

Hoosier Archives is a periodic listing of the Diplomacy archives of Walter Buchanan, R. R. 3, Lebanon, Indiana 46052, telephone (317) 482-2824; Archives Director, N3FGBDD; a Director of The Diplomacy Association; and a member of IRWDS. Since the archives is virtually complete in at least xerox form back to 1966, the archives listing will only appear quarterly, the last being in issue #35, or as further substantial additions are acquired. However, additions to the archives are solicited, either through originals, which are preferred, or a loan to permit xeroxing. Also, postage fees will be paid for duplicates so that they can be made available to others. Many original spares are now available. The main purpose of Hoosier Archives is to make available information from the archives, such as Diplomacy articles, game news, etc., as well as to serve as a medium for original articles, which are solicited. To subscribe to Hoosier Archives, send one stamped, self-addressed business size envelope per issue. For back issues, only a stamp per issue is necessary. Ask for issue #40 to get a list of all articles through issue #42. This is Albatross Press publication #45.



INTO THE ARCHIVES NO. 12

In Gaillardia I, 3, Bob Johnson suggested that Hoosier Archives run a series on rating systems. Little did he know that I had already asked Doug Beyerlein to do an article on them! Doug is a recognized authority on rating systems and, in addition to currently running the Beyerlein Player Poll, has written several articles on rating systems in Jeff Key's Letor Gabala. If anyone is interested in further rating system articles, they are, of course, solicited.

RATING SYSTEMS AS I SEE THEM

by

Douglas Beyerlein

Rating lists and systems mean different things to different people. They give the good player the recognition he may think he is due. They allow the novice to quickly pre-judge the talent of his opposition. And they give something for some people to gripe about -- especially if they are not at the top of their favorite rating list.

Rating systems in general have some natural limitations and weaknesses. These, however, are only inherent to a particular rating system and not to the field as a whole. Perhaps a definition of rating system is needed. For my own philosophy I define a rating system as a statistical compilation of the various parameters which can be measured in a Diplomacy game with weighted emphasis given to certain positive achievements. To compute a player's score, these parameters are combined into a single number according to an established mathematical formula.

The key to the above definition is the various parameters measured by a rating system. For most ratings these can include any combination of a player's relationship to the number of his country's units or supply centers at the finish of the game, the number of years played, country played, opponents' achievements and final standings, and others. For example, the BROB rating system only measures a player's rank of finish in relationship to the other six players in the game and awards points accordingly. Other rating systems have been designed to measure parameters in other ways. It is up to the rating designer to incorporate the parameters which he believes to be important into his system.

Two factors tend to limit the scope of a rating system. Information retrieval can be a difficult job if the needed parameters encompass more than a center-year chart can provide. An equally troublesome problem is the time needed to compute parameter numbers into a player's score. To keep scores updated can turn into a full-time job for some rating systems. A breakthrough in this area has been the use of computers. Tony Pandin is currently developing computer programs and data to compute all the major rating systems. He is also publishing center-year charts for all finished games in his new zine, TERMINUS.

Rick Brooks mentioned a common complaint in his article in Hoosier Archives #39. Basically it is that rating systems are not accurate or all-encompassing enough to differentiate between common events in different games. An example: is a win against six novices

equal to a difficult win against six good players? Most rating systems would award points without consideration of the player's opposition. This is generally done for simplicity of calculations, but can also be defended on the point that a statistical sample needs more than the results of one or two games to be accurate and over the long run these variations of play will dampen out. That is why I believe it is ridiculous to attach any significance to a player's rating until the player has finished at least three or four games. After ten games or so, a player's ability should be pretty well established. Obviously, this idea has a drawback in the fact that a player must play at least three or four years before his ability can be accurately established by a rating system. This problem can be overcome by player polls, but this is another subject outside the strict definition of a rating system.

Rating systems, like most everything else in this world, should not be taken too seriously. And remember, if you are as good as you really think you are, the word will get around.

CALHAMER POINT COUNT RATING LIST

Speaking of rating systems! As mentioned by John McCallum in SerenDip #76 and Pfenning-Halbpfenning #1, I am taking over the Calhamer Point Count Rating List. Also, as independently suggested by Allan Calhamer and Brenton Ver Ploeg, a modification will be added which Mr. Calhamer aptly entitles the Point Count Average Rating System. In this system, the Calhamer Point Count score is divided by the number of games in which the player in question might properly be rated as a participant. This gives the player's Point Count Average, which is a better gauge of the player's performance in that very active players don't have such an advantage. Mr. Calhamer also suggested that the number of games rated for each player be published so that if player X plays one game and wins, his "batting 1.000" can be discounted by the reader.

However, due to my limited time, all these changes won't be incorporated at once. For the near future, in addition to the Calhamer Point Count Rating List, I am going to take Brenton Ver Ploeg's suggestion and just publish the "top two boards" of the Point Count Average Rating System. Also, the entrants into these top two boards will be limited to those who have been rated on 3 or more games. This will incorporate Doug Beyerlein's suggestion as well. I also like the idea of starting out with just the top two boards as this will make an interesting objective criterion on which to judge the Beyerlein Player Poll (BPP) and the Archives Publishers Poll (APP). Hopefully, I will be able to publish all this in the next issue of Hoosier Archives. Comments anyone?

THE GRUDGE GAME

And speaking of new features! For all you Dippy fans out there that like Diplomacy as a spectator sport, Hoosier Archives has a real treat in store for you. As announced in Gehenna #17, I will soon be taking over that long-awaited "game of the decade," The Grudge Game! This game will be played by some of the top players in postal Diplomacy with an additional kicker thrown in. Most of the players have at one time or another had a feud with some of the other participants! Therefore, the stabbing should be rampant. For all of you that like bullfighting and other gorey sports, this is the game to watch.

I might also add that for the benefit of novices that want a good insight on what is going on, a "famous anonymous expert" has agreed to do a running commentary on the game. AND...for good measure, the editor of Naorg-Oldid (better known in New York City circles as "the Hoosier Hachet") will spur the action on with spicy press releases! Coming soon in Hoosier Archives!

OUR COVER?

Another first for Hoosier Archives! With this issue, we bring you a "cover" on the back page. Actually, it's more of a cartoon and that's why it's not up front. Thanks go to Steve Norik for another of his artistic gems.

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