

ELDAR TACTICS

By Dan Rothman

A comprehensive treaty on Eldar tactics in Battlefleet Gothic.

This section is intended as a guide for the aspiring Pirate Prince. Through discussion of some of the ups and downs of the Eldar, as well as reviewing some special rules, we'll discover what it is that makes the Eldar so special in BFG. One of the real successes Games Workshop has achieved with BFG is to imbue each fleet with a very individual character – the Eldar are a great example of this. They handle differently from any of the other races. You'll find that over time both the Pirate Prince and the Prince's victims learn this unique character and adjust their styles of play to accommodate the Eldar's peculiarities. Hopefully, we Eldar can stick together and ride up the learning curve ahead of our opponents!

SPECIAL RULES

When BFG was first introduced, the Eldar seemed to be a tremendous exception to all of the other rules. Since then, the introduction of the Space Marines, Tyranid, and most recently, the Necron fleets has expanded the universe of special rules – the Eldar seem a lot less of a bizarre exception than before. So, let us take a quick review of the special rules that apply to Eldar.

Movement

The Eldar style of movement remains unique. Eldar movement varies according to their orientation relative to the sun. At their slowest (moving directly sunward) they are fast. At their fastest (moving with the sun abeam) they are the fastest of all the fleets. Some points to remember about Eldar movement:

- A ship doesn't have to move, an Eldar ship may choose to remain stationary.
- Free turn at the beginning of movement.
- No turns during movement – the Eldar can't change their orientation after they've moved.
- Second movement during Eldar's Ordnance phase – during the Eldar's Ordnance phase, and after all other ordnance has moved, the Eldar may take another free turn and full move.

It's also worthwhile to note that the Eldar have some unique interactions with celestial phenomena. In *BFG Magazine 1*, Eldar ships were permitted a Leadership test (re-rolled for escorts) to ignore the effects of gas and dust clouds. They were also allowed a Leadership test (apparently without a re-roll for escorts) to partially avoid

the effects of solar flares partially (though "riding the storm" does blow ships that save 2D6 cm directly away from the sun). These rules are particularly important, because the effects of gas and dust clouds, asteroids, and solar flares are now not as big a threat. Instead they are quite useful...

Shooting and Weapons

The Eldar have some extremely sophisticated weapons and targeting systems. Eldar weapons batteries always treat targets as closing (so the target orientation is not significant), and lance batteries keep hitting (up to three times per lance) once they've started. Eldar torpedoes may re-roll misses, and Eldar bombers may re-roll the number of hits they achieve. Eldar fighters are also very durable, remaining on the field on a 4+, rather than having to return to refuel. Altogether a very powerful arsenal.





Defense and Shields

Eldar defences are also sophisticated – and they’d better be, because Eldar ships are very fragile. Eldar ships have two primary lines of defence, running away and holofields. Holofields convey a 2+ save against many attacks. Because the Eldar don’t have other significant defences, those weapons (which are increasing in number...) and phenomena that ignore holofields are very dangerous to the Eldar. Weapons that ignore holofields currently include weapons batteries (though the holofields do force an extra right shift on the Gunnery table), Space Marine bombardment cannons, Necron lightning arcs (which don’t take the holofield right shift), particle whip, and pulse generator. Imperial Nova cannons can be countered by one holofield save versus the entire effect of the Nova cannon, rather than a save against each hit. In addition, gas and dust clouds, Blast markers, asteroid fields, solar flares, and warp core implosions all ignore holofield saves (because they’re not targeted at the ship).

More significant than their defences, however, are the complete *lack* of defences in certain areas. Eldar ships do not have shields at all. They also do not have turrets (though holofield saves apply to ordnance). Finally, note that Eldar ships take criticals on a 4+, rather than the normal 6+, and all criticals are rolled on a Critical Hits table particular to Eldar.

Miscellaneous

One miscellaneous (but extremely important) element is that Eldar have a bonus to Leadership. Remember to add one to your Leadership value after you roll them – it can change the game!

Another miscellaneous element is the application of special orders. Eldar use Lock On, Reload, and Brace for Impact special orders as usual. The following special orders are unavailable to Eldar: Come to New Heading, All

Ahead Full, and Burn Retros. Eldar don’t ram (just in case you were wondering how to ram without All Ahead Full).

The ‘Cons’ of Using an Eldar Fleet

Playing Eldar can have a lot of downsides. Great respect should be shown to any aspiring Pirate Prince who will get into a ship without shields, a definite lack of armour, and no weaponry with a range over 30 cm!

Adding insult to injury, Eldar ships consistently have fewer Damage Points than ships of the same class in any other fleet. Individual Eldar ships are expensive, and Eldar are frequently outnumbered on the field. This is particularly true of ordnance. The Eclipse and the Void Stalker are the only Eldar ships with launch bays, and they are very dear. Eldar have no benefits in terms of boarding actions, and so boarding actions are very hazardous for the Eldar.

Finally, Eldar are not permitted to make a final sacrifice by ramming. Because Eldar ships are made out of balsa wood and tin foil, ramming manoeuvres probably wouldn’t be terribly effective anyway!

The ‘Pros’ of Using an Eldar Fleet

OK, good news last. BFG is about timing and concentration of fire, which is great because:

The tremendous manoeuvrability of the Eldar allow them to choose the time, place, and manner of engagement.

The high Leadership of Eldar fleets ensures that timing and coordination will be effective. Because of the advanced weaponry and targeting of Eldar weapons, any ship targeted by an Eldar task force is unlikely to survive.

Eldar are also likely to survive returning fire through a combination of manoeuvring (denying the enemy optimal targeting solutions) and the wonders of Eldar holofields.

Conclusion

When things begin to go badly for the Eldar, they go very badly. However, when used well, they can be a devastating opponent. Well-timed, surgically precise application of devastating firepower, followed by decisive disengagement allows the Eldar to dismember enemy forces at their leisure. That'll do it for the basics. Next, I'll go over each type of ship available to the Eldar player in the Fleet section.

THE ELDAR FLEET

The Eldar fleets are organized as raiding fleets commanded by Pirate Princes. The fleet list, however, is extremely flexible. The strict hierarchies of Imperial fleets are not observed, and it is possible to field a fleet comprised only of all capital vessels, or escort frigates. This flexibility allows you to model any fleet type you wish: a Pirate Prince's fleet, a Craftworld fleet, or whatever else you might imagine.

A quick word on Eldar capital ships. Keep in mind that, in addition to having fewer hits than other capital ships, Eldar capital ships suffer considerably more from those hits. Eldar capital ships take critical damage on a 4+, rather than a 6+ like other capital ships. These criticals are taken on a special Eldar Critical Hits table, though this is not an additional burden, because the criticals are neither worse nor better than the standard ones – they're just appropriate to Eldar. However, having suffered critical damage, the Eldar ship's lower number of Hits makes those criticals more difficult to recover from. In short, Eldar capital ships take more criticals, which remain in effect for a longer period than other fleets.

So choose a ship type from below and I'll let you know all about its particular strengths and weaknesses. Once you have finished learning about each of the Eldar vessels presented here, see how this knowledge can be applied by visiting the Basic Tactics section.

VOID STALKER

The Void Stalker is the largest standard Eldar ship. At 10 hits, it is a behemoth compared to other Eldar ships. The Void Stalker is still quite nimble though – spinning your battleship around and moving it 50 cm can really intimidate an opponent! This manoeuvrability, combined with its longer-ranged, broad arc weaponry make the Void Stalker fearsome.

The Void Stalker is also a survivor. Beyond what the 10 Hits indicate, the effect of holofields on ships with a greater number of hits is dramatic. Unlike standard shields, the holofield only goes down if it's broken in a critical hit. This means that it takes as many shots to inflict the sixth hit as it did the first. This is much different from

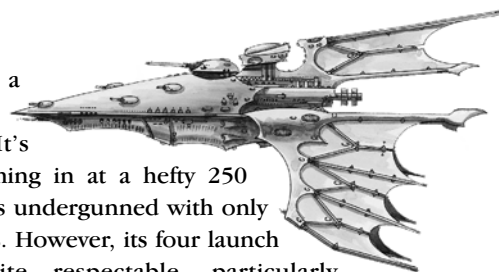
other fleets, in which the first hit is the most difficult (getting through shields). On the other hand, the frailty of Eldar ships is also highlighted in the Void Stalker. It is frequently the case that the Void Stalker is rendered useless long before it dies. The higher probability of criticals and the Eldar critical table combine to degrade the function of the ship fairly quickly. It's not unusual to see a Void Stalker either disengage or skulk in a corner to preserve its points values beyond its useful life.

The Void Stalker has a unique role in the Eldar fleet. It is a carrier, providing ordnance support. While at the same time, it's a very effective weapons platform with both lances and batteries with broad arcs of fire and extended ranges. It's also one of the few Eldar ships that can mount a respectable boarding action. Remember, however, that the true strength of the Eldar comes in concentration of fire. The Void Stalker can be used toe-to-toe with cruisers of other races and fare pretty well, but its best effects are achieved in a combined action.

The Void Stalker provides some unique tactical opportunities. The Stalker's broad fire arcs provide unique opportunities for Locking On. This special order is useful to the Eldar overall, but the Stalker's flank fire arcs almost require the regular use of Lock On. Don't forget that fire can be split – the forward arcs of most Eldar weapons sometimes lead us to forget that fire can be split across different targets. Finally, don't forget opportunities for a parting teleport attack.

ECLIPSE

The Eclipse is a classic carrier platform. It's expensive, coming in at a hefty 250 points, and it is undergunned with only a pair of lances. However, its four launch bays are quite respectable, particularly considering the effectiveness of Eldar ordnance. Unlike a standard carrier, however, the Eclipse is neither ungainly nor particularly fragile. The Eclipse has the speed to keep up with the overall Eldar fleet and is as much a survivor as any Eldar cruiser. Most importantly, the Eclipse is the only element of the Eldar fleet, short of a battleship, that has any launch bays, which makes it an integral part of any Eldar fleet.

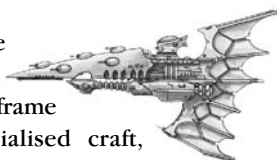


The Eldar don't really have the launch capacity to undertake a full ordnance-oriented fleet. However, others (especially the Imperials) do, and so ordnance defence is an important component of any Eldar strategy. As a consequence, the Eclipse plays a defensive role in an Eldar fleet, normally staying back from the fray a bit, possibly undertaking some mopping-up operations, but primarily focusing on fighter production.

The Eclipse has very few tricks up its sleeve, and it is probably the most straightforward Eldar ship. There are a few tidbits that are useful to keep in mind, however. First, remember that ordnance is deployed, though not moved, during the Shooting phase and that the Eclipse gets another move during the Ordnance phase. The Eclipse can advance, deploy ordnance, and then retreat again, effectively increasing the single-turn range of Eldar ordnance. Bombers can begin the turn in their launch bays, and by the end of the turn, attack a target as far away as 45 cm! Second, don't forget that the Eclipse is a capital ship. Although not an effective ship of the line, it can fire respectably, initiate boarding actions, and use teleport attacks. The Eclipse can act as an effective flank or mop-up auxiliary, particularly once its launch bays are exhausted and preservation of the Eclipse is less critical.

ACONITE

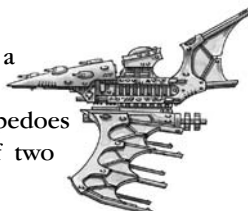
At 65 points, the Aconite frigate is a steal. Five firepower in an Eldar escort frame is amazing. This is a specialised craft, designed to be wielded like a surgeon's scalpel. A squadron of just two Aconites puts out firepower equivalent to that of most cruisers!



The Aconite fills two major roles in an Eldar fleet. Its first (and I would argue, most important) role is to provide a volume of fire in the line. Normally, escorts do not participate in the main offensive line, but Eldar don't fight like other races. The Aconite is ideal for hit-and-run tactics. Because Eldar "main engagements" are normally a one-turn strike on a segment of the opponent's fire line, the speed and firepower of the Aconite make it an ideal addition. The second role the Aconite plays is as an escort-hunter. The Eldar targeting systems make the firepower it possesses that much more effective on escorts than is at first apparent. Three Aconites firing at escorts will always get at least eight shots, normally enough to take down two or three enemy craft. Plus, the Aconite's manoeuvrability and speed mean that enemy escorts are seldom out of reach.

NIGHTSHADE

The Nightshade destroyer is a tremendous bargain at 40 points. The quality of Eldar torpedoes makes their smaller payload of two torpedoes very worthwhile.



The Nightshade is specialised as a flanking torpedo platform. Nightshades can sometimes play a role in a primary engagement, but firing torpedoes from the edge of a combat is really where the Nightshade excels. The Eldar ability to retreat after firing is a core manoeuvre for

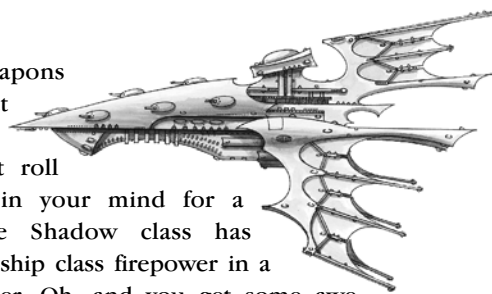
the Nightshade, particularly because Locking On is of little benefit when firing torpedoes. The main difficulty with the Nightshade is reloading. Once they've expended their ammunition on an unfortunate roll of doubles, they become a weapons platform with an unimpressive Strength of 1. Their best role at this point is two-fold: 1) preserve their points value (possibly disengaging) or 2) harass enemy escorts (use those holofields).



Nightshades have a number of tricks they can make use of. Most typical is to use their speed to put their torpedoes closer to the enemy. Like the Eclipse, the Nightshade can give its ordnance a "running start." It can also be occasionally useful to convert your flanking force to a rear assault, particularly versus Orks and sometimes other Eldar. Nightshade squadrons are expected to lurk on the edges of a battle and engage "edge-on." So, bringing a few Nightshades entirely around the battle to set up a crossfire can be a surprising and often disconcerting tactic. Remember that Eldar ships can survive Eldar torpedo hits by using their 2+ holofield save, much better than most other forces, and they also have the speed to clear out. This means that firing straight through an opponent's rear and thereby endangering your own ships is less "wrong" for Eldar than for anyone else.

SHADOW

Twelve weapons batteries that always fire as closing – just roll that around in your mind for a moment. The Shadow class has effective battleship class firepower in a standard cruiser. Oh, and you get some awe-inspiring torpedoes to work with as well. The Shadow is the epitome of fire concentration in an agile delivery system. Its 210-point price tag is also quite reasonable, considering it packs better fire potential and survivability than, say, two Aconites and two Nightshades.



The Shadow is a straightforward ship of the line, anchoring primary assaults. Get stuck in, blow the heck out of something, and run away. There aren't many specialised tactics to address here. The only element that regularly escapes attention is that the Shadow is in fact a capital ship, and players should remember to use teleporter attacks and boarding actions whenever applicable.

HELLEBORE

The Hellebore is actually the least attractive of the Eldar escorts, though it is certainly a worthwhile vessel. At a pricey 75 points, it has a variety of armaments. These being a pair of torpedoes, a lance, and one weapons battery.



Hellebores offer tremendous flexibility. They can provide additional fire support in the main assault line along with torpedo support. Although it's somewhat counter-intuitive, the fact that they are escorts rather than capital ships can prove an advantage, as they draw less fire when they are hit, they actually degrade more gracefully than an equivalent capital ship. For example, a squadron of four Hellebores that takes two hits will retain half its firepower and all of its mobility, unlike a crippled light cruiser. The Hellebores also do not suffer from hampering criticals, though admittedly, four Hellebores constitute an expensive squadron at 240 points. Also, the Hellebore can act as part of a flanking force, providing long-range torpedo support as well as defensive firepower for such a formation. A Hellebore can be a welcome addition to a Nightshade squadron, and a couple of Hellebores can be a great complement to an Eclipse cruiser.

The Hellebore doesn't have many tricks up its sleeve. Possibly the most surprising thing a Hellebore can do is to move from a flanking position to support a primary assault. Consider two Hellebores and two Nightshades as a flanking force. Entering from the end of the opponent's line, all of these ships loose their torpedoes to saturate the line, one turn ahead of a primary assault on the opponent's line. The Nightshades slip back away from the conflict, while the Hellebores, on the other hand, follow the torpedoes in towards the enemy line.

On the following turn, the Hellebores can Lock On and scream into the flank of the enemy line, while the body of the Eldar fleet engages the enemy from the front, all the while watching the torpedo wave wreak havoc. The main difficulty with this manoeuvre is that if the Hellebores Lock On, they won't have an opportunity to "wave off" but must either remain at 30 cm from the (dearly departed) enemy line or continue into whatever remains of the opponent's line.

HEMLOCK

I have to admit a particular fondness for Hemlocks, as my personal fleet includes twice as many Hemlocks as any other escort. A full squadron of Hemlocks firing Locked On is a death sentence for almost any ship in the game, except maybe a Necron tombship. I've killed any number of



battleships with a single furious burst of lance fire from Hemlocks. But enough rhapsodising, suffice to say that an Eldar lance on an Eldar escort platform for 40 points is extremely worthwhile. There is a downside to Hemlocks though, they are nearly hopeless in boarding actions!

Hemlocks are almost exclusively ships of the line. They swoop in with lances blazing then duck for cover. Full squadrons of six are normally a waste. A squadron of four is sufficient to at least cripple anything short of a battle cruiser, unless of course the dice hate you. Besides, splitting your Hemlocks into smaller squadrons gives you better manoeuvring and targeting options, as well as forcing your opponent to choose which squadron to target.

Hemlocks are straightforward and brutal. They are also unsurprising. Possibly the biggest surprise they can deliver is by targeting ordnance. Lances never run out. If the only target in range is ordnance, use the lances on them. The lances will only hit on 6s, and don't get to continue rolling when they miss, but using them this way can be a big surprise to an opponent who assumed his stack of bombers was safe skittering in front of the Hemlocks.

ORDNANCE

In particular, Eldar torpedoes and bombers are only destroyed by enemy turrets on a 6+, rather than the usual 4+. Also, Eldar fighters are unusually resilient, with effectively a 4+ save against enemy ordnance.

The advanced nature of Eldar torpedoes and bombers changes the precise tactics best employed with them. Because Eldar ordnance is so difficult to destroy with turrets, and because the rest of the Eldar fleet can be so difficult to bring under fire, Eldar ordnance is subjected to a greater degree of fire than the ordnance of other races. Ordnance in waves (whether bomber or torpedo) can be destroyed as a whole by a lucky lance or battery shot. The usual procedure of forming bombers and torpedoes into large waves can be counter-productive for Eldar. To kill enemy escorts with either bombers or torpedoes, I recommend splitting ordnance down into short stacks. These are more difficult to intercept, and torpedoes fill more space. Three Nightshades in a staggered formation (about 10-15 cm apart) dropping minimum-sized torpedo salvos can deploy three separate salvos of two on dispersed trajectories that will be hazardous to an escort squadron for two turns.

When deploying bombers at other than point blank range against capital ships, do not neglect fighter support. A capital ship with three turrets will probably take down one ship from a wing of bombers, so the fighter won't go to waste. The opponent must engage with waves of

fighters (an unusual practice) to negate a single fighter, because individual fighters must engage the Eldar fighter, which will survive each individual encounter on a 4+. On impact, a wave of two bombers and a single fighter will inflict an average of 4.5 + 4.5 + 1 attacks on a capital vessel, losing the fighter in the process. These 10 attacks will generally average 3-4 hits, so use your bombers if you get the chance.

In terms of intercepting enemy ordnance, the Eldar are not very unusual. I just wanted to review for a moment the benefit of Eldar fighters. The operation of Eldar fighters was clarified in *Warp Storm*, under the Space Marines rules, where Thunderhawk operation was explained, and then stated to be identical to Eldar fighter operation. In summary, Eldar fighters can survive enemy ordnance on a 4+ many times but can destroy only one enemy ordnance counter per Ordnance phase. An enemy can overwhelm an Eldar fighter with multiple fighters of his own, safe in the assurance that he will only lose one of his own. Also, be on the lookout for clever use of enemy ordnance. A single enemy torpedo can be moved purposely into contact with an Eldar fighter, right before a large wave of torpedoes moves through the same space and effectively ignores the fighters and your defence!

Eldar are different. Very, very different from any other race in BFG. In play, they don't have the stately progress of the other races displayed through that feeling of inertia built into the Movement rules. They're quick and nimble but depend on the direction of the sun; which no one else does. All this adds up to a very unique character for the race, which demands very different tactics.

Have a Plan

Of paramount importance to the success of any battlefield tactics is that they fit into an overall battlefield strategy. The battlefield strategy is simply the overall plan for how to win the game. For Orks, 95% of the time their plan is "Charge, use lotsa dakka, then ram and board!". Simplicity has its merits, but this is not the case for the Eldar.

Formulating your plan generally requires identifying the greatest threats and determining what to do about them, while managing not to let the smaller threats nibble you away. Make no mistake, the biggest threats to Eldar are weapons batteries, particularly long-ranged ones. Just about everything else in the game permits holofield saves, but not batteries; they go through the balsa wood of Eldar ships like a hot knife through butter. If you set out to identify and eliminate all the weapons batteries, you're well on your way to winning.

Another important point is to keep the victory conditions in mind always. Most BFG scenarios are fundamentally based on Victory Points. Most of the recommendations that follow are tailored to these victory conditions, but for scenarios with more specific objectives (like Convoys, Blockade Runs, or Planetary Assaults) be sure to plan towards the objective. Recently I won a Blockade Run without inflicting or suffering any major casualties. I simply focused on the objective (exiting the board) while my opponent tried to kill me.



Evolve

Finally, your plan must evolve during the game, particularly after the first attack pass. Once initial contact has been made, there is a significant period of reevaluation. Are you in a position to re-engage, or will your opponent regroup and provide a reliant defence? I recently lost a game, because I poorly evaluated my opponent's ability to regroup. I got greedy and pursued a damaged cruiser out on the flank. My opponent employed a well coordinated set of special orders (some All Ahead Fulls, and some Come to New Headings) that permitted the healthy elements of his fleet to bear on my somewhat battered elements that were trying to run the damaged cruiser to ground. The evaluation and evolution of the plan are crucial and can make a good engagement decisive or reduce the impacts of a bad engagement. On the downside, a poor re-evaluation can cost the game.

With all the knowledge gleaned from the Eldar Fleet Basics and the Basic Tactics sections, we are now ready to delve into some more complex manoeuvres. Presented here are three unique tactics that you can use to befuddle, confuse, annoy, and then destroy your opponent!

Jumping the Line

Many fleets will attack in waves. There's a first line, possibly a second line, then there are support elements. The support elements are normally points-rich and relatively undergunned. These support elements include carriers, hive ships, and transports. Also, because these ships are support elements, the remainder of the opponent's fleet won't function very well without them. The Line Jump manoeuvre has as its goal the bypassing of the opponent's primary fire line to attack support elements. The manoeuvre depends on the Eldar's ability not to move, and everyone else's requirement to move.

The basic concept behind the Line Jump is to wait in cover (asteroid or planet) as the opponent closes. When the opponent's primary fire line is one turn away (ie, will be in your cover on his next turn) "jump" your fleet over the opponent's line towards the support element. Best case, the "jump" will put the Eldar fleet into firing range of the target (well, even better if the Eldar are Locked On as well!).

The second move is used to move further beyond the line, hopefully beyond range of reprisal. Overall, assuming the Eldar can get maximum moves and that the opponent starts out about 15 cm from the Eldar, even the Void Stalker can move 25 cm, fire, and then move another 25 cm a full 35 cm behind the enemy line. After the opponent's capital ships move their minimum distance, manoeuvre, and try to find firing solutions, only some of their 45-cm weapons will be able to bear, and those may well be on special orders (Come to New Heading being popular!). By then it's all too late...



Hiding in the Tailpipes

One of the safest places in the vicinity of an enemy capital ship is off its stern (preferably about 8 cm). The opponent must manoeuvre to find a firing solution, and frequently that will involve using Come to New Heading or Burn Retros special orders. Nearby ships may come around for firing solutions as well, frequently throwing them off formation. Although not as safe as retreating out of line of sight in a second move, running into the opponent's tailpipes offers some immediate protection and generates longer-term difficulties for your opponent. It is important to remember that this manoeuvre is counter-productive vs. ships with 90 degree turns, such as Space Marines strike cruisers.

There are several subtle aspects of this manoeuvrability that are somewhat counter-intuitive. First, it is frequently better to hide in the tailpipes of a ship other than your target. Normally the target of a coordinated Eldar attack will not be at full efficiency and Braced for Impact at least, if not crippled or dead. Other nearby opponents will normally be a greater threat, because 1) they will probably be more functional than the target, and 2) they will have a better firing position than your target. By hiding in the tailpipes of some nearby opponent, advantage 2 will be reduced.

A second counter-intuitive feature is that it's not best to hide directly behind the ship you're tailpiping. The opponent can achieve a fire solution – the goal is just to make it more difficult. If you sit at least 15 cm minus one-half their move behind them, it will be very difficult for them to bring weapons batteries to bear at under 15 cm (thus with a left shift on the Gunnery table) or within 10 cm for teleport attacks.



A third non-obvious result regards the positioning of several ships. Use a “fire sink” ship to draw fire away from the most valuable ships used in the assault. Although all that is needed to bypass the fire sink ship is a Leadership check, force your opponent to take that check. Particularly if several opponent ships/squadrons come to bear on the Eldar attack element, some fire will be redirected to the fire sink. If at all possible, the closest ships to the enemy should be chosen based on marginal points value (ie, how many points you will lose if the ship/squadron is damaged), with preference given to ships with holofields (if the holofields are down, the ship won't absorb a lot of fire...). This normally means that the fire sink ships should be a single or pair of escorts or a disabled (not necessarily crippled) capital ship.

Set up Your Approach

Finally, positioning on approach can help set up for this maneuver. When starting the attack pass, position ships with a primary target, a secondary target (for the case where the rest of the attack element destroys the primary), and a separate tailpipe target. If the attack ship is not Locked On, this can mean driving into point blank with the primary target, with the secondary behind the primary, probably on one side of the forward fire arc, and with the tailpipe target on the opposite side from the secondary, probably in a beam fire arc. After the attack, in the second move, the attacker turns to the tailpipe target and moves to its stern. For Locked On ships, it will generally mean stopping 15-20 cm short of the primary target and being somewhat off-line with the primary target. The secondary target will normally be nearer to the attacker than the primary (yes, requiring a Leadership check) and on one extreme edge of the forward fire arc.

The tailpipe target will be beyond the primary target, slightly off centre-line (centreline is focused about 8-10 cm behind the tailpipe target). Following the attack, use as much (or as little) of the second move to enter the tailpipe area.



Ordnance Clearing

Eldar ships often have a manoeuvring advantage over ordnance. Eldar receive a 2+ holofield save and may be on Brace for Impact, conferring a further 4+ save. Ships' moves are not impeded by ordnance. The ordnance clearing manoeuvre uses a ship to engage enemy ordnance voluntarily, to prevent that ordnance from attacking more valued Eldar targets. It's also just a great deal of fun to watch your opponent's face as your braced Hemlock converts pile after pile of bombers and torpedoes into Blast markers. It has a great psychological impact upon him, particularly if the ordnance clearing ship survives! This is even more fun when the Void Stalker that was the target of all that ordnance rips through the enemy's fleet.

At this point, I bet you think you know it all. But guess what, you don't! There is still much to learn by turning the battlefield against your opponent in the Celestial Phenomena section. Then, there is plenty for you to absorb in the Opponents section. Know your foe before heading to battle! All this and more is to come next issue, so I'll see you then.



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The second move is used to move further beyond the line, hopefully beyond range of reprisal. Overall, assuming the Eldar can get maximum moves and that the opponent starts out about 15 cm from the Eldar, even the Void Stalker can move 25 cm, fire, and then move another 25 cm a full 35 cm behind the enemy line. After the opponent's capital ships move their minimum distance, manoeuvre, and try to find firing solutions, only some of their 45-cm weapons will be able to bear, and those may well be on special orders (Come to New Heading being popular!). By then it's all too late...

Hiding in the Tailpipes

One of the safest places in the vicinity of an enemy capital ship is off its stern (preferably about 8 cm). The opponent must manoeuvre to find a firing solution, and frequently that will involve using Come to New Heading or Burn Retros special orders. Nearby ships may come around for firing solutions as well, frequently throwing them off formation. Although not as safe as retreating out of line of sight in a second move, running into the opponent's tailpipes offers some immediate protection and generates longer-term difficulties for your opponent. It is important to remember that this manoeuvre is counter productive vs. ships with 90 degree turns, such as Space Marine strike cruisers.

There are several subtle aspects of this manoeuvre that are somewhat counter-intuitive. First, it is frequently better to hide in the tailpipes of a ship other than your target. Normally the target of a coordinated Eldar attack will not be at full efficiency and will be Braced for Impact at least, if not crippled or dead. Other nearby opponents will normally be a greater threat, because 1) they will probably be more functional than the target, and 2) they will have a better firing position than your target. By hiding in the tailpipes of some nearby opponent, advantage 2 will be reduced.

A second counter-intuitive feature is that it's not best to hide directly behind the ship you're tailpiping. The opponent can achieve a fire solution – the goal is just to make it more difficult. If you sit at least 15 cm minus one-half their move behind them, it will be very difficult for

them to bring weapons batteries to bear at under 15 cm (thus with a left shift on the Gunnery table) or within 10 cm for teleport attacks.

A third non-obvious result regards the positioning of several ships. Use a "fire sink" ship to draw fire away from the most valuable ships used in the assault. Although all that is needed to bypass the fire sink ship is a Leadership check, force your opponent to take that check. Particularly if several opponent ships/squadrons come to bear on the Eldar attack element, some fire will be redirected to the fire sink. If at all possible, the closest ships to the enemy should be chosen based on marginal points value (ie, how many points you will lose if the ship/squadron is damaged), with preference given to ships with holofields (if the holofields are down, the ship won't absorb a lot of fire...). This normally means that the fire sink ships should be a single or pair of escorts or a disabled (not necessarily crippled) capital ship.

Set up Your Approach

Finally, positioning on approach can help set up for this maneuver. When starting the attack pass, position ships with a primary target, a secondary target (for the case where the rest of the attack element destroys the primary), and a separate tailpipe target. If the attack ship is not Locked On, this can mean driving into point blank with the primary target, with the secondary behind the primary, probably on one side of the forward fire arc, and with the tailpipe target on the opposite side from the secondary, probably in a beam fire arc. After the attack, in the second move, the attacker turns to the tailpipe target and moves to its stern. For Locked On ships, it will generally mean stopping 15-20 cm short of the primary target and being somewhat off-line with the primary target. The secondary target will normally be nearer to the attacker than the primary (yes, requiring a Leadership check) and on one extreme edge of the forward fire arc. The tailpipe target will be beyond the primary target, slightly off centre line (centre line is focused about 8-10 cm behind the tailpipe target). Following the attack, use as much (or as little) of the second move to enter the tailpipe area.

Ordnance Clearing

Eldar ships often have a manoeuvring advantage over ordnance. Eldar receive a 2+ holofield save and may be on Brace for Impact, conferring a further 4+ save. Ships' moves are not impeded by ordnance. The ordnance clearing manoeuvre uses a ship to engage enemy ordnance voluntarily, to prevent that ordnance from attacking more valued Eldar targets. It's also just a great deal of fun to watch your opponent's face as your braced Hemlock converts pile after pile of bombers and torpedoes into Blast markers. It has a great psychological impact upon him, particularly if the ordnance clearing ship survives! This is even more fun when the Void Stalker that was the target of all that ordnance rips through the enemy's fleet.

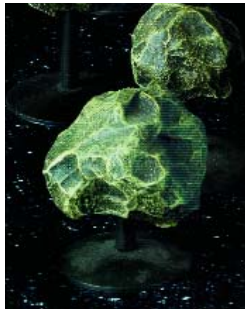
At this point, I bet you think you know it all. But guess what, you don't! There is still much to learn by turning the battlefield against your opponent in the Celestial Phenomena section. Then, there is plenty for you to absorb in the Opponents section. Know your foe before heading to battle!

CELESTIAL PHENOMENA

In general, Eldar prefer to fight on a crowded battlefield. Because of the Eldar's manoeuvrability and limited weapons range, any element that obscures fire lines is useful to the Eldar. Specific phenomena have important characteristics, which are all the more important because Eldar don't avoid celestial phenomena, they make use of them. So begin your journey to spacefaring enlightenment by choosing one of the links presented here!

ASTEROIDS

Asteroids are where it's at. An asteroid field is a navigation hazard (requiring Leadership checks to cross, but escorts are allowed a re-roll), with serious negative consequences for failure. But Eldar never fail Leadership checks. Right? Asteroids block line of sight, automatically destroy torpedoes, and endanger other ordnance. Asteroids also do not have gravitational fields. This is a mixed blessing, but it is positive in the sense that it doesn't offer opponents additional manoeuvrability. Asteroids are ideal for Eldar to lurk in and around, while they continually attack their prey.



A standard tactic is to use asteroid fields as explicit cover. Escorts can actually dodge in and out with relative impunity, hopping out to fire or drop torpedoes then dodging back in for cover. Capital ships have it a bit more difficult, as they are much more likely to take damage than the escorts. The capital ships must manoeuvre carefully to permit them to pop around the edges, retain arc of fire, and dodge back behind, not through or into, the asteroids.

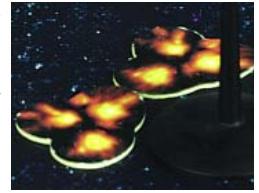


Opponents must eventually commit to break into the asteroid bastion. Otherwise, the Eldar can snipe with relative impunity. As an opponent approaches, the Eldar can opt to lurk behind the asteroids and choose a flank to engage as the enemy comes around the asteroids or preempt the approach. If you choose to pre-empt the opponent's approach, there is a great opportunity to align ships in the prior turn and order a general Lock On. The opponent is signaled as to the target line of the fleet for one turn before the engagement, so they will have some opportunity to regroup.

If your opponent uses a lot of Burn Retros or Come to New Heading orders, remember that you haven't issued the Lock on orders yet (you've just planned to and signalled your intention) and can readjust your plan. Your opponent's adjustment may have left another segment of his fleet vulnerable. This leaves the Eldar player with the alternative of pursuing the original plan, using the Lock On order, and hopefully inflicting a lot of damage, or redirecting to the newly exposed enemy fleet elements.

BLAST MARKERS

Blast markers are an important part of BFG and for Eldar in particular. The Eldar do not have shields. Thus, every Blast marker is a potentially damaging item, whereas for others, it is but an inconvenience. At the same time, Blast markers offer a modicum of cover (reducing the effectiveness of weapons batteries) and impairing the mobility of enemy forces. Moving through a Blast marker costs 5 cm of movement and will cause damage (1 in 6 chance) to a ship without shields (no holofield saves).



Blast markers are caused by all manner of events, but two in particular bear noting. First, any time a holofield save is effective, a Blast marker is placed in base contact with the ship (exactly as for shields); second, ordnance destroyed by direct fire (batteries or lances) leaves a Blast marker. Tactically, this means that when the fighting gets thick, so do the Blast markers. Managing those Blast markers to best advantage is a small but important part at the detailed tactical level.

PLANETS

In this segment, we're discussing anything that generates a gravity well and blocks line of sight. For the most part, this includes planets and moons but also extends to Ork hulks. The free turns offered by gravity wells offer endless possibilities for fancy manoeuvring – unfortunately, the benefits to non-Eldar are greater than those for Eldar. Finally, planets and moons can be navigated without hazard. This means that these phenomena offer no impediment to enemy commanders and reduce their effectiveness for Eldar as cover.



Moons and planets can be used as an effective cover for Eldar and allow them to hide out of line of sight, pop out to attack, and pop back in. Again, this tactic is useful to generate sniping ordnance fire. Though not generally devastating, this sniping will wear down the opponent's nerve and patience, largely because he will be unable to respond. Unlike asteroid fields, the planet or moon offers the opponent a greater advantage than the Eldar. If possible, attempt to engage your opponent away from the planet. Use the planet as cover as the opponent approaches (goaded by your sniping) and leap out to engage before your opponent can exploit the characteristics of the celestial phenomena. This can leave you farther out in the open than an Eldar Prince finds comfortable, but this position is less exposed than it might at first appear. As your opponent attempts to regroup around the planet, there is a great temptation to exploit the apparent disorder in your opponent's ranks. This is generally a bad idea, because the gravity well permits your opponent to reorient his fleet much more quickly than normal and present a significant threat to your fleet. Exercise patience, regroup your forces away from the gravity well, and begin executing a new plan.

A quick tip on gravity wells. The free 45 degree turn at the beginning and end of movement can be extremely useful to Locked On ships, because turns provided by the gravity well are not affected by the ship's orders. So a ship that did not appear to have a useful target for Lock On, by using their free turns, may manoeuvre for target solutions. They may also use the second free turn to reorient towards cover. Keep in mind, however, that these benefits apply to your opponent as well, and increase your opponent's capabilities more than they increase the Eldar's.

WARP RIFTS

Warp rifts are a relatively rare element on the battlefield and hopefully in the universe as a whole! Nevertheless, a good Eldar Pirate Prince should be prepared to make use of them. Warp rifts can be viewed as extremely dangerous asteroid fields – pass a 3D6 Leadership test or die (no re-rolls for escorts). All ordnance disappears on contact. Most importantly, the warp rift blocks line of sight.

Most of what was said concerning asteroid fields applies to warp rifts, though there is no real opportunity to dodge into and out of these phenomena. All ships must lurk around the edges, rather than bursting across. Because of this limitation, an Eldar Pirate Prince is fairly safe in assuming that an opposing fleet will “come around” the warp rift somehow. It is useful to leave extra space (about 15-20 cm) between your ships and the rifts to allow you to align your vessels to exit around the rift.

WARP EXPLOSIONS

I have had some very bad experiences with warp core implosions recently. I tied a game in which I lost very few ships to enemy fire, but many to warp core implosions. When a capital ship dies, you must roll on the Catastrophic Results table. Two of the possible results are warp core implosions and plasma explosions. Both of these results cause damage in a radius from the dying ship. The damage is equivalent to a number of lance shots based on the ship's number of starting hits. Unfortunately, the damage caused cannot be saved with holofields – tremendous explosions don't care if you're a few light seconds from where you appear to be. Because of the extremely short range of Eldar weaponry, the desire to converge on enemy ships for concentrated fire, and the frequent desire to move beyond the enemy's current position in the Eldar second move, Eldar are frequently at point blank range to the ships they're destroying.

I personally haven't discovered a good way around this difficulty. Murphy's Law seems to surround my best efforts at blowing up enemy ships. Any solutions to this would be greatly appreciated!

GAS CLOUDS

Gas clouds act in essentially the same manner as a Blast marker. Though they do not fully obscure line of sight, they offer an additional right shift to weapons batteries and possibly cause ordnance to detonate. Unfortunately, ill effects can befall an Eldar ship as well, because Eldar ships do not have any shielding. Fortunately, based on new rules in BFG Magazine #2, Eldar ships are now permitted a Leadership check to avoid these ill effects

(with re-rolls for escorts). Remember to roll for each ship in a squadron, using the squadron's Leadership. Note also that the effects on ordnance occur as soon as the ordnance touches the gas cloud, so ordnance launched inside the gas cloud may well be destroyed before it gets anywhere.

Gas clouds can be used as cover for Eldar in a pinch. The reduced effectiveness of batteries is useful, and the reduced movement for others is also useful if the opponent attempts to traverse the gas cloud (an effect avoidable by Eldar). If your Eldar fleet is lance-heavy, opponents in the gas cloud are vulnerable – the gas cloud slows them down, reduces their effective firing, and drops one of their shields. Lances, however, are unaffected. So let them have it!

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

One of the great appeals to BFG is the diversity and character of the different fleets. This makes each a unique challenge, requiring a different approach. Fortunately, the Eldar are diverse and adaptable, which affords the aspiring Pirate Prince room to tailor his approach. Select an enemy from the list below!

THE IMPERIAL NAVY

The Imperial fleet has the greatest variety of ship types to draw from, far too many to document here. Suffice to say, the biggest threats in a battle line Imperial fleet are mid-to-long-range, battery-heavy ships. A short list of the worst capital ship offenders follows:

- Emperor battleship – 60 cm batteries and launch bays, in a fairly inexpensive package. If your opponent knows you're playing Eldar and is going to bring a battleship, you can almost count on seeing one of these.
- Retribution battleship – 60 cm batteries and others, but the others increase the price beyond the impact on Eldar fleets.
- Overlord battlecruiser – optimised for Eldar hunting.
- Tyrant cruiser – the Tyrant would be awful for Eldar if it had either better range or better manoeuvrability. Fortunately, it doesn't have these things. Treated carefully, these are quite manageable.
- Dauntless light cruiser – the batteries on the Dauntless don't have the range of the worst of the Imperials, but the light cruiser platform is manoeuvrable enough to be a real threat to the Eldar. A couple of squadrons of two Dauntless can provide excellent support to a full Imperial battle line (though an equivalent weight in Swords is probably of greater concern to an Eldar player...)

Of the escorts, the Sword frigate is the greatest threat to Eldar in the Imperial fleet. In fact, of all the forces of the Imperium, Swords are the most effective Eldar-killing weapon available. Eldar should take steps early on to neutralise Sword squadrons (I recommend the application of four to six Hemlocks).



The basic weakness of the Imperium is its lack of speed and manoeuvrability. If the Imperial player has not equipped himself with enough long-range batteries or sufficient ordnance, the Eldar will simply snipe him to death from range, secure in their immunity from retribution. If the Imperial Commander has strong long-range weaponry, the Eldar player must commit to the destruction of these ships early – aggressive tactics will pay big dividends.

The Imperial fleet normally deploys in one of two configurations: a classic battle line, or a Carrier fleet. These are two very different fleets, requiring different approaches.

Battle Line

The Imperial battle line is the classic BFG fleet and one of the most common encountered. Again, consider the Imperial fleet composition when considering your plan. Frequently in tournament or pick-up play, the Imperial fleet will have a low (and avoidable) percentage of long-ranged batteries. In this case, a sniping, patient strategy is productive and conservative. If, on the other hand, the Imperial player is loaded for Eldar (either by design or coincidence) with a good number of mid-to-long-range batteries, then aggressive tactics must be used. Defensive play against such a fleet will only result in the Eldar getting dismembered from a distance, with little return damage to show for it. Remember, however, that such an Imperial battle line fleet has relatively low mobility and can't afford to guard its flanks or rear well. Ordnance waves, followed by flank and rear fire can be an effective means to engage and scatter a battle line fleet.

Carrier fleet

The Imperial fleet has the best and most diverse carriers in the game. Normally, an Eldar fleet is incapable of pumping out enough defensive ordnance to hold out against such a fleet. The only real solution is to engage carriers aggressively – early and often. The longer the carriers are out, the more bombers you'll have to contend with. Fortunately, the Eldar have the mobility to get to the carriers. A little creative Line Jumping and tailpiping can slingshot the Eldar towards the enemy carriers. A cautious

Imperial commander will actually bring his carriers into the heart of his line when fighting Eldar. If this happens, the only real advice I can offer is to go in early with everything available. The two turns following an Eldar assault on the heart of an Imperial line will dictate the outcome of the game. Either the Eldar will reduce the Imperial ordnance production considerably, or the Eldar will sustain too much damage in the attempt. Some of the tactics presented earlier can help tilt the balance of fate in favour of the Eldar, but much of the outcome will rely on dice rolling.

Don't take extra turns to flank or surround the Imperial carrier fleet. Each turn will see in excess of 18 Imperial bombers on the field. If nothing else, a rapid, brutal, and uncompromising frontal assault coming from an Eldar player may disorient and confuse the Imperial opponent.

CHAOS

As unlikely as it may seem, the Chaos fleet is probably the most threatening to the Eldar. Chaos ships are cheap like Imperials, faster and more manoeuvrable than Imperials, and seem to prefer mid-range batteries over any other weapons. Although not popular, the fragile Iconclast destroyer can be a threat in large numbers.

Unlike the Imperials, where major threats will be glaring and isolated, the Chaos fleet will normally bristle with too many threats to the Eldar. A strong attack pass to neutralise some threats will invite devastating retribution. The best advice is to formulate a battle plan based on scenario, available terrain, and exact enemy disposition. If the Chaos fleet relies heavily on lances, engage in hard-hitting, decisive conflicts. If the enemy is battery-oriented, employ very conservative sniping tactics and pursue scenario objectives.

In short, use caution and exploit your opponent's mistakes. Just don't rely on any particular weaknesses from Chaos.

ORKS

Orks are at a significant disadvantage when fighting Eldar. Orks have a shooting range comparable to that of the Eldar, but none of their manoeuvrability. Orks also have

an even greater shortage of ordnance than Eldar. Unfortunately, in BFG, Orky numbers don't count for much on defence.

Orky escorts should be cleared with torpedoes, batteries, and teleport attacks wherever possible. Because Ork Escorts actually have some considerable manoeuvrability and tend to arrive in hordes, it's usually worthwhile flanking, enfilading, and generally clearing away the escorts before engaging the larger capital ships. Though this may take a few turns and prove a bit tedious, it is important, because the Orks can do damage if not treated carefully – Big Gunz batteries and Brute Ram ships can reduce Eldar ships to splinters if they ever come to grips with the Eldar.

Lances should be reserved for Orky capital ships as should bombers. Massive saturation is required to take down an Ork capital ship. Their multiple hits should be respected in planning the demise of an Ork capital ship. It's going to take a greater volume of fire to take it down than feels sensible, and when they blow up, you don't want to be nearby. Don't make the mistake of sniping these guys – a decisive engagement with a lot of direct firepower is required to stop an Ork kroozer. Sniping at a distance will take a very long time to do any substantial damage to any Ork capital ship.

ELDAR

Fighting other Eldar is fun. It also tends to go quite a while with no engagement, explode into a bloody mess, and then go very quiet again. One of the difficulties is that the first player to engage frequently ends up on the wrong end of the stick. Eldar have no manoeuvre restrictions in formulating a devastating countercharge. In addition, a player planning to receive an opponent's charge can position his fleet for several good Lock Ons.

This difficulty can be mitigated somewhat. The Eldar vs. Eldar battle often goes to the player that can bring the most weapons batteries to bear most effectively; lances and ordnance aren't going to do it. To dismember your Eldar kin brutally, batteries are where it's at. An interesting consequence is that buffers of Blast markers can be used effectively as a weapon. Although your opponent can't readily be killed by lance fire, lance fire bouncing off holofields generates Blast markers that reduce weapons

battery effectiveness and provides a hazard to navigation. If you must attack another Eldar player, try using Hemlocks and Hellebores toward the centre of the enemy formation. Attack the flank side of enemy ships with lances and torpedoes to lay down a curtain of Blast markers, backed by a curtain of lance or torpedo-oriented inexpensive Escorts. Battery-bearing Aconites and Shadows should focus on inflicting crippling damage on a few capital ships and escaping as intact as possible.

An interesting consequence of Eldar movement is that no one is forced to move. An Eldar vs. Eldar battle often devolves into a Mexican Standoff at 62 cm. When this happens, no one is going to win; break off and find a new way to approach the problem.

One final note when fighting Eldar; it is always counter-productive to produce waves of ordnance. Eldar have no turrets and frequently have unused range attacks to waste on ordnance. Similarly, fighter support for bombers is only useful as a counter-intercept measure. You should also split fighters away from a bomber wing before they attack a ship. In a bombing run, the Fighter will be wasted and can be better used intercepting and harassing enemy ordnance.

TYRANIDS

I'd like to claim full disclosure right now. I haven't found a Tyranid opponent yet... but I've read up on them!

Tyranids do not appear to be a deeply threatening opponent to the Eldar. The Tyranids depend largely on very close engagement with large numbers of ships (either hordes of escorts or large numbers of relatively cheap cruisers). Ramming and boarding (or variants of boarding) form a very central part of Tyranid tactical doctrine. Unfortunately for the Tyranids, they haven't got the speed or manoeuvrability to match Eldar forces. The Tyranids' most effective doctrine against the Eldar will be to fill as much space as possible (limiting Eldar manoeuvring options) and absorbing casualties until they can force the Eldar to engage at close quarters. In addition, the Tyranids are very dependent on their hive ships to provide intelligent direction to their fleet. If the Eldar stay out of Tyranid front arcs and close range, the Hive Mind will spend a lot of effort redirecting instinctive behaviours.



For the Eldar, the main difficulty will be inflicting enough casualties to rack up significant Victory Points. A Tyranid player will surround his most valuable ships with inexpensive escorts while attempting to run the Eldar to ground, while the Eldar close, snipe, and retreat. The only real additional tactic I have to add to this is to recommend the use of minimum-sized torpedo salvos as a spore-clearing agent. Using sequenced minimum spreads of torpedoes at oblique angles to Tyranid ships can also displace whole clouds of spores to parts of the Tyranid fleet that the Hive Mind will find annoying.

Using fighters to clear spores is also a useful manoeuvre, although Eldar don't produce massive numbers of fighters, and the Tyranids may produce massive volumes of assault boats (which they'll need against holofields). If you do intend to use fighters to clear spores, move a fighter to about 20 cm (and off-line from your attack vector) in the end of the 'nid player's turn to draw the spores off his ship base (eg, clear the shields off), make your attack run, move the fighter away, and watch the 'nid player's spores move back into contact with his ship (if it's still around). Just have a care that your attacking ships aren't within 15 cm of the spores – remember that the Eldar second move happens after all other ordnance moves, so the spores will have an opportunity to attack the Eldar ships before they can move away.

NECRONS

Necrons are a fearsome opponent. If you're used to clearing off swathes of your opponent's ships during a game, you're in for a rude surprise against the Necrons. They're fast, and above all, they are tough. The Necrons also have a significant chunk of weaponry that ignores holofield saving throws, so they hit the Eldar hard when they hit.

In terms of tactics, I'll briefly summarise some very valuable lessons conveyed by Brad Bell in BFG #8. First, keep the Necrontyr off-balance. When lining for firing solutions, always have a secondary (and maybe even tertiary) target, particularly for lance armaments. Fire all lances until a particular ship/squadron has Braced for Impact, then proceed to lance the next target until it braces. Make as much of the Necron fleet Brace for Impact every turn, and use lance fire to do it. After you've exhausted lances, move on to concentrated weapons battery fire – backwards from the usual, but very useful for Necrons. Because of the special Necron Victory Points rules, there's great incentive to reduce capital ships to hulks. Keep in mind, however, that reducing the Necron capabilities is a survival priority. Any opportunity to cripple an additional ship should not be overlooked, even at the cost of granting a ship under the gun a temporary reprieve. Round out the attacks with ordnance. Necrons have limited turrets and no intercept ordnance. In spite of these inadequacies, their special hulls make them very resistant to ordnance.

Finally, remember that the Eldar are more manoeuvrable than the Necrontyr, if not much faster. The Eldar second move should be used to gain safety, either in cover, or by manoeuvring to force the Necrontyr out of good firing solutions.

A last word – always count the Victory Points with the Necrontyr. Part of the play balance of the Necron Fleet comes about through their special Victory Point rules – they may inflict disproportionate casualties on the battlefield, but they pay a disproportionate price for each Necron casualty.



SPACE MARINES

Space Marines are lance fodder. They deserve respect for their speed and manoeuvrability, but they tend to be escort heavy, and their strike cruisers have 90 degree turns with respectable firepower.

Unfortunately for the Adeptus Astartes, their greatest strengths are all either overkill for Eldar or neutralised by Eldar special capabilities. Though seemingly daunting at first, the bombardment cannon uses weapons battery rules, but always hits on a 4+. Eldar armour is a 4+, thus the bombardment cannon is overkill, acting as a very expensive weapons battery. All Space Marine ordnance is manned – boarding torpedoes and assault boats. Fortunately, both of these are saveable by holofields. Standard bombers are more effective against Eldar than assault boats. Finally, the Space Marines have a 6+ armour. Eldar torpedoes and lances really come into their own against high armour opponents.

Altogether, the Space Marines end up “overpaying” for their benefits against the Eldar. They are, ship for ship, less effective against Eldar than Chaos and don't get as many ships as the Chaos player. In fact, Space Marines and Eldar tend to field similar sized fleets.

Tactically, this should not be taken as license to ignore the very real threats the Space Marines present. Gladius and Sword escorts present a great threat. At close ranges, Space Marine capital ships are quite dangerous, and they are manoeuvrable enough to come to range if the Eldar commander is incautious. So, kill the escorts, then lance the capital ships into submission.