

Christophe Borgeat winner of the French Championship 2025

The Champion's Corner is where recent tournament winners share the moves or strategies that helped them emerge victorious.

This week, we welcome Christophe Borgeat, winner of [French National Championship 2025](#) Hosted By Anjou Feu

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Triumph in the Vineyards: My Victory at the 2025 French Diplomacy Championship



From July 12th to 14th, 2025, the French Diplomacy Championship took place in Bellevigne-en-Layon, at the magnificent Château La Tomaze. Nestled among the vineyards of the Loire Valley, the venue offered not only breathtaking views but also the convenience of on-site lodging. The setting fostered a unique ambiance of strategic focus, conviviality, and immersion — a true paradise for Diplomacy enthusiasts.

Over four rounds, I faced a wide array of experienced players, navigating alliances, stabs, and shifting board states. The tournament format rewarded both consistency and boldness, and by the end of the weekend, I was the only player to top two boards — securing the overall title.

Round 1 - German Precision with a Northern Ally

The first game featured a six-player board, with Turkey managed by automatic (non-player) moves. I drew Germany and quickly formed a strong alliance with England, played by Kevin Lecoq. Sensing early that Russia lacked meaningful support from the east, we pounced. Our coordinated attack paid dividends — Russia collapsed under our joint pressure, and France, caught in the middle, struggled to find a stable position.

Surprisingly, Turkey, despite its automated moves, managed to hold on to three centers, thanks largely to the lack of coordination among Austria and Italy. In the end, I emerged with 8 centers for a board top, while both Italy and England finished on 7. It was a well-executed start, and an important psychological boost heading into the rest of the tournament.

Round 2 - Stalemates and Setbacks in the East

In Round 2, I played Italy in another six-player game, with Turkey again on autopilot. I allied with Austria (Brieuc Thibault), planning a campaign against the Turkish position. However, progress proved slow and costly. I clashed early with Russia over Constantinople — blocking his attempt to take the center but triggering a long-standing conflict that drained both our resources. Russia, out of spite, began supporting Turkey to prevent my expansion.

Things got worse when France turned westward and attacked me. With fleets diverted and no real breakthrough in the Balkans, I was squeezed from both directions. I ended the game on just 3 centers, while England secured a 9-center board top. It was a setback, but one I could absorb thanks to the solid result in Round 1.

Round 3 - The Black Sea Gambit

With the arrival of more players, we finally played a full seven-player board in Round 3. I drew Turkey and approached the game with caution and clarity. I quickly established peace with Italy (Eric Le Morvan), and formed a tactical alliance with Russia (Brieuc Thibault) to bring down Austria.

The early game played to our strengths. Russia came under attack from England in the north, allowing me to make decisive gains in the Balkans. Once Austria was eliminated, I turned on Russia in a well-timed stab and consolidated control around the Black Sea.

Crucially, my alliance with Italy held firm throughout. I built only two fleets during the entire game — one of which remained stationed in the Black Sea — showing both trust and strategic discipline. As the game progressed, I tightened my grip on the eastern half of the board and finished with a 9-center board top. This was my second board top of the tournament, and it positioned me firmly in the lead.

Round 4 - Holding the Line Under Pressure

I entered the final round leading the standings — always a dangerous position in Diplomacy. To my relief, I drew France, a nation with strong defensive potential. But the early game quickly turned into a nightmare: Italy and Germany launched a coordinated invasion, with an Italian army even moving through Munich to strike Burgundy. England soon joined the attack, and my defense collapsed — I lost Marseille and Brest early, and was reduced to just 3 centers.

However, fortune began to shift. In the east, a rapidly growing Austria-Turkey alliance caught Italy off guard, capturing Venice just as Italy had taken Marseille. This critical blow prevented him from building a new unit and forced him to redirect forces home.

Meanwhile, England turned against Germany in the north, relieving pressure on me. I regained Marseille, then managed to seize Belgium late in the game. I clawed my way back to 5 centers — not enough to top the board, but a remarkable recovery that earned me the “Cholet Basketball Team” award for the player who best bounced back from adversity.

Austria and England finished tied for the board top. Crucially, neither had previously won a round and there was a new winner on the other table too — meaning I remained the only player to have topped two boards. That sealed the deal: I secured first place overall in the tournament.

Final Thoughts - A Championship of Grit and Timing

Winning the 2025 French Diplomacy Championship was both thrilling and hard-earned. Across four very different games, I experienced moments of dominance, frustration, opportunity, and survival. I'm proud not only of the two board tops but also of my resilience in Round 4. In addition to the overall victory, I was awarded prizes for Best Germany (Round 1) and Best Turkey (Round 3), further validating the strategic choices and alliances I pursued throughout the weekend.

Château La Tomaze offered the perfect environment for a Diplomacy tournament — serene yet competitive, beautiful yet mentally intense. My thanks to the organizers, fellow players, and the local community for making this a memorable championship.

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