

Diplomacy World #173



Spring 2026 Issue
www.diplomacyworld.net

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Spring 2026 issue. I hope you are all having a good year, despite the general turmoil and anxiety that seems to be hovering over so many people lately. Diplomacy can serve as a welcome distraction to real-world problems; it's just important to keep it in perspective. Sometimes I think too many people forget: **it's just a hobby!** Yes, I have built lifelong friendships through this hobby, enjoyed moments I will always remember. And there are even marriages that have originally been introduced across the Diplomacy board. But in the end, it is still **just a hobby**.

Rant over....

As per usual, I am writing this a few days before the deadline. I have to, because it takes that long for me to correct all my typos! But because of that, late-arriving material likely won't be mentioned here.

In fact, how about I use that comment as a reminder: while I am VERY THANKFUL for any articles, letters, flyers, columns, artwork, ideas, feedback, or anything else I receive...it really helps me if you don't wait until the last minute to send them in. I regularly receive articles within a few hours of the deadline. That requires a quick turnaround on reading, editing, and layout. And the more material I get at the last minute, the less I can work on it. So please, try not to wait until the last minute. As a matter of fact, why not sit down and write something right now? I checked with my legal advisors: it is NOT a crime to send an article in a few months early, no matter what you may have heard on social media.

Anyway, in this issue....you'll find...STUFF.

Oh, you want a bit more detail? Fine.

One thing there are a lot of are event flyers. Which is a good thing, on multiple levels. First, it shows the hobby is healthy and going strong. (Why else would there be so many events?). Second, it shows that organizers have finally started to embrace my mantra: take advantage of the ability to promote your event in Diplomacy World for free. Send flyers for inclusion, and then encourage participants to write about their experiences.

Granted, sometimes it seems like half the issue is taken up with flyers. But that's just because most of you reading this haven't written any articles. Why not? This zine is only as good as the material YOU send in! In general, Diplomacy attracts very literate people, so I can

say with full confidence that YOU, yes **YOU**, have the ability to write something that other people would enjoy reading. It can be anything....recounting a memorable or recent gaming experience; discussing your favorite variant; exploring similarities between game situations and some dystopian streaming series you watch; a humorous piece revealing how you're going to use your Diplomacy skills to get revenge on your nosy neighbor. The list goes on and on!

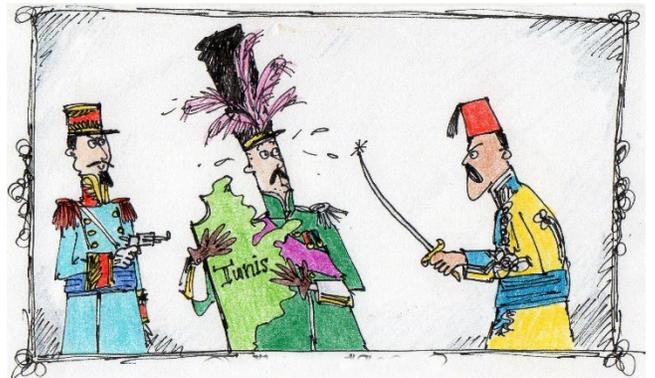
But elsewhere, you'll find things like:

- The latest Never a Cross Word crossword puzzle
- Mal Arky on opening strategy
- Shane Armstrong on tournaments in Bangkok and Melbourne
- Thomas Haver on Battlefront Dayton
- Robert Lacy on Owlcon 2026
- David Hood on games other than Diplomacy

And more!

Plus, I expect some articles to show up in the final day or two. They almost always do.

That's enough from me this time around. ***I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is July 1, 2026.*** 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 Calhmer. It is currently owned by Hasbro and the name is their trademark with all rights reserved. Diplomacy World is a quarterly magazine devoted to discussion of all topics related to the game of Diplomacy, and was founded by Walt Buchanan in 1974.

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Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column

 **Conrad Woodring** - I saw the renegade article about the reviving the North American Grand Prix. Clearly the list of events is only the renegade sponsored events. Perhaps they should open it up to all events that are fair competitive events or rename it something else. Like the Renegade Grand Prix. As it stands now it is a bit of a slap in the face to Buz Eddy and his work creating the Grand Prix. Buz wanted people to interact and connect by encouraging them to travel. A more connected and unified hobby with relationships across North America was a good thing. Creating an exclusionary event inside the Renegade walled garden is the antithesis of everything Buz did for the hobby. I find it distasteful.

Good spot by Mr. Birsan. I read last issue and somehow missed that Haver incorrectly claimed World DipCon 2027 will be hosted in Las Vegas. As per the charter, the vote was held in San Francisco in 2025 and there attendees selected Chicago as the host of the World DipCon 2027. Congrats Chicago!

 **Mark Nelson** - I think it would be a nice touch if on page two you added a comment that Diplomacy World was started in 1974 by Walt Buchanan. Credit where credit is due.

[[I've added a mention to the section under Diplomacy World Staff.]]

 **David Smith** - I just wanted to tell you how impressed I was with the recent article in DW 172, entitled "The Grand Synthesis of the Convoy Paradox." I think it was the most detailed and comprehensive analysis I have ever read of any facet of Diplomacy. Back when I was gamemaster for my students' games of Diplomacy I thought that the only controversial thing that might arise was the Coastal Crawl. But from time to time one of the situations found in the article above would arise. I just tried to be consistent with my rulings. Once again, what a fine article this was.

 **Shane Armstrong** – Melbourne Open just wrapped up and TD Rob Hillier had a great idea for a potential column. Basically, naming your dream board of players - can be any reasons, but his idea was people he has the most fun with or would like to see interact. Could be the sort of thing you can solicit from some people in advance or something people could just write in with - seemed like a fun idea after a bunch of pints.

 **Katie Gray** – The North American Diplomacy Federation is happy to announce our newest board member: Keith Worstell!

Keith is an organizer in North Carolina who runs the Nexus league, bringing plenty of experience and passion for improving our hobby. He is replacing Jonnie Gillam of New York, who served on the board for two years. Thank you for your time, Jonnie! Keith joins returning board members Matt Crill and Emmett Wainwright from Denver, Justin Loar of the LA Legionnaires, and president Katie Gray from Albuquerque.

 **Robert Lacy** – BGG SPRING 2026
May 21-25, 2026- (9:00am Thursday - 3:00pm Monday)
Hyatt Regency DFW Airport, 2334 North International Parkway DFW Airport, Texas, USA 75261

DIPLOMACY TRIATHALON
Round 1 Classic Diplomacy
Round 2 Diplomacy Era of Empires
Round 3 Diplomacy Golden Blade

There will be trophies for top finishers in each round as well as award for the overall tournament winner. Participate in one or more of the events to qualify for the top award. The more you play the more points you get! In addition, there will also be special awards for outstanding and creative gameplay and many prize drawings for participants in each round, plus lots of Diplomacy themed swag to give away.

<https://tabletop.events/conventions/bgg.spring-2026>



The 40th Annual Dixiecon

Chapel Hill NC - May 22-24, 2026

Tournament Director: David Hood

Assistant TD: Michael Lowrey

Overview

Dixiecon is the longest-running Diplomacy tournament location in the world. Since 1987, Diplomats from around North America and beyond have gathered in Chapel Hill to play games, eat BBQ, and deepen hobby friendships.

This Year's Details

1. One round each on Friday, Saturday, Sunday – best two scores count, using Dixiecon scoring
2. Unlimited rounds except for Sunday round which has random end time 7 to 9 hours from the start
3. BBQ Dinner on Saturday afternoon
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 options also available
6. Full tournament coverage on the Diplomacy Broadcast Network YouTube Channel

For More Information: Email davidhood@dixiecon.com or visit www.dixiecon.com

Battlefront Dayton: World's First Diplomacy Triathlon

by Thomas Haver

Battlefront Dayton is a tabletop gaming convention held at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. The convention is hosted by Gary Blevins of Board Game Nation (<https://www.youtube.com/boardgamenation>), who has been a strong ally of Diplomacy players everywhere. Blevins has consistently released Diplomacy content and has provided some “firsts” for the community, including a how-to-play on “Diplomacy: The Golden Blade card game”. For the convention this year, Blevins was interested in hosting a Diplomacy event at the convention. Given we have two new Diplomacy games available, we elected to introduce a new tournament format: the Diplomacy Triathlon.



Since this would be the world premiere of The Golden Blade, we had designer Rosco Schock at the convention teaching the game to anyone willing. We also ran our regular teaching events for Diplomacy and Era of Empire before the tournament began.

The first round was Saturday morning with classical Diplomacy. Brendam Lim, who traveled all the way from New York, had a big board top that round to edge out everyone else and claim Gold. In between rounds we had a meal provided by the convention. This convention was run slightly differently than other large conventions. They provided meals as part of the convention ticket and even passed out branded cups that you could take for a refill. This was because the convention center is across the hall from a bar & grill.

In the second round, we had two great games of Era of Empire. On one board we had strong play from Robert Zahn as Japan. He established two strong alliances on the board and rode those to a safe position and board top. The other board ended up playing longer when it initially looked like a draw was going to happen. Max Keating convinced the board to “play it out”, much to his benefit as he stabbed two allies in the next year and jumped everyone for the board top and Gold.

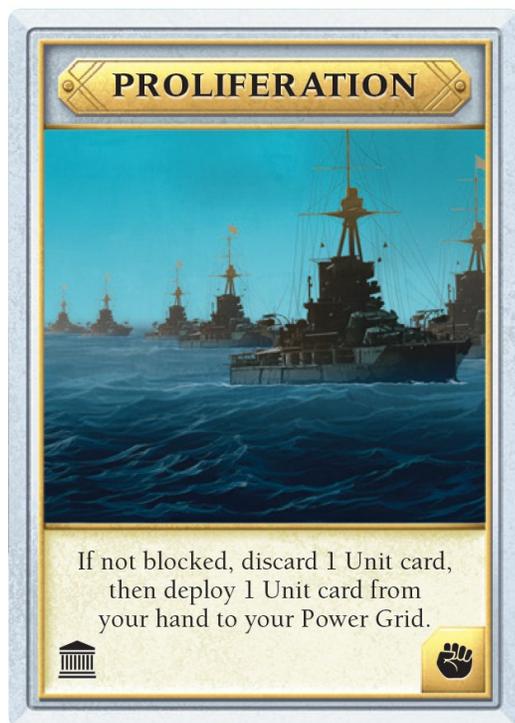
A Diplomacy Triathlon is a three-round event featuring three different Diplomacy games. Each round of play focuses on one of those three games. The idea is similar to track-and-field events where the goal is to be the best overall competitor over multiple events. The three games selected were: classical Diplomacy, Era of Empire, and The Golden Blade. In each round, the goal is to have the best placement on your board AND to have the best placement in the round by tournament score. For each game we would award a Gold (1st), a Silver (2nd), and a Bronze (3rd) plaque to identify the best player's each round.



We had the rest of the evening for dinner and drinks, followed by a live panel discussion with yours truly and Rosco Schock about game design. We had some amazing insights during the discussion from Larry Harris, famed designer of the Axis & Allies series of games.

The following morning, we had the final round of the Triathlon: The Golden Blade. We budgeted four hours for the round but didn't need it. The added time was to provide one last rules explanation by designer Rosco Schock. Typically, games of The Golden Blade last about 15 minutes per player. For reference, here is a "How to Play" for a two-player game: <https://youtu.be/IJciacsC3rw?si=t9OuEr3bM14DULSt>. Everyone knew the results of the prior two rounds and the table assignment was random. The target: tournament leader Robert Zahn.

In The Golden Blade, play proceeds until one player wins the game. There are no draws. So, it became a classic "crabs in the bucket" game where one player would get close, and the others would pull them down. But the consistent setup was an attack on Zahn to knock the tournament leader down. Going into that final round, he had a strong placement lead. He would require a 5th place finish or worse to get knocked off.



Wouldn't you know it, Zahn's neighbors kept on attacking him. A well-timed "Proliferation" play by Phil Burk meant he was able to Build a 3rd level card to win the game! Congrats to Phil Burk for winning (gold) the Golden Blade event. Tony Prokes was 2nd (silver) and Nolan D. "Ginger" tied with Nick Bays for 3rd (bronze).

Zahn finished in 5th place, which meant there was a tie for placement points to win the tournament. So, we went to our first tiebreaker: total number of "medals" won. Both had won two medals (top 3 placements) in the event. Tied again. We had to use our second tiebreaker, which counted combined tournament scores – not just placements – across all three rounds. That tiebreaker went to Zahn. The very first Diplomacy Triathlon, decided by 2nd tiebreaker, was won by Robert Zahn.



Congratulations to Robert Zahn for winning the first ever Diplomacy Triathlon. He took home an actual blade (engraved champagne saber) as the championship trophy. We awarded golden blades to each of the Top Board finishers. Results are below.



Diplomacy Triathlon at Battlefront Dayton tournament results:

Top Board

- 1st Robert Zahn
- 2nd Phil Burk
- 3rd Nick Bays
- 4th Tony Prokes
- 5th Brendan Lim
- 6th Nolan David
- 7th Max Keating

Classical Diplomacy

- Gold - Brendan Lim
- Silver - Robert Zahn
- Bronze - Phil Burk

Era of Empire

Gold - Max Keating
Silver - Robert Zahn
Bronze - Nick Bays

The Golden Blade

Gold - Phil Burk
Silver - Tony Prokes
Bronze - Nick Bays & Nolan David

Golden Blade (best stab)

Max Keating



Max Keating won Golden Blade for Best Stab during the Era of Empire game. He convinced the board to play on -- much to his benefit as he stabbed Britain and Russia to win.

Board Game Nation also recorded an event recap here for anyone interested in a rundown of the convention: https://www.youtube.com/live/CY_xzXxF_wQ?si=n2Kyt7FoKN1DjIPa



Final Thoughts

Battlefront Dayton may have been a first-year convention, but Gary Blevins and his team of volunteers ran it professionally. The event organization was superb and better than many long-running conventions I attend. They went to the umpteenth degree on scheduling: meals were built into the cost of the event ticket, free drinks, dozens of raffle prizes, autograph sessions, panel discussions, designer meet-and-greets, and great company.



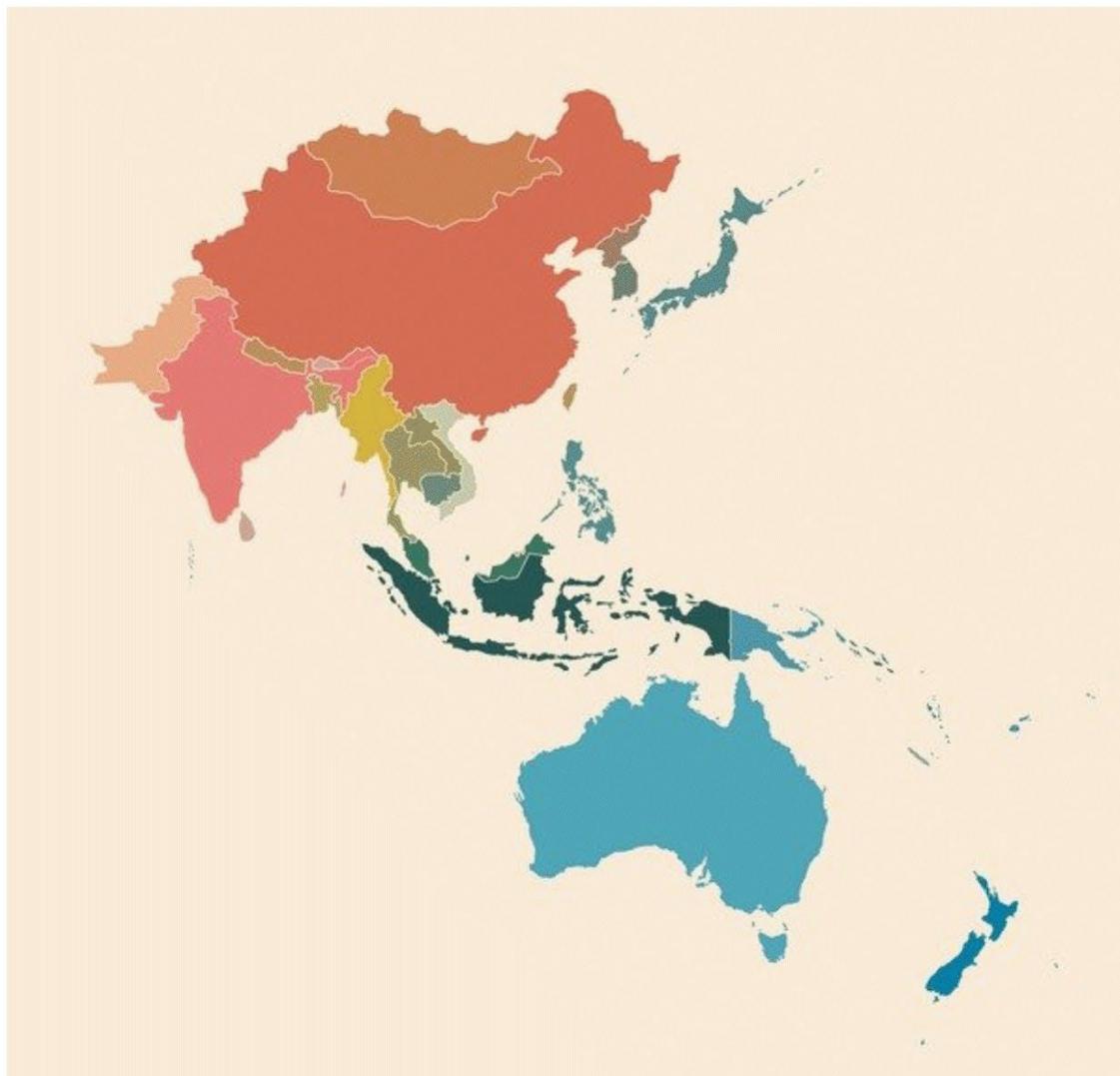
5 - Hosted by Board Game Nation! Thank you for watching the Axis & Allies Global '42 and Anniversary Tourna

Battlefront: Dayton - Game Designer Panel - Larry Harris, Matt Hyra, Rosco Schock, & Tho...

Two moments that personally meant a lot during this convention: the panel discussion and the autograph session. On Saturday night we had a panel discussion with designers, of which I was included for my work on many Renegade games. It was an absolute honor to be on the stage with legendary designer Larry Harris. He's such a sweet, considerate man. We had multiple opportunities to talk during the convention: about game design, about politics, about life. I'm profoundly thankful for that quality time with one of the best game designers of all time. Secondly, I loved the autograph session. I've been asked to sign Diplomacy games and Acquire games before -- but here was a dedicated session that people paid for autographs. One of those moments I wouldn't have imagined as a kid playing Diplomacy with his high school friends. Really cool.

Lastly, "*Diplomacy: The Golden Blade card game*" won the Ignis Award at the convention for best board game as voted on by the players. Larry Harris cast the deciding vote for the game. Congratulations to Rosco Schock for designing an excellent game. I can't wait for the Diplomacy community to experience this game. We'll be back at Battlefront Dayton next year for more Diplomacy and fans of Diplomacy can experience Triathlon events at Circle DC, BGG Spring, and BGG Con in 2026.

2026 Asia-Pacific Diplomacy Schedule



24-26 April - Hung Parliament Handicap - Canberra

27-28 June - Sydney Cup

TBC August - Cane Toad Classic - SE Queensland

TBC October - Flying Fox Fandango - Melbourne

13-15 November - Australian Open - Canberra



Memorial Day Weekend
(May 22-25, 2026)
Burlingame, CA

Diplomacy Events

- Teaching Session - Friday at 7 PM
- Diplomacy - Saturday at 10 AM
- Diplomacy: Era of Empire - Saturday at 6 PM
- Diplomacy - Sunday at 1 PM

Diplomacy organizer: [Alex Amann](#)

For more information about
the convention, visit
<https://kublacon.com/>

Event registration opens
mid-April



Four Rounds in Bangkok: Not Much Between Despair and Ecstasy

by Shane Armstrong

Photography from Stuart Barton, Bonnie Tatatutaki, and Nassim Abed

'Siam's gonna be the witness to the ultimate test of diplomatical fitness...'

So begins another season of tournament Diplomacy. January saw face to face tournaments kick off in four countries – Blazecon in the US, the Steel Showdown in the UK, Cascadia in Canada, and, the subject of our consideration here, the Asia Pacific Diplomacy Championship in Thailand.

The fifth Bangkok Open was given the honor of doubling as the venue for the 2026 Asia Pacific Championships, or APAC. The Asia-Pacific Diplomacy Association (APDA) made this very deliberate choice in 2025. It would be incredibly easy for the continental championship to be held in Australia indefinitely, bobbing around capital cities, and not feeling particularly different to any other tournaments on the circuit. APDA has resolved to alternate hosting between Australia and elsewhere in the region to try and grow the game. While this may sometimes result in smaller attendances as less Australian players are able to travel, it is the hope that events such of these may help kickstart local hobbies in a similar way to how successful tournaments have given a boost to the local scenes in Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

This made Bangkok the easiest place to start with these efforts. Sascha Heylmann has been based in Bangkok for a considerable period of time, and has managed to run the Bangkok Open on an annual basis since 2022, and it was expected that there would be a small local community that could be built upon to run a successful tournament.

While some local call-offs reduced player numbers slightly on the run-in to the tournament, nine nationalities were represented in the field of 16 players, making this APAC more diverse than 2025's WDC.

'Play at this level there's no ordinary venue? It's Baltimore – or Middlesbrough – or Athens – or – or this place!'

Playing Diplomacy overseas is truly one of the joys of life. You get experience the game it in a different environment, against a different group of people, and you also get to enjoy something of a holiday if you have enough time and plan properly. Bangkok, despite its traffic snarls, is fairly easy to get around via metro or elevated train (BTS), and food and drink are both tasty and relatively cheap. Further, it caters for every type of

tourist – from those who like to stay in four- and five-star hotels and airconditioned malls, to people who prefer hostels, back alleys and street food. The temples are beautiful, the locals are wonderfully friendly, and the Chao Phraya River winds through town offering a chance to get the wind in your hair as you explore yet another transport option. Travelling players arrived early or departed late from Bangkok, and all of them enjoyed themselves immensely exploring different aspects of Thailand.



Post-game dinner and drinks

Hotel Cinematique, a converted cinema, served as the venue. Just off Sukhumvit Road in the Phra Khanong district, the recently refurbished space offered plenty of room for negotiations. One board was placed in the mezzanine, with the other on the ground floor, keeping the boards fairly separate, but offering challenges to anyone who may have to double board.

'The crème de la crème of the Dip world, in a show with everything but JP Blanchet...'

Round 1 kicked off on the Friday night, with Clare Bradbery (AUS) topping Board 1, Somporn Yos, with a 9 dot England, followed by Robert Hillier (GBR) on 6 as Russia, and Tristan Singh (CAN), and Man Hin Ng (HKG) on 5 as Austria and France respectively. Man Hing travelled from Hong Kong to play his first tournament games, and was a very welcome presence on and off the boards the entire weekend. This board also saw Andreas Möllmann (GER) eventually secure Best Italy with a battling 2 dot effort that constituted a good survival in a tournament that saw Italy really

struggle. Board 2, Peerawat Akkaratum, saw the A/T of Jamal Blakkarly (AUS), and Shane Armstrong (AUS) come up against the E/G of Stuart Barton (AUS) and Brandan Austin (AUS), with the game ending in a three way shared 8 dot board top, with Stuart one behind on 7. There were no potential stabs that could have broken this board open, and cagey games would end up being something of a theme for the weekend. The A/T propped up Bonnie Tatatutaki's (THL) one dot Russia in Moscow to preserve the balance of the board, and Vidal Das (USA), who uses Diplomacy as a teaching aid in Thailand fought to a 2-dot survival as France against the E/G.



The view from the mezzanine

'Time flies – doesn't seem a minute, since the Ionian Sea had a French fleet in it...'

Given Bangkok has a culture of busy nights, mornings tend to start a little later, and it was a post-10am kickoff for Round 2. Board 1, Sarawut Konglap, saw Stuart Barton snatch the sole board top and a best country on 8 SCs as Germany, with Robert Hillier finishing second as Turkey. Board 2, Rangsiman Kemmueang, this time saw Shane Armstrong in France (7 typical dots, and Greece!), and Jamal Blakkarly in Russia share an 8-centre board top, followed by Sascha Heylmann (GER) in Italy on 7 SCs. First-time player Catrina Yuan (CHN) played a fantastic game as England, finishing on 5, and proving a true handful on the board, keeping Shane and Jamal both busy and constantly guessing.

'Get Thai'd! You're talking to a tourist, whose every move's among the purest...'

It was then off to lunch before returning in the afternoon for Round 3, which saw one board played as a few attendees opted to sit out, rest, or take in a bit more of the city. The board, Chinnawat Wongchai, saw a west unable to stick together with solid alliances for any extended period of time, and an east where Austria and Russia were able to quickly cripple Turkey and also keep

Italy small. Shane Armstrong's patient Russia, finished on 12 SCs, 4 clear of Brandan Austin's Austria, giving him Best Russia, and taking all of the points available to those at or near the top of the board. This breakaway win made him the clubhouse leader coming into the final round on Sunday.



Prizes worth playing for!

'One town's very like another when your head's down over your pieces, brother'.

While there was a clear leader, the tournament remained open going into the final day. The four round tournament featured a drop round, meaning that 5 or 6 players remained in the hunt if they could manage a big score. In these situations, board draw can play a significant role. The board Bordin Phala saw Andrew Goff (AUS), Stuart Barton, Robert Hillier, and Jamal Blakkarly in contention, with a breakaway result offering the potential to catapult a player to the top of the standings. However, consistent with the quality of play over the weekend, the game remained tight, with Andrew Goff in Austria claiming best Austria in sharing a 10-dot board top with Stuart Barton in Russia. Next came Lei Saarlainen (FRA) on 7, netting him Best Turkey.

Chaiyawat Buran was the other board in the round, with clubhouse leader Shane Armstrong and second placed contender Clare Bradbery the ones to watch, with Brandan Austin still a chance, but with all three players very aware of the risks in loose play. The board draw saw Shane in Germany and Clare in France, with Brandan in England, a draw that effectively neutralized a big score. A friendly but tight game saw first time player Karan Dikaew (THL) play an excellent debut game as Austria, and Bonnie Tatatutaki play a great game, this time as Turkey. Bonnie was wonderful all weekend, with the players voting her Most Esteemed Elephant. Clare and Brandan shared a 10 SC board top netting Brandan Best England, Clare Best France and second overall in the tournament and Shane the Asia Pacific Diplomacy Championship.

The presence of a significant number of Bangkok-based players, a few late local call-offs, and an enjoyable time for first time players gives the Thai hobby a base that can be built upon with a bit of hard work organizing regular games. There is every potential that the 2027 Bangkok Open could deliver two boards of locally based players and also a boost to the numbers of Thais playing the game. I'm sure the entire hobby wishes Sascha Heylmann the best, and strongly encourages him to build on the platform that has been built by hosting APAC 2026.

Clare Bradbery, Shane Armstrong, and Stuart Barton in the podium places

Asia Pacific Diplomacy Championship – Top 7

1st – Shane Armstrong

2nd – Clare Bradbery

3rd – Stuart Barton

4th – Brandan Austin

5th – Jamal Blakkarly

6th – Andrew Goff

7th – Robert Hillier

Best countries

Austria-Hungary – Andrew Goff

England – Brandan Austin

France – Clare Bradbery

Germany – Stuart Barton

Italy – Andreas Möllmann

Russia – Shane Armstrong

Turkey – Lei Saarlainen

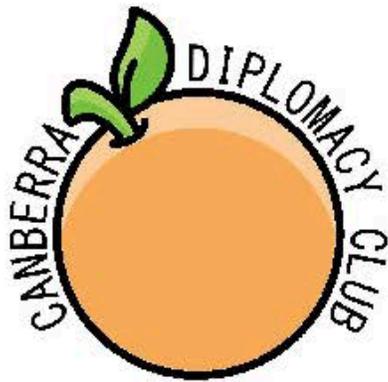
Most Esteemed Elephant – Bonnie Tatatutaki



RegensCon 2026
June 19.-21.

**Join us in Regensburg, Bavaria for three rounds of Diplomacy,
other gaming and an all-around good time!**

<https://regenscon.com>



Hung Parliament Handicap 2026

What?

The Hung Parliament Handicap is a unique Diplomacy tournament. It plays fairly normally, though it has a sillier vibe, and less-experienced players get a points top-up that might just help them beat a World Champion!



When and Where?

4 Rounds over 3 Days
24-26 April 2026
Australian National University
Canberra



PrezCon

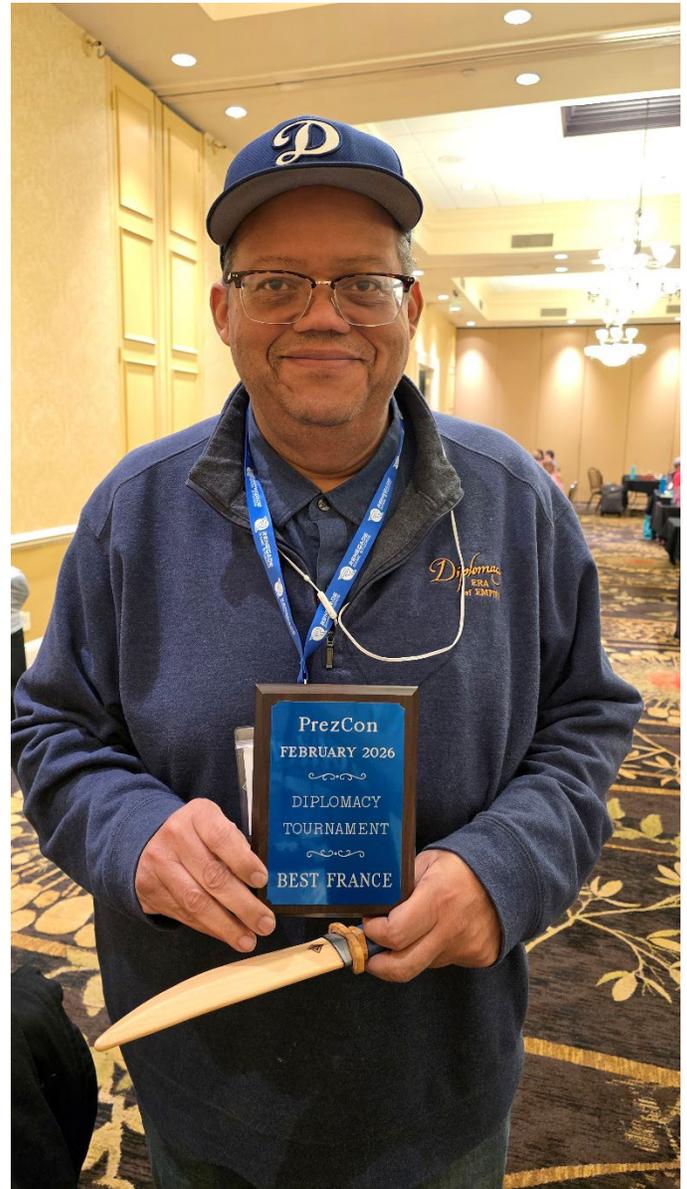
by Thomas Haver



Congratulations to Robert Zahn for winning the PrezCon Diplomacy Tournament in dominant fashion. Zahn earned a Best Country award on all three boards he played over the weekend. The best two of three round event was brought back in 2024 after a 14-year hiatus. Held annually in Charlottesville, Virginia the convention is known affectionally as the "Winter Nationals", a sister convention of the World Boardgaming Championships. Per usual, we treated players to Diplomacy shirts and some winter wear -- Diplomacy hoodies! The thick winter clothes keep you warm and double as protective padding from backstabs.



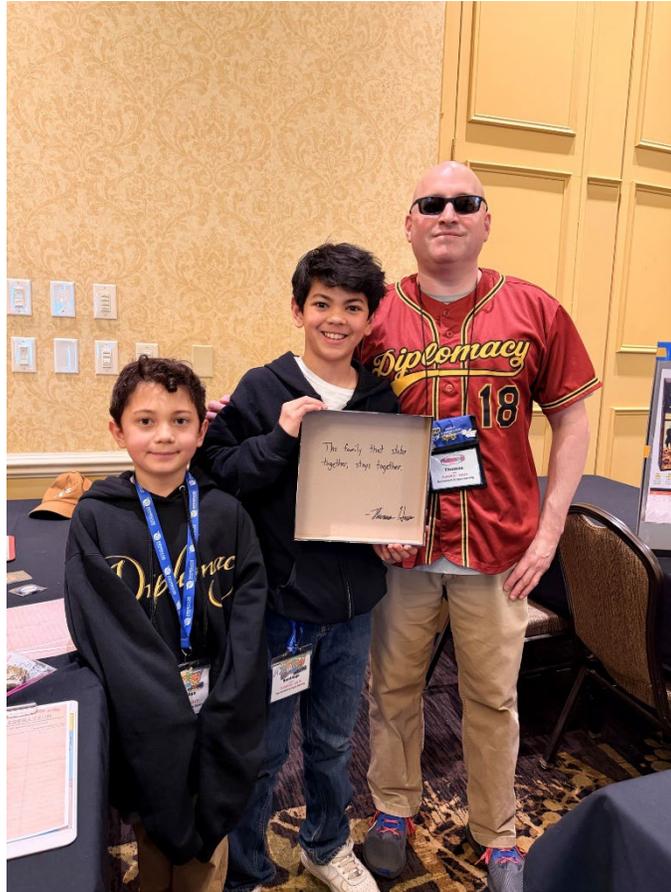
Previously Claude Worrell was a repeat champion of the tournament -- winning in 2010 and in 2024 at the reformed event. Robert Zahn has matched him in a slightly shorter timespan with victories in 2025 and 2026. Claude earned his keep in the event, pulling down a Best France and also engineering a three-power stab of Austria that took them from 5 to 0 centers in one year. That nasty bit of work also earned him the coveted "Golden Blade" award for best stab. Michael McKibbin won Best Diplomat for leveraging the ambitions of three strong Powers against each other in a wonderfully humorous fashion in the final round.



The event featured several newcomers. J Smith went from Intro session to tournament play. Despite getting attacked on all fronts in his first tournament game, he hung on with good temperament and forced a survival to end the game. That bit of good sportsmanship earned him a Classic Diplomacy game to take home. Esteban Carnice followed in the footsteps of his father Hans and big brother Santiago by playing in his first tournament as well. Esteban later player in the Era of Empire demo with his entire family. So, it comes as no surprise the family took home a copy of Era of Empire and a WW1 propaganda book.

Special congratulations to Jeff Hayman for earning his first second place finish. Jeff is a former helicopter pilot

and a published author (The Wall), and treated us to his most recent manuscript at the event. Several players in attendance ended up as characters in his book. Many thanks to John Carpenter for traveling all the way from Toronto to compete in the event. John will be playing with his friends at the Canadian National Championship in Toronto this March at BreakoutCon.



Top Board:
 1st - Robert Zahn
 2nd - Jeff Hayman
 3rd - Paul Konka
 4th - Claude Worrell
 5th - Santiago Carnice
 6th - John Carpenter
 7th (tie) - J Smith
 7th (tie) - Michael McKibbin



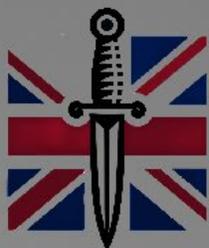
Best Country:
 Austria - Jeff Hayman
 England - Robert Zahn
 France - Claude Worrell
 Germany - Robert Zahn
 Italy - Paul Konka
 Russia - Robert Zahn
 Turkey - Jeff Hayman



Special Awards:
 Era of Empire - Santiago Carnice
 Classic Diplomacy - J Smith
 Golden Blade - Claude Worrell
 Best Diplomat - Michael McKibbin
 Propaganda - Esteban Carnice



EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY CHAMPIONSHIP



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From the DW Archive – The Good Ally

by Mal Arky

While perusing *DW* #11 for an article to write about, my attention was drawn to Len Lakofka's article. You may ask, "Why?" – I permit you. No, really, go on, ask. No? Well, I'm going to tell you, anyway.

DIPLOMACY WORLD

PLIGHT OF N.M.R.



DEAR GAMEMASTER,
I KNOW I MISSED MY LAST MOVE, BUT
PLEASE DON'T REPLACE ME WITH HOW KALELLA

VOL. 3, NO. 1

SPRING 1976

In fact, there are **two** reasons. First and foremost, it contrasts with another article published in the same issue written by Rod Walker, called "Norb as I Knew Him". Walker's article describes a zine publisher whose style of Diplomacy fits neatly into the undiplomatic school: bluster and bullying. In fact, this seems to be how Norb was (is?). Ask Denmark about this kind of diplomacy. Walker is a good writer – go read it.

Second and foremost, it seems like it's an article that would fit in well with my still-new zine, [On Silver Tablets](#), issue #1 of which was officially published on 31 January this year ("officially" because I got it out early, of all things!). Yes, this **is** a blatant plug. No, I'm not ashamed: it's contextual!

OST is aimed at novices to Diplomacy, and Lakofka's article was in response to a request from the then editor of *DW*, Walt Buchanon, for articles for novices. Lakofka answered the call, writing this article on one of the memes of the time (not that they would've been called

'memes', probably 'trends'), which was the emergence of the 'Good Ally' style of play.

Lakofka was quite optimistic about new players back in the spring of 1976. While he states that novices might be put off by articles of an 'esoteric' nature, he suggests: "As time passes, they might go back and reread those articles that make no sense now and get a great deal out of them."

I'll brush over the fact that this type of article – whatever an 'esoteric' article on Dip might be – could seem nonsensical to a new player. I think that Dip players tend to be intelligent; the ones that aren't never get past ordering Lon-Bel and Edi-Nwy in S01. (One of **my** top tips for newbies is always: READ THE FREAKING RULES, FOR FREAK'S SAKE!) I'm pretty sure the more in-depth, abstract, esoteric(?) articles will make some sense, just not be overly useful.

Hmm. That was brushed over quite **lightly**. Never mind.

Anyway... Lakofka's optimism: they'll go back and read these articles again when they understand Dip a little more. Perhaps. Or perhaps they'll just think: *Well, that was a pile of doo-doo* and move on.

There are a couple of things I think Lakofka gets wrong in this article, but I'll leave them until the end. Let's concentrate for now on what he thinks about this faddish fervor for being a Good Ally.

The first thing I find interesting is how Lakofka defines a 'Good Ally', which wouldn't fit into what I think a modern definition might be. For me, the Good Ally style is one based on maintaining an alliance as long as possible, working for the alliance rather than being selfish or opportunistic, and perhaps ditching it when a possible win is in reach. Maybe not that 'good' at the end there, but we're not talking about a Carebear-type of alliance (a 'Holy' or 'Cartel' alliance as Lakofka calls them) that is played for the sake of playing it. For me, the Good Ally style is about keeping the faith until that no longer makes sense. Not exactly altruistic and quite self-serving in the long run. Exciting? Meh.

Lakofka defines the Good Ally style as about being tenaciously truthful:

*"Basically it says, 'I will never tell a lie.' Thus, if you plan to attack, you announce it. If you plan to be an ally, you become one. ... You may attack – but you **must** announce it."*

I've come across Lakofka's "Good Ally" style of play only once; I found it fascinating but confusing. This player would announce, in public press, that they were going to attack someone, and then they would. And, when they'd succeeded there, they'd announce that now they were going to attack **this** player. Surprisingly, it worked initially, perhaps because everyone, including the victim, thought they were bluffing. Once we realized this wasn't the case, it stopped working. Predictability is rarely an advantageous asset in Diplomacy.

Lakofka's idea of what the Good Ally is lays the foundation for what he goes on to write. He isn't very complimentary about this kind of play. Perhaps it is the pernicious predictability of it all; as I've said, this isn't a good thing to portray.

He's apparently a lover of The Stab. Well, of a "good" stab, anyway. He discusses what a good stab is, among one of his reputed rambles away from the topic. There's a reason for this, however:

"Some 'good ally' players become piqued when someone actually attacks them without warning. What has upset them is their own error, but they do not see it that way. ... A 'good ally' can not stab because he can not tell a lie."



If this is what a Good Ally style was, then he's absolutely right! The Stab **is** part of Diplomacy. If you routinely release the identity of the player you're going to attack, even if it's only to the victim themselves, you're not stabbing anyone. "Forewarned is forearmed", as some still assuredly allege somewhere (possibly someone with an excess of upper-body appendages). You **can** play the game without stabbing anyone, and you **can** gain some success in doing so, depending on what your idea of "success" is. But wins will be few and far between... again depending on how a 'win' is defined.

Let's bring this forward to a more modern meaning for the Good Ally style of play, and put aside the percipience that it is a player who doesn't lie. Instead, it is about building and maintaining an alliance assiduously as a way to move towards ultimate victory... or a decent result, at least.

Using this definition, the consummate conclusion will probably be seen in stabbing your ally. It may not be, of course; you may be able to allure your ally to the point of their vesting victory upon you! But that should be seen as a remote resolution.

Again, we're not talking about a 'Cartel' alliance (I like that phrase: an unbreakable alliance). This isn't Carebearism. It is playing the game in a fashion that facilitates the flourishing of all members of the alliance, on the basis that this stimulates symbiotic success.

This style of play isn't to everyone's taste, of course. Some may even call it boring. Where's the cut and thrust? Where's the flexible finesse of Balance of Power play? The electricity of erratic alliances? For me, all of these are valid ways to play the game. It's everyone's challenge to contend with this quagmire of conceptions.

When it comes right down to it, at the end of the day, in the final analysis, when all is said and done, Diplomacy is about securing the support of others to achieve your objectives. Being a good ally is the embodiment of this, in that mutual momentum is going to reap rewards.

Lakofka concludes by pointing out that Diplomacy, although a game in which betrayal is embedded, is about striking a balance between candor and cunning. If you eschew chicanery on ethical grounds, this is probably not the game for you. However, while I choose to avoid dishonesty in real life, Diplomacy **isn't** real life. It's a game. That doesn't mean that absolutely **anything** goes: bullying, threatening behavior, and hatred are not a part of the game, or shouldn't be. Aggressiveness needs to be managed. But it does mean that – for a time – you can imaginatively manage your morality.

There is one thing I disagree with in what Lakofka has to say about Diplomacy. It doesn't really matter in the

context of what his subject is, but it rankles with me, perhaps unreasonably.

A couple of times in his article, Lakofka asserts that Diplomacy is a war simulation:

“Diplomacy is a WAR simulation on the Diplomatic [sic] and on the gross tactical levels.”

“Diplomacy is irrevocably connected with tactics. The simulation is DESIGNED that way. If you screw up the tactics, all the Diplomacy in the world will not save you.”

Now, this doesn't affect what he's saying in the article. When he mentions that the game is a war simulation, or just a simulation, it is to draw attention to the weakness in his assertion of what “Good Ally” play is. Leave the strategic and tactical elements out, and you're going to struggle.

Diplomacy is often confused with a war game because it is a STRATEGY game. In today's parlance, it is an AREA CONTROL game. These are – and were – common in war simulation games. However, if this is the case with Diplomacy, why is it played **away** from the board? Why do we spend so much time and effort communicating with each other? Well, OK, maybe that should be “why **should** we spend so much time and effort..?” as there is a lamentable lessening to this aspect of the game, either due to the time provided by online deadlines and a lack of desire to communicate in any depth from an increasing number of players.

Now, while I accept that Calhamer himself called Dip a war game occasionally, there is a good reason for this. Calhamer had a specific audience in mind when he

released the game: the players of strategy games. These games were two-player affairs, often actual simulations of historic battles. If you like, they were playing chess on variant boards with variant rules to simulate various units in the battle. As a game that needed to appeal to strategy gamers, calling it a ‘war’ game would more likely catch their attention.

Diplomacy is a game of conflict, yes. It is also a COOPERATIVE game, although not in the common perception of this type of game. It isn't about a team playing against the game; it is about acting cooperatively with other players to further self-interest.

Diplomacy isn't a simulation of the pre-WWI strategic and diplomatic alliances, either. England does not have to ally with France against Germany. Austria-Hungary does not have to ally against Russia. The historic setting is contextual to the game, nothing more.

If you want to play a multiplayer strategic game that is a war game, another game that was contemporaneous with Diplomacy, released just the year before. It's called *Risk*. It also isn't a simulation either. You don't need to spend time talking to people. Unfortunately, it isn't a pure strategy game like Diplomacy, as the element of chance is included in the rolling of dice and the drawing of cards. Unfortunately, it isn't Diplomacy.

Perhaps Lakofka's background was in the type of strategy simulation games that preceded Diplomacy, and that's why he asserts that it is a war simulation. If so, Calhamer's strategy worked well! Or perhaps this is just how Lakofka sees the game. It certainly doesn't seem to affect his views on playing it detrimentally!

Asia-Pacific Diplomacy Association News

by Shane Armstrong

New Asia-Pacific Diplomacy Association Committee Elected for 2026

The Asia-Pacific Diplomacy Association elected its 2026 Committee on 22 March.

President - Shane Armstrong (ACT)

Vice-President - Gavin Atkinson (QLD)

Secretary - Rob Hillier (VIC)

Treasurer - Max Roe Banks (ACT)

Committee Members - Tristan Barrett (NSW), Zoe Cameron (VIC), Casey McAllister (VIC).

The incoming Committee would like to thank the outgoing members of the 2025 Committee for their work over the last year.

Ask the Hobby Historian: Is Dip All There Is?

by David Hood

For my quarterly piece about the history of the Diplomacy hobby, how about we...not talk about Diplomacy at all. No, I've not lost my marbles (yet). As much as I love The Game, love talking about The Game, and love talking about the hobby that surrounds The Game, Diplomacy per se has never been all that our hobby is all about. From the very beginnings of the postal era back in the mid-1960s, there were many other things going on.

Other board games, for one thing. While it's true that there have always been, and always will be, Diplomacy players who really only care about Diplomacy and no other games, this has never been the majority of the Dip population. In the early days of the hobby, Chess was a particularly popular sideline for those who had been eliminated early, or when your local Dip group turned up 9 or 11 players instead of only 7. Study of Diplomacy benefited greatly from this early influence - where do you think we got the terms Opening, Midgame and Endgame, after all? And of course, there are still many chess enthusiasts in our hobby right now, including a few recent world champs I could mention. In early postal zines it would not have been unusual at all to see articles of chess, or even folk playing chess games by mail in the same zines in which Diplomacy was being played.

As many more board games were invented over the succeeding decades, Dippers often played these games at tournaments or club gatherings for the same reasons folk had used to play chess - for eliminated or extra players - but also the newer games had advantages all their own. They were fun! During the 1980s in our North Carolina club, the most popular non-dip games were 1830, Titan, Adv Civilization, and Nuclear War. When I started Dixiecon, we had side tournaments for all these games - yes, somewhere in someone's garage right now is a participant ribbon from one of those early events entitled "Nuclear War Participant." But face-to-face was not the only way Diplomacy folks played non-Diplomacy games. They also made up a significant portion of the play-by-mail games in the zines.

When I took over publication of Diplomacy World in 1990, I thought it important to feature content about these other games from time to time. In issue 61, for example, I ran a series of articles about the sports games that were very popular in the hobby of that day. The "manage a soccer club" game called United was particularly in demand, with specific zines being published for the sole purpose of running a United league. There were also articles in that DW edition

about United Basketball, Rotisserie Baseball, and Gonzo Football. Two issues later I did a series on election games played in the zines of the day, which included Presidential Politics and Campaign Trail. (Fun fact, I brought my old copy of Campaign Trail to the 2023 Dipcon, which a bunch of young'uns then played after the barbeque on Saturday night.) In DW issue 65, I covered another set of games being played in Postal Zines, the word or language games like Scrabble and Fictionary.

Perhaps the most popular genre of non-Dip games played by folk in Dipzines, though, was a genre also very popular in the broader gaming world - train games. In issue 68 of Diplomacy World, I described the train games available for play in the fall of 1992 being 18xx, Empire Builder/Eurorails, Rail Baron, and Railway Rivals. (The latter game is still the most popular non-Dip game played in the few zines which still exist today, particularly in the English zines.) And all of this was before the invention of the computer game Railway Tycoon, which itself launched a bevy of other choo-choo games of both the video and board game varieties, including a game which would dwarf them all in popularity - Ticket to Ride. Nowadays there are so many railroad games available for purchase and play that one could hardly know them all.

Now there has always been another genre of games very popular among Diplomacy players, even though many of these games were not suitable for adaptation to remote play by post or otherwise. These were games LIKE Diplomacy - multiplayer, substantial player interaction, negotiation or bargaining as a component, and often based on a historical or at least map-oriented theme. Early titles included Britannia, History of the World, Dune, Age of Renaissance, and others. More recent games in this category would include Here I Stand and Game of Thrones. It's not hard to see the attraction of these games to the Dip community, given the emphasis on talking and player interaction. Another example of games particularly suitable for the Diplomacy fan would be the hidden-player motivation games like Werewolf, Battlestar Galactica, Avalon, or Blood on the Clocktower. Diplomacy people love to try to read other people, so the attraction is obvious there also. There are also some wonderful party games now being played at Dip events as well, like Just One or Code Names, which allow friends and family of Diplomacy players to participate as well.

Now, what is my point, you may be asking? Well, the primary point here was to talk about the history, for sure.

Games other than Dip have always played a major role in our hobby, for several reasons. First, as a fun way for Dippers to interact when not playing the actual game of Diplomacy, for whatever reason. Second, as a recruitment tool, because once you get to know folk while playing Coup or Secret Hitler, or whatever, you have the perfect opportunity to invite them to game something even more challenging and fun (like Diplomacy.) Third, and conversely, having other games one enjoys to play will help keep people from leaving our hobby. There are always folk who tire of playing Diplomacy, or realize the game is not for them emotionally, who nevertheless would like to continue to interact with us. Go to Dixiecon some year, and you will discover that about half the attendees are friends who USED to play Diplomacy, but still come every year to play other things. Those personal connections are worth keeping, believe me. As I sit here writing this article, I am finishing up a game of Gaia Project I've been playing online with one guy who founded the Windy City Weasels and another who is a multiple tournament winner, including both Dipcon and World Dipcon. Neither plays Dip anymore. I play games of some sort with them virtually every day. Think now - are there folk

who've dropped out of the hobby that you wish you could still see? If you had played other games with them, might you still be in contact?

So, what started as me bringing up a historical topic will once again segue into me making a future-facing point. The Diplomacy Hobby is not primarily about the game itself. It's about the people. We don't write Diplomacy World articles or create videos on DBN in order to play pickup games of Diplomacy with anonymous opponents. We want to know people. We get deeper into the hobby for connection with others, not for competition alone. I believe that in order to make your own hobby experience deeper and richer, you should invest some of your time and attention online and/or in person into subjects other than the game itself. This could be other board games, as discussed in this article, but it could be other things as well. Poker, karaoke, shared dinners, sports, and other activities are all things which happen at Diplomacy events. Make time for this. It's important for relationship-building. Not only will that help you on a future board with these folk, it will help make your life more enjoyable.

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/> and <https://www.world-diplomacy-reference.com/tournaments/upcoming>

Circle DC 2026 – April 10th – April 12th, 2026 – Washington, DC – <https://tabletop.events/conventions/circle-dc-2026>

Netherlands Diplomacy Championship – April 11th – April 12th, 2026 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1quKQArRyj2VTjz3D5UoWIWAi5i_6xrB/edit?tab=t.0

Hung Parliament Handicap – April 24th – April 26th, 2026 – Canberra, Australia - https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecd7dMas-iKyp3onxGMuJYxyEQo_IW_PWAy9O27ExdmY9f9w/viewform?pli=1

London Open – May 9th – May 10th, 2026 – London, United Kingdom - <https://www.diplomacy.co.uk/londonopen26>

BGG Spring 2026 – May 21st – May 25th, 2026 – DFW Airport, Texas - <https://tabletop.events/conventions/bgg.spring-2026>

DixieCon 40 – May 22nd – May 24th, 2026 – Chapel Hill, North Carolina - <https://www.dixiecon.com/>

World DipCon – May 22nd – May 24th, 2026 – Athens, Greece - <https://athensdiplomacy.club/wdc2026/>

KublaCon – May 22nd – May 25th, 2026 – Burlingame, California - <https://kublacon.com/>

RegensCon – June 19th – June 21st, 2026 – Regensburg, Bavaria – <https://regenscon.com>

Origins – June 17th – June 21st, 2026 – Columbus, Ohio - <https://www.originsgamefair.com/>

DiploRat Mischief – July 10th – July 12th, 2026 – Brooklyn, New York - <https://www.eventcreate.com/e/mischief26>

DipCon at Armada Regatta – July 30th – August 2nd, 2026 – Denver, Colorado – <https://armada-dip.com/regatta>

GenCon – July 30th – August 2nd, 2026 – Indianapolis, Indiana - <https://www.gencon.com/>

World Boardgaming Championships – July 31st – August 1st, 2026 – Seven Springs, Pennsylvania - <https://www.boardgamers.org/>

National Diplomacy Masters – September 5th – September 9th, 2026 – Las Vegas, Nevada - <https://wsbgvegas.com/>

Euro DipCon – October 2nd – October 4th, 2026 – Chesterfield, United Kingdom - <https://diplomacy.co.uk/edc2026>

Weasel Moot XX – October 2nd – October 4th, 2026 – Chicago, Illinois - <https://windycityweasels.org/weasel-moot-xx/>

Australian Open – November 13th – November 15th, 2026 – Canberra, Australia – No links yet

BGG Con 2026 – November 18th – November 22nd, 2026 – Dallas, Texas - <https://tabletop.events/conventions/bgg.con-2026>

Circle DC Diplomacy Tournament 2026

Please join us in our nation's capital for Circle DC: A Conference on History, Education & Play. Registration for the three-day event is \$150.

Last year we were joined by an amazing group of game designers including Jason Matthews, Tory Brown, Volko Ruhnke, Sebastian Bae, and many more. Come join old friends and meet new friends at the friendliest game convention on the planet.

Circle DC will be hosted at the DC History Center (<https://dchistory.org/>) and the Shakespeare Folger Library (<https://www.folger.edu/>). The Folger Library is located a block from the US Capitol and is home to the world's largest Shakespeare collection.

April 10th – April 12th, in Washington, DC

DIPLOMACY TRIATHLON TOURNAMENT

Three Rounds -- Three Different Diplomacy Games!

In a Diplomacy Triathlon, players compete in a three-round event with a different game featured each round. Prizes for winning each round and overall event.

Teaching Round (all games) 10am-2pm Friday
Round 1 (Diplomacy) – 4pm-8pm Friday
Round 2 (Era of Empire) – 10am-2pm Saturday
Round 3 (The Golden Blade) – 4pm-6pm Saturday

Tournament Director: Thomas Haver
Email: Heroes@RenegadeGames.com
Website: <https://www.fortcircle.com/>

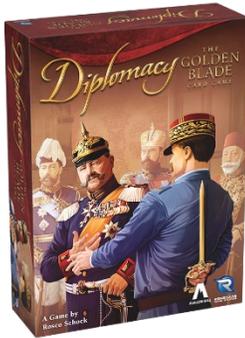


Interview with “Diplomacy: The Golden Blade” Card Game Designer Rosco Schock

by Thomas Haver

*Rosco Schock is a software engineer by day and a game designer by night. He lives near Lancaster Pennsylvania and started designing what became The Golden Blade, his first game in late 2017. He has lots of other designs in the works, including the title **FlipDraw: Mondrian** (where you make actual modern art while playing a draw and write game with a spatial puzzle) and **Wunderkammer** (a bidding game with elements of area control and set collection), which was named a Finalist for the 2026 Cardboard Edison Award.*

Thomas Haver is a former Diplomacy World Champion based out of Columbus, Ohio. He’s facilitated hundreds of teaching events for Diplomacy and other Avalon Hill games over two decades as a member of Rogue Judges. He’s the co-designer of Diplomacy Era of Empire and has served as consultant on numerous strategy game titles for Renegade Game Studios. Thomas presently leads the Renegade Heroes community outreach program.



Questions

What was the original inspiration for this game, and how close is the final version to that first idea?

There wasn’t really an original inspiration for this game per se. A tech friend had invited me to a board game play test event and I didn’t have any designs. Years ago, I had made some cards to “fix” a board game that me and my friends were playing so I went and found them. Unfortunately, after searching every back-up, flash drive and Google drive and consulting a Ouija board, it became clear that I was going to have to make up something new. The 1/2/3 cards I uncovered came in three different types of city aspects and the idea was something along the lines of upgrading your 1s to 2s to 3s and this eventually became the power grid system in the first version and that never changed during play testing or development.

What part of the design are you personally most proud of, and why?

The action validity system for sure. Each turn you play a secret Order card (from a fixed set of 12) against your left and your right neighbors. 9 of these Orders are tied to one of the areas of victory (army, fleet, political). During the game you will build your power in these three areas from level 0 all the way up to level 3 (which is the win condition)



What was the hardest mechanic to balance, and how did you approach solving it?

To be honest, very little changed with the base mechanics from the original version. One thing that did happen is that despite it being a card game and that implying hand management being a critical element of strategy, players were over-using certain action cards and hand locking themselves. If their neighbors noticed this, they could lock them out a bit if they were willing to forgo their own development. To help players out of the mess they put themselves in, I switched out one action for one that always draws them an extra card and can never be blocked. It will be a slow climb back out but they can get there. I think in future plays, these players understand to be more balanced in their strategy.

How did you ensure the game remains fun and fair across different player counts?

Part of the answer here is that the game is self-balancing by the players. You have two people on either side that can work with you or attack you.... And so does everyone else. The one thing I did have to make sure of was that at higher player counts it became harder to affect the other side of the table except through social engineering. When I created the first set of betrayal (later Promise) cards, I made

sure to have one that let two players work together to extend their reach further around the table.

Did any unexpected strategies emerge during playtesting that changed the design?

After players first learn the rules, two “obvious” strategies pop into their head right away. One is to pile on and constantly attack a certain player. They soon realize that they are doing this at the expense of developing their own winning condition and switch tactics. Frequently, this player is left all alone and then comes back to win quite often in a tortoise-hare situation.

How did different types of players (casual, competitive, thematic) respond to the game?

I think one of the strengths of the game is that it is a system that allows the play group in their own style. Plug 7 hardcore Diplomacy players in and they will dig deep into theme and positioning. I demo'd for a group of players that were very into MtG Highlander and they told me they felt the games were similar. I just think the game let them play as if they were playing Highlander. But more casual players can just try to build their power normally and not really engage in the betrayal and subterfuge. I think they are missing some of the fun but the game won't break because of this.

What aspects of the original theme were most important during development?

I didn't set out to design *Diplomacy* the card game but that is how people kept describing it in early play tests. Eventually, I started introducing it that way too and that is how I eventually pitched it to Renegade. Once it was signed, Thomas was instrumental in increasing the Diplomacy flavor. Actions became Orders. Resources became Units. Build became Deploy. Destroy became Disband. There are a lot more not mentioned but we had a goal to make onboarding for existing *Diplomacy* players as easy as possible.

How did you work with the publisher to refine the game?

After the game was signed, Hasbro (who owns the IP) asked that we also create a 2-player version. I started working on a version right away, trying as much as possible to keep the second guessing and bluffing elements alive now that I had lost the negotiation element. We had scheduled about a month for online play testing with the broader Renegade community. The base game continued to

play as expected with no real issues or even major suggestions from play testers. The same was not true for the 2-player variant. To be fair, one was extensively tested over 7 years and one was only 4 months old. We did get some great feedback here from the community and one of the suggestions helped fix some issues by letting some of the Order cards scale their action based on the power level of the associated area of influence.

What type of player do you think will enjoy this game the most?

I think anyone that likes high interaction games will enjoy this. If you like to just be heads down working on your own board, then this might not be the best fit. However, one of the selling points for The Golden Blade is that there is no player elimination and a play time around 15 minutes per player. So even if you get betrayed and knocked out of contention, it won't be after hours of careful maneuvering and plotting. You can just shuffle up and play again and see if you can avoid getting stabbed this time.

Are there expansions, variants, or additional content you'd like to explore?

As this game is already a variant, in some sense, of the original *Diplomacy*, I personally don't think we would be looking for future changes. It will be great fun to see the community make altered or additional Order cards to use with their friends to adjust the core concepts.

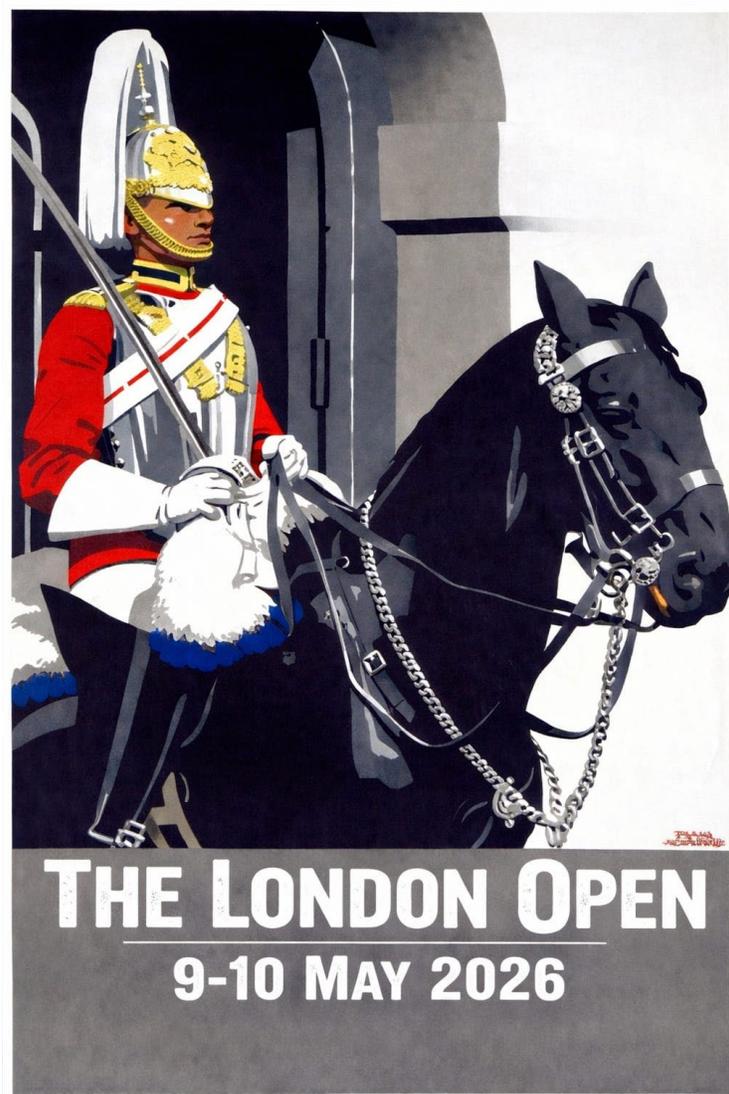
What trends in board gaming influenced your decisions during development?

I don't think this game had this issue. The fact that the design started in 2017 means it was kind of immune to all factors. I do think one thing we are seeing is the desire for some shorter and smaller box games to fit players' busy schedules more. In this case, it was more of a happy coincidence rather than a deliberate choice.

The game releases to the public on April 16, 2026. How can people get their hands on the game? Are there any special events for the game?

I know you will be able to buy directly from Renegade's online store front and I'd assume that you will be able to buy it anywhere you can buy the original *Diplomacy* game. Thomas and I will be at all major conventions running demos and tournaments, including running a *Diplomacy* triathlon again where 7 players will play the original, then Era of Empire and finally The Golden Blade.

London Open



Info here : <https://www.diplomacy.co.uk/londonopen26>
Signup link here : <https://forms.gle/cVGYQJQSKU6iHWyr7>

The London Diplomacy Club has announced London's first tournament in over 20 years. On 9-10 May, they will host the London Open, a three-round tournament at our favorite venue, the [Sambrook's Brewery](#) in Wandsworth, London.

This is a perfect opportunity to come to London and see what all the excitement is about. The 1200 Saturday start means travelers from Europe can arrive Saturday morning and only spend one night in a London hotel, but still get three games of Diplomacy in!

There will be a Friday night social event for early arrivals.

Sunday round starts at 1200 and will finish by 1700. More details to come.

Signup via the [registration form](#).

Opening Strategy

by Mal Arky

Ah, here we go again, I know you're thinking. *Good old opening strategy. What is there that's new to say about it?* Well, quite, if your view on opening 'strategy' is about opening moves.

There's a difference. There are piles, heaps, mountains (well, OK, mounds) of articles that have been written about the moves each power should make in the opening years of a Diplomacy game. They often come down to what to do in 1901 or a little beyond, which moves are the 'best' (tactically or statistically), and which you shouldn't make. Some of this is obvious: the [Alpine Chicken](#) may or may not be a tasty bird, but the [Yorkshire Pudding](#) tastes fowl! (Actually, Yorkshire puddings are versatile and can be very tasty, but not in Diplomacy. And 'fowl'... I know, sorry; no more of that sort of thing.)

More often than not, generally speaking, by and large, these articles tend to be tactical rather than strategic, as they discuss opening moves rather than broader strategy. This is not to say that knowing these moves, and understanding which are more probable than not – and why – isn't useful, it is. But this isn't **strategy**, in the sense of starting the game in a way that will lead to surviving the Early Game and, hopefully, going on to long-term success.

This, then, is my personal view of opening **strategy** in a game of Diplomacy. How to play the game as you mean to go on, and how to survive the Early Game.

The Grand Scheme of Wins

Let's start by considering what Diplomacy is about. There are some things that, if you ignore them, you're not going to be playing Diplomacy well. Understanding these will provide the basis for having a decent strategy at the start of the game.

On the board, Diplomacy is ultimately about owning 18 supply centers. Yes, there are some variations – try reaching 18 SCs in a European tournament game that ends in 1909 or even 1907! But, given the primary object of the game (even with Renegade's confusing rules¹) is to achieve this, you need to have at least **some** idea of how you're going to reach this magic number with the power you're playing.

I'm not talking about a full-on Grand Strategy, here, although that never hurts (unless you can't be flexible about it – more on that below), but a simple idea about which SCs you're going to need. This is easier when you've played more, and you begin to recognize the patterns. But you also need to understand the board so

you can work out which SCs you can get your greedy mitts on.

However, believe it or not, Diplomacy is more about what happens away from the board. All your dreams of conquest are nothing without the cooperation of the other players. And why should they help you? Because **you** are also going to help **them**!

These days, there are very few things I bemoan in the hobby. I must be mellowing, I guess. Or perhaps I understand more about why things are the way they are. But the length of deadlines in an online game frustrates me. I get that people want to get on with the game and that they want to see success on the board. But you're not going to achieve success on the board without communicating with other players, assuming you're not playing with fools.

To expand your empire in Diplomacy, you need allies. The way to make alliances is through communication. The most important phase in the game is the Diplomatic Phase – and not because this is when you work out your tactics for the turn, but because this is when you secure the support of other players. This is when you hammer out agreements, persuade other players that they need to work with you, and collectively work out what tactics are likely to be more successful. For all of this, you need **time**. You may be lucky enough to have plenty of free time during the day to write messages to other players; they may not. Having more time than others is definitely advantageous but **not** if you're trying to work together.

I'm convinced that some of this is because there are a lot of players in the online form of Diplomacy who don't **really** understand the importance of the Diplomatic Phase for **diplomacy**. This is the phase when they enter their orders. Perhaps they send off a quick message telling the players they can be bothered to write to, their neighbors. Well, at least, the neighbor(s) they're allied with; the other(s) – why bother?

sigh

I'm slightly off-topic here, so let's leave that there for now, especially as I bang on about this a **lot**. Let's just say that your **diplomacy**, the press part of the game, is the most important part. If you dislike this or are impatient with it, play Gunboat. Please.

Finally, the last element of the big picture is how to reach the End Game. Given that, in the normal scheme of things, your priorities are (1) win, (2) get to the end of the game with a good number of SCs, or (3) just get to the

end of the game, you've got to survive. You've got to get there.

I've adapted that list of priorities to reflect the realities of arena play and the usual scoring systems applied. If you were playing a standard game, it would be simpler: win or stop anyone else from winning, and survive. Frankly, though, there is so **much** arena Diplomacy played that reality needs to be recognized.

At Last, the Start

That's the big picture. Let's focus on to the opening strategy, now.

I'm not going to write about individual powers. There's enough of that out there, but if you want to pick up some great tips, look at the [Legendary Tactics](#) YouTube videos on each power. These are interviews with some top players on how **they** approach the different powers.

What you'll see if you **do** watch these videos is that there are common threads in each one. And I mean **each** one. This isn't surprising; no matter which power you've drawn, the opening strategy is the same – it just needs to be adapted to the power you're playing.

Let's start with the moves you want to make because this is a minor consideration, and we need to get it out of the way. What you'll find is that, by and large, when it comes to opening moves, Diplomacy players are lazy. They'll repeat what's worked before, or they'll simply go for the statistically standard moves. If you have knowledge of these moves, you'll know what you're likely to see. Of course, this isn't necessarily about being lazy: statistically standard moves are standard for a reason!

Some opening moves make little sense, no matter what; even some named openings are largely pointless. As an example: England's 'Western Opening' has F Edi-Cly! I mean, yeah, OK, you're going after France, but...

If you're playing online, it is good, but not necessarily standard, practice to enter some orders straight away. These should reflect the SCs you would like to take. If you're heading for Norway and Belgium, as England, **don't** order F Edi-Cly. Actually, if you're heading for anywhere as England, **DON'T ORDER F Edi-Cly.**

If you **are** wanting to take Belgium and Norway, your fleets need to be in two of three sea spaces: Norwegian Sea, North Sea, English Channel. You don't **need** to have an army in either space at the end of the year, but it also has three spaces to choose from that make some kind of sense: Edinburgh, Yorkshire, or Wales. Which one depends on where you're ordering your fleets. If you're leaving your army at home, move it to Yorkshire, from where it covers all three home SCs.

Yeah, pretty basic stuff. But the moves **are** pretty basic. All they need to do is reflect where you want to be at the end of 1901.

And, yeah, it **is** more complicated than that... but we're talking about entering provisional orders. How much emphasis you place on actually achieving this is up to you. But this is just to (1) have orders in place if the worst happens and you somehow miss the deadline, and (2) give you a focus.

Now we come to the real stuff, the complicated stuff: diplomacy.

How much you communicate and with whom depends on the power you've drawn. If you've had the joy of drawing Russia, you have a **lot** of neighbors: England, Germany, Austria, Turkey and – stretching the definition of 'neighbor' to its limit – Italy. Why Italy? Because Austria is the Wiener Würstchen in a Russo-Italian sandwich. This leaves France, the furthest power away from you. You've got a lot of work ahead of you!

If you've drawn Turkey, you have three neighbors: Italy (again, a stretch, but no less true), Austria and Russia. England, France and Germany are pretty remote... on the board.

Let's use Turkey as the example. Your priorities at this stage, when it comes to communicating, are these three neighbors. Based on the realities of the board, with Russia, you need to agree on what happens with Armenia, the Black Sea, and Rumania. With Austria, you're thinking about Rumania, Greece and, of course, Bulgaria. With Italy, it's about the Mediterranean... and whether Italy will attack Austria, of course, but that's another matter.

For me, though, jumping into negotiations over these spaces from the start is too much. You can mention them, of course, but keep it to something along the lines of reaching an agreement. And, as Turkey, when messaging Russia, keep it basic: can you reach an agreement over the two most sensitive spaces, Armenia and the Black Sea?

What about the three remote powers? Why bother with England, France and Germany? What are you even going to **say** to them?

Well, true, these aren't in any position to help you on the board. So, yeah, OK, Germany **might** head east, and if they bounce Russia out of Sweden, that would be lovely. England **could** head for St Petersburg for you, so will they land an army in Norway? France... well, unless they're going to send F(Bre) to the Western Mediterranean in F01, there's not too much you need to be concerned about here.

These are your considerations. At this stage, though, all you're doing is initiating contact. You're sending out your feelers. You're communicating. That's it. The on-the-board stuff is the second priority... assuming you have the time for this stuff. You see why I moan about short deadlines???

Message **everyone** at the start of the game. Don't be surprised if the more remote players don't answer: you've learned something – they're either lazy or inexperienced. They're going to wait until they **need** you on the board. And, if they're taking that attitude with **you**, they'll take it with others. If France can't be bothered to reply to your friendly message, they won't be writing to Russia or Austria, either.

So why should **you** bother? Because, assuming you're still there later in the game, you've already made contact. You've prepared the ground. And you've not just limited this to a message in S01, have you? You've continued to send messages in F01, S02, F02... haven't you? Not essays. No remonitions about a lack of communication. But you've maintained contact. At some point, they **will** get back to you.

Ultimately, you want two things from communicating with these three more remote powers if you're Turkey: (1) information about what might be going on away from the board, because you can never have too much information, and (2) to extend your limited influence. You can't influence these players on the board like you can Italy, Austria and Russia; you need to influence them through diplomacy, through communication. **WRITE TO THEM! KEEP WRITING TO THEM!** Ultimately, these powers – one of them, at least – are going to make the difference to your chances of winning. Grand scheme.

What about your neighbors, then? Your neighbors are **always** your priority. You need to reach agreements with them. You need to have alliances with **all** of them if you can.

Well, OK, you **can't** have real alliances with all three. **You** know that, **they** know that. But you need to explore these options. Who will make the best ally? How can you work with them?

Let's get rid of two common misconceptions here. The first is that an alliance is with a power: it isn't. **An alliance is with the player.** Elsewhere in this issue (if the lovely Doug has printed it), I wrote a piece on Len Lakofka's article called "[The Good Ally](#)", published in *DW* #11 in Spring 1976. In it, Lakofka warns against 'vendetta' play (where a player, having been stabbed in one game, carries the grudge into subsequent games). This is idiotic, and that's all that needs saying. However, he also says, "*A vendetta player will not last long nationally [I've no idea!] because he gets the reputation for playing the players and not the game.*" The assertion

being that "playing the players" is a bad thing. In terms of a vendetta, it is; in general, that's what you **should** be doing, to an extent.

Tactics – the orders you enter for your units, playing on the board – are important, of course they are. And Lakofka points out that tactics alone won't win the game; you also need to utilize your diplomatic skills. And the reverse is **also** true: communication skills without tactical skills won't provide success. It's the combination of both.

Your opening strategy is about feeling out which **players** will make the best allies. There's a lot out there about which **power** is the best ally for the power you're playing, all based on the position your power occupies on the board. Again, it's worth knowing, but it is a secondary consideration to the player controlling that power. Turkey **isn't** allying with Russia in a Juggernaut; the Turkish player is allying with the Russian player. This shouldn't be because the Juggernaut is the 'best' alliance for Turkey (and I'm not convinced by that argument) or because it will provide at least initial success (which it may not), but because Russia, of your three neighbors, is controlled by the person who seems the best ally for **you**, initially.

When it comes down to it, as Turkey, there are pros and cons no matter which of your neighbors you ally with. This is the second misconception: **There's no right answer to which power is the best to ally with** because this depends on a range of factors, as well as the first misconception. Leave tactical considerations aside for now.

What you're looking for is the player who seems most likely to be prepared to work with you. Who communicates well? Who shares the same ideas for what to do on the board? Who seems genuine? Who has a style of play you can accommodate, or that complements your own? That kind of thing.

As I say, you should be trying for some sort of alliance with **all** these players, but you'll need to decide who is the best fit.

Your strategic priority, then, is opening the communication channels with everyone and beginning to get a feel for who you can ally with. Now, let's go back to the board.

Those orders you entered: are they the right ones? Now's the time to look at these again. Do you still want to order F Ank-BLA? This will be affected by three factors.

First, do the orders you wanted to make need to be revised due to the alliance structure? If you're allied with Austria, you may want to bounce Russia from the Black Sea or Armenia. You may even want to move to both! If

you're allied with Russia, one of these bounces may actually **still** make sense. If you're attacking Austria, perhaps F Ank-Con might make more sense. Can your fleet and Italy's fleet work together in the Med?

Second, what have you told people you're ordering? As far as possible, if you've said anything about your orders, you need to do what you say. Whether you're actually allied with someone or just telling them you are, saying you'll do something and then not doing it is going to make them question (1) your sincerity and (2) your ability. Neither is good.

Trumping them all, however, is ordering your units to achieve what you want to achieve. This, itself, will be affected by the first two factors, and what you want to achieve might have been changed based on your diplomacy, but making sure your orders give you a chance of success is all important.

Is lying OK? If it's needed. Yes, as I said above, being truthful is the ideal but, if you need to lie, and you're confident that the revelation that you lied isn't going to cause any lasting harm, then there's no reason **not** to do so.

1901 - Testing, Testing?

There seems to be a modern feeling that 1901 is to test out the game. Not in the sense of "Is it possible to do this?" The rules tell you about that. (If you're not sure, READ THEM.) Rather, the idea is that you try not to commit so that you can see who is **really** interested in allying with you.

With apologies to Toby Harris, there is a good reason for being as neutral as possible in 1901 but it shouldn't be to test your ally(ies). What you shouldn't be doing, certainly in S01, is making enemies if it is avoidable. Of course, if you've lied to someone – if you've moved to Armenia and the Black Sea when you told Russia you were right behind them – you've made an enemy (even though you are, literally, right behind them!). 'Wait and see', though, **can** work; avoiding unnecessary conflict, and when you're not happy with anything anyone's said – you have nobody you feel allied with – means you've got to play it comparatively safe.

However, you need to grow in 1901. You need to be in a position to continue that growth into 1902 and through the Early Game. To do this, you're going to need to **decide** who you're allied with. There's no way you can genuinely know this, so your decision might be wrong. If it is, well... chalk it up to experience. Where did you go wrong? What did you miss?

Lakofka, in his piece I mentioned above, states that you should not attack another power in 1901. Aim to take the neutrals first unless you are **certain** about what's happening. This is good advice, but don't take it as

always correct. Rarely is **anything** always correct in Diplomacy. There are no altruisms in Diplomacy, with the exception of the altruism that, in Diplomacy, there are no altruisms. Italy would never occupy Trieste in 1901 if Lakofka's idea were true!

Toby Harris, former World, European, and UK champion at face-to-face Diplomacy, [doesn't believe in 'wait and see' Diplomacy](#).² Chris Martin, former World and North American champion, in his YouTube series "[Diplomacy Academy](#)", urges us to trust in an alliance, to be prepared to take risks to make progress.³ Both of these ideas suggest that making a decision is better than dillying with your dally. Neither is necessarily always true when it comes to opening strategy – no altruisms, remember – but, on balance, if you're as confident as you can be in what you want to do, based on your diplomacy, it is best to go with it. That show of confidence might be enough to tip the other player over into being fully allied with you!

YOUR Opening Strategy

Go and read as much as you can about the opening of a game of Diplomacy. The Diplomacy Archive has a [whole section on these articles](#), as well as sections dedicated to each power. As I said, most of these articles will be to do with opening moves, rather than strategy, but the knowledge is useful.

Go and watch the Legendary Tactics videos I mentioned way back. They often focus on generalities, even though each one focuses on a single power. There's a reason for that: they are not talking about opening strategy in a specific game.

This is always important: your opening strategy should be about what you want to do in **this** game, with **these** players, and **this** set of circumstances. You could play several games as Turkey and not formulate the same opening strategy in any game. Some of that will be because you made a mess and were out by 1903. Hopefully, most of it will be because you started from what you'd **like** to do, **reviewed** those aims based on the early diplomacy, and **revised** those aims to match what you believe the situation in the game would be.

Flexibility is the key. I don't mean physically, although doing some yoga before a game starts might help you to 'center' yourself. I wouldn't know. I can still see my toes when I'm stood up but yoga could well be a stretch. (Hey, I did well there: one at the start and now one at the end. Get off my back.)

Strategic flexibility is the key **throughout** the game. Things happen; circumstances change; the game evolves. Your strategy for the game needs to adapt to reflect this. It's also important in your **opening** strategy, not just with what that strategy should put in place but when your chosen ally gets jumped by other powers,

while you're not able to affect things, you need to be flexible enough to switch tack. Otherwise, you'll end up all at sea. (Hmm, the gates may have opened.)

What you don't want to let yourself do is take on somebody else's opening strategy. Whatever Stephen Agar says, or Richard Sharp, Doug Beyerlein, Edi Birsan, Rod Walker, Richard Hucknall, Toby Harris, Chris Martin... whatever anyone else says, make the strategy for your game, with your power, **your** strategy. Don't be a sheep. Ewe'll regret it. No, really, you wool. That would be baaad.

Doug, stop me now.

NOTES

1: I find myself complaining a lot about the current rules around the 'Object of the Game'. Whoever wrote Renegade's rules for this made a blind butcher's job of it. Compare the [current rules](#) with the [2015 Rules](#) or, well, [any other rules](#) around the objectives. When the draw is

in the rules (it wasn't in 1961!) it was always secondary to a win. Now, well, it looks like it might be a separate objective on its own! What's worse is that, in the rules for [Diplomacy: Era of Empire](#), which has the same basic objectives (numbers aside) the draw is presented much more clearly as secondary to the win. Renegade really needs to correct this error.

2: Harris emphasizes this 'wait and see is bad' idea a lot in the article linked to in the text: "England for Experts". Unfortunately, the article was published in [The Diplomatic Pouch](#) online Dipzine, and the links to articles on the site don't always work. Hopefully, someone can correct this. The "... for Experts" series is an excellent one.

3: The video in the *Diplomacy Academy* series in which Martin emphasizes the need for speed in an alliance is video 2, which focuses on the ["AI alliance and tempo"](#). Really an excellent series, and one which Martin has (fairly) recently added to.

New Diplomacy Releases!

by Thomas Haver



Since Renegade obtained the license to Diplomacy in 2022, we've seen the game expand in scope significantly. Now we have a formalized organized play program (Renegade Heroes), the game is sold by partners the globe, and we're getting entirely new content. I've got some exciting news to share with the community.

First, a little background on how we got here. Renegade's 6th edition release of Diplomacy has been successful. They've gone through four print runs of the game, and established partnerships with game publishers across the globe to distribute the game. Devir Games is the Spanish-language partner for the game. Their edition is sold not only in Spain, but also in Central

and South America. The latter two areas of the world are often overlooked by Diplomacy players, so it's wonderful to see growth of the game worldwide.



The success of Diplomacy directly led to "Era of Empire" being greenlit for production. The last time an official Diplomacy variant was released was in 1994 with Colonial Diplomacy. Renegade obtained the license to the original title and received permission to rework the game (map, rules, components, arts, etc.). "Era of Empire" had a successful release in August 2025. We started using the game in official tournaments at the National Diplomacy Masters in Las Vegas and Battlefront Dayton. The standalone game is now taught at conventions and included in tournaments.



enhance the game experience and decided to proceed with two ideas: (1) a deluxe dual-sided map, and (2) deluxe supply center tokens.

The deluxe dual-sided map has classic Diplomacy on one side and "Era of Empire" on the other. The map is 3'x2', which is larger than the map that comes with both games. It's made of neoprene and has stitched edges. The maps are large enough that we also printed the three-letter for every province. I recently received the packout copy of the map from the factory and immediately put it to play at the Canadian National Championship in Toronto. Both sides of the map are gorgeous. In my opinion, this is the best map produced for Diplomacy in its history.

The success of "Era of Empire" led to "Diplomacy: The Golden Blade" card game. The new game started to ship in February 2026. It was unlike any other Diplomacy property. Rosco Schock had taken Diplomacy and converted it into card form. The game distills Diplomacy into card form that plays 2-7 players at only 15 minutes per player. For existing Diplomacy players, this fills a long-standing need for what to do when you can't get exactly 7 players together for a game. It's also a great entry point for new players to the game. "The Golden Blade" will be sold at Barnes & Noble bookstores later this year, so it's certain to bring new players into our community. That's three new releases in just a few years, when previously went decades between new games. We're adding more fun for our faithful Diplomacy fans.

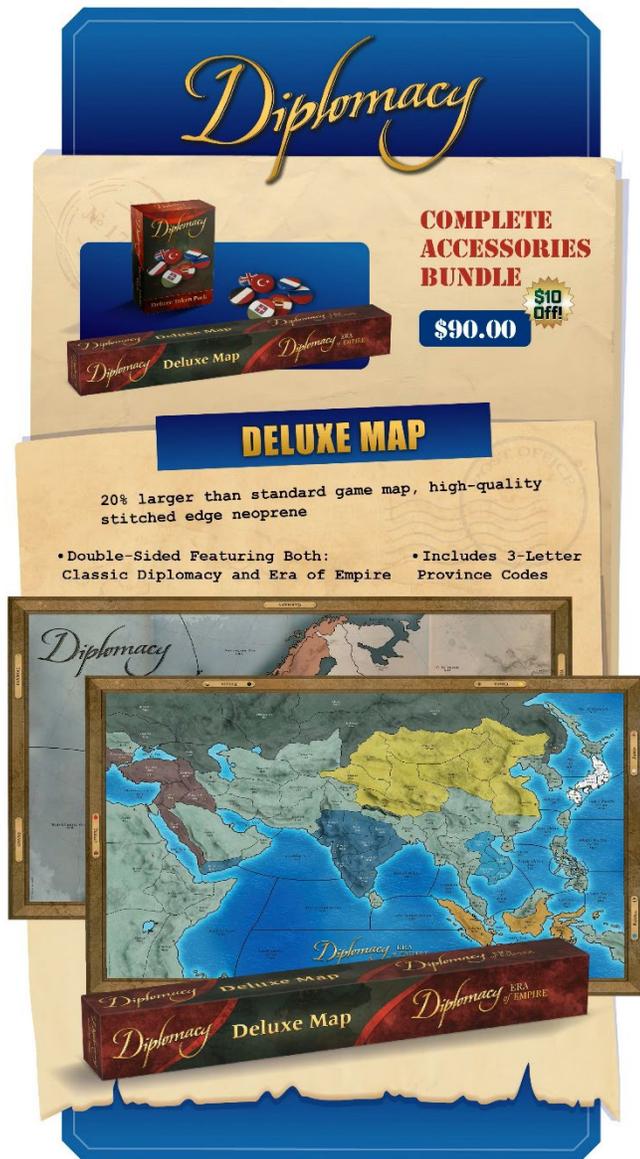


The deluxe tokens are made of acrylic. They feature the Power color on one side and the country flag on the other side. The tokens are intended for classic Diplomacy, but we produced 22 tokens for each Power. That means if you wanted to use them for Era of Empire, you'll still be able to mark 22 supply centers for a victory. The tokens have a good tactile texture to them, which makes them easy to pick up. We also played with them at Breakout Con in Toronto, with positive feedback from the players (even the grognards who grew up without Supply Center markers). I think Supply Centers markers are an important addition to any game that you intend to teach newbies on. Whether you own a 1959 original



Renegade is releasing a set of Deluxe Diplomacy Accessories. We considered many different items to

from Calhamer or the Avalon Hill bookcase edition, you can add these tokens to your game.



Where do we go from here? If you've read this far, you've probably surmised Diplomacy is doing quite well. The classic game has gone through multiple print runs. We got the first new standalone game in 30 years. We have a card game now – a *card game*! The game is popular enough to get its accessories. I like to drop hints by telling everyone Diplomacy has a bright future before we make some major announcements. Take a moment to appreciate the growth of the game. Diplomacy has never been stronger internationally than it is right now. As our organized play program adds volunteers and events across the world, the game will continue to shine. Keep on playing and please continue to support

Renegade. That will allow them to release even more great Diplomacy content in the years to come.



Note: The Deluxe Diplomacy accessories are available for preorder on the Renegade Game Studios webstore. If you pre-order The Golden Blade from Renegade, you will receive the wooden Ambassador token. Links to the games and the webstores are below!

Deluxe Map for Diplomacy and Era of Empire:
<https://renegadegamestudios.com/diplomacy-deluxe-map/>

Deluxe Token Pack (Diplomacy):
<https://renegadegamestudios.com/diplomacy-deluxe-token-pack/>

Diplomacy The Golden Blade:
<https://renegadegamestudios.com/diplomacy-the-golden-blade/>

Additionally, we have videos about The Golden Blade from some of our content creator partners. Many thanks to Board Game Nation, Legendary Tactics, and Ruel Gaviola!

Diplomacy: The Golden Blade Card Game - Unboxing and Review (Board Game Nation)
<https://youtu.be/XXOKFPMWdm8?si=wK7THbYZP-CbNhDI>

Diplomacy: The Golden Blade Card Game - How to Play & Playthrough (Board Game Nation)
<https://youtu.be/IJciacsC3rw?si=QKnjA5mtACvkNcMf>

Diplomacy: The Golden Blade — How to Play + Full Gameplay (Legendary Tactics)
<https://youtu.be/kXvCKS-vqpg?si=JwbTmAHRGbPFsblz>

Diplomacy: The Golden Blade Playthrough With Ruel Gaviola
https://youtu.be/4ixf84U_I_g?si=8vYaO4hPTxXuqbUT

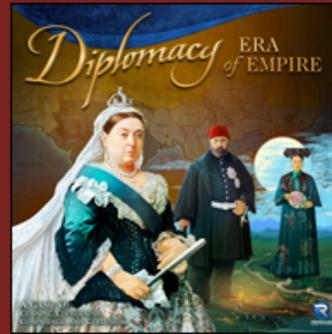
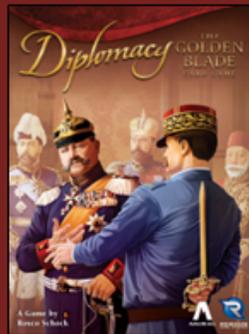
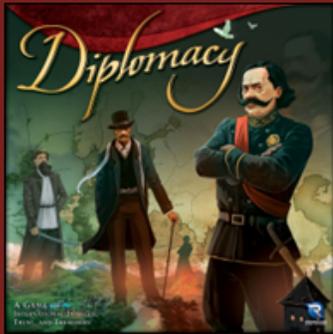
Diplomacy



Tournament Diplomacy is returning to Texas!



After years of growing Diplomacy in the Dallas area, veteran organizer Robert Lacy will host tournament events at BGG Spring and BGG Con in Dallas, Texas in 2026. Both events will be three rounds of Diplomacy using three different games: Diplomacy, Era of Empire, and The Golden Blade card game. Are you the best all around Diplomacy player?



BGG SPRING 2026

Dates: May 21-25, 2026

Venue: Hyatt Regency DFW Airport

Site: https://boardgamegeek.com/wiki/page/BGG_Events

BGG CON 2026

Dates: Nov 18-22, 2026

Venue: Hyatt Regency Dallas (Reunion Tower) in downtown Dallas

Site: https://boardgamegeek.com/wiki/page/BGG_Events

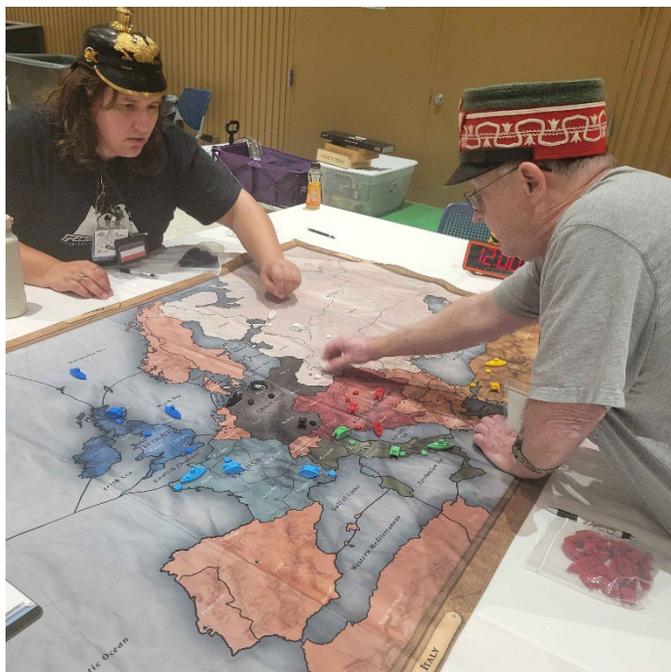


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Owlcon 2026 Report

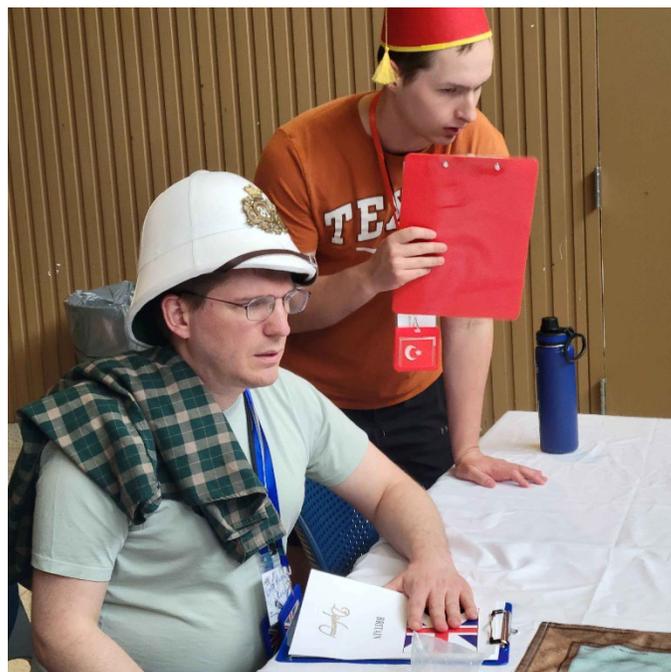
by Robert Lacy



The Diplomacy Tournament at Owlcon XLIII was held at Rice University on February 21. Diplomacy has been a part of Owlcon since the beginning. Since Owlcon X in 1989.

There were two rounds to the tournament, each round there was a classic Diplomacy board and a concurrent Era of Empires board. Each game was to the end of 1907 on the Classic board and 1877 on the Era board. The plan was for Players who played one board in the first round would play the other board in the second round. In the tournament we a total of thirteen participants in the tournament overall but no more than 12 people each round. A few only played in round one while others only in round two. This presented a dilemma; either round 1 would be two games of 6 players each or we would have players play more than one board. I was leaning toward volunteers to play more than one board but presented the options to the players as group and gave my opinion of each choice and which I preferred, but solicited any opposition to people playing more than one board. I also made it clear that the scoring would still be best of 2 games. There were no objections and we had to several players volunteer to play both boards at the same time. I then went over the tournament rules quickly and then we assigned game boards. I started the classic game first followed by the Era board seven minutes later to try to have the two boards staggered. I want to note here that except for one player, none of the tournament goers had actually played a game of Era of Empires yet.

On the Round One Classic Diplomacy board Austria and Germany were looking good early on. Russia and Turkey bounced first turn in the black sea then we saw in the fall Turkey went to Constantinople with its fleet and Russia moved to Rumania both leading the black sea open. This signaled to a few players there was a possible juggernaut that could form. Russia tried to keep Turkey on side as a western triple was evident. Britain moved to the north while France swung south to the mediterranean. Austria tried to rally the rest of the board against this but it was too much for Austria after Italy fell. Though holding the line and keeping Russia Austria busy, Germany sort of couldn't get going after the initial gains and Austria slowly dwindled down facing all its neighbors after Italy fell. Of note was that Russia went almost to elimination but bounced back though determination to three supply centers at the end of the game.



The first round Era board had Turkey get strong from the start. If it wasn't for a critical disorder Turkey could have possibly soloed this board, and most likely won the tournament right there. Extrapolating out the error it was in the cards. If anything, it would have been a few more points. Making a big push to break pas the center of the board, Bryce ordered a move to KASH and supported move to KASH, which was incredibly vague. In addition, he actually had the same support order written twice, both with KASH as the destination. This move became a hold order which conga lined several of this armies moving east and denied him a build and a loss of what his position should have been as Japan was moving

from the east as well. The back and forth with Britain and Netherlands and France was a more or less stalemate in the Indian Ocean for most of the game. In the north east Netherlands kept pressure on Japan and even snuck into Tokyo in a Fall turn but was pushed back out in the next turn. When Russia broke in the middle of the board and Turkey made a push out of Arabia and the Red Sea the whole board tried to rally against Turkey despite all the previous friction and conflict. Britain, France and Netherlands dropped the back and forth over Ceylon and Madras and Japan let a Russian live a little longer as did France in order to keep the remaining Russian armies on the front line against Turkey for a couple of turns.



The Japan player was new to Diplomacy having showed up before the events commenced to learn how to play. After a careful first two turn Kevin caught on and by the end of the game was a respectable 11 center Japan coming in third on the board. Kevin saw the writing on the wall with Turkey moving fast and jumped on what was left of eastern Russia and China the last two years of the game picking up a lot of supply centers quickly while denying them possibly to a rapid moving Turkey. Russia had the toughest time from the start, slowly shrinking a little at a time.

We then took a two-hour break for other con activities, bathroom, dealer room and food. I reset both boards and player clipboards and entered the previous round results on the tournament spreadsheet on my laptop. One of the players ordered pizza for delivery and we all sat around and recharged and the players talked with each other. Round two started as scheduled promptly at 6pm.



Round Two Era board was almost the opposite of round one. Richards Turkey fell very early to a strong and dominant Britain-Russia alliance but left him to concentrate on the Classic board. Diplomacy veteran Daniels Britain found the perfect ally in Andrew's Russia and they ended up dominating the board with big scores second round after low scores in the first round. In the south Frankie's Netherlands made gains attacking France early in the south and for a while becoming the dominant power on the other side of the board with Japan as a partner going after China, both of them eliminating France in the end and almost eliminating China which was a surprise as early to mid-game we had a very large China on the board which had me thinking the round China might dominate the center and become a contender.

On the Classic board we had another new first-time player who was excited to get to play a game they had owned for ten years but never got to play. Naomi drew Germany and had a good time playing while holding their own as Germany for a first-time player. Not originally signed up to play in round two, Kevin joined us after having fun previously on the Era board. The classic board quickly became Richard as Russia and Bryce as England racing for the top spot and points. Caden drew Austria on the classic board and struggled to get it off the ground after Italy built an army in Fall 1901 instead of a fleet, ending the planned Lepanto move early. Italy was the first to fall at the hands of Austria and Turkey. However, Turkey moved from cautious status quo with Russia to ally and Turkey allied with Russia and made impressive gains in the Mediterranean in the last half of the game taking second on the board with 11 centers while Russia ended at 12 after securing all of Scandinavia and all of Germany. Of

note was the Caden's defense of Austria, holding out for a long time with a smart defense but not able to withstand the combined Russia/Turkey ending the game with one center.



I tallied the final scores, checked them over and then we had an awards presentation.

First Place went to Richard Sweat.
Second place to Cadon Towlson

Third Place went to Bryce Cruise. Bryce was the clear tournament leader after round one but round two would be the deciding factor as the field was still open. Just about anyone could have clinched the top place in round two.

In addition to the trophies for the top three finishers there were some special awards given out at Owlcon.

Ian Mauzy received the Best Diplomat Award. As the Owlcon convention events coordinator he gave us a generous amount of table spaces and extended time slots to hold our event, something that they normally would not do. In addition, upon hearing we had an odd player count in the first round, he jumped in last minute in order to help our player count out. His Russia on the Era of Empires board was not doing so well, but he kept going and stuck with it to the end. Honorable mentions were Richard Sweat for helping with setup and teardown and Bryce Cruise for a positive game attitude despite some critical misorders on his part that probably effected his finishing place.

Bryce Cruise ended up in Third Place and also receiving the coveted Golden Brick Award. The Golden Brick is given out for most misorders in the tournament or the most crucial game changing disorder. Bryce had a critical misorder both in round 1 and round 2 during fall

turns that cost him a supply center each time and possibly effected his overall ranking in the tournament. Each time Bryce accepted the errors as hold orders and most importantly he accepted the TO ruling and explanation for the ruling in round 1 with grace. For each error he gracefully shrugged, stated 'misorders are part of the game' and moved on not wanting to dwell on it or waste time.



I was prepared to an intended to give out a Golden Dagger for best or most game changing backstab, but there really wasn't any in any of the games. Each game was fairly straight forward with sides and alliance picked

early and the alliances mostly stable. The few 'stabs' I did see were completely obvious to everyone on the table, including the stabbed; no one was surprised at all.

I also had the Rubber Duck Award, it is for best or most impressive convoy, a convoy that was a surprise move, or best use of fleets. Again, like the Golden Gadder I did not see any super impressive convoys or fleet uses. I watched a few candidates; Germany in round one of the Classic board got up to three fleets at one point. I was going to consider Germany if they outbuilt England on that game board because that would have made the Kaiser proud! In Round 2 on the Classic Board Italy was planning and going to set up Lepanto with Austria, but blew it not building fleets. If this had worked that would have possibly been worthy of the award. I was really, really wanting to give it out to the Dutch player in the second round of Era because he was so close to having all his fleets deployed on the map and none left in the

count. Funny enough he was the Germany player in round 1 of Classic. Perhaps Frankie just likes boats?

The number of people who walked up to comment on the game and the setup, get information about what we were doing, and take flyers for upcoming events. Another positive thing of note as well was bystanders taking pictures and people stopping by to just see what was going on. I had two different people come up to me wanting information for a friend that loves diplomacy and lives in the area. There were also people that came over saying they had been at a game at a nearby table and were watching us all day and saw everyone was having fun and not jerks and will play Diplomacy next year, they were afraid it would be too cut throat.

I also want to say that the players that volunteered to play two boards did well, especially in the second round. They were able to play two different games, and keep things flowing well enough while.

Final Scores Owlcon XLIII

	PLAYER NAME	COUNTRY	ROUND	BOARD	ELIMINATION YEAR	GAME END	SUPPLY CENTER COUNT	SC2	SCORE P = (SC2x100)/G
1	Jeff Johannigan*	AUSTRIA	1	1			2	4	1.834862385
2	Caden Towlson	FRANCE	1	1			9	81	37.1559633
3	Andrew Katcher*	ENGLAND	1	1			7	49	22.47706422
4	Frankie Torres	GERMANY	1	1			7	49	22.47706422
5	Richard Sweat*	ITALY	1	1			1	1	0.458715596
6	Daniel Bowers	RUSSIA	1	1			3	9	4.128440367
7	Ayden Hayes	TURKEY	1	1			5	25	11.46788991
1	Kevin Riley	JAPAN	1	2			11	121	18.44512195
2	Ian Maunzy	RUSSIA	1	2			0	0	0
3	Bryce Cruise	TURKEY	1	2			17	289	44.05487805
4	Robert Lacy	NETHERLANDS	1	2			7	49	7.469512195
5	Jeff Johannigan*	CHINA	1	2			0	0	0
6	Andrew Katcher*	BRITAIN	1	2			1	1	0.152439024
7	Richard Sweat*	FRANCE	1	2			14	196	29.87804878
1	Daniel Bowers	BRITAIN	2	2			13	169	27.70491803
2	Ayden Hayes	CHINA	2	2			1	1	0.163934426
3	Lance Hlvaty*	FRANCE	2	2			0	0	0
4	Caden Towlson*	JAPAN	2	2			12	144	23.60655738
5	Frankie Torres	NETHERLANDS	2	2			10	100	16.39344262
6	Andrew Katcher*	RUSSIA	2	2			14	196	32.13114754
7	Richard Sweat*	TURKEY	2	2			0	0	0
1	Caden Towlson*	AUSTRIA	2	1			1	1	0.314465409
2	Kevin Riley* (sub)	FRANCE	2	1			4	16	5.031446541
3	Bryce Cruise	ENGLAND	2	1			6	36	11.32075472
4	Naomi Palmer	GERMANY	2	1			0	0	0
5	Kevin Riley	ITALY	2	1			0	0	0
6	Richard Sweat*	RUSSIA	2	1			12	144	45.28301887
7	Lance Hlvaty*	TURKEY	2	1			11	121	38.05031447

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 31st – August 1st in Seven Springs, PA

Demo – 5pm-7pm Friday
Round One – 7pm-11pm Friday
Round Two – 10am-2pm Friday
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/>



20 Boards as Melbourne Open Booms!

by Shane Armstrong, with photography from Andrew North

38 unique players descended on Melbourne in March 2026 to take part in the 2026 Melbourne Open, making it the biggest Melbourne Open ever. The tournament took place over three days, and four rounds, allowing players one dropped score. Each round featured five boards, totaling 20 for the weekend.



The spoils all laid out...

Round 1 kicked off on Friday night, Board 1, Umaarrimin, saw Connor Muirhead (ACT), Tianyu Sun (ACT), and Max North (VIC) sharing a 3-way board top, 11-11-11-1 as Russia, Germany, and France respectively, with Tristan Barrett (NSW) in Austria picking up the survival. Board 2, WW Armstrong saw Stephan Kumar (SA) and Shane Armstrong (ACT) share a 10-dot board top as England and Germany, with Soham Schinde (VIC) in third. Board 3, JM Blackwell saw double-boarder Peter McNamara (VIC) doing Peter McNamara things, topping on 11 as Austria, followed by Nancy Jin (ACT) on 9. Board 4, SA Tredrea saw Stuart Barton (ACT) and Alan Thompson's (VIC) F/G top the board. The final board of the round, WM Woodfull was topped by Jamal Blakkarly (ACT), on 12 as Turkey, followed by Clare Bradbery (ACT) on 11 as Germany

A good chunk of the player base headed home to rest up for Saturday, but an equally good chunk of players partook in a late-night curry and a few drinks.

Saturday morning saw the typical Peter McNamara masterclass on Board 1, BR Wilson. Dismantling one neighbor and taking advantage of favorable cross-board circumstances, he topped on 12 as France, winning Best France. Second was Alan Thompson on 8 as Turkey. Board 2, CV Grimmett saw Connor Muirhead secure another board top, shared with Nancy Jin, 11-11 as England and France. Board 3, MG Hughes saw Brandon Austin's (ACT) patient Turkey win out, topping on 11, followed by Joshua Crowther in England on 8. The 4th

board of the round, R Thompson, saw Andrew Goff (VIC) top on 9 as Russia, followed by Arden Gough (VIC) in England and Khai Tschuemperlin (VIC) in Germany on 7 apiece. The final board of the round, IR Redpath, saw Max Roe Banks rocket to a 14-dot board top as Germany, followed by Max North on 8 as Turkey.



Plenty of smiles. For now...

The players headed out for a quick lunch and returned for Round 3. Board 1, CL Fitzpatrick, saw Stephan Kumar top on 13 as Austria, followed by Shane Armstrong on 12 as Russia, with 4 northern fleets. Connor Muirhead finished third on 9. Board 2, WM Lawry, was topped by Brandon Austin in Russia on 12, netting him Best Russia, 4 dots clear of Peter McNamara's 8 dot Turkey. Board 3, AL Hassett, was topped by Andrew Goff on 8 as France, with Clare Bradbery in Austria, Robert Chatterton (VIC) in England, and Darcy Morris (ACT) in Germany finishing shared second on 6 apiece. Board 4 was topped by Jamal Blakkarly on 13 as England, followed by Casey McAllister (VIC) on 11 as Italy. The final board of the round, WH Ponsford was the one that caught everyone's attention. A thing of beauty, or an abomination, depending on your philosophical position, Tianyu Sun in Italy and Max Roe Banks in Turkey (best Turkey) reprised their positions in their recent DBNI last chance game, this time securing a 17/17 draw.

So, to the final day, and the final round. Board 1, SK Warne, was topped by Max North on 12 as England, getting him his first Best Country award, followed by Andrew Goff on 11 as Turkey. Board 2, RN Harvey, was topped by Jamal Blakkarly on 14 as Italy (best Italy), followed by his Austrian ally, Jonathan Sun (VIC) on 9. Board 3, C Matthews saw yet another Connor Muirhead board top, this time on 10 as Austria, followed by Alan Thompson in England, and tournament debutant, Antranig Sarian in France sharing second on 8. Board 4,

KR Miller was topped by returning Canberra Diplomacy icon Darcy Morris on 10, followed by Shane Armstrong as Turkey, and Brandan Austin as France both one dot behind on 9. The final board of the round, MM Lanning, was tightly fought, with Josh Crowther in Italy coming out on top with 8 SCs in a final turn thriller, denying Max Roe Banks the title.

Best Turkey - Max Roe Banks (ACT)

Best Alliance - Shane Armstrong (ACT) and Stephan Kumar (SA)

Best Stab - Max Roe Banks (ACT) and Tianyu Sun (ACT)

Players' Choice - Lynn Chia (VIC)

TD's Award - Tristan Barrett (NSW)



Sunday Morning's Alright for Dipping

With four rounds played, and drop rounds dropped, final results were revealed, with Jamal Blakkarly coming out on top. As far as successful powers go, this was a well-balanced tournament - each power was represented in a sole or shared top at least three times, and eliminations were also fairly evenly distributed. First time Tournament Director Robert Hillier did a fantastic job managing 20 boards over the weekend, and also established a perpetual trophy for the Melbourne Open, joining the Bismark Cup, the Australian Diplomacy Championship, and the Sydney Cup in the pantheon of Australian Diplomacy silverware.



The winner!

Final Standings

- 1st - Jamal Blakkarly (ACT)
- 2nd - Max Roe Banks (ACT)
- 3rd - Peter McNamara (VIC)
- 4th - Brandan Austin (ACT)
- 5th - Connor Muirhead (ACT)
- 6th - Andrew Goff (VIC)
- 7th - Max North (VIC)
- 8th - Shane Armstrong (ACT)
- 9th - Tianyu Sun (ACT)
- 10th - Nancy Kin (ACT)

- Best Austria - Stephan Kumar (SA)
- Best England - Max North (VIC)
- Best France - Peter McNamara (VIC)
- Best Germany - Max Roe Banks (ACT)
- Best Italy - Jamal Blakkarly (ACT)
- Best Russia - Brandan Austin (ACT)



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 17th - June 21st 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

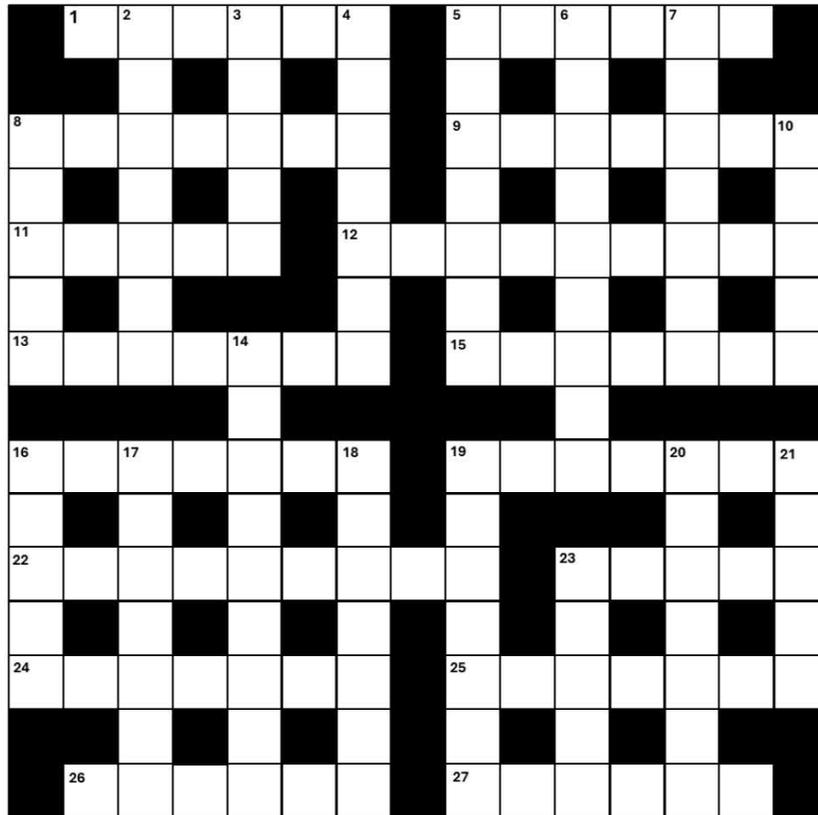
Contact: Thomas Haver (tjhaver@gmail.com)
Website: <https://www.originsgamefair.com/>



Never a *Cross* Word

By Archie Duke

Never a **CROSS** word No. 6



By Archie Duke



'This has all the makings of a tragedy by Euripides Ambassador'.

Never a **CROSS** word No. 6

ACROSS:

- 1 Continent likely to have pride. (6)
 5 Disputed territory with fragmented piecemeal alliance that held Sevastopol initially. (6)
 8 Latin American country, US soldier and army secure region of central Italy crossed by the Tiber. (7)
 9 Fortresses often involved in exchanges with kings. (7)
 10 Measure two pints. (5)
 12 & 27 A Battle formation looked down on by Lord Nelson. (9,6)
 13 Adversaries see mine repositioned. (7)
 15 Business issue perhaps. (7)
 16 Region of Switzerland from which to observe coast it's said. (7)
 19 Black newspaperman gets under the skin of these nasty (often red) parasites. (7)
 22 By the sound of it, vacant head space. (9)
 23 Exactly vertical. (5)
 24 Item of jewellery worn in witnessing New Year ring in. (7)
 25 Absurd pre-sale creates a further setback. (7)
 26 Part royalty experiences setback outside historic French city. (6)
 27 See 12A.



'We'll always have Paris.'



'Do you think you'll finish that before this all ends?'

DOWN:

- 2 Turning face run into place likely to experience heavy fire. (7)
 3 Block attacking Ottoman territory. (5)
 4 Sat a bit pondering defensive work. (7)
 5 Old American spies back march without leader firstly. (7)
 6 Kept up a specific type of attack. (9)
 7 Place conveying the essence of Germany? (7)
 8 Kindle annoyance. (5)
 10 Alluring woman quite likely to be calling you and others. (5)
 14 Disrupted, I bin Italy – state possessed of impotence. (9)
 16 One of these could be conducted around 10. (7)
 17 EU politician heads up mistake ignoring Right yet becomes Republican leader. (7)
 18 Apparently, Dr edges clear. (7)
 19 Establishments in Paris sort out half of ISIS bombers straight away. (7)
 20 Likely treacherous rebel is pure user gone mad. (7)
 21 Siberian animal is held in captivity but is able to escape. (5)
 23 Dua Lipa came back partly just for this renowned rice dish. (5)

ANSWERS to 'Never a CROSS word' No. 5

ACROSS: 1 *Obeys*, 5 *Dagger*, 8 *Potsdam*, 9 *Swaddle*, 11&13 *In the library*, 12 *Immediacy*, 15 *Nearest*, 16 *Antigua*, 19 *Colonel*, 22 *Britannic*, 23 *Plump*, 24 *Mustard*, 25 *Picardy*, 26 *Reveal*, 27 *Tangle*.

DOWN: 2 *Bathtub*, 3 *Yodel*, 4 *Damnify*, 5 *Dustman*, 6 *Guardrail*, 7 *Endgame*, 8 *Prial*, 10 *Egypt*, 14 *Aggravate*, 16 *Album*, 17 *Trieste*, 18 *Acnodal*, 19 *Cockpit*, 20 *Neutral*, 21 *Lippy*, 23 *Pecan*.

COMPETITION WINNER:

Christian Kelly, Brisbane, AUSTRALIA.



'If you sit on our knees for a while, we'll explain the Maginot Opening.'

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.

July 30th - August 2nd 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/>



Whipping 2026 Tournament Report

by Adam Silverman

Whipping, California's only stand-alone Diplomacy tournament and home of the 2025 World DipCon, ran over the weekend of March 27-29. I'm writing this article during round 3 of the event, since Doug (justifiably) won't give me an extension past April 1 to get the article in, and I owe the world a timely report! On the bright side for you readers, I'll have to keep it brief.

After 105 attendees last year, I must admit that the co-organizers, Siobhan Nolen and Alex Amann, and I were really happy to return to the more casual numbers that we've had most years. With around 30 players, we had four boards every round without anyone having to play on two boards.

Things kicked off on Friday night with a social dinner at The Parthenon. We didn't actually make a field trip to Greece, but we did enjoy a great Greek meal at a restaurant by that name; yes, in honor of our World DipCon 2026 hosts in Athens.

After the dinner, many folks hung out into the late hours playing board games or just chatting in the hotel mezzanine. Things kicked off on Saturday morning with four boards in round 1. All great games, perhaps most notably Board 3 where Italy dropped from 6 to zero centers in a year, the next year Germany dropped from 3 to zero, and the following year Russia dropped from 8 to 3. During the round, while not engaged in TD duties, Alex, Siobhan, and I had a chance to try to destroy the One Ring in the co-op game Lord of the Rings: Fate of the Fellowship (we failed... twice). All the Diplomacy games ended by mid-afternoon which gave everyone some time to relax and get food together.





The last round 2 board drew at around 1am, giving everyone at least a few hours of sleep before Round 3 kicked off at 8:30am. Unlike rounds 1 and 2, the last round was time limited with a call time between 1 and 2:30pm. Two games drew early and the final two were called at 2:15pm. It was a pretty intense final round with several players in contention for the final, but when the smoke cleared, Ed Sullivan emerged victorious. I've included the top 7 and Best Country award winners below. All in all, a very successful event, with a number of first-time tournament attendees who had a great time and who I'm sure we'll be seeing much more of in the future.



The 2026 Whipping prizes.



Top 3 (from left to right: Edwin, Ed, and Peter)

Round 2 which was chock-full of shenanigans, featuring (in various games) an Italy simultaneously with a fleet in Norwegian and an army in Silesia, the convoy of a Turkish army from StPete to Portugal (via France... who owned Portugal), another Turkey that dropped to 2 centers but managed to build two more (5 years later) and ultimately ended on 5, and the Italian position illustrated below which is **totally normal** (Italy survived another 3 years till the game drew).





Best Austria: Jake Mannix 12 SCs
 Best England: Peter McNamara 12 SCs
 Best France: Justin Loar 11 SCs
 Best Germany: Ed Sullivan 12 SCs
 Best Italy: Peter McNamara 10 SCs
 Best Russia: Patrick Jacobson 13 SC
 Best Turkey: Victoria Terada 11 SCs

Top 7:

1. Ed Sullivan 517 pts
2. Peter McNamara 460 pts
3. Edwin Lopez 444 pts
4. Craig Mayr 413 pts
5. Jake Mannix 373 pts
6. Justin Loar 373 pts
7. Patrick Jacobson 359 pts

True North: The Canadian National Diplomacy Championship

by Thomas Haver

Congratulations to Robert Zahn for winning the Canadian National Diplomacy Championship at BreakoutCon in Toronto. The tournament was best two rounds of three in classical Diplomacy, with added games for "Era of Empire" and "The Golden Blade". The tournament finale was hotly contested, with local favorite John Carpenter being narrowly edged out by Robert Zahn in the third round. Zahn rode two board tops (Germany and England) to the championship.

The event was held at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Toronto. This was an excellent location because it was within walking distance of many restaurants and tourist sites. I traveled to the convention with my family; combined we had a lot of Diplomacy and sightseeing on the schedule. During our stay, we visited the Royal Ontario Museum, Casa Loma, the Polson Pier, and the CN Tower, among other stops. Toronto is a fantastic

international city, so there's plenty of fine dining to enjoy. We began our trip with dinner at Makilala with some friends from Toronto and finished at the 360 restaurant in the CN Tower for some amazing views. Over the years we've had many Diplomacy players travel to the States from Canada. We were happy to finally give the Canadian Diplomacy fans a home game.

The Diplomacy tournament was held at Breakout Con (<https://breakoutcon.com/>), which has been running for over a decade. Renegade has a presence at the convention via Chris Chung, a Toronto native who's also a notable game designer (<https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgamedesigner/71997/christopher-chung>). However, this was the first full year of coordination with the organizing committee. We were eager to host an event in the Toronto area because there are many Diplomacy players in the region, and

several members of the Renegade Heroes program. The convention was also a satellite event for the World Series of Board Gaming, which Renegade is also a sponsor of. Perfect opportunity to bring more events to our Canadian supporters. Many thanks to the organizers at BreakoutCon: David, Christian, Pete, and Yvonne.



The tournament structure was similar to our other Diplomacy events at Origins Game Fair and PrezCon: best two rounds out of three in classical Diplomacy with a scoring system that favors placement on the board. As expected, Canada was well represented in every round, with players from as close as the University of Toronto and as far away as Calgary. We had some special guests travel in to support the tournament as well, including PrezCon champion Robert Zahn and the crew from Legendary Tactics (<https://www.youtube.com/c/LegendaryTactics>).



The early tournament leader was local John Carpenter of Mississauga. John has previously won Origins Game Fair, and he was enjoying home field advantage for the first time. He cruised to a large board top as Russia in the first round. He could have pushed for even more but elected to show grace to his opponents. As a former player, I think this is a wise meta move. There are still two more rounds to be played. A magnanimous gesture to start the tournament could pay off in the other two rounds. No need to create bad blood even if players do claim to “reset” in between games.



Saturday was a jam-packed day of Diplomacy. We had two rounds of classical Diplomacy planned plus “The Golden Blade” card game plus “Diplomacy: Era of Empire”. Board tops early by Dylan (Kit) Surovec and Robert Zahn brought them closer to John Carpenter, who did NOT experience a return of goodwill from his play the round prior. The group broke for lunch at Chef’s Hall after the second round. Chef’s Hall is just across the street from the hotel and is a market-style collection of restaurants, so everyone can order something they like. It felt very “Origins” to me with the North Market across the street from the convention center. It was a great, easy option to get lunch between events.

Before the third and final round, players had the opportunity to first play “Era of Empire”. Many in attendance own the game but haven’t had a chance to play since it was released last year, so I had the joy as co-designer of watching others play their first game.



England. Both are familiar with the tournament structure, having won multiple tournaments before, just at other events. Then the question becomes how much tournament meta plays a factor, because both players are playing to win. In Zahn's theater, he manages to grab the North from Russia and establishes a stranglehold on Scandinavia. In the East, John established a strong alliance with Adrian's Turkey to similarly put pressure on Russia. They leveraged Italy by first sending him west versus France, then executed a three Power stab of Italy by bringing France into the alliance. An excellent backstab coordinated by John to put him in the driver's seat as board top. However, tournaments aren't decided mid-game.



Adrian Ongteco topped the board as Britain with some strong roleplay as Queen Victoria's forces. The group then switched into "The Golden Blade" card game with an hour before the final round. The game had just been released to the public the day before, so it was also a fresh experience for all except John Carpenter, who had playtested the game. Once again Adrian Ongteco came out on top. He started the day with a one-center Russia that never got to build and had rattled off two wins in two different games. Would his fortune carry over to the Third Round?

The final round in every Diplomacy tournament always has twists and turns, even if there is a leader in the clubhouse. In this situation, the field was wide open because no one had claimed two board tops. The two players with the best chances of winning were John Carpenter and Robert Zahn. They were paired on the final board together, with John as Austria to Robert's

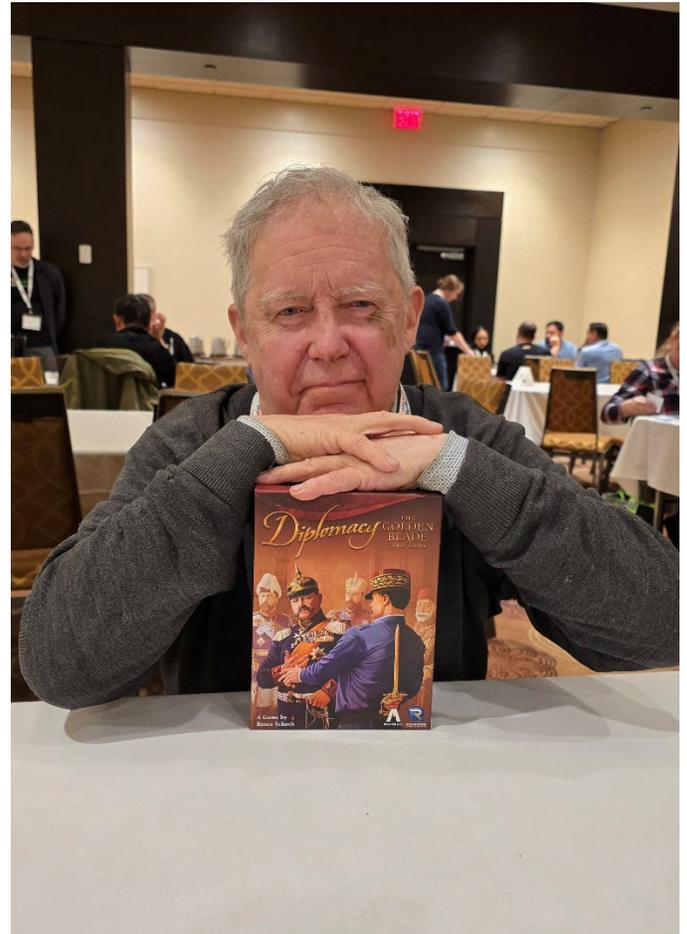
The early news of Russia's demise was greatly exaggerated. Vitaly Gam, playing in his first tournament, led others to believe he was finished and would accept an elimination of the Power, since Russia's situation was dire. Onto other games at the convention. But no, not Vitaly. He arranged for a German stab of England in Moscow, then accepted support back into Rumania to stay alive at one center. The subsequent year saw his lone Rumanian unit be part of a beleaguered garrison against 3 attacking Powers. Vitaly had fooled me as well. The sudden change of fortunes opened up the board. Germany's one center stab of England in Moscow resulted in Zahn turning his many fleets on Germany. The riposte from England took down Denmark & Belgium, and threatened to steamroll the board to victory. And that's where things got interesting.



championship and Robert second place. Robert Zahn has won many tournaments, and he wasn't ready to back down. To John's credit, even though he could have pushed Turkey over England in the game, he elected for fair play. He decided to play the game on its own terms. Not for a championship, not for the North American Grand Prix, but the game in front of them. Robert ended up playing that way as well – to win the board. To both their credit, after the initial discussion they played for a true end to the game. Turkey ended up tying England for the board top, with Austria taking third. The Canadian National Championship was claimed by Robert Zahn.



Based on tournament standings, John would beat Robert by finishing ahead of him on that board. However, it was possible for John to win the tournament by having someone other than Robert finish in first place. John could play the kingmaker on the board, ensuring that person (Adrian's Turkey in this case) would board top, thereby pushing Robert down in the standings. I watched this play out live as Tournament Director (TD). As TD, I'm there to adjudicate orders and take pictures and resolve potential disputes. I hold my personal thoughts on the game until after the tournament. I was quite curious to see how this would play out over the board, because the moves on the board were there to get John the championship.



I've played in dozens tournaments across the world. I think there's merit in the argument to either approach: playing each game in isolation and playing the tournament meta. I've vacillated between both approaches in competitive play. Leveraging someone's goals in the game, whatever they may be, is a legitimate approach. Likewise, I think it's fun to play for your best position on a single board – do your best. I personally would have approached the ending the same way John did, because I wouldn't feel the victory was "well-earned" the other way. If I was in Zahn's shoes and the same draw vote was held that would give me second to John's first, I probably take it because I think John played masterfully that tournament. But that's because I see



John and Robert were openly talking about this tournament placement situations because John was hoping for a draw vote that would end the game in a first-place tie on the board, giving John the

more of everyone's game across the event rather than one perspective. I've also grown softer after decades of play. A younger more cutthroat me would have turned the vote down just as Zahn did, and go for the championship. I'm curious what people reading this think about John's decision to let the game play out.



Congratulations to Robert Zahn on winning the Canadian National Diplomacy Championship and to John Carpenter for finishing second and to Adrian Ongteco for finishing third. In addition to the championship plaque, we also awarded a copy of "The Golden Blade" card game to our top seven finishers. The podium (top three) finishers each received a Diplomacy hat. And we had many other awards to hand out. . .



Best Diplomat went to Adrian Ongteco of Calgary, Alberta for his play across all three Diplomacy games. He emphasized the roleplay aspect of Powers during the classical Diplomacy tournament, which was a fan favorite. He also achieved a world first in Diplomacy: winning three different Diplomacy games in the SAME day. Adrian won as Britain during the "Era of Empire" game. He followed that with a win in the newly released "Golden Blade" card game. He finished the night with a board top as Turkey in classical Diplomacy. Not bad for his first tournament!

The Golden Blade for Best Stab went to John Carpenter for his coordinated three Power stab of Italy in the final round. Zahn won a wooden Diplomacy board to pair with his championship plaque. We plan to return to BreakoutCon next year for another Canadian Championship!

Top Board:

- 1st - Robert Zahn
- 2nd - John Carpenter
- 3rd - Adrian Ongteco
- 4th - Dylan Surovec
- 5th - Owen Casselman
- 6th - Aaron Fischer
- 7th - Mike Keepence

Best Country:

- Austria - Dylan Surovec
- England - Robert Zahn
- France - Owen Casselman
- Germany - Robert Zahn
- Italy - Mike Keepence
- Russia - John Carpenter
- Turkey - Adrian Ongteco

Additional Awards:

- Best Diplomat - Adrian Ongteco
- Best Propagandist - Vitaly Gam
- Best Historian - Aaron Fischer
- Golden Blade (Best Stab) - John Carpenter
- New Player - Ryan Lu



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.

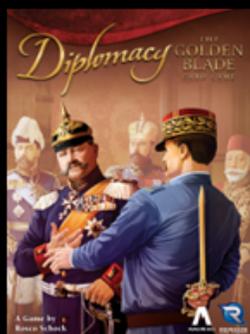
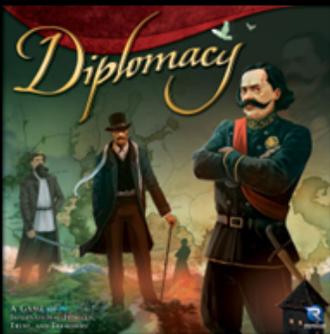


Compete against our honored Diplomacy Masters:

- 3-Time World Champion **Cyrille Sevin**
- North American Grand Prix Champion **Robert Zahn**
- Reigning National Diplomacy Masters Champion **Dan McNeill**
- US National Champion **Gregory Vaughan**
- Diplomat of the Year winner **Nolan David**
- Era of Empire champion **Richard Sweat**

- September 5-9, 2026 (Labor Day Weekend)
- Horseshoe Hotel & Casino
- National Diplomacy Masters tournament
- "Diplomacy: Era of Empire" tournament
- First official "Diplomacy: The Golden Blade" tournament
- Plus many opportunities to learn and win!
- Hotel & Tickets: <https://wsbgvegas.com/>
- Reach out to GM Thomas Haver for additional event details at Heroes@RenegadeGames.com

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



Everybody's Playing The Game, But Nobody's Rules Are The Same

by Nastja Styles

The title is a line from a song in the musical “Chess”. It’s a story of political intrigue, underhanded tactics, and betrayals—reminiscent of another board game, perhaps!

But in reality, chess is very simple: the objective is to win, or failing that, to not lose.

In Diplomacy? Half the time we don’t even agree what a win is, and we could fill a whole article debating the rationales for considering various kinds of draw to be wins, or at least better or worse than others. Same with different kinds of loss! And while scoring systems can provide objective clarity, let’s face it, it still won’t mean everyone at the board will be singing from the same song sheet.

So, how to navigate this, when “everybody’s playing the game, but nobody’s rules are the same”?

I propose that two questions are critical:

1. Who are you?
2. What do you want?

We should know these things about ourselves, and about the other players.

To be clear, I don’t mean simply “Hi, I’m Nastja, I’m France, and I would like Belgium please”.

It goes deeper than that. Let’s work our way up, and start with...

What *do* you want?

No, not “the Black Sea”, but rather:

Some players will want to win at all costs, whatever “win” means to them. Some consider only a solo is worth trying for. Some want to tell the best lies. Some want to do great things together. Some want to show off their encyclopedic knowledge of stalemate lines. Some want to get a certain other player out of the game as quickly as possible. Some want to make everyone happy. Some want to play the most objectively correct moves. Some want to bowl everyone over by force of will. *And so on.*

Me? I want to have a good time with my allies (a shared top with my ally is my favorite kind of win, honestly), and if I find myself without an ally, to have a good time with my enemies. And after the game, I want people to think “Wow, Nastja played well”, and/but I also want them to think “I look forward to playing with her again”.

What do *you* want?

And when you understand what another player wants in that regard, half the time you can offer that to them, and even if you are enemies, knowing what they want (what they really really want) can go a long way. They may be playing by different rules than you, but once you know what they are, now you can adapt accordingly.

Which brings us to the other question:

Who *are* you?

Because this is in large part informed by the answer to the previous question, but what you/they want is not the whole story.

Who *are* you, when the question of what you want is set aside? Who are you when you have what you want? Who are you when you don’t? Who are you when you so nearly do, but it’s snatched away? Who are you when you stab? Who are you when you’re on your way to the board call? Who are you when somebody ruins your game in the opening? Who are you when you talk about your fellow players socially? Who are you when the colorful little plastic pieces are being tidied away after the game?

As for me? You’ll have to ask my allies and enemies, as while I could indulge myself in an answer, this isn’t the space for an autobiography!

But: who *are* you, when everybody’s playing the game, but nobody’s rules are the same?

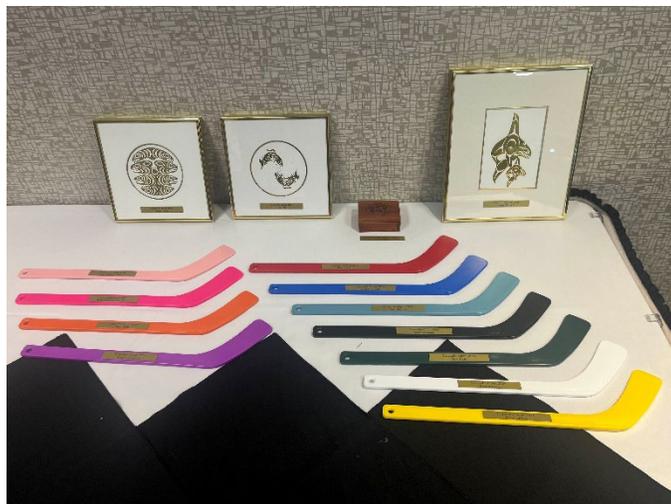
Cascadia Open Report

by Chris Brand



The 11th iteration of Cascadia Open took place on the weekend of the 31st January/1st February. 27 diplomacy players from as far afield as Australia and the UK gathered in Surrey, BC, Canada. Amongst them were four former winners of the tournament – John Jamieson, Edi Birsan, Riaz Virani, and David Miller, last year's champion. On the Friday, most of the group gathered at Earl's Kitchen + Bar in Guildford for dinner, and then adjourned to the hotel to play some games.

10-centre England. That put Jason in the lead with 241, followed by David and Edi both on 226 and Andrew in fourth with a total of 217.



For Saturday morning's round, Andrew Zick volunteered to play two boards, managing to get 8 centers as Germany in one game, behind Sabi Ahuja's 10-centre France, while in the other David Miller topped with a 13-centre Germany, Riaz Virani got 7 centers as Turkey, and Andrew finished with 6 centers as Austria. Meanwhile, Edi Birsan managed to get to 14 centers as Russia (ahead of Craig Mayr's Austria and Justin Loar's Italy, both on 10) and Jason Mastbaum topped the fourth board with 15 centers as Turkey, ahead of Doug Moore's

In the afternoon, Elle Doer volunteered to play two boards. Zoe Cameron topped her board as a 9-centre Russia, ahead of Doug's 8-centre France, and Craig topped his with a 9-centre England, ahead of Edi in Austria and Jason in Italy, both with 8 centers. Riaz finished with 12 centers as Russia, ahead of Sabi's Germany and Mackenzie Reichard's Italy, both on 5. The fourth board went all the way to the 1909 fixed end, with David getting to 17 as Turkey. That gave David a commanding lead, with 497 points, followed by Jason on 365, Edi on 350, and Riaz on 346.

Sunday morning we had a very awkward 24 players. Matt Shields, Doug Moore, and Liam Moore kindly volunteered to sit out the round. Two boards played right through 1909 – in one Riaz managed to top with 12 centers as England, ahead of Justin's 11-centre France, and in the other Andrew topped with a 15-centre Russia, ahead of Zoe's 11-centre Germany. The third board finished in 1905 with Gabe Racz's France, Ruby

Dickson's Turkey, and David Miller's Italy all on 8 centers.



Other awards were as follows:

- Best Austria – Craig Mayr (144 points for 10 centers in round 1)
- Best England – Riaz Virani (191 points for 12 centers in round 3)
- Best France – Sabi Ahuja (176 points for 10 centers in round 1)
- Best Germany – David Miller (226 points for 13 centers in round 1)
- Best Italy – Justin Loar (144 points for 10 centers in round 1)
- Best Russia – Andrew Zick (236 points for 15 centers in round 3)
- Best Turkey – David Miller (271 points for 17 centers in round 2)
- Player's Choice – George Mørk
- With Friends Like These – Kyra Olson
- Just a Flesh Wound – Gabe Racz
- Best Stab – Liam Stokes

In the end, David Miller retained his title, finishing with 621 points, staying ahead of Riaz Virani in second with 537, and Justin Loar in third with 464.



Tournament Haven

by Thomas Haver

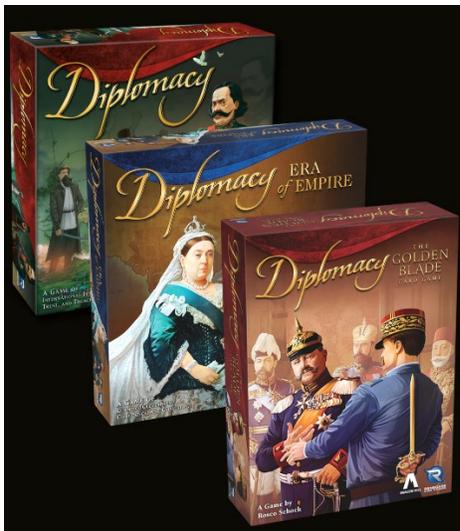
In this edition of “Tournament Haven”, we’ll cover our three winter tournaments, upcoming events, the North American Grand Prix, and we’ll look ahead to WDC 2027 Las Vegas. Let’s dive in!



We used a similar scoring system to Formula One, with added emphasis on finishing in the Top 7 (Top Board) instead of Top 10. Participating in any event earns points. The better a player performs at an event, the more points they earn (25 points for a 1st place finish, 18 points for a 2nd place finish, 15 points for 3rd, etc.). To make the events more accessible, we held all NAGP events at public game conventions. Lastly, as an incentive to win we awarded a free trip to the World Series of Board Gaming to the champion. In 2026 we kept the same scoring system and are providing a track for interested tournament directors or potential tournament directors to participate. Anyone interested in running an event should submit their registration for the Renegade Heroes program using the link above. For anyone with questions, please reach out to Heroes@RenegadeGames.com.

Onto the current “Top 7” players!

As you’ll see in the event results below, we’ve completed three tournament events, so the season is still young. There will be plenty of opportunities to compete throughout the year, with potential for added events. Join the Renegade Discord for the latest updates (<https://discord.gg/PNqNt2Uy>). Zahn’s lead is due to his two wins at PrezCon and the Canadian National Championship at BreakoutCon. John Carpenter also picked up solid points at both those early events, while Richard Sweat claimed the crown at OwlCon to continue his solid play from last year. We look forward to providing updates throughout the season as more tournament events are held. Look for event results from Circle DC, BGG Spring, and Origins Game Fair in the next edition!



Last year Renegade piloted the return of the “North American Grand Prix”, a circuit event for Diplomacy to support travel and play across the continent. Aligning with the creation of the Renegade Heroes program (<https://renegadegamestudios.com/blog/introducing-the-renegade-heroes-community-program/?srsltid=AfmBOorp6YE2nUiXnoTo4yzgH1NGcgJonGe5OWL8ERdQnzrwI2AT30wA>), a central body for organized play within the Diplomacy community made it possible to align on standards for teaching the game and running events. The overall participation of the circuit was amazing in 2025, with more than 300 competitors registering at least one event. What are the rules we used in 2025, and what changes have been made for 2026?

Top 7

Rank	Player	Points
1	Robert Zahn	50
2	John Carpenter	26
3	Richard Sweat	25
4 (tie)	Caden Towlson	18
4 (tie)	Jeff Hayman	18
6 (tie)	Paul Konka	15
6 (tie)	Bryce Cruise	15
6 (tie)	Adrian Ongteco	15

February 21-23 - OwlCon (Houston, TX) - Robert Lacy

“Richard Sweat is the champion of the first ever OwlCon mini tournament. The Diplomacy Tournament at Owlcon XLIII was held at Rice University on February 21. Diplomacy has been a part of Owlcon since the beginning. Since Owlcon X in 1989. There were two rounds to the tournament, each round there was a classic Diplomacy board and a concurrent Era of Empires board. Each game was to the end of 1907 on the Classic board and 1877 on the Era board.

The number of people who walked up to comment on the game and the setup, get information about what we were doing, and take flyers for upcoming events. Another positive thing of note as well as bystanders taking pictures and people stopping by to just see what was going on. I had two different people come up to me wanting information for a friend that loves diplomacy and lives in the area.” – Robert Lacy, tournament director

Top Board:

1st - Richard Sweat
2nd - Caden Towlson
3rd - Bryce Cruise
4th - Andrew Katcher
5th - Frankie Torres
6th - Lance Hlvaty
7th - Daniel Bowers

February 27-28 - PrezCon (Charlottesville, VA) - Thomas Haver

Congratulations to Robert Zahn for winning the PrezCon Diplomacy Tournament in dominant fashion. Zahn earned a Best Country award on all three boards he played over the weekend. The best two of three round event was brought back in 2024 after a 14-year hiatus. Held annually in Charlottesville, Virginia the convention is known affectionally as the "Winter Nationals", a sister convention of the World Boardgaming Championships. Per usual, we treated players to Diplomacy shirts and some winter wear -- Diplomacy hoodies! The thick winter clothes keep you warm and doubles as protective padding from backstabs.

Top Board:

1st - Robert Zahn
2nd - Jeff Hayman
3rd - Paul Konka
4th - Claude Worrell
5th - Santiago Carnice
6th - John Carpenter
7th (tie) - J Smith
7th (tie) - Michael McKibbin

March 19-22 - BreakoutCon (Toronto, Canada) (Canadian National Championship) - Thomas Haver

Congratulations to Robert Zahn for winning the Canadian National Diplomacy Championship at BreakoutCon in Toronto. The tournament was best two rounds of three in classical Diplomacy, with added games for "Era of Empire" and "The Golden Blade". The tournament finale was hotly contested, with local favorite John Carpenter being narrowly edged out by Robert Zahn in the third round. Zahn rode two board tops (Germany and England) to the championship.

Top Board:

1st - Robert Zahn
2nd - John Carpenter
3rd - Adrian Ongteco
4th - Dylan Surovec
5th - Owen Casselman
6th - Aaron Fischer
7th - Mike Keepence

April 10-12 - Circle DC (Washington, DC) - Thomas Haver

Now in its fourth year, the convention hosted by Fort Circle founder Kevin Bertram has fast become one of my favorite. The central location of the DC History Museum coupled with a who's-who of board game industry folks make this a must attend event. Last year saw the return of tournament Diplomacy to Washington DC. This year we're upping the ante by running a Diplomacy Triathlon. That means players will get an opportunity to compete in three different Diplomacy games over three rounds to determine the champion. Teaching events are scheduled for the three games and the designer of "The Golden Blade" will be on-site. Website:

<https://tabletop.events/conventions/circle-dc-2026>

May 22-24 - BGG Spring (Dallas, Texas) - Robert Lacy

Robert Lacy is the 2024 Diplomat of the Year, awarded for his service to the Diplomacy community. He's been instrumental in the rise of Diplomacy in Texas, which has long had good players but lacked organization. This year Lacy is expanding the Diplomacy presence at BoardGameGeek Spring by adding a Diplomacy Triathlon tournament. This format was first piloted at Battlefront Dayton and will be used at multiple general gaming conventions across the country. The event is easy to attend because of its proximity to DFW airport. My family will be making a vacation of the event and I know Lacy has some fantastic prizes for the competitors. Website: <https://tabletop.events/conventions/bgg.spring-2026>

June 19-22 - Origins (Columbus, Ohio) - Thomas Haver

Origins is one of the “original” Diplomacy events. First held in 1975 in Baltimore, Maryland, the convention was nomadic for the first twenty years of its existence before settling on Columbus, Ohio as a permanent home. The classic Diplomacy tournament is best two rounds out of three, with teaching games planned for classic Diplomacy, “Era of Empire”, and “The Golden Blade”. Dinner and drinks have been a decades-long tradition, so don’t miss out on the merriment. Website: <https://www.originsgamefair.com/>

July 31 - August 1 - WBC (Seven Springs, PA) - Anton Wilsbach

The World Boardgaming Championships started as AvalonCon in support of Avalon Hill. Since its inception more than thirty years ago by Don Greenwood, the convention has become most well known for the “Century”, a series of competitive board game tournaments held over a full week. This convention is held at the Seven Springs Mountain Resort outside of Pittsburgh, PA. Many attendees are decades-long supporters of classic titles by Avalon Hill. The Diplomacy tournament is best two rounds out of three, with a teaching round on Friday before the first round. Website: <https://www.boardgamers.org/>

July 30 - August 1 - GenCon (Indianapolis, IN) (US National Championship) - Thomas Haver

GenCon is considered the premiere gaming convention in the US. Attending at least one GenCon is a rite of passage in the gaming world. For the Diplomacy community, it’s the longest running tournament & Diplomacy gaming event aside from DipCon itself. The first Diplomacy event was at the first GenCon back in 1968 and today is the United States Diplomacy Championship. GenCon hosts the largest Diplomacy event in the world, with 187 participants at last year’s event. The tournament event is unique – the Best Country system awards the seven “Best Country” winners with a spot on the Top Board on Saturday. That game is played until a solo or concession is achieved. For those looking for a lighter experience, teaching events run concurrently with the tournament. In addition to the classic Diplomacy tournament, teaching events will be held for “Era of Empire” and “The Golden Blade”. Website: <https://www.gencon.com/>

September 4-7 - National Diplomacy Masters (Las Vegas, NV) - Thomas Haver

Renegade Game Studios partnered with the World Series of Board Gaming to create the “National Diplomacy Masters” tournament in 2024. The Masters event celebrates some of the best on-the-board players

and the biggest contributors to the Diplomacy community every year. The event is being played at the Horseshoe Resort & Casino in Las Vegas over Labor Day Weekend. The convention packs the most Diplomacy you could want out of an event: three rounds of classic Diplomacy to crown the National Diplomacy Masters champion, three rounds of “Era of Empire” to crown the North American Era of Empire Champion, and three rounds of “The Golden Blade” to crown the first ever Golden Blade champion. Nine total rounds of Diplomacy at one event! Not to mention the prizes. To honor those “Masters of Diplomacy” each of the below listed players has been gifted a “stay-and-play” package for the convention that covers badge & hotel at the convention. Few events in Diplomacy provide awards as significant as the National Diplomacy Masters. Try your luck in Vegas this year, and remember, what stabs happen in Vegas stay in Vegas. Website: <https://wsbgvegas.com/>

Cyrille Sevin (3x World Diplomacy Champion)
Richard Sweat (Reigning WSBG Era of Empire champion)
David Rynkowski (multi-time Best Diplomat honoree)

Gregory Vaughan (Reigning US Diplomacy Champion)
Robert Zahn (Reigning Grand Prix Champion)
Nolan David (Reigning Diplomat of the Year)
Dan McNeill (Reigning National Diplomacy Masters winner)

November 6-8 - Battlefront Dayton (Dayton, Ohio) - Thomas Haver

Board Game Nation brought us an amazing convention in 2025 at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. The primary focus was on tabletop war, historical, and fantasy games. Battlefront Dayton has the distinguished honor of hosting the first ever Diplomacy Triathlon, which has since spread to many general gaming conventions. The convention returns this year with more surprises for players. Last year they hosted multiple notable game designers, including Axis & Allies creator Larry Harris. The convention space is linked to the hotel and just across from a bar & restaurant in the same building. You don’t have to walk far to get what you need at Battlefront Dayton. The Diplomacy tournament will once again be a Triathlon, with three different Diplomacy games across three rounds of play to crown the best all-around Diplomacy player. Discord: <https://discord.gg/tU9Td8b9> and Website (2025): <https://tabletop.events/conventions/bgn-bfd>

November 18-22 - BGG Con (Dallas, Texas) - Robert Lacy

Dallas is host to a second Diplomacy tournament this year at BoardGameGeekCon. Robert Lacy has been teaching Diplomacy events at BGG Con for a few years now, and the players are eager for tournament play. The

Hyatt Regency Dallas is located in downtown Dallas. Like the Spring edition, Lacy will be hosting a Diplomacy Triathlon – three different Diplomacy games over three rounds. As per the tradition, multiple teaching rounds will occur during the 5-day convention to give players of all skill levels the opportunity to play the event they want. The championship “trophy” for this year is sure to excite players once they see it – and in Texas you can actually brandish the award in public without causing alarm.

Website: <https://tabletop.events/conventions/bgg.con.2026>

December 4-6 - PAX Unplugged (Philadelphia, PA) - Thomas Haver

PAX Unplugged has quickly become one of the largest gaming conventions in the US, with more than 30,000 attendees in the halls of the Philadelphia Convention Center. The event location in downtown Philly puts you in the heart of the action, with Terminal Market and Chinatown within walking distance. The Diplomacy event is part of the “Classic Cardboard” tournament hosted by ReedPop. Diplomacy is one of the classic games included in the lineup. Teaching games will be held for “Era of Empire” and “The Golden Blade” in the exhibit hall. Join us for one of the lighter Diplomacy tournament events on the circuit then visit Renegade Game Studios in the dealer hall for some extra swag. Website:

<https://unplugged.paxsite.com/>

WDC 2027 – LAS VEGAS

In 2027, we’ll host World DipCon with a four-round Swiss tournament and a Top Board to determine the World Champion. WDC 2027 will take the place of the existing “National Diplomacy Masters” event at the World Series of Board Gaming. We will also host the world championships for both “Diplomacy: Era of Empire” and “Diplomacy: The Golden Blade” card game. Three world championships at one convention – The World Series of Board Gaming!

The hotel site is also the event site, so no additional travel is required. Additional event information can be found at the WSBG site and on the Renegade Game Studios official Discord (<https://discord.gg/uGzzUQbq>).

The National Diplomacy Masters tournament traditionally honors four competitors each year as part of the event. In 2026 we expanded to sponsor seven competitors. Each competitor receives a “Stay & Play” package to cover hotel & event costs. This tradition will continue at WDC by celebrating the achievements of players on the

board and those organizers who uplift face-to-face play. Additionally, four hotel rooms will be made available to select international travelers representing different nations. Each hotel room has two queen-size beds, so multiple competitors can elect to stay together for the duration of the event. Lastly, the WSBG will offer travel stipends to select VIPs to help support event attendance.

For full details and updates, visit:

Website: WDC2027.com

Contact: WDC2027LasVegas@gmail.com

2025 Photos: [Google Photos Album](#)

2024 Photos: [Google Photos Album](#)

Video Coverage: [Board Game Nation YouTube](#)

Key Details on WDC 2027:

- **Dates:** September 2027
- **Location:** Horseshoe Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas
- **Signup:** [WSBG Site](#) | [WDC Info](#)
- **Contact:** WDC2027LasVegas@gmail.com



An Open Letter to the Face-to-Face Diplomacy Community

We the undersigned would like to voice our support for revision of the World Diplomacy Convention (WDC) Charter, and request that you add your support at WDC 2026 in Greece to begin the process of Charter modernisation.

The [WDC Charter](#) was adopted in Baltimore in 2000, and primarily outlines the bidding process for WDC, the requirements for WDCs, and the obligations of hosts. The principles of the charter have been upheld since this time, and we support this process continuing as it has done since the Charter's adoption.

However, the WDC Charter is now 26 years old, and requires some modernisation to make it fit for purpose for ongoing use. The document refers to bodies that no longer exist, the language should be updated to improve clarity and inclusivity, and, given its age, the document only barely acknowledges the internet.

The amendment process outlined in the Charter is time consuming. A draft amendment is required to be approved at successive WDCs before it can be adopted, meaning 2028 will be the earliest time that an amended Charter could possibly be ratified.

Accordingly, we call on the community to support the motion to be put to the hobby meeting at WDC 2026 to commence the amendment process.

This will enable the hobby to consider and discuss amendments, and arrive at a new draft Charter for approval at WDC 2027 before final ratification at WDC 2028.

We would be grateful for your support in commencing the process to reform the charter, bringing it into the 21st century and ensuring the principles established in 2000 continue to stand the test of time.

Sponsors:

Shane Armstrong (President, Asia-Pacific Diplomacy Association)

Katie Gray (President, North American Diplomacy Federation)

Dan Lester (2022 World Champion, UK hobby)

Lei Saarlainen (2018 EDC Champion, Francophone hobby)

Signatories:

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Co-TD WDC 2027

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Tourney Organiser WDC 2026

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Boston Massacre and TotalCon
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TD Sydney Cup 2026
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Player David Miller
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TD BlazeCon 2026

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Organiser EDC 2026

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Parent of (young) player
Non-playing member of community

Michael Saxton
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APDA Member
Snakepit Organiser

Robert Chatterton
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Wellbeing Officer Flying Fox
Fandango 2025

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APDA Secretary
TD Melbourne Open 2026

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TD WDC 2025

David Cohen
Academy of Creative Destruction
and NYC Diplorats
Player and Organiser

David Hood
North Carolina
TD WDC 1990, 1998, 2014

Ed Sullivan
Houston
Middling player with minor
successes and major
disappointments

Sean Colman
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TD Various Australian Champs

Patrick Jacobson
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Player and Organiser

Tianyu Sun
Canberra Mandarins
Player and Organiser

Eber Condrell
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