

Nexuiz CTF Strategy

This article will shed some light on the teamplay behavior for Capture the Flag games. Even though CTF seems to be self-explanatory at first, many people don't know how to achieve an optimal teamplay. The following text is originally from a posting in the former Alientrap forum. Since this forum no longer exists, the posting can only be found [via archive.org](https://archive.org).

Before the action

First you choose a server, enter a match and join a team and even right there some people make their first mistake. Do not just join any team! That is very bad for the team balance! Take a look at the player list and scores to see which of the two teams needs help. If in doubt join the smaller team. Most of the time that's the one which needs help. The easy way is to press the "auto" button in the team selection menu which will do just that (either join the smaller team or if both are the same size it makes you join the team with less points). It often happens that several people see that one team has fewer players and all join this team but then teams might be unbalanced again. The "auto" button will prevent that. The only reason to use the red/blue team buttons should be to change teams to restore balance or if you want to get certain players in a team. You can change teams anytime by pressing F5 (by default) that will bring up the team selection menu. Or just press F6 that's a shortcut for the AUTO button so you do not need to press F5 and click the auto button.

Though the default is to present you the team selection menu, *some* servers may put you into a team automatically when joining the match just as if you had used the "auto" button in the menu. Even on such a server you can still press F5 then to get the team selection menu and choose the other team if needed.

In either case, the color of your gun or the colors beside your name in the scoreboard (press TAB to see it in the default settings) will tell you your current team. You should try to only hit the *other* team(s).

Regarding team balance: *If* you decide to play a match then please *do* play the *whole* match. There is no shame in losing. But running away like a coward weakening your team and throwing off team balance which will probably make even more people leave *is* something to be ashamed of! An unbalanced game just is not fun and not sportsman like. If you really have to go then at least say something before you go so people do notice in the heat of the match! By default you can do so by pressing t, entering your message and pressing return to send the message. Also please tell people if you think teams are unbalanced. It's just too easy to miss this fact in the heat of a match.

How to begin

So you joined the match. For now let's pretend the match has just started. I mentioned "CTF" can be misleading. That's because the most important thing in CTF is *not* to "capture the flag" but to prevent the other team from capturing your flag. The best way to prevent them from doing so is to defend your own flag and flag room! This means the first thing you do after joining the match is to go to your own flag (newer versions will indicate the red and blue bases with an icon that you can see even through walls to guide you). Do this in the most straight way but try to grab one or two guns and an

armor along the way. Do not grab more since your teammates also need guns and armor! There are maps like "vitamea" and "eggandbacon" where a lot of guns and/or armor is available in one place but: You can just use one gun at a time and health and armor will slowly drop if you have more than 100. So it's better to let other team members get some instead of collecting everything and watching the numbers run down on your HUD. It's a good idea to inform the others about those free items (explained later on in the team communication part). If the other team does try to follow "CTF" word by word there should be a few coming into your base which your whole team should be able to fight off without a problem.

How to proceed

Now your base is secure and you can begin phase two. You need to organize your team. You need three sorts of players: Defenders, Attackers and (if there are enough players) also Midfielders. This sounds harder than it is. A lot of people prefer one of the roles so with some luck your team just fills all the needed positions automatically. If not just watch what the others are doing. If everyone runs out of the base it's a good idea to stay back and defend. If everyone stays you should play attacker. Team communication (as explained later on) will of course help with the process. Just tell your team mates what job you are doing or if you think you need help from others. Read the following descriptions to find a role you like.

The defender

The defender's primary job is to protect the flag and the flag room. This means they *get all the armor, health, ammo and weapons* inside the flag room and base *first*. In case of a crosscapture this shifts towards the guy that has the flag. Nobody should take armor or health away from a flagcarrier! When they are stacked the others can take those but only then! As defender you need to have lots of health, armor, ammo and also the "heavy" guns. Depending on the size of the flag room this means the rocket launcher, mortar, electro for smaller flag rooms and the nexgun, mortar, electro for larger flag rooms. If those guns are not nearby (e.g. nexgun in tznex03) have other team members bring you those (more later on, in the midfielders description). You have to be stacked all the time so you can not be overrun and have to watch your flag being taken. Depending on the number of players there should be *at least two* defenders. The main defender has to stay close to the flag so you can't be attacked by surprise. The other defender(s) roam(s) the flag room and base to stack up and to give attackers a warm and dangerous welcome. Make sure to switch a few times so the weaker defender can stack up. This might not be possible on small maps so maybe all defenders are near the flag.

If you were unable to protect the flag and it was taken it's the others' job to intervene. But make sure they know what happened. Do *not* follow the enemy flag carrier! You have to stack up again and remember your job to protect the flag and *flag room*. This is very important because if you leave the flag room the enemy will take it and grab the flag again the moment it returns. Do not allow such a thing as otherwise you will find out how hard it can be to fight your way into a flag room.

The defender's secondary job is to protect the flag carrier when there is a cross capture (both flags are taken). The other team will send attackers to retake their flag. Stay near and follow your flag carrier. If you are the only defender, you and the flag carrier should stay inside the base and get stacked. If possible get some others to help!

When you play as defender you are the base upon which your team is built. You are the backbone of

the team.

The attacker

The attackers job is to attack the enemy base, grab the flag and take it back to their own flag to score a capture. Depending on the number of players there should be *at least two* attackers that support each other. The one with less armor and health should attack the flag room first as he will probably die no matter what. But if he attacks first he can draw the defenders to him and the other attacker has more health left to make the run home. Try to organize your attack.

When both attackers are still alive the one with more armor and health takes the flag. And then *both* try to take the flag home. Being two people you divide the damage and the chance is higher to make it back to your base. Also in case the flag carrier gets fragged the other one is around to pickup the flag and go on. It can be tempting to stay and confuse the other team by taking their flag room. This should only be tried if there are more then two attackers in the enemy flag room and if you want to humiliate their defenders because they have to suffer the consequences I mentioned earlier.

When you carry the enemy flag, stay away from them. If there is a cross capture make sure you have *at least* one other guy protecting you and stay out of harms way to make sure you do not loose the flag again. This includes collecting all the health and armor you can find without exposing yourself to enemies.

The attackers secondary job is to stop enemy flag carriers and retake the flag. In case of a cross capture its the *other* attackers job! Just frag the enemy flag carrier and touch the flag to make it return to your base.

Attackers are the guys that make the most points so many people want to play attackers but they cannot win the match alone. You are the star in the team but you need a good backup in the base so you can capture when coming back with the flag.

The midfielder

The midfielders maybe have the most frustrating role. They roam the space between the two bases and their primary job is to fire what ever gun they have at the enemy. This is to weaken incoming attackers, to help your own flag carrier cross the map and to stop enemy flag carriers from escaping. When someone managed to get your flag you and the attackers have to make sure he does not make it to his own base. As already explained, the defender cannot leave his base to retake the flag and the enemy flag carrier will pass you first so this is mostly your job but as he is already hurt by the defenders this is easier then it sounds. When an enemy got past you, report them (more later on) so the other two team members can prepare to stop them.

The midfielders secondary job is to handle items laying around the map and to generally support the other two team parts. "Handle" means to inform the other team members of those free items so they can stack up for defending and attacking. Only pickup items yourself if your teammates are stacked already or to *prevent* the other team from getting them. You can weaken the other team considerably by taking items away from them so this is *very important*! Also you *have* to get the power ups like strength (quad damage) because most of the time it's too dangerous for the defenders and attackers. They risk blowing them selfs up and rocket jumping home is almost impossible. But try not to hurt them either :). A special hint: Health and armor near the base are very helpful for enemy attackers.

Don't let them get any of it!

Another thing i already mentioned is that on certain maps (like tznex03) important weapons are not near or inside the base. In such a case it's also your job to get such a gun and bring it to the defenders. You can drop the gun you currently wield with backspace by default. You can use the options/controls menu to change this to a key better suited for you. Or: `bind x dropweapon` in the console will make x drop the gun.

Being a midfielder is a hard job but you are the fail-safe of your team. You stop enemy flag carriers and you are the backup for the defenders and attackers. Both will have a way harder job without you.

General stuff

To play a good CTF match all parts need to work together. A defender alone has a very hard job, an attacker alone has a very hard job and for sure a midfielder has a hard job without help. Don't be afraid to switch positions. Try each of the parts. You need to learn what people do on the different positions so you can better help your team. Once you have learned the hard way (by playing) that defenders and flagcarriers need lots of health and armor you should have learned not to take it away from them but to inform them about a free item when you play another part in the team. When the match is running for a while people might want to change their position. It can be boring to play one position for the whole match. Make sure the others notice that a player is doing another job so they can fill the hole. A good example is to grab a nexgun as midfielder in tznex03 and turn into defender when back in the base instead of dropping the gun.

There is something i wanted to tell a lot of people I met in CTF matches: MOVE MOVE MOVE! I guess if people are new to CTF, Nexuiz or a map it's just natural to "hang back" and try to stay out of harms way but after all those matches I'm convinced this does not help, neither yourself nor your team! If you do not know the map you have to explore it and learn its layout, learn the routes and learn where you can find the best weapons and items. Also if you are new to CTF or Nexuiz you have to see what others are doing to learn from them. By avoiding the action you get fragged a lot less but the simple fact that you are around the action helps your team! If you are roaming the map you take items so the other team has less health/armor, even more so if you fire some shots at them. The more you hit them the weaker they are. Even if you miss them they might get distracted and someone else from your team can frag them more easily and sometimes its even a little thing like *being in the way* of the flagcarrier that gets him fragged. These things are all very important so please try to be helpful to your team and *take part* in all the action!

Team communication

It's very important to keep your teammates informed. Every player can spot the enemy flag carrier and maybe take him down and get the flag back. Even if you fail to return the flag or have lost the enemy flag, report to your team where the flag is so they can hunt him down or find the flag more easily. In organized matches you can use a VoIP program to speak with your teammates. But in public matches you will have to rely on the good old text chat messages. There is `messagemode2` bound to r and y by default. Press the key, type in some text and press return to send a message that only your team will see.

A more elegant and faster way is to use predefined messages. Starting with Nexuiz 2.2.3 there are some default messages on the numberpad. And at least with Version 2.4.2 there is an easy to use "userbind" menu in "Settings/Input" to change the text and keys you need to press. For example, by default when you press the key 6 on the numberpad your team will be informed that you saw an enemy at your current position. As you can see him he is near your position. This helps the others to prepare for him. When you press the key 2 on the numberpad your team will be informed about a free item, its name and position (you have to point *exactly* with your crosshair at the item). The defaults using the keypad is for sure hard to use but there are not much free keys left so its a very good idea to change those bindings and find keys you can easily use during playing. Best are the keys around your movement keys as you do not have to stop moving when using those keys.

Special in Nexuiz

As Nexuiz does not yet have a separate capture counter but gives frags for captures, midfielders have to be a bit more stacked than in other CTF games, so they do not die that often because those frags sum up too.

For the same reason attackers should try to not getting fragged once they have the flag. You get quite a few points more for returning the flag then you get for taking and loosing the flag only. Of course you get more points for successfully capturing the flag but when you can foresee that you will not make the run home it's sometimes smarter to abort an attack and retry or to frag a few people instead of taking the flag.

Tricky weapons

Some people spam with the secondary electro mode. There are only few things that are more fun then setting off those blobs and killing the spammer. On the other hand this also means it is best to only fire 1-3 blobs and setting them of yourself and not letting them stay around for others to kill you with, or having teammates running into them as that will give you mirror damage.

The rocket launcher is very dangerous but with the hagar one can easily make the rockets explode while they are near the owner.

Projectiles have a limited lifetime. For example (up to 2.2.3) the electro primary shot explodes before it reaches the other base in "facingworlds". From 2.3 on the electro was changed so you *can* use it for such shots. Use the laser or rocket launcher in older version (which are fast or "live" long enough) to push people off the pyramid top. Also a few shots with the rocket launcher from the top of your base to the corners of the other base can hurt newly spawned enemies when you are lucky.

The machine gun spread is too high to be useful over a long distance. The secondary mode has less spread but the recoil will not make it very useful for more then "half" of "cbctf1" or "facingworlds".

Rockets, timed grenades and electro blobs can open doors. Shooting an electro blob to open a door on "vitamea" and switching to the nexgun helps attacking incoming enemies. They aim for the opening door or are even taken by surprise.

Too much theory

All this stuff in the guide is just to guide you. Of course you still need to use your wit and adapt to each situation. Sometimes a defender should follow the enemy flagcarrier when he thinks he is the only one stacked up and fast enough to stop him. It can be good to have one attacker hide in or near the enemy base and the other one attacks, graps the flag and tries to get it home. The defenders might follow him and if the flagcarrier gets fragged and the flag is returned the other attacker has an empty flagroom to grap the flag, build up speed and get home more easily. Midfielders should help defenders if they notice the own flag gets taken too often, or help the attackers if they can't take the other flag often enough. Sometimes it's good to hide near the enemy base to try to grap items so the enemy defenders can't stack up easily. Although I adviced that midfielders should use the powerups and *help* the attackers it can work wonders if an attacker get's a powerup and wrecks havoc in the other base. Just be very careful with the strength (quad damage) powerup. It can easily hurt yourself.

CTF is a flexible game. The tides can turn quite often. It can be enough if a strong defender get's fragged and the rest of the team is not fast enough with helping defend so the other team can score. Also when the map is already running for a while certain things will get harder as things are much more dynamic during a match then right at the start. When a defender was taken down he might have to fight back the flag room. Make sure that you get help by the other defender(s) or even midfielders then. Also you will notice how good or bad people are at playing certain positions. You will sometimes notice people doing stupid things. Try to help and guide them if possible. Sometimes it's hard to pass a certain point in the map as it is well protected. Tell you mates and ask for help or try another way when the map does allow this. When you can't get to the flag ask for more attackers. CTF will be determined by how good people adapt to the enemy. Sometimes one good defender is enough, another time you can't get enough of those. On some maps an all-out attack to get the flag and then hunt down the enemy flag carrier works better than defending. With time you will get a feel for what is needed.

And now some real theory

I hope by now you agree that CTF is much more determined by team play and strategy then by brute force and simple aim. Part of the strategy, or better part of the preparation that will shape the strategy for a given map, is to notice / find out which parts of a map are important because they will give you the upper hand in a match if your team controls them. Generally you have to find the areas that hold important items like weapons, health, armor or that give you a positional advantage in a fight.

- Armor shards, single health bubbles, near the base often do not vastly improve your armor stats but they can help to *hear* attackers that pick them up. Leave them as bait ("mikectf2", "runningmanctf").
- Items that will mostly help enemy attackers, because their effect wears off too fast for your own, have to be taken by your own team. Those items also respawn (reappear) after a certain time after they were taken. Look at the HUD or scoreboard to know when they are back and grab them again at all costs ("mikectf2" - the 100 health, "facingworlds" - then quad, "cbctf4" - the quad/shield, the quads on "reservoir").
- Tightly packed or powerful items that will turn someone into a unstoppable fragging machine (quad/shield in general, "ctctf6" - the room behind the flags with the 50 health, 100 armor, nexgun, rocketlauncher and mortar, on "moonstone", the nex room with the small armor, the

50 health, small health and big armor nearby) those places are also perfect to “hide” in case of a crosscapture.

- Shield/quad damage spawn areas. Most classical CTF maps have such a spawn in the middle of the map. Your team has to fight to control that arena around 5-10 seconds before it will respawn again to be able to take and use it. If just one of your team is there to take it, he might get fragged too fast.

[Back to the games database](#)

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