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VANILLA FUDGE is the occasional journal published by and for the Postal Diplomacy Rating Commission. Appears at some time that the Editor/Publisher, Konrad Baumeister, of 11416 Parkview Lane, Hales Corners, WI 53130 USA has time to put it out -- which means

that it's highly irregular. Interested onlookers can subscribe to VANILLA FUDGE at the rate of 25¢ per issue. This is EGGNOG Enterprises Production #110 (a little late, right?).

THE FIRST THING ON THE AGENDA TO GAYLISIOSQUEZZEINAMLEASTONELINEARSEPARATOPPERZINE

ON LATENESS. So what? I know I'm two months late, actually. Back in mid-April I had tried to get out the 'zine and put out two pages of drivel instead. I lost the masters. In late April I tried again and worked for one day, but then came a letter from Doug Myerlein, and I had to re-type. In May I wanted to work on the issue, but had absolutely no time, as several people can attest to. In June I had too much going on to work on this, and then I even went up north for a week. So now, on the 22nd of June, I am finally getting around to it. I beg for forgiveness. (On the other hand, in July I should have more time, while August is busy again -- more so than ever before, in fact. We will see.) But here we go anyway.

ON THE BALLOT. Questions one by one. People who returned the ballot were Walker, McLendon, Kendter, Hollingsworth (sort of) and Baumeister. So:

1. There should be only one person to represent each Rating System. Walker: Having 2 people jointly responsible for a rating system was not a situation which had arisen in the mid-70s when the PDRG started. The intent of the Constitution was to prevent another situation which had arisen from screwing up the voting...namely, one person maintaining 2 systems. The intent of the Constitution, in any event, was to have one person responsible for the vote. Having 2 people capable of cancelling out a single vote divided between them is not really what the document envisions, and I feel it is counterproductive. If Steve maintains the system, he's the Ratingsmaster and has the vote. When he consults with...Bob, for instance...is his affair. McLendon: I will have to vote NO with a clarification. Each rating system should be allowed ONE vote. I see nothing wrong with two people maintaining a rating system, with both of them being allowed to vote. However, both of their votes count as ONE if their votes agree with each other. If they disagree, then their votes cancel each other and their rating system has a net contribution of zero to the overall PDRG vote. Kendter: NO, except each system should have one vote. Hollingsworth: I agree with the general thrust of Steve McLendon's comments... Baumeister: I stand 110% with Ed on this. In any case, both Steve and Bob Sargeant have written saying that from now on Steve is Ratingsmaster and that Bob no longer has anything to do with it. So the question can be left as is; Steve will get one vote to represent his system. Bob is out of the picture. That's out of the way.

2. Ratingsmasters who rate only currently active games should not be allowed on the PDRG, under Article II.A which limits membership to custodians of systems which rate completed games (not to mention all completed).

McLendon: I will vote YES (should not be allowed) on this, but not because it violated the Constitution. Nowhere in Article II.A does it mention the

word "complete" in reference to potential Diplomacy games. I suggest we re-write Article II.A to make this quite clear. Walker: Please reread Article II.A. There is no requirement that the games rated be completed. The last sentence is only a hedge on the timing requirements in the event Everything does not come out on time. Most rating systems depend on Everything for their information. However, again, a rating system which rates only ongoing games is a new situation. My initial reaction is that such a system could not possibly cover the entire hobby and would therefore lack a universal character. This is not a requirement, again, but I believe it's fair to say that a rating system ought to be universal in nature (that is, hobby-wide and not local). Kendler: Rating masters who rate active games should not be included. Jauneisler: I say, for reasons also brought up by Walker, that RMs of active games do not really belong in the PDRC, where the rest of us rate completed games, and try to be as universal and all-encompassing as possible. That's fairly unanimous then.

3. In 1977OS, France should be rated as included in the draw. McLendon: Sorry, Conrad, but I have to vote NO on this. When a player removes himself from a game (by resigning or dropping out or whatever) he forfeits any points to be awarded later. It makes no difference whether "later" turns out to be ten gameyears or zero gameyears. Is this game ratable? I think so. My criteria says that the drawing players have to have as many or more centers as those players (auto, not "powers") not in the draw. Since there was no player for France, there is no player not included in the draw with more centers than the drawees. Is it ratable at all, due to the high number of centers in disorder? Maybe not. But what do we mean by "high"? Does "high" mean 6 centers in ord? 8 centers? 12? We need to quantify this. May I suggest 12? If over 1/3 of a game's centers are in ord, I think it would be highly suspect. Walker: I would include France (the country) but not the player. And I believe that's the way to treat all of these situations. Determine the points on the basis of how the countries finish, then go back and apply points (or not) to the players as appropriate. France is thus in the draw, but the French player is not. Kendler: France should not get part of the draw. Jauneisler: Then that is unanimous as far as the question goes. But I'd like to hear from you your opinions on how many centers it takes in civil disorder before a game becomes "unratable". I'll get to that later.

4. 1977HD: How would you rate this? McLendon: I would rate this one as I do all the others. My rule states, "A game will not be rated if one player has played two or more countries in that game, and he played more than one game year at each position." Since Kelly played only one season as Turkey, the game is ratable. My feeling is that if a player plays only one game year at a position, the odds are he hasn't had a chance to impact the game. Walker: I do not understand this unreasonable prejudice against having a player in two positions at different times. In the very early games multiple replacements by one person were common. In the case of Ron Kelly in 1977HD, there is the additional factor that he was eliminated in 1982 and came back in 1988. I assume the argument against multiple positions is based on the player's presumed privileged knowledge from his earlier playing. I regard this argument as specious... because at best... and totally inapplicable in this case, given the time span. Kendler: From the point of view of past RMs this is probably irregular. Anytime one player played 2 positions it was treated as such. As far as rating goes, that's up to you guys. Jauneisler: I think that Steve has a pretty good way of dealing with the situation. To Rod: It's not so much the "privileged knowledge" in this case as it is a well-known development in the hobby, cross-gaming and cross-game revenge. Now players out there to play

grudges, and given the chance to re-enter a game where they feel they want to right a previous wrong, plenty can happen. In the case of 1977KD, obviously nothing did happen; Ron never had a chance as Turkey. But there are plenty of other cases where this kind of thing could happen, and that is the primary reason people don't like to see the same person tie down two different positions in the same game. (It used to happen in the '60s all the time, but that was back in the days of good sportsmanship, if one overlooks Bernie Kling or Hazley Jordan.)

5. In 1977KT, England and Italy should be rated as included in the draw. Melendon: I will vote NO for the reasons given in 1977CS. I do think this game should be unratable as almost half of the game centers are in ed. Walker: Again, I feel the countries draw, but the players do not. Thus the game is a four-way draw, but only two people receive points for it. Steve has a point about half the centers being in ed, but since no portion of the game was actually played in that mode... Kendler: England and Italy should not be part of the draw. Baumgartner: The question of unratability via the number of centers in disorder comes up again. Obviously, without that bit, 1977CS and 1977KT are identical.

6. 1978AT: In this game, who should be rated as having won the game? Melendon: As far as I am concerned, neither player should be rated as having won the game. The way I see it Jake Walters, in effect, resigned from the game after 504 and Tom Thomson came in as a standby player. But what if Walters had returned in, say, 508? My view is the same. Before I will credit a player with a win the most he can be absent from the game in one game-year. Any more than that then he is not entitled to a win, as he has relied upon another player's ability for a good portion of the game. Walker: If a "temporary" replacement is in command when the game ends, then I feel the situation should be treated as one in which the original player resigned and the replacement was permanent. And then rated accordingly. Kendler: This should be up to the rating system. In Calhauer Points, standbys get credit. So there it should go to Thomson. Otherwise? Baumgartner: But in this case Thomson isn't really a standby in the sense of the word, since it was assumed that the takeover would be temporary. I'm with Rod on this; the replacement gets the points, since he won the game. Steve objects to this primarily because his system doesn't rate standbys. If it did, however, it sounds like he'd rate the game as Rod and I would, though.

Hollingsworth: He went along with Steve; that's all he said. I wish he would have been somewhat more specific. Next time? I hope so.

SOME COMMENTARY ON THE SIDE. From Steve Melendon: As a closing thought, I would like to raise a Constitutional point. Should PDRC decisions be binding on the members? Article I says they are not, but should they be? If they are not binding, then what is the purpose of Article VI.C? If decisions are not binding upon the members then any talk about the number of dissenting votes required is meaningless. Unless we are going to stamp the various rating systems as "PDRC Approved". Are we?

Reply to Steve From Rod Walker: It's important here to distinguish between the SRB and the notion of "binding". The SRB is simply an agreed set of games...in a way, simply a way of making it easier for each IBI to state his own rating base. He simply says that his ratings are based on "SRB/44" (that is, the SRB as of January 44), and then states whatever additions to or deletions from he has made. He is not bound to use the SRB, and only the SRB.

I suggest great caution in trying to make the PDRC decisions more binding or trying for a "PDRC Approval" stamp on rating systems. The success of

of the PDGC will initially depend on how widely it is accepted by RMs, Present RMs and future RMs, I might add. The minute you try to create anything like a prescriptive situation, you may make some people feel threatened and you may find them not participating at all.

Of course, the hobby climate may have changed since 1974. Perhaps the RMs themselves would like to have an environment where there is some new uniformity and this is enforced to some degree. I doubt it, but it's possible. I don't want to discourage you entirely from pursuing this approach, but I hope it can be approached with the utmost circumspection. Ratings-masters, like Custodians and Game-masters, are independent hobby functionaries. If they are defensive about that independence, they have good cause, I believe.

I do in fact have a rating system, the one used in the General's Guide. I haven't updated it since I wrote the ms., but I have all of the Everything's which have come out since and I can do so (and probably will one of these days). The point here is that while I would use the SKB as a base, I would not be bound by it. I mention this because, although my feelings might be old-fashioned, they also may not be...and if the PDGC then tried to curtail the independence of the RMs (or appears to be trying to do so), and loses, this will undermine the PDGC and it will have been a lot of effort toward no realistic end.

Well, maybe I'm being unduly pessimistic or misunderstanding what Steve is suggesting.

From Konrad: On the above, I believe that it is perhaps the most important topic up for discussion that could be. I need to hear from every one of you on what you think. Should the PDGC bind its members to something? What should be binding and what not? How would it be enforced? Please send me your ideas as soon as humanly possible. Next, some comments from Mark Berch referring to some of the above:

From Mark Berch: Though I don't have a vote and have missed the deadline, I do want to comment on your "Only ratingsmasters keeping records of all completed regular postal Diplomacy games qualify for the Commission." This standard is so strict that NO ONE will qualify.

As you recognize, the 2 German and also Jack Masters would be disqualified. ((Masters was never on the Commission.)) Also, there are I believe at least 3 British systems up-to-date, but don't rate American or Continental Europe, so they're out. ((I am totally out of touch with the British scene, and do not have the vaguest idea that anybody in Britain kept a system.)) As far as North American ADPGR and ODDDDO haven't appeared in years, so they cannot possibly meet the "all completed" language. ((I am bringing the ADPGR up to date, but Leader has indeed been silent lately.))

That leaves DEES & OGR. Of these, I believe that both operate just from Everything. However, E has not recorded a British game in over two years or a central Europe game in longer than that. Further, there are dozens of completed games not in E, A, & M. Finally, most of the games from the first 10 years of the hobby are not rated in DEES because none of their players are currently active. ((There is nothing that can be done about missing games besides report them. Or how do you see it?))

I think that taking such a narrow view of excluding rating systems that don't rate all games will weaken your outfit since you are cutting people out who might contribute. The same goes for rating games in progress. There is no theoretical reason to invalidate such systems.

As for 1977CS, once France resigns, he's OUP. Subsequent events are irrelevant. The remaining players voted for a France-less draw. You cannot say that they would have included France in their draw. Last of later moves

is not the point -- there would be a later vote. High number of centers in disorder sometimes occurs in British games where they use no standbys, and have never stopped them from rating games.

1977MHD: Unratable

1978AT: Interesting question! No opinion.

1977KE: Same as 1977CS.

If you plan this procedure (a good one, I might add), please do this for 1977FH in E 44; GM NMRed Germany in F01, stating he had received orders on the same sheet as a personal note. No prohibition of orders on same sheet as personal notes in HRs or any mention of it at any time in "zine or correspondence with player. An article in "zine on writing orders made no mention. Player (Burch) resigned after that move. Is the game ratable? Is Burch's "Performance" ratable? (Details in DD 7-8). ((Good question. Ideas from the readership?))

Letter From Doug Beyerlein: First I think that it is important to get the vocabulary straight. Only the BNC can label a game regular or irregular. A ratingskeeper (or PDRG) can decide that a game is ratable or not ratable. The two sets of terms are somewhat different in what they say about a game. An irregular game is never ratable. A regular game may or may not be ratable, depending on the ratingskeeper's criteria for rating players and games. For example, a game in which a replacement takes over with 17 centers and wins the next year is a regular game if everything else about it is regular. However, many ratingskeepers may not rate the replacement player or the game. So we should be talking about ratable and not ratable games, not regular and irregular.

Second, if the PDRG is limited to ratingskeepers who rate all completed games then neither McLondon or Leader would qualify for membership. Both of these gentlemen started their rating systems in the 1970s and do not include games finished before then -- much to my dismay. What I think you want is membership limited to all active ratingskeepers of completed postal Diplomacy games. ((Exactly.)) That will exclude your German friend, but potentially would include the British ratingskeepers. I doubt, though, that they are interested in the PDRG.

My last general comment is that I think you are making a mistake in examining individual games. Because of the number of games that finish every year to be fair to all of the players you really should go with the information the BNC supplies to Everything. If he calls 1977GS a draw without France then that's the way it should stand, unless you can show him sufficient evidence that this is wrong. At the same time it should be the power of the individual ratingskeeper to decide what to do about Ron Kelly playing two different countries (at different times) in 1977HD. I think that you may have a difficult time and find it counterproductive to try to get a consensus on each individual game. Different rating systems have different sensitive areas and what is important to one ratingskeeper may not mean a thing to another (for example, Gibson playing one game versus 1977GF).

It is my belief as a former member of the PDRG and BNC that the purpose of the PDRG is to establish common policies among the ratingskeepers to review problem regular games and to agree upon a standard rating base (SRB). Each ratingskeeper has the option to rate games not part of the SRB and to determine how to handle problem regular games in accordance with the rules for his rating system. This means that each ratingskeeper really has to sit down and decide for himself how to rate the players in 1978AT (for example). The PDRG can bring problems like the "temporary" replacement player up for discussion, but I think that it is a mistake to try to hold a binding vote on the subject.

((Thanks for an excellent letter. The rest of you should notice of Red

Walker and Doug Beyerlein think very much alike. Why is no secret. Both worked together on this kind of work for years, culminating that work on the PDSC in the '74-'75 period.)

WRAPPING UP. So, that should end this issue. I do have a few topics I'd like to get replies on, in some detail if possible. Here we go.

1) I think that the consensus would like a re-writing of Article II.A which would limit membership in the PDSC to ratingsmasters who rate only completed regular Diplomatic games. Ja? If anybody (such as Rod Balkar, who wrote the original document) would like to try re-wording it, we can vote on it. I'll do it myself next issue if nobody else wants to.

2) Does the number of centers in civil disorder affect whether or not the game is retaliable? If so, what number of centers (or percentage) would make a game unretaliable? Ideas? (Clearly if too many centers are in disorder then the game is affected. The question is in degrees, of course.)

3) In a similar vein, suppose a power drops out in SDI and the gamesmaster does not assign a replacement player. What we have is a six-player game. What do we do?

4) Please address the points brought up about how "binding" the PDSC should be, and just how strong we should be. This is almost a political question.

5) Gamesmaster irregularity as pointed out in 1977EE by Mark Barch above: What do you think of the game in this case? Is it regular or irregular? If regular then it would probably be retaliable, but Barch thinks that it is irregular, and thus unretaliable. You?

6) What if birds couldn't fly?

Please try to have responses in by mid-July, say the 15th. I'll try to get out an issue soon thereafter. POLITICALIAN is due the 16th and ECONOG on the 16th, so VANILLA FUDGE will probably wait for the weekend. Treat the questions above as a ballot under the Constitution, even though they are not on a proper ballot sheet. Thanks much.

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