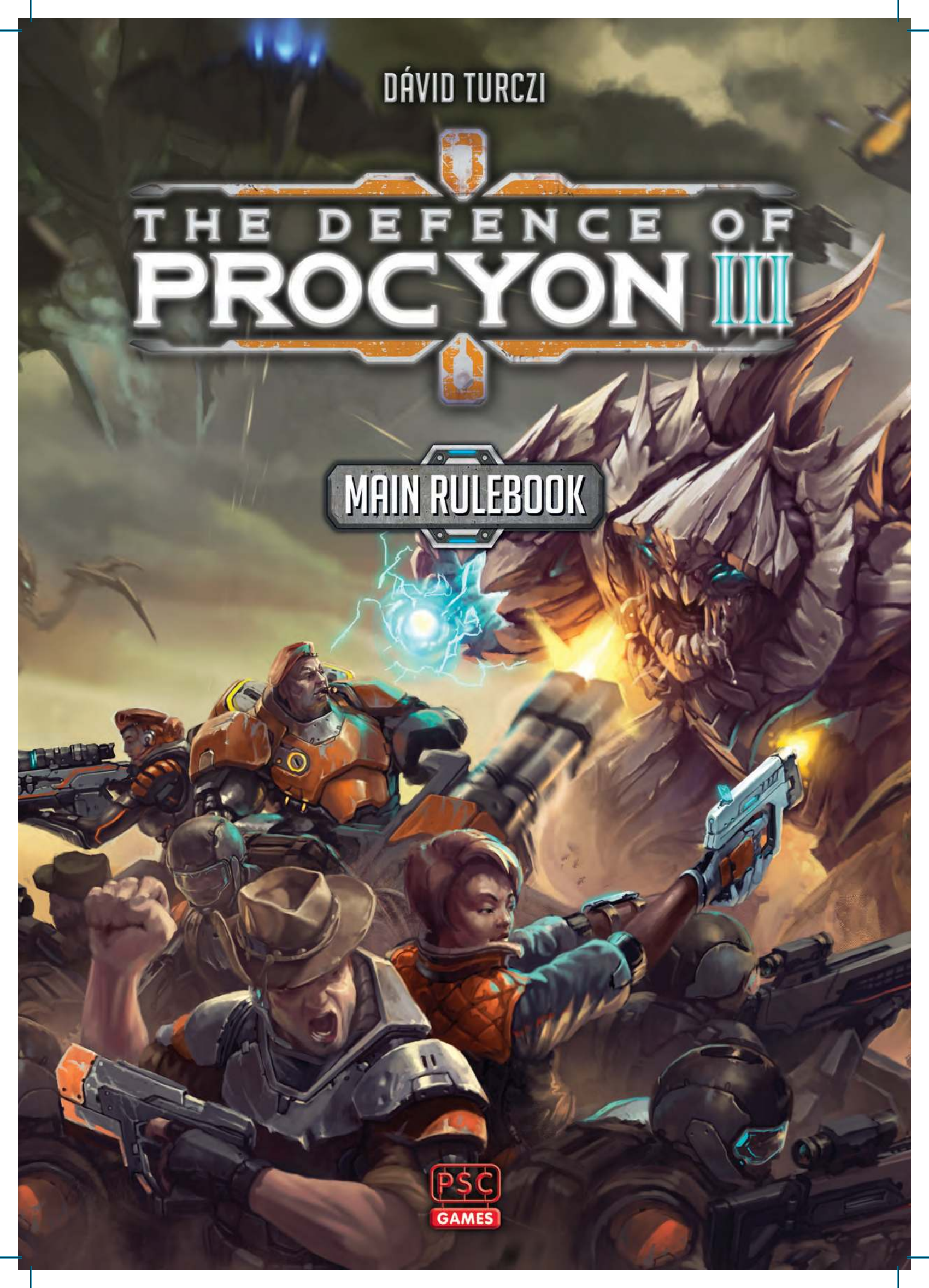


DÁVID TURCZI


# THE DEFENCE OF PROCYON III

MAIN RULEBOOK

PSC  
GAMES



## START HERE IF IT'S YOUR FIRST TIME PLAYING.


The logo for 'The Defence of Procyon III' is centered in a dark space background. It features the title in a stylized, metallic font with orange and blue highlights. The word 'PROCYON' is the largest, with 'THE DEFENCE OF' above it and 'III' to the right. The logo is flanked by two small, glowing blue circular lights.

# THE DEFENCE OF PROCYON III

Procyon is a star 11 light-years from Earth, visible in our skies as the brightest star in the Canis Minor constellation. Because the system contains the remains of a collapsed star, it was bound to be rich in heavy elements and ripe for industrialisation. It was thus no surprise that in 2104, this was one of the first extrasolar systems to be colonised. The surprise came three years later, when an ancient but still active Artefact created by a clearly alien civilization was discovered under the settlement. The observatories picked up the unmistakable tachyon radiation of a fleet slowing down from faster-than-light travel approaching the system. Preparing for the worst-case scenario, the UN dispatched its entire Armada to relieve the minimal defences the settlement holds, while their Scientists worked hard to decipher the alien communications and to understand their newfound enemy - whose name was revealed to be the "Aethyn".

A dark, rounded rectangular header with the text 'GAME OVERVIEW' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

## GAME OVERVIEW

A vertical strip on the left side of the page shows a close-up of a character's face, wearing a helmet with a visor and a blue glowing element.

The Defence of Procyon III is a game for two teams: on each team, one player is in charge of the ground battle, and the other player is in charge of the space battle. On one hand, the ground battle is more of a push-and-pull of threat and defence; on the other, the space battle is an exercise in tactical and positional combat on multiple fronts.

Teams score Victory Points for certain feats. If either team is at or above **42 Victory Points** at the end of a round, the battle has come to a climactic end: the team with the most points wins the battle for the Procyon star system. If this does not happen before round 10, the team with the most Victory Points at the end of the 10th round wins. In the case of a tie, the Aethyn team wins. Alternatively, the Human team automatically loses the game if their morale breaks down (after the loss of their 10th Scientist; see page 7).

All names and terms related to the Aethyn in this rulebook were chosen by the forces of the human Expedition on Procyon III and the UN Armada facing the strange ships of the Aethyn. It was long after the defence of Procyon III - which later became widely known in human history as the First Contact Conflict - that we were able to fully grasp the mostly psionic communication of the Aethyn, including how they referred to themselves.

## HOW TO LEARN THIS GAME

Defence of Procyon III is a combination of four card-based combat games interacting with each other. Because the four factions of the game have completely different rules, the game is presented in five rulebooks (this rulebook - including the solo and co-op rules, and the four faction rulebooks).

### ARMADA

The shining space navy. The human cavalry. While they're limited in movement, they are blessed with overwhelming firepower and strong shields that can pack a huge punch. Using a card-play mechanism where you decide your own attack strength at the risk of reducing your manoeuvrability, every move involves a series of tough decisions. Yet, the Armada's strongest abilities depend on how you manage and use their scarcely available Promethium crystals.

**Mechanisms:** *turn programming, randomness mitigation, resource management*

**Luck factor:** *medium to high*

### MELD

The alien space force consisting of organic ships, which deploy Spore Clouds of nano-machinery in an attempt to blockade the Human fleet from providing help to the surface. Using a mixed die/card selection system, this is the faction where the most careful planning is needed. While their ships are limitless, their time and their resources are not. They need to carefully balance surviving the UN Armada's onslaught and utilising orbital bombardment to help the Principal deliver the killing blow to the colony.

**Mechanisms:** *dice pool management, card selection, hand construction*

**Luck factor:** *low*

### EXPEDITION

The brave human defenders of the colony, lead by four Heroes with unique abilities. They use a tradeoff-focused card-play that will drain their strengths the more, the better they are doing. Hold out until relief arrives, or organise a desperate dash against the Aethyn's Empress.

**Mechanisms:** *deck destruction, action point allowance*

**Luck factor:** *low*

### PRINCIPAL

The primary alien aggressor faction of the game. Their job is to make the most of their cards to break through the Human defence lines, score points fast, and resist being slowed down by their Combat bag's constant fluctuations. Their one weakness is the centralised power of the Empress; don't let the Humans exploit that!

**Mechanisms:** *bag building, multi-use cards*

**Luck factor:** *medium*

For your first game, you should focus on your own rulebook; the rules of the other factions can be learned during play (though most of their rules that are relevant to your actions are included in your rulebook to aid you in taking effective actions). At the very least, familiarise yourself with how your cards/dice work and how to move and attack with your own units. After you have played one game, you will have seen all the factions in action, and it will be much easier to understand the other rulebooks. On a side note: your first two-three turns will take much longer than average while each player learns their turn structure and their available options. Once things feel familiar, you can spend time during the other players' turns planning out your moves and be ready to execute them. We estimate an average player turn to take around three minutes once everyone is familiar with the game's concepts.

## HELP YOUR FRIENDS LEARN THE GAME

Your rulebook tells you how to move your forces around the board, but at some point, you will want to start dealing some damage to the enemy. The highlights of dealing damage are in your rulebook, but some details about the consequences of damage might be found only in the rulebook of the faction taking the damage.

You should help your friends learn the game. Answer questions about how your rules work. If you see your opponent making an obvious mistake, point out the rule that is being overlooked. The Humans and the Aethyn are fighting a battle for survival, but to have a fun game night, all the players need to work together.

## AETHYN FACTIONS

### MELD (SPACE)



12 Fang figures



10 Rattle figures



10 Hood figures



3 Cobra figures



6 Neuron dice



8 Command cards



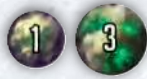
8 Evolved Command cards



1 Mothership tile



Meld board



Spore Cloud tokens  
(in denominations of 1 and 3)



30 Shield/Hit tokens  
(various denominations)



10 Function cubes (purple)

### PRINCIPAL (GROUND)



21 Command cards



30 Legion figures



5 Centurion figures



1 Empress figure



35 Health counters



Principal board



4 Skybeam tokens



15 Fallen tokens

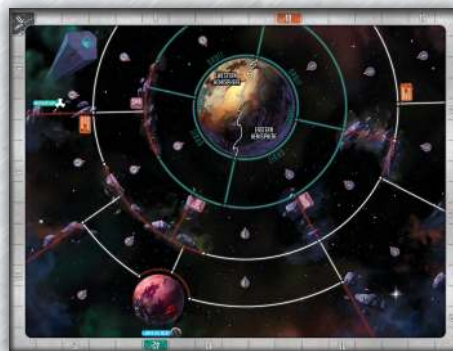


1 Combat bag,  
15 Focus cubes (black),  
15 Discord cubes (white)

## COMMONS



Ground board



Space board



Round tracker



14 Activation tokens



2 Victory Point trackers  
(one Aethyn, one Human)

HUMAN FACTIONS

ARMADA (SPACE)



14 Interceptor figures



6 Frigate figures



2 Dreadnought figures



1 Ion Cannon card



27 Tactics cards



10 Echo Drone tokens



10 Promethium tokens



1 Lunar Refinery tile



Armada board

EXPEDITION (GROUND)



UNMC Colonel John O'Hare



Specialist MacKenna "Mac" Willard



Gunnery Sergeant Paul Keeler



Doctor Stacey Krahm



4 Hero figures and cards



12 Militia figures



12 Marine figures



4 Absorption Field tokens



6 Deflector tokens



6 Hit cubes (red)



18 Tactics cards



12 Wound cards



6 Pylon tokens



Expedition board



14 Scientist/Transport tokens



8 Building tokens

These tokens and cubes are **unlimited**: Activation tokens, Hit cubes, Spore Cloud tokens, and Shield/Hit tokens. Should you run out of any of these, use a proxy.  
 These tokens and cubes are **limited**: Fallen tokens, Focus and Discord cubes, Skybeam tokens, Absorption Field tokens, Deflector tokens, Promethium tokens, Echo Drone tokens, and Function cubes.

## SETUP

1. Teammates should sit next to each other. Place the ground board and the space board next to each other, making sure that their orientations match (have East/West on the same side of both boards). The Principal and the Meld players should sit side by side, with the Armada and the Expedition players across the board, facing their respective direct opponents.



2. Place the Round tracker on "Round 1".
3. Place the Aethyn Victory Point tracker on "0" and the Human Victory Point tracker on "10".
4. Each player takes their chosen faction's rulebook and their components. Each player sets up their portion of the game according to the rules specified in their rulebook.
5. Keep the Activation tokens near the play area. These tokens are used by the space factions (Meld, Armada) to visually enforce the rule of "each ship can only be activated once" and help the Expedition player remember which Hero they activated.

Both boards are double-sided: one side has minimal iconography, for maximum immersion and enjoyment of the illustrations, while the other one has additional clarifying labels and icons: names of locations/zones, starting unit setups, and in the case of the space board whether the zone is above the Eastern or the Western hemisphere. Use whichever sides you prefer; there is no gameplay difference.

## GAMEPLAY

The game is played in rounds. In each round, players take turns, always in this faction order:

1. **Principal**
2. **Armada**
3. **Expedition**
4. **Meld**

Turns are explained in each faction's rulebook. Note that each faction has one turn between them and their "immediate opponent". This is by design so that players have time to plan their turns while the action is mostly on the other board.

At the end of the Meld player's turn, the Round tracker is moved to indicate the start of the next round.

## RULES OF COMMUNICATION

**Defence of Procyon III** is a team game with highly asymmetrical responsibilities and capabilities. Therefore, it is normal that you may wish to discuss your options with your teammate in order to formulate strategy or ask their opinion over a particular choice. This is allowed (including showing your cards to each other), but all spoken discussion should be in the open. Players wishing to simulate a stricter sense of wartime confusion may allow hidden team-talk, but this might become cumbersome in some situations.

## PLAYING WITH FEWER THAN 4 PLAYERS

When playing with **2 players**, you may either play both factions of a team each to play against each other or cooperate against the enemy as explained on page 8, using the “Worst Case Scenario” rules. Note that if you’re playing two factions simultaneously, the game might go much longer, as you won’t have a “friendly” turn to plan your moves on.

When playing **solo**, use the “Worst-Case Scenario” rules to control the Aethyn while you control both Human factions.

If this is your first time playing and you plan to use the “Worst-Case Scenario” rules, you only need to read the Human rulebooks (Expedition, Armada); everything you need to know about the opponent is explained in the cooperative/solo rules.

When playing with **3 players**, both factions of one team are controlled by a single player and the other team by 2 players. This places a much higher cognitive burden on the player controlling two factions simultaneously, and so, we only recommend it for experienced players.

## SCORING & GAME END

During players’ turns, they may score or lose Victory Points in ways explained in the Objectives section of their rulebooks. Whenever a team scores Victory Points, advance its tracker on the Point track around the space board. In the extremely unlikely case of a team losing more Victory Points than they have, ignore any losses that would push them below 0 Points.

If after the Meld player’s turn (at the end of the round), at least one of the teams is at or above **42 Points**, the game ends. The game end is also triggered after the Meld player’s turn if the Meld player achieves the “**Destroy the Artefact**” objective. Whichever team has more Points at this time wins. In case of a tie, the Aethyn team wins.

If all spaces of the Morale track are **filled with Human Scientists**, the Human team’s morale collapses and they immediately surrender, leading to an Aethyn victory (even if the Humans are at or above 42 Points at this time).

If neither of the above has happened by the end of the **10th round**, then whichever team has more Victory Points at this time wins. In case of a tie, the Aethyn team wins.



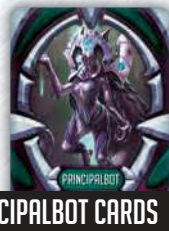
# WORST-CASE SCENARIO

## THE COOPERATIVE AND SOLO RULES FOR DEFENCE OF PROCYON III

### ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS



12X MELDBOT CARDS



18X PRINCIPALBOT CARDS


In these rules, “you” refers to the human player or players controlling the Expedition and Armada collectively. When playing cooperatively, you may freely discuss all your choices, show your cards to each other, and coordinate as much as you want.

### GOAL OF THE GAME

Our worst nightmare has come to pass. The alien fleet has swept the system, destroyed our Lunar Refinery, and blockaded the planet. They dropped their armies, and they amassed against the City. Victory is out of the question; it's all about survival now. Punch a hole in their blockade, and evacuate the greatest minds of our colony and their families. Make humanity proud.

Your goal is to evacuate 6 Scientists from the colony while never losing hope: do not let your Morale or your Victory Points reach zero! You only have 10 rounds to do it; if time runs out, the aliens simply glass the planet's surface.

### SETUP

1. Perform the Expedition's setup according to their rulebook.
2. Perform the Armada's setup according to their rulebook but with the following exceptions:
  - a. Remove both “X” damage cards from the Armada's Tactics cards deck.
  - b. Place the Lunar Refinery with its destroyed side showing, and give the Armada 2 starting Promethium.
  - c. Place the Armada forces as shown below.
3. Perform the Principal's ground board setup and combat bag setup as shown in their rulebook. (Familiarise yourself with their units.) Return their cards and Directive board to the box.
4. Instead of performing the normal Meld setup, place the Meld ships as shown on next page. (Note the +2 Shield/Hit token beside the Mothership and the 3 Spore Clouds in the adjacent zone.) Return unused Hoods and Cobras to the box, and place the unused 9 Rattles and single Fang into the Meldbot's supply.
5. Roll 3 Neuron dice, and place them in a row in the Meldbot's play area to form a queue (with a clear first, second, and third die in the queue). Return the other 3 dice and all Meld cards to the box.
6. Shuffle all Meldbot cards together, and place them next to the row of Neuron dice to form the Meld deck.
7. Separate the starting Principalbot cards by the . Deal 3 starting cards face up in a row below the Meld deck and dice. Shuffle the rest of the starting cards together with the rest of the Principalbot cards to form the Principal deck.
8. Remove the Aethyn Victory Point tracker from play. Set the Human Victory Point tracker to 10, as normal.
9. Use two Activation tokens to cover the two rightmost spaces of the Morale track (i.e. the ones with “0” penalty on them).
10. The game is ready to begin, starting - as usual - with the Principal(bot)'s turn.





## CHANGES IN HUMAN RULES

You play your own turns exactly as described in the Expedition and Armada rulebooks, with the following exceptions.

### OBJECTIVES

The objective scoring described in the Expedition and Armada rulebooks is replaced with the following system.

● **Gain Victory Points** for the following achievements:

- Kill the Empress: +6 VP
- Kill a Centurion: +1 VP
- Destroy the Mothership: +6 VP (note, the Mothership's base health is permanently increased from 6 to 8)
- Any card effect scoring points for you still applies.
- Everything else listed as objectives in the multiplayer rules do not increase your score.

● **Lose Victory Points** if any of the following happens:

- A Hero is knocked out: -4 VP
- A Scientist/Transport is killed: -1 to -3 VP, as shown on the Morale track
- A Frigate is destroyed: -1 VP
- A Dreadnought is destroyed: -4 VP

● **Gain an Echo Drone** for the following small achievements:

- A Cobra is destroyed.
- A Skybeam is destroyed.
- For every 2nd Meld ship killed on the same round (including Cobras)

● The game is **immediately lost** if any of the following happens:

- The 10th round is over.
- The left-most space on the Morale track is occupied by a Scientist/Transport.
- The Empress enters the City.
- Both Pylons are destroyed.
- You have 0 VP. (This is different from the multiplayer game!)

● The game is **immediately won** when the 6th Scientist Transport jumps away from orbit. As in the multiplayer game, when the Expedition deals multiple damage to the same location,

### DISTRIBUTING DAMAGE TO THE PRINCIPALBOT'S UNITS

damage assignment alternates between the Expedition and the Principal. When it's the Principal's turn to select a unit to damage, use the following priority list:

- ➔ If a Centurion has 3 or more Health tokens beneath it, damage that Centurion.
- ➔ Kill a Legion.
- ➔ Damage (or kill) a Centurion.
- ➔ Damage (or kill) the Empress.


Additionally, there are 5 changes from the core rules. These are highlighted on the player aid.

### SPECIAL RULE CHANGES

- The Armada player may use **any number** of Echo Drones in the Drone Phase to remove 1 Spore Cloud each using Frigates and Dreadnoughts.
- The Expedition player may launch one Scientist for free (i.e. no Echo Drone cost) in each of their Drone Phases, but this launch does **not** provide the Armada player with a free move. Otherwise, the Expedition player still has the option to use Echo Drones to launch Scientists (up to 2, as before) and provide the free move.
- When the Armada player is using an activation to move a Scientist Transport, they may move **any number** of Transports **already in orbit**, thus jumping them together. Moving Transports out of sub-orbit still requires an activation each.
- If any ability allows you to discard a die from the Meld pool, you may instead **set** any one of the 3 queued Neuron dice to any other face.
- Mac's special ability only does 1 - rather than 2 - damage to a Principal unit of your choice, and does not manipulate the Principalbot's deck.
- The Mothership's Hit Points are increased to 8. There is a +2 Shield/Hit token near the Mothership to indicate this, as noted in the setup.

# ON THE PRINCIPALBOT'S TURN

## TURN STRUCTURE

1. Resolve **two** of the three cards shown, from left to right.
  - a. On the Principalbot's first turn, resolve the two leftmost ones.
  - b. On its subsequent turns, resolve the two shown on the card on the top of the **Meld's discard pile**.
  - c. If a designated slot is empty (near the end of the game), perform a Push action instead (see below).
2. Discard the resolved cards, and refill the slots from the Principalbot's deck (if able) from left to right.
3. Do the **first** applicable thing from this list:
  - ➔ *If the Principalbot has 6 or more Focus*  *cubes not* in the Combat bag: add 2 Focus cubes to the Combat bag.
  - ➔ *If the Principalbot has 12 or fewer Legions on board and there is at least one Fallen token on the board:* select up to 2 Fallen tokens and replace them with up to 2 Legions each. (If more than 2 Fallen tokens are available, select those with more Expedition units present; if tied, pick those closer to the City; then, choose randomly if still tied.)
  - ➔ *Otherwise:* select the largest group of Principal units sharing a location with Expedition units (choose randomly if tied) and attack with them.

## RESOLVING THE CARDS

Cards mostly instruct you to perform four kinds of actions (i.e. *Move*, *Attack*, *Sweep*, and *Push*) and may have some conditions on which option to resolve. Some cards additionally can manipulate the content of the Combat bag, replace Fallen with Legions, and remove damage from the Empress and Centurions. Effects starting with "If..." are only resolved when the condition is met. Effects starting with "Else..." are only resolved if the previous conditional effect was not resolved. Effects starting with "Then..." are resolved after the previous effect(s).

### MOVE

Select units adjacent to the target location, and move them there. If multiple locations are available to move **from**, use the following priority list:

- ➔ Move units forward (i.e. from Alien locations to Settlements/Vents/Approaches, from there to Pylons, from Pylons to the City).
- ➔ If multiple groups are available, select the least suppressed one (see below).
- ➔ Amongst equally suppressed groups, select the larger one.
- ➔ Amongst equally sized groups, choose randomly.

The rule of **suppression** applies, just as in the multiplayer rules. On the Principalbot's turn, all Principal units that attempt to leave a location come under fire from each combat unit you have there. (Your combat units are your Militias, Marines, and Heroes). Each of your combat units deals 1 damage to a leaving Principal unit of **your** choice. A group of Principal units is **suppressed** if it would suffer at least one damage upon moving (i.e. it shares its location with at least one Expedition combat unit). A group of Principal units is **less suppressed** than another group if

they would suffer less damage upon moving (i.e. whichever group shares its location with fewer Expedition combat units).



Once the group to be moved is ascertained, determine how many units are to be moved using the following priority list (in order, top to bottom):

- ➔ Move half of the units but no fewer than 3, rounding up.
- ➔ If there is one or more Centurion available to move, move one of them.
- ➔ If the move would leave the Empress behind with 3 or fewer other Principal units, then move her as well. Otherwise, do not move the Empress.
- ➔ If the move would leave fewer than 3 Principal units behind, move those as well.




### ATTACK

Principal units attack the same way in a solo/co-op game as they do in a multiplayer game. In case you have not yet read the Principal's attack rules, they are written below.

The Principal's combat strength is equal to **half of the number of combat units (rounded up)** it has in the location. Skybeams are not combat units and are ignored when calculating combat strength. In the core solo scenario, Rattles never land; in a scenario where they do, each landed Rattle increases the Principalbot's combat strength by 2 for attacks in its location.

When it attacks, reach into the Combat bag and, without looking, pull out a number of cubes equal to its combat strength. Each Focus  cube counts as one hit. Discord  cubes are misses.

The Combat bag starts with 12 Focus cubes and 10 Discord cubes, but the ratio will change during the game:

- ➔ If you drew all Discord  cubes, all **but one** are returned to the bag.
- ➔ If you drew exactly one Focus  cube, return all cubes drawn.
- ➔ If you drew more than one Focus  cube, then all cubes **but one of the Focus** ones are returned to the bag.

If the location attacked has a **Deflector**, remove it and you distribute all damage. Otherwise, the Principal will distribute damage according to the following priority list (unless changed explicitly by a Principalbot card) in top-to-bottom order:

- ➔ Absorption field (mandatory, absorbs 1 hit)
- ➔ Pylon (max once per turn)
- ➔ Hero, if dealing 2 or more damage (and preferring the Hero with fewer remaining Hit Points. If the present Heroes are tied in Hit Points, prefer Keeler > Mac > O'Hare > Krahm)
- ➔ Marine that would die during this attack (i.e. if the Marine is already injured or there are two or more hits to distribute)
- ➔ Building (max once per attack, placing a Skybeam if this destroys the Building)
- ➔ Militia
- ➔ Marine
- ➔ Hero
- ➔ Scientist

When a Militia, Marine, or Scientist is killed, replace it with a Fallen. If a Scientist is killed, move it to the rightmost free space of the Morale track and lose the shown VP amount. If this covers the leftmost space, you have lost the game.

## SWEEP

The Sweep action is shorthand for the following sequence:

1. Move with the Principal group adjacent to the Target location. If no group has been selected, use the Move selection criteria. If the group is suppressed, attack with it before moving, then suffer any remaining suppression.
2. If the group did not attack in the first step, attack now in the new location.

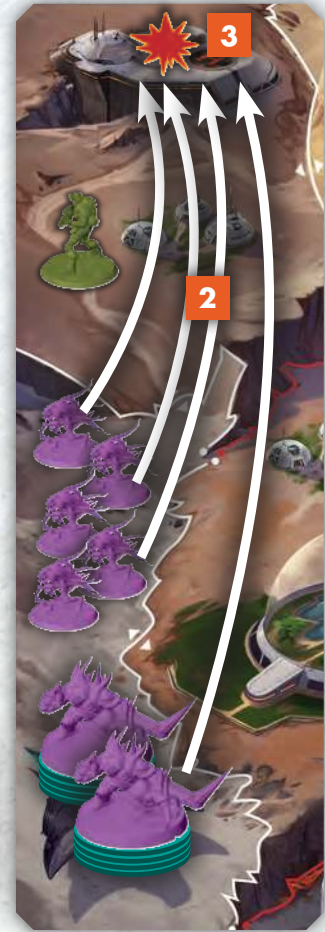
*The Principalbot*

- resolving the Target: Buildings card (1)
- sweeps the location containing a building and selects the Hospital, (all else being equal) the least protected Human building. They move half of their forces there (including one Centurion) (2), and then attack in the Approach (3).

Note: if there was a Human Militia present in the Alien Vanguard (and no other group of Principal units could sweep to a building) they would have attacked there first (attempting to kill the suppressing militia) and then move to the Approach without attacking.

1

**Else:** select a Building  
(Tiebreak: Least suppression damage to reach, biggest adjacent Principal group, least Expedition Hit Points) and Sweep there.



## PUSH

The Push action is shorthand for the following sequence:

1. Select a Principal group in or adjacent to a Pylon or the City (the target). If multiple groups exist, use the following priority list:
  - ➔ Amongst adjacent groups, select the least suppressed group.
  - ➔ If groups are still tied, select the larger group.
  - ➔ If groups are still tied, select the one targeting the Pylon/City with fewer Expedition units.
  - ➔ If groups are still tied, prefer targeting the City, or choose randomly between Pylons.
2. Sweep the target (see above).



The Principalbot has 3 choices to push from towards a Pylon. It ignores the group in the Western Approach (1) (since they are suppressed), then since the remaining groups are equal sized, it picks the one facing less resistance at the Pylon: sweeping the 3 legions and 1 Centurion from the Western Settlement to the Western Pylon location (moving and attacking there) (2).

## ON THE MELDBOT'S TURN

### TURN STRUCTURE

1. Construct one ship, except a Cobra. (See "Construction" on page 17 for details.)
2. Draw one Meldbot card and perform the top (Attack or Defend) effect of it, scaled by the number of  $\diamond$  icons on the first queued Neuron die. Each **Skybeam** built anywhere on the ground board (when a Building is destroyed) counts as an additional  $\diamond$  icon, regardless of its location.
3. Check all Armada ships. If their shields are **exhausted**, they are subject to destruction. (See page 16 for details of Armada destruction.)
4. Perform the bottom effect of the same card, scaled by the number of  $\odot$  on the same Neuron die.
5. Discard the used card, and re-roll the used die. Place the re-rolled die at the back of the queue.

### CONCEPT OF DANGEROUS ZONES

Most actions instruct you to perform the Meldbot's actions in the most Dangerous zone(s). This is a formal way of saying: act where the Armada is the most threatening to the planetary blockade. During the game, the Meldbot's two main actions select targets in descending Danger order.

When comparing two (or more) zones for Danger, use the following priority list:

- ➔ A zone with a Human ship in it is always more dangerous than one without.
- ➔ A zone with fewer Spore Clouds is more dangerous than one with more. If tied, a zone with fewer Rattles is more Dangerous.
- ➔ A zone with more Human ships is more dangerous than one with fewer. Scientist Transports are included in this.
- ➔ A zone with fewer Hoods adjacent to it is more dangerous than one with more Hoods adjacent to it.

(If a most Dangerous zone cannot be determined, then resolve the effect or action starting with the zone closest to "clockwise-North", and proceed by **alternating** between tied zones in clockwise order, as shown below.)



All Meld actions ignore completely empty zones and the Armada's non-orbit "landing zones" on the edges of the space board.

## RESOLVING THE CARDS

### ATTACK!

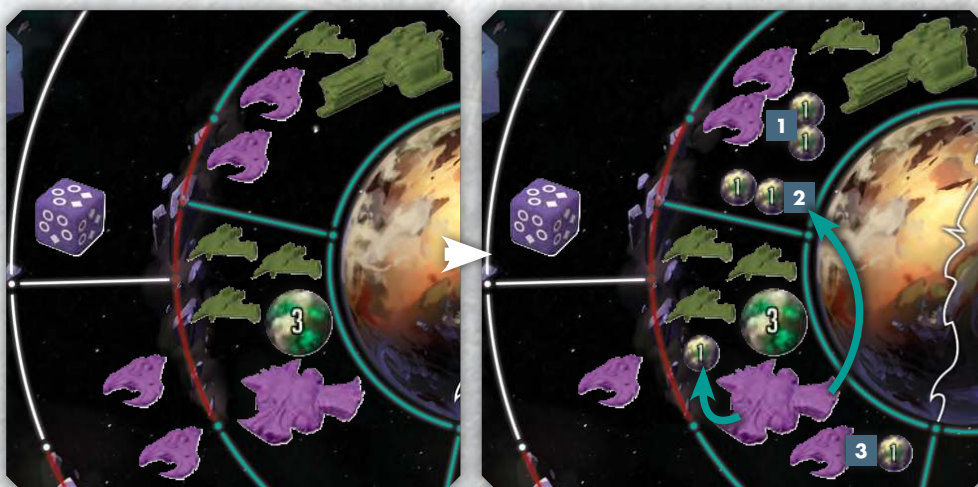
Attack allows the Meldbot to use two times the visible  $\diamond$  icons on its Neuron die to perform specific ship activations and movements, **preferring to attack in non-orbital zones** (with most Dangerous breaking ties) before orbital zones. Determine which ships are activated using the priority order below (under "Activating Meldbot Ships"). To perform Attack, the Meldbot first selects a ship, optionally moves it, and places a Spore Cloud in the zone that it is in (or possibly adjacent to, in the case of a Cobra). In other words, the Meldbot is performing the **2x  $\diamond$  "best attacks" in (potentially) multiple zones**. If it has fewer ships than activations available, it performs as many activations as it can. When performing Attack, the Meldbot's goal is to neutralise threats present in the non-orbital zones, hopefully preventing Armada ships from getting close enough to threaten its orbital planetary blockade.



The **Attack** card will attack wherever it can, starting with reachable, non-orbital zones (excluding Armada starting locations). Therefore, for 2 function icons, it will place a spore cloud into the non-orbital Frigate's zone (1), then move 2 more Fangs in there to do the same (2). Since it has one more activation left over, it uses it to attack its next best target: the Frigate in orbit (3).

### DEFEND!

Defend works similarly to Attack, using the same priority order and similar rules, but it **only targets orbital zones**. This action allows the Meldbot to defend a zone with as many ships as two times the visible  $\diamond$  icons on its Neuron die. The Meldbot carries out Defend differently from Attack; first, it chooses the most Dangerous orbital zone, then it activates as many ships as the card specifies. In other words, the Meldbot defends **one zone with 2x  $\diamond$  ships**. As with Attack, if it has fewer than the required number of ships, the Meldbot activates as many ships as it can. When performing this action, the Meldbot is interested specifically in defending the orbital planetary blockade itself.



**Defend** will find the most dangerous orbital zones (in this case the ones with Human ships). Since the one with no Spore Clouds is more dangerous, it'll place spores there first. The Meldbot has 2 function icons this turn. The two Fangs there activate, placing 1 Spore clouds each (1). Then, out of adjacent ships, it activates the Cobra first, which places 3 Spore Clouds, alternating between the two orbital zones, as they alternate being the most Dangerous one. (2). Finally, one of the two nearby Fangs activate (not enough Function icons to activate the last one), moving into the target zone and placing a Spore there. (3)

## ACTIVATING MELDBOT SHIPS

When activating ships, the Meldbot uses this priority order (top to bottom) to determine which zone's ships to activate:

- ➔ Most Dangerous zone (with orbital vs non-orbital zone priority determined by whether the card directs the Meldbot to Attack or Defend).
- ➔ The adjacent zone with the most Meld ships.
- ➔ The zone closest to "clockwise-North" as is done when deciding the most Dangerous zone above.

When executing Attack or Defend, the Meldbot prefers to activate its Cobra, if possible, before any Fangs.

## Activating Fangs

When a Fang is activated, it optionally moves to an adjacent zone (towards its target) and then places a Spore Cloud. If it is already in the target zone, it simply places a Spore Cloud.

## Activating Cobra

When the Meldbot activates the the Cobra, it performs the following three times: it optionally moves to a zone clockwise-adjacent to its target zone and then places a Spore Cloud in the target zone (not at its current location). If the Cobra is **already adjacent** to its target zone, it does not move. If the Cobra is already **within** its target zone, it moves **from** the target zone to a clockwise-adjacent zone.

## Rattles, Hoods

The Meldbot never activates Rattles and Hoods. Hoods, however, still give +1 additional Hit Point to all Meld ships in **adjacent** zones, just as they do in the multiplayer game, and the effect still stacks.

## DESTROYING ARMADA SHIPS

Armada ships can be destroyed after the Attack/Defend action if their shields are exhausted:

- The number of Spore Clouds present in the ship's zone equals or exceeds the number of shields the ship has.
- Each Rattle+Spore Cloud pair counts as an additional Spore Cloud.
- When a ship is destroyed, remove its piece from the game and return 1 Spore Cloud from its location to the supply.
- Destroy Dreadnoughts before destroying Frigates (if possible), and destroy Frigates before destroying Interceptors (if possible).
- Each turn, **up to 4 ships** can be destroyed by the Meldbot.
- After destroying the ships, all Scientist Transports **in orbit** sharing a space with at least one Spore Cloud and no (non-Transport) Armada ships are also destroyed (return 1 Spore Cloud each). Move destroyed Scientist Transports to the Morale track, and immediately lose the shown VP. If this covers the leftmost space, you lose the game.

## BOMBARDMENT

Some (bottom) actions allow the Meldbot to bombard the ground board (regardless of its ships' position). Select a number of valid targets from the below priority list (from top to bottom), and damage them once each:

- ➔ Each unprotected (see below) Hero (damage absorption does not work against bombardment!)
- ➔ Each unprotected Scientist not sharing a location with any other type of target (preferring one closer to the City, then random)



- ➔ Pylon
- ➔ Buildings (preferring one already damaged, then random)
- ➔ Injured Marine (preferring one sharing a location with more Scientists, then random)
- ➔ Militia (preferring one sharing a location with more Scientists, then random)
- ➔ Marine (preferring one sharing a location with more Scientists, then random)

In the extremely unlikely case of fewer valid targets existing than damage to be dealt, **all** unprotected Scientists become valid targets (even if guarded by other units). Remember that units on a Pylon location while the Pylon is not completely destroyed are shielded, and units in the City are always shielded (until both Pylons fall, but in the cooperative game, that is an instant defeat). The bombardment actions on the Meldbot cards are restricted to Eastern or Western locations or, in the case of the third card, to non-Pylon locations. Note: the Central Plains and the Central Vent are valid targets on all three.

### CIVILIAN SUFFERING

The Humans lose 1 VP per visible ☉ icon on the Neuron die. Remember that you immediately lose the game if you have 0 VP (or fewer)!

### REBUILD

The Meldbot performs a Construct action (as detailed below).

### CONSTRUCTION

When a Meld ship is destroyed, return it to the supply so that it can be rebuilt during a later Construct.

**Exception:** when a Hood is destroyed, simply flip it upside-down as a reminder of where it was destroyed.

When instructed to Construct, do the first thing possible (based on ships in the Meldbot's supply) from this list, from top to bottom, for each visible ☉ icon on the Neuron die:

- ➔ Place a Cobra (maximum 1 on the board) clockwise-adjacent to the most Dangerous orbital zone.
- ➔ Rebuild a destroyed Hood (flip it right side up) in the least Dangerous orbital zone that has a flipped Hood.
- ➔ Rebuild a destroyed Hood (flip it right side up) in the least Dangerous non-orbital zone that has a flipped Hood and no Armada ships present.
- ➔ Place a Rattle in the most Dangerous orbital zone that doesn't have a Rattle.
- ➔ Place a Fang clockwise-adjacent to the most Dangerous orbital zone.
- ➔ Place a Rattle in the orbital zone with the fewest Rattles (more Dangerous one if tied).

### REINFORCE

Place 1 Centurion and as many Legions as there are visible ☉ icons on the Neuron die on the unprotected location with Principal units closest to the City, choosing the largest group of Principal units if tied. If the groups are still tied, choose randomly.

### SPREADING SPORES

The Meldbot selects as many zones as there are ☉ icons on the Neuron die and then places 2 Spore Clouds in each selected zone. Break ties for most Dangerous zones until the Meldbot has selected as many zones as are specified on the card.

### Protected and Unprotected Locations

The City is protected as long as at least one of the Pylons is still intact. The East and the West Pylon locations are protected as long as their respective Pylon is still intact. Every other location is always unprotected. Units are considered protected or unprotected if they are in such a location.



## ADJUSTING DIFFICULTY

The following changes make the game **easier to win**:

- Add 2 more Discord cubes to the Principal Combat bag at setup.
- Increase starting Echo Drones to 4.
- Increase starting Promethium to 4.
- Increase starting VP to 12.
- Only 5 Scientist Transports have to jump away from orbit to win.
- Limit each Meldbot Bombardment to kill a maximum of one unprotected, unguarded Scientist (similarly to the multiplayer rules).
- Cobra only places one Spore Cloud per activation (instead of up to 3).

The following changes make the game **harder to win**:

- Add 2 more Focus cubes to the Principalbot's Combat bag at setup.
- Decrease starting VP to 8.
- Add 1 Spore Cloud at setup to all Orbital zones.
- Add 2 Legions at setup to both Alien locations.
- Place an unused Hood on the planet on the space board: all ships in orbital zones have their Hit Points increased by one. This Hood cannot be destroyed. (1)
- The Meldbot can destroy any number of exhausted Armada ships during each turn.
- 7 (or 8) Scientist Transports have to jump away from orbit to win.



## ADDITIONAL SOLO SCENARIO

# BRING DOWN THE BIG ONES

Take the fight to those monstrosities, and show them what humankind is made of!

All the rules from "Worst-Case Scenario" apply, unless otherwise noted.

## CHANGES IN SETUP

The ground board's setup is unchanged, except for the following: remove 1 Scientist from each Settlement and place them on third and fourth right-most spaces of the Morale track (do not lose VP for them), place 1 additional Health tracker under each Centurion and the Empress, and return the 5th Centurion to the game box.

Set up the space board as shown on next page. Place the remaining 7 Rattles into the reserve. Return all unused Hoods and Cobras to the box. All Fangs should already be on the board.

## CHANGES IN OBJECTIVES

The objectives listed on page 10 (and the solo Meldbot aid) remain unchanged, except for the following:

- Do not receive VP for destroying the Empress. However, once the Empress is killed, **ignore any effect that would heal or place a Centurion**.
- Do not receive VP for killing the Mothership. However, once the Mothership is destroyed, **ignore any effect that would place a Cobra**.

- Receive 3 VP for each Scientist Transport successfully jumped away from orbit.
- The VP loss and other auto-loss conditions are unchanged.
- You **immediately win** the game if the Mothership, the Cobra, and the Empress are all destroyed and there are no Centurions on the ground board.



## CHANGES IN RULES

The Empress, the Centurions, the Mothership, and the Cobra all have 1 additional Health/Hit Point. These are all indicated in the setup by additional Health counters/bonus Shield/Hit tokens. Ignore any effect that would place a 5th Centurion on the board at any point.

## CHANGES IN MELDBOT PRIORITIES

As long as the Mothership is alive:

- Consider **proximity to the Mothership** instead of fewer Hoods (the 4th consideration) as the tiebreaker for Danger.
- When resolving a Defend, also consider the Mothership's zone and the zone adjacent to it when determining the most Dangerous zone.
- When the Meldbot places a Cobra, Fang, or Rattle, it is always built adjacent to the Mothership.

## ADJUSTING DIFFICULTY

For a further challenge, during setup, remove the 2 Scientists from the Central Vent location and place them on the next two spaces of the Morale track. This lowers your starting VP by 2. Otherwise, the same modifiers to increase or decrease difficulty as in "Worst-Case Scenario" apply.

## ADDITIONAL SOLO SCENARIO

# RESCUE, RATTLE, AND ROLL

Deal with a rain of enemy Rattles while rescuing survivors of the destruction of the Lunar Refinery.

All the rules from "Worst-Case Scenario" apply, unless otherwise noted.

## CHANGES IN SETUP

Ground board setup is unchanged, except remove 1 Scientist from each Settlement and place them on the Lunar Zone of the space board.

Set up the space board as pictured:



Return unused Rattles, Hoods, and Cobras to the box. All Fangs should already be on the board.


## CHANGES IN OBJECTIVES

You have the same objectives as in “Worst-Case Scenario,” but **at least one of the rescued Scientists has to come from the Lunar Refinery.**





## CHANGES IN RULES

The zone immediately adjacent to the Lunar Refinery is considered **lunar orbit**. Scientists on the Lunar zone can be moved into the adjacent, lunar orbit space zone (and flipped to a Transport, adding 2 Promethium to it) using any Armada action, same as Transports on the sub-orbit zones. A Transport may jump away if it leaves lunar orbit, using the usual rules. Once a Scientist has left the Lunar zone, they may not move back there. However (unlike in the sub-orbit zones), Scientists can stay in the Lunar zone indefinitely and are immune to all Meld effects.



At the end of each Meldbot turn, when re-rolling the used Neuron die, select 1 Rattle in orbit based on the number of  icons rolled:



- 1 : North-East
- 2 : South-East
- 3 : South-West
- 4 : North-West
- If there is no Rattle present, select one from the next clockwise zone, and so on.

Land the selected Rattle in an adjacent ground location (whether protected or unprotected) with at least 1 Human unit and 1 Principal unit present. If multiple targets are available, select the location with the most Principal units; if they're still tied, pick the one closest to the City; finally, pick randomly amongst the still-tied ones.

Rattles destroyed in space are **removed from the game** and returned to the box; they cannot be constructed again.

## CHANGES IN MELDBOT PRIORITIES

If there is at least one Transport in lunar orbit, consider that zone part of both orbit and non-orbit for the purpose of determining Meldbot targets.

## ADJUSTING DIFFICULTY

To increase difficulty, add 1 more Rattle each to the North-East and North-West orbital zone during setup. Otherwise, the same difficulty modifiers as in “Worst-Case Scenario” apply.



# PRINCIPALBOT QUICK REFERENCE

1. Resolve two cards (selected by Meld card).

2. Do the first eligible:

- ➔ If 6 or more Focus cubes outside of the bag, add 2 to the bag.
- ➔ If 12 or fewer Legion on board, and at least one Fallen on board: select 2 Fallen (Tiebreak: more Expedition units present, closer to City, random) and replace with 2 Legion each.
- ➔ Select biggest group of Principal units sharing location with enemy and attack.

## WHERE TO MOVE FROM?

- From back to front preferred (Alien Locations > Approaches/Settlements/Vents > Pylons > City)
- If tied, least suppressed preferred
- If tied, larger group preferred
- If tied, select randomly

## HOW MANY TO MOVE?

- Half of units present, but minimum 3
- This includes 1 Centurion if possible
- Do not move Empress, unless left with 3 or fewer units
- Do not leave 2 or 1 units behind; move them along

## SWEEP

- If unsuppressed, move (see amounts above), then attack where the units moved to.
- If suppressed, attack first (the location of the suppression), then move to the target (do not attack). If still suppressed, suffer suppression.

## PUSH


- Select a group of Principal units in or adjacent to a Pylon or the City. If multiple options:
  - ➔ If adjacent to target, least suppressed is preferred.
  - ➔ If undecided, larger group is preferred.
  - ➔ If tied, group adjacent to fewer Expedition units in Pylon/City preferred.
  - ➔ If tied, City preferred over Pylons; between Pylons choose randomly.
- Perform a Sweep (see above), and when moving forward (City > Pylons), prefer location with fewer Expedition units unless otherwise indicated on triggering card.


## TAKING DAMAGE

When the Principal is given the option to distribute damage, choose the first valid target from this list:

- ➔ If 50% or less damage on it: Centurion
- ➔ Legion
- ➔ Centurion
- ➔ Empress

## ATTACK

Draw cubes from Combat bag equal to **half of the units present** (round up) + 2 if Rattle landed in location. Each Focus  cube is a damage.

- 2+ Focus cubes: return all cubes, except 1 Focus.
- all Discard  cubes: return all cubes, except 1 Discard.
- exactly 1 Focus cube (and any number of Discard): return all cubes.

Unless modified by card, Principalbot deals damage the following way:

- ➔ Absorption Field (mandatory)
- ➔ Pylon (max once per turn)
- ➔ Hero, if dealing 2 or more damage (preferring Hero with fewer remaining hit points, if tied Keeler > Mac > O'Hare > Krahm)
- ➔ Marine that would die
- ➔ Building (max once per attack)
- ➔ Militia
- ➔ Marine
- ➔ Hero
- ➔ Scientist

**Suppressed:** When Principal units move out of a location shared with Expedition combat units, they suffer 1 damage per your combat unit present. A group is less suppressed if they suffer less damage.

# MELDBOT QUICK REFERENCE

1. Construct one ship (except Cobra).
2. Draw one Meld card: perform top half with first die. (Skybeam + ♦)
3. Destroy up to 4 exhausted Armada ships (plus all exhausted Transports).
4. Perform bottom half of same card, with same die.
5. Then reroll used die, put to end of queue.
6. Then perform highlighted Principal cards on Principal turn.

## DAANGEROUS ZONE

Find first that differentiates

- ➔ Zone with at least 1 Human ship is more Dangerous.
- ➔ Zone with fewer Spores is more Dangerous.
- ➔ Zone with more Human ships is more Dangerous.
- ➔ Zone with fewer Hoods adjacent is more Dangerous.
- ➔ Then alternate between tied, starting with "clockwise-North."  
(Human starting zones and empty zones are ignored.)

## BOMBARDMENT TARGET SELECTION

(repeat list for each damage, ignoring target of previous damages):

- ➔ Each protected Hero
- ➔ Each unprotected, unguarded Scientist (closer to City, then random)
- ➔ Pylon
- ➔ Buildings (fewest hit points, then random)
- ➔ Injured Marine (with more Scientists, then random)
- ➔ Militia (with more Scientists, then random)
- ➔ Marine (with more Scientists, then random)

## RULES CHANGES

- Unlimited Echo Drones can be used to remove Spore Clouds.
- 1 Free Scientist Launch per Expedition turn (does not give Armada a free move).
- For one activation, Armada may jump multiple Transports from orbit.
- Discarding Meld dice: set one queued die to any face.
- Mothership has +2 Hit Points.
- Mac's ability deals 1 damage.

**Cobras** act as if present in all adjacent zones too. Instead of moving to target zone, they move to least Dangerous adjacent orbital zone.

## CONSTRUCTION

Do the first possible:

- ➔ Place **Cobra** (clockwise) adjacent to most Dangerous orbital zone.
- ➔ Rebuild a **Hood** in least Dangerous **orbital** zone that has a flipped Hood.
- ➔ Rebuild a **Hood** in least Dangerous non-orbital zone that has a flipped Hood **and** no Human ships are present.
- ➔ Place a **Rattle** in the most Dangerous orbital zone that doesn't have one.
- ➔ Place a **Fang** (clockwise) adjacent to most Dangerous orbital zone.
- ➔ Place a **Rattle** in orbital zone with fewest Rattles (tie break: most Dangerous).

## HUMAN OBJECTIVES

### Gain VP

Kill Empress: +6  
Kill Mothership: +6  
Kill Centurion: +1

### Lose VP

Hero Knockout: -4  
Morale Loss: -1 to -3  
Frigate Loss: -1  
Dreadnought Loss: -4

### Echo Drone gain

Kill Cobra  
Kill Skybeam  
Every 2nd killed Meld ship per turn

**6th Scientist jumps: Win game** (in Worst Case Scenario)  
**Lose game** if 0 VP remaining, City destroyed, or 10 rounds completed.

## CREDITS

**Game design:** Dávid Turczy

**Illustrations:** Jakub Politzer

**Graphic Design & Layouting:** Henri Kermarrec

**Lead developer:** Riccardo Fabris

**Solo/co-op design:** Dávid Turczy & Noralie Lubbers

**Solo development and scenarios:** John Albertson

**Production:** Will Townshend, Dan Mersey, and Mark Cooke @ PSC Games

**Rulebook Writing:** Dávid Turczy & Jason A. Holt

**Rulebook Editing:** Emanuela & Robert Pratt

**Additional editing and card texts:** Noralie Lubbers, Mark Cooke, Marcel Cwertetschka  
Thanks to Balázs Horváth for his help with the theme texts and to Josh Beavers for the amazing TTS module.

**Playtesting, advice, and support:** Noralie Lubbers, Kieran Symington, Nick Shaw, Selwyn Ward, Benjamin Schmauss, Bijan Mehdinejad, Alan Paull, David Mortimer, Benjamin Tieman, Adrian C. Whipp, Derek Jonson, Frank de Jong, Olivier Ladage, Roelof Van Der Heijden, Matt Green, Tamás Rábel, Péter Juhász, Joshua Howie, Graham Andrew Rutland, Wai-yee Phuah, Alex Batterbee, Martin Harris, Richard Dolman, Red Morris, Debs Lyon, Harry Dean, Neil Ralls-Whitmore, Sven Tschepainz, Marco Tuzzi, Esben Heick, Cyril Epinat, Josh Beavers, Onno Westerhout, and many more in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and all around the world.

*This game is my love letter to all the cool sci-fi worlds I wanted to watch the heroes kick some more butt in.*

*Thank you Noralie, without your help it would have been... tough to finish this one <3*

*Thanks to all the Kickstarter backers who trusted me.*

