

Boardgame Players Association Announces Top Awards

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The Boardgame Players Association, sponsor of the World Boardgaming Championships (<http://www.boardgamers.org>) that take place annually in Lancaster, PA, has announced its top honors for 2009:

- GM of the Year—Jim Jordan, MD
- Sportsmanship Award—Mark Yoshikawa, CA
- Caesar Award (Top Overall Player)—Stefan Mecay, TX
- Consult Award (Top WBC Player)—Rich Meyers, MN

WBC 2009 GM of the Year



BPA's Top Gamemaster honor for 2009 went to Jim Jordan of Maryland, who bested the *Here I Stand* GM and fellow Marylander, Ed Beach, by a single point, 72-71, in voting by the association's board of directors, despite getting no first place votes to Ed's three. His winning score of 72 (out of 96 points) was based on a strong overall performance in the view of all eight voters. This was Jim's fourth Top Six GM performance. He has long been active at WBC as a GM and has served 11 straight years as the *Britannia* GM.

Jim's recognition as GM of the Year probably has more to do with a long history of consistency than anything new he did differently in 2009. As he has done nearly every year, Jim has always been punctual, neat and complete with paperwork requirements. He is one of a very few GMs to submit his schedule requests in carte blanche format, allowing the Convention Director to schedule the event as facilities allow in accordance with other events at the cost of his own personal convenience.

He also always contributes "Best Side" awards for players scoring best with each of the game's four colors as well as an award for the lowest score (Ethelred the Unready). And as was recognized earlier when he won the Sportsmanship Award, he continues to put his own playing opportunities last by playing only when necessary to round out each heat's total entrants with even multiples of four players. In addition, he has provided additional prizes such as books at his own expense and has the engraving updated for the traditional silver tray donated by original GM Scott Pfeiffer.

Above all he is calm, clear and not easily ruffled—commanding and getting the respect of his participants. He also was instrumental in welcoming game designer Lou Pulsipher to WBC and making him a regular part of the *Britannia* WBC community with the result that the newly published 2nd edition of *Britannia* was designed with comments from WBC players playing a major role. Through Jim's good offices the game was playtested at WBC—having an effect on the hobby beyond the boundaries of our own WBC enjoyment.

Second-place finisher Ed Beach received extra consideration for his work in the WBC Juniors room and the *Great Campaigns* event. Tom Gregorio garnered his first Top Six honors to finish third with 62 points for hosting *The Russian Campaign*. Rounding out the remainder of our Top Six GMs were Richard Irving (*Merchant of Venus*) with a score of 61, Stuart Tucker (*Hannibal*) at 58, and Eric Brosius (*Princes of Florence*) with a score of 56.

For a list of previous WBC GMs of the Year, see <http://www.boardgamers.org/topgmwinners.htm>.

WBC 2009 Sportsmanship Award



The second leg of the BPA Triple Crown of Annual End of Year Honors is the Sportsmanship Award. It is especially feted since it is something we should all aspire to and is within our reach regardless of how many hours we spend honing our boardgame skills. It reminds us that there is no fun to be had with games without an affable opponent with which to cross vicarious swords. Who among us has not had a moment when we were too caught up in the quest for "wood"? BPA's Sportsman of the Year subscribes to a higher standard and offers a shining example of sportsmanship that we should all do our best to emulate.

The winner was selected from among many nominees put forth by gamemasters and other interested commentators whose recommendations were considered and reduced to a field of 25 worthies added to BPA's annual Membership Drive ballot for selection by the association membership at large.

All 25 nominees received votes but winning handily with 17% of the record 323 votes caste was Mark Yoshikawa. The California native and everyone's favorite *Slapshot* referee was nominated in both *Slapshot* and *B-17*, events in which he has a long record of service. A *B-17* assistant GM, he created a database of his own design to provide results and statistics of the B17 missions as play progresses which adds much color to the competition and the After-Action meeting of this unique event.

Mark wears a referee's uniform and enforces a "No Whining" rule, escorting offenders to the penalty box in the annual Saturday night *Slapshot* event at WBC. As if that wasn't enough, Mark is always among the volunteers in the WBC Junior room. Finishing second with a respectable 12% of the vote was Ben Knight. He was followed by Jason Levine 11%, Bryan Collars 10%, John Ohlin 9% and Mark Gutfreund at 8%.

See <http://www.boardgamers.org/wbc/sportman.htm> for a list of previous WBC Sportsmanship Award winners.

Caesar Award (Top Overall Player during 2009)

Stefan Mecay of Texas, in only his fourth full year of competition at WBC (<http://www.boardgamers.org/>), became BPA's 11th Caesar with a record 295 Laurels for the 2009 season, besting runner-up James Pei's total of 293 when Pei was Caesar in 2004.



Laurels are awarded for each of the top six places in every BPA-sponsored event throughout the year, including at WBC, mini-conventions, and in play-by-email-events. The level of points earned for a given event is directly related to the number of players in and length of the event. Thus, bigger and longer events offer more laurels to the top players.

This year James, from Virginia, could muster only 157 laurels to finish second. Stefan had run up a huge lead before WBC by winning two large email tournaments—*Paths of Glory* and *Twilight Struggle*—in the card-driven wargame genre that is his specialty. He padded that lead with two wins at the BPA's 2009 Winter Activation Meeting—in *Twilight Struggle* and *1960: The Making of the President*—and then added a fourth-place in *Manifest Destiny* at BPA's Enlightenment for good measure.

It would have taken an incredible WBC to overtake him, even if he did not attend the summer championships. However, attend he did, and taking another *Paths of Glory* win during Pre-Con all but guaranteed his fitting at the toga emporium. The line of succession included Ken Gutermuth, NC; John Emery, NC; reigning Caesar Alex Bove, PA; and Curt Collins II, PA, who finished third through sixth respectively.

See <http://www.boardgamers.org/wbc/caesar.htm> for complete details on the Caesar contest.

Consul Award (Top Player at WBC 2009)



As great as Mecay's year was, he couldn't rule alone and finished well down the list for Consul honors. Consul is composed of only the results earned during the seven days of WBC itself. All Laurels earned at WBC will still count for the Caesar Award, but only those earned at WBC itself will determine the Consul so as to give everyone an equal shot on a level playing field.

With 14 multiple winners, the race for Consul was the most hotly, contested ever. In fact, it ended in a tie as both Rich Meyers, MN, and Curt Collins II, PA, tied with 100 each. Both won two events, but Rich won the largest event tie-breaker to don the consular robes by the slimmest of margins. A third challenger, newcomer Kyle Greenwood, HI, would have taken them both if Pre-Con laurels counted in the Consul race. His second in *Hannibal* would have given him 116 laurels and made his first WBC memorable indeed! As it was he finished in a four-way tie for sixth at 80 laurels with Steve Pleva, CT; Richard Beyma, VA; and John Elliott, MD. The other top Consul contenders were Jim Castonguay, PA; Chris Withers, CA; and 2005 Caesar Arthur Field, SC.

See <http://www.boardgamers.org/wbc/caesar.htm#consul> for complete details on the Consul contest.