

# Solomon Sea Campaign Sequences

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## 1 Introduction

Everybody knows that wargames are much more likely than their real counterparts to fight a battle to the death (simply because it is not to the death). Likewise, everyone knows that this ahistoric behavior can be easily counteracted. If battles occur as part of a larger campaign game, players will be much more cautious and less likely to throw away their forces because (like their real world counterparts) they may need them again in the next battle. Finally, everyone knows that if a campaign game exists, players will play it. Well, so here it is, in the simplest form possible: by linking the individual Solomon Sea scenarios together. I call this a campaign sequence, instead of a campaign scenario, because there is no continuous play - no flow of reinforcements, one simply assumes things between the battles ran pretty much as they did historically. Simply play out each battle in the sequence, following the rules given below to link them together. You can even reasonably well predict how long it will take you to arrive at a conclusion, since typically you will be able to play one scenario per evening (or two-three in a Saturday afternoon).

An intriguing possibility is to link in the Command game on the Battle of Midway. Note though that due to the nature of that battle, its outcome may have drastic enough effects to make playing the later battles moot. Even without Midway, obviously being blown out of the water in the first battle of a sequence means you will have a hard time getting back on a winning track. So it goes. Play accordingly.

Ruleswise, there is one massive addition, the damage control rule. This is the largest piece of chrome (and yes it is large) to be put into the game; there is not going to be another like it. The reason for it is that in campaign situations (a) it provides a neat model for determining repair times for damaged carriers and (b) it removes total certainty concerning the fate of enemy carriers. In other words, it fulfills the same role as the Alternate Setup table for the individual scenarios. It slightly reduces lethality (but any carrier hit twice is still much more likely to go down than not). And provides more differentiated damage effects for carriers as a bonus, adding quite a bit of flavor. And in terms of playing time it costs no more than three or four die rolls over the course of a typical scenario. In fact, if you like the differentiated damage effects, just go ahead and use the rule in individual scenarios (I do).

## 2 General Procedure

Play each scenario using the standard length or three days, whichever is longer. After each scenario, compute which naval units are available for the next

scenario, based on the time of repairs. Sunk ships are omitted from the setup of the subsequent battles. A ship is called *available* if it has not been sunk and is not currently under repair.

**2.1 Carriers and US battleships.** Unless specified differently by the individual sequence rules, each carrier and US (but not Japanese) battleship that is available is included in the setup for that scenario. *Design note: The Japanese rarely released more than a couple of their battleships for use in these battles.*

**2.2 Smaller ship limits.** For each class of ships except carriers, US BBs and transports, if the number of ship in that class specified for the setup of the next scenario is *lower* than those available for the scenario you just played, set up as many ships as survived and are now available. *Example: There are four CAs in a fleet in a battle. Three are sunk, one is damaged (but available). One was damaged before but is available now. Setup for the next battle, B, specifies 3 CAs. Two are set up.*

If the number of ships specified to be set up in the next scenario is *higher*, then set up the available ships from the previous scenario plus the additional (new) ones. *Example: There are three CAs in a fleet in a battle. One is sunk. Setup for the next battle specifies 4 CAs. Three are set up.*

**2.3 Transports.** Transport losses are not carried over to later battles.

**2.4 Base damage.** All Base damage is repaired between scenarios.

**2.5 Computing Ship Availability.** The time between scenarios is given in terms of the number of weeks that pass between the end of one and the start of the next. Each battle is assumed to last one week. Add up the separations between two scenarios A and B and add one week for each battle in between. This is the number of repair weeks that a ship can be unavailable for combat and participate in scenario B.

*Example: Santa Cruz takes place 9 weeks after Eastern Solomons. Naval Battle of Guadalcanal takes place 2 weeks after Santa Cruz. A ship damaged at Eastern Solomons suffers 10 weeks of repair time. It is available for setup at Naval Battle of Guadalcanal (8 weeks + 1 week + 1 week duration for Santa Cruz).*

The rules below are added to the normal *Solomon Sea* rules when playing the linked scenarios.

## 3 Carrier Damage Control

**Play tip:** Note that the rule as written assumes the use of markers for recording ship damage, which are not in the game as published. You can use any unused, inverted counters from the game instead, with a marker placed in the Ready box meaning DECK damage, a marker in the Unready Box touching the deck meaning

ENG damage, a marker touching the carrier's waterline meaning FLOT damage.

When a carrier is damaged, its behavior (except AA fire) is no longer determined by the values shown on that side. Instead, do the following.

- if the carrier was hit by a D or B unit (or a B5N at range 3 per advanced rule 13.4), put one ENG and one DECK marker on the carrier's air display.

- if the carrier was hit by a T or S unit, a submarine, or a destroyer, put one ENG and one FLOT marker on the carrier's air display.

- if the carrier was hit by a CA or BB unit, put one ENG, one FLOT, and one DECK marker on the carriers' air display

Like all other information on the carrier display, the damage markers are never made visible to the other player.

**3.1 Damage Control.** Before the Air Return phase of each turn on which the carrier was hit, roll once on the Damage Control Table. Note: This roll *must* be made.

**3.2 Sinking.** Any carrier with as many FLOT markers as steps in the 'end of turn' Phase is sunk, as is any carrier with more ENG markers than steps.

**3.3 Damage effects.** Any carrier with original speed 1 with one ENG marker moves at half speed. It can only recover planes, not launch them (which means it also cannot operate CAP). A CVE with original speed of 1/2 is dead in the water and cannot operate planes.

A carrier with one DECK marker can engage in air operations at half capacity. (*Representing minor deck or elevator hits plus potentially some fire damage.*)

**3.4 Abandoning.** Carriers can be abandoned at will by the owning player, before rolling for damage control. The die roll must still be made. (*Note: Abandoning includes ineffective scuttling attempts.*) It can be reboarded later by moving an undamaged naval unit into the same hex.

**3.5 DIW.** A carrier with as many ENG hits as steps is burning and dead in the water (this must be told to the other player when he next attacks the carrier). It doesn't fire AA and attacks on it are made with a modifier of +1. At the end of each turn where it was *not* attacked, roll a die:

1-4 - sinks.

9-10 - stabilized, stop rolling.

If the carrier sinks but was not abandoned, the other player gets 3 VP (for unnecessarily lost crewmen).

**3.6 Towing.** A DIW carrier can be moved at speed 1/4 together with a CA or larger type unit. (This means moving on every second 1/2 speed turn.)

### 3.7 Damage Control Table

Dieroll	Remove
10	FLOT, ENG
9	ENG
8	FLOT, DECK
7	FLOT
6	-
5	FLOT, FLOT, DECK
4	-
3	ENG
2	DECK
1 or less	<b>F</b>

FLOT or

ENG or

DECK ... remove one marker of that type

**F** ... Fires out of control - ship abandoned and sunk

### Modifiers:

2 or more ENG hits	-5
each DECK hit	-1
ready aircraft on deck when attacked	-2
untested damage control doctrine*	-1
IJN Victory disease at Midway**	-1
Victorious per FLOT hit	-1
Wasp,Hiyo,Junyo (2 step counters)	-3
Hiryu,Soryu (1 step counters)	+3
all CVLs	-4
all CVEs	-5

\* This modifier is applied to each side separately up to the end of the first battle where a friendly CV was lost. If playing individual scenarios, it does not apply to the USN after Coral Sea, or to the IJN after Midway. If playing a campaign sequence which starts after Coral Sea, it never applies to the US. If playing a campaign sequence which starts after Midway, it never applies to the Japanese.

\*\* Particularly sloppy damage control preparations and ammunition handling

## 4 Naval Repair

Repair times for damaged ships are given in terms of calendar weeks. This is the number of weeks that a ship is not available for use in combat.

**4.1 Repair time.** This is computed as follows:

Carriers (including CVL, CVE, CVS)

Damage repair time for both sides: 2 weeks per ENG or DECK hit marker and 3 per FLOT marker.

Add the travel time as given below.

Japanese carriers	3 weeks
US carriers with one hit marker	2 weeks
US carriers with more than one	4 weeks

To the sum determined above, roll a die and add the following:

DR	1-2: 0 weeks
	3-8: 1 week,
	9-10: 2 weeks.

A player can always decide not to have a carrier repaired and have it participate in the next scenario with the damage markers from the previous scenario.

**Battleships:** For both sides, repair time is 12 weeks plus result of die roll as above.

**Other 2-step counters** (non-battleships): Roll a die on table below.

DR	1-2	replace by undamaged 1-step counter after 4 weeks; keep out of action till then
	3-6	replace by undamaged 1-step counter if available (1-step counters may be merged with 1-step counters of same type in next setup)
	7-10	switch to full strength after 2 months; keep out of action till then.

**1-step counters** except carriers cannot be damaged, they are always destroyed.

**4.2 Dockyard space (optional).** Both sides have limited space available for ship repairs. The Allied side can repair two ships in Pearl Harbor, one (non BB-, non-CV) in Sydney, and nine on the West Coast. The Japanese side can repair eight in Japan. If insufficient dockyard space is available to repair all damaged ships, excess ships (player's choice) have the start of their repair delayed until a space is free.

US carriers with one damage marker and all smaller ships are assumed to be repaired in Pearl Harbor in the standard rule. Therefore, add 2 weeks to their repair time if they are sent to the West Coast instead. Battleships and heavily damaged US carriers are automatically sent to the West Coast.

*Note: I originally wanted to leave this rule out since it requires that players keep track of free dockyard slots, but everyone asked why it wasn't considered. So here you have it. Note that damaged status in the game means a need for a significant overhaul; minor damage that could be repaired locally (e.g., in Sydney or at Truk) is not considered. As a result the potential maximum repair capacities have been a bit reduced; but it should still be noticeable that bottlenecks are unlikely to develop, except at Pearl Harbor.*

## 5 Air Group Replacements

Reinforcements always arrive for a particular category of aircraft until the required number of aircraft for the next battle has been reached. Excess steps are lost.

**5.1 Japanese carrier air replacements:** It is not permissible to shift planes between carriers in between battles. (*Japanese air groups were organizationally integrated with their carriers and were not shifted around.*) If planes landed on a different carrier during a battle to avoid having to ditch, then they must be placed back on their original carrier's air display after the end of the battle if the original carrier was not sunk.

The Japanese receive one naval air unit (2 steps) per week.

**5.2 Japanese land-based air replacements.** Japanese land-based air automatically starts each battle except the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal at full strength. In the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, the losses of the Battle of Santa Cruz (2 weeks earlier) are carried over.

*The Japanese several times completely replaced their air units in the Guadalcanal area, rotating attrited major units out of the area.*

**5.3 Allied carrier air replacements.** Allied carrier air losses are completely replaced up to the available carrier capacity within one month. If there is less than a month between scenarios, but more than a week, half the losses are replaced.

**5.4 Allied land-based air replacements.** Allied land-based air losses are completely replaced for each battle. *The Allies constantly rotated individual squadrons out of the area for resting as new squadrons came in. The period before the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal actually saw a heavy buildup so previous losses would not be noticeable despite the short time after Santa Cruz.*

## 6 Other Rules

**6.1 Bombardment Ammunition.** Mark any ships that are intended to bombard enemy bases during the scenario with an inverted Fatigue marker. Only these ships can bombard at full value, all other ships bombard at half strength. Once the ships have bombarded, turn the fatigue marker right side up. For surface combat the ships behave as if fatigued at all times (see 13.8). *Carrying a large amount of special bombardment ammunition together with the internal stacking arrangements for the bombardment made these ships less efficient in the initial stages of a surface engagement.*

**6.2 Japanese Night Advantage.** Japanese ship strengths in surface combat are increased by 1 at night.

**6.3 Fog of War.** The other player need be given no information on damage control or repair effects, including sinkings, other than found by searches or needed for setup.

## 7 Midway

This section lists three possibilities of incorporating the pivotal Battle of Midway in play. They are referenced in the scenario descriptions below.

**7.1 Midway happens:** The Battle of Midway, three weeks after Coral Sea, is not played out since it is not included in *Solomon Sea*. Its historical results are assumed to have occurred.

- The US lost one carrier at Midway (historically Yorktown). As a result, if any US carriers survive the Battle of the Coral Sea with at most two damage markers, one of these must be removed from play (preferably Yorktown, but use Lexington if Yorktown is heavily damaged or sunk).
- If both Yorktown and Lexington are sunk or have more than two damage markers after playing the Coral Sea scenario, either Enterprise or Hornet is removed from the game (since she is assumed to have been the ship that was hit by the Japanese at Midway instead of Yorktown).

*Note: Yorktown's aircraft delivered some of the crucial strikes at Midway, but we give the Americans the benefit of the doubt. The purpose of this rule is not to give a complete simulation of all hypothetical outcomes of Midway, but to provide a close to historical outcome for the subsequent battles.*

**7.2 Flexible Midway.** As several people pointed out to me, the above is actually a rather tame approximation of what might have happened at Midway, because it does not consider the potential presence of additional carriers. For the full monty, try this rule. It can be added anywhere that 7.1 (Midway Happens) is used, without restriction. Be aware that it may bring things to a head rather quickly.

- This rule is an addition to 7.1 (Midway Happens).
- If one of Shokaku or Zuikaku is available for Midway with at least 80% of its planes present, one additional US carrier is sunk (choose at random).
- If both are available as above, one more US carrier is damaged for 12 weeks.
- If at least one of Shokaku and Zuikaku is available and both Lexington and Yorktown are available, roll a die: 1-5 one of Shokaku and Zuikaku is sunk, 6-10 one is under repair for 12 weeks.

**7.3 Victory at Midway.** This section lists the rules needed to play XTR's *Victory at Midway* using the *Solomon Sea* rules. It is not used in all sequences (it is used in exactly those where neither of the two previous rules is used).

- Play the game exactly to the original time limit.
- Use the *Solomon Sea* victory point scale.
- The US player gets 3 PBY units and three PBY search paths at Midway instead of his fixed three searches.
- The Japanese player does not have free searches near his carriers; instead he gets two CAV searches (as per *Solomon Sea* rule 7.7).

- Once the Japanese seaplane tender has set up shop, the Japanese get two CVS searches per *Solomon Sea* 7.8.
- The weather number is 1 (3 for the Japanese until they sight the first US CV). (*The Japanese special value is due to lackadaisical searching caused by victory disease*).
- The special rule in *VaM* for the vulnerability of Japanese CVs is replaced by a damage control table modifier.
- Note special damage control modifier for Hiryu and Soryu. If they survive the battle this also holds for all later scenarios in which they participate. Alternately, consider them two-step counters and handle the same way as Wasp, Junyo, and Hiyo.
- If the Japanese land ground troops on Midway, but the island has not fallen by the end of the scenario, keep rolling for ground combat, but triple the number of US ground combat die rolls from then on. *The Japanese were prone to making risky assaults if they felt their attacks were not gaining ground fast enough.*
- Even if Shoho were available for Midway after the Coral Sea scenario, she is not included (the Japanese battle plans did not include her). This does not affect her participation in later battles.
- Japanese transport losses on the Solomon Sea map do not affect Midway setup and Midway transport losses do not affect later scenarios. *The Midway transports came from the general merchant shipping pool and went back to it. The ground unit for the assault on Midway was so small that its loss does not affect the other scenarios.*

Helpful suggestions: Volkmar Böse, Eugene Gesner, Brian McCue.

## 1. The South Pacific Campaign

This is the scenario that links the standard four Solomon Sea scenarios.

### **Battles:**

Coral Sea

Eastern Solomons

Santa Cruz

Naval Battle of Guadalcanal

### **Separation**

Eastern Solomons takes place 14 weeks after Coral Sea. Santa Cruz takes place 8 weeks after Eastern Solomons. Naval Battle of Guadalcanal takes place 2 weeks after Santa Cruz.

**Special Rules:** Use 7.1 (Midway Happens). 7.3 (Victory at Midway) is not used.

**Delay:** Since the later three battles took place on the initiative of the Japanese (who had to bring troops to Guadalcanal), the Japanese player can, if so desired, let any of these scenarios except Santa Cruz take place one week later (i.e., if a ship that would be present were repaired after one additional week, he can add it to his setup). All later scenarios are assumed to be shifted by the same amount, i.e., there is no change. The Allied player need not be told about this decision (he would not have known historically either why the battle would have been delayed). *Santa Cruz is an exception since that battle was triggered by the incorrect information the Japanese Navy received from the Japanese Army.*

**Port Moresby:** If the Japanese player achieves the “automatic” victory conditions in the Coral Sea scenario, Port Moresby (“PM”) is considered a Japanese base in all later scenarios, and Gili-Gili and Buna do not exist. The Allied planes that start in PM are set up in Australia instead. Also, the Japanese have four TT units available (exactly four, not four added to original setup) to unload at Guadalcanal in every subsequent scenario. (*Representing troops not needed in New Guinea.*) Conversely, the Allies have the following auxiliary airfields available: Mareeba (hex L14), Cooktown (K14), Coen/Iron Range (I14) All have capacity 6 and 2 AA. Mareeba also has SP capability, and the original PM PBV search paths are set up there. (*Cairns was an Australian PBV base.*) It is suggested to use the airstrike and Rockhampton/Townsville displays for these bases, arranging planes in vertical “stripes” for each airfield. Invert aircraft on CAP or place them directly on the map.

### Other outside events influencing carrier presence:

- Wasp, Saratoga, and North Carolina are not included after Eastern Solomons (Wasp was sunk by a submarine in October and the other two were heavily damaged in such incidents).
- In the Santa Cruz and Guadalcanal scenarios, roll a die. On a roll of 1-3, include Hiyo in the setup. On a roll of 4-6, do not include her in the Japanese setup. (*She is lying at Truk with engine problems.*) On 4-6, do.

**Shopping for flight decks:** If the Allies are reduced to no available carriers, they can use Victorious, Long Island, and Altamaha (starting with full plane complements) until at least one US CV is available. This is not possible for the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal if this condition is achieved at Santa Cruz. (*Because the time after the Battle of Santa Cruz was too short to have brought these ships into front line service.*) If the Japanese have taken Port Moresby, Victorious (only) is already available once the Allies are down to one carrier (*the British worrying about a threat to Australia*).

### **Victory Conditions**

Count victory points. The player with the higher total wins. However, the Japanese win if the Allies lose all CVs before the Naval Battle for Guadalcanal.

## 2. The Guadalcanal Campaign

This is for players that consider Coral Sea to be a bit remote from the rest, causally and temporally, and want to play out only the actual battles of the Guadalcanal campaign. Play like Campaign Sequence 1, except that you start with the Battle of the Eastern Solomons and ignore the Midway Happens rule.

### 3. The Great Battles of 1942

This is the campaign sequence that links the standard four *Solomon Sea* scenarios, but also includes the Battle of Midway for owners of *Victory at Midway*.

#### **Battles:**

Coral Sea

Midway

Eastern Solomons

Santa Cruz

Naval Battle of Guadalcanal

#### **Procedure**

The same as for Campaign Sequence 1. For Midway, play through the *Victory at Midway* standard scenario using rule 7.3. All Japanese carriers that survive the Midway scenario will be added to the later scenarios.

#### **Separation**

Midway takes place 3 weeks after Coral Sea. Eastern Solomons takes place 10 weeks after Midway. Santa Cruz takes place 8 weeks after Eastern Solomons. Naval Battle of Guadalcanal takes place 2 weeks after Santa Cruz.

#### **Special Rules**

All special rules for Campaign Sequence 1 hold, except (of course) for the Midway Happens rule: Delay, Port Moresby, Outside Events, Shopping for flight decks. Any carrier repaired in time after Coral Sea can participate in the Battle of Midway, and any carrier of both sides that survives Midway can be used in the later scenarios subject to the restrictions laid down for Wasp and Saratoga.

Emergency repairs: One damage marker on a US CV can be removed for free after Coral Sea. All other Allied repair times are considered to be reduced by 1 week as far as participation in the Midway scenario is concerned (*because the battle took place so close to Pearl Harbor that ships could be on station near Midway within three days*).

Victory at Midway: Use rule 7.3 to play Midway.

Decisive Battle: To prevent any canny IJN player from holding their carriers back at Midway so as to be assured of their use in the later scenarios, the following holds: If any CV in the Midway scenario that survives undamaged has not at some point had some of its planes participate in a strike on Midway Island, the game is automatically forfeit. (*Yamamoto has lost confidence in himself and has resigned from his post.*)

Protecting Pearl Harbor: If the Japanese take Midway, the US player secretly rolls a die. On a result of 1-5, remove 50% of all US land-based aircraft steps in the later scenarios. On a 6-10, remove 33%. This does not apply to Hudsons, P-40, Beaufighters, and Beauforts, which are Australian. (*The removed aircraft have instead remained behind to bolster the defense of the Hawaiian Islands against potential later attacks.*)

#### **Victory Conditions**

Count victory points. The player with the higher total wins. However, the Japanese win if the Allies lose all CVs before the Naval Battle for Guadalcanal. Also, if the US has no carriers remaining after Midway, there is no need to go shopping for flight decks, the invasion of Guadalcanal never happens and the Japanese win. Finally, the US win if all but two of the Japanese CVs have been sunk.