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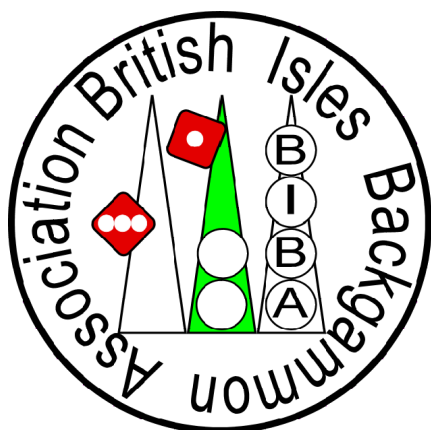
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**Newsletter of the British Isles
Backgammon Association**

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Backgammon**



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Bright 'n' Breezy in
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Start Here

This section is directed towards beginners and intermediates. However, the content is often of use to everyone as it contains information that will improve your game and match winning opportunities

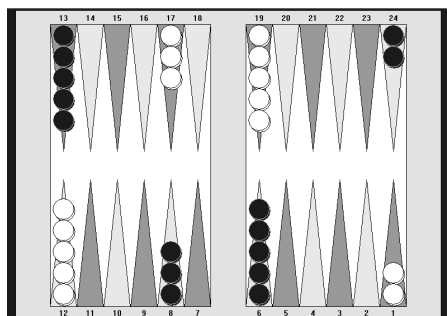
Keep Thinking - A Beginner's Game

By Michael Crane

For this session for 'beginners' I have chosen to feature a one-point match played by two members of the Lincoln Backgammon Club. The beginner is Alex Davey and he is playing against John Batty. Alex has a lot to learn still but he is making progress.

John (white) vs Alex (black)

Move 1



01) 41: 13/9 6/5 41: 13/9 6/5

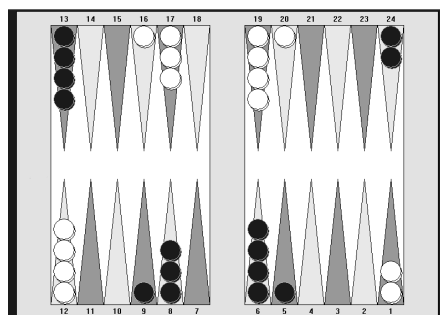
An aggressive opening move from John but perfectly correct when playing against a beginner. John is experienced enough to recover from being hit. Alex has a good chance here (17/36) to hit John back a good few pips, and, even though John can recover it is still a setback for him. John has 30 rolls that cover this blot next roll so it is essential that Alex hits him with his first roll of the game.

Alex rolls one of his 17 hitting numbers and makes the mistake of copying John's move. He should have moved both back checker and hit John's blot and stopped him making the 5-point next roll. An opponent's 5-point is called the **Golden Point** and it is the best point on the board to have. It is worth the risks taken to secure it and so to let your opponent occupy it is a huge error.

Hitting a blot in your opponent's home board is correct most of the time, hitting one on your first roll is correct **all** of the time. Slotting your own 5-point instead of hitting a blot

on your opponent's 5-point is completely wrong. When playing backgammon it is essential to prioritise points and assess the risks you are willing to take to make them or stop them being made by your opponent. At the top of this list is both 5-points, followed by the bar-points, and then the 4-points. Also, if possible, attack any blots on points that your opponent is attempting to construct a prime – a consecutive number of occupied points of two or more checkers.

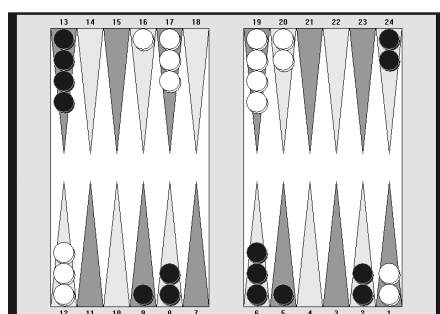
Move 2



02) 53: 13/5 64: 8/2 6/2

John covers the blot with one of his 30 covering shots. Having slotted his own 5-point, Alex now ignores it completely and makes his 2-point. The 2-point is very deep, too deep to be of much use in the early stages of a game. As I said above, the **Golden Point** is worth taking risks for and one should almost never throw away the opportunity to make it. Alex should have played 24/18 9/5.

Move 3



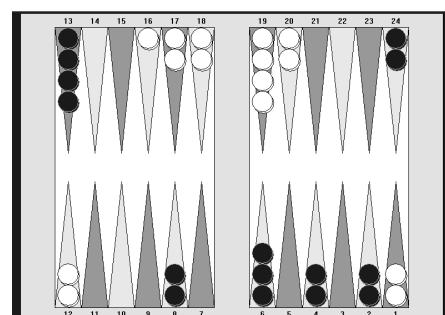
03) 61: 13/7 8/7 51: 9/4 5/4

John now has a similar hitting opportunity that Alex had on his first roll . . . but he missed, instead making his bar-point, a much better roll.

Once again Alex ignores the strongest point on the board and makes his 4-point instead. 13/8 6/5 would have been the correct play here. If you do slot your 5-point it is essential that you make it with the first available roll - something Alex has yet to understand having twice neglected to make it. One could argue that at least Alex is building home board points, but look at them, they are all one point apart. When building home board points ideally they should be in contact. We already start with the 8- and 6-points. Next should be, in order if possible, 5-point, bar-point (7-point), 4-point, etc..

Take a look at John's side of the board. He already has a four-prime straddling the bar and next roll he hopes to make either his 4-point or his 9-point to complete a five-prime. Alex has more points covered in his home board but they aren't a threat to John's runners who can easily escape. Backgammon in its purist form is a racing game; so, if you can obstruct an opponent's checker from racing around the board then you'll most likely win.

Move 4



04) 31: 13/9 42: 13/7

John gets one of the fours he needed to make the five-prime and he's not at all bothered about leaving Alex a shot

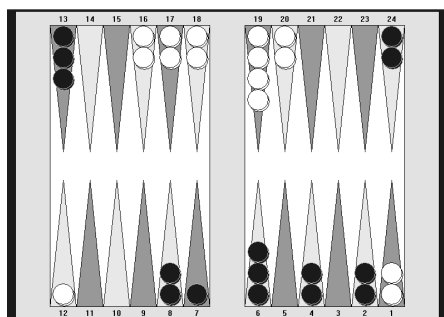
with ones (11/36) – after all, Alex's home board is full of holes! Alex comes under attack from John's runners by slotting his bar-point. Although it is a good point to hold, slotting it isn't a good idea at this stage.

Playing from the mid-point with the four and a back man with the one would have been the move here. It would have served two purposes:

1. It is an attempt to get to the front of the five-prime and it could force John to break it up
2. It is a builder for the 7-, 5- and 4-points

Builders are very important. Ideally they should be placed at least seven pips away from an opponents checker (i.e. not within the roll of a single die). Even points are builders as they are often sacrificed to make a better point elsewhere.

Move 5



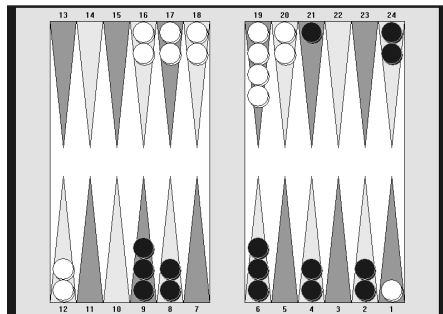
05) 65: 24/18* 18/13
44: 25/21 13/9(3)

Alex's slotting ploy didn't succeed and John hits and covers his own 13-point blot. Alex replies with a good roll of double four. He plays off the bar (forced) and three checkers across from the 13-point making the 9-point. This isn't a bad move but the back checkers are now isolated being 12 and 15 points away from the main body of black checkers. They are out of communication, and the outer board is now controlled by white.

A better play, bearing in mind that gammon losses are unimportant is to play from the 13-point and hit on the 1-point. If the 1-point blot is hit it can be re-circulated back into the game, possibly making an advanced anchor in white's home board; or, if white

dances (fails to re-enter off the bar) black might be able to roll a three or a six and make the anchor or escape the blot on the 21-point.

Move 6

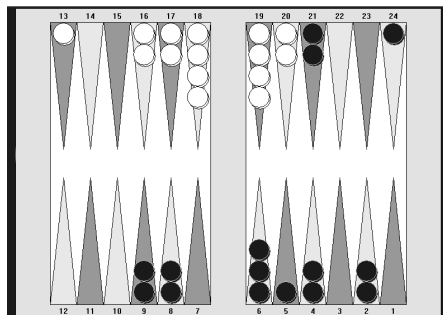


06) 66: 24/12 13/7(2) 43: 9/5 24/21

With a whopping double six John would have danced had Alex hit on the 1-point! Instead he moves his checkers into good building positions to attack the 4-point, risking only a 62 hit from Alex. Making the 3- and 2-points (9/3 9/3 8/2 8/2) would have been a grave error for white. He needs to contain the black blot and hopefully point him out.

Alex rolls the crucial three and now plays correctly. John is coming in and Alex's 1-point blot might come in handy for the hit he needs to turn this game around.

Move 7

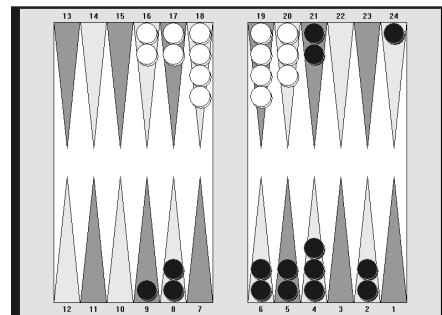


07) 61: 12/5 51: 9/4 6/5

Good roll and move from John, and a good play from Alex. However, there is a better play for Alex. It is 8/3 6/5, making the 5-point (at last) and slotting the 3-point – the next point required. John has twelve rolls that leave a blot on his next roll but none of them will leave a blot six or five pips away; which are the covering rolls for the slotted 3-point. In other words, Alex hasn't duplicated his roll. That is, he can roll ones, twos,

threes and fours to hit a possible blot and fives and sixes to cover the 3-point.

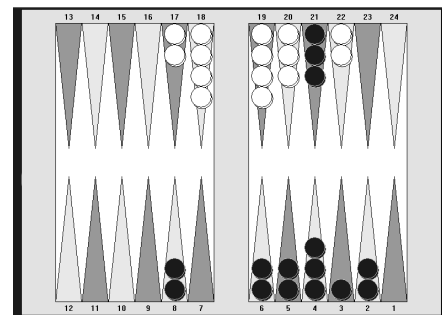
Move 8



08) 33: 9/3 9/3 63: 9/3 24/21

John rolls a safe double three. Had Alex played the slot last time he could have made the point and moved the three into his home board and thus kept the annoying blot on white's 1-point. If he is going to move the back checker then it might have been better to run out all the way.

Move 9



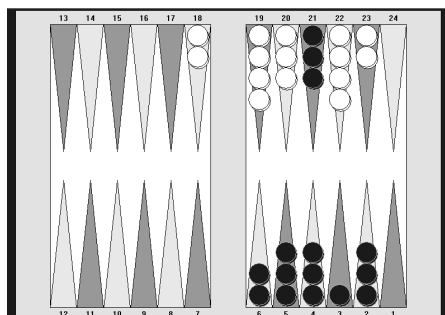
09) 55: 8/3(2) 7/2(2) 63: 8/2 8/5

If the black blot had been on his 1-point still, John would have played 7/5 7/5 6/1* 6/1 placing Alex on the bar. Alex wouldn't mind this too much as he can re-enter and hit later perhaps. As it is, John plays over the black checker.

Once again, this isn't a bad move from Alex. It is possible that on his next roll John could pop out a 64 and leave a blot. Alex's play gives him twenty covering shots (all twos except 22, all ones and double six) and still leaves threes to hit with. However, running with a back man 21/15 and moving 8/5 would have improved the number of covering rolls to twenty seven; and still left threes to do the business.

When an opponent has a potential bad roll next time look for ways to exploit it. It might be just an 18-to-1 chance, but if that chance comes up you've got to ensure that you get maximum use out of it. Leaving a blot on the 21-point after hitting on the 18-point isn't too risky, leaving only double one as the bogey. Who knows, white could re-enter with six, one!

Move 10



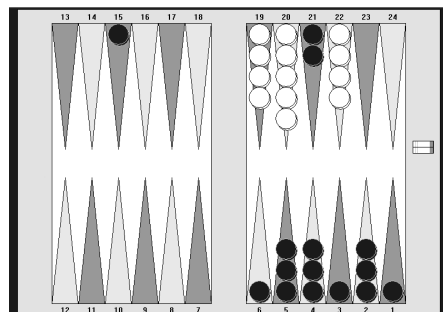
10) 22: 7/5(2) 2/0(2) 65: 21/15 6/1

John rolls another great double leaving Alex with little hope of an immediate hit.

Alex, with only a choice of three moves, 21/10, 21/15 21/16, or 21/15 6/1 chooses by far the worst of the three. Although he won't get a shot after John's next roll, he has lost a very valuable 6-point and prime and

left three blots on. Running all the way would have been correct and would have left more than twenty covering shots for the 3-point blot.

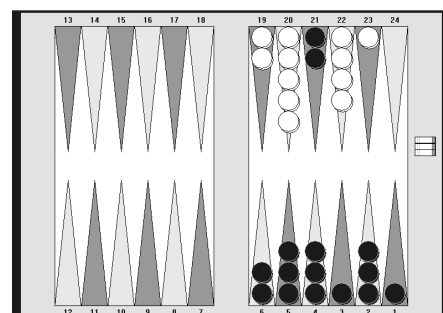
Move 11



11) 64: 6/0 6/2 54: 15/6

Slight mistake by John here. I think he played this one a little too quickly. His play leaves an awful 62 next roll leaving a blot facing eleven hits. He should have played 6/0 5/1 and left it totally safe. Alex correctly covers the blot but he has now duplicated twos. He will need a two to hit should John roll the dreaded 62 and he needs a two (or a one) to cover the 2-point blot. Note that he doesn't need to cover the 1-point, this is second choice after the five-prime is constructed. Getting hit there is good as it will send another checker back that white will have to pass to safety.

Move 12



12) 55: 6/1(2) 5/0(2) 42: 5/1 6/4

John is rolling doubles like they are going out of fashion! Mind you, this one isn't safe next roll, 54 64 and 65 (6/36) all leave a blot. This fact should alert Alex and his move should be played with the possibility of a hit in mind and the fact that with the blot leaving rolls, John will still have a blot on his 2-point.

Alex's move of 5/1 6/4 here is very wrong. Out of a possible sixteen ways to move 42, this is perhaps the worst. All he had to do was move a back checker out all the way and leave the two blots in his home board. This might seem crazy, leaving two blots, but it is his only chance of getting a second checker back if John can't safety the 2-point blot. Look at John's possible moves of the bar here, ones



What Is JellyFish?

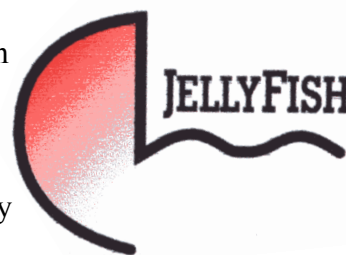
JellyFish is a neural net based backgammon program that plays at a very high level. On the highest playing level it matches the best humans in the world, and on the very fast level 5 a top human will hardly win more than 55% of the time. Also, its use of the doubling cube is outstanding. JellyFish is able to play matches of any length, or 'money games' where each point is equally valuable.

JellyFish 3.5 Prices

Analyzer 3.5	£136
Upgrade A 2.0/3.0 to A 3.5	£33
Tutor 3.5	£63
Upgrade T 2.0/3.0 to T 3.5	£17
Upgrade T 2.0/3.0 to A 3.5	£88
Player 3.5	£24
Upgrade P 2.0/3.0 to P 3.5	£15
Upgrade P 2.0/3.0 to T 3.5	£54
Upgrade P 2.0/3.0 to A 3.5	£127

The program can be used for fun, for testing your game, for analyzing recorded matches [*Analyzer version only*], or most importantly: To improve your game.

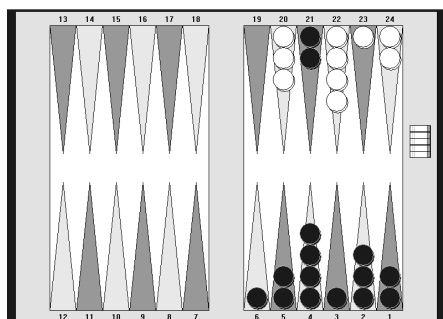
JellyFish can give a running commentary on the moves and cube decisions you make or use the "2 Players" mode to have JellyFish keep track of the score and comment on both opponents play or just play against JellyFish on your own. It's almost like having your own private professional to comment on your game. [*Comments not available in Player version*]



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and threes, and to cover his blot? Ones and threes! John's entry rolls have been duplicated with his covering rolls giving Alex excellent chances of getting a second checker back.

Move 13



13) 65: 5/0 5/0

52: 6/1 5/3

John rolls one of his six blot leaving rolls but Alex fails to hit the blot with his eleven chances. John goes on to win the game.

Although backgammon, like ludo, is a racing game with the first player around the board and home with all his checkers being the winner, it is not simply just a race. It is as complex as chess in its strategies and game plans. To become a good player you have to keep thinking about what is most likely to happen next. All the time, think, think, think.

A good backgammon player has to look out for the possible good and bad rolls on both sides of the board; he

has to have a flexible game plan that can be changed after just one roll as and when the whim of the dice dictate; he has to be aware of the probabilities of each dice roll coming out of the cup; and he has to accept that the difference between a good player and an average player is that the good player plays the bad rolls well and realises that luck has nothing to do with it!

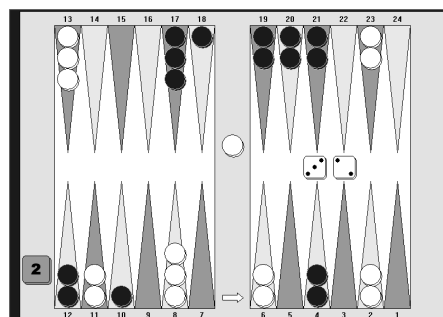
Botany Lessons!

The Bright 'n' Breezy Seminar from Paul Lamford

In each of these six positions two or more bots disagreed on the best play. White is on roll in each position. Decide on your checker move and then compare your answers on page 37 with the correct answers.

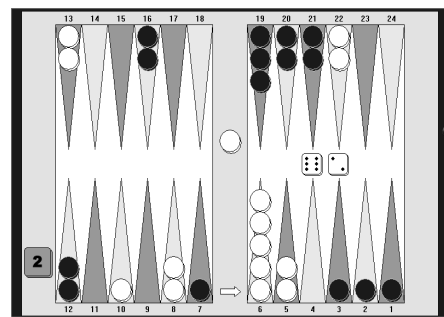
The top scorer in Brighton was Jon Sharpe with a score of 57.

Pos 1.



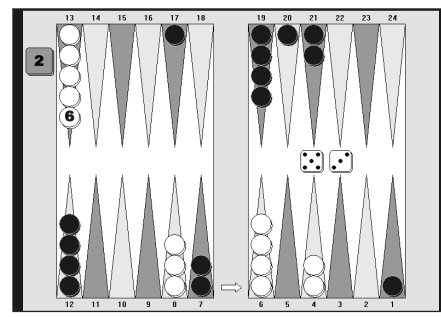
White trails 0-2 in a 5 point match
White to play 32

Pos 3.



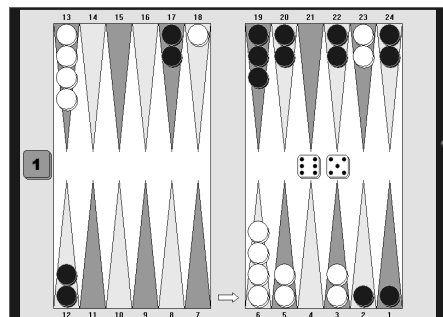
0-0 in a 5 point match
White to play 62

Pos 5.



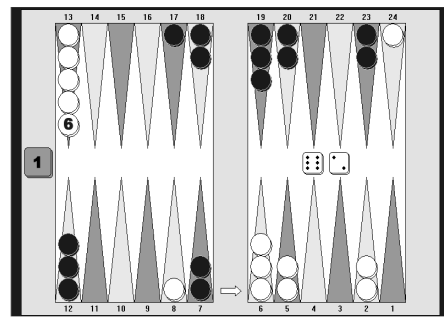
White trails 0-2 in a 5 point match
White to play 53

Pos 2.



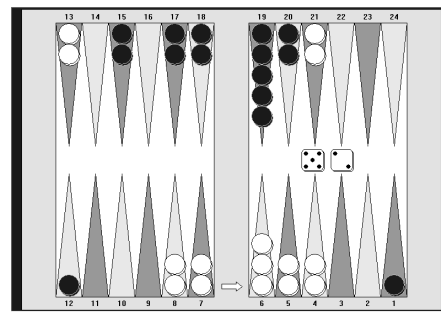
0-0 in a 5 point match
White to play 65

Pos 4.



White trails 2-3 in a 5 point match
White to play 62

Pos 6.



White trails 0-4 Crawford
White to play 52

How Good Is Your Backgammon?

Asks Michael Crane

As promised in the last issue, this article is based on the 1991 Monte Carlo World Championship quarterfinal match between Neil Kazaross and Michael Meyburg. These are two of the top players in the world (in fact, Meyburg wins this match and in doing so clinches his first World title) and this particular 21 Point Match is played for in twenty games.

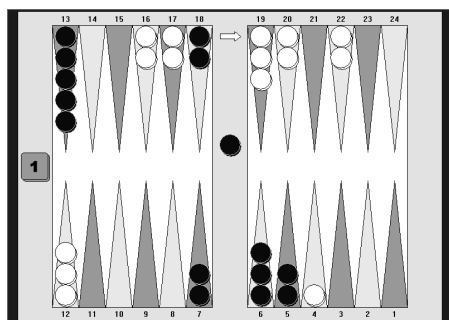
Neil is a member of Biba and was the 1999 British Open Champion. Michael isn't a Biba member - but I hope that one day he'll join!

When you come to the ??? cover up the text underneath the board, write down your move, and then read on. Later, check out your score with the 'How Good' score-o-meter'.

Game 1

(White)	(Black)
Kazaross : 0	Meyburg : 0
01) 31: 8/5 6/5	11: 8/7(2) 6/5(2)
02) 52: 24/17*	32: 25/22 24/22
03) 44: 17/9 13/9(2)	64: 24/18 22/18
04) 33: 24/21 9/3* 6/3	63:

??? Cube Action



So far it's been an easy match to follow, all rolls being played correctly. We now come to the first real decision in this first game. After Meyburg dances with his 63, Kazaross offers a 2-cube. This is an easy drop for Meyburg. Kazaross has a 72.1% chance of winning the game with 24.4% gammon chances.

	wins	equity
Kazaross	72.1	0.653
Meyburg	27.9	
Double/Drop		

Double/Drop 5A
Anything else -2

05) Doubles to 2 Drops
Wins 1 point

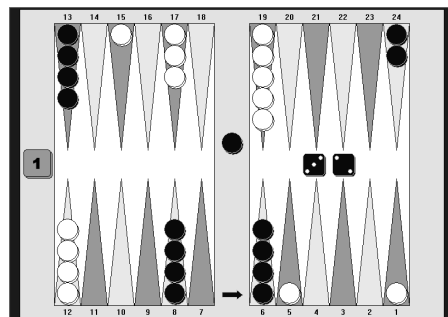
Game 2

Kazaross : 1 **Meyburg : 0**
01) 51: 13/8 6/5

Meyburg plays an attacking 1 from the 6-point in an early assault on the very important 5-point. I am not too sure if this is a good move or not, especially against a player of Kazaross's experience. It came out at JF2, with the 'normal' 24/23 being 0.006 better, so, not that bad after all. The benefits of being missed are great and perhaps worth the risk.

02) 43: 24/20* 13/10

??? Black to play 32



As expected, Kazaross used the 4 to hit, now Meyburg re-enters with a 32. This really is a choice between two moves, pointing on the 22-point or hitting on the 5-point. JellyFish favours the hit placing it 0.1 ahead of the 22-point play. I am inclined to agree here - stopping your opponent from making your 5-point (his Golden Point) is very important; also, if Kazaross is hit back he will be better off with four men back than three when it comes to anchoring.

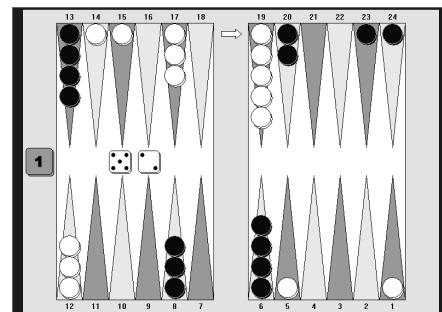
25/23 8/5* 5A
25/22 24/22 3
25/23 24/24 1

32: 25/23 8/5*

03) 52: 25/20* 13/11
54: 25/20 24/20

Well, at least Kazaross has made one of the 5-points!

??? White to play 52



The top five ways to play this roll range from an equity of 0.057 down to 0.037, so, not a lot between them. In fact the first two are just 0.001 apart.

Kazaross chose JF4. This is a good play, it duplicates 5s and 3s and taunts the Golden Point anchor, daring Meyburg to split off and hit.

20/15 13/11 5A
11/6 10/8 4
6/1* 13/11 4
20/13 2
20/15 10/8 2

04) 52: 20/15 13/11 41: 20/15*

Meyburg is drawn into the hit . . .

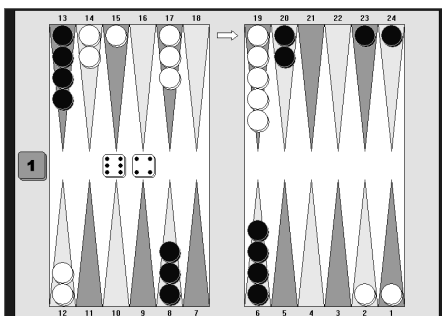
05) 52: 25/23 15/10*

. . . and Kazaross replies with a re-entry and hit.

32: 25/20

Back where we started, on the Golden Point!

??? White to play 64



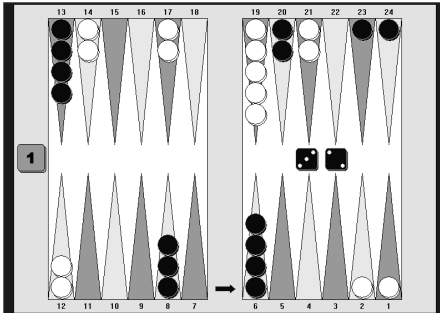
As far as I can see there are a few reasonable moves here. One is to make the 4-point the another is to hit and make the 2-point and one more is to run from the 24-point (or not!)

10/4 8/4	5A
8/2* 6/2	4
24/18 10/6	2
24/14	1

Quite correctly, Kazaross makes the 4-point. Pointing on the 2-point really isn't worthwhile as the point is too far down to be of use. The 4-point is far superior.

06) 64: 10/4 8/4

??? Black to play 32



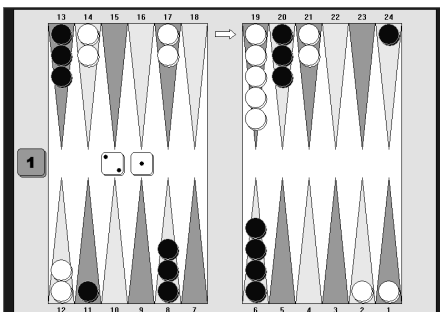
Had Kazaross pointed on the 2-point, this re-entry roll would have made a fine 22-point anchor for Meyburg. Instead he has to find something a bit better.

23/18	5
23/20 13/11	4A
23/20 24/22	3
13/8	2
13/10 24/22	1

Meyburg's move here isn't aggressive enough. Kazaross might hold three outer-board points but he doesn't have any spare men or builders on any of them. By playing 23/18 he can provoke some action and force Kazaross to break up a point.

32: 23/20 13/11

??? White to play 21



Making the 22-point looks good, but

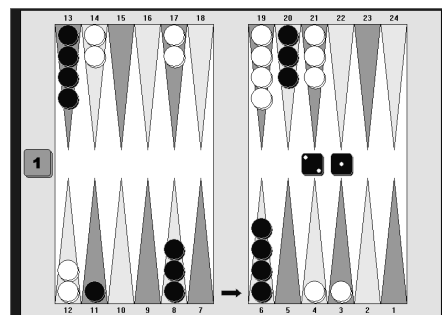
is it? Why bother making a point that will almost certainly have to be broken next roll? The two back men are the only outer men Kazaross can move without breaking a point, therefore moving at least one of these two men is a must, and, slotting and eventually making another home-board point should be considered.

24/22 4/3	5
6/4 22/23	4A
24/21	3
22/20 24/23	2
6/4 22/21	1

Although JF placed the actual move in 5th I rated it higher although I did have reservations about Meyburg being able to safely play a five from his 6-point.

07) 21: 6/4 23/22 65: 24/13
08) 21: 24/21

??? Black to play 21



Well, making the 11-point is an option with the 2 but what about the 1?

6/4* 4/3*	5A
11/8	2
6/4* 11/10	1

Obviously the double hit is better. If Kazaross rolls a six it'll give Meyburg an extra chance to make another home-point.

21: 6/4* 4/3*
09) 54: 25/20 25/21 42: 13/9 11/9
10) 41: 6/2 21/20

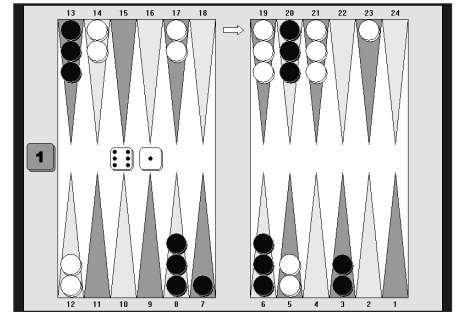
Kazaross needs to anchor now as Meyburg brings his men to bear down onto his higher home-points.

62: 9/3 9/7

Meyburg makes the 3-point and du-

plicates 2s.

??? White to play 61



A few options here, but none of them are very good. Certainly making the 2-point is perhaps the best use of the 6, but what about the 1?

8/2 4/3	5
8/2 8/7	4A
20/13	2
13/6	1

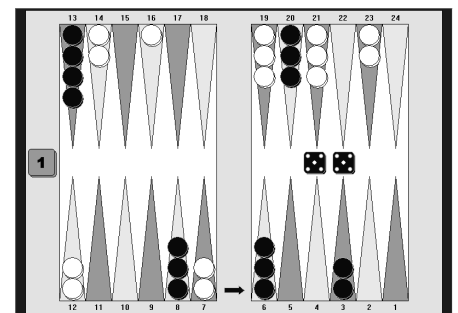
Moving closer with the 1 doesn't really do much, playing it slotting the 3-point at least leaves 5s as a good move next time.

11) 61: 8/2 8/7 52: 20/18* 18/13

Meyburg gets a free hit with the 2.

12) 21: 25/24 20/18*	42:
13) 64: 24/18 20/16	32: 25/20
14) 61: 16/9	

??? Black to play 55



Rolling 20 pips in the race. Is it time to run from the back with all three men?

20/5 13/8	5A
20/5 8/3	3
20/5 6/1	2
20/15(3) 13/8	1

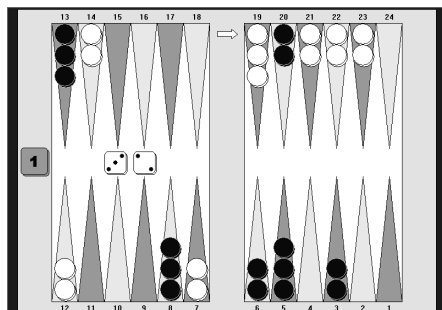
Running all three back men isn't a good idea. The actual move is very

good, it slots the 5-point and brings a spare man down from the mid-point to help cover it.

55: 20/5 13/8

15) 61: 9/3 4/3 31: 8/5 6/5

??? White to play 32



There's lots of options this time, but one in particular stands out.

13/10 13/11 5A
6/1 3
4/1 3/1 2
11/6 1
18/13 -2

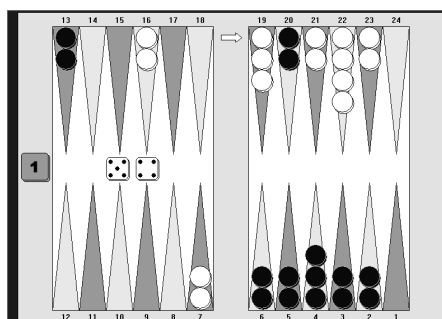
The actual play will draw Meyburg off the Golden Point and still leave sixes to hit as they can't be used to re-enter. Running from the 18-point is far too dangerous.

16) 32: 13/10 13/11 61: 13/6
17) 21: 11/9 10/9 41: 8/4 5/4
18) 42: 11/7 11/9 65: 8/2 8/3

Now black is in trouble as all his outer points are flat and another six could be devastating.

19) 64: 9/3 7/3 21: 6/4 3/2

??? White to play 54



Kazaross is forced to leave a blot here, the question is, which one?

18/9 5A
9/4 6/2 3
6/1 6/2 2
18/13 18/14 -2

Kazaross correctly chose to move a back man to safety on the 9-point. Moving 9/4 6/2 or 6/1 6/2 only postpones the problem and could easily lead to another blot being left.

20) 54: 18/9 42: 13/7*

Meyburg rolls one of his many sixes and Kazaross is on the bar and looking for the miracle 61 in & hit roll.

21) 31: 25/24 9/6 Doubles to 2

A correct double and a correct drop.

22) Drops Wins 1 point

So, how good was your backgammon?

55 You are Michael Meyburg
45-54 You are Neil Kazaross
35-44 Good enough to play MM
25-34 Good enough to play NK
15-24 Read a backgammon book
10-0 Sell your board and retire

Error: In the last Bibafax I made an error in the scoring of one of the moves. Martin Hemming points out:

I was a little puzzled by your analysis of the position at the bottom of the first column on page 9 (Dobrich to play 52).

As you point out, Dobrich's decision not to hit is a mistake. So why do you award maximum points to another non-hitting move, 13/8 13/11? According to Snowie hitting with the 2 and safetying the blot on 11 comes out easily the best. I attach the analysis for your info. Does Jellyfish disagree?

Martin and Snowie favour 24/22* 11/6, which, I have to admit, should have been No.1 (and Jelly says so too). To arrive at your correct score, transpose the original 1st & 2nd results.

ARCHIVE - The Cruellest Game

For this issue we are going to delve into "Backgammon – The Cruellest Game" by Barclay Cooke and Jon Bradshaw. This spelling of *cruellest* is either a spelling mistake, as it should be *cruellest*, or it might be an American spelling – anyone know? To quote from the 'blurb':



Barclay Cooke

(Picture supplied by Barclay Cooke)

It is called "the cruelest game" with good reason, for unlike virtually every other gambling game, it is a tantalizing and frustrating amalgam of luck and skill. But that is also its attraction, because with good dice even a novice can defeat a grandmaster in the short run.

Backgammon is probably the oldest game in the world, even predating chess by almost a thousand years, and it has had its fads before. But its current popularity gives every evidence of being permanent, and the increase in the number of players in the last decade is astronomical. Currently there are at least a dozen books on the game in print, many of them inaccurate in assessing even the simplest percentages and positions, and unsophisticated in their assessment of tactics, strategy and psychology.

Though The Cruellest Game presupposes no prior knowledge on the part of the reader, and leads one gently through the fundamentals and basic rules, offering sound commonsensical advice along the way, it delves deeper into the extraordinary paradoxes, subtleties and nuances of this apparently simple game than any book

heretofore published. In addition, it explores meticulously the delicate differences in maneuvering and doubling between tournament and money play. It is no exaggeration to say that anyone, even the most expert player, who reads this book will learn and benefit from it.

For the first of two parts in this session we are going straight to Chapter Eleven which deals with the psychological side of playing backgammon.

Chapter 11 The Psychology Of The Game

*All war supposes human weakness
and against that it is directed.
-- Karl von Clausewitz --*

There are many reasons for the tremendous resurgence of backgammon, but one aspect of the game in particular makes it unique. There is no other game involving skill in which the beginner after a short time reaches a level from which he has a definite chance to beat anyone else, no matter how good his opponent. This is a built-in hazard for the experienced player, a great boon for the newcomer and adds excitement for kibitzers and participants alike.

The rules of the game are simple, their execution an art; this is backgammon's pervasive principle. However, it is the game's apparent simplicity that is its greatest attraction. Almost anyone can learn 60 percent of the moves in a week, and we know of no one who did not believe that he actually understood the game in a few days. But backgammon is so subtle that it may be impossible to learn all there is to know about it. One of the world's leading players, who has played for thirty years, admits that he probably understands only 90 percent of the game. As you must know by now, backgammon is more complex than it first appears to be.

Because of the subtle skills involved (most average players believe those who are better than themselves are lucky), and because most players tend to rationalize the dice, blaming their

misfortunes on "bad luck," it is difficult not only to recognize your mistakes, but to evaluate your abilities. The game is usually played for money, and self-deception can be expensive. Given the luck, the self-deception, and the fact that there is no other game in which a player can so often make the wrong move and win as a direct result of it, backgammon has become for many of its devotees an exquisite siren song, a honeyed land of hope and double 6's. It is for these reasons that we have called backgammon the cruelest game.

Like some concealed and irreplaceable mechanism, cruelty is built into the game. For example, it is replete with paradox. Once the dice have been thrown, a battle begins, and each succeeding roll will alter the position, the tactics and the strategies. Certain basic theories, all sound, may have to be violated at any time. It is this elusive principle that is probably the most difficult to comprehend - and the most destructive when it is not brought into play. The beginner will learn the fundamental rules - and will then be told that he must contradict them. Though many players acquire other more mechanical skills, they never completely grasp this. But it is this flair for improvisation which separates the average player from the expert. A good player is one who plays his bad rolls well. A chronic loser loses because he is unable to play his difficult rolls to his best advantage. Anyone knows how to bear off four men - when he has rolled double 6's.

All too often the wrong computation, the wrong decision, and hence the incorrect move will win. This is the most unkindest cut of all. But it happens so often that players who have won as a direct result of it attribute their success to skill and believe the game requires no further study. Backgammon is glutted with such people. If one attempts to explain certain percentages to them, they are merely insulted. When they lose in money games or tournaments, they will later confide to intimates that their opponent was unbelievably lucky and their

own dice unbelievably bad.

In this aspect, no other game can be compared to backgammon. For example, if you challenged Bobby Fischer at chess, and for some reason he accepted, you would not win a single game. In bridge, an inferior player will seldom win a tournament, and in poker the best player will almost always win.

Except for chess, there is an element of luck in the above games. In backgammon, however, the luck factor is dominant. Though many of the percentages in backgammon are calculable, the ratio between luck and skill remains obscure and has probably been discussed for as long as the game has existed. Because it is not as logical as chess or as scientifically exact as checkers (a game so restrictively formal that if two experts play, the one who moves first always wins), it is often dismissed by the unknowing as just one more game of chance performed by gamblers who might just as well be flipping coins.

Although the ratio of skill to luck is impossible to compute exactly, it is generally agreed that when the adversaries are evenly matched (both technically and emotionally), the game is all dice. Over the short term, an average or good player can beat a superior player, but in the long run even the "unlucky" expert will win, for the law of averages is as infallible as the law of gravity. We believe that the proportion of luck to skill in backgammon is approximately 80 to 20, but a 20 percent edge is an insurmountable advantage.

Take Las Vegas. If you play craps against the house and play correctly (that is, giving yourself the best chance), the percentage in favor of the house is actually less than 1 percent. But given that minuscule advantage, in the long run the house will win. In comparison, the 20 percent skill-factor in backgammon is overwhelming.

As another example, what possibilities exist for horse-players when the track takes 15 to 17 percent out of

every dollar they bet? None. You can only win consistently at the track if you have somehow fixed the race or have managed to obtain inside information. In backgammon, an understanding of the correct percentage moves in specific situations qualifies as "inside information" and will enable you to win in the long run. But not every time, alas, and often not even in what you believe to be crucial games. This condition must be accepted philosophically, of course, and should not deter you from continuing a detailed study of the game.

Backgammon is not a game in which luck should be taken seriously, though many players continue to gamble at it, apparently relying on the spurious advice of the Oriental sage who claimed that if you threw a lucky man into the sea, he would emerge with a fish in his mouth. Such players forget that though *they* are gambling, the experts are not. Gamesmen rather than gamblers, the experts always have an edge because they know infinitely more about the game. Like many other endeavors, backgammon is a game of levels; to play against the experts for money is nothing more than another version of Russian roulette.

Backgammon might be compared to *Alice in Wonderland*. On one level, that book can be described as a droll fairy tale, but among the childish games, improbable characters and laughter there is a subtle allegory that tells an altogether separate tale. In much the same way, backgammon can be learned and played forever as a rather simple game of chance: once it is taken seriously, however, cunning labyrinths and curious paradoxes begin to appear. This book has attempted both to teach the beginner how to play and to enjoy the game, and to present at least a few of the game's more intricate conundrums.

A note about kibitzing: If you are not directly involved and are watching a match, no matter what happens at the table-repeat, no matter what-say nothing. Form any opinion you wish about the play or players, but remain silent. Should some flagrant error as-

tonish you, steal quietly away. When the match is over, but not until then, you can approach either contestant and raise your questions or objections, but never during play.

If an argument arises between the two players and you feel sure you know who is in the right and can show why, still say nothing-unless, and this is vital, you are appealed to by *both* opponents.

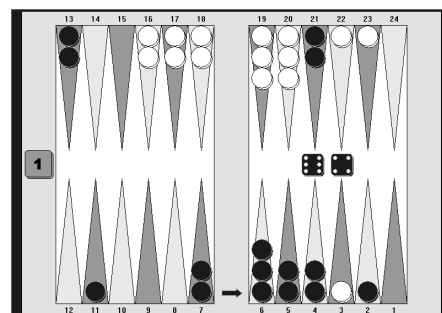
Over the years, at tournaments and in money games, we have seen specific positions presented to experts who will then argue the relative merits of the "right" move. Rarely do they agree. At the end of these discussions, each man will go his separate way convinced, however secretly, that he was right and the rest of them were wrong. Backgammon seems not only to attract but to elicit the most outrageously egotistical behavior. If, for instance, a confidential questionnaire were sent to thirty acknowledged experts and each was asked to fill in his choice for the one best player in the world, you would get thirty different nominations, all autobiographical. More often than not, the expert was not sure that he was right, but being an "expert," he was expected to take a stand which he will uphold for illogical reasons.

In bridge, for example, upon analysis the correct percentage play can almost always be determined, but though there are positions in backgammon where the proper move is self-evident, there are countless others where it is almost impossible to get a majority opinion. In Diagram 93, for example, Black has rolled a 64. What is the correct move? There are at least three good options, but expert opinion is invariably divided.

First, you could cover your 2 point with the 4 and play the 6 in to your 5 point. White cannot escape on his next roll unless he rolls a 6-5, and even then he is vulnerable to a return 6-1. The reason for this choice is not that it is conservative but that it forces White to move. Any double is awkward, and should White not roll a 5 or a 6 he will (except for 2-1) have to put

builders out of play or weaken his five-point prime

Black to play 64



Secondly, you could hit White's blot on your 3 point, using a man from White's 12 point. This play leaves two blots in your board. It is true that White also has two blots, but these do not concern him much because he has a five-point prime, and every man of yours that is hit will have to get first to his 4 point and only then follow with a 6 to be free. If you choose to hit in an effort to keep the lone White piece from escaping, you could be defeating your own purpose because he may be prevented from moving at all, which could be to his advantage.

The third choice would be to hit his blot with the 4 from your bar point and to come out to his 10 point with the 6. This is wild, wide-open and imaginative, but it makes the next roll crucial. White could annihilate you, or could be destroyed himself, depending on the dice. There is style and boldness in this play, and if circumstances and the score are such that winning a gammon happens to be more advantageous to you than losing one is disastrous, you should consider taking this plunge.

Which of the three should you pick? An unequivocal answer is impossible. But this very fact is why backgammon is such a fascinating game. Of course it is frustrating not to know for certain what to do. You *know* that you should make your 5 point with an opening 3-1, but as you progress you must learn to improvise to the best of your ability, and the longer you play, the more aware you will become that a countless number of inscrutable dilemmas like this example will occur.

Size up your opponent, the situation

(is this a tournament or for money? head-to-head or chouette?), and the score. Try to weigh every angle and then choose what is best, considering the circumstances. We are not hedging when we say that a sound argument could be made for each of the three moves above, depending on the situation.

MC: Given the choice of the three moves, 1: 11/5 6/2, 2: 13/3, 3: 21/15 7/3*, place them in the order that JellyFish thinks is best. Check out your answer at the end.*

Which is as it should be. The game has few absolutes. It is fluid and ever-changing, and often the best that one can hope for is to sensibly exercise specific options. It is a game of calculated choices, which may be as humdrum or eccentric as one wishes, but need not necessarily be "correct."

There is also a certain amount of gamesmanship to be employed in backgammon. As in any other competition, it is never advisable to appear nervous or uncomfortable when you sit down to play. This is particularly true when you are opposed by a well-known player. Never greet him by saying, "You're too good for me. I'm only a beginner and don't have a chance against someone like you." There is only one instance when you can say this: when you don't mean a word of it! Given the uncertainties of the game, you always have a chance, and with determination and the dice you can upset the most expert of players.

If you tend to play slowly - and at first you probably will - don't be intimidated by an opponent who rushes his moves. Take your time, no matter how much he hurries you. Attempt to play your routine moves with a certain steady rhythm and without hesitating needlessly - but only when you feel secure in doing so. As you improve, you will grasp the problem created by each specific move more quickly, and so make your plays with assurance and finality. Occasionally, of course, there will be a difficult decision with which you'll have to

take some time, and this is to be expected; in general, however, try to develop the habit of making your mind up fast and react accordingly.

The board is comparatively small, and your position and your opponents are in front of you at all times, so try to avoid "balks." When part of your roll is "forced" - that is, if you have a 5-4 to play and there is only one 5 - move this 5 immediately, and then concentrate on the best deployment of the 4. Many players will roll the dice and immediately play the number, but having done so, they will retract the move and make another play elsewhere, then vacillate again and make yet another move. Soon they are back to where they began and in a quandary. Sometimes it's difficult to choose the best percentage move, but try to train yourself to avoid this kind of play by thinking the situation through before touching your men. What it boils down to is simply mental discipline, which is as valuable in life as it is in a game. This sort of intangible is a valuable asset every time you sit down to play.

Size up your opponent immediately. Attempt to estimate his strengths and weaknesses. If he is more experienced than you, use every legal ploy you have to equalize his edge. For instance, you should attempt to make every game as simple as possible. Against better players, always seek simple positions. Block and run as best you can, and at all times avoid back games. Further, if your opponent attempts to needle you, remain impervious. If he stalls, allow him to do so without becoming irritated. If he talks, try not to listen, nor to fall into conversation.

Concentrate on the game at hand and ignore anything that intervenes. Check all of your opponent's moves and remember that it is not considered unethical to allow him to place his man in the wrong spot if it is to your advantage. In short, display as little emotion as possible, and try to disregard bad luck or the fortune which may seem to favor the enemy. The good player is one who does not

compound his losses with personal feelings. "And yet," as one expert has said, "99 percent of the people who play double up when they are losing and draw back when they are ahead. You must look at backgammon in the same way that you would look at a business reversal over which you had no control." Of course this is a question of discipline - but discipline is a quality that can be learned.

There is an interesting and complex psychological factor at work in the taking or dropping of a double. Assume that in a chouette over a period of a few months certain players dropped 1000 games in which they were doubled, and were correct 700 times and wrong 300, none of which was a gammon.

For many people the actual money gambled is not the primary incentive. They enjoy the challenge and want to - win more for winning's sake than for receiving financial rewards. Such people like to be proved correct; it is part of their pleasure and boosts their egos. If you were able to look into these players' minds and psyches, you might find that they actually *preferred* to be correct in their decisions 70 percent of the time, even though they are subconsciously aware that if they had been *wrong* 70 percent of the time (that is, if they had accepted all the doubles), they would be better off financially. The droppers of those thousand games are minus 1,000 units; if they had taken, they would be minus 1,400 + 600, for a net of minus 800.

Many takable doubles are dropped because of such an outlook. Perhaps in these cases the individual is receiving emotional fulfillment amply compensating him for his lower financial rewards. We are not arguing for or against such eccentric behavior; we merely state that it exists and occurs in many more instances than is realized.

As mentioned earlier, the ego is rampant throughout the backgammon world (probably more unjustifiably than in any other game, since the dice are the controlling factor), and the

desire to be "right" is neither consciously recognized nor admitted by most players. It is a factor worth thinking about, though, and perhaps there is a latent streak of it in all those people who drop too soon. The point is, those players who drop takable doubles are paying out good money that they don't have to lose.

When you do lose - and you will - try hard not to say that your opponent out-lucked you. Nobody particularly cares that you missed two triple shots and that your opponent hit a 17-1 shot to win the whole match. But if the provocation is too much and you must moan a little, never tell your opponent that he played a move incorrectly. Even if it is true, what have you gained? Restrain yourself, congratulate him and contrive to smile! This is important, because regardless of how good you are, you're going to gain considerable experience in being a loser.

Conversely, when you win, attempt to be gracious; if you have been lucky, admit it. No matter how badly your opponent behaves, neither argue nor disagree; after all, you can afford to be generous.

The discipline that pervades the game should also control the amount of money for which you play. This may seem too obvious to dwell on, but more than a few players involve themselves in high-stake games which invariably meet with the predictable conclusion. If the amount of money you are playing for makes you uncomfortable, you should not be playing for that stake. That is the key to what you should play for. What you can "afford" is not necessarily the stake at which you feel comfortable, whether it is high or low. The two can be quite different. Assume that you are a millionaire many times over. You can "afford" to play for almost any stake, but the chances are that you would be uncomfortable long before you reached the sum you could not afford. The amount to play for is that which does not divert your attention from your main concern - the game.

This is not a lecture on how to conduct a life style or an attempt to dictate the stakes you should play for. Our sole purpose is to help you play in the most comfortable frame of mind. Whether or not you have a fortune, if the stake distresses you, simply decline to play in that particular game. If you allow your ego to get the upper hand and are seduced into a bigger game, you are at a distinct disadvantage. You may out-luck it and win, but in the long run you are a favorite to lose because you will inevitably drop doubles that you should take, or not double when you should, for fear of increasing the stakes. Why expose yourself through false pride to such a situation?

To sum up: the stake that permits you to play at your best is the stake that permits you to relax-regardless of what you can afford.

What we have been primarily concerned with in this chapter are the psychological traps into which every player has periodically fallen. It is to these specific traps that we wish to direct your attention, since if they are not recognized and remedied, your backgammon talents will not progress beyond mere technical expertise. An eminent neuropsychiatrist and analyst believes that to win at any game, you must first understand the specific skills involved, and secondly the specific traps - that is, the psychology of the snares laid by your adversary. If you have mastered neither the skills nor the trap's alternatives and still insist on entering the game, you are throwing a razor-sharp boomerang which will ultimately cut off your own head. The psychiatrist goes on to say that the professionals of any game are those who place their opponents in various categories, and then apply the trap most likely to seduce them. It is the failure to recognize these traps and the subsequent inability to exert some rational control over the course of events that not only indicate but instigate disaster.

This is yet another of the game's paradoxes, and perhaps its most important one. It is a game of war, a series of all-or-nothing skirmishes con-

ducted for the most part in civilized company toward civilized ends. It is what Nick the Greek, that most infamous of American gamblers, had in mind when, in discussing expert game-playing, he said, "It is the art of polite bushwhacking." Given the scope of backgammon and its infinite possibilities, it is the consummate encounter.

MC: Here are the JellyFish positions for the 64 move above:

13/3*	-0.025	JF1
11/5 6/2	-0.117	JF3
21/15 7/3*	-0.321	JF11

The next part is from Chapter Twelve describing "Three Great Games" of which we take a look at one. This match is of an unknown length, and with unknown players. All we know is: "What follows is a game recently played [1970s?] by two of the world's best in a tournament match in London that was televised and followed with great interest by players around the world."

I have reproduced the game in Jelly-Fish format and have analysed and commented on the plays myself (in italics, MC) with the authors' comments in plain text preceded by AC.

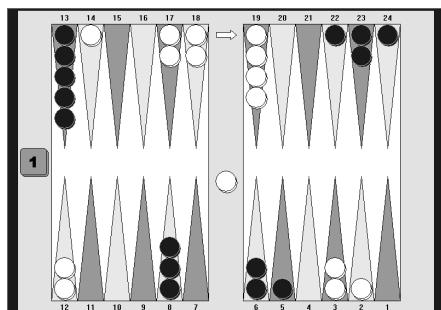
White	Black
01) 61: 13/7 8/7	64: 24/14
02) 52: 6/1* 13/11*	51: 25/20 25/24*

AC: A hitting contest then ensued, with each player attempting to establish a position, and forced in turn to hit again.

MC: A bloodbath!

03) 65: 25/20 11/5*	21: 25/23 6/5*
04) 43: 25/22 24/20*	65: 25/20* 20/14
05) 32: 25/22 13/11*	21: 25/23 6/5*
06) 42: 25/23 24/20*	31: 25/22 6/5*

Diagram 104



AC: This was the first really major decision in the game. (See Diagram 104).

Black's option was to come in on the 24-point, establishing two blocks, and to hit with the 3 from his 8-point. But the move as played is imaginative and daring. If Black had come in on the 1-point, he would have been committing himself to a backgame. Black can afford the play he made because White has made only his bar and has not yet made any points in his inner board. Hence, Black is not necessarily in a backgame as yet. The drawback to this play, however, is that Black has lost a builder by hitting White's blot from the 8-point.

Nonetheless, this is an interesting example of early tactics. Black has decided against a backgame this early in the game - going along with the theory that backgames should if possible be avoided.

MC: *This is a very 'daring' play indeed. JellyFish favours making the 22-point (perhaps with a backgame in mind?), and relegates the actual play to 3rd. Certainly hitting the blot will make it harder for White to make the Golden Point (20- or 5-point) next roll but there are only ten rolls that miss the 5-point blot - very backgamish if you ask me!*

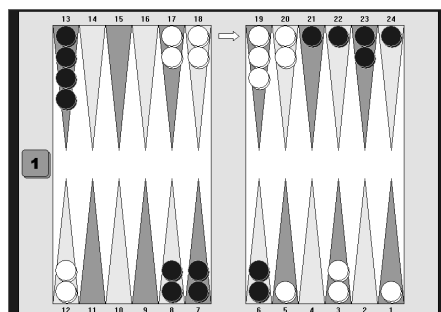
07) 31: 25/24 23/20* 61: 25/24 13/7
08) 61: 11/5 6/5

AC: By far his best choice. He, of course, could have hit Black's blot on the bar-point, but this would serve no purpose, since White has too many of Black's men in his inner board already.

MC: *Best choice? Only choice - after all, they are "two of the world's best." Any other play would be ridiculous.*

31: 24/21 8/7

Diagram 105



AC: Another interesting play. (See Diagram 105.) Black might have left the blot on his bar-point and made White's 4-point instead. [24/21 22/21 - JF2] Another alternative would have been to hit White's blot on Black's 5-point with the 3 and to make the 3-point in White's board with the 1. [8/5* 23/22 - JF7] But both of these moves would commit him to a backgame, which he is still reluctant to get involved in. But because White now has his 5-point and a four-point block, we believe that Black should have made the move. However, we imagine that Black, seeing that White had four men in his inner board, was still attempting to avoid a backgame. In this case, we feel he was wrong. White's four back men do give him good timing to defend a back game, however, and Black decided against it.

MC: *Not too sure exactly what the authors are saying here. Do they agree or disagree with the actual play of 24/21 8/7? I liked it and so did JellyFish making it No.1. But, I see this as a definite backgame play. I also like the idea of making the bar-point but it leaves an awful three to move.*

09) Doubles to 2 Takes

AC: At this point, White doubles Black to 2. It is interesting to speculate on whether or not White would have doubled if Black had used the 1 to make White's 4 point. Despite the fact that White has a good position, it

is still a bold double. Black has no serious flaws in his game. He has a defensive anchor and opportunities for delay, and White is short on builders in his outer board. Black must have felt the same, since he accepted White's double.

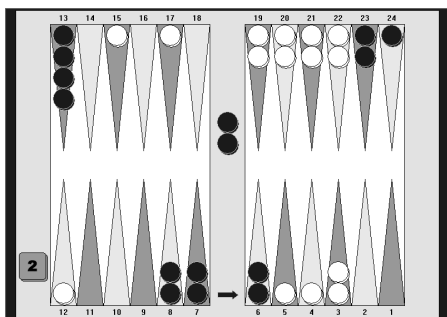
MC: *JellyFish says this is No double/ Take!*

	wins	g/bg	eqty
White	63.9	23.7	0.470
Black	36.1	5.8	

Although the volatility is at 0.111 I don't understand JellyFish here. I see that No double might be because of going for a gammon, but Take? Surely, because it is so gammonish, that this should be a drop? Any experts out there who'd like to comment?

10) 53: 8/3* 6/3 65:
11) 33: 24/21 13/10 7/4* 7/4

Diagram 106



AC: There are many ways of playing these double 3's. With two of Black's men on the bar already and a four-point board, White could have made the 1 point, thereby sabotaging Black's back game entirely. Admittedly it is an awkward and unnatural move to make, but well worth considering in this instance.

MC: *This play is NOT worth considering at JF5.*

AC : But having rejected it, White surely should have started his bar with the fourth 3, rather than the weak and aimless move up to the 4 point in Black's board.

MC: *This isn't a bad idea. Its JF2 with an equity of 0.799 whereas the actual play is JF1 with 0.810.*

31: 25/24

AC: A great roll for Black; he still has one man on the bar, but he has secured that vital second point in his opponent's board.

12) 22: 22/20(2) 13/11 10/8

41: 25/24 13/9

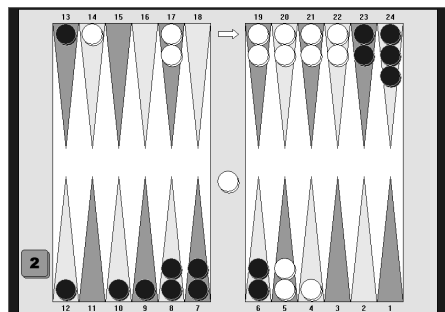
13) 52: 20/13

AC: This is the correct play. White does not want to delay Black further and so declines to hit. At this juncture, he has a distinct edge in every area. He even holds his enemy's 5 point.

MC: *Delay him, that's Jelly's advice. He places the actual move at 4th favouring hitting 21/16* with 16/14 or 11/9 or 8/6. I admit that hitting does aid Black's timing but I'd rather have another man back than see a four-prime.*

31: 13/10 13/12*

Diagram 107



AC: This is one of the most fascinating decisions of the game. If White's two men on the 5 point had been on the 4 point, we are sure that Black would have blocked his 9 point with the 3-1, thereby containing White's three men in his inner board unless White rolled a 6. In this position White has very little in reserve and might easily be forced into breaking his blockade. But since the men were on the 5 point, Black elected to go into a massive back game. An ingenious and daring play.

MC: *Ingenious? Daring? More like wrong! What on earth is wrong with the pick and pass play 13/12* 12/9? It hits and makes a great four-prime.*

Black is already in a massive back-game. This one move could have made all the difference. JellyFish places the actual play at JF10 with -0.930 compared to my play at JF1 with -0.564, a huge difference.

14) 43: 25/22 20/16*

AC: White still does not relish hitting, but in order to break up Black's countering blockade, he decides to attack. If he had entered on the 4 point and played the 3 to his own 8 point, he could be blocked with low numbers. Double 3's would be especially disastrous. A good example of going against the usually sound premise of not hitting in a back game. The situation is unique, and White correctly improvised.

MC: *I agree with this play . . . but if Black had played the best move with his previous 31 then it would have been an entirely different kettle of fish!*

55:

15) 21: 22/20 21/20

AC: White might have hit two more of Black's men, but rightly decided to bring two men up. An expert play.

MC: *An "expert" play that Jelly relegates to 9th with an equity of 1.055 as opposed to JF1 of 16/15* 15/13*, hitting twice with an equity of 1.229. Black is still in this game, albeit in a slight way, but, by not hitting any blots, White is letting him have an 'extra' roll. Better to put him on the bar.*

61: 25/18

16) 52: 20/15* 16/14

AC: Here again, White makes a crucial error, in our opinion. The 2 is vital. Following the practice of not hitting when you are defending against a back game, White does not hit twice-but he should have. It is a time to ensure that Black does not make White's bar point by rolling a 6-1, 6-2 or 5-2, a total of six shots. (He should not use 5-1 to hit, because the 2 point is too valuable.) It is a calculated risk, but we think White was in error here. If White secures his

bar and establishes a prime, he has an excellent chance to contain his opponents men long enough so that Black's remaining forces will be well out of play. In other words, Black's other men will have been forced to move to the forward points in his inner board before White's blockade breaks.

MC: *I agree, White should hit twice, 20/15* 15/13**

52: 25/18

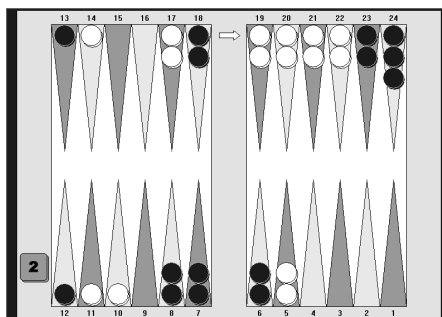
AC: Because White did not hit twice and Black did roll the 5-2, he has come from far behind and is about even money now. (See Diagram 108.)

MC: *JellyFish says:*

	wins	g/bg	eqty
White	67.6	43.4	0.833
Black	32.4	3.2	

Hardly what I'd call evens.

Diagram 108



17) 55: 20/15 20/15 14/9 11/6

AC: A very cautious play. What is White afraid of? He wants to be hit, and by playing safely he has made himself too fast.

MC: *This is far too timid. White needs to be hit and to re-circulate his spare checkers. Jelly favours playing 20/10 20/15 14/9, leaving three blots on the 9-, 10- and 11-points. The actual play came out at JF6, equity 0.651, well behind the best play at 0.728.*

53: 8/3 8/5

AC: Deliberately leaving two blots. It is entirely to his advantage to be hit, and if White rolls 3's and/or 2's, he

will have to hit or strip his board. Curiously, since White does not want to hit under any circumstances, Black is partially "blocking" White with his two separated blots.

MC: This play is very wrong. Black should be concentrating on maintaining a prime, not slotting loosely in his inner board. The actual play comes in at JF11 with an equity of -0.828 whereas the best play, 13/8 12/9 comes out at -0.663, a big difference.

18) 62: 15/9 6/4

AC: Again White is dogging it by playing safe. Black has perfect timing now.

MC: Once again, the actual play is well behind: JF4 with an equity of 0.661 as opposed to an equity of 0.867 playing 15/9 15/13*. White should be hitting whatever he can now to ensure that Black is stripped of builders to make any inner board points.

63: 24/15
19) 64: 15/9 15/11 41: 12/8 7/6

AC: There is no point in hitting; he has no board.

MC: That might well be true, but, is this the best play? This move is JF9, with the top plays all moving off the 15-point: 15/10, 15/11 12/11, 15/11 13/12, 15/11 7/6 - all builders for the top inner board points.

20) 51: 11/6 9/8

AC: Refusing to hit, of course.

MC: This refusal to hit leaves Black able to make a useful inner board point next roll. At JF8 it is far behind JF1, 11/10* 10/5. The equity difference being 0.559 and 0.634 respectively.

22: 8/4 7/5 6/4

AC: Black's first usable double of the game; he uses it to make two good points in his board.

MC: I agree.

21) 61: 9/3 9/8

AC: A good shot, but Black's timing is still excellent.

MC: I agree.

33: 15/3
22) 64: 8/4 54: 13/8 18/14
23) 31: 8/5 4/3

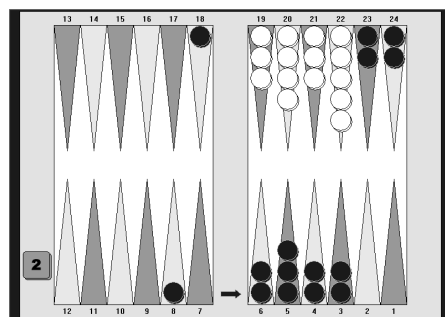
AC: He does not want to delay Black.

MC: Jelly does! By playing 8/7* 7/4 White at least will be able to play fairly safe next roll.

54: 14/5

24) 53: 8/3 8/5

Diagram 109



AC: As can be seen in Diagram 109, White has now brought all of his men into his inner board, but Black's timing remains nearly perfect.

MC: Black has a very good chance of a re-cube if he is able to threaten to hit any of White's checkers during the bearoff.

31: 18/15 8/7
25) 52: 5/0 6/4 41: 15/10
26) 11: 6/3 6/5 62: 10/2
27) 51: 5/0 4/3

AC: Keeping his men as diversified as possible.

51: 7/2 5/4
28) 42: 4/0 5/3 41: 23/18
29) 54: 5/0 4/0

AC: Bears two men off and leaves a triple shot which endangers two blots. (See Diagram 110.)

MC: Nightmare! Looking back there

seems no way it could have been avoided.

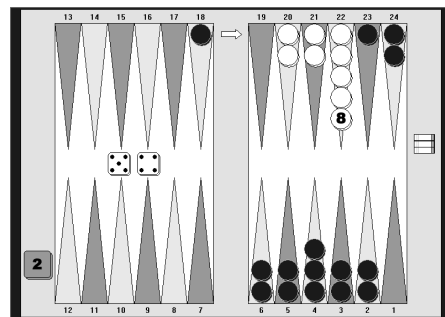
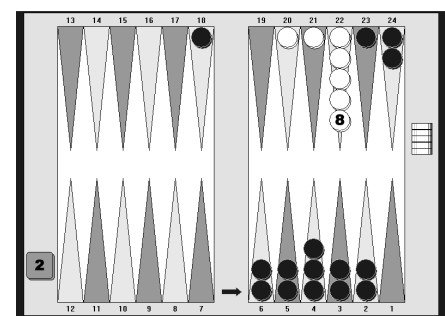


Diagram 110



AC: In this position, Black redoubled. Should White take? In all money games, the answer is yes. Black can hit with any 2, 3 or 4, which means that 27 shots hit and 9 do not, making him exactly a 3 to 1 favorite. You will recall that 3 to 1 is the dividing line on whether or not one accepts a double. In this instance, White is neither over nor under. But the determining factor here is that if Black misses, White has good double-game possibilities, since he has five men off already. But because this was a tournament match, and due perhaps to the score at the time or the psychological blow he had just been dealt, White thought it expedient to drop.

When a position like this arises - that is, when you leave a triple shot - do not throw up your hands in the belief that your cause is hopeless. How many times, for example, have you failed to enter a three-point board? In this instance the odds are exactly the same. But Black may have bluffed White here. The psychological setback of suddenly leaving two blots may have caused him to drop without considering the position carefully.

Nevertheless, overall this is a superb game by two great strategists, and it

demonstrates the essence of backgammon.

MC: Jelly says:

	wins	g/bg	eqty
White	28.8	13.8	
Black	71.2	0.0	0.270
No double/Take			

30) Drops Doubles to 4
Wins 2 points

Before we leave this article here's a bit about the authors taken from the flyleaf:

Barclay Cooke was born in 1912, and graduated from Yale in 1934. For a year thereafter he worked as a roustabout in the oil fields in the South, then for a bank in New York City, but when he found that this job interfered with his attendance at Yankee Stadium, the Polo Grounds and Ebbets Field, he left with no regrets.

Though Mr. Cooke is widely acknowledged to be one of the three or four best backgammon players extant, he feels that his true metier is as a big-league baseball manager, a post which will never be offered him.

Mr. Cooke is married, has four children, and lives in Englewood, New Jersey, and during the season can be found in the second row of the Metro-

politan Opera orchestra every Friday night.

Jon Bradshaw was born in the United States in 1937 and has lived in England for most of his adult life. He is an amateur backgammon player, a professional writer, and the author of Fast Company, a comical study of the good works and bad habits of six American gamblers.

*To finish, a short 'endorsement' of the book. This personal opinion of The Cruellest Game is taken from Tom Keith's **Backgammon Galore** web site, **Newsgroup Archive**:*

When I learned backgammon in 1975, Cooke/Bradshaw was not only considered the best beginning book, but simply the **best book** on the game. (Of course there weren't any advanced books back then...). About a year or two later Magriel came out. Then in the early 80's Kleinman and Robertie started to make a college course out of the game. Cooke played a style of backgammon which worked for him (and a lot of others) in the 70's, when many of his opponents hadn't a clue about concepts we now consider fundamental. (Here I also refer to his other two books-- "Paradoxes and Probabilities" and "Championship Backgammon", the latter co-authored by Rene Orlean.)

He was very heavy on defensive tactics, was almost obsessed with building the 20-point, but had a serious distaste for splitting the back checkers (on the 24-point). His cube recommendations ("when in doubt, don't double; when in doubt, take") also tended to be on the conservative side by today's standards. He much preferred to double his opponent out rather than to see a take (and risk the potential frustration if the game turned around). Having said all that, Cooke was definitely (in my opinion) a proponent of using one's head while playing backgammon. That advice will never go out of style!

Every backgammon book should be read with a skeptical eye. Listen to what the author says, but don't take it as gospel. Try to understand the "why" of his/her thinking rather than memorizing plays or "rules". Every backgammon book I've read (except maybe "Underhanded Backgammon"!) has some sound advice. You could do a lot worse than reading Barclay Cooke.

Chuck Bower – August 1998

So, there you have this issue's Archive. Any comments, please forward to me at the usual address.



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What Makes A Good Backgammon Player?

by Dr. Roy Hollands



Since I have not been able to find any article on this topic I am writing my own thoughts on this fascinating subject. Hopefully others will then point out faults in my approach and make constructive suggestions that can be developed further.

First of all I listed qualities that I considered important to be a good backgammon player. This produced a long list: mathematical ability, confidence, memory, experience, concentration, ability to analyse, interest, speed of thought, logical thinking, courage, information known, patience, mental and physical health, intelligence, willingness to study, calmness, mental and physical stamina, appreciation of pattern, determination, ability to visualise positions, natural ability.

No doubt there are others that could be included and ones that could be excluded, but at least this was a start to the problem.

Obviously there is considerable overlap between many of the listed factors. For example, intelligence includes mathematical ability and ability to analyse; natural ability could consist of many of the listed factors.

My limited knowledge of psychology and statistics would not make me competent enough to use factor analysis that would tease out the amount of overlap involved.

It seemed that the best alternative would be to form groups that had certain facets in common. Readers will be able to improve on my suggestions so they should only be regarded as a tentative start.

BRAINPOWER

A1

- (i) Intelligence (as found in standard IQ tests).

- (ii) Mathematical ability (many tests are available, in particular we need the mathematics needed to do pip counts, gauge probabilities, understand equities, evaluate risk versus reward and other aspects that occur in backgammon).
- (iii) Logical thinking.

A2

- (i) Ability to analyse (e.g. consider all candidate moves).
- (ii) Appreciation of patterns (e.g. calculating pip count using blocks, cancelling 'opposites').
- (iii) Visualisation (e.g. given the first three moves of a game can you visualise the position).
- (iv) Speed of thought (important as this allows one to go deeper into an analysis).

KNOWLEDGE

B

- (i) Information known (e.g. rules for safe bearoff, relative value of the possible opening moves).
- (ii) Studying/learning (willingness to read articles and books, noting interesting positions for further study/rollouts, etc).
- (iii) Experience.
- (iv) Memory (it is of little value if one studies and cannot remember what has been learnt).

ATTITUDE

C1

- (i) Interest (the degree of interest in a subject decides the amount of study time spent on it and affects many other factors).
- (ii) Determination (the will to win., closely linked to 'Interest').

C2

- (i) Concentration.
- (ii) Patience.
- (iii) Confidence (this depends to a large extent on 'Knowledge').
- (iv) Courage (this is linked to such factors as willingness to take risks/gains, evaluation of those risks/gains and these in turn are depending on 'Knowledge').
- (v) Calmness (tension not only saps the energy, it also decreases the ability to think clearly).

STAMINA

D

- (i) Mental (tiredness affects many of the factors that have been listed).
- (ii) Physical (illness, lack of sleep and physical weakness or disability can adversely affect one's play).

Some players have a natural talent or flair for backgammon. I have not included this as a separate factor as I consider it to be a combination of several of the above items - mathematical ability, speed of thought, confidence, memory, etc.

So where do we go from here? I had a dream! The article above was sent to numerous players of widely ranging ability. They gave a mark to the categories A, B, C and D so that the total was 100. For example, it could be A 50, B 30, C 15, D 5.

The replies were analysed for all those who answered and also by putting them into groups according to ability. (Everyone was asked to gauge their ability on a scale from 10 {World Class} down to 1 {Beginner}.)

The next stage was to ask those who had replied to take part in a more detailed survey.

They were now given the 'average' values for A, B, C and D. Let us suppose they were as above - A 50, B 30, C 15, D 5. Because of the overlap between items it would not be acceptable to distribute the 50 awarded to A between each of the six subdivisions of A. Instead they were asked to mark each subdivision on a given five point scale with 5 Very Important and 1 Not Very Important.

Then the statisticians were set to work to factor analyse the results... that's when I woke up.

Roy Hollands, B.Sc. M.A. M.Ed., Ph.D.

Plan To Improve

By Dr. Roy Hollands

It is very easy to overlook the importance of planning in backgammon. After a roll our attention is focused on the best way of playing the given numbers. These are the short term tactics but what about the long term strategy? In this article we will see how even the world's top players sometimes fail to discriminate between the conflicting demands of these two.

Positions to illustrate this have been selected from MatchQiz so that the comments of Kit Woolsey and the statistics from Snowie can reinforce each point. This combination gives by far the best way for players of all levels to improve on their performance. I am grateful for permission from Oasya to quote from these sources. Further information about them is available from www.oasya.com or by snail mail from Oasya SA, Av.Moulin 5, 1110 Morges, Switzerland, Phone +41 21 8022802.

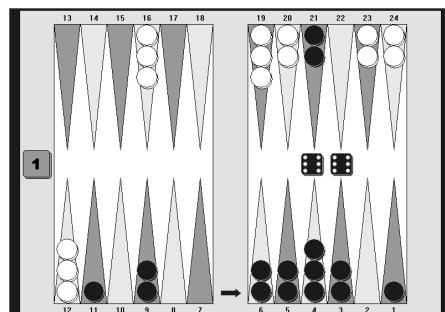
As an introduction to planning I can recommend an article by Walter Trice which can be seen in www.gammonvillage.com Game Plan, 19th. October, 2001. Walter suggests there are three ways to win a game of backgammon: race, prime and attack.

Some players think there is no need to have a game plan. Surely if you make the best possible move each time that is good enough? If we could calculate as deeply as Snowie rollouts we might get near to this. Since we cannot, a plan is essential to guide us through the maze of possible moves. Others who scorn the need for a plan maintain it is far too changeable and hence wasteful on one's mental energy.

It is true we must always be prepared to change our plan according to the dictates of the dice and the play of our opponents; however such changes use far less energy than trying to calculate the numerous possibilities that arise when considering all your reasonable

candidate moves followed by those of your opponent; and that only looks ahead for one move by each player.

To take a simple example consider the position below.

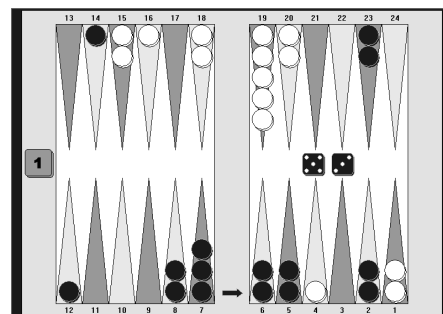


Black to play 66

Black is twelve pips behind and has now rolled double six. Before that roll his game plan was to hang back on the 21-point in the hope of getting a shot as White brings in the rest of his checkers. The double six puts him 12 pips ahead and necessitates a change of plan. He now wishes to break all contact and change the game to a straight race. He therefore plays 21/9(2).

How does the example above fit into Walter Trice's three ways of winning: race, prime or attack? When staying back, hoping for a shot, Black was choosing attack as his winning method. Admittedly the chance to attack a blot might never arise but the potential is there after the 66 attack was replaced by a race.

How early can planning be required? Often as early as the first move. Consider playing 43 as the opening move. If you are well behind in the match then building a prime is a good aim, hoping the dice will co-operate. Playing 13/10 13/9 is the best way to start this plan. If however you are ahead in a match you want to make an advanced anchor as soon as possible thus minimising your opponent's hopes of blocking you with a prime. Hence 43 would be played as 24/20 13/10 or 24/21 13/9.



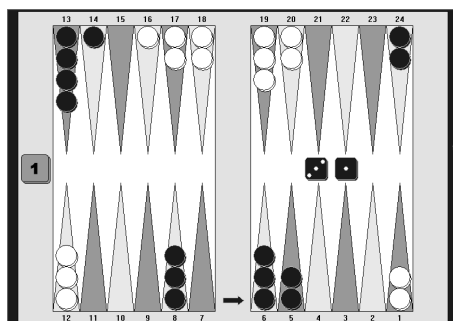
Black to play 53

In this position Black has to play 53. What should his plan be? He could make a 5-prime or he could hit loose and bring another checker into the attack with the idea of a blitz. Thus the choice of plan is between 'prime' and 'attack'. Are there any strengths or weaknesses that help us to choose the better plan?

Black has the better board. Black is well ahead in the race. Having the better board suggests that a blot-hitting contest is likely to be in Black's favour; however being ahead in the race implies avoiding exchanges and concentrating on winning the race. If Black hits loose on his four-point a return hit by White would cancel out Black's present advantage. It is not worth the risk, especially as there is such a good alternative available. By far the best play is making the five prime playing 14/9 12/9. Snowie agrees with an equity of 0.228 for 12/4* and 0.389 for 14/9 12/9. The hit is a serious blunder.

You will find in the following that Kit Woolsey often explains the 'plan' without specifically mentioning that term. For example he talks of a player needing to play according to his own strengths, and to his opponent's weaknesses. If you have the stronger board you should be more willing to enter a blot-hitting contest since you will find it easier to re-enter than your opponent will. Consequently your plan may well be 'attack' whilst your opponent looks elsewhere for a winning plan

The following position on the next page is from MatchQiz, Game 15, between Bob Wachtel (White) and Mike Svobodny (Black).



21 Point Match
Black 13 White 9
Black to play 31

Kit's comments throughout are given in full without any modification, any comments I have added are in initialled and in *italics*.

Kit says: Svobodny has an interesting and delicate decision. His actual play of 24/23 14/11 is quite reasonable. The split to the 23-point puts both pressure on Wachtel's stripped eight-point and makes it easier for Svobodny to make an advanced anchor. Playing 24/21 14/13 should be avoided. This would give Wachtel too many good rolls which make the four point on Svobodny's head. Playing 14/11 8/7 could work well, but it would be catastrophic if the blot were hit. *RH: This is Snowie's tenth choice, equity -0.617.*

The real alternative to consider is the simple 14/10. The checker on the ten-point is much better placed than on the eleven-point, since it aims at the four-point and the ten-point can be part of a prime whilst the eleven-point cannot. In addition splitting does run the danger of being blitzed if Wachtel starts to boom out big doubles now or in the next roll or two before Svobodny is able to fill in his own prime.

The key question to be looked at is the timing issue. This means that if we get involved in a timing battle, Svobodny will have slightly the better timing all the other things being equal. This consideration makes me lean towards 14/10. If Svobodny can fill in his bar-point or his four-point he will be a long way towards containing Wachtel's back checkers, and if he can succeed informing a prime he may not need to get his back men

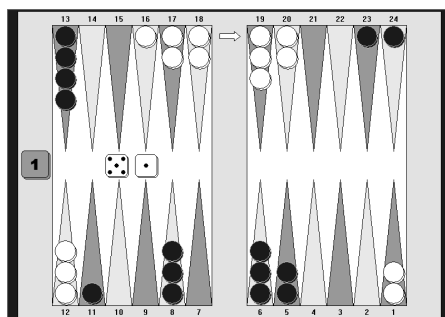
going - he can just win the priming battle.

RH: Kit has showed at length that 'priming' should be the overall plan for Black. Playing 14/10 is the best move if one is to carry out this plan. Snowie's 3-ply moves are as follows:

24/13	14/11	0.452
24/21	14/13	0.460
24/21	24/23	0.475
14/10		0.513
24/21	6/5	0.530
14/11	6/5	0.539

Both Snowie and Svobodny chose 24/13 14/11. I think this shows how difficult it is for a world class player such as Svobodny to arrive at the best long term plan in the limited time available. Similarly one cannot expect a 3-ply analysis to reach the same conclusion as Kit who has had plenty of time to consider the position in depth.

On the very next move Bob Wachtel (White) also makes an error in planning. He has to play 51. Kit explains, backed up by Snowie's analysis.



White to play 51

Kit: Wachtel, on the other hand, chooses not to split playing 13/7. The builder on the bar-point is slightly better placed for attack purposes than on the eight-point, since Wachtel would rather give up his eight-point than his bar-point in order to attack Svobodny's blots. However it doesn't make all that much difference, and splitting could be very important for Wachtel. He is the one who is ahead in the race, so the timing in a priming battle tends to go against him. In addition Svobodny is short of attackers so splitting is saver [*sic*] than usual.

I think Wachtel should play 13/8 24/

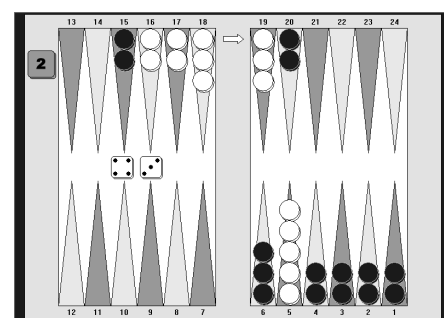
23. If he can form an advanced anchor he will have much the better of it. Playing 24/18 is not the right idea. This would just give Svobodny an easier time making the bar-point.

It is interesting that the player who has the better timing makes the marginal split, whilst the player who is ahead in the race chooses not to split when it is much safer for him to do so. I think they got this one backwards.

RH: Here are the 3-ply results from Snowie.

24/23 13/8	0.216
7/2*/1* 0.194	
24/18	0.178
13/8 9/8	0.173
13/7	0.162 (actual play)
13/8 6/5	0.143

There are, of course, many positions where you just need to wait before deciding on a plan. Waiting might also be to your advantage when your opponent will have to commit himself before you do. Such situations often arise in backgames, holding games and prime versus prime. The following positions are from once again from MatchQiz. Mika Lidov (Black) (2) leads Hal Heinrich (0) in a 21 point match. Kit Woolsey gives his usual clear comments and I have added Snowie's 3-ply data.



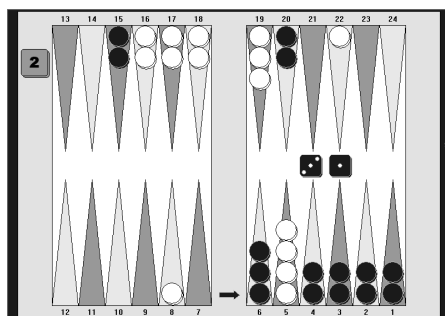
White to play 43

Kit: Now Heinrich makes his move, 20/17 7/3, to cover the outfield. I don't agree. He leaves Lidov a seven shot, and getting hit here may be fatal. In addition, the blot Heinrich leaves on his three-point may be quite an annoyance - he may get a shot next roll and be afraid to hit it because of the blot. I think he should just sit tight and make the three-point. Lidov has

to play, and her play move may give Heinrich a chance to get something going if he doesn't have a bunch of blots to clear up. Lidov's main advantage is her strong inner board while Heinrich's big asset is better timing. By leaving blots he plays into Lidov's strength.

RH: Snowie says -

7/3 6/3	0.288
20/17 7/3	0.312
20/17 6/2	0.351
20/13	0.372
7/4 6/2	0.402
20/16 20/17	0.426



Black to play 31

Lidov (*plays 6/2 and*) lets Heinrich get away with his last play. She is still fixated on the game plan of holding the fifteen-point and leaping her two back men out to this point and then going on to win from there. This was a perfectly viable game plan a few moves ago, but the position has changed and the priorities are different. Lidov's play puts Heinrich under no pressure, allowing him to play his next roll as he sees fit to take control of the outfield. In addition, the spare blot Lidov had on her six-point can come in very handy later on; If Lidov can't roll a five or a six next roll she will be in big trouble - forced to break the 15-point when Heinrich is ready for her. Even if she rolls the five or six, she will have a very difficult time bringing everybody around.

Her main asset is still her stronger inner board, so she should use that asset to challenge Heinrich's blots before he has a chance to consolidate. She should play either 15/14 15/12 (my choice) or 15/11. Either play challenges the blot Heinrich has left on her eight-point Heinrich hits at his

own risk - he has a blot in his inner table, and if he gets hit from the bar it could be fatal due to Lidov's strong board. Lidov must attempt to capitalise on her strong board - timing is running out.

RH: Snowie says -

15/12 15/14	0.105
15/11	0.081
15/14 6/3	0.069
6/2	0.045 (actual play)
15/12 4/3	0.044

Readers are left to apply Walter Trice's criteria of race, prime or attack.

Since writing this article Kit Woolsey has also written one! Fortunately he has taken a shorter approach to planning so the articles complement one another. Kit's article 'What's Your Game Plan?' is at his website, www.gammonline.com.

MC: I have tracked down the match between Heinrich and Lidov. It is the 1990 Monte Carlo WM-QF. The extract below is from the full match (thanks to Harald Johanni), all of which is available as a JellyFish match file (or plain text) via email or floppy disc.

Game 3

Hal Heinrich : 0	Mika Lidov : 2
01)	62: 24/18 13/11
02) 41: 13/9 8/7*	64: 25/21 24/18*
03) 43: 25/22 13/9	53: 8/3* 6/3
04) 64: 25/21 13/7*	
	44: 25/21 13/9 8/4*(2)
05) 62: 25/23 13/7	Doubles to 2
06) Takes	31: 13/10 13/12*
07) 54: 25/20 24/20	61: 10/4 12/11
08) 41: 24/20 6/5	63: 11/2*
09) 65: 25/14*	41: 25/20*
10) 52: 25/20 14/12*	
	55: 25/15 20/15 9/4
11) 51: 12/7 6/5	21: 4/2 21/20*
12) 43:	32: 6/3 4/2
13) 41: 25/20	11: 21/20 3/1 2/1
14) 43: 7/3 20/17	31: 6/2
15) 43: 6/2 20/17	63: 20/11
16) 55: 17/12(2) 9/4(2)	43: 11/4
17) 53: 7/2 7/4	22: 20/12
18) 65: 20/9	41: 15/11 12/11
19) 41: 9/5 4/3	42: 15/11 4/2
20) 51: 12/7 12/11	63: 11/2
21) 53: 7/2 8/5	64: 11/1
22) 21: 8/6 11/10	22: 11/7 6/4(2)
23) 22: 20/18* 18/12	51: 25/24
24) Doubles to 4	Drops
	Wins 2 points

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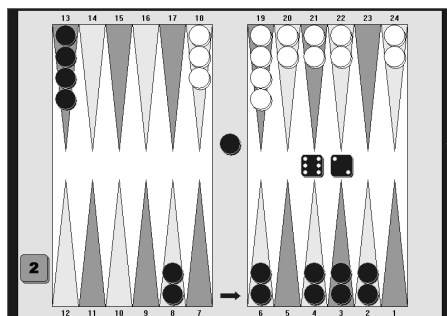
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We'll start with the extra credit question: Which of the following precise mathematical formulae best describes the probability of rolling 2-6 from the bar?

- It's a 17-to-1 shot that happens maybe 15-20% of the time.
- It's only one number, but due to something I think has to do with permutations and combinations, it's the number you will roll most often from the bar.
- Humans may roll it more than the law of averages would predict, but these ridiculous bots always get a 2-6 from the bar, especially if they can hit you on the 8 point.
- Whether or not you roll it more often than you should, the correct way to play a 2-6 from the bar isn't always obvious.

We won't try to solve this deep a mystery in this short a time, or this small a space. Instead, on the presumption that there's at least some chance the right answer is choice D, let's look at some examples of 2-6 from the bar taken from recent games.



Problem 1

Black to play 2-6 from the bar
Pip White: 71 Pip Black: 123
Money Game

If Black chooses to run, he almost

Another 2-6 From The Bar!

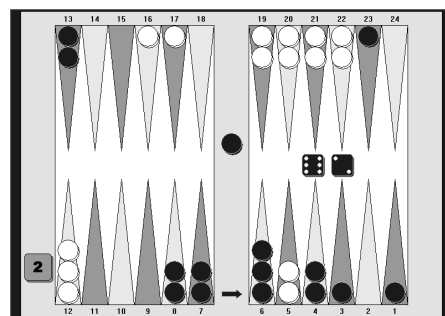
by Mary Hickey



certainly concedes the game without even guaranteeing he gets off the gammon! Can this be right? Bar/23, 13/7 is a constructive alternative, and White could be forced to leave a shot right away if he rolls a 6-4.

The key here is Black's missing 5 point. If he held his 5 instead of his 2 point, his hits would be more decisive, leading to many quick wins with the cube after early hits, and easier containment leading to more eventual wins after later hits. In that case, he'd be right to stay.

However, since he doesn't have his 5 point, Black's best bet here is to run with bar/17 and hope he can save the gammon in the race.



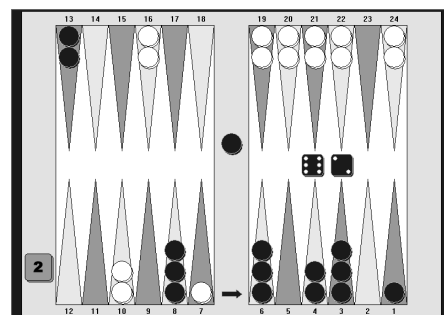
Problem 2

Black to play 2-6 from the bar
Pip White: 132 Pip Black: 134

Money Game

Black might look at those two blots in his home board, and his opponent's anchor on his five point, and conclude he isn't ready to make a big move yet. However, sometimes life is like that - an opportunity presents itself, and you must act upon it even though you feel unprepared, or risk letting it slip away forever. And oh yeah, backgammon can be that way too, as is the case here.

Black's actual play was bar/23, 7/1, trying to get better set for a later shot. This was the wrong concept here, and bar/17* is best for money and also at most match scores. As you might guess, the exception is "Gammon Save" scores such as 2-away, 1-away Crawford, where the added gammons versus added wins trade-off is 1:1 instead of the normal 2:1 ratio. A JellyFish rollout shows the trade-off here is 13 extra gammons versus 8 extra wins, close to midway between these two trade-off reference points.



Problem 3

Black to play 2-6 from the bar
Pip White: 104 Pip Black: 111
Double Match Point

There is a backgammon maxim, "When in doubt, hit". There is another, less often heeded, that advises "Respect a five point board". In a



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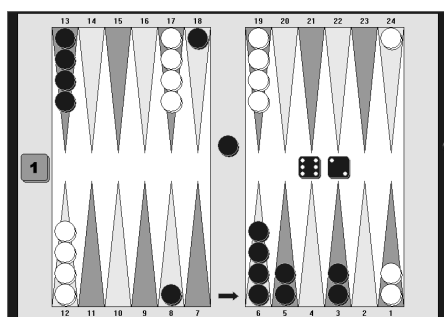


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money game, hitting here would be suicidal. Playing with four blots versus a five point board, especially with your own home board this weak, is just asking to get gammoned.

At double match point, the issue is much closer. Anything that increases Black's game-winning chances has to be right, regardless of the number of additional gammons he might lose. In this case, Black (oh, all right, I'll tell you that it was me) thought the hit would lead to more wins, and so played bar/23, 13/7*. A JellyFish rollout shows this to be wrong even at this score, leading to 32.5% wins versus 33.3% for the best play.

What is that best play? It isn't bar/17, a blunder at this score which the rollouts show leads to only 31.2% wins. Best both at DMP and for money is the quiet bar/23, 8/2. This works at building a better board in anticipation of either later hits, and also minimizes White's hitting opportunities in a game that could turn into a close race.



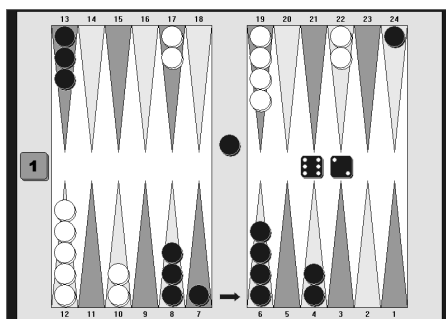
Problem 4

Black to play 2-6 from the bar
Pip White: 157 Pip Black: 143

Game One

5 point match. Crawford
Black 4 White 3

If only for contrast, a case where playing with four blots is absolutely right. Black's correct play, even at this "Gammon Save" score, is bar/23, 13/7, trying to lengthen his block while White is in no shape to stop him effectively. This isn't even a case of trading off additional wins for himself versus additional gammons for the opponent; a JellyFish rollout shows Black actually loses fewer gammons after 13/7 than after 8/2!



Problem 5

Black to play 2-6 from the bar
Pip White: 141 Pip Black: 151
Double Match Point

Splitting to the opponent's bar point is often correct or at least reasonable in the opening, but tends to be overrated in the middle game, in my opinion.. Here, Black doesn't need to come out to the bar point to get "action", since many of White's rolls force at least multiple indirect shots anyway. Bar/23, 24/18 just gives White attacking options with some of his otherwise unhappy rolls. In contrast, bar/23, 13/7 is constructive and makes Black's later hits stronger by reducing White's counterplay after them. It's correct at this score and also for money.

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The Cock-Shot

Michael Crane explains

A 6-2 from the bar is very interesting. To a lot of players this is known as a Cock-Shot! Why? Well, about four years ago I was playing in a chouette with two friends. We were playing in my hotel room when one of us (names withheld to protect the guilty!) desperately needed to roll a 6-2 off the bar to enter into a five-prime board via the open 2-point and hit a blot on the opponent's 8-point, and then go on to win the game.

The roller shook his dice excitedly and chanted, "six-two, six-two, six-two." "No chance," said one of us. "In fact," he went on, "If you roll a

6-2 I'll get my cock out!"

Now, he wasn't talking about a pet fowl here (I wish he was) but his . . . Well, you know what I'm on about!

"Six-two, six-two," shouted the roller as he pitched the dice from the cup. They tumbled out, rolled around the board for what seemed an eternity and came to land on . . . Well, of course, it was a 6-2!

Good as his word, the cock came out (not a pretty sight) for a brief moment (not brief enough for my liking), one of us laughed at the size, the other at the colour, and thus the 'Cock-Shot' was born.

Now, years later, players who've never heard of the origin or ever met any of the three players involved are regularly heard asking for a 'cock-shot' when a 6-2 off the bar can change the game dramatically. Often they don't realise that if their wish comes true they will have to show their cock!

It has been officially recognised as a backgammon term by the Encarta Dictionary. I was the backgammon contributor for the dictionary and, when asked about any new words or terms proposed 'Cock-Shot' as my candidate. It is defined as any roll in backgammon that can turn the game around, e.g., a 6-2 off the bar and



hitting a blot.

Nowadays it's a brave man that calls for a 'cock-shot' when one is needed but I do occasionally hear the call - and I always turn my head and walk away!

Archive – Paul Magriel

Once again, trawling through my archives I've unearthed some more articles written by Paul for the New York Times. The first one, as far as I can make out is from early 1980, possibly, January or February.



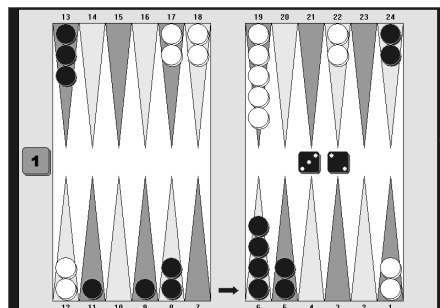
If the Opponent Is in a Mess, Well ...That's His Problem

In backgammon tournaments players are often vexed by the caprice of the dice. Although luck is an integral part of the game, many wish it could be reduced. In bridge competition, the luck of the cards can be reduced by playing duplicate – that is, each pair are dealt the exact same cards at different tables.

Backgammon can also be played duplicate style., with players at different tables having the same dice rolls. In duplicate backgammon, the same opening rolls allow the players to get off to an equal start. Very early on however the games will tend to diverge. When this happens the fact that the same numbers are being used at each table becomes irrelevant. Quite arbitrarily and unforeseeably, the same number may work well at one table but be a disaster at another. One of the few durable tests of duplicate backgammon came during the World Championship Cup in London in 1973, between four of the world's leading players. This event was a team match with Barclay Cooke and his late son, Walter, representing the United States against Phillip Martyn and Joe Dwek, representing Europe. The identical rolls were played by opposing sides at both tables. The results of this match, with a detailed and highly instructive commentary on each play, are present in Barclay Cooke's new book, "Championship Backgammon" (Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NY, 1980).

An informative example of how the duplicate format works may be seen in the diagrammed position taken

from "Championship Backgammon." In the two simultaneous games, the first two rolls for each side were played identically. Thus, on the third roll, the same position was reached with Black to play 32.



Black to play 32

On Table I, Barclay Cooke (Black) competed against Joe Dwek (White). On Table II, Phillip Martyn (Black) was playing Walter Cooke (White). At both tables, Black chose to use the 2 to play 11/9, making the 9-point. The 3, however, was played differently by each, and so the game diverged at this point.

Phillip Martyn decided to split his back men by playing 24/21. With this play, Black hopes to establish the 21-point, or else escape with one of his back runners. Cooke, well known for his determination to keep an anchor in his opponent's board, chose to play his 3 13/10, creating another builder.

In the diagram, White is already at a great disadvantage even though the game is only beginning its third turn. All of White's points are stripped except the 6-point, which has too many men. Thus, White will have trouble making new points and developing his game. Black, on the other hand has a stronger, more flexible position. His men are well-placed, and so, Black has many constructive rolls. Black should try to avoid contact with White in order to allow his game to improve naturally.

The correct play, then, is Cooke's conservative choice: 13/10 11/9. Black consolidates his gains, while leaving White to struggle with his unwieldy position.

The alternative play 24/21 exposes

both of Black's back men, inviting an immediate attack. Now, many of White's rolls, which would otherwise be awkward, become playable: White may be able to activate his excess men on the 6-point; White may be able to hit and point on Black on the 4-point (10 combinations out of 36); White may hit one or both of Black's back men: - thus, splitting is likely to result in a wild, tactical melee, in which neither side has a clear advantage.

MC: As usual, I enlisted the assistance of JellyFish. He completely agreed with Paul and Barclay. The correct play is 13/10 11/9. Martyn's play of 24/21 11/9 came in at JF 2nd.

13/10 11/9	eqty, 0.086
24/21 11/9	eqty, 0.037

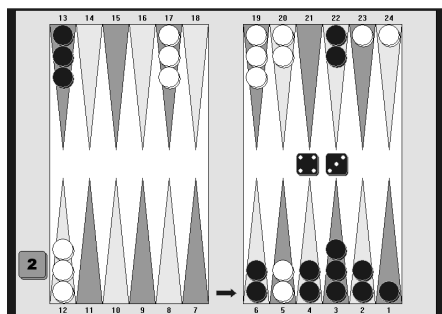
This next article is from 1980. I'm not sure in what month but it follows the fourth Las Vegas tournament – whenever that was.

There's a Time to Run – Fast – Gambling, but Succeeding

The forth Las Vegas backgammon tournament sponsored by American Backgammon Championships was completed here last weekend. The main attraction was the World Amateur Backgammon Championship for the Plimpton Cup. Russell Sands of Los Angeles won 11 straight matches to win the title and the \$100,000 prize money. In the finals he Wayne Drogseth of Las Vegas. Third place went to David Hoffner and fourth to Michael Gilbert.

The open section which drew a strong field of experts was won by Michael Senkiewicz. Al Hodis was the losing finalist; Nick Mafeo and Mack Ballard were semi-finalists. John Henderson defeated Steve Goldman to take the beginner section; Victoria Wheelless teamed up with Steve Zolotow to win the doubles event.

The diagram (on the next page) occurred in the last game of the 19-point match amateur final between sands (Black) and Drogseth (White). Sands had built up a 17-78 lead in the match



Black to play 43

and so needed only two more points to win the title. In an attempt to catch up, Drogseth had doubled early and Sands had accepted. Sands realised that he had an obligation to protect his match lead as well as try to win the game. Indeed, the general strategy for the match leader is to play cautiously and avoid taking chances that may result in losing a gammon (double game).

With the roll of 43 the play that seems natural is 13/6, safely bringing the spare man on the mid-point down to the 6-point. By maintaining an anchor in White's home board (on the 22-point) Black can never be closed out, and so need not fear losing a double game.

Sands, however, rejected the conservative move and correctly played 22/15, breaking off his anchor and leaving two men exposed. This risk was justified both tactically and positionally. Tactically, this was the opportune time to run because of White's two home-board blots (on the 23- and 24-points). If White hits he will probably be forced to leave several of his own men exposed to dangerous return shots. In a 'blot hitting contest' Black will be at an advantage because he has a much stronger home board.

Positionally, the play is necessary because Black is 'out-timed.' If Black plays 13/6 he will almost immediately be left without constructive plays. In fact, if Black persists in clinging to the 22-point his position will quickly deteriorate. In the meantime White's position will improve as White covers his home board blots and brings another builder down from his 12-point.

In the actual game White next rolled a 53 and played 8/3 6/3 hitting Black

and making the 3-point. Black re-entered immediately on the 23-point hitting White back. The game took several twists and turns, but Black eventually won.

MC: Predictably, Jelly picks the 'wrong' play as its first choice, 13/6. It did however, place the actual move of 22/15 in second place. The equities weren't too far apart:

13/6	-0.077
22/15	-0.123

Personally I favoured playing safe with 13/6, so, as an experiment I rolled it out on Level 5 full roll out. I was wrong . . . 13/6 won 56.6% and 21/15 won 61.5%.

These articles are reprinted with acknowledgements to Paul Magriel and the New York Times.

Letters

Arthur Williams writes: **Archive – Barr on Backgammon.** Further to your request for further information on the above author, Ted Barr is a very interesting character indeed.

Barr was an up and coming young lawyer from Oregon and an accomplished backgammon player.

In Feb 1981 he was running a tournament; the Portland Marriot Open. The police, acting on information supplied by a rival backgammon promoter raided the event and along with several others Barr was arrested. He was charged with:-

Bookmaking &
Promoting gambling

Barr's defence costs were crippling and the American backgammon community rallied to his aid in the form of a defence fund.

Paul Magriel headed a list of expert defence witnesses, his testimony lasted for two hours and many believe that due to his academic and backgammon credentials his testimony was pivotal.

The case was finally heard in Feb 1982. Judge Stephen Walker's verdict in the State of Oregon vs Theodore Barr was a welcome one for Ted. The judge declared that **Backgammon is not a game of chance but a game of skill**, and Ted was found not guilty of promoting gambling, a landmark victory for backgammon and common sense. The judge, almost apologetically, had to find Ted guilty of bookmaking. He fined him \$150 and immediately suspended it.

I hope you and Bibafax readers found the story interesting

MC: Yes, very interesting. Now we have seen it in print, backgammon is a game of skill. Mind you, Arthur, luck still plays an enormous part in it; after all, I can always beat the skilled players but I cannot beat the lucky ones!

Regular contributor, **Cedric Lytton** writes: Regarding "How Good Is Your Backgammon" in Bibafax 57. I also played White's 63 as 18/9. I think Magriel had four things in mind:

- 1 This move safties one blot
- 2 It brings up a builder for his 4-point should miss it as expected
- 3 The alternative 13/4 (the obvious and first thing I considered) would leave Dobrich a double shot from his mid-point (as well as fives to hit Magriel's back man to gain tempo), and more importantly,
- 4 leaving Dobrich in complete control of Magriel's outer board with a safe haven for his back runner should he roll a six.

MC: Good points. I wonder if Paul Magriel will answer one day? I know he reads the Bibafax.

The next letter (full of questions) is from **Brian Busfield**: I hope you won't mind if I make some queries and suggestions.

MC: Of course not, Brian. I shall answer them in turn.

1. PRIZE FUND; I'm surprised there were so few entrants - perhaps because the roll-over condition didn't

appeal. Wouldn't it be better to pay out for the best performance, sharing if more than one player reaches the same level? Or even split it as in the other pools?

MC: The Prize Fund Brian refers to was the first one in Brighton. It is a 'Winner-Takes-All' fund in which . . . the winner takes all! Unfortunately the winner (Brian) wasn't in the fund (which must have been a major factor when asking this question!) and therefore it was rolled over to the next tournament, The Jarvis Trophy.

I do agree, the low entry was due to the fact it was a 'Winner-Takes-All' format (this was the reason Brian

gave when not entering) but to make in into another pool would make it just another pool - what would be the point of that? The idea of W-T-A is to see how much will be in the pool when it is eventually won. After Brighton it stood at £345.

2. POOLS; several players have suggested that the figures for each pool should be posted up - and the split specified. Ideally with the names of all those entered in each pool so that everyone can see their exact position.

MC: Brian attends so few tournaments he doesn't know it, but we do do as he suggests. On the draw-sheet (knockouts) and on the slats (Swiss)

we always write what pool a person is in using (loosely) Roman numerals: L = £50, M=£25, X=£10 and V=£5.

We have been doing this for some time now following a suggestion from Graham Britain. In fact, if we had not recorded the pools in this manner during the BB it would not have been possible to identify in which pool a player was in after the laptop was stolen! The split is posted on a flip chart (not available at Brighton and therefore missing) for all to see.

3. PRE-PAID CONSOLATION; is this returnable? Presumably if one does not pre-pay one can pay at the appropriate time. I have pre-paid on



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several occasions and not been in the consolation. I have never been repaid the pre-paid entry fee. Is this correct?

MC: If you have not been paid a refund then I apologise, you should have been. As far as I am aware it is always paid out - but, if you say you weren't then I shall accept that and pay you next time I see you. One does not have to prepay, but, if you enter via the Progressive side then you shall pay an amount equal to the round in which you enter. Also, taking prepayment is easier than taking it as and when players enter the Consolation.

4. THE DRAW; when calling the draw you should demand absolute silence, not only as a courtesy to yourself but also to make it more efficient for everyone's sake.

MC: I did demand absolute silence in Brighton . . . several times! I am taking steps to deal with the matter.

5. THE AUCTION; would it not be a good idea to give the players in the individual auction the right to buy a percentage of themselves from whoever bought them? Say 30%. And also to post the figures and names involved so that the organisers do not have to be pestered.

MC: Often a player or group of players are purchased by two or more buyers and therefore to impose a mandatory 'buy-back' would erode each buyers share. I do advise players that they have the right to buy-back at the purchaser's discretion.

6. BRIGHTON; is obviously the favourite venue - why not try to have two tournaments a year there instead of one? Or three!

MC: What a great idea! As I am paid by Hilton for the number of 'bed-nights' sold it'd be a good earner for me. I could move all the tourneys there and then retire on the proceeds . . . but, there are a few reasons why I can't do that:

The venue is so far south that any further and it'd be rather wet. This means that it is a long way

from a lot of players who live north of London. I hold one in Brighton each year so that players living on the south coast and in the south east have a 'local' tournament.

Getting a seaside hotel to host a tournament in mid-January is fairly easy - any other time it is nigh impossible, unless of course members don't mind paying the going rate for their accommodation.

Finally I would like to take the opportunity to say that I appreciate how well you run the tournaments and to thank you for all your efforts. When things are run well minor imperfections seem greater.

MC: I don't like any imperfections no matter how small; but, you can't please everyone.

Uldis Lapikens sent in the following newspaper clipping from the Herts Advertiser dated 13 December 2001. Apparently some hairdresser from Harpenden is Britain's top backgammon player; and I have never heard of him!

Cream of the Crop

Hairdresser Graham Brock has just become Britain's top backgammon player.

He won the national championships by beating Peter Savage from Doncaster by 17 games to 14. Graham, aged 48, of The close, Harpenden, runs Sunshine Hairdressers in French Row, St Albans, and the Village Barbers in the High Street.

He has been playing backgammon since he was 15 and said: "It used to be a popular pastime with hair dressers because each game only lasts around nine minutes and people could play between customers."

Graham played his way through scores of games in local, area and regional rounds of the competition before reaching the national finals, organised by Mensa, in Birmingham. But before the big day he took his wife, Michelle, for a week's holiday

in Greece.

He said: "The Greeks are fanatical players so it's easy to get a game, but they were a little surprised to come up against an Englishman who could give them a tough game."



MC: No wonder he won, he is one of a pair of Siamese twins, quite obviously joined at the elbow. Mind you, his brother doesn't seem too interested I must admit.

Brendan Burgess has made an interesting observation regarding the Mind Sports Olympiad: Thanks for the latest Bibafax. Marvelous write up on the Olympiad. I have written a computer program to try to understand who gets what medals. It came up with the following approximation to the rules:

It seems to be something like this.

If you win a lot of matches and expect a gold medal, you will get nothing.

If you win a few matches and expect nothing, all of a sudden you will get a bronze medal.

If you drop out early, you will get a gold medal!

What a great program, I am sure it'll prove invaluable for all entrants to the MSO backgammon. All you need to do now is write a program that explains the clock rules and timings for the Irish Open!

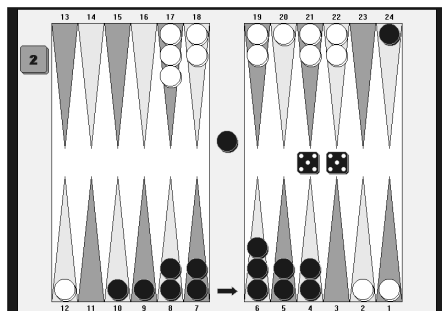
Competition 2001 No4. 57.01-06. Marks and Comments

By Richard Granville

In Bibafax 57, all BIBA members were invited to enter the final 2001 competition, comprising 6 problems. This article contains the competitors' answers, together with selected comments.

Marks have been awarded primarily according to the number of votes. In some cases, they are also influenced by the Jellyfish equities, as well as my own view.

Problem 57.1



11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 55

White has just hit loose on his 5-point and would have had reasonable prospects if Black had stayed off or entered inconveniently. Instead, Black has rolled his best reply of 5-5. Clearly Black must enter and hit with his first five, but after this there are many options for his remaining three fives.

Don Hatt: 25/20 20/15 7/2* 7/2. After 25/20 my first impulse is to make the 3-point and play 8/3 twice then 9/4. However, two checkers on the bar are better than one and with two other blots available it must be an advantage and so I hit and cover on the 2-point then bring a checker closer to White's blot on the 12-point.

In fact the whole panel made the 2-point with the next two fives, so the problem boils down to how to play the fourth five. Agreeing with Don:

Rodney Lighton: 25/20* 20/15 7/2(2)*. We could go for a full blitz with 25/20* 7/2(2)* 6/1*, but return hits on the 1-point are very threaten-

ing in view of White's good board and broken prime. It looks better to just put two checkers up and try to pick up the blot on the 12-point, hoping to escape our back checker while White is still on the bar.

Two other competitors preferred to go for the full blitz:

Cedric Lytton: I play 25/20* 7/2* (2) 6/1, going for the jugular, blitzing, denying White most of his anchoring chances and with good gammon prospects. I have sevens, eights and nines to cover my ace point next time. If hit back I anchor with ones or fives or 4-2. Having given away the cube, I must play aggressively.

The alternative plan of advancing the 5-point prime without hitting, e.g. 25/20*/15 8/3(2), leaves White 20 numbers to anchor and go to work on Black's back man. Similarly, 25/20* 8/3(2) 7/2* (or 6/1*) leaves the same 20 numbers to hit or to anchor. The halfway house 25/20* 20/15 7/2*(2) looks safe, threatens to hit 15/12 and would be my second choice, but it breaks up the 5-prime which might tell if White were to anchor.

I don't quite understand the final comment – 7/2 7/2 itself breaks up the 5-prime. In any case, the prime is of only secondary importance if you put two men on the bar against a 4-point board.*

Simon Macbeth: 25/20* 7/2*(2) 6/1*. Blitz! What else? There is no alternative to Bar/20* 7/2*(2), so the only problem lies in the 4th move. Here the dynamic 6/1*, going for gammon or even backgammon and preventing any easy anchor on the ace point, is surely better than any of the passive alternatives, such as 20/15 or 10/5, both of which make the return joker 3-3 far more dangerous. Also, even if White anchors with 1-1, by keeping a blot on the 20-point we have a chance to make the advanced anchor and stay ahead in the game.

Two other competitors were quite

tempted to hit on the 1-point, but eventually decided against it. Agreeing with Don and Rodney:

Richard Biddle: Our first five brings us in off the bar. Then, without question a hit and cover from the 7-point. Followed by a hot rush of blood which might lead us to fully blitz with 6/1*, therefore putting three men on the bar. This would really increase our gammon chances, but even without that third man on the bar, we are still favourites to win with a gammon. I prefer 20/15 to 10/5 as threes are duplicated for White and it may allow us to pick up the loose blot with a three, next move or make the 10 or 9-points with a five or six. A four allows us to move the back man for escape, a one allows us to make the 9-point. Correct move: 25/20* 20/15 7/2* 7/2

Proposing a third choice for the fourth five:

Bob Young: 25/20* 10/5 7/2* 7/2. White's dream of a full prime has just exploded, and now he will have to go into survival mode. Putting a second checker in the air 7/2*(2) looks certain. 6/1* used to be my candidate for the fourth five to prevent White anchoring, but, with no immediate direct covering numbers, and any one by White being a possible pivotal roll, my more cautious self plays 10/5, bringing in more fire power. The front checker in White's home board will easily escape, the only headache being to extricate the rear checker, which this roll does nothing to aid. So, two on the bar, two builders for the 1-point, four for the 3-point, and hope White dances, and Black rolls 4-4 to wrap everything up! Is life always this good?

There were two other votes for Bob's choice. Firstly this rather unhelpful comment:

Brian Busfield: 25/20* 7/2(2) 10/5. Hitting on the 1 point is best if you don't get hit back.

Brian is right about the drawbacks of 6/1*, but doesn't analyse which of 20/15 and 10/5 is better. Offering more justification:

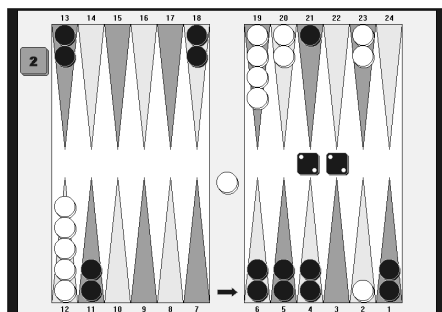
Peter Bennet: 25/20* 10/5 7/2(2)*. After entering 25/20* I think Black should hit twice with 7/2(2)*. This wins more gammons and gives Black more time to extricate the man on the 24-point. Moving 10/5 with the last five puts an extra builder in range to prepare for the closeout.

This may be true, but Jellyfish rates this move significantly worse than both of the main alternatives. Perhaps this is the reason:

Julian Hayward: Black needs time to hop his last man out, and can best do this by keeping White in the air. Although it doesn't make the points in order, 25/20* 20/15 7/2*(2) puts two in the air and leaves three builders ready to jump on the 3-point next time unless White flukes back with 3-3. In addition, it threatens to put a fourth man back and diversifies well (four to run the back man, 3,5,6 to make the three-point, 1,2,3 to re-make the bar point). Making the 3-point now gives White more chance to anchor, after which he'll be in relatively good shape.

I think that this diversification is quite important. Bob's last comment (above) about 4-4 being good for Black may have been made in jest, but playing 10/5 places Black in a position where he may need several fours to settle the game. The majority choice of 20/15 gives Black virtually no bad rolls next time.

Problem 57.2



11 point match
White 0 Black 4
Black to play 22

I'll start the discussion by presenting the one offbeat selection:

Cedric Lytton: I play 18/14(2). I am ahead 137-152 in the race before the roll, and if White gets a holding game, his timing will be better - this rules out extending my prime with 11/7(2). I am aiming to escape my back man, ideally with sevens, eights or tens, and then bring my men home making use of my excellent outer-board coverage. My back man is fairly safe as White's twos are duplicated.

I don't have enough ammunition near enough to try a blitz with 11/9(2) 4/2*(2) or even 6/2*(2). Hitting and covering 18/16(2) 4/2*(2) to gain time to safety the back man would shorten my prime and still leave White with a partial holding game, while 18/14 instead: of 18/16(2) looks too loose.

I must say that this seems rather a curious analysis. Twenty years ago, when there was more emphasis on priming rather than blitzing, 11/7 11/7 would have attracted significant support, but 18/14 18/14 looks like a rather aimless running move. This comment is more to the point:

Peter Bennet: 11/9(2) 4/2(2)*. The best non-blitzing play is probably 11/7(2). There is no point in moving off White's bar-point, which communicates with Black's back man and puts pressure on White's mid-point.

However I prefer blitzing with 4/2(2)* and then 11/9(2) bringing two more builders to bear on the open points. As in the previous problem putting two on the bar buys Black time to start clearing points as well as notching up extra gammon wins.

Or more concisely:

Brian Busfield: 11/9(2) 4/2*(2). Must bring up builders for possible blitz.

I think Brian regards 4/2 4/2 as sufficiently obvious not to require discussion and just comments on the other two twos. There are of course*

other ways to play them:

Simon Macbeth: 13/9 4/2*(2). Blitz again - if it works we're 8-0 up and we can't afford to let White anchor given that we have so many stripped points. 13/9 is the logical follow-up - if you're going to blitz, do it properly by bringing in diversified builders. Doing this means that even if White comes in with a blot next roll, we hit back with 5's, 6's, 7's and 8's, all of our most common numbers. Slightly less good is 4/2*(2) 11/7 as it takes away some of those common numbers and gives us only 2 builders in our outfield. Other moves such as 4/2*(2) 11/9(2), or even worse 4/2*(2) 18/16(2) ignore the principle of diversification - faint heart never won fair game!

Well reasoned, and Jellyfish's first choice. I still wonder whether 11/9 11/9 is a little better, since it brings two direct builders to bear on the 3-point, and retaining points is insurance against a possible 3-3 or 4-4 reply. Actually, the difference in equity is only .001, so the arguments between the two moves are presumably finely balanced. Unfortunately for Simon, nobody else voted for this move, so I can't give it more than 4 marks.

Two competitors plumped for a third option:

Bob Young: 11/7 4/2* 4/2. Putting a second checker in the air, with a four point home board must be right, so 4/2*(2). Bring in more men to keep White from anchoring is now the next plan, so, with only the 11-point nearby, the men need to come from there. 11/9(2) creates 28 hitting rolls, whereas 11/7 creates 31. So the numbers have it, go for maximum cover.

Richard Biddle: Making the 7-point forgoes the chance to put a second man on the bar, which is preferable, because it's downright annoying for your opponent, more than anything else. OK, so we need to bring down a builder and I really cannot choose between 13/9 and 11/7. Holding onto the mid-point will pay off later so I go for 11/7 4/2* 4/2.

Bob and Richard each consider one of the main alternatives before rejecting it, but it should be noted that Jellyfish places 11/7 well below the other two moves. Although it the short term it could provide more hitting rolls, in the long term the man may be too far forward since it cannot productively move 5 or 6.

For the majority:

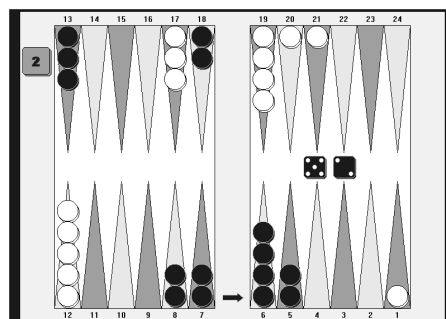
Rodney Lighton: 11/9 11/9 4/2(2)*. The main options seem to be make the bar point or switch points to put two checkers on the bar. Making the bar point gives a nice 4 point prime, but White is likely to enter quickly and then we have problems getting the rest of the checkers round without being hit. I prefer the point switching play as it is likely to give us a couple of rolls to get our back checkers moving.

Julian Hayward: Again, putting two in the air is Black's best plan. His chances in a drawn-out strategic game are relatively poor, with the ace-point covered, no anchor, and an inflexible position. He wants to run home with as little contact as possible and this is easiest if White is struggling to come off the bar. Ideally he'd make points as well, so I play 11/9 11/9 4/2*(2), leaving White no immediate returns and fair chances to make the bar point, which will be very useful as he brings more men round.

Don Hatt: 11/9 11/9 4/2* 4/2. Although I hate to abandon the 4-point, my preference is to put two checkers on the bar so that Black's checkers that are well spaced out will have a

chance to run home and so I play the 4/2 twice. Making the 9-point gives Black a resting place for any fleeing back checkers and are within striking distance of the home board.

Problem 57.3



11 point match
White 4 Black 4
Black to play 52

One competitor clearly wonders why I set this problem:

Brian Busfield: 18/13 18/16. Is there an alternative?

Slightly more helpfully:

Rodney Lighton: 18/13 18/16. The race is slightly in our favour, White has two blots in the inner board, now seems to be the right time to run from the 18-point.

Expanding on the above reason:

Simon Macbeth: 18/13 18/16. Run while White has two blots in his home board. We are ahead in the race, so holding the 18 point is more of a hindrance than a help and our problem is that White has plenty of time to build his board and wait for us to break the 18 point on his terms. Better

to act now and put him to an immediate decision should he roll a 4. The other plays I would consider are 13/8 13/11 and 13/8 6/4: both with the idea of extending the prime and keeping the holding game in reserve if it goes wrong. On the other hand, stripping or abandoning the mid-point seems wrong when we have such bad timing for a holding game. Keep it simple - run!

I think that many of us opt for simplicity when an attractive choice presents itself. It is clear that running while White has blots in his home board cannot be bad, but it is generally worth looking for alternatives.

Don Hatt: 13/8 6/4. Black could do with making the 4-point and to slot this now while White has 2 blots in his home board is a good idea, after which 13/8 gives me another checker to cover. The 2-checkers on the 18-point will have to wait for a better chance to run.

Slotting the 4-point is another way to take advantage of White's home board blots. Providing even more justification:

Julian Hayward: There's quite a long way to go in this game, and although Black has a bit of a racing lead he also has a good anchor and a stronger home board. He can afford to try to strengthen his position before giving up the anchor to run. 13/8 6/4 threatens White's weakness directly - White must hit and hope not to end up with a second man back or end up stuck behind a 5-prime. Running off the bar point is pretty good for Black



when things go well, but when they don't the lack of an anchor makes life more difficult.

Jellyfish likes 13/8 6/4 too, but nobody else voted for it, so once again the highest equity move gets only four marks. There were no votes at all for Jellyfish's second choice, although like Simon above, the following competitor considers it:

Peter Bennet: 18/13 18/16. Black could play safe with 13/6 but he should take advantage of White's home board blots and find something better. Hitting loose with 13/11 6/1* is unnecessary because Black is winning anyway. Possibilities are 13/8 6/4, 13/8 13/11 or 18/13 18/16. Black's lead in the race calls for disengagement so I would play 18/13 18/16.

The remaining competitors come to the same conclusion:

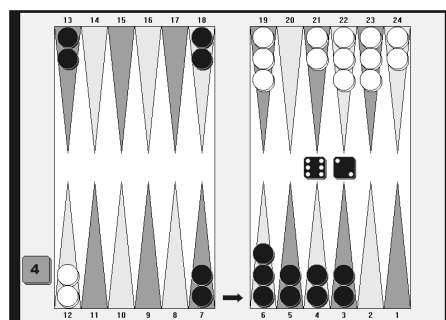
Cedric Lytton: 18/13 18/16. I am leading the race 139-146, and plan to win it while containing White's back man, my own back man helping to cover my outer board should White play 24/15 or 24/16. White is not a favourite to hit me, and if he does I have 2 return shots. This is a good time to clear White's bar point, while he has no board and before he makes his started home-board points, after which a hit might be lethal. From this point of view, other plays like 13/8 13/11 and 6/1* 13/11 are too slow and still leave White ones to hit.

Bob Young: 18/13 18/16. Already off to a lead in the race, and a prime developing, plus rear anchor well advanced. Black doesn't need to leave a blot 13/6, but this is too inflexible a position, and White will have a stronger home after the next roll, so do we hit with the five? I think not. A return hit will both wipe out the race lead, and risk Black facing an improving home board. Running from the rear to safety one checker, and advancing the remaining piece to leave the minimum shots looks a good time to do it. White has only nine rolls that hit and cover one blot (only 4-4 hits and covers both), and if

not hit, Black is in very good shape.

Richard Biddle: Black really wants to clear his men and turn this into a contrived race. White offers no threat in the home board so time for Black to run with the back men, if hit, the onus is on White to cover the blots. Running with 18/11 leaves 23 shots, 18/16 18/13 leaves 14 shots. Correct move: 18/16 18/13

Problem 57.4



11 point match
White 4 Black 4
Black to play 62

One competitor correctly noticed that this was a continuation of the previous game:

Cedric Lytton: 7/1 7/5. My team captain, not having done what he was told in 57.03, now faces a White holding game which, however, is on the point of collapse. Behind in the race now, my plan is to maximise my hitting chances. When White rolls one six, I hit with any 1 or any 6 or with 2-2, 3-3 or 4-2 (24 numbers) and cover on my ace point with 9 of these: 6-6, 6-5, 6-4, 5-1 or 4-1. And of the remaining 15, I only get hit back about 1/3 of the time and, if missed, can cash with a redouble.

The similarly-minded play 7/1 6/4 also hits with ones or sixes, and covers with 6-6, 3-3, 1-1, 6-3, 6-1, 3-1 (9 again), but is slightly looser as White can hit back with 5-2 and hit twice with 6-1. The super-safe 13/7 13/11 leaves only sixes to hit (17 numbers).

Cedric is also correct in identifying the two main alternatives, but perhaps doesn't sufficiently consider their merits. In fact there is a major reason for choosing 7/1 6/4:

Rodney Lighton: 7/1 6/4. We are

miles behind in the race, so need a hit. The best way of achieving this would appear to be to keep the mid- and 18-points. 7/1 6/4 preserves a spare six so looks better than 7/1 7/5.

More succinctly:

Brian Busfield: 7/1 6/4. Saving a six.

Jellyfish rates this only .003 better than 7/1 7/5, so Cedric's arguments in favour of the latter move are clearly sound. But what about running from the mid-point:

Peter Bennet: 13/7 13/11. My first instinct was to play 13/7 13/11 to maintain the strongest possible front position ready to contain an enemy checker.

However keeping the mid-point with 7/1 7/5 or 7/1 6/4 results in a double shot (24 shots) on most of White's sixes. Also 9 of these 24 hits also cover Black's home board blot. I therefore decided on 7/1 7/5 to reduce the gammon danger if I am hit back. However, there are a lot of arguments against this play:

1. White blots on only 8 numbers instead of 10 as he cannot play 61
2. Black's 5-prime reduces to a 4-prime
3. Black's blot in board may still be there when he hits White
4. Black's future structure will be weakened – he will probably make his one point before the 2-point
5. If Black does hit a shot, he may be leaving several blots open and could get gammoned.
6. Black will not be able to hold the mid-point for long anyway

Taking all these into account, I have reverted to my original move of 13/7 13/11. With this play if Black does hit a shot, now or later, it will be an almost certain winner.

Peter's reasons for not retaining the mid-point are reasonable as far as they go, but there is a lot of difference between getting 24 shots or 17 shots next roll. Jellyfish places this .025 behind the popular choice, but per-

haps a rollout might yield a difference conclusion (Michael?). The next competitor knows his priorities:

Richard Biddle: Black has to stay with both blocks and move the two men in from his bar-point. Way behind in the race, Black needs all the contact he can get. You could argue that 13/11 13/7 will maintain Black's home board, but this is not the issue. Make the hit first then worry about the home board. Correct move: 7/1 6/4

Providing a more extensive analysis but coming to the same conclusion:

Bob Young: 7/1 6/4. Seriously behind in the race, Black won't win unless he hits White. So, running a checker from the back is suicidal. All White's sixes then play good, whereas with the exception of 6-1 and 6-6 (which only delay the problem), all sixes now play bad for White. Running a six from the midpoint, and leaving a blot there, effectively operating a phantom point could work, but gives White another route to victory, hitting the blot and Black dancing on the five point White home board. Running both from the midpoint will leave 17 shots for Black if White has to run with any six. The third option is to keep outfield points, and play 7/1 6/4. This keeps another six if needed still to play from the 7-point, (whereas 7/1 7/5 doesn't), plus a 4 1/2 point board, with two builders to cover. 24 rolls then hit if White runs with a six, of which 8 rolls hit and cover the 1-point, and then Black is in very good shape. White's home board may well have started to collapse by the time White runs, and a return hit from the bar for White will be by no means a certain win. The cube on 4, with gammon chances on both sides for the match suggests keeping maximum contact, so keep both anchors.

The remaining competitors agree:

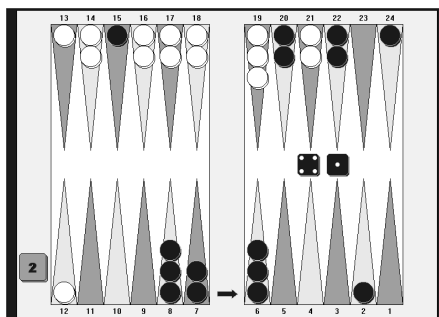
Simon Macbeth: 7/1 6/4. Best of a bad lot. While it's horrible to give up the bar point and leave two blots, we have no choice at this score holding a 4 cube. We must maximise our chances of hitting White when he rolls a 6, so vacating the midpoint is

out and we have to leave ourselves a spare 6 in case White does not blot this roll, so 7/1 7/5 is also out. I don't like it, but there's no choice.

Julian Hayward: It looks obvious - the race is lost, Black must hit or die. He must keep a potential double shot threat against White, and he mustn't allow White to hit him (his hitting chances coming off the bar against a 5-point board are miniscule), so he has only two real candidates (7/1 6/4 and 7/1 7/3). I go for 7/1 6/4 as it allows him to hang back if White rolls small and Black gets another 6 next time.

Don Hatt: 7/1 6/4. Far behind in the race Black needs contact and not try to race this one. Keeping the 18-point and 13-point probably gives him the best chance especially if White throws 61 and he can possibly hold those positions for a couple of throws.

Problem 57.5



11 point match
White 8 Black 8
Black to play 41

This time I'll start with the most extensive analysis:

Bob Young: 15/11 6/5. Not Black's best roll, but it's difficult to even see what Black may have chosen anyway. As a gammon would be match, to play for a back game that could easily go wrong is a desperate measure that need not be engineered as yet. A holding game, leaving the back five checkers, and moving the front blot over the attacking White pieces with the four, and then slot the 5-point seems a good compromise. It will be several rolls before White may have to leave a shot, by then Black will have used his ten checkers to good effect as a reasonable prime. If White

is fortunate to point on the rear blot, re entry via the 3- or 5-point should at least ensure that the game is not a gammon and match. On the extensive rollout that I did (two of them, then the doorbell rang, so that was the end of that), sixes seemed to be the Achilles heel of White's safe bearing in and off. So develop a home board, and wait and see. Perhaps just one more mince pie as well.

I think Bob answered these problems just after Christmas. He makes a good point about the difference between a back game and a holding game. I regard the 3-5 point combination as a holding game since Black is aiming to get a shot before White starts bearing off. So one should question the following terminology:

Cedric Lytton: 15/11 6/5. I am playing a well-timed backgame, but do not want to have my man on White's 10-point hit, to re-enter with a six and have to play it in my board as White has all my sixes blocked in his board. Not 24/23 15/11 when my ones and threes are duplicated between starting my 5-point and moving the back man which I need to build my board.

If Black was really playing a backgame he would not mind being hit. So I presume that our next competitor believes that he is playing a holding game:

Brian Busfield: 15/11 6/5. Don't want another man back. Do want to start the five point.

Our next two competitors clearly don't mind going into a full backgame:

Richard Biddle: Nothing leads to more heated debate in a chouette than how to play a backgame. It is all about keeping your nerve and most people haven't got it. The argument would revolve around whether you should remove the threat of being hit on the 15-point or allow yourself to be hit with a view of making the 1-point. The chickens will scream that if hit, Black only has a five to escape from White's prime. However, Mr Backgame Man will be salivat-

ing at the prospect of holding White's 1, 3 & 5-point. Love is blind to all reason and we've got the cube to kill the game. Got to hope I'm not the only backgame addict. Correct move: 8/4 6/5

Simon Macbeth: 8/4 6/5. Cor! What a mess! We urgently need to make a board and hope that our reasonably well-timed backgame bears fruit. We don't mind the blot on the 15-point being hit as this will only improve our timing, but White is bearing in now and we are likely to be presented with shot opportunities soon. It is therefore imperative that we give ourselves maximum opportunities to contain him if he is hit. Any other move such as shuffling the man on the 24 point or running with the blot on the 15 point seems to me to ignore the urgency of the matter.

As can be seen from the equity table, Jellyfish disagrees. Playing 8/4 6/5 seems to ignore Bob's comment about reducing the chances of being gammoned. Also, leaving two home board blots allows White to play aggressively and attack both Black blots. Black might end up with several more men in White's home board, but still only the 3- and 5-points.

The next competitor offers a third option:

Rodney Lighton: 24/20 6/5. The hardest problem of the set. The alternatives with the four seem to be 24/20, 15/11, 8/4 or 6/2. 15/11 gets the checker safe and leaves us to wait for a shot from White's 3 or 5 point, but our board may be in some disarray before that happens. 8/4 or 6/2 leave the blot on the 15-point, if it is hit our timing improves, so no great disaster. However, I prefer 24/20 which gives a spare on the 20-point for attacking or running. With the one I play 6/5 to start the next inner board point. I would not be surprised to be totally wrong on this one!

Rodney, you're not totally wrong, but your priorities seem to be wrong. The next competitor explains why:

Peter Bennet: 15/11 6/5. Black

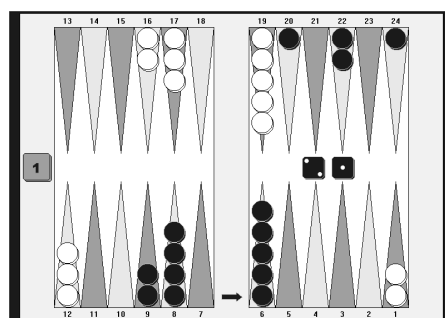
would like to move up to the 20-point with the 4. He needs to be able to free the spare man to preserve his fragile timing. However, this would mean leaving the blot on the 15-point. If this is hit, both Black's gammon danger and his timing seriously deteriorate unless he can spring a man immediately. I therefore think Black should play 15/11 6/5 and hope for another 4 soon.

I was hoping that after choosing 15/11 for the four, there might be some analysis of how to play the one, since Jellyfish slightly prefers 11/10 and 8/7 to 6/5. However, all the competitors playing 15/11 also choose 6/5. The remaining comments:

Julian Hayward: Black doesn't need more men back, it's time to start building a board ready for shots to come in a few moves. The man on 15 is a liability and should just get out of harm's way. Black can then set about making his 5-point, the most important now that his back position is secure. 15/11 6/5.

Don Hatt: 15/11 6/5. Black needs to bring his checker on the 15-point to safety with 15/11 and try to make a better home board while waiting for a hit. 6/5 slots another point in his home board to meet this requirement.

Problem 57.6



11 point match
White 8 Black 8
Black to play 21

Which point should Black be making in this position?

Rodney Lighton: 22/20 22/21. The alternatives are to make our bar point or White's 5-point. The opponent's 5-point is better than our bar point, although we already have the 3-point

anchor, especially as making the bar point loses the 8-point. With the one play 22/21, which gives sixes to escape or the threat to make the 21-point.

Preferring to make the other point:

Cedric Lytton: 9/7 8/7. This leaves 5 indirect shots but prevents White escaping with 6-6 or 6-5, converts the broken prime into a solid 3-prime with more long-term prospects and still leaves 3 builders for my 5-point. I have plenty of chances to make my slotted golden point later, unless White hits and covers (9 numbers).

If I seize my golden point at once with 22/20 22/21, White can escape one man relatively easily to his big safety zone in the outer boards, and may then be able to escape the other before I can complete and extend my prime. Given a choice of two good things, I prefer to do the most difficult one first.

Another plan is to slot White's bar point and hope for some shots. The difficulty is what to do with the one. 24/23 makes some sixes very awkward, while after 22/21 20/18 White could hit and cover several times and considerably improve his board.

Although making the bar point is useful, it must surely be lower priority in this position than making the golden point. Agreeing with Rodney's choice of one:

Don Hatt: 22/20 22/21. A more advanced anchor for Black with 22/20 and try to escape one of the other back checkers. Neither player has a home board but as Black is 15 behind in the race so he needs to get his back checkers in a position to move out if not making point in his home board.

The next competitor nearly chose the same move but chose a quite similar one:

Julian Hayward: Black needs to settle in for a long struggle. He can grab a good anchor and some outfield influence with 22/20. Of the aces, both slots are bad because whenever White

hits, it gives him the tempo to run his back men out to safety. 24/23 and 22/21 look fairly even - I go for 22/20 24/23 as it makes White's position more awkward should he try attacking the deeper points in the near future.

There was a sizeable minority in favour of a more aggressive move:

Brian Busfield: 22/20 6/5. Make and start the two best points.

Simon Macbeth: 22/20 6/5. 22/20 is almost mandatory; making the Golden Anchor, and preventing any effective White prime. The difficulty is with the one, and here I prefer the dynamic 6/5 to any passive play with the back checkers. This game might get quite messy, and if it does I want to be fighting for every important point on my home board rather than manoeuvring back checkers to run. It is true that we risk falling much further behind in the race with this play, but against that we need to start building our board and taking risks while White has no board himself.

Richard Biddle: Making White's five-point builds more foundation to Backgammon strategy than Black's bar-point. Now that we have the second most valuable point on the board, time to slot onto the most valuable, the Black's 5-point. Slotting the 7-point allows White the chance of a hit and run, 22/21 doesn't really add anything special to the position. Holding both 5-points, in most cases, prevents the cube being offered. Correct move: 22/20 6/5

Jellyfish is not very keen on this slotting play, perhaps because White might be able to attack more than one of Black's blots, but it is clearly a reasonable move.

The remaining competitors chose the more conservative play:

Bob Young: 22/20 22/21. Making the bar point and a small prime is fine, but does nothing to fight for the White 5-point, which the game will inevitably hinge around. So, make the

5-point with the two, and think about the one. Slotting the 5-point or bar point is reasonable, but I prefer to hit there if White should step into these points with a blot, rather than slotting and hoping White misses the checker. It's still an even game with the White 5-point made, so just keep the rear checker out of harms way and bring up the other checker 22/21. It's no more under the gun in the new position than where it was, whereas 24/23 brings extra good rolls for White.

Peter Bennet: 22/20 22/21. Making his bar with 9/7 8/7 looks nice but gives White too many good numbers to either hit and make his 5-point or hit Black's 9-point blot. Locking up the advanced anchor with 22/20 therefore seems necessary. With the 1, Black should not be tempted to slot 6/5. Although he has 4 men back he only trails by 6 pips after the roll and therefore should not take unnecessary risks. I think he should play 22/21 preparing to free this man (24/23 takes away some playable 6's).

Although some of the problems attracted large majority votes, nobody managed to find all six and only two competitors answered five problems in line with the others. Congratulations to Don Hatt who found a more popular minority choice than Rodney Lighton on problem 5. Once again, I would like to thank all the competitors for taking the time and trouble to enter the competition.

Nine competitors was an improvement on last time, but entries are still below 2000 levels. Any chance of some new or returning entrants for the next competition?

Several of the competitors produced material worthy of the "best presentation" prize, but after due consideration I have awarded this to Julian Hayward. So, who has won the big prize, the £50 for the top score

of the year? Well, before this final competition it was between Richard Biddle, Don Hatt and Peter Bennet as the most likely with Bob Young and Brian Busfield.

In the end, despite the substitution of 54 points for his worst of 47, Don Hatt had to settle for 2nd place; and Peter Bennet's substitution of 48 points for 41 was just too few to beat Don. The winner of the fifty quid without a substitution was Richard Biddle with great scores of 54, 51 & 60, with a total 165 points, just two clear of Don Hatt..

(see tables on next page)

Jellyfish equities (level 7)			
57.1:	1	0.915	25/20* 20/15 7/2*(2)
	2	0.869	25/20* 7/2*(2) 6/1*
	3	0.816	25/20* 20/15 8/3(2)
	4	0.814	25/20* 10/5 7/2*(2)
57.2:	1	0.767	13/9 4/2*(2)
	2	0.766	11/9(2) 4/2*(2)
	3	0.733	11/7 4/2*(2)
	4	0.712	18/16(2) 4/2*(2)
	5	0.705	18/16 11/9 4/2*(2)
	> 15	0.550	18/14(2)
57.3:	1	0.438	13/8 6/4
	2	0.434	13/8 13/11
	3	0.407	18/13 18/16
	4	0.406	6/1* 13/11
	5	0.401	13/6
57.4:	1	-0.319	7/1 6/4
	2	-0.322	7/1 7/5
	3	-0.344	13/7 13/11
	4	-0.350	7/1 3/1
57.5:	1	-0.590	15/10
	2	-0.593	15/11 8/7
	3	-0.599	15/11 6/5
	4	-0.611	15/11 24/23
	5	-0.613	15/11 7/6
	6	-0.625	24/20 8/7
	7	-0.638	6/2 8/7
	8	-0.641	8/4 24/23
	9	-0.641	24/20 7/6
	10	-0.642	24/20 6/5
	> 17	-0.659	8/4 6/5
57.6:	1	-0.120	22/20 22/21
	2	-0.123	22/20 24/23
	3	-0.170	22/20 6/5
	4	-0.195	22/20 8/7
	5	-0.216	22/20 9/8
	6	-0.228	9/7 8/7

So, as we say good-bye to the 2001 competitions I'd like to say congratulations to our worthy winner, Richard Biddle and hard luck to Don Hatt & Peter Bennet.

I'd also like to thank all the competitors that took part and wish them all better luck in the next series.

I would appreciate receiving any comments readers have on the articles (constructive criticism, please). Send comments to Biba HQ via the post or email: comps@backgammon-biba.co.uk

Well, that's 2001 out of the way, now for the new, 2002 series. See the bottom of this page for the first six of 2002.

Competition 2001 Totals				
best 3 out 4 scores where appropriate				Total
Richard Biddle	54	51	60	165
Don Hatt	60	49	54	163
Brian Busfield	55	53	53	161
Peter Bennet	46	55	48	149
Bob Young	49	51	45	145
Julian Hayward	51	49		100
Rodney Lighton	42	53		95
Connor Dickinson	44	48		92
Kevin Carter	33	39		72
Jeff Barber	49			49
Michael Howard	47			47
Peter Wilson	46			46
Martin Hemming	40			40
Simon Macbeth	40			40
Kevin Berry	38			38
Cedric Lytton	34			34

No.	move	score
57.1	25/20* 20/15 7/2*(2)	10
	25/20* 10/5 7/2*(2)	6
	25/20* 7/2*(2) 6/1*	5
57.2	11/(2) 4/2*(2)	10
	11/7 4/2*(2)	5
	13/9 4/2*(2)	4
	18/14(2)	2
57.3	18/13 18/16	10
	13/8 6/4	4
57.4	7/1 6/4	10
	7/1 7/5	3
	13/7 13/11	2
57.5	15/11 6/5	10
	8/4 6/5	4
	24/20 6/5	3
57.6	22/20 22/21	10
	22/20 6/5	7
	22/20 24/23	5
	9/7 8/7	4

Panellist	57.1	57.2	57.3	57.4	57.5	57.6	Pts
Don Hatt	25/20* 20/15 7/2*(2)	11/9(2) 4/2*(2)	13/8 6/4	7/1 6/4	15/11 6/5	22/20 22/21	54
Brian Busfield	25/20* 10/5 7/2*(2)	11/9(2) 4/2*(2)	18/13 18/16	7/1 6/4	15/11 6/5	22/20 6/5	53
Rodney Lighton	25/20* 20/15 7/2*(2)	11/9(2) 4/2*(2)	18/13 18/16	7/1 6/4	24/20 6/5	22/20 22/21	53
Bob Young	25/20* 10/5 7/2*(2)	11/7 4/2*(2)	18/13 18/16	7/1 6/4	15/11 6/5	22/20 22/21	51
Julian Hayward	25/20* 20/15 7/2*(2)	11/9(2) 4/2*(2)	13/8 6/4	7/1 6/4	15/11 6/5	22/20 24/23	49
Peter Bennet	25/20* 10/5 7/2*(2)	11/9(2) 4/2*(2)	18/13 18/16	13/7 13/11	15/11 6/5	22/20 22/21	48
Richard Biddle	25/20* 20/15 7/2*(2)	11/7 4/2*(2)	18/13 18/16	7/1 6/4	8/4 6/5	22/20 6/5	46
Simon Macbeth	25/20* 7/2*(2) 6/1*	13/9 4/2*(2)	18/13 18/16	7/1 6/4	8/4 6/5	22/20 6/5	40
Cedric Lytton	25/20* 7/2*(2) 6/1*	18/14(2)	18/13 18/16	7/1 7/5	15/11 6/5	9/7 8/7	34

Competition 2002 No1. 58.01-06. Marks and Comments

By Richard Granville

Well, here's the new, 2002 competition. The first of this year and your first chance to make some extra pocket money. So, get your thinking caps on (and put away Jelly-Fish and Snowie!) and see if you can get maximum marks.

Having an annual prize allows a significant amount of money to be allocated to the winner, but the disadvantage is that people who didn't enter early in the year (or who did enter, but scored badly) might be discouraged from entering later in the year. To encourage a greater number of entries and quicker payouts the

following new rules are now applicable:

£20 for the winner of each individual competition.

£5 for the contributor of the "best presented" set of answers. (*This would be Richard's decision, based upon the amount of editing he has to do.*)

£50 for the highest point scorer of the year, using the best 3 out of 4 scores.

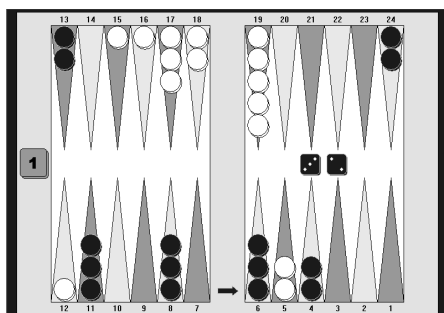
Hopefully these new rules of entry will result in a lot more of you entering the competitions and in the proc-

ess, beginners will get an insight into the thought processors behind the moves.

The entries for this competition must be in before 1st April 2002. Send email entries to this address richard.granville@tinyworld.co.uk and a cc to comps@backgammon-biba.co.uk and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ via Royal Mail. Please remember to follow the formatting suggested in Bibafax 53, page 23.

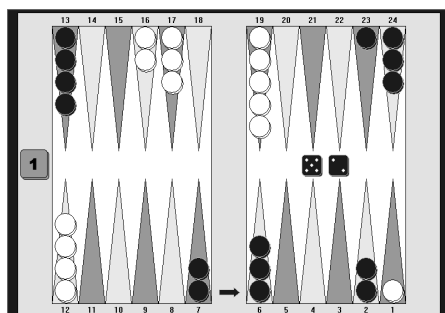
The six positions are on the following page.

58.01



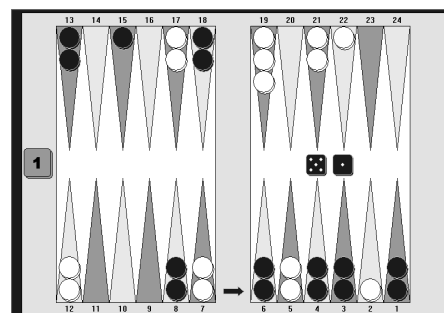
11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 32

58.03



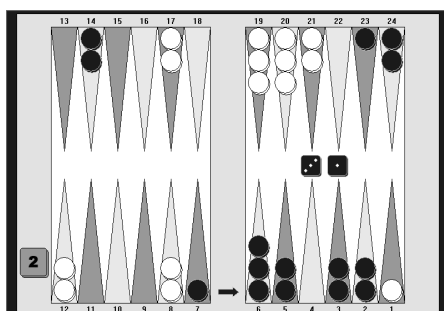
11 point match
White 4 Black 0
Black to play 52

58.05



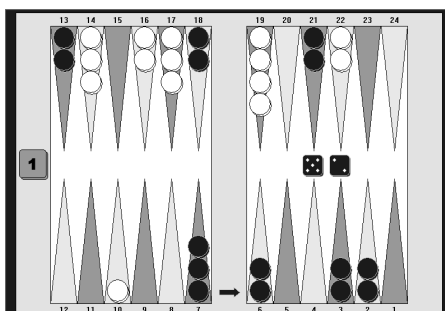
11 point match
White 1 Black 3
Black to play 51

58.02



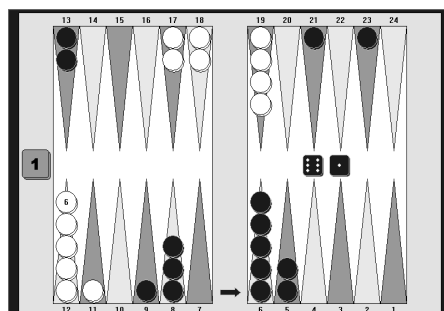
11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 31

58.04



11 point match
White 4 Black 0
Black to play 52

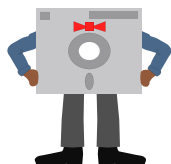
58.06



11 point match
White 4 Black 4
Black to play 61

ZX81

Half man
Half machine
Half-wit



My, my, aren't the *do-gooders* out in force at the moment? All this fuss over the treatment and civil rights of terrorists. If someone chooses to become a terrorist and decides to kill unannounced and indiscriminately then what rights they might have had become forfeit. Don't grieve for any of them - they don't care about you.

Now that's off my chest let us get back to backgammon and my last competition. I asked, "If you could buy a Christmas present for anyone in the world (alive or dead) what would it be and for whom, and for what reason?" Was this difficult or wasn't the prize of fifty-five quids worth of free accommodation enough? Only one person bothered to enter - and so, he wins the free nights' accommodation and a free entry into any tournament this year.

The 'winner' was **Bob Young** and he says:

"My present would be a tub of Vaseline for Santa. Poor Rudolf has had too much flack about his red nose for far too long. (If you say that I am not eligible, as Santa is not a real person, I would refute this. My father took me to the village phone box when I was 8, and I spoke to Santa. If my father were still alive today, he would be able to verify this.)"

You certainly are eligible because my father knew Santa and he always passed our letters on to him after checking them for spelling mistakes.

Well doe, Bob - number one in a field of one!

Not only was Bob good enough to enter the last competition but he has also set one of his own with this second entry:

"I would buy a big bottle of vodka and give it to Jacques Qwertuioip, the inventor of the modern keyboard

layout, on the eve of his invention. This would then prevent him from waking the next morning with this invention on his mind!

Everyone knows that x, y and z come at the end of the alphabet, but you try finding them in a hurry on a modern keyboard. Placing the keys in order from a to z in place of the existing ones would also save 200 million people the need to be trained in the art of typing.

In fact what I have done is to type a message using the logical key positions, and ignoring what is coming out on the paper. Mind you, my keyboard is a little wonky! Here it is...

W IWHHN FYV NYWK ZH NHC WSS.

H.L...WSS ZIY CHVYS AYNL WKY PWDDYR, LH P IWR ZH CLY ZIY AYN ZH ZIY KPUIZ YHK ZIYD.

WFR...W YKYY WHZZSY HY VPFY YHK ZIY YPKLZ

EHKKYEZ WFLVYK ZH ZIY
JCYLZPHF.....
VIH UWCY ZIY LYDPFWKL WZ
WKPUIZHF PF PWFCWKN 0223?
H.H.L...DN AYNWHWKR WSLH
IWL PZL FCDWYKL KYCYKLYR.
WFLVYKL
ZH.....KNhcfu@knhcfu98.ykyylykc
y.eh.ca

To claim your prize just decipher the code - it's all in there."

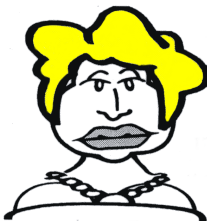
Now, for my own competition. About whom is the following passage from an international best-seller referring to? The correct answer and the funniest will both receive free entry into any tournament during 2002. Answers (Bob) via email to: zx81@backgammon-biba.co.uk or via the post to Biba HQ to arrive no later than March 31st 2002.

"There's worse. He's always been a bit of a rake, interested in fast cars, the Riviera and taking his pleasures with young girls, usually servants. That habit has led to three broken marriages. And, worst of all, I have heard it whispered that he cheats at backgammon."

"Good God" Humping the staff one might overlook, but cheating at backgammon!

Lady Lovely's Chatter

For once in his life it looks as if **John Slattery** has put his money where his mouth is . . . **Michael Crane** was overheard criti-



cising **Liz Barker's** new, crimped hairstyle in Coventry. You'd better watch out Michael, we girls don't like to be told we have bad hair - even if we have! . . . **Hubert De L'Epine** will soon be in the dog house if he continues to take his wife to backgammon tournaments and then spends all night playing backgammon, going to bed at 8.30 in the morning. I thought the French were romantic - evidently not . . . The spirit of **Albert Tinker** was playing through **Tony Fawcett** at the Jarvis. Let's hope for Tony's sake he returns . . . **Mike Butterfield** and **Rachel Rhodes** were both selling second-hand boards at the Jarvis; don't they realise that secondhand goods should be cheaper than new?

IN MEMORIAM Albert Tinker 1945 - January 2002

Albert Tinker might have been a little man; little in the height department, that is, but he stood head and shoulders above most of us. In fact he stood far higher than that, he stood some 100 to 200 feet above most people. Albert used to be a steeplejack! He'd always aspired to greater things, and, being born in Manchester in 1945 into the family firm of steeplejacks his aspirations were soon realised.

What Albert lacked in height he made up for in personality, confidence and likeability. Likeability might not be a real word, but it does describe Albert - it was impossible not to like him; his cheeky grin, his infectious sense of humour and his down-to-earth attitude that left you in no doubt about what he was thinking.

Albert had a competitive nature. This was highlighted during his funeral when the parson there told us of the time Albert and his brother had been called in to repair the weather vane atop the church spire. To cut a long story short, it boiled



down to what the parson suspected was a bet between the two brothers as to how far up the ladder on the spire could they entice the parson to inspect the weather vane at close quarters. Knowing Albert, as they did, the congregation were in no doubt that a bet had been placed. Albert loved to gamble.

At backgammon tournaments he invariably came in rubbing his hands together and asking, "Right, who's next?" as he went through his matches and his opponents like he

went through life - hell for leather! Sadly, late last year he contracted cancer, and despite a valiant effort to combat it, it proved to be one opponent he couldn't beat.

Mind you, throughout it all, both in hospital and in the hospice his spirit was never defeated. He was always joking with the nurses and his fellow patients. He even found the time and energy to continue with his gambling; having bets on whether or not his blood pressure had gone up or down!

He is survived by his mother, brother and son (who looks just like his dad), and many friends from all walks of life. His backgammon friends from Huddersfield have decided that although Albert is no longer with us, his spirit will live on - they are to sponsor the Bright 'n' Breezy Consolation in his memory. As the picture shows, winning the Consolation in 2001 was a happy time for him.

I for one will not forget Albert, and I am certain I am not alone.

Botany Lessons - The Answers

1. Correct play; b/23 13/10* .

Marks:

b/23* 6/5*	10	
b/22 8/6		7
b/22 13/11	6	
b/23 8/5		1
Others	0	

It would be nice to come in on the 22-point, from where you are poised to leap the prime, but the priority is to stop White forming it. You therefore should put a third ugly checker on the 23-point and hit with the three. White is in great shape if he completes the five-prime so fight to stop him doing so.

2. Correct play 13/2*

Marks:

13/2*	10
18/7	7
13/7 6/1*	2
23/18 13/7	1
13/7 13/8	0

Your opponent has a stronger board here, and he will be doubling whatever you play. This magnifies any error this turn. You have to leave many shots, but will still have a take. You need to hit to take away half of Black's roll, but 13/7 6/1* is too loose, mainly because of the extra shots and one extra blot. It leaves 22 shots which could lead to a gammon. 13/2* leaves only 16 - a big difference.

3. Any shitty six you like, as Dod Davies is fond of saying. Top marks go to b/17.

Marks:

b/17	10
b/23 13/7*	7
b/23 10/4	4
b/23 8/2*	1

If you found another move or didn't notice you were on the bar, a hard-earned zero. The theme here is to minimise blots and try to hang on for a better roll and a bit of stability. Hitting is great on the four dances, but sprays white blots around like confetti at an Italian wedding. Jumping out to the 17 has virtually no duplication, but is the best of a bad bunch.

4. Any shitty ... The same theme again. Top marks goes to the quiet 13/5 keeping all of our miserable assets in one place:

Marks:

13/5	10
24/16	7
24/22 8/2	4
13/11 8/2	3
8/2 6/4	2
Others	0

It would be nice to pop out and be missed, but 23 shots are the price one has to pay. And Black wants to clear your bar-point with tempo. However, lifting the blot on the eight is not the solution - what do you do for an encore? Keep the shots down to 11 and wait for a better roll with 13/5.

5. It is natural but wrong to make the 3-point

Marks:

13/8 13/10	10
8/3 6/3	7
13/10 6/1	4
13/5	3
Others	0

The idea here is that you are dangerously stripped after making the 3-point, whereas the flexible 13/8 13/10 prepares to make new points and duplicates threes neatly. Next turn Black will have his 5-point and it will not be as safe to leave a shot.

6. Correct play 21/14

Marks:

21/14	10
13/8 13/11	7
21/16 13/11	4
21/16 6/4	3
Others	0

You need a five to jump and get one. So use it. 5-2 is a great roll. If White attacks and you hit back there is another checker behind the 5-prime. Despite the risks, best is 21/14 (still minimising shots) and hoping to survive the attack. The duplication of twos is useful.

On this set, top programs mloner, mgnu_zip, snowie, and mgnutest made errors averaging 0.65. Sadly the neural network Lamford made an error above that in one of the positions!

I would like to thank the following for their Christmas and New Year greetings:

Bayram Akay, Jeff Barber, Brian Barber, Liz Barker, Richard Barnard, Paul Barwick, Martin Barkwill, Ahmet Baydar, Alan Beckerson, Monica Beckerson, Peter Bennet, Rosemary Bensley, Harry Bhatia, Richard Biddle, Chris Bray, Graham Brittain, John Broomfield, Kenroy Brown, Jacek Brzezinski, Nigel Buchan, Brendan Burgess, Brian Busfield, Mike Butterfield, Jim Caray, Sean Casey, Phil Charlton, Nick Check, Paul Christmas, Peter Christmas, John Clark, Spencer

Close, Danny Cohen, Carol Cole, Nigel Coombes, Cliff Connick, Edward Connolly, Tim Cross, Chris Curson, Michael Damianou, Costas Damianou, Dod Davies, Bill Davis, Martin De Bruin, Hubert de l'Epine, Rob Dean, Stuart Dewis, Emmanuel Di Bona, Tom Duggan, Paul Edwards, David Edwards, Abraham Eitan, Jeff Ellis, Ralph Eskinazi, David Fall, Alan Farrell, Anthony Fawcett, Julian Fetterlein, Matthew Fisher, Mark Flanagan, David Gallagher, Simon Gasquoine, Ric Gerace, Richard Granville, Alan Greenwood, David Hale, Steve Hallett, Don Hatt, Jean

Hatt, Julian Hayward, Helen Helmsagar, Hercules and Bridget, Shaun Herd, Charlie Hetherington, Malcolm Hey, Roy Hollands, Richard Howes, John Hurst, Kerry Jackson, Mahmoud Jahanbani, Raj Jansari, Harald Johanni, Jim Johnson, Simon K Jones, Rod Jones, Raymond Kershaw, Mario Kuhl, Colin Laight, Paul Lamford, Uldis Lapikens, Brian Lever, Cedric Lytton, Michael Main, Liz Makepeace, Steve Malins, Mustafa Manav, Stuart Mann, Jasmina Maric, Dave McNair, David McNamara, Butch Meese, Julian Minwalla, Jim Moore, Tim Mooring, James

Mooring, David Motley, Peter Murrell, Arthur Musgrove, Judith Musgrove, David Nathan, David Naylor, Charles North, Mardi Ohannessian, Mark Oram, Stefan Paliwoda, Rowena Paliwoda, Bob Parmley, Anthony Patz, John Paulton, Sue Perks, Steve Pickard, George Plant, Bill Pope, Graham Powell, Lawrence

Powell, Martin Reade, Laura Reid, Rachel Rhodes, Will Richardson, Ian Sadler, Paul Sambell, Andrew Sarjeant, Corinne Sellens, Birgit Sevel, Ove Sevel, Jon Sharpe, Mike Shelton, Graham Sievers, Steve Simkin, John Slattery, Elliot Smart, Cary Smart, Gerry Smith, Daphne Smith, Bill Spillers, Ken Staines, Ray Tannen, Ian

Tarr, Dale Taylor, Chris Ternel, John Thomas, Paul Turnbull, Neil Webb, Kevin White, Michael Wignall, Tim Wilkins, Barry Williams, Evan Williams, Peter Wilson, Peter Wilson, Bob Young, Bill Young.

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backgammon
on this page..**

*then try
looking at this page..*

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Backgammon Clubs – In Your Area

I have updated and changed the format of local club information. It is now possible to see who, what, where, when, and how much it'll cost you to play all over the country. Some clubs charge nothing to play, others fifty pence a week and one or two £20 or more.

Where I have marked a category with * means that more specific information is required - would club organisers please send in the information (see below).

The list isn't complete because some of the clubs I canvassed failed to send in their details, subsequently they are absent.

If your club isn't on this list then send me the details either via Biba HQ or you can email information to: clubs@backgammon-biba.co.uk

Key:

1. Club Name
2. Venue
3. Address/location
4. Club contact
5. Club web page
6. Club nights
7. Club format and activities
8. Club fees or cost to join/play
9. Accepted playing standard
10. Can beginners/guests play
11. Comments

Brighton

1. Brighton Backgammon Club
2. Lion & Lobster Pub
3. Bedford Place, Brighton (but may be moving very soon, so please check)
4. Ian Eiloart ian-bbc@eiloart.com
5. <http://bbc.eiloart.com/>
6. Tuesday 8pm until closing
7. Eight player knockouts, 7 point matches. Winners of 8 tournaments play in the "big 8". Unlimited re-entries.
8. £1 pa plus £1.50 per tournament entry. All entry fees are returned in prizes.
9. All
10. No reply *
11. None

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1. Brighton Backgammon Club
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8. £1 pa plus £1.50 per tournament entry. All entry fees are returned in prizes.
9. All
10. No reply *
11. None

Bristol

1. Bristol Backgammon Organisation
2. Bristol County Sports Club
3. Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5AE
4. Ian Tarr 0117-9756349 brisgammon@messages.co.uk
5. www.freenetpages.co.uk/hp/brisgammon
6. Second Thursday of the month for knock-out tournaments, last Wednesday of the month for league night
7. Monthly knock-out tournaments (usually two flights) contribute to two annual grand prix competitions; annual leagues (currently two)
8. No membership fee, just fees (which cover prizes) for individual competitions entered *
9. All standards welcome
10. Beginners are always welcome to play in any of our competitions, although qualification for our Premier League has to be earned via results in other competitions; guests are also welcome to our tournaments, but must fully understand the conditions of entry before entering; players in our Premier League are barred from certain of our competitions which are designated as "intermediate"
11. We do our best to give a warm welcome to all players, and are prepared to listen to any suggestions for modifying or adding to

our existing programme of competitions

Dublin

1. Dublin Backgammon Club
2. Sach's Hotel
3. Donnybrook
4. Brendan Burgess 603 0891 . wildlife@indigo.ie
5. None
6. 2nd Monday of every month.
7. Knockout tournament
8. £1 per night
9. All standards
10. Yes
11. Money play is discouraged so that we can encourage new members

Eastbourne

1. Eastbourne and Bexhill BG club
2. The Lamb near Pevensey
3. The Lamb, Hooe (On main Pevensey to Bexhill road)
4. Roy Hollands 01323 722905 e-mail royhollands@aol.com
5. Nil
6. Mondays 19.30
7. 5 point all play all. Monthly championship to 7 point. Chouettes.
8. Free
9. Any
10. Special arrangements to fit any guests or beginners.
11. Couldn't be cheaper. Give us a try.

Halifax

1. Halifax/West Yorkshire Club
2. Nominally The Three Pigeons
3. The Shay, Halifax 1
4. Rachel Rhodes 07961 355433 dicewitch@yahoo.co.uk
5. No
6. Sporadic
7. Informal
8. No fees
9. Anyone
10. n/a
11. Let's get this going on a more regular basis

Lincoln

1. Lincoln BG Club
2. The Liberal Club
3. St. Swithin's Square, Lincoln
4. Michael Crane, 01522 829649,

- michael.a.crane@ntlworld.com
5. www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~biba/index.html
 6. Every Tuesday from 19:30 to 23:00
 7. Round Robin, knockouts and chouettes
 8. We don't have a membership fee, just 0.50p per night subs plus (optional) 0.40p for sandwiches
 9. All standards accepted
 10. Yes. They can play in all formats except the 5-point monthly Knockout, unless of course they are visiting for a month!
 11. LBC is a friendly low cost BG Club where we all standards of players are welcome. Check out our web site for full details

Liverpool

1. Liverpool Backgammon Club
2. The Bridge Club
3. 7A, Croxteth Road, Liverpool, L8
4. John Wright, Tel. 0151 280 0075, e-mail jpwright@cableinet.co.uk
5. http://my.cybersoup.com/lpoolbg Club nights
6. First Friday of each month from 20:00 to 23:00
7. Monthly round Robin, winter knockouts and annual Open tournament
8. We don't have a membership fee, just £4 per night plus optional sweep
9. All standards accepted
10. Yes
11. LBC is a small friendly, low cost BG Club where we all standards of players are welcome. Check out our web site for details.

London

1. Double Five Backgammon Club
2. St. Johns Wood Bridge Club
3. Grove Hall Court, Hall Road, London NW8
4. George Sulimirski. 020 7381 8128 jgsulimir@aol.com
5. None
6. Thursdays 7pm. and Sundays 5pm. £100 Tournament on the third Sunday of the month at 3pm
7. Money games - chouettes and head up. Occasional tournaments
8. Hourly table fees depending on stakes played (mostly £2 - £20 per point) plus £1 for non members

9. See 11
10. See 11
11. The club is quite informal and visitors are welcome but since all the games are for money we cannot accommodate beginners (except Lottery winners!)

London

1. Fox Reformed
2. Fox Reformed Wine Bar
3. 176 Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 0JL
4. Robbie (020) 7254 5975, robbie.richards@fox-reformed.co.uk
5. www.fox-reformed.co.uk
6. Monday (tournament); other nights by mutual arrangement
7. Weekly, 16-player knockout tournament with main and consolation; annual ladder open to all
8. £20 for the weekly tournament (includes buffet. Rest of entry fees returned as cash prizes); £30 per annum for the ladder (includes membership of FRILLS which gives discounts on wine and organises other events) then £3 fee per match in the ladder (all match fees are returned as prizes at the annual dinner)
9. All abilities welcomed; all tournament players are guaranteed two matches and also play other friendly yes, every Monday
10. Yes, and guests sometimes turn up from other countries
11. Club includes several of the top British players and organises regular trips to foreign events (we had 22 at Monte Carlo and 9 in Nova Gorica). Most players will be as happy to play 50 pence a point as £20 per point

London

1. The Bell Inn Backgammon Club
2. The Bell Inn, Hampton
3. The Bell Inn, 8 Thames Street, Hampton, Middx., TW12 2EA
4. 020 8941 9799 or 07946 801801(mobile)
5. Club web page - n/a
6. Club nights - Tuesday
7. Club format and activities (e.g. Knockouts, Swiss etc.) - Weekly knockout (£30 entry) start time 7.30 pm and chouettes at £3, £5, and £10 per point start time 2pm.

8. £30 (see above)
9. All players welcome
10. Yes
11. Busy, friendly and sociable club - newcomers always welcome. Knockout tournament statistics are compiled and half-yearly championship prizes awarded.

London

1. Ealing Backgammon League
2. The Kings Arms Pub
3. 55 The Grove, Ealing, London W5 020-8567 0606
4. Grahame Powell 020-8968 6327, g.f.powell@amserve.net. Geoff Oliver EalingBackgammon@netscape.net
5. None, yet.....
6. Every Sunday 3.00pm onwards, other nights by arrangement
7. Weekly League Tourney (8-player invitation knockout), chouettes.
8. Annual Fee £10, weekly fee £1, Tourney Entry £25
9. All standards accepted, free lessons by arrangement
10. All welcome for chouettes, weekly tourney is restricted to members or special invitation.
11. There has been backgammon in Ealing for at least 20 years now, and for the last 9 years the Kings Arms has been our home. It's a friendly informal 'locals' pub, and that's the way we like our backgammon.

Manchester

1. Manchester and District Backgammon Club
2. Heaton Moor Conservative Club
3. Heaton Moor Road, Stockport
4. Kevin Stebbing. Email kevin@stebbing.net 0161 283 1886
5. www.stebbing.cwc.net/bgman/bgman.htm
6. 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7:30pm
7. Knockout
8. Free (optional £3 pool)
9. All
10. Yes
11. Join us for a sociable evening of backgammon. All standards are welcome

Nottingham

1. Nottingham Backgammon Club
2. The Horse and Groom.
3. Radford Road, Basford, Nottingham.
4. Conrad Cooper.
conrad_cooper@excite.com ;
0115 9113281
5. <http://beehive.thisisnottingham.co.uk/clubinfo>
6. Monday, 9.00pm
7. All matches played around flexible league system and also knockouts
8. Free
9. All playing abilities welcome
10. Yes they can
11. The Nottingham Backgammon has a friendly, sociable, relaxed atmosphere. We welcome players of all standards of play.

Reading

1. Reading Backgammon Club
2. Various, publicised in advance by e-mail - e-mail

reading_backgammon-
subscribe@egroups.com

3. See 2 above
4. Kevin Carter on
kevin@profundus.com & +44-118-971-2948
5. <http://www.ratbag.demon.co.uk/reading.html>
6. Usually the penultimate Wednesday of each month, publicised in advance via email
7. A Swiss tournament every 2-3 months interspersed with other less formal evenings involving eg chouettes and friendly games
8. No fees except for tournament entry of £5 (all money returned as prizes)
9. Too friendly and informal for professionals but beginners welcome
10. Yes, but beginners should attain a reasonable grounding in the rules and etiquette before entering the tournaments
11. None

St. Albans

1. Not really a club, no membership
2. The Mermaid (pub)
3. Hatfield Road, St. Albans
4. Uldis Lapikens, 01582 455970,
uldis@talk21.com
5. Not applicable
6. Every Tuesday 19.45 (for 20.00) to 23.30
7. Knockout tournament and consolation playoff
8. No fees, £5 knockout entry (optional)
9. All
10. Yes
11. Friendly & informal, real ale, car park, 5 minutes walk from city station

Tournament Details

Registration: Saturday 1030 to 1230

Play Starts: Saturday 1300, Sunday 1030

Auctions: Group, Saturday 1245, Individual, Sunday 1015

Pools: Private, members only prize pools available at £50, £25, £10 & £5

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

All tournaments feature a Friday night Warm-up and a Saturday night Doubles Knockout

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS - Biba rate

Dinner, Bed & Breakfast per person: 1 night £55, 2 nights £100

Hilton Reservations: 08705 201 201 quoting Backgammon. Credit card required

(Hilton terms & conditions for Special Events)

Backgammon Tournament weekends cannot be booked through any other Hilton special offer or promotional rate. Current Biba members not obeying these terms and conditions will be barred from entering the tournament excepting non-residents who shall pay a surcharge of £10.

FRIDAY

Warm-up Knockout

Play starts 2200, 1st prize, free accommodation for this tournament plus first byes in next Main knockout entered.

SATURDAY

Registration 1030 / 1230

**Players arriving after close of registration only accepted at Director's discretion.
All jackpot pools will close promptly at 1230**

SUNDAY

Play resumes 1030

**(penalty points apply)
Presentation 1630 - 1730**

Registration Fees

Full Members: £15 (you can join on the day)

Entrants not residing at the hotel, £10 surcharge

(all fees and surcharges to be paid on the day - prepayment not required)

Biba & Hilton Hotels present the Knockout tournament

**UK Final
2002**

The Slattery Scottish Open 2002

Leeds Garforth Hilton

9th & 10th March 2002



Grand Prix



**This tournament is sponsored by John Slattery and
will have an estimated prize fund of £1,500**

Biba & Hilton Hotels present the Knockout tournament



The British Open 2002

**UK Final
2002**



Grand Prix

Hilton National - Coventry

Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th April 2002



**Sponsors of the
British Open**



Biba & Hilton Hotels present the Swiss Format tournament

**UK Final
2002**

County Cups Trophy 2002



Hilton National - Coventry

4th & 5th May 2002



Grand Prix

Biba & Hilton Hotels present the Knockout tournament

Hilton Trophy 2002



Grand Prix

Hilton National - Coventry

8th & 9th June 2002



European Backgammon Calendar

Feb 18-24	3rd Paris Master & Open, Holiday Inn Paris France	0033 607 551 516
Feb 23-24	Arctic Open, Grand Nordic Hotel, Tromso, Norway	0047 97505719
Feb 23-24	Studerterbar Cup, Studenternes Hus, Aarhus, Denmark	0045 4062 1789
Feb 24	Schwaben-Cup, Waldheim, Stuttgart-Sillenbuch, Germany	0049 71148 6190
Feb 25	Doobie's Cup 2002, Doobie's, Paris, France	0033 1 4261 8080
Feb 28-Mar 03	Partouche Trophy, Palm Beach Casino, Cannes, France	0041 79320 5276
Feb 28-Mar 03	Partouche Trophy, Palm Beach Casino, Cannes, France	0041 793-205276
Mar 09-10	Scottish Open, Leeds Garforth Hilton, England	01522 888676
Mar 12-15	4th International Championships, Abu Dhabi, UAE	00971-2-4436333
Mar 28-Apr 01	14th Nordic "Wide" Open, Denmark	0045 3336 3601
Apr 06-07	British Open, Coventry Hilton, England	01522 888676
Apr 26-28	9th Oslo Open 2002, Vika Atrium, Oslo, Norway	0047 22-360966
Apr 30-May 05	8th EBN Mayday Tournament, Costa del Sol, Spain	0034 950133 009
May 04-05	County Cups Trophy, Coventry Hilton, England	01522 888676
May 06	MSO Backgammon. Parkside Community College, Cambridge	01223 563932
Jun 08-09	Hilton Trophy, Coventry Hilton, England	01522 888676
Jun 15-16	Tournament of Spirits, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	0031 20463 3724
Jun 30	Schwaben-Cup, Waldheim, Stuttgart-Sillenbuch, Germany	0049 71148 6190
Jul 06-07	Keren Di Bona Trophy, Hilton Coventry, England	01522 888676
Jul 08-14	World Championship Grand Hotel Monte Carlo	
Jul 15-16	11th Nice Open, Lido Plage, Nice, France	0033 4938 79436
Jul 04-07	14th Venice Tournament, Venice Casino, Venice, Italy	0039 41521 1029
Aug 03-04	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Hilton, Coventry, England	01522 888676
Sep 06-08	14th European Championship, Nova Gorica, Slovenia	0039 2690 18168
Sep 07-08	Roy Hollands Trophy, Hilton, Coventry, England	01522 888676
Sep 21-22	Amsterdam Open 2002, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	0031 20463 3724
Oct 05-06	Sandy Osborne Trophy, Hilton, Coventry, England	01522 888676
Nov 09-10	Townharbour Trophy, Hilton, Coventry, England	01522 888676
Nov 23-24	Danish Championships 2002, Copenhagen, Denmark	0045 3336 3601
Dec 07-08	UK Finals, Hilton, Coventry, England	01522 888676

Forthcoming Events

Slattery Scottish Open 09/10 March

OK, so it's not actually *in* Scotland, instead it's near Leeds in Yorkshire. Well, following last years dismal turnout of the natives it was decided to lower the location and bring it a bit more southerly; after all, the majority of entrants were not from anywhere near Scotland.

It will still have the usual Knockout format, including Main, Progressive Consolation, Last Chance and The Haggis! Plus, *Stop Pots* on demand.

Who knows, if enough Scots get their kilts on and make the trek south in 2002, perhaps it'll relocate back to Bonny Scotland for 2003. Mind you, no-one has complained yet from Scotland - I wonder if any of them have read the Bibafax? Perhaps the

estimated **£1,500 Prize Fund** mind entice a few extra players!

British Open 06/07 April

This year (and perhaps for a few more) we have a new sponsor; **At-A-Glance Calendars** in the guise of Peter Bennet. Peter has stepped in as the new sponsor and is looking forward to the tournament . . . No he's not! He'll be in Scandinavia, skiing over that weekend. Well I am sure he'll be there in spirit.

As usual it is the familiar Knockout format, including Main, Progressive Consolation, Last Chance and Suicide! Plus, *Stop Pots* on demand. For fuller details of the new sponsor look on their web site:

www.ataglance.uk.com/

County Cups Trophy 04/05 May

This is the second of the four Swiss

tournaments this year and another opportunity to increase your rankings.

Mind Sports Cambridge 06 May

MSO Cambridge is staging its second Mind Sports Festival and this time it includes a one day backgammon tournament. The format is to be 5 x 5-point Swiss and the entry fee will be £8. Prizes will be:

- 1st. JellyFish Tutor
- 2nd. JellyFish Player
- 3rd. Years Biba Membership.

Play starts at 0930 and continues until 1800. Please register via the web site at: www.gen.cam.ac.uk/msocam02/index.html or via telephone on 01223 563932 and be there ready for the draw at approx.. 0920.

Hilton Trophy 08/09 June

The familiar Knockout format offering the usual elements.

Club Corner

Lincoln BG Club.

Michael Crane reports: We have now completed our 2001 annual competitions and it's been a very close battle all the way through. Each of the four elements were not fully decided until the last two weeks of the year.

The format for the Club Championship is an 11-point match competition based upon a loose, Round Robin format in which we play all other players at least twice. The percentage of matches won determines the Club Champion. To qualify for Championship status a minimum of 34 11-point Round Robin matches have to be played. The Club Champion will be the player with the best average at the end of the year (17 December 2001). The winner this year (and last, and six other times!) was Jeff Ellis with Michael Crane runner-up (for his fifth time), just pipping Tim Mooring into 3rd place on the last night!



Jeff Ellis & Michael Crane
LBC 1st and 2nd 2001

We also have two Knockout competitions, one for 5-points played on a monthly basis and one for 1-point played on a weekly basis. The 5-point winner was John Batty, and, thanks to Jim Moore losing in the last one, Michael Crane was the runner-up. However, Jim (and Jeff) got the better of Michael in the 1-pointer.

2001	Chmpshp	5pt KO	1pt KO	A/R
BB	59.46	2	12	45.04
NB	36.84	2	18	37.72
MC	68.52	8	27	77.90
JE	72.00	7	30	76.80
PG	56.10	1	16	50.42
TM	66.67	2	25	68.80
JB	60.78	9	15	64.98
JM	60.78	6	29	64.78
KS	51.52	7	11	43.26
MV	43.75		7	14.26
MS	22.22		1	22.60
AS	14.58		5	13.70
AD	13.04		3	6.58

Michael had to win the last one of the year to win and force a playoff between Jim and Jeff for 2nd place as they were both on the same number of wins. Unfortunately for him Michael didn't win and, in the play-off for the 1-point Knockout, Jeff beat Jim into 2nd place by just one point.

In addition to the above matches we also have an All-Rounder competition. The All Rounder is based upon performance throughout all elements. For each match won members are awarded points; 11-pointer = 1.50, 5-pointer = 0.68 and 1-pointer = 0.28. and these points are accrued on a weekly basis. This was won by Michael with Jeff Ellis closely behind in 2nd place - again, all decided in the last week!

Finally, a few mentions: John Batty for winning 9 out of 10 11-point matches; Jim Moore for winning 10 out of 10 11-point matches; Mike Saxby for stopping Michael winning his 10th out of 10; Tim Mooring for being beaten by both Mike and Anne Saxby in the 11-point Championship; and finally all the new members who have swelled our ranks to a regular 15/16 players a night.

LBC meet each Tuesday night and anyone can come and play with us as a guest and it is completely free - except for the sandwiches which cost 30p! For more details contact Biba HQ on 01522 829649.

Double Five Club, London. George Sulimirski reports (*in as few words as possible!*):

Tournament. 16th Dec. 2001

Winner - Murray Sharp.

Finalist - Engin Ongel.

Semi. - Al Hogg & Jim Johnson.

The **Atlanta Backgammon Association** have produced an excellent Chouette Rules document that just about covers everything you need to know about playing with a group of other players all determined to take all your money!

ABA Chouette Rules

August 2001

Basics and Terms

1.1) These rules assume knowledge of the game of backgammon, how it is scored, the role of the doubling cube, and procedures for handling dice and doubling cubes.

1.2) In a chouette, one person, called **Box**, plays a game of backgammon for points against a **Team** of other players, headed by **Captain**, who rolls the dice and plays the checkers for the Team. Optionally, Box may take a **Partner**, customary when the Team is large (often restricted to chouettes with 6 or more by mutual agreement). At the end of each game, the Team rotates, with the next in line becoming the new Captain. The new position of Box, Partner, and Captain is according to the rotation rules below.

1.3) The initial determination of Box, Partner, and Team with Captain is customarily done by each player rolling 2 dice, (doubles not counting extra), and the highest number becomes Box, the next is Captain, then the next determines the order of the Team. The last person on the team would be the first selection as Partner, if any.

1.4) Each member of the Team has a doubling cube.

1.5) A cube is said to be *in the game* if and only if it has been turned

and accepted, regardless of the value of the centered cube.

Stakes

2.1) The *basic stake* (number of dollars per point) is determined by mutual agreement and should be written at the top of the score sheet.

2.2) When joining the chouette, a player arranges to play for the basic stake, or for multiples of the basic stake. For the basic stake, the centered cube begins with "1" or "64" facing upward. If the player wishes to play for double stakes, the cube begins showing "2" provided that Box is also willing to play for that stake. For quadruple stakes the cube begins at "4", and so on, always subject to Box's preference.

2.3) A player wishing to change the stake arrangement between games may do so only if all participants agree.

Consultation

3.1) The Team may not consult on cube decisions, nor should they announce their reasons for doubling, taking or dropping. Cube decisions should be made in order, first by the Captain, then by each member of the team in the order of the established rotation.

3.2) For checker play, Captain may seek advice from any player whose cube is in the game regardless of the Captain's cube status. Those without a cube in the game must not consult or comment. The Captain may only offer advice if his cube is in the game.

3.3) Box may consult with Partner regarding cube decisions at any point.

3.4) Box may consult with Partner regarding checker play only if two cubes have been turned, regardless if they were taken or passed.

3.5) The only players who can handle the dice or checkers are Box and Captain, but the Team members may handle their own cube, if desired.

The Captain makes the final decision on all checker plays.

Scoring and Settlements

4.1) Jacoby Rule: Gammons and backgammons count only if the cube in question is in the game.

4.2) Scoring is kept to whole point accuracy. If Box and Partner win an odd number of points, Box receives the extra point. When Box and Partner lose an odd number of points, Box loses the extra point.

4.3) If games are settled for a fractional point amount, the fraction is 'rolled off' by both players throwing two dice. The higher total (doubles not counting extra), wins the extra fractional point. Other dispositions of fractional points may be made by mutual agreement between players, provided that only whole points are recorded on the score sheet.

4.4) Box may preempt a settlement between players in the Team. For example, 'A' has elected to double, but 'B' has not. 'A' offers 'B' $\frac{1}{2}$ the cube value for 'B's interest in the game in order to double. If 'B' accepts the offer, Box may preempt the offer, paying 'B' in order to reduce the Team. Box may also preempt offers from spectators or players out of the game.

4.5) Box may offer settlements to any player or number of players, and is not obligated to offer the same settlement to the entire Team. Box may also sell his game to any player or spectator.

Doubling

5.1) By default automatic doubles are not used. When matching starting dice are rolled, an automatic double (cube turned to next higher value with the cube remaining in the center) can be made by mutual agreement between Box and any number of the other players.

5.2) A player doubles by placing the cube on the backgammon board with the doubled value showing. If

requested by a Team member the Captain may turn that player's cube.

5.3) When a double is offered to a player, the player acts with a drop, take, or beaver (turn the cube to the next value and hold it).

5.4) If a player beavers, the player who offered the double may accept the beaver, raccoon (turning the cube once more without changing possession) or drop the beaver, immediately losing the value of the cube before the beaver. Raccoons and other further immediate redoubles are allowed only with consent of both players involved.

5.5) Misunderstandings about doubling, drops, and takes should be avoided by announcing the decision and making sure all involved have heard. However, if there is confusion, the cube position resolves any dispute. When dropping, the cube is restored to its initial value and, should be put in a different location than cubes that still remain in play in the middle. When accepted, a cube shows the new value and is positioned so that it is easily visible and all know that it is in the game.

5.6) Box may offer initial doubles selectively, and may also redouble selectively.

5.7) When Box doubles all cubes from the middle and a lone player takes, he is obligated to accept any offered extras. The lone player is paid the value of the undoubled cube, and now will hold the cube of the player(s) who offered the extra at double the value. Beavers and raccoons are allowed. The player(s) who offered the extras are now on the side of Box with no consulting permitted, and will have independent cube action between them and the lone player from that point on. The taking player has the option to drop instead of take if he does not wish to accept the offered extras.

Alternate rule 5.7a: The lone taking player must continue the game taking the Box's cube, but has the option to immediately drop any of the offered

extras (to reduce the gammon risk), losing a net of one point to each of those players.

5.8) Players in the Team may act on a cube offer by Box in any order, but have the right to wait until all those preceding them in the rotation have acted. Optionally, Box can insist that the team makes cube decisions in order of the rotation.

5.9) At Captain's turn, a player in the Team may offer Box a double, at which time the Box is required to verbally solicit the Team for other players that also may wish to double. This applies to initial doubles and redoubles. When a Team member may wish to double on the next sequence, he must tell the Captain to 'hold your roll' or words to that effect to give that Team member the option to double before the dice are rolled. Optionally, Box can insist that the cubes be offered in order of the rotation.

5.10) When all cubes are turned from the center, Box may drop or accept all cubes, or may accept at least one half of the cubes and drop the rest. Box may not accept less than one half the number of offered cubes, regardless of their value. Box may beaver any cubes but still must accept at least half of the cubes.

5.10a) (for 3-handed chouette only) When both cubes are turned from the center, Box must take both or drop both cubes. Extras are handled as in rule 5.7.

5.11) For cubes that are redoubles, Box may accept or pass any number of cubes. The Box may also accept or pass any number of initial cubes if the entire Team does not double together.

Rotation

6.1) Box for the next game is the winner of Box vs. the initial Captain. However, Box must always at least break even for the last game to remain Box. If Captain loses and Box also loses points in that game or if Captain and Box settle their cube for zero points, then Box goes to the end of the

Team behind Captain, and the player behind the original Captain becomes Box, and the next player becomes Captain. A person scheduled to be Box has the option to relinquish that role and go to the bottom of the rotation.

6.2) If Box defeats Captain with the cube and other players in the Team remain in the game, the game continues with the next player in line becoming **Acting Captain**. The losing Captain goes to the end of the current Team for the next game. This first Acting Captain is also scheduled to be Captain for the following game regardless of this game's outcome. If an Acting Captain also loses while others are still playing, the next player in rotation becomes Acting Captain. A player that becomes Acting Captain has no effect on the rotation of players.

6.3) If the initial Captain defeats Box with a double, he sits out, but will be Box for the following game. If other players are still in the game, the next player in line becomes Acting Captain and is also scheduled to be Captain in the following game. For the following game, Partner retains the position he would have had if he did not become Partner, and losing Box becomes Partner (or goes to the end of the Team if new Box plays solo).

6.4) When scheduled to become Captain in the next game, Partner may 1) remain Partner and drop to the bottom of the rotation and the next player in the rotation becomes Captain, or 2) relinquish being Partner and become Captain for that game. If Partner chooses to become Captain, the player at the bottom of the order can be invited to be the new Partner.

6.5) A player wishing to join the chouette does so at the discretion of Box or any of the players, subject to the maximum number of participants allowed. The new player joins the end of the Team. The player at the bottom of the Team is the first choice for Partner (if any), not any new player joining. When 2 or more players join at the same game they roll 2 dice,

(doubles not counting extra), to determine their order at the end of the Team. Generally, it is recommended not to arbitrarily exclude new players from the chouette, unless it has become large (6 or more players).

Proxies

7.1) A player in the Team who leaves the scene temporarily may appoint a proxy to handle that player's cube. The proxy can be any other participant in the chouette, whether still in the game or not. The proxy may also appoint yet another proxy, and so on. If no proxy is appointed, Captain acts as the proxy for the missing player(s).

Legal Plays

8.1) Any player including spectators and players not in the current game can bring attention to any illegal play involving rolling, checkers or the doubling cube. Once an illegal play has been identified, it must be corrected if at all possible, regardless of timeliness; the goal being the realization of the normal game position in absence of the illegal play.

8.2) If possible, the illegal play should be identified and corrected as it is being made or after the dice are lifted and before the opponent rolls. If the illegal play is identified after the opponent has rolled then either rule **8.3** or **8.4** is applied as appropriate:

8.3) If the equity achieved by the choice of legal plays is substantially the same regardless of the opponent's roll, the illegal play is corrected and the opponent's roll stands.

8.4) If the equity achieved by the choice of legal plays would change with prior knowledge of the opponent's roll, the illegal play is corrected and the opponent has the option to re-roll or use the number already rolled.

8.5) Illegal plays may also be corrected after the initial illegal player starts to move after the next roll, but only if it can be adjusted without

affecting the previous plays or rolls.

Pip Count

9.1) The pip count should be considered common knowledge, so when one player (or the box) does a pip count, it is acceptable and recommended to announce the count to the entire group. This speeds the game by avoiding having every Team member do a separate pip count.

Scorekeeping

10.1) The score sheet should be avail-

able to any player to review at any time. It is best practice for the scorekeeper to announce the number of points that have been won or lost by each player as the score is recorded. Recording points from dropped cubes as they happen is also recommended. After each game is scored, the scorekeeper should verify that the total of all scores adds to zero. To facilitate tracking the rotation, the loser of each game is circled. As each player becomes Box, their circled score is crossed through. If both Box and Captain lose, they are both circled, with a 'b' by Box's circle to

indicate that Box will follow Captain in the rotation. The highest circle on the score sheet is the player that is due to be the next Captain.

Modifications to the Rules

11.1) By mutual consent of all players in the chouette, these rules may be modified to suit the preferences of the chouette. All players must agree to any change, and any new player entering the game must be informed of the change.

It has finally happened, I have run out of ideas!

I was hoping to be able to fill this page with something worth reading but, after 58 issues my brain has finally given up and refuses to come up with anything new!

What I need is **your** help. This is **your** newsletter and if **you** would like to see all the pages filled with worthwhile stuff instead of this drivel then get your thinking caps on and send in an article.

Regular readers of Bibafax know I'm not too fussy about the content - I go for quantity not quality! So, hopefully with your help the next issue will be singularly spectacular in its content and worthwhileness.

If this plea falls upon deaf ears (or blind eyes) then be prepared for a Bibafax in May about six pages long!

Just to answer you before you ask, no, Biba does not pay a fee. It is sent out to members all over the world as a free newsletter and there isn't a budget to cover contributor's fees. This is a shame because I know for a fact that some of the top players and authors in the world read the Bibafax. It would be a nice gesture if just one of them sent in an original article and put something back into backgammon. I know a lot of Biba members would enjoy reading something by Robertie, or Magriel, or Meyberg, or Kazaross that wasn't 'borrowed' by me from another source.

What about it you top players and authors; anything for the next issue? Deadline for copy is mid-March. It won't pay much, just the undying gratitude of hundreds of Bibafax readers who are fed up with my scribblings!

Funcom Backgammon - Live In London

25 November 2001

by MikeMadMonk

As more and more people play backgammon on the Internet, so will they wish to actually meet those players they play with. The era of pen pal has metamorphosed into the era of net pals. Set up a Meet and bring them all together. That was the plan that Biba members Liz Barker (a.k.a. Cassie) Editor of Funcompress and myself MikeMadMonk owner of Backpacker Backgammon Boards came up with.

The set up at Funcom (where we play online) is geared towards social play. There are Tourneys and Ladder play, but without the ability to save games, Funcom is not considered as one of the serious backgammoners sites. But the Lobby Chat area is bigger than most and runs quicker than any other online site I know. Quite a few of the players coming were online-only players - Live Tourno play was to be a new experience - they came prepared for a learning curve.

We started planning this weekend event a few months ago before we went to another Funcom Players Meet in Oslo in June that was organized by Danish players Bedstefar & Co. It was a party to remember - we played some backgammon too. We had various ideas penciled down and published what we had on our websites: FuncomPress and Backpacker Backgammon Boards.

Over the weeks we added more info as we had it. The British Isles Backgammon Association agreed to donate two prizes of membership & associate membership (this on Liz's suggestion that she would again wear



Organisers Mike Main(MadMikeMonk) and Liz Barker(Cassie)

a low cut top at the next BIBA event in December.) A week or two before the event, Oasya very kindly donated a Snowie 3 C.D. After weeks of trying to get a response from Funcom, they finally replied to us and sent us some of their T-shirts.

Three months ago we had cheekily asked Paul Lamford (author of the recently published Starting Out In Backgammon and British Champion 1993) if he would like to do one of his seminars over our planned weekend. He said he would love to as long as it didn't clash with a BIBA weekend. I'm not sure how, but we managed to choose a weekend that did clash. Oops we thought later.

come the chance to go to what sounded like a very different fun-filled weekend. He'd do a seminar too!

The party officially started on Friday 9th Nov - but some of players arrived the day before and started the ball rolling. Zoe flew in from Greece, changing her route en route but was still picked up at Heathrow by Barry, one of the many drivers we

would use over the weekend that were provided free of charge by Greater London Hire, a leading London Cab Company. The Lost Property Game started straight away as Zoe left a bottle of wine in Barry's Previa. Bedstefar, recently arrived from Denmark, was staying not far away with his daughter so he took Zoe out for a late lunch. Scouseicky was also there a day early and I gather they checked out the Spice Island Pub across the road from our venue - the YHA in Rotherhithe.

On Friday Whiteman, Diane, David and Alison flew down from Scotland and arrived at Luton to be met by Barry and bottle. Stanolli arrived by

car, Nina was dropped off by a friend, Grant arrived by tube, Netmusen and Mazda were bought in by the general who had picked them up the day before from Stansted, Gamotto arrived from Austria and Liz and myself crossed the River Thames with a ton of clobber we would need over



The Funcom Live in London group came from seven different countries

the weekend.

By 6.00 p.m. there were 16 of us and we headed across the road to the Spice Island Pub and took over the largest table they had. The party had begun.

But on the Monday before our weekend Paul asked Liz if he could come to our event. He was, before the end of the year, already the British Champion 2001 and had no need to go to BIBA. He explained that he'd wel-

Backgammon boards were not in evidence. This evening was for socializing. £5 in a pint pot got us two rounds to get us started. It is great to be able to sit down with people you have known online for sometime. Matches were remembered, other "Funcom faces" were spoken of, promised kisses passed on, moans about the server were aired and I found myself trying to have three conversations at once. Paul Lamford joined us having checked into the YHA and said with glee that he was pleased to see table football in the YHA bar. The questions he would ask in his seminar were handed out for players to work upon. We had dinner and for some reason Paul asked for and saved other people's butter wrappers. We partied on and had far too many drinks I'm sure.

Upon closing time we returned to the Y.H.A. and occupied the bar. Paul's butter wrappers came out and we played table football. He's a fair man and buttered all eight rods. It was soon obvious that Paul and Gamotto were the best table footballers around and they played a singles 7 baller.

Zoe, Scouseicky and Stanolli went online and logged into Funcom and said "Hi to all" there. A backgammon board came out and a chouette was played. My experience in this form of backgammon did me no good whatsoever as I left the party £14 down and Grant, in his first ever chouette, found it a profitable pastime. I went off to bed to get some much needed sleep before the morrow.

I had fully intended to put up posts on the Funcom Bulletin Board letting all those who could not be with us, know what was going on. I sat down at the computer early on Sat morning but I was coffeeless and my fingers would not work!

The Paul Lamford Seminar

Six situations to work out. Everybody having filled in their sheets, these were handed round to others to mark. Paul took us carefully and very informatively through each situation.

Players found themselves looking at backgammon situations in a new light and I'm sure their play will improve because of it. We didn't score too badly and players' minds were now focused on what they were about to do. David won a signed copy of Paul's 100 Backgammon Puzzles.



British Champion Paul Lamford treating the players to a fun seminar

Main Swiss Format Report

Fresh from Paul Lamford's seminar with thoughts of doubling strategy running through their heads the players lined up at the thegeneral's Tournament Directors desk to check in for the main tournament and sign up for the £5 or £10 prize fund. By the end of registration we had 21 players for the five-pointer four-round Swiss Tournament. It was Liz that got the bye, but a late arrival took us to a nice even 22 for the first round.

We were predominantly regular Funcom players plus a few from The Fox Reformed, reflecting well the international make up of the Funcom community with a total of seven countries represented, stretching from the roof of Europe down to the Aegean Sea.

We had hired the Conference Room (as the YHA call it) for the weekend. It is in fact the far end of the dining area with a shutter wall pulled over it. Round 1 ran smoothly. It never ceases to amaze me how many backgammon players smoke. The smoke alarm had been disabled with a plastic bag and

rubber band and make shift ashtrays appeared on nearly every table. Then somebody from the YHA appeared with our trays of sandwiches and we got told off. Meanwhile our 11 undefeated players were: Palal, Grant101, John B, MikeMadMonk, Frodostar, Gamotto, Bedstefar, Dod D, Paul L, Mazdaen and Daryll.

So Round 2 matches were played in both the YHA bar or the Conference Room - but not the pub across the road please! Upon completion the general told us we had five undefeated players: John B, Frodostar, Dod D, Mazdaen and Daryll.

Just before we had Round 3 we turned our attention to fireworks. The Lord Mayors Show had happened just across the River Thames in The City of London and (I'm claiming) he'd had graciously decided to lay on a

fireworks display in honour of our event. It was agreed that if players had finished their next round within the next hour, players could pile into the various modes of transport parked outside and go just up river from where we were. Unfortunately the players with transport finished first and missed others without transport. We were now down to three undefeated players: Frodostar, Dod D and Mazdaen.

Round 4 saw Frodostar lose to Dod D. but Mazdaen also won (against Zoe) so we needed a 5th Round Final playoff. Dod used to play on Funcom but moved on when eight of his last nine matches there went unfinished due to server crashes. He has since given up his day job and is currently the British No 3 player. Mazdaen won the Funcom Gotenburg 2000 Tournament, won the Consolation Round in the Funcom Oslo 2001 Tournament and is currently the Funcom/Cases Ladder No 1 player

Mazdaen soon emerged as our Champion beating Dod 5-1.



Mazdaen, the event winner

Mazdaen (who is Danish) was presented with the trophy and the Snowie 3 C.D. Already a strong off-line and online player I'm sure this will further improve his backgammon.

Dod was awarded a smaller trophy and the one-year membership to BIBA. However, having won 10 tournament 11-pointers in a row, Dod is already a lifetime member of BIBA, so in keeping of the spirit of this event, said he would like to offer his prize to any player that who would care to put their names into a hat for a draw which was won by Grant. Mazdaen had to stand up again to receive his £80 prize pool and David and Daryll shared the £50 pool.

Doubles Knockout Report

The Swiss Tournament completed and prizes awarded we moved directly into the doubles tournament on Saturday evening. We were looking to inject some "fun" into this evening, following the more serious play of the day so, upon a player vote, we decamped to the YHA bar, cracked open the beer, found a wall for our score chart and outlined the prizes. Much hilarity followed.

The format of the tournament was to be a three-point knockout. We were 19 players. The YHA barman (Spiridon from Romania) had already indicated to me that he could play

backgammon. So it wasn't difficult for him to desert his bar, become a player and hand the running of the bar over to Alison who didn't really want to play anyway and is a barmaid to boot. We were up and running.

With 10 pairs registered, we had plenty of room for re-entries, much to the relief of Paul Lamford and Liz Barker (Fun and Games) who re-entered twice and still failed to make it past the first round. However, Liz took the opportunity to throw as many cocked dice as possible and won the big white fluffy pair.

The best team name went to MadFatMonkFish, a combination of Dod Davies (otherwise known as fatpiranha) and MikeMadMonk. They made it to the semi-final, where they were beaten, re-entered, and lost again in the other semi-final! Mike seemed pleased with his choice of dominant partner and took the opportunity to sit back and relax.

Zoe (an outgoing Greek) and Scouseicky (a jovial Liverpoolian, otherwise known as Alan) amusingly called themselves the Spice Girls. Zoe had spent the best part of the day grovelling on the floor trying to find her dropped dice and the evening was no exception. In her defense - she adapted wonderfully to the new experience of using dice cups. A set of juggling balls was awarded for her efforts.

Romnor (Spiridon and Frodostar from Norway) re-entered only to be beaten twice in the second round by MadFatMonkFish but I'm sure Spiridon enjoyed his evening's "work."

Danish Dynamite (Bedstefar and Mazda) also re-entered but were beaten by Marbles in the second round.

The BlueMoganners (which apparently means something Scottish) picked up a prize for something or other but for the life of me, I can't remember what! Possibly the silliest rolling action.

Wolfgang (Gamotto) came all the

way from Salzburg to pair up with Mike (Stanolli), all the way from Gloucestershire, to form the Chaps. They steamed through to the final (with no re-entries), to beat the Marbles (Nina and Grant) and then re-named themselves the Champs.

They took away a trophy each, Wolfgang was awarded a copy of Starting Out In Backgammon and Mike was awarded Associate membership to BIBA. But their triumphs were not over - they also won the prize for the most boring banter and gave the Marbles the prize for winning the fastest match (just 20 seconds I'm told.)

The majority of players were unaccustomed to live play, so the aim of the weekend was to introduce these players to different types of tournament formats. We also hoped that by playing as consulting pairs and hearing their opposition consulting that they would learn something new about the game. Ultimately, we wanted to have fun, and this tournament was, without a doubt, the most laughter-filled evening of weekend.

Tric Trac Tourno Report

So what are Tric Trac Tournos? A simple, fun backgammon tournament is the short answer.

A couple of years ago a friend of mine wanted to run a backgammon tournament in a pub and asked me to help set it up. At that stage in my life I knew very little about official backgammon tourney formats. Also the pub players were, I was told, casual backgammoners. Therefore we decided to run a league - all players play all players in a 1-point match. No doubling cube backgammon. Straight win = 1 point, gammon = 2 points, backgammon = 3 points. The evening was great fun.

Later I wrote an Internet version (maximum 12 players) of the format. To keep players that lost, say, their first five matches from just clicking off and leaving the tourno because they were doing badly, a ½ point for losing a match was introduced. This has been described as "very socialist" but if one remembers that the idea is to have fun, it works. It does make the

scores much closer, which increases both the fun and sociability of the event. It also means that players must, in order to win, play for gammons and backgammons. Because players are doing that, blots are a regular sight on the boards, which makes for interesting games. I've now run 19 of these Tric Trac Tournos on Funcom and they have proved very popular with the players.

I ran an online Tric Trac Tourno a week or so before Funcom Backgammon Live In London just for those coming to the weekend, so all the regular Funcom players knew what they were playing for. Indeed we had three (thegeneral, Scouseicky and Bedstefar) previous TTT winners present at Funcom Backgammon Live In London. We also had Paul Lamford (GandP) and John Broomfield (John B) playing. I was very interested to see how these (world-class) usually 11 point players would fare in these 1 pointers. Obviously luck can play an even higher part in such a short match. But could they use their undoubted skill to win over players who know from experience what they need to do?

We had 15 players - more that I would usually accept in an online TTT because this means 105 games in total. (66 games in a 12 player TTT.) Procedure and rules explained I wished all players res sucundae (good luck) and play commenced. To create an atmosphere of fast frantic fun, players play whoever is the next available player.

Game three produced our first gammon for Bedstefar against John B. By game 21 we had another 5 gammons, Cassie (v John B), Zoe, GandP, thegeneral and John B.

By game 42 we had another four gammons reported - Bedstefar and Cassie now had two and GandP was up to three. At the other end of the table Netmusen, Mazda and Scouseicky were not doing so well.

In game 43 GandP won a backgammon (three points) and had not yet lost a game. By game 63 John B was

on one gammon and one backgammon, Mazda woke up and now had a gammon (but six losses) Stanolli had one gammon no losses, Grant had one gammon, one loss, three straight wins and GandP had now lost one. Meanwhile I was seeing too much of Scouseicky, Alison and Whiteman (it's the loser that reports.) We were playing in a non-smoking room so for the smokers (the majority) there was an added incentive to win so they could go to the bar for a ciggie.

By the four-fifths of way through (84 games) GandP had yet another two gammons, Grant picked up another three, thegeneral was now on two gammons and David and Whiteman got their first gammons. Zoe and Nina were cruising along, Cassie looked like winning a backgammon but Bedstefar her hit last remaining checker on her 1 point and pulled it back to a straight loss.

GandP was the first player to finish, which gave him time to assess the standing as they were happening. In the match Zoe versus Alison I gather Zoe was telling Alison what to do and Alison came away with a gammon to her name! Grant, Stanolli and thegeneral were all a game or so behind others and GandP quickly worked out that he could be beaten if they scored well. By game 94 Stanolli lost one but picked up a gammon, Grant did the same and thegeneral won one.

If Grant (now on five gammons, four straight wins and three losses) could win his two last games by a gammon and backgammon he could win the tourno. But it wasn't to be and with a crowd looking on, Grant lost to both Stanolli and Bedstefar.

So GandP won and won handsomely by 3 ½ points. At one stage I was convinced that he was going to win it all without a single loss - something that has never been done in a TTT. However it was very interesting to see that a player can use his backgammon skills to win despite it only being 1-point matches.

So is there a future for such a Tourno format? Within the higher echelons of

the game, I'm sure not. But to Joe Public, who has no idea or wish to play doubling cube backgammon (the vast majority of those who say they can play this game) but wants an evening of competitive social backgammon I think it does.

I'll now run more offline and online TTT, so if you're anywhere near London or Funcom and you would like to give one a go, gimme a shout.

The Fox Reformed

The weekend was over. Or was it? Nope, Here in London we play backgammon at The Fox Reformed in Stoke Newington Church St on Monday evenings so Zoe and Stanolli joined us there too. Le Patron, Robbie, announced recent results, explained the format (16 player knockout with consolation round 5 pointers) and off we set.

Of the five Funcomers, Paul, Liz, Zoe and Stanolli all won their first round, Stanolli and Paul lost their second and Liz and Zoe went on to the Semifinals, but both lost there. Zoe carried on losing her dice and Stanolli learnt even more about live backgammon. I was so shattered after the weekend that I forgot to settle my bar bill, but did phone Robbie as soon as I got home to my cell and fell exhausted into bed.

UK Finals 2001 - 8/9 December

Report by Michael Crane

What a weekend! I can hardly focus on writing this report after imbibing copious quantities of our sponsors' donated prizes. This year we were sponsored by **Marston's Brewery** who very generously donated twenty crates of their special beer, *Double Drop*, to help ease the tension and stress caused by playing endless hours of backgammon. It's amazing what 240 bottles of beer can do!



Champion of Champions (7)

Usually we have eight (the pre-qualifiers) sitting down to fight it out for

this title on the Saturday afternoon, but, because of an Achilles' tendon injury, Brian Lever was unable to attend until the Sunday. Thus one of the remaining seven had a bye. This went to Mike Butterfield who was standing in for Dod Davis (see main). Mike made good use of this bye and went all the way to the final in which he defeated Salvador Leong to take the trophy and fifty quid from the C o C sponsor, Roy Hollands. Well done, Mike.

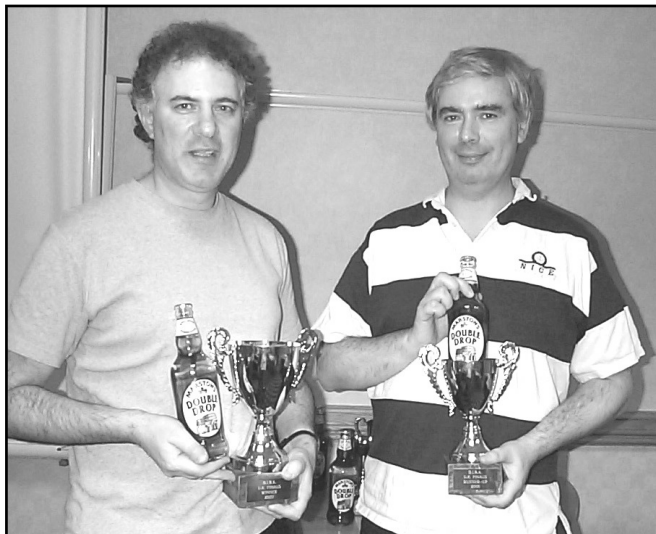
Main (62)

Sixty-two backgammon players were entered including the eight pre-qualifiers from the eight tournaments that comprise the UK Finals circuit. For those of you not familiar with the format, the UK Finals is a knockout competition of sixteen players, eight of which pre-qualify by winning certain tournaments throughout the year, and eight more from a qualifying tournament held on the Saturday of the Finals. Thus, our sixteen sat down on the Sunday to battle it out for the UK Champion title.

These sixteen players represented a total of twenty-one championship wins between them – a formidable field, you'll agree.

The first round saw the demise of half the pre-qualifiers (in bold), Paul Christmas, Paul Barwick, **Salvador Leong**, **Wayne Auty**, **Mike Butterfield** (who was a replacement for the actual qualifier, Dod Davis who was in Cancun, Mexico, relaxing after winning four competition in the Las Vegas Open!), **Steve Hallet**, Alan Greenwood and Uldis Lapikens.

In the next round, Helen Helm-Sagar, the only female qualifier from Saturday, had a tough draw against **Brian Lever** from which Brian emerged the victor. Peter Christmas fell to Richard



Main: Brian Lever & Paul Lamford

player by any definition with a total of nine championship titles and the current highest ranked player in Biba. And, he also writes books on backgammon!

Mardi just couldn't compete and it was Paul that went through to the semi-finals. Here he met, and defeated Steve John who had had a magnificent tournament. In the other semi **Brian Lever** despatched Richard Granville in a very close match; and thus we were left with a **Brian Lever vs Paul Lamford** final – two of the best players in the British Isles, and two of the pre-qualifiers.



Consolation: Paul Watts & Kevin Stebbing

Watched by several of their peers, Paul and Brian battled it out for the title. Could Brian deprive Paul of a tenth championship title and thus add to his own list? It wasn't that simple – playing against Paul never is, but, Brian proved to be a tough and worthy opponent and he eventually prevailed to limp away (he was on crutches at the time) with the trophy. Congratulations to Brian, and commiseration's to Paul.



Suicide!: John Renick & Tim Mooring

Progressive Consolation (60)

A progressive format always ensures a late finish, and this one proved it, finishing as it did at 7 o' clock on Sunday evening. Mind you, with seven rounds to play when coming from the non-progressive side, is it any wonder? This was the route taken by Paul Watts as he cleaved his way through the field to meet Kevin Stebbing from the progressive side in the Final. Kevin, a computer programmer by profession and a magician in his spare-time worked some legerdemain and left Paul in second place – unable to see how he lost!

Granville. Kevin Stebbing fell to Steve John, and in what would have been a good 'final', defending UK Champion, **Mardi Ohannessian** faced **Paul Lamford**. Paul is a *top*

Suicide (64)

After losing in all the other competitions held over the weekend, suicide is an apt name for this 3-pointer Knockout. An open field of sixty-four was drawn leaving plenty of re-entries for those players unable to get past the first couple of rounds. One such player who took advantage of this facility was Tim Mooring who lost initially to Arthur Williams in the 2nd round, but, after availing himself of a re-entry, played all the way to the Final.

Here he should have met yours truly, but, John Renicks had other ideas and he knocked me out in the semi-final and he went on the play Tim in my place. "Right, Tim," I said, "he's all yours." But, I was wrong, Tim was all his! John walked away from the table with his first ever Biba trophy – well done, John.

Friday Knockout (20)

The worlds' oldest backgammon player, Roy Hollands, had a late night on Friday (or should that be an early morning Saturday?) as he faced Edwin Turner in the final. Roy, with a string of letters after his name as long as the alphabet itself, proved no match for Edwin who brushed him aside and sent him to bed in second place.



Some of the delicious Double Drop



Grandfathers, Emmanuel Di Bona & Michael Crane showing the effects of too much beer!

Doubles Knockout (19 teams)

As usual we had our names competition and this time it was a close fought battle with some very good names indeed: *The Almost Graceful Bobby Tonto And His Inartistic Bridesmaid* was a very obscure one, unfortunately Bobby's bride never crossed the threshold of the first

round; *Smarticus* was a smart pun on a surname but not smart enough to make the semis; *For Fox Sake* had to be carefully pronounced, but they were out smarted; *Existence of Fish* was an existential entry whose own responsible acts took them out in the first round. The winner of the best name (earning them a crate of beer) was judged to be *Harry's Potty and the Philosopher's Stoned*. Unfortunately, being potty and stoned wasn't a good idea and they were knocked out in the semi-finals by *Throwing In The Wind*. *Throwing* then went on to win the final against two old farts, *Double Stubble Trouble* - who, in second place won a pack of Bic razors!

True to our sponsors the *Double Droppers* were deprived of maximum publicity for Marston's *Double Drop* by being knocked out in the first round – I blame the beer!

And finally . . . It was a great tournament. No problems to speak of, all of it running smoothly - thanks to the beer, no doubt. Mind you, sitting up until 3 o'clock Sunday morning drinking *Double Drop* wasn't a good idea although it did seem so at the time!

Cheers, Marston's. Thanks for sponsoring the UK Finals. If you wish to do it again next year, I'm willing. Hic!

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What a fantastic turnout, the biggest since the first one Bright 'n' Breezy in 1998 which attracted 107 entries, when Paul Magriel gave a seminar. One hundred and sixteen players sitting down to be whittled away to just one – what a fantastic sight.

Main (116)

In the first round there were a couple of draws that were worthy of 'final' status: John Clark fell to Dod Davies and Dale Taylor fell to Paul Lamford. Dod went on to make the last eight and Paul the last sixteen, being beaten by Peter Fallows. In the last sixteen we had four female players, Diana Sulimirski, Kerry Jackson, Helen Helm-Sagar (the defending champion) and Rachel Rhodes; of these four just two survived to the last eight:

Dod Davies vs Chris Bray
Raj Jansari vs Rachel Rhodes
Edwin Turner vs Kerry Jackson
Brian Busfield vs Peter Fallows

Chris, last year's losing finalist was knocked out by Dod; Rachel, 2000 British Champion, lost to Raj; Kerry lost to Edwin; and Peter lost to Brian. So, despite a determined effort by the ladies, none of them made it to the semi-finals.

In the semis, Dod played Raj, and Edwin played Brian. Both matches were very close but in the final point it was Dod and Brian who emerged as the finalists. Dod (who, in Las Vegas recently won four finals in one day!) was the favourite - not that that bothered Brian – his only concern was he'd not entered the 'Winner-Takes-All' prize fund! His failure to enter and subsequent loss of a potential £345, did not however affect his desire to win. He stormed through taking the title leaving Dod as runner-up and facing his first loss in a long time. Brian's non-participation in the prize

Bright 'n' Breezy 12/13 January

Report by Michael Crane

fund now means that it is rolled over to the next tournament, the Jarvis Trophy, in February with a starting sum of £345 – will it be won then or will it be rolled over again? My advice is to enter and try to win it!



Some of the 116 entrants battling away on the Sunday

Consolation (112)

With an entry in the Main of 116 it was inevitable that the progressive side of the Consolation would take a long time to reach a conclusion – which is what happened.

Playing on the non-progressive sheet, Bright 'n' Breezy regular, Barry McAdam played through six rounds to face David Nathan in the 'final' of the non-progressive draw. Despite his most valiant efforts, David had to settle for being a losing semi-finalist as Barry went through to the proper final. Here, entering from the Main last sixteen, Vianney Bourgeois, playing in his first Biba tournament, played against Paul Lamford who had entered via the Main last eight. Paul proved to be the stronger of the two and it was he that faced Barry in the final.

Having already won seven matches, Barry was not going to lose out on eight in a row, despite Paul's determination to the contrary. Determined as he was Paul, couldn't quite match Barry's determination and he had to settle for runner-up as Barry took first place.

Last Chance (72)

Tim Mooring, my *Assistant Director* has a good job – he plays and I direct! Luckily, for Tim, his wife Julie and my wife, Sharen both act as Assistant TDs so, most of the time he is free to play. He prosecuted this freedom to its fullest extent by playing through a distinguished field to sit down in the final to face Ray Kershaw. Ray, unfettered by any feelings that he ought



Main winner, Brian Busfield getting a snog from Julie



Dod Davies being cool

to be co-directing the tournament couldn't use this advantage over Tim to any effect and he had to settle for the runner-up trophy whilst Tim happily took first place. Julie was very pleased for Tim, not so much for the deserved victory but for the lovely prize money!

Tidal Wave(96 open)

Lots of re-entries here but neither finalist, Martin Barkwill or Dave Raynsford took advantage of them, both playing directly into the final from their one and only entry. Martin, a recipient of five Biba trophies over the years was guaranteed to add a sixth to his already buckling mantelpiece and Dave was looking forward to balancing his previous two with a third in the middle. Dave prevailed, although for him the addition of a third trophy was secondary to having his picture in the Bibafax for the first time since he joined Biba in February 1993. I hope he's happy now. He certainly looks it in the picture where he is, "The meat in a backgammon sandwich between Sharen and Julie!"

Friday Knockout (50)

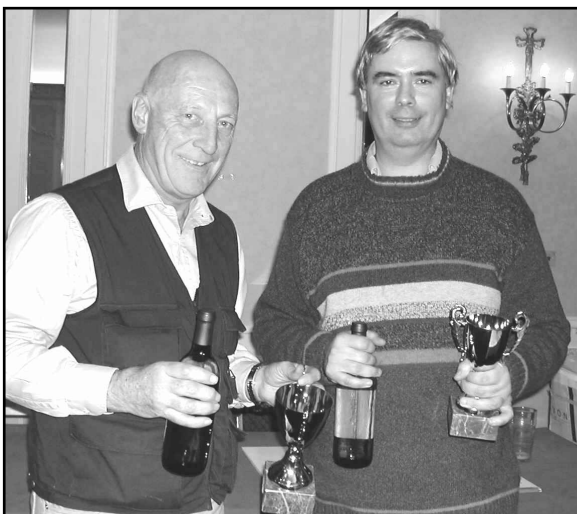
I haven't kept (handy) records of the entries for the Friday KO, but I am sure this is one of the biggest entries we've ever had. It would have been more but for the fact that I didn't play due to the expected late (or early morning) finish, and that six to eight players sat down for a poker session rather than play backgammon – turn-coats!

Top Biba player, Paul Lamford making fullest use of a first round bye, once again played all the way into the final where there he met Frenchman, Hubert De L'Epine who had approached the

same position from the first round. Evidently this longer route was too much for Hubert as Paul took first place and the weekend break prize.



**Last Chance Winner, Tim Mooring
and Runner-up, Ray Kershaw**



**Consolation Winner, Barry McAdam and
Runner-up, Paul Lamford**



**Tidal Wave Winner, Dave Raynsford enjoys his 'backgammon sandwich'
while Runner-up Martin Barkwill looks on**

Double Knockout (32)

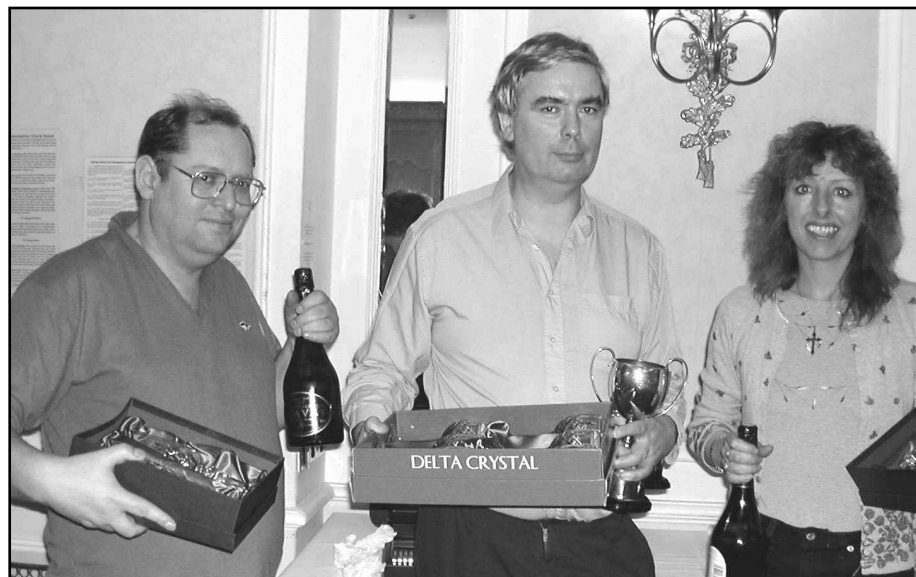
A good entry – especially from an admin point of view. The top name this time went to *Mid-point Crisis* although this wasn't my first choice, but it was the first choice of the judges. Mine was *The Will of Dod* who were 'barred' from their usual, *Dod Willing* by the judges! Other notable (and forgettable) names were: *Wot! No Beer?* A statement bemoaning the fact that the hotel had run out of proper beer (as opposed to lager). Where's 'Double Drop' when you need them? *Brighton Bitches*, they were; *Out Damned Blot*, who were, first round; *Double Whiskies From The Bar* clearly had one too many and fell in the first round; *Yanks and Wanks*, who pulled themselves all the way to the last eight to be felled by the father and daughter pairing of *Sweet & Sour*, she was, he wasn't; *Two Anchors*, not to be said too quickly proved to be a right pair; and finally, *Can't Have Your Kayak And Heat It*, which was a torturous punch-line from an equally torturous joke.

In the final, the rather banal named *Blues & Twos* battled it out with *Sweet & Sour*. The superior rolling of *Sweet* combined with the superior playing of *Sour* was no match for the *Blues & Twos*, and *Sweet & Sour* took home the lovely money.

Finally. It was an excellent tournament. I was very satisfied with the number of entrants, and, despite the large entry and the potential for conflict such numbers can fester, it was an incident free tournament. Unless of course, one counts the theft of my laptop computer as an incident!



After securely locking up the playing room and with the only access being that of the hotel cleaning staff, it was thought that the goods and equipment locked away would be in safe hands – how wrong I was. Overnight (Saturday) someone walked off with the laptop and the data from the weekend leaving me not only feeling physically sick but also racking my brains to remember what money was paid and by whom. The loss meant a lot of extra work from not just me but Sharen and Julie too; and a lot of work from me at home on the Tuesday on the PC trying to back-guess who had paid what in renewal fees. If I ever find the thief I'll shove the laptop right up where the sun doesn't shine until I bring tears to their eyes!



During the Brighton weekend we presented the prizes to the annual championship winners. In the picture above, Paul Lamford – Ranking and Grand Prix Champion, is flanked by the Ranking Runner-up, Jeff Barber and Grand Prix Runner-up, Helen Helm-Sagar

Jarvis trophy (80) Not a bad turnout, ten more than last year, perhaps due to the Prize Fund being rolled over from Brighton!

Jarvis Trophy 9/10 February
Report by Michael Crane

game. Well done David on your two-in-one feat.

David Startin played his way into the record books and Biba archives by winning six out of six, however, his 6th round win against John Slattery was only the last round because Ian Tarr, also on 5/5 in the 6th round, was beaten by Rodney Lighton, thus saving us a 7th round playoff.



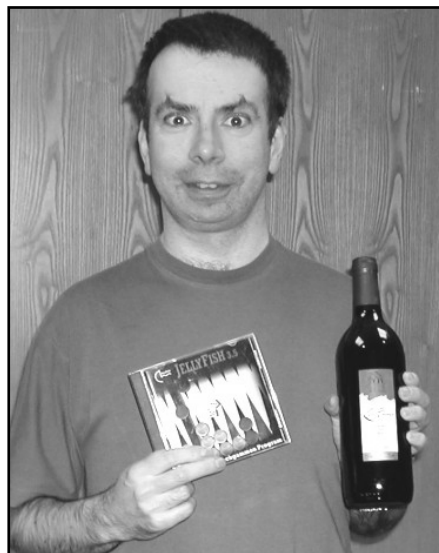
David Startin Jarvis 2002 Winner and Top Beginner

Ian had to settle for 3rd place behind John when the sums of opponents' scores were taken into consideration: John had 25, Ian had 22.

Edwin Turner was the Top Intermediate, and David Startin (yes, him again!) was Top Beginner! The Top Beginner is a new element and at each tournament the TB will win a copy of JellyFish Tutor to help them improve their



Edwin Turner
Top Intermediate



John Slattery
Runner-up

Friday KO (26) Bright 'n' Breezy winner, Brian Busfield (having failed to win the prize fund in Brighton) made the journey up to Coventry to try his luck (he didn't do it!) in the Jarvis. Neither did he win the Friday Knockout – that was won by Elliot Smart.

Doubles (15) Not a lot to say about the names this time, it seems that inspiration has fled to be taken over by ennui. The top name was *Lords of the Cube*. However, they were not Lords of the Game as they failed to get past the first round. The final was contested between old favourites *Thelma & Louise* and *All You Need Is Luck*. The former two had more luck than the latter two and *Thelma & Louise* drove off into the sunset clutching first place.



It is amazing to what lengths some backgammon players will go to to win a match. Here, Amy Woodward, playing in the third round of the Jarvis trophy, takes her top off in a brazen attempt to force her opponent (a happy Martin Sloane) into making an error. Martin, showing enormous self control averted his eyes (most of the time) and came out the winner. Mind you, it was several minutes before he could stand up and report his victory; something to do with cramp – or so he says!

Tournament Results

UK Finals 8/9 December 2001

Main (62)

- 1 Brian Lever
- 2 Paul Lamford
- 3/4 Richard Granville
- 3/4 Steve John
- 5/8 Helen Helm-Sagar
- 5/8 Peter Christmas
- 5/8 Kevin Stebbing
- 5/8 Mardi Ohannessian

Consolation (60)

- 1 Kevin Stebbing
- 2 Paul Watts
- 3/4 Tom Duggan
- 3/4 Paul Barwick
- 5/8 Mardi Ohannessian
- 5/8 Roy Holland
- 5/8 Edwin Turner
- 5/8 Alan Greenwood

Suicide (64)

- 1 John Renicks
- 2 Tim Mooring
- 3/4 Michael Crane
- 3/4 Dave Motley
- 5/8 Neil Young
- 5/8 Michael Damianou
- 5/8 Steve Hallet
- 5/8 John Slattery

Champion of Champions (7)

- 1 Mike Butterfield
- 2 Salvador Leong
- 3/4 Paul Lamford
- 3/4 Helen Helm-Sagar

Friday Knockout (20)

- 1 Edwin Turner
- 2 Roy Holland
- 3/4 John Slattery
- 3/4 Emmanuel Di Bona

Doubles (19)

- 1 Throwing In The Wind
- 2 Double Stubble Trouble
- 3/4 Batgirl & Boy Blunder
- 3/4 Harry's Potty and the Philosopher's Stoned

Best name: Harry's Potty and the Philosopher's Stoned

1000-To-1 February 2002

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Salvador Leong | 7 |
| Willy Stanton | 6 |
| David Startin | 6 |
| Tony Fawcett | 5 |
| Paul Barwick | 4 |
| Ray Mitchell | 4 |
| Emmanuel Di Bona | 4 |
| Glen Bollington | 4 |

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Brian Busfield | 4 |
| Martin Sloane | 4 |
| Jeff Ellis | 3 |
| James Hatt | 3 |
| Len Brailey | 3 |
| Richard Wenban | 3 |
| Charlie Hetherington | 3 |
| John Bazigos | 3 |

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| David Eggert | 3 |
| Richard Granville | 3 |
| Ewan McLeod | 3 |
| Nigel Buchan | 3 |

Bright 'n' Breezy 11/12 January 2002

<u>Main:116</u>			<u>Last Chance:72</u>			<u>Friday KO:50</u>		
1	Brian Busfield	15	1	Tim Mooring	6	1	Paul Lamford	
2	Dod Davies	13	2	Ray Kershaw	3	2	Hubert De L'Epine	
3/4	Edwin Turner	7	3/4	Andrew Kindler	1	3/4	Mark Lemon	
3/4	Raj Jansari	7	3/4	Sue Perks	1	3/4	Peter Bennet	
5/8	Chris Bray	4	5/8	Geoff Conn		5/8	Elliot Smart	
5/8	Rachel Rhodes	4	5/8	Colin Laight		5/8	Rowland Brindley	
5/8	Kerry Jackson	4	5/8	Mardi Ohannessian		5/8	Dave Motley	
5/8	Peter Fallows	4	5/8	Rebecca Brindley		5/8	Tony Lee	
<u>Consolation:110</u>			<u>Tidal Wave:96</u>			<u>Doubles:32</u>		
1	Barry McAdam	13	1	Dave Raynsford	3	1	Sweet & Sour	
2	Paul Lamford	6	2	Martin Barkwill	1	2	Blues & Twos	
3/4	David Nathan	4	3/4	Tom Duggan		3/4	Twenty-eight	
3/4	Vianney Bourgeois	3	3/4	Bob Parmley		3/4	Bright But Easy	
5/8	George Sulimirski	1	5/8	Graham Powell		Best name:Mid-point Crisis		
5/8	Mark Lemon	1	5/8	John Slattery				
5/8	Rachel Rhodes (see Main)		5/8	Andrew Sarjeant				
5/8	John Clark	1	5/8	Alan Beckerson				

Jarvis Trophy 9/10 February 2002

(Pos / Name / Wins / GP)

001 David Startin	6	15	035 Stuart Mann	3	1	070 Neil Young	1
002 John Slattery	5	10	035 David Fall	3	1	072 Arthur Williams	1
003 Ian Tarr	5	7	038 Matthew Fisher	3	1	073 Grant Dewsbury	1
004 Peter Bennet	5	7	038 Bob Young	3	1	073 Tim O'Hanlon	1
005 Paul Barwick	5	7	038 Paul Watts	3	1	075 Liz Barker	1
005 Emmanuel Di Bona	5	7	038 Ernie Pick	3	1	076 Steven Wilson	0
005 Rodney Lighton	5	7	042 Stuart Parmley	3	1	077 Rebecca Bell	1*
008 Kevin Williams	5	7	042 Dave Motley	3	1	078 Johan Salfors	1*
009 Tony Fawcett	5	7	042 John Renicks	3	1	079 Sarah Rosich	0*
010 Uldis Lapikens	4	3	045 Brian Lever	3	1	079 Amy Woodward	0*
011 Julian Minwalla	4	3	046 Paul Gilbertson	3	1	* Failed to complete	
012 Peter Chan	4	3	047 Peter watkins	3	1		
013 Tim Mooring	4	3	048 Jeff Barber	3	1	Friday KO (26)	
014 Jeff Ellis	4	3	048 Mike Wignall	3	1	1	Elliot Smart
014 Tony Lee	4	3	048 Gary Slocombe	3	1	2	Brian Busfield
016 Charlie Hetherington	4	3	051 Bill Pope	3	1	3/4	Rosey Bensley
016 Mardi Ohannessian	4	3	052 Andrew Sarjeant	2		3/4	Neil Young
016 Connor Dickinson	4	3	053 Paul Sambell	2		5/8	Paul Gilbertson
019 Stephen Drake	4	3	054 Sue Perks	2		5/8	Julian Minwall
019 Juliet Fennell	4	3	055 Jerry Smith	2		5/8	Edwin Turner
021 Richard Granville	4	3	055 John P Lewis	2		5/8	Sue Perks
021 Mike Greenleaf	4	3	057 Jacek Brzezinski	2		Doubles (15)	
023 Mark Flanagan	4	3	057 Colin Laight	2			
023 Edwin Turner	4	3	057 Vianney Bourgeois	2			
025 Mike Butterfield	4	3	060 Mike Waxman	2			
026 Rachel Rhodes	4	3	060 Kevin White	2		3/4	Gammoners
027 Brian Busfield	4	3	060 Elliot Smart	2		3/4	Essex Blitz
028 Martin Sloane	4	3	060 David Welch	2		Top Name: Lord of the Cube	
029 Peter Wilson	3	1	060 Aubrey Tapley	2			
030 Phil Caudwell	3	1	065 David Nathan	2			
030 Darryl Kirk	3	1	066 Simon Macbeth	2			
032 Peter Christmas	3	1	067 Steve Malins	2			
033 Tim Wilkins	3	1	068 Hubert De L'Epine	2			
033 Eddie Barker	3	1	069 Bob Parmley	1			
035 Roy Hollands	3	1	070 Rosemary Bensley	1			

February 2002 Active Rankings

(New / Old / Name)

1984	1984	Paul Lamford	1611	1644	Tim Wilkins	1452	1452	Robert Bush
1866	1866	Dod Davies	1611	1554	Rodney Lighton	1452	1452	John Napier
1854	1853	Mardi Ohannessian	1605	1612	Bob Young	1444	1491	Neil Young
1850	1879	Brian Lever	1594	1568	Rachel Rhodes	1443	1467	Jerry Smith
1830	1830	John Clark	1586	1586	Steve Rimmer	1441	1441	David Naylor
1806	1806	Julian Fetterlein	1584	1584	Francine Brandler	1439	1495	Arthur Williams
1775	1758	Richard Granville	1577	1608	Simon Macbeth	1435	1466	Andrew Sarjeant
1754	1735	Tony Lee	1576	1576	Harry Bhatia	1433	1433	Rob Dean
1743	1727	Brian Busfield	1574	1574	Simon Gasquoine	1431	1456	Colin Laight
1742	1742	Tim Cross	1573	1574	Peter Christmas	1429	1429	Will Richardson
1728	1679	John Slattery	1568	1542	Tim Mooring	1429	1429	Steve John
1727	1727	Danny Cohen	1567	1567	Kevin Stebbing	1419	1419	Nigel Coombes
1722	1722	Lawrence Powell	1566	1602	Mike Waxman	1418	1448	Steve Malins
1721	1721	Ralph Eskinazi	1564	1564	Alistair Hogg	1417	1455	Sarah Rosich
1714	1661	Ian Tarr	1560	1532	Mike Butterfield	1413	1342	Tony Fawcett
1710	1660	Jeff Ellis	1559	1559	Shaun Herd	1411	1411	Kevin Carter
1702	1702	David Gallagher	1554	1554	Jim Moore	1410	1400	Paul Watts
1690	1690	Graham Brittain	1549	1552	Phil Caudwell	1409	1409	Leslie Singleton
1688	1688	John Hurst	1542	1542	James Vogl	1404	1425	Kevin White
1672	1672	Salvador Leong	1541	1541	Wayne Auty	1403	1403	Steve Simkin
1668	1618	Emmanuel Di Bona	1530	1498	Edwin Turner	1403	1393	Peter Wilson
1662	1662	Mike Grabsky	1526	1526	John Thomas	1403	1412	Rebecca Bell
1656	1661	Jeff Barber	1522	1428	David Startin	1391	1390	John Renicks
1653	1657	Roy Hollands	1521	1448	Paul Barwick	1388	1379	Paul Gilbertson
1653	1653	Steve Pickard	1514	1514	Stavros Elia	1380	1380	Mark Oram
1647	1621	Charlie Hetherington	1510	1510	John Gale	1373	1373	Cliff Connick
1646	1646	Helen Helm-Sagar	1507	1476	Peter Chan	1363	1354	Ernie Pick
1645	1613	Uldis Lapikens	1504	1504	Michael Damianou	1359	1359	Malcolm Hey
1645	1645	Raj Jansari	1497	1494	Dave Motley	1354	1354	Don Hatt
1637	1644	David Fall	1494	1524	Jacek Brzezinski	1336	1360	John P Lewis
1636	1636	Chris Bray	1492	1488	Matthew Fisher	1320	1372	Rosemary Bensley
1635	1654	Stuart Mann	1488	1514	Elliot Smart	1320	1320	Andrew Maxwell
1622	1622	Kerry Jackson	1479	1443	Julian Minwalla	1314	1314	Shirley Innes
1622	1622	Gavin Crawley	1478	1478	John Wright	1305	1358	Bob Parmley
1620	1569	Peter Bennet	1468	1468	Suart Dewis	1305	1290	Mike Wignall
1618	1620	Bill Pope	1468	1468	Martin Hemming	1281	1281	Helen Dean
1616	1654	David Nathan	1466	1496	Hubert De L'Epine	1276	1294	Paul Sambell
1613	1613	Simon K Jones	1466	1466	Jeremy Limb			

February 2002 Pending Rankings

(Ranking / Name)

1793	Jim Johnson	1573	Martin Barkwill	1481	Lorenzo Rusconi
1787	Dave McNair	1534	David Hale	1474	Brendan Bemsley
1725	Simon Barget	1533	Mark McCluskey	1472	Blaine Buchanan
1724	Steve Hallet	1527	Theo	1470	Steve Lynch
1666	Richard Beagarie	1520	Alan Beckerson	1468	Neil Davidson
1640	Paul Turnbull	1520	Kyriacous Kyriacou	1459	Roz Nathan
1638	Gerry Corolan	1519	Paul Christmas	1458	Wayne Felton
1636	Rod Jones	1518	Tom Duggan	1452	Stuart Parmley
1626	Connor Dickinson	1510	Miles Ilott	1450	Winston<David
1623	Arthur Musgrove	1510	Vianney Bourgeois	1440	Liz Barker
1608	Corinne Sellers	1506	Kevin Williams	1439	Ian Shaw
1602	James Hatt	1505	David McNamara	1430	Jim Pennington
1587	Dave Raynsford	1499	Daphne Smith	1430	Alison Hobbs
1586	Ray Tannen	1497	Jyesn Qwt	1428	George Plant
1574	Dave Robbins	1487	Monica Beckerson	1428	Peter Murrell
1573	David Barker	1483	Sunni Nicholson	1425	Ian Sadler

February 2002 Grand Prix

(Name / GP Points)

David Startin	15	Rachel Rhodes	3	Peter Christmas	1
John Slattery	10	Mardi Ohannessian	3	Bill Pope	1
Paul Barwick	7	Richard Granville	3	Bob Young	1
Ian Tarr	7	Connor Dickinson	3	Stuart Parmley	1
Emmanuel Di Bona	7	Mike Greenleaf	3	Dave Motley	1
Peter Bennet	7	Brian Busfield	3	Stuart Mann	1
Rodney Lighton	7	Julian Minwalla	3	Peter Wilson	1
Tony Fawcett	7	Mike Butterfield	3	David Fall	1
Kevin Williams	7	Edwin Turner	3	Paul Gilbertson	1
Jeff Ellis	3	Juliet Fennell	3	Paul Watts	1
Uldis Lapikens	3	Martin Sloane	3	Mike Wignall	1
Peter Chan	3	Brian Lever	1	John Renicks	1
Tim Mooring	3	Phil Caudwell	1	Ernie Pick	1
Mark Flanagan	3	Tim Wilkins	1	Darryl Kirk	1
Stephen Drake	3	Roy Hollands	1	Gary Slocombe	1
Charlie Hetherington	3	Matthew Fisher	1	Peter watkins	1
Tony Lee	3	Jeff Barber	1	Eddie Barker	1

February 2002 Ranking Championship

(Name / Played / Score)

Brian Busfield	12	1862.00	Tony Lee	7	1622.14	Kevin Williams	6	1649.67
Edwin Turner	12	1816.83	Peter Christmas	7	1500.00	Mark Flanagan	6	1646.83
Rachel Rhodes	11	1710.09	Paul Gilbertson	7	1452.86	Juliet Fennell	6	1622.67
Mike Butterfield	10	1677.10	Ernie Pick	7	1439.29	Peter Watkins	6	1575.50
Peter Bennet	9	1795.78	John Renicks	7	1416.29	Peter Wilson	6	1560.00
Jeff Barber	9	1625.00	Sue Perks	7	1339.29	Bill Pope	6	1550.83
Dave Motley	9	1602.22	Elliot Smart	7	1334.86	Darryl Kirk	6	1539.17
Stuart Mann	9	1513.33	Andrew Sarjeant	7	1299.86	Brian Lever	6	1538.67
Simon Macbeth	9	1481.89	Paul Sambell	7	1276.14	Matthew Fisher	6	1528.17
Vianney Bourgeois	9	1452.67	Hubert de l'Epine	7	1258.29	Gary Slocombe	6	1495.33
Emmanuel Di Bona	8	1849.88	Liz Barker	7	1218.57	Phil Caudwell	6	1486.67
John Slattery	8	1805.88	Rosemary Bensley	7	1156.57	Stuart Parmley	6	1482.17
Tim Mooring	8	1660.50	Bob Parmley	7	1149.14	Eddie Barker	6	1473.17
Mardi Ohannessian	8	1643.88	David Startin	6	2051.00	David Welch	6	1407.17
David Fall	8	1580.38	Raj Jansari	6	1984.00	Kevin White	6	1403.00
Mike Wignall	8	1580.38	Paul Barwick	6	1960.50	Tim Wilkins	6	1398.67
Roy Hollands	8	1559.25	Ian Tarr	6	1900.67	Mike Waxman	6	1358.17
Bob Young	8	1554.75	Rodney Lighton	6	1883.50	Gerry Smith	6	1355.50
Paul Watts	8	1512.50	Jeff Ellis	6	1871.50	Jacek Brzezinski	6	1336.67
David Nathan	8	1427.88	Richard Granville	6	1763.00	Aubrey Tapley	6	1328.50
Colin Laight	8	1413.38	Julian Minwalla	6	1740.33	John P Lewis	6	1314.67
Neil Young	8	1314.75	Charlie Hetherington	6	1726.33	Steve Malins	6	1282.67
Dod Davies	7	1994.14	Peter Chan	6	1683.00	Arthur Williams	6	1222.67
Tony Fawcett	7	1735.71	Martin Sloane	6	1680.00	Grant Jewsbury	6	1209.50
Uldis Lapikens	7	1722.86	Conner Dickinson	6	1669.50	Tim O'Hanlan	6	1147.83
Mike Greenleaf	7	1626.86	Stephen Drake	6	1653.67	Stephen Wilson	6	1029.33

On the following pages I have reproduced the 11-point match winning percentages of all recorded 11-point matches.

I admit that due to missing records (databases on very old ZX81 computer - no longer in my possession) the numbers of 11-point matches played is incomplete. However it is complete enough to be used as a starting point.

I have chosen to show only players that have played a minimum of 24 matches. There are, of course, some erroneous results inasmuch as Simon Barget and Chris Bray (2nd & 3rd) have only played 39 and 24 matches respectively. This apart it still leaves Paul Lamford in 1st place - where he rightfully belongs.

February 2002 11 Point Win Percentage

(Name / Played / Won / %)

001	Paul Lamford	238	171	71.85	051	Barry Williams	105	64	60.95
002	Simon Barget	39	28	71.79	052	David Fall	97	59	60.82
003	Chris Bray	24	17	70.83	053	Lawrence Powell	79	48	60.76
004	Dod Davies	149	105	70.47	054	John Clark	191	116	60.73
005	Julian Fetterlein	27	19	70.37	055	Stuart Mann	89	54	60.67
006	Rick Janowski	168	117	69.64	056	Steve Hallet	124	75	60.48
007	Salvador Leong	46	32	69.57	057	Mark Leah	43	26	60.47
008	Jim Johnson	236	164	69.49	058	Andrew Grkow	48	29	60.42
009	Mark Adkins	78	54	69.23	059	Tim Found	48	29	60.42
010	Helen Helm-Sagar	29	20	68.97	060	Mike Waxman	158	95	60.13
011	Steve Bibby	96	66	68.75	061	Paul Turnbull	155	93	60.00
012	John Hurst	35	24	68.57	062	Jeff Barber	260	156	60.00
013	Nigel Merrigan	25	17	68.00	063	Tony Lee	50	30	60.00
014	Stephen Turner	93	63	67.74	064	Andrew Plater	25	15	60.00
015	Brendan Burgess	120	81	67.50	065	Roger Porter	154	92	59.74
016	Derek Matheson	181	122	67.40	066	John Wright	144	86	59.72
017	Mardi Ohannessian	165	111	67.27	067	Raj Jansari	57	34	59.65
018	Brian Lever	284	191	67.25	068	David Nathan	52	31	59.62
019	Peter Bennet	64	43	67.19	069	Dan O'Farrell	84	50	59.52
020	Dale Taylor	237	159	67.09	070	Mike Grabsky	163	97	59.51
021	Michael Brereton	24	16	66.67	071	Charlie Hetherington	116	69	59.48
022	Dave McNair	166	110	66.27	072	Richard Beagarie	123	73	59.35
023	Tim Cross	195	129	66.15	073	Danny Cohen	177	105	59.32
024	Brian Busfield	53	35	66.04	074	Richard Wenban	76	45	59.21
25	Mike Butterfield	53	35	66.04	075	Marc Steyvers	39	23	58.97
26	David Levi	38	25	65.79	076	Michael Steingold	29	17	58.62
27	Dave Coyne	32	21	65.63	077	Geoff Hall	38	22	57.89
28	Thomas Connor	169	110	65.09	078	Adam Jacobs	66	38	57.58
29	John Broomfield	249	162	65.06	079	Tim Wilkins	193	111	57.51
30	Geoff Oliver	120	78	65.00	080	Mike Loughman	68	39	57.35
31	Stefan Paliwoda	37	24	64.86	081	Nigel Gibbions	68	39	57.35
32	Philip Ward-Ackland	105	68	64.76	082	Simon K Jones	171	98	57.31
33	Murray Henderson	28	18	64.29	083	John Slattery	145	83	57.24
34	Richard Granville	153	98	64.05	084	Simon Baker	133	76	57.14
35	Gerry Corolan	25	16	64.00	085	Jeff Ellis	258	147	56.98
36	Nev Hyde	36	23	63.89	086	Tom Breheny	102	58	56.86
37	Graham Sievers	91	58	63.74	087	Peter Ozanne	88	50	56.82
38	Michael Crane	85	54	63.53	088	Graham Brittain	148	84	56.76
39	Rodney Lighton	30	19	63.33	089	Roy Hollands	261	148	56.70
40	Gavin Crawley	27	17	62.96	090	Ken Staines	117	66	56.41
41	Connor Dickinson	24	15	62.50	091	David Gallagher	172	97	56.40
42	Joseph Levy	32	20	62.50	092	Alistair Hogg	142	80	56.34
43	Paul Cohen	24	15	62.50	093	Ewan McLeod	32	18	56.25
44	Paul Money	111	69	62.16	094	Shahid Baig	25	14	56.00
45	Arthur Musgrove	42	26	61.90	095	David Hale	25	14	56.00
46	Ray Tannen	60	37	61.67	096	Ian Tarr	238	133	55.88
47	Adrian Chambers	52	32	61.54	097	Paul Grant	34	19	55.88
48	Ralph Eskinazi	205	126	61.46	098	Rachel Rhodes	115	64	55.65
49	Simon Osborne	132	81	61.36	099	Romolo Mudu	72	40	55.56
50	Francine Brandler	31	19	61.29	100	Steve Pickard	126	70	55.56



101	Martin Lee	154	85	55.19	155	Miles Illott	56	28	50.00
102	Uldis Lapikens	254	140	55.12	156	K. Charalambous	24	12	50.00
103	Keith Screene	49	27	55.10	157	Rob Dean	182	91	50.00
104	Kevin Stebbing	89	49	55.06	158	Andrew Sarjeant	76	38	50.00
105	Richard Howes	120	66	55.00	159	Jim Pennington	24	12	50.00
106	Dave Raynsford	91	50	54.95	160	Tony Beckerson	95	47	49.47
107	Martin Barkwill	139	76	54.68	161	Peter Fallows	75	37	49.33
108	Bill Spiers	77	42	54.55	162	Steve Malins	61	30	49.18
109	Simon Gasquoine	132	72	54.55	163	Tim Mooring	192	94	48.96
110	Raymond Kershaw	33	18	54.55	164	Hubert De L'Epine	45	22	48.89
111	Dave Motley	103	56	54.37	165	Mark Flanagan	78	38	48.72
112	Phil Caudwell	186	101	54.30	166	Colin Laight	56	27	48.21
113	Corinne Sellers	70	38	54.29	167	Julian Hayward	188	90	47.87
114	Bob Young	131	71	54.20	168	Rosalie Johnson	220	105	47.73
115	Richard Gibney	48	26	54.17	169	George Plant	86	41	47.67
116	Shay Shannon	24	13	54.17	170	Suart Dewis	143	68	47.55
117	Martin Sims	24	13	54.17	171	Peter Gittins	38	18	47.37
118	Graham Powell	111	60	54.05	172	Jimmi Wong	36	17	47.22
119	John Thomas	185	100	54.05	173	Paul Heaton	36	17	47.22
120	Bill Pope	161	87	54.04	174	Stuart Milbourne	70	33	47.14
121	Nick Check	141	76	53.90	175	Nigel Hurneyman	32	15	46.88
122	Peter Christmas	195	105	53.85	176	Neil Clarke	47	22	46.81
123	Rod Jones	117	63	53.85	177	Paul Barwick	283	132	46.64
124	Alan Beckerson	216	116	53.70	178	Bob Freeman	88	41	46.59
125	Peter Walker	41	22	53.66	179	Jack Darian	28	13	46.43
126	Emmanuel Di Bona	179	96	53.63	180	Patrick Campbell	84	39	46.43
127	Chris Andrescu	28	15	53.57	181	Gerry Cornish	91	42	46.15
128	Robert Bush	28	15	53.57	182	Monica Beckerson	211	97	45.97
129	James Grenier	30	16	53.33	183	Michael Proto	59	27	45.76
130	Shaun Herd	124	66	53.23	184	John Gale	59	27	45.76
131	Jim Moore	113	60	53.10	185	Cato Fordham	33	15	45.45
132	Neil Webb	83	44	53.01	186	Michael Damianou	33	15	45.45
133	Leslie Singleton	34	18	52.94	187	Dave Clifton	141	64	45.39
134	Michael Earnshaw	110	58	52.73	188	Conrad Cooper	42	19	45.24
135	Kerry Jackson	74	39	52.70	189	David Bridges	31	14	45.16
136	Ray Pelly	105	55	52.38	190	Paul Buckley	31	14	45.16
137	James Hatt	42	22	52.38	191	Peter Wilson	80	36	45.00
138	Simon Morris	109	57	52.29	192	Mahmoud Jahanbani	29	13	44.83
139	Matthew Fisher	163	85	52.15	193	Stavros Elia	56	25	44.64
140	Phil Charlton	150	78	52.00	194	Wai Mun Yoon	36	16	44.44
141	Julian Minwalla	50	26	52.00	195	David Edwards	43	19	44.19
142	Bill Brierley	54	28	51.85	196	Rosemary Bensley	68	30	44.12
143	Jens Neregaard	27	14	51.85	197	Paul Seaton	59	26	44.07
144	Julian Hayhurst	56	29	51.79	198	Malcolm Hey	84	37	44.05
145	Steve Rimmer	64	33	51.56	199	Barry Teece	25	11	44.00
146	Alan Lennox-Smith	97	50	51.55	200	Tony Fawcett	25	11	44.00
147	Paul Christmas	68	35	51.47	201	Kate Porter	87	38	43.68
148	Jacek Brzezinski	138	71	51.45	202	Karen Proto	55	24	43.64
149	Brian Jackson	37	19	51.35	203	Steve Taylor	55	24	43.64
150	Jeremy Limb	41	21	51.22	204	Laura Walker	78	34	43.59
151	John Dean	96	49	51.04	205	Bernadete Santos	39	17	43.59
152	Philip Tabberer	67	34	50.75	206	Steve Simkin	46	20	43.48
153	Stuart Patterson	42	21	50.00	207	Bob Parmley	180	78	43.33
154	Steve Bland	48	24	50.00	208	Karen Hare	44	19	43.18

209	Mark Tucker	86	37	43.02	249	Alison Jones	32	12	37.50
210	John Kane	42	18	42.86	250	John Hamlen	24	9	37.50
211	Guy Rankin	28	12	42.86	251	Carl Dell	116	43	37.07
212	Lionel Mann	108	46	42.59	252	Giovanna Bett	54	20	37.04
213	Ann Maher	40	17	42.50	253	Mike Wignall	46	17	36.96
214	Ergin Ahmet	40	17	42.50	254	John Azraq	58	21	36.21
215	Michael Maley	66	28	42.42	255	Anna Hayward	28	10	35.71
216	David Naylor	45	19	42.22	256	Carl Jones	48	17	35.42
217	Mike Shelton	100	42	42.00	257	Harry Bhatia	51	18	35.29
218	Cliff Connick	206	86	41.75	258	Helen Clarke	60	21	35.00
219	Gill Horne	36	15	41.67	259	Sherry Taylor	60	21	35.00
220	Tahir Babar	24	10	41.67	260	Pamela Hare	119	41	34.45
221	Chris Evans	48	20	41.67	261	John P Lewis	161	55	34.16
222	Neil Jackson	29	12	41.38	262	Keith Hancock	60	20	33.33
223	Steve Field	29	12	41.38	263	Jon Forshaw	60	20	33.33
224	Peter Chan	213	87	40.85	264	Zoe Gregory	27	9	33.33
225	Alan Farrell	54	22	40.74	265	Andrew Baxter	30	10	33.33
226	Geoff Page	54	22	40.74	266	Will Richardson	115	38	33.04
227	Derek Irwin	27	11	40.74	267	Mike Curtis	56	18	32.14
228	Don Hatt	163	66	40.49	268	Jordan Wensley	28	9	32.14
229	Jerry Smith	57	23	40.35	269	Sima Sahami	28	9	32.14
230	Anna Price	77	31	40.26	270	Brian Tilley	25	8	32.00
231	Pauline Rowlands	97	39	40.21	271	Sarah Rosich	25	8	32.00
232	Raymond Bramzel	30	12	40.00	272	Paul Gilbertson	54	17	31.48
233	Alan Greenwood	65	26	40.00	273	Paul Sambell	46	14	30.43
234	Martin Blindell	35	14	40.00	274	Ro Marsh	25	7	28.00
235	Stuart Parmley	25	10	40.00	275	Brian Algar	36	10	27.78
236	Kevin White	88	35	39.77	276	Matthew Curtis	37	10	27.03
237	Angela Dell	106	42	39.62	277	Sue Perks	70	18	25.71
238	Carol Southby	84	33	39.29	278	Susie Green	39	10	25.64
239	Matthew Pinnell	41	16	39.02	279	Paul Edwards	43	11	25.58
240	Rob Walk	31	12	38.71	280	William Caudwell	24	6	25.00
241	Caroline East	31	12	38.71	281	Shirley Innes	67	15	22.39
242	Keith Robertson	44	17	38.64	282	Helen Dean	132	29	21.97
243	John Renicks	29	11	37.93	283	Zoe Mann	42	9	21.43
244	Peter Davis	24	9	37.50	284	Liz Morgan	42	9	21.43
245	Liz Jackson	24	9	37.50	285	Bob Atkins	48	10	20.83
246	Johann Waterworth	24	9	37.50	286	Margaret Algar	36	6	16.67
247	Don O'Neal	32	12	37.50	287	Andrew Maxwell	26	4	15.38
248	John Baucher	24	9	37.50					

David Naylor



Corner section showing glued and screwed checker housing



Very strong, reliable and harmonious leather closure



Leather covered brass checkers in various colours



Hand-stitched, lipped and lined shakers in top quality leather



Hard wearing and extremely strong 16mm brass hinges



Screwed leather handle for maximum security

The unique, David Naylor doubling cube



Discover the Beauty of Leather in its Greatest Form - BACKGAMMON

David has been building leather backgammon boards for over 20 years at his workshops in the Italian Alps and now in his London workshop. All leather used is finest Tuscan quality selected personally by David himself.

For further details contact Michael Crane on 01522 829649, email dnb@backgammon-biba.co.uk

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