

Rules Changes for the Nexus Setting

As the idea for creating the Nexus Universe solidified, my brother and I made the conscience decision to create a setting that would utilize many of the basic features from Babylon 5 Wars, yet at the same time change and tweak those rules we felt needed, or could sustain a change. The goal has been to create a unique setting with its own feel and style of tactics. Some of these ideas have come from listening to discussions from other players to just wanting to try something different. In some ways, this adds a level of complexity to the game that does not exist with the B5 races. In the end, my brother and I have decided that the Nexus Universe would have its own character with the various rules tweaks, but the effort has been made to limit radically difficult changes.

Special Rules for Crude Jump Drives in the Nexus Setting

Not every race is capable of producing a fully functional jump engine. The primary cause of this is when a race is developing jump technology on their own without technical support or assistance, or from attempting to copy jump technology in a short period of time or from a substandard source. Crude jump drives are characterized by fewer hit boxes to represent their fragile nature, more severe criticals, and lesser capabilities. The following rules are used for Crude Jump Drives.

Jump Delay Times

Crude jump drives generally have longer jump delays than equivalent jump engines of other races. Typically, the best a crude jump drive can obtain is 40 turns.

Jump Point Vortex Operations

Crude jump drives follow the same procedure as normal jump drives when opening and closing a jump point, but are under the following restrictions.

- The jump point may only be within 2 hexes directly ahead of the generating ship. (Directly ahead refers to the facing of the ship, not its direction of motion.)
- The vortex facing cannot be selected. The jump point always faces the generating ship.
- Jump points close as per the standard rules.
- Crude jump points may not be maintained.

Crude Jump Gates

Crude jump gates do not suffer from any of the restrictions to opening a jump point since they are larger and have dedicated reactors to sustain them. However, crude jump gates may not maintain a jump vortex and suffer from all critical penalties as crude jump drives.

Jumping Into Combat

All ships equipped with a crude jump drive suffer a +5 to the roll on determining the scatter of the jump vortex.

Crude Jump Drive Criticals

Crude jump drives roll for criticals like normal jump drives. However, a penalty of +15% is added to the chance of being destroyed if the jump drive is used.

Special Rules for Ballistics in the Nexus Setting

Launch Declaration and Impact

Any ballistic weapon used by a Nexus ship is launched during the Fire Determination stage of the turn (i.e. when all other weapons fire). At launch, the hex of launch is noted. However, Nexus ballistics do not impact on this turn. Due to the slower speed of ballistics compared to other weapons, the ballistics will not roll to hit their target until the Resolve Ballistic Weapon Attacks segment of the following turn. This allows ballistics to keep their primary advantages of range, no range penalty, and hitting before weapons fire, while at the same time allowing the targets of a ballistic attack to "take action" against the attack. Offensive EW is not applied to the target until the turn of impact.

Launch Range versus Flight Range

All Nexus ballistics utilize two ranges in the weapons stats box. The first is the Launch Range of the weapon. This is the range that the launching platform must be to its intended target before the weapon may be fired. The second value, in parenthesis, is the Flight Range. This is how far the ballistic weapon may travel from its launch hex after being fired. Typically, this is larger than the Launch Range.

Combined Example

A Craytan Epiron Cruiser wishes to engage an advancing Sal-bez Fel-riz New Patrol Cruiser with its plasma bombs. These weapons have a range listed at 15 (25). It is currently the start of Turn 2. In order to fire the plasma bombs, the Epiron must maneuver to within 15 hexes of the Fel-riz by the Fire Declaration step of Turn 2, which it does, although barely. At a range of 15, the Epiron fires both plasma bombs and records the launch hex. At this point, the Epiron required no offensive EW. The bombs will now travel towards their target and will attempt to hit during the Resolve Ballistic Weapon Attacks segment of Turn 3. The Sal-bez, knowing that it cannot get to a range of 26 hexes from the launch hex, maneuvers in order to present the lower profile and bring defensive weapons to bear during the movement segment of Turn 3. Furthermore, the Sal-bez goes fully defensive and puts its light particle beams in defensive mode. For its part, the Epiron goes fully offensive with its EW in order to try and assure a hit. If any hit in this segment, the damage is resolved on the side of the Fel-riz facing the launch hex using the standard B5W rules during the Resolve Ballistic Weapon Attacks of Turn 3. After this both sides will commence with the Fire Declaration Step of Turn 3.

Special Rules for Light Combat Vessels in the Nexus Setting

Electronic Warfare

The electronic warfare (EW) restrictions against Light Combat Vessels (LCVs) in the B5 Universe have always felt a bit artificial. In addition, many B5 LCVs use low quality sensors that effectively render the point moot. However, the B5 setting sets a precedent that LCVs were simply not considered "front-line" units. They were specialty units to operate in heavy atmospheres or as local customs and police vessels.

In the Nexus Universe, the reverse is true. LCVs are an integral component of the races' order of battle. While still more of a local system unit, the Nexus races invested a great deal in these units, and their sensors were no exception. The Nexus races saw LCVs as units that were expected to face combat situations and planned accordingly. As a result, all Nexus LCVs may utilize their EW points freely and with no restrictions. This is not optional. Whether fighting a Nexus scenario or in a cross-over battle, Nexus LCVs are never penalized in their EW usage. This cost is already factored into the LCV's point cost.

Strategic Movement

Again, unlike their B5 Universe counterparts, Nexus LCVs were expected to be highly mobile, armed pickets as well as first-responders. This became ever more important as the true nature of travel within the Nexus system was realized. Now that practically any world could be reached via Nexus, the old defensive structure of confining an opponent within the established jump network was tossed right out the window. Unfortunately, the Nexus fleets were not large enough to cover every single world. As a result, LCVs were utilized to provide early warnings of incursions and to call for help. This, combined with the *Treaty of Nexus*, further convinced the powers that LCVs needed to be able to operate with extended ranges, a trait already developing before Nexus was discovered.

This means that Nexus LCVs are legal units to use in offensive and defensive scenarios. Nexus LCVs can accompany a battle fleet without the services of a tender. However, the Nexus races did develop tenders for two reasons. First, even though the LCVs could transit with a fleet through hyperspace, the ships were simply not very comfortable. Tenders eased the strain and provided an accessible point for repairs and re-supply. Second, tenders were needed for LCVs transiting to or from Nexus, as they were incapable of surviving travel through The Ring that surrounded Nexus. In a campaign setting, Nexus LCVs can travel one jump on their own (if a jump gate is available). The arrival system must have a friendly world or tender available for the LCV to re-supply and allow the crew some much needed rest.

Special Rules for Bases and OSATs in the Nexus Setting

From the original concept for the Nexus setting in the Babylon 5 Wars system, the idea has been to re-imagine various rules and systems. The goal has been to create a unique setting with its own flair and characteristics. This has certainly applied to the fixed defenses of Nexus.

While many of the Babylon 5 Wars bases and OSATs are impressive, my brother and I have been of the opinion that they lacked the range and presence that would justify their status as being defensive lynch-pins. In short, fixed defenses are vulnerable to massed fighter strikes, short-range jump-ins, or any opponent that could field a number of relatively long-ranged weapons.

After several scenarios where a B5 Universe base flailed helplessly against an equivalent point force, the wheels started turning for forming the Nexus Universe. The notable exception was an Earth base casually lobbing heavy missiles 40 hexes every turn. In the Nexus setting, bases are true center points for defensive actions. They provide numerous support capabilities to a defending fleet. Furthermore, as the true extent of how Nexus affected travel in the region was realized, bases had to contend with the possibility that they may face a determined enemy force with no supporting fleet. Unlike B5, Nexus makes jump routes less rigid and it is much easier to side-step the established jump network. As a result, Nexus bases would become truly enormous installations.

Any highly pointed single unit will suffer against an equally pointed force of more numerous units, but Nexus bases will be capable to remain dangerous opponets. Their increased size allows for expanded capabilities, both offensive and defensive. In the end, the Nexus races decided that if the time and effort was going to be used to create a base in the first place, the attempt would be made to make these units extremely hardy.

The following rules are enhancements for bases or OSATs. These can be installed at the player's option. While the choice to use the enhancement is optional, the enhancements are not optional rules. Any player utilizing a Nexus base or OSAT is allowed to purchase these enhancements. These include Ballistic Accelerators and Sensor Mines. Some bases will have these enhancements already included. Additional base rules will be made as my brother and I create more of the Nexus bases.

Ballistic Accelerator

Availability: Any year (Advanced Accelerators are not available until 2168.)

Cost: Determine the maximum damage the weapon can cause in a single shot. The ballistic accelerator is one-fourth this value (round fractions up). For pulse-style weapons, sum the total damage for the maximum number of pulses and use one-fourth of this value. Advanced accelerators cost one-third the maximum damage.

Restrictions: This may only be used on bases or OSATs.

This is an example of the improvements to ballistic weapons on fixed defenses. Nearly every base or OSAT using ballistics was eventually equipped with a ballistic accelerator. Due to the size of these units, or in the OSAT's case not needing crew or engine compartments, and being stabilized platforms, ballistic launching systems have additional boosters to accelerate munitions away from the base or OSAT. This boost greatly extends the range of the munitions. The standard ballistic accelerator adds 30 hexes to the launch and total range of the weapon used. The advanced accelerator adds 40 hexes to the launch and total range of the weapon used.

Sensor Mines

Availability: Any year

Cost: 10% the value of the unit being assisted (Gives 4 sensor mines)

Up to two additional sensor mines may be purchased, but each additional mine costs another 5% of the base or OSAT's base point value. Therefore, a base with six sensor mines would have to pay 20% of its base cost for all six.

Restrictions: This may only be used for bases or OSATs. Ballistic weapons benefit from the bonus fire control only if their target is within the bonus range of the sensor mines at the moment of impact.

Signature: 4

Damage: 14

All of the races in the Nexus region looked for ways to improve the capabilities of their fixed defenses. This arose out of the effectiveness of small attack craft on fixed defenses. The major issue was that small attack craft, while individually weak, could race up and inundate the defenses of bases or

OSATs. Efforts were taken to create defensive weapons that could engage these small units at range, but these failed, as weapons that had the range and fire control to attack small units at range were too impractical for use.

Each race eventually found ways to utilize passive sensor mines to enhance the firing solutions of their bases and OSATs. The system was found to radically increase the range of weapons on these units as well as provide bonus fire control against enemy units near the base or OSAT. For purposes of these rules, sensor mines are considered very basic and a generic rule can be used for sensor mines of all races. The advantages of sensor mines are listed below.

Typically, sensor mines are deployed in groups of four, which offered the greatest advantages for the least amount of cost. Sensor mine packages are bought individually for each base or OSAT and different bases and OSATs cannot use each other's sensor mines. Each mine is deployed up to 15 hexes away from the base, or 8 hexes away from the OSAT it is assigned to.

The effect of sensor mines is to reduce the range penalty of any shot by the base or OSAT by one-half, with any fractions rounded down. For example, a Sal-bez Tak'riz OSAT wishes to fire its laser cutter at a Craytan Epiron cruiser 22 hexes away. Normally, the range penalty would be -11 to hit. However, the sensor mines reduces this by 5 to -6 (ie: $-11/2 = 5.5$, rounded down to 5). In addition, bonus fire control points of +1 per active sensor mine are applied to the to-hit number on any enemy unit within 15 hexes of a base or 8 hexes of an OSAT. This bonus is cumulative with the halving of the range penalty.

When sensor mines are detected and destroyed, it affects the ability of the sensor mines to assist the unit they are assisting. For each sensor mine destroyed, the bonus fire control is reduced by one. If only one sensor mine remains, all bonuses to fire control and range penalty are lost.