

BIBAFAX

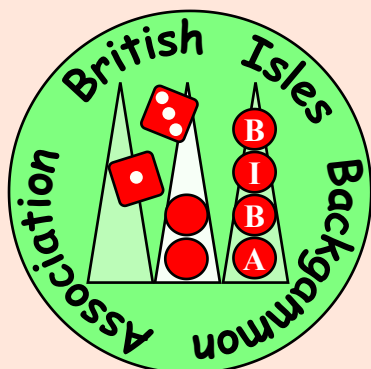
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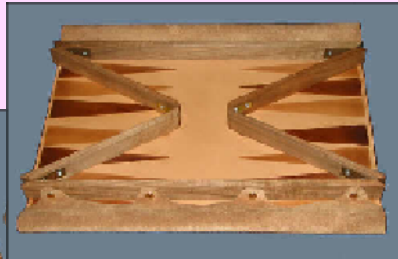
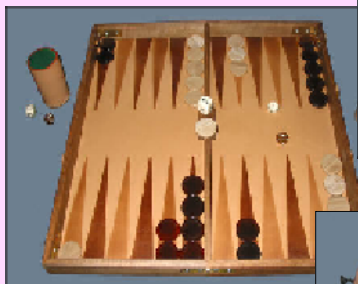


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Hard Contract - Part I

By Mike Nosanov

The neon sign cycled through its predestined display as he watched. "The Dublin Cube, Bar and Board" he read aloud, and chuckled to himself. Long ago, the ad in the Sunday paper had promised backgammon exclusively, but entertainment of all forms was common at the Dublin Cube, even in the neon sign. The sign implied, if not literally announced, that here indeed one could play backgammon, have a drink, and relax. Not that one could always believe the Sunday paper, of course, but the weekend section, de-editorialized as it was, reduced to mere sex and violence to lure the unsuspecting, could be read without being defensive.

He followed the stones in their constantly changing St. Vitus' Dance, moving around the neon sign's board. "Just like 'One more round' at four in the morning," he mused. "Not only the men but the dice as well have minds of their own."

Once inside, seated within the plush chair, behind a plastic board pretending to be wood, he felt at home. Work meant nothing at a time like this. Money, health, life itself seemed secondary to that first roll. He would always be a rover, unable to settle down. The Game was everything. More important than love, or for that matter anything else, the Game consumed him.

Kathi, as usual, was the first to notice him.

"The usual, Paul?"

He nodded. The usual would be just fine. Kathi understood the need for the usual. With her barmaid's instinct, she knew what consumed him.

"You're a strong personality," she had once said. "You'll never be happy until you're the best at what you do."

"I guess you're right," he had ineloquently agreed. It was a source of some displeasure to him that he had never won a backgammon tournament of any kind since he began playing, long before the Game became a popular fad. He had, in his own mind, paid his dues for years. Now, he craved the recognition that being the best would bring.

"You'll therefore," Kathi had continued, not too brilliantly but all too logically, "never be happy."

It was probably true. He had been playing at the Dublin Cube since it opened many long years ago, and had opened and closed the place more than anyone else. He had downed, by his own estimate, about ninety-one gallons of Harvey's Bristol Crème sherry during that time, and laughed at the same idiotic jokes more than he cared to remember.

"No wonder the members ignore me", he considered, half aloud. "I can't even win the damn club weekly. If I were somehow recognized as the best player, say by the entire backgammon world, now, that would be something."

As she poured the sherry, Kathi regarded him fondly. (Like you would regard a living room plant of many years, lest the reader get the wrong impression.) She knew Paul better than anyone did.

"In fact," she mused, "I know him better than he knows himself. He's no mental giant", she observed, somewhat charitably, "but he's nice. Obsessed, but nice."

It was with only a mild twinge of something vaguely resembling guilt that she brushed unnecessarily close to his shoulder to set down the drink.



"You're nice," she said, anticipating his usual tip.

He idly scanned the list of 36 entries, awaiting the announcement of the pairings.

"Great, 19th this time. That means I'm paired with...", as he considered the obvious, "either 36 or 18... here it is, eighteen, Zebub. Hell of a name, 'Zebub'. Let's see... here's my table." Kathi was all too right, a David among Goliaths.

What's-his-name was already seated, owning by squatter's rights the red men and the red dice. Paul looked into the steely-gray eyes, and immediately looked down at the board.

"Hi, I'm Paul."

"Good evening," the stranger sonorously intoned. "I hope you enjoy our match."

Paul had predictably forgotten his opponent's name. "What can I call you," he asked, hoping that his traditional conversational gambit would rescue him from yet another potentially embarrassing situation.

"Call me by my initials," said the stranger. "Call me 'B. L.' if you don't mind."

"Sure thing, B. L. I hope that doesn't stand for 'bad luck'."

"That," replied the stranger with a smile, "depends on one's point of view."

Paul was surprised to see a single red die appear, as if from thin air, and fall to the board. Six.

A good deal of shaking of the cup and utterance of "a new pair of shoes" produced for Paul... a paltry ace.

"I see what you mean," he cleverly replied.

The game, such as it was, ended with alacrity. The stranger threw quickly and well: 1-1, 5-5, 4-2, 5-5, hit a blot, fill the inner table, double out, score 3-zip. Paul hardly had a chance to move anything.

"You're hotter than Hell, B. L."

"Quite," replied the stranger. "However, I do believe you will do better this time."

Paul did do better 'this time'. Score, 4-zip.

A wry grin crossed B. L.'s face as they set up the stones for the third game.

"I have a good luck charm, my friend."

"What is it?" Paul asked, with complete sincerity. "And," he continued, "will you lend it to me?"

"But of course." B. L. produced a small talisman, vaguely Egyptian in appearance, and placed it on Paul's side of the bar. It seemed like a miniature goat or ram of some sort, and the horns were pointed directly at Paul.

"Merely ask for the roll you need, my friend, and it shall, as they say, come to pass." The stranger's smile was easy as he went on. "The dawning of each new



day will grant you three wishes and three wishes only, so use them wisely."

Paul began to ponder this curious recital. They certainly let all kinds of kooks into this place, he reflected.

"Thanks", he said aloud. "I'll give it a try."

Paul played his usual conservative game, maintaining contact as long as possible, but he finally had to leave a crucial blot. It was hit.

"Don't you ever miss?" he whined.

The stranger appeared unperturbed by this breach of etiquette, and declined to comment about his earlier misses in the still-young match.

"Not," he simply replied, "when I set my mind to it, my friend."

Paul surveyed the situation. Only the one-spot open, far behind in the running game, a 1-6 miracle shot his only chance to compete. "Seven come eleven", he cried aloud, rolling an enthusiastically-bouncing 5 and a too-tall-to-call 6, which landed on the floor. He would have to roll again.

"You'll have to choose," observed the stranger, "one or the other, unless you intend to throw a 7-4." He gestured towards the alleged good luck charm.

"Seven, of course," replied Paul. "Do you think I'm stupid?" He threw a more muted roll this time.

"Of course," Paul began, "I really meant a 1 to come in, and a 6 to hit." He picked up the 1-6, feeling somewhat embarrassed, without considering the literal nature of his rhetorical question. "I guess God takes care of the dumb," he continued, feeling the awkward silence.

He was surprised to hear the stranger chuckle out loud.

"Excuse me, my friend," B. L. quietly remarked, "but I've never heard that one before."

At 6-zip, Paul finally won a game.

"You let me win one, didn't you?" Paul could only joke about his dubious accomplishment. He was beginning to feel mysteriously inferior, even for him, to this confident new partner.

"Precisely, my friend." The smile was gone. "Enough of the preliminaries. I have a proposition for you."

Paul was always interested in any proposition.

"I'm always interested in any proposition," he said.

"I'll give you one hundred dollars if you roll a 1-2 right now, on your first try."

"And if I don't?" Paul asked warily.

"You'll have to return my good luck charm."

"Fair enough." Paul stood. "Acey-deucy!", he cried. Although a few bystanders turned to see the cause of the disturbance, the sight of Paul yelling at his dice was not a novelty, and merited no lasting attention. The roll was 1-2.

"Hot stuff!" Paul sat down, hoping for a C-note but not really expecting it.

"You see, my friend, the charm works. Here you are."

The money was crisp, properly green, and appeared to be real. Paul immediately rat-holed it.

"B. L., what's your angle?"

"The charm, of course. I am selling the charm I loaned you."

Paul was familiar with lots of scams - with some, it should be added, all too familiar.

"Give me a break. I got hot with one acey-deucy, and you want me to believe the charm did it?"

"My friend, what about your 1-6 last game? You did ask," continued the stranger, stifling the desire to add 'with some prompting', "for a 1-6, and got it."

Paul considered this momentarily.

"Luck, just blind dumb luck. Just a coincidence."

The stranger was prepared for this.

"Listen closely now, my friend, and I shall prove to you that the third wish of the talisman is yet potent. I will pay you one thousand dollars cash if you choose two of those four dice and roll a 13."

Paul pondered this latest offer.

"You mean," he asked, "like, including the doubles, or just with two dice?"

Patiently, the stranger reassured him.

"Either way".

Paul was satisfied. This was clearly a fair offer.

"And if I don't roll a 13?"

"If you don't roll a 13 I'll forfeit the match. I am leading 6-1 in the race to 7, you know."

Paul had to look at the score sheet to verify the 6-1 score. A moment's thought about which was more important, the money or the match, was quickly resolved. He'd be knocked out next round anyhow. Besides, how could two dice add up to 13?

"You're on, B. L. I can't lose."

The stranger only smiled as Paul rattled the dice in the cup, and pleaded aloud for success. "Come on, bones, give with a 13!"

The spectators and players alike turned quizzically, but, seeing who it was, resume their previous activities. Paul wants a 13? Now, that's a miracle roll.



A small puff of what appeared to be smoke issued forth from the cup as Paul threw for the \$1,000. He looked at his roll, a 6, a 5, and what's this? A deuce? Three dice? Can it be?

Paul looked the stranger in the eye.

"I don't know what you did, but you forfeit the match."

"Not exactly, my friend. There are only two dice on the board. If you rolled the 13, you get the money, not the match."

With that pronouncement still hanging in the air, the stranger opened his wallet, a curiously crafted leathery-looking affair with burnt engravings, removed two \$500 notes, and laid them on the table. Money like that was common in the Dub-



lin Cube, however, so no notice was taken. Wallets on the table were also common, so nobody but Paul looked close enough to seem that some of the engraving was still warm, or at least appeared so, as it was still smoking.

Paul's natural curiosity as to the amount of loot still remaining in the leathery-looking thing drew his gaze first. But 13? He inspected his winning throw. Sure enough, the 6 was rather straightforward, but the 5 and 2 were from opposite halves of the other die.



It had split in half, somehow, and the edges were smoking just like the wallet. Paul leaned back in his chair.

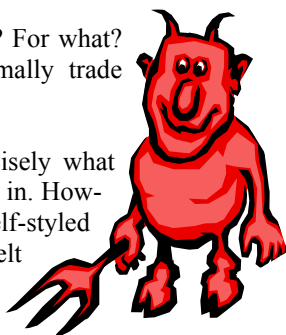
"B. L., you're the Devil, aren't you?"

Pleased that this recognition had at long last occurred, the stranger was expansive. He bowed.

"B. L. Zebub, at your service."

"At my service? For what? Don't you normally trade in..."

Paul knew precisely what the Devil traded in. However, being a self-styled atheist, Paul felt that the Devil was doomed to take the short side of every proposition. Proposition!



"I", Paul said, "am always interested in any prop..."

Proposition, he had tried to say, but a curious adrenaline reaction was impeding his speech. Proposition? He wasn't quite sure he was interested in mortgaging his, well, that is, what everyone calls his soul, even if he didn't have one.

"What's the prop... er, the deal, anyhow?"

The Devil knew right then that only the terms remained to be settled. Each of the human race has his price, being only mortal; only find it and one can strike a hard contract. The soothing words were chosen carefully.

"What is a soul, my friend? Do you have

'soul', or have you a soul? The essence of life? Brainwaves? Heartbeat? Breath? Yes, a soul is a breath - your last breath, to be precise. If you don't have one, so much the better."

"But", objected Paul, "You don't know what I want!"

"Of course I do". Paul was enough to try even the Devil's soul. If, of course, he had one of his own. "You want to be recognized as the best player by the entire backgammon world. You want fame and fortune. You want respect and adulation. I can even..." - here the Devil paused to consult his pocket planner - "... offer the cover of Time, Newsweek and Sports Illustrated. Or the alternative package, that includes the Wall Street Journal, the Singles Register, and Hustler."

Paul considered the deal.

"You'll put all this in writing?"

"Of course. That's how I do business. Signed, sealed and..." The Devil leaned forward conspiratorially and whispered "... delivered. All right there on the page in red and white."

"Red and white?"

The Devil regarded Paul with a look not unlike that used by doctors diagnosing sexually transmitted diseases. "Red and white. It's written in blood, you know."

"Oh", said Paul. He didn't.

"And, special today," added the Devil, considering the circumstances, "since it won't do for the man 'recognized as the best player by the entire backgammon world' to be anything but worldly and sharp as a tack," ... (and, he reflected to himself, it would clearly show the wolf in the henhouse if a dolt like Paul had consistent success, even in backgammon) "... I will equip you with supernatural powers of observation, calculation and alliteration."

"You will?"

"I'll even have you understanding what that means."

That did it; Paul was sold.

"Say, B. L., I mean, your Devilship..."

"Call me B. L., that's just fine." Good

grief.

"When can I look at the contract? I mean, I trust you, of course, but I want to read the fine print.

"Tomorrow, when the Cube opens. I'll be here." The Devil made a mental note to do some heavy editing overnight.

"I'll be here too," said Paul. They both knew he would be.



They arrived at the door simultaneously. That is, when Paul opened the door, somehow the Devil was right there beside him.

"After you, B. L."

"After you, Paul, I'm already inside."

Paul didn't immediately understand, but when his eyes grew accustomed to the muted fluorescent lighting recently installed by the proprietors of the Dublin Cube for reasons of energy conservation, B. L. was, in fact, already seated at Paul's table.

"It's very simple. Party of the first part," began the Devil, "that's you, agrees to deliver, conditionally upon his being recognized as the best player by the entire backgammon world, and irrevocably upon his natural demise, the following, to wit, his soul, for eternal safekeeping."

"Natural demise?" That sounds ominous, Paul thought. "You mean you'll wait until I die? You don't do anything to hurry me along?"

"Of course not. I can wait forever for you." The Devil leaned forward to whisper. "Even longer, if necessary." The Devil knew that this particular witticism would be lost upon his subject.

"Let's see what it says."

Paul reached for the contract. It seemed very thin, just a page or two. Somehow, it slipped from his fingers and fell to the floor. He picked it up, gingerly at first,



and then noticed the trailing pages, looking for all the world like a long paper streamer, with page after page of tiny little lettering.

"You must have had," said Paul, "a dozen lawyers to write this for you."

The Devil was indignant.

"God has the Angels, doesn't He, to help Him do His work? Why can't I have the lawyers?"

"OK, OK, I was just kidding. Where does it say how we'll know that I'm recognized as the best player by the entire backgammon world?"

"Right here in Page 666, section 90210. 'Party of the first part shall compete in a tournament arranged and presided over by party of the second part...'"

"You mean, you'll run the big backgammon tournament that I'll win?"

"Didn't you know, Paul? I run them all right now."

"Oh." Paul didn't. *No wonder* I never won anything, he mumbled to himself.

They discussed the various other provisions in some detail.

"Couldn't you make the fine print a little larger?" Paul complained. "Every time I try to look closely at this stuff the letters seem to swim around."

"It's a special type face. Now, listen, we've gone all over this. Just put your thumbprint here, and you'll be on the way up."

"You mean like this?"

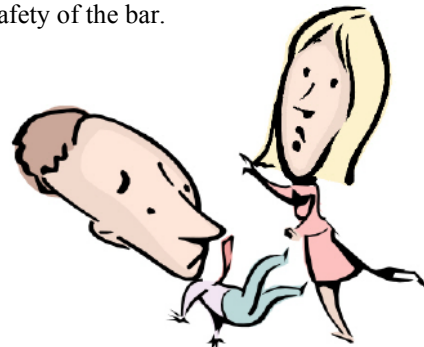
As Paul's thumb touched the page, a lightning bolt lit up the sky. Thunder rolled. The Devil seemed to shrink down to a point, disappearing in a small cloud of sulphurous black smoke strangely reminiscent of Garcia y Vega cigars. How odd, thought Paul, I can now recognize cigars by their odor. I never could before.

He turned to look at Kathy. Beneath the barmaid uniform, such as it was, her lithe and slender body seemed to beckon to him. She saw him turn, and quickly joined him.

"Where's your friend?" she asked.

"He disappeared," said Paul, matter-of-factly. "You know," he continued, "you are the sexiest woman I have ever seen. When your busy day has concluded, perhaps you would like to come home with me? I'll show you my place, and we'll make mad, passionate love all weekend. What do you say?"

She slapped him, and left for the relative safety of the bar.



Watching her attractive form retreat, he was acutely aware of his newfound and surprisingly keen powers of observation, calculation and alliteration.

"I have a lot to learn," he noted to himself.

MC: The story continues in the next issue

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Archive - Winning Strategies (Robin Clay)

By Michael Crane

Here's the latest of Robin's quiz.

There is a big difference between reading about how to play and actually using the correct principles when it comes to playing the game. This quiz, taken from Robin Clay's *Backgammon - Winning Strategies*, is designed to enhance the analytical skills required to become a successful player.

There's not enough space to show all the

moves. Robin's choices for each position are designed to try and illustrate both the wrong and correct move. It is just as important to know why a move is wrong as it is to know why it is right.

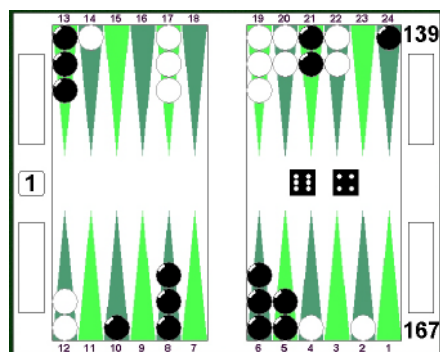
The positions are all money games, not tournament play, and without the Jacoby Rule (*No gammon or backgammon can be won unless the cube has been turned*). Robin's moves have been rolled out by Snowie (in the book he used JellyFish 2.1, all that was available to him at the time) and have been updated where nec-

essary with Snowie 4, Professional.

Tick your play for each position and then check your scores on page 17, along with the analysis. More positions will appear at a later date. This issue we deal with positions 61 to 70.

Sadly, Robin Clay died in November 2000. No doubt he's looking down on us as we continue to play the game he loved so much.

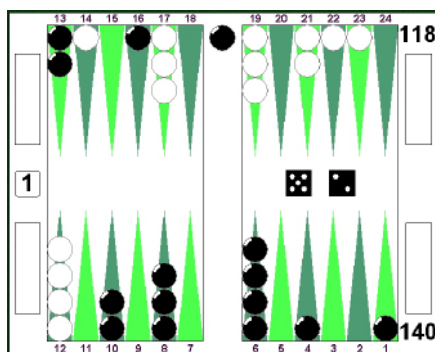
Problem 61



Black to play 64

- a) 8/2*, 6/2
- b) 24/14*
- c) 10/4*, 8/4

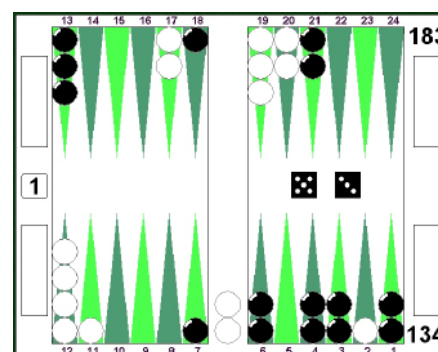
Problem 63



Black to play 52

- a) Bar/23*, 16/11
- b) Bar/23*, 6/1
- c) Bar/20, 6/4
- d) Bar/20, 16/14*

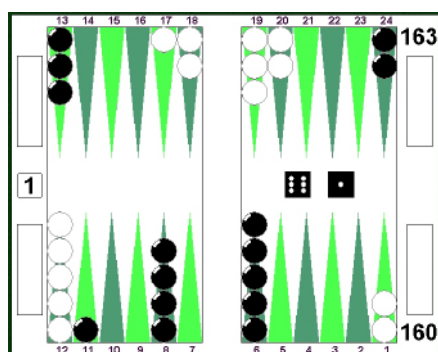
Problem 64



Black to play 53

- a) 7/2*, 21/18
- b) 7/2*, 13/10
- c) 21/18, 21/16
- d) 21/13
- e) 13/5
- f) 13/8, 13/10
- g) 13/8, 21/18
- h) 13/10, 18/13

Problem 62

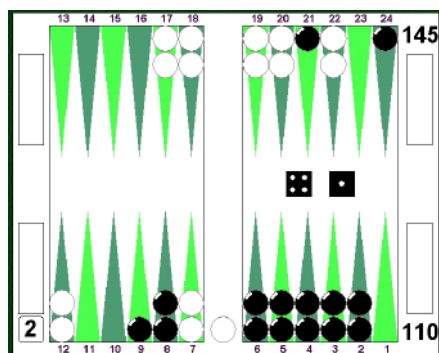


Black to play 61

- a) 24/17*
- b) 13/7, 8/7
- c) 11/5, 6/5



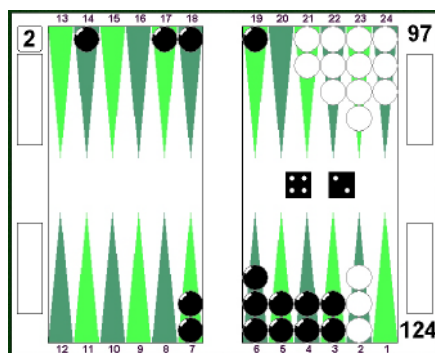
Problem 65



Black to play 41

- a) 9/4
- b) 8/3
- c) 9/5, 24/23
- d) 24/23, 8/4

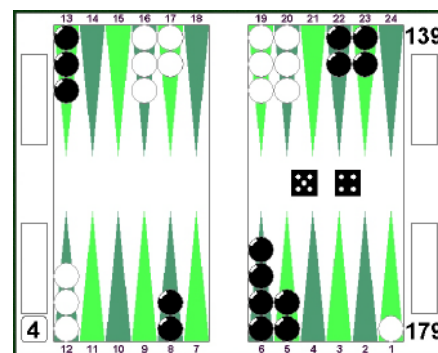
Problem 67



Black to play 42

- a) 18/14, 17/15
- b) 14/8
- c) 19/17, 18/14
- d) 19/13
- e) 18/12
- f) 17/11
- g) 19/15, 6/4

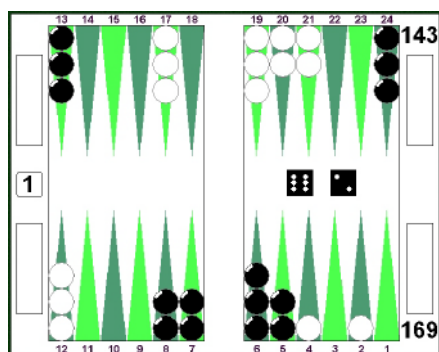
Problem 69



Black to play 54

- a) 13/8, 6/2
- b) 8/4, 6/1*
- c) 13/4
- d) 22/13
- e) 22/18, 6/1*
- f) 23/14
- g) 22/18, 23/18

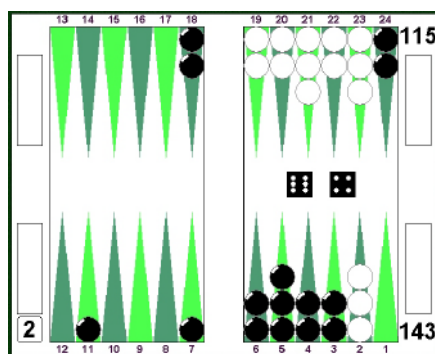
Problem 66



Black to play 62

- a) 24/18, 24/22
- b) 24/18, 13/11
- c) 24/18, 6/4*
- d) 13/7, 6/4*
- e) 13/5
- f) 24/16
- g) 24/22, 13/7

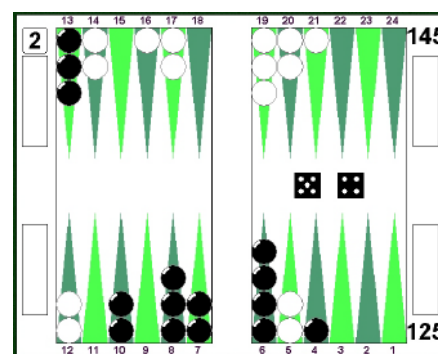
Problem 68



Black to play 64

- a) 7/1, 5/1
- b) 11/7, 24/18
- c) 11/7, 18/12

Problem 70



Black to play 54

- a) 13/4
- b) 8/4, 6/1
- c) 13/8, 6/2
- d) 7/2, 7/3

Archive - Winning Strategies (Robin Clay)

Solutions By Michael Crane & Snowie

Problem 61: A difficult choice - give White three chequers back or make the 4-point?

- a) **-1** This is the wrong point to make. Black should be making the point before the 2-point.
- b) **+1** An attractive move that escapes the most distant runner and puts the opponent at a disadvantage with three chequers back in the black home board. The drawback is that it gives White an opportunity either to make an anchor on the black 4-point or to hit back on the black 10-point. In either event White would have a play-

able game and a major advantage if he hits back.

- c) **+2** This is the best move. Building the 4-point gives Black an advantage against any response by White.

Problem 62: Three attractive ways to play this move. Which is correct?

- a) **+2** The best move. This gives White three chequers back and places the black runner in a position where it is easy to escape. It also removes the chequer on the white 8-point to stop White from being able to extend his blockade. While White wastes part of his next move re-entering Black may

have a further opportunity to improve his position. Hitting could result in Black gaining a significant advantage. In contrast the other two moves fail to give Black any significant advantage.

- b) **+0** Of the three choices this is the weakest. Although the bar-point is a valuable blocking point it does nothing to restrict re-entry when the opponent is hit. It also strips the last spare from the mid-point too early in the game.
- c) **+1** The second best move. Making the 5-point is superior to the bar-point and equalizes the two inner boards. However, it does not give Black any significant advantage. Sending a third chequer back may well result in a definite advantage for Black.



Problem 63: A confusing early mid-game position with both players having two blots exposed in their home boards. Anything could happen here. This is the sort of position where the best thing to do is to ask Snowie for the answer.

- a) **+0** Hitting on the 23-point with this move suffers from two defects. Firstly, the two rear chequers are not in communication and secondly, it does nothing to reduce the white builders waiting to make the 5-point, but it does add a builder for Black to make his 5-point. Jellyfish liked this move best but Snowie made it 3rd.
- b) **+3** Black should not be making the 1-point so early in the game so that he has only thirteen chequers with which to play. However, if he has to hit then it's the only realistic five to play.
- c) **-1** This leaves White free to attack and/or make his 5-point.
- d) **+2** Now the two rear chequers are in communication, it takes away a builder for the White 5-point and leaves White with two blots in his home board. This was Snowie's second choice, but there was a big difference in equity from A with -0.307

Problem 64: Should Black concentrate on making the 5-point, or continue the blitz by hitting on the 2-point?

- a) **+4** Black hits and re-anchors on the 18-point. This move would make double two a good response for White. The blitz continues but Black only has 11s to cover the 2-point blot.
- b) **+0** The best move according to Jellyfish, but only joint 4th according to Snowie. Now Black can cover the blot with seven dice.
- c) **+2** Black moves his anchor and threatens the blot on his 11-point with direct 5s and 2s..
- d) **+0** Running out with this one checker isn't that good and doesn't aid the blitz or threaten another checker.
- e) **-1** A bold attempt to capture the 5-point by slotting. This infringes a fundamental principle; when the opponent has two or more blots on the bar do not slot. Just place chequers in position to make the point naturally.
- f) **-1** A move designed to close the 5-point as soon as possible. Jelly's 2nd and Snowie's 7th. The reason is the number of blots it leaves - too many!
- g) **+0** Wrong. Black must not give up his anchor even if he is bearing down into his home board.
- h) **+2** Black keeps out of trouble and brings around another builder for his 5-point.

Problem 65: A simple problem in non-duplication. This is a position where Jellyfish thinks that Black should have redoubled before throwing his dice.

- a) **+0** The wrong move. Now Black has duplicated the three he needs to advance the rear checker and the three he needs to re-hit on the 1-point if White re-enters.
- b) **-1** Exposing four blots is too risky.
- c) **+2** The correct move. Now twos can be used to advance the rear checker and four becomes the hitting number on the 1-point if White re-enters.
- d) **-1** Exposing four blots is too risky.

Problem 66: The three chequers back on the 24-point is a particularly adverse situation for Black. He must, with this move, attempt to get at least one of the back chequers away. Any move that does not do something about the third rear checker is wrong.

- a) **+0** Moving 24/18 is almost a 'must' but Black should not give up his anchor with 24/22.
- b) **+2** Diversifying with 13/11 and coming out to the 18-point with the six, teasing White into hitting with a six and risking another checker back.
- c) **+4** Although this move is risky it is Snowie's 1st choice. Even if the slot on the 4-point is not hit, Black can only cover at the cost of breaking an essential blocking point. However it does start a back checker off and puts White in the air.
- d) **+1** This move is risky and again does nothing about the weak formation of three chequers on the-24 point. Hitting is correct but the six should run a back checker out.
- e) **-1** A safe move that does nothing to get one of the rear chequers away.
- f) **+3** An attempt to escape one of the rear chequers which, if not hit, will become a valuable builder. Jellyfish confirmed this as the best move but Snowie disagreed and placed it 2nd losing 0.019.
- g) **-1** A move that gets the third checker off the 24-point and places a builder on the bar-poi

Problem 67: White's only good dice are 65 or 66. Black must play to make these dice as adverse as possible for White. Jellyfish did not seem to understand this position and made no attempt to block 66 or place chequers to cause White maximum damage when he runs with 65.

- a) **+3** This is the correct move. It blocks 66 and gives three shots at the 13-

point if White runs with 65.

- b) **-1** Slotting the 8-point and no chequers within direct range to cover is too risky. White still has a four-point board and sometimes re-entry can be badly delayed. Picture the havoc White could create if he gets loose amongst all those black blots!
- c) **+0** Making all blots safe and blocking 66 is not really necessary because it reduces the number of dice that hit White when he runs with 65.
- d) **+0** This does nothing to block White's 66 and exposes a blot to an indirect shot with 65.
- e) **+0** The same defects as D but the indirect shot is now 64.
- f) **+0** Again the same defect as D and E but the indirect shot is now 63.
- g) **+1** Still does nothing to guard against 66 but it offers great shots if White escapes with a six.

Problem 68: This position needs to be played in such a way that it makes it more likely that White will destroy his home board.

- a) **-2** This is a novice's elementary blunder. Black should be making points in front of the white anchor, not behind it.
- b) **+2** This is the best move. Now if White throws a five or a four he will be forced to move from his 6- or 5-point and so commence the destruction of his home board.
- c) **+0** This move controls the outer boards but as White cannot play a five it may keep his board intact longer than with move B.

Problem 69: Black has been forced into a back game situation but with inadequate timing. Should Black play to increase his timing by exposing more blots for White to hit or is there any other alternative?

- a) **-2** A wasted move. Black does not want to make the 2-point so why slot it?
- b) **-2** With White rapidly extending his growing prime this move commits Black to a back game that has all the hallmarks of a disastrous gammon.
- c) **+1** Trying to make the 4-point which is fine when it works, but not so good when it is hit.
- d) **+0** All this does is run out a back checker but it's a tad too safe.
- e) **+0** Running part of the way and hitting loose on the 1-point is just a bit worse than D.
- f) **+2** Second best move, running a back checker out to aid the mid-point in



making another outer point.
g) **+4** Here Black seizes the 18-point and creates an anchor where he cannot be primed. By far the best move to escape a disaster.

Problem 70: The race is Black 125 pips, White 145. Being well ahead in the race Black needs to turn his attention to clearing the mid-point and must select the best move with this objective in mind.

- a) **+2** This prepares to clear the mid-point by moving one chequer to the 4-point. This does not create maximum flexibility but it does make the 4-point for when White moves off and perhaps leaves a shot.
b) **+0** The wrong move. Black should be moving one chequer from the mid-point.

- c) **+1** This is the 2nd best move from Snowie and the 1st from JellyFish. It saves two outside sixes so that Black can preserve his three landing points for as long as possible to enhance the probability of clearing the mid-point without leaving a shot.
d) **-1** The most adverse move. Black both reduces his landing points for the chequers from the mid-point and reduces the number of outside sixes.

MC: In his original text Robins says, "Jellyfish was again blind to the need for flexibility and selected 13/4 for its move. It does not seem to recognize the need for outside sixes." However, Fishy has been proven correct in this instance for 13/4 was deemed the best move after Snowie rollouts!

Rating your standard of play

Maximum score: 28

Minimum score: -11

Advanced	22 to 28
Higher Intermediate	16 to 21
Lower Intermediate	11 to 15
Beginner	6 to 10
Weak Beginner	1 to 5
Even Weaker Beginner	0 to -11

Well, how did you do? Check your score above to see how you fared.

Archive - Talking Turkey in Istanbul

By Michael Crane

In December of 1992, in Istanbul, Jay Whitehead and Rick Janowski played a 5 point match in the 1st Turkish Open. Jay recorded the match and now, thirteen years later Snowie and I have taken a close look at it.

Rick, a Biba member since 1990 went on to write code for Snowie and published a famous paper on the cube which subsequently formed the basis of his work on Snowie 3. This 38 page document is available as a pdf file and is on the CD-ROM version of Biba, as is this entire match.

I have been unable to find out anything about Jay - if you know anything about him please let me know. I think he is American, but I am not sure.

5 point match

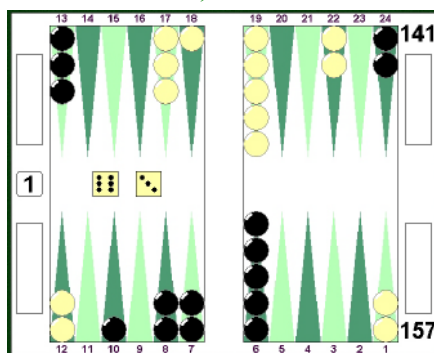
Game 1

Black **White**
Janowski : 0 **Whitehead : 0**
01) 63: 24/18 13/10

Nice to see that even as early as 1992 Janowski is moving the 'modern' 63 instead of running it out to the 15-point. And, on his first roll, Whitehead correctly hits instead of making his 4-point.

02) 21: 25/24 13/11 42: 13/9 9/7*
03) 41: 11/7 8/7 55: 13/8(2) 8/3(2)

Game 1, Position 3



Black 0 White 0
White to play 63

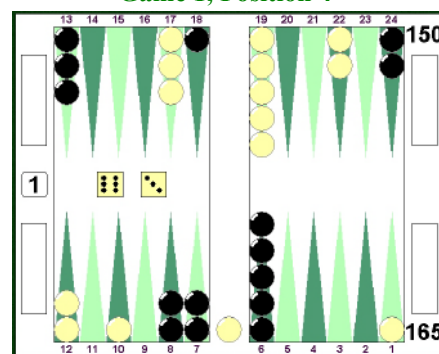
White has a decision to make here, hit the blot with 24/15* or make his bar-point with 13/7 and whatever takes his fancy with the three.

Making the bar-point looks very inviting, and it would certainly make it difficult for black to escape his runners - but it would be a grave mistake to do so. White is already 'trapped' behind black's bar-point prime and this 63 roll gives him an excellent chance to run a checker out and hit.

Mind you, black's reply of 61 off the bar is a cracking roll.

04) 61: 25/24 24/18* 63: 24/21 21/15*

Game 1, Position 4



Black 0 White 0
White to play 63

Another 63 roll for white and this time he's no choice - he has to play 25/22; it's the six that he misplays according to Snowie. He splits off the mid-point and hits on his bar-point whereas Snowie prefers 25/16. Both plays leave blots and the chances of black hitting one or more white blots is almost equal after either play: 13/7* = 27 rolls, 25/16 = 26 rolls.

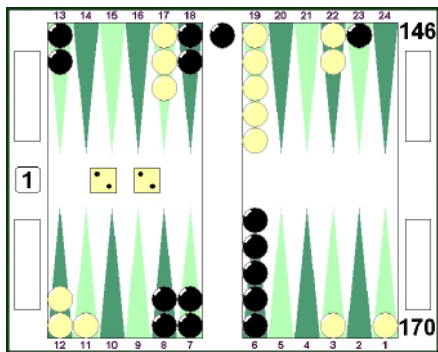
So, if they are that close then why is the hitting play wrong? Perhaps the sheer number of blots on the board might be a factor! With the actual play white will have five blots on whereas after the better play he'll have two fewer.

Black's reply off the bar is 62 and it's then white's turn to sit on the bar.

05) 62: 25/23 24/18* 63: 25/22 13/7*
06) 62: 24/18 13/11 32: 25/22 15/13
07) 66: Dances 62: 22/16 16/14*



Game 1, Position 7



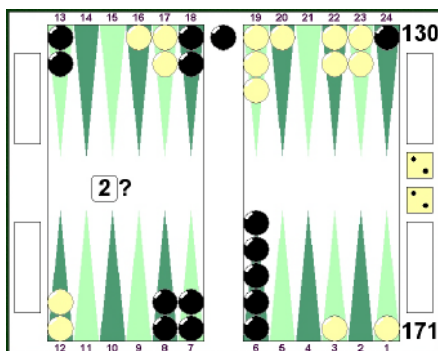
Black 0 White 0
White to play 22

Quite often two in the air is correct, and this is the play white made; but Snowie is concerned about the runners. One can escape with sixes but the other needs a combination to escape. With this in mind the better play is 24/20 6/4(2).

22: 6/4(2) 4/2* 4/2
08) 51: 25/20 25/24 53: 14/9 8/5*
09) 33: Dances

White's correct play 14/9 8/5* is bad news for black after he rolls 3s.

Game 1, Position 9



Black 0 White 0
White cube action?

Black's 33 has given white the opportunity to ship the cube across and black elects to drop - both actions in accordance with Snowie.

10) Drops
Doubles to 2
Wins 1 point

Game 2

Janowski : 0 Whitehead : 1

The 2nd Game starts with the same two opening rolls as the 1st, 63 followed by 42. In Game One Janowski correctly moved 24/18 13/10 and Whitehead correctly hit with his 42, 13/7*. However, in this game it's Whitehead who rolls the 63

and plays 24/18 13/10 -- but Janowski ignores the blot and makes his 4-point. instead.

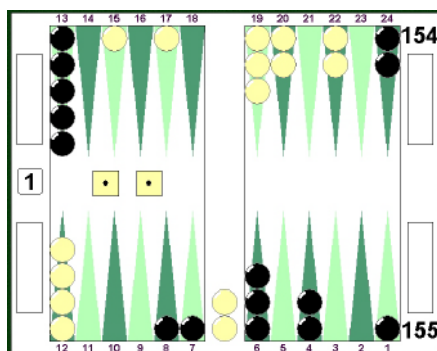
Either play with the 42 is acceptable, there being just 0.001 between them; or to put it in technical terms, sod all! The hit is favourite if one refers to the '*Replies to the Opening Move*' by Tom Keith in Bibafax 76.

01) 63: 24/18 13/10
02) 42: 8/4 6/4 33: 8/5(2) 6/3(2)

White's 33 is somewhat thwarted by black's 42 but it's still a great roll; making two very important inner board points. But, black's reply of 51 puts two in the air - but the euphoria is short-lived when white rolls *Snake Eyes*.

03) 51: 6/1* 8/7*

Game 2, Position 3



Black 0 White 1
White to play 11

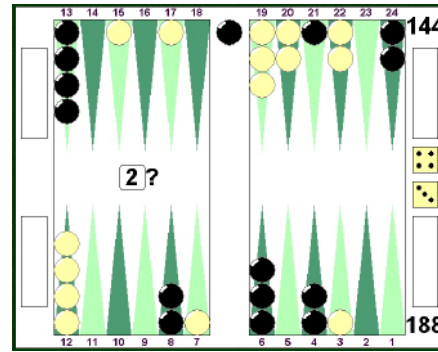
Obviously two of the ones are played 25/24*(2); but it's the remaining two that white misplays. He makes the 23-point anchor when he should be increasing his chances of hitting one or both of black's blots in the outer table by playing 24/22. The actual play gives only 6s and 5s whereas Snowie's play adds 4s, the difference being 30 hitting rolls as opposed to 25.

11: 25/24* 25/24 24/23(2)
04) 54: 25/21 13/8 51: 23/18* 23/22
05) 63: Dances

Spookily the 1st and 2nd games not only share the first moves, but the final moves (almost) as well.

In the position in the next column is can be seen that Black rolls another dancing number and white doubles him out! A correct decision by both players, according to Snowie.

Game 2, Position 5



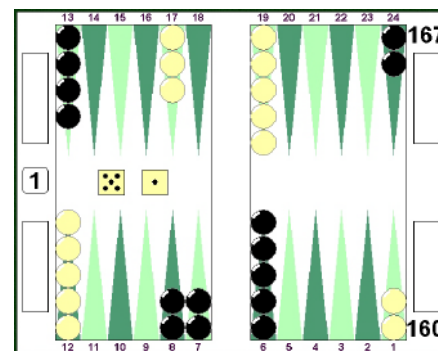
Black 0 White 1
White cube action?

06) Drops
Doubles to 2
Wins 1 point

Game 3

Janowski : 0 Whitehead : 2
01) 61: 13/7 8/7

Game 3, Position 1

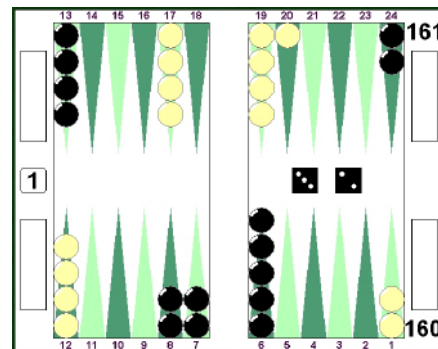


Black 0 White 2
White to play 51

White's play of 13/8 is quite correct, but slotting 65 is just playing into black's hands. Splitting the back checkers is better than the slot.

51: 13/8 6/5

Game 3, Position 2



Black 0 White 2
Black to play 32

Black appears to be blinded by the blot on white's 5-point and decides to take a chance and he makes his 4-point, 7/4 6/4!



No doubt he is hoping that if hit on his bar-point white won't be able to cover his 5-point blot - but that's a tall order.

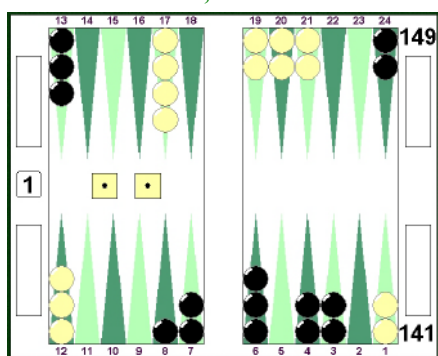
Snowie, looking at white's potential for making his 5-point decides that running both back checkers is best. This certainly puts the blot under pressure

02) 32: 7/4 6/4 41: 13/9 6/5
03) 61: 13/7 6/5

Now is the time to slot. White is occupied forming a prime and this diversion might just do the trick.

52: 9/4 6/4
04) 52: 8/3 5/3

Game 3, Position 4

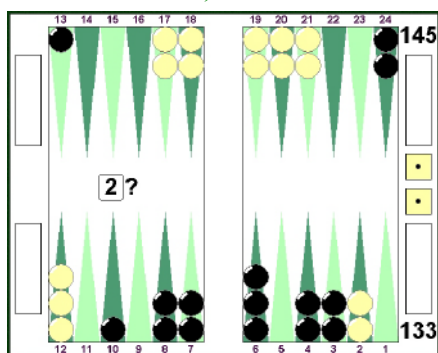


Black 0 White 2
White to play 11

The game was just becoming quite interesting . . . and then white rolls a Joker and spoils it!

11: 24/23(2) 8/7(2)
05) 53: 13/8 13/10

Game 3, Position 5



Black 0 White 2
White cube action?

In an almost prime vs prime position white, just 12 pips ahead, decides to cube. He's got shots with 1s and 53; but if he misses what happens then?

If this game continues without the hit then someone's prime is going to crumble

- white is the least likely but it's close. Too close to drop in Snowie's opinion. White has about 27% in this position - and that makes it a take.

06) Drops Doubles to 2
Wins 1 point

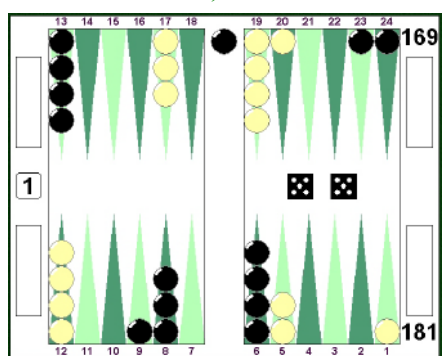
Game 4

Janowski : 0 Whitehead : 3
01) 41: 13/9 6/5 43: 24/20* 13/10

Black starts off with an aggressive move - and is punished for it immediately. Instead of his next move making a handy point it's used to re-enter off the bar.

02) 61: 25/24 24/18 32: 10/7* 7/5
03) 42: 25/23 24/20* 51: 25/20 6/5*

Game 4, Position 4



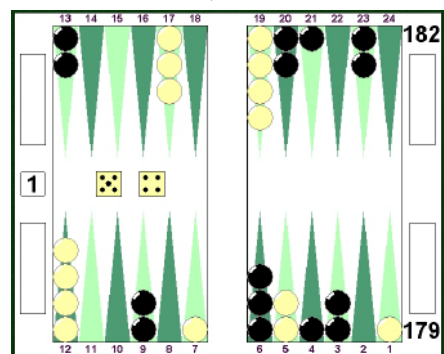
Black 0 White 3
Black to play 55

According to Snowie the actual play of 25/23* 8/3(2) 6/1* is a big blunder despite the fact that white has only four rolls that'll re-enter and hit; 55 44 22 and 11. The best play according to Snowie is 25/20* 13/8 8/3(2). I'm not happy with this move and of the two I prefer the actual move - but it is losing a lot of equity at -0.136. I suppose that the odds of being hit and of making a good anchor make it a better play; but I still can't convince myself to play it. Perhaps one of our more experienced 'experts' would care to expand on the position for the next issue?

04) 55: 25/20* 8/3(2) 6/1* 31: 25/24*
05) 62: 25/23 13/7 52: 25/20 20/18*
06) 44: 25/21 24/20 13/9 8/4

In the next position black is rather stripped in the outer boards and is more than likely going to move checkers out of white's inner board. With this in mind the actual play of 13/9 is just letting black have a free shot with one of the checkers he's most likely going to move anyway.

Game 4, Position 6

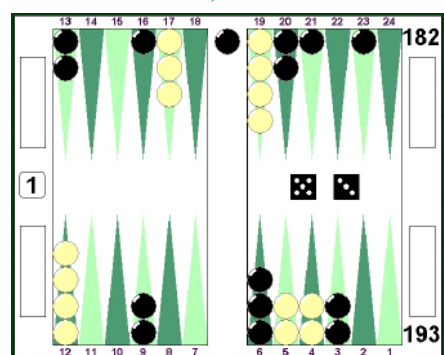


Black 0 White 3
White to play 54

White on the other hand has good control of both outer boards and plenty of spare checkers. So, no need to leave any shots, simply move 24/20 to give a spare checker for hitting in the black outer board and then pick up your own blot 18/13.

54: 18/13 13/9
07) 43: 20/16* 23/20 43: 25/21* 24/21

Game 4, Position 8



Black 0 White 3
Black to play 53

The key to making the correct play here is in white's outer board - make the 16-point by playing 25/22 21/16. It's a good point to harry the black checkers from and it is a good landing point for the runners. Picking up the 16-point blot 16/13 is too passive.

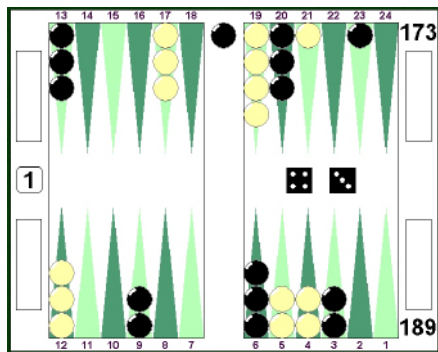
08) 53: 25/20 16/13 63: 13/7 7/4*

In the position on the following page black obviously has to play 25/21*, but playing 13/10 and teasing white's anchors is wasting a good builder and threat. Better to continue off the bar and carry onto the 18-point.

White's reply to the tease is to roll *The Girls* and move his anchor forward to his 15-point.



Game 4, Position 9



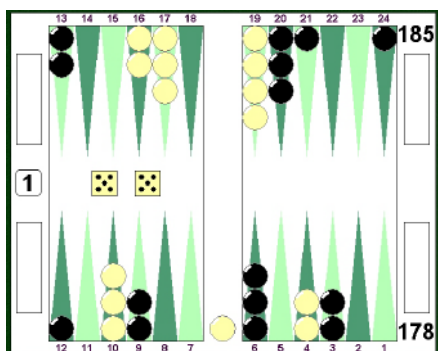
Black 0 White 3
Black to play 43

09) 43: 25/21* 13/10 55: 25/15*(3)

That'll teach black. Mind you, I don't suppose he fears whites awesome one-point board much!

10) 31: 25/22 22/21 64: 15/9 13/9
11) 62: 21/15 23/21 21: 13/11 11/10*
12) 61: 25/24 21/15* 64: 25/21 21/15
13) 21: 15/13 13/12*

Game 4, Position 13



Black 0 White 3
White to play 55

After a bout of hitting and counter-hitting it's refreshing to see that white resisted the obvious play of hitting on his 4-point. Instead he went for the far superior play of 25/15 15/10(2) and made an excellent blocking point.

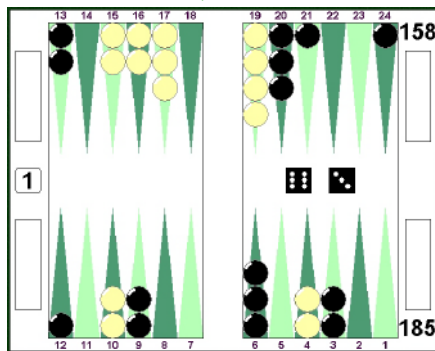
55: 25/20 20/15 15/10(2)

In the next position, making the 21-point anchor looks good but it would have been far better to have made the white bar-point. It would have given black great outer board control and made it difficult for white to clear his 15-point.

What lets the actual play of 24/21 20/14 down is the extra blot onto the 14-point; it more than doubles white's chances of a hit. In actual fact, white rolls 42 and gets the double hit. Again, with such a poor home board (on both sides of the board)

being hit aint much of a problem, though it does rob you of at least half a roll.

Game 4, Position 14



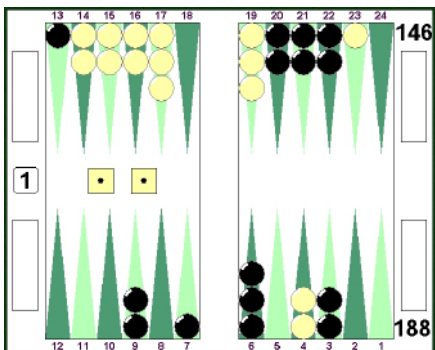
Black 0 White 3
Black to play 63

14) 63: 20/14 24/21 42: 15/11* 15/13*
15) 32: 25/22 25/23 42: 6/2* 13/11

White completes a 4-prime . . . in his outer board! And black responds by making a third anchor! This now leaves white with some awkward rolls coming up. He's got to either start moving his runners out else start crunching up his prime. He doesn't have any spare checkers except on his 8- and 21-points.

16) 63: 25/22 13/7

Game 4, Position 16



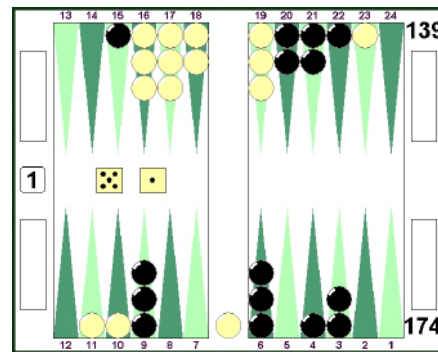
Black 0 White 3
White to play 11

Playing 21/20(2) white moves the runners forward. Then he plays 11/9 duplicating 6s. But, he doesn't want black to come off his 5-point necessarily.

Snowie much prefers to tease all of the anchors and plays 8/7(2) leaving a triple shot! Black can't move large numbers from the back and therefore he'll have to start isolating his runners if he rolls any.

11: 21/20(2) 11/10 10/9
17) 11: 13/9 43: 11/7 10/7
18) 21: 6/4 7/6 65: 20/14 20/15
19) 61: 21/15* 22/21

Game 4, Position 19

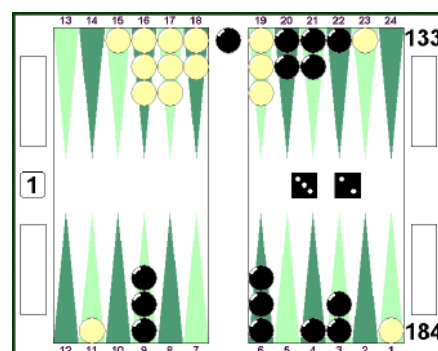


Black 0 White 3
White to play 51

Hitting 15/10* as white did is a blunder according to Snowie, and it's his 2nd best move! There's a fair chance that black will get another white checker back and white should do what he can to avoid that. Making the 14-point is much better playing 25/20 15/14.

51: 25/24 15/10*

Game 4, Position 20



Black 0 White 3
Black to play 32

There's nothing to be gained by hitting 25/23* but this is what black does, continuing with 23/20. His home board is non-existent and he has a blot on his 4-point. It's the 4-point he should have been concentrating on with 25/22 6/4.

20) 32: 25/23* 23/20 54: 25/20 14/10

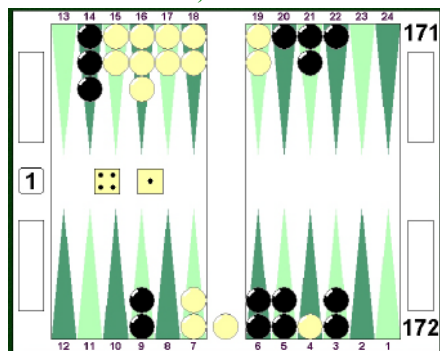
White regains his prime; and black's 61 run and slot starts to mix it. He wants as many checkers back as possible. The cube's in the centre and a gammon loss is a long way away at the moment.

21) 61: 20/14 6/5* 43: 25/21* 6/3*
22) 53: 25/20 25/22* 61: 25/24 24/18
23) 64: 20/14 9/5 65: 24/18 8/3*
24) 63: 25/22* 20/14

Continued on the next page



Game 4, Position 24

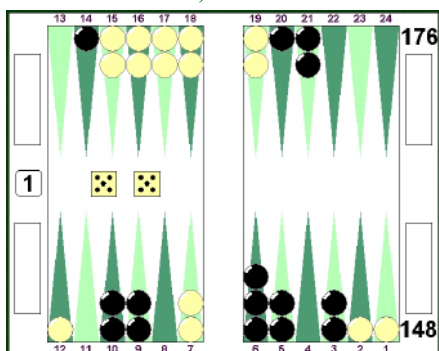


Black 0 White 3
White to play 41

Black's plan is to get a few white checkers back and then white's prime to crumble; and therefore white should not be helping him! But, by playing 25/24 9/5* that's exactly what white does! He should have made the 21-point anchor and kept a builder by playing 9/8.

41: 25/24 9/5*
25) 44: 25/21 14/10(3) 31: 21/18 24/23
26) 42: 10/6 22/20* 51: 25/24 18/13
27) 61: 20/14 21/20

Game 4, Position 27

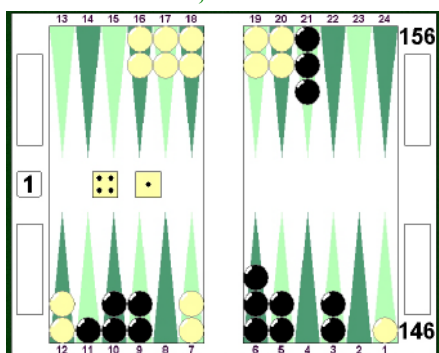


Black 0 White 3
White to play 55

White rolls a great double-five.

55: 23/13 10/5*(2)
28) 43: 25/21 14/11

Game 4, Position 28

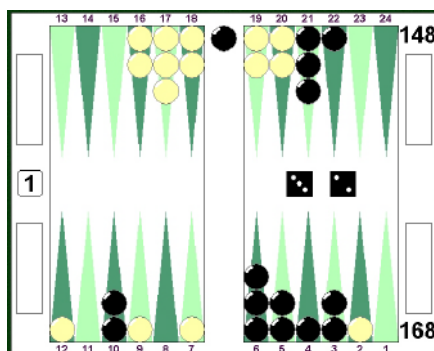


Black 0 White 3
White to play 41

Instead of hitting the blot, 18/14 (with 24/23 as preferred by Snowie) white plays off his mid-point, 13/8. This move loses a lot of equity, -0.462.

41: 13/9 9/8
29) 43: 11/8 8/4 21: 24/23 23/21*
30) 53: 25/22 9/4 11: 25/23 18/16*

Game 4, Position 31



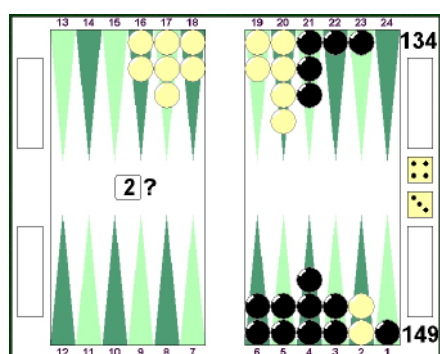
Black 0 White 3
Black to play 32

Black must concentrate on making home board points and this roll is ideal for doing just that; 25/22 gives him a good anchor and 6/4 a good point. But, he doesn't do this, he prefers to hit playing 25/23 10/7*. He can only escape with 6s from whites home board and can't really afford any more checkers being sent back.

31) 32: 25/23 10/7* 32: 25/23
16/13
32) 51: 10/5 5/4
At last he makes his 4-point!
44: 13/9(2) 9/5(2)
33) 53: 6/1 7/4

Unless black starts rolling 6s his board is going to crumble. White decides that he'd rather cash and ships over a 2-cube.

Game 4, Position 33



Black 0 White 3
White cube action?

If black drops this he's going to go 5-away, 1-away, a score at which his match

winning chances are a slim 15%. If he takes he's got around 20%. Taking means that white will win the match if he wins this game; so if black takes he's got to ship back the cube to four - but he can't win the match unless he gets a gammon - very unlikely.

Black passes, which is correct, but white's cube was wrong, he was, "Too good to double" and he should have played on for the gammon with the chances of one being approx 30%.

Doubles to 2
34) Drops **Wins 1 point**

Game 5 - Crawford

Janowski : 0 Whitehead : 4
01) 63: 24/18 13/10

Yet another 63 opener, but this time it's followed by a 62.

02) 62: 13/7* 13/11 66: Dances
03) 41: 11/7 24/23 41: 25/21 21/20
04) 22: 7/5* (2) 6/4(2) 41: 25/24 13/9
05) 64: 24/18 18/14

Up until now black had it all . . .

21: 13/11* 10/9
06) 43: 25/21 21/18 54: 11/7* 7/2*
07) 31: 25/22 25/24 33: 8/5 6/3*(2) 5/2
08) 33: Dances 66: 13/1*(2)
09) 64: 25/21 33: 9/6 8/5(2) 6/3

All black needs is a four . . .

10) 61: Dances 63: 24/18 18/15
11) 52: Dances 54: 9/4* 15/11

. . . now he needs two of them (although one would be good).

12) 66: Dances 64: 24/18 11/7
13) 65: Dances 44: 18/2
14) 31: Dances 54: 7/2 4/0

White finally picks up the blot. Just a few rolls between him and a whitewash for black.

15) 51: Dances 51: 6/1 1/0
16) 42: 25/21

Black finally rolls a 4 but it's too late and white rolls out for the match.

31: 3/0 2/1
17) 32: Dances 66: 6/0(2) 5/0(2)
18) 61: 25/19 13/12
Wins 1 point and the match.



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Ask The Ruleinator



Dear Rulienator.

I was taking part in a tournament recently when my opponent rolled a nice pick-and-pass number. She moved her checker to the correct point then picked up her dice forgetting to place me on the bar. She then realised her mistake and reached across, picked up my checker and placed it on the bar!

I called the TD over and complained and he told me my opponent was correct! I was astonished at this decision and appealed immediately. My appeal was upheld and my checker was returned to its original position. What would you have done in these circumstances?

Barman.

Dear Barman.

I too am astonished at the TD's decision! I don't know of a single serious TD that'd allow your opponent to get away with such a blatant act. This was clearly an illegal action and as such it was your right to allow it or not.

Where were you playing, on the Planet Zod? I have trawled the known universe for backgammon rules and procedures and I haven't found a single instance where this isn't described as an illegal action and where you are given the right to choose if it stands or not. It would seem that you've been unlucky enough to discover a TD that doesn't know the rules. Thankfully, you and your peers that formed the committee know far more than the TD does!

You don't mention why the TD found in your opponent's favour. I would be very interested in knowing on what basis they allowed her to move checkers around after completing her turn. Astonishing!

Personally I think it was a cop-out. The TD ruled against you knowing full well

the decision was incorrect and that you'd appeal and that the decision would be overturned. This way they get to be friends with everyone . . . or so they think. What happens in reality is that they come over as weak and ignorant. If a TD is too weak to apply the rules correctly (and in this particular instance everyone but your TD and your opponent would have made the correct ruling) or is biased towards a friend, then they should desist from directing immediately and leave it to those that know what to do and are not afraid to do it.

The cop-out decision is bad enough, but perhaps the TD didn't cop-out; perhaps they don't know the rules - God protect us against such amateurs!

Biba's TD, Michael Crane, has been directing tournaments for more than twenty years and as far as I am aware he's never had one single ruling decision overturned on appeal. Now that's what I call a TD! In future stick to playing in tournaments where the TD is beyond reproach and knows the rules inside out - it's for your own protection.

The Eden Plaj 2005 Backgammon Tournament

By Myke Wignall - From the sunny south of France

For those who don't know, Eden Plaj is a beach hidden in the Garden of Eden at the bottom of a hill in Cap D'Ail (Monte Carlo). It's a real chill-out place with shaded flower-covered terraces, cool tunes and fabulous views over a blue sea. And once a year, it's also host to a flock of backgammon players. So Paul (Gilbertson) and I got to know Maurice and the lovely girls who work at Eden and decided to start a little backgammon tournament. Backgammon, beach, great food, drink, girls and girls and more girls - what more could we ask for?

This being the second year of the tournament, we had some beautiful agate trophies made and were lucky to have added prizes donated by two of the most enthusiastic supporters of backgammon, John Slattery and Michael Crane. John donated a Hatrick Board for the winner (a great prize, and if you check out Hatrick Boards, you'll see they come in as many colours as John's suits!). Michael generously donated a Hotel Weekend with tournament entry and, for the runner-up, lifetime membership of Biba. All in all then, plenty of reasons to win.

So, to the tourney. Paul and I decided to play to make up the numbers, but this was a field of quality players and Paul was drawn against Lawrence Powell. Paul went 2-0 up and, in the next game, did something very unusual (for him) and rolled double 5s. At this point, he keeled over, literally. I thought it might be the shock of Paul realizing he's actually pretty good at this game and that he can also roll doubles. But no, it seemed my co-organizer was having some sort of Mediterranean Heart Attack!

Within minutes, two Baywatch guys had turned up, then seven paramedics and finally, three doctors (I'm sure there's a song in there somewhere). They decided to take him to the old fogey's clinic in Monte Carlo, which meant carrying Paul and all the gear up the hill. So I left Julie

Mooring with the dosh and the trophies and went up the hill with Paul, Doris and the medical team.

My trek up the hill in the wake of Paul and his entourage was a test of my stamina, I'll tell you. It's a hard enough climb at the best of times but I was laden down by a clutch of oxygen cylinders! They might have been for Paul's use but I can tell you I was tempted to take a drag myself!

Those of you that know this climb from the beach might also know that it almost claimed Ernie Pick last year when he collapsed on his way up it. As luck would have it Paul and I were on hand to assist - me giving mouth-to-mouth (well, very nearly!) and Paul asking Ernie for his pin number!

Before getting back to the more important news of the tournament, you might want to know how things went with Paul. The hospital was fantastic and after many

tests they revealed that Paul had a heart and it was very healthy.

Meanwhile the final of the tournament was between Peter Bennett and Tim Mooring. Tim beat Dods to get to the final, a great result for his first trip to Monte. Ultimately though, the deserving champion of the 2005 Eden Plaj Tourny was Peter.

Of course, this report is about backgammon, but it's also about the friends we meet through the game. Paul wanted everyone to know that he's still alive and kicking. He wanted to thank all the people in Monte - the docs, paramedics, Baywatch, barmaids, oh, and the nurse who shaved him! But most of all he wanted to thank the backgammon crowd for their concern - who knows, maybe next year we'll get the Cardio Hospital to sponsor a prize!

Finally then, a big thanks to all those who made the pilgrimage, with a special mention to David Naylor (great to see you back in Monte, David).

Until next year...



Peter (L) & Tim

Got access to the web? Got something to say about backgammon? You should join the . . .

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SAC Trophy

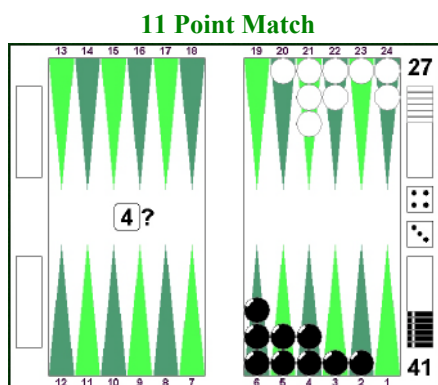
Report by Michael Crane

Main (8)

With an entry of thirty-two and a Main of eight there was always the possibility that anyone winning 5-6 could be the winner or runner-up.

It was at this juncture that Lawrence Powell sat down in the 6th round against John Slattery. Lawrence had so far swept aside all opponents and was the only one on 5-5; Slat's was on 4-5 and it was his task to stop Lawrence getting that 6th win and the winner's trophy.

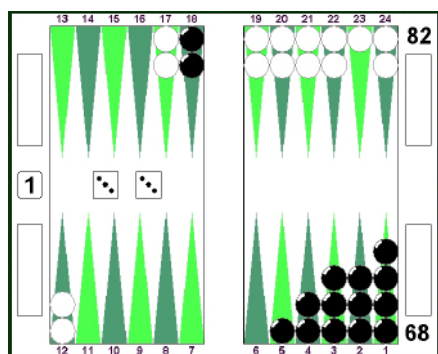
It was a match that went all Lawrence's way; although in the 3rd Game Slat's did help him a little! Look at this re-cube from Lawrence (white):



Black 1 White 2
White cube action?

Most of those around the table thought this was a good double from Lawrence; and it should have been an easy pass by Slat's. But, Slat's took!

According to Snowie this was a massive blunder losing 1.638. Lawrence went on to win the game and went ahead 6-1. He won the next game despite making a blunder of his own here:



Black 1 White 6
White to play 33

The benefit of recording matches on video for transferring to Snowie later is that you get to see how long each player takes over each roll. Lawrence took quite a while here to play both checkers from his mid-point and two from his 8-point. Snowie says that this loses 0.126 and that the better play would have been 8/2(2). This play would have given him better chances of a hit if Slat's rolled 5s or 6s.

In the end, though, it was Lawrence that prevailed - Slat's got a couple of points in Game Six taking the score to 3-9, but in the next Game Lawrence won a single on a 2-cube (No Double / Take, said Snowie, but it was only a small error).

So, Lawrence is the new SAC Champion, and in 2nd place was Tony Lee. Tony (or Swiss Tony as he was known last year) was hoping to win it for a third consecutive time, but Lawrence thwarted that ambition! And, before you ask why wasn't Tony playing Lawrence in the last round, he wasn't because they had already met earlier.

We used the new 'Average Ranking' criteria for countbacks and it worked very well indeed. A few players dropped out along the way but their doing so didn't affect any of their opponents.

TooT (12)

You should be aware now of the TooT - Two out of Three, the new extra bit on the Sunday for those in the Consolation without a win. This was shared nicely between Peter Chan and Anne Pocknell.

Oh, here's a word of warning for all US members (and there are quite a lot of them), Peter Chan will be in Las Vegas in November - - you have been warned!

Consolation (24)

You can always tell when it's summer time. Nothing to do with the sun or the weather - it's all to do with Steve Rimmer! If he's playing then it must be summer! Steve won 4-4 in the

Consolation; as did James Browning, and so they had a play-off for 1st and 2nd.

Despite a close fought game it was Steve that relegated James into 2nd place. Well done, Steve.

NB: Take a close look at the piccy - Long-term Biba members might recognise James from a few years back!

Continued on the next page

Top to bottom

Tony & Lawrence, James & Steve

David Naylor & Sharen

Gabriella Naylor & Michael



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Friday Warm-up (14) New-member, Chris Purchase (it's French, you know?) made a name for himself when he took home the dosh and weekend break. He had to beat Slat's in the Semi and Martin Barkwill in the Final to do it; so well done that man!

£50 Jackpot (4)

Dave Sanders might have been 'pressganged' into entering but he had the last laugh when he took home 2nd place when he lost in the Final to Peter Bennet.

Poker (16)

The old adage, 'A fool and his money are soon parted' could have been meant for Mick Butterfield. He was all-in several times; and buying back in several times. He spent an absolute fortune chasing the pot and in the end it finally paid off for him; but all he did was win back all of his own money and a fraction of everyone else's.

Myke 'Mad Mullah' Wignall came in 1st, laughing all the way to the bank, Mick 'Drunk Mullah' Butterfield took 2nd place; and, keeping up the family tradition, Paul 'I'm Never Playing Backgammon Again

(Probably!)' Gilbertson came 3rd.

Martin (Hemming) did tell me who came 4th . . . but who cares???

Next year Martin is to launch a Poker Grand Prix . . . read all about in the November issue of Bibafax or, if you can't wait until then, check it out on the Biba web site.

Finally

There was a very welcome face at the hotel this weekend. David Naylor put in an appearance with his wife, Gabriella. It was great to see him and to see him making such wonderful progress after his terrible cycling accident.

He might be a bit slower on his feet but the sparkle in his eyes is still there. He is back into production on the boards, with Gabriella's help (I have three in stock for immediate sale - contact me for details) and will be knocking them out slowly but surely in the months to come.



If anyone doubts David's return to full capacity, here's proof. I snapped him just about to snog my wife!

9th Mind Sports Olympiad Backgammon

By Michael Crane

Those attending the first day's play could be forgiven for thinking that there's a misprint in the title above: The 'th' shouldn't be there; surely it should say, "9 Mind Sports 2005 Backgammon Tournament" with the nine referring to the number of entrants for the first event!

In fact it wasn't that dire, there was actually eleven entrants . . . only two Beginners turned out and so they were added to the nine.

Weekend Tournament (11)

Saturday: A couple of Biba players were under the impression that the *Grand Prix* points awarded at the MSO would be very low due to the low turnout, but this wasn't the case. *Grand Prix* points are based upon wins, and with a possible six wins within the Swiss format the points available were the same as for a field of many more entrants.

One player very pleased by this was Adrian Jones - he's biting at John Slatery's ankles at the moment and, with Slaters absent this year he was looking to overtake him and show him a clean pair of heels!

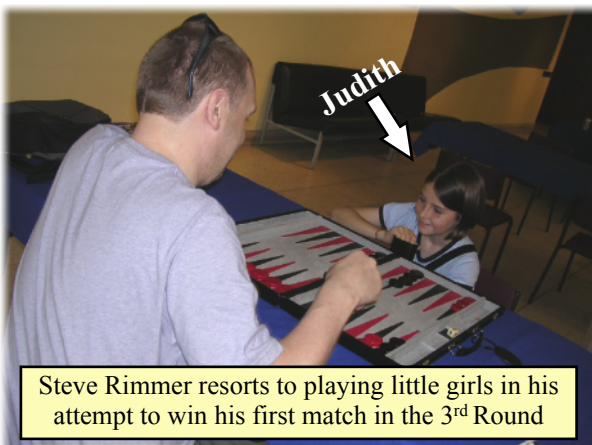
His plan got off to a good start with 2/2 but then Martyn Hamer stopped him in the 3rd Round.

Mahmoud Jahanbani was also on 2/2 and he joined Martyn on three wins after beating Fanika Petkovska.

Steve Rimmer was having a bad day, two rounds played and no matches won - his 3rd Round opponent, Judith Miller felt sorry for him and graciously allowed him to chalk up his first win of the Saturday!

Sunday: I see daft people! No, this isn't another misprint, I really do see daft people! At breakfast this morning a guy walked in: Hawaiian shirt, ragged shorts, ordinary black shoes, one grey ankle sock and one black sock with 2" high red bands, knee-length pulled up tight! Now what's that all about??

Anyway, back to the backgammon. Talking of back and backgammon, one of today's players has turned her back on backgammon and has gone off to play some card game called cabbage! Fanika

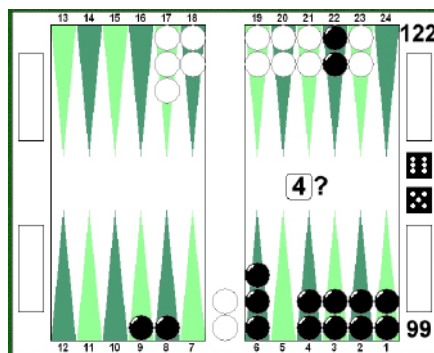


Steve Rimmer resorts to playing little girls in his attempt to win his first match in the 3rd Round

has been 'head-hunted' by Event Organiser, Tony Corfe, making his card playing entrants to 16! Ah well, at least I now have an even number.

Mahmoud got off to a good start against Martyn, leading 6-0. Martyn fought back though and it was he who went through with 4/4 with the score at 8-11.

Meanwhile Uldis Lapikens (black) was leading Adrian, 2-0 when this position arose:



11 Point Match
Black cube action?

Uldis needs to roll at least one six else his board will soon crunch - should he redouble?

According to Snowie, no. It says this is a no redouble/take. Uldis resisted the temptation and hung on to the cube . . . and, his board opened and Adrian re-entered and went on to win the two points. Then Adrian admitted he'd have dropped!

So, Round 5 and it's Martyn on four playing Jeff Barber on three. Can Jeff stop Martyn's run of wins? Well, yes he can. Jeff now joins Martyn on 4/5; and

Mahmoud beat Adrian to give us three on 4/5 and three on 3/5. So we are at least going to have one on 5/6 which will be the Gold or Silver should we get a second one.

A guaranteed 5/6 came from the Mahmoud vs Jeff match, with Jeff losing and remaining on 4/5 and facing the tie-break. Martyn beat Uldis to join Mahmoud on 5/6.

On tie-breaks, Martyn took the Gold, Mahmoud the Silver and by virtue of their head-to-head match, Adrian Jones pipped Jeff to the Bronze.

1-Point Wipeout (16)

Monday: A good turnout for the frantic 1-pointer Round Robin.

With 15 matches to play it was going to be a fairly open event. After Round 8 Steve Rimmer led with 12 points, with Alexander Baron on 10, followed by Uldis Lapikens on 9.5 and Martyn Hamer and David Rudolf on 9 each.

How were these points won? Well like this:

Win a single game = 1 point

Win a gammon = 2 points

Win a backgammon = 3 points

Lose a single game = 1/2 point

Lose a gammon or b/gammon = 0 points

Round 12 saw Steve Rimmer notch up his 12th consecutive win, leading with 16

Is this the monolith from Kubrick's
2001 - A Space Odyssey?



No, it's the new MSO Medal Award! This has sadly taken the place of the 'proper' cast medals of previous years. Price restraints have meant the end of the much sought after medals - but will this *Space Oddity* be as popular?

points. His medal hopes high, those chasing him needing gammons or better to overtake him. Could Steve go through 15 matches unbeaten? Martyn was just behind with 14.5 and Alexander on 13.5. On the outside was Mahmoud Jahanbani with just 9 points, but Mahmoud was to launch a late attack on the medals.

By Round 13 Martyn had closed the gap on Steve to just ½ a point behind. . . and Steve was still to lose a match. Mahmoud had moved to 12 points, with Uldis Lapikens on 13.5.

Round 14: Steve (still unbeaten) on 18, Alexander on 15.5 and Martyn on 17 (he was unable to beat Tony Wilkinson after being hit during the bearoff. Mahmoud had moved up to 15 placing Uldis behind him on 14!

So, the 15th and final Round:

Steve managed to go through the entire event without losing a match, and ended up with 20 points and Gold; Martyn failed to gain any more points losing a gammon to David Rudolf, his 17 points winning him Silver; and Mahmoud Jahanbani kept his nose in front of Uldis to take Bronze with 16 points.

This was an exciting event and right up until the end it was touch and go for the medals. I like this format - it is fast and furious and everyone enjoyed it.

Biba Challenge (18)

Tuesday: A good turnout for this event, better than the Weekend one, which is strange??

The format today is five x 5-point matches and straight away there were a couple of 1st Round mentionables: Ken-



Weekend Winners
Mahmoud, Silver - Martyn, Gold - Adrian, Bronze



1-Point Wipeout Winners
Martyn, Silver - Steve, Gold - Mahmoud, Bronze



Biba Challenge Winners
Kevin, Bronze - Fanika, Gold - David, Silver

At the 'lunch' break we had three players on 3/3: Fanika Petkovska (stunning 5-0 victory over Uldis!), Steve '1-Pointer' Rimmer, and David Rudolf - who seems to be making a name for himself winning all three at DMP!

Fanika won another match 5-0 and she was into the final round on 4/4. Her next opponent came from the David vs Steve match - and it was David who came through - yet again at DMP! Steve had led for most of the match but David managed to wrangle another DPM victory; much to Steve's dismay!

So, my job is a lot easier with a guaranteed 5/5 for Gold - the winner of Fanika vs David will win that, but there's going to be three 4s vying for the Silver and Bronze!

I went across to look at the David vs Fanika match and I saw that David was down 4-0 after a very short time. "What happened?" I asked.

"He refused an 8-cube" Fanika said.

"An 8-cube!" I exclaimed, "What're you doing throwing around 8-cubes?"

"Well he started it" laughed Fanika!

David might have started it, but it was Fanika who finished it . . . She won the match and the Gold.

neth Ho showed he was the better Ho brother when it comes to backgammon winning his first match against Martin Thompson, and David Rudolf gave Jeff Barber a run for his money taking the match to DMP - a game that David won; Jeff being plagued by rolling dice that fitted in nicely with the gaps in his home board during the bearoff!

The Silver went to David on countbacks, and Kevin Stebbing and Steve battled it out in a tie-break for Bronze, their countbacks being equal, a match from which Kevin came out on top.

Fanika is to return tomorrow in some nicer clothes for an 'official' photo. I'm looking forward to that!

Manchester Challenge (11)



Wednesday: It's raining again - in Manchester; now who would have thought it?! Despite this eleven wet backgammon players turned out to play five, 7-point matches.

Odd numbers always mean a bye and normally at Biba tournaments it goes to the lowest ranked player, however at the MSO we don't have rankings so I have to decide to whom the bye goes. I do this using my knowledge of the entrants and I then pick the player who hasn't fared so well in previous events. Today's first bye went to Kenneth Ho - thereafter it will be a random draw between those I deem 'worthy' of a bye. I have to avoid giving byes to players that have a reasonable chance of winning the event.

After Round 2 we had just two players on 2/2, Martin Thompson and Kevin; from which Martin went into the 4th Round on 3/3 following an unforced hit on Kevin's mid-point. The hit proved to be Kevin's downfall for it cost him a gammon on a 2-cube and the match!

So, Round 4 and it was down to Jeff Barber to stem Martin's collection of wins. Jeff couldn't do it and Martin went into Round 5 with a perfect 4/4. But, Martin had already secured the Gold because even if he lost he'd already beaten his nearest rivals on head-to-heads. Therefore that left Uldis and Kevin to fight it out for Silver and Bronze - a match from which Kevin came out on top leaving Uldis with the Bronze.

Finally: I had a bit of excitement today . . . someone tried to steal my laptop - and I was just 7 metres away from it!

I was watching a match with one eye on my Registration Desk



Fanika



Manchester Challenge
Kevin, Silver - Martin, Gold - Uldis, Bronze

when this guy strolls over and 'looks' it over, his body shielding the laptop. I spotted that his arms were tucked in close to his body indicating that he was doing something on the table out of my sight.

I walked over towards him from the side to get a better view and he turned around and walked out of the exit. When I got to my desk I saw that the power cable and USB mouse had been disconnected (ready for a quick lift); but by that time he'd got on his cycle and scarpered.

My eyes are peeled for his return . . . and he won't get away next time!

Olympiad Championship (10)

Thursday: Ten! If we get any fewer I'll be here on my own! The new pricing structure is badly affecting the entries for the backgammon - but at least we've been spared the cancellations that other 'sports' have suffered. The MSO is in crisis this year and its future is seriously in doubt. To survive it needs a sponsor; even a small one - £15 to £20 thousand would see it go into its 10th year: so if you know of anyone or Company willing to support it, let me know. There aren't any local backgammon players entered this year due to the higher costs involved, and a certain wedding and weekend tournament in Bristol has had an affect too!

But at least the ten players entered are going to get six, 11-point matches in and a good few *Grand Prix* points for each win.

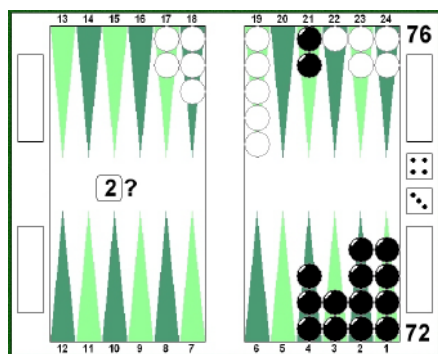
Adrian Jones is chasing those GP points and he got off to a good start beating Mahmoud. Other 1st Round winners were Martyn Hamer, Fanika, Uldis and Steve Rimmer, back from his day off for the Decamentathlon in which he came 3rd - an event I can't even pronounce let alone stand any medal chances in!

With the score at 9-8 to Steve, Tomas (w) offered a 2-cube. Steve did a pip count and calculated his 4-pip lead and decided to drop.



Spotted at the games, Sony's latest in micro technology. Isn't it amazing how small they make video cameras nowadays? This one is hardly visible! Can you see it just beneath the hand?

11 Point Match



White cube action?

I ran it through Snowie and it said, *Double, Take* giving Steve 31.1% for the match. He was facing a slight gammon loss of 1.6% which was acceptable. Steve dropped because he was concerned about pick-&-pass rolls or even pointing rolls, plus Tomas only had one bad roll, double-six.

Steve won the match on Crawford and he joined Adrian and Uldis on 2/2 with Adrian as his next opponent.. This left Uldis pitched against Martyn.

At the close of play on Day One we had Adrian through on 3/3 with Uldis, and three on 2/3; and medal chances could go to someone on 4/6 . . . It all depends on what happens tomorrow.

Friday: Another wet morning in Manchester. One of the competitors has just walked in drenched to the skin, his shirt plastered to his body, clinging to him like a page three girl on a footballer. "You should have brought an umbrella," I said to him as he stood there dripping all over the playing-room floor.

"I've got some wet weather gear," he replied.

"Well I bet you wished you'd got it with you," I said, watching water droplets running into his eyes.

"I have," he proclaimed, holding up a carrier bag!

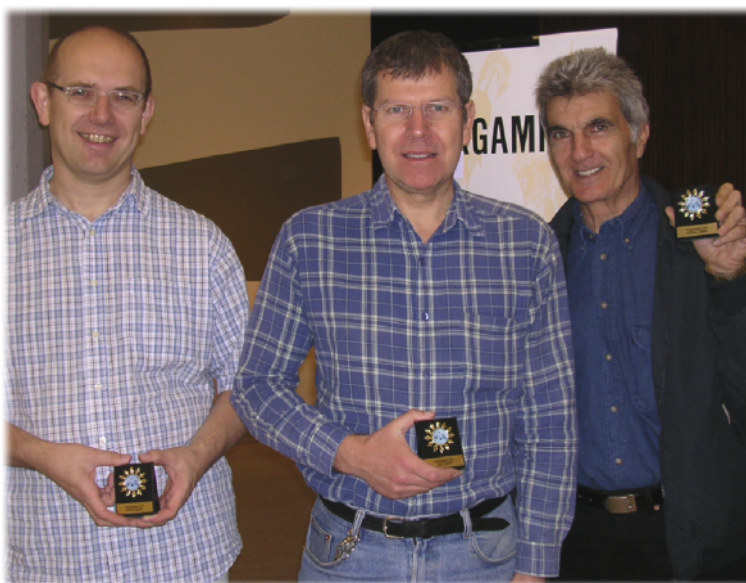
Back to the backgammon: Adrian lost to Uldis and so we have just one on 4/4, Uldis and two on 3/4, Mahmoud and Adrian. Still wide open on the medal chances. Mahmoud was pitched against

Uldis and Adrian against Kevin.

Uldis came through, 5/5 and guaranteed at least Silver, and Adrian came through on 4/5 and a good chance of Silver or Bronze.

In the 6th Round Uldis beat Steve to take the Gold with a perfect score of 6/6, and Adrian, already with 4/5 was sure to take Silver after no one else matched his four wins in Round 5.

This left the Bronze up for grabs between six on 3/6. Head-to-heads were not possible so it went to sums of opponent's wins and thus the Bronze went to Mahmoud.



Olympiad Championship
Adrian, Silver - Uldis, Gold - Mahmoud, Bronze

English Open (13)

Saturday: Over the last week, at every breakfast I have been trapped in an Edgar Allen Poe story in which the dining-room gets smaller and smaller and smaller.

Last Saturday it was fine; large, spacious, plenty of tables, chairs and cheery diners. Then on Sunday morning it was reduced by a third as a barrier was moved across the room partitioning off a section. Then daily the barrier crept across the room like a lichen creeping across the face of a marble statue - unstoppable, irreversible.

By yesterday morning the few diners in there were almost sitting on each other's laps as the barrier further encroached on the few tables left in the cramped space. I feared going down this morning, worried that I would be crushed by the barrier's final crunch.

But, lo and behold, miraculously the dining-room had reverted to its original size!

At last I have awakened from my *Po-eesque* nightmare and breakfast became its normal self

. . . much like the number of entrants in the backgammon!

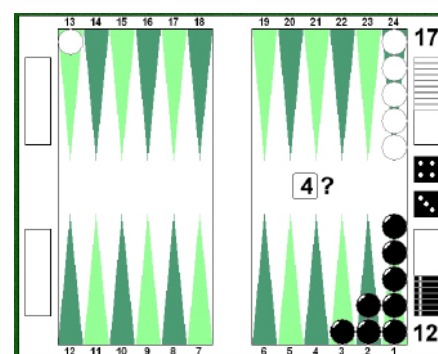
Once again an odd number have meant a bye. I had thought I had a nice even 12 for I heard one entrant say, "I'm going through to chess", but I'd misheard him for he actually said, "I'm through with chess!"

Going into Round 2 we had three players on 2/2: Uldis, Mahmoud and Kevin. The draw for Round 4 meant we were guaranteed at least one on 3/3 for Sunday. Uldis was the 'guaranteed' 3/3 and then it fell to Steve to stop Kevin from joining Uldis with another perfect 3/3 on the Sunday.

Kevin took the score to 10-5 Crawford, and then Steve began fighting back: 10-6, 10-8. Eventually the match ended and Kevin joined Uldis on 3/3 despite Steve's best efforts.

In Round 3, Jeff Barber (b), leading 8-3 against Paul Statter decides to put the game on the line and offers a re-cube to 4 in this position:

11 Point Match



Black cube action?

Paul, who's read a book or two did the maths and decided to take; which was correct. What was incorrect was the re-cube itself.

If Jeff just kept hold of the cube he was favourite to go 1-away, 8-away, giving him 94%; which leaves Paul a measly 6%. Paul currently has approx 15%, which, with the re-cube to 8 coming back



to Jeff is a damn sight better than the 6% he might have expected.

As you might have gathered, Paul recubed and won the match!

Sunday: Over the Bank Holiday weekend, Manchester is host to the Gay Pride festival. Canal Street (or *anal street* as some wag has made it by removing the first letters!) is the centre of the festival and the streets are buzzing with activity. With the future of Mind Sports Olympiad being in doubt perhaps now is the time to launch a gay section of MSO. There's a huge untapped market out there - all we need to do is make it attractive to them. We'll need some pink table clothes and free mascara dispensers dotted around the playing rooms! That should do it.

Anyway; back to normal: Uldis and Kevin battled it out to be the only one on 4/4. Uldis shot to an early 6-0 lead, then Kevin fought back to 6-8 at which stage Uldis woke up and moved it to 10-8 Crawford after a timely double-three got him a 2-cube gammon. Uldis failed to win the Crawford however, 10-8, he then used his free drop, but at DMP it was Kevin that ended up with 4/4.

Kevin then went on to win 5/6 against Mahmoud and in his 6th Round he made it complete by beating Gerhard Eslin, taking the Gold.

Silver and Bronze was between the 4s, Uldis, Paul Statter and Adrian Jones. The positions were based upon countbacks from which Uldis took Silver and Paul, Bronze.

Manchester Blitz (4)

Monday: Yep, that's not a typo, it really was four entries! The Manchester GB Club boycott has really made a difference to entries throughout the games. It is a real possibility that there won't be any



English Open
Paul, Bronze - Kevin, Gold - Uldis, Silver



Manchester Blitz
Steve, Bronze - Jeff, Gold - Uldis, Silver & Mahmoud

MSO next year - thanks, lads!

I know they're making a point about increased costs but for the first time in years the MSO have decided to try and make less of a loss and charge a fair price for the events. Over the years organisers Tony Corfe and David Levy have been putting in their own money to keep it alive - several thousands of pounds each. The poor attendance throughout this year (of which Manchester GB Club is a part) has meant that this might well be the last MSO ever.

On November 1st this year the MSO will decide if there will be a 10th or not. In the meantime they are looking for 'patrons' to make donations towards its staging. Already four individuals have given £500 each of their own money to help save it. Can you help? The MSO needs around £15,000 to stage the games next year and desperately need your help to raise it. Any amount, large or small will be welcomed. For further information go to their web site www.msoworld.com or contact me via Biba.

So, will this be the last ever Blitz? Let's hope not.

The four entrants, Jeff, Uldis, Steve and Mahmoud were drawn to play a double Round Robin. Four players chasing three medals.

After the first, all-play-round Steve Rimmer led on 3/3, Jeff had 2/3, Mahmoud 1/3 and Uldis was yet to win one.

Going into the final round we had Jeff vs Steve for Gold (each on 3/5) and Mahmoud and Uldis playing for Silver or Bronze play-off. Jeff beat Steve to take the Gold and Uldis knocked Mahmoud out, so it was Uldis vs Steve for the remaining two medals - and encounter from which Uldis took Silver and Steve, Bronze.

Amateur Backgammon Champion

Eight overall entrants qualified for this year's title and it was won by Kevin Stebbing.

Entrants had to enter at least four events and their top six Pentamind points would decide their final placing. Kevin won it with just four entries but he would have come second if Uldis Lapikens had won the Blitz.

The End

Well. That's it for another year. I don't know if there will be one next year - I hope so. It'd be a shame to let it die after the efforts of all concerned over the years. I'd like to say thank you to this year's entrants (in all events) and I hope to see you all again next year.

Finally, a big thank you - and goodbye to Dan Glimnie, poker organiser and Chief Arbiter. Dan is 'retiring' after nine years and he will be missed by everyone. Cheers, Dan.

9th MSO Backgammon Results

Weekend Tournament (11)				
Pos	Name	Wins	Amateur	GP
01	Martyn Hamer	5	95.00	
02	Mahmoud Jahanbani	5	95.00	13.42
03	Adrian Jones	4	75.00	9.29
04	Jeff Barber	4	75.00	9.29
05	Uldis Lapikens	3	50.00	6.19
06	Steve Rimmer	3	50.00	6.19
07	George Miller	3	50.00	
08	Michael Cresswell	2	20.00	
09	John Glynn	2	20.00	
10	Fanika Petkovska	2	20.00	2.58
11	Judith Miller	1	0.00	

Olympiad Championship (10)				
Pos	Name	Wins	Amateur	GP
01	Uldis Lapikens	6	100.00	24.77
02	Adrian Jones	4	88.89	9.29
03	Mahmoud Jahanbani	3	50.00	6.19
04	Steve Rimmer	3	50.00	6.19
05	Martyn Hamer	3	50.00	
06	Paul Statter	3	50.00	6.19
07	Jeff Barber	3	50.00	6.19
07	Kevin Stebbing	3	50.00	6.19
09	Fanika Petkovska	1	5.55	2.58
10	Tomas Kosicka	1	5.55	

English Open (13)				
Pos	Name	Wins	Amateur	GP
01	Kevin Stebbing	6	100.00	24.77
02	Uldis Lapikens	4	83.33	9.29
03	Paul Statter	4	83.33	9.29
04	Adrian Jones	4	83.33	9.29
05	Mahmoud Jahanbani	3	50.00	6.19
05	Steve Rimmer	3	50.00	6.19
07	Gerhard Enslin	3	50.00	6.19
08	Jeff Barber	3	50.00	6.19
09	Alex Wilkinson	3	50.00	
10	Martyn Hamer	2	20.83	
11	David Rudolf	2	20.83	
12	Tony Wilkinson	1	8.33	
13	Alexander Baron	0	0.0	

Manchester Blitz (4)			
Pos	Name	Wins	Amateur
01	Jeff Barber	4	100.00
02	Uldis Lapikens	3	66.67
03	Steve Rimmer	3	33.33
04	Mahmoud Jahanbani	2	0.0

1-Point Wipeout (16)			
Pos	Name	Wins	Amateur
01	Steve Rimmer	20.0	100.00
02	Martyn Hamer	17.0	93.33
03	Mahmoud Jahanbani	16.0	86.67
04	Alexander Baron	15.5	73.33
05	David Rudolf	15.1	73.33
06	Uldis Lapikens	15.0	73.33
07	Jeff Barber	13.6	50.00
08	Tomas Kosicka	13.5	50.00
09	George Hall	13.1	50.00
10	Tony Wilkinson	13.0	50.00
11	Philip Swanton	11.5	33.33
12	Martin Thompson	9.6	23.33
13	Chris Carter	9.5	23.33
14	Fanika Petkovska	8.0	13.30
15	Alex Wilkinson	7.5	6.67
16	Joey Ho	7.0	0.00

Biba Challenge (18)			
Pos	Name	Wins	Amateur
01	Fanika Petkovska	5	100.00
02	David Rudolf	4	88.24
03	Kevin Stebbing	4	88.24
04	Steve Rimmer	4	88.24
05	Uldis Lapikens	3	67.65
06	Mahmoud Jahanbani	3	67.65
07	Martyn Hamer	3	67.65
08	Martin Thompson	3	67.65
09	TJ	2	38.23
10	George Hall	2	38.23
11	Tomas Kosicka	2	38.23
12	Jeff Barber	2	38.23
13	Alexander Baron	2	38.23
14	Alain Dekker	2	38.23
15	Kenneth Ho	1	17.63
16	Chris Carter	1	17.63
17	Josef Kollar	1	17.63
18	Andrew Smith	0	0.0

Manchester Challenge (11)			
Pos	Name	Wins	Amateur
01	Martin Thompson	4	95.00
02	Kevin Stebbing	4	95.00
03	Uldis Lapikens	3	65.00
04	David Rudolf	3	65.00
05	Jeff Barber	3	65.00
06	Mahmoud Jahanbani	3	65.00
07	George Hall	2	30.00
08	Fanika Petkovska	2	30.00
09	Josef Kollar	2	30.00
10	Kenneth Ho	1	10.00
11	Peter Horlock	0	0.00

Continued on the next page ►

9th Mind Sports Olympiad Amateur Olympiad Championship

Name	Points
Kevin Stebbing	333.24
Uldis Lapikens	324.33
Mahmoud Jahanbani	314.32
Martyn Hamer	305.98
Jeff Barber	290.00
Steve Rimmer	288.24
David Rudolf	247.40
Fanika Petkovska	163.30



**Amateur Champion
Kevin Stebbing**

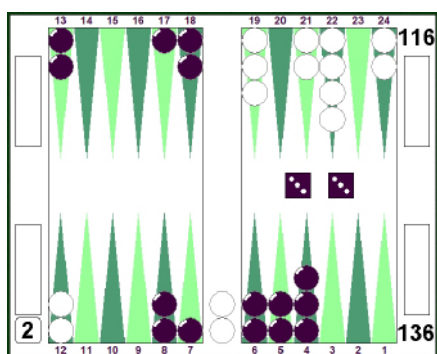
Grand Prix Points			
Mahmoud Jahanbani	13.42	6.19	6.19
Adrian Jones	9.29	9.29	9.29
Jeff Barber	9.29	6.19	6.19
Uldis Lapikens	6.19	24.77	9.29
Steve Rimmer	6.19	6.19	6.19
Fanika Petkovska	2.58	2.58	
Paul Statter	6.19	9.29	
Kevin Stebbing	6.19	24.77	
Gerhard Enslin	6.19		
These have been added to the GP Totals			

Competition 2005 No2, 7601-06 Answers

By Michael Crane

Welcome to the 2nd part of the 2005 Competition. We only had four entrants this time – which is a little low but at least it gives entrants a 25% chance of winning the £25 towards accommodation at their next tournament.

7601



**11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 33**

In our first problem all entrants agree on at least one move: 13/7. On his own is ...

Bob Young: 18/15(2) 13/7

Don't overplay the position by breaking the prime and creating builders for the open points, make the prime first, after all that was why the slot was there in the first place, and then look around at the remaining two threes. The only real danger is getting one or two checkers eventually hit and trapped should White enter well, so bring the last pair of checkers along safely together, and that should just leave the single checker to bring past the mid-point. I rule out making the 2-point with the 8-point checkers, it leaves them out of

play should White enter on the 3-point and eventually anchor there.

This looks a little untidy with the two blots in White's outer board. Here's a couple that agree on a tidier distribution:

Richard Biddle: 17/11 13/7

We'd like to be able to get the gammon here, so I think the five-point prime is essential by playing one man down from the mid-point. How do we best use the other two fives?

I'm going to suggest keeping the opponent's bar-point intact as insurance and leaving the single blot on the mid-point in case we might want to make that point again later. We do not need to worry about our opponent throwing double ones as a hit does not harm us too much.

Rodney Lighton: 17/11 13/7

Possible plays are 8/2(2) or 13/7 with something. Blitzing with 8/2(2) should win more gammons but will lose more games.

Difficult to decide whether the equity of going for the gammon is more than the priming play, but I will go for making the prime, which should make the win fairly certain. If White anchors on the 24- or 23-point Black will be able to cube White out. 17/11 for the final threes to give maximum coverage for the back of the prime.

The blitzing play 8/2(2) doesn't improve gammon by much, it increases from 32.5% with 17/11 13/7 to 33.1%

Steve Hallett: 13/10(2) 10/7 8/5

Black is behind in race but with a three point board and two of White's men on the bar. White has four a point board which could be useful if ever he manages to hit any of Black's checkers. Black's game plan should be to close White out for a gammon but not to lose sight of the cube if White anchors quickly and gammon probability goes down.

Possible plays:-

- 13/7(2)
- 13/10(2), 10/7, 8/5
- 17/14, 13/10(2), 10/7
- 17/11, 13/7
- 17/5

Because the cube hasn't been turned and because of White's strong board I don't think plays which expose Black to 11 & 22 jokers should be played so discount leaving a blot on the 14- or 13-points.

So we now have the question whether to lock up the five prime with 13/7 or to bring builders in with 17/5 or 13/10(2), 10/7, 8/5. Both of the latter plays have the advantage of four active builders and of the two I think 13/10(2), 10/7, 8/5 is best so what's it to be?

13/7 is safe and locks up the five prime but being an attacking player I go for 13/10(2), 10/7, 8/5 as the extra builder almost doubles the number of pointing rolls and you still have the option of making the five prime later and only if White anchors on the three point would he be able to take a double.



Steve decides on abandoning a five-prime in favour of attacking inner-board points. However, our resident 'know-all' doesn't he agree. He agrees with the previous two above.

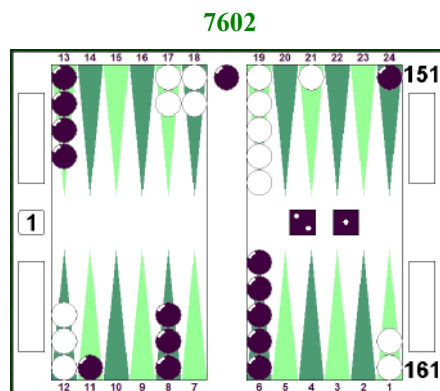
Snowie: 13/7 17/11

This was a much more difficult set of problems than the previous ones, in part because the choices for a number of the problems were extremely close in terms of equity.

The first position is a case in point. Black is playing on for a gammon and can always cash the game if things start to go awry. For that reason the game plan here is to blitz if the opportunity arises but as a back-up to make sure that his prime is strong enough that he can cash should White anchor somewhere in Black's board.

This should make it clear that two of the 3s must be played 13/7 securing the 5-prime. For the other two the choice is between 13/7, putting a builder in place ready to attack, and 17/11 preparing to build the full prime by bearing on, and subsequently making, the 9-point.

After thousands of roll-outs the two plays dead-heated! Because I have to give an answer I will go with 13/7, 17/11 as that play was ahead by 0.001 points of equity after my final set of rollouts!



11 point match
White 2 Black 2
Black to play 21

The first two entrants agree on making the anchor.

Bob Young: 25/23 24/23

Why give White anything? The 23-point anchor is no better than the 24-point one, while leaving the rear men split invites White to attack with good rolls, and leaving the blot into the outfield gives White a shot to nothing on that side of the table. (Did I really choose this option?, the

valium must be working earlier this evening!!) yeah yeah, you're right, making the 23-point freezes the 8-point checkers, they no longer are active builders for the blot in Whites home board, and White cannot hit directly the blot that Black has, so any hit there would risk having the White blot in his home board being sent back - .so, changed my mind, the time clock keeps ticking, only three seconds left before I disappear for ever, so the top line is - 25/23, 24/23

The 23-point anchor is preferable to the 4-point; but not by a lot.

Richard Biddle: 25/23 24/23

This is so early in the game; we are still deciding our strategy. Our opponent is ahead in the race and beginning to build a prime. We must put pressure on the outer points in that prime by making the 2-point. This limits what our opponent can use for builders to the 4-, 6- and reluctant mid-point. This is more advantageous than making the 11-point and may force him to split his back men next move and 'come under the gun'.

Good reasoning. Richard likes to pile on the pressure when he can.

Rodney Lighton: 25/24 13/11

Possible moves are 25/23, 24/23 or 25/24, 13/11 or 25/22. 25/22 leaving three blots looks too loose. 25/23, 24/23 is OK but the 23-point anchor is not much better than the 24-point anchor. Because Black has made no improvement from the starting position I will grab two assets with 25/24, 13/11.

The 23-point is better by 0.026 equity and the 13-point blot isn't under any real danger at the moment. Our final entrant favours the slot!

Steve Hallett: 25/23 6/5

Second roll of the game what to do?

Black could anchor up and make the 11-point with 25/24, 13/11 or just anchor up with 25/23, 24/23, or even 25/22 trying to make a more advanced anchor; but this play just allows White to attack without much gain. A much better play I think is 25/23, 6/5, unstacking the heavy 6-point, slotting the 5- (golden) point and duplicating White's four's to hit or cover

If the opponent slots in early the part of the game and you don't hit the slotted checker a counter slot of your own is usually best, especially in this case with the added builder on the 11-point and

back men split.

Risky, and not really worth the fours. Snowie is torn but opts for the anchor that its experience of such positions says is correct.

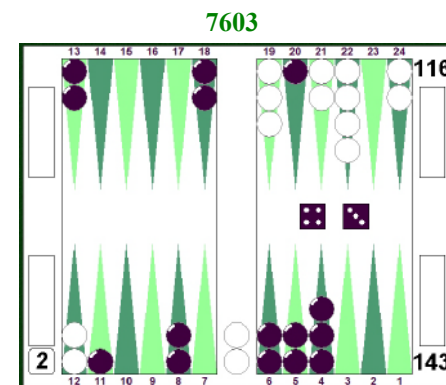
Snowie: 25/23 24/23

This one will cause some debate. There are three candidate plays: (a) 25/24, 13/11; (b) 25/23, 24/23 and (c) 25/23, 6/5. 25/22 should be considered and rejected as too loose.

Partly this is a matter of style but long analysis of this type of position using my silicon chips has shown me that (b) is the right move here.

It creates an anchor, potentially freezing the men on White's 8-point, and stops any attack by White. Black's plan is then to build a strong forward position to contain White's back men. Of course if White can't cover his blot on his 4-point Black may be able to attack it next time.

The other two moves (a) and (c) are not blunders or even errors and I wouldn't argue with a chouette partner who wanted to play either. It is just that long experience has shown me that the anchor play is the strongest in this type of position.



11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 43

We have another two agreeing on the best move, one almost as good and one well down on equity. The first one nearly made it.

Richard Biddle: 11/7 13/10

I suspect this is the position in the roll before 7601. Looks like 11/7 20/17 was played, so that must be a contender. It is safe with no return shots. Can we improve on this? I like slotting our bar-point in order to make the 5-point prime which is what we do in 7601. But I think we need to take a little risk to ensure we do



make it next time (even though I know the next roll will be 3-3!). I would be prepared to risk an opponent's roll of double ones and play down from the mid-point to spread the builders.

Giving away Snake Eyes relegates this play to 2nd place. Our next entrant is out on his own.

Rodney Lighton: 11/7 8/5

This position is the precursor to 7601. Black played 11/7, 20/17 in an attempt to make the prime and avoid a 11 disaster. I don't agree with that, preferring to go for the blitz play at this point with 11/7, 8/5 which leaves four builders for the 3- and 2-points and three builders for the 1-point. This gives great chances for a successful blitz.

Going all out for the Blitz, but that dreaded double-one would be a set back. As before the remaining two agree with Snowie (or vice versa!).

Bob Young: 11/7 20/17

This is the position used to generate 7601, so assuming it was a match between Ima Worldchamp and Barry Big-play, then I shall go along with their choice of move! That is to say, don't overplay the position by using the 8-point to make extra builders, keep that point, slot the bar-point with the double advantage of it being a vital next blocking point, or a useful builder for the next natural point in the home board. Obviously it wasn't Barry Bigplay on roll.

Good thinking, Bob. Steve Hallett sort of agrees.

Steve Hallett: 11/7 20/17

Continuation of question 7601. Black, further behind in race but still with two of White's men on the bar.

The question is should White be going aggressively for the gammon with 11/7, 8/5 bringing four builders in but paying off to 11, or play completely safely with 20/13 or 20/17, 11/7?

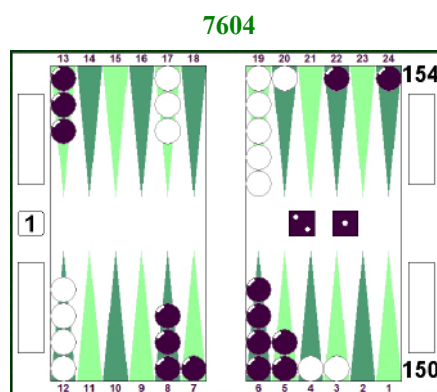
Of the two safe plays 20/17, 11/7 is best giving three builders and allowing Black the chance of making a five prime next roll if he can't continue the attack. So the four must be played 11/7.

So now we have a choice of three's, 20/17 or 8/5. Because Black is further behind in the race and his builders are further away I think this time he should play safe.

Snowie: 11/7 20/17

This is obviously Problem 1 one roll earlier. All the comments made there apply here as well. The correct plan is to slot the bar-point with the idea of building the prime so that Black will always have a redouble whenever White rolls a joker.

The correct answer will therefore include 11/7 with the 4. For the 3 there is virtually no difference between 20/17 and 13/10 but as 20/17 doesn't give White a potential joker with double ones it just gets the nod. Again the equities are so close that the two plays are virtually dead-heated. However, the winner by a short head is 11/7, 20/17.



11 point match
White 5 Black 5
Black to play 21

We have one entrant all on his own this time, Bob is the only one not opting for the double hit. Ironically it was his first reaction to play this move but he talked himself out of it!

Bob Young: 22/20* 8/7

The double hit was my first reaction, but that prime is just waiting to be completed. I could do both, make the prime and hit on the 4-point, but any three and White is back in the game. So, I chose to hit the blot in White's home board, make the prime and see if White can roll a three or a four. It is a race after all.

The rest all agree . . .

Richard Biddle: 6/4* 4/3*

Not much to say here, except for 'two on the bar is better by far'. Yes we can consider hitting the opponent's home board slot or making our bar-point, but all these tasks can be performed next roll because only four rolls (doubles) allow White the opportunity to enter and play round the board. Wish we had doubled before the roll.

Rodney Lighton: 6/4* 4/3*

Choices are 24/22, 8/7 tidying everything up with a nice 4-prime and a 22-point anchor or the double hit. The pure play is pretty, but the double hit looks better, with good chances of picking up Black's blot on the 20-point and gammon chances. Note that Black has a better home board, so is at an advantage in a blot hitting contest.

Steve Hallett: 6/4* 4/3*

The race is fairly even with Black having a stronger position and White having three loose blots. The big question is why hasn't Black doubled?

So back to the position: Should Black hit two checkers with 6/4*, 4/3* or hit one checker and lock up the four prime with 22/20*, 8/7 or even 8/7, 6/4*?

Of the two plays making the four prime 22/20*, 8/7 is best sending a third man back and gaining in the race. So what's it to be? I would automatically play 6/4* 4/3* over the board and even now after studying the options with White having no board and the blot on his five point I still think it's the best.

So old, Hand Grenade fails to go off – pity, he put up such a convincing argument.

Snowie: 6/4* 4/3*

Only two plays to consider here: (a) 6/4* 4/3* and (b) 22/20*, 8/7. Any other play is a huge blunder. The main difference between the plays is the doubling cube. After (a) there are far more sequences where Black will either double White out or give him a very difficult decision next roll.

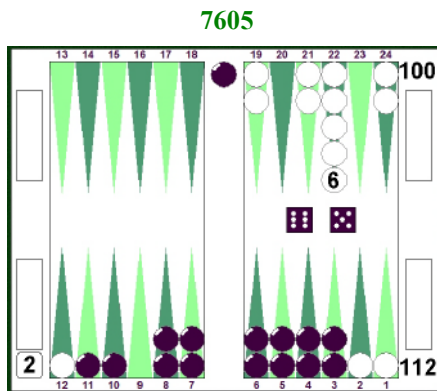
(b) is likely to lead to Black having the advantage but with White having long-term equity through an anchor. This will create a non-volatile position where Black may not be able to double for some time.

In backgammon you want to put your opponent under pressure, give him difficult decisions and the chance to make mistakes. (a) does precisely that. (b) is an error but not a blunder.

For our next problem again we have one entrant all on his own but this time Snowie agrees with him. The rest all stick together – but according to Snowie they're just a bunch of wimps!

We start with the 'Lone Arranger', Bob:





11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 65

Bob Young: 25/20 11/5

Enter and wait back in White's home board, and Black may well pick up the third blot as it comes into range. 11/5 means that a roll of 62 will not be duplicated, hit the blot or roll the prime forward (if 10/4 had been chosen).

Richard Biddle: 25/20 11/5

Enter with the five but stay there, to try and pick up the opponent's runner on the mid-point. We have a cosy six-point prime so we are looking pretty. Still we would like the gammon, so we need the third man back and the opportunity to lift one of the back men in the air. The six is played to the 5-point. Hopefully this builder can be used to hit next time.

Steve Hallett: 25/20 11/5

Black has this game tied up with a six prime and control of the cube. Black's game plan should be to play for the gammon but not lose sight of the cube if the gammon probability drops. The five of course is played 25/20.

So we now have a choice of sixes:

- 20/14
- 11/5
- 10/4
- 8/2*

I can't see the point of hitting with 8/2* and allowing White a chance of rescuing the game so I reject 8/2*. So we have the choice of staying on the 20-point or not. If we are staying 11/5 or 10/4 there doesn't seem to be much difference except for bearoff, spares higher up allow for greater flexibility so I suppose 11/5 is best

So whether to run or not?, I say not, staying behind gives Black better chances of picking up third checker.

Steve considered the attacking play of 8/2 but didn't want to give White a*

chance to rescue the game. Pity, for it was the 'best' move on the rollouts. However, vox populi as they say, so the Three Wimpeteers get top marks.

Not known for his aggression, Rodney goes for it.

Rodney Lighton: 25/20 8/2*

Hitting on the 2-point is certainly risky with White having a four point board, but the safe plays of 11/5 or 10/4 give White a chance to anchor on the 23-point drastically reducing our gammon chances. Note that White's stack on his 3-point is awful and that he is unlikely to be able to improve his home board even if he does re-enter with a hitting two.

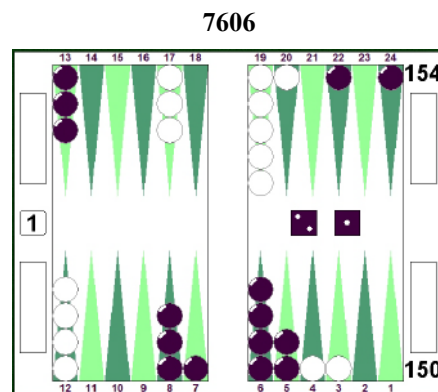
Although three wrongs make a right I'm awarding nine points to the second choice for it was the move I'd have played.

Snowie: 25/20 8/2*

The question here is whether to play completely safe with 25/20 with either 11/5 or 10/4 or to go for the jugular with 25/20, 8/2*.

The latter incurs some risks of losing to a miracle sequence by White, normally starting with a 62 played 25/23 23/17*. Miracle sequences do happen (else why would we play the game?) and Black loses 3.8% more games with this play. However, he is compensated by winning nearly 8% more gammons. This more than offsets the losses and makes 25/20, 8/2* the right play although not by that much.

Computers such as myself have taught you carbon life forms to take more risks to win gammons and this is finally getting through to you. Match equity tables used to be based on a gammon figure of 20%. We have taught you that with correct play that figure is closer to 26%, precisely because of the approach that should be taken to problems such as this one. QED the correct move is 25/20, 8/2*.



11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 42

Do Rodney and Snowie have a pact? Or are the other just ganging up on Rodney? Again Rodney is out on his own with just Snowie for company.

Rodney Lighton: 8/4* 6/4

Obvious choices are the double hit with 18/14*, 6/4* or make the 4-point with 8/4*, 6/4. Two on the bar is always nice, but the 4-point made with one on the bar looks sounder. Leaving the blot on White's bar point has advantages, if hit Black gets return shots, if not hit Black has a good chance to make a better anchor.

The double hit is the favourite with the others (except Snowie). Even old 'HG' goes for it this time!

Bob Young: 18/14* 6/4*

The natural hit and point would leave a 'mere' twenty five return hits from the bar, and is far too high a price to pay. Hitting twice leaves just twelve rolls to enter and hit, anything else doesn't look safe enough to consider.

Well, that was all a bit short of the verbals for me, but that must be a good thing I expect you are saying right now, and I am sure you are right!

There's Bob, doing his sums and working out what might happen next roll.

Richard Biddle: 18/14* 6/4*

Now what's the expression I used in 7604, ah yes, 'nuff said.

Well, it might be 'nuff for you but I was expecting a bit more!

Steve Hallett: 18/14* 6/4*

Simple question this: Hit two checkers with 18/14*, 6/4* or one checker with 18/14*, 13/11 or 18/14*, 23/21 or make a point with 8/4*, 6/4.

Because Black is so far behind in the race I think he has to hit the blot on the 11-point even though he has no board and the 4-point would be so much better, the race is the deciding factor so I reject 8/4*, 6/4.

So the question now is the double hit or not: Of the not-hit moves there doesn't seem to be much difference but I would play 13/11 to bring another builder into action; but the best play must be the double hit, putting two of White's check-



ers on the bar and taking away all of his next roll.

Good job Steve didn't pick the 13/11 move – it was well down in the list. As I said above about wrongs and rights . . .

Snowie: 8/4* 6/4

Again only two choices but for all that this is a difficult problem. The choice is between the solid asset of the 4-point with 8/4*, 6/4 and putting two men in the air with 18/14*, 6/4*.

In performing the rollouts the two plays are virtually identical with the only difference the percentage of gammons won by White. With the cube having not been turned this is not too significant a factor. This reinforces the point that it is important to interpret rollout results and not just take the answers as gospel. Move selection over the board may well be governed by factors such as whom you are playing against and what type of game you are steering for, i.e. simple or complex.

The fact that 8/4*, 6/4 leaves White a good 4 (one of his non-entering numbers) with 11/7* may lead you towards the double-hit. Like many moves in backgammon the answer is not crystal clear

and once again I wouldn't argue with a chouette partner who wanted to make either play.

I will go with the rollouts results as far as the quiz is concerned: 8/4*, 6/4.

Well that's the 2nd one over and Richard Biddle almost gets a perfect score. Wee done, Richard.

Name	Scores		Pts
Snowie	58	57	115
Richard Biddle	56	59	115
Steve Hallett	57	54	111
Bob Young	49	52	101
Rodney Lighton	43	46	89
Mark Oram	45		45

	Move	Score
7601	17/11 13/7	10
	13/10(2) 10/7 8/5	7
	18/15(2) 13/7	6
7602	25/23 24/23	10
	25/23 6/5	7
	25/23 6/5	6
7403	11/7 20/17	10
	11/7 13/10	9
	11/7 8/5	3
7404	6/4* 4/3*	10
	22/20* 8/7	6
7405	25/20 11/5	10
	25/20 8/2*	9
7406	18/14* 6/4*	10
	8/4* 6/4	8

Fax	Month	Questions	Answers
78	Sep	7801-06	7601-06
80	Jan	8001-06	7801-06
82	May	8201-06	8001-06

**Competition No 3 : 7801-06
on the following page**

Name	7401	7402	7403	7404	7405	7406	Tots
Richared Biddle	17/11 13/7	25/23 24/23	11/7 13/10	6/4* 4/3*	25/20 11/5	18/14* 6/4*	59
Snowie	17/11 13/7	25/23 24/23	11/7 20/17	6/4* 4/3*	25/20 8/2*	8/4* 6/4	57
Steve Hallett	13/10(2) 10/7 8/5	25/23 6/5	11/7 20/17	6/4* 4/3*	25/20 11/5	18/14* 6/4*	54
Bob Young:	18/15(2) 13/7	25/23 24/23	11/7 20/17	22/20* 8/7	25/20 11/5	18/14* 6/4*	52
Rodney Lighton	17/11 13/7	25/24 13/11	11/7 8/5	6/4* 4/3*	25/20 8/2*	8/4* 6/4	46



CD or no CD? - That is the Question

This issue of Bibafax contains a free CD for you to log onto GammonEmpire to

Play Backgammon and Make Money!

You get \$2 free to get you started and you can win thousands of \$\$\$\$!

Open an account and pay using:
PayPal, Visa or MasterCard

GammonEmpire - One step ahead

Competition 2005 No3, 7801-06 Questions

By Michael Crane

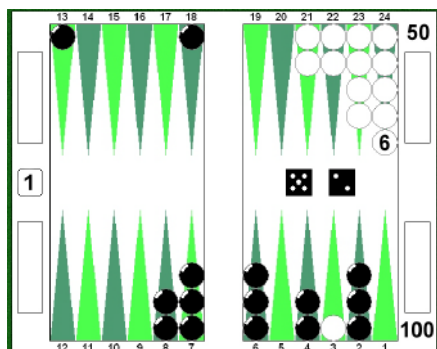
Welcome to the final Competition that makes up the 2005 season.

- The winner will win £25 towards accommodation at any one tournament of their choice.
- The member with the highest points total at the end of the year will win £75.

Entries to be in by December 1st. 2005

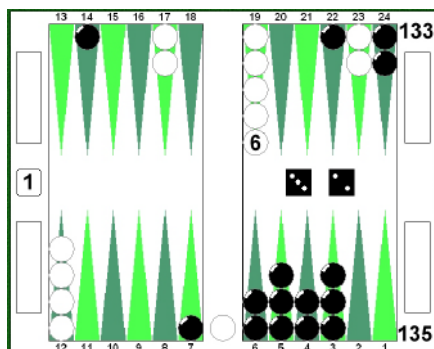
Email: to comps@backgammon-biba.co.uk
and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ via Royal Mail.

7801



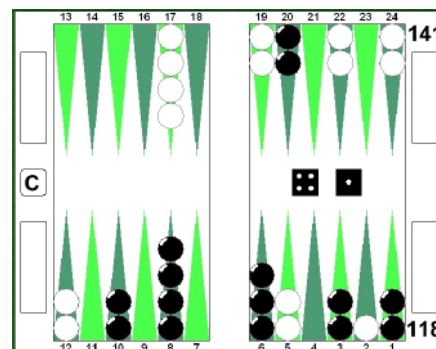
11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 52

7803



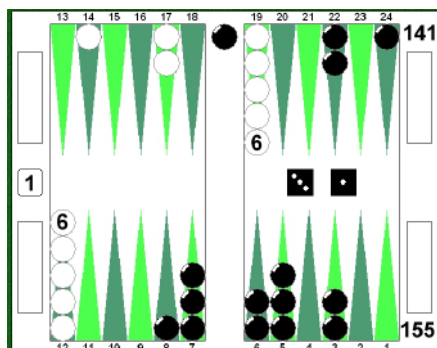
11 point match
White 2 Black 5
Black to play 32

7805



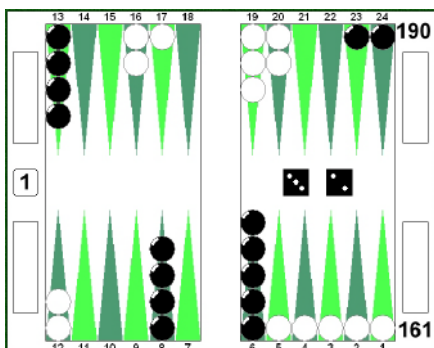
11 point match
White 10 Black 9
Black to play 41

7802



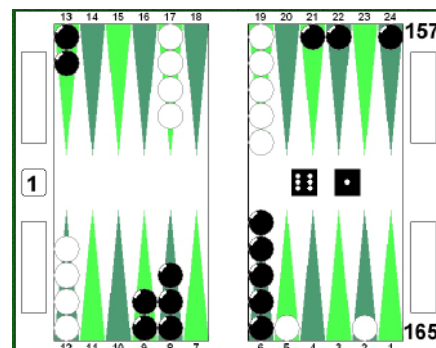
11 point match
White 2 Black 5
Black to play 31

7804



11 point match
White 0 Black 1
Black to play 32

7806



11 point match
White 0 Black 1
Black to play 61

Impressions of a World Championship Virgin

By Tim Mooring

For years I have said that I would play at the Backgammon World Championships at least once before I die, and since I was to celebrate my 50th this year I decided I had better not leave it too much longer. So, fifty years old and still a World Championship virgin, I arrived at the Fairmont wondering whether my first time would be a painful experience or a

pleasurable one. By the end of the week and my virginity lost I was sure I would be returning to play another year.

Shortly after my return home I was telling Michael Crane about my impressions of



the tournament. He thought it would be a good idea for me to submit an article for the Bibafax based on the impressions of a World Championship virgin. Not having a great deal of literary imagination I wasn't so sure. A couple of weeks later I was certain it was a bad idea.

I struggled to put my impressions of Monte into words that when I read them back sounded even slightly interesting to someone considering the trip for the first time. In fact I think I would have put some off....."Better not go in case I get stuck with that Tim Mooring".



I thought I would try a different tack. I'd interview myself.

Q. What did you think of Monte Carlo?

A. Great.

Q. What did you think of the Tournament?

A. Great.

Q. What did you think of the organisation?

A. Not that great.

Q. Did you play well?

A. No.

Q. Where did you stay?

A. Cap D'Ail.

Q. What did you think of Cap D'Ail as a base?

A. Errr.....great.

So, I now know I'm not very good at asking open questions either. By this time Michael is e-mailing me every day asking if I had finished it yet, and I'm wishing I had never gone in the first place.

However, I did go. So I had another go at asking myself open questions.

Q. What was your impression of Monte Carlo?

A. Monte Carlo is a wonderful place (if you don't already know), but despite arriving two days before registration I didn't really see enough of it. I'll have to go back some time as a tourist rather than to play backgammon. Even so, walking through the park and Casino Square on the way to the tournament each day adds to the sense of occasion. My advice for virgins is put some time aside in the mornings for sight seeing stuff rather than sleeping off hangovers. It wasn't me that had the hangover, it was them others.

Q. What about the Fairmont and the tournament facilities?

A. Great (I need to say more than that).... can't fault the hotel or tournament hall at all. The boards are a bit dodgy though. When you first enter the playing hall it looks errrrr.....great. Hundreds of boards laid out, all in the same colour scheme. But they are a felt playing surface on a flimsy, plastic base. I couldn't help wondering how many boards Slat's was going to trash during the week. Have you noticed how heavy handed he is.

What did impress me was the CCTV big screen coverage of the top matches. I not sure that had much to do with the tournament organizers.

Q. What did you think of the organization?

A. Not impressed. Registration was an impersonal affair. I was greeted with "Fill that in and pay over there". I did get a very nice money clip as a gift, not that they left me with much money to put in it. The running of the event seemed to be limited to doing the draw prior to the start of play each day. There was little encouragement for players to start on time. I noticed that one player picked up a single penalty point for being 40 minutes late! You wouldn't get away with that at a Biba tournament. If you mentioned the absence of your opponent to the organizers you would be told to return to your seat and wait, which I had to do for 20 minutes on one occasion. I didn't receive a penalty point but did win that match which pleased me greatly as my opponent wasn't very friendly. The most significant failing on the part of the directors that I was aware of occurred during a match in the Championship flight. There was much shouting between two players and a crowd quickly gathered round. Despite this continuing for some time there was no intervention from the directors that I noticed.

Q. Did you find the cost prohibitive?

A. Since our son James left University Julie and I have had no idea what to spend our surplus money on, well that's not entirely true, Julie comes up with ideas regularly. Even so, the intermediate flight cost me 620 euros and the reality was that I had a good chance of going out in the first round! But you shouldn't even think about it. I did think about it and ended up in the intermediate flight rather than the Championship, and still crashed out in the first round. You do get a lot for your money, five competitions during the week, Cocktail receptions and Gala Dinner not to mention the golf and tennis competitions if you are that way inclined....not that I'm suggesting there is anything wrong with people who play golf and tennis. But it's not what you get, it's the atmosphere, the anticipation of doing well at the World Championship and other intangible things. By the end of the week my impression was that it was well worth every euro. No regrets.....except that maybe I should have gone for the Championship flight. It is the World Championship after all.

Q. What was your most enjoyable backgammon moment?

A. That would be during my Consolation match against Natalie Guez. I was leading 2 away 7 away and despite knowing I

shouldn't offer the cube yet, I did. I hate Crawford games. Not unexpectedly she expressed her surprise at such a stupid cube. I told her about my dislike of playing out Crawford games and sat back while she considered it at length. I resisted asking her why, if it was a stupid cube, did she take so long. It wouldn't have been nearly so enjoyable if she had snatched it off me. I won the game.

Q. And your worst backgammon moment?

A. Without doubt in the team event. I teamed up with Rosey and her brother John. We had a bye in first round and saw off two very strong teams in the 2nd and 3rd rounds. In the 4th we came up against some fellow Brits. The match stood at 1-1 and was dependant on my match against Tony Walters which was DMP. I was trailing as we started to bear off but I rolled well. Finally Tony needed double 5 or 6 to save it. That was when I experienced my worst moment. We were going all the way.....and then we weren't.

Q. Finally, did you have good accommodation?

A. We stopped in a small hotel down the road at Cap D'Ail. I not saying which one in case I can't get in next time I go. It was brilliant. Many thanks to Myke Wignall for organizing our room.

I wouldn't want to advise a first timer where to stay, but I love Cap D'Ail and will stay there again. It has a few good restaurants, a wonderful beach (if you're OK with steps) and only a short ride into Monaco.

My overall impression is that having surrendered my virginity I would like to go back for more. Isn't that always the way?

Tim

Congratulation to Dennis Carlston, World Champion 2005, who won over John O'Hagan in an exciting final match! The most successful player from the winners of the qualifiers on TrueMoneygames was Stephen Nelson, who got the second place in the second consolation. Congratulations to all!

For more information go to:

www.truemoneygames.com/news-promos/special-events-dn.shtml

MC



2005 Details, Deals and Dates



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 or £10

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

All tournaments feature a Friday night Warm-up with a weekend break prize,

Saturday night Doubles Knockout, Poker and Jackpots on demand.

Registration Fees: Members only: £16 (you can join on the day)
Entrants not residing at the hotel, £10 extra to cover facilities
(all fees and surcharges to be paid on the day - prepayment not required)

FRIDAY

2130
Warm-up Knockout

SATURDAY

Registration 1030 / 1230
Play starts 1300 prompt

SUNDAY

Play resumes 1030
(penalty points apply 1035)

Accommodation costs 2005 - Contact Central Reservations:

Paramount (ex-Hanover) +44 1455 251 000 and quote 'backgammon'

Dinner, Bed & Breakfast, standard room, single occupancy

Saturday: £57 per person, Friday & Saturday: £104 per person

Dinner, Bed & Breakfast, standard room, double occupancy

Saturday: £47 per person, Friday & Saturday: £94 per person

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

Backgammon tournament weekends cannot be booked through any other special offer or promotional rate.

Players not on the Biba special rate or not staying in the hotel shall pay a surcharge of £10 to cover facilities

See the following page for accommodation costs for 2006 at Hilton Coventry

Date 2005	Tournament	GP		Venue	Type
Oct 08-09	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP	.	Hinckley	Knockout
Oct 29-30	13th Irish Open	GP	UK	Dublin	Combination
Nov 05-06	Townharbour Trophy	GP	UK	Hinckley	Swiss
Dec 03-04	Gilbertson UK Finals	.	.	Hinckley	Combination
2006 Tournament Calendar					
Jan 14-15	Bright 'n' Breezy	GP	UK	Brighton	Knockout
Jan 27-29	4 th Cotswold 'Fireside'	GP	-	Blockley	Knockout
Feb 04-05	Jarvis Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
Mar 04-05	Slattery Scottish Open	GP	UK	Coventry	Knockout
Apr 01-02	At-A-Glance British Open	GP	UK	Coventry	Knockout
Apr ??	Manchester 1-Day	GP	-	Manchester	Combination
May 06-07	County Cups Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
Jun 03-04	Hilton Trophy	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
Jul 08-09	Keren Di Bona Memorial	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
Jul ??	10 th Liverpool Open	GP	-	Liverpool	Combination
Aug 05-06	SAC Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
Aug 19-28	Mind Sports Olympiad	GP	-	Manchester	Swiss
Sep 09-10	Backpacker Trophy	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
Oct 07-08	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
Oct ??	13 th Irish Open	GP	UK	Dublin	Combination
Nov 04-05	Townharbour Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
Dec 02-03	Gilbertson UK Finals	-	-	Coventry	Double KO

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 right*) either via Biba HQ or you can email information in the order below, to: clubs@backgammon-biba.co.uk

Birmingham - Dave Motley - 0121 476 4099 - davemotley@blueyonder.co.uk - Monday.
Brighton - <http://eiloart.com/bbc/> - Tuesday 8pm until closing.
Bristol - Ian Tarr 0117-9756349 brisgammon@blueyonder.co.uk 2nd Thurs of the month.
Dublin - Brendan Burgess - 603 0891 - wildlife@indigo.ie - 2nd Monday of every month.
Eastbourne & Bexhill - John Thomas - 01424 219415 - Jtprincesgaragelimited@btinternet.com - Mondays 19.30.
Glasgow - Renfrew - John Paul Vass 0141 587 0255 - 1st Tuesday of month @ 7:00
Herne Bay/Broomfield - Bob Bruce - 01227 362181 or mobile 07754 549 576 - Monday.
Huddersfield - Rachel Rhodes - 07961 355433 - dicewitch@yahoo.co.uk - Tuesdays
Lincoln - Michael Crane - 01522 829649 - michael.a.crane@ntlworld.com - Every Tuesday.
Liverpool - Simon K Jones - (0151 428 3082) - vineries@btinternet.com - Last Friday of each month
London - Croydon - Danny Gallagher 0208 647 7767 - 1st Sunday of the month
London - Fox Reformed - Robbie (020) 7254 5975 - robbie.richards@fox-reformed.co.uk - Mondays
London - Ealing -Grahame / Geoff - 020 8 968 6327 - Ealingbackgammon@netscape.net - Every Sunday 3.00pm.
Manchester - Rodney Lighton - 0161 445 5644 lighton@btinternet.com - Tuesdays
Nottingham - Conrad Cooper - 0115 9113281 - conrad_cooper@excite.com - Monday, 9.00 pm.
Perth - Steve Wallace- info@perthgammon.org.uk 01738 587574 - Tuesdays, 7.30
Preston - David Wallbank - d.wallbank@blueyonder.co.uk - Last Tues of every month.
Reading - Kevin Carter - kevin@profundus.com - 0118-971 2948 - Alternate Wednesdays.
St. Albans - John Ingamells - john.ingamells@ntlworld.com - Every Tuesday 19.45.- 01442 885246
York - Leo Waters is hoping to start a club in York. Contact him on watersleo@hotmail.com.

- 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

Forthcoming Events

Sandy Osborne, October 8/9: Knockout tournament offering the usual element: Main, Progressive Consolation, Last Chance and Randy Sandy.

13th Irish Open: See following page for details. Pre-registration not required, just enter on the day.

Townharbour Trophy, November 5/6: I have been reliably informed, by Tim Cross himself, that he intends to put in an appearance this year! Tim's the tournament sponsor and for the last couple of years he's been concentrating on his golf . . . And I'm not referring to his motor car! As always, this is the last chance members have to increase their Grand Prix points and Ranking Championship points, being a Swiss Format with six x 11-point matches guaranteed.

Gilbertson UK Finals, December 3/4: The final event of the year and already we have six qualifiers: Mike Grabsky, Uldis Lapikens, Peter Christmas, Rachel Rhodes, John Slattery and Lawrence Powell. The remaining two will come from the Irish Open and the Townharbour. If you fail to get automatic qualification, don't despair for you can qualify on the Saturday!

Main Qualifier: Entrants will play 2 x 7pt matches of Swiss Format

All players that win 0/2 will go into the Sunday Consolation

All players that win 1/2 will go into a 5pt Knockout to playoff for 4 players

All players that win 2/2 will go into a 7pt Knockout to playoff for 4 players

Dinner, bed and breakfast @ Hilton Coventry 2006

Single room: 1 night £59, two nights £104

Double or twin room: 1 night £90, two nights £94

To book accommodation call 02476 603000 and quote 'backgammon'

There are a limited number of rooms made available to Biba at the above rates and they will be allocated on a first come - first served basis.

Important: Hilton Coventry operate a secure car park the cost of which is £3 per 24 hours.

The 13th Irish Open 2005 Backgammon Championship

Wynn's Hotel, Dublin. 28/30 October 2005

Tournament Directors: Paul Waters and Caith Skelly

ENTRY FEE: €20

There will be an optional €50 and €10 side-pools

(No Pre-registration)

Saturday 29th:

Registration opens 10:30

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 087-2144270 or 087-2609317

Sunday 30th:

Playoffs for last 16 at 09:00

unless they can be fitted 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.

FRIDAY NIGHT 28th- €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.

ACCOMMODATION

WYNN'S HOTEL - 35 Lower Abbey Street +35318745131

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 €110 per night including breakfast.



**UK FINALS
QUALIFIER**

Scottish Open Returning to Scotland

I have discussed the possible move back to Scotland with Slat and we have reached a 'compromise'.

The last time it was held in Scotland only 5 or 6 Scots turned out despite the fact that there were 40 odd within a 25 mile radius of the venue - and they had been informed of the tourney via email, Bibafax or letter. This poor turnout was the main reason for moving it to a location that would attract players.

I have already contracted for the next one in March 2006 in Coventry, However . . .

Slat and I throw out this challenge and promise: If the Scots are really serious

about getting the Scottish Open back then they should arrange to come to the 2006 event in sufficient numbers to convince us that there's a market for its return. If there is a significant Scottish turnout then the title will return to Scotland in 2007.

I don't want to hear anyone moaning about how far it is and how much it'll cost - remember it was the non-Scottish entrants that supported it for years; and many of them travelled from London, and a couple from the South coast!

Scottish clubs and players have plenty of notice about how to get the event back and plenty of time to save up for it - so it's up to you lot!

Will there be a Scottish invasion next year? Or is it that they want it but aren't willing to make a commitment? You lost it because the non-Scots were the only ones supporting it - and now it's time to wrest it back! I would like some feedback from the Scots on this proposal.

For example, just how many players are willing to travel down; how many are not? How many would actually attend the event if it was in Scotland? I have 65 Scottish players in my database and I am willing to write to all of them on behalf of the Scottish clubs if you really want to have a go at getting the Scottish Open back.

Backpacker Tournament

By Michael Crane

I have come to the conclusion that there's too much backgammon around at the moment! Slovenia nibbled away at our entries; the weekend before Roland and Simonetta's wedding event ate into the MSO and a lot of players are just backgammoned out! So, this left us with just 23 entrants. A little disappointing perhaps but those that turned out enjoyed themselves and that's the most important thing.

In the **Main**, all but the semi-finalists went into the Progressive Consolation. Brian Lever had a tough match against Nicky Check in the semis, a match from which Nicky went into the Final after rolling three big doubles at DMP to rob Brian of the place. In the other semi, David Nathan made very quick work of Peter Chan; so quick that Peter was hardly heard to call his rolls!

In the Final Nicky took an early lead, 9-2. David then began to dig back point by point to take it to 9-9 and DMP. The final game was a bit disappointing (especially for David) and wasn't very exciting. The dice played themselves most of the time and the game and match went to Nicky. This is Nicky's first Main victory since the 1999 Mary Rose tournament; so it's good to see him back on form.

In the **Consolation**, Jeff Barber triumphed over Uldis Lapikens. This was Jeff's first win since his Consolation win at the 2003 UK Finals. Uldis entered via

the last eight of the Main whereas Jeff did it the hard way - from Round One.

This year, as last, the event was co-directed between myself and Mike Main, the tournament sponsor. Mike's friend, Sean Williams is responsible for the Excel spreadsheet in which the event is recorded and run. A complex program (to an idiot like me!) but one which Sean knows inside out. He was able to make tweaks and alterations on the fly to ensure it all went along smoothly.

It looks as if there's a bit of rivalry between Sean and partner, Zoe Cunningham at the Biba Backpacker events. Last year Zoe won the Last Chance after knocking Sean out - and this year it was Sean's turn to take home the **Last Chance** trophy after he beat Mick Vacarey in the Final. Zoe wasn't too upset, after all, she did knock Sean out of the Consolation!

Mind you, Zoe wasn't going to go home empty handed, she set her sights on the **Suicide**: Chris Ternel, Kevin White, Paul Statter, Kevin White (thanks to a buy-back) and finally (literally) Dave Motley were unable to stop her taking home the Suicide trophy.

There were so many trophies knocking about that there was almost one each for everyone! Suzy Crabb got one for winning the **Gang** event. Gang? What the hell is a Gang? A Gang is where (ideally) 8 players are divided into two teams and they play against each other conferring (actually shouting is more accurate - along with drinking and more drinking)

with the Captain who does the moving. The winning team is then divided into two more teams and off it goes again! Thus it was that Suzy gained her trophy, as did Chrissi Williams (no relation to Sean) for coming 2nd.

Because of the way the spreadsheet handles byes we had 8 players waiting for their first Main opponent so we ran a **Satellite** for them to keep 'em occupied. Jeff Barber won one satellite and Bob Young won another. Uldis Lapikens went home with a few bob in his pocket for winning the **£50 Jackpot**; and Myke 'Mad Mullah' Wignall won the **Poker** . . . again! New member, Chris Gibbins won the **Friday Warm-up** after beating Nicky in the Final. I tried to stop him in Round Two but he whitewashed me . . . the cad!

Overall it was a good weekend's backgammon. Everyone seemed to enjoy it and there were no contentious issues to deal with. Who knows, perhaps this time next year Sean will have played another Backpacker without having to tweak his spreadsheet . . . but I doubt it.

Finally. Mike drove down with Sean, Zoe, Chrissi and Suzy; all of whom had a trophy. The only one without one was the guy that bought them!

Pictures on the following page





Backpacker Pictures



Clockwise from top left:
Main - Nicky & David, Consolation - Uldis & Jeff,
Suicide - Dave & Zoe, Friday Warm-up- Chris,
Gang - Chrissi & Suzy, Poker - Myke with Sharen,
Last Chance - Mick & Sean



Tournament Results

SAC Trophy. 6 & 7 August

Main (8/32)

Pos	Name	Wins	GP
1	Lawrence Powell	6	24.77
2	Tony Lee	5	13.42
3	Jeff Barber	4	9.29
4	Chris Ternel	4	9.29
5	John Slattery	4	9.29
6	Kevin White	3	6.19
7	Khachik Melikyan	3	6.19
8	Martin Hemming	2	4.13

Consolation (24/32)

Pos	Name	Wins:Con/All	GP
1	Steve Rimmer	4/5	13.42
2	James Browning	4/5	13.42
3	Brian Lever	3/4	9.29
4	Adrian Jones	3/4	9.29
5	Ann Pocknell	3/4	9.29
6	Peter Bennet	2/3	6.19

7	Simon K Jones	2/3	6.19
8	Peter Chan	3/3	6.19
9	Peter Christmas	2/3	6.19
10	Martin Barkwill	2/3	6.19
11	Ron Havenhand	2/3	6.19
12	Mick Vacarey	2/2	4.13
13	Myke Wignall	1/2	4.13
14	David Nathan	1/2	4.13
15	Mick Butterfield	1/2	4.13
16	David Sanders	2/2	4.13
17	Uldis Lapikens	1/2	4.13
18	Chris Purchase	0/1	2.58
19	Fanika Petkovska	1/1	2.58
20	Racheal Garrett	1/1	2.58
21	Paul Barwick	1/1	2.58
22	Paul Gilbertson	0/1	2.58
23	Rosey Bensley	0/0	
24	Tony Walters	0/0	

Friday Warm-up (10)

1	Chris Purchase
2	Martin Bakwill
3	Chris Ternel
4	John Slattery

£50 Jackpot (4)

1	Peter Bennet
2	Dave Sanders

Poker (16)

1	Myke Wignall
2	Mick Butterfield
3	Paul Gilbertson

Grand Prix at Liverpool

18.58	Brian Lever	6.19	Peter Chan	4.13	Tim Brown
13.42	John Slattery	6.19	Dave Motley	4.13	Ron Havenhand
9.29	Uldis Lapikens	4.13	Nigel Merrigan	2.58	David Wallbank
9.29	Steve Rimmer	4.13	Jeff Barber	2.58	John Broomfield
9.29	Rosey Bensley	4.13	Angela Dell	2.58	Alan Greenwood
9.29	David Fall	4.13	Simon K Jones	2.58	Rachel Rhodes
6.19	Paul Barwick	4.13	John Clark	2.58	Colin Laight
6.19	Steve Hallet	4.13	Darren Kernighan	2.58	Kevin Stebbing
6.19	John Wright	4.13	Rodney Lighton	2.58	Paul Gilbertson

Backpacker Trophy 6 & 7 August

Main (23)

1	Nicky Check
2	David Nathan
3/4	Brian Lever
3/4	Peter Chan
5/8	Uldis Lapikens
5/8	Chris Gibbins
5/8	Dave Motley
5/8	Tony Walters

Consolation (19)

1	Jeff Barber
2	Uldis Lapikens
3/4	Zoe Cunningham
3/4	Tony Walters

Last Chance (16)

1	Sean Williams
2	Mick Vacarey
3/4	Stephen Cole
3/4	Myke Wignall

Suicide (32)

1	Zoe Cunningham
2	Dave Motley
3/4	Kevin White
3/4	Chris Gibbins

Friday Warm-up (12)

1	Chris Gibbins
2	Nicky Check
3/4	Tony Walters
3/4	Suzy Crabb

Gang (7)

1	Suzy Crabb
2	Chrissi

Poker (8)

1	Myke Wignall
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Satellite A	Jeff Barber
Satellite B	Bob Young

Grand Prix at Backpacker

13.42	Nicky Check	6.19	Tony Walters	2.58	Kevin White
13.42	David Nathan	4.13	Uldis Lapikens	2.58	Myke Wignall
13.42	Jeff Barber	4.13	Chris Ternel	2.58	Paul Statter
9.29	Brian Lever	4.13	Mick Vacarey	2.58	Stephen Cole
6.19	Peter Chan	4.13	Adrian Jones	2.06	Simon Morecroft
6.19	Dave Motley	4.13	Chris Gibbins	2.06	Martin Hemming
6.19	Zoe Cunningham	2.58	Simon K Jones	2.06	Suzy Crabb
6.19	Sean Williams	2.58	Bob Young		

Grand Prix Championship September 2005 (Top 100)

75.35	John Slattery	27.87	Nigel Merrigan	13.42	Darryl Kirk
69.16	Adrian Jones	26.83	Roy Hollands	13.42	David Sanders
69.15	Uldis Lapikens	25.81	Mike Greenleaf	12.90	Paul Christmas
68.13	David Nathan	25.80	Mahmoud Jahanbani	12.39	Tim Brown
60.90	Brian Lever	24.77	David Fall	12.38	Connor Dickinson
59.87	Jeff Barber	24.25	Paul Statter	12.38	Malcolm Robertson
55.74	Chris Ternel	23.23	Myke Wignall	12.38	Stuart Mann
54.70	Simon K Jones	23.22	John Gilbertson	12.38	Rodney Lighton
54.19	Peter Christmas	22.71	Julian Minwalla	12.38	Zoe Cunningham
49.03	Mardi Ohannessian	22.19	Martin Hemming	11.35	Paul Van Dijke
47.47	Steve Rimmer	22.19	Vicky Chandler	10.32	Jeff Ellis
45.41	Peter Bennet	22.19	Stephen Cole	10.32	Dave McNair
44.90	Nicky Check	20.12	Roland Herrera	10.32	Ralph Eskinazi
43.86	Kevin Stebbing	19.61	Simonetta Barone	10.32	Matthew Fisher
43.35	Rachel Rhodes	18.58	Brian Busfield	10.29	Sean Williams
42.83	Julian Fetterlein	18.58	Blaine Buchanan	9.29	David Edwards
42.31	Stephen Drake	18.58	Neil Young	9.29	Paul Lamford
41.29	Jason Champion	18.58	Rogier Van Gemert	9.29	Emmanuel Di Bona
40.26	Tim Mooring	17.55	Danny Cohen	9.29	Andreas Giannopoulos
40.26	Tony Lee	16.51	Mick Butterfield	9.29	Sean Casey
38.18	Peter Chan	16.00	John Broomfield	9.29	Steve John
37.67	Tony Walters	15.48	Steve Hallet	9.29	Leslie Singleton
37.16	Rosey Bensley	15.48	John Hurst	8.25	Stepehn Ferrer
36.64	Lawrence Powell	15.48	Wayne Felton	7.74	Mark Dixon
36.12	Ron Havenhand	15.48	Ann Pocknell	7.74	Suzy Crabb
34.06	Paul Barwick	15.48	David Markwick	6.71	Edwin Turner
34.06	Kevin White	15.48	Fanika Petkovska	6.71	Tony Fawcett
29.93	Ian Tarr	14.96	Bob Young	6.71	Jo Curl
29.41	Dave Motley	14.45	Alan Greenwood	6.71	Malcolm Wilson
28.90	Mike Grabsky	13.42	James Browning	6.19	Dale Taylor
28.90	Paul Gilbertson	13.42	Chris Bray	6.19	Grahame Powell
28.90	Mike Main	13.42	Richard Granville	6.19	Lionel Mann
28.90	Mick Vacarey	13.42	Andrew Sarjeant		
28.38	Martin Barkwill	13.42	Geoff Conn		

Ranking Championship September 2005 (4 or more played)

14	2162.64	John Slattery	14	1502.86	Martin Hemming	7	1420.00	Simonetta Barone
14	2153.50	Chris Ternel	14	1493.86	Myke Wignall	7	1374.71	Connor Dickinson
14	2149.36	Simon K Jones	14	1473.21	Stephen Cole	7	1367.43	Lionel Mann
14	2136.79	Jeff Barber	14	1274.43	Fanika Petkovska	7	1225.86	Alison Lee
14	2135.07	Peter Christmas	13	1677.77	Julian Minwalla	6	1970.50	James Browning
14	2111.43	David Nathan	13	1587.92	Vicky Chandler	6	1950.50	Richard Granville
14	2091.07	Uldis Lapikens	13	1545.77	Bob Young	6	1877.83	Brian Busfield
14	2073.36	Adrian Jones	12	1626.50	Dave Sanders	6	1809.67	Rogier Van Gemert
14	2056.57	Jason Champion	12	1577.08	Stephen Drake	6	1752.67	Khachik Melikyan
14	2032.79	Brian Lever	12	1573.92	Rodney Lighton	6	1663.67	Wayne Felton
14	2028.71	Peter Bennet	12	1504.08	Dave Motley	6	1526.00	Graham Powell
14	2018.14	Mardi Ohannessian	11	1748.73	Martin Barkwill	6	1381.50	Ed Turner
14	2001.00	Ron Havenhand	11	1702.09	Ian Tarr	6	1334.17	Chris Purchase
14	1983.79	Nicky Check	10	1533.70	Jeff Ellis	6	1189.83	Rachael Garrett
14	1962.00	Peter Chan	9	1889.78	Neil Young	5	1734.20	Nigel Merrigan
14	1955.93	Kevin White	9	1862.78	Rachel Rhodes	5	1503.00	Mike Greenleaf
14	1883.71	Tony Lee	9	1565.78	Paul Christmas	4	2012.50	Dave Edwards
14	1833.43	Mick Vacarey	9	1544.11	Ann Pocknell	4	1994.25	Sean Casey
14	1832.29	Tim Mooring	8	1948.75	Lawrence Powell	4	1878.50	Steve John
14	1788.79	Paul Barwick	8	1866.00	Mike Grabsky	4	1826.00	John Hurst
14	1774.07	Roy Hollands	8	1763.88	Steve Rimmer	4	1582.25	Paul Statter
14	1670.93	John Gilbertson	8	1336.75	Roland Herrera	4	1530.00	David Markwick
14	1652.36	Mick Butterfield	7	1844.43	Mike Main	4	1491.50	Dave McNair
14	1652.07	Tony Walters	7	1795.86	Darryl Kirk	4	1415.00	Malcolm Wilson
14	1625.00	Paul Gilbertson	7	1584.71	Alan Greenwood	4	1367.00	Emmanuel Di Bona
14	1517.93	Rosey Bensley	7	1524.14	Stuart Mann			

Active Rankings

1965	1965	John Slattery	1662	1662	Connor Dickinson	1490	1490	Neil Young
1957	1957	Tony Lee	1660	1660	Ian Tarr	1489	1489	Julian Minwalla
1943	1943	Julian Fetterlein	1654	1654	Martin Barkwill	1483	1483	Richard Biddle
1938	1936	Brian Lever	1651	1651	Mike Greenleaf	1483	1483	David Sanders
1889	1889	Rachel Rhodes	1633	1633	Ian Gwynne	1481	1481	Ernie Pick
1886	1862	David Nathan	1627	1640	Bob Young	1481	1481	Roland Herrera
1876	1876	Lawrence Powell	1626	1604	Jeff Barber	1479	1479	David Markwick
1836	1836	Richard Granville	1624	1624	Barry McAdam	1476	1476	Wayne Felton
1821	1821	Stuart Mann	1623	1623	Mick Butterfield	1473	1473	Johan Sallfors
1816	1816	Mardi Ohannessian	1619	1619	Jason Champion	1471	1471	Rebecca Bell
1802	1802	Dave McNair	1618	1613	Uldis Lapikens	1460	1460	Anthony Coker
1801	1801	David Startin	1614	1614	Rodney Lighton	1455	1437	Tony Walters
1799	1799	Dod Davies	1611	1611	Jeff Ellis	1454	1454	Simonetta Barone
1779	1779	Steve Hallet	1609	1609	Ian Shaw	1444	1444	Malcolm Wilson
1767	1707	Nicky Check	1601	1601	Paul Christmas	1439	1439	Steve John
1756	1756	Steve Pickard	1600	1600	Kerry Jackson	1438	1438	Mike Main
1754	1754	Peter Christmas	1600	1600	Ken Gibson	1430	1430	Jane Oxley
1748	1748	Danny Cohen	1599	1599	Edwin Turner	1423	1423	Alan Greenwood
1746	1746	Raj Jansari	1593	1593	Ron Havenhand	1423	1423	Leslie Singleton
1739	1739	Roy Hollands	1587	1587	Geoff Conn	1415	1415	Andy Bell
1735	1735	Mike Grabsky	1583	1583	John Wright	1411	1416	Myke Wignall
1734	1734	John Hurst	1578	1578	Paul Barwick	1409	1409	Hubert De L'Epine
1727	1727	Peter Bennet	1572	1587	Paul Statter	1407	1407	Bob Bruce
1727	1727	Kazu Niki	1568	1568	Grahame Powell	1401	1401	Rosey Bensley
1726	1726	Kevin Stebbing	1562	1562	John Gilbertson	1396	1396	Colin Laight
1722	1722	Brendan Burgess	1548	1548	Vicky Chandler	1395	1395	Catherine Oldfield
1722	1736	Simon K Jones	1545	1525	Peter Chan	1394	1394	Jo Curl
1721	1721	Arthur Musgrove	1537	1537	Eddie Barker	1382	1382	Chris Evans
1717	1717	Emmanuel Di Bona	1535	1535	Stavros Elia	1381	1381	Tim Brown
1708	1708	Dave Coyne	1531	1553	Martin Hemming	1374	1374	Paul Fox
1708	1705	Chris Ternel	1528	1528	Kevin Berry	1367	1367	Cedric Lytton
1707	1707	Tim Mooring	1527	1527	Paul Gilbertson	1348	1353	Stephen Cole
1698	1698	John Thomas	1527	1527	Darryl Kirk	1347	1357	Mick Vacarey
1694	1694	Stephen Drake	1517	1517	Matthew Fisher	1344	1344	Tony Fawcett
1690	1690	Dale Taylor	1517	1517	David McNamara	1337	1337	Fanika Petkovska
1686	1686	Ann Pocknell	1514	1514	David Horner	1322	1322	Jon Sharpe
1676	1676	Steve Rimmer	1510	1489	Dave Motley	1248	1248	Alison Lee
1672	1672	Adrian Jones	1492	1492	Cliff Connick			
1663	1663	Brian Busfield	1490	1505	Kevin White			

2005 Championships

Grand Prix: John Slattery is the current leader but his lead is being eroded by a few players nibbling at his lead of just 6.19 points. With three more events left, Irish Open, Sandy Osborne and Townharbour Trophy, almost any of the top twenty or so can overtake him. John has four scores of 9.29 to replace, whereas his rivals have lower scores - giving them good catching-up chances!

Ranking : Another list headed by John Slattery; but this time he's got Chris Ternel snapping away at him. In fact almost any player with 2000+ average has a good chance of going top. However, unlike the Grand Prix, the Ranking Championship only has two more events to draw upon - Sandy Osborne and the TT. The TT is a Swiss format so there's a good chance here that John can be overtaken.

Summary: If you want to be a Champion then you have to meet and beat John Slattery. It's tough at the top but I'm sure John would have it no other way.

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