

EuropeMasters 2011

Pevans at the European Board games Championship

This is the European Board games Championship and takes place on the Saturday of Spiel each year (it was originally called Intergame). It's for teams of four, who all play (as individuals) a set of four games against members of other teams. Most teams have qualified through similar tournaments in their own country (I believe Germany has regional competitions leading to their national championships).

I've taken part in this several times and was roped in again this year to join 'A Fistful of Dobbers', one of two UK teams. That's two out of 32 teams from 12 countries across Europe. It's a wonderfully international gathering and a great place to get away from the crush that is a normal Saturday at Spiel.

The tournament

The first game was *Troyes* (Pearl Games), a game I enjoy but find a bit fiddly. Crucial to the game are the three sets of cards that are available (at a cost) for players to use to convert die rolls into cash, influence and victory points. I immediately spotted a good combination of cards and bought onto them. Unfortunately, the player on my right (who went on to win) spotted what I was doing and did his best to deprive me of the yellow dice I needed to use my cards. I was squeezed into fourth place, which was rather disappointing.

Second was *Olympos* (Ystari Games), which I really like. It's a game of two boards: one showing a map of Ancient Greece where players grab territory to gain resources. The other is a grid of the developments and wonders that will give players advantages—and victory points. I made the mistake of being greedy: I saw an opportunity of getting two Wonders, but took the less valuable one first. A bad mistake and another fourth place. Oh dear...



EuropeMasters 2011 in progress

After lunch (sausage in a bun—hey, I'm in Germany!), the game was *7 Wonders* (Repos Productions). I was a bit surprised that this was included as I find it quite a light game. However, it is excellent and it's good to have a card game in the tournament. The organisers' analysis of the results suggest that the players who got Halicarnassus did significantly better. That was certainly the case in my game—though the woman who won with Halicarnassus spent most of the game complaining that she really didn't like it! I did well enough to take second place—winning the last game would bring me close to average (and would mean I'd win just once!).

The closing game was *Navegador* (published by PD-Verlag and reviewed in issue 118 of *To Win Just Once*), another game I really like. The trick to *Navegador* is taking advantage of other players' strategies and doing something different. The player on my right managed to sit on the fence for several turns, not committing to any obvious strategy. I capitalised on my early purchase of colonies by making this my main thrust and my neighbour was then good enough to do lots of exploring.

Cash was tight as the two opposite us had a nice racket going in pumping up the markets for each other and buying lots of buildings with the cash they generated. However, at the end of the game, they deliberately left a single building on the board so that the game went one more round. This let me cash in on the market for once and buy several more colonies. It also let the man on my right maximise his strategy: first for him, second for me. Ah well.

The results

After four games, I had two fourth places and two seconds, giving me just 8 points. As a team, we had achieved a completely average score of 44 points, leaving us 19th out of the 32 teams. Most of this was due to our star player, Nick Harrison (a former European champion with 'Sharkbait'), who placed third overall with 17 points (a perfect score for winning all four games would be 20 points and is occasionally achieved). Well done, Nick. The other UK team, 'Nil Nominatus', came in 7th.

The individual prize went to Bernd Radmacher of German team



Team Trebotov brandish their trophy – though one of them seems a little shy...

'Meister der Magie' with 18 points. This wasn't enough for his team, though, as they only placed 5th. Dutch team 'Krasse Knarren' took 4th, the Czechs of 'One Day Heroes' were 3rd and 'Aachen Fantastics' from Germany came second. The winning team, however, and 2011 European Boardgame Champions were 'Trebotov' from the Czech Republic, who got 56 points in total.

Congratulations to the Trebotov team and to Bernd Radmacher, who (along with the other top-placed teams) received plaques, trophies and a stack of prizes. Many thanks to Ronald van Lent and his team of volunteers for organising a great day's gaming and an excellent competition. Thanks, too, to the sponsors of the event, particularly the publishers who provide their games for the teams.

Next year's championships will be at Spiel on 20th October 2012. Who will be representing Britain? That will depend on next year's Spielchamps, the UK qualifying tournament. For more about EuropeMasters, see the website at www.europemasters.org. There's information on SpielChamps at www.ukboardgaming.com.

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