SWORD
II
OF THE STARS
LORDS OF WINTER

BEGINNERS GUIDE

v1.3

"We are not alone..."

Emblems of the Tarkasian Empire

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Who are the Lords of Winter?

Welcome to *Sword of the Stars II.* With its combination of fast-paced action, dynamic research tree, multi-player support and slick interface, we hope that Sword of the Stars II provides players with an immense gaming experience.

Be prepared to be sucked into an titanic conflict spanning a constellation of galaxies. Where seven fledgling species struggle to survive the onslaught of the remnants of the Elder races – *The Lords of Winter*. Get ready to venture across the vast emptiness of space. To colonize distant worlds. Take part in devastating battles between large fleets of powerful starships, armed with weapons of advanced technology, beyond your wildest of dreams. *Dare you become the Sword of the Stars.*

What is Sword of the Stars II – Lords of Winter?

Sword of the Stars II is essentially a 4X space strategy game set in the hostile depths of intergalactic space. The basic goals of the game are to: 1) e**X**plore, 2) e**X**pand, 3) e**X**ploit and 4) e**X**terminate. Hence the acronym **4X**.

As the leader of your particular empire you must assume control of one of six unique galactic species. Your goal is straightforward - take your species and propel it to their destiny among the stars.

Space: The Last Frontier

The premise is simple. Take control of and manage every aspect of your empire including: *exploration*, *colonization*, *research*, *ship-building*, *diplomacy*, *revenue & trade* and *warfare*. Befriend, annihilate or assimilate any opposition you meet along the way. Develop and construct fleets of spaceships to defeat all who stand in your way. Most of all, be wary of the threat posed by the all-powerful Lords of Winter. Lest they turn their gaze upon you and destroy your empire in the blink of an eye.

Intended Audience

This guide has been written predominately for first-time players of the game. Those new to the 4X genre may also find it a useful read. Players of the original game may also find some sections of use, in terms of appreciating the basic differences in gameplay, between this game and it's predecessor.

☐ If you are looking for strategy tips, try to seek them within the **SOTS2 Wiki**:

> **http://www.kerberos-productions.com/forums/index.php**

☐ Or on the game's forum hosted at:

> **http://forum.paradoxplaza.com/forum/forumdisplay.php?**
> **488-Sword-of-the-Stars-II.**

☐ You may also wish to read the **Game Manual** which explains how to use the interface in more depth, as well as expanding on the core game features mentioned within this guide.

A Zuul Battleship

GETTING STARTED

Sword of the Stars II games are essentially played as one-off *sand-box* scenarios. What this means is that certain aspects of your game can be configured in a variety of ways, to suit your preferences. Parameters are set on the *Game Set-up Screen*, shown below. Once the game begins these parameters cannot be altered. The values set determine the rivals and enemies you will face, how the action may unfold and ultimately the
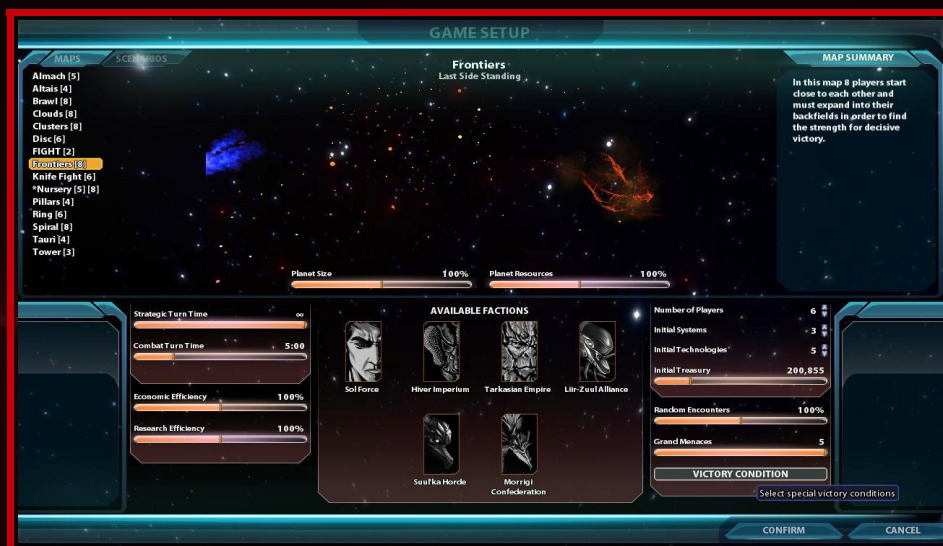
Game Set-up Screen

journey you will experience. If your preference is for *long games* then choose one of the larger maps [Size 7 or 8]. If you like to *explore* and *colonize* without too many interruptions, reduce the number of players [to 3 or 4]. Those who prefer to get into the *action quickly* may try increasing the efficiency ratings [to 100+] and increase the number of starting colonies and technologies. Players desiring a *difficult challenge* can set random encounters and grand menaces to their maximum.

WHAT TO MANAGE

In order to emerge victorious players will need to familiarize themselves with the main aspects of gameplay. These are:

☐ *Exploration* – Take your fleets of ships and navigate them across space.   Travel to and chart every star-system of the known galaxy.

☐ *Colonization* – Find, identify and land colonists on planets capable of supporting your species.

☐ *Revenue* – Generate as many credits as possible by increasing the number of colonies in your empire, and by trading and mining resources. Reduce your expenditure through research.

☐ *Research* – Study and discover many advance technologies.   Do so before any enemies can gain an advantage that proves decisive.

☐ *Colony Management* – Terraform and upgrade colony infrastructure.   Construct and upgrade orbital space-stations to maximize the capabilities and efficiency of your colonies.

☐ *Ships & Fleets* – Design, commission and maintain the most advanced fleet of space-faring vessels in existence. Use them to protect the empire and crush any enemy fleets encountered.
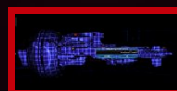
☐ *Diplomacy & War* – Conduct diplomacy and arrange treaties when at peace. Command and control all available fleets and defensive installations during times of war.

☐ *Empire Governance* – Ensure that the empire runs as smoothly as possible by managing fundamental aspects of your empire's population, morale and territorial boundaries.

THE CYCLE

The phases of gameplay employed in 4x games is demonstrated in the simple cycle shown below.

Surveying Systems		**War & Diplomacy**
Explore ←		**Exterminate**
Colonization	**Acquiring Revenue**	
Expand →		**Exploit**
Ship Production	**Station Construction**	**Terraform & Upgrade Infrastructure**
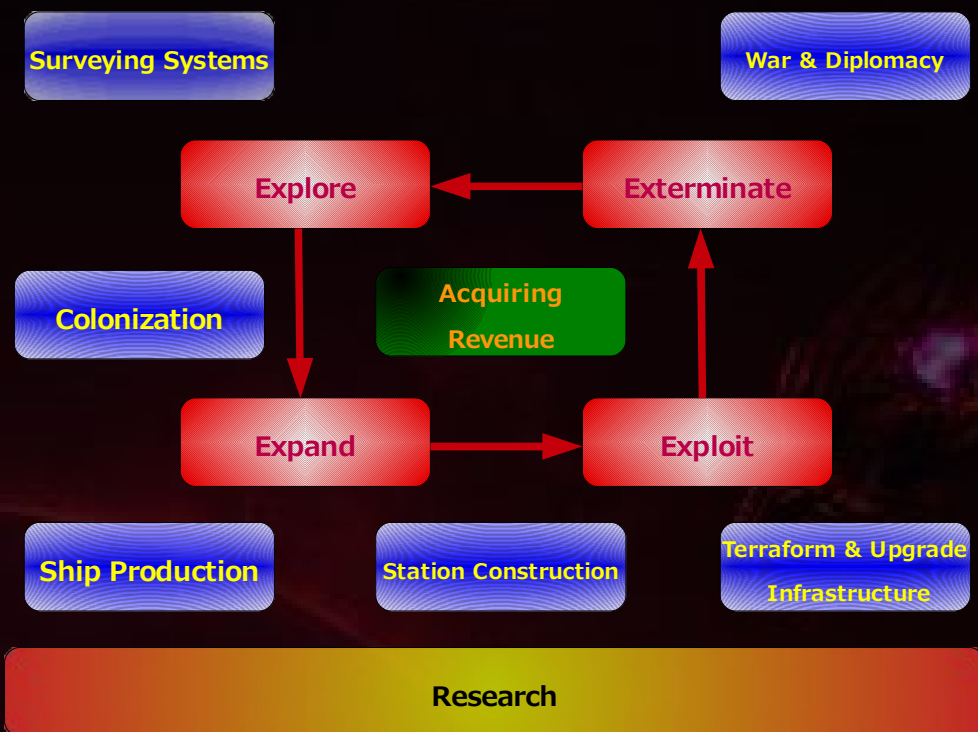
Research

For the most part a balanced approach should govern your overall strategy during times of peace. It will need to be refined accordingly, depending on the situation. Research and revenue gathering should be your priority during every turn. Except perhaps when at war. Especially if outnumbered or outclassed. Therefore during peace try to acquire as much revenue as possible, conduct research in non-war tech., construct civilian stations and colonize as many worlds as you can afford. During wartime focus on expanding your fleet and building defensive stations.

THE RACE AGAINST TIME

Tick, tock. Tick. Tock. As the sands of time run down victory or defeat looms closer. As Sword of the Stars II is a *turn-based* affair it is wise to remember that every turn progressed is a step closer the enemy (A.I. or other players) takes towards their own goals. More importantly they will move a step closer to stopping you from achieving your own goals. So as when playing a game of chess, it pays to plan ahead.
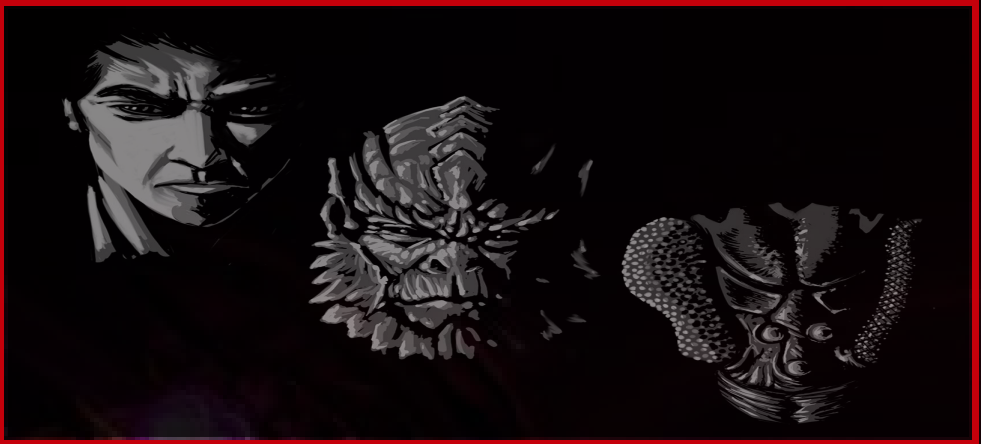
Faces in the dark: Human, Tarka & Hiver

Every action taken could be a waste of resources, assets and time if nothing is achieved with them. In the back of your mind always consider how precious time and resources could be better spent elsewhere, on other tasks or missions. Take heed that proximity to other species will almost certainly hamper your ability to expand the empire quickly and without conflict. The starting configuration of the game may also limit how successful your empire can eventually become. Such as, a high number of players on a small sized of the map, will result in each faction starting on the doorstep of another.

Core Goals

The premise of the game is fairly straightforward to comprehend. Your core goals should always be to create and maintain as many *Colonies and Fleets* as possible. Without one, the other is not possible.

Primary Goals

☐ *Colonies* are the lifeblood of the empire. Their role is vital in providing the platform for your empire's rise to power. They retain *Resources* and *Population* which form the basis of revenue in Imperial Credits. Colonies can be upgraded through the construction of *Space Stations* which can increase many aspects of productivity and defense.

On Patrol: A Fleet in an Unknown Quadrant

☐ *Fleets* are used for all manner of strategic actions. From colonizing planets, to defending them from attack. They do so by undertaking *Missions.* It is important to note that most actions in the game can only be performed by fleets. So the more fleets at your disposal the more actions can be performed at any given time and the larger the area that can be covered. Fleets require a large amount of credits to maintain.

☐ *Exploration* is the key to early success. Knowing where planets exists that are good candidates for colonization and uncovering the location of potential enemies and allies, will allow for a more coherent strategy.

SECONDARY GOALS

Aim to achieve secondary goals whenever possible. Doing so will allow you to make hard decisions a little more quickly and a lot more easily.

☐ *Research (R&D)* is the conduit from which all aspects of the empire can be improved. There are 14 tech trees, many with multiple branches to be discovered. Technologies greatly enhance all manner of capabilities including: fleet combat, R&D breakthrough speed, colonization efficiency, to intelligence gathering or even diplomacy.

☐ Trade & Commerce greatly enhances your empire's revenue income. Freighter fleets can be sent out to establish trading routes with friendly planets, within your empire and those belonging to neutral or allied rivals. Mining vessels can be sent to exploit the rich resources of the galaxy's planets and asteroids. These options require some research before they can be called upon.

☐ *Imperial Credits* must be acquired throughout the game. Your ability to undertake any actions will be impaired or blocked without these. The *Empire Manager* provides a breakdown of expenditure and revenue. Most game actions deduct varying amounts of credits from the *Treasury*. Remember that revenue can only be generated in a limited number of ways. Expenditure on the other hand can easily race out of control.

☐ *Intelligence* is mainly a by-product of exploration. Though through research and the construction of space-stations, a galactic sensor grid can be compiled to monitor the movements of rival fleets. Fleets can also be used to patrol explored star-systems.

☐ *Diplomacy* becomes important once contact is made with rival species. More so if your game has many different factions in play. The options available in diplomatic exchanges are dependent on the technologies researched. Chances of successful negotiations can also be increased through research.

VICTORY OBJECTIVES

The circumstances for achieving victory vary depending on the *Victory Conditions.* They are set up on the *Game Set-up Screen* at the start of the game. There are seven types each requiring a different approach to the strategy employed. Only one can be set active at a time. Once set it cannot be changed for the duration of the game. So choose carefully.

Last Side Standing
Last Capital Standing
Star Chambers
Gem Worlds
Provinces
Leviathans
Land Grab

Victory Conditions

Some objectives require a focus on certain aspects of the game over others. However for the majority of play a balanced approach should be adopted. *Land grab* for instance requires colony expansion over research. Yet in order to attain enough planets to win, the planets must be protected from harm. To ensure your empire remains intact, research advanced technologies so you can upgrade fleets in line with those of rival empires.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Sword of the Stars II is played in *Turns*. There are <u>three</u> phases to each turn.

The *Strategic Phase* which is followed by an *Automated Phase*, and then by the *Combat Phase*. The first and last phases are played on their own screens, the *Galaxy Screen* and the *Combat Screen*.
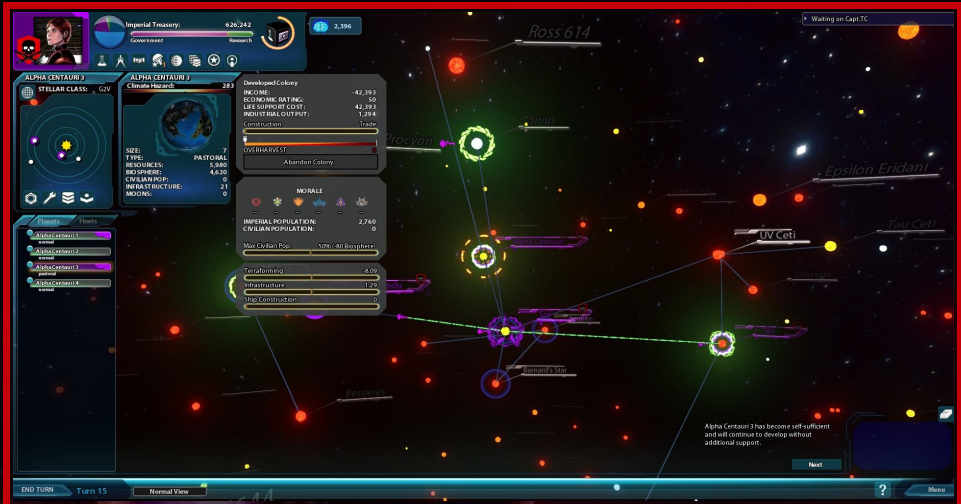
The Galaxy Screen

☐ The *First (Strategic) Phase* is where overall planning is conducted and the empire managed. *Strategic Actions* are initiated through this screen. Additional support screens for aspects such as research, empire management, colonies and ship building are all accessed from here. Actions are not actually performed during this phase. Instead they are queued ready to be conducted during the next phase. Once you are happy with any actions you have initiated, pressing the [END TURN] *End Turn* button, commences the second phase.

☐ The *Second (Operational) Phase* is automated. Action initiated during the previous phase are performed by the game engine and the results calculated. Once these have been completed, the final *Third (Combat) Phase* of the turn begins.
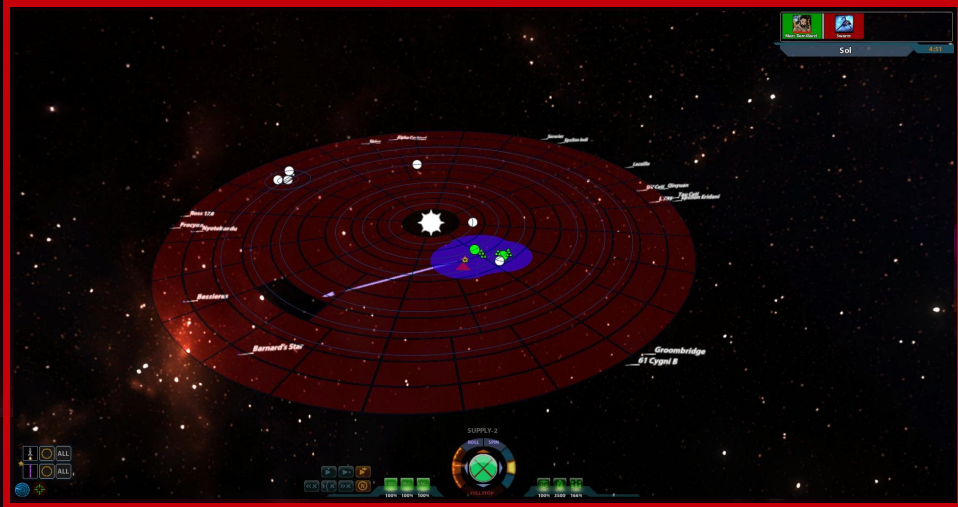
The Combat Screen

☐ The *Combat Phase* occurs when at least one encounter takes place between rival species. A list of star-systems for potential battles is presented to the player. Players can either choose to initiate or bypass combat. The option of simulated hands-off combat, where the action is summarized and the results shown, can also be chosen. Command of fleets can be initiated to attempt to achieve victory by your own hand. If the latter option is chosen, play is switched to the *Combat Screen* which starts as a tactical map.   Once two opposing forces meet, control your fleet of ships against the enemy forces and installations. If no battles take place, play returns to the *Strategic Phase* and a new turn starts.

FIRST STEPS

GAME START

The first step in any strategy is to determine what goals need to be accomplished immediately. Then to prepare for the goals that must follow. Look to develop a list of priorities and plan how best to achieve them, with the resources at your disposal. Every faction starts the game with equal amounts of assets, planets and resources. Actual quantities are determined by the parameters set on the *Game Set-up Screen*.

System Homeworld

PROTECTING THE HOMEWORLD

The *HomeworldSystem* is the seed of all things during the early stages of the game. It is can be seen on the *Galaxy Screen* as the system with the *Corona Civica* (Oak leaf crown) surrounding it, as seen above. Lose this system early and you will struggle to propagate your domain and leave your empire open to conquest. Ensure that you take immediate steps to protect the *Homeworld* by upgrading any *Naval Stations* and building additional *Cruisers*, at least until you are able to research better ship enhancing technologies.
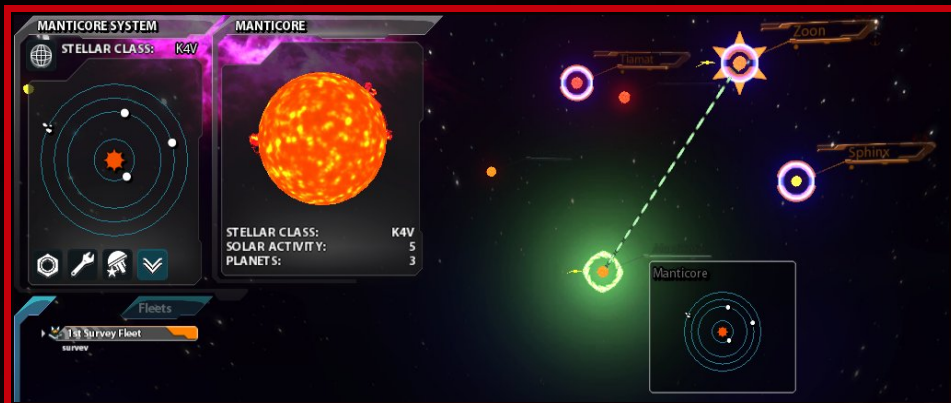
Exploring the Unknown

Exploring the unknown star-systems in the immediate vicinity of your homeworld should be another urgent priority for players. Doing so provides a two-fold benefit so new planets for potential colonization can be discovered and any potential threats identified. Select the starting *Survey Fleet*, located at your *Homeworld* and send it to the nearest unexplored system within its range. Afterall threats cannot be dealt with if their nature or location remain undetermined.

Territorial Control

Another urgent priority should be the colonization of unpopulated planets located in star-systems within range of the empire. These systems can be

Faces of the Morrigi

assessed for suitable candidates by selecting a system on the *Galactic Map* and then the *Planets* tab. Identify an unclaimed world and decide whether to colonize it. Note the color of each planet. Those colored green are easy to settle. While those in red may be colonized only if the required technologies are researched at a later date.

Planetary Bodies

QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE

Another immediate concern should be to decide upon an efficient research program. There are 14 different branches to research, each with a varying amount of technologies to uncover. Deciding those technologies to prioritize will help focus and not waste any effort on unnecessary subjects.

I.e. Focusing on ballistic weapons may provide an immediate advantage in that area, but rivals may possess shields impervious to those weapons, meaning those efforts to gain an advantage have been in vain. So remember to prioritize the technologies you research as circumstances dictate.
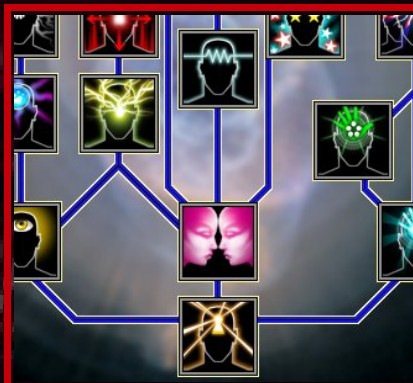
Psionics

MISSIONS

Most actions are conducted through the use of *Missions*. They are initiated on the *Galaxy Map*, during the *Strategy phase* of the turn. They are always performed on a star-system, near some object within its space; such as the orbit of a planet, star or asteroid field. The *Mission Menu* is displayed by right-clicking upon a target star-system on the map.

Missions: Step 1

Conducting a *Mission* is a multi-step process. First right-click on the target star-system on the *Galaxy Screen*. From the menu select the mission you wish to perform. Missions such as *Survey*, *Colonize*, *Relocate*, *Patrol*, *Interdict*, *Invade* or *Strike* will bring up a sub-screen to select which fleet is to conduct the mission, and the target planet of the mission. The *Build Station* option requires the selection of a target location, where the station will orbit. While *Upgrade Station* must be conducted upon an existing station.

Missions: Step 2

Mission Types

Most strategic actions require fleets to undertake a mission. The numerous missions available, can only be attempted if a particular ship type is part of the fleet. Missions are shown and described below:

☐ Survey missions allow fleets to be sent to map un-surveyed star-systems. The target system must be in range of the chosen fleet.
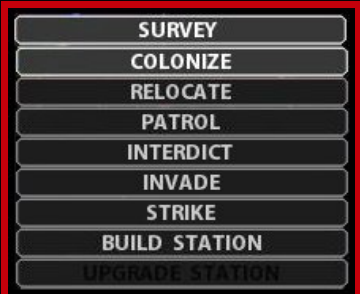
☐ *Colonize* missions require fleets with at least one ship containing a colonizer mission module. Uninhabited planets with an appropriate level of terraforming can be targeted These planets must also be in range of the fleet being used.

Mission Types

☐ *Relocate* missions allow fleets assigned to one star-system to be moved to a different one. This is very useful as fleets can be moved into the range of unreachable, far off planets.

☐ *Interdict* & *Patrol* missions allow fleets to be sent to a target star-system to actively search and engage any threat at that location.

☐ *Invade* & *Strike* missions allows fleets to offensively target enemy planets and either occupy them, eliminate the population or destroy the target planet's infrastructure.

☐ *Build Station* & *Upgrade Station* missions allow space stations to be created or upgraded. A fleet with a ship containing a construction module must be chosen for these tasks.

Mission Factors

Range plays a vital factor in the execution of a mission. It is essential to remember that every mission can only be attempted if the fleet is

TOTAL MISSION TIME	11 TURNS	
TRAVEL TIME	4 TURNS	?
SURVEY TIME	7 TURNS	?
COST	0 CREDITS	

Mission Duration

within *Range* of its current location, to the target system. Fleets can only be assigned to a mission if not already engaged on another. Missions in progress can only be canceled, they cannot be changed. Certain *Prerequisites* must also be in place before the order can be given. These vary depending on the mission. Some examples include: unclaimed systems, habitable planet or free slots for building stations.

Missions take a certain *Length of Duration* to accomplish. This number usually equals the number of turns needed to travel to the target and back, plus some turns to perform the action in question. Do not always expect the mission to be completed within that time, as it is an estimate. *Delays* are possible. Upon completing the mission assigned to them, fleets automatically return to the star-system they embarked from.

Changing Your Mind

Before committing to the execution of any mission, you can take the opportunity to review the *Mission Cost* in time and money, as provided in the *Mission Briefing Screen*. If the mission estimates are not to your liking, try sending another fleet or send that fleet to an alternate star-system, or cancel the mission entirely.

COLONIES

These are the vital organs of every empire. They are created by initiating a *Colonize Mission* in range of a *Colony Fleet.* Only unoccupied planets, capable of supporting life can be targeted for colonization.

FACTORS

Planets have a number of factors which are explained below:

Planetary Factors

☐ *Size* indicates the potential capability in terms of population of the planet. This is important for factors such as taxation and trade income.

☐ *Type* indicates whether the planet requires advanced technology to be settled or can be populated by any species.

☐ *Climate Hazard* indicates the ease of which the planet can be terraformed. The higher the rating, the less suitable it is for sustaining life. At least for some species. This rating can easily be reduced by increasing the *Terra-forming Slider* in the *Colony Management Panel*. Over time it can be reduced further through additional colonization support provided by Colony Fleets.

☐ *Biosphere* provides an indication of the maximum population numbers this planet will be able to support. The higher this number is, the higher the maximum population that can be housed on this particular colony.

☐ The *Civilian Pop* count will change depending on the number of colonists that are present. Population grows or declines depending on the circumstances of the planet each turn. The higher this value, the higher the productivity and the more tax income can be generated from the colony.
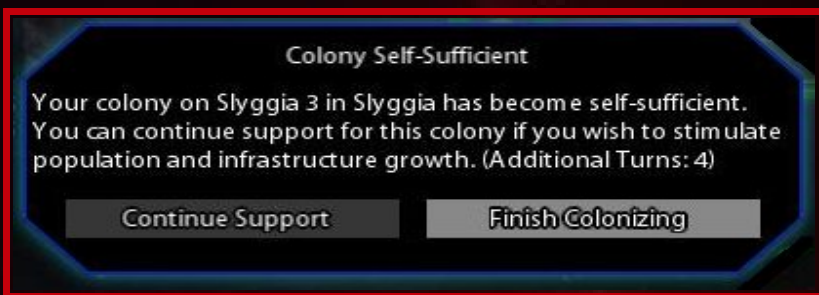
☐ *Resources* are the source of income that can be generated from ownership of the planet.

☐ *Infrastructure* represents the level of progress made in all areas of habitation. Together, the higher these values are, the more income can be generated from the planet.

☐ *Moons* represents the number of small planetoids that are in orbit around the particular planet in question.

COLONY SUPPORT

Once a *Colony Mission* has finished and the colony is constructed, *Additional Support* to the fledgling settlement can be provided. This helps the colony grow at a faster rate. Alternatively you can send the fleet back to its base. *Colony support* can be ordered multiple times.

Colony Self-Sufficient

Your colony on Slyggia 3 in Slyggia has become self-sufficient. You can continue support for this colony if you wish to stimulate population and infrastructure growth. (Additional Turns: 4)

Continue Support | Finish Colonizing

Colony Support

STAR-SYSTEM SCREEN

 If you need to find out more information about the planets in a particular star-system, click on the *Star-system* icon, on the left. Here you can see in more detail on the status of each planet that orbits
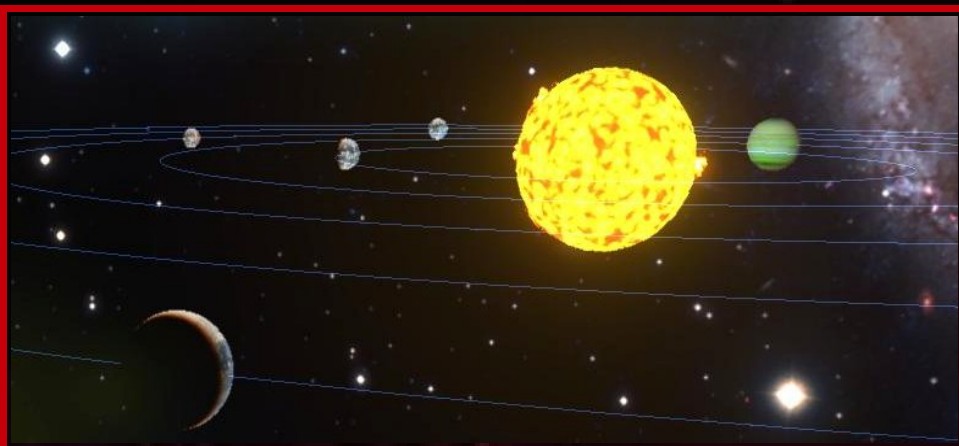
Star-system Screen

the star. As well as assessing which planets are suitable for colonization, you can view any colonies belonging to a rival species in this sector. Any space-stations located in the start-systems can also be seen here. You can only access this screen if the star-system has been surveyed by at least one of your fleets or knowledge of its location has been obtained from another faction.

Emblems of the Hiver

Colony Management

The *Colony Management Screen* allows you to monitor and manage the individual colonies of your empire. You will first see it when your ships create a colony and later during the game by pressing the *Star-system Icon* and selecting the colony you wish to review.

Colony output is represented by the *Construction-Trade* slider. Decide how much of your income you wish to spend on either or both.

You can increase the rate of development above safe limits with the *Over-harvest* slider.

Moving the *Biosphere* slider can increase the maximum population size a planet can hold beyond safe

Colony Management

limits. This will increase revenue but will likely result in decreased morale and ultimately planet-wide rioting.

Lastly choose which upgrades to prioritize from the *Terraforming*, *Infrastructure* and *Ship Construction* sliders. Every point put into one of these factors, is a point less that can be used to develop the others.

TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH

The *Research Screen* can be accessed by clicking on the icon seen on the left. The important thing to remember is that it will be almost impossible to research every technology in a single game.

Example Technology Tree

Research is pivotal in the development, expansion and most notably protection of your empire.   There are two fundamental research strategies one can choose to adopt.

Choose to research technologies that take the quickest time, effort and credits, across a broad spectrum of subjects. Thereby enabling you to learn more subjects in a specific amount of time. Otherwise focus on developing your knowledge of a few select branches, choosing to gain a technological superiority in those fields only. This will give you an advantage over your rivals, at least until they catch up.

RESEARCH STATES

When beginning a new game, only certain technologies are known about. Some of these can be researched immediately. Others may require a *Feasibility Study* before any real attempt can made to learn them.

Feasibility Studies are completed comparatively quickly compared to normal research. They provide an excellent indicator as to how efficiently a subject can be researched. The results are represented by the color of the lines connecting the nodes, in a technology tree. They can be interpreted at a glance when looking at the research screen. Each state is displayed by a different color, as seen in the example below.
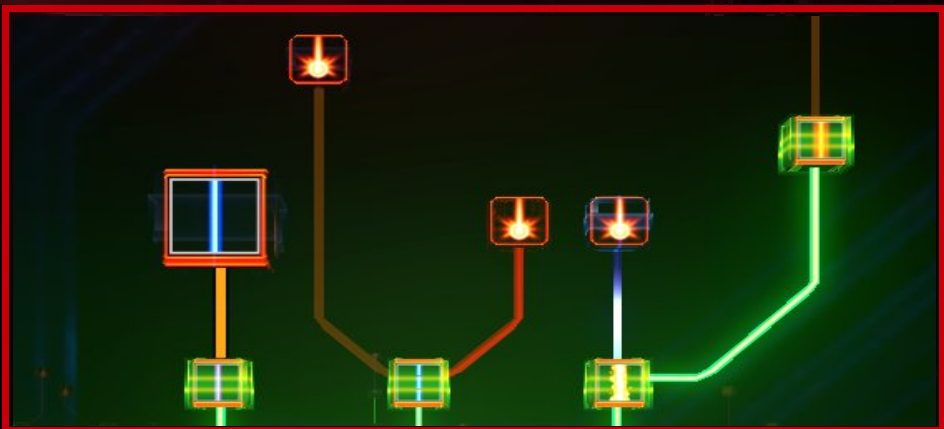
Research States

Red denotes techs that are virtually impossible to research. *Brown* denotes techs that are not as straightforward, but with some effort are attainable. *Orange* denotes techs that can be easily researched. *Green*

denotes techs already uncovered.   While *Blue* denotes unknown techs. Once the results of a feasibility study are known you can choose whether to progress with the current project or whether to switch to another.

MONITORING PROGRESS

You can keep an eye on the progress of the currently researched project by checking the icon on the *Galaxy Screen* (on the left), or from within the *Research Screen* (as seen on the right).

ENHANCED INFORMATION

Enhanced Details

Some technologies have detailed information which you can find by clicking on the *Details* button to display this additional information.   This extra knowledge is currently limited to weapon technologies.   The extra information provided should allow you to appreciate which weapons you wish to mount, onto which ships.   The following detailed information is shown: the *Rate of Fire*, plus the amount of damage that can be delivered against *Planetary Infrastructure*, *Population* and *Terraforming*.

FLEETS

Fleets are the workforce of your empire. Without them very little is possible. In order to use them effectively you need to know the basics.

FLEET MANAGER

 Once you have built your ships, they must be assigned to a fleet. You can conduct virtually all fleet configuration by clicking the *Fleet Manager* icon.

FLEET BASE

Every star-system has one base where all fleets are said to reside when idle. This is known as the *home-base* where fleets are stationed when not on a mission. When a fleet completes a mission it has been assigned, it will always return to this base. Fleets can be relocated to alternate star-systems, at which point they begin operations from this new home-base.

FLEET COMMAND

Each fleet must contain at least one *Command and Control (CnC)* ship. *CnC Ships* are outfitted with a CnC module in the *mission section* of the ship's hull. Each one possesses a *Command Point (CP) Limit* denoted in the image to the right, by the figure 54. Every ship in a fleet has a CP rating. The current level of ship CPs is 36. The total number of ships in a fleet can never exceed the CP limit. So in this example at any additional ships must have a CP rating of less than 18 to


Organizing Fleets

be added to this fleet. Only one command ship can be assigned to each fleet. Adding additional *CnC* ships will not boost the *CP limit* of the fleet. Only the quality of the *CnC module* fitted, dictates whether a greater contingent or larger sized ships can be added to any fleet.

THE RESERVE

The *Reserve* is a special immoveable fleet where all ships are placed when newly constructed. Each star-system has a *Reserve fleet* created once the first ship is produced in that system. These fleets cannot be given any orders. They are used to hold any unassigned ships in the sector. You can only move ships from stationary fleets in the system, to and from the reserve, as you organize your ships into flotillas you require.

CREATING FLEETS

Click on the *Create Fleet* button to commission a new flotilla. Then choose an *Admiral* to lead this new group of ships. Confirm your choice
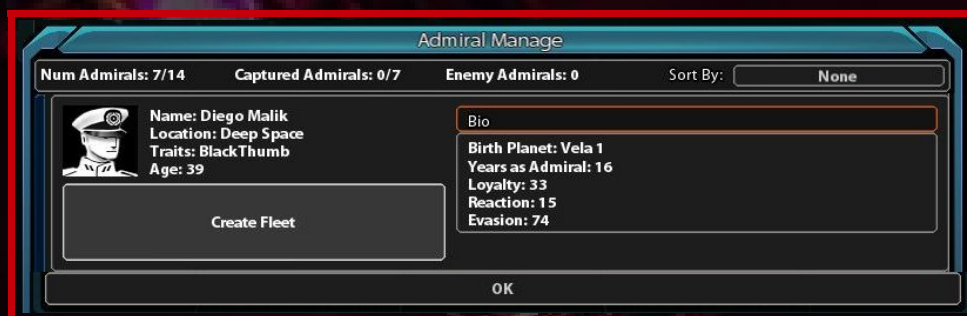
Assigning Admirals

by pressing the button below your preferred leader. To create a fleet, at least one *CnC ship* must be in the *Reserve* at the location in question. Once a fleet has been created you can drag and drop groups of classes or

individual ships, located across the fleets within the star-system.

NAMING FLEETS

New fleets can be named or renamed, by right-clicking on the fleet name in the *Fleet Panel* on the left side of the screen. One possible naming convention is to give them a combination of star-system they are based at and intended primary mission, plus a number i.e. Beta-Colony-1.

FORMATIONS

Once you have assigned the preferred number and configuration of ships to a fleet and named it, you can set up its travel formation. First double-click on the *fleet name* on the left hand panel. This will place the ships of the fleet in the *waiting area* (bottom) of the *positional grid*. Clicking on one of the *formation buttons* selects a position for each ship to assume. These ships can be dragged and positioned individually across both vertical and horizontal axis and through three levels of height.
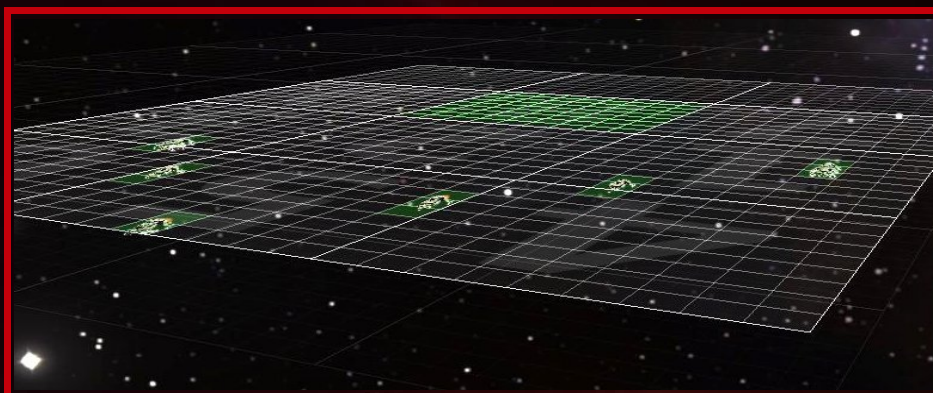
Fleet Formations

Ship Design

Every game starts with a handful of basic ship designs at your disposal whatever the faction chosen. Each of these has a specific role to play through the game from combat, construction, trading, mining to colonization. *Ship design* is performed in six phases.

Ship Design Screen

Ship Class

First the ship class (or type) is selected. Choose your preferred class by selecting from one of the researched classes. There are several types, the standard being the *Cruiser.* Larger classes consist of the *Dreadnought* and the immense *Leviathan* types. Smaller craft include *battle-riders* and *drones* which are carried into battle as they have no jump capability. You should remember to redesign your craft periodically, whenever research discovers a major new tech.

Saved Designs

Next you must decide upon the specific components that will be fitted for each of the three core modules for: *Command*, *Mission* and *Propulsion* modules.

Standard Command	Barrage	Fusion
Armor Rating: 240	Armor Rating: 280	Armor Rating: 320
T: ▪▪▪▪▪▪	T: ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪	T: ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪
B: ▪▪▪▪▪▪	B: ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪	B: ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪
S: ▪▪▪▪▪	S: ▪▪▪▪▪▪	S: ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪
Structure Rating: 500	Structure Rating: 750	Structure Rating: 900
Command Module	Mission Module	Propulsion Module

COMMAND MODULE

This module combines a variety of *hull types* that sacrifice some of the *turret points* for more command capability or extra armor or structure.

MISSION MODULE

This module determines the overall mission capabilities of the craft. The range of types such as: PEACEFUL - supply, mining, trade, construction & colonizing, or WAR: armored, drone/battle rider carriers, and a selection of heavy weapons carrying hull platforms.

PROPULSION MODULE

This module determines the *transport speed* and *travel mode* the ship will use to traverse the realms of space. For the most part the available options are restricted by the race being played and the research level of the *propulsion tree* in the *Research Screen*. Research the necessary technology branches to develop faster moving vessels.

Weapon Mounts

Once the core modules of a ship have been decided upon, you can begin to arm the space-craft with weapons across the breadth of it's surface. The amount of weapon points available will vary, depending on the hull type, size and command, mission and propulsion modules selected.

Weapon Mounts

Auxiliary Points

Some hull types have special slots located at key points across the hull of a ship. Seen as green in the image below. These are used to equip special auxiliary modules on the hull of the ship. These special equipment types enhance various aspects of a ship capabilities.

Auxiliary Modules

SHIP PRODUCTION

Once you are happy with the ship designs created, you will want to build these in the numbers needed and can afford. In order to demolish enemy fleets and get the job done. From the *Galaxy Screen*, click on icon (to the left) to access the *Ship Production Screen*.

Ship Production

Ships are produced at the star-system level. All colonies within a system contribute to their construction, depending on the slider settings. When completed they are immediately assigned to the *Reserve Fleet* of the particular star-system. They can be reassigned using the *Fleet Manager*.

INVOICES

Ships can be built individually or enmasse. They are arranged in *invoices*. These can be saved and called upon to build the same group of ships at different places across the empire where needed. Just remember to update your invoices with newer designs as they become available.

Space-stations

Once a colony is established you can construct and upgrade *space stations* using the *Station Manager* (icon to the left). There are five initial types. These facilities provide a boost to both empire and colony capabilities in all sorts of ways from: *generating additional taxes*, *increasing research efficiency*, to *proving additional command* and *defensive capabilities* for your settlements during combat.

A Space-station : Sector X-91L

Initial Construction

Space Stations can be built at the locations of planets or stars whether under your control or any unoccupied star-systems within range of your

Station Types

empire. In order to do so, you must send a fleet on a *Construction Mission*. Select the type of station you wish to build from those available (to the left).

Next you must select the *deployment area* around the target planet where you wish to deploy to. Finally assign it a *Fleet* with a *Construction Ship*. In the example (to the right) there are four zones, where stations can be deployed to.

Station Deployment

Depending on the size of the planet in question, the number of available locations to place additional stations will vary. Once completed it's name can be changed. Each station consists of a number of *module types*.

STATION MODULES

Once a station has been deployed, you can use the *Station Manager* to configure its *internal modules*. Each module increases the capabilities of the particular station in question, by applying a small percentile increase in some aspect of gameplay such as: *Research efficiency*, *Diplomatic capability*, or *Command capacity* for the star-system they are built in. Stations have a *Module Limit* and once this number of modules has been built, the station must be

Construct Modules		
2 MAX	Bastion	5/7
0+4 MAX	Combat	0/4
2 MAX	Dock	1/3
2 MAX	Amp	5/7
0 MAX	Hiver Habitation	0/1
1 MAX	Energy Weapons Technology Lab	0/1
0 MAX	Torpedo Technology Lab	0/0
0 MAX	Energy Technology Lab	0/0
0 MAX	Warhead Technology Lab	0/0
0 MAX	Ballistic Technology Lab	0/0
0 MAX	Bio Technology Lab	0/0
0 MAX	Industrial Technology Lab	0/0
0 MAX	C3 Technology Lab	0/0

Station Modules

upgraded before additional modules can be added. Modules are added by

Module Construction Costs

selecting them from the *Modules sub-panel*. Once you have selected the modules you wish to build, click on the *Confirm Build Order* button.

UPGRADING STATIONS

Stations can be upgraded in one of two ways; by initiating a mission from the *Galactic Screen* or from the *Station Manager*. Either way will require you to choose which station you wish to upgrade and which *Construction fleet* will perform the operation. Having the required funds available will ensure that the station is upgraded in a timely manner.

Station Manager

Battle Manager

Once your colonies are established you will want to think about defending them from the warmongering AI or player controlled opponents. The *Battle Manager* is perfect for this. It allows for the organization and


The Battle Manager

placement of one *Fleet* and numerous *Battle Platforms* within the vicinity of your empire's colonies. Each star-system is separated into *Sectors* as denoted by the thick black lines. Each system also has a *Command Point (CP)* limit for all defensive assets that can be deployed at any given time.

Placing Platforms

Different types of *Defensive Platforms* can be researched and built to defend a star-system belonging to your empire from attack. They can only be placed within the star-system they were produced in. Once built
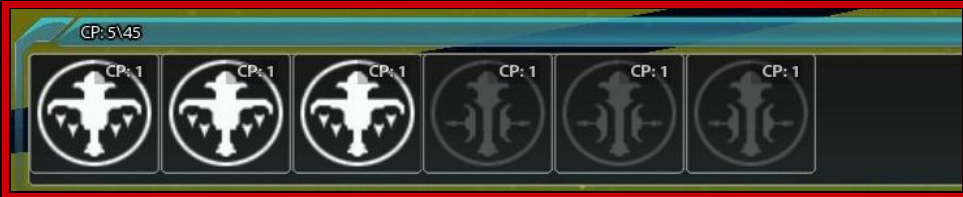
Available Platform Queue

they appear in the *Platform Queue* (previous page), which also shows the CP of currently deployed platforms and maximum limit for the system. Platforms can be selected from the queue and placed on any available deployment zones – i.e. the black circles (top of previous page).

PLACING A FLEET

Available Fleets

To place a fleet simply drag and drop one of the those listed under the *Fleets In System* (see picture to left). Make sure that you choose the most capable fleet, as fleets currently do not contribute to the overall CP limit of the star-system it is assigned to. Active defensive fleets are denoted with a yellow star, as shown on the left, by *Fleet Def A*. Fleets can be positioned individually, unless it contains a single ship, of its own. Once positioned the initial facing of each fleet can be changed using the *green directional buttons* directly to the front of the icons (See below).
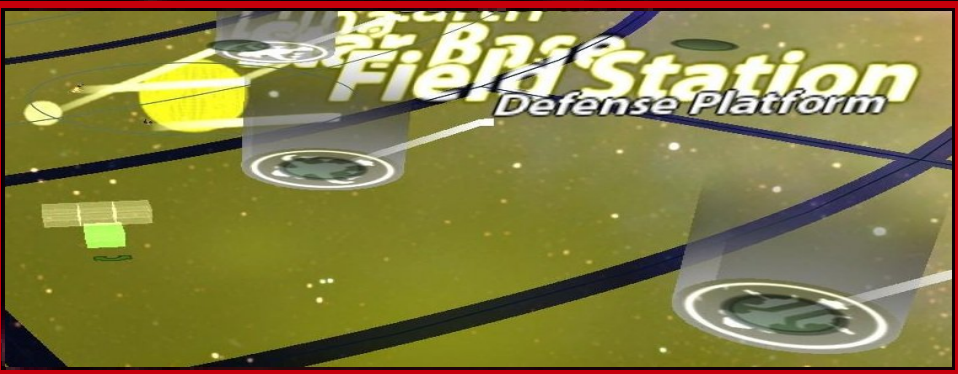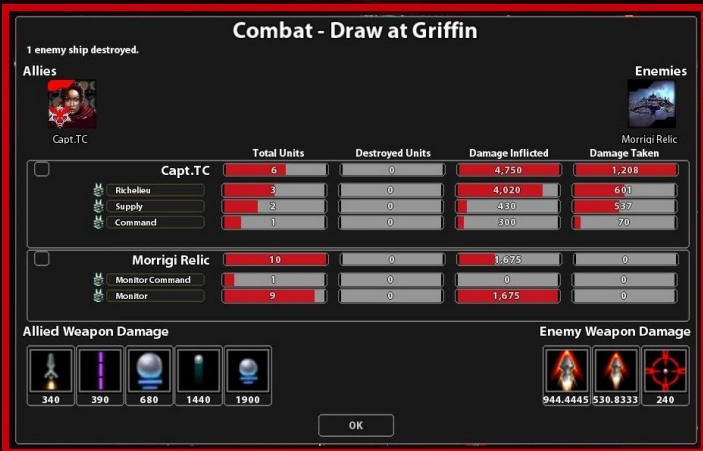

Platforms and Fleet

Combat in Sword of the Stars II comes in two forms: *Auto-resolved* and *Hands-on combat*. Combat occurs when two or more fleets from rival factions encounter each other at a star-system location. Once engaged, you can choose to either take part in *Hands-on combat* or allow the computer to *Auto-Resolve* the encounter. If the latter is chosen, additional options can be set to let computer take the appropriate course of action. Options consist of: *Attack* or *Peaceful* conduct. Remember to set these actions for all *Encounters* that are listed for the current turn.

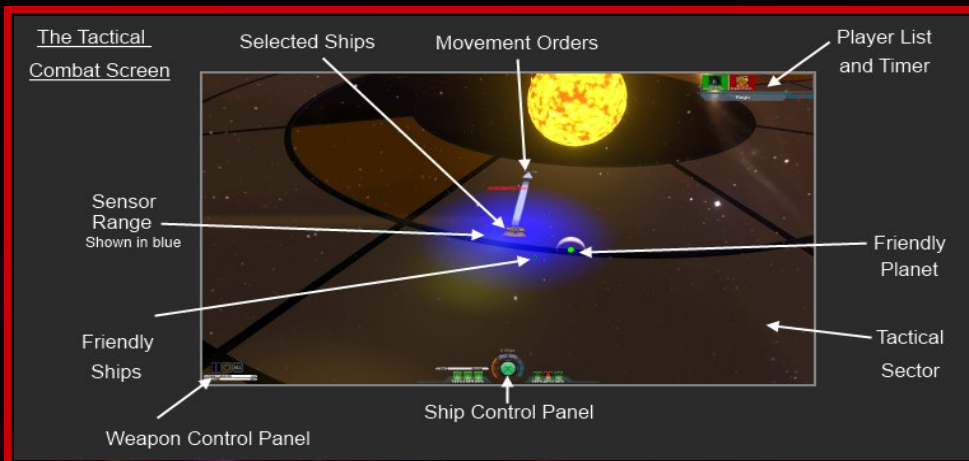Once combats are concluded, a summary of the results are presented as shown on the screen to the left, which depicts details of the damage dealt to and from the enemies being fought, and the weapons used by both sides.

Combat Results Screen

COMBAT CONTROLS

All the following instructional images contained within this section are taken from the wonderful pictorial guides made by **Elouda.** They have been altered to make them fit this format, but are available in their original size and format on the *Paradox Interactive - Sword of the Stars II forum.*

TACTICAL COMBAT SCREEN

The *Tactical Combat Screen* is seen once non-automated combat is initiated with an enemy fleet. Upon entering combat, the screen usually starts in *Sensor Mode View*, as can be seen in the image below.

The Tactical Combat Screen

Selected Ships

Movement Orders

Player List and Timer

Sensor Range Shown in blue

Friendly Planet

Friendly Ships

Tactical Sector

Weapon Control Panel

Ship Control Panel

Tactical Combat Screen

This mode is seen when a battle at a particular location first begins and your ships and those of your enemy, are located beyond sensor or visual range of each other. This view displays the entire system area in zoomed out form enabling you to direct the ships of your fleet, towards the targets you wish to engage. Click on the *Sensor Mode button* in the *Weapon Control Panel* to zoom-in battle view once you are in visual range. You will then be able to see the action close-in and give orders to individual ships.
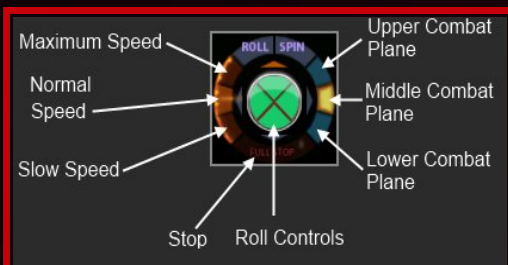
Ship Control & Status Panel

Once engaged in combat you can use the *Ship Control & Status Panel* to monitor and direct your fleets during combat. These orders can be given to either one, several or all the ships taking part in the action. Depending on which individual fleets are present. *Stances* are set to determine how a fleet will act against rival fleets. They can be aggressive, passive or defensive in nature.
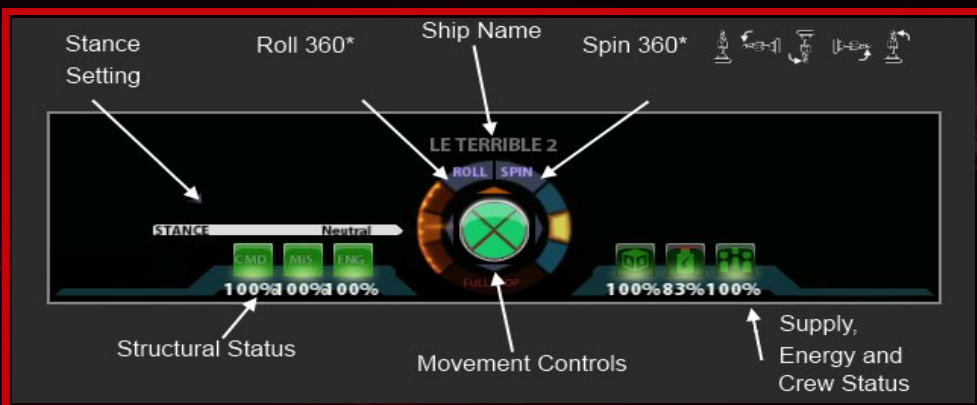
Ship Control & Status Panel

Ships can maneuvered using the *Roll* and *Spin buttons*. *Movement controls* can be used to set the speed of which s ship travels across space.


Ship Controls

They can also be ordered to attack from one of three vertical planes, so as to direct their attack from a particular direction. Components of a ship that can be damaged are represented by the

*Structure & Supply, Energy and Crew Status* icons.

WEAPON CONTROL PANEL

The *Weapon Control Panel* allows you to customize how each ship attacks during combat. When deciding how to initiate your attacks, you can choose which *Weapons will fire*, *the Mode* they will fire and the ship type *Targeting Priority* they will focus their fire at.
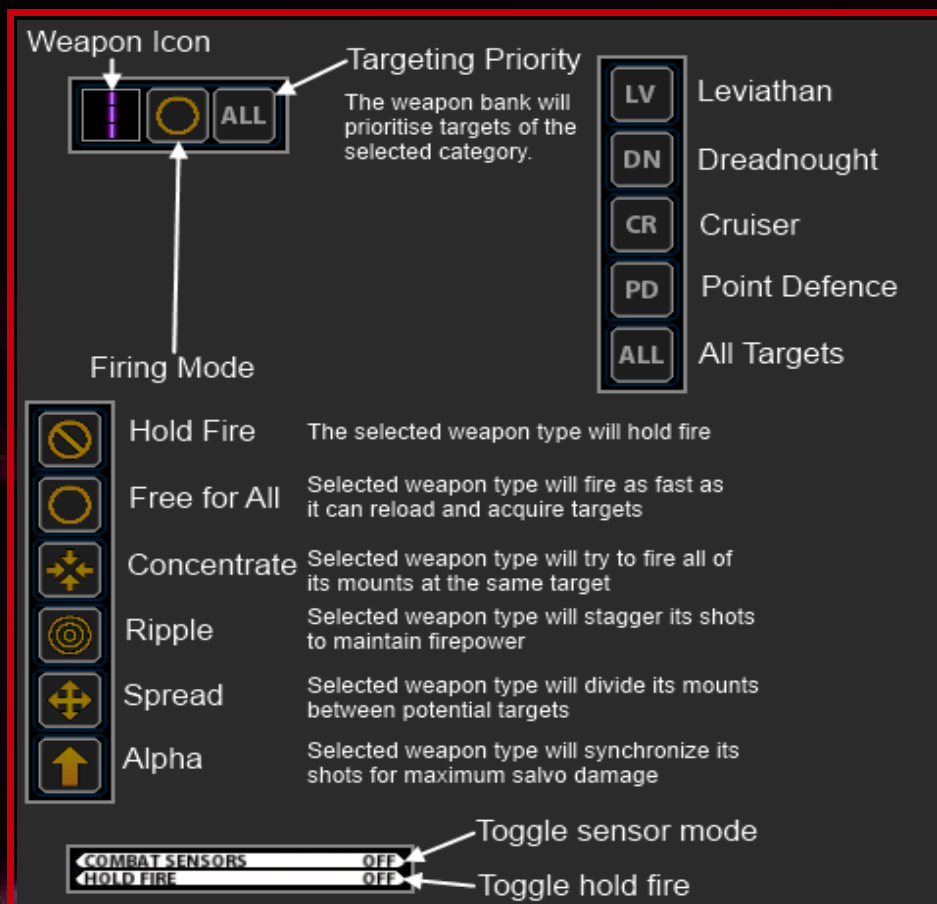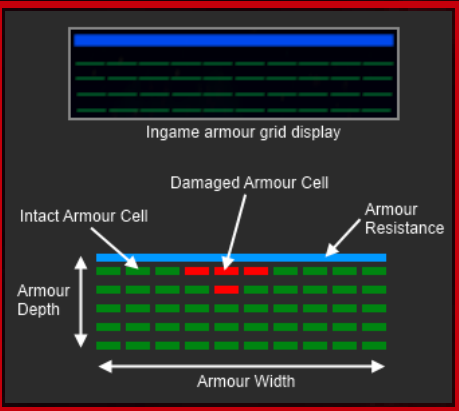

Weapon Control Panel

Ship Armour

Understanding the status of armor that a ship possesses is key when deciding whether to withdrawn from battle. All ships possess a certain amount of armor, while those dedicated to combat, possess more defensive capabilities. All armor is given a rating, as can be seen in the
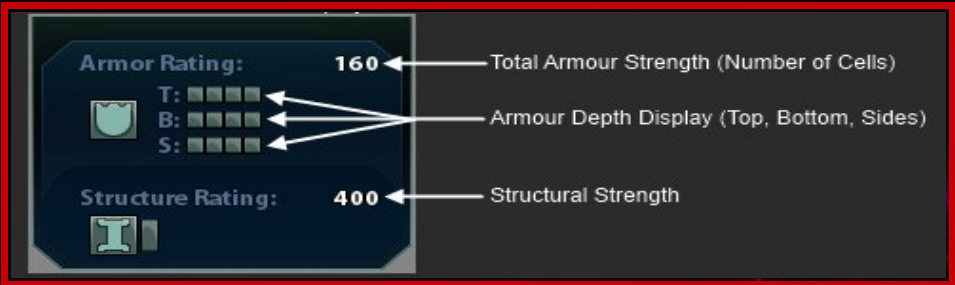
Armour & Structural Ratings

image above. *Armour Strength* represents the total number of individual armor plating cells that the ship possess. *Armour Depth* shows the level of armor any attacks will need to penetrate before hitting the ship proper. The *Structural Strength* of the hull is also shown. This is essentially the exposed hull of the ship once all armor has been depleted from the craft's exterior. The *Armour Grid* is the visible component of the armor, when seen on screen (Green). As each ship is attacked, this grid will update to show exactly how bad the damage being caused is (Red).

The Armor Grid

DIPLOMACY

You can also engage in diplomacy and espionage from the *Diplomacy Manager Screen*, (by clicking the icon on the left.) From this screen you will be able to undertake a host of actions, limited only by the resources you need to fund such actions, such as *credits*, *knowledge*, *technologies* and *diplomatic stations*.

Available *diplomatic currency* is shown at the top of the screen (as above). This value determines what actions can be attempted for all your diplomatic dealings with rival factions. You can increase this amount in several ways including: building diplomatic stations, setting sliders in the Empire Manager and through research.

Technologies that increase your diplomatic capabilities can be found throughout the technology tree, though the most important are perhaps *Political Science* and *Psionics*.

DIPLOMACY, ESPIONAGE & INTEL

The range of *Diplomatic actions* and *Espionage options* are arrayed across four sub-panels which can be navigated by using the *Orange buttons*. Each species has its own set of panels which are color-coded to match those of the factions in play. The first of these provides an *Overview* of the rival species including: Race portrait and
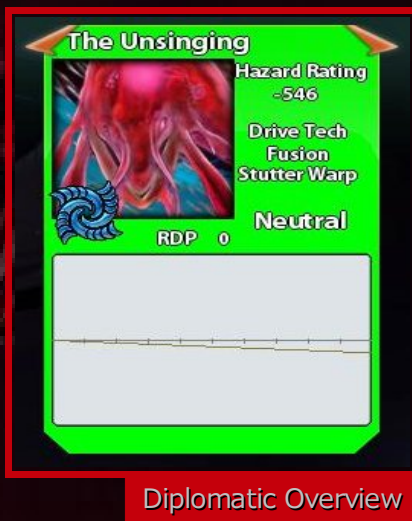
Diplomatic Overview

logo, leader name, space travel tech, and the current relationship between their empire and yours.

Diplomatic Actions are arrayed in the next sub-panel. Here you will be able to conduct any actions you choose and keep an eye on any previous actions that may be pending.

Ogodei the Golden
Diplomatic Actions
RPD   0

| DECLARE |
| REQUEST |
| DEMAND |
| TREATY |
| LOBBY |

Items Pending

Diplomatic Options

The next sub-panel contains *Espionage* and displays an overview of all operations and situational intelligence that your empire's forces have been able to gather against each opponent.

The First-Born
Espionage

INTEL (30 pts)

COUNTER INTEL (30 pts)

OPERATIONS (30 pts)

Espionage Options

History is the final sub-panel. This provides an overview of recent events and interactions concerning the particular faction being monitored.

As research and stations increase so will your capabilities and success rate in both these disciplines.

Var Kona's Legions
History

Recent News

88	Smaller Empire	
88	Smaller Empire	
88	Smaller Empire	+
88	Smaller Empire	
88	Larger Empire	+.
88	Larger Empire	+.

Recent Interactions

Intelligence Overview

EMPIRE MANAGEMENT

Empire Manager

Accessed by clicking on the *Pie-Chart* icon on the main *Galactic Screen*, the *Empire Manager* provides an overview of: finances, government ideology, current tax and immigration rates, as well as the current *Relationship overview* for each known rival faction. In addition there are a number of *statistics* detailing your empire's *current achievements*. Perhaps it's most important function is to show whether your treasury will increase through *savings* in the next turn, or if a loss will be made.

BUDGETING

Everything comes at a price. Whether conducting research, upgrading colonies, building stations or maintaining fleets. Each action sucks vital credits from the imperial treasury.

INCOME PIE CHART

You can see the percentage of funds allocated to each sector of the imperial effort by glancing at the *Income Pie Chart* on the *Galaxy Screen* or in the *Empire Management Screen*. Each color represents a portion of your empire's expenditure. The most

Income Chart

important of these are *Dark Blue* for government/bureaucratic expenses. *Purple* represents research. *Black* shows the amount of credits lost to system wide corruption. A turn where there is a shortfall will see the necessary funds taken from treasury savings. Interest is shown in *Red*.
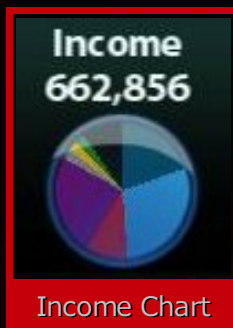
TREASURY BAROMETER

As the leader of your empire you can manage to some degree what volume of funds are

Treasury Barometer
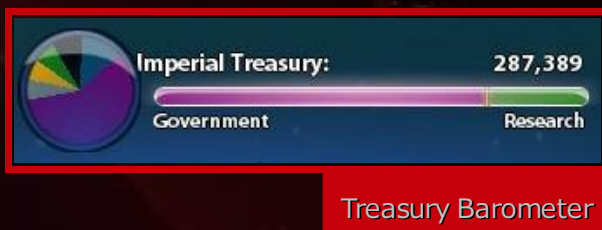
allocated to which sections of effort. Moving the slider from the *Treasury Barometer,* seen below moves the amount allocated to the two core funding areas of your empire. Most of the time what you spend on *research* dictates what the slider is set too. Once you have a number of established colonies generating credits, consider saving money to build valuable dreadnought and Leviathan fleets.

TRADE

If you ever hope to win, you will need to become a master of the mercantile and fill your treasury with as many *Imperial Credits* as possible.
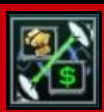
 The knowledge held by the *FTL Economics* technology from the *Political Science* discipline must be discovered. Once unlocked several key elements become available, making trading possible.

The *Trade Filter* becomes active in the *Galaxy Screen*. You must select this option in order to

see the *Trade View* (below) and manage your empire's trading.

Trade View

 Civilian Stations can now be built within star-systems with at least one colony. Once operational, *Freighter Ships* can be built to transport goods between systems. Each station provides a limited number of slots (Δ) for *freighters* to ship goods from. When built they are automatically assigned a free shipping slot solely within that system. The number of *Goods* being shipped can be increased by moving the planetary slider from *Construction* towards *Trade*. Once freighters begin shipping *Goods*, *Imports* will begin to show automatically depending on volumes being traded. Access the *Empire Manager* to view how many *Imperial Credits* are being made per turn, through trading.

EVENT HISTORY

Important events are noted and recorded in the *Event Log*. These alerts can be found at the bottom right of the *Galaxy Screen*, as they occur. Though only one event is shown at a time, you can cycle through all of the events of the current turn in order.

HISTORY LOG

For more details you can consult the *Event History Log* which can be accessed by clicking on the icon to the left. Previous events are stored here in chronological order, grouped into sections by the turn count during which they occurred. You can consult these logs at any time you wish, in order to see if you have missed anything of importance. Most type of game events have their own icon to help scan the list of past events and identify any that you may be looking for.

The Empire's History

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THE WENDY'S ON CAMBIE

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