

That Freedom in the Galaxy session was a hoot.

My partner (fun English guy; his name escapes me) had snatched a mint, unpunched copy of the AH edition of FitG for \$10 at the WBC auction, and when I casually let it slip that I had actually been a playtester for the SPI edition and knew the rules well, he asked me to teach him.

Since this was WBC and we only had a solid week to play games, I decided to settle for one of the "System Scenarios" instead of the larger (more detailed but more bloated) Province or Galactic scenarios. Ironically, even though all science fiction films inform us quite clearly that the evil galactic empire of the future will be ruled by Englishmen (and fought against by Yanks and Ozzies and other lowly commonwealth types), he wanted to play the Rebels.

This first scenario ("Flight to Egrix"), features just a single solar system with three planets in differing states of unrest. I chose to defend the most volatile system (the one with a Coup rating) most heavily, garrisoning it with my best units and characters. The arrogant Rebels landed on that planet anyway, but were detected by the Planetary Defense Base on the way in, which hampered their subsequent operations.

The first couple of turns saw both sides scrambling to track down some new friends. Both sides failed in this Gain Characters mission a couple times. By the third turn, the Rebels managed to convince a scientist egg-head to join their faction (smart characters are very important for both hiding and diplomacy missions), while the Imperials were graced by an appearance of none other than the useless, drug-addled galactic Emperor himself... which made things pretty funny.

The next turn saw the Rebels gleefully digging for more characters to help their cause, while simultaneously searching for special high-tech Possessions. In the long run, this ended up wasting more Rebel time than it was worth... since the scenario is only 6 turns long.

With four characters, the Rebels could safely attempt two missions on the planet while the Imperials had to stick to only one. Their superior intelligence and numbers helped, and the Rebels soon had the planet in a state of full Unrest -- the final stage before the Rebellion could be touched off.

Desperate to avoid a massive armed uprising, Emperor Coreguya himself bravely lead a mission team on the highly dangerous and unpredictable Coup mission... which had the potential to dramatically shift the loyalty marker from Unrest, through Dissent all the way to Loyal. Unfortunately, an unlucky random draw exposed the Coup team and resulted in their capture by the Rebels! With the hapless Emperor now in the grubby clutches of the Rebels, the Empire braced itself for disaster... but unfortunately for the cause of intergalactic brotherhood and freedom, the unlucky Rebels ran out of time before they could dig up a rare "R" result in the mission deck, and the Rebellion never quite got off the ground before the game ended. While the captured Emperor gave them some VPs, it wasn't enough to compensate for all 3 planets still being loyal to the empire.

A great way to spend a couple hours. My only regret is that we didn't still have the game set up when John Butterfield himself strolled through the room... that would have been pretty amazing.