

Nighthawks: Tactical Space Combat in the Dyner System

by Chris Rowlands - To provide playtest feedback visit <http://nighthawks.space>

*It is the year 2407. Humanity, united under the oppressive rule of the **Conglomerated States**, has long ago exhausted the solar system's resources and has begun searching for new opportunities in the cosmos. While this exploration has historically been cautious, the sudden and inexplicable birth of a new star system has led to a rush to colonize. Some believe this new system to be a gift from a higher power, while others view it as a sign of the impending downfall of man. Whether or not these portents are true has yet to be determined, but what we do know is that many destinies have intertwined within the **Dyner System**, and it is there that these questions will find answers.*

Welcome to **NIGHTHAWKS**. In this game, you will take on the role of a small military-fleet commander who has set out to claim the Dyner System. This is not a task for the weak-willed or unambitious however, as there are other factions who feel they too have a claim to this newly-birtherd area of the Galaxy. To play you'll need the following components:

- **A set of the NIGHTHAWKS ships.** The files for these are attached.
- **A relatively large, flat surface.** A play area approximately three feet by three feet is ideal.
- **A die (like a six-sided die, often called a "d6"), or some other way to randomize a 50/50 chance.** This will be used to perform a variety of actions within the game. Any die would work. You can even use a coin to flip.
- **A straight measuring device.** You can use anything that is roughly 5-6 inches long and is easy to discern between full length and half-length. A pencil or pen should work just fine.
- **A handful of beads or tokens.** These will be used to mark target locks during the game. You'll need about 2 per player.

In addition to the above, we also recommend that you have a handful of items to use as obstacles on the play area. These objects can represent things like asteroids, satellites, space stations, or civilian vessels.

Objective:

The last player with at least one ship remaining on the table is declared the winner.

Basic Rules:

1) Ranges in Nighthawks are determined using a measuring device. They come in two

distances:

Full Range- The full distance of the measuring device.

Half Range- Half of the distance of the measuring device.

2) At various times throughout the game, players will be called upon to make a roll. Rolls are always 50/50 chances. If using a d6, a roll is successful if the number is 4 or more.

3) In the case of measurement or rules disputes, players are encouraged to err on the side of destruction. For example, if it is unclear whether or not a weapon is in range, it is assumed that yes, the weapon is in range! The Dyner System is an unforgiving place.

SETUP AND GAMEPLAY:

Step 1: Clear and mark off a large portion of your table to represent the play surface. The ideal size is approximately 3 foot by 3 foot, but most importantly the play area must have clear visible boundaries. Then, beginning with the player who tipped the most at their last meal, everyone at the table may take turns placing 1 obstacle anywhere they like on the table, provided it is at least one full range away from any other obstacle. This continues clockwise until **one player passes**. At that time, the remaining players may each choose to place one final obstacle.

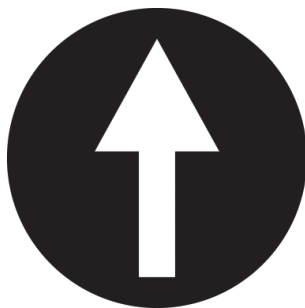
Step 2: Each player chooses one faction to play, and then assembles their fleet by choosing 3 of the available ships from that faction.

Step 3: Players then take turns placing their ships on the playing surface one at a time, regular side up. Each player must place their ships touching the table edge (or marked boundary) that is nearest to them. Continue until all ships have been placed on the board.

Step 4: BATTLE! Beginning with the first player to pass during step one of set-up, the space battle commences.

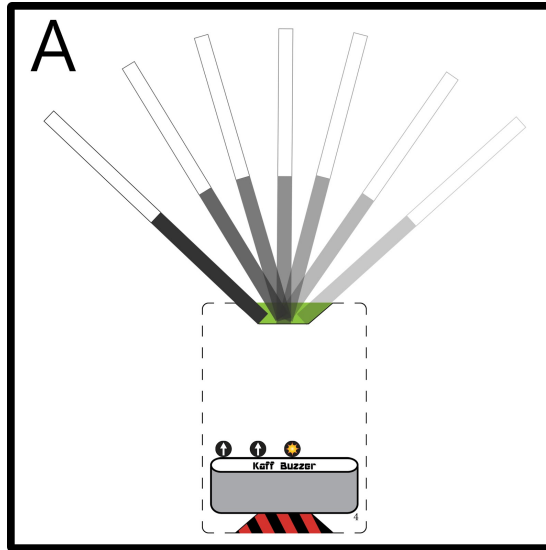
EACH TURN:

During each player's turn, they must activate one of their ships. When activated, a ship **must** perform the actions indicated on its action bar, in order from left to right.



Movement

In order to move, place the measuring device on the table so that it is touching the front movement bar of the ship. The measuring device must remain fully within the movement arc depicted on the ship card. (See diagram A.) Once the measuring device is placed, the ship will then move so that its rear movement bar touches the other end of the measuring device. Again, the ship must be oriented so that the measuring device remains fully in its rear movement arc.



(Diagram A - Movement)

Ships must always move the full range of the movement device.

If for some reason a ship is forced to move off of the edge of the play surface it is automatically destroyed. While the measuring device can overlap ship cards, it can never overlap obstacles on the table. If ever a ship is moved so that it is overlapping another ship card, the ship which is moving must make a **PILOT ROLL**. In order to make a pilot roll, the controlling player rolls a d6. If the roll comes up in the player's favor (a 4 or greater on a d6, for example), the Pilot Roll has been passed and play continues as normal. If the Pilot Roll fails, the activated ship suffers a hit, which we will detail later.



Action.

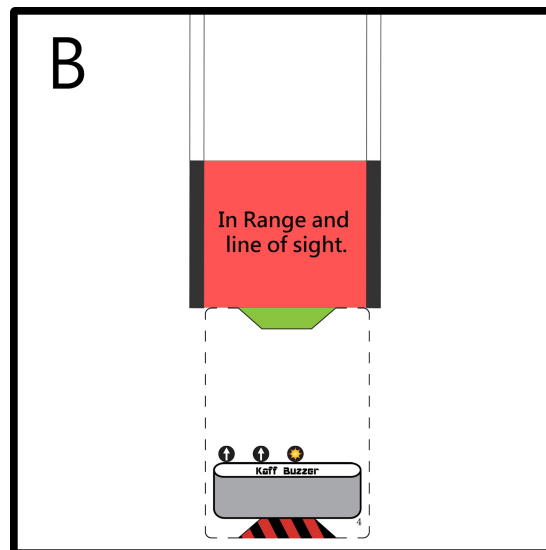
For each action icon, ships may choose 1 available action. (Note that unlike movement, a player can opt not to take an action with an activated ship.)

- **Basic Action:** Ranged attack.

To perform a ranged attack, choose one ship to fire at. Check to see if the target is within range and line of sight. A target is considered in range if it is within half the distance of the measuring device. A target is considered in line of sight if any

part of the targeted ship lies directly in front of the attacking ship, and there are no obstacles or other ships in the way. (See diagram B.) **If the target is not both in range and line of sight the attacker makes no attack roll and the attack automatically misses.** If the target is in range and line of sight, make an attack roll. **If the roll comes up in the attacker's favor (a 4 or greater on a d6, for example), the attacker has scored a hit.** In the event of a failed attack roll, the attacking player receives a TARGET LOCK TOKEN. When a player has 2 target lock tokens, they may spend them **before** making an attack roll to score an automatic hit. A player can never collect more than 2 target lock tokens at a time.

Each ship can take **1 hit before being destroyed**. On the first hit, flip the ship card over to indicate it has been damaged. (Some ships will become weaker when damaged, some will become stronger.) If a damaged ship is hit again, remove it from the table. It has been destroyed.



(Diagram B - Range and Line of Sight)

- **Basic Action:** Flight Maneuver.

When making a Flight Maneuver, the controlling player may rotate the ship card in place so that it faces any direction. This action is typically used in order to make U-turns or other tricky maneuvers.

- **Special Actions:**

Many ships have special actions they can perform, as detailed on the individual

ship cards.

FACTION DESCRIPTIONS:

“Black Kaff’s Fiends”

Piracy is lucrative in the Dyner System, and there is no band of miscreant pirates more notorious than those led by Lancaster Kaffka - better known as “Black Kaff.” Renowned for their rampant use of stims, it is said that these fiends do not sleep. Reckless and completely without mercy, Black Kaff’s Fiends are a constant threat, a story told to children to keep them in line. As the popular children’s tale goes: “The best part of waking up, is getting to wake up.” Because of their reckless nature and use of stims, ships in a “Black Kaff’s Fiends” fleet will typically move faster than other ships, which isn’t always a good thing.

“The Vita’Min”

The Vita’Min are alien terrors from the depths of deep space. They seek to consume all biological nutrients in their path, as they use this organic fuel to power their hyper metabolisms. Innumerable, they are driven forward without fear by a hive mind and an insatiable hunger. Their bio-fleets are made up of living creatures, and because of this “Vita’Min” fleets are typically much more agile and maneuverable than other fleets.

“The Nation of Carba”

As hyper-space travel first began for humanity, the research of Dr. Francis Carba was instrumental in providing the necessary technology to facilitate deep space exploration. Over time however, the company he founded began to resort to even more extreme means to quench his thirst for progress. In doing so, he inspired an almost cult-like following of humans that volunteered to have their bodies shaped into bio-mechanical hybrids by his scientists. To represent their artificial components and advanced technology, the ships in “Nation of Carba” fleets have long range weaponry and the ability to repair one another.

“The Lactoss”

The most ancient of all the known races in the galaxy are the Lactoss. Intolerant towards all other inhabitants, these ancient beings move steady and undeterred throughout the galaxy. They exhibit a patience cultivated by lifespans that stretch across countless eons, and thusly are both slow to act, and even slower to change their minds. It is said that once the Lactoss set their mind to a task, their thick-headedness makes it impossible to reason with them further. To represent their patience, many ships in a Lactoss fleet move half range, rather than the mandatory full-range movement.