# Capture the Flag

Capture the flag, or as it is abbreviated often, CTF, is a game mode, widely used in shooters but also other game genres. The concept is usually very close to the following rules:

- Two teams are playing against each other.
- Both teams have a flag of their color.
- This flag starts at the so-called flag spot.
- The goal for each team is to grab the opponents flag and carry it back to their own flag spot. The successful realization of that goal is a „capture".
- Usually a capture can only occur, if the own flag is still at the flag spot.
- If the flag carrier gets fragged, the flag is dropped.
- If the flag is picked up by a member of the owning team, then it is reset at their flag spot (no carrying back needed).
- If the flag is picked up by a member of the opposing team, that member can continue trying to carry the flag to their own flag spot.

Usually also the following rules are implemented:

- If the flag is dropped and laying still for a certain amount of time (e. g. 60 seconds) then it is reset to the originating flag spot.
- If the carrier uses special means of traversing the map (e.g. the translocator in unreal_tournament or the Emergency Transporter in Star Trek: Voyager Elite Force, the flag is dropped on the original spot the player transported away from.

This mode requires more effort on team coordination, as carrying the flag is not only a matter of aim skill or similar traits. This makes it a very popular game mode, besides the deathmatch. If a team works properly together, even a good „lone wolf" player may be easily overwhelmed. If the lone wolf manages to carry the flag back to his own spot but in the meantime the opposing team also got his flag, he cannot finish the capture until he retrieves his own flag as well.

There are games that offer practically the very same game mode, but call it differently, such as „Cell Capture" for toxikk.

## Variations of the Principle

There are variations of this principle, such as the demolition or hostage scenarios of Counter-Strike or the bombing run mode of UT2004.

For example the hostage rescue is similar in that respect, that the Counter-Terrorists start at their rescue zone (spot where they have to carry at least one hostage to). Their goals is to reach the spots on the map where the hostages are placed and take them from there. So in a way it is an asymmetrical version of CTF, where only one side has to capture a hostage and carry it back to the rescue zone, while the other has to prevent that from happening.

For the bomb defusion scenario on the other hand, the Terrorist team carries the bomb and has to successfully place it at a certain spot on the map and see to it, that the Counter-Terrorist team does not defuse the bomb successfully before its timer goes up. In this scenario there are classically two

spots, where the Terrorist team may plant the bomb, so camping at the bomb spot is simply not an option for the CT Team (while it is very much useful for the Terrorist team after planting the bomb). Again, an item has to reach a certain spot on the map.

The bombing run of UT2004 on the other hand is very likely to soccer. At the beginning of the match a ball-shaped „bomb" is placed at the center of the usually symmetrical map. Both teams have a goal spot. If by any means the ball is thrown through that spot, the owning team loses that round.

There are even more dynamic variations of the CTF principle, such as the key hunt mode of Nexuiz. In this scenario, 2 or more teams each are handed one „key" (given randomly to one team member). The goal is to obtain the keys from all participating teams (2 to 4) and bring them together. If a team achieves it, that one of their players is making contact with all keys at the same time, they score. Every player can carry multiple keys. A player that gets fragged, drops all keys in his possession. In this scenario there is no pre-defined spots, where the items have to be carried to or taken from. The only definition is, that every team starts with their own key. How a team achieves the convergence of all keys on one player is not predefined. This requires an even greater amount of team play, especially when there are three or four teams participating.

# See Also

- Shooter
- nexuiz_ctf_strategy (applies in principle to all CTF games)

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