

One of the major differences between Imperium Third Millennium and the GDW editions is the combat system. In the older game, combat is of the “line up and shoot” variety, and the new version was always intended to have this feature as well, but even simpler (no charts required as in the old game). But sometimes too many chefs enter the kitchen ...

We highly recommend using the rules below as the standard for Space Combat in *Imperium: Third Millennium*, and viewing the Space Battle map and associated rules as optional. This should considerably reduce the game’s overall playing time, not least because this procedure is substantially “bloodier” than the current version.

12.0 SPACE BATTLE

Combat takes place at either short or long range, over a number of rounds. The first round of combat is always fought at long range. All ships are at the same range: a player may not have some ships at long range and others at short range in the same combat round.

Torpedoes may be fired at long or short range. Beams may only be fired at short range.

Combat results take effect simultaneously. The Imperial player first announces which of his or her ships will attack which enemy ship. Not all enemy ships need be attacked: all of a player’s ships could attack one enemy, though they may only attack once per round. A ship must target all of its factors against the same enemy ship; it may not “split” its fire at attack more than one target. All targets must be designated before any attacks are resolved. A player may not “wait and see” how the first attacks fare before assigning targets to his or her other ships, even if this means some ships expend their weapons on floating space dust.

Once the Imperial player has chosen targets, he or she resolves the attacks. Roll one die for each beam factor and each torpedo factor. For each result of 6 (5 or 6 at short range), one hit is scored.

The Terran player then repeats the procedure. Since combat results take effect simultaneously, any damage or destruction to Terran ships is not inflicted until after the Terran player has fired with his or her ships (a ship destroyed by Imperial fire may still fire in the round in which it was lost).

12.1 Counter-Measures.

A ship may use its counter-measures (CM) to deflect incoming torpedo (but not beam) fire. For each ship targeted by enemy torpedoes, the owning player rolls a number of dice equal to its CM value (the number of triangles on the game piece). For each result of 6, the number of hits against that ship (only) is reduced by one. A ship may not use its CM to protect another ship from enemy torpedoes.

12.2 Damage.

If during a single round a ship receives a number of hits equal to or greater than its defense value, its screens are overloaded and collapse. Flip the piece to its reverse (“Damaged”) side. If the piece has no reverse side, or is already on its reverse, the ship is destroyed and its piece is removed from play (it can re-enter later to represent a newly-built ship).

Hits are not carried over from one round to another. For example, if a Terran super-dreadnought (defense value of 3) suffers two hits during the first round, it is not damaged. If it suffers two more in the next round, it is still undamaged — the hits are not added together.

If a ship receives hits equal to three or more times its defense value in a single round, it suffers a catastrophic explosion and is destroyed, even if it is still on its front, undamaged side. Otherwise, ignore excess hits — for example, if an undamaged Terran superdreadnought (defense value of 3) suffers six hits in one round, it is flipped to its damaged side but is not destroyed.

12.3 Subsequent Rounds.

After the first round of combat either or both players may elect to attempt to close the range — and in later rounds, may attempt to move back to long range. If both players desire to alter the range, the range is altered automatically. If neither wishes to alter the range, it remains the same. If one player wishes to alter the range and the other does not, the player with the faster fleet is allowed to determine the range. A player has the faster fleet if the slowest ship in his or her fleet is faster than the slowest ship in the enemy fleet. Light ships have a speed of 3, capital ships a speed of 2 and monitors and auxiliaries a speed of 1.

Players may not split their fleets during battle. If neither player has a faster fleet, each rolls one die and the player achieving the higher result determines the range for this round. Roll again if a tie results.

At the end of a round of combat either player may attempt to disengage. Players may only disengage when at long range. The procedure to disengage is the same as that for changing the range in combat, except that instead of moving the battle range the player is attempting to remove his or her ships from the fighting altogether.

12.4 Ending a Space Battle.

Space Battle ends when ships of only one side are left, or after the third round. Surviving ships are returned to their fleet boxes. The fleet pieces from the winning side remain in the system. Those from the losing side are placed in the system from which they entered the system (if they moved during this action segment) or one closer to their side's home world (Sol for Terran fleets; Dingir, Gashidda or Ishkur for Imperial fleets). If ships from both sides remain after three rounds the moving player's ships must vacate the system. Ships may be re-allocated between fleets (the only time this may be done without consuming an activation). Monitors are never forced to vacate a system.

12.5 Winning a Space Battle.

The player who destroys (not merely damages) more ships than his or her opponent wins the battle. Capital ships count double. This can affect the Glory Index.

12.6 Carriers and Fighters.

Place fighters with their fleets at the start of battle and with carriers at the end — there is no need to “launch” or “recover” them as in the advanced game, but any fighters forced to vacate a system that cannot be placed on carriers are eliminated.

12.7 Small Weapons.

Halve the number of hits caused by fighters, scouts, destroyers and missile boats against heavy cruisers (CS, CR or CA) or capital ships (total the number of hits scored by such ships against a single target in the same round and round any fraction up).

Example: Five Terran destroyers attack one Imperial battleship (B2) with torpedoes and score three hits between them. The Imperial battleship suffers only two hits ($3 \times 1/2 = 1.5$, rounded up to 2), and is not damaged.