

## Starships Player Handbook

Starships Player Handbook v1.1  
Plain Text Version  
Ryan Hackel  
17 June 2003

- I. Introduction
  - A. Object of Game
  - B. Setup and Materials
- II. Starting a Game
  - A. Homeworld Selection
  - B. Resources and Ships
  - C. Mapping
- III. Gameplay
  - A. Ship Construction
    - i. Type and Hull
      - a. Navy
      - b. Explorer
      - c. Freighter
    - ii. Resources
      - a. Ore
      - b. Alloy
    - iii. Equipping
      - a. Guns
      - b. Engines
      - c. Volume
      - d. Structure
      - e. Capacity
      - f. Weight
      - g. Speed
  - B. Exploring
    - i. Random Map
    - ii. Free Ore
    - iii. Nebulas
    - iv. Planets
      - a. Colonies
    - v. Wormholes
  - C. Ship-to-Ship Combat
    - i. Aim
    - ii. Shields
    - iii. Boarding Parties
  - D. Ship Actions
    - i. Repairing
    - ii. Docking
    - iii. Nav Beacons
    - iv. Sensors
  - E. Facilities
    - i. Colonies
      - a. M-Class
      - b. Dome
      - c. Mines
    - ii. Space Stations
    - iii. Terraforming Stations
    - iv. Orbital Drydocks
  - F. Ship-to-Facility Combat
  - G. Resource Management
- IV. Game Support

Tables are available in the Starships Tables Handbook.

## Starships Player Handbook

### I. Introduction

In a game of starships, players command a homeworld. They build starships, explore space, establish colonies, harvest resources, and compete against other players for survival.

#### A. Object of Game

The Object of a game of starships is to eliminate all of the ships and facilities belonging to an opponent(s). The last player with a ship or facility left wins the game.

#### B. Setup and Materials

All players will need graph paper. Four squares to an inch is recommended. Also needed is a pencil or pen, and some paper for keeping track of resources, ship stats, and other data. The DM will also need a set of polyhedral dice. Each player should also have a copy of these rules.

### II. Starting a Game

#### A. Homeworld Selection

At the beginning of the game, each player chooses a homeworld. There are five to choose from: Draconia, Besk, Sefeeria, Terra, and Gledia. Each homeworld has unique starships and related technology. If a player does not choose a homeworld, they operate without one, as a Pirate player.

#### B. Resources and Ships

Each player receives 40 credits and 20 alloy at the start of the game. Pirate players only receive 25 credits and 12 alloy. Each player may then build as many ships as they choose, using the initial resources given. Ships are launched adjacent to the player's homeworld.

#### C. Mapping

Space is divided into sectors, which are assigned a letter at the DM's choice. Each sector is subdivided into 900 squares in a 30 X 30 square grid. Coordinates are given for each square in the format of X.YY.ZZ, where X is the letter of the sector, YY is the row number of the square, and ZZ is the column number. For example, A.16.23 is a square in sector A, in the 16th row down from the top, and the 23rd column over from the left edge. The upper left corner of a sector "X" is assigned X.01.01, and the bottom right corner is assigned X.30.30.

## Starships Player Handbook

Squares are considered adjacent in two ways. For puposes of moving, only squares that share a side are considered adjacent. For all other purposes, squares are adjacent if they share a side or corner.

### III. Gameplay

During a turn, a player has many options of what to do. Players may do as much or as little as they desire, but individual ships can only do one thing a turn.

#### A. Ship Construction

##### i. Hull Type and Class

First, a hull type must be chosen, applicable to that player's homeworld. Pirate players may choose any hull type. A ship's class defines the way in which it will operate. The classes are as follows:

##### a. Navy

Navy ships are military ships. They receive a salary of one credit every five turns. When they destroy an enemy ship, they earn credits equal to the enemy ship's volume. They are never paid for delivering resources.

##### b. Explorer

Explorer ships explore uncharted regions of space. Explorer ships earn a credit for every ten squares they reveal. This is their only source of income.

##### c. Freighter

Freighters haul resources to and from facilities and homeworlds. They receive one credit for every ore delivered to a colony or the homeworld. They receive two credits for every alloy delivered to the homeworld. Only freighter hull types may be of the freighter class.

A pirate player's ships do not have a class, and receive no credits for their actions. The only rewards pirates earn is what they can steal.

Ships normally do not change classes after construction, and this action is

Starships Player Handbook  
left to the discretion of the DM.

ii. Resources

After choosing a hull type, costs must be paid. Each hull types requires credits and alloy.

a. Credits

Pay credits equal to the credit cost of the hull type. This must be paid before the ship is launched.

b. Alloy

Pay alloy equal to the volume of the ship. This must be paid before the ship is launched.

Once both costs are paid in full, the ship is launched adjacent to the homeworld.

iii. Equipping

After the hull type is launched, it is useless until engines, guns, and items are equipped. A ship has a capacity (C) used for carrying things. Capacity is divided into guns (G), engines (E), and volume (V).

a. Guns (G)

G is the amount of the capacity that can be used to equip weapons. The combined equip values of the ship's equipped weapons cannot exceed the ship's G value.

b. Engines (E)

E is the amount of the capacity that can be used to equip engines. The combined equip values of the ship's equipped engines cannot exceed the ship's E value.

c. Volume (V)

V is the amount of the capacity that can be used to equip items. The combined equip values of the ship's equipped items cannot exceed the ship's V value.

d. Structure (S)

This ship stat represent's the ship's hit points. The ship can withstand this amount of damage before being destroyed.

e. Capacity (C)

## Starships Player Handbook

The ship's equipped weapons, engines, items, towed objects, cargo, docked ships, etc, all take up this space. The combined equip value of all these items cannot exceed the ship's capacity.

### f. Weight

A ship's weight is the sum of the ship's maximum V and the used amount of G, plus docked ships, towed objects, and cargo.

### g. Speed

A ship's speed is it's total power from the engines divided by the ship's weight. Drop any decimal. For example, a ship with a power of 20 and a weight of 6 has a speed of 3.

## B. Exploring

### i. Random Map

When your ship sensors reveal unexplored squares, things such as planets, enemy ships, nebulas, and other phenomena might be revealed at random. The DM consults the Exploration Table.

### ii. Free Ore

If ore is discovered, the ship that found it may pick it up, and carry it as cargo, providing that the ship has enough empty capacity to carry the ore. Free ore takes up one C. The ore serves just as other ore does.

### iii. Nebulas

When an area is explored, it may be a nebula. Ships in a nebula at the start of their turn lose 1d10 % of their shields, or if shields are down one component at random is taken off-line, and the ship suffers 1 damage to structure. Ships in a nebula are treated as if they are cloaked.

### iv. Planets

Most planets are gaseous, barren, or otherwise too inhospitable for use. However, some can be colonized by dome colonies, and few M-class (capable of supporting life), and can support an M-class colony. Some planets can also be

## Starships Player Handbook

mined for ore. The DM determines the planet's qualities using the appropriate tables. The discoverer of the planet chooses the planet's name.

### v. Wormholes

Wormholes are tunnels in space that allow ships to traverse large distances of space quickly. The stability of a wormhole affects how ships travel through it. A stable wormhole permanently connects two points in space. A partially stable wormhole has a fixed end, but the other end changes frequently. A ship entering a partially stable wormhole travels a random distance in a random direction, determined by the DM using the Wormhole Table. An unstable wormhole appears no different from a stable wormhole, but can only be used once, and there is a 75% chance that a ship passing through an unstable wormhole will be destroyed. Ships must be adjacent to a wormhole to move through it. Adjacency is identical to a planet. Moving a ship through a wormhole ends the ship's turn.

EXAMPLE: A stable wormhole connects A.20.20 and B.10.10. A ship at A.20.19 is adjacent to the wormhole, and can spend a turn to travel to B.10.09. A ship at B.11.11 is adjacent to the wormhole, and can spend a turn to travel to A.21.21.

### C. Ship-to-Ship Combat

Frequently, ships will encounter an opposing player's ships. Combat between ships involves a turn sequence in which ships fire one or more weapon at the other ship, in efforts to destroy (or capture) the enemy starship. To fire a weapon, two conditions must be met. First, at least one engine must be online. Secondly, the ship cannot fire weapons if it has moved already in the turn. (vice versa, a ship that has fired weapons cannot move in that turn.) There is no limit to how many weapons a ship can fire in one turn, so long as all weapons being fired at a single target. The Targeting Computer item allows for weapons fire to target separate vessels. Each weapon fires a number of shots between 1 and the SPR of that weapon, determined at random by the DM. For each shot, the DM then rolls a percentage. If the percentage is higher than the attacking ship's aim value, the shot hits the defending vessel. The shot does an amount of damage between 1 and the maximum rated damage of the weapon, determined at random by the DM. If the defender does not have shields, each

## Starships Player Handbook

point of damage reduces one point of structure on the defending vessel. Each hit that damages a ship's structure also sends one of the defender's components offline, chosen randomly by the DM. If the defender's structure reaches zero, the ship is destroyed.

### i. Aim

A ship's aim is a function mostly of the defending ship's size. Bigger ships are a bigger target, thus easier to hit. It is calculated by

$$\text{AIM} = 75 - ( V * V )$$

where V is the defending ship's volume.

For example, an attacking ship firing at a defending ship with a volume of 4 has

$$\text{AIM} = 75 - 16 = 59.$$

If the defending ship's volume was 2, then

$$\text{AIM} = 75 - 4 = 71.$$

If the defending ship's volume was 7, then

$$\text{AIM} = 75 - 49 = 26.$$

Other effects such as weapon aim modifiers, and items like Targeting Computer and Maneuvering Thrusters can add or subtract from the AIM value.

### ii. Shields

So long as the defending ship has at least one shield online, it does not suffer damage to its structure. Instead, damage dealt to the defending ship is used to reduce the shields. Shields are charged to a maximum of 100%. Each point of damage dealt to shields reduces the shield level by 1d10 percent, determined at random by the DM. All damage from a single hit drains the shields simultaneously, but further damage from further hits will damage structure instead. Shields at 0% are offline.

EXAMPLE: a defending ship has shields at 37%. It is hit three times, first by a 5-point hit, then by a 1-point hit, and lastly by a 2-point hit. The first hit drains shields by  $4+3+7+10+9=33\%$ . The defender's shields are now at 4%. The next hit drains shields by 10%. The defender's shields are now offline. The remaining hit destroys two points of structure, and sends one component at random offline, determined by the DM.

### iii. Boarding Parties

## Starships Player Handbook

A ship can attempt to board an enemy ship. For this to occur, some conditions must be met. First, both ships (the attacker and defender) must have no shields up. Both players roll 1d8. If attacker's roll is higher, the defending ship is boarded. The attacking player may control the defending ship, transfer components between ships, scuttle, etc. Boarded ships can be reassigned to any class, but do not receive credits as Navy ships, freighters, or explorer ships. Captured ships can be scrapped at a homeworld to obtain alloy and credits (see Scrapping Ships and Equipment).

### D. Ship Actions

Ships can perform one action per its player's turn. A ship can move, attack, repair, dock or undock with another ship, board an enemy ship, deploy or retrieve a nav beacon, pick up and/or drop off cargo, or do nothing.

#### i. Repairing

Ships repair to reverse the damage that has been inflicted on them. Ships repair damage in these ways:

1. one off-line system is brought on-line.
2. one structure is repaired, up to full.
3. shields are increased 1d4 percent. This is called charging shields.

A ship conducting repairs must not move for that turn. One of the above actions may be done each turn, at the controller's choice. Space stations, orbital drydocks, and homeworlds allow adjacent ships to conduct an additional action of the above during repairs. For example, a ship has shields down, 5/6 structure, and phasers off-line. The ship may choose to bring phasers on-line, repair the structure to 6/6, or charge their shields (1d4%). If the ship is at a space station, orbital drydock, or homeworld, the ship may do any two of those actions, or do one action twice.

#### ii. Docking

A ship can dock inside a larger ship. This is the action for both ships for the turn. A ship can be docked inside the larger ship if larger ship has enough unused capacity. The docked ship takes up X of the larger



## Starships Player Handbook

ship's capacity, where X is the docked ship's volume. The docked ship can repair, but is unable to move, fire weapons, be dealt damage, use its sensors, or be detected by other ships' sensors as long as it remains docked. The docked ship must undock to do any actions.

### iii. Nav Beacons

Nav beacons are carried by all ships. Each ship can carry up to 3 nav beacons. Nav beacons do not take up volume or capacity, and do not affect a ship's stats. A Nav beacon is placed at a square, and transmits the coordinates of that square to all ships in the deployer's fleet. Nav beacons appear on any ship's sensors if the beacon is in range. Any ship can deploy and retrieve nav beacons, regardless of who placed them. (Beacons on board a ship do not transmit coordinates.)

### iv. Sensors

Every ship has a sensor range of 1. The contents of any square adjacent to the ship is detected. This includes planets, nebulas, free-floating ore, nav beacons, other ships, wormholes, etc. Sensors do not detect cloaked ships or ships in nebulas. A ship's weapons range is the same as its sensor range. The Advanced Sensor item extends a ship's sensor range, but does not increase the ship's weapons range.

## E. Facilities

Facilities are buildings or structures placed on a planet, or in space. Facilities are used to gather resources, perform ship construction and repairs, or defend a location. Facilities are paid for at the homeworld, and are assembled in pieces. When all pieces are transported to the destination, the facility is finally constructed and placed in service.

### i. Colonies

Colonies are placed on suitable planets in order to convert and store resources. Colonies convert 2 ore into 1 alloy. Ore is supplied by mines, and must be shipped to a colony for conversion. Ore and alloy can be stored in unlimited amounts at the colony. Colonies come in two forms, with different attributes:

## Starships Player Handbook

### a. M-Class

M-Class colonies can only be placed on M-Class planets. They convert 2 ore into 1 alloy instantly when 2 ore are at the colony. This colony costs 20 credits and 2 alloy, and is built in two pieces.

### b. Dome

Dome colonies can be placed on any habitable planet. They convert 2 ore into 1 alloy instantly when 2 ore are at the colony. This colony costs 45 credits and 3 alloy, and is built in three pieces.

## ii. Mines

Mines are placed on any planet with mineral deposits. A single mine produces one ore every five turns; a second mine will up that production to one ore every four turns, and a third mine will increase production to one ore every three turns. Ore must be transported to a colony or homeworld to be converted into alloy. If the planet also contains a colony, the ore is converted on-site. Production is treated as a planet, not as a set of mines. No more than three mines can be placed on a single planet. Mines cost 15 credits and 2 alloy, and are built in two pieces.

## iii. Space Stations

Space stations can be placed in space in any square, except where the station would be adjacent to a planet or other facility. Space stations are useful for defending regions of space, and by repairing ships by allowing adjacent ships to repair twice in a turn. Space stations cost 65 credits and 4 alloy, and are built in four pieces. Space stations do not repair hostile ships.

## iv. Terraforming Stations

Terraforming stations can be placed on any planet. The presence of a terraforming station makes the planet habitable. As long as the terraforming station is at the planet, the planet will support any other type of facility except the M-Class colony. If the terraforming station is destroyed, all other facilities are unusable. Terraforming stations cost 50 credits and

Starships Player Handbook  
3 alloy, and are built in 3 pieces.

v. Orbital Drydock

Orbital Drydocks are placed on habitable planets. An orbital drydock allows a ship adjacent to the planet to repair twice in a turn. A single drydock can also construct ships of volume 2 or less. A second orbital drydock allows for the construction of ships with volume 5 or less. No more than two orbital drydocks can be at a single planet at a time. Orbital drydocks do not repair hostile ships. Orbital drydocks cost 40 credits and 3 alloy, and are built in 3 pieces.

F. Ship-to-Facility Combat

Ships can attack facilities during a turn. Regardless of the ship's type, ship-to-facility combat works the same way. The attacking ship rolls 1d8 and compares it to the location's strength value. The loser pays structure equal to the difference in the roll and value. Disregard ship shields. Locations have structure equal to the strength value, and can repair it like a ship can. If a location's structure falls below 1, the ship gains control of the location, or may destroy it to gain X credits, where X is 8 times the facility's original structure. Only space stations can declare attacks against adjacent ships; other facilities can only defend.

G. Resource Management

There are three resources in the game: credits, ore, and alloy. Credits are earned by starships for salary, or by performing certain actions, or as bounties. Credits are used to pay for ship hulls and components, and facilities, as well as for diplomatic purposes. Ore is found on mine-supporting planets, and sometimes found drifting in space. Ore is converted into alloy at colonies and the homeworld. Alloy is used in the construction of ships and facilities. Ore and alloy can be carried by a ship as cargo, where each unit of resource takes up 1 capacity, and adds 1 to the ship's weight.

For Homeworld players:

Ore and alloy can be stored on any planet (habitable or not). If the planet is uninhabited, the resources appear on any ship's sensors. Credits can be stored in unlimited amounts on any ship or planet.

For Pirate players:

Ore and alloy can be stored on any planet.

### Starships Player Handbook

If the planet is uninhabited, the resources appear on any ship's sensors. Pirate ships may carry up to 2 ore and alloy each without taking up volume or adding to weight. If the ship is captured, the stored resources can be taken by the boarder.

#### i. Scrapping Ships or Equipment

When a ship is at the homeworld or an orbital drydock, the ship and or any of its equipment can be scrapped. Scrapping allows the player to reclaim some of the credits and alloy spent to purchase the ship or equipment. A scrapped hull earns half of its credit and alloy cost, rounded down. Scrapped equipment earns half of its credit cost, rounded down.

Game Support: If you have any questions, comments, or inquiries, or wish to receive updated rulebooks, contact [deeplogic@excite.com](mailto:deeplogic@excite.com)