

Owls Diplomacy News



SEPTEMBER 2007

Owls Open...

This issue lists the results of second round of the Owls Open Tournament. As you see there are quite a number of players in with a shot at the title. A solo will make the difference!

Also thanks to Peter McNamara for providing an analysis of Greece, always a pivotal and often a bloody province!

Trust you enjoy it.

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Owls Open Tournament 2007, Rd 2.

by TM

The second Round of the 2007 tournament has ended, with one epic game (2g) played right to the time draw. Most of the games were much shorter and I know many of you have been itching to get started on the third round! Well those games are now filling and you should have received an invitation to your table...

As a quick analysis, the various powers and their performance in Rd1 and Rd 2 follows:

Power	Rd 1	Rd 2
Austria	7.750	4.583
England	6.583	9.021
France	12.271	5.896
Germany	6.458	6.833
Italy	6.750	5.792
Russia	8.479	10.688
Turkey	4.125	8.833

The wheels fell off France and Austria whereas Turkey, England and Russia made strong improvement. Will be interesting to see the third round results included.

Standings after Round 2.

Player	Game	Score	Game	Score	Total
Ivan Milovanovic	71gR	35.000	72aI	11.000	46.000
Jonty Klassnik	71kF	35.000	72aF	11.000	46.000
Kyle Billingsley	71cE	35.000	72aE	7.000	42.000
Eric Kirwan	71jF	35.000	72aT	6.000	41.000
James Leadley	71aG	6.000	72eR	35.000	41.000
Jeremy Edwards	DNP	0.000	72hT	35.000	35.000
Thava Visvanathan	71aR	18.000	72bE	12.000	30.000
Brian McCain	71hA	15.000	72aR	15.000	30.000
Kyle Kalember	71dR	15.000	72bG	14.000	29.000
Alex Woodcock	71eA	10.000	72dR	18.000	28.000
Adam Schofield	71bA	12.000	72cR	15.000	27.000
Matthew McDonald	71fA	16.000	72bI	11.000	27.000
Andrius Krivas	71bI	11.000	72cG	15.000	26.000
Bill Perry	71aT	5.000	72fE	20.000	25.000
Dale Gander	71dI	15.000	72bA	10.000	25.000
Andrew Crollard	71dG	13.000	72cI	10.000	23.000
Gerry Evenwel	71fR	8.000	72dF	15.000	23.000
Mike Penzato	71fT	1.500	72gE	21.000	22.500
Craig Thibeault	71gT	1.500	72jG	20.000	21.500
Chris Burgess	71jG	2.000	72IE	19.000	21.000
Brad Basden	71iA	20.000	RSN	0.000	20.000
Robert Schwartz	71IT	19.000	72aG	0.750	19.750
John van Voorhis	71fI	13.000	72cF	6.000	19.000
Martin Podkrivacky	71gG	1.000	72gT	17.000	18.000
Rohan Light	71bF	18.000	RSN	0.000	18.000
Steve Messier	DNP	0.000	72kT	18.000	18.000
Greg Alderman	71hG	15.000	72bR	1.500	16.500
Aaron Denton	71eF	15.000	72bT	1.250	16.250
Luke Dwyer	71eI	8.000	72dI	8.000	16.000
John Pomeranz	71fE	5.000	72fA	11.000	16.000
Benjamin Weaver	DNP	0.000	72iA	15.000	15.000
Juliet Evans	DNP	0.000	72iR	15.000	15.000
David Conway	71iE	13.000	72cA	1.500	14.500
Sam Jones	71hI	13.000	72cE	1.250	14.250
Jorge Garcia	DNP	0.000	72KE	14.000	14.000
Scot Hicks	71hF	1.500	72kF	12.000	13.500
Dennett Ingram	71IF	8.000	72dE	5.000	13.000
Erik Hanberg	71cG	4.000	72fR	9.000	13.000
Stuart Auld	DNP	0.000	72iG	13.000	13.000
Chris Mosakewicz	71eG	12.000	72cT	0.750	12.750

Alex Collins	71jR	6.000	72eF	6.000	12.000
Andy Adams	DNP	0.000	72jT	12.000	12.000
Colden Rouleau	71fG	8.000	72el	3.500	11.500
David Robertson	71iG	2.000	72iT	9.000	11.000
Jason Gibbs	71aF	11.000	RSN	0.000	11.000
Lars Adolfsen	71iF	11.000	DNP	0.000	11.000
Matan Harel	71iG	10.000	72dA	0.750	10.750
Joshua Shank	71iR	7.000	72eE	3.500	10.500
Lee Lovejoy	71aA	6.000	72dT	4.000	10.000
Thomas Hultgren	71fF	2.000	72iG	8.000	10.000
Brendan Billingsley	71gF	6.750	72eA	3.000	9.750
Robert Pace	71kE	2.000	72hR	7.500	9.500
Henrik Rudstrom	71cT	6.000	72eG	2.000	8.000
Martin Williams	71bR	2.000	72jF	6.000	8.000
Michael Bilow	71jE	2.000	72iI	6.000	8.000
Almon Packard	DNP	0.000	72iA	7.000	7.000
Brett Arends	DNP	0.000	72jI	7.000	7.000
Steve Franey	71bE	6.000	72fG	1.000	7.000
David Start	71hR	0.750	72gl	6.000	6.750
Gary Rolfe	71dA	1.750	72jR	5.000	6.750
George Caruana	71bT	2.000	72iR	4.000	6.000
Mike Cosgrave	71gA	3.750	72fl	2.000	5.750
Edward Rustin	71aE	4.000	72aA	1.250	5.250
Alex Lee	71eR	5.000	RSN	0.000	5.000
Chris Zepf	71kT	5.000	DNP	0.000	5.000
Mark Riedeman	DNP	0.000	72hG	4.500	4.500
Byron Hynes	71jT	3.500	72kG	0.750	4.250
Karl Swetland	71bG	2.000	72hF	2.000	4.000
Molly Aichele	71kA	2.000	72gR	2.000	4.000
David Dessau	71dF	2.000	72gA	1.750	3.750
Kyle Doyle	71iT	2.000	72hE	1.750	3.750
Andrew McCraith	71cF	2.000	72iT	1.250	3.250
Mark Banta	71iR	1.000	72gF	2.000	3.000
Peter Schubert	71gl	2.750	DNP	0.000	2.750
Bob Herbert	71kG	2.500	DNP	0.000	2.500
Chris Kinsella	71jI	2.000	72kA	0.500	2.500
Dennis Baughn	DNP	0.000	72jE	2.000	2.000
Jeff Edwards	71hE	2.000	DNP	0.000	2.000
Mark Haines	71hT	2.000	DNP	0.000	2.000
Shane Serafin	71cR	2.000	DNP	0.000	2.000
Ben Fowler	DNP	0.000	72iE	1.750	1.750
D.J. Brasier	DNP	0.000	72kI	1.750	1.750
Neil Maneck	DNP	0.000	72hI	1.750	1.750
Tim Beaulieu	71cI	1.750	DNP	0.000	1.750
Alistair Lauchlan	71iI	1.500	DNP	0.000	1.500
Andrew Midwinter	DNP	0.000	72iI	1.500	1.500
Francois Lahey	DNP	0.000	72iF	1.500	1.500
Scott Dutcher	71iA	1.500	DNP	0.000	1.500
Joe Dzikiewicz	DNP	0.000	72hA	1.250	1.250
Rick Inman	71gE	1.250	DNP	0.000	1.250
Val Kukatov	DNP	0.000	72kR	1.250	1.250
Adonai Zahi	71jA	1.000	DNP	0.000	1.000

Josh Holland	71dT	1.000	RSN	0.000	1.000
Rick Hodge	DNP	0.000	72dG	1.000	1.000
Ron Rider	71iI	1.000	DNP	0.000	1.000
Adam Boynay	71eE	0.750	DNP	0.000	0.750
Greg Duenow	DNP	0.000	72iF	0.750	0.750

For interest, last years top board was Brad Basden, Jonathan Lawn, Alex Woodcock, Jeremy Edwards, Gert Jan Timmerman, Thomas de Klerk (eventual Champion) and Jonty Klassnik. Both Jonty and Jeremy have made it onto the top board this year as well as last, and Kyle has advanced from B last year to top board. Congratulations!

Wishing all players good games and trust you enjoy the tournament challenge!

Greece

by Peter McNamara

A discussion on the value of Greece, and the virtues of opening with the Balkan Gambit.

Greece sits adjacent to the Ionian and Aegean Seas, key spaces for the control of Italy and Turkey respectively, and on land borders the heart of the Balkans in Serbia as well as the primary Turkish expansion route in Bulgaria. By virtue of neighbouring such valuable real estate, as well as of course being a supply centre, Greece becomes a key space in its own right, and one worth fighting for (or having a pliant ally inhabit).

Not only is control of Greece usually a prerequisite for controlling the south-east region of the board, but how Greece is taken and occupied dictates to some extent how the occupant wishes the battle to progress. A fleet in Greece and the battle is for the seas, or an army in Greece and the battle is for the Balkans. Of course in either case the battle for Greece itself may still be on.

Like all provinces on the board, their immediate importance is proportional to their proximity to battle (or a potential battle). So once the region is safely secured, ownership is less important, though a division of supply centres between allies in a safe and even manner is always a touchy subject. With respect to the role of Greece in this regard it can be prudent for an Austrian player to cede Greece to an allied Italian or Turkish fleet as an example (assuming one receives some compensation, and preferably done with an eye for stabbing to regain the centre at a later date).

The most obvious point in time in a Diplomacy game where Greece and its neighbours are thick with battle is the opening, although the generalities discussed above apply at all times. However it is in the opening of the game and the position of Greece in the "triangle" of Austria, Italy and Turkey. And the question of whether or not Austria should open TRI-ALB (with an accompanying BUD-SER) in Spring 1901 that prompted the writing of this article, so that is what we shall now focus on.

In the sample of recent face-to-face games that I saw Austria fail to open TRI-ALB, in each case there was a common theme of a strong Turkey and a weak, if not eliminated Austria come the transition from the opening to the middle game. Looking for a larger sample of games to test the hypothesis that this trend continued, I turned to the 2006 Owls Tournament. Overall in this tournament, the Austrian performance was abysmal, but in those games which featured the (misnamed, since it is not a true gambit) Balkan Gambit of BUD-SER and TRI-ALB, the Austrian results were noticeably stronger.

To pick up the neutrals of Serbia and Greece and obtain two builds puts Austria in a strong position for 1902, covering many of its initial defensive weaknesses. Even in those unfortunate circumstances where a home centre is lost to an aggressive neighbour, taking Serbia and Greece with an army and fleet respectively not only provides an Austrian with the maximum military force to attempt to win back the lost dot or two, but also provides the greatest number of diplomatic options.

Since the game of Diplomacy is about the diplomacy more than anything else, particularly in the early game, it is the wealth of diplomatic options available that provides the most convincing advertisement for Austria to get its fleet to Greece in 1901 (preferably coupled with A SER to ensure that an opportunistic Turk does not interfere with its safe passage). An Austrian F GRE in 1901 can rightly profess to be everyone's friend. From the Italian point of view, the Austrian fleet is best placed in Greece not only so that it is away from Venice and the Adriatic, but for the pressure it can place on Turkey and its ability to fight for the Aegean Sea. From the Russian point of view, it keeps Turkish growth in check, and is ready to pounce on Bulgaria.

For the Turk, there are offers of support into the Ionian and/or Rumania that can be dangled, presenting either Italy or Russia as a

more attractive target than the (now) Austrian Greece and Serbia.

Conversely, if TRI-ALB is not ordered in Spring 1901, there are many things that can go wrong for the Austrian. Italy is likely to be the most unhappy, and more susceptible to offers to attack the Austrian. Russia will still be unhappy, especially if Turkey is given a free reign in the Balkans. Turkey on the other hand will be delighted, and more than likely will be looking to take one of Serbia and Greece for him or herself, or at least ensure that they are not Austrian. Such action is attractive to a Turk since it can usually be enacted without any fear of immediate retribution.

All of these considerations together would appear to be a glowing recommendation in favour of opening with the Balkan Gambit. It is my experience that most good players seem to know this and open accordingly, with rather extenuating circumstances required for a deviation. Not all readers though are (yet) highly skilled or experienced, and there is also some literature out there advocating the hedgehog approach to the opening (TRI-VEN, VI-GAL, BUD-RUM/SER), which really needs to be called the ugly (for Austria) Turkish dream it is.

Just because Austria can (for most practical purposes) force Greece in Spring 1901, does not mean that it is hers forever given this fluid game, and in fact it would be prudish to take stock of some of the dangers abounding. The fastest Italian way to gain control of Greece is to get Turkish support for a convoy of APU-GRE in Fall 1901. For the Turk in a Juggernaut alliance with Russia, RUM-SER coupled with FAEG S BUL-GRE in Spring 1902 wins Greece often, and always if Italy has taken Tunis with a fleet. These are not the only ways of course, for example a Turk may want to place a fleet there to force the Ionian against a non-compliant Austria, and this just illustrates the beauty and flexibility of this great game we play, that there are multiple ways for multiple countries to end up in control of this important supply centre they call Greece.

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Thorin Munro, Sydney, 4th September, 2007