SKATING PENGUINS, MkII

This game is a playful spoof of all those aerial / space combat games that minimize or ignore the third dimension. Here --in a no-pretence world of 2D maneuver-- flightless birds battle each other on an Antarctic ice sheet. A token nod to Newtonian physics guides the action as foes slide and pivot (and slip and fall...) while trying to line each other up for a killing shot. The combatants --which can come from the history as well as future of 3D combat-- are, of course, imaginary: which means they can be anything the players decide. The examples provided in the appendix (and their respective statistics) are included as guidelines only. The only concern regarding descriptions and statistics should be whether all players involved agree to the ratings/abilities given to any particular penguin: There should be no worries about a raid from the enforcement division of Jane's All the World's Penguins publishers to complain about the top speed assigned to a Sopwith Penguin...

As with all other Brawl Factory games, this guiding principle of personal preference applies to the rules themselves: If some part ruins the fun had while playing --or if a different method / game-mechanic can produce more fun-- then players should discard or change or substitute the offending rule to better suit local tastes. All I ask, as the designer, is that you take the time to send me complaints so that I could possibly repair the game or --better yet-- let me know of your new, better idea so that it can be shared with others: I'm in this for the fun, so the more the merrier!

CONTENTS

PIECES-PARTS

PLAYING SURFACE:
Movement and firing-range are hex-based, therefore the playing surface needs to be laid out with a hex grid. The size of the hex needs to accomodate one figure per hex. The overall size of the playing area is open to personal preference, though much less than a 20 x 20 -hex field will prove to be crowded for a game with more than a half-dozen figures. While an "open seas" playing convention can be used to allow for an infinite amount of area, I prefer to establish a border to keep the action centered --having an edge that figures can fall off of adds a nice twist to the play (as well as keeps the speed-demon players in check...zooming around is tough when you have to keep turning to stay on the table!).

Terrain features that can be built/marked on the surface can include rough spots, holes, and various obstacles (which can be soft --like snowdrifts, or hard --like rocks). As with the penguins themselves, the GM's imagination is the only restriction on what sort of features can be included (ramps?...snowmen?...frozen explorers?...). A sample of terrain features and rules suggestions for handling them is provided in appendix C.

FIGURES:
There are, to my knowledge, no manufacturers of penguin figures with airplane (or spaceship) wings such as I originaly made for the game. Since, however, the look of the figures is --like the penguins themselves-- completely imaginary, there's nothing other than a player's own desires to dictate what the figures used should look like. In other words: you can use whatever you want to represent each particular penguin-warrior. It would be helpful to gameplay if --at the least-- some sort of feature / marking / whatever be included with the figure so that other players around the table can recognize / identify what kind of penguin it is (eg: Sopwith penguin? F-86 Sabre penguin? X-wing penguin?) and be able to play accordingly with knowledge of the figure's characteristics and abilities.

Aesthetics aside, each figure should be based in such a way that allows the display / representation of both the figure's facing and direction. Since the two qualities are independent of each other in the game (ie: a figure can be facing one way and moving in a completely different direction) there needs to be an indicator for both. It is also a good idea to have a speedometer on the base / figure, as speed changes regularly during play. Some sort of numbered marker / die can also serve the purpose. Having players keep track of their speeds in a written log --while possible-- is discouraged and, IMO, a last-ditch solution because of the drag on speedy play its use creates. An example of basing is shown in appendix A.

Each figure will have ratings / abilities that govern their performance in the game. These can be written on cards for reference during play. The qualities are:

Thrust, Brake, Top Speed, Maneuverability, Target size, Damage Points, Weapon Power, Weapon Accuracy, and Weapon Arc-of-Fire.

Sample values for four general types of penguin (WW1, WW2, Jet, and Spacecraft) are given in appendix B. As mentioned in the introduction they are provided as guidlelines only.

OTHER STUFF:
Six-sided dice (two colors: text uses B&W), and figure Stat Cards (or other record to track damage).

TURN SEQUENCE

Players take turns moving their figures one at a time in random order. The order can be determined by die roll or by dealing out numbered chits or...? All movement and combat (if any) by a figure and resolution of their effects should be completed before the next player takes his/her turn.

MOVEMENT

GENERAL
Only one figure may occupy a single hex at any time.

A figure must, at all times, have both its facing and direction indicated (separately and clearly for each) as being towards an adjacent hex. If/when a figure's speed is zero its direction --if different from the facing-- is automatically moved to match its facing.

A figure moves one hex in its current direction for each speed point it currently possesses. A figure's facing does not affect its movement speed or direction.

A figure must move its full indicated speed allowance each turn. Actions taken during the turn (braking, falling, colliding, etc...) may change the indicated speed in the course of a move.

A figure with a speed greater than zero must move one hex in the current direction before taking any other action. (This rule supercedes any other regarding action sequencing.)

MOVEMENT ACTIONS
During its turn a figure may take / attempt the following actions:
-- Change SPEED using thrust (increase) or brakes (decrease).
-- MANEUVER to change facing or direction.

SPEED
A figure may increase and/or decrease speed by adding or subtracting an amount less than or equal to its thrust or brake value (respectively). This can be done once per turn for each action (thrust and brake) at any point in a figure's move. The change is applied immediately, allowing additional movement (if an increase) or an end to movement (if reduction removes unused speed points).

Thrust can only be used if the figure's facing matches or is adjacent to its direction. Thrust applied when facing and direction are adjacent is halved (rounded down).

Brake can be applied in any facing, but is halved (rounded down) if facing and direction are not adjacent or matching.

> OPTIONAL SPEED CHANGE:
> Do not allow braking. Instead, a figure applying thrust while its facing is opposite its direction subtracts the full amount of thrust used from its current speed. If a figure's facing is adjacent to this opposite condition (ie: facing one of the two rear-quarter hexes) subtract half the amount of thrust used (rounded down) from its current speed. Thrust may only be used once per turn by each figure: either to increase or decrease the speed (but not both).

MANEUVER
Facing and direction are separate qualities, and must be changed individually*.

Changes in both facing and direction are in one-hex increments, ie: it takes one maneuver action to change either facing or direction (not both together*) by one hexside to an adjacent hexside.

A figure may attempt to change facing and/or direction any number of times during a turn --such changes do not use or require any speed points. Multiple changes (in either/both facing or direction) may be made in a single space.

Direction changes MUST be made either toward or to match the current facing --no direction changes away from the facing are allowed. Also: no direction changes are allowed if a figure's facing is opposite its direction.

* Exception: When a figure's speed is zero, direction freely (and automatically) moves to match facing --no maneuver test is required for the direction change.

MANEUVER ACTION TEST
Changes in facing or direction are not automatically successful. For each maneuver attempted a player must pass a test to succeed by rolling (on 1d6) greater than the sum of the cardinal values of the previous actions done so far in the current turn, ie: if one action has been done then the player must roll greater than one to succeed in a maneuver action, must roll greater than three (sum of first and second actions previously done: 1 + 2 = 3) to succeed in a maneuver action, and must roll greater than six (sum of first, second, and third actions previously done: 1 + 2 + 3 = 6) to succeed in a maneuver action. Maneuverability ratings for particular penguin types will modifiy the test rolls.

Previous actions that count towards the sum include: using thrust, using brake, changing direction, changing facing, standing up from fall, climbing out of water, unjamming weapon, and firing.

These tests are only required for maneuvers (facing and direction changes): other actions desired (such as speed change, firing, etc..) can be done without passing a maneuver action test.

Failure of a maneuver test results in the figure falling down.

FALLING

Falling results from either a failed maneuver test, collision with another figure, terrain encounter, or a critical hit / fumble during combat. Falling sucks. (I hang a pink "ring of shame" on fallen figures.)

If a figure falls it takes damage equal to half its current speed (rounded down). If facing does not match direction, add 1 to the damage if a front-quarter fall, add 3 if rear-quarter, and add 6 if rear.

While fallen, a figure may take/attempt no actions (thrust, maneuvering, firing, etc...).

At the end of each turn a figure is fallen determine its facing randomly, and reduce its speed by one.

At the beginning of subsequent turns, a fallen figure may attempt to stand up (after moving one hex if its speed is greater than zero). Success in standing up comes by rolling greater than a two on 1d6. If the figure is successful, it may continue its turn.

COLLISION

Whenever a figure's movement brings it into contact with another figure, the collision is resolved using the guidelines below. All calculations are based on direction, not facing. (NOTE: The following is an attempt to represent the "billiard-ball" -style impacts and reactions that would occur between two objects on ice within the framework of a hex-gridded surface. It is admittedly simplified and not very accurate physics-wise.)

If the target figure's speed is zero (regardless of relative impact direction), move the target half the speed of the hitter (changing its direction and speed). Change the speed of the hitter to the same.

Both figures take damage equal to the original speed of the hitter.

If a front collision, move the slower figure half the difference in speed in the direction of the faster (changing its direction and speed indicators). Change the speed of the faster to the same amount.

Both figures take damage equal to the sum of the impact speeds.

If a front-quarter collision, use 2/3 the target's speed for all calculations. Bounce both figures half the difference in speed 120-degrees from both entry directions.

Both figures take damage equal to half the sum of the impact speeds.

If a rear-quarter collision, bounce both 1/3 the hitter's speed (adding amount to target and subtracting from hitter) in the direction of the other figure.

Both figures take damage equal to half the difference in speeds (hitter minus target -if target is faster then no damage results from collision).

If a rear collision, move both half the hitter's speed (adding/subtracting as rear-quarter above).

Both figures take damage equal to the difference in speeds (as rear-quarter above).

In all collision cases, both players must each roll greater than one-quarter the damage taken (rounded up) to avoid falling. Also, if the current figure has speed points remaining (after any adjustments made per the guidelines above) it may continue its move.

FIRING

At any point during its movement a figure may fire (once per turn) at another figure. To hit, the firing player must roll greater than or equal to the range to the target on 2d6 (black and white).

Modifiers to the range:

--ACTIONS OF FIRER --Add one to the range for each previous action taken that turn.
(NOTE: The definition of "action" used is the same as that used in the "maneuver action test" section.)

--DIRECTION OF FIRER -- If a "side shot" (front or rear quarter facing relative to direction), add one to the range for every three points of speed (rounded down).
(Exception: If target direction matches firer's, add for every three points of DIFFERENCE in speeds.)

--DIRECTION OF TARGET -- As above, using target direction to determine "side" status.

--WEAPON ABILITIES and/or TARGET TYPE -- See stat cards for details, also: add three to range if target figure is in a water hex.

DAMAGE
If a hit is made, damage is determined by rolling the weapon-specific number of dice.

For every five points of damage (rounded down) a figure takes, a player subtracts one from the die roll in attempts to climb out of the water or stand up from a fall.

CRITICAL HITS / FUMBLES
Any successful firing roll that shows a "6" on the black die is a critical hit (causing extra damage in addition to the normal damage roll). Any roll that shows "snake eyes" is a fumble / automatic miss.

die roll	CRITICAL HITS	FUMBLES
1	-1 on maneuvers	no maneuvers***
2	reduce brakes by 1	no speed changes***
3	reduce thrust by 1	-1 on maneuvers***
4	weapon jammed**	weapon jammed**
5	roll extra damage die	misfire: take ½ d6 damage
6	fall	fall

** repair on subsequent turn(s) by rolling >2 on 1d6 *** next turn only

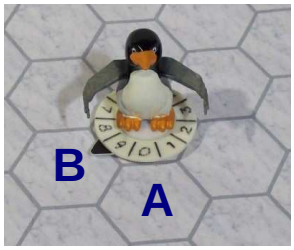
RECOIL / IMPACT:
On any firing roll that shows a "6" (or "5" as well for 2-power shots) on the white die the firing figure is moved back one hex opposite its facing and its speed is altered by the same. (Optional: for side-quarter shots, the black die must also show a "1-4" to apply the speed change.) The same effects are applied to the target figure if a hit is scored.

DEATH:
If a figure takes damage greater than or equal to its damage point total it is dead and should be marked with smoke. If the figure has a speed greater than zero, it is moved on successive turns (in random order) --subtract one speed point at the end of each turn as with a fallen figure. On the turn after a dead figure does not move any longer remove the figure, leaving the smoke to mark the spot. At the end of the next turn remove the smoke and place a hole marker on the hex.

APPENDIX A

Here is how I chose to show the three qualities of facing, direction, and speed with the figure. The figure, poker chip (with numbered scale around perimeter), and black triangle / arrowhead (on the lower left of the poker chip in the photo on the left) all spin independently of each other.

The figure itself displays the facing --in the photo on the left, this is towards adjacent hex "**A**". The black triangle / arrowhead indicates the direction --in the photo on the left, this is towards adjacent hex "**B**". To show the speed, the poker chip is spun under the figure until the tail points to the correct number --in the photo on the right, the current speed shown is "**5**".



APPENDIX B

A sample of penguin types and statistics -- Not to be considered in any way authoritative!

	WW1	WW2	JET	SPACE
DAMAGE POINTS	12	15	18	10 [5]
TARGET SIZE MODIFIER [1]	+1 to range	--	-1 from range	--
WEAPON ARC OF FIRE [2]	FAN	FAN	LINE / FAN [3]	LINE
WEAPON POWER	1d -1	1d	1d+1 / 3d [3]	2d [4]
WEAPON ACCURACY	+1 to range	--	-- or [3]	-1 from range
TOP SPEED	5	7	9	none
THRUST	1	1 - 2	1 - 3	1 - 5
BRAKE	1 - 2	1 - 2	1	none [6]
MANEUVERABILITY	+2	--	-1	+1

[1] Apply range modifier when other figures fire on figure.
[2] LINE is single row of hexes. FAN is single row to range 4, 3-wide row beyond 4, and 5-wide row beyond 8.
[3] In addition to cannon (that fire on line with 1d+1 power), Jets have missiles (that fire on fan with 3d power) that may be fired once each per game (number of missiles available should be limited: 1, 2, or 3). Special range/roll: 1/8, 2/7, 3/6, 4/5, 5-7/5-7, 8-9/8, 10-11/9, 12-13/10, 14-15/11, 16-17/12, etc...
[4] Spacecraft must use energy to fire: subtract 2 (or 1 each) from either/both thrust or shields each time figure fires.
[5] Shields: 12 points of shield-power is allocated to the six sides at the start of the game. The points can be spread in whatever fashion player desires, but may not be switched later. When hit in combat, subtract the shield value before assigning damage points to the figure. (Having shields destroyed by attacks is optional = GM discretion.)
[6] Spacecraft must use the "optional speed change" rule to decrease their speed.

APPENDIX C

Sample terrain types and rules to deal with their effects.

Rough Patches = Hexes with friction of varying degrees: rated 1, 2, or 3 (or more).

Reduce current speed of a figure moving into the hex by the friction rating.

If figure's facing does not match direction, roll 1d6 to avoid falling: >1 if front quarter, >2 if rear quarter, >3 if rear.

All maneuver action tests made in a rough patch gain a bonus equal to the friction rating of the hex.

Obstacles = Stuff on the surface which can be either hard (such as rocks) or soft (like drifts).

Figures entering a hex with a hard obstacle take damage equal to their speed, and bounce back along their approach path --changing direction accordingly.

If a soft obstacle is hit the result is the same, though the damage taken and speed is halved.

If obstacle can slide, treat encounter as a collision.

At the end of the encounter the player must roll greater than 1/4 the damage taken (rounded up) on 1d6 to avoid falling.

Holes / Edges = Hexes that contain water in liquid form.

Figures entering hole or edge hexes immediately fall in and their turn ends. Their speed is reduced to zero, and their facing is determined randomly.

Spacecraft and jets have a 1/3 chance of putting out their engines --a roll >2 on 1d6 is required to restart (and can only be attempted after climbing out).

No firing is allowed from holes.

Facing changes may be made on subsequent turns (one per turn) prior to attempting to climb out.

Climbing out must be done into the faced hex. It succeeds on a roll >1 on 1d6 and ends their turn.

JUMPING:
Figures may try to jump over rough patches, obstacles, and holes to avoid dealing with their effects.

The figure's facing must match or be adjacent to its direction, and it must have sufficient speed remaining to reach the opposite side (ie: a figure cannot end its turn in "mid-jump").

To successfully jump a rough patch or hole, the player must roll (1d6) greater than the size of the jump (ie: if one space is to be missed, a roll of "2" or better is required, a three-space patch or hole requires a "4", etc...).

Obstacles are leapt by rolling greater than half the size of the obstacle (rounded up).

Players subtract one from the roll in all jumping attempts if direction is adjacent to facing.