Dynaverse Multiplayer Guide

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1. Introduction

SFC III is an interesting and engaging game. The single player campaigns take you through three points of view - the Federation, Klingon, and Romulan campaigns are exciting and well worth your time.

But what do you do when you've completed the single player storyline? Granted, it may be a while before you reach this point in the game, but eventually you will either finish the game or stop playing for some reason. What do you do then?

The SFC III single player game is only part of the overall Starfleet Command experience. When you've finished with the single player campaign you basically have three other choices - replay the single player campaign (which could be fun), play the single player conquest game, or venture online -- either into the Dynaverse or in direct competition via Gamespy.

If you choose to venture online, you will discover one of the best-kept secrets of Starfleet Command - and that secret is that this game is capable of nearly infinite variety through something called "The Dynaverse." Essentially, the Dynaverse is a self-contained virtual universe that looks and feels exactly like the single player game, except that you are participating with and competing against other human and AI opponents. There will be several Dynaverse servers, many of them will be set up and run by players just like you and I. Dynaverse Servers often have separate themes. Want to fight either for or against the Borg, starting with the battle at Wolf 359? Odds are that there will be a Borg Invasion server. Want to enter the world of "Yesterday's Enterprise," where the Federation is at war with the Klingons and the Romulans, and the Borg has yet to make an entrance? It will probably be there. Many of the campaigns will detail a key episode in the TV series, or will have an entirely plausible storyline as the basis of their theme. Dynaverse servers are all about conflict and battle, and like any strategic wargame, some of them will have victory conditions, goals, and objectives that your side must accomplish as a team in order to win.

The Dynaverse (hereafter referred to as the D3) will allow you to link up, move with, and play with other human players that belong to your same team. Depending on the server you play on, this may be members of your race or members of other races that are closely allied to you. Unlike other online games, you probably will not be alone against an implacable enemy - you have the capability to bring friends. Lots of them.

Playing in the D3 can be a little daunting at first, but once you get used to it, most players will tell you that it is the most addicting aspect of Starfleet Command. Fame and Glory abound in the D3, and significant battles and strategies are debated long after a campaign has finished. The D3 is not the type of environment where a new player is crushed immediately by a bully - there is opportunity to learn and grow, and other members of your Empire will welcome you with open arms. Why? Because you represent the most critical of battlefield assets to a campaign - reinforcements!

Will you be the next Federation Captain to stand against the Klingons in a last-ditch defense of Earth? Will you be a member of the 1st Romulan Expeditionary Force, raiding with your friends

across the neutral zone? Will your Klingon Battleforce be the hammer that blunts the Borg Incursion? All this and more await you in the D3! Read on, and learn about the D3. Trust me, you won't regret it.

2. The Dynaverse 3 Environment

The D3 represents a huge chunk of our known universe. The actual map looks very similar to the single player campaign - it is a huge, 2-dimensional map filled with hexes for movement and divided into empire areas. Each major empire or area of space is color-coded. Grey is neutral, Blue is Federation, Red is Klingon, Green is Romulan, and Gold is Borg. There may also be other colored hexes on the map - it is up to you to find out who owns them.

Space is full of hazards, and the same is true with the D3. Not only must you contend against a hostile enemy, you must also learn to deal with any hazards that may be thrown your way. Often, there will be times when you can use these hazards to assist you, and other times, these hazards will be used against you. Becoming familiar with spatial "terrain" is the first step towards understanding the Dynaverse. Most of the hexes on the map are empty, just like real space is mostly empty, but there are some hexes on the map that contain special items. Many of these items will become key goals as you pilot your ship in the D3 because they represent economic points for your empire, which in turn can affect your Empire's shipyard production and your overall victory points in the campaign.

Each of the major spatial terrain features, along with the hazards and positive aspects they represent, are listed below:

a. Spatial Terrain

Asteroid Fields. Asteroid fields are fairly common, and they represent some of the most dangerous terrain in the game. On the D3 strategic map they look fairly innocent - just a hex with a few boulders in it, but once you are in the tactical battle, your opinion will quickly change. Huge spinning rocks, many of them several times larger than your ship, abound throughout the battlefield. Hiding behind one will take you off of your enemy's sensors (and vice versa), and

Dynaverse Terrain on the Strategic Map

Asteroid Hexes

Black Hole Hex

Planet

Nebula Hex

running into one will shred your hull like a block of Swiss cheese hitting lawn mower blades. They can't be tractored, shot at, or moved. About the only thing you can do is avoid them and try to use them to your advantage.

Fighting in an asteroid field can be nerve wracking and stressful, but it can also be a lot of fun. You can essentially play hide and seek among moving mountains. No matter what you do,

sooner or later you will have to fight in one of these areas because asteroid fields tend to have high economic ratings, which means that the more that your empire owns, the richer your empire is, and the better your ship selection will be in the shipyard. Capturing asteroid fields is a good way to serve your Empire.

It is possible to use asteroids to your advantage. If you are very good at piloting your ship, a favorite tactic that some people have used is to tractor your opponent and basically push them into a spinning asteroid and holding them there until they blow up. This is difficult to do without running into an asteroid yourself, but it can be done. Additionally, if you are in a small ship, and your opponent is in a very large ship, an asteroid field is the perfect place to engage them. Your ship will be more suited to moving around these dangerous rocks, while your opponent probably will not be to keen on taking something with a poor turn radius into harms' way.

Planets. Planets come in all different types. You normally encounter them in Scan and Planetary Assault/Defense missions. The only danger that a normal planet (scan mission) poses is the unlikely event that you might accidentally either try to warp through one, or run into it.

But there is one other type of planet that you need to be careful around. Occupied planets that lend themselves to the Planetary Assault mission are usually heavily armed and have defensive fleets. Homeworlds are especially dangerous, being heavily fortified with defense platforms and numerous defending ships. Unless you are in a powerful vessel, a planetary assault is not something you would want to do alone. It is best to bring lots of friends.

Nebula. Scattered throughout D3 are hexes composed of glowing dust clouds. These hexes represent the building blocks of the universe, for it is here in the fusion furnaces of Creation that Stars are born. They also are a dangerous place to do battle or for a ship to be in for very long.

Nebulae obscure scanners, making it harder to detect and target an opponent. Dust clouds also cause damage to ships - and this damage is hull damage - shields don't stop a lot of it. Lastly, there are certain things that you can't use in a Nebula - transporters and tractors are two good examples.
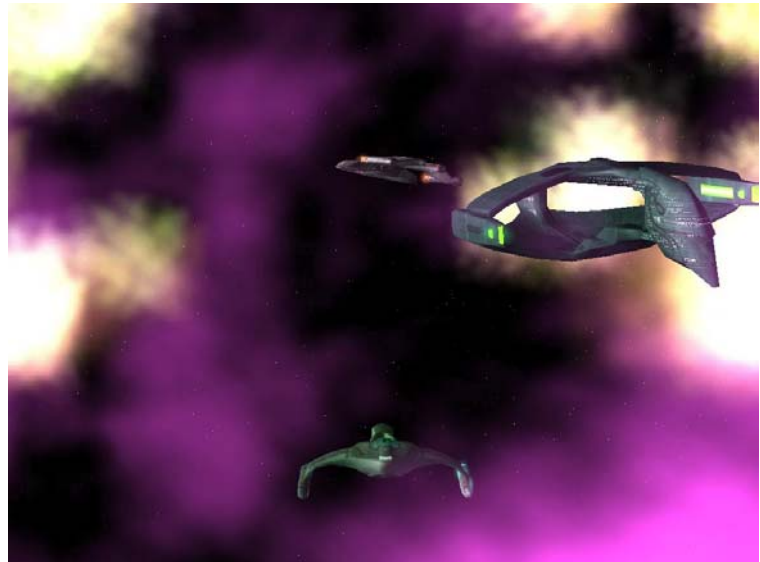
Fighting in a Nebula can be difficult, but it is not impossible. In many ways, it levels the playing field between ships of varying capability. The Borg are especially vulnerable in a Nebula because it denies them the use of their Tractor Beam Weapon, an asset that they tend to use to great success in normal battles. If you are going to fight in a Nebula, get used to the idea that your engagement ranges are going to be close - long-range bombardments usually miss their

target completely. Nebula hexes tend to also be resource-rich, which makes them a valuable economic resource for your Empire.

Black Holes. Black holes are hazardous, even though they are easy to spot, they are difficult, if not impossible, to maneuver around. You cannot successfully cross over a black hole – your ship will be destroyed outright. Even passing close to one is dangerous – it can draw your ship in to the point where you cannot overcome the power of gravity. Unless you really know what you are doing, I would recommend avoiding them altogether, but sometimes that simply is not possible.

A black hole has strong gravity waves that will reach out and pull your ship in. Should you get too close to a Black Hole, it will latch onto you and start pulling your ship into the center of the hole, where you will basically disintegrate. I have seen full size ships at full impulse power drawn inexorably into the center of one of these things, and it is not a pretty sight.

Like any other terrain, if you know what you are doing, this is a good place to have a battle against a larger opponent.

b. The Other Guys - Enemies and Friends and How You Encounter Them

The D3 is all about interaction with your fellow players. There will be those that will be your allies, either by belonging to the same empire you are playing, or to an allied empire in a campaign. There are others that will be your enemies. These will belong to other empires in the game that oppose the goals of the empire you are playing.

When facing an enemy player, don't get upset should you be outfought or defeated. Just do your best. In this game, the important thing isn't necessarily about winning or losing – it is better to just do the best that you can do in all situations. When an opponent defeats you, don't take it personally. There will be times when you will be frustrated, perhaps even angry. Don't let it get to you. Relax, and remember that you are there to have fun.

The fun part of the D3 is playing with your friends. Having a buddy with you as you cruise the starlanes is a lot of fun - and knowing that you can count on him or her to cover you, and vice versa, makes the game interesting.

Up to three human players can "fleet" together, and up to six human players can participate in a single battle. To join a fleet, all you have to do is be in the same hex and hit the "join" button - the fleetmate will either accept or not accept your offer to join. If they accept, then you will move and fight with the fleet leader. If one of you is attacked, the rest of the fleet you are a member of will join with you to either defend or attack.

One clue - don't "join" an AI that might be sitting in the hex with you. They typically don't move much, or at least, not as much as a human player does. It is perfectly acceptable to allow an AI to join YOU, but for you to join an AI would be sort of boring. Take my word for it.

c. The Artificial Intelligence Players and What They Can Do

The AI players in SFC III are exactly that. Players. This is a bit different from previous titles. The AI will be moving around on the map fairly frequently. They will be taking missions as they come across them, and they might even invade hostile territory. The AI can also react to your presence in a nearby hex and may attempt to hunt you down, just like a human player might.

The AI in the tactical game can be a serious threat, depending on the type of ship they are piloting, and one note to the wise - the AI is not always in a "stock" model ship. There are several variants that they fly, and some of those variants are quite deadly. In terms of skill, I would rate most of the AI players as nearly proficient. They do occasionally do some stupid things, but all in all, they also do some very smart things on occasion. Having an AI in your fleet can be a valuable asset, but they really can't take the place of a true human player.

3. The Dynaverse 3 as a Community

The D3 will eventually evolve into a solid community. Like any other community in real life, there are good people and bad people. How you act in the Dynaverse is your personal choice, but unlike some other online communities, there is something that you need to understand from the very beginning – your actions, your attitude, and what you do in the D3 will have consequences.

Just like any social setting, there are unwritten rules of behavior that most D3 players instinctively follow. This section will familiarize you with some of these unwritten laws and the code of ethics that they are based on so that you will more fully understand some of the odd behavior or terminology that you might run into when you enter the D3.

The D3 is full of helpful, friendly people. Even the ones that want to reduce your ship to scrap can be helpful. They are people just like you and I. Don't hesitate to ask for assistance on a server - odds are that a player or two will offer to hook up in a fleet and teach you some tactics or the basic ropes of the campaign. Don't be shy. Get out there and trade some phaser fire! If you are a veteran of the game, don't hesitate to help a new person venturing online for the first time. Their first experience in the D3 should be fun and rewarding. It is this type of experience that will keep the new players coming back for more.

However, there are some common sense rules to follow. It is your choice and nobody is there to make you do anything, but it is generally a good idea to pay attention to the following. It will improve your enjoyment of the game immensely.

First of all, before entering a D3 campaign, it is a very good idea to read the campaign description before you hit the "join" button. If a website is listed there, it is an even better idea to cruise on over and see what is there. Websites are often set up for special campaigns, and there might be some rules or some information that you will need to know (or might want to know) before you participate in the game. Knowledge is power, and it is definitely a good idea to know

any sort of unique information about the campaign in progress before entering into an unfamiliar situation.

Secondly, remember why you are there. You are there to have fun and fight for the glory of your Empire. Keep these goals in mind in everything that you do. Many players tend to role-play to some extent when they play the game. For them, it makes the game more vivid and interesting - players who act this way will actually attempt to act as they think a Klingon or the next Picard will act in a given situation. A Federation pilot might just let you go after disabling your ship whereas a Klingon, Romulan, or Borg will enthusiastically blow you into space dust. Don't take it personally if this happens - it is part of the game. I have even played in the D2 where I towed a crippled opponent to the border and let him escape after a particularly glorious battle. That was respect for my foe, and a promise that we would meet again. It was also sort of a neat thing to do - it helps establish your reputation as a player.

Each section below provides details that you might find valuable on your very first foray into the D3.

a. "Unwritten" Rules on a D3 Server

Okay. You are a brand new player venturing into your first D3 campaign. You are excited and ready to go explore the vast unknown reaches of space in your shiny new Frigate.

You enter the Dyna in your Saber and what do you see? All sorts of things that don't make sense. Some guy calling himself the Race Moderator is saying something about a newly signed treaty that imposes a cease-fire against the Borg for five game years, but you aren't sure if that applies to you. You see whole blocks of players with odd letters and numbers in front of their names. F9THPicard is asking you if you want to join his fleet, and you notice that there are a LOT of F9THs all around you! What do you do????

Let's make sense of it all. We'll start with the Race Moderator. Some of the better campaigns that you will play on in the Dynaverse will have volunteer players known as Race Moderators and Assistant Race Moderators (RM/ARM for short). Occasionally, a Race Moderator will put an "RM" after their D3 name so that all of the other players know who he or she is.

Basically, the RM is a coordinator. There is usually one RM and possibly an assistant RM for each playable race in the campaign. This person spends a lot of time on the server, making sure that things are going well, recording any accomplished victory conditions, and acting as a point of contact for any nasty player business. What I mean by "nasty" is if you have an issue with another player acting dishonorably or even if you suspect cheating, the proper way to deal with it in a D3 campaign is to not go to the forums and raise a stink about it publicly. All that does is create hate, discontent, and negativity. Instead, contact the appropriate RM (either your RM or the RM of the offending player) via email and tell them about the incident or issue, and then let them research and resolve it. If a player is found to be in violation of the server rules, then they are typically banned from that server or an appropriate penalty is imposed. This penalty could be the loss of a ship or a prestige fine. That is the role of a RM. If you are on a server that has no RM, then the appropriate thing to do is to contact the server administrator, once again via email.

Most server admins put an email address in the description line of the campaign. Another thing -- there is going to be the occasional bad apple in the D3 -- my advice in some of these cases is to be a Duck. That's right. Quack, Quack. Have you ever noticed during a rainstorm that water runs off of a Duck? That is how you should be. Don't let it get you down or affect you and move on, avoiding that player that point on. Bad Apples are sort of rare, and don't last long in any case – they tend to be hunted down mercilessly by every player on the server. Now, let's talk about players. Players in the D3 come in two basic flavors - those that belong to a fleet/organization and those that don't. Typically fleet members announce their fleet affiliation by putting a series of letters in front of their name. This is sometimes called "wearing your colors." Don't imitate them unless you have been accepted into their society as a member. F9th is the Federation 9th Fleet - an honorable and venerable fleet that flies Federation ships almost religiously. Then you have the Galactic Foreign Legion (GFL), XenoCorp (XC), Klingon Black Fleet (KBF), and a whole host of others. I am sure that several new fleets will also be formed once SFC III hits the shelves. Fleets are interesting societies to be a part of. There are some benefits and drawbacks to belonging to a fleet - but the important thing to remember about a Fleet is that Fleets have reputations that are built on the actions of their members. Fleets also have rules that their members agree to.

So, if you see a whole group of players with the same exact lettering in front of their names, odds are that they are part of a fleet of some sort. Don't be intimidated by them. Fleets are always on the lookout for new recruits, and most fleets have what they call a "training" program in place for new players, which means that if you are lucky enough to hook up with them you might learn some neat tricks just by osmosis.

There is a lot to be said about staying independent, also. First of all, you are free to fly any race that you want, although it is considered good form to restrict yourself to flying just one specific race per server - multiple accounts on the same server or campaign is often frowned on and occasionally outright banned, depending on the campaign.

Now you know what an RM is, and you know who all these other guys are that have the same letters in front of their name. You hook up with F9thPicard and head for the Neutral Zone!

Almost immediately your fleet runs into a Player Romulan Fleet. Emerald, Nomad, and Tempest are entering battle with you and F9thPicard. Your hands get sweaty, and adrenaline is pumping!

You fight bravely, but after all you are in a Frigate, and although F9thPicard's Galaxy-class Dreadnought is really dishing it out, it is getting ripped apart by the trio of Romulan Shrikes. F9thPicard suddenly types (or shouts over Roger Wilco (see below)), "Run! Run for your life! I will hold them off as long as I can!" You immediately think this is a good idea because you are unable to make much of a difference anyway. You hit tactical warp and suddenly the game crashes before the battle is finished.

After muttering various words that your mother would be ashamed to hear you say while bringing the game back up, you appear in the same hex. F9thPicard and the Romulan fleet are also still there. Almost immediately F9thPicard asks you to join him once again, and begs your permission as a witness. You are baffled, but join him anyway. Almost immediately you join

battle with the Romulan fleet again, and you prepare yourself mentally for a rematch. However, you both enter the tactical game, and instead of attacking, F9thPicard asks you just to watch for a moment. He moves his Galaxy opposite the Romulan players, and then self-destructs. By now you are wondering "what on earth????!!!!!" The Romulans state that honor has been satisfied. F9thPicard then orders you to head for the border and escape, leaving the field to the Romulans.

Why did this happen? Essentially, there is an unwritten code of honor among some veteran Dynaverse players – especially players that belong to fleets. In many situations in the past, when it is apparent that a player was about to lose but something happens out of their ability to control the situation, such as a bug or server/game crash, the honorable player will call the opponents to witness and self-destruct their ship in the name of fair play. Most of the time, if this happens, the player who was about to lose will often ask the other players if they want him/her to do this action, at that point it is up to the winning side whether or not to have that ship destroyed. Most of the time the winning side will simply say that is okay and let it go, but to be perfectly candid, if the ship in question is a very heavy ship, such as a Dreadnought or Battleship, the opposite side will normally want the player to self destruct because that vessel represents a valuable asset to the player's Empire. Some very honorable players will sometimes insist that they be allowed to self-destruct under those circumstances, even if the opponents say that it is not necessary. There is no rule per se that says that you have to do this kind of thing, but it is the mark of a very honorable player to behave in this fashion.

Next situation. You are entering a Dyna server for the first time, and you head towards the Borg border and capture a hex. Suddenly everyone seems sort of upset at you! Why? They are the enemy, and that is the point of the game, right?

Well, yes it is, and yes it isn't. If you are entering a server for the first time, it is sometimes a good idea to simply ask in racial chat what is going on, where the main effort is, and if there is any plan other than attack the nearest enemy! An independent player could conceivably upset weeks of planning in about five minutes flat by unknowingly violating a treaty or cease-fire. It is always a good idea to at least ask the question before rampaging across the Alpha Quadrant. If nobody tells you anything different, then that means everything and anything is fair game - go have fun!

b. Your Behavior and Courtesy - an Armed Society is a Polite Society

How you act in the Dynaverse is pretty much up to you, but there is an important fact to consider, and that is that your actions have impact on a scale that is unprecedented with other online games.

Correspondingly, your reputation as a player will eventually be known one way or another. If you are a ruthless player that shows absolutely no mercy against a foe, no matter what the situation, then don't be surprised if other players treat you exactly the same way. Also don't be surprised if you get hunted down if you are insulting or disruptive. Talking trash is one thing - it is expected and admired to some extent, but being downright rude might get a bounty on your head. Some players enjoy that kind of challenge - if you act this way, don't be surprised if you seem to be getting an above-average number of hostile encounters!

The important thing to remember is - yes, I will say it again - you are there to have fun! It is okay to be ruthless, even "mean" to some extent under some circumstances, but it is typically bad form to be personally insulting against another player, or to take a personal grudge too far. By the way....grudges settled by Trial by Combat are perfectly acceptable, and are often part of a Fleet's by-laws.

So, how should you view the D3 community and the players in the Dynaverse? That is pretty much up to you. Personally, I look at the players that I meet in the D3 as having some of the same attitudes and traits as the fighter pilots in WWI, the "Knights of the Sky." Many of the unwritten codes of honor are somewhat similar, and much of the interaction is the same.

c. Fame and Infamy, The Greater Rewards of Playing

What sort of reward do you get out of playing in the D3? Well, the first and most important reward has nothing to do with prestige or what ship you end up flying. I have known players that went through an entire campaign and never gave up their light cruiser, even though they had enough prestige to buy a Battleship!

In my opinion there are two basic types of reward for playing in the Dynaverse. There is the team reward, and the personal reward. Both are very different.

The Team reward is what you feel in terms of recognition when your team has acted honorably or done the best possible job that they could under the circumstances, possibly even winning the Campaign/War. There is usually a great deal of bragging rights associated with these types of wins, and it feels good to be part of a winning team.

The personal reward is your reputation as a player. If you participated in a number of player vs. player and cooperative missions, and if other players got to know you, test your mettle under fire, and know you to be someone that they can count on, someone that they would want to fly next to, then this is the greatest reward of all. Players become famous based on their actions in the Dynaverse. As a player, you have an opportunity to make a name for yourself, to be respected and admired by your friends and peers for your skill and deportment in battle. This is how you become famous.

There is also the chance that you can build a reputation built on fear. If you are so skilled, so implacable and merciless, you will also gain respect as a player. This is infamy. Some players revel in this sort of recognition, and there is nothing wrong with it. You can still be ruthless and still keep a polite and positive attitude towards the game, and still be sought after as someone to fly with.

d. Roger Wilco, What is It?

The D3 benefits immensely from the experience that veteran D2 players will bring to the table. One of the most important things you can do as a new player to the D3 is look for things that will

make your experience in the D3 more exciting and meaningful. Roger Wilco is one way of doing this.

Roger Wilco is an application that will run on your computer in the background while you are playing SFC III. It is a voice communications tool that allows you to actually talk to your fleetmates and other players in the game while in battle.

It is also something that will profoundly change your whole experience in the D3.

For example, you are in the D3 and you are not on Roger Wilco. You can't hear the battles being fought, or the cries for help in certain sectors of the map. You can't hear where your own empire is massing their forces for a counteroffensive. You move about the map, blissfully unaware of the conversation that is occurring all about you. Each race will have a separate channel – no spying allowed! Most of the servers that will be running in the D3 will have a Roger Wilco address set up for the players to log into and communicate. Roger Wilco adds an entire dimension to the D3, and is, in fact, a force multiplier because it gives the players in an Empire the ability to better focus their effort and plan their attacks in the D3

The best part of it all is that Roger Wilco is a free shareware program. All you need on your computer is a microphone and the ability to play sounds (soundcard and speakers). I would highly recommend obtaining Roger Wilco if you plan on playing in the D3. The URL to obtain this program is:

http://rogerwilco.gamespy.com

The download file is about 770K, and it is very easy to install. There is an option to also register the program for a small fee, but the shareware version will work fine without registering. I would encourage you to register if you feel so inclined. It helps support further development of this application, and it is well worth your money.

4. The Shipyard: Bids, Refits, and Officers

Everything starts at the shipyard. Unlike previous titles, SFC III allows you to customize your ship with various systems, including primary and heavy weapons, shields, computers, armor, and three different categories of engines (thruster, impulse, warp). All of this customization is based on how much mass your ship is designed to carry. Different hull sizes and designs can carry more mass in certain areas than other hull sizes and designs.

Starbases, Battlestations, and Base Stations all allow you to refit your ships, bid on new ships, and obtain new officers either as replacements for officers that have died in battle, or to obtain more experienced officers to run ship systems.

Bidding on a ship in the shipyard

Bidding on a ship is a straightforward process. It is similar to the single player campaign with one exception - when you bid on a ship, it does not immediately come to you. There is a short

period of time to allow an auction process to proceed. When you place a bid, there is a chance that another player in your race will bid against you for that same ship. Shipyard production and the types of hulls and bases available for purchase are driven by how strong an Empire's economy is. An Empire's economy is calculated by how much economy their territory is generating. Each empire hex has an economic rating. Planets, asteroid fields, and nebula often generate more economy than an empty hex. The higher the economy, the more likely that heavier hulls and bases will be available in the shipyard. The lower the economy, the more likely that only smaller ships and no bases will be available.

Refitting your vessel

I am convinced that there really is no such thing as an optimum ship configuration for the Federation, Romulan, or Klingon star fleets. Different play styles will dictate how you customize your vessel. There are trade-offs for everything that you do. For example, you can mount rapid-charging versions of primary weapons on your ship in order to fire more frequently in battle, but the trade off is that the non-rapid versions of that same weapon do more damage per hit than the rapid fire versions do.

There is one exception to the whole mass/limitation equation, and that exception is a single ship on the Borg roster: The Cube. The Cube, unlike any other ship in the game, is capable of mounting the most high-end systems and weapons available in all categories without exceeding mass limits – except for possibly their engine settings. I do not have a problem with this. The Cube is so expensive and tough (as it should be) that this makes sense.

With weapons, the type of beam weapons you mount (primary and heavy) and the type of torpedo you will use will mostly depend on what you plan to do. Are you a Klingon that will be fighting a lot of Romulan players? Then you want to have a Type IV Computer or higher (for anti-cloak scans), and probably Polaron torps, since they have a chance to penetrate shields and hit hull directly. On the other hand, if you are fighting Borg, you can get away with heavier armor and a Type III computer, and you probably want to use K-Photon torps because unlike a Polaron torp, an experienced weapons officer can occasionally get multi-torp spreads out of a single K-Photon launcher, applying more damage theoretically in a shorter amount of time – definitely something you need to be able to do if you are facing Borg. The fact that Borg do not have shields is important and renders the special ability of the Polaron torp pretty much useless, although the Polaron does do significant damage in any case, especially when overloaded.

Officers

There is no way around it. Officers play a key role in how well your ship fights. Officers effect how maneuverable your ship is, how much energy your warp engines generate, and a whole host of other factors involving countermeasures and targeting. In a very indirect way, key officers can affect the mass limitations of your vessel. The Engineer makes a key difference in this area. A highly experienced Engineer can get more energy out of a warp engine, which can allow you to mount a lighter warp engine (if that is your choice), which in turn can increase your overall speed and turn radius by being able to mount larger thrusters and impulse engines – key factors for maneuvering your ship in battle.

Each officer normally specializes in a specific skill set. Eventually, officers will reach Legendary status in the three primary skill sets in their chosen position, which in turn has dramatic impacts on how your ship operates. Damage sustained during battle can result in officer injuries and deaths. If an officer dies, it is replaced with "untrained crew", which is bad news to that particular area of your ship's operations. Untrained crews have very little skill in the area that they are filling in, and it can be a dangerous proposition to enter battle with untrained crew.

Officers can be obtained at some bases for a set prestige cost. The more experienced the officer, the higher the prestige cost will be. Officers are not auctioned or bid on like ships in the shipyard – officer assignments and transactions in the D3 are instant. Occasionally, there will be no officers available for you to recruit. One unusual way to use officers in the D3 is as a sort of loan security. If you are in a high-end vessel, and you are defeated in battle, ending up back in a Frigate with zero prestige, the fact is that your officers will come with you. If you have one or two officers that are heavily trained, they are sometimes worth one thousand or more prestige each. By switching out some of these officers with lower-ranked/experienced officers at the starbase, you gain instant prestige that can allow you refit your current ship or perhaps even bid on a new ship right away. In a way, the way you train and develop your officers results in a sort of collateral value that you can cash in at a later date.

5. Race Descriptions and Tactical Summaries

What follows is a short description of each race and their perceived strengths and weaknesses, along with a few comments on tactics.

The Federation

Strengths
Balanced Weapons
Strong Shields
Pulse Phaser
Highest Hull Diversity
Potentially best Frigate in the game
Potentially best Battlecruiser in the game

Weaknesses
No Cloak
Larger ships not nimble
Weapons mass limits are restrictive

The Federation is probably the best-known political entity in The New Generation (TNG) series. They are the good guys, yet they are also feared by some races as being too powerful. They tend to be the largest of the four playable races in the game. Their political system is based on a representative republic with member worlds and a governing council. There are some socialist overtones in regards to how their economy is structured. For instance, although there appears to be some form of free enterprise and capitalism in the TNG universe, it is not the driving force

behind the expansionist Federation. The Ferengi, on the other hand, are driven by a form of aggressive capitalism that sometimes conflicts with Federation ideals. In a singe word, the Federation represents stability. They believe in non-interference and something called "The Prime Directive," which is a hands-off approach to an Imperialist expansionist philosophy. Federation starships are supposedly built with research and scientific study in mind. Despite this disclaimer, Federation starships are very well suited to war, and are very successful in battle.

Federation starships are armed with Phasers (several different categories), the Pulse Phaser, which was developed primarily to fight Borg but which is actually an excellent weapon no matter who it is used against, Photon Torpedoes, Quantum Torpedoes, Tachyon Beam Cannon (this is a universal heavy weapon available to all races), and minelayers (once again, a universal weapon). Federation starships can be classed into two very distinct categories. I call these two classes the War classes and the Ships of the Line, or multi-role vessels. War vessels appear to be designed with primarily combat in mind. Most of their weapons face forward, and many of these hulls have no 360-degree or rear-facing weapons. Here is a list of the ship types that I think fall into this category:

Saber Frigate (FF)
Norway Light Cruiser (CL). Could also be considered a Destroyer hull (DD)
Defiant Light Cruiser (CL)
Excelsior Heavy Cruiser (CA)

The Ships of the Line represent a more balanced design. Interestingly enough, some of these vessels potentially can have more firepower facing towards the sides and rear than they do facing forward. The Federation Sovereign is a good example. This vessel, the largest in the Federation Starfleet inventory, can potentially have more weapons pointing directly to the rear than forward. The Sovereign can focus five Primary weapon mounts and three heavy weapons mounts directly to the rear, while it can only focus three primary weapons mounts and three heavy weapons forward. I included the Akira as a multi-role vessel even though some players believe it to be a war design – I based this decision on its design, which is well balanced and lends itself to a multi-role definition much easier than as a pure war design.

Intrepid Light Cruiser (CL) (Same ship as Voyager)
Akira Heavy Cruiser (CA)
Nebula Battle Cruiser (BCH)
Galaxy Dreadnought (DN) (same ship as Enterprise)
Sovereign Dreadnought (DN)

The Klingon Empire

Strengths
Lots of weapons mounts
Primary weapons charge quickly
Nimble ships
Lots of mass available for weapons
Energy use is very efficient
Can Cloak
Decent hull diversity

Weaknesses
No 360 weapons mounts
Polaron not capable of multiple volleys
Shield mass restrictions

When players think of Klingons, they tend to be sharply divided as to what actually constitutes a proper Klingon attitude. This conflict is a direct result of the difference between The Old Series (TOS) Klingons, which were also a key part of several of the Star Trek movies, and The New Series (Worf, Kahless). Klingons in the TNG universe are represented as an honorable warrior society, and are somewhat allied to the Federation. They have many admirable qualities, and there is no denying that Worf depicted a warrior attitude that appealed to a very wide following with TNG fans. Worf's no-nonsense, hit first and ask questions later attitude in his role as tactical officer on the Enterprise was not always the right decision on the bridge of the Enterprise, but it always had merit. On the other hand, TOS Klingons are similar, but a bit different. TOS Klingons tend to be very bloodthirsty and ruthless, and are not above using an underhanded means to achieve victory. Honor is still a requirement, but honor is subjective, and can be found in a devious ploy as well as a frontal assault. How can you characterize this easily? In the TOS series a Klingon was heard to say that a running man with a razor can slay a thousand sleeping men in a single night. That is a TOS Klingon. Worf, on the other hand, would probably walk into the building with the sleeping enemy and challenge them all to single combat and slay all thousand one by one using Trial by Combat.

Regardless of how you view Klingons or how you believe they should act in the Dynaverse, there are some things that are common with any Klingon point of view. Klingons find glory in conflict. Their society demands that the weak are eliminated, and the strong advance on their own merit. In war, they are merciless and very difficult to bring to the bargaining table. Duty is their watchword. They often act rashly, which gets them in trouble diplomatically and on the battlefield. Once the rage of battle is in their blood, a Klingon is difficult to stop, even if continued battle would result in their self-destruction. Sacrificing themselves for the glory of the Empire is the highest form of honorable self-expression. Klingon ship design is an interesting window into their cultural psyche. No Klingon ship mounts a 360-degree primary weapons mount of any type. At first thought, a player might think that this is a drawback, but is actually isn't, not when you take into account the Klingon attitude. Klingon ships are built for war, not for mansy-pansy research and nebula mapping. As such, the majority of their weapons point forward, because a Klingon believes in facing their enemies head on. This makes their forward

weapons volleys very powerful. Klingon ships are also very nimble. In fact they appear to be some of the most maneuverable ships in the game. Klingon vessels are well suited to their favorite tactic in SFC, known as "Saber Dancing." Saber Dancing involves constant movement at a range of 10-15, presenting different weapons and shields to an opponent, and keeping an opponent off balance by never allowing them to pin them down for any length of time. All Klingon vessels can also cloak.

Of all of the Klingon vessels, the K'Vort and the Vorcha are probably the most interesting. The Nehgvar Dreadnought is also very notable as the largest Klingon vessel – it is well designed and probably the most affordable Dreadnought in the game.

Klingon ships are armed with the following weapons types: Disrupter (several variants and types), Ion Cannon (heavy beam weapon), K-Photon Torpedo, Polaron Torpedo, Tachyon Beam Cannon (universal weapon to all races), and minelayer (universal weapon to all races).

The Romulan Empire

Strengths
Some of the best-balanced vessels in the game
Engines/power generation second only to Borg
Cloaking Device
Myotronic Beam (Stuns enemy weapons)

Weaknesses
May be a bit light on heavy weapons mounts
Plasma takes a long time to arm
Cloak is not foolproof

What do we know about the Romulan Empire? Not much. They are isolationist and do not welcome any interference in their internal affairs. They have fought one or more wars against the Federation. They appear to be related to Vulcans, except that their ancestors and the Vulcans diverged centuries ago over a cultural and philosophical debate over the role of logic and its influence on development of the race. Klingons have a hatred for them that borders on the obsessive, although at one time they may have been allies. Romulans, unlike Vulcans, do not embrace logic as holding the keys to the universe. Romulans are in fact somewhat emotional, warlike, and potentially violent. The Romulan Empire actually appears to be a sort of Republic that is very similar to Old Earth Rome. There is a Senate and a powerful figure known as the Praetor that sets policy and makes decisions for the Empire. There is also the Tal Shiar, a shadowy intelligence organization that seems to occasionally work at cross-purposes to the Senate and the Praetor. Romulans are considered the premier spies in the Alpha Quadrant. Romulans are also highly intelligent, and their ship designs clearly show advanced technology and design. In fact, although they do not have a lot of hull diversity, their light cruiser, the Shrike, is considered by many to be the best-balanced light cruiser in the game. Although reporting is vague and incomplete, it is apparent that the Romulan Star Fleet has fought the Borg longer than the Federation has, and has in fact been more successful at fighting this implacable enemy than any other race in the Alpha Quadrant. Duty to the Empire is what drives a Romulan

Commander. Duty is their meat and bread. Honor also plays a part in everything that they do, but their honor is tempered by duty. Sacrificing personal honor to do your duty to the Empire is something that a Romulan would not think twice about. Despite this key difference, Romulans tend to share many of the same attributes as the Klingons - they are just quieter about it all. The difference between Romulan and Klingon attitudes can best be described by comparing the attitudes between a Soldier and a Warrior. Both are fighters, but both approach fighting in different ways. To a Warrior, individual combat is essential. To a Soldier, winning is your duty, and fighting as part of a coordinated team is more essential than fighting as an individual. Klingons are Warriors. Romulans are Soldiers.

Romulans have the strongest warp engines of any race in the Alpha Quadrant, only the Borg has engines that can generate more energy. Romulans also mount what is considered the most powerful single weapon in the Alpha Quadrant, the Plasma Torpedo.

Romulan ship design is an interesting blend of offensive and defensive capabilities. Of all the races, Romulan ships appear to be some of the best-balanced vessels in the game. The Shrike, Raptor, and Warbird are all very dangerous vessels. The Shrike, a light cruiser hull, is more than capable of taking on and defeating vessels much larger than they are if properly equipped. The Raptor is a very good battle Cruiser, and the Warbird is an interesting Dreadnought, although it is light on heavy weapons mounts.

Romulan battle tactics rely on the cloak extensively as a tool in the tactical battle. Romulan players who do not understand the cloak, or who do not use it effectively, will not be using their vessel's full potential. The Cloak can be a powerful tool in an experienced pilot's hands. Some Romulan vessels, especially the Warbird, appear to be a bit light on heavy weapons mounts. There is a reason for this. They tend to mount fewer heavy weapons mounts because of one key fact - their heavy weapons are more powerful than any other race in the game. Nothing does as much damage as a heavy plasma torpedo can conceivably do, shot for shot. Additionally, there is also the Myotronic beam. There is no other weapon in the game quite like it, and it is the single weapon that could be considered the bane of the Borg. It is also a fine example of Romulan Advanced Technology. The Myotronic beam stuns an enemy's weapons for a short time when it hits hull. Considering that the Borg do not possess shields, the Myotronic beam is very effective against them. A Romulan ship mounting twin Myotronic beams can keep a Borg's weapons stunned for significant periods of time by alternating their Myotronic Beam strikes. This weapon, when used in conjunction with a cloaking device, can be very deadly. The idea is to slam home with primary disrupters and plasma, bringing down your opponent's shields, then hit them with a Myotronic beam, stunning their weapons while you cloak, preventing your opponent from firing on your vessel while you transition into invisibility. This is just one way of using this unique weapon to your advantage. More than any other weapon, the Myotronic Beam lends itself to innovative tactics.
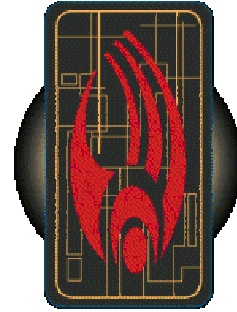
The Borg Collective

Strengths
Hull/Armor Regeneration
Very large ships with high mass limits
Only Battleship in the game
Tractor Beam Weapon
Strongest Warp Engines in the Game

Weaknesses
No shields -- vulnerable to hull-effect weapons
Large size can be a drawback in tight battles (especially in Asteroid Fields)
Higher-end ships VERY expensive

If any specific race could be considered "evil" in SFC III, then the Borg would probably fit that bill. Interestingly enough, they are not really evil. In fact, they probably do not understand concepts of good or evil, and if they were approached with any sort of philosophy that addresses good and evil, the Collective would probably consider it irrelevant.

The Borg Collective is basically a hive mind that is made up of literally millions of minds, all connected together, all driven to the same purpose - to assimilate the universe. To say that they are "goal-oriented" is an understatement. Their racial goal drives everything that they do. They wish to standardize everything in creation, and by that means render everything and anything except sheer existence irrelevant. Their concept of a perfect universe has no room for concepts of good, evil, or individuality. Nor does the concept of pain and suffering mean anything significant to them. In their minds, if they manage to achieve their goal, the known universe will reach its ultimate expression and the next step in evolution will be attainable at that instant. Of course their goal is probably impossible because the universe, as we know it, is infinite, but their own attitude does not recognize that fact. Every small victory, every inch traveled at warp speed, is progress. Losses do not matter. Resistance from other races does not matter. Eventually, the Collective will triumph.
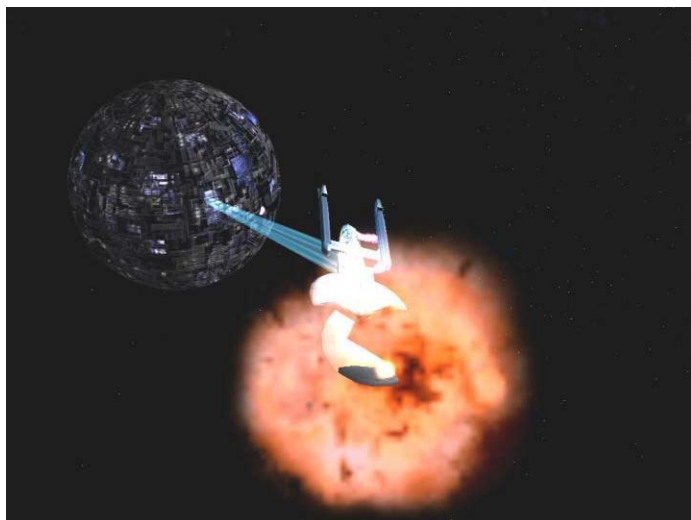
This implacable attitude and certainty of focus is what makes the Borg so terrifying. They cannot be reasoned with. Even defeating them is not something to be comfortable about because they always come back.

One of the neatest things that the Borg in the TV show can do is adapt to all offensive actions taken against them. In the game, this is literally impossible to portray accurately. Despite this drawback, the Borg are a very interesting race to play, and their technology is so

different that their lack of adaptability is not something that detracts from gameplay. In a sense, they do adapt to offensive actions, but they are not totally impervious to weapons fire.

Let's start with the differences. Borg weapons are very unique in that they are the only race that has a tractor weapon. Their tractor beam has a weapon setting that is unavailable to any other race. Their primary weapons are cutting beams -- three different levels with two different types per level. They have the Graviton Torpedo, which seems to fall somewhere between the Federation Photon and the Federation Quantum in terms of power and damage, and they have the Shield Inversion Beam, which when used correctly, can strip an opponent of their energy shields. They also have the Tachyon Beam and the antimatter mine layer, which are universal weapons available to all races. The Borg weapons array excels at close-in fighting, and unlike other races, the weapons arcs on their vessels are very evenly distributed across all arcs. Additionally, all Borg vessels have 360-degree weapons mounts. They are the only race to have ships possessing multiple 360-degree mounts, and three of their upper end vessels have multiple 360-degree weapons mounts. The Borg Sphere and the Borg Sphere Prime have two primary weapons mounts with 360-degree arcs. The Borg Cube has a total of four – two primary and two heavy weapons 360 mounts. The Cube is the only vessel in the game that has 360-degree heavy weapons mounts.

The Borg Cube was probably the hardest ship to conceive of in SFC III because it is one of the few vessels, besides the Enterprise, Defiant, and Voyager, that has so much material on it. The Cube is truly terrifying, especially in the hands of a human player. It is the only true Battleship in the game. It is the only vessel that has two Heavy Weapons 360 hard points and two 360-degree primary weapons hard points, along with weapons hard points on all sides for additional coverage. The Cube can literally take on multiple opponents easily and crush them one by one because it does not matter what side you approach the Cube from -- the weapons coverage will be the same on all sides.

Borg vessels take some getting used to. They are literally huge. The Cube is as large as some Starbases, and even a planet will not dwarf the immense size of this vessel. Surprisingly, Borg vessels can be very nimble, which makes their large size deceptive. Enemy ships, even the largest ones, appear small next to many of the Borg vessels. I have found that the best way to operate a Borg vessel in the tactical game is to switch back and forth from the 3-d view to the Top-down view. The Borg vessels (especially the Sphere and Cube) are so large that they obscure your opponent, which can make targeting difficult.

The Borg have the best warp engines in the game. They are the only race in the game that can transcend above a Type X Warp engine -- they have something called a Warp SB, which by itself masses more than an entire Frigate and some light Cruisers. The Cube is the only Borg vessel that can mount this size of engine. Borg vessels can take incredible amounts of damage because their hull is regenerative – it repairs itself during a battle as the Borg vessel takes damage. The Pyramids and Diamonds are not so bad, but the Sphere and the Cube can literally take volley after volley on their bare hull without showing the slightest sign of damage.

Borg tactics are well suited to close-in engagements. Here is a key fact -- the Borg Cube is one of the only ships in the game that you can actually run in to. This is not a good thing because

that means that the Borg pilot can use the sheer mass of the Cube as a weapon. Even a Nehgvar Klingon Dreadnought will not cause crippling damage to a Cube when it gets ran over by this Juggernaught. Does the Cube sound unbalancing? Maybe at first glance, but that is before you see the pricetag. The Cube typically costs three to four times more than the most expensive dreadnought in the game. Definitely something to consider. For the cost of a single Cube you can pay for an entire fleet of Dreadnoughts. This makes sense, since the Cube is a powerhouse capable of taking on entire fleets of smaller ships fairly easily if piloted by a human pilot with an experienced crew. In the Dynaverse, Cubes will be sort of rare, but the opposite side of the coin is that it may very well take an entire fleet to hunt down a Player Cube. Such battles will be glorious, and debated long after they are over.

6. Ship Design Philosophy

As I have said before, I am convinced that no single ship configuration will be considered an "Uber" configuration. I believe that how your ship is configured will mostly depend on your play style. Some players will emphasize maneuver over offensive punch with a style that lends itself to rapid moving games with high angular velocity and short, sharp exchanges of fire. Other players will prefer a less maneuverable ship loaded down with lots of weapons that can deliver a solid punch. A vast majority of players will seek a compromise somewhere between the extremes. Another consideration to take into account is what your actions are going to be in the Dynaverse. Different weapons configurations will be necessary for different actions. Are you going to be part of a planned base assault? Then your ship will probably be configured differently from your basic patrol configuration. You will want some heavy long-range weapons with the heaviest shields you can manage if you are going after a base. Rapid charge times won't matter as much with a stationary, slowly rotating target. If you are in a ship-hunting configuration, you will want a design that compliments your own personal style and tactics. Designing a vessel, regardless of what race you play, is not about putting the heaviest possible weapon in every weapon slot. It is all about balance. Sure, you might be able to mount one or two very heavy primary weapons in a light cruiser or a frigate by ignoring all but a couple of your weapon slots, but when you face an enemy CL with several lesser strength weapons covering a wider firing arc, you will quickly learn that although you might have the heaviest weapons…they are not landing solid hits very often and you are being ripped apart from directions that your weapons do not face. Odds are that you will probably lose that engagement unless you can "pin" your opponent and land solid blows from your heavier weapons. Balance is the operative term when it comes to building your ship. Having said all of that, there are some essential concepts that a player should apply when designing their vessel, and these concepts vary from race to race. This section will not tell you how to configure your vessel, but it will provide you with an idea of what certain racial designs lend themselves to easily.

a. Federation

I have found the Federation to be one of the hardest to analyze when discussing ship customization. This is because Federation ships come in two basic flavors -- a "war" design and a more balanced multi-role design. The Defiant is a War design, while the Galaxy or even the Intrepid represents multi-role designs. Complicating the process is the fact that Federation weapons arcs are not what you would expect in a warship. In thinking about the Federation,

some of my inspiration has come from some of the designs that I have seen the AI fly in the Dynaverse. It seems odd to be referring players to take a close look at the AI ships because most players discount AI capability. Some of that is true, but on the other hand, may of the AI ship designs do make sense. One design I saw that happened to be very effective was a Galaxy that mounted three Pulse Phasers in its rear primary weapons mounts. You would not normally consider the Pulse Phaser for that kind of role, but it was very effective in turning my Romulan vessel into scattered space debris.

When designing a Federation vessel, pay close attention to your weapons arcs. If you are building a war design with a Defiant, Nebula, or Saber, or perhaps even an Akira which seems to straddle the boundary between multi-role and war designs, then your design philosophy is fairly straightforward. Most of your weapons will be forward-focused, and you need to purchase shields and weapons that exploit that aspect of your ship. One major factor that will affect your ship customization is how you see your role in the Dynaverse and where you plan to focus your efforts. If you know you will be facing Borg, then your ship configuration will be different than if you are planning to face Romulans or Klingons. So. What do Federation vessels excel at design-wise? The answer is that they really do not specifically excel at anything -- they do most things quite well equally. It is possible to design a Federation vessel that has the ability to apply damage equally no matter where your opponent is. Some Federation ships lend themselves to this type of configuration. The Sovereign comes to mind immediately, as does the Galaxy to a certain extent.

Klingon

Weapons and energy curves. That is what Klingons are all about. Their vessels (except for their Frigate for some reason) have a lot of weapons mounts. Most of them point forward.

Klingon warp engines, which supply power to their weapons, are extremely energy-efficient -- possibly more energy efficient than their Federation counterparts. I think this has something to do with how much energy their weapons draw, which allows the Klingons to mount more weapons than what you might expect without suffering from energy shortages during battle. Klingon vessels are highly maneuverable, and it is generally a good idea to exploit that aspect of Klingon ship design.

The Klingons have the Ion Cannon as their special heavy beam weapon. The Ion Cannon has no real special properties (like the Romulan Myotronic Beam or the Borg Shield Inversion Beam) other than the fact that it levies tremendous damage against a target when fired. It probably does more damage than any other Heavy Beam weapon in the game.

And last but certainly not least -- do not ignore the cloaking device. Although the Klingons do not center their tactics on its use like the Romulans do, it can be a very useful tool in a tight spot.

The Klingon Vorcha could well be one of the most dangerous Battlecruisers in the game if it is in the hands of a competent player. For veteran SFC EAW/OP players, the Vorcha probably represents a very successful evolution from the C7 Heavy Battlecruiser. It is highly versatile and can mount an impressive array of weaponry. This vessel, along with the K'Vort and the

Nehgvar, will be Klingon favorites in the Dynaverse. The Fek'lir might see some action, but most players don't care much for it.

Romulan

Romulan vessels tend to be well designed and very well balanced. Some of the Romulan vessels, most notably the Shrike and the Raptor, are considered by some players to be the best ship designs in the game.

The Hawk represents the Romulan Heavy Cruiser. This design can, with a bit of customization, be a highly successful heavy cruiser. It looks sort of bulky, but it can be configured to turn on a dime with little loss of offensive firepower. The Shrike and Raptor will probably be two of the most favored Romulan ships in the D3. What you have to decide when you are playing Romulan is if you want to mount Plasma torpedoes, which deliver a very solid punch but which take a long time to arm, or whether you want primarily an energy weapon-oriented vessel armed with Myotronic beams. It is usually a good idea to try to mount a mix of both if at all possible. I have also had great success with the Shrike mounting two medium plasma torpedoes forward, rather than Myotronic beams. It is mostly a matter of personal taste. One thing that I have noticed about Romulan vessels is that they rarely lack for energy. This is because they mount some of the best warp engines in the game.

Once again, how you design your ship will depend in part on what you are doing. If you are going to be facing Borg, then a Myotronic beam or two is a necessity. Additionally, because the Romulan tactical philosophy depends in part on the Cloaking Device, I always try to mount the heaviest cloaking device that I can on my Romulan vessel.

Borg

Borg ship design requires a complete change in tactical thought because unlike any other race, Borg weapons arcs fully cover all angles.

Borg vessels typically mount the same (or nearly the same) number of weapons on all sides. They also ALWAYS have a 360 mount (sometimes more than one) at their disposal, which further makes their vessels very dangerous regardless of the angle of attack you use against them.

The decisions you need to make as Borg mostly have to do with heavy weapons. I have found the Shield Inversion beam to be very valuable only when used as pairs. A single Shield Inversion beam sometimes is not very effective – or at least not as effective as an overloaded Graviton Torp.

There is one very important aspect of Borg ship design that needs to be covered that makes them truly different from every other race, and that is their energy curves.

Borg vessels do not mount shields. Instead, their hull regenerates as a battle commences. This impacts HEAVILY on power generation and weapons power allocation – the fact is that the

Borg are not required to put energy into shields, which in turn provides more energy for weapons fire!

This makes a big difference in ship design philosophy. It means that the Borg need to mount the heaviest armor possible (the heavier your armor, the better your hull regeneration), and the best engine possible. When facing a Borg, you must realize that the Borg player is probably quite capable of overloading most or all of their weapons at any given point without detracting from their defensive systems – most other races have to reduce their shield strength to temporarily overload weapons, depending on their configuration. Essentially, Borg defensive systems operate at zero energy cost. ALL of their energy goes into weapons.

7. Dynaverse 3 Tactics Primer

This section is meant to provide information that will allow players a foundation to develop their own tactical thought and application within the D3. It is not what I would call a definitive tactics manual – such a product would require a great deal more thought and input from actual battles before it could be created.

This is the bottom line – tactics in the D3 will be as varied as the near-infinite number of ship configurations. Does that mean that everything is chaotic or constantly in flux? No. There are some very basic tactical considerations that all players will have to take into account in developing their own D3 tactics.

a. Angular Velocity - What is it and how does it affect you?

Angular velocity might well be one of the key aspects of the Dynaverse that will be least understood (at least initially).

Angular velocity (hereafter referred to as AV) in SFC III is an expression of basic physics. It is a numerical expression that you can see on your main battle screen – it constantly changes depending on your speed, your opponent's speed, and the angles and turns that you and your opponent are making. AV directly affects your ability to target your enemy and actually hit with your weapons. The higher the AV, the less chance you have to hit.

A player can use AV both offensively and defensively. By maximizing your own AV, you reduce the chance you opponent has to hit you with their weapons. By minimizing your opponent's AV, you increase your chances to hit with your weapons.

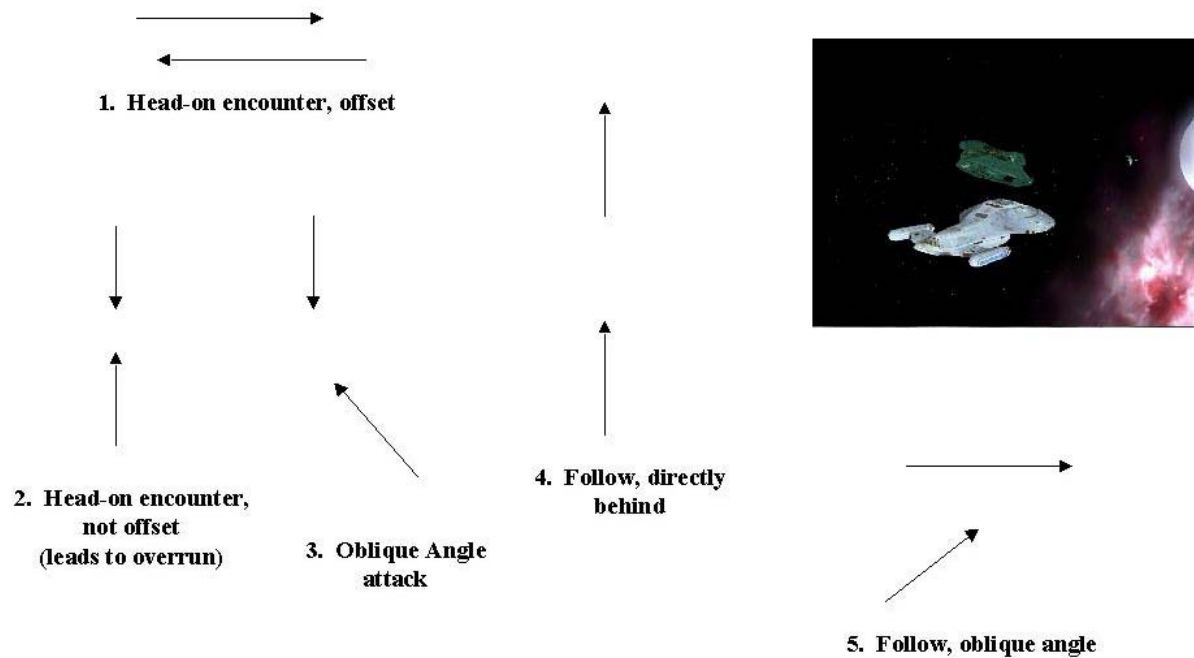Several factors affect how well you target against an opponents AV, and how well your ship generates AV. These factors are:

(1) Your maneuver decisions
(2) The skill level of your Helm Officer (ability to do HET and make tight turns)
(3) The skill level of your Tactical Officer (targeting)
(4) The skill level of your Engineer Officer (affects speed and impulse power)
(5) The level of Computer your ship mounts (affects targeting and other factors)

(6) The speed at which your vessel can move (affects targeting and AV generation)
(7) The nimbleness of your vessel – how fast it can turn (same as #6)

Consider the following examples:

Angular Velocity Examples

1. Head-on encounter, offset

2. Head-on encounter,
not offset
(leads to overrun)

3. Oblique Angle
attack

4. Follow, directly
behind

5. Follow, oblique angle

Let's analyze Figures 1, 2, and 3. All three are variants of head-on attacks, but all three will have different AV ratings. Figure 1, an offset head-on encounter, will have a minor AV rating until your actually pass each other close by, at which point your AV and your opponent's AV will peak. The worst possible moment to fire in this case will be as you are passing next to your opponent, because the AV will be very high and you will probably miss. The best possible time will be before you reach them, as you head towards them. In Figure 2, the direct head-on encounter, your AV and your opponent's AV should be very low or zero until you actually over run your opponent, at which point it will suddenly peak. Firing your weapons on top of your opponent in this situation, with both of you moving in opposite directions, will probably miss, regardless of the fact that you will be at range zero. Figure 3, the oblique approach, is one of the best compromises. Your AV and your opponent's AV will be significant, but not impossible, and allows for some unique tactical decisions that will ultimately zero-out AV for rear-firing weapons.

Let me explain AV situation 3 a bit better. Here it is for reference:

Opponent

You
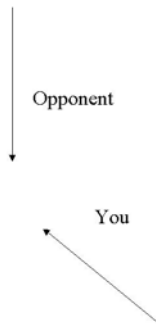
You are approaching your opponent from about a 30-45 degree angle. Both of you will be moving at a high rate of speed. Your opponent's AV will be low to moderate – your AV from his/her viewpoint will probably be about the same.
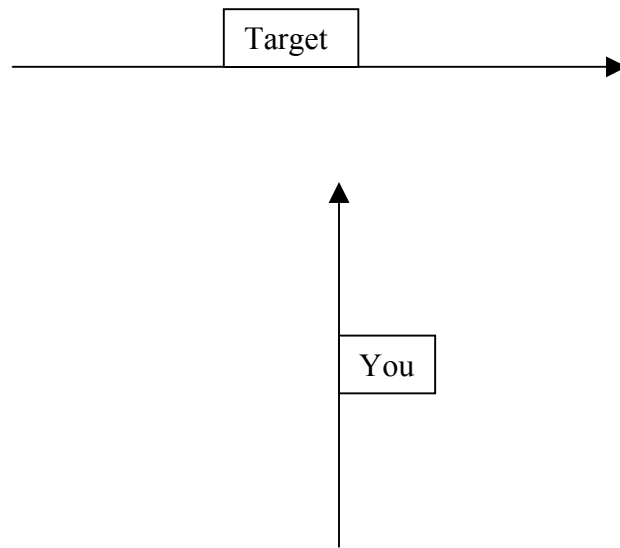
When you reach the point at the tip of the arrow in relation to your opponent you start a HET and fire you forward weapons. As you start to cross in front of your opponent, your HET occurs and you turn directly in front of your opponent, presenting your rear shields and weapons directly in front of them. Now – this is the important part – your opponent's AV at this point will be ZERO because you are both at the same angle, moving in the same direction, and you are directly in front of them. If you have significant rear-mounted weapons or a 360-degree weapon that has not fired yet, now is the time to fire. Fire, drop a mine, and immediately turn or throw your vessel into reverse if you can. The major drawbacks to this tactic can be twofold. If your opponent is ready for this maneuver, he may have a tractor beam ready, which really throws a wrench into your plan, and at the one brief moment of zero AV, if he has not already fired his forward weapons, then he will also have a window of opportunity to slam home a volley that could bring down your rear shields. However, odds are that your opponent will exchange fire with you initially as you approach, which means that his forward weapons will still be recharging when you pull this cute maneuver.

Figures 4 and 5 are very good ways to minimize AV because you both are basically moving in the same general direction. Figure 4 is a bit dangerous if your opponent has significant rear weapons. Figure 5 is actually the best possible option out of all of the examples above – most vessels have very few weapons that cover that specific arc, and therefor it is highly unlikely that you will be taking fire, while all of your own forward weapons can fire at the target with only low to moderate AV factors involved.

Speed plays an important role in AV. The faster you are actually moving, the harder it is to hit your opponent, especially if you are moving at different angles or opposite directions. Typically, the greater the angle, higher the speed, and the more extreme the direction of movement (with movement in opposite directions being the greatest) the more AV there will be.

In some cases, you would think that this situation might generate an optimum firing solution:

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That is not necessarily the case unless the target is slow moving (like a freighter). If the target is a fast mover, odds are you are going to miss, despite the fact that you are firing at the widest part of the target vessel.

Lastly, there is one system that instantly negates AV, and that is the tractor. A tractored target has a zero AV by default, although pulling off a HET while tractored will generate AV temporarily. If you are tractored, or tractoring an opponent, your odds of hitting are very high because AV no longer becomes a factor unless you or your target are pulling off a High Energy Turn.

b.   Using Reverse Movement - Do's, Don'ts, and the Kaufmann Retrograde

Reverse movement can result in some interesting tactical possibilities. How fast you can move in reverse depends on what your maximum impulse speed is. You can move in reverse at one quarter of your maximum speed. If your maximum speed is 40, then you can move at speed 10 in reverse, which can be a significant speed in most engagements.

The most obvious use for reverse movement is to be able to move backward while presenting your forward weapons toward your target for an extended period of time. In this situation, your opponent will be subject to your forward fire, and won't be able to escape that forward arc unless they manage to either out-turn or over run you by moving faster. Reverse movement also reduces the AV factor when engaging your opponent because you will probably be moving in the same direction, even though you are facing each other.

In Star Fleet Battles, the boardgame that inspired Starfleet Command, there is a tactic/maneuver called the Kaufmann Retrograde. Essentially, the idea is to approach a target head-on, and at a specific point, start moving in reverse with your forward shields and weapons oriented towards

your target. This maneuver is most often used in base assaults. When using this tactic, the idea is to put maximum power to your forward shields and overload all of your weapons. Theoretically, you should be able to take any hits from your target on your forward, heavily reinforced shields, while firing your weapons in response.

There are some very neat tricks and tips that a player can use in conjunction with reverse movement. Let me share one with you. At the start of an engagement, put your ship into full reverse. Once you have reached your maximum reverse speed, orient your vessel towards your target, reinforce your forward shields, and hit your tactical warp. When you are about range 30 moving at warp, come out of warp – you will appear at range 5-8 in front of your target while your target is moving towards you. When you come out of warp, fire. YOU WILL STILL BE MOVING IN REVERSE! Warp movement does not affect your inertia and impulse movement. After you fire, you will still be moving in front of your target in reverse, and your opponent will probably still be in your forward sights for at least one other primary weapons volley.

Reverse can also be used to affect angular velocity, or as a surprise move to put you into the rear arcs of your opponent if you are at close quarters. One other common reverse movement tactic will be the tractor-mine slam. The idea is to lock on a strong tractor and throw your vessel into reverse movement while dropping mines. As you move backwards, your mines arm and explode on the tractored target's shields. It is a very effective way to augment your weapons fire against a pinned target.

There are some drawbacks to using reverse movement. When moving in reverse, you are not able to turn as quickly as when you are moving forward. Also, when you are transitioning from forward movement to reverse movement, you eventually reach a point in between where your velocity is zero – at this point your angular velocity in respect to your opponent will be very low, perhaps even zero, regardless of range. This makes you vulnerable for a moment or two until you can once again build up some velocity.

c. Tractor Beams

Tractor beams will be a key part of all tactics considerations. In SFC III, they are much more important than they were in SFC2.

In SFC2 Tractor Beams were used to pin other ships for guided weapons strikes. In SFC 3, there are no guided weapons, but the principles are much the same with some important differences. A tractored target can't escape, can't launch shuttles, can't cloak, and their AV is zero.

The only way to escape a tractor beam is to have one of your own set on "repel". Additionally, most tractor beams do not last forever – how long it lasts depends on the mass of the vessel being tractored, the type of tractor your ship mounts, your vessel's mass, and the relative engine power between the two vessels.

The AI loves tractor beams. Tractor beams lock on at range 3, so avoiding a tractor beam is often as simple as simply not closing within that range.

The Borg is especially dangerous with tractors because their tractor beams, unlike all of the other races, is actually a weapon as well as a tractor. The Borg Tractor weapon will literally rip other ships apart. Large Borg ships with level five tractors are very dangerous. Additionally, the Borg Cube is very vulnerable to another tractor tactic, and that is to tractor another Borg or AI vessel and ram it into the Cube. The Cube is the only vessel in the game that can be rammed, or that can ram you. This tactic can cause significant damage to the Cube if done correctly.

d. Tactical Warp

Tactical warp will probably be one of the most controversial systems in the game because it will allow a player to depart a tactical battle easily. It also adds a tactical dimension to the game that will prove challenging to most players. Tactical Warp can be difficult to control if you don't have a sense of timing. Depending on the experience level of your Engineer, there is a delay when you first enter warp speed.

When traveling at warp speed, you have no shields, and you can be targeted and hit with weapons fire from your opponent. Additionally, you can't steer while you are warping, and it is easy to hit solid objects, destroying your vessel, if you are not careful. When you are exiting warp you do not instantly transition – there is a short delay while you are still travelling at trans-light speeds. For example, if you are in warp, and you hit the button to take you out of warp at range 35 or 36, you will come out of warp at about range 10 to your target. Timing your entrance and exits out of warp is a skill that can has to be developed by you as a player.

In a nutshell, tactical warp allows you to:

(1) Close the distance between you and your opponent quickly
(2) Escape from battle
(3) Change the conditions of engagement
(4) Allow for unexpected flanking attacks from distant allies (especially when used with a cloaking device).

e. Cloaking 101

In previous Starfleet Command titles the cloak has mostly been a running joke. It is almost never used in a player vs. player game because the cloak in SFC 1, 2 EAW, and 2 OP did not truly cloak the player – the opponent could still see the enemy ship – where it went and what it did, and the opponent could still shoot at the cloaked ship, while the cloaked ship could not fire back. It was a very one-sided proposition. About the only practical use for the cloak in previous SFC titles was to break lock-on for seeking weapons…and sometimes that even did not work. Some seeking weapons still had a chance to hit, depending on when the cloak took place and how close the seekers were to impact. As a Mirak player, I gained great enjoyment watching a cloaked player disintegrate under a drone barrage that did not lose lock on immediately. For the cloaked player, it was very frustrating and a bit of a letdown.

Now we come to SFC III, and we have a real cloak. Sure, there are some drawbacks, but the truth is that this version of the cloak is tactically sound, and has useful strategic applications.

This section is meant to open up some eyes to the potential of the cloak, and to give some insight to those players who have not played Romulan or Klingon extensively. Much of what is in this document are tactics that I have either seen used against me, or that I have used against other opponents in the D3.
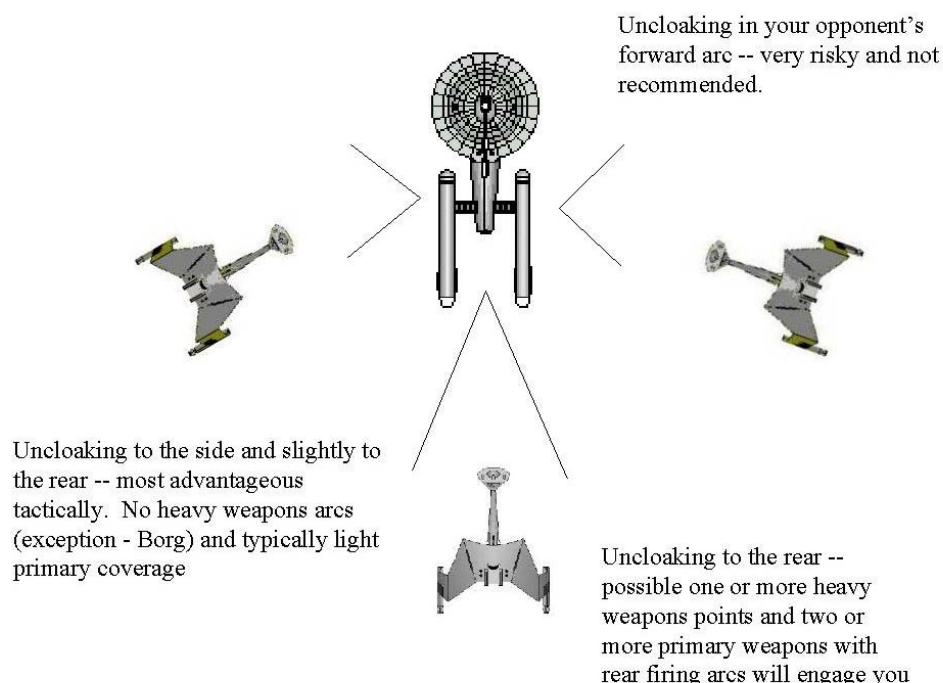
Basic Uses and Tactics

Cloaking in SFC III results not only in your enemy not being able to target or fire on you, you also gain actual invisibility on the tactical battlefield.

Being physically invisible gives you the feeling of being a voyeur. You can see every move that your opponent is making, but he/she can't see you. You zip around the board with tactical warp, cloaked, while your opponent is casting about for your location, completely clueless in most cases as to where you actually are.

But it goes much deeper than that. Here is where the tactics comes in to play. Some of this is instinctive, and some of it isn't. I will start with the instinctive part.

We all know that that most SFC III ships are weakest in terms of firepower to the rear (exception – some Federation vessels). So where do you want to uncloak? BEHIND your opponent, of course! If you know your enemy ships well enough, you can even usually uncloak in an arc that normally is not covered – there are very few vessels that will have weapons coverage across every arc. Uncloaking behind or at an angle behind your opponent puts you in an immediately advantageous tactical position. Please note – the only exception to this will be the Borg, which always has 360 degree heavy and primary weapons coverage. This diagram shows the most advantageous arcs for uncloaking against a Federation opponent:

<u>**Advantageous Uncloaking Arcs**</u>

Uncloaking in your opponent's forward arc -- very risky and not recommended.

Uncloaking to the side and slightly to the rear -- most advantageous tactically. No heavy weapons arcs (exception - Borg) and typically light primary coverage

Uncloaking to the rear -- possible one or more heavy weapons points and two or more primary weapons with rear firing arcs will engage you

Nearly any arc in the rear half of your opponent is advantageous, but the best possible arc to uncloak in is either the left or right rear quarters. The important thing to remember is that with the exception of the Borg, no race mounts heavy weapons that have side firing arcs, and primary weapon coverage in that quarter should be light or even non-existent. If you uncloak directly behind your opponent, be careful. There might be a fully charged heavy weapon ready to slam into you before your shields can come back up. Most cruiser-sized and above vessels have a heavy weapons mount that has a narrow rear arc, and most experienced players will put some sort of heavy weapon back there "just in case." When I play Federation, for example, I usually have one or more photon torpedo tubes pointing to my rear for tailgaters and careless Romulans. It is worth remembering this fact.

Cloaking does have its drawbacks. First – you don't have any shields, and you can't fire your weapons when you are cloaked (although you CAN do damage – see the advanced cloaking tricks and tips for more information!). What the cloak basically does for you is to give you a short time of invulnerability and basically a "free move" to set yourself up for a critical blow against your opponent. Although it is unlikely that you will destroy your opponent with a single volley, using the cloak several times to deal out damage in arcs where your opponent either already has a shield down, or can't return effective fire, will give you the battle every time.

The Cloak can also be used defensively, also. It allows you to disengage from immediate danger and tactically warp away without your opponent knowing what direction you have gone in. This can be valuable if you need to repair and then return to battle from an unexpected direction.

Advanced Cloaking Tips and Tricks

This is the "nitty gritty" of cloaking tactics. Some of it can be complicated, but if used effectively, the tips and tricks here can be a combat multiplier for the Cloak enthusiast.

First, let's talk about computers. Computers are the bane for any cloak-capable vessel, but they are only dangerous under certain circumstances. Only the higher-end computers can detect a cloaked ship, and even then it is sometimes "hit or miss" depending on what level of cloak you possess. If a computer detects you, your opponent can lock on and fire weapons at you while you are cloaked. Suddenly, the tables are turned – he can see you and fire on you, but you can't fire back and you have no shields. If you are too close, this can spell disaster.

If you are in a Dynaverse environment, odds are that at least at the very beginning, the starting ships will not have high-end computers. Without a high-end computer – class four or above – a cloaked opponent has all of the advantages. Smaller vessels have lower mass limitations, which means that computer power is often sacrificed for other systems, such as transporters, armor, or tractor capability. Bridge and Hull systems share mass limitations.

Bottom line – If you are facing an enemy frigate (or even possibly a destroyer) and you are in a vessel that has the cloak, odds are that your opponent will be unable to detect you once you are cloaked. This means that you control the battlefield, and can conceivably control every move in the battle, to include the ones made by your opponent! You control when and where fire is

exchanged, and you control how your opponent moves by forcing him/her to protect down shields, etc.

Now – what about those times that you think you are facing an opponent that has the ability to scan for cloaked ships? Well, there are some answers to that also. First, you must realize that scanning for cloaked ships is not an automatically successful process. Secondly, you have to realize that it takes time. Basically, the enemy ship "pings" the space around it, looking for the cloaked ship. It is very similar to an Allied destroyer pinging sonar for a German U-boat in World War II.

It takes time to build up a "ping." It pays to know exactly how many seconds you have once your opponent starts pinging for you – pings have a rhythm and there is a blind interval between pings, or at least there seems to be. If a ping comes up negative, you have until the next ping to accomplish your attack still undetected. If you are facing an experienced player that has an upper end ship, most likely that player will have a high-end computer – depending on when your opponent starts pinging, you will have perhaps 10-15 seconds to cloak, engage warp to close the distance, uncloak, and fire, before the next ping cycle builds up.

Additionally, the better your cloak, the harder it is to find you and the faster your shields come up when you uncloak. Always carry the heaviest cloak you can if you intend to use the cloak tactically.

Another tip – If you can, target your opponent's computer for concentrated fire. Even the largest Federation battleship in the game will fall to a Romulan light cruiser if it has no computer, or a disabled computer with degraded functionality.

Cloaked vessels and starbases. Interestingly enough, starbases appear to ignore cloaked ships. It sounds cold…but launch a shuttle then cloak if you are seeking to avoid damage from a starbase. It will take out the shuttle but you should be able to cloak successfully and hide from the starbase sensors. It is possible that a starbase may start pinging for your ship, but at least you will have enough of a reprieve to warp out and reposition for your next strike.

General tips that can prove valuable:

a. Do not enter tractor range while cloaked. Very dangerous, especially against a vessel that might be able to detect you.
b. If you cross over your opponent while cloaked, your opponent will see the silhouette of your ship crossing the illuminated shields. Your opponent can't lock on or fire, but he/she can see what direction you are going and what shield facing you will be at if you uncloak immediately.
c. If you launched shuttles, be careful. They may betray your general location because they tend to warp with the mother ship if the mother ship warps out.
d. Armor can be valuable since it is likely that you will take a few shots against hull while in the process of cloaking and uncloaking. Do not ignore armor when refitting in the shipyard.
e. Always carry mines. They are a nasty surprise when combined with cloaking tactics.

f. If you are detected while cloaked and take enemy fire, tactically warp out and uncloak, then cloak again if necessary to break the lock on.

g. Know your starships, especially those you will be meeting in battle – many vessels (Federation and Borg especially) have 360-degree primary hardpoints that can engage you no matter where you uncloak. Time your cloak accordingly – if possible, uncloak when you think the 360 primary has already fired.

Countering the Cloak, the Game of Hide and Seek

Now we are going to move on to cloak countermeasures. This is valuable information for both the player who will be fighting cloaked ships regularly (Federation or Borg), and the player who uses the cloak – just to give them an idea of what sorts of things a tricky Federation Captain might do to catch you.

Countering the cloak starts at the shipyard in the refit screen. You need to mount an advanced computer with anti-cloak scan to even be remotely successful against a cloaking opponent. Without the right sort of computer, your only option might be to disengage if you are facing a cloaking opponent.

You need to have a class four or higher computer in order to be able to scan for cloaked ships.

Generally speaking, when I am playing Federation and I venture into Romulan space or am facing a Romulan player, the very first thing I do after going to red alert is to start my anti-cloak scan, even if my opponent has not cloaked yet. This is a prudent thing to do because it takes time to build up a "ping" to find a cloaked opponent. If the timing is just right, you might find yourself instantly detecting a cloaked opponent as soon as they cloak.

Once you are in the battle and your opponent is using cloak tactics, there are several things that you can do to make their life absolutely miserable. First off, do not make the common mistake of sitting still and turning around in circles looking for the cloaked ship. Sometimes this works, but it also makes you a stationary target. Instead, perform short tactical warps in different directions every time. You have to understand that the whole purpose of being cloaked is so that they can uncloak, say "surprise" and unload the latest toy from Romulan (or Klingon) weapons research and development on your shields in the most awkward place possible. By changing directions frequently and using short tactical warps, you will frustrate and upset these carefully laid plans.

Next, once your opponent starts to uncloak, you will be able to detect them. If you can, fire immediately before their shields are up, then tactically warp out, hopefully before they can bring the full force of all of their weapons to bear – this is difficult to do, but unless you are facing a Romulan veteran, odds are that not all of their forward weapons will immediately be able to focus on you all at once – they will still have some minor jockeying to do to get everything in line. Odds are that your opponent will be uncloaking in one of your blind spots. If this happens you have basically three choices – immediately do a high energy turn to engage him with your forward weapons, tactically warp out, or slap a level one tractor on him and rotate him to your forward arc. You have to be ready and have lightning-quick reflexes if you plan to survive the

pain that is coming your way. Lastly, and this is an important note, when a ship is in the cloaking transition and it takes fire, the cloak is temporarily interrupted. If you can possibly fire one weapon at a time, you can prevent a cloaking opponent from cloaking for a period of time while gaining hits on their bare hull.

Countering the Cloak – Nasty Surprises to Turn the Tables

Facing a cloaking opponent can be frustrating and time consuming, but there are a lot of nasty things you can do to turn the tables.

Tactical battle with a cloaking opponent is basically a cat and mouse chess game. Here are some tricks to make him the mouse and you the cat.

a. Use your mines to control the terrain. Cloaked or not, a mine is an obstacle to a cloaked ship. Cut off your opponent's options and force them to play your game. The main limitation to this tactic is the fact that you only have a limited number of mines.
b. Launch all of your shuttles in "defend me" mode. When that Romulan or Klingon uncloaks in weapons range, your shuttles will open fire once they can detect him. Surprise! Damage directly to hull.
c. Pull a "crazy Ivan" (a random high energy turn) every once in a while – this will cause the cloaked opponent to suspect that you know where he/she is and may cause them to uncloak prematurely. It may also present a new shield or even put them in your forward arc just as they are uncloaking. Not a good place to be! Another option is to hold off on pulling HETs, but be ready as soon as you detect a cloaked ship or are notified that a vessel is uncloaking, then use the HET to bring weapons to bear before the uncloaking vessel can re-establish their shields.
d. Always, ALWAYS be ready with a tractor beam. Nothing rains on their parade more than being tractored while cloaked!

Now for the sneaky stuff. The "getting into your opponent's head" type of strategy that will really make this game fun. If you are in a ship with an advanced computer and you have detected your opponent, it pays not to immediately fire. In fact, I would start going around in circles, making your opponent think that you are still clueless, luring him in closer while I power up a tractor beam, then at the last minute, pull a high energy turn and lock a tractor on him while unloading all of my forward weapons! This can ruin a cloaking opponent's day in a BIG way. The key here is to trick your opponent into thinking that you don't see him, when you actually do. Also remember, even after detecting a cloaked target, your detection time is limited. If you can't close the range, it pays to fire right away in any case.

Next, keep your heavy weapons overloaded if you have a rear-firing heavy. This is a nasty surprise for the occasional careless Romulan or Klingon that uncloaks directly behind you. If you don't have heavies facing to the rear, then keep your primaries overloaded and have your rear primaries up and ready to fire as soon as you detect your opponent uncloaking.

Use surgical targeting – specific system targeting – to disable systems on your cloaking opponent. If you can target the cloak, do so. Taking that ability away from your opponent can drastically change the whole aspect of the battle.

Closing Comments

The cloaking device does not unbalance the game, but it is now a critical tactical consideration for SFC III, unlike previous titles.

When engaging an experienced cloaking opponent, automatically assume that if you both know what you are doing, that the battle is not going to be over very quickly. In fact, it will probably last a very long time even though it will be fast moving.

If you are unfortunate enough to be involved in a battle with several cloak-capable opponents, it will be difficult for you to focus on one opponent at a time. In this situation if you are in a vessel that cannot cloak, my best advice is to constantly move and take your shots as soon as you can against cloaked opponents. You must disable or destroy an opponent as quickly as possible to cut down the odds. In one battle where I piloted a Romulan Heavy Cruiser (Hawk) I had two fleetmembers with me in Romulan frigates. We were facing a single Federation Heavy Battlecruiser – a Nebula. Even though the firepower equation might have been considered nearly even under normal circumstance, and even though the Nebula was more than capable of taking out either or both Romulan frigates with one or two volleys, because all three of us could cloak and present multiple tactical problems to the Federation pilot, none of us took any significant damage, while we crippled the Federation ship very quickly. Multiple cloaked opponents are a Federation Pilot's worst nightmare.

The Borg has to be treated somewhat differently, both as a player piloting a Borg vessel, and as a cloaking player encountering the Borg. The Borg mount heavy weapons that cover all arcs, so no matter where you uncloak, you will be in one or more heavy weapons arcs. The same is true of their primary weapons. The Borg also has a tractor beam that causes damage.

Tactically speaking, the Borg might be the most dangerous opponent for a cloaking opponent. You must always assume that you will take damage no matter what arc you uncloak in against the Borg. Getting within tractor range of a Borg and uncloaking is suicide.

Bottom line – the Cloak is a valuable and tactically dangerous tool. Learning how to use it and learning how to counter it will become one of the tactical keys to success in SFC III.

8. How to Survive and Be Successful as a Player in the Dynaverse

The best path to success in the D3 lay with the willingness to be part of a cooperative fleet. I do not mean go out and join one of the racial fleets like the KBF, etc, what I mean is that those players that travel and battle as part of a fleet, either with other players or with one or two AI captains with them, will meet with more success than the "lone wolf" on the frontier.

The players that routinely participate in fleets that have one or two other human players will typically meet with the most success on a regular basis. Player fleets will be able to concentrate their effort in carefully coordinated strikes against other targets. A fleet of three Humans in light cruisers will be far more dangerous than a single human in a heavy Battlecruiser, or even in a Dreadnought, although that sometimes depends on the skill of the players involved and the systems/ships involved. In one instance where I was piloting a Borg Sphere against two human opponents (one in a Vorcha, one in an Akira), I managed to destroy the Vorcha and damage the Akira before my Sphere met its maker. Typically, it should not have happened that way.

An additional tool that adds to your success is Roger Wilco. Roger Wilco will permit you to communicate directly with your fleetmates both in and out of battle. This can be very important, especially if you are battling other players.

And most importantly – go out there with the intention to have fun and you just can't go wrong. Any setback or defeat is easily overcome with time, patience, and persistence, and all setbacks, no matter what it is, will be temporary. Prestige can always be earned.

I hope this guide has been valuable to you, and I hope that it has provided you with some helpful tips and tricks for your initial forays into the D3.

Remember – Good Hunting, Have Fun, and Good Luck (GH, HF, GL!), and I hope to see you in the Dyna!

-Tempest.