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Dedicated To Backgammon

Blackberry Messenger



Paul Money offers
advice to those
learning and those
still catching up.



Goldiblots finds
something fishy
at the Bore's house!

Richard Biddle and wife, Caroline
play around outside, watched by
Sue Keeble and Mosen Jalaei.



Mayhem and temper
tantrums at big money
Event in London.

Peter Bennet bides his time
to bring you a series of
problem positions.



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Beginners Please by Paul Money

gamm^onlife.com

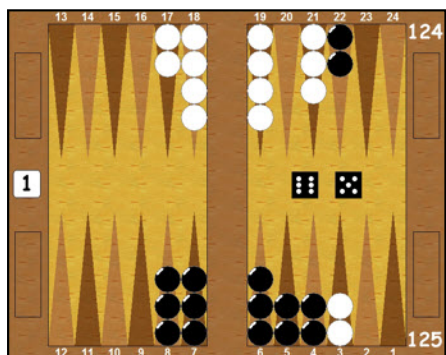
In a pervious lesson we were looking at anchors and how to play against them with the cube. We didn't need to think about checker play much. The attacker tries to get home safely without leaving a shot, while the defender sits and waits and hopes.

However, there are of course many situations where the checker play of the anchor holder is difficult and this time we'll look at some of them. As usual, we're not trying to remember specific positions, because backgammon can't really be learned in that way. What we are trying to do is to learn what features of the position are important so that we can organize our thinking when we face a similar position over the board.

Some of the most difficult problems in backgammon occur in quite mundane games when we have to ask ourselves, "Should I run off the anchor this turn?" Even the bots sometimes struggle with these.

In the position below, both sides are anchored on the 3-point. They are playing what is known as a mutual holding game. The first thing to note about these is that the side that gets forced off the anchor first is usually at a disadvantage because the other side will attack the checker that is left behind.

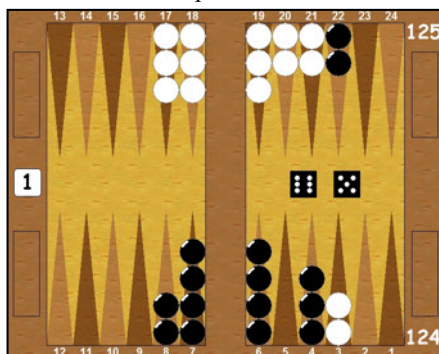
Black leads 2-0 in a 3 point match and has a 65 to play – they are in the Crawford game so neither side has much to gain from winning or losing a gammon.



The race is close; Black trails 125-124 before the roll. He has a reasonable way to play the roll by making the 2-point, but should he run out 22/11? Yes he should. If he just makes the 2-point, then he risks being unable to run next turn as White can keep all her blocking points with every number except 44, always a notorious prime buster. If he runs now, then he has a better board and a better prime to fight a blot-hitting contest. It's all about flexibility next turn. Running keeps all

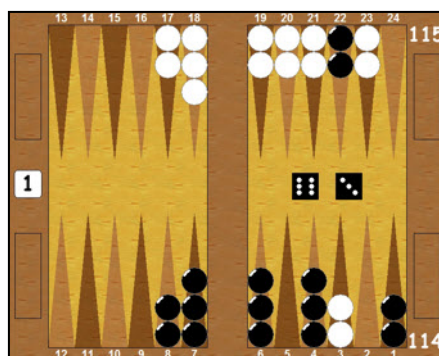
his checkers available for play, whereas making the 2-point reduces his playable checkers to 13.

What if the positions were reversed? Look at this next position:



Now Black leads 124-125, but running would be a clear error. If he plays 22/11 White can attack with almost every number and her stronger board and longer prime will make her the favourite in a blot-hitting contest. Black should just make his 1-point and wait for a better opportunity. It's true that he will still be behind a five-prime next turn, but he will at least still be anchored.

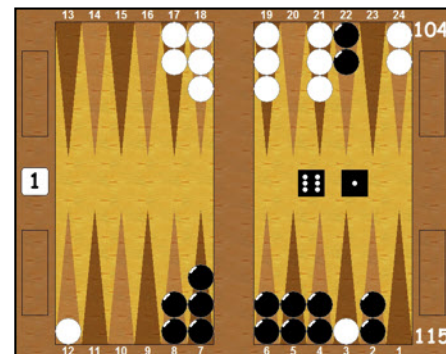
After another turn the situation might look like this:



Both players have made another point inboard so one would think that the net effect would be a wash, but that isn't actually true. White made her extra point by using two of her active builders, whereas Black used two spares that were surplus to requirements anyway. He still has three active builders which can make another point inboard or be used for attack if he gets the chance. White now only has one spare, reducing her attacking chances considerably. Black should take his chance and go now, because if he

doesn't he will have to bury two more checkers on the 1-point and that is a concession that he just can't afford to make.

The play difficulties in these situations aren't restricted to deciding whether or not to run. Once one player has broken the anchor, the question of how to respond is often far from straightforward. In this game, Black then faced this tricky roll:

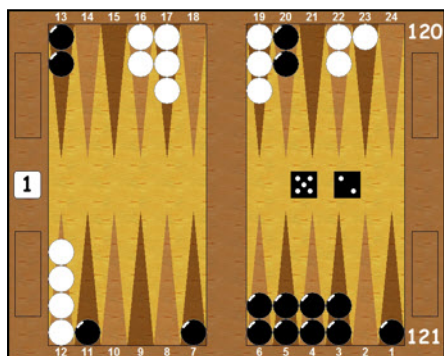


The first option to discard is 8/2, 8/7. Black's 5-prime is his most valuable asset right now and he has to keep it. The move of 7/1, 2/1 is a decent play and would be clearly best if it was a game where gammons counted. However, at this score, both sides can effectively disregard gammons, so Black needs to step out with the 6, playing 22/16, 22/15. It isn't often that you choose a play giving your opponent almost every number to hit and/or escape, but Black has to try it here. It's risky, but there is more danger in playing passively. This is particularly true when playing a fallible human being as the passive play means that White in her turn won't face so many difficult decisions.

Weighing up the possibilities of two entirely different game plans is extremely difficult even for the very best players. This is why I recommend that you play out positions like this, by yourself or with a partner, so that you find out the sort of thing that can happen as the game unfolds further. The experience that you will gain and the confidence that comes from it when you encounter a similar situation another time are immensely valuable. Try playing from this position, 7/1, 2/1 and then 22/15 about 50 games each, and record your results for your home- ➤

work. It won't take too long with the game this near to the end.

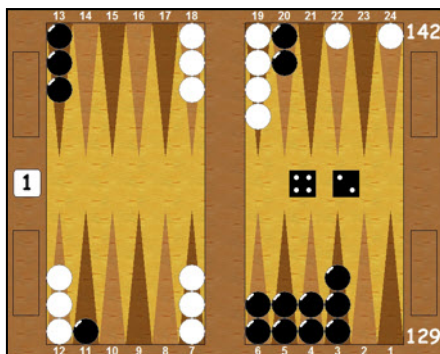
Run or stay problems often occur from the 20-point anchor for some reason and are invariably difficult. Here's one faced by Luigi Villa in the 2006 World Championship Final. Villa is trailing 13-7 versus Philip Vischjager of Holland at this point. Should he think about running here?



Black is 1 pip behind 121-120 and will only lead by 6 pips after the roll. Human beings at all levels will wait here, treating the only issue as being whether Black should keep the mid-point for another roll and the bots will do the same, but running 20/13 may well be the best play.

Why should Black even consider running into a race that is so close? Well, White's attacking chances are not too good just yet because of her very weak board and Black does have 14 rolls that complete his escape next turn. If he waits, White's board will certainly get stronger and she will usually be able to bring more checkers into position to attack a straggler. If Black was much behind in the race that wouldn't be so important, but with the race so close he may roll well enough to be forced to leave at just the time when White is strongest. If White rolls large numbers that clear her mid-point and take a good lead in the race, then she will be able to double Black out whether he is anchored or not. This position will give you some idea of how hard the decision can be and some of the things that you should be considering!

There were a number of these decisions in that match and Villa faced something similar in the first game. It looked like this:



Villa leads by 13 pips in the race, White's home board is a mess and Black's own board is very strong. This all seems to argue for running, 20/16, 13/11 but it is probably a small error. It exposes two blots rather than the more usual one, and this is not only more vulnerable to attack but much harder to tidy up next turn. Also, unlike the previous position, it isn't just a question of escaping and getting into the race, it's converting from a mutual holding game, 20-point v. 18-point, to a game where he has to bear in safely against the bar anchor, so clearing the 20-point anchor is far from conclusive. The best play here is probably 13/9, 11/9.

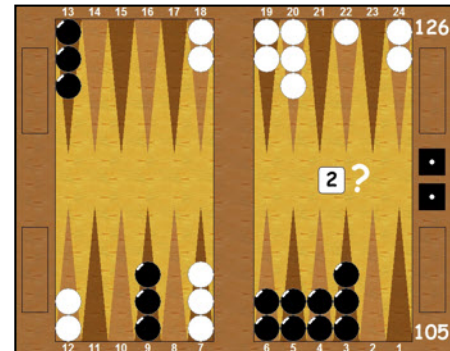
A master player analyzing this position will notice straight away that White's structure is unusually brittle. Her checkers are widely separated and don't combine well to make points. She has no chance of building a prime and although she has slotted two points in her home board, they are less threatening, lower points.

The best way of developing positions that lack good structure is to hit blots, so Black should deny White that opportunity, make the 9-point and allow White's position to disintegrate further. Basically, you oppose weak structure with good structure. This concept is not something that you are going to grasp in the space of one paragraph, so for the moment just be aware that it exists.

You will find this and similar themes developed more fully in Bill Robertie's excellent volume *Modern Backgammon*, not really a beginner's book but one that you will want to own one day. It also contains a superb annotation of a long match between the two strongest players

of the modern era, Jerry Grandell and Nack Ballard and you will find this wonderfully instructive. Studying annotated matches is a great way to learn and Robertie is a master of the art.

After Black made the 9-point, he cleared the anchor in the next two moves to arrive at the position below. Would you double this?



Black will win the game 73% of the time from here, quite enough to double from the middle. Players of all standards will tend to wait with the cube in this position, afraid that they will be unable to clear the mid-point without leaving a shot. The things that you need to take into account are these.

Firstly, Black's spare checkers will buy him at least two rolls grace before he will be forced to break a point. Secondly, White's board isn't much of a threat as it stands and she will have to roll very well to complete it. She has only 13 checkers to play with, always a handicap and one of those is the spare on the anchor that may yet have difficulty getting into the game. Black must double now as he can lose his market by throwing a double that clears the midpoint or by leaving a shot and being missed.

Once again we have run out of time, but I hope that these positions have demonstrated a few of the things that you need to be thinking about.

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Biddle Dumb and Biddle Dee vs Sue Keeble and Mohsen Jalaei

By Sean Williams and Richard Biddle

Saturday 3rd October 2009 was a first in the history of backgammon for a couple of reasons. First, it saw the inaugural game on what may be the largest fixed backgammon board in the world - the Biddle patio. Secondly it saw the first game in the 2009 Backgammon in London Doubles Championship with Richard and Caroline Biddle taking on Sue Keeble and Mohsen Jalaei. The match was to 7 points and it was a classic.



Richard & Caroline, Sue and Mohsen



Is this the UK's biggest permanent backgammon board measuring 8.5 feet by 9.5 feet?

Notice the orange buckets used as shakers. The bevelled sticks are for moving the pieces saving your back.



Is this a cocked dice?

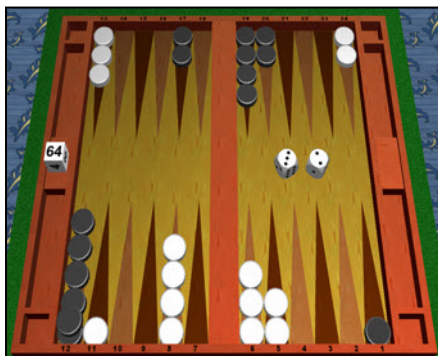
OK Lets get this match started. The Biddles (on the left above) take on Mohsen and Sue.

Game 1: Biddles (w) 0 - M&S (b) 0

The Biddles opened the first game with a 21 and showed their aggressive style by slotting with 13/11, 6/5.

Sue and Mohsen (black) - henceforth to be abbreviated to M&S which they preferred to S&M - responded with a lover's leap.

The Biddles covered and brought another man to the 8-point with 51, M&S made their 5-point with a 31 and we got to this position:



Pip count: W158, B152
White to play 32

Richard proudly announced that he had been studying the World Champion's seminar on blitzing and priming structures and declared that they must split at the back with 24/21. So far so good but the Biddles played the remaining two 11/9 rather than 13/11. With all his advanced lessons swimming round his head Richard had forgotten that making points is good.

Lesson 1: Making points is good

Biddle's defence - yes, on hindsight possibly the wrong move, however, I didn't want to strip the mid-point, lose builders and I saw little value in owning the 11-point and the 5-point. I felt it was better to bring the builder forward to the 9-point to bear in on the 4-point. Perhaps, I should have been more focused on making the bar-point. I am unsurprised by Smart-Ass Sean (S-AS) gloating over this error but I never suspected Snowie would punish me so much by making it 7th best play (Mini-rollout gave it -1.03 behind S-AS suggested move). This is an example of not getting too tied up with general principles and keeping an open mind on each roll.

M&S smoothed with 51 played 13/8, 6/5. The Biddles rolled a great 66 correctly

making the 5-prime 21/9, 13/7 (2). M&S then had a 54 to play here:



How does black play 54 from here?

Black cannot hope to compete in a priming battle with white. The right game plan here is to point on the 1-point and hope to escape the back checker whilst white is languishing on the bar. The blot on the 12-point does make blitzing a very viable plan. M&S played 13/8, 13/9 leaving white their full roll to play.

Lesson 2: Don't try to counter-prime when you are losing in the priming battle and have a reasonable chance to blitz

After the incorrect play of the 54 the Biddles find themselves in the position on the following page. This is a thin

cube and an easy take. None-the-less I would definitely throw the cube over here and see if you can get your opponents to hallucinate a pass.



Pip count: W129, B137
White missed cube

Biddles defence – S-AS absolutely right here and I remember being distracted by the hullabaloo of my partner rolling big rubber dice out of a bucket. As my wife rolled I said we should have doubled. Needless to say Mrs Biddle (aka Biddle Dum) was totally at fault for this mild cubing error.

The Biddles held the cube and rolled a 31 played 13/10, 8/7. M&S rolled a great 61 making the bar point and giving them genuine counter-priming chances. Not to be outdone Caroline Biddle found a perfect 33. This:

- made the 4-point;
- made a 6-prime;
- brought the back checker to the edge of the opponent's prime.

M&S found a saving 51 making the 4-point on the Biddle head.

Worth pointing out at this stage that despite all the murmurings of dissatisfaction about using big rubber dice coming from the S side of the M&S team, this was the first real joker rolled in the match (according to Snowie).

The Biddles (white) threw a 42 to enter from the bar in the following positioning:



White to play 42

Mr Biddle who had partaken of a couple of beers decided that Bar/23, 9/5 looked pretty and Caroline was unable to persuade him of the error of his ways. Keeping the full prime with Bar/23, 8/4 and not leaving the freak 62 is better.

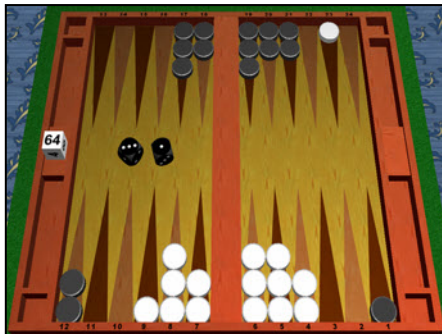
Lesson 3: 6-point primes are good. Don't give them up when there is a reasonable alternative available

Biddles defence – Sean, you make this move sound like a crime against humanity. Snowie doesn't even rate this as an error even after doing a mini-rollout, second best yes, but considering the number of Hobgoblins I had consumed, it was quite an enlightened move designed to throw the opposition off kilter which judging by their ensuing blunders paid dividends.



M&S need a good roll here to get themselves out of the *!***

M&S followed up with the 31 to make the first blunder of the match.

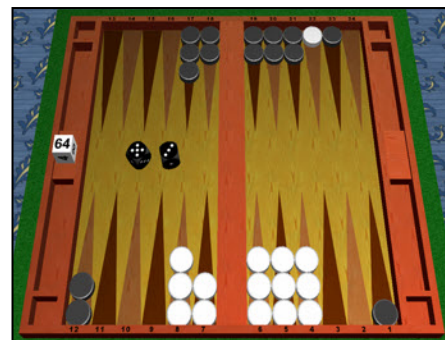


Pip count: W111, B124
Black to play 31

Black should not be hitting here. The plan is to keep black away from the edge of the prime and hope that they have to crack first. Hitting just gives white more time. M&S played 6/2*.

Lesson 4: Be wary of hitting in Prime versus Prime battles if hitting improves your opponent's timing

The Biddles found a 53 entering at the edge of the prime and safetying 9/4. M&S rolled a 53 and played 13/5.

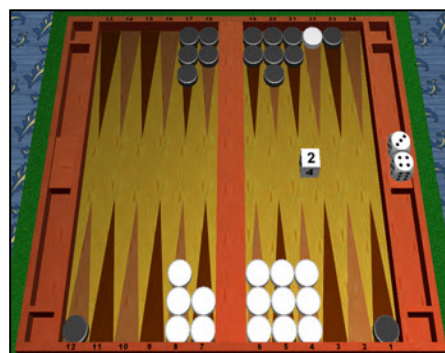


Pip count: W105, B120
Black to play 53

Unfortunately here the hit is compulsory! 8/3*, 13/10 is the right move by a lot. The big difference between this position and the one before is that black is at the edge of the prime and is threatening to escape with any 6. Notice that 62, 61, 53, 52 and 51 all leave another blot for white after the hitting play.

Lesson 5: In Prime versus Prime battles, tend to hit if your opponent is at the edge of your Prime and is threatening to escape

The first double of the match:



Pip count: W105, B112
White cube action

The Biddles could sense blood after the 53 misplay and cubed. White is leading in a medium-sized race by 7 pips. They have a checker trapped behind a 5-prime and are threatening to escape the prime with any 6. This looks like a good cube.

Should M&S take?

Black also have a checker trapped behind a 5-prime. 66, 65 and 64 all escape for white but 63, 62 and 61 mean that black will have a shot at putting another white back behind that prime again. Even if white does escape it is far from all over for black with the checker on the ace-point, combined with the strong prime, causing white problems in bringing the position home.



53, 52, 51, 32, 31, 21 and 11 all make a white 6-prime but this will be a very temporary asset if white cannot find a 6 on their next roll.

If the Biddles don't escape or make a six-prime, M&S have huge counter-play (though they will need to remember to hit at the edge of their prime in many variations). These sorts of prime verses prime positions are very two-sided and one roll can cause enormous swings in equity.

The gammons here are very 2-sided and black will often have a potent re-cube if they can turn the game around.

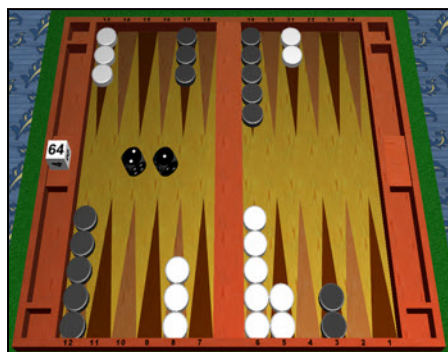
Bottom line, this is an easy take. M&S didn't fancy it at the start of a long 7-point match and passed.

Biddles gloat – a massive blunder according to Snowie, that's three blunders on the trot from our opponents following my inspirational move to break my six-point prime. It's the same hypnotic affect you can have on a baby or dog to send them to sleep just by slowly closing your eyes. Needless to say, M&S are putty in the Biddles' hands after this great psychological masterstroke.

OK, that's the end of Sean's patronising commentary and lessons. I will take over the analysis here and I will give Sean an opportunity to honour us with his superior view after finishing this article.

Game 2: Biddles (w) 1 - M&S (b) 0

This game set off at a good pace with the Biddles making headway with their 5-point and their opponent's 4-point made. M&S were then faced with this 21:



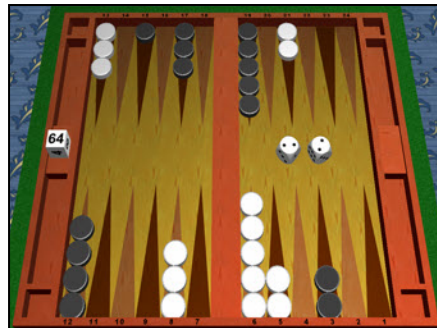
Pip count: W155, B163
Black to play 21

They played the innocuous 13/10. Evidently an error, Snowie suggests the more adventurous 13/11, 6/5. This play begins to make the 5-point with three builders bearing in on it. M&S's move was Snowie's fifth choice. Both moves leave 15 shots but the former achieves more by

making a stronger point next time.

Suggestion 6: When you have a lousy roll, put the checkers where you most want them. You never know your opponent may not hit

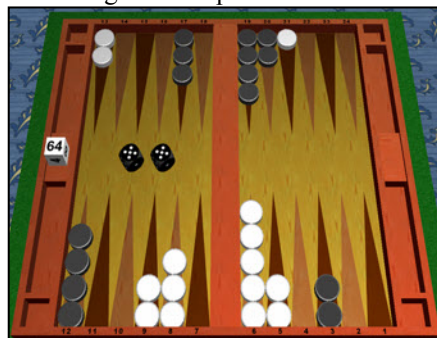
Not to be outdone in making errors, the Biddles played a huge error but I can't see why this is such a blunder.



Pip count: W145, B160
White to play 22

The Biddles played 13/9(2). I wanted to block black's 6s for the back checkers. This is a monumental error (mini-roll-out). I guess it is essential to unstack the heavy 6-point and play 6/4(2). Snowie then suggests playing 13/11(2) leaving a single checker on the mid-point. I guess with three home board points made and a forward anchor we can be bolder with our other moves.

We then get to this position:



Pip count: W129, B154
Black to play 55

M&S played the complicated 13/8, 8/3(2) 6/1, needlessly leaving a blot in their home board. Even after moving 20 pips they are still 5 pips behind in the race with two men still back behind a broken four point prime. The strategy must be to make valuable points and maintain builders hoping for a hit. Snowie proposes 13/3(2). Leaving a blot on the ace-point should be avoided if there is a viable alternative.

It was this point that the Biddles as white decided mistakenly to double.



The Biddles Double

With 65.7% winning chances it is still too early. No real advantage in the race after the black's double-fives, no threat and only a marginally better position. I can see now it was an error to double, but it was an even greater blunder to pass. The Biddles got lucky. Two points from two wrongly dropped cubes. Would you have dropped as black?

Suggestion 7: If there is any chance your psychologically-damaged opponent may drop when they should take, it's a double

Game 3: Biddles (w) 2 - M&S (b) 0

This game was short-lived; the following cube decision arose for black.



Should black double?
Should white take?

What should have been a very easy take decision was clouded by several beers leaving the Biddles looking truly flummoxed.



What was never even a double was dropped by the Biddles ensuring that all points scored in the match so far, 2-1, had all been won by wrongful dropping. Obviously playing on the big board heightened emotions making things look

worse than they were for the dropped cubes and in light of the two wrong cubes given, better than they were.

Game 4: Biddles (w) 2 - M&S (b) 1

The second joker of the match, double fours, was thrown by M&S (again!). To which the Biddles responded with a 41.



Pip count: W147, B128
White to play 41

We entered on the ace-point and you would have thought when choosing between the two hits one should choose to maintain the forward anchor and hit from the mid-point. But oh-no according to Snowie it is better to hit black's blot on the 17-point. I'm surprised by this as it appears that black has more return shots and better rolls if white plays Snowie's Favourite (even after a full rollout). Any other move is deemed an error.



Look it can happen with rubber dice as well!

Further on in the game M&S rolled yet another double four joker

(tiresome I know) to put the Biddles on the bar who danced while M&S developed a healthy board. After white enters, black has a doubling decision to make.



Black cubes

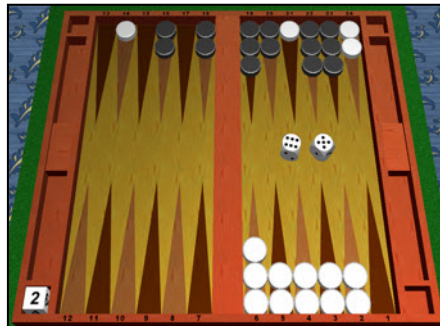
White has two points made in blacks home board. Snowie thinks this is a big blunder to take. Guess what?The Biddles take this cube.

On reflection, I can see white's timing is lousy as our home board is going to

crunch and even if we do get a direct shot at some stage, we will offer little threat in retaining black. Yes, white should have dropped.

From this position, black rolled 31 and inexplicably played 11/7 rather than the safer and correct 15/11. Perhaps they were looking to keep some builders and not strip their board.

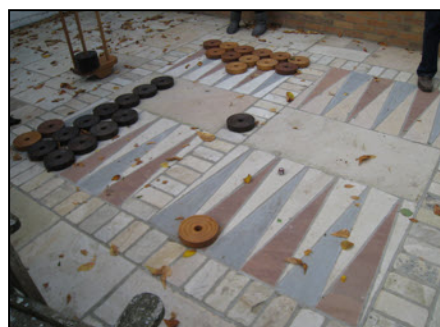
Later on this game we had this position:



Pip count: W129, B75
White to play 65

I chose to leave the white checker on the 4-point to cause problems for black, playing 14/8 to use up the 6 and slot my one point to maintain my timing and not force me to escape until it is on my terms. Not only does my move lose a few more games but doubles the number of gammons I lose so this was a huge blunder. Snowie says not running from the black 4-point is a blunder

As it happened, M&S rolled an anti-joker 61 leaving a direct shot. Rolling 11 we missed but were able to pick up a blot on the bear-off. With a near perfect home board we were able to correctly double M&S out, who correctly passed to go 4-1 down.

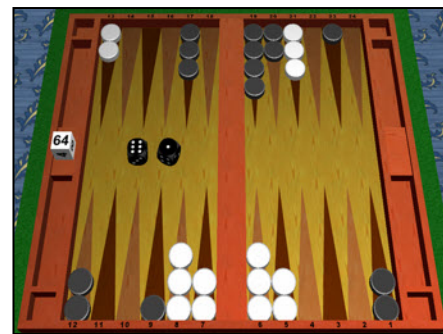


White cubes 'em out!

The first cube decision played correctly by both sides!

Game 5: Biddles (w) 4 - M&S (b) 1

The first meaningful position appears in the next column. M&S played 16/10, 6/5 offering white a direct shot with their loose builder on their anchor.

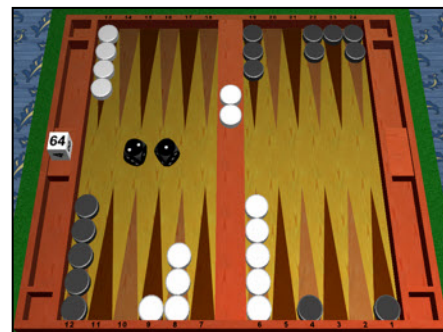


Pip count: W155, B150
Black to play 61

Snowie tells us it is better to leave the direct shot where white will need to break his mid-point to hit. 8/2, 6/5 would have been better. It also makes another home board point, albeit deep. The Biddles decided to punish this wrong play by doubling. This is not a double and should be taken but M&S decided to drop. Score 5-1.

Game 6: Biddles (w) 5 - M&S (b) 1

At 5-1 down, M&S need to start thinking about doubling at the earliest opportunity. The Biddles threw a dancing 31, a roll after which a double should have been forthcoming. So early in the game, the Biddles would have been obliged to take. Perhaps M&S thought they would be too good as on their next roll they had two of white's checkers on the bar.



Pip count: W165, B138
Black to play 21

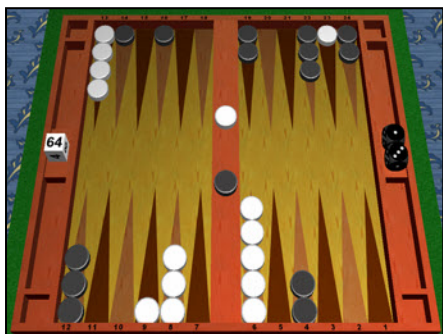
However, with two on the bar, they should be more courageous than playing 24/21. Now is the time to unstack the mid-point to bear in on the 5-point. 24/23 will put a little more pressure on the white blot.

The Biddles re-enter with a single 5: 25/20 leaving one checker on the bar. Before rolling, again M&S should have considered the double but may have thought themselves still too good.

However, Snowie tells us it is a big pass at this score, but because I would have thought about this long and hard I did a full rollout of this position at 0-0 ➡

scoreline and found it is a take ... just. This makes me feel a little better for not realising what a big pass it was.

A few rolls on:



Pip count: W163, B149
Black cube action?

Again M&S miss out on an opportunity to double their points haul by not doubling. This is a double take. One wonders whether they think they are still too good or whether they are nervous against throwing the cube across with their own checker on the bar.

Further on with things going from bad to worse, the Biddles pulled out this fantastic joker (below) which despite still leaving them with negative equity in the game, makes them confusingly favourite to win the game ... just.



But the Biddles played their next 42 badly by hitting and then playing the 2 down from the mid-point.

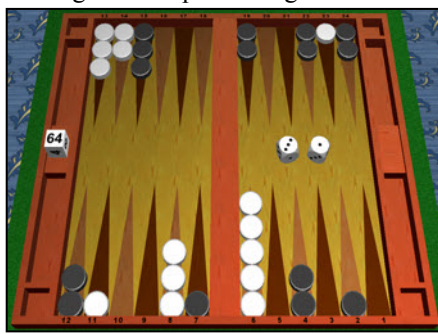


Pip count: W169, B151
White to play 42

This is just too loose for Snowie, despite the additional gammons this brings, who would have preferred hitting and then

continuing with the same checker 20/16*/14. Another Biddle Blunder!

This next position shows that invariably making the five-point is right with 31.



Pip count: W155, B169
White to play 31

The Biddles wrongly played 13/10, 11/10, but as someone once said the 5-point is such an asset later in the game one should sell one's grandmother to make it.



Pip count: W147, B151
Black to play 65

Here M&S played the mildly wrong 13/8, 13/7 but actually should have played 18/7. The argument being that if black is going to leave a shot it makes more sense to leave it so that white needs to break one of their valuable outfield points to hit; otherwise M&S leave a direct six-shot for the white back checker that needs to move out anyway.

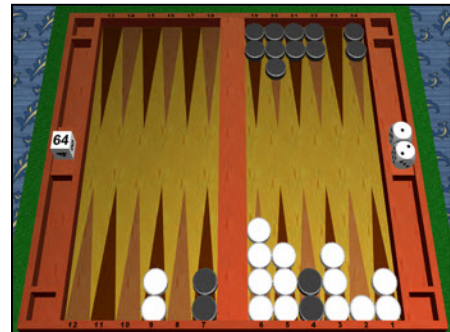


Pip count: W107, B147
White to play 55

The Biddles should have done better with this double-five than to play the unimaginative 13/3 (2). Yes, it right to clear the back points first and one should cover the

blot in the home board. However, it is also important to begin clearing the points that are going to be vulnerable to a double shot, especially while black has such a weak home board. Snowie proposes 13/8 (2), 8/3, 10/5.

Now, according to Snowie it was the Biddles turn to blunder by missing a double.

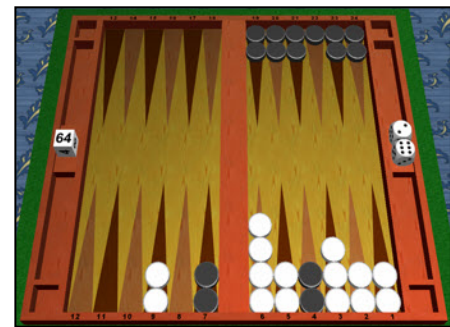


Pip count: W70, B121
White cube action?

Leading 5-1 in a seven point match, I would normally only ever want to double my opponent out. However, white has only 4 bad rolls, 62 & 61, next roll and almost a 79% chance of winning the game and, hence, match if they double. By playing on for a 6-1 Crawford scoreline, white reduces his match winning chances to 71.1% (90% match equity multiplied by his 79% game winning chances). This latter number can be increased slightly to include gammons, but still falls way short of 79% if white doubles.

At 0-0, this a drop for black but a take at this scoreline ... just. If dropped, black has 10% match winning chances with the score at 6-1 Crawford. However, if taken and re-cubed, black has a 21% chance of getting the score back to 5-5. 21% multiplied an even match winning chance is 10.5%.

It is these calculations made at the table that differentiate the men from the boys. The Blundering Biddles are mere boys.



Pip count: W67, B117
White cube action?

The Biddles make another error by missing this double foregoing match-winning chances of 79% again for a less favourable 71% by playing on. Again black would have been right to take. However, doubling may have been wrong in hindsight as white rolled 62. But, black failed miserably by rolling an anti-joker and missing the shot. The Biddles don't need asking three times and doubled black out. However, playing on would have been the better option with about 8% gammons available by this stage.

Game 7: Biddles (w) 6 - M&S (b) 1

So with their backs to the wall at Crawford, M&S needed to play well and enjoy a little more luck along the way. Their second roll after a 64 was a fortunate double-six that was going to put them way ahead in the race in a game they were just focusing on winning. What a shame then that they should make such a dreadful blunder with their second roll:



Pip count: W158, B157
Black to play 66

24/18, 13/7(3) was played leaving two blots where white would be more than happy to hit loose. Far better to play 14/7, 13/7(3) leaving the back checker to pick up another white checker. Typically, black rolled 52 and hit bringing down a builder to bear in on the 5- and bar-points

Suggestion 8: Avoid leaving too many loose blots where the points would be of value to your opponent. You do not want your opponent to hit you and start to make a valuable point



Pip count: W161, B132
White to play 22

Further on white rolled this double two that left them the option of hitting or tidying up. The Biddles wrongly chose to hit on their bar-point with the play bar/21, 11/7*. Snowie prefers unstacking the heavy 6-point to make another home board point and making the 11-point. To attack white, black must then hit deep in their own board. Black now needs to do all the cleaning up. Following the Biddles hit, M&S rolled the anti-joker 66 to dance.

It's a cruel game and M&S with two men on the bar soon found themselves being spectators at their own game.



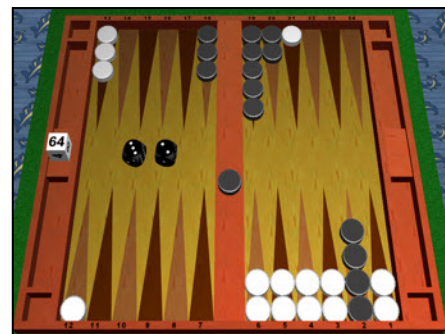
The Biddles (white) then rolled 64, needing to win just a single point from this game to win the match. There was absolutely no need to take any more checkers off especially as there was a good move to make the 2-point inboard. Flush with beer and excitement of playing on this expansive board, Biddle Dee wanted to see what it would look like with four men on the bar.



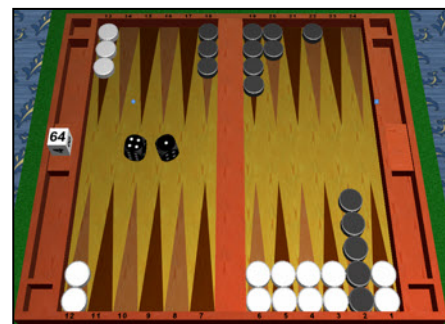
Yup, four checkers fit nicely on the bar but very much a case of using a gammon hammer to crack a one-point nut. The Biddles were punished when white rolled the game-saving double two.

Suggestion 9: Don't overplay a position especially when you only need one point

After coming on M&S played the tame 6/3 in the position shown in the next column when they should have gone for the hit 7/4*. They actually want to be hit here to preserve their timing. Gammons don't count for white so they should go all out in the game to be bold.



Pip count: W158, B157
Black plays 25/23, 6/3



Pip count: W101, B173
Black to play 41

Rather than make the 2-point M&S should have attempted to make their points in order as much as possible. 7/3, 6/5 is the preferable move. Their next roll was a 21, which meant they would have built a five-point prime boosting their chances in the event of a hit.

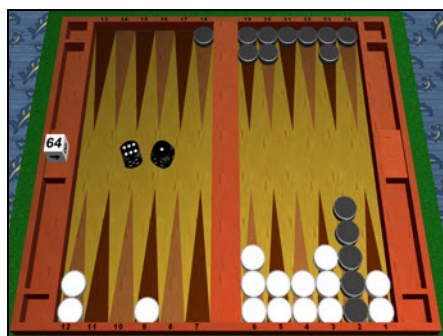


Pip count: W88, B165
Black to play 63

M&S must play out from the back here in order to prevent their board from crunching. It is criminal to do otherwise. What do they have to fear? Absolutely nothing. They do not need to worry about gammons so do not mind being hit. Their play of 7/1, 7/4 crunches their board, leaves them exposed if they do get a hit and gives them a horrible double four next time.

Playing 23/14 should have been the move here to leave them a one in five chance of winning this game. Their move means they now win one in 6.5 games.





Pip count: W80, B156
Black to play 61

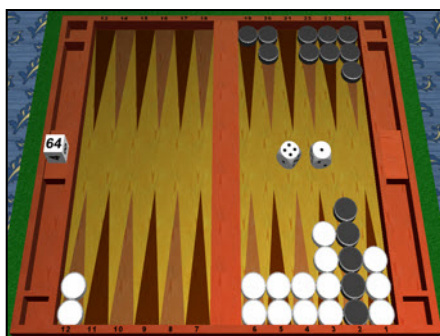
So I said last move they were exposed if they were to get a hit and just to punish them the Dice Gods gave them a hit with three blots in their own board so that they chickened out. I hate to be rude here but by not coming out and hitting, M&S are turning into a pair of serial blunderers. Again I stress they have nothing to lose or fear by hitting. They already have five men back so they need to play the ultimate one-point back game. They need to be in this game until the end.



Pip count: W80, B149
White to play 65

With the prospect of winning this game and the match, the Biddles too, started to make errors, here by playing the ultra-safe 9/3, 6/1. All they want to do is bring their checkers in safely and borne off. After all, black has somehow managed to maintain a five-point home board, despite their earlier crunching. Care must be taken, however, their move stacks up the 3-point and loses the builder on the 6-point. Plus there is still a job to do to bring the checkers on the 12-point home. The better move here is to maintain a good spread along the high points in the home board by playing 12/6, 9/4. This makes the bear-off easier in the long-term and begins to clear the difficult twelve-point while black still only has an indirect shot at it.

Now the Biddles get punished for their previous timid play. They are unable to bring a checker into their home board and must now choose between leaving two blots or clearing their 5-point.



Pip count: W66, B144
White to play 41

The clue to the correct move is on the other side of the board where M&S have a blot in their home board. The Biddles, now with victory supposedly in their grasp again played the ultra-safe 5/1, 5/4. Not quite a blunder but wrong nonetheless. They should have slotted the 7-point and got ready for a blot-hitting contest safe in the knowledge that their home board was stronger than black's.



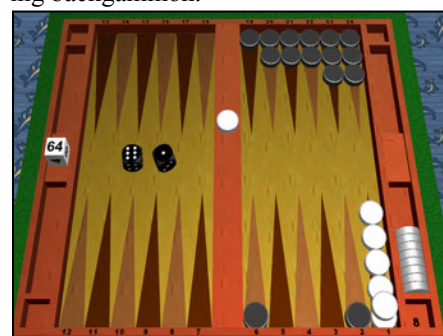
As a result of the Biddle's continuing error-strewn caution, M&S were able to grab a second point in white's home board and still maintain a four point home board. Sue Keeble can be seen above moving one of her back checkers into the outfield. This is done by inserting the bevelled stick into a hole in the middle of the checker and moving the piece. No need to bend over and pick up pieces, keeping the strain on the back to a minimum. Just need to figure out how to pick up the rubber dice now. That is if the dog hasn't grabbed it.



Pip count: W42, B118
Black to play 54

The Biddles (w) were in very good shape here despite facing a hit from black. They

still win this 75% of the time after the hit. But you can imagine what would have gone through Biddle Dee's head when this move was so badly misplayed that M&S didn't hit and moved the wrong number of pips. At this stage, home advantage was paying off and M&S may well have been suffering from hypothermia and agoraphobia. Biddle Dee decided to tell them they had misplayed their move but not tell them about the missed hit. They soon played 14/10*, 10/5. But this is a timid hit, 23/18, 14/10* does a better job by spreading the threat around the board and making it difficult for the white checker to get home. The Biddles still felt confident, safe in the knowledge that their good sportsmanship should not lose them the game. "Legal moves only" is an increasingly popular concept entering backgammon.

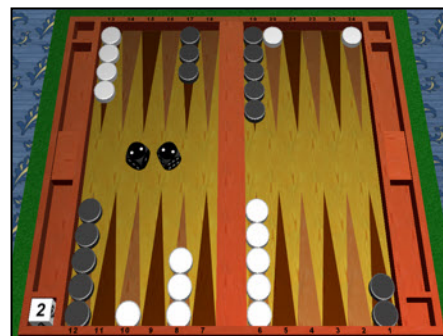


Pip count: W31, B81
Black to play 61

M&S got another shot on the bear-off, soon closing out their home board almost. They still have to make their pesky 6-point and make a big error by not playing 19/12. By playing 19/12 they give themselves maximum chances of closing off the home board. They don't need to fear 66 as it is a good roll for white anyway. This became academic, as they closed off their home board later and went on to win the game in a close run bear-off to go post-Crawford.

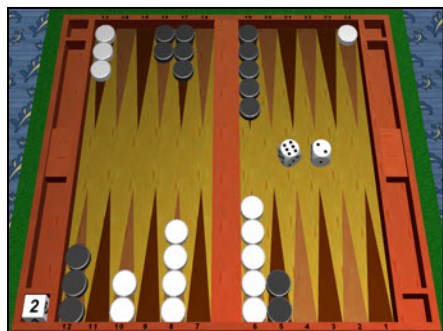
Game 8: Biddles (w) 6 - M&S (b) 2

The Post-Crawford game quickly had the cube on 2. But the errors still continued.



Pip count: W160, B167
Black to play 22

Not making the 4-point and the 11-point is an error here. Black is going to need this asset for later. It also maximises gammon chances. White played the racing 24/20(2) which lacks the flexibility offered by unstacking the heavy points.



Pip count: W145, B151
White to play 62

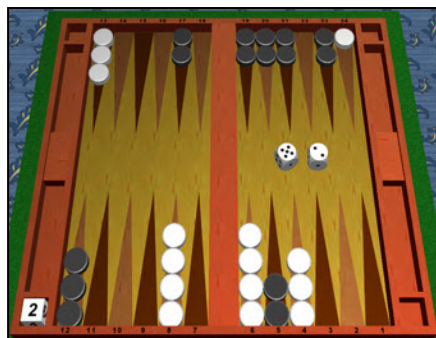
The Biddles shortly misplayed this 62 by making their 4-point, attempting to lay a trap for black. However after this roll, white would be 14 pips ahead and only needing one point for a win, should be looking to race for home by playing 24/18, 6/4. *When ahead, it is not necessary to incite contact.* Anyway by playing up to black's bar-point there will likely be contact anyway.



Pip count: W145, B151
Black to play 44

With this roll, M&S were absolutely right to make their 5-point with 9/5(2) but in this situation they are wrong to unstack their 6-point to make their 2-point. Yes, one should unstack the 6-point to make the 4-point as in the 22 a few rolls earlier but the 2-point is just too deep. It is better to make the points in order by playing 8/4(2). It leaves an indirect shot that only hits with 61 and 52 but black has a forward anchor in an open white home board attacking the single white blot in the out-field.

In the next position (next column) it would be wrong for white to begin to escape the back checker here as black would happily slot on you. The Biddles made the choice of starting to make another home board point by playing 8/3, 6/4.



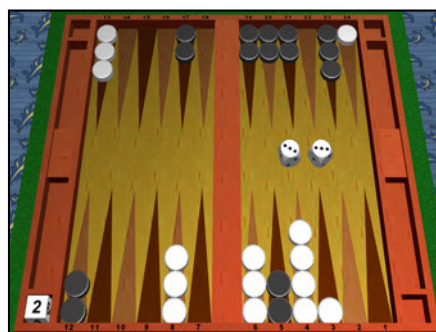
Pip count: W131, B129
White to play 52

Snowie, thinks this is an error, even after a rollout, preferring 13/6. I guess the argument being is that there is to be contact very soon and the less blots white has against black's strong home board the better. This is despite the strong builders that white would have to cover the slot. Snowie's play decreases black's gammon chances which white should quite rightly avoid. White is not the favourite to win and should be looking at damage limitation



Pip count: W124, B129
Black to play 65

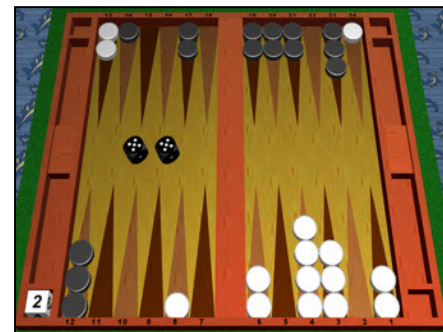
M&S followed up with 65, with which they play 13/2 as would most players adopting a wait and see approach in the level-pegging race. However, because white has a very weak home board with a blot and a strong home board, now is the time to be bold and run from the back with 20/9.



Pip count: W124, B118
White to play 33

The Biddles responded with 33. Not wanting to lose the mid-point, white played 13/4, 6/3. Despite making another

home board point and continuing the wait-and-see approach both sides are playing, this is an ugly play as it stacks the 4-point. A Snowie rollout prefers 13/10(3), 6/3. Firstly it makes another point to bear in on the 5-point when black tries to escape. It also makes it difficult for black to escape both back checkers at the same time. What it also does is protects white against gammons by moving white checkers towards home more efficiently. If black rolls a 1 next time, they are likely to hit the white blot in their home board and try to close out for a gammon.

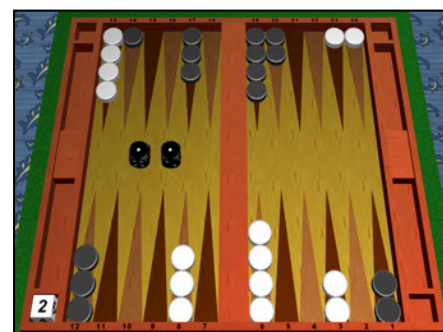


Pip count: W97, B102
Black to play 55

Further on with the white blot still trapped, M&S rolled the joker 55. Without too much delay they played the clean up move 13/8(3), 11/6, sacrificing huge opportunities to win the gammon which would have seen them draw level in the match. They absolutely should have hit and made the 3-point with 11/1*, 8/3(2). This is a gargantuan blunder that reduces their gammon chances from 30% to 3%. Needless to say the Biddles gave a sigh of relief at this stage. Instead of being level at 6-6, they had a small buffer with a 6-4 score line.

Game 9: Biddles (w) 6 - M&S (b) 4

The cube quickly turned and M&S soon found themselves mulling over this double one.



Pip count: W153, B156
Black to play 11

The choice comes down to making the 4-point or bar-point. M&S chose to make the bar-point playing 8/7(3), 6/5. ▶

This would appear to be a sensible move with a solid 3-point prime and a good spread of builders leaving black in a favourable position. However, white's position is quite open with contact very likely in the next roll. It is time for black to put themselves in the position where they can maximise the effect of hitting by making an immediate home board in order by playing 6/4(2). Black has plenty of builders bearing on the bar-point to make that next time. Not to make the 4-point is a blunder according to a Snowie Rollout.



Pip count: W144, B149
White to play 33

This time it was the turn of the Biddles to misplay a double-3. Why I decided to make the bar-point and not the 5-point I don't know or remember. Too much beer probably. One must make the 5-point here and extend the broken prime by making the 10-point to create the beginnings of a prime v prime strategy. 13/10(2), 8/5(2). Our strategy should be to complete our prime and escape the back checkers with any sixes.



Pip count: W123, B160
Black to play 65

Later on white was able to not only escape a back checker but hit a black blot at

the same time. M&S were faced with this 65. Again, quickly they tried to clean up by playing 25/20, 12/6.

This is wrong because what they need to do is prevent white from making their 5- and 4-points. This is best achieved by setting up a diversion by coming all the way out playing 25/14. White is now forced to play in the outfield, preventing them from strengthening their prime. Black should not mind sacrificing a blot to maintain this positional advantage.

White proceeded to make their home board as black came on and got hit again. M&S (black) are really up against it in this position.



Pip count: W110, B154
Black to play 41

They are 72% favourites to lose this game and the match. Now is not the time to play tamely as they did with 25/24. 5/1. They should hit with 7/3*. It takes half a move away from white which crucially might prevent white from escaping and/or, more importantly, making the bar-point. If black gets hit, this is not a problem as a back-game will ensue. This is the last thing white wants as, only chasing a single point, a gammon is worthless.

The Biddles as white went on to win the game and match just as the chill was setting in for the Autumn evening. As you can see in the next column, M&S were very gracious in defeat.

Thanks go to Mike Main for his extensive camera work and capturing this momentous day in history.



The outdoor board played very well, moving the pieces using the bevelled sticks was easy once you got the hang of it. The rubber dice thrown from the buckets worked fair and square and picking the dice up provided a healthy workout. However, having increased the puppy count within the Biddle household, I strongly suspect we may need to set up a real board to roll real dice into set to the side as in the picture above. Rolling brightly coloured objects in the vicinity of a dog is red rag to the bull. The added benefit of using real dice on a real board is that it also prevents back strain from having to bend over to pick up dice from the ground.

The social nature of the board make it best suited to Gang Tournaments, Doubles and Chouettes. There are plenty of places to put your drinks and in the Biddle garden you are never more than a few steps from a beer fridge. Roll on the summer; I intend to hold monthly Gang Tournaments. Weather allowing, of course. Serious players need not apply and naturally you will be required to drink if you get the invite.



Jarvis Trophy

Report by Michael Crane

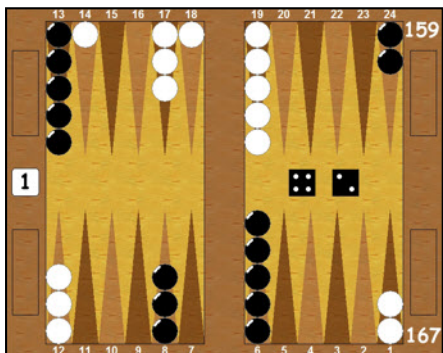
Friday 500 (13) The weekend got off to a good start for Andy Darby as he sat opposite Simon K Jones in the Final. He emerged the winner and then on the Saturday & Sunday he stormed through the field of the Main.

Andy's win places him on the top with Myke Wignal a few points behind him and Simon just 1 point behind Myke. It's all pretty close at the moment, but with two sessions of the 500 in March to come, things should start to alter . . . perhaps!

Marcus Wrinch, who led the 500 field for most of 2009, is yet to make his mark on this year's 500 going out in the 1st Round to Tony Fawcett.

Main (15) Going into the 6th Round we had just one player on 5-5, Andy Darby. A 4-5, Jeff Barber, was drafted in at random to play him to see if he could be stopped.

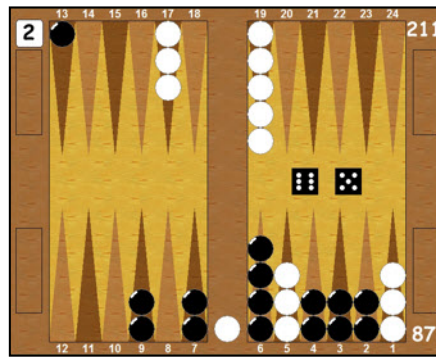
Jeff Barber is a quiet man, keeps his head down at tournaments and makes very little noise except the occasional tutting or heavy sighing now and again. Sometimes he throws his cup into the air after a particularly bad joker against him - but overall, he's quite quiet. However, he is an aggressive backgammon player. He'll slot like it's going out of fashion. If there's a point he wants he goes for it. If he can hit a blot, he will! Leave a blot anywhere and Jeff'll have a go at it. The trouble with this style of play is backgames! Jeff keeps getting into them. It all started here (Jeff is playing as white and Andy Darby as black. The match is to 11 points):



Black 1 White 2
Black to play 42

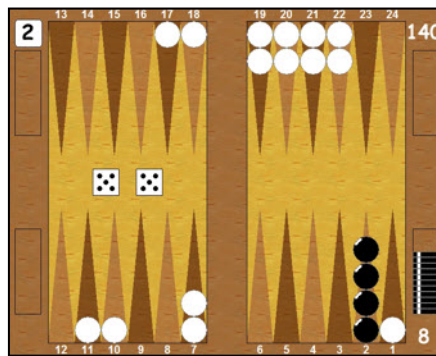
Jeff opened with a 62: 13/7, 13/11. Andy moves 24/18* and this is the start of Jeff's attack of the blots! He hit or played loose almost everywhere to eventually end up

in this position:



Black to play 65

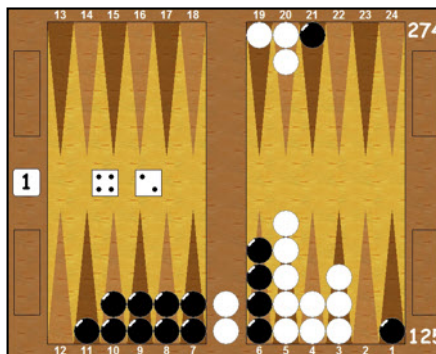
Andy plays 13/2 and then Jeff then rolls 55, comes in and he's off! Later he gets a hit but can't contain it, and Andy continues bearing off until we reach this position:



White to play 55

The likelihood of getting a hit is slight but at least 'The Girls' is a gammon saver - well it is if you don't play 18/8, 15/10, 14/9, and then have your opponent to roll his own 55 for a backgammon! Six points to Andy.

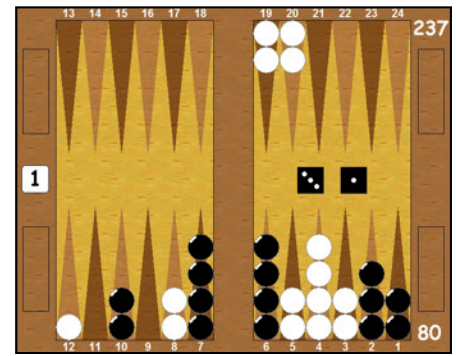
The score reaches 9-6 to Andy and Jeff is back to his usual backgame:



White to play 42

He comes in and then the fight-back begins five moves later when Andy is forced to leave a blot (see the next column).

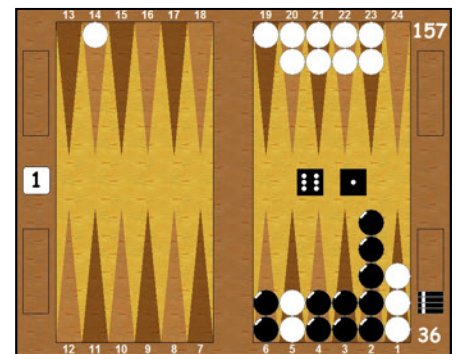
Andy is forced to come off his 10-point leaving a blot and Jeff hits it. Despite all Andy's attempts to get this lone checker



Black to play 31

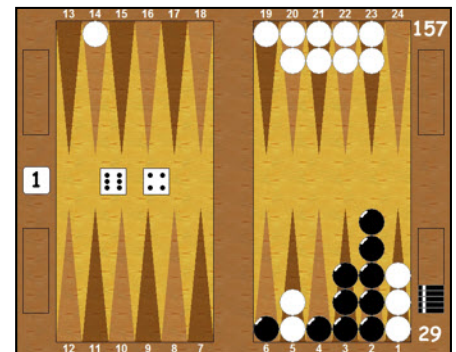
safe he is continually knocked back by Jeff and his 15 checker army! Eventually Jeff is in a position to cube and Andy, shell-shocked, drops.

In the final game, with the score at 10-7 Crawford to Andy, Jeff has some spectacular bad luck (or, Andy has some spectacular good luck!) when this series of jokers determine the outcome of the match:



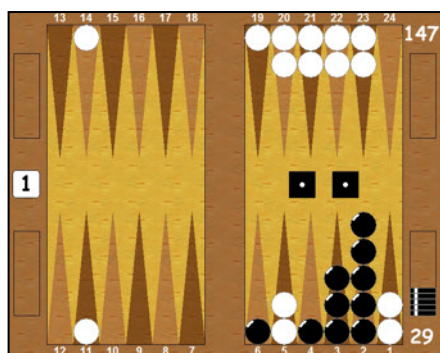
Black to play 61

This is an awful roll for Andy and he is forced to leave two blots as he plays 6/0, 4/3. Jeff becomes favourite to win the game until he rolls . . .

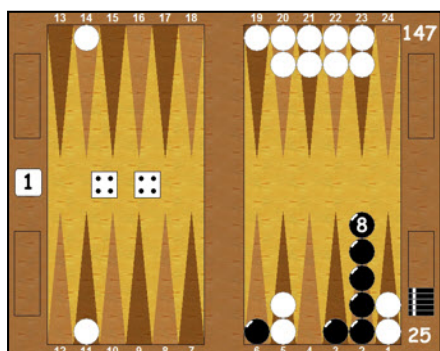


. . . 64! A triple-shot and Jeff misses with one of his 9 bad rolls as he plays 24/14. Andy let's out a sigh of relief and then he rolls . . .

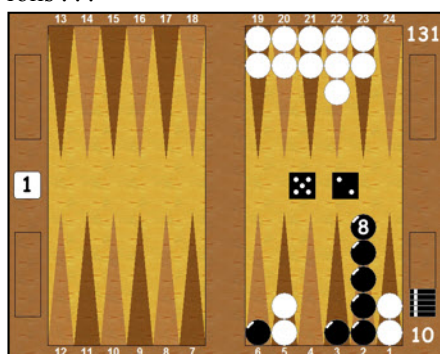
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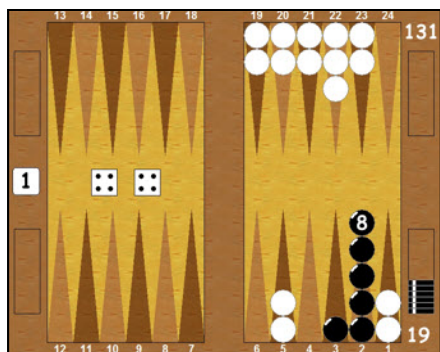
... Snake Eyes and has to leave two blots again with 4/3, 3/2(3). Once again Jeff has a triple-shot and this time rolls ...



... 44! Jeff throws his shaker into the air and sighs heavily! Yet again he misses as he plays 14/6, 11/3, hoping for a miracle. And it looks as if he's got one as Andy rolls ...



... 52 and plays 6/0. Now down to a single-shot Jeff shakes the dice for all he's worth and out pops ...



... another 44! He moves 20/16,(2), 16/8. Andy then rolls out to win the match 11-7.

So, Andy Darby - two finals, two victories! Well done, Andy. The runner-up

was Vicki Pemberton who was (thankfully!) the only player to have 5-6.

It was a bitty match with 53 checker play errors, including 17 blunders between them! Snowie rated them thus: Andy - Advanced, Jeff - Intermediate. One other stat that caught my eye while inputting into Snowie was the amount of 4s rolled - often accompanied by a 3! A lot more than one might expect: effective # of appearance of 4s was 174 whereas the theoretical # of appearances is 151.7. So, if you're playing with Jeff's dice in the future, remember the 4s!

In the **Consolation (15)** element Ann Pocknell came through with 3-3 on the Sunday as did Stewart Pemberton. Head-to-heads or shared opponents couldn't decide a winner so it went to the average ranking score of opponents and it was Ann who came out on top. She very graciously offered to play a decider but Stewart declined - which was a sporting gesture by both players. It's a pity that one of the WSOB entrants over the same weekend wasn't as sporting! See page 16.

Poker (13) Andy Darby also plays poker - but not as good as he plays backgammon and he didn't even make the final table of eight. Mark Calderbank came 1st with Rosey Bensley 2nd and Vicki Pemberton 3rd. Thanks to his win over the Jarvis weekend, Mark jumps up to within two points of leader, Vicki Pemberton.

Team (7) I don't want to comment on this element. I was knocked out by my wife, Sharen's team in the 1st Round! She went on to win the 2nd Round and only lost in the final when she was beaten by Ed Turner. I didn't see his victory, I went to bed early, sulking!

Finally It wasn't the biggest of turnouts, but, as Sharen keeps telling me, size doesn't matter. I don't believe her.



Match detailed statistics for Jarvis

Player	Andy Darby	Jeff Barber
Rating	advanced	intermediate
Overall	7.991/32.545	11.970/46.557
Errors(blunders)	27(4)	42(20)
Checker play errors		
Checker play	4.859/22.237	9.490/37.492
Errors(blunders)	20(2)	33(15)
Double errors		
Overall	0.877/3.660	1.525/5.193
Missed double	0.775/3.133	1.221/4.269
Wrong double	0.103/0.527	0.305/0.924
Errors(blunders)	5(1)	7(3)
Take errors		
Overall	2.254/6.648	0.955/3.872
Wrong take	0.000/0.000	0.339/0.718
Wrong pass	2.254/6.648	0.616/3.154
Errors(blunders)	2(1)	2(2)
Andy Darby was 64.01% - 35.99% favorite.		

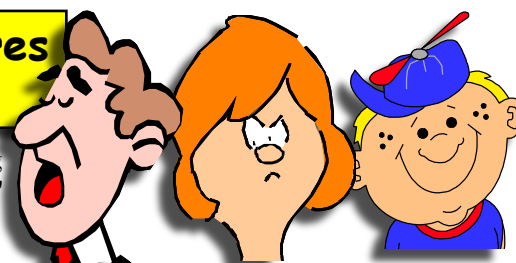


Main: Andy and Vicki
Consolation: Ann and Stewart



Goldiblots and the Three Bores

By R Umplestiltskin



Once upon a time there were three bores, Daddy Bore, Mummy Bore and Baby Bore.

All day long they'd play backgammon on the webernet for peanuts, they liked peanuts - a lot.

Each week, after a hard week's tap tap tapping away on their loptaps they would have a lovely bowl of soup and then settle down for the arrival of Goldiblots, their friendly next-door neighbour who would pose them three problems and she would award the winner with a nice massage and a rub down with the Sporting Times.

pointed on!" She sat down, saying as she did, "I am now fin-ished." She smiled, Daddy Bore grimaced.

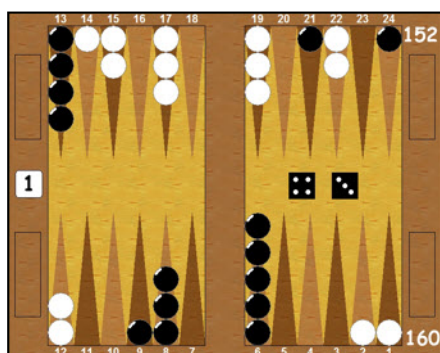
Not to be left out Baby Bore began, "I might be a little sprat but I won't flounder like you tunas. The bestest move by far is to make two points with 24/21 and 13/9. Mummy Bore's move gives white too many chances to anchor (he threw in a nautical reference in line with the fishy theme, but no one spotted it!) and Daddy Bore's move is boring." Smirking, he sat down.

the best point to hold is the 5-point. Why, even my esteemed and learned Daddy Bore sang its virtues a while ago. Slotting it now with 13/5 gives me the chance to make it before white can do any harm on his side of the board." He sat down giggling to himself and repeating, "Ann Chovy. Ann Chovy."

Goldiblots stood up and asked Daddy Bore to start. "I now ask Mr Bigeye to start on the final position." Daddy Bore rose up looking at her thinking, *Is this a fish reference or a personal slight?*



Problem #1

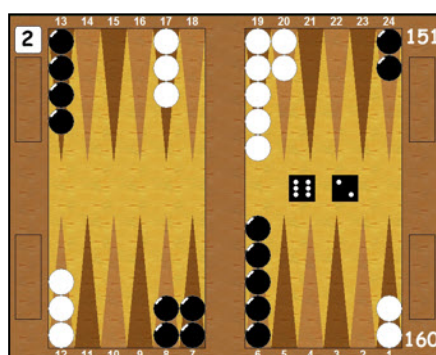


11 point match
Black 1 White 5
Black to play 43

It was Daddy Bore's turn to go first. All day long he had been making 'fishy' comments and he tried to incorporate it into his analysis. "Some people say I am a stickleback for detail but my good friend, John Dory, always told me the best point to hold on the board is the Bolden Point and this rollmop is unherringly good for making it with 9/5, 6/5. Once I have hold of it I never let it go, thank cod!" He sat down, pleased with his fish references and analysis.

Mummy Bore got up. "What a load of pollocks," she said, looking across at Daddy Bore and seeing his double-chin, "chub!" she added. Daddy Bore looked a little sheepish and placed his hand over his mouth masking one of his chins. "I won't carp on about it, but did you not think about hitting with 21/14*? It's all well and good making your Golden Point," (she stressed the G in Daddy Bore's direction) "but if you don't do something about what's happening on the other side of the board you're gunard get

Problem #2



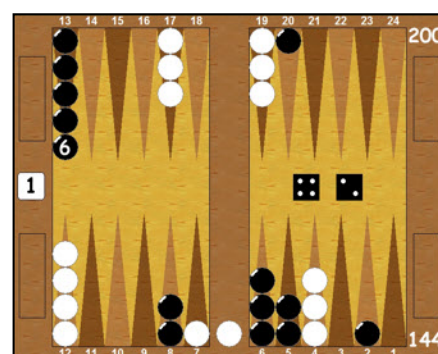
11 point match
Black 0 White 0
Black to play 62

Goldiblots called Mummy Bore back to her feet. "I know my plaice, and it is at the top because I am brill. I make no bones about it, before white gets a better board or makes their bar-point it is time to run with 24/16. If I do get hit back I could make an advanced anchor so it's not too bad." She sat down, passing Daddy bore as she did.

Daddy Bore drew a deep breath and began, "Well, I am a dab hand at backgammon, and I am the sole of the party" (*Arsehole*, thought Goldiblots) "and it is quite clear to me that 13/7, 13/11 is the most productive move on the board. I am poised to make a good inner point on my next roll whereas Mummy Bore is going to get hit with a direct shot." Pleased with himself he sat down and allowed Baby Bore to take to the floor.

"I thought I smelt something fishy, and I was right - it's the two moves already mentioned," he began. "As my good friend, Ann Chovy (everyone but him groaned at this awful pun) always says,

Problem #3



11 point match
Black 0 White 0
Black to play 42

He addressed his audience. "Despite Mummy Bore's pout, so far tonight she's not got one move correct, and seeing that I am first up this time she's not going to come first again." Mummy Bore sadly reflected to herself, *I never come first!* "Of course, the 4 is easy, cover the blot with 6/2. There's only a couple of 2s left and the better one is 20/18 getting incommunicado with my mid-point." He sat down, finished for the night, confident he'd done well singing to himself (but loud enough for all to hear, "Salmon enchanted evening . . .") They all pretended not to hear him.

Baby Bore got up. "I'll not skate over the issues, but I agree with Daddy Bore that 6/2 is correct for the 4." Daddy Bore solemnly nodded as if the entire 

assembly were paying homage to his wisdom - he was ignored by the said assembly and Baby Bore continued, "but he is very wrong with his move of 20/18 with the 2."

Daddy Bore's nodding stopped and he looked hurt - no one noticed. Baby Bore went on, "13/11 is just brisling with potential and is a major threat to the blot on my bar-point. Very soon I will have two on the bar and I shall now clam up and let Mummy Bore try to find a better move."

Mummy Bore got up and went into it with gusto. "Well, my little cockle," she looked at Baby Bore, "I can easily find a better move than yours. And as for you my little winkle," she directed at Daddy Bore who instinctively placed both his hands over his *lower bits*, "I can better yours too. I have taken onboard advice from *my* good friend, Barry Cuda and have gone for the hitting play 13/7*. As

Barry always says, '*Two on the bar are better than one in the pump*' and he's correct." She sat down, happy that this time, despite Daddy Bore's opinion, she *will* come first tonight.

"Well," said Goldiblots, "this has been an interesting night. Daddy Bore has flexed his mussels, Mummy Bore has cocked a snook at both of you, and Baby Bore has been a little shrimp.

"One of you has two correct with one in 3rd place, one of you has one correct with the other two in 3rd place and one of you came second every time."

"That'll be Mummy Bore!" interrupted Daddy Bore to scathing and withering looks from the two females.

Mummy Bore had an idea and she reached into her handbag and drew out a photo of Daddy Bore and showed it to

Goldiblots. "What do you think to *this* mullet?" she asked. They both burst into uncontrollable laughter.



So, dear reader, is Daddy Bore the big fish he thinks he is, or is he just small fry? Is Mummy Bore going to shout 'wahoo' when she finds out it is she who has been correct twice? Or will Baby Bore go from being a shrimp to a Tiger Prawn? Turn to page 19 to find out.

Before you do, here's a little quiz for you. How many fishy references are there in the article? Name all you can find and the person with the most fishy references will win twenty squid! Email or snail-mail entries to arrive no later than 15 April to claim your twenty squid!

The World Series of Backgammon held a Shoot-out tournament over the weekend, 6 & 7 February with a total prize fund of \$480,000!



After his first outburst I would have taken Shino aside and explained the consequences of any further outbursts and would hope that would be enough

All this money and they played 3 and 5 point matches, best of three each set. Many Biba members took part (old and new). Those in the last 8 were: John Clark, Julian Fetterlein, Kazuhiro Shino, John Hurst and Julian Minwalla. The three who have not played with Biba were Peter Jes Thompson, Christian Plenz and the Organiser and TD, Will Cockerell.

Shino stated the clocks had mechanical defects and weren't stopping after he played his move, but close inspection of his clock by others ensured it was fine. All that was necessary to stop your clock was a light caress of the button, not the hard bashes Shino was giving them. He then went on to destroy three clocks in his anger, including hurling one to the floor and smashing it (adding another €90 to WSOB's bill!). A shell-shocked Plenz, the innocent victim in all this, and one of the most gracious men on the circuit, limped through the next two sets in a daze and crashed out of the tournament.

The final was between Thompson and Shino with Shino winning \$150,000 and his opponent taking home \$90,000, not a bad pay-packet for a weekend's backgammon. However, one of these two should think himself very lucky I wasn't directing the event under Biba rules of play! The following is what happened in the match between Shino and Plenz and is taken from Will Cockerell's blog:

This was a disgraceful display of ill manners from Shino and one that would have led to him going home without a single dollar in his pocket if they had been playing to Biba rules.

The final quarter-final was a dreadfully unpleasant affair as Shino did not attend to clock issues in the first set, and complained bitterly when his clock ran down. His opponent Christian Plenz had been fully aware of Shino's time trouble long before his clock ran down.

It clearly states in . . .

Rule 1.9. Code of Behaviour: The organiser will not brook bad behaviour. Any player deemed guilty of such may be barred from the tournament losing all and any claims to prizes etc.

to avoid any more disturbances. If he continued causing upset (as he did) then I would have barred him from the tournament and he would have forfeited his share of the prize money. We don't need *prima donnas* kicking off at any tournament and I am astonished he was allowed to continue playing on.

One must ask, where was the TD or Committee that had the responsibility to see that the event went along smoothly when all this kicked off? Was nothing done about it?

It gives out all the wrong signals to players when a TD is so weak (or afraid) to step in when they are so apparently needed. Tournament Directors have a responsibility to all entrants and to let this go unpunished is disgraceful. His opponent should have been protected from such bad behaviour and he was clearly affected by it as Will himself admits in his blog. He was indeed, 'the innocent victim' in all of this - yet he was not protected from it by weak and ineffectual directing.

Why not?

Advice on Booking Accommodation for all 2010 events

The Biba calendar on this page lists all the Biba events (plus a few non-Biba events) for the year. The wise member books every tournament they want to enter in one block booking. If, nearer the date they are unable to attend, they simply cancel the room (at least one weeks' notice is required) and they are not charged a penny. This guarantees that you'll never have to worry about accommodation ever again and you can relax in the full knowledge that no matter what, you'll always have a room. Book it now - you know you want to!

What does sponsoring an event entail?

At the very least you are required to supply the trophies for the event - the costs vary, but are usually in the region of £100 to £150. If you wish to attract a good turnout then extras should be considered to boost attendance. You can rename some of the above events to suit your sponsorship - details upon request. Once sponsorship has been agreed you are obliged to supply/fund the trophies in order to exclusively reserve your event.

If you would like to sponsor a tournament, those marked X are unavailable.

2010 Backgammon Calendar

X Mar 19,20,21	Scottish Open	casino rip.com	GP	-	Edinburgh	Knockout
X Apr 9,10,11	British Open	casino rip.com	GP	UK	Hinckley	Knockout
Apl 25	Manchester 1-Day (non-Biba event)		GP	-	Manchester	Combination
May 7,8,9	County Cups Trophy		GP	UK	Hinckley	Swiss
Jun 4,5,6	The English Open		GP	-	Hinckley	Knockout
X Jul 2,3,4	Biba World Championship	casino rip.com	GP	UK	Hinckley	Knockout
Jul 24,25	15th Liverpool Open (non-Biba event)		GP	-	Liverpool	Combination
Aug 6,7,8	SAC Trophy		GP	UK	Hinckley	Swiss
Aug ??	14th Mind Sports Olympiad (non Biba event)		-	-	tba	Swiss
X Sep 3,4,5	Backgammon in London @ BibaTrophy		GP		Hinckley	Knockout
Oct 1,2,3	Sandy Osborne Memorial		GP		Hinckley	Knockout
Oct ??	18th Irish Open (non-Biba event)		GP	UK	Dublin	Knockout
Nov 5,6,7	Townharbour Trophy		GP	UK	Hinckley	Swiss
X Dec 3,4,5	The UK Finals Christmas Party		GP	-	Hinckley	Double KO

* Sponsored by Peter & Paul Christmas *

The XI Scottish Open

19, 20, 21 March 2010

Barceló Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh

Registration Fee: £20 Entry Fee £20

Guaranteed 1st Prize: £500 minimum



Sponsored by **casino**rip.com

THE SMARTER WAY TO PLAY

2010 Details, Deals and Dates



Registration: Saturday 1030 to 1230

Play Starts (prompt): Friday 2100, Saturday 1300, Sunday 1030

Auctions: Group, Saturday 1245. Individual, Sunday 1015

Pools: Private, members only, prize pools available at £tba

All tournaments feature a free entry Friday 500 **

Formats: Knockouts - 11, 7, 5, & 3 point matches, Swiss - 6 x 11 point matches

Saturday night backgammon, Poker Grand Prix and Jackpots subject to demand

Registration Fees: Members only: £20 - you can join on the day.
Entrants not residing at the hotel, £15 extra to cover facilities
(all fees and surcharges to be paid on the day - prepayment not required)

FRIDAY

2100: Friday 500 **
+ Jackpots (on demand)

SATURDAY

Registration 1030 / 1230
Play starts 1300 prompt

SUNDAY

Registration 1030
(penalty points apply @ 1035)

Backgammon tournament weekends cannot be booked through any other special offer or promotional rate. Players not on the Biba special rate or not staying in the hotel shall pay a surcharge of £15 per night to cover facilities provided. ** Friday 500 entrants who are not on the Biba rate or are not staying in the hotel will have to pay a £20 entry fee.

Dinner, bed and breakfast @ Barceló Hotels for 2010

The Barceló Carlton Hotel - Edinburgh

Reservations: 0131 4723 000 option #2 and quote 'backgammon'

Rates per person, per night : Single £79.50, Double £59

The Barceló Hinckley Island

Reservations: 01455 631 122 option #2 and quote 'backgammon'

Single room: One night £66, two nights £115.50

Double or twin room: One night £108.00, two nights £203

There are a limited number of rooms made available to Biba at these rates for each of the hotels above and they will be allocated on a first come - first served basis. You are strongly advised to book your accommodation requirements as instructed on page 17 to avoid disappointment.

7, 8, 9, May - County Cups Trophy @ Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel

The second of the year's four Swiss Format events. Not only do entrants get to play 6 x 11 point matches, but the winner qualifies for the Christmas UK Finals in December with entry into the Last 16 plus one night's free accommodation. Also, this is a great opportunity to rack up a good few Grand Prix points. In addition to the Main & Consolation there will also be a 3-point Blitz between rounds for those that fancy something extra! Not forgetting the Poker Grand Prix and backgammon Saturday night.

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THE SMARTER WAY TO PLAY



Goldiblots drew a deep breath and announced, "And the results are, Baby Bore won two, Daddy Bore won one, and Mummy Bore came second every time." ("Don't I always?" mused Mummy Bore, "don't I always?"")

Position #1

24/21, 13/9
21/14*
9/5, 6/5

Position #2

13/7, 13/11
24/16
13/5

-0.057
-0.141

Baby
Mummy
Daddy

-0.026
-0.066

Daddy
Mummy
Baby

Position #3

13/11, 6/2
13/7*
20/18, 6/2

-0.017
-0.065

Baby
Mummy
Daddy

Don't forget, dear reader, there's twenty squid to be won, so sharpen them pencils and get scribbling and send off your fishy list as soon as you can.

Registration £20, Entry Fee £15
Guaranteed 1st prize of £500

The English Open. 4,5,6, June 2010

Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel
The usual four elements plus extras on demand

This is a Biba Grand Prix Tournament and is seeking a sponsor



Biba is proud to present its second World Championship Knockout & Progressive Consolation, Last Chance and 3-pointer event that is open to all players (**see below**) who cannot afford the high Registration and Entry Fees that world events normally charge.

2,3,4, July 2010

Barceló Hinckley Island

Registration Fee: £20. Entry: £20

Guaranteed 1st Prize: £1000

*** Entrants must be subscribers to Bibafax and members of Biba. You can join on the day.**

Sponsored by *casino*rip.com

THE SMARTER WAY TO PLAY

This is a UK Finals Qualifier and Grand Prix Tournament



You want it? We've got it!

www.bgshop.com

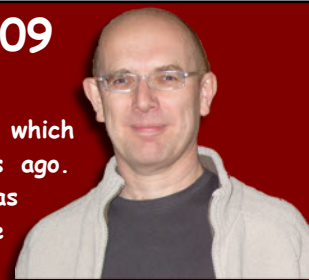
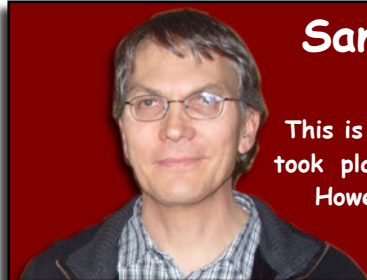


Sandy Osborne Trophy, October 2009

Peter Bennet (on the left) reflects

This is not a very timely article, relating as it does to a Biba final which took place (depending when you read this) at least five months ago.

However, I found that going over it months after the event was quite instructive and I hope you also find some of the following positions interesting.



My first ever Biba tournament win was the Sandy Osborne Trophy in October 2000 in the age of analogue clocks. When I played in the October 2009 Sandy Osborne, for which there was a rollover of the 'winner-takes-all' prize fund, I felt (not for the first time!) that the omens were right and perhaps it was my 'turn' to win again. For my first five matches everything went according to plan, and so I found myself in the final on the Sunday afternoon.

Having split most of the cash with my opponent, Adrian Jones, we settled down to play a good-natured final using a digital clock, with the usual Biba allocation of 2 minutes per point plus 12 seconds per move. I am all in favour of clocks being used throughout a tournament. I am not the fastest player, nor am I the slowest, but I like being able to allocate my time as I see fit rather than having the TD (perhaps repeatedly) telling us to speed up. I don't often get into time trouble when using a clock, but the Sandy final was one of those occasions....

We started the match after the video camera above the board had been switched on to record the moves, and play continued normally for the first few games. Suddenly however, someone noticed that the red light on the camera had gone out, indicating that it was no longer recording. Michael Crane investigated and realised that it had not been plugged into the mains, and so had stopped recording when the internal battery had become exhausted.

After Michael had connected the power cable and switched the camera back on we resumed the match, which carried on for a few more minutes before I really noticed the clock again. I was horrified to see that after only five games, and with the score at four points apiece, I had eight minutes and fifty-five seconds of my original 22 minutes remaining. There had been no critical plays or cube decisions which might have gobbled up big chunks of my time. I came to the conclusion that my clock had probably been running while the camera was being attended to,

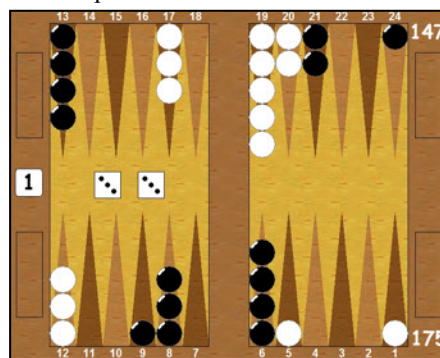
but I just accepted that it was my fault for not stopping the clock, and carried on with my severely curtailed time allocation. I was aware of time pressure for the rest of the match, so perhaps I can use that as an excuse for some of the poor plays I made!

The other unfortunate consequence of the camera failure was that we did not get a complete record of the match, although Michael has cobbled the two halves together somehow (the score jumps from 3-0 to 4-2 in Adrian's favour). Of course all my best plays were in the bit which was never recorded ☺

In addition to the clock problem, the match did not quite follow the script which I had written for it. I was trailing throughout, but then managed to claw my way back to DMP. The last game was certainly eventful: I went from 70% favourite in the middle game, down to 5%. Then, thanks to two sets of boxes and a very efficient double-2 in the bearoff, I was back up to 87.5% favourite again. Unfortunately for me, Adrian spoiled my fun by rolling a 66 of his own, which I could not answer. As Michael has already noted in his tournament report in Bibafax 103, the grisly final sequence can be seen on youtube at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_rT4TmSdLs

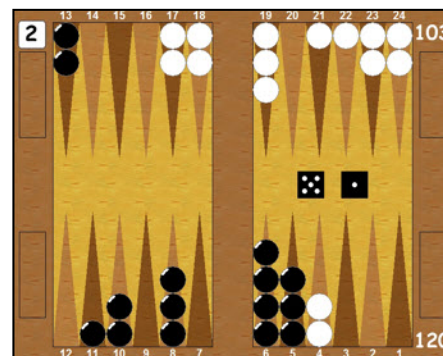
On to some of the match positions, and to get my revenge for Adrian's final double 6 I'll start with one of his blunders – a double 3 in the first game. I am playing as black and Adrian as white, the match is to 11 points.



Black 0 White 0
White to play 33

As is often the case with doubles, there are plenty of reasonable-looking plays to choose from. Should Adrian leave his rearmost blot where it is on the 24-point rather than moving it up and giving me two targets to attack? Should he improve his prime by making either his bar- or his 10-point? He chose the latter: 24/21, 13/10(3).

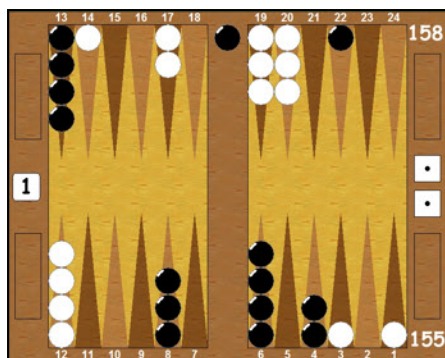
In the current position it is important to note that Adrian will be 40 pips up in race after his move and therefore priming me is not an important goal. If he can just bring his men home safely he will win the race. Another feature of the position is the stack of men on his 6-point which are currently not serving a useful purpose. All but one of Snowie's top ten plays use two of these men to make the 3-point. This will not only make his bear-in safer, but his stronger board will make it more dangerous for me to attack in my home board. Neither the bar-, nor the 10-point are vital here, and the best play is 24/21, 8/5, 6/3(2).



Black 2 White 4
Black to play 51

Trailing in the race I need to prevent white from escaping. In my haste to improve my prime, and seduced by the two blots in white's board, I spread out my outfield checkers and uselessly dump a man on the ace with 13/12, 6/1. I wasn't afraid of being hit, but my play is much too loose: with his stronger board and my newly-created in-board blot, Adrian will gleefully come off his anchor to hit me. It is much better to start the more useful 3-point and leave no outfield blots with 11/10, 8/3. My first of several blunders.

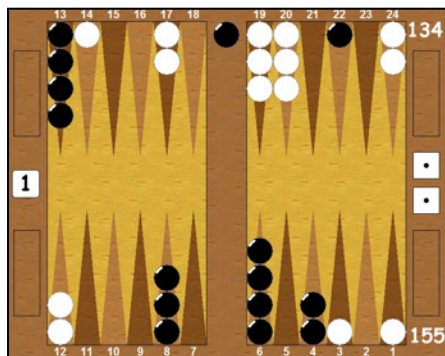




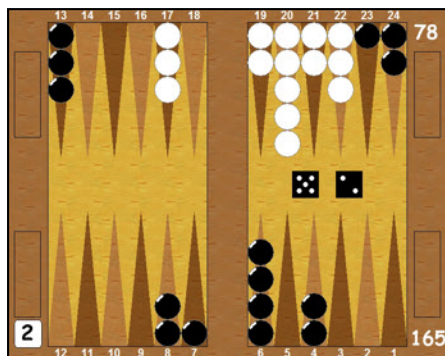
Black 4 White 5
White cube action?

I am on the bar against a two point board and Adrian is likely to attack my other blot on his 3-point. Do I have a take? A few years ago I might have seriously considered passing this, but Julian Fetterlein's advice now rings in my ears when I am faced with these sorts of positions. For the blitz to be successful, white needs to close me out. To close me out here he needs to move his checkers a minimum of 57 pips. That's a lot of pips: about seven rolls on average, assuming no setbacks and no movement of the back checkers. That's a big assumption when he may need to hit loose repeatedly to prevent me from anchoring, and I have a two point board myself. So much so that it is the double which is a blunder.

Advance Adrian's men 24 pips by moving two from his mid to his ace-point . . .



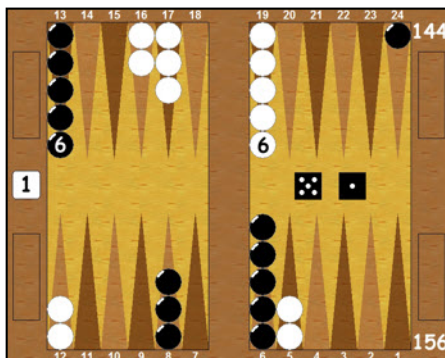
. . .and the closeout is now only 33 pips away, turning the cube into a monster pass.



Black 4 White 5
Black to play 52

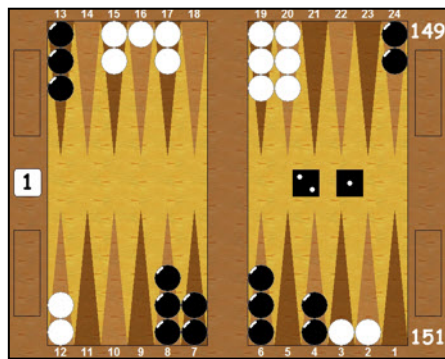
Adrian's cube worked out well for him, and now I am desperate to avoid a gammon loss. With this in mind, I briefly consider stopping on Adrian's bar-point, but reject the idea and play 23/16. This saves me about 3% in gammon losses. Unfortunately it also costs me nearly 5% more plain game losses and is approaching blunder territory.

A mental scroll through white's rolls should have given me the answer here. If I leave the blot on his bar-point I will be worse off after most of white's aces, but happier with most of his other numbers. Adrian would like to be able to move two men from his 8-point in relative safety but an annoying blot on his bar-point would get in the way, and in some cases force a direct shot. The two is best played 13/11 rather than 7/5, in case of an immediate shot.



Black 4 White 7
Black to play 51

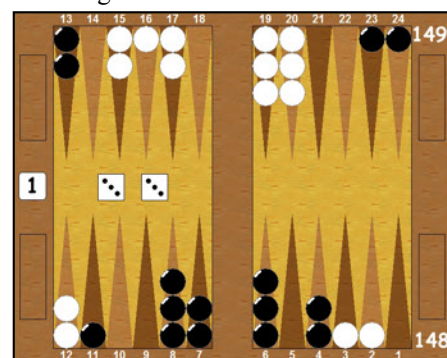
A simple position, incorrectly played (on autopilot) 24/23, 13/8. Not a huge mistake, but I trail in the race (although I only have one man back) so I have the opportunity to make a more flexible play at little cost. 13/7 gives me builders on three points instead of only two, and making the bar-point would also be quite nice. The downside? White might hit, but with 21 and 26 things look very ugly for him, and 24 and 25 are good building rolls anyway.



Black 4 White 8
Black to play 21

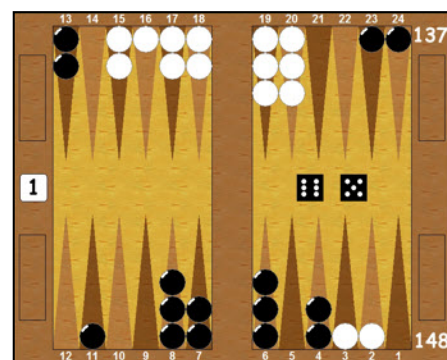
plays from the same game. Michael commented on the two subsequent moves in his original report, but the sequence starts off with this 21 which I play passively 24/23, 13/11. Not a blunder, but very unimaginative. It is often right in the early game to exchange the bar-point for the 5-point and leave a single shot. In this case I should still do it at the cost of a double shot, because I get plenty of compensation:

- I secure a 3 to 2 home board points advantage which will benefit me in an exchange of hits
- if white misses, 6s and 1s cover, giving me a solid 5-prime
- most of white's hitting 4s and 5s are very constructive on his side of the board anyway, reducing the cost of being hit



Black 4 White 8
White to play 33

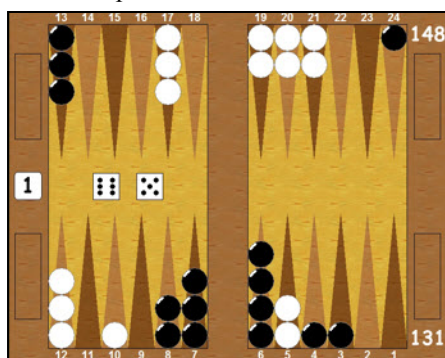
Adrian decided on 13/7(2) here, but it is a big blunder. Priming certainly looks like a reasonable winning plan: Adrian completes a broken five prime with spares to facilitate its forward movement. The trouble is that the priming play leaves me my full roll to work on my own prime, and because I am behind in the race my timing will be better if I succeed. Pointing on me with 23/20, 8/2*, 5/2 looks impure, but this matters less if Adrian is steering away from priming and towards blitzing. The pointing play wins 5% more games overall, and converts 10% more of those wins into gammons.



Black 4 White 8
Black to play 65

The first of three consecutive bad mis-

Immediately after Adrian's 33 it's my turn to make a monster blunder. I roll a poor 65 and, failing to notice that the dice have dictated a change of plan, I tamely move two men from the mid- in the hope of making my 5-point next time. I should have realised that I needed to take some urgent action now to stall Adrian. If allowed to use his full roll he is likely either to construct a solid five-prime, or to escape a back man, and then I may be scrambling to stay in the game. Better to attack now, by either pointing on the blot on my 2-point, or with the slightly purer loose hit 13/7, 8/3*. If my attack succeeds, extricating my diversified back checkers will be much easier than it would be if Adrian is allowed to make a solid five-prime first.



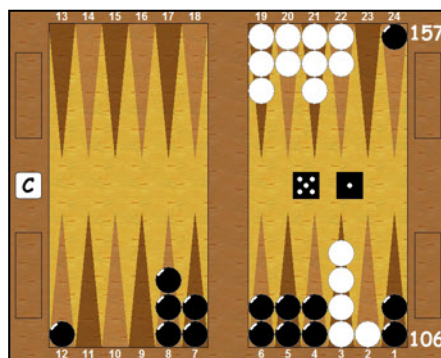
Black 6 White 9
White to play 65

This is a great position, neatly illustrating all of Magriel's famous criteria for deciding whether to make a 'bold' play or a

'safe' play:

- White trails in the race and has more men back than black
- White currently has an advanced anchor
- White has a stronger board than black: three points to black's one
- Black has two blots in his board, White has none

So everything points to a 'bold' play by white, but . . . what is the best bold play??! Well, Adrian's very reasonable looking play of jumping into the outfield (20/14, 20/15) isn't, because if it works and I miss the shot, white is just racing. This isn't very bold, because he is losing the race, unless he can trap my back man. So why not try to trap it now, with 15/10, 13/7? If missed, white becomes huge favourite to make a solid five-prime. Any other play is a blunder.



Black 8 White 10
Crawford Game
Black to play 51

In this final position I try to get too clever. Thinking that white will self-destruct whatever I do, and with match-winning triples colouring my judgement, I try the loose hit 8/2* which adds another double blunder to my tally. Quite apart from the fact that I only gain about 0.3% extra triples with this play, it doesn't take too much imagination to see how things could go badly wrong for me.

I could end up with three on the bar, giving white time to roll enough escaping sixes. Or my back checker might get stuck while my prime crunches. Or white might stay on the bar long enough to maintain a strong front position for a critical shot later on.

I remember reading a wise comment by the American player Alex Zamanian a few years ago along the following lines: "More often than not in backgammon the obvious move is the best. The trickier the play I am considering, the more certain I need to be that it is correct." The simple, and obvious, 24/18 is by far the best play.

MC: This match is available to members as a JellyFish or Snowie match file or as a html file. It features on the email and CD versions of Bibafax or can be obtained from Biba HQ via email.

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UK FINALS 2010

9, 10, 11
Barceló Hinckley

April
Island Hotel

British Open 2010

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Biba Grand Prix Event

Manchester Backgammon Club

www.lighton.btinternet.co.uk/backg.htm e-mail absolutforme@yahoo.co.uk

One Day Backgammon Tournament - Sunday 25th April 2010

Manchester Bridge Club. 30 Palatine Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3JJ

*** pre-entry by 18th April essential (including payment of entry fee) ***

Registration 9-30 to 10-30 Play starts 11 am prompt (finish about 11pm)

Entry Fee £25: (£15 Juniors) NB: numbers limited to 56

Please bring your own board if you have one

Main event 5 qualifying rounds (Swiss format 5 point matches)

Main Final 8 or 16 player knock out + Consolation Event 5 point knock out

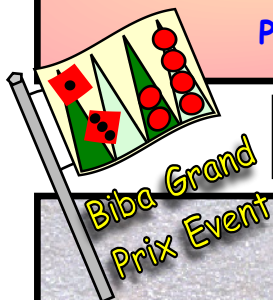
Last Chance 3 point knock out + 1 point knock out event

Trophies - Prizes - Pools - Non-expert prizes - Biba Grand Prix - Buffet - Bar

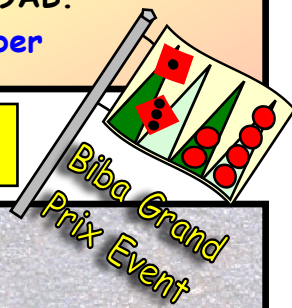
To pre-book your entry send your cheque for £25 (£15) payable to Susan Bourne to:

Susan Bourne. 16 Duke Street. Buxton. Derbyshire. SK17 9AB.

Please include your name, email address & telephone number



Both these events are Biba Grand Prix events



LIVERPOOL BACKGAMMON CLUB

presents

The 15th Liverpool Open - Saturday 24, Sunday 25 July 2010

Venue: Liverpool Bridge Club, 7 Croxteth Road, Liverpool L8 5SE

Fee: £35.00 (under 18 - £20) includes Saturday Buffet

Entries after the deadline will incur an extra £10 additional fee

Reg: Saturday: 10.00-10.45am for a 11 am start. (NB: Limited to 64 players)

* Main * Consolation * Last Chance * One Point Shoot-Out *

* Sweeps * Cash Prizes! * Poker * Bar *

Details from: John Wright. 07931 553829 jpwright@blueyonder.co.uk

Peter Chan: 07879 837288 peedur8@hotmail.com

For catering purposes, pre-entry is required. Cheques payable to Simon Jones.

3 The Vineries, Liverpool, L25 6EU and forward prior to 17 July 2010

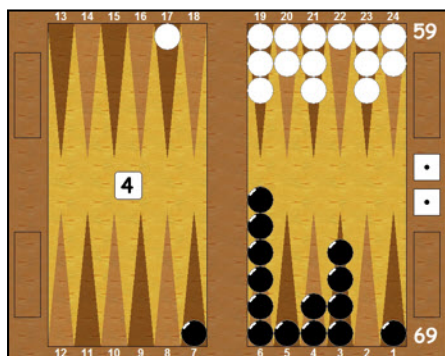
Please include your name, email address & telephone number

NB: Entries after 17 July will incur an additional £10 fee

Biba International Tournament

Report by Michael Crane

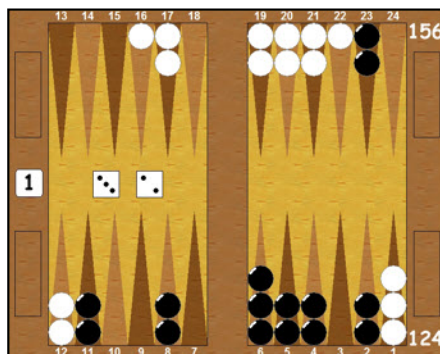
Main (25): Twenty-five was a poor turn-out, and I will not even trot out the usual, "but it was a quality field" even if it is true! On the Sunday the Semis saw Tony Fawcett vs Paul Plumptre and Marcus Wrinch vs Nicky Check, from which Paul and Nicky emerged to face-off in the final. It wasn't a classic match and Nicky came out as 'beginner' to Paul's 'intermediate'. Between them they played an astonishing 53 errors of which 25 were blunders! What perhaps clinched it for Paul was his luck rate: 28.595 . . . pretty high! Here's a few snippets for you:



Black 2 White 1
White recubes

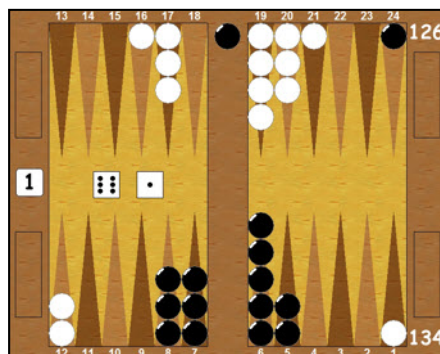
Nicky took quite a while to ship across this recube to 4. While viewing the video I realised he was counting the pips, which had him 10 pips ahead. Mind you, a glance at the relative positions should have been a good indication of the correct cube procedure: Double/Pass. Black has poor distribution and six checkers stacked on the 6-point with just one 5 to remove before 5s are wasted. White has all points covered and is likely to remove

two checkers each roll for longer than black will.



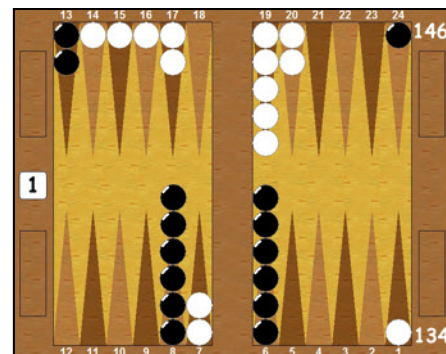
Black 4 White 3
White to play 32

On the video recording Nicky is clearly seen to take 1 minute, 40 seconds (not including his 12 seconds per move allowance) to misplay this roll 8/3. What he should have played is 24/22, 9/6. Coming off the 8-point is a blunder according to Snowie, it's blocking escaping 6s for black and threatening them if they move off and run out with 5s.



Black 6 White 3
White to play 61

Another instance where Nicky thinks a long time (68 seconds) to make a mistake with 13/7, 5/4. He did toy with the correct play, 9/3, 4/3 but for some reason didn't play it. Slotting the bar-point is playing into black's hands and he'd love to have a go at rolling a 6 with a 1, 2 or 3. Black in fact rolled 62: 25/23, 24/18*. Nicky never recovered and was doubled out a bit later on.



Black 7 White 3
White on roll

After a series of stacking moves Paul found himself in this awful position; a position that 'Stacker' Staines himself would be proud of! Incredibly, Nicky couldn't keep the black checker contained and eventually Paul cubed him out to go 8-3 ahead.

Thereafter, Nicky gains one more point and is then gammoned at 9-4 to lose the match.

In the Progressive **Consolation (21)**, Round 1, Jon Barnes (British Champion 2009) met Rachel Rhodes (British Champion 2000 & 2005), a match from which Jon came through the winner. He then progressed through to the final from the non-prog side to meet Mardi Ohan- ➡



Main: Nicky Check and Paul Plumptre



Semi-finalists: Marcus Wrinch and Tony Fawcett

nessian who came through the progressive side. Mardi, more comfortable with head-to-head games than matches, was looking to get back to a head-to-head that was rudely interrupted by this final, and it was he that came out to take home yet another trophy. On a separate note: For someone that has appeared in several films as an extra, Mardi is never serious when in front of the camera . . . as the photo shows!

Having been defeated by Jon in the Consolation, Rachel made emends by getting to the final of the **Last Chance (32)** on her 3rd re-buy! Facing her was fellow 3rd re-buyer, Uldis Lapikens. For a while it looked as if Uldis was going to take the title but Rachel stepped up another gear (she's a truck driver!) and drove off with it instead.

In the **Time Trials (8)** the final between Andy Darby and Phil Tutchings was played on the clock (hence the title), and it was Andy that came out the fastest!

Last month Andy won the top title - Jarvis Main, and this month he wins the lowest title!

Other events over the weekend: **Friday 500 (10)** saw Andy Darby (yes, the same one!) fight it out against Myke Wignall in the final - and Myke came out the winner. **Poker (9)** saw Andy Darby (yes, the same one!!) in 1st place with Tony Fawcett 2nd and Mark Calderbank 3rd. **Team (8)** saw Irving Czechowicz beating Rachel Rhodes in the final. *NB: Andy Darby was playing poker, thank goodness!*

Finally. I have been saving the best news 'til last: Paul Plumptre wasn't in the winner-takes-all prize fund so it's a roll-over for Scotland of £210. See you in Scotland!

Match detailed statistics for Jarvis		
Player	Paul Plumptre	Nicky Check
Rating	intermediate	beginner
Overall	11.396/19.721	13.970/22.150
Errors(blunders)	26(11)	27(14)
Checker play errors		
Checker play	9.694/17.154	6.529/10.281
Errors(blunders)	20(10)	19(6)
Double errors		
Overall	1.703/2.567	2.155/3.539
Missed double	0.612/0.907	2.137/3.515
Wrong double	1.090/1.660	0.018/0.024
Errors(blunders)	6(1)	3(3)
Take errors		
Overall	0.000/0.000	5.285/8.331
Wrong take	0.000/0.000	0.000/0.000
Wrong pass	0.000/0.000	5.285/8.331
Errors(blunders)	0(0)	5(5)
Paul Plumptre was 52.43% favourite.		



Consolation: Jon Barnes and Mardi Ohannesian



Last Chance: Rachel Rhodes and Uldis Lapikens



Time Trial: Andy Darby and Phil Tutchings



Myke Wignall and Mick Harris caught hiding!!

The Jarvis Trophy, 5,6,7 January, 2010

Main (15)			wins	GP	Consolation (15)			con/wins	GP	Team (7)	
1	Andrew Darby		6	24.77	1	Ann Pocknell		3 / 4	9.29	1	Ed Turner
2	Vicki Pemberton		5	16.52	2	Stewart Pemberton		3 / 4	10.84	2	Sharen Crane
3	Mark Calderbank		4	13.42	3	Andreas Sophocleous		2 / 3	7.74	Friday 500 (13)	
4	Phil Tutchings		4	12.39	4	Tony Fawcett		2 / 3	6.19		
5	Myke Wignall		4	10.84	5	Richard Holness		2 / 2	4.13		
6	Lawrence Powell		4	9.29	6	Bob Young		1 / 2	5.68		
7	Nicky Check		4	10.84	7	Paul Barwick		1 / 2	4.13		
8	Simon K Jones		4	11.35	8	Mick Harris		1 / 2	4.13	3&4	Myke Wignall
9	Jeff Barber		4	10.84	9	Neil Everitt		1 / 2	4.13	3&4	Nicky Check
10	Uldis Lapikens		4	9.29	10	George Hall		1 / 2	5.68	5to8	George Hall
11	Marcus Wrinch		3	8.25	11	Linda Taylor		1 / 1	2.58	5to8	Mardi Ohannessian
12	Rosey Bensley		3	6.19	12	Ed Turner		1 / 1	2.58	5to8	Rosey Bensley
13	Mardi Ohannessian		3	8.25	13	Anne Ryder		0 / 0		5to8	Tony Fawcett
14	Peter Christmas		3	8.25	14	Eric Westbrook		0 / 1	2.58	Poker (13)	
15	Jean Wade		2	4.13	15	Chris Ternel		0 / 1	2.58		
1 Mark Calderbank											

Ranking changes @ Jarvis (new/old)

1922	1957	Chris Ternel	1612	1584	Mark Calderbank
1865	1865	Lawrence Powell	1608	1634	Bob Young
1833	1865	Marcus Wrinch	1599	1609	Tony Fawcett
1823	1802	Simon K Jones	1562	1562	Andreas Sophocleous
1822	1810	Nicky Check	1544	1495	Phil Tutchings
1774	1782	Peter Christmas	1499	1558	Ed Turner
1768	1750	Ann Pocknell	1482	1466	Rosey Bensley
1743	1755	Mardi Ohannessian	1479	1437	Myke Wignall
1737	1733	Uldis Lapikens	1464	1467	Eric Westbrook
1715	1692	Stewart Pemberton	1438	1450	Paul Barwick
1632	1544	Andrew Darby	1432	1446	Mick Harris
1612	1583	Jeff Barber	1410	1414	Jean Wade
			1404	1414	Neil Everitt

1391	1415	George Hall
1374	1374	Richard Holness
1355	1263	Vicki Pemberton
1348	1435	Anne Ryder
1203	1236	Linda Taylor

Biba International Championship, 5, 6, 7 March 2010

Main (25)		Last Chance (32)		Poker (9)		GP @ International	
1	Paul Plumptre	1	Rachel Rhodes	1	Andy Darby	13.42	Paul Plumptre
2	Nicky Check	2	Uldis Lapikens	2	Tony Fawcett	13.42	Nicky Check
3&4	Marcus Wrinch	3&4	Brian Lever	3	Mark Calderbank	9.29	Marcus Wrinch
3&4	Tony Fawcett	3&4	Jeff Barber	4	Myke Wignall	9.28	Jon Barnes
5to8	Jeff Barber	5to8	Andy Darby	5	Mick Harris	9.27	Rachel Rhodes
5to8	Paul Barwick	5to8	Irving Czechowicz	6	Robert Tutchings	6.19	Paul Barwick
5to8	Chris Evans	5to8	Neil Everitt	7	Chris Evans	6.19	Jeff Barber
5to8	Mardi Ohannessian	5to8	Mick Harris	8	Julian Fetterlein	6.19	Tony Fawcett
Consolation (21)		Friday 500 (10)		Time Trials (8)		6.18	Mardi Ohannessian
						6.18	Irving Czechowicz
						6.18	Mark Calderbank
						6.17	Uldis Lapikens
						4.13	Brian Lever
						4.13	Chris Evans
						4.13	Andrew Darby
						4.13	Phil Tutchings
						4.13	Neil Everitt
						4.13	Mick Harris
Ranking changes @ International (new/old)				Team (8)		4.12	Chris Ternel
						2.58	Julian Fetterlein
						2.58	Robert Tutchings
						2.58	Andreas Sophocleous
						2.06	Myke Wignall
						2.06	Dorothy Lee
						2.06	Kevin Jones
						1459	1438 Paul Barwick
						1449	1479 Myke Wignall
						1447	1432 Mick Harris
1941	1965	Julian Fetterlein	1697	1639	Paul Plumptre	1443	1451 Chris Evans
1928	1932	Brian Lever	1643	1612	Jeff Barber	1406	1424 Robert Tutchings
1908	1922	Chris Ternel	1627	1632	Andrew Darby	1401	1404 Neil Everitt
1852	1822	Nicky Check	1606	1599	Tony Fawcett		
1850	1833	Marcus Wrinch	1606	1612	Mark Calderbank		
1806	1808	Rachel Rhodes	1544	1544	Phil Tutchings		
1769	1743	Mardi Ohannessian	1541	1565	Dorothy Lee		
1727	1737	Uldis Lapikens	1541	1562	Andreas Sophocleous		
1724	1714	Jon Barnes	1497	1521	Kevin Jones		
			1492	1478	Irving Czechowicz		

Friday 500 March 2010

		14	Ed Turner	4	Angie Dell
		12	Ann Pocknell	4	Arthur Wright
44	Myke Wignall	11	Anne Ryder	4	Chas Perry
43	Andy Darby	9	Rob Tutchings	4	Malcolm Robertson
37	Nicky Check	9	George Hall	4	Mark Calderbank
23	Simon K Jones	9	Ray Kershaw	4	Martin Barkwill
22	Tony Fawcett	9	Rosey Bensley	4	Paul Barwick
20	Peter Bennet	9	Tony Walters	4	Paul Gilbertson
18	Mardi Ohannessian	7	Brian Lever	4	Peter Chan
16	Phil Tutchings	7	Carl Dell	4	Rachel Rhodes
16	John Wright	7	Chris Ternel	4	Richard Biddle
16	Marcus Wrinch	7	Eddie Barker	4	Roy Hollands
14	Andreas Sophocleous	7	Ian Tarr	4	Steve Taylor
14	Mick Harris	7	Jeff Barber		

Myke Wignall and Andy Darby swap places at #1 & #2, with Myke leading by just 1 point. Simon K Jones and Nicky Check remain unchanged. We lose George Hall, Ray Kershaw and Tony Walters from the Top 16 (all absent and who drop into joint #16) and gain Andreas Sophocleous, Mick Harris and Rob Tutchings (who shares his #16 place with a few others!).

These positions are likely to alter very soon as the Scottish Open, Friday 500 will bring in a bunch of players chasing after the £100 added prize money!

Poker Grand Prix March 2010

<u>Pts</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Pts</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Pts</u>	<u>Player</u>
		21	John Wright	9	Martin Barkwill
		21	Rosey Bensley	8	Julian Fetterlein
64	Mark Calderbank	19	Carl Dell	7	Angie Dell
48	Vicki Pemberton	17	Mick Harris	6	Paul Gilbertson
42	Lawrence Powell	15	Marcus Wrinch	4	Mick Vacarey
40	Tony Fawcett	13	George Hall	3	Roy Hollands
36	Myke Wignall	12	Robert Tutchings	2	John Batty
35	Simon K Jones	12	Ann Pocknell	1	John Hedge
29	Andy Darby	10	Chris Evans		
21	Philip Tutchings	10	Eddie Barker		

Mark Calderbank takes advantage of Vicki Pemberton's absence and takes over the #1 spot, pushing Vicki into #2. Lawrence Powell (absent) clings onto #3, and Tony Fawcett jumps in at #4 closely followed by Myke Wignall as they elbow out Rosey Bensley and Simon K Jones (both absent).

These positions are likely to change following the Scottish Open . . . watch this space!

The relationship between Barceló Hotels and Biba is a delicate one, each dependant upon the other. To enable me to run Biba and to provide members with adequate facilities for tournaments I have negotiated a retainer and a commission from Barceló that is beneficial to both parties. Unfortunately this delicate balance is now under threat from members bypassing the Biba rate for cheaper accommodation. An activity that is jeopardising Biba's future!

During the weekend of the Brighton tournament 28% of entrants staying in the hotel were not on the Biba rate, nor did they pay the advertised surcharge - the effect of this was that Biba was almost liable for the 'extras' that our special rate covers. When an entrant books onto the Biba rate Barceló doesn't just provide dinner, bed and breakfast, it provides: Event staff accommodation, playing rooms and refreshments, bottles of wine prizes, Weekend Break prize, UK Qualifiers accommodation, administration retainer and commission; all of which is calculated within the Biba rate. If Biba were to pay for the 'extras' built into the Biba rate the playing-room itself in Brighton (and elsewhere) for 48 hours continuous use would be more than £1200, a sum that would be very difficult to recoup from tournament entrants, add to this the other 'extras' and it is nearer £2000!

Bypassing the Biba rate and staying at the event hotel is a false economy which will lead, if unchecked, to renegotiations with Barceló to place everyone on a 48 hour delegate package with typical rates of around £100 per day per delegate. If Biba is forced down this route then its future is very uncertain.

It has been decided that the current, non-resident surcharge is to be increased to £15. Entrants staying at the hotel but not on the Biba rate will also incur the surcharge at the rate of £15 per person per night's stay, i.e. two nights, Friday and Saturday is £30. This is to become active at the Jarvis Trophy in February. NB: There is no surcharge for Sunday night stays.

Grand Prix Championship March 2010

42.84	Nicky Check	13.42	Paul Plumtre	6.19	Peter Chan	4.13	Jean Wade
33.00	Andy Darby	13.42	Stewart Pemberton	6.19	Martin Barkwill	4.12	Roy Hollands
28.88	Mark Calderbank	13.42	Lawrence Powell	6.19	Ray Kershaw	4.12	Chris Bray
26.83	Marcus Wrinch	13.40	Rachel Rhodes	6.19	Rosey Bensley	4.12	Malcolm Robertson
26.32	Jeff Barber	13.39	Jon Barnes	6.18	Irving Czechowicz	4.12	Mick Vacarey
24.77	John Hurst	12.88	Chris Ternel	5.68	George Hall	2.58	Linda Taylor
24.76	Peter Bennet	12.37	Peter Christmas	4.13	Cliff Connick	2.58	Robert Tutchings
19.10	Vicki Pemberton	10.32	Andreas Sophocleous	4.13	Brian Lever	2.58	Eric Westbrook
19.09	Phil Tutchings	9.29	Angie Dell	4.13	Alan Beckerson	2.57	Mike Williams
17.03	Myke Wignall	9.29	Sean Williams	4.13	Ian Tarr	2.06	Eddie Barker
16.51	Paul Barwick	9.28	Monica Beckerson	4.13	Steve Taylor	2.06	Zoe Cunningham
15.48	Simon K Jones	9.27	Peter Finnimore	4.13	John Wright	2.06	Dorothy Lee
15.47	Ann Pocknell	8.26	Bob Young	4.13	Richard Biddle	2.06	Kevin Jones
15.46	Uldis Lapikens	8.26	Neil Everitt	4.13	Chris Evans	2.06	Simon Heath
14.96	Tony Fawcett	8.26	Mick Harris	4.13	Stuart Mann	1.55	Arthur Wright
14.43	Mardi Ohannessian	6.71	Ed Turner	4.13	Richard Holness		
13.42	Paul Gilbertson	6.19	Mike Heard	4.13	John Hedge		

Ranking Championship March 2010 (11 point matches played - Score - Player)

Q 1946.07	Nicky Check	6 2051.67	Bob Young	2 1053.50	Jon Barnes
Q 1745.07	Marcus Wrinch	6 1411.00	George Hall	1 1438.00	Julian Fetterlein
13 1908.31	Jeff Barber	6 1358.50	Chris Ternel	1 1405.00	Malcolm Robertson
12 1661.25	Paul Barwick	6 1203.17	Linda Taylor	1 1378.00	Chas Perry
10 1659.80	Mark Calderbank	5 1924.00	Paul Gilbertson	1 1375.00	Chris Bray
10 1478.60	Tony Fawcett	5 1475.80	Jean Wade	1 1353.00	Arthur Wright
9 1907.56	Andy Darby	4 2147.00	Paul Plumtre	1 1351.00	Zoe Cunningham
9 1708.33	Phil Tutchings	4 1900.50	Angie Dell	1 1323.00	Tim Mooring
9 1623.78	Myke Wignall	4 1843.75	Sean Williams	1 1322.00	Irving Czechowicz
8 1821.25	Simon K Jones	3 1895.67	Mike Heard	1 1319.00	Simon Heath
8 1701.00	Lawrence Powell	3 1858.67	Ray Kershaw	1 1292.00	Peter Bennet
8 1643.75	Mardi Ohannessian	3 1811.33	Peter Chan	1 1274.00	Mike Williams
8 1524.00	Mick Harris	3 1694.33	Martin Barkwill	1 1268.00	Carl Dell
8 1436.50	Neil Everitt	3 1536.67	Eric Westbrook	1 1211.00	Monica Beckerson
8 1279.63	Ed Turner	3 1423.67	Rachel Rhodes	1 1197.00	Peter Finnimore
7 1827.14	Vicky Pemberton	2 1784.50	Alan Beckerson	1 1139.00	Robert Tutchings
7 1653.14	Ann Pocknell	2 1760.00	Chris Evans	1 1135.00	Chris Purchase
7 1583.29	Stewart Pemberton	2 1698.50	Stuart Mann	1 1132.00	Dorothy Lee
7 1570.71	Uldis Lapikens	2 1674.50	Brian Lever	1 1048.00	Tony Walters
7 1536.43	Peter Christmas	2 1625.50	John Hedge	1 1047.00	Mick Vacarey
7 1479.57	Andreas Sophocleous	2 1612.00	Ian Tarr	1 1020.00	Roy Hollands
7 936.43	Anne Ryder	2 1576.00	John Wright	1 951.00	Kevin Jones
6 2201.33	John Hurst	2 1528.00	Richard Biddle	1 888.00	John Batty
6 1640.33	Rosey Bensley	2 1518.00	Cliff Connick	1 888.00	Eddie Barker
6 1498.17	Richard Holness	2 1468.00	Steve Taylor		

Active Players Rankings March 2010

1950	1950	John Hurst	1724	1714	Jon Barnes	1589	1589	Gheorghe Filipas	1457	1457	Tim Vasiljevic
1948	1948	Peter Bennet	1715	1715	Stewart Pemberton	1569	1569	Raymond Kershaw	1449	1479	Myke Wignall
1941	1965	Julian Fetterlein	1713	1713	Steve Rimmer	1547	1547	Alan Beckerson	1447	1432	Mick Harris
1928	1932	Brian Lever	1710	1710	Mick Butterfield	1544	1544	Phil Tutchings	1443	1451	Chris Evans
1908	1922	Chris Ternel	1704	1704	Ian Tarr	1542	1542	John Gilbertson	1434	1434	Simonetta Barone
1899	1899	Adrian Jones	1697	1639	Paul Plumtre	1540	1540	Gerry Enslin	1423	1423	Larry Bennet
1879	1879	Paul Gilbertson	1693	1693	Tom Duggan	1539	1539	John Wright	1410	1410	Jean Wade
1867	1867	Tony Lee	1688	1688	John Hedge	1539	1539	Eddie Barker	1401	1404	Neil Everitt
1865	1865	Lawrence Powell	1660	1660	Peter Chan	1537	1537	Simon Morecroft	1391	1391	George Hall
1858	1858	Kevin Stebbing	1660	1660	David Phillips	1527	1527	Talan Evans	1390	1390	Arthur Wright
1852	1822	Nicky Check	1654	1654	Tim Mooring	1514	1514	Richard Biddle	1388	1388	Angela Dell
1850	1833	Marcus Wrinch	1645	1645	Stefan Paliwoda	1499	1499	Edwin Turner	1377	1377	Steve Taylor
1841	1841	David Nathan	1643	1612	Jeff Barber	1492	1478	Irving Czechowicz	1374	1374	Mick Vacarey
1823	1823	Simon K Jones	1643	1643	David Motley	1482	1482	Rosey Bensley	1374	1374	Richard Holness
1813	1813	Martin Barkwill	1627	1627	Roy Hollands	1479	1479	Mike Williams	1366	1366	Rowena Paliwoda
1806	1808	Rachel Rhodes	1627	1627	Chris Bray	1474	1474	Brian Metcalf	1355	1355	Vicki Pemberton
1776	1776	Mike Heard	1627	1632	Andrew Darby	1472	1472	Monica Beckerson	1348	1348	Anne Ryder
1774	1774	Peter Christmas	1610	1610	Roland Herrera	1464	1464	Eric Westbrook	1346	1346	Carl Dell
1769	1743	Mardi Ohannessian	1608	1608	Bob Young	1463	1463	Chris Purchase	1297	1297	Bob Bruce
1768	1768	Ann Pocknell	1606	1599	Tony Fawcett	1463	1463	Mike Barrett	1212	1212	Fanika Petkovska
1756	1756	Sean Williams	1606	1612	Mark Calderbank	1460	1460	Cliff Connick	1203	1203	Linda Taylor
1727	1737	Uldis Lapikens	1594	1594	Wayne Felton	1459	1438	Paul Barwick			

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What is? How Does? What are?

What are Grand Prix Points?

Our Biba Grand Prix Championship is comprised of two sections - Swiss format and Knockouts - being decided over a series of Grand Prix tournaments (all formats) in which players gain points towards an annual total based upon match wins. Grand Prix points are points awarded to round winners of all 11-, 7-, 5- and 3-point matches in Biba events or non-Biba events recognized as GP events. Your six best positions are used to decide your eventual score; so, if you are in the points more than six times the better scores will replace the poorer ones. At the end of the Grand Prix season all points are reset to zero. I shan't go into the points structure here but if you want to see them look on the Biba web site here: www.backgammon-biba.co.ukFormatProposal.htm

There is no minimum tournament entry required but obviously the more tournaments you enter the greater your points total will be. At the end of the year the Biba Championship winners will be the players with the greatest points total. Should two or more players share this total then it shall be decided using 2, 3 or 4 decimal places.

What is the Ranking Championship?

All members start with a ranking based upon the average ranking (approx 1535) and this is adjusted according to wins/losses during tournaments. All matches in the tournaments are ranked except 3-pointers. To qualify for the Ranking Championship a player has to play a minimum of 14, 11-point matches in a year (if you play more than 14, lower scores will be replaced by higher ones) and an average is worked out, the champion being the player with the best average. Scores are decided by adding 500 points to an opponents' Ranking Score if you win or by deducting 500 points if you lose. This system allows everyone to have a chance at becoming the champion. It is slightly biased towards the lower ranked players for their wins will often be against higher ranked players. This means that the higher ranked players have to win far more games against their high-ranked peers than against the lower-ranked players.

What are the UK Finals?

In eight designated tournaments throughout the year (see the calendar) the winner is entered into the last 16 of the UK Main, and gets one nights' free accommodation to the UK Finals held in December of that year. In the event of the 1st player being unable to attend then the place will be given to the 2nd player. If that 2nd player has qualified in their own right or is unable to take up the position, then no one will replace the missing player and the position will be taken up by an extra qualifier from the Saturday Main Qualifier tournament. Any player being 1st more than once will be given one bye in the Main Finals and any subsequent positions taken up by a Saturday qualifier. Players that have not pre-qualified by winning one of the eight events can enter a qualifying tournament on the first day (Saturday) of the Finals weekend. From this qualifying event a minimum of eight players will join the pre-qualifiers to make a Main entry of 16 players.

What is the Friday 500?

It is a 5-point Knockout based over 12 tournaments for 2010, the final winner of which will take home from the December, Christmas Party UK Finals the princely sum of £500. All players get 4 points for entering. This is increased to 7 for last 16 losers, 9 for last 8, 12 for semi-final losers, and finally 16 and 20 for 2nd and 1st respectively. This method of awarding points means that it could be possible to gain enough points to qualify by attending on a regular basis ($11 \times 4 = 44$ points). At the same time it means that winning just one event won't guarantee a place. This system also means that should the turnout be fewer than 16 (but greater than 8), the 1st Round losers will in fact get 7 points, and for fields of 8 and fewer, the 1st Round losers will get 9 points. Just how many entrants each event will attract is unknown - so it might well be worthwhile entering just in case the number of entrants is fewer than 16! Can you afford not to enter?

The top placed player after the November event (the last event of the year before the December Finals) will receive £100 for being the Top Player. The December draw will be 1st vs 16th, 2nd vs 15th, etc, etc. If fewer than 16 entrants turn up in December players from 17th upwards will be allowed to enter should they be present. A failure to get a 16-draw will mean byes will be applied, and these will be allocated from 1st position downwards until filled.

How does the Poker Grand Prix work?

The Poker Grand Prix functions as the backgammon grand prix inasmuch as the leader after the December event will be the Poker Grand Prix Champion and the prize money accrued over the year will be paid out according to the listing to the Top Five placed players thus: 1st 40%, 2nd 25%, 3rd 20%, 4th 10% and 5th 5%. To encourage (and reward) regular entry the qualifying minimum number of events needed to qualify for a Top Five place is five (out of a possible 12). Once a player reaches five entries they can replace lower scores with higher ones. Players making the final 8 at each event will get bonus points of 3 to 10 for position 8th to 1st. Thus in a 16-player tourney the last-placed person scores 1 point, second to last 2 points, third to last 3 points and so on until we reach 8th place where the bonus kicks in and 8th place gets 12 points and 9th 8 points. It is recognized that making the final table is an achievement and is therefore rewarded by the points allocation.

After the success of the first edition in November 2009, Cyprus is back from 6th to 9th of May 2010 to be the first stop of the "European Backgammon Tour 2010". Again at the Golden Tulip Hotel**** in Lefkosa (Nicosia), the 2nd Cyprus Open will offer 10,000 € added prize money. All matches of the Champion's division will count towards the point race of EBGT. The winner of the Champion's Division will be qualified for the Grand Finale of EBGT 2010 and compete for a prize-pool of minimum 20,000 €. Sunny and warm climate, the biggest pool of Cyprus, fine food and great hospitality are waiting for you, in addition to backgammon, poker and casino action.

The increase of popularity and the many requests from players have forced WBA to have the 5th edition of the "Portuguese Open", preceded by the Davis Doubles event, from 23rd to 27th of June 2010 in Estoril, a hop away from Lisbon. End June guarantees warm temperatures and sunny days in Estoril. This tournament is part of the "European Backgammon Tour 2010". All matches of the Champions Division will count towards the point race and the winner is granted a seat at the Grand Finale of the EBGT, to compete for a minimum prize-pool of 20,000 €. The new venue is the SANA hotel, across the beach and within walking distance to the tables, slots and poker actions of the casino. The hotel offers a good backgammon rate, wifi, a nice playing room, a club to party and a pool to relax.

The US Open 2010 will take place in South San Francisco. Bigger, better, nicer! The 2nd US Open has been moved from Fresno to the Bay area, South San Francisco, just 2 miles away from SFO international airport. The venue is an all-suites hotel at \$99/night including breakfast, free parking, shuttle to/from airport and free internet. This 4 days event will be part of the World Backgammon Tour (WBGT) and the American Backgammon Tour (ABT) and features a new format in the Last Chance.

Join the fun, compete against the best US players and earn valuable points towards the WBGT point race and your chance to qualify for the Grand Finale of WBGT with approx. \$50,000 prize-pool.

6th – 9th MAY 2010

Golden Tulip Hotel & Casino Nicosia (Lefkosa), Cyprus



present



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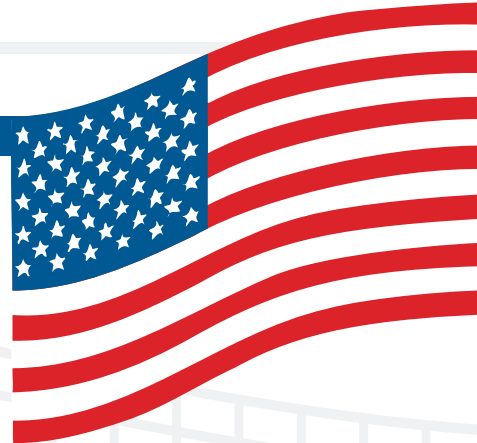
Qualify for



Grand Finale prize-pool

20,000 €

2nd Cyprus Backgammon Open



Qualify for the
WORLD BACKGAMMON
TOUR

Grand Finale with a prize pool of approx.

\$ 50,000



2nd US Backgammon Open San Francisco

Embassy Suites SFO
South San Francisco

For additional information, please contact:
info@world-backgammon-association.com / www.world-backgammon-association.com



23 – 27 JUNE 2010



5th Portuguese Backgammon Open & Davis Doubles

Qualify for the
EBGT Grand



Grand Finale
prize-pool

20,000 €

For pre-registration and additional info:
info@world-backgammon-association.com
www.world-backgammon-association.com