

THE X-SHIP PROJECT

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Most people felt that X-ships, as published in Module-X1, never quite worked the way they were supposed to work. Unfortunately, tactics “in the wild” were considerably different from the playtesting.

The single greatest problem was that the overloaded phaser rules encouraged players to perform a single maneuver, called “close and hose”. So the “fix the X-ships” project started with eliminating the overloaded phaser. This upset the balance of X-ships and, many changes were required to restore X-ships to their proper place.

The cornerstone of the new X-ship rules is the way EW works for them. Providing improved accuracy through EW was a way to improve the average damage output of an X-ship without increasing its already substantial maximum “crunch”.

One misconception was that, many people felt that X-ships were supposed to be able to defeat a DN soundly every time in a duel. In actuality, X-ships are supposed to fill the same role as a DN, but that does not necessarily translate into a balanced duel. In point of fact, neither type of ship (especially a DN) is supposed to ever find itself in a duel in the first place. Many of the advantages an X-ship has over a DN are strategic (such as higher strategic speeds) and not easily represented in SFB.

A second misconception was that a large number of players thought that X-ships somehow single-handedly spelled the doom of attrition units. This idea turns out to be a ghost from the old Commander's Edition Supplement #2, in which the changed borders meant that replacement attrition units (fighters and PFs) would be too hard to resupply. X-ships are, indeed, much better than non-X ships when dealing with attrition units, but they were never intended to annihilate them.

Along the way, many ideas were proposed by various people; some good (and a lot of bad) ideas were rejected for various reasons.

Perhaps the most controversial of these ideas was to give X-ships a Ph-1 that could fire twice in one turn, but not within 12 impulses. This idea sought to emulate the firepower advantage of the original overloaded phasers, while eliminating the single-impulse crunch problem noted above. The problem is that this solution provided too great an increase in firepower, exceeding even that of the original Module-X versions. The idea that an X-ship would have to “work hard” to get in the second shot turned out not to be true; X-ships had little difficulty getting in position for a second shot.

Other rejected ideas were: an improved Ph-G, fast-overloads for heavy weapons other than photons, and additional “free” electronic warfare points. That last item was the subject of intense debate, and was thoroughly tested, but proved to be too overwhelming.

(X0.0) Any rule not explicitly changed below is unchanged from the original version in Module X1. Note specifically that phasers still have “double capacitors”.

(XD6.34) EW Effect: Due to their advanced fire control, if an X-ship has more ECCM than its target's ECM, it gets a special -1 modifier to its fire. This modifier obeys all rules relating to negative shifts (i.e., it may not cause a column shift for a phaser). This is cumulative with legendary gunner but not with an outstanding crew.

(XD6.393) EW Limit: X-ships no longer receive two “free” ECCM. Instead, they may generate EW (total ECM and/or ECCM) up to their sensor rating plus two.

(XD9.21) Shield Repair: X-ships repair one shield box per point of power in damage control.

(XD13.0) Aegis Fire Control: X-Aegis has a maximum range of 15 hexes.

(XE1.25) Misfire: All rules pertaining to weapons misfires are deleted; all references to such rules are to be ignored. NOTE: Players found the misfire rules make the game a frustrating die-rolling contest where tactics and strategy were irrelevant, only avoiding a misfire die roll mattered, and there was nothing one could do to avoid it. In place of this penalty, fast-loaded heavy weapons are limited to a range of 15 (even if held to a later turn), reflecting their instability.

(XE1.7) Small Targets: X-ships ignore the small target modifier.

(XE2.42) Overloaded Phasers: All rules pertaining to overloaded phasers are deleted; all references to such rules are to be ignored.

(XE2.43) Rapid-Pulse Phasers: These rules are unchanged, but all references to overloaded phasers are deleted.

(XE4.5) Fast Load Photons: Warhead strength of a fast-loaded photon is limited to 12, but there is no chance of discharge or misfire. Fast Load Photons are limited to a range of 15. Note that a 9-point warhead is still an overload and is still limited to range 8.

(XE4.51) This rule is deleted.

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(XE4.53) Replace all “Misfire” or “discharge” results with “Safe”, which of course means there is no die roll for this at all.

(XE7.22) Treat “Misfire” results as “operates normally” (i.e., don't even bother rolling the die). If fired without a cooling turn, the Fusion Beam is limited to a range of 15.

(XE10.2) Hellbore Fastloads: Fast loading a Hellbore no longer risks discharge or misfire; ignore the Misfire Table. Fast loaded Hellbores are limited to a range of 15.

(XE11.21) PPD Fastload: Fast loading a PPD no longer risks discharge or misfire; ignore the Misfire Table. Fast loaded PPDs are limited to a range of 15.

(XFD2.1) The Type-VIII drone has only two payload spaces, but occupies only 1.5 spaces in the drone rack.

(XFD10.4) The Type-VIII drone has only two payload spaces.

(XFP1.252) Plasma Fastload: Fast Plasma Torpedo Arming no longer risks misfire; all misfire results are treated as functioning normally (i.e., do not roll for misfires at all).

(XFP1.262) Plasma Rapid Load: Rapid Torpedo Arming no longer risks misfire; all misfire results are treated as functioning normally (i.e., do not roll for misfires at all).

(XFP11.0) Note that under (FP11.13), all X-ships already have the Sabot Refit.

(XFP12.0) Note that X-ships automatically have the (FP12.4) Late War ECP Upgrade.

The following revisions are made to BPVs for published X-ships. Any ships not listed are unchanged. Note that these are the best calculations we can make at this time and that we do not guarantee that “in the wild” tactics with the new rules won't prove us wrong.

Bases, Orion, ISC, LDR: Unchanged.

Federation CX = 240, DDX = 170.

Klingon DX = 250, FX = 130, DXD = 260.

Romulan SKX = 160, K5X = 150, KEX = 240.

Kzinti BCX = 245, CCX = 250.

Gorn CCX = 260, CMX = 260, BDX = 150.

Tholian CCX = 220, CPX = 225, NCX = 240.

Hydran (all include fighters): LBX = 290, RNX = 300,

DGX = 280, LNX = 180, SCX = 220/150.

Lyrans CCX = 240.

WYN FZX = 150.