

• **FAST PLAY NAVAL RULES FOR THE  
BATTLE OF SOLE BAY 28 MAY 1672 / 28 MAY 2017**

These rules are based on a version of Fast Play Napoleonic Naval Rules that appeared in the first printed edition of the 'Wargames Journal' magazine several years ago. They have been adapted and amended since then to reflect new interpretations of combat in 'the Age of Sail' and to learn from other rule systems. These rules do not claim to be an original piece of work but have been created to fine-tune an already workable and enjoyable set of rules to ensure better game flow and address some period-specific issues not covered in the original set.

The original rules and almost all the adaptations were authored by Neil Fox, to whom we are very grateful. Neil is happy to address questions regarding the rules at [hardrada@supanet.com](mailto:hardrada@supanet.com)



*De Ruyter against the Duke of York* by Willem van de Velde II, 1691

## FAST PLAY NAVAL RULES FOR BATTLE OF SOLE BAY 1672

**Definitions:** Ships are classed for Movement (speed), Hull (damage) and Crew (quality), all of which are noted on the Ship Rosters.

**Movement:** Medium or Slow

**Hull:** Stout, Average or Weak

**Crew:** Elite (+1), Regular (+/-0) or Poor (-1)

**Turn Sequence:** Initiative – Movement / Collisions – BroadSides / Boarding

**Initiative:** Each side rolls 1d6; highest roll has initiative and may choose a ship or squadron to activate, after which the other player may do the same; alternate until all vessels are moved. Re-roll any draws.

**Movement:** Movement is divided into 'Strategic' (beyond 12”) and 'Tactical' (within 12”). Movement rates are in inches and all movement distances are doubled for Strategic moves. Ships will move their full distance except when following a slower ship within the same squadron/division, when it can move at the speed of the ship it is following. All ships must move at least 2” Tactical, or 4” Strategic, unless Backing Sail, at anchor or aground. After its minimum movement, a ship can make an optional turn to port or starboard.

Speed	Fresh	Worn	Damaged	Heavily Damaged
Medium	6	6	4	2
Slow	4	4	2	2

**Speed** may be varied as follows:

By declaring it is moving at FULL SAIL, a FRESH ship may double its basic move but may not do so if within gunnery range (12”) of an enemy vessel at the start of its move.

If a line drawn from the stern of the ship crosses the windward table edge Roll 1D3 and add crew quality modifier to the Result; add the total in half inches to the ship’s move (whole inches if Strategic).

If a line drawn from the bow of the ship crosses the windward table edge, reduce speed by half.

**Turning** is in 45 degree increments using the template. All ships must move 2” (or 4” Strategic) between turns. Turns are made from the stern corner.

- **Slow** ships may only make 1 turn a move.
- **Medium** ships may make up to 2 turns a move.

**Backing Sail** allows a ship to halt or hold position at a given point in its move. To achieve this, roll 1D6, being successful on a roll of 4+ modified by crew quality (+ or -1). Failure requires the ship to continue at its current speed for the rest of its move. Turns may be made as above.

**Tacking** into the wind is handled in the same way, with a failure leaving the ship stationary facing into the wind ‘in irons’ for the rest of the move.

**Collisions:** Collisions occur when movement brings two ships into contact without a boarding action being initiated. Moving player rolls 1D6 modified by Crew quality and applies result:

0-1	Disastrous impact	Both ships take FULL Collision Damage.
2-4	Impact	Both ships take HALF Collision Damage
5-7	Come about!	Collision is Averted – No damage.

**Collision Damage** is inflicted according to Hull class of moving ship:

- **Stout** inflict 2D6 damage
- **Average** inflict 1D6 damage
- **Weak** inflict 1D3 damage

Once resolved, place the colliding ship alongside the other ship until it is next activated.

**Collision Averted.** Using movement template, make minimum move necessary in order to avoid the collision and continue along the new course if any movement allowance remains. If there is no room to avoid the collision, then inflict damage as 'Impact' result.

**Broadside:** Firing Broadside occurs either before or after movement. The firing line is measured at 90° to port or starboard. If the line crosses an enemy ship model's base, then firing may take place. A ship may use both broadsides in same turn. Ranges are measured from base of firer to base of target. The score required to hit on a D6 is based on Range:

- **Close Range (4''): 4+**
- **Medium Range (8''): 5+**
- **Long Range (12''): 6+**

Check combat table and match ship's rating to its current condition, apply modifiers below and roll appropriate number of dice. Each hit will mark off one box of damage on target ship.

Rating	Fresh	Worn	Damaged	Hvy Damaged
<i>1st</i>	9	8	5	3
<i>2nd</i>	8	6	4	2
<i>3rd</i>	7	6	4	2
<i>4th</i>	6	4	3	2

**Modifiers:**

Raking bow/stern: +3D6 (If line of fire passes through bow & stern edges of target's base)

First broadside: +1D6 once per ship per game

Target at Full Sail: +1D6

Crew quality: (Poor -1D6; Regular even; Elite +1D6)

A '6' is always a hit.

**Boarding:** Boarding may occur when a ship ends movement within half an inch of the side edge of an enemy ship's base, even after firing. Roll 1D6 and add crew quality modifier:

**0-2 Failed Boarding** – grappling attempt failed.

**3-7 Grappled** – grappling successful; place both ships alongside each other.

**Fighting the Boarding Action.** One round of combat will be fought per player Initiative including the initial grappling and boarding action. Both ships inflict Damage on the other using the following modified die rolls:

- **Stout** ships: 2D6
- **Average** ships and **Fireships**: 1D6

**Modifiers:**

Crew quality: Poor -1; Regular +/-0; Elite +1

Relative Damage: +1 per level of Damage less than opponent

Flagship: +1 if Division Flagship and Flag Officer present

Crew causing most damage may choose to immediately break-off by moving ½" away from other ship or remain grappled and continue the action in the next initiative phase.

**Fireships.** During the movement phase, the player commanding the Fireship should announce the ship has been 'fired' and the crew removed. The ship will then sail in a straight line, rolling for a possible explosion each move until it collides with another vessel. Roll on the Boarding table to see if the target vessel is ensnared (grappled); the target vessel fighting off the Fireship as if it was a Boarding Action. If the target ship loses a round of Boarding Action, the fire spreads from the Fireship. The fire will inflict 1D3 of Damage on the target vessel per move until a successful Fire Fighting roll puts it out or the ship is destroyed.

**Fire Fighting:** 4+ on 1D6, modified by crew quality; -1 per each turn of Fire.

Fireships are subject to standard sailing rules; however, they can apply 'Full Sail' within gunnery range (they do not have the crew onboard to change sail) even if 'Worn' (but not Damaged or Heavily Damaged).

**Hull Strength.** The number of hull boxes in each section of a Ship's entry in the Squadron Roster varies depending on the hull strength of the ship. Stout ships have 5 boxes, Average ships have 4 boxes, and Weak ships have 3 boxes. The current damage level will affect both movement and firing.

**Ship Destruction.** When all boxes have been deleted, ships are considered destroyed. If destroyed by Broadships or Fire, Roll 2D6 and on a roll of 11 or 12 (10, 11 or 12 if Fire) the ship explodes. All ships within 1D6 inches take 1D6 hits and there is a Risk to Flag Officer - see below. The destroyed ship is then removed from play. If the ship does not explode then it remains on table to be taken as a prize at the end of the battle.

**Squadron Breakpoint.** Once a Squadron/Division has lost 33% of its ships, and each time it loses a ship thereafter, it will break off and retire on a modified 1D6 roll of 1 or 2. (Fireships are always ignored for Squadron Breakpoint.)

-1 Flag Officer lost

+1 most remaining ships are Fresh

+1/-1 most remaining crews are Elite/Poor

**Flagships.** Each Squadron/Division has a Flagship, which is the first ship listed on its roster. Whenever the Flagship's Damage rating is reduced (eg. Fresh to Worn; Worn to Damaged etc), there is a Risk the Flag Officer is killed.

**Risk to Flag Officer:** Roll 2d6: Flag Officer killed or mortally wounded on '2' (Or Double Skull if using a pair of 'Death Dice'.)

If a Flagship is boarded, the Flag Officer can choose to retire to any another ship of his Division within 6" *before* the action is fought. He will automatically retire if he survives his flagship being destroyed but will be captured if it is destroyed by boarding action.

**Turning Template.** The diagram below is taken from the original article and shows the the template in use for a turn to starboard.

