The Vast Darkness Rule (Draft1)

This game simulates the initial space race to colonize the solar system after the invention of the fusion drive.

Each player represents one of three factions (with an optional fourth) within a nation state engaged in initial colonization. Note that players themselves do not represent specific characters and therefore cannot be assassinated.

**Victory Conditions:** Players performance is judged as the sum of their faction score + their individual score. Factions gain one victory point per large structure they have at the end of the game (research station, mining colony, colony, etc). Individually the **Chief Scientist** gains one VP per science station and technology the have. The **Captain of Industry** gains one VP per mining colony built as well as points for building Great Projects. Finally, the **Head of State** gains 2 VP per colony founded and 1 vp per advancement in interplanetary government they research.

**Game Phases:**

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| Purchase phase: | Things are bought and sold. Money can only exchange hands during this phase |
| Mission Phase: | Missions (other than 1G and High G) are paid for and launched, At the end of this phase all active missions are shown. |
| Reaction Phase: | 1 G and high missions may be launched. They arrive during the arrival phase |
| On Planet actions | Military units on a body at the beginning of the turn may act |
| Arrival Phase | Missions that are scheduled to arrive; arrive. Those missions may now take actions, such as land of operate or attack. If multiple missions arrive at the same place the players take actions in order of initiative. |

**Example of initiative:**

Example A: Player one launches a transport on a 2-turn mission for Ganymede carrying a missing colony. The next turn, Player two launches a transport on a one turn mission for Ganymede, also carrying a mining colony. The two missions arrive at the same time. Since the Player two’s mission has a higher initiative on arrival, player two will be able to place their colony first. If by the time it arrives, Player One’s mission has no place to land, the mining colony cannot land.

Example B: Player two launches warships on a 1 turn mission towards one of Player 2s colonies. During the reactions phase, Player one notices the launch and sends ships to intercept. Player one does not have the cash for a high G mission so ops for a full G mission. Due to initiative order, Player two will be able to conduct one full round of attacks BEFORE Player one’s ships arrive and join the battle.

Arrival at the same time: If to missions arrive at the same time with the same initiative. Players may bid credits to see which one arrives first. If neither player bids, roll a dice.

**Money:** Money earned in this game carries over from turn to turn.

**The Factions:**

The Bureaucracy:

The bureaucracy represents the faction’s political elite and are embodied by the Head of state. The head of state has the advantage of controlling the tax base. Any credits generated by full colonies automatically go to the Head of State. The head of state is the only player who can purchase Interplanetary Government policies. These policies can never be traded or sold and are purchased with political points.

The Intelligentsia:

The intelligentsia represents a faction’s educated elite. There are embodied by the Chief Scientist. The chief scientist starts the game with a one-time amount of 20 credits. After that, they are dependant on the head of state, any research stations within their faction or the sale of any technology they control for additional funds. Any new technology researched by their faction, is first placed in the hands of the chief scientist. After that, the chief scientist may share said technology with anyone inside or outside their faction for whatever amount of credits can be negotiated.

(NOTE: Should another faction member acquire a technology before the chief scientist, the chief scientist automatically gains that technology)

(NOTE: Chief scientists are not the only faction members that can sell technology they possess)

The Industrialists:

The industrialists represent a faction’s captains of industry and are embodied by the Captain of Industry. All industry points and all credits generated from mining colonies and Great projects go to the Captain of industry.

**Contracts:** The Captain of industry is the only player in the faction who can initially build things. Other faction members, who wish to have something built for them, must do so by contracting the Captain of Industry to buy it for them. The price that the captain of industry charges for this service is up to the players, but once a contract is created it MUST be honoured within the faction.

These contracts are done by being filled out on the contract build form and then submitted to a controller with the total amount of money listed on the contract. The controller then deducts the build cost of the items from the amount given and then hands the rest to the Captain of industry. The controller then hands the items purchased to the faction member paying for the contract.

(NOTE: When the Captain of industry purchases something for themselves, they do not need to fill out a contract.

**Space Missions:**

When ever a player wishes to move something from one body in a solar system to another body, they do so by buying a **Space Mission**. The cost of a space mission is equal to the absolute difference between position value of the starting body and the position value of the destination. The value is then multiplied by the value of the mission type**. In general, once a mission is launched, its existence is public knowledge and it is listed as an active mission on the overhead projector.**

(NOTE: Traveling to a moon from its parent body automatically costs 2 Position difference)

**Example:** Player A wants to move their ship from Earth to Jupiter. Earth has a position value of 1. Jupiter has a position value of 15. There for the position cost is 14. Player A wants to get there fast and elects to do a high G burn (which will get them there in half a turn with +1 initiative) the has a cost factor of 3. Therefore, the total cost of the mission is 14 (position value difference) times 3 or 42.

**Mission Types:**

Gravity Assist: Gravity assist missions are missions that use minimal amounts of fuel and rely heavily on gaining gravity assists from various planets.

**-Gravity assist mission take 3 turns to complete and reduce the cost of the mission to 1/10. Arrives with an initiative of 0**

Quarter G Burns: These missions use constant fuel all the way by only accelerate using a quarter of a g of thrust:

**Quarter G Burn missions take 2 turns to complete and reduce the mission cost by half. Arrives with an initiative of 1.**

Half G Burns: Same as above but using a half g of continuous thrust.

**Half G burns are your standard mission. They do no change the base mission cost. They arrive at the beginning of next turn with an initiative of 3.**

Full G Burns: These are the first of the half turn burns. They can only be launched during the reaction phase and they arrive during the arrival phase of the same turn.

**Full G Burns double the cost of the mission and they arrive with an initiative of 2. Note is means they go before a quarter G burn mission but after a half G mission.**

High G Burns: These are high G burns all the way and the crew is often required to sleep for most of the mission in order to survive the high gravity.

**High G burns are launched during the reaction phase and arrive during the arrival Phase. They arrive with an initiative of 4. Which means they always go first. High G burns increase the cost of the mission by 3.**

**Structures: (All space structures have 12 hit points)**

Science Station: (**Cost = 10/ Combat Value = 5**) These stations are placed in orbit around a body and generate an amount of science points equal to the second science value of a world each turn. The Science advisor may generate any amount of the science points these stations generate into credits at an exchange rate of 1 credit per science point. Because these stations are orbital, there is no limit to the number science stations a body may have.

Mining Colony: (**Cost = 10/ Combat Value = 9)** May occupy a single unoccupied landing zone on a planet/moon or asteroid. Produces 1 industry point and 1 credit per turn. Both go directly to the captain of industry.

Colony: **(Cost = 10/ Combat Value = 9)** May occupy a single unoccupied landing zone on a planet or moon. (But not an asteroid). Produces 1 political point per turn and credits equal to the tax value of the world per turn.

**Ships:**

Science Probe**: (Cost = 1/ Combat Value = 0)** Can be sent out to land on unexplored worlds. Being the first to land a probe on a world, generates a one time pay out of science equal to the science value of the world. **These ships are destroyed with a single hit**



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Transports: **(Cost = 5/ Combat Value = 2)** If a player wishes to move ground forces, Science Stations, colonise or any other large structure, they must use a transport. Transports can either carry one structure (i.e. a colony) or up to 10 marines.

**Can carry up to 12 marines**

**These ships are destroyed after 2 hits.**

Gun Boats: **(Cost = 5/ Combat Value = 4)** High powered, lightly armoured warships. These ships are primarily used for frontier defence. During the mission phase, the cost of moving these ships 1/10 the normal cost. If moved during the reactions phase, reduce mission cost by half. **These ships are destroyed with a single hit**

Stealth Ships: **(Cost = 10/ Combat Value = 5)** Corvettes designed to avoid detection. These small ships are coated with heavy sensor masking technology. When placed on the map by themselves, they always ID as another ship type (players choice). When placed with other ships, they ID as another ship type or not at all. When they move, their movements are not public knowledge. During the mission phase, the cost of moving these ships 1/2 the normal cost.

**These ships are destroyed after 2 hits.**

Destroyers: **(Cost = 10/ Combat Value = 6)** Built for pure acceleration, these ships are the nemesis of Stealth Ships. When moved, during the mission phase, they move at a cost of 1 per ship. When moved during the reaction phase, the cost of moving them is reduced to 1/10 the normal cost.

**These ships are destroyed after 3 hits.**

Cruisers: **(Cost = 20/ Combat Value = 8)** General purpose warships, these ships are the backbone of any fleet. Cruisers can only be built at an orbital shipyard.

**6 hit points**

**Can carry up to 3 marines**

Battleships: **(Cost = 30/ Combat Value = 9/ Shoots three times)** The lords of space warfare, if you have one of these, you’re probably spending too much on military. Battleships can only be built at a space ships yard.

**12 hit points**

**Can carry up to 12 marines**

**Marines:** Marines must always either be with a transport or at a base. Land forces alone at the end of the turn, die automatically. Where as ships are often used to blow things up. Marines are used to capture things. Marines on board a transport can be used to capture things in space or on the ground. If a land force successfully “Hits” in combat, it does not damage the hit point, it instead captures the hit point. Defending Marines that that hit, can either kill enemy Marines or take back a captured hit point. Attacking marines can never target defending marines. When the majority of a target’s hit points are captured, the target is captured. All marines, defending the target die.

**(Cost = 1/Combat Value = 1)**

**1 hit point**

**Combat:**

When one fleet engages another fleet. Both player reveal the true size of their fleets.

Structures have a base initiative of 1 and ships in orbit have a base initiative of 3

When combat is initiated, the first thing that occurs is that the initiative of the attacker is compared to the initiative of the defender.

* If the attacker’s initiative is lower than the defenders, combat will only occur if the defender allows it.
* If the initiatives are equal, regular combat begins.
* If the attacker has a higher initiative to the defender, the attacker may either make a free attack, start a regular combat or retreat. Making a free attack lowers the attacker’s initiative by one. If lowering the attacker’s initiative makes the attacker’s initiative equal to an incoming fleet, the incoming fleet may initiate a regular combat. If after a free attack, the attacker still has a higher initiative, repeat cycle.

**\*\*Essentially an attacker with higher initiative may use that advantage to make free attacks or ensure the defender cannot retreat. If they have 2 or more points of initiative they may do both.**

During a free attack, only the attacker fires.

If there are incoming ships, and regular combat has begun, the incoming fleet enters combat on a round equal to the attacker’s initiative – the incoming fleet’s initiative.

**Regular Combat:**

During regular combat, if one side has a lower initiative or is a structure, that side my not retreat from battle. The defender fires first by picking a unit, picking a target and then rolling a d10. If the roll is higher than the CV of the target, the target takes a hit point of damage. If the attacking unit has more than one attack, the defender may do this a number of times equal to the number of attacks. The defender does this unit all of their units have fired. Any destroyed attackers are removed from the board and then the attacker fires and does the same as the defender. Repeat this unit one side retreats or one side is defeated.