

I've spent quite a lot of time scouting throughout my EVE career. During my time flying with Star Fraction I wrote up a guide on fleet scouting which received many positive comments. Recently I gained some more experience with roaming null-sec gangs and null-sec scouting in general while flying with Rote Kapelle. Decided to have a look over it again and update it. The version I'm about to link is the result of those efforts. I wouldn't say it's an exhaustive guide, but it should address all the major elements of being a good scout.

The PDF version is over at EVE-files, download it [here](#). Alternatively I posted a [copy of it](#) on the new OOC forum, [EVE-Inspiracy.com](#) which I encourage anyone interested in role playing or EVE related fiction to check out. Take the time to register and join the discussions, it's a new community venture which should become a great resource for the RP community as a whole.

Check out the guide after the break. Comments and suggestions are appreciated.

Why Scout?

Effective scouts are a critical component for any successful fleet. As a scout you serve as the eyes and ears of the Fleet Commander. With good scouting the FC is able to choose his engagements wisely and avoid unfavorable fights. Scouting can be done by anyone, and good scouts will be welcome in any fleet. Also, you will be one of the few people with the privilege to use voice comms throughout an op, something for more narcissistic people to keep in mind. ;)

I encourage everyone to at least give scouting a try and see if you like it.

What Do I Need?

The two things any good scout needs are a ship and a working microphone. Clarity of scouting reports is essential, so be sure your mic is setup properly before the op.

Scouting Ships

There are many different ships that can be used to scout with. They are listed here in rough order of preference with the first entry being best and bottom worst. Naturally this is not set in stone and the optimal scout will vary somewhat with the fleet composition and goals of the fleet commander for the operation (e.g. Rote Kapelle almost always uses tackle interceptors as primary scouts). **Note:** This rough order pertains primarily to forward scouts. There is more leeway with the other positions, and floating/static scouts are usually more useful if they can cloak. I've left off T3 for now, though technically they can make absurdly good scouting platforms, especially in null sec. T3's place on the list depends heavily on how they are fit. Cloaking and bubble immune setups are comparable to Recons as scouts, and they can be configured to probe as well. Bubble-immune T3 have horrible agility however, which weakens their viability as forward scouts. Probe fit T3 *may* have limited utility for combat however, as they lose some fitting viability for PvP. Useful if you have them around, but they should not be considered for primary scout positions in the majority of fleet compositions.

- Tackle Specialized Interceptors (Stiletto, Malediction, Ares, Raptor)
- Dramiel (more of a tie with tackle 'ceptors)
- Combat Interceptors (Claw, Crusader, Taranis, Crow)
- Other Faction Frigates (depends heavily on fittings)
- Covert Ops Frigates (Buzzard, Helios, Cheetah, Anathema)
- Force Recon Ships (Rapier, Arazu, Pilgrim, Falcon)
- Electronic Attack Frigates (primarily Keres and Hyena)
- Frigates, speed fit with MWD (Just about any will work)
- Assault Frigates (Jaguar, Hawk, Harpy)
- Interdictors (Sabre, Eris, Flycatcher, Heretic)
- Cynabal & Vagabond (in that order)
- Stealth Bombers (Manticore, Hound, Purifier, Nemesis)

Tackle interceptors are first on the list as they offer an ideal combination of mobility, survivability (if fit properly), and to top it off they have bonuses to warp disruptor and scrambler ranges. Covert Ops frigates and other covert ops cloaking ships are the optimal (non-forward) scouting ships because they can observe enemy groups without alerting them to their presence. This means you can happily sit on grid and directly observe movements, including alignment, gate positioning, and even the gun fittings in some cases. Covert Ops and Recon ships are capable of fitting probe launchers, which is a bonus for anyone willing to train up Astrometrics to can bust safe spots and catch missioners, which is an awesome ability to have in any gang.

Interceptors and Frigates are next up, all of them can be extremely agile and nigh uncatchable. In a pinch Interceptors/Frigates/AFs can serve as fast tackle or back tackle when needed, making them an ideal addition to smaller gangs. The tackle role interceptors are best here because they have the fastest warp speeds in-game, plus a bonused warp disruptor range, but in a pinch the combat fit interceptors can also work if they have a warp disruptor fitted. Until it gets nerfed the Dramiel is an amazing scouting and all around combat ship. The other faction frigates vary much more heavily. Though if they are MWD fit they should all be reasonable scouts. The combat interceptors are still much faster than frigates, but fitting them with a long-range point tends to detract from their usual fitting doctrine (excluding the Crusader and Crow), plus it's hard to not feel a bit kill horny when flying one. Scouting frigates should emphasize speed over tank in their fits, though *some* tank is essential to survive bad bubble camps and maintaining tackle long enough for backup to arrive.

The Electronic Attack ships, specifically the Keres and the Hyena can do a good job as scouts provided they have sufficient tank and a long point at minimum. On the whole though EAFs are quite frail and aren't nearly as useful as a proper interceptor scout. Additionally in most cases an EAF's EWAR role is much better served by the equivalent Recon Ship 9 times out of 10. Assault Frigates are an odd category, because they serve a dual role of scout and forward fast tackle and "bait." Most Assault Frigates are **not** good scouts, because they compromise their strengths in order to move quickly. The Jaguar is the best for this role, though the other natively shield tanked AFs, the Harpy and Hawk may also be able to pull it off.

The Cynabal aligns about as fast as a frigate, hits about 3km/s, and destroys tackle. It makes for a great scouting ship in a pinch. Same thing can be said for the Vagabond, minus the frigate level agility. Stealth Bombers are sub-optimal as scouts, the only reason they are viable is the ability to

run a Covert Ops cloak. Too fragile to maintain tackle and cannot be fit with a probe launcher without compromising the combat fit. This is why they are at the bottom of the list.

As a note, in many gang types there won't be a strong emphasis on having a probing or cloaking forward scout, especially in smaller gangs. In those cases a scout equipped for combat becomes more useful to the gang than a prober (though they are still awesome to have on hand). For that role the Force Recons (and T3) are inferior to frigates, as their lower scan resolution and recloaking delay make them weak general purpose tacklers. Bombers are pretty much useless as a forward tackle scout.

Additionally a serious consideration for any scout that may hold tackle for the gang is to have sufficient survivability (and cap stability) to keep a target pointed until the gang arrives. It also goes without saying that any viable scout **MUST** be fit with a long range point at minimum. Ships only fit with a warp scrambler are not suitable scouts, unless of course you are a fan of constantly blue-balling your fleets with missed tackles...

Types of Scouts

There are four basic types of scouting positions, forward, back, floating, and static scouts. The forward scout (sometimes referred to as the primary scout) is the most common type, and one that every gang should have before undocking. Forward scouts stay one jump ahead of the main fleet and follow the route to whatever destination the FC has set. As a general rule, unless hostiles are present in the system the forward scout should remain just one jump ahead of the fleet, waiting on the exit gate until the fleet enters that system before continuing to the next one. It is the forward scout's job to act as initial tackle in the majority of situations.

Back scouts remain one jump behind the fleet, keeping an eye out for hostile gangs that are approaching from behind. Having a back scout is extremely useful, especially as this scout can serve as back tackle for the gang without compromising their primary role. The third type, the floating scout, is a more autonomous role. Your job as a floating scout is to search away from the fleet's current route to find any targets of opportunity. FC's can sometimes forget about where the floating scout is, so occasionally check in and report your current location and status, even if nothing of interest has shown up. Static scouts serve a similar role to the floating scout, the only practical difference is they remain in a fixed system and report changes there.

How to Scout

Scouting is all about being able to present up to the minute intelligence in as succinct and clear a way as possible. To that end every scout should strive to perfect their reporting skills, to quote a teacher of mine "What makes perfect? Perfect practice." Work on doing as much as you can right every time you step up to scout, and you'll find yourself doing it automatically in no time, and many of the skills will transfer to other combat roles including fleet command.

A few general points before getting into the details: a) keeping your ship alive is a priority, don't put yourself in harms way unless directly ordered to by your FC b) when reporting always remain calm, a panicked or excited report is much harder to understand, and subtly influences the

moods of the fleet and fleet commander (this applies to FCs as well) and c) *relax* and have fun, if you aren't enjoying scouting than you should be doing something else.

Voice Comms

Voice comms are your primary means of talking to the fleet commander. While this is the best way to get information to the fleet, there are limitations to them. **Remember this:** there is a limit to how much information a single report should contain, after the 6-7th piece of info it will all start going in one ear and out the other for the FC (or at least for me). As a general rule, do not report exact fleet compositions over voice, there is simply no way for the FC to process that information efficiently. If there are more than 6 ships on field, do NOT report ship types on voice. Ballpark numbers are OK to use though, e.g. "Auga, Amamake Gate, Hostile Gang with 5 BCs 2 Interceptors and a guardian at 0" is fine. Now, onto the most important part, syntax and report order for voice comms.

Generally when reporting intel, avoid interrupting the FC unless it is URGENT. If there is something that must be heard, precede the report with "Check check" and it will be recognized as critical information.

When entering a new system, keep this order of significance in mind: Local -> Grid -> Max Range Scan -> (Conditional) Shorter-range scan. You should always try and report intel in that order. In most cases it should take you about 30 seconds (max) to report the condition of the system, unless there is a significant hostile presence. When reporting the local count (total first), the priority should be reporting numbers of war targets, reds, then neutrals In the interest of efficiency, estimation is often better if you're dealing with a large local count (do NOT do this with war targets).

Now for the fun part, reporting syntax:

On-grid reports:

Your pilot name > System Name > Celestial you are near (station, gate, planet, etc) > [Intel Report] -- Be sure to note if there are different hostile gangs present, their location relative to the gate, and if they are currently engaged.

Scan Reports:

Your pilot name > System Name > "From <celestial> [Intel Report] is on scan in direction of X" or similar. Note: When doing a 360 scan, it doesn't have to always be reported, only if you suspect a pounce or hostile gang, otherwise it is just noise.

Local Reports:

Your pilot name > System Name > Local has W total, X WTs, Y reds, Z neutrals.

A note about reporting on outlaw players, when reporting reds and neutrals, be sure to use the term "outlaw" not "negative ten" when referring to pilots under -5 sec status. So an engageable target would be reported as a "red (or -10) outlaw Hurricane is jumping to you" or "Misan Auga Amamake Gate neutral outlaw gate camp with 10 BS and HICtor support at 0."

When there isn't anything on grid, as you jump in, the standard report is "Inbound Clear" and for the exit gate "Outbound clear". For local reports, "system is empty" and "local has X pilots, all neutral" are also useful.

Text Comms

Text based reporting is primarily done for two things, first is hostile fleet compositions, and second is miscellaneous details that don't need to be reported on voice. There is no super-efficient way to do text based fleet composition reporting, especially with overview and scan sorting having significant limitations on the order of ship types. For reporting fleet compositions, the recognized standard is to report the number of each ship type on field (2x, 5x, etc) then the name of the ship. If you are able to observe the hostile fleet on grid without putting yourself at risk, sort the overview by type and report it from there. Otherwise the best way is to use the directional scanner. If on grid, you can sort the scan results by distance to reduce reporting non-hostiles, and if off grid you should get a <30 degree scan on the fleet (5 degree is optimal) and use that to report it. Scan results persist through systems provided you don't hit scan again, so if you land on a hostile gang, hit scan then jump through and report it after you are safe.

Typing these lists out can be a pain, but don't rush it otherwise you'll probably have to delete something and take even longer to report it. If you don't have time to give a detailed report, try to eyeball the composition on the overview or scan and give a breakdown of the number of BS/BC/support the fleet has along with the total size (estimated).

Scanners & Overview

Directional Scanner:

Knowing how to use the directional scanner effectively is essential to scouting. But learning how to use it well is beyond the scope of this guide and requires in-game practice to become proficient in. Some suggestions related to using it are located in the Tips & Tricks section. Useful guide here: http://amerrylifeandashortone.blogspot.com/2009/10/using-your-directional-scanner_20.html

System Scanner:

Explaining the process of using probes to find targets is beyond the scope of this guide, but I will address some basic points regarding what to do with a probe capable scout in addition to the details of scanning out sanctums in player-held null-sec space. There are excellent tutorials on scanning elsewhere, including [this one](#) produced by CCP.

The process of finding sanctums is ridiculously simple. Under the scanning window in system scan use the onboard scanner as you enter system and within 10 seconds you will have a list of sanctums/havens in system. If you get results you can look at their location through the solar system map (F10) and use the directional scanner to determine if there are any player ships active in each one. Speed of execution is crucial here and thankfully now that you no longer need probes to do this you do not even need to uncloak before warping to a result. Bear in mind (pun intended) the longer you remain in system the more likely your target(s) will become aware of your presence and opt to stop their rat killing and get safe.

Probers can be used to bust safe spots, get warp-ins on sniper fleets, and find mission runners/plexers (miners too, if rare). There are basically two ways to take advantage of system scan results, fleet warps and warp-ins provided by the scout. The former requires the prober in question to have a leadership position in fleet and initiate a squad/wing/fleet warp to the scan results. Be mindful of where the scout is in the leadership hierarchy, as they can only warp their subordinates (squad members, squads in a wing, wings in a fleet) who are currently on grid with them. For providing warp-ins you almost never ever want to have your prober warp to the results at zero (unless it is mission/plex). Generally don't warp any closer than 30km from the results. With larger fleets the further away the better, as you may get uncloaked by other ships on grid if you warp too close. To provide a good warp-in the prober should be located in-line with a celestial and have the hostile fleet between themselves and the celestial in question. The FC should then be able to warp from that celestial to the scout at a range (up to 100km) that will land the fleet in its optimal combat range. The process can be more nuanced but won't be expanded further. This guide is already long enough as it is.

Overview:

For the overview be sure to have relevant information columns included, as much as you can squeeze in. At the minimum you want IC (Icon), Distance, Name, Type. Other useful columns are Velocity, Corp/Alliance, and Transversal/Angular velocity. Sorting by IC is especially nice as you can quickly filter out the WTs from a large gang and get a count of them.

All scouts should have a specific overview setup designed for scouting. The purpose of the scouting overview is to provide as much information as possible to find targets quickly without needing to constantly be spinning around to find the correct celestials or adding objects to the overview. Open up the overview settings and add the following (ordered from top to bottom in the settings): asteroid belt, beacon, force field, stargate, warp gate, wreck, bomb, bomb ecm, mobile warp disruptor, **all** drones, capture point, **all** ships, station, and control tower. This list isn't exhaustive and you may find it useful to add additional ones like sovereignty structures, mission/belt/faction NPCs, customs offices, planets, moons, etc.

The goal is to be able to hit scan and determine both who is in system and what they might be doing. Wrecks are included to figure out if someone has been killing NPCs (and what kind). Drones can indicate if they are still active. The combination of force field and control tower allows you to determine if ships are sitting at a POS. If there is no force field present in the

direction of the tower it means the **tower is offline**. This overview setup will be rather cluttered, so when entering a combat situation swap to a more appropriate PvP setup. **Note:** Swapping to a more restricted (e.g. ship only) overview setup while trying to narrow down a specific ship on directional scanner helps quite a bit by eliminating irrelevant scan results.

Tips & Tricks (in no particular order)

- It's really damn useful to have your brackets on. You can easily add and remove moons from your brackets with ALT+X (new default is Alt-Shift-X). Great for POS scanning.
- Setup good push-to-talk hotkey, it should be easily reachable and interfere minimally with your ability to type or pilot your ship. Personally I have a side mouse where my thumb rests set to do this, middle mouse is also a good one.
- As I mentioned before, scan results are preserved across systems so long as you don't dock. So don't be afraid to take a scan of a system then jump out if you are threatened.
- If you are sitting at a gate waiting for your gang to catch up, always orbit the gate at 1000, this makes you hard to bump and keeps you safe from snipers and large ships looking to take pot shots.
- ALWAYS always always say your pilot name (or just 'scout') before a report so the FC knows who is talking. This applies to everything, not just scouting.
- If possible have BMs for each gate setup at 165km or higher. This allows you to warp to a safe point on grid either from a jump in or to observe hostile gangs. Amazingly useful when you have a covert ops ship.
- You can make quick off-grid safes for checking gates with d-scan on future trips by creating a bookmark before you exit warp on the outgate (anywhere around ~1,000,000km to 1AU is ideal).
- Pay attention to the distances between gates and other celestials, your max scan range is about 14.5 AU, so always keep that in mind. When setting up a warp-in or calling for backup, it is helpful to report the AU distance from where you are to the inbound gate of the fleet so the FC has a rough sense of how long it will take to reach you.
- When under 100km from anyone you can use the "Look at" option to see what guns they are fitting and what direction they are moving their ship.
- Pay attention to where hostile ships warp to, if they warp straight towards a celestial you can reasonably expect them to not be heading to a safe spot. If the player warps in an odd direction, not straight in line with the celestial, they went to a safe.
- If you are acting as a fast tackler for a gang that is in hot pursuit of a fleet, the fastest way to get into warp is NOT by using the overview. After a jump right click in space and find the stargates sub-category, once the loading bar for the session has finished mouse over the right gate and click the WTZ drop down option.
- Double click for show info is awesome, use it. Especially on unknown neutrals and reds.
- When using the directional scanner, click on your ship to generate the square bracket, use that to line up a celestial and if you are using a 5 degree scan you're guaranteed to get it right.
- When in null-sec (or you suspect a disco BS camp) if there is a large hostile presence in system, don't warp directly to the outbound gate. Find a celestial near the outbound and warp to it first, scan towards the gate and then warp if it's all clear. Your default overview should have 'Mobile Warp Disruptor' checked. Check for bubbles towards the gate and be mindful to report any Interdictors (Sabre, Flycatcher, Heretic, Eris) or Heavy Interdictors (Broadsword, Onyx, Devoter, Phobos). Be prepared to burn 15-20km to the gate if you warp to it. A recent patch also allows

you do add warp disruption probes to the overview so you can see when interdictors have the gate bubbled too.

- If there are drag bubbles (bubbles off the celestial 50-100km) on the outbound gate, report it to the FC and suggest a nearby celestial (planets or stations) to use as a bounce point. Alternatively when in a fast ship burn to a point 150km or more off the gate and offer your ship as the warp-in.
- Setup an overview (plus tab) with major celestials (planets, belts, stations, gates) so you can easily see distances.
- In a similar vein to scanning as you jump out of system, if you either are on grid with a gang or land as they warp off quickly take scan so you can report the fleet composition to the FC once you have a safe moment.

I'll occasionally be taking a look back at the guide and updating it as I learn more. May include more specifics later as well, but we'll see.