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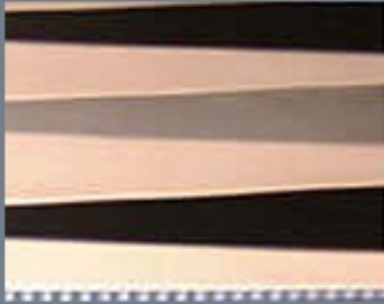
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**Ian Shaw - Champion
At-A-Glance British Open**

Full report on page 52

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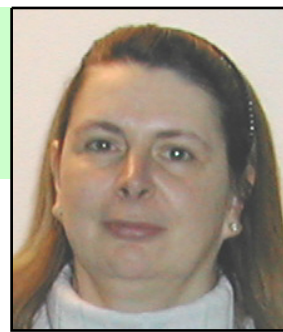
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Scottish Open Final Peter Chan vs Rosey Bensley

Analysis by Michael Crane & Snowie 4.



The Scottish Open final saw two outsiders playing for this major title. Peter Chan (white) and Rosey Bensley (black) had both beaten all before them and had rightly earned their places. Without taking anything from either player, at the start of the competition you could have got some very good odds on this pair being finalists. Certainly on paper and according to the ranking scores there were far 'better' players in the field. In fact, Rosey beat one of the favourites, John Slattery, in her first round!

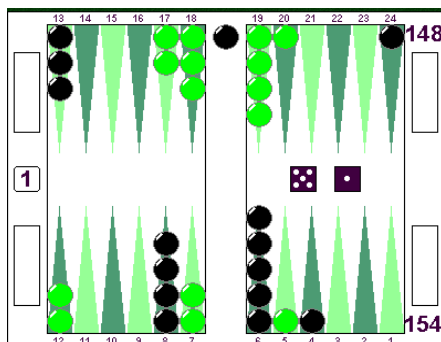
Snowie rated them both overall as Beginners; in a match that had 80 errors, 32 of which were blunders (an equity loss of 0.110 or greater).

I have taken a look at those blunders using Snowie 4 and I've attempted to direct the two finalists towards the correct play at the same time pointing out (in my opinion) why their plays were incorrect.

I have set all plays at 3-ply and have not rolled out any of the positions. It is possible that a rollout might slightly alter the equities of some of the moves but not enough that the analysis would be wildly wrong.

11 point match Game 1

Chan : 0 **Bensley : 0**
01) 52: 13/8 13/11
02) 66: 24/18(2) 13/7(2) 43: 11/4
03) 63: 13/7 8/5 11: 24/20*
04) 51: 25/20 6/5*

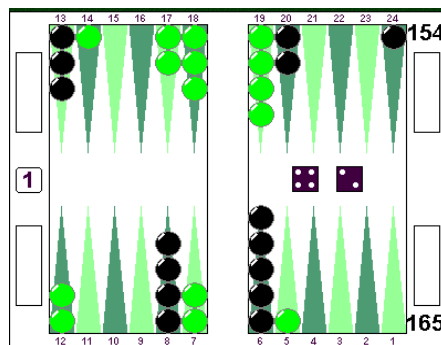


51: 25/20* 4/3
The actual play here of 25/20* 4/3 is too passive. It is far better to go for the double hit - it will stop white making the black 5-point, and at the same time increase black's chances of making white's 5-point.

Two in the air is often the correct play.

Equity loss 0.150 Play 3.

05) 21: 25/22* 41: 25/20
06) 65: 22/11



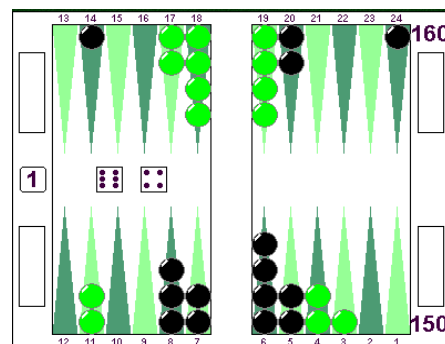
42: 20/14*
Hitting from the 20-point is very wrong here. It vacates the most valuable anchor on the board and gives white a good few chances to make a similar anchor. Black needs to make another point here, and therefore 8/4 6/4 is best.

Rarely hit from the 5- (20-) point unless you have a spare checker. It is too valuable to vacate lightly.

Equity loss 0.106. Play No.3

Technically, not a blunder, but it is a common mistake.

07) 42: 25/21 13/11* 42: 25/23 24/20
08) 52: 20/13 64: 20/14* 8/4*
09) 64: 25/21* 53: 25/20 23/20
10) 32: 25/22 13/11* 11: 25/24 13/12* 6/5(2)
11) 44: 25/21 18/14(2) 11/7 66: 20/14 13/7(2) 12/6



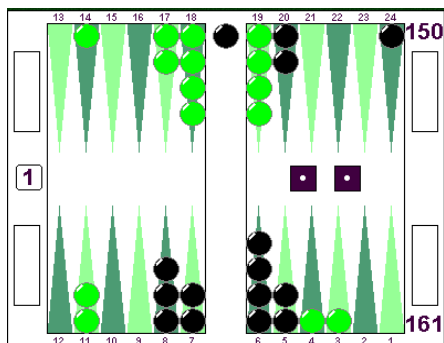
12) 64: 21/11*
Black's last four checkers will have to start moving round soon, so hitting one back 21/11* will only delay her and at the same time vacate the only anchor in her home-board. The better play by a long chalk is to keep all the occupied points intact and play 22/12. Getting hit back isn't that big a deal.

Don't break off good anchors for a useless hit.

Equity loss 0.120. Play 3.

Continued on the next page





11: 25/23 5/4*(2)

Well, it's happened. Re-entry and hits. But, the passive play of 25/23 5/4*(2) doesn't really harm white. It would have been far better to have gone for the double hit, 25/24 6/4*/3*. White has left three blots on and black should be looking to scoop them all up. If you can, always try to put two in the air.

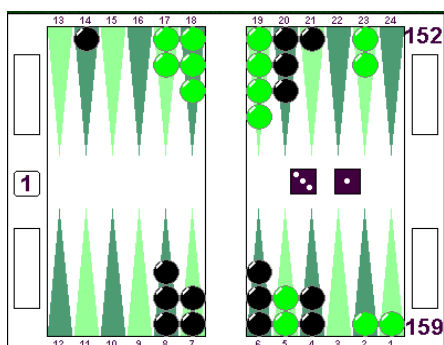
Two in the air . . .

Equity loss 0.373. Play 5.

13) 52: 25/20 22/20 63: 23/14*
14) 42: 25/23 7/3 42: 6/2* 24/22*
15) 21: 25/23* 25/24

51: 25/20 22/21

16) 66: 14/2(2)



31: 6/2*

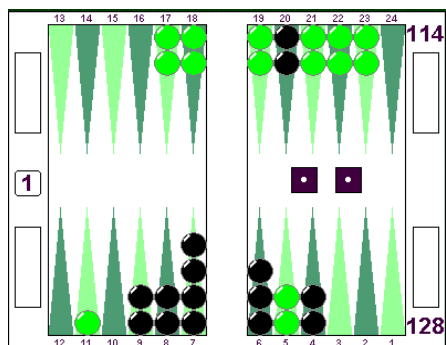
Playing 6/2* only gives white more chances of getting another checker on the 20-point anchor; without which it becomes stripped if a blot presents itself. Black should play 21/20 and ensure she can't be hit and pointed on, and then tease the white 20-point by playing 14/11. Although white will almost certainly hit with a six it isn't what he'd prefer to do.

When nothing better presents itself, try to tease checkers off a

good anchor.

Equity loss 0.113. Play 6.

17) 51: 25/20 24/23* 31: 25/21
18) 54: 20/11* 64: 25/21 20/14*
19) 63: 25/16 21: 8/6 21/20
20) 64: 16/6 51: 20/14
21) 43: 7/3 23/20 61: 21/15 21/20
22) 61: 20/13 31: 15/12* 14/13
23) 21: 25/24 6/4 61: 20/14 13/12
24) 42: 24/20 6/4 52: 14/7
25) 41: 20/15 54: 12/7 14/10*
26) 53: 25/20 6/3 31: 12/9 10/9
27) 51: 20/14



11: 9/8(2) 4/3(2)

White is running out of time here. He needs to roll 5s or 6s to escape the back checkers else his prime might crumble. With this in mind black should keep holding the prime intact and simply shift points from 4- to 2-. Instead she moves off the 9-point with two checkers and shifts to the 3-point. This play greatly increases whites escaping chances.

Don't break a holding-prime if you can move behind instead.

Equity loss 0.129. Play 11.

28) 54: 20/15 20/16 21: 7/5 6/5
29) 61: 14/8 16/15 64: 8/2 7/3
30) 53: 15/7 62: 8/2 8/6
31) Doubles to 2 Takes
32) 54: 15/6 63: 7/1 8/5
33) 66: 8/2(3) 7/1 51: 6/1 5/4
34) 32: 6/1 11: 7/4 3/2
35) 43: 7/3 7/4 62: 20/12
36) 11: 2/0 1/0(2) 52: 12/5
37) 54: 6/1 6/2 54: 20/11
38) 54: 4/0(2) 52: 11/6 2/0
39) 43: 4/0 3/0 22: 4/0 2/0(2)
40) 62: 3/0 2/0 65: 6/0 5/0
41) 62: 3/0 2/0

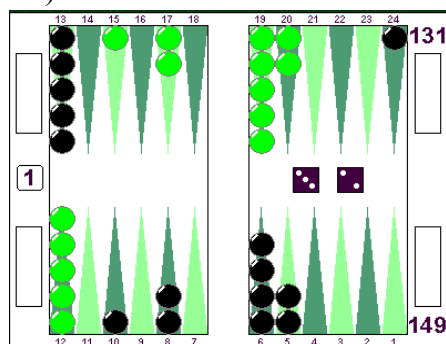
Wins 2 points

Game 2

Chan : 2

Bensley : 0

01) 64: 24/18 13/9
02) 44: 24/16* 24/16
55: 25/10 18/13
03) 65: 16/10 16/11 31: 8/5 6/5
04) 63: 11/5 8/5



32: 8/5 24/22

The black back checker looks like a liability for Rosey, but it isn't. It is an asset, being her only chance of hitting a blot. Therefore it is of more use on the 24-point than anywhere else for the moment. Black played 8/5 24/22 which allowed white to play 4s and 5s over the blot to the 22-point, at the same time breaking off a point for no gain whatsoever. The correct play here is to move 13/10 and make a *building point* and slot the 4-point. If the back checker does hit a blot later, home-board points will be vital in keeping it on the bar.

Try to make as many home-board points as you can when you have lost the runners; you'll need to keep them in should you get the hit later.

Equity loss 0.139. Play 16.

05) 65: 13/2 55: 13/3(2)
06) 11: 6/3* 3/2 53: 25/22 13/8
07) 63: 13/7 10/7 42: 8/4 6/4
08) 32: 13/8 51: 22/16
09) 11: 8/6 7/6(2) 41: 16/11
10) 21: 8/5 52: 13/8 13/11
11) 42: 13/9 13/11 42: 10/6 8/6
12) 66: 11/5 9/3 8/2 6/0

Rolls that are lucky (or unlucky)

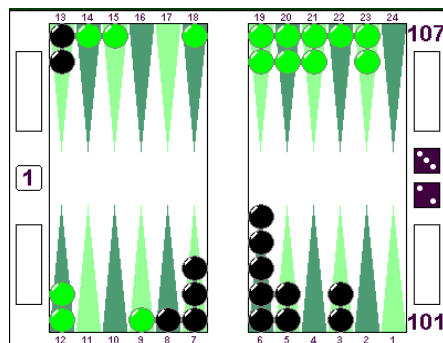


are deemed jokers by Snowie. Peter's renowned luck kicks in with his first joker, a timely double six putting him 24 pips ahead and ready for a double (and drop) next roll.

63: 11/5 8/5
13) Doubles to 2
Wins 1 point

Game 3

Chan : 3 **Bensley : 0**
01) 65: 24/13
02) 64: 8/2 6/2 65: 24/13
03) 51: 13/8 6/5 53: 8/3 6/3
04) 41: 8/4 6/5 41: 13/8
05) 32: 13/10 13/11 54: 13/8 13/9
06) 31: 8/4 21: 9/7 8/7
07) 43: 10/3 43: 13/6
08) 63: 24/15 62: 13/7 8/6
09) 51: 15/10 8/7 31: 8/5 6/5
10) 53: 24/16



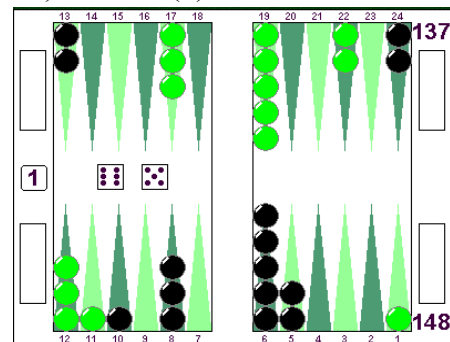
Before her next roll, a 41, Rosey missed a great opportunity to double. By not doubling now she has lost 0.146 equity. However, this is based upon the premise that Peter would take (which is the correct action). However Rosey hits and waits a roll and then doubles . . .

41: 13/9* 9/8
11) 53: Doubles to 2
12) Drops Wins 1 point

. . . only to be too good. This is now a no double/pass. Peter quite correctly passes.

Game 4

Chan : 3 **Bensley : 1**
01) 43: 13/9 13/10
02) 54: 24/15* 43: 25/21 13/10*
03) 65: 25/14 54: 10/5 9/5
04) 55: 13/3(2) 65: 21/10



05) 65: 14/8 13/8
White decides to load his 8-point by playing 14/8 13/8 which is very cumbersome and unnecessary. If the 14-point blot must be moved then it should be moved to the 9-point. This move is a simple runner to the mid-point. It only leaves black 11 shots to hit the blot, which, if it's missed, will put white in a good position. If it is



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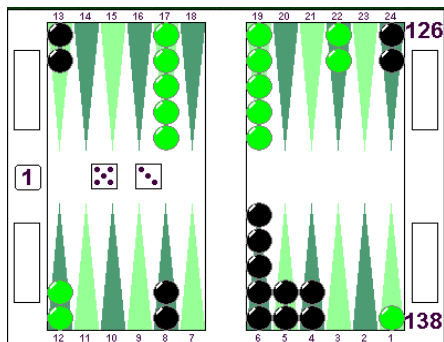
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possible to leave indirect builders then do so in preference to loading an existing point.

Almost anything else is better than stacking - certainly when the home-board is so poor.

Equity loss 0.378. Play 3.

64: 10/4 8/4

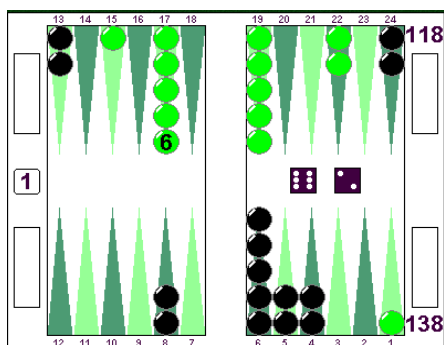


06) 53: 13/8 13/10

White decides to completely abandon his lone runner and move 13/8 13/10. Now the poor back man has to run 14 pips to safety - a tall order! It might look ugly but the only alternative is to play two checkers to the 3-point. The mid-point anchor is too valuable to give up.

Never leave a checker behind to fend for itself, always try to have at least one point on which it can land safely.

Equity loss 0.187. Play 2.



62: 13/5

Black has two objectives here:

- i Escape the runners
- ii Stop the white back checker from escaping

Playing 13/5 will not achieve either. It might look good as a home-

board builder, but it's sixes that'll be rolled to escape the lone whitey - and two of them will hit.

At the moment, white has a two-point board and therefore now is the time to poke your head out and run. If you get hit back it could well turn out to be in your favour with the establishment of an advanced anchor.

Try not to play checkers past a point you want to make.

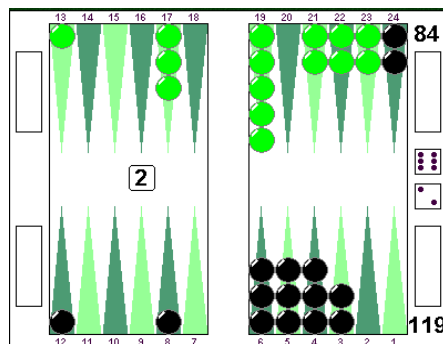
Equity loss 0.201. Play 4.

07) 64: 10/4 8/4 21: 6/4 13/12

08) 66: 24/12 8/2(2)

Peter's second 66 joker! Joker score 2-0 to Peter.

53: 8/3 6/3



09) Doubles to 2

Takes Peter correctly doubles here, but Rosey makes a massive error and takes! She is 36 pips behind in the race (approx. 4.5 rolls) and will have a few moves to play before any potential hit and to perfect her home-board prime but the likelihood of a hit is too small and the take very risky.

Peter's checkers are well poised on the top of his board and he is favourite to bearoff safely; with almost 84% chance of winning the point. Sometimes it helps to see the board from your opponent's point of view.

Ask yourself if you were your opponent, what would you like. If it helps, get up and go around the table and look!

Equity loss 0.486.

10) 65: 12/6 8/3 41: 8/3

11) 33: 8/5(2) 6/3(2) 63: 12/6 5/2

12) 44: 6/2(3) 52: 6/1 4/2

13) 62: 5/0 5/3 63: 24/15

14) 53: 4/0 3/0 63: 15/9 24/21*

Rosey rolls a great joker. Joker score 2-1 to Peter.

15) 65: 43: 9/5 21/18

16) 31: 25/24* 32:

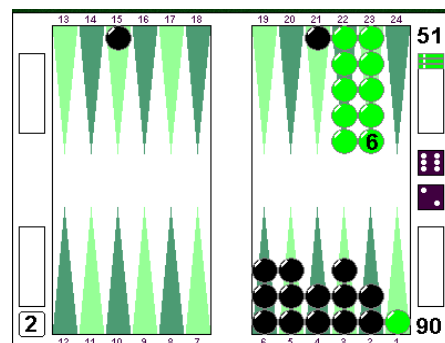
Rosey dances on a two-point board. Another joker for Peter. Joker score 3-1 to Peter.

17) 53:

Rosey replies with a joker, Peter is unable to make any move at all. Joker score 3-2 to Peter.

43: 25/21 18/15

18) 55:



A great opportunity to redouble to four here and Rosey lets it go by. Peter has only borne off three checkers and the odds are on her next roll that Rosey will be able to hit (and even cover) the last white runner. This is a redouble/drop.

She actually rolls 44 and is able to hit the blot; however, she might not have been able to hit, and Peter might have rolled 66 and pinched it off her.

When left with one checker, hit it as often as you can and try to get a second back if possible.

Don't let a double/drop pass by. If you don't double them out when you should do then don't complain when they roll the

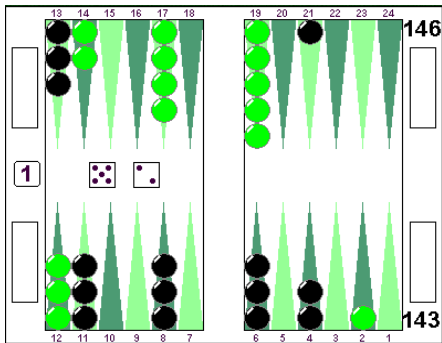
joker and go ahead.

Equity loss by not doubling 0.122.

19) 43: Doubles to 4
20) Drops **Wins 2 points**
Game 5

Chan : 3 **Bensley : 3**

01) 52: 13/8 13/11
32: 24/21 13/11
02) 65: 24/13 22: 13/11(2) 6/4(2)
03) 21: 13/11 24/23 65: 24/13



04) 52: 13/6
The last thing the 6-point needs here is another checker. Five is too many, six is well to many - but white doesn't think so!

Moving 8/3 helps lessen the load on the 8- and aids the making of the 3-point; moving 13/11 gives a spare checker in the outer-board for hitting/pointing if needed.

When you can't find a point making or blot hitting move, try to shift a few checkers off the heavy points.

Equity loss 0.117. Play 5.

65: 21/10
05) 53: 23/15* 54: 25/21 11/6
06) 55: 15/5 8/3(2) 65: 11/5 13/8
07) 31: 6/3 6/5

11: 11/10 8/7(2) 6/5
08) 22: 11/9(2) 6/4*(2)

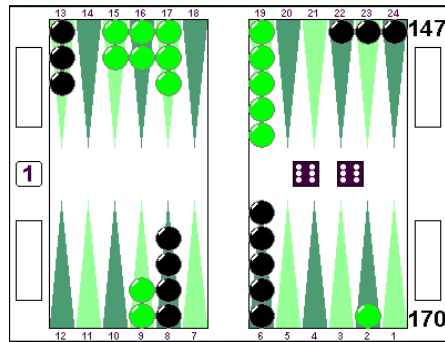
22: 25/23 10/4
09) 53: 9/4 9/6 66: 8/2(2) 7/1(2)

10) Doubles to 2 Drops
Wins 1 point

Game 6

Chan : 4 **Bensley : 3**

01) 32: 13/10 13/11 41: 13/9 24/23
02) 62: 24/16* 54: 25/20 13/9*
03) 32: 25/23 13/10 42: 20/14*
04) 63: 25/16* 63: 25/22 14/8
05) 44: 24/16 13/9(2)

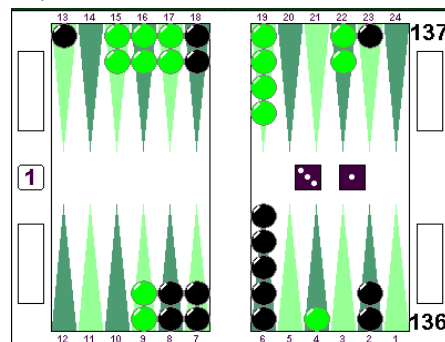


66: 13/7(2) 8/2*(2)
Hitting on the 2-point is clearly correct, but, taking two off the mid- to cover the bar-point only gives up the valuable blocking mid-point for a small gain. It is far better to keep the mid-point and bring another builder around from the 24-point. White might hit the 12-point blot but, with a one-point board, this isn't a problem for black.

Don't give up blocking points to make others unless the point you're making is worth having and risk free.

Equity loss 0.114. Play 3.

06) 31: 25/21 64: 24/18 22/18
07) 53: 8/3 6/3



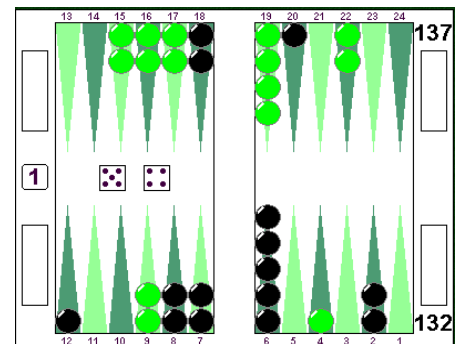
31: 23/20 13/12
White is going to find it difficult to make another point or play into his home-board because of the blot on his 2-point. This annoying blot is white's best hope of a hit. If it's moved up to the 20-point it'll allow black to play over it and safely

home without risk. Therefore black's play of 23/20 13/12 is wrong.

At the moment neither side has a home-board worth a jot, and therefore hits to the bar aren't so painful. Now is the time for Black to make the important 5-point playing 8/5 6/5. It looks dangerous, but with an even race it isn't.

The 5-point is a point for life! And don't allow your opponent to make safe plays over your head . . . unless you want them too!

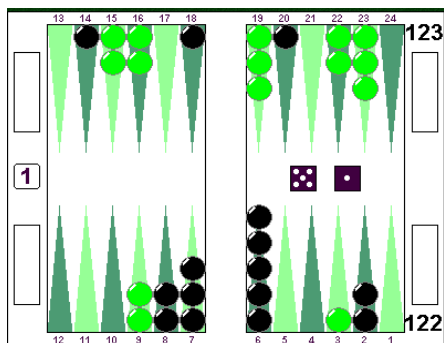
Equity loss 0.252. Play 8.



08) 54: 21/16 6/2
Black's home-board is too poor not to take advantage of. Pointing 10/5* 9/5 is far superior to the safe played move of 21/16 6/2. The safe play doesn't achieve much whereas the attacking play makes a great point and it is possible that black could dance, further enhancing the play.

Take advantage of a poor home-board to make points and/or hit.
Equity loss 0.285. Play 2.

65: 20/14 12/7
09) 65: 8/2 16/11*
54: 25/20 18/14*
10) 63: 25/22 8/2



51: 8/3* 3/2

Blacks pick-and-pass move of 8/3* 3/2 is just an annoyance to white and, with nothing else for black to pick up, all it does is clear a good point, the 8-point.

Making the mid-point (which is a good blocking point as well as a safe haven for the runners) is by far the better play.

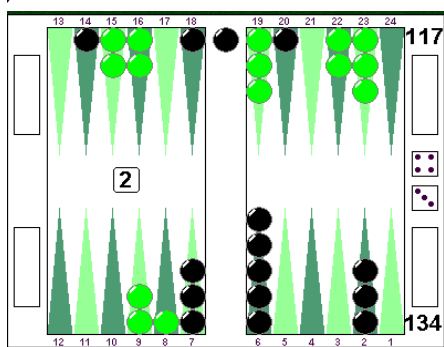
Ask yourself, can I make a point? If the answer is yes and it's a good point, make it!

Equity loss 0.262. Play 3.

11) 53: 25/17*

63:

Rosey dances on a three-point board and gives Peter another joker. Joker score 4-2 to Peter.



12) Doubles to 2
Wins 1 point

White seems to panic and throws away the cube on a definite no double/pass. Rosey, quite correctly drops. Peter throws away almost half a point by doubling.

Put yourself in your opponent's position. From there you can often see their reply to an action.

Equity loss 0.496.

Game 7

Chan : 5

Bensley : 3

01) 21: 13/11 24/23

52: 13/8 13/11

02) 63: 23/14*

55: 25/15 6/1* 6/1

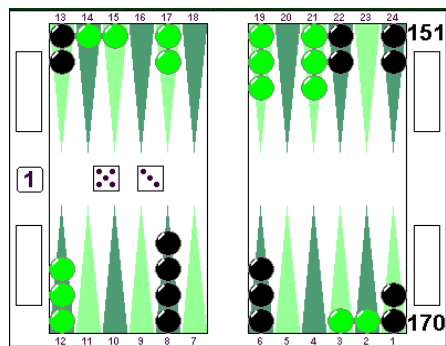
03) 22: 25/23 13/11 6/4(2)

32: 13/11* 11/8

04) 31: 25/22 11/10*

43: 25/22 6/2*

05) 42: 25/23* 8/4 32: 25/22 8/6



06) 53: 11/6 13/10

The actual play 13/10 11/6 isn't that bad, however, this is a missed opportunity to make the *Golden Point*, as Magriel puts it, the 5-point.

OK, making the 5-point leaves a return shot with 5s and 61, but remember this; once you've made your 5-point you almost never clear it until the bearoff - it becomes a fixed point and is well worth the risk in this instance. Does white really care if black breaks off the 22-point anchor to hit?

Magriel knows what he's talking about. More often than not, make the 5-point if you can - especially when your opponent has a very poor home-board.

Equity loss 0.126. Play 2.

62: 24/18 24/22

07) 62: 13/7* 13/11

66:

Another two-point board and another dance for Rosey. Joker score 5-2 to Peter.

08) 64: 22/16 11/7

41: 25/24 13/9*

09) Doubles to 2

Takes

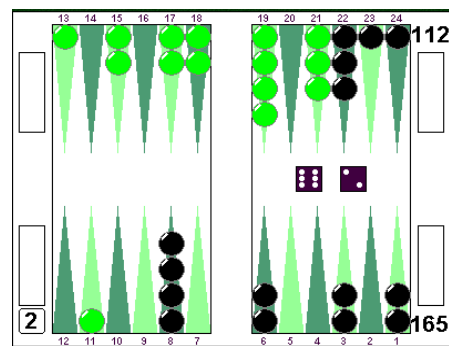
10) 42: 25/21 23/21

51: 9/3

11) 54: 21/12*

32: 25/23 6/3

12) 61: 21/14



62: 8/2 8/6

Slotting the 2-point here is of no use, even if it does help clear a heavy point. The next point(s) to make are the 5- and 4-points, in that order if possible. The two played 8/6 is correct.

Shift the spare checker off the 22-point with the six. If it gets hit back you have a good chance of making another anchor.

Try to make your home-board points in descending order from the 6-point. Fill any gaps as soon as you can.

Equity loss 0.120. Play 5.

13) 62: 14/8 12/10 41: 6/2 24/23

14) 64: 10/4 8/4

33: 23/20(2) 8/5(2)

15) 54: 6/1 6/2

42: 22/16

16) 22: 10/6(2)

52: 16/9

17) 52: 6/1 4/2

64: 20/14 20/16

18) 62: 8/2 8/6

64: 14/4

19) 63: 7/1 7/4

41: 9/4

20) 31: 4/0

21: 16/13

21) 64: 6/0 6/2

62: 13/5

22) 21: 2/0 1/0

54: 22/13

23) 43: 4/0 4/1

32: 13/8

24) 53: 6/1 6/3*

52: 25/18

It might not appear one but this is a joker for Rosey - it helps avoid the gammon. Joker score 5-3 to Peter.

25) 51: 4/0 1/0

52: 18/13 8/6

26) 41: 4/0 1/0

21: 13/10

27) 53: 3/0 2/0

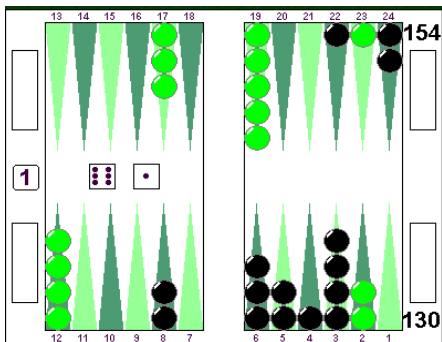
43: 10/6 3/0



28) 21: 2/0 1/0
Wins 2 points

Game 8

Chan : 7 Bensley : 3
01) 52: 13/8 13/11
02) 21: 13/11 24/23
33: 8/5(2) 6/3(2)
03) 64: 24/14* 32: 25/22 13/11*
04) 43: 25/21 11/8 43: 11/4*
05) 62: 25/23 8/2 55: 13/3(2)
Double five joker. Joker score 6-3 to Peter.

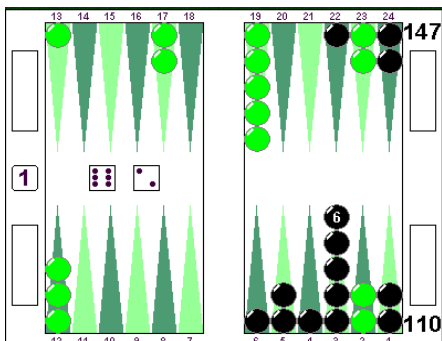


06) 61: 8/2 13/12
Do not make the 2-point. It is of no use to you at all, it would be better if the blot there was re-circulated and put back into the game. The best move here should be obvious - make the bar-point.

Ask yourself, can I make a point....

Equity loss 0.169. Play 3.

55: 8/3(2) 6/1(2)
Double five joker. Joker score 7-3 to Peter.



07) 62: 12/6 23/21*
It is quite obvious that the 2 is played 23/21*; but what about the six?

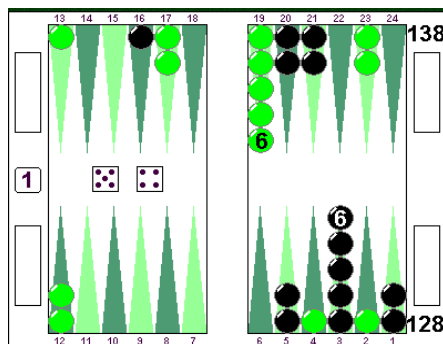
Well, the last place you want to

put it is on the 6-point; on top of the other five! The best 6 is to move the back checker and prepare to repel the last three black checkers as they scramble for home. Very soon black's home-board will crunch - and white has to make another point at least before he becomes any sort of a threat.

Don't stack on points. Keep your checkers well distributed.

Equity loss 0.113. Play 3.

44: 25/21 24/20(2) 6/2*
08) 21: 25/23* 13/12
64: 25/21 22/16



09) 54: 13/8 13/9*
White plays an unnecessary hit and once again stacks on top of an existing point. Hitting here will not make much difference to black, the two-point board doesn't pose much of a threat. (although Rosey's record of two-point dances is impressive!).

All white needs to do is be patient and try to attack in his home-board. Playing 12/8 will be a useful builder for this, and 23/18 will further enhance his chances of a hit in the outer-board. If white thinks he'll get a hit in black's home-board he's mistaken - whilst black has five checkers to move elsewhere, she'll not be moving any at home.

Recognise where the battle will be enjoined. Staying back to pick up home-board blots must be a realistic ploy.

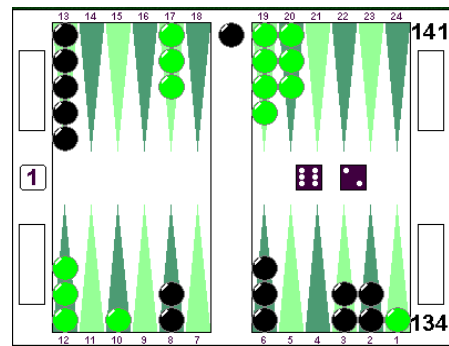
Equity loss 0.172. Play 7.

41: 25/24 20/16*
10) 21: 25/23 6/5* 22:
Again, a two-point board dance for Rosey. Joker score 8/3 to Peter. This is the last joker roll for either player and it proves beyond doubt that Peter is a lucky player!!!

11) 21: 21/19 6/5 51: 25/24 21/16
12) Doubles to 2 Drops
Wins 1 point

Game 9

Chan : 8 Bensley : 3
01) 64: 8/2 6/2
02) 21: 13/10 65: 24/13
03) 51: 10/5 6/5 63: 24/15
04) 62: 13/7 24/22 53: 8/3* 6/3
05) 52: 25/20 7/5 65: 15/9 13/8
06) 41: 20/16* 16/15



62: 25/23 8/2
The 6, what do you do with the 6? Well playing 8/2 is a waste of a move and gains nothing if the blot is hit. It is far better here to slot the bar-point and, if missed then there are excellent chances to make it next roll. Even if the blot is hit it can become useful in making an anchor.

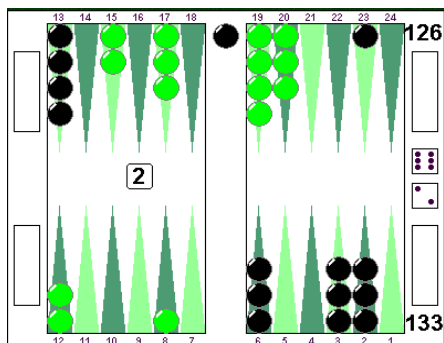
Don't waste a roll by being afraid of being hit. Look at the opponent's home-board and assess the risk first.

Equity loss 0.127. Play 2.

07) 53: 15/10 13/10 64: 13/3
08) 43: 24/17* 65:

Continued on the next page





09) Doubles to 2 Takes
This is far too good to double and a massive pass. Had Rosey correctly passed it would have cost Peter 0.052; instead Rosey has lost 0.256 equity by taking.

Why is it a drop (if doubled)? Black has two checkers back - one on the bar - and white is on roll and threatening to make another good point. Plus he has some great gammon chances and a gammon at this score will mean a match victory for white.

Why isn't it a double? White has a 29% chance of a gammon from this position. Look at it this way: 100 games. If black drops each time then white wins 100 points; if

white does not double then he wins 2 points $\times 29 = 58$, plus $71 \times 1 = 129$ points.

As it turned out, white was down to any double to win the gammon (move 26), 16.66%; which is better than 0%. Fortunately for Rosey, Peter rolled 31.

At 3-away against you be very wary of accepting doubles. Look out for gammon (and therefore match) losses. If you do accept you must always be aware of the recube to four. At this match score if your winning chances look to be better than 25% you should consider the recube.

Equity loss 0.256

10) 51: 17/11	61: 25/24 13/7
11) 41: 11/7 8/7	21: 24/22 23/22
12) 61: 10/4 5/4	11: 7/5 6/5 2/1
13) 63: 13/7 13/10	41: 13/9 13/12
14) 32: 10/7 10/8	21: 3/1 13/12
15) 31: 8/4	53: 12/4
16) 43: 8/4 8/5	21: 9/6
17) 55: 7/2(4)	32: 12/9 6/4
18) 64: 6/0 4/0	54: 6/1 6/2

19) 32: 4/1 2/0	63: 22/13
20) 61: 6/0 5/4	52: 13/6
21) 31: 4/0	42: 9/3
22) 21: 2/0 1/0	43: 6/2 5/2
23) 32: 4/1 4/2	22: 5/1 4/2(2)
24) 44: 6/2(2) 5/1(2)	42: 22/16
25) 44: 2/0(4)	53: 16/8
26) 31: 2/0 1/0	

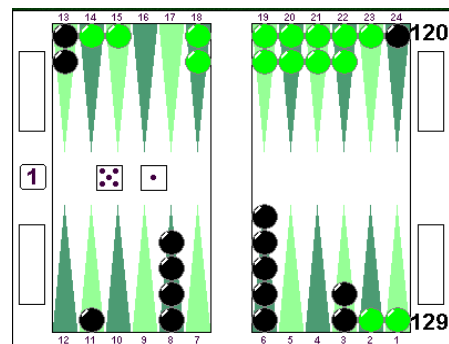
Wins 2 points

Game 10

Chan : 10

Bensley : 3

01)	62: 24/18 13/11
02) 42: 8/4 6/4	52: 18/11
03) 33: 8/5(2) 6/3(2)	52: 13/8 13/11
04) 51: 13/8 24/23	51: 11/6 24/23
05) 42: 8/2*	33:
06) 33: 13/7(2)	31: 25/24 11/8
07) 32: 13/10 13/11	53: 8/3 6/3



08) 51: 10/4

Moving 10/4 isn't a bad move although it does come out at Play 8. If black rolls a 1 she's going to hit the blot, so, getting your hit in first won't make any difference to that. If she does re-enter on a 1, her two-point board is nothing to fear and she'll still need another 1 to have any chance of escaping the prime.. If she re-enters with a 62 and runs out you'll have plenty of shots at the blot.

Sometimes, when you are hit with a roll no matter what you do, it is a good idea to consider hitting first.

Equity loss 0.177. Play 8.

	21: 13/11 24/23*
09) 62: 25/23 11/5	43: 13/9 6/3
10) 42: 24/20 4/2*	53:
11) 53: 23/18 5/2	62:

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12) 33: 23/20 18/9 55:
 13) 53: 20/12 61: 25/24 11/5*
 14) 31: 25/21 64: 11/5 8/4*
 15) 11: 25/24 9/6 42: 8/4 6/4
 16) 11: 12/8 41: 6/2 3/2
 17) 66: 24/12 7/1* 7/1 66:
 18) 66: 12/0 8/2 6/0 66:
 19) 42: 6/2 6/4 63: 25/16
 20) 43: 4/0 3/0 51: 16/11 8/7
 21) 65: 5/0(2)

Wins 1 point and the match

So, a game of errors and blunders from each side. Hopefully this analysis will be of use in explaining the whys and wherefores of correct play. Often we analyse the matches of the top players and try to learn from their example; here we can learn just as much.

My thanks to Peter and Rosey for

their contribution towards this article and I hope they have found it of value.

Here on the right are the Snowie detailed stats.

Peter was the just the favourite, but not by a lot. Overall they were very close. Peter never made any Take Errors, simply because the cube was offered at the wrong time for any real decisions.

<u>Match detailed statistics</u>		
Player	Bensley	Chan
Rating	World Class	World Class
Overall	13.273/27.219	13.488/26.175
Errors(blunders)	38(17)	42(15)
Checker play errors		
Checker play	8.438/17.115	9.747/19.027
Errors(blunders)	24(11)	32(10)
Double errors		
Overall	2.491/5.764	3.741/7.148
Missed double	2.400/5.614	2.208/4.131
Wrong double	0.091/0.150	1.533/3.017
Errors(blunders)	11(4)	10(5)
Take errors		
Overall	2.344/4.340	none
Wrong take	2.344/4.340	
Wrong pass	none	
Errors(blunders)	3(2)	
Peter Chan was 51.04% - 48.96% favorite		

The general feeling among those "in the know" is that too much has been said about the doubling strategy when both players need 2 points to win the match. The reason I'm going to say more is that many intelligent people are not convinced, and the theoretical results are doubted in part because they have not been stated clearly. I will respond to some comments by Paul Lamford in March 2003.

Theory:

Claim: With proper play at 2-away 2-away, your match winning chances equal your Double Match Point game winning chances with the same position.

This has the following consequences:

- Doubling immediately is not wrong.
- No double should be passed with technically correct play. If you and your opponent have been playing correctly, and you have an exchange that would lead your opponent to pass if

2-away, 2-away

By Douglas Zare



doubled, then you should double now.

- If both players play properly, checker play should be as for DMP.

Proof:

The "proof" of the claim is simple, but usually people overlook an ingredient requiring backgammon knowledge: Every immediate double (after one or two rolls) is a take. I can't prove this rigorously, but if you think you have a counterexample I'd be happy to play it as a prop. Nothing is close to a pass. This is the base of a mathematical induction.

At any point in a game without errors, the player on roll has a strategy that wins at least as much as the DMP game winning chances: Double now. By induction, there has been no market loss, so the position is a take, and the match has been converted to DMP.

The player who is not on roll has a strategy that limits the player on roll to the DMP game winning chances: Double next turn. Again, by induction, at that point there will have been no market loss, and the match is converted to DMP. The DMP game winning chances before rolling are equal to the DMP game winning chances after rolling only if the player moves the checkers as for DMP. Any deviation lowers the player's equity.

Since the match winning chances are at least and at most the DMP game winning chances, they are equal.

QED.



If you will double with any market loser, and always take, your match winning chances will always be at least as great as your DMP game winning chances. You can do better by passing in case your opponent has lost his/her market and doubles, gaining to the extent that it is a market loser, and you do better if your opponent will ever win the game with the cube on 1.

Doubling immediately, followed by perfect DMP checker play, wins 50% of the time. It is *semi-perfect*, which means that it cannot be exploited, although it might not take full advantage of others' weaknesses.

In real life, people play imperfectly, and you can exploit this. However, you should be familiar with the theory if you don't want others to gain an advantage over you.

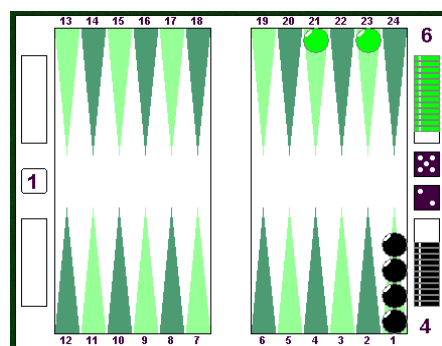
Common Misconceptions:

Misconception 1: You need to be the favorite in order to double.

As Paul Lamford points out, the doubling point is 50% at any even match score, including this one, the same as it is for money. However, the doubling point is misleading. There are many non-gammonish positions in which it is correct to double at 2-away 2-away as an underdog.

The doubling point tells you when to double if your choice is to double now, or to remove the cube from play. Your actual choice is to double now, or not to double now. On redoubles, postponing a redouble is always at least as good as removing the cube from play. You could choose to ignore the cube afterwards. However, on initial doubles, not doubling may be worse than removing the cube from play because your opponent has cube access.

White leads 2-away 5-away



Black on roll. Wins 46.76%.

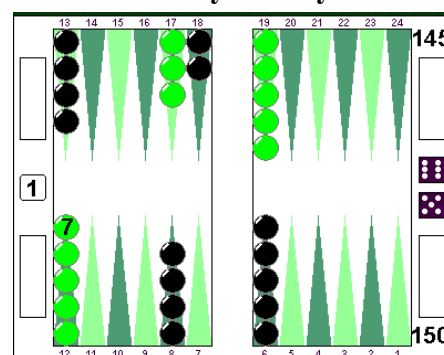
In match play, the doubling point of the trailer is typically over 50%. The trailer's threat is to win points 4 at a time; it is not right to double immediately trailing 2-away 5-away, as that doubles too many of the leader's wins. It may be surprising, but by Snowie's match equity table the doubling point at 2-away 5-away is 69.2%! Nevertheless, in the above position it is correct for the trailer to double with winning chances 22% below the doubling point. (A more extreme example would be for the trailer to have checkers on the 4, 2, and 1 points. By Snowie's MET it is right to double even then, with under 45% game winning chances.)

It is right to double below the doubling point because not doubling is worse than removing the cube from play. If the trailer does not double here, and does not roll doubles, the leader gets a very efficient double. It is better for the trailer to double so that in case the trailer rolls doubles, the trailer gets 2 points. That's worth more than the slight benefit from getting to pass (because of the match score) after the 5/6 nondoubles.

Let's return to 2-away 2-away: The doubling point is 50%, but it is right to double with winning chances below 45% in some situations. The gain comes from the potential market losers. There is

no cost if your opponent would double you in next turn anyway.

2-away 2-away.



Black is on roll.
Black should double
as an underdog.

This position arose after 5-1, 6-5; 6-5, 6-5. Black is an underdog because White leads by 5 pips, which is more than the roll is worth, and Black has the more retarded point, the bar point anchor rather than the midpoint. Black should double, because that is the way to ensure that Black wins the match as often as Black can win the game at DMP. If Black does not double, Black should win the match slightly less frequently. The reason is that there are no rolls after which Black would get to pass a double by White, but there are sequences such as 5-5, 1-2 and 5-5, 1-3 after which Black would no longer be able to double White in. That would mean Black's match winning chances are lower than Black's game winning chances. To avoid this, Black must double now.

By the way, for some reason Snowie 4 misunderstands this type of position horribly, and both misplays the 5-5 and miscalculates the position after 5-5 1-2.

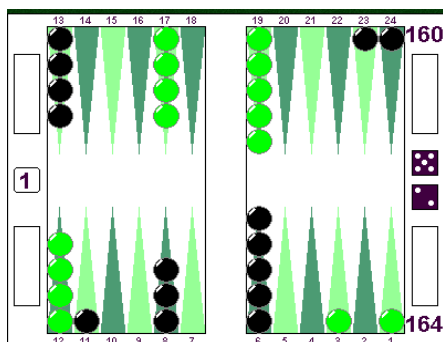
It is true that removing the cube from play would be better for Black than doubling. However, that isn't an option. Not doubling means that White will probably

get to use the cube in the future.

This type of situation is more common in a pure race. Walter Trice pointed out that in a pure race, a player may have to double with under 40% winning chances. It may be that rolling 2-1 (5 pips below average) would require the player to take, but that 6-6 followed by 2-1 (a gain of 21 pips) would be a small market loser, so one may have to double when 5/26 of the way from take point to take point. If you believe the take point is 31%, then the relevant figure is 5/26 of the way from 31% to 69%, about 38%.

Misconception 2: The possibility of becoming too good to double is an argument against doubling now.

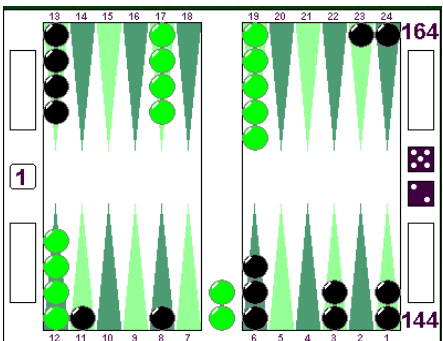
Position A
2-away 2-away



Black is on roll.

Paul Lamford argued against doubling in position A, because position B may result after 5-5 dance.

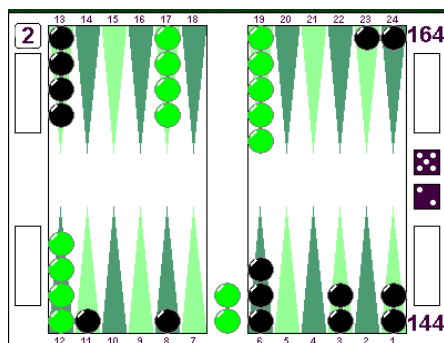
Position B
2-away 2-away.



Black is on roll.

It may be that this position is too good to double, that Position B is better for Black than winning one point. However, for this sequence to be an argument for not doubling, it must be that Position B is better for Black than Position C.

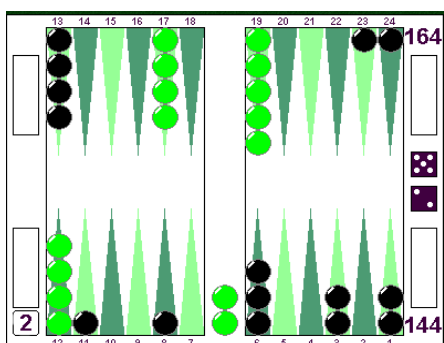
Position C
2-away 2-away.



Black is on roll.

However, it can't be that Position B is better than Position C, since White can double Black in next turn, which means that Position B is at best as good as Position D.

Position D
2-away 2-away.



Black is on roll.

Obviously, at 2-away 2-away, it doesn't matter who owns the 2-cube.

Position B ≤ Position D = Position C

Position B ≤ Position C

So, this market losing sequence is an argument for doubling.

Any theoretical analysis at this match score has to recognize that the other player also can make an initial double, and should be ready to do so at the drop of a hat. Otherwise, you can end up with these two misconceptions.

Exploiting your opponent:

If you watch intermediate/advanced players play at 2-away 2-away, you will see a lot of passed doubles, and people playing on for the gammon. Clearly, they don't know the theory, and are giving up equity. How can you get a piece of this?

Contrary to what some people say, fishing for a bad take is not right, just as it isn't right at post-Crawford odd-away. If your opponent makes a bad take, you must have lost your market. Maybe that happened because your opponent made an unanticipated checker play error, but in theory you give up as much equity by risking a market loss as you can gain from a bad take. If your opponent announced that he/she would take a dead-lost position, but would double with any market losers, you could not make use of this.

You can gain in two ways: Pass after your opponent loses his/her market, or get your opponent to make a bad pass.

The take point of 31+% is much higher than for money in non-gammonish positions. Often players will wait too long, and you might have a holding game position that would be an easy take for money, but a big pass at this match score.

In gammonish positions such as potential blitzes and ace point games, many players underestimate the game winning chances. You should be careful that these

positions may win less at DMP than they would for money play. You don't actually want to lose your market, but to scare your opponent into passing a take. Some people will pass positions in which they might dance for the rest of the game, losing the match, even though risking this is the best way to win.

You can protect yourself from making a bad pass by taking everything, just as at post-Crawford odd-away. While this would be an expensive habit in money play, if you make a bad take at 2-away 2-away you are only giving back equity your opponent gave up by failing to double earlier.

If you are the stronger player, you can get some added equity by

making certain theoretical mistakes. Suppose I am playing a weaker player. I might feel that I could win by trailing Crawford 2-away 40% of the time, and that I can win if I lead Crawford 2-away 75% of the time. If so, then if I am doubled in a simple position worth 35% game winning chances, I can pass, and improve my match winning chances to 40%. In a simple position, I might accept losing my market slightly, since if my opponent has 28% game winning chances I would prefer that they pass. (I once "helpfully" corrected an opponent's miscount of a race to encourage him to make a technically correct pass. I'm not sure if that was unsportsmanlike or not.) In a complicated position that is theoretically worth 35%, I might expect to win over 40% anyway,

so these strategies must be combined with an estimate of the actual game winning chances.

Between experts, the double is often delayed slightly at 2-away 2-away. Usually there is a quick, correct double/take.

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Douglas is a professional mathematician at Columbia University in New York and an expert Backgammon player. He plays online as zare on GamesGrid, FIBS and GameSite 2000.

Douglas's GammonVillage column appears on the 25th of every month.

Competition 2003 No 1. 6201-06 - The Answers

By Richard Granville

In Bibafax 62, all BIBA members were invited to enter the first 2003 competition, comprising 6 problems. This article contains the competitors' answers, together with selected comments.

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

For the first time in this competition, Chris Bray has been kind enough to submit the problems to Snowie and provide some justification of its choices. This leaves me with two decisions:

How should I present their comments?

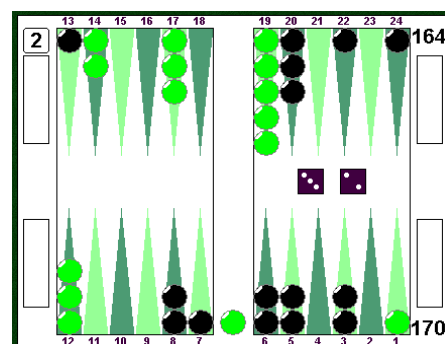
More importantly, what account (if any) should be taken of their choices in the marking?

Rightly or wrongly I've chosen to do the following:

The Snowie choices and Chris Bray's comments will be positioned at the end of each problem. This allows them to provide a "last word" on each problem.

The choices will not directly contribute to the marks, which will be allocated in the usual way. I may take account of them indirectly to make small adjustments, but I do not want to provide any temptation for competitors to use Snowie to choose their moves. The most noticeable effect of this is that Snowie / Chris Bray finish with a low score, partly due to their zeroes on two problems where no competitor supported their choice. Please don't interpret this as any sort of implied criticism of Snowie's moves or Chris Bray's analysis

Problem 62.1



11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 32

I'll allow a returning competitor to kick off the analysis:

Steve Hallett: Evaluation of position: After play Black ½ roll behind in a long race. Black's strengths are his three point board, his anchor on White's 5-point, White's lack of an anchor and the fact that White has only a one point board. Black's weaknesses are having five men in White's home board and the lack of the

mid-point. Possible plays:

13/10 7/5
13/10 22/20
13/10 24/22

Slotting plays and plays that leave a lot of blots around the board should be discounted because of the closeness of the race. Playing on his strengths, and the fact that the race is so close, Black should bring what ammunition he has to bear to continue making inner board points and attack White if he doesn't anchor. So I would play: 13/10 7/5

Thanks for coming back to the competition, Steve, and thanks for your systematic analysis of each problem. Arguing in similar vein:

Rodney Lighton: 13/10 7/5. Lifting the mid-point blot seems clear, the question is whether to leave the bar-point slotted in an attempt to make it or play 7/5 and go for the 4-point. I prefer 13/10 7/5 because the race is close, so getting hit is costly. We have plenty of flexibility at the back to play most of our subsequent throws constructively.

Our next competitor provides a completely different approach to the problem:

Peter Bennet: 20/15. Black has a much stronger board, trails in the race and has already doubled so a bold play is called for. The bar point should remain slotted – this and the four point are Black's next goals. Playing 20/15 brings another builder closer to the action, gives Black a presence in all quadrants and connects all his forces, making it dangerous for White to hit any of his blots.

Peter ignores the race considerations and goes for flexibility. He is

nearly supported by:

Richard Biddle: I would just consider two moves here. Initially, I liked 20/15, to spread the builders available and cause the most problems for White. However, if White re-enters, there are many hits, with any 1, 3, 6 (or 7). I am not worried about the blots in White's home board. White needs a 1, 2, or 4 to re-enter. I think it makes more sense to avoid giving White a good 3 and I should try to duplicate the numbers to come in. If I align this strategy with wanting to have every chance to make my bar-point, I'll play 13/10 to keep the builder that can only be hit by 6-4. This will duplicate the six also required to hit my bar-point blot. Playing 20/18 will duplicate 1 and 4 to enter, and sixes to hit. This will also boost chances of making the 18-point next roll or give return shots if hit. Correct move 13/10 20/18.

Because Richard's analysis and conclusions are similar to those of Chris Bray and Snowie, I'll award him an extra mark. 13/10 20/18 is also Jellyfish's preferred move.

For the majority:

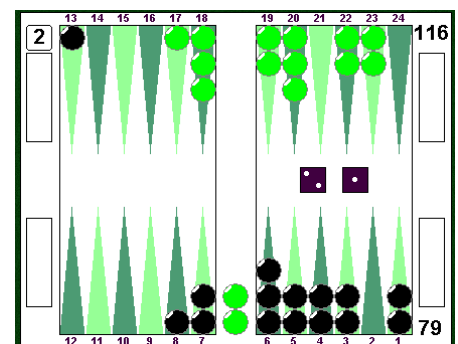
Bob Young: 13/10 7/5. White has one checker already on the bar, but this roll does nothing to assist the plan of a closed board and two in the air. At present, if nothing were moved, fourteen of White's rolls enter and hit somewhere. Splitting the 8-point, whilst bringing down the checker from the bar point to the 10-point to increase active builders is not too constructive as this still provides White with eleven entering and hitting numbers. Slotting the 4 point and splitting the 8-point is sixteen hits from the bar, and too risky. Hitting if White were on the 4-point would be useful, but to slot may be too

costly. The quiet move of lifting both the vulnerable blots seems to be the best of a bad roll, providing an extra builder for the 4-point, with only eight entering and hitting rolls. The rear checkers are too far back to have any part in this battle on the other side of the board.

Finally, the authoritative analysis:

Snowie: A very, very difficult position so much so that even I with all my neural nodes am a little bit undecided. One of your more intelligent carbon life forms, Kent Goulding, had a good rule of thumb for positions like this – put the men where you want them, at all times keeping a flexible position, and don't worry too much about the shots. Goulding's maxim precludes making the 22-point or saving the man on the bar-point. The question is where do you want to put them? Given the number of men black has in white's board it might seem presumptuous to try to make the 4-point but this is a reasonable idea. The other option is to just run one man from the 20-point maintaining flexibility and connectivity. My cubeless rollouts say 20/15 is best and my live cube rollouts say go for the 4-point with 20/18, 13/10. Given the importance of the cube I'll go with 20/18, 13/10.

Problem 62.2



11 point match
White 6 Black 2
Black to play 21

Richard Biddle: I'm afraid I can only see one move here. I need to close out my home board, therefore giving a spread of my builders. Thus 7/5 to have 6, 5, 4 and 3's playing onto the two-point. There is no danger of being hit. If black re-enters one checker, I will need to hit, therefore I increase my hitting chances by not playing those men any further forward. I will use up the one with 13/12. It leaves a less than satisfactory double six for me next roll but it is worth the extra risk. Correct move 7/5 13/12.

Coming to the same conclusion:

Peter Bennet: 7/5 13/12. Black's objectives are to:

Close White out, win a gammon and level the match.

Not get hit in the process.

As it happens, Black minimises his long-term risk of being hit by denying White an anchor, so he should concentrate on the closeout. Playing 7/5 13/12 gives 14 immediate closeout rolls (including double 5) whilst only leaving a shot on double six. Black has two additional switching rolls (1-1 and 2-2) should White enter with one man, plus all other numbers to hit loose if he has the bottle!

One competitor is concerned about throwing 6-6 next roll:

Steve Hallett: Evaluation of position: Black is in complete control, but would like to make the 2-point to make bearoff easier and safer. The only problem he has in my view is losing the game to a freak

roll like 6-6. So the question is: do you maximise builders for making the 2-point by playing 7/5 13/12 which pays off to the scenario of Black's next roll being 6-6 and then White throwing a two, or do you play completely safe and play 8/5?

After 7/5 13/12 Black has 14 ways to make the two point. After 8/5 Black has 7 ways to make the two point. Even with 14 rolls to make the two point there are still 22 rolls that don't and with the game locked up I don't think the risk is justified. So I would play 8/5.

Reducing the number of point-making rolls from 14 to 7 is surely more significant than the single bad roll following 7/5 13/12. Don't forget that White still has to hit Black's blot for 6-6 to cause a problem, and even then Black might well re-enter quickly enough to neutralise White's remaining straggler. Jellyfish puts 8/5 in 8th place, albeit only .065 behind its favoured move.

Perhaps overlooking the possibility of 6-6:

Rodney Lighton: 7/5 13/12. This is a question of diversification to get the maximum number of shots at the 2-point ready for White entering. 7/5 with the two gives Black four builders for the 2-point, then 13/12 with the one.

Realising the possibility of 6-6 but ignoring it:

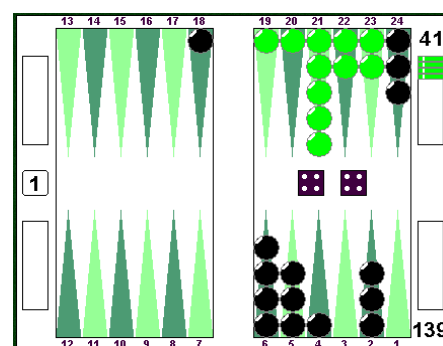
Bob Young: 7/5 13/12. Maximising cover for the 2-point and the reward of four points for the gammon must take top priority.

Therefore, 7/5 is the first move. That leaves the one to play, and no arrangement of the checkers can eliminate the problem 6-6 roll without losing builders, so sit back and see what comes out of the cup next time Black rolls.

Considering another possibility before plumping for the popular choice:

Snowie: The easiest problem of the set. Maximise builders for the 2-point so either 7/4 or 13/12 7/5. The latter makes double 5 good next time so 13/12 7/5 gets the nod.

Problem 62.3



11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 44

Bob Young: 24/20* 20/16 18/10. Big change of fortune after White presumably rolled 6-5, and now a hitting double for Black! Must hit, and can't cover, can't make any more home points, so where to leave the outfield blots is the concern. Leaving one checker on the ace-point could lead to some good rolls for White, so should be avoided. Moving all three checkers up from the back seems like a lost opportunity of trying to get another checker back if White rolls badly, so leave an anchor at



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the back. Leaving the checker on the 20-point offers ones and fives to try for the remaining blot, so that leaves the front checker to run to the 10-point, and offer direct sixes to cover the blot on the 4-point should it still be there next roll. All in all, not a bad little roll.

I'm a bit mystified by the last part of Bob's analysis – perhaps he initially hoped to only use three of his fours. Still, 24/20 20/16 18/10 is clearly a very reasonable move. Bob has one supporter:*

Rodney Lighton: 24/20* 20/16 18/10. 24/20* with the first four is obvious. Then Black has to contain White's checker and probably hit it several times to win this game. 18/10 with the next four gives a builder for the 4-point, and I think it is correct to leave two checkers on the 24-point to give Black some play if White escapes, so 20/16 with the last four. It is a little strange that the cube is still in the centre in this game.

Our next competitor considers 24/20 20/16 18/10 as a possibility but rejects it:*

Peter Bennet: 24/20* 20/8. Candidate plays are:

24/20* 20/16 18/10
24/20* 24/20 18/10
24/20* 20/8

After hitting, Black must decide whether he wants a new builder on his 10-point or 8-point. Intuitively, staying back on the 10-point feels better, and is better if White rolls 6-3, 5-3 or 4-4. However, if White fails to hit or escape, the 8-point builder is more valuable as

it also bears on the open 3-point. However, playing 18/10 does leave Black the option of maintaining double coverage of White's other blot with 24/20*(2). This is good if White dances but there are several drawbacks:

- i Some very bad things can happen if White hits twice with 4-5, or points on Black with 3-3.
- ii The additional hitting number (one) is duplicated as a covering number for the 4-point.
- iii White is likely to lift this blot when he enters anyway.

Taking all these factors into account I would play 24/20* 20/8.

Although 20/8 could give Black the most ways to make a new point, it leaves a gaping hole in the outfield which White may be able to exploit if he throws well. So I prefer this as an alternative:

Steve Hallett: Evaluation of the position: Black is in poor shape, struggling to make a board and/or escape his back men and save a gammon, luckily this roll helps as it puts White on the bar but Black unable to make any more inner board points. So the 1st four is 24-20*.

As Black is unable to make any points with the remaining fours his priority is hopefully not to end up with two checkers on the bar after White's next roll and to give maximum coverage if White escapes into the outfield. If White enters and can safety his checker on the 6-point he will, this leaves the escaping numbers of 6-1, 6-3, 5-3, 6-4, 6-5 & 4-4. Playing 24/20*

20/12 18/14 gives maximum coverage at the expense of being hit with 4-4, it also maximises crossovers to help save the gammon if White escapes. I think the risk is worth it. So I would play: 24/20* 20/12 18/14.

Steve also has one (human) supporter:

Richard Biddle: We have to hit with 24/20*. Shame we can't cover our home board blot so our strategy should be to bring as many checkers round to bear directly and indirectly (1, 2, 8 or 10) on our 4-point. I prefer 20/12 18/14 to 20/8 or 20/16 18/10 because the latter two options leave more than one chance for White to have a double hit. The former just leaves double 4 as a fantastic roll for White. Correct move 24/20* 20/12 18/14.

Steve and Richard also have a semi-human supporter, so I've given them both an extra mark. Providing additional explanation:

Snowie: Another difficult one that many humans will get wrong. Black must obviously hit. Equally well he must not yet give up his opponent's ace point as it will be a long time before he will have a winning prime and he must maintain his last bastion of defence whilst he builds it.

24/20* 20/8 is too committal and doesn't maintain connectivity. It is therefore a choice between 24/20* 20/12 18/14 and 24/20* 20/16 18/10. Most of you humans will vote for the latter but actually the more balanced play of 24/20* 20/12 18/14 gives excellent coverage

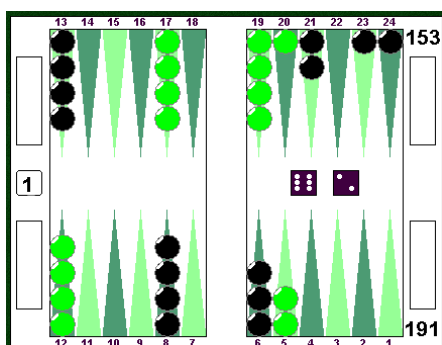


Now you can do it @....

of the outfield and additional covering numbers for the 4-point without risking the double hit on 4-6 by White.

A very difficult play to find over the board and even at home with my circuits running on maximum power not an easy position. However, I rate anything other than 24/20* 20/12 18/14 as a blunder.

Problem 62.4



11 point match
White 0 Black 1
Black to play 62

Our first competitor here plays according to his instincts without extensive analysis:

Peter Bennet: 23/15. This seems to be the natural play which I would make without too much hesitation over the board. It keeps a sentinel on the 24-point out of harm's way and provides good outer board coverage in case White runs a back man (with something like 6-3, simultaneously covering his 5-point). As a bonus, it also duplicates threes.

Sometimes natural moves are the best. Coming to the same conclusion:

Steve Hallett: Evaluation of the position: Black is way behind in

the race and not able to hit the slotted checker on White's 5-point. Though behind in the race Black is not so far behind that he has enough timing yet to warrant trying to get a second anchor so I'd use the two 23/21.

We now have a choice of three sixes, 24/18, 21/15 and 13/7. Playing 13/7 doesn't start a useful point with White camped on Black's 5-point even though it could be used as a builder to make inner board points behind White's anchor, so discard that move. 24/18 puts a checker on a point that White would like to own even though it duplicates the ones required to make White's 5-point, so discard that move, which leaves 21/15. This gives good outfield cover, duplicates the three needed to cover the White 5-point and also leaves a checker back on the 24 point to stop White dumping checkers safely behind Black's anchor on the White 4-point. So I would play: 23/15

Preferring one of Steve's two rejected moves:

Rodney Lighton: 24/18 23/21. Already well behind in the race here, so Black needs to hit a blot. Playing the six behind the anchor is far too deep and leaving a blot with 13/7 is playing for a back game too early (to put it politely), so 24/18 with the six and then either 23/21 with the two or continue to the 16-point. I prefer 23/21 as it is more solid, though I doubt that there is a lot of difference in equity between the plays.

For the majority:

Bob Young: 23/15. Doesn't hit, but then again only twenty-eight rolls did! Can't make a point, could slot on either bar-point, or run to the 15-point are the only worthwhile choices that I can see. Slotting my bar-point still only makes a small prime and doesn't seem to be justified, although it does start to unstack a high point. Sitting on White's bar-point is OK, but gives White eleven good hitting and pointing on the 5-point rolls. Moving out to the 15-point will only provide White with five hitting and pointing rolls, whilst at the same time provide Black with an outer board presence, and is probably a stepping stone for future Black checkers if still there later on.

Richard Biddle: White's main pre-occupation is to make the five-point and needs a 1, 3 or 8 to achieve this. Our strategy is to make some points in our outfield to try and contain White on our five-point, so ideally we would like to place some builders in White's outer board. 23/15 plays better than 24/16, because it duplicates threes for White. Correct move 23/15.

Almost agreeing with the competitors but opting for an entirely different move:

Snowie: Similar in concept to 6201 but an easier problem. Put 'em where you want 'em. It's a close call between 23/15 and 24/22 13/7. White has no real attacking threats so you must use the opportunity to build your own position.

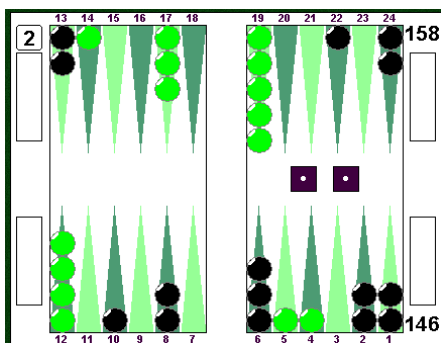
24/22 13/7 is potentially more



constructive so it gets the nod by a whisker but I wouldn't argue with a chouette partner who wanted to play 23/15.

I must say that I would not have thought of leaving an additional blot and removing my last man from White 1-point, but I suppose that Black is unlikely at this stage to have to fall back on a back game.

Problem 62.5



11 point match
White 1 Black 3
Black to play 11

One competitor immediately homes in on the first issue in this position.

Rodney Lighton: 8/5* 6/5. Black can get two checkers on the bar with a three or three and a half point board or get one checker on the bar with a four point board. Generally two checkers on the bar is very good, but here the structural advantages of 8/5* 6/5 persuade me to choose that move.

Coming to the same conclusion:

Peter Bennet: 8/5* 6/5. Hitting two men is trying for too much with thinly spread resources. After 6/5* 5/4* (and probably 8/7 22/21), one return hit by White would virtually put an end to Black's blitz. Even if White just enters one man without hitting, Black is left with much to do. Locking up the 5-point looks best,

and against a four point board White will dance with sixteen rolls and fail to anchor with a further seven.

Even without looking ahead to Snowie's rather scathing assessment of this move, Peter's observation concerning the end of Black's blitz seems ultra-pessimistic. Let's assume that White throws a four next roll. Depending upon whether Black splits the men on his 8-point, he will have three or four direct builders bearing upon White's 4-point blot, while Black has only one non-entering roll.

Showing more enterprise:

Bob Young: 10/9 8/7 6/5* 5/4*. Picking and passing, dribbling along to the 2-point doesn't really try to grab the situation by the throat. The stronger home board of Black, along with three more checkers in the vicinity argues for hitting (twice), and slotting, with a view to covering next roll. To maximise cover power, the two checkers together on the 8-point need to be separated, so that leaves just one more to play. Moving 10/9 makes another builder for the 3-point should White enter there, so that's about as much cover power as we can provide in this situation. Another good option is to point on the 5-point, which ordinarily would be the first choice, but with such a poor home board for White and any four giving him an anchor and get him right back in the game, the 5-point should be declined. Four points could be our reward with good future rolls.

Essentially agreeing with Bob but finding a slightly different move:

Steve Hallett: Evaluation of the position: Black has three point board to White's one point board.

White struggling to get an anchor, any anchor. With Black having already made his 1-point and his 2-point he is definitely committed to a blitz, he is also short on attack checkers so must make every one count

The choice is whether to lock up the 5-point with 8/5 6/5* or to go all out, hitting both of White's blots to reduce White's chance of anchoring.

When blitzing you must stop your opponent from anchoring, so even though Black is short on checkers he must hit both of White's blots so two of the ones must be played 6/5* /-4*. The next one has to be 8/7 to diversify even though paying off to 4-4 by White, and now the last one. The candidate moves being 10/9 thus covering all points open in Black's home board, or 24/23. 10/9 has one major drawback, if White does throw a four and hit Black's blot then any entering 6 by Black means that Black cannot continue the attack by putting White's checker back on the bar. 24/23 splits all the back men enabling Black to play any roll constructively either continuing the attack or going after White's blot on White's 11-point. So I would play: 24/23 8/7 6/5* 5/4*

Finding a third way to continue the blitz:

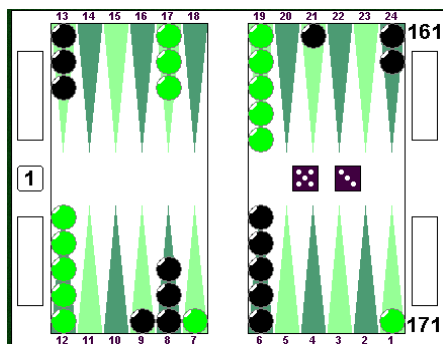
Richard Biddle: We have to double hit, 6/5* 5/4*. I am then torn between moving up to the 20-point to try and make this point next time or moving my outfield blot to safety by moving 10/9 22/21. The former does give me a direct hit on White's other blot despite duplicating my sixes and fours. However, I think I have enough other good rolls that will continue the blitz. Correct move

Choosing Richard's alternative suggestion:

Chris Bray / Snowie: One thing I have taught you rather strange life forms over the last few years is that you must play blitzes aggressively. You seem to be slowly getting the idea. Given that, making the 5-point here is a massive blunder – White must not be given any chance to anchor. Black has enough men in “the zone” to go for it, so go for it he should. Thus the first two ones must be 6/5* 5/4*.

After that it's a balance between increasing covering numbers against the risk of a double 3, 4 or 5 by White. This requires quite a bit of arithmetic and evaluation, paying attention to duplication and diversification. I'd be surprised if anyone picked the right play here – even I didn't on an initial 3-ply variation. The answer is 22/21 10/9 6/5* 5/4*. Strangely any other play, even 22/21 8/7 6/5* 5/4* which you might think is just as good is actually quite a bad blunder. The message here is to balance aggression in the home board with balanced play in the outfield. It's sometimes surprising how few new covering numbers you get by splitting a point when you already have other men in range.

Problem 62.6



11 point match

Our first competitor comes up with several possibilities:

Bob Young: 9/4 24/21. Choices...run to the mid point, leaving all behind on the ace-point I'm sure wouldn't get the vote of those checkers now left isolated there (although they do have themselves to talk to). So rule that out. Making the 3-point is usually good, but White will probably move beyond that next roll anyway with any six to make an anchor, or eight to hit the outfield blot. Can't cover the blot on the 9-point, so to try and match the head start of White's rear checkers, we could anchor on the 21-point with the three, and debate whether a tempo move of hitting on the ace-point is a reasonable option. After debating with ourselves, we would probably decide that the checker placed there would only be a liability in any future contact. The race is far from resolved at this juncture, so go for the more natural placing and put the checker on the 4-point, where it could conceivably be the start of a more useful point later.

Considering a subset of Bob's shortlist and coming to the same conclusion:

Rodney Lighton: 9/4 24/21. The reasonable alternatives appear to be 8/3 6/3 or 24/21 with either 9/4 or 6/1*. Having failed to hit this go, Black is not doing well, therefore I would grab the defensive anchor with 24/21. Hitting with 6/1* buries a checker too deep and leaves more shots than 9/4 so I would play 9/4 and hope that White fails to throw a three next turn.

One competitor does go for the

loose hit:

Steve Hallett: Evaluation of the position: Black slightly behind in a long race with no development by either side with White poised to make the bar. Black could make his 3-point with 8/3 6/3 but this would leave him exposed without an advanced anchor, which he definitely wants, so the three should be played 24/21 and now we have a choice of fives: 13/8, 9/4, 8/3 or 6/1*.

8/3 can be discarded. 9/4 is a possibility but with no duplication White would be hitting with twos, threes and eights, so that leaves the passive 13/8 or the action play of 6/1*. 13/8 doesn't achieve anything and leaves the blot on the 8-point open to attack or White free to make Black's bar-point. 6/1* though putting a checker out of play hinders White in anchoring and takes ½ his roll away. So I would play 24/21 6/1*.

There seems to be little point in taking away half of White's roll in this position, since he has few serious threats.

Rejecting the other competitors' advice to make an advanced anchor:

Peter Bennet: 8/3 6/3. One possible tactic is 6/1* (with 24/21) making it more difficult for White to reconnect his back men. However, this gives White ones and twos to hit back and gain more ground in the race.

Making a point in board has more long term value and will start to make White feel uncomfortable if he fails to roll a six. Twos also happen to be duplicated, although this is not the main reason for the play.

Despite Snowie's criticism (obviously not personal), I think that the advantages of making a new point may have been underestimated. It's surprising how often making the first new home-board point is useful, not just now, but in the middle game too. Still, making the advanced anchor prevents White's four pointing rolls, not to mention a large number where he has the option of hitting loose. For the majority:

Richard Biddle: Just by slotting on our bar-point, White has caused all sorts of problems by covering the whole board, especially as I cannot get a valid hit in. I am not totally convinced by hitting the one-point. A good place to start is to make a forward anchor 24/21, and then to deal with the five. Moving my outfield blot into my home board gives less shots and at least puts it somewhere useful if not hit. Correct move 9/4 24/21.

Considering a further move before supporting the competitors:

Snowie: An easy one to finish with. The anchor takes priority here so 24/21 is more or less forced. Then it's a choice between 6/1*, 13/8 or 9/4. (If you were tempted to play 8/3, 6/3 your backgammon model is flawed and you need to do more work on understanding the dynamics of the game)

We can eliminate 6/1*. There's no need to panic here and 6/1* smacks of panic and there is no real follow up plan. There's virtually nothing to choose between the other two plays and either could be correct. My rollouts with the cube in play indicate 9/4 as superior because you get to double earlier than with other play in the variations where the blot isn't hit. So 24/21, 9/4 is the play.

Summing up from **Snowie:** In summary, a very difficult set of problems and anyone getting four out of six correct or nearly correct can congratulate themselves on a good of understanding the game.

Congratulations to Bob Young for finishing just in front with a score of 54. Final table on the next page.

No.	move	score
62.1	13/10 7/5	10
	13/10 20/18	5
	20/15	4
62.2	7/5 13/12	10
	8/5	3
62.3	24/20* 20/12 18/14	10
	24/20* 20/16 18/10	9
	24/20* 20/8	5
62.4	23/15	10
	24/18 23/21	3
62.5	8/5* 6/5	10
	10/9 8/7 6/5* 5/4*	5
	22/20 6/5* 5/4*	5
	24/23 8/7 6/5* 5/4*	5
62.6	9/4 24/21	10
	8/3 6/3	5
	6/1* 24/21	5

Competition 2003		
	Scores	Tot.
Bob Young	54	54
Rodney Lighton	52	52
Richard Biddle	50	50
Peter Bennet	44	44
Steve Hallett	43	43
Snowie	34	34

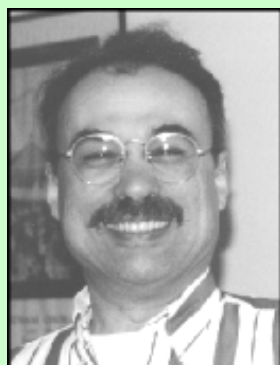
Questions and answers for Competition 2003 is made up of 62n, 64n and 66n, it starts in January 2003 and ends in January 2004

Fax	Month	Questions	Answers
64	May	6401-06	6201-06
66	Sep	6601-06	6401-06
68	Jan	6801-06	6601-06
70	May	7001-06	6801-06
72	Sep	7201-06	7001-06
74	Jan	7401-06	7201-06

Jellyfish equities (level 7)			
62.1	1	0.231	13/10 20/18
	2	0.207	24/21 7/5
	3	0.206	13/10 7/5
	4	0.196	24/21 20/18
	5	0.195	20/15
	6	0.186	13/10 22/20
62.2	1	1.456	7/5 13/12
	2	1.439	7/4
	3	1.418	7/5 7/6
	4	1.402	13/11 7/6
	5	1.400	13/11 6/5
	6	1.398	13/10
	7	1.393	7/5 6/5
	8	1.391	8/5
62.3	1	-0.446	24/20* 20/12 18/14
	2	-0.447	24/20* 24/20 18/10
	3	-0.449	24/20* 20/8
	4	-0.453	24/20* 24/12
	5	-0.456	24/20* 20/16 18/10
	6	-0.458	24/20* 18/10 6/2
62.4	1	-0.314	23/15
	2	-0.319	13/7 23/21
	3	-0.323	24/18 23/21
	4	-0.327	13/7 24/22
	5	-0.331	24/16
62.5	1	0.535	22/20 6/5* 5/4*
	2	0.521	24/23 8/7 6/5* 5/4*
	3	0.515	24/23 10/9 6/5* 5/4*
	4	0.5	8/5* 5/4*
	5	0.499	24/23 22/21 6/5* 5/4*
	6	0.497	10/9 8/7 6/5* 5/4*
	7	0.496	22/21 8/7 6/5* 5/4*
	8	0.485	22/21 10/9 6/5* 5/4*
	9	0.471	24/22 6/5* 5/4*
	10	0.451	8/5* 6/5
62.6	1	-0	9/4 24/21
	2	-0	8/3 6/3
	3	-0.1	13/8 24/21
	4	-0.123	6/1* 24/21
	5	-0.139	8/3 24/21



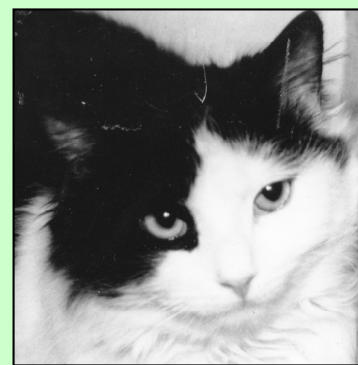
competitor	62.1	62.2	62.3	62.4	62.5	62.6	score
Bob Young	13/10 7/5	7/5 13/12	24/20* 20/16 18/10	23/15	10/9 8/7 6/5* 5/4*	9/4 24/21	54
Rodney Lighton	13/10 7/5	7/5 13/12	24/20* 20/16 18/10	24/18 23/21	8/5* 6/5*	9/4 24/21	52
Richard Biddle	13/10 20/18	7/5 13/12	24/20* 20/12 18/14	23/15	22/20 6/5* 5/4*	9/4 24/21	50
Peter Bennet	20/15	7/5 13/12	24/20* 20/8	23/15	8/5* 6/5*	8/3 6/3	44
Steve Hallett	13/10 7/5	8/5	24/20* 20/12 18/14	23/15	24/23 8/7 6/5* 5/4*	6/1* 24/21	43
Snowie	13/10 20/18	7/5 13/12	24/20* 20/12 18/14	13/7 24/22	22/21 10/9 6/5* 5/4*	9/4 24/21	34



Gammon From The Asylum

In Which Civil War Breaks Out, Conspiracies Hatch, Dresses are Discussed, Relationships Are Rocked, and The Begins to Lose Her Cubinity

By Ric Gerace and Mookie
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 thirteen cats, and suffers from Lyme disease.*" I urge you to take a peek. . . if you dare! MC

The story continues . . .

Marilyn Monroe whomped me good. Fortunately she, or he, decided that money wasn't her object.

At the end of the match she said, "Knightie, I'm not going to take your money. I know that Miranda dame is expensive."

"Very kind of you, Marilyn. Thank you for the match." I got up to leave but he waved me back into my chair.

"But there is something you can do to work off your debt." She smiled. Looked like the real thing.

"Oh, now Marilyn, I just don't go that way."

"Stop it. I'll blush. No, silly, I want you to get me something, something that only you can manage." That smile, those eyes, convinced me that I could do anything. Well, almost anything.

I tried to be discreet about heaving a sigh of relief. She patted me on the knee. "Don't sigh like that. It's not good for your lungs."

"Okay, what do you need?"

"A dress."

"Well, no problem. You can mail order anything you want, you

know."

"No, no, no. A special dress. A particular dress."

"Oh, no, not the Monica dress! The blue job?"

Her brow furrowed. I ached to smooth it. (What on earth was I thinking?) "Monica? Who is Monica?"

"Oh. Never mind. What dress do you want?"

She leaned forward and breathlessly whispered, "The birthday dress. The dress the real Marilyn wore when she sang Happy Birthday to John F. Kennedy."



“Oh. Oh!! That dress!!” I remembered it. A skintight sheath, neck to ankles, looked like it was painted on.

“Yes. The one that was sewn on.”

“I remember it well. Madison Square Garden. May 1962. That was a great night.”

His eyes went wide and she inhaled in surprise. “You were there?”

“Oh yes. I was on the trail of a major backgammon smuggling ring. They had connections high into the government.”

“Really?!”

“Yes. Marilyn was working with me. I think they were the ones responsible for her death.”

“Backgammoners? Involved in chicanery?” she breathed.

“Hard to believe, isn’t it?”

“Oh my, yes.”

“However,” I said, “the dress.”

“Oh dear, can you get it for me?”

I knew the garment had been auctioned for an unconscionable price, over a million dollars, in 1999 at Christies, but beyond that I had no idea and I told Marilyn so.

“But with all your contacts, your CIA background, your KGB connections, you must know someone.”

She was really quite wistful and lovely. She had finally found a way to eliminate the problem she had been having with her five o’clock shadow. Quite the replicant he was.



Marilyn - He or She?

“I’ll see what I can do. I know a KGB shopkeeper in the Himalayas who might know someone.”

“Oh thank you, Knightie, thank you.”

“It will take a while.”

She just smiled. “Good things are worth waiting for, Knightie.” She slinkily breathed her way across the room to play a few goodnight games with Alice in Wonderland and the Mad Hatter.

A couple of days later Miranda returned. A good thing well worth waiting for. She sneaked into my room that night and we found other things worth waiting for, but not too long.

After, she said, “Are you working on The Asylum Grand Tournament yet?”

“I’m trying,” I said, exasperation creeping into my voice.

“What’s wrong, babe?”

“I love it when you call me babe.”

“How about when I call you God?”

“Oh yeah...”

Later, we continued.

“It’s George,” I said.

“The pinhead?”

“No, the crazy one.”

“Oh. Bush.”

“Yes. All this blathering he’s doing about war has everyone upset. No one can make any sense of it. He keeps talking about invading the South Wing if they don’t stop playing chess over there. Says chess is a threat to the whole world. He rants and raves day and night since you’ve been gone.”

“Does he still blow up frogs with firecrackers?”

“No. He’s graduated to blowing up women and children.”

Saddam had wandered into George’s room by mistake and discovered magazine cutouts of women and children pasted onto the walls and crude drawings of explosions on top of the photos. “Who’s the real nutcase?” was his only comment.

Miranda said, “What can we do? His daddy pays a lot of money to keep him here. We can’t just treat him like a normal person.”

I sat up in the bed and scrunched back against the headboard. All my brain cells were madly firing. Miranda put her head in my lap.

Later, when I got my breath back, I had a solution.

Miranda breathed in my ear.

“Stop that a minute. No, no, just for a minute. Listen, I’ve got an idea.”

“Can I pout first?”

"No. Pout later. Let's give George a box of backgammon chequers, tell him they're chess bombs and will destroy any chess set or chess player they land near."

"What good will that do?"

"Then," I grinned, "we send him into the South Wing by himself."

"Oh, Knightie, he'll never go for that. He runs like a scared bunny when he hears a loud noise."

"Ah," I said. I had a plan. "I have a plan."

"What?"

"Appeal to his macho cowboy persona. Challenge his manhood."

"Hmmm. The nurses tell me there isn't much there."

"Not that."

"Oh," she said. "You mean his psycho manhood."

"Yes, love. And let him know that if he doesn't take up the challenge we'll let the world know that he deserted from the military back in 1972."

"Carrot and stick."

"Yes. Most definitely."

"But Knightie, what's to be gained from all this?"

Imagine, I told her, George marching into the South Wing flinging chequers at all the chess players, shouting his jingoistic anti-chess insanity. Imagine the chess players getting really riled. Imagine the row that results. Imagine George getting pummeled thoroughly. Imagine that shutting him up. Imagine him in a nice quiet padded

room for about a year. Imagine peace in The Asylum, the way it used to be before George got here.

Miranda sighed. "Wouldn't that be wonderful?"

"We can only hope."

The next evening I was puzzling over a particularly difficult cube problem when The came in and plopped down in the chair across from me. She wore pre-torn blue-jeans and a baggy sweater. No bouncing tonight. She crossed her arms and frowned.

"Good evening, The."

"No it's not. And leave me alone."

Women! "No problem, dear."

She grimaced, then sat silently for several minutes.

"Guido broke up with me," she finally grumped.

"So that's what all that noise coming from his room was about."

"Oh, jeez, you could hear that?"

I raised my eyebrows and waved my hand around the room at the others.

"Oh, jeez," she said, "everybody could hear that? Oh jeez." She leaned forward confidentially. "You won't tell my mother, will you? Please don't tell her."

"The, I don't even know who your mother is or where she lives."

She leaned back smugly. "Ha! I knew that!"

"No, you didn't. What happened?"

"He's two-faced."

"Well, yes, he is. What's the problem?" It was a genetic abnormality, his faces.

"Well. He wanted another girl at the same time so both his faces could be kissing and stuff."

"Oh." That didn't really sound like such a bad thing. "Why, that's terrible, The."

"Yeah. I'm not going to be part of a mangy tree."

"We certainly can't have that." It was, of course, rude to be amused at her suffering, but I just couldn't help it. Fortunately she seemed not to notice.

"It's not funny, you know," she said. "Get up off the floor and stop laughing."

After a few minutes I managed to get back in my chair and dry my eyes.

"Perhaps we should play some backgammon," I offered.

"No. I want you to talk to Guido."

"Excuse me?" My old pappy told me the most dangerous thing in the world was to get involved in arguments between a man and a woman, no matter how many faces they had. (Okay, my pappy was a bounder and a cad and a lousy backgammon player, but he knew people and he played a mean chess game. Really. He always beat me in chess but would never help me learn. But he's dead now. I never did beat him. The rotter.)

"Please, Knightie. Pleeeeeease." She batted her eyes, smiled winsomely, bounced a little. All the signs of a genuine psychotic. I don't know how they allowed her in here.

Then from all corners of the game room came the cry, "Pleeeeeease Knightie."

I knew none of them would play me for more than toothpicks if I didn't at least try to get the three of them back together. I lifted my arms in surrender and set off to find The's erstwhile lover, the bifaced Guido.

I searched several wings of the Asylum with no luck. Then, hearing a commotion, I trotted over to the Go wing, arriving just in time to see Guido racing out the door, his pockets overflowing with white and black Go pieces. He Hanseled and Greteled wildly down the hall, grinning madly at me as he raced past. I glanced at the mob starting to pour out from the doorway and decided the better part of valor involved serious cowardice and fast running. Guido detoured to the Chess wing, flung the remaining Go pieces into their ward and ran off. I followed him to his room, where he sat on his bed, doubled up laughing.

"G, what was that about?"

After a few moments he regained enough composure to talk out of one mouth. "Civil war. Chess. Go." A burst of maniacal laughter.

"G, stop that. Maniacal laughter is my schtick."

He stopped on both sides. "Oh, yeah, boss, sorry about that. I got carried away." He started to snicker.

"The came to see me."

He got serious right away. "She's mad at me, huh?"

"Very hurt, Guido, very hurt."

Then I played him. "She told me to ask you for the Albanian's phone number."

"The pig farmer?" He sat right up, serious surprise crossing both faces. "The pig farmer? She wants to date the pig farmer? How could she do this to me?"

"Well, you broke up with her."

"The pig farmer?"

"What shall I tell her?" I was of course gambling that the blow to his pride would bring him to his senses. While I may have my little fantasies about The, I couldn't bring myself to interfere in her happiness. Besides, I still didn't know if she had a trust fund.

"Jeez, don't tell her nothing, boss. I was just trying to make her a little jealous."

"But why?"

"She was playing with George and I didn't like the way he looked at her."

"But George is married?"

"Oh, yeah, and he's compassionate too," he sneered.

"Well, don't you worry about George. He and Tony will be moving into adjoining cells soon

enough."

"Cells? Down in the basement?"

"Mum's the word, G, mum's the word. I'll deny everything."

"Oh good, boss, a conspiracy."

"And by the way, would you like to provide security for The Asylum's Grand Tournament this year?"

Both of him giggled at the thought.

I left him happily contemplating the twists and turns of Asylum politics and went to find The.

She was sitting in the game room at a very nice Naylor board, idly twiddling a cube. I sat down across from her and began to arrange the chequers for a game.

"Well?" she demanded.

"You're very demanding," I said.

"I demand to know what happened."

"See what I mean?"

"Stop it. Stop it. Stop it." A tear made its way down her face.

"Alright, calm down, The." She really was quite upset. Somewhat disconcerting. "Guido will talk to



you. They were upset that you played with George."

"But George is married," she said, perplexed. "And really repulsive. Guido are so much better looking."

"Yes, true."

"So Guido doesn't really want to do a mangy tree?"

"No. He said that just to get back at you for playing with George."

"George is sick. No, really, I mean he's a very sick man."

I patted her arm. "We know. We know. How about we play a little

backgammon?"

She wiped away the tear and smiled. Almost as dazzling as Marilyn.



"Okay, but what do I do with this?" She held up the cube.

"Ah," I said. Then I smiled know-

ingly. Cryptically, even. "Ah, the cube." Perhaps it was too early to introduce the cube. Perhaps not. Cube Master Iki Picasso said, "Never cube too early the introduction, nor too late meeting novice under full moon with picnic basket and twin butterfly."

Of course I didn't tell The about Master Picasso. His sayings would only confuse her at this stage in her development. I took the cube from her lovely hand and looked into her eyes. Fortunately she wasn't wearing the low cut blouse. Thus began her introduction to The Cube.

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John Clark
(white)

UK Finals 7th and 8th December 2002

Analysis by Roy Hollands & Snowie 4.



Peter Bennet
(Black)

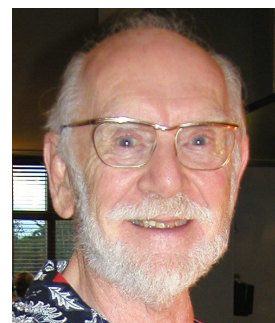
Many thanks to those who made this article possible: BIBA's most successful players Peter Bennet and John Clark, Michael Crane for recording the match, Michael Strato for publishing it in his great website, GammonVillage (www.GammonVillage.com) and last, but not least, Snowie 4.

Peter Bennet and John Clark, contested this closely fought match. Snowie gave the chances of winning as Peter 51.12%, John 48.88%. The luck factor was in favour of Peter by 6.315.

An error is a move losing 0.03 equity compared to Snowie's choice and a blunder is one losing 0.100 equity. The overall rating of the level of play was Advanced for both players. BIBA final's players are consistently getting this grade, suggesting that our best players are not yet up to level needed to have any chance of winning the World Championship.

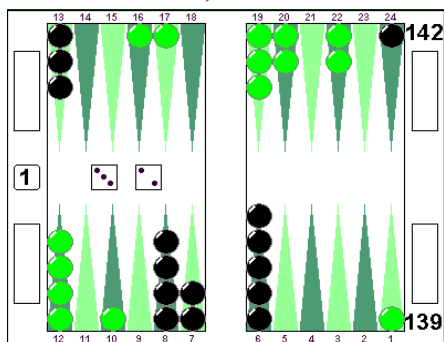
This match may give us some insight as to where we are falling short at the top level. Time and time again we find Snowie prefers an aggressive and/or challenging move where Peter and John have made much safer moves. Compared to Snowie they have, on several occasions, been unwilling to commit themselves to riskier, but possibly game winning, alternatives.

Admittedly it is often very difficult to judge how much risk to accept relative to the likely gain. Maybe the decision is just too difficult for many of us. . . .on the other hand it may be that we Brits are just too cautious and might do better if we played more aggressively.



Roy Hollands

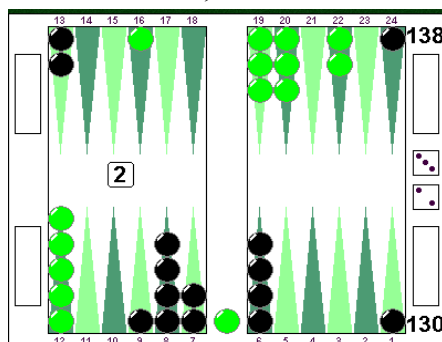
Game 1, Position 4



15/13 8/5 -0.078

Superficially this looks sound, safetying two of the three blots, yet it loses 0.078 equity. Better is 13/8, making the important 8-point. This unstacks the heavy mid-point at the cost of leaving a direct 3 shot. But a 3 can often be used usefully to move 24/21. Also if Black hits with 13/10 his mid-point is stripped and his weak board gives White no entrance problem.

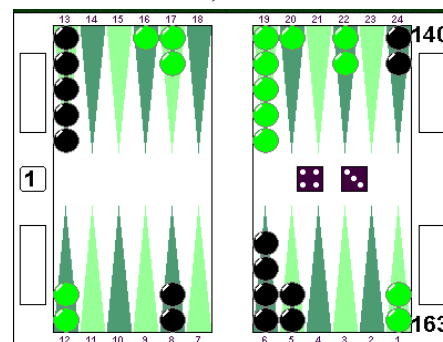
Game 1, Position 6



Double / Pass +0.504

Both the double and the pass are incorrect. The double loses 0.043 equity, a small error, but the pass is a huge blunder costing 0.504 equity. Black can win 38.7% of the games. The correct cube action is No double, Take if doubled.

Game 2, Position 3



24/20* 24/21 -0.070

An error costing 0.070 equity. Black gives White too many attacking chances. Much safer, and resulting in a better structure, is 24/20* 13/10.

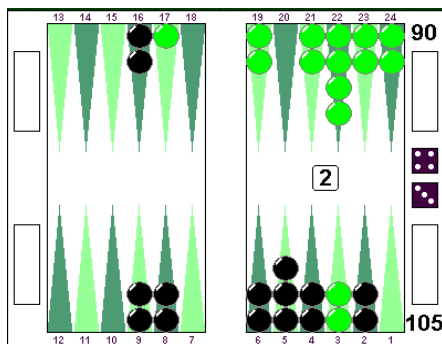
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Rating & Score

Black	0	Novice
White	1	Beginner



Game 2, Position 11



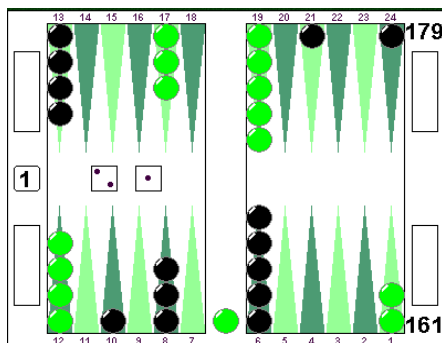
Double / Pass +0.001

Double/Take is fractionally better than passing, by a minute 0.001 equity.

Rating & Score

Black 1 World Class
White 1 Extra-terrestrial

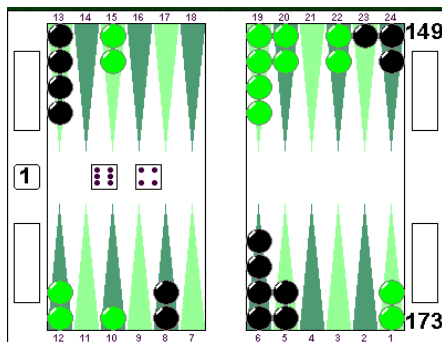
Game 3, Position 2



25/22 -0.084

This serious error costs 0.084 equity. Bar/24 6/4* is far better, unstacking the heavy 6 point and starting the valuable 4 point. No doubt White was avoiding the frequently criticised play of putting three checkers on the 24 point. However this can easily be corrected at such an early stage.

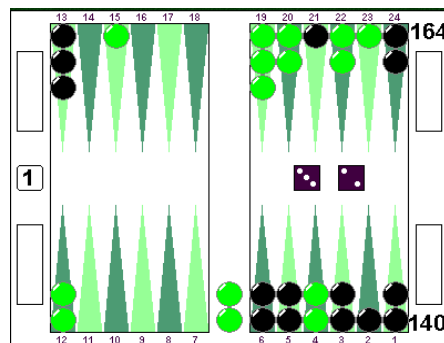
Game 3, Position 7



15/9 6/2* -0.094

Another serious error that is close to a blunder losing 0.094 equity. Snowie prefers 24/18 15/11. It is difficult to fault White's move. He has the better board so hitting and unstacking the 6-point certainly has its attractions.

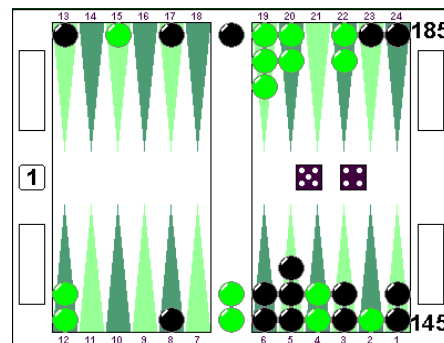
Game 3, Position 13



13/8 0.082

Black brings a builder down so as to cover his blot on the 2 point if he throws a 6 next roll. This loses 0.082 equity. 24/21 13/11 is best. Note that if he did throw the 6 it could also be used to hit on the 15 point.

Game 3, Position 16



25/21 31/8

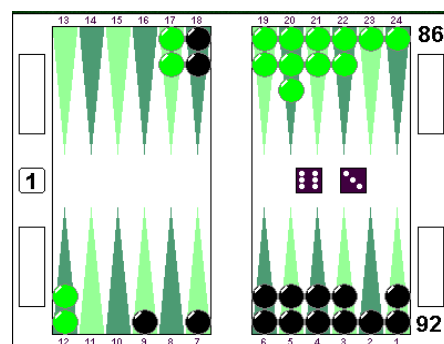
(missed double -0.208)

Failing to double is a very serious error losing 0.208 equity. White has a take as he can win 38.1% of the games. The double is based on winning 61.9% of the games but 43.3% of the wins are gammons or backgammons.

Rating & Score

Black 3 Advanced
White 1 World Class

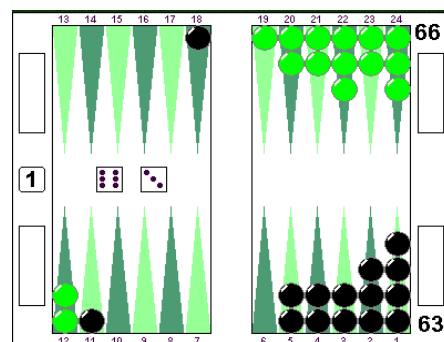
Game 4, Position 12



9/3 7/4 -0.051

This loses 0.051 equity. Better is 9/3 5/2 saving a 6.

Game 4, Position 15



13/7* 6/3

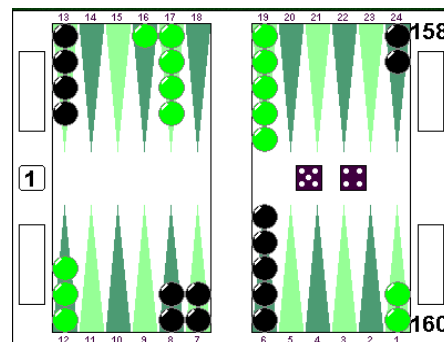
(missed double -0.063)

White should have doubled, gaining 0.063 equity. A clear take as Black can win 34.2% of the games.

Rating & Score

Black 7 World Class
White 1 World Class

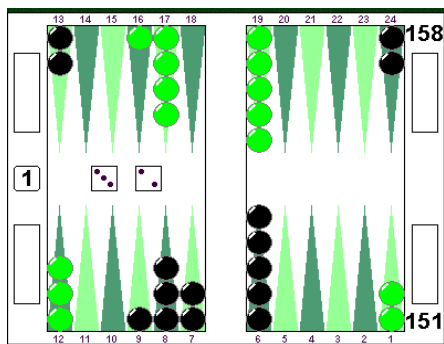
Game 5, Position 2



13/8 13/9 -0.071

This strips the mid-point and fails to activate the back checkers. Playing 24/15 is better by 0.071 equity.

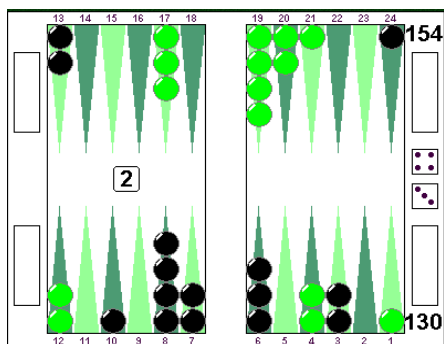
Game 5, Position 2a



13/8 -0.129

This is a bad blunder costing 0.129 equity. It is Snowie's 8th choice. (MC: According to my Snowie it is in 13th place on 3-ply!) In first place the enterprising 13/11 8/5 with 24/21 24/22 second and 24/22 13/10 third. Putting a fifth checker on the 8-point is very ugly, especially with the 5-stack on the 6-point.

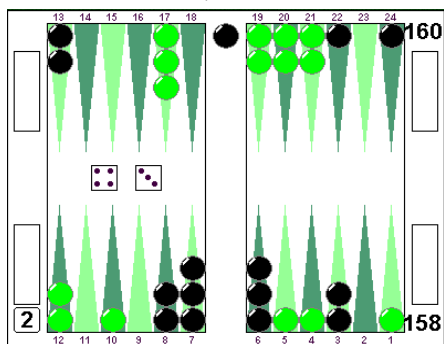
Game 5, Position 6



Double / Take -0.144

Although losing 4-away to 10-away White makes a serious error by doubling, losing 0.144 equity. Black has a very easy take winning 48.1% of the games.

Game 5, Position 9

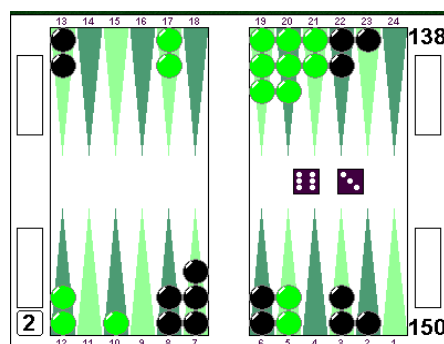


24/20 8/5 -0.048

24/21 20/16 is better by 0.048. It

leaves fewer shots and gets away from the spares on Black's 6- and 7-points. Black will have to give up his mid-point if he is to hit.

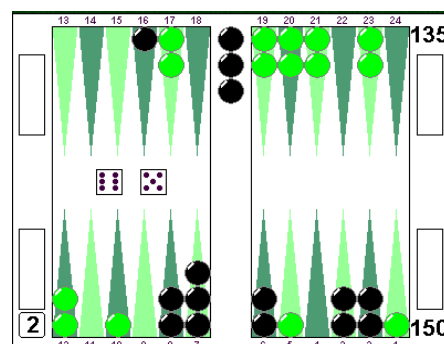
Game 5, Position 12



13/10* 8/2 -0.042

Snowie prefers the board building 8/2 7/4 by 0.042 equity. Giving up the mid-point could be dangerous for the three back checkers as they will have no landing place. There is some duplication of 3s.

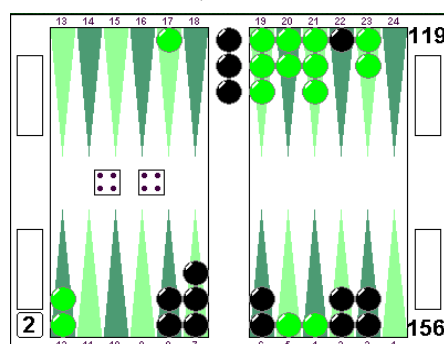
Game 5, Position 15



15/9* 9/4 -0.049

20/9* is better by 0.049. Checkers on the 9-point and 15-point are better placed than on the 4-point and the 20-point.

Game 5, Position 17

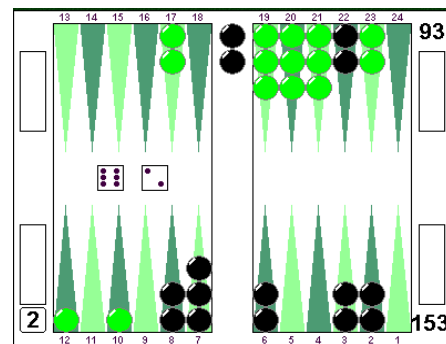


20/8 13/9 -0.061

With three of the opponent's

checkers on the bar it is essential to maximise the builders for the vital 3-point and to a lesser extent the 7-point. Hence 20/16 13/9(2) 9/5 is better by 0.061 equity.

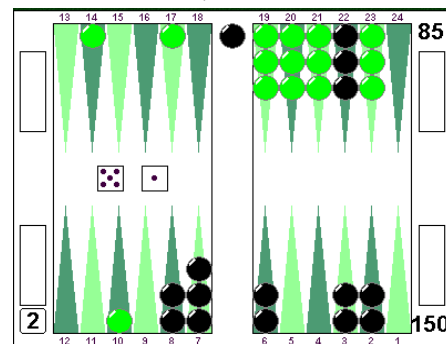
Game 5, Position 19



13/11 8/2 -0.049

The main aim for White is to bring all of his checkers into his home board before Black can enter his two checkers from the bar. Consequently 8/2 wastes pips unnecessarily. Moving 13/7 8/6 is consequently better by 0.049.

Game 5, Position 20

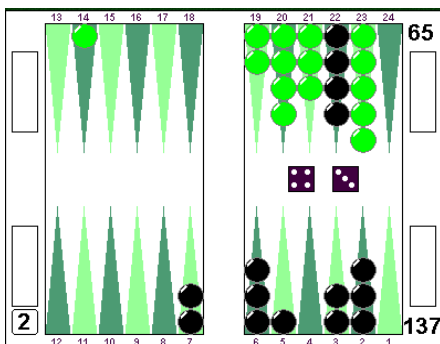


8/2 -0.149

A very large error that is only fractionally off being a blunder. It loses 0.149 equity. Playing 6/1 2/1 is best. An enemy checker on White's 1-point is always a danger and in this position it gives Black two chances of entering instead of just one.

Continued on the next page

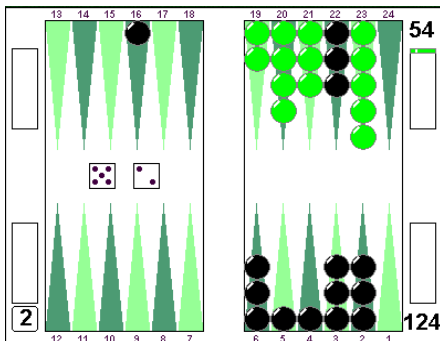
Game 5, Position 23



7/3 7/4 -0.076

When so far behind in the race one must maximise contact despite the added risk if hit. Hence 22/18 7/4 is preferable by 0.076 equity.

Game 5, Position 24



5/0 2/0 -0.058

Playing 6/1 6/4 is very safe yet White's move meant leaving shots on 66,55,63 and 36. Is it worth taking the risk so as to increase one's chances of getting a gammon?

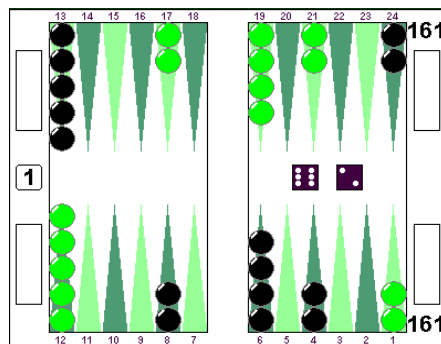
Black needs 58 pips to bring his four back checkers to his 6-point. The next move after that he saves the gammon. With an average roll of just over 8 pips he should save the gammon after eight rolls. White has 14 men to bear off so the gammon is very close.

Snowie prefers 6/1 6/4 by 0.058 equity but with Black's board containing two blots the risk of taking two checkers off seems reasonable.

Rating & Score

Black 7 World Class
White 3 Beginner

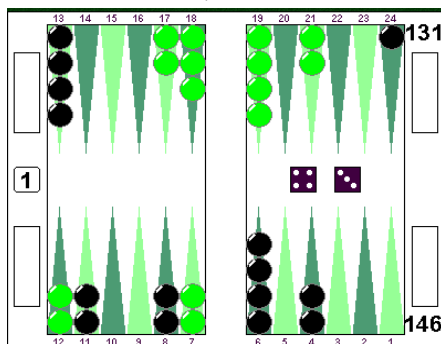
Game 6, Position 2



24/16 -0.050

This loses 0.050 equity. Moving 24/18 13/11 is better, unstacking the 13-point and bringing down a builder for the 7-point and the 5-point.

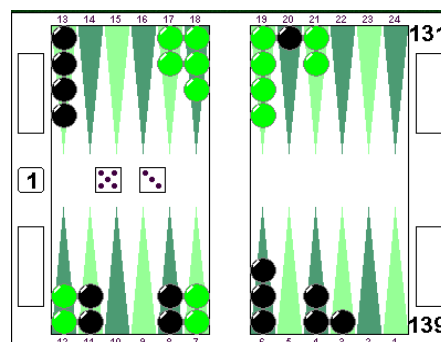
Game 6, Position 4



24/20 6/3 -0.037

Snowie prefers 24/20 13/10. This is riskier than Black's move but gives a slightly better structure if missed.

Game 6, Position 4



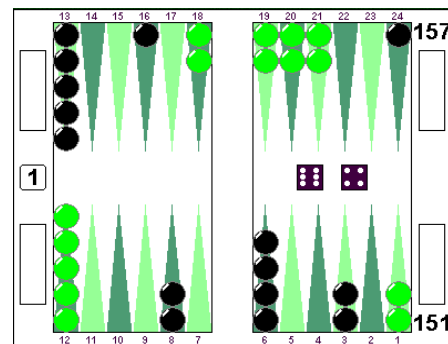
7/2 6/3 -0.165

This is no time to chicken out, moving 13/5* is better by 0.168 making White's move a clear blunder. When in doubt, - attack.

Rating & Score

Black 7 Advanced
White 4 Beginner

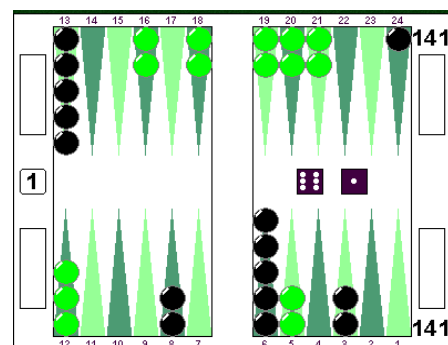
25 Game 7, Position 3



16/6 -0.059

16/6 gives a very poor distribution compared to 16/10 13/9. Stacking the 6-point costs 0.059 equity.

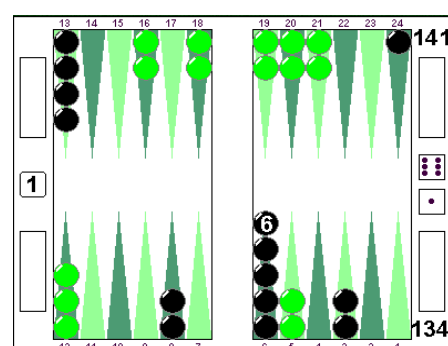
Game 7, Position 4



13/6 -0.091

More ugly stacking in the quest for safe moves. Black must challenge White to roll a 5 or a 1 by playing 24/17. If missed Black has good chances but sitting back on the 24-point gives White more time to get builders into place.

Game 7, Position 4a

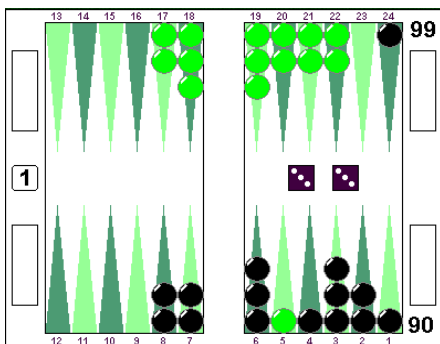


20/9

(missed double -0.048)

White should double and Black pass. Failure to double costs 0.048 equity.

Game 7, Position 10



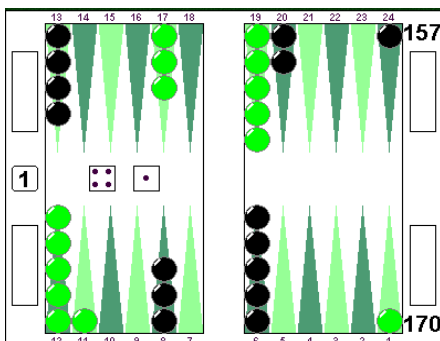
8/5(2)* 6/3 4/1 -0.046

Hitting a checker when you have a man trapped behind a 6-prime is always suspect and this case is no exception. After 4/1 and 6/3 the choice is 8/5*(2) or 7/4(2).

Rating & Score

Black 7 Advanced
White 5 World Class

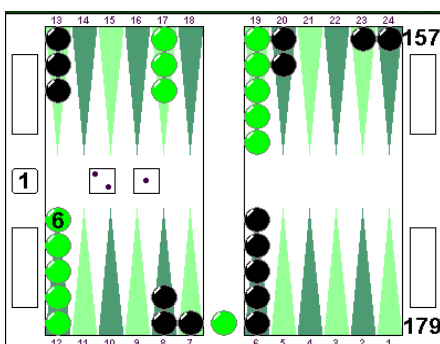
Game 8, Position 2



24/20 14/13 -0.032

Moving 14/9 is better by 0.032 equity. Six checkers on the 13-point is unsatisfactory. Black would be reluctant to hit a checker on White's 9-point if it meant giving up his 20-point anchor.

30 Game 8, Position 4

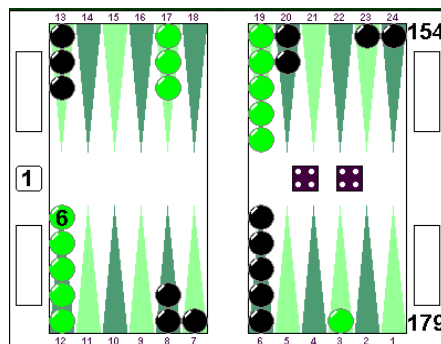


25/22 -0.045

White is 19 pips behind after this

roll. He should therefore be tempting Black into a hitting match. Bar/24 13/11 is better by 0.045 equity as it unstacks the heavy mid-point, challenges Black to hit from the 20-point and leaves the back checker on the 24-point where it is safer than on the 22-point.

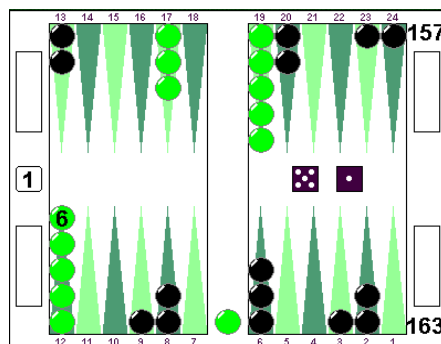
Game 8, Position 5



13/9 7/3* 6/2(2) -0.048

Better by 0.048 equity to make a three point board by 8/4(2) 6/2. The spare is best left on the 13-point.

Game 8, Position 6

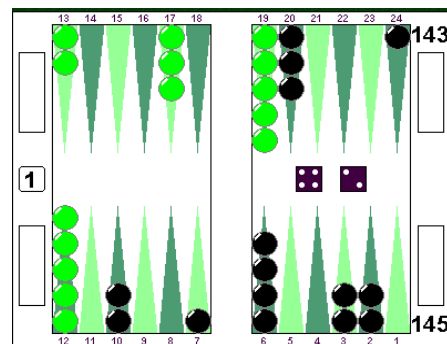


8/3 8/7 -0.073

Moving 9/3 leaves fewer blots and is better by 0.073 equity. There is a balancing act between providing extra hitting numbers, as Black has done, and leaving fewer return hits, as Snowie prefers.

Continued in the next column

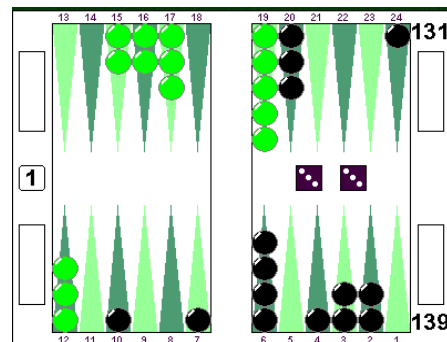
Game 8, Position 8



10/4 -0.067

Once more we see the difference between Snowie's aggressive style (20/16 7/5) and the safe, cautious move (10/4). Having by far the better board Black can afford to get into a hitting contest so 20/16 7/5 is better by 0.067 equity.

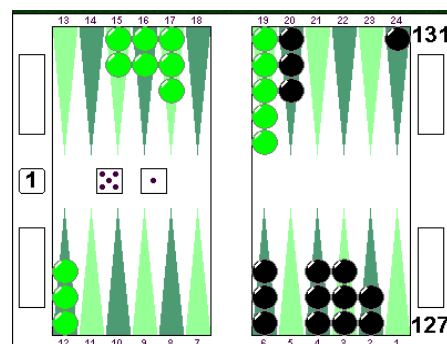
Game 8, Position 9



10/7 7/4(2) 6/3 -0.100

Snowie once again challenges White to hit at a time when Black has the better board. Playing 20/18 10/4 is better than the cautious move played by 0.100 equity. Thus the actual play qualifies as a blunder.

35 Game 8, Position 9a



13/8 13/12 -0.039

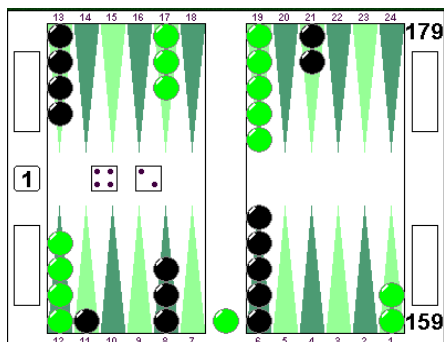
Snowie prefers 13/12 6/1* by 0.039 equity.

One can understand White's reluctance to hit loose on the 1-point when Black has a vastly superior home board. The move played does, however, leave a number of excellent rolls for Black, such as 25,26,16 and 66.

Rating & Score

Black 7 Beginner
White 6 Advanced

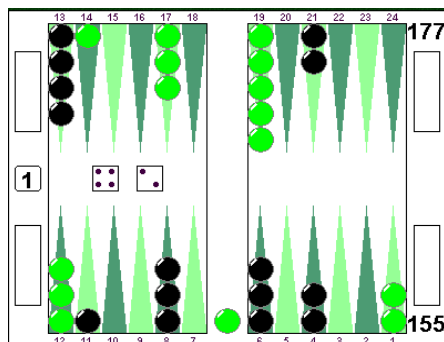
Game 9, Position 2



25/21 13/11 -0.037

Snowie prefers 25/21 24/22 by 0.037.

Game 9, Position 3

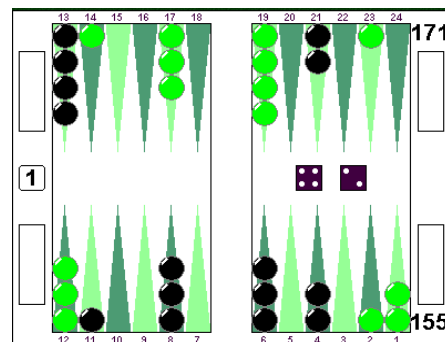


25/23 6/2 -0.105

A blunder costing 0.105 equity. Moving 6/2 unstacks the 6-point but puts a checker behind Black's anchor. Bar/23 24/20 may seem risky but it is essential to try for an advanced anchor before Black brings down more builders.

Continued in the next column

38 Game 9, Position 4



11/5 6/5

(missed double -0.123)

Black has the better anchor, fewer checkers back and a 16 pip lead in the race. A clear double and pass. Despite White winning 31.9% of the games the gammon risks (23.6%) are too high to take.

Continued on the next page



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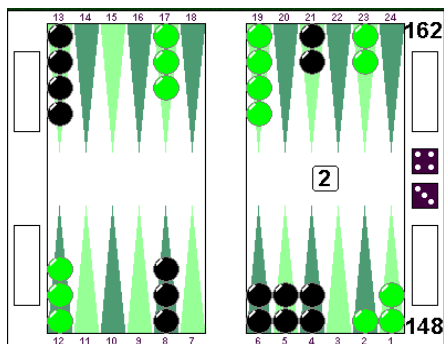
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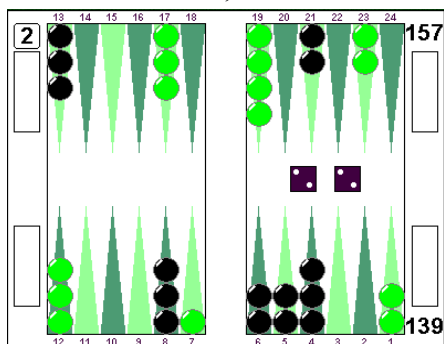
Game 9, Position 5



Double / Take -0.542 (white)

One of the worst blunders of the match losing a massive 0.542 equity. This was a huge, double / pass. White may be able to win 26.0% of the time but the gammon losses of 26.3% are an unacceptable risk.

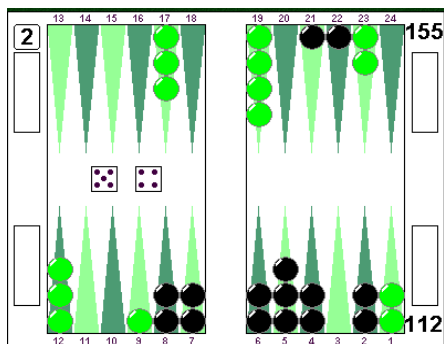
40 Game 9, Position 7



13/7* 7/5 -0.030

Moving 13/7* 8/6 is better by 0.030. Snowie again demonstrates when it is better to maximise attacking chances rather than playing safe.

Game 9, Position 10



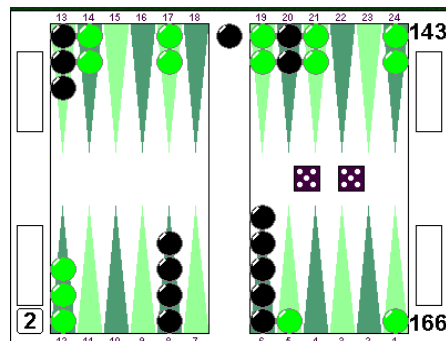
16/12 13/8 -0.033

Snowie suggests the aggressive play of 13/4*, preferring this by 0.033 equity.

Rating & Score

Black 9 Expert
White 6 Beginner

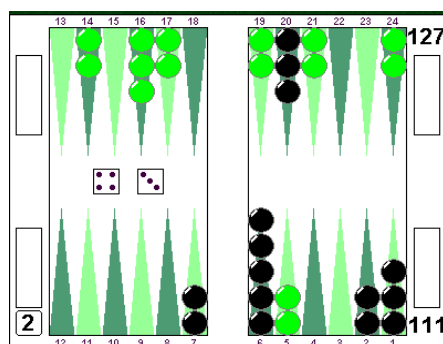
Game 10, Position 6



25/20 13/8 8/3(2) -0.048

Moving Bar/20 20/15(3) is better by 0.048 equity. Why? See the chapter on 'Connectivity' in Bill Robertie's great book, *Modern Backgammon*.

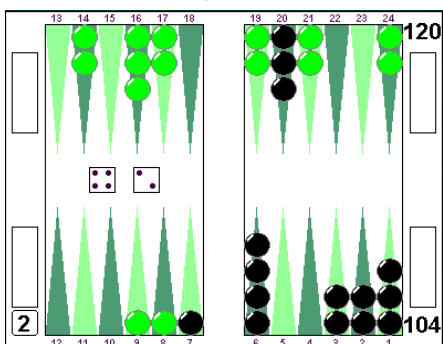
Game 10, Position 9



20/16 20/17 -0.038

White's 20/16 20/17 is difficult to fault as it gives good cover of the outfield. Snowie prefers 9/2 although this strips the 9-point and puts a checker behind Black's anchor.

Game 10, Position 10

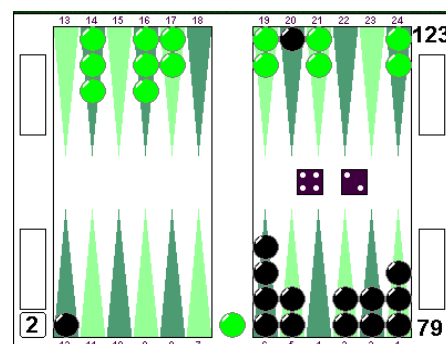


17/11 -0.037

Snowie prefers 9/3 by 0.037 equity.

ty. This slots the 3-point which White wants to make next, but its main value is in keeping a better cover of the outfield. This is especially important with White being behind in the race.

Game 10, Position 14



20/18 6/2 -0.071

When you have an advantage it is important to exert the maximum pressure rather than play super safe. Moving 20/18 6/2 loses 0.071 equity compared to 20/18 12/8. Double four is a wonderful joker for White whichever of the moves is made, but apart from that a Black checker on the 8-point is vastly superior to one on the 12-point.

From hereon, Peter (black) goes on to win the two points and the UK title.

Rating & Score

Black 11 World Class
White 6 World Class

On the following page is the match detailed statistics. ➤

<u>Match detailed statistics</u>		
Player	Bennet	Clark
Rating	Advanced	Advanced
Overall	6.825/17.035	6.782/18.156
Errors(blunders)	22(3)	25(5)
Checker play errors		
Checker play	4.183/12.066	4.207/12.267
Errors(blunders)	18(0)	19(3)
Double errors		
Overall	1.147/2.466	1.090/1.961
Missed double	1.068/2.174	0.577/1.141
Wrong double	0.079/0.292	0.512/0.820
Errors(blunders)	3(2)	5(1)
Take errors		
Overall	1.496/2.504	1.485/3.928
Wrong take	none	1.482/3.923
Wrong pass	1.496/2.504	0.003/0.005
Errors(blunders)	1(1)	1(1)
Peter Bennet was 51.12% - 48.88% favorite		

Hi-Rollers

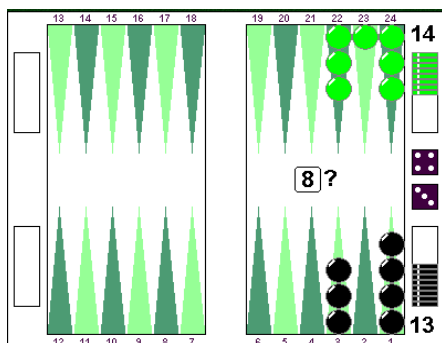
September 20/21 2003
Win 3 Main matches
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Monday nights at the Wine Bar

Phil Churton returns after a long toilet break!

Monday nights at the Wine Bar still continues, although my current abstentious campaign means glasses of orange juice change hands instead of the more usual alcoholic currency!

Matched against the (improving) Arthur last night in a 5-point set, Arthur's near miraculous salvaging of a crunched 3-4 back game and am impudent recube to 4 left me eagerly anticipating further shenanigans in the bear-off.



5 point match
Arthur, white 0
Me, black 0, on roll
Recube to 8?

"One slip on Arthur's part, and 8 cube here I come", thought I, niftily reaching the above position:

Itching to punish Arthur for his earlier cheekiness, I fancied this one. "I'm definitely taking your double", blustered Arthur – but I know he meant it, and intended to deter my recube.

It looks like 3½ rolls v 3½ rolls, must be 75 odd% to me to win, but he only needs 15% or so to take at this score. However, I only need 51% to push the (killed) cube over, and even if I roll 2-1, if he only takes 2 men off, I've still got a "borderline" double, (Arthur would free a 3 roll vs 3 roll proposition with 21% chance to win, plus a 27% chance of me throwing a 2 – still over 50% to me!).

So far as I could see, only an immediate double 3, 4, 5 or 6 from Arthur would make me wish I hadn't doubled, with 1-1 also causing some grief to yours truly.

...

Sitting out the next set and buying Arthur his glass of red (winner stays on of course), I was not feeling best pleased. As usual David and the crew "helpfully" danced around to an amusingly off key Samba music CD, as if to rub salt into the wound.

Michael, tell me the worst. What do you think of the double?

P.S. I'm seriously considering switching to cranberry juice, which I hear boosts the I.Q!

MC: According to Snowie this is a redouble / take with an equity loss of 0.021 if you don't.

Phil, take my advice and get back on the wine; you had far more success when you'd downed the odd bottle or two of the house plonk!

Dorothy's Opening

By Cedric Lytton

Dedicated to my dear wife, who gave me my first backgammon set and often races faster than Paula Radcliffe.

Dorothy and I enjoy a best-of-three backgammon session (*a Ia Turque*, without the cube) almost every day, and while firmly refusing to look at any books or articles, she has learnt not to play an opening 43 as 13/6.

As we all know, this roll can be played 13/9, 13/10 (going for a quick prime and a gammon) or 13/9,24/21 or 24/20, 13/10 starting both a prime and forward anchor. However, Dorothy has never been convinced of the need for a prime and, indeed, wins quite a few of our games by making her forward anchor, bringing all her men home on the 1,2 and 3-points and waiting to jump over my prime with 65 or a large double when I eventually clear the back points. (Chris Bray's technique (i) of keeping the back points and building my board using men from the front points always seems to end with me leaving a shot and losing the race, and with no cube I can't double her out.)

Dorothy then, plays 43: 24/20, 24/21. Chris Bray (ii) reports a personal failure rate of 0 out of 3 for this move, but it does have some points:

If not hit a normally awkward 1 next time (e.g. 51, 41, 21) can be played 21/20 making the invaluable golden anchor

If not hit, opponent won't dare bring a man down from his mid-point as she covers all, and will be a favourite to hit;

even 13/11 leaves all 6s and 33, plus 52, 43 (total 20).

If one blot hit and not pointed on, she has 26 numbers either to return hit or to anchor on her other blot making her a good favourite. Indeed, quite often there results a blot fight in which opponent only wins a point at the cost of three or four men back.

As opponent has not yet brought down any men from his mid-point, Dorothy is not "coming under the gun" which is dangerous when opponent has three or more builders for these points (iii). Indeed, only 11, 22, 33, 44, 31, 42 are great replies and these are good numbers anyway

The normally feared 55 now hits nothing.

Sometimes it is convenient to run out next time with one man to the mid-point or even beyond.

This opening could be useful at Crawford 1-away, 2-away or Post Crawford 1-away, 3-away when the leader wants to make an early anchor as security against being gammoned.

The play is occasionally useful a few moves into the opening. Readers will remember this was Snowie's first choice in Snellings vs Lumpur, game 2 (iv).

In short, Dorothy's opening is ideal for a good defensive player. Similar principles and results hold for the opening 32 which Dorothy plays 24/21, 24/22 although the low 3-point anchor is naturally less promising than the high 4-point or golden anchor.

I am quite prepared to be told that JellyFish and Snowie rate Dorothy's opening as a blunder or gross error and certainly I play

opening 43 another way. Well, just say that when faced with Dorothy's opening I at once expect a battle royal on those points!

References:

- i Chris Bray, "The Case of the Outside Prime", *An Independent View*, Electra Publishing (1998) Page 71.
- ii Chris Bray, *What Colour is the Wind?* (2002), Pages 200-201.
- iii Paul Magriel, *Backgammon*, X-22 Publishing (1976) Page 260.
- iv Michael Crane, "Blunders from the Biggies", *Bibafax No. 63* (March 2003), Page 9.

MC: Publications i, ii and iv can be purchased from Biba. For 'Backgammon' by Paul Magriel, visit . . .

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Prize Crossword 04

The Solution

Well, one member is on a roll.

The winner of Word Search 01, Anne Pocknell (Bibafax 63, page 15) is also the winner of this prize crossword competition! Another £15 is winging its way to her, whilst £10 is on its way to Adam Stocks, the second correct solution opened up.

		1 S	2 T	E	A	3 M	I	N	4 G		5 H	6 I	7 T	8 S
9 A			I			A			U			10 N	I	T
11 D	E	S	M	12 O	N	D	S		13 M	L	O	N	E	R
V				K		S						E		A
A			14 B	R	I	A	N	15 L	E	16 V	E	R		G
N		17 O		A		N		O		I		T		G
C		F				D		S		G		A		L
18 E	F	F	E	C	I	E	N	T	D	O	U	B	L	E
D						R				R		L		R
A		19 C	U	20 B	I	S	T		21 D	I	C	E		
N		U		E		E				S			22 T	
23 C	A	P	T	A	I	N		24 G		25 H	O	26 M	E	
H				V				27 U	P			28 E	M	G
29 O	N	T	H	E	R	O	O	F					P	
R				R				30 F	L	Y	S	H	O	T

Mark Oram writes: Dear Michael and Richard *Granville*, many thanks for the helpful analysis of competition 61.01-06 answers, and also thank you very much for the Presentation Prize: it was very gratifying to receive it. (I also note I shunted Rodney Lighton out of the 'last place' slot this time round, thus depriving him of his hat-trick. Somehow, I don't imagine he'll mind too much.)

On a slightly more serious note, regarding the competition objectives, I agree 100% that it is far better to have each answer discussed by as many entrants as possible than to simply present a list of equities from Snowie etc. While it is possible to highlight the weaknesses in one's game by (a) seeing equities for each of the possible plays in any given position or (b) reading expert analysis on set positions; I find it much more instructive and useful to read the opinions of the other entrants who have wrestled with the same problems as I have. This seems to make the lessons much easier to absorb and be remembered. I also get a definite feel for the 'style' each player has, and one of the chief

Letters

attractions for me with this game is the huge scope there is for playing with varying styles; again whether the particular moves of a particular approach be 'right' or 'wrong' in the absolute sense.

Secondly, many congratulations on the new Bibafax CD-ROM format: I enjoy it a great deal. I guess one possible drawback is now, as you pointed out, that you have to find more material for more issues per year than with the old quarterly format. Have you thought of offering some kind of small incentive for members to make regular contributions: even, say, some kind of prize for the person who submits the most articles - original or otherwise - at the end of the year? Roy *Hollands* would be a very deserving candidate in this regard for example. Also, I find when printing out a hard copy, that it is now possible to save significantly on paper by only copying certain sections (and leaving the tables of rankings, for example, on the screen simply for reference etc).

Environmentally this is much better - although given that, as I write, the USA has stepped up its bombing campaign against Iraq the long-term benefits to the World as a whole may be minor compared to the still unknowable consequences of this military action. (On this note, a few weeks ago Iraq made a challenge to George W. that he and Saddam should simply duel out their differences *mano a mano*: no-one even thought of having the two play backgammon instead! Who do we predict would win, say, 11/15/25 point matches?)

Thanks for the comments on the Biba-CD. It is proving a very popular 'extra' and is now being sent out to 89 members world-wide. The fact that it contains several Snowie match files might be a reason for its popularity.

I agree about the Competition format. I too enjoy reading why players choose a particular move, and, although it is often the 'wrong' move, their reasons are well argued and genuine. I would not like to see a list of Snowie equities and

Continued on page 38



Word Search 02

Compiled by Michael Crane

U	S	E	A	N	C	A	S	E	Y	A	H	C	F	A	H	J	M	V	T	L	G	N	P	A	N	O	R	S	J
C	T	R	P	T	F	D	L	L	M	N	G	T	S	N	Y	U	D	D	V	Q	C	T	K	O	X	K	I	N	I
O	Q	R	F	I	N	V	H	L	L	A	B	P	R	T	M	L	G	E	L	T	J	D	M	M	R	E	A	Y	M
J	P	P	K	F	J	L	G	H	G	H	I	G	R	Q	P	I	S	E	R	U	M	E	R	A	T	T	N	A	J
E	E	G	O	E	D	Q	U	X	F	T	U	L	A	P	P	A	T	Q	X	E	B	C	L	N	I	T	C	L	O
W	T	N	J	X	N	J	O	Q	D	A	L	G	G	A	E	N	E	K	E	A	K	C	A	M	P	Q	M	C	H
Q	E	A	H	X	Q	O	N	S	L	N	G	N	A	U	T	F	V	K	X	L	N	M	C	K	O	I	E	N	N
Q	R	G	S	R	L	H	O	A	E	D	O	I	S	L	E	E	E	I	A	H	B	R	A	S	Y	B	V	I	S
N	B	I	S	E	A	N	D	M	I	I	M	R	M	M	R	T	H	C	O	L	O	B	Q	T	A	Q	A	B	O
O	E	R	E	N	W	H	C	T	F	V	A	O	L	O	W	T	A	J	J	S	O	X	E	Q	H	Y	D	O	N
T	N	R	G	R	R	U	M	S	S	A	M	O	E	N	I	E	L	Y	S	V	P	Y	B	W	G	E	I	R	Q
E	N	E	R	U	E	R	N	I	U	D	I	M	H	E	L	R	L	C	R	Y	Y	A	T	X	L	K	S	D	P
R	E	M	U	T	N	S	I	R	B	L	T	M	N	Y	S	L	E	D	Q	M	R	I	V	Q	S	I	P	O	V
E	T	L	B	N	C	T	V	H	N	D	A	I	E	J	O	E	T	N	D	R	D	X	K	U	T	P	E	D	N
R	K	E	N	I	E	V	E	C	A	D	R	T	L	R	N	I	T	E	Y	S	X	X	B	D	E	R	B	N	W
B	M	G	A	W	P	Y	K	R	I	K	U	W	E	A	N	N	X	W	I	E	F	J	R	T	P	I	P	I	O
L	V	I	D	D	O	M	X	E	R	S	M	D	H	J	R	O	I	Z	L	X	O	O	V	Y	H	C	L	I	J
E	V	N	N	E	W	W	M	T	B	K	I	A	A	E	R	L	A	H	P	H	F	Y	N	N	E	K	R	N	G
A	A	N	E	S	E	A	A	E	A	E	V	M	N	V	L	N	K	B	N	M	H	T	S	E	N	J	A	L	R
H	N	O	R	T	L	L	C	P	R	G	U	A	N	I	I	C	V	B	A	A	D	U	V	I	T	A	C	W	A
C	A	T	B	V	L	E	Y	G	W	I	R	J	A	K	E	D	R	L	R	M	I	A	W	L	U	N	H	S	H
I	M	N	O	T	I	H	V	E	W	C	E	M	S	H	K	O	L	R	G	X	R	E	H	K	R	O	E	E	A
M	A	A	T	N	W	F	X	X	L	F	S	E	C	J	O	U	Y	E	V	O	D	N	I	A	N	W	L	N	M
C	F	T	P	J	R	U	J	E	F	L	H	K	T	M	A	B	V	M	V	K	O	Y	G	Z	E	S	R	O	S
K	A	S	F	X	W	G	A	B	T	P	C	P	F	P	H	I	Y	C	C	I	V	A	M	A	R	K	H	J	E
F	T	Y	N	W	M	H	A	N	L	I	G	I	E	A	U	J	O	O	W	F	T	W	N	R	B	I	O	D	I
E	S	L	C	T	C	R	H	A	N	Q	E	W	T	Y	R	E	T	T	A	L	S	N	H	O	J	D	D	O	V
U	U	L	F	I	B	R	R	W	T	L	K	I	I	G	R	M	H	L	X	M	A	M	N	S	I	A	E	R	E
K	M	I	M	E	L	V	J	U	D	C	A	U	R	O	Y	H	O	L	L	A	N	D	S	S	C	I	S	N	R
N	W	W	R	L	M	U	Y	S	N	E	N	N	A	T	Y	A	R	L	H	C	D	O	D	D	A	V	I	E	S

Barry Williams	Jeff Barber	Mustafa Manav	Ray Tannen
Brendan Burgess	Jim Johnson	Neil Kazaross	Rick Janowski
Brian Busfield	John Broomfield	Neil Webb	Robin Clay
Dave McNair	John Clark	Nick Check	Rod Jones
David Levi	John Hurst	Nigel Merrigan	Roy Hollands
David Nathan	John Slattery	Paul Lamford	Sean Casey
Derek Matheson	Julian Fetterlein	Paul Money	Stephen Turner
Dod Davies	Kevin McDonough	Peter Bennet	Steve Hallet
Edwin Turner	Lawrence Powell	Peter Christmas	Tim Mooring
Graham Seivers	Michael Brereton	Peter Wilson	Wayne Auty
Harry Bhatia	Michael Crane	Rachel Rhodes	Willy Stanton
Helen Helm-Sagar	Murat Imamoglu	Ralph Eskinazi	

Your mission, should you accept it is to find all the winners in the list above, and to identify one more whose name is in the grid but not on the list! You have until 7 June to send in your answers to the usual place after which this word search will self destruct. Your reward for completing the mission is fifteen quid. Securicor will deliver it via an armoured van for its protection.

a winner merely justifying the move. I am grateful to Snowie/Chris Bray for the 'correct' analysis; and think this contribution worthwhile.

Remaining with the format, Richard Granville writes about his decision to stand down as the editor of the competition: Although I realise that you would prefer me to continue, I really don't want to run the competition for ever. I am willing to continue to the end of the year (i.e. two more competitions) but would then like a rest from the commitment.

I've sounded out Peter Bennet and Brian Lever about taking over, but only the former thinks that he has enough time, and then would prefer not to organise every competition. Perhaps you could put a note in the next Bibafax, asking if anyone else is interested. (I've just realised that Rodney Lighton is a possibility, his lack of backgammon experience being balanced by his bridge expertise and understanding of how the corresponding bridge competitions are run).

If necessary, I'm willing to:

- run one competition per year (not the first in the year)
- help the new organiser(s) get started
- consider minor changes to the format

Well first of all I'd like to say a big thank you to Richard for doing the competition for so long. Many readers have found a lot of inspiration from the content, and, although it has its critics, the format has worked well.

If Brian, Peter or Rodney are interested in taking it or part of it on, then please get in touch with me and we'll sort something out. At the very worst I'll take it on but I'm

sure you're all fed up with my contributions without having to read more!

Peter Bennet stays with us to explain (yet again) about a mistake in the last issue spotted by John Broomfield: John Broomfield is correct regarding the article, *Do You Know Your Ace-point Game?* By Kit Woolsey in Bibafax 63, page 11 - there are a couple of errors in your version, but it's quite easy to deduce the corrections even without the original.

On the first page, 1c should read 6/5 6/4 3/2 and 2a should read 6/4 5/4. These moves are shown correctly in the answers section on the second page. Also, 1d is given as 6/5 5/4(3) in the question, but as 6/4 5/4(2) in the answer. Kit uses the latter notation for both, and they are of course identical moves - it's just a bit confusing to have two different notations.

Also in your Snowie rollouts you refer to differences between different plays of, for example, 0.036% whereas these figures are equities in fractions of a point rather than percentages.

Actually I had intended to contact you about this article myself, not so much because of the above errors, but the apparent discrepancies between Kit's answers and the Snowie rollouts, which are more thought provoking. One reason for these would appear to be that Kit's program was looking for the safest play, ignoring gammons completely, whereas Snowie is maximising equity including gammons (assuming no Jacoby rule). Kit's four listed assumptions will also introduce errors, and he states in his next paragraph:

"Assume that safety is the only consideration, and that the number

of men borne off when a shot is left is irrelevant."

This is clearly not the case in a real game, where the number of men you have taken off when you leave a shot can be crucial for winning the game, never mind gammon considerations. The top Snowie choices therefore show a tendency for ripping checkers off where possible, but Kit's program doesn't award any Brownie points for checkers off - it is simply trying not to get hit before clearing down to the 2-point, after which it doesn't care what happens.

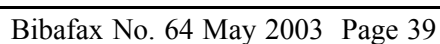
One other observation particularly regarding the Snowie rollouts of Position 4 but also applying to some plays in a couple of the other positions where the rollout equity is 1.000 precisely. This must be because Snowie is going to double White out next time however the current roll is played, and irrespective of White's next roll, because it is too dangerous to play on for the gammon. Where the equity exceeds 1.000 by a very small fraction, Black is only slightly too good and will probably double White out very soon in most variations. Take cube access away from Black and you will get significant equity differences between the different plays.

Thank you Peter (and John) for the above comments. Perhaps it would be a good idea if Peter were to take on some of the competition that Richard is abdicating - as this reply shows, he's more than capable in his analysis.

On the same subject, regular contributor, Cedric Lytton says: I have studied Kit Woolsey's "Do you know your Ace-point game?" with interest, particularly position 5.

Continued on page 40





Now, I admit to placing all the choices exactly as Snowie, and exactly wrong as Kit points out. On further thought, Kit's preferences (a, c) may well have been marked down by Snowie because they leave 4 immediate bad numbers, 65, 51 whereas (b, d) leave only 64. But we'll have to clear the 6 point some time, we are unlikely to do so with a double, and the more men we bury or take off with temporising moves like (a, c) the fewer spares we shall have to handle the bad numbers later. This point may well not figure largely in Snowie's long-term calculations, but I'm sure Kit's program is foolproof and his observations are better interpretations of his results. The same applies to position 4 where, despite the immediate horror rolls 65 and 54, filling the 4-point is likely to avoid even more trouble.

Cedric also comments: I think maybe your document reader had some fluff in the camera, as there are a couple of typos in Julian Hayward's column in the matrix on page 30 of Bibafax 63. His equity losses for Problems 60.01, and 60.02 should have been 0.011 (not 0.110) and 0.039 (not 0.390), making his total equity loss 0.133 and not the whacking great 0.583 as printed.

Yep, it was fluff! Cedric is one of the 'old school' inasmuch as he uses a typewriter as opposed to a word-processor; and, in the 'translation' via my OCR software a couple of the figures were incorrect. However, the mistake is still mine - I should have checked it over!

Ian Shaw, the 2003 At-A-Glance British Open Champion took time off celebrating his victory to say: I just had to check out your report (on the Biba web site) as soon as I

received your email. That daft beam (*front page*) is still plastered all over my face! My missus doesn't usually take too much of an interest in my backgammon exploits, but she had the champagne on ice by the time I got home on Sunday, and the evening proceeded most pleasantly.

Thanks very much to you and your team for all your organisational efforts. I always enjoy the tournaments, but needless to say, this has been my favourite one so far!

Well done, Ian. I am sure your smile will wear off eventually - unlike the inscription on the trophy! Ian wrote an article on GammonVillage about his victory which. If you are not yet a member of GV then contact me for details regarding three months free usage.

John Slattery brings up the subject of Grand Prix points: Following our telephone conversation today I have discussed the subject of Grand Prix points with a few erstwhile BG players and we are all as puzzled as each other on how they work.

The main points raised are, firstly:
 i Consolation winner with a field of 37 gets 10.2
 ii Consolation winner with a field of 81 gets 6.2.

Shouldn't there be a positive differential between winning a tournament with 80+ players than when there is less than half that?

The GP points are not based upon the size of the field, but on the number of rounds played (which, of course, is loosely based upon the entry size). In the Consolation, unlike the Main, some players (you were one) jump into it in the latter rounds and therefore will play less matches than others who

started in the 1st round.

In the example above:

- i You played 6 rounds = 10.2
- ii You played 4 rounds = 6.2

This was clearly explained in Bibafax 62, page 25. Did you read it? If you disagreed with it then you should have let me know right away.

This doesn't make sense. Surely some recognition has to be given to the fact that even though the winner may have played fewer rounds at 7 points in the Consolation, they had to win several 11 point rounds in the Main to have entered the Consolation where they did.

Good point. The 'reward' for going so far in the main is entering the Consolation at the very last chance. However, I agree this isn't reward enough and I have decided to add together GP points gained in all sections. Therefore, I shall redo the GP points for 2003 to date and amend the database accordingly.

Secondly, how can the winner of the Last Chance with a field of 64, which is only 5 point matches, get 6.1 Grand Prix points. This is only 0.1 difference!

Dave McNair played 6 rounds; you played 4. If we look at the number of points played for, Dave played 30 and you played 28. It is harder to win 6 x 5-pointers than to win 4 x 7-pointers due to the volatility of the small points matches, hence the closeness of the GP points.

I think the calculation should be looked at again and at very least recognition given to the points that would have been won in the Main.

The calculations are fine, and have been since we began the GP Championship. However, as stated above I have decided to recognise achievement in other sections. This recognition is now active and the latest data (see the final pages of this issue) reflects this.

*The new, CD-PDF version of Bibafax is proving a great success. Here's a couple of satisfied customers; **Ron Havenhand** Received the disk today, thank you, and it is very impressive. The colour aspects make the magazine much more interesting. I have also enjoyed the Snowie extras. Keep up the good work! **Claudio Salamone - Buenos Aires - Argentina:** Very good idea with the new overseas format of your Bibafax in CD. Keep on with your well done job. Your newsletter is getting better issue after issue.*

*Thanks, Guys. But, not everyone is happy! **Bill Davis** emailed saying:*

I am unable to read the disk you sent me at home (I have a Macintosh) and it is too time-consuming to go through it or print it at my office. Please send me hard copies in the future.

*Finally, on a rainy day with nothing better to do, **Chris March** did this:* It was raining here last Sunday so I started to flick through some recent copies of Bibafax. Whilst doing so I came across the 'World's Shortest Game Of Backgammon' in the January 2003 issue 62.

I decided to rise to the challenge and try and find an even shorter game, so armed with my board and a pencil and paper I set off for the study. Two hours later I emerged defeated but did succeed in finding what I believe to be the shortest game where one player can win in exactly his/her opening pip-count of 167.

10 turns, 19 moves.

Total pip-count 194

White

01) 65: 24/18 18/13

21: 24/23 13/11

02) 66: 13/7(4)

21: 24/23 13/11

03) 66: 13/7(2) 7/1(2)

21: 23/22 13/11

04) 66: 7/1(4)

21: 22/21 13/11

05) 66: 24/18 18/12* 8/2*(2)

21:

06) 66: 12/6 8/2 6/off(2)

21:

07) 66: 6/off(4)

21:

08) 11: 2/1 1/off(3)

21:

09) 11: 2/1(2) 1/off(2)

21: 25/23

10) 11: 1/off(4)

White pip-count 167

Black pip-count 27

I don't know if anyone has done this before but someone might find it interesting.

I found it interesting. Did anyone else? Can anyone find a shorter game or will Alan Beckerson retain his 'Guinness Book of Records' entry?

Hi - Rollers - Double Entry Jackpot

September 20 & 21, 2003

First Prize £2000, Runner-up £800, 3/4 £600 each

Entry Fee: £250 (Main only). 100% entry fees returned in all events.

Entry is restricted to 16 players on a first-come-first-accepted basis*

Saturday - Main Qualifier: Knockout of 15 point matches. 1st Round losers go into an 11 point, Double Entry draw for a two-player Main entry, 2nd Round losers go into a 7 point Double Entry draw for a second two-player Main entry. This will leave 8 players for the Sunday Main Jackpot.

Sunday - Consolation (separate entry fee tba): Random draw Knockout to include progressive entry of 1st Round losers from the Main.

In addition to the above events, jackpots and other diversions will be available throughout the weekend upon demand. It is anticipated that demand for this event will be over subscribed, therefore you are urged to register as soon as you can. A pre-registration fee (refundable if unable to attend) of £15 should be sent to Hi-Rollers. *Once we get to 16 players a 'stand-by' list will be maintained which will be used to replace entrants that drop out or alternatively, may enable us to increase the field in increments of 8 players at a time. If the latter is the case, then the format will be revised to accommodate a higher entry.

For further details, : hi-rollers@backgammon-biba.co.uk or contact via Biba HQ

ZX81
Half man -
Hal machine -
Halfwit!



SARS (Sneezes Are Really Serious) has been occupying my time this last few weeks. I have been called in by the WHO to help them sort out a bad, PR problem

"To date about 266 people have died world-wide," I told a bunch of doctors, scientists and Roger Daltrey, "Which is nothing at all to worry about when you consider the billions of people that haven't." I went on, "Approximately 266 people are dying of tobacco related diseases every minute of the day - and you can buy tobacco everywhere in the world, quite legally! So, if the tobacco industry can survive when it's killing its own customers on a regular and grand scale, then losing a few to SARS is just a drop in the ocean."

That concluded I turned my attention to the Gulf War. During a meeting with TB and GWB they aired their concern over Weapons Of Mass Delusion. "I can't understand it," said GW, wringing his hands, "we just can't find any."

"Nor shall you," I said, matter of factly. I went on to explain. "After the last/first Gulf War the weapons inspectors destroyed the Iraqi's stockpiles and manufacturing plants pertaining to WOMD. Since then they've been unable to manufacture any more - despite being supplied with the basic machinery from France - and what stocks of chemicals were not destroyed by the inspectors are now well past their best-before date and no longer of any use."

TB and GWB gasped at the impli-

cations. "But, but," stuttered TB, "but that means our excuse for entering Iraq isn't valid! You know what this means, don't you?"

"Yes," I said, shivering with fear at the prospect. "It means you'll have to resign . . . and Prescott gets to take over!"

Finally, on the war topic. It's a good life being in today's modern armed forces. All you have to do is fight for about 7 to 8 weeks and then you get 18 months to two years off for a good rest! On this basis my father, who fought in WW2 for a total of 3½ years, wouldn't have to fight again until at least 1997!

Back to the backgammon. The winner, by just two votes, of the tee-shirt competition was Steve Wilson; well done, Steve, it's not easy beating Bob in these competitions.

Now for this issues's competition.

Look at the funny faces in the next column. Can you see who it is yet? Blimey, I've come all over Rolf Harris!

The first entry opened on June 21st to name them all correctly will win a free bottle of wine for dinner on the Saturday night at a tournament of their choice.

Send to zx81faces@yaddayaddayadda or via snail mail to Biba HQ.



The winning tee-shirt from Steve Wilson. Steve wins free entry to the next four Swiss format tournaments and a lovely tee shirt bearing his design.

Competition 2003 No.2 6401-06

Compiled by Richard Granville

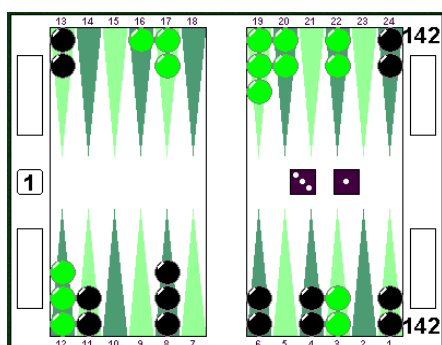
Welcome to the second of the three Competitions that make up the 2003 season. Already Bob Young has won half price accommodation for any Saturday night. Who will win the second one?

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 June 15th. 2003.

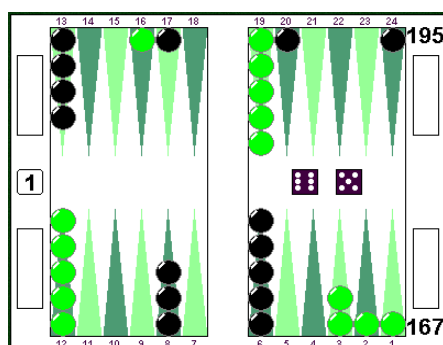
Email: richard.granville@tinyworld.co.uk and a cc to comps@backgammon-biba.co.uk and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ via Royal Mail.

6401



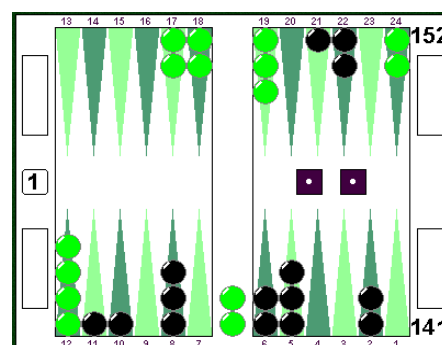
11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 31

6403



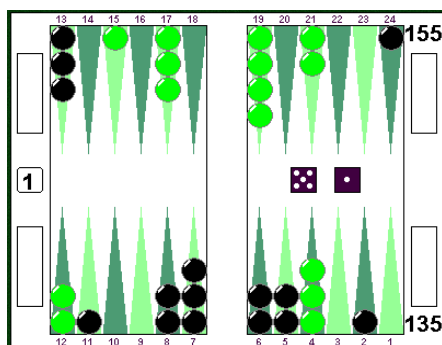
11 point match
White 1 Black 1
Black to play 65

6405



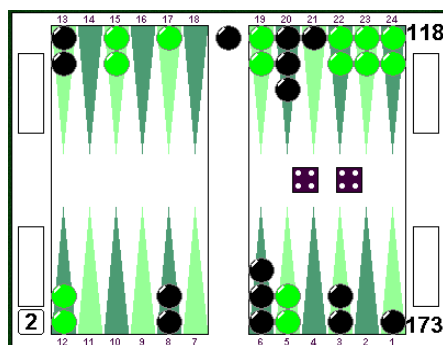
11 point match
White 10 Black 8 (Crawford)
Black to play 11

6402



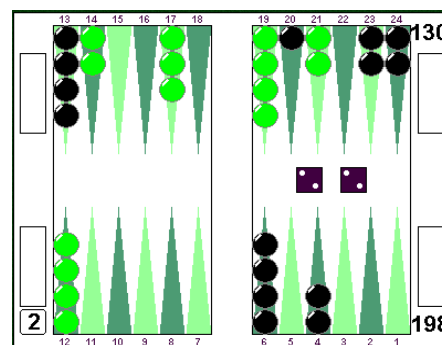
11 point match
White 3 Black 2
Black to play 51

6404



11 point match
White 3 Black 5
Black to play 44

6406



11 point match
White 0 Black 2
Black to play 22

NOTICE

If you haven't already done so, then please read Richard's letter about the future of this competition (page 38). If you feel you can help, please let me know through the usual channels.

Local clubs

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@blueyonder.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

Broomfield BG Club
Bob Bruce 01227 362181
or mobile 07754 549 576
Monday

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
Last 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

Ealing Backgammon League
Grahame Powell 020-8968 6327,
abband@aol.com.net or
sagusb@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
kevin@profundus.com & +0118-971-2948,
Alternate Wednesdays

St. Albans

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

Forthcoming Events

Hilton Trophy 7/8 June

Back to the Knockout format offering those that keep losing at least four matches - unless, of course, you go home sulking after being knocked out in the 1st Round of the Main!

Keren Di Bona Memorial 5/6 July

The popular Knockout tournament to commemorate the life of Emmanuel's wife, Keren.

Liverpool Open 19/20 July

See next few pages for details.

SAC Trophy August 9/10

Sharpen up your bg skills prior to the Olympiad with this, the 3rd of 4, Swiss Formats this year. Also, with 6 x 11-point matches to play,

Continued on page 46



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.

February 1, 2003: The feedback from interested parties is to leave as is. So, no changes. But . . . I still need a commitment from members. Hanover Hotels are anxious to stage this new event but are unsure about the logistics. They need to have a good idea of its viability before they ask me to sign contracts. Once signed I become liable for any costs incurred should the event produce less than the expected entries. So, I am appealing to all Backgammon Club organisers to contact me and let me know how many (if any) Teams each Club is entering. I am compiling a list of interested members who would like to form teams (i.e. non-club members who are perhaps isolated from other players). Get in touch and I'll try to pair?, triple you up.



this is the tourney to better your Ranking Score.

for details.

British Open - Ian Shaw
County Cups - John Slattery

7th Mind Sports Olympiad 16-25 August. The venue, accommodation, entry fees and events & timings are now confirmed. See the next few pages in this issue.

Hanover, National Team Challenge 18/19 October

Team entries are beginning to filter through now. Anyone wanting to register a team should do so as soon as possible.

Still to come:
SAC - August
Irish Open - November
Townharbour Trophy - November

Hi-Rollers Double Entry Jackpot 20/20 September

Already, after just a few days on the web, this tournament is attracting an early interest. See page 41

UK Finals 6/7 December

Qualifiers to date:

Bright 'n' Breezy - Edwin Turner
Jarvis Trophy - Bob Young
Scottish Open - Peter Chan



Backgammon Events

At the 7th Mind Sports Olympiad 16-25 August 2003



Beginner's Tournament
August 16
Play starts 09:30
(1 hour per round)
Finish approx. 15:00

Qualification: Generally but not exclusively, the criteria for a beginner is anyone who has not previously won or has been highly placed in a backgammon tournament. The Director reserves the right to refuse entries if he thinks the entrant does not qualify for this category.

Entry Fee: £10 (Juniors £5 under 19 years old).

Format: One day Swiss Format of 5, 3 point matches without the doubling cube. 1st 2nd & 3rd. (Gold, Silver, Bronze) will go through to join the Weekend Tournament on the Sunday, (subject to numbers the 4th placed player may also go into the Weekend Tournament).

Weekend Tournament
August 16, 17
Play starts 09:30
(2¼ hours per round)
Finish approx. 16:30

Qualification: Open to all players (including top players from Saturday Beginner's Tournament - see above).

Entry Fee: £26 (Juniors £13 under 19 years old).

Format: Two day Swiss Format of 6, 11 point matches, three per day. 1st 2nd & 3rd will win Gold, Silver, Bronze.

Olympiad Championship
August 18 to 22

Qualification: Open to all players.

Entry Fee: £26 (Juniors £13 under 19 years old).

Qualifying starts 10:30
continuous until 16:30

Format: (August 18th to August 20th) Three qualifying days of Swiss Format 3, 5 point matches, playing in random groups of eight players. All players initially start as Bronze Category and can advance to:

3 wins for Gold Category.

2 wins for Silver Category.

All entrants are allowed three attempts to better their Category subject to time constraints and numbers re-entering.

Finals: (August 21st & 22nd)

Gold: 6 x 11 point matches. Two day Swiss Format, 3 per day

Silver: 6 x 7 point matches. a/a

Bronze: 6 x 5 point matches. a/a

Gold Cat.: 1st 2nd & 3rd: Gold, Silver Bronze. (Gold Category)

Silver Cat.: 1st 2nd: Gold, Silver. (Silver Category)

Bronze Cat.: 1st: Gold - (Bronze Category)

Gold Final starts 10:00
(2¼ hours per round)

Silver Final starts 10:15
(1 hour 45 minutes per round)

Bronze Final starts 10:30
(1¼ hours per round)

Finish (all events) approx. 17:30

English Open
August 23, 24
(See Weekend above for times
and approx. finishing time)

Qualification: Open to all players.

Entry Fee: £26 (Juniors £13 under 19 years old).

Format: Two day Swiss Format of 6, 11 point matches, three per day. 1st 2nd & 3rd will win trophies.

Olympiad Championship Finals
August 25
Play starts 09:30
(1½ hours per round)

Qualification: The Gold & Silver medallists from the four above events. Should any entrant appear more than once the next highest will qualify.

Entry Fee: Entry by qualification only.

Format: One day Swiss Format of 4, 5 point matches.

1st 2nd & 3rd (Trophies).

The Manchester Blitz
August 25
Play starts 09:30
(45 minutes per round)
Finish approx. 14:30

Qualification: Any player except MSO7 Backgammon Gold & Silver winners

Entry Fee: £18 (Juniors £9 under 19 years old).

Format: One day Swiss Format of 6, 3 point matches.

1st 2nd & 3rd (Trophies).

Important details on the following page ►

IMPORTANT

Entrants must be in the playing area no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of Round One to register with the Director for entry into the draw.

Tournament positions in all the events on the preceding page: In the event of a tie for position the sums of opponent's scores will determine final positions. The scores of players that fail to complete all rounds will be extrapolated to render a total score. E.G. Wins 2 out of 3, extrapolated to 4 out of 6.

Byes: Random byes will be chosen from the lowest scoring players in each round. No player will have more than one bye.

Full Biba rules will be used for all events.

Mind Sports Olympiad Moves to a Permanent Home!

Biba is delighted to announce that the annual Mind Sports Olympiad is moving to a new permanent home in Manchester.

The 7th Mind Sports Olympiad will take place from Saturday August 16th to Monday August 25th inclusive in the Renold Building at Manchester Conference Centre. By reverting to the 10-day format we will be able once again to offer more than 100 tournaments encompassing more than 40 Mind Sports, and this year there are cash prizes as well as medals to be won.

The permanent move has been made possible through generous sponsorship provided by our hosts, UMIST (University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology), and by the support of the City of Manchester. Dates have also been agreed for the following four years, with the event starting each year on the corresponding Saturday and ending on the bank holiday Monday (the last Monday in August). Key points about the **7th Mind Sports Olympiad**:

Excellent playing site within 2 minutes walk of more than 500 student and hotel bedrooms.

Accommodation at very competitive rates for the different qualities of bedroom (including VAT):

Standard Single £23.50 B&B

Standard Twin £20.00 per person B&B

En Suite Single £28.50 B&B

Hotel single £45.00 room and £6.00 breakfast

Hotel Twin £22.50 per person and £6.00 breakfast

Hotel Double £22.50 per person and £6.00 breakfast

A one-stop booking service for accommodation, both for the above-mentioned rooms and for a large number of additional hotels of various standards and with price-ranges to suit all budgets.

Self-service lunches at very low prices.

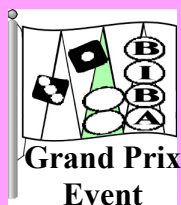
Snacks, sandwiches, confectionery and beverages on a cash basis adjacent to the largest playing hall.

Social events will include at least one party and one barbecue.

Bar area for socialising and playing games in the evenings.

Cash and other prizes to be announced shortly.

**For further information visit us from time to time at www.msoworld.com
or contact us via: tony@msoworld.com. Telephone enquiries: +44 1707 659080**



LIVERPOOL BACKGAMMON CLUB

present
THE 8th LIVERPOOL OPEN

Saturday 19th & Sunday 20th July 2003

Registration - Saturday: 10.00-10.45am to allow for a 11 am start.

**** Main Tournament ** Consolation ****

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

**** Sweeps ** Cash Prizes! ****

Registration Fee: £20.00 includes Saturday Buffet

Venue: Liverpool Bridge Club, Liverpool 8.

Details from: John Wright, 0151 280 0075 jpwright@blueyonder.co.uk

Simon Jones: 0151 428 3082 vineries@surfanytime.co.uk

Details of local hotels available, please ask!

Please make registration cheques payable to John Wright and forward entry
prior to Saturday, 12th July to John Wright, 36 Rocky Lane, Childwall, Liverpool, L16 1JD

Biba Backgammon Calendar

Date	Tournament	Venue	Type	Accommodation	Info
May 24/25	Hi-Rollers Event	Cancelled			
Jun 07/08	Hilton Trophy	Coventry	Knockout	08705 201 201	01522 888676
Jul 05/06	Keren Di Bona Memorial	Coventry	Knockout	08705 201 201	01522 888676
Jul 19/20	Liverpool Open	Liverpool	Combination	0151 280 0075	0151 280 0075
Aug 09/10	SAC Trophy	Coventry	Swiss	08705 201 201	01522 888676
Aug 16/25	Mindsports Olympiad	Manchester	Swiss	0161 200 4068	01707 659080
Sep 06/07	Roy Hollands Trophy	Coventry	Knockout	08705 201 201	01522 888676
Sep 20/21	Hi-Rollers Event	Daventry	Knockout	08457 444 123	01522 888676
Oct 04/05	Sandy Osborne Memorial	Coventry	Knockout	08705 201 201	01522 888676
Oct 18/19	National Team Challenge	Daventry	Knockout	08457 444 123	01522 888676
Nov 01/02	11th Irish Open	Dublin	Combination	+ 353 1 6030891	+ 353 1 6030891
Nov 08/09	Townharbour Trophy	Coventry	Swiss	08705 201 201	01522 888676
Nov 22/23	Hi-Rollers Event	Daventry	Knockout	08457 444 123	01522 888676
Dec 06/07	UK Finals	Coventry	Combination	08705 201 201	01522 888676

Tournament Details



The Eleventh Irish Open Backgammon Championship



Wynn's Hotel, Dublin
1st & 2nd November 2003
(note the change of date)
Tournament Director: Paul Waters

**UK FINALS 2003
QUALIFIER**

Saturday:
Registration opens 11:00
Auction of all the players at 11:30

Play starts promptly at 12:00 Noon
(If you are arriving late or your flight is delayed, call the tournament director on 0872609317)

Sunday:
Playoffs for last 16 at 10:00 (unless they can be fined in on Saturday evening)
Last 16 at 10:00, Consolation 10:30, Team event 12:00
Scheduled finishing time: 18:00

FORMAT: COMBINED SWISS & KNOCKOUT

Six rounds of 7 point matches will be played on Saturday. Winners of 6 matches out of 6 will go into the last 8 on Sunday. Winners of 5 matches out of 6 will go into the last 16. Winners of 4 matches out of 6 will go into a playoff for any remaining places in the last 16.

Chess clock preference. Any player can insist on playing with a chess clock, subject to availability. Strict time controls will be in place on the Saturday and late finishers in any round will have the length of their subsequent round matches reduced by the Tournament Director. Players who have not requested a chess clock, will have no grounds for complaint about their opponent's speed of play.

ENTRY FEE: €20 There will be an optional €100 side-pool - winner takes all

FRIDAY NIGHT - €200 JACKPOT: A jackpot, completely separate from the main tournament, will start on Friday night at 19:30. If necessary, it will continue at 10:00 on Saturday morning.

Biba has made special accommodation arrangements with **The Comfort Inn, Talbot Street.** It is just 5 minutes walk from Wynn's. You can contact the hotel on +353 1 8749202. The special rates are: €140 per room per night including breakfast, for two people sharing. Be sure to mention 'Backgammon' when making your reservations.

WYNN'S HOTEL- 35 Lower Abbey Street +35318745131
Double Room: €150 bed and breakfast per night; single room €98 bed and breakfast per night
Mention Backgammon and they might give you a special rate.

Irish Tourist Board Reservation Service freephone number in the UK is 0800 7835740.
Gardiner Street is the most convenient place.

The Townhouse is a guesthouse with a separate hostel, +353 1 8788808. Double rooms in the guesthouse are €102 per night including breakfast. Rooms in dormitory style accommodation start at around €19.

FUTHER INFORMATION

(Pre-registration is not required)

Brendan Burgess 21 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4
Tel: + 353 1 6030891 E-mail: brendan@thepanel.com

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* Knockout

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.

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)

**This space could be selling
your event, services or product
for as little as £12**

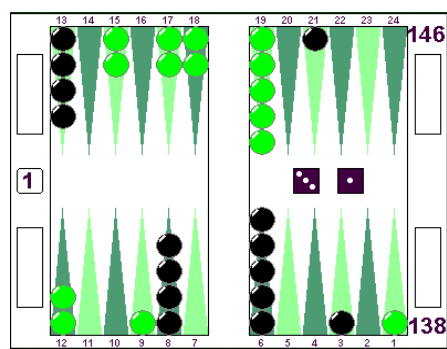
At-A-Glance British Open. 5/6 April 2003

Report by Michael Crane

Main (85)

When someone in a position of authority or power gives a relative a place at the top it is called nepotism, when that someone of authority makes it to the top themselves it's called bloody hard work! Such was the lot of sponsor, Peter Bennet of **At-A-Glance Calendars**. Through sheer hard work he battled his way through Martin Barkwill, Liz Barker, Ray Kershaw, Mardi Ohannessian, Steve Hallett (2001 Open Champion) and Nigel Merrigan (2003 Open Champion) to find himself in the final of his *own* tournament.

Taking a slightly shorter route thanks to a 1st Round bye, his opponent, Ian Shaw cleaved a way through Uldis Lapikens, Jane Oxley, Amir Mossanen, John Clark (top-rated active player) and Tony Lee. In the final Ian took an early lead and in Game 6 he led 5-2

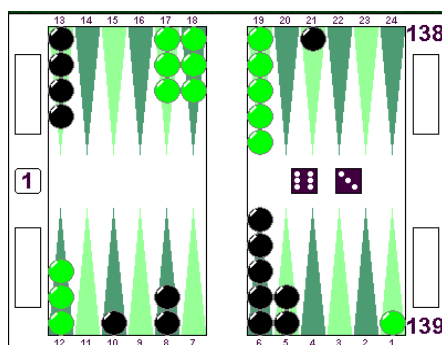


when this position presented itself:

Black (Ian) to play 31

Ian took a long time to play this move, torn between making his 5-point or covering the 3-point blot. He eventually made the 3-point. According to Snowie this was an error losing 0.072 in equity. The 5-point is far more valuable. If the blot on the 3-point is hit it will be re-circulated and aid the formation of an anchor in white's home board.

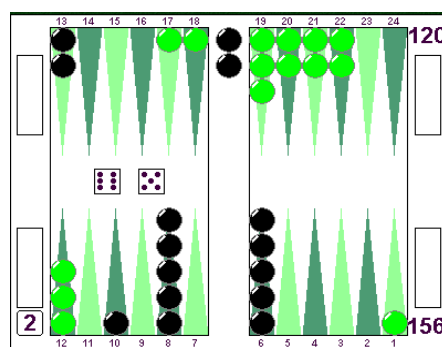
By Game 8 Ian had increased his lead to 7-2. Here Ian had another point-making decision to make:



Black (Ian) to play 63

Another long think, run out or make the bar-point? The pundits watching were divided over this one. Ian chose to play safe and ran out (I wanted to make the bar-point). Ian made the better play. Snowie rated the bar-point as losing 0.088. Well played, Ian. However, in the long term it didn't matter because Peter went on to win the point.

In Game 9 Peter began to make inroads to improve his score. After a correct double/take, Peter was facing this position:



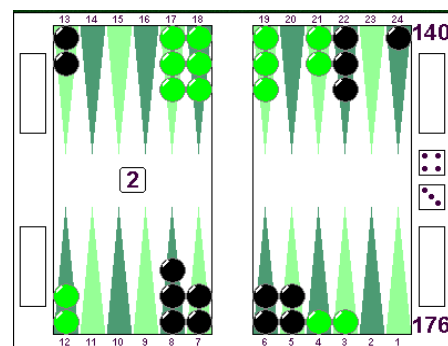
White (Peter) to play 65

With two blacks in the air, Peter played both checkers from the mid-point to form a 6-prime instead of making the 2-point; picking up his dice his expression showed he knew he'd made an error. According to Snowie this wasn't an error it was a blunder

coming in in 4th place! The equity loss was a colossal -0.164. The better plays were: 8/7 8/2, 7/1 6/1, 24/18 13/8. The actual play left two points open for re-entry and made it possible for Ian to anchor and wait for a hit. As it turned out, Peter prevailed, at one time having three of Ian's checkers on the bar whilst Ian's home board boasted the single point, the six.

On the 25th move Peter rolled the nightmare 65 when bearing off against opposition and left Ian a double shot, 3s and 4s, which would have changed the game dramatically had he hit one or both of them. Ian rolled 62 and Peter survived to win a gammon and take the score to 7-7.

This game, Game 10 became the last game. In this position Peter shipped over a 2-cube:



White (Peter) cubes

When both players are 4-away, 4-away their match winning chances are 50% each. Cube decisions at this score can have serious consequences. In this position Peter was at 59.7%, not really enough for a cube. Quite correctly, Ian snapped it up. Snowie's verdict was:

No double 0.515

Double / take 0.420

Proper cube action:

No double, take.



This cube was instrumental in Ian's victory when he gammoned Peter. After this cube action Peter was hit on Ian's next roll and he never recovered, one or both checkers then remained on the bar for twenty rolls, eventually re-entering behind Ian's checkers and losing a gammon and the match.

So, the sponsor became the Runner-up and Ian Shaw, the best player in Sheffield was feted as the best player in Britain and acclaimed the **2003 At-A-Glance British Open Champion**.



**Main Open 2002
Ian & Peter**

Consolation (84)

Knocked out by Tony Lee in the Main last 8, John Slattery had an *easy* route to the Final; win four matches and win the Consolation. Well, was it easy? What do you think? He had to beat John Clark, Simon K Jones and Mardi Ohannessian before facing Ray Kershaw in the Final - not an easy task. But, Slats loves a challenge and he fought his way through the first three to meet the fourth in the Final.

Ray Kershaw had to travel the longer route, five wins . . . and then beat Slats! Entering from the Main 3rd Round Ray had to beat some pretty tough opposition including Brendan Burgess and Julian Fetterlein. He was up to the job, but could he take Slats out?

The short answer is no! John went on to win his second successive Consolation and his third 2nd place out of the three tournaments he'd entered this year! He was 1st in the Slattery Scottish Open Consolation and Runner-up to Bob Young in the Jarvis Trophy (God only knows where he'd have been if he'd been to Brighton in January!). Upon beating Ray he notched up a few more *Grand Prix* points in the process.



**Consolation2002
Ray & Slats**

Last Chance (64)

How unlucky can a player be when fate deals a brace of ex-British Open Champions for a second time over the weekend? The 1997 British Open winner, Dave McNair, was hoping to be the first to win the title twice but was ousted from the Main 3rd Round by the 1993 Champion, Nigel Merrigan. He was then despatched from the Consolation by Rachel Rhodes, the 2000 Champion. All I can say is he's lucky he didn't have to face Steve Hallett (2001) in the Last Chance!

Thanks to the fact that Steve Hallett remained in the Main and couldn't enter the Last Chance, Dave had a breeze into the final! Here, sat waiting for him was Leslie Singleton. A trusting soul, is Leslie. Halfway through a game Leslie went off to watch the boat race leaving Dave to study his own

52 move in depth. Now, anyone who knows Dave McNair knows he loves to analyse his plays. How well we remember the time he did a 1,296 rollout in his head - over the board; whilst his hapless (and helpless opponent) looked on! This time however, Dave settled for rearranging his checkers (illegally) into a better position before Leslie returned. Upon his return Leslie sat down, Dave moved the 52 and Leslie shook his dice for his roll. Stricken by regret (and the fact that Dave and I had *both* cheated Leslie) Dave confessed that he'd been a bit *artistic* with the checker distribution. Leslie just laughed and said he thought it looked different but wasn't certain.

Proving the old maxim wrong, (or perhaps coining a new one) Dave (the *almost-cheat*) did prosper and he relegated Leslie into 2nd place.



**Last Chance 2002
Leslie & Dave**

Sent to Coventry (64)

Suicide is such a depressing name for a knockout, thought Peter Bennet, so instead he called his 3-pointer, the *Sent to Coventry*. For the benefit of our overseas readers, being *sent to Coventry* means being ignored and not spoken to - which often leads to suicide!

David Nathan was unstoppable in his pursuit of the title (and of course the money!) and he soon found himself in the final against

Martin Hemming. Martin couldn't quite stem the flow and David went home with a nice trophy and some even nicer money.

During the prize-giving I asked two totally redundant questions. First I asked Martin if he wanted a bottle of wine, and then I asked him, red or white!?



**Sent to Coventry
David & Martin**

Friday KO (32)

David Nathan won this in 1999 and he was hoping for another weekend of free accommodation this time. Simon K Jones had other plans. He'd got his wife, Lucy, with him and he thought the free weekend would fit very nicely into his budget. So, he set about taking it away from David, which he did - but at least David got some of that lovely money he's so fond of!

Doubles (20)

42 (*pair of Bristols*) were tipped out in the 1st Round; *Bob the Builders* were bob; *Shi'ite & On-ions* left a nasty taste behind as they went out; and the *Coalition Force* and *Shock & Awe* failed to emulate their namesakes and both went out like damp squibs.

White Van Men drove through everyone to reach the final, but their tyres were let down by *Dice & Sleazy* who walked off the winners and the best name. Finally. Thanks to the Dublin

crowd for their support - sorry you went home without any trophies. I'd like to thank Peter Bennet and **At-A-Glance Calendars** for their sponsorship. They provided some very striking trophies and have possibly galvanised Slats into a *trophy war* for 2004!

Very finally. The votes were cast for the 2003 Sportsmanship Trophy during this weekend. The recipient wasn't there in person to receive the trophy himself but I can reveal that it was a close race and that the eventual winner polled just three votes more than his nearest rival, and that over half the field got more than 20 votes each.

So, well done, **Cliff Connick**. A popular victory for a popular player. The trophy and the £100 prize - both generously donated by **Dod Davis** - will be awarded to Cliff when he next attends a Biba tournament; at which time a picture will be taken and entered into the Biba annals.

Manchester One Day Report from Rodney Lighton

The inaugural Manchester tournament attracted 36 competitors who gathered at Manchester Bridge Club's excellent venue on Sunday 27th April. Most players were from the North West, with some from across the Pennines and a few from further a field.

Shamelessly stealing Liverpool's excellent one day format (why change a winning formula) a five round Swiss tournament of five point matches was played, with the top eight qualifying for the Main seven point KO final and the remainder playing a five point consolation. Running all day was a one point KO and there was also

a three point last chance event in the evening.

In the main event Nottingham's Daryll Artt beat Nigel Merrigan in the semi-finals after trailing 6-3. He played Scottish Open champion Peter Chan in the final, Daryll quickly reaching a 6-1 lead. Peter clawed his way back to 6-4 and with the cube on a mandatory 2 an exciting game ensued. At one point it looked as though Peter would win a gammon and the match and then the game swung several times from one player to the other, with Daryll finally emerging victorious.



Daryll Artt

The consolation final was won by Yorkshire's Tony Fawcett who beat Liverpool's Simon Jones in the final. It was left to Manchester's Ian Shimwell to salvage home pride which he did in fine style by winning both the last chance and the one-pointer.

Thanks to Lucy Jones and Lorraine Lighton for their help with the scoring and administration.

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and I hope to make this an annual event.

County Cups. 3/4 May 2003

Report by Michael Crane

Main (40)

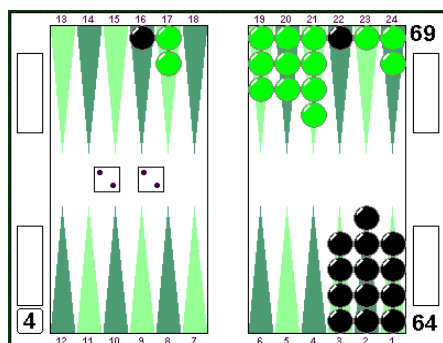
With an entry of 40 it was always possible that no-one would win six out of six; however, we were able to achieve a perfect score after Julian Fetterlein (the current title holder) and John Slattery (chasing his first Swiss victory) both got five out of five.

So, we were guaranteed a six from this 6th Round encounter, but, it was technically possible that the loser might not be the Runner-up; this could go to any player with five wins - including the loser of this match.

This 6th Round match turned out to be a nail-biter. Julian soon took an early 8-1 lead after getting a gammon on a 4-cube held by John in Game Two.

Although I recorded the match I had a few problems with the camera and unfortunately I was unable to transcribe the entire match for the moment - but I will try later. I did, however, manage to get the crucial Game Two in which John dropped eight points.

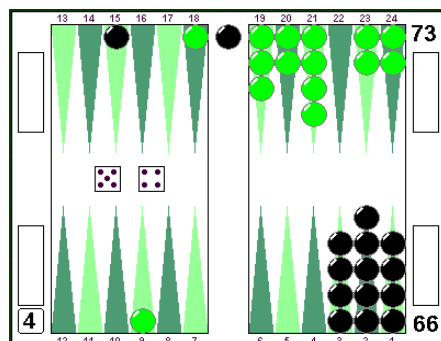
Question: When is a blunder not a blunder? Answer: When you're after a gammon. Take a look at this position in Game Two, position 23. Julian is white and John black.



White 0 Black 1
White to play 22

By far the safest move and Snowie's 1st choice is the pick-and-pass, 8/6 5/3* 3/1 4/2. However, if you're looking for gammon wins then the best move is Snowie's 6th, 8/2 5/3*; which is classed a blunder by Snowie, losing 0.115 equity. But, the gammon chances with the first play is 7.6% whereas with the actual play of 8/2 5/3* it goes right up to 12.5%. With both plays Julian is a massive favourite to win the game, but with the latter he wins a lot more gammons.

Another example a few rolls later. Game Two, position 29:



White to play 54

Moving 16/12 7/2 is the safest but the actual play of 16/11 7/3 gives more gammon chances - 13.5% up to 17.1%. which, despite the equity loss of 0.131 makes it the perfect move for gammon wins.

This last play really paid off for Julian. John danced four times, each time missing the 3-point blot, he re-entered but failed to get a checker off and lost the gammon.

But, John didn't let this massive loss get him down. He tenaciously fought back to 10-10 from where he emerged, tired but victorious! What a battle! I really will try to salvage what I can from the recording, albeit in single games if need be.



Slats

As it turned out the Runner-up did not emerge from this encounter. John came out with his first Swiss victory and this left Julian to play against Andrew Sarjeant in a play-off for 2nd & 3rd place after they were both tied for 2nd place. Andrew emerged from the play-off with two trophies under his arm - Runner-up and Top Intermediate.



Double Winner - Andrew

The latter prize was a disappointment to Jane Oxley. She was hoping to take home the Top



Intermediate but was relegated into 5th place on count-backs. However, she is mentioned in despatches for a fantastic performance of five wins and a total gain of 60 ranking points. Well done, Jane.

Friday Warm-up (8)

It's not often I get to play on a Friday night - I usually give the others a chance to win! However, this time I decided to enter. I lost in the 1st Round against Mike Greenleaf but took advantage of a buy-back and re-entered to play Tim Mooring. Poor Tim never had a chance. When he danced twice on my 1-point board with consecutive double sixes it was evident that the tone was set and I went on to win 7-2.

My next opponent, Paul Sambell seemed a walkover - I was well ahead 7-0 when Paul suddenly woke up! I scraped through by the skin of my teeth at DMP, 9-7! In

the Final all I had to do was beat a very sleepy Emmanuel Di Bona. Unfortunately, even when he is half asleep he is difficult to beat and I went off to bed a happy Runner-up, leaving Emmanuel to relax in his *free* room, courtesy of Hilton Coventry!

Doubles (8)

I'm going to have define a dress-rule for this element. I mean, what chance do we men have when female entrants blatantly flaunt their bodies in provocative clothing? They called themselves, *Busted & Bored*, with the emphasis on *busted*! Mind you, not all the male entrants were swayed (I wonder why??) and they popped out in the 2nd Round. *Finito La Musica* were finito'd I quickly; and *Peter & The Wolf* bit the dust at the same time.

Unable to come up with a name, *The Team With No Name* made it into the final - and no-one knew who they were playing! Their op-

ponent's *Nowak & Good* were not good enough and the *No Namers* made a name for themselves by walking away with 1st place. Mind you, their opponent's *Nowak & Good* proved to be good enough for the top name.

Jackpot (8)

Playing with the *big boys* holds no fear for Rosey Bensley. On her way to taking home a load of dosh she got rid of Slat, Elliot Smart, and in the Final, her brother Paul Gilbertson. Go girl!

Footnote:

With a *Grand Prix* score of 43.9 (and it's only May), John Slattery is heading for a record-breaking score if his standard of play continues throughout the rest of the year. He is already 20 points clear of his nearest rivals - and is likely to expand this, unless of course, someone steps in and stops him!

Tournament Results

See next page for At-A-Glance British Open

County Cups Trophy. 3/4 May 2003

(pos / name / wins / gp)

001	John Slattery	6	15.3	015	Richard Granville	3	1.0	028	Liz Barker	2
002	Andrew Sarjeant	5	7.1	015	Rosey Bensley	3	1.0	028	Bob Bruce	2
003	Julian Fetterlein	5	10.2	017	Nigel Briddon	3	1.0	031	Steffen Nowak	2
004	David Startin	5	7.1	017	Roland Herrera	3	1.0	032	Phil Rouse	2
005	Jane Oxley	5	7.1	019	Uldis Lapikens	3	1.0	033	Johan Sallfors	2
006	Ernie Pick	4	4.2	019	Peter Bennet	3	1.0	034	Mardi Ohannessian	2
007	Bob Young	4	4.2	019	Simon Fahoury	3	1.0	035	Ron Havenhead	2
007	Emmanuel Di Bona	4	4.2	022	John P Lewis	3	1.0	036	John Thomas	2
009	Danny Cohen	4	4.2	022	Matthew Fisher	3	1.0	037	Jeff Barber	1
009	Julian Minwalla	4	4.2	024	Rodney Lighton	3	1.0	038	Elliot Smart	1
011	Roy Hollands	4	4.2	024	Myke Wignall	3	1.0	039	Simonetta Barone	1
011	Lawrence Powell	4	4.2	026	Mike Greenleaf	2		040	Paul Sambell	1
013	Kevin White	3	1.0	027	Brian Busfield	2				
014	Paul Gilbertson	3	1.0	028	Kerry Jackson	2				



At-A-Glance British Open. 5/6 April 2003

(pos / name / gp)

Main (85)

1	Ian Shaw	15.3
2	Peter Bennet	13.2
3/4	Nigel Merrigan	6.1
3/4	Tony Lee	6.1
5/8	Steve Hallett	3.0
5/8	Simon K Jones	3.0
5/8	John Clark	2.0
5/8	John Slattery	2.0

Consolation (81)

1	John Slattery	6.2
2	Ray Kershaw	6.1
3/4	John Wright	3.0
3/4	Mardi Ohannessian	2.0
5/8	Adam Stocks	3.0
5/8	Stavros Elia	1.0
5/8	Johan Salfors	1.0
5/8	Simon K Jones	1.0

Last Chance (64)

1	Dave McNair	6.0
2	Leslie Singleton	3.0
3/4	Nick Check	1.0
3/4	David Startin	1.0
5/8	Gerry Smith	
5/8	Charlie Hetherington	
5/8	Brian Busfield	
5/8	Myke Wignall	

Sent to Coventry (64)

1	David Nathan	3.0
2	Martin Hemming	2.0
3/4	Mike Grabsky	
3/4	Martin Barkwill	

£100 Jackpot (8)

1	Dave McNair	
2	Martin Barkwill	
3/4	Dod Davies	
3/4	Nick Check	

£50 Jackpot (8)

1	Andrew Sarjeant	
2	Brian Busfield	
3/4	John Slattery	
3/4	Graham Powell	

Friday Knockout (32)

1	Simon K Jones	
2	David Nathan	
3/4	Steve Pickard	
3/4	John Clark	

Doubles (8)

1	Dice & Sleazy	
2	White Van Men	
3/4	Francine Couldn't Think of Anything	
3/4	Brit Dice Open	
Top name: Dice & Sleazy		

May 2003 Grand Prix

(3 or more GP Points)

43.9	John Slattery	7.1	Tim Wilkins	4.2	Cliff Connick
22.6	Julian Fetterlein	7.1	Uldis Lapikens	4.2	Paul Barwick
22.3	Peter Bennet	7.1	Andrew Sarjeant	4.2	Danny Cohen
20.3	Edwin Turner	7.1	Steffen Nowak	4.2	Ian Tarr
19.5	Bob Young	6.2	Rodney Lighton	4.2	Roy Hollands
18.2	David Startin	6.1	Brian Lever	4.2	Kevin Stebbing
15.3	Ian Shaw	6.1	Nigel Merrigan	4.2	Ernie Pick
14.2	Lawrence Powell	6.1	Tony Lee	4.2	Ann Pocknell
12.3	Peter Chan	6.1	Raymond Kershaw	4.0	Amir Mossanen
10.2	Barry McAdam	6.1	Paul Watts	3.0	Steve Hallet
10.1	Dave McNair	6.1	Francine Brandler	3.0	John Wright
9.2	Rosey Bensley	5.2	Kevin White	3.0	Peter Christmas
9.1	John Clark	5.2	Julian Minwalla	3.0	Tim Mooring
9.1	Roland Herrera	5.2	Paul Gilbertson	3.0	Mardi Ohannessian
8.4	Emmanuel Di Bona	5.0	Simon K Jones	3.0	David Nathan
8.1	Leslie Singleton	5.0	Nick Check	3.0	Andrew Darby
8.1	Jane Oxley	5.0	Mark Lemon	3.0	Adam Stocks



May 2003 Active Rankings

(new / old / name)

1995 1968 Julian Fetterlein	1614 1614 Peter Fallows	1481 1481 Hubert De L'Epine
1959 1959 John Clark	1613 1613 Mike Waxman	1480 1480 Martin Hemming
1949 1949 Brian Lever	1606 1606 Francine Brandler	1477 1477 Stuart Parmley
1906 1859 John Slattery	1602 1602 Simon K Jones	1473 1473 Vianney Bourgios
1845 1845 Tony Lee	1585 1585 Steve Pickard	1472 1472 Arthur Williams
1829 1829 Dod Davies	1568 1595 Steffen Nowak	1469 1452 Paul Gilbertson
1828 1828 Dave McNair	1566 1566 Alistair Hogg	1462 1462 Neil Davidson
1806 1768 David Startin	1566 1566 Mark Lemon	1451 1451 Monica Beckerson
1797 1797 Steve Hallett	1566 1564 Roland Herrera	1450 1450 John Renicks
1790 1790 Jim Johnson	1565 1591 Kerry Jackson	1447 1447 Will Richardson
1768 1768 Ray Tannen	1559 1559 Shaun Herd	1440 1468 Johan Sallfors
1767 1787 Richard Granville	1557 1557 Peter Christmas	1438 1438 Wayne Felton
1759 1759 Rachel Rhodes	1557 1557 Jacek Brzezinski	1436 1436 Steven Reddi
1759 1737 Lawrence Powell	1554 1554 John Wright	1436 1482 Simonetta Barone
1732 1732 Stuart Mann	1549 1549 Phil Caudwell	1435 1395 Julian Minwalla
1730 1730 Ralph Eskinazi	1548 1548 Steve Rimmer	1431 1431 Leslie Singleton
1717 1717 Jeff Ellis	1547 1616 Jeff Barber	1425 1425 Cliff Connick
1716 1716 Ian Tarr	1546 1549 Uldis Lapikens	1421 1421 David Naylor
1716 1690 Emmanuel Di Bona	1545 1545 Peter Chan	1420 1420 Kevin Carter
1711 1711 Dale Taylor	1545 1545 Tim Mooring	1418 1418 Steve Malins
1708 1708 David Gallagher	1544 1544 Ian Shaw	1417 1417 Sarah Rosich
1700 1700 Harry Bhatia	1542 1542 James Vogl	1414 1414 Steve John
1689 1709 Peter Bennet	1539 1539 Dave Motley	1414 1414 Jeremy Limb
1688 1688 John Hurst	1535 1535 Eddie Barker	1413 1413 Jerry Smith
1688 1701 Rodney Lighton	1534 1534 Paul Christmas	1411 1346 Rosey Bensley
1686 1686 David Nathan	1534 1527 Nigel Briddon	1400 1400 Nick Hamar
1680 1680 Graham Brittain	1533 1533 Jim Moore	1399 1399 Michael Main
1670 1670 Raj Jansari	1527 1527 Amir Mossanen	1395 1453 Elliot Smart
1664 1664 Mike Grabsky	1526 1565 John Thomas	1388 1388 Paul Watts
1663 1663 Tim Wilkins	1526 1526 Raymond Kershaw	1378 1378 Colin Laight
1662 1662 Stephen Drake	1525 1528 Matthew Fisher	1375 1375 Malcolm Hey
1660 1635 Bob Young	1519 1519 David Hale	1368 1368 Neil Young
1654 1654 Kevin Stebbing	1515 1515 Paul Barwick	1367 1382 Liz Barker
1651 1651 Arthur Musgrove	1508 1468 Ernie Pick	1366 1366 Kevin Nicholson
1648 1629 Roy Hollands	1507 1449 Andrew Sarjeant	1360 1342 Myke Wignall
1646 1646 Nick Check	1506 1506 Alan Beckerson	1346 1346 Tony Fawcett
1644 1690 Mardi Ohannessian	1505 1505 Anthony Coker	1340 1340 Rebecca Bell
1644 1644 Helen Helm-Sagar	1502 1502 Mike Heard	1336 1336 Don Hatt
1641 1641 Paul Turnbull	1501 1489 Kevin White	1326 1326 Sue Perks
1635 1635 Connor Dickinson	1500 1500 John Napier	1314 1314 Jon Sharpe
1634 1634 Bill Pope	1497 1497 David McNamara	1310 1292 John P Lewis
1629 1629 Charlie Hetherington	1495 1495 Tom Duggan	1294 1294 Cath Kennedy
1627 1627 Vincent Versteeg	1493 1493 David Fall	1276 1276 Bryony Jessiman
1626 1626 Edwin Turner	1487 1518 Mike Greenleaf	1277 1277 Bob Parmley
1616 1616 Barry McAdam	1484 1424 Jane Oxley	1141 1165 Paul Sambell
1615 1662 Brian Busfield	1482 1482 Mike Butterfield	



May 2003 Pending Rankings

1725 Simon Barget	1509 Melvyn Abrahams	1428 George Plant
1719 Brendan Burgess	1499 Miles Ilott	1428 Peter Murrell
1699 Dave Coyne	1495 Gabor Weiner	1427 Tim Brown
1666 Richard Beagarie	1485 Kevin Williams	1425 Ian Sadler
1610 Rod Jones	1484 Spencer Close	1425 Rowland Brindley
1608 Corinne Sellers	1483 Sunni Nicholson	1412 Paul Jenkins
1602 James Hatt	1474 Brendan Bemsley	1407 Geoff Conn
1574 Simon Gasquoine	1473 Niclas Wigstrom	1404 Evan Williams
1574 Dave Robbins	1472 Blaine Buchanan	1381 Rebecca Brindley
1571 Ann Pocknell	1470 Steve Lynch	1379 Alan Greenwood
1568 Ricardo Falconi-Puig	1468 Suart Dewis	1377 Alison Hobbs
1557 Dave Raynsford	1467 Lorenzo Rusconi	1376 Tony Pryor
1533 Mark McCluskey	1459 Roz Nathan	1368 Peter Wilson
1527 Theo	1450 David Winston	1366 Amy Woodward
1524 Felix Vink	1450 Jonathan Lamb	1354 Richard Winston
1520 Kyriacous Kyriacou	1443 Ron Havenhead	1351 Liz Makepeace
1510 Ian Hill	1435 Grant Dewsbury	1326 Martin Blindell

May 2003 Ranking Championship (4 or more played)

(played / average / name)

Peter Bennet	18	1952.11	Roy Hollands	10	1773.10	Danny Cohen	6	1628.50
David Startin	18	1863.56	Kevin Stebbing	10	1637.30	Simon Fahoury	6	1599.83
Paul Gilbertson	18	1690.61	Paul Christmas	10	1618.70	Niclas Wigstrom	6	1585.50
Rosey Bensley	18	1521.33	Brian Busfield	10	1386.10	Dave Motley	6	1497.83
Mardi Ohannessian	18	1408.28	Mike Butterfield	10	1342.60	Gabor Weiner	6	1481.00
John Slattery	17	1861.35	Ernie Pick	9	1752.33	Faten Issa	6	1438.67
Roland Herrera	17	1736.29	Andrew Sarjeant	9	1661.11	Matthew Fisher	6	1379.50
Myke Wignall	17	1496.76	Tony Lee	9	1531.44	Kerry Jackson	6	1372.50
Jeff Barber	17	1222.82	Julian Minwalla	9	1462.89	Jonathan Lamb	6	1368.00
Jane Oxley	16	1661.44	Paul Barwick	8	1634.75	Bob Bruce	6	1355.83
Uldis Lapikens	16	1410.50	John Thomas	8	1344.00	Phil Rouse	6	1294.67
Lawrence Powell	15	1633.60	Elliot Smart	8	1283.50	Malcolm Hey	6	1243.83
Johan Sallfors	15	1455.53	Mike Greenleaf	8	1275.00	David Nathan	6	1208.17
Simonetta Barone	15	1352.40	Kath Kennedy	8	1207.38	John Azraq	6	1056.00
Paul Sambell	15	1299.67	Dave McNair	7	1810.71	Nigel Merrigan	5	1917.60
Kevin White	14	1670.29	Ian Tarr	7	1762.14	Steve Hallett	5	1863.60
Julian Fetterlein	13	1894.23	Leslie Singleton	7	1718.86	Brian Lever	5	1780.60
Edwin Turner	13	1781.31	Rachel Rhodes	7	1685.86	Jon Sharp	5	1733.00
Emmanuel Di Bona	13	1697.31	Grahame Powell	7	1666.86	Arthur Musgrove	5	1678.40
Tim Mooring	13	1647.15	Nigel Briddon	7	1542.29	Spencer Close	5	1582.80
Ron Havenhead	13	1219.69	Wayne Felton	7	1446.71	Anthony Coker	4	1877.75
Bob Young	12	1961.42	Kevin Nicholson	7	1352.00	Harry Bhatia	4	1792.00
Steffen Nowak	12	1682.50	Aboudi Al-Halabi	7	1281.86	R. Falconi-Puig	4	1744.50
Rodney Lighton	12	1648.00	Bryony Jessiman	7	957.00	Dale Taylor	4	1591.00
Richard Granville	12	1518.33	Ian Shaw	6	2154.17	Ray Kershaw	4	1588.75
Liz Barker	12	1490.83	Peter Chan	6	1919.33	Ralph Eskinazi	4	1501.75
John P Lewis	12	1373.83	Barry McAdam	6	1914.17	Al Hogg	4	1306.25
Stuart Mann	11	1708.00	Tim Wilkins	6	1872.00	Dod Davies	4	1247.50
Amir Mossanen	11	1568.45	Nick Check	6	1744.83			
John Clark	10	1845.70	Simon K Jones	6	1675.17			
Ann Pocknell	10	1781.50	Cliff Connick	6	1668.67			

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