**PowerPaladin - Observations - 1/8/2021**

-Flew with Wolfen, Ben, Chua, & [FO-54] Tiberius Zahn. In later matches, Tiberius had to leave.

-I neglected to count the number of games we played (my current unsubstantiated guess sits at 4). Some were sweaty, others were (unfortunately) more seal-clubby; however, all were victories. Something something “Blood for the Blood God. Skulls for the Skull Throne.”

-Of note: Tiberius Zahn is an excellent interceptor pilot with equally admirable communication skills. He was quick, informative, and frequent with updates. If we at any point find ourselves in need of another Interceptor pilot, he has my recommendation.

-The main purpose of my flying tonight was to workshop the bodyguard maneuvers I reported on to Psyren earlier this afternoon. Opening plays for the interceptors were per the usual, if only different in focus: screen for bombers possibly running an ai farm, prioritize them, then move on to support. I would suggest an extended line of succession then proceed to fighters followed by the raider/corvette, and then enemy interceptors, but our openings often flipped rather quickly after the death of the bombers and the support as we did also open with ai farming (in most games) when implementing this strategy.

-Executing an offensive guardian/ward pairing structure was met with success. One interceptor limited their engagements to any enemies targeting the bomber and support while the other interceptor mostly harassed any enemy ai farmer and enemy support. The latter interceptor pilot was also on-call to assist the other interceptor on bomber guard when required. Originally, I had planned on assigning the fighter to a piercing torpedo loadout to deploy their payload against the shield generators (softening them up for the friendly bomber) before staying in the field to assist the latter interceptor in harassing the ai farmer and support players after their torpedoes were exhausted. In theory, a fighter executing such operations could divide an enemy team’s attention among 3 key target choices: the bomber/support pairing (while guarded by the primary interceptor), the fast and nimble interceptor harassing the air farmer/support, or theirself (the fighter launching piercing torpedoes). Such a division (assuming an enemy team comp of 3 anti-starfighters), drastically limits their effectiveness against a friendly assault, but most importantly the bomber/support grouping, which holds priority defense above the fighter and latter interceptor in such an occasion.

-My strategizing incorporates the latter interceptor switching to defense of the bomber/support in the event the primary interceptor is dusted or is forced to exit the zone. The fighter, regardless of the state of its torpedo payload, then fills the latter/secondary interceptor’s role of harassing the air farmer and support players.

-Execution of this role division on defensive phases could follow this structuring:

1. Primary Interceptor: scans and focuses on incoming bombers, switching focus to enemy support after all bomber threats are neutralized. The Primary Interceptor also prioritizes defense of the ai farmer and support in the event that they are being focused.

2. Secondary Interceptor: fills roles of the Primary Interceptor in the event of their death or absence. The Secondary Interceptor mainly dedicates their engagement time to the destruction of incoming bombers, switching focus to enemy support after all bomber threats are neutralized.

3. Fighter: launches ion torpedo at incoming raider/corvette, then scans and focuses on incoming fighters or secondary bombers, focusing more on any torpedoes launched at the frigates or flagship. Assists both Primary and Secondary Interceptors, if necessary, and fills role of the Secondary Interceptor in the event of the absence of either the Primary or Secondary Interceptor.

4. Bomber: farms AI unless friendly capital shields have been stripped, at which time it focus is on the shieldless enemy raider/corvette.

5. Support: retains mask/mark loadout to assist in the survivability of the team as a whole and expedite the destruction of incoming priority targets (such as enemy bombers or an unshielded raider/corvette).

-My last main observation is that near-flawless execution of this structuring on either offense or defense requires concise communication. It may be beneficial to a team employing these tactics to refer to themselves, first and foremost, as their role (i.e. “Primary Interceptor retreating,” instead of “I’m/[insert player name here] retreating.”). This could help cue everyone to more deeply understand the situation, leading to more resolute adjustments on-the-fly. Standard call-outs of objective statuses should continue to be observed (i.e. [Fighter]: “Raider/Corvette shields down. Scanning for torpedoes,” or [Bomber]: “Bomber making my attack run. Request Support for stand-by mask/mark”).

Knowing your role and knowing everyone else’s role builds consistency. Reducing communication to better focus on role-based terminology reduces time spent on mental math (i.e. “Who’s voice is that, again?” “What are they flying?” “Which Interceptor are they?”) and increases reaction time to act accordingly in situations where success and failure can be divided by fractions of a second.

Teaching role outlines is also leads to better flexibility among main and sub players. In theory, any team member intimately familiar with a team’s set roles can hop into a game with that team and know what each person is doing even if they are completely unfamiliar with their voices if the role titles are used in comms.