

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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DipCon XII/Origins '79

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Well! DipCon XII and Origins 79 have made for one of the most exhilarating weekends I have spent in some time. I am already looking forward to next year's. It started for me early Friday morning, getting to work early so that thru the miracle of modern Flexitime, by 3:30 PM we we're off and running. I went up and returned with, and stayed in a noisy, unairconditioned dorm with John Kador, a friend and fellow postal player. John's companionship was certainly one of the most pleasant aspects to the weekend, at times offering a different perspective than my own.

The Friday nite seminars were somewhat of a disappointment, due to the low turnout. The idea had been conceived after the flyer for Origins was sent out, so we missed out there. Then, in the printed program, it was inexplicable labeled as a DIPCON meeting, totally misdescriptive, plus they gave the wrong time. I gave a talk on French openings, and then Rod Walker gave a talk on Dippy Psychology. He pointed out, when discussing such such matters as reputation, that people remember what they want to remember, which can be fairly selective. At the end, various people gave little talks on some misc aspects of the hobby, seeking questions from the floor. I think that if more people had known about it, it could have been a big success, and I trust next year will be better organized. The only reason that this happened at all was that I wanted to do it, because I enjoyed it at Origins 76.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the weekend was meeting for the first time people who I've been writing to, or know of, for some years. The one regret that I have about the weekend is that I spent less time in this activity than I wanted to. Between all the time that the tourney took, and some variant games going on, and just not being able to find people, I did less of this than I would have liked. However, there was a bit of a negative side to this "personalities" business. It seems that some people are still interested in nuturing old resentments and grievances long after the events and issues have any more meaning. Thus in one incident, Rod Walker came up to John Boardman, gave him a big cheerful hello and shook his hand. Boardman stared at him, and then immediately strode out of the room. Or there was Roberts Sacks, fulminating about something Lew Pulsipher (who wasn't even there) did years ago, "destroying" the variant hobby or some such. There is a time for letting go of such things, but I guess the principals in these matters see things differently.

Saturday morning began the tournament. I had no idea that this would be so timeconsuming. I want to correct a misimpression that some people seem to have gotten. I was NOT running the tournament. Except two areas where John had delegated duties, all decisions were in the last analysis his, or were set by the convention rules. I was delegated the task of explaining the scoring system, and answering questions about it. This matter is discussed elsewhere in detail in this issue. The other area of delegation was that Rod was the final authority in all matters of adjudications disputes, badly written orders, etc. Rod and I discussed how to rule in

various cases (like mislabeling an army for a fleet) and I found myself in agreement with him in all such matters, tho we do differ when it comes to postal ruling.

But besides that it was John's show. It may have seemed like I was deciding some things when people asked a question, and I gave them an immediate answer. But these were matters we had already discussed and decided. And I was often given the task of announcing things. Finally, as John is a little hard of hearing, I would sometimes act as a go-between when the room got extremely noisy. I'd like to give a few examples, so you have some idea of what sorts of problems arise in running a tournament, and so perhaps those running next year can find some different mistakes to make rather than just unimaginately repeat the same ones we did.

1. Giving out various standings as the tournament proceeded. We had generally decided not to do this. At the beginning of the third round, someone asked if we'd post the best-country-so-far scores (just the number of centers, no names). We said no. Lee Kendter, Jr began immediately objecting (I don't know what it was, but it seemed like everytime I opened my mouth that weekend within earshot of Lee Jr he took vigorous exception to what I said. Last year he informed me that my zine was "pointless" I can't quite figure him) to this ruling. So John and I discussed it a bit, getting Lee Jr's and Karl Schuetz's opinions, and decided to list the info after all. So the names of the countries were put up, and we began rummaging thru the score sheets for the information. At this point, another crowd, led by Lee Kendter, Sr began protesting that this was improper, etc, etc, etc. I had no idea that so much diplomacy would be targeted at the people running the tournament! At this point, John stood up and announced that no information would be distributed whatsoever, and that settled that.

2. The length of the rounds. A very common complaint was that the games were too short, and that people had to be rushed. The games had to end at 1907, and in a few cases at 1906 when people fell behind and could not catch up. I had in fact taken this question up with Lee Kendter, Sr well before the tournament: Why start so late (10:00 AM)? He told me that starting any earlier would be a hardship for the Phila players who would not be staying on campus. As it was, we extended the closing time from 2:00 to 2:30. But an extra half hour would have been nice, giving an extra game year, and the chance to use a 13 center victory criterion.

3. Correcting errors. An Italian player protested that, while the official sheet showed him with 10, he really had 11 centers. This error cost him Best Italy. He said that he could produce witnesses from his games as to which centers he actually had. John decided that as the names had already been turned in to the Origins people, it was just too late.

4. Delays in getting started. Alas, most people did not show up until about 10 minutes before the start of the first round, tho coming earlier for most of them would not be a problem. This caused backups at the start. Before the first game, we separated players according to their zip codes, as best we could. In the second, they were separated to make sure that no one played in the second round with the same person that they played within the first round. Plus we had to make sure that each board had a player with a set. Complicating matters was that we wanted to ensure that those second round players didn't get the same country that they played in the first round. To prevent people from lying about what country we had, we supervised this selection process, which chewed up some time.

One complaint that I had was the system for awards. With 10 trophies, 7 went to best country, and three for the top positions overall. However, this does not spread the awards around enough, since the top three could easily grab one of the best countries --- Indeed, Ben nearly had three trophies. I favor giving all ten to the top ten finishers, thus giving people a reasonable shot even if they know that they can't be in the top three or five. For best country, give out Certificates. If someone could design it, I could get 200 of these printed for about \$6, enough for a lot of tournaments. If you want fancy paper, it could still be done for under \$20. This means two different types of awards which is fine by me --- they are different types of achievements.

For the third round, I was closeted with the players of the top board. They got handouts describing my tape recorder plans. To my utter delight, not only was neither plan vetoed, but all players cooperated magnificently. I could not have asked for better sports! I was surprised, because I had discussed this question with some "name" postal players, several of them who indicated that they would be totally unwilling to participate in any manner. Fortunately, no one of that persuasion made it to the top board! At any rate, I got over 2 hours of taped conversations. In the next issue of DD, I will present the game and my analysis of it, based heavily on taped conferences, and player asides to me. This will present, I believe, a unique look into how the negotiational aspect of the game is, or at least, can be, handled. This is quite different from the usual commentary, in which the commentator must guess.

There were other triumphs of the weekend as well, such as the reconvening of the traditional dipcon bridge game. Or the fact that Bob Sergeant was actually able to get 15 players together at 11:30 Sat nite to play test his slimmed down version of World War III. FTF playtesting of very large variants is normally next to impossible, tho it can greatly help the designer. I believe that Bob is planning a postal section. If you are interested, write him at 3242 Lupine Drive, Indianapolis, Ind 46224. A 19 player version is running at present!

I had a grand time, even just talking dippy with total strangers, and I suggest that you make a special effort to get to DipCon XIII. But I've other topics, so.....

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The Zine Column #16

The Tretick/Oaklyn/Alan affair: Some final answers, some closing comments.

I did hear from James Alan on the phone on the day he got the zine, which indicates to me that he does have concerns of his <sup>own</sup>, and is not just a "drop" for Oaklyn. He denied calling Andrews and Edwards "real good friends", and said that they were just friends. This is a minor point, and not consistent with my recollection. Aside from that, the phone call got me nowhere. He has an interesting habit when he starts lying: His voice drops. I noticed it again and again. At one point, when I asked him point blank whether Brian Edwards lived in the same house as he did, his answer was nearly inaudible. But I got nowhere. When I pointed out that if Oaklyn wanted to show he was different from Tretick, all he had to do is produce a photo-stat of a Birth certificate or passport, he switched and said, no, Bernie wasn't actually interested in proving that he was not Tretick. Sure.

One remaining question is which of Tretick and Oaklyn is the real name, which is the pseudonym or discarded name. I can answer this. As was well known (and printed in Against the Odds, I believe) Oaklyn began a venture this past year with the Montessori Schools. For a while when you called Oaklyn's number you got a Montessori recording. A call to the Montessori Manor School people revealed that yes, a school had been started up at 7701 Bradley Blvd in Bethesda. By Mr Tretick. No, nobody heard of the name Bernie Oaklyn. The school incidently, has since folded. So even as late as last fall, he was still using the Tretick name, and I assume that he still does to this day.

This leaves, for those who like things all wrapped up, the question of the origin of "Oaklyn". Both Boardman and Ron Kelly and probably others have mused on this question, which I can now answer. Before Tretick moved his operation into 7701 (which is the St. George Greek Orthodox Church), there was another Montessori Manor School there, run by a Ms. Fonseca. It moved in 1978 to Potomoc, Md, right nearby. The address? 10500 Oaklyn Drive. Just a coincidence, you think? Really? Then perhaps I could interest you in this opening. You open A ~~Wal~~-Wal, I open F Bre-Eng, and I'll convoy to Bel.....  
Lpl

John Michalski was kind enuf to reprint my TZC #14 both in his zine, and to send a copy to various pubbers. (John, at least two games do have official Boardman numbers, 1978KJ and 1978AP) John suggests that Oaklyn, Alan, etc should be expelled from all their games, and all Oaklyn's games should be declared irregular. I can understand this reaction: He has besmirched our reputation, so we should kick them out of the hobby.  
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## The Berch Tournament Scoring System brouhaha at DipConXII/Origins'79

1. Background

Several Months ago there was announced in Lee Kendter's Why Me? the fact that John Boyer would be running the Diplomacy Tournament at this years DipCon, and was looking for input from the hobby, including a scoring system. For reasons that I'll get to, I was dissatisfied with the system previously used. I created a system, wrote it up, along with an explanation of both what it does, and why it was set up that way. I sent this to John Boyer, and sent a copy to Lee Kendter for publication in Why Me?, to generate further response from the postal community. As it turned out, neither I nor Lee nor John got any written responses. John liked it, and decided to go with it. I emphasize that the decision to use it was John's (not mine), as were all decisions on tournament procedure.

2. The Rocamora System

This is named after its creator, Mike Rocamora, a successful postal and FTF player, who also dabbled at publishing ("Don't Knock the Rock"). I played under the system at Origins 76 (Dipcon IX), Origins 77 and Penn Con XIV (1978). It was also used at Origins 78, and some other tournaments as well, I'm told. The form varies slightly from tournament to tournament, but the essentials are the same. Origins 78 is typical. One point was given for each center held at game's end. One point was also given for each player of the same country that you beat. Your score was summed over both rounds. Thus, if you were an average Germany with, say, 6 centers at games end (which was 1909), in a 20 board round, you'd get about 10 points for beating 10 other german players who did poorer than that, plus 6 for your centers to give 16. If you tied another player, you just got  $\frac{1}{2}$  that point. Also, you got  $\frac{1}{2}$  point for making it to WOL, and another  $\frac{1}{2}$  point for not being eliminated --- small stuff. And that's it.

I don't like that system at all.

The idea of scoring according to how others have faired with that country comes from duplicate bridge, where each set of players play the exact same set of cards, and then they're scored on how well they do compared to others who plyaed that set. It works fine because you don't know how others faired with the cards till after the hand is over.. But it's different at a dippy tournament. If you want to see how the other Germany players are doing all you have to do is look.

Those of you who have been in more than one postal game with me, or saw my letter in Runestone a while back know that I feel that every game should be independent, and that cross game influences should be minimized. But this system institutionalizes them and indeed requires such influences. Your play of germany, especially if you are doing quite well, can be influenced by how other Germany are doing.

This is not theory, this is fact. Players check out the other boards if need be. I recall clearly a round at Origins 77. I was allied with an Italy of about 10 centers and was around half that size. In the winter before the next to last game year, I proposed to my ally a bold plan that, if the breakthru succeeded would net him 2 or maybe three more centers, and would give me at least three. That would help me enormously. Not so much the 3 centers, but the fact that the jump in centers would lift me above a goodly number of other pesons playing my country. He turned it down cold. He had checked out the other boards. There was one Italy he couldn't hope to catch, but he had risen above pretty much all the rest. The plan however could fail, if a third party betrayed us AND the others guessed our moves, or it could fail if I stabbed him. Failure could cost him a couple of centers, which might well drop him back into the upper part of the pack of other Italian players. That could cost him quite a few points. It wasn't worth the risk. He'd play it safe, guard what he had, and maybe try for one more center. I had to admit, however, that he was right, and that had I been in his shoes I'd have done the same thing. The fact that he was ahead of nearly all other Italy's meant he could gain little, and lose much by taking

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the gamble, even if it were a reasonable gamble within the context of the game.

In fact sometimes players go even further than just glancing at the other boards. In Round 1 of last year's Penn Con, I was Russia, and in FOI boldly went for 3 builds. I got none. Before long I was puppeting to Karl Schuetz's Turkey (when you puppet to Karl, he takes your centers anyhow; he just doesn't take them as quickly and he doesn't quite eliminate you) Anyhow, a Turkey from another table, who's doing well came by and glumly counted Schuetz's yellow peril. He then asked me (Karl was away) if I was being "pushed back". When I said no, he asked wistfully if there wasn't some way I could be "contained" He didn't exactly conduct diplomacy at the table, but I wonder what would have happened if he could have struck a deal with a strong ally of Turkey, Germany perhaps, to stab Turkey, in return for stabbing Germany at the other table. I'll grant that this is farfetched. But my point is that any scoring system that includes cross game factors in the scores will engender cross games influences into the play. It has and does happen.

Another problem is that if a given round has a relatively small number of boards --- say less than 10 -- (the third round this year I think had 8) there's a good chance that results can be skewed by a flukish poor or good performance by one type of country. For example, at least years Penn Con, the Best Russia got 3 centers!!! That Russia got a good number of points by getting one from each each even poorer Russia. By contrast, average for Both France and Turkey was 10. Except for the S.C. totals, they got fewer points with their 10 than Russia got with his 3.

Second, giving the rest of the points just for centers produces a static, unimaginative and predictable play. Lets suppose you've had a successful alliance; you and your ally are around 8 centers. Do you have to way such ordinary considerations as: Should I stab my ally? Will he stab me? or should we just consider the present course fine? No. You say to your ally: "Look, there's no point in a stab. Why stab and get centers from me the hard way when you can get them the easy way from the other minor powers. Sure, I might get a few centers ahead of you; you might not be able to catch up. Indeed, I might even be able to gain a win. But so what???????? Its no skin off YOUR back if I do well. I'm not your competition, even if you can no longer deal with my strength; your competition is on the other boards. So lets just take it the easy way." This logic cannot be refuted. Triple alliances work even better because they're even faster. They give you a virtual guarantee of at least 8 centers. Of course, such alliances have certain inherent instabilities, but these are almost non-existent if you don't have to worry about your allies getting too far ahead of you, because it doesn't matter. You do remember the triple alliance in Round two last year, don't you Lee? You never would have stabbed France if we hadn't stalled the western triple, or would you?

All this means that the bag of tricks employed by a power being squashed is considerably depleted. The usual threat of defending your last centers in such a manner that one player will have a run-away lead just won't work. Then there's draw notes. They add a diplomatic element to the game, and losing players often employ them (in face to face games, these matters are usually discussed out in the open, so all can see who stands where) to try to expose differing goals by members of the winning alliance. That vanishestoo.

What really sticks in my craw about the Rocamora system is the fact that such concepts as "Win" and "Draw" don't exist. To me, these are at the very core of what the game is all about. If they aren't there, then the system is automatically deficient in a very serious matter.

So why don't I like the Rocamora system? Because a system should, if anything, discourage cross-game consideration, not incorporate it. Because just counting centers allows a player to view his ally's unchecked growth with total impunity. Because ignoring wins and draws is contemptuous of what the game is all about.

Thus, the prospect of playing in yet another tournament, under a rating system that I do not respect, was totally unappealing. And next year would be just the same. But, as a famous fugitive once said, your're either part of the solution, or

you're part of the problem. If I didn't like the present system then the obligation was to create my own.

### 3. Creating a Tournament rating system

There is no perfect system, nor will there ever be, because there are just too many variables in evaluating players' performances, and not everybody agrees on which are important and which are not. Should wins count and if so should the 18 center rule be reduced? How much better than a draw should a win be? Is coming in second to the winner success or failure? How much, if any, should your number of centers count? How should curtailed games be handled? Should you be compared to others playing your country? Does survival count? Does it matter whether you're eliminated early or late? Its hard to know where to even start. The central question is this: What style of play do I wish to encourage?

I want people to try to win. That is, after all, the point of Diplomacy. If they cannot, they should try to share in a draw, and share the draw with as few people as possible. That, to me, should be what tournament Diplomacy is all about. If a player cannot get himself into a draw, then he may if he wishes try for as good a survival as he can manage. But the rating system should make it clear that this is a secondary goal, to be pursued only if the primary goals are utterly unobtainable. Its not good enuf to just grub for more centers.

In order to encourage this highly competitive style of play, several things had to be done. Only wins and draws would be considered success. A Win was to be very valuable --- twice as good as a two-way draw, three times as good as a 3-way draw, etc. Second, a win was to be made more attainable. A lowered score of 12 (Pursuant to Rule III of the rulebook) was used. And no margin of victory would be required: Just getting there would be good enuf.

As a result, the following appeared in Why Me?#14, 6 April 1979

## 4. THE BERCH SYSTEM FOR DIPLOMACY TOURNAMENT SCORING

### A. Allocation of points

1. Each game is worth 60 points., which go to the winner. In case of a 2-6 way draw, those participating devide the points evenly. No points are allocated for 7-way draws.
2. In addition, 0.01 points are given for each supply center held at game's end.

### B. Voted Conclusions

1. After W05, players may vote a winner or draw, a vote which must be unanimous and signed by all surviving players.
2. The voted winner must have at least as many centers as anyone else.
3. A voted draw must specify exactly who is to participate in the draw.

### C. Curtailed Games (games ending because time has run out)

1. The person with the largest numbers of centers is the winner, provided that s/he has at least Q centers.
2. If 2 or 3 players have tied under C1 above, then they (alone) have drawn.
3. The value of Q depends on the year in which the game is curtailed:  
1906: 11  
1907: 12  
1908: 13  
1909: 14

### D. Tournament Procedures

1. Assignment of players to games in the first two rounds is on a random basis, and should avoid family relationships.

2. Assignment in the final (third) round will be seeded, with the best 7 total scores going to the first board, the next 7 to the second board, etc.

3. Overall awards will be given for the best cumulative scores over all three rounds. If possible, certificates will also be given to "best country" for each of the seven country's players.

4. Assignment of countries will be by random draw. In round two, no one shall play the same country that he played in round 1. The GM, at his discretion, may attempt this rule for Round 3 as well.

5. Those playing at the top board in the final round are required to write their orders in such a manner that a permanent record of the game can be assembled.

6. If a player leaves the game while he still has or can build units, the GM must be summoned. At that time the GM will either:

- a) obtain a standby or
- b) prepare neutral orders or
- c) place the country in c.d.

7. The GM may at his discretion deduct points from a player's score for un-sportsmanlike conduct, such as intentional misreading of orders. In all disputes the 1971 or 1976 Rulebook will be used and the decision of the GM is final.

8. Players are reminded that this is only a game.

Some comments:

Section A: This scoring system is based primarily of the Win-or-Draw-only (or "Calhamerian" or "Rulebook") philosophy. The fractional points for supply centers, since they cannot add even to a full point, are for tie-breaking purposes. This is important since, with Win/Draw scoring, there aren't very many different outcomes, so ties are to be expected. A single center might determine whether or not you get to the top board. Note that calculating a player's score is much quicker than the systems used at other Origins: I estimate 4 seconds/player/round. E.g. a four way draw with 11 centers = 15.11. 600 points was chosen because it divides all of 2-6 ~~centers~~ <sup>draws</sup> evenly. 0.01 was chosen for the centers for ease of calculation --- you could put the number of centers in parenthesis after the score just as well. A seven way draw shows no resolution and thus was not given points. By not having a player's score influenced by how others are doing with that country, cross-game influences are minimized.

Section B: Voted conclusions are a simple matter in general. I have permitted draws of fewer than all survivors. This is because points are given for centers. Thus a three center player may be told: Vote for a draw without you or you will be wiped out next year, depriving you of your 0.03 points. The victim should have this option, if he chooses to go for the safe 0.03, feeling that otherwise he will surely be wiped out. However, this point is not essential to my scoring system, and I suspect that such votes will be rare.

Section C: This is the most vexing aspect of tournament scoring. The Q values were obtained as follows: The values for 1908 were done by looking at about 50 won games in Everything, in which 1) the game was not over in 1908 and 2) the guy who was leading (or tie for leading) in 1908 was the eventual winner. The median 1908 value for those games came to 13. This was repeated for the other years, using the same games. The numbers seem intuitively reasonable to me. I am firm, however, that the winner does not have to have won by some specified margin over the runnerup. I say this because:

1. The Rule book, Rule III, which authorizes the lower victory criteria, makes no mention of such requirement.
2. In virtually all sports, any victory margin will do.
3. It will add extra tension and zest to the final year in close games. No longer can the second place, or tie-for-first-and-second-place player play it cautious on the theory that the other guy can't possibly get enough centers to gain the required margin. The smallest miscalculation can have dire consequences!

Note also that if two players both have at least Q centers and tie, only they draw the game. This is for two reasons:

1. Otherwise, it would benefit a minor power to donate a center to the second place player to precipitate a draw-by-tie, surely an undesirable situation. Thus, 14-13-4-3, i.e. a win for Mr. 14 and 0.03 for the fourth place player could be converted to 14-14-4-2, a four way draw with 15.02 for him.

2. Fundimentally, the Q value, under Rule III is the lowered victory score agreed upon in advance. Any player who reaches it, and who is unsurpassed by another player has won. If there are 2 such winners, they "share" the victory, i.e. a draw.

Section D: One question is whether those in the top board should be entitled to extra points for the stiffer competition that they will face. Tho this is a close question, I think that it is not needed. If there are many boards for the final round, then, theoretically, there should not be much difference in quality of competition between the top two boards. If there are few boards, then perhaps a case could be made, but still: The 2-round scores of players on the first boards should be significantly higher than those on the second board, giving them a big lead already. In general, if the third round has other than one board drawing and the other winning, then the first board will take most of the top position in the tournament. Thus, the first two rounds are partially qualifying rounds, altho scores are added cumulatively.

Procedures under rule D4 are easy. Players draw, and if one gets the same country, they redraw. If 2 get the same country, they exchange countries. If 3 or more, they rotate countries, flipping a coin to determine the "direction" of rotation.

D5 is important if we want to upgrade these tournaments. Records are kept of top chess tournaments, for example. I am definitely interested in publishing the game record, with full commentary.

A few other points. This assumes a three-round tournament, which I think is best. Friday evening should be devoted to non-gaming, e.g. panel discussions. The selection of the scoring system should be up to the GM, unless a tournament committee is set up, which I understand John Boyer is thinking of doing. If that happens, I would like this system to be compared to other fully scripted scoring systems (and not someone's vague notion of what a scoring systems theoretically ought to be like). I hope that this proposal will draw comments in Why Me?; I'll be glad to reply to them. One topic that I'm still working on is the very difficult problem of handling a game with fewer than seven players. This would be in a separate protocol, as there would be no need to include it in the tournament rules.

And finally, I have named this after myself because I'm convinced that modesty is a waste of time.

## 5. The Criticism

Starting right after the first round, I caught quite a bit of flack over this system. Critics ranged from those who did very poorly to the overall winner! As some of these people receive/publish Why Me? I wish they had written me earlier. Fortunately for my spirits, a number of people said they really liked the system, one saying that it produced a "much more gutsy game". What I'd like to do here is respond to some of the criticisms as best I can reconstruct them. These are presented in no particular order.

a. No credit for coming in second to a win. Lee Kendter, Jr complained that (aside from his fractional points for centers held) he got nothing for his strong second to a win. He declaired that this was "totally ridiculous", and that "no one thinks that way." This is the win/ draw vs. strong second debate, which has been going on since Diplomacy was first played, and will never be "resolved". The question is: Does coming in second to the winner constitute a (partial) success, and thus deserving of a partial credit, or is it a failure (not as big a failure as coming in third, of course) and thus not entitled to credit in the scoring. There is no "answer" to this question; its a matter of taste and personal philosophy and attitude toward the game.



Lee's hyperbole aside, I daresay that many agree with him that coming in second should count for something. However, I completely reject the notion that there is anything "wrong" with my second-is-failure philosophy, and that there is anything in any way unreasonable about this approach.

To begin with, Diplomacy is war. And there is no such thing as coming in second in a war and being satisfied with it. If you are the leader of your country, you either win, or are part of the victorious coalition, or you can expect to lose your job, fortune, freedom or your life.

Its just a game you say? Very well then. The most popular more-than-4-player game in the US is certainly poker. When the arms reach out to rake in the pot, it all goes to #1. Indeed, the guy who came in second often lands up contributing more than anyone else to the winner's loot.

Stick to Diplomacy? Consider the following:

1. The Rulebook. The only outcomes sanctioned by the Rulebook are wins and draws. Coming in second isn't even mentioned.
2. Calhamer's Opinion. The inventor of Diplomacy made his opinion on this subject quite clear in his classic essay in the 1974 Diplomacy Handbook, an article which I really ought to reprint some day. He was totally against strong second play.
3. Postal Ratings Systems. There has been an unbelievable variety of these produced since the hobby began. To my knowledge, only two are being kept in North America. One is the CPCL, kept by Doug Hollingsworth. My rating system is based on this, and it gives no credit for second. Its one of the oldest systems, and in the opinion of people like Doug Beyerlein, the best. The second is McLendon's and Sergeant's DTRS. This gives a pot of points for the winner and drawers, just like my system, and one point for each center. Nothing else is added for coming in second.
4. Other writers from the world of Postal Diplomacy. I am not alone in this:
  - "...Diplomacy is best played as a test to see if you can win. If you cannot, you must draw the game; you should not "do as well as you can if you can't win" (Len Lakofka, 1973)
  - "...the player who has enabled the victor to win has certainly not "survived" " (Tom Hubbard, 1973)
  - "The Calhamer School of thought (of which I am a member) believes that either a player wins, stops someone else from winning, or loses. And the awards, or penalties, are given accordingly. This has led to the design of the ... ODD Rating system" (Doug Beyerlein, 1973. A slightly altered system, ODDMOD was published, until recently by John Leeder. It too given no credit for coming in second)

OK, that's three quotes just from the year 1973. I assure you that I could dredge up three quotes from that year for the other point of view. My point is NOT that mine is the majority view -- I haven't the slightest idea whether its the majority view. My point is that treating coming in second to a winner as losing is entirely respectable.

This is not to say either that I never play for second. Indeed, in 1976ID, when I was unable to interest the others in stopping Konrad BAumeister's push for his 18th center, I played for, and got, third. But I consider that game a failure, not a success. Germany came in fourth and I came third, but I consider us to be equal as losers.

So I ask you, Lee, and others who agree with you, in view of all those precedents I've cited, within and without the hobby, do you agree that my treatment of coming in second as a failure is reasonable, even if its not your preference?

b. Too many large draws encouraged. After the first round I was collared by Steve McLendon, who said that there were an awful lot of large draws. I replied that this was due in part to having to end the games in 1907. But he felt that my rating system just made things worse, tho I don't quite recall how his reasoning went. But the rating system did reward people for shortening the draws. Why this didn't happen more I do not know. Lets look at Round I, Board 1, which I believe was

Steve's. The game ended as a six way draw, surely a disappointment for a player of Steve's caliber (Steve has an astonishing run of wins as Germany). The S.C. total for Italy, the weakest of the survivors, was 4-4-3-2-2-2-1. By 1904 it was down to 2 centers, and yet it managed to survive till game's end. Had the plays so desired, he certainly could have been wiped out. I of course know nothing about the game, but presumably someone was urging the others to do just that. His diplomatic efforts failed, and so he paid the price --- the poorer score as a result of the larger draw. Those who failed to listen pay the same price. You all understood how the scoring system worked. If you were unwilling to shorten it, you just have to pay the price. Perhaps Steve will explain how my scoring system encouraged large draws, because I don't see it. If you can't win, the ONLY way to improve your score is by shortening the draw, by wiping some of the players out.

c. One center countries should not be allowed into the draw. This view was expressed to me with firm conviction by Lee Kendter, Sr. I have heard this before. Rod Walker, in his Gamer's Guide, said that he rated 16-16-1-1 draws as two way draws. WHY? By removing this consideration, you can remove one of the most exciting aspects of the game, that of a tiny power struggling to stay in the draw with his back against the wall. This is exactly what happened in the Top Board of the third round. The Turkish player, with no game long allies, his survival of no real value to anyone brilliantly manipulated the draw votes, combined that with a bold tactical ploy and earned himself a share of the draw. Why should the games be denied this?

I saw the S.C. sheets for the games, and there were plenty of examples of countries eliminated in 1906, or 1907, and examples of countries voting for draws that they did not participate in, just to survive. If the major powers are either unable or unwilling to do just that, then I'll be damned if I will.

d. As soon as someone reached about 9 centers, everyone jumped on him. This was raised by Lee Kendter Jr and I think his father joined in as well. This is quite true, only I don't see anything wrong with it. This is called "Balance of Power" play by some; I prefer "King of the mountain". Players can accept a King -- after all, someone has to be on top. But when someone is not only on top, but steadys himself and seems to have a purchase on that position, then naturally the others will be "concerned". Some kings divert and frustrate and devalue this concern; others do not. The former are referred to as "winners", the latter are called "drawers". Getting to about nine centers by 1904 or 1905 is not all that difficult; quite a few players did it. But being able to expand from that beachhead, with the spotlight clearly on you is much more difficult, and requires not only skill at that point, but requires that you were careful in how you got those 9 centers in the first place. Just getting 9 isn't enuf. You need to have also dowed disention among the others, or have a loyal ally, or whatever it takes to get --- and hold --- three more centers. That's what this game is all about.

e. People just played the scoring system, not the game. This was raised by Ben Zablocki. Except for one idea I'll get to at the end, this is unavoidable, and will be true regardless of the rating system employed. There is nothing unique about Diplomacy in this respect. Take bridge. The rules are fixed, but there are at least three different scoring systems in use: Rubber, ordinary duplicate, and I.M.P. scoring. This affects play. Some plays would be foolhardy at rubber scoring which would be pretty much mandatory at duplicate. The fact of the matter is, tournament Diplomacy is a different mode of play than the more social, ordinary FTF game, just as postal and telephone games are also different modes.

f. Too much credit was given for wins. I have saved this for last as it is the most fundamental. It comes from Ben Zablocki. Ben is certainly one of the top FTF players on the east coast. He came in third in last years PennCon, and I believe he won at Origins in 1975. He also won this year's DipCon, so his criticism is entirely free of even the possibility of sour grapes. In the first two rounds, Ben had a loss and a two way draw, which got him on the second board. In the final round, he won, giving him 90 points and the victory, overall. Ben felt that the scoring system was "ill conceived". Ben hit upon a method of winning. He convinced

his ally that a draw was worthless, and that only a win was worth anything. The two would then ally, and flip a coin to see who'd get credit for the win. He did this not once, but twice. The second of these netted him his victory in the third round. He blamed this on the scoring system, which he said "was designed to make two guys play for a game long alliance, divide up the board, and then flip a coin between them as to who is going to take all the marbles!" I do not know if his reference to his two-headed coin was serious or joking. He then stated that this turned "Diplomacy into a game of luck!" Tom conceded that the system had "some good points" but concluded that "the problem is that the spread between a 60 and a 30...is too much, is too discouraging. Too much credit for a win as compared to a two-way, three-way, or four-way!" He went on to suggest 45 and 40 points (at different points in the conversation) for a two way draw, and 30 for a three way draw. He pointed out that if he had done this only once, it might be dismissed as a fluke, but after doing it twice, it could not.

My response at the time was to just say that he was a successful diplomat, that he found a way to get the win, which was the point of the game. I do not know how he talked Jim Yerkey (the winner of last year's PennCon) to abide by the loss of the coin flip; I certainly would not have. However, I realize now that such a response does not really deal with his criticism. Part of the problem is the type of thinking engendered in the last round: Anything for a big splash. It is quite common in tournaments of all sorts to take big risks in the last round if you are behind, for the simple reason that just doing real well, which a two way draw would have been, isn't good enuf.

For completeness, I should add Rod Walker's comments. He has been to many, many tournaments. He came to the opposite conclusion. If the drawers split up 60 points amongst themselves, the winner should get 100. This will prevent, he says any conceded wins: "Then you will get utterly cutthroat play."

The question of the relative spacing of win and draw, and the spacing between the draws is of fundamental importance. There are, after all, no other parameters. With regard to the win-draw spacing, if you want to get a highly competitive game, you must walk a very narrow line. If the win is too valuable, not only do you get coin flipping (after all, ally, why settle for 30 apiece when once of us could have 100? We can augment our total points by making sure one of us wins), but you also have the problem that when one player nears a win, the others will just not bother to try to stop him. Why stop him, when stopping him will just produce a worthless draw? On the other hand, if the win is worth too little, then no one will bother to try for it. A Game beginning with a triple alliance will end up with a three way draw because that crucial 1904 stab just won't be worth it. It won't be worth the risks of failure for the small additional value of the win. What's the proper balance? In principle, this should be strightforward enuf. Use some system, then examine the results, fine-tune it accordingly, and run the next tournament and see how the new values work. So how did this one go?

Zablocki presents good evidence that the win-draw gap was too large, for reasons set forth above. And there were, for whatever reason, too few 2, 3, and 4 way draws.

On the other hand, consider this: If someone had asked me before the tournament how I'd like the first two rounds to go, I'd have said this: I want there to be 7 wins in the first two rounds. The smallness of this number means that it was quite difficult to do. But not too difficult so that only a fluke could produce it. It would give a first board with all winners. Second board would have no winners. This would give a nice sharp break between the two. It would also mean that the top-board players would take most of the top spots in the tournament.

In reality, there were exactly seven winners in the first two rounds, a fact that I was quite pleased with, altho one of them didn't show up in time Sun morn to get to the board, alas. And they took, I believe, 4 of the top 5 places in the tournament. So on that basis, there seemed to have been the proper amount of incentive for winning, and the proper degree of difficulty.

However, I am going to lean toward Zablocki's view here. I propose to you to add 15 points to the 2 and 3 way draws, 13 points to the 4 way draw, 8 points to the 5 way draw, and none to the six way draw. That gives the following scale, beginning with the win: 60-46-36-28-20-10. Note that this gives more incentive to shortening the draws. Each shortening is worth 8-10 points, whereas now, shortening from 6 to a 5 is only worth 2 points. I ask Ben, and those who agree with Ben, whether they consider these spacings to be good, or at least, good enough. I would like to hear from as many of you as possible.

I have no objection to making this change, if you feel that it constitutes an improvement. It does no violence to the basic principles of my system. Please note, incidentally, that the win is set by the year in which the games are supposed to be ended. If the games can run longer, as I hope that they can, the value is set correspondingly higher.

Finally, this note. DipCon next year will not be with Origins, but with MichiCon. The committee handling this will be Rod Walker, 1273 Crest Drive Encinitas Calif 92024; Cal White 1 Turnberry Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6N 1P6; Herb Barents, 1142 South 96th Zeeland, Mich 49464. I will be submitting the BTS to them in due time..If you have any comments on it, especially on the relative spacings question, send those to them.

Or create your own, send it to them, and may the best system win. If you do, I urge that you have the final round seeded, for two reasons. For the good players, seeding allows them to play in a game without the uncertainties introduced by a very weak player. Indeed, for me that would be the biggest reward for doing well in the first two rounds: The chance to play a top flight game. Also, the very weak or inexperienced players will mostly have been clobbered in the early round(s). If they stick it out, they will at least get a good chance to play amongst their peers, and get some mid-game or end-game experience that they might not get otherwise.

6. A Radical Suggestion. This comes from Rod Walker, who suggests that the players not be told the details of the rating system in advance, to prevent them from just trying to play the rating system. Just assure them that the committee felt it is a sound system, and to play the very best that they can. There is little that they would have to know. All that comes to mind is 1) The lowered victory criterion if there is one 2) whether or not a draw must include all survivors. It solves several problems that would arise regardless of what rating system is used. But will it create new ones? I guess there's only one way to find out.....

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(continued from page 3) However, I cannot agree with this proposal, much as I'd like to. If I were a GM none of these characters would be welcome in my games. But I don't think that a player should be removed from a game for reasons that have nothing to do with that particular game. That happened once to me, and I object to it on principle. Suppose you were allied with Alan in a game --- it would be unfair to you to suddenly have your ally removed, for reasons irrelevant to the game. This of course does not apply when the GM has HRs against the use of an alias, and Oaklyn is indeed an alias. Similar considerations apply to just flatly declaring all his games irregular. Such a move is quite a burden on someone who won the game --- he won't get credit for it in any rating system. From his point of view, there were no complaints about that particular game, so there should be no sanctions against that game. I just don't believe in guilt by association. Of course, there might not be any games in that category. One of my subbers, Charles Price, writes me that his "Front" game "...is ridiculous with the GM making an "error" virtually every game turn! So while I don't think he's entitled to the benefit of the doubt normally tendered (by GMs!@ to GMs, such blanket rulings, and mass expulsions are not justified. If you find a guy guilty of 10 robberies, you still have to prove the 11th to nail him on it. I feel uncomfortable standing up for the rights of such people, but the actions of the hobby must be fully justified, and not just extrapolations. If he didn't actively taint one game that he ran, then that game is not irregular. Alas, the guy is still active; several of my subbers have noted getting sample issues from him, so it is necessary to warn people. But expelling him from games only risks making him appear to some a martyr.