

Solitaire Starship Combat



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Wargaming, it must be admitted, is a rather esoteric hobby. Sometimes opponents can be very difficult to find. For those who have difficulty finding an opponent or who wish to play without one, this scenario is presented for *West End's Star Trek III* game.

This scenario is based on the assumption that the major "powers" (Federation, Klingon, Romulan) have vast areas of space to patrol/control with a limited number of vessels and manpower. Consequently each side has developed robot ships which would operate without a crew and attack any unknown vessel entering a given area of space. This article presents rules for using robot vessels in the *Star Trek III* game. **PLAYERS MUST FOLLOW THESE RULES EXACTLY TO ENSURE THAT THE ROBOT SHIPS ARE USED PROPERLY.**

Set Up:

The following types of ships may be used as "robot" ships by the Federation, Klingons, and Romulans including: All types of destroyers, frigates, escorts, and scouts. The Romulans may also use Bird of Prey light cruisers in the robot mode.

Players should understand that in addition to moving his own ship

and firing its weapons, the solitaire player must plot for, move, and fire the robot ship's weapons.

Usually only one robot ship may be used in each scenario and should be matched against a similar ship type to ensure some sort of game balance. However, more than one robot ship may be used against a more powerful opposing vessel.

Initially, the solitaire player will place his ship in the center of the map. The robot ship will enter the map from any hex on the map edge in the solitaire player's ship aft arc. If multiple robot ships are used, one ship is placed in a hex on each map edge; no more than four robot ships may be used in a single scenario. Play continues until all robot ships have been destroyed, or the solitaire player's ship has been destroyed. The three impulse game **MUST** be used.

Plotting and Energy Allocation:

In addition to plotting for his vessel, moving it, and firing its weapons, the solitaire player must also do the same for the robot ship. Energy points produced by the robot vessel's engine(s) is allocated between various ship's systems according to the following priorities, without exception:

- 1) Movement
- 2) Shields: The shield facing the opposing vessel is always powered up to maximum strength. Remaining shield points are distributed between remaining shields.
- 3) Weapons:
 - a) Photon/plasma torpedoes,
 - b) Long-Range phasers or disruptors (if two kinds are carried),
 - c) Short-Range phasers or disruptors.
- 4) Remaining Energy Points: Remaining energy points are distributed among remaining shields, preferably to those that are or could be facing the opposing vessel.

Movement:

- 1) All robot vessels have energy allocated to movement sufficient to allow them to move four hexes per game turn.
- 2) The robot vessel must either move toward or follow the solitaire player's ship in each game turn.
- 3) At the end of each movement impulse the robot ship must turn in the hex it ends its movement in to allow any unfired weapons to bear on the oppos-

ing vessel. If all weapons have already been fired these turns are not made; instead the robot ship will move toward the opposing vessel.

- 4) The robot ship may not move off the map since the map represents the patrol area that the robot ship has been assigned to patrol. The robot ship will always select a course that will keep it on the map.

Shields:

- 1) The robot ship will always have the three shields facing the opposing vessel powered up to full strength. If there is the possibility that the opposing ship may shoot at and hit the robot ship on a hex side between two shields, then both shields are powered up to full strength.
- 2) No more than three shields may be powered up at one time.

Weapons:

- 1) The robot ship will always follow/move toward the opposing ship until it is in sufficient range to allow hits to be made on a die roll of 1-4 or better. Combat may take place at closer ranges. As soon as a robot ship is in range it will fire all weapons that can bear against the opposing vessel.
- 2) After the first time the robot ship fires its weapons in a game turn, it turns so that any unfired weapons may be fired in the next impulse.
- 3) The robot ship will always turn to present the firing arc with the most unfired weapons toward the opposing ship.
- 4) In each impulse the robot ship will continue to turn and fire its weapons until no unfired weapons remain.
- 5) Photon or Plasma torpedoes are always energized and fired before phasers or disruptors are fired or as soon as they are in range. If more than one of these weapons is available, only one is fired in any single impulse.
- 6) Cloaking devices may not be used during the game by either side.

Unless otherwise noted, all regular game rules are in force at all times. In any situation where the variant material presented in this article conflicts with the regular game rules, the regular rules will take priority in resolving the conflict.