

Diplomacy World #165



Spring 2024 Issue
www.diplomacyworld.net

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Spring 2024 issue. Spring has arrived in the real world, there's an eclipse coming to my area early in April, and the heaviest part of the Diplomacy event calendar is about to begin. So, get off your duff and jump into the pool!

Before I get to the content of this issue, two pieces of news that crossed my best recently. The first was that Thomas Haver was named the 2023 Gamemaster of the Year by the Boardgame Players Association. This is a category which is nominated by the players themselves, so that speaks volumes to the work Thomas puts into the events he GMs at. You can read about the award at:

<https://www.boardgamers.org/history-topgm-2023.html>

Speaking of Thomas Haver, he happened to send me the details of this new event: Diplomacy is coming to Las Vegas!

The National Diplomacy Masters tournament is happening this September at the Horseshoe Hotel & Casino (September 23-35). **Just to be clear: there is no cash prize for this event.** It takes place in Las Vegas but there's no cash or gambling involved, other than the gambles you take regarding who leaves the Channel and the Black Sea open in Spring 1901. This special event is part of the World Series of Board Gaming. The Masters event celebrates the achievements of players on the board and those organizers who uplift face-to-face to the next level. Truly Masters of their craft and worthy of the honor. The only way to meet them all in one place is at the World Series of Board Gaming. Remember, what stabs happen in Vegas, stay in Vegas!

To compete in this one-of-a-kind event, visit the WSBG site (<https://wsbgvegas.com/>) and purchase any ticket package that includes National Championship Games. Additional event information can be found at the WSBG site and on the Renegade Game Studios official Discord (<https://discord.gg/renegadegames>).

Oh, and before I forget, I wanted to give a plug to the Diplomacy Broadcast Network. To my way of thinking, this is the best place to get your live or prerecorded Diplomacy video fix. From monthly updates on what's happening in the hobby, to turn-by-turn live analysis of major events, it's always a good time. Plus, a collection

of many powerful hobby personalities with lots of skins on the wall.

You can find all their prior videos, and sign up for notifications about new ones, on their YouTube page at: <https://www.youtube.com/@DiploBN>

I was very happy to see some new blood this issue. I'm hoping that names such as Jeff Hayman, Lucas Kruijswijk, and Robert Lacy (to mention a few) will be more frequent visitors to our pages. I know that to some folks, the prospect of writing an article for **Diplomacy World** can seem daunting. But it's really not. Just email me and we can talk about what you'd like to cover. If it needs some editing or additional work, I can either clean it up or guide you to what parts need to be added to. This isn't like writing a term paper or composing a novel. In the end it's just showing an appreciation for the game we all enjoy, and focusing in on one aspect of that game (or the hobby that has grown around it).

Three particular topics I don't think are covered enough these days in Diplomacy World – and I know this reveals my personal preference – are Strategy & Tactics, Humor, and older variants. Of the three, humor is the most difficult; it's a very personal thing, and finding ways to approach humor and put it in a Diplomacy content can be a major effort. (My own attempts have resulted in some people finding them funny, others not so much, and a few not understanding they were humorous at all!).

But as to the other two, sometimes I think people forget this is meant to be a publication for the ENTIRE Diplomacy hobby. You don't need to necessarily justify your strategy and tactics ideas with a multi-page spreadsheet, or defend your opinion of a classic variant with character references and court filings. Sometimes it's fun just to knock an idea around or admit you like something just because you do. If only the best things were the most popular, Adam Sandler would never have had a career.

That's enough from me this time around. ***I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is July 1, 2024.*** Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So, email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com! See you in the Summer, and happy stabbing!

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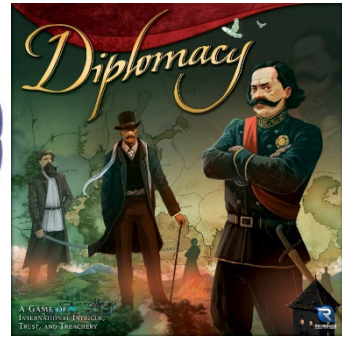
Contributions are welcomed and will earn you accolades and infinite thanks. Persons interested in the vacant staff positions may contact the managing editor for details or to submit their candidacy or both. The same goes for anyone interested in becoming a columnist or senior writer. Diplomacy is a game invented by Allan Calhamer. It is currently manufactured by Hasbro and the name is their trademark with all rights reserved.

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PrezCon Diplomacy Tournament: The Alpha & The Omega

By Thomas Haver



Background

Diplomacy has a long history at the PrezCon gaming convention, an annual event held in Charlottesville, Virginia. Diplomacy was part of the first PrezCon in 1994 and the convention previously hosted DipCon in 2006. For more than a decade Diplomacy at PrezCon went without a GM to help steward the event. This is the story of how we brought Diplomacy back to PrezCon, including the challenges we faced along the way.

During the planning for the Diplomacy 6th edition release by Renegade, PrezCon came up as a potential site to host both a teaching event and a tournament event. The participation numbers weren't fantastic those final years before going away, but the convention held promise. Pre-pandemic there was an active group in DC and there were many players nearby. I was confident that travelers from Central Ohio plus WBC regulars plus invited players from around the country would ensure enough numbers to host an event.

Sunday (2/24-2/25), with a best 2 of 3 round event. This would provide an opportunity for players nearby to play without having to take time off work. We also planned for a few carpools and arranged hotel rooms for travelers in need of space. Diplomacy tournament players are notorious for committing to events early but actually booking travel & hotel details at the last minute.

Another key component to the event was the teaching round. At all our events this year we host teaching rounds either concurrently with the tournament or before the tournament begins. Some events are "teaching only" to help grow the Diplomacy community, and this convention would host both types of events. PrezCon was modeled after AvalonCon (WBC), so working with the convention organizers was easy. We leveraged the existing materials used to submit events for WBC and updated for PrezCon. The PrezCon staff was happy to see Diplomacy return, so they went out of their way to promote the event to attendees.



In the leadup to the event announcement publicly, I was privately recruiting players for the event to gauge interest. We settled on hosting the tournament on Saturday &



With the core details planned out ahead of time, we formally announced the return of PrezCon in November. The event was promoted in Diplomacy World as well as across social media platforms. We had numerous long-time players reach out to partake in the resurrection of Diplomacy at PrezCon. In honor of the return, we put extra effort into the event swag. All players participating in the tournament received a Diplomacy shirt, a Diplomacy zip-up hoodie, an Avalon Hill beanie, and a gift bag filled with goodies. The faith they had in bringing this event back would be rewarded with some fun games and excellent swag.

In the First Round, games were played on a 21,000-piece LEGO set designed after the Renegade edition of Diplomacy, as well as on large wargaming mats with 3D printed pieces. Those topping their boards received a free Renegade Game, and the highest score for each round received a Diplomacy tumbler. After a long time away from PrezCon, these players resurrecting the tournament deserved it all.

The Event

The teaching round was held on Saturday morning before the tournament. A father-son duo were the recipients of the new edition along with all the aforementioned swag. We had two other players intent on playing in the tournament, so they brushed up on the rules in the teaching round then jumped immediately into the game. Another core aspect of events we run is we're friendly to new and returning players. This expectation is held by tournament director and player alike.



Round One Board One saw a strong alliance between Russia (John Avina) and Turkey (Carl Willner). The counterbalance on the opposite side was with England (Kevin Fernandez) and France (Robert Zahn). The EF alliance focused primarily on Germany, but England had to contend with Russia leveraging Germany's disadvantaged position to take Scandinavia. Meanwhile, Italy (Claude Worrell) was working to contain Turkey after jumping on Austria in the early years of the game. Italy and Russia were neck-and-neck for the board top, but the Italian position was too difficult to maintain in this balance-of-power game that's common with C-Diplo (ranked based) systems. Italy had two centers taken in the final year of play, which resulted in Russia (John Avina) taking the board top. Just behind Russia was Turkey & France with 7-centers each, followed by England at 6-centers. The game had some great tension because of how close the players were in supply center count till the final year. Claude, who was board top until the final year, would take note of the playstyle difference and adapt for Rounds Two and Three.

aspect of Diplomacy is the number of armed forces who members learned to play while serving. That military angle played a role in this game, as tournament veteran Jeff Hayman is also a military veteran. He immediately went to work with the new players, establishing himself as a trustworthy ally. At the same time, Germany (Kevin Youells) and France (Geoff Mize) went to work against England. They convinced Russia to focus north and block England in Norway. However, the initial alliance state would not last, with Scandinavia changing hands multiple times during the game. The Russian player (Steve Chilcote) was working both sides of the alliances to survive. Jeff Hayman's Italy managed to convince France to support him into Munich, stabbing his German neighbor. Instead of going all scorched earth toward to end the game, Jeff played for long-term tournament success. His allies in Austria & Turkey did not stab Italy, validating the earlier work to build a strong alliance. Italy topped the board with 9-centers, followed by France and Turkey with 6-centers each. So nice to see different branches of our armed forces work collaboratively!



Round One Board Two had two of our new tournament players, one of whom was active-duty Army LTC and another was a retired Naval Officer. One fascinating

Round Two Board One had an initial pairing of Germany (tournament leader Jeff Hayman) and England (Claude Worrell) against France, and they landed an English army into Belgium. The true action, however, was in the East; the one word to describe East was CHAOS. The game between Italy-Austria-Turkey-Russia shifted on a season-by-season basis. This would potentially be a prime opportunity for the EG alliance to do well against France, but the chaos was spreading. Russia snuck an army into

Berlin and supported England against Germany in Sweden. The dynamics shifted to an EF against Germany, with Russia poking holes in Germany from behind. The back-and-forth in the South eventually ended with Italy on the short end of the center count, as Kevin Fernandez's Austria picked up multiple centers in a mid-game stab. Turkey took the opportunity to also grow, but the Balkans were a tempest of attacks. Russia-Austria-Turkey switched alliances multiple times, and the game ended with Russian units in Syria & Armenia forcing Turkey into a defensive posture. It was Claude Worrell's England that won the day, picking up the lowlands and German dots to top the board at 9-centers. Russia finished with 7-centers, and France/Turkey ended at 6-centers each.

of the alliance play seen in draw-based systems. Both Austria and Russia were knocked out by 1904. The only question was who would eventually top the board, either via superior moves or an ally breaking. The latter ended up being the case, as Germany hit Italy late in the game. Kevin Youells had piloted Italy to 10 centers but was knocked down by a combination of the Witches alliance and his own ally centers. He dropped down to 8-centers, making the way for Johnny Avina's Turkey to top the board with 10-centers. England (Carl Willner) jumped up to 8-centers, tying Kevin for 2nd place on the board.



Round Two Board Two was all about Italy from the start. Kevin Youells worked with Mark Smith's Germany to attack France early with much success. The early attack was made possible because of a Spring 1901 grab of Trieste against the Austrians. An Italian-Turkish effort coupled with a bounce in Galicia with the Russians left Austria in a rough spot. After the initial grab against Austria was resolved, the English (Carl Willner) and Turkish (Johnny Avina) teamed up against Russia. Unlike the other games in the tournament, this resembled some

Entering the final round of play, Johnny Avina was in the "clubhouse" with a clear lead. Two games played, two board tops. The tournament scoring was best two rounds out of three. Even if eliminated, he would still be on the podium. Behind him was Claude Worrell and Jeff Hayman, who each had board tops in prior rounds. Unless another player earned a solo, it would come down to one of those three players. It was fitting those three players all had the same board draw in the final round. The only luck involved in a Diplomacy tournament is the Power/Board draw. The rest is up to the players to decide.

The final round Sunday saw tournament leader Johnny Avina draw Germany. Claude Worrell drew Turkey and Jeff Hayman drew England. Per tournament rules, a player competing in multiple rounds CANNOT play the same power twice in a tournament. Each player drew their third different power in the event.

The game crystalized faster than the games in the first two rounds. Out of the gate Austria was massacred by his neighbors. A worst-case scenario for the Austrian player hoping for a good result: a 1902 elimination. No builds, only destruction. The BBQ restaurant across the street became the de facto "Loser's Lounge". England (Jeff Hayman) and France (Kevin Youells) agreed to an early game alliance. England would focus north on Russia while France would focus on Italy after Germany was eliminated. They proposed a "Western Triple" to start the game but that was a ruse. To counterbalance the alliance, Russia built fleet St. Pete north coast. However, Russia and Germany could not seem to coordinate against England effectively the next turn, which gave EF and opportunity to take Denmark and Holland from Germany. In the south, Kevin Fernandez's Italy had to shift against the fleets France was sending south. Russia was caught in the north with Germany and England. This provided the golden opportunity for Turkey (Claude Worrell).



Italy was working on England to stab his ally France. It would both give him an opportunity to defend against Turkey and provide a path for England to win the tournament. At this point, France was at 8-centers after taking Tunis. In an attempt to be top dog, England did make a move on his game-long ally France. A draw was proposed to end the game with Turkey on top but this vote failed with two people voting against it. The game would finish on the board not via votes. Defeated at the prospect of not finishing second, France blocked England from making further gains, leaving the south open. This prevented further growth from England, and Turkey stabbed Italy for two more centers to finish the game. This board was effectively a "Top Board" situation because it determined the winner. Claude Worrell finished with 12-centers as Turkey to top the board, with Jeff Hayman's England sitting at 10-centers and Kevin Fernandez's Italy at 9-centers. If Turkey and England had tied on center count, the split points would have made Johnny Avina the champion. No man has ever rooted for a tie as Johnny Avina did in that final year. Claude Worrell claimed the board, the Best Turkey, and the Championship in one fell swoop.



Claude did not take the golden opportunity for granted. Turkey had solid position as a result of the early exit of Austria, and he continued to press the advantage. From a six-center Turkey in 1902, he picked up another center (Russian owned) in 1903 and continued the assault the following year, adding three more centers. With Italy's fleets stuck in Tunis & the Tyrrhenian Sea, along with the armies in stuck on the boot, and Russia isolated in the north (and one unit in Germany), it was Turkey's game to lose.

Event Results

Following Round Three we began awarding the prizes so players could begin their journey home. The focus for this event was finishing in the Top 7 or "Top Board". Among the Top Board gear were Diplomacy hats. . . a podium finish earns you a Diplomacy hat of your choice. We had two styles for events this year. We also had "Top Board" photo clipboards produced for the Top 7 finishers. The clipboard has a classic Diplomacy logo on the back in a crossweave pattern and a map with event details on the front. Players can collect a set of seven for their home games! We also provided challenge coins from Avalon Hill and Diplomacy coffee mugs.



Claude Worrell topped his boards in the second and third round, earning two Best Countries and the championship. He did so over tournament leader Johnny Avina, who entered the final round with two board tops. Just a few points separated the pair for the championship. The final round was the deciding factor in the event; entering the clubhouse with a good score doesn't mean you're safe, especially in a Diplomacy tournament.



Kevin Fernandez received the "Best Diplomat" award for his play during the Second Round. He volunteered to play two countries at the same time -- Austria on both boards! He managed to win Best Austria with his play on the LEGO board. After winning CircleDC and Liberty Cup, Kevin keeps accruing honors. Kevin is a rising star in the Diplomacy community, and I look forward to seeing him play at more events in the future.



The Top Board and Best Countries were as follows:

Top Board

- 1st Claude Worrell
- 2nd Johnny Avina
- 3rd Jeff Hayman
- 4th Carl Willner
- 5th Robert Zahn
- 6th Kevin Youells
- 7th Kevin Fernandez

Fun Fact(s): Claude Worrell won the LAST PrezCon held back in 2010. Claude is also a Charlottesville native, so he defended his home turf. A Champion in 2010 and in 2024 with a 14-year gap in the tournament makes Claude the alpha & the omega – or rather the omega & the alpha since we started the tournament anew. Congratulations, Claude!

Best Country Awards

Best Austria - Kevin Fernandez
Best England - Claude Worrell
Best France - Robert Zahn
Best Germany - Mark Smith
Best Italy - Jeff Hayman
Best Russia - Johnny Avina
Best Turkey - Claude Worrell



Event Retrospective

After each event I run, I reach out to players for their feedback on the event. What went well? What didn't go so well? What would you do differently next year? All common questions for people working in product development, and quite relevant for gaming events.

One thing we weren't prepared for was the open seating arrangement at PrezCon. Our event was assigned the Grand Ballroom; however, the tablespace is first-come, first-serve. This meant on both Saturday and Sunday mornings I set my alarm early so I could claim the large round tables for the event. This also meant I skipped dinner with everyone between Round One and Round Two so I could keep the tablespace for Diplomacy.

From feedback by players at the event, their preference is to NOT hold the final round on Sunday morning. Much like WBC, the final Sunday of the convention is a travel

day. Attendees check out of the hotel and head home. Most don't stick around for open gaming or tournament events. That was immediately apparent just by looking around the Grand Ballroom. Diplomacy was among the last events to conclude. For any event next year, we'll likely follow the WBC model: one Round on Friday night, and two Rounds on Saturday. The players did love the swag for the event. The zip-up hoodies and shirts were a big hit. The Diplomacy tumblers were a sought-after prize for performance. For John Avina, our tournament second-place finisher, earning two board tops in the first two rounds of play was the experience he was seeking at the event.

We had positive feedback from the convention organizers. They were of course happy we brought in new attendees to the convention and reserved hotel rooms. The event was well run from their perspective, with written feedback to me and Renegade afterward saying:

Kim: *"We really liked the way that you ran your Diplomacy Tourney! You really made it fun for the players and the spectators! The Lego Map was very cool!"*

Shane: *"[I] was very impressed with Thomas's efforts at Prezcon 2024. I am very excited about the prospect of raising Diplomacy tournaments to the next level."*





better for attendees. At Diplomacy convention events, you give up a degree of control in exchange for infrastructure. Some tournament directors don't care for this model, but I've learned to find a happy balance with my gaming group. In my experience, the best events happen when the organizers and Game Masters are working closely through all stages of planning & execution. I'm pleased and thankful for the support PrezCon has given Diplomacy in its grand return.

A special thank you to all our players who supported this event. We had an eclectic mix of competitors from DC, North Carolina, Virginia, California, and the Midwest. Some played in their first ever tournament, while others were PrezCon originals making their triumphant return. A profound thanks to Renegade Game Studios for bringing Diplomacy back and strongly supporting organized play.

The PrezCon organizers have invited us back for 2025. Perhaps we run it back again with enough interest. If you want to see Diplomacy at PrezCon in the future, please reach out to me via email (tjhaver@gmail.com) or on Discord (QR code below). Thanks for your time and take care!

Photos from the event are available here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/5hZCmwARv7rBVuRD9>

Building a good working relationship with the convention organizers of any event will help make the future events



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or Email Craig.Mayr@gmail.com

Registration Link



Room Block Link



Wise Old Diplomacy: OwlCon Game Report

By Robert Lacy

For the 41st OwlCon at Rice University in Houston, TX - held on February 23-25, 2024 - I was able to host the scheduled game of Diplomacy. The convention is sponsored by the Rice University War and Role-Playing Club. The first convention was held in 1980 and has been going since then. The convention attracts about 750 participants each year. With a few exceptions Diplomacy has been played at the convention each time since the beginning.

For OwlCon 2024 we had seven players signed up but one did not show. The event GM decided to step in and play as Italy wearing both the Italy hat and the GM hat. As the GM, I was not planning on playing and being the GM at the same time, but the other players all wanted a full seven player game, so I relented to the group but made myself ineligible for any special award or prize giveaways. We played for 4 hours and ended the game at the conclusion of the Fall 1905 turn. The game was time slotted for 4 hours; the game format was that the game would last 4 hours or till the end of 1907, whichever happened first.

There were two experienced players (and myself, for a total of three). There were also two new players who had never played before, but had read the rules and watched a few online "how to play" videos. We also had two players of intermediate skill, one of which had played a lot many years ago but had not played in several years and one that had a few games under their belt more recently. This gave the game a nice diverse group of players and player experience. In addition, we had a wide mix of age ranges and gender. We had one female player that was very enthusiastic to play, and the age range was mid-20s to 60s. I felt this was a nice variety.

After waiting in vain for the missing person to show up, we started the game about 30 minutes late. We briefly went over the event format and answered a couple of rules and movement questions for clarification, and then we drew for country assignments. Each player drew one of the nation flags for country assignment from the pouch, and at last the game was ready to begin.

Germany started out with an impressive gain of three supply centers at the end of Fall 1901, gaining Belgium with help from the English fleet in the North Sea. This caused France to become very concerned. Germany denied Sweden to Russia in the fall of 1901 which left Russia with only one build from Rumania. England and France had a DMZ in the English Channel early on, which went to the wayside after a few turns. With Germany gaining three builds, France and Italy made

the Western Med, Gulf of Lyon, and Piedmont a DMZ, which both were happy to keep for most of the game, being violated only in 1905.

There was some uneasy trust between Italy and Austria all game but the alliance held firm overall, though both agreed the usefulness of the alliance was coming to an end and if the game had more turns. Both were eyeing the other for a potential backstab. Early on in the east, Turkey and Russia kept the Black Sea a DMZ. Turkey spent the first few turns looking to not irritate either Austria or Russia, and not to commit to anything the first two years of the game, which became a bad deal for both Turkey and Russia. Turkey played very defensively the first half of the game, which allowed Austria to eventually gain an upper hand in the Balkans, helped by Italy. Turkish 'neutrality' and indecision led to Russia taking the brunt of Austria's advances, and by the time Russia and Turkey decided to join together to stop Austria it was already a bit too late for either of them. Both Turkey and Russia pleaded with Italy for help against Austria, but Italy saw more to gain - more quickly - from continued help with Austria, and felt that Russia and Turkey were not offering much in return for assistance.



In addition, at the same time there were some aggressive moves by Germany towards Warsaw. This left St. Petersburg open for the English, followed by walking into Moscow with an English Army on last move

of the game. This reduced Russia to just a single army in Warsaw. Turkey went out at the end of 1904, and this left Russia dealing with too many powers on its own. Still, several very good defensive moves and bounces by Russia kept them in the game. France was bogged down for most of the game trying to force its way into Germany, or break up the German defenses in the low countries. They stayed at five supply centers at the end of three consecutive fall turns. It took Germany being forced to disband a unit that finally allowed France to push through into the low countries, but cemented England and France at odds with each other. This led to English moves to the Channel, and positing to move against France. At the same time France was positioned to gain many supply centers in Germany, which caused England and Italy to talk about the long-term implications and possibly Italy repositioning some forces to the west. As it was approaching the midnight stop time, we completed Fall 1905 and then I called the game. We concluded having played some three-and-a-half hours. I thought we had a good game pace, and there was general consensus that we all expressed a wish that we could have kept going to see how things would play out, but alas we could not. If the game had gone on further, at the end of the next fall phase it would have been just four powers left, coming down to Austria, England, France and Italy jockeying and hashing it out. There are many ways that could have played out on the board, and several interesting possibilities for shifting alliances. Would Austria and Italy have kept their alliance; Austria continuing into Russia and driving England out of the east while Italy moved west into France? Would Italy and England eat up France? Would that cause Austria to ally with France and turn on Italy out of fear or game board balance?



Surprisingly there was not a huge backstab in the game. There was a lot of interesting back and forth

diplomacy and moves between France, England and Germany all game, mostly involving the England player keeping a balance of power between all three of them, while at the same time keeping Germany and France aimed at each other. It was very interesting to watch it develop, and included some impressive play by the England player. Interesting of note also was that Rumania, Sweden and Galicia were the provinces where most of the bounces, attacks, taking, and retaking kept happening over and over each turn.

Supply Center Gains and Losses by turn:

- Fall 1901
- Austria +2
 - England +2
 - France +2
 - Germany +3
 - Italy +1
 - Russia +1
 - Turkey +1

Sweden remained the only unowned supply center at the end of 1901.

- Fall 1902
- Austria +1
 - England +1
 - France +0
 - Germany +0
 - Italy +0
 - Russia -1
 - Turkey +0

- Fall 1903
- Austria +1
 - England +1
 - France +0
 - Germany -2
 - Italy +2
 - Russia +0
 - Turkey -2

- Fall 1904
- Austria +1
 - England +1
 - France +2
 - Germany -2
 - Italy +1
 - Russia +0
 - Turkey -1

- Fall 1905
- Austria +1
 - England +2
 - France +0
 - Germany +0
 - Italy +0

• Russia -1

**** Final Score at the end of Fall 1905 ****

1. England 9
2. Austria 9 - (8 pieces on board due to no open home center)
3. France 7
4. Italy 7
5. Germany 1
6. Russia 1
7. Turkey 0

The winner went to Chris K. playing England who took home the Owl Trophy for 2024. The special 'Rubber Duck Award' which is given out for either the most convoys or the longest convoy also went to Chris K.

Second place went to Jeff J. as Austria. Jeff is an experienced player who has a good grasp of the rules and strategy. He elected to take a stylish Diplomacy tumbler mug with him to use at work for drinks.

For good gameplay, taking things in stride and a great positive attitude player Sandra M. who was playing as Germany was given a new copy of the game provided by Renegade Games. She also received the Pour le Merite of Blue Max medal for best game play, unanimously agreed upon by all the participants. She was very appreciative and excited about receiving the copy of the game and the medal and everyone gave her a big round of applause for a very good showing her first time playing. Everyone on the board agreed that she had a very positive attitude and was a pleasure to play with and did very well for a first-time player. Afterward the game I gave her a few play tips and pointers for her next game.

Lastly, Jeremy H. as Turkey took home a Diplomacy hat for being a good sport and doing his best to stop the invasion of Turkey. He also received applause from everyone after going out and wished everyone well taking the loss with good graces.

Most importantly, everyone had a good time and a positive experience. Those that were not doing as well as others took it with good humor and with stride. Sure, there were a few frustrations here and there but everyone stayed in good spirits. There was even a comment from one of the first-time players at the end that 'getting beat is how you learn' and that they cannot

wait to play again. I believe that is always a good attitude to have for any game, and especially Diplomacy.

I would also add that there were many people that came up during game play to see what was going on or watch, though I did have to ask one observer nicely but firmly at one point to not kibbitz the game which he realized he did and apologized for.

Overall, the game was a big success and there was lots of good feedback and excitement to play again from everyone. Special thanks to Thomas Haver for helping with the product support! The players were surprised and happy. Everyone that played got a Diplomacy T-Shirt for participating, which was unanimously received well.



DIPLOMACY ANGEL FUND



Fund to Support Diplomacy Travelers

Organizers: Siobhan Nolen, David Hood, Ed Sullivan

Overview

The Diplomacy Angel Fund (DAF) is designed to help Diplomacy fans to attend face-to-face tournaments when finances are an issue. We take applications from any interested travelers, and pair their needs with available donors.

Details

1. Applicants are encouraged to contact any DAF organizer to propose travel assistance.
2. Neither applicants nor donors need disclose their names beyond the Fund organizers.
3. Applicants may reside in any country, and seek assistance to attend any Dip event in the world.
4. DAF cannot guarantee full funding of all requests, as funds may be limited.
5. Applicants should contact organizers well in advance to allow for fundraising and savings in travel cost.
6. Donors may participate in any desired amount, just contact an organizer to join the Fund.

Apply/Donate: Email davidhood@dixiecon.com, or contact any organizer on Discord.

Modeling Commodity Transfer on the Diplomacy Board

By Harold Reynolds

Introduction

Transfer is the process of moving a commodity from its point of origin to its point of destination. For a set of regions, the simplest model has the commodity in question being entirely transferred from a given region to all of its immediate neighbors, keeping none for itself. I thought that it would be interesting to see what would happen if such a model were to be applied to the set of regions that comprise the Diplomacy board.

Model Setup

I digitized the simplified Diplomacy map used in Andy Lischett's zine *Cheesecake* using an ancient copy of a very handy desktop GIS package that I had used in my previous two jobs. Using a program that I'd written, I extracted the set of boundaries between each of the regions and their lengths and imported the result into Excel. It was a straightforward exercise to set up the model in Excel with minimal coding.

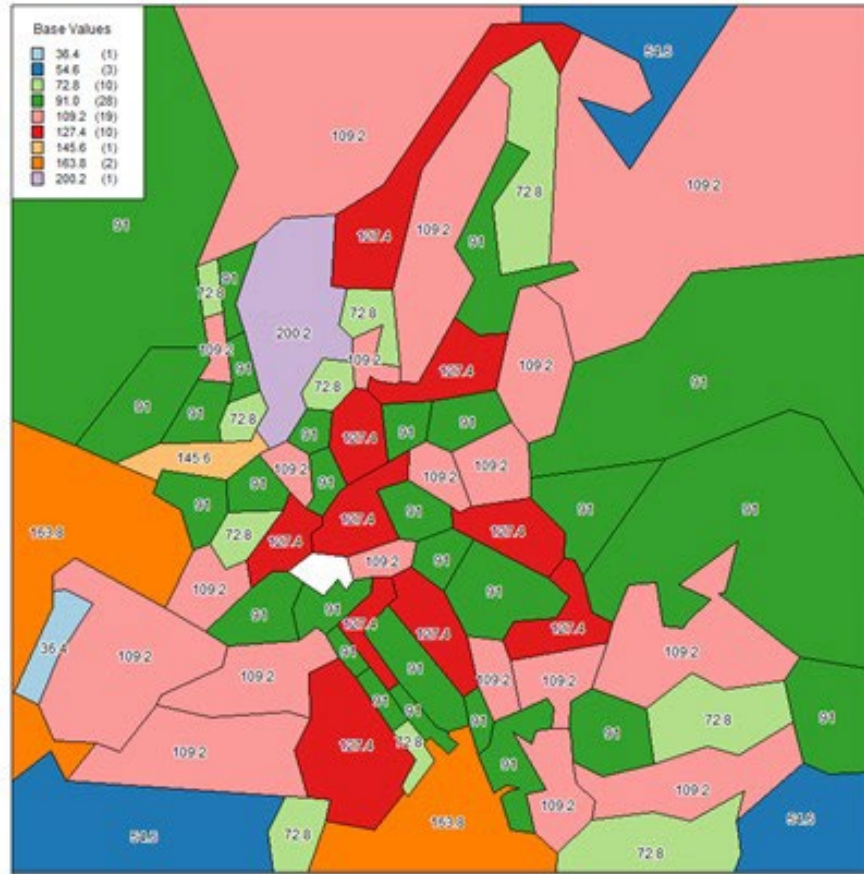


Figure 1: The Model Base Values

Base Model Values

- The base model was defined by setting the length of each boundary segment to be the same value, in this case 5, so that the amount transferred from a region to each neighbor is proportional to the number of neighbors.
- Consider the NAP-APU boundary. NAP has 4 neighbors and APU has 5, which means that NAP will send 25% of its total to APU, but APU will only send 20% of its total to NAP. This inequality means that the regions will not have the same values when the model converges

- Each region's initial value was set to 100.
- The model was iterated 100 times to get convergence.
- The results, shown in Figure 1, have each region with a value equal to approximately 18.2 times the number of neighbors. Other experiments with this model on regular hexagonal and square tile patterns have similar results – a constant times the number of neighbors. The tests listed below will report deviations from the base values, rather than the actual values, for easier reference.

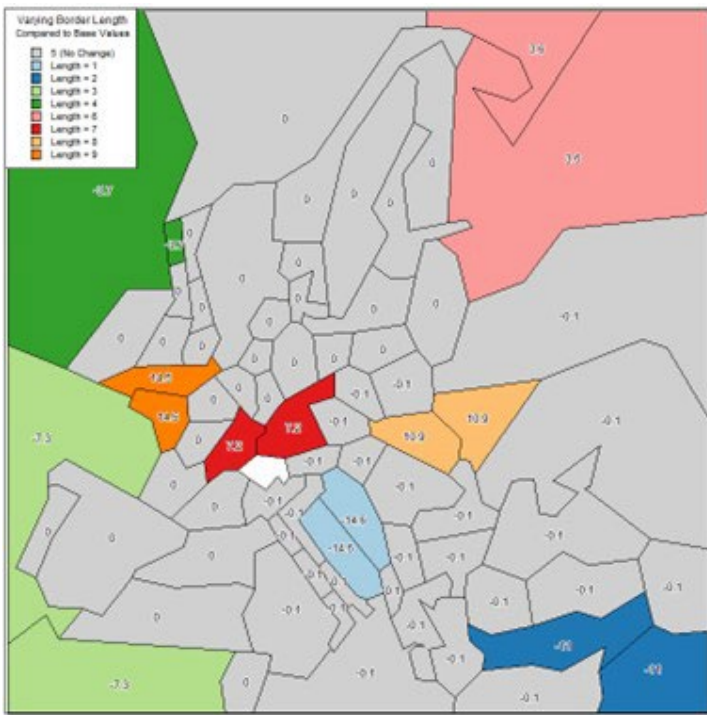


Figure 2 - Figure 2: Increasing and Decreasing Boundary Lengths, and

Experiment 1: Altering the Length of Boundaries

The first experiment tested the effect of lengthening and shrinking boundaries from their default value of 5. Figure 2 shows the boundaries that were altered and the table below shows the final values with respect to the base values.

Zone 1	Zone 2	Length	Value
ADR	TRI	1	-14.57
SMY	SYR	2	-10.93
MAO	NAF	3	-7.29
CLY	NAO	4	-3.64
BAR	STP	6	3.64
BUR	MUN	7	7.28
GAL	UKR	8	10.92
BRE	ENG	9	14.56

The regions with the increased boundary, and hence transfer proportion, see their totals increase, which is because they exchange more of the commodity with each other than they do with their neighbors. Similarly,

the regions with the decreased transfer proportions transfer less to each other than to their neighbors.

The relationship between the length and the change in value is $Value = 3.642 * Length - 18.211$. Note the 18.211, which is very similar to the constant that multiplies the number of neighbors to get the model's base values. Multiple experiments with other borders and lengths return very similar results.

Experiment 2: Keeping Some of the Distribution Within the Regions

In order to have a quantity remain within each region, an "extra side" of length 5 is added so that equal amounts flow from the region to each neighbor, and from the region to itself. The dilution effect is most pronounced with Portugal, which changes from exporting 50% of its quantity to Spain and the Mid-Atlantic Ocean to exporting 33.3% to each and keeping 33.3% for itself. The North Sea, on the other hand, goes from exporting 1/11 (9.1%) of its total to each neighbor to 1/12 (8.3%) and keeping 8.3% for itself.

The table shows a linear relationship between the number of neighbors of a region (including itself, so Portugal has 3) and the change from the base value of the model. Note that each value in the table is an average because various regions with a given number of neighbors had slightly different results. The equation is $Value = -2.808 * Neighbors + 18.224$. Once again, the 18.224 value of the intercept is similar to the constant in the previous experiment.

# of neighbors (including self)	Model Value (Average)
3	9.78
4	6.99
5	4.18
6	1.38
7	-1.42
8	-4.23
9	-7.08
10	-9.82
12	-15.51

World Boardgaming Championships

WBC is an annual gaming convention held at Seven Springs Mountain Resort. The best two rounds of three will count towards the final tournament score. Best Country awards and prizes will be provided by the organizer. Food and drink will be provided during each round, with a pizza party during Round Three. A teaching round will be taught on Friday with board game prizes to select competitors.

July 26th - July 27th in Seven Springs, PA

Demo - 5pm-7pm Friday

Round One - 7pm-11pm Friday

Round Two - 10am-2pm Saturday

Round Three - 7pm-11pm Saturday

Scoring: C-Diplo

Rank: Best two out of three rounds

Contact: Thomas Haver (tjhaver@gmail.com)

Website: <http://www.boardgamers.org/>



Selected Upcoming Events

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://petermc.net/diplomacy/> and <https://www.thenadf.org/play/> and <https://www.diplomacybriefing.com/diplomacytournaments> and <https://diplobn.com/schedule/>

Circle DC (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – April 4th – April 7th, 2024 - Washington, DC - <https://tabletop.events/conventions/circledc>

Hung-Parliament Handicap - April 12th – April 14th, 2024 – Canberra, Australia - <http://daanz.org/dip-tournaments.htm>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – April 13th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

No Time Draws 2024 - April 27th – April 20th, 2024 - <http://petermc.net/diplomacy/ntd2024.html>

Buckeye Gam (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – May 3rd – May 5th, 2024 - Chicago, Illinois - <https://www.gaminghoopla.com/>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – May 11th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

BGG Spring (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) - May 23rd – May 27th, 2024 - Dallas, Texas - <https://tabletop.events/conventions/bgg.spring-2024>

DixieCon – May 24th – May 26th, 2024 – Chapel Hill, North Carolina - www.dixiecon.com or email davidhood@dixiecon.com

KublaCon (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – May 24th – May 27th, 2024 - Burlingame, California - <https://tabletop.events/conventions/kublacon-22>

World DipCon 2024 – May 31st – June 2nd, 2024 - Croce Rossa Italiana - Comitato di Varedo, Italy - <https://www.facebook.com/events/2407467882765459> or <http://agiletechideas.com/event/world-diplomacy-convention-2024/>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – June 8th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

Origins (Tournament and Teaching Event) – June 19th – June 23rd, 2024 - Columbus, Ohio - <https://www.originsgamefair.com/>

Dice Tower East (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – July 3rd – July 7th, 2024 – Orlando, Florida - <https://dicetowereast.com/>

CharCon (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – July 12th – July 14th, 2024 - Charleston, West Virginia - <https://www.charcon.org/>

ARMADA Regatta – July 19th – July 21st, 2024 – Denver, Colorado - <https://armada-dip.com/>

World Boardgaming Championships (Tournament and Teaching Event) – July 26th – July 27th, 2024 - Seven Springs, Pennsylvania - <https://www.boardgamersorg/index.html>

US Diplomacy Championship at GenCon (Tournament and Teaching Event) – August 1st – August 4th, 2024 - Indianapolis, Indiana - <https://www.gencon.com/>

Boston Massacre – August 9th – August 11th, 2024 – Boston, Massachusetts - <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfwK6t-y0Mc-yXOZKqvpM7dMcoXkFhT6Q4nN1tQTIPojgV5g/viewform>

SkyCon 2 – August 23rd – August 25th, 2024 – Bozeman, Montana – Country Inn & Suites by Radisson - Registration form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeQ6NLGo8jxM1ZB7TDPm-nTXUCsP4u5wWJ_0uW_9r660jEjxQ/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0

National Diplomacy Masters at World Series of Boardgaming – September 23rd – September 25th, 2024 – Horseshow Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada - <https://wsbgvegas.com/> or Discord at <https://discord.gg/renegeadegames>

Nuke-Con (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – October 4th – October 6th, 2024 - Council Bluffs, Iowa - <https://www.nuke-con.com/>

BGG Con (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – November 13th – November 17th, 2024 – Dallas, Texas - https://boardgamegeek.com/wiki/page/BGG_Events

PAX Unplugged (Tournament and Teaching Event) - December 6th – December 8th, 2024 – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - <https://unplugged.paxsite.com/>

World DipCon 2025 – Probably March 2025 – San Francisco, California

U.S. Diplomacy Championship

We proudly bring you the annual U.S. Championship at the largest Diplomacy event in the country. Square off in one or more of the four qualifiers. The seven Best Country winners from the qualifiers advance to the Top Board on Saturday night. Our group also hosts "Introduction to Diplomacy" events concurrent with the tournament events.

August 1st - August 3rd at GenCon in Indianapolis, Indiana

Round One: 12pm-4pm Thursday
Round Two: 8pm-12am Thursday
Round Three: 12pm-4pm Friday
Round Four: 8pm-12am Friday
Championship Board: 4pm Saturday

Contact: Thomas Haver (tjhaver@gmail.com)
Website: <http://www.gencon.com/>



After Action Report: PrezCon 2024 – Return of Diplomacy

By Jeff Hayman

After playing the last four WBC Diplomacy tournaments in Pennsylvania, I was anxious to try a tournament a little closer to my home in Virginia. PrezCon provided that opportunity this year, and the even better news was that Tom Haver would be hosting it. I like Tom's format of a four-hour time limit and best two out of three games, the C-Diplo scoring system, and of course all the great SWAG that Tom is known to bring to the party. This year's PREZCON was no exception.

The Diplomacy tournament was held at one end of the Double Tree Hilton's grand ballroom. The other ongoing game tournaments did not distract from the always intense negotiation periods that Diplomacy necessitates. Numerous non-players were drawn to the very colorful custom boards that Tom provided, but were never a nuisance. I even ran into two childhood friends I hadn't seen in over 40 years as a result of all the interest in the Diplomacy swag!

There were 19 players who signed up to try their hand at being the "Master of all Europe" this year. Most played at least two games, some all three rounds, and a total of five total boards were fought over. And considering there were ten really nice awards possible (1st, 2nd, 3rd...and seven Best Country awards), everyone stood a good chance at some "official" recognition. Additionally, players rec'd a Diplomacy hoodie, a Diplomacy T-shirt, and a gift bag of Diplomacy themed trinkets. And that's

not even counting the additional swag of games, mugs, hats and much else for board toppers!

Bottom line, some old acquaintances were renewed, some new friendships made, and plenty of smiling stabbage on the side (and front and back and underneath)! For my part, I played all three rounds (Italy, Germany, and England) and my scores of my first and third game were enough to earn me a Third-place finish overall. We certainly couldn't count my second game as I ended up "defunct" as Germany! Everyone made some good moves, some bad ones, even a mis-order or two but all had a great time! I also picked up a Best Italy award and left with no hard feelings towards anyone. The first and second place finishers (Claude Worrell and John Avina respectively) were certainly deserving and very gracious, as was everyone else. Tom runs a very collegial tournament. And as always, I learned a lot about the game.

Staying in the hotel made the logistics a lot easier, and there was a decent restaurant and bar on site. The amenities were modern, and unlike Seven Springs, the Wi-Fi was excellent! I have now played in eight tournaments of various lengths, modalities, and scoring. Although I've enjoyed them all, I think this past weekend was the best. If Diplomacy returns to PrezCon next year, I'll be there, and hopefully a lot of you readers will too!

Ask the Hobby Historian: Aussie Diplomacy

By David Hood

Alright, it seems totally apropos for these times for me to devote this hobby history installment to our friends Down Under. With Jamal Blakkarly being the current World Dipcon champ along with being the winner of the 2023 Virtual Diplomacy Championship, and Peter McNamara winning the latest DBN Invitational tournament (and coming in second in the VDC), there is no denying that Australians are ascendant on the Diplomacy scene. I mean, when Popular Mechanics decided to publish a piece about Diplomacy in their magazine a few years ago, they did not just recruit some random American to profile - no, they chose Andrew Goff.

So how did all this happen? What's the story of Diplomacy play in Australia, and how did it develop? Honestly, I don't know the full story. I would not claim to be an expert on all the ins and outs of that hobby. So, I'll approach this subject in the best way I can - based on my own personal interactions with Australian Diplomats.

Back when I started playing the game postally in 1986, I did participate in several "international" games. This meant that instead of the normal three- or four-week deadlines for moves, the time frame was five or six weeks to allow for the players to send mail across greater distances. I distinctly remember several of these games involved Australian players, including one Aussie confusingly named Andrew England (most international games I had were with folk from England, not folk NAMED England.) I did not realize it at the time, but Andrew was actually one of the folks in Australia trying to organize hobby services at the time.

Take a look at issue 6 of the Journal of Australian Diplomacy, published in the fall of 1989, linked here: https://archive.org/details/The_Journal_of_Australian_Diplomacy_6-1989-09/page/n5/mode/2up

You will notice a few things. Firstly, Andrew is mentioned several times in relation to several hobby services, including the International Subscription Exchange, for which he was the rep on the Australian end. This was an early way for hobbyists to send money to each other across the oceans without having to pay for currency conversion. (No, I don't remember precisely how it worked.) Another thing you will notice is that they had three Australian tournaments advertised - the South Australian Open (which ran for many years), something called the City v. Country event, and the Australian Diplomacy Championship in Canberra, which was a bit like their version of North America's Dipcon. And these were not even all the events they had back in the day, just the ones being publicized in that one issue of the Journal.

One other thing you will notice, quite to my surprise I must say, is that my own name is mentioned in that issue - because I was about to host the second ever World Dipcon that next year at Dixiecon, with a blitz of promotional material already reaching the shores of Australia some nine months before. The original plan for World Dipcon was for the British to host at Manorcon in 1988, then me to host in 1990, and then finally the Canberra event would host in 1992, so their mention of my event was part of their own long-range planning for the 1992 WDC three years early! Fun fact - for those who watched the latest Whipping tournament, or played in that San Francisco event a couple of weeks ago, you may recall that Don Del Grande played in the Sunday round. Don was the sole North American rep to that Canberra event in 1992. Yes, he, Edi Birsan, and Melinda Holley are three of the few players still active who predate my own involvement in the hobby.

Three Australians would come to my event in 1990, including the one I knew the best from other hobby interactions, John Cain. In addition to being a tournament organizer, John was also a zine publisher. His *Victoriana* is listed in the issue of the Journal I mentioned above, along with the other nine Australian zines active in the late 80s. One other item in the Journal should be of interest to hobby history buffs - mention of the Diplomacy Association of Australia, the DAA. They did have a functioning institution to help promote the game and hobby throughout the country, unlike North America at the time which was (oddly) proud of its anarchic lack of anything like that. (The formation of the North American Diplomacy Federation was many years away.) Years later, the DAA would add New Zealand and be renamed the DAANZ.

Now, let's jump into our Hot Tub Time Machine and fast forward a few years, to 1997. In February of that year, issue 3 of the DAA's zine *Rag* is linked here: <http://daanz.org/rag03.htm>

Let's note a few things about the state of their hobby eight years later. First, take a look at the list of active tournaments now - regional championships for Victoria, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, and Northern Territory, along with the Australian National Championship and a second Melbourne event called the Don Challenge Cup. Whew! Now you can understand how exciting it must be for Australian hobbyists of today to see a successful event last month and another one coming up in April - their FTF scene is starting to rebuild towards a goal of reaching the level they had so many years ago.

You will also notice that the list of Dipzines has dropped to three. Just as everywhere else in the world, the advent of the Internet was killing off the amateur magazines that had formed the backbone of the hobby for so long, with players using either the online automated judges or web-based human GMs for email games of Dip without the accompanying magazine articles and other content which helped to create the fannish atmosphere of the past. Here's another fun fact though - two of those three zines from 1997 are STILL publishing today! I just recently resubscribed to Brendan Whyte's zine *Damn the Consequences*, now published in Australia instead of in New Zealand as it was in 1997. The second still going is Brad Martin's *Western Front*, still published from Western Australia.

Last comment to make about the state of the hobby in early 1997 - look at the listings for the Bismarck Cup. As I discussed with Peter McNamara in his interview for the March 2024 edition of my DBN news show *Deadline*, the hobby in Australia used to have a points system to tie together players' finishes from all their FTF events of the year to crown an overall circuit champ. The North American hobby used to do this as well, with a Grand Prix points race for all face-to-face events, and also regional versions like the Eastern Swing and the West Coast Swaggle. These were all forerunners of the DBN Invitational concept we have now - a way to tie various events together from a season of Diplomacy play, to enhance the competitive fun and to encourage folk to try out as many events, leagues or tournaments as they can.

Again, let's fast forward, now to today. Australia went through a rough patch in terms of FTF events for several years, with really the only tournament being a housecon hosted by Melissa Call known as Poppycon. However, with two events this spring, and perhaps more coming later in the year, the Aussies appear to be back on the upswing. Who knows, maybe if they train up some more players, they can stop screwing around and take the Dipcon title next year as well!



National Diplomacy Masters

The World Series of Board Gaming (WSBG) and Renegade Game Studios are joining forces to host the National Diplomacy Masters in Las Vegas, Nevada. The tournament is being held in conjunction with the WSBG championship to crown the brightest star in board gaming.



Compete against our honored Diplomacy Masters:

- DipCon Champion **Katie Gray**
- US National Champion **Dan McNeill**
- Famed GMs **Robert Lacy** and **Manus Hand**

- September 23-25, 2024
- Horseshoe Hotel & Casino
- Round 1: Monday 4pm
- Round 2: Tuesday 4pm
- Top Board & Round 3: Wednesday 4pm

Do you have what it takes to defeat a Master?
Find out at the World Series of Board Gaming!

- Hotel & Tickets: <https://wsbgvegas.com/>



2023 Diplomacy Rules: Seventy Years of Evolution

By Lucas Kruijswijk

In 2023, the new Renegade edition of Diplomacy came out with an updated rulebook. This was an ecstatic moment for the author of Diplomacy Adjudicator Test Cases (DATC), and prompted me to put a lot of time and effort into an update after 15 years.

In 1953 Alan Calhmer drafted the first set of rules, but it wasn't until 1971 they became expanded and "modern." Then In 1982 the rules were slightly adapted. With the emergence of the internet around 1990, the first automated adjudicators were implemented. These operated both by email servers and as standalone, downloadable programs. Although this opened a completely new way of playing, it created also some problems. All those early adjudicators contained bugs, and they were often not trusted. If you are running a server hosting thousands of games, weird things can happen. It also became clear that different adjudicators interpreted the rules differently.

The good thing about rules that contain issues is that those create a lot of lively discussions. Often that results in long email threads comparing the abstract moves in the game with some real military operations. But there the positivity ends. Players joining tournaments want the same rules everywhere, as it is with chess. A bad reputation (even it is only due to minor issues) might lead to players and programmers going their own way, or ignoring the rules in places where they're perfectly clear. And then the restyling of the rules in the 2000 edition left some longing for the "good old days" of the 1971 rules.

My greatest fear was that a new edition would "fix" the rules, but ruin the game in the process. To give an example, when a player forgets to disband a unit or the country is in civil disorder, then the unit furthest away is disbanded. The 1971 and 1982 rules did not explain how the distance was calculated. Must armies convoy? Or can they walk over water? Literally, all the adjudicators around that time had implemented it differently. Although it didn't affect actual play, a fix in the 2000 rules would have been nice, but it became worse. The 1971/1982 rules specified distance to home *supply centers*, but in the 2000 rules it become home *country*. A slight difference; for Germany it meant the provinces of Prussia, Ruhr, and Silesia in addition to the home supply centers. For the adjudicators it was a big change, because the map data had to be extended, and data structures needed to be changed. This would require so much work that as a result this rule was never implemented. Also, a player of a country in civil disorder

is unlikely to complain. The rule was now broken *and* ignored.

The 2023 edition has fixed this situation, but also changed it. The distance is now calculated from any *owned* supply center. This change makes sense, because it gives slightly better play in civil disorder. Yet, the point is if the rule didn't need fixing in the first place. But we need decisive rules, not only for simply getting it right, but also to cement them for the future.

Around 2000 I had my own ideas how on to write an adjudicator. I realized that I needed to test my algorithm, so I started writing test cases. I also bumped into the rule issues; in the end I was more occupied with collecting rule issues and reported bugs from all kinds of forums than anything else. This resulted in the DATC. Eventually, my algorithm ideas also ended up in the DATC and several adjudicators used them.

This worked. With the inherent distrust in new adjudicators, the developers were keen to make their project "DATC compliant," persuading the naysayers to use their creation. As consequence we saw a dramatic increase in adjudication quality.

It also became clear to me that the rules issues were rather minor, in the sense that none of them had a significant impact on how the game is played. The bad reputation was really due to the issues combined with the buggy and unfaithful implementation of the older adjudicators. But, although minor, an unexpected adjudication due to a rule issue may still be experienced as a local apocalypse.

One of these minor issues was whether an impossible move - such as "A Moscow – Munich" or even "A Moscow – Moon" - would still count as an attempted move. If so, one can securely deny a support in hold, without moving the unit. You can think about a theoretical situation where a unit needs to be disbanded to build it somewhere else. But does this happen in actual play? Incidentally, there was an article on this very topic by Mark Berch back in **Diplomacy World #38** (page 18 <https://www.diplomacyworld.net/pdf/dw38.pdf>).

Yet, the issue pops up also in another situation. Suppose Germany orders the following:

F Kiel Hold
A Holland Supports Kiel
A Holland – Burgundy

The player intended to write “A Belgium – Burgundy”, but made a mistake. When processing these orders, one could argue that Hollands holds, because it has two orders, but one could also argue that the last line is impossible and should therefore be ignored, leaving the support order intact. The 2023 rules address this issue and say that impossible orders result in a hold. I think it would be better if it had said impossible orders are ignored, but we get the message. This is also compatible with modern internet play, where the user simply cannot select an impossible move.

Other issues needed some time to discuss and resolve. Around 2000 there was no consensus whether coastal specification in support orders (and requiring them to match) should be mandatory. Opinions were evenly split. Stephen Agar asked Mr. Calhamer about this and he replied: “allies should be in evident agreement on the moves.” With this remark the consensus started to tilt towards the point of view that coastal specification should be required. The adjudicators implemented this and the 2023 rules codified it.

While updating the DATC early this year, I noticed that the passage of time also made some debates outdated. The early e-mail judges required convoy path specifications. Instead of “A Holland – York” one had to write “A Holland – North Sea – York”. Around 2000 there were proponents that wanted this adopted generally. This never got traction. It would also introduce a new issue in case of manual adjudication. If mandatory, “A Holland – York” could still be considered a poorly written order, since there is only one way to convoy this. The newer adjudicators started to abandon the convoy path specifications, making it adhere to the official rules. The updated DATC has been significantly trimmed on these outdated discussions.

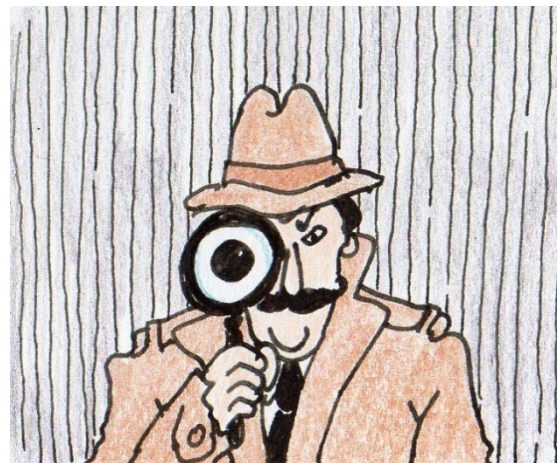
Although the 2023 rules filled the most annoying gaps, they are still not perfect, in my opinion. On page 5 of the rules, it spends five sentences on illegal and poorly-written orders, instead of just beginning by describing the proper orders. My preference would be to move this to a new chapter somewhere at the end, including the “what if” for improper orders. Such chapter could contain guidelines for common errors in order writing, such as too many or too few builds (or disbands) in the adjustment phase. For poorly written orders it could say that each order should be interpreted individually (so, an order cannot be explained by another). Although certainly a neutral game master may adjudicate more leniently.

The rule for convoying to an adjacent province is currently overly complex, and still somewhat ambiguous. The 2000 rules added the annotation of “via convoy”, but didn’t make it mandatory when the convoy contains a fleet of same power. This is the only place in the rules where an order is interpreted by looking at other orders. Let’s require “via convoy” for all moves to adjacent provinces. It is a very rare case and the players won’t forget.

Finally, I hope that the Szykman rule will be adopted for convoy paradoxes. All adjudicators after the inception of the DATC have done so. The current 2000/2023 rule is not bad (and mostly compatible with the Szykman rule), but still incomplete. The uncovered cases are extremely rare, but may still happen. One such case was reported on [Reddit on April 2020](#). The rulebook does not give a resolution, but it was resolved by the Szykman rule. The Szykman rule says: “If a situation arises in which an army’s convoy order results in a paradoxical adjudication, the convoying fleet(s) part of the paradox will execute a hold order.” Since there is likely only one convoying fleet, you can hardly do anything wrong if adjudicated manually. And if you think about it, doesn’t it make sense to just take out the *convoy* in case of a *convoy paradox*?

To summarize: after the publication of the 2023 rules, I was happy that most of the issues were resolved and no new issues were introduced. Renegade and Hasbro showed commitment in perfecting the rules and protecting the legacy of Allan Calhamer.

The new version 3.0 of the DATC has been uploaded to the Files sections on the Diplomacy page of BoardGameGeek.



Origins Game Fair

The annual Origins Diplomacy Tournament is held at one of the largest gaming conventions in the US. The tournament is three rounds running Friday through Saturday. Best Country Awards, the Midwest Diplomacy Championship, and prizes will be awarded following the third round. We also host a teaching round on Thursday evening with prizes to select participants.

June 20th - June 22nd in Columbus, Ohio

Teaching Round: 7pm-11pm Thursday
Round One: 7pm-11pm Friday
Round Two: 12pm-4pm Saturday
Round Three: 7pm-11pm Saturday


Scoring System: C-Diplo
Rank: Best two out of three rounds

Contact: Thomas Haver (tjhaver@gmail.com)
Website: <https://www.originsgamefair.com/>



ORIGINS
GAME FAIR


Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column

 **Lewis Pulsipher** – I was reading through DW 164 and came to Mal Arky's description of DW #1 and #5, and found my name being mentioned for an article that I do not remember writing - though I vaguely remember the title, "A Myth Defended." I was inspired to go back and read it.


I still think Diplomacy naturally works as groups of nations, even if that "group" is occasionally a single nation. That there can be more than two groups is one of the oddities of the game, since a real war virtually always comes down to two sides, even if one side includes nations that are natural enemies (WW II USA & Britain vs. USSR). Yet the diplomatic maneuvering in the real world *before* war breaks out sometimes involves three or more sides.

BTW, I never designed a variant of "Kingmaker" that I can recall - I despise the game because it's a design kludge that is not only a poor game but that has NOTHING to do with how the Wars of the Roses worked. But I did design "Britannia" and other published board games (and one video game).

(A revised version of Kingmaker was recently published in the UK. Haven't seen it, but I understand it's much more reasonable.)

 **Thomas Haver** – Good news about the availability of Diplomacy. In mid-March the bookstore chain Barnes & Noble will start carrying Diplomacy! **[[See the photo on page 33.]]**

This new development should expose our beloved game to many new players. The chain has over 600 locations across the US. Many stores have a solid selection of board games (including Acquire and Axis & Allies, which are also published by Renegade). Who's ready for a 3rd printing?

 **Thomas Haver** – In this edition of Diplomacy World, readers will spot a flyer for the "National Diplomacy Masters" tournament. This is a completely new event, so many readers are probably wondering how this event came into existence. The event started with the World Series of Board Gaming (WSBG) The convention was founded a few years ago in Las Vegas to support competitive Board Gaming, with a similar model to the "World Series of Poker". Their signature events are called "Ring Events", a group of 16 tournaments featuring different board

games to determine the World Championship. The unique part of the WSBG are cash prizes -- \$100,000 to award.

The WSBG worked with Renegade Game Studios on a sponsorship to turn "Acquire" into a Ring Event. They also requested Diplomacy after several WSBG staff members saw the Diplomacy tournament at PrezCon. After internal discussion, we decided to make Diplomacy part of the "National" type events rather than a Ring Event All Ring Events are single-elimination. That's a reasonable structure for games like Cascadia, Terraforming Mars, and Azul -- but not so easy for Diplomacy. When pro Diplomacy players travel to an event, they expect to play at least three rounds. Diplomacy will take place in the afternoon on three consecutive days, with a Top Board held during the third round. Everyone who plays at least one round is walking away with some special Diplomacy gear (shirts, challenge coins, & more), with escalating prizes based on single game performance & overall tournament placement. Even though a player may not qualify for the Top Board in the third round, they still have incentive to play because of the prize structure.

A unique feature of this event are the four "Diplomacy Masters". These are four individuals who stood out from the crowd in the past year based on performance on-and-off the board. These four competitors are being honored at the event, and each has the "Stay & Play" package for four hotel nights as well as access to all events at the WSBG. Please send your congratulations if you're in contact with Katie Gray, Dan McNeill, Manus Hand or Robert Lacy. I think this event is a cool way to recognize our face-to-face organizers and championship players. I'm also looking forward to the post-game activities being planned for the players. So many fun events in Las Vegas; Darren Aronofsky's immersive film "Postcard from Earth" at The Sphere (<https://www.thespherevegas.com/>) will be the night before the tournament. Remember: what stabs happen in Vegas, stay in Vegas.

Additional details can be found here. We'll send additional updates in the next edition of Diplomacy World as well.

<https://boardgamegeek.com/thread/3271370/national-diplomacy-masters-tournament-las-vegas-co>



The 38th Annual Dixiecon

Chapel Hill NC - May 24-26, 2024

Tournament Director: David Hood

Assistant TD: Michael Lowrey

Dixiecon News #1 - March 16, 2024

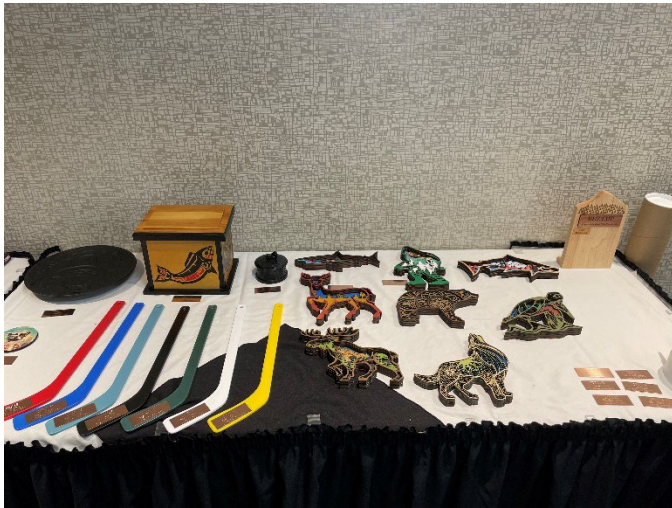
Updates for the 38th Annual Dixiecon

1. Registrations already received from eight US states and two Canadian provinces.
2. Past Tour of Britain winner Timothy Crosby returns to FTF play at Dixie
3. Attendees include four completely new to Dixiecon
4. Open Gaming, Iron Man Event for non-Dip gaming, and Social Activities start Thursday night
5. \$50 registration, \$50/night double or \$80/night single to stay in dorm, hotel block also available
6. Annual tradition BBQ Dinner scheduled for Saturday afternoon
7. Full tournament coverage on the Diplomacy Broadcast Network YouTube Channel

It's Time to Register: Email davidhood@dixiecon.com or visit www.dixiecon.com

A DipCon in Canada?

By Chris Brand



The Awards Table for Cascadia Open

You might think that early February is not the best time to visit British Columbia. Of course there's snow on the mountains if that's your thing, and there was the winter Olympics in 2010, but a lot of people would honestly rather be somewhere warmer. Since 2017, though, there has also been the attraction of the Cascadia Open, and in 2024 that was also DipCon 56. This meant that nearly 50 of the ruggedest Diplomacy players dug out their thermal underwear and passports and set out to see if they could get their name in lights (or at least on Wikipedia). They came from near and far – Coquitlam, Burnaby, Maple Ridge, Montreal, 14 different US states, London, and even Australia. Five of them had won WDC. Four had won previous DipCons. One of them started playing in the 1960s. For five this was their first face-to-face tournament. Riaz Virani had his work cut out finding a restaurant that would take a reservation for 40+ on a Friday night.

Stepping back a bit, my own first tournament was in 2004, when I somehow stumbled upon “Dip in the Ocean” run by Mike Hall. I travelled as far as Seattle to play over the next few years, until Vancouver hosted WDC and DipCon in 2007. Then I really got hooked. Mike Hall moved back east, 2014 was officially the last WAC Tournament in Seattle (although that turned out to be a lie) and in 2016 I finally won my first tournament. By then I was arrogant enough to think that I had some good ideas about how tournaments could be improved, but if I was going to try them out then I was going to have to run my own tournament, and so in 2017 Cascadia Open was born. When Riaz returned to the hobby in 2019, he still couldn't travel much, so we agreed that he would take on a lot of the organizational work beforehand as long as I was willing to run the

tournament itself so he could play. So, when I was asked if I could host DipCon - bringing DipCon back to Canada after 17 years away - my immediate reply was “I'll ask Riaz”. Once he said yes, I was able to start advertising, and soon after the adverts were published, I was informed that I was hosting DipCon 56, not DipCon 53. At least I knew people were reading them!



From the Friday Meal

Friday the 2nd of February was a day of many trips to the airport, with people arriving throughout the day. Several people met for lunch near the venue, with Mike Moore going from the airport to lunch and Riaz and myself heading to the airport immediately after lunch. By the evening, the vast majority had arrived, and we took control of 4 large tables at ChongQing Szechuan restaurant. After dinner, the majority went to the Green Timbers pub which used to be run by the late Len Tennant - who was a Diplomacy player - and is now run by his two sons. They were very happy to give us our own area where we wouldn't annoy the other patrons. The main gaming space at the hotel was also open, and

some other games were played; I saw Avalon and King of Tokyo.



Ed Sullivan, Andrew Zick and Andrei Gribakov

Saturday morning we had 48 players including myself. Doug Moore agreed to play two boards, so there were seven boards in total. The scoring system for the weekend was ManorCon, and all games were limited to 1909. The best result was a 12-center board top for David Maletsky as England, followed by 12-center board tops for Noam Brown and Katie Gray, both as Austria. Karthik Konath was awarded “Coolest Move” for a clever convoy of Katie Gray’s Austrian army from Gascony to Portugal.

For the evening round, we again had seven boards, this time with Matt Shields, Liam Stokes, and Ed Sullivan playing two each. In this event, players’ best three scores counted, regardless of the round they were obtained, and Liam managed to best his elimination in round one on both his boards, with a 6-center Italy and an 8-center France. The best result this round was Zachary Moore’s 10-center England, closely followed by an 11-11-11 tie between Mike Moore’s Austria, Jason Bennett’s France, and Alex Amann’s Germany. That same game also won Mike the “Best Stab” award for the Fall ’03 turn when he walked into Trieste and Bulgaria

while supporting Germany to Warsaw, stabbing three of his neighbors at once.



Karthik Konath, Ed Sullivan and Jamal Blakkarly.
Apparently there was a lost sports best involved...

Going into the final round on Sunday morning, the top five were Katie with a total of 62.37 points, followed by Karthik at 59.48, Nicolas Sahuguet at 59.44, Jason Bennett at 59.16, and Brandon Fogel at 58.94. After David Miller graciously agreed to give up his lie-in (which got him the “TD’s Choice” award), we had 42 players and exactly six boards. The best results were Seren Kwok’s 12-center Germany, and Kyra Olson’s 12-center England, followed by Katie with 12 centers as Russia. That was enough to make Katie the North American champion, with a total of 97.16 points. In second place was Riaz Virani with 88.69 points, which got him the “Best Canuck” award. Karthik took third place with 88.05. Adam Silverman got the “Just a Flesh Wound” award for his game as Austria where he peaked at 4 centers in 1901 and 1902 and was down to 1 by 1905 but nevertheless survived into the draw in 1908.

Best Country awards went to Noam for Austria, David Maletsky for England, Andrei Gribakov for France in round 1 (Jason Bennett had exactly the same score in round 2, but Andrei had a higher average dot count), Seren for Germany, Karthik for Italy in round 1, Katie for Russia, and Brandon for Turkey in round 1.

Ruby Dickson got the “Players’ Choice” award, which was voted on by the players.

Max Kasprzik took “Best Rookie” for finishing in 20th place.

Eric Silverman got “With Friends Like These” for suffering three eliminations.

Doug Moore was awarded “Best Shane Cubis”.

The full details can be found at <https://diplomacytv.com/tournaments/65/> and DBN's coverage is at <https://www.youtube.com/live/IOx0Bjr9d64>



From Round 3: Alex Amann in the background. Craig Mayr and Katie Gray in the front

After the award ceremony, the vast majority of the players headed for home. Several did find themselves staying an extra night or two, courtesy of their airline. Everyone did eventually make it home safely, though, hopefully feeling that while BC may not have warm temperatures in February, we do nevertheless give visitors warm feelings. I will give Riaz a couple of months to recover before I ask him to start planning for Cascadia in February 2025, and it looks like DipCon isn't due back in Canada until the 2040s.



Also Round 3: Left-to-right (ish) Brandon Fogel, Matt Shields, Andrew Goff, Keith Worstell, Jamal Blakkarly, Doc Binder, and David Maletsky



From Thomas Haver: A shot of finding Diplomacy in the wild in Barnes & Noble

2024 Whipping Tournament Report

By Adam Silverman

As Whipping, the Bay Area California FTF Diplomacy tournament just wrapped up the first tournament of its third decade the weekend of March 23-24, I can't help but reflect on what an amazing journey it is that brought the Bay Area Diplomacy Association (B.A.D.Ass.) here, especially as we look forward to hosting World DipCon next year. Whipping started in 2004 in a tiny game store in Fremont, CA, eventually finding its way to Japantown in San Francisco where it hosted DipCon in 2010, going on a short hiatus before reappearing in San Jose, and this year finding its new home back in San Francisco.

We've had our share of drama – tournament winners coming down to one center (Eric Mead over Chris Brand in 2010) or less than one center (Matt Crill over Craig Mayr in 2023), a last minute Covid cancellation in 2020 followed by a virtual tournament in 2021 (won by Jason Mastbaum by an infamous 17-17 board split with 2nd

place Matt Crill), and another dramatic finish at 2022 DipCon (Tanya Gill edging out Andrew Goff).

Which brings us to 2024. One of the most difficult parts of running an event is finding a location. We ran Whipping at the Hotel de Anza in San Jose from 2017-2022, thanks to Siobhan Nolen's efforts in finding and maintaining a relationship with the site. Unfortunately, they became more difficult to deal with and weren't an option for 2023. So, we moved down the street to a meeting room at a Hilton, which was fine for a year. But it didn't feel like the right fit for us, so in late spring 2023 I started looking for a new location. It felt like time to move back to San Francisco, and I was fortunate to get support from Riaz Virani in reaching out to and helping me navigate various options. We finally settled on Hotel Spero, located near Union Square.



Trophies for Top 3 finishers and the famous Best Country Bears. And the Buz Cup, named in honor of hobby luminary and NADF Founder, the late Buz Eddy – to be awarded to the top finisher in the Wild Wild West tournament circuit (Vancouver, SF, Denver, and Bozeman).

The months leading up to the event involved the usual recruiting, wrangling, helping travelers with logistics, setting up registration docs, finding a location for a welcome dinner, making sure we had enough boards, pens, and pads, and so on. The preparation and execution of the tournament would not have been possible with the support of our amazing tournament

committee comprising Siobhan Nolen, Edi Birsan, and Alex Amann.

We started the weekend with a bunch of travelers and few locals meeting up at Fisherman's Wharf in SF for lunch. Heading back to the hotel, most of the group opted for Ubers, but I got to enjoy the company of Chris Brand and Karthik Konath in walking over one of the

biggest hills in the city. After a little bit of down time, it was onward to the welcome dinner at a restaurant in SOMA called The Harlequin. A good deal of eating,

drinking, and socializing commenced, though we didn't end up out too late – I think everyone wanted to get a good night sleep for the main event on Saturday.



How much time do we spend studying the board? Too much or not enough?



Soon-to-be Whipping Champion Steven Hogue records orders as they are read over the board.

We used the Whipping scoring system, which is a hybrid system that is primarily center based, but also has a small shared survival bonus and a board topping bonus.

While most aspects of the tournament system conformed to what FTF players are used to, we did try a brand-new system for taking draw votes. The system is

pretty straightforward. Starting in Spring 1906, anyone on the board can propose a draw (always including all survivors). If there are no open vetoes, the clock is stopped, and the tournament director is called to take a vote. Votes are done secretly – all players with at least one center are handed two playing cards, one red and one black. Secretly turning in a red card means you want to end the game (approve the draw proposal), while turning in a black card means you want to keep playing. A single black card fails the proposal. The TD secretly reviews the cards and let's everyone know the outcome. So far so good; just the way almost every other FTF tournament does it. But here's the hitch – following a third failed draw vote, all subsequent draw votes are open. In other words, instead of secretly turning in your vote, you hold your vote card in front of you and everyone shows it simultaneously. In practice, only two boards went to open draw voting, and we actually had one open vote fail with two against, three in favor! Feedback on the system was overwhelmingly positive, and I imagine we will continue to use it in the future.

Saturday morning board call was at 9am. We had 32 players, not counting me as the TD, so the way to make 5 boards was for me to play and get two volunteers to play one two boards each. Edi Birsan and Noam Brown were gracious enough to give it a try. It worked out ok for Noam, who had a bit of a rough time on one board as Italy but managed to get himself into a nice position as Turkey on his other board. Edi drew Austria on both boards and was treated to eliminations in 1903 and 1904.

All of the round 1 games ended well before the 6pm board call for round 2, where we ended up with 26 players plus the TD, so I played one game and Alex Amann played two boards, drawing Turkey on both and getting the Edi Birsan treatment (early elimination on both). Interestingly, while all 5 Turkeys had good to very good results in round 1, in round 2, 3 of 4 Turkeys were eliminated and the best Turkey of the round had just 4 centers. When all the boards ended, a few players stuck around for a couple of rounds of Avalon, with the last folks heading to bed around 2am.



Players socializing between rounds.

Round 3 had an even more awkward number of players show up – 25 excluding the TD. Since several local players were happy to sit, we ended up just running 3 boards. The tournament was tight going into the final round. There were 6 players clearly in contention, and another 3-4 that had a shot. But there can only be one champion, and this year it was Steven Hogue, who rode an 8 center Turkey, 11 center Russia (3-way board top), and 12 center Austria (board top) to victory. I've

reproduced the full results below including the many fun awards we give out for various shenanigans and game oddities. We were fortunate to have a bunch of board games donated to us by Renegade Games, which we gave out amongst the special awards.

Ultimately when I think about Whippings over the years, and what has made them so special, it has always come down to the people who come from all over the world.

This year we had quite a few folks playing in their first Diplomacy tournament, and even one player who played in her first games ever and performed quite admirably. But more than that, the joy of in-person Diplomacy tournaments is the dinner before it starts, the socializing in between the games, the nonsense stories of

tournaments past, and the feeling of belonging to a community of truly amazing people.

Next year when we host World DipCon (dates will be locked down by the next Diplomacy World issue), I hope you'll join and experience the fun.



Some players on this board look happier than others....

Whipping 2024 Results

Top 7

1. Steven Hogue (Kentucky)
2. Tanya Gill (Toronto)
3. Matthew Crill (Seattle)
4. Katie Gray (New Mexico)
5. Chris Brand (Vancouver)
6. David Graff (California)
7. Craig Mayr (Montana)

Best Countries

- Austria: Steven Hogue, 12 SCs
- England: Matthew Crill, 11 SCs
- France: Jason Mastbaum, 9 SCs
- Germany: Katie Gray, 11 SCs
- Italy: Edi Birsan, 11 SCs
- Russia: Steven Hogue, 11 SCs
- Turkey: Tanya Gill, 12 SCs.

Special Awards

- Globetrotter bear for most distant unit from home: Noam Brown, for his Turkish fleet that arrived in the Barents Sea... and was subsequently destroyed

- Mayr bear for closest score differential (in honor of Craig Mayr, who came in 2nd last year by less than one point): ironically awarded to Craig Mayr, who came in 7th place by a margin of only 4 points
- Nostradamus award for best predictions of 2024 Whipping outcomes: Chris Brand
- Ball-gag: Peter McNamara, for his incredible ability to take up people's time talking... about mostly nothing
- Handcuffs: Edwin Lopez, for being the 1 center power in an 11-11-11-1 game
- Whipped: David Graff, who, while in a long-term 3-way alliance discussing plans with his "allies" was abruptly asked to leave the discussion... you can definitely guess what happened next.
- Best Pirate: Ariel Mendez-Penate, for having two units, one of which was a fleet that over the course of a few years owned every single English SC
- Best defense and survival (awarded GI Joe deck building game, courtesy of Renegade Games)
 - Mike Moore: SC run as France was 6-5-5-5-5-5-5-5
 - Ian Rudnick: As Italy didn't grow in 1901, yet survived a 1908 game at 1 SC for the last 4 years
- Acquiring the most centers in a single season (awarded Acquire game, courtesy of Renegade Games)
 - Katie Gray: Germany grew from 4 to 7 SCs in 1902
 - Tanya Gill: Turkey doubled in centers in 2 years from 6 to 9 to 12
- Shenanigans with a "Transformed" position (awarded Transformers deck building game, courtesy of Renegade Games)
 - Karthik Konath: 8 SC board-topping Turkey was reduced in one year to 5 SCs then to 3 SCs the next year.
 - Kayla Silverman: In honor of the adage, "Belgium, where English armies go to die," she survived as a 1 SC England with an army in... Belgium
- Players' choice (awarded Robo Rally game, courtesy of Renegade Games)
 - April Mihalovitch
 - Tom Hilton



The round 3 players following awards. Still (mostly) standing after a great weekend.

2024 CONVENTION EVENTS

-  OwlCon | Feb 23-25 | Houston, TX 
-  PrezCon | Feb 24-25 | Charlottesville, VA  
-  Circle DC | Apr 4-7 | Washington D.C. 
-  Buckeye Game Fest | May 2-5 | Columbus, OH 
-  Gaming Hoopla | May 3-5 | Chicago, IL 
-  BGG Spring | May 23-27 | Dallas, TX 
-  KublaCon | May 24-27 | Burlingame, CA 
-  Origins | Jun 19-23 | Columbus, OH  
-  Dice Tower East | Jul 3-7 | Orlando, FL 
-  CharCon | Jul 12-14 | Charleston, WV 
-  WBC | Jul 26-27 | Seven Springs, PA  
-  US Championship | Aug 1-4 | Indianapolis, IN  
-  Nuke-Con | Oct 4-6 | Council Bluffs, IA 
-  BGG Con | Nov 13-17 | Dallas, TX 
-  PAX Unplugged | Dec 6-8 | Philadelphia, PA  

 Teaching

 Tournament

