

Squad Building in Star Wars Miniatures: Beginning to Advanced

by Michael Fryda

About the Author



Michael Fryda is a 9th and 10th grade high school science teacher from central Omaha, NE.

Michael has been posting to the Star Wars Miniatures message boards since January 2005. He has been very active in his local Star Wars communities working to encourage and support new players through modeling good sportsmanship. He has also worked to support the tournament scene. He encourages people to seriously improve at the game but also try to maintain a light and fun tournament environment to encourage people to want to come back.

His contributions to the online community are many. He has posted advice in the general, rules, and squad critique forums for over four years. He participated in the Lost Twenty set fan project. He has posted almost 30 articles on the message boards, including articles on Gambit, Growing the

Game in Your Area, the long running unofficial and official Star Wars Miniatures Strategy Showcases (with Ironlightsaber), Screening Strategies (Knowledge Arcana), and a resource article about Nom Bombs.

Other than Star Wars Miniatures, he also enjoys board games like Arkham Horror, A Game of Thrones, Settlers of Catan, Troll Cave, and Zombies.

Michael can be found playing Star Wars Miniatures at Coliseum Hobbies and Games in LaVista, NE with the Omaha area competitive players. He has also played for several years at Hobbytown South in Lincoln, NE. He and his wife of nearly four years, Laura, share their home with two cats, a lizard, and two snakes.

Part I

Introduction

This three-article series focuses on squad building concepts for Star Wars Miniatures. I will divide the articles into beginning (one article) and advanced play (two articles) and I do not intend them to be mutually exclusive. You will see some topics that would appear to be more advanced in the “beginning” article and vice versa. Different people pick up different aspects of squad construction at different times in their experience. I would like to say there is a defined progression that players go through in their ability to construct squads. There is not. The first article will use the construction of an example squad to talk about squad building basics. The second and third articles will focus more on advanced squad building techniques. The second article will focus on specific squad execution issues to build for such as activation control, damage concentration, and choices between building ranged, melee, or a combination. The third article will focus on the big picture, including building to address your local meta-game, thinking through games ahead of time, and techniques that you can use to quickly fine-tune your squads.

These articles are also about building squads to win games, end of story. Whether you are just beginning with the game or a seasoned veteran, much of the fun for people comes from outlasting your opponent. All of the techniques that I will talk about focus on constructing to better put yourself in a position to have more points than your opponent at the end of the game. I won't talk about adding Luke Skywalker to a squad that already has Han Solo and Princess Leia unless Luke is the best choice for increasing your chances of victory. Quite often players build squads based on a theme or because they simply want to try out a new character. Those are good things to do for fun. They often don't help you win games.

The other perspective that I will write from is a DCI rules perspective. I have a vested interest in growing this game. The best way that we can grow it is to attract more people to the DCI play environment. That doesn't mean that we need to make competitive players. It means that we need to have an official sanctioned presence for this game. So when I discuss squad building concepts, I will refer frequently to rules used in the DCI Floor Rules for Star Wars Miniatures. You will hear frequent references to Gambit scoring. The intent is not to alienate groups that don't use Gambit, but rather to attract all players, casual or competitive, to officially sanctioned play. I will also assume playing with the rule of activating only one character when you go first in a round. That influences squad construction.

One last thing. Squad construction is only one aspect of the game. The tactical decisions you make while playing are the ultimate determinant of how well you do. Strategy articles abound for the game in the online community. However, a well-built squad can make your decisions more effective. Any strategy or tactic you try just won't carry the same weight if you don't first make a squad that can maximize those decisions.

Why Care About Building Squads?

I think that many players of games believe that a game is in the execution. The fun is there. If you aren't playing the game, then what is the point? How can squad construction be a fun pursuit? To answer those questions I think we need to consider what game playing is about.

What do game players like? Whether we are talking about sports fantasy games, Chess, Starcraft, Magic the Gathering or Star Wars Miniatures, many game players share the same basic love. They like to work the numbers. They want to know the odds of victory and defeat. They want to say that they can (at least partially) predict the outcome of events and then see if they are right. Game players have a natural tendency to think critically. They are interested in cost/benefit analysis and statistics, often whether they realize it or not. Most players “work the numbers” and enjoy it, regardless of whether they know that that is what they are doing.

Many games, *Star Wars Miniatures* included, have a level of depth that exists outside of, but is very closely related to, the actual execution of the game. It is the "planning" phase in which a player can make choices before the actual game itself to increase the odds of victory. It is problem solving at its core. Your "problem" is that you need to achieve victory. The planning phase is the time in which you can equip yourself to do better once the time actually comes to do something about it.

Squad Construction in *Star Wars Miniatures* is not just about selecting characters up to a point total. It is about pre-selecting the available tactics and strategies that you will have available to you in the game. Fine-tuning the available choices allows for you to best prepare yourself to make good choices. It makes the choices easier. When you have a plan and stick to it, you are more likely to do what you rehearsed, and less likely to pick an option that is sub-optimal.

Once players delve deeply into squad construction many find that it can be just as rewarding as actually playing the game. I know several players that don't play the game very much either by choice or because they simply don't have the time to do so. They still build squads. They enjoy the challenge of simply finding the most optimal build for a concept. As you will see later, I don't recommend just building if you really intend to improve at the game. There can be no pencil and paper substitute for in-game practice. My point is simply that squad construction adds a great deal of depth to this game that allows you to continue to enjoy it even when you are not sitting across from an opponent playing!

So, what are the basics of building a squad? What should a squad, at its very core, be prepared to do?

Beginning Squad Building

What is the Prime Directive of Squad Construction?

You build a squad to score points. If your squad isn't designed to do that, you won't win. There are two ways to score points in *Star Wars Miniatures*. You defeat enemy characters or you gain gambit points. Most of your points will come from defeating enemy characters. In close games gambit scores may result in victory. When you build squads you need to think about how you will score points and how you will stop your opponent from scoring points.

So how do you do that? You do more damage to your opponent than they can do to you. You build squads with the goal of damaging enemy characters and eliminating them. This can serve the dual purpose of minimizing damage to yourself. After all, if the enemy loses characters, they can't use those characters to do damage to you. This leads many players to believe that the best way to build squads is offense, offense, offense. This would make perfect sense, if not for the fact that your characters are not the only characters that get to be moved in a game. Your opponent also has characters and you can't eliminate all of their characters at once. They are trying to do the same thing to you! So it can't be just about offense. You have to have enough defense that you can try to stop the enemy from doing to you what you are trying to do to them!

Character Roles

So when we make decisions about characters to put in our squads, the primary thing in the back of our minds is what offense and defense that character can bring to the squad. But it doesn't stop there. *Star Wars Miniatures* has several other concerns that a person has to keep in mind. Some characters don't just do damage or help others do damage. Some characters are put in squads to protect other characters. Some characters are put in squads to control the center of the board and collect gambit points. Other characters help with opening doors so that you can get your offensive characters in the right place to strike. Some characters contribute to your "activation" count, allowing you to concentrate your offense all at once at the end of the round.

In summary, within a squad, a certain character has a certain job to do. They do their job with the bigger picture of trying to do damage to the enemy while preventing damage to yourself. They contribute to you scoring points, or they stop the enemy from

scoring points on you. What follows are some examples of roles that characters can play.

Central character(s) – our Primary Damage Dealer(s)

Every squad has one character or group of characters that are there for doing damage. They have many names. Big hitter, beatstick, and central character are just a few of the common names. They are selected because they are good at offense, but that may not be their only benefit. When you select your central character or characters, you have to be careful of a couple of things. Your central character or characters shouldn't be so expensive that you can't fit some good support into your squad. If you spend too much on a central character, you may find that you are missing points that could be used to make a less costly central character even more effective. Your central character also needs to be able to do enough damage quickly enough to score points. Doing a great deal of damage doesn't matter if you can't eliminate a character and score points.

How much damage is enough damage? The real answer to that question comes with experience in playing the game. You can approximate your answer with the general idea that you want to do as much damage as you can while spending as few points on it as you can. It also depends upon the build point total. You need to be able to do more damage in 200 than 150, for example.

Let's look at an example comparing Boba Fett, Bounty Hunter with Boba Fett, Mercenary. Both of these characters have defensive capabilities, so let's focus on damage alone. Bounty Hunter has Bounty Hunter +6, Twin Attack, and +12 attack for 20 damage. Mercenary has Bounty Hunter +4, Cunning Attack, Double Attack and +10 attack for 20 damage. They both have Accurate Shot, meaning that they can attack anyone they can get line of sight to in most circumstances. Why might we choose one over the other? Looking at the stats, Mercenary has more options for you to be able to accomplish your primary goal of scoring points. How so? Bounty Hunter is forced to attack a single target with Twin Attack during a round for 40 damage. The character has Disintegration, but it only happens on a natural 20. It normally does not happen in games so we can't count on it. Most of the time, Bounty Hunter has a great chance of hitting and doing 40 damage to a Unique character and a good chance of hitting a non-Unique character. What about Mercenary? Mercenary can split up its damage. I know that earlier we said that concentrating damage is important for scoring points, but that is only true of high hit point enemy characters. You are often better off killing two 30 hit point characters totaling 28 points than one 60 hit point character totaling 18 points. This is, of course, situation dependent, but that is a good general rule to consider. By doing that, you may also be eliminating key support of the enemy, making it easier for you to kill the enemy characters in subsequent rounds. You also can eliminate two activations of the enemy instead of one, helping you control the tempo of the game.

We're not done! What about the other offensive abilities on the cards? Bounty Hunter gives you the best option of hitting Unique characters with the best odds. Mercenary can get the same total attack bonus of +18 with Bounty Hunter and Cunning Attack. So, when we pick support later, we may pick a support character that can increase the chances of that happening. Mercenary also has the chance at a higher attack bonus on non-Uniques. With non-Uniques generally having fewer hit points than Uniques, Double Attack also benefits us because we have the option of killing two characters in Boba's activation instead of one, potentially scoring more points. We can't lose sight of our primary goals! Damage and points!

So, let's build a 150 point squad with some primary damage dealers. I'm going to pick Boba Fett, Mercenary partly because of the advantages I discussed above. That doesn't mean that Boba Fett, Bounty Hunter is a bad choice. I prefer those advantages over Bounty Hunter. That isn't the ONLY reason I am picking him though! He also has defensive abilities that are influencing my choice. Both characters have Flight, allowing them to move over pits, low objects, and difficult terrain. They can also move away from melee attackers without provoking attacks of opportunity. Bounty Hunter has Evade, a good defensive power, but looking ahead to the "support" section, I can add that to Mercenary quite easily. Mercenary has the big advantage of Intuition, allowing him to move his speed before any other character activates in a round. This is very useful for many reasons, including moving to set up a Double Attack or moving to control Gambit or lines of fire. Most importantly, Intuition is a good defensive measure to use to get Mercenary away from enemy line of sight or melee attacks before the start of a round.

All this just to choose between two characters! You bet. If you want to win games, whether casual or competitive, you need to know what your characters can do, and what other choices you might have available to you. On with the squad building.

Mercenary costs 58 points. So my squad looks like:

Boba Fett, Mercenary 58

We're not done with big hitters in this squad! From my experience, I know that I will need to do a lot more damage than that in a round to win a 150 point match. My opponent will also have big hitters with high hit points and I need to be able to deal with them!

I have lots of options now because Boba Fett, Mercenary is Fringe and he can go in with any faction. Now I need to pick a faction or just keep adding Fringe characters. This is a good opportunity to introduce the idea of support.

Support

Support characters are characters that may not be able to do a lot of damage on their own. They are there to do everything that your big hitters can't do but that still increase your chances of victory. Some examples include:

- 1) Making your big hitters better attackers (by increasing their attack value, damage or granting them additional offensive special abilities)
- 2) Protecting your big hitters (giving them Defense boosts, defensive special abilities or healing them)
- 3) Giving big hitters better movement options
- 4) Controlling doors
- 5) Controlling gambit scoring
- 6) Controlling the tempo of the game (through activations)
- 7) Controlling initiative
- 8) Increasing the synergy between characters, so that the whole does more than the sum of its parts

or anything else that your big hitters can't do.

Support characters are often called "tech" characters, because they can grant a wide variety of boosts to which your characters normally don't have access. "Synergy" means that characters work well together. When they do that we say that they "have synergy". In real life, you can experience a lot of success with working with other people and the same is true of Star Wars Miniatures. When your characters have abilities that make them work better together than alone, your squad becomes much more effective as a whole.

Big hitters sometimes have "support" options built into Commander Effects of their own, but they often cost a lot more as a result. Having separate characters for support gives you more characters that your opponent needs to deal with. They have to direct their damage to more characters and have more difficulty concentrating damage to eliminate your points. Separate support characters also have the advantage of you having more characters to activate in a round to control the tempo of the engagement and potentially allowing yourself to have more characters left to activate at the end of the round.

Back to the squad I am building. I'm skipping my second big hitter for now, because the faction that I plan on selecting is better at offering support than offering big hitters.

Remember earlier when I said that Bounty Hunter has the "Evade" advantage over Mercenary, but that we could deal with that later? The faction that we pick can give Mercenary access to Evade so that he has better defensive abilities. I can do this with

Commander Effects from General Wedge Antilles from the New Republic faction, or General Rieekan from the Rebel Faction. Both Commander Effects are board-wide, meaning that I don't need to worry about them being near Boba Fett, Mercenary in order for them to be able to work. Rieekan's commander effect is better, because it affects allies and not just followers. Rieekan also has Recon, which could help with initiative. General Wedge costs more and has more special abilities on his card. He can serve as a better offensive character than Rieekan because he has Mobile Attack, Accurate Shot, and a +8 attack for 10 damage. This makes him a great "scrub" killer. He is great at eliminating low hit point support that your opponent will probably have. Ten damage doesn't seem like a lot, but it may be just enough for you to score enough points to win. Do not underestimate it. Most squads contain some low cost characters to help control tempo, so whom should I choose?

Building squads is all about finding characters that work well together, not just on their own. Rieekan and Wedge are great characters on their own, but I want to squeeze as much benefit out of the CE that I pick as I can with my plan. To do that, I have to put the choice on hold, and think about other key support characters for the strategy I'm thinking of using.

Boba Fett, Mercenary 58
General Wedge Antilles 23/General Rieekan 14?

So why didn't I choose yet? I'm thinking ahead. I don't want Boba Fett, Mercenary to have Evade just because it is a good defensive power and could help to prevent my opponent from eliminating my beatstick. I need Evade because it interacts with another Commander Effect that I was thinking about using. Remember how we said that Mercenary has Double Attack, allowing him to potentially attack and eliminate two low hit point characters in a round? Well, you can't do that if you move. And, even with Evade, Boba still doesn't want to be taking fire from the enemy if he stands still. The Twi'lek Black Sun Vigo can help me get around this. The TBSV's Commander Effect grants Greater Mobile Attack to followers with Evade. This would allow Boba to move, make both attacks and move, up to six squares total. It could also allow him to just move a full six squares and still attack twice. This is a huge advantage because it helps me to guarantee that Boba will do his maximum possible damage each round. This character doesn't just contribute the Commander Effect though. It has a good attack at +9 for 10 damage, and the possibility of +13 for 30 damage with Opportunist+20. It can be a primary damage dealer as well! It has Evade, so it doesn't need to rely on the other Commander Effect we were planning for, and it also has Jolt, allowing you to activate a big enemy character. So the Twi'lek can be useful whether it attacks an enemy that has activated or one that has not. Options make for better squads. Building in characters that can fill multiple roles is always a good idea.

Boba Fett, Mercenary 58
Twi'lek Black Sun Vigo 18
General Wedge Antilles 23/General Rieekan 14?

Now our squad is shaping up. The primary support we have is a character to give characters with Evade Greater Mobile Attack. Now we just have to choose which character we will select to give Evade so they are eligible for the TBSV. In what way could the TBSV benefit from either of those two commanders? The TBSV can only benefit from Rieekan because his CE specifies allies. But, it doesn't really matter if it can benefit because it already has Greater Mobile Attack and Evade on it's card.

So, in this case, it is really a matter of what characters you want to work with in the faction you choose. There are good options for either faction. Rebels will be more focused on support. New Republic has more options for damage dealers. I'm going to focus more on New Republic. I chose them because I'm concerned right now that there are not enough damage dealers in the squad. Boba Fett is powerful, but he isn't going to carry the whole squad on his own. By picking New Republic, I also take more advantage of Wedge's attack power and defensive abilities in conjunction with the TBSV. The TBSV doesn't have Accurate Shot, and if I want to get the most out of Opportunist as a damage possibility, I want someone to be able to gun down an Ugnaught who is in the way, preventing a bigger character from being a legal target. Would Rebels have been a good choice instead? Sure. In this case I think the damage prospects are better for characters in the New Republic faction.

Boba Fett, Mercenary 58
Twi'lek Black Sun Vigo 18
General Wedge Antilles 23

Finishing it Off

That leaves me with 51 points left. This is where you really have to be strong and think about how to make the best compromises between damage, defense and even theme. What characters will work best here? You need to select ones that will really increase the options you have in the game and can really play off of your support well. My gut instinct and experience tells me that we need at least one more damage dealer here and then to round out the squad with support of door control and maybe Relay Orders. Who should be doing that damage and providing the last support?

This squad so far has me questioning whether the remaining characters should even be from the New Republic faction! If there are better choices from the Fringe faction, you should take the better choices instead. Let's look at New Republic.

characters like Mara Jade, Jedi and Han Solo, Galactic Hero would fit in this build, but they are really just too expensive. You want to be able to do a lot of damage, but you always want to balance that with defense and support. Han doesn't leave any room for additional characters and an enemy squad with more than four characters will have an advantage in being able to go with more characters at the end of a round. More on this in the second article. Mara Jade, Jedi has high damage potential and she benefits greatly from General Wedge. Evade is useful on a shooter as defense and Mobile Attack would let her move out, twin from range, and then mobile back. With only one activation at the beginning of a round, you will most likely spend that on Boba Fett, but that isn't a lock. With both Mara and Boba Fett, you can hit with a big assault with Mara and then after this use Accurate Shot to potentially get Cunning on another enemy within line of sight of Boba. Your opponent will likely consider this and make sure that any characters within line of sight have activated when Boba gets to go, but with Intuition you can make that harder for them. Its certainly a lot to think about and I'll talk more about this technique in the third article.

What about cheaper New Republic characters? Some examples of high quality characters that could be damage dealers would be Kyp Durron, Jaina Solo, Corran Horn, and Wolf Sazen. Each has their pros and cons. I won't work through them here because beginning players should take the time to work through the logic of what they think is best.

What about Fringe? Just because you have a "New Republic" squad, that doesn't mean that you need to fill it with "New Republic" characters. If there are better options from the Fringe faction, you should always consider those. What are some of the choices? There are over 70 Fringe characters that could work here. Let's narrow it down to some common choices that would work well with this squad. Some examples of popular Fringe damage dealers are the Genoharadan Assassin, Aurra Sing, Dash Rendar, Renegade Smuggler, Bossk, Bounty Hunter, Jarael, and Jolee Bindo. Ahhhhh! Who do I choose? The point is that one of the great things about this game is that there are so many choices that quite often you can try many different ones and any one of them could be the correct choice! When you get stuck, you really should always do one of two things: 1) Play to your squads strengths and 2) Have a plan for addressing weaknesses. What is this squad about? Right now, this squad is really about hitting hard with Boba Fett without him being vulnerable. So some choices may be to increase Boba's offense or defense, or try to address other weaknesses. What could give this squad problems? Super Stealth could be a problem. Being outactivated could be a problem. I don't have anything to deal with doors (yet). I don't have anything that is an onvious Gambit getter without taking some risks. So, I'm going to pick some characters from my pool of contenders that deal with these issues.

I can address Super Stealth by simply playing some melee characters or ranged characters that don't mind being close up. I think that Corran Horn and Kyp are probably the best choices from my pool, although Aurra Sing or a Genoharadan Assassin also wouldn't be bad. Corran costs 39, has a way to prevent damage from range (but that isn't that much different from Evade), and with Melee Reach 2 he doesn't need to be next to characters that have Super Stealth or Cloaked. Kyp is cheaper, has about the

same damage potential, and has the big auto damage threats of Force Lightning and Force Push 5. Kyp probably won't get to use Force Push 5. We want to preserve Boba and Wedge as long as possible. Kyp can also double as a Gambit getter under the right circumstances since he needs to be close to do damage anyway. So, my choice is Kyp Durrón. That gives me plenty of points to deal with my other two weaknesses of activations and door control.

Boba Fett, Mercenary 58
Twi'lek Black Sun Vigo 18
General Wedge Antilles 23
Kyp Durrón 26

Twenty-five points left! What will I spend it on? There are two routes we could go that sound good. Here's what I'm thinking.

Option 1-A Little Bit of Extra Defense and Offense

Luke Skywalker, Force Spirit 10

This gives Kyp Force Renewal and Mettle. Mettle is very useful on characters with Evade. It greatly increases the chance that they will prevent the damage. It also opens up Force Push 5 as a big threat for the enemy. I wouldn't go with this option if not for the fact that Kyp already has Evade from the TBSV. It also has the drawback that we want to make sure that Kyp gets the Evade at all times so he can use it with Mettle and really prevent some damage.

Option 2-Ranged Offense Extreme

Czerka Scientist 13

That would give Boba Fett, Mercenary Jolt from Blaster Rifle Upgrade and the TBSV and Wedge Twin Attack from Blaster Pistol Upgrade. Boba can now also Jolt enemy unactivated characters and his Accurate Shot gives him a much wider number of targets for doing so. If Kyp can get close to engaging the enemy, they may choose to spend two activations to eliminate Kyp, setting up Boba for some nice Jolt shots on other characters. The Twi'lek becomes capable of 60 damage on activated characters, giving me a possible third big hitter. The only drawback is that the Czerka needs to be kept within six of these characters, but that isn't too difficult since they are ranged and will likely stay close together and as far away from the enemy as possible. Or will they? :) Boba's Intuition grants him a good range to get some nice lines to enemies to move forward. There are times in which being aggressive with Boba is a good plan.

The key to both options is that I want my characters to be doing as much for me as possible at all times. I'm going to go with the Czerka Scientist because I'm thinking about how I want the squad to play out. It depends upon what I face, but I feel most comfortable with Kyp in a protection role, hanging back to protect my shooters and commanders. I can play him aggressive if I choose. The Czerka also gives a big boost in ranged offense to everyone but Kyp.

Boba Fett, Mercenary 58
Twi'lek Black Sun Vigo 18
General Wedge Antilles 23
Kyp Durrón 26
Czerka Scientist 13

That leaves me with 12 points and lower-than-desired activations and no door control. The Twi'lek's Commander Effect is also within a range of six so I'd like to get a Mouse Droid or two in there for Relay Orders for Kyp and a fodder shield if necessary. I'll go with

just one since the plan is to use Kyp for more protection anyway. The last nine points will go to three Ugnaught Demolitionists which serve as activations, door control and potential fodder shields. I'm erring on the side of more Ugnaughts here because they will get Evade and Mobile Attack from Wedge, making them a little harder to kill and easier to move around than the Mouse. Every character serves multiple roles, where possible.

Boba Fett, Mercenary 58
Twilek Black Sun Vigo 18
General Wedge Antilles 23
Kyp Durron 26
Czerka Scientist 13
Mouse Droid 3
Ugnaught Demolitionist X3 9

150 points, 9 activations

That looks good, but I'll finish up here with two more quick points. Notice that I hit the mark exactly on the points. It doesn't always work out that way. If I had four points left unspent at the end, would I pick a four-point character? Maybe. It all depends upon how it fits the synergy of the squad. If it works out and gives me an advantage, I'll do it. If I find myself short of the build total but need a character for synergy purposes or to meet a specific need I don't ever feel weird about building short. If winning is your goal, you need to always do what is best for your chances of victory before filling in points just because you can.

You may have also noticed that I seemed to start with the big hitter first, went to support, went back to a big hitter, and then finished with lower cost support. It doesn't always work out that way. As you get more experience you organize thoughts in your own way. One of the things that happens is that experienced players tend to work through all of these ideas much more rapidly. They may start with a support base that they are interested in rather than a damage dealing base. This is what squad building tends to be like as new sets are released when people want to use new commanders. There is not one right way to organize or order your thoughts if it gets you to a sound squad.

Summary

Some very basic tips to follow when thinking about squad building:

1. Build to score points.
2. Build to maximize and concentrate damage dealt and minimize damage taken.
3. Select a compromise of some heavy hitters and some support. More damage output than support.
4. Build with characters that have synergy so your whole squad is better than the sum of its parts.
5. Play to your squad's strengths.
6. Have a plan for addressing weaknesses.
7. The more options you have, the more ways you can achieve victory.
8. Don't waste points, but be ok with going under the limit if that choice gives you better options.

I hope you enjoyed this first article about beginning squad building and I invite you to stay tuned for the next two! In the next article we'll talk about more advanced topics, including building with activations in mind, concentrating damage, and choosing between ranged, melee and mixed squads.

Part II

Introduction

This three-article series focuses on squad building concepts for Star Wars Miniatures. The first article focused on beginning squad building tips. I used the construction of a squad as an example to illustrate eight key points for starting to build squads. A summary of those points follows.

1. Build to score points.
2. Build to maximize and concentrate damage dealt and minimize damage taken.
3. Select a compromise of some heavy hitters and some support. More damage output than support.
4. Build with characters that have synergy so your whole squad is better than the sum of its parts.
5. Play to your squad's strengths.
6. Have a plan for addressing weaknesses.
7. The more options you have, the more ways you can achieve victory.
8. Don't waste points, but be ok with going under the limit if that choice gives you better options.

The next two articles will focus more on advanced squad building techniques. This article will discuss more specific squad building issues to consider such as activation control, damage concentration, and choices between building ranged, melee, or a combination.

Activations in Squad Building

If you've spent any amount of time perusing discussions on the official Star Wars Miniatures message boards, or any of the other online resources available, you've probably seen ample references to "activations" in squad building. An "activation" is taking a figure's turn. The base rules of the game say that you activate one figure if you go first in the round. Your opponent activates two, you activate two, and then you continue trading activating two figures until you are out of figures to move that round.

Discussing number of activations in games is a reference to how many figures you have to move each round and is important out of a strategic desire to be able to move more figures at the end of the round than your opponent. This is a big advantage because it allows you the options of concentrating more damage, have a greater response in positioning to your opponent positioning (which they can now not change), and allows you to potentially also add moving a piece at the beginning of the next round. These advantages, when utilized to their fullest, can result in more victories.

Damage concentration

You win games by defeating enemy figures. Winning games can often be boiled down to you eliminating enemy figures quicker than they can eliminate yours, so that the partial squad that you are fighting with is more powerful and more capable than the partial squad your opponent has left.

One of the techniques that players use to gain an advantage in the game is to try to spread the damage out across their characters so that it takes the opponent longer to eliminate their figures. The idea is that, in Star Wars Miniatures, figures do not suffer in effectiveness when they have been damaged. A figure with 100 hit points remaining has the same capabilities as when it only has ten hit points remaining. In other words, it is better to have a figure that can potentially do 40 damage alive than eliminated.

How do players spread damage out? They take advantage of the legal target rules and position their figures so that damage that

was being done to one of their figures must now be done to a different one. They "leap frog" figures in front of each other so that each character takes partial damage instead of all of the damage. Special abilities like Accurate Shot help to get around this technique, but not all figures have it.

What does this have to do activations? In each round of play, with very few exceptions, each figure can only move once. Having more activations than your opponent means that your figures are moving at a time (the end of the round) in which your opponent doesn't have the option to "leap frog" and spread damage across multiple different figures. Once their figures have gone, they are effectively "stuck" in the squares that they placed them in until the beginning of their first activation of the next round. If you have four figures to move and all of their figures are "stuck", they can't move them around to spread out the damage. If you can concentrate your damage on one or two figures that are stuck, to eliminate them, they won't be able to do anything about it.

Being able to move figures at the end of a round so that your opponent cannot respond will henceforth be referred to by its common term of "out-activating" your opponent.

Positioning

Once your opponent has activated all of their figures, they are effectively "stuck" in place. This could give you the advantage of being able to concentrate damage, but early on the game you often don't have that option. That doesn't mean that out-activating your opponent doesn't have an advantage.

Even if you can't use out-activating your opponent to concentrate damage, you can still use it to position your own figures for the future. Thinking ahead is an invaluable skill in the game, because even if you can't get the drop on your opponent immediately, that doesn't mean that that situation couldn't present it yourself in the future. It is the same idea as thinking moves ahead in chess. If you out-activate your opponent, you can position your figures more optimally in response to your opponent's position. You can set up the line's of sight, or protection in cover, or use of order of your own abilities better than your opponent because you have the gift of knowing that your opponent's figures are exactly where they will be at the beginning of the next round.

The next round

The advantages of out-activating your opponent do not end with the end of the current round. The next round will start when the current one is over. If you out-activate your opponent, you have the added possibility of continuing with moving a figure if you win initiative. Winning initiative could mean that the string of figures that you moved at the end of the round could continue, further crippling your opponent's chances of responding effectively.

These reasons are why activations are so important for squads.

Squad building techniques for out-activating your opponent

How do you build to out-activate your opponent and what special abilities help you when you do?

Extending activations

Building squads with the specific purpose of out-activating your opponent is called "using tempo control" because you are building to control the pace of a how a round goes.

The most obvious way to out-activate your opponent is to simply build squads with more lower cost figures in them. There is a danger here. If it were so simple as to achieve victory by always having more pieces than your opponent then everyone would build 150 point squads with 50 Ewoks. This doesn't work because every higher cost figure you replace with several lower cost ones exchanges activations for power and a lower ability to hit and damage figures. Higher cost figures generally have increased odds of hitting and damage enemy figures. If you have all activations and no power, then you can't damage your opponent.

So how many activations should I have? The best advice here is for you to practice and find out. You need to figure out what ratio of activations to power increases your chances for victory. A balance is needed. Too many activations means that you don't have the power to do the job of eliminating enemy figures. Too few means that your opponent does all of the things discussed above.

Commander effects

Certain figures can increase your chances of out-activating figures without compromising power. Specifically, there is a suite of highly coveted figures in the game that have commander effects that either force you or allow you to choose to activate one figure per phase instead of the normal two. These commander effects are unique in that they extend to Droid and Savage figures, which are immune to most commander effects.

The figures that force you to activate only one per phase are San Hill and Admiral Ozzel. These figures may seem counter-intuitive because it would seem that it would be a disadvantage to only be able to activate one figure at a time. This is partially true. Only being able to respond with one figure to an opponent's actions really limits a player's options in that moment. Remember that the goal is to trade being able to respond in force during the beginning and middle of the round, in exchange for being able to respond with great force at the end of the round.

Some figures allow you the choice of how many figures you can activate in a phase, including just one. These figures are General Dodonna and Grand Moff Tarkin. General Dodonna allows you to choose to activate one or two characters per phase and has the advantage of activating one figure when necessary to out-activate your opponent. Unlike San Hill or Admiral Ozzel he has the added advantage of being able to activate two figures in a phase when you need it. Grand Moff Tarkin allows you to choose to activate one, two or three figures in a phase, with the limitation of needing to have line of sight to an enemy character at the beginning of a phase.

The goal of all of these figure's commander effects is to activate half of the number of figures as your opponent must activate during the beginning and middle of the round so that you can get that big advantage at the end of the round. This is easier said than done and requires practice to do effectively. A common pitfall of this method of gaining an activation advantage over an opponent is that the limitation of one activation per phase frequently causes players to be unable to effectively respond to opponent moves during the middle of a round. When figures get engaged in the later rounds of the game, the need to respond more quickly increases. Timing is everything, and not understanding the timing can result in the method back-firing.

Special abilities and other boosts

Once you have a solid concept and method for out-activating your opponent, there are specific special abilities and commander effect boosts that you can build into your squad to take advantage of your end-of-round response, or to help mitigate the effects of only activating one figure per phase.

Two special abilities are the kings of activation control. They are Opportunist and Deceptive. Opportunist make your figures more effective at the end of the round because it grants a +4 bonus to attack and a +10 or +20 bonus to damage against figures that

have already activated. Deceptive gives a +10 bonus to damage only. These special abilities are the bread and butter of out-activating your opponent because they increase your damage chances against figures that have already gone. Making your opponents activate is what out-activating them does. When you build with Opportunist or Deceptive, you build with the idea that figures with these special abilities will activate only after opponent figures have moved in the round.

Several commander effects either grant Opportunist or Deceptive, or grant direct bonuses to figures that attack enemy figures that have already activated in the round. The combination of Thrawn (Mitth'raw'nuruodo) and Admiral Ozzel is a natural combination. Admiral Ozzel extends your activations so that you have more figures to activate after your opponent's figures have activated. Thrawn gives allies Opportunist, increasing their effectiveness against figures that have already activated.

Not all special abilities or commander effects help to boost the attack effectiveness of figures when you out-activate your opponent. Remember when I mentioned that a problem with only activating one figure per phase makes you less likely to respond during the middle of a round? Special abilities and commander effects that grant added defenses to figures are often utilized in squads that are designed to out-activate opponents to help deal with reduced ability to handle your opponent activating two for every one of yours at the beginning and middle of rounds before your opponent is finished activating pieces.

Additional techniques for gaining tactical advantages

Activation control is one of many choices you can make when building squads to increase your chances of games going well. The following techniques can all be used in different ways to give you an advantage over your opponent.

Building to concentrate damage and understanding the odds

We've already discussed the importance of concentrating damage in eliminating more enemy figures than they have eliminated in your squad. One thing that you can do in building your squads is to build to increase your chances of doing damage to your opponent. The more attacks you can land on your opponent, the more damage you can do and the better your chances of victory. Twelve chances to damage your opponent are better than six. If you can build twelve chances in without hurting your activations or odds very much, you'll have more chances to do damage. It is always important to understand and play to your odds. Take Grenades for example. Under normal circumstances, Grenades is a 50/50 chance of success. For every two uses of Grenades on the enemy, you would expect one failed save, on average, from your opponent. The more Grenades you lob, the more chances you have to do damage. Each use is an independent event and the individual chance of success doesn't change. But if half will hit on average, you need to build to play the odds and respond accordingly. The execution of your squad depends upon how close to the odds the actual odds go. So, for example, if I have twelve figures in my squad with Grenades 20, I expect that it is possible for me to do 240 damage, but that that is a very unlikely for my opponent to fail every save. In reality, about six of those twelve will hit, on average, and so I would plan to be able to do about 120 damage to my opponent with twelve uses of Grenades 20. It could easily be 140 or 100, but it is unlikely that I will do 240 or zero damage. Part of building squads is about planning for damage concentration, but also understanding the odds and what your squad is likely to do.

Understanding your squad build can help you to be a good sport when playing your opponents, in addition to becoming a better player. Understanding the odds means that you should know what to expect out of your squad build and not get upset when odds go in places where they aren't likely to go. In the example above, there is no reason to be upset if your opponent makes all of their Grenade saves, because the odds are against that anyway. Remaining cool and calm in the face of difficulties is part of winning or losing games graciously. Don't expect all of your Grenades to hit, because that will happen in only the most unlikely circumstances.

Damage overage

When designing squads, you may think that building with figures with the highest damage statistic is the best plan. This isn't always

the case. The concept of damage "overage" is one thing to consider when building your squad. Damage overage is the idea that if you eliminate an enemy figure with 20 hit points with an attack that did 40 damage, that extra 20 damage effectively didn't matter. You paid the cost of a figure that could do 40 damage but you could have done the job with a cheaper 20 damage figure. In short, the points you spent in building in a figure with extra damage were wasted when you could have done the same thing with a cheaper figure and perhaps increased activations. That is an over-simplification of course. It isn't always wrong to do extra damage if it means eliminating a key enemy figure. The basic idea of overage is an issue of efficiency of using build points and using your figures in the correct order for optimal damage.

Many players scoff at the idea of having lower cost figures that only do 10 damage in their squads because they immediately dismiss the low damage as ineffective. This is not always the case. For example, consider the special ability Twin Attack. Twin Attack allows you to make an extra attack against the same target. This can result in more damage to your opponent, but your opponent can also use it to their advantage if you have not built your squad effectively. If your entire squad is built of higher cost Twin Attack figures, your opponent can force you to attack figures (through legal target rules) that only require one attack to eliminate. If you eliminate an enemy figure on the first attack, the Twin Attack is lost and the build points that you spent to get Twin Attack are wasted.

How do you build to take the most advantage of Twin Attack, avoid damage overage, and spend your build points most efficiently? This is where cheaper yet effective figures can be a more efficient use of build points. You can use that cheaper figure to eliminate low cost "fodder shields" to make sure that your Twin Attacks are concentrated on doing maximum damage. The key thing to remember is that you generally want to use lower cost figures to eliminate lower cost figures and high cost figures to do the main damage of your squad. Commander effect heavy squads can change this dynamic, but the general principle can help you build more balanced squads.

Choosing where to put your damage

Sometimes choosing to put your damage where you want it to go can be just as valuable as concentrating it on one figure. One key enemy tech piece that is not a legal target could be the key to gaining advantage. All the damage in the world doesn't matter if you can't target it. Special abilities like Accurate Shot, Sniper, It's A Trap, and Disruptive can allow you the choice of being able to target a figure that you normally could not. These abilities, especially Accurate Shot, are coveted for squad building because they allow you to choose to eliminate those key enemy tech pieces that would normally be protected by legal target rules.

Melee, ranged, or mixed?

Following the suggestions above can open up a whole new way to look at squad building. You can go as deep as you like in terms of nit-picking what combination of figures will give you the best chance of victory. What about more general ways to look at squads? One question that comes up frequently is: What proportion of my squad should be melee and what proportion ranged? Let's look at three ways you could go and some of the advantages and disadvantages of each.

All melee

On first inspection an all melee squad looks to be a bad idea. You can't damage your figures until you get close and in the meantime any ranged pieces that your opponent has can potentially get LOS and therefore attacks on you. They also have the big disadvantage of only being able to influence the part of the field that they are located in.

There are advantages to all melee squads. Melee figures generally have more hit points and higher defenses than ranged figures. They don't need to worry about cover since they always attack when adjacent. Sometimes they can be more cost effective than

ranged pieces. Melee figures can sometimes get access to Super Stealth or Cloaked to avoid attack-backs from enemy ranged pieces. Big beefy melee figures can also be effective point sinks, allowing you to preserve your points for longer in a timed match. If you can get them in the center, melee figures are good at securing Gambit victory points without as much worry of being eliminated as ranged figures.

All ranged

Ranged pieces have the advantage of being able to attack from far away. This is a huge advantage. Super Stealth and Cloaked ranged pieces have the added advantage of not being able to be targeted by enemy ranged pieces if they have cover.

Of course, ranged pieces also have disadvantages. They tend to be very fragile close up. The key to defeating ranged squads is often just getting close to them when you attack.

Mixed

Many of the solid squads that people see posted on the message boards are a mix of the two and they are a mix for a good reason. Having both melee and ranged figures increases your options of what you can do and who you can damage at any given time. While your melee figures are going to engage the enemy (or sitting back to protect your shooters), the ranged pieces can be doing damage to enemy figures. The melee figures can be effective gambit getters that have a gun behind them that is shooting any would be attackers away.

I usually advocate a mix of ranged and melee for the best squads because it gives you options. The more choices you have to influence the field, the better of a response to the enemy you'll be able to bring.

There are, of course, exceptions to this. Certain commander effects and character synergies can make all melee or all ranged squads good. If the synergies are not there for what you are interested in playing, keeping your options open is always good.

Summary

This second part of a three-part series focused on some specific more advanced squad building issues. The main points included:

1. Out activating your opponent can give you a big advantage.
2. Specific commander effects and special abilities can help you get the most out of out-activating your opponent.
3. Spending points to concentrate damage is an important goal of squad building. In doing so you should understand the odds of doing damage.
4. Spending build points on a mix of low cost, low damage figures and higher cost high damage figures is often preferential to either extreme.
5. Avoiding damage overage, or putting heavy damage where it can be most useful, helps you to get the most out of the points that you spend on a figure.
6. A mix of ranged and melee figures in a squad can help you to respond to a bigger variety of situations that you may face.

The final part in this series will focus on the big picture, or meta-analysis of squad building. The article will explore using fore-sight to build more effective squads, building to beat a wider variety of squads, local meta analysis, squad research and how to practice effectively.

Part III

Introduction

This three-article series focuses on squad building concepts for Star Wars Miniatures. The first article focused on beginning squad building tips. I used the construction of a squad as an example to illustrate eight key points for starting to build squads. A summary of those points follows.

1. Build to score points.
2. Build to maximize and concentrate damage dealt and minimize damage taken.
3. Select a compromise of some heavy hitters and some support. More damage output than support.
4. Build with characters that have synergy so your whole squad is better than the sum of its parts.
5. Play to your squad's strengths.
6. Have a plan for addressing weaknesses.
7. The more options you have, the more ways you can achieve victory.
8. Don't waste points, but be ok with going under the limit if that choice gives you better options.

The second article discussed more specific squad building issues to consider such as activation control, damage concentration, and choices between building ranged, melee, or a combination. A summary of the second article:

1. Outactivating your opponent can give you a big advantage.
2. Specific commander effects and special abilities can help you get the most out of out-activating your opponent.
3. Spending points to concentrate damage is an important goal of squad building. In doing so you should understand the odds of doing damage.
4. Spending build points on a mix of low cost, low damage figures and higher cost high damage figures is often preferential to either extreme.
5. Avoiding damage overage, or putting heavy damage where it can be most useful, helps you to get the most out of the points that you spend on a figure.
6. A mix of ranged and melee figures in a squad can help you to respond to a bigger variety of situations that you may face.

Where do we go from here? The choices you make when you build squads are always focused on getting the best combinations of figures to increase your chances victory. The specific abilities of characters and how they interact with each other is an important part of building a squad. Setting yourself up for winning games goes beyond the printed stats. Consider a military analogy. Strategy in war goes well beyond what you know about your own capabilities as an army. Your strategy is also molded based upon what you know the enemy army is capable of doing through intelligence gathering. The more you know about the enemy resources and who is commanding them influences the decisions that you make. The more you know, the more likely you are to anticipate the enemy and out-maneuver them. The same basic idea can be applied to planning in Star Wars Miniatures. What you know about what your opponent is likely to play is important information for building a squad that can win.

Metagaming

A player of any game that spends any amount of time participating in or observing discussions about a game will frequently hear the term "metagaming" used to refer to aspects of that game. "Meta" means "outside" and the term "metagaming" was first coined to describe events that usually aren't initially considered to be important for a situation, but that are later argued to be influential. The terminology has been used extensively in mathematics, politics, the sciences and warfare. "Metagaming" in the context of games means a discussion of parts of gameplay that are outside the scope of the base rule set and how the game is played but that players know to be important for succeeding at the game. Examples include "the psychological game" of how your opponent feels and reacts socially to the game itself, the attitude of players at a venue toward competition, the choices they make

in squad construction based upon personal skill and preference, and what your own personal strengths are in game play. I will focus on the last two examples for the rest of the article.

Playing to Your Strengths and Play Style

"Know thyself," the ancient Greek phrase inscribed at the Temple of Delphi is one of the most important considerations for players trying to win games. One of the most common mistakes players make in preparing for winning games in tournament or casual play is ignoring their own personal strengths when building and selecting squads. Each individual that plays Star Wars Miniatures is learning the more they practice the game. Different people have different types of strengths at different degrees as they improve. Players that consistently win games, irrespective of their actual skill at the game, win more games when they play squads that match their skills and play styles.

A good example would be the difference between aggressive and conservative players. Aggressive players tend to favor direct engagement of their opponent and do not shy from taking risks in games to achieve victory. They are usually prepared to get to the deciding move of a game as soon as opportunity arises. They are offensively oriented, but not necessarily so much that they make bad choices. Conservative players are more risk averse. They generally prefer to play towards the very endgame and take the minimal amount of risk necessary to "pull out" a victory at the end. Neither play style is necessarily better than the other. They both have their advantages and disadvantages and both can lead to victory. However, certain squads lend themselves much better to one style of play over the other. When an aggressive player plays an aggressive squad, surprise situations do not affect them as much because the execution of their squad naturally flows with their personal style towards engagement. A squad that is designed to force a major confrontation meshes well with an aggressive play style, allowing the player the opportunity to take advantage of what they know about proper timing of engagement. On the contrary, conservative players tend to do well with more conservative and defensive styles of squads that match their desire to "hold out until the end". A squad that creates a defensive net that can also strike back at the right moment to score points will fit a patient player who prefers to set up the best positioning for victory over time. Neither style is better than the other in principle, but how they are executed matters very much. A defensive squad played aggressively often results in over-extension and defeat. An offensive squad that waits too long to engage can find itself in a "too little too late" situation.

Research on the internet and discussions among other players can often result in mismatches between style and execution. Players frequently will come across a "new hot squad" and play it without any considerations of whether the squad matches their play style. The squad may be very strong, in the right hands, but a player that is inexperienced and selects a squad that doesn't match their strengths quickly finds themselves overextended, or acting too late.

Self reflection is an important part of meta analysis for experienced players. They know what they do well and what they don't do well. They know how they prefer to engage and what they like to avoid. Being aware of your own strengths and weaknesses is important to turn a squad that makes sense on paper into one that plays well for you in actual game situations.

The Other Player

The next step to increase your chances of victory is to be aware of the play styles and squad choices that your opponent prefers and is likely to play. You need to know your opponent in order to increase your chances of victory.

What do other players at your venue like? What factions do they like to play? What combinations of commander effects and special abilities do they like to rely on? Are they aggressive or conservative players? If you can answer these questions, you can increase your chances of winning by building squads that not only match your strengths, but also directly confront your opponents strength's and expose their weaknesses. Do your opponent's prefer force users? Play a Vong squad. Do they always bring initiative control? Bring a squad in which winning initiative won't benefit them much. Do they play droids? Start packing the Ion Gun special

ability. Do players at your venue prefer tempo control? Play tempo control so that you can keep pace with the end of the round action. There are thousands of choices to seek victory in Star Wars Miniatures and there are counters for nearly each one. Since you can't prepare for every eventuality, metagaming your opponent's personal likes can help you to build squads that are more likely to deal with the specific strategies they bring.

Where Is The Honor In This?

A common player "objection" to metagaming is that playing squads that are more likely to specifically address another player's style is somehow "unfair" to that player. Squads are built in secret, so using information about what your opponent is likely to do is outside of the spirit of the game. I'll address this with two points. People "metagame" constantly in their own lives, every day. They use cost/benefit analysis to try to get the best possible outcome of a situation. Sports teams do it when they scout and watch film of other teams. Politicians use it when they consider the needs of the opposing party and other nations to get the best negotiated deal possible. Texas Hold-Em Poker players do it whenever they learn people's "tells." People do it whenever they buy gifts for their family members. It is not an uncommon tactic. Secondly, any game is built with metagaming in mind. This is why certain special abilities that are released are really only effective in certain situations. They are good against certain opposing combinations with the goal being to allow a player the chance to compete against the choices of their opponents. It is what we call "game balance" and without it one combo would always win over others. Metagaming allows a player the opportunity to face their enemy on the best possible footing they can.

"But, I like to play droids and I was winning with them, and now all of sudden my opponents are all bringing super stealth and I can't win. That isn't fair!"

Is it unfair? Why should you be allowed to bring an effective combo but your opponents shouldn't be allowed to play something that can beat it? Metagaming allows your opponent to flex their brain to defeat a challenging situation. They want to win too. Both players have the opportunity to metagame each other, so there is a level playing field in doing so.

Even if you don't buy into metagaming as a legitimate tool to help you engage your opponent, I am prepared to argue that metagaming helps people build better squads and improve at the game. The reason is that metagaming provides pressure for people to improve. It prevents players from keeping a monopoly on the chance for victory. When you metagame, you increase your chances of victory, but also must more deeply consider what your opponent could bring to face you.

How Do I Do This?

You observe. You start to keep track of what your opponents like to play and start to change your squad choices to increase your chances of victory. You also need to learn "common" combos of figures that work well together and common squads. The more research you do, either at your local store, or online, or both, will increase your understanding of what your opponent will try to do to beat you. If your opponent is interested in winning as well, metagaming can be a very interesting game of "cat and mouse" that you can play with your opponents.

It's Too Much To Think About!

It is important to keep some perspective of what I have intended with these articles. The title includes "Beginning to Advanced" and the more advanced ways of approaching winning strategies for the game appeal to some players but not others. I'm not trying to tell you how to think or what to think about. The goal here was to show how experienced players use information to increase chances of victory. If winning is one of your goals, metagaming is an important critical thinking skill that you can practice and develop to improve. The goal here is have fun, and for many intense thought is very fun. It isn't the "right way" to play or think about the game, but it is necessary to be able to do to anticipate opponent's squads.

Thinking Bigger: From Opponents to Tournaments

One of the challenges of metagaming is that you can frequently think so deeply into the situation that you end up over-thinking your local situation and end up decreasing your chances of victory in a multiple-game tournament. What I mean is that you can think so intensely about combos and counters that you end up just building a "hate" squad. "Hate" squads are squads that are specifically designed to eliminate a specific squad type that an opponent or opponents are fond of playing. You are building a squad that will completely stop a specific combo! The problem is that in doing so, you have greatly decreased your chances of victory against other squads. Your hate squad doesn't have the tools necessary to deal with the wide variety of abilities that others will be bringing.

Why does this matter? In tournaments with multiple games, you place higher when you win more games. Experienced players know that: 1) building the strongest squad you can that 2) fits your play style and skills, and 3) can deal with a wide variety of different abilities is the best chance for winning the most games. They know what their opponents are good at and prefer. They prepare to deal with those strengths and preferences, but they keep their options open for surprises.

Conclusion



I hope you enjoyed this three article series on squad building in Star Wars Miniatures! Squad building is a fun mental challenge for many players and can be just as rewarding as playing the actual game! I hope that the ideas presented will help you to become more skilled and have more fun in confronting the challenges of the game. I'd like to thank Chuck Chauvin for hosting these articles on Atlanta Star Wars Gamers. If you have questions, come join us on the official Star Wars Miniatures message boards at <http://community.wizards.com/starwars> to discuss rules, strategy, squad construction, and upcoming sets!