

Marine Positioning

There are **macro** and **micro** levels when we speak about marine positioning. Macro level means your tactical positioning on map and micro level means your tactical positioning in combat. I dare to say that positioning is the most important element tactically and combat-wise.

Positioning on map

Even if commander is the one who gives marines moving orders, every marine should be able to know how to cover as much ground as possible and to move right directions without commander's babysitting. In fact, sometimes commander can't see how things truly are from the bird view. **Map control** is important aspect of game. Marines must win battles order to get map control, but there are some tricks to help to get more map control:

Positioning marines **central of map** as possible gives you advantage to cover more ground and react faster in different situations, because marines this way have shorter way to everywhere. This is the reason why sending majority of marines other side of map is a bad idea. Of course there are special situations, but for example in start, one should never send every marine to one side of the map.

More your **spread out marines**, more map control you get. Smaller the units are, harder the battles are for marines. It is useless to send four marines to destroy one RT, if one or two marines can get job done. It also stupid to spread every marine to being alone, if they can't win battles alone. Finding out right size for marine groups and mixing group sizes in right situations is the key. Obviously one can use smaller units better the marines are.

Mobility in also map control. Faster the marines move on map, more ground they cover and every second is essential. In NS2 good marines have to move fast and be on guard same time. Being over cautious is normally even worse that moving head first everywhere. I would say that marines should always be on motion, because there are always more buildings to construct or alien buildings to destroy. The next objective should be already on your mind while doing the current one; this way you move faster and never hesitate. There are indeed key locations to hold, but generally more aggressive you are, more map control you get. Of course marines shouldn't die, but once again, more skilled marines can be more aggressive. Tech like PGs or JPs increase marines mobility and

therefore increase map control, unlike Exos which decrease map control.

Marines should **dictate tempo** of the game. Marines being more powerful at combat in start, they can start pushing and destroying from very start. This generally means that marines are attacking and aliens defending. Marines should make aliens to feel that there are constant pressure and aliens can't afford to send anyone to attack marines buildings. The feeling that marines are everywhere on map from very start is really frustrating to aliens. Low level clans often describe their feelings, when playing against better clans, that: "That they can't get any breathing space". Tempo may change in middle/late game when aliens get higher lifeforms (Fades before JPs), but marines should still try be the side who keep pressure on.

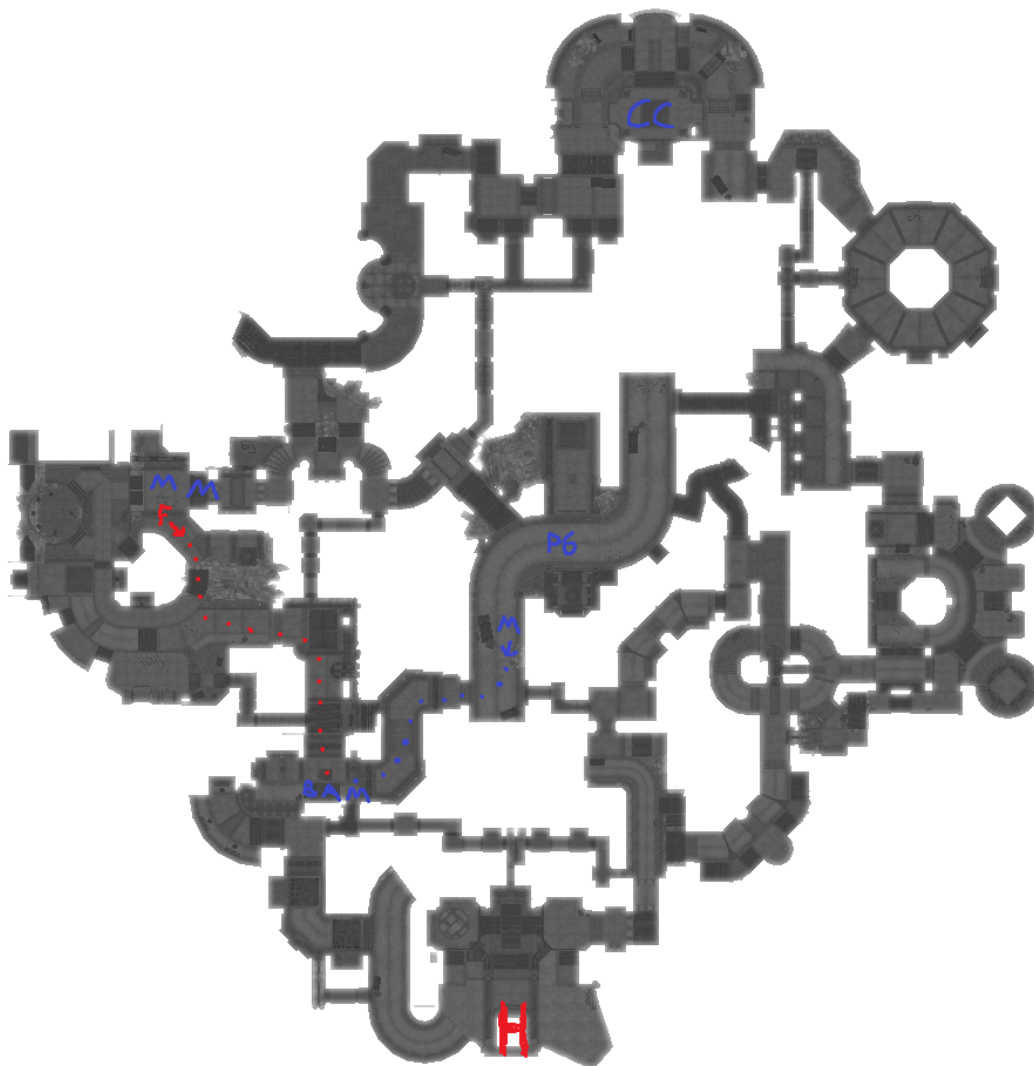
By **general route blocking** I mean marines ability to cut aliens way on map. Blocking aliens' routes from hive is the most efficient way to get map control. This way marines force aliens to attack marines in positions which are good for marines. Just standing somewhere and waiting attack is of course much worse option, than to block route and for example trying to destroy alien RT same time. But once again, one should ponder marines' ability to handle harder situations.

Very simple picture about very basic route blocking:



Positioning yourself between the base and the most obvious route from closest hive is best way to prevent base rush. You can go as forward as spawncamping if the situation allows it. If you stay at base, not only you get information of base rush too late, but you are also in worse location to make damage to aliens than closer to alien hive. I have to admit, that this is harder in NS2, because random marine base spawn locations and generally there are more routes to marine base (NS2_Veil West for example). But still aliens will use/have to use the fastest way to marine base most of the times.

Lifeform blocking is fine art. It requires creativity, great game sense, excellent timing and bravery, but when done perfectly it can win games. Lifeform blocking means that marine(s) block lerks, fades or onos route from combat to healing point (crag, gorge, and hive). Especially good fades normally uses all their health before withdrawing from combat to nearest healing point, during that time they are extra vulnerably. Lifeforms of course use save routes, but if you can surprise aliens and block those “save” routes, you get free big kills. Here is bad picture about lifeform blocking:



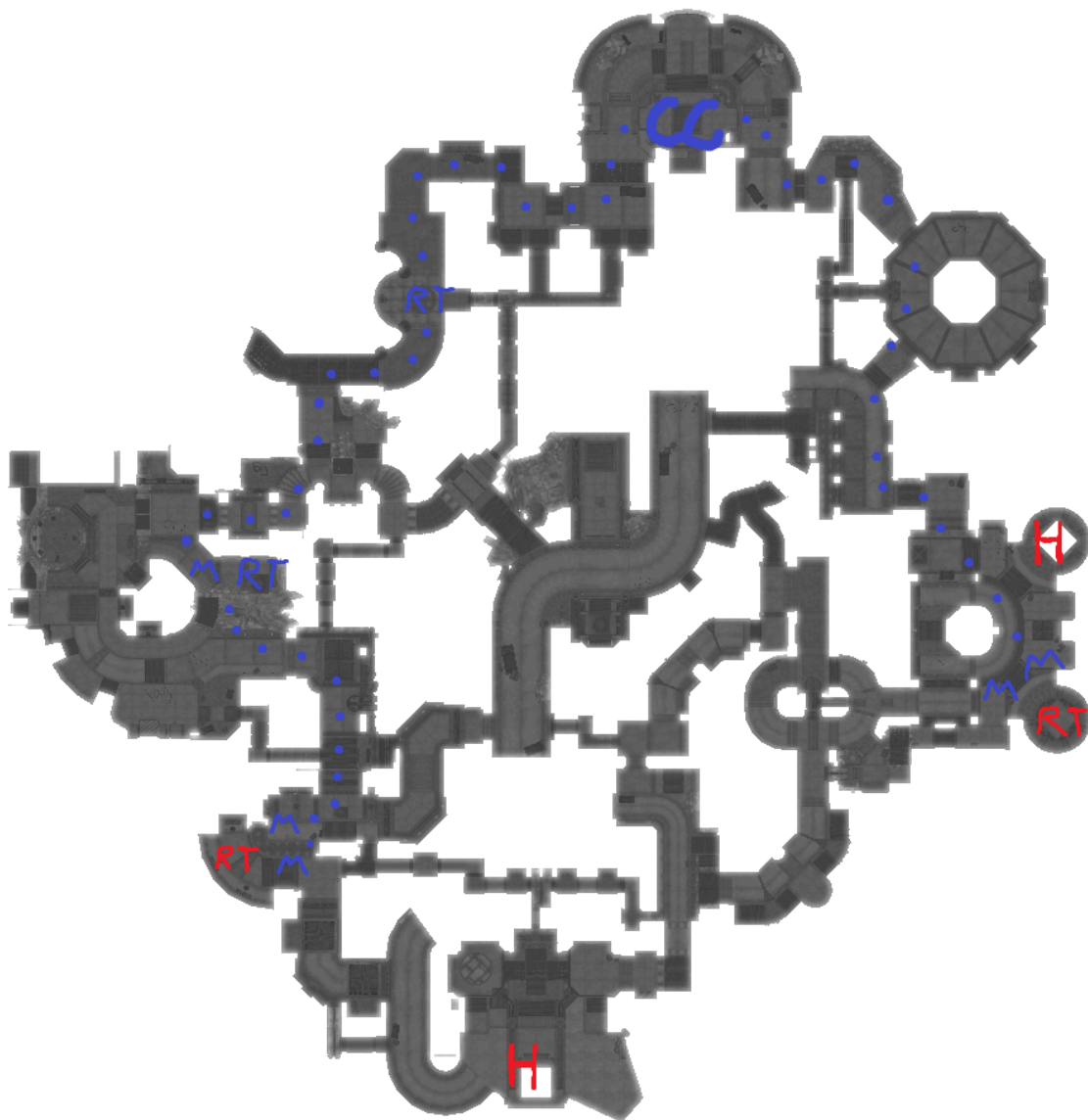
This is good example why marines have to think their map positioning themselves. Commander can't react as fast as marine to these kinds of situations. Commander had probably ordered Crossroad's marine to defend the PG, it's good to notice that the marine had already positioned himself as close Computer Lab as possible while still defending Crossroad PG: prediction plays big part. The marine have to start moving when he first time see fade in minimap in Flight, it's save to presume that marines do enough damage to fade in Flight even if they die doing so. This is exactly why it is so hard to pull off: you have to think many moves ahead and react extremely fast.

Overlapping means that you leave marine behind the pressure group. The idea is that pressure marines pin down aliens to attack them, while same time behind the pressure group the lonely

marine cap RTs. For example in Veil you send three marines to System and one to West, those three marines blocks main route to the marine in West. Overlapping is usually the better way to cap RTs, because this way marines keep pressure and dictate tempo of the game. If all marines would just cap RTs at start, aliens would be free to organize well timed rush to those marines. Making organized well time rush to pressure group is much harder, because they don't build anything and they are free to choose and move from location to another, unlike when you are capping RTs.

Double pressure is advanced way to keep pressure. In nutshell it means that you pressure two alien locations simultaneously, forcing aliens to divide their unit to separate places or to focus only one. The stronger marine group should drawn aliens to themselves, while the weaker unit (which can consist only one marine) should stay silent as long as the stronger group start attacking. This is most excellent way to destroy alien RTs, upgrades or even hives with larger numbers, and this is even better in NS2 than in NS1 because lack of alien's mobility compared to marines. There even can be little delay between two attacks, but is not big crime if the stronger group have to delay their attack a little bit.

Here is a picture about overlapping and double pressure:



Marines in Computer Lab draws aliens to themselves leaving Data Core free from aliens to two marines to destroy the RT, while same time overlapping the marine in Flight, who is free to cap the RT without fear of being attacked. This is advanced marine positioning at best.

Scouting means your ways to gain information about your opponent's movements and tactical choices. The commander plays important part in scouting with his ability listen alien's movement and dropping ghost structures, but once again marines on field should contribute. Marines scout with their movement and positioning. More spread out marines are, more information they can collect. Scouting and reporting alien's RTs, upgrades and hives of course is basic playing for every

competitive marine.

However, scouting aliens positioning is more advanced scouting and the trick is to count aliens movement on map. The best players do this from their backbone. For example if a fade just killed your teammate on Crossroad, a great marine knows by using minimap exactly where that fade can be and can't be in next 10 seconds. Counting six different aliens this way isn't simple math, but if you can pull this off, you do get big advantage over other players. I also like to point out, that it is not only about scouting where aliens are or can be, but where they aren't or can't be! For example if aliens do not defend their RTs while pressuring them, you should prepare for base rush based on knowledge where aliens aren't.

More **advanced way to defend RTs** is to position yourself between the nearest hive and the most obvious route to RTs you are trying to defend. This way you can defend multiple RTs from one location and you also normally have closer distance to every possible RT that can be attacked. It's pain to watch marine to chase RT biting skulk from one RT to another; that is the noob way of defending RTs. Once again an amazing picture:



The marine in West Junction is defending West and Overlook from one spot. Sub's PG is blocking the route from Sub side to the RTs and MS base is blocking route from there. If the marine is clever, he is killing skulks by surprise from that positioning. Easy kills and the better way to defend RTs. It's always wiser to defend your RTs than to build new ones, if that is the choice you have to make. This is especially important to remember when you are pushing a hive, you can leave one marine to defend base and RTs. But that marine shouldn't try to cap RTs while pushing (you shouldn't be pushing if you have less than three RTs). Especially because it is common alien tactic to send one skulk to bite RTs while being attacked.

Combat Positioning

Coming soon or not... But just watch this clip at time 10:54: <http://www.ensl.org/movies/158> and try to learn as good positioning and movement in combat :)