

Fighting the F4U-1

by sick

The Hog is a beautiful bird that is going to give you headaches like a jackhammer at 4 AM. She's almost as fast as you are, turns much better, and carries more ammunition. Even worse, iMOL has seen fit to allow her to blast away with the same six fifties you carry, but not shake back and forth like a dish of Jell-O. The Ensign Eliminator also rolls better than you do, has an initial dive that's better than yours, and has better flat acceleration. Don't forget a better zoom climb, and a sustained climb that's just as good.

Are you utterly hosed from the start? No. But you will have to be as careful as when you fight a Ki-84Ia or a P-38L. If you don't have an energy advantage, remember to go home with your anatomy intact, because the chances of you picking one up any time soon are miniscule. But what are your real advantages? There is only one: speed. Pure, unadulterated speed. And you don't even have a lot of that to go around. The F4U retains energy as well as you do as well, so long sloping turns to deplete the other guys E aren't going to get you anywhere at all. But if you have that initial energy advantage, you can burn a Hog rather handily with a series of boom and zoom guns passes. Be very gentle on the stick, and hold onto that advantage, and every pass you make will cause the poor Hog driver to make a defensive, E depleting maneuver. Like you, he can't afford this. Unlike you, he can't hit the WEP and leave when the time comes.

This is rather shoddy advice, I realize, since it amounts to "if you can't win, run away." The problem is, old Big and Blue really doesn't have any disadvantages versus the Pony. In many ways, they were designed to do the same job: hunt down and destroy their primary opponent. For the Pony, that's FW's and 109's. For the Hog, its Zekes, pure and simple. The Hog trades in a little speed for maneuverability, and the combination is wicked. If you can't exploit that speed advantage early on, you will give up angles that will kill you in the end.

There is one other advantage that, in a pinch, may save you against a Hog, but using it requires devotion to say the least. The rearward blindspot on an F4U is much larger than that on a P-51. If you can get into your opponents six o'clock view, even six o'clock high, you will either force him to yank on the stick to get you back in sight, bleeding valuable energy, or he will have to try to fight blind. Either way, it can be the difference between life and death against this well rounded opponent.