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Editor/Publisher: Michael Crane, 2 Redbourne Drive, Lincoln. LN2 2HG

Office/Fax: 01522 888676, Home: 01522 829649, Mobile: 07900 916468

info@backgammon-biba.co.uk, www.backgammon-biba.co.uk



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Backgammon**



In full colour!
(see page 19)

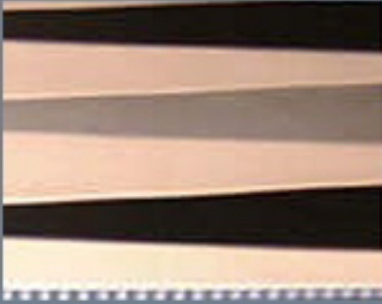


John (Slats) Slattery

Is he already the 2003 *Grand Prix* Champion?

See page 52 to see how big his lead is
after playing in just six tournaments so far.

Anatomy of a David Naylor Board



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Dice Gods and the Meaning of Life

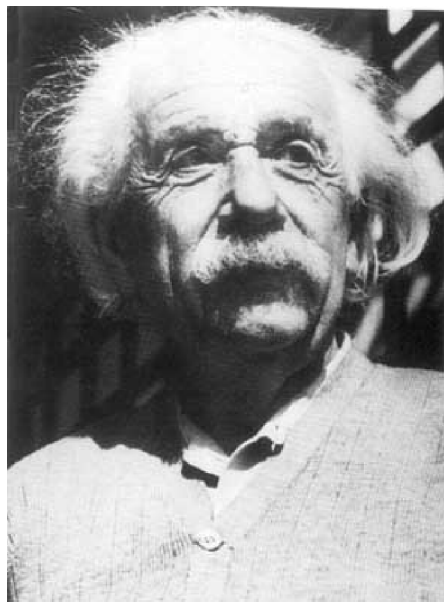
By Lorenzo Rusconi

This is just a brief introduction to an idea which I have been working on since the last few months. It has been difficult to shrink it into such short discussion, since there are so many more points I have explored, which will eventually come in due time in the form of the book I am writing. If you are interested you can e-mail me your comments at dicegodsnlife@hotmail.com and you can also find me quite regularly on NetGammon playing and chatting under the nickname of DiceGods. I am always up for a good game or an interesting conversation...

Have a nice one. Lorenzo Rusconi



"God doesn't play with dice"



(Einstein)

I am a Backgammon player.

I have been for quite sometimes. I just got sort of addicted to it. You know, the usual addiction escalating route. I started with family and friends when I was young, then playing it on-line, eventually reading books about it, ultimately going to local and national tournaments (not that I have ever won one, still, I am a work in progress). Basically, as you might have perceived, it became quite a big part of my Life. Even my love relationships at times have been affected by it; as if I would ever think or dream of making love to a leather backgammon board with

latex straps and brass checkers for God's sake!! Still, you try explain it to her. (Mind you, I definitely would have liked to get to know better that that lady which consistently kicked my ass on backgammon on the island of Ko Samui, leaving me with a crushed ego and the lowest possible level of self-esteem).

Anyhow, going back to it, You can't really breakdown the stages of such development, they just naturally followed one another, bringing me here, slowly making the last step of my evolutionary backgammon life . . .

To share the Knowledge that undeniably is discovered, when, as in love, you give all of yourself to someone or something, without limits nor expectations, there and only there your meaning of life finally becomes clear to yourself, and there is where I am taking you now.

This is because I feel the knowledge I have found through backgammon is not of a technical nor professional level; that, I leave it to experts like the ones I have read to improve my playing skills. My knowledge is more of a philosophical and practical level, not only for the brain and the ever present ego, but for the mind, the soul, and

ultimately life itself. In fact, I believe backgammon has so many similarities to what I consider reality to be, that I have started to feel and look at backgammon as a practical tool to enhance my life's choices and situations, sort of training me to live life, eventually helping me to find my meaning in life. I could almost agree with you that I could say this of any hobby or passion, but I believe it is not the case. Backgammon has something special, and here I am showing you why. Mastering backgammon is mastering life.

So if you feel you are open to other's people experiences and willing to share your knowledge with them, possibly learning from each other, please read on, and so, I wish you will enjoy it as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

Backgammon is a peculiar game, it has been around for centuries, its ancestors include most of the ancient games, all the way up until the 1920's, when an unknown genius in New York created what is known today as the "Doubling Cube". That particular invention mostly made backgammon the popular game it is today, modern backgammon, known to the *aficionados* as "the cruelest game on earth".



I like that basically the actual creator of something is unknown. Sometimes I feel the same about life. I don't believe it is so important to know or believe on what created Life, why we are here, and all those existential mind demons. The point is that here it is, it doesn't matter when and who created it (if anything did it at all), but it is here and now, for us to be lived. Backgammon is the same, we don't ultimately know who created the modern version of it and where exactly it came from, but it is here and now, we just have to play it and enjoy it.

By this I do not imply that there is no God, but that for our immediate existence that belief alone does not help us to lead a good and meaningful life, God might reward us on the after life, something that we cannot verify on this existence, and as Aristotle has been quoted as rightly saying, in the uncertainty of the doubt, it is much better to live a life in line with spiritual beliefs and moral practices . . just in case . . God might be there, watching upon us and letting us decide our good fortunes or misfortunes to be then judged once gone from this actual existence, but the fact itself that if he existed and he did give us freewill, stresses that it is still down to us and not to him what we are going to make of our lives. So once again, here is life in front of us, we might not know everything about it, but here it is for us to explore and learn from day one, understanding the causes and effects of our actions upon us and upon others, living or material entities they might be.

To begin with, why is it beneficial to learn this awkward game then?

When you start learning backgammon, you are taught its rules, laws,

and limitations. As in Life, the better knowledge of all laws and rules, scientific and moral, the better equipped to understand your surrounding reality. In backgammon you are imposed a structure on which you have to move and respectfully abide, a system on which you are an active player, like the student in front of an empty blackboard ready to be filled. As it often happens, in life it is so easy to just ignorantly lay back and take in what comes your way, passively acknowledging the "necessity" of your life and being lead by it, following what you believe the natural process of things was meant to be for you, and that is it.

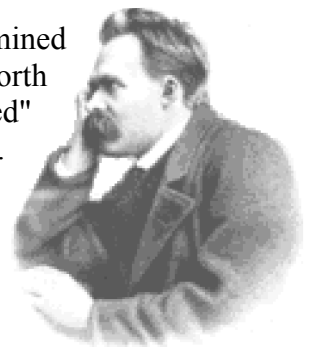
Well, as a backgammon player you are taught to act, to be aware of your particular situation, to know the rules and to move on with your strategy, with your aims and dreams (especially at tournaments), incessantly trying to achieve what your role asks from you with a deep knowledge of the limits and laws of the game itself. You are thrown into a personal dynamic world, in which you have to take control of your play, accept what the dice give you and will upon them your individual choice of action, re assessing your situation and your style at any time. It becomes a continuous affirmation of yourself as an individual entity, thus every move you make, if you already knew it or not . . . acknowledges you into existence, your existence.

In life there has always been a fundamental question: are human beings determined entities, or do they have a free will. Are our actions already written somewhere, as all our life and the moment of our death, or at any time we have freedom to choose and to act, and therefore decide our own destiny.

Is there anybody watching over us and deciding our fate, or are we ultimately lonely in our choices, mistakes and decisions.

I don't believe yet anybody has been able to completely answer such question (science seems to be getting closer to it), and few people actually dwell thinking about such subjects anyway, as most people consciously dismiss them as too abstract and not worth spending time upon them. But they are important. After all, like one of my favourite thinkers was quoted as saying:

"An unexamined life is not worth being lived" (Nietzsche).



Basically, how does it feel to live a life without knowing why we do what we do? We could believe in an Entity that has created us and has already decided what we will do in our life, leaving us only to act out its universal plan, waiting for us to do mistakes he planned and punish us accordingly; or we could just believe in our self and our strength and do anything that pleases us without restrains. I doubt either way alone would make you a true and meaningful person, as both from my point of view hold some truths and have to be considered when analysing our life and our decisions.

In backgammon these two apparently opposite views are united and applied together in order to achieve your goal. The dice are sort of given to you, they could be compared to what some call destiny, others karma, the Will of God or just for the hard-core material-

ist, mere natural processes. They are here and cannot be changed, you have to use what the Dice-Gods have given you, but these Gods don't ultimately choose what you are going to do with the dice. Here it is when your free will comes into play, you have to choose, among the few limited possibilities that the structure of the game allows you, and act. In that moment nobody can help you, you have the freedom of choice and you have to use it fast, for in backgammon as in life, no-one waits forever.

I find it a fascinating way to see how my life works, and how to live by it. Some things are totally given to me, as to anybody else, I can't change them nor ignore them: like my family, where and when I was born, ultimately even the day I will die, or some of my misfortune and some of the good luck I have had and will have in this life. Living in illusion about the things that cannot be changed cannot bring any true benefit nor meaning into your life, but accepting certain limitations in your life can only enhance your strength and determination to go on and create what you can of your true life. And by accepting what you cannot change, you will be able to focus all your energies into what you can actually change or modify.

To me this concept completely shifts my outlook and my priorities in life. Most people concentrate their energies and thoughts on what happens to them, sometimes not even caused by them, and this leaves them unable to cope with the circumstances of life and without the strength to react, ending up by just getting pulled by life. However, learning to play Backgammon teaches you to focus not on what happens to you, like what dice have come out at any

one time, but rather on acknowledging them, and on what you are going to do with them next.

It is not what happens to you that counts, but how you react to it, how you move on from that point, and only you can be held responsible of what move you choose to make, you cannot blame anything nor anybody, and if you do a mistake, you have to acknowledge it, and hopefully try to fix it, but it still is your responsibility to do so. So many times things happen to us, bad things, that hurt us and make us suffer, and do not allow us to move on with life, but by acknowledging it, understanding it and accepting it, then we will be able to do what is necessary to heal ourself if we can, or at least through such process, knowing what is happening to us, overcome our fears by truly knowing what we are in nature and build upon it the future self we always naturally strive for.

Backgammon is right there, in your face, it doesn't allow you to delegate, to postpone, or cheat, you have to face what comes your way and overcome it, in the bad and in the good. Such outlook and attitude in life will allow you to change what you have to when you have to, to accept what you can't change, and it will force you to take responsibility of your actions and accept the inevitable and mostly unpredictable consequences, keeping you grounded to reality.

This takes us to the statistical dice factor in backgammon, which shows another important fact of life that so many time people seem to have forgotten; that backgammon, like life, is not fair. There might be some after life court of justice, but here in our life it has never existed and regrettably mostly needed. Bad things and sad

things just happen, entangled as they are with the rest of the knowable and unknowable events that continuously unfolds in the whole universe. Sometimes when you are about to win and only one combination out of all the 36 possible ones would actually turn the game around, and so it happens, anger does not help, nor blame, nor shouting "but it is not fair, it is all luck!!!" and a lot worst which I have heard in a few languages around the globe...

Well, the bare fact is that this is just the way that it is; things are not good nor bad, fair nor unfair, they are natural in and for themselves. Backgammon can teach this too, by accepting whatever comes your way, without blaming the unfairness of it all, but by seeing your true situation, you will be more capable of changes and opportunities in your life. Therefore, the better knowledge and skills, the better equipped to face misfortunes and possibly change the situation around, learning from it as much as you can.

This now brings us to a brief discussion of the doubling cube and its psychology.

The introduction of the doubling cube into the game, allows a player to double the stake of the game if he feels in advantage, and allows the opponent to accept it and play double the value of the game (with the option of doubling back himself if the situation changes to his/her advantage), or refuse it and lose the game at the level it was being played on.

This addition to the game has psychological and philosophical correlations and implications to our existence, and a good knowledge of its use can enhance further your knowledge of yourself. When I

think about the doubling cube, or I am contemplating its use in a game, I recall few philosophical concepts from my University days. The doubling cube in backgammon doesn't only make you react to what happens to you, but when you are using it, it allows you to truly affirm yourself. By using the doubling cube, I believe you exercise what Nietzsche called your "will to power". Your nature is to overcome yourself, to face your fears and limitations and push them to the limits of your existence. By doubling an opponent you are just doing that.

You don't exactly know if you are going to win, but by offering it you impose yourself on the game, you will yourself into existence, it makes you stronger and makes you feel alive, in control. However, as mostly misunderstood in Nietzsche too, it is not a power to destroy, but a power to create, create your life and your situations. From time to time nothing makes you feel more alive than being able to stand up and affirm who you are by making your own choices, by making a strong move, risk a bit to make you feel for one moment really special and unique in your own way. Life is also about this, taking your chances and enjoy the ride, and always remember, as a great comedian and true philosopher, the late Bill Hicks, used to say about life...



"Life is just a ride".

No matter how real and important it all seems to be, never forget that it is just a ride, make it a special one, and it will not matter when and how it will end.

Furthermore, when you happen to find yourself on the receiving side of a doubling decision, you are forced to look at your actual situation, and act accordingly. In backgammon you are taught that at times you cannot always get what you want, and to give up when you still have time to do so. So many times in life we push ourselves over our limits, thinking we will always make it out of an awkward situation, either out of pride, or because we have grown to believe in something we are not, and we will find ourselves in situations we cannot deal with, deeper and deeper. Our super ego takes over and pushes us wholeheartedly into uncharted territories, and it can be as tempting as a beautiful mermaid can be.

By mastering the doubling cube you are taught to be humble, to accept a certain situation and let go of it, to give it up hopefully for higher benefits later. The Buddhist theory of attachment is at the core of our existence and in play in backgammon. Only when we will be able to let go of things we will be able to reach happiness, understanding the impermanence of things and situations. If you know your position and understand your limits, you are forced to let go and settle for a lesser damage, but if you will not learn that, in Life as in BC you will eventually lose more than you were supposed to.

Then again, it is not over until it is over, so if you feel you still have a real chance - based on knowing how to analyse your situation - you should go for it, accepting the possibility of a greater loss, but

also knowing you have done all you could possibly do. Ultimately we all sort of end the big game in life, we cease to exist don't we? So let's learn from it all and live fully while we are at it. After all, it doesn't really matter when one dies, what matters is that he/she has explored all the potentialities that their particular existence allowed them to, after that, how can it matter if it is over, if at any one time it was "complete".

For me, this is what backgammon is also about, it is not ultimately about winning, it is about truly living the game, each moment, taking out of it all that you possibly can and have a great time while at it, with all its ups and downs, it is not the end of the journey which matters, it is the journey itself.

In Life, we have to be able to accept some losses and natural limitations, but also to fight for our gains and potential rewards to the natural limits of our existence, and if things do not go as one has planned, well, guess what, shit happens, so change your strategy and fly again...

We will not always be right in life, so we also have to learn to take ourselves not so seriously all the times, no matter how strong we believe in ourselves, from time to time, we will all act as fools . . .

So, after such brief discussion, and what I believe I have learnt through playing backgammon, what is then the meaning of life?

Well, that there is no meaning nor structure in it other than the one you give to it each and every moment of your life, that it is here and now to be lived and shared. To know its strengths and limitations, to embrace it consciously and ful-

ly, always with the humbleness that naturally comes from knowing its constantly changing reality and your contingent existence in it. That you have to take it seriously, but be able to laugh at yourself from time to time, and to explore it to the maximum of your particular potentialities, and finally, that one day it will end, like everything else, but also that it doesn't matter, for what is important is not at the end, it is while you are at it . . . life is a ride, play it fully . . . and enjoy it.

Lorenzo Rusconi

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How Good Is Your Backgammon?

Asks Michael Crane

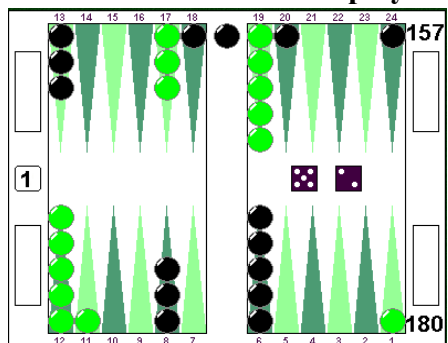
Once again we follow the 1991 Monte Carlo World Championship ¼ Final between Neil Kazaross and Michael Meyburg. We pick up the action in Game 7.

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

Game 7

Kazaross : 3 **Meyburg : 7**
 01) 62: 24/18 13/11
 02) 64: 24/14* 52: 25/20 13/11*
 03) 65: 25/14*

??? Black to play 52



So, what do we do here? A couple of possible moves present themselves:

Making the 18-point - 25/20 20/18

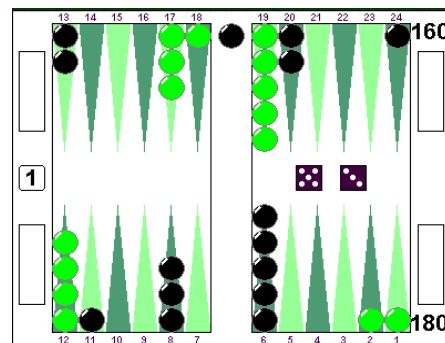
Making the 20-point and hitting a blot - 25/20 13/11

Actually there's no real value in holding the 18-point. The 20-point is far more valuable (referred to as *The Golden Point* by Paul Magriel) and will prove an asset with its outer board cover. Of course, the added bonus of making this point is that you're free to hit the blot as well. Making a good point and hitting a blot is always good.

25/20 13/11 5A
 25/20 18/16 3
 25/20 6/4 3
 25/20 24/22 2
 25/18 1

52: 25/20 13/11*
 04) 62: 25/23 13/7*

??? Black to play 53



Another off the bar choice. Holding the 20-point now proves its worth as the five is played 25/20; but what to do with the 3?

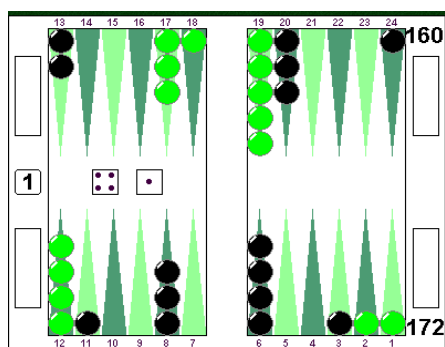
The actual play of 6/3 doesn't achieve a lot except to tempt a hit with a 1 which could be used to make white's bar-point. However, this isn't a good enough reason for this play. Moving the 3, 11/8 to safety has its merits but in my opinion it is too wimpy, the checker is better off as a builder; and any 9s or 10s rolled by white that contain a 6 will almost certainly be used to make his own bar-point.

Moving 24/21 is the best option. Although it leaves white free to play into his home board it does mean that black can escape the spare checker and concentrate on re-supplying the stripped mid-point.

25/20 24/21 5
 25/20 11/8 4
 25/20 6/3 3A
 25/22 6/1* 2
 25/20 8/5 1

53: 25/20 6/3

??? White to play 41



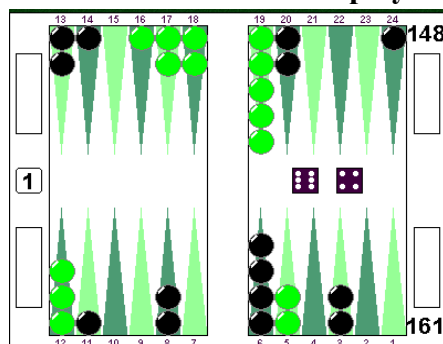
Snowie rates the actual play of 13/9 8/7 in 5th place with an equity loss of 0.086, not too far from a blunder. I'm not too sure myself if it deserves to be this bad, but I am not happy with the 13/9. Black has spare checkers and can hit without breaking a point.

Snowie actually prefers to ignore the bar-point completely and adopt a different strategy - go for an advanced anchor. Preferring 24/20 23/22*, Snowie puts all its eggs into one basket and goes for the hit.

24/20 23/22* 5
 23/22* 22/18 4
 23/22* 7/3 4
 24/20 8/7 3
 23/22* 13/9 3
 13/9 8/7 2A
 8/7 6/2 1

05) 41: 13/9 8/7 65: 20/14 8/3
 06) 43: 24/20 23/20

??? Black to play 64



Moving 14/8 11/7 black is rewarded with the first blunder of the game losing a massive 0.155 in equity and being placed in 5th position. Plays 1 to 4 all favour the hit 20/16* except one, running the back checker out 24/14 to make the point. The number one choice by a fair margin is 20/14 20/16*. It puts white on the bar and offers an extra builder for the blot on the 11-point.

20/14 20/16* 5
 20/16* 14/8 4
 24/14 3
 20/16* 16/10 2
 14/8 11/7 1A

64: 14/8 11/7

07) 52: 9/4 6/4

51: 6/1 8/7

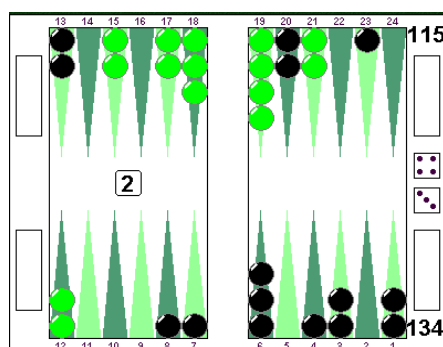
08) 51: 13/7

51: 6/1 24/23

09) 55: 20/10(2)

41: 8/4 7/6

??? White on roll. Cube action?

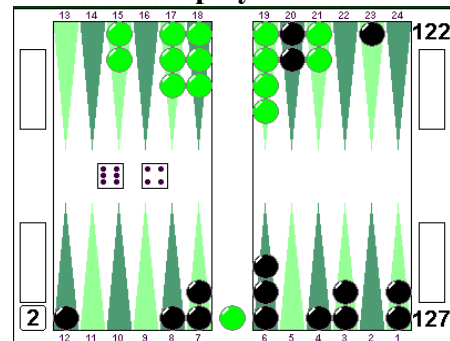


According to Snowie this is a Double/Pass . . . but it is borderline. The equity for white if black passes is (obviously) 1.000, when the cube is taken it moves fractionally to 1.002; not a big gain. With such a small equity gain, is it worth handing over the cube to be

used against you at a later stage of the game?

10) Doubles to 2 Takes
 11) 41: 13/8 61: 13/7 13/12*

??? White to play 64



What you have to ask yourself here is, do I want black to secure a second anchor? If you answer no then it's the double hit, if you answer yes then you've got to find an alternative move for the 6. Two in the air is risking just 12 rolls (all 2s) at the same time giving 32 covering rolls - the only rolls that don't cover are 33, 21 and 11, although of course 11 will but it means losing the 4-point, and 33 will make the 3-point. So, technically, the only really risky roll is 21 - not bad odds.

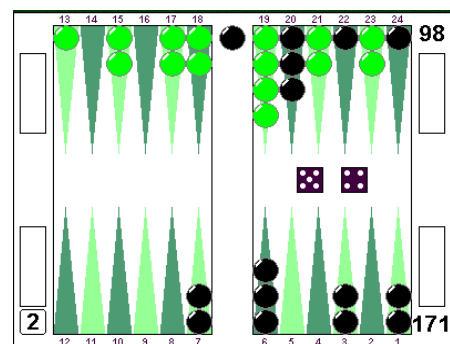
25/21* 6/2* 5A
 25/21* 21/15 4
 25/21* 10/4 -1
 25/21* 7/1 -2

12) 64: 25/21* 8/2* 43: 25/22
 13) 54: 7/2 21/17*

51: 25/20 25/24

14) 41: 17/13* 13/12

??? Black to play 54



Another one where half the roll is easy, 25/20.

Black is 73 pips down in the race and his only hope of winning the game is to get a hit. Gammon losses are very real so he needs to provoke some sort of action.

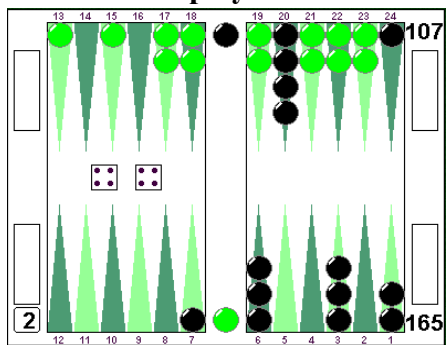
The actual play of 7/3 is far too passive and goes well past the two points that need plugging, the 5- and 4-points. Running the back checker to the 20-point lessens the chances of a hit. Slotting 6/2 at least gives an opportunity to make a 4th home board point. But the best play is to run off the 20-point and mix it. If it is missed it helps a little in the race.

25/20 20/16 5
25/20 24/20 3
25/20 6/2 2
25/20 7/3 1A

54: 25/20 7/3

15) 43: 7/3* 6/3 62:
16) 53: 6/1* 10/7 41: 25/24*
17) 11: 42:

??? White to play 44



OK, so one will be 25/21, what about the others?

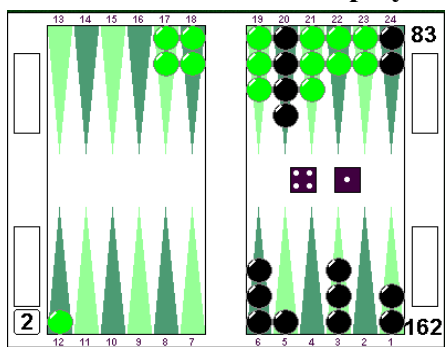
Black really is in trouble here; a long way behind in the race (approx. 7 rolls) and only one anchor. What he needs is the second anchor - so it's white's job to try to stop this happening. The best way to do this without losing any existing points is 12/8 8/4 10/6. The actual play almost achieves this

but runs out 25/13 instead of the 12/4.

25/21 12/4 10/6 5
25/13 10/6 4A
25/17 12/8 10/6 3
25/21 10/6 8/4(2) 3
25/17 10/6 8/4 2
25/17 12/4 1

18) 44: 25/13 10/6 21: 25/24 7/5
19) 53: 12/4

??? Black to play 41

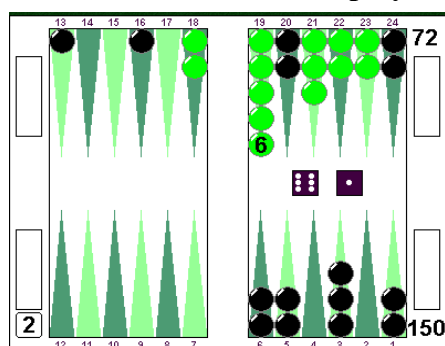


Gammon losses are so real that black will find it very hard to save one, so he needs to make a useful point here. This is done by playing 20/16 6/1. Making the 2-point will not help keep white in the black home board if he is hit later.

20/16 6/5 5A
6/2 3/2 3
20/16 3/2 3

20) 61: 13/6 41: 20/16 6/5
21) 11: 8/6(2) 52: 20/13

??? Black to play 61



The gammon is still on and black still needs a hit. But, with this roll he can concentrate on (hopefully)

saving the gammon by playing two crossovers. Slotting the 2-point without an effective builder right now could result in another checker back for black if white rolls either a 52 or 65 and is hit onto the bar.

16/10 13/12 5A
13/7 8/2 3
16/10 3/2 3
20/14 3/2 1
20/14 13/12 1

61: 16/10 13/12
22) 63: 6/3 21: 12/9
23) 43: 7/3 7/4 21: 9/6
24) 33: 6/0 3/0(2) 54: 20/15 20/16
25) 65: 6/0 33: 16/7 15/12
26) 42: 6/0 61: 12/6 7/6
27) 62: 6/0 6/4 64: 24/18 10/6
28) 54: 4/0(2) 43: 18/11
29) 31: 4/1* 1/0 66: 25/7 11/5

This little joker double-six saves the gammon as Neil scarpers round as fast as his legs will carry him!

30) 52: 4/0 2/0

Wins 2 points

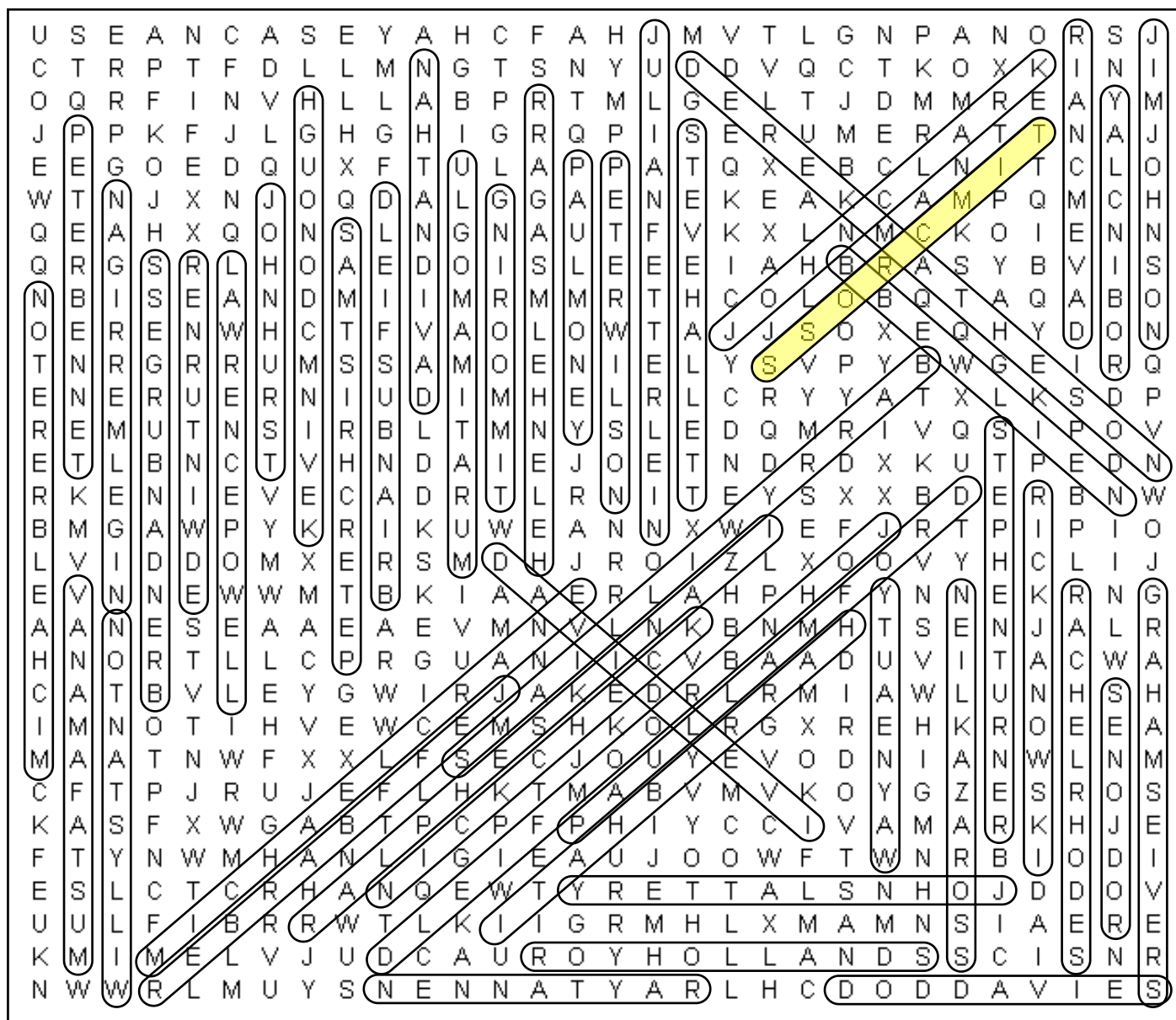
Kazaross : 5 Meyburg : 7

So, how good is your backgammon? Check below to see:

50 Cheating again?
40-49 You are Michael Meyburg
30-39 You are Neil Kazaross
20-29 Fair to middling
10-20 Pull your socks up
0-10 Burn your board!

Word Search 02 - The Solution

From Michael Crane



The mission was to identify the missing winner from a list of 47 members. The missing name was that of **Tim Cross** the sponsor of the Townharbour Trophy.

The first correct answer (out of the several) that was opened on 7 June was that of Jeff Barber (who is also on the grid above). Well done, Jeff. Fifteen quid is attached to this issue of Bibafax.

NB: Anyone else finding a cheque for fifteen quid - give it to Jeff!

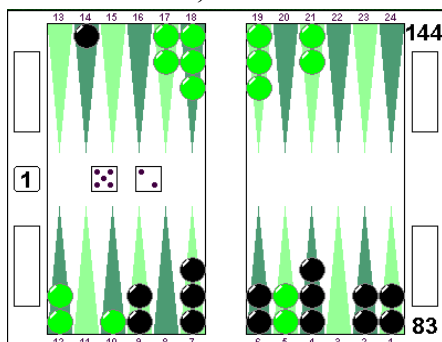
The match featured this time is the semi-final match between Donald Kahn and Abraham Eitan in the 2000 Paris Masters.

The format was best-of-three, 11 point matches. Donald is playing white and Abraham, black.

Using Snowie 4 I have picked out some of the bigger blunders in the three matches.

Match 1 of 3

Game 3, Position 12



Kahn (w) 6 Eitan (b) 1 White to play 52

Black is well ahead in the race 83 pips to 144 pips so the 2 is very welcome. Quite correctly it is played 13/11*, but what about the 5? The top three from Snowie are, in reverse order:

11/6. Moving the same checker on adds nothing to the strategy of keeping black on the bar or making another home-board point (although 44 and 33 would play well).

13/8. This adds a builder to the 8-point enabling white to make a point from here without giving it up.

15/10. Keeps everything flexible and is an excellent additional 5-point builder. Black's

only real reply is 65 or 55 (8.33%) whereas the odds of making a point anywhere for white is 100%! Of these thirty-six rolls, twenty-three (63.89%) make the 5-point, nine (25%) make an home-board point and the remaining four 11.11%) make the 10- & 11-points (two each).

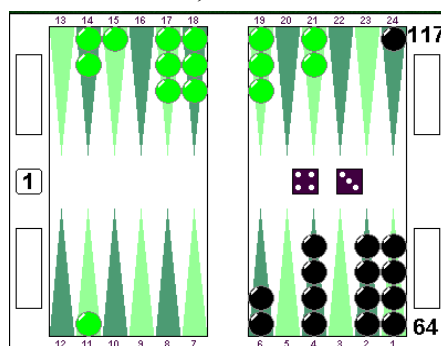
The actual move for the 5 was 20/15, which is a monumental blunder losing 0.526 equity! Giving up the anchor at this time and securing the 15-point instead doesn't really achieve much for white, but it sure helps black! Take a look at the two home boards. Black's reentry chances 32/36 (88.88%). Whites reentry chances are well below that at 20/36 (55.55%). If it comes to a battle of the home-board primes, black is going to win it more often than white.

Snowie Moves & Equity

13/11	15/10	0.295
13/11	13/8	0.192 (-0.103)
13/11	11/6	0.017 (-0.273)
13/11	20/15	-0.231 (-0.526)

Black rolls 61 and enters on the 24-point, where he sits, unable to move until he rolls 43

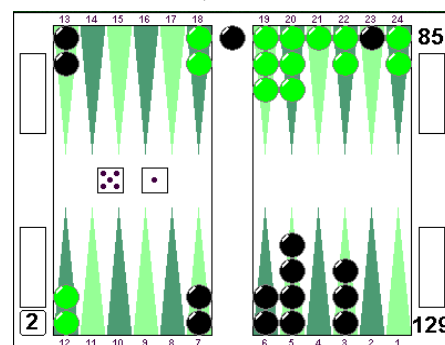
Game 3, Position 16



Black to play 43

Whatever black does here, he's lost. White, 53 pips behind, will have a double next roll and white will (and does) drop.

Game 4, Position 13



Kahn (w) 7 Eitan (b) 1 White to play 51

Having already taken a 2-cube which was a pass, black is in a very gammonish position at the moment. It's this gammonability that should influence white's play.

Quite clearly the 1 is played 5/4 covering the blot; so what about the 5? There are three possible moves but one, 6/1 can be discounted as not worthy of consideration. The choices lie between the hit 7/2* or the cross-over play of 13/8.

Let's look at the benefits and drawbacks of each play.

6/2*. Black now has to roll two 2s to get both checkers in on one roll, 1/36 (2.78%), or one checker in, 11/36 (30.55%). So the odds are against him in each instance. The odds are in favour of white either covering or lifting the blot: 27/36 (75%) cover, of which one, double-three, shifts points to do so; 4/36 (11.11%) lift; which leaves just 5 rolls that leave the blot on, 13.89%.

So much for the benefits, what about the drawbacks? Well, being hit is one; but not a big one. With three closed points the odds of white dancing are low, and his prime will remain for sometime to come.

13/8. Assuming black doesn't anchor, white now has eleven rolls that cover (30.55%) of which four of them have to shift points; and he has six rolls (16.66%) that can pick-and-pass.

The drawbacks are black can reenter and anchor with eleven rolls, 30.55%, four of which, 62 & 21 will enter and hit.

So, summing up, for the same risk of being hit by 30.55% of black's rolls the hitting play of 6/2* gives far greater chances of covering or safetying the blot; with the added bonus that gammon chances increase from 86.9% to 89.8%, a good enough reason to be bold.

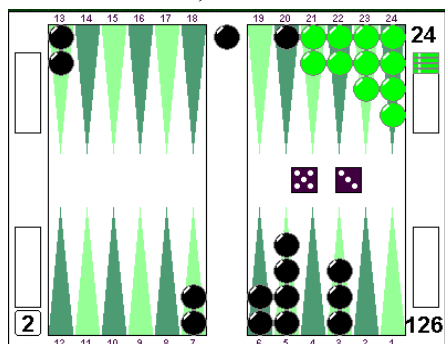
As you might have guessed, the actual play was 13/8.

Snowie Moves & Equity

7/2* 5/4 1.131
13/8 5/4 1.115 (-0.196)

What happened next? Black rolled 54 and danced, white rolled 64 and closed the board. Black then danced for six rolls as white proceeded to bear off safely.

Game 4, Position 21

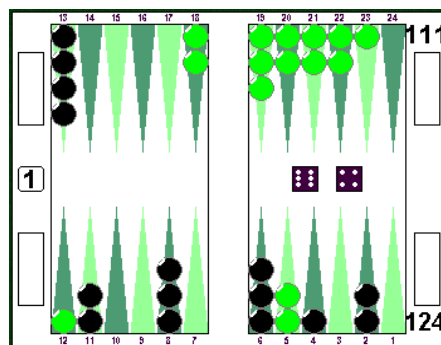


Black reenters

Black eventually reentered his second checker, not once getting a shot, and failed to save the gammon. Donald gladly took the four points and the 1st Match.

Match 2 of 3

Game 7, Position 8



Kahn (w) 3 Eitan (b) 5
Black to play 64

With just 3 pips in it after this move black is in with a chance in the race. Admittedly his home-board distribution isn't good, but being hit would be far worse. White must get his back checkers round and black is blocking the fleeing double 6s, 4s and 3s.

So, playing safe here 13/3 is the safest option! Unfortunately, black decided to make the 4-point with the four and move off the mid with the six, losing 0.283 equity in the process.. This gives white 2s to hit and 4s and 5s to cover.

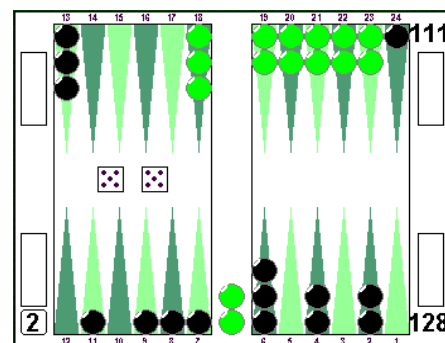
Snowie Moves & Equity

13/3 -0.11
13/7 8/4 -0.294 (-0.283)

White doesn't even bother to roll next roll - he doubles (which is an error) and loses 0.012 equity as black rightly takes. White rolls 62, hits and off to the bar goes black. He dances for a while, then rolls a Joker 11 and reenters and puts 2 white blots onto the bar for good measure. White's reply is a devastating 55 off the bar - which he misplays and loses a whopping

0.503 in equity!

Game 7, Position 12



Kahn (w) 3 Eitan (b) 5
White to play 55

With five black blots up for grabs, now is the time to shift points and play 25/20(2) 6/1*(2). But white decides that running 25/15(2) is better.

The shift doesn't make much difference to the winning percentage: Shift = 89.5%, Run = 88.9%. The big difference lies with the gammon and backgammon chances.

Move	b/gmn	gmn
25/15(2)	0.9%	39.6%
25/20(2) 6/1*(2)	6.1%	76.5%

So, without risking too much as far as winning goes, the shifting from the 6-point to the 1-point makes a tremendous difference as far as gammons and backgammons are considered.

Snowie Moves & Equity

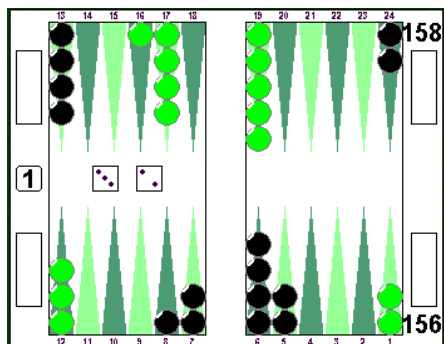
25/15(2) 1.107
25/20(2) 6/1*(2) 1.201 (-0.530)

White does get the gammon in the end; but that doesn't make the play any less of a blunder. By making the best move prescribed by Snowie he would almost have doubled his chances of getting a gammon and four very valuable points.

continued on the next page



Game 8, Position 2



Kahn (w) 7 Eitan (b) 5
White to play 32

Snowie preferred nine other moves before placing the actual play of 13/8 at 10th on its list! Mind you, the equity loss of this play was a loss of just -0.198; leaving the majority of the better plays, better plays!

I'll not go into each of the nine plays, suffice to say that each of them preferred moving one or both runners, and that the actual play is the only one after these combinations have been exhausted that doesn't.

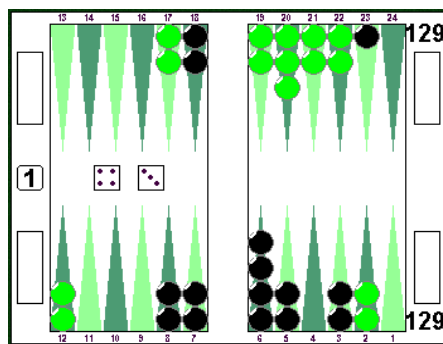
Certainly moving to an already stacked point isn't a good play and it does tend to strip the mid-point down to a minimum.

Snowie Moves & Equity

24/21 24/22	-0.608
24/22 9/6	-0.662 (-0.054)
24/22 13/10	-0.699 (-0.091)
24/21 8/6	-0.725 (-0.117)
24/22 6/3	-0.728 (-0.120)
24/21 6/4	-0.752 (-0.144)
24/21 13/11	-0.756 (-0.148)
24/22 8/5	-0.761 (-0.153)
24/21 9/7	-0.800 (-0.192)
13/8	-0.806 (-0.198)

Black's response to this move was a correct double, to which white responded with a correct take. The game progressed, ending up with white saving the gammon on his very last roll.

Game 11, Position 9



Kahn (w) 8 Eitan (b) 8
White to play 43

This looks like a stalemate almost. Both players with primes with enemy checkers behind them. However, where white needs a combination roll to extricate his checkers black needs 5s - a great advantage.

The race is level-pegging and white has to break off one of his points. He can be bold or he can play safe. Playing safe, 8/4 8/5 will only delay the inevitable - a blot on or near the mid-point very soon. Now is the time for bold play - 8/4 5/2*.

If black dances and white covers it'll give him the timing he needs to escape the runners. The risks are big, but so is the play.

Snowie Moves & Equity

8/4 5/2*	-0.495
13/9 5/2*	-0.500 (-0.005)
13/6	-0.665 (-0.169)
8/4 8/5	-0.813 (-0.318)

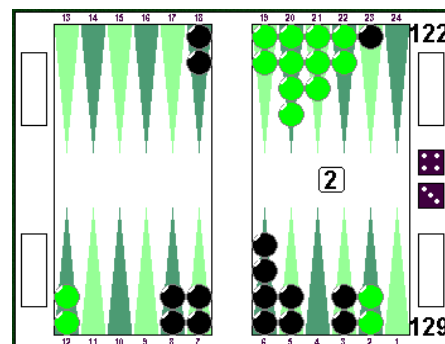
Black doesn't even bother to roll, he ships across a 2-cube and white passes. Which according to Snowie is correct on the double but wrong on the pass. It is a double / take. (see next column)

Cube action alert: Wrong pass

Double, take	0.819
No double	0.691 (-0.129)
Double, pass	1.000 (+0.181)

Proper cube action: Double, take

Game 11, Position 10

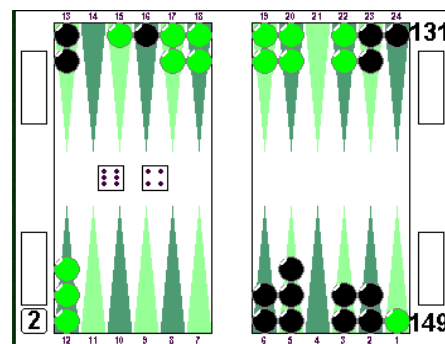


Kahn (w) 8 Eitan (b) 8
White doubles

The match progresses to a conclusion without any further blunders (although there are several errors) with Eitan winning making it 1-1 in the best of three format.

Match 3 of 3

Game 4, Position 9



Kahn (w) 1 Eitan (b) 3
White to play 64???

To hit or not to hit, this is the question. White's answer was, not to hit - which cost him 0.201 in equity. He didn't play it safely, 13/7 10/6, this would have been an even bigger blunder losing 0.236. Instead he played 24/18 10/6 and in the process threw away 0.201 equity.

After this play the race will be 149-121 in white's favour but he's now left black a direct six, 17 shots (47.22%) plus two 9s, making a total of 19/36 (52.78%); good odds and ones that black is more than happy to accept.

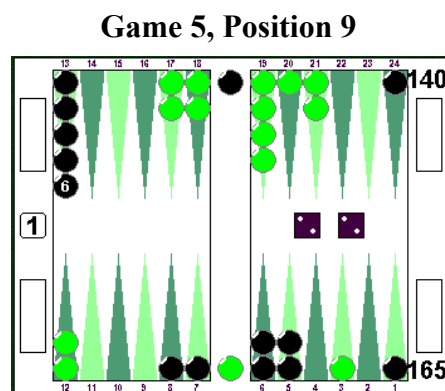
What black would be less happy about is the best move, 24/18 13/9*. This would leave him with a meagre 8 entry+hit rolls (25%), less than half the rolls of the actual play. It would also alter the race in white's favour by an extra 11 pips.

Snowie placed the actual move in 6th place, with four of the preceding five rolls favouring the hit.

Snowie Moves & Equity

24/18 13/9*	0.843
13/7 13/9*	0.695 (-0.148)
13/9*/3	0.686 (-0.157)
10/4 8/4	0.670 (-0.173)
13/9* 10/4	0.645 (-0.198)
24/18 10/6	0.642 (-0.201)

Black rolled 41, missed the hit, was then hit himself with a timely double-two. Later he lost the gammon after white rolled consecutive double-fives bearing eight men off and leaving just double-six for black to roll to save the four points.



Kahn (w) 5 Eitan (b) 3
Black to play 22

The actual play of 25/23 24/20* 13/11 looked good to me at first glance, and across the table this would have been my play too. But, when given the luxury of sitting back and studying it I would have played it differently.

This play leaves too many blots in the outer-board, and, even with two checkers in the air it not only enables white to reenter, but to possibly reenter, anchor and/or hit.

If this happens then it's blot world, and white will think all his birthdays have come at once!

Playing 25/23 7/3* 3/1 also puts two in the air, but it leaves only one return shot (44) or anchors without rolling doubles (2s 3s or 4s). At the same time it leaves the blot on white's Golden Point exposed to a double hit, potentially sending a third checker back.

Snowie Moves & Equity

2523 7/3*/1	0.118
25/23 24/20* 13/11	-0.108
	(-0.226)

White rolls 31, enters and hits, but black consolidates on the 20-point with a 54. This proves helpful because here he sits tight until white rolls a significant double five which causes him to sit back and think about what, if any, home-board points to make.



BACKGAMMON

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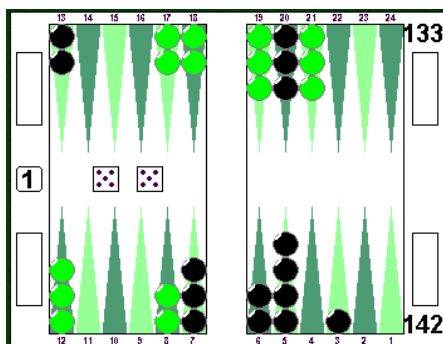
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Game 5, Position 15



Kahn (w) 5 Eitan (b) 3
White to play 55

Quite soon black is going to have to run off a back checker or split from the mid-, and when he does white needs to do two things:

1. Hit him
2. Make reentry difficult

The best way to achieve both is by making two home-board points now by playing 8/3(2) 7/2(2). This is the best move from Snowie.

The actual move, although being 2nd in Snowie's list, loses a lot of equity. The play 13/8 8/3(3) loses 0.231, quite a lot.

The problem here is that the builder from the mid-point has gone which can lead to a blot for white should he get the hit he's hoping for later.

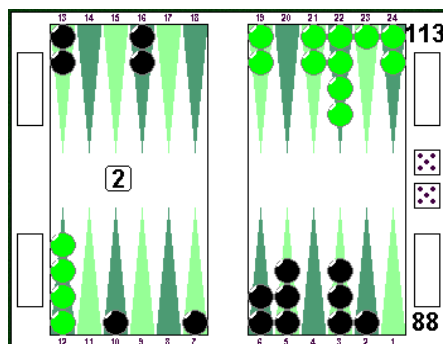
Snowie Moves & Equity

13/8(3) 8/3	0.512
13/8(3) 6/1	0.420 (-0.092)
13/3(2)	0.394 (-0.118)
13/8 8/3(3)	0.281 (-0.231)

Black's reply to the double-five is a double of his own, double-four, and he advances his three runners.

The game continues for a few rolls until eventually white ships across a takeable cube which black, incorrectly passes, giving away 0.168 equity in the process.

Game 5, Position 18



Kahn (w) 5 Eitan (b) 3
White doubles

Snowie says:

Cube action alert: Wrong pass

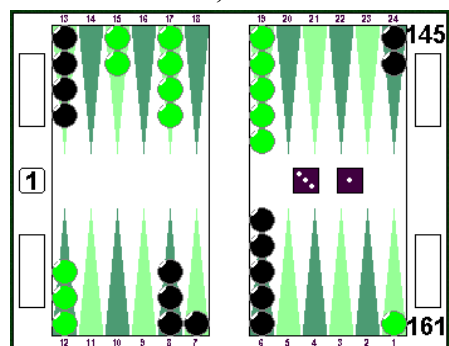
Double, take 0.832

No double 0.767 (-0.065)

Double, pass 1.000 (+0.168)

Proper cube action: Double, take

Game 10, Position 3



Kahn (w) 7 Eitan (b) 7
Black to play 31

Almost every book I've read says how important the 5-point is; on either side of the board - more valuable in most circumstances than the bar-point. Here isn't an exception despite leaving a blot on the 7-point.

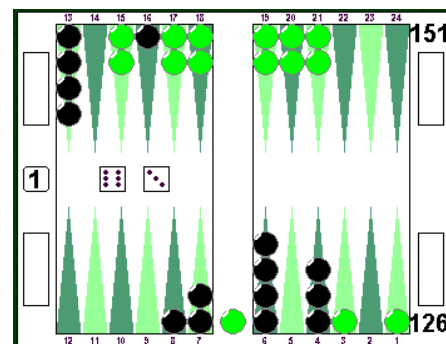
The actual play, 24/21 8/7 is rated 3rd by Snowie losing 0.190 equity. If you have to make the bar- then it prefers to play off the mid- to build for the 5-point.

Early days, perhaps, but once held, your own 5-point is rarely lost until the bearoff or via a forced play.

Snowie Moves & Equity

8/5 6/5	-0.221
13/10 8/7	-0.381 (-0.160)
24/21 8/7	-0.412 (-0.190)

Game 10, Position 8



Kahn (w) 7 Eitan (b) 7
White to play 63

Only a choice of four moves here, and all with the 6:

- 25/22 10/4
- 25/22 7/1
- 25/22 8/2
- 25/16

We can count out the first one, no sense in leaving another blot. The 3rd & 4th aren't that good; breaking a good prime to make such a low point isn't worth it. If white gets a hit it's worthwhile keeping a continuous prime. Which leaves us with the final move, and the best, runner off the bar and carrying on.

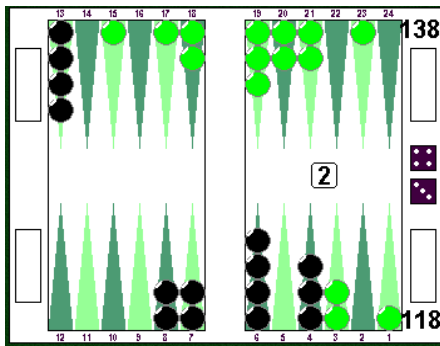
White isn't afraid of being hit back, he's looking for confrontation so that he can get a black checker behind that 5-prime. White didn't make this play (as I'm sure you've gathered), he played 8/2.

Snowie Moves & Equity

25/16	-0.450
25/22 8/2	-0.614 (-0.164)
25/22 10/4	-0.626 (-0.175)
25/22 7/1	-0.768 (-0.317)

Two rolls later black doubles and white, wrongly passes.

Game 10, Position 10



Kahn (w) 7 Eitan (b) 7
Black doubles

Cube action alert: Wrong pass

Double, take 0.944

No double 0.870 (-0.075)

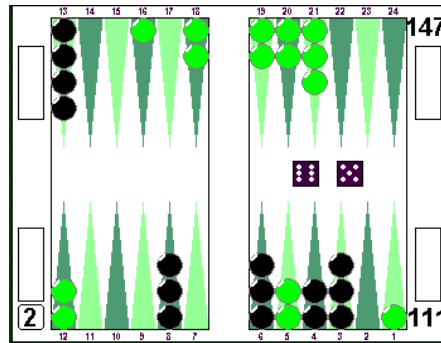
Double, pass 1.000 (+0.056)

Proper cube action: Double, take

From here the match progresses without major incident to the score being tied at 9-9, when the 'mandatory' double/take takes place.

Some time later, a 'forced' 65 by black leads to his downfall.

Game 14, Position 8



Kahn (w) 9 Eitan (b) 9
Black to play 65

Black is obliged to play 13/2. White rolls 61 and hits, and thereafter this black runner sits in the white home-board (or on the bar) for seventeen consecutive rolls, missing his one and only chance of a hit and a possible chance of winning the bearoff and the match.

Donald's reward for this last victory was to face Johannes Levermann in the Final. A match from which Donald emerged the winner.

Norah. Help For The Hopeless

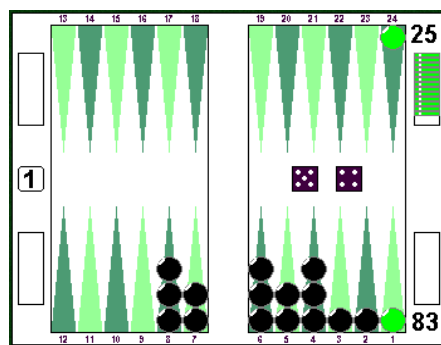
Dear Norah,
We met in Las Vegas in the year 2000 We had just heard that our friend, Robin Clay, had died. We discussed smoking and you were using more than 40 a day. Glad to see you are still around and keeping Robin waiting. This letter concerns the:

Bexhill Big Breakfast Backgammon Bonanza

En-route to BIBA tournaments we always stop for breakfast. Imagine one of rural England's finest hotels where one can enjoy the ambience as well as a sumptuous full English breakfast. The evening before we (that is Kerry Jackson and John Thomas) play a match to decide who pays for the breakfast. The winner can eat as much as he, or she, likes and the loser pays for it. The last match gave rise to the following position.

John, playing as Black, had to play 54. He formed the prime with 6/2

8/3 particularly wishing to avoid leaving me a gammon. Can you please tell us the correct play?

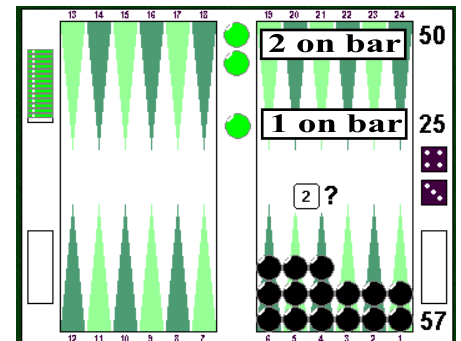


**Fig A: Black to play 54
Score 2-2 to 11**

Also, if it's not too much to ask, because we know how busy you are, we would appreciate your expert opinion on the following two positions.

In each Black has the ideal bearing off position and White has:

- (a) two checkers on the bar; and
- (b) where White has one checker on the bar.



**Fig B: Black on roll
Cube action?**

Love from, Kerry and John

Dear Kerry and John,
There is no gain without pain as my old granny said on her wedding night. She had just married a fat, ugly oil tycoon.

In Fig A you **must** play the seemingly riskier 7/3 6/1*. (Equity - 0.556). All other moves are serious blunders with far lower equities of -0.9 and worse. The technique is to try to get both checkers on the bar and close your board. If you can do this and get a perfect bearoff position you are nearly 70% favourite to win, with an equity of about 0.4. Thus you must keep hitting loose and hope



to be hit back, then throw a 1 to hit the other checker.

Bob Young has kindly sent me a reference to Bill Robertie's great book entitled, **501 Essential Backgammon Problems**. Problem 414 is our **Fig B**. Robertie says, *Black's a favorite in the game, (about 2-1 favorite, actually) but he can get closer to his optimal doubling point before turning the cube. He should wait. If doubled White has a very easy take.*

I did a rollout and it gave Black an equity of 0.391. Black wins 69.6% of the games which is close to Bill's estimate of 2-1 favourite. Snowie says that if it was a money game it is a beaver for White if Black doubles.

The general rule for doubling is to count each checker on the bar as equal to five checkers off. This gives 10 and White has 13 off. When these are equal Black has a double and White a thin take. Thus Black should take off three more checkers before he doubles. When White has only one checker closed out then White is about 93% favourite to win.

Yes, I do remember you guys. You were both heavy smokers too. Let's agree that the great pleasure we have had is well worth the 15 years earlier that we will die. Crap! - it is too late for me but stopping now can still work for you two. I'll give Robin your regards and keep a place in our chouette for you both. See you soon - if you don't stop smoking!

All my love, Norah

*Kerry went on to win the match and eat an enormous breakfast. They don't call her **Hollow Legs** for nothing!*

County Cups 2003 - The Final

By Michael Crane

John Slattery proved that you never give up in this nail-biting Final against Julian Fetterlein. After just two games he went 8-1 down. He pulled back to 8-2 and then slipped 10-2 Crawford! He won the Crawford, and then the next five in a row to take the winner's cup and his first ever Swiss format trophy.

I have reproduced the entire match below for you to play through or study - whatever turns you on!

11 point match. Game 1

Slattery : 0 Fetterlein : 0
 01) 53: 8/3 6/3 54: 13/8 24/20
 02) 11: 8/7(2) 6/5*(2) 55:
 03) Doubles to 2 Drops
Wins 1 point

Game 2

Slattery : 1 Fetterlein : 0
 01) 42: 8/4 6/4
 02) 11: 8/7(2) 6/5(2) 61: 24/23 23/17*
 03) 42: 25/23 24/20 51: 13/8 6/5*
 04) 61: 25/24 13/7 54: 13/8 17/13
 05) 55: 23/18 18/13 13/8(2) 63: 13/7 8/5
 06) 51: 24/23 23/18* 65:
 07) Doubles to 2 Takes
 08) 52: 18/13 7/5 54: 25/21 21/16
 09) 64: 13/7 13/9* 43: 25/21 24/21

10) 41: 6/2 9/8 33: 13/10(2) 10/7(2)
 11) 32: 5/2 24/22 51: 8/3* 6/5
 12) 43: 25/22* 13/9 54: 25/21 21/16*
 13) 33: 25/22 13/10 10/7 8/5 51: 13/8 16/15
 14) 21: 5/3 7/6 42: 8/4 8/6
 16) 43: 6/2 6/3 Doubles to 4
 17) Takes 64: 21/15 15/11
 18) 65: 8/2 8/3 53: 21/16 11/8
 19) 43: 7/3 5/2 64: 8/2 6/2

20) 51: 7/2 2/1 62: 16/10 10/8
 21) 54: 5/1 53: 7/2 7/4
 22) 55: 11: 8/7 7/6 2/1(2)
 23) 42: 22/18 18/16 22: 8/6 6/4 5/3* 4/2
 24) 31: 25/22* 16/15 43: 25/21 6/3*
 25) 43: 25/22* 22/18 51: 25/20 8/7*
 26) 55: 63: 20/14 21/18
 27) 55: 21: 18/16 7/6
 28) 22: 52: 14/9 9/7
 29) 66: 54: 16/11 7/3
 30) 65: 64: 11/5 4/0
 31) 54: 65: 6/0 5/0
 32) 52: 66: 6/0(2) 5/0(2)
 33) 51: 25/20 20/19 43: 4/0 3/0
 34) 32: 15/12 19/17 52: 4/0 2/0
 35) 51: 12/7 7/6 64: 4/0 2/0
 36) 52: 17/12 12/10 21: 1/0(2)
Wins 8 points

Game 3

Slattery : 1 Fetterlein : 8
 01) 62: 24/18 13/11 51: 13/8 8/7*
 02) 65: 25/20 24/18* 31: 25/22 6/5*
 03) 11: 25/24 11/10 6/5(2) 64: 24/18 22/18
 04) 54: 18/13 24/20* 66:
 05) 21: 13/11 11/10 31: 25/22 6/5*
 06) 43: 25/21 8/5 63: 22/16 8/5
 07) 54: 6/1* 5/1 31: 25/22 6/5
 08) Doubles to 2 Drops
Wins 1 point

Game 4

Slattery : 2 Fetterlein : 8
 01) 52: 24/22 13/11
Misplay. Julian moves two 2s. John noticed and let it go.
 02) 61: 13/7 8/7 65: 22/16 16/11
 03) 53: 8/3 6/3 22: 11/9(2) 6/4(2)
 04) 65: 24/18 18/13 43: 24/20 20/17*
 05) 52: 25/23 13/8* 51: 25/24 13/8
 06) 61: 13/7 24/23 62: 13/7 9/7
 07) 31: 8/5 6/5 54: 13/8 13/9



08) 33: 23/20(2) 13/10(2) 62: 8/2 8/6	26) 32: 20/17 17/15 27) 41: 15/11 21/20	66: 66:	24) 54: 9/4 5/1* 25) 41:	41: 25/24* 11: 4/3(3) 3/2
09) 31: 13/10 10/9 53: 24/21 21/16*	28) 42: 20/16 16/14 29) 64: 14/8 8/4	66: 66:	26) 43: 25/21 14/11 27) 41: 11/7 7/6	54: 52: 3/1
10) 53: 25/20 7/4 41: 16/12 8/7	30) 44: 11/7 7/3 5/1 4/0	66:	28) 53: 21/16 16/13	64:
11) 64: 20/14 14/10 Doubles to 2	31) 65: 6/0 6/1	11:	29) 42: 6/2 4/2	64:
12) Takes 33: 12/9 9/6(3)	32) 31: 3/0 1/0	62: 25/19	30) 52: 13/8 8/6	65:
13) 64: 10/4 10/6 32: 7/4 4/2	33) 42: 4/0 4/2 43: 25/21 19/16		31) 11: 8/7(2) 7/6 6/5	54:
14) 32: 7/4 7/5 61: 8/2 8/7	34) 53: 5/0 5/2 65: 21/15 16/11		32) 61: 7/1* 5/4	64:
15) 42: 10/6 6/4 43: 7/3 6/3	35) 52: 3/0 2/0		33) 55: 7/2 6/13)	32:
16) 21: 4/2 6/5 31: 7/4 7/6	66: 15/9 11/5 9/3 5/0		34) 43: 7/3 3/0 61: 25/19 19/18	
17) 54: 20/15 15/11 43: 4/0 3/0	36) 51: 3/0 1/0 31: 3/0 2/1		35) 52: 5/0 2/0 32: 18/15 15/13	
18) 52: 11/6 20/18 62: 6/0 2/0	37) 31: 2/0 1/0 21: 2/0 1/0		36) 54: 5/0 4/0 54: 13/8 8/4	
19) 66: 18/12 12/6 6/0(2) 66: 6/0(4)	38)		37) 43: 4/0 3/0 63: 4/0 3/0	
20) 22: 6/4 4/2 2/0(2) 21: 2/0 6/5	Wins 1 point		38) 63: 4/0 3/0 54: 3/0(2)	
21) 53: 5/0 3/0 62: 6/0 2/0	Game 6		39) 55: 2/0(2) 1/0(2)	
22) 41: 4/0 6/5 41: 4/0 3/2	Slattery : 3 Fetterlein : 10		Wins 2 points	
23) 66: 6/0 5/0(3) 43: 4/0 5/2	01) 56: 24/18 18/13		Game 8	
24) 43: 4/0 3/0 52: 2/0(2)	41: 13/9 24/23		Slattery : 6 Fetterlein : 10	
Wins 2 points	02) Doubles to 2 Drops		01) 13: 8/5 6/5 21: 13/11 24/23	
Game 5 (Crawford)	Wins 1 point		02) 64: 24/18 18/14* 63: 25/22 24/18	
Slattery : 2 Fetterlein : 10	Game 7		03) Doubles to 2 Takes	
01) 31: 8/5 6/5	Slattery : 4 Fetterlein : 10		04) 43: 14/10 10/7* 31: 25/22 23/22	
02) 64: 8/2 6/2 53: 13/8 13/10	01) 14: 13/9 24/23 61: 13/7 8/7		05) 65: 13/7 13/8 52: 13/8 13/11	
03) 62: 13/7 7/5 44: 24/20*(2) 8/4(2)	02) 62: 13/7 9/7 53: 13/8 24/21		06) 21: 13/11 11/10 64: 8/2 6/2	
04) 65: 64: 8/2 6/2	03) 61: 23/22 22/16		07) 21: 24/22 6/5 64: 13/7 11/7	
05) 42: 43: 20/16 16/13	04) 66: 32: 16/13 24/22		08) 61: 22/16 13/12* 21: 25/23 22/21	
06) 43: 25/22 13/9 64: 13/7 20/16*	05) 61: 25/24 13/7 42: 8/4 6/4		09) 43: 16/12 13/10 64: 8/2 8/4	
07) 54: 55: 13/8(2) 8/3*(2)	06) 43: 7/3* 6/3 62: 25/23 13/7		10) 33: 8/5 7/4* 7/4 5/2*	
08) 53: 42: 13/9 7/5	07) 61: 8/2* 24/23			
09) 61: 25/24 42: 16/14 14/10	64: 25/21 21/15		11) 42: 6/2 12/10 31: 25/22 6/5	
10) 53: 51: 10/5 5/4	08) 33: 13/10*(2) 8/5(2)		12) 63: 12/6 5/2 41: 8/4 6/5	
11) 53: 21: 10/8 6/5	42: 25/23* 13/9		13) 31: 10/7 7/6 62: 22/16 16/14	
12) 41: 25/24 13/9 22: 9/7 8/6 7/5 6/4	09) 61: 25/24 10/4 51: 13/8 8/7		14) 53: 10/5 5/2 64: 22/16 16/12	
13) 54: 9/4 8/4 44: 6/2(2) 4/0(2)	10) Doubles to 2 Takes		15) 65: 10/4 6/1 42: 12/8 8/6	
14) 55: 24/19(2) 19/14 13/8 22: 7/5(2) 5/3*(2)	11) 21: 6/4 24/23 22: 9/7(2) 7/5(2)		16) 53: 6/1 4/1 64: 14/8 7/3	
65: 5/0(2)	12) 21: 24/22 6/5		17) 42: 8/4 8/6	
15) 62: 13/7 14/12 65: 5/0(2)	13) 65: 66: 23/17 17/11 7/1(2)		66: 22/16 16/10 10/4 7/1	
16) 64: 19/13 24/20* 11: 25/24 4/3(2) 3/2	14) 54: 64: 11/5 8/4		18) 41: 6/2 1/0	
17) 53: 12/7 20/17 61: 3/2	15) 11: 31: 8/5 6/5		55: 22/17 17/12 12/7 8/3	
18) 62: 17/11 6/4 65:	16) 43: 32: 3/0 5/3		19) 42: 4/0 2/0 52: 7/2 2/0	
19) 51: 8/3 4/3 61: 2/1*	17) 52: 25/23 23/18 65: 6/0 5/0		20) 54: 5/0 4/0 42: 4/0 2/0	
20) 51: 25/24* 6/1* 33:	18) 61: 18/12 10/9 32: 6/3 6/4		21) 53: 5/0 6/3 62: 6/0 2/0	
21) 63: 11/5 8/5 61: 25/24*	19) 31: 12/9 9/8 65: 5/0(2)		22) 22: 2/0(4) 32: 3/0 2/0	
22) 31: 25/24 13/10 65:	20) 35: 23/20* 20/15		23) 22: 6/4 4/2(2) 2/0 53: 5/0 3/0	
23) 42: 7/3 3/1* 42:	62: 25/23 23/17*		24) 52: 3/0 2/0	
24) 63: 7/1 24/21 66:	21) 55: 25/20 23/18 18/13 13/8*		Wins 2 points	
25) 54: 10/5 24/20 66:	51: 25/24		Game 9	
	22) 64: 20/14 15/11 64:		Slattery : 8 Fetterlein : 10	
	23) 21: 11/9 9/8 52: 4/2			



01) 36: 24/18 13/10 51: 13/8 8/7*	25) 21: 21/19* 19/18 65:	32: 25/23 24/21
02) 22: 25/23 24/22 22/20 20/18*	26) 21: 18/16 16/15 44:	07) 43: 6/2* 13/10 53: 25/20 8/5
51: 25/20 8/7*	27) 55: 21/16 15/10 11/6 10/5	08) 61: 8/2 6/5* 61: 25/24 13/7
03) Doubles to 2 Takes	41: 25/24 5/1	09) 52: 10/5 10/8 42: 13/9 9/7
04) 32: 25/23 8/5* 61: 25/24 13/7	28) 32: 16/13 13/11	10) 51: 13/8 13/12* 32: 25/22 7/5
05) 54: 10/5 13/9 21: 13/11 24/23	65: 24/18 18/13	11) 62: 12/6 8/6 52: 7/2 24/22
06) 22: 23/21(2) 6/4(2)	29) 31: 11/8 3/2 54: 13/8 8/4	12) 31: 8/5 6/5
62: 24/18 18/16*	30) 11: 8/7 7/6 6/5 5/4 42: 5/1 3/1	66: 22/16(2) 16/10(2)
07) 63: 25/22 8/2*	31) 61: 6/0 4/3 42: 4/2	13) 11: 8/7(3) 6/5 54: 21/16 21/17
21: 25/23* 24/23	32) 23: 3/0 2/0 51: 2/1	14) 21: 6/4 5/4 52: 24/22 22/17
08) 44: 25/21 13/9* 9/5 8/4	33) 63: 6/0 6/3 63: 24/18 18/15	15) 51: 7/2 5/4 51: 6/1 2/1
16: 25/24 24/18	34) 55: 5/0(3) 4/0	16) 65: 7/1 6/1 52: 17/12 12/10
09) 62: 22/16 16/14*	43: 24/21* 21/17	17) 51: 6/1 2/1 51: 10/5 16/15
42: 25/23 6/2	35) 51: 25/20 20/19	18) 65: 21/16 16/10*
10) 63: 13/7* 14/11	44: 24/20 15/11 11/7 7/3	65: 25/19 19/14
51: 25/24 23/18*	36) 43: 19/15 15/12	19) 52: 21/16 10/8* 52:
11) 21: 25/23* 11/10	43: 17/13* 13/10	20) 11: 8/7 7/6(2) 5/4 65:
14: 25/24 18/14	37) 52: 25/20 20/18 52: 10/5 5/3	21) 43: 16/12 12/9
12) 52: 21/16 13/11*	38) 53: 18/13 13/10	33: 25/22 14/11 10/7 7/4
22: 25/23 13/11 11/9* 9/7	66: 20/14 14/8 8/2 3/0	22) 22: 9/7 7/5 5/3* 3/1
13) 42: 25/21 23/21	39) 66: 10/4 4/0 3/0(2)	53: 25/22 11/6
41: 23/22 22/18	66: 3/0(4)	23) 54: 6/1 6/2 43: 8/4 5/2
14) 11: 10/9 9/8 8/7* 7/6	40) 63: 3/0 2/0	24) 44: 5/1(2) 4/0(2) 61: 8/2 6/5
61: 25/24 24/18	Wins 2 points	25) 61: 4/0 1/0
15) 31: 6/3 4/3 42: 18/14* 13/11		33: 22/19 19/16 16/13 13/10
16) 51: 25/20 21/20	Game 10	26) 42: 4/0 2/0 22: 10/8(2) 8/6(2)
54: 23/18 11/7	Slattery : 10 Fetterlein : 10	27) 22: 2/0(2) 1/0(2) 11: 2/1 1/0(3)
17) 42: 6/2* 5/3 41: 25/24 18/14	01) 25: 13/8 13/11 54: 13/8 13/9	28) 53: 1/0(2)
18) 51: 21/16 3/2 42: 7/3 3/1	02) 53: 24/21 21/16*	Wins 1 point and the match
19) 62: 20/14 16/14	65: 25/20 20/14*	<i>This match is available on the</i>
55: 14/9(2) 7/2 6/1	03) 63: 25/22 22/16 53: 8/3 6/3	<i>PDF version of Bibafax CD in</i>
20) 54: 20/15 15/11 43: 9/5 9/6	04) 65: 16/10 16/11*	<i>Snowie html & .mat files and as a</i>
21) 43: 14/10 14/11 31: 6/3 6/5	64: 25/21 21/15*	<i>JellyFish .mat file. NB: the Snowie</i>
22) 63: 11/5 5/2 54: 7/2 7/3	05) 41: 25/21 11/10*	<i>html files do not need Snowie to be</i>
23) 31: 10/7 7/6 43: 6/2 6/3	42: 25/21 6/4*	<i>viewed on your PC.</i>
24) 21: 6/4 4/3 52: 8/3 8/6	06) 43: 25/21* 24/21	

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The CD also features Snowie html & .mat and JellyFish .mat files of matches within all issues and Acrobat Reader if required

NB: Snowie html files can be read without Snowie (special folder included) but the .mat files will need both bots.



Backgammon Races

Explained by Chris Bray

The understanding of backgammon races has improved significantly in the last twenty years. Initially it was enough to do a pip count and apply the following formula:

Let the leader's pipcount be L .
Let the trailer's pipcount be T

If T is 8% greater than L then the Leader should double.

If T is 9% greater than L then the Leader should redouble.

If T is 12% greater than L then the Trailer should pass the double or redouble.

This formula whilst very basic still works well for long races and is a good guide.

The problem is that there are other factors such as distribution, number of men etc. that need to be taken into account. To this end Edward O. Thorp (author of the blackjack book "Beat the Dealer") derived a more accurate formula. His formula goes as follows:

Compute the leader's adjusted pipcount, L , as follows:

1. The leader's pip count.
2. Add two for each of the leader's remaining men.
3. Plus one for each man on the 1 point.
4. Minus one for each point covered in the home board.
5. Plus 10% of the total so far, if that total is greater than 30.

Compute the trailer's adjusted pipcount, T , by following steps 1-4 but omitting step 5.

If T is greater than or equal to $L-2$, the leader should double.

If T is greater than or equal to $L-1$, the leader should redouble.

If T is greater than $L+2$, the trailer should pass.

Thorp's formula works well for many late game bearoffs but still fails to accurately assess some positions. This is because it doesn't make sufficient allowance for gaps or stacks.



Edward O. Thorp

Jeff Ward, a backgammon theoretician of the 1980's, improved on Thorp's formula to create Ward's formula, the one used by the majority of the top players. Ward's formula goes as follows:

Compute the leader's adjusted pipcount, L , as follows:

1. The leader's pip count.
2. Add two for each additional man (over the number of men that the trailer has)
3. Plus two for each man over two on the 1 point

4. Plus one for each man over two on the 2 point.
5. Plus $\frac{1}{2}$ for each man outside the home board.

Gaps (points with no men on) are treated subjectively. Gaps that can be filled by outfield men or internal gaps that will be filled easily are not penalised. For example an empty 3-point when there are lots of men on the 6-point, because 3's will fill the gap. Gaps are penalised by subtracting one for each gap from the trailer's (i.e. the opponent's) adjusted pipcount.

Compute the trailer's adjusted count, T , in exactly the same way.

If T is greater than or equal to $L-2$, the leader should double.

If T is greater than or equal to $L-1$, the leader should redouble.

If T is greater than $L+2$, the trailer should pass if the pipcounts average 50 or less.

If T is greater than $L+3$, the trailer should pass if the pipcounts average 75 or less.

If T is greater than $L+4$, the trailer should pass if the pipcounts average 100 or less.

This is the most accurate of the available formulae but undoubtedly someone will refine it in due course. For all practical purposes using the Ward formula will be as accurate as you need in 99% of races.

The picture of Edward O. Thorp is from the University of York:

www.york.ac.uk/depts/maths/

Portraits of Statisticians and is reproduced here with thanks to Peter M Lee.

Read Chris Bray's column every Saturday in the Independent.

Cotswold Fireside Tournament

Martin Hemming - Director

Tony Lee takes inaugural Cotswold Title

Seventeen players gathered at Blockley in the green hills of Gloucestershire at the end of February for the inaugural Cotswold Fireside Tournament. The name was chosen with visions of hoary frosts outside and convivial backgammon and glasses of mulled wine in front of blazing log fires. What we got was pouring rain followed by a springlike-day on Sunday when we could have played outside. Ah well!

The format – best of three 7-point matches – was one not often played in the UK. It's supposed to favour the stronger players, who are thought to be advantaged by the high number of match-score related cube decisions compared with a single longer match. The field included BIBA high-rankers Julain Fetterlein, John Clark, Tony Lee and Dod Davies, and the last two won through to Sunday's final, although Tony could easily have gone out at the first hurdle when Elliot Smart took him right to DMP in the deciding match of three. Apart from Elliot, Tony had to get past Brian Busfield and Simonetta Barrone, while Dod overcame John Hurst, John Clark and Paul Statter in the semi-finals. Paul's is a name not many will have heard of before. He was making his live tournament debut, but on this performance we might be hearing more of him.

Tony Lee emerged as the first Cotswold Champion after having

at one stage been a match down in the final and 2-4 down in the second. Tony must be one of the best players never to have won a BIBA title. He's reached many semi-finals over the years, including at this year's At-A-Glance British Open, so this was a popular win. After a slow start the final series featured some cracking backgammon, with both players Snowie-rated World Class in the second and third matches of the three. The final was recorded and can be browsed in its entirety by GammonVillage members at www.gammonvillage.com.



**Fireside Champion
Tony Lee**

In the progressive consolation (single 11-point matches) John Hurst took the money after victories over Liz Barker, John Broomfield, Brian Busfield, Roland Herrera and Julian Fetterlein in the final, while Julian overcame Elliot

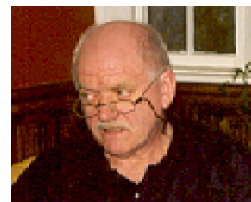


Smart, John Clark and Rosey Bensley to get there. Julian's semi-final match with Rosey couldn't have been closer. At double match point the result hung on whether Rosey could roll a double to win. John Clark snatched Julian's offer to back the double at odds of 9/2. It was a wise hedge but Clarky collected after Rosey's roll failed to joker Julian out of the final.



**Consolation Winner
John Hurst**

Saturday night featured an experimental pot limit Texas Hold'em poker tournament, which I decided to run this after noticing the high level of interest (and success) in the poker by backgammon players at the 6th Mind Sports Olympiad in Loughborough last year. Most of the backgammon players joined in what turned out to be a lively competition where the lead changed hands many times, but 1st prize went to Terry Fix, who had come specially for the poker.



Terry Fix

The venue, the Crown Inn Hotel in Blockley, near Moreton-in-Marsh, lived up to its reputation for good food and the character of its rooms and bar areas. All agreed the that it



**Want to play Backgammon
for real money?**

was a pleasure to play backgammon in a beautiful village setting, and I'm delighted to announce that the 2nd Cotswold Fireside Tournament will take place at the same venue on the weekend of 30 January to 1 February 2004. For full details please visit the Biba website Calendar on www.backgammon-biba.co.uk

Cotswold Fireside Championship

1 st	Tony Lee
2 nd	Dod Davies
3/4	Paul Statter
3/4	Simonetta Barrone

Consolation

1 st	John Hurst
2 nd	Julian Fetterlein
3/4	Roland Herrera
3/4	Rosey Bensley

Poker Champion

1 st	Terry Fix
2 nd	Martin Hemming
3 rd	Liz Barker

Running a Club Evening Tournament

Rodney Lighton explains

A club tournament held over one evening has three main aims:

- to produce a winner and runner-up for prize/trophy purposes
- to provide a reasonable guaranteed amount of backgammon for everyone
- to fit into the time available

In addition it is sociable to play a fair number of different opponents during the evening.

A knock-out tournament satisfies the first and third aims but only works well with a power of two entrants, whereas a Swiss Tournament is difficult to run and may necessitate some messy tie breaks to produce a winner.

After years of trying various formats the Liverpool club has come up with a good system. I will describe their format, then discuss various problems and possible solutions. i.e. an odd number of players, tie breaks and shortening the tournament.

At the Liverpool club the attendance is generally between eight and sixteen players. The players are each allocated a number randomly (a pack of playing cards is useful for this) and then play six 3-point matches against a set of opponents determined by a schedule for the appropriate number of players. At the end of this phase either the leading two or four players then play a knock out competition of 3-point matches for the prize fund and trophy. This means that everyone gets to play at least six matches. Those who have been unlucky can go home or play chouettes, while those who have played well finish the tournament.

Working out the schedule for the first phase is fairly simple, but unnecessary since I have a complete set of schedules for seven to twenty players which are available by e-mail. (see end of article)

The Liverpool club plays its tournament on a Friday evening and it often doesn't finish until 1 a.m. Obviously this is unsuitable for most clubs, especially if they run

on a mid-week evening. The number of qualifying rounds can be shortened to five (or even four). Given that a 3-point match should take a maximum of 30 minutes, five qualifying rounds followed by one or two rounds of knockout should fit into a typical club evening of 8p.m. to 11.30p.m.

The rules for deciding who has qualified for the knock out phase are

- The players with the most number of matches won
- If tied for number of matches, then points for/against
- Further ties can be split by results of individual matches, lottery, or points scored.

If an odd number of players turns up then there are some problems. Liverpool plays a seventh round, which pairs up all the players who have sat out during a previous round. This, however, takes extra time and isn't suitable for a five round qualifying. For a five round qualifying there are two possible solutions. The simplest is to award a player who has sat out half a match and a 1-0 score for that match. The other, which is really suitable only for fifteen players or more is to draw one match each round to be between three players who play 1-point matches amongst each other for half a match*. For example 1 plays 2, 1 plays 3 and 2 plays 3, each being a 1-point match. If the first player wins in each case then player 1 would score 1 match win and a 2-0 points score, while player 2 would score ½ match win and a 1-1 points score, while player 3 would score 0 match wins and a 0-2 points score. For a fif-



Now you can do it @....

teen player, five round tournament it is possible to devise a balanced schedule in which each player plays four 3-point matches and two 1-point matches.

Look at the example of a schedule for a ten player, five round tournament and part of the score sheet for entering the results of a qualifying tournament (partially filled in as an example, player 1 has played two 1-point matches in round 2, winning the first and losing the second). Note that it is advisable to always draw the first round as player 1 v player 2, player 3 v player 4 etc. This means that if another player turns up just after the tournament has started it is easy to change to the next higher number of players, without restarting games.

I have a set of schedules available in word format by e-mail on request for anyone who is interested. My e-mail address is lighton@btinternet.com

Acknowledgements – thanks to the members of the Liverpool Club who devised this format, before I started playing tournament backgammon.

(*) Using this 3-player format could also be suitable for a 9-point (or 11-point) Swiss tournament with an odd number of entrants where the three players currently with the lowest score (who haven't already played in a three way tie) would play two 3-point matches for ½ a match point each.

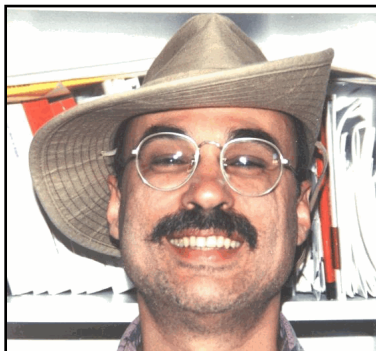
Ten Player Qualifying (3 points)					
Round 1	1 v 2	3 v 4	5 v 6	7 v 8	9 v 10
Round 2	1 v 3	2 v 5	4 v 7	6 v 9	8 v 10
Round 3	1 v 5	2 v 9	3 v 7	4 v 10	6 v 8
Round 4	1 v 7	2 v 8	3 v 10	4 v 6	5 v 9
Round 5	1 v 9	2 v 4	3 v 6	5 v 8	7 v 10

Five Round Tournament - Qualifier's Table								
Name	John		Petra					
Round	Match Score	Points	Match Score	Points	Match Score	Points	Match Score	Points
1	1	3-1	0	1-3				
2	0.5 0	1-0 0.1	1	3-2				
3	1	3-2						
4	0	0-3						
5	1	3-0						
Total	3.5	10-7						
+/-	+3							

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event.

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you want!





Gammon From The Asylum

*In Which George and Tony Get A Life,
The Approaches the Cube, and
Knightie Realizes a Mistake and Collapses*

By Ric Gerace and Scooter
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 rents an apartment in his mother's house (it's an Italian thing, he says, and the rent's cheap, the food's really good, and he can't afford anything else anyway) on Cape Cod. From here he travels the world via the Internet and publishes his own web site at www.ricgerace.com aka *Papa Ric's Home for the Terminally Bewildered*. In his own words, it is "*the personal website of a warm, cuddly, curmudgeonly, cranky political liberal, absolute Atheist, not-so-bad writer who is owned by thirteen cats on Cape Cod.*" I urge you to take a peek. . . if you dare! MC

The story continues . . .

Unfortunately The and I were unable to continue our initial cube discussion. A major disturbance erupted when the Bridge players attacked the Poker room in an attempt to retrieve their cards, stolen by the Poker players three nights before. The Backgammonites, whose allegiances split between the two groups, were drawn in. A great row ensued and a good time was had by all.

Several nights later I entered the game room and was met by a loud cheer and shouts of congratulations. In short order I was hoisted on the shoulders of several people and carried about the room to the sounds of huzzahs and merriment. After ten or fifteen minutes of raucous behavior, the crowd deposited me on a dais in the corner and handed me a microphone.

After a few moments of cheering they hushed.

"Thank you, thank you, fellow Backgammonites," I began.

Knowing that the attention span of this crowd could be measured in seconds, I wanted to keep the speech brief. "Once again The Asylum is safe for ordinary, decent, honest mental degenerates. We had nothing to lose but our George and Tony, and thank God we finally lost them." More cheers. "Now let the backgammon begin."

Merlin the Magician, who doubled as The Asylum's audio-video wizard, whispered in my ear.

"Ah, yes. I forgot. We have cake! For everyone!" A large layer cake, almost two meters tall, stood in the middle of the room. I strode over to it and was just about to plunge in a very large plastic knife when the top flew off and out leaped Miranda, wearing...



very... little. She did me proud (but that was later).

After half an hour of eating cake and commenting on Miranda's attributes, the crowd dispersed to the backgammon tables. Miranda whispered to me, "Good plan, Knightie, good plan!" She was wearing Shalimar. My knees got all wobbly for a second or two. "See you later, babe," she said. She patted my nether region and swiveled across the room.

My plan to give George a bunch of magic chequers he could use to bomb the Chess players had worked marvelously. He ran into their wing, flinging chequers left and right, screaming about heathens playing Terror Chess and how God told him, over cornflakes in the White House, to bomb all things Chess in the entire Asylum.

Naturally the chequers, the finest Crisloid could produce, didn't explode. The Chess players rose up and pummeled George mercilessly, then rampaged over to Tony's room and grabbed him up too,

because the Chess players, great analysts that they are, suspected a grand conspiracy of stupidity. The crowd stripped off the men's clothes and tossed both of them, naked, out a second story window.

Staff later found the two men on a pile of rocks, baying at the full moon. Each man received a new strait jacket and a private room in the basement. Adjoining, of course. Tony coos at George, and George swears at Bill Clinton, claiming everything was his fault and that he, George the Second, was only doing what God and Rummy told him to do.

George's Daddy tried to buy his son's way out, but Daddy was himself locked in a wing full of evangelizing atheists who had been stripped of their American citizenship because they refused to accept John Ashcroft as their One True God.

Cruelest of all, George, Tony, and Daddy had their backgammon privileges suspended indefinitely.

Now that I had put paid to George's and Tony's axis of evil, The Asylum became a much quieter, more peaceful place. Boring, almost, but that was a condition that could not long obtain. In the meantime, backgammon continued, as did The's lessons. I had promised her, before George had tried to take over The Asylum, to discuss the doubling cube with her.

"Well. Well. Let's get to it. Let's get to it," she said this evening. She was dressed in a sweatshirt and tight jeans. I figured my mental abilities would be okay as long as she didn't stand up.

"Why are you saying everything twice?"

"You said we'd be doubling to night. You said--"

I put up a hand to stop her. "Got it. Got it. I meant that you would learn something about the doubling cube tonight."

"That's that thing with the numbers on it," she said, picking it up and turning it round and round.



"Yes, precisely. The Cube."

"Yeah, the thing you guys are always having some kind of mystical organism over."

"Organism?"

"Yeah, yeah, like when you're in bed and--"

"Never mind, never mind."

"You did it twice!" she said, grinning.

I considered arranging for an exorcism to be performed on her organism. However...

"Alright, The. Can we possibly get serious? Just for a minute or two?"

She shrugged, almost as well as Miranda. "Okay, Knightie. Listen, you don't want me to call you sir, do you?"

"This," I said, taking it firmly from her hand, "is the cube."

"Okay, okay, I'll be good for a while."

"Hmmmph. Now, with your degree in nuclear physics from M.I.T., you must have noticed the numbers on the cube increase in a

geometric procession, from two to sixty four, right?"

"University of Chicago, actually. Yes. Two, four, eight, sixteen. Yada yada."

"Good. Very acute."

"I am, aren't I?" she said, primping.

I think I groaned, but it may have only been an inward groan. Perhaps it was gas.

"Yes, dear. Now then, you've seen people use the cube here. What do you think they're doing?"

"Aggravating the hell out of each other?"

"Besides that?"

"They're messing with the score somehow?"

"Good. I appreciate your use of precise technical terminology."

She smiled coyly and started to take off her sweatshirt.

"Please don't do that."

"Then be nice."

More gas.

"Okay, here's the nitty gritty. When you think you've got a good advantage, you offer the cube to your opponent, doubling the stakes."

"I'm a vegetarian. But yeah, okay."

"So now if he takes the cube, you're playing the game for twice as much."

"That's it? That's the whole magilla?" She got up to go. "Gotta

go see Guido about an organism.”

“No that is not it, and Guido left earlier on a mission.”

She sat down heavily. “Aw, geez, where’d you send him this time?”

“Siberia.”

“No, really. Where’d you send him?”

“Really. Siberia. Some backgammonites were only recently released from what’s left of the Gulag. They have some interesting documents on KGB suppression of arcane backgammon lore during the Soviet Union’s heyday. It’s quite interesting. You see...”

She held up a hand. Nicely manicured, but I didn’t care for the blue nail polish.

“Nope, don’t tell me. I’ll just fall asleep. When is Guido coming back?”

“I don’t know exactly. Couple of weeks maybe.”

She sat silently for several minutes. I did not want to imagine what was going through her mind. A nice Kevlar suit might be in order, I thought. Perhaps Miranda could get me one on her next trip off island. Perhaps tailored in Hong Kong. Dark blue, with a fine pinstripe. Double thickness.

“Okay. Get on with it, Knightie. Sir.”

“He didn’t tell you?”

“Neither one of his faces said a word.”

“Well, you may want to speak harshly to them when they return.”

She clapped her hands. “Oh, good idea,” she said smiling. “Because then we can make up after!”

“Yes. Hmmpph. Can we do this?” I said, holding up the cube.

“Full charge ahead, matey. Damn the speed. Up the torpedoes.”

“I suppose you have a doctorate in American History, too?”

“Louisiana State. I’m smart, Knightie, I’m smart.”

“Okay. So, now you’ve given your opponent the cube.”

“You mean I just hand my weapon to my enemy? Hardly makes sense. Can I hmmmph now?”

“Certainly.”

“Hmmmph.”

“Ready?”

“Yes, thank you.”

“Not only have you handed the weapon to the enemy, he gets to keep it, and only he can use it next.”

“You mean I’m without a double from then on?”

“Unless he gives it back to you.”

“Why would he do that?”

“Because he thinks he’s better than you.”

“Bah. I’ll see that he doesn’t make that mistake again!” She made a charming little fist and held it up in my face.

I patted her hand and pushed it away gently. “Perhaps some valium...”

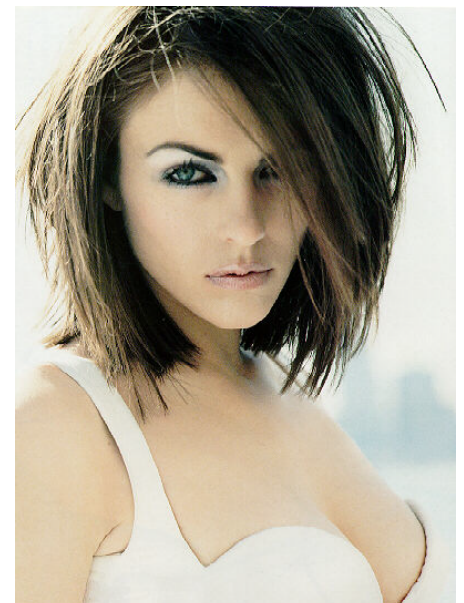
She grinned.

“I meant his position on the board has improved to the point where he feels he has a good advantage over your position.”

“Did I tell you about this position that Guido and I found?”

“Please don’t.”

She cocked her head and winked at me. “Okay, but I told Miranda already.”



I had a feeling I was about to be surprised, or ambushed, on my next rendezvous with Miranda. Actually an exciting thought. There was that time outside The Asylum wall... well, never mind.

“The cube?” she said.

If ever there was a wench in the works...

“Okay, so he redoubles you. Now you’re at four times the original stake, you own the cube, and only you can double next.”

She pondered that for a few minutes.

“When you’re done pondering...”

I said.

“Okay. I got it. Whoever owns it is the only one who can double.”

“Right. Except at the start of the game, when the cube is in the middle.”

“Well, suppose I just grab it at the start.”

“Well, that’s not how it’s done, The.”

“Oh, pish. I can beat anybody here with one hand tied behind my back.”

“Of course you can, The. Nobody doubts that.” I had in mind a Cyclopean bargain, since she stood barely a meter and a half and weighed maybe five stone.

“Hey, I read the Odyssey. None of that Noman stuff, okay? I’m a kung-fu double black mocha belt. Beat anybody here.”

“I believe you, The.” I almost did. Well, maybe more than almost. I’d seen bruises on Guido. “Okay. The rule is that you can’t just grab the cube when the game starts. Unless you want to double after the first move.” Alice in Wonderland had wandered over and was watching us. “Hello, Al,” I said. He nodded.

“But who would do that?”

“That’s a little advanced for you right now.”

Alice chimed in. “Oh, listen sweetie, don’t pay any attention to him. I always take six impossible cubes before breakfast every morning.” He stopped, then counted on his fingers. “Actually that’s thirty-six separate cube fac-

es, but the permutations, the permutations.” He sighed and wandered away, muttering something about the Queen and practicing a little Queen wave as he walked.

Joe Stalin snickered as Alice walked by him. “The, you want it, you take it, you hear me. You play with capitalist pig, you got to play rough.” He lit his pipe and twinkled at me.

I nodded and tried not to roll my eyes about in my head. That always made me dizzy.

The said, “See. From an expert, no less.”

“Perhaps you’d care to take lessons from him?”

“Hmmm. When did you say Guido would be back?”

“The!”

“Kidding!”

I wasn’t so sure. “Alright, a little bit more cube lore.”

“Lore away.”

I placed a red chequer on The’s six point and a black chequer on my one point. “If red is on roll, would he double? Would black take?”

She looked at it for several minutes, finally looking up at me and shrugging helplessly.

“Are you alright? You’re not speaking.”

“I’m shrugging helplessly. Do I have to spell it out for you?”

“Sorry. Okay, there are twenty-seven combinations on the dice that take the red chequer off the

board, and nine that take the black one off. Seventy-five percent for red and twenty-five percent for black. Very important.”

“Umm, so? And how do you know that? And what’s the point?”

I suddenly realized that there was a gaping hole in The’s backgammon education. We had never talked about the probabilities of a dice roll. I rolled my eyes at my stupidity and had to lie down until the dizzy spell passed.

“Sir, sir, what’s wrong?” I heard The saying. I think there was a genuine note of concern in her voice.

Then I heard Ziggy Freud’s voice close to my ear. “Ztop dis nonsense. Remember your position.”

The said, “Hey, I tried to talk to him about positions, but he don’t wanna listen. Is he alright?”

Ziggy slapped me. “You’re disgracing your class! Get up. I want to know what you are dreamink.”

Stalin picked him up and carried him away, muttering about capitalist nightmares. Ziggy said to him, “Joe, Joseph, what did your mudder do to you?”

When I was finally upright in the chair again, I told The that I had sorely neglected an aspect of her education.

“Oh, don’t worry, I got a book.”

“Oh. Excellent. Who did you get? Magriel? Robertie?”

“Don’t know those guys. No, I got Comfort.”

I dug in my memory, but could not recall an expert named Comfort. I

shrugged helplessly.

“Oh, Knightie, you know, The Joy of Sex. Jeez, sir.”

“Wrong aspect, The. I meant a backgammon aspect.”

“Jellied backgammon? I don’t understand.”

I explained that I hadn’t instructed her in the probabilities of dice rolls.

She thought a moment.

“Well,” she said, “what’s the probability Guido gets back before I play with Stalin?”

I shrugged helplessly. “How many points?”

“Two,” she said, throwing her shoulders back and once more looking remarkably like the love of my fantasy life, Liz Hurley.



“Oy,” I said. “Tomorrow we’ll talk probability.”

(...to be continued)

Swiss 2004 : Consolation Format

It has been apparent for sometime now that a lot of players aren't fully happy with the Swiss format as it stands at the moment. Some players who lose the 1st and/or 2nd Rounds feel that it isn't worth continuing and lose heart. Although they play on (as expected of them) they aren't fully committed to it. To combat this I have devised the **Consolation Swiss Format**.

It is quite simply two competitions in one. There is the **Main** which everyone starts in, and then there is the **Consolation** for those players that have lost as above and *choose* to enter a separate Swiss competition. I use the word *choose* because entry into the Consolation isn't mandatory (at least not at the moment) - any player can continue in the Main regardless of the outcome from the first two rounds if they wish. It is worth bearing in mind that for the majority of Swiss formats, 1st and 2nd places are normally from those players that have won 3-3 on the Saturday.

Firstly I'll deal with the **Main**: Players that decide to stay in the Main at Round 3 will be placed into a wholly separate section and will play within this section only. If an odd number decide to remain in the Main then a *volunteer* from the rest of the players will be sought to join them. If no-one volunteers then a random draw from those with 1 win will decide the even player. From this section will emerge the Main winner, runner-up, etc.

The Main Swiss, except for the above differences, will remain unchanged: Wins and sum of opponents' wins to decide position (*). In the event of a tie for 1st or 2nd place there will be a 3 point match

to decide the eventual position (and pool payout if affected).

The *initial* prize pools will be deemed **Main Only** and will be paid out within the Main section. If one or none of the pool entrants are not within this section then the pool(s) affected will be paid out in the Consolation section relative to 1st and/or 2nd position in the Main pool entry. Likewise, any Saturday *Group Auction* purchases are **Main Only** and paid out within the Main section. The Sunday *Player Auction* remains as before with those on 3-3 being auctioned and paid out within these players, irrespective of their eventual position in the Main competition.

Now to the **Consolation**:

Any player not continuing in the Main is entered into a new, Swiss competition wherein their first two match wins (1 or 0) are reset to zero (*) and they continue playing another 4 x 11 point matches.

The Consolation Swiss, except for the above differences, will remain unchanged except that only wins and sum of opponents' wins to decide position will be counted from the Consolation section. In the event of a tie for 1st or 2nd place, one of two tie-breaks will be applied.

- i If the tied players have met within the Consolation, the player that won will be judged the winner. If this fails then . .
- ii A comparison will be made on players met (Main and Consolation) and, where both players have met the same player, the tied player who won will be deemed 1 point ahead of their rival. If, after this comparison the tied players remain tied, they will be judged joint 1st.

Subject to demand there will be a £5 and £10 Consolation pool.

Irrespective of what section a player is in, the allocation of *Grand Prix* points will be unaffected, based upon total wins within the weekend's competition(s). Similarly, the 1000-To-1 will be based upon both sections.

Ranking points remain as usual, based upon wins and losses within both sections.

(*) For *Main positional purposes only* **all** wins, both within the Main and Consolation are counted for the sum of opponents' wins.

* * * * *

The above proposal has been on the Biba web site for some time now and here are a few comments taken via emails:

Kevin Carter: I think your proposed changes for Biba Swiss weekends is a good step and should work better.

On a personal note, I have always enjoyed your Swiss events - even the old format - more than the Knock-out format, with Consolation, Last Chance, Suicide, etc. I know a lot of other people share this view, not least because they

think one entry fee to all events is fairer than having to pay more for each progressively lower level.

MC: The 'entry fees' you mention are in fact for the pools and not to play in the event. All tournaments cost the same to enter, £15 Registration.

Bob Young: Presumably no problems finding opponents for those that choose to stay in the Swiss and have lost their first or both matches on the Saturday? Can they be assured of having opposition of similar match results thus far in the comp?

MC: Might be a little difficult, but I am expecting most players to opt out and go for the Consolation. I might even consider making it mandatory - depending upon feedback from members.

Rodney Lighton: Your proposal for a Consolation Swiss sounds eminently sensible. I would go ahead with it and find out the teething problems as you go along.

MC: I agree!

Ron Havenhand: As a "rookie", my main aim in coming to the Biba Swiss events is to gain experience - I have no expectations of prizes (despite my Consolation fluke at the Scottish Open KO!).

So, I have been satisfied to play all my matches with the aim of gaining experience and improving my performance (so far 2 out of 6 is my best result and I have never won a Saturday match!). So, still plenty to aim for!

Guess, therefore, that I will still get my six matches in the new format, I can still aim to improve my performance and the prospect of getting something out of a Consolation event is a bonus.

So, yes, I like the proposal.

MC: I'm pleased Ron sees the potential for improvement within either format and that he highlights the bonus that the Consolation format offers.

Steffen Nowak: Your proposal sounds interesting and I'd be happy to play under those rules (not that I lost heart when loosing in the early rounds before!).

MC: So far no real opposition. It does seem very likely that the new format will be used in one form or another in 2004. In the meantime, I'd like to hear more comments from members - especially those of you that have ceased playing in Swiss formats.

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Word Search 03

Compiled by Michael Crane

G	J	U	N	Y	G	T	E	C	P	A	H	K	N	L	U	Y	L	N	E	I	C	X	P	L	G	B	G	O	S
O	E	E	F	A	E	A	Y	V	H	N	B	S	X	R	O	L	L	I	N	G	U	P	B	E	A	S	T	N	X
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a beaters motion
a nice Mr Leach
bar his cry
big bent knives
bomb player
crook been in scam
cylinder to tc
damn hair so insane
deprive stack
enjoy alex

enlarge if meek
gone senile still
grim motion
had her closer
has a win
i did vast rant
infernal crab nerd
ink recipe
lame balls up
leech rot me brain

manages her hell
me king wally
nasty till now
odd navy liar
prize has a link
pull of drama
rain rat
ran mutants
rolling up beast
rubs green bands

sorely seen by
stack so mad
stoic mrs
tear nanny
that level set
the sly trojan
Tot hand
warm brat in kill
warrented jeans
zero anal kiss

OK, this'll test you! Not only must you find the anagrammed names above, but you also have to unravel them! The first correct solution opened 1st September 2003 will win free registration for all 12 Biba tournaments in 2004 - a prize worth £180. Not bad eh? Send your solution (if you've got what it takes!) to the usual addresses - you know where.

Mark Heidenfeld from Dublin writes: Thanks for the new edition of Bibafax. It's a very enjoyable read. As a new member, I wanted to get used to some of the names as quickly as possible. From the full ranking list on your web site, I generated a complete alphabetical member list and discovered a few things. Maybe there are some members with the same name, but also possibly an error.

Name	Rank	MC
Barker, David	1573	i
Barker, David	1523	i
Barker, David	1518	ii
Edwards, Paul	1543	ii
Edwards, Paul	1400	ii
Taylor, Paul	1559	ii
Taylor, Paul	1443	ii

No surname: Theo, Bridget and Alexis.

The names are: Theo prefers a single name; Bridget is the Baroness of Culcreuch, the wife of Hercules; and Alexis is now Alexis Hogg after her marriage to Al.

Thanks for pointing out the duplications, here's the explanation:
i Same member.
ii They are all different members.

Andrew Sarjeant asks: Could you please explain to me how I got less *Grand Prix* points than Julian Fetterlein in the County Cups Trophy? I got the same number of wins as him (6), got the same number of points on countback and beat him in a playoff to come second (although I am sure that the playoff doesn't count towards the *Grand Prix*). Please can you explain how you have calculated the points?

The reason is explained on Page 24, Bibafax 62, If you win 5/5 you get 10.2, if you win 5/6 (i.e. you

Letters

lose in any round except round 6) then you get 7.1. This is done to make consecutive wins in Swiss the same as losing in the Final of a 6 round knockout.

Following a telephone call from John Broomfield, he emails: Regarding Bibafax 64. Page 4, Game 1, Move 41 for Peter. He takes two checkers off and Rosey concedes! If Peter rolls consecutive 1s she can win by rolling large doubles.

I hadn't noticed the mathematical chances of Black winning if White rolled consecutive 1s. I did not personally record the match - it is done via video; but Rosey decided to concede. John continues with another example.

Page 11, Game 10. Once again, Rosey seemingly concedes too soon – a win was still possible. In your narrative, you do not make any comment in respect of the two games where you show her conceding prematurely.

She did concede the match. I watched it and pointed out to her, after conceding, that it was mathematically possible to win but she didn't think it realistic, needing four doubles to do it. According to others, the previous concession was with her knowledge. Finally John says.

Page 4, Move 12 for white. Surely he moves a double four **four** times – not three?

Typo!

Regular contributor, **Cedric Lytton** writes: Thank you very much for publishing *Dorothy's Opening* last time. Dorothy, and the friends here to whom I have shown it, were tickled pink. Just one small

unimportant typo: column 2, line 1, 'and' should be 'but'. Another, equally obvious, on page 31, column 3, line 10, '20/18' should be '24/18'.

By the way, does Roy really need to give the equity loss (or gain) twice every time? That said, a great article.

*The **bold** instances of the equities are down to me, the references within the text is Roy's.*

There were other mistakes in the Bibafax:

Page 11: The Rating should be Beginner - Beginner. The one shown is 'left over' from the original and for some reason wasn't replaced during cut & paste. Page 32, Game 9, Position 4: This is a missed double analysis and the move was wrongly shown as 42 when it should have been 61 - which is evident from the 11/5 6/5 moved.

I have toyed with the idea of letting John proof-read for me, but then I thought, why spoil his fun? He likes dissecting the Bibafax and telling me where I'm going wrong!

Ray Kershaw emails in to say: Excellent article by Roy Hollands on the Bennet v Clark match. I learned a lot from it. If the grandmasters make so many errors, I dread to think how bad the rest of us are.

On the same subject Paul Money writing on GammonVillage says: Roy argues that these players lack class, because they got an advanced mark here. He suggests that this is because they are unwilling to take necessary risks. However the positions that he has chosen don't support this view. Some of the errors are indeed too

careful, but at least as many are too risky and as many again are just errors of judgement, neither one nor the other.

Taking Snowie ratings for a single match is also not a good guide. If the majority of the games are holding games or races, you will see few mistakes and a high rating. Where there are a number of difficult positional struggles, an advanced rating can be very good indeed. If these positions are anything to go by, this was a very tough match to play. It is also very misleading to take Snowie's best evaluation as definitive.

Position 2, for example, may be no double technically speaking, but how can a double be wrong when it gets a pass? It only takes an 8% chance of a pass to make it correct here. It is entirely possible that John has seen Peter pass something like this before, or he may be testing the water, to see how Peter reacts to an early double with a whiff of gammon to it. If he gets a confident take, then for a small price, he has gained a useful piece of information. When he gets a pass, bingo! This is quite a good double.

Position 4 is an example of Snowie over rating a 22pt anchor game, as it usually does. A rollout demonstrates that this is a clear pass.

Many of the checker play evaluations can't be relied upon. Game 5, move 12 is a good example. Peter chooses the aggressive hit, 13/10*, 8/2, while Snowie prefers the quieter 8/2, 7/4, an extremely difficult play to find over the board. A long cubeless rollout shows these plays to be essentially equal, with 13/10*, 13/7 not far behind.

Both John and Peter are fine players, who would have an excellent chance in the Monte Carlo buntfight. To judge them on the evidence of one match, full of tough plays is very unfair, particularly if you don't choose to use the rollout feature when you do your analysis.

I await a reply from Roy . . . if he's got enough time to answer Paul's epistle!

Lincoln member, Darryl Kirk emails: The Bibafax PDF file is great and I love the Snowie games. Thanks for sending it through. Mind you, I still love having the paper copy to read in bed though.

Mrs. Kirk must be thrilled

On the subject of the Mind Sports Olympiad, Richard Biddle emails: Quick question. I am hoping to come up for the MSO in Manchester this year. I understand we are allowed three attempts to better our category in the Olympiad Championship (subject to time, etc., etc.). Is this included in the £26 entry fee or are these buy-backs? I am figuring out whether to pay £96 for all backgammon tournaments or £100 for unlimited tournaments.

No buy-backs. One payment covers all.

Rodney Lighton sends in a newspaper clipping: "We used to travel together, rent a car together, go out for dinner, play stupid games like backgammon or boggle to pass the time..." Martina Navratilova in The Guardian 28th June.

Who said any publicity is good publicity?

She's lying, we never played boggle!

Hi-Rollers

September 20/21 2003

**Win 3 Main matches and
take home**

£2,000!



A Dose of the Schidttts

Roy Holland introduces a few friends and acquaintances

How did the Schidttts become the greatest backgammon family in the world? To answer this I visited the Vatican library and their records for 1543. In that year Cardinal Dawg became the pope. He was a member of the influential Schidtt family who had a monopoly on all the sewage works in the Holy Roman Empire.

Pope Dawg the third stated, in his inaugural speech, that he had two main aims. The first was to stamp out swearing that was rife



throughout the Empire. The second was to promote backgammon, a game at which he was recognised as the strongest player in the Vatican. Dawg appointed two bodyguards both provided with very large choppers. Anyone swearing in Dawg's presence was to be immediately chopped to death.

At the celebrations to honour Dawg's appointment the herald had an unfortunate lisp. As the pope was about to enter the hall he announced "Pay homage to His Excellency Pope Dawg the turd." **Chop!, Chop!** and the herald was no more.

Once a week Dawg held an audience for leading citizens. They each paid the equivalent to £500 in today's money, hoping for kickbacks and priority treatment when at the Pearly Gates. A nephew of the pope, called Fulla, was due to be presented. This involved kissing the pope's ring and stating his full name. Fulla kissed the ring

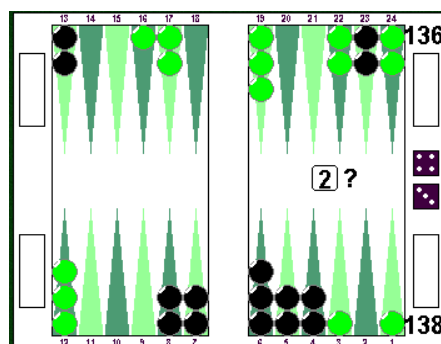
and said "Fulla Schidtt," **Chop!, Chop!** and Fulla was no more. The pope was overcome with grief at his nephew's untimely death. He decreed that Fulla's memory would be perpetuated by establishing the **Fulla Schidtt Memorial Backgammon**.

The pope won it the first year and other members of the family who played were Dawg, Byrd, Holie, Noe, Bull, Big, Deep, Giva and Loda. To this day many members of the Schidtt family are named after one of these.

Linguistic experts advise me that the d in Schidtt is silent, as in banana.

The Schidttts have kindly agreed to give me their opinions on some positions that have intrigued me. The final word will rest with **Snowie Schidtt** a computer program that is expected to be the successor to Snowie 4. In each position the reader is asked to place the Schidtt opinions in order of merit, then compare your order with that of Snowie Schidtt on the following page - and no peeking!

Position 1



Money Game
Black on roll
Cube action?

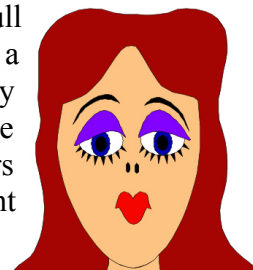
Fulla Schidtt: Black is two pips behind but on roll so this is equiv-

alent to being two pips ahead. Based on the race this is nowhere near a double. Also black will have problems freeing the two checkers on his 23-point.



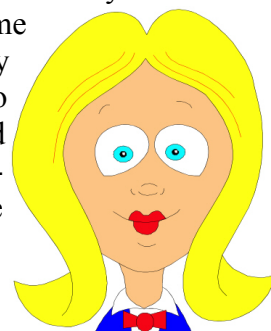
I estimate Black should win about 60% of the games, 10% being gammons. Not yet a double. Take if doubled.

Noe Schidtt: The prospect of a successful blitz and of making a full prime, justify a double by black. The back checkers on the 23-point could be difficult to free, also the blitz might fail.



This adds up to white winning more than 25% of the time. So the correct cube action is Double-Take.

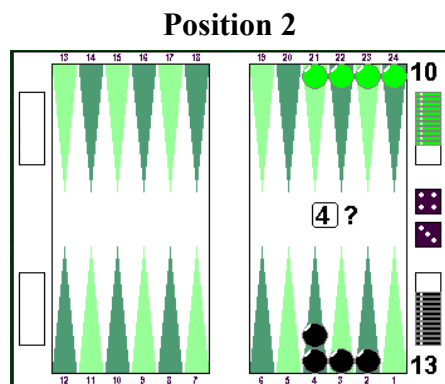
Holie Schidtt: Since white has no anchor black will try for a blitz. His five-prime will be very difficult to pass and more ammunition can be brought into play from the mid-point.



When the dice permit black will also be able to split his back men and have a good prospect of picking up white's blot on his nine-point.

I would expect black to win about 73% of the games with about one third of these being gammons.

A strong double and a clear pass.



Position 2
Score 3-3 to 7
Black on roll
Cube action?

Noe Schidtt: Black is a clear favourite with a good chance of getting off in two rolls. Rolling a 1, unless it is a double 1 is bad for him but it is well worth the risk and black should redouble.

I would expect black to win about 72% of the games so white's 28% gives him a thin take.

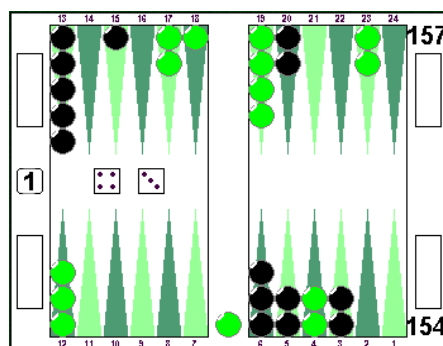
Fulla Schidtt: If Black rolls a 1, but not double 1, in either of his next two rolls he is really in the *krapenfarti*. This happens nearly 50% of the time so no redouble and take if redoubled.

I estimate black to win a little more than half of the games.

Holie Schidtt: A three roll position is well known to be a drop for the player not on roll. I think the given position is about the same value and hence a redouble and drop.

If played out I would expect black to win about 76% of the games.

Position 3



Score 0-0 to 5
White to play 43

In this position the candidate moves are 25/21 6/3, 25/21 7/4, 25/21 13/10. Please put these in order of merit and give your reasons.*

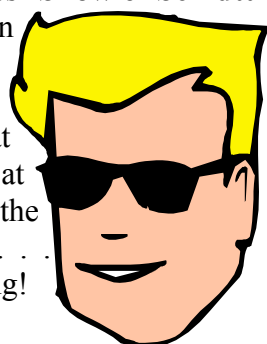
Noe Schidtt: When in doubt **hit**. 25/21 13/10* is my first choice. Next best is 25/21 7/4 as there is no point in letting black hit with a 2. Third is 25/21 6/3.

Fulla Schidtt: I agree with Noe about the first choice but would make 25/21 6/3 second and 25/21 7/4 third. If black enters, and also rolls a 2, he cannot afford to hit on white's 7-point; the three blots would be far too vulnerable.

Holie Schidtt: 25/21 7/4 is my first choice. This leaves no blots and starts the 4-point. Next best is 25/21 6/3, As Noe says, black cannot afford to give up his anchor and hit on White's 7-point. Third comes 25/21 13/10*. Hitting is thematically wrong when black has the stronger board.

So, what does **Snowie Schidtt** have to say on the positions?

Take a look at his analysis at the top of the next column . . . and no cheating!



Position 1:

Holie has spotted the main issues and is in complete accord with the analysis I have made. Black wins 72.7% of the games with 32.7% being gammons.

Noe comes second as the double is clear but she is wrong about the take. This is a blunder losing a massive 0.448 of the equity.

Fulla comes third as failing to double is an error and taking is a blunder. The estimates of black's wins and gammons is too low.

Position 2:

Well done, Fulla. The other two are way off target and their reasoning is flawed. Since No Redouble/ Take is correct, Noe is second place, and Holie is last.

Black wins 52%. Despite my confidence in my analysis I double checked the the Thorpe and Ward formulae. They both confirmed this is is not a redouble.

Position 3:

My analysis agrees with Holie. The equities are given in brackets.

25/21 7/4	(-0.204)
25/21 6/3	(-0.326)
25/21 13/10*	(-0.336)

Noe is second as 25/21 7/4 is better than 25/21 6/3.

As your name suggests Fulla, your choices were . . .

Mmm. What a Puzzlement!

I've got just one word to say to you, **Pangram!** What? I hear you cry in ignorance of what I refer to. Let me put it another way: **The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.** Now do you know what I'm on about? Good. So, here's a couple with a backgammon theme from Arthur Williams.

Backgammon wizard jinxed his quest for very late prime.

Devotees from Japan and Zimbabwe backgammoned by lucky sixes.



Do you have an apposite **Pangram?** If so send it in to . . .

Cedric Lytton: I offer for Bibafax an original puzzle with a difference. It took me over six months to construct, starting from a list of well-known terms and personalities: like Kent (Goulding) and also a few like (Ben-)Zion that I couldn't fit in. Only one letter in the grid is not used - I won't ask readers to find it!

So you think you know all about the cube? Well, see if you can take this one!

R	P	L	A	A	A	I	N	C	S	E	O	E	S	N	B
E	B	U	C	U	R	O	L	A	E	R	A	K	H	L	Y
W	T	A	E	N	A	H	C	S	A	R	T	A	O	R	D
Y	T	P	K	K	N	E	E	M	N	E	W	T	T	D	D

These are successive slices of a 4x4x4 Wordsearch grid. For example, the top left corner letters of each slice in turn from left to right, spell RACE.

Which six of the following 36 words are not in the grid?

Area	Bray	Dice	Lord	Prat	Seat
Auty	Chan	Drop	Levi	Race	Shot
Back	Clay	Dwek	Neil	Roll	Slot
Bear	Cube	Home	Oram	Rust	Take
Blot	Deep	Kent	Pass	Sari	Ward
Bona	Deny	Knee	Paul	Sean	Wind

Suggestion: Cross the words off as you find them, don't mess up your copy of Bibafax by trying to circle or connect them across the grid.

The solution will be published in the next issue. The person to send in the first correct solution opened on 1 September will win free Full membership for 2004. Send to yadda yadda yadda!



Can't afford to buy Snowie 4? Why not purchase a copy of JellyFish 3.5?

3.5

Not interested because the Fish isn't as strong as the Snowman? Boy, you're hard to please! Just how difficult an opponent do

you want for sixty-three quid? The Fish plays as well as or better than most players you'll ever play against in real life. Try and get Bill Robertie to come 'round your house for £63 and play against you on demand.

JellyFish Tutor and Analyser versions will not only beat you on a regular basis but they will both tell you why you are losing by pointing out better plays and all your doubling mistakes. With the Analyser version you can even rollout positions to be sure of playing the correct move.

JellyFish 3.5 Prices Jan '99

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

Order today from Biba HQ. Cheques payable to M. Crane.

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

Still some places left. Send in your registration fee today

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
brigrammon@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.

Eastbourne

Eastbourne & Bexhill BG Club
John Thomas. Tel: 01424 219415
Jtprincesgaragelimited@btinternet.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@cablenet.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

Tunbridge Wells

Liz Park email:
LizP@parksconsulting.com
Every Tuesday

York

Leo Waters is hoping to start a
club in York. Contact him on
watersleo@hotmail.com

Forthcoming Events

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, this is the tourney to better your Ranking Score.

7th Mind Sports Olympiad 16-25

August. Just one month to go before the biggest backgammon extravaganza of the year. The venue, accommodation, entry fees and events & timings are now confirmed. See the next few pages in this issue.



Roy Hollands Trophy 6/7 Sept.
All the usual events in this popular Knockout tournament. Sponsor, Roy Hollands will be in attendance to hand out free advice and wisdom that have taken him 145 years to accumulate!

Hi-Rollers Double Entry Jackpot 20/20 September
This might be your last chance to

register. See page 36 for details.

Hanover, National Team Challenge 18/19 October

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

If there's not a significant increase in entry levels this event will be cancelled.

UK Finals 6/7 December
Qualifiers to date:

Bright 'n' Breezy - Edwin Turner
Jarvis Trophy - Bob Young
Scottish Open - Peter Chan
British Open - Ian Shaw
County Cups - John Slattery



2004 Dates, Deals and Venues

Starting in 2004, Biba tournaments will be moving from Hilton to the [Hanover International](#) chain of hotels. The events will be shared between the Hinckley and Daventry hotels - see below for details for which event is in which hotel. * *denotes unconfirmed*

The reasons for the move are to offer Biba members better value for money and increased facilities and playing areas. The Biba special rate is very competitive and represents excellent value for money. The inclusive rate covers these benefits:

Dinner, bed and breakfast. Event staff accommodation. Playing rooms and refreshments. Bottles of wine prizes. Friday Warm-up 1st prize of a weekend break for two in any Hanover Hotel, worth approx. £200 (subject to certain conditions). UK Qualifiers accommodation. Administration retainer.

When the benefits are taken into consideration, the cost per night, per member clearly shows that Biba offers its members more than anyone else - and in fantastic surroundings.

Accommodation costs: (standard room, *no single supplement*)

1 night £55 per person for dinner, bed & breakfast.

2 nights (*or two people sharing 1 night*) £50 per person for dinner, bed & breakfast

Members can be upgraded to deluxe rooms for just £20 per night upon arrival at the hotel.

To reserve accommodation call
(Central Reservations)

08457 444 123

and quote 'backgammon'.

Date		Tournament			Venue	Type
Jan 09-11	*	Bright 'n' Breezy	GP	UK	Brighton	Knockout
Jan 30-Feb 01		2nd Cotswold 'Fireside'	GP	.	Blockley	Knockout
Feb 07-08		Jarvis Trophy	GP	UK	Hinckley	Swiss
Mar 13-14		Slattery Scottish Open	GP	UK	Daventry	Knockout
Apr 03-04		At-A-Glance British Open	GP	UK	Daventry	Knockout
Apr 25		Manchester 1-Day	GP	.	Manchester	Knockout
May 08-09		County Cups Trophy	GP	UK	Hinckley	Swiss
Jun 05/06		Hilton Trophy	GP	.	Daventry	Knockout
Jul 03/04		Keren Di Bona Memorial	GP	.	Hinckley	Knockout
Jul ??	*	Liverpool Open	GP	.	Liverpool	Combination
Aug 07/08		SAC Trophy	GP	UK	Hinckley	Swiss
Aug 21/30		Mind Sports Olympiad	GP	.	Manchester	Swiss
Sep 04/05		Roy Hollands Trophy	GP	.	Daventry	Knockout
Oct 09/10		Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP	.	Daventry	Knockout
Oct/Nov ??	*	12th Irish Open	GP	UK	Dublin	Combination
Nov 06/07		Townharbour Trophy	GP	UK	Hinckley	Swiss
Dec 06/07		UK Finals		.	Hinckley	Double KO

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.

“Bristol 50”

a one-day, three-flight knock-out tournament being held in the centre of Bristol.

It's open to the first 32 players to pay the £50 entry fee.

The date is Saturday October 11th, 2003, from noon till around midnight

The venue is the Bristol County Sports Club

The format is:

Main flight: 11-point matches;

Progressive Consolation: 7-point matches;

Progressive Last Chance: 5-point matches, with a 1-point Lucky Losers shoot-out
for the first 16 Last Chance losers to gain re-entry to the Last Chance

The prizes (assuming a full complement of 32 players) are: **£700** and **£300** for the main flight finalists;
£200 and **£100** for the consolation finalists; **£100** and **£50** for the Last Chance finalists.

The remaining stake money pays for the food (two waves of buffet)

Address enquiries to Ian Tarr on 07940 284652, or email him at brisgammon@blueyonder.co.uk

To ensure that you don't miss out, send a cheque for £50 to Ian Tarr, 27 Quarrington Road, Horfield,
Bristol BS7 9PJ. Refunds for cancellations will only be made if a replacement is found.

An entry waiting list will be maintained when the event becomes fully subscribed.

Biba Backgammon Calendar 2003

Date	Tournament	Venue	Type	Accommodation	Info
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 11	Bristol "50"	Bristol	Knockout	call Ian Tarr on .	07940 284652
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



Backgammon Events

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



Ten days of backgammon, offering the following events:

Beginner's Tournament - August 16
Weekend Tournament - August 16, 17
Olympiad Championship - August 18 to 22
English Open - August 23, 24
Olympiad Championship Finals - August 25
The Manchester Blitz - August 25

Venue: Renold Building at Manchester Conference Centre.

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

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**

Hilton Trophy June 2003

By Michael Crane

Main (43)

It was quite a match! It had more ups and downs than the Big Dipper at Blackpool - and that's a lot!

The title was decided on a 1-point match when both protagonists finished up at 10-10 in the 11 point match. Could Mike Greenleaf, last years' Runner-up take home the Winners' trophy or would Kevin Stebbing magic it away from him?

Neither player had won a Main event before, but, at least on paper, Mike was judged the better of the two by a narrow margin. Usually I have a monetary interest in the Final when I've purchased one of the finalists; and this one was no exception. But, this time I was far more relaxed about the outcome - my syndicate had both of them! Win or lose, we couldn't lose!

Now, those of you that have read my previous scribblings might remember that Kevin is a part-time magician. This worried Mike. After all, anyone who can hold a glass of water upside down and not let any drips onto the floor must have something up their sleeve!

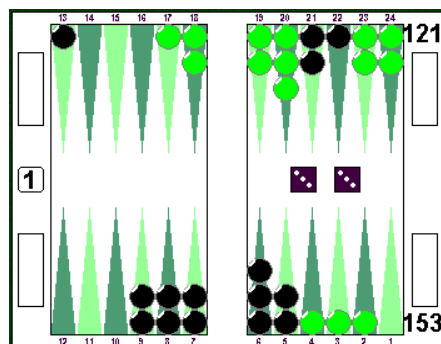
By Game 5, Kevin had gone into a 4-0 lead by good checker play and rolling the odd double six and a rabbit! Mike insisted Kevin played with his sleeves rolled up and he promptly pulled back four points in the 5th to level it off. Despite the penalty of having his forearms bared, Kevin pulled away another five points through sheer hard work and legerdemain - at one time I swear I saw a dove fly out from his armpit!

Mike pulled back another couple after he insisted that Kevin strip

down to his underpants; but Kevin still managed to pull something out . . . but we won't go into that! Kevin hit the Crawford at 10-6, and Mike, when things began to go a little awry for him, went into a long - and eventually successful, backgame: 10-7, then 10-8 and finally 10-10 . . . a 1-point match to decide the winner.

Not leaving anything to chance (or chicanery) Mike made Kevin remove his keks and for the first time ever we all saw where Kevin keeps his magic wand . . . or at least I *hope* it was his wand!

The last point developed into a prime vs prime battle until Mike rolled a double-three. This move had the pundits split over the correct play for ages afterwards. What would you have played?



DMP

Black (Mike) to play 33

Mike played 8/5(2) 7/4*(2) which came out as Snowie's 14th choice and an equity loss of -0.240; a big blunder. I can't say what the best move is (apart from looking at the list below) but I reckon that putting two in the air is favourite and gives great chances for winning the match.

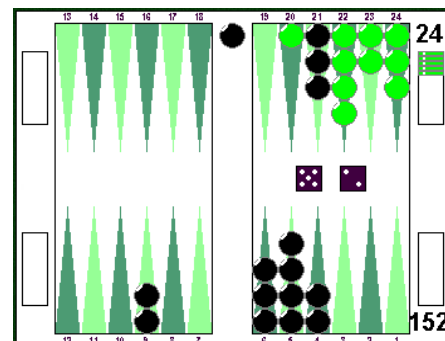
13/10 7/4*(2) 6/3*	0.606
13/4* 6/3*	0.578
13/4*/1	0.559
9/3* 7/4*(2)	0.550

8/5(2) 7/4*(2)

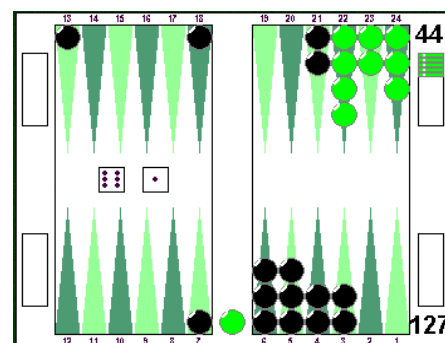
0.366

As it turned out this was a pivotal play. Mike danced for the next ten rolls eventually re-entering with a hit during the bearoff following a forced error:

Black rolls 52



Kevin dances for three moves and then, waving his wand about, pulls out a rabbit, a dove, a bunch of flowers and a joker 61 off the bar in this position:



White rolls 61

Mike dances, Kevin picks up another blot and Hey Presto! Kevin wins! Poor Mike, he never stood a chance against the *force*!

Consolation (39)

If you can't win the Main, and you're knocked out by the winner (our Kev) then it's always a good idea to win the Consolation so that you can say later that the only one to beat you was the eventual winner. This is what David Nathan said and did. His hapless (and at times, helpless) opponent, Lawrence Powell graciously settled for Runner-up.

Last Chance (32)

It's a funny old game, isn't it? In Round 1, Peter Chan knocked out Paul Gilbertson. Paul re-entered and chose the 32nd position claiming he'd get his revenge in the Final. And he did! Never before had victory tasted so sweet.

Suicide! (32)

Missing out on the trophies last time out, Jane Oxley (she of the red hair - or orange, as it was this weekend) was determined that even the likes of Brian Lever wouldn't prevent her taking home the Runner-up at the very least. But, Jane set her sights a bit higher and walked off with the winners trophy instead. Way to go, Jane!

1-Point Shootout (32)

Just a little diversion for those that were interested. £1 per entry and twenty-five quid added prizemoney made this a popular little extra. John Slattery walked off with the bigger half of the pot leaving opponent, Jeff Barber, clutching a tiny handful of £1 coins.

Friday KO (18)

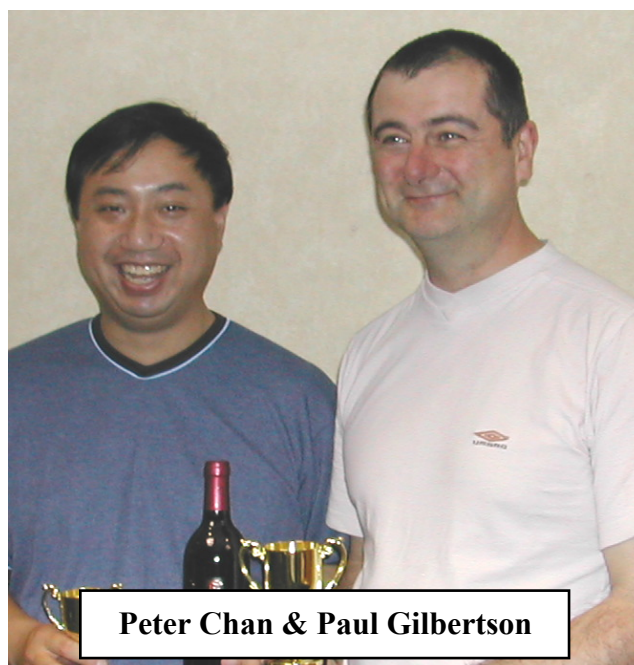
I'd just done a perfect draw of 16 players (which didn't include me) when a 17th turned up to play. Now, normally I'd so, "Sorry, but we have just started," and that would be the end of it. However, this late-comer had traveled all the way from Georgia (not the USA one!) and I didn't have to the heart to tell him. Instead I moved the first two players into a prelim round and I played him myself. This was a wise



Mike Greenleaf & Kevin Stebbing



Lawrence Powell & David Nathan



Peter Chan & Paul Gilbertson

decision . . I ended up in the semi-finals! Unfortunately I got no further. This was left to Tim Mooring and David Nathan - from which the latter emerged the winner.

Doubles (10)

Matrix Redoubled fared badly (unlike their namesake) and they went out in the 1st Round. *Holie & Fulla Schidtt* pooped in the 3rd, but *ShawShank RedEmption* went all the way. Only *Bill & Ben* could stop them, which they did in the Final. When asked the secret of their success, *Bill* (or was it *Ben*) said that having a partner that could only speak Georgian was a great advantage!

The top name went to the wonderful use of names: *ShawShank RedEmption*.

Finally, a couple of things. One congrats to Paul Sambell for wining the £50 Jackpot and boosting his Ranking Score be a goodly amount, and a big Thank You to Akaki Kikaleishvili for coming all the way from Georgia to take part in our little tournament. A regular attendee of the Monte Carlo World Championships, I can only wonder at what he made of it all. He seemed to enjoy himself and I had little difficulty communicating with him - I just spoke very slowly and very loudly; that did the trick.

More pictures on the next page including one of a gorgeous redhead!



Brian Lever & Jane Oxley



John Slattery & Jeff Barber

Main (22)

Once again, Biba sets another record.

OK, so it's not a *good* record with just 22 entries; but it *is* a record nonetheless! *I must make a mental note to ask the Monte Carlo World Championships to move their tournament to another date so that we don't clash for 2004!*

Mike Greenleaf, still hot after his Runner-up placing last month against Kevin Stebbing in the Hilton Trophy found himself in a second consecutive Final. This time his adversary was Brian Busfield, veteran of four finals and winner of one, the Bright 'n' Breezy 2002.

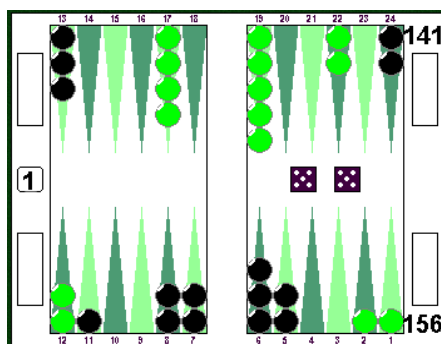
Mike was determined to be victorious this time . . . and so was Brian.

In a match where both players made six checker play blunders each, this one from Brian (black) was the biggest. Brian (black) had taken an early two points lead when this position came up, **Game 5, Position 3:**

Keren Di Bona Memorial 5/6 July 2003

By Michael Crane

1st play above to 62.5%.



11 point match
Black 5 White 3
Black to play 55

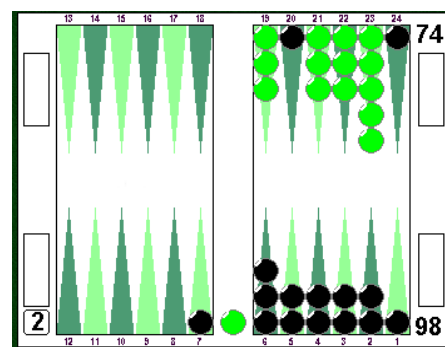
Brian played 13/8 11/6 6/1(2)* which gave him an equity of 0.555. Two better plays were:

8/3(2) 7/2(2)* making four home-board points and giving white just 20 re-entry rolls. Equity .0789

13/3(2). Even though this play leaves direct 1s its equity comes in at 0.728 (-0.061).

The actual play gives away 0.234 equity and reduces the game winning chances from 67.6% with the

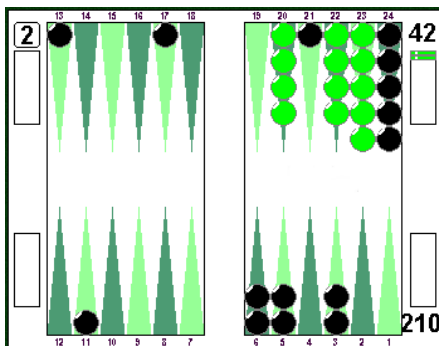
In **Game 6**, during the bear-in against a 1-point anchor and a 5-point blot, Mike was forced to hit loose after rolling his one bad roll, a 63. Brian re-entered with a 65 and Mike went to the bar; missing a double shot twice when he rolled a 54 twice. A few rolls later he was in **Position 29:**



Black 6 White 3
White on roll

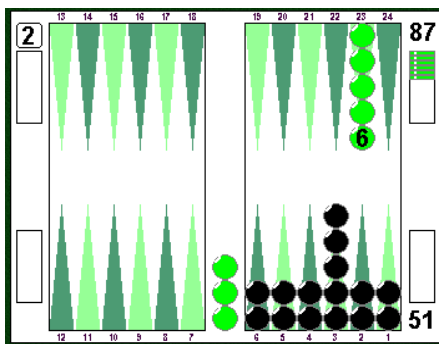
The dice Gods were with Mike as he shook out the 61 for the re-entry double hit! In this one roll his game winning chances leapt from 23.2% to 71.3% - quite a move! He then rolled out for the gammon.

One of the biggest swings came in **Game 8**. This is **Position 28**:



Black 6 White 8
Black on roll

White's game winning chances are excellent at 77.0% and his gammon chances are really good at 64.4% . . . but black gets a hit, then another, then another so that by **move 45** white has three checkers on the bar:



Black on roll

Mikes' game winning chances have reached a nadir at 1.4% and his gammon chances have evaporated to nil! Two points to Brian, 8-8.

Eventually the score moved to DMP and, in a very one-sided game, Mike emerged the victor to claim his first Main trophy win.

The entire match will appear soon on GammonVillage.

Consolation (20)

This year, if he is unable to win the Main, John Slattery wins the Consolation. So far it's been Scottish Open and British Open; and now to add to his distinguished list of



Mike, Emmanuel & Brian



Slats, Emmanuel & Steve



Ernie & Paul

Consolation wins, Keren Di Bona 2003!

Steve Rimmer tried his best to stem John's flow

of wins but to no avail, Super Slats was unstoppable. *I've been asked why I spell it Slats with one t and not with two ts. Well, as I was the first one to call him Slats in the first place I reserve the right to spell it my way!*

Last Chance (8)

With a field of just eight players two new trophy recipients sat down in the Final - Ernie Pick and Paul Sambell. As Ernie said in his victory address when collecting the winner's trophy, "Class will always come through." Oh yeah? Well then how come its taken it so long to do so??

Suicide!(16)

New member, Justin Joseph, was treading on thin ice when he beat Sharen (my wife) in the semi-finals. I was minded to rescind his membership . However, I let him continue and he met Uldis Lapikens in the Final. Here, the ex-Lincoln BG Club player (Uldis) showed Justin how we do it in Lincoln and Uldis left Justin in the Runner-up spot.

Friday Warm-up (8)

Tim Mooring is making a habit of getting to the Finals on the Friday night. Last month he lost to David Nathan and this time he lost to me



Justin & Uldis

(he also beat me in the semis last month). I wonder who he'll play in the SAC Warm-up Final?

Doubles (4)

Considering the number of Main entrants and the £50 Jackpot, four teams isn't a bad entry. We played a Round-Robin format with one team, *Constipata & Di Area* winning all three of their matches. Not only did they win the dosh, but

also the bottle of wine for Top Name.

£50 Jackpot (8)

Rosey Bensley knocked out Ernie Pick and Paul Sambell (see above) to face Tony Lee in the Final. Tony's route was a little harder, Brian Busfield and Slats; so he'd honed his technique ready for this encounter - and it proved fruitful as he relegated Rosey into Runner-up position.

Finally . . .

All things considered it wasn't a bad little tournament. What we lacked in quantity we made up for in quality. It would be nice to know why the turnout was so low. It has been suggested that members no longer like the Hilton Coventry; well that's OK because next year we're moving to a new sponsor and hotel. For full details see page 42.

Tournament Results

Hilton Trophy 7/8 June 2003

(pos / name / gp)

Main (43)

1	Kevin Stebbing	15.3
2	Mike Greenleaf	8.2
3/4	Mick Butterfield	7.1
3/4	Uldis Lapikens	6.1
5/8	Simon K Jones	4.0
5/8	Ian Shaw	3.0
5/8	Tony Fawcett	3.0
5/8	John Slattery	3.0

Cons (39)

1	David Nathan	8.2
2	Lawrence Powell	5.1
3/4	Julian Fetterlen	3.0
3/4	Ian Shaw	2.0
5/8	Peter Christmas	2.0
5/8	Martin Hemming	1.0
5/8	Kevin Nicholson	1.0
5/8	Simon K Jones	1.0

Last Chance (32)

1	Paul Gilbertson	5.1
2	Peter Chan	2.0
3/4	Paul Sambell	1.0
3/4	John Batty	1.0
5/8	Mardi Ohannessian	
5/8	Roy Hollands	
5/8	Pat Holly	
5/8	Leslie Singleton	

Suicide! (32)

1	Jane Oxley	2.0
2	Brian Lever	1.0
3/4	Myke Wignall	
3/4	Roy Hollands	

5/8	Jeff Ellis
5/8	Peter Bennet
5/8	Pat Holly
5/8	Andrew Darby

1-Point Shootout (32)

1	John Slattery
2	Jeff Barber
3/4	Arthur Williams
3/4	Rosey Bensley

Friday Warm-up (18)

1	David Nathan
2	Tim Mooring
3/4	Michael Crane
3/4	Lionel Stinnerman

Doubles (10)

1	Bill & Ben
2	Shawshank Redemption
3/4	Little John & Tiny Tim
3/4	Anthony & Cleopatra

Top Name: **Shawshank Redemption**

£50 Jackpot (8)

1	Paul Sambell
2	John Slattery
3/4	Tony Fawcett
3/4	Mick Butterfield

Keren Di Bona Memorial Trophy 5/6 July 2003

(pos / name / gp)

Main (22)

1	Mike Greenleaf	9.3
2	Brian Busfield	8.2
3/4	Steve Rimmer	5.1
3/4	Julian Minwalla	4.1
5/8	Pat Holly	2.0
5/8	Emmanuel Di Bona	1.0
05/08	Tony Lee	1.0
5/8	David Nathan	1.0

Consolation (20)

1	John Slattery	8.2
2	Steve Rimmer	3.1
3/4	Justin Joseph	2.0
3/4	Emmanuel Di Bona	2.0
5/8	Tim Mooring	1.0
5/8	Uldis Lapikens	1.0
5/8	David Nathan	1.0
5/8	Julian Minwalla	1.0

Last Chance (8)

1	Ernie Pick	3.1
2	Paul Sambell	2.0
3/4	Jeff Barber	1.0
3/4	Rosey Bensley	1.0

Suicide (16)

1	Uldis Lapikens	2.0
2	Justin Joseph	1.0
3/4	Tim Mooring	
3/4	Sharen Crane	

Friday KO (8)

1	Tim Mooring
2	Michael Crane
3/4	Justin Joseph
3/4	David Nathan

Doubles Round Robin (4)

1	Constipata & Di Area
2	Ann & Tim

Top Name: Constipata & Di Area

£50 Jackpot (8)

1	Tony Lee
2	Rosey Bensley
3/4	Paul Sambell
3/4	John Slattery



July 2003 Grand Prix

(3 or more GP Points)

55.1	John Slattery	9.1	Roland Herrera	4.2	Danny Cohen
25.6	Julian Fetterlein	8.2	Steve Rimmer	4.2	Ian Tarr
22.3	Peter Bennet	8.2	Brian Busfield	4.2	Roy Hollands
20.3	Edwin Turner	8.1	Mike Butterfield	4.2	Ann Pocknell
20.3	Ian Shaw	8.1	Leslie Singleton	4.0	Tim Mooring
19.5	Bob Young	7.3	Ernie Pick	4.0	Paul Sambell
19.5	Kevin Stebbing	7.1	Brian Lever	4.0	Tony Fawcett
19.3	Lawrence Powell	7.1	Tim Wilkins	4.0	Amir Mossanen
18.2	David Startin	7.1	Tony Lee	3.0	Steve Hallet
17.5	Mike Greenleaf	7.1	Andrew Sarjeant	3.0	John Wright
16.2	Uldis Lapikens	7.1	Steffen Nowak	3.0	Mardi Ohannessian
14.3	Peter Chan	6.2	Rodney Lighton	3.0	Martin Hemming
13.2	David Nathan	6.1	Nigel Merrigan	3.0	Andrew Darby
11.4	Emmanuel Di Bona	6.1	Raymond Kershaw	3.0	Adam Stocks
10.3	Julian Minwalla	6.1	Paul Watts	3.0	Ron Havenhead
10.3	Paul Gilbertson	6.1	Francine Brandler	3.0	Ricardo Falconi-Puig
10.2	Rosey Bensley	5.2	Kevin White	3.0	Justin Jospeh
10.2	Barry McAdam	5.0	Peter Christmas		
10.1	Dave McNair	5.0	Nick Check		
10.1	Jane Oxley	5.0	Mark Lemon		
10.0	Simon K Jones	4.2	Cliff Connick		
9.1	John Clark	4.2	Paul Barwick		

July 2003 Active Rankings

(new / old / name)

1999 1999 Julian Fetterlein	1614 1614 Peter Fallows	1473 1473 Niclas Wigstrom
1959 1959 John Clark	1613 1613 Mike Waxman	1473 1473 Vianney Bourgios
1920 1920 Brian Lever	1606 1606 Francine Brandler	1467 1467 Arthur Williams
1920 1880 John Slattery	1595 1539 Mike Greenleaf	1463 1463 Paul Gilbertson
1829 1829 Dod Davies	1594 1548 Steve Rimmer	1462 1462 Neil Davidson
1828 1828 Dave McNair	1587 1584 Uldis Lapikens	1451 1451 Monica Beckerson
1824 1826 Tony Lee	1585 1585 Steve Pickard	1450 1450 John Renicks
1806 1806 David Startin	1575 1571 Ann Pocknell	1450 1450 Jonathan Lamb
1797 1797 Steve Hallet	1568 1568 Steffen Nowak	1447 1447 Will Richardson
1790 1790 Jim Johnson	1566 1566 Alistair Hogg	1440 1440 Johan Sallfors
1775 1775 Lawrence Powell	1566 1566 Mark Lemon	1438 1438 Wayne Felton
1768 1768 Ray Tannen	1566 1566 Roland Herrera	1436 1436 Steven Reddi
1767 1767 Richard Granville	1565 1565 Kerry Jackson	1436 1436 Simonetta Barone
1759 1759 Rachel Rhodes	1558 1558 Peter Christmas	1429 1396 Rosey Bensley
1732 1732 Stuart Mann	1557 1557 Jacek Brzezinski	1427 1420 Julian Minwalla
1731 1731 Kevin Stebbing	1556 1556 Ian Shaw	1425 1425 Cliff Connick
1730 1730 Ralph Eskinazi	1549 1549 Phil Caudwell	1421 1421 David Naylor
1729 1731 David Nathan	1544 1544 Peter Chan	1420 1420 Kevin Carter
1716 1716 Ian Tarr	1540 1545 Tim Mooring	1417 1417 Sarah Rosich
1711 1711 Dale Taylor	1539 1539 Dave Motley	1414 1414 Steve John
1708 1708 David Gallagher	1535 1535 Eddie Barker	1414 1414 Jeremy Limb
1700 1700 Harry Bhatia	1534 1534 Nigel Briddon	1414 1427 Tim Brown
1691 1691 Jeff Ellis	1530 1554 John Wright	1413 1413 Jerry Smith
1689 1683 Emmanuel Di Bona	1529 1529 Paul Christmas	1405 1405 Kevin Nicholson
1688 1688 John Hurst	1527 1527 Amir Mossanen	1404 1404 Leslie Singleton
1688 1688 Rodney Lighton	1526 1526 John Thomas	1400 1400 Nick Hamar
1680 1680 Graham Brittain	1526 1526 Raymond Kershaw	1399 1399 Michael Main
1679 1679 Peter Bennet	1525 1525 Matthew Fisher	1395 1395 Elliot Smart
1670 1670 Raj Jansari	1525 1525 Mike Butterfield	1392 1392 Myke Wignall
1664 1664 Mike Grabsky	1519 1543 Jeff Barber	1388 1388 Paul Watts
1663 1663 Tim Wilkins	1519 1519 David Hale	1378 1378 Colin Laight
1662 1662 Stephen Drake	1515 1515 Paul Barwick	1375 1375 Malcolm Hey
1660 1660 Bob Young	1507 1507 Andrew Sarjeant	1370 1370 Tony Fawcett
1653 1653 Mardi Ohannessian	1506 1506 Alan Beckerson	1368 1368 Neil Young
1651 1651 Arthur Musgrove	1504 1504 Martin Hemming	1367 1367 Liz Barker
1646 1646 Nick Check	1502 1502 Mike Heard	1360 1377 Alison Lee
1644 1644 Helen Helm-Sagar	1500 1500 John Napier	1336 1336 Don Hatt
1641 1641 Paul Turnbull	1497 1497 David McNamara	1328 1328 Rebecca Bell
1635 1635 Connor Dickinson	1495 1495 Tom Duggan	1326 1326 Sue Perks
1634 1634 Bill Pope	1495 1495 Gabor Weiner	1314 1314 Jon Sharpe
1633 1633 Simon K Jones	1493 1493 David Fall	1310 1310 John P Lewis
1630 1594 Brian Busfield	1484 1484 Anthony Coker	1295 1295 Cath Kennedy
1629 1629 Charlie Hetherington	1483 1483 Jane Oxley	1277 1277 Bob Parmley
1627 1627 Vincent Versteeg	1482 1508 Ernie Pick	1269 1269 Bryony Jessiman
1626 1626 Edwin Turner	1481 1481 Hubert De L'Epine	1236 1236 Paul Sambell
1621 1638 Roy Hollands	1479 1501 Kevin White	
1616 1616 Barry McAdam	1477 1477 Stuart Parmley	

July 2003 Pending Rankings

1725 Simon Barget	1510 Ian Hill	1428 George Plant
1719 Brendan Burgess	1509 Melvyn Abrahams	1428 Peter Murrell
1699 Dave Coyne	1499 Miles Ilott	1425 Ian Sadler
1666 Richard Beagarie	1485 Kevin Williams	1425 Rowland Brindley
1610 Rod Jones	1484 Spencer Close	1412 Paul Jenkins
1608 Corinne Sellers	1483 Sunni Nicholson	1407 Geoff Conn
1602 James Hatt	1474 Brendan Bensley	1404 Evan Williams
1574 Simon Gasquoine	1472 Blaine Buchanan	1381 Rebecca Brindley
1574 Dave Robbins	1470 Steve Lynch	1379 Alan Greenwood
1568 Ricardo Falconi-Puig	1468 Suart Dewis	1376 Tony Pryor
1557 Dave Raynsford	1467 Lorenzo Rusconi	1368 Peter Wilson
1533 Mark McCluskey	1459 Roz Nathan	1354 Richard Winston
1527 Theo	1450 David Winston	1351 Liz Makepeace
1524 Felix Vink	1443 Ron Havenhead	1342 Amy Woodward
1520 Kyriacous Kyriacou	1435 Grant Dewsbury	1326 Martin Blindell

July 2003 Ranking Championship (4 or more played)

(played / average / name)

John Slattery	18	2001.61	Paul Christmas	12	1567.92	Nick Check	6	1744.83
Peter Bennet	18	1952.11	Richard Granville	12	1518.33	Cliff Connick	6	1668.67
David Startin	18	1863.56	Liz Barker	12	1490.83	Brian Lever	6	1648.33
Paul Gilbertson	18	1702.22	Julian Minwalla	12	1446.08	Danny Cohen	6	1628.50
Uldis Lapikens	18	1633.22	John P Lewis	12	1373.83	Simon Fahoury	6	1599.83
Rosey Bensley	18	1603.56	Stuart Mann	11	1708.00	Niclas Wigstrom	6	1585.50
Mardi	18	1538.50	Amir Mossanen	11	1568.45	Dave Motley	6	1497.83
Myke Wignall	18	1531.28	John Clark	10	1845.70	Gabor Weiner	6	1481.00
Jeff Barber	18	1298.06	Simon K Jones	10	1752.80	Phil Rouse	6	1461.33
Roland Herrera	17	1736.29	Ernie Pick	10	1681.90	Faten Issa	6	1438.67
Mike Greenleaf	17	1635.59	David Nathan	10	1334.90	Matthew Fisher	6	1379.50
Jane Oxley	17	1622.53	Kath Kennedy	10	1286.00	Kerry Jackson	6	1372.50
Lawrence Powell	17	1604.71	Ian Shaw	9	1993.78	Jonathan Lamb	6	1368.00
Paul Sambell	17	1268.71	Andrew Sarjeant	9	1661.11	Bob Bruce	6	1355.83
Kevin Stebbing	16	1782.06	Kevin Nicholson	9	1451.00	Malcolm Hey	6	1243.83
Emmanuel	16	1685.00	Paul Barwick	8	1634.75	John Azraq	6	1056.00
Brian Busfield	16	1521.81	Leslie Singleton	8	1626.50	Nigel Merrigan	5	1917.60
Kevin White	15	1637.80	John Thomas	8	1344.00	Steve Hallett	5	1863.60
Mike Butterfield	15	1482.47	Elliot Smart	8	1283.50	Jon Sharp	5	1733.00
Johan Sallfors	15	1455.53	Bryony Jessiman	8	994.75	Anthony Coker	5	1711.00
Simonetta Barone	15	1352.40	Dave McNair	7	1810.71	Arthur Musgrove	5	1678.40
Julian Fetterlein	14	1837.64	Peter Chan	7	1784.00	Spencer Close	5	1582.80
Tim Mooring	14	1595.21	Ian Tarr	7	1762.14	Steve Rimmer	4	2092.25
Edwin Turner	13	1781.31	Rachel Rhodes	7	1685.86	Harry Bhatia	4	1792.00
Tony Lee	13	1492.62	Grahame Powell	7	1666.86	R. Falconi-Puig	4	1744.50
Ron Havenhead	13	1219.69	Nigel Briddon	7	1542.29	Martin Hemming	4	1648.50
Bob Young	12	1961.42	Wayne Felton	7	1446.71	Dale Taylor	4	1591.00
Ann Pocknell	12	1738.17	Aboudi Al-Halabi	7	1281.86	Ray Kershaw	4	1588.75
Steffen Nowak	12	1682.50	Barry McAdam	6	1914.17	Ralph Eskinazi	4	1501.75
Roy Hollands	12	1679.83	Tim Wilkins	6	1872.00	Al Hogg	4	1306.25
Rodney Lighton	12	1648.00	Tony Fawcett	6	1752.17	Dod Davies	4	1247.50

Win% Top 50

(pos : name : played : won : win%)

001	Julian Fetterlein	74	54	72.97
002	Simon Barget	39	28	71.79
003	Paul Lamford	239	171	71.55
004	Dod Davies	165	116	70.30
005	Nigel Merrigan	30	21	70.00
006	Rick Janowski	168	117	69.64
007	Salvador Leong	46	32	69.57
008	Mark Adkins	78	54	69.23
009	Chris Bray	26	18	69.23
010	Steve Bibby	96	66	68.75
011	Jim Johnson	246	169	68.70
012	John Hurst	38	26	68.42
013	Brendan Burgess	128	87	67.97
014	Stephen Turner	93	63	67.74
015	Derek Matheson	181	122	67.40
016	Brian Lever	304	204	67.11
017	Dale Taylor	244	163	66.80
018	Michael Brereton	24	16	66.67
019	Dave Coyne	39	26	66.67
020	Tim Cross	195	129	66.15
021	David Levi	38	25	65.79
022	Helen Helm-Sagar	35	23	65.71
023	Dave McNair	180	118	65.56
024	Ian Shaw	26	17	65.38
025	Thomas Connor	169	110	65.09

026	John Broomfield	249	162	65.06
027	Geoff Oliver	120	78	65.00
028	Stefan Paliwoda	37	24	64.86
029	P Ward-Ackland	105	68	64.76
030	Ray Tannen	85	55	64.71
031	Murray Henderson	28	18	64.29
032	Gerry Corolan	25	16	64.00
033	Nev Hyde	36	23	63.89
034	Richard Granville	177	113	63.84
035	Graham Sievers	91	58	63.74
036	Michael Crane	85	54	63.53
037	Edwin Turner	41	26	63.41
038	John Clark	218	138	63.30
039	David Startin	76	48	63.16
040	Arthur Musgrove	51	32	62.75
041	Rodney Lighton	51	32	62.75
042	Joseph Levy	32	20	62.50
043	Paul Cohen	24	15	62.50
044	Tony Lee	101	63	62.38
045	Mardi Ohannessian	202	126	62.38
046	Mike Butterfield	77	48	62.34
047	Stuart Mann	122	76	62.30
048	Paul Money	111	69	62.16
049	Peter Bennet	116	72	62.07
050	Adrian Chambers	52	32	61.54

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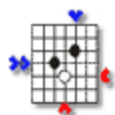
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