

AX Large Ship Guide

A research report by Commander Aterius in collaboration with Commander Aranionros Stormrage and Commander Painbeaver

Disclaimer:

The Anti-Xeno Flight Manual and all its associated resources have been integrated into the Anti Xeno Initiative's new [AX Knowledge Base \(AXKB\)](#) under the 'Thargoid Combat and Strategy' topic. This [link](#) will take you to the new up-to-date version of the AX Large Ship Guide. This document may become outdated!

Introduction:

Large ships can be divided into two categories based on top speed. The Imperial Cutter, unlike the Anaconda, Federal Corvette, Beluga, and T-10 is capable of outrunning a Medusa, Cyclops, and the Thargon swarm (note the exception of the Basilisk). This allows the Cutter time to synthesize heatsinks, repair modules, and reverse the swarm (see AXFM). Other ships must tank the thargoid for the entirety of the fight, or strategically kite using low-temperature orbiting. **As of 3.3 the SLFs can no longer take aggro of the interceptor!**

Recommended Videos:

CMDR Painbeaver's [Hydra Solo](#) (Corvette)
CMDR Aranionros Stormrage's [Hydra solo](#) (Corvette)
CMDR Aranionros Stormrage's [Medusa solo](#) (Corvette)
CMDR Gluttony Fang's [Medusa solo](#) (Cutter)
CMDR MuQuuu's [Double Medusa solo](#) (Cutter)
CMDR Painbeaver's [gaining distance in slow ships guide](#)

Ship Choice:

The best large ships for AX combat are the Cutter, Corvette, and Conda in (roughly) that order. The Cutter's principal advantage is its speed and large shield capacity, however, the wing mounted weapons are only suitable for flak launchers. The Corvette significantly out-edges the Conda due to its maneuverability, two additional size 7 internal slots capable of fitting larger SCBs, a much higher base shield rating and much better convergence, though it has slightly less theoretical DPS due to using Small Gauss Cannons (In practice, the difference is not very significant). Here are some recommended builds:

AX Cutter:

<https://s.orbis.zone/4yu1>

AX Cutter with Repairs:

<https://s.orbis.zone/4yu3>

Note: Once the C8 bank runs out, turn it off and start using the C6 ones two at a time.

AX Corvette:

<https://s.orbis.zone/4yts>

AX Corvette with Repairs:

<https://s.orbis.zone/4yu4>

AX Anaconda:

<https://s.orbis.zone/4yu5>

AX Anaconda with Repairs:

<https://s.orbis.zone/4yu6>

Notes:

- Prismatics or A-rated shields are interchangeable (though prismatics are better)
- You can replace shield boosters with a shutdown field neutralizer or xeno scanner. A xeno scanner is functionally a waste of slot in solo fights, but it is advisable to have at least one person bring a scanner in wings.

Note on other large ships:

The other large ships are, frankly, terrible for AX interceptor combat. The T-10 has abysmal convergence, is very slow, and has almost no maneuverability. FDev lied to you, the T-10 is not the meta for AX interceptor combat (although very passable for scouts). The T-9 suffers even more of the same shortcomings. The Beluga is a passenger liner. While you could technically outfit it for AX combat, it has an undersized distributor and lacks any tactical advantage over the Conda for a roughly similar price. The Imperial Clipper, while fast, is essentially a medium ship with the size of a large ship.

Large Ship Strategy:

See AXFM for details on interceptor combat. The same basic pattern of swarm destruction, heart exertion, heart destruction is the same. Unlike with small/medium ships, a large ship can essentially tank the damage from the interceptor's main cannon. The key to success is promptly engaging the swarm, consistently utilizing SCB, managing your pips, and avoiding the lightning attack by maintaining appropriate distance.

The first heart

For the first heart, you have two options. You can either kill the first heart immediately while the swarm is (relatively) stationary or deal with the swarm first. During this initial time period you will be safe from the lightning attack, and it only takes approximately 30 seconds to destroy the first swarm. After you destroy the first swarm, you can easily get several shots in the second swarm

as it is spawning. The drawback to destroying the swarm before attacking the heart, is that you will take more damage from the interceptor cannon. Given the strength of your shields this damage will be negligible.

After you destroy the first heart, you will have to deal with two lightning attacks. Immediately put 4 pips to engines and boost away. If in a cutter, you will be fast enough to avoid the lightning entirely. If not, turn around if FA-off, and slow down to ~100m/s, and when the interceptor comes within 1.5km, boost past it. The lightning should only catch you for a few seconds, and then you'll drift away. If your shield is not full, deploy SCBs before getting close to the interceptor to ensure it doesn't drop.

Avoid the Lightning

The lightning does massive shield damage compared to the interceptor's cannon attack (however, it does almost no damage to hull). See the following table:

	Cyclops	Basilisk	Medusa	Hydra
Duration	8	10	12	14
Shield Damage	800	1700	2800	3200-4400*

*Hydra lightning damage seems to vary

Given your reliance on shield tanking, a large ship must avoid the lightning attack at all costs. Interceptors follow an attack run period from the first shot it takes at your ship to the time when it turns away from you and stop attacking, this is colloquially referred to as a "rearming" period. The interceptor only utilizes the lightning attack once per each of these attack runs. **The most effective strategy is thus to discharge the lightning on each attack run by passing within 800m while at a high relative velocity to the interceptor as to prevent it actually engaging this special attack.**

The interceptor shows two different forms of behavior after it begins to attack after its "rearming" period depending on your distance at the time that the thargoid ends its attack run (turns away from you) which you can utilize to disarm its lightning attack. The best strategy is to prioritize staying outside of 1.5 km during each rearming period as to trigger scenario 1.

Scenario 1 around 1.5 km or greater: The interceptor will turn towards your ship and begin traveling at high speed directly towards you with momentum. You can either boost past it or remain stationary.

Less than 1.5 km: The interceptor may not trigger its lightning attack immediately. Utilize caution and prepare to boost past the thargoid in FA-off when it begins charging to attack. Or if you are able to take out a heart before the lightning's duration ends, do so, then proceed to cold-reboot to instantly regain shields.

Engage the swarm

After the destruction of heart, your first goal is to destroy the swarm. If you are in a Cutter, you may proceed according to the AXFM (Reverski to draw the swarm away from the interceptor, and engage). In a Conda or Corvette, the situation becomes trickier. Since you are not fast enough to outrun the swarm, you have several options.

Option 1: Dogfight the swarm (Better for Conda/Corvette)

After the swarm flies through your ship, it will continue for approximately 2 km until adjusting its course. If you utilize an fa-off turn and chase the swarm, it will continue in a straight line, grouped tightly together, so long as it remains under 2 km away from your ship. Utilize boosting and pip management to remain within this distance, with the optimal distance being approximately 600 m.

Note, if the swarm approaches or passes the 2 km, do not boost. The swarm will quickly reverse course and attack you. Utilize this opportunity to begin chasing the swarm again. If you boost, you will not be able to maintain the 2 km separation after the swarm passes you again.

While dogfighting the swarm, it is important that you track the lightning status of the interceptor. Ensure that after each lightning attack run (see above), you wait until the thargoid disengages its lightning attack to directly engage the swarm.

If the swarm double-back towards the interceptor while you are chasing them, and there are not many of them left, you can boost forward, and fa-off turn around and reverskii them.

Option 2: Reverski the swarm (Better for Cutter)

Boosting away and turning around while in fa-off allows you to shoot flak at the swarm while moving away. The Cutter is fast enough to be able to do this safely, Conda/Corvette are slow, and will be exposed to fire from the interceptor or the swarm

Avoiding damage

Large ships are not maneuverable enough to use stealth-orbiting techniques to avoid the interceptor's fire and they have plenty of shields and strong hulls to tank it. However, one should always avoid as much damage as possible, and large ships can do this with by reverskiing and using vertical + lateral thrusters to achieve a semi-orbit demonstrated [here](#)

Utilize your SCB

As a large ship, your shields are your best (and really only) defense. Large ships rely on slow regenerating shields which will not regenerate quickly once broken, requiring a reboot to regenerate in a timely manner. Always ensure that you are utilizing your SCB to stay with at least two full rings. When you see any damage to the second ring of your shield, double bank. This involves firing your first SCB, firing a heatsink, then firing a second SCB.

Utilize thermal vent beam lasers to cool your ship

Map your beam lasers to a secondary fire group and utilize liberally to minimize reliance on heatsinks. The primary function of these beams is to allow you to remain close to the interceptor after destroying a heart, and avoiding damage with semi-orbiting (having a heat signature close to 0 will disable the Interceptor's secondary attacks (Caustics/EMP). The beams help you to stay cold, reboot, synthesize heatsinks/ammo and ram the shield.

Cold Reboot

Unlike a regular reboot, a cold reboot is more reliably successful (no need to rely on a fighter), but it can only be done immediately after destroying a heart. Deploy a heatsink to reduce your heat to 0, and toggle FA-on + 0 throttle to kill your momentum quickly and come to a standstill. The Interceptor will try to position itself ~1km away from you, though sometimes it will drift closer. (If there isn't a distance of at least 750m between you, it will be able to see you regardless of heat and launch caustics, interrupting your reboot!). Keep firing your thermal vents at it (make sure weapon capacitor is full to maximize cooling), and begin the reboot. After it is over, resume firing the beams until the interceptor releases its swarm.

Rebooting does not interrupt synthesis, so you can use the downtime to synth heatsinks. If you're quick enough, there's also time to synth flak ammo after the reboot.

Note: After destroying a heart, you have 30 seconds before the interceptor becomes active again. It takes 15 seconds for the reboot to complete, so you need to work quickly. As of 3.3 there is also a 3 second countdown before you can activate the reboot.

You cannot reboot after the first heart! The Interceptor will use lightning after the first heart which is not affected by low temperature and it *will* hit you. Instead, use SCBs to keep your shields alive until after the second heart, after which you will be able to reboot after every heart.

Here's a [video example](#) on how to do it:



Ramming speed

Completing a cold reboot puts you in the perfect position to ram the Interceptor and destroy its shield, eliminating kiting time, and dramatically reducing the duration of the fight. (Very useful for Conda/Corvette, since they can't easily kite for prolonged periods)

Do not approach the interceptor until it releases its swarm!

After completing the ram, you can proceed to deal with the swarm, either by immediately chasing it, or boosting away and reverskiing it.

Manage your pips

Unlike with medium ships, your shields are a better defense than your maneuverability. Utilize the ~2.6x damage reduction from running pips 4-0-2 while exerting the heart. In the Conda and Corvette, this leaves enough energy to both exert the heart with 4 gauss and kill the heart using only 2 gauss (use separate fire groups) **after the shield has already decayed**. If necessary, toggle using macros to 2-0-4 to recharge your gauss which allows your ship to fire continuously.

Avoid the shutdown field

After destroying the next to last heart, the Thargoid will attempt to emit an EMP burst. This EMP has an effective range of 10 km, so it is unlikely you will be able to avoid the effect, however, it is possible to avoid triggering it entirely. There are two primary strategies:

Option 1: Deploy a heatsink. The EMP will not trigger if you are at less than 15% heat (this also works for caustic missiles). Use thermal vent beams to maintain low temperature and stay close, or boost away and follow option 2.

Option 2: Remain outside of 3 km after destroying the heart until the interceptor deploys a swarm (signaling it will not fire the EMP).

If the EMP is triggered, you will hear an “Energy surge detected” warning (sometimes bugged in wings). Trigger FA-off and boost directly away from the thargoid while deploying a heatsink (if able). Charge and fire your shutdown field neutralizer (if equipped), or put 4 pips to shields and fire your SCBs (if shields are low) and drift away.

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