

The UK National Diplomacy Championship 2025 - Tournaments Director's Report

A God Save The Zine Interview with Bradley Grace

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How do you think this year's event compared to last year?

In terms of numbers last year's event was great for it being the first tournament in the country for two years as we had 20 people playing a total of 6 boards across a weekend. This year, that number increased to 32 people playing 15 total boards. So a sizeable increase in growth. Included in that was the decision to have two rounds on Saturday, and then a top board round on Sunday. Not only did this increase the number of boards but also the spectacle. Last year I think everyone went to sleep Saturday night knowing who the winner was going to be, this year all we knew was that we would be able to watch a fantastic game.

What were the highlights of the weekend for you?

For me I think there were two big highlights that come to mind, the first being the dinner on the Friday evening. Being sat in the same place in the same restaurant (Ask Italian) we had a year prior and seeing just how much space we were taking up in comparison was a feeling of accomplishment in a way. And the second was the awards ceremony on the Sunday after the games were finished, knowing people had a good time and handing out all the awards and trophies was certainly a special moment.



You devised your own scoring system for the tournament. How does it differ from other common systems such as C-Diplo and were you pleased about how it worked?

The scoring system was designed last year and really stress-tested this year. It essentially rewards board topping and topping by large margins. In my mind showing that level of control of a board deserves it's rewards the system creates. It differs from other systems like C-Diplo because the rewards for players who aren't topping are about closing that gap to first and gaining growth, which is entirely the opposite of what first place is playing for since they want to increase their lead. So instead of having games where an alliance just accepts first and second, you are given incentives to not arrange such things (but that doesn't stop players doing so, as people will play in their own ways). It also differentiates between the board toppers in a way I prefer, as we all know, not all board tops are equal, so why not have a system that reflects that.

The games were in theory until 1909. Why do you think so many are called early?

This is just my opinion but having a deadline to a game is all about making sure the players know what the potential limit is, not that you have to keep playing until that point. Just knowing how long a game can go is an element in itself. I've been to events with 1907 deadlines where it was common to draw in 1905, when I went to the world championships this year the games were untimed and yet I believe the longest a game lasted was 1912. So games were called early because that's when players felt like it was the right conclusion to end their games.

There were a few prizes other than just 1st, 2nd, 3rd and best countries. What were they and what were they awarded for?

We had some fun awards this time around, mostly just to reflect things that can't be shown by looking at a list of results. There was the Best Rookie award for someone playing in their first tournament won by Cameron Taylor, the best move award to celebrate something really impressive that someone did, which was won by Günther Bedson. Other fun awards was the best Australian (who isn't actually Australian) award, as there was one and almost two people who travelled all this way for the event so in some ways it was to celebrate that. This was won by Jeremy Tullet as chosen by our resident Aussie Darcy. We also had the best British player (who isn't actually British) as a way to celebrate there being five people who travelled from overseas for the event, and funnily enough this was won by Darcy Morris. On the DBN stream of last year's event a phrase was coined "the Dan Lester Peace Prize", for holding all your units because you are in control. So this year we made it an actual award, won by Maaïke Blom for getting the entire board to do all holds in the last turn accepting her board top. We also had the best Toby Harris, won by Chris Woolgar. And lastly there was the player's choice award, which after asking around for nominations on the Sunday morning went to David Wigglesworth. Günther Bedson, Dan Lester, Conrad Woodring

Do you think Dan was a worthy winner and why?

What can I say about Dan, he's incredible. That top board had incredible players everywhere, Conrad

was playing at the best I've personally seen from him, Günther came in as the reigning SpireCon champion, Darcy was showing us all that Australians sort of know their stuff, Mikalis is the current DBNI diplomat of the year and the 2023 North American dipcon winner, Bernard is a wonderful player who always seems so calm and easy to work with, and Maaïke is incredible having won multiple tournaments in the last twelve months. So, for Dan to not only win that board, but to have it drawn in spring 1908 on 13 centres with the next highest on 9 shows a level beyond almost anyone else in the world, and that's all that can be said really.

Next year you are passing over the NDC to a new Tournament Director. What's the story?

When I ran the NDC last year, I was able to use the title because there had been no other events in the country for nearly two years. I am not the most organised person in the world and much prefer being a player than an organiser. But someone needed to step up and I guess I was the only one wanting it bad enough to just do it. Now this year we have had three events so far (SpireCon making it's return in February ran by Chris, Manorcon in July with Dan Lester running it, and then the event in Warrington), so there is space for the baton to be passed to other interested parties. What that'll be, well you'll have to wait and find out but expect big things. I will still be running an event in Warrington once a year and I have plans of starting more regular house games in the area to bring in new players, but having other people who have the passion to run events and have their event be "the big one" for that year is no issue in my mind, and in fact should be welcomed if the hobby is to thrive.

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