

Space Empires: Imperium

A Mashup of GMT's Space Empires 4x and GDW's Imperium

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[1.0] INTRODUCTION

Space Empires: Imperium is a personal mashup of the old GDW sci-fi game *Imperium* and the more modern GMT game *Space Empires: 4x* and its expansions. However, I have also added some of my own touches that do not exist in either of those games.

The result is a game that is (hopefully) more interesting for a modern gaming audience within a hobby that has had decades of evolution since the original *Imperium* was released.

A quick summary of changes include the use of ships and technology from *Space Empires: 4x* (as well as its combat system), a deck of cards that add various events and actions that deliberately introduce some chaos into the game, and a modified sequence of play.

[2.0] GAME PARTS

[2.1] What You Need

In order to play this game you will need both a copy of the original *Imperium*, GMT's *Space Empires: 4x* and the *Space Empires: Close Encounters* expansion. Future optional rules may require other expansions for *Space Empires: 4x*, but are not required at this time.

[2.2] The Game Map

The map from the original GDW edition of *Imperium* is used for this game. All elements of that map remain intact, e.g. minor and major worlds, gas giants, etc.

[2.3] The Playing Pieces

Only the playing pieces from *Space Empires: 4x* are used in this game. None of the pieces from

Imperium are used except the map.

[2.4] Game Charts and Tables

This game uses a modified tech and combat system.

[2.5] Game Tracks and Displays

There is both an economic track and a turn track.

[3.0] STANDALONE VARIANT

This section is a standalone variant for the base *Imperium* game. No parts or rules from *Space Empires: 4x* are used.

The following changes are options designed to address several key issues which we found to be problematic to our enjoyment of the game. No attempt is made to conform to the fiction. These are strictly designed to make the game more interesting from a play balance point of view.

[3.1] Sequence of Play

Instead of the Imperial and Terran players conducting Maintenance and Production at the start of their respective turns, both the Terran and Imperial player perform maintenance and Production at the start of each turn simultaneously, including Imperial Intervention and any Appeals to the Emperor.

In the first war, the Imperial player conducts maintenance and production first. In subsequent wars, the winner of the previous war goes first.

Rationale: The current system creates a strange dynamic where each side plops down their reinforcements and can then bludgeon their opponent before they've had a chance to counter it. The end result is a sort of like *Risk* after you've

traded in a set of cards. You bludgeon your opponent, and then they do the same thing, and the cycle repeats.

[3.2] Special Attacks

[3.2.1] High Intensity Missile Fire You may not use *High Intensity Missile Fire* (HIMF) when your opponent terminates combat.

Rationale: There's no real downside to it if you're not assaulting a planet, and it feels too powerful. You could also argue that the effectiveness of HIMF is offset by the (presumed) increase in range as the enemy retreats.

[3.2.2] Suicide Attack If you perform a *Suicide Attack* when your opponent terminates combat, the targeted ships may fire at the attacking ships first. This is an exception to the rule that ships terminating combat may not fire.

Rationale: I think it's fair to say that even in retreat they would be able to fire at an approaching ship.

[3.2.3] Short Range Missile Fire Add 1 to the die roll when using *Short Range Missile Fire* (SRMF).

Rationale: The idea here is to give a slight buff to something that only really only matters to a few ship types in particular. The basis for this thematically is that anti-missile systems (abstracted generically into "screens") would have a harder time countering missiles at close range.

[3.3] Capital Ships

Any ship that costs at least 10 RP (i.e. Strike Cruisers, Heavy Cruisers, Battleships and Dreadnoughts) suffers a disruption result the first time they are hit rather than be destroyed. If a disrupted capital ship is hit again (or was already disrupted at the start of space combat or planetary defense) then it is destroyed.

Rationale: Currently the capital ships are essentially useless. They are too expensive, too brittle, have a high maintenance cost and are unlikely to survive between wars. The upshot is that no one builds them, opting for large numbers of smaller units instead. This should also make capital ships more valuable in assaults since they can withstand a hit.

[3.4] Scouts

During the preparation step of combat you may "attach" a scout to a ship that has already been placed. Place the scout and the ship that it's attached to at the same time. The scout is considered to be providing support (ECM) to the attached ship. Enemy ships firing at a ship with an attached scout suffer a -1 penalty to the die roll. This applies to both beam and missile combat.

Restrictions: A scout may not attach to a fighter, monitor, or another scout. No more than one scout may be attached to a given ship. A disrupted scout may not use this ability.

An attached scout is considered screened and may not be targeted, and may not fire. However, if the ship it was attached to is destroyed then it is no longer considered screened. Any enemy ships that were lined up against the destroyed ship that have not yet fired may instead fire at the attached scout.

Rationale: Currently the scouts are not very useful, especially the Terran scouts. Currently their primary purpose is to be speed bumps or swarm enemy fleets with dummy targets. This gives them a mission and reason to live.

[3.5] Destroyers

Destroyers (DD) fire at +1 against fighter units.

Rationale: Makes destroyers slightly more interesting and more useful against fighter swarms.

[3.6] Light Cruisers

Light Cruisers (CL) may carry a 1-strength or 2-strength infantry (regular or jump troop) in the same manner as a transport.

Rationale: Makes light cruisers slightly more interesting, and gives players a small upside to drawing low strength infantry.

[3.7] Fighters

A maximum of 3 fighters may operate at an Outpost. If you have more than 3 fighters at an Outpost at any point, they are considered to be on the surface.

Any number of fighters may operate at a World.

Rationale: This is mainly meant to defeat massed stacks of fighters at Outposts and it feels thematic.

[3.8] Ground Combat

If, after a round of ground combat, one side has troops and the other side has only non-troop counters remaining, the player with only non-troops loses the ground combat immediately. All of that player's remaining counters (including Outpost markers) are eliminated, except World markers which are instead neutralized.

Exception: Treat a defending PD unit as a troop counter for purposes of this rule. It still only defends, but its presence protects the other non-troop counters from elimination. If a non-troop counter is selected during placement then a PD unit must be selected before other non-troop counters.

Rationale: The rules as written state that there is only ever one round of combat per Surface sub-phase, stating "A planetary surface box cannot be conquered in one sub-phase if the number of attacking troops is less than the number of defending counters". However, this quickly leads to non-sensical tactics where the players (probably the Terrans) can simply land hordes of cheap space units (transports, fighters, scouts, etc) on the surface that make conquest of any planet virtually impossible given the counter mix and time constraints. This change makes more thematic sense, is more consistent from a rules perspective (currently only the attacker is eliminated if he has no troops) and also makes troops (and to a lesser extent PD units) more valuable.

[3.9] Appeals to the Emperor

The Imperial player does not lose a Glory point on a roll of 5 or 6 (no result) when making an Appeal to the Emperor. Instead, the penalty is that the Imperial player may not make another appeal on the following turn.

Rationale: Failing appeals can be decisively bad for the Imperial player given how coarse the victory point system is. This variant reduces the bite, only penalizing the Imperial player on very bad rolls. Thus, there is still some risk, but less than before.

[4.0] IMPERIUM CARDS

This variant adds a deck of cards (henceforth the Imperium Deck) that both players will use over the course of the game. These cards can affect movement, production and combat in various ways. Imperial Intervention and Appeals to the Emperor are also altered slightly for use with these cards.

This adds a bit of flavor and chaos to the game and, hopefully, makes the game a bit more interesting.

[4.1] Start of Play

Shuffle the cards in the Imperium Deck and place it face down somewhere within easy reach of both players. All cards in the Imperium Deck remain face down until drawn.

[4.2] Deal the Cards

At the start of a war, the Terran player receives cards from the Imperium Deck equal to the number of friendly controlled Worlds. The Imperial player receives cards equal to *half* the number of friendly controlled Worlds, rounded up (the rest were taxed by the Emperor). This is considered your minimum hand size.

For the first scenario, for example, each player would receive three cards.

The cards in your hand are secret and should be kept hidden from your opponent until played.

[4.3] Drawing More Cards

During each player's maintenance and production phase the active player draws a number of cards that brings them back up to their minimum hand size (if below the minimum).

After drawing up to their minimum hand size the active player may discard cards for 1 RU each. Cards discarded in this fashion are not replaced until the following turn.

The active player may also buy additional cards at a cost of 5 RU per card. You may not discard a card that you purchased for RU in the same turn that you purchased it. You must pay to discard any cards that you wish discarded before purchasing more.

[4.4] Playing the Cards

A card may only be played during the phase specified at the top of the card. Each player may only play one card per phase or sub-phase, e.g. you could play one battle card during the space combat sub-phase, and one during the surface combat sub-phase.

In battle, the attacker plays their card first. In other phases, the first player (e.g. the Terran player in the First War scenario) plays their card first.

When playing a card from your hand refer to the event section of the card for its effects. The text here may include additional clarifications that were not practical to include on the card itself.

[4.5] Hand Size Limit

Your hand size limit is equal to the maximum number of connected worlds and outposts that you control. If you draw cards in excess of this number, you must immediately discard down to your hand size limit.

[4.6] Discards and Reshuffling

Cards played over the course of the game are placed into a discard pile. The moment the last card is drawn from the deck, reshuffle all of the discarded back into the Imperium Deck.

Note that some cards may also cause the discarded cards to be reshuffled back into the deck earlier than expected!

Discarded cards are face up and may be inspected at any time.

[4.7] Between Wars

Cards may not be held between wars. Any cards still in your hand at the end of the final turn of the game must either be discarded for +3 RU each (available at the start of the next war), or used to automatically pay the maintenance cost of a ship instead of rolling, one card per ship.

Exception: you must discard 2 cards to automatically pay the maintenance of a Battleship.

[4.8] Card Manifest

Below is a description of each card in the deck, when it can be played, and the quantity in parenthesis. Any clarifications are also included.

In the interests of brevity, the term "sub-phase" has been dropped, e.g. "Space Combat" refers to the Space Combat Sub-phase, and the term "PS/SI" refers to the Planetary Surface/Surface Interaction Sub-phase.

High Intensity Missile Fire is abbreviated as "HIMF". Short Range Missile Fire is abbreviated as "SRMF".

[4.8.1] A Call to Arms (2)

When: *Space Combat, at start of second round of combat*

Your ships from a single, adjacent, connected system may join a battle at the start of the 2nd round of combat.

Requirement: Have at least 1 surviving ship at the end of the first round of combat.

Exception: Monitors may not use this event.

[4.8.2] Close the Range (2)

When: *Start of Space Combat*

Treat all missile fire by your opponent as *Short Range Missile Fire* during this space combat when at long range.

This event has no effect at short range.

Clarification: Short Range Missile Fire still fires after beam weapons at half strength when at short range.

[4.8.3] Commandos (2)

When: *PS/SI*

During this combat your regular troops may land without a transport.

Your jump troops may not be fired on by PD units or Outposts.

*Clarification: Worlds still fire on jump troops. Regular troops that land in this fashion do **not** receive a +1 modifier in their favor against planetary defense fire.*

[4.8.4] Confused Fighting (1)

When: Start of Space Combat

Do not make range determination rolls this combat. Every ship may fire at whatever range it wishes, using either missile or beam factors.

Suicide attacks are automatically successful if they survive defensive fire.

Reshuffle the deck after the current Combat Phase is complete.

Clarification: Both players are affected. Neither player may use HIMF or SRMF when this card is played.

[4.8.5] Direct Hit (2)

When: Any time during Space Combat

After rolling the dice, convert any single dr that is less than a 6 as a 6.

Draw another card.

Clarification: Note that this card would not necessarily do any damage if your opponent's screens are too high!

[4.8.6] Economic Boom (2)

When: Start of Maintenance and Production

Each of your Outposts produces +1 RU this turn.

Imperial player only: May instead be played to cancel a Depression when rolling for Imperial Intervention.

[4.8.7] Electronic Warfare (2)

When: Space Combat, after ship assignment

Immediately disrupt up to 3 enemy ships that are not in reserve.

Addenda: If using my scout variant rules, you may not target ships which have an attached scout.

[4.8.8] Escape Plan (1)

When: Combat

You may terminate combat without being fired upon. If used then **all** of your ships must retreat to the same area.

If terminating combat at a friendly World, immediately lose 1 Glory Point.

Clarification: You are not obligated to play this card at the start of combat. You could fight a round of combat and see how it goes before deciding to play it. However, you must play it before dice are rolled before each battle round.

[4.8.9] Flank Speed (2)

When: Reaction Movement

One stack may make an unlimited number of jumps during reaction movement instead of the normal 3.

[4.8.10] Intel (2)

When: Any time (except combat)

Look at your opponent's hand, choose one card and discard it.

Play at any time before or after combat.

[4.8.11] Logistics (2)

When: Maintenance and Production

Add 5 RP to your total, and add +1 to all maintenance rolls this turn.

[4.8.12] Mass Drivers (2)

When: Combat (Bombardment)

You may combine missile and beam factors when bombarding a system.

[4.8.13] Minefield (2)

When: Combat

Make a 12-pt missile attack against two random ships at the start of Space Combat.

Clarification: This happens before placement.

[4.8.14] Overrun (1)

When: Immediately After Combat

If you have destroyed all enemy ships and/or all enemy ships have retreated, then your victorious fleet may make one more jump. This can potentially lead to another combat.

Clarification: Any of your disrupted ships would still need to make a maintenance roll in order to take part in an Overrun move.

[4.8.15] **Queued Up** (2)

When: Reaction Movement

You may move up to 3 stacks (instead of the normal 1) during reaction movement.

[4.8.16] **Reckless Attack** (2)

When: Combat

Each of your ships may add +2 to their combat roll, but each ship that does so suffers a +1 penalty when being fired at.

Clarification: The decision is made at the moment of firing, after placement. Although combat is still simultaneous, the side that played this card should roll first if used.

[4.8.17] **Resistance** (2)

When: PS/SI

For this ground combat all of your defending regular troops add +2 to their rating, and your jump troops fire simultaneously against regular troops.

[4.8.18] **Sabotage** (1)

When: Immediately after Maintenance and Production

Disrupt 1d6 enemy ships in any system containing an enemy outpost that is in or adjacent to one of your own worlds or outposts.

Then reshuffle all discards (including this card) back into the Imperium Deck.

[4.8.19] **Snafu** (2)

When: Start of Enemy Movement Phase

Choose any one system containing an enemy Outpost. Enemy ships in the designated system may only make up to 2 jumps this movement phase.

[4.8.20] **Standoff** (2)

When: Combat

Both sides terminate combat at the end of the first round of combat and must leave the system, attacker first, if both sides still have at least one ship. Neither side may fire at retreating ships.

[4.8.21] **Supply Run** (2)

When: Start of your Movement Phase

All of your disrupted ships are no longer disrupted.

[4.8.22] **Surprise** (2)

When: Combat, Range Determination (2)

Skip the range determination roll. Instead, you choose the range for every combat round.

Clarification: This may even affect the first combat round.

[4.8.23] **Tactics** (2)

When: Combat

Add +1 to all range determination rolls this combat. This is in addition to the modifier for having the smaller force.

Add +1 to the dr of all of your ships in space combat.

[4.9] **Imperial Intervention and Appeals to the Emperor**

[4.9.1] Imperial Intervention On a roll of "2" the Imperial player immediately loses one random card.

On a roll of "10" the Imperial player immediately draws a card.

[4.9.2] Appeals to the Emperor On a roll of "6" the Imperial player immediately draws a card.