

by Mike Lane

# The Frontiers of Design



*A new shipbuilding system for the  
STAR FRONTIERS® game*

Many STAR FRONTIERS® game players have problems when it comes to designing nonstandard military ships for use with the Knight Hawks board game and, as I can testify, it becomes rather nerve-racking to be constantly asked "How many laser batteries can I put on this minelayer? Well, then, how many rocket battery salvos can it carry? Well, then. . ." and so on. Over many hours and some calculator thumping, a system that pleased everyone in my gaming group was generated. This system creates starships compatible with (if a little tougher than) those given in the board-game rules. The new ships also have a great variability in weaponry, which can make even a simple assault-scout duel quite interesting.

The following sections deal with the shipbuilding formulas and overall system in depth. Tables 1-6 give details on the items discussed below.

### **Hull points and DCR**

A civilian ship's hull points and DCR (Damage Control Rating) are determined as per the Knight Hawks rule book — i.e., hull size x 5 = hull points; (hull size x 3) + 20 = DCR. Military and Star Law ships multiply hull size by 10 to determine hull points and by 9 to determine DCR. The greater values generated show the toughness and technical superiority of the secret military hardware over the civilian/militia equipment, and result in fewer attacking ships being vaporized in the "Defensive Fire" phase of combat.

### **Weaponry and defenses**

All weapons and defenses on a ship are placed according to the amount of space they occupy in cubic meters, as per the statistics on page 61 of the Knight Hawks game rules, rather than using the MHS (Minimum Hull Size) method. The MHS is still used as a measure of how many weapons of one type may be mounted on a certain hull.

The maximum number of each type of weapon on a ship may not exceed the hull-size rating divided by the MHS of that weapon system. However, any ship with the necessary space may mount any one weapon despite its MHS. (Yes, you can have an assault scout with a laser canon!)

Defenses are also bought by the cubic meter, though no ship of less than hull size 5 can mount a powered defense screen because of the screen's heavy energy demands, which require the larger "B" engines.

The cubic meters of space for each hull size is determined by a decreasing percentage scale, with figures rounded to the nearest useful amount. This effectively reduces the free space on a battleship to about 1.6%, as compared to a fighter's 97%, which reflects the squeeze on space as life-support systems, crew quarters, storage areas, and so forth expand with ship size and potential patrol duration.

**Table 1**  
**Space Available by Hull Size\***

Hull size	Military ships	Civilian ships
1	30	20
2	50	30
3	75	40
4	100	50
5	175	90
6	250	125
7	300	150
8	350	175
9	400	200
10	450	225
11	500	250
12	550	275
13	600	300
14	700	350
15	800	400
16	900	450
17	1000	500
18	1100	550
19	1200	600
20	1300	650

\* All space is in cubic meters.

It should be noted that noncombat ships such as freighters, research vessels, liners, and the like have only 40% of the space listed, since their primary functions demand nearly all available space. This is not to say that there could not be small-capacity, heavily armed liners used to move VIPs; this simply means that such ships would not be self-sufficient and would thus be very rare.

#### Weapon magazines

Rather than saying that a certain number of rounds can be kept in a launcher, the cubic-meters system is used to determine the number of rounds carried. Thus, ammunition for assault rockets, rocket-battery arrays, torpedo launchers, mine spreaders, seeker-missile racks, masking-screen launchers, and ICM launchers are figured on a cubic-meters-per-shot basis, though one round (or one array, or 20 meters of mines) may be kept at no space cost in any launcher except a masking-screen launcher. This is because a masking-screen charge is larger than the launcher itself.

#### Space stations

Space stations come in four main categories: fortresses, fortified stations, armed stations, and unarmed stations. The last title is something of a misnomer, as even the smallest freight station is likely to have a laser battery to discourage piracy.

Military stations fall in the fortress and fortified-station categories, while megacorporations have only a few fortified stations and many armed ones. "Free" stations not belonging to any one group or cartel are

**Table 2**  
**Weaponry and Space Needed**

Weapon	Cubic meters	MHS
Laser cannon	40	5
Laser battery	25	3
Proton-beam battery	30	10
Electron-beam battery	30	6
Disruptor cannon	60	12
Assault-rocket launcher	10	1
Assault rocket*	10	—
Rocket-battery array	40	5
Rocket-battery salvo	10	—
Torpedo launcher	75	5
Torpedo	20	—
Mine spreader	60	7
Mines (5 fields)	20	—
Seeker-missile rack	40	7
Seeker missile	40	—
Grapples	60	5

\* Assault rockets for rearming fighters kept aboard an assault carrier are kept in cargo space. Up to 15 per cargo unit can be carried.

**Table 3**  
**Defenses and Space Needed**

Defense	Cubic meters
Reflective hull	—
Masking-screen launcher	10
Masking-screen charge	25
Electron screen	10 x hull size
Proton screen	12 x hull size
Stasis screen	10 x hull size
ICM launcher	10
ICM	5

**Table 4**  
**Optional Items Carried**

Item	Cubic meters
Fighter	60
Assault-transport dropship	35*
Hull size 2 ship	120
Assault scout	850

\* Dropships are mounted about 75% externally, thus taking up less space than the totally interior docking areas and repair facilities used by fighters.

usually armed, though a few fortified and unarmed stations can be found. Small freight stations, scientific stations, and automated stations are usually unarmed,

Space-station weaponry and defenses are mounted in exactly the same way as they are on starships, with two differences: No forward firing weaponry may be mounted, and MHS restrictions are ignored with respect to the maximum number of one weapon type mountable.

The statistics given on Table 6 refer to a single space-station hull of a given size. It should be remembered that more than one hull may be joined to create megasta-

tions, as per page 8 of the Knight Hawks rule book, though such huge stations are prohibitively expensive for all but the military and megacorporations of the largest size.

#### Miscellaneous items

Players and GMs will undoubtedly find new things to put on ships. By carefully determining an item's size, it can easily be integrated into this system. Remember, though, that addition of any item beyond the listed maximums reduces the ADF or MR of the ship by one.

(Tables continue on page 76.)



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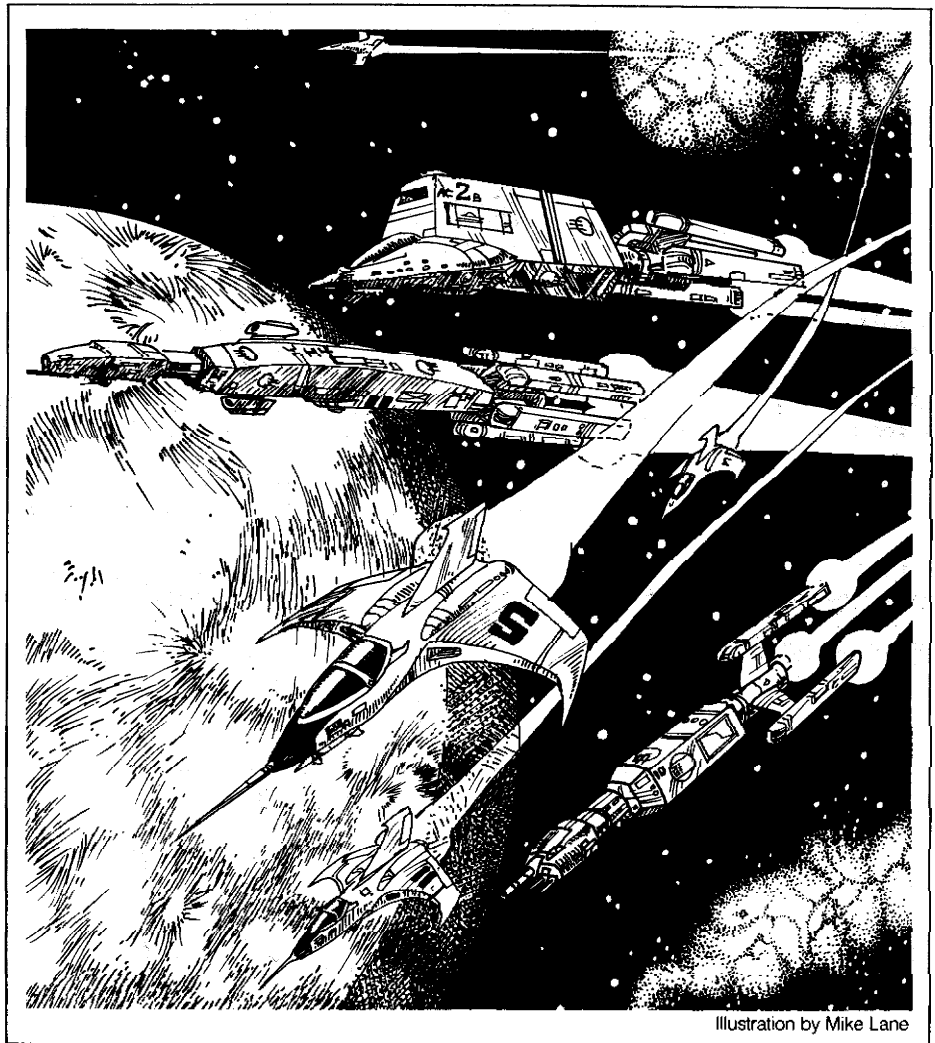


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**Table 5  
DCR and Hull Points**

Ship type	DCR determination	Hull points
Civilian	(HS x 3) + 20	HS x 5
Military	(HS x 9) + 20	HS x 10

**Table 6  
Space Stations**

Station type	Hull size	Hull points	DCR	Space in cubic meters
Fortress	5	250	175	550
	6	300	200	800
	3	80	60	180
	4	120	80	210
Fortified	5	140	100	250
	1	30	30	80
	2	55	40	120
	3	70	65	160
Armed	4	80	75	200
	1	20	25	25
	2	40	35	50
	3	55	50	75
Unarmed	4	75	70	100

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