

Diplomacy World #168



Winter 2024 Issue

www.diplomacyworld.net



Notes from the Editor:

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Winter 2024 issue. If this time of year is actually cold where you are, I hope you're staying warm and safe. As for me, I don't think we've had a hard freeze yet this winter. But historically, when Dallas gets a mild December, it has a really bad January or February. Only time will tell!

Anyway, thank you for joining us for yet another issue. This now makes *51 years* of **Diplomacy World**, with a few stops and starts along the way. And 18 years since I returned as Lead Editor. I swear, when Jim Burgess browbeat me into jumping on board again, he told me it would just be for a few years. But he LIED to me!

I'm not getting too nostalgic, although this time of the year does have that effect on me. There are moments when I remember how I got sucked into taking on **Diplomacy World** in the first place in 1995. Struggling with Word Perfect to lay issues out, and sometimes having to tape things on the masters so I could include that in the issue. The slow, expensive photocopying. The even slower - and much more expensive - addressing, sealing, and postage for the envelopes. The constant stream of zines in my mailbox. Those were good times. Hard and different times, but in general they're pleasant memories.

But here we are, in the present. With new problems, new opportunities. And new developments! The first development I'd like to mention is the addition of a new Co-Editor, the first since the late Jim Burgess left us. And our new Co-Editor is...Elle Doerr! And part of Elle joining us will be a newly designed **Diplomacy World**. A few days after the release of this issue in the standard format, you'll be able to find a copy in the NEW format either on the **Diplomacy World** website (www.diplomacyworld.net) or in the **Diplomacy World** Facebook group, which can be found at (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/67101107783>). For the time being issues will be produced in both versions. What we really need is your feedback on the new style. What do you like, what do you dislike, what would you like to see changed? Elle can adjust and experiment until something can be finalized a few issues down the road. Oh, and if you prefer the old, "standard" format, let me know that too...if both versions need to be done going forward, we can arrange that as well.

Another development: there's a contest for you to participate in, and you can have fun at the same time! Roger Pitfield has submitted the first of what may be a series of Diplomacy-related crossword puzzles. Not only do you get to work out the answers and use your brain, but you also get to enter his contest if you send in the results! **Details can be found on page 36**. Of course, you'll find lots more in this issue. Another visit to the **Diplomacy World** Archive with Mal Arky; Randy Lawrence-Hurt with an interview about World DipCon 2025; more insight from David Hood in his persona the Hobby Historian. And many other articles.

I still wish we could get some well-written Strategy and Tactics articles coming in more often. Despite the high level of experience many of our readers have, plenty of newcomers to the hobby download each new issue as well. Why don't some of you share some of your brilliance with the new players?

I wonder if returning to the days of pre-announced "issue topics" would help generate material? See this page from **Diplomacy World #102**. I'm interested in your thoughts on that.

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Contributions are welcomed and will use your resolution and infinite thanks. Please comment in the correct staff position and contact the managing editor for details or to submit their candidacy or both. The same goes for anyone interested in becoming a columnist or writer online. Diplomacy is a game invented by Allan Calhamer. It is currently manufactured by Hasbro and the name is a trademark with all rights reserved.

Themes for Upcoming Diplomacy World Issues:



Diplomacy World #103:
Science Fiction and Fantasy
Deadline for #103 Submissions:
October 1, 2008



Diplomacy World #104: Worldwide Variants
Deadline for #104 Submissions – January 1, 2009



Diplomacy World #105: The Endgame
Deadline for #105 Submissions – April 1, 2009

Diplomacy World® Page 1

That's enough from me this time around. **I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is April 1, 2025**. 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 Spring, and happy stabbing!

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This issue's cover art by Michael Paul

Some classic art by Nemanja Simic

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

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Invasion of the New Co-Editor

by Elle Doerr

Hi, peasants. It's me, Elle.

You thought you were safe? Thought that you were all cuddly and cozy in your own little Diplomacy World corner? Thought that no juggernaut could get you there, no Key Lepanto could sneak behind your lines?

Well, well, well. You didn't expect me now, did you?

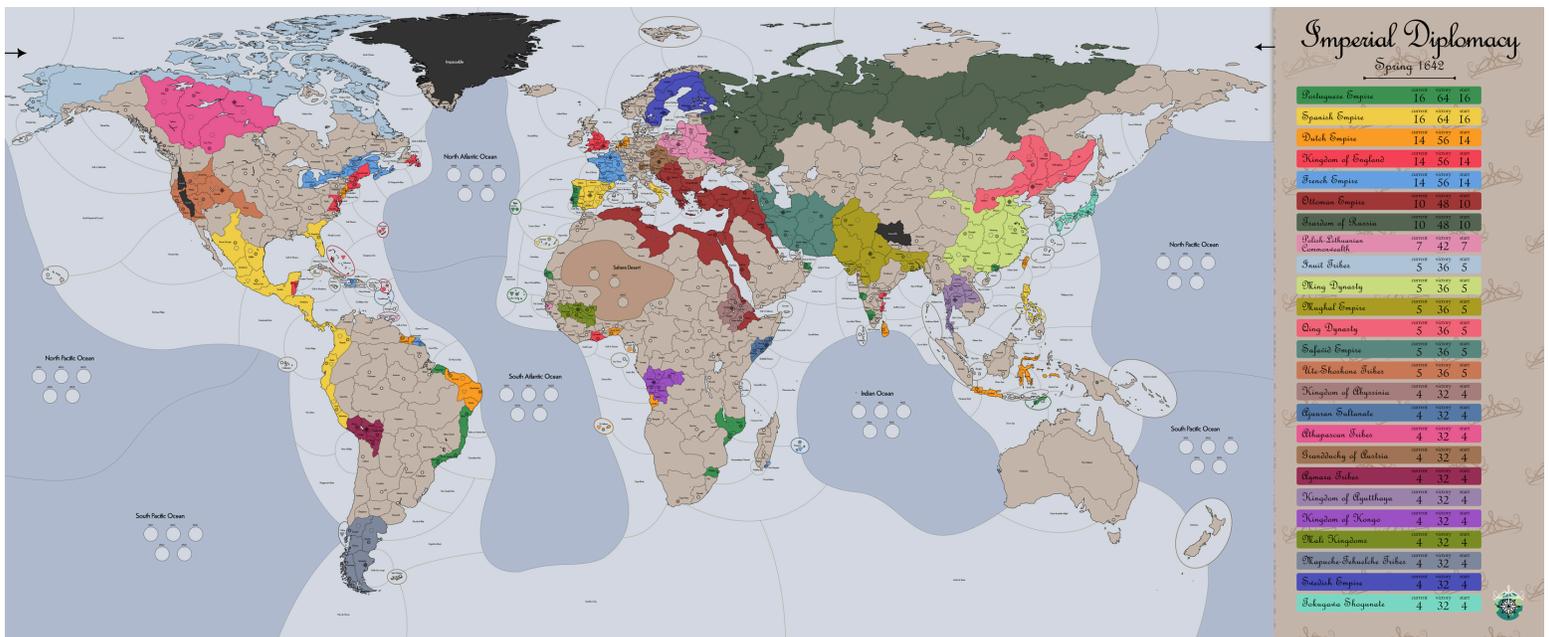
This is what you get when you invite a witch in, and a very wicked one at that. You thought England and Turkey were bad, but I'm far, far, worse. You're in my playground now. Dear old Douglas gave me a set of keys to this pretty little world, and decided to let me loose. Are you ready for what's next?

There're a few little projects that brought me into the diplomacy scene, but none quite like World Diplomacy, designed by ye olde thehillshaveaviators. While I had played a game or two (or a wee bit over a hundred) on Backstabbr, diplomacy via Discord is what really drew me into the scene. Taking first in my introduction to variants as the Queen of the Zulu in a 24-player variant really reignited my love for blood, and I've done my best to remain undying ever since.

I had a stint over at the Olympus Diplomacy tournament server as second in command, and after a few introductions with a couple of skilled mapmakers, namely NoPunIn10Did and Flare (as they are so called via pseudonym), I wanted to revive the colonial feeling that World Diplomacy captured so well, and recruited Flare to develop Imperial Diplomacy. While not the first of its name, and likely not the last, it is certainly the reigning variant at this point in time. By the time you will be reading this, our official Beta will have started. With over 375 players playing in 15 simultaneous games in our Alpha 2 run, our server is one of the biggest Diplomacy communities on Discord. If you would like to check it out, you can find us at: <https://discord.gg/imperial-diplomacy1201167737163104376>.



Elle's visage, as displayed electronically



The starting map of Imperial Diplomacy, as seen in Spring 1642, with 25 players



Now enough with the advertising. Why should you even pay attention to this newcomer? Braggadocio is one thing, but outright threats? Shouldn't you just coalition this fledgling, and let her suffer the fate of Icarus? Well, as Callhamer wrote in [Games & Puzzles No.21](#), "The notion that a player may tell all the lies (s)he wants and cross people as (s)he pleases etc., make some people almost euphoric." Sometimes the best lie is one that is truly believed, as the euphoria is contagious. The pleasure felt in a shakeup of a diplomacy board after a Western Triple is dissolved, or after the most perfect stab is executed, is nothing compared to the initial glee of the devious plotter, who having sent out discourse to Caesar, knows she is trusted more than anyone and yet the knife is already on the way.

So, was anything in this article true? Where was the nugget of wisdom? Is she merely pontificating, since she was given a page to write on, a gaggle of followers to message to? Sometimes the bluster conceals what is really believed, and that is why you want the liars to keep on talking. You wait, wait, and finally, at the last minute, a kernel of truth slips through. The euphoria has led the liar to close to the sun, and at last, you are able to wreak havoc on their plans, and break apart even the closest alliance. You have been patient, my friend.

The anticipation, my friends, is what truly makes the game of Diplomacy exciting. Some might argue that is what makes certain publications, modes of playing the game, or even certain players truly great. While the modern immediate responses may feel temporarily euphoric, pleasure is instead derived by waiting for that next letter from England to arrive; waiting for the results of adjudication to be finally posted; waiting, at last, for that next issue of Diplomacy World. Thank you for, at the least, tolerating this incursion, that I hope will allow this witch to stay a little longer in your homes and heads, as the co-editor of **Diplomacy World**.

Yours truly,
Elle

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/>

Diplomacy California Cup 2025

- January 19th, 2025 – Burbank, California
- <http://www.meetup.com/los-angeles-diplomacy>

SEA Diplomacy NY Tournament 2025

- January 24-26, 2025 - Bangkok, Thailand
- Form: <https://forms.gle/R9TN64LMpxBGDEJa9>

Cascadia Open

- February 1-2, 202, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
- email: cascadia.open@gmail.com

SpireCon

- February 7-9, 2025 – Chesterfield, United Kingdom
- <https://diplomacy.co.uk/spirecon2025>

Hung Parliament Handicap

- February 20-23, 2025 – Canberra, Australia
- See flyer in this issue or <https://www.facebook.com/diplomacycbr/>

PrezCon

- February 21-22, 2025 – Charlottesville, Virginia
- <https://www.prezcon.com/program>

Circle DC

- March 28-31, 2025 – Washington, DC
- Email: tjhaver@gmail.com
- <https://www.fortcircle.com>

World DipCon 2025 at Whipping

- April 4-6, 2025 – Hotel Spero, San Francisco, California
- Email: worlddipcon2025@gmail.com
- <https://www.thenadf.org/world-dipcon-2025/>

Origins Game Fair

- June 19-21, 2025 – Columbus, Ohio
- <http://www.originsgamefair.com>

2025 Jameson Hand Memorial ARMADA Regatta

- July 25-27, 2025 - Boulder, Colorado
- <https://www.facebook.com/events/965271088819369/>

World Boardgaming Championships

- July 28-29, 2025 – Seven Springs, Pennsylvania
- <http://www.boardgamers.org>

U.S. Diplomacy Championship at Gencon

- July 31 – August 2, 2025 – Indianapolis, Indiana
- <http://www.gencon.com>

National Diplomacy Masters

- September 19-23, 2025 – Las Vegas, Nevada
- <https://wsbgvegas.com>



Game Night at the Columbus Urban League

by Thomas Haver

Renegade Game Studios partnered with Step Ahead Tech

(<https://www.stepaheadtech.org/>) and the Columbus Urban League

(<https://www.cul.org/>) to run a holiday game night, in what is quickly becoming a yearly tradition

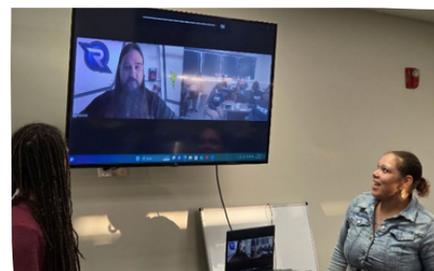
(<https://renegadegamestudios.com/blog/renegade-teams-up-with-step-ahead-tech-to-spread-holiday-cheer/>). The effort was made

possible through a collaboration of all three organizations. This year, we scheduled a presentation by Dan Bojanowski, the Senior Producer of Board & Card Games at Renegade, to teach the students about careers in the game industry.

The group of students in attendance was part of the Columbus Urban League's Young Engineers Society (YES), an initiative for youth ages 10-14. The program exposes participants to Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) and career readiness related concepts through engineering, while providing an academic support and socialemotional strength-based curriculum.

Volunteer instructors taught students some classic games such as Robo Rally, Acquire, and of course Diplomacy. Last year, Renegade sponsored another such charity event at a local school in Columbus. Last year I didn't expect many students to attend the "Diplomacy station" given the variety of newer games available. To my surprise, we had a full complement of players - young women at that - to learn Diplomacy. I ended up having to ship additional copies of Diplomacy to some students as we ran out of free games.

This year we were expecting interest and had an additional volunteer to support Diplomacy so I could float. Jack Wilsbach, a regular to our Columbus group since he was a teenager, volunteered to GM the game. As you can see from the pictures, we had a full group playing - and they really got into the game. That's the power of MAP. Map draws in the students. Instead of the "poker meets Survivor" comparison used to teach adults, perhaps the best comparison to draw in a younger audience is the game "Among Us".



From our community outreach effort the last few years, we found Diplomacy still draws interest from a younger audience. The beautiful map scratches that geography itch that we all get at some point in our youth. Emphasizing the social aspects of the game is another big plus that aligns with many current gaming interests. At the conclusion of the event all students took home a free game from Renegade. Many thanks to the volunteers, Step Ahead Tech, and the Columbus Urban League for providing some holiday cheer!



Diplomacy

Cascadia Open 2025

When: 1st - 2nd Feb 2025

Schedule:

*Optional meal and social event
Friday evening.

*Round 1 9am Sat the 1st

*Round 2 5pm Sat the 1st

*Round 3 8:30am Sun the 2nd

Registration 15 minutes before each
round.

All games will end in a solo victory, after
1909 fall retreats, or earlier if all surviving
players agree.

Where: Holiday Inn Express 15808 104th
Ave, Surrey, BC, Canada

Cost : \$30Cdn

Wise: @christopherb4580

Paypal: cascadia.open@gmail.com

Tournament Director: Chris Brand

Questions: ? Cascadia.open@gmail.com

Manus Hand Was Right: Scoring, a Reprise

by Eber Condrell

It was a blistering Colorado afternoon on the front range. I had made my way down C-470 to the Highlands Ranch game store and restaurant where the ARMADA group meets once a month to play Diplomacy. After searching in vain for a shaded parking spot I walked in to find Manus Hand setting up one of his diplomacy sets on the high table in the middle of the room.

"Manus, what's up with this scoring system," I said, an incredulous grin plastered on my face. I had just learned the details of Manus' unique draw-based scoring system a few days earlier and needed a straight explanation.

"What's up with it?" Manus replied not understanding my vague question. Why would he? Manus had "grown up" as he would put it in the ancient times of the diplomacy hobby when everyone assumed that draw size systems were the most rulebook accurate type of scoring system. To him his system was normal, something would be up if it was not draw based.

"You give smaller powers more points in a draw!" I exclaimed throwing my hands in the air dramatically.

"Just a little bit more" Manus responded holding his fingers about an inch apart. This was true, the point total awarded to players who finished with less centers than their opponents was minuscule compared to the points awarded for being a participant in a smaller draw. This was not the problem though. I felt that no matter how small, awarding any points for centers in descending order was enough to break ties between players in a league or tournament setting. Before I could bring this up Manus added, "and besides, the guy who ends up on one stopped a solo while the guy ends up on 17 failed to get one. I think the guy on one played a better game." This statement was spoken with such a resolute tone that it blinded me to what I would see later as the internal logic of this system.

In the years after this initial, albeit apocryphal, conversation, I continued to deride Manus' system in front of him on a monthly basis. I would point out that he was awarding people for doing worse and argue that his system was crazy. Only recently did I realize the mistake we both made in those initial discussions. Instead of focusing on the concept of draw size as a central rule for the system I focused on the secondary element of descending centers. My problem was mainly with draw size because I feel it is not a good measure of success in diplomacy.

My preference, as you may have read in a previous issue of this publication, is for centers as the determining metric for success.

With the centers paradigm in my head, I was dumbfounded by the idea that someone would award more points for having less centers. I pridefully, hastily, and even hatefully displayed this flabbergastion to everyone who would listen. This article is part of my penance for embarrassing Manus by calling his system bunk so many times.

I was thinking about scoring systems recently in terms of objective metrics. I had gone back to the well on the original argument Manus put forward, "the small power played better." I found this argument ridiculous. "Why are you basing your system on your subjective idea of how well someone played? You need objective metrics to measure success!" I would drone on and on about how descending centers is not a proper objective metric. The thing I realized recently was that it 100% is!

In centers focused systems it makes sense to add additional incentives for things ancillary to centers. Anything that gets you closer to having more centers or is a result of having more centers: topping, top degree, rank etc. In a draw size focused system, it makes sense to add additional incentives for what is considered good play in that system. Manus' argument was not that having one center is better play than having 17. It was that within the internal logic of draw-size-based systems having survived on a few dots while the other powers are big shows an ability to beat the system that he wanted to reward. They were able to avoid being cut out of a draw despite the heavy bent toward smaller draws imposed by draw size scoring. Despite its strangeness, descending centers is an objective metric that aligns with the principles of DSS. Therefore, it is not so offensive as I had once felt it was.

My friend Manus Hand is one of the best organizers in the hobby. He is a great player and a better man. I feel I owe it to him to apologize for making fun of him over numbers for so long, especially when I was not even right. Although it was meant in good fun, I feel that an apology is needed. I hope you, dear reader, will try to make it out for the first annual Jameson Hand Memorial ARMADA Regatta on July 25-27 in Boulder, Colorado. I know I will make every effort to be there. And honestly, I hope Manus gets to run his own scoring system and not mine.



World Dip Con 2025 At Whipping



Registration now open!



Event Details

The Bay Area Diplomacy Association (B.A.D. Ass.) is thrilled to host World DipCon in 2025 at the Whipping Diplomacy Tournament!

Location: Hotel Spero, 405 Taylor St, San Francisco, CA 94102



Join us in San Francisco to crown the World Champion!

- Sign up to join the WDC2025 email list
 - <https://forms.gle/C6pmAEjing4r2DYW7>
- Join the North American Diplomacy Federation (NADF) Discord server, and check the #wdc-announcements channel
 - <https://discord.gg/7yKWR2wp>
- Email the organizers at worlddipcon2025@gmail.com

Learn more at <https://www.thenadf.org/world-dipcon-2025/>

An Interview with Adam Silverman and Siobhan Nolen

by Randy Lawrence-Hurt

Randy

Hey hey, thanks for taking the time to do this! Let's get introductions out of the way first - y'all are hardly new to the Diplomacy scene, so most DW readers will probably recognize your names, but why don't you go ahead and tell us how you got into the hobby, and for fun, your proudest accomplishment in the game, and what keeps you coming back to it.

Adam

Hi Randy, it's hard to believe that I've been participating in the Diplomacy community for 25 years. I learned how to play in high school in the 90s, and while in college I ended up connecting with a guy who ran a postal Diplomacy postal zine called "The Flat Earth Society" who advertised for World DipCon in Maryland, which was happening in summer 2000. I was in college in Boston at the time, and decided to drive down to check it out. I got my butt whipped, but I was hooked. Proudest accomplishment has to be winning DipCon in 2021. That was a special tournament for many reasons - it was the first FTF event in over a year and a half due to Covid, and was something of a hobby turning point where so many folks who had joined the virtual community came to play in person along with long time hobbyists like myself. And why do I keep coming back? That's a pretty easy one, and I know you've heard this answer before - it's the people. I've made so many lifelong friendships through this hobby and it is such a joy to get together, schmooze, hang out, and of course play this game. And as the hobby grows it's amazing to welcome new folks in hopefully to share in that experience.

Siobhan

Hey Randy! Thanks for setting this all up! Excited to chat with you. I've been playing Diplomacy for... Oh goodness now I feel old.... 24 years. I started playing when I was 14 years old and Edi Birsan talked me into playing a game at a local game convention in the SF Bay Area. I topped the first board I ever played on and have been hooked ever since. My proudest accomplishment? That's always my first tournament win, nothing will ever beat that feeling. 2017 at Tempest in DC, I'd had 2 decent results coming into the last round, but nothing extraordinary. Then in the 3rd round I managed to convince someone on the other side of the board to zero-dot his ally. Said ally was notoriously reactive in such circumstances, and reacted EXACTLY as I expected him to. Stabbed party immediately comes to me and throws me the board, culminating in a conceded solo in the last (timed) round.

I seem to recall, Randy, that you (who came in second in that tournament) had some choice words for me from across the room when you realized what was happening. Why do I keep coming back? I hate to echo Adam here, because dissent makes for a more interesting narrative... But it really is the people. Through this hobby I've met some of the most interesting people I have ever known. Many of whom I count amongst my very close friends. I am forever grateful that I have had the chance to get to meet and know these people, as I would never have found them outside of Diplomacy. So, yes, it is the people.

Randy

Good stuff! I do remember that tournament, Sio, thanks for reminding me. One of my more memorable almostwins. The friendships and community are the biggest draw for me as well, along with getting to see some new places - quite enjoyed Denver this past summer, for example, which I visited thanks to the Regatta tournament. Which is my transition to the tournament y'all are hosting in April, which will also be World DipCon! Let's start with location - what can you tell us about the venue?

Adam

We've gone through a bunch of venues for Whipping over the years. From its humble beginnings at game stores in Fremont and Oakland to (probably my favorite spot) the hotel Tomo in SF Japantown, to a couple of different spots in San Jose, and then back to SF at the Hotel Spero near Union Square last year, and also our home for WDC 2025. The hotel itself is a very nice boutique, non-chain, hotel, which is frankly really nice for us because the staff is fantastic and we don't have to deal with the corporate nonsense of a chain. And they've been very good to us, giving us the event space at a reasonable rate and offering a room block at \$149/night plus tax, which is kind of a gift knowing what things go for in SF. The event space is two large rooms down the hall from each other, with a huge mezzanine in between. This mezzanine is really what I most love about the space, because it's a wide open area for negotiations and can handle the big crowd we're expecting.

Siobhan

Oh Hotel Tomo! Reminding me of my first Whipping tournaments... love the nostalgia. As Adam said, we hosted at Hotel Spero for the first time last year. It's always a bit of a gamble trying a new venue and I, for one, can say that they exceeded my expectations in every way. The play areas are fantastic and well managed, the bar and



restaurant downstairs made it easy to get quick food for most of the day (hello short food breaks on a board when you can't walk down the street for something), a few excellent breakfast options within the hotel and also a short block or two walk away, proximity to Union Square and tourist areas around there, and so so much more. San Francisco is such a compact city that everything is not really that far away, so if you're traveling with the intent to sightsee it'll be easy. I'm sure we'll have lists of things to do and where to eat as we get closer to the event. I know I'm biased as the SF Bay Area is where I was born and raised, but San Francisco really is a place everyone needs to check off of their visited list.

Randy

All three of us have brought up the community as a major motivator for our staying engaged with the hobby - does Whipping WDC have any social events planned folks can look forward to?

Adam

Absolutely. Of course there will be plenty of time for socializing between rounds, and we're also going to organize some sightseeing activities for folks who are able to come a day or two early. We haven't worked out the details but there will definitely be opportunities to explore SF and possibly visit some of the nearby beautiful locations like wineries, redwood forests, or the Pacific coast.

Randy

Let's talk format. How many rounds will there be, what's the scoring system, do you have an initial head count or celebrities list? Adam Does Edi Birsan count as a celebrity? Randy Legend, celebrity, Godfather. I'd say so.

Adam

I know people want to have the opportunity to play with the best in the world at WDCs. As of now (Dec 31) we have 56 people registered, and that number continues to grow. That includes several past WDC winners, and also hobbyists from four continents. I've been particularly excited about the enthusiasm from the Australian hobby. It's a big trip and I think we already have four or five registered.

Randy

Love it. WDC should be just that: a WORLD Dip Con. Siobhan, can you speak to the tournament format and scoring system?

Siobhan

Absolutely! As for the format, it's pretty straightforward for anyone who has been to a recent Whipping, or any other NADF tournament for that matter, just on a larger scale. For anyone wishing to peruse the details and rules in full, you can find them at <https://www.thenadf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2024/11/Whipping-WDC-Rules2025.pdf>.

The tournament will consist of four rounds. One Friday night, two rounds on Saturday, and the final round on Sunday morning. A player's best two of the first three rounds will be calculated to determine their ranking to enter Round Four. Specific ranking and scores of players will not be made public, however the top 21 players will participate in the Championship Pool. These 21 players will be randomly seeded onto three boards and the WDC 2025 Champion will be the player from this pool with the highest tournament score. Ranks 2nd and below will be based simply on overall tournament score. For those not playing in the Championship Pool, all rankings 2nd and below are up for grabs. Additionally, assuming we have 49+ players who don't qualify for the Pool, they'll have the opportunity to participate in the Team Round. Details on the Team Round rules can be found at the link above.

Adam

There's a lot here that we're doing a bit differently than previous events. The "championship pool" is a bit of a riff on the top board concept that's been popular at a lot of tournaments. We were looking for a way to give more players a shot at winning come the final round, while still ensuring that the top players get to compete against one another. I think we found an elegant solution, and I'm excited to see how it works out. I'm also particularly excited about the team tournament for the folks who don't qualify for the championship pool. We'll have teams of seven with each team assigning one person to each power. Of course for it to work we'll need to have 70 players in that last round, but I think we can get there.

Randy

I love the Championship Pool idea in particular, and that y'all are innovating and experimenting! I've seen a decent number of evolutions and fads over the years (drop-dead timing was very popular when I started going to tournaments, and now hardly anybody uses it), and personally I love it. I probably should've asked this at the start of the interview, but could you clarify y'all's respective roles in the tournament, and talk a little about the local San Francisco hobby?



Siobhan

Definitely, I can clarify. We'll start with the big man in charge. Adam Silverman is our primary organizer, which involves a vast range of duties. He has taken the lead on working with the venue, recruiting attendees, communication via various platforms for announcements, finalizing the rules and tournament structure, and so much more. In addition to all of the work that he's putting in in the lead up to the event, Adam will be acting as Tournament Director at the event. For any not aware TDing an event is a massive task involving (but of course not limited to) seating boards, resolving disputes (both on and off the board), ensuring the scheduled events are running according to plan, herding the cats ... I mean players ... to events and registration, tabulating scores, and in general just making sure the trains are running on time. Seriously, buy the man a coffee for morning registration. He'll need it! My part in this is a bit simpler. As the Assistant Tournament Director, mostly I'm just assisting Adam in everything he is doing. I'll be helping him in the lead up to the event and acting as his proxy for resolving disputes and issues at the event itself. I am also coordinating all of the prizes for the event, from the Championship trophy to the coveted Best Country Bears (there'll be a twist this year to make them extra special, so you really want to show up to compete for one!). In addition to Adam and myself, Alex Amann and Edi Birsan have been a great help with organization along the way and will be onsite all weekend to assist with everything.

Adam

Running an event like this really does take a village and we're fortunate to have such an amazing organizing team. Siobhan has done so much with the awards and helping work out the logistical details. Edi's been around so long he just thinks of every possible contingency - when we're planning he'll sometimes throw out these crazy ideas that no one likes but he'll also sometimes say "did you think of this?" and it turns out none of us did think of that, but it was important! And Alex has really stepped up with local recruitment efforts and putting together house games and running events at local gaming cons as part of building hype and local awareness about the event.

Randy

I've run a few tournaments myself - I can only imagine how much crazier running a WDC must be. Many kudos to you both for taking it on! Speaking of format, I believe there will also be a hobby meeting at some point, to discuss the location for WDC 2026?

Adam

We will have a hobby meeting. WDC sites are selected two years in advance so the site for 2026 was chosen earlier this year - it's going to be in Athens, Greece. The organizer, Spyros Davos, will be in SF for WDC 2025, and I'm super excited to meet him in person and learn more about what's in store for that event. The hobby meeting will have three agenda items. We'll decide on the site for 2027 WDC. If there are any proposed amendments to the WDC charter, we'll review those and have a preliminary vote, though approval would happen in 2026. And finally, tournament directors will have a chance to promote their upcoming events.

Randy

Let's get a bit more philosophical. What do you think the legacy of WDC is? What does it bring to the hobby, and how will SF WDC contribute to that legacy?

Adam

The Diplomacy community is truly international, and WDCs are the main chance to bring the global community together in person. I think the joy of bringing the community together has been magnified a bit following the pandemic and the advent of virtual diplomacy and DBN. Today there are tons of folks who have played together virtually or been seen on DBN or maybe just have recognizable names from hobby exploits. And here's a chance to meet those folks in person - maybe play on a board together but definitely the chance to grab a coffee or beer or dinner, to kibbutz and just get to hang out. That's what I'm personally most looking forward to for SF in April.

Siobhan

Personally, WDC has a special place in my heart. 2014 WDC at Dixie was my first tournament off the West Coast and my first introduction to the larger hobby. Having the opportunity to meet all of those legendary players and pick their brains about diplomacy both on and off the boards; seeing what the community looked like outside of my small bubble was a transformative experience. That first WDC was what reignited my love for the game and got me back into traveling and playing after a bit of a hiatus. For SF in particular, the West Coast has seen a resurgence in the last 7-8 years with both Whipping and Cascadia returning, as well as SkyCon and Regatta more recently. Between us all we've hosted many amazing tournaments and two wildly successful DipCons in those recent years. Add to that the BuzCup that we came together to create has really ignited excitement for us as well as the larger hobby who come to our events. With this renaissance, the only next logical step



was for one of us to host WDC, and who better than Whipping in SF?

Randy

Most DW readers likely know the big international names that're likely to attend WDC and the typical favorites - knowing what you do of the local hobby, can you give us a dark horse name or two to be on the lookout for?

Adam

Oh, that's a spicy one! I'm so excited by all of the Australian players we have coming. I actually think we have close to if not reached a full board of folks from down under. Jamal has done such an amazing job down there rallying players and getting them excited about tournament Diplomacy. And did I mention that these folks are scary good? But if I've got to pick one dark horse candidate, it's got to be Bradley Grace from the UK. The dude has taken the virtual Diplomacy hobby by storm. All he does is top boards and win leagues. I don't know how much FTF experience he has, but if he plays at WDC the way he has on the virtual scene, folks had better watch out.

Siobhan

Well darn. Now I'm going to have to say the things I never wanted to put into writing.... From the international community Riaz Virani is such a strong player and has been so so close to big results so many times. If he really puts his mind to it, I think he could be a real contender. Domestically, Matt Crill is someone no one should sleep on. He's one of the most pleasant people I've ever met, but don't any of you mistake that for weakness on a Diplomacy board.

Randy

Love it! Alright, I think that's everything I needed, thank you both for your time!

Want more information about World DipCon in San Francisco, or ready to register? Check out the [WDC2025 website](#).

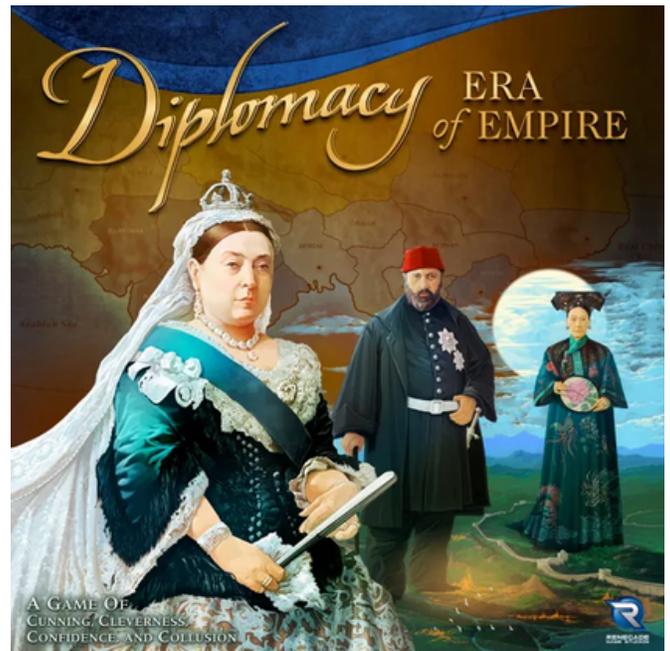
Diplomacy: Era of Empire

by Thomas Haver

This past October, Renegade Game Studios announced the release of a new *Diplomacy* game, *Era of Empire*, the first such release in 30 years (<https://renegadegamestudios.com/renegade-conoctober-2024>). While the game won't be available until August 2025, you can preorder on the Renegade webstore (<https://renegadegamestudios.com/diplomacyera-of-empire/>) and the game will be made available at most retail stores.

In the next issue of **Diplomacy World**, you can expect an interview with members of Renegade about the process of selecting and designing the game. Renegade has an established relationship with Hasbro to license their IP (<https://renegadegamestudios.com/blog/renegadegamestudios-expands-licensing-partnership-withhasbro-gaming-classics/>). Until then, here's a sneak peek about *Era of Empire* and how you can play before the official release. *Diplomacy* has a bright future. The 6th edition has gone through three print runs since it was released in July 2023. I was surprised at GenCon 2023 when I was told a 2nd print run was happening already, less than a month after the initial release.

Era of Empire was picked up for release many months later. The game is intended to be standalone as an official *Diplomacy* variant. Long-time fans of the game will note the similarity to *Colonial Diplomacy*. That's because the project was licensed through Hasbro to redesign *Colonial* into something new.



For the past year, the game has undergone a redesign. Nothing was off the table in the development process. The map, the rules, the pieces -- even the artwork has been redone. Old mechanics were removed, and new mechanics were added. Playtesting has been ongoing for a year. Experienced variant designers were brought onboard to provide their feedback and rules lawyers were tapped to provide updates to the original rule set. The result is a game both new and experienced players can enjoy. What exactly are those new mechanics? You'll have to wait for the formal release of the rules. If you're not in the playtest group, you'll have plenty of opportunities to test drive *Era of Empire* this year before buying. For anyone hoping their favorite design (or their own design) will be published next, the most important advice I can provide to hopeful designers and fans is to support these two existing games, because it opens the door for more published games.

Move over, Taylor Swift, because Queen Victoria is going on tour!

The "Eras Tour" is so last year. The "Era of Empire Tour" kicks off in 2025 with teaching events for *Diplomacy: Era of Empire*. Attend any of these convention events for your opportunity to play *Era of Empire* before the game is available in stores. Participants will receive special *Era of Empire* branded swag and have a chance to win the game. Take up the challenge of the "Age of New Imperialism" and join the race to establish your own empire!

**Note: If you would like to run Era of Empire at a convention near you, then please reach out to Thomas Haver on the official Renegade Game Studios Discord at <https://discord.gg/5tbFxEua>*

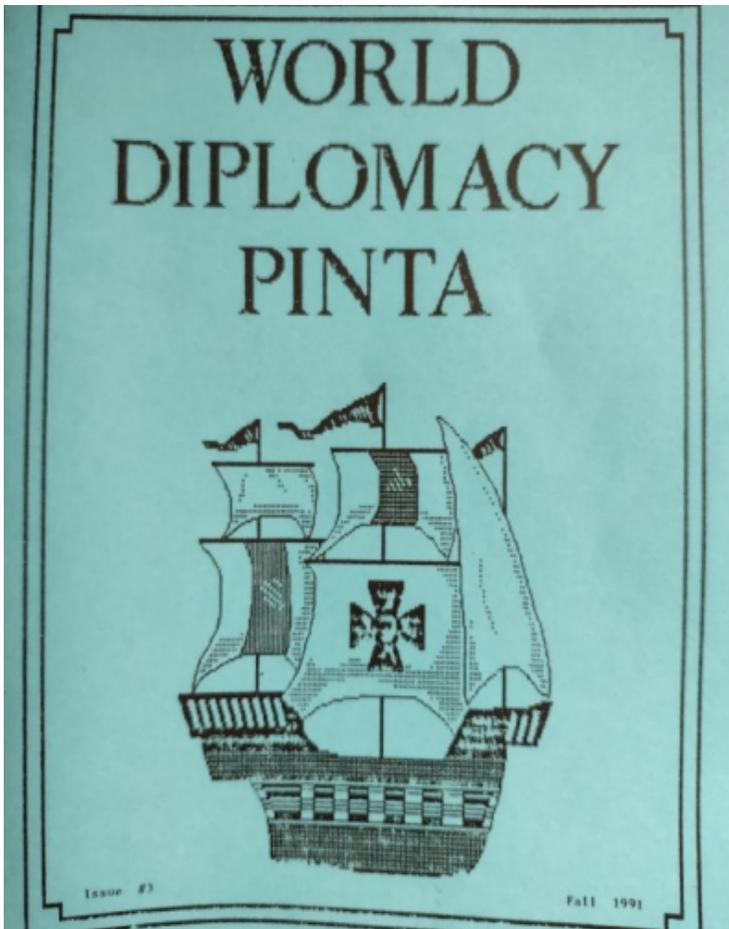


Ask the Hobby Historian: The Hobby in 1991

by David Hood

1991 was an important year. For me, that is. I graduated law school, moved to Hickory, and became the youngest lawyer in the law firm where now I am, ahem, the most “seasoned” attorney in the bunch. Sandi and I moved into a rented house, but a HOUSE instead of an apartment. By Fall 1991 my life was really in a good place.

So was the Diplomacy hobby. I was reminded of just how much was going on in late 1991 when I recently ran across my copy issue #3 of Larry Peery’s zine called World Diplomacy. It was lurking in a box of old Diplomacy World issues in the garage. This zine was his attempt to put in one place reports from the year’s face to face events around the world as well as promos for those coming up in 1992. There were other articles to round out the issue, including a panel discussion about the future of World Dipcon (there had only been two WDCs at that point so there was a lot of hobby debate about the future of the event.) I was a little surprised to see that I had written nothing for Larry in that issue, but then remembered that in 1991 I was publishing **Diplomacy World** myself, so I’m sure that was taking up all my hobby writing energies.



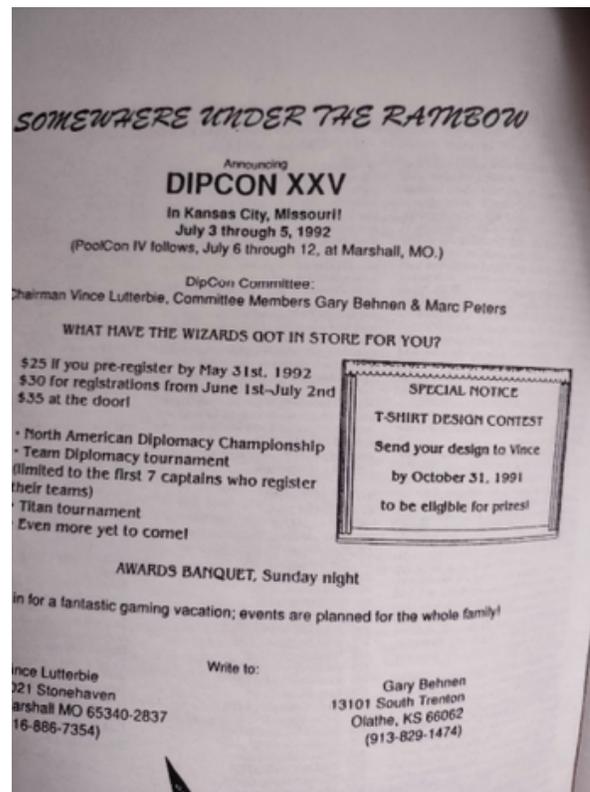
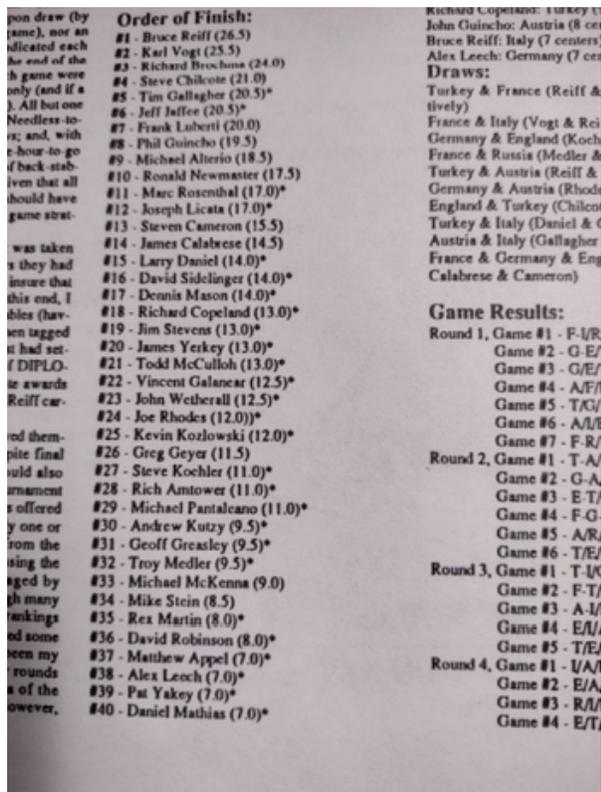
Let’s look at some of the content in this zine and make connections to the hobby of today.

First thing to jump out at me was the “Info Pack” for World Dipcon III, to be held in Canberra in late January 1992. “Friendly Australia” back then boasted many of the world’s best players, who were certainly welcoming, like the spider welcoming a fly to her web. I reckon some things never change, given the dominance of Australian players in many tournaments and events over recent years. WDC 3 had three rounds of Diplomacy, as well as a Saturday night Chinese buffet and ceremony that was scheduled to last for an amazing four hours. The success of that event would cement Down Under as part of the WDC rotation scheme for years to come.

And yes, that is Australian hobby legend Luke Clutterback saying right there on page 1 of the info packet “The best organized Dipcon in the World, ever.” Typical Aussie bravado.

Another part of this issue of World Diplomacy was the report from the Diplomacy tournament of the very first Avaloncon, birthed in our featured year of 1991 and held in Pennsylvania. This was the event now known as the World Boardgaming Championship, of WBC, originally envisioned as a championship level event for many games published at the time by Avalon Hill, including Diplomacy. GM Rex Martin’s report is probably a little on the small side for you to read, so let me point out that the winner of this 56-person event was Bruce Reiff, who went on to win my Dixiecon tournament a few years later in 1994. By the way, he attended the Dipcon at Dixiecon in 2023, you may have met him there. In 1992, Avaloncon would be won by one of my North Carolina players, Tom Kobrin, with this happening again in 1993 (Steve Koehler.) Once again these are guys some of you know very well because they are still in the hobby and attend Dixiecon every year.





Because I was having quite a busy year personally I did not attend Avaloncon myself in 1991, but I did make the 1992 Dipcon in Kansas City. This tournament was promoted in this very same issue of World Diplomacy. This event was run by hobby veterans Gary Behnen and Vince Lutterbie, and turned out to be important historically because Avalon Hill representative Rex Martin attended for the purpose of calling a hobby meeting to recruit help from the Diplomacy community for his new project - a rewritten version of the Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy. A group of us signed on to assemble a team of writers to help with the publication, and five of us also signed up to be listed as the regional contacts for North America on AH's new gamebox flyer. I was the "Southeast" contact.

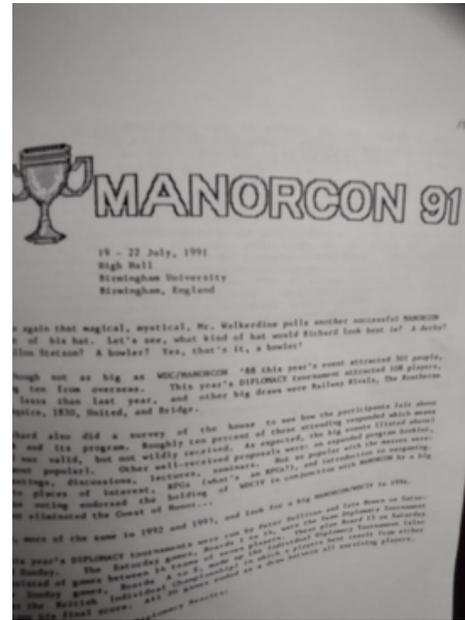
Also, in attendance in Kansas City that year was Buz Eddy, so I got to meet him (and I played on a board with him in a game that was an absolute mess, but that's another story.) He and I had a long discussion about hobby services, ways to recruit and retain new players, and the like. You may recall that Buz Eddy formed the North American Diplomacy Federation a few years after that. Meeting new folk and strengthening friendships are some of the best reasons to go to face-to-face Diplomacy events - and sometimes those relationships can help start new projects like the NADF!

The UK hobby was also featured in the zine, because the biggest event of 1991 in terms of player total was actually Manorcon, with 108 players. Frankly, this was usually true back in those days, when the UK hobby members all pretty much showed up for that one big event every year. In contrast, the North American hobby was just geographically more dispersed and thus had smaller numbers but at more scheduled events overall. The 1991 Manorcon winner will surprise no one, as Toby Harris is still kicking up a storm in UK play even now. Another recent connection to the 1991 event is the fact that co-TD Peter Sullivan is also still around, particularly in the zine-based remnant of the hobby - and he even helped me GM some virtual face to face games during the 2021 virtual Dixiecon! Given how important the UK hobby used to be on the world scene, it is extremely gratifying to see it bounce back during 2024 with the advent of the UK National Championship as well as the UK hobby's new website.

(continued on next page)



I appreciate you all indulging in my reminiscing. I understand that many of you were not even born in 1991 so this may all seem very foreign to you. Let me make a larger point though. I and other hobbyists of that day made memories with each other in 1991, and 1992, and so on - memories which still bring me joy to think about today. You, the Diplomacy hobbyists of the present, have that same opportunity, to make memories with each other over a shared love of this wonderful game of ours. Seize it. Play. Organize. Travel. Help. Yes, I know these things take time and effort. But take it from me, it's fun to go back and remember all the cool things we used to do with all the cool kids we did those things with. And some of us are still doing it now after all these years, which is incredibly rewarding. Don't just be a passive and casual consumer in the shallow end of the Diplomacy pool - jump into the deep end with us! You'll be glad you did.



The Bismark is Back

by Peter McNamara



Back in the late 80s, an influential series of humorous articles pseudonymously written by one Arthur Bismark, named the Bismark lectures, were published in the Envoy, an Australian PBM zine. Subsequent to this, a trophy, the Bismark Cup, was created for the best player in face-to-face tournaments in a calendar year across Australia, and later Australia and New Zealand.

The Bismark Cup was awarded every year with one exception between 1989 and 2011 inclusive. Then a lean post-WDC slump hit the hobby, with only one year (2016) having a critical mass of tournaments necessary to justify awarding the trophy. And then something special happened.

March 2, 2024. 24 diplomacy players gathered in Fortress Melbourne, numbers the likes of which had not been seen down under in a long time. And the hobby went from strength to strength with a total of 72 unique players appearing in the five tournaments throughout the year.

And so, it was time to bring the Bismark out of storage and into circulation. The cup was located, polished, and brought to Canberra where it could be awarded at the conclusion of the final tournament of the year. The top seven in the final standings were:

1. Marcus Loane - 252.1
2. Max Roe Banks - 225.5
3. Jamal Blakkarly - 207.9
4. Peter McNamara - 183.5
5. Shane Armstrong - 171.8
6. Andrew Goff - 150.0
7. Zoe Cameron - 148.2

Full results, as well as a description of the scoring system can be found at <https://petermc.net/diplomacy/bismark.txt>
Here's to an even better 2025!



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 31st - 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/>



Diplomacy

**GEN
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Origins 2009 and the World Diplomacy Championship

by Robert Zahn

In 2009, the World Championship of Diplomacy was held at Origins in Columbus, Ohio. Columbus is the 15th largest city in the United States, with a population of nearly two million people, and has over thirty colleges and universities in the area.

Columbus, in part because of the population and all the students in the area, had a large gaming community in 2009, and it still does. In addition, there were well over fifty local individuals who played Diplomacy within the hobby. Origins had always had a Diplomacy tournament, and it was commonly well-attended, with up to five boards per round. Some rounds even reaching seven boards.

I have been playing Diplomacy since 1982. I went to The Ohio State University, and that is where I played my first Diplomacy game, which took place in our student union during a much smaller gaming convention on campus.

Origins in 2009 - and the Columbus gaming community - were excited to have the World Diplomacy Championships hosted here. There was a large turnout of local Diplomacy players, in addition to players from all over the country - especially the Weasels from Chicago - and a few from outside the country. The local Diplomacy & gaming communities were anxious to test their skills against the world's best competition. This had to be the apex for Origins, not only in the number of Diplomacy players, but the number of boards played in the tournament. The Origins Diplomacy organizer, Dan Mathias, was a good man, and he had directed the Diplomacy tournament for a number of years. That year he certainly had his hands full with the large turnout.

Unfortunately, what should have been a phenomenal event for both Origins and the Columbus gaming community turned out to be an unmitigated disaster. After the world championship in Columbus, the Diplomacy tournament director quit, and a large number of the Columbus gaming community stopped playing Diplomacy...not only in tournaments, but also at local gaming events. It was a severe blow to our sport in the Columbus area, and we still (after all these years) have not fully recovered. Many of those players never played again. In 2010 (the year after WDC), the next Origins Diplomacy tournament saw both the number of players and boards greatly reduced, to where we were lucky to have two boards at each round. It took a long time to recover from 2009.

What happened you might ask? What left such a bad taste in all these player's mouths? While there are friendships and metagaming in most Diplomacy tournaments, what happened in 2009 was a travesty. In 2009, the Chicago Weasels traveled to Columbus with the intent to crown one of their own as a World Diplomacy champion. A lofty and worthy goal! However, the manner in which they wanted to achieve this left a dirty taste in everybody else's mouths, and resulted in many people leaving our sport, a tournament director quitting, and a bad reputation for Diplomacy at Origins. There were many that quit the tournament and didn't even play last round. I was one of those players. After the second round I quit the tournament and did not even return for the third round or even return to Origins that year, even though I had two solid scores in the 1st and 2nd rounds.

I can only speak to what happened on my board, but what I can tell you is that many other people in the tournament had these same experiences on their own boards. On my board, I allied an individual who just happened to be a Chicago Weasel. He was - and I assume still is today - a good person and a good Diplomacy player. I had no problem with him. What I do have a problem with is that instead of he and I positioning to see who would win board top, is that another Chicago Weasel on the board essentially marched out of his supply centers so his fellow Chicago Weasel would top the board easily. I was told this happened on numerous occasions in multiple rounds. So, while it was a lofty goal to have one of their team win the championship, the manner in which they tried to make this happen was underhanded and not an example of sportsmanship. In all my board gaming - not just Diplomacy, but also other games - this was perhaps the saddest moment I have ever witnessed.

[If you are interested, you can find a number of articles covering the WDC at Origins 2009 event in Diplomacy World #106, available here:

<https://www.diplomacyworld.net/pdf/dw106.pdf>. That event seemed to be full with other controversies as well. Articles by event winner Andrew Goff (page 47) and Mark Zoffel (page 44) offer divergent details on some especially interesting moments.]





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:

- National Diplomacy Master Champ **Katie Gray**
- US National Champion **Robert Zahn**
- Famed GM **Phil Burk**
- Mystery Diplomacy Master to be announced

- September 19-23, 2025
- Horseshoe Hotel & Casino
- Four Round Diplomacy tournament with Top Board on Sunday
- First "Diplomacy: Era of Empire" competitive event

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

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



Asia-Pacific Diplomacy Championship Recap

by Shane Armstrong



NZ's Dominick Stephens rocking both Best England, and Best Negotiator medals

The weekend of 12-13 October saw the inaugural AsiaPacific Diplomacy Championships held in Melbourne, Australia, at the State Library of Victoria. 32 players flew in from Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, and New Zealand, and the tournament also drew on a sizeable number of players of all experience levels from Melbourne.

2 cars were also driven from the current Diplomacy Capital of the World - Canberra to Melbourne, supported by a Spotify playlist of questionable quality, someone's Diplomacy-themed stand-up set, and plenty of laughs along the way. These were generally not related to the stand-up...

2 rounds were scheduled for the Saturday, with the final round on Sunday. In the washup, it was an incredibly tough tournament for Austria-Hungary, experiencing by far the most eliminations, while France had it fairly smooth, as the only power not to be eliminated.

The tournament was directed by the experienced hand of Andrew Goff, ably supported by the venerable Peter McNamara and was played in a fantastic spirit. The most exciting part of the entire weekend in terms of the Australian Diplomacy scene, was to see local Melbourne players talking excitedly at various points throughout the weekend about kickstarting the face-to-face scene down in Melbourne and planning out their first regular games. This was then held in November, drawing two boards in what will hopefully end up a firm foundation for a revived game down in the state of Victoria.

ROUND 1



Round 1, and a massive 5 boards kicking off the tournament!

After breakfast at the on-site cafe, Mr. Tulk (in which the smart breakfast choice for the hungover was the 'Dusty Benedict' washed down with black coffee), it was down to business with five boards formed. Board 1, 'Dynamite' lived up to its name, getting off to an explosive start with a very tidy F-E-T 3-way draw (13-11-10) featuring Peter McNamara (VIC), Daryl Cox (VIC, in his first game in years!), and Joshua 'The Beast' Crowther (ACT) leading the scoring. Board 2 saw Jamal Blakkarly (ACT) start the tournament nicely as Russia, finishing 4 SCs clear of second placed Brandan Austin (ACT) playing as Italy. Board 3 also saw a 12 dot Russia lead an 8 dot Italy (pray for Austria-Hungary, dear reader!) with Max Roe Banks (ACT), and Robert 'No Hat' Hillier (VIC) in the points. Board 4, named 'Fake Love' certainly seemed to lack in the unconditional positive regard, with France (Zoe Cameron, VIC) topping the board a massive 5 dots clear (earning Best France along the way) of second placed Russia (Stuart Barton, ACT). Board 5 closed the round out, ending with an even more massive 16 dot England played by Dominick Stephens (NZL), trailed by a slew of players on 4 SCs, practically guaranteeing Best England would be headed across the Tasman unless someone finagled a solo in the remaining two rounds.



Ah, Round 2. Where do we begin? With the clocks that felt like they were running fast? With the rooms that felt like they were growing increasingly hot by the season? This round was definitely one that tested the endurance of players, though things made a lot more sense when we found out the venue had turned off the air conditioning! Board 1, 'Permission to Dance' showed that everyone was going to give France continued permission to do so, with Jonathan Sun (VIC) topping the board on 10 SCs, followed by Alex Batten (ACT) playing Russia on 7 SCs. Board 2 saw both Turkey (Jason Gray, NSW, 11 SCs) finish 2 SCs ahead of Brandan Austin's England. Board 3 saw Connor Bennetts (ACT) put in his breakout performance on the Australian Diplomacy scene, taking Turkey to a 13 SC finish that would eventually earn him Best Turkey, followed by the Dusty Benedict Twins - Shane Armstrong (ACT) and Gavin Atkinson (QLD), finishing as a 10 dot France and a 9 dot Germany (the Best Germany winner) respectively. The final board of the round 'Bad Decisions' saw an excellent England played by Marcus Loane (VIC) finish on 13 SCs, 7 SCs clear of second in a performance that would most likely yield the Best England trophy in most tournaments, if not for Dominick's standout performance in Round 1.

ROUND 2



Canberra's Connor Bennetts picks up the first of what will be many awards in his FTF career.

ROUND 3



2024's top 3!

The third and final round took place on the Sunday morning, with players for the most part fairly well rested after a casual night at a great local restaurant/bar, the Captain Melville. The day finally yielded the best AustriaHungary game of the tournament on Board 1, with hometown player Tim Jones finishing on 7 SCs behind a shared England/France (Jamal Blakkarly/Gavin Atkinson) board top of 9 SCs each. Board 2 was dominated by France (Max Roe Banks), who finished 5 SCs clear of the next closest player. Board 3 ended with a 3-way board top between England (Shane Armstrong), France (Alan Thompson, VIC), and Italy (Stephan Kumar, VIC), and Board 4 saw Italy (Tianyu Sun, ACT) heading west, leading a successful I-T-A and topping the board on 10 SCs and taking away Best Italy for his troubles.

It was then to trophies, with Max Roe Banks showing that the vibe is real, taking out top spot, followed by Jamal Blakkarly, with Zoe Cameron finishing in third. Best Negotiator was, of course, Dominick Stephens (how else could you explain a 16 SC England in Round 1?), Best Strategist was, again, Max Roe Banks, and Best Tactician was one of Victoria's best and brightest, Jonathan Sun. The Best Shane Cubis Award was given to Ken Gordon, who was wonderful to play with all weekend. The Tournament Director's Award went to Billy Colman for his assistance throughout the weekend, and Toughest Mark was given to Canberra's own Hector Soukhavong, who fought valiantly as Russia to secure a 1907 survival on 1 SC in Vienna.



The day also saw the Asia-Pacific Diplomacy Association (APDA) hold a meeting to incorporate itself in the state of Victoria, providing an overarching body to support development of the game in the Asia-Pacific region. Keep your eye out in a future edition of **Diplomacy World** for more information on the APDA.

Awards:

First - Max Roe Banks (ACT)

Second - Jamal Blakkarly (ACT)

Third - Zoe Cameron (VIC)

Toughest Mark - Hector Soukhavong (ACT)

Tournament Director's Award - Billy Colman (NSW)

Best Negotiator - Dominick Stephens (NZL)

Best Strategist - Max Roe Banks (ACT)

Best Tactician - Jonathan Sun (VIC)

Best Shane Cubis - Ken Gordon (QLD)

Best Austria-Hungary - 7 SCs, R3 - Tim Jones (VIC)

Best England - 16 SCs, R1- Dominick Stephens (NZL)

Best France - 13 SCs, R1 - Zoe Cameron (VIC)

Best Germany - 9 SCs, R2 Gavin Atkinson (QLD)

Best Italy - 10 SCs, R3 - Tianyu Sun (ACT)

Best Russia - 12 SCs, R1 - Max Roe Banks (ACT)

Best Turkey - 13 SCs, R2 - Connor Bennetts (ACT)

From the DW Archive: King Dimitrios & the Dropout

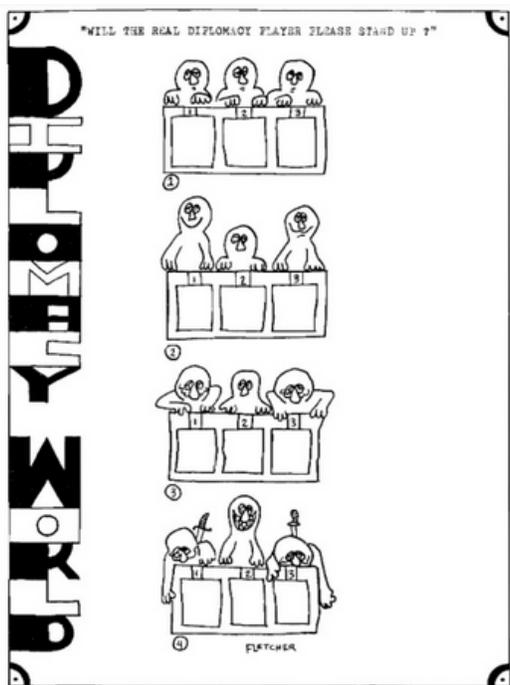
by Mal Arky

If there is one disappointing aspect of online Diplomacy, as played on websites (and, once upon a time, apps), it is the number and frequency of abandoned powers. As Steve Hall put it in his article from DW#4, dropouts.

Players leaving games isn't the sole concern of online Diplomacy, of course. It happens in any online game. And it happened well before the Digital Age of Diplomacy. Look back through any Dipzine that featured games and you'll see that many a GM's House Rules contained sections on what would happen should players leave the game. It is a blight, and has always been a blight, on remote play.

Well, unless you're a neighbor of an abandoned power, of course. Then, it's feast time. But even in this fortunate circumstance there is, or should be, a tinge of regret. Where is the challenge? Where is the fun? I don't often like it when writers compare what happens in Diplomacy with another game. Diplomacy isn't Chess, although it was partially inspired by chess in the design of the board and the mechanics of movement, and of the board and the mechanics of movement, and being able to read the game effectively to anticipate what another player is doing is often key. Diplomacy isn't Poker, although being able to talk to players without them reading your true thoughts, with a poker face, is a skill. It isn't anything like Risk, except that it might look a little similar. Steve Hall compares Diplomacy to yet another card game, Bridge. Here, he says, it is common for a pair to have such a bad start that they know playing the tournament to completeness is futile. And yet, they seldom drop from the tournament. Why not? "They know that they owe their opponents good competition all the way through." He goes on to say that it isn't that tournament Bridge is played face-to-face. Why not? Because there are so many players that, if the odd pair didn't show, it wouldn't be noticed. Instead, he says, it is that these players have developed such a respect for the game and for the others who play the game. And this he damns the players of Diplomacy for lacking.

It is here that, for me, Hall's argument breaks down. I can't disagree with him about tournament Bridge; I've never played it and I don't intend to start now. But I do disagree with him - generally - about Diplomacy players lacking respect for the players, with a caveat.



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I think that, within the wide Diplomacy hobby there are varying levels of respect. This can depend on how you play the game, in which format you play it; it can depend on the philosophy with which you play the game; it can depend on the way you play the game; and it can depend on the character and personality of the people involved.

There is, among some, still a feeling that in-person play - FTF and vFTF - is the epitome of Diplomacy. I can understand that. It's the way the game was designed to be played. It involves different skills to those who play it remotely. You have to be able to read someone using body language; you have to make quick judgement calls; you have to persuade or cajole others to your point of view equally quickly. I read, quite recently, a well-known aficionado of in-person play condemn playing on websites as nothing more than using a Judge. Well, duh.

I could write (and did until I self-edited) reams as to why the differences between in-person and remote Diplomacy don't make one superior to the other. They're different, with some variation in skill set, and that's all. But in this article, I'm leaving it there.

In general, I think the underlying cause Hall is ascribing to dropouts - the lack of respect - is not accurate, at least in regard to other players. There are times when I've had no respect for a player I've played against. That might be because of their personality, their actions (dropping-out, for instance), etc. There are times when I've not been very respectful of how someone has played. (I should add that the latter is completely different to the former: I might describe something you've done as being idiotic but that doesn't mean you're an idiot... although you might well become an idiot if you're unable to tell the difference between the two!)

Dropouts don't happen because players don't respect other players, except for those with a very fragile ego.

What I do agree with in Hall's argument is that too many people don't have respect for the game itself. This is much more prevalent in remote Diplomacy, unfortunately. But, even then, it isn't the whole story.

Online, especially, there are players that have never played the game before, and don't know how to play it. They get themselves into a game, make an illegal order (oh, Lon-Bel again?) and, seeing things fall apart, some will drop from the game. Others will plough on, at least for a while. I try to contact the player when I see this

happen and point out why the order failed. I'll even try and prop them up. Admittedly, this wouldn't happen in an arena game but, well, that's different. Then I'd be doing it to seek an advantage!

There are also players who find that Diplomacy just isn't for them. Some may play the game out; others will drop out immediately on realizing this.

Online there are going to be more times when real life gets in the way. Death, disaster, illness: unexpected events interfere with leisure time regularly. And with a bigger player-base and more games - as well as players involved in multiple games - this will have a bigger impact.

Although Hall says it isn't - in Bridge - to do with games being played in-person rather than remotely, in Diplomacy it very definitely is to do with this. Players may not turn up to an in-person game due to unexpected events. But players in a game are much less likely to leave a game unfinished. It does happen, but seldom. The very fact of them being there prevents it, as does the fact that an in-person game lasts hours, not weeks (or even months) as it does online.

The impact on in-person play is more evident in tournaments. Here, Hall's comparison does hold some water. Tournaments will have players who don't play in every round. Perhaps this is because they couldn't get there on time. Perhaps because they have to leave the event early. Perhaps because there are more players than can be accommodated.

Again, though, there are some people who don't play in later rounds of a tournament because they've had poor early results. This is the same in-person and remotely. Again, in-person it is less prevalent and probably because it is in-person; you're there, after all: what are you going to do instead?

I think for everyone dropouts are most frustrating when it happens, on the face of it, because things just aren't going right. We've all - those of us who play online - been in games where one player simply disappears after they've been stabbed. I was in one game where I, as Italy, stabbed Austria after persuading Austria to try the Key Lepanto. Austria's response was to swear at me a lot, compare me to some pretty distasteful people, and run away. All that meant was that, by the end of 1903, I controlled Italy, Austria, Tunis, Serbia and Greece.



Had I been Turkey or Russia I would've been more disappointed.

I agree with Hall that there are players out there who simply don't respect the unwritten, unsigned contract you have when going into a game of Diplomacy. Play the game the best you can and stick it out, no matter what. Use a bad game to learn from it.

The second half of Hall's article is meant to illustrate the way players should act when they face a bad situation. Unfortunately, it comes across as being superior. At one point he writes: *"Let me tell you I learned enough about tactics to write my own book and have enough left over to teach my enemies a few things."*

Hall's illustrative examples are from Postal games. This, in itself, indicates that the issues arising from leaving games is very much a remote play problem rather than an in-person problem. This brings into question his assertion that it isn't anything to do with whether a game is in-person or not.

What his examples show is that, if you stick with a bad game, things can change. There is, after all, a glimmer of hope, a slight chance of gaining something from the game while you're in it. If you quit, even that goes.

What is Hall's solution to the problem? After all, if one exists, then it needs to be implemented. Well, frankly, he doesn't have one.

He condemns the efforts to prevent dropouts from playing games. Instead, we should be pushing for a higher level of respect, a stronger 'keep on' ethic. And that's it. He says it has been discussed *"... ad nauseum, with blacklists, lockouts, and all the other big brother tommyrot. Why can't we simply push for a higher level of respect and concern for fellow players among our diplomatic brethren?"*

Perhaps this was more realistic in the Paper Age, when Diplomacy was played postally and games run through zines. Perhaps it was something that could be reinforced by stronger messaging from GMs, editors, players, etc. But, frankly, from the short time I spent in the Hobby then, I can remember it being encouraged all the time anyway, probably because it was an issue in this form of play. Did it ever make a difference? I don't think so.

I can also tell you that it is something that is encouraged, ethically and more practically, online. Has it made a difference? Perhaps, for a small number of people, with the right attitude.

Practical measures don't change anything much, either, from what I can see. The difference is that practical measures, that Hall decries as "big brother tommyrot", can - at least to some extent - protect more consistent players from those who run away at the first sign of trouble. And that has to count for something.

Look, if ethics and moralistic arguments could make a major difference to things, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia - all forms of hatred - would be argued into submission. These are things that matter in the real world, to much bigger numbers within our societies; in a leisure activity hobby they would melt away at the first mention. These things alone don't work.

Stop inconsistent players from playing with consistent ones and you simply reinforce that inconsistency is the rule. Imposing rating penalties for dropping out has no effect - these players aren't bothered about that or else they wouldn't drop in the first place. Banning them from playing does nothing to encourage better play from these players, and may even encourage them to create a new account and simply do the same thing out of spite.

Perhaps in arena events, banning inconsistent players is more effective and more important. You want the event to carry some credibility after all, and games to be competitive.

For me, the only solution to this problem, if any solution exists, is for players in a game to intervene. If you feel someone is likely to drop from the game, message them and offer advice on how to keep going. When it comes down to it, while this may hamper your own success in a game, it is - perhaps - encouraging some players to build some respect for the game and going some way to building a healthier attitude and positive outcome for the Hobby in general.



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 19th - 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/>



ORIGINS
GAME FAIR

A Response to Diplomacy World #167

By Mark Boyle

Diplomacy World #167 - Fall 2024 contained a dreary and disingenuous little piece for Malcolm Arky aka Mal Arky aka Timely_Palpitation23 concerning a comment post yours truly made to him (and was most certainly not anonymous as inferred), in the vain attempt to guide him away from his idiosyncratic practice of cutting and pasting everything already written about Diplomacy verbatim in the hope if he does so for long enough, he will come to that event horizon of enough people online caring less.

For those needing service identification, Mal Arky is the cheeky effer who took everyone else's past work and has been trying to sell it online as "50 Tips for Playing Better Diplomacy (for \$7.99 minimum or \$999 suggested price) since 2021, whilst the likes of Ben James did the same for free - to say nothing of Richard Sharp's seminal book being available for free online for decades. I could answer his plate of word salad in a more structured manner, but since life is too short, will simply make the following points concerning his maledictive mewlings:

Point 1: "I received an email, sent on 6 July, from someone who I shall keep anonymous. If they'd commented on my blog, I wouldn't do so; comments include names or usernames and, therefore, are public. As this came by email, I think it's only fair to keep it anonymous"

You're a liar Mal Arky. You didn't receive an email; it was a comment posted on your Diplomaticon website (the latest of your tortuous "cunning plans" for "hobby fame" which you will doubtless pull the plug on like some child bored with his latest toy when its hit stats calcify). What happened was it went straight to your "awaiting approval" holding folder, the way ALL WordPress websites work if you have the settings at default (and most bloggers do so due to spammers). If you're lying about something as basic as this, think we can cheerfully dismiss the rest of your hot take on what I wrote as the bib dribblings of the latest "friendly hobby"'s wannabe celeb. Plus, ça change, plus c'est la même chose ... And oh look! What have we here? Hot on the back of your "shock! horror! won't someone please think of the children?!" piece for Diplomacy World comes the news that - wait for it! - you've decided to launch your own quarterly zeen like wot the big kids do and is gonna be tots mazin bro!"

"Diplomaticon Quarterly" - wow, Mal, where do you come up with all those clever titles! It must have taken you ages to come up with someone so radically different from your last one!

And he's looking for writers, again: "There are a lot of knowledgeable people out there, with a lot to say about Diplomacy, so why don't you - one of these great people - get involved and write something. As long as it's Diprelated, I'll use it, and probably in issue 2."

Ooooo, I know the answer to that one, Mal [jumping up and down hand in air like Hermione Granger on ten bags of blue Skittles ...], how about your cute habit of posting people's letters and emails in Diplomaticon and not having the basic manners to let them know what you've done, never mind actually sending them a copy? Back in one of your previous incarnations, what was it called again, "34" or "69" or "36 24 36" or something? Or have you forgotten that one already too, you pretentious little lickspittle?

Point 2: "Alright; why have I written about this? Well, let me say first that I haven't written this article to spread bad news about the Dip Hobby. This is all decades past; its relevance today is minimal (which suggests it isn't worth writing about in the first place, I know)."

Yeah, because it is perfectly normal to write 2936 words spread across 3¾ pages about something you think "isn't worth writing about in the first place, I know".

There's nothing quite so feeble as those who try to have their cake and eat it, sufficing their own tortuous ramblings with: "but none of this is important anymore, we have moved on." then in the next paragraph barfing along the lines of: "By the way, next issue comes my very interesting hobby history article about what Conrad von Metzke, Richard Sharp, Pete Birks, er, er, er ... [furiously thumbs through tear stained school jotter with "Big List Of Important Hobby Ghods To Namedrop" scrawled on the front, bought off eBay from someone called Jan Niechwiadowicz ...] and John Herringbone, er Harrington, wrote on the toilet walls of Manorcon 1985, er Midcon, er something, 'cos these were highly important moments of hobby history you need to know about and stuff!"



Point 3: "I wrote this because I was genuinely shocked by the email I received."

Oh please! You wrote it because you thought "Squee! This will be my ticket to hobby fame and fortune at last! as your sausage fingers feverishly clattered on your sustainable plastic keyboard to get it out on time to send to the "prestigious" hobby quarterly. Same old Dip hobby dorkdom.

Point 4: "I'm told by no less a person than Stephen Agar .." Stephen Agar isn't God, not even a Hobby Ghod, you unctuous urchin Arky, no matter how much of his own money he flings about yet again to achieve it (same as he did back in the Spring Offensive days). He's no Sharp or even a Walkerdine (i.e. who was just the supermarket own brand diet Sharp).

The days of those sort of people - and the UK Diplomacy that went with it - are dead and buried (arguably with Sharp's death went the UK hobby de facto ...) and so long as the current crop continue their attempt to run a "hobby tribute act" along those lines paying mere lip service to technological and zeitgeist realities will remain so, but that's another topic. And that really has to be that. Agar's recent own disingenuous behavior towards me has made me realize the UK Dip hobby remains the same lost cause I left two decades ago (and likely to get worse as more of them retire - the devil makes work for idle hands to do ...).

To cut a long story short, he asked me for an article in response to a throwaway sarcastic parting shot from yours truly in God Save The Zine 19 (August 2024) about the UK Diplomacy hobby's willful permaGroundhog Day - still trying to be a paper zines hobby in a virtual world - and that perhaps, just perhaps, they need a giant reality check in the UK.

I'd hoped it would get the point across than a hobby cloud dreaming on its past (and a rather selective one at that) is one with no future, on the quietly inferred understanding if he showed it to one, he showed to all. Once I'd sent the articles (note plural), quelle surprise, complete volte face and telling everyone he would be treating it as a "dirty magazine" for reading by "select" people only, i.e. the remaining self-aggrandizing hobby old farts with moon orbited egos whose crumbling hobby echelons he's spent three decades of his life aspiring elevation to; as well as using it as "currency" with those

he wanted to cultivate in order to generate the max "shock! horror!" headlines for his next letter column.

Which of course I wasn't expecting in the slightest. Much. He forgot that I was able to read what he was saying on the Facebook UK Diplomacy Old Duffers pages without having to join it. That said, I'd been hoping against hope he'd prove me wrong.

(The fact it is Zine Poll season was also not a coincidence - the same time of year he also suddenly starts caring less about plugging every other zine, since zine editors' votes tend to be more influential on the final result, but that's another topic ...)

The first I knew about it was when Tringham spat in GSTZ 20 "I know for certain he [i.e. me!] has misunderstood what Pete wrote in 1988 ..." - which considering I had said nothing publicly about Birks in 1988 in any previous issue, only in said offering, confirmed Agar had forwarded the article I'd sent him.

Not very edifying. Same old UK Dip hobby sadly, more concerned with being 'fannish' than fun. Am well out of it, and Agar can kiss goodbye to getting the final full version - "It's All Fun and Games Until Toby Harris Almost Loses an Eye" - twenty-three pages of how a determination to machine gun itself in the foot time after time led it to its current perma-malaise, which I'd kept back to await events. Lucky I had.

Thankfully the new generations can simply play Diplomacy online and avoid these boozy bloky pretentious old farts desperately trying to regrab their "yoof" like the plague (there's times when I can well understand the ageism of today's generation) - as they are most certainly doing judging by the recent UK National Championships. Nineteen players in total, one less than James Handscombe OBE's Harris Westminster School's Diplomacy Society gets in the entirety of its after school weekly Dippy game sessions - enough said (source: Stephen Agar's "God Save The Zine" issue 18, July 2024, Page 5)

As for hobby fame chaser Arky, take anything he says with a bucket of salt.

"In spite of all their kind some elements of worth - With difficulty persist here and there on earth."



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What Stabs Happen in Vegas, Stay in Vegas

By Thomas Haver

The National Diplomacy Masters in 2025 and Your WDC 2027 Host Site

The National Diplomacy Masters is a tournament held in Las Vegas at the “World Series of Board Gaming (WSBG)” convention (<https://wsbgvegas.com/>). This year was the first year of what will be an annual event and eventual host tournament of World DipCon in 2027. We had players from all over the US descend on the Horseshoe Casino & Resort to compete alongside “Masters” for the championship and the right to be declared a Master for next year’s event.

A cool feature about the event are the four honored Masters. We selected two tournament champions and two community organizers to receive “Stay & Play” packages for the convention. These ticket packages gave each player a hotel room for the convention, access to all tournaments, access to all events, and some special presents. This isn’t typically done for Diplomacy events, which are usually run on a tight budget and without financial support for the players. Aligning Renegade Game Studios with the host WSBG opened many doors to tournament support.



Our four Diplomacy Masters were:
Dan McNeill – Reigning US Diplomacy Champion
Katie Gray – Reigning DipCon Champion
Manus Hand – Organizer with the most active club in the world
Robert Lacy – Organizer with 3 conventions, a local league, and game store teaching events.

The 2/2 split between organizers and tournament champions is intentional. People who promote the game should be held in the same esteem as champions. This method also provides a path for just about anyone to be a Diplomacy Master. If you can’t travel to a tournament, you can work locally and be recognized with a fabulous event package.



The tournament was held in a specially designated area within the WSBG convention. We had our own storage room and a large space for the giant, walkable map.

For those unfamiliar with the convention, it started several years ago as a competitive board gaming event with cash prizes. Every day there are multiple qualifying “Ring” events. The winners of each Ring event (such as Acquire, Azul, Terraforming Mars, etc.) proceed to a sort of playoff to determine the WSBG champion. They have over 200,000 in cash & prizes at the event. With that said, I know what you’re thinking: did Diplomacy have a cash prize? No, we avoided that by supporting our Diplomacy Masters. Cash prizes in Diplomacy events can really alter behavior, and we wanted to avoid that. We invested heavily in prize support for all players: Diplomacy challenge coins, Top Board wooden trophies, Best Country awards, board games, shirts, pens, stickers, magnets, keychains, mugs, tumblers – the list goes on and on.



The event already has several reports published by players, so I thought why not provide a tournament director's perspective. Given this was the first year of the event AND it was held over weekdays as opposed to weekend, we aimed to have 3 boards per round to start. Socialization is a big aspect of a Diplomacy event, so we provided several potential events the night before the tournament and planned meals after each round. These meals were fully comped for players, their families and their friends. On successive nights we finished the round at 8pm, then went out dining to Guy Fieri's, then Carmine's, and finally Giordano's. This will be a tradition we intend to continue in future years. We want players to enjoy Diplomacy, socialize as a group after the round over a meal, and then be free to enjoy the Vegas nightlife on their own terms.

Our player base was a great mix of regulars at Diplomacy tournaments with competitive crossovers from the WSBG events. This was also an outcome we sought from the beginning of the relationship: to bring in people who otherwise wouldn't attend WSBG, and to provide other competitive events for the existing convention goers. We had players from Boston and LA, from the Midwest and the South. Las Vegas is a destination city and the National Diplomacy Masters is now a destination convention.

The added benefit of our situation with the WSBG is the Organized Play manager for Renegade, Trevor McGregor, is a Vegas local. He'll be running additional events next year at Dice Tower West. He was a big help navigating Vegas for the many out-of-towners. I'm glad we had such a great group of players and we have such robust support from the convention staff. We've got an even better event planned for next year, which will include the first recognized competitive event for Diplomacy: Era of Empire. I will refrain from providing specific details about our Top Board, because as you'll see below, we recorded the entire thing and will release on YouTube in the coming weeks! Onto the results...

First things first: Congratulations to Katie Gray on winning the National Diplomacy Masters tournament at the World Series of Board Gaming.

Katie came into the event as one of four honored Diplomacy Masters players and she showed everyone the title is well-deserved. She dominated the Top Board early as France and won via concession before the final bell. This means she'll be back as an honored guest next year to defend her title.

Congratulations are in order to Robert Zahn and Phil Burk for being named Diplomacy Masters for 2025. Robert Zahn won the US Championship at GenCon and Phil Burk has organized and assisted in numerous Diplomacy tournaments & teaching events. We honor both tournament prowess and event organization skills. Congratulations to Robert and Phil.



Top 7

1. Katie Gray
2. Mark Egerman
3. Nick Benedict
4. Jack Brawner
5. Ed Prem
6. Jeff Hayman
7. Richard Sweat

Best Country

- Austria - Mark Egerman
- England - Mark Egerman
- France - Manus Hand
- Germany - Robert Zahn
- Italy - Phil Burk
- Russia - Richard Sweat
- Turkey - Jack Brawner





Remember to follow Board Game Nation on socials (<https://www.youtube.com/boardgamenation>). They covered all the Top Board action for YouTube, which included a four-camera setup, mics for all players, and a confessional area for those most secret of admissions. Gary from BGN has informed me there are two videos pending for “Axis & Allies: North Africa” to complete, then we’ll work together to review all the recordings from the National Diplomacy Masters and GenCon. All those audio and video streams pieced together into a coherent narrative is a big challenge that will involve multiple people, but the results will be worth it for this unique experience.

What’s Next?

We’ll be back for “National Diplomacy Masters” in 2025 and 2026 before it becomes WDC in 2027. Next year we’ll shift to four rounds and weekend dates after the success of the inaugural event. In 2026 the “World Series of Board Gaming” moves to Labor Day weekend. Yea for a holiday weekend! These were the contract details I was unable to share in Milan but was given the blessing to relay at this year’s convention. One other detail regarding an online question I received about the age 18+ restriction on certain events: I was told by WSBG that for cash payout events, that restriction needs to be in place (legal reasons). However, since Diplomacy **doesn’t** have a cash payout, we could host games with under 18 so long as we assign those boards to designated tables in our event space. We have many parent-child pairs at our events, so this will open attendance up for all.

For this event, we used Manus Hand’s tournament software to assign boards. While that worked in the first two rounds, the conflicts created for the third round meant a few players had to play with the same Powers again. They weren’t opposed to the fresh opportunity to earn a Best Country or play their favorite Power again, but that’s something I want to avoid. I’ll work with Manus to make updates or revert to the tried-and-true: draw from a bag with Power restrictions in place.

I think the central clock is a necessity at WSBG because of all the scheduled events, both gaming and social. This year we had reservations set at restaurants on each night; if we had offset timings for the boards then we would likely miss some of the crowd for free dinner & drinks. We had more people at the dinners than play on the boards this year – a consequence of friends & family being invited. The social aspect at a Diplomacy event is just as important as the competition on the board. Given our strong attendance at the dinners, we’ll keep doing what people like.

In 2025 the WSBG runs from September 19-23. We’ll be shifting to a four-round tournament with a Top Board during Round 4. An open question I put to our players this year and the larger Diplomacy community: what is your preferred round structure (2 Saturday & 2 Sunday, 1 Friday & 2 Saturday & 1 Sunday)? Based on player feedback from this year, a group trip to The Sphere (<https://www.thesphere.com/shows/the-sphereexperience>) seems like a good idea. Let me know what you think – we’ll adjust the event based on player input because it’s your event and will be WDC in 2027.

The WSBG staff were thrilled with our turnout and professional setup. They have some surprises in store sure to delight players next year. Renegade is invested in WSBG as a sponsor so that relationship will continue to grow from Diplomacy and Acquire to include other games. The Organized Play Manager for Renegade being a Vegas local helped immensely this year with running the event; Trevor’s presence in the future will ensure both tournament & social events run smoothly. We also have some fun announcements to make regarding organized play upcoming for Diplomacy games (plural use intentional!). Stay tuned by following Renegade Game Studios on social media and join their official Discord server (<https://discord.gg/jp2pc8s4>).

Event pictures can be found at:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/HU8d8U8oqSy4K8rf7>





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MORE INFO: WWW.MEETUP.COM/LOS-ANGELES-DIPLOMACY

Never a Cross Word

By Roger Pitfield

Every so often, measured in years rather than decades, I get the urge to host a Great Game of Diplomacy – especially as autumn comes around and the dark nights and gloomy days descend. Last year (2024) was just one such time – in all probability down to the flurry of interest in the Great Game thanks to the coverage around the release of the RENEGADE Games edition in 2023 and the particularly wet & gale force autumn being experienced where I live. The challenge over the years for me has always been to find seven willing participants – as I restrict my adventures to recruiting just friends and close associates. It is just the way it is for me. There is a nostalgic pull for this built up since the 1970s. Maybe sometime soon I will cast my quest for ruling an empire wider – as I am retired now and although there is still never enough time, there is more time available than there was when I worked – and of course time is finite and no doubt running out. *We will see!*

Anyway, the pull and the fun for me, when my itch needs scratching, is entertaining the participants and producing what in PBM days could have been considered a minizine based specifically on the one game – it would run to just a few pages and involved a lot of “physical” *cutting & pasting* – and photocopying. Still with me, is a nostalgia for replicating those days – which I guess were based on a deal of mimicry of articles appearing in the magazine ‘Games & Puzzles’. *What days they were!*

Time has moved on. I am not dead yet and age (so far) has not wearied me. There is life in the old bulldog yet and what with email, the Interbob-wotsit, texts, apps and AI, things have, paradoxically perhaps, become a whole lot easier. The fun can continue and get better and better. I still keep things simple, but the base of my hosting takes the form of a small spoof newspaper: ‘The TROUBLED TIMES’. Its form takes its inspiration from certain broadsheets, those old ‘Games & Puzzles’ mags and ‘Private Eye’.

This time out, as part of the entertainment (for myself as much as for the participants of course), I decided to include a crossword – and it is that that brings me here. There are several fellow cryptic-crossword fans in the folk recruited to my current game, so I thought why not give it a go. Having done so, I thought it might be nice to share it more widely through this esteemed journal.

By some strange coincidence, I had seen the bugle call for material – so I put the idea to the red tabs in the HQ chateau, and after some preparatory negotiation they replied ‘Why not? Go for it!’



TROUBLED TIMES – front page of Issue 1

So here we are: the first ‘Never a CROSS word’ prize cryptic! Yes, a prize - largely Diplomacy themed - cryptic crossword. The first of a regular feature perhaps. How about it, Ed?) Don’t worry if you haven’t tried a cryptic crossword before or have and not done very well with it. Give this one a go – it has some Diplomacy themed clues and answers and unless you want to submit a completed version of the puzzle with the chance to win the prize on offer, there is no huge necessity to finish the whole thing – just see how many clues you can get. Over time your success rate will increase. Cryptic crosswords are not as hard as you might think. In fact, the first thing you should know is that in reality there is no such thing. This is because a ‘straight’ definition must always be provided at either the beginning or end of each clue. You can look for this and if you suss it you need never worry about the cryptic element. Approaching things that way is a good way to start.



The cryptic element of course provides the fun – and satisfaction – for both solver and setter. And in case you didn't know, just as importantly, in unpacking and solving cryptic clues you will release endorphins – those things produced in one's brain that help relieve pain, reduce stress and improve outlook. *What more encouragement do you need?*

The easiest types of clues to solve are those based on anagrams. There will be some indication that an answer is based on an anagram in the clue – e.g. look for words like 'upset', 'jumbled', 'mixed up' etc. And count the number of letters for the word/s you think form the anagram to see if it matches the length of the answer. Another easy type of clue is the straight "string" where the answer is literally hidden in plain sight in the clue. Again, this will always be indicated in some way in the clue, if it is the case.

What's that? Did you say prize crossword? Yes!

The sender of the first fully complete and correct solution opened will receive a copy of the 2023 RENEGADE Games Diplomacy. Similarly, the first person – again drawn at random - identifying the Great Power NOT represented as an answer in the crossword will receive a set of wooden gaming pieces they can use to represent armies and fleets. Ditto, the person sending in a cryptic clue judged to be the best for the word 'DIPLOMACY'.

Entries should be sent (separately for each prize) to nogametoosmall@gmail.com – with Subject headings as follows:

Diplomacy World – 'Never a CROSS Word' #1
 Diplomacy World – ' Never a CROSS Word' Missing Great Power
 Diplomacy World – 'Never a CROSS Word'
 DIPLOMACY

Please ensure Subject lines match the above exactly. The closing date for entries is midnight GMT on March 10th, 2025. Winners will be announced in the next edition of Diplomacy World.

CLUES

ACROSS:

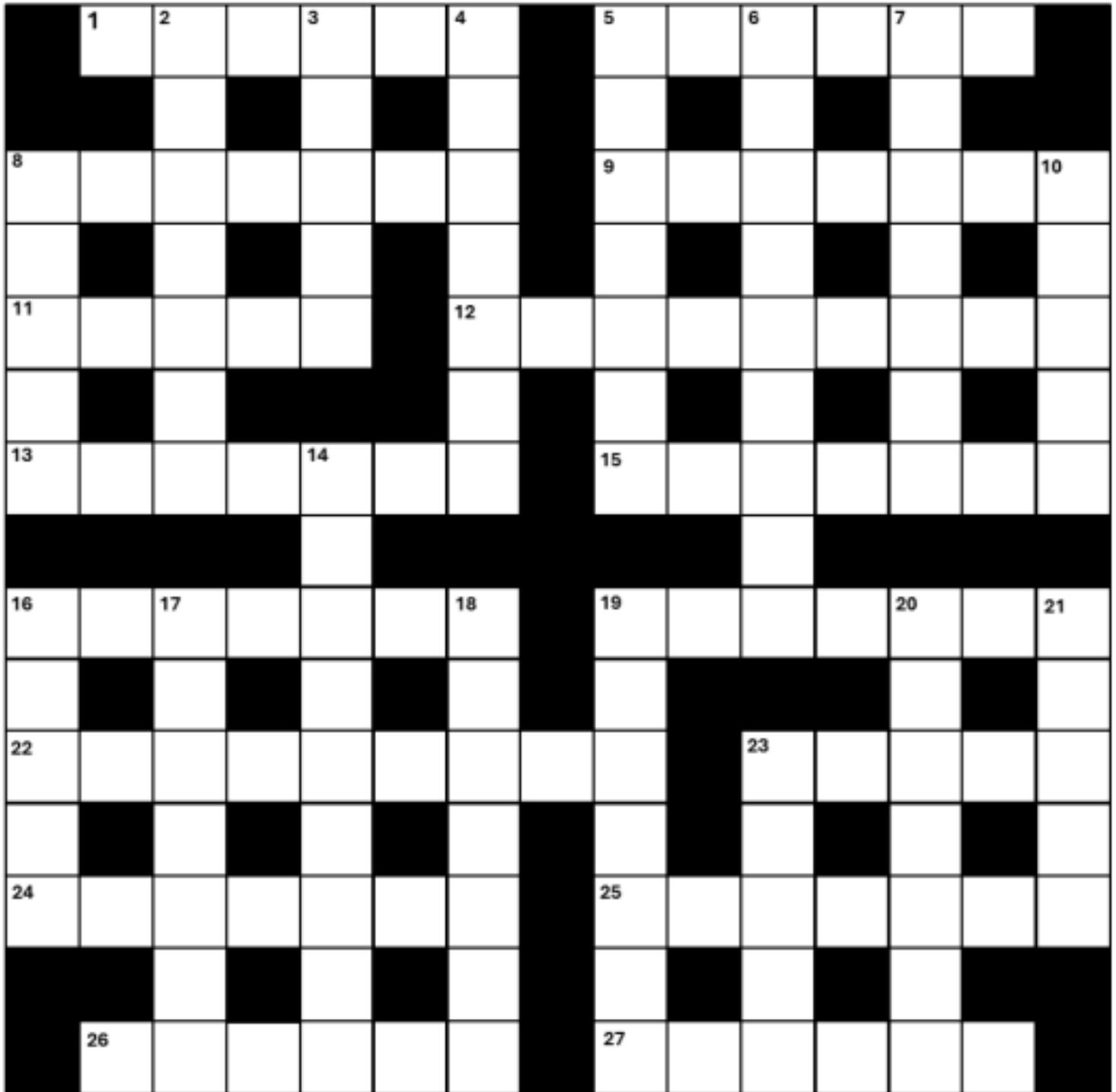
- 1 Temporary profession? (6)
- 5 Country initially formed then managed by church. (6)
- 8 Upset lads chase vehicle – destructive hooligans! (7)
- 9 Tottenham striker spends the day in Paris outside having a break. (7)
- 11 Key type of material from which tower may be said to be made. (5)
- 12 Consumed after beginning to create something. (9)
- 13 Country providing grey men a new identity. (7)
- 15 These were powerless in attacks on Belgium (1940) and Holland (1944). (7)
- 16 A star is annoyed and initially underperforming for this nation. (7)
- 19 Part of a kingdom points to organ linking blood, sweat and tears for example. (7)
- 22 People outside the norm to be found in AustroHungary? (9)
- 23 Steal something dropping Romeo and moving South from Ypres by the sound of it. (5)
- 24 Idiomatic to jumble room ahead of arrest almost. (7)
- 25 Gem of a description of Ireland? (7)
- 26 Illegal replication of a fleet on the high seas perhaps. (6)
- 27 Country bird. (6)

DOWN:

- 2 This may illustrate the ups & downs on expedition after opening of campaign. (7)
- 3 The place to find La Dolce Vita extremely lively. (5)
- 4 French province where small infantry unit hits snag. (7)
- 5 Game activity based partly on selfish ingratitude. (7)
- 6 Close to promotion before signing up. (9)
- 7 Campaign for holy way? (7)
- 8 Striving to win victor precedes symbol of oriental hero. (6)
- 10 Exigencies calling for dense treatment. (5)
- 14 Blag Romania inherently creates a desire to be like Greta Garbo in Grand Hotel. (9)
- 16 You might get put in this after being shot – for the record. (5)
- 17 Popular Goddess surrounded by System International and Zulu reordered strong movements. (5)
- 18 A likely triumphal structure inside New York creates uproar. (7)
- 19 This answer could be simplest! (7)
- 20 Activate a mine – ta, exploded! (6)
- 21 Fear awesome judge? (5)
- 23 Navigate turn. (5)



Never a **CROSS** word



Compiled by the one & only Archie Duke



Australian Open 2024

by Shane Armstrong

Hot on the heels of October's Asia-Pacific Diplomacy Championship down in Melbourne, Australia's Diplomacy obsessives only had to endure a three week wait for the Australian Diplomacy Championships, held in Canberra from 1-3 November. Players duked it out over three rounds on the Friday and Saturday to obtain a score high enough to feature on Sunday's top board.

Rather than running extra games as the top board was played, it was turned into a feature spectator event. Sunday's final game featured the use of specific 'negotiation zones', enabling spectators to listen in on negotiations, offering fascinating insights into the game as it unfolded, and also providing a priceless insight into how some of Australia's best do their thing.

Throughout the weekend, players were awarded 'Diplobucks' for good play, sporting behavior, and the most Based moves. One highlight in particular was Tianyu Sun (ACT) playing in Italy giving France an unwanted support with Army Piedmont, forcing France back into Marseilles from Gulf of Lyon, preventing a Fleet being built in Marseilles and also putting Italian Fleets into Gulf of Lyon, Western Mediterranean and North Africa in one turn. These Diplobucks were redeemable for game cards for the Sunday, which were also available for purchase. Cards were produced with every single 1st/2nd/3rd combination possible, and players exchanged Diplobucks or purchased cards at random, exchanging them with others during the game as fortunes ebbed and flowed as spectators vied for cash prizes. This innovation, ably implemented by Jason Gray (NSW) proved to be great fun. It also netted Jason the Best Shane Cubis award for introducing gambling to Diplomacy.

Tournament Director, Jamal Blakkarly, ably assisted by the selfless Hector Soukhavong ran another excellent tournament, with the spectator event top board warmly received by attendees, and an exciting new addition to the community.

ROUND 1



The calm before the storm on Friday night...

The first round was held on the Friday night, with speculation about travel and workday fatigue having an effect on player performance. While there were a few misorders, the top board on the Sunday was the one that saw the most over the weekend as pressure ratcheted up. Board 1 saw a strong I-T run by Shane Armstrong (ACT) and Tianyu Sun take out the top 2 spots on 9 and 8 SCs respectively, with Shane's Turkey holding out for the entire weekend to hand him Best Turkey when the prizes were handed out. Board 2 saw Peter McNamara (VIC) start incredibly strongly, topping the board on 12 SCs as Germany held off by a strong A-I alliance, played by Darryl Cox (VIC) as a 9 SC Austria-Hungary, and Josh "The Beast" Crowther (ACT) finishing on 8 as Italy. Board 3 saw Darcy Morris (ACT) as Italy, and Stuart Barton (ACT) as Russia share a 2-way board top on 8 dots each in a finish that did the board name 'Courtship Marriage' justice, and giving Darcy Best Italy. The fourth board of the round saw another strong Turkey, with Marcus Loane (VIC) topping on 10, followed by Andrew Goff (VIC) on 9 as England, Connor Bennetts (ACT) on 8 as France, and Alan Thompson (VIC) on 7 as AustriaHungary. Does the hobby have a name for 34 dots being divided 10, 9, 8, 7?



Peter McNamara secured his spot on the top board immediately on the Saturday, starting the morning with something better than a hearty breakfast - a 12 center Austria-Hungary (giving him best Austria-Hungary), 3 clear of second placed Brandan Austin (ACT), who finished on 9 dots as England. Interestingly, there were no eliminations in this game, with 3 players finishing on 1 center when the game was time-drawn at the end of 1907. Board 2 saw Andrew Goff as Russia, and Jude Connor (ACT) as England share a 10-dot board top (giving Goffy Best Russia) in a game that almost saw a Russian Army convoyed from Denmark to Spain! Board 3, 'Menagerie' saw a second shared board top, with Josh "The Beast" Crowther as France, and Jacob Trager Diplomacy World #168 - Winter 2024 - Page 41 (ACT) as England both finishing on 11 SCs and sharing the points, with Josh taking out Best France with his performance. 5 English armies in Germany and the Low Countries warmed the hearts of the "England only needs 3 Fleets" caucus.

ROUND 2



Best Russia is awarded to Andrew Goff

ROUND 3



Choose your fighter!

Round 3 was scheduled for a 1910 finish, which led to some epic games. Board 1 saw Stuart Barton as Turkey, Alex Batten (ACT) as England (winning him best England), and Jason Gray as Austria-Hungary share a three-way board top on 10 SCs each. Board 2 saw a four-way board top with Andrew Goff as Germany, Darcy Morris as France, Darryl Cox as England, and Zoe Cameron (VIC) as Austria-Hungary all finish on 8 SCs. Marcus Loane dominated Board 3 as Germany, with his 12 SC board top, 4 clear of Henri Gray (NSW) as England. The final board of the round saw Max Roe Banks (ACT) put in a barnstorming performance as Germany to take the board top on 13, which was enough to get him onto the top board on the Sunday. Second place was taken by Nancy Jin (ACT), who finished 5 SCs behind on 8 as Austria-Hungary.

The standings at the end of the regular round were as follows:

- First - Peter McNamara
- Second - Marcus Loane
- Third - Darcy Morris
- Fourth - Andrew Goff
- Fifth - Max Roe Banks
- Sixth - Jude Connor
- Seventh - Tianyu Sun

Top Board So, to Sunday and the top board 'Mate Against Mate' - named after a variant created by Queensland's own Gavin Atkinson. This game had a scheduled 1910 end. The Paris Method was deployed, with the order and subsequent selections as follows:

- First - Darcy Morris - France
- Second - Max Roe Banks - Russia
- Third - Peter McNamara - Austria-Hungary
- Fourth - Marcus Loane - England
- Fifth - Jude Connor - Germany
- Sixth - Andrew Goff - Italy
- Seventh - Tianyu Sun - Turkey



The game was broadcast on DBN, and was ably supported with sideline commentary by Zoe Cameron and Brandan Austin, so if you'd like to experience the entire game that way, please head to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wg7mPTNfH7A>. Otherwise, here's a brief write-up.

Spring 1901 saw only one bounce, in Galicia. Russia ended up in Black Sea, Fleet Ankara went to Constantinople, and France and England agreed to a DMZ in the Channel. Italy moved its Armies to Tyrolia and Apulia. Fall 1901 saw Russia take Sweden and Rumania, Turkey move into the Aegean and keep Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary get the usual 2 SCs and also bounce again in Galicia, France take all of Iberia, England get 1 build from Norway, and Germany get 3 builds. Germany used all three builds, putting down Fleet Kiel and 2 Armies, France built Fleet Marseilles, Russia built Armies in Moscow and Sevastopol, and the Turkish build of Fleet Smyrna proved to be pivotal in the East.

Spring 1902 saw a 2:2 bounce in Burgundy, Russia and Austria-Hungary work together to put Peter McNamara into Bulgaria, as Max Roe Banks also supported Army Sevastopol to Armenia, putting Tianyu Sun in Turkey under immediate pressure. The Fall turn saw Russia put Army Armenia into Ankara, the Italians end up in the Aegean with help from Austria Hungary, and bounce in Galicia for the fourth time. In the West, all French units were purposely ordered to Hold, and the Germans forced Burgundy 3:0.

Spring 1903 saw England force Denmark, and also saw Germany conduct a quick withdrawal from Burgundy and into Belgium to cover it from the English and to try and secure peace with France. In the East, Austria-Hungary supported themselves into Galicia, the Russians misordered to Silesia, and Turkey managed to hold both Constantinople and Smyrna to slow the decline. Fall, though, saw Constantinople fall, with Turkey left with an army in Smyrna. France opted to hold most of his units again, and Germany saw the loss of Denmark to the English.

Spring 1904 saw Turkey kicked out of Smyrna by the Italian Fleet in the Aegean, France continued to guard its borders warily, and Germany ably defended Heligoland Bight from the English, while a Russian misorder prevented Berlin from being taken. Berlin was successfully taken in the Fall, though Sweden was taken by the English to offset it. France eased Germany out of Belgium for a build, and also moved into North Africa and West Mediterranean to directly threaten Tunis, and the game farewelled Tianyu Sun as the first elimination.

Spring 1905 saw the French force Tunis, and the Italians move back to the West, with the Austro-Hungarian Fleet in Greece moving into the Ionian Sea to assist the Italians in defending the Mediterranean. Italy also took Munich with help from Russia. Plans for de-escalation in the occupied Turkish territories were carried out by both Andrew Goff as Italy and Max Roe Banks as Russia (convoying A Ank to Sev), but Peter McNamara walked into Ankara from Constantinople, triggering play around the 5 dots that adjoin the Black Sea for the majority of the rest of the game. In the West, there were plenty of bounces and failed attacks. Fall saw France pick up Tunis but lose valuable position in the Gulf of Lyon, and a holding pattern continue in Scandinavia.

Russia's disband was Fleet Baltic Sea, ending Max Roe Banks's role as a player able to influence Scandinavia. Spring 1906 saw the Italo-Austro-Hungarian alliance reclaim Tunis for the Italians, and England gain valuable position in the North, moving into Heligoland Bight and the Baltic Sea. In the East, Russia moved into Rumania strongly, but the Austro-Hungarians moved into Armenia putting more pressure on the Russian position in the South. In the Fall, Peter McNamara's Austria-Hungary regained Rumania, blowing up a Russian Army there, and also walking into Sevastopol.

Spring 1907 saw Italy and Austria-Hungary balancing/trading dots, Italy forcing the Western Mediterranean, and also assisting the final German unit into Burgundy, destined for Marseilles in the Fall. England took Kiel, and Austria-Hungary pressed his advantage against the Russians. This turn was pivotal - Italy had to go West to force France away, but then lost 2 SCs to Austria-Hungary and was forced to disband two while Austria-Hungary built two.

Spring 1908 saw Italy again headed East to protect his home SCs from an Austria-Hungary 6 dots larger. Marcus Loane as England continued to jockey for better position heading into the endgame, and Austria-Hungary and Russia continued to scrap around the Black Sea with Austria-Hungary taking Sevastopol while Russia convoyed from there to Ankara. France again entered the Mediterranean while England convoyed into Belgium, taking it from France, who picked up Munich from the Italians. The game also farewelled Jude Connor as Germany at this point.

Spring 1909 saw Marcus Loane as England make his move, taking St. Petersburg and Holland, and forcing France to again move a Fleet out of the med and to the Mid-Atlantic



Ocean. Fall saw Max Roe Banks as Russia finally eliminated, setting up a race in 1910. At this point, Peter McNamara as Austria-Hungary was 3 SCs clear of Marcus Loane's England, 13 SCs to 10, but Andrew Goff took both Vienna and Trieste by this point, though Peter was making strong gains in Moscow, Berlin, and Naples to more than offset these losses.

1910 saw the spectators chewing the board over working out whether Marcus could realistically catch Peter. By this point though, it looked fairly unlikely, and while Peter lost an SC and Marcus picked one up, there wasn't enough realistic play in the board for any other result.

Awards

- First - Peter McNamara (VIC) - Austria-Hungary - 12 SCs
- Second - Marcus Loane (VIC) - England - 11 SCs
- Third - Darcy Morris (ACT) - France - 7 SCs
- Fourth - Andrew Goff (VIC) - Italy - 4 SCs
- Fifth - Max Roe Banks (ACT) - Russia - Eliminated 1909
- Sixth - Jude Connor (ACT) - Germany - Eliminated 1908
- Seventh - Tianyu Sun (ACT) - Eliminated 1904 Diplomacy

The Jade Buddha Award - Shane Armstrong (ACT)
Best Shane Cubis - Jason Gray (NSW)

Best Countries

- Best Austria-Hungary - 12 SCs, R2 - Peter McNamara (VIC)
- Best England - 10 SCs, R3- Alex Batten (ACT)
- Best France - 11 SCs, R2 - Joshua "The Beast" Crowther (ACT)
- Best Germany - 12 SCs, R3 Marcus Loane (ACT)
- Best Italy - 8 SCs, R1 - Darcy Morris (ACT)
- Best Russia - 10 SCs, R2 - Andrew Goff (VIC)
- Best Turkey - 9 SCs, R1 - Shane Armstrong (ACT)

The tournament, the fifth of the season, rounded out the year in Australian Diplomacy, and also saw the awarding of the Bismark Cup for the first time since 2016. After Shane Armstrong and Zoe Cameron fell short of the final board, the final game turned the competition for the Bismark Cup into a straight shoot-out between Marcus Loane and Max Roe Banks, with Marcus's second place on the board securing him the title as Australia's most successful tournament player for 2024. Congratulations Marcus!

Bismark Cup Standings

- First - Marcus Loane
- Second - Max Roe Banks
- Third - Jamal Blakkarly
- Fourth - Peter McNamara
- Fifth - Shane Armstrong
- Sixth - Zoe Cameron
- Seventh - Andrew Goff



Peter McNamara crowned the winner of the 2024 Australian Open!



Marcus Loane takes out the 2024 Bismark Cup!





All in readiness for Sunday's top board showdown...



Andrew Goff (Italy), and Jude Connor (Germany) strategizing.



Marcus Loane (England), Jude Connor (Germany), and Darcy Morris (France) most definitely not a Western Triple...



Peter McNamara (Austria-Hungary), Tianyu Sun (Turkey), and Andrew Goff (Italy), wait for Darcy Morris (France) to get his adjustments down on paper as spectators look on.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

The State of Play in the UK

by Conrad Woodring

The UK is back!... well sort of. 2024 was undeniably a growth year for UK Diplomacy. 14 face-to-face games were played in the UK in 2024, up from only 6 in 2023. We saw the return of a UK National Diplomacy Championship take place in Warrington with a respectable two boards per round over three rounds. Most importantly we saw 53 different people play the game face to face in 2024, up from 30 in 2023. We saw club games in Brighton, Warrington and London. While these are not big numbers, these numbers are a lot bigger than 2023's and 2022's numbers (you can get more numbers by downloading the UK Diplomacy 2024 annual report here <https://diplomacy.co.uk/about>).

As we look ahead to 2025, all three clubs (Warrington, London and Colchester) have committed to organizing more club games than in 2024. Organizers of the Warrington event will host it again in 2024. We also welcome a second UK tournament to the calendar with the return of SpireCon, in February in Chesterfield. There is also talk of an in-person Tour of Britain in addition to the 2025 edition of the virtual Tour of Britain. 2024 and the plans for 2025 have happened independently of any kind of organized, centrally coordinated effort. It's been organic. That may be changing.

In June 2024, UK Diplomacy came into existence with the launch of:

- www.Diplomacy.co.uk (the website)
- www.patreon.com/ukdiplomacy (free newsletter)
- a broad social media presence (Facebook, Discord, Instagram, Reddit)
- a great logo!

Finally in December of 2024 UK Diplomacy released a plan for rebuilding the face-to-face hobby in the UK with the release of the UK Hobby Manifesto: Roadmap to a renewed F2F hobby in the UK. (the document can be found here <https://diplomacy.co.uk/about>). The Manifesto does three things:

- 1) it outlines a communication strategy to bring more people to the table so to speak;
- 2) it outlines a roadmap through 2029 with annual goals; and
- 3) it is a call to action for those inclined to help rebuild the Uk hobby.

So if you're reading this and you want to help, reach out and say so.



Our new Logo!

Primary KPIs

	YoY Variance	2024	2023
Boards Played	+8	14	6
Unique Players	+23	53	30
New Players	+40	40	n/a
Returning Players	+13	13	n/a
Non-Returning Players	-17	(17)	n/a

Secondary KPIs

	YoY Variance	2024	2023
Players >1 game	+8	21	13
Newsletter Posts	+18	18	n/a
Newsletter Subscribers	+26	26	n/a
UK Diplomacy website visits	n/a	n/a	n/a

Key Performance Indicators



2024 Events and Happenings

Below is a list of events and games that occurred in 2024. Worth noting that all these games and events were organized independently of any nationwide organization.

Happening	Notes
UK NDC, Warrington	This year UK player Bradley Grace organized the UK's first national diplomacy championship in several years. The three-day event in Warrington, UK saw 19 players play six boards over three days.
London Diplomacy Club (LDC)	Continues to organize regular games in central London. 2024 LDC hosted 32 players different players over six games.
Warrington Club	Warrington hosted its first club game in recent memory. Although two last minute cancellations meant the one board played was two players light, the game went well, and the organizer plans to host more games in the future.
Colchester Club	Due to external circumstances the Colchester Diplomacy Group were unable to arrange any face-to-face games in 2024.
Brighton Club	Brighton hosted its first club game in memory in December 2024. Six beginners and one veteran player reportedly had a great time. The organizer said that six of them would likely play again.
Virtual Tour of Britain	Organized by UK player, Garry Sturley. This year saw 24 registered players, although very few UK players. Players competed in 8 rounds, covering 9 games. Scores were the sum of a players best 4 games. This year's edition was won by UK player Bradley Grace.

2025 Look Ahead

Happening	Notes
Virtual Tour of Britain	Garry Sturley will be stepping down as organizer for the Virtual Tour of Britain. Bradley Grace will replace him.
F2F Tour of Britain	Virtual Tour of Britain organizer Garry Sturley is considering a face-to-face Tour of Britain. The idea is still taking shape. More details to come.
SpireCon	After a hiatus, Chris Woolgar will host SpireCon II in Chesterfield. The event will take place 7-9 February and includes mixed play on the standard diplomacy map.
Colchester Club	Colchester organizers Lee and Jon expect to restart quarterly face to face play in Colchester in 2025.
London Diplomacy Club (LDC)	London organizers Marvin Fried and Conrad Woodring expect to continue the club's growth trajectory through 2025. Their goal is to host at least eight games in 2025.
Warrington Club	Warrington organizer, Bradley Grace, expects to host additional club games in Warrington in 2025. Should Warrington host additional club games in 2024, it will mark the third active diplomacy club in the UK.
Brighton Club	Almost everyone that played in 2024 had fun. We therefore hope to see future face-to-face games taking place in Brighton.
UK Games Expo, Birmingham	May 30 to 1 June, Renegade Games will host a yet to be disclosed Diplomacy event at the UK Games Expo. More info to come in 2025.



Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



Rob Lacy - It was an exceptional honor to be able to go to the first Diplomacy Tournament at WSBG, a board game tournament that is held in Las Vegas. The game space allocated to us was very generous and worked out very well. Thomas as always put on a great event. All his events always run smoothly and are a model for me personally. The tournament had a good pace and stayed on time with impartial, objective rules answers and judgments when needed by players. I also appreciated the WSBC hosts and their enthusiasm for hosting the tournament and I saw their excitement after the event was concluded. Talking about and planning a diplomacy event may be one thing but seeing it going in in person is something that will get any convention organizer excited, especially one run as well as this one was.

The best part for me was not only seeing my old friends again but making new ones. I got to meet people that I had heard mentioned before or talked to online but meeting them in person, talking to them and playing with them was the highlight of the tournament for me. I also got to meet and play with people from across the country that I had not heard of before, and this was equally enjoyable. It is always good to meet like-minded people who understand the game and know how to play that are pleasant to play with, either as friend or foe on the game board.



Conrad Woodring - I am not sure if this publication's readers are football (or soccer for our American friends) followers, but something interesting has just happened in the world of football politics.

FIFA, an organization that is as synonymous with football as it is with corruption, gave only 25 days for bidders to prepare bids to host the 2034 world cup. Because of the rotation principle between regions, only Oceania and Asia could qualify to host in 2034. Within minutes Saudi Arabia lodged their bid, and not surprisingly, no one else lodged a competing bid because it takes months and months to prepare a bid. The icing on the cake for this bit of shenanigans was that with a bid evaluation score of 4.2 out of 5, Saudi Arabia received the highest ever bid score.

If FIFA wanted a fair process with competing bids they could have given bidders plenty of time to prepare bids and fast tracked the bid evaluation process which took the better part of a year. Instead, it looks like a setup to ensure no competing bids were received and by extension, no public scrutiny of the merits of competing bids could take place.

No why am I bringing this up in the pages of **Diplomacy World**? Why should readers here care? Because this story reads an awful lot like the hobby meeting at the 2024 World DipCon where Renegade Games' representative hijacked the World Dip Con voting process to ensure that no competing bids would be received.

The organizers of World DipCon 2024 suddenly announced at the hobby meeting that attendees would be considering bids for World DipCon 2026 as well as World DipCon 2027. As voting on World DipCon 3 years in advance is a clear violation of the charter, no one else was prepared for this news. There was no competing bid because everyone expected the bid for World DipCon 2027 to take place at World DipCon 2025 in San Francisco. The organizers at World DipCon 2024 and Renegade Games' and its representative colluded to make sure Renegade Games' would have no opposition to its proposal.

The key difference between what happened in football and what happened in Diplomacy is that FIFA sets the rules for football. What they did was clearly unfair, but they didn't break any hard and fast rules per se. The World DipCon charter clearly states that World DipCon will be awarded two years in advance. So, Renegade Games and its representative not only did something unfair, but they also broke the rules.

Unlike football, our hobby is lucky in that the hobby and its rules and going-ons are governed by the players, not by a central organization and not by the wealthy and powerful. I hope that that tradition can continue and that Renegade Games and Rogue Judges do not become the FIFA of Diplomacy.



Circle DC Diplomacy Tournament

Please join us in our nation's capital for Circle DC: A Conference on History, Education & Play. Registration for the three-day event is \$99.

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 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.

March 28th – March 30th, in Washington, DC

Teaching - 1pm-5pm Friday
Round One - 7pm-11pm Friday
Round Two - 10am-2pm Saturday
Round Three - 7pm-11pm Saturday
Era of Empire Demo - 10am-2pm Sunday

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

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



Diplomacy

THE ERA OF EMPIRE TOUR

JANUARY	GRIMSBY, ON	• NIAGARA BOARDGAMING WEEKEND
FEBRUARY	MINNEAPOLIS, MN	• CON OF THE NORTH
FEBRUARY	CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA	• PREZCON
FEBRUARY	HOUSTON, TX	• OWLCON
FEBRUARY	LOUISVILLE, KY	• GAMA EXPO
FEBRUARY	ROTHSCHILD, WI	• EVERCON
FEBRUARY	AURORA, CO	• GENGHIS CON
MARCH	LAS VEGAS, NEVADA	• DICE TOWER WEST
MARCH	ORLANDO, FL	• ESCAPE WINTER CON
MARCH	INDIANAPOLIS, IN	• WHO'S YER CON
MARCH	MILWAUKEE, WI	• ADEPTICON
MARCH	WASHINGTON, DC	• CIRCLE DC
APRIL	LEXINGTON, KY	• LEXICON
APRIL	GLEN ELLYN, IL	• CODCON
MAY	COLUMBUS, OH	• BUCKEYE GAME FEST
MAY	KANSAS CITY, MO	• MIDWEST GAME FEST
MAY	MILWAUKEE, WI	• GAMING HOOPLA
MAY	ST. LOUIS, MO	• GEEKWAY TO THE WEST
MAY	KNOXVILLE, TN	• ROCKY TOP GAME CON
MAY	KERNERSVILLE, NC	• RECON
MAY	DALLAS, TX	• BGG SPRING
MAY	BURLINGAME, CA	• KUBLACON
MAY	BIRMINGHAM, UK	• UK GAMES EXPO
JUNE	COLUMBUS, OH	• ORIGINS
JULY	ORLANDO, FL	• DICE TOWER EAST
JULY	CHARLESTON, WV	• CHARCON
JULY	SEVEN SPRINGS, PA	• WORLD BOARDGAMING CHAMPIONSHIPS
AUGUST	INDIANAPOLIS, IN	• US DIPLOMACY CHAMPIONSHIP AT GEN CON
AUGUST	SEATTLE, WA	• DRAGONFLIGHT
SEPTEMBER	LAS VEGAS, NEVADA	• NATIONAL DIPLOMACY MASTERS AT WSBG
OCTOBER	COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA	• NUKECON
OCTOBER	CINCINNATI, OH	• CINCITYCON
OCTOBER	BLOOMINGTON, IL	• FLATCON
OCTOBER	MADISON, WI	• GAMEHOLECON
NOVEMBER	TORONTO, ON	• TABS CON 66
NOVEMBER	DALLAS, TX	• BGG CON
DECEMBER	PHILADELPHIA, PA	• PAX UNPLUGGED

*EVENTS AND DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE



Diplomacy

THE ERA OF EMPIRE TOUR

A Trip to GenCon

By Rob Lacy

This summer I put on my traveling shoes and made my way to GenCon in Indianapolis. I thought I'd offer a little writeup of my activities sitting at the Diplomacy board while there.

THURSDAY

I always feel the first game is always the most important. As a player you get back into game playing mode and the tournament mindset. I drew Italy as the first power to play. I was actually happy to do so. I do not mind playing Italy at all and think it can be the most fun power to play. I also was getting it out of the way as a power draw early. I ended up scoring 9 with Italy which was not bad at all but at in a large tournament was not great either. The score could have been 10 if it wasn't for some minor issues but in the end considering the other Italy scores later in the tournament, it didn't matter.

Second board on Thursday afternoon I drew Austria. I ended up scoring 9 as well. I had a very good working relation with the Italian player. In a way it was a mirror image game of the first game I had played.

FRIDAY

Game three on Friday morning was the best game that I played in. I say this because I had a very good Italy player as my alliance partner and it allowed both of us to score big as a Russia/Italy alliance that remained totally committed and unbreakable the whole game. We both had the same plan and vision for the game and it played out the way we planned from the start. Neither of us ever even thought of a backstab on the other. Our movement across the board was like a machine. I was put in a position of having to choose between two very experienced players as a potential partner. I had to choose between one of the two and it was a difficult choice to make. In the end I threw my lot in with the one that presented a plan that seemed more 'fun'. I strongly feel that either of them could have worked out well as an alliance partner. In a tournament setting one sometimes has to put personal feelings and friendships aside for the best game performance. I would also say that this game ran the smoothest of the games I was in and there were also some very good and experienced players on this board that made negotiations and the overall game flow enjoyable. I would gladly play with these seven players again and hope to see them in the future.

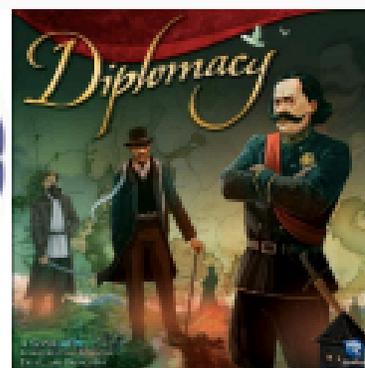
The last qualifier for the game I went in knowing that I had a top score for Russia and a backup second place Austria. But I put both of those aside as that can always change. Nothing is done and for certain in a large tournament with so many games going on at the same time. I did not let any of the past games go to my head but instead pushed them aside. Russia tried to rally the other players against me mid game but I think it was too late.

My final standings at the end of the four qualifying rounds were Top France with a score of 13, Top Russia with a score of 14, second place Austria with a score of 9. I could not complain at all with that performance after two long days and four games of Diplomacy.

FINAL BOARD

Making it to the final board is always my first and main goal. That in itself is a big achievement in a large tournament such as Gencon. I also want to give recognition to the Tournament Organizer, and to Phil B. for spending his own convention time to help Thomas with game setup and teardown. It takes a lot to run a tournament like this and Phil taking his own initiative and time to help with the logistics was not unnoticed by myself.





February 21-22, 2025

Diplomacy has a long history at the PrezCon gaming convention. Diplomacy was part of the first PrezCon in 1994 and the convention previously hosted DipCon in 2006. Last year we brought PrezCon back and we're happy to announce the PrezCon Diplomacy Tournament will return in 2025. The three-round event will be held on Friday night & Saturday (2/21-2/22) in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Details about PrezCon

"The PrezCon Annual Convention presented by Faceless Men Productions, LLC, is proud to have been hosting their Winter Board Gaming Convention since 1994. PrezCon has grown into a big event. It is now attended by hundreds of people from around the globe. We host over 100 Tournaments and dozens of demos during the convention! Our Open Gaming rooms entertain over 200 players utilizing our 500+ board game library. PrezCon Winter Nationals include some of the old favorites and many new tournaments as well."

Purchase Tickets here:

<https://www.prezcon.com/program>

Dates:

February 17th – 23rd, 2025. The Diplomacy tournament is February 21st – 22nd.

Diplomacy Tournament:

Contact - Thomas Haver (tjhaver@gmail.com)

Tournament Details - PrezCon is an annual gaming convention held at the Hilton Doubletree in Charlottesville, Virginia. The 19th edition of the Diplomacy tournament will be three rounds over two days. The best two rounds of three will count towards the tournament score. Best Country awards and tournament prizes will be provided by the organizer. Firm time limits for negotiation and order writing will be followed to ensure expedient play for competitors with other events on their schedule. The style of play is open to all skill-levels and encouraging for new players to gain experience. **The NEW Diplomacy game will also be on display to demo during the event – the first convention appearance!**

Intro/Demo: Friday 2/21 from 5pm to 7pm

Round One: Friday 2/21 from 7pm to 11pm

Round Two: Saturday 2/22 from 10am to 2pm

Round Three: Saturday 2/22 from 7pm to 11pm

Scoring System: [C-Diplo](#)

Rank: Best two out of three rounds

2024 Event Pictures Here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/5hZCmwARy7rBVuRD9>



Robert Lacy named “Diplomat of the Year”

by Thomas Haver



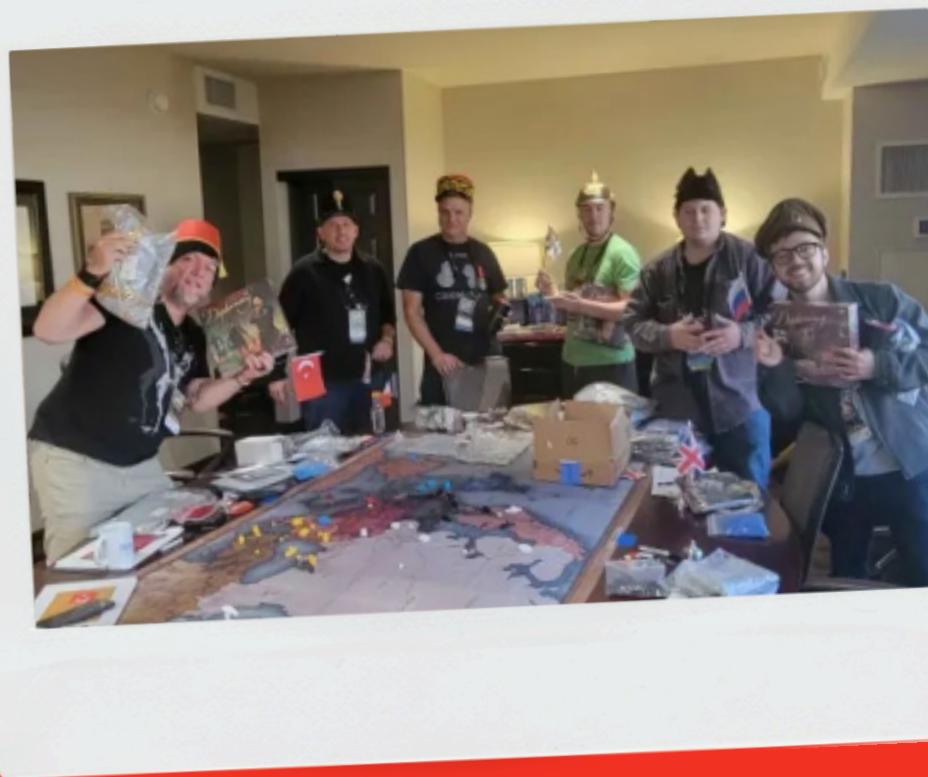
Congratulations to Robert Lacy on being named the 2024 “Diplomat of the Year”! This past year, Renegade Game Studios established a “Hall of Fame” for community members who have gone above and beyond to create a positive and inclusive environment and grow the Renegade community by upholding our number one value: gaming is for everyone. In the same tradition, we have selected a “Diplomat of the Year” to honor an individual who has gone to extraordinary lengths to grow the game of Diplomacy.

Robert Lacy hails from Dallas, Texas. He got into the competitive Diplomacy scene back in 1993 at Origins, held that year in Fort Worth, Texas. From his early days playing at OwlCon, Rob has been both a fan and historian of Diplomacy. He collects old editions of the game, Diplomacy books, memorabilia, and of course print copies of Diplomacy World. He shares this history in the many teaching events he runs across Texas.

Robert runs three Diplomacy convention events by himself. He travels between Dallas and Houston, teaching the game multiple times over the course of the convention and always with special setups. He provides the players with WW1-era officer hats, country flags, color-coded gear, and has special maps setup. All these elements combine for a unique experience to ensure a player’s first game is fun and memorable. Additionally, Robert teaches Diplomacy at local game stores around his hometown in Dallas and started up a local league for play.

Robert Lacy is a deserving awardee for “Diplomat of the Year”. As part of his award, he was provided with a giant plaque commemorating the honor as well as a Diplodocus award. The Diplodocus awards were originally conceived by Allan Calhmer as a means to honor the written contributions to Diplomacy Zines. Only a few remain in circulation and I’m sure Mr. Calhmer would be proud of the effort Robert has put into growing this great game he created. We congratulate Robert on the honor and look forward to playing with him on the board next year. If you want to get into contact with him, please reach out in the Diplomacy thread on Renegade Game Studios official Discord at <https://discord.gg/R6323FMp>.





DIPLOMAT OF THE YEAR:
ROBERT LACY