



by Guy W. McLimore, Jr.  
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This will be a regular feature of **STARDATE**, featuring rules questions about **STAR TREK: THE ROLE PLAYING GAME** and related products. The system's designers and developers will address queries on rules interpretation. Our replies can be considered "official" for the present, though we reserve the right to establish different rule clarifications in later expansions, if necessary. Even so, feel free to make whatever rules modifications you wish in your own games! ("Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations...")

Please try not to ask us to provide a whole new rules subsystem in this column (such as a psionics system for humans, or a detailed robotics creation system). If you want to see such systems developed, let us know and we'll consider them for future supplements and/or full-fledged articles for **STARDATE**. There isn't room for more than short replies in this column, nor can we develop such systems to send to questioners personally.

The appearance of this column does NOT mean we have given up our efforts to personally answer all letters sent to us. Sometimes it takes a bit of time, but we WILL get back to you. (Letters DO go astray occasionally, however, so write again if you fear your letter might have been lost.) Meanwhile, you can help by sending rules questions in a separate envelope to **ASK STARFLEET COMMAND** at the address listed at the end of this article. (Be sure to put **ASK STARFLEET COMMAND** on the envelope...) General comments on the game, suggestions for future work, friendly words, and other communications are also welcomed by us at Fantasimulations, but send communications about the magazine's other features to **STARDATE** in separate letters.

Also, when a question is answered by one of the co-designers, the answer will be signed by him.

This first column will address itself to some commonly-asked questions from the mail we've been receiving. Writers will be acknowledged in this column if their question has general interest value or is particularly novel. On to the questions...

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**Q. Why does certain material in ST:RPG conflict with things stated in the STAR FLEET TECHNICAL MANUAL, the STAR TREK SPACEFLIGHT CHRONOLOGY, etc.?**

**A.** There are several reasons for variances between ST:RPG and other licensed book material. For one thing, it is our feeling that much of the published material in these two works is not consistent with the **STAR TREK** universe as established in the TV series and films. Also, Franz Joseph's approach (in the Tech Manual) to Star Fleet as a military unit (especially as evidenced by the Dreadnought design) is not in keeping with the design team's ideas on Star Fleet's role. If the individual player or Gamemaster wishes to adopt material from these works, or others, be our guest. We, as designers, have different philosophies and speculations about the history and technology of the **STAR TREK** universe, and we will stick with them. As a player, adopt whatever you like best.

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**Q. Why are there no rules in the basic game for accumulation of "experience points" (or a similar system) toward increases in rank for player characters?**

**A.** For one thing, among top officers, an increase in rank would often require a transfer to another ship. Commander Spock, for instance, could not become a full Captain without being moved off the *Enterprise*. (Or until Kirk was promoted out, which is indeed what happened...) This tends to break up campaign groups. (Of course, a person in this position could turn down the promotion, as Spock is rumored to have done on several occasions.)

Most important, however, is our feeling that promotions are too important to be left to an arbitrary experience system. Only a Gamemaster can look over a campaign and see where a character has performed in such an exemplary manner (and gained sufficient experience as an officer) to merit promotion. In this respect, the Gamemaster takes the "role" of Starfleet Command superiors, examining the reports filed by the candidate's fellow officers as well as the officer's service record before deciding to offer a promotion.

Gamemasters should not promote characters too quickly. It would be unusual in the extreme for a promotion to come along before the officer had spent at least a year at her/his current rank. If the character has a satisfactory performance record at a low-grade rank (Ensign or Lieutenant J.G.) for a year or so, good recommendations from superiors, and perhaps a commendation or two, then and only then will promotion likely be offered.

For higher grades, promotions come more slowly and require more evidence of excellence. Generally, a promotion above full Lieutenant would not come for two years or more. Promotions above Lieutenant Commander



are rarely made on *Constitution* class vessels except between 5-year tours of duty. (Spock, promoted from Lieutenant Commander to Commander during the voyage, was an exception.)

Very rarely, a character may be offered a promotion as a result of a special instance of extreme heroism or demonstration of professional excellence under extreme conditions. Such efforts are more often rewarded by such honors as the Star Fleet Citation for Conspicuous Gallantry or Legion of Merit.

*Q. If two players simultaneously declare that they wish to make opportunity actions, which goes first? How many actions may be taken in a row before the person whose turn is being worked out may continue?*

**A.** If two players on the same "side" declare simultaneous actions, they may decide between themselves who acts first. If opponents declare at the same time, the figure with the highest DEX attribute acts first (unless the Gamemaster rules that special conditions present would delay the action).

If an opportunity action is declared, it takes place as soon as the player currently acting (on his turn) completes the single action now in progress. Moving one hex is a single action, so an opportunity action can interrupt movement in the middle. The interrupting figure gets ONE action (one shot from a ready weapon, move one square, etc.); then the character whose turn is in progress may make another action before being interrupted again.

If more than one character interrupts, each interrupting character gets ONE action before the character whose turn is in progress gets to continue. (Thus, a character running across a room full of enemies may be stopped in the middle and fired upon by all enemies present with ready weapons, but each can only fire ONCE before the character can continue.)

One exception can be made, as the Gamemaster desires. If a player is trying to dash across a short stretch of open area, avoiding gunfire, to seek shelter, the Gamemaster may rule that he can be interrupted for fire combat only ONCE per opponent — even though the character may move several squares. Use common sense in applying this rule. If the area to be crossed is large, the Gamemaster may want to allow two or three shots per opponent.



*Q. Why don't the phasers in ST:RPG have a wide-angle stun setting, as was shown in several episodes?*

**A.** The newest editions of the game will contain this rule, and it can also be found in the pullouts with the ST:RPG Gamemaster's screen.

Briefly, it works like this:

A wide-angle stun shot affects all targets in three CONNECTED squares (any pattern chosen by the attacker). All targets must be within the stated SHORT range of the weapon, and a clear line-of-sight must be drawn to EACH TARGET SQUARE. A wide-angle stun shot drains FOUR TIMES as much power as a standard stun shot.

A separate *To Hit* roll must be made for all affected targets. If the roll fails, the target is missed (or at least unaffected), even though targets on either side (or in the same square) may be hit. A 20 point bonus is applied, however, to all wide angle stun *To Hit* rolls.

Only phaser-type energy weapons (not disruptors, police stunners, blasters, etc.) have this setting, and it works only with the stun setting. (Wide angle heat is possible, but it does no damage to normal living targets...) Resetting a weapon for wide-angle stun requires performing a "reset weapon" settings action, as does returning the angle setting to normal. There is no "wide angle heavy stun" setting.

By the way, since we just mentioned the Gamemaster's screen, let me also point out that the weapons tables in the screen and pullouts contain data for old-style laser weapons, police stunners, and stunclubs, all of which were mentioned in **TRADER**

**CAPTAINS AND MERCHANT PRINCES.** We also included weapons statistics for the Mark II Phaser weapons, as used in the *STAR TREK* movies. Using this data, you can get a head start on our upcoming movie supplement.

*Q. Must a ship have a "sensor lock" on an opposing vessel to fire on it? Can several ships be "sensor locked" at once? Can a ship whose sensors are temporarily inoperative fire weapons?*

**A.** A sensor lock is not necessary to fire at a visible target, under normal conditions. Thus, more than one ship can be targeted in a given turn. A sensor lock must be present, however, to monitor the results of fire. Thus, if no sensor lock is present, a firing vessel cannot determine whether or not a shot did any damage, or what type of damage is done, and such information should then be determined secretly by the Gamemaster and not told to the firing vessel's crew. Only one ship can be "sensor locked" at a time.

Even so, a ship with its sensors temporarily inoperative (due to battle damage) cannot bring weapons to bear at all! This is because sensor systems are used to aim weapons, even though a "lock" is not required.

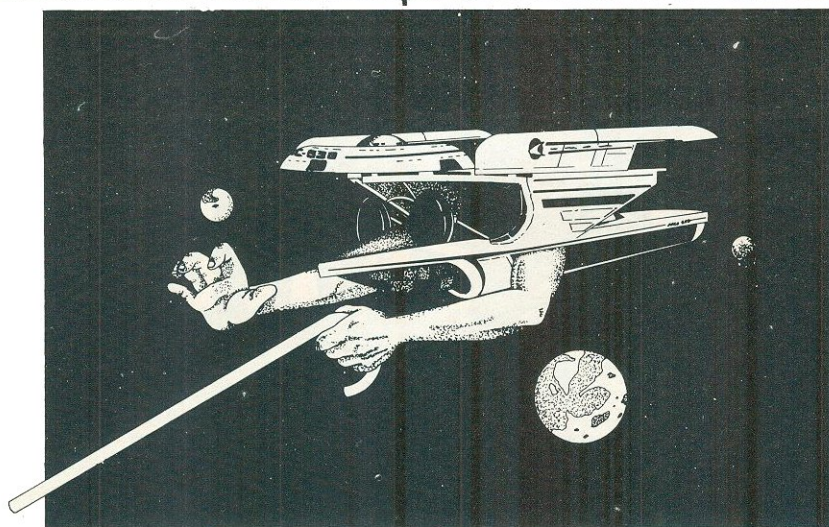
In the case of a ship that is not visible (such as a cloaked Romulan vessel), a sensor lock is necessary for direct fire. If the ship was visible (or sensor locked) last turn, a try can be made for a sensor lock for the subsequent turn. If the lock is successful, the ship is sensor locked and can be fired upon until it moves.

Once an invisible ship has moved, a saving roll on Ship's Sensors skill by the Science Officer is necessary to maintain the lock for firing purposes. If the roll succeeds, you continue to track the ship and may continue firing. If the lock is lost, it cannot be regained unless the ship scans blindly.

A blind scan can be made for an invisible vessel at the beginning of any turn. Blind scans are made in a general direction conforming to one firing arc of the ship (either forward, aft, starboard, or port). The saving roll is made at a 40 point penalty. If the roll is successful, the hex where the invisible ship is located is identified, and a sensor lock may be attempted. This scan method will reveal only one invisible vessel (the closest), even if two or more are present in that sensor arc.

Remember that cloaked vessels





cannot be in cloak the same turn that they fire weapons. They can return to the cloak at the beginning of the next turn. Remember also that a sensor lock or blind scan cannot be made if the sensors are inoperative or the Science Officer (or other officer delegated to operate sensors on your ship) is temporarily unable to perform.

**Q.** In *ST:RPG*, you mentioned alien hybrids such as Vulcan/Human. Is it possible to have a Vulcan/Romulan or Human/Romulan crossbreed? This example was set by Lt. Saavik in *STAR TREK II*.

Erik Jacob Sturdevant  
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**A.** Yes, Vulcan/Romulan hybrids are quite possible, as Lt. Saavik's existence makes clear. Vulcans and Romulans are physically quite similar, and such crosses require no special genetic restructuring. Human/Romulan hybrids are theoretically possible, but would require very special laboratory help and genetic tailoring, as was used by Ambassador Sarek and Amanda Grayson to produce Spock, a Vulcan/Human hybrid. There are no recorded instances of persons within the Federation who are of mixed Romulan/Human heritage.

**Q.** Was Lt. Uhura born in the United States of America or Africa? On page 20 it says she was born in the "United States of Africa". (A misprint, I believe...)

Richard Lau  
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V6M 3K1

**A.** The United States of Africa is Lt. Uhura's correct birthplace. This nation evolved by *STAR TREK*'s time from a coalition of smaller independent African nations and includes much of Central and Western Africa. The United States of Africa has Swahili as its official language, and it is an economically strong country by *STAR TREK*'s time. The Africans learned that they could make better use of their rich natural resources by pooling their efforts.

**Q.** Is there a recorder or computer on board a ship that records everything automatically all the time? Players in my campaign wanted to use recorded evidence to support their report on a combat vs. the Klingons, but I would not allow it because they didn't specify at the time that they were recording the incident. They claim that everything is automatically recorded. Who is right?

Richard Lau

**A.** Yes, most routine ship's actions and all combat actions are automatically recorded by the ship's flight recorder. This recording can be dumped into the memory storage area of a ship's recorder buoy and released if the ship is in danger of being destroyed, or it can be transmitted to Starfleet Command's nearest outpost.

**Q.** Can you beam someone to or from an enemy (or friendly) ship as long as there is one unshielded side on both ships, even if the unshielded sides do not face each other?

Richard Lau

**A.** All beaming by transporter is line-of-sight. Thus, there must be a clear, straight, unshielded line between two

ships before beaming can take place.

**Q.** Are there any shields on the underside of the Constitution class ships or D-7 battle cruisers?

Richard Lau

**A.** All shields extend around top and bottom of their respective sides. Think of the shields as being sections out of a large ball and you'll get the idea.

Dave Tepool

**Q.** When you set a phaser to overload, is it immediately audible, or is there a delay of, say, 1 combat turn or so?

Richard Lau

**A.** Setting a phaser to overload is immediately audible. There is no delay.

**Q.** The weapons list on page 54 of the *ST:RPG* rulebook does not allow for weapons such as pole weapons, axes, and maces to be thrown. Some of these weapons can be thrown. What are the throwing ranges for them? Also, how are "power points" determined for weapons like the bow and the MG?

Richard Lau

**A.** Some, but not all, pole weapons, axes, clubs, and maces can be thrown. (For instance, a glaive, broadax, spiked club, or 2-handed mace cannot be thrown with any reasonable accuracy for any distance...) If a weapon is of a throwable variety, it must be stated when the weapon is first described. If so, they have the following range requirements:

CLUB/MACE/AXE: S 1-3, M 4-7, L 8-11, EX 12-15

POLE WEAPON: S 1-5, M 6-10, L 11-15, EX 16-20

Weapons in these classifications vary greatly. These are average ranges, and you are free to modify them for specific types of weapon, if you desire. The "power points" for ranged weapons like bow, MG, etc. are the average number of rounds carried in typical weapons of the type noted. In other words, that's how many shots can be fired before you must reload (or, in the case of a bow, refill your quiver). Again, this can be adjusted for the specific situation you have in mind. Some types of pistols carry more rounds than others, etc.

Dave Tepool

**Q.** In *THE KLINGONS*, the D-10 heavy cruiser has one set of range and damage information for the forward KD-9



disruptors, while the **SHIP CONSTRUCTION MANUAL** has different data. Which is correct?

Richard Lau

- A. The D-10 statistics in the **SHIP CONSTRUCTION MANUAL** are correct. The ones in the Klingon book are in error.

Dave Tepool

- Q. Is there a saving roll to detect a false tribble in the adventure "Again, Troublesome Tribbles"?

Richard Lau

(Yes, Mr. Lau asks lots of good questions...)

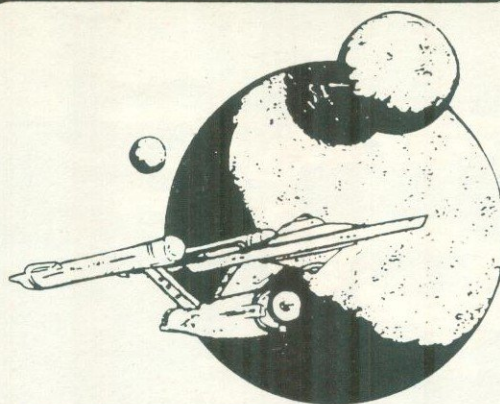
- A. There is no saving roll the first time a false tribble is encountered by a person. After a person has had a chance to (carefully, we hope) examine a false tribble, he or she should get a basic saving roll on the INT attribute to recognize one again if it is examined closely before being picked up.

Finally, we would like to reply briefly to all those who have written to make mention of concepts, rules, ship designs, and historical notes from Task Force Games' Star Fleet Battles and related publications. The Task Force game has no connection with ST:RPG or **STAR TREK** in any manner, and the Star Fleet Battles universe is NOT the **STAR TREK** universe, despite marked similarities. Nothing published for their game system has any official connection with what we do, and we take no responsibility for remaining consistent with their system. Despite similarity of names, ship designs, etc., Star Fleet Battles is not licensed by authority of Paramount Pictures, who hold copyright on all **STAR TREK** material. Once again, if you as a player or Gamemaster wish to adapt outside material for your games, be our guest. But neither we nor **STARDATE** can publish such material, and please do not expect us to take such material into consideration in our speculations and expansions on the official **STAR TREK** universe.

The address for questions (and questions ONLY) is:

**ASK STARFLEET COMMAND**  
1026 West Van Buren  
Second Floor  
Chicago, IL 60607

Send other correspondence separately to **STARDATE**, not to **ASK STARFLEET COMMAND**.



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