

# *Fighting Everybody Else*

## *by sick*

Anyone who doesn't stand a chance of catching you in level flight, everyone who can out-turn you just by thinking about it, these are the bulk of your opponent. The Spitfire, the Zeke, the Oscar, the Bf109F-4 or G-6, the F6F, F4F, P-40 or even P-39D; they are very different from each other actually, but to a Pony driver they can be summed up as the turn and burn crowd. These are the fellows who rely on angles superiority to fight a P-51, even if they are really energy fighters compared to other opponents (an F6F can boom and zoom a Zeke to hell and back, but to you they're one and the same).

The most important thing when engaging the tangled masses is energy advantage. This will be most obviously on your side when you cruise over the furball with a 5k altitude advantage, but you can even have an advantage when you are lower if you are significantly faster. If you don't have an energy advantage, don't try to play hero, don't try to drop your flaps and do your best: disengage immediately. Drop your nose, hit the WEP, and get up over 400 kias before you even think about leveling out. Many of these birds are pretty fast themselves and will give you a damn hard time of it, so don't think you're Flash Gordon and can reverse on them when they are d10 behind you. Run away, go home. If they break off pursuit, then, and only then, you can recover altitude and come back for your revenge.

If you start the fight with the E advantage you need, you will be nearly untouchable. Dive on your opponent repeatedly, recovering after each pass with a gentle zoom and an Immelman or a pitchback to repeat the process. You may be able to half Cuban and repeat an attack quicker, or you may be able to lag displacement roll and really beat on the poor lug, but in any case you must make a guns pass, and retain your energy with a recovery move. At first it will take a number of passes to nail each opponent, due to a very high closure rate, short firing window, high deflection, and the fact that the poor Pony is the only bird in the game that shakes when you shoot. Don't get discouraged, and certainly don't try to slow down so you can get a better tracking shot. This won't help your shooting, but will get you a one way ticket to the local morgue.

Situational awareness is what it takes to rack up the kills on these fellows. If you keep track of the E state of your plane, and all those around you, you can engage hordes of them without a worry. But you have to know its time to disengage *before* you burn enough E to give them their chance. If they are already on your six, you've messed up. When you start to feel like its hard work to reverse on them, when you feel a bit overwhelmed by their numbers, when they start getting near your altitude, its time to go home. If you start to head home and notice they don't follow, you can recover energy and come back to rejoin the fray. But if they do follow you, just head home and live to fight another day.