

Fighting the FW190

by sick

The sight of an FW190 of any model bearing down strikes fear and panic into the hearts of most pilots. The same sight makes a Mustang pilot's mouth water in anticipation of a tasty lunch. In many ways, the Wuerger is the ideal opponent for the dedicated Pony driver. Here is the basic breakdown: the Pony is faster, it turns better, and it retains energy much better. The FW can roll faster, and has a hell of a lot more firepower. The FW also happens to have an absolutely wicked split-s. What this means is, if you play your cards right, you should never lose to an FW.

If you start with an altitude advantage over the FW, don't hesitate to dive into the attack. If the FW has enough speed, you will fall in behind him. At this point, he will attempt to roll and jink; just remember to play it cool and don't get caught in a scissors with him. When he starts jinking hard, let him. If you have to, pull up in a Cuban, lag displacement roll or high yo-yo to control your closure but maintain energy advantage. At this point, it's only a matter of time before his poor E-retention characteristics leave him a sitting duck. If, after your initial dive, you have a *lot* of closure, treat the FW like you would any other sitting duck, and make a series of high side guns passes followed by a recovery until he dies.

If the FW instead dives on *you* to start the engagement, first think about how next time you should fly higher and keep a better look out. Then, don't panic. If you have vertical maneuvering speed (which you should never be without in a Pony, it's 200 kias if your desperate, 250 kias to be safe), pitchback to both spoil his aim and allow you to out-turn him. If he tries to turn with you, don't forget to use manual elevator trim to tighten your turn; he'll bleed energy like a rock, and you will soon find yourself not only inside him, but with a significant energy advantage. Take your guns pass, and recover to maintain your newfound e-advantage. If the FW doesn't turn with you, you have a smart driver on your hands. Either he will disengage, in which case if your airspace is clear you can give chase, or he may employ an e-saving gentle zoom, pitchback or Immelman of his own. If so, he's a wily bastard. Since he just dove on you, he has an e-advantage, and you may want to consider disengaging. If his energy surplus is slight, you may be able to zoom with him and catch him up; if not, the angles fight will reap you rewards, as long as he doesn't have buddies around to catch you slow.

To summarize, you can afford to pursue an FW as aggressively as possible. Your limit is not the FW, but the chance that he has friends around. As long as it's just you and him, your fight will be one-sided. Your only real fear is a stray snapshot from those cannons, which will shred you quite instantly.