

# **Not-Minigolf** (working title)

## Game Treatment

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<http://thumper.thunderbunny.net/game>

## **1 Background**

### **1.1 History**

The humans have long left Earth and move into space. Measuring distance by miles has since long been forgotten. The human race now extends beyond our solar system, spanning many clusters, even galaxies. Interplanetary travel has become a common chore, no more difficult than travel between cities on planet Earth. During these many years, humans did not encounter alien life, but the human species has diverged greatly into three prominent groups. Though they stem from the same ancestry, such brotherly love no longer has a place in this time. Two groups, War1 and War2, are continually at war with each other, while the third, the Traders, supplies both sides.

### **1.2 War1**

This group maintains the closest connection to the humans of planet Earth. They are the direct descendants, and their pride in this heritage is crucial in the framework of their government. Because of their long background, they have the most experience in technology and manufacturing. Their ships and such are very sleek, refined, and technologically advanced, though not without drawbacks. For example, their ships feature the latest breakthrough in plasma cannon technology, but the cost of maintaining such technology may in some sense outweigh the option of the older but reliable technology of lasers. Life within War1 is not easy, though; War1's society and existence has been inseparably intertwined with War2 in continual conflict.

### **1.3 War2**

War2 is a child of War1. Many, many years ago, during the early stages of interstellar travel, War1 was forced to send out many expeditionary crews to far star systems for various reasons (reconnaissance, construction, etc.). As years passed, the small outposts grew to become substantial populations, sometimes inhabiting an entire planet. Some of these offshoots of War1 were eventually reabsorbed, but many remained forever detached, either by social bias or by incompatibility of values and principles. These children colonies possessed the knowledge and technology to sustain themselves and gradually began establishing their independence. Years passed, and gradually War1 became aware of the growing power of War2. War2 began with a fresh start; they did not bear the baggage of tradition or a preexisting society and were able to sculpt their growing empire based on the success and failures of War1. The rapid development of War2 led to their style of ships and weapons to be less visually appealing but much more reliable and effective. Their power quickly grew to match that of War1.

### **1.4 The conflict between War1 and War2**

As War2's power came to match that of War1, War1 began a campaign to regain control over War2, but having greatly underestimated the power of their opponents, War1 ended up plunging their society from a state of prosperity into a state of perpetual warfare. Neither side has the strength in leadership nor military to conquer the other, yet their differences and precedent for battle keeps them battling towards no end. Countless years have passed since war between the two

sides began. The ferocity of the war quickly declined once the war began and has maintained a steady pace since then. Both sides have made what they call 'significant victories' towards the end of the war, but in reality they have progressed no further from which they began. Most people by now have lost sight of why exactly they are at war but accept it as being the normal way of life. They live their lives without much concern for the war disrupting their lives but are aware of its presence in everything they do. The societies War1 and War2 have unknowingly come to rely on the war: economies built on the manufacture of armaments, billions employed in the military, a near-religious following against the opposite side, and so on.

## 1.5 Traders

This group grew alongside War1 and War2 during their years development and conflict. The earliest record of their lineage comes from the first nonstop two-way voyage between the original War1 systems to their outer colonies. Previously, the only way to reach the furthest colonies was to star-hop from one colony to the other. They paved the way by heavily investing in developing the fastest and most efficient rockets as well as jump gates. Their ships therefore are the quickest and most mobile of the three groups and have the most cargo space. The role of the Traders developed quite naturally beginning from the early deep-space colonization missions. As planets and stations became more populated, they soon needed more supplies that their location could not supply. The Traders quickly and effectively filled the gap. The strong network of ships and trade routes allowed the Traders to be very flexible in accommodating all the desires of any planet or station. As tension grew War1 and War2, both sides pressured the Traders to abandon the other, but their hollow threats only prompted the Traders to strengthen their grip on their trade routes jump stations. Of course, entrepreneurs could try their hand at establishing their own jump stations and routes, but none lasted long because of the onslaught of pirates and thieves, even attacks from the Traders themselves. The Traders are a group outside the conflict of War1 and War2. Their main goal is money, and they are very good at achieving said goal. They possess very strong industrial skills as well as trading skills, though not battle skills nor technology. Their true power lies in controlling the flow to and from any location. Also, they would like to see that the conflict between War1 and War2 go on as long as possible. As long as there is war, there will be a need to munitions, raw materials, and such.

## 2 Story Line

The following is a background description explaining the history and organization of the Syndicate. Note: All specific names used are tentative and subject to change.

### 2.1 Introduction to the Syndicate

The Syndicate is an extremely large group of 'pirates' that owes its allegiance to no one, least of all to either of the two warring nations. It has been around for as long as people can remember, and perhaps even longer than the conflict between the nations itself. Their members often prey on unsuspecting space stations and spaceships on the outskirts of society, and boost their income (and often their numbers) through raids, kidnappings, and various other scattered attacks. They work for money and will temporarily aid or ally with anyone who has enough money for any particular assignment or mission. Nevertheless, in the end, the Syndicate is very careful to maintain (and flaunt) its independence. The Syndicate has an extremely lengthy chain of command designed such that each member of the Syndicate only reports to his/her direct superior or superiors and may not even know or realize that there is a higher power, or (at very low levels) even know that they

are part of the Syndicate at all. The benefit of this organizational structure, of course, is that it is nearly impossible for someone (or a group, or even a nation) to trace or compromise all or even a significant portion of the Syndicate. Currently, at the very top of the chain is a man named Kaiser Stratski, a very ambitious and intelligent leader whose origins are very unclear. One thing is certain, however, to those who have had the displeasure of facing his wrath (although it's a moot point since they are all dead), both his spaceship and his piloting skills are unrivaled. There are very few living men who have seen or know him, but the rumors and legends of his existence amongst the general populace are great and many. Directly under Stratski is an elite group of space pilots whose skills and ambition almost equal his own. These men are known as the *name*. The Kaiser trusts all eight of these men like he would his own family and together they form the central unit that organizes all of the activities and operations of the Syndicate. Needless to say, the Syndicate itself then is divided at some level into 8 large units, each of which report to one of these 8 men (again either directly or indirectly through a long chain of command). You are one of these men; in fact, you are probably the most skilled and intelligent of the group, second to only the Kaiser himself.

*more to follow*

## 2.2 The Coup

Inevitably, there comes a time when some of the

*name*

members start to question, not only current state of the Syndicate, but their own roles and whether or not they need or want to obey Stratski any longer. Tensions have always run high between Stratski and his underlings, but lately the discontent has grown to a level where some of the men feel they need to break free. Eventually, 4 of the men organize secretly to overthrow Stratski and take over the Syndicate. Before they attempt a coup, they decide to give each of the other 4 men a chance (in a subtle manner to judge whether or not they would go with the flow, or remain loyal till the end) to join their ranks instead of dying with the Kaiser. On the fateful day, each of them finds the one they are assigned to recruit/assassinate. One of those men approaches your ship and starts a hypothetical line of questioning to gauge how your reaction would be. Despite his efforts to mask his true intentions, you realize that there is some sort of plot against the Kaiser and that this man (and former ally/teammate) is here to kill you. You quickly turn the tables on him as he tries to shoot your ship down and destroy his instead. Realizing that the Kaiser is in danger, you race off to meet him and simultaneously (in a rather hasty and haphazard manner) try to organize and gather what members of your unit are close and available as a defensive force to protect the Kaiser.

Meanwhile, the ?rebel? group successfully recruits one of the [name] men and kills the other two. The four of them (3 originals and 1 ?new?), upon contacting each other, realize that one of their men (the one you killed) has failed and race off to assassinate the Kaiser and finish the coup before he gets word.

You reach the Kaiser at about the same time as the other four men. Chaos ensues as both sides scramble to organize and attack. You are vastly outnumbered, however, and since your motley group of ships stands no chance against the combined forces of the other men, you are utterly defeated. The Kaiser is killed and your ship is all but destroyed during the battle. The other forces leave you for dead in the chaos as your completely disabled ship drifts out into space.

## **2.3 A New Start**

This is essentially where the main game begins. You are eventually discovered and rescued by some scavenger group that is out looking for stray ships and parts floating in space. They bring your ship to the nearest station, *name*. There you are able to repair your ship back into some sort of working condition. With all of your former forces scattered, destroyed, or re-assigned/allied to the new Syndicate, and with no money or even a reputation in the outside world, your long and difficult journey to get back into power begins here. However, you still have your trusty ship, and the Syndicate does not know you are alive.

## **3 Ships**

The styles of ships vary from group to group. Because of the various different backgrounds, each group developed ships that suited their needs. Each group has ships in 4 classes: light, medium, heavy, and capital ships.

### **3.1 War1**

Their ships are sleek, somewhat more technologically advanced, but very expensive. Their ships are overall very balanced, suffering mainly from their price and the limited locations that can repair their complicated systems. The ships are very compatible with the latest weapons and armors, but most older technologies cannot be made available to these ships.

### **3.2 War 2**

Their ships are very blocky, almost tank-like. Their style stemmed from an origin in which the technology and knowledge was there, but the time and materials were not. Therefore, their ships tend to be blocky and sluggish but very effective and reliable. They benefit from being easy and cheap to repair, but are somewhat susceptible to the latest guns. Also, the latest armor developments can be made compatible with these ships, but the forced application of the armor loses some of the effectiveness of the armor.

### **3.3 Traders**

Geared towards cargo and transport these ships are very good at evade and speed. Their armor is also usually above average, whereas their weapons tend to be only sufficient in fending off small pirate attacks. They mostly rely on hires for help in defending their transports. Being crafty and having connections to weapon developers, they are able to fit most upgrades without penalty.

### **3.4 The Syndicate**

They are able to use any ships from War1, War2, or the Traders. However, they take the time and effort to gut the ships and outfit them with the best parts they can get. The consequences of this is that they can fit most upgrades on any ship without penalty. Some of the syndicate are rumored to have built their own custom ships, which are beyond the power of practically all other ships of their same class.

### **3.5 The Ship Garage**

The basic progression of the game will involve the player earning money on missions, and then using the money at ship garages to buy upgrades and increase his/her ship's effectiveness. By improving

the quality of the ship, the player will then be able to undertake more and more difficult missions with even bigger payoffs. There will be various upgrades available for your spaceship throughout the adventure. There are three areas of your ship that you can modify/upgrade: Weapons, Armor, and Engines (speed).

### 3.6 Weapons

You will be able to purchase new missiles at the various shops scattered throughout the universe for a fee. You will also be able to upgrade missile capacity and the overall effectiveness with which your ship can use these missiles. Missiles are a staple when you undertake missions, as you cannot hope to defeat enemy ships or destroy objectives without some sort of weaponry.

A working list of upgrades follows:

#### Weapons

1. **Laser/Plasma shot.** This comes standard with your ship and has unlimited ammo. However, it uses an energy supply that takes time to recharge. Using this too frequently will cause the system to overheat and hinder your firing frequency.
2. **Standard Light Missiles.**
  - (a) Dumb fire missiles. These will be your standard, cheap missiles which will curve slightly to hit its target; but for the most part, it will simply fly straight.
  - (b) Friend or Foe missiles. These missiles, once fired, will seek out the closest ship (whether friend or foe) and target it.
  - (c) Homing (Heat-seeking) missiles. Once you lock onto a target and fire the missile, it will follow that ship until it hits.
3. **Heavy Missiles.** While your ship will probably be unable to use any weapons of this magnitude, you may come across larger ships (such as battleships) that are capable of using them. These will pretty much just be like normal light missiles only larger and more powerful.
4. **Special Missiles.** May or may not be available to the player. These missiles will most likely be rare and rather expensive. However, they will have features that enable them to be extremely effective. To be specified.

**Armor:** You will be able to purchase increased armor for your ship at the shop. More effective (and expensive) armor will reduce the damage your ship takes when it either gets hit by a missile or collides with some other ship/object. Upgrading armor may or may not affect mobility.

**Engines:** You will be able to upgrade the engine for your ship at the shop. Different engines will provide you with increased acceleration, responsiveness, and overall maximum velocity.

## 4 Scenario Coordination and Plot Advancement

This game will feature mission based story progression. Some missions will advance the plot and push you further into the game. However, a vast majority of these missions will be optional (optional in the sense that you don't have to do any particular ones to advance in the game), and will simply aid you in gaining money and perhaps some future aid in one way or another. Somewhere near the beginning of the game, it will be established that this new breed of the Syndicate is operating in some manner ?you don't agree with? (to be specified: Perhaps it is overly aggressive and brutal.)

Therefore, your goal becomes to eliminate the ones currently in power and remake the Syndicate as you see fit (probably closer to the way it was under the Kaiser). You are also, of course, motivated to some extent by revenge. While at first, you will mostly be focused on gaining capital, at some stage there will be about three main paths you can follow in order to take back control of the Syndicate.

1. You can choose to join the Syndicate at a low level and work your way back up the chain until you can challenge your former allies for control.
2. You can use the trade nation to your advantage, and through their aid, eventually develop a new sovereign group capable of taking down the Syndicate and making room for your own.
3. You can gain enough of a reputation to be recruited by one of the two warring nations to deal with the Syndicate threat (now growing due to the increased aggression under the new rule). Then use their resources and forces to attempt your own coup of the Syndicate.

All of these routes will still involve the simple process of making money, upgrading your ship, and gaining power through your missions.

There will be various locations in the "universe" that you can traverse to and from. At each location, there will be missions available for you to pursue in order to gain money. There will also be ship garages where you can buy new parts and upgrades for your ship. Obviously, not all of these places will be available to you immediately. For starters, warp jumps (used to quickly travel between locations) cost a lot of money. Furthermore, you need to make sure that you stay off the Syndicate's radar. Some missions will become available randomly. Others will only become available over time, or after some other prerequisite missions have been accomplished. Still others will only be available in specific locations while some may be available from anywhere.

General Missions:

**Bounty Hunting.** You hunt down and kill a specific target.

**S.O.S.** You receive a general distress signal from some ship. Your objective here is to find the ship that needs aid and destroy all of its pursuers.

**Escort** You escort a ship (such as a trade ship) from point A to point B and destroy any ships that attack.

**Attack** You destroy a ship (such as a trade ship) that is being escorted.

**Destroy** You aid a person or group of people (or do it alone) in attacking some objective.

**Defend** You help defend a space station or some other objective under attack.

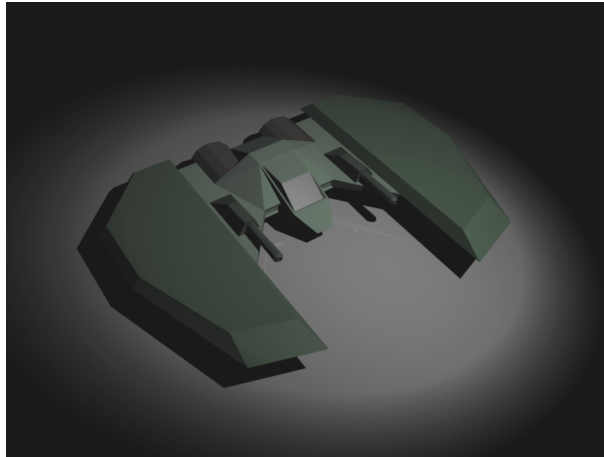
**Reconnaissance** A mission where you fly to some location to obtain information about something. You may need to fight off some ships along the way.

**Main scenario missions** These missions will be those that advance either the main plot, or some sub plot. They may be somewhat more complex or varied than the other mission types since they are rarer than your standard "bounty hunting" affair. One of these missions might be something like:

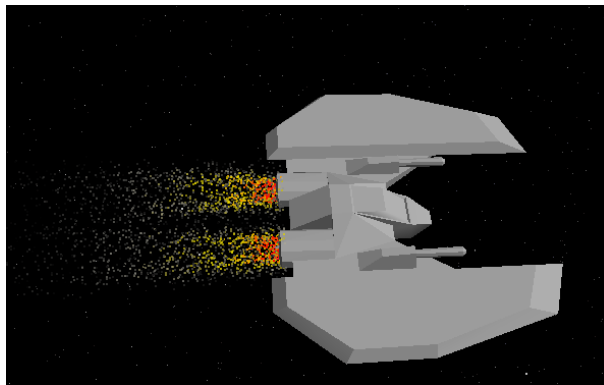
**Escape** Fly from point A to point B while under attack to lose your pursuers.

**Survival** You are at a disadvantage (an ambush?) and must survive for some determined duration until help arrives or until the enemy is forced to retreat. A variation on this might be that not only do you have to survive, but some objective must survive as well.

## 5 Screenshots and Concept Art



Here is a rendering of our first usable ship model. A few tweaks need to be made, and textures would help out a lot, but we've come a long way...



A screenshot from our game, demonstrating the (very simple) particle engine and our starfield generator, along with the model above.