Fast Carriers

by Christopher Perleberg

The “fast” in Fast Carriers is not to be taken as a literal description of its intricate routine of play. Undaunted by its complexities, Mr. Perleberg presents us with a critical overview, some historical translations, and some interesting revisions to make that routine a little more complex. Just to snap things up a bit, you see. —RAS

Fast Carriers presents nine scenarios, from Pearl Harbor (a solitaire slaughter) to a hypothetical carrier action in the North Sea. But the real “heart” of the game is the group of scenarios dealing with the four “classic” actions of World War Two: Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomons and Santa Cruz. It is in these four scenarios that the tactical map is used; only here does all that strategic maneuvering end with the actual attacks by the dive and torpedo bombers, and the defensive efforts of the CAP and AA fire. In the modern scenarios, the tactical sequence is nicely abstracted; the different weapons systems involved necessitate it. This abstract process, however, can’t match the satisfaction of diving your very own Dauntless, with your sights on Akagi. This article will examine these four scenarios, offering first a brief description of the game, and then discussing some ways in which the rules can be changed to add to it.

The game operates on three levels: strategic, operational and tactical. The strategic phase, played on one of several strategic maps on the game sheet, involves the movement of task forces, their efforts to search out the enemy, and the resolution of surface combat. This surface combat is slightly abstracted and occurs mostly in—you guessed it—the Guadalcanal hex. Braver souls may try to integrate C4 into the game, but it probably isn’t worth it; it would take too much from the later carrier actions. The search procedure is especially well handled; each Player must allocate so many of his aircraft to the different search patterns to try to spot the Enemy task forces. This procedure is simple enough, but the complications arise through the use of dummies and “search effectiveness” chits. Every time his task forces are spotted by the Enemy Player, the Owning Player picks one of these chits for each task force spotted. The chits include results from “Report True” to “Report False” (everybody’s favorite), and include various levels of approximation. The Owning Player then tells the other Player, within the guidelines of the chit draw, what has been spotted. Because the draw may allow him to lie about or exaggerate the composition of the spotted force, neither Player can ever be completely sure about which force contains which ships until an attack is committed; it is not unusual to launch a full strike against an Enemy carrier force, only to find a dummy task force, or a mere CVL.

The operational level is played on separate boards, one card for each task force. It is here that each Player allocates his aircraft assets to the missions of strike, search or combat air patrol (CAP). The individual carriers portray three status levels for their aircraft: their planes may be in dead storage in the hangar, being armed and fueled, or on the flight deck, awaiting take-off. Where these aircraft are at any given time is important; being caught with aircraft on the flight deck or in arm and fuel lowers the Defense Strength of the carrier and makes it easier to sink, so each Player must constantly attempt to anticipate the other’s actions—although the radar rules make this task far easier for the U.S. Player.

The operational display also involves the creation of strikes. Each strike is formed into waves; the more waves in a strike, the more chance there is of making contact with the target, but then there is also more chance of your attack force arriving piecemeal and being downed in detail. In addition, there are range limitations to be considered. The F4F Wildcat, for instance, can only stay aloft for three operational turns (3 hours of real time) and can only hit targets two hexes away and return safely. If still in the air when its time runs out, it “splashes” and is lost. The range limitations are handled simply, and provide yet another consideration each Player must weigh.

The World War Two scenarios include a tactical sequence on the mapsheet’s tactical display [one hex = 1000 yards; one Tac-Turn = 40 seconds], where the actual forces, represented by counters for each individual ship and each group of six planes, maneuver for position and attack. Each type of weapon must be used characteristically: torpedo bombers must come in low, in a straight line at least three hexes in length, and attack “anvil” style from the front. Dive bombers must enter the target hex from the stern and dive from high altitudes with their weapon. Level bombers, like the B-17, must move six hexes in a straight line at high altitude to attack (it’s pretty worthless, though, for they never seem to hit anything). Damage is taken in the familiar D1-D4 sequence, with D3 representing dead-in-water and D4, sunk. Aircraft counters are double-sided, and aircraft require only a D2 for destruction, taking a D1 result by flipping over to half-strength.

 Appropriately, there is an incredible amount of luck in this sequence. Waves may arrive one at a time or not at all. The attackers may enter the map from the wrong direction and have to fly through heavy doses of CAP and AA defenses to attack. Because of the search-effectiveness system, they may not even find anything to attack! Best of all, the CRT is set so that a roll of “1” at the highest possible odds results in a “null effect.” This can be, to say the least, quite a break for the defender and a disaster for the attacker; it can be hard enough to launch one such attack per sequence. But that’s the nature of carrier warfare!

There are other elements to Fast Carriers, of course, but those are the basics: search, commit and attack. The game also includes land airbases, shore bombardment, weather, night Turns, and coast-watchers. In the modern scenarios, there are submarines and long range interceptions.

One can really learn a lot from the game, if one is willing to take the time. Fast Carriers is a long game; some scenarios have taken five to six hours to play. The game can be “long hours of boredom followed by a few minutes of sheer terror,” to paraphrase a contemporary fighter pilot, if a Player doesn’t pay strict attention to the game and lets things happen by chance. The game also requires a lot of space; each Player can have up to eight task forces, and each TF requires its own operational card. My advice is to pick a space where you can carry on unseen by your opponent and where you can lock out the cat: maybe once took to battles Zuihou about the room, something that never happened at the Coral Sea. It helps the game some if you make two copies of the strategic map involved, so that each Player can plan his moves in advance without giving his intentions away through fingerprints on the mapsheet. It is possible to Xerox sections, and then each Player can draw and make notes right on the copy, away from his opponent and in front of his operational cards. [It’s also possible to cut up the Strategic Maps using a straightedge and razor. This alleviates the space problem. —RAS.]

There are, however, some flaws in the game at each level. In the following sections I’d like to consider what they are and offer some ways to correct them, and by doing so improve the game.

Let us first consider the famous dive bombing attack at Midway in game terms. The three Japanese carriers, Akagi, Kaga and Soryu are caught Game-Turn Three, Day Two, with aircraft in both Arm & Fuel and Flight Deck Boxes, due to Nagumo’s indecision over which target to strike. In
game terms, their Defense Strengths are reduced to 20. The first wave of the U.S. attack, 6 TBD units, has made its run and has been slaughtered, obtaining no hits. One TBD unit escapes. All the Japanese CAP has been pulled down to low altitude, and so is unready for the next two waves of dive bombers, which arrive simultaneously.

Three SBD units, Leslie's from Yorktown, attack Soryu, making in (game terms) two optimum attacks of +6 and +3. The probability of results is as follows: No effect - 11%; D1 - 41%; D3 - 13%; and D4 - 18%. Historically, the Soryu takes three hits and sinks on Game-Turn Five of the same day.

The Kaga and Akagi are attacked at the same time; McClusky's 6 TBD units breaking up into two roughly equal groups to make their attacks. Japanese AA fire is incredibly light, and the CAP is still straining for altitude. Both carriers are attacked at the same odds as Soryu, Kaga taking four hits and sinking on Game-Turn Five, and Akagi, attacked by slightly fewer aircraft, takes three hits and is abandoned by Nagumo at the end of Game-Turn Three and sinks on Game-Turn One, Day Three.

The point is that, historically, all three carriers sank, an event that has about a .05% chance of happening in the game. I mentioned earlier that Fast Carriers requires a lot of good luck to win, but in reading accounts of the battle, one sees that the sinkings were not all that lucky; the real luck came in the lack of fighter cover and AA defenses, and in the way in which the carriers were caught with all that ordnance on the deck, factors that were already present in our recreation. Yet it is next to impossible to recreate this epic attack in the game. Something is clearly wrong.

What's missing here is a rule regarding fire. All three ships burned furiously after the bombings. Kaga and Akagi probably received D3 results from the attacks, and the Soryu probably suffered a D2. But the fires that were ignited finished them off, as happened to the Lexington at Coral Sea. True, there is an attempt made to reflect this factor; this is why Defense Strength is affected by aircraft units in Arm & Fuel and Flight Deck Boxes. But while these rules may account for the greater initial damage, they do not provide for the lingering danger of fire that claimed so many carriers.

I propose the following changes in the game rules to account for this effect:

[13.71 & 13.72] (Change) This reduction takes place only when attacked by dive bombers.

[13.74] (Addition) After all attacks have been made for that Operational Game-Turn, a die is rolled to determine the appearance and effects of fire. See Fire Appearance Table.

Box. If the result is a "No Effect," there is no fire and no further die rolling. If the result is "Fire," make a note of the unit. At the beginning of every Operational Game-Turn, the die must be rolled for each unit on fire. Subtract one if the current damage level is D2; subtract two if the current damage level is D3. If the result is "Controlled," the fire is considered out, and no further die rolls are necessary. If the result is "No Effect," the die must be rolled on the next Turn. If the result is "D1," the damage level of the carrier goes up one level, and the die must be rolled again on the next Turn.

This rule will allow for the lingering effects of fire, and will make the dive bomber a more lethal weapon against carriers. After Coral Sea, the U.S. should not subtract from the die roll when using the Fire Appearance Table; this will simulate the improved fire control systems on U.S. carriers, where CO2 was flushed through fuel lines when an attack was picked up on radar.

**Fire Appearance Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Die Roll</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtract 1 if air units in Arm & Fuel; subtract 1 if air units in Flight Deck. See text for explanation of results.

**Fire Results Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Die Roll</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>D1</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>D1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>D1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Controlled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Controlled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Controlled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Controlled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtract 1 if current damage is D2; subtract 2 if current damage is D3. See text for explanation of results.

As can be seen, the U.S. Player, with his higher complement of dive bombers and improved fire control, benefits most from these changes. The U.S. Player should be thrown a corresponding handicap to even things out.

As the game stands, it's hard to understand why there aren't more TBD's or TBF's aboard each U.S. carrier; unit for unit they are twice as lethal as SBD's or SBU's. Historically, this was just not the case. The American torpedo, with its magnetic pistol, was notoriously unreliable, and had a habit of running too low or exploding before hitting the target. After the battle of Santa Cruz, the Americans couldn't even scuttle the stationary Hornet with torpedoes; the Japanese had to do the job later with torpedoes. This situation wasn't taken care of until early 1944, when the magnetic pistol was removed. The following rules portray this effect:

[13.57] Whenever U.S. torpedo planes attack, a die must be rolled to determine their effective Attack Strength. The die is rolled for each unit for that attack. If the unit is a TBD, subtract one from the die roll. If the unit is half-strength, a roll of 1 or 2 gives an effective Strength of 1, etc. A half-strength TBD subtracts two from its die roll. Note that the effective Attack Strength of the TBD can drop to zero.

This rule effectively recreates the unreliability of American torpedoes, and the ineffectiveness of the TBD (as if a Defense Strength of "2" isn't enough). The U.S. Player can still use the torpedo bombers, but he can't count on them, and the dive bomber will become his main weapon. It's too bad he can't use his TBD's for recon work.

As mentioned earlier, the U.S. Player benefits from radar in the later scenarios. The effects of radar are simple, essentially allowing the U.S. Player an Operational Turn's advance warning of an impending strike, allowing him to "clear the decks" for action. While it is the case that, as the rules mention, long range interception had not yet been perfected, using radar, the U.S. could make contacts at least 35 miles out, as they did at Eastern Solomons. I suggest a minor change in the radar rules that would affect the Tactical Stage and that would more closely simulate the use of radar and CAP:

[19.11] (Addition) The Japanese Player must also state the altitude status of his units.

[19.14] (Addition) In the Tactical game set-up, the U.S. Player deploys any units on CAP after the Japanese wave arrival and placement procedure. Each subsequent Japanese wave arrival (if any) occurs on the Fifth Tactical Turn during the Attacker Air Movement Phase, although the Japanese units so placed may not move until the First Tactical Turn of the next Sequence. Note that this gives the U.S. Player two Air Movement Phases to prepare to intercept. If all the Japanese units in a wave are destroyed before Turn Five, the intervening Tactical Turns still take place, and the next wave is still placed on Turn Five during the Attacker Air Movement Phase. (Note: This procedure changes that of Cases 11.2 and 11.3.)

These rules add to the U.S. radar advantage by giving him the entry location of the Japanese Player. Play is affected slightly, with the net result being that the Japanese must work harder to attack. One might experiment with rules allowing torpedo bombers to "slip in low," or allow a kind of "long range intercept," rule where U.S. CAP may enter the entry/exit hexes and intercept according to a die roll, and, if no interception is made, requiring another die roll to re-enter.
the map, but this is probably complicating things too much. The rules presented seem to be more historically accurate.

As far as AA fire for both sides is concerned, I add two hexes in range when the target is at high altitude. This appears to accentuate the different hazards to dive and torpedo bombers, and allows the dive bombers a fighting chance to attack. Remember, they have to stick around through a Flak Attack Phase before attacking.

The damage key on the last page seems to contradict the text of the rules. Case 9.48, for example, implies that air units may land on a carrier with a D2 damage result, but the last page says no. I say air units land (only) on a D2 carrier, but each unit is "attacked" at +2 odds on the Anti-Air CRT. For airbases, units which land on a D3 airbase are "attacked" at +2, and units landing on a D4 airbase, at +3. (This changes rule 15.71.) This would simulate the hazards of landing on a landing strip of swiss cheese. If fire rules are used, air units are prohibited from landing on a burning carrier. Another change in the damage results that seems appropriate would be to declare "sunk" destroyers and CL's on a burning carrier. Another change in the damage results that seems appropriate would be to declare "sunk" destroyers and CL's with D2 results. Destroyers especially were usually unarmored, as were oilers, etc. and their predominant defense, speed, is already represented by their Defense Strength.

The final problem in the Tactical Phase involves the air bombardment of airbases. As it stands now, it is next to impossible to damage an airbase through bombing; the power just isn't there. An attempt is made to give B-17's more anti-base strength, but the net result is that every aircraft unit is just about the same for bombardment purposes: three TBF's affect an airbase exactly the same as 15 B-17's. The B-17 can be 16% better in the unlikely event one manages to maneuver three, intact units over the airbase simultaneously, which seldom happens. The best solution seems to be to proceed with the tactical routine, but total all the bombardment points attacking each hex, and then conducting three attacks on each hex as one does with shore bombardment. This will allow air units to have some effect on airbases without changing the game too much.

Most of the above rules changes affect the third, Tactical Routine in the four major scenarios. The Operational Phases are fine, although in reading accounts of the battles, one finds discrepancies between the accounts and the flight deck capacity given for the carriers in the game. This is probably a minor point and not worth changing; anyway I have this thing against changing counter values. It would, however, prove useful to require air units to be armed with a specific kind of ordnance: anti-base or anti-ship. This would be noted at the appropriate Carrier Status Display Phase, and would account for the Japanese actions at Midway. Torpedo planes armed with torpedoes may not attack land airbases, and dive bombers attacking ships with anti-base weapons get no attack benefit for air units in the Arm &

Fuel Boxes of carriers attacked (the bombs explode on impact and don’t penetrate the Flight Deck). Such a rule can be added with little increase in complexity.

The big omission in the operational rules seems to be the inability of air units to fly cover missions, or, as they are called in Solomons Campaign, another SPI game, area CAP missions. Land-based aircraft can fly CAP only for the task force that includes their carrier. This reduces airbases, land bases especially, to a much more unimportant role. In a game of air/naval action, there should be some way of using fighters for a covering force:

[9.52] (Change) Fighters, only, may fly CAP for task forces or bases other than their own. Air units from a carrier may fly CAP for any TF in the same or adjacent hexes. Air units from land airbases may fly CAP to the limit of their strike range (Endurance-I). During the Take-off Segment of any daylight Operational Game-Turn, air units may take off from their base and be placed in the CAP Box of the appropriate task force or base. (Alternatively, for land-based aircraft flying CAP at long range, the air units could be placed in the Strike Box, and Endurance Tracks set, so that the units must "fly" to their station. This adds complications.) The air units then function as normal CAP units, subject to range attenuation. If the base from which these units originate is attacked, these units are unavailable. Land-based units, only, may switch stations between task forces in the same hex at any time; however, they may only engage in the active defense of one task force or base. They are, in effect, flying area CAP as in Solomons Campaign. All other CAP rules apply.

[9.53] (Addition) Air Cover CAP suffers attenuation to reflect the shuttling of the air units involved. (See Table.) Simply take the number of air units involved, cross-reference with the range, and arrive at the effective strength of the CAP for that target. For example, 10 Zekes from Rabaul (hex 0602) are flying Air Cover CAP for a task force in hex 0605, three hexes away. If attacked, five air units would be present for defense. The other five units may not be used for any other purposes. Note that U.S. units at a range of two, and Japanese Zekes at a range of three or four, subtract one from printed Attack Strength.

These rules will mostly aid the Japanese, as in most scenarios Rabaul is the only major airbase. Still, these rules will make the area surrounding a land airbase or carrier safer for friendly units, and present more realistic possibilities for each Player.

On the Strategic Level, in three of the scenarios there arises the problem of the inability of the Japanese to make "slot runs." They can try, of course, but they wind up being attacked at least four times, or until the U.S. Player runs out of aircraft at Henderson. The research on this point is puzzling; everybody agrees that the Japanese would start high speed runs before dark from just within range of of the SBD's from Henderson. Everybody agrees that the range was about 200 miles. But everybody also agrees that the SBD had an operational range of 1000 miles, as reflected by the Endurance Level in the game. Where are the missing 600 miles? Even if the 1000 mile figure represents unloaded range, something is still amiss. I have to assume that problems like fuel shortages are operating here, but no source I found deals with this problem directly. The only solution I can come up with, for those who desire to make "slot runs," is to limit the endurance of all aircraft from Henderson to 2 (in the Eastern Solomons and Santa Cruz scenarios only), and allow Japanese DD, CA, CL and BC units to make a two hex move from either hex 1004 or 0905 on Turn Six, and another two hex move to either of those two hexes on Turn One. This is admittedly an abstraction, as the Japanese ships weren't all that fast, but here, as in Solomons Campaign, a special rule seems to be the only way to deal with "slot runs." One could perhaps justify it by noting that night falls about 1830 around the equator in August, and Turn Five should

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9.54</th>
<th>AIR COVER ATTENUATION TABLE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distance in hexes</td>
<td>Number of air units on CAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>JA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cross-reference range in hexes for the appropriate nationality with the number of air units involved. The number given is the actual number of units that would be placed on the Tactical Display in the event of an attack. Note that Japanese units at a range of 3 or 4, or U.S. units at a range of 2 subtract one from their Anti-Air Strength. The British Seafire units in Case 25.6 may fly Air Cover CAP in the same hex only.
It's not complicating things too much to add wind into the game. Wind direction is determined by the roll of the die at the beginning of the Plot Phase on Game-Turn One, and applies throughout the Campaign Day. The scatter pattern in Case 20.2. is used to determine direction. Wind has two effects: it "regularizes" storm movement, and puts a restriction on taking off and landing aircraft.

[20.2] (Change) Storms move in the general direction of the wind. A roll of one or two and the storm moves one hex to the left of the wind direction; a roll of three or four and the storm moves one hex in the direction of the wind; a roll of five or six and the storm moves one hex to the right of the wind direction. Roll the die for each storm.

[20.5] (Addition) Aircraft carriers which either launched or landed aircraft in the preceding Operational Turns may not move away from the wind during that Strategic Naval Movement Phase. They may stay in position or move into the wind. Away from the wind is defined as the direction opposite the wind direction, and the two directions adjacent to that direction. Landing aircraft refer to strike aircraft.

These rules account for the fact that carriers must sail into the wind to launch or retrieve aircraft, a factor which will present more reasons for maneuvering in the game. The rules also make it possible for a Player to try to follow a storm if he wishes, to stay concealed. Regardless of popular belief, the weather is not all that random.

The biggest problem with the strategic game is not the fault of the game itself, but one of the "fog of war." The search effectiveness procedure goes a long way toward encompassing this factor, but it cannot solve the larger problem: each Player knows what he is searching for. It is the one he knows his die and plays the "percentages;" a Player can plan and plan and have his strikes miss, or find dummies or fail to inflict damage. So it's not to say that the game is all luck. Fast Carriers can teach a lot about carrier warfare in World War Two. If one takes the time to learn and play it well. If one uses the rules above, a little "spice" can be added to the game by adding more considerations for each player. The four "classic" scenarios in Fast Carriers make the game a good simulation of history.

[25.27] Coral Sea Variants: Japanese Player

- Die
- Roll

**Force Additions and Subtractions**

1. Add Hiryu(505), 4(Zeke), 3(Val), 4(Kate); Tone(546), Mogami(537), 3 DD's(587-589), from start.
2. Add Junyo(515), 3(Zeke), 3(Val), 4(Kate); 4 DD's(587-589), from start.
3. Add Junyo, as above; subtract Zuikaku (501), add 10(Betty) to Rabaul, from start.
4. Standard O.B.
5. Standard O.B.
6. Standard O.B.

(1) represents an increased Japanese effort. (2) represents an increased effort in the South Pacific, with a decrease in the later Aleutian effort, but an increased land-based support force. (4), (5) and (6) are the historical levels. (Note: Add one complete Campaign Day to Japanese objectives, see 25.21.)


**Die**

- Roll

**Force Additions and Subtractions**

1. Subtract Yorktown(003), add Saratoga (006), 3(F4F), 6(SBD), 2(TBD), (not torpedoed); San Diego (047), 2 DD's(071-072), 1 DD(057), from start.
2. Subtract Yorktown(003), add Saratoga (006), with air complement above to U.S. forces, from start.
3. Subtract Yorktown(003), add its air complement to Midway, plus 3(F4F), 2(TBF), 3(B-17).
4. Standard O.B.

(1) and (2) are the historical situations. (3) is the historical situation, but postulates that the Saratoga was not torpedoed, but was still unavailable. (4) postulates Saratoga not torpedoed and available. (5) represents the Enterprise arriving directly from the Doolittle Raid. (6) postulates a British carrier pulled down to the South Pacific. (Note: The U.S. Player must state whether or not the Saratoga has been torpedoed. Add one Campaign Day to Japanese objectives, see 25.21.)

[25.27] Coral Sea Variants: U.S. Player

**Die**

- Roll

**Force Additions and Subtractions**

1. Standard O.B.
2. Standard O.B.
4. Add Saratoga(006), 3(F4F), 6(SBD), 2(TBD), (not torpedoed); San Diego (047), 2 DD's(071-072), 1 DD(057), from start.
5. Add Enterprise(004), 4(F4F), 6(SBD), 2(TBD); Nashville(041), Northampton (029), 2 DD's(071-072). Enter Turn One, Day Two, east edge.
6. Add Victorious(401), 5(F4F), 2(Alba), 2(Swdf), from start.

(1) and (2) are the historical situations. (3) is the historical situation, but postulates that the Enterprise was not torpedoed, but was still unavailable. (4) postulates Saratoga not torpedoed and available. (5) represents the Enterprise arriving directly from the Doolittle Raid. (6) postulates a British carrier pulled down to the South Pacific. (Note: The U.S. Player must state whether or not the Saratoga has been torpedoed. Add one Campaign Day to Japanese objectives, see 25.21.)

[25.37] Midway Scenario Variants: U.S. Player

**Die**

- Roll

**Force Additions and Subtractions**

1. Subtract Yorktown(003), add Saratoga (006), 3(F4F), 6(SBD), 2(SBU), from west edge. Turn One, Subtract 2(SBD), 2(SBU) from Midway; add 3(B-17), 1(F4F), 2(TBF).
2. Subtract Yorktown(003), add Saratoga (006), with air complement above to U.S. forces, from start.
3. Subtract Yorktown(003), Add its air complement to Midway, plus 3(F4F), 2(TBF), 3(B-17).
4. Standard O.B.
8

5 Standard O.B.
6 Standard O.B.

(1) postulates earlier arrival of repaired Saratoga. Historically, she arrived on the scene about June 8. (2) postulates loss of Yorktown at Coral Sea, and quicker repair of torpedoed Saratoga. (3) represents loss of Yorktown at Coral Sea, with Saratoga unavailable. (4), (5) and (6) represent historical situation. (Note: Saratoga’s air complement in (1) represents primarily the counter mix; although the TBF was available. The U.S. Player must tell the Japanese Player if Yorktown is not used.)

[25.47] Eastern Solomons Variants:
Japanese Player

Die Roll  Force Additions and Subtractions
1 Add Hiryu(505), 5(Zeke), 5(Val), 3(Kate); Mogami(537), Mikuma(538), 4 DD’s (621-624), from start.
2 Add Junyo(515), 4(Zeke), 2(Kate), 3(Val); from start. Add 6(Betty) to Rabaul.
3 Subtract Ryujo(514), 4 DD’s(607-609, 611). Add 6(Betty) to Rabaul.
4 Standard O.B.
5 Standard O.B.
6 Standard O.B.

(1) postulates an early Japanese withdrawal at Midway, with no second day’s attacks. (2) simulates an increased Japanese effort. (3) simulates a decreased naval effort, but more land-based support. (4), (5) and (6) are the historical situations. (Note: Add one Campaign Day - 6 Game-Turns - to Japanese objectives, in 25.42.)

[25.47] Eastern Solomons Variants:
U.S. Player

Die Roll  Force Additions and Subtractions
1 Subtract Wasp(008) and total task force designated to start in hex 1409 in 25.43. Add 6(P-39) to Henderson. May not go to High Altitude.
2 Standard O.B.
3 Standard O.B.
4 Add 6(P-39) to Henderson. May not use High Altitude.
5 Add Yorktown, 6(F4F), 3(TBF), 6(SBD); San Diego(047), Vincennes(028), 3 DD’s (055-057), from start.
6 Standard O.B. Yorktown not sunk.

(1) actually is the historical situation, as Wasp as refueling during the battle. (2) and (3) represent the carriers available at the date of the battle. (4) represents an increased fighter commitment to Henderson. The P-39 here, as in (1), are P-400, an American-made P-39, which was shipped to the British. All these aircraft are equipped with British, hence unusable, oxygen equipment. (5) simulates Yorktown not having been sunk at Midway. Note that the U.S. Player must use 6(P-39), 6(B-17) and 3(TBD) in this variant, due to the counter mix. It is strongly recommended that these “ersatz” counters be used in “non-visible roles,” like search and CAP to avoid giving the variant away. (6) represents the Yorktown not sunk, but unavailable. (Note: The U.S. Player must tell the Japanese Player if the Yorktown was not sunk).

[25.56] Santa Cruz Variant: Japanese Player

Die Roll  Force Additions and Subtractions
1 Add Hiryu(505), 3(Zeke), 4(Val), 3(Kate); subtract these aircraft from those stationed at Rabaul. Hiryu has a flight deck capacity of 5 for this variant only. Force available at start.
2 Add Hosho(513). 1(Zeke), 1(Kate), at start.
3 Standard O.B. Hiryu not sunk at Midway.
4 Standard O.B.
5 Standard O.B.
6 Add Hiryu(505), 4(Zeke), 4(Val), 4(Kate); subtract these aircraft from Rabaul, when appropriate. Subtract Zuiko(512). From start.

(1) postulates that Hiyo, sister ship to Junyo, had not suffered a mechanical failure which required it to be withdrawn, and its aircraft sent to Rabaul. (2) represents a (slight) increase in the Japanese force. Hosho probably to be used as a decoy carrier, a favorite Japanese tactic. (3) is the historical force, but the Hiryu was not sunk at Midway. (4) and (5) are the historical situations. (6) allows for the Hiryu to make an appearance. (Note: The Japanese Player must tell the U.S. Player if the Hiryu is not sunk.)

[25.56] Santa Cruz Variants: U.S. Player

Die Roll  Force Additions and Subtractions
1 Standard O.B. Wasp not sunk.
2 Standard O.B.
3 Standard O.B.
4 Add 3(SBD), 3(P-39) to Henderson.
5 Add Wasp(008), 4(F4F), 5(SBD), 2(TBF), at start.
6 Add 4(F4F), 5(SBD), 3(P-39) to Henderson.

(1) represents historical scenario, with Wasp not torpedoed 15/9/42, but unavailable. (2) and (3) are the historical situations. (4) and (6) represent increased air commitment to Henderson Field. (5) simulates Wasp not sunk and available at the battle. (Note: U.S. Player must tell the Japanese Player if the Wasp is not considered sunk.)