

Lore Weaver's Master of Orion III Strategy Series

By: Mark Horseman

Humanoids



Species: Humanoid

Races: Human, Evon, Pylon

Hardwiring:

The Humanoid population has a general dislike for oppression and war. This is offset by a boost in research efficiency, senate effectiveness, initial relations and Casus Belli. Being that they are small, quick and crafty, they get a little bit of an initiative bonus in ground combat.

The Pylons get a further research bonus on top of the regular humanoids that is offset by a significant population growth penalty.

Do not take this to mean that the Humans and Evon are identical as they are not. There are slight differences in terraforming circles as well as other unmentioned bonuses.

Humans cannot select superior toughness. Diplomacy picks are 1/2 price. They cannot select poor diplomacy and they cannot select Antaran Background.

Evon get Economics: Investors for 1/2 price, cannot select superior diplomacy and they can't select original creativity.

Pylons cannot select superior toughness.

Customization Options:

Customizing Humanoids is fun. They get that sweet Representative Government pick for a total of zero points. The representative government series is hands and feet above the other non collectivist, government types. When customizing Humanoids, I usually go for the trade/diplomacy/spy type races.

My favorite Humanoid race is one designed to get that 'X' win (I like the X win). Try this puppy on for size:

Base: Pilon

Trade: Average (-20)
Environmental: Good (+20)
Accuracy: Poor (-10)
Diplomacy: Good (-20)
Starting Senate Member: No (+10)
Citizenship: Duty (+20)
Starting Biodiversity: Diverse (+10)
Cunning: Sharp (-20)
Anataran Background (+10)

The idea behind this races is to grab as many reasonable worlds as you can on the fringe of the galaxy and research like mad. In the mid game, you'll have to venture into the galactic core to stop those pesky senate victories. The diplomacy is knocked down just a touch because if you run into others in the fringe, you'll want to be friends and not enemies. Diverse biodiversity (whoa, that's a mouthful) is nice so that you can deal with the inevitable food shortages you will have while expanding quickly in the early game. By the tenth turn you should be able to build a colony ship every four turns. Leave no green world un-marked for colonization for the first fifty turns, unless it's a frontier with a possible enemy.

One final note, switch your government to Republic on the first turn and adjust your oppressometer. The Republic government has the highest oppressometer tolerance out of all the representative government types. Corporate also has a high oppressometer tolerance, but reduces research and recreation.

General Disadvantages:

Humanoids are incredibly sensitive to enemy spies, especially in the early game. Picking Republic or Corporate governments is a way to combat this a little, but may cause a disruption in your general strategy. I prefer to deal with enemy spies by raising the oppressometer a couple notches and offset the unrest by spending additional money in unrest reduction and having a fair amount of Recreation and Military DEA's on most worlds.

Development Plans:

This really depends on what you want your Humanoids to do. I like having the following development plan "All Planets: Research Primary, Trade Secondary, Recreation Tertiary". With this base plan, most of your worlds will have one Recreation DEA, and most will have a plethora of Research DEA's. Having Government as a tertiary priority on "New Planets" will put one Government DEA on most worlds as well.

It is important to fill out "Mineral Rich", and "New Planets". I like to define a 'player

defined' plan that focuses on Manufacturing, Infrastructure, and Military (in that order), for worlds that I feel should be building most of my Military (like Magnate Civilizations.)

Research Strategy:

Research is very important for Humanoids. Typically you should be leaps and bounds over everyone save that crafty Trilarian player. If I am away from the senate I like to put 30% into Economics and Sociology and do an even split across the other schools. If I start in the senate or finally reach that other empire, I'll typically drop economics and sociology down to 20% and split evenly amongst the rest.

The reason for doing this is the combination of economics and sociology go a long way towards making your research engine even stronger. Sociology also has many advances in it to help you deal with spies. Dealing with spies in the mid to late game is EXTREMELY important to stop those vile enemies from stealing an Antaran X from you while you are researching it. Once you've gotten an X, especially the second X (my favorite), beefing up research in weapons is a good plan. People will start to declare war on you. Unless you're Evon, in which case you are likely already at war!

Game Play Strategy:

Over extension is a mild problem with Humanoids. Expand at a comfortable pace in the early game, if you manage to find a biodiverse world then it may be safe to expand a little faster. I prefer to capitalize on research whilst playing Humanoids, but building a strategy based on light warfare supplemented by spying works okay also. Try not to be at war with too many empires at once, your people will not approve.

Cybernetiks



Species: Cybernetik

Races: Meklar, Cynoid

Hardwiring:

The key thing to note with the Cybernetik hardwiring is that they eat half food and half minerals. This is both a blessing and a curse. Your early game expansion will be seriously hurt when you do not have the ability to freight excess minerals to newer worlds. You have to be very crafty with what you do.

Cybernetiks enjoy a HUGE bonus to manufacturing, the largest manufacturing bonus in the game. They also enjoy an accuracy and initiative bonus. Cybernetiks are also privy to a very high oppressometer tolerance.

Meklar cannot select the following: superior bioharvesting, superior trade, economic investors, superior diplomacy, or fantastic traders. Meklar get tolerant and natural engineers for ten points each.

Cynoids cannot select poor manufacturing, or empathic. Economic investors is half price, natural engineers and tolerant are ten points each.

Cybernetiks are the second most hated race in the game. Guess who's number one.

Customization Options:

Customizing Cybernetiks requires some thought. You have to remember the half and half food verses minerals hardwiring. Cybernetiks could become a very powerful war race, a very strong research race, and a very strong senate race, just to mention a few. Cybernetiks enjoy cheap toughness picks, Meklar enjoy some other cheap picks, but are penalized by not being able to select superior Bioharvesting or fantastic traders.

Here is a custom race that many of the Beta Testers have enjoyed. I first came up

with the idea of recreating a Collectivist Cyborg empire (guess where that idea came from). My first shot at this put a strong emphasis on ground combat. Several of the Beta Testers commented on the slowness of research. I agreed and I put more of an emphasis on research while sacrificing ground combat skills.

Base: Cynoid

Trade: Average (-40)

Accuracy: Average (-10)

Reflexes: Average (-10)

Toughness: Average (-10)

Government: Collectivist (+60)

Citizenship: Loyalty (+40)

Starting Minerals: Rich (+10)

Cunning: Slow (-40)

Creativity: Normal (-20)

Natural Engineers (+10) (Cybernetiks get this 10 points cheaper)

Tolerant (+10)

The main idea here is to customize a race that will have the highest manufacturing capabilities of any race in the game. I don't know how you could create a more manufacturing savvy race. Citizen Cain claims that his Raas custom race can out perform this race in manufacturing. I disagree, the hardwiring numbers show otherwise. Raas have other benefits though; we'll get into that later. Hopefully CK will grace me with a copy of his Raas race.

General Disadvantages:

The half-and-half rule significantly slows down your expansion speed. This is a very difficult thing to offset. You have to really stress mining, even on worlds where mining isn't necessarily a wise thing to do.

Most races will hate you or be indifferent. While you have a chance to make friends with Ichthyosians or Geodics, to others you will be a tough sell.

To offset these issues I like to put a slight research emphasis on physical sciences, sociology, and occasionally economics.

Development Plans:

Development plans are crucial to the Cybernetiks. I typically do the following for my All Planets strategy: Primary Manufacturing, Secondary Mining, and Tertiary Military, assuming I'm going on the warpath. With Meklar, doing something research related is quite strong. Primary Research, Secondary Mining, and Tertiary Manufacturing makes a very effective strategy.

Other plans you'll want to fill out are mineral rich (you want to mine there) and mineral poor. Setting Mining as primary for new planets is wise. Secondary and tertiary priorities should be assigned according to your general strategy. For Cynoids, Trade is an excellent choice. There is nothing wrong with money.

Research Strategy:

Physical sciences should be the focal point of your research. Cybernetiks need to have that mining edge so you have the hope of keeping up any sort of expansion. How much extra you want to put in is up to you. I'll go as high as 40%, but not any higher. And I'd only recommend that if you're very hurting for mineral resources. The nice thing about physical sciences is that it has a lot of cool missile technologies in it, so you won't be hurting in the weapons category.

Realistically, you'll likely only want to slightly favor physical sciences and keep up with a reasonable amount of research in all of the other schools.

Game Play Strategy:

When playing Cynoids, a good plan is to search out Itchthyosian and Geodic races and make trade agreements. Once you've got income coming in, you'll be able to start exploiting your natural abilities. Going it alone with no friends is a difficult prospect when the effectiveness of your empire relies on trade income.

Playing Meklar is a bit of a different story. Meklar have really good spies. With Meklar, you've got "war supplements". Spies help you damage the enemy's infrastructure or steal Deep Extraction Mining from that slightly better research race. Meklar have a shot of getting along with Insectoid races. Meklar can't support many wars, but they can support multiple wars without any allies. Effective spying makes a huge difference.

Saurians



Species: Saurian

Races: Sakkra, Raas, Grendarl

Hardwiring:

The Saurians are a fairly robust species. They are fairly militaristic in nature, and thus enjoy some ground combat initiative and strength bonuses, as well as a despotic/tribal society that lends itself to oppression.

Saurians enjoy an increased pollution tolerance, as well as a population growth bonus. The Grendarl have a slightly higher growth rate than the other Saurians. I typically favor the Grendarl for this reason, but their economic and research suffers more than the other Saurians.

A wider range of planets is available to the lizards, and this plays well with their hardwiring.

Sakkra get bioharvest picks for half price, they cannot select superior diplomacy or empathic.

Raas cannot select poor bioharvesting.

Grendarl get mining picks for half price, cannot select economic investors, and get the Citizenship: Loyalty pick for half price.

Saurians will almost always be at war with Ichthyosians wherever they exist in the galaxy.

Customization Options:

Customizing Saurians, in my opinion, isn't necessary. The stocks Saurians are all quite formidable. However, there is nothing wrong with making the Saurians jive well with your playing style. While I do enjoy the production savvy races, I typically enjoy

them in the form of Cybernetiks. The nice thing about Saurians though is their wide terraforming rings allows them to conquer Magnate civilizations easily and their stock picks are fairly average in nature (favoring military over research though). All these things are key when customizing your Saurian race.

Base Race: Raas

Mining: Superior (+40)
Economics: Monetarists (+20)
Accuracy: Poor (-20)
Reflexes: Poor (-20)
Diplomacy: Average (-20)

The main idea behind this race is to have stronger mining and economics skills to further overdrive industry. With the higher mining ability, you'll have less of a need for Mining DEA's to run your industry. This frees up more space on your worlds for Industry DEA's. Now that you have an increased amount of Industry, it's time to drive that industry with your stronger-than-average economy.

The thing that makes this race strong is the base race. Raas have the largest terraforming circles out of the entire Saurian species. This allows them to colonize more worlds and acquire Magnate civilizations. Magnate civilizations are incredibly important to this race because of its lackluster ground combat skills.

General Disadvantages:

The base picks for all three of the Saurian races aren't anything to write home about. They are all tweaked towards Military supremacy type games. Their research skills are below average and it is quite expensive to increase them. Saurian spies are also quite average. Any war that the Saurians are a part of needs to be won by the strength of their military. Due to the lack of economic and research skills, this military tends to be lower in quality. Hardwiring offsets this a little. Grendarl and Sakkra have no problem with troops, they have the second most powerful troops in the game. Sakkra have a slight research boost, Raas make up the difference with increased numbers, Grendarl have a bit of a trade bonus.

Development Plans:

Development plans for the Saurians should revolve around military. Military is an odd thing to add to any development plan. Military DEA's are important to keep down unrest (for when you backstab that empire right next to you), and to train your ground troops faster. I prefer the following development plan for all three Saurian races, All Planets: Manufacturing primary, Mining Secondary, Military Tertiary.

Using Player Defined category, Mineral Poor, or Low Biodiversity for Primary Research is a good plan. I like to place Core worlds on research as well.

Research Strategy:

For the first hundred turns, I prefer to place 30% in both the Physical Sciences and Energy Schools. I'll typically take this away from Social Sciences (who need society?) and Biology (The Saurians are all decent bioharvesters). Putting Mathematics between 17-20% is a good idea too; it is an important supplement to your weapons research.

The point behind this research strategy is that Energy and Physical Sciences is the core of most weapon technologies. Staying competitive with your military technologies is very crucial to your success as a Saurian player. This research strategy allows you to quickly crush your near by neighbors and have an empire that has a respectable presence in the galaxy.

Game Play Strategy:

Saurian strategy is all warfare related. The three base races treat warfare a little differently, so I'll break them up and discuss them each on their own.

Sakkra: The Sakkra should attempt the X victory, it's a little harder than the Orion Senate victory, but it is significantly more rewarding. Your early game should be crushing your neighbors with your superior military and making strong allies with any Ethereans you come across. An Antaran X victory should take you somewhere between 300-500 turns. If you start outside of the Senate, it is EXTREMELY important to fight your way into the core of the galaxy and hunt down all reasonable sized empires that are senate members. If you cannot contain the Senate members, you will lose.

Raas: Raas should go for a sole survivor victory. Your manufacturing capabilities allow you to build a large fleet, and in the mid game you should have a large enough empire to support a large number of ships economically. Again, if you are outside of the senate you must kill the stronger senate members. Raas empires can go for the X win, but you'll probably be able to win by sole survivor much sooner (depending on Galaxy size).

Grendarl: There is a lot to be said for diplomacy by force. Grendarl enjoy the highest growth of any Saurian species, thus the Senate victory is a good option for them. They key is that you MUST hunt down and DESTROY COMPLETELY all Insectoid members of the senate. They have a higher population growth rate than you do. Grendarl are the second best ground troops in the game. Policing the senate should not be an issue for them. Once you've nailed the Insectoids, with the help of your trusty Etherean friends, a Senate victory should be in the bag by turn 120-200. If you don't start in the Senate, one of the other two victory conditions will have to suffice (unless you can worm your way into the senate). The non-senate victories are fairly difficult for the Grendarl to achieve. That being said, Grendarl are my third favorite race in the game to play. I have a soft spot for beefy ground troops.

Ichthyosians



Species: Ichthyosian

Races: Trilarian, Nommo

Hardwiring:

The highlight of Ichthyosian hardwiring is their oppressometer tolerance. They have the highest oppression tolerance of any species in the game, including the Magnate civilizations. Their watery heritage gives the Ichthyosians keen senses, thus giving them a respectable bonus to ground combat Initiative and Evade skills.

Ichthyosians have a reasonable amount of choice when it comes to planets. They like the thicker atmosphere worlds that have cooler temperatures. Cooler and denser worlds are preferred over their Saurian descendants predilection.

Ichthyosians are guaranteed to be at war with Saurians, they almost have more distaste for Saurians than they do for Harvesters. As an Ichthyosian player, you'll be fairly good buds with any other species. Trilarians and Nommo have Good and Superior diplomacy respectively, thus making your stay in the galaxy reasonably pleasant.

Ichthyosians cannot select superior toughness. Nommo cannot select slow cunning. Nommo get Citizenship picks for half price.

Customization Options:

The biggest choice you have to make for your custom Ichthyosian is the base race. If you plan on customizing something with strong citizenship, Nommo are an excellent starting block, they only have to pay 30 points for loyalty. Trilarians start with loyalty, but because they didn't pay half price for their Citizenship picks, they gain 20 points per level of Citizenship they drop. Here is a custom race for you Ichthyosian fans to try out. It's designed to get that Antaran X win, my favorite sort of win.

Base Race: Trilarian

Trade: Good (+20)

Starting Member of Orion Senate: Yes (+10)

Citizenship: Association (-40)

Antaran Background (+10)

This isn't much of a change from the standard Trilarian Empire; the extra trade is nice to overdrive your industry with. You will not be short of money with this race. Antaran Background is like having free research labs on all your ships (kinda sorta), this will come in handy when you're sending out Antaran eXpeditions. Starting in the senate will be a load off your chest. Fighting your way into the senate with the weaker Ichthyosian military is not fun. So this way, you can win by senate, or vote for the New Orions to stop the Insectoids from winning (accursed bugs). You'll want to sign trade agreements with everyone you meet, save those evil Saurians. Be careful whom you ally with, you don't want to be dragged into some psycho war with your allies. Humanoids and Ethereans make good friends though.

General Disadvantages:

Ichthyosians have some of the worst ground troops in the game. They get a spiffy hardwiring bonus to their ground troops, but it's not enough, they start with poor toughness, and the Nommo have poor accuracy and reflexes. Nommo are easily the worst ground troops in the game. Nommo also have the liberty pick to start with, this makes them very vulnerable to Social spies that can sneak past their borders. Other than their strong research abilities and beefy oppressometer, they really have nothing going for them.

Development Plans:

Your development plans should be focused on research. Ichthyosians have a strong oppressometer and that will save your research engine from any mishaps. ANY game where you play Ichthyosians you should have research with a primary emphasis. If you are playing Nommo, recreation should make it in as a tertiary, or even secondary, plan. If recreation is secondary, make trade your tertiary, Spaceport DEA's and Recreation DEA's get along quite well. When you are playing Trilarians you don't have to worry about moral, so Recreation can be omitted from your general strategy.

A Player Defined category is a wise thing to set up for worlds that you think should be manufacturing worlds. I typically prefer larger worlds with poor minerals, and Magnate civilizations to do manufacturing for my Ichthyosians. Even Gnomes fight better than Ichthyosians. However, you'd want to emphasize trade on any Gnome world.

Research Strategy:

Research strategy for Ichthyosians is fairly simple. This will be familiar to you MoO2 veterans: get research techs, and go nuts! To do this, I put 20% on both Economics

and Sociology, then an even 15% amongst the remaining four schools. This gives the Ichthyosians a massive research boost while keeping them on the cutting edge of military technology.

Game Play Strategy:

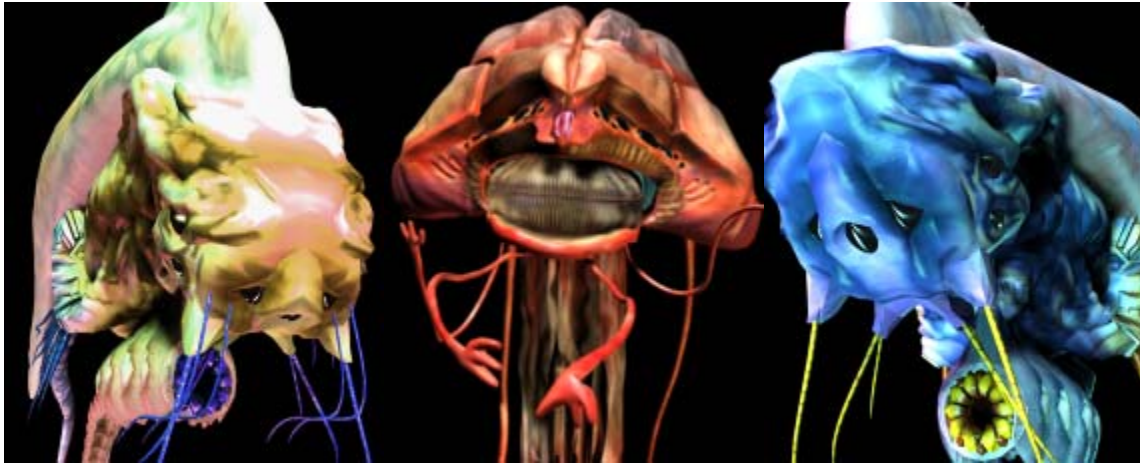
Ichthyosians have a hard time fighting their way into the galactic core to stop possible Senate victories. If you want a challenge, play on Hard or Impossible and keep re-starting until you aren't in the Senate, and good luck. If you do start in the Senate, you have a reasonable shot at a Senate victory. It depends what other races are in the senate at the start of the game. I strongly recommend going for the Antaran X victory every time you play Itcthytosians. Sole Survivor is possible with Trilarians and Nommo, but very long and difficult, especially when you run across more militarily savvy races.

Research is the key for both Itcthytosian races. Your success or failure as an empire is based entirely on your research ability when you are an Itcthytosian.

If you are an Ichthyosian fan, and it's your first time playing the game, if you don't start in the senate, don't expect to win.

Another important thing for your Ichthyosian Empire is acquiring ANY other race to do your ground combat for you. Ichthyosian troops are terrible. Because both Itcthytosian races are very diplo-savvy you may be able to trade some high technology for a world. Your best chance would be with an Evon empire, Ichthyosians have a good relationship with Humanoids, and Evon are quite respectable ground troops. Magnates are nice if you can find them as well.

Ethereans



Species: Etherean

Races: Imsaeis, Eoladi

Hardwiring:

The most important thing to remember with Etherean hardwiring is the planets they prefer. Not just the fact that they prefer gaseous worlds, but the fact that they prefer gas GIANTS. You can fit a heck of a lot of people on a gas giant. Those very rich, size twelve, extreme gravity planets that have a classification of "Red 2" for most races can very well be "Green 1" for our Etherean pals, not to mention that these planets can hold a good 130+ pop points worth of people, and Ethereans like extreme gravity.

The Ethereans sport a mediocre oppressometer tolerance, so switching from a Corporate Monarchy over to Despotism will take you several turns to adjust. If you start in the Senate, it's a worthwhile switch.

The Ethereans' airborne nature confers a respectable Ground Combat Initiative bonus. The Ethereans also sport many tentacles, thus providing them with an extra Ground Combat Attack. The difference between Etherean hardwiring and Ichthyosian hardwiring, with respect to ground combat, is Ethereans get an extra attack, while Ichthyosians get a sizeable evade bonus. In my opinion, the ability to shoot twice is better than the ability to dodge half the time (simple example: in game mechanics are -WAY- more complex).

Ethereans cannot select superior toughness or mining. Eoladi cannot select poor Bioharvesting. Imsaeis get cunning picks for half price. Ethereans have an efficiency bonus to both research and manufacturing (less test tubes and minerals required, respectively).

Ethereans don't get along with Cybernetiks or (*gasp*) Harvesters. Everyone else is your friend.

Customization Options:

Ethereans lend themselves well to expansion. Imsaeis and Eoladi both have superior bioharvesting, thus allowing them to more easily feed their ever-growing population. When customizing Ethereans, it's best to stick with a peaceful approach. You may have better troops than the Ichthyosians, but that doesn't mean you're the king of town (see the Ichthyosian guide). I prefer to base my customizations off of Imsaeis because I'm 'very very sneaky'. Stock Eoladi start with original creativity, so if your looking for a lax research race, start with Eoladi and get your 60 points for knocking that down to imitative.

Base Race: Imsaeis

Starting Member of Orion Senate: Yes (+10)

Citizenship: Duty (-20)

Cunning: Dangerous (+30)

Creativity: Normal (-20)

There's a long story behind this seemingly simple race. I first tried it in an MP game against Kebzero. The idea here is to win by Senate. Ethereans can expand like mad because of their bioharvesting skills. Imsaeis superior diplomacy keeps the AI from interfering with your plans, and keeps the New Orions happier with you. The spies are meant to fight wars for you, and steal tech that you cannot research.

This custom race can win the game, in the larger galaxies, as early as turn 120. My quickest victory was a Senate victory on turn 125 (depends when the Senate convenes). If you don't find many magnate races, your victory won't be as quick as that, but it's definitely possible to win by turn 200 without Magnates.

Just don't fight any wars. Your spies should be able to keep everyone's economy at bay.

General Disadvantages:

Etherean troops are not that great. You'll beat the sushi out of Ichthyosians, but that's about it. In every other case, you'll want some extra numbers to make up the difference. If you can take another races world through diplomacy, or a magnate civilization, you'll be fine for ground troops for the rest of the game.

Ethereans don't have much oppressometer tolerance.

If you expand like crazy with the Ethereans, as you should, you will have trouble defending many of your worlds from possible enemies. Signing defensive alliances with many computer opponents is a wise plan.

Development Plans:

As an Etherean player, you have to carefully plan your overall strategy, whether you're going to capitalize on research, or manufacturing. I myself prefer playing

Imsaeis, who don't have strong research skills, but are endowed with good mining. A manufacturing based strategy that is designed for insane early game expansion is a very good idea.

If you're playing Eoladi, a research heavy set of development plans is a very good idea.

All Etherean players should be defining mining as primary on mineral rich worlds.

Research Strategy:

A general research strategy is effective for Ethereans, favoring no school over any other. Let the viceroys handle it. In the case of the custom race supplied, putting an emphasis on sociology is a wise plan, to make your spies quicker to build and more effective. Eoladi are very fast researchers, and can typically stay only a few steps behind Ichthyosian or Humanoid players. Imsaeis don't research nearly as well, and have to rely on their slightly better diplomacy skills to get them their technological advantage.

Game Play Strategy:

Kebzero and Deb Durham play Eoladi almost exclusively. When switching to other races, the first thing they notice is that they run out of food. Etherean empires can build quite a large and effective empire out of only a handful of good systems. In a recent game, I found three size eleven and twelve gas giant worlds that were all green class in one system. That is a little on the lucky side, but you'll find that most solar systems have a gas giant in it that is worth colonizing. Colonizing yellow class planets is wise if they have rich minerals and extreme gravity.

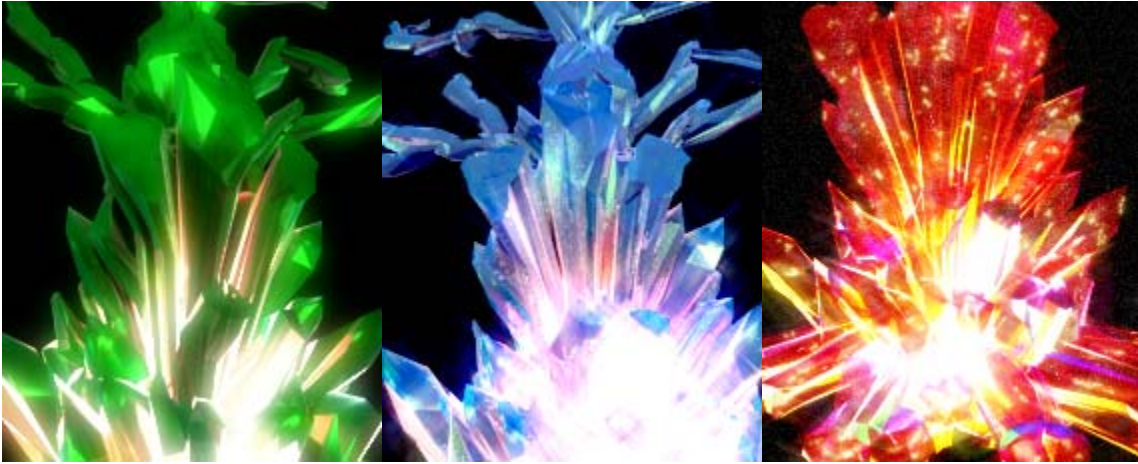
Etherean players should avoid war whenever possible. Armed with enough allies or superior technology, you should be able to trounce an empire or two at a time. You won't likely have the ability to defend your empire from multiple opponents; Ethereans don't work that way. You'll have to make friends. Keep diplomatic channels open whenever possible. Ask for trade agreements, if no more non-intelligence agreements are available, trade for technology. Be sure to put the right emphasis on your diplomatic communications; this is more crucial for Ethereans than any other race. Sakkra respond well to demands from larger empires, Grendarl like to be treated honorably. Make sure you pay attention to the foreign matrix. Breaking a non-aggression pact with someone who is at war with an ally of yours is better than cheesing your ally off. Chances are that you'll still have a friendly relationship with the empire you had the non-aggression pact with.

If you do not start in the senate, you should try to peacefully get a foothold in the Galactic core in hopes that you will be given Senate membership. It doesn't hurt to butter up the New Orions either. Give them a world that doesn't matter or something. Anything to get positive relations with them so they are more likely to support your senate membership that one of your allies likely proposed.

Winning by Antaran X's or sole survivor is tougher with the Ethereans because both options require more of a militaristic approach. If you start in the senate, you should

go for the Senate win, thus Antaran X's and Sole Survivor should be your strategy ONLY if a senate win is unavailable to you (can't get into the senate, or senate victory turned off). An Antaran X's win will be easier and quicker than a Sole Survivor win.

Geodic



Species: Geodic

Races: Silicoid

Hardwiring:

Geodic are, again, a very unique race in the Master of Orion universe. The previous games in the genre had Silicoids thriving on any world, hindered only by population maximums. In Master of Orion III, Silicoids received a very similar treatment, except they get a further population growth penalty on worlds they dislike.

Geodics have a mediocre oppressometer tolerance, much like the Ethereans. Starting off with an Oligarchy or Monarchy is usually the standard way to go with Silicoids, switching to Despotism can be a touch rough.

Geodics are hindered by a substantial population growth penalty. This is offset by an HUGE mining efficiency bonus, a ground combat armour bonus (rocks are really hard), a couple extra hit points in ground combat, and the fact that they use minerals for food instead of bioharvest units. This does not mean Bioharvesting is unimportant though; we'll get to that later.

Silicoids cannot select superior bioharvesting, poor mining (don't know why you'd - want- to), or superior reflexes. Silicoids pay 50% more for Research, Trade, Diplomacy, and Creativity picks. Natural Engineers is free, Tolerant costs an extra ten points.

Most races are indifferent towards Geodics, except for Humanoids, Insectoids, and Harvesters, all of whom dislike Geodics.

Customization Options:

Geodics are very fun to customize. One thing you must keep in mind at all times is the fact that your people eat minerals. If you have any hope of expanding at any

speed, you need very good mining skills. Geodics are my personal favourite species in Master of Orion III. This custom race was designed with the movie "Galaxy Quest" in mind.

Base Race: Silicoid

Bioharvesting: Poor (-20)
Manufacturing: Good (+20)
Environment: Good (-20)
Economics: Specie (-20)
Accuracy: Average (+10)
Reflexes: Average (+10)
Government: Collectivist (+60)
Citizenship: Association (-20)
Starting Planet Mineral Richness: Rich (+10)
Starting Planet Biodiversity: Similar (-10)
Creativity: Normal (-20)

The idea behind this race is to give it a sizeable mining bonus so expansion isn't slowed down by the Silicoids need for minerals. Either collectivist government supplies a very nice bonus to both mining and bioharvesting. The slight bump in combat values is for flavour, "It doesn't have any weak spots, it's a ROCK!"

This race is most effective when it takes over other races. This is true for most Geodic games, but even more so for this race. You need the research abilities that other species have to offer.

General Disadvantages:

Geodics have many major problems they have to solve every game. You have to make up for your bad research, your terrible diplomacy, and your slow population growth.

Luckily for us, Geodics start with a fairly high Creativity pick, thus saving their research engine a bit. Diplomacy though will always be a problem, people will be very indifferent towards you and you will not be able to count on diplomacy as a strategy. As a Geodic player, you will never be able to overcome your population growth issues. You must conquer another race, or find a magnate race to conquer.

Thankfully you have some very competitive ground troops, and are able to manufacture a fleet very early in the game.

Development Plans:

Geodics can do amazing things with manufacturing, so it's a good idea to design a development plan that will yield a large military. I prefer the following for the "All Planets" plan, Primary Manufacturing, Secondary Research, Tertiary Military. You don't want military any higher than tertiary because you don't want more than one (maybe two) military DEA's on any given planet. Research is important to keep your empires equipment up to par.

Mining is very important to Geodics; in the early game you will likely have mineral problems. I suggest setting Mineral rich worlds to, Mining Primary, Mining Secondary, and Mining Tertiary. You want those rich worlds to mine like there was no tomorrow. Also setting up mining as primary on new worlds is nice.

As always, having Government as Tertiary on new planets is a good as it encourages viceroys to build a government DEA on each new world.

Research Strategy:

Physical sciences are very important to Geodics. Much of your game you will be waiting for Deep Extraction Mining, Full Crust Mining, or their ilk. Sometimes these techs get pushed back the tree a bit. There is nothing like striking up a conversation with some local Ethereans to get that Mining DEA enhancement.

I'd recommend pushing your Physical Sciences school as high as 40% and then spread the remaining 60% equally amongst the remaining five schools. Realistically, you'll likely only feel comfortable with 30% in physical sciences.

This emphasis on Physical Sciences will yield missile technologies, mining DEA enhancements, and new ship hull technologies.

Game Play Strategy:

Over expansion rears its ugly head when playing Geodics. In the early game, you can typically only support one or two additional worlds without fear of starvation. I'll typically let some of my Geodics starve so I can expand at a much more reasonable pace. It is very critical to take over another race early in the game. This is for two reasons: you want population that doesn't eat minerals and you want slaves. Slaves work hard and generally do good things for your empire. Crank that FLU meter as high as it'll go every game you play with Silicoids, milk those softies for all they're worth. If you decide to follow that strategy, building a single Bioharvest DEA on your homeworld (or first colony) is a very wise idea, so you can freight food to a newly found Magnate civilization, or that race you just conquered.

Due to the toughness of Silicoid ground troops, a single troop transport containing three units (infantry or marines) can easily be enough to take a world of respectable population. If you have fewer troops than the enemy, using bio or chemical weapons is an option worth thinking about.

Silicoids, because of their growth issue, will have a tough time winning the game by the Orion Senate. Silicoids should not have any problems with the other two victory conditions though.

Insecta



Species: Insecta

Races: Klackon, Tachidi

Hardwiring:

The best thing about the Insecta species is they get the best government series for free. Collectivist governments give you a lot of good bonuses, with very few, or negligible, minuses. Hive governments have an aversion to recreation, other than that; there aren't any notable pitfalls.

Insecta have a mediocre oppressometer tolerance, the largest growth rates in the game, the Tachidi have a slightly higher growth rate than the Klackons. The Insecta enjoy a slight bonus to ground combat initiative.

The Insecta species cannot select citizenship: liberty. Tachidi get superior manufacturing for half price (Klackons start with superior manufacturing). Tachidi are the "everyone's bugs", basically they specialize in no specific area and are quite average across the board. Insecta species can downgrade their government, but they don't get many points back for doing so.

Klackons, on the other hand, are extremely specialized. Klackons get superior bioharvesting for half price, pay 50% more for Research picks, pay 50% more for Creativity picks, and get environmental picks for half price.

Insecta species don't get along with Geodics and Harvesters.

Customization Options:

Insecta are one of the most fun species to customize. Tachidi are fun because they start quite average, therefore you can go in several directions with them. Klackons

can be specialized towards environmental options, or towards farming, or towards combat. The tough decision is what to take away from them when specializing them. Lets give it a crack though. I call these babies the "Army Ants".

Base Race: Klackon

Bioharvesting: Superior (+10)
Environmental: Superior (+20)
Toughness: Average(+10)
Diplomacy: Poor (-20)
Citizenship: Duty (-20)

This race beefs up the Klackons combat ability from average to almost competitive. The key with these Klackons is their environmental bonus and the bioharvesting bonus. Both Collectivist governments grant a sizeable bonus to bioharvesting, so food won't be a problem for these bugs. What these guys won't be doing is researching. You have to expand, and then expand some more, and when you're done expanding, do some more expanding. These Klackons want to conquer using their vast fleets (from their insane manufacturing). Citizenship: Duty is a huge hit. Not having to worry about unrest is really nice, but there isn't much else to take a hit on.

General Disadvantages:

Insecta ground troops chime in as average. They are better than Psilons, Ethereans, and Ichthyosians. Tachidi are slightly better than Klackons (slower but tougher). Insecta can use their good manufacturing to overcome this penalty. It doesn't take long for Insecta planets to be in full operational mode either.

Klackons chime in as the worst researchers in the game. Tachidi are slightly better, but still pretty bad. Spying to make up the difference is also not an option, Insecta sport the worst spies in the game also. The Insecta also don't have good diplomacy skills. You're going to have trouble with technology all game. One way to offset this is to have many research colonies.

Development Plans:

Insecta have a lot of disadvantages that they need to make up for with their development plans. What you have to decide, first and foremost, is what kind of worlds you want to do research on. I like to research on mineral poor worlds, but that's just my preference. Other players like to do industry on poor worlds. One thing you can do is set up a player defined plan that has research, research, and more research. Once this plan is defined you can apply it to specific worlds right after you colonize it. I'd recommend applying it as the secondary plan though, so if the planet falls prey to unrest or starvation you can have a development plan automatically deal with it for you. The nice thing about this approach is you can have planets with rare plants, petrochemicals, animals, or metals defined as research worlds.

Another thing you want to do with development plans is emphasis manufacturing so

you can expand. Stock Klackons are capable of building a colony ship every other turn in the early game (turn 30ish). You should always strive to achieve that goal. Insecta don't just make a footprint on the galaxy, they ARE the galaxy.

Research Strategy:

Talking about research in an Insecta guide is an oxymoron. Regardless, you want to slightly favour biological sciences so you have technology that supports your expansion. Physical sciences are nice to favour also, to support your manufacturing. All other technologies are just nice to have. When you enter some system with ten times more ships than the enemy, it doesn't matter that you have light armour on all your ships and everything shoots fusion beams.

Game Play Strategy:

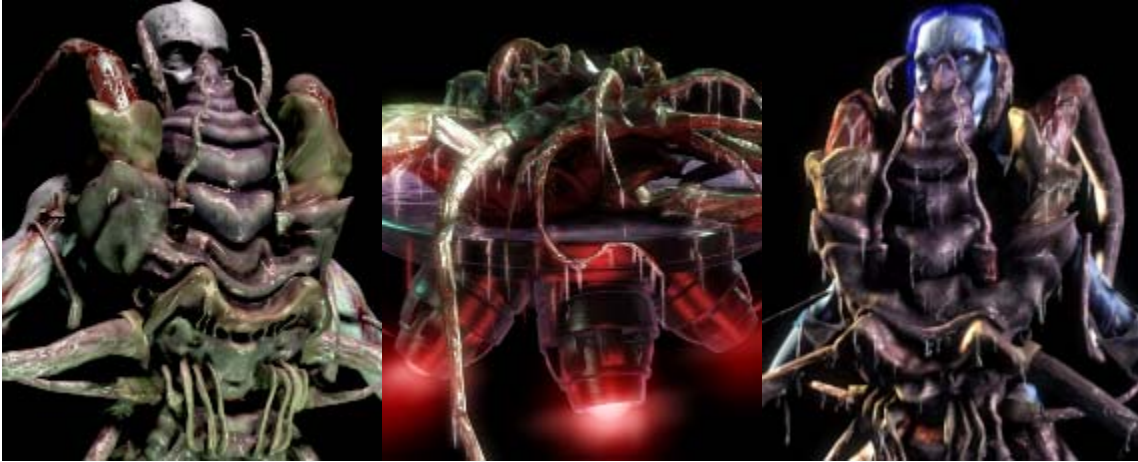
The stock Insecta are some of the best races in the game. If you start in the senate, you should have no trouble winning. Your fast expansion and quick growth rates mean victory. You may have to compete with the Ethereans for that senate victory, but you can squash them like bugs.

If you don't start in the Senate, your race to the center should not be that challenging. Don't expect to get into the senate, but you can remove possible senate victors with no trouble.

Going for a sole survivor victory is likely much quicker in small to large galaxies than an X victory. In larger and huge galaxies, X victories are much more viable.

I strongly recommend that you play an Insecta race for your first Master of Orion III game. It's a great way to ease into the game, if you start in the Senate, you may even win your first game, if you're playing on easy.

Harvesters



Species: Harvester

Races: Ithkul

Hardwiring:

Ithkul are subject to a significant amount of hardwiring. They enjoy a high oppressometer tolerance, a ground combat initiative bonus, a ground combat rally and route bonus (less running, more fighting).

Harvesters can't stand being at peace, and its citizens demand war with other empires and other empires are more likely to declare war on them. Harvesters also have a dramatically reduced senate effectiveness (less likely to garner support from the New Orions). Harvesters when sharing a planet with another race, will consume that race, including Magnate Civilizations.

Harvesters pay 50% more for economic picks. They cannot select superior diplomacy, random senate membership, or senate membership. Collectivist government only costs 40 points. Tolerant and Antaran Background are free.

Customization Options:

Harvesters are fun to customize. You don't have to worry about talking with anyone in the early game, and because of this, you get a bunch of fun little bonuses. Being able to drop the oppressometer and raise the taxes for example. One thing to remember when customizing your Harvesters is that they eat other species. You will have a tough time taking advantage of Magnate Civilizations with a Harvester empire, so dropping the ground combat skills isn't that wise. This example of a custom race does drop ground combat skills, but not so much so that we'll have significant troubles taking worlds. This idea is a modified version of a Harvester race given to me by Herknav.

Base Race: Ithkul

Mining: Superior (+40)
Research: Superior (+20)
Environmental: Average (-20)
Accuracy: Average (-10)
Reflexes: Average (-20)
Toughness: Good (-10)
Government: Collectivist (+40)
Citizenship: Duty (-20)
Cunning: Sharp (-20)

The idea behind this race is to expand and envelop everyone in your path. The bonus to mining skills pairs up well with the high manufacturing and the Collectivist government. This race should colonize every solar system they come across, using colony or outpost ships. This race will have to bring a few extra troops compared to the standard Ithkul and they won't be able to support their wars with the excellent spies that Ithkul have.

General Disadvantages:

Everyone hates Harvesters. Everyone you meet will be at war with you. It will be very hard to not be at war with anyone. In MP games, people who ally with you will suffer large unrest penalties, as will you. While warmongers will think this is just their cup of tea, they are going to be in for quite a shock. Being at war with eight enemies and having no allies is difficult. That and every game you play is a race against the senate victory clock, and every race is road block slowing you down from stopping the would-be senate victor.

Development Plans:

There are many things you can do with development plans for Harvesters. I prefer to favour a research strategy, but also putting a strong emphasis on planetary defense. As a harvester player, you'll want to define worlds that will do manufacturing for your military, farming to support your large empire, research to support your war time technologies, and mining to support your infrastructure. What worlds you do these on are up to you.

Research Strategy:

As a Harvester player, you will not be trading technology with anyone. This means you'll want an even spread across the board for research. Leave your research categories unlocked so that the AI can modify something for you slightly if your empire needs a particular breakthrough.

Game Play Strategy:

Harvesters are one of the most fun species to play in Master of Orion III. They have very good skills in every area of warfare. The successful Harvester player will use

their spies, fleet, ground troops, and strong economy to overcome their adversaries. Early expansion is the key to playing Harvesters, setting up that empire that you will stage your assaults from is the most important part of your game. Ithkul have the strongest ground troops of any playable race. Ithkul spies are more than competitive, and are capable of getting through the strong Ichthyosian defense. The Ithkul economy is very capable of outperforming most in the galaxy.

The Ithkul need every advantage they can get. In Master of Orion III, everyone a Harvester meets is an enemy.

Magnates



Species: Metashifters, Non-Corporeal, Protoplasmic, Plant, Fungal, Avian, Gargantua, Bulrathi, Mrrshan, Elerian, Gnomam

Races: Darlock, Brye Ehts, Ajarad, Audrieh, Phaigour, Alkari, Rhea, Bulrathi, Mrrshan, Elerian, Gnomam

Metashifters, Darlock: High Gravity

World Preference: 105 Pressure, 83 Temperature.

World Summary: Similar to Ethereans in planet preference, except they prefer significantly hotter worlds.

Metashifters have a very respectable oppressometer tolerance, they also enjoy a ground combat initiative bonus and a ground combat strength bonus. They have an average ground combat rating.

The Darlock race suffers from a slight senate effectiveness penalty. It takes 100 Darlocks to receive 85 votes in the senate.

Non-Corporeal, Brye Ehts: Average Gravity

World Preference: 76 Pressure, 26 Temperature

World Summary: Similar to Harvesters in planet preference, except they prefer a much more pressurized atmosphere.

The key feature of the Brye Ehts is their self sufficiency. Brye Ehts only eat one unit of Bioharvesting for each five units of population. They also enjoy a very high oppressometer tolerance. Brye Ehts have a significant ground combat initiative, and a large evade bonus. They're base ground combat skills are slightly above average.

Protoplasmic, Ajadar: Average Gravity

World Preference: 38 Pressure, 65 Temperature

World Summary: Similar to Cybernetiks in planet preference, except they prefer slightly hotter worlds.

Ajadar are less efficient than Brye Ehts, requiring four units of food for five population points. They have an oppressometer tolerance similar to that of the Ethereans. They are average ground combatants, but they receive an extra four hit points in ground combat.

Plant, Audrieh: Average Gravity

World Preference: 70 Pressure, 76 Temperature

World Summary: Similar to Humanoids in planet preference, except they prefer significantly hotter worlds.

Audrieh are another efficient race, only requiring one food for each two population points. They have a low oppressometer tolerance. The Audrieh only generate a quarter of the pollution that other races do. Their base ground combat skills are very competitive, and on top of that, they receive a sizeable evade bonus.

Fungal, Phaigour: Average Gravity

World Preference: 54 Pressure, 67 Temperature

World Summary: Similar to Geodic in planet preference, except they prefer slightly cooler worlds.

The Phaigour have an average oppressometer tolerance. They only pay 85% of the normal costs to maintain their military units. They have a 15% population growth bonus. Phaigour base combat skills are average, they however receive an extremely large evade bonus, and an initiative bonus.

Avian, Alkari: Low Gravity

World Preference: 38 Pressure, 38 Temperature

World Summary: Similar to Humanoids in planet preference, except they prefer a much thinner atmosphere.

The Alkari sport an average oppressometer tolerance, and an average ground combat skill. They are the beneficiaries of a huge initiative bonus, as well as a large evade bonus.

Gargantua, Rhea: High Gravity

World Preference: 105 Pressure, 27 Temperature

World Summary: Similar to Ethereans in planet preference, except they prefer significantly cooler worlds.

The Rhea have an average oppressometer tolerance. They are the best ground troops in the game (Superior Toughness, Accuracy, and Reflexes). On top of their formidable ground combat skill, they receive an attack strength bonus, an armour bonus, and two extra hit points. Unfortunately they generate twice the normal amount of pollution.

Bulrathi: Average Gravity

World Preference: 86 Pressure, 21 Temperature

World Summary: Similar to Saurians in planet preference, except they prefer significantly cooler worlds.

The Bulrathi enjoy a higher than average oppressometer tolerance. They also are efficient miners. Bulrathi have a host of ground combat bonuses, superior toughness, good reflexes, good accuracy, an initiative bonus, an attack strength bonus, an armour bonus, two extra hit points, a moral bonus, and a rally bonus (everyone fights, no one quits).

Mrrshan: Average Gravity

World Preference: 68 Pressure, 32 Temperature

World Summary: Similar to Humanoids in planet preference, except they prefer slightly warmer worlds.

The Mrrshan have a high oppressometer tolerance, they have extremely efficient military DEA's. Their base ground combat skills are slightly above average (superior accuracy, but poor toughness). Mrrshan receive the following bonuses to ground combat, a sizeable initiative bonus, a large accuracy bonus, an evade bonus, and a substantial moral bonus.

Elerian: Average Gravity

World Preference: 43 Pressure, 72 Temperature

World Summary: Similar to Saurians in planet preference, except they prefer a drastically thinner atmosphere.

Elerians have a better than average oppressometer tolerance. They get an unrest reduction bonus that is two times better than loyal citizenship. They are average ground combatants that receive the following bonuses, an initiative bonus, an accuracy bonus, an evasion bonus, and a substantial rally bonus.

Gnolam: Average Gravity

World Preference: 67 Pressure, 53 Temperature

World Summary: Similar to Humanoids in planet preference, except they prefer a more toasty environment.

The Gnomes have a higher than average oppressometer tolerance. They receive the following trade bonuses, an extra trade level, space ports 20% more efficient, and trade is 20% more efficient. They are average ground combatants that receive an initiative bonus. They are more likely to flee from a ground combat.
