



Diplomacy[®]

Escalation Diplomacy Variant **by Edi Birsan**

Diplomacy is a time-proven, classic seven-player game with fine balance between all the countries. Sometimes, however, seven people aren't available to play, or eight or more people show up for the game. "Escalation" is a system that provides a solution to that problem and a unique game experience each time it's played.

THE RULES

Set out the board with no pieces on it.

Each player takes a different-colored set of pieces. If there are more than seven players, either use some other sort of tokens or have two players share a color -- one player aligns his pieces north-to-south, and the other aligns them east to west. Decide who goes in what order during the Escalation Placement phase of the game. An easy way to do this is to let the owner of the game place first, followed by others in alphabetical order by last name.

Decide on the number of pieces players will place during the Escalation. The recommended numbers of pieces are listed below.

- 2 players: 12
- 3 players: 8
- 4 players: 6
- 5 players: 5
- 6 players: 4
- 7 or more players: 3

Starting with the first player, each player gets a turn to place one piece on the map. This is the Escalation. Players who go first have more choices but those who place later have more information to react to. The first piece can be an Army or a Fleet, and it can be on any legal, unoccupied space, including a Supply Center.

Continue placing pieces one at a time until the agreed number of pieces is placed.

Each player owns any Supply Center containing one of his pieces at the start.

Continue until the agreed number of pieces are placed.

Play the Spring '01 and the Fall '01 seasons as in a normal game. As part of the Winter '01 resolution, however, each player writes down three supply centers under his control that he will consider his "home centers" (where he can build units) for the rest of the game. Players are not limited to declaring traditional home centers. Their centers don't even need to be adjacent. For example a player could declare Brest, London, and Naples as his three home centers if he owns them in the Winter of 1901.

Discussions can be limited to tableside only (all discussions open to all), none ("known as the Gunboat style of play"), or traditional, private talks. For four or fewer players, it's recommended that there be no discussions except at the table.

As a teaching device for two players, increase the number of starting pieces to 17. This makes the Escalation phase more intense and stresses the need to plan ahead.

Players may want to limit the time to placing pieces to 30 seconds if it drags on too long.

