



The Australian Championship Issue...

Well the 2009 Australian Championship has been run and won – for a second consecutive year by Andrew Goff.

With 28 players across three days, thirteen hard fought games, eight new players. Very pleased with the results of a lot of effort on the organising and recruiting fronts.

This issue we'll look behind the scenes to meet the players, spot-light some of the games, gauge the tournament successes and listen to suggested improvements. Thanks to everyone who has contributed articles and photos.

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Australian Diplomacy Championship 2009

by Thorin Munro, TD

The WDC 2011 Challenge? The DAANZ Exec had decided to await the running of the Australian Championship to judge the potential for the ANZ hobby to host WDC 2011. The level of success of ADC09 would directly influence the thinking on this...

Key factors to be considered included how many players were attracted especially new players; what level of interest in WDC existed

across the hobby and whether the games and tournament atmosphere were themselves enjoyable.

Pre-tournament controversy: The continuous tournament format and scoring system (to a lesser degree) became a hot topic in the week leading up to ADC. Concerns raised included:

- *Players being allowed to play in simultaneous games. Where they may not be able to play quality diplomacy in both.*
- *Allowing players to drop their worst result if they play a fifth game. Does this encourage people to abandon a losing position and start a new game?*

A vigorous discussion then played out on daanz.dip around these potential issues. As the TD I took the opportunity to post the rationale behind the continuous format:

The continuous format aims to:

- *Cater for times when there isn't a multiple of seven players (most of the time) AND eliminates the need for dummy or GM positions*
- *Allow those who are eliminated early and want to play Diplomacy (and may have made a significant effort in travel, time, expense etc) to get into a new game*
- *Avoids the need to force time draws onto games, allowing them to be played to their natural conclusion (except for the end of the tournament, Mon 4pm)*

The concern about playing in more than one game simultaneously:

- *I completely agree playing more than one game reduces MY quality of play in both. I don't do it and don't encourage it. However some might be able to manage it. And frankly in many local tournaments I've played, there's been a need for either the*

GM or some others to play in multiple games. [Then you've got the problem of which game do they count as their score for the round. So is there just an incentive to focus on that one?]

The continuous format just encourages people to abandon a losing position and start a new game.

- *I'd argue that if you can only join a new game once you are eliminated (or the game ends) then that might be a stronger incentive to dump that poor position (or end the game).*

There is a concern that a player who devotes their time to one solid game each day - potentially fighting tooth and nail for survival as a minnow, is doing themselves a great disservice. They will only score from 3 games, and won't stand a chance of winning the tournament.

- *Ultimately that's a player's decision. Like some others I personally fight tooth and nail as a minnow. And I also know minnow results are not likely to win me a tournament. That's my choice.*

At ADC there's 19 hours of scheduled game time available over the three days. That's 38 game years. Take off a few hours for game starts, then there's still more than 30 game years available to each player to manage their game load. As an approximation, that equates to four games averaging to 1908 or 1909.

There was a concern that a player may play in a maximum of FIVE (5) games over the course of the tournament. With a player's best FOUR (4) results being counted.

- *This is primarily intended to allow some flex in the player pool to ensure we can get games started when there's not a perfect multiple of 7 players for 4 games over 3 three days.*
- *I learned from ADC last year that the 6th game was one too many (it got silly in those last two games), hence back to 5.*
- *And yes this does create a 'second chance' and an incentive for players to keep trying to get a better score, particularly for those who get eliminated in one game. I think this is a good incentive and can encourage players to come back on later days of the tournament. Particularly the new players.*

Despite the concerns, I'm yet to see successful 'gaming' of the continuous format. Looking at the recent continuous tournaments, the overall results look correct to me, where the stronger & more consistent Diplomacy players at the event, were more successful. This would seem the most important assessment criteria. And of course whether people had a good time and enjoyed their games. And then come back.

This by no means summarises the totality of the debate, nor all the conclusions drawn. Following the tournament articles is a feedback section from players who attended ADC. There are some great builds to the format.

Day 1 Summary – “HOT HOT HOT”

Sydney put on scorching, humid weather for the first day of the Championship. The community centre air-con was not able to combat the summer heat. So the games became not just a battle of diplomatic skills, but also a real test of stamina....

Opening up registration just on 9am, we quickly built up one, then two and then three boards ... and the players still kept rolling in. By 10am we had 26 signed in and were ready to go. There was a genuine feeling of 'now this is a real tournament'. Hungry Diplomats!

I gave a quick welcome including a thank you to Sean Colman and Seropeco for the incredible first prize (trip to Columbus Ohio for WDC). It's the third year his game company has sponsored the event in this magnitude. Our other sponsor is a boutique drinks company Springleaf Ice Tea, and as it turns out the fridge full got demolished over the heat-wave day!



(Photo: Shane starts the day with a cold beer as Thorin welcomes everyone and new comer Gavin wonders what he's got himself into!)

And so the gaming began. Three games got underway immediately. Two completely new players (Leena and Gavin) were paired with experienced players and tagged along with them to learn about the game. This proved to be a very successful way of easing first timers into the game.



(Photo: Setting up the first three games)

The fourth game, with the remainder of players, started at 12 noon with two early eliminations getting back onto the saddle. A fifth and sixth game were started later in the afternoon.

Ashmore

Stephen Muzzatti (E/15) and Geoff Kerr (F/11) stormed the board. Game drawn after 1908 when it was clear Muz was not able to solo and may well, if he pushed it, have begun a downward slide. Unfortunately Muz could only play on this day. Rob Schone (T/3) and Graham Allen (A/5) survived as little guys in the corner. Kim, Matthew and Gabriel were all squeezed off the map. Welcome to Matthew Woodburn, 'blooded' so to speak in his first tournament game. Matthew recently found Diplomacy online (dpjudge) and in real life is a dentist from Balmain.

Bribie

A short game to 1905 with Jake as Turkey the only fatality. Peter McNamara topped the board as Austria (8). The big surprise was Goffy being contained as England (6). Others on the board included a new and tenacious Lachlan Scarf (F/2) holed up in Iberia, Will Black (G/6), JC our unofficial photographer (I/6) and Steve Lytton (R/6). Apparently everyone was just warming up to the tournament ... and overheating by midday due to the weather!



(Photo: Game Bribie – Around the table facing Will, Goffy, Peter Mc, Chris Hennessy. In the background a blurred Graham and Steve checking the timer)

Cockatoo

Tristan Lee was on song, scoring a strong game (E/16) by end 1909. Properly stalemated by newcomer Garth Harkins (F/1), come-back kid Shane Cubis (I/6) and Irish Canberran Liam Cosgrove (T/11) also scoring well. This was Chris Hennessy's first tournament, in Sydney on holiday from Tasmania. His gaming group have been playing a monthly game of Diplomacy. After being chopped up as Germany by the marauding Tristan and Garth (before Garth became Tristan's next SC source), Chris became one of the new player coaches for Gavin Walters in game Dangar. Another tournament debutante, Damian Thornley, a Sydney local from Earlwood said he had a great time even if his booming Russia (7sc in 1902) fell off a cliff in 1905 (5 sc to 0... in one year). Hobby stalwart Tom Drake-Brockman as Austria suffered a piranha attack, out in 1904...



(Photo: Game Cockatoo – L to R – Shane Cubis, Liam Cosgrave, Garth Harkins, Tristan "C'mon give me your centres Shane" Lee)

Dangar

A short 'training' game which ended in 1904. Four new players were thrown in with sharks, Sean Colman (A/5), Thorin Munro (T/5) and Bill Brown (I/5). By and large the newbies held their own and even showed the experienced players a thing or two. Youngster Jake Cruwys sounded like he'd won the grand final when he topped the board (F/7). A great result for him after enduring a string of eliminations and tough games at SDC08 and his first game elimination in Bribie. Leena Hu survived (R/1) and learned some key things about being decisive. She came to me after the game for some feedback on her play. The first time I've seen any new player show this level of curiosity about their play. Gavin Walters led a solid Germany (5 sc). Tom Drake-Brockman made up for that first game elimination with a quick English 6. Balanced draw agreed with everyone still alive.



(Photo: Dangar in progress. Kim Colman, Jake Cruwys and Leena Hu)

Esk

!!!!SOLO!!!! Well something must have got Goffy, the defending champion, very motivated. He controlled the game from the outset as Germany and scored a HUGE 23sc....in 1908. What to say? My distant observation was that Goffy managed to eliminate his main rivals in the West, Peter McNamara's England and Lachlan Scarf in Russia, and dived across the stalemate line into Tyrolia and then into an undefended Venice. Then he just kept rolling. Will Black's Austria got to 10sc in 1905, but then it was all downhill, left holding 1sc at the finish. The lurking Turk Chris Hennessy picked up 7sc as a very minor consolation. Everyone around the board looked completely exhausted from the game and the heat. Except the cheeky, cheerful maestro, Mr Goff! Well played.



(Photo: Yes, that's 23 German centres...)

We stopped play around 6pm and all headed to the local hotel for well earned cold drinks, dinner and more board gaming... everyone hoping for a cool change in the weather.

DAY 1 Standings (Top 7)

- 1 Andrew Goff 44.00
- 2 Tristan Lee 20.00
- 3 Stephen Muzzatti 19.00
- 4 Geoff Kerr 14.00
- 5 Liam Cosgrove 14.00
- 6 Peter McNamara 13.50
- 7 Will Black 11.50

Day 2 Summary – A Cool Change.

Quote of the day came from by Lachlan Scarf, at the pub after the second day's play. "You guys are just like my uni mates, only older!" Scarfy, those twenty years fly by quickly :)

Thankfully a cool change did blow into Sydney overnight and day 2 turned on very pleasant playing conditions. Much of the sweating returning to where it's meant to be, over the game moves and fickle alliances!

Two additional players arrived Sean 'Crusher' Phelan and Chris Goff, taking the total attendance to 28 over the two days. Five games were completed and remained in progress. Not to mention Ticket to Ride Europe during the day and Attika and Power Grid down at the Summer Hill Hotel. That's where I left about a dozen people, playing games, drinking beer and attracting comments from curious patrons and staff. Maybe Scarfy was right on the money after all.

To the games...

Granite

Continued over night from day 1, when Thorin had crippled Geoff Kerr's Austria with a successful Spring 1901 A Ven – Tri. And a slow paced EFG moved eastward. Steve Lytton was heading for a big score with Turkey guiding 'puppets' in Italy (Thorin/6) and Russia (Sean Colman/2) against an increasingly dubious EFG. A big gamble by Italy and Germany (JC) to turn on their respective puppet masters stopped both Turkey (9sc) and Graham Allen (E/7) in their tracks and effectively forced them to agree the draw. Leena Hu played her best game to date as France/5. Phew...

Fraser

Classic long alliance game with Bill Brown (R/15) and Shane Cubis (A/13) taking over the world by 1910. Crusher (E/1) and Tom Drake-Brockman (F/5) played well to survive the onslaught...

Hindmarsh

Another great game played out to 1909. Will Black (F/13) and Geoff Kerr (G/7) had a long alliance until Will snaffled some of Geoff's cities. Andrew Goff (A/0) after soloing in his previous game, took a bullet here. Sean Colman played his favourite lurking Turkey (10sc) to finish strongly.

King

Smash and grab by 1905. Thorin (R/12) and Chris Goff (E/8) were playing a very strong alliance before Chris swung back and forced the draw onto an expansive Russian! In the East JC (T/1), Steve Lytton (A/5) and Leena Hu (I/3) cobbled together the other draw forcing coalition. Liam Cosgrave played a solid France (5).

Lizard

Mini-Diplomacy? A very short, 1903 6-way draw suited Goffy (R/6) perfectly to add a few points to his tournament lead. Clearly everyone else was also happy to take some points from the game which began as an EFG. Supply centres split 6/6/6/4/6/0....

DAY 2 Standings (Top 7)

- 1 Andrew Goff 54.25
- 2 Steve Lytton 39.00
- 3 Thorin Munro 33.00
- 4 JC Imbeault 30.00
- 5 Will Black 28.50
- 6 Bill Brown 27.00
- 7 Graham Allen 26.00

Day 3 Summary – Can he do it?

The big question on day 3 was whether anyone could catch last year's champion Goffy?

He held a solid lead with a solo already on the scoreboard. The rest of the field were largely left fighting for minor positions and best country awards...

Magnetic

Continued from the previous day. Bill Brown (F/16) and Thorin (G/16) forged a strong alliance and gradually pressed back the rest of the board. Germany had to scramble to handle the initial Italian (Liam) and Austrian (Tristan) foray into Tyrolia and Bohemia. France landed an army in Wales and conquered England (Leena) who defended very creatively and tenaciously. Meanwhile Russia (Crusher) quietly went about his business collecting 10sc by 1905 and Turkey (Shane) managed to hang on against an A-I attack long enough to break out when F-G turned toward the centre of the board. Unfortunately for Russia, an excess of units in Scandinavia, allowed the German to break into Warsaw and beyond (beware the convoy, Kiel to Livonia) and the mighty Tsar collapsed. Not helped by his erstwhile ally Turkey, stabbing for a couple of centres and the hopes of a balanced 3-way draw with F-G. Not to be as the pale blue and black juggernaut rolled on.

Norfolk

A very attractive alliance between Italy (Will/10), Austria (Liam/8) and Russia (Peter Mc/12) managed to navigate the bumps and jostles along their way and gained solid scores. On the other side France (Sean/4) relocated to English soil as Italy took over France itself... newcomer Matthew Woodburn (Germany) was keen enough to join day 3 play after having missed day 2. He found himself surrounded by very experienced players and it was tough going. Look forward to seeing Matthew get more experience on-line and take on the FTF game again soon.

Rottnest

This was the 5th game Goffy played and he was keen to secure anything other than an elimination to cement his lead. Drawing and playing a patient Italy he gained 8sc by game end. JC (R/1) had a strong alliance with Gabriel (T/6) before the wheels fell off with a couple of unfortunate orders and a misplaced fleet in St Petersburg. Steve Lytton (E/8) made a shaky start down to 3sc in 1902, fought on in alliance with F-G and persevered to his goal

supply centre goal. Leena (G/3) rounded off an incredible first tournament, going from zero experience to being capable of mixing it with very strong opposition. Overall, an excellent new student of the game.



(Photo: Rottnest in progress with kibitzers. L to R – Sean Colman, Thorin Munro, Leena Hu, Peter McNamara, Steve Lytton. Unknown back...)

So when the dust settled and the results were tallied, Andrew Goff had won the Australian Championship for the second consecutive year. An incredibly consistent performance and the first time anyone has won back to back Australian Championships. When taking into account his overall success in tournaments in 2008, Goffy is the form Australian player. He will now represent Australia at the World Diplomacy Championship in Columbus, Ohio later in the year, courtesy of generous sponsorship by Seropeco games.

In all there were 28 players and 13 games played.

- First Place: Andrew Goff**
- Second Place: Thorin Munro**
- Third Place: Bill Brown**



(Bill Brown, Andrew Goff, Thorin Munro and Sean Colman)

Best Novice Leena Hu (13th)



(Photo: Sean, Leena and Thorin)

- Best Austria Shane Cubis (13)
- Best England Tristan Lee (16)
- Best France Bill Brown (16)
- Best Germany Andrew Goff (Solo)
- Best Italy Will Black (10)
- Best Russia Bill Brown (15)
- Best Turkey Liam Cosgrave (11)



(Photo: Thorin, Shane, Bill, Goffy, Will, Liam, Sean)

Following the completion of the presentation ceremonies, there were clearly many people who had made new friends and thoroughly enjoyed themselves through the intensity of the tournament. I look forward to seeing everyone (and their Diplomacy playing friends) same time, same place in 2010. If not sooner at one of the 2009 ANZ tournaments...

Australian Diplomacy Championship 2009

- 1 Andrew Goff Vic 64.00
- 2 Thorin Munro NSW 52.00
- 3 Bill Brown Vic 46.00
- 4 Steve Lytton Vic 42.00
- 5 Will Black NZ 41.50
- 6 Peter McNamara WA 36.50
- 7 Graham Allen Vic 36.00
- 8 Liam Cosgrave ACT 34.25
- 9 Sean Colman NSW 33.00

=10 JC Imbeault NSW 30.00
 =10 Shane Cubis NSW 30.00
 12 Geoff Kerr NSW 24.50
 13 Leena Hu NSW 24.00
 14 Tristan Lee Vic 23.00
 15 Gabriel Singer NSW 21.25
 16 Stephen Muzzatti NSW 19.00
 17 Tom Drake-Brockman NSW 17.75
 18 Garth Harkins NSW 14.50
 19 Jake Cruyws NSW 12.75
 20 Chris Goff ACT 11.00
 21 Gavin Walters NSW 8.00
 22 Kim Colman NSW 6.50
 23 Lachlan Scarf NSW 6.25
 =24 Chris Hennessy Tas 6.00
 =24 Rob Schone NZ 6.00
 =24 Sean Phelan NSW 6.00
 27 Matthew Woodburn NSW 2.50
 28 Damian Thornley NSW 1.25

The full results are available at
www.daanz.org.au

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The very hungry Goffypillar

By Andrew Goff

I didn't expect that, and must admit I am embarrassed as I was by no means the best player at the ADC on the weekend.

I want to apologise to Bill Brown and Thorin Munro in particular, both of whom played some sublime Diplomacy, including a spectacular 16-16 alliance. Both of them deny any effort at all in making that happen but it was spectacular! Stephen Muzzatti and Tristan Lee's England's were both also exceptional games. There were a few great Austrian games, Will Black's sublime EG (and later his I in an AIR)... so many great games were played and I only had one of them.

I also think the one thing that dominated my thinking at the tournament (which I tried to say in the worst speech ever) was the quality of the new players, and of the "intermediate" players who any moment will crack the big time! Liam C., Kim Colman, JC (once he learns to stop mis-ordering!), Steve L, Leena H, Chris H and last but not least Graham Allen are all future tournament winners... get out there guys and play in tournaments wherever you can as you are ready to dominate any moment now!!! The new players at the tournament were also real quality and some of them will be great if they stick at it!

In the end, I got a 23 centre Germany. Which is wrong for so many reasons, I don't want to go into it here. What you all want to know is how, and really there were four points which made it happen:

- 1) Total Trust between France and Germany, and 100% working together from 1901 Spring. If Italy hadn't viciously attacked France, I would have gone 16/16 with Kim. Unfortunately...
- 2) Without any prompting, Italy went for France - this left me able to get everything in England and excused my third fleet build. The key move was that I was able to order Mun-Tyl-Ven in one step earning France's unending support and breaking any stalemate line.
- 3) Will's over-reaction. On the turn I went from 10-13 Will screamed as loud as he could about me getting an 18. He had just gone 7-10. We stayed the same that year. The newish Turk looked at that and said "everything Goffy has said was right" and Will is using it as an excuse to keep me down. From here it was TFG Vs AI when it should have been TFA Vs G.
- 4) Keeping focussed on only taking centres from "the bad guys" not taking centres for myself... the stab came at 17, I wouldn't have even stabbed then except the opportunity for 23 instead of 18 was too much to resist.

The problem with all that is it was SO SIMPLE. Compared to some of the games mentioned above it was easy. It was NOT the best game of the tournament, just the biggest. I even rate my 8 centre Italy as a stronger game. I got very very lucky this time, and while I will take it I can't say it was as dominant as some at the tournament were suggesting.

Thorin is a superb organiser and once again was fearless and honest in his tournament directorship but, even more impressively, his promotional work was outstanding. No more words required :) Sean Colman must also be acknowledged as a great asset to the Diplomacy Community. A pain in the arse over the board, but someone who has happily found a crucial role which suits his skills and resources and which does enormous good for the prestige and wellbeing of the Australian Diplomacy hobby! Sean baby we love you!!!

Finally, for those who don't know, you all get a break from me now as I go off to London for a while. The maestro will be back, gunning for Rob Stephenson in the Master points, before you know it... so make hay while the sun shines! Cheers, Andrew

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May contain traces of nuts!

By Will Black

Game Norfolk: Played on day three of ADC 2009, this was probably the most interesting game of my tournament.

Board

A Liam Cosgrave

E Jake Cruwys

F Sean Colman

G Matthew Woodburn

I Will Black

R Peter McNamara

T Kim Colman

I do like playing Italy! It has a sort of place on the board that gives it lots of options. Home Centres close to the major stalemate line and the Med.

My starting negotiations with Sean agreed a DMZ across Pie, GOL, Wes, Naf. That way we could concentrate on our own theatres. I was happy with that, gave me options and play on Austria and Turkey. Liam was a bit on edge, he had had a tough tournament and wanted a good working alliance, but not too much risk. Peter on my board for the 4th time was looking at the Turk and wanting to eliminate her. Turkey was happy but wanted a friend. I suggested that not building a fleet in 1901 would gain my friendship. I ran out of time to talk to Germany or England in great detail. Had a chance to welcome a new player Matthew Woodburn (Germany) back after he missed day two.

So I moved a standard Lepanto with Tyl. Germany was interested in what I was doing in Tyl. I suggested a move to Munich in order to attack France in 02. This is a great tactic as it lets Italy play three boats towards Frances one or two. Alas I was just playing as I really had no intention to go against France as we have some agreement already in place. Austria was nervous about Tyl, and I assured him that I was going to Munich and trying to get Germany to allow me to go there. Russia was looking good with a move North and South. There was a little tension between both AR as one said to me, if he moves to GAL it is war, then the other said the same thing. Interesting. Turkey was looking at building an Army. I could work with Turkey. That would give me play on Austria as Russia did not want to leave Turkey in the corner.

1902 saw me build an Army and Fleet, Turkey did build an Army. Decision time. Continue with Lepanto or side with Turkey. I did weigh it up, but I am bad. Continued with Lepanto. Austria was looking west as well and moving slowly. Really he was still sitting on the fence. Russia was pushing for Norway and I was looking at Ber & Smy. France was advancing on England.

I began intense Negotiations with both Russia and Austria. At this point I was still secretly in an FI alliance and working the other two.

The convoy straight into Smy worked, but I did not get Ber. Built another army and look to strike Austria.

First part of the plan works, Dislodge and destroy Austria's Fleet in AEG, but fail to support myself into Tri. So the Negotiations with Austria are more intense and the Russian is OK but not sure of what I am doing. France missed my attack on Austria, somehow. The Turk was sitting on the two centres and moved to a new game. England and Germany are on the ropes.

So I gained Gre, but not Tri or Bud in 03, I was in a small battle with Austria, but at this point I saw Russia siding with Austria so I decided a new plan would have to be worked out. Part one was the destruction of my army in Albania and the capture of Bulgaria. Then building two Fleets and going against France.

Did not get Con, but built one fleet and was off, trust of Austria was the plan and Russia was getting about jumpy with the exposed centre and Austria with lots of armies. I took Mar and was pushing at Spa and Por.

Austria at this point was looking at attacking Russia. I was not that keen so he was not going to do it. He did anyway but mis-ordered and a lot of bouncing units occurred. Russia and I noticed this and were a bit worried. I pulled one fleet from the line to head back to Austria. Just as well. Gre would have been unguarded if I had not covered it. Russia and I were trying to DMZ the Turkey area after elimination of Turkey.

France was getting out of my way to fight Russia in the North. I was then left with again attacking Austria or siding with Austria against Russia.

I finished in A Tyl, A Ven, F Gre, F Tys, F Nap, F CON, A Smy. Lots of Fleets to attack Austria coast but then would need to build Armies fast. Russia may have collapsed under the pressure of Austrian armies if I had sided with Austria but I may have been on the losing end.

So I proposed a draw, and it passed quickly.

Russia 12, Italy 10, Austria 8, France 4.

The interesting part of this game was the flow. It was moving all the time and it may look in the end to be an AIR alliance but it was not that way all the game.

I hope to see Liam, Peter and Sean at future tournaments. They made it an intense and very enjoyable game.

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Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda

By Bill Brown, a player of 185 tournament Diplomacy games and more than 20 years experience of Australian tournaments.

After so many years, the fact is I still enjoy tournament Diplomacy. And it is not just because I like the game and have done well at it. For me now, the game is all about the people. Having just attended the 2009 Australian Diplomacy Championships one of the things that stand out would be the people that I had a chance to meet.

I travelled up by car from Melbourne, breaking up the trip by making it to Canberra (8 hours) on the Friday to visit my sister and her family, and completing the journey with a relatively quick 3 hour ride on the Saturday morning to Sydney town. After a short stop for breakfast I arrived at the venue to find Thorin Munro the tournament director making his final opening statement to get the tournament underway. Suffering a bit of a headache and the effects of the drive I declined from participating in the first round of games starting. As with the continuous game system that was being used, "there will be another game along in an hour or two".

So settling back with a cool drink of water I observed the activities. There were quite a few new faces amongst the well-known's. Chris who belongs to a Warhammer gaming group in Tasmania and happened to hear about the tourney and dropped in; Gavin, a local, new to Diplomacy who spent the first round being "buddied" by following around an experienced player to get a hang of the game; and Gabriel, an expat South African who announced his intentions by writing on his name tag "Gabriel Von Bismarck".

For me the stand out players were three who I spent some time playing on the weekend, for that is just the way the games worked out.

You'd like to get a chance to play everyone, but you take the games when you can.

When I first cast my eye around the room I couldn't ignore the pretty girl in the low cut top (ok, call me old fashioned, but anyone out there who is shouting PC! PC! at this point is ignoring a couple of imperatives: biology and the hetero male, and besides, I am approaching a half century and claim the right to join the old fogey club that gets away with calling waitresses and shop assistants "love", as in "Thanks love"). **Leena Hu** would have to be the find of the tournament circuit for many years. For someone who hadn't played before she certainly picked up the finer points quickly. Leena was also "buddied" for the first round and was in my first game which got under way later in the morning. The experienced players on the board decided to take it mainly as a learning game for the newer players and allow them to try to get a chance to play a few turns without going too hard at them. We finished with a respectable short draw.

Leena played her full complement of 5 games over the weekend, and I later had a chance to play against her again on day two. The change in her game was remarkable. She was hungry to get involved and wanted to line up Thorin and attack him, and the pressure she put me under to tell the truth was awesome. I had to pull out my full range of skills to sell the lies I was telling her, and although she put up a stout defence of England she went down fighting to the end. She showed more than enough over the weekend for me to hope that she comes back for more, and I will definitely be looking to her as a possible ally if she does.

When you hear the name "**Crusher**" **Phelan** what springs to mind? The latest WWE sensation? An old time boxer? A character from a Dick Tracy comic? Well, with the real "Crusher" you get a bit of them all. "Crusher" was one of the players you'd class as intermediate. Has played some social games, knows the moves and has enough diploming skills, but hadn't experienced tournament play before. That was his only weakness. He was able to get into a pretty strong position in both games we played, but eventually he was overtaken by the tactical, diplomatic and strategic strengths of the more experienced players. I hope he has learnt a lot from this and will come back for more, for I think he could do well with a few more games under his belt.

Shane Cubis may be well known in the hobby (already a Veteran in Masterpoints ranking and two tournament wins under his belt – one more

than me!), but unfortunately his involvement began in 2000 just after I wound back my tournament commitments, so we had never played together before (although I had attended for one game at the 2002 WDC). If I was to caricature Shane it would be in the Christian Bale mould (but more American Psycho than Batman Begins). He has a certain glint in his eye that could spell trouble or mischief, but his grasp of the strategic possibilities in a game are impressive, and I don't think I saw him make a tactical error in the two games we played together.

Which leads me to the title of this little piece.

In two of my games my allies and I were able to take the games down to a two-power alliance dominated board (Shane 13 centres as Austria, me 15 as Russia; and Thorin and I were 16 apiece as Germany and France). I must say I enjoyed both alliances immensely.

People have asked me why didn't I go for an 18 centre win?

Coulda? In the first game my reading of the board was that while I could have stabbed for a couple of centres against Austria earlier, this would have left my centre vulnerable. I was spread from Ion in the south to England in the north and it wasn't until I was able to build some armies later on did I have some security in my homeland. Stabbing Austria may also have allowed France to make headway against me in the west. Shane negotiated the end by giving up a centre or two to me. **Could** I have won? Maybe, but I don't think so from my tactical reading of the game.

Woulda? In the second game Thorin is a wily player who didn't give me much room to manoeuvre and I didn't think I had many opportunities to stab him effectively right up to the end. If the game hadn't drawn when it did Thorin himself could have taken 17 and thrown the game into an even fight at the end, which would have probably centred around the North Sea. I couldn't have picked the outcome of this. By going for the win I may have finished with zip. **Would** I have won? No.

Shoulda? In both games **should** have I gone for the win? I had in mind that if had gone for a solo then this would have extended the length of the game and maybe prevented or certainly delayed me starting another one. As it was I was only able to play three out of the five possible games due to the length of my games. But I didn't know this at the time. A final game on the last day fell through due to lack of

numbers, then lack of time. I didn't want to start another game while I was already playing in one as I don't think it is fair on the other players or your own game, but that was my choice. A win wouldn't have won the tournament for me; Goffy already had his win and a couple of 6 centre games to back it up. And Shane was encouraging me to go for it in the second game, but as I pointed out to him, did he want me to go for it in the first? The answer was of course, no!

There you go. Others can call me a wimp for not going for it, but in many ways I was much more satisfied with having the chance to play long games with both Shane and Thorin and enjoy the alliances we formed. By doing this I think I gained a lot more.

So I am looking forward to making another trip to old Sydney town in the future. Thorin runs an enjoyable tournament with a friendly atmosphere. I don't remember one major bone of contention throughout the weekend (apart from the weather!). So thanks Thorin and keep up the great work.

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Leena's Reply to Bill

Thanks Bill, I'm absolutely chuffed, and don't quite know what to say. I have yet to work out what I have done to receive such praise, or what the finer points I have grasped are. My aim going into the tournament was to hopefully survive in at least one game. I was thrilled about achieving just that.

I was lucky enough to play two games with Bill and three with Thorin, and I watched your game play throughout, in particular the remarkable way you both built and maintained alliances through to the end. Every game I played (in fact, every turn) was such a huge learning experience for me, and I have so much more to learn.

I am grateful for the insight that this article gives me about the way Bill plays the game, and about Bill's mentality. Bill was perhaps the only person I played with during the tournament who I could not read at all. I was completely sold by all the lies Bill told me, in spite of my better judgement. And like everyone else, I had also wondered why Bill did not try to go for a solo. I'm sorry I missed the epic ending of the game where I was England. It certainly was not the result I had expected.

Thank you again Thorin for organising such an enjoyable event and for encouraging me to show up. In hindsight I sincerely cannot possibly think of a better way to have spent my long weekend. Thanks to everyone who helped show me how the game is played. Special thanks to Steve Lytton for allowing me to eavesdrop during his first game. I will most certainly be coming to another tournament and look forward to playing diplomacy again in the near future.

Regards, Leena. (3/2/09)

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A MEMORY OF A GAME

Or
**A Diplomacy Game from the Point of View
of a Roving Frenchman**

by Bill Brown

ADC: Sunday 25th – Monday 26th January 2009

Game Magnetic

The Players:

A Tristan Lee

E Leena Hu

F Bill Brown

G Thorin Munro

I Liam Cosgrave

R Sean Phelan

T Shane Cubis

CHAPTER ONE, in which France and Germany make a pact and England is isolated.

This was my third game for the tournament after playing Italy and Russia in my previous games and it was a relief to see the light blue in my fingers as they came out of the box. A while ago I had a run of getting AGI in a few tournaments and it was a good change to select Russia (my favourite country) and France (my best performed country). I was coming into this game after scoring 15 centres with my Russia, and I hoped to be able to fit in this game, and another one, before the end of the tournament on Monday.

It was with some trepidation that I saw that Thorin and Leena were my neighbours. Thorin and Leena had already played three games together so far and I was worried that they may have formed a good working relationship. So it was with some relief that Thorin opened his diplomacy with an offer of going for the “Sea

Lion” opening against England. This is where France goes to the Channel in Spring and supports Germany to the North Sea in the Fall of 1901. This then opens up England to convoy opportunities early and can complete an early conquest for France and Germany. Thorin felt that Leena had had enough exposure to Diplomacy to be challenged at this stage and he was interested in seeing how she would cope. I readily agreed.

After talking up a possible EFG with Leena the trap was set and I made it into the Channel in Spring 1901.

Other diplomacy was conducted in 1901 that would hopefully see Italy and France maintain a solid border. My mention of a possible French move to Burgundy in 1901 was met somewhat enthusiastically by the Italian who moved to Tyrolia in Spring, but by then my interest was in the Sea Lion and my armies had moved to Picardy and Spain instead.

So 1901 ended with Germany in the North Sea, Italy in Tyrolia and Russia with two builds.

CHAPTER TWO, in which England and Germany are pressured and Italy makes a tragic mistake.

At the start of 1902 it became obvious that Germany did not have the resources to continue with “Operation Sea Lion”, so we decided that I would continue against England alone. With a build for Spain still available for France the future was looking good.

Austria had moved to Bohemia to support his ally, and it was looking difficult for Turkey as the other three Eastern powers lined up against him. Russia also moved into the Scandinavian region to seal England’s fate.

Germany secured Holland to help shore up his position and in Fall 1902 Italy moved a fleet to the Tyrrhenian Sea to trigger an instant French reply of a build of a fleet in Marseilles and giving France an excuse to head into the Mediterranean. With Italy left buildless, with Turkey still at his back and his alliance with Austria stalled thanks to some useful diplomacy by Turkey, the Italian found himself with nowhere to run to.

I still find it hard to understand why Italy moved in my direction so early. He has nothing to back it up with and merely handed me an excuse to move his way. Otherwise I would have been happy to continue down the path I

was taking and have a go at dominating the West.

CHAPTER THREE, in which England's fate is sealed and Russia grows large, but not for long.

I was able to split my forces into two. Three units headed in the Mediterranean and northern Italy while three continued the campaign against England. Germany meanwhile has recovered enough to return to the North Sea and Turkey finally found some freedom as Italy had to turn to meet the French units heading his way.

Russia had grown to 10 centres with four units sitting in Scandinavia. He had made an arrangement with Turkey and they were now profiting from the pressure Austria and Italy were under.

Germany and I took Edinburgh and Liverpool from England and Germany made the play of the game by invading Russia with an army via the Baltic Sea to Livonia. Suddenly Russia was left vulnerable and lost Warsaw and Scandinavia to the German.

CHAPTER FOUR, in which Italy and Turkey try to strike a deal.

England was finally finished off when she guessed wrong (or I guessed right). It was a Spring turn and England had an army left in London. I had units in Yor (fleet) and Lpl (army). I couldn't support Lpl-Wal because Yor was a fleet. By guessing wrong, England could survive another season. I had the choice to move my unit forward to Wal (in which case it could be bounced by London), or hold in Lpl, move Yor-Lon and hope she moved Lon-Wal. I got lucky.

Meanwhile in the Med. Italy was trying to diplomate his way out of his fix. I agreed to take only Tunis and head east if he gave it up without a fight. After some tactical jousting and less than honest diploming from us both his defence collapsed anyway. So I made it through and was within reach of the Ionian.

Turkey then entered into negotiations with a plan that if he worked with me and loaded up my centre count by strategically giving centres up to allow me to grow bigger than Germany then the game could end 16-9-9. With 15 centres already within reach and Germany offering centres e.g. Edinburgh to "rationalise" our centre counts I was happy to go along with

the Turkish plan, but I never foresaw him ending up with more than just his homeland at the end. But I believe he made the right decision to allow him to stay on the board to the end.

CHAPTER FIVE, where the game comes to a conclusion.

Germany and I had agreed to push the game to the maximum limit of 16 all if at all possible. I was happy to go along with this as it may have put me in a position to make a grab for an 18 if the position presented itself.

Our agreement rapidly reached a conclusion as I picked up Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and Smyrna from Turkey to go to 16. Germany had picked up the rest, leaving Turkey with Con and Ank.

Tactically I was weak in the Balkans with only two armies to hold Ser and Bulgaria. Germany could have easily pushed for Serbia to go to 17 in which case I would depend on Turkey to stalemate the eastern side by guarding Arm and supporting Bul. Greece could be held with fleets and Italy was secure. This would have left the West as the battleground to stop Germany and/or recover my sixteenth centre. The battle, as I saw it, would have come down to the ownership of Belgium.

Anyway, what happened was that Thorin was mentioning going 17 all (a possibility, but very dangerous, you have to have the right board position and stalemate lines in place – as France and Germany we didn't have this). So on the very last turn Thorin pulled me aside and asked what would I do if he took Serbia, and I said I would fight it out. A draw was then agreed.

EPILOGUE

Upon reflection I felt that Thorin had had the better game. I was never under threat, and he had to deal with Russia, Austria and Italy all attacking him at one stage. He survived this and then repaid the favour to them all. My visit to the Med. was made easier by having better tactical position against Italy and Turkey allowing me to advance without a fight.

All in all everyone diplomated well and often. No-one gave up without a fight and the game was played in a good spirit.

[Thorin: Thanks Bill. On reflection, I rate this game as my best to date. I was constantly under pressure from multiple neighbours including my ally, managed to juggle all the balls and then crashed through with a gamblers set of moves, exactly when I needed to take the risk. I am content with the finish☺]

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ADC Feedback

Hi Thorin, My suggested improvements are a minimum turn limit for draws and no running point's total.

Cheers, Graham Allen

Minimum draw length (e.g. 1904 or 1905) is a good idea. The other implication is that no game can start with less time than would allow this many years to be played on the Monday when there's a forced time-draw. (i.e. 1904 length, means 2 hours play, means last game start by 2pm etc). At ADC there was one 1903 draw, one 1904 (which was more a 'training game' on day one) and three legitimate 1905 draws. Maybe a minimum of 1904 would work?

Running points tally.

Having the progressive scores available seems right to me. Have thought a LOT about this:

- Experienced players already know the tournament scores and standings and what they need to do (even when there's no official tally) and so not having the tally visible mostly disadvantages the newer players
- A tournament IS a series of connected games (however much idealists think every game 'should' be played completely in isolation). I think this is the nature of any competitive tournament. I can't think of any game / sport where people / teams don't know how they are going themselves and against their opposition! There's a good challenge.
- Playing to win a tournament means you need to understand the rules and system and have some kind of strategy about how you are going to operate within that system. Any system will have this aspect (plenty of good players deny they do this, hah!). Personally I think that's part of the challenge and fun:)

OK Thorin. I prefer the 1905 time draw minimum but I might be the only one that likes it that late. Running points total distracted me a

bit, but that's because I was being wimpy on the last board.... I must learn to go for it hard and not let up! That is the step I need to take to get to the next level. Cheers, Graham.

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Hi Thorin, Thanks again for organising a very enjoyable tournament. Just my few cents on possible things to think about for further tournaments:

a) private votes for draws: I think that this makes draw votes faster - someone just has to say they are calling for a draw vote, everyone gets two counters (one for a draw and one for continuing to play) and drops one of them into a bag - then the bag is opened and voila there is a clear vote. I found on the weekend that quite a few draw votes involved some bullying behaviour - and it wasn't obvious at times which way people were voting. I guess that this can be seen as a sort of diplomacising, but it also took a long time to sort out on occasions.

b) the possibility of having a top table. Even in small tournaments, competing to get on a top table and then having the top three places on this table be guaranteed to be the top three places in the tournament will mean that one will have to have a good game against good players to win. Other benefits include the fact that other players will take an interest in the game and weaker players will have the chance to play on what should be a weaker board if it runs at the same time as the top board, meaning newer players will be more likely to do well in a game. I have not been in a tournament with a top board in which there was a problem. In a continuous tournament there may be the issue of a game running over from the previous day - perhaps there could be a cut off point for starting games that would count for a place on the top board.

c) a very small matter: I think that it might be an idea to have people self-register for new games. If there was a place where people could write their name, number of games they have played and any other info you need, then I don't think that anyone would have any problems doing so - and it would take some pressure off the tournament organisers (who would still need to organise the game start). I found it a bit confusing at times when I didn't know who to go to see about being available to start a new game.

d) thanks again for a great tournament, I found the atmosphere very enjoyable, people were

playing in the right spirit and I would definitely be keen to attend future tournaments on the strength of this one.

All the best for now, Liam Cosgrave

Hey Liam,

Thanks for the encouragement and well thought through suggestions to improve the tourney. I'm definitely going to keep spamming you about upcoming events. Why don't you join the daanz-dip group ... it's a fun (most of the time) forum to discuss the hobby... <http://www.daanz.org.au/lists.htm>

Actually we're moving into the realm of 4+ boards which now allows us to start getting more fancy. 1-2 board tourneys make top board and the like a bit redundant. I'm loading this idea into my subconscious to try to figure out how we might work it with the continuous format. Suggestions welcome!

Draws? In the tourney rules I did specify secret ballot. Spoke with a few people and it appears the open draw negotiation is the usual practice here in Australia. And the high pressure that goes along with that negotiation. Not 100% sure either way. Secret might be an experiment for next event, to see how it goes in practice

Yep, as the crowds start to flock back to FTF Diplomacy tournaments, we need to get more sophisticated for game starts. Will Black is already talking about writing a computer program to handle it. With players registering that they are ready for a new game there. The bigger a tournament gets, the more likely I think we'll end up with a non-playing TD, which is probably still a luxury right now.

Really glad you had a good time and very glad you met Shane and he gave you a place to stay. See you next tournament. Cheers, Thorin

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DAANZ Exec Notice

"Dear All, The DAANZ Exec will support a bid for the World Dipcon to be held in Australia in 2011. The organizer for this event should it the bid be successful will be Thorin Munro assisted by Shane Cubis.

They will be supported by a team of other volunteers. More details will be announced by Thorin and Shane in due course.

Regards, Grant Steel / President DAANZ"

So following the success of the Australian Championship and the apparent momentum and interest in the game, we're going to give hosting WDC a shot. WDC has previously been held in Australia in 1992 and 2002. It's great to have Shane alongside. Organising a successful WDC won't be a solo effort, looking for helpful volunteers and all ideas welcome!

Watch this ezine and the daanz.dip discussion group for further news.

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Masterpoints Quiz Time

By Will Black

1. Who has scored the Most Supply Centres in a single year, and how many?
2. Who has two solos, with two countries averages with a difference of over 5 SC.
3. Who has the most consecutive 15+ SC scores.
4. Who has 3 solos but is not a Master or Champion?
5. Who has a Debut game of 17 as Russia?
6. Who has played 14 games but not Italy?
7. Who has played 12 games and has more eliminations than SC.

email answers to wjblack@gmail.com, first one with 7 correct wins a prize.

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DAANZ Calendar

To get started in the hobby, why not make the effort to participate in an upcoming event. You will meet a bunch of unique characters and enjoy the game played at its best, in person!

Auckland Championship

In conjunction with Auckland University's BATTLECRY.

February 21st and 22nd, 2009

Venue: ASB stadium in Kohimarama.

TD: Grant Steel

Queensland Diplomacy Championship 2009

Date: Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd of May

Venue: 40 Goodwin St, Moorooka, BRISBANE

Cost: \$10 per round 25 for 3 rounds, new players free

Format: 2 rounds Saturday time drawn, 1 round Sunday no time draw

Scoring System: Cricket

Trophies for 1st, 2nd 3rd, Best countries

TD / Contact: Kit Burke (kitstjohn@yahoo.com)

or Tony Collins (redmacropod@hotmail.com)

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DAANZ eZine Editor

Thorin Munro,
thorinmunro@hotmail.com

Sydney,
8th February 2009

