

World DipCon 2025 - Tournament Director's Report by Adam Silverman

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On Monday, March 31, I messaged Siobhan Nolen and Alex Amann in our group chat – is this actually happening? After the many months of lead up work, countless emails, Discord messages, phone calls, spreadsheets, and on and on, it was a bit surreal to recognize that the big event was only a few days away. I think I can speak for the entire organizing team to say how much we all love the Bay Area and San Francisco, and we really wanted to show our travelers what a great place this is. For folks who arrived early, we had two organized trips on Thursday – a group of around 8 led by local player Darin Leviloff and Siobhan drove to the Sonoma wine area, about an hour north of SF and enjoyed tasting some fine wines. A second group of 16 organized by Alex and me were heading to Muir Woods. Until we hit the first snag in our plans when we found out a redwood tree had fallen in the roadway and was blocking the entrance to the park. Fortunately for us, there are tons of beautiful places to explore, and we ended up instead taking a hike in the Marin Headlands in Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Local Nicolas Schoichet guided us on a beautiful 5 mile (or as most of our travelers call it, 8 km) walk while pointing out some of the interesting old WWII military installations in the area. After a quick drive back to SF, had some time to relax before our welcome dinner. We were really fortunate to find a venue willing to accommodate around 50 of us who had arrived early. It was a really nice evening with many folks meeting for the first time or catching up with old friends. It turns out Diplomacy players sure can talk – the happy buzz in our semi-private room was probably about 60 decibels louder than the rest of the restaurant.

Of course, the night didn't end there, as Randy Lawrence-Hurt reserved a private karaoke room for us a few blocks away. There were some impressive performances (yes, the Australians are good at this too), and some less than impressive ones (not going to name names, but... me?). I turned in a little after midnight, but I understand folks were singing till 1am and then back at the hotel hanging out much later. With no morning round to wake up early for on Friday, why not? Despite the late night, Riaz Virani, Emmet Wainwright, Ben Kellman, and I managed to get up relatively early and take morning run together around the Embarcadero. Thankfully I didn't capture any photos of that event, but meanwhile Siobhan led a group to get Irish Coffee to ensure the day would start off right. A bunch of folks headed over to Alcatraz later in the morning, while Siobhan, Alex, and I stayed back to get the rooms set up and greet folks who were getting in during the day on Friday. Before things kicked off, we were treated to the unveiling of amazing project that led by Justin Loar – Diplomacy trading cards, with graphics by Matt Pickard. This was such a creative and cool project, that set an amazing tone for event.

The main activities kicked off at 4pm local time with a hobby panel featuring Edi Birsan, Nicholas Sahuguet, and Dan Lester, hosted by David Hood. The panel talked about a range of topics with a focus on the history and importance of World DipCon as a hobby institution, as well as how far the international hobby has come in the past decade plus in building a welcoming inclusive community of players.

Following the panel, we kicked off the games. I've gone into more details about the structure of the tournament in past articles, but to briefly summarize: the best 2 of 3 scores in rounds 1-3 counted toward qualifying for a "championship pool" in round 4. The Championship Pool seeded the top 21 players together over 3 boards, and these folks competed for the World Championship title, receiving a 50% scoring bonus in their round 4 game. Players who didn't qualify played in the Team

Tournament in round 4. Everyone's final score was computed as the sum of their top two scores in rounds 1-3 plus their round 4 score. Games in rounds 1-3 were time-unlimited, while games in round 4 had a 2-hour window within which the games would time out.

I won't go into details of the games here though I hope some of the players will provide write-ups, and you can watch coverage of many of the games on Diplomacy Broadcast Network. Friday night featured 14 boards. The games were hard fought, and several went late into the night. While some folks got off early, with the first games ending well before midnight, the latest board finally called a draw at around 4am. Did I mention that round 2 would be starting only around 5 hours later, at 9am? Round 2 featured 13 boards, and the one and only solo of the tournament by Adam Sigal's Turkey. Most of the games ended in time for the 4:30pm hobby meeting, the focus of which was to select the location for World DipCon in 2027. There were two bids presented: Brandon Fogel presented a bid for Chicago on behalf of the Windy City Weasels, and Ryan Feathers presented a bid for Las Vegas on behalf of Thomas Haver, who was not in attendance. The vote was strongly in favor of Chicago. Broken down by region, Las Vegas had 1 vote from Europe, 0 from Australia, and 4 from North America, while Chicago had 9 votes from Europe, 7 from Australia, and 42 from North America. The World DipCon charter stipulates that if there are more than 10 votes in a region, those votes get normalized to 10, so the normalized vote tally worked out to 24.9 for Chicago and 1.9 for Las Vegas. Congrats to the Chicago Windy City Weasels. I believe they've hosted WDC twice before, most recently in 2016, and always do a phenomenal job. After the vote, tournament directors for upcoming events shared details of their tournaments. Most notably, Spyros and Georgina Dovas shared a ton of information about next year's World DipCon, which will be held in Athens, Greece in May 2026. Round 3, which featured 12 boards, was the last of the qualifying rounds, so folks who needed a good score would have to go all out. I expected this round to go even later than round 1, but all of the boards actually drew by around 3am – still very late by my standards. Of course, even with the games over, the I didn't get to bed for another hour or two, as I had to enter and double check all of the scores going into round 4. It turned out that 21st place was a tie, and we had to go two tiebreakers deep to settle it (Jake Mannix eking out Jonhny Gillam for the final spot). On Sunday morning, started the Championship Pool boards, featuring the 21 players who would be playing for the WDC crown, while the remaining players formed teams for the Team Tournament. Each team had 7 players, and the teams assigned each player one of the great powers to play. We had 9 teams, and seeded boards so teammates were separated. In addition to scoring individual points, team scores were the sum of the individual scores of the teammates. The Championship Pool boards were intense; check out the DBN stream if you would like to see the details. I'll just say that the intensity of 21 folks all playing with the World Championship on the line certainly lived up to expectations. Remarkably, while I'm not sure if it was a feature or bug of the system, I think most people went into the awards ceremony not sure who had won. Adam Sigal had the huge score from the only solo in the tournament and also had another big score from his round 1 game but was targeted and ultimately eliminated in his Championship Pool game. Noam Brown overtook Adam to become the 2025 World Champion based on his 16 center England in round 2, 14 center Turkey in round 3, and 8 center Italy in round 4. Congratulations Noam, our 2025 Whipping and World DipCon Champion! Following the tournament, many players were staying in town for a few days and went off on some individual and group exploring. Edi organized a trip to see the SF Giants baseball game Monday night, which was well attended, particularly by our Australian and European visitors. Any event this large requires a village to make it happen, so I want to conclude with a lot of thank yous. Our Bay Area, California local players came out, helped host and show the travelers a great time, and were so incredibly supportive of the event. The Hotel Spero staff was incredible in working with us and meeting all our needs throughout the weekend. Liam Stokes maintained our website. Hal Schild designed the WDC 2025 logo and T shirts for us; we were sad that he ultimately couldn't attend, but he still got a shirt! Chris Brand's diplomacytv software is a life saver for tournament directors the world over, and he went above and beyond putting in work to adjust the

software specifically to accommodate for the needs of this event. The Diplomacy Broadcast Network put on amazing coverage of WDC, providing their always incredible insights and play-by-plays for the games. And that coverage wouldn't have been possible without all the games getting sandboxed (recorded on Backstabbr), an effort which was coordinated by Patrick Jacobson. Of course, what makes these events successful is the people who attend, and I am so incredibly grateful that people took time out of their busy lives to attend, coming from all over the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. We had 105 players, which I believe makes it the largest World DipCon since Berlin in 2006! Finally, my co-organizers Siobhan Nolan, Alex Amann, and Edi Birsan are absolutely the best in the business. Putting this event together was such an incredibly collaborative experience of many, many hours of work that happened before the event, not to mention all of the logistical and tournament directing support over the course of the weekend. It was a pleasure and privilege to host World DipCon 2025, and this event is in phenomenal hands with Spyros Dovas in 2026 and Brandon Fogel in 2027. Hope I'll see you all in Athens next year!

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