

ISC Basics for Starfleet Command 2: Orion Pirates

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ISC starships are arguably the most capable in Starfleet Command. This is because they were designed to be better than the ships of other empires! Although certain races will be able to beat out the ISC in one or two characteristics, there is no other empire that has such a powerful blend of abilities for their ships. ISC ships are rarely balanced against a comparable class of ship of a different empire. A fully-refitted ISC light cruiser, for example, is not balanced against other CLs but instead is about equal to other heavy cruisers and command cruisers (based on BPV). This means that, although powerful, the ISC are balanced in BPV-based games; they aren't a sure win if you are flying as them, and they aren't impossible to beat if you are facing them.

All pilots keep learning, and I am by no means an expert with the ISC (so read everything critically!). This article is written with player versus player 1v1, 2v2, and 3v3 games in mind, with one pilot flying one ship each. This is the usual style of play for Gamespy Arcade, but the same strategies will still be useful for most Dynaverse2 and single player games. I am writing this based on OP 2.5.5.2 patch and Firesoul's OP+4.0 shiplist (http://klinton.pet.dhs.org/OP_plusrefit/).

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A. ADVANTAGES OF ISC STARSHIPS

1. *High-quality ships.* This is a pretty general statement, but it is true. ISC ships have good shields, good HET chances, and they always have average or above average numbers of secondary systems (labs, transporters, hull, batteries). ISC early-era ships are on a par with the construction of most races late-era ships as far as quality goes. For example, the original Klingon D7 has the drawback of glass rear shields and an all-phaser-2 phaser suite, while the Federation CA is sluggish and underpowered. The ISC CL (about equal to both of these as far as BPV goes) has none of these weaknesses, and is an all-around great ship for its time. In the early era, ISC ships have all the engine power of the later ships, and they haven't been refitted with PPD or plasma-I yet, so they can fly at high speeds while fully charging weapons, EW, etc.
2. *Weapons arcs.* The typical ISC ship can fire 2/3rds to 3/4s of its phaser-1s out of the edge of the FH (forward 180-degree) arc, and every ISC ship can fire all of its phaser-1s anywhere out of the FA arc. These phaser arcs work perfectly in conjunction with plasma torpedoes. And by the time the ISC get the Z-refit, they have plasma torpedoes pointing in every direction. This means that it is impossible to approach most ISC ships without facing the threat of crunch damage.
3. *Plasmatic Pulsar Device (PPD).* The PPD may be the best medium/long-range direct fire weapon. It is accurate at long ranges and because it normally fires four pulses, it has multiple chances to hit. It also does a LOT of damage quickly to multiple shields. Once those shields are down, internal damage quickly adds up as the PPD strips the targets weapons, and by then outcome of the battle is already decided. Also, because the PPD attacks the facing two/three shields and does a lot of damage, it is nearly impossible to reinforce against.

ISC light cruisers and above usually only have half of the number of PPDs compared to other races and their heavy weapons, and the PPD takes twice the energy to arm. However, because the PPDs are so effective, this doesn't matter; two PPDs do more damage at ranges 10-20 than four disruptors or proximity photon torpedoes. In addition, the PPD only takes half its charging energy to hold and its unique underload function allows a lot of flexibility in charging (covered later in the Tactics section).

The PPD does the most damage at range 4-10, but 90% of the time it is fired at range 15. This will be covered later also, but it means that the PPD-armed ISC ship can do a lot of damage without being close enough to receive as much in return.

4. *Plasma/PPD combination.* Since the PPD is a great long range dancing weapon and plasma torpedoes do lots of damage at closer ranges, they are the perfect match. When you're flying fast and dancing at medium-long range, most opponents will try to close the range and overcome the dancing ship with crunch power. But because the ISC have plasma torpedoes (usually facing in every direction), anyone who tries to close the range is hit by the plasma torpedoes.

This means that an opponent can either try to keep the range open to avoid plasma torpedoes and die a quick death from PPD, or close the range to avoid the PPD and die a quicker death from plasma.

Plasma torpedoes also mean that any opponent slow enough to reinforce against the PPD by starcastling (flying slower than speed 6.0 while reinforcing the front shield(s)) will be an easy target for the plasma.

B. DISADVANTAGES and ways around them

1. *Poor maneuverability.* ISC ships turn at the same speed as Federation and Gorn ships, so they are tied with the slowest in the game. The frigates and destroyers are about equal to most other races, but as you get to the light cruisers and above, the ISC get more and more sluggish.

However, this is balanced by the fact that the ISC will usually face opponents that are the next size class up (like the I-CLZ/CSZ/CMZ example above, which is equal to most CCs/CCHs). As a result, the maneuverability of ISC ships in a point-balanced match will mostly be equal to Hydran, Lyran, or Kzinti/Mirak maneuverability.
2. *Power-hungry systems, but only average power.* The larger ISC ships have to power a large phaser capacitor, plasma torpedoes, and PPDs. ISC ships have decent power, but it's nothing special considering the energy cost of their weapons. As a result, the ISC can't go as fast as the ships of other races while they are loading their weapons. Another thing to keep in mind is that PPDs and plasma-G/S both take some power to hold when they are charged.

The good news is that plasma-I don't take any power to hold, so once they are charged and you only use them when they are absolutely needed, the ISC can move at a good clip while using their other weapons. Also, the ISC can fight effectively while only using about a third of their firepower (PPD only, heavy plasma only, etc.), so they rarely have a need to charge *everything* all at once. As long as you are smart about charging your phasers, you can usually dance at speed 24+ while cycling between charging the PPD and the heavy plasmas.
3. *Limited plasma arcs on pre-refit ships.* The FF, DD, and CL series all have FH (forward 180 degrees) plasma arcs. While this means that they can fire both torpedoes to bear obliquely, it means that they have no plasma to the rear, and few phaser-1s to the rear. This makes dealing with aggressive opponents difficult, especially if they have more crunch power and you can't turn to attack them without getting clobbered yourself.

The FH plasma arcs are a matter of opinion among plasma pilots—some like them because they are more aggressive, but others prefer the RS/LS arcs that allow the plasma user to fire nearly in any direction. The problem of the FH-arc plasmas is fixed with the Z refit on the DD and CL series, which adds plasma-I launchers to the sides and rear.
4. *Spread-out plasma arcs.* The average late-era Romulan or Gorn cruiser has two plasma-S and two plasma-F torpedoes, and can fire these from the forward centerline. ISC cruisers might have about the same total plasma firepower (since they can only fire two plasma-I at a time), but their plasma-I will always face different directions than the heavier plasma. This means that standard ISC cruiser can't throw out 100 points of plasma towards a target if it catches the target in an anchor, for example.

However, the ISC cruiser can fire both of its heavy torpedoes, use a HET, and turn quickly to fire both plasma-I (or fire the side plasma-S and plasma-I, then HET to bring the other half to bear). Another way around this on a slow opponent is to fire the heavies, turn 360-degrees, and firing each I-torp as it comes to bear. By the time the turn is completed, the heavy plasma will be almost charged again.

C. TACTICS

Note: ISC ships in the *Starfleet Battles* board game were designed to fly in an echelon. This meant that 5-6 frigates and destroyers flew in the front line (the gunline), 3-4 light cruisers and heavy cruisers flew behind them, and a command cruiser or dreadnought flew in the back. The gunline would destroy any closing enemy ships with their forward firing plasma-Fs and phaser-1s. Any ships that made it past the line of FFs and DDs would be hit by the heavier plasmas of the CLs and CAs. The plasma-S in the echelon could also be a threat to enemy ships in front of the gunline. The PPD armed ships (usually the CA, CC or DN, and maybe a CS) could use their long-ranged weapons to cripple enemy ships who were still about 10 hexes/units away from the gunline.

Unfortunately, the fleet system in *Starfleet Command* isn't good enough to really pull off the echelon strategy. Small echelons of three ships is possible in multiplayer games (with one person controlling each ship), but that doesn't come close to the classic 10-11 ship echelon. However, ISC ships are still wonderful in single ship duels and also in point-based 3v3 matches (commonly played on Gamespy Arcade, especially with mixed races/empires), so that's what I'll focus on.

1. [Flying plasma-armed ships](#)

The plasma- and phaser-armed ISC ships don't have the advantage of the PPD, but they are still very capable in both duels and in multi-ship matches. Examples include the FF, DD, CL, CW, and CF, as well as the pre-refit CM and CA.

It is essential to know the "Gorn Anchor" and "Plasma Ballet." It's written well at S'faret's Gorn website at <http://ghdar.tripod.com/phasers1.htm> so check up there if you aren't familiar with those tactics.

It's important to pay attention to the plasma arcs of these ships. Most of them have twin FH-arc plasmas, which means that no matter which side they show to an enemy on the approach of the Plasma Ballet, they can fire either, or both torpedoes. The drawback of the FH-arc torpedoes is that they do not cover the 3, 4, and 5 shields at all, so if you need to run from an enemy with superior crunch power, you can't lob the torpedoes over your shoulder while retreating. However, every ship larger than the frigate gets the Z-refit, which adds at least two rear-facing plasma-I torpedoes, which makes up for the limited FH arcs of the heavy torpedoes. If you are flying a pre-Z refit ship and you need to escape a chaser, you can always use a HET to bring the forward plasmas to bear.

Most experienced players will maintain a high speed and never let you land a plasma hit (that is, unless they are purposefully taking a bloody nose in order to do more damage in return). This means that, while plasmas are your big threat weapon, your phaser-1s will end up doing most of the damage during the match. One thing to notice on all ISC ships is that *every* ph-1 can fire out of the FA arc. With your plasmas, you can usually force your opponent to reveal their rear shield as they run away. As they do this, fire all of your ph-1 into it; this is best at range 8 or closer, but also works over time at range 15. After their rear shield is whittled away, they will be severely limited – they can choose not to reveal that shield, but it means getting hit by plasma, and if they choose to keep running from plasma, your phasers will gut their ship slowly. This tactic is called the Phaser Enema and was first written on S'faret's site as well –

<http://ghdar.tripod.com/gornca.htm>. Again, remember to fire *all* of your phaser-1s into their rear shield and try to counter any ECM with equal ECCM; many captains know to counter individual idle shots with a few points of specific shield reinforcement, and your only chance of breaking through is if you beat that by firing every phaser-1.

Enveloping plasma-S can be useful against slow-moving targets that have many weak or downed shields, but otherwise, stick to normal torpedoes. Enveloping torpedoes cost more energy to arm and hold, and against someone who is looking to close in and damage your ship, you want to take down their front shield with your torpedoes (making it foolish for them to keep up the chase) rather than sanding each of their shields away but leaving them intact—and a desperate opponent with weak shields all around (but no downed ones) is very dangerous.

On plasma-Gs – it is best not to fast-load these as plasma-Fs because the diminished range will make torpedo hits much more difficult to accomplish. Two exceptions are for when you *need* the torpedoes quickly—you're hanging around at knife-fighting range near the end of a match, or when someone is chasing you at close range.

2. [Flying PPD/plasma-armed ships](#)

Note: There are a few PPD-armed ships without plasma, such as the CSP and pre-refit DN. These ships should not be flown as solo ships because of their lack of plasma. Once you fire the PPDs, there is nothing to keep your opponent from aggressively tailgating you for the entire game. However, they are useful in multi-ship matches, as long as one of your wings uses their plasma torpedoes as a threat to keep the other team from closing on you.

The combo-armed ships use all of the tactics mentioned for the plasma- and phaser-only ships, but they also get the advantages of the PPD. Simply put, if the ISC captain can repeatedly get PPD hits in without taking more than shield damage, they will win the match. Opponents have to struggle against the *PPD Clock* ... the longer they take to battle the ISC ship, the less their chances of winning. Once the PPD has pounded their shields to nil and begins to strip their weapons, the battle is practically decided already.

A standard PPD Peel (if repeated, you can call it the *PPD Dance*) maneuver is as follows:

1. Fully charge all of your weapons and use specific reinforcement on the rear shield. Once the phasers are charged, reduce the phaser capacitor to 0%-10%.
2. Approach the enemy ship obliquely at speed 24+ (faster if you're facing S- and R-plasma).*
3. Fire all of your PPDs at range 15, and keep the target at the edge of your FA arc.
4. Turn away quickly after all the pulses have fired and turn off the PPDs.**
5. Speed up to increase the range to recharge.
6. Once you are a safe distance and they aren't chasing you, recharge (it's best not to go slower than 16).

*If you have 'Weapons' set to priority 1 on the energy panel, temporarily set it to 5 so that you don't slow down as you fire the PPDs. When it's safe to charge again, you can set it back to 1.

**As long as they aren't chasing you at a high speed while you turn away, escape while facing your opponent with either your 3 or 5 shield. This way, you have less of a chance of your rear shield being picked away, which really limits your options.

PPDs are more resistant to ECM than many other direct-fire weapons, but if you have the energy, you should still try to fire through a shift of O. You don't have to rely on your phaser-1s as much as the plasma-only ISC ships, so you can usually reserve them for firing through downed shields created by the PPD.

Use your judgment on when to fire your heavy plasma (if you have any). If you want to convince your opponent to turn away as you fire the PPDs, launch a real or fake plasma-S on step 1. If you do this, it's possible to fire the plasma opposite to the side that you're going to turn away to – so that you can employ both of your heavy torpedoes. If you want to dissuade them from chasing you after you've fired, fire a real or fake plasma-S during step 3.

If the enemy ship is intent on chasing you, turn off the PPDs right after they have fired. Until you have a chance to charge them safely, they are a waste of energy while someone is chasing you. Because of their arcs, plasma-I torpedoes can't fire on the approach, but they are superb for taking down the front shields of anyone brave enough to chase you. Managing the plasma-I and PPD is discussed in more detail below under "3. Energy Management, #2 and #3."

As a PPD/plasma ship, the best thing you can do is to always fly fast (at least 24 unless your opponent slows down and is far away). Don't try to pull off the PPD approach by going slow, thinking that your enemy won't close because they are afraid of your plasmas. Although they might take a plasma torpedo closing in, you'll be too slow to turn and feed them the other ones if they do decide to be aggressive, and you will take more damage in return.

Overloaded PPDs aren't all that useful just because of the myopic range of the PPD (overloads only useable from range 4-8). This means that they are only useable on a slow target, and closing to range 8 takes away from the long range advantage of the PPD in the first place. Normal and underloaded PPDs are useful at range 20, but 90% of the time, you should take the range 15 shot. Range 20 is mostly useful if they are running away, or you don't want to get too close (if you're facing a mauler- or plasma-R-armed opponent). Firing at range 10 is usually only useful if the enemy has fired all their weapons and has nothing to keep you from closing in.

It is also important to stay in the middle of the map! This will keep your options open and allow you to escape and run in any direction that you need to. It also means that an aggressive opponent can't corner you. If you can't stay in the middle, run for the map edge instead of the corner—so you can turn either left or right once you get to the edge.

Finally, it is important to know what your opponents will do to try to defeat you in a 1v1 duel. Although some weapons, like massed proximity photon torpedoes at range 30, can beat the PPD at long range, the reality is that no opponent can expect to win by "dancing" at longer ranges; the PPD will simply do more damage than they can return. This means that in order to win, they are going to have to be risky and aggressive, closing in on you. To make sure you live and prevent this from happening, you need to maintain the range by keeping your speed up (24 and above), manage your energy wisely, and use your torpedoes to punish them if they try to get close; since the PPD and plasma-S are so effective at range 15, you don't usually need to get any closer.

3. Energy Management

The most difficult part about flying an ISC ship, especially the PPD/plasma combo ships, is recharging the weapons while keeping up a decent speed, so use these tricks:

1. Keep the phaser capacitor down. You won't really need the phasers every turn, so don't set it to 100% unless you have the opportunity and aren't in danger.
2. If your plasma-I launchers have banks of two or more torpedoes each, set them to "Defensive" at the beginning of the match. This means that if someone chases you, you can fire one torpedo from each launcher, and after a turn (?) delay, you can fire another torpedo from each launcher, making it impossible for someone to chase you without taking huge amounts of damage. You won't be able to recharge all of your I-torps as someone is chasing you, however, so make sure that before you fire them you set your 'weapons' priority to 5 under the Energy panel. If you need to recharge your I-torps on the run, set them to "Main," where each launcher functions as a single plasma-F.
3. The PPDs take a while to charge, and you'll have a hard time charging them along with your other weapons while you are maintaining a high speed. The way around this is to charge your plasmas first, and then your PPDs (since plasma-I/F have no holding cost). You can also use the "Underload" function of the PPDs—either fire them as underloads or charge them as underloads and then switch to 'normal' once they are loaded so that you only have to use the full 4 points of power per PPD for the final turn of arming.
4. Again, turn off the PPDs completely if someone is chasing you; they are a waste of power in this situation.

4. [The Starcastle](#)

The *Starcastle* is a tactic where you reinforce the front shield, face the opponent's ship, and fly at speeds slower than 6. The heavy reinforcement makes it difficult for anything other than plasma torpedoes to damage you, and you usually hold one or more Wild Weasel shuttles for dealing with the heavier volleys of torpedoes. Using this tactic, you can fire your PPDs and phaser-1 at a target while keeping your heavy plasma as a deterrent to enemies who would otherwise close in on you. It is useful if your rear shields are gone, and is also useful in 2v2 and 3v3 multiplayer games if your wing(s) decide to slow down, making your *PPD Dance* impossible if you want to stay with your team (frustrating, but it happens).

I wouldn't use this strategy too often. Besides these uses, starcastling isn't all that good. For one, it hands the initiative to your opponent, so if they don't want to come to you and get hit, there's nothing you can do about it. Also, you're giving them an easy opportunity to slow and fully recharge their weapons. *Speed is life*, and by starcastling, you are limiting your options. Also, slow drones and plasma torpedoes (otherwise not much of threats if you are travelling at speed 24+) become much more dangerous. In addition, starcastling is considered a "dirty" tactic in a duel, because it's a refusal to fight ... you're basically saying "come here and make a mistake so I can win the game." The *starcastle*, if used sparingly, can be useful.

5. [Combating fighters](#)

Even with the power of the typical ISC ship, fighters should not be underestimated. Just one group of several fighters can mash a shield up pretty well at long range, and at close range can tear apart the hull of a capital ship. Fortunately, the ISC have some ways of dealing with them that other races lack:

1. The PPD is very effective as a fighter killer. Remember that even if a single fighter of a squadron returns to its carrier, the whole squadron may "regenerate." So you have to do your best to kill the entire group. Using your ECCM to match the natural 2 ECM of the fighters will help you do this. After you fire your PPDs (again, range 15 is safest against fighters), you may need to fire your ph-1 to destroy any remaining fighters in the group.
2. Shotgunned plasma-S torpedoes are effective in destroying fighters, but only within range 10. A shotgunned plasma-S costs 4 points of energy per turn to arm (as opposed to the normal 2.67/turn), but splits the torpedo into three plasma-F torpedoes. Each of these must target a different object in order to be fired, but the good news is that each individual fighter is counted as a separate object, so if there are three fighters in a squadron, a shotgunned plasma-S will fire one plasma-F at each fighter. This is more risky than using the PPD to clear fighters as you need to be closer, but it is more likely to work.
3. I-torps – in "Defensive" mode, plasma-I will fire at fighters without the turn delay between firing, but will let you fire one torpedo per turn at a starship. "Full Defensive" is the same, but it won't let you fire any I-torps at other ships. I-torps work well for fighter killing, but just as with #2 above, you have to be close in order for them to work. Also, make sure that you set your 'Weapons' energy priority to 5 before you rush in on a fighter squadron; nothing is worse than flying in at speed 31 only to have your speed drop in half when you're empty, especially when fighters and an angry carrier are close by.
4. And finally, there is no fighter-spoofing bug/exploit involving shuttles. Not at all.

D. SHIP REVIEWS (CLASS (BPV) – full name – weapons – power/movement cost)

Note: ships in red are incomplete. These are mostly carriers, and fighters/fighter strategies aren't my specialty. I also skipped the *heavy war destroyer* series because they are very weak compared to the rest of the ISC line.

FF (69) – *Frigate* – 4 ph-1 and 2 plasma-F – 15 power/O.33 MC

FFW (73) – FF with an additional 4 ph-3

The ISC frigate is a well-balanced frigate with lots of firepower and good shields for its size. The 4 ph-1, all of which can be fired from out of the FA arc like all ISC ships, can heavily weaken opposing frigates' shields within range 8. Like most smaller ISC ships, the twin FH-arc plasmas make dealing with chasing opponents problematic. Fortunately, the FF can pull off multiple HETs in a match as long as it doesn't use a HET too often. With the large phaser capacitor and plasmas, charging your weapons while flying fast can be difficult; always try to stagger firing your plasma-Fs so that one is usually held (pseudo torpedoes are useful for this) and manage your phaser capacitor.

FFE (72) – *Escort Frigate* – 4 ph-1, 4 ph-3, and 2 plasma-D – 15 power/O.33 MC

The FFE is a good escort in that its phasers alone help make up for the lack of heavy weapons, and without any plasmas to charge, it is quite fast. However, the only time you would want this over the FFW would be in a 3v3 match where your team specifically needs an escort, like if one of your wings is flying a carrier.

FFL (83) – *Frigate Leader* – 4 ph-1, 4 ph-3, and 1 plasma-G – 16 power/O.33 MC

In the *echelon* formation, the frigate and destroyer leaders were meant to be at the very nose of the gunline; although the echelon isn't often usable in *Starfleet Command*, the FFL is still good. The added shields, power, and the cheaper cost of arming one plasma-G compared to two plasma-F makes it an efficient ship. Two things against it: the high BPV cost (compared to most frigates) and the fact that you have half the plasma "crunch" power of the original FF, making aggressive opponents difficult to face; for these reasons, the FFL is best used in 2v2 and 3v3 matches, where the added range of the plasma-G is also a bonus.

FFV (88) – *Frigate Carrier* – 4 ph-1, 4 ph-3, 2 plasma-F, and 4 fighters – 14 power/O.33 MC

I don't recommend this ship. The small amount of fighters doesn't come close to making up for the high BPV, and if you play at a high enough BPV to purchase good fighters, the ship is even more outmatched.

DD (81) – *Destroyer* – 4 ph-1 and 2 plasma-F – 20 power/O.50 MC

DDW (85) – DD with an additional 4 ph-3

DDZ (95) – DDW with an additional 2 plasma-I

While the destroyer doesn't gain any weapons over the frigate, it has an easier time charging its weapons and is a tougher ship (more hull and shields, and a total of 4 labs – so the shields recharge twice as fast). The Z-refit gives the destroyer 360° plasma coverage, but otherwise pushes the BPV a little too high, where it is no longer a match for comparably-priced enemy ships.

DE (95) – *Destroyer Escort* – 4 ph-1, 4 ph-3, and 4 plasma-D – 20 power/O.50 MC

The destroyer escort is useful in a full echelon, and is included in the game to make it complete, but it isn't useful in multiplayer games. Since the full 10-11 ship echelon strategy is impossible in SFC, skip this ship.

DDG (88) – Plasma G Destroyer – 4 ph-1, 4 ph-3, and 1 plasma-G – 20 power/0.50 MC

DDGZ (97) – DDG with an additional 2 plasma-I

The DDG is more expensive than it is worth. The DDGZ isn't as useful in 2v2 and 3v3 games as the DDZ and DW because other war destroyers, such as the Gorn BDD, have the same plasma setup but much more engine power.

DDL (106) – Destroyer Leader – 4 ph-1, 4 ph-3, and 2 plasma-G – 22 power/0.50 MC

DDLZ (116) – DDL with an additional 2 plasma-I

The DDL and DDLZ are too expensive to use in point-based games, especially the latter, which is comparable in price to many war cruisers.

DW (96) – War Destroyer – 4 ph-1, 4 ph-3, 2 plasma-F, and 2 plasma-I – 21 power/0.50 MC

The DW is essentially a DDZ that traded one of its labs for another point of power, and has trouble facing other war destroyers, which usually have more power, more phasers, or longer-ranged plasmas. However, with their plasma coverage (and speed, as long as all the plasmas are charged), the DW and DDZ work better as plasma escorts in a 2v2 or 3v3 match than as single ships in a duel.

CL (119) – Light Cruiser – 6 ph-1 and 2 plasma-G – 32 power/0.67 MC

CLW (123) – CL with an additional 4 ph-3

CLY (132) – CLW with the plasma-Gs replaced as plasma-S

CLZ (151) – CLY with an additional 4 plasma-I

After the series of so-so destroyers, the CL series of ships picks things up again. The pre-refit CL is great in early era games, where its powerful phaser suite and awesome power curve let it run circles around most races' early CAs. The CLY is good in later-era fleet games, where its dual plasma-S can be used to outreach most other war cruisers (with 1 plasma-S and 2 plasma-F) and other plasma wings can cover the FH-only arcs of the CLY. The CLZ is good, but the CW (covered below) barely costs more and is more capable.

CE (141) – Escort Cruiser – 8 ph-1, 4 ph-3, and 4 plasma-D – 32 power/0.67 MC

This ship is of very limited use—only if you are winging with someone who is flying a carrier. In that case, the ship does a good job as an escort and can also use its powerful phaser suite for offense.

CSP (142) – Strike Cruiser – 6 ph-1, 4 ph-3, and 2 PPD – 32 power/0.67 MC

CSZ (161) – CSP with an additional 4 plasma-I

The CSP is only useful in 2v2 and 3v3 games where you have one or more wings armed with plasma to keep the opposing team from being too aggressive; on its own, the ship has nearly no rear-firing weapons. The CSZ, however, is very powerful in both duels and fleet matches.

CM (133) – *Medium Cruiser* – 6 ph-1, 4 ph-3, and 3 plasma-G – 32 power/0.67 MC

CMP (137) – CM with 1 plasma-G replaced as 1 PPD

CMZ (154) – CMP with an additional 4 plasma-I

The pre-refit CM isn't as good as the CLY because three plasma-G cost more energy and have less range than two plasma-S, not to mention all three plasma-G are FH-only. The P- and Z-refit medium cruisers try to merge mainly-PPD and mainly-plasma armaments onto the same hull, but the end result is that the CMP/Z doesn't have the plasma threat factor that the CLY/Z has, and it doesn't have the long range punch that the CSP/CSZ have. Stick with the specialized ships instead.

CVL (134) – *Light Carrier* – 6 ph-1, 4 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, and 6 fighters – 31 power/0.67 MC

CVLZ (153) – CVL with an additional 4 plasma-I

CVLP (144) – *Light Strike Carrier* – 6 ph-1, 4 ph-3, 2 PPD, and 6 fighters – 31 power/0.67 MC

CVLS (153) – CVLP with an additional 4 plasma-I

How is the CVLS cheaper than the CSZ when it is the same ship plus six extra fighters? The only thing it loses is one point of power. Although I can't see why this makes sense, you still might want to take the CSZ over the CVLS: the single point of power *can* make a difference, and the CVLS can't usually afford to buy any good fighters without becoming too expensive.

CVP (152) – *Patrol Carrier* – 6 ph-1, 4 ph-3, and 12 fighters – 28 power/0.67 MC

CVPZ (170) – CVP with an additional 4 plasma-I

CW (157) – *War Cruiser* – 6 ph-1, 4 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, 2 plasma-F, and 4 plasma-I – 34 power/0.67 MC

The war cruiser is like a more powerful version of the CLZ for only 6 more BPV. The extra front plasma-F make the Gorn anchor more deadly with this ship, and the extra power always helps. This ship, however, is somewhat "cheesy" in that it wasn't really used in *Starfleet Battles* (I think it was conjectural) and that it is definitely underpriced for what it really is . . . so it's really your choice whether you want to fly the CW or not in point-based games (after a while you might see it so much that the CLZ makes battles more interesting).

CA (146) – *Heavy Cruiser* – 8 ph-1 and 3 plasma-G – 40 power/1.00 MC

CAP (156) – CA with an additional 6 ph-3, one plasma-G swapped for 1 PPD

CAY (165) – CAP with the plasma-Gs replaced as plasma-S

CAZ (194) – CAY with an additional 6 plasma-I

The CA series is a very powerful one. Just like the pre-refit CL, the CA is very fast and is more than a match for the early era CCs of any other empire. Flying the CAY or the CAZ is a matter of opinion. The CAY matches the heavy command cruisers of most races at 165 points, but you could also fly the CSZ or the CLZ (smaller ships, but fully-refitted); these have either better PPD capability or better plasma ability, but not quite the mix of the two. Instead of the CAZ, you could usually fly the CCY (200 points), which has more power and an additional PPD, but no plasma-I.

CF (180) – *Fast Cruiser* – 10 ph-1, 6 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, and 2 plasma-I – 44 power/1.00 MC

The fast cruiser is great as both a dueler and in fleet matches at under 200 points; by then, you should take the CCY for the PPDs. In fleet matches, the CF should be flown as an escort for the direct fire ships on your team, using its plasmas as "threat" weapons. It can also contribute using its ten phaser-1s.

NCA (191) – *System Cruiser* – 8 ph-1, 6 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, 6 plasma-I, and 1 PPD – 38 power/1.00 MC

I don't recommend the NCA because 38 points of power is just too little to fly with on an over-gunned ship like this. It can be done, but there are much better ships for about the same price. The plasma-S are also on restrictive FH arcs.

NCS (201) – *Strike System Cruiser* – 8 ph-1, 6 ph-3, 1 plasma-S, 6 plasma-I, and 2 PPD – 38 power/1.00 MC

See the NCA above. The NCS is nearly the same, but swaps a plasma-S for an additional PPD. This makes power management even worse, so you should never take the NCS (especially when you can also get the CCY for 200 points).

CV (162) – *Fleet Carrier* – 8 ph-1, 6 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, and 8 fighters – 40 power/1.00 MC

CVZ (191) – CV with an additional 6 plasma-I

CAA (188) – *Armored Cruiser* – 8 ph-1, 6 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, and 1 PPD – 40 power/1.25 MC

CAAZ (216) – CAA with an additional 6 plasma-I

Forget the armored cruiser—it is an overpriced CA that has better shields, some armor, and a higher movement cost. Since speed and maintaining range are your principle ways to avoid damage, the higher movement cost is death.

CC (191) – *Flagship Cruiser* – 8 ph-1, 6 ph-3, 2 plasma-G, and 2 PPD – 44 power/1.00 MC

CCY (200) – CC with the plasma-Gs replaced as plasma-S

CCZ (229) – CCY with 6 additional plasma-I

The flagship (command) cruiser is one of the most powerful of the ISC designs. Although the pre-refit CC leans a little too much toward a PPD armament (the plasma-Gs aren't enough to hold back chasing opponents), it is useful in early and middle era fleet matches where one of your teammates is flying a dedicated plasma boat. The CCY is great in both 1v1 and fleet battles in later era matches; so is the CCZ, as long as the BPV doesn't go too high into the dreadnought price range.

CVD (189) – *Interdiction Carrier* – 8 ph-1, 6 ph-3, and 16 fighters – 36 power/1.00 MC

CVDZ (216) – CVA with an additional 6 plasma-I

BCV (263) – *Battle Carrier* – 8 ph-1, 6 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, 2 PPD, and 8 fighters – 40 power/1.00 MC

DNL (269) – *Light Dreadnought* – 8 ph-1, 6 ph-3, 3 PPD, and 6 plasma-I – 55 power/1.25 MC

The DNL is pretty fast and has a good armament, but because you could only fire two plasma-I a turn—not enough to scare an aggressive opponent in a DN—I would only recommend flying it in a fleet match where your wing has plasma-R and plasma-Ss.

DN (254) – *Dreadnought* – 10 ph-1, 8 ph-3, and 4 PPD – 56 power/1.50 MC
DNZ (292) – DN with an additional 8 plasma-I

Like most PPD-oriented ISC ships, the DN and DNZ must rely on a teammate with heavier plasma to lob at aggressors. Although the plasma-I are pretty good for deterring opponents, a determined pilot in a 1v1 match can eat the incoming torpedo on a side shield while lining up a range 8 shot at the ISC's rear shield. The ISC dreadnought has below-average power (and the PPDs are energy-thirsty weapons), so you must remember to use every setting for the weapon (underload, and offline for when you are on the defensive).

CVA (251) – *Heavy Carrier* – 10 ph-1, 8 ph-3, 2 PPD, and 16 fighters – 56 power/1.50 MC
CVAZ (289) – CVA with an additional 8 plasma-I

DNT (282) – *Torpedo Dreadnought* – 10 ph-1, 8 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, 8 plasma-I, and 2 PPD – 56 power/1.50 MC

The swap of two PPDs for two plasma-Ss on the DNT fixes the plasma-weak problem of the DN/DNZ, but also significantly takes away from the direct fire punch . . . because of this, the DNT has barely any more firepower than the CCZ. Again, I recommend flying the DNZ (or DNM/DNH) and relying on a dedicated plasma wing to provide for defense.

DNP (272) – *Plasma Dreadnought* – 10 ph-1, 8 ph-3, 4 plasma-S, and 8 plasma-I – 56 power/1.50 MC

The plasma dreadnought is a decent plasma boat, but if that's what you are looking for, you should just take the Gorn DNH/DNHph or the Romulan PRA instead—these have plasma-R and much more engine power.

DNW (291) – *War Dreadnought* – 8 ph-1, 8 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, 4 plasma-I, 4 plasma-D, and 2 PPD – 56 power/1.50 MC

The war dreadnought is like a weaker, yet more expensive DNT. While the plasma-D can be nice, most of the time you won't be using them, so they are a waste of BPV.

DNM (301) – *Medium Dreadnought* – 14 ph-1, 8 ph-3, 4 plasma-I, 4 PPD, and 2 plasma-D – 59 power/1.50 MC
DNH (306) – *Heavy Dreadnought* – 14 ph-1, 8 ph-3, 8 plasma-I, and 4 PPD – 58 power/1.50 MC

The DNM and DNH are almost interchangeable and are both great choices if you happen to be in a match that is above 300 BPV. Because both have no heavy plasma, they (like all of the ISC dreadnoughts) are best flown in 2v2s and 3v3s where a plasma-armed teammate can escort you while your PPDs and massive amounts of phaser-1s rip down enemy shields.

BB (341) – *Battleship* – 13 ph-1, 8 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, 4 PPD, and 6 fighters – 78 power/2.00 MC
BBn (329) – BB with no fighters
BBZ (390) – BB with additional 12 plasma-I

I haven't had too much experience with the battleship, but it doesn't seem like too much of an improvement over the DNM or DNH.

BBV (359) – *Battleship Carrier* – 11 ph-1, 8 ph-3, 2 plasma-S, 4 PPD, and 16 fighters – 78 power/2.00 MC
BBVZ (390) – BBV with additional 12 plasma-I

The BBV is so-so for the price, but at most games above 300 BPV, you're just going for the biggest ship anyway, even if it isn't efficient. In this case, the many fighters (outfit them as the nasty Caveat-Ills if you have the points) can rip even other battleships to pieces in seconds.