

WIFCON Hofgeismar 2015 Table 5 Report

Sides

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Summary

This was the last table to start. Set up was not completed until late Friday night, play began Saturday morning and lasted until the following Saturday afternoon. The players sacrificed sleep and drinking time in an effort to catch up, but still the game ended in SO43.



The Axis played an aggressive France first strategy, with early Italian DOW and an invasion of Southern France which saw the Italian Mech Corps reach Paris (but not take it) before the Germans.

At the same time, Japan launched an early invasion of Siberia, taking Vladivostok in MA40. France was Vichied in MJ, and the Axis (aided by long turns and favourable weather) didn't hang about:

Suez fell in JA and Iraq was aligned in SO, forcing the Soviets to invade Iran in ND. Japan aligned with Iran, sent in her peacekeepers and held Teheran.

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This was followed by a JF41 Barbarossa built around a stunning first impulse capture of Leningrad. This would not be a boring game!



By the end of the year the Germans had reached the Don and taken Rostov. However, the Soviets had survived, holding Moscow and Murmansk and saving the bulk of their Army, while the CW declared war on Vichy and landed in an undefended Morocco after a year of focusing on the bomber war - Björn's catchphrase "Der Bomber kommt immer durch"¹ accompanying every hit.

In the East, China was holding on, despite losing Kunming. Then Japan declared war on the Netherlands in SO followed by the CW and the USA in ND41 - to the relief of the US player, whose entry chits and tension rolls had been unfortunate. Japanese carriers raided Pearl Harbor and Los Angeles, sinking two CVs but losing one of their own when the USN's battleships sortied and surprised the Japanese task force off the Californian coast. Thereafter there would be no major naval battles, a combination of fleet in being strategies and missed searches.

¹ "The bomber will always get through".

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1942 saw relentless German attacks on the Eastern Front. After a year of desperate fighting they held Moscow and Stalingrad but failed again to break the integrity of the Soviet Line, as the Russians traded space for time and avoided excessive casualties. In the West, the Commonwealth developed her Western Mediterranean offensive, taking Algeria and Corsica and invading Sardinia. In Asia, Japan invaded India overland through Burma and began an epic siege of Calcutta that was to continue until the end of the game.



In 1943 the strategic initiative began to change hands. The Soviets switched from defence to offense, aided by the Germans' increasing focus on other fronts.

By the end of SO43, when play was abandoned, they had retaken Moscow, Stalingrad and Rostov while seeking revenge on Japan by breaking the pact, driving them out of Iran and invading Manchuria.



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In the West, the Axis fought hard to slow down the CW advance, tenaciously contesting the Western Med and using U-Boats against transports in preference to convoys, to great effect.

By the end the CW had to be satisfied with Sardinia, Tunisia and toeholds in Southern Italy and the Northern Adriatic.



In the far East, Germany supported the attack on India with an attack on Bombay, but both Bombay and Calcutta held out while the US seized the Marshall Islands, devastated Japan's convoys ("Jeder bekommt die Convoyverluste die er verdient"² according to the German player) and made ominous moves towards NEI and the Philippines.



It was a shame to end the game because much still hung in the balance and both sides still nurtured offensive plans.

² "Everyone gets the convoy losses they deserve".