

# Surprise At Lachlon II

*BFG Scenario Competition Runner Up*

By Reinout Hubbers

This article documents the retreat of an Imperial fleet headed by one of its most famous ships while unknowingly being stalked by a Chaos cruiser detachment sent by Abaddon to remove the prized battleship from the Imperial inventory. An otherwise insignificant planet becomes the backdrop for a surprise battle. What sets it apart is that the Imperial player must balance his actions between battling Chaos (risking destruction) and moving towards his objective (becoming predictable and easy to catch in the stern), the position of which is decided randomly.

## OVERVIEW

Having escaped the disastrous course of events at Ulthanx, the remnants of the Imperial fleet have set a course away from the battlezone. The Emperor class battleship *Legatus Stygies*, is in need of repairs after narrowly avoiding destruction. Concerned by the possible loss of this prestigious ship, Lord Admiral Ravensburg ordered a covered withdrawal to a safe haven. However, in the area of operations, only one base is capable of handling vessels larger than escorts. The docking facility is a space station between the moons of a small planet.

The planet is named Lachlon and its moons are referred to as Lachlon II and III. As a theatre of operations, this sector is underdeveloped, with few events having occurred there in the past centuries. As a consequence, few resources are available as the base declined while other sectors were given priority. The system itself is quite isolated and the space station is a remnant of past eras when the planet required docking facilities for the mining colonies that formerly dotted the planet's surface. When the mines became unprofitable, the long decline of Lachlon set in.

Abaddon meanwhile has counter-guessed his opponent's next move. Triangulating the courses of the Imperial Navy's most recent moves at, and after, Ulthanx, the Warmaster has some idea of where the limping Emperor class ship will turn up next, though the precise location remains unknown to the Despoiler. Hastily assembling an interception fleet comprising escorts and cruisers with the infamous *Foe-Reaper* as flagship, Abaddon sends this detachment around the various asteroid belts that separate the retreating Imperial Navy from its Chaos pursuers. The Chaos fleet is swift enough to race around the lumbering battleship and its support fleet, find a gap in the asteroid fields and emerge somewhere along the projected interception point. But what will they find there?

## FORCES

Both forces are 1,000 point fleets, but the Imperial Navy player gets the use of the Emperor class battleship *Legatus Stygies* for free. On the other hand, he must pay for the space station (130 instead of 150 points) out of his allowance.

The Chaos player freely receives the Repulsive class grand cruiser *Foe-Reaper*. Both fleets choose an Admiral as normal.

Both players may not select other battleships, battlecruisers, grand cruisers or heavy cruisers to represent the difficulties in navigating the asteroid fields (Chaos) and because the other heavy Imperial ships have no need for repairs and have thus retreated to another warzone.

## BATTLEFIELD LAYOUT

The battlezone is 120cm wide by 180cm long but feel free to increase the area if you find your fleets running out of space too soon! This is a battlefield situated in the Primary Biosphere and must include at least one asteroid belt, one medium planet and two moons. Place the medium planet in the northeastern corner (sunward table edge is considered to be due south) so that the edges of your planet touch both the north and east table edge; then, randomly decide the distance between the planet and the two moons, but roll D6 and multiply the result by 10cm instead of the usual 2d6x10cm. The moons will be set up on the southwestern side of the planet (measure from the centre of the planet). A fair way to randomly place the moons is to use a triangular ruler with degrees on it: divide the 90 degrees into six 15 degree zones and assign a D6 result to each zone; roll a dice for each moon.

A space station is located exactly between the two moons, so once the moons are placed, simply measure the straight distance between them and place the station at the exact centre of the line. An asteroid field is located in the northwestern corner, extending southwards for at least half the battlefield. If players wish, extra phenomena may be placed in the two southern quadrants (note though that the moons and space station could end up in a southern quadrant if the random roll is high enough).

## SET-UP

The Imperial Navy sets up first, as they are surprised by the onrush of Chaos interceptors. The Imperial deployment zone is as wide as the southwestern quadrant, and extends to 15cm. However, the Imperial player may elect to place a single cruiser or a single squadron of escorts at the space



station to represent vanguard elements that raced ahead of the fleet to inspect the docking facilities and to notify the system's defenders.

Chaos deploys in the northwestern quadrant, as wide as the quadrant and with a depth of 15cm. Beware of the asteroid belt that runs partly through your deployment zone! All Chaos ships are assumed to have successfully crossed a gap in the asteroid belt.

## FIRST TURN

As the Chaos fleet springs the surprise, they get the first turn.

## SPECIAL RULES

**Imperial Player.** The space station hasn't seen much use recently. Its complement of weapons have deteriorated due to insufficient servicing: the maximum range of the weapons battery is 30 cm instead of 60cm (for purposes of shifting columns left/right, retain the 60cm figure – the space station is limited to close fire support... but once the enemy is close there's no stopping it!). The lance battery and ordnance function as normal. The station must be paid for from the fleet points allowance, but at a reduced cost of 130 points in regard of the decreased firepower. The space station can be crippled and even out of action but once the latter happens, do not roll on the Catastrophic Damage table. The space station cannot be completely destroyed in this game. See victory conditions.

The *Legatus Stygies* is the flagship and may not be equipped with Shark assault boats, does not have to be paid for from the fleet points allowance but to represent the damage it has already suffered, its hits are set at 10 (use that number to calculate for crippling and out of action) instead of 12 and cannot use any special orders except for "Brace for Impact!". Although a full starting complement of ordnance is present, the battleship may **not** reload them as the special order is barred from use – you can only launch once!

**Chaos.** The *Foe-Reaper* comes free of charge but must be the flagship.

## GAME LENGTH

The game lasts 10 turns or until one of the victory conditions is met.

## VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Chaos player wins automatically if the *Legatus Stygies* is destroyed completely. The Imperial player automatically wins if he can dock his flagship by moving the *Legatus Stygies* into



base contact with the space station and declaring it in high orbit. Then, it must survive a single turn to win. The ship is saved, even if the space station is out of action. Note: this measure is to prevent Chaos from taking an easy win by wiping out the station, of course knocking out the space station does give Chaos more breathing space... If after 10 turns no such conditions have been met, end the game and calculate Victory Points as normal. Both sides scamper off, Chaos back towards the asteroid belt, the Imperial Navy towards the Lachlan system. The Imperial player can score extra by destroying the *Foe-Reaper* which grants 125% of its normal Victory Points in light of its fearsome reputation (only if it is destroyed). The Chaos player, when calculating Victory Points counts the *Legatus Stygies* as 50% of its value if he managed to cripple but not destroy it. Note that holding the field counts for nothing in this battle; hulks are unimportant, destruction is all that matters!

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Imperial Navy was shocked to find a cruiser squadron in their path while just within reach of their destination. A desperate battle ensued with the Chaos cruisers, *Foe-Reaper* in the lead, going for the heartbeat of the Imperial fleet – the *Legatus Stygies*! After several hours of fighting, the Emperor class battleship was crippled and things looked grim. Once in range of the space station however, the *Foe-Reaper* was targeted with a vengeance and it was soon crippled as well. The Chaos Admiral took a sharp turn and sent in other ships to take the incoming Imperial fire while he quietly disengaged. Without their flagship, the Chaos fleet discontinued the battle and took up their position as escorts for the *Foe-Reaper*. Both major vessels survived the encounter, with the *Foe-Reaper* remaining a thorn in the Imperial Navy's side to the present, while the *Legatus Stygies* was fully repaired and went on to annihilate the Chaos battleship *Black Pain* in battle at Arriva. The Lachlan system, after helping the Emperor class battleship back to operational levels, faded once more into obscurity.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Having enjoyed Man-o'-War, Reinout now turns towards BFG to satisfy his naval ambitions. He organises at least one annual WFB tournament, usually at the Games Spectacle (Eindhoven). Warmaster is another love. Currently, Reinout is looking into other venues of the hobby to expand into, perhaps even commercially..

