

BIBAFAX

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**Dedicated To
Backgammon**



Get it more often!

No, your calendar or watch are not wrong, this really is the latest issue of Bibafax. Not only does it have a new look, it is also being published **six times** a year! Starting from now issues will be sent out every two months following the latest tournament.

But, six issues isn't the only major change. Your favourite backgammon magazine is now available as a PDF* document - in full colour! This new, PDF version will be sent to all overseas members (this is a brazen attempt at cost-cutting to save on postage!). If any UK member would like to receive a PDF copy instead then all they have to do is ask :-)

* Needs Acrobat Reader (supplied on CD)

Slight alterations have been made to the content:

Competition 2003: Three times a year (March, Jul, Nov)

The formatting prize will be cancelled

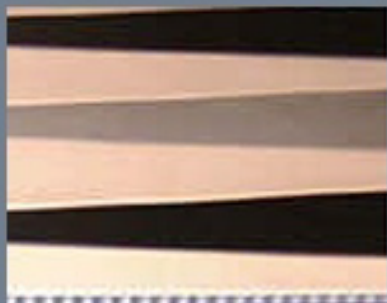
The 'monthly' prize will be changed/increased to half price Saturday accommodation at any one tournament

The annual prize will be increased to £75

Publishing Bibafax six times a year is a bold step and to ensure that we can continue the high quality content it is important that members send in articles, comments and contributions. Don't forget, Bibafax is *your* magazine. It heavily depends upon *your* input - without which it would be a couple of pages long!

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Anatomy of a David Naylor Board



made by
David Naylor



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David has been building leather backgammon boards for over 22 years at his workshops in the Italian Alps and now London. All leather used is finest Tuscan quality selected personally by David himself.

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Issue Dates

Mid: January
March
May
July
September
November



SAC Trophy. August 2002

By David Startin & Brian Lever- and Michael Crane



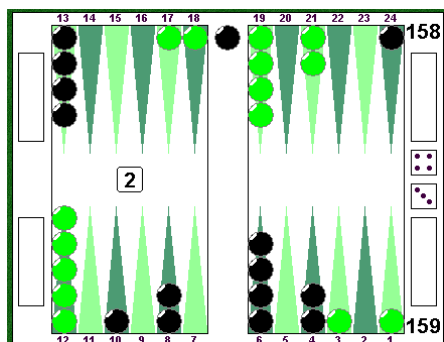
I asked Brian Lever and David Startin to comment on the final of this tournament. David did an annotation of some of his moves and Brian went into the doubles; good & bad! We start with David's contribution:

NB. Where the actual play in David's comments differ from Snowie 4 best move, I have shown the Snowie analysis and move position.

11 point match

White Startin : 0 Black Lever : 0
Game 1

01) 42: 8/4 6/4
02) 42: 8/4 6/4 63: 24/18 13/10
03) 21: 24/22 8/7* 64:



04) Doubles to 2

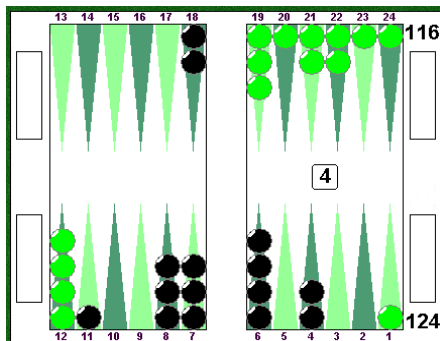
At the table, I thought that this double was a bit early. Now it looks much worse. I do not have enough builders ready to attack. This was an easy take for Brian.

Snowie 4:
No Double 0.369
Double, Take 0.242
S4 says: no double, take

Takes
05) 61: 22/15* 65: 25/20
06) 51: 15/10 6/5*
32: 25/22 25/23
07) 42: 7/3* 5/3

I have to try and keep Brian on the bar while I quickly build up a good board. Instead of making the 5 point I use the slot on the 5 point to make the 3 point.

61: 25/24 23/17*
08) 43: 25/22 10/6 65: 17/11 13/8
09) 65: 22/11
66: 24/18(2) 13/7(2)
10) 65: 11/5 6/1 51: 13/7
11) 65: 13/2



Redoubles 4

This looks an easy take. Brian has not yet made his 5 point and has to clear his anchor on my bar point. I am ahead in the race also.

Snowie 4:
Redouble, Take 0.821
No redouble 0.784
S4 says, redouble, take

12) Takes 53: 8/3 6/3
13) 63: 13/4 41: 11/6
14) 42: 24/20 4/2

I have to come to Brian's 5 point with the 4 and try to escape while I can.

22: 18/16(2) 7/5* (2)
15) 32: 25/23 5/2 22: 6/2* 6/2
16) 61: 25/18*

A hit from the bar! If Brian stays out, I will be cubing to 8.

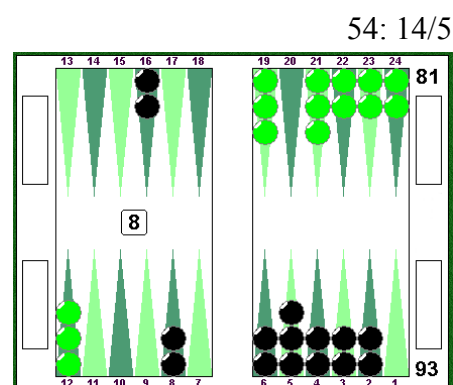
52: 25/18
17) 63: 13/7* 7/4

I have to hit despite the blot in my home board. It's getting volatile!

65: 25/14
18) 51: 18/13 2/1

An excellent roll. I move the blot on the 18 point to safety and cover the blot on the 1 point. Another cube turn is imminent.

Snowie 4:
18/13 6/5 0.737
18/13 2/1 0.721 A
18/13 4/3 0.702



19) Redoubles to 8

This looks clear to me. I lead in the race 81-93. It should be easy to get one checker past Brian's anchor and any double loses my market. In addition, Brian may not be able to hold his anchor too long. It is, however, a clear take.



Snowie 4:

Redouble, Take 0.649

No redouble 0.645

S4 says, redouble, take

20) 52: 13/8 4/2 Takes

Here I make a good decision by saving a 6.

43: 8/1
21) 43: 8/1 33: 16/10(2)
22) 54: 13/8 13/9 61: 10/4 8/7
23) 52: 9/4 8/6 42: 10/6 7/5
24) 41: 4/0 1/0

I lead 51-61 in race. Surely I will be leading 8-0 very soon.

55: 5/0(4)
25) 54: 6/1 4/0

I spoke too soon. Brian's 55 has really changed the game.

43: 4/0 3/0
26) 41: 4/0 1/0 51: 6/0
27) 44: 6/2(3) 3/0

Another good roll, even though I can only bear off one checker. There will be no more misses for me and Brian already has one gap with more likely.

31: 3/0 1/0
28) 52: 3/0 2/0 52: 6/1 2/0
29) 52: 2/0 2/0 54: 6/1 4/0
30) 63: 2/0 2/0

One die landed on 6. The other span for a long time. I thought I might get a reprieve with another 6, but it was not to be.

53: 4/0 2/0
31) 54: 2/0 1/0

No doublet, so I am now 8-0 down in a match to 11.

21: 1/0 1/0
Wins 8 points

Game 2

White

Startin : 0

Black

Lever : 8

01) 62: 24/18 13/11
02) 33: 13/7* 13/7 64: 25/15
03) 11: 24/22 6/5(2)

An excellent roll. I unstack the 6 point, make the 5 point and split the back checkers. Depending on Brian's roll, I will be able to consider doubling next turn.

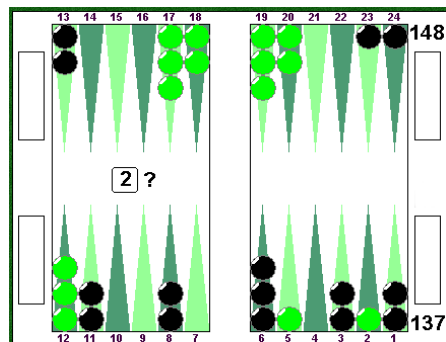
55: 8/3* 8/3 6/1*(2)
04) 52: 25/20 25/23

Brian's 55 last roll put two on the bar, but at least I am in with both checkers now. Doubling is postponed for a while.

65: 11/5* 13/8
05) 41: 25/20*

A double from the bar could be considered here. Snowie says I made the correct decision not to double, yet gives double/take a higher equity than no double? Hitting from the bar here is excellent. I am back on top.

22: 25/23 15/11 13/11
06) 31: 23/20 8/7

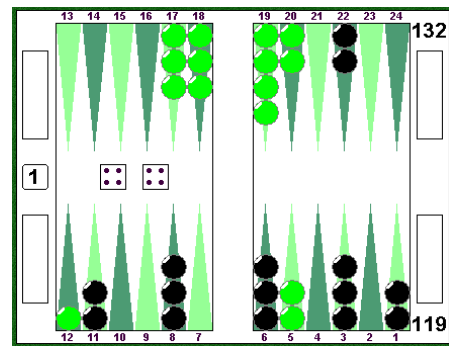


I missed what looks to be a clear double here.

Snowie 4:
Double, Take 0.933
No Double 0.806
S4 says, double, take

21: 24/22 23/22

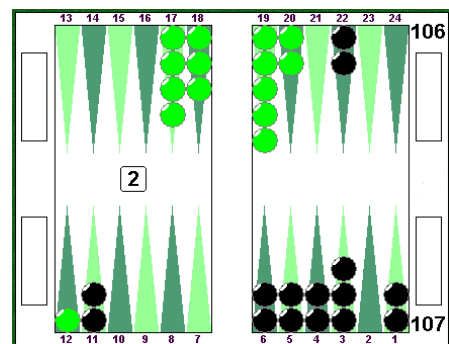
07) 43: 13/6 52: 13/8 13/11
08) 41: 13/8 53: 11/3
09) 44: 20/12(2)



I left a 64 hitting roll for Brian here. This was a mistake.

Snowie 4:
20/16(2) 13/5 0.922
20/12(2) 0.886 A
13/5 8/4 6/2 0.788

43: 8/4 8/5
10) 64: 12/6 12/8 41: 8/4 6/5



11) Doubles to 2

Only 1 pip up in the race but Brian is behind my prime and may waste pips bearing in. The double looks clear to me, but Snowie disagrees slightly.

Snowie 4:
No Double -0.791
Double, Take -0.787
S4 says, no double, take

Takes
12) 32: 7/4 6/4

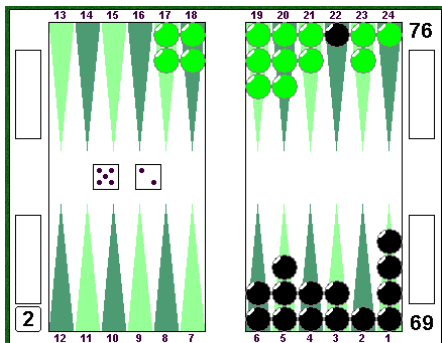
Making the 4 point has higher priority than safetying the blot on the midpoint.



13) 53: 13/5
14) 65: 8/2 6/1
15) 51: 8/2

Brian has a better board than I do so I move 8/2 without hitting. Snowie prefers the hit marginally.

55: 16/1 6/1



16) 52: 8/3* 3/1

My biggest blunder in the match! I saw I could hit and cover the blot and so I did. Obviously making the 3 point and completing a 6 prime is far superior. I could then have tried for a gammon, which would have been useful considering the match score.

Snowie 4:
8/3* 5/3 1.000
8/3* 3/2 0.716 A
6/1 5/3* 0.606

17) 62: 8/2 6/4
18) 63: 7/1 7/4
19) 53: 5/0 4/1
20) 44: 6/2(2) 5/1(2)
21) 42: 4/0 2/0
22) 53: 4/0 4/1
23) 31: 2/0 1/0
24) 61: 2/0 1/0
25) 62: 2/0 2/0
26) 52: 1/0 1/0

Wins 2 points

Game 3

White Startin : 2
01) 54: 13/8 24/20
02) 42: 8/4 6/4

Black Lever : 8
32: 11/6
63: 22/16 8/5
31: 11/8 3/2
32: 11/6
63: 22/16 8/5
51: 51:
52: 25/18
31: 18/14
52: 14/7
31: 7/4 1/0
44: 6/2 4/0(3)
31: 3/0 1/0

03) 63: 24/18 13/10* 64:
04) Doubles to 2 Drops
Wins 1 point

Snowie says I was extraterrestrial with an error rating of 0. It is a shame that I cannot do it all the while. However, the game was only 4 moves long.

Game 4

White Startin : 3
01) 43: 13/9 24/21

I moved 24/21 13/9. Snowie prefers to bring down two builders at this match score (3-8).

Snowie 4:
13/9 13/10 0.116
24/20 13/10 0.104
24/21 13/9 0.102 A

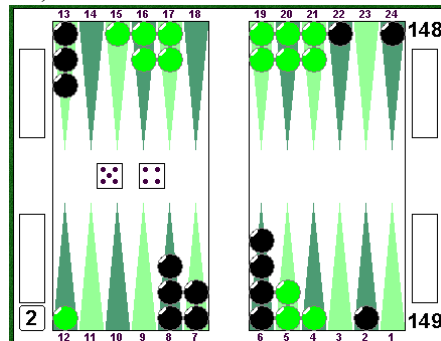
02) 32: 24/21 13/11
03) 32: 13/10* 11/9
04) 62: 10/4 6/4

I missed a double here, although the decision was very marginal.

05) 52: 8/3* 3/1* 53: 25/22 13/8

With a better board and an advanced anchor, hitting two checkers seems clear. Another missed double!

06) 11: 25/24 21/20 6/5(2)
07) Doubles to 2 Takes
08) 43: 24/20 13/10 43: 25/22 6/2

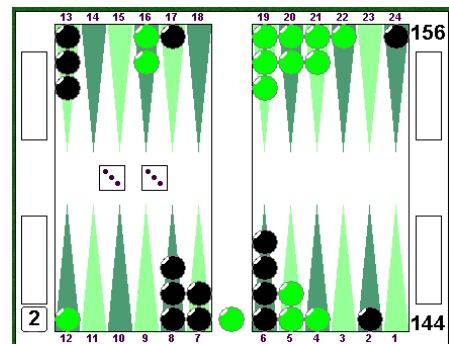


09) 54: 8/3* 10/6

Breaking a point in the prime to hit loose is not the right idea here. Brian's hit from the bar serves to emphasise this.

Snowie 4:
21/16 13/9 0.572
13/8 10/6 0.553
21/16 10/6 0.546
10/6 8/3* 0.541 A

62: 25/17*



10) 33: 25/22 13/7 6/3

I should have switched points here.

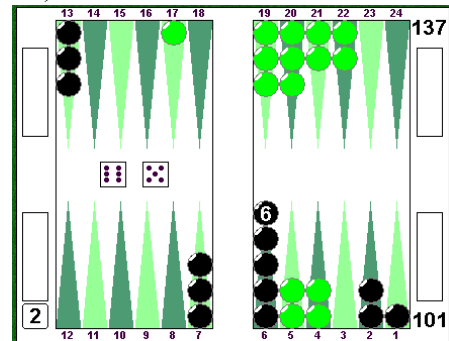
Snowie 4:
25/22 6/3 4/1*(2) 0.502
25/22 13/7 6/3 0.339 A
25 22 13/10 6/3 0.303

11) 41: 9/5 22/21 65: 17/6

12) 31: 25/24 9/6 63: 24/18* 18/15
13) 53: 24/16 62: 8/2 15/13

I should have stayed back on the 24 point here, maximising my hitting chances.

14) 62: 16/8 61: 13/7 2/1
62: 8/2 8/6



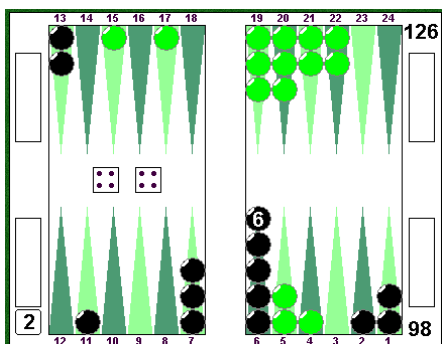
15) 65: 21/10

I should have remained in Brian's outer board rather than running all the way. I could have then made the point in the outfield on the next roll, making it difficult for Brian to clear his midpoint. His home board is not that good at present.

Snowie 4:

8/2 6/1 -0.264
20/15 8/2 -0.289
21/16 8/2 -0.299
20/9 -0.305
21/10 -0.313 A

21: 13/11 2/1



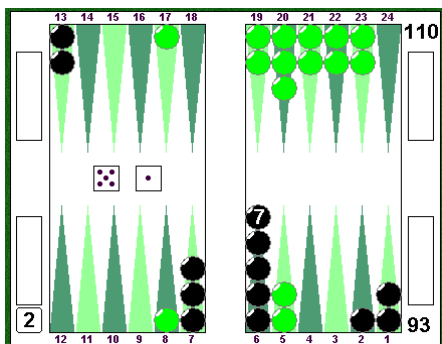
16) 44: 21/17 10/2 6/2

Again the point in Brian's outer board should have been made.

Snowie 4:

10/2 8/4 6/2 -0.065
10/6 6/2(2) 5/1 -0.104
21/17 10/6 6/2(2) -0.118 A

32: 11/6



17) 51: 8/2

Snowie recommends leaving two blots in Brian's outer board. There is some duplication of 5s and 4s

and Brian's home board is weak

Snowie 4:

17/16 8/3 -0.229
20/15 8/7 -0.235
20/14 -0.236
8/3 5/4 -0.241
20/15 5/4 -0.243
8/2 -0.248 A

54: 6/1 6/2

18) 64: 17/7 44: 13/9(2) 7/3 6/2
19) 65: 20/9 63: 9/3 9/6
20) 62: 9/1 21: 7/5* 6/5
21) 33: 11: 7/5 2/0
22) 64: 25/15 52: 5/0 2/0
23) 53: 15/10 7/4 32: 3/0 2/0
24) 62: 10/4 2/0 21: 6/4 1/0
25) 31: 3/0 1/0 66: 6/0(3) 5/0
26) 54: 5/0 4/0 Redoubles to 4
27) Drops Wins 2 points

Game 5

White

Startin : 3

01) 42: 8/4 6/4 54: 13/8 13/9
02) 32: 24/21 13/11 43: 9/5 8/5
03) 41: 11/7 8/7 61: 24/17*
04) 52: 25/23 13/8*
32: 25/22 24/22
05) 42: 8/4 23/21 53: 8/3 6/3
06) 51: 13/7 51: 13/8 6/5
07) 55: 21/11(2)

I should have made the 8 point here impeding Brian's escape. His 55 on move 8 would then have been very awkward.

Snowie 4:

21/16(2) 0.104
21/11(2) 0.014 A

43: 6/2 5/2

08) 52: 7/2 4/2
55: 22/17(2) 13/8(2)
09) 43: 7/3 6/3

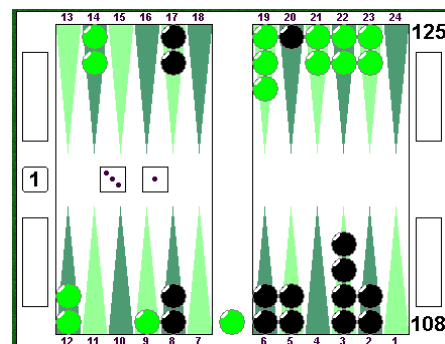
Here I am building up my board rather than trying to escape.

41: 8/3
10) 32: 24/21 7/5 54: 8/3 8/4*

11) 54: 25/21* 21/16

An excellent roll, hitting from the bar and escaping. If Brian stays out, I should be able to win this game.

41: 25/20*



12) 31: 25/24 16/13

I made a blot safe instead of moving up to the 21 point. Brian's checkers on the 3 point are now threatening me. His double 1 next roll punishes me for this error. The end of the match is near.

11: 3/1* 3/1

13) 42: 25/21 13/11

64: 17/11 8/4*

14) 11: 64: 17/11 8/4

15) 66: 64: 20/10

16) 66: 43: 11/4

17) 66: 66: 11/5 10/4 6/0 6/0

18) 32: 22: 5/1 5/3(2)

19) 63: 25/19 11/8 53: 4/0 3/0

20) 43: 13/9 13/10 21: 2/0 1/0

21) 21: 8/5 54: 4/0 4/0

22) 62: 11/5 19/17 22: 4/0 3/1 2/0

Wins 1 point and the match

We now come to Brian's contribution.

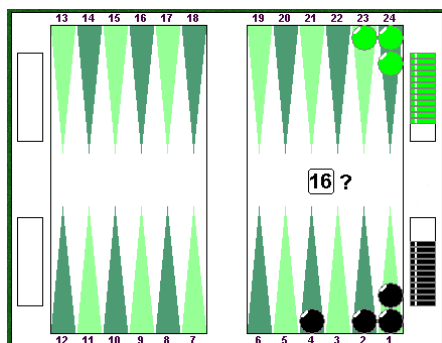
Finals are supposed to be hard fought (and when I am in them!) long affairs. Rarely have I seen more than 4 points a game – here, of course, 8 points were won the first game and the reason is because David and I were both far too loose with our cubes. A premature double on the 4th move by

David was followed by an equally premature re-double by me on the 12th. On move 19 came, probably, the only correct cube action – re-double by David, take by me. Thereafter the game could have gone either way and it was simply down to the luck of the dice that I won the race.

If we had behaved properly the score would be 2-0 or, at most, 4-0. At 8-0 it was pretty much “game over”.

There was one further doubling decision to make, on move 30. We both had 4 checkers left but I am on roll –

Game 1. Move 30



**Black on roll
Cube action?**

Snowie 4 match winning chances:

<i>Redouble, take</i>	<i>75.98%</i>
<i>No redouble</i>	<i>70.62%</i>
<i>Redouble, pass</i>	<i>88.67%</i>

Given ordinary dice both of us would be off in two rolls and a two roll position is usually double and pass. Not so here, I think, because of the match score.

If I re-double to 16, I think that David must take and play for the match there and then. Looking at it from his point of view, a run-through of my 36 possible rolls and his 36 possible replies would tell him that he has got approximately 25% match winning chances if I re-double and he

takes. I don't have my trusty match equity tables handy, but I reckon this is far greater than the chances he would have if he dropped the re-double.

At 3-away, 11-away Brian is 90% favourite.

Snowie 4:

Wins: 88.7%

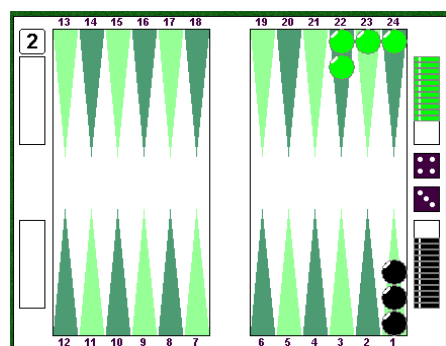
Losses: 11.3%

Equally, I think that my match winning chances, if I play on, are greater than 75% - I haven't done the maths so this is just a guess but I strongly felt that a re-double would be an error on my part.

There was one further influencing factor in my decision not to re-double; I've been in a very similar position before but on the opposite (i.e. David's) side. It sticks firmly in my memory because it was the Intermediate Consolation Final, Monte Carlo, about 10 years' ago. I think it may even have found its way into an old Bibafax.

My opponent (*white*) was on roll, 13-4 up in a match to 17 and re-doubled to 4. Dropping meant going 15-4 down leaving me with almost no chance so I took and re-cubed to 8 when he rolled a non-double, won 8 points with a double 5 and went on to win the match.

The match is from the 1991 Monte Carlo World Championships .



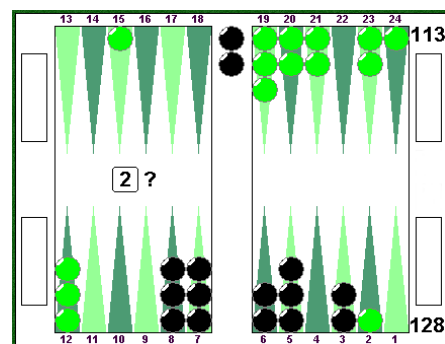
The position (above) appeared on page 7 of Bibafax No8. Sept. 1991.

I know that this isn't strictly a comment on the SAC Final, but our doubling pattern illustrates another backgammon “truth” - that more doubles are takes than are actually taken.

David's initial double was an easy take. My re-double to 4 was a take, but not such an easy one. His further re-double to 8 was a take but a tough one.

Ignoring certain match scores, one should take tough but take-able cubes for a number of reasons, the two most important, I feel, being firstly that you send a message to your opponent that he can't bully you around and secondly the psychological effect you can achieve if you turn a game in which your opponent believed he had a strong advantage.

By way of illustration here is a position I had in an earlier match that weekend. It's a clear drop according to Jellyfish, but I took and won a backgammon!



According to Jelly, Brian's chances went from 19.4% to 47.2% after the take! Just shows how important cube ownership can be.

Brian Lever is a winner of three Biba tournaments: SAC '93, UK '01 and SAC '02; and David Startin is the 2002 Biba Champion and the Jarvis 2002 winner.

How Good Is Your Backgammon? Asks Michael Crane

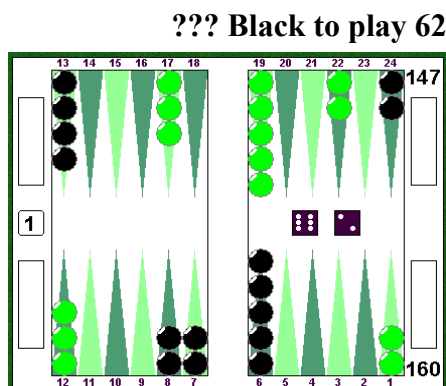
We continue our series of the 1991 Monte Carlo World Championship ¼ Final match between two of the giants of backgammon; Neil Kazaross and Michael Meyburg.

We pick up the action in Game 5. When you come to ??? cover up the text below the diagram and work out your move before continuing. At the end of the article you can check your score to see how good you are.

21 point match Game 5

White
Kazaross : 1
01)
02) 55: 13/3(2)

Black
Meyburg : 5
61: 13/7 8/7



What is Black's priority here? To better his prime and to contain White. Preferably making the 5-, 4-, or 9-points but at a pinch the 3-point would do. He has three moves that will help attain this:

13/5, 13/7 6/4, and 13/7 13/11.

Playing 13/5 and 13/7 6/4 will give White unnecessary direct shots, therefore the best play here is the last one - 13/7 13/11. Only at risk to two rolls, 64, it leaves just 4/36 rolls that don't point next roll, 51 and 41. Admittedly some of these aren't too good; 11- and 2-points but it is a good return for

moving 13/7 13/11.

Anyone tempted to run or play one of the runners shouldn't - there's nothing to gain from doing so.

13/7 13/11 5A
13/7 6/4 4
13/5 2
24/16 2

62: 13/7 13/11

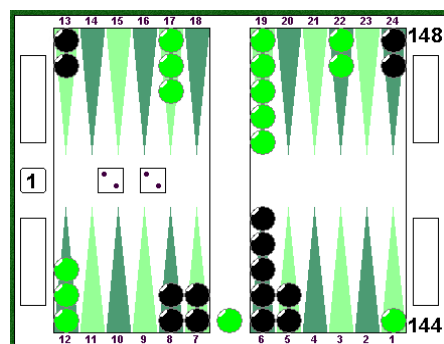
03) 62: 24/16

White also rolls 62 and rightly decides to run. Slotting the 5-point is far too risky and with little return.

22: 11/9* 9/5 7/5

Black rolls a great 22, hitting and then making his very valuable 5-point.

??? White to play 22



Can you see a pattern emerging here? 62 62, 22 22!

This is a good roll for White, He re-enters and can make his 4-point. Should he play 23/21 or 13/11 with the remaining 2?

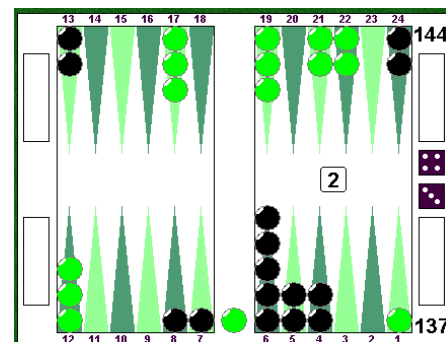
There's merit in 13/11, another builder but this play leaves both White back men a combination roll to escape. The better play here is 23/21 enabling at least one checker to escape easily or the prospect of an advanced anchor.

25/21 6/4(2) 5A
25/23 13/11 6/4(2) 3
25/23 24/22 6/4(2) 3
25/23 8/6 6/4(2) 2

04) 22: 25/21 6/4(2) 43: 8/4* 7/4
Black progresses his prime. This looks dangerous but in reality White has just 12 rolls that enter and hit, and in Black's favour, 9 that dance.

05) 54:

**??? Black on roll
Cube action?**



White dances and Black chucks across a 2-cube. With a slender lead of just 7 pips is this really a double?

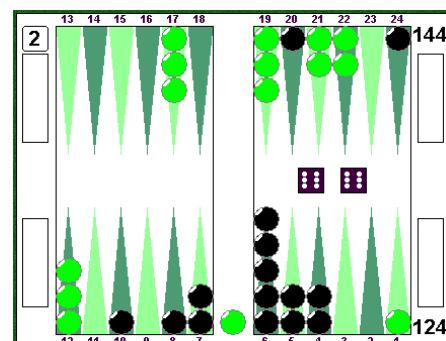
Snowie says: No double / Take . . . which is precisely what happens.

Doubles to 2

06) Takes 41: 24/20 8/7
07) 62: 25/17 53: 13/8* 13/10
Black throws in his hand and goes for an all out attack committing all but the two runners to an assault on making a holding prime.

08) 55:

??? Black to play 66



White already has one checker on the bar - and soon he'll be joined by the blot from Black's 1-point. But, how does one play this 66?

Bearing in mind that Black's intentions are now to blot White out completely by quickly making home board points, we have four realistic moves to consider.

Here is each candidate roll with the total point-making rolls:

24/18 10/4 7/1*(2) 18
 20/14 10/4 7/1*(2) 17
 20/8 7/1*(2) 9 (12)
 24/18 20/14 7/1*(2) 9 (12)

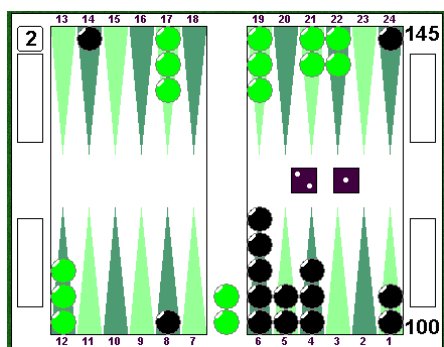
The totals in parenthesis include rolls that do not make a home board point but do make the bar-point.

The actual play was the 2nd on the list with 17 pointing rolls - which was rated 4th according to Snowie following a mini-rollout. However, considering the need to keep White dancing I have elevated it to 2nd place and equal first for points.

24/18 10/4 7/1*(2) 5
 20/14 10/4 7/1*(2) 5A
 20/8 7/1*(2) 3
 24/18 20/14 7/1*(2) 3

66: 20/14 10/4 7/1* (2)
 09) 61:

??? Black to play 21



Shame on you if you played 14/11 . . . you should have moved the 1 first, 6/5 to maximise your builders and then you'd be left with just one two, 6/4.

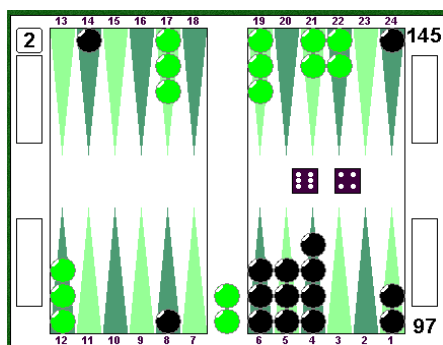
Or is it that double two from White would hit you back and you'd rather not take the risk? Cer-

tainly it is a consideration but this move is trading safety for 18 home board builders whereas the actual play risks being hit 1/36 for 27 home board builders.

6/4 6/5 5A
 14/11 4
 24/23 6/4 3
 14/13 6/4 2
 8/5 1

10) 11:

??? Black to play 64



Evidently Snowie is bothered by the joker now! It prefers to play 24/14 and ensure it can't be harmed by a (un)lucky roll.

I must admit I find this a little on the wimpish side but it is a sensible play. The actual play makes the 2-point which I'd imagine most of you would have made, however, I don't think this is the right play.

I am drawn towards the first play, making the 14-point blot safe from the joker. Although this leaves White an extra open point the odds of entering both men are slim, just 4/36 and for entering one man it is 16/36 after which there is plenty of ammunition for a pointing move from Black.

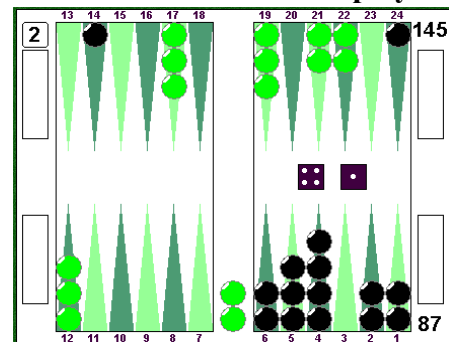
24/20 14/8 leaves the joker 33 and therefore I don't like it, and 24/18 14/10 also leaves the joker 33 but it does trade it for a good 44.

24/14 5
 24/20 14/8 4
 8/2 6/2 3A
 24/18 14/10 2
 24/18 8/4 1

64: 8/2 6/2

11) 41:

??? Black to play 41



Black is in danger of neglecting his runner so now would be a good time to move him up. Without doubt double three from White would be devastating but it is unlikely to happen, however, being held on the 23-point is a real possibility for Black. Now is the time to move up.

24/20 14/13 5
 24/20 5/4 3
 24/20 4/3 2
 14/9 1A

41: 14/9

12) 62: 33: 9/3 6/3(2)
 Black begins to crumble. Had he played 24/20 14/13 last roll he'd have kept his prime intact.

13) 65: 25/19
 White re-enters one man and Black's runner has a long way to go and fifteen men to go past!

21: 4/1

14) 61: 25/19 13/12
 All White's men are now fully active and he starts to maximise his hitting chances for when the lonely Black runner makes a dash for it.

65: 24/13*

Joker!

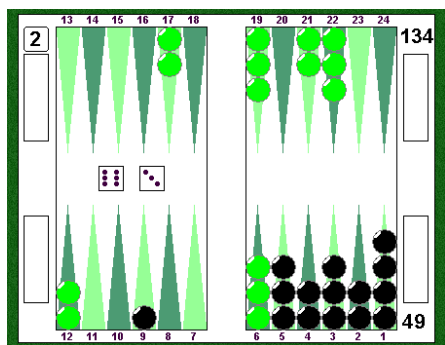
15) 65: 25/19 8/3

Joker right back at you!

43: 13/9 4/1

Black moves across and cuts down the hitting rolls from 15 to 14, a small edge but it might be enough.

??? White to play 63



If you didn't hit with the 3 then you might as well sell your board and cancel your Biba membership because backgammon isn't your game. Quite rightly the move is 19/16* 16/10; now is not the time to worry about a 55 off the bar.

19/19* 16/10 5A

19/13 19/16* 3

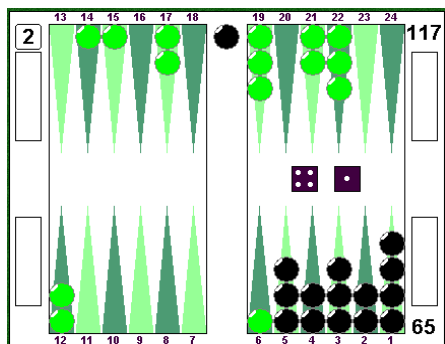
19/19* 13/7 1

16) 63: 19/16* 16/10 43:

17) 62: 19/11

White brings a man around to help cover his 5-point.

??? Black to play 41



Well, you've got two choices here - did you choose the right one?

If you thought that playing bar/24

5/1 was right you'd be wrong! This play is risking a potential second blot which White would love to have. Keep to just one blot and you might just get away with it. Send a second back and you've no chance.

25/20

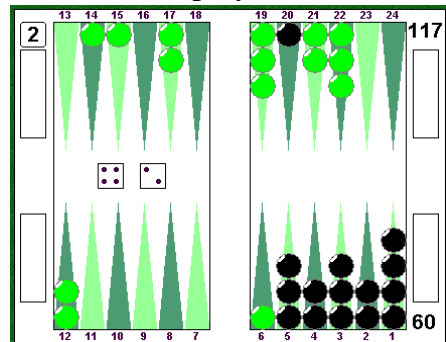
5A

25/24 5/1

1

41: 25/20

??? White to play 42



White simply cannot afford not to hit, despite the number of return shots off the bar; all the 5s.

11/5*

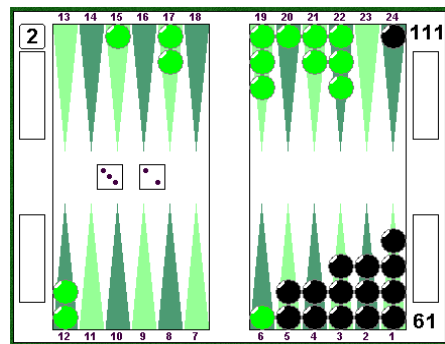
5A

13/11 10/6 2

18) 42: 11/5*

31: 25/24 5/2

??? White to play 32



Keep it safe! If you think that covering the 5-point 8/5 and then hitting 3/2* is correct - I'd like you to explain it to me!

What Black is looking for now is sixes (preferably two at the same time) or a hit - so don't oblige him by offering up on a plate exactly what he is looking for.

If he does escape you'll have a few more chances to knock him back; or even a re-cube at some time.

10/5

5A

19/17 8/5

3

8/5 3/1*

2

5/8 6/4

1



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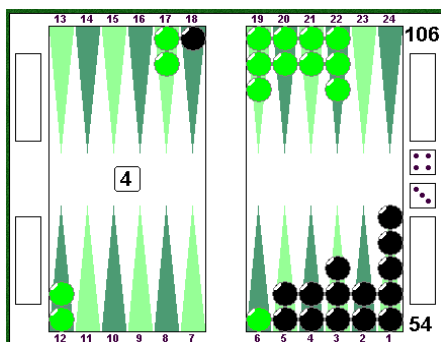
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19) 32: 10/5 61: 24/18 2/1
Glad you didn't hit?

??? White on roll
Cube action?



Pretty good odds here that White'll hit the blot, 25/26 (69.44%); but the converse is true for Black, he has 11 numbers that miss which equates to 30.6%. This is well within his doubling window:

	Double Pts	Take Pts
White	48.9	18.6 to 24.9
Black	51.1	22.0 to 25.9

Therefore it is both a redouble and a take. However, Black decides it's too rich for him and he drops.

Redouble/Take	5
No Redouble	3
Redouble/Pass	1A

20) Doubles to 4 Drops
Wins 2 points

Kazaross : 3 Meyburg : 5

This match will continue in the next issue.

In the meantime, how good is your backgammon? Look in the next column to see your rating:

- 60 Did you cheat?
- 50-59 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 player
- 10-20 You should have cheated!
- 0-10 I want my mummy!

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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.

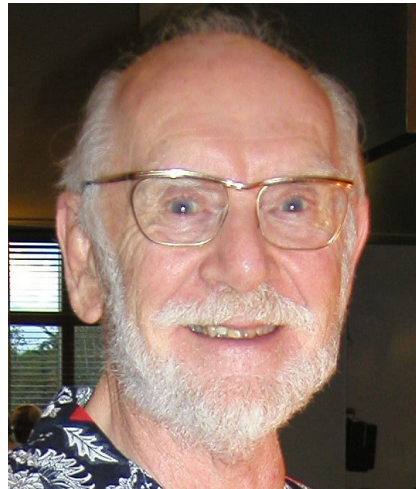
Morten won the final 25-11. The Snowie statistics show that Raj was very unlucky to lose. The luck factor was 9.321 in Morten's favour. Snowie rated Raj as 51.3% favourite. Thus his slight advantage in skill was counteracted by his lack of luck.

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.

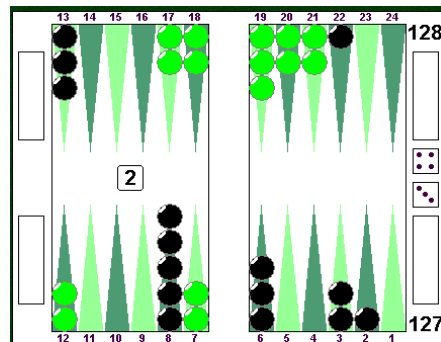
We continue this article following Game 3 in the last Bibafax.



Game 4

Raj Jansari 0 Morten Holm 14
(white) (black)

01) 65: 24/18 18/13
02) 63: 24/18 13/10 43: 13/9 9/6
03) 62: 24/18 13/11 43: 6/2 6/3
04) 64: 13/7 11/7 32: 6/3 24/22
05) 42: 8/4 6/4 32: 13/10 10/8
06) 51: 10/5 6/5 41: 13/9 9/8

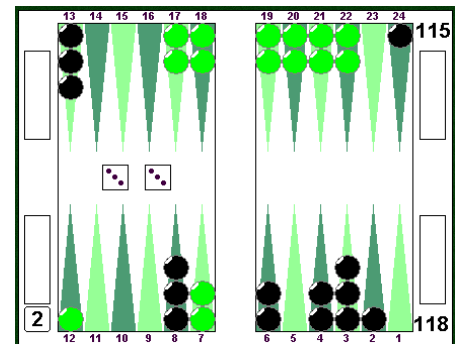


07) Doubles to 2

Although Black can win about 28% of the games the take is a blunder losing 0.229 equity. The cost of taking is too great considering that about 25% of White's wins are gammons or backgammons.

08) 32: 6/3* 13/11 41: 25/24 8/4
09) 62: 11/5 5/3 52: 8/3 6/4

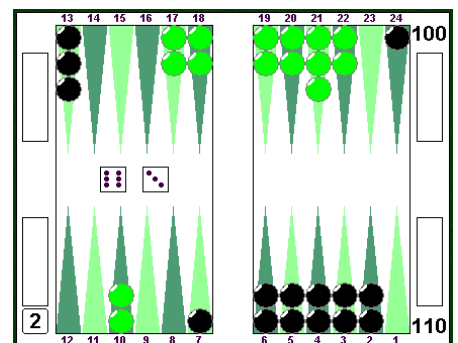
Takes



10) 33: 18/15(2) 13/7

White's move seems logical as he is ahead in the race so breaking contact is thematic. However Snowie rates this move as a clear error losing 0.066 equity. Snowie's preferred move 7/1*(2) produces 40.2% of the wins as gammons compared to only 17.1 % after White's move.

11) 21: 7/5 5/4 31: 8/5 3/2
31: 8/5 8/7



12) 63: 15/9 9/6

Snowie rates this as a blunder preferring 7/1* 4/1. A 1296 rollout confirms this as white's move loses 0.208 equity. Snowie's move wins about 2% more games and 25.2% gammons as opposed to 9.7% after 15/6.

13) 61: 15/9 9/8 52: 13/8 8/6
14) 64: 8/2 6/2 53: 6/1 10/7
15) 66: 8/2(2) 7/1*(2) 42:
16) 42: 4/0 2/0 66:
17) 63: 6/0 6/3 61: 25/19 7/6
18) 63: 5/0 3/0 63: 19/13 13/10
19) 43: 4/0 3/0 64: 11/5 10/6



20) 32: 3/0 2/0
 21) 42: 4/0 2/0
 22) 14: 5/1 2/1
 23) 56: 1/0 1/0
 24) 23: 1/0 1/0

Wins 2 points

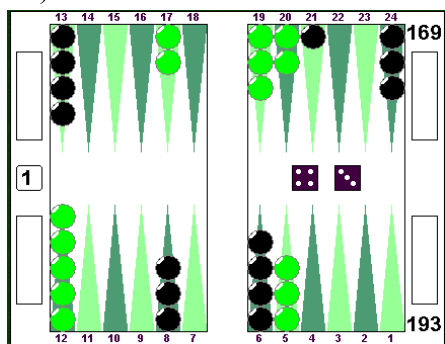
Rating

White: Advanced
Black: Advanced

Game 5

Raj Jansari 2 (white) **Morten Holm 14 (black)**

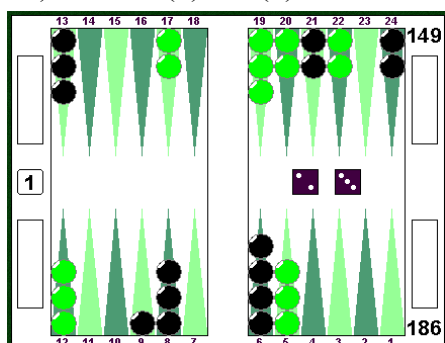
01) 21: 13/11 6/5
 02) 31: 24/21 21/20*
 62: 25/23 11/5*
 03) 54: 25/20* 24/20
 52: 25/20 23/21
 04) 32: 8/5* 6/4*
 41: 25/21* 25/24
 05) 51: 25/20 6/5



43: 13/9 24/21

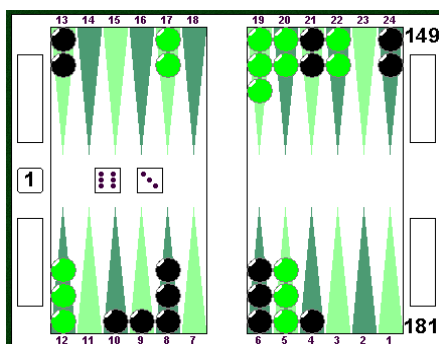
24/21 is the best 3. Snowie prefers 8/4 (by 0.061) to 13/9. 8/4 starts a good point whereas 13/9 gives White a free shot at hitting with a 4. 13/9 would be far stronger if White had only two checkers on his 20 point as he would then have to give up his anchor if he wished to hit.

06) 55: 13/8(2) 8/3(2)



23: 13/10 6/4

A surprising and serious blunder, losing a massive 0.235 equity. Black may have decided that his best chance was to play a back-game. It is far better to play the solid 9/4 and await future developments.



07) 63: 20/14 14/11

White should have doubled. Although Black can win 33.5% of the games he is not quite good enough to take. The deciding factor is that 26.7% of Black's losses are gammons.

21: 6/4 10/9

08) 61: 13/7 8/7

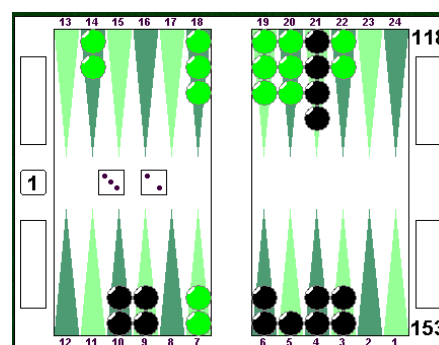
33: 24/21(2) 13/10(2)

09) 61: 11/5 8/7

32: 6/3 8/6

10) 22: 20/18(2) 13/11(2)

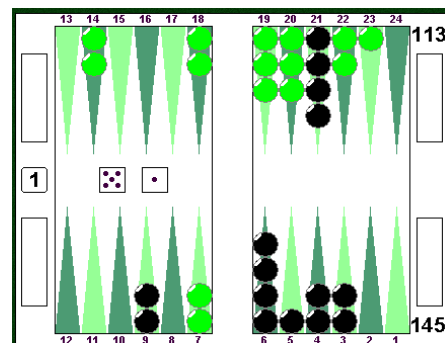
53: 8/3 8/5



11) 32: 5/2 7/5

White should have doubled. Black has a take. White loses 0.097 equity by not doubling.

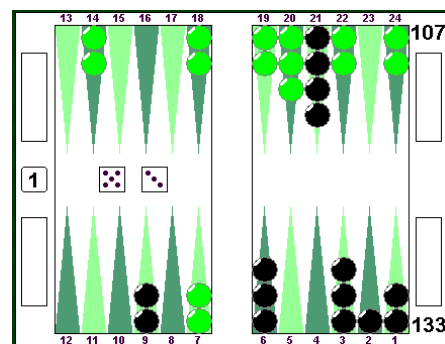
22: 10/8(2) 8/6(2)



12) 51: 6/1 2/1

A blunder by White who should have doubled. This cost him 0.134 equity. Black wins 27.4% of the games so would have had a take.

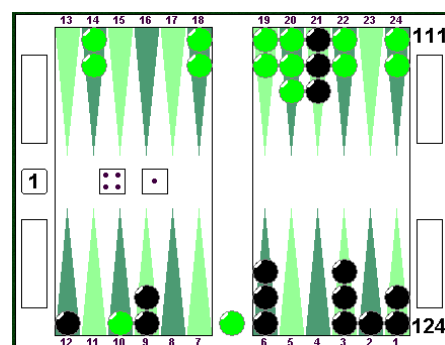
33: 6/3 5/2 4/1(2)



13) 53: 18/13 18/15

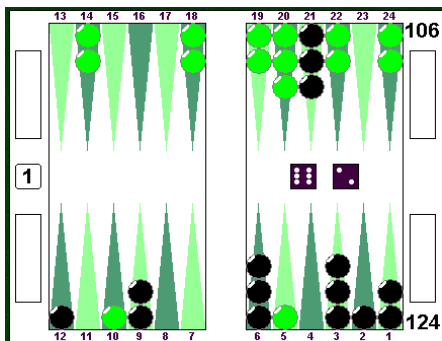
Another cube mistake. Correct is double/pass

54: 21/16 16/12*



14) 41: 25/21 21/20

White yet again blunders by failing to double. He loses equity of (0.183). Snowie prefers bar/21 15/14. The further back White's checkers are the greater the hindrance for Black, hence stay on the 21 point. Also 15/14 duplicates 1s.



62: 12/10* 10/4

Putting White on the bar whilst leaving two blots on in his home board is far too dangerous. 12/4 is best (by 0.078). This aims to make a strong board and then hope for a late hit.

15) Doubles to 2	Takes
16) 21: 25/23* 11/10	51:
17) 62: 20/14 23/21*	53:
18) 63: 14/8 11/8	11:
19) 66: 21/15 15/9 8/2(2)	65:
20) 22: 10/8 8/6 7/5(2)	22:
21) 65: 9/3 5/0	65:
22) 62: 6/0 3/1	21:
23) 53: 6/1 6/3	54: 25/21

24) 55: 5/0(4) 31:
 25) 43: 3/0 3/0 41: 25/21 21/20
 26) 51: 3/0 1/0 51: 21/16 20/19
 27) 44: 2/0(2) 1/0(2) 53: 21/16 21/18
 28) 22: 1/0
Wins 6 points

Raj Jansari 8 Morten Holm 14

Rating

White: Beginner
Black: Advanced

This match will continue in the next issue, mid-March 2003.

*MC: This match is available as a Snowie match file or as an html file suitable for most PCs (Snowie is **not** required to view html files). The html file is just over 3mb and the match file 470kb. To obtain a copy please send a recordable CDR (html) or a floppy (match file) to Biba HQ including a self-addressed envelope.*

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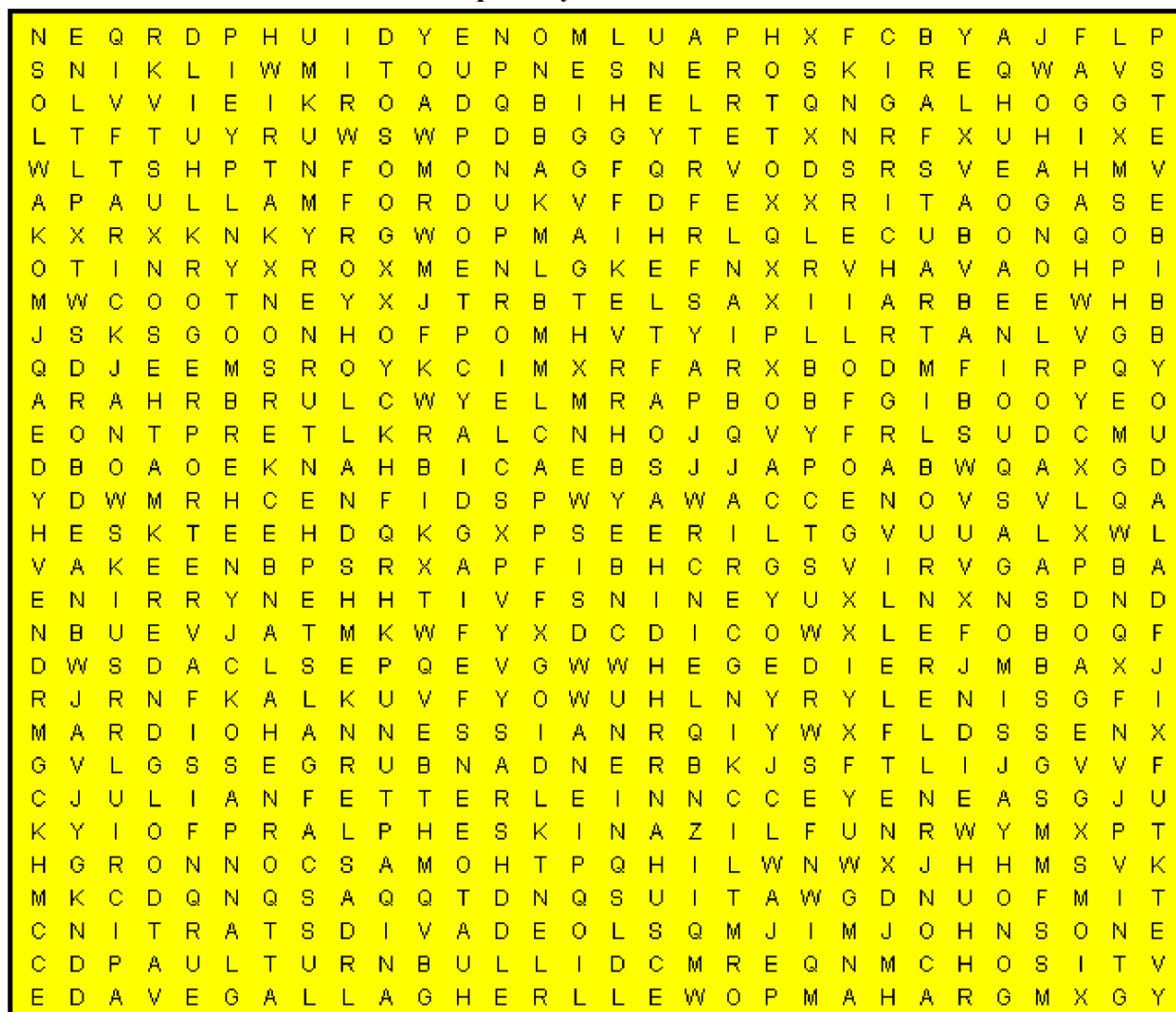
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Sharpen your pencils, and sharpen your wits. Hidden in the box above are thirty-nine winners of Swiss format tournaments from the year dot. It is your task to find them all . . . and in the process identify the impostor! No doubt the sharper eyed among you have spotted there are forty names!

The first correct solution showing where all but one of the above are situated, opened on 28 February, 2003 will receive a cheque in the post for fifteen quid. Don't spend it all at once! Entries can be submitted via, fax, post or email attachment; all clearly showing the thirty-nine names.

Clock Rules

(these rules should be read in conjunction with the full rules and procedures)

1.0 CLOCK ISSUANCE

1.1 At the discretion of the Director, clocks will be issued purely as a means to complete a match within the time allowed*. Opponents who suspect slow play can request a clock only for timing purposes and not to gain an advantage. Clocks shall be introduced only at the start of a new game. * See A Guide to Match Score and Time posted at all tournaments.

2.0 PRELIMINARIES

2.1 The Director shall place minutes on each player's clock according to the following timetable. The timetable shows suggested amount of minutes to put on each clock according to the number of points needed by each player to win the match (**red - blue**). Example: At the start of a 9-point match (**9-away, 9-away**) 54 minutes is placed on each clock. If the clock is issued in the middle of a match at **6-away, 4-away**, then 30 minutes is placed on each clock.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36
2		12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39
3			18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42
4				24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45
5					30	33	36	39	42	45	48
6						36	39	42	45	48	51
7							42	45	48	51	54
8								48	51	54	57
9									54	57	60
10										60	63
11											66

3.0 THE PLAY

3.1 Equipment. Players share one pair of dice. Each player has his own dice cup or they share a baffle box (if unable to agree on the medium used to produce a random roll then a roll of the dice will decide).



3.2 Dice Mix. Either player may demand a mixing of dice prior to the start of any game. Four predetermined dice (including the two already in play) are mixed with each player picking one die.

3.3 Opening Roll. At the start of each game, both clock buttons are centred and each player rolls one die. The player rolling the lower die pushes (hits) the clock button nearest them, starting the opponent's clock. Then the player with the higher die moves.

3.4 Completing A Play. Each player signals the end of their turn by hitting the clock with the same hand used in moving, leaving the dice in place on the board. The turn then passes to the opponent. No player may touch the dice or checkers during an opponent's turn. A player who has no legal checker moves (e.g. closed out on the bar) is not required to roll the dice but still must continue hitting the clock to signify completion of turn. *This is to allow the player to use the doubling cube or assess the position.*

3.5 Cube Handling. After doubling or redoubling, a player hits their clock. After accepting the cube, a player says "take" and hits their clock. To reject the double, a player says "pass," centres both clock buttons, and resets the board.

3.6 Conceding Or Completing A Game. A player may offer to concede a plain game, gammon or backgammon only after completing their turn and then centring both clock buttons. To accept a concession, opponent says "accept" and resets the board for a new game. To reject a concession, opponent says "reject" and rolls the dice. The player who offered the concession should then hit their clock, else, each game shall be rolled to completion if not ended by a pass. No player may refuse an opponent's concession for the maximum possible number of points. After bearing off their last piece, a player centres both clock buttons and resets the board.

4.0 STOPPING THE CLOCK

4.1 A player centres both clock buttons (a) to start a new game, (b) to offer a concession, (c) to announce their intention to take an authorized break in the match*, (d) to retrieve fallen dice, (e) to contest an opponent's action, or (f) to summon the Director. ** Prior to each break both players are to record the clock times upon the score-card.*

5.0 PENALTY POINTS

5.1 Time Expiration. When a player's time expires the opponent shall pause both clocks and summon the Director. This is the sole responsibility of the opponent. *No observer should comment or summon the Director.* Nor shall the Director comment or rule until asked to do so by either player. For matches greater than 7-points, the Director shall add two (2) penalty points to the opponent's score for player's first offence and one (1) penalty point for each repeat offence. For matches of 7-points or less the Director shall add one (1) penalty point to the opponent's score for player's first offence and one (1) penalty point for each repeat offence. For each offence the offending players' clock is then reset for an additional five minutes and the game in progress continues. Penalty points may end the match immediately. *In games whose outcome will always end the match (double match-point), time limits and penalty points no longer apply (this situation can arise after accepting or declining a double). Both players can continue to hit the clock to indicate completion of a turn or dispense with clocks altogether if they both wish and continue as in a normal game.*

5.2 Frozen Cube. If penalty points bring a player's score to within one point of winning the match, the doubling cube (*regardless of its current location and value*) shall be frozen for the duration of the game in progress. In addition the next game (if necessary) will be the Crawford game.

Biba January 2003

[Click here to see rules etc. online](#)

The Townharbour Trophy, November, 2002

by Roy Hollands

The final was between John Clark and Stuart Mann. It was an exciting, closely fought match that went to double match point.

Many thanks to the contestants, to Michael Crane for recording the match, and GammonVillage and Snowie 4 for the analysis.

Gammon Village is an excellent web site and Snowie 4 is the very latest program from Oasya.

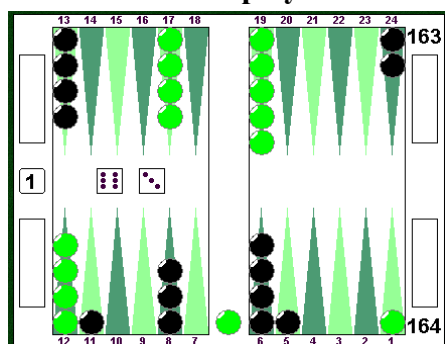
Snowie rated Stuart as 50.28% favourite with John at 49.72%. Stuart made more errors/blunders than John but John's lost him more equity. The luck was on John's side, 4.873 for John and hence -4.873 for Stuart. The rating for both players was 'Advanced'.

11 point match

Game 1

Black **White**
Clark : 0 **Mann : 0**
 01) 54: 13/8 24/20
 02) 21: 13/11 6/5*

White to play 63



63: 25/22 13/7

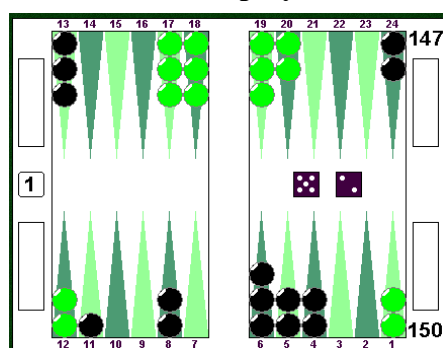
An error losing 0.031 equity. Playing 25/16 is better.

03) 53: 13/8 8/5

11: 22/21 8/7 6/5(2)

04) 42: 8/4* 6/4 61: 25/24 13/7

Black to play 52



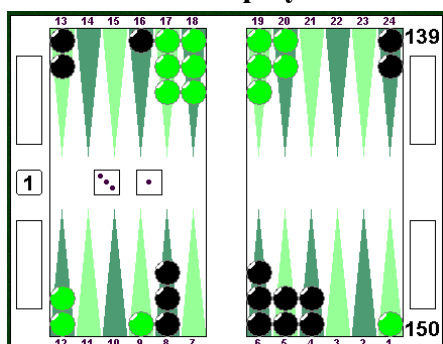
05) 52: 13/8 11/9

A blunder costing 0.141 equity. Playing 13/8 24/22 is best. The priority is not to let the back checkers get hemmed in – the risks must be accepted.

62: 24/18 18/16*

06) 63: 25/22 22/16

White to play 31

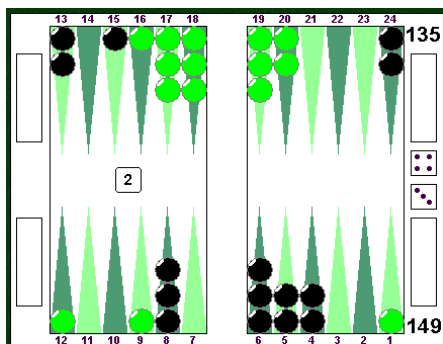


31: 13/10 10/9*

A blunder losing 0.124 equity. It is far too loose to leave four disconnected blots. Moving 16/13 6/5 is best.

07) 64: 25/21 21/15

White on roll



Doubles to 2
Wins 1 point

08) Drops

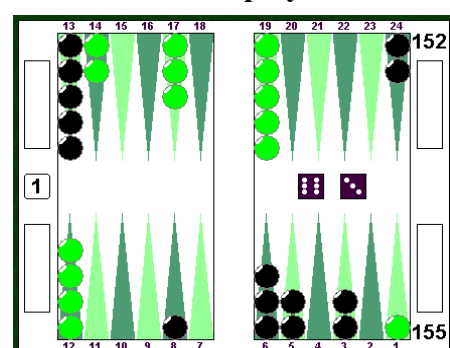
Wrong double and wrong pass. Black can win 38.9% of the games and despite the gammon threats has a clear take.

Black: Novice **White: Novice**

Game 2

Black **White**
Clark : 0 **Mann : 1**
 01) 64: 24/18 18/14
 02) 33: 8/5(2) 6/3(2)
 32: 14/11 13/11

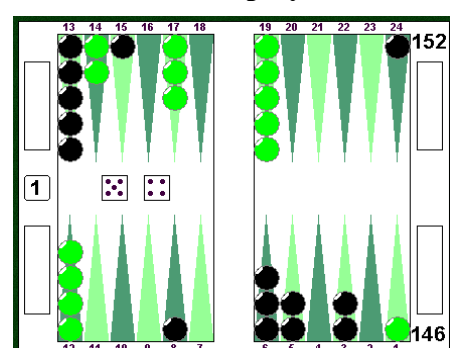
Black to play 63



03) 63: 24/18 18/15

An error costing 0.042 equity. Moving 24/18 13/10 is better, 13/10 unstacks the mid-point and 24/18 contests the outfield. Any danger is reduced by Black having the stronger board.

White to play 54



54: 6/1* 13/9

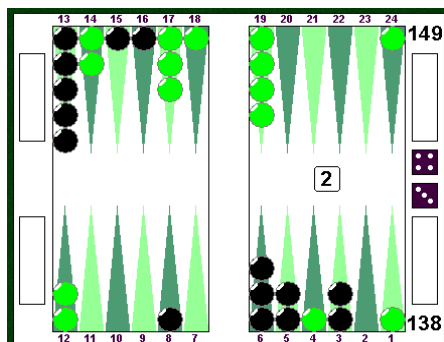
This is a serious error costing 0.092 equity. 13/8 13/9 is far sounder despite the drawback of



stripping the mid-point. Black has the stronger board so a return hit would be bad for White. If there is no return hit then the checker is out of play on the 1-point.

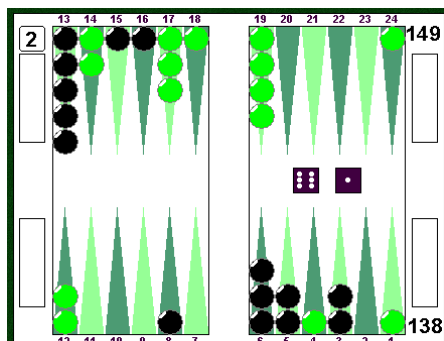
04) 63: 25/22 22/16*
64: 25/21 13/7

Black on roll



05) Doubles to 2 Takes
A correct Double/Take. Good decisions by both players.

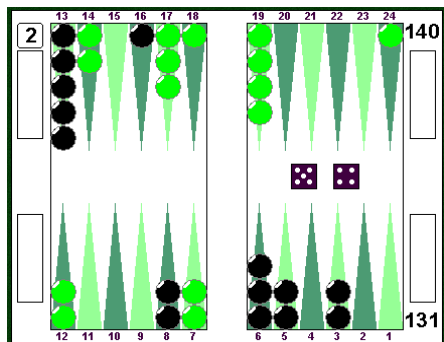
Black to play 61



06) 61: 15/9 9/8
No error but Snowie prefers the pure 13/7 8/7.

63: 24/18 21/18

Black to play 54

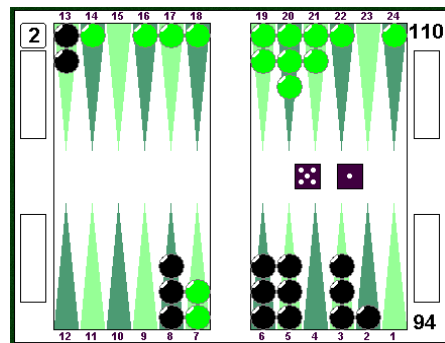


07) 54: 16/11 6/2
An error costing 0.061 equity. 16/

11 13/9 is better, unstacking the heavy mid-point whilst White has only a 1-point board and a blot on the 1-point.

08) 65: 11/5 13/8 41: 8/4 6/5
09) 64: 13/9 9/3 43: 8/4 6/3
10) 52: 13/8 8/6 64: 13/7 13/9

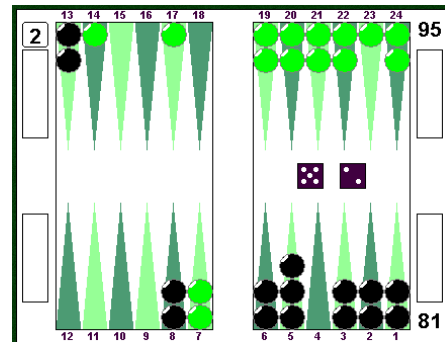
Black to play 51



11) 51: 6/1 3/2
No error but Snowie prefers the 13/8 13/12 clearing the awkward mid-point whilst White has two blots in his home board.

22: 7/5 5/3(2) 3/1
12) 61: 8/2 2/1 43: 9/5 5/2

Black to play 52



13) 52: 13/8 13/11
See the note after Black's 11th move above.

14) 54: 43: 18/14* 11/8
15) Drops Doubles to 4 Wins 2 points

Black: Advanced.
White: Advanced

Game 3

Black

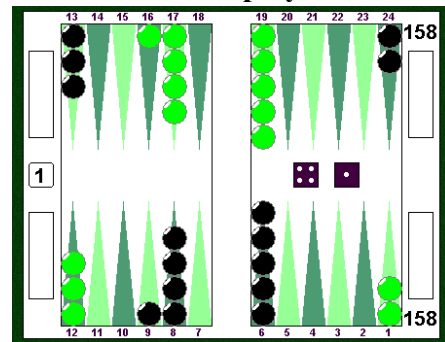
White

Clark : 0

Mann : 3

01) 54: 13/8 13/9 54: 13/8 13/9

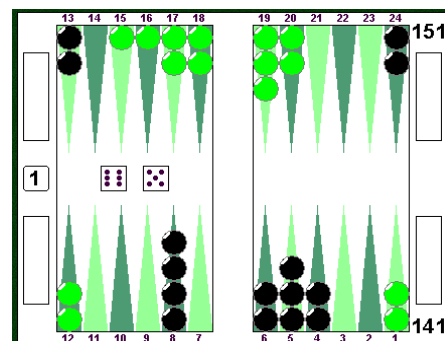
Black to play 41



02) 41: 9/5 6/5
13/9 24/23 is better by 0.050. 24/23 prepares for an advanced anchor or for an escape. This is more important than improving the forward position by 6/5.

11: 8/7(2) 6/5(2)
03) 41: 13/9 6/5 21: 13/11 11/10
04) 52: 9/4 6/4

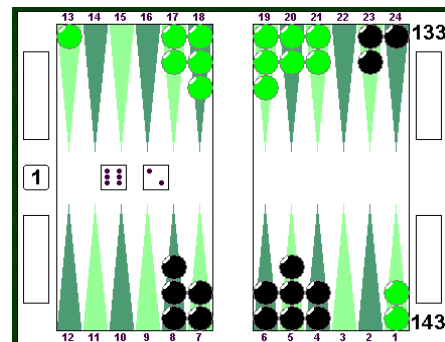
White to play 65



65: 10/4 9/4
Good play. Escaping a checker with 24/13 would be a major blunder.

05) 61: 13/7 8/7 61: 13/7 13/12*
06) 21: 25/23 24/23

White to play 62

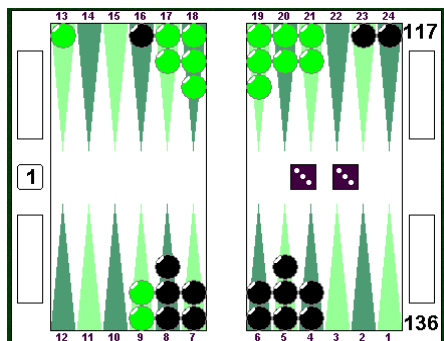


62: 24/22 22/16

White missed a double here, losing 0.061 equity. Black had a take, winning 34.4% of the games.

07) 61: 23/22 22/16 62: 24/16

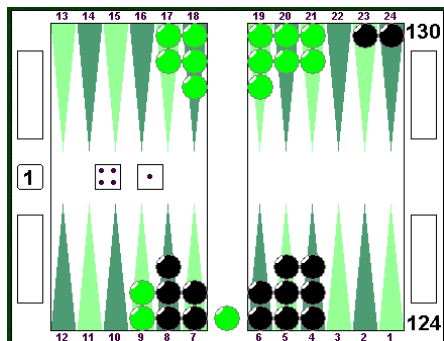
Black to play 33



08) 33: 16/13* 13/10 10/7 7/4

A serious error, almost a blunder, losing 0.091 equity. 16/13* 8/5 5/2(2) is much stronger.

White to play 41

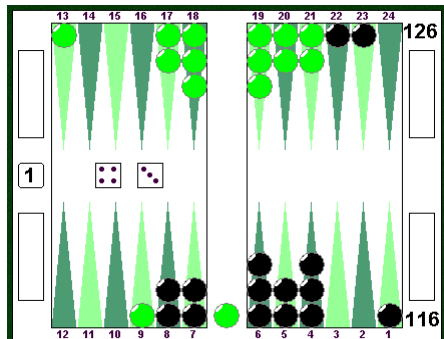


41: 25/24 16/12

Another missed double. Correct is Double/Take. This is a typical position where we amateurs fail to double and the world class players get it right, - well, some of them do.

09) 22: 24/22 8/6 5/3 3/1*

White to play 43

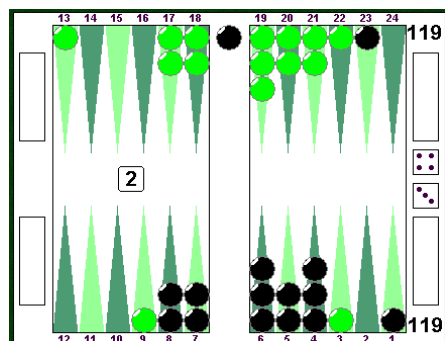


43: 25/22 7/3*

Another difficult doubling position. Correct was Double/Take.

10) 54:

White on roll



Doubles to 2

11) Drops

Wins 1 point

It is too good to double, losing 0.049 equity.

Black: Advanced

White: Beginner.

Game 4

Black

Clark : 0

01)

51: 13/8 24/23

02) 43: 24/20 24/21

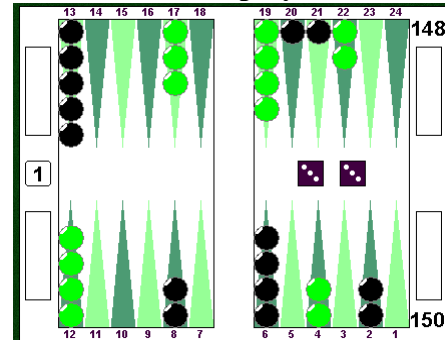
53: 8/3 6/3

03) 64: 8/2* 6/2 43: 25/21 24/21

White

Mann : 4

Black to play 33



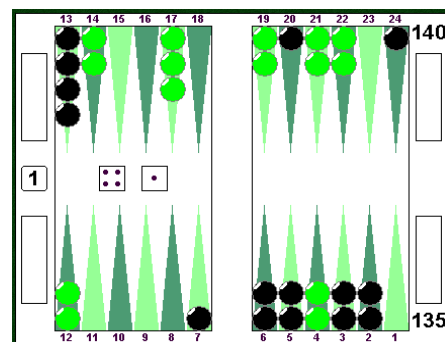
04) 33: 8/5(2) 6/3(2)

Better to unstack the heavy mid-point and block sixes with 13/10(2) 8/5(2). Putting checkers behind White's anchor makes 6/3(2) weaker than it would be if White had a checker, or checkers, on the 23 or 24 points.

22: 13/11(2) 6/4(2)*

05) 61: 25/24 13/7

White to play 41



41: 8/4 4/3

An error costing 0.088 equity. Better to make the valuable bar point with 11/7 8/7. The risk by leaving the checker on the 11-point is preferable to 8/3 which loses the useful builder from the 8-point.

06) 43: 24/20 13/10

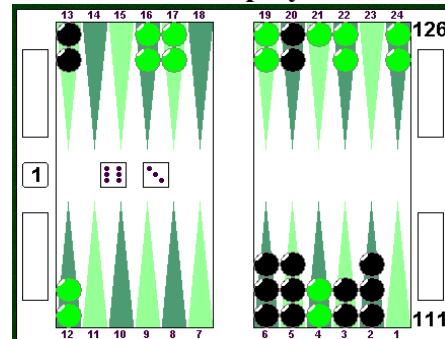
11: 11/10(2) 10/9(2)

07) 42: 10/6 7/5

32: 4/1 3/1

08) 65: 13/7 7/2

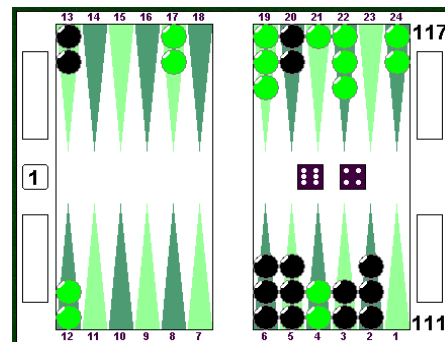
White to play 63



63: 9/3 9/6

Snowie prefers 13/4 by 0.03 equity. It is a close call.

Black to play 64

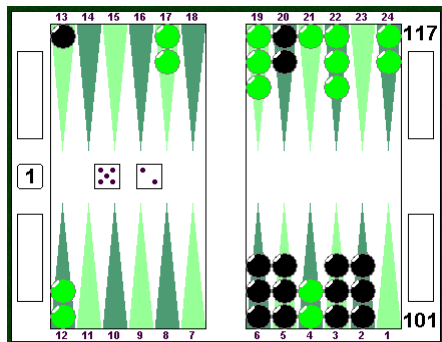


09) 64: 13/7 7/3

There is little to choose between

this and Snowie's 20/14 20/16.

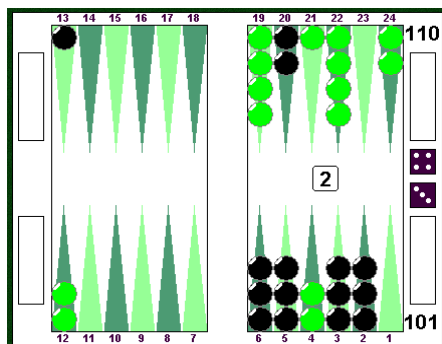
White to play 52



52: 8/3 8/6

This is a blunder, losing 0.128 equity. 13/8 6/4 is much better. Giving up the valuable 8-point and putting a fourth checker on the 3-point is too high a price for safety.

Black on roll



10) Doubles to 2 Takes
Despite being 4-0 down this is a premature double losing 0.033 equity. White can win about 37% of the games so it is a very easy take.

11) 53: 13/8 8/5 64: 21/15 21/17
12) 41: 5/1 2/1 64: 17/11 15/11
13) 55: 20/15(2) 15/10(2)

51: 11/6 6/5

14) 41: 10/6 5/4 41: 13/9 13/12
15) 52: 10/5 2/0 51: 11/6 6/5
16) 43: 4/0 3/0 61: 12/6 6/5
17) 53: 5/0 3/0 42: 9/5 6/4
18) 61: 6/0 1/0 31: 3/0 1/0
19) 65: 6/0 5/0 51: 5/0 1/0
20) 61: 6/0 1/0 31: 3/0 3/2
21) 44: 6/2 5/1 3/0 2/0

52: 5/0 2/0

22) 22: 2/0 1/0

Wins 2 points

Black: World Class
White: Advanced.

Game 5

Black

Clark : 2

01) 41: 13/9 6/5

20/14

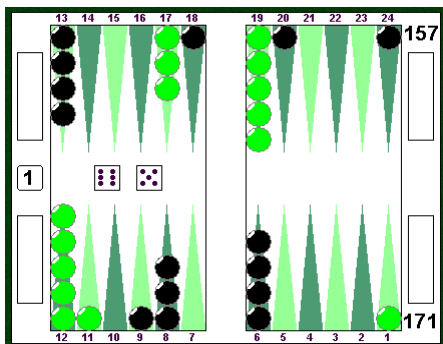
02) 65: 25/20 24/18

White

Mann : 4

64: 24/20*

White to play 65



65: 13/7* 6/1*

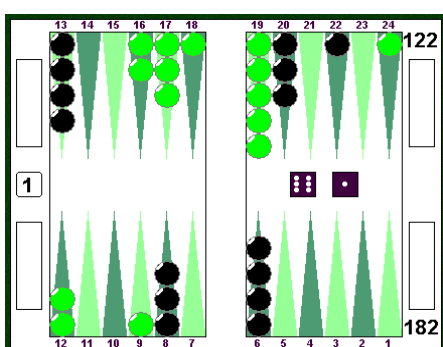
Well played. Other moves, such as 24/13, 14/8 13/8 and 14/9 13/7* are definitely inferior.

03) 65: 25/20 62: 24/18 18/16*

04) 53: 25/20 25/22

44: 14/10 13/9 13/9 10/6

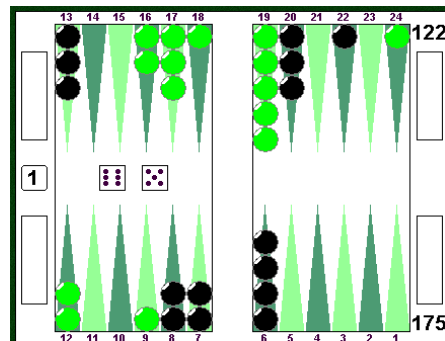
Black to play 61



05) 61: 13/7 8/7

This loses 0.041 equity. Attention should be focused on the plight of the back checkers. 13/7 8/7 would be fine if White still had a checker in Black's home board. Snowie suggests 20/14 6/5.

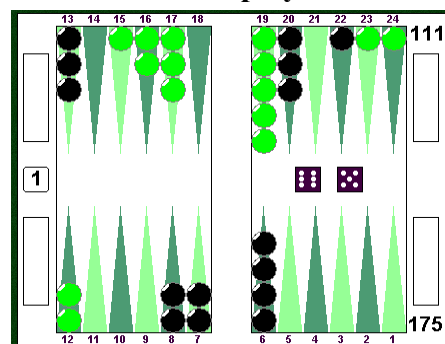
White to play 65



65: 16/10 7/2

A blunder costing 0.171 equity. The blot on White's 16-point is in little danger since Black's board is so weak. 13/7 13/8 gives a solid 4-prime with plenty of spares.

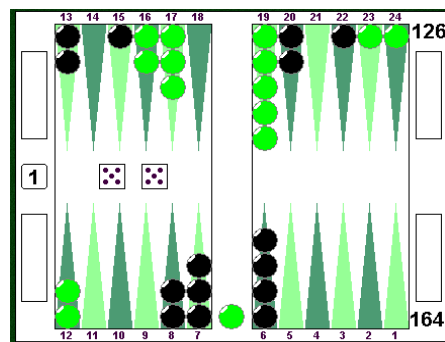
Black to play 65



06) 65: 13/7 20/15*

20/15*/9 is better by 0.03 equity. It safeties the blot and is still a useful builder for the 5,4 and 3 points. It is also the start of a 4-prime..

White to play 55



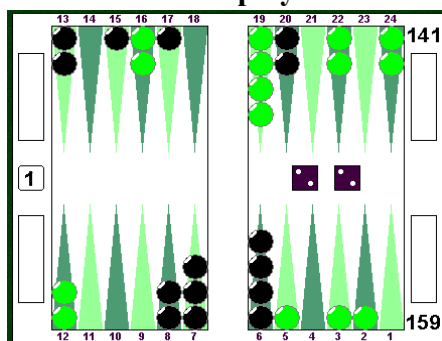
55: 25/20 8/3* 8/3 6/1

An error. Making the 3-point on White's head was tempting but does not compensate for leaving the blot on the 20-point and giving up the important 8-point. 25/10* 6/1 is best.

07) 62: 25/23* 23/17*

32: 25/22 25/23

Black to play 22



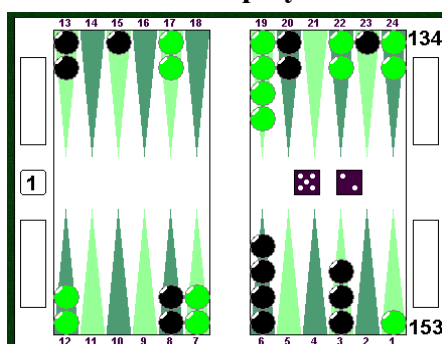
08) 22: 7/5* 7/5 5/3* 5/3

A blunder costing 0.157 equity. Putting two checkers on the bar is always strong but 7/5*(2) 6/4(2) is far stronger, making the 4,5 and 6 points and leaving the 7-point slotted.

11: 25/24(2) 9/8(2)*

09) 42: 25/23 7/3 65: 24/18 23/18

Black to play 52

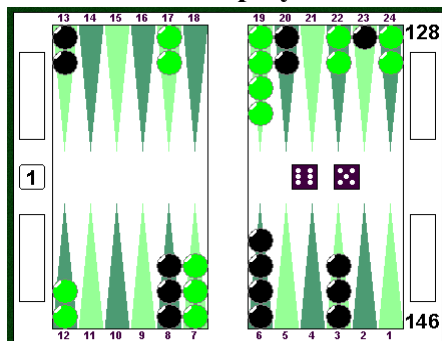


10) 52: 15/10 10/8

A blunder that loses 0.147 equity. 6/1* 3/1 is far superior, making a third point in his board and taking away half of White's next roll.

51: 24/23 23/18

Black to play 65



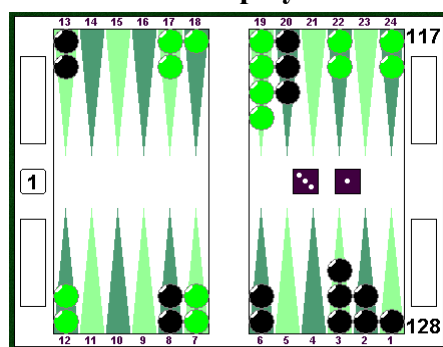
11) 65: 8/2 6/1

This error costs 0.073 equity. Better is 23/18 8/2 which prepares to escape the isolated back checker and challenges in the outfield whilst White's 8 and 13-points are stripped.

21: 18/16 16/15

12) 43: 6/2 23/20 62: 15/9 9/7

Black to play 31



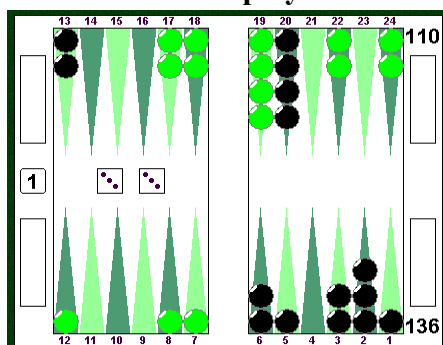
13) 31: 8/5 3/2

This loses 0.031 equity. Snowie prefers 8/5 2/1.

61: 13/7 18/17*

14) 32: 25/23 23/20

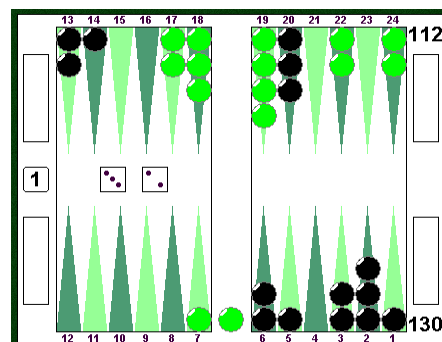
White to play 33



33: 17/14 14/11 13/10 10/7
White misses a double. This blunder loses 0.133 equity. The proper cube action is Double/Pass.

15) 42: 20/16 16/14*

White rolls 32



32: Dances

Cannot move. White misses another double at a cost of 0.049 equity. It was an easy take as Black can expect to win 35.6% of the games.

16) 66: 20/14 13/7*(2) 7/1

41: 25/21

17) Doubles to 2

Drops

Wins 1 point

Rating

Black: Beginner

White: Beginner

This article shall continue in the next issue, March 2003.

Competition Comment

By Chris Bray

I have always thought your competition quizzes in BIBA an excellent idea. In my view the comments of the entrants are actually worth their weight in gold as it gives an insight into how players think (or don't think) about positions. As with most things in life the errors are more interesting than the right answers!

I've always found the marking system somewhat arbitrary but still entertaining! The one thing that leaves me dissatisfied is that at the end you still don't what the best move is in many of the positions. From the perspective of the quiz itself that doesn't matter as all contestants have to abide by the

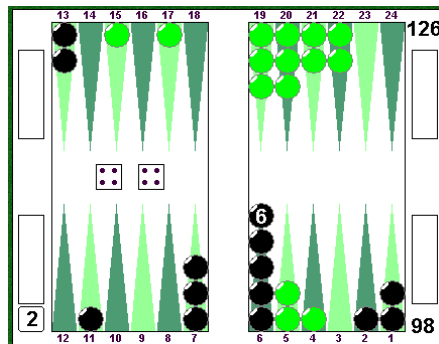


rules and no one gains or loses as a result. However, leaving readers not knowing what the best move is, or even worse giving them wrong information on which they will base their future play is definitely a problem. Most of the time the combination of carbon and silicon life forms combine to get to the right answer but human beings, as we know, are somewhat fallible and JellyFish 3, whilst not bad, is a little past its sell by date especially as we now have Snowie 4. JellyFish rollouts would be a distinct improvement and would be right about 95% of the time.

Occasionally the quiz throws up a position where if you are not careful you can be way off target and never know it. Position 60.5 from the last Bibafax is just such a position and it is interesting that not one of your correspondents picked the right move (neither did I when I studied it before turning to my Silicon friend) or even discussed it! JellyFish got close but was way out in its equities.

When I come across positions like this I initially run Snowie 4 on 3-ply analysis. I then take its top ten moves and do mini-rollouts. Snowie 4 is strong enough that this normally gives a fairly clear indication of the best move. However I then take the top 3 moves from the mini-rollouts and run full rollouts for 36 games and use the maximum settings running on a 2.5Ghz computer. Once that is done there is normally a very clear indication of the best move but I have learnt caution over the years. I then run several hundred additional rollouts on close or apparently close moves. Even on a fast computer this can take 24 hours but by the end 99% of the time I am comfortable with the results.

Thus it was with position 60.5.



11 Point Match White 4 Black 1 Black to play 44

Those quiz entrants that advocated aggression here were absolutely correct. Black has given the cube away, is behind the match and has an anchor. The position absolutely cries out for aggression. What is not articulated clearly in any of the responses is how gammon percentages (both for and against) can have a huge impact on move selection. In fact far too often in the quiz responses we see people worrying about guarding against losing instead of talking about how they are going to win and how many gammons they are going to win in the process. This negative attitude is far too prevalent in the game – particularly in chouettes where people play for more money than they can afford! You will find that the best players in the world at backgammon (or indeed any other game or sport) enter the fray with very strongly positive attitudes. This reflects the old but very true adage, “Winners are not afraid of losing, but losers are afraid of winning.”

So what is the correct play in 60.5? It should be obvious by now that the only moves that qualify are those that hit two blots and we should (and can) quickly discard any switching plays – this is no time for half measures. This leaves us a choice between (a) 13/1*, 6/2* and (b) 9/1*, 6/2*, 8/4. Over the board the choice would be dif-

ficult indeed and I admire Tony Lee’s bold choice of (a). However Snowie’s detailed analysis shows this losing too many gammons whilst winning only a few more.

(b) is the clear winner, so much so that any other move is not only a blunder but actually a gross blunder. The two moves awarded 10 points in the quiz both give away more than 0.1 points of equity – a quite staggering figure. Note that Jellyfish nearly got the right move on its 3-ply analysis – a testament to its durability. Sadly, nearly right doesn’t win matches and money. However much work it takes we should strive first to get to the right play, then analyse why it is the right play and then add it to our mental model of the game for re-use the next time we face a similar situation. Snowie 5 may change our views again but for the moment I’ll back Snowie 4’s rollout analysis as being the nearest we can get to “right”.

MC: Chris has kindly offered to rollout the positions for the remaining competitions. These will be forwarded to Richard Granville who will refer to them when marking and commenting upon the moves.

If you’d like to read more from Chris on backgammon you’ll find his weekly column in the Saturday edition of The Independent newspaper a rich source of comment and ideas. Once upon a time the column was to be scrapped - but it was saved by Biba members and avid readers who let the Editor know in no uncertain manner to leave it well alone!

Let Them Eat Cake . . .

says Adam Stocks

Last year, my mother made me a lovely backgammon cake for my birthday.

She has been commissioned again to make my next birthday cake, this time a circular one. She has already made a full set of 30 marzipan backgammon checkers, each exactly 1.570 inches diameter. I have instructed her to arrange them on a circular cake, such that each checker touches two others, and that the circumference of each one touches the circumference of the cake so that the checkers do not overhang.



Bearing in mind that I expect my birthday cakes to be precision made (sorry mum), then to the nearest thousandth of an inch, what diameter must she make the cake ? If it is not accurate enough, it will be fed to the cat. *Can you guess the diameter of the cake? The answer will be in the next issue. MC.*

Norah - Help for the Hopeless



Dear Norah,
Can you please
tell me what is
the correct

doubling procedure when the match score reaches 2-away 2-away? I generally double at the first opportunity - I remember someone saying this is what I'm supposed to do. Is this correct? I am not very good at mathematics so please keep it simple.

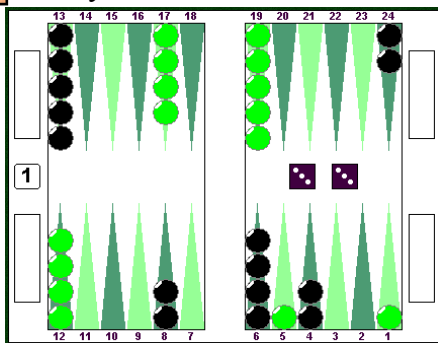
Best wishes, T.J.

Dear T. J,

There are cases that depend on the relative ability of yourself and your opponent. If you think you know more about doubling at this score you may be able to take advantage of an opponent failing to double when he should or taking when he should drop.

If you want a simple life and want to concentrate on other aspects of the match then double at the first opportunity. You may be sacrificing a small amount of equity but you avoid making either of the mistakes I have mentioned above.

By far the best plan is to double as soon as you have a market loser. This begs the question 'What is a market loser?' If you delay doubling until the position is such that your opponent will not take then you are said to have "lost your market."



Above is an example of a 'market loser.' You (black) opened with 42 and played 8/4 6/4. Your opponent rolled 54 and played 13/8 24/20. In this position, at 2-away 2-away, you must double because a roll of 33, played 8/5(2) 6/3(2), would cause your opponent to drop. It would be a **market loser**.

If you wish to delve deeper into this see Kit Woolsey's *Tournament Backgammon* or the many articles on *GammonVillage*.

Give my love to Dod when you see him next. He is gorgeous!

Best wishes, Norah.S.Lloyd

Grand Prix Points Explained

I have attempted to make the points awarded in the *Grand Prix* as simple as possible. Often in the past, when someone came in from the progressive side of the Consolation, it was difficult to work out what points to award. I have now slightly altered the system and based it wholly upon rounds won/played.

Firstly, the Swiss Format:

Grand Prix - Swiss		
	1st	2nd
7/7	20.3	
6/7		13.2
6/6	15.3	
5/6*		10.2
5 wins	7.1	
4 wins	4.2	
3 wins	1.0	

Quite self-explanatory. Win 7/7 you get 20.3 points, come 2nd in a 7-rounder and you get 13.2 points. In a 6-rounder the winner gets 15.3 and 2nd gets 7.1 points unless they have won 5 consecutive matches going into the 6th; wherein they will be awarded 10.2 points.

Secondly. The Knockout:
(see the next page)

The Knockouts are in Rounds Played. If you win 7 out of 7 (as in the Swiss overleaf) then the points awarded are 20.3; the runner-up getting 13.2 if they also played 7 rounds or 10.2 if they played only 6 rounds (a 1st Round bye).

This new system now allows for Progressive entry at any round and calculates the points awarded relative to that entry point.

Often the points awarded in the Consolation for Progressive entrants will be less than the points awarded in the Main - when this is the case then the higher points are awarded; not the sum of both awards.

Finally, it will be seen that I have taken the points awarded to 1 decimal place. This is to (hopefully) avoid a draw at the end of the year!

Grand Prix - Knockout					
Main	Played	1st	2nd	3rd/4th	5th/8th
	7	20.3	13.2		
	6	15.3	10.2	7.1	
	5	12.3	8.2	6.1	4.0
	4	9.3	6.2	5.1	3.0
	3	7.3	4.2	4.1	2.0
Cons					
	7	13.2	7.1	5.0	
	6	10.2	6.1	4.0	3.0
	5	8.2	5.1	3.0	2.0
	4	6.2	4.1	2.0	1.0
	3	4.2	3.1	1.0	1.0
L/C					
	7	7.1	4.0	1.0	
	6	6.1	3.0	1.0	
	5	5.1	2.0	1.0	
	4	4.1	1.0	1.0	
	3	3.1	1.0	1.0	
Suicide					
	7	4.0	3.0		
	6	3.0	2.0		
	5	2.0	1.0		

Prize Crossword 03

The Solution

Another good set of entries, but alas, only two players can get a prize.

Coming first and getting half price accommodation for the Slattery Scottish Open in March is Brian Lever. Brian scraped in on the deadline by faxing his entry through - typical of Brian to wait until the last minute!

Adam Stocks takes home (but is unlikely to keep) a copy of JellyFish Player.

1	C	O	2	N	N	E	3	C	T	I	V	I	4	T	Y		5	D	6	A
	A			O				U						I		7	G	I	N	
	S		8	T	H	E		B	O	X				9	M	O	N	E	Y	
	H			M				I						I			U			
		10	L	E	11	W	I	S	D	12	E	Y	O	N	G				13	S
14	R				A			M		Q				G			15	B	O	T
	O				L					U		16	F	A	N					A
17	B	L	I	T	Z				18	V	I	G		D			19	L		C
	U				E					T				V			E		K	
	S			20	D	R	O	O	21	P	Y	22	D	R	A	W	E	R	S	
23	T	R	A	C					R		I			N		G				
	N		24	N	O	N	C	O	25	M	M	I	T	M	E	N	26	T		
	E				O					I				A		N			E	
27	S	T	A	K	E					S				G		U			A	
	S				E			28	O	U	T	F	I	E	L	D			M	

Hi-Rollers

Due to 'customer' demand the entry fee is now just £50
Next event: 25/26 January 2003. Hanover, Hinkley Hotel

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

Or contact Michael Crane on 01522 888676

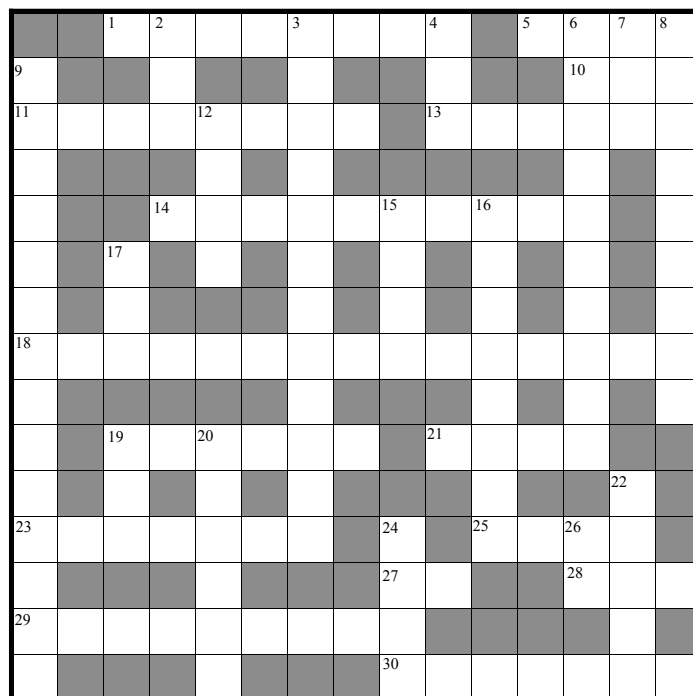
Prize Crossword 04

Compiled by
Arthur Williams & Michael Crane

Another chance to test your word skills.

The first correct entry opened 1st April 2003
will win £15, the second will win £10.

Please send entries to Biba HQ . . .
or fax to 01522 888676, or email to . . .
xword04@backgammon-biba.co.uk



Across

- 2 Captain's partners surrounded by lyrical uttering and behaving like a turbine powered liner, not recommended when playing for money. (8)
- 5 Did Elvis have more than Cliff! (4)
- 10 An idiot giving back a type of cup? (3)
- 11 Two little ducks. (8)
- 13 Early bot, Me & Ron tinkered with. (6)
- 14 I learn verb for BIBA player. (5,5)
- 18 Fitful obedience after careful conditioning results in productive cube action. (9,6)
- 19 He possesses the art of doubling? (6)
- 21 Female players have two, and so do the men! (4)
- 23 First murderer hides fitting team leader. (7)
- 25 Bart's dad detailed our destination. (4)
- 27 & 29 Andy Williams hit after hit? (2,2,3,4)
- 28 Initially Snowie's evaluation of cash play. (3)
- 29 (see 27 across) (9)
- 30 Long range hit gives insects a temperature. (7)

Down

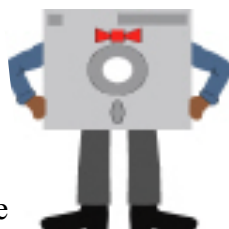
- 2 Tie your boat to this player and helper. (3)
- 3 World champion, sends a remand, for makeover. (4,8)
- 4 Is it acceptable to stick this on the bar? (3)
- 6 Neil Barnet converted home. (5,5)
- 7 This is impossible in backgammon. (3)
- 8 Last man home. (9)
- 9 Funny? Chevron can add a place of long term security. (8,6)
- 12 Ladie's extreme digits moving the men. (4)
- 15 The game you are in when equity is zero. (4)
- 16 Irish gov. reforms some extra percentages. (8)
- 17 Not only the ladies like to take their men here. (3)
- 19 Sometimes we play for one, sometimes from one. (3)
- 20 Foolishly cube a very good player for money, one possible response is entailed, (6)
- 22 Half a roll. (5)
- 24 The one point is rubbish. The bible tells us so. (4)
- 26 *Mea Culpa*. Who's at fault at the beginning? (2)

ZX81

Half man

Half machine

Half wit!



This might be my last column for a while, I have just been called up to fight in Iraq. Not many people know but I am trained in the art of camouflage.

Take a look at the picture at the top of the page; it's hard to imagine, I know, but I am in fact nothing more than a floppy disc with legs. I'll bet you never knew that!

During the recent fire-fighters' strike I was called in by Sky News to analyse their morning poll. It was my job to filter out the fire-fighters' own votes from that of the general public. My findings were a revelation. Before filtering the results of, *Do you support the fire-fighters claim for a 40% pay increase?* The count was very close; 56% Yes, 44% No. After filtering it changed to 6% Yes, 94% No!

Using my camouflage skills I had earlier infiltrated the FBU Headquarters to eavesdrop on the vote for Tone. No wonder they voted for a 40% increase. What would you have done when asked, "Right lads, shall we ask for a 4% pay increase in line with other public sector workers and inflation or shall we ask for 40%?"

Due to my preparations for war I have been unable to judge the tee shirt contest from the last issue, therefore it will be carried over to the March issue and I will accept late entries until the middle of January. Send to the usual: Biba HQ for snail mail. Or email ZX81@yadda yadda yadda

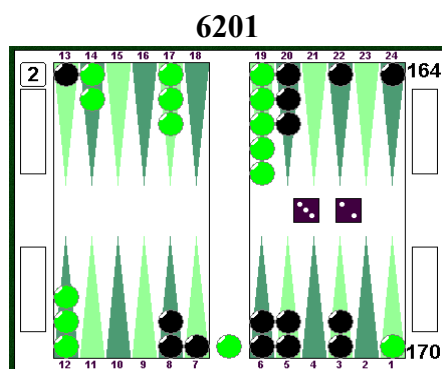
Competition 2003 No.1 6201 - 06

The winner will win half price Saturday accommodation at any one tournament of their choice.

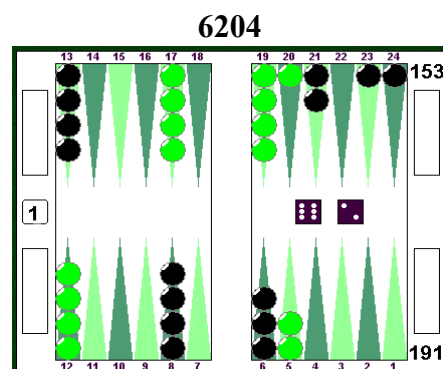
The member with the highest points total at the end of the year will win £75.

Entries to be in by March 1st. 2003.

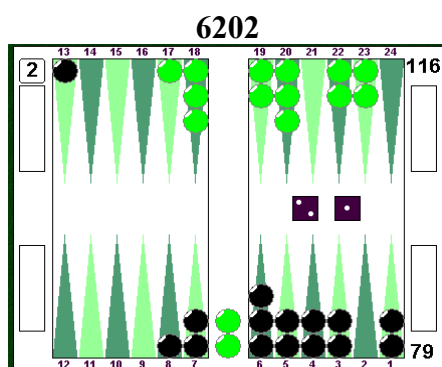
Email: richard.granville@tinyworld.co.uk and a cc to comps@backgammon-biba.co.uk and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ via Royal Mail.



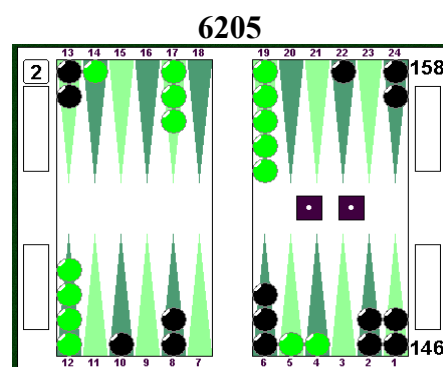
11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 32



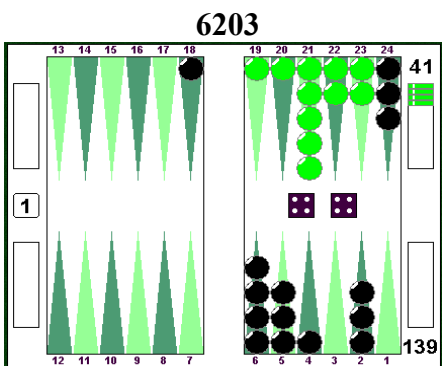
11 point match
White 0 Black 1
Black to play 62



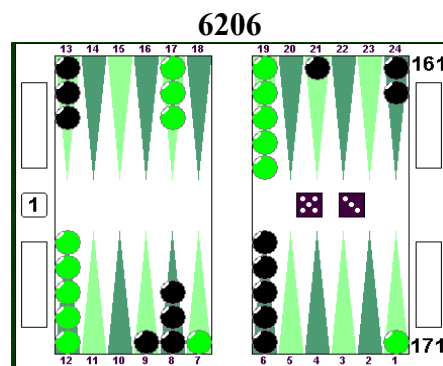
11 point match
White 6 Black 2
Black to play 21



11 point match
White 1 Black 3
Black to play 11

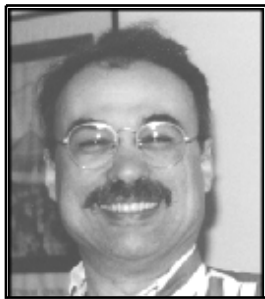


11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 44



11 point match
White 0 Black 1
Black to play 53

Gammon From The Asylum



In Which The Learns to Run and Bounce, and Guido Learns He Has a Pig Problem

By Ric Gerace and Harley
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 *élan*. Some of his most humorous articles have appeared at GammonVillage, where he has an avid readership.

Ric lives in an apartment in his mother's house on 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 twelve cats, and suffers from Lyme disease.*" I urge you to take a peek. . . if you dare! MC

The story continues . . .

My match with George W. went swimmingly well. In addition to letting me open games with any double I wished, he took every cube I gave him. Perhaps it wasn't all his fault, as he conferred several times over a small radio with someone named Karl. George claimed it was a Secret Service matter. Whatever. I think it was one of the Iraqi waiters who worked the dining room. Obviously the advice Karl provided was wrong. At the end of the session I owned three counties in Texas, including George's ranch, and the \$800,000 he made off that insider stock sale at Harken Energy. Not a bad night's take.

Unfortunately I didn't get the frog farm.

"I ain't a-giving that up. I got real fond memories from when I was a boy. Why, the whole family used to sit around on a summer night and watch me stuff firecrackers in them frogs and blow 'em up. We all had a great laugh over that."

It's true, too. I looked it up in his dossier. Miranda sneaked it out of the office for me after I gave her

the chocolate backgammon set for her birthday. *Budding sociopath*, someone had written on the file.

"Takes all kinds to screw up the world," I said to Miranda, between gasps.

She gasped. "Oh god!"

George wouldn't play me for a while after that. Told me he wanted to play froggies with Saddam.

Fortunately The came back a couple of nights later.

"Where have you been, The? We've missed you," I said, knowing full well where she'd been. Guido had come back with the two pigs from Albania and he was bumbling around The Asylum with silly smiles on his faces.

"You ain't gonna believe it, Knightie."

"Please don't call me that. Sir or Mister will be fine."

She sneered endearingly. "Yeah. Right. Anyway, that guy I talk to everyday-"

"Dr. Takesbaddoubles?"

"Chuck's a doctor?" Perplexity was not her best emotion, though she had considerable practice with it.

"Yes. Sometimes. Please continue." Such innocence. Such ignorance. I wondered if she had a trust fund.

"Yeah, okay, Sir Knightie. So Dr. T, he sees about my doctorate in physics from M.I.T. and asks if I'd help him out with an experiment."

"Ah, yes. The Experiment. Let me guess. They clamped a couple of small pads on the side of your head, told you to bite on something-"

"Peppermint flavored."

"Or wintergreen. Then they asked you to concentrate and count back from ten."

"I got as far as nine." She grinned and threw her shoulders back.

"They gave you a lollipop."

Her face went blank for a minute.



"I don't remember."

"Surely you remember Guido?"

She smiled. Nothing shy or maidenly about it. Was he twice the man I was?

"Never mind," I said. "Are you ready for some more backgammon?"

"You betcha, buddy."

"You, ah, you do remember what you learned before?" George had lost an entire year in 1972-1973 after one of his experiments with the doctor. Even his military unit couldn't find him. Not that he noticed.

"Of course. But I can't remember the damn lollipop."

"No one does, dear, no one does. Set up the board and we shall get on with it."

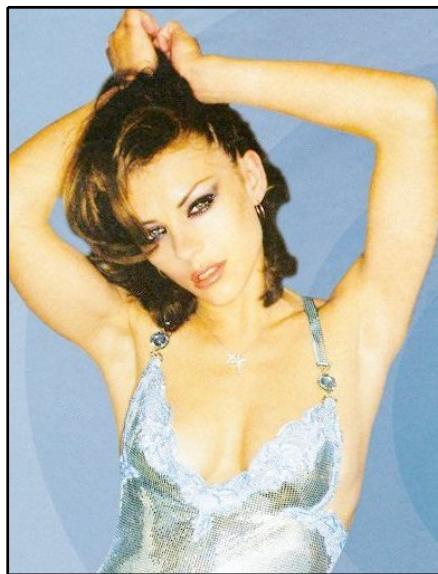
The set up the board in quick time. I noticed that she was wearing a rather loose, low cut blouse, which clued me immediately that she meant business and was beginning to understand the game at its deepest, most fundamental level. But I was not without profound intellectual resources of my own, and resolved to look only at the board and into her eyes.

"Today," I said, staring right into her eyes, "we'll discuss the different types of games one can play."

"Hey," she said, sitting bolt upright, "I wanna discuss backgammon. You said you'd teach me backgammon, Knightie."

"Don't call me that! And I'm talking about themes within backgammon, so don't get your blouse... I mean your brain in a tizzy."

She leaned forward. "I don't understand." The sly look in her eyes and secretive little smile told me she understood perfectly about the blouse.



The in *that* blouse

"That is the first step on the road to wisdom." I gazed at the board.

"Okay. Whatever. Where did you learn to talk like that?"

"Like what?"

"All weird and wisdomy."

For a moment I flashed back to my adventures pursuing the secrets of backgammon through the Far East, the Himalayas, the dust bowls of the Middle East, the mighty Pyramids themselves, and the foulest alleys of New York City.

"I was a Tibetan wise man for seven years."

"What's Tibetan?"

"Never mind. It paid poorly. Can you focus now?"

"Sure." Then she waved to someone across the room. "Hi Guido, hi!" I turned to stare at him and he slunk out of the room. Traitorous

soul.

"The?"

"Ain't he sweet? Both of him?"

"No. He owes me a pig. Pay attention."

"Okay. Themes. Go for it, Knightie."

I breathed a quiet "Oy," and went on.

"Fundamentals. You understand the object of the game, correct?" She stood up and began to intone: "Crush your enemies..."

"No, no, not that."

She sat down, leaned forward. "Oh, you mean about getting my little guys around and off the board before you get your little guy off." She smiled.

"Save the innuendo for Guido. But yes. And in the process there are different things that might happen, or be made to happen."

"Okay. Like?"

"Broadly speaking, there are racing games, holding games, priming games, and attacking games." The bounced up and down in her chair. "I like holding and attacking. Or sometimes the other way around." She was quite the bouncer. Two Republican politicians, family men both, they claimed, threw their necks out watching her... bounce.

"Backgammon, The, backgammon."

She settled. "Yessir, sir." Nonetheless, she did wave slyly to Snow White in the corner. Ms. White was looking quite out of

sorts.

“Let’s talk the simplest game, the racing game. Or running game.”

“I bet you could lose a lot of weight running a mile a day carrying your backgammon board.”

“Yes you could.” Not being a religious man I could not ask the supernatural for patience nor the dark forces for plagues and pestilence, so I took a deep breath and plunged ahead.

“Assume a position like this. Stop that. On the board.” I moved the back men for both sides up to the midpoint.

“Jeez, four six fives in a row. That kind of sucks. Don’t you have to cheat to do that?”

“No. It happened to me several years ago, when Michael Crane was just starting out as a tournament director, on a small nameless island in the vicinity of Scapa Flow. Mid January it was, a horrendous gale blowing for four days. Fortunately, the inn was well stocked and the barmaids...”

“Knightie?”

“Yes, what, sorry?”

“The game.” She smiled and leaned forward. Visions of bouncing barmaids danced in my head.

“Yes. Well. Of course. The six-fives are just for illustration purposes, you understand. Do you see how the game from this point would simply be a matter of dice? Given equal skill, the player with the better dice wins.”

“So, where can I buy some really really good dice?”

“No, The. I’m talking about better rolls.”

“We had some good ones at breakfast, eh? Especially the cinnamon ones.”

I sighed. She sat up and threw her shoulders back.

“Bigger numbers,” I said. “Bigger numbers on the dice.”

“Oh, okay. Lemme look at this.” She spent five minutes staring at the board. I could see her lips moving as she thought about the position.

“Okay, Knightie, I got it. There’s hardly any contact here so we’re just racing for home.”

“Racing game.”

“Got it.”

“So,” I said, “when there is little contact possible, or none, the game is just a race.”

“Got it.”

At that moment Snow White raced across the room towards us, mumbling, and stopped at our table.

“Knightie, I’ve lost my dwarves, I’ve lost my dwarves.” She was quite upset.

“Did you tell her to call me that?” I said to The.

She grinned. I grimaced.

“Where did you leave the dwarves, Snow?”

“Right on the computer, where they always are.”

“Ah, right, let’s go see.” I excused myself and led Snow back to her

computer, which had indeed locked up and gone blank. I rebooted the machine and reloaded the Seven Dwarves backgammon program. It had been written especially to placate the more paranoid among us, and was programmed to cheat, blatantly, broadly, unabashedly.

Snow smiled, gave me a little peck on the cheek, and as I turned to leave she said, “The Dwarves don’t cheat, you know. I have proof.”

“Very good, Snow, very good.”

Back at the table, The said, “Even I know the stupid program cheats. Why do these people insist that it doesn’t?”

“Well, The, you may have noticed that The Asylum is not a hotbed of critical thinking.”

“I don’t know about that. Some of you guys are pretty critical.”

“Oh, you mean the art critics and theater critics and suchlike. They have their own wing. They’re much too disruptive and arrogant.”

“Well, no, I meant you guys, in here. Some of your brains are in pretty critical shape.”

“And you’re here because you have a doctorate in nuclear physics from the University of Chicago?”

“From MIT. Yes, I do.” She bounced up and down. “I can tell you all about the physics of bouncing these.”

“Listen, The, just don’t do that when George is around. He won’t understand.”

“Gotcha.” She winked.



“Okay, now, back to the running game. If you want to play that game, you understand that you have to move the men accordingly.”

“Like play an opening six three all the way out to the fifteen instead of to the eighteen and ten?”

“Yes. And so on. Of course a racing game can start at any point in the course of a game. Some other strategy will fail perhaps, but you may be able switch to a running game.”

“And eventually it all becomes a race. Vroom vroom.” She gestured with her hand, running it round and round like a car on a race course. Like those really boring American auto races.

“Ain’t that kind of boring?”

“American car races. Oh, certainly.”

“Yeah, that too, but I mean backgammon.”

“Usually. It’s all dice. Minimal skill, strategy, trickery, deceit.”

“Yeah. None of the good stuff.”

Jesse Owen stopped at the table. “I

heard that. It’s not true. Racing is exciting. I ran a great race in the 1936 Olympics. I did. I did. I did.” I patted him on the head. “Very true, Jesse. I was there.”

Hitler chimed in from the next table. “He vasn’t dere, dat little Owen person. It vas a big black guy. I haf to shoot all my runners after he beat them.”

Our Jesse was a midget with a gimpy leg and big dreams. Played a hell of a backgame though. He limped off with Hitler, the pair arguing about the recent height restrictions in America, where the President declared that only Christians and people who were white and over five foot eight inches tall could be citizens. “I was with the CIA, for god’s sake,” Jesse said loudly.

“I know, little man, I know. Come, ve’ll haf some schnapps and play some Backgammon. I can tell you that Bush league stuff nefer verks in der long run.”

The gazed quietly at them walking out the door. “Isn’t that sweet? Mutt and Jeff.”

“Sweet? The little guy is the most vicious player here.”

“Yeah, yeah. Sour grapes. I heard he whomped you bad, Knightie. In The Asylum Finals last year.”

“Lucky dice, that’s all. You want to play or not?”

“Can’t, Knightie. Got a game to play with Guido. I’m holding and he’s attacking.”

She bounced out of the game room.

“Yeah,” I called after her, “you tell that two-faced mug that the Albanian is coming for his pigs. You tell him that!”

She waved ta-ta casually over her shoulder.

Oh, well, Miranda was coming back from a three-day leave on the mainland, wherever that was. In the meantime Marilyn Monroe breathed that she’d play me, but just for points.

What the hell, why not? So what if Marilyn’s a cross dresser from Iceland? She looks good. Or he looks good. Plays a mean game too. And that’s what counts around here.

World’s Shortest Game of Backgammon. By Alan Beckerson, via Michael Crane

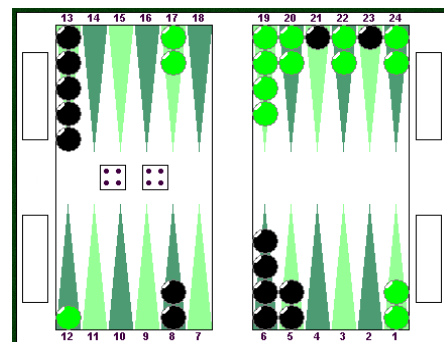
On Wednesday, 11th March 1982, Alan Becker of England decided to devise the shortest possible game of backgammon without the use of the cube to end the game.

He came up with a game that took 17 turns and 17 moves and a pip-count of 167. However, not satisfied with this attempt he tried again on the Thursday. This was

the day that will go down in the annals of backgammon: One game, 11 turns, 16 moves, pip-count 188.

Here's how he did it:

Black	White
01)	31: 8/5 6/5
02) 21: 24/22 22/21	
	55: 13/8(2) 8/3(2)
03) 21: 8/6 6/5	
	66: 13/7(2) 7/1*(2)
04) 21: 25/23 6/5	
	44: 8/4*(2) 6/2*(2)



This is the joker double four that clinches the game for White. Black is closed out and then, when the White board does open he predictably (but unnecessarily) dances a couple of times to allow

White the record breaking win.

05) Closed 66: 24/18(2) 13/7 7/1
06) Closed 54: 18/13 18/14
07) Closed 66: 14/8 13/7 8/2 7/1
08) Closed 11: 2/1 1/0(3)
09) Closed 66: 6/0(2) 5/0(2)
10) 21: Dance 44: 4/0(2) 3/0(2)

11) 21: Dance 22: 2/0(2) 1/0(2)
wins the match

This happened a few years ago and I'm not sure if this *is* the shortest possible game of backgammon.

Anyone know a shorter one?

I'd like to thank Alan for his tenacity in devising the game and the Fall 1982 edition of *Backgammon Times* - Vol.2, #4 in which the game was first published.

Last Man In

By Joe Stampher



Early spring found me once again in the underworld of Pellucidar. I was in a meadow propped against a tree, visiting

my dark friend, Magger. Subjects of our conversation turned round and round, from the origin of his world's heat and light to the upcoming Mastodon festival.

At one point I asked him, "Player, give me a backgammon lesson I may take to my own world, will you?"

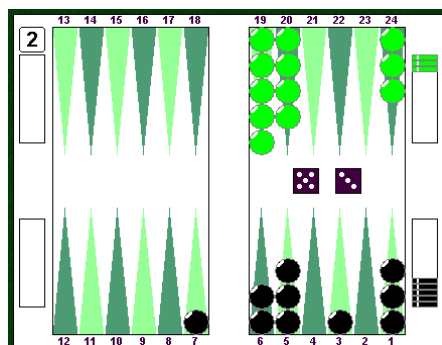
He stared upward, following the flight of a claw-bird, then replied, "Of course, swallow one." He closed his eyes for a second. "Consider this," he began. "Always bear your last man in and a home man off so that the distribution of your men is as even as possible."

Having spent much of the afternoon drinking the native wine cured from the abundant foam-flower, I had some difficulty following his thoughts.

"Explain," said I

He sighed, shook his head, and drew the following position in the sand.

Problem 1



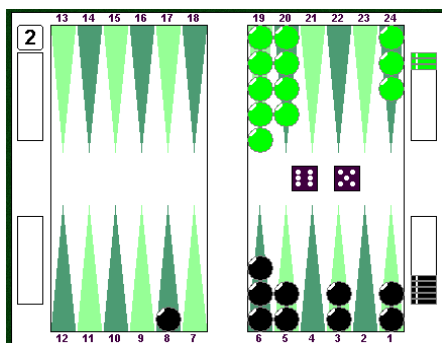
Black to play 53

"Black has two choices," he said. "He can either bear off the 5 point or off the 3 point. He should choose the former, since the resultant distribution is more even."

"But this is obvious," I replied. "Any good player would automatically make the first choice. It takes a man off the higher point and leaves only one gap. Tell me something I don't know, strong one."

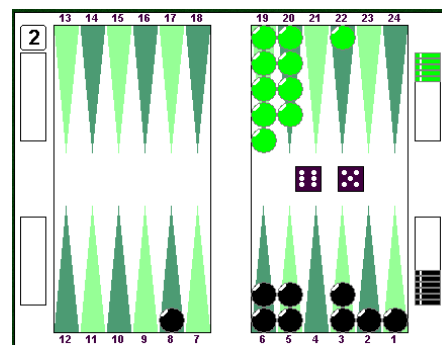
"I have," he said. He smiled and drew two more pictures.

Problem 2



Black to play 65

Problem 3



Black to play 65

"How do you play these?" he asked.

I looked at them a long time and finally guessed. In Problem 2, I played the five in and the six off. In the third problem I was pretty sure that I must leave only one man on the six point. When I gave Magger my answers, he laughed.

"I told you the rule," he said. "Why don't you use it?"

I answered that my solution for Problem 2 seemed to indeed leave a more even distribution. And though I had two gaps, at least the 6 point was not top heavy. As for Problem 3, I admitted that the other play might be slightly more even, but the extra man on the 6 point was a hindrance.

"Besides which, Magger," I said with exasperation, "I don't have your brain. I can't really tell which distribution is more even. How can I do this on my own world,

where I don't have your assistance?"

He nodded and thought for a second.

"Here," he said. "Merely compute the average number of checkers for each point. Then take the mean differences for each move and choose the smaller sum. For example, in the first of the three problems there are eight checkers left after either move you make. This is one-and-a-third checkers per each of the six points. If you had borne a man off the 5 point, you would be left with a distribution of 2,2,1,1,0,3. Thus, the sum of the absolute differences from the mean is $\frac{2}{3} + \frac{2}{3} + \frac{1}{3} + 1$ and $\frac{1}{3} + 1$ and $\frac{2}{3} = 5$. If you bear off the 3 point instead, the distribution will be 2,3,0,0,1,3 and the sum will be 7. Therefore, the first move leaves you closer to an even distribution."

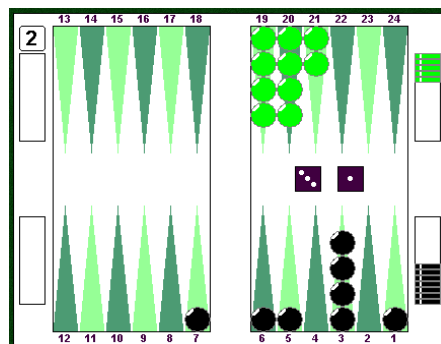
I worked out the sums for the other two problems. My move in Problem 2 resulted in a sum of 6. The other move added up to 5. In Problem 3, the correct move added up to 4 while mine added up to $4\frac{2}{3}$.

Two weeks later I returned to the surface and ran some computer simulations to check my friend's "rule." It worked! In Problem 1, the average number of rolls it takes Black to bearoff is 5.26. If he chooses the wrong move it goes up to 5.45, an increase of 3.6%. In the second problem, the averages are 5.34 vs. 5.39 in favor of bearing off the 5 point. In Problem 3, it is 4.64 vs 4.66 in favor of leaving two men on the 6 point.

I was still unconvinced, however, that the rule of evenness should always take precedence over unstacking the 6 point, a point I knew from experience to be notoriously poor in bearoff positions. Finally I

found a contradiction.

Problem for Magger



Black to play 31

Here the sum is $5\frac{1}{3}$ if Black bears off the 3 point and $5\frac{2}{3}$ if he comes off the 1 point. Yet simulations showed that Black's average rolls to complete the bearoff were 4.42 and 4.41, respectively. A meager victory to be sure, but one which I would be happy to gloat over.

The next time I visited Pellucidar, I cornered Magger and gave him the quiz. He made the right move!

"How can you make that move," I cried, "when the other leaves a more even distribution! What about that rule you made?"

"Oh, swallow one," he said softly. "You wanted a simple rule, so I gave you one. Nothing in life is ever really simple. You know that. But the rule is almost always correct. And when it is not, it is very close."

"I could refine the rule, if you like. We could take a weighted mean, stressing the value of unstacking the highest point in the few cases where severely distorted interior distribution exists. Perhaps a logarithmic -"

"No!" I exclaimed, my head spinning. "No. That's all right."

He looked at me quizzically.

"The simple rule is more than enough. Instead," I smiled, "let's have some wine."

MC: This article was taken from the Fall 1982 edition of Backgammon Times, Vol 2, #4; and appears here with acknowledgements to Backgammon Times and Joe Stampher.

Backgammon Clubs – In Your Area

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

Herne Bay * new listing

- 1 Broomfield BG Club
- 2 Huntman & Horn Public House
- 3 Margate Rd, Broomfield., Kent
- 4 Bob Bruce 01227 362181 or
mobile 07754 549 576
- 5 None
- 6 Every Monday from 7.00 pm
- 7 Informal matches until regular
numbers established
- 8 Free
- 9 All standards welcome
- 10 Yes
- 11 This is a new club (commences
Monday Dec 2nd 2002). Herne
Bay is on the A 299, approx. 9
miles North of Canterbury.

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

Jarvis Trophy 08/09 February The
first of this years four Swiss for-
mat Ranking Tournaments. 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, Brad-
ford 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.

British Open 05/06 April The top
title in British backgammon, the
Open, is sponsored by **At-A-
Glance Calendars** via Peter Ben-
net. *If you haven't yet got your
2003 Biba Tournament Calendar,
then contact Biba HQ for details
whilst stocks last.* The format is a
knockout with the usual four ele-
ments offering players plenty of
backgammon action ranging from
11-pointer down to 3-points. All
trophies and prizes are kindly do-
nated by **At-A-Glance Caland-
ars**.

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 are three Jackpots (Friday and Saturday night subject to draw) and the winner will play in a ninth Jackpot the winner going to Monte Carlo for flights, transfers, accommodation* and entry. The cost of the Flight are all included. It is anticipated that this event and that it might be possible to send more than one member.



Cancelled due to lack of interest!

If there's a demand for more than one Jackpot each tournament then the cost per qualifying Jackpot will be £40 per entry. Entrants can qualify more than once to 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.*

Biba Backgammon Calendar

Date	Tournament	Venue	Type	Accommodation	Info
Jan 25/26	Hi-Rollers Event	Hinckley	Knockout	08457 444 123	01522 888676
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	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	..
Oct 18/19	* National Team Challenge	Daventry	Knockout	08457 444 123	..
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	..
*	New tournament. See below ..				

Re the above, Team Challenge. It has been suggested to me that I consider a change to the format and details as shown on the following page. Suggestions are:

Decide teams using random draw on the day using Biba rankings. Divide the entrants into 3 groups sorted by ranking - decide Team Captain (top 3rd) and two other members, one each from the remaining two 3rds.

Dispense with the pools and increase the entry fee to £100/£150 per team.

I would appreciate any comments from members on this or any other suggestions for the format. Please reply by February 28th in order to include them in the March issue.

The Hanover

National Team Challenge 2003

October 18/19 2003

Registration (entry payment) 10:30 / 12:30

13:00 start of competition

Hanover Daventry Club & Hotel

*Near M1, M6 and M40 motorways, one mile from Daventry town centre.
Forty minutes from East Midlands and Birmingham International airports*

Registration Fee: £30 per team, Entry Fee: £78 per team
Limited to 32 teams of 3 players each

**This exciting new event is sponsored by Hanover Hotels
and is organised and directed by Michael Crane**

Main: 11-point knockout. Each team will be drawn at random for the 1st Round. The team that scores two wins will progress to the next round, the losing team shall go into the progressive Consolation (excepting the last 4 of the Main) as determined by the Main draw.

Consolation: 7-point knockout. Same playing format as Main.

Team Trial: 3-point knockout. Same playing format as Main.

£2,496	£ total	£ each
Main 1	£702	£234
Main 2	£468	£156
Main 3/4	£546	£91
Con 1	£273	£91
Con 2	£234	£78
Team 1	£156	£52
Team 2	£117	£39

Expected Prize Fund. NB: Prize pools will also be available in all events for TC members only (£1 fee, see details).

This event is likely to prove very popular and, due to the limit of 32 teams, pre-registration is essential. To reserve space, Team Captains are urged to send the following information to Biba HQ:

Team Captain

Contact (email or telephone)

Team Name (members can be declared on the day)

£15 Registration Fee (refundable if unable to attend)

Cheques made payable to Biba

Entry Conditions:

Teams must comprise of 3 members with one designated as Captain through whom all correspondence will be channeled. Team Captains will agree upon the playing order for each round. If agreement cannot be reached then the Director will decide by a roll of dice. Local clubs can field as many teams as they like providing that no players are in more than one team. Once a team has started the event they cannot field a substitute and must complete the event in their original form.

Accommodation: £100 dinner, b&b per person for 2 nights, £55 for 1 night.

Contact Central Reservation on 08457 444 123 and quote 'backgammon'

Players who choose not to stay in the hotel will incur a cover charge of £10 for hotel services and facilities

Details ►



The Hanover National Team Challenge 2003 Timings & Details

Friday 17 October

21:00 - Team Warm-up: Playing in three separate knockouts as individuals, team members are set the task of showing that they will be a force to be reckoned with as they compete to win each of the three knockouts. The entry fee will be £30 per team with an added £90 (£30 for each knockout) from the tournament sponsor.

Saturday 18 October

10:30 to 12:30 .. Registration (fee payment)
 12:40 to 12:50 .. Auction of the teams to the highest bidders
 13:00 (prompt) .. Start of Main tournament
 15:20 Main Round 2 and Consolation start (latest start time)
 17: 40 Main Round 3 (latest start time)
 20:00 Dinner
 21:30 Consulting Team Knockout. 5-point matches. Entry fee £25 per team (2 or 3 players)

Sunday 19 October

10:15 Auction of leading teams
 10:30 (prompt) .. Main & Consolation continue
 10:45 Start of Team Trial. Open draw to suit demand, allowing entry from Consolation.
 16:30 Anticipated finish and prize-giving

Prizes

Sponsors are being sought for extra prizes. Will interested parties please contact Michael Crane?

Pools

£30 and £75 (per team) pools will be available for Team Challenge members only. Annual membership is just £1 per person. All pool entries are a private matter and are administrated by the organiser who shall ensure 100% return, acting as agent for Team Challenge members. All income derived from membership will be raffled off at 10:30 Sunday to members who shall receive one free ticket each.



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



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



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.

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)

A Few Jottings from the Las Vegas Open 2002

Arriving in Vegas at 8 pm local time - 4 am at home, and having been traveling since 7 am a journey time of some 21 hours!, one is understandably a little weary.

But wait, it's only 8 pm here and the night is young - not only that; Las Vegas is a shocking stimulant to the senses. The lights the sounds, the sheer ludicrous size of everything - you laugh out loud as you gaze in wonder.

Struggling to keep a grip on reality - is there any here?- you decide you're delirious with fatigue and drag yourself to bed at 11 pm.

But, you can't sleep - too excited with anticipation - 10 whole days



By Rachel Rhodes

in sin city itself, every temptation under the sun and cover of darkness, with a weeks backgammon and some of the best food in the world, what could be better? So still awake, - after all it's morning in the UK now. Eventually nodding off you awake at 4:15 am simultaneously feeling like you've slept in 'til lunch time (which it is) and that you haven't slept at all (which you haven't - or barely!)

For this among other reasons it is a good idea to arrive a few days before the tournament. This being a 24 hr city, if you were not tied to a tournament timetable it would be easily possible to stay on UK time and avoid jetlag altogether. **But** we do want to play don't we - so we suffer.

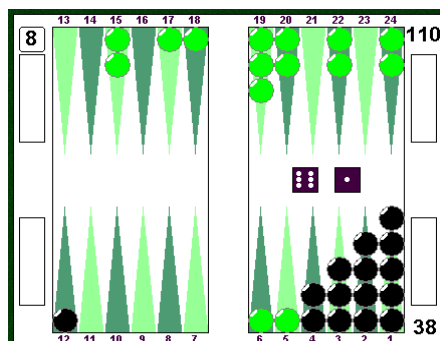
Arriving Sunday night I have until Wednesday before registration and until Thursday before the tournament proper starts. However immediately preceding this years 2002 Vegas Open event was the Pro-Am doubles tournament. Many of the top names we all know are already here - and as they are playing doubles the moves are discussed and it makes for very spectator friendly back-

gammon. You can even tell from the draw who the members of the playing partnerships are!, because unlike the more famous and established Biba doubles events (monthly at Coventry) they use their real names! Entrants include Bill Robertie, Kit Woolsey, Paul Magriel, Jerry Grandell, Kent Goulding, Nack Ballard, among others.

The partnership of Jerry Grandell (ex-world champion) and Armando Balbi went all the way to the final which they eventually won, on the way defeating Paul Magriel and Mike Sherman in the 19 point quarter final (imagine how long that would take in a Biba doubles match! This match is recorded on GammonVillage for detailed study - suffice it to say that Grandell/Balbi had by far the better dice, Magriel was his usual flamboyant entertaining self and oh yes, it was quite hard to pick up tips from the winning pair as they discussed their moves rarely and when they did, in Portuguese!

On Tuesday I watched the semi-final - Grandell/Balbi vs. Leo Fernandez and Jose Salema. Jerry's dice seemed a little less reliable today and not until they were losing 11-4 in the 21 pt match did the opportunity to catch up present itself. They accepted a re-cube to 4 and promptly offered an 8 cube which quickly became an unsaveable gammon turning the score from 4-11 down to 21-11 up - pretty nice swing. This game is also on GammonVillage and as you will see is quite instructive. The 4-cube turns out to be a blunder and also the 8-cube should have been passed compounding the error. Take a look as well at move 32 for green the 6,1. Jerry chose the more crowd pleasing less safe play of hitting both blots - and it paid off!

Fernandez / Salema (white) 11



Grandell / Balbi (black) 4 Black to play 61

*Position courtesy of
GammonVillage.com*

On Wednesday we moved upstairs to a bigger room - **wow** this was something, the Penthouse suite at the Riviera is known as **The top of the Riviera**. On the 64th floor of the Monaco tower it measures 195 ft x 75 ft and has windows on three sides with views across the city and beyond to the red coloured mountains in the distance. Even after being knocked out of the tourney and getting tired of re-entering blitzes and mini matches etc. you can gaze at the sunset and the flashing lights of the strip. There was so much room - only half of it was required for tournament play, comfortably seating the 300+ entries over the three divisions, open, intermediate and beginner. The remaining half of the room had seating to relax with coffee (complimentary) browse at the excellent boutique run by Carol Joy Cole and leaving plenty of space for registration, tournament management etc. The boutique did very well - \$5000+ on the first day alone, mostly in books and dice!

The tournament itself went very smoothly, though none of us Brits, Myself, David Motley, Dod Davies, Jo (sorry Jo don't know your surname - (MC: it is Curl) or Peter Wilson won any prizes -

unless you count Dod's \$200 win in the Calcutta auction, a raffle basically where the only requirement to be in the draw is that you are entered in the tournament and that you are present at the auction when the draw takes place. It certainly ensures that people turn up at the auction as \$10,000 dollars is given away!

Despite this, every year absent people lose anything up to a \$1000 prize - expensive lie-in. It's also quite funny when they arrive later and everyone laughs as the auctioneer announces their arrival and they walk in with a smile, at hearing their name and the warm greeting, turning to a look of puzzlement followed by dismay to everyone's further delight.

The best we did was Peter one round from the money in the seniors (over 55s), Dod, last eight in Mini match 2pt tourney and also in Blitz playoffs (both of which he won last year), myself last 8 of mini-match and last but not least a certain BIBA member who despite actually being an American and only attending *one* Biba tourney in his career (this October I believe), called Curtis Lucas, actually won the whole tournament! Mike Svobodny was overheard to remark "So Curtis, a new kid on the block huh?" Curtis just smiled as anyone who met him at Biba will know he's a senior senior.

It's a long way to go but recommended - lots of play: main event, consolation last chance, blitz event, mini-match doubles, seniors, after tournament tournament etc. It's easy to spend lots of money though, and once you're there you have to take in some of the top class shows and eat top food, but all in all it's great - just make sure the clothes you pack to

travel home in are at least 2 sizes bigger than those you went out in!

UK Finals 7/8 December 2002

Report by Michael Crane

Well, I suppose after eleven good ones without too many moans and groans it was bound to happen - the last of the year and all the moans and groans of the last eleven were bundled together and let loose by Pandora!

What were they complaining about? Playing 5-point matches in the Swiss qualifier on the Saturday. Despite the fact that playing to 5-points was clearly stated in two Bibafaxs (August and November), players still complained about it after starting the tournament. Mind you, I didn't get one complaint from players who were winning, just those that were losing

Qualifier (51)

Bearing in mind the comments re the match length didn't start coming in until the first results came in, the tournament got off to a good start. To qualify for the Sunday, last 16 Main, the Saturday bunch had to win 5/5 to guarantee a place. It was envisaged that 4/5 would have a great chance and 3/5 might at a pinch. I was wrong, no 3/5 got through and accompanying the two 5/5, Peter Bennet and Roland Herrera, there were seven on 4/5 and sadly (for him) we lost David Nathan on the count-back by 1 point.

Those that made it were . .

Main (16)

. . Tim Mooring, Ed Turner, Dave Sharples, Felix Vink, Simonetta Barone, Roland Herrera, Peter Bennet and Graham Farley. They were each matched against a *true*

qualifier in this order: Jim Johnson, Brian Lever, John Clark, Hubert de l'Epine (who was a substitute for Murat Imamoglu who couldn't attend), Ray Tannen, David Startin, Brian Busfield and Julian Fetterlein.

Two of the *true* qualifiers fell in the 1st Round to leave us with the drawsheet thus:

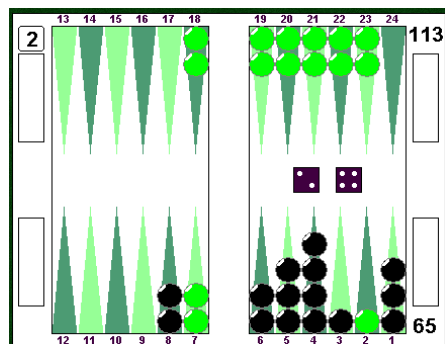
Jim Johnson	Brian Lever
John Clark	Felix Vink
Ray Tannen	David Startin
Peter Bennet	Julian Fetterlein

A very strong field and impossible to predict the outcome of any of them. Jim bumped Brian; John felled Felix, David roused Ray, and Peter jiggered Julian!

So here we are, the final four:

John Clark	Jim Johnson
Peter Bennet	David Startin

I have always found that the better the player the fewer the comments when losing matches. Conversely, the weaker the player the more comments upon losing. Jim Johnson falls most definitely into the former category. I have known Jim for years and I have never heard him claim he was unlucky or that his opponent was lucky - he's always taken victory and defeat with equal aplomb. But, this weekend he had good reason to descend to the latter category. Take a look at this:



Jim (black) leads 7-4 in 11-point match. Black to play 42 and lose a backgammon!

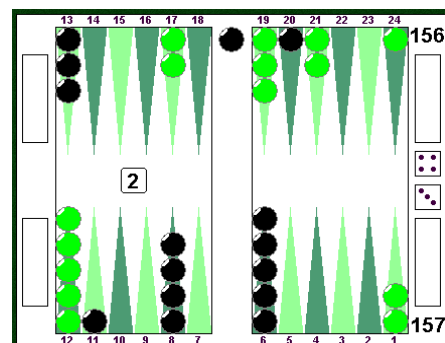
Well, you might have seen a major clue as to what Jim played; he played 8/6 8/4. John rolled the 1 and went on to win a backgammon. This is what Snowie (and the onlookers) came up with:

Move	Eqty
5/1 3/1	0.242
8/4 8/6	0.124(-0.118)

Playing safe was better by 0.118. Jim did explain that he was worried about upcoming rolls and therefore played it this way for that reason. John was happy, he rolled the 1 and then won a backgammon with Snowie showing his slim chances of doing so at 0.1%!

Going 10/7 Crawford down to John Clark is never a good thing, no matter who you are and poor Jim was unable to get back into the match and John went through. Waiting for him in the Final was Peter Bennet who despatched David Startin in spectacular fashion, 11/1. Just how David managed to get the 1 is a mystery

The Final was an exciting affair: After four games Peter was leading 7-1 after which John was galvanised into action and the match swung back to a more even score of 7-6 to Peter after 8 games. The score moved to 9-6 Peter, and then in the 10th game John (white) doubles in this position:



According to Snowie this is a correct Double and Take. John has 57.4% chance to win the game included therein are 24.7% gam-



Peter Bennet

John Clark

mons. Both players are already playing at *Advanced* level so the match continued with Peter in possession of a dead cube.

On move 11, John is forced to leave a flyshot 65 and Peter hits it after which John never gets back into the game even though he does roll 55 and 66 - both of which can be fully played; thus destroying his timing. Peter wins the bearoff and walks away from the table adding UK Champion to his growing list of honours. As usual, John was his usual gracious self and was the first to genuinely congratulate Peter on a good match.

If you've never met JC and you bump into Ernie Pick on your travels, ask him to show you his impression of John at the table. He has got him down to a tee - even John was laughing at the depiction. MC

Consolation (54)

All the players that didn't make the cut on Saturday went into the progressive Consolation. As mentioned in the *little-read* Bibafax those players with the most wins on the Saturday got first bash at the byes. This turned out nicely

because the 26 byes went to those players with 2 & 3 wins (and of course, David Nathan with his four).

Someone not benefiting from a 1st Round bye was Rachel Rhodes. She had to play her way through six rounds to face her opponent from the progressive side. Her opponent was Ray Tannen who appeared in the Consolation via David

Startin from the Main. Due to the lateness of the hour it was agreed that they should play a truncated match which Ray went on to win.



Ray Tannen Rachel Rhodes

Suicide! (64)

Open draw, 3-point matches, lots of buy-backs. That's the way to do it. Taking full advantage of the buy-backs were Emmanuel di Bona and Lionel Stinnerman. Despite entering 9 times between them neither of them made it past the 2nd Round - but they did bump up the prize pool quite a bit! The most grateful player for their contributions was Simon Kennedy-Rose from Istanbul via the States. He met and beat John (Slats) Slatery in the final to take back to Turkey enough money if con-

verted to Turkish Lira to fill a suitcase



Simon Kennedy-Rose & Slats

Champion-of Champions (6)

A couple of no-entries somewhat devalued this diversion for the Sunday Qualifiers, but this didn't diminish the fervour in which it was fought. Ray Tannen was declared the C-o-C after despatching Julian Fetterlein, John Clark and David Startin in that order. A worthy Champion.

Friday KO (22)

Getting an early start to the weekend, Ray Tannen almost began with a victory. However it was denied him by Mike Greenleaf in the Final.

Monte Carlo Jackpot (8)

Well, they've started . . . but not completed; and it is all Ray Tannen's fault! He was in so many finals over the weekend that he didn't have time to play against Dave McNair in the MC Final - which is postponed until they next meet. In total Ray appeared in four finals out of the five events he entered - not bad at all.

Doubles (10)

The Beginners played true to form and went out in the 1st; *English Turkey* were stuffed in the same round, as were *Dice & Shakey* as they shook themselves off to an

early bed. *Harfur Chance* had a good chance to take home the loot but they were pushed back into 2nd place by *Can't Count, Won't Count* who couldn't and wouldn't and still won. Mind you, *Harfur Chance* did win the best name.

And finally. Overall it was a good tournament. Apart from the moans about the 5-pointers it was uneventful. I know we played to seven last year and it dragged on for so long that many of the players almost didn't get their dinner (it has to be early to avoid the Christmas Party bookings) so I shall have a rethink for 2003 and come up with something to placate the dissenters.

I'd like to thank the sponsors, **TrueMoneygames** for the generous prizes which included **Snowie 4** for the winner, \$\$\$\$ vouchers for online gambling on TrueMoneygames, **Backgammon Today** magazines and memberships to **PlaymakerWorld**. All the recipients were pleased to accept their well earned goodies.

Bright 'n' Breezy. 4/5 January

Report by Michael Crane

Whilst my own city of Lincoln, 210 miles north of Brighton, slept under a weekend blanket of soft, downy snow, Brighton basked in warm winter sunshine - for a change! The sea was calm and dazzlingly bright as the sunlight reflected off its surface and bounced into the bar and restaurant of the Brighton Metropole; bathing the one hundred and eleven entrants in reflected glory. Of those 111, many of them were themselves destined for glory of their own - a reflection of their playing skills and not that of Mother Nature gazing down at the seaside resort with unseasonable

affection.

Friday Knockout (54)

A great turnout for a Friday Warm-up tournament - I've directed smaller Main entries! Boosted by a fair influx of local players the event got off to a good start for some of them, but alas they couldn't sustain the momentum as the *outsiders* tossed them aside in their bid for glory.

The semi-finals saw a remarkable foursome - David Startin vs Julian Fetterlein, and Rachel Rhodes vs Tony Lee. By the strangest coincidence these four were the winners and runner-ups in the *Biba Grand Prix* and

Ranking Championships of last year! The odds of them all being drawn in separate quarters of the draw must be very high, but to end up in the semis together must be astronomical.

The final saw Julian facing Tony from which Julian emerged the glorious winner. *Tony must be the best Biba player never to win a tournament - will his luck change this year?*

Main (111)

Question: What is the connection between Santa Claus and Barry McAdam? Answer: You only see them once a year!

Barry has been entering the Bright 'n' Breezy since 1999, and up until this year his best placing was 1st in the 2002 Consolation. So, to better his last attempt he'd have to win the Main this year - or at least come 2nd.

Prior to 2003, Edwin Turner's highest claim to fame was as Losing Finalist in the 2002 Jarvis Trophy; so it was going to be major glory for one of these two in the Final.

Barry's passage was helped along by a 1st Round bye followed by the demolition of Dave Motley, Mike Main (*aka Mad Mike Monk*), Ricardo Falconi-Puig, and John Clark. No disrespect intended, but his fiercest opponent by far was JC, prolific winner of several events; a player feared and respected by his peers and one of the hardest players to beat currently playing the Biba circuit. The



Friday Foursome

match was a fantastic battle from which Barry emerged victorious after a match full of suspense. A match that John will be discussing for months to come!

Edwin's passage was by no means a doddle - he had to cope with Harry Bhatia, an on-form Nicky Check, and a determined David Startin.

The Final was a hard-fought affair with neither player really taking a commanding lead. Although I have recorded this match I have yet to transcribe it as a JellyFish or Snowie match file due to time constraints and the need for the rankings and data to be updated, however, in a few days time it shall emerge for your delight and delectation.



Barry McAdam & Edwin Turner

In this victory, Edwin has made Bristolian history. This is what Ian Tarr (Bristol BG Club) had to say on their website:

www.freenetpages.co.uk/hp/brisgammon/

Ed Turner today became the first Bristol player to win a national tournament, when he finished top of the pile at the BIBA Brighton Breezy. And the pile consisted of 111 players, including many of the highest ranked BIBA stalwarts. At least ten players with local connections attended the event, at the Hilton Metropole in Brighton, and three of those were still in contention after Saturday's play had whittled the contenders down to sixteen. Stuart Mann and Roland Herrera made little further progress on Sunday morning, but Ed fought his way past Harry Bhattia, Nick Check and Dave Startin before beating Barry McAdam in a nail-biting final. Ed obviously enjoys the sea air, as it was in this very tournament last year that Ed reached the semi-finals in what had hitherto been his career high spot. Ian Tarr.

Progressive Consolation (107)

With such a large entry it was inevitable that the occasional time

problem would bubble to the surface, but, despite a few protestations from a couple of players, the Final of this event ended almost at the same time as the Main - which is what I had hoped and planned for.

I don't know if the Consolation finalist, Francine Brandler has the soul of a poet but I do know she has the voice of one! Her soft American accent is so kind on the ears that even Ray Tannen cannot find fault with it! You would think that a combination of that delicious



Francine & Julian

drawl and striking good looks would melt the heart of any opponent - but you'd be wrong!

It didn't get the better of Julian Fetterlein, who emerged from the Progressive side thanks to David Startin. Julian, as always (or so it seems nowadays) played his way to yet another victory; this time taking the inaugural *Albert Tinker Memorial Consolation Trophy* as well as the usual 1st prize. He was reportedly polite and magnanimous in his victory and Francine was nonetheless delighted at being

Runner-up. Well done both of you.
Last Chance (64)

Yet another Bristolian player in a Final. This time it was Paul Watts playing against an excited Amir Mossanen. Amir had been so pleased to reach such dizzy heights that he continually took photographs of the drawsheet that charted his ascent to the top.



Paul Watts

Alas, Amir does not have photographic evidence of a 1st place; this went to Paul. Amir had to settle for Runner-up, which he did with much pride and enthusiasm.



Amir Mossanen

Tidal Wave (64)

The only wave seen throughout this weekend of outside calmness was the 3-pointer Tidal Wave.



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One player in particular was making a few waves of his own: Peter Bennet. He had promised to visit his mother during Sunday afternoon and had fully intended doing so after lunch - but he was persuaded to enter the Tidal Wave by Sharen; a decision he later was grateful for as he ended up in the Final.



Peter Christmas

he keeps in the boot of his car for the odd occasions he is unsuccessful in his legitimate attempts!



Peter Bennet

Double (32 teams)

The victim of at least one spelling mistake, *FCUK Backgammon* went out in the 2nd Round; *A Right Pier of Seaside Anchors* sank

head and she insisted on a team photograph to commemorate their victory - do not adjust your monitor, that really is her hair colour! *There's no 'f' in pier* consoled themselves with the Best Name and a bottle of wine.



Drop Said Red



www.TrueMoneygames.com

Christmas might come only once a year but *Peter Christmas* comes a lot more often. Playing in his umpteenth tournament, Peter faced Peter in the Final - and Peter won! Peter Christmas that is, Peter Bennet came Runner-up. Peter B, the *Harry Potter* of backgammon, is under instructions from his children to return home after each tournament with a trophy - which he always does. He either wins an official one or he resorts to a spare

without trace in the 2nd; and *French & Saunters* sauntered out in the 1st. In the semis, *Near Missus* missed out thanks to *Brighton Spelling Test: There's no 'f' in pier*; and *Bennet & I* fell to *Drop Said Red*.

In the Final, *There's no 'f' in pier* discovered that there is no *win* in *doubles* as *Drop Said Red* blew them away like their namesake. The win went straight to *Red's*

And finally . . .

I'd like to thank the one hundred and eleven players that showed up to play. I always enjoy Brighton and seeing friends/players that only come out at the seaside. I would like to hold all Biba tournaments there but I think there might be a few objections from any players north of Hatfield!



Now you can do it @....

Tournament Results

UK Finals 7/8 December 2002

Main (59/16)

1	Peter Bennet
2	John Clark
3/4	Jim Johnson
3/4	David Startin
5/8	Brian Lever
5/8	Felix Vink
5/8	Ray Tannen
5/8	Julian Fetterlein

Consolation (54)

1	Ray Tannen
2	Rachel Rhodes
3/4	Tim Mooring
3/4	Dave McNair
5/8	Dave Motley
5/8	Andrew Darby
5/8	Brian Lever
5/8	Brian Busfield

Suicide! (64)

1	Simon Kennedy Rose
2	John Slattery
3/4	Peter Fallows
3/4	Roland Herrera
5/8	Rosey Bensley
5/8	Liz Barker
5/8	Uldis Lapikens
5/8	Jeff Barber

Friday KO (22)

1	Mike Greenleaf
2	Ray Tannen
3/4	Lionel Stinnerman
3/4	Simon Kennedt Rose
5/8	Neil Young
5/8	Brian Busfield
5/8	Frank Conway
5/8	Paul Watts

Champion of Champions (6)

1	Ray Tannen
2	David Startin
3/4	Brian Busfield
3/4	John Clark

Doubles (10)

1	Can't Count, Won't Count
2	Harfur Chance
3/4	Bad Accent, Worse Accent
3/4	2-1s 4 Once

Best name: Harfur Chance

Bright 'n' Breezy 4/5 January 2003

Main (111)

1	Edwin Turner	20.3
2	Barry McAdam	10.2
3/4	David Startin	7.1
3/4	John Clark	7.1
5/8	Julian Fetterlein (see Con)	
5/8	Nicky Check	4.0
5/8	Dave McNair	4.0
5/8	Ricardo Falconi-Puig	3.0

Consolation (107)

1	Julian Fetterlein	8.2
2	Francine Brandler	6.1
3/4	Mark Lemon	5.0
3/4	Andrew Darby	3.0
5/8	Dod Davies	2.0
5/8	Tim Mooring	2.0
5/8	Roland Herrera	1.0
5/8	Mike Grabsky	1.0

Last Chance (64)

1	Paul Watts	6.1
2	Amir Mossanen	3.0
3/4	Chris Bray	1.0
3/4	Jordan Wensley	1.0
5/8	Myke Wignall	
5/8	Lawrence Powell	
5/8	Brian Walker	
5/8	Miles Illott	

Tidal Wave (64)

1	Peter Christmas	3.0
2	Peter Bennet	2.0
3/4	Monica Beckerson	
3/4	Dave Raynsford	
5/8	Karl Simpson	
5/8	John Thomas	
5/8	Simonetta Barone	
5/8	Emmeline Cullen	

Friday KO (54)

1	Julian Fetterlein
2	Tony Lee
3/4	David Startin
3/4	Rachel Rhodes
5/8	David Nathan
5/8	Arthur Musgrove
5/8	Mike Main
5/8	Charlie Hetherington

Doubles (32 teams)

1	Drop Said Red
2	There's no 'f' in peir
3/4	Near Missus
3/4	Bennet & I

Best Name: There's no 'f' in peir

January 2003 Grand Prix

(points / name)

20.30	Edwin Turner	6.10	Francine Brandler	3.00	Ricardo Falconi-Puig
10.20	Barry McAdam	5.00	Mark Lemon	2.00	Tim Mooring
8.20	Julian Fetterlein	4.00	Dave McNair	2.00	Dod Davies
7.10	John Clark	4.00	Nick Check	2.00	Peter Bennet
7.10	David Startin	3.00	Peter Christmas		
6.10	Paul Watts	3.00	Andrew Darby		



January 2003 Active Rankings

(new / old / name)

1982	1982	Paul Lamford	1616	1554	Barry McAdam	1477	1477	Stuart Parmley
1974	1949	John Clark	1614	1606	Peter Fallows	1475	1481	Simonetta Barone
1972	1917	Julian Fetterlein	1614	1614	Vincent Versteeg	1473	1495	Vianney Bourgios
1942	1942	Brian Lever	1613	1613	Mike Waxman	1472	1472	Arthur Williams
1910	1907	Dod Davies	1608	1608	Tim Wilkins	1468	1453	Liz Barker
1843	1855	Tony Lee	1603	1603	Roy Hollands	1465	1465	Kevin White
1812	1812	Richard Granville	1591	1591	Kerry Jackson	1462	1462	Neil Davidson
1790	1791	Jim Johnson	1589	1600	Alistair Hogg	1462	1462	Wayne Felton
1777	1777	Steve Hallet	1585	1610	Peter Christmas	1460	1460	Ernie Pick
1773	1749	Dave McNair	1581	1581	Simon K Jones	1451	1472	Monica Beckerson
1768	1773	Ray Tannen	1580	1564	Uldis Lapikens	1450	1450	John Renicks
1768	1713	David Startin	1578	1578	Steve Pickard	1447	1476	Will Richardson
1757	1745	Stuart Mann	1566	1514	Mark Lemon	1440	1440	Ian Shaw
1753	1752	Rachel Rhodes	1565	1573	John Thomas	1436	1457	Steven Reddi
1749	1744	Ralph Eskinazi	1561	1561	Nigel Briddon	1421	1426	David Naylor
1739	1751	Lawrence Powell	1559	1559	Shaun Herd	1420	1420	Kevin Carter
1738	1733	Dale Taylor	1557	1557	Jacek Brzezinski	1418	1418	Steve Malins
1726	1742	Brian Busfield	1553	1553	Simon Macbeth	1417	1417	Sarah Rosich
1721	1722	David Nathan	1549	1549	Phil Caudwell	1414	1414	Steve John
1720	1731	Mardi Ohannessian	1548	1548	Steve Rimmer	1414	1421	Jeremy Limb
1717	1717	Jeff Ellis	1542	1546	Mike Greenleaf	1410	1410	Julian Minwalla
1709	1709	Ian Tarr	1542	1542	James Vogl	1409	1409	Jerry Smith
1708	1708	David Gallagher	1538	1538	Bob Young	1400	1408	Nick Hamar
1700	1686	Harry Bhatia	1537	1491	Tim Mooring	1399	1377	Michael Main
1697	1697	Emmanuel Di Bona	1535	1548	Eddie Barker	1399	1405	Leslie Singleton
1694	1704	Mike Grabsky	1533	1533	Jim Moore	1396	1407	Andrew Sarjeant
1694	1690	Jeff Barber	1528	1528	Matthew Fisher	1390	1352	Paul Gilbertson
1688	1688	John Hurst	1527	1527	Mike Butterfield	1388	1388	Cliff Connick
1681	1681	John Slattery	1519	1534	David Hale	1388	1373	Paul Watts
1680	1690	Graham Brittain	1518	1469	Roland Herrera	1378	1385	Colin Laight
1670	1645	Raj Jansari	1516	1516	John Wright	1372	1372	Malcolm Hey
1664	1664	Rodney Lighton	1510	1538	Tom Duggan	1368	1389	Neil Young
1662	1662	Stephen Drake	1509	1524	Paul Christmas	1355	1355	Cath Kennedy
1659	1650	Arthur Musgrove	1506	1520	Alan Beckerson	1346	1346	Tony Fawcett
1644	1661	Helen Helm-Sagar	1502	1491	Mike Heard	1340	1357	Rebecca Bell
1641	1639	Paul Turnbull	1501	1521	Dave Motley	1336	1336	Don Hatt
1641	1535	Edwin Turner	1500	1500	John Napier	1336	1343	Mike Wignall
1640	1610	Nick Check	1496	1496	Paul Barwick	1326	1354	Sue Perks
1640	1647	Charlie Hetherington	1493	1493	David Fall	1316	1316	John P Lewis
1635	1635	Connor Dickinson	1491	1491	Peter Chan	1291	1291	Rosey Bensley
1635	1635	Kevin Stebbing	1484	1502	Raymond Kershaw	1277	1277	Bob Parmley
1634	1634	Bill Pope	1481	1505	Hubert De L'Epine	1264	1287	Jon Sharpe
1628	1591	Francine Brandler	1479	1479	Martin Hemming	1190	1213	Paul Sambell
1624	1608	Peter Bennet	1478	1478	Anthony Coker			

January 2003 1000-to1

Michael Brereton	12	Murat Imamoglu	6	Rodney Lighton	4
Salvador Leong	7	Ernie Pick	5	Martin Sloane	4
Edwin Turner	7	Ray Mitchell	4	Freddy Mossanen	4
Willy Stanton	6	Glen Bollington	4		

January 2003 Pending Rankings

1725 Simon Barget	1499 Miles Ilott	1428 George Plant
1721 Brendan Burgess	1489 David McNamara	1428 Peter Murrell
1666 Richard Beagarie	1485 Kevin Williams	1425 Ian Sadler
1608 Corinne Sellers	1483 Sunni Nicholson	1425 Rowland Brindley
1602 James Hatt	1474 Brendan Bemsley	1404 Evan Williams
1574 Simon Gasquoine	1472 Blaine Buchanan	1396 Alan Greenwood
1574 Dave Robbins	1470 Steve Lynch	1381 Rebecca Brindley
1568 Ricardo Falconi-Puig	1468 Suart Dewis	1377 Alison Hobbs
1533 Mark McCluskey	1467 Lorenzo Rusconi	1376 Tony Pryor
1527 Theo	1465 Tim Brown	1368 Peter Wilson
1525 Amir Mossanen	1459 Roz Nathan	1366 Amy Woodward
1520 Kyriacous Kyriacou	1453 Elliot Smart	1354 Richard Winston
1510 Ian Hill	1450 David Winston	1351 Liz Makepeace
1509 Melvyn Abrahams	1442 Johan Salfors	1326 Martin Blindell
1505 Daphne Smith	1435 Grant Dewsbury	

January 2003 Ranking Championship (3 or more played)

(played / average / name)

7 2077.43 Edwin Turner	4 1893.00 Roland Herrera	3 1765.33 Peter Fallows
6 2020.17 David Startin	4 1859.75 Stuart Mann	3 1761.33 Mike Main
6 1923.17 John Clark	4 1792.00 Harry Bhatia	3 1722.33 Arthur Musgrove
6 1914.17 Barry McAdam	4 1744.50 R. Falconi-Puig	3 1710.67 John Hurst
5 1921.00 Dave McNair	3 1810.33 Mike Heard	3 1676.33 Ralph Eskinazi
5 1897.40 Julian Fetterlein	3 1788.00 Dale Taylor	3 1643.33 Spencer Close
5 1853.00 Nick Check	3 1786.67 Patrick O'Connor	3 1625.33 Tim Mooring
4 1913.50 Ann Pocknell	3 1784.33 Liz Barker	3 1622.33 Raj Jansari
4 1893.50 Paul Gilbertson	3 1781.67 Peter Bennet	3 1586.67 Karl Simpson

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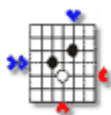
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