

STAR CHASE

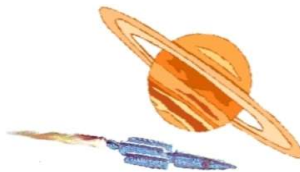
SMART ACTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The “smart actions” in these rules are optional - they're not essential to the game but they are available if you want them. They do provide a way of doing some fairly clever things and they also provide a quick way of filling in a turnsheet when you haven't got time to work out your turn properly (of when you're just getting started).

In the Hints & Tips (see separate leaflet) I'll suggest a set of orders using smart actions in the early turns: if you haven't got time to work out what you're doing then you can dash off a workable turn with those and you won't go far wrong.

The normal system for a game like Star Chase is that you write orders that are very precise: you say exactly what you want, and if you get your orders right then that's what will happen. With smart actions the idea is that you choose the action to say what overall effect you want, and the when the game is running the details are filled out for you.

An important feature of these actions is that they're converted into normal actions at the time they're processed. They can react to things that have happened earlier in the turn. They can't do anything you couldn't have ordered for yourself, but if you're clever with them they might sometime do things you wouldn't order because you couldn't be sure whether they'd be possible.

There's nothing to stop you mixing normal actions and smart actions in the same turn, except you'd better be careful they don't interfere with each other (usually you'll want to do normal actions first and then smart actions later – the smart actions might do something that prevent the other things you ordered from working)

FUTURE CHANGES

These actions are a first attempt, so it's unlikely that they're a complete set. Ideas for new ones, or improvements in the existing ones are welcome.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF ACTIONS

The actions available are listed here in alphabetical order. The format for all these actions is that you just enter the action name. You shouldn't enter anything in the “Where From”, “Where To” or “Number” columns.

Example: [SETTLE] [blank] [blank] [blank] to plant a new colony

BORDER

The BORDER action uses one of the NEWCRS, NEWFTR, BUILD or COLONISE actions to build up the defences on the borders of your empire. It builds whichever of cruisers or fighters that allows the most ships in a system on the border (if the number is the same either way then it builds cruisers). If there's nowhere suitable to build ships then it builds industry somewhere on the border (so as to be able to build ships another time) and if there's nowhere to build industry (because there's no population) then it tries to plant a colony (so as to be able to build industry another time).

This is the most complicated of the smart actions. You're probably not going to use it often, and not when the BUILD or COLONISE options are needed.

CRUISERS

The CRUISERS action builds new cruisers using the NEWCRS action wherever you can build the most (between systems where you can build the same number the preference is first for border stars and then for where there are the most cruisers already).

This is an action that can easily use up all your BPs, especially early in the game when it's probably more important to build individual cruisers in the locations where they're needed (according to where you're going to be exploring next).

EXPLORE

The EXPLORE action searches for unowned systems that can be captured by your cruisers with a MOVE action. Normally a single cruiser will be sent, but if there are more cruisers together and no other unowned systems adjacent then more might be sent. The order of preference for where to explore is dwarf stars first, then giant stars, then planets, then asteroid belts (the different stars in order of their population limits).

An advantage (or disadvantage, depending on your inclination) of using EXPLORE actions rather MOVE actions is that EXPLORE won't try to grab stars that were unowned at the start of the turn but which someone else has captured earlier in the turn before your action is processed.

FIGHTERS

The FIGHTERS action builds new fighters using the NEWFTR action wherever you can build the most (between systems where you can build the same number the preference is for where there are the most fighters already).

It's more likely that you'll want to make your own choice for where you want to build fighters. A better idea might be to build them in locations where they can easily be picked up by colony ships.

GATHER

The GATHER action uses the MOVE action to try to concentrate fleets in the interior of your empire. The first preference is to move the largest fleet that isn't at a border star to either a border star or your fleet base. The second choice is to combine the largest pair of adjacent forces that aren't at border stars (ie. whatever pairing produces the largest combined fleet). If neither of these are possible then some fleet not at a border will move at random. Cruisers in border areas won't be moved.

This is almost certainly an action you'll use only when you're too busy to work out your turn properly, and it's certainly not going to be useful early in the game. For sure you're going to be able to work out a better move for yourself.

INCREASE

The INCREASE action builds industry by using a BUILD action. This will be wherever you have room for industry that provides the best rate of return (ie. the biggest increase in income divided by the cost of the action, and the biggest affordable build where the rate of return is the same). Your Industry Tech is taken into account.

Be careful with this action, as it's easy to blow all your BPs at once and leave yourself with nothing to spend in the rest of the turn. It's better to use this for a high-numbered action late in the turn.

LIFT

The LIFT action searches for the largest group of cruisers that it can find at a planet or an asteroid belt where you own the parent star and uses a SEND action to lift them back into space.

In Star Chase you often come through the early stages with single cruisers scattered all over the place, parked in the planets and asteroids they discovered. Later in the game the same thing happens with the remnants of assault fleets when you capture similar systems from other empires. There's usually something more important to do than collect all the strays together again.

MAXBUILD

The MAXBUILD action builds industry by using a BUILD action. This will be wherever you have room for most industry that you can afford, ignoring whether it gets the best value for money.

Be especially careful with this action, as it's almost always going to blow all your BPs at once and leave yourself with nothing to spend in the rest of the turn. It's probably best in the last action of the turn.

POP

The POP action expands your population by using a GROW action. This will be wherever you have population that provides the best rate of rate of return (ie. the biggest increase income divided by the cost of the action). Your Agri Tech and Birth Labs tech levels are taken into account.

Unless you want more population in a specific location (when you intend to build some industry in the same place in another action, for example) then POP is probably a better action than GROW.

SCREEN

The SCREEN action builds fighters wherever it can build the most that add to the fighter screens of your colony ships (within the limit of your Fighter Tech, so that the fighters can continue to accompany their colony ships). If there's nowhere suitable to build then it will attempt to move some for the same purpose instead. If it can't do that then it will simply build fighters in your base system.

This is probably a useful action if you're in a hurry, that saves searching through your game report to find the colony ships that need protection. It might also be useful when you don't know where your colony ships will be or whether their fighter screens will be up to strength.

SETTLE

The SETTLE action uses the COLONISE action to plant a colony somewhere you own that could have population but doesn't (ie. not black dwarf stars). Given a choice of where to colonise the preference is for wherever has the highest pop limit, except that the system already occupied by the colony ship is normally the last choice (because it can still be colonised later in the same turn). If a colony ship only has one un-colonised system adjacent then a SETTLE action may use a MOVECOL action instead (again another SETTLE action later in the same turn - or another turn - can plant the colony and the move may open up new areas to colonise, while if the colony ship stayed where it was then it'd probably never be able to find anywhere with a SETTLE action again).

This could be a useful action early in the game. Many players struggle to use their colony ships effectively, in which case this action should help most of the time. Later in the game when colony ships are used mostly for holding defensive positions, blockading planets, as fighter carriers and for delivering buster bombs you'll find this action is no use at all.