

Editor/Publisher: Michael Crane

2 Redbourne Drive

Lincoln. LN2 2HG

Office/Fax: 01522 888676

Home: 01522 829649

Mobile: 07711 361566

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Newsletter of the British Isles
Backgammon Association

Email: info@backgammon-biba.co.uk

www.backgammon-biba.co.uk



**Dedicated To
Backgammon**



**John Slattery
Backgammon Grandmaster**

Details from page 61 ▷

The World Cup Challenge VII

7-12 January 2003
Bucharest - Romania

\$50,000

Added Prize Money

For information -
Tournament director:
Abraham Eitan
Email: eitanbg@zahav.net.il
Tel/ Fax: +972- 3- 751- 6912
Mobile: +972-52-581-329

Tournament website:
www.playmaker-world.com/bucharest

Hotel Reservation-
Special Rates:
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Deluxe Room: \$115
Reservation can be made only
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**The masters tournament & warm up
5-7 January 2003**

The world Grand Backgammon Championship

2-8 December 2002

The highest ever added prize of

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For information -

Tournament director:
Abraham Eitan

Email: eitanbg@zahav.net.il

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**The World Grand Jackpot
29 November – 2 December**

You Can be a World Class Player- Guaranteed

By Roy Hollands

Snowie Professional calculates the equities of moves within a match (or game) and hence gives values to cube and checker play errors and blunders.

Based on the error rate Snowie gives the following scale:

0.0-1.2	Extra-terrestrial
1.2-4.4	World class
4.4-5.9	Expert
5.9-8.8	Advanced
8.8-12.6	Intermediate
12.6-18.5	Beginner
18.5+	Novice

The luck factor in backgammon has a far greater effect in a short match, as opposed to a long one, when the skill factor has had time to take effect.

In many short matches, even those you lose, there may be few opportunities to make errors. By concentrating on 1 point matches you will soon find you can reach World Class in some of them. Play Snowie, twenty 1 point matches, and, if you are not a World Class player in at least one of them make sure you keep your day job.

It is instructive to see the grades for each game in the 2001 World Championship Final in Monte Carlo. This was won by Jorgen Granstedt of Sweden with Thomas Holm of Denmark being the runner up.

All of the match details below are taken from that excellent website, Gammon Village. A visit is a must. See www.gammonvillage.com for details.

I have made extensive use of Gammon Village. For the full match analysis go the Gammon Village **Home Page**, click on **School**, then **Bot** and scroll down to the appropriate match. All comments within this article are mine.

Game	Granstedt	Holm
1	Beginner	Advanced
2	Expert	World Class
3	Extra –terrestrial	World Class
4	Advanced	World Class
5	World Class	World Class
6	World Class	Intermediate
7	Beginner	Novice
8	Advanced	Beginner
9	Beginner	Extra-terrestrial

10	World Class	World Class
11	World Class	Extra-terrestrial
12	Advanced	Novice
13	World Class	Advanced
14	World Class	Advanced
15	World Class	World Class
16	World Class	Extra-terrestrial
17	Extra-terrestrial	Advanced
18	Advanced	World Class
19	Intermediate	Advanced
20	World Class	Novice
21	World Class	Expert
22	Expert	Expert
23	Extra-terrestrial	World Class
24	Extra-terrestrial	World Class

The overall grades for the whole match were Granstedt, Expert, and Holm Advanced. However, within the match, how can two such brilliant players have grades of Beginner and Novice in Game 7? Let's find out.

All the moves for this game are given. No diagram or equities are given if the player and Snowie choose the same move.

Match to 25 points.

Game 7

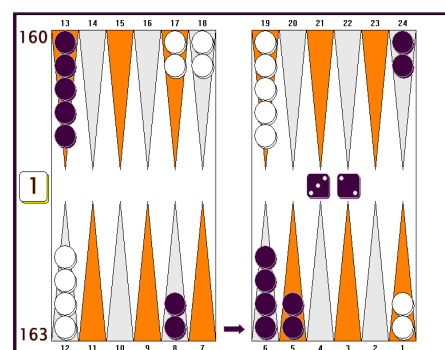
Granstedt (Black) 10

Holm (White) 2

01) 31:8/5 6/5

61:13/7 8/7

Black to play 32



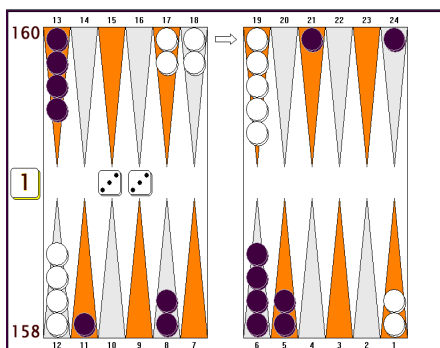
Move	Equity
24/22 13/10	0.086
24/21 13/11	0.072 *
13/10 13/11	0.045
24/21 24/22	0.037
3/8	0.024

Little to choose between 24/22 13/10 and 24/21 13/11. 24/22 13/10 brings down a builder for the 4-point

but the split to the 22-point is slightly inferior to the 21-point.

02) 32:24/21 13/11

White to play 33

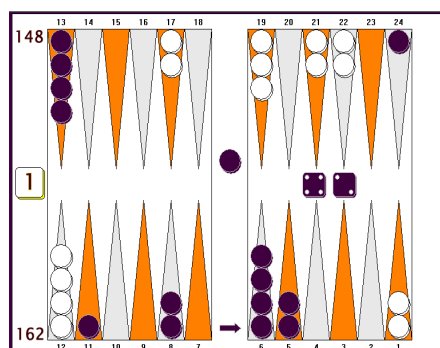


Move	Equity
8/5(2) 7/4*(2)	0.309
7/4*(2) 6/3(2)	0.299 *
24/21(2) 7/4*(2)	0.209
24/18(2)	0.196
24/21(2) 6/3(2)	0.160

After 7/4*(2) Snowie has a slight preference for making the best point on the board with 8/5(2). Also very good is 6/3(2) as this accepts the inferior 3-point but un-stacks the heavy 6-point.

33: 7/4*(2) 6/3(2)

Black to play 42



Move	Equity
bar/23 24/20	-0.311
bar/23 13/9	-0.344 *
bar/23 11/7	-0.460
bar/23 6/2	-0.513
bar/23 8/4	-0.891

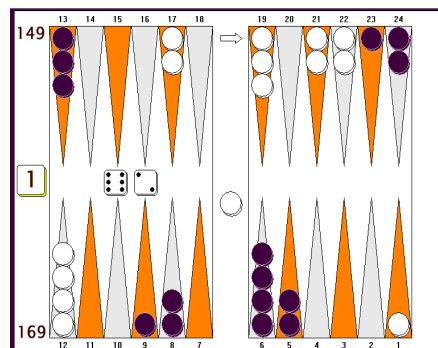
After bar/23 Snowie's 24/20 is preferable to Black's 13/9. It is better prepared to escape or make the 20-point before White improves his outer board.

03) 42: bar/23 13/9

62: 24/16*

04) 21: bar/24 11/9*

White to play 62



Move	Equity
bar/23 24/18	0.348
bar/23 8/2*	0.208 *
bar/23 13/7	0.138

Alert: Blunder (0.141)

A serious blunder. Nice if one gets away with it but gives away all the present advantage if hit back. Better to keep the valuable 8-point and try to escape a back checker or establish an anchor.

62: Bar/23 8/2*

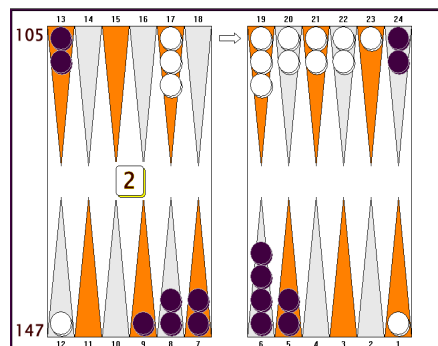
05) 56: bar/14

55: 23/13 13/8(2)

06) 32: 14/9

44: 13/5(2)

07) 62: 13/7 9/7



White doubles.

Cube action equity Alert: Wrong double

No double	0.396
Double, take	0.330
Double, pass	1.000
Proper cube action:	No double, take

White's blockade is impressive and many would double in this situation. However, as the equity of 0.259 suggests it is nowhere near a double. Black's 43.1% wins confirms this.

Double

08) Take.

44: 13/5 8/4 6/2

09) 64: 13/7 13/9

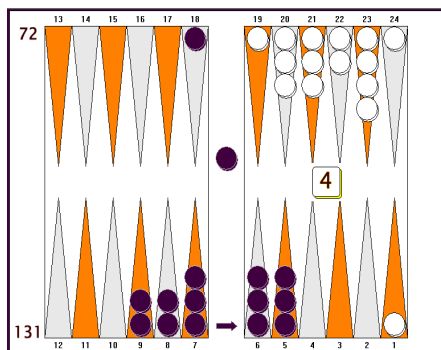
66: 8/2 (2)

10) 61: 24/18 6/5

65: 6/1*

Continued on the next page . . .

Black re-doubles to 4



Cube action equity Alert:

Wrong double, wrong pass

No redouble 0.625

Redouble, take 0.385

Redouble, pass 1.000

Proper cube action: No redouble, take

11) Double
Pass

Black hits with 20 numbers and misses with 16. Even if he is not hit White still has to escape his back checker. Borderline doubles are always justified if you think there is a good chance your opponent will pass. Trailing 10-2 and with 28% chance of winning it is a clear take. Note that Black gave up a massive

Game 7 detailed statistics

Player	Jorgen Granstedt	Thomas Holm
Rating	beginner	novice
Overall	15.960/1.461	46.191/4.007
Errors(blunders) 2(1)		3(2)
<u>Checker play errors</u>		
Checker play	2.615/0.130	8.373/0.415
Errors(blunders) 1(0)		1(1)
<u>Double errors</u>		
Overall	13.345/1.332	3.624/0.180
Missed double	0.000/0.000	0.000/0.000
Wrong double	13.345/1.332	3.624/0.180
Errors(blunders) 1(1)		1(0)
<u>Take errors</u>		
Overall	0.000/0.000	34.194/3.412
Wrong take	0.000/0.000	0.000/0.000
Wrong pass	0.000/0.000	34.194/3.412
Errors(blunders) 0(0)		1(1)

0.240 in equity by doubling if White took. White gave up 0.375 by failing to take.

I would like to thank Michael Strato of Gammon Village for his permission to use this match; and also Jorgen Granstedt and Thomas Holm for a great Final.

Hilton Trophy Final

Julian Fetterlein talks us through it

When I used to play regularly in the top London clubs hardly a week went by without a new self-proclaimed "Best player in the country" walked through the doors. It didn't take long for one of the local wits to remark "Him, he's not even the best player in his own postcode!" Since I moved to Cheltenham in Gloucestershire last year I felt confident that I now truly was the best player in my own postcode.

In the recent Hilton Trophy final I played Mike Greanleaf, who it transpires, also hails from Cheltenham. So as well as the Hilton Trophy the "strongest player in GL50 postcode" was also at stake!

11 point match

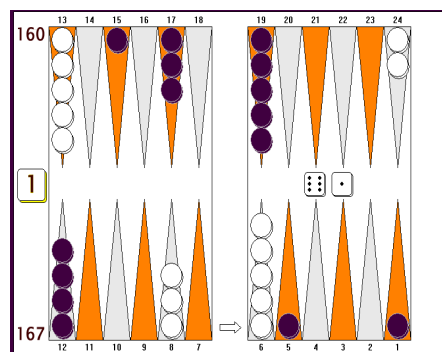
Game 1



(Black)
Fetterlein : 0

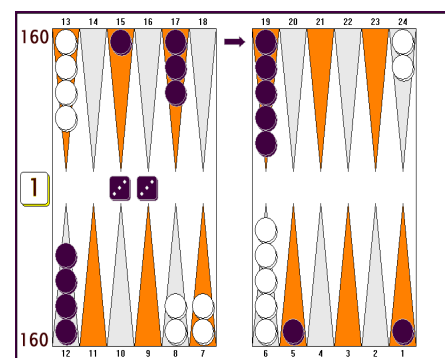
(White)
Greenleaf : 0

01) 43: 24/20 13/10



61: 13/7 8/7

I have a slight preference for 6/5* 24/18 but there is nothing wrong with white's solid choice.

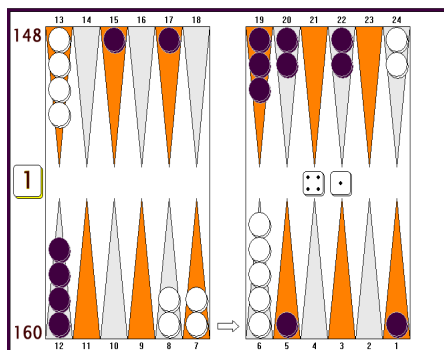


02) 33: 8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3

With the back checkers split building a board to make return hits effective takes precedence.

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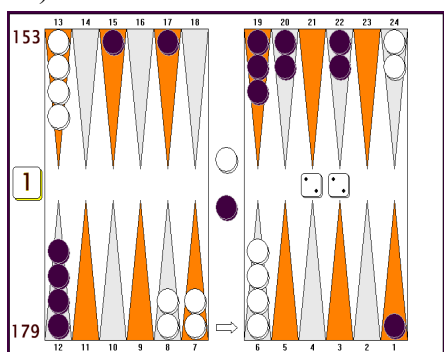




41: 6/5* 5/1*

White hits twice, not primarily to blitz, but to hope to pick off black's outfield blots.

03) 61: 25/24*



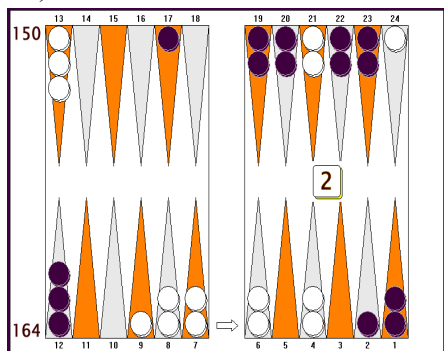
22: 25/21 6/4 6/4

After entering and building the four point 13/11 is a reasonable alternative

04) 61: 25/24 10/4* 31: 25/21*

05) 62: 25/23 8/2 43: 13/9 24/21

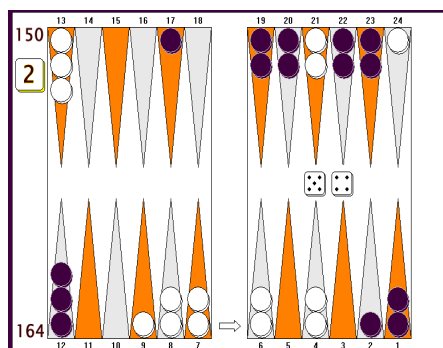
06) 54: 13/8 6/2 Doubles to 2



07) Takes

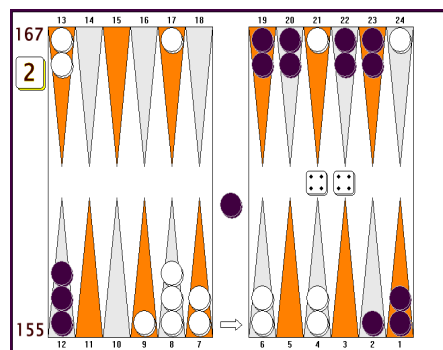
White's advanced anchor and growing blockade certainly give him the advantage but Black's small lead in the race combined with his four point board make this an easy take. Snowie live cube rollouts show White's equity as 0.465 before the double and 0.382 after the take. However there is a

substantial rating difference and it is a good idea to explore you opponent's cube action early in the match.



54: 13/8 21/17*

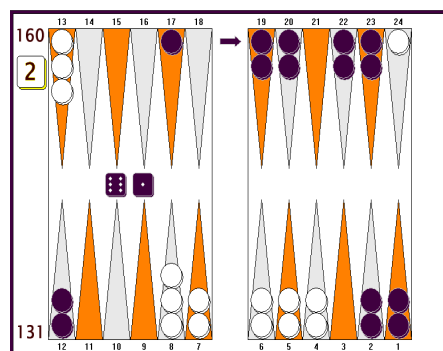
Since the back checkers are in little danger Snowie has a small preference for making 5 points out of 6 with 13/9 21/16 but White's move is not an error.



08) 44:

44: 17/5 9/5

After making the 5 point I prefer making the 17 point with the last 4 which will give black bad 5's, Snowie considers both moves about equal.



09) 52: 25/23 13/8

62: 21/13

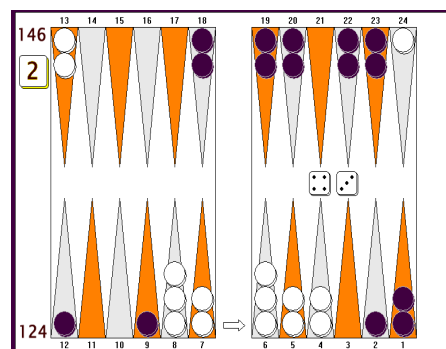
10) 61: 13/7 8/7

To say Black's back game prospects are not too good is a serious

understatement. He needs to trail by about 100 pips to successfully time the backgame and he only trails by about 30. In addition White has already completed a five prime so attempting to recirculate extra checkers is doomed to failure. Black should play 23/16 which frees another checker and reduces his gammon danger. This is the first blunder of the match costing 0.145 equity.

52: 13/6

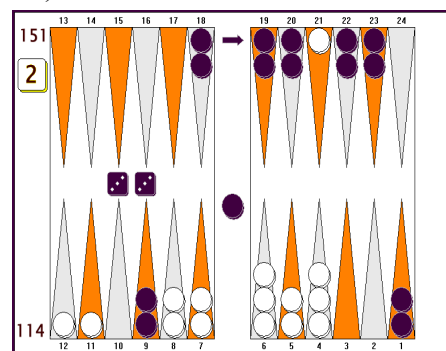
11) 61: 23/16



43: 8/4 24/21

White is presumably worried about helping Blacks timing by hitting but the checker on the 16 point is Blacks timing, so the reverse is true; failure to hit is a blunder costing 0.200

12) 61: 23/16 21: 13/11 13/12*



13) 33: 25/22 16/13* 7/4* 7/4

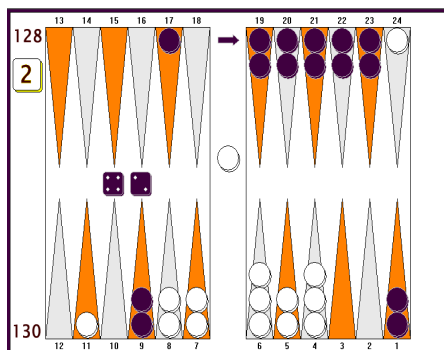
A monster joker improving Blacks equity by 1.2 points !

41: 25/24

14) 65: 22/16 13/8

64:

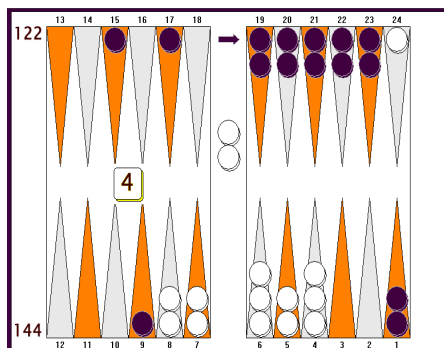
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15) 42: 16/14* 14/10

This play is based on an overvaluation of my position. I thought that by removing his last checker from the outfield his prime would collapse as soon as he entered. Unfortunately White is by no means certain of entering before Black runs out of time. Snowie prefers to get the back checkers moving with 24/22 16/12 by 0.080.

52:



16) Doubles to 4

This is a serious blunder. Black continues to over estimate his chances. After giving away the cube it's not even certain that he will win the majority of games.

Jelly and Snowie both agree:

No Double, Take

Does having to roll 2s followed by 6s have some bearing? MC

17) 33: 10/1* 8/5

Takes

18) 65: 16/5

19) 62: 24/16

20) 33: 16/7 5/2

21) 64: 7/1 5/1

22) 31: 6/3 6/5

23) 41: 5/1 2/1

43:

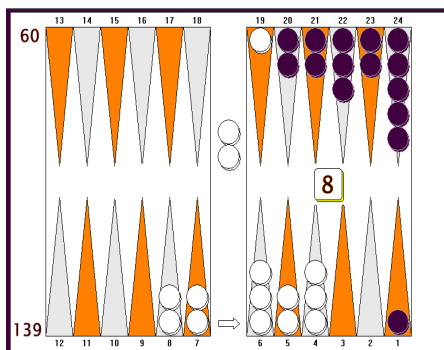
63:

63:

52:

66:

61: 25/19



Doubles to 8

White again doubles aggressively

24) Drops

For money this would be an easy take with recube leverage and gammons both working in Black's favour. However 8-0 down to 11 only gives 10% match equity, so White can take a recube with only 10% winning chances and blacks undoubled gammons are only worth the same. I was reluctant to gamble the entire match on one game which was essentially a dice-rolling contest. Black however wins 36% of the games from this position and twice as many gammons as White. Passing increases White's match winning chances by almost 10%.

Wins 4 points

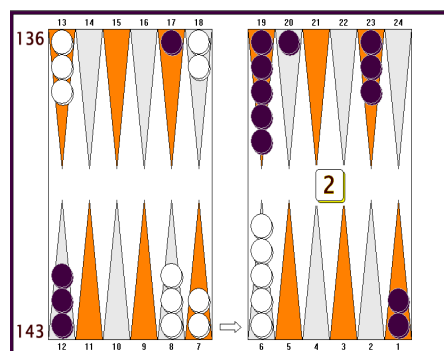
Game 2

Fetterlein : 0 Greenleaf : 4

01) 52: 13/8 13/11

66: 24/18 24/18 13/7 13/7

02) 66: 11/5 8/2 8/2 8/2



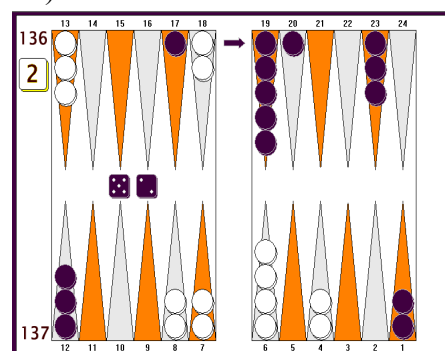
Doubles to 2

Fortunately I had looked at the variants with alternate 66's a couple of weeks before. In a money

game white should only double if blacks first move is 51 13/8 24/23. Here Black's position is better with only 3 checkers on the 2 point and the 5 point slotted. White should be slower to double with his four point lead in the match and Snowie rates Whites double as losing 0.075 equity.

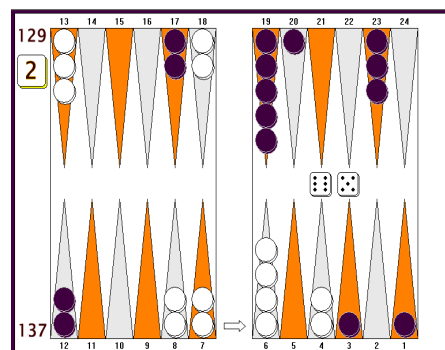
03) Takes

42: 8/4 6/4



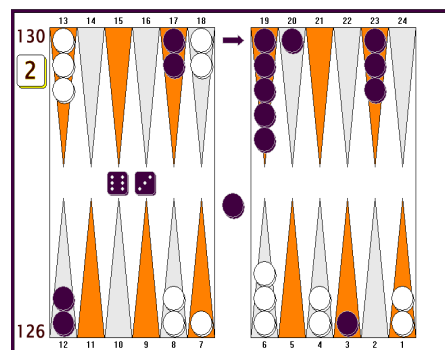
04) 52: 13/8 24/22

Making the 8 point and splitting accomplishes two gains while making the 3 point only one.



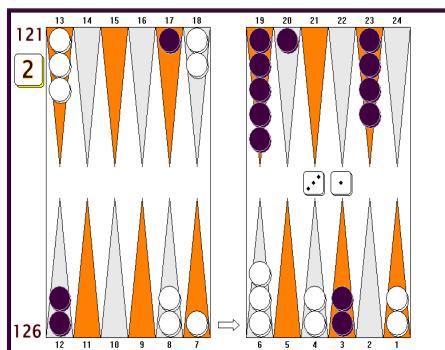
65: 7/1* 6/1

Going for the prime with 13/7 13/8 is equally good, it is simply a matter of taste.



05) 63: 25/22 8/2

Holding the 22 point halves Whites gammons and is well worth burying a fourth checker on the 2 point.



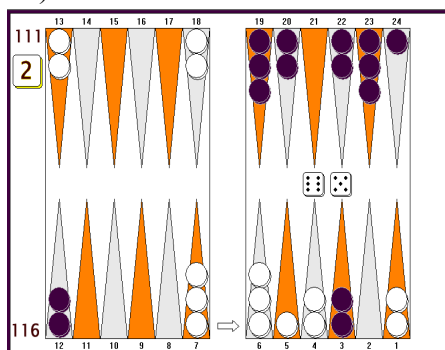
31: 8/5 8/7

White attempts to exploit Black's weak home board by slotting his own 5 point however this is a major blunder. Hitting the 17 point blot delays Blacks board building and also moves off the difficult to clear 18 point. 18/15 18/17* is better by 0.317.

06) 51: 8/3 6/5

42: 13/7

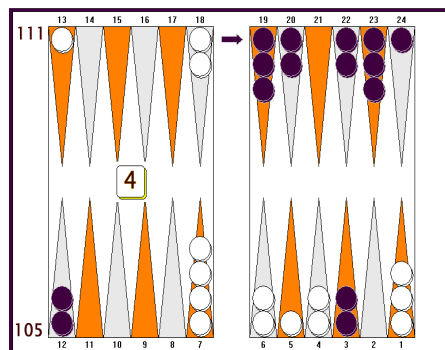
07) 31: 6/3 2/1



65: 13/7 6/1

Black has rolled well to untangle the mess in his home board and now White must find a way to play this terrible roll. The only way to avoid a double shot is to bury two checkers on the ace point but even

this is better than White's choice. Best is 13/7 13/8 keeping the shots down to 20 and, if missed, leaving 3 builders to cover the 5 point and plenty of time before he must break the 18 point.



08) Doubles to 4

This is an easy take for money with an equity of only 0.4 but a marginal pass at this score.

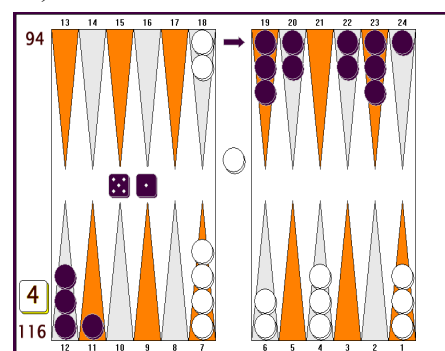
Takes

09) 54: 22/13

54: 13/4

10) 62: 22/20* 20/14

32:



11) 51: 13/8 2/1

After missing the first shot things have gone Black's way but he must play accurately to maximise his advantage. Most of Whites

counterplay will come from holding the point 6 away from Blacks midpoint so Black must try to clear the midpoint while White is stuck on the bar. 13/12 6/1 leaves no shots but puts a checker out of play and adds one checker to the midpoint. Better by 0.170 is 14/9 2/1 leaving three checkers on the midpoint and gaining an extra builder for the four point. However Black's actual play, taking one checker off the midpoint, is better by a further 0.120

42: 25/21 7/5

12) 66: 14/2 8/2

64: 21/11

13) 21: 6/4 5/4

32: 11/8 7/5

14) 44: 13/5 13/5

54: 18/13 18/14

15) 64: 6/0 4/0

33: 14/5 13/10

16) 22: 2/0 2/0 2/0 2/0

66: 10/4 8/2 7/1 7/1

17) 21: 6/4 1/0

41: 4/0 1/0

18) 52: 5/0 4/2

11: 1/0 1/0 1/0 1/0

19) 41: 4/0 1/0

52: 5/0 2/0

20) 44: 5/1 5/1 3/0 3/0

41: 4/0 6/5

21) 21: 2/0 1/0

Wins 4 points

Game 3

Fetterlein : 4

Greenleaf : 4

01)

63: 24/18 13/10

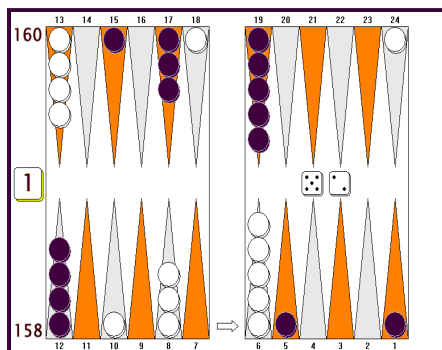
02) 43: 24/20 13/10

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**Michael & Sharen would like to
wish you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year**



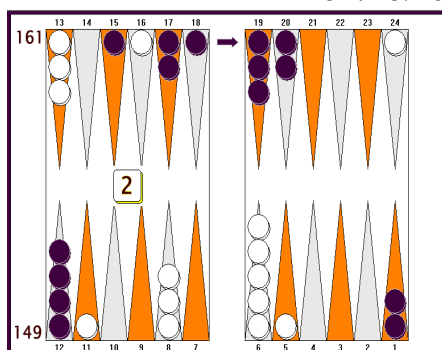


52: 10/5* 13/11

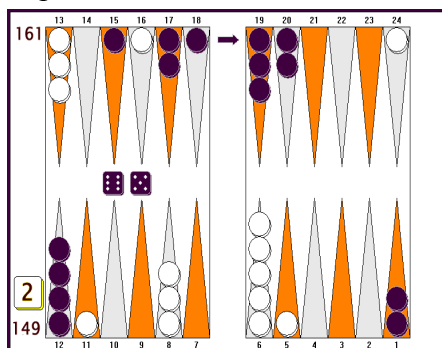
Snowie prefers 18/13 10/8 but this is not to everyone's taste! However if he hits on the 5 point he should play 18/16 to take away Black's return hits with a six, rather than create a new blot.

03) 11: 25/24 8/7* 6/5 6/5

54: 25/16



04) Doubles to 2 Takes
Through no fault of his own, the dice have pushed White into a classic "Slot and Split" position. Black has many threats leading to market losing sequences. Ahead in the race with less checkers back White has an easy take. Black needs to execute some of his threats before White would have to pass.



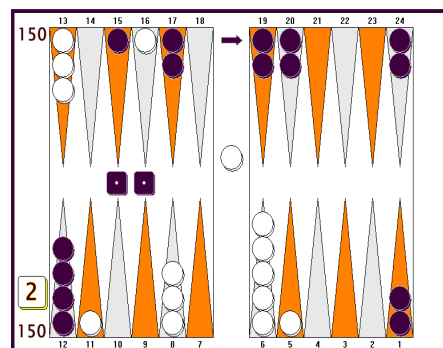
05) 65: 7/1* 6/1

13/7 10/5 is positionally superior but gives White precious time to

consolidate. The text move is better by over 0.1.

61:

06) 11: 24/20*



Probably the best move of the match. A few years back everyone would have played 10/9* 8/7 with 24/22 maximising builders for the empty inner board points. However the text move gains more in the race, hits White off the valuable 5 point, retains the 8 point and attacks the blot on the 11 point. All these factors outweigh the one extra builder by 0.050.

55:

07) 55: 13/3 10/5 8/3

08) 33: 13/10 8/2 5/2

09) 65: 20/14* 14/9*

10) 32: 13/8

11) 32: 9/4*

12) 61: 10/4 8/7

13) 31: 24/20

14) 52: 20/15 7/5

15) 62: 15/9 13/11

16) 33: 11/2 9/6

17) 61: 6/0 5/4

18) 32: 4/1 2/0

19) 54: 6/1 6/2

20) 65: 5/0 5/0

21) 51: 4/0 4/3

22) 54: 3/0 3/0

23) 44: 3/0 2/0 2/0 2/0

24) 65: 1/0 1/0

61:

32:

52:

64: 25/21

31:

66:

66:

66:

66:

66:

66:

66:

32:

41:

42: 25/21

52: 25/20

11:

Wins 6 points

Black wins a rare backgammon after White fails to re-enter after rolling a devastating double one. Greenleaf was very unlucky to lose six points in one game. MC

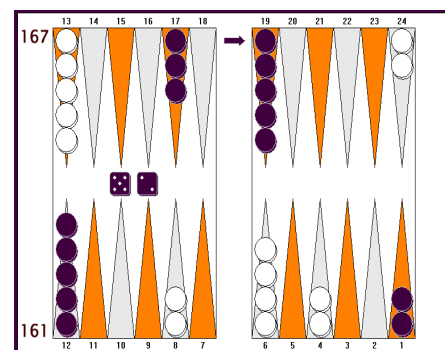
Game 4

Fetterlein : 10

Greenleaf : 4

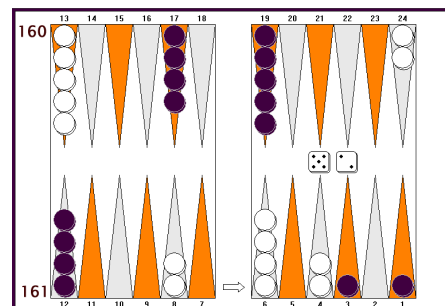
01)

42: 8/4 6/4



02) 52: 13/8 24/22

When White makes a good inside point on the opening roll it is imperative for Black to split his back checkers. This is especially true here when this can be achieved without producing a blot on the other side of the board.



52: 8/3* 3/1*

It is worthwhile looking at the score in the Crawford game before adopting a plan. Whites play wins 5% more gammons than the two alternatives but these are almost worthless, only depriving Black of his free drop. Rather than give up the 8 point for the double hit White does better to use it to park a new builder, 13/8 with 24/22 or 13/11 are both better by 0.050

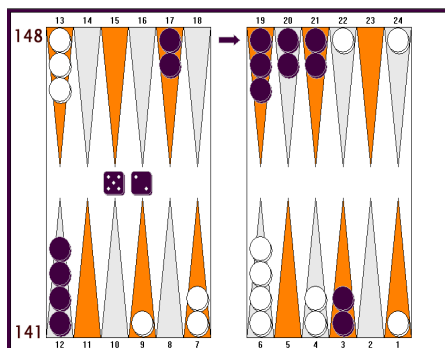
03) 33: 25/22 25/22 8/5 8/5

61: 13/7 8/7

04) 11: 6/4 6/4

42: 13/9 24/22

Continued on the next page . . .

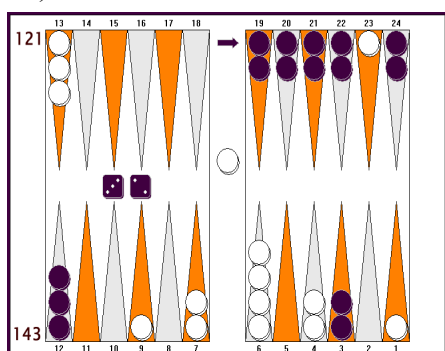


05) 52: 8/3* 3/1*

With two White blots on the other side of the board, attacking is now preferable to quiet development.

43: 25/22

06) 55: 13/3* 8/3 6/1 42: 25/23



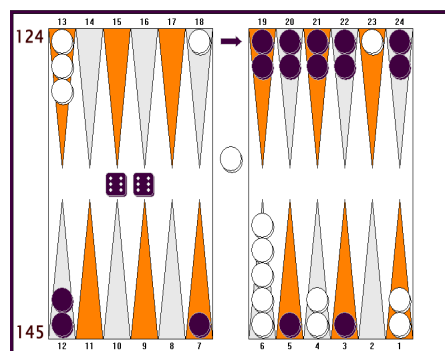
07) 32: 13/10 22/20

It is correct to break the anchor to maximise shots at the blot but 22/17 is the correct way to achieve this. Black will be embarrassed if White enters with 22! (25/23 7/5* 5/3* 3/1)

32: 25/23 9/6

08) 32: 10/7 22/20 65: 7/1 23/18*

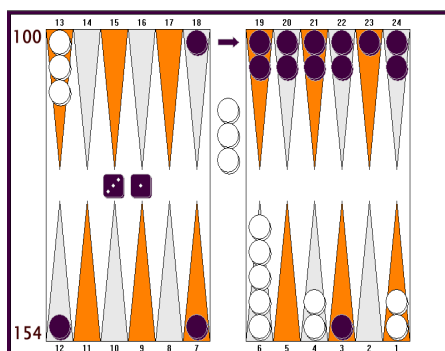
09) 32: 25/22 20/18* 54:



10) 66: 20/2* 13/7*

Even with gammons not counting it is best to try to prevent White from anchoring on the 2 point.

41:



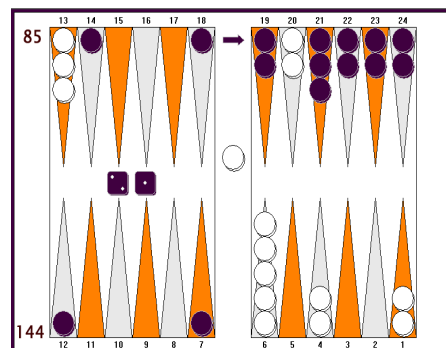
11) 31: 5/2 5/4

Black does not need a closeout to win and if White establishes an anchor it will be easier to navigate past one on the 20 point rather than the 23 point.

53: 25/20

12) 65: 22/11

54: 25/20



13) 21: 4/2 7/6

Now White is threatening to hit some indirect shots Black should safety some blots with 13/11 7/6 even though the 11 point may be difficult to clear.

64:

41:

62:

43:

63:

51: 25/20 6/5

14) 65: 18/7

15) 54: 13/8 11/7

16) 62: 7/1 8/6

17) 42: 7/3 2/0

18) 52: 6/1 6/4

19) 63: 6/0 6/3

Wins 1 point and the match

Julian Fetterlein has been a member of Biba since August 1995. He has won three Biba tournaments: Sandy Osborne '97 County Cups '02 Hilton '02; and been 2nd twice: Sandy Osborne '01 Keren Di Bona '02

How Good Is Your Backgammon - asks Michael Crane

We continue our series of the 1991 Monte Carlo World Championship 1/4 Final match between two of the giants of backgammon; Neil Kazaross and Michael Meyburg.

We pick up the action with Game 4, with Kazaross trailing by 2 points.

When you come to ??? cover up the text below the diagram and work out your move before con-

tinuing. At the end of the article you can check your score to see how good you are.

21 point match

Game 4

White

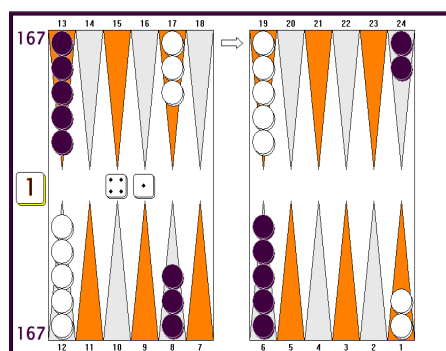
Kazaross : 1

Black

Meyburg : 3

So, it's the opening roll and I'm already asking what would be your play! Is it straight forward or am I testing you?

??? White to roll 41



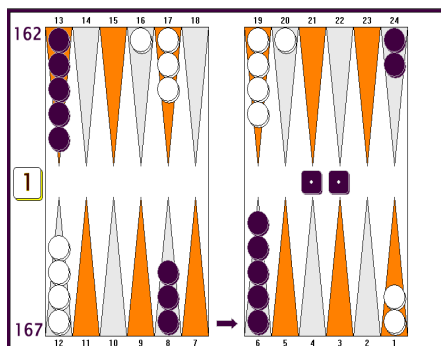
There are two categories of move here, aggressive or non-aggressive.

White chose to be aggressive here and played 13/9 6/5. However, Both Snowie and Jelly don't like this play; it gives away too much if hit . . but it does gain a lot when missed. I have decided to err on the side of caution and marked the actual move according to the bots.

24/23 13/9	5
24/20 24/23	5
13/8	3
13/9 6/5	2A
24/20 6/5	1

01) 41: 13/9 6/5

??? Black to play 11



Two moves, two questions? How Black replies to the aggressive opener is important, especially when the roll contains a hitting number (4). To hit or not to hit, that is the question.

Snowie and Jelly are both emphatic, hit playing 24/20* but I'm not too sure, and I like the actual play. But, can two bots be wrong? With equity differences of 0.035 (JF) and 0.047 (S) it is hard to ignore the best move.

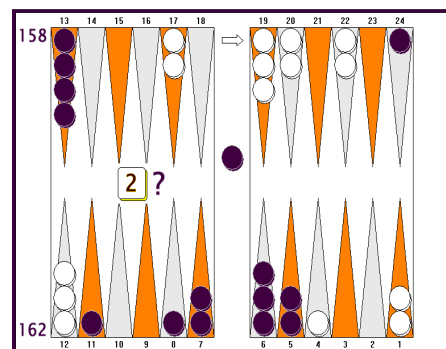
If Black does not hit then Black has 83% chance (30/36) to make the 5-point, but the trade off is, both players will have made an important point; the Golden Point. Is it worth stopping your opponent from making his 5-point for the loss of not making your own? No! I believe making your own now is better, and who knows, Black might just roll one of his non-cov-

ering rolls (and they don't all play well).

8/7(2) 6/5(2)	5A
24/20*	4
24/22 6/5(2)	2
24/23(2) 6/5(2)	1

11: 8/7(2) 6/5(2)	
02) 65: 9/3 8/3	42: 24/20* 13/11
03) 41: 25/21 6/5*	63:
04) 53: 13/5	65:

??? Cube action 03

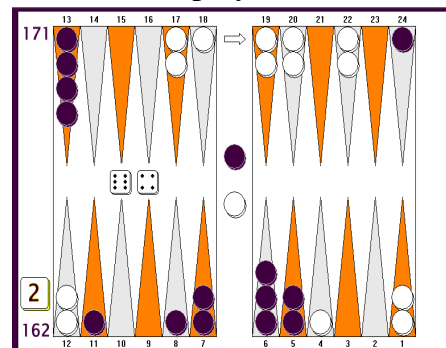


Is this a double? Is it a take? The bots disagree on one thing only, whether or not to double - they both agree it is a take. The equity difference is minimal and therefore perhaps Double vs No Double is borderline.

Double/Take	5A
No Double/Take	5
Double Pass	2

05) Doubles to 2	Takes
06) 65: 13/7 6/1*	61: 25/24*

??? White to play 64



If you don't get the four correct then sell your board! But can you get the six correct? There are four

possible plays but only two real candidates. It's a matter of letting Black anchor or not and boils down to playing 7/1* to stop this or 13/7 to build a 4-prime.

How bad for White would it be if Black anchored? On the 1- or 2-points, not too bad, on the 4-point, better for Black but not that bad for White.

Although a blocking prime is good, Black has a couple of very vulnerable blots on his 11- and 8-points and playing 7/1* would give White great chances of sending back a 3rd or 4th man.

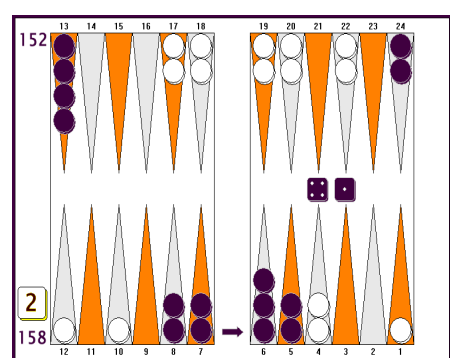
25/21 7/1*	5
25/21 13/7	4A
25/15	1
25/21 8/2	-5

07) 64: 25/21 13/7

31: 25/24 11/8

08) 63: 24/15

??? Black to play 41



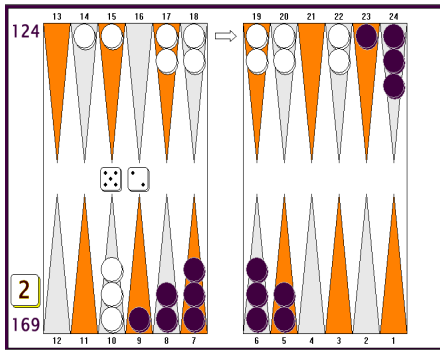
Does Black want to risk a third man back? If not then the only real play is that chosen as the best move by both bots, 13/12* 12/8.

13/12* 12/8	5
13/9 13/12*	3A

41: 13/9 13/12*	
09) 63: 25/16*	31: 25/24 12/9*
10) 54: 25/16*	53:
11) 43: 15/11 24/21	

61: 25/24 13/7	
12) 66: 21/15(3) 16/10	
41: 13/9 24/23	

??? White to play 52



This is an interesting one, there are lots of moves with an equity range of 0.881 down to 0.827 some of which I like!

The key here is to stop Black anchoring on the 4-point; once he does this he'll be a nuisance - so plays that prevent this are favourite. Candidates are:

15/10 11/9:	4 cover, 4 risk
15/10 15/13:	2 cover, no risk
15/13 11/6:	0 cover, 4 risk
11/6 10/8:	3 cover, 0 risk

This is the Snowie order of preference after a mini rollout. Although the top play gives the most covers it also carries the greatest risk. But why take any risks at all? Surely the better move is 11/6 10/8 offering a good cover and no risk? This was the actual play; and my favourite. So, the order of points is:

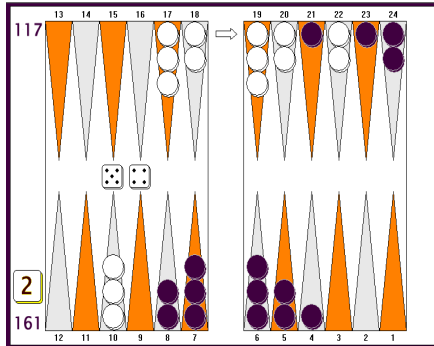
11/6 10/8	5A
15/10 15/13	4
15/10 11/9	4
15/13 11/6	2
15/13 10/5	1

Why have I chosen to ignore the bots' advice? Because I can't see any real advantage in leaving more shots than is necessary - and because I'm the boss!

Continued in the next column . . .

13) 52: 11/6 10/8 53: 9/4 24/21

??? White to play 54



Once again it is important to stop Black advancing or making a second anchor. Two candidates for this move are 15/10 8/4* hitting loose and 7/2* 6/2* playing safe. I know which I prefer but the bots disagree with me: I prefer safe they prefer slot! Why? What can be gained by playing the slot?

Slotting:
Black will dance 25%,
re-enter and not hit 50%
and re-enter and hit 25%.

Pointing:
Black will dance 45%,
re-enter and not hit 33%
and re-enter and hit 22%

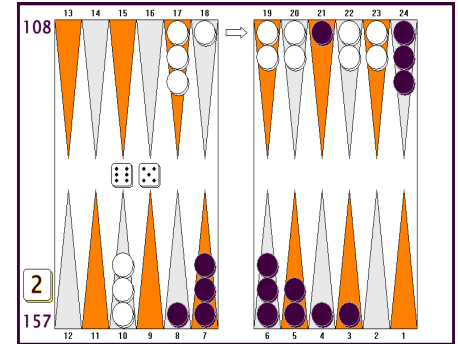
Pointing makes most sense, it carries a slightly less chance of being hit on re-entry but its greatest asset is that dancing rolls are vastly improved. Also, while Black is occupied on White's side of the board he cannot be improving his own inner board.

If Black had another inner-board blot then I might be tempted into the slotting play, but not as it stands at the moment.

7/2* 6/2	5A
15/10 8/4*	4
15/6	3
8/4* 7/2*	1

14) 54: 7/2* 6/2	51: 25/24 8/3
15) 65: 15/4*	55:

??? White to play 65



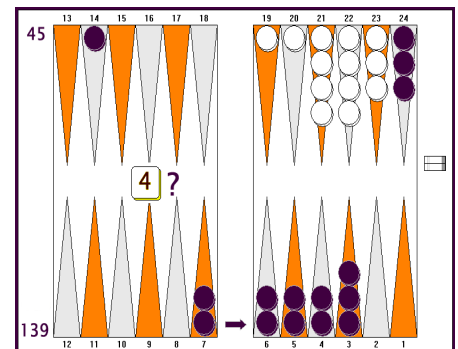
This is a clear hitting play now. Two reasons:

- 1 Stop Black anchoring
- 2 Black's three blots on the other side of the board.

15/4*	5A
15/9 7/2	3
15/8 15/10	2
15/10 8/2	1

16) 54: 15/10 8/4	52:
17) 11: 10/9 8/6 8/7	54:
18) 61: 15/8	41: 25/24 7/3
19) 62: 9/3 8/6	21: 6/4 8/7
20) 43: 7/3 7/4	31: 7/3
21) 42: 6/2 6/4	64: 24/14
22) 65: 6/0 5/0	

??? Cube action?



White rolls the nightmare 65 and leaves two shots. Is this a good time for Black to reshuffle the cube across?

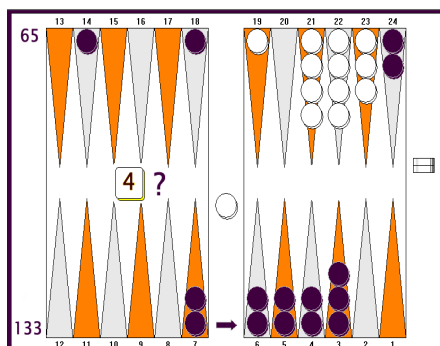
It might look good for Black but shipping across a 4-cube is just a bit too soon. This would be an easy take for White, who at the moment has a 44% chance of winning the game. If he takes (and he should) his chances increase to 49% if missed.

No re-double	5
Redouble/Take	4
Redouble/Pass	2

42: 24/20* 20/18

23) 64:

??? Cube action?



So, is this a position where a recube is correct; and if it is, is it a take or pass?

It's borderline:

Re-double/Take	5
No re-double	4
Re-double/Pass	2

Doubles to 4
Wins 2 points

24) Drops

Kazaross : 1

Meyburg : 5

This match will continue in the next issue. In the meantime, how good is your backgammon?

- 50 You are the best player
- 40-49 You are the second best player
- 30-39 Good enough to play the best player
- 20-29 Good enough to play second best
- 10-20 Oh dear, what a pity, never mind!
- 0-10 Wake up!



Blunders from the Biggies!

By Michael Crane

I have trawled through my extensive archive of top players' matches and have pushed them through a Snowie analysis (and a bit of Jelly too) to see where the blunders are. Snowie is very good at spotting them; he marks them in bright colour to catch the eye!

The match I have chosen was played in 1983 between Paul Magriel and Kit Woolsey. The match is the 7th ABC held in Las Vegas.

Paul Magriel was, at this time, an ex world champion (1978), but, because this was held in the Bahamas and not in Monte Carlo it doesn't appear on the Monte Carlo Roll of Honour! That year is attributed to Richard de Surmont. Who???

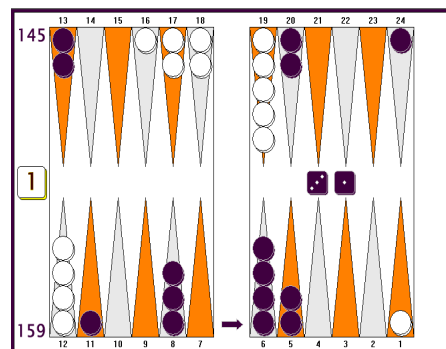
I'm not sure what Kit was doing in 1983 but over the years he has written a lot of books on the game and is famous for his *Equity Table*. He is currently involved with GammOnline among many other activities.

I haven't reproduced the entire match of 12 games, just the parts that relate to the text. In each position I used a mini rollout to arrive at the equities quoted.

Game 3

Black 1

White 1



Black to play 31

01. 24/20	0.025
02. 24/21 6/5	0.009
03. 11/10 8/5	-0.022
04. 24/21 11/10	-0.024
18. 8/7 6/3	-0.185 A

You would expect that setting parameters to display the 20 best moves would include the actual play - especially when the players are world-class. Although this 31

is within those parameters, astonishingly the actual play of 8/7 6/3 came out in 18th place!

Snowie's first choice with the only positive equity was 24/21 6/5, 0.009. All other plays came out negative with the actual play on -0.185.

The actual play is very bold, but was it necessary? Playing the 1, 6/5 is a good choice, increasing the number of builders available and freeing the extra checker from the 6-point. Having made that play the choice of where to play the 3 is limited. We can discount 11/8 or 8/5 because they achieve nothing new; 13/10 or 6/3 both leave unnecessary blots.

So, logically, we are left with the best play, 24/21. This might leave the blot a little under the gun but it isn't in too much danger and will lose little in the race if hit.

Black rolled 11 and hit the 3-point blot. If the 31 had been played as the 1st choice then the 11 would

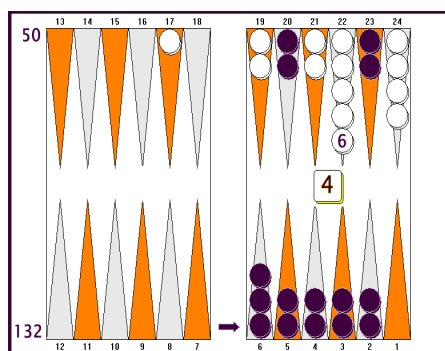


not have been much use at all!

Game 3

Black 1

White 1



Cube action

Cube action alert:
Wrong double

No redouble/take 0.462
Redouble/take 0.352 A
Proper cube action:
No redouble, take 17%

Both Jelly & Snowie agree that this is a No re-double/Take.

Black has 66.66% chance to hit - which leaves White with 33.33%; which is a take, no doubt.

If White is missed he has only 11/36 bad rolls (30.55%).

Both players have similar gammon chances, Black 11.4%, White 11.2% so keeping the cube and the status quo is correct.

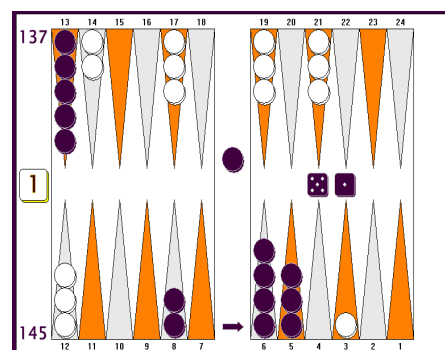
After correctly taking, White was hit by a 53 and ended up on the bar. He re-entered on his next roll with a 61 playing 25/18. Although this blot was missed by Black, one move later white was forced to leave a direct 6 and was hit by 66; (one six was enough!) an action he was unable to fully recover from and after a few re-entries and knock-backs he lost two points.

Continued in the next column >

Game 4

Black 5

White 1



Black to play 51

01. 25/24 13/8 -0.274
02. 25/24 8/3* -0.385 A
03. 25/20 5/4 -0.394
04. 25/20 6/5 -0.461
05. 25/24 6/1 -0.467

The actual play of 25/24 8/3* is the 2nd choice but it does give away a lot of equity 0.111 to be exact.

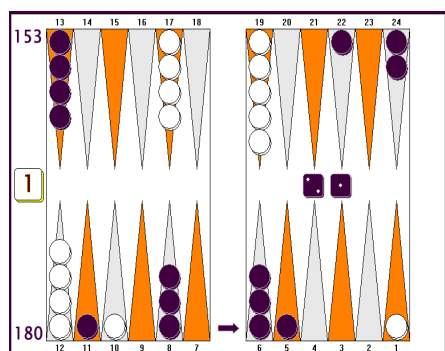
The 5 played 25/24 isn't a good choice as it gives White ten point-ing rolls; therefore the correct play is 25/24 leaving a five to play.

Not many choices here: 13/8 or 8/3* or 6/1. As agreed by the bots the better of these is the safe, building move 13/8. Hitting loose from the 8-point gives so much away and doesn't really gain that much. White re-entered on his next roll with a 61 and failed to hit either blot then or later.

Game 5

Black 5

White 9



Black to play 21

01. 13/11 6/5 -0.056
02. 24/22 6/5 -0.063
03. 11/9 6/5 -0.082
04. 8/5 -0.120
07. 13/10* -0.142 A

This looks to me to be so obvious that I was amazed to find that the actual play of 13/10* wasn't what I expected! It came out 7th for both bots.

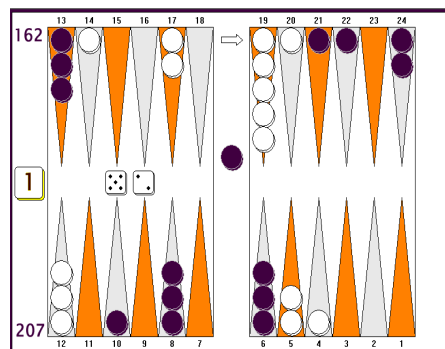
Surely 13/11 6/5 is the only play? Equity wise there was a good bit between them: -0.056 to -0.142. Hitting can't be an option here, not at the cost of making two points. Whites blot on the 1-point isn't going far, and, if I was Black I'd rather be hit with this roll than have the two points made against me.

Black rolled the marvellous 54 off the bar, hitting and making the 20-point!

Game 5

Black 5

White 9



White to play 52

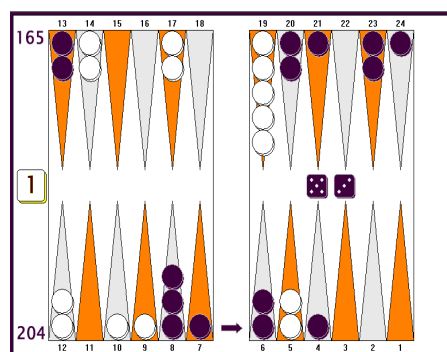
01. 8/3* 5/3 0.675
02. 20/15* 6/4* 0.570
03. 20/15* 5/3* 0.523
04. 20/15* 13/11 0.466 A

Unluckily White rolls one of the five rolls that can't cover the 5-point blot. Making this point would be top of his list, so, you'd think that the next move on his list would have been to make it safe, wouldn't you? Well, I'm afraid you'd be wrong!

Instead of playing the move chosen by both bots, 8/3* 5/3 and putting two checkers in the air, White plays 20/15* 13/11. Still two in the air but leaving direct return shots. Nothing gained, and something to lose.

Black showed his contempt for the play and came in off the bar with double twos - reversing the two in the air playing 25/23(2) 22/20* 6/4*.

Game 5 Black 5 White 9



Black to play 53

- | | |
|-----------------|----------|
| 01. 23/18 7/4 | -0.246 |
| 02. 23/18 21/18 | -0.282 |
| 03. 21/16 7/4 | -0.285 |
| 04. 21/13 | -0.292 |
| 05. 24/21 23/18 | -0.295 |
| 08. 24/21 8/3 | -0.399 A |

Lots of good moves here, seven of which are better than the actual play!

Both Snowie and Jelly favour making the 4-point with the 3; which makes sense, giving two inner points for Black. The bots also favour attacking the 18-point playing 23/18.

At the moment holding the 23-point isn't much use, and, so long as Black holds the important Golden Point (5- or 20-point) leaving a few blots isn't a problem.

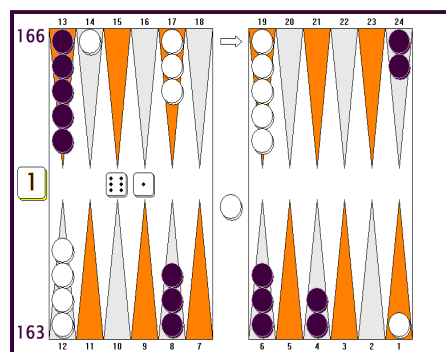
The actual play 24/21 8/3 makes another anchor but does so at the

expense of two inner board blots and a blot remaining on the 7-point.

Making the 18-point now makes more sense than the actual play.

By playing this way Black gives up 0.153 equity, quite a lot. The best play is -0.246, the actual play is -0.399.

Game 6 Black 5 White 11



White to play 61

- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| 01. 25/18 | -0.360 |
| 02. 25/24 11/5 | -0.425 |
| 03. 25/24 13/7 | -0.498 A |
| 04. 25/24 8/2 | -0.615 |

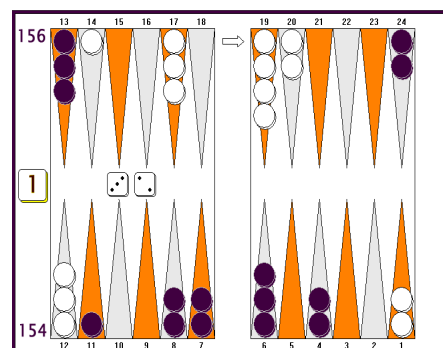
With just four moves to pick from both bots agree on all of them; the best is 25/18, the actual play, 25/24 13/7 is 3rd.

Quite a difference on the equities: -0.360 as opposed to -0.498, giving away 0.138.

Does White really want to send a third checker back? If so then playing 11/5 would be better in an attempt to make the 5-point.

As it turned out, Black rolled a 21 and didn't do any damage, and then one roll later White made the valuable 5-point (Black's 20-point). I think it was Magriel who 'invented' the Golden Point in his book, *Backgammon*, a title that says it all!

Game 6 Black 5 White 11



White to play 32

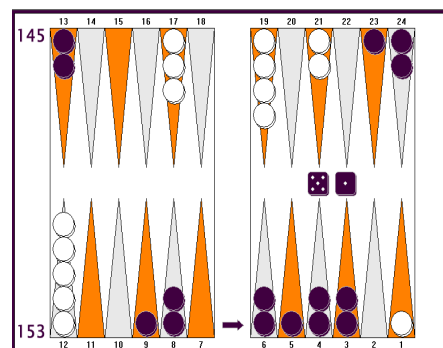
- | | |
|-----------------|----------|
| 01. 24/22 11/8 | -0.276 |
| 02. 24/22 13/10 | -0.307 |
| 03. 24/22 8/5 | -0.314 |
| 04. 13/10 11/9 | -0.449 |
| 06. 13/11 8/5 | -0.463 A |

I have to admit that my play was the actual play - and that makes both Magriel and me equal; we both chose a move well down the lists of both bots!

Playing 13/11 8/5 looked good to both of us, but, the bots prefer (by a good margin) 24/22 11/8. The actual play gives away a whopping 0.187 equity: -0.276 to -0.463!

The race is almost even so I suppose the preferred play doesn't give too much away but what is gained by giving Black a few extra pointing rolls?

Game 10 Black 7 White 14



Black to play 51

Continued on the next page . . .

01. 3 24/18 -0.010
 02. 3 23/18 5/4 -0.024
 03. 3 23/18 9/8 -0.037
 04. 3 6/1* 6/5 -0.041
 12. 3 23/18 8/7 -0.123 A

12th place! That's where both bots place the actual play of 23/18 8/7! The only thing the bots and Black agree on is the 18-point; but the bots prefer to use the whole roll moving 24/18.

Playing safeish with the 1 is better than slotting the bar-point and leaving five blots open! Why not just concede the game and save time?

Bigger blunders have been made when comparing the equity loss of this move: -0.010 to -0.123, a difference of 0.114; but coming in at 12th of 37 moves is a blunder in anyone's book. So, a few positions there for discussion!

Match detailed statistics		
Player	Kit Woolsey	Paul Magriel
Rating	expert	expert
Overall	4.915/16.319	4.550/14.543
Errors(blunders)	29(4)	25(4)
Checker play errors		
Checker play	4.494/14.970	3.818/12.736
Errors(blunders)	27(4) 21(3)	
Double errors		
Overall	0.421/1.349	0.560/1.374
Missed double	0.218/0.466	0.262/0.692
Wrong double	0.203/0.883	0.298/0.682
Errors(blunders)	2(0)	3(1)
Take errors		
Overall	0.000/0.000	0.173/0.434
Wrong take	0.000/0.000	0.000/0.000
Wrong pass	0.000/0.000	0.173/0.434
Errors(blunders)	0(0) 1(0)	
Paul Magriel was 51.78% - 48.22% favorite.		

Here's the final stats from Snowie:

Prize Crossword 02

The Solution

Quite a few correct entries this time and the lucky winner out of the hat for the half-price accommodation was Jeff Barber.

The runner-up, Cedric Lytton won the copy of JellyFish.

To all of you that failed to win this time, don't despair, keep trying!

Sorry about the *odd* clue for 22 across which read, "Viz: be in an **old** way a strange World Champion" when it should have read, "Viz: be in an **odd** way a strange World Champion". Happily the typo didn't make any difference to the entries received. Nor did the second error for 20 down which was obviously 4 letters long!

So, fancy your chances again? Well, turn to the next page and off you go . . .

1	B	I	2	L	L	R	O	3	B	E	4	R	T	I	5	E		6	A	
			I					A		U				Y			L			
7	T	E	D	B	8	A	R	R		N		9	L	E	A	P	S			
	R				W		C			10	J		S			H				
	I		11	B	A	F	F	L	E	B	O	X			12	B	A	R		
	C				U		A			E						B				
	T		13	J	E	L	L	Y	F	I	S	H			14	M	A	N		
	R		O				C			Y						C				
15	A	L	E	X	16	I	S	O	B	O	L	E	N	S	K	Y				
	C		D		B		O			V						G				
			W		E		K			E						A				
17	T	H	E	C	R	U	E	18	L	19	E	S	20	T	G	A	M	E		
	W		K		I			21	A	L	T	O				M				
	O			22	D	A	V	I	D	B	E	N	Z	I	O	N				
23	S	P	A	I	N			24	Y	A	R	E				N				

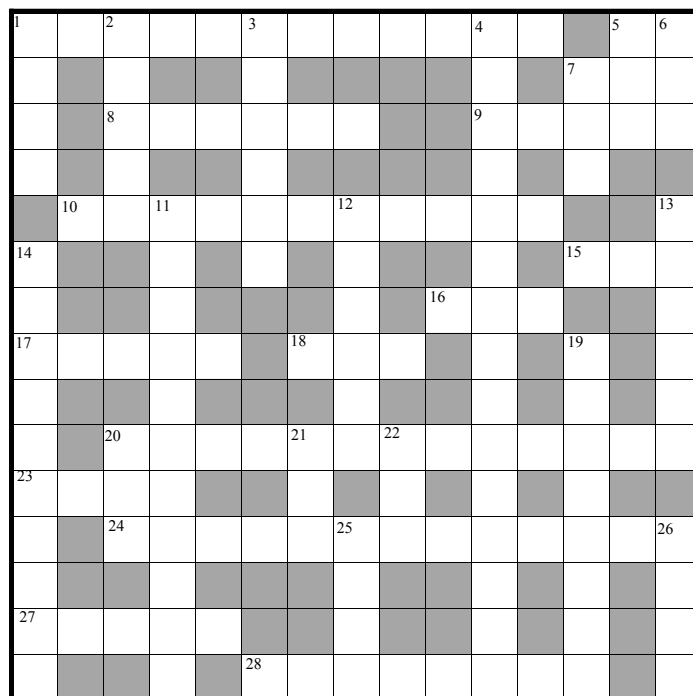
Prize Crossword 03

Compiled by
Arthur Williams & Michael Crane

Here's another test of your backgammon knowledge and lore.

The first correct solution opened on Jan. 1st 2003 will win half price accommodation for the Slattery Scottish Open, March 2003 (one night only). The second correct solution will win a copy of JellyFish Player.

Please send to Biba HQ or via email to:
xword03@backgammon-biba.co.uk



Across

- 1 One of the four fundamental principles of 'Modern Backgammon'. (12)
- 5 Initially this is Biba member 0794. (1,1)
- 7 Drink to inevitable end of game? (3)
- 8 Jack may be in it but the captain isn't. (6)
- 9 Monkey loses a grand but still has some cash. (5)
- 10 Ely is gowned rather oddly for this player and promoter. (5,6)
- 15 Initially be of temperate disposition to become a super-human player. (3)
- 16 Do we think of Lady Windermere when we do this? (3)
- 17 Aggressive, usually early game, strategy. (5)
- 18 Small extra percentages that effect the odds. (3)
- 20 Forty-four down at the Mecca. (6,7)
- 23 Michael Main invents half a format! (4)
- 24 And another of those 'Modern Backgammon' fundamentals (3-10)
- 27 Doubled by the cube. (5)
- 28 Not at home on a grassy area of no-man's land. (8)

Down

- 1 Johnny sings, "Don't play on for the gammon". (4)
- 2 Answer to, "Which of you two is playing slowly?" (3,2)
- 3 Doubling skill inherent in Picasso's style? (6)
- 4 Admitting a vegan strangely gives you an edge. (6,9)
- 5 See 6 down.
- 6 Of these two, which one do I move first? (3,3)
- 7 Sounds like new rival for Snowie. (3)
- 11 We root Aleck out to find a player & son of former top author. (6,5)
- 12 Your expected return from a particular game. (6)
- 13 Commonly there are lots of these candlesticks sayeth the bible. (6)
- 14 Another of the fundamental principles of 'Modern Backgammon'. (10)
- 19 1981 world champion. (3,5)
- 20 Is this guy desperate to play? (3)
- 21 He doesn't play backgammon for fun. (3)
- 22 The 13 point is obscure but in the ascendancy. (3)
- 25 I hear you failed to hit a shot, in the fog. (4)
- 26 Opponents of 8 across. (4)



Gammon From The Asylum

In Which The Learns to Move and Shake that Thing

By Ric Gerace and Mike

Institut pour des joueurs de jacquet de Deranged



Ric Gerace is a man of many parts - most of them in full working order. Multi-talented, Ric has done almost everything there is to do (forty different jobs so far!), and then some! He is a prolific writer and wobbles between the serious (he has just written a novel) and the comic with equal *èlan*. Some of his most humorous articles have appeared on **GammonVillage.com** wherein which he has an avid readership.

Ric lives live in an apartment in his mother's house at Cape Cod. From here he travels the world via the Internet and publishes his own web site at www.ricgerace.com/ . In his own words it is, "*the personal website of a political liberal, absolute Atheist, not-so-bad writer who is owned by ten cats, and suffers from Lyme Disease.*" I urge you to take a peek . . . if you dare! MC

The story continues . . .

The was nothing if not a thorough student. She didn't reappear in the game room for another week. My intelligence sources (Guido, both of him, a very large man who is my cousin as well as a trustee guard, and who once bench pressed Michael Crane, Paul Magriel, and a CD of the Encyclopedia Britannica all at once, six times), as I say, my intelligence sources told me that The had spent all her time learning the board.

"She can whip that checker," Guido said, his faces alight.

"But a week, G, just on that?" I feared for her insanity.

"She's a tough little cookie." He patted me on the head. "You watch your butt."

I noticed he had a suitcase packed and was wearing civilian clothes. "Where are you going, G?"

"Oh, you know that fellow in Albania who owes you two pigs for that match last year?"

"He never paid. I thought he got shot."

Guido smiled. "Not just yet. Bacon next week." He cracked his knuckles. Several people ducked.



Our heroine - The

The showed up that evening while I was watching the final few moves of a match between George W. Bush and Saddam Hussein. George was contemplating a four cube from Saddam, who was looking determinedly impatient.

"Are you going to take the cube or not, Georgie?" Saddam sighed heavily. George was the only one who would play with him.

George stared at the cube for another minute. "What's that thing for

again?" he finally said.

"It's a bomb, George. It's going to blow up the board."

George poked Saddam in the nose. "You don't play fair, Saddy. I told my Daddy I'd beat you but you don't play fair." George was jumping up and down and throwing checkers at Saddam. The men in white moved in and grabbed him and hauled him off.

Saddam wiped his nose on his sleeve and turned to me. "That little bugger is nuts."

"Well," I said consolingly, "it was a good redouble. He should never have doubled you."

"He hasn't a clue, has he?"

I shook my head sadly. "Runs in the family, I suppose."

The chimed in. "What's the cube?"

Saddam intoned gravely, "The cube is Truth, Grasshopper."

I pulled The away, politely saying goodnight to Saddam.

"If he gets started on that, he'll go on and on and on. He likes to pretend he's Fidel Castro sometimes."

"Who is he anyway?"



"Well, rumor has it that he used to be an accountant. Looks like one, little guy like that. Lost all his money, his home, his wife, his kids, the dog, the cat, and the Volkswagen playing backgammon in back alley games in Chicago."

"Hmph," The hmphed, wrinkling her nose. "That'll never happen to me."

They all say that, I thought, surveying the game room full of people to whom such things never ever happened.

"Well, The," I said as we sat down at a very nice oak bar board, "are you ready for the next lesson?"

"Whaddya think I'm doing here, for Pete's sake? Get it on, old man."

I may not be young and pretty anymore, but I can still think and feel and fantasize and ... never mind, I digress. I must discuss this with Elizabeth later. Or Miranda. She owes me. Umm. Yes. Well. Never mind, never mind.

"Alright, The," I said calmly. I think I heard Hitler snicker nearby. "We'll work on setting up the board." The board in front of us had all its checkers borne off.

"No probs," The said brightly, and proceeded to lay out the board in a matter of seconds. Then she sat up, threw her shoulders back, and said, "See? I'm a quick learner."

"Who taught you that?"

"That big guy, Guido. He showed me all you gotta do is set up half, then mirror the other half in the other color. Neat guy. And big, too."

Pigs in Albania, indeed!

I took a deep calming breath and went on. "Alright, The, that's very good. It took George three weeks to get that almost right."

"George is a wuss."

"We humor him. Now, then, you've watched lot of games. What do you think the point of the game is? In the simplest terms you can muster." The usual answer I got was something general about winning points and being sportsmanlike. But The was not the usual student.

She stood up and in a deep muscular voice she boomed out, "To crush my enemies, see them driven before me, and hear the lamentation of their women."

Hitler and Bonaparte stood up and applauded politely. Stalin's moustache twitched. George W., now in restraints in the corner, jumped up and down, wildly shouting "Yeah, baby. Yeah, baby. Bombs away, bombs away!" Arnold Schwarzenegger, in a high squeaky voice, said, "That's my line, that's my line." He and George got valium right away.

The bowed to the room and sat down.

"Very good, The. You might have glossed over some minor intricacies, but we'll get to them later." Minor stuff like primes, holding games, races, backgames, strategy, tactics, checker play, yada yada yada.

"Alright then. Perhaps we should move on to opening moves."

The grinned. "Yeah, baby."

"Or dice."

"Yeah, baby." She stopped grinning. "Wait a minute, wait a minute, that's them things with little dots on 'em, right? Bouncy bouncy clickety clack?"

"Yes, The."

"What do I gotta know about them? Huh? What for?" She was squirming in her chair.

"It's okay, The, everyone uses them." Suddenly I realized what her difficulty was. "And the dots won't jump off and crawl under your skin."

"Yeah? You sure? You really sure?"

"Oh yes. All the dots have been superglued to the dice and fastened securely with little tiny nails."

"Yeah?"

"Yes. Not to worry."

She settled down. Well, pretty much anyway. After a little while her feet stopped kicking the table and we got on with it.

"Okay. We always use two dice. Just two."

"Yes. That one and that one." She touched each one.

"Well, yes, but it can be any two."

"There's so many." Her eyes started darting all around the room. "How do you choose? How do you choose?"

"The!" I said sternly, getting her attention. I was getting seasick watching her eyes. Not quite as pretty as Elizabeth's eyes. "It doesn't matter. Any two."

"Okay. Okay. Two will do."

I heard Conan the Barbarian, a couple of tables away, giggling.

"We'll just use these two. Watch." I rolled out a 6 and 1. "How would you move that?"

She moved one checker seven pips, threw her shoulders back, and smiled.

"Maybe you could not do that thing with your shoulders so much. Reminds me of someone I'd like to know."

"Okay." She relaxed. "It's about that Hurley dame, isn't it?"

"Never mind. Put the checker back. Right. Now how else can you move?"

"Else? It's seven. What is this else crap?" The beginning of a snarl showed on her lips.

"You moof a six und den a vun vit vun of der udder checkers." Hitler said over my shoulder.

"Thank you, Adolf," I said. "But it would be better if she figured it out herself rather than have you dictate to her."

He got all huffy then. "Vell, Mr. Knight person, I *am* a dictator!" he huffed, and stomped off. Stalin laughed himself silly across the room.

The leaned forward and whispered, "You have some very strange friends."

"Yes, and just think, soon they'll be your friends, too."

She thought about that for half an hour, then said "Oh. Yeah. Never mind. So I can move a six and then a one with another checker if I want."

"Right. And you can even move them to the same point." I made her bar point for her.

"Oh. Oh. Of course. This is very deep," she whispered. "Do the others know about this?"

"Most of them."

"Except George?"

"Except George."

She spent the next hour rolling dice and moving checkers. She was actually quite good at it.

"Okay. I'm good at that now. What's next? And when's Guido coming back with the pigs?"

I muttered something obscene under my breath, smiled at her, and said, "Guido will have another mission right away, something about the Himalayas, I believe. Secret agent stuff and all that."

"Oh," she said, disappointed. Then she brightened. "Okay, I guess I'm stuck with you."

"Thanks for the vote of confidence."

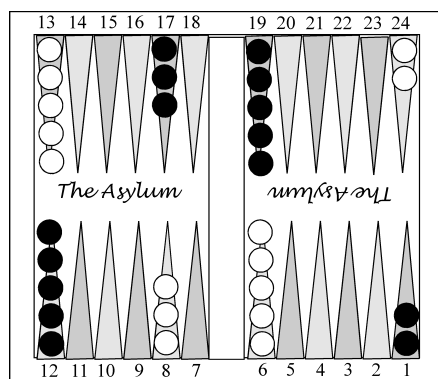
"You're welcome. Really. I have a doctorate from MIT in manners."

I mumbled my thanks to the universe.

"Let's move on, shall we, The?"

"Yeah. Cool."

I pulled out a diagram I had made for her.



"Isn't that cute?" she almost gushed. "Little numbers. Awww."

"That's how we tell where things go. See." I picked up a white checker from the 24 and moved it to the 18. "I moved 24 18. Six pips."

She squirmed a little. "This is higher math, right? I don't do math so good."

"I'm sorry. You said you had an advanced degree in physics."

"Oh, yeah, sure. But that's just physics. This is backgammon."

I understood perfectly. "Don't worry. You'll catch on. Do you remember relativity from your physics courses?"

"Of course I do. You think I'm stupid or sumtin?"

"Not a bit." Over in the corner Einstein's hair perked up and he ambled over to us. "Just remember, the numbers are relative to the player. These are white's numbers. Black's would be just the opposite."

"Zat brings up a pertinent point from my paper, *On The Electrodynamics of*

Moving Bodies."

The gushed, "Ooooh, I read that, Doctor Einstein. Wonderful. I especially liked the part about making hash brownies."

They beamed at each other for a moment. It could have gone on all night, the beaming.

"Albert," I finally said, "I have business with The. You can trade recipes later."

"Yes, of course. Charming little girl. Good night, dear," he said to her and walked away.

"He can call you 'Dear' and I can't? Hardly seems fair," I grumped.

She sighed. "But he's such a doll with that Don King hair." As an afterthought, very definitely an afterthought she said, "But you're cute too."

Yes, well, Miranda didn't call me God for nothing. I wondered how many times she would call me that on this night. The record was twelve. Hmmm. But I digress.

"Alright, here's the last little bit for tonight. Some of the points have names."

"Oh okay. I want to call that one Steve, and that one Mick, and that one –"

"No. No. No."

The Empress Josephine leaned over from the next table and said, "You call them anything you want, honey. You don't have to take any grief from... from... *men!*" She was swept away by gales of laughter and two burly orderlies.

"She's not been right since Waterloo," I said.

"That's the little girls room down the hall?"

"Whatever. Pay attention. See the 18

and the 7? Those are called the bar points.”

“Bar points? What’s that mean? Can I get a drink?”

“It’s because they’re next to this long thing in the middle, which is called the bar. Don’t ask about that yet. I have a headache.”

“Poor baby.”

“This and this, the 5 and 20, they’re called the golden points. Well, the 20 is the golden point.”

“Doesn’t look like gold. Same color as the others.” She licked her finger and rubbed at the paint. “Nope. No gold there.”

“It’s because they’re valuable in play.”

“I’ll give you a dollar for one.”

Yes you will, I thought, looking ahead to the long years to come. Yes you will. Many dollars. Many many dollars. Hey, a guy’s gotta make a living. And Miranda liked expensive trinkets. And chocolate. You have no idea how hard it is to come by choco-

late in The Asylum.

“And these,” I said, indicating the 12 and 13, “are the midpoints. Yours, and mine.”

“Because they’re in the middle.”

“Good. Now go to your room and memorize all that. Next time we’ll look at opening moves, and different kinds of games. Maybe.”

“When do I get to the money?”

“Sooner than you want to.” I paused. “Dear.”

She tried to give me a withering look, but I pretended she was really Eliza-



The withers/sneers

beth Hurley showing me that delightful sneer she’s mastered. Then she stomped out of the room.

George wandered over, looking for a game. Saddam had gone to bed.

“God wants me to play this game,” he said.

Usually I could resist, but I had my eye on a very nice chocolate backgammon set from Switzerland, for Miranda. How could I not play a nice prep school rich boy whose brain was half fried and whose mission in life was to prove how macho he was. And of course he has happily stoned on the valium he’d been given earlier.

“Okay, George, but I get to start with triple threes this time, okay?”

“Sure enough. Say, what religion are you?”

“A Backgammonite. Shall we say ten dollars a point?”

To be continued . . .

2003 RENEWAL FEE

Fred Bloggs 9999

£25

Please cut out this label and send it and
your fee to Biba before January 1st 2003

Did you see this on the envelope this Bibafax arrived in? If you didn’t have one then it is because you have renewed already for 2003 and you can ignore this message!

Now if you haven’t renewed yet, all you have to do is send off your renewal fee, and, if it arrives before the 1st of January 2003 you will receive a 2003 Biba Tournament Calendar from AT-A-GLANCE™ Calendars absolutely free (usual cost £5 + p&p).



Hi-Rollers

A new backgammon experience

The usual run of tournaments in the U.K. do not cater for the experienced backgammon player who enjoys playing for money and not tin cups or prizes.

Hi-Rollers addresses this by setting a standard of play that will guarantee top players an opponent worthy of their time and skill. Hi-Rollers isn't for casual players who want to tinker around the board and pass an hour or two playing backgammon, it is for serious players looking for serious action and money play.

Hi-Rollers have set out to create an event that not only offers its members some great backgammon but to offer it in luxurious surroundings. None of our events are held in budget hotels - but they do offer budget prices! Great facilities (if you have time to use them!) are available at all events. If you can't make full use of them then it's a safe bet your partner would be able to.

Hi-Rollers offer a full format of continuous backgammon action:

Jackpots

You set the entry fee. Members can pick and choose how much they want to invest, subject to numbers. Running from Friday evening 21:00 throughout the weekend, Jackpots alone will test your stamina; but there is more!

Knockouts

The Main event of the weekend. 11- and 15-point matches to test your playing skills culminating in a final where the money is yours to do with what you, the two finalists, decide. Split it your way or let the organiser set the split. It's your decision.

Progressive Consolation

It's not much fun being knocked out of any tournament but at least you have a chance to cash in with the Progressive Consolation. All but the last four Main players will be able to enter the Progressive Consolation and have a chance to go home with a bit of extra money in their pocket!

Last Chance

If you don't want to continue with Jackpots after being knocked out in the Main or Consolation you can play in the open draw, Last Chance. Until the draw-sheet is full members can enter as many times as they like (fee payable) in an attempt to take a share of what will become a substantial pot.

Double or Quits

Subject to demand a **Double or Quits** event will be introduced over the weekend, just in case there's not enough backgammon for you! Each time you win you double your money. If you don't want to play on, take the money and run!

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Subject to demand we also offer £50, £25 & £10 optional pools in all events.

Hi-Rollers will more than satisfy the most ardent and demanding backgammon player. If you are serious about your backgammon, we are serious about providing you with an experience you'll want to repeat.

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Weekend breaks, bottles of wine or tin cups
Newsletters or fancy web pages (information only)

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Check the calendar to see at which location each event is held - **D** or **H**.

To book your accommodation please telephone Central Reservations on 08457 444 123
and quote 'backgammon' for our special rates (see below).

Hi-Rollers events for 2003

24-26 January **H**, 21-23 March **H**, 23-25 May **H**, 19-21 September **D**, 21-23 November **D**

Accommodation costs: (standard room)

1 night	£55 per person for dinner, bed & breakfast
2 nights	£100 per person for dinner, bed & breakfast

So, is membership to Hi-Rollers for you? Although membership is open to anyone a certain standard of playing skill is expected. Hi-Rollers isn't for beginners. Members must be experienced players with an at least an intermediate knowledge of cube strategy and checker play. Playing to this standard all members will be assured of first class opponents and some good matches. If you would like to join Hi-Rollers please contact us for a membership form and further details or log onto our web site.

Email: hi-rollers@backgammon-biba.co.uk

Web page: www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~biba/Hi-Rollers.html

Office/fax: 01522 888676

Mobile: 07711 361566

Postal: 2 Redbourne Drive, Lincoln. LN2 2HG



Hi-Rollers is administrated and organised by Michael Crane

2003 Club Ranking Scheme

After consultation I have come to the conclusion that there is a need to expand the Biba ranking system to include club play as well as Biba tournament play. Therefore, starting January 1st 2003 the following scheme will become available:

There must be a minimum of eight players taking part in each event and it must be an *official* club event

Before an event can be ranked at least 75% of the players must be Biba members, Full or Associate

Tournaments only, no head-to-head or chouettes

11-point matches only will be ranked

Both players must be Biba members

Before the start of the event each member must decide whether or not to have their matches ranked. If one player out of a pair doesn't want their

matches ranked then that match will not be ranked for both players

All ranked matches must be recorded on the clubs official registered score card showing the names of the players, their Biba No., the result and the signatures of each player and the Club Organiser

The record sheets must be posted to Biba HQ to arrive before the end of the month for the results to be calculated on the 1st of the following month. However, clubs are allowed to wait until the sheet is full if it prefers to do so

Club matches will not count towards the Biba Ranking Championship nor shall they count as qualifying matches for Active Ranking status or towards the 1000-to1; they are simply a supplement to rankings of the monthly Biba tournaments

So, how does a club go about getting its players 11-point matches ranked? First of all the club, via a recognised club official, has to register with Biba for ranking status for which there is an annual charge of £10. Upon acceptance to the scheme the club will be sent one free record sheet for 32 matches, (64 entries). Each record sheet is unique to each club and will bear the club name and sequential numbers. Only results on these record sheets will be valid and ranked. Subsequent record sheets can be ordered from Biba at the price of £12 per sheet to cover the cost of administration etc. This works out at just under 18 pence per match per player.

The Club Organiser will be responsible for checking that each recorded match is genuine and that neither player has agreed on the outcome prior to the match finishing in line with full Biba Rules of Play. Any Club found abusing the scheme will be barred from the scheme and all players that gained ranking points will have them rescinded.

It is anticipated there will be a high demand for the scheme and Club Organisers are advised to consult with their members as soon as possible to ensure they are registered before the starting date of 1st January 2003.

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Probabilities Associated With Ordinary Dice

By C.C. Lytton

(formerly Defence Research Agency, Royal Aerospace Establishment, Farnborough, Hants.)

1. Introduction

A true die will yield exactly $1/6$ probability for the numbers on each of its six faces. On most dice the dots are made with small indentations on each face, and perfectionists insist that this results in a die biased towards sixes, and demand very expensive precision dice. We show that, for a popular set of dice supplied with a high-quality backgammon set, there is indeed a bias, but over 60,000 trials the expected surplus of sixes beyond 10,000 is about 12, so that in practice the bias will be unnoticeable.

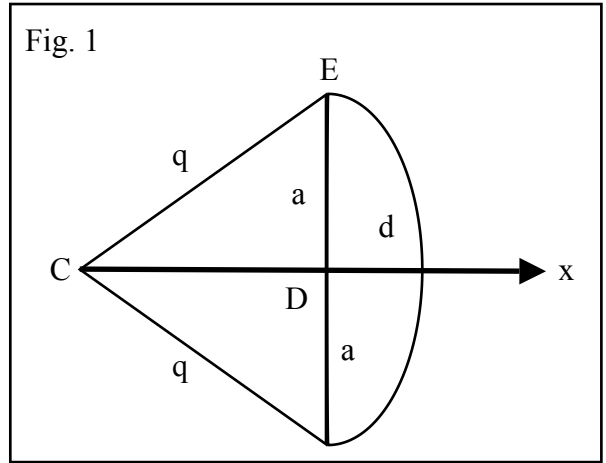
2. The Volume and Centre of Gravity of a Spherical Cap

Assume that the dots on each face of a die are made by drilling out spherical caps and then colouring the drilled surface in some way.

First, we need the volume and centre of gravity (CG) of such a spherical cap. Let the cap have radius a and depth d , as shown in Fig. 1. If the radius of curvature of the drill bit is q , then applying Pythagoras's theorem to the triangle CDE with sides a , $q-d$ and q , we find:

$$q = \frac{1}{2} \left(d + \frac{a^2}{d} \right) \quad (1)$$

Take the x -axis along the axis of the cap as shown, then a small slice of the cap at distance x from the centre of curvature C will have area $\pi(q^2 - x^2)$, so the cap volume is . . .



$$v = \int_{q-d}^q \pi (q^2 - x^2) dx = \pi \left[q^2 x - \frac{x^3}{3} \right]_{q-d}^q$$

which simplifies to $v = \pi d^2 (q - \frac{1}{3}d)$. Substituting for q from (1) we get $v = \frac{1}{6} \pi d (d^2 + 3a^2)$ (2)

We observe that for a hemispherical cap with $d = a$, this reduces to the well known result $v = \frac{2}{3} \pi a^3$

Also, taking moments about C , if the CG of the cap is at $x = c$, then . . .

$$vc = \int_{q-d}^q \pi x (q^2 - x^2) dx = \pi \left[\frac{1}{2} q^2 x^2 - \frac{1}{4} x^4 \right]_{q-d}^q \quad \text{Which simplifies to } vc = \pi d^2 (q - \frac{1}{2}d)^2 \quad (3)$$

Now the plane face $x = q - d$ of the cap will be flush with the surface of the die, which will be our real reference point rather than C . From Fig. 1 the depth, w , into the cap, of the the CG from this plane is obviously $w = c - (q - d)$.

Substituting for q from (1), v from (2) and c from (3), we emerge with $w = \frac{d}{2} \frac{d^2 + 2a^2}{d^2 + 3a^2}$ (4). Again for a

hemispherical cap with $d = a$, this checks against the schoolroom result, $w = \frac{3}{8}d$.

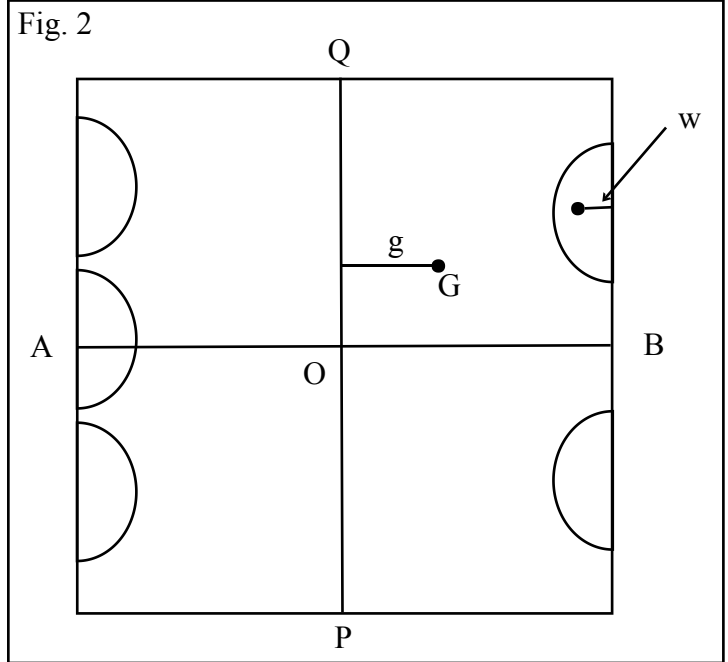
3. The Centre of Gravity of a Cube Indented With Spherical Caps

On each face of a die the indents are symmetrically disposed around the centre, so if we consider a cross-section halfway between two opposite faces of the die as shown in Fig. 2, (on the next page) the combined CG of the indents on the other four faces lies in this cross-section plane indicated by QOP . Thus the displacement of the CG away from this central plane is due solely to the different number of indents on the left and right faces in Fig. 2.

Let our die have j indents on one face (centre B) and $k > j$ indents on the opposite face (centre A); for clarity Fig. 2 is drawn with $j = 2$ and $k = 3$, but (j, k) actually takes on the values of (1, 6), (2, 5) and (3, 4).

The centre of gravity G of the die will be displaced from the central plane a distance g towards the face with the smaller number j of indents, because less volume has been removed from that side. Also, since the total number of indents is 21, the volume of the die (taking each side to be unit length) is $1 - 21v$, where v is given by (2). Hence, if the central plane QOP is vertical, the moment of the die about P , say, is $g(1 - 21v)$.

A single indent has its CG at distance w given by (4) from its plane face, and therefore at distance $(\frac{1}{2} - w)$ from the central plane, so the moment of the indent about P is $(\frac{1}{2} - w)v$ where v is the volume given by (2).



If we were now to replace all the missing indents, our die would be perfectly balanced about a pivot P, so balancing k indents on the left against j indents plus the indented die on the right, we have:

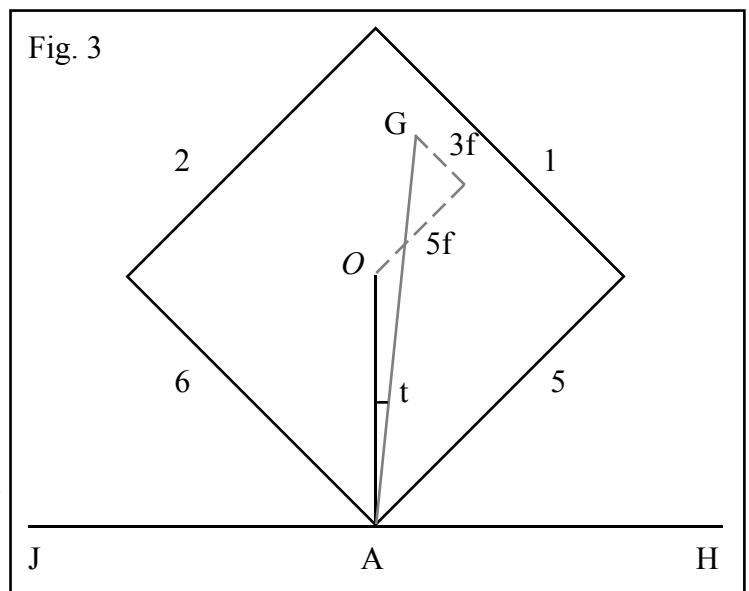
$$k(\frac{1}{2} - w)v = j(\frac{1}{2} - w)v + g(1 - 21v) \dots$$

$$\text{whence } g = (k - j)f \quad (5) \dots \text{ where } f = \frac{(\frac{1}{2} - w)v}{1 - 21v} \quad (6).$$

Thus, on the die axis perpendicular to faces 3 and 4, G is displaced a distance f towards face 3; perpendicular to faces 2 and 5 with $k - j = 3$, G is displaced a distance $3f$ towards face 2; and perpendicular to faces 1 and 6 with $k - j = 5$, G is displaced a distance $5f$ towards face 1. Putting it another way, if we take Cartesian axes (x, y, z) centred at O with Ox, Oy, Oz towards faces 1, 2, 3 respectively, the coordinates of G are $(5f, 3f, f)$ (7).

4. The Effect of the Bias on Roll Probabilities

To estimate this effect, we model a typical roll as follows. First we select one of the 12 edges of the die at random, with an equal probability $1/12$ for each edge. Then we place this edge in contact with a smooth level table so that each of the faces containing this edge is somewhere between the horizontal table-top and the vertical perpendicular to it, again with equal probability in this range; this means that the plane containing the die centre O and the contact edge varies within an angle 45° either side of the vertical. A possible position is shown in Fig. 3, which is drawn for the case where the edge (5, 6) common to faces 5 and 6 is in contact with the table JH and is represented by a line through A perpendicular to the plane of the paper.



Finally, we gently release the die so that it falls under gravity on one face or the other, depending on where G is relative to the vertical plane through the edge A . In Fig. 3, if G is on the right side of this plane (that is, the angle $G\hat{A}H$ is less than 90°) the die will fall showing 2; if on the left, it will show 1. For a perfectly balanced die, G would coincide with O and since O is equally likely to lie either side, the probabilities of 1 and of 2 are equal (both $\frac{1}{2}$). For our die as shown, $O\hat{A}G$ will be a non-zero angle designated by t . Then $G\hat{A}H$ is less than 90° if $O\hat{A}H$ is less than $90^\circ + t$, so (as the angle $O\hat{A}H$ must lie

between 45° -- when side 5 is flat down -- and 135° when side 6 is flat down), the die will fall with side 2 up if $45^\circ \leq O\hat{A}H < 90^\circ + t$,

$$\text{i.e. } 0 \leq \frac{O\hat{A}H - 45^\circ}{90^\circ} < \frac{1}{2} + \frac{t}{90^\circ} \text{ and with side 1 up if } 90^\circ + t < O\hat{A}H \leq 135^\circ \text{ i.e. } \frac{1}{2} + \frac{t}{90^\circ} < \frac{O\hat{A}H - 45^\circ}{90^\circ} \leq 1$$

So the probability of rolling the higher number (2 here) is $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{t}{90^\circ} = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{2t}{\pi}$ **(8).**

From here on, we shall work with angles in circular measure (radians), so that $90^\circ = \pi/2$.

Thus the probability of rolling the lower number on the die (1 here) is $\frac{1}{2} - \frac{2t}{\pi}$ **(9).**

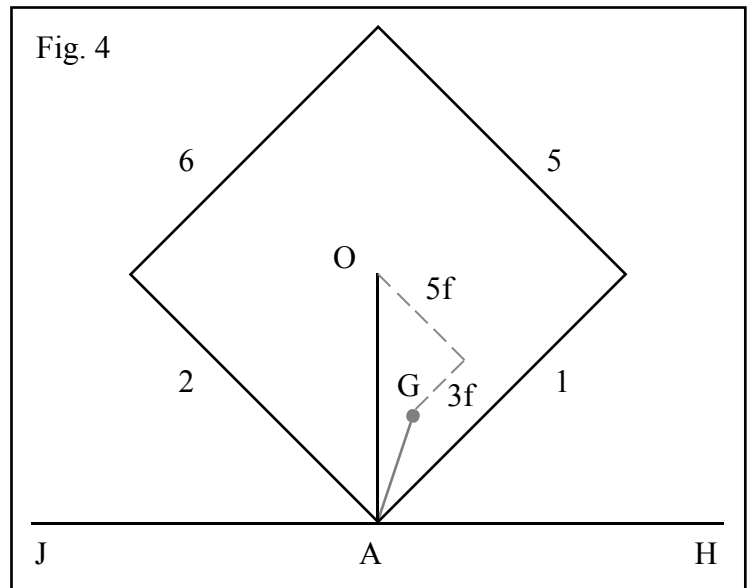
For a perfect die with $t = 0$, **(8)** and **(9)** both reduce to $\frac{1}{2}$, and since each face has 4 edges the total probability for a particular face is the sum of these 4, multiplied by the probability $\frac{1}{12}$ for each edge: $\frac{1}{2} \times 4 \times \frac{1}{12} = \frac{1}{6}$ as we expect.

So we can henceforth ignore the terms $\frac{1}{2}$ and refer simply to extra probabilities $2t/\pi$ in **(8)** and $-2t/\pi$ in **(9)**. Now, since f and its multiples are very small, the angle t can be well approximated by projecting the two separate displacements (which together yield G in Fig. 3) on to the perpendicular to OA through O . In Fig. 3, we have the algebraic sum of displacements $5f/\sqrt{2}$ towards face 1 and $3f/\sqrt{2}$ towards face 2, divided by the distance OA which is $1/\sqrt{2}$ for our unit cube:

$$t = \left(\frac{5f}{\sqrt{2}} - \frac{3f}{\sqrt{2}} \right) \cdot \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} = 2f \quad \textbf{(10).}$$

We observe that if the die is initially placed on the opposite edge (1, 2) common to faces 1 and 2 as in Fig. 4, we obtain the same value of t and the same probabilities **(8)**, **(9)** for the larger and smaller face values 6 and 5 as for faces 2 and 1 respectively. Note that Figs. 3 and 4 are not drawn to scale, and indeed the difference between O and G will normally be indistinguishable to the naked eye.

We work through all 12 edges similarly in opposite pairs, noting that there are no edge pairs such as (1, 6) since these are opposite faces. We obtain the following table of values of t expressed as multiples of f similarly to **(10)**, and of extra probabilities for each face, to be factored with $2/\pi$ according to **(8)**, **(9)** and **(10)**. We remark that for edge pairs (4, 6), (4, 5) and their opposites the algebraic sum t in **(10)** also comprises one positive and one negative term, but for the others such as (2, 6) the sum comprises two terms both the same sign - as can be verified from diagrams similar to Fig. 3 and Fig. 4.



The total extra probabilities for each face are again found by adding the values from the four contributing edge pairs as shown on the bottom row, multiplying by the aforementioned factor: $\frac{2}{\pi} f$

and then by the probability $\frac{1}{12}$ for each edge. In particular, the extra probability for face 6 is:

$$20 \times \left(\frac{2}{\pi} f \right) \times \frac{1}{12} = 20 \times \frac{f}{6\pi} \quad \textbf{(11).}$$

Table of Extra Probabilities For Each Face and Edge Pair								
Edge pairs	t / f	Faces:	1	2	3	4	5	6
(5, 6) & (2, 1)	2		-2	2			-2	2
(4, 6) & (3, 1)	4		-4		4	-4		4
(3, 6) & (4, 1)	6		-6		-6	6		6
(2, 6) & (5, 1)	8		-8	-8			8	8
(4, 5) & (3, 1)	2			-2	2	-2	2	
(3, 5) & (4, 2)	4			-4	-4	4	4	
Totals over all edges:			-20	-12	-4	4	12	20

This is at the expense of face 1. Similarly the extra probability for face 5 is:

$12 \times \frac{f}{6p_i}$ **(12)** at the expense of face 2, and that for face 4 is $4 \times \frac{f}{6p_i}$ **(13)** at the expense of face 3.

5. Application

David Naylor's backgammon set comes with dice which I measured as follows (*MC: These are ordinary, non-precision dice*): side 15.0 mm, diameter of cap (representing a pip) 2.8 mm, and using a pinhead the depth of an indent is estimated as 0.4 mm. This gives:

$$d = \frac{0.4}{15.0} = 0.026667, \text{ and } 2a = \frac{2.8}{15.0}, a = 0.093333.$$

Plugging these values into **(2)**, **(4)** and **(6)**, we get:

$$v = 0.00037482$$

$$w = 0.0092516$$

$$f = 0.0001853$$

and in **(11)** $\frac{f}{6p_i} = 0.0000098$ or approximately 0.1×10^{-4} . **(14)**

Thus, over 60,000 trials we expect face 6 to appear in excess of 10,000 about $6 \times 10^4 \times 0.1 \times 10^{-4} \times 20 = 12$ times, at the expense of face 1, according to **(11)**. Similarly, for face 5 e.g. **(12)** shows a factor 12 to be applied to **(14)** yielding an excess of about 7 times over 60,000 trials, at the expense of face 2; and for face 4, a factor 4 yields an excess of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ times, away from face 3.

6. Concluding Remarks

Using an empirical model of the process of rolling a die, we have shown that the pip indentations indeed produce a bias towards the number 6 and that, for a popular brand of dice, the bias is of the order 12 extra occurrences in 60,000 trials, that is to say about 0.02%. In practice, a bias of this order will be unnoticeable, though the author does not know of any experiments or other research, by parties interested or not, which might demonstrate bias due to other factors.

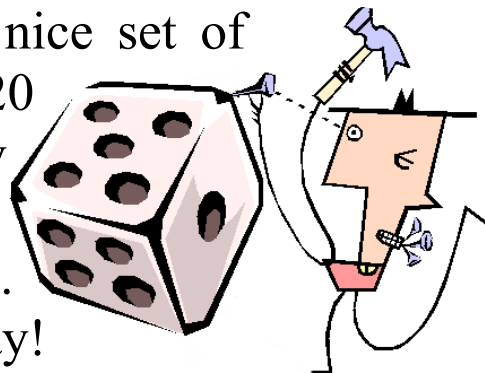
Formulae are derived in the text, enabling probabilities to be readily determined for other dice, if desired. The formulae involve only simple arithmetic; no advanced mathematical functions or large high-speed computers are required.

Precision dice are manufactured with the indents filled in using material of the same density as the main body, and so are free of this source of bias. As they are about half the (linear) size of ordinary dice, thus demanding at least twice as great a manufacturing tolerance in machining exact cubical dice, the extra financial outlay is already understandable. What the author does wonder is whether bias in dice matters at all compared with simple differences in playing ability.



O.K. So what will it be?

Do you want to stick with the *Mickey Mouse* dice or move up to a nice set of precision dice? Just £20 for a set of four brightly coloured, hand-crafted, beauties from Biba H.Q. Send me the money today!



The Nordic Open Championship Final, April 2002

By Roy Hollands

There were 399 players at the Nordic, 92 of them entering the Championship.

The final was between Morten Holm (Denmark) and Raj Jansari (UK). Morten is a very strong player with a long list of victories to his credit. He was semi-finalist in the World Championship at Monte Carlo, 2001. Raj played excellent backgammon throughout the tournament. I was particularly impressed with his victory over the ex-World Champion Peter Thomsen.

Morten won the final 25-11. The Snowie statistics show that Raj was very unlucky to lose. The luck factor was 9.321 in Morten's favour. Snowie rated Raj as 51.3% favourite. Thus his slight advantage in skill was counteracted by his lack of luck.

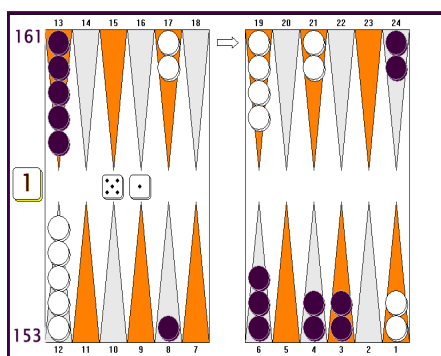
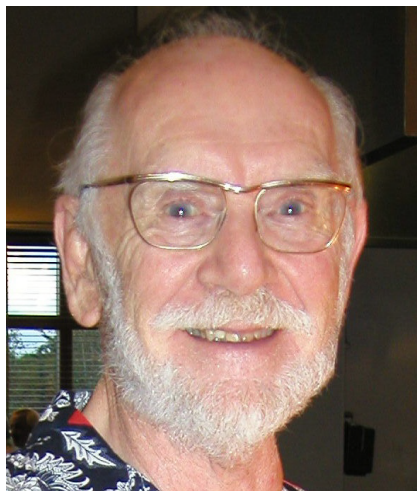
Snowie rated both players as *expert* level. Most of the winners of our BIBA tournaments are at *advanced* level so the play in the Nordic final was of a very high standard.

Raj made 20 errors of which 8 were blunders. His error rate was 5.283. Morten made 21 errors of which 7 were blunders. His error rate was 5.482. *A blunder is when there is 0.10 or more difference between the move, or cube decision, and Snowie's choice. An error is when the difference is 0.03 or more.*

Rollouts of 1296 have been used to verify some of the plays.

Game 1

Raj Jansai 0 (White)	Morten Holm 0 (Black)
01)	53: 8/3 6/3
02) 42: 8/4 6/4	42: 8/4 6/4



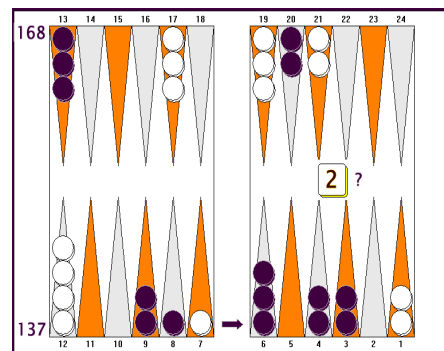
03) 51: 13/8 6/5

This is an error, bordering on a blunder (0.091).

Snowie prefers 24/23 13/8. Black has the stronger board and a hit on White's 5-point is far more damaging than one on his 23-point. 6/5 does unstack the 6-point and starts the valuable 5 point, but the risks far outweigh the tentative advantages.

Furthermore White needs to split so as to escape a checker or make an advanced anchor and this should be done before Black brings down more ammunition.

44: 24/20(2)* 13/9(2)
04) 61: 25/24 24/18

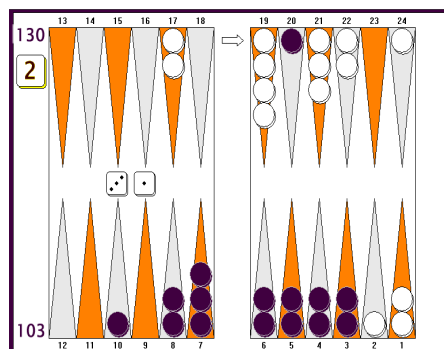


Doubles to 2

A clear double with equity 0.897 as opposed to 0.806 if no double. Also a clear take as White wins 32.2% of the game.

05) Takes 64: 13/7* 13/9
06) 63: 21: 7/5 6/5
07) 42: 25/23 8/4 41: 13/9 9/8
08) 41: 13/9 9/8 11: 9/8(2) 8/7(2)
09) 43: 13/9 9/6 43: 9/5 5/2*
10) 52: 25/23* 13/8

41: 25/24 24/20
11) 43: 13/9 9/6
54: 20/15 20/16
12) 53: 8/3 6/3 11: 15/11
13) 43: 8/4 4/1 64: 16/10 11/7



14) 31: 8/5* 6/5

This is a blunder losing 0.161 equity compared to 24/23 4/1.

What is the correct game plan for White? When trapped behind a prime hitting is generally wrong to hit.

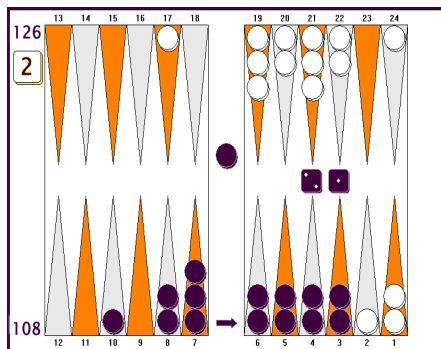
It may be correct if you can build a strong block and your opponent has to enter on a low point. This



would also require him to have a timing problem so that he has to break his prime before he can escape.

These conditions are not present in White's position. White will have a four-point board but does not have the timing to maintain it.

So the game plan is to hope for a late hit and to have a four-point board when this happens. Hence best is 24/23 4/1. The 23-point anchor is better than one on the 24-point as it generates more hits.



21: 25/23 7/6

A cubeful rollout confirms that this is an error.

Bar/24* 10/8 is better by 0.06, bar/24 7/5 by 0.048 and bar/23 7/6 by 0.011. Hitting increases the number of gammons by about 15% which more than compensates for the reduction from 90% wins to 86%.

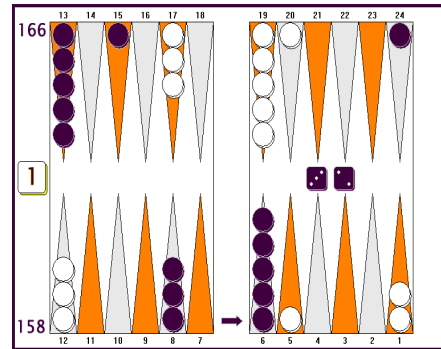
- 15) 11: 24/23(2) 8/7(2)
 55: 23/18 18/13 13/8 8/3
 16) 32: 6/3 3/1 62: 10/4 3/1
 17) 61: 4/3 65: 7/1 6/1
 18) 61: 3/2 42: 7/3 3/1
 19) 43: 6/2 6/3 55: 8/3(2) 5/0(2)
 20) 41: 6/2 2/1 43: 4/0 3/0
 21) 64: 23/17 17/13 65: 6/0 6/1
 22) 63: 23/17 13/10 31: 3/0 1/0
 23) 11: 10/9 9/8 8/7 7/6
 54: 4/0 4/0
 24) 64: 17/11 11/7 42: 3/0 3/1
 25) 31: 23/20 7/6 43: 1/0 1/0
 26) 31: 20/17 17/16 42: 1/0 1/0

27) 41: 16/12 12/11 42: 1/0
Wins 4 points

Game 2

Raj Jansai 0 (White) **Morten Holm 4 (Black)**

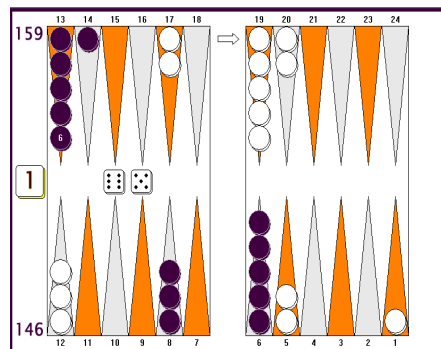
01) 23: 13/10 13/11 63: 24/18 18/15*
 02) 65: 25/20 11/5



32: 24/21 15/13

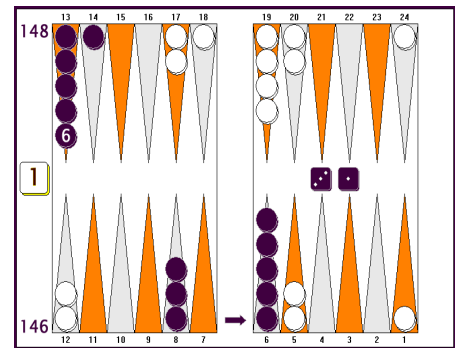
A fairly serious error. The hit on Black's 5-point is essential. When in doubt play the aggressive alternative. It stops White making an anchor on his 20-point. 13/11 is the best 2 as it brings down a builder aiming at the 5-point.

03) 43: 24/20 8/5 52: 21/16 16/14



04) 65: 13/7 6/1

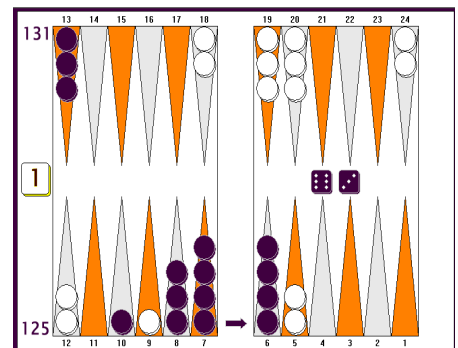
A small error. Unless there is a very good reason, as for example when blitzing, always look for an alternative to putting a checker on your 1-point.



31: 6/3 14/13

A serious blunder. 14/10 duplicates the 5 needed to hit and to cover the 1-point blot. White would have to give up his anchor to hit with a 5. 14/13 puts seven checkers on the 13-point which is very ugly. Also 6/3 allows a hit with a 2 which cannot be used profitably elsewhere.

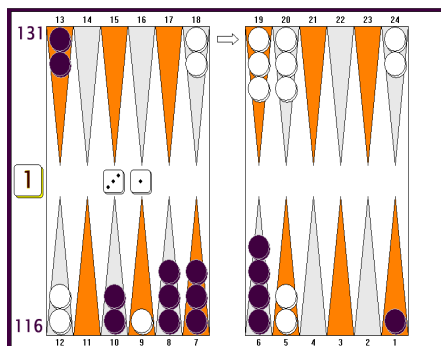
05) 51: 6/1 8/7 66: 13/7(4)
 06) 32: 8/5 24/22* 63: 25/22 22/16
 07) 52: 20/15 22/20 42: 16/14 14/10*
 08) 63: 25/22 22/16



63: 7/1 13/10

10/4 7/4 is better by 0.063. White has a 3 point board and making Black's 4-point would be a step towards equalising boards. Putting a checker on the 1-point is always suspect.

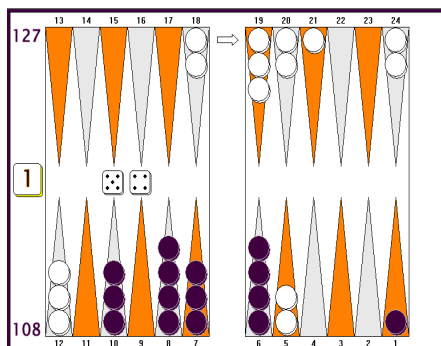
(continued on the next page)



09) 31: 16/13 5/4

White is 15 pips behind and has the better board. This suggests provoking a hitting contest, especially as Black has a blot on his 1-point. Hence 7/4 5/4, leaving the blot on the 16-point, is best.

53: 13/8 13/10



10) 54: 13/8 8/4

Snowie prefers 13/8 7/3 leaving a better distribution. If Black was likely to be leaving a blot in the near future then 13/4 would not have been an error.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| | Doubles to 2 |
| 11) Takes | 63: 10/4 6/3 |
| 12) 32: 13/10 7/5 | 65: 8/2 8/3 |
| 13) 65: 10/4 13/8 | 52: 7/2 6/4 |
| 14) 33: 8/5 6/3 5/2(2) | 61: 7/1 7/6 |
| 15) 43: 7/3 4/1 | 65: 8/2 8/3 |
| 16) 63: 20/14 14/11 | |
| | 63: 10/4 10/7 |
| 17) 54: 11/6 20/16 | 51: 7/2 1/0 |
| 18) 21: 16/14 14/13 | 63: 6/0 3/0 |
| 19) 51: 13/8 6/5 | 41: 4/0 1/0 |
| 20) 51: 8/3 1/0 | 62: 6/0 2/0 |
| 21) 21: 2/0 1/0 | 32: 3/0 2/0 |
| 22) 22: 6/4 4/2 2/0 2/0 | |
| | 65: 6/0 4/0 |

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| 23) 52: 5/0 6/4 | 31: 3/0 2/1 |
| 24) 22: 4/2(2) 2/0(2) | 61: 4/0 2/1 |
| 25) 42: 4/0 5/3 | 31: 1/0 1/0 |

Wins 2 points

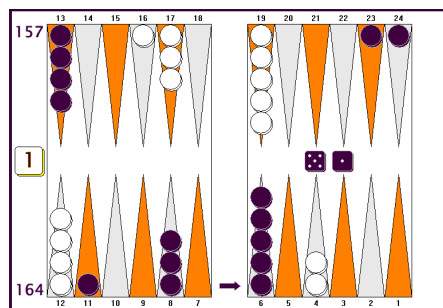
In Game 2 Raj was rated World Class and Morten as Expert.

Game 3

Raj Jansai 0 Morten Holm 6
(White) (Black)

A remarkable game. Apart from one minor error neither player made any other mistakes. Raj was graded as Extra-terrestrial and Morten as World Class. The dice were very cruel to inflict such a heavy loss on Raj when he had played so brilliantly. That's backgammon for you!

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 01) 14: 13/9 24/23 | |
| | 21: 13/11 24/23 |
| 02) 32: 24/21 23/21 | |



51: 11/6 6/5

A small error. Snowie prefers 13/8 6/5. The builder on the 11-point is better placed than an extra checker on the 13 point. It gives a better chance of making the 5-point and also of making a point in the outer board.

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 03) 11: 21/20(2)* 6/5(2) | |
| | 51: 25/24 23/18 |
| 04) Doubles to 2 | Takes |
| 05) 42: 13/9 9/7* | |
| | 22: 25/23 24/22(2) 6/4 |
| 06) 41: 13/9 8/7 | 53: 8/3 6/3 |
| 07) 43: 20/16 16/13 | 61: 13/7 7/6 |
| 08) 52: 20/15 15/13 | 41: 8/4 6/5 |
| 09) 63: 13/7 13/10 | 31: 13/10 6/5 |
| 10) 55: 13/8(2) 9/4(2) | |

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| | 41: 13/9 23/22 |
| 11) 31: 10/7 7/6 | |
| | 11: 13/12 10/9 9/8 8/7 |
| 12) 66: 8/2(4) | 51: 22/17 17/16 |
| 13) 44: 6/2(4) | |
| | 66: 16/10 12/6 10/4 8/2 |
| 14) 61: 7/1 2/1 | 54: 7/2 9/5 |
| 15) 54: 7/2 5/1 | Doubles to 4 |
| 16) Takes | |
| | 44: 22/18* 18/14 14/10 6/2 |
| 17) 22: | 42: 10/6 22/20* |
| 18) 51: 25/24 | 43: 5/1* 4/1 |
| 19) 42: | 42: 20/16 16/14 |
| 20) 55: | 43: 14/10 10/7 |
| 21) 55: | 32: 7/4 2/0 |
| 22) 21: | 21: 6/4 4/3 |
| 23) 55: | 55: 6/1(2) 5/0(2) |
| 24) 33: | 32: 3/0 4/2 |
| 25) 33: | 43: 4/0 4/1 |
| 26) 44: 25/21(2) 21/17(2) | |
| | 42: 3/0 2/0 |
| 27) 52: 17/12 12/10 | 54: 3/0 2/0 |
| 28) 51: 17/12 10/9 | 31: 2/0 1/0 |
| 29) 31: 9/6 12/11 | 42: 1/0 1/0 |
| 30) 41: 11/7 7/6 | 35: 1/0 1/0 |

Wins 8 points

Morten leads Raj 14-0. This match will continue in the next issue, mid-January 2003.

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Amendments & Rules 2003

More and more often I am recording matches and publishing them in the Bibafax and on the web via GammonVillage. Also, a lot of players are seeking the right to record their own matches. In order that I might have the right to record and publish a match as I see fit and for players to record if they so wish I have made an addition to the Biba Rules of Play: 1.8 Match Recording

Also, I have a few complaints about players not acting in a sporting or gentlemanly manner during matches (both their own and those of others) - in short, acting rude!

There's no excuse for bad behaviour. It is not in the spirit of Biba and I will not tolerate it. To this end I have made another addition in an attempt to *legalise* any appropriate action that might have to be taken against offending players: 1.9 Code of Behaviour.

Rule 5.5 Crawford Rule has been slightly altered to avoid use of the cube and to make it plainer.

The Biba Format are not rules of play or procedures. They shall instead form a separate section.

The Rules & Procedures starting in January 2003 are:

1.0 Properties

1.1 Interpretation The Tournament Rules & Procedures cannot, and should not, regulate all possible situations that may arise during a game. No set of rules should deprive the Director of his freedom of judgement and prevent him from finding the solution dictated by fairness and compatible with the circumstances of a particular case.

1.2 Scope Except where otherwise specified, the commonly accepted rules of backgammon apply.

1.3 Staff At each Biba tournament the Director shall be Michael Crane or others appointed by him, having had similar experience.

1.4 Entries All entries are subject to the approval of the Director.

1.5 Aids Once a match is in progress, neither player may use mechanical or written aids except to keep score, or record matches. Players may forbid opponents from wearing headphones.

1.6 Language The official tournament language is English. Speech in any other language will not be permitted at any time between players and/or spectators whilst a match is in progress.

1.7 Spectators Spectators should remain silent while observing a match. They have no right to draw attention to any misplays or comment on plays but have the right to report cheating to the Director (see Rule 6.2). Players may request the Director to bar any spectator without reason. With proof of cheating or signalling between a player and spectator(s), all parties will be disqualified from the tournament, and banned from all the playing areas. Furthermore they will lose all and any claims to prize money, prizes, trophies and any form of remuneration.

1.8 Match Recording Players may record their own matches either with pen and paper or video camera as long as the method used is unobtrusive and does not interfere with the playing of the game. BIBA reserves the right to record matches of its choice and to market such matches at its discretion.

1.9 Code Of Behaviour The organiser will not brook bad behaviour and any player deemed guilty of such (in the opinion of the organiser and/or fellow members) may be barred from the tournament losing all and any claims to prize money, prizes, trophies and any form of remuneration including refunds of membership or entry fees. (see 6.3 Appeals)

2.0 Regulations

2.1 Place All matches to be played in areas agreed by the Director. Any player missing from the main playing room when called out in the draw shall incur the first penalty point after an absence of 5 minutes from the start of the match unless they are absent with the Director's permission.

2.2 Time Matches shall start promptly at the appointed time. Three 5-minute recesses only are allowed per 11-point match. Players must use their breaks at the same time.

2.3 Penalty Points Penalty points will be awarded against latecomers and absentees at the rate of one per five minutes late, the first point being awarded 5 minutes after the appointed starting time. When the total of penalty points amount to more than 50% of the total points to win the match the absent player shall forfeit the match.

2.4 Slow Play Players are expected to play at a reasonable pace. If, in the Director's opinion a match is not progressing at a reasonable pace a warning may be given. If slow play continues the Director can either award penalty points or issue clocks accordance with BIBA Clock Rules. The Director's decision is final. *NB. For reference see A Guide to Match Score and Time document.*

2.5 Monitors The Director may appoint a monitor to observe a match on his own initiative or at the request of any player. The Monitor shall have full powers to protect each player from an opponent's irregularities.

3.0 Preliminaries

3.1 Equipment Either player may demand that both use when available and approved by the Director, precision dice (over any others), and/or lipped cups or baffle boxes, 21" tournament sized boards. After the start of a match, equipment can only be changed by the Director. *NB: When playing space is restricted, boards greater than 21" will not be allowed in the main playing room.*

3.2 Preference If necessary, the direction of play, equipment, choice of checker colour and seat location shall be decided by the roll of the highest die prior to the commencement of play.

3.3 Dice Either player may demand a mixing of the dice prior to the start of any game. The demanding player shakes and rolls all four dice then each selects a die in turn.

4.0 Play Of The Game / Irregularities

4.1 Random Rolls A legal roll consists of both dice being placed into the cup and shaken vigorously before rolling simultaneously to the right of the bar. They are to be thrown from a discernible height and be seen to bounce and roll freely across the board.

4.2 Valid Rolls Both dice must come to rest flat (not cocked) on the playing surface to the right of the bar; otherwise they must be rolled again.

4.3 Moving Players should move

clearly, using only one hand to play the checkers. Players shall re-enter any checker on the bar before moving any other checker. No player shall move any checkers during an opponent's turn. Deviations from proper moving procedure may result in an adverse ruling in cases of dispute.

4.4 Checker Handling Checkers that have been hit must be kept on the bar pending re-entry. Checkers that have been borne off must be kept off the entire playing surface for the rest of the game. Failure to observe these procedures may result in an adverse ruling in any case of dispute or redress to an opponent harmed thereby.

4.5 Lifting Dice Players conclude their turn by lifting either or both dice. With notice to the opponent the player may reposition the dice on the playing surface to facilitate the moving of checkers. After the player has lifted both of the dice the move can only be changed upon an opponent's demand to replay an illegal move.

4.6 Premature Action All premature actions, (dice rolls or cube action), shall stand if otherwise valid. An opponent, who has yet to complete his turn or act upon the cube, may then do so with the foreknowledge of the premature roller's dice throw or cube action.

4.7 Error In Set-Up An incorrect starting position must be corrected prior to the fifth roll of the game. The set-up thereafter becomes official. Players starting with less than fifteen checkers can still be gammoned or backgammoned.

4.8 Illegal Moves Upon drawing attention to an illegal move the player may condone it or demand that the full roll be played legally. An illegal move is condoned by

the opponent rolling their own dice or turning the cube.

4.9 Completion Games must be rolled to completion unless ended by a pass of a double or redouble, or conceded in no-contact positions, single game, gammon or backgammon losses. No game may be cancelled, replayed or settled. Matches must be played the appointed length or as decided by the Director. Non-adherence may lead to disqualification of one or both players, and result in the loss of all and any claims to prize money, prizes, trophies and any form of remuneration.

5.0 Scoring / Doubling

5.1 Keeping Score Each player shall keep a running match score and compare it with the opponent's at the start of each game. In the event of a scoring dispute the player not keeping score will be at a disadvantage.

5.2 Cube Set-Up It is the responsibility of both players to ensure that the cube is in the middle of the board and that the "64" face is showing at the start of every game. In the event of a dispute, current position and level of the cube will strongly affect the Director's ruling. The cube should be removed during the Crawford game only. (See 5.5 Crawford Rule)

5.3 Cube Rules Gammons and backgammons shall count at all times. It is not necessary to double an opponent first to win a gammon or backgammon. Beavering is not allowed. Automatic doubles are not allowed.

5.4 Cube Handling Players may only double when it is their turn to roll and must do so before rolling, (cocked dice are deemed "rolling" dice). To offer a double or redouble move the cube towards the

opponent at the higher level saying clearly, "double" or similar. To take, draw the cube towards oneself and say, "take" or similar, placing the cube on your side of the board. Both players should ensure that the correct level is displayed. To reject the cube one says, "pass" or "drop" and the game is concluded. *Care should be exercised when handling the cube as either verbal or physical acts might be interpreted as cube actions by an opponent.*

5.5 Crawford Rule The Crawford Rule will apply to all matches. When a player reaches match point, the cube cannot be used by either player for that one game and should be removed from the board for this one game only. *Use of the cube will not be recognised if any player doubles during the Crawford game. Spectators must report any such use to the Director.* In any subsequent games the cube should be replaced on the board and can be used prior to any legal throw, except the opening roll. (See 5.2 Cube Set-Up).

5.6 Score Result The final score should be reported to the Director or someone appointed by him, by the winner immediately upon completion of the match. It is the winner's responsibility to check that the correct result is recorded and posted. In the eventuality of an incorrect result being posted, this may only be corrected if neither player has started playing the next round.

6.0 Contentions

6.1 Disputes When a dispute arises, both players must leave dice, checkers, cube and score-sheet unchanged while the Director is summoned. Violations in this area by either player are most serious and create a presumption in favour of the opponent.

6.2 Testimony Any player may argue issues of fact or rule. Spectators, except to report cheating, testify only at the Director's request. Spectators are required to report any suspected cheating, collusion or faulty equipment directly to a tournament official and *not* to the players involved.

6.3 Appeals A player may appeal against the Director's ruling but must do so promptly, while timely redress may be obtained. To resolve an appeal, the Director shall convene a committee of three knowledgeable and disinterested players who shall hear the testimony and all relevant arguments from all parties and may overturn the Director's ruling by a unanimous vote. The committee's decision is final and thus exhausts the right to appeal.

Michael Crane
Biba Director
November 2002

Biba Format

1.0 Swiss Ranking

1.1 Matches Each player shall play six, eleven-point rounds against six other players in accordance with the Swiss Format. The tournament winner will be the player who has won the maximum number of rounds with the highest points total. Should two or more players share the maximum number of rounds won there shall be a 7th-round knockout. The Director shall decide the match length.

1.2 Position Criteria Position within the Swiss format will be decided thus: a) Rounds won, b) Sum of opponent's scores.

1.3 Round Matching Round One, random draw, thereafter matched with an opponent who has an iden-

tical score or similar. Whilst every effort will be made to ensure correct matching, mismatching may occasionally occur. *NB. In the event of an odd number of entrants in the 1st Round the player with the lowest Biba ranking will (random draw if more than one) be given a 1 point bye. Thereafter players on the least number of wins will be drawn at random for the bye.*

1.4 Ranking Championship Qualification Players have to play a minimum of 18, 11 point matches (*if you play more, the lower scores are substituted by higher ones*) of which we use the average (total of scores divided by 18) to ascertain your Ranking Championship position.

1.5 Rankings New players begin with a Ranking Score of 1500. This is altered after each round according to win or lose. Players do not qualify for the active list until they have played 15 11 point matches and they must then play another 15 within one year of qualifying to remain upon the active list.

1.6 Ranking Championship Winner The Ranking Championship winner will be the player with the highest average at the year end (Townharbour Trophy, November). Deciding criteria should two or more share this total is; a) 2 decimal points, b) 3 decimal points, etc.

2.0 Knockouts

2.1 Matches Each player is entered into the 1st round of the Main on a random draw, and thereafter will enter subsequent elements (Consolation etc.) when they lose a match on a knockout basis.

2.2 Rankings In Knockouts All 11-, 7- and 5-point Knockout

matches will be ranked and the scores will supplement the Ranking Score gained in Swiss tournaments. *NB: all 11-point matches count towards the Ranking Championships. (See 1.4)*

3.0 Grand Prix Championship

3.1 Grand Prix Points In both the Knockout and Swiss formats, Grand Prix points are awarded relative to final positions / matches won. These points are accrued on an annual basis and are reset to zero in each January. Non-Biba tournaments may also feature Grand Prix points (see 2.2).

3.2 Qualification Only current Biba members qualify for the Biba Grand Prix Championships. Tournaments other than Biba run can also qualify, subject to certain restrictions.

3.3 Championship Winner (Swiss & Knockout) The Championship winner will be the player with the highest Grand Prix points total at the year end (Townharbour Trophy, November). Deciding criteria should two or more share this total will be based upon total of rounds won in Grand Prix tournaments; the player with the most rounds won being the winner.

Biba Clock Rules

Due to the (relative) high cost of *time delay clocks* Biba will have to continue with the standard clock it has used in the past, however, new clock rules will be in operation starting in January. If any member would like a copy of these rules when they are ready then they can do so by contacting me via email: clocks@backgammon-biba.co.uk Or via the post from Biba HQ.

I would rather avoid the use of chess clocks to keep matches on schedule, so I have reproduced below the expected total of points on the score sheet at 15 minute intervals.

Playing Time	Total Score	Match Length
0:15	5	
0:30	7	3-points 0:36
0:45	9	
1:00	11	5-points 1:00
1:15	13	
1:30	15	7-points 1:24
1:45	17	
2:00	19	
2:15	21	11-points 2:15

If, at any of these timings a match is behind schedule then a clock might be used (see Clock Rules) to ensure the match finishes at the expected time.

Members Letters

David Hale writes: Outrageously, Brendan Burgess reported in Bibafax 60 that, despite coming third, David Hale hefted the Zakynthos Perpetual Houseparty Cup back to Crete. Well, BB is quite right - and I congratulate Neil Davidson and John Clark, the organisers, on their skill and diplomacy in enabling this result. Here I am, a month later, overseeing the final of the first backgammon tournament to be held in the Cretan mountain village of Azogires. Not only were both finalists women and German, neither had bothered to eat lunch, despite their match not starting until 6pm.



The blonde won. As well as free totty, generous quantities of local raki and grapes were provided to the increasingly enthusiastic contestants throughout the tournament. Might Michael Crane

introduce a similar custom at BIBA events?

MC. Yes, I shall introduce a similar custom to Biba. In future I shall accept all the free totty, raki and grapes that members can bring to a tournament. Mind you, they can leave the kids behind!

From *The Asylum*, **Ric Gerace** points out an error: Thank you so much for the photo on page 40, column 1 of Bibafax No.60. A person can dream...

Now for the oops. Ahem. Correct me if I'm wrong (sound of wild maniacal laughter). Bibafax 60, Page 3, diagram lower right corner. There are 17 rolls that point on the blot on the 22 point.

4 x 3 gives you 12 pointers for the four checkers within direct range. Add to that five doubles - 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2.

For checkers within direct range, the number of hitters available (n) times (n-1) gives you pointing rolls. Gaps don't matter. I believe this works even if intervening points are held by the opponent.

Then add available doubles, including those aided by indirects.

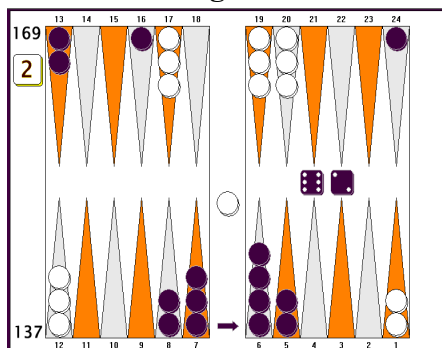
Simpler, yes? (As am I.)

MC. Oops indeed!

Continuing his last letter, **Leslie Singleton** adds: For what it is worth, have a butcher's at No. 45 in Bagai's book. Not much similarity between the positions I agree but note that he *takes it for granted that the midpoint will be cleared before the 16 point*, not to mention his further comment that "the 16 point is not a 'liability' and does serve the purpose of covering both outer boards".

MC. Here's the extract that Leslie refers to:

Advanced Backgammon #29 Page 45



Black to play 62

Simple plays for simple positions. Robertie outthinks himself and the rest of the world by suggesting 16/8 over the natural, safe, productive and correct 24/16. Will the stripped 16- and 13-points be all that hard to clear? The 16-point perhaps, but the mid-point certainly won't be, and those checkers will soon become the builders that Robertie thinks are so immediately important. The 16-point is not a 'liability' and does serve the purpose of covering both outer boards. Moreover, it does so *safely*. 16/8 is simply a blunder.

MC. Both Jelly & Snowie agree with the above.

Liz Barker tells us: Ray Tannen was asking me about the transcript of the final in the tournament of spirits (*Bibafax 60, page 55*). It transpires that there is a typing error in Game 1. The final move for Phillip (13) should be: 51: 8/3*, 8/7.

Bob Young takes time out from winning Bibafax competitions to muse: You know when we had characters like "iceman" (wasn't it) for the various people, well if it ever caught on again, I would like to lay first claim to the name of "hand grenade". It somehow just sums up my style of play sometimes!

MC. I've seen you play. I'd have thought Molotov Cocktail would be more apt!

ZX81
Half man
Half machine
Halfwit



Once again a madman with his finger on the button and with weapons of mass destruction at his disposal is threatening world peace. Can no-one stop Tony Blair? I went to *Checkers*, his country retreat a couple of days ago to speak with him. "Tone," I said, "What the hell do you think you're doing? If you don't back down this country's going to be in one hell of a state soon."

"Yes, I know," he replied distractedly, his grin getting bigger (if that were possible). "And what a state it will be - the 51st!"

I was dumbstruck. I started to admonish him but the strangest thing occurred - he began to disappear

until all that was left was the grin!

John Major has reached the super heights of male macho among the 'greyer' population. Let's face it, if *he* can have egg all over his face there's hope for everyone!

Back to business. In my last column I asked, "What am I" and the best answer (and the funniest) was from the ubiquitous, Bob Young (groan, groan.) He said:

O.K. so I had this spare length of 1.25cm square section timber, about 439cm overall length, a bag of nails, a flat board less than a meter square, a bit of old felt or cork laying around and didn't know what to do with it. Then I bought five boxes of those French red round cheeses, the laughing cow variety, or as the French say *la vache qui rie*, or something like that, and it all seemed to fall into place.

Why not make a board with it, and then think of a game to play on it if it comes out o.k.. As the game evolved, the cheeses, thirty in all, six in a packet, were gradually being eaten by those bad losers which every great game seems to attract, (the father in law), so they had to be replaced by something less edible. Then I invented plastic and the rest as they say is history. Well not quite, because the game that I had invented I called "silly pig" after the mother in law, but this didn't have that marketing ring to it. As the mother in law was always paralytic, flat on her back, then "backpig" was considered, until eventually I came up with that now classic game "Audreysow", no no it was "backgammon".

When the board was unearthed after the mother in law buried it, a quick measure of the board was

taken so that more could be made. After all, there is no merit in being the champion of the world when only you and the father in law play it, is there?

My 30 round, plastic thingies turned out to be exactly 2cm radius, 4cm diameter so they cover an area of 377 square cms (how do you type that little 2 up in the air to represent a squared function?)

ZX: you mean one of these ??
They're easy!

The playing area was 50 x 55 cms (2,750 square cms), which if I call this A, my 30 round thingies would obscure 13.71% of A.

The whole game size was 52.5cms x 62cms,(3,255 square cms), because I would often put the round thingies on the side, or that middle

bit, which the father in law didn't like, and would put them in rows late in the game at the side of the playing area. This turned out to be 18.36% more. I often called this B. (B careful if you are on the middle bit, B happy if you get the fifteen thingies in the side slot before the opponent).

For the mathematically inclined, my 1.25cm timber did very nicely in making all the dimensions fall into place, and I used two of them for the middle bit, which again with the mother in law in mind I called "the bar". The six pointy bits on the board were made 25 cms overall long, which enabled six round thingies to sit very nicely side by side in each quarter of the board, with just a little bit of a gap for ease of playing. So what am I? I'm a backgammon board . . . You are 100% correct Bob me old

mate. As your reward I'll give you a bottle of wine and I'll tell you how to do those ²s. Just select the 2 and format it as *superscript*.

Now for my next competition. I want you to design a tee-shirt with a backgammon theme. You can either print it out yourself or you can send in a picture of your design. The winner will be judged at the Bright 'n' Breezy. I shall print the best one as a tee-shirt in whatever size to suit the winner. Whomever is judged the best at the B&B (that'll be yours, Bob!) will win free entry for the four Swiss Format tournaments next year. Send them to the usual place, via snail mail to Biba HQ or via email to the regular zx81@backgammon-biba.co.uk to arrive before the end of December 2002 or wear them in Brighton.

Start Here

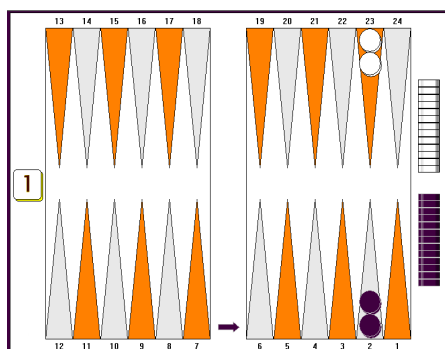
This section is directed towards beginners and intermediates. However, the content is often of use to everyone as it contains information that will improve your game and match winning opportunities

Double or Quits

By Michael Crane

This extract is from *Backgammon For Winners* by Bill Robertie:

Black Doubles to 2 *



(* For purposes of this article I have altered the original double of 16 to 2. MC)

The advantage is now firmly with Black, and he cranks up the tension another notch, turning the

cube to 16 on White's side of the table!

An excellent double on Black's part. With only two checkers left on each side, we can start to estimate each side's chances just by looking at the possible rolls next turn. Of Black's 36 different dice rolls, all but 10 win immediately for him. (The 10 are the rolls that contain an ace: 61 and 16, 51 and 15, 41 and 14, 31 and 13, 21 and 12.) That gives him 26 winning rolls and 10 that don't win making him 72% to win. That's enough to give him a solid double.

White, on the other hand, still has a take! Black is only 72% to bear both checkers off, which means

White is still in the game 28% of the time. That's more than the 25% he needs to take, so he can take and play on. And as we explained before, the level of the cube doesn't matter. A take is still a take. Bill Robertie

On the rec.games.backgammon news group, *brad* commented:

I know this is an introductory book for beginners, but still. Black wins immediately 72% when he rolls good. Of the 28% he rolls bad, he loses 72% of that (when white rolls good.) So black will win in this position $72\% + (28 \times 28)\% =$ about 80%. So white is definitely not winning anywhere near 25% of the time so, at least according to the 25% rule, and should give it up

right there.

David Startin explained:

If black doubles and white accepts, 72% of the time black will win with the cube on 2. The 28% of the time that black fails to win immediately, white will redouble since he is 72 % to win and black will win 28% of these games on a 4-cube.

In 100 games, black wins 72 on a 2-cube (144 points), and 8 on a 4-cube (32 points). White wins 20 on a 4-cube (80 points). White, therefore, loses 96 points in total if he takes. This is better than the 100 points he loses by dropping.

So there it is, both *brad* and David making sense of doubling. This same position appears in *Backgammon* by Paul Magriel on pages 270/271. Paul also argues that it is a double and a take; and a possible redouble.

Let's see what Magriel has to say about:

Basic Doubling Strategy

Doubling is one of the most important and exacting aspects of backgammon. Good doubling decisions will often make the difference between winning and losing a series of games.

Let us review the rules:

The doubling cube starts out "in the middle." That is, either player may double whenever he feels he has a significant advantage. In doubling, he offers to double the stakes of the game by turning the cube to 2 and passing it to his opponent. The double must be made when the player is on roll, but *before* he has rolled the dice.

His opponent then has two options:

- 1 He may refuse (**pass**) the double and lose the original one

unit, thus ending the game.

- 2 He may accept (**take**) the double, in which case the game continues with a value of two units - double the original stake.

The player who has been doubled is said to **own the cube**, which gives him the exclusive right to re-double should he feel at any time that *he* is the favorite. If he re-doubles, his opponent may pass, giving up the present stake of the game - two units; or he can take, playing on at the re-doubled stake of four units.

Re-doubling can, in theory, continue on forever, keeping in mind that only the player who owns the cube (the last player to have been doubled) may offer a re-double. Experienced players seldom re-double a game beyond the four or eight level.

Offering Doubles

The question of when you possess a sufficient advantage to warrant doubling is unanswerable in easy terms. The player owning the cube has a built-in advantage in that he alone may decide whether to make the next double. You should therefore avoid doubling with a trifling advantage, for this gives your opponent ownership of the cube (which can be a powerful weapon against you) too cheaply. On the other hand, you must have the courage to double when you have a solid lead.

The double may have two effects: First, it may force your opponent to pass, thus ensuring a definite win. Failure to double allows your opponent to play on "for flee" and possibly get a lucky sequence of rolls to reverse the position and win the game. In such a case you have only yourself, not the dice, to blame.

Secondly, if your opponent takes, he is now faced with a loss of twice as much. Failure to double allows him to escape with a lesser penalty than he deserves. In backgammon there is no reward for such humane treatment - your opponent cannot be expected to extend the same courtesy to you.

Taking Doubles

Assume that you have been doubled. Unless your opponent has made a serious miscalculation, he is the favorite. Why, then, should you consider taking at all and playing on at a higher stake?

The answer is that by passing you give up a sure point, whereas by taking you may hope to turn the tide of the game and win two points yourself. Thus, if you have a reasonable chance to win, you are better off taking than resigning yourself to a sure loss.

What constitutes reasonable? One criterion often used is whether you have better than a 25% chance to win the game (Chapter 22 explains where this number comes from). However, except in a few well-defined endgame situations there is no practical way of evaluating what the true odds of winning actually are. Every position is different, so there is no easy formula for deciding what your practical chances are in a given position. In fact, many of the world's best players often disagree strongly about the merits of accepting certain doubles.

Gammon Possibilities

Sometimes your position will rapidly become so overwhelmingly strong that you have virtually no chance of losing and have an excellent chance of gammoning your opponent. In such a case, doubling would be a great error - because

your game is *too* good. If you double, your opponent will quickly pass, giving you half what you would gain if you played the game out and gammoned him.

Gammon possibilities may also strongly influence your decision about whether to accept a double. Consider the case where you have a reasonable chance to win, but sense that you will be gammoned if you lose. In such a case, you must be far more careful in accepting, for you are risking losing not twice as much, but four times as much. (This is one reason why the

25% rule mentioned earlier for taking doubles is not always an adequate criterion.)

Conversely, when considering whether to double, if you have a significant chance to gammon your opponent but run little risk of being gammoned yourself you may consider doubling earlier than usual. The ability to judge when a position involves a possible gammon comes with experience.

In sum, good doubling strategy goes hand in hand with a knowledge of the game - the ability to

correctly assess positions and predict the game - the ability to correctly assess positions and predict the game's resolution. As you play more and read further in this book, you will acquire an understanding of the underlying concepts of the game, which in turn will better enable you to assess your overall chances.

In the next issue we shall continue with Magriel's doubling theory and advice.



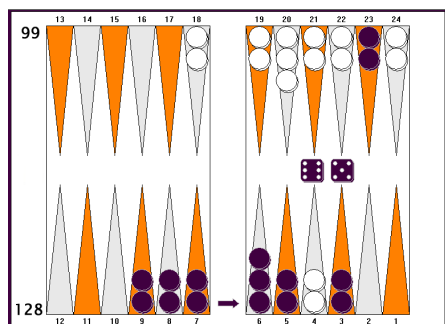
What Colour is the Wind?

By Chris Bray



Turkish Delight

On holiday in Turkey a few weeks ago I reached this position as black against Remzi, the multi-talented manager of the Dalyan Hotel, one of the world's most charming small hotels.



In the Eastern version of backgammon there is no doubling cube so each game is played to the end. Playing in this manner for a few weeks is an excellent way to get a better understanding of the game as you get to see how games de-

velop from positions that are normally double/drop. Thus you can often get the chance to check your assessment of positions in a way that is not normally available. Your strategy also has to change a little as it is no longer sufficient to reach a strong double. Game plans must be predicated on playing the game to a conclusion.

However it shouldn't change much, strong moves are still strong moves and good backgammon principles still apply. In this position I played 23/12, got hit when white rolled 63, played 21/15, 5/2* and was easily gammoned. It is too easy to go by results and think in retrospect that breaking a point may have been a better play.

It isn't. This is a standard prime versus prime position and 23/12 is easily the best move as it escapes a man at a moment when both sides are short of timing. Moves like 7/1, 7/2 or 8/2, 8/3 should not be countenanced just because of white's strong board. Just play 23/12 and trust that your prime will win the day. Sadly there are days when it doesn't - *touche* Remzi.

Chris has given Bibafax the right to reproduce articles from his book at the rate of one per issue Miserly readers not wishing to purchase the tome will not have read the entire book until the year 2055 where they will find the last article in Bibafax No.272. Why wait that long? Order your copy now! MC.

What Colour is the Wind?



By Chris Bray

£14 + £3.50 p&p

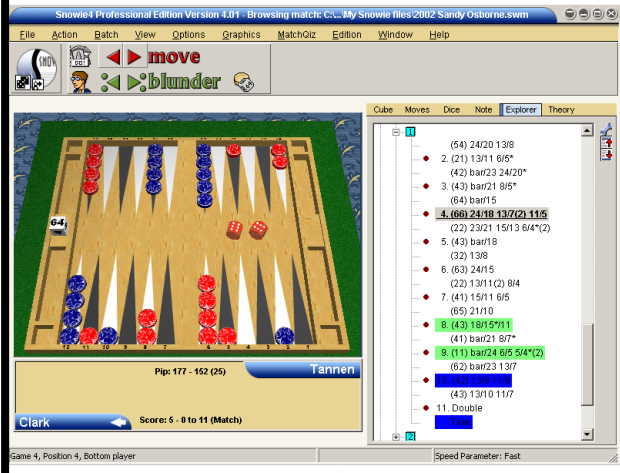
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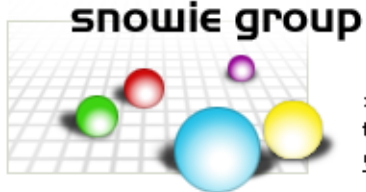


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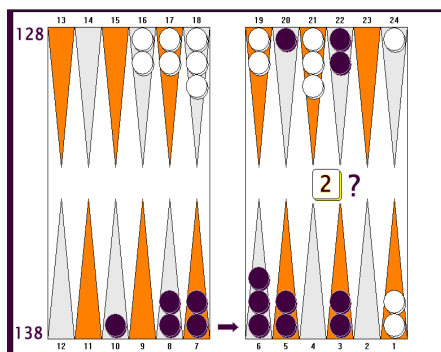


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Rollout To Order

Michael Crane and the Bots offer analysis.

3-point match Black on roll
Black 0 White 1



Cube Action?

This interesting position came from the Liverpool Club's monthly tournament and was sent in (and commented on) by Rodney Light-on. Make your mind up before turning to the solution.

Solution.

Although it looks as though Black

may have problems extracting the back chequers, Black has more timing than White whose board is likely to collapse soon. Jellyfish gives Double/Drop. Everyone I have shown this problem to thought it was Double/Take. At the table my opponent took (after considerable thought), his board crunched and he ended with 4 chequers back on the 1-point and lost a gammon. Although this was a somewhat unlucky turn of events Jellyfish estimates nearly 20% gammon losses. RL

Rodney is correct. Both Jelly and Snowie says Double/Pass.

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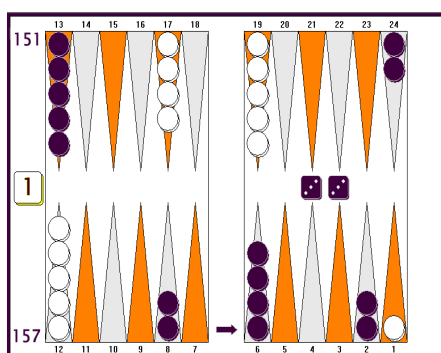
Competition No3

In Bibafax 60, all BIBA members were invited to enter the third 2002 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.

To aid future reference, I've identified the problems as 60.1 to 60.6, which distinguishes them from problems set in other competitions.

Problem 60.1



11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 33

I'll let one of our regular competitors start by summarising the main possibilities:

Rodney Lighton: A large number of options as is usual with doubles. At least here it is only sensible to think of moving the checkers in pairs. Unstack the mid-point, make the 21-point anchor, make the bar or 5 or 3 points. All good things to do – what an embarrassment of riches. Making the 5-point, while a good end in itself, means losing the 8-point so I don't think that is right. Making the 3-point is perhaps going too deep (after having made the 2-point) and strips the 6-point. I choose



By Richard Granville

24/21 24/21 13/10 13/10 mixing offence and defence.

Although a player can miss many good moves by only considering movement of checkers in pairs, Rodney is right about this position in that with some good point-making moves there is no need to think about other options. Rodney's choice is clearly a constructive, if very conservative, move.

One of our new competitors prefers to be more aggressive:

Mark Oram: 8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3. White would dearly love to develop his top-heavy points (which he has in abundance) as well as escape his back man. With a four-point board staring at him, however, even any fly shots he may give us would be very risky. In addition, escaping (with anything other than 6-5) would instantly play into the hands of our mid-point, hungry for a hit. Making Black's bar would not pressurise him in nearly the same way, and seizing our 4-point anchor is premature, given White's lack of development. Making our bar point does start to hem in his straggler; although White would feel far freer to develop his men when facing only a two point board should we then hit him. Additionally, taking either bar point still leaves us holding the 8- and 2-points, points which 'do not part of the same prime make'. We have a chance to play 'purer' than this, and we should take it.

Mark goes further than Rodney by

2002 - The Answers

considering the possibility of making either bar point, but correctly rejects both moves. When choosing how to play an early 3-3, both 24/18 24/18 or 13/7 13/7 tend to be far inferior to other moves, unless they hit an opposing blot.

Our other new competitor votes for a third option:

Tony Lee: Early days with White having escaped a checker. Double 3 is a great shot and Black has many options and given the match score, the position plays like money.

The key idea to the position is that Black wants to attack the remaining single checker, as it won't be able to anchor, so the 5 point is crucial in all candidate plays. Also, as Black already holds the 2 point, the 8 point becomes redundant as they both can't take part in the same prime.

After making the 5 point with 8/5 8/5, have a look at the resulting position. What cries out to be played is 13/10 13/10! This play unstacks the heaviest point, influences both White's outfield (18- to 14-points), and Black's home board (4-point). What more could Black ask for?

Answer: to use this opportunity to advance his back men. Even so, Black creates a powerful forward position by playing 13/10 13/10 8/5 8/5, which is clearly a strong way to play. A fourth option was chosen by just one competitor:

Julian Hayward: There are lots of positive choices here, but, White has got nowhere in terms of building points and there are no immediate threats against you. Making two home board points



isn't necessary just yet - that leaves White with safe territory for builders. 24/21 24/21 8/5 8/5 leaves White with nowhere to hide, and already a three point board to face if he's hit. 24/21 24/21 6/3 6/3 is similar, but not as good - you don't have any more active builders after this move and the 3-point is less useful (though it would be the move if you still had five men on your 6-point).

Yet another sound move: which of the four is best? Black can choose between improving his board, improving his back/mid position, or a combination of the two. In many situations in the opening, 8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3 is a strong move because it puts immediate pressure on the opponent to play reasonably safely, the more so, since Black has already made the 2-point. Following this reasoning:

Don Hatt: 8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3. Black should make a strong home board here and try to contain White's last man. There is nothing in the race, but any contact would benefit from the stronger board. White will have to roll well as I think Black has the advantage from this move.

Tim Wilkins: White has only one man left to extract but few points, and may have to leave shots soon. Black doesn't need to advance the back men as he doesn't need an advanced anchor and it may give White a place to dump men. Making the bar point 13/7 13/7 does unstack the midpoint but doesn't make a very good block. I prefer the aggressive 8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3. This makes a 4-point board that will be a huge advantage if Black can hit a shot.

The problem with this move is that it fails to prevent White from playing a normal development, such as

running the back man or bringing down builders from the midpoint. Don is right to claim that Black is winning, but the Jellyfish equity of .101 is hardly overwhelming.

Although rated highest by Jellyfish, there was only one other supporter of Rodney's move:

Peter Bennet: 24/21 24/21 13/10 13/10. Although White has escaped one back man this double three gives Black a small racing lead. He therefore has no reason to hang back on White's ace point and I think he should make an advanced anchor with 24/21 24/21. After that, 13/10 13/10 seems the natural choice for the other two threes. It impedes the escape of White's straggler and also makes it more dangerous for White to advance this man in Black's board.

There were two competitors agreeing with Tony:

Bob Young: 13/10 13/10 8/5 8/5. With no threats yet by White to trap Black's rear men, to advance these rear checkers 24/21 24/21, or 24/18 24/18 is an unnecessary use of half of a good roll. Black needs to provide firepower against the last remaining White checker. Therefore the choices come down to how to play on the Black inner and outer board. Making a strong home board of four points would be a worry to White, forcing him to play safe at every opportunity until his board became equally strong. The alternatives are 13/7 13/7 or the compromise 13/10 13/10 8/5 8/5. You can rule out 13/10 13/10 6/3 6/3 (much weaker than 8/5 8/5), as well as ruling out splitting the rear checkers, either to the 21 or 18 or even the 15-point. Why give White something to hit and possibly point on with so many good productive safe moves available elsewhere.

The problem with four home points is that Black will only have a single shot at White if he runs with any six. My preferred move provides a double shot for the final escapee except 6-4, while still providing men in the outfield to make the next natural point in the prime, the 4-point. 13/7 13/7 while blocking sixes, still allows White to run with almost a third of his rolls, giving only the mid point to hit from in return. The balance of owning three home board points, coupled with reasonable outfield control seems to be the best all round balance for me.

Richard Biddle: My immediate reaction to this roll was to make two additional points in my home board by playing 8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3. However, I think this strips Black's position and cuts down the options for the next roll, almost having to rely on doubles to throw well. We should make the five-point. The choice should be whether we advance to a forward anchor or bring builders down from the mid-point and make the ten-point, or a hybrid of the two with 25/21 13/10. Black does not have a home board to worry about so I would be more inclined to play my choice, 13/10 13/10 8/5 8/5.

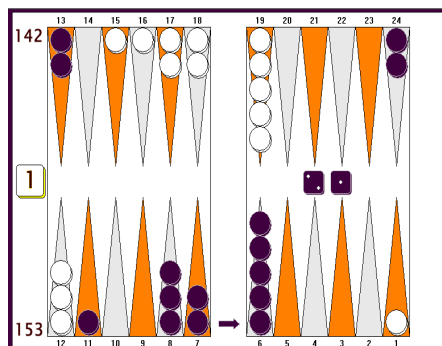
For the majority:

Brian Lever: It's often tempting to play half of an early double 3 defensively, by making the 21-point anchor (if available) and then looking round for the other half - often that would be the right play if the opponent was threatening to make home board points. Here no such threat really exists; White has escaped a man so the priorities are not defence but the capture of the escapee and attacking of the straggler. A combination play, which simply splits the

back men, makes an inside point and pulls a man from the midpoint satisfies both these aims: 24/21 13/10 8/5 8/5 or 24/21 13/10 6/3 6/3. However, I don't actually like the look of my home board after this play; the problem is the early made 2-point, which doesn't fit well with either 8/5 8/5 or 6/3 6/3. Much better if there were another made point in the resultant gap - therefore 8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3 would be my play. This makes the home board more compact, immediately outboards White four points to one and provides a permanent doubling/gammon threat if any other checker is caught or if the straggler is put on the bar - all the more so as White has no structure at present. I'm prepared to freeze my back men and lose my 8-point in favour of this aggressive move, which likely provides a game winning double after a hit and dance by White in the next few moves

I really can't add anything to the competitors' analysis – there are sound arguments for all of the four chosen moves, including Jellyfish's second choice 24/21 24/21 8/5 8/5, which only attracted one vote. I see no reason to be influenced by Jellyfish's preferences and therefore mark the position in the usual way.

Problem 60.2



11 point match
White 8 Black 7
Black to play 21

A typical early-game position in

which neither side has yet made any home board points. One competitor discusses a number of possibilities:

Richard Biddle: There are so many permutations here and it is too late in the evening for me to consider all. Three stood out for me, least preferable first.

24/22 24/23: This will force White to shore up the two loose blots in the outfield; however, this move serves little purpose in trying to create a forward anchor which should also be a major consideration.

7/5 6/5: At first appearance this may seem a risky move to make the five-point, however, if White does not hit Black's bar-point blot, Black may well make that point next move. If hit, no problems, as there are plenty of return shots and Black can benefit from the improved timing.

24/21: All that said and done, Black has a good base to try and trap the White back checker. Now is the time to try and make a forward anchor to clear White's fast appearing prime. If hit, at least, this has distracted White from making a prime or clearing the back checker.

My choice is therefore 24/21.

While 24/21 is not a really bad move, it comes in for some criticism:

Rodney Lighton: In this position I have two main aims: to block the last White checker and to get my back checkers moving. 24/21 is a possibility but activates the checker on White's 10-point for pointing on me. The pile of checkers on my 6-point needs unstacking, so I choose 24/22 6/5. This

could lose some quick gammons on a bad day when White picks up a lot of blots, but if I survive I should be in good shape to improve my position on one or both sides of the board.

Rodney has one supporter:

Don Hatt: 24/22 6/5. Black should split his back men and try for a more advanced anchor and as in the first position last competition slot the 5 point, if not hit with a 4 by White's man on his 1-point he has a good chance to cover next throw. Also 4 is a good number for White on the other side of the board to make his own 5-point.

Although 24/22 6/5 aims to make progress on both sides of the board, I can't really agree with it because Black is slotting when his back men are split. I can do no better than quote from Paul Magriel's "Backgammon" (pages 225-226) (reproduced with acknowledgement):

"It is normally wrong to slot while your back men are split or exposed in your opponent's inner board ... You slot on a point with the expectation that if your opponent misses, you will have a good chance of making the point on your next roll. If you slot when your back men are split, you not only risk being hit, but you may be unable to make the point even if the slotted man is missed because you may have to defend your back men."

Of course, few rules in Backgammon are absolute, but here Black has a number of more attractive alternatives, such as:

Bob Young: 24/22 8/7. Make the 5-point at the expense of breaking the prime is the first option to rule out. Black is starting to feel trapped by the mobile growing

prime in front of him and needs to do something about that while he has the opportunity. He could move both rear checkers, but probably moving any one of them is enough to create greater outfield shots, or improved advanced anchor chances, without providing ideal pointing places for White. On the other side of the board Black has a blot that is nicely placed to provide a double shot at White should he run with anything other than 6-4, so should leave it there. Placing it at the rear of the prime is good, but would need fours to cover, a very useful number on the other side of the board. I prefer to activate the checker on the 8-point by advancing it to the 7-point, so that would naturally leave the two to be played from the rear anchor.

This is better – a split without a slot – but this move seems rather passive to me. Also, there is a fair chance that White can point on his 3-point, although admittedly Black would frequently have sig-

nificant return shots. This is surely a better way to split:

Brian Lever: Black has to decide whether to split here; if he does then 24/23 or 24/22 is indicated - I wouldn't use the entire roll to split 24/21 because White then has over 20 pointing numbers.

If he decides not to split, then my choice would be the distraction play of 7/5,6/5; White is then forced to hit rather than point if he throws a 6 and faces being behind at least a four prime if he doesn't. The trouble with the distraction play, however is that White will hit with a six if he can and may very well make a four prime of his own if he can't, moreover with two Black men behind it. All combinations of 5s, 4s, 3s and 1s do this double 2s play well - and of course 6s escape with a hit. So split it is, and my choice is 24/23 11/9 which creates a bit of compactness up front and doesn't advance too far into White's potential attack.

Even better is the following way of splitting:

Julian Hayward: With your men back on White's ace point, he can happily build his board at leisure. You need to move them for two reasons – to threaten the builders, and to threaten to run one man out and equalise the game. 24/21 looks dangerous, but White's rolls that point on you would be strong for him whatever. 24/22 11/10 reduces the danger a bit and also makes sure your 6's aren't duplicated. I think it's close, but at this match score I'd be just that bit more cautious about being gammoned if it turns nasty.

Although 24/22 6/5 is an incorrect way to slot the 5-point, there are other ways to achieve this effect. What about this approach?

Mark Oram: 13/11 6/5. Ouch, what a nasty position! (Then again, this is why these are the competition problems - right?).



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White is presumably hoping to play for an undoubled gammon to reach 10-7 Crawford (I'm assuming we could return any cube thrown our way and play for the match 'at this visit', to steal a snooker metaphor). If this is the case, we to think hard about any play which leaves us more blots strewn around. Sadly, though, what else is there? 11/8 seems way too inflexible. Splitting our back man with the ace to freeze his 8- and 7-point builders may be OK, but White has plenty of ammunition in place to develop further even if we do this (to say nothing of the invitation to attack that splitting would bring). 13/11 6/5 does of course leave two blots under direct attack: at least we duplicate his ones and fours, which play very smoothly for him in building his offense. Additionally, we will have greatly increased chances of making an anchor if we are hit, and if he kicks us off our five point his back man is still blocked by our newly made 11-point. Even the loss of our midpoint may not be too harmful to our back men. At present they will need to probably work out their own salvation in any case (no lover's leaps for them!); an extra companion sent back may be just what they need to do this.

No this isn't right either: Black's midpoint blot may be hit and the effect is similar to slotting and splitting. Black is probably more likely to make his 5-point than after 24/22 6/5, but giving up the midpoint is a strategic loss. If Black wants to slot the 5-point, this is the best way:

Tim Wilkins: Splitting the back men looks too dangerous with so many White builders. Playing safe e.g. 11/9 8/7 doesn't really make any threats and lets White build his board in peace. Best looks to

be 11/9 6/5, which gives Black the chance to keep up with White's board, or at least requires White to use half a roll to hit.

We've had seven different choices so far and none is entirely satisfactory. The best move is one that has been criticised by some of the above competitors. I'll leave Tony to provide a dynamic explanation:

Tony Lee: Hmmm... Black looks in pretty bad shape: down in the race, more checkers back and getting primed, and throwing pants to boot! What's Black going to do with 2-1?

Well... Stepping up with the back checkers is like walking down a narrow corridor containing a Howitzer. White has several builders aiming at the home board and Black's just going to walk into a gunfight holding a banana! So, what does that leave Black with, options-wise? Looking at Black's position, White has a single checker back, so we can't outrace White and it's difficult to prime a singleton. That leaves us with the attacking option, as White doesn't have an anchor.

Looking at the match and cube situation, Black can afford to be quite aggressive as White has points overage at 3 away and if doubled, Black can give a very efficient recube at 4 away.

With these points in mind, making the 5 point stands out as being a great play. OK, White's 6s become good, but most of them were good anyway 6-1, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4 and 6-5 make good points of the other side of the board.

Making the 5 point makes a stronger board, starts a 4 prime and give White a chance to self-destruct or misplay the position!

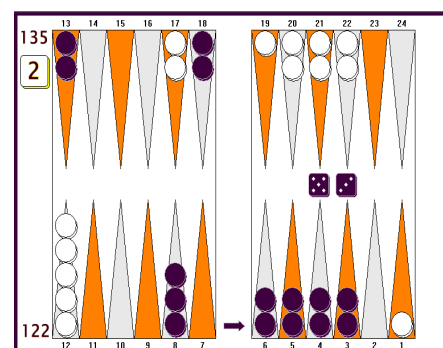
Or, more soberly:

Peter Bennet: 7/5 6/5. Black's distribution is awkward with his stripped midpoint and undeveloped stack on his 6-point. I think this is one of those positions where Black should trade his bar point for his 5-point even though he leaves a direct six shot. A lot of White's sixes play well anyway, either making an inner board point or escaping his runner. If he is hit, Black will have many returns from the bar and he will also have the stronger board.

How many times are such moves missed? Black needs to take chances to improve his position, but even if his bar-point blot is hit, he will still have chances to win.

I think that this problem has set a record by producing a total of eight different answers. With only ten competitors this is quite remarkable, the more so since Black has not thrown a double. As for the scoring, the natural approach would be to award ten marks to the two moves with two votes each, and five marks to the other moves. Instead, I'm going to exercise my option to downgrade both 24/22 6/5 and 13/11 6/5 by 20% partly because I believe that they are fundamentally wrong, and partly because 7/5 6/5 is such a good move.

Problem 60.3



11 point match
White 1 Black 1
Black to play 53

One competitor thinks that the answer is obvious:

Bob Young: 18/13 18/15. Run baby run while Black has the chance to safety one checker and leave only a single shot at the remaining checker, all at a time while White has an unusual blot on the 6-point. (dubbed by me as the kryptonite point) {did Jellied-eel vacate this point, and if so, under what circumstances?}. Perhaps switching points for a double hit with a small double - does he never learn? I can't see any other play that remotely comes to mind. Can't hit sensibly, can't provide more gammon chances without giving White outfield blot hitting opportunities, so run baby run. Everyone scores dix points j'espere.

Picking up on Bob's digression, I recall that one backgammon book calls the opponent's 6-point the platinum point, on the grounds that platinum is a rarer and more valuable metal than gold. I can't remember the circumstances in which Jellyfish left a blot on its 6-point, but I think its previous roll was 2-1. It is clearly unattractive for Jellyfish to move outside its home board and a move like 6/3 is surely reasonable.

Bob's last comment reminds me of the equivalent competition in bridge magazines where periodically somebody makes a comment to the effect of "surely a unanimous panel". Here there are sound alternatives, such as:

Julian Hayward: Nothing sophisticated here - you're ahead, you have a strong board and you have escaped your back men. There's no need to run them and risk being caught behind White's

remade prime; you can wait until you get a double or you have White's straggler safely on the bar. 13/10 13/8 keeps you moving along pretty safely.

Or this:

Don Hatt: 8/3 8/5. Black would ideally like to make the bar point but to achieve this he would have to leave the 13-point. Another way is to try and close him out before he escapes and so I think 8/3 8/5 gives him the potential to do both.

8/3 8/5 looks ugly and it also greatly reduces the chance that Black can make his bar point, but this won't be so important if White is unable to escape straightaway. There were two other supporters of this move:

board Black has plenty of returns which up the gammon percentage. On the upside, there are three builders to extend the home board and attack that lonely back checker. Now Black can aim to put White on the roof and clear his other points with impunity...

Richard Biddle: Same structure again, three favourite moves, least favourite first:

18/10: This move takes advantage of White's vulnerability in the home board, as White will need to hit and cover, however, there is still a clean up job required that could go gammonishly wrong.

18/13 18/15: Clearly states Black choice to run, leaves 13 hits, but there will most likely be return shots unless 3 2 is rolled or 3 4. If not hit there are no bad rolls for Black next time round.

8/3 8/5: All said and done, Black should be going for the gammon

and put the utmost pressure to put the White back checker on the bar. Once there, Black can bring his checkers home safely and prevent White from moving. This usually ensures a gammon. My choice is 8/3 8/5.

Tony and Richard provide more explanation and 8/3 8/5 is certainly a good move.

One competitor voted for Richard's first-mentioned choice:

Mark Oram: 18/10. Since we need to win this game with our fifteen men only we may as well get them working as best we possibly can. We can do this (and win our two points very easily) with our bar point made, and the 10-point builder gives us greatly increased chances to do this. What



Tony Lee: This position seems relatively straightforward, Black is ahead in the race, has no men back, and a stronger board. Everything points to either coming off the midpoint or playing 18/13 18/15. Unfortunately, the former play means Black still has to clear the 18 point (with a double), while the latter gives White the opportunity to hit and get back into the game with a 3.5 point board (and none of us have ever danced on one of those, eh?). Also, with the cube in White's hands, the opportunity to play conservatively and win with the cube isn't available (cube centred before the roll, Black's equity was about 0.625, i.e., double-pass).

Anyhow, another play that avoids the pitfalls of the other two, is 8/3 8/5. The downside is that it leaves a 6-1 flyshot, but with a weak(er)

of the downside? Our four point board is a definite asset in any blot-hitting contest, and White has few hit and cover numbers: only 6-1, 6-2, 2-1 and 1-1 really hurt us. Giving up White's bar point (18/13 18/15) is consistent with our racing lead and gives White fewer 'hit and covers', but threatens to do far less to improve our subsequent position. Leaving our mid point (13/10 13/8) similarly does not increase our chances of forming a game-winning 6-prime, and also waves goodbye to our back men.

This move certainly leaves 14 of Black's men working very hard, but the 15th is left facing a double direct shot. Of course White is unlikely to be able to hit and cover, but a loose hit could still be fatal for Black. I think that Black has to choose between the moves suggested by Bob, Julian and Don. Of these, Jellyfish prefers 13/8 13/10, but this move attracted only one other supporter:

Rodney Lighton: Two moves spring to mind immediately - 13/8 13/10 and 18/13 18/15. With a racing lead I want to keep it by playing as safely as possible. If I played from the 18-point and was hit I wouldn't be happy especially if White managed to cover the blot on his 6-point. If I play from the mid-point there is only an indirect shot. There is some danger of leaving the back checkers stranded, but I may throw doubles soon and also there are some variations where I can attack White's back checker and leave the 18-point in relative safety while White is on the bar. My choice 13/8 13/10.

The remaining competitors join Bob in scoring "dix points":

Tim Wilkins: At least 3 plausible moves: 18/13 18/15, 13/8 13/10, 8/3 8/5. The 2nd of these doesn't look very useful as it leaves the back men stranded and doesn't threaten the blot on the one point. As Black has a good racing lead and White has a broken home board (but might repair it soon) I favour the first - 18/13 18/15.

Brian Lever: Black has 2 reasonable choices - 8/3 8/5 aiming for an attack or clearing White's bar point with 18/13 18/15. The key here is the race; Black is well ahead after the roll and doesn't want to hang back on a point he may otherwise have trouble clearing when White's board is stronger than it is now. The blot on White's 6 point is also key - running is not too dangerous when there are only 4 hit and cover nos. So play 18/13 18/15.

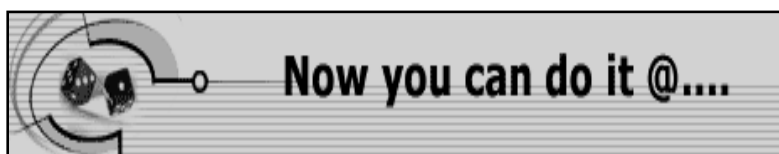
I'll start with a fairly extensive analysis of the position:

Mark Oram: 9/2*. Firstly, as in position 60.01, White is cramped and under-developed. Having our men on not one but two of his home board points again seriously hampers his attempts to activate the men on his mid point. Given this, White will naturally try and point on the man on his five point if he possibly can: 9/2* thwarts this approach. (We would have killed stone dead his 'dream' roll of 4-4 for example). If he does enter with a hit (with anything apart from 1-1) we then also have a chance to seize his five point and settle the matter once and for all. (Only two rolls from White, namely 6-2, would send both our men back). If White dances or enters without a hit we have an opportunity to build a three-point board. Again, as in position 60.01, this will make any of White's developing moves which leave fly shots

even less desirable to him.

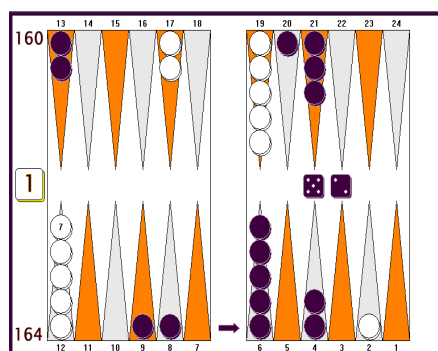
Secondly, no other 5-2 play seems to be as smooth. 20/13 gives up a lot of our current positional advantage for no gain and simply leaves our two blots at the mercy of his fleeing checker. Also, the gains from something like 13/8 13/11 seem less tangible than those from the tempo play. Finally, all of Magriel's 'safe play vs. bold play' criteria argue for a bold and/or provocative play. We have more men back, a stronger board *and* an advanced anchor. 9/2* seems to be the boldest one going.

(Fourthly, we must not forget Tim Mooring's 'Lincoln' rule, which states that when our opponent is trying to come in against a two point board, he will dance many more times than usual providing



Peter Bennet: 18/13 18/15. Black's racing lead and stronger board, and White's blot on his 6-point, all call for disengagement now. It will be more difficult and dangerous for Black to clear the 18-point later, when White will have remade his 6-point.

Problem 60.4



11 point match
White 1 Black 3
Black to play 52

we hold our six and four points. Clearly this is the case here, and when not one but *two* (?) of the giants of backgammon point in the same direction, it would take a greater man than I to argue against them!)

I'm not sure that either Tim Moor- ing or Paul Magriel would fully endorse this move, but it's cer- tainly not bad. "When in doubt hit" can be an effective strategy, which works well when the oppo- nent dances or re-enters awk- wardly.

What about Mark's suggested al- ternatives?

Bob Young: 13/8 13/11. Options: hit, advance two rear checkers, bring two down from the mid- point, or a combination of the last two rolls. Nothing stands out clearly for me in this position; I don't have any serious view points about any of them, so I guess this will quietly not get written up, (quite rightly), because no one wants to read non opinions. I have chosen my move hoping that White will roll an even double!

With all current entries being sent electronically I tend to use (and sometimes edit) all material that I receive. It's OK Bob – I don't expect every competitor to have a clear view on every single prob- lem.

Rodney Lighton: I choose 20/13. Black's position is a mess and this roll has done little to clear it up. I can only cover the blot on the 8-point at the expense of losing the mid-point, which doesn't look right. 21/14 leaves blots all over the place. 20/13 gives up the chance of making the 20-point but gives good outfield coverage. If

White doesn't throw a six or seven I will be in reasonable shape, if he does I always have a 4-point an- chor game to fall back on.

Putting a spare on the mid-point could work very well if White is unable to escape quickly. It is also one way to forestall an attack on White's 5-point. It's a reasonable move, but unfortunately nobody else voted for it.

A fourth option:

Don Hatt: 8/3 6/4. Duplicating White's ones with 8/3 I like very much while the other blot on the nine point has a good chance of being missed. 6/4 relieves the 6- point and gives Black another builder for the lesser points.

This doesn't feel right to me. Black's men are too far forward and he creates a gaping hole in his outer board.

All the remaining competitors voted for either 9/2 or 13/8 13/ 11, although some were rather nervous about the latter:*

Brian Lever: These difficult posi- tions lend themselves to a number of candidates but there's only one that I like, which is 13/8 13/11. Yes, I know I'll probably score 0 for breaking the midpoint prema- turely, but I want - in this position - to remake the 8 point and then bring the lone ranger out of imme- diate harm's way and aiming at the 5-point. I did think of using the two to come out to White's bar point but that's really what White wants - targets for his seven men

on his midpoint. So give him noth- ing, rebuild your structure and look for the doubling opportunity that White's awkward position should give.

This is similar to another bridge panellist's quote: "I'll probably be on my own here, but I feel strongly that my bid is correct". Why is it perfectly OK here to break the mid-point?

Richard Biddle: My first thought is to hit with 9/2*. I am afforded a little more time in this exercise and I feel it would be better to block twos, fours and sixes for the White back checker. This will limit the moves White is able to make as he is heavily stacked up on the six-point and mid-point. 13/8 13/11 performs this responsi- bility and piles in the builders to finish the job of build- ing a prime. The four Black checkers in White's home board are an absolute advan- tage allowing Black

the liberty of leaving the mid- point.

My choice is 13/8 13/11.

Exactly – Black cannot bring his back men to safety at the moment, so does not need to retain a land- ing place for them. As things stand, he might well make a differ- ent point in White's outer board that could serve equally well.

There were two more supporters of the hitting move:

Peter Bennet: 9/2*. Not a very pretty position and all the posi- tional plays leave too many shots for too little gain. I would just hit loose and hope for something good to happen. With four men already back there is little to lose with this play.



Tim Wilkins: Black has four men back to White's one, so trying to get one of the back 4 out doesn't look right. White's position is very inflexible and Black has the better home table. I think the best option is to hit 9/2* which takes away half of White's roll.

For the majority:

Tony Lee: Standard Brian Busfield position, where none of the slots worked, and Black has several checkers back! What does Black do now? Key candidates are: 2 down from the midpoint, popping out into the outfield (21/14), hitting (9/2*) and sticking a spare on the midpoint (20/13).

Hitting doesn't feel right. The race is close and sending another checker back, commits Black to some sort of holding/back game in the short term.

Sticking a spare on the midpoint is good, although White is likely to send another checker back, gaining in the race, and Black's into another quasi-holding/back game.

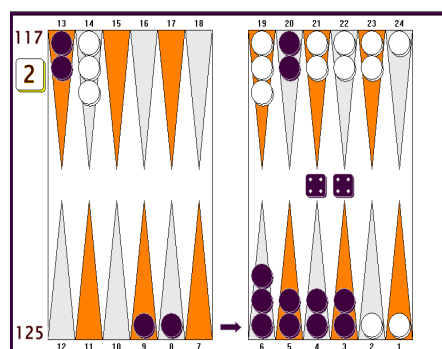
Popping out to contest the outfield would be good if it wasn't for the **huge** stack of checkers on White's midpoint which are all dressed up with nowhere to go. Blots for dinner? Yummy! Oh, and it leaves the Black blots on 8 and 9 to be sent back for another quasi-holding/back game.

So, that leaves us with 2 down from the midpoint... Well, it bisects Black's army in two, thus making getting home for the back blots more difficult, but it covers the 8 point! This makes White dog to hit and send another checker back, meaning no quasi-holding/back game!!! Excellent!!! Must be best...

Or more succinctly:

Julian Hayward: You need to keep White's straggler back here. You have your anchor and White is badly stripped, so no worry about being attacked, and your back men can come round with relative impunity at the moment. 13/8 13/11 gives you a very strong point (6 away) in front of White's straggler and plenty of threats to build quickly.

Problem 60.5



11 point match
White 4 Black 1
Black to play 44

I think this is a very difficult problem. Does Black play safe or hit loose once or twice? What about switching points with 5/1 5/1? How important is it for Black to hold the golden point?*

Let's start with the option of playing safe:

Don Hatt: 20/16 20/16 9/5 8/4. After this play Black will have an 8-point lead: playing 9/5 8/4 gives him a good chance to hit and cover. Bringing the back men out may assist if it comes down to a pure race (not sure that I believe this twaddle but it's what I would play).

With slightly more justification:

Julian Hayward: Again, attack is the idea. Here you're not convincingly ahead in the race after this roll, but you have two of White's

men back and exposed, and bags of outfield control. However, you can't afford to be hit lightly. 20/16(2) 9/5 8/4 leaves you ready to crush White with little rolls, and bring more builders round from the midpoint with larger rolls. Switching points is wrong, as it gives White the chance to make a good forward anchor - with your prime where it is, he can only make a backward anchor which shouldn't really get in your way.

Surely if attack is the idea, Black should be hitting at least one of White's blots. The chosen move is Jellyfish's preferred non-hitting move, but still rated only 13th overall. This move was equal first in terms of votes, but because this passive approach was also at odds with the philosophy of the other competitors, I have once again chosen to slightly downgrade the marks.

There are various ways to hit the blot on Black's 2-point:

Tim Wilkins: As Black may want to hit in his home board soon giving up the anchor on White's 5 point looks wrong. Black could hit with (some) safety with 5/1*(2), but this creates a long-term weakness in Black's board. Black doesn't have access to the cube to double White out if he dances, which also counts against this move. I think Black should hit loose with 13/5 8/4 6/2*. This threatens to close White out quickly, without leaving White a double hit return shot.

Coming to exactly the same conclusion:

Bob Young: 13/5 8/4 6/2*. Switching points doesn't work too well, as Black has to bury checkers on the ace-point, and slot on the 2-point, or leave a blot on the 6-

point. He could hit on the ace-point and 2-point, both blotting, which doesn't look too clever, he can even cover both blots on the 8 and 9-points, but leaving the anchor is very risky, with four points at risk if all goes pear shaped. Leaving the anchor with both checkers is a safer option, with the ability to pick up both loose blots on the other side of the board, but for me, the safety that keeping the golden point provides enables Black to consider a more aggressive option. With the high anchor, bring all the firepower to bear by moving all near checkers into range, and hit White off the 2-point. If not hit by White, a gammon is much more likely for Black, and if hit, the checker can easily re-enter and recycle.

A minor variation on this theme:

Brian Lever: Aggression is called for here - Black is behind in the match, has doubled and could use a gammon. So reject any safe, passive non-hitting plays. The question really is whether to hit one or two White checkers. I don't think this is a position which allows for switching points because that may require a (later) loose hit with a high point open and White's board is to be respected.

Also, White's strong board does demand some caution, therefore no double loose hit, which leaves a lot open. So keep the anchor there in case of accident, and play 13/5 13/9 6/2* - plenty of covers for the 2-point if not hit, and opportunity to go after the blot on the 1-point if things go well

Only one competitor was bold enough to play the double loose hit:

Tony Lee: I never understood the marketing message of Not Bacon!

and other such vegetarian products that pretend to be meaty. My philosophy is if you want meat, then eat it, don't fake it and so to this position... Double 4 can be played in a variety of non-confrontational ways, for example, 20/16 20/16 9/5 8/4. Yawn... Gammons are worth double, and Black is 3 points behind in the match and a gammon or backgammon puts Black ahead and in control.

So, 6/2* and 9/1* is mandatory... and the final 4? 13/9, of course! Unless you're playing Not Backgammon!!!

This probably gives the best chance of winning a gammon, but could go badly wrong if White hits next move and Black is unable to re-enter. With all those blots strewn around, Black's advanced anchor won't necessarily protect him from being gammoned himself. Still, I admire Tony's positive approach to the situation.

The other main approach is to hit and switch points:

Mark Oram: 8/4 6/2 * 5/1* 5/1. This was, for me, a very hard position to analyse. The question is where do we start? Assuming our two blots are not hit, and all the time we own the golden point, White has minimal chance to gammon us. We, however, do have a reasonable opportunity to gammon him, and so we should take that chance. (I'm assuming we would like to play the next game 5-4 up rather than 6-1 down!) Given that we want to lift our blots (a) to avoid any remote chance of losing a gammon and (b) to bring our fire-power in to target White's blots ourselves, then I see two reasonable approaches. We have either the 'prudent' play of 20/16 20/16 9/5 8/4, or the 'go for the jugular' play of 8/4 6/2* 5/1* 5/1.

(I'm discounting 13/5 13/9 8/4 here: we do not want to give up all out-field control and abandon our back men for no real gain, as this play would make us do).

The 'prudent' approach is very *very* appealing when White fails to roll an ace to anchor, or 6-5 to steal our bar point. In this case around half our rolls become really crushing against White (making a fifth inner point on his head, or putting two in the air if we switch points twice with 1-1, as examples). None of the other rolls play particularly badly either. However, he has thirteen rolls which at least allow him to survive the immediate gammon threat (and in fact a White 6-5 then leaves any six we may roll very harmful to us in turn!). So the prudent approach seems initially to give us a very strong, game- (and gammon-) winning position around two thirds of the time. Can we do better?

The 'jugular' approach is certainly pretty committal. It gives us each a four and a half point board; the crucial difference being that White has two men on the bar to bring in. If he misses our blot we have any two, seven or eleven to cover, giving us a five point board (albeit at the cost of burying a man or two). So White's immediate 'game saving' rolls here are now his 'dream' 5-5 and any two: a total of twelve: one less than before. However, even if White rolls a single two to enter, we will now each have a man in the air facing a four point board. Not a fantastic proposition for us to face it is true; however at least Black gets first roll **and** a chance to pick up the blot on White's one point.

To be perfectly honest, the more deeply I tried to analyse these possibilities the more confusing it all



got, so I will stop here. I **think** the net gain of all of White's best throws (both the immediate and subsequent consequences) is less in the second approach (and hence this is my answer): if nothing else it also 'feels' right to try and attack him (i.e hit twice) when he is down. Maybe I've missed the wood for the trees in this position of course, and it would certainly be very instructive to learn how expert players would analyse this one.

Going for the jugular is not a bad idea in this position, and using three of the fours to hit loose and shift points is very reasonable, but Mark unfortunately spoils all his good work by a poor choice for the fourth four. Playing 8/4 puts a man in the wrong place. A much better way to shift points is as follows:

Peter Bennet: 13/9 6/2* 5/1*(2). As is often the case with doubles there are lots of choices.

Out of respect for White's board Black could play safe, regroup and prepares to attack later with 9/5 8/4 and either 13/9(2) or 20/16(2). The trouble with this approach is that it gives White a breather enabling him either to anchor or perhaps to complete his formidable five point board. Black will then be walking on eggshells for the rest of the game.

At the other extreme Black could steam in with the double loose hit 9/1* 6/2* and probably 8/4 to give some insurance against complete disaster. One return hit by White however and Black will immediately be on the back foot.

In between these extremes, the single loose hit, probably played 13/5 8/4 6/2* has merit, still threatening the closeout while

maintaining the four prime as security if the blitz fails.

Finally there is the anti-positional point-switching play of 13/9 6/2* 5/1*(2). This is my choice because it puts two White checkers on the bar against a 4½-point board with a direct cover for the 2-point. It also brings more ammunition to bear on the open 5-point. If White enters both men quickly Black will no longer have his prime to fall back on, but the tactical advantage of the double hit should compensate for this.

Yes – 13/9 is the fourth four. It's also worth noting that Peter's suggestion in the penultimate paragraph is Jellyfish's second choice and as a way of hitting loose twice is significantly safer than Tony's choice.

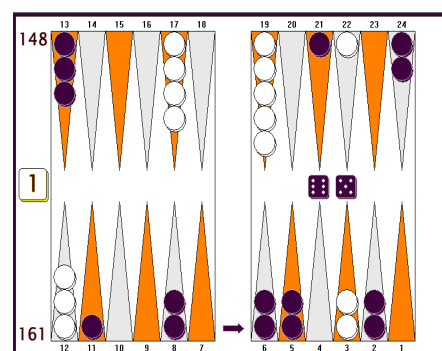
Jellyfish's preferred move is yet another way of hitting loose on the 2-point, for which there were again two supporters:

Rodney Lighton: An enormous number of choices. My first thought was to play safe with 20/16 20/16 9/5, 8/4 which virtually wraps up a win – giving White at best a 2-point anchor game. However, on deeper study of the position, Black has good gammon chances here by attacking one or both of White's back checkers. I don't think that it is correct in this sort of position to switch points from the 5-point to the 1-point. The 5-point (and the four point prime) are just too valuable to give up. That leaves attacking with 6/2* or 9/1* or both. 13/1* 6/2* is a good option, but there may be a problem in covering both blots. 20/8 6/2* has a lot going for it. There is a good chance of covering the 2-point next turn if not hit. If I am hit back on the 2-point, then I have a broken 5-prime plus a shot at the blot on White's 1-point or a

chance of remaking the golden point. My choice is 20/8 6/2*.

Richard Biddle: The safe move is 20/16 20/16 9/5 8/4. This begins to race home, safeties the blots and puts pressure on the White blots. However, we should not overlook the gammon opportunity here, so I propose 20/8 to add to the prime and 6/2* to get a White blot in the air. My choice is 20/8 6/2*.

Problem 60.6



11 point match
White 2 Black 5
Black to play 65

This problem looks to have several candidate moves:

Peter Bennet: Black has to get something moving from the back so the choices become:

24/13
21/10
21/16 11/5
21/15 11/6
21/15 13/8

The trouble with moving from the 21-point is that it leaves Black's back checkers stuck on White's ace point. Black would rather have them split to try for an advanced anchor of his own.

The simple 24/13 gives Black a more balanced position and his stronger board gives him some protection against a possible attack by White.

Also rejecting all moves from the

21-point:

Julian Hayward: White, with no builders and an awkward blot, can't really attack you just yet, so 21/anything makes his life easier. 13/8 11/5 and the like are rather negative - you already have several points in front of White's back men and can only threaten one more (the 4-point). So, a quiet move to keep up the race and leave you relatively level seems in order. 24/13 turns a straggler into a builder and leaves all your existing threats in place.

The next two competitors don't like 24/13:

Tim Wilkins: 24/13 doesn't look right, as it creates an extra target in White's home board and Black already has a spare on the mid-point. White is not likely to break his anchor soon so Black doesn't need to get builders into his home table immediately (e.g. 13/8 11/5). This would also cut down Black's options as it leaves no spares in the outer tables. I prefer 21/10, which brings a man round and threatens to make either bar point or 9 point.

Tony Lee: 21/10 looks like a clear favourite. Unless White throws a double, the anchor stays, so where else has White got play? The huge stacks on the 8- and 6-points are the pieces White want to get into action, so to avoid any mishaps let's get the blot on 21 out of the way. This is the same argument against 24/13. Now the question is should the 21 blot run all the way to 10 or hang in the outfield on 15 (and duplicating 3s). All the way is best as White now has the problem of what to do with the blot on the 3 point. Now Black can focus on building a nice prime in front of White's laggards!

Although some competitors flirted

with other possibilities, in the end there were only moves chosen: 24/13 and 21/10. Although Jellyfish prefers 24/13, the competitors once again come down in favour of the other move. Since I can't really add anything to the analysis I'll just present the remaining comments.

In favour of 24/13:

Richard Biddle: I don't like 21/15 11/6, even though this duplicates threes for White. The chance to make a forward anchor is lost.

21/10 creates a valuable builder, but again loses the forward anchor possibilities. White will be more concerned with making the three-point than hitting Black so I propose the move that adds another builder. does not strip the mid-point and leaves forward anchor chances and comes from habit, my choice 24/13.

Rodney Lighton: 24/18 11/6 plays for a high anchor while lifting the blot on the 11-point, but gives White a lot of blots to aim at. 21/10 leaves only indirect shots and gives the best chance of making Black's bar-point, which is the point that Black would most like to make, but does nothing to get an anchor. My choice is 24/13, which is a compromise between the previous two plays. It gives a reasonable chance of either making the bar-point or a high anchor next turn.

For the majority:

Mark Oram: 21/10. Yet again we are facing an opponent who seems unable or unwilling to develop smoothly. We already have a three point board and an extra offensive point. We can continue our own development and threaten to further retard his own by the ever-

present threat to hit in the outfield. Even if White attempts to build a prime of his own we would not fear this for two reasons. Firstly, we would have more timing than him, so can assume he will eventually 'crunch' first. Secondly, White's first priority will be to cover his 3-point blot; he will then be very awkwardly placed to close a fourth or fifth point in front of us. His infant prime will thus be full of holes, giving us sufficient time and opportunity to escape his clutches without too much hindrance. With all this in mind, we should aim to close our nine, seven and four points: 21/10 leaves our builders optimally placed to achieve this. Even if White hits one of the two fly shots, we simply take aim at his inner board blot, and then the White checker which hit us if he dances.

Bob Young: 21/10. Running from the rear anchor and leaving two blots in White's home board doesn't seem safe enough in this close race. White just may be able to point and improve his home board that at present is noticeably inferior. Bringing a checker from the mid point to the 8-point whilst moving the other checker to the 5-point is all safe but moves everything too close to White's rear anchor. The only other option seems to be to keep the rear anchor, and bring the rear blot round to the Black outer board. If not hit, these builders could be very useful in making more points in front of White. If hit, they can easily re enter, and may pick up the loose blot in White's home board.

Don Hatt: 21/10. Black has the better board but three men back. Playing 21/10 escapes one man and gives Black another builder for the bar point or to make the 9-point next time blocking 6s.

Brian Lever: Choice here seems to be between 24/13, 21/15 13/8, 21/15 11/6 or 21/10. I think Black should take advantage of White's temporary indisposition and go for the points he needs, which are the bar and 9 pts - not the 4 pt though that will be useful later, because bar and 9 constrict White in a situation where he hasn't got flexibility. The best play for this purpose is 21/10. Sixteen rolls make one or other point, and nearly all rolls play well.

Competition 2002 Totals				
Scores >	1st	2nd	3rd	Tot.
Brian Lever	59	53	50	162
Bob Young **	44	52	52	148
Don Hatt	54	48	45	147
Richard Biddle	52	47	46	145
Peter Bennet	41	53	43	137
Rodney Lighton	50	39	37	126
Julian Hayward	-	60	38	98
Tim Wilkins	-	-	51	51
Tony Lee *	-	-	49	49
Mark Oram	-	-	38	38

** wins £20, * wins £5

On a difficult set, nobody managed to score ten points on more than four of the problems. Congratulations to Bob Young for finishing just in front with a score of 52. Once again, I would like to thank all the competitors for taking the time and trouble to enter the competition. Ten competitors is the most we've had for some time – could this be the start of an upward trend? Most of the competitors produced material worthy of the “best presentation” prize, but after due consideration I have awarded this to Tony Lee for his enthusiastic style.

*Brian Lever maintains his lead at the top of the table. Don't forget that that the leader after Competition No.4 (this issue) will win £50. To decide the final scores all entrants will be judged on 'best three out of four' entries. The top six competitors can all discard their worse result but the rest of the field will have to do with just three results. Unfortunately this means that the winner will **not** be from those players with just three entries because the most marks you can score is 60 and Tim Wilkins can only achieve 158. However, I hope this fact doesn't detract from the number of entrants. (see the next page for the JellyFish equities)*

No.	move	score
60.1	8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3	10
	13/10(2) 8/5(2)	7
	24/21(2) 13/10(2)	5
	24/21(2) 8/5(2)	3
60.2	7/5 6/5	10
	24/22 6/5	8
	24/22 8/7	5
	24/21	5
	11/9 6/5	5
	11/9 24/23	5
	24/22 11/10	5
	13/11 6/5	4
60.3	18/13 18/15	10
	8/3 8/5	7
	13/8 13/10	5
	18/10	3
60.4	13/8 13/11	10
	9/2*	6
	20/13	2
	8/3 6/4	2
60.5	20/8 6/2*	10
	13/5 8/4 6/2*	10
	20/16(2) 9/5 8/4	8
	8/4 6/2* 5/1* 5/1*	5
	13/1* 6/2*	5
	13/5 13/9 6/2*	5
	13/9 6/2* 5/1*(2)	5
60.6	21/10	10
	24/13	7

competitor	60.1	60.2	60.3	60.4	60.5	60.6	score
Bob Young	13/10 13/10 8/5 8/5	24/22 8/7	18/13 18/15	13/8 13/11	13/5 8/4 6/2*	21/10	52
Tim Wilkins	8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3	11/9 6/5	18/13 18/15	9/2*	13/5 8/4 6/2*	21/10	51
Brian Lever	8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3	11/9 24/23	18/13 18/15	13/8 13/11	13/5 13/9 6/2*	21/10	50
Tony Lee	13/10 13/10 8/5 8/5	7/5 6/5	8/3 8/5	13/8 13/11	13/1* 6/2*	21/10	49
Richard Biddle	13/10 13/10 8/5 8/5	24/21	8/3 8/5	13/8 13/11	20/8 6/2*	24/13	46
Don Hatt	8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3	24/22 6/5	8/3 8/5	8/3 6/4	20/16(2) 9/5 8/4	21/10	45
Peter Bennet	24/21 24/21 13/10 13/10	7/5 6/5	18/13 18/15	9/2*	13/9 6/2* 5/1* 5/1*	24/13	43
Julian Hayward	24/21 24/21 8/5 8/5	24/22 11/10	13/8 13/10	13/8 13/11	20/16(2) 9/5 8/4	24/13	38
Mark Oram	8/5 8/5 6/3 6/3	13/11 6/5	18/10	9/2*	8/4 6/2* 5/1* 5/1*	21/10	38
Rodney Lighton	24/21 24/21 13/10 13/10	24/22 6/5	13/8 13/10	20/13	20/8 6/2*	24/13	37



Jellyfish equities (level 7)			
60.1:	1	0.136	24/21(2) 13/10(2)
	2	0.125	24/21(2) 8/5(2)
	3	0.118	13/10(2) 8/5(2)
	4	0.101	8/5(2) 6/3(2)
	5	0.101	24/21(2) 6/3(2)
60.2:	1	-0.262	7/5 6/5
	2	-0.294	6/4 6/5
	3	-0.301	24/22 11/10
	4	-0.302	11/9 6/5
	5	-0.309	24/22 6/5
	6	-0.316	24/22 8/7
	7	-0.322	24/22 24/23
	8	-0.324	11/9 24/23
	9	-0.324	24/21
	10	-0.334	8/5
	11	-0.345	13/11 6/5
60.3:	1	0.508	13/8 13/10
	2	0.500	8/3 8/5
	3	0.489	18/13 18/15
	4	0.457	13/5
	5	0.449	18/13 8/5
	6	0.420	8/3 13/10
	7	0.412	18/10
60.4:	1	-0.010	13/8 13/11
	2	-0.017	9/4 8/6
	3	-0.018	20/13
	4	-0.021	13/8 6/4
	5	-0.023	9/2*
	6	-0.045	21/16 8/6
	7	-0.051	20/15 8/6
	8	-0.061	8/3 6/4
60.5:	1	0.733	20/8 6/2*
	2	0.731	9/1* 8/4 6/2*
	3	0.726	13/9 6/2* 5/1*(2)
	4	0.726	13/5 13/9 6/2*
	5	0.725	13/5 8/4 6/2*
	6	0.700	13/1* 6/2*
	7	0.686	20/16(2) 9/5 6/2*
	8	0.672	20/16(2) 8/4 6/2*
	9	0.668	13/5 9/5 6/2*
	10	0.659	13/9(2) 8/4 6/2*
	11	0.656	13/1* 8/4
	12	0.655	20/16(2) 13/9 6/2*
	13	0.650	20/16(2) 9/5 8/4
	14	0.630	8/4 6/2* 5/1* 5/1*
	15	0.630	13/5 13/9 8/4
60.6:	1	0.042	24/13
	2	0.031	24/18 11/6
	3	0.025	21/10
	4	0.013	21/15 11/6

Competition 2002 No.4 61.01-06

Payout for Competition No.4:

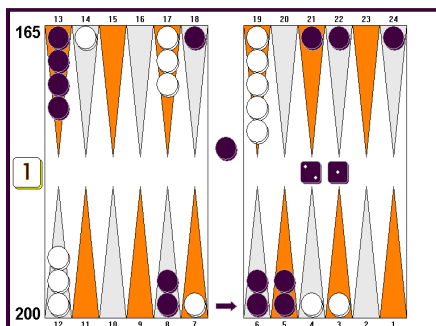
£20: winner of individual competition.

£5: contributor of the "best presented" set of answers.

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

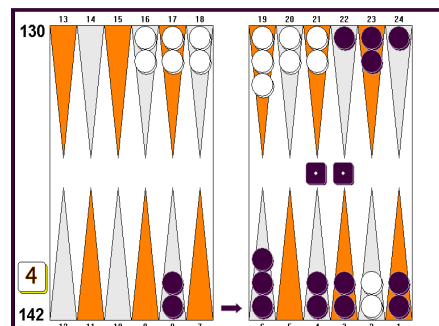
Entries by 31st January 2003. Email: richard.granville@tinyworld.co.uk and a cc to comps@backgammon-biba.co.uk and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ via Royal Mail.

6101



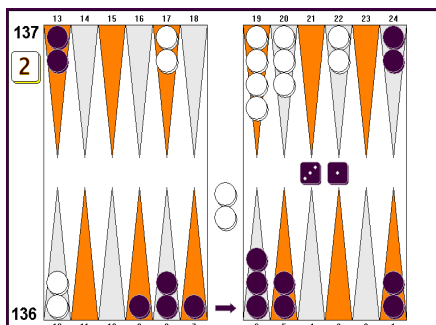
11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 21

6104



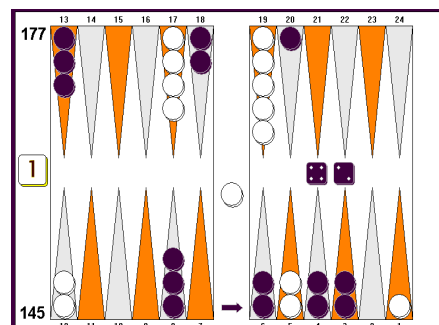
11 point match
White 4 Black 4
Black to play 11

6102



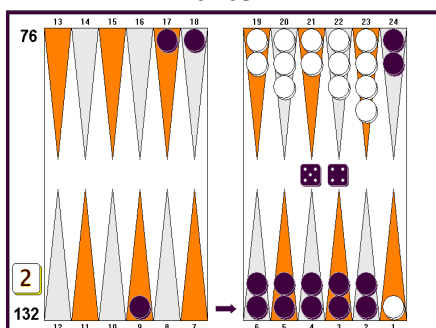
11 point match
White 7 Black 7
Black to play 31

6105



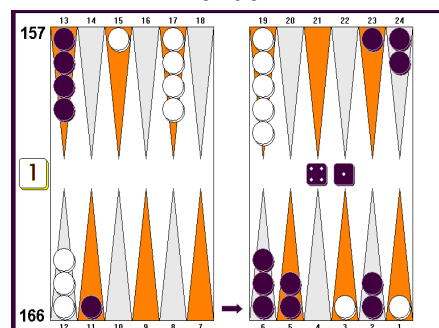
11 point match
White 2 Black 2
Black to play 42

6103



11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 54

6106



11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 41

Backgammon Clubs – In Your Area

Due to space problems this issue I have only produced a truncated version of the club details: where, who and when. Anyone requiring a fuller list can see one on the Biba web site or via the mail from Biba HQ.

If your club isn't on this list then send me the details (*see key*) either via Biba HQ or you can email information in the order below, 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

Birmingham

Birmingham BG Club
Dave Motley 0121 476 4099
motleydavid@hotmail.com
Every Monday

Brighton

Brighton Backgammon Club
<http://eiloart.com/bbc/>
Tuesday 8pm until closing

Bristol

Bristol BG Organisation
Ian Tarr 0117-9756349
brisgammon@messages.co.uk
Second Thursday of the month.

Colchester

Mersea Island & District BG.
Ron. Bishop 01206 384651
ronbish@mersea25.fsnet.co.uk
Tues. most weeks

Dublin

Dublin Backgammon Club

Brendan Burgess 603 0891 .
wildlife@indigo.ie
2nd Monday of every month.

Dunfermline BG Club

Graeme Campbell, 01383 738968
gccannon@euphony.net
Every 4th Sunday

Eastbourne

Eastbourne & Bexhill BG Club
Roy Hollands 01323 722905 e-mail royhollands@aol.com
Mondays 19.30

Halifax

Halifax/West Yorkshire Club
Rachel Rhodes 07961 355433
dicewitch@yahoo.co.uk
Sporadic

Lincoln

Lincoln BG Club
Michael Crane, 01522 829649,
michael.a.crane@ntlworld.com
Every Tuesday

Liverpool

Liverpool Backgammon Club
John Wright, 0151 280 0075,
jpwright@cableinet.co.uk
First Friday of each month

London

Double Five BG Club
George Sulimirski. 020 7381
8128 jgsulimir@aol.com
Thursdays 7pm. & Sundays 5pm

London

Fox Reformed
Robbie (020) 7254 5975,
robbie.richards@fox-reformed.co.uk
Monday (tournament);

London

The Brave New World (*formerly The Bell Inn BG Club*)
020-8399-0200 or 07946 801801
Tuesday

London

Ealing Backgammon League
Grahame Powell 020-8968 6327,
abband@aol.com.net or
sagub@aol.com
Every Sunday 3.00pm

Manchester

Manchester & District Club
Rodney Lighton 0161 445 5644
lighton@btinternet.com
3rd Tuesday of each month

Nottingham

Nottingham BG Club
Conrad Cooper 0115 9113281
conrad_cooper@excite.com
Monday, 9.00 pm

Preston BG Club

D.Wallbank
d.wallbank@blueyonder.co.uk
Last Tues of every month.

Reading

Reading Backgammon Club
Kevin Carter on
kevin@profundus.com & +0118-971-2948, Penultimate Wed of each month

St. Albans

Not really a club, no membership
Uldis Lapikens, 01582 455970,
uldis@talk21.com
Every Tuesday 19.45

Forthcoming Events

UK Finals 07/08 December Sponsored by **TrueMoneygames**.

TrueMoneygames.com offer on-line games that can be played for real money or just for fun. The first game to be offered on their server is backgammon; there are plans for additional games in the pipeline. The server comes with great graphics and realistic sound and the software required is easily



Monte Carlo Here We Come!

It is the aim of a series of Jackpots to send a Biba member to the Monte Carlo World Championships in 2003, expenses paid. There will be eight, 8-man Jackpots (Friday and Saturday night subject to demand) the winners of which will play in a ninth Jackpot the winner going to Monte Carlo. Transport, flights, transfers, accommodation* and entry into the Championship Flight are all included *all of which will be arranged by David Naylor who is offering all Biba members an all-in-one package*

next year for Monte Carlo including travel and accommodation in a choice of hotels to suit all budgets - details of which are available upon request from montecarlo@backgammon-boards.co.uk or telephone David on 07930 460647.



It is anticipated that this will be a popular event and that it might be possible to send more than one member. If there's a demand for more than one Jackpot each tournament then more will be on offer. The cost per qualifying Jackpot will be £40 per entry. Entrants can qualify more than once to obtain byes in the 9th Jackpot. *Please note that there will not be a cash alternative to the prize of going to the Monte Carlo World Championships. *Accommodation does not include food at the Grand Hotel.*

downloaded from their site. You can play games against other players from all around the world 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is no setup fee to play on the server or membership costs. They make their business by charging a small percentage of the real money winnings (rake). If you lose then you don't pay anything - except what you lose to your opponent!

We have our eight qualifiers: Brian Busfield, David Startin, Ray Tannen, Murat Imamoglu, Julian Fetterlein, Brian Lever, Jim Johnson John Clark.

On the Saturday everyone (except the eight players above who will be playing in the Champion of Champions knockout) will play 5 x 5-point Swiss format matches. The top 8 players (sums of opponent's score as decider) will enter the Main Knockout last 16 on Sunday at 10:30 whilst all other players will compete in the Progressive Consolation. At 13:00 Sunday all players not playing in the Main or Consolation will start

the open entry Suicide! thus giving all players maximum playing opportunities.

NB: Any byes into the Consolation will be allocated first to those players with the most wins from the Saturday (random draw).

Bright 'n' Breezy 04/05 January

This knockout is not only the first Biba tournament of each year but also one of the most popular. If you intend to enter then you are advised to book your accommodation as soon as you can.

Turn up and play in the most garish, horribilist, silliest beachwear outfit you dare wear for this tournament and you could win one nights accommodation and free entry for the British Open in April 2003. Be prepared to wear it all day Saturday - not for the faint-hearted!

See next page for special element!

Jarvis Trophy 08/09 February The first of this years four Swiss for-

mat Ranking Tournament. Your chance to play 6 x 11 point matches and to notch up a few ranking points.

Slattery Scottish Open 08/09 March Once again the Scottish Open is on tour! This time in Bradford Hilton, Hall Ings, Bradford City Centre.

The Hilton Bradford is a modern, first class hotel with commanding views over the city centre and the beautiful Yorkshire Dales only a short drive away. The restaurant, Britisserie offers a wide range of English food making it is an ideal hotel for business or pleasure.

The hotel is situated adjacent to the rail and bus stations and is just two minutes walk away. There is also a NCP car park next door as well.

The usual knockout format with trophies supplied by John Slattery, the tournament sponsor.

Biba Backgammon Calendar

Date	Tournament	Venue	Type	Accommodation	Info
Dec 07/08 (2002)	UK Finals	Coventry	Combination	08705 201 201	01522 888676
Jan 04/05	Bright 'n' Breezey	Brighton	Knockout	..	..
Jan 25/26	Hi-Rollers Event	Hinckley	Knockout	08457 444 123	..
Feb 08/09	Jarvis Trophy	Coventry	Swiss	08705 201 201	..
Mar 08/09	Slattery Scottish Open	Bradford	Knockout	..	..
Mar 22/23	Hi-Rollers Event	Hinckley	Knockout	08457 444 123	..
Apr 05/06	* new date British Open	Coventry	Knockout	08705 201 201	..
May 03/04	County Cups Trophy	Coventry	Swiss	..	..
May 24/25	Hi-Rollers Event	Hinckley	Knockout	08457 444 123	..
Jun 07/08	Hilton Trophy	Coventry	Knockout	08705 201 201	..
Jul 05/06	Keren Di Bona Memorial	Coventry	Knockout	..	..
Aug 09/10	SAC Trophy	Coventry	Swiss	..	..
Sep 06/07	Roy Hollands Trophy	Coventry	Knockout	..	..
Sep 20/21	Hi-Rollers Event	Daventry	Knockout	08457 444 123	..
Oct 04/05	Sandy Osborne Memorial	Coventry	Knockout	08705 201 201	..
Nov 08/09	Townharbour Trophy	Coventry	Swiss	..	..
Nov 22/23	Hi-Rollers Event	Daventry	Knockout	08457 444 123	..
Dec 06/07	UK Finals	Coventry	Combination	08705 201 201	..

Jan 01-06 8th Thai Open, 19th Hole Super Pub, Pattaya, Thailand
 Jan 05 3rd Desperado Mexican Festival, Zurich-Hongg, Switzerland
 Jan 05-07 World Cup Masters, Marriott, Bucharest, Romania
 Jan 07-12 World Cup Challenge VII, Marriott, Bucharest, Romania
 Feb 02 4th Desperado Mexican Festival, Zurich-Hongg, Switzerland
 Mar 30-Apr 2. 2nd Bali Championship, Kudeta Restaurant, Indonesia
 Apr 17-21 15th Nordic "Wide" Open, (tentative location), Denmark
 May 1-4 3rd Citta di Jesolo Torneo, Casa Bianca Hotel, Italy
 May 6-11 Mayday Gin/BG, Costa del Sol, Spain
 Jul 7-13 World Championship, Grand Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco

The above are taken from Carol Cole's backgammon calendar. More tournaments and fuller details are available online at www.chicagopoint.com/calendar.html or via these two excellent magazines:

Flint Area BG News <http://homepage.interaccess.com/~chipoint/cjc.html>

Chicago Point <http://www.chicagopoint.com/index.html>



Bright 'n' Breezy

Following the tragic loss of their friend, Albert Tinker, Tony Fawcett and Mick Butterfield have decided to sponsor the Bright 'n' Breezy Consolation that Albert won in 2001.

They are to donate an **Albert Tinker Memorial Trophy** that will be played for annually at the B 'n' B.



Biba Tournament Details 2003

(timetable below for all Biba tournaments)

Registration: Saturday 1030 to 1230

Play Starts: Friday 2130, Saturday 1300, Sunday 1030

Auctions: Group, Saturday 1245, Individual, Sunday 1015

Pools: Private, members only prize pools available at £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



*** * New for 2003 - Monte Carlo Jackpots * ***

2003 Accommodation

Costs sharing:

One night : £55 per person dinner, bed & breakfast *

Two nights: £100 per person dinner, bed & breakfast *

Single occupancy in double or twin room:

£10 per night added to the normal costs.

* Brighton only, £59 pp 1nt, £109 pp 2nts

NB: Brighton and Bradford have a limited number of single rooms and they will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis.

The contact numbers are:

Tournament information 01522 888676

Accommodation (Central Reservations) 08705 201 201 and quote 'backgammon'.

(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* & Monte Carlo Knockouts

Play starts 2130, *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)



Prize Distribution for the TrueMoneygames UK Finals

Main

- 1st Snowie 4.0 - The latest from the Snowie Group
- 2nd \$100 voucher to use on TrueMoneygames
- 3rd & 4th \$50 TMG voucher

Consolation

- 1st 6 months PMW subscription plus 8 issues of Backgammon Today
- 2nd \$25 TMG voucher plus 6 months Playmaker World Subscription
- 3rd & 4th 6 months PMW subscription

Suicide!

- 1st 6 months PMW subscription plus 8 issues of Backgammon Today
- 2nd \$25 TMG voucher plus 8 issues of Backgammon Today
- 3rd & 4th \$25 TMG voucher

Biba & True Moneygames present the Swiss/Knockout tournament

The U.K. Finals 2002

Hilton National - Coventry



Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th December 2002

STOP PRESS ARTICLE: Bristol even the score in Birmingham

The twice-yearly contest for the Inter-Cities Challenge Trophy, between Birmingham and Bristol, is setting new records for "away advantage." You'd think that playing on your own patch might just be worth a few points over the course of a full afternoon's encounter. Not a bit of it! On Saturday October 19th at the Moseley All Services Club, Birmingham, this strange new trend gathered pace when the visiting Bristol team stormed to a 23-16 victory over their hosts, the fourth successive away win in these con-

tests.

The match featured two teams of thirteen players, each playing three 9-point matches – the total of 39 matches guaranteeing a decisive outcome one way or the other. Bristol had been let down at the last minute by a no-show, so Birmingham kindly provided an extra player to make up the difference. In truly democratic fashion this player was drawn from a hat (well, an envelope actually) containing fourteen Birmingham names. Bristol's Simonetta Barone pulled out the name of the hitherto un-

sung Mike Hall, who had turned up expecting to make his debut for the home side. This seemed to be greeted with a certain amount of relief by the Birmingham players, who might have been dealt a severe psychological blow had they lost, for example, Ralph Eskinazi.

So it was that Mike joined Neil Young in making debuts for Bristol, while Tom Speedy was making his first appearance for Birmingham. The draw for pairings for the three rounds of

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Backgammon at the 6th Mind Sports Olympiad

Loughborough 13/18 August

Report by Michael Crane

Shoestring! This years' Mind Sports Olympiad was ran on a shoestring – that is, without any sponsorship money at all. Funded solely by entry fees, little was left for a complete games. However, this didn't deter over five hundred entrants turning up over the five days to take part in various mind sports. Considering the relative short notice given about the event the Organisers all agreed it was a successful games and it will be better for MSO7 next year.

Held at Loughborough University it proved to be a semi-popular venue inasmuch as some of the events were cancelled due to lack of enough entrants and many others went ahead with a handful of entrants. Also, to cover costs a late-entry and non-accommodation penalty fee of £5 for each was imposed. This prompted a few moans and groans, but, as Tony Corfe (Chief Organiser) pointed out the MSO had to pay for the hall hire etc, and, without a sponsor all income had to come from the competitors.

The backgammon was our lowest entry ever, but, considering the amount of notice and publicity the event had, this wasn't surprising. Also, being held on the campus there was little or no 'passing trade'. Something that had a significant impact on entry levels, I'm sure. At least in London there was a continuous stream of entrants arriving via bus and tube – in Loughborough I doubt any of the natives turned out (excepting those that had perhaps entered previous MSOs).

Beginners' Tournament (12)

When is a beginner not a beginner?

When they're a MSO beginner! Using broad criteria for Beginner status (to maximise entries) has resulted in a fair number of "beginners" taking part. Not to mention any names but some of the entrants this year were clearly experienced players and knew their way around a backgammon board without any problems. Next year will be different – see below.

Jan Stastna, from the Czech Republic, played his way into the final round of 5-point matches with 3 out 3, to face Peter Horlock, England. The Gold was a certainty but the Silver was open to any player with 3 wins dependent upon the sum of opponents' score as a tiebreaker. Jan emerged the victor, and took the Gold but would Peter secure the Silver?

This was left to fate – the outcome of two final matches; and the other contender for Silver, Neil Stein, had a similar outcome to contemplate. Peter's player came through whereas Neil's didn't so Peter secured the Silver and Neil – very happily – settled for Bronze.

So, what can Beginners expect for MSO7? A format that will hopefully deter 'beginners'. The proposed format is 5 x 3-point matches, no cube! That should put off the "beginner's" from having a go! The definition of a Beginner will be that if, when someone mentions 'cube' to you you immediately think, "sugar" and if the only pip count you're familiar with includes a half dozen Granny Smiths, then you're a Beginner!

Olympiad Tournament (18)

No, that isn't a misprint, the entry was just eighteen – and that was

one of the best entries over the whole event! However, the quality of the entrants was extremely high as can be seen from the results listed after this report.

Typically, and true to form, Grandmaster John Clark, turns up one hour late thinking (incorrectly) that the format this year was the same as last year – when will he ever read the literature sent out to him?

However, being the considerate TD that I am I allowed him to enter (playing another late entrant) as long as they were finished when expected, which was within 90 minutes – a task they accomplished without effort after an 8-cube was thrown across the board!

Francine Brandler, perhaps under John's guidance also turned up late. Unfortunately for her there wasn't an opponent so she had to settle for a ½ point bye.

For those of you not familiar with the MSO Swiss format, whenever a player misses a round - either by choice or circumstance - then they are awarded a ½ point bye. An opponent affected by this situation is awarded a 1-point bye. Players can choose to enter two mind sports at the same time but must accept a ½ point bye in one of them when rounds clash.

However, this handy little half point turned out to be very useful. Going into the 6th and final round there were four on 4/5 guaranteeing two on 5/6 – Gold & Silver, and, if Francine beat Wayne Felton she would emerge with 4½ out of five, pipping the 4/6s by half a point! Sadly, for Francine, that is, Wayne stopped her in her tracks

and secured himself 4/6. This left me with the job of deciding which of these five would be declared the Bronze winner.

John Slattery missed out on going 5/5 when he lost to Martin Hemming in the 5th Round. Martin backgammoned and then gammoned him on a 2-cube! But, John being John, he went on to win the next match and he clinched the Gold medal for Scotland, beating Martin narrowly into Silver with scores of 6/24 and 6/23 – just one opponents' wins between them.

Bronze was declared a draw between John Clark (England) and Dario de Toffoli (Italy), after three tiebreaks failed to split them.

Not only did John Slattery win Gold, but this time he attained Grandmaster status as well. Sharen pointed out to me that the best way of becoming a Grandmaster is to be called John! The first was John Clark, the second was Peter Bennet and the third, John Slattery. *Peter Bennet*? Yes – his real name is *John Peter Bennet*!

English Open (26)

Wow! Into the twenties! Just a few more turned up for the English Open, but it turned out to be a topsy-turvy tournament with an unexpected (but very popular) Gold & Silver position. In fact the Bronze position was also a popular choice - because the recipient failed to take the Gold or Silver! Read on . . .

Rosey Bensley had the tournament of her backgammon life. She was the only player to win five straight matches. My problem lay with her 6th match - who would be her opponent? I had a choice of four players with 4/5, however, one of them, Alexander Baron had al-



**John Slattery
Olympiad Gold**



**Martin Hemmings
Olympiad Silver**



**John Clark & Dario de Toffoli
Olympiad Bronze**

ready been beaten by Rosey in the 5th Round so he was ruled out. Of those remaining it was decided (after consultation with the Chief Arbiter, Dan Glimne) that Tony Fawcett would play her because he had won the most consecutive

matches from Round One onwards.

I had worked out that if Tony were to win this final match then Gold, Silver and Bronze would be decided on the sum of opponent's scores because at best I was going to have three on 5/6 and at worst, five. If Rosey won she'd be guaranteed the Gold and Tony very likely take the Silver.

The match between Rosey and Tony swung back and forth but eventually Tony triumphed. Now my task as Arbiter got difficult. I ended up with three on 5/6 (I'm pleased it wasn't five) and I had to go into the sum of opponents' scores tiebreak.

After several counts to be certain Rosey was declared the winner beating Tony by just one point 5/21 to 5/20! Two popular positions. So, who was the third *popular* position? John Clark! He is already a Grandmaster; it was only proper he let someone else see what being at the top was like!

So, that's the backgammon over with. Was it a success? Was Loughborough a good venue? In my opinion, yes and yes. Despite the lower turnout the backgammon was very successful, all entrants enjoyed themselves and it was a friendly event. Loughborough University was a good enough venue: we had plenty of playing rooms, we had a great atmosphere with other minds sports happening at the same time all around us, the accommodation was up to scratch; but what clinched it for me was that the bar was open until 3 o'clock in the morning! The MSO might not agree with me but this was a plus. It turned the event into a social gathering as well as a gathering for



Rosey Bensley
English Open Gold



John Clark
English Open Bronze



Tony Fawcett
English Open Silver

backgammon. We played hard all day and we drank hard all night! What more could one possibly want?

Before I go

What would you do? You turn up at the University with suitcase and bits and pieces in your hand and you go to Accommodation Reception. They check you in, give you a key and send you off to your room.

As you enter the room you notice immediately that there are someone else's belongings strewn around the room, their clothes are in the wardrobe, their toothpaste and toothbrush are in the bathroom, their damp towels are drying on the back of the bathroom door, their suitcase and holdall are under the desk, their books and papers are on top of the desk, the *single* bed has been slept in and the duvet is pulled back to air the mattress I'm sure you can imagine what an occupied room looks like! So, what would **you** do?

I'd imagine that 99.99999% of you would return immediately to Reception and report the fact that a mistake had been made and that the room was already occupied. So, how unlucky can I be when my room is allocated to the gnat brained 0.00001% that moves in regardless!

Believe it or not but Gnat Brain actually moves in! He places his pyjamas on *my* bed, he puts his luggage on *my* floor next to mine, he deposits his toothpaste and toothbrush in *my* bathroom next to mine, he hangs his clothes in *my* wardrobe pushing mine aside to make room for his, he places his books and papers on *my* desk and a few knick-knacks above mine on *my* shelf. Then he proceeds to 'freshen up' in *my* bathroom (this

I try to blank from my mind!), he then eats an orange (his own!) and has a cup of *my* tea; and I don't doubt – he has a nice lay down on *my* bed! In short Gnat Brain moves in and totally ignores the fact that the room is already occupied.

When I returned to find his stuff in my room I was dumbfounded – it was surreal. I just couldn't imagine someone could be so stupid; after all, I *was* at the **Mind** Sports! I tracked him down within five minutes, confronted him, told him to shift his stuff immediately else I'd throw it all into the corridor. Ten minutes later after I'd returned to my room he hadn't turned up so out of the door and into the corridor went all of his stuff. This was at 20:10, at 23:50 he turned up to vacate the corridor.

The following morning at breakfast Gnat Brain had the nerve to ask for his *disposable* razor back that I'd missed the night before – I threw it down the corridor!

Am I being unfair to gnats?



Subscribe now to Gammon Village and receive 3 free* months!

If you cannot find your personal Gammon Village invitation card and number in this issue of Bibafax then email gvsb@backgammon-biba.co.uk or via Biba HQ by phone or post. *Gold & Diamond subscriptions only.

MSO6 August 2002. Beginners' Tournament					MSO6 August 2002. English Open				
Pos	Wins	Opp Wins	Name	Medal	Pos	Wins	Opp Wins	Name	Medal
01	4	9	Jan Stastna	Gold	01	5	21	Rosemary Bensley	Gold
02	3	9	Peter Horlock	Silver	02	5	20	Anthony Fawcett	Silver
03	3	7	Neil Stein	Bronze	03	5	18	John Clark	Bronze
04	3	7	Jeremy Das		04	4	23	Roland Herrera	
05	2	10	Dave Treacy		05	4	23	Alexander Baron	
06	2	7	Alan Farrell		06	4	20	Uldis Lapikens	
06	2	7	David Pearce		07	4	18	Ali Safa	
08	2	6	George Lane		08	4	15	Steve Rimmer	
09	1	11	Josef Kollar		09	4	14	Kevin Stebbing	
10	1	8	Tige Nnando		10	3	23	Martin Hemming	
11	1	7	Bharat		11	3	21	Jeff Barber	
12	0	8	Gloria Stein		12	3	19	Roy Hollands	
MSO6 August 2002. Olympiad Tournament					13	3	19	Leslie Singleton	
Pos	Wins	Opp Wins	Name	Medal	14	3	18	Adam Stocks	
01	5	24.0	John Slattery	Gold	15	3	17	Michael Wignall	
02	5	23.0	Martin Hemming	Silver	16	3	15	Wayne Felton	
03	4	19.5	Dario De Toffoli	Bronze	17	3	15	Francine Brandler	
03	4	19.5	John Clark	Bronze	18	3	13	Nick Hamar	
05	4	18.0	Adam Stocks		19	2	23	Ernie Pick	
06	4	16.0	Jeff Barber		20	2	17	Simonetta Barone	
06	4	16.0	Wayne Felton		21	2	13	John Slattery	
08	3.5	13.0	Francine Brandler		22	1	18	Spenser Close	
09	3	20.5	Kevin Stebbing		23	1	13	Paul Gilbertson	
10	3	18.0	Steve Rimmer		24	1	13	John Broomfield	
11	3	16.5	John Broomfield		25	1	12	Tige Nnando	
12	3	12.5	Jan Stastna		26	0	14	Walter Jarc	
13	2	18.0	Ali Safa						
14	2	17.5	Walter Jarc						
15	2	15.5	Mahmoud Jahanbani						
16	2	11.5	Roy Hollands						
17	1	17.0	Alan Farrell						
18	0.5	14.0	Paul Gilbertson						

◁ Page 60
 matches having been completed,
 battle was joined.

The first point was secured for Bristol by Elliot Smart. And although Bristol have started slowly on some previous occasions, this lead was never to be lost throughout the afternoon. The break for an excellent buffet (provided by Dave Motley's sister), after the first round of matches, saw Bristol leading 8-5. The next series threatened at one stage to restore parity, but the lead was further extended

to 15-11 by the time the final series of matches got under way. Five more points were needed for Bristol to cross the finish line first, and it was Phil Charlton who scored what proved to be the "winning goal".

Three further Bristol successes gave the final scoreline a comfortable look. But these were needed to avoid the embarrassment of Mike Hall – the honorary Bristolian – making all the difference with his three victories!

Others to win all three matches for Bristol were Blaine Buchanan, Charlie Hetherington, and Elliot Smart, while Ralph Eskinazi and Dave Fall fared equally well for Birmingham. These five players shared the pools for the best players on each side, the Bristol split going only three ways as Mike Hall had opted out of the pool. And Bristol had the team prize pool, as well as the trophy, to show for the day's endeavours.

Final score: BIRMINGHAM 16
 BRISTOL 23

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Roy Hollands Trophy 7/8 September 2002

Report by Michael Crane

Once again backgammons oldest player turned out to play in his own tournament - and took home one of his own trophies! More on that later.

Main (59)

Question: What do Brian Busfield, David Nathan, Peter Christmas, David Startin and Roy Hollands all have in common?

Answer: They are all past champions and they went out in the 1st Round!

It was a tough tournament. Ray Tannen beat Brian, Andrew Sarjeant beat David N, Edwin Turner beat Peter (the first Roy Hollands Champion in 1999), Mike Heard beat David S and Helen Helm-Sagar beat Roy. Surprisingly only two of these 'giant killers' made it into the last eight! Any guesses? Well, one was Edwin and the other was Ray Tannen - again. Not content with the 2002 Scottish title Ray was looking to add the Roy Hollands to his collection. But . . .

Harry Bhatia had other plans for the title and trophy. He'd already cleared a space on his mantelpiece for the trophy - it was next to the Roy Hollands Consolation trophy he won last year when Helen beat him in the Final. Harry wanted to add to his collection of Roy Hollands trophies and eclipse Helen above the fireplace. So, he was determined to stop Ray in the last eight; which he did. Edwin couldn't pass Arthur Willams and Arthur then faced Harry in the semi-finals.

Peter Wilson, Roy Hollands winner 2002, was knocked out by Eddie Barker, and Vincent Versteeg knocked out Kevin Stebbing in the second half of the last eight. Vin-

cent then went on to beat Eddie in the semi-final, and when Harry met Arthur, it was Harry who came first as he went on to meet with Vincent.

Vincent tried all sorts of tactics to beat Harry including a silly shirt and hat - he even tried playing better backgammon! But, it was all in vain. Harry, determined to eclipse Helen on the mantelpiece lost the Crawford he was defending but won the following game and took the title and the trophy home. Vincent left with the Runner-up trophy.



Harry Bhatia - Winner

Progressive Consolation (55)

So, how did our 'killed giants' fair in the 1st Round of the Consolation on the non-progressive side? Well, David Startin got as far as the 3rd Round where he was beaten by Peter Christmas, and Peter in turn was beaten by Roy in the 5th. In the 2nd Round David Nathan fell to Carl Alderman and Brian Busfield was beaten by Paul Barwick.

Still on the non-progressive side, Roy met and beat new member, Ricardo Falconi-Puig in the 6th Round leaving Roy a place in the Final. He now awaited his opponent from the Progressive side. Jumping in at the last sixteen, Ray Tannen despatched Edwin Turner and Peter Wilson to face Rachel

Rhodes in the semi. Rachel was unable to stop Ray and she stepped aside to let him go through to meet with Roy.



Roy Hollands presents Roy Hollands with his own trophy!

In the Final, Ray was as intent on winning this trophy as he had been to win the Main; and he proved unstoppable as he went on to take 1st place with Roy as Runner-up. I told you Roy took home one of his own trophies, didn't I?



Ray Tannen Consolation 1st

Last Chance (64) open draw.

Clearly misnamed, the Last Chance is in fact the second to last chance but a round called *Second To Last*, *Last Chance* is ridiculous! So, the Last Chance went ahead with an open draw of 64

giving lots of opportunities for re-entry. One of our finalists took advantage of the re-entry and one didn't; David Startin didn't and John Slattery did. David proved that he was a far better player than John and that he didn't need a second chance to win the Final - which he did!



**David Startin & John Slattery
Last Chance 1st & 2nd**

Suicide! (64) open draw.

Another popular open draw giving maximum playing opportunities again. As above in the Last Chance, one of the finalists took advantage of the re-entry and one didn't; Jeff Barber didn't and Rosey Bensley did . . . three times! Did it prove to be third time lucky? No, Jeff did a 'Startin' and played all the way from start to finish without losing a match leaving Rosey with the Runner-up egg cup!



Jeff Barber Suicide 1st



Rosey Bensley Suicide 2nd

Friday KO (28)

Not a bad turnout. There would have been more but I was at a special black-tie dinner (with Sharen) and three more turned up too late to enter. Taking full advantage of my absence David Nathan and Eddie Barker made it to the Final after beating Rachel Rhodes and Emmanuel Di Bona respectively in the semis. Eddie, having cut his teeth on four top players: Vincent Versteeg, John Slattery, Ray Tannen and Emmanuel wasn't going to be intimidated by David Nathans recent victory in the Keren Di Bona. He just brushed him aside and took 1st place and the weekend break . . . and some money!

Double (12)

Somewhat depleted by two eight-man Jackpots being run privately at the same time the turnout was less than it could have been. I have been asked by several players to stop the private action when it affects the organised action in this way. I can't do that, but I tolerate it. I cannot stop players getting together to do their own thing - if players don't want to enter it they aren't forced to; it is their choice.

Mind you I do have plans for an exciting official Jackpot starting next year; full details of which will appear on page 57.

Back to the doubles. Time has caught up with us and the team names are beginning to lack true originality. *E=MC Cubed* wasn't bad, nor was *Dice Cubes* but the rest, for me at least, didn't inspire me. However, the judges of the Best Name chose *Hit & Run* which is thought to be the first time it's been used - hence the win. Mind you, *Hit & Run* did neither, going out in the 1st Round to *The Pheasant Pluckers* who in turn were batted into the stands by *Batgirl and the Boy Blunder*. *Dice Cubes* were melted in the 1st Round by *Lucky Red Dye* who played right through to the Final against the dynamic duo. *Batgirl and Boy Blunder* batted and blundered their way to a win and left their opponents with red faces.

NB: The winners last year were *Pinky and The Brain*, who this year called themselves, *Batgirl etc!* Two in a row, well done.

Finally.

As you might have known at this tournament we held the *I Wouldn't Wear This Shirt In Public* competition. It turned out to be a success and a good laugh. Some of the shirts were horrible and should never have seen the light of day. The shirts worn by John Slattery and Vincent Versteeg were wonderful creations, but, with the title in mind only one shirt really stood out; that worn by Mike Wignall. It was truly revolting. Mike actually wore it to dinner (a competition requirement) which took nerve I can tell you! That nerve was rewarded by his peers as they voted his the shirt they'd not wear in public - or private for that matter!



Jane Oxley



Roy Hollands



Paul Gilbertson

Mike Wignall
Wearing that shirt!



Peter Christmas



David Startin



Vincent Versteeg & John Slattery

Sandy Osborne Memorial Trophy - 5/6 Oct. 2002

Report by Michael Crane

Main (56)

Starting with a tough 1st Round opponent, Tony Lee had to get past Mardi Ohannessian if he were to have any chance of progressing to the Final. This he did, he then made his way through three more opponents to end up in the semis. Here he was in illustrious company: His three peers were already winners from previous Biba tournaments including the British Open 2000, the Scottish Open 2002 and the Jarvis Trophy 1998 - not to mention a *Backgammon Grandmaster* thrown in there for good measure!

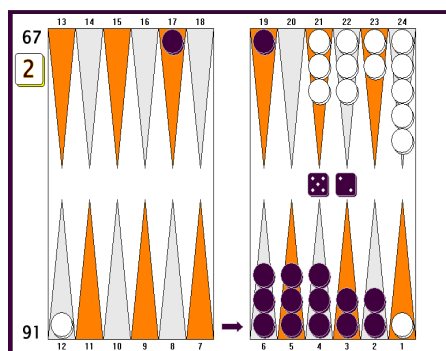
So, here was Tony with the 'big' boys (and girl!). Whilst Rachel Rhodes (British Open 2000) had to fend off John Clark (Jarvis 1998 and a Grandmaster); Tony had to defeat the reigning Scottish Champion, Ray Tannen. Could Tony get past the steady Ray or would he once again be the bridesmaid? It was touch and go. It went to DMP and, following one fatal roll, it went Ray's way and Tony had to settle for 3/4th place. In the other semi Rachel was bulldozed by John and we were left with a John Clark, Ray Tannen Final.

The assembled onlookers were looking forward to an exciting Final. I had set up the video camera on long play for 3 hours of recording and wasn't expecting much tape left at the end of the match - John is famous for his match commentary and analysis! I needn't have bothered. Poor Ray was whitewashed! He went down 11-0, never having a chance. John not only rolled the right numbers he played all the right moves as well. *Which is rather like the way I play - I also play all the right moves but not necessarily in the right order!*

According to Snowie 4 (yes, I have a copy) both players made just three checker play blunders between them, John two and Ray one. One of Johns was a minor blunder, just -0.146 but the remaining one each were very big blunders! Take a look at this one from John in Game 4, move 27:

Ray (W) 0

John (B) 5



Hitting is essential here. The question is, which one to hit - the 12- or 1-point blot?

John chose to play 19/17 6/1* which surprised a lot of us looking on. Most of us thought that playing 19/12* was much better. Johns play doesn't achieve a lot except give Ray a chance to re-enter and possibly escape.

The best play according to S4 is 19/12*. What does it matter if Ray anchors? He'll be moving off with any 6 and in the meantime his prime will collapse.



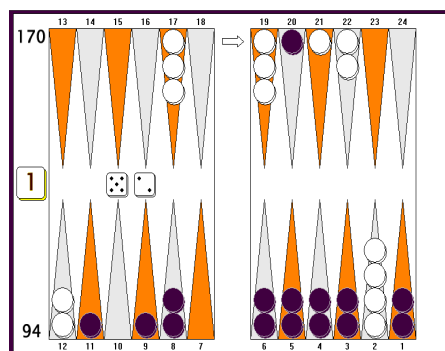
Main
Ray Tannen & John Clark

19/12* 1.191
19/17 6/1* 0.996 -0.225

Ray fared no better with his blunder. This is from Game 6, move 15:

Ray (W) 0

John (B) 8



Another misplayed 52. This time it was Ray's turn to cock it up!

John is threatening to complete his prime and totally isolate the four checkers on his 2-point so one would expect a hit (23/16*) here from Ray even if his home board is poor. However, Ray saw it differently and played 8/3 6/4 to make another point but in the process loading the 3-point.

According to S4 the best play here is the hit with Rays move coming in at 3rd place.

23/16* -0.749
8/3 6/4 -1.000 -0.251

John was apparently 'lucky' with an average luck rate of 28.332. but, if he'd played the moves as I do, *not necessarily in the right order*, then the outcome would have been different.

Not surprisingly, Ray was upset to go down eleven, nil, but he felt that he hadn't played that badly and that perhaps the dice hadn't gone his way (they certainly seemed to be going John's way!).

	John advanced	Ray world class
Rating	6.125/11.853	4.169/7.635
Errors		
(blunders)	20(5)	13(2)

According to S4 Ray played a class higher than John

Consolation (52)

Cliff Connick *did not* win the Consolation, but he couldn't have been happier if he had! Why? Because he took money off John Slattery after beating him in their first round match. Cliff agreed a certain stake but John, always the hustler persuaded Cliff to play for double that agreed amount; Cliff did so and took home twice what he expected. Well done, Cliff.

Playing from the non-progressive side, new member, Curtis Lucas was making a name for himself. Taking advantage of a first round bye he played through the field to meet Mardi Ohannessian in the quarter finals. Not knowing that Mardi was a *top player*, Curtis wasn't in awe (or dread) of him when he sat down to play, and perhaps because of this *ignorance* he prevailed condemning Mardi to the ranks of the Suicide.



Consolation
Peter Bennet & Steve Hallet

Curtis' next opponent, Peter Bennet, proved a little more inflexible and this time Curtis gave way and let Peter take his rightful place in

the final. Facing Peter was Steve Hallet who had entered into the 2nd Round via the progressive side. Peter finally ran out of steam and Steve emerged the winner (and the most hirsute!).

Last Chance (32)

Normally Mike Greenleaf doesn't bother playing in the Last Chance, he'd rather head for home and family. This weekend though was not normal - he entered and eventually found himself in the Final against Roy Hollands. This was at about 2:30 in the afternoon, and, because Mike's wife was expecting him home for lunch you'd have thought a guilty conscience might have inhibited his checker play, wouldn't you? Well it didn't - he stayed long enough to win the trophy, have his picture taken and then he went off home (no doubt to a cold Sunday lunch).



Last Chance
Mike Greenleaf & Roy Hollands

Suicide! (64)

Thanks to an early exit from the Consolation via Cliff Connick, *Slats* went into the Suicide where he didn't take advantage of the reentries available as he played his way into the Final. Mind you, he almost never made it. In his semi-final against Rebecca Bell he was faced with a *coup classique* after he almost got a backgammon to win the match 3-2 in the Crawford. Unfortunately Rebecca

hadn't had much - if any - experience playing the *coup classique* and thanks to this John managed to scramble home and take it to DMP at the next game - which he won. In the Final he met Matthew Fisher who was on his second try after being beaten by Roland Herrera in the 1st Round. Strangely enough, both finalists had each played Mardi in the 1st Round!

The prospect of impending fatherhood spurred Matt on to win his second Biba trophy (the first was the Consolation, 5th Birthday Tournament in 1995). Now he has two of them to show the little blighter when he/she arrives.



Suicide!
John Slattery & Matthew Fisher

Friday Knockout (20)

Peter Christmas had never won a Friday KO before whereas his opponent in the Final, John Slattery, had won two - Hilton and Sandy 2000. So, Peter figured, it was time to stop John getting a third. This he duly did and he walked away with the money and the weekend break. The score is now John 2, Peter 1.

Doubles (9)

Some good names this time. *Pheasant Pluckers* were plucked by *Boreham Rigid* in the 1st Round; *Captain Birdseye* and his *Fishy Fingers* were licked by *Dice To See You, To See You Dice* in the semis and *W07* threw the better dice in the Final against *Dice To*

See You.

The best name was *Boreham Rigid* which is a very nice geographical pun.

And finally . .

Not much to report this time. A nice smooth tournament without hitch or incident - the sort I like!

10th Irish Open. 26-27 October Report from Michael Crane

There was only one thing flowing faster than the Guinness this weekend and that was the River Liffey, swollen by recent and current rains. I must apologise to everyone that went to Dublin for the inclement weather - it was my fault entirely. Every time I go to Dublin it rains; I have this effect on the Irish climate - don't ask me how I do it!

Wet and cold (the weather that is, not the Guinness - 'though undoubtedly it was) outside it might

have been but inside it was warm and inviting; all thanks to our hosts. The tournament was ably directed by Cait and Fiona Hall - with Brendan Burgess overseeing whilst he played at the same time. A neat trick if you can get away with it.

Starting Saturday at 13:00 the format for the sixty-six entrants was 6 x 7 point matches with anyone with 6/6 going into the last on 8 on Sunday and anyone with 5/6 going into the last 16. Those players unlucky enough to win just 4/4 had to playoff for the few remaining places. Now, this might be a coincidence, but the only player with 6/6 was in fact the 'overseeing' Director, Brendan Burgess! This put him in good stead with just three rounds to win to secure the title for himself and Eire.

In his second match, the semi-final, he sat down to play Stuart Mann. Clocks were being used for the last 16 and this proved (yet again) to be the downfall of an-

other player following last year's loss on time by Peter Christmas against Brian Lever in the Final.

Stuart, having played some excellent backgammon, lead in the Crawford 10-9 but it was evident that he was going to be in trouble with just two minutes remaining on his clock whereas Brendan had no such problems. The clock rules stated that for the first time penalty two points would be added to your opponent's score which meant that unless Stuart could win this game within two minutes he'd lose the match 10/11. Brendan is a clock expert, playing all his matches with one and, exploiting this 'advantage' he played tactically leaving blots (especially during the bearoff when Stuart was on the bar) and forcing Stuart to hit him and thus he ate into Stuart's precious time. The flag dropped and Stuart was out of the tournament - another triumph for clock tactics as opposed to good play.



Lights! Camera! Action!

As many of you know I often record the final matches at Biba tournaments and publish them in Bibafax. Subsequently these are analysed by Snowie and featured on the web via GammonVillage.

A lot of players have enquired if they could have their matches recorded and analysed - and now the answer is yes!

Subject to availability and time any player can have their match recorded and analysed at Biba tournaments. The cost is just £15 per match for one player or £20 per match for two players for any length matches or time played. The service includes the following, all supplied on a CD-ROM for the PC:

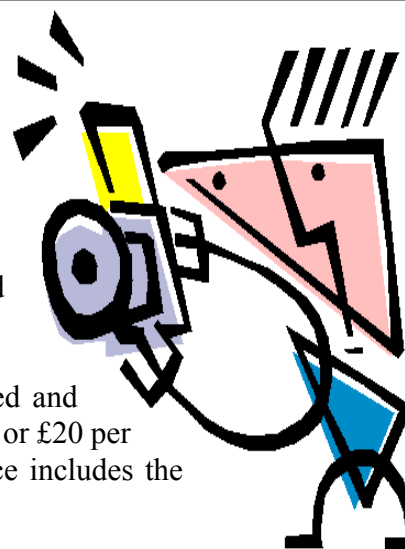
JellyFish Match File

Snowie 4 Match File

Full Snowie 4 analysis of the entire match in three formats - text, formatted text and html

Of course, to make use of the first two items customers will need copies of either bot, but the text, formatted text and html files can be read on almost any PC.

If you want to record a particular match then please inform Michael Crane at the tournament as soon as you can. Payment is required at the time of recording and the finished recording will be sent out within 7 days.



As a TD I am in favour of using clocks as you all know but in this situation the time allowed was a good bit less than anywhere else. At Biba we use clock rules based upon the Unified Clock Rules where for an 11-point match 66 minutes each is allowed but in Dublin just 55 each was allocated - a big difference. I know that a lot of players have to catch flights home and that time is a precious commodity but to truncate matches by such an amount is unfair. It is also unnecessary. I am certain that all 16 players would much rather start an hour earlier and have a better time allocation than in use this weekend.

Off the soapbox and back to the tournament . . .

Jim Johnson and David Startin were playing in the other semi-final. Although they were allocated a clock it wasn't used - they both agreed to leave it to one side and to get on and play backgammon not *clockgammon*. Consequently the match progressed at a good rate without the impediment of a clock and Jim prevailed. He then had a long wait for his Final opponent.

Despite the adamant demands of Cait, the TD at the beginning of the Sunday session that, "Clocks will be used in *all* matches," it was decided not to use them in the Final but to play to 7 points instead of 11, or starting 4-4 as the score card showed. This arrangement suited Jim for he had to catch a plane, and he would much rather play a shorter match than use a clock anyway!

The games went in Jim's



**Main
Brendan & Jim**



**Consolation
Wayne & Eamonn**



**Jackpot
Nicole & Paul**



**Team
Geoff, Dave and David**

favour and he eventually prevailed winning 11-6 after which he went through a very fast presentation followed by an even faster exit and journey to the airport!

Amidst all the excitement of the Main Final the Consolation Final almost concluded without anyone noticing; which was a shame for the two protagonists, Wayne Felton and Eamonn Keogh. Happily for them the Main finished just in time for those still in the playing room to switch their attention to see Wayne pip Eamonn to take first place.

For those players not embroiled in either Main or Consolation (myself included) there was the Team Event. Random drawn teams of three playing to 3 points. The winners of this was a team unfettered by drink - my own (and a few others) were more interested in pints rather than points! Those sober enough to take first place were Dave Coyne, David Startin and Geoff Conn. The equally sober runners-up were Ralph Eskinazi, Jeff Ellis and Brendan Gasparro. I'm not sure where my team finished in the competition but I do know that my partners finished up on the bar floor!

As a warm-up there was a Friday night Jackpot. With the entry fee set at 200€ it was too rich for me but it didn't deter Paul Christmas nor Nicole Taboury, the two finalists. It might have been the copious imbibing of Guinness or the fact that Nicole was Fench or even the fact that she played better, but Paul had to content himself with second place as Nicole took home the lion's share of the healthy pot.

Finally . . .

It was an enjoyable tournament most of the time; but once again marred by clock use and timings. It is my opinion and that expressed to me by several players (including a lot of Irish players) that this issue has to be addressed by the organisers. The tournament depends heavily upon overseas

players taking part and, if they are to continue making the large financial investments necessary to enter then they must be given more time to play out the matches on the Sunday. As one of the last 16 I would have much rather started playing at 9:00 instead of 10:00 and either had no clock at all or at the least had as much time to

play the match as I'd expect in a Biba or other tournament where clocks are used.

Many thanks to Cait, Fiona, Brendan and Paul O'Kelly for a good weekend and all being well I shall return next year despite the comments above.

Townharbour Trophy (57)

Report by Michael Crane

"I'll be back!" Not, it isn't Arnie, it's John Clark. These were his parting words after winning the October Sandy Osborne Trophy but failing to take home the Prize Fund. And, true to his word, he was back; and with a vengeance.

Not only did he return but he left with the Prize Fund as well after beating Stuart Mann in the 6th Round. The Final went to DMP but it was John who walked away with the money, the trophy, the wine and the *smile*.

Poor Stuart couldn't even muster 2nd place, this went to Julian Fetterlein on count-backs based upon the sum of opponents' wins. Stuart had to settle for 3rd place. *(As everyone knows by now, this is a Swiss format and therefore there isn't a 'final' but a last round from which we are guaranteed a winner but not necessarily a Runner-up)*

Roland Herrera had a great tournament and for his efforts went home as the Top Intermediate, and Ernie Pick, losing just his first match, was the Top Beginner.

Congratulations to all those mentioned above.

Friday KO (16)

Mike Wignall had to knockout Hubert de l'Epine, David Startin and Mike Greenleaf to face David Nathan in the Final. David had already scythed his way through Martin Hemming, Rosey Bensley and Lawrence Powell and he was in no mood to let Mike stop him - which he didn't. David emerged the winner which prompted the plaintive cry of, "Lucky git!" from a frustrated Mike!

Doubles (16)

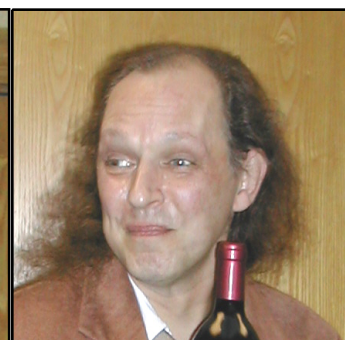
A few names worth a mention: *Dancing With Tears In Our Eyes* cried out in the 1st Round; *Startin*



Ernie Pick
Roland Herrera



John Clark



Julian Fetterlein
Stuart Mann

Lee Good were not startlingly good enough to get past the semis, but *Lucky Dice* were; *A Right Pair of Anchors* were a right pair of ***** losing twice in the 1st Round (they foolishly bought back in); and *John Renick's Fan Club* showed their loyalty to The Boss by going out to *Dirty Dancing* in the last eight.

The best name went to *A Right Pair of Anchors*.

Lucky Dice's luck ran out in the Final where they were beaten by *Doppio Gioco* whom I believe is a cousin of Toppo Gigio!

Finally . . . The only thing missing this weekend was Tim Cross, the tournament sponsor! He was conspicuous by his absence. As one of the entrants put it, "He could have at least sent a cheque!" I did ask, "Has anyone seen Tim Cross," to which John Clark replied, "Yes; every time he losses a gammon!"



**Is backgammon stressful?
No way, says Steven Reddi!**

Over the weekend the hotel echoed to the shouts and cheers of backgammon players as they urged on the dice. Were these exhortations for the Finalists? Were they cheering on a Doubles Team? Or were they backing Mike Wignall against David Nathan on the Friday night? It was none of these. The shouting, cheering, urging and general frenzy was for the **Monte Carlo Rollouts!**

What a way to get to Monte Carlo - roll a few dice for £2.50 and win six matches in a row!

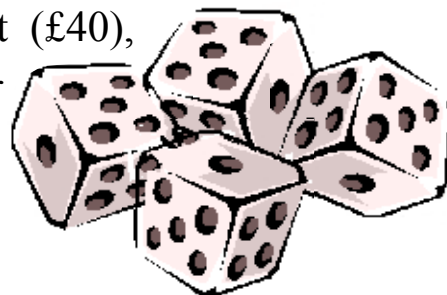
We already have a couple of Jackpot entrants and more to come in December.

During the UK Finals there will be continuous Rollouts and MC Jackpots to satisfy every players need. Bob Young said of the Rollouts, "It's very exciting being in the preliminary rounds of the World Championships!" And he was right, it was very exciting. So, don't miss out, get to the UK and subsequent tournaments early enough and enter for your chance to go to the World Championships and have an unforgettable experience.

Monte Carlo Roll-out!

Want to enter the Jackpot for just £2.50? Well you can with the Monte Carlo Roll-out!

All you have to do is pay £2.50 and, when there are sixteen in the Roll-out (£40), you will be given four precision dice to roll-out.



The four lowest rolls (total of all four dice - doubles count as single number) will drop out each Roll-out until there are just four left. When there are four left the two lowest drop out to leave a *best-of-three* twosome; the first to roll the higher total twice being the Jackpot Entrant!

NB: If there are more than four lowest rollers (two or more sharing the same total) then the highest of the lowest rollout to eliminate rollers until there are four rollers left.

2002 Championships - Who Won What

Well, that's another year over as far as the Championships go. So who are the new Champs?

Grand Prix Championship

(147 Entrants)

Well, during the Townharbour Trophy this Championship could have gone to any one of three: David Startin, Rachel Rhodes or Julian Fetterlein.

Only one of these actually gained points during the tournament but it wasn't enough to take the Championship; Julian had to win to beat David's top score of 50 points, but he was unable to do so and he gained only 7 points to come 2nd with 46 points. Rachel failed to make any impression on her score of 39 and she remained in 3rd place. Well done, David Startin, 2002 Biba Grand Prix Champion.

Ranking Championship

(250 Entrants. 52 Qualifiers)

Tony Lee went into the Townharbour knowing that a good performance from Julian or Rachel could usurp his Number One position. Tony had some pretty good scores and it would be hard to replace them with better ones unless he played some very high ranked players.

Fortunately for him Julian's result from the TT was a little too short to topple him. It was also a bit short of Rachel, too; so Julian fell to 3rd and that left Tony at the top and Rachel in 2nd place.

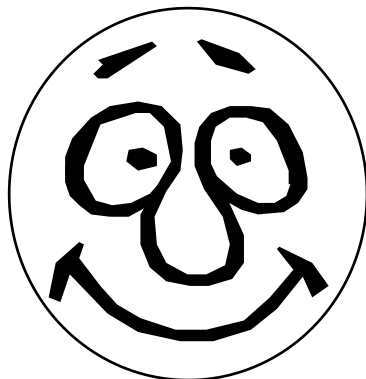
It is hoped that the presentations can take place in Brighton - if the four can get together there, failing that the presentations will take



David Startin



Julian Fetterlein



Tony Lee
(artists impression)



Rachel Rhodes

place at the Jarvis Trophy in February.

I'd like to thank all the players that took part in the tournaments and Championships; and, if you didn't win, perhaps you'll do it next year.

Good luck for 2003!

Michael

On page 66 of Bibafax 60 there was a competition to name the two champions - unfortunately no-one got them both correct and therefore Biba has saved on a great prize of free entry tournaments! Two entries got one each correct, though.

David Startin got Tony Lee correct and Bob Young got David Startin correct. They should have put in a joint entry, or at the very least David should have picked himself for the Grand Prix!

Tournament Results

Roy Hollands Trophy 7/8 September 2002

Main (59)			Last Chance (64)			Friday KO (28)		
		GP			GP			
1	Harry Bhatia	15	1	David Startin	6	1	Eddie Barker	
2	Vincent Versteeg	10	2	John Slattery	3	2	David Nathan	
3/4	Arthur Williams	6	3/4	Cath Kennedy	1	3/4	Emmanuel Di Bona	
3/4	Eddie Barker	6	3/4	Bob Bruce	1	3/4	Rachel Rhodes	
5/8	Ray Tannen (see Cons)		5/8	Don Hatt		Doubles (12)		
5/8	Edwin Turner	3	5/8	Bob Young				
5/8	Kevin Stebbing	3	5/8	Paul Christmas				
5/8	Peter Wilson	2	5/8	Mahmoud Jahanbani				
Consolation (55)			Suicide! (64)			Top Name: Hit & Run		
1	Ray Tannen	4	1	Jeff Barber	3			
2	Roy Hollands	7	2	Rosey Bensley	1			
3/4	Ricardo Falconi-Puig	4	3/4	Emmanuel Di Bona				
3/4	Rachel Rhodes	3	3/4	Leslie Singleton				
5/8	Peter Christmas	3	5/8	Helen Helm-Sagar				
5/8	Tony Lee	3	5/8	Uldis Lapikens				
5/8	Leslie Singleton	2	5/8	Michael Crane				
5/8	Peter Wilson (see Main)		5/8	Paul Gilbertson				

Sandy Osborne 5/6 October 2002

Main (56)			Last Chance (32)			Friday KO (20)		
		GP			GP			
1	John Clark	12	1	Mike Greenleaf	5	1	Peter Christmas	
2	Ray Tannen	10	2	Roy Hollands	3	2	John Slattery	
3/4	Tony Lee	6	3/4	Uldis Lapikens	1	3/4	Ray Tannen	
3/4	Rachel Rhodes	6	3/4	Ramsay Jamil	1	3/4	David Nathan	
5/8	Jeff Barber	3	5/8	Stuart Parmley		Doubles (9)		
5/8	Dave Motley	3	5/8	Brian Lever				
5/8	Richard Granville	3	5/8	Alan Greenwood				
5/8	Kevin White	2	5/8	Hubert de l'Epine				
Consolation (52)			Suicide (64)			Best name: Boreham Rigid		
1	Steve Hallet	10	1	Matthew Fisher (see Cons)				
2	Pater Bennet	6	2	John Slattery	1			
3/4	Curtis Lucas	4	3/4	Rebecca Bell				
3/4	Kevin White (see Main)		3/4	Lawrence Powell				
5/8	Mardi Ohannessian	3	5/8	Tim Mooring				
5/8	Kevin Stebbing	3	5/8	Roland Herrera				
5/8	Matthew Fisher	3	5/8	Rachel Rhodes				
5/8	Dave Motley	1	5/8	Conner Dickinson				

Very Late Bit of News!

Tuesday 14 January 2003

Gala Backgammon Evening (black tie)

Brave New World Backgammon Club

Limited entry of 32 players. Pre-registration essential

Registration £20 including dinner. Entry fee £100

10th Irish Open. 26/27 October 2002

Main (56)			GP	Consolation (64 open draw)			Team (several!)		
1	Jim Johnson	15	1	Wayne Felton	10	1	Dave Coyne, Geoff Conn		
2	Brendan Burgess	10	2	Eamonn Keogh			David Startin,		
3/4	Stuart Mann	6	3/4	Nicole Tabery	3	2	Ralph Eskinazi, Jeff Ellis,		
3/4	David Startin	6	3/4	Adam Stocks	3		Brendan Gasparro		
5/8	Walter Jarc	3	5/8	Liz Perry	2				
5/8	Martin Hemming	3	5/8	Ian Vaughan					
5/8	Dave Coyne	3	5/8	Dave McNamara					
5/8	Patrick O'Connor	3		2					
8/16	Adam Stocks		5/8	Lie Man					
8/16	Michael Crane								
8/16	Ian Vaughan								
8/16	John Broomfield								
8/16	Felix Vink								
8/16	Brendan Gasparro								
8/16	Ralph Eskinazi								

Friday Jackpot (16)

1	Nicole Tabery
2	Paul Christmas

Townharbour Trophy 9/10 November 2002

pos / name / wins / gp

001	John Clark	6	15	023	Chris Evans	3	1	049	Kevin Nicholson	2
002	Julian Fetterlein	5	7	023	Martin Hemming	3	1	050	Anthony Coker	1
003	Stuart Mann	5	10	027	Ian Tarr	3	1	051	Paul Jenkins	1
004	Rodney Lighton	5	7	027	John P Lewis	3	1	052	Nick Hamar	1
005	David Nathan	5	7	027	Rosey Bensley	3	1	053	Tim Mooring	1
006	Ernie Pick	5	7	027	Mike Wignall	3	1	054	Roy Hollands	1
007	Tony Lee	4	3	027	Simonetta Barone	3	1	055	Cath Kennedy	1
007	Lawrence Powell	4	3	032	Tim Wilkins	3	1	056	Steven Reddi	1
009	Roland Herrera	4	3	033	Bob Young	3	1	057	Steve Pickard	0 *
010	Jeff Barber	4	3	034	John Slattery	3	1	*Failed to complete		
011	Hubert De L'Epine	4	3	034	Francine Brandler	3	1	Friday KO (16)		
012	Eddie Barker	4	3	036	Stephen Drake	3	1	1	David Nathan	
013	Paul Barwick	4	3	037	Peter Fallows	3	1	2	Mike Wignall	
013	Kevin Stebbing	4	3	038	John Thomas	2		3/4	Lawrence	
013	David Startin	4	3	038	Mardi Ohannessian	2		3/4	Mike Greenleaf	
016	Steffen Nowak	4	3	040	Simon K Jones	2		Doubles (16)		
017	Emmanuel Di Bona	4	3	041	Rachel Rhodes	2		1	Doppio Gioco	
017	Liz Barker	4	3	041	Jonathan Lamb	2		2	Lucky Dice	
019	Peter Bennet	4	3	043	Peter Chan	2		3/4	Startin Lee Good	
020	Mike Greenleaf	3	1	044	Andrew Sarjeant	2		3/4	Dirty Dancing	
021	Kevin Carter	3	1	044	Leslie Singleton	2		Best name: A Right Pair of Anchors		
021	Gabor Weiner	3	1	046	Colin Laight	2				
023	Bob Parmley	3	1	046	Paul Sambell	2				
023	Peter Christmas	3	1	046	Ian Shaw	2				

November 1000-to-1

Michael Brereton	12	Willy Stanton	6	Ernie Pick	5	Martin Sloane	4
John Clark	11	Murat Imamoglu	6	Peter Bennet	4	Freddy Mossanen	4
Salvador Leong	7	Dod Davies	5	Rodney Lighton	4		
Harry Bhatia	6	David Nathan	5	Liz Barker	4		

November 2002 Active Rankings

(new / old / name)

1982 1982 Paul Lamford	1613 1613 Mike Waxman	1476 1476 Will Richardson
1949 1878 John Clark	1610 1612 Peter Christmas	1472 1472 Arthur Williams
1942 1942 Brian Lever	1608 1611 Tim Wilkins	1469 1426 Roland Herrera
1917 1884 Julian Fetterlein	1608 1580 Peter Bennet	1465 1465 Kevin White
1907 1907 Dod Davies	1603 1665 Roy Hollands	1462 1462 Neil Davidson
1855 1848 Tony Lee	1600 1600 Alistair Hogg	1462 1462 Wayne Felton
1812 1812 Richard Granville	1591 1591 Kerry Jackson	1460 1391 Ernie Pick
1791 1791 Jim Johnson	1581 1618 Simon K Jones	1457 1512 Steven Reddi
1777 1777 Steve Hallet	1578 1626 Steve Pickard	1453 1415 Liz Barker
1773 1773 Ray Tannen	1573 1614 John Thomas	1450 1450 John Renicks
1752 1800 Rachel Rhodes	1564 1564 Uldis Lapikens	1440 1469 Ian Shaw
1751 1730 Lawrence Powell	1561 1561 Nigel Briddon	1426 1426 David Naylor
1749 1749 Dave McNair	1559 1559 Shaun Herd	1421 1421 Jeremy Limb
1745 1696 Stuart Mann	1557 1557 Jacek Brzezinski	1420 1411 Kevin Carter
1744 1744 Ralph Eskinazi	1553 1553 Simon Macbeth	1418 1418 Steve Malins
1742 1742 Brian Busfield	1549 1549 Phil Caudwell	1417 1417 Sarah Rosich
1731 1810 Mardi Ohannessian	1548 1548 Steve Rimmer	1414 1414 Steve John
1722 1672 David Nathan	1548 1517 Eddie Barker	1410 1410 Julian Minwalla
1717 1717 Jeff Ellis	1546 1544 Mike Greenleaf	1409 1409 Jerry Smith
1713 1699 David Startin	1542 1542 James Vogl	1407 1437 Andrew Sarjeant
1709 1711 Ian Tarr	1538 1537 Bob Young	1405 1422 Leslie Singleton
1708 1708 David Gallagher	1535 1535 Edwin Turner	1389 1389 Neil Young
1704 1704 Mike Grabsky	1533 1533 Jim Moore	1388 1388 Cliff Connick
1697 1678 Emmanuel Di Bona	1528 1528 Matthew Fisher	1385 1403 Colin Laight
1690 1666 Jeff Barber	1527 1527 Mike Butterfield	1373 1373 Paul Watts
1690 1690 Graham Brittain	1524 1524 Paul Christmas	1372 1372 Malcolm Hey
1688 1688 John Hurst	1521 1521 Dave Motley	1357 1357 Rebecca Bell
1686 1686 Harry Bhatia	1516 1516 John Wright	1355 1411 Cath Kennedy
1681 1690 John Slattery	1505 1483 Hubert De L'Epine	1354 1354 Sue Perks
1664 1608 Rodney Lighton	1502 1502 Raymond Kershaw	1352 1352 Paul Gilbertson
1662 1668 Stephen Drake	1500 1500 John Napier	1346 1346 Tony Fawcett
1661 1661 Helen Helm-Sagar	1496 1457 Paul Barwick	1343 1320 Mike Wignall
1650 1650 Arthur Musgrove	1493 1493 David Fall	1336 1336 Don Hatt
1647 1647 Charlie Hetherington	1491 1519 Peter Chan	1316 1289 John P Lewis
1645 1645 Raj Jansari	1491 1552 Tim Mooring	1291 1274 Rosey Bensley
1635 1635 Connor Dickinson	1481 1485 Simonetta Barone	1287 1287 Jon Sharpe
1635 1614 Kevin Stebbing	1479 1484 Martin Hemming	1277 1256 Bob Parmley
1634 1634 Bill Pope	1478 1543 Anthony Coker	1213 1227 Paul Sambell
1614 1614 Vincent Versteeg	1477 1477 Stuart Parmley	

November 2002 Pending Rankings

1733 Dale Taylor	1538 Tom Duggan	1495 Vianney Bourgios
1725 Simon Barget	1534 David Hale	1491 Mike Heard
1721 Brendan Burgess	1533 Mark McCluskey	1489 David McNamara
1666 Richard Beagarie	1527 Theo	1485 Kevin Williams
1639 Paul Turnbull	1520 Alan Beckerson	1483 Sunni Nicholson
1608 Corinne Sellers	1520 Kyriacous Kyriacou	1483 Melvyn Abrahams
1606 Peter Fallows	1514 Mark Lemon	1481 Lorenzo Rusconi
1602 James Hatt	1510 Miles Ilott	1474 Brendan Bemsley
1574 Simon Gasquoine	1510 Ian Hill	1472 Monica Beckerson
1574 Dave Robbins	1505 Daphne Smith	1472 Blaine Buchanan



November 2002 Pending Rankings

1470	Steve Lynch	1428	Peter Murrell	1381	Rebecca Brindley
1468	Suart Dewis	1425	Ian Sadler	1377	Michael Main
1465	Johan Salfors	1425	Rowland Brindley	1377	Alison Hobbs
1465	Tim Brown	1424	Grant Dewsbury	1376	Tony Pryor
1459	Roz Nathan	1408	Nick Hamar	1368	Peter Wilson
1450	David Winston	1404	Evan Williams	1354	Richard Winston
1448	Elliot Smart	1396	Alan Greenwood	1351	Liz Makepeace
1428	George Plant	1389	Amy Woodward	1326	Martin Blindell

2002 Grand Prix (147)

(points / name)

50	David Startin	11	Uldis Lapikens	4	Kerry Jackson
46	Julian Fetterlein	11	Lawrence Powell	4	Darryl Kirk
39	Rachel Rhodes	10	Tony Fawcett	4	Curtis Lucas
34	John Clark	10	Mike Butterfield	4	Chris Bray
33	John Slattery	10	Matthew Fisher	4	Andrew Sarjeant
33	Brian Lever	10	Kevin Williams	3	Will Richardson
32	Ray Tannen	10	Kevin Stebbing	3	Vianney Bourgios
29	Tony Lee	10	John Thomas	3	Stuart Shalom
29	Brian Busfield	10	John Napier	3	Roland Herrera
26	Mike Greenleaf	10	Jacek Brzezinski	3	Ralph Eskinazi
24	David Nathan	10	Dave Motley	3	Patrick O'Connor
23	Stuart Mann	10	Darren Kernighan	3	Nicole Taboury
23	Dod Davies	9	John Renicks	3	Mike Waxman
20	Hubert De L'Epine	9	Bill Pope	3	Martin Sloane
18	Stephen Drake	8	Simonetta Barone	3	Mark Flanagan
18	Peter Bennet	8	Simon K Jones	3	Juliet Fennell
18	Jim Johnson	8	Mike Heard	3	Julian Minwalla
18	Harry Bhatia	8	Mardi Ohannessian	3	John Jacobs
17	Roy Hollands	7	Raj Jansari	3	Jeff Ellis
17	Rodney Lighton	7	Peter Wilson	3	Ian Shaw
17	Emmanuel Di Bona	7	Leslie Singleton	3	Ian Hill
17	Brendan Burgess	7	John Wright	3	Freddy Mossanen
16	Tim Mooring	7	David Fall	3	Dave Raynsford
15	Vincent Versteeg	7	Dave Coyne	3	Charlie Hetherington
15	Murat Imamoglu	7	Arthur Williams	3	Alistair Hogg
15	Jeff Barber	7	Anthony Coker	3	Adam Stocks
14	Ernie Pick	6	Sean Casey	2	Tim Wilkins
13	Kevin White	6	Rosey Bensley	2	Paul Sambell
13	Edwin Turner	6	Peter Snape	2	Melvyn Abrahams
13	Eddie Barker	6	Nigel Briddon	2	Helen Helm-Sagar
13	Connor Dickinson	5	Raymond Kershaw	2	Geoff Conn
13	Barry McAdam	5	Peter Fallows	2	David McNamara
12	Steve Hallet	5	Paul Christmas	2	Colin Laight
12	Richard Granville	5	Mike Wignall	2	Bob Young
12	Peter Christmas	5	Martin Hemming	1	Tim Brown
12	Peter Chan	5	Liz Perry	1	Sue Perks
12	Paul Lamford	4	Stuart Parmley	1	Steven Reddi
12	Paul Gilbertson	4	Steffen Nowak	1	Steve Field
12	Paul Barwick	4	Ricardo Falconi-Puig	1	Ramsay Jamil
12	Ian Tarr	4	Mike Grabsky	1	Phil Caudwell
11	Wayne Felton	4	Liz Barker	1	Peter watkins





2002 Grand Prix (147)

(points / name)

1	Paul Watts	1	George Suilimirski	1	Cliff Connick
1	Nick Hamar	1	Gary Slocombe	1	Chris Evans
1	Neil Davidson	1	Gabor Weiner	1	Cath Kennedy
1	Martin Barkwill	1	Francine Brandler	1	Bob Parmley
1	Mark Lemon	1	Felix Vink	1	Bob Bruce
1	Kevin Carter	1	David Wallbank	1	Andrew Kindler
1	John P Lewis	1	David Sharples	1	Amir Mossanen
1	John Batty	1	Dave McNair	1	Alan Greenwood

2002 Ranking Championship (52 qualifiers, 250 entrants)

(pos / points / name)

001	2139.89	Tony Lee	027	1735.33	John Renicks
002	2126.22	Rachel Rhodes	028	1733.22	Tony Fawcett
003	2108.61	Julian Fetterlein	029	1726.61	Mike Butterfield
004	2088.00	David Startin	030	1716.33	Paul Barwick
005	2073.56	Emmanuel Di Bona	031	1712.39	David Nathan
006	2065.56	Mike Greenleaf	032	1702.50	Paul Gilbertson
007	2056.94	Jeff Barber	033	1698.67	Liz Barker
008	2046.89	Brian Busfield	034	1690.39	Peter Christmas
009	2041.67	Ian Tarr	035	1683.56	David Fall
010	2031.83	John Slattery	036	1661.62	John Thomas
011	1978.44	Ray Tannen	037	1648.94	Brian Lever
012	1943.67	Dod Davies	038	1617.38	Peter Chan
013	1926.67	Roy Hollands	039	1615.11	Ernie Pick
014	1895.61	Stuart Mann	040	1610.78	Mardi Ohannessian
015	1878.44	Hubert de l'Epine	041	1601.44	Peter Wilson
016	1856.11	Tim Mooring	042	1590.27	Lawrence Powell
017	1840.17	Peter Bennet	043	1572.83	Julian Minwalla
018	1837.61	Dave Motley	044	1532.22	Nigel Briddon
019	1822.61	Arthur Williams	045	1527.07	Leslie Singleton
020	1818.83	Andrew Sarjeant	046	1517.17	Eddie Barker
021	1816.89	Kevin White	047	1496.44	Paul Sambell
022	1810.33	Mike Wignall	048	1486.50	Rosemary Bensley
023	1808.44	Uldis Lapikens	049	1484.11	Bob Young
024	1789.50	Jacek Brzezinski	050	1335.06	John P Lewis
025	1788.11	Richard Granville	051	1334.88	Colin Laight
026	1737.19	Stephen Drake	052	1327.67	Bob Parmley

◁ Page 64

As usual, the match was a hugely enjoyable occasion, played in its customary spirit of mutual friendship, and the teams will probably next meet in Bristol in the spring.

Although this meeting ended in a resounding Bristol win, this was needed to even things up in the record books. The seven point winning margin equalled

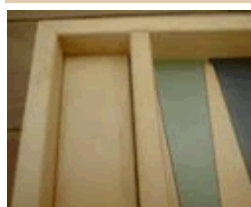
Birmingham's best victory, scored in the third match of the series, and the teams have now won three matches apiece. Just to keep things symmetrical, the total number of matches played in the six meetings is 222, and each side has won 111!

On the individual side, though, the Bristol team has boasted few consistent stars, with none of their 31 representatives yet having won 10

matches from the six encounters. For Birmingham, though, two players stand out from the 24 who have played for them thus far -- Ralph Eskinazi and Dave Fall have each won 14 of 18 matches played -- a record vastly superior to any other player on either side.

-- Ian Tarr

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



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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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