

B R O B D I N G N A G

 Brobdingnag #88

Rating List Issue

14 September 1968

Recently Completed Games.

Well, not so recently as all that. Two of them, the Armageddonia games were completed in June, and the conclusion of them was announced in July. However, due to the Canadian postal strike I didn't receive the announcement until the latter half of August, just too late for the last issue.

Game 1965W. Begun in Barad-dur, this game was transferred almost immediately to Orthanc on the splitting of the former journal. Later, it was transferred to sTab with the remainder of Orthanc's uncompleted games. The game was won by Don Miller, playing France. This is Don's third win, out of four games played; As will be seen elsewhere in this issue, this win puts Don at the top of the BROB Rating list.

With the completion of 1965W, only three 1965 games remain on the books: two are in Wild 'n Woolly, the other in Lonely Mountain.

Our congratulations to Don on his win. A supply centre chart and a summary of the game will be found in sTab 53.

Game 1966BG. This game was carried in Armageddonia, its game #2. Again a victory for France, played this time by Derek Nelson. As most will know Derek won the first postal Diplomacy game played, 1963A. The current game is his third win. Details will be found in the latest issue of Armageddonia.

Game 1966BK was also carried in Armageddonia. Unlike the two games mentioned above, both won by battle-scarred veterans, this game was a first win, being won by Paul Leitch, playing Russia. BROB wishes him many more victories.

Game 1968P. Again a first win and again by Russia, played by Ed Halle. Our best congratulations, Ed! As John Koning points out in mentioning the game in sTab, this win followed very closely on another first for Ed, the arrival of his first offspring, a son, Edward Lindsay. And he moved into a new house just about the same time. All the best, Ed, on all these new ventures.

As Big Brother does not publish a supply centre chart of its games one is given below:

	<u>1901</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>05</u>	<u>06</u>	<u>07</u>
England	4/3	4	2	1	1	1	OUT
France	3	4	4	5/4	2	2	1
Germany	4	5	7	7	6	2	OUT
Italy	4	6	9	9	9	14/12	15
Austria	4	4	OUT				
Russia	6	8	12	12	16/15	15	18
Turkey	4	3	OUT				

Magazine, Big Brother #'s 52-69, game #7 in that journal, Gamesmaster, Charles Reinsel. Players: England, Greg Warden, France, David Mayhall, in disorder after Fall 1904, Germany, Robert Johnson, Italy, Monte Zelazny, Austria, Thomas Griffin, Russia, Eduard Hille, Turkey, Karl Wittmann.

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Rating List.

It is now more than six months since there has been a complete edition of the BROB Rating List. The four games mentioned above require fairly numerous changes in the listing so a complete revision is given below.

Up to now the Brob Listing has included three 5-man games. At one time 5-man games were carried in the same Roster with 7-man games and it seemed better to include all in the Rating List. There were several awkward consequences, however. First, a slightly different selection of games was used in the personal listing, compared with what was used in the Country Listing, as the five man games had to be dropped from the latter. Secondly, since the highest possible score differs in the two types of games, there is an added complication in finding the percentage score of any player who has played in both types of games. John Koning has long urged that I drop the 5-man games, and I have decided to do so. With no regrets as far as 19650 and 1966AP are concerned, as they were begun at a time when there was no need of a 5-man game, other than the desire for a variant game. 1963A is a little different. It was the first game played. When organized it was either a matter of playing with 5 players or perhaps not playing at all. However, it seems better to adopt an all-or-nothing policy and 1963A is accordingly being deleted from this listing as well. My apologies, Derek, and to all others as well whose scores are hurt by the change in listing. Observant readers will note some marked changes in scores of a few players who haven't played for years; they are brought about by the removal of the 5-man games formerly considered.

Games included in this listing are 1963B, 1964A, B, D, 1965A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, L, M, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, 1966B, D, E, H, I, L, M, N, O, R, AA, AC, AG, AI, AK, AL, AM, AQ, AU, AV, BC, BG, BJ, BK, 1967H, AK, AU, 1968P, for a total of 49 games. stab 53 was the last zine received before compiling the listing so that the Current Game part of it should include nearly everything published up to the end of August, but nothing published in September.

Three figures are given for each player. First, the percentage score, that is, the player's score averaged over the number of completed games he has played, this being reduced to a percentage scale. Second, his total score on his games completed to date. Third, the figure obtained by adding to the second figure partial results from the players games in progress. By comparing the latter two figures it is possible to make some estimate of whether the player's mean score is likely to increase or diminish in the next half year or so. Names are ranked in order of standing in the percentage

Rating List. In the case of a tie in the percentage points, the difference between Current Game total score and Completed Game total score was used as a tie-breaker, the player showing greater increase in current games being ranked ahead of the player showing a smaller increase. Players rated on games in progress but not yet rated on any completed game, will find their names at the end of the listing, in order of Current Game Total score.

With two wins by each of France and Russia those two middle ranked powers have considerably narrowed the gap between them and the two front runners.

The Country List.

England	59.7%	+57
Turkey	58.5	+50
France	53.9	+23
Russia	52.4	+14
Italy	44.6	-32
Germany	41.8	-48
Austria	39.1	-64

Top Board

89.1	+20	+20	Donald Miller (W)
85.5	+26	+30	Monte Zelazny (W)
81.6	+13	+24	Harold Naus (W)
81.4	+23	+28	Charles Wells (W)
81.2	+10	+13	Harold Peck (W)
79.2	+12	+13	Bud Pendergrass (W)
79.2	+12	+7	Banks Mabane

Second Board

77.4	+17	+25	Charles Turner (W)
76.0	+22	+30	James Dygert (W)
75.0	+6	+19	Eugene Prosnitz (W)
75.0	+8	+12	Don Barrows (W)
75.0	+6	+9	Eduard Hille (W)
75.0	+6	+8	Paul Leithh (W)
75.0	+6	+6	John Beshara (W)

The Rest of Us

75.0	+6	+6	Bruce Pelz (W)
74.3	+10	+14	Jerry Pournelle (W)
74.2	+15	+16	Rod Walker
73.1	+25	+31	John Koning (W)
70.8	+5	+5	Rick Brooks
69.5	+10	+7	Larry Peery
69.4	+8	+14	Terry Kuch
68.8	+6	+7	Bob Lake
66.7	+4	+11	Jack Greene
66.7	+4	+6	Chris Wagner
66.7	+4	+5	Kenneth Levinson

66.7	+4	+4	Trevor Hearndon
66.7	+4	+4	Dian Pelz
66.7	+20	+19	John Smythe (W)
66.7	+4	+2	Richard Bryant
65.6	+15	+18	John McCallum (W)
64.5	+14	+4	Charles Reinsel (W)
62.5	+4	+1	Douglas Beyerlein
61.7	+6	+2	Jock Root
59.8	+13	+21	Derek Nelson (W)
59.8	+5	+9	Frank Clark
59.7	+6	+7	Ken Davidson
59.7	+6	+6	James MacKenzie (W)
58.3	+2	+3	Michael Childers
58.3	+2	+3	Wm. Lee Linden
58.3	+2	+2	David Mayhall
58.3	+3	0	Dave Francis
56.2	+2	+3	Mark Owings
56.2	+2	+2	Lon Atkins
56.2	+2	+2	Jim Sanders
54.2	+1	+1	Bill Christian
53.2	+2	+19	James Latimer (W)
52.4	+1	+8	Thomas Griffin (W)
51.4	+1	+12	Alan Huff (W)
50.0	0	+4	Richard Shagrin
50.0	0	0	Edwin Baker
50.0	0	0	Don Bergran
50.0	0	0	John Davey
50.0	0	0	Ben Hendin
50.0	0	0	Pat McDonnell
50.0	0	0	Jeff Steinberg
50.0	0	0	Earl Thompson
47.2	-4	-12	Dan Brannan
46.5	-3	+7	Edi Birsan
45.8	-1	+4	Robert Johnson
45.8	-1	-1	Wade Johnston
45.8	-1	-1	Charles Roland
45.8	-1	-1	Gail Schow
45.8	-1	-1	Terry Huston
45.2	-3	-11	Robert Ward
43.9	-14	-16	Conrad von Metzke (W)
43.8	-2	+12	Greg Long
43.8	-2	-2	Al Goggins

43.8 - 2 - 7	George Parks	15.6 -11 -11	Fred Lerner
41.7 - 2 - 1	James Munroe	+ 8	John Austin
41.7 - 2 - 2	Brenda Banks	+ 5	Chuck Carey
41.7 - 2 - 2	Gregory Molenaar	+ 4	Sid Cochran
41.7 - 2 - 2	Robert Whalen	+ 4	Michael Dobson
40.3 - 4 - 4	John Boardman	+ 4	Mike Miller
38.3 - 6 - 6	Jack Chalker	+ 4	Ben Turk
37.8 - 5 +13	David Lebling	+ 3	Doug Baker
37.8 - 5 -11	Ron Bounds	+ 3	Thomas Eller
37.5 - 4 - 4	Jack Harness	+ 3	Cole Harrison
37.5 - 3 - 9	Ron Parks	+ 3	George Heap
35.8 -17 -21	Roland Tzudiker	+ 3	Stephen Hueston
34.4 - 8 -11	Brian Bailey	+ 3	Mike Melby
33.3 - 4 + 3	John Hazor	+ 3	Cliff Ollila
33.3 - 4 - 4	Michael Aita	+ 3	Mehran Thomson
33.3 - 4 - 4	Robert Cline	+ 3	Buddy Tretick
33.3 - 4 - 4	Dennis Frisch	+ 2	Hugh Anderson
33.3 - 4 - 4	Alexis Gilliland	+ 2	Wm Connelly
33.3 - 4 - 4	Mark Johnson	+ 2	Dan Evans
33.3 - 4 - 4	Stuart Keshner	+ 2	Sherry Heap
33.3 - 4 - 4	Steve Powlesland	+ 2	Bob Kinney
33.3 - 4 - 8	Ken Fletcher	+ 2	Peter McDonald
33.3 - 4 -10	Alan Fisher	+ 2	Paul Mosslander
31.2 - 6 - 6	Art Canfil	+ 2	Steve Perrin
31.2 - 6 - 6	Scott Duncan	+ 2	Hank Reinhardt
31.2 - 6 - 6	Bill Schreffler	+ 2	Eutiquio Jose
31.2 - 6 -12	Stephen Barr		Revillagigedo
31.2 - 6 -12	Greg Warden	+ 2	Bob Weston
30.5 -10 -10	Anders Swenson	+ 1	John Alden
29.2 - 5 - 5	Tom Bulmer	+ 1	Beyerlein & Baker
29.2 - 5 - 5	Steven Patt	+ 1	Christina Brannan
29.2 - 5 - 5	Solebury School D.C.	+ 1	Wayne Gibbs
29.2 - 5 - 5	Jerry Tenney	+ 1	Michael Hakulin
29.2 - 5 - 9	Richard Uhr	+ 1	Linn Haramis
28.1 - 7 -12	Karl Wittmann	+ 1	Jim Houghton
26.6 -12 -12	Leonard Garland	+ 1	Richard Houston
25.7 -10 -14	Dick Schultz	+ 1	Jon Jacky
25.0 - 6 - 6	William Celestre	+ 1	Mark Lyon
25.0 - 6 - 6	Thomas Gorman	+ 1	Robert Maloney
25.0 - 6 - 6	Don Recklies	+ 1	Richard Metzger
25.0 - 6 - 6	John Sandoval	+ 1	Peter Nemeth
25.0 - 6 - 6	Stephen Willard	+ 1	Brad Payne
25.0 - 6 - 8	Clyde Johnson	+ 1	- Porter
25.0 - 6 -10	Bill Stewart	+ 1	Dick Reiter
25.0 - 6 -14	Sidney Get	+ 1	Peter Rosamalia
24.6 -13 -13	Jerald Jacks	+ 1	Tom Rosenbaum
24.2 -16 -35	Charles Alexander	+ 1	San Diego DC&CBW
24.0 -19 -29	Margaret Gemignani	+ 1	Mike Santos
21.9 - 9 - 9	Barry Gold	+ 1	Chuck Schloti
19.3 -19 -16	James Goldman	+ 1	Paul Scroggie
18.8 -10 -10	Paul Marley	+ 1	Geo. Shelz
18.8 -10 -10	Bernie Kling	+ 1	M. Skinner
18.8 -10 -10	Joel Sattel	+ 1	Bob Speed
16.0 -14 120	Phil Castora	+ 1	Charles Welsh

Allan B. Calhamer, the inventor of Diplomacy, has written a letter on Rating systems. A slightly abbreviated version of it appears below:

Appropos your remarks about a current game rating ((BROB 85)), it occurred that given the year and the number of supply centers controlled, one could forecast the number of centers to be controlled at the end of the game, based on actual experience, eventually developing either a formula or a simple table. The table might indicate, for example, that if you stand at 6 centers at the close of 1903, your expectation is around 9; with 6 centers after 1906, your expectation might be around 4. The player could then be rated as if he had scored his expectation in a completed game.

Averaging the two center-year diagrams from BROB #86 with three from sTab #45, we get a rudimentary diagram:

[illegible]

Thus countries that had 5 centers at the end of 1902 averaged 9.1 centers at the end of the game, and so forth. Obviously some intelligent smoothing and filling is called for. I do not think it is important that such a table be theoretically nice or based on complete statistics; only that it be plausible and established beforehand. The curious inversion whereby (5, 02) exceeds (6, 02) may possibly be intrinsic to the game. It might be better diplomatically to lay low at (5, 02) if you can't make (7, 02). Of course, if one had nothing else to do, one might put each country on a separate table. Forces would probably be slightly better indicators than centers.

The diagram is interesting apart from ratings. Around '09, when the games are finishing, one can expect the column to be somewhat similar to the extreme left hand column; i.e., if you've got (4, 09) you're a decent bet to finish with 4. At (4, 05), you're more likely to finish with 0. At (4, 01), again you're heading for 4, because you have a slightly below average game.

There are 35 samples in each column, except the late columns, from which some countries have dropped out. Thus the middle cells for '01, '02, '03, are the product of from 3 to 12 samples each. (6, 1) is just one sample, but (7, 02) is four samples, (6, 02) is ten; (5, 02) is eight.

I think the notion of a single perfect rating system is a will o' the wisp; I note that you have frequently published two numbers, your rating and the number of games won. The batting champion in baseball is chosen on the basis of two numbers. The champion has the highest ratio of hits to times at bat among players having at least 400 times at bat. Frequently a lot of raw statistics are published, as well as such compounds as runs batted in and slugging average. If you wanted to know who was fast on the base paths, you might calculate triples per double, but I have never heard of anyone doing it.

In Diplomacy, such a simple statistic as number of games rated for the individual player is not published, although the size of a statistical sample is generally considered important in attaching confidence to the result.

Without criticizing, then, anything that has already been done, I would like to suggest another rating system. After all, it's a poor sport that can't afford an active hot stove league.

My criterion for this system is to make the least change in the way the game is played. For this purpose I recommend one point for a win, divided equally among the survivors in case of a tie.

It has occurred to me that if these points were simply accumulated, without any averaging, they would be very similar to the master points awarded in contract bridge, consequently that name might be applied to them. The bridge system is not the best in the world (to the best of my knowledge, the system used by the U. S.

Chess Federation is the best) but it has a remarkable effect: all over the nation, silent roomfuls of people struggle nightly for the abstract and rather niggardly award of two master points per room.

((+It will be noted that Mr. Calhamer's suggestions are really two in number. First, there is the idea of a master point system. This would be cumulative, not averaged. A win would score a point, and a tie a half-point. Players in a multi-player draw would divide the point between them. Survival, in a game that went to a win, would receive no points. This would be the easiest of all possible rating systems to maintain.

Tabulated below are the games published to date. The question is often asked why certain games, e.g., 1965J, do not appear in the Rating Lists. In earlier years the Roster included games which would now be listed as variants. In the listing below we give all games begun up to the end of 1966, with a note of explanation of why they are not included in the Rating List if they are not so included. To save space, for 1967 and 1968 I have included only the four regular games actually completed. The Roster of standard games is, of course, maintained by John Koning and is updated regularly in sTab; the corresponding roster for variants is maintained by Don Miller, in Diplomania. We are here only really concerned with the former; but many of the games which would now be listed only on Miller's Roster were earlier included in the main roster, so I have decided it would be best to tabulate all such below:

<u>Game</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1963A			5-man variant
B	B. Pelz	Russia	
C			Over-the-board game
1964A	MacKenzie	Turkey	
B	Smythe	Austria	
C			Disallowed: player irregularity.
D	McCallum	Austria	
1965A	Wells	Turkey	
B	von Hetzke	Russia	
C			In progress, Wild 'n Wooly.
D	Pournelle	Italy	
E	Smythe	England	
F	Wells	Turkey	
G	Felson	England	
H	Smythe	Italy	
I	Smythe	Italy	
J			Team game variant
K			In progress, Wild 'n Wooly.
L	Tie		Clark, Germany; Koning, Russia
M	Wells	France	
N			Team game variant
O			5-man variant

<u>Game</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1965P			In progress, Lonely Mountain.
Q	TIE		Koning, Italy; Kuch, Turkey.
R	D. Miller	Russia	
S	D. Miller	Turkey	
T	TIE		Brooks, Russia; Lebane, Turkey.
V	DRAW		Clark, England; Kuch, Germany; Lebane, Italy; Huff, Turkey.
W	D. Miller	France	
1966A			In progress, Lonely Mountain
B	Pournelle	Turkey	
C			In progress, Wild 'n Wooly
D	Huff	England	
E	Latimer	Russia	
F			In progress, Diplophobia
G			Over-the-board game
H	Dygert	Russia	
I	TIE		Kaus, Germany; Davidson, Turkey
J			Anonymous player variant
K			In progress, Diplophobia
L	Koning	Germany	
M	Dygert	England	
N	Barrows	France	
O	DRAW		Walker, England; Turner, France; Peery, Turkey.
P			: : : Caramba, hoax.
Q			Over-the-board game
R	DRAW		Berman, France; Levinson, Russia; Wagner, Turkey
S			Anonymous team game
T			In progress Diplophobia
U			Anonymous team game variant
V			Anonymous player variant
W			Over-the-board game, partially.
X			In progress, Miskatonic University.
Y			In progress, Lonely Mountain.
Z			In progress, Wild 'n Wooly.
AA	TIE		Latimer, Germany; Walker, Austria.
AB			In progress, sTab.
AC	Peck	England	
AD			Team game.
AE			In progress, ADAG.
AF			Team game variant
AG	Pendergrass	Turkey	
AH			In progress, ADAG
AI	Beshara	Russia	
AJ			Cancelled
AK	Zelazny	Russia	
AL	DRAW		Turner, England; Walker, France; Barrows, Italy; Beyerlein, Russia; von Metzke, Turkey.

<u>Game</u>	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1966AM	Zelazny	Germany	
AM			Anonymous player variant
AO			In progress, Erehwon
AP			5-man variant
AQ	Reinsel	Russia	
AR			5-man variant
AS			In progress, Diplophobia
AT			In progress, Diplophobia
AU	Pendergrass	Germany	
AV	Wells	England	
AW			In limbo, Corsair
AX			Cancelled
AY			Duel variant
AZ			In progress, Diplophobia
BA			In limbo, Corsair
BB			In progress, ADAG
BC	Prosnitz	England	
BD			In progress, Diplophobia
BE			5-man variant
BF			Cancelled
BG	Nelson	France	
BH			Team game variant
BI			In progress, Erehwon
BJ	Dygert	France	
BK	Leitch	Russia	
BL			In progress, Kalmar
BM			In progress, Kalmar
BN			In progress, Kalmar
BO			In progress, Kalmar
1967H	Turner	Russia	
AK	Griffin	Russia	
AU	Naus	Turkey	
1968P	Halle	Russia	

The expression "In limbo" has been used to designate a game which seems to have disappeared from human ken without being either concluded or cancelled. If anyone can give me further information on the status of those games I would be glad to have it. And it will be apparent that the expression, "in progress" is sometimes used in a purely conventional sense.

Using the data from the listing above we obtain the Calhamer master point count for each player, given in the listing on the following page. The second and third numbers given for each player will be explained later.

Inadvertently omitted from the previous page:

1965U DRAW

Smythe, Turkey; McCallum, England;
Reinsel, France.

Calhamer master point listing.

4.333	30	27	John Smythe
4.0	28	25	Charles Wells
3.0	21	20	James Dygert
	21	22	Don Miller
2.0	14	13	John Koning
	14	20	Derek Nelson
	14	15	Bud Pendergrass
	14	13	Jerry Pournelle
	14	20	Monte Zelazny
1.5333	11	11	Charles Turner
1.50	10	5	James Latimer
	10	8	Harold Naus
1.333	9	11	John McCallum
	9	9	Charles Reinsel
1.25	9	8	Allan Huff
1.2	8	8	Dan Barrows
	8	3	Conrad von Metzke
1.0303	7	4	Rod Walker
1.0	7	7	John Beshara
	7	5	Tom Griffin
	7	8	James MacKenzie
	7	2	Harold Peck
	7	7	Bruce Felz
	7	6	Eugene Prosnitz
	7	7	Leitch
0.75	5	1	Frank Clark
	5	4	Terry Kuch
	5	6	Banks Nebane
0.5	4	2	Rick Brooks
	4	2	Ken Davidson
0.333	2	1	Don Berman
	2	1	Ken Levinson
	2	6	Larry Peery
	2	2	Chris Wagner
0.2	1	1	Doug Beyerlein.

In some respects this presents a highly attractive listing. It emphasizes the thing we should all be after, namely a win. In this listing, if a player cannot get a win, the only way for him to make any gains at all is to unite with the other trailing players against the front runner. A philosophy frequently urged by John Beshara and Eugene Prosnitz.

The existing Rating List most like this is the Big Brother one. It, like this listing, is cumulative and not an average. It gives the major award to the winner and the winner alone. So I thought it would be instructive to compare the two. Since the winner gets 7 points in the Big Brother system its scale is 7 times that of the Calhamer master point system. The second column in the listing is just the Calhamer point count, multiplied by 7 to bring it to the BB scale, and rounded to the nearest integer. The third column gives the Big Brother score for these players, as obtained from Big Brother #70. (I have added in the results for game 1965W, whose conclusion was announced too late to be included in that listing). It will be noticed how very closely the two columns are in agreement, for many players the two figures being identical. Some of the differences are more apparent than real. Derek Nelson, for example, gets a higher score in the BB listing largely because that listing includes 1963A, a 5-man game.

There are some differences of course. Calhamer's proposed master point listing is far more generous to a player in a split board tie. Such a player gets a half point in Calhamer's listing, i.e., three and a half points on the Big Brother scale, while he would

only get two points in Big Brother's listing. At the time when, at Conrad von Metzke's urging, Reinsel made the only change his system has had, namely to give 2 points rather than one for strong survival, I remember suggesting to him that there should be the further change of giving three points when the survival was very strong, which would have included the tie case.

The other difference is that in the BB system every player in a completed game is listed. He gets a point if he survives, no matter how weakly, and loses one if he is eliminated or if he resigns or leaves the game. It is the "embroidery" provided by these many small additions and subtractions which accounts for most of the differences of a few points found between column two and column three on the previous page.

So, in a sense, we have always had a master point system, as the Big Brother Rating List was the first to be proposed. Interestingly, at the time of its first appearance, Charles Wells compared it with the Contract Bridge master point system.

The second of Mr. Calhamer's proposals is for a Rating List which would take account of games in progress as well as completed games. For this purpose he uses the Prosnitz Rating system (i.e., for completed games the total count of supply centres held) and uses for the games in progress the prediction table given on page 5 of this issue.

The prediction table used was reduced on the basis of 5 completed games for which supply centre charts happened to be readily available. Of course, if one were to adopt this system one would use all data from all 49 games so far completed. It would be a good deal of work and, before doing it, I think it would be instructive to use this makeshift table as it is on one representative case. We will use the games of Monte Zelazny, just as we did in #86 for a similar purpose. Two of his games, then in progress, have now been finished and there has been a further season of play for one of his games but, in applying the table we will back-track to the position as it was when issue #86 was prepared. At that time Monte had finished 4 games with a total of 50 centres in them. There were in addition the following games then in progress:

1966BC	1909	6 centres	?	(let us say 6)
1967E	1907	11	8.0	
1967AA	1904	3	0.8	
1967BC	1904	7	4.0	
1968P	1906	12	17.5	(by interpolation)

where the first column gives the number of the game in progress, the second column gives the year reached, the third column gives the number of centres held and the last column gives the Rating to be used according to Calhamer's table. For game 1966BC the table gives no indication of the correct figure to use. I have adopted 6, arbitrarily, although it is probably a little on the generous

side. Putting these results in with those of his completed games we get for Monte's score under the Calhamer version of the Prosnitz system:

$$\frac{50.0 + 8.0 + 0.8 + 6.0 + 4.0 + 17.5}{9} = \frac{89.3}{9} = 9.61$$

Let us now turn back to BROB #86 and repeat the scores there quoted.

Monte Zelazny's scores, Prosnitz Rating system

12.50	Completed games only
9.73	Completed games, plus current games with unit weight
11.45	Completed games, plus current games with linear weights
12.44	Completed games, plus current games with quadratic weights
9.61	Completed games, plus current games on Calhamer prediction

Now there is no reason why a player should not have a lower score in a current game Rating List than in a completed game listing if he is doing badly in his games in progress. But Monte is not doing badly. 7 centres in 1904, 11 in 1907, etc., are excellent scores, quite as good as, or better than, he had at a comparable stage in the games which he later won. Inclusion of them should not, therefore, appreciably reduce his completed game score. But this proposed system is even worse in that respect, than just adding present holding of supply centres, and that system was universally rejected as being grossly unfair to the active player whose score it inevitably hurt in comparison with the non-active player of equal attainment.

Mr. Calhamer, may I return to answering you directly? As you can see, I think that there is a lot to be said for your proposed master point system. It is readily maintained, it gives the meat of the Reinsel system without the need of listing the name of every player who has ever played, and it is a little fairer to the player who gets a split board draw. Your proposal for a current Rating List is, I am afraid, not practical at all. Inclusion of data from all games would, of course, smooth out the bumps in your table and all that, but the thing is wrong in principle, so we can disregard such details. It is interesting for itself, but not satisfactory for a Rating List.

By the way, do you know of any other game, only ten years or so old, which has produced several dozen magazines, and whose devotees consider it worth while to devote pages - and hours - to the discussion of a Rating List of its players? It is indeed a remarkable game. Other games, of course, have had more man-years, or man-centuries, used in their play; but Diplomacy must be nearly unique, among recent games, in the amount of time and energy devoted to its discussion.

You have often mentioned how the invention of Diplomacy was triggered by the writings and lectures of Professor May. Have you ever thought of writing an article on the origin of some of its technical features? The multi-player feature, I suppose stems directly from the game's conceptual origin, but its handling is very

different from most games; mostly, multi-player games are simulated races, not simulated battles. Parchesi, perhaps, could be considered the basic type. Poker, of course, is a multi-player battle, but is devoid of the shifting alliance complication, making it a simpler game in concept if not in actual play. Most people would regard the simultaneous move as Diplomacy's most distinctive feature. The idea of "turns" is so ingrained in most board - card - games, that Diplomacy's very different procedure is striking. The army and fleet feature also: many war games do have different units, e.g., cavalry and infantry, with different powers, but the same combat area - in fact it is present in Chess. It is a neat reversal in Diplomacy to alter matters and have two types of unit, of equal power, but different arenas of action. (This occurs in Chess, where, for bishops, the arena is completely separated into white squares and black squares; I know of no other game where, as in Diplomacy, the playing spaces are partly, but not fully, overlapping.)

Any chance of an article sometime, giving the origin of these and other similar novel ideas incorporated in the game? I am sure it would find eager readers. -jamcc+))

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Chess Ratings.

Several times players have suggested that a Diplomacy Rating List could be made similar to the U. S. Chess Federation scheme, although none of them has ever worked out details of the modifications necessary to apply it to Diplomacy. Calhamer, in his letter above, calls it the best Rating system ever devised, but does not suggest that it is applicable to the Dippy game.

I am not familiar with the U. S. Chess Federation system itself. Some 20 years ago my dad played a lot of postal chess as carried in Chess Review, so that I have a fair idea of their system, and I have had some slight acquaintance with the system used by the Canadian Chess Association. They are sufficiently similar so that the presumption is that they stem from the same source, no doubt the U. S. Chess Federation system. The description below is a generalized one and the actual numbers are not necessarily correct for either of the two systems which I have seen, nor for the U.S.C.F. scheme itself, which I have not seen. The way it works:

1. A number, say 1000, is assigned as the score of every new player. It makes no real difference what this number is but it is convenient to have a number sufficiently large so that no score goes negative.

2. If two players whose previous scores are equal have a game, the winner will gain the amount assigned for a win, say 50 points, and the loser's score has the same amount deducted from it. (That is, the winner will have a score of 1050 and the loser a score of 950 after their game, if they both started with a score of 1000.) Again, the choice of this win score is not critical, but it should be a fairly

large number so that it can be adjusted by the handicap figure to be described next, and it should be considerably smaller than the zero of the system, indicated in paragraph 1, above .

3. The handicap figure. Usually two players entering a game will not have identical previous scores. A handicap will be used based on the difference between their scores. Let us suppose that we decide on a handicap of 1 point for every 10 point difference in previous scores. Then if a player with 900 and a player with 1000 points enter a game, and if the lower ranking player wins, then he will gain 60 points and his opponent will lose that amount. On the other hand if the higher ranked player wins he will gain only 40 points. If the game is a draw, the low ranked player moves up 10 points and the higher ranked moves down the same amount.

It is here, assigning the handicap points, that some nicety of judgment will be required in designing a satisfactory system for a particular type of game. If the handicapping is too light the system becomes, for all practical purposes, identical with a cumulative total score system, with all the disadvantages of such a system which we have been told about so often in Diplomacy Rating List discussions. Of two players of equal skill, both fairly successful, the one who is the more active will advance the more rapidly and the listing would become as much a measure of activity as of skill. On the other hand if the handicapping is too strong the system will become very stiff and only the strongest, or the weakest, players will move very far from their preliminary scores as assigned at the outset. A fair knowledge of the behaviour of the game, whether Chess, checkers, Diplomacy, or what not, and the likelihood of draws in it, and so on, would be required, I think, to decide on an appropriate handicapping to choose.

A necessary concomitant of this system is that only players of approximately equal skill are pitted against one another. In Chess it is customary to divide all players into four, or five, classes. Only those in the same class will enter the same game. The same thing could be achieved by saying that only those whose scores are within a certain number of points, say 250, of one another's would play against each other.

As can be seen, the system is much the same as the ladder tournament frequently used in individual sports, though it can cope with a far larger number of entries. As in it, a ranking is obtained of all players. In ladder tournaments challenges are usually only given, or accepted, if the two players are within two, or three, ranks of one another; the classification scheme is the equivalent of this adapted to much larger numbers of players. As in the ladder tournament the rating produced avoids all questions of amount of activity. Of course, if a player has hardly played at all his score will merely reflect the admission point of the system; but if he has been reasonably active he will be at a point approximately that appropriate to his success - two equally skilled players one of whom has played 10 games and the other 50 will have nearly equal scores.

Moreover, this system achieves this result without all the computational machinery required in all the averaging systems.

A really excellent system for its purpose. And, in my opinion, quite unsuited to postal Diplomacy as we know it today. Among the difficulties:

1. The time element. An example will show how seriously the time element would, in practice, affect such a scheme if it were used in postal Diplomacy. Charles Wells entered game 1965C in January 1965; it was, I believe, the second game he entered. He was eliminated in that game. I am not sure if that elimination occurred just before his win in 1965A, his first game, or just after it. Had the game been scored then Charles would have had a small handicap, whatever would be appropriate for one win, or no handicap if the win had not yet occurred. That is, he would have taken some loss for his elimination, but not a large one. But that game, 1965C, is still going on 3 years and 8 months after its beginning. Charles now has 4 wins to his credit, being one of the two players who have been so successful: he is at or near the top of all Rating Lists. Under any system based on the U.S.C.F. scheme his handicap would now be very large and the set-back he would suffer on the game being rated now would be enormous. Is this fair to him when the wins which gave him the large handicap had not been made when the elimination occurred? On the other hand, to use handicaps as they were established at games' beginnings would mean that no further games could be rated if they include players in any as yet unrated game. As game 1965C was the 8th 7-man game and all its players are quite active it would mean, in practice, that we would have now 7 rated games instead of a half-hundred.

2. As noted above, a necessary adjunct of the Chess system is that only players whose scores are reasonably close should be in the same game. With our small numbers, how could we possibly do this in Diplomacy? A gamesmaster announces a new game and invites applications. He gets perhaps 10 or 12 entries. Several applicants will have to be rejected to break up regional alliances; the editor will have to accept all, or nearly all, the rest - he just doesn't have the necessary freedom of choice to make up a game all of whose players are near the top, or near the bottom, or near the middle, of the listing. Even if we had a central registry for making up games - which heaven forbid - our numbers are so small that any attempt at classification of this sort would inevitably mean that every game with Koning in it would also have Zelazny, and reciprocally. Twenty years ago, in postal Chess, although they had some 15 times as many players as we do, there was already some evidence of this effect, the same players being matched against each other repeatedly.

3. Mobbing. If we attempted to have such a system without limiting games to players with similar scores the inevitable result would be ganging up of all the other players, or all who can get at him, against a high ranking player in a game. There will be a handicap bonus to be gained by defeating him and there will be an almost inevitable urge to gain it early and to squabble about its division afterward.

Rating Lists in general have sometimes been objected to on the grounds that they cause all players in a game to unite against Smythe. With present rating lists I am doubtful if this is true - I think that what occurs would occur anyhow, rating list or no rating list. But to award a special prize for the defeat of a high ranking player, as the U.S.C.F. scheme does, would ensure the mobbing of such a player in every game. How strong the tendency is, even without a special reward being given for its success, may be shown by the following incident. Some months ago I entered a new game and, as is my usual custom, I sent a circular letter to the other players, with personal post-scripts to those with whom I wanted to negotiate pacts of various sorts. In the game were several new comers to postal play, one of whom had recently written me asking about availability of games, the characteristics of different ~~lines~~ and so on. One of the other players in the game was Edi Birsan, now far more active than I am, so in my circular letter I suggested that any new-comer, wanting information on how various gamesmasters handled their games, should write Edi. The result was unforeseen: far from writing Edi for advice, two of the new players promptly formed an anti-Birsan pact. Now Edi has been active and moderately successful, being above the median point of all Rating Lists but not near the top of any of them. If this was the effect in such a case, what would have been the effect with a player near the top of the Listings, especially if extra points were given for defeating a high ranking player?

4. Finally, the multi-player feature of Diplomacy makes the Chess scheme difficult to apply in our case anyhow. What is the winner of a game pitted against, a sort of pooled mean of the scores of the other players, or what? The BROB system, which treats every game as a collection of two player battles, would be the easiest to adapt to this procedure, but there would be difficulties even with it.

In brief, the U.S.C.F. scheme is not usable in postal Diplomacy as currently organized. With ten times our present numbers it would become attractive; though, even then, considerable thought would be required to choose a suitable handicap and to ensure that games included players not widely different in score so that the "mobbing" feature would not appear.

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A possible change in BROB Rating List.

As most readers of this magazine know, the BROB Rating List is a ranking scheme. All players in a game are ranked, the winner first, the second survivor next, and so on through the survivors, then the last man eliminated, the second last, and so on. Scores are then given:

- +6 For winner
- +4 for second strongest survivor
- +2 for third survivor, or last eliminated
- 0
- 2
- 4
- 6 for first eliminated.

If there is a tie at any point, e.g., if there are two eliminations in the same "year" of play, they get a score intermediate in position. For instance, if there are two survivors, in addition to the winner, and if each of them have eight supply centres at the end of the game, they tie for second-third place, and they each get +3 instead of one getting +4 and the other +2. These scores are identical with what would be obtained by regarding each game as a tournament made up of 7 players, each of whom plays a match with each of the other 6 players, and if the winner of each sub-match gets +1 point, the loser -1, and 0 being awarded to both if there is a tie.

In thinking about this system recently I have been wondering if it might not be somewhat improved. Consider a game where there have been three players eliminated and where the survivors have 16, 7, 7, and 4 centres, respectively. There is now a net pot of 12 points contributed by those eliminated. How the pot will be divided among the survivors will depend on future developments. Note that it is now very much to the trailing player's advantage to unite with the other two and stop the front-runner, since a stalemate will give him a score of +3 points, whereas, if the front player dashes ahead for a win, this fourth player will net a score of zero. (In case of a drawn game, all surviving players get an equal score.) For the players with 7 centres the correct line of play is by no means so clear cut. One or other, or both, of them may decide that the front runner cannot be stopped. In such a case his obvious line of play is to assure himself of the +4 points given to the runner up, either by attacking the other middle power, or by theft of property of the fourth player.

Such action would be counter to the philosophy of play so frequently and eloquently urged by John Beshara and Gene Prosnitz, and it is also counter to the balance-of-power concept which is so fundamental to the game. In a game which ends 18-16, with no other survivors, as 1964A did, it is not unreasonable for the runner-up to get two thirds as many points as the winner, it was obviously a close battle and one lucky guess, more-or-less, might have resulted in a reverse outcome. But in the far more common ending of 19-6-5-4 it seems odd that a player with one third the strength of the winner should get two thirds his reward, and double the reward of the player who trails him by only one unit.

A possible way to avoid this anomaly would be to rank all surviving players, other than the winner, equally. In such a scheme the winner would get, as now, +6 points. Those eliminated would be treated exactly as now. But other survivors would lose to the winner, gain a point from each player eliminated, but have no ranking among themselves. In a sense this is the procedure adopted now when there is a stalemated game, and its extension to all games might be a good idea. It will make the difference between winner and other survivors greater than at present; it would urge those playing for Rating Score, to stop the front runner and prevent a win, if possible.

Opinions of readers on this matter are requested.

Diplomacy Quiz.

There are no prizes for the following quiz. For quizzes with prizes see Costaguana or Erelwon. Anyway, listed below is a long series of addresses. What have these addresses in common?

Apt. 5, 106 South Edgemont, Los Angeles 4; Radio Station KFDR, Grand Coulee, Washington; 330 South Berendo, Los Angeles; 224 South Lincoln, Spokane, Washington; Ralston, Alberta, Canada; General Delivery, Berkeley, Calif.; 2417 Webster St., Berkeley, Calif.; 3044A Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, Calif.; Castle Towers Apartments, 411 Fairmont Ave., Oakland, Calif.; Apt. 2, 2324 North West Johnson St., Portland, Oregon; 2542 North West Vaughan, Portland, Oregon; 6720 Day St., Tujunga, Calif.; Apt. 1, 951 North Oxford, Los Angeles, Calif.,

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ACELDAMA.

I am taking over the running of the two games, 1967AT and 1967AY, currently carried in Armageddonia. The games will be carried in a zine to be called Acel dama. It will be a strictly utility zine carrying the moves and propaganda for its games, but nothing else. Players in the two games will, of course, receive their issues by Air Mail on publication. Exchange and subscription copies will be sometimes sent several issues together for more economic mailing. The subscription price is \$1 to the end of the current two games, and is not recommended to anyone not particularly interested in the two games concerned. Players in its two games will receive concurrent issues of Brobdingnag.

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Diplomacy is a game invented by Allan Calhamer and commercially produced and sold by Games Research, Inc., 48 Wareham St., Boston, Mass., 02118. The game is probably better adapted to play by mail, or by telephone, than to ordinary over-the-board play and it is widely played in that manner.

Brobdingnag is one of some two dozen journals devoted to the play of Diplomacy by mail. It is edited and published by John McCallum, Ralston, Alberta, Canada, and sells for ten cents a copy. Copies of most back issues are available at the same price, which also applies to subscriptions for future issues.

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There are openings in the following magazines: Big Brother, Ragnarok, Jutland Jollies (shortly), The Diplomat, Glockorla, Diplophobia (for replacements), ADAG, Costaguana, Xenogogio. And openings for variants are very plentiful. Don't just stand there, enter a game.