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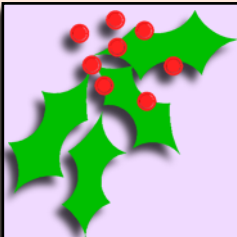
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2009 Biba Championships



Between them, these three Biba members have come 1st and 2nd in the Grand Prix and Ranking Championships. Can you guess who did what?
Turn to pages 29 & 30 to find out.

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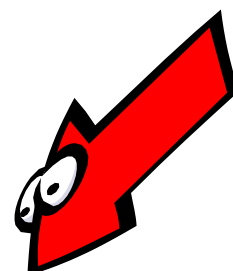
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The Liverbird Does It Again!

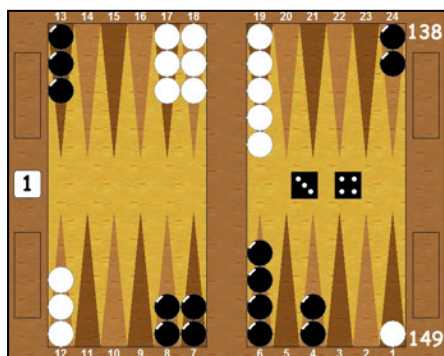
By Michael Crane

Rachel Rhodes first won the Liverpool Open in 2006, and now, three years later she does it again. Rarely content to win anything just once, Rachel is making a habit of winning events time and time again.



This year the Liverpool Open final match was recorded and imported into Snowie, and after it had analyzed it I saw that between them, Rachel and Adrian Jones had played just three checker-play blunders; and furthermore each play was Snowie's 2nd choice . . . or the only other choice in one position!

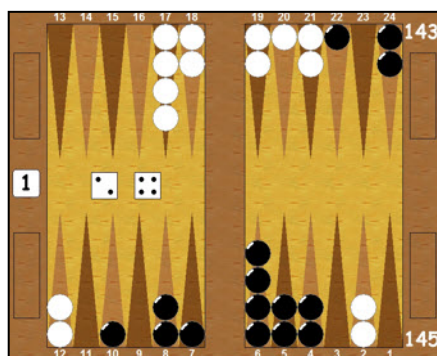
However, there were a few other instances when their plays could have been a tad better. The match is to 11 points and Rachel is playing as black.



Black 0 White 0
Black to play 43

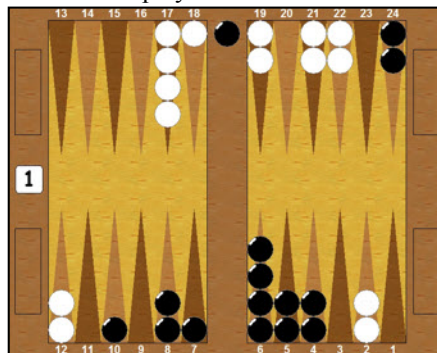
Very quickly both players have established good blocking primes straddling their bar-points, and now Rachel has the opportunity to make a move with the back checker(s). Her move of 24/20, 13/10 could have been played differently; certainly one of the checkers should run, and if one was to run then it should have been 24/21, 13/9, hoping to make the 9-point soon and thus connecting the prime into one good block. However, better still is to run both checkers out 24/20, 24/21. Although under attack from small numbers it is unlikely that both will

be hit or pointed on, and if one is hit then there's a good chance of making an advanced anchor on re-entry.

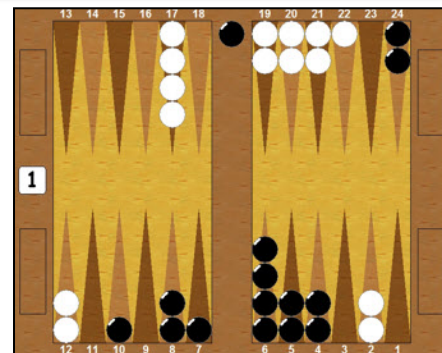


Black 0 White 0
White to play 42

We quickly reach the first of the blunders mentioned at the start of this article. There are two moves here that include 7/3*, which is quite obvious. The difference between the best move and the blunder is whether or not to leave the blot on with 7/5 or make the 3-point with 5/3? Over the board it would appear that the latter, 7/3*, 5/3, is the better one, but it isn't, and not by a long margin! Take a look at both plays:



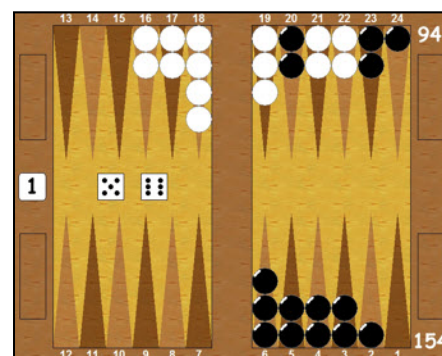
7/3* 5/3



7/3* 7/5

In what looks like the safest option, 7/3*, 5/3, take a look at what's happening on black's side of the board. If black rolls a 3 (a non-entry number) with a 5, 2, or 1 he is going to form a great 5-prime making it very difficult for white to escape. On the other hand, with 7/3*, 7/5, although black has a direct hit there is a duplication of 3s; and if hit, there's a good chance of hitting off the bar. The actual play 7/3, 5/3 lost Adrian 6.5%.

Staying with Adrian, and still in the 1st Game we come to the second blunder in 2nd place!:



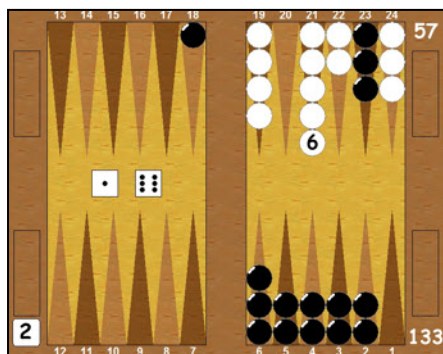
Black 0 White 0
White to play 65

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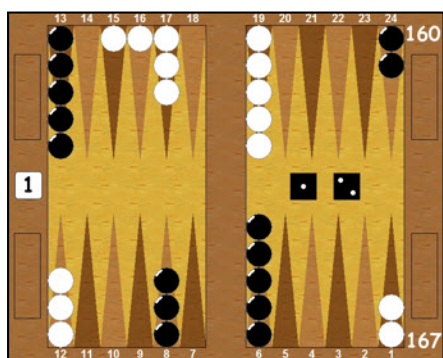


The instinctive play of making the 1-point with 7/1*, 6/1 looks perfect - but is it? In this position it is better by far to clear from the back with 9/3, 6/4. If placed on the bar, Rachel's timing will be vastly improved and her chances of getting a hit perhaps even better. If left alone then one of two things will happen quickly: 6s will see the Golden Point broken or her home board beginning to crunch. The hitting play lost 5% winning chances and lets Rachel keep her points intact for a while longer.



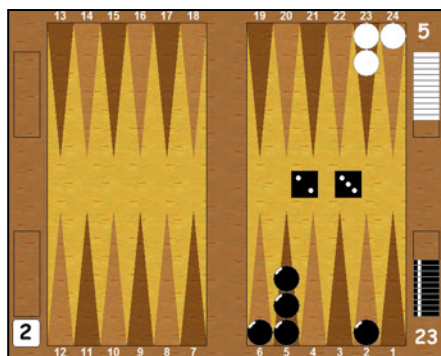
Black 0 White 0
White to play 61

It'd be criminal if white were to leave a shot unnecessarily, and to this end the actual move of 6/0, 1/0 is wrong; it is better to play 6/0, 4/3. Although it is impossible to cover 44 (leaves a blot in both plays), it is possible to ensure against two consecutive large doubles (66 & 55): leaving a blot on the 4-point when playing 1/0; whereas with 4/3 66 or 55 will leave none.



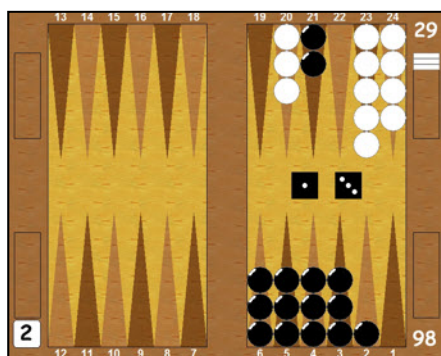
Black 2 White 0
Black to play 21

Adrian started with 4/3 and split two checkers off his mid-point. Rachel's reply of 21, if played correctly now gives her a sporting chance of making her 5-point with 13/11, 6/5. However, her move of 24/23, 13/11 will not greatly affect white's intention to make his 7- or 5-point (or perhaps his 4-point if neither the other two can't be made). So, while he is engaged in carrying this out the slotting play might just pay off. It did, she rolled 51 and would have made her 5-point!



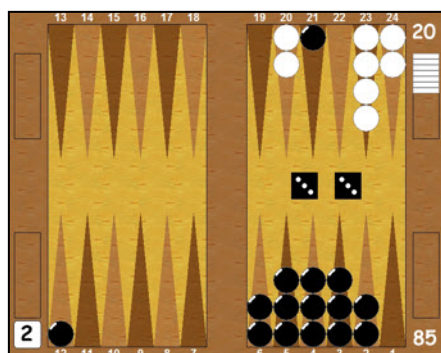
Black 2 White 0
Black to play 32

Unless he rolls 22 or greater, white will be off in two rolls, which leaves Rachel just one roll after playing this 32. Rachel played it 5/0 which meant only one roll next time, 66, would win her the two points, whereas by playing 6/3, 2/0 she could double her chances to include 55 as well.



Black 2 White 2
Black to play 31

Black's chances of getting a shot are slim, (10/36), so playing 6/2 does nothing to increase or decrease those odds; in fact all it does is increase her gammon losses by nearly 8%! She would be better off running out 21/17. The only 'bad' roll is 11, and it isn't worth worrying over!

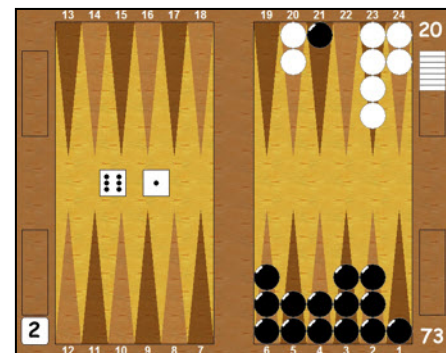


Black 2 White 2
Black to play 33

Two rolls later and Rachel is still hanging on for the hit. She should now be looking at gammon-saving moves but she remains in Adrian's home board as she plays 12/6, 5/2, 4/1. This play gives white

14.5% gammons whereas if played correctly, 21/15, 12/6, it is reduced to just over 3%.

But, what does Snowie know? Look at what happens on the very next roll when Adrian rolls a blot-leaving shot:

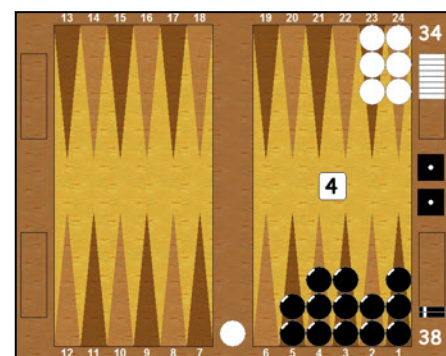


Black 2 White 2
White to play 61

She gets a shot! Adrian plays 5/0, 2/1 (the 'worst' of the three possible moves) and, although he maximises his winning chances to 86.3%, he reduces his gammon chances to 13.7% as opposed to 16.8% by playing 5/0, 5/4*. His chances of winning the game are well in his favour so the increased gammon play won't cost him too much but could well double his points!

The sad thing is, Rachel rolled 11 - hitting and covering! Is it any wonder that her average luck rate was 13.579 based upon 12 Jokers, of which this excellent Snake eyes is just one?

And then she shipped over a 4-cube in this position:

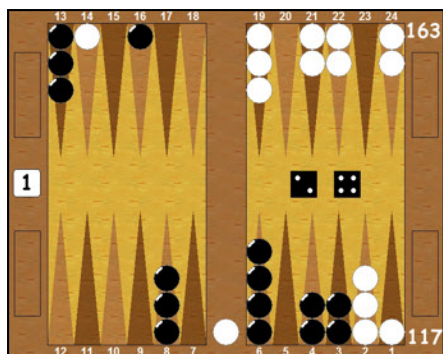


Black re-cubes to 4

This is not a re-cube . . .

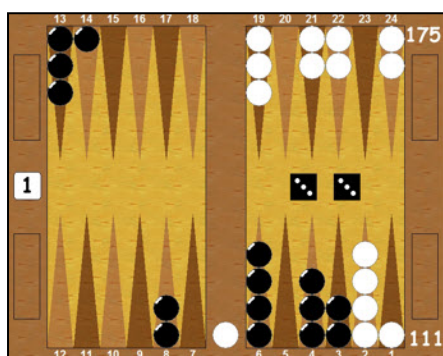
No re-cube 0.407
Re-cube/take -0.369

Adrian takes . . . and once again, the sad thing is, she rolls out to win four points after rolling another Joker, this time double-three, to bearoff her last four remaining checkers!



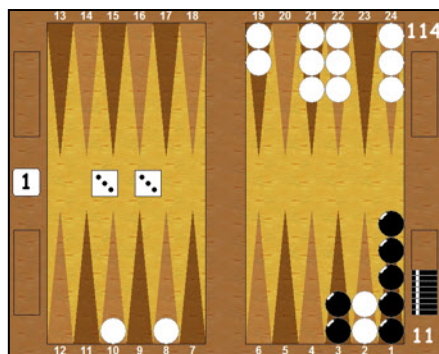
Black 7 White 3
Black to play 42

The match has moved on a bit and Rachel makes an error by playing 16/14* (correct), 8/4 (incorrect). By playing 8/4 she has removed a builder for the 5-point; perhaps she had in mind to stop white anchoring if he didn't roll a 1? It wouldn't have mattered, for the first 6 he rolls white would likely come off the black 1-point anyway. It would have been better to go with 13/9 and build on the 7- and 5-points.



Black 7 White 3
Black to play 33

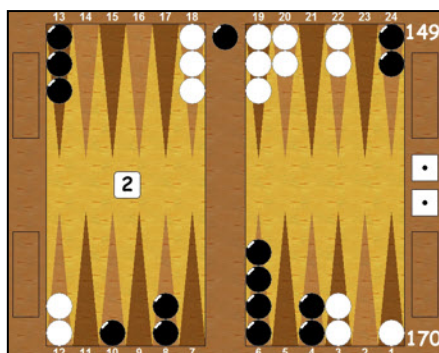
Her very next roll and it's a large error when Rachel moves 14/11, 8/5(2), 6/3. The 6/3 play lets white have eleven chances to anchor on the 1-point and it seemed her intention on the previous roll to prevent this. It would have been far better to have put two in the air with 14/11, 8/5(2) and then 4/1*; still the same number of hits, but only one anchoring roll, Snake eyes!



Black 7 White 3
White to play 33

In a similar situation to Rachel's 33 roll in the previous column, Adrian now waits for the (unlikely) shot. His gammon losses are quite high and at least one runner should break off and he should be looking for (possible) gammon-saving plays. Snowie suggests 23/14, 15/12; Adrian prefers 17/11, 15/9. However, it matters not for Rachel rolls 41: 3/0, 1/0 -- and Adrian hits with his own 41: 23/22*, 22/18! Unfortunately for him he's not as 'lucky' as Rachel, who, thanks to an excellent 66, rolls out for the gammon and the score moves up to 9-3 to Rachel.

At 2-away, 8-away, Adrian cubes:



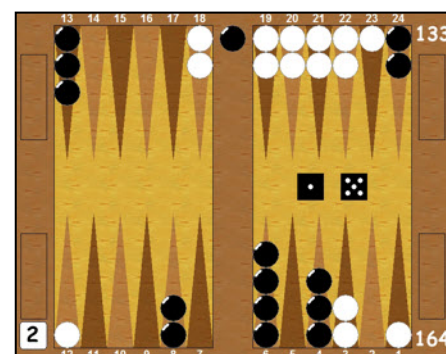
Black 9 White 3
White cubes

Snowie rates this double/pass:

Double/pass	1.000
No double	-0.002
Double/take	+0.423

However, Snowie didn't convey this to Rachel and she took!

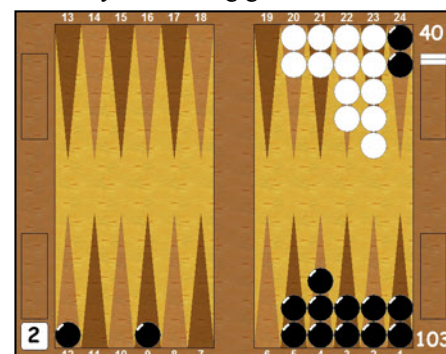
Finally we get to the last of our three, 2nd move blunders. This one is Rachel's.



Black 9 White 3
Black to play 51

At 2-away, 8-away, and holding on to a 2-cube, Rachel is favourite to win the match by a long chalk. With only two choices of move: 25/24, 13/8, or 25/24, 6/1*, Rachel goes for the hit - which is a borderline blunder. Sending another checker back won't improve her chances of winning (it in fact lessens it by 1.8%) and can only favour Adrian. He is unlikely to cover his 2-point blot with a 5 (unless it's 65!) so Rachel will almost certainly get a shot at it. Although she might have more shots with her hitting play if she is hit back, doing so won't increase her chances of winning the match.

Suddenly it's looking good for Adrian.



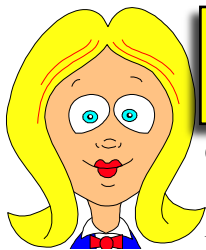
Black 9 White 3
White on roll

But not for long! Adrian rolled a nightmare 54: 5/0, 4/0! Rachel rolled 63: 24/21*, 21/15; Adrian danced with 33; Rachel rolled 11: 21/20*, 9/6 and now Adrian has two on the bar and is facing a closed board! His winning chances have plummeted from 86.3% to a measly 3.7% in a couple of rolls. Although he re-enters with 66 and with Rachel just a couple of checkers off he is unable to win the game and loses the match 11-3.

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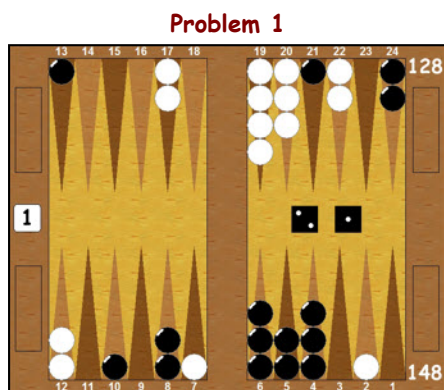
Goldiblots and the Three Bores

By R Umplestiltskin

Once upon a time there were three bores, Daddy Bore, Mummy Bore and Baby Bore. All day long they'd play backgammon on the webernet for peanuts, they liked peanuts - a lot.

Each week, after a hard week's tap tap tapping away on their loptaps they would have a lovely bowl of soup and then settle down for the arrival of Goldiblots, their friendly next-door neighbour who would pose them three problems and she would award the winner with a nice massage and a rub down with the Sporting Time

When Goldiblots came around this time, Daddy Bore had spent the last few hours listening to his collection of backgammon songs on his I-Pop. So engrossed was he that he left it playing while he made his plays - or as he put it, "Play list." Goldiblots told them all that each problem shared the same two dice, a roll of 21. She told them that often it was the littlest numbers that were the hardest to play. Because he was still grooving Daddy Bore didn't hear about the 21s nor did he hear her asking him to go first, Baby Bore stepped in and took his turn.



11 point match
Black 0 White 1
Black to play 21

"Quite a lot of choice for this one," he said, thoughtfully stroking his chin, "but, I am going for the hitting play, 10/7*. If I am not hit back next roll I have great chances of rolling a 6 and making a very good prime. If I am hit I will have excellent changes to make an advanced anchor."

"No I am not!" retorted Daddy Bore, mishearing the word, anchor. Goldiblots

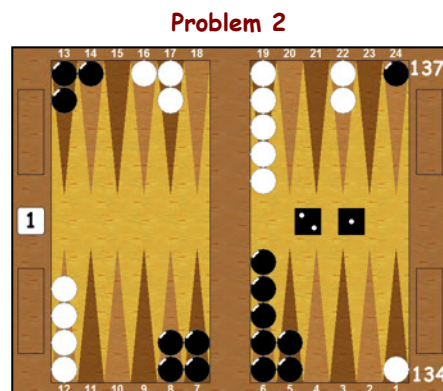
ignored him thinking, *yes you are*, to herself and called Mummy Bore up.

"What's needed here is a bit of imagination. Obviously hitting is correct, but not with 10/7*, but with 8/7* and then keep it going with 7/5, giving lots of good rolls next time that will make another home board point."

Having seen Baby Bore and then Mummy Bore get up and do something Daddy Bore deduced that he was next. He got to his feet, bopping away in a world of his own, "*Get out from that kitchen and rattle those pots and pans. Well, roll my breakfast 'cause I'm a hungry man. I said Shake, rattle and roll. I said Shake, rattle and roll*"

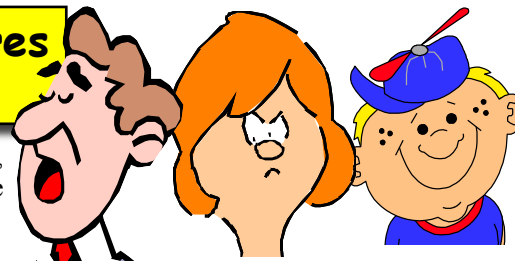
They all put their fingers in their ears and motioned for him to stop 'singing' and to get on with it. He continued, "I have no idea what you two played," he turned to Baby Bore and Mummy Bore, "and frankly I don't care. No doubt it included hitting, which is totally wrong. The simple, quiet play is to make the anchor with 24/21. Now, if any of my blots are hit . . . *time, time, time is on my side, yes it is. Yeah, time, time, time is on my side.*"

Strutting like Mick Jagger he returned to his seat, to a chorus of moans and groans. Goldiblots called up Mummy Bore to go first for the next problem.



11 point match
Black 5 White 6
Black to play 21

"Nice Max Wall impression," she jeered,



"and by the way those headphones look like a stetycscope thingy that doctors wear. You look silly", she added. She then turned her attention to the problem.

"The key to this move lies with the 2. Play this first and the 1 will be easily spotted. White doesn't have much going for him in his home board at the moment so slotting 6/4 is an obvious 2; and then simply place the 14-point checker onto the 13-point. The only thing white can do is hit with 3s, and he is favourite not to do so, and then I have good chances to make the 4-point myself."

She sat down, but Daddy Bore made no attempt to get up, he was still bopping away in a world of his own. Prodded by Baby Bore, Daddy Bore rose. "Before I start there's a song I'd like you all to hear that gives a clue to my move." Before he could be stopped in launched into, "*Oh you need timin' a tick a tick a tick a. Good timin' a tock a tock a tock a tock a. Timin' is the thing it's true.* Have you guessed my move? No? Well it's 24/21 again. I don't mind being hit because it will help my . . . *timin' a tick a tick a tick a, timin'.*" He sat down chuffed to bits with his musical references.



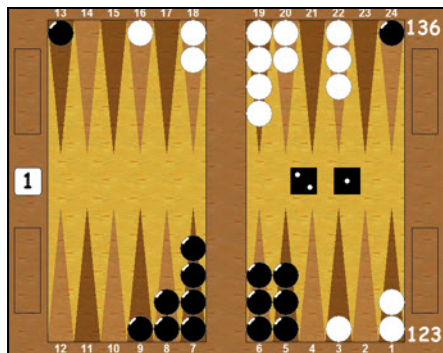
Baby Bore got up - he too began by singing, "*If I could turn back time,*" he sang to Daddy Bore, "I'd have made sure you wore a condom!" Mummy Bore blushed, Daddy Bore never heard him, and Goldiblots was thinking, *tell that to his father.*

Baby Bore got on with it. "When Mummy Bore played 6/4 I thought she was going to play my move, but she made a big mistake when she played 14/13. She should have played 6/5 to unstack the 6-point and provide an extra builder to cover the blot. If both my blots are missed I will have the added bonus of 55 covering the 4-point." He sat down singing to himself, "*If I could turn back time.*"

Goldiblots, wishing she could turn back time to a time when she wasn't liv- ►

ing next door to the Bores produced the final problem.

Problem 3



11 point match
Black 7 White 10 Crawford
Black to play 21

Daddy Bore got up as Goldiblots motioned to him it was his turn to go first. To catcalls and jeering he started singing, "Should I stay or should I go? If I go there will be trouble. And if I stay there will be double. Should I stay or should I go? Yes, here's an easier musical clue. Now is the time to run with 24/21. If I am hit off my 9-point I will probably be able to anchor and leap out without much difficulty."

"The only Clash I want to hear," said Baby Bore as he got up to take his final

turn, "is your head clashing with the wall. Your needle's obviously stuck on 24/21 . . . 24/21 . . . 24/21!" he sniggered. "Leaving a shot now is madness, all that's needed is to maximise the builders for another point by playing 9/8, 7/5. My mid-point blot is well placed to deter white's checker on my 3-point from running out and if he stays he's under pressure of being pointed on - or to put it musically, *bang, bang, Maxwell's silver hammer comes down upon his head.*" Very pleased with his own musical reference he sat down and allowed Mummy Bore the final word.

"Daddy Bore's singing might be bad, but his backgammon is even worse. I mean, what sort of man does the same moves over and over again and again? (*Your sort of man*, thought Goldiblots.) It shows a distinct lack of imagination. (*Told you*, said Goldiblots, silently.) I do agree with moving the back checker - or Chubby as I call him." She giggled at her oblique musical reference. "Who are you calling chubby?" asked Daddy Bore. Mummy continued, "Just move it 24/23 to escape with 6s and then safety the blot 9/7. Safe and threatening both at the same time; a perfect dual-purpose move."

"Forget about Chubby Checker, or the Stones, or even Gladys Knight and the

Pips. It's the Pointer Sisters every time in my book, with Abba's, *Dancing Queen* a close second" said Goldiblots, jumping on the band wagon. "But, back to business. Well, you aren't going to believe it but no one got a single problem correct! In fact you all went into blunder mode!"

"I did it my way," protested Daddy Bore. "I blame it on the boogie," said Baby Bore pointing at Daddy Bores I-Pop. "Here comes my nineteenth nervous breakdown," wailed Mummy Bore.

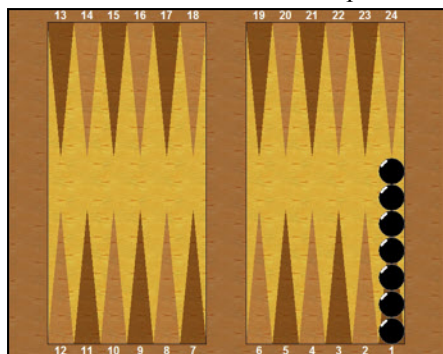
Was it the booger rather than the boogie that ruined it for Baby Bore? Was Daddy Bore more Frank Spencer than Frank Sinatra? Was Mummy Bore really having a nervous breakdown or was just a touch of the Shakin' Stevens? Well, dear readers, what a kerfuffle! Can you work out the best move for each problem? See what Goldiblots has to say on page 9.



Effective Pip Count

In memory of Walter Trice

Even the simplest backgammon positions have their little secrets. Case in point:



Depending on the dice, it takes 2, 3, or 4 rolls to bear off 7 men from the ace-point. Simple multiplication of probabilities shows that the chance of bearing off in 2 rolls is 1/36 and that the chance that 4 will be needed is 125/216. What remain - (1 - 1/36 - 125/216) - is the probability of bearing off in 3 rolls. From these figures, one can calculate the average number of rolls required, and it turns out to be 3.5509259259.



3.5509259259.

Hmm. Pretty dull. Multiply it by 49/6, though, and something interesting happens. You get 28.999.

Could it be just a coincidence that this process produces a number that is almost an integer? Well, maybe. But if you do the same thing for a 13-checker stack, the result is even more interesting: 50.000004.

When I encountered these numbers 11 years ago [approx 1989 - this article was published in 2000], the first thing I had to do was pop my eyeballs back into their sockets. Then I went to work on an algebraic formula for the sequence, including the "error" term. I sent it off to Danny Kleinman, whom I figured was the only

other person on the planet who would find the thing as fascinating as I did. Danny worked out a simpler derivation than mine and wrote it up in an article ("Walter's Wonderful Formula") that he included in his next book *But Only The Hogs Win Backgammons*.

You may be wondering exactly why 49/6 entered the picture. 49/6 is the average number of pips in one roll of the dice. If we didn't get to play our doubles twice in backgammon, the average roll would be 7, just as it is in craps. But doubles gives us two bangs for the buck. Since doubles occurs once in 6 rolls, we average 7 bangs for 6 bucks, or 7/6 bangs per buck. Since the average bang is still 7 pips, the average roll is 7/6 x 7 pips, or 49/6. Thus, when we multiply some number of rolls by 49/6, we are converting a "roll count" to a kind of pip count.

Backgammon GALORE!

Relationships like the one between the 4-roll position and the number 29 needed a name, and I decided to call 29 the **Effective Pip Count**, or EPC, of the 4-roll position.

All pure ace-stack positions have EPCs that are very close to whole numbers.

The general formula is as follows:

Rule 1:

For an N-roll position, the EPC is $7N + 1$

For a 1-roll position consisting of 1 or 2 men on the ace-point, you get $7 \times 1 + 1 = 8$. The "real" answer is greater by 1/6 of a pip. But every time you go out one more roll, the error in the formula decreases by a factor of 6, so it quickly becomes insignificant. For a 7-roll position the formula gives $7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$, and as we have seen, the error is only 4-millionths of a pip.

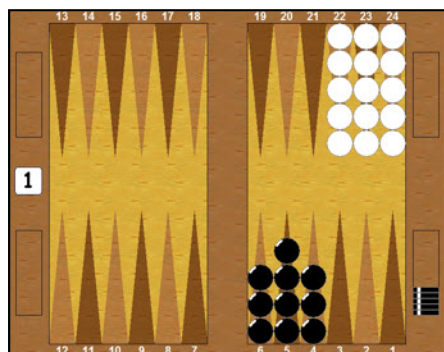
Lured by the possibility that other classes of positions might have EPCs that could be calculated just as easily, I began looking at home board bear-off positions, multiplying the average number of rolls it took to bear them off by 49/6. The next rule to emerge was more approximate than the neat $7N + 1$ rule, but it had a broad range of applicability. In a nutshell, Rule 2 was as follows:

Rule 2:

Nice positions waste 7 pips

A "nice" position consists of a smoothish cluster of checkers on the 4-, 5- and 6-points. For a nice position, you get the EPC as follows: count pips the normal way, and then add 7.

Rules 1 and 2 lead to a very efficient method of gauging cube action in roll-vs.-pip positions. The method is best illustrated by a position I call "Prop 57."



Which side do you think stands better here? A few years back, players tended to grossly overestimate the value of Black's having already borne off five men. I would offer to play backgammon from this position, rolling to see who goes first, cube in the middle, for small stakes - just

to make it interesting. After a few dozen points had dribbled away, my opponents usually decided that they were on the wrong side. No problem, I'd say, turning the board around . . . Oddly enough, switching sides didn't seem to make a difference!

Black is slightly better, but unless both sides handle the cube skilfully, the positions are, for all practical purposes, equal. White's position is close to an 8-roll ace-point stack, so Rule (1) says that his EPC is 57. Black has a nice position with a pip-count of 50, so Rule (2) says that his EPC is also 57. As the game progresses, most of the time Black stays semi-nice and White stays crunched, so the two formulas keep working.

The Prop 57 player's edge comes from his being able to handle the cube decisions quickly, effortlessly, and with above-average accuracy. One set of guidelines works well for pip-vs.-roll positions and for roll-vs.-pip positions, if both sides are converted to EPC. Here's how it goes. Start with the "number of rolls" for the position of the player on shake, and subtract 3. This is the maximum deficit in EPC with which the trailer can take a double. If the trailer is within 1 pip of his point of last take, the leader can redouble. Within 2 pips, it is an initial double.

Suppose, for example, that in Prop 57 White wins the opening shake, taking off two men, and then Black rolls his worst number, which is 2-1. Now White is in a 7-roll position with an EPC of $7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$, and Black has reduced his EPC from 57 to 54. 7 minus 3 is 4, so Black has a bare take, down 4 = $54 - 50$. If, instead, Black had rolled 3-1 or 1-1, he would be down 3, and 1 pip better than his point of last take: (re)double/take. If Black had rolled 3-2 or 4-1, the position would be an initial double for White, but not a redouble.

When Black wins the opening shake, the picture is a bit different. If Black rolls 6-5 and White fails to roll doubles, then White should drop Black's cube, though it's close. You might think that this sequence would mirror the [White: any roll / Black: 2-1] case, since 2-1 is 4 pips smaller than an average non-double and 6-5 is 4 pips larger, but there are three

extra factors working in Black's favor. First, after 6-5, Black is not in a "7-roll" position: an EPC of 46 is a 63/7-roll position. Second, when Black rolls something that lets him take off checkers without being forced to dump any onto his three low points, his position becomes even "nicer" and his wastage diminishes by a small fraction of a pip. And finally, the two sides aren't really equal to start with. Black's edge in the initial position is equivalent to 3/10 of a pip.

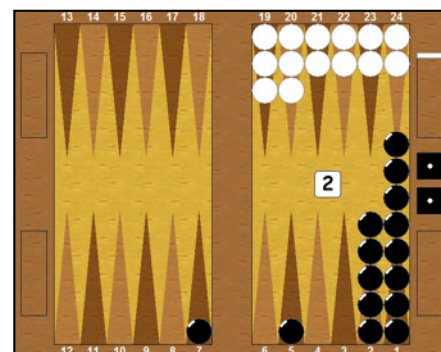
I don't use Effective Pip Count methods for every racing cube decision. Most of the time the plain vanilla pip count is all you need to know. When in doubt, I'll use Jeff Ward's adjusted pip count. I reserve EPC for these asymmetrical roll-vs-pip positions and for certain peculiar types of races that emerge after someone gets hit in a contact endgame.

In the world of EPCs, a few reference positions go a long way. One reference position deserves its own rule.

Rule 3:

The flat position wastes 10 pips

The flat position is a simple closed board, two checkers on each point. If a position is smooth, flattish and top-heavy, it will always waste fewer than 10 pips and more than 7.



Towpath Tournament

September 2000

15-point Finals:

Friedman (Black) = 5

Trice (White) = 1

White has borne off one checker.

Black on roll. Cube action?

In the position that arose in my match with Mike Friedman at the Towpath Inn Tournament, my over-the-board guess for White's wastage was 9.5. ▶

Flint Area
BackgammonNews

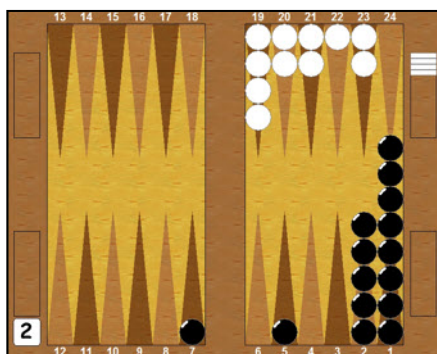
Undoubtedly I had seen the exact position - flat with spares on the 5- and 6- points - at some time on a computer screen, along with its EPC and wastage, but I had never committed it to memory. So it's a coincidence that the real answer differs from 9.5 by only a hundredth of a pip. White's EPC, then, is 53 (his literal pip count) plus 9.5 for a total of 62.5.

Black has 15 checkers with 16 crossovers. If he always gets 4 crossovers from his doubles, and 2 crossovers from his non-doubles, then he'll have played out an 8-roll position. But a single miss costs a full roll. Over the board I again made an educated guess, and estimated that Black was 2 pips worse than an 8-roll position. So my EPC estimates were 59 for Black and 62.5 for White. Since the "roll-vs.-pip" guidelines said I could take being down 5, I was quite comfortable with my decision to take, and I didn't bother to get into the tedious counting of two-roll miss sequences that would have been necessary for a more exact calculation of Black's EPC. It was obvious enough that Black had a goodly number of ways to miss by rolling a 3 or a 4 on his second shake.

A closer (and computer-assisted) look at the position reveals an interesting nuance. Black's EPC turns out to be 59.6. This

puts him at about a 3-pip lead, and the pip-vs.-roll rules suggest that Black might have an initial double, but not a redouble. But a Snowie rollout indicates that in fact Black does have a money redouble. How come? The reason is that the Towpath position is not really a pip-vs.-roll position. White is 2.5 pips away from "nice," and higher wastage also implies lower variance. "Lower variance" means less joker-potential. Less joker-potential means that it is harder to catch up if you are behind, which magnifies the significance of your opponent's lead.

I felt challenged by the Snowie result to find a minimal modification of White's position that would vindicate the old guidelines. Here it is:



White's position may not look as pretty as the Towpath position, but it is in fact almost 2 pips nicer, as a result of his

having 3 fewer checkers on the low points, and none on the ace. This almost makes up for the fact that White's pip count is now 55 instead of 53; his EPC is 62.58 instead of 62.51. Although White's higher EPC results in a numerically greater lead for Black, the modified position is indeed not a redouble.

This article was first published November 2000 in
Carol Joy Cole's *Flint Area BackgammonNews*
www.flintbg.com/index.html
and was later reproduced by Tom Keith on his web
site *Backgammon Galore* in June 2004
www.bkgm.com/
Biba thanks them both for their permission to
reprint the article in this issue of Bibafax.



"Well," said Goldiblots, "I am not at all surprised that there were no correct answers - and I blame it on those silly songs! For your information the correct answers were . . ."

Position 1

Quite simply the double-hit, 8/7*, 4/2* is by far the better move in this position. Even with a direct 2-shot left on I will be able to do plenty of damage with the blots/buliders I have dotted about the board. It's a good gammon-play move and I will go well ahead if white doesn't hit.

8/7* 4/2*

10/7*	-0.273	Baby
8/7* 7/5	-0.447	Mummy
24/21	-0.847	Daddy

Position 2

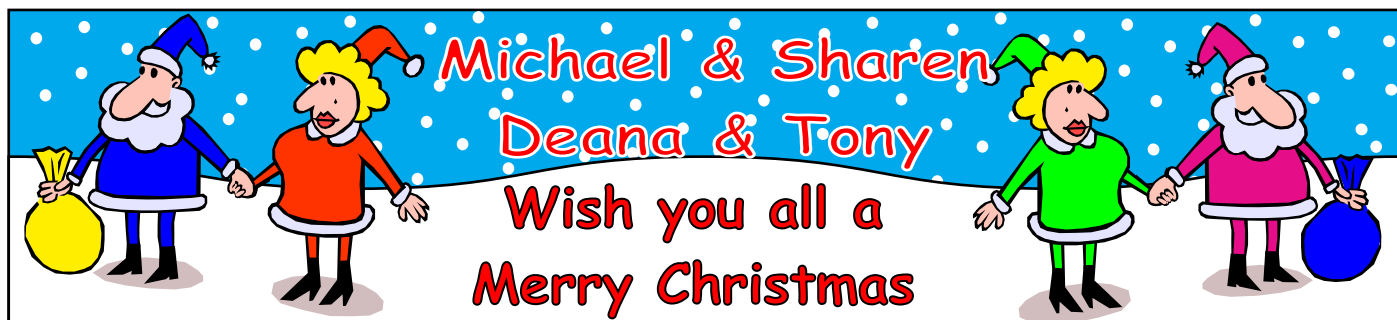
There is absolutely no need to leave any shots on with this roll. All that's needed is to play sensibly and safely with 14/11. Any slotting play or moving into easier reach of white's checkers is completely uncalled-for.

14/11		
14/13 6/4	-0.131	Mummy
24/21	-0.156	Daddy
6/4 6/5	-0.201	Baby

Position 3

Many players would only see the danger that the 9-point blot is in from 6s and panic - but it isn't in that much danger. Not all 17 6s will hit, in fact apart from direct 6s (11) only 51 will do the job (as will 53). Making the 4-point with 6/4, 5/4 is more important here; it's the next point in a row and well worth the danger of being hit.

6/4 5/4		
9/8 7/5	-0.287	Baby
24/23 9/7	-0.303	Mummy
24/21	-0.450	Daddy



Backgammon Stoplight Charts

by Timothy Chow

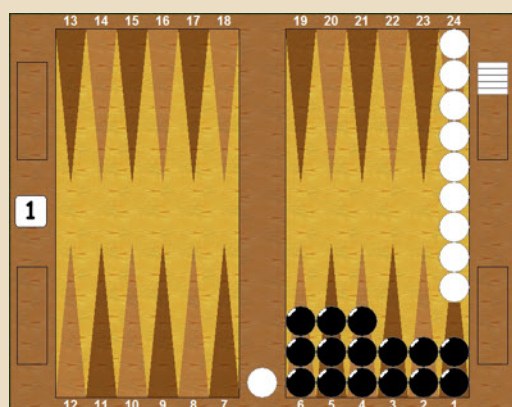
Most cube reference positions that you will find in the literature, such as in Kit Woolsey's *Backgammon Encyclopedia*, are for money games. As of this writing (October 2009), there seems to be no widely available compilation of cube reference positions for match play. However, I predict that it is only a matter of time before such compilations start to appear.

For anyone who is planning on producing such a compilation, I have a suggestion for how to summarize the cube action for a particular position: A stoplight chart. Here is the idea. First, let us associate a different color to each possible cube action, as follows.

A stoplight chart for a particular position would look a little bit like a match equity table, except that the entries would not be match equities; they would be colors, indicating what the cube action would be for that particular position at that particular score.

No double, take	Red	R
Double, take	Orange	O
Double, pass	Green	G
Too good to double	Blue	B

For example, here is a position and its associated stoplight chart, calculated using 1296-game GNU Backgammon supremo rollouts and the g11 MET:



	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	G	G	R	G	G	G
3	G	G	G	G	G	O
4	O	G	G	G	G	G
5	O	O	O	O	O	O
6	G	G	G	G	G	G
7	G	G	G	G	G	G

The first row and column have been suppressed because post-Crawford cube actions are not very interesting. Also, I have stopped arbitrarily at 7 points; naturally, the chart could be extended further. The stoplight chart tells us, for example, that if you are Black and are leading 2-away/4-away, then you should not double; however, if you are trailing 4-away/2-away then you should double and Red should take.

To remember the colors, begin by noting that red means "no double". That is, if you are tempted to double the position, STOP. Do not double. On the other hand, if you see green, then go ahead and double; in fact, your opponent should pass. Orange (or amber) is in between red and green on a stoplight so it represents "double, take". The remaining possibility is "too good to double," which lies beyond "double, pass," so we assign it the color blue, which lies beyond green on the rainbow.

Stoplight charts do not, of course, tell you everything about a position. In the above example, the 4-away/3-away cube action is very close to the take/drop borderline, but the stoplight chart does not distinguish it from a clear drop. Nevertheless, I believe that a stoplight chart is a useful way of summarizing a lot of information about match cube actions.

Stoplight charts do not, of course, tell you everything about a position. In the above example, the 4-away/3-away cube action is very close to the take/drop borderline, but the stoplight chart does not distinguish it from a clear drop. Nevertheless, I believe that a stoplight chart is a useful way of summarizing a lot of information about match cube actions.

NB: After coming up with the idea of a stoplight chart, I was informed by Bob Koca that Tom Keith had come up with a similar color-coding scheme many years ago, www.bkgm.com/articles/Koca/CuringYourShortBearoffBlues.html. What can I say? Great minds think alike!

This article first appeared at www-math.mit.edu/~tchow/stoplight.shtml and is published here with the kind permission of its creator. More Timothy Chow stuff can be seen here: www-math.mit.edu/~tchow/fun.html

Backgammon in the Bahamas

From the Blog, Do You Know The Way To San Jose?

By Shannon Woolfe

<http://wolfyknowstheway.blogspot.com/2009/09/backgammon-in-bahamas-part-one.html>



When I was very young, my father taught me to play backgammon... he had been running with a crowd of fashionable people who liked to speak French and play backgammon while drinking wine all night. They played for money too. So he instilled in me a very serious attitude towards the game -- he taught me to be merciless.



There are people who think that backgammon is purely a game of luck because it's a dice game -- but a skilled backgammon player knows how to use those dice to their advantage. She knows all her "automatic points" and how to cover her men while capturing her opponent's men. She knows how to swiftly get to her home board and set it up such that the dice will get her men off the board before her opponent even knows what happened.

My husband refuses to play backgammon with me, he says he doesn't know this woman who emerges on the other side of the board -- he cannot beat her and she seems so bent on destroying him that he would rather do something less dangerous, like those chain saw chores that have been piling up in our woods. He used to enjoy playing cards with me, Gin, we played Gin for hours when we lived in Bermuda, but that fierce woman took over our card playing too... she is just too good at it, he tired of losing all the time. How did he end up marrying a grifter anyway?

I have only met one person who can foil me at backgammon. My life long friend Anita -- she and I played backgammon as teenagers -- we would sit on the floor for hours and set up game after game after game. We were evenly matched and we were obsessed! The record player would

play Bowie's Changes or The Beatles White Album over and over and we would roll the dice and another game would go by us. We even played over the phone! I would have my board and she would have hers -- this was the ultimate in trust - she would roll her dice, announce what came up, and I would mirror her move on my board - you had to believe the other completely, and you had to be totally honest. My grandmother would walk by me sitting at the kitchen table with my board set up... "Dear, when are you going to get off the phone? Why don't you just ride down to Anita's house and play?" I would shush her... "Mom! you don't get it!" and then I would go back to my game. She didn't get it -- there was something about playing over the phone that cemented our friendship and our skill.

But then Anita developed the most annoying and ingenious strategy. Early in the game, she would intentionally leave her men open, three or four or five men, so many men, that you were tripping over them, you had to capture them. And then she would fill up your home board with all these men coming back into the game and so you could not build a proper home board... and **then** she would capture your men who had made it all the way to the home board and send them back, back into the abyss. Finally, she would go in for the kill -- she would ever so swiftly gather up all her former prisoners and take them home and start clearing them off the board, while you ran all the way home with your tail between your legs. It was infuriating. It broke all the conventional ideas of the game. And no matter what I did to anticipate her coup, she would undo me. I tried to do the same to her -- but to no avail -- she would crush me, the Swede that she was, quietly, while drinking hot chocolate and nibbling on a Pepperidge Farm cookie, never taking her eyes off the board. This end-

ed our backgammon days -- not our friendship, but she had found the ultimate weapon and our balanced rivalry was ruined, I was defeated.

A few years later though I would find new opponents, or should I say victims? Every once in a while I would stumble upon someone at a party in college who wanted to play, "But we don't have a board" and I would say "I do, back in my apartment! Let's go!" It was a nice pick-up line, but all I was interested in was playing backgammon and winning five or ten bucks.

In the spring of '85 I went to the Bahamas -- to Freeport -- with our college rugby team. My roommate and I line-judged for our team and they asked us to go with them to a rollicking good tournament for Spring Break. Who could pass that up? When they weren't playing rugby, they were drinking and smoking enormous amounts of reefer. It was a sight to see. On the second or third day on the island, we all went to the beach -- I remember a death defying bus ride and all of us spilling out onto this beautiful beach. We spent the day swimming and dancing and drinking... it was marvellous.



But what was even more marvellous was there was a large cabana on the beach that housed an open bar and grill. There I found a group of Bahamian men, old thin boney black men, wearing straw fedoras, drinking Elephant beer, smoking Cuban cigars and playing *backgammon*. I was drawn to them like a stray dog -- I watched them play fast and I watched their money, those tropical colored bills going back and forth between them. I wanted ►



to play, but the sun was calling and I had to plan my approach.

The rain came on our last day in Freeport -- the tournament had ended and we had played well. I was wiped out from line-judging in the hot equatorial sun and from the late nights. On that last morning, our hotel was quiet, all the players were hung over and asleep.



But I had a plan. I was going to use this rainy day to go to the beach and find those men. I walked down to the bus stop and rode alone in that big unwieldy bus, while the rain came in the windows. I was full of hope about the good game to come and I had a pocket full of just enough cash to buy my way in...

The bus driver eyed me when I departed the bus... perhaps he thought that he would have to describe me to Bahamian police later in the day. Yes, I was a young blonde American girl, going to the beach in the rain -- and I was alone. I bid him goodbye and strided towards the cabana. The ocean which had been so clearly azure earlier in the week, roiled green and thick. I was pleased to see the men huddled at their table with the backgammon board loaded for bear. They had two piles of bills weighted down with a beach rock. Their Cuban cigars stung my nose and their low guttural voices were like that of horses eating dinner on a cold winter night in the barn...

I placed myself on a stool at the bar and ordered a beer. The dark Bahamian bartender recognized me from the previous days, "Hey, where are all your friends? The rugby players?" I tried to be cool, cool as a young girl alone on a rainy Bahamian beach who was clearly looking for trouble could be. I didn't know I was looking for trouble, I thought I was just looking for a good game of backgammon with some old men.

"Oh, them, they're all back at the hotel... so tell me something..." The barkeep leaned over the counter, he was all ears. "Tell, me are those fellas here every day?"

"Yes M'am. Dat's what dey do...dey play backgammon all day long, rain or shine. Do you play?"

"I do, just a little, they wouldn't play me, I would be wasting their time..." I took a sip of my beer and turned to look at the old men, they were fogged in by mist and cigar smoke...it hung about them like it would hang around a mountain top.

"Hey Fishmon! Fishmon!" my barkeep was calling to the men, they all turned, the smoke cleared and Fishmon answered...

"Can't you see I'm in dis game?" he was clearly annoyed.

"Dis girly here, she wants to play. Give her a game or two!" I held up my hand to the men, I didn't wave, just cocked my hand and smiled. They all looked at each other and then back at me. Fishmon smiled a sparingly toothed smile...a gold tooth in the very front gleamed at me.

"You come over den." I got off my bar stool and walked over to them. They cleared the current game, just swept it off the board. They had a live one. "You got money? We don't play for fun girly, we play for money."



I pulled my stash of jewel colored Bahamian dollars with the Queen's turquoise portrait accompanied by a barracuda out of my pocket. They waved me to sit down at the board. "You know how to set up the board girly."

"Yes, I think so." I hesitated slightly with the pieces, I wanted to appear competent, but not cocky. Its at this point that I must admit, that I had the best of intentions when I sat down with these men. I wanted to have my Bahamian experience, hang with the natives so to speak, something to write home about. But there was clearly a problem right from the beginning. They thought they were going to take all my money and I thought I was going to take all theirs. Fishmon was the first to play me. They set up the doubling cube on the bar of the board. We rolled to determine who would go first...it went my way and

I took that roll as my first move. I snapped my men into an automatic point - suddenly the air currents shifted slightly... Fishmon leaned in, looked at my first point and then at me. He sat back and rolled his dice, he smiled as though he was telling himself "Girly knows a little bit..."

The first game went fast - I kept my hands off the doubling cube. I didn't want to strike too hard in the first game. I gammoned Fishmon and his cohorts ordered a round of beers and lit fresh cigars. They all jumped to be next, they jostled Fishmon aside. I had lightened his pocket by 10 Bahamian dollars and he was stunned.

My next opponent was the blackest of the group - he narrowed his eyes at me and



pulled his fedora down over his eyes. But when it was all said and done, he leaned back in his chair, tipping the fedora back on his head and raised his unbelievably long arms to Jah. "Girly did it again! She took all my money!" I did take all his money, I turned the doubling cube a couple of times during that second game and cleaned his clock of thirty or so Bahamian dollars. The bartender came over, "What's dis? Girly's got de best of you den?" He pulled up a chair, the rain started to come down harder. The ocean was rising up on its legs and trying to tell me something, but I was high on the Cuban cigar smoke and my Elephant beer.

My third opponent couldn't wait to play me -- he was heavy, with a round head like Idi Amin. He had more teeth than all his friends put together and they were lighting up the place... I took this to mean that he had money and he had skill... he looked like a man determined to beat Girly. He had been watching me play, he was going to trip me up. But I had another trick up my sleeve - the Anita Blockade - I had never tried it on anyone, but this seemed as good a time as any to give it a go. With my first roll I left two men wide open. There were giggles of delight, Fishmon leaned over me "Girly, you sure you want to do dat?" I bit my lip.

Immediately the fat toothy man took my men and turned the doubling cube. I rolled again, I got doubles and was able to put my taken men back on the board and then use my remaining moves ➡

to cast my line with three more uncovered men. The big black fish took it - and a few moves later it was like Anita was there with me, sitting on my shoulder, speaking Swedish to me. I was channeling her. Fat man's home board was now completely blocked up with my men and he was being forced to use his dice in unconventional and risky ways. And then what I had been waiting for happened. He had to leave two men open and I pounced with a good roll of the dice, a double fives! I took his men and then began my exodus from his home board back to my home board - the cabana went horribly quiet - he had turned the doubling cube to a crazy amount and now all you could hear was the dice hitting the felt...and then, it was over. He never even managed to get one man off the board -- I slayed him with the most brutal of Swedish tactics.

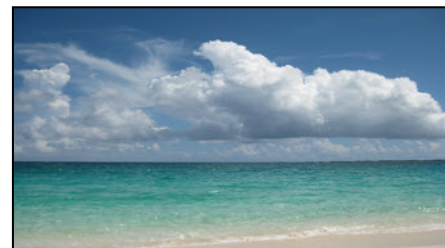
He pulled out his money clip and layed his money down on the board. Close to three hundred Bahamian dollars... and just as I stuck out my arm to take the money, I had a terrible realization... I was all alone and these men were very pissed off. It wasn't funny anymore -- Girly was

a grifter. I let the money sit on the felt of the board. I looked around - I looked to Fishmon, the sea breeze came in and fluttered the bills and the bartender placed his hand on them before they blew away. "Fishmon...one more game then...no doubling cube, just winner takes all of that and this..." I quickly took my other winnings, plus my reserve cash and put it down. Fishmon looked at the Fat Man and the Black Fedora man - they nodded. I felt this horrible heat down at the base of my back, like someone was holding a torch to it. My scalp was sweating. I needed to lose that game and lose it in such an utterly perfect way that they would redeem themselves and I wouldn't end up being fed to the barracudas.

Fishmon won the roll for the first move. He deftly used his automatic point. I rolled, and when I rolled I hung my wrist, I tried to remove all the heat from my hand, to throw those dice with no thoughts in my head that might just make them land hot. I asked Jah to make my dice as cold as that green sea that was rushing in my ears. And Jah provided, roll after roll, was cold and rotten -- I made mistakes, but I had to make smart

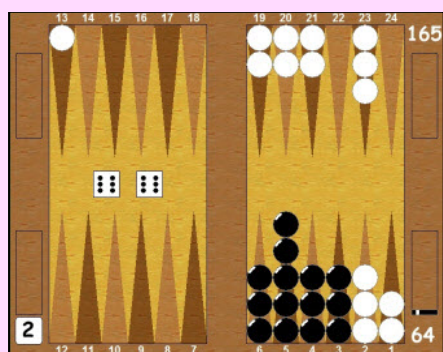
mistakes, mistakes that appeared to be failed strategy. I could not be a fighter throwing a fight or a jockey pulling a horse - no I had to lose for real.

And somehow I did - I lost in such a way that the ocean began to calm.



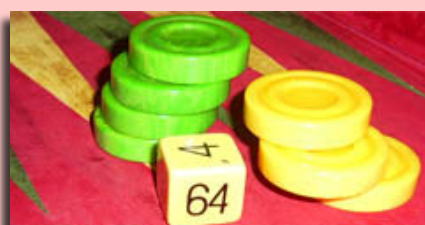
That hot torch at the base of my spine was suddenly gone and the men patted me on the back. I had given them all my money and had returned all of theirs. The bartender went back to the bar and I pushed back my chair and thanked them for a good afternoon. Fishmon held out a five dollar bill, I hesitated, "Take it, you're gonna need it for de bus back to your hotel." I took it and ran out into the rain. I could see the bus waiting at the stop and I didn't want to miss it.

Correction: On page 27, Bibafax 102, I made a mistake in my report over the 66 played by Jon in which the 2-cube wasn't recorded. Despite all my efforts to input the video into Snowie, I somehow missed this vital cube decision. I have redone the analysis and I apologise for my error.



White to play 66

Jon quickly went through three options and eventually settled on 23/17(2), 17/11, 12/6. Snowie rated this an error @ 0.056 as opposed to its best play of 23/5, 12/6. Why an error? It's probably due to gammon losses. With the actual play the gammon losses are 46.2% and with Snowie's they are reduced down to 40.9%. The Dice Gods then went against Jon and they punished him with a 43 for Simon, 6/3*, 5/2. They then teased him with three gammon-saving (perhaps even game-saving) plays when Simon left a blot, but he just couldn't do it and Simon won his first ever Biba final!



**Coventry Open
Backgammon Tournament
Sunday, 29 November**

**Whitefriars Olde Ale House
114-115 Gosford Street Coventry**

*The venue is on Gosford Street at the edge of Coventry City Centre,
opposite the Coventry University School of Art and Design (M Block.)*

**Starting @ 12 noon:
9 Point, 7 Point and 5 Point KO events
Cash Prizes & Buffet**

Entry £20 (32 maximum entrants)

**To secure entry send cheque payable to P Tutchings
43 Hermitage Road. Wyken. Coventry. CV2 5GF**

The Scottish Open returns to Scotland! Scheduled for mid-March 2010, this popular knockout tournament will be taking place at the Barceló Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh. Although Biba is seeking a sponsor for the event (see bottom of this page) there is already a guaranteed first prize of £500 minimum! Also there is £100 added for the Friday 500 Knockout. The Edinburgh Carlton Hotel is right in the city centre (adjoining the railway station) and Biba has negotiated some very good rates for one of the best hotels in the city. Full details on the Biba website.

Advice on Booking Accommodation (including for 2010 events)

The Biba calendar on this page lists all the Biba events for the year. The wise member books every tournament they want to enter in one block booking. If, nearer the date they are unable to attend, they simply cancel the room (at least one weeks notice is required) and they are not charged a penny. This guarantees that you'll never have to worry about accommodation ever again and you can relax in the full knowledge that no matter what, you'll always have a room. Book it now - remember what happened last December!

2009 Backgammon Calendar

If you would like to sponsor a tournament, those marked X are unavailable. Ask for details

X	Dec 4,5,6	Gilbertson UK Finals	-	Oxford	Double KO
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2010 Backgammon Calendar

X	Jan 8,9,10	13th Bright 'n' Breezy Celebrating Cliff Connick's 90th Birthday	GP UK	Brighton	Knockout
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	Feb 5,6,7	Jarvis Trophy	GP UK	Hinckley	
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	Mar 5,6,7	Biba International Championships	GP -	Hinckley	Knockout
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	Mar 19,20,21	The Scottish Open	GP -	Edinburgh	Knockout
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	Apl 9,10,11	British Open	GP UK	Hinckley	Knockout
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	Apl ??	Manchester 1-Day	GP -	Manchester	Combination
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	May 7,8,9	County Cups Trophy	GP UK	Hinckley	Swiss
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	Jun 4,5,6	The English Open	GP -	Hinckley	Knockout
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	Jul 2,3,4	Biba World Championship	GP UK	Hinckley	Knockout
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	Jul ??	15th Liverpool Open	GP -	Liverpool	Combination
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	Aug 6,7,8	SAC Trophy	GP UK	Hinckley	Swiss
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	Aug ??	14th Mind Sports Olympiad	- -	tba	Swiss
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X	Sep 3,4,5	Backgammon in London @ BibaTrophy	GP	Hinckley	Knockout
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	Oct 1,2,3	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP	Hinckley	Knockout
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	Oct ??	18th Irish Open	GP UK	Dublin	Knockout
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	Nov 5,6,7	Townharbour Trophy	GP UK	Hinckley	Swiss
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X	Dec 3,4,5	The UK Finals Christmas Party	GP -	Hinckley	Double KO
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* Sponsored by Peter & Paul Christmas *

What does sponsoring an event entail?

At the very least you are required to supply the trophies for the event - the costs vary, but are usually in the region of £100 to £150. If you wish to attract a good turnout then extras should be considered to boost attendance. You can rename some of the above events to suit your sponsorship - details upon request. Once sponsorship has been agreed you are obliged to supply/fund the trophies in order to exclusively reserve your event.

2009 & 2010 Details, Deals and Dates



Registration: Saturday 1030 to 1230

Play Starts (prompt): Friday 2100, Saturday 1300, Sunday 1030

Auctions: Group, Saturday 1245. Individual, Sunday 1015

Pools: Private, members only, prize pools available at £tba

All tournaments feature a free entry Friday 500 **

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

Saturday night backgammon, Poker Grand Prix and Jackpots subject to demand

Registration Fees: Members only: £20 - 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

2100: Friday 500 **
+ Jackpots (on demand)

SATURDAY

Registration 1030 / 1230
Play starts 1300 prompt

SUNDAY

Registration 1030
(penalty points apply @ 1030)

UK Finals new venue

Dinner, bed and breakfast @ Barceló Oxford for December 2009

Reservations for Oxford on 01865 489 933 and quote 'backgammon'

This is the telephone number for Oxford only. It is a direct number but they are very busy and you could wait some time before it is answered.

Single room: 1 night £63.50, two nights £110.50

Double or twin room: 1 night £103, two nights £193

Dinner, bed and breakfast @ Barceló Hotels for 2010

The Barceló Old Ship - Brighton

Reservations on 01273 329 001 option #2 and quote 'backgammon'

Single room: 1 night £69, two nights £128, three nights £181.50

Double or twin room: 1 night £114, two nights £208, three nights £282

The Barceló Carlton Hotel - Edinburgh

Reservations: 0131 4723 000 option #2 and quote 'backgammon'

Rates per person : 1 night £79.50, two nights £118

The Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel

Reservations: 01455 631 122 option #2 and quote 'backgammon'

Single room: 1 night £66, two nights £110.50

Double or twin room: 1 night £103.00, two nights £193.00

There are a limited number of rooms made available to Biba at these rates for each of the hotels above and they will be allocated on a first come - first served basis. You are strongly advised to book your accommodation requirements as instructed on page 13 to avoid disappointment.

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 per night to cover facilities provided.

** Friday 500 entrants who are not on the Biba rate or staying in the hotel will have to pay a £20 entry fee.

The Gilbertson UK Finals - 4,5,6 December 2009

**Optional: Black-tie
and posh frocks for
Saturday night!**

This is one of the most popular events in the Biba calendar; and this year it is set to be even better! In order to maximise attendance this tournament has been moved from Daventry to Oxford.



The UK Finals will be the usual format of Saturday: Main qualifier double knockout

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

All players that win 0/2 will go into the 3 point Snowball

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

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

Sunday: Main: 7 point 16 player Knockout.

Progressive Consolation: 5 point Knockout with entry from Main 1st Round

Last Chance : 3 point open draw Knockout

Plus several extras including Rosey's Rollout!

NB: This is Paul's final year as the UK Finals sponsor. If you'd like to sponsor the 2010 UK Finals, please refer to the bottom of page 16 for details of what's expected of you.

Bright 'n' Breezy 2010 8, 9, 10, January

Sponsored by Cliff Connick to
celebrate his 90th birthday



The first tournament of the 2010 season, and without a doubt, the favourite of many backgammon players from around the world. In usual four elements are there for your enjoyment. Plus a 1-point Knockout with £50 added prize money courtesy of Cliff.



To launch the 2010 season there's also a special prize for the Friday 500 - the winner gets free accommodation (two nights) and registration for the Scottish Open in March (non-transferable).

To avoid disappointment all players are advised to book their accommodation now because Biba has a limited number of rooms. See page 17 for details.



* This is a Biba Grand Prix and UK Finals Event *

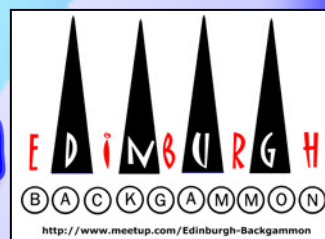


The British Isles Backgammon Association



presents in partnership with

Edinburgh Backgammon



The XI Scottish Open

19, 20, 21 March 2010

Barceló Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh

Ideally located on the Royal Mile, minutes from Princes Street.

Biba rates for dinner, bed & breakfast per night:

Single Occupancy - £79.50, Double Occupancy - £59.00 per person

Call Reservations on 0131 4723 000 opt #2 and quote 'backgammon'

(9am to 9pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm @ weekends)

Registration Fee: £20 Entry Fee £20

Guaranteed 1st Prize: £500 minimum

Biba is proud to return the Scottish Open to its rightful home. The event comprises of Knockout & Progressive Consolation, Last Chance and 3-pointer that is open to all players (see * below). In addition there will be a free entry Beginner's Knockout of 3-point matches, no cube, the winner of which will receive £50. Throughout the weekend Edinburgh Backgammon will be hosting free backgammon lessons and coaching sessions. The Main starts 1300 on the Saturday (registration 1030 to 1230), and for those attending the Friday night knockout there will be £100 added prize money (Biba entry conditions apply, see www.backgammon-biba.co.uk).



Biba Grand
Prix Event

This event is seeking a sponsor. Minimum requirement - supply of trophies - cost in the region of £80 to £200 depending upon type. Contact info@backgammon-biba.co.uk or tel 07900 916 468 for details,

* All entrants for the Main Scottish Open must be subscribers to Bibafax and members of Biba. You can join on the day

Sandy Osborne Trophy

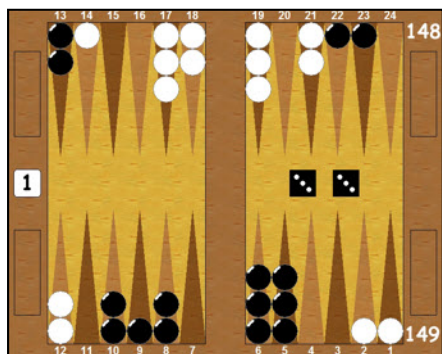
Report by Michael Crane

Main (42): Help! Send for Derek Aco-rah! I am being haunted by 42s. Last month we had the *Backgammon in London @ Biba* with 42 entrants for the second time in two years, and now the Sandy has done it too! OK, I'll live with it knowing that I have cracked the answer to the question, "The Ultimate answer to Life, the Universe and Everything is..."

The forty-two were whittled down to 8 on the Sunday, and it was one of the toughest 8s we've ever had: Chris Ternel vs Peter Bennet. Arthur Musgrove vs Simon K Jones. Mardi Ohannessian vs Julian Fetterlein. Adrian Jones vs Jon Barnes. From this lot emerged Adrian vs Peter.

Throughout the match both players made a few blunders with the cube, Adrian 3, and Peter 5. Among them are two quite big ones that are worth looking at. In the positions Adrian is playing as black.

Game 7. Position 5

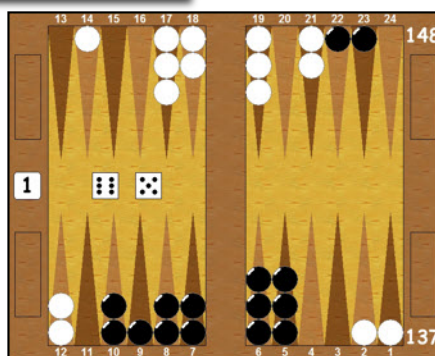


Black 8 White 4
Black to play 33

Adrian took 35 seconds to play 13/7(2), blocking off white's escape and forming a 4-prime straddling the bar. It looks good but @ -0.272 it is a huge blunder! Snowie much prefers the hitting and threatening play 23/20 - direct 6 bearing upon the white blot -, 8/5, 5/5*(2), placing white on the bar allowing the 23/20 play to be very effective. The key here is gammons: actual play 16.9%, Snowie's play 24.3%. Peter then rolled 65, which would have danced if hit. Ironically, if Adrian had hit, Peter's 65 play would not have been his biggest blunder!

In the position in column two, Peter played 13/7, 13/8. Half of this play was correct according to Snowie - 13/7. Playing 13/8 doesn't really achieve a great deal and just places another checker on

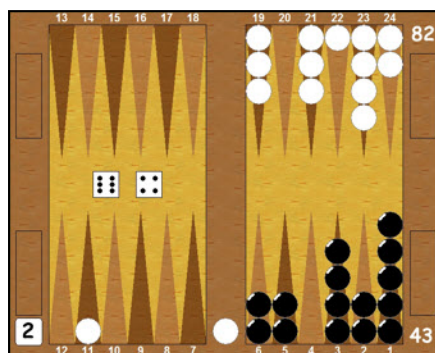
the 8-point. Better use of the 6 is hitting 8/3*.



White to play 65

Adrian is very likely to improve his prime next roll, hitting him now makes that more difficult and could allow white to move up his runners and attack black's 9-point blot. Peter's move was an blunder @ -0.193.

The match progressed with Adrian moving to 9-4. Thereon Peter began to claw it back: 9-6, 9-8. Adrian took it to Crawford, 10-8, but was unable to clinch it and it went to 10-9 and DMP after an early double/take. The game goes along, back and forth until we get to this position:



64: 25/21, 14/8

Peter's chances are low at 5.6%. The game goes as follows with Peter's % shown after each move ...

Adrian (w)	Peter (b)
61: 6/0, 6/5 4.9%	66: 21/3, 8/2 15.3%
21: 2/0, 1/0 21%	66: 6/0(3) 4/0 62.7%
32: 3/0, 2/0 71.7%	65: 4/0(2) 69.9%
33: 5/2, 3/0(3) 40.1%	22: 2/0(4) 78.2%
32: 5/0 87.5%	64: 3/0(2) 86%
66: 5/0, 2/0, 1/0(2) 16.7%	53: Loses the match
Peter fails to roll a double and loses the match.	

This entire sequence can be seen on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_rT4TmSdLs

This match is now available as a Snowie, JellyFish or text file; however, there is one thing to know. Whilst recording this match on the video the camera stopped for a while (battery low) and I missed a part of the match. I cobbled together what I could and the only consequence is that in Game 2, the score moves to 4-2 to Adrian. It does not affect the analysis.

Match detailed statistics for County Cups		
Player	Adrian	Peter
Rating	world class	expert
Overall	3.847/18.372	4.780/32.851
Errors(blunders)	13(5)	18(6)
Checker play errors		
Checker play	3.070/16.371	4.413/31.857
Errors(blunders)	11(3)	17(5)
Double errors		
Overall	0.777/2.000	0.026/0.097
Missed double	0.448/1.104	0.000/0.000
Wrong double	0.329/0.896	0.026/0.097
Errors(blunders)	2(2)	0(0)
Take errors		
Overall	0.000/0.000	0.341/0.897
Wrong take	0.000/0.000	0.000/0.000
Wrong pass	0.000/0.000	0.341/0.897
Errors(blunders)	0(0)	1(1)
Adrian Jones was 64.48% - 35.52% favorite.		

Consolation (38): Entering from the non-prog side, Mick Vacarey played his way into the final to face Stewart Pemberton from the progressive side. Alas, Mick's progress was cruelly halted as Stewart prevailed. **Last Chance (32):** Peter Christmas and Rachel Rhodes met in the final after (respectively) beating Paul Plumtre and Brian Lever in the semis. Rachel came out on top and left Peter in 2nd place. **The Sandy (32):** 3-point matches are hard to win, they are very short and favour the weaker players; however there wasn't any weakness between the finalists, Martin Barkwill and Andy Darby. The two top players battled it out - an encounter from which Andy emerged the winner.

Poker (18): A good turnout for the penultimate poker Grand Prix fixture. There was a big shock for the 'established' players when Liverpoolian entrants, Carl Dell and Peter Chan came 1st and 3rd ... the shock made greater by the fact that Peter had no idea what he was doing! Marcus Wrinch came 2nd. John Hedge and Julian Fetterlein came 4th and 5th. Myke Wignall remains #1 and it'll be a chal- ▶

lenge for John Hedge (his nearest rival) to topple him - it is possible, but it needs a good turnout and for John to win at least 26 points and Myke to win none. Rosey Bensley and Paul Gilbertson swap positions and Chris Evans moves into the money, replacing Vicki Pemberton. With Arthur's 70th on its way in November there is still time for changes in the money positions for those just nosed out. The final list is on page 31.

Friday 500 (15): Marcus Wrinch and Julian Fetterlein battled it out for the winner's prize; and it was Julian who won

leaving Marcus with 16 points - enough for him! With just one more event to go, Arthur's 70th (formerly the TT), Marcus Wrinch has secured the £100 prize by topping the list with a lead greater than 20 points over nearest rival Julian Fetterlein. With one more event to go there's still time for some big changes. With 20 points up for grabs none of those hanging onto the lower positions are safe! Also, if fewer than 16 entrants turn up in December players from 17th upwards will be allowed to enter should they be present. See page 31 for the final list.

Finally: It was a good weekend's backgammon and everyone enjoyed it. The Liverpool Backgammon Club are proving a force to be reckoned with. Last month Simon K Jones won the Main, this month Carl Dell and Peter Chan come 1st & 3rd in the Poker and Adrian wins the Main! I wonder when they'll be stopped?

I am now looking forward the Arthur's 70th - and hopefully a break from 42! Life? Don't speak to me about life!



Top Left: Main. Adrian and Peter

Top Right: Consolation. Mick and Stewart

Bottom Left: Last Chance. Peter and Rachel

Bottom Right: The Sandy. Martin and Andy

Adrian Jones
Winner 2009



How Good Is Your Backgammon?

Asks Michael Crane & Snowie

This continuing article is based on the 1981 2nd Holiday Tournament, Las Vegas, between Kent Goulding and Mike Maxakuli. In this series I have slightly changed the format, instead of you deciding on a particular move I have listed the options.

When you come to ??? the position is shown along with five candidate moves (if five are available). Cover up the text below the moves and decide which of the moves is your choice. Keep a record and at the end see how you scored. The match is to 15 points, Kent is playing Black and Mike, White.

We continue coverage in Game 15 with (as usual) just one point separating the two players.

Game 15

Kent: 12

Mike: 11

01) 51: 13/8 6/5

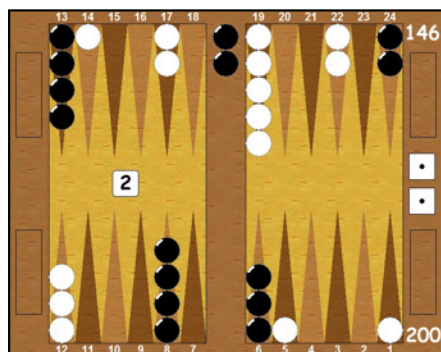
42: 24/20* 13/11

02) 31: 25/22 6/5*

55: 25/20* 13/8 8/3*(2)

03) 33: Dances

??? White cube action?



No Double
Double, take
Double, pass

This is most certainly a pass and is 'too good to double'. For money white is looking at around 35% gammons and black is very pleased to drop a single here to take the score to 3-away, 3-away.

No double 5 A

04) Drops Doubles to 2
Wins 1 point

Game 16

Kent: 12

Mike: 12

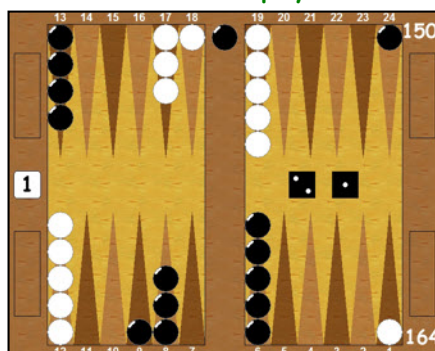
01)

65: 24/13

02) 64: 24/18 13/9

42: 13/7*

??? Black to play 21



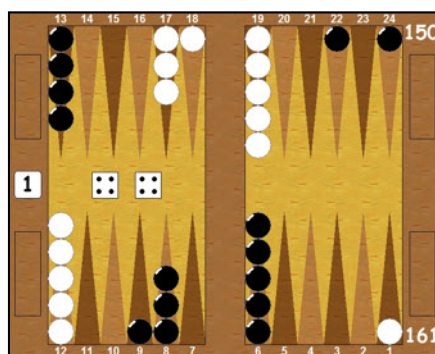
25/22
25/23 6/5
25/23 9/8
25/23 24/23
25/24 13/11

White is threatening to make his bar-point next roll and it's perhaps this threat that black is considering as he moves 25/22, but it is an error. It is better to concentrate on forming a prime or blocking points to stop the escape of white's single checker, and it is this tactic where the best move lies. Two rolls within the candidates do this, 25/24, 13/11 and 25/23, 6/5 - the latter, although more aggressive is just 0.009 'worse' than the safer move, and therefore it shares top points. By far the worst play is safetying the 9-point blot, 9/8, why would you want to do that?

25/24 13/11 5
25/23 6/5 5
25/23 24/23 3
25/22 3 A
25/23 9/8 0

03) 21: 25/22

??? White to play 44



13/5(2)
24/16* 8/4(2)
24/16* 6/2(2)

24/16* 13/9(2)

24/16* 13/9 7/3*

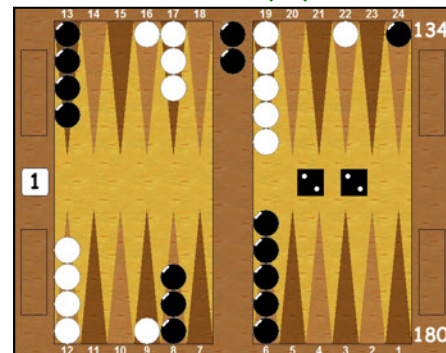
I would imagine some of you, programmed into playing set moves with set rolls went for 13/5(2), which is a pity for it is the worst play of them all and a big blunder. Something else, though, should be programmed into you, and that is that two in the air is often the correct move - and in this position it certainly is. It leaves black with 3s or 22 or 11 to hit, which means that almost 64% of the time he'll miss; and white has great chances to keep him dancing and to make some good home board points.

The 'best' of the single-hit plays is 24/16*, 13/9(2). It looks good needing just a 1, 6 or 54 next roll to form a 4-prime straddling the bar but with just one checker in the air black has 23 rolls that'll re-enter and hit the 7-point blot - this is the inverse of the best move! The remaining two rolls are just poor and I was even tempted to deduct points for choosing them!

24/16* 13/9 7/3* 5 A
24/16* 13/9(2) 3
24/16* 6/2(2) 0
24/16* 8/4(2) 0
13/5(2) 0

44: 24/16* 13/9 7/3*

??? Black to play 22



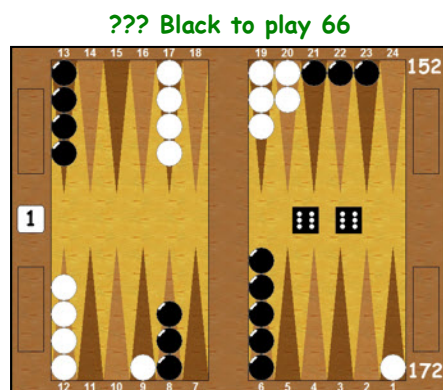
25/23(2) 13/9*
25/23(2) 24/22* 6/4
25/23(2) 24/22* 13/11
25/23(2) 24/22* 23/21
25/23(2) 24/22* 22/20

If you didn't play 24/22* then expect no points at all. Leaving a home board blot untouched is against the law in this position! At the moment white has three blots on and you need to maximise your chances of getting them all if possible To this end the best way to do that is with 25/23(2), 23/21, 24/22*. This leaves two direct shots bearing upon white's ➤

9-point blot, 6s and 5s, plus 4s from the mid-point onto his second blot. White will be hard-pressed to get them safe next roll.

25/23(2) 24/22* 23/21 5 A
 25/23(2) 24/22* 22/20 4
 25/23(2) 24/22* 6/4 3
 25/23(2) 24/22* 13/11 3
 25/23(2) 13/9* 0

04) 22: 25/23(2) 24/22* 23/21
 11: 25/24 9/8 6/5(2)



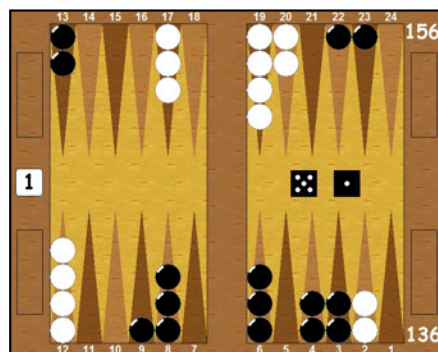
13/1*(2)
 21/9* 13/1*
 22/10 21/9*
 21/19* 8/2(2)
 21/19* 13/7(2)

Well, did the programming kick in again and you put two in the air with 21/9*, 13/1*? That's a pity because it's a blunder, and a big one too; as are 21/9*, 8/2*(2) and 13/1*(2)! Playing 22/10, 21/9* isn't too bad but the best play is one that actually makes the bar-point rather than threatens to: 21/19*, 13/7(2). White doesn't have much going for him at the moment and this 3-prime for black will improve and become much stronger before long.

21/19* 13/7(2) 5 A
 22/10 21/9* 4
 21/9* 13/1* 0
 21/19* 8/2(2) 0
 13/1*(2) 0

05) 66: 21/9* 13/7(2) 42: 25/21 8/6
 06) 33: 7/4*(2) 6/3(2) 21: 25/23 24/23

??? Black to play 51



9/3
 22/16
 22/21 9/4
 23/22 8/3
 23/22 9/4

Whenever possible try not playing past open points in or close to your home board. By playing 9/3 you have lost a good builder for the 7- and 5-points and in the process gained zero points.

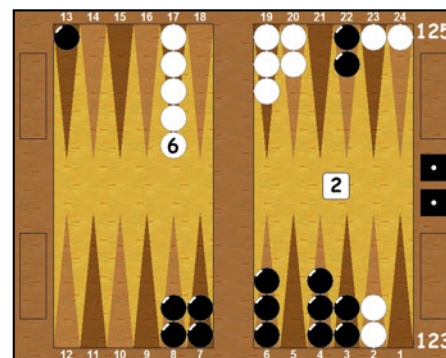
Mind you, apart from the best move, 22/16, all other moves contain a checker being played past an open point; in these cases (except with 9/3) it is how the 1 is played that determines its score. If you make the 23-point and go no deeper than your 4-point, this is better than going as deep as your 3-point. But, playing 22/21, 9/4 is poor due to the vulnerability of the 22/21 move.

Playing 22/16 is under threat from 4s only and if missed could form an anchor with the runner should a 52 drop out.

22/16 5
 23/22 9/4 4 A
 23/22 8/3 2
 22/21 9/4 1
 9/3 0

07) 51: 23/22 9/4 65: 13/7 13/8
 08) 61: 13/7 8/7 55: 13/8(2) 7/2 6/1

??? Black cube action?



No double
 Double, take
 Double, pass

Both players are facing primes and that facing black is poorer than that facing his opponent. With the spare checker able to move before his prime crunches, black has the advantage at the moment - that coupled with 6s and 4s to escape give him the double - and white must drop.

Double, pass 5 A

09) Doubles 2 Drops
 Wins 1 point

Kent: 13 Mike : 12

So, how good is your backgammon?

35	You are Kent Goulding
28-34	You are Mike Maxakuli
20-27	You are nearly Mike
10-19	You are sub-Mike
15-9	You sub to Mike's sub
0-8	You are sub zero!

The final of this long-running article will come to a climax in the next instalment.

casinorip.com
 THE SMARTER WAY TO PLAY

I was fortunate enough to reach my second final of the year in September at the *Backgammon in London @ Biba* finals and with a few hundred pounds in the “winner takes all” kitty up for grabs I was feeling pretty confident. The final wasn’t a classic and the standard was not great but going through the match was a good exercise and hopefully I learnt a few things.



How To Win and Lose a Final

by Jon Barnes



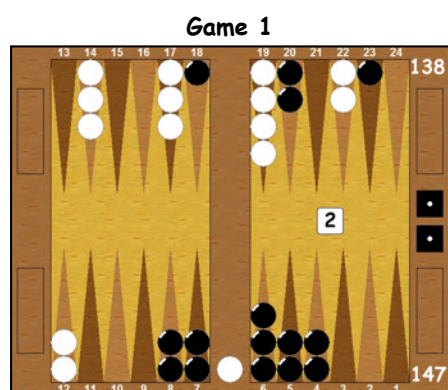
much erring and I should, of course, have let this one go.

...but keep things in perspective...

Disengage “automatic pilot”

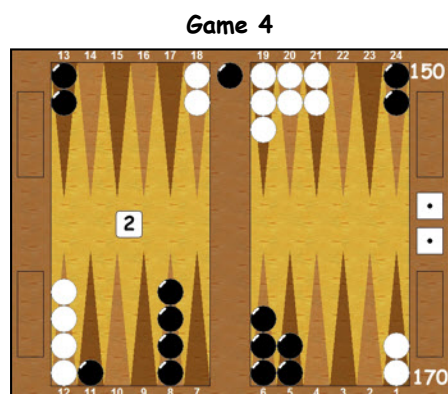
Here’s a summary of what to do and what not to do. The match is to 11 points and in each position I am playing as black against Simon K Jones.

Early doubles and dodgy takes



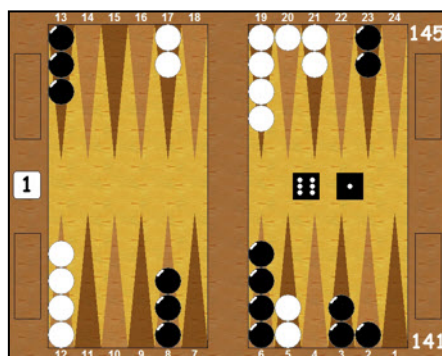
Black 0 White 0
Black cube action

This is only 0.416 and not yet a double but I am a great believer in testing the water early in a match (especially a final). I had an inkling that Simon would drop this and I was right.



Black 3 White 1
White cube action

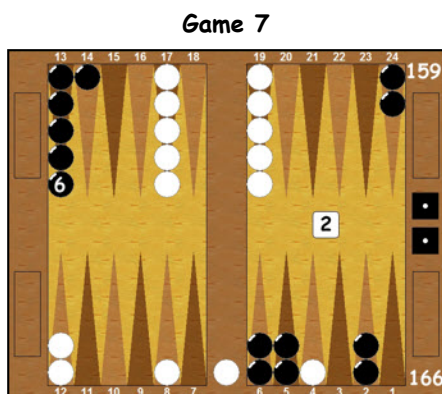
Still early in the match and, if possible, I want to make my opponent play through a game until the end, so I would err on the side of taking. Having the reputation as a “taker” is, I think, beneficial in the long-run. This position, however, is way too



Black 1 White 0
Black to play 61

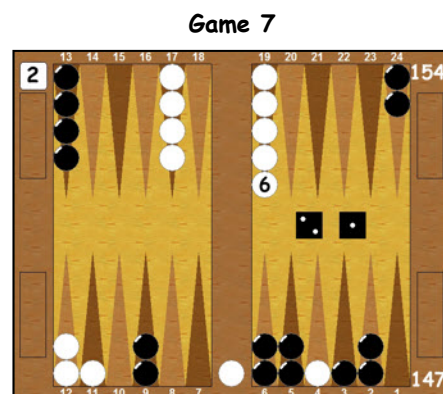
How many of you would make the bar-point? I did. Seems obvious doesn’t it? I looked at and rejected the run 23/16 but completely missed far and away the best play 23/22, 8/2. My move was a blunder in the match (-0.114) and still a sizeable error for money (-0.042).

Be true to your style...



Black 5 White 3
Black cube action

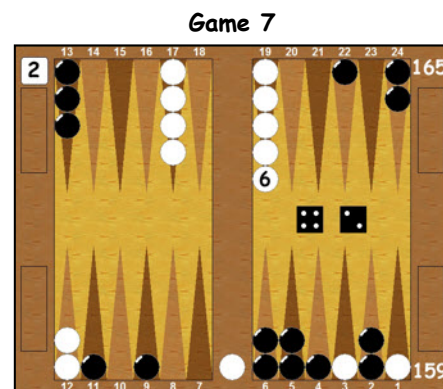
I would double this position every time, despite what Snowie says! There is always the chance of a drop (Simon correctly took) and, if things go well, a doubled gammon would practically wrap up the match.



Black 5 White 3
Black to play 21

I made an error here by being too gung-ho. I cubed a few moves earlier (last position) with a blitz in mind and then missed the 6s & 5s shot to put another on the roof. In general when you have given the cube, you should be more aggressive, but my play of 13/11*, 9/8 is too open and I was soon to regret it when Simon entered two with his next roll, hitting in the process. My position becomes too difficult to tidy up. A better play (my second choice) was 13/11*, 11/10. However, just edging this is the best play of 5/4*, 5/3 – denying the anchor. I foolishly rejected this because I didn’t want to lose the 5- point.

...and be prepared to change your game plan



Black 5 White 3
Black to play 42



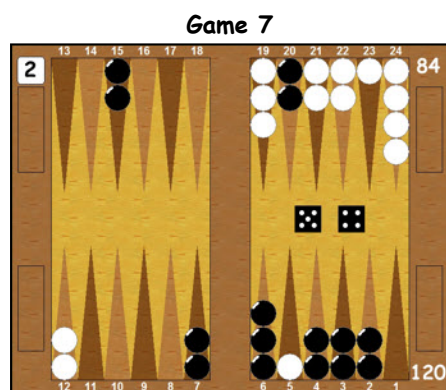
Backgammon in London @ Biba



We have all made errors like this! You see your blitz attempt faltering before your eyes and yet you still cling to the same plan when the dice Gods are telling you to change tack. Here, I hit to put a second checker on the bar with 9/3*, but there are three better moves, the more circumspect 24/22, 13/9 winning out.

What followed in this long Game 7 was not pretty. Unfortunately for me Simon was not missing a shot but, fortunately, he had missed opportunities to cube me in. Nevertheless I wasn't happy facing 78% gammons with two on the bar against a 5- point board. A well-timed joker got me back in the game but then came this blunder serving to remind me to . . .

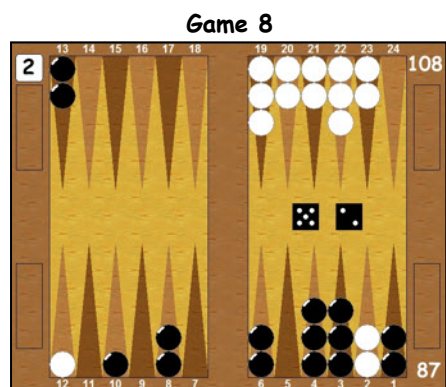
...forget about what has just happened in the game



**Black 5 White 3
Black to play 54**

I was still thanking my lucky stars to have got off the gammon when I faced this roll. In the cold light of day the move is clear and I should run with 20/15, 20/16 duplicating 4s. At the time I didn't fancy being on the bar again next move and played the wimp's move. 7/2, 7/3.

Don't overcomplicate things

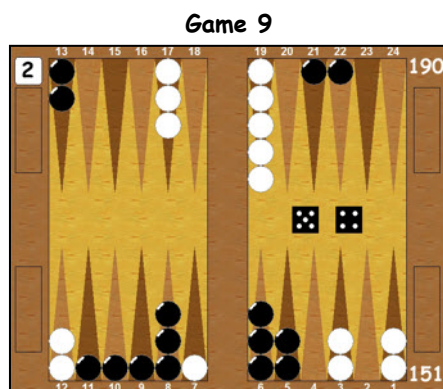


**Black 5 White 5
Black to play 52**

Here, I was just about to play the obvious safe move 10/3, when I started cogitating, about future shots, using up valuable time. Only 62 and 65 are disasters and I fell into the old trap of overestimating future shots, rather than considering the immediate 6(!) shots. I really cannot believe I made the play I did: 13/8, 13/11. Needless to say one of those numbers popped out, but I've only myself to blame.

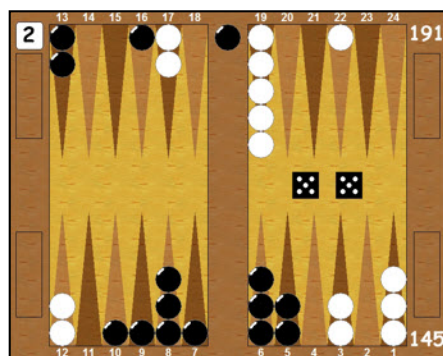
Keep a level head

In Game 9 Simon had the 1 and 3 anchors with no timing for a back game. The crucial point is my bar-point. If I could make it I would be sitting pretty.



**Black 5 White 7
Black 54: 21/16, 11/7***

Simon - 51: 25/24, 8/3*. I then rolled ...



Black 55: 25/10, 16/11

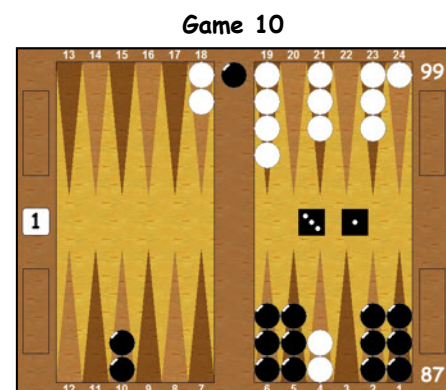
Neither of the above rolls were 'anti-jokers', but I had let them get to me. Once Simon had the bar after his 6-4, I began feeling a little aggrieved that my chance of a gammon was dissipating. The game slowly turned: the luck wasn't going my way but I allowed this to affect my play.

While we are on the subject of luck, it is so easy to remember the bad sequences and think of our good sequences as being somehow 'deserved' by good play. I was convinced that throughout this match I had the worse of the dice but Snowie rates the luck factor as being hardly significant at all. Having said that it also

rated me a 85% favourite, yet I lost. Food for thought.

If in doubt, hit!

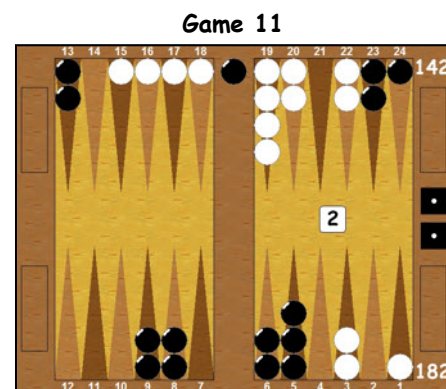
Would only be fair to show my biggest error of the match!



**Black 5 White 9
Black to play 31**

I moved 25/22, 3/1. Big blunder! (-0.235)

Keep the match score in mind



**Black 7 White 9
Black cube action**

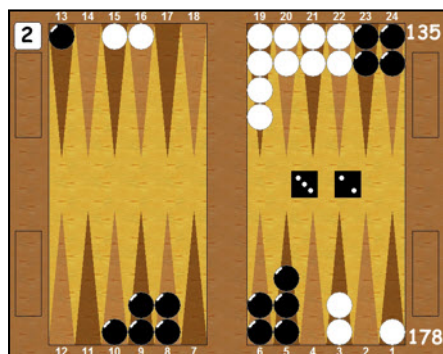
This is the final game of the match and here is a position where a non-double is a -0.118 blunder (thankfully I got this one right) whereas it would be a whopping -0.298 to cube for money.

Play to win - be aggressive

One of my favourite maxims is "Backgammon is a game of aggression" – Robertie (I think). The position on the following page shows the blunder that I was most disappointed about. It's also a blunder for money. Instead of sitting back with 13/8, the aggressive play of making the bar-point, 10/7, 9/7 gives the most direct way to victory. It turns out that the dice sequence which follows would have been favourable to me if I had made the right play.



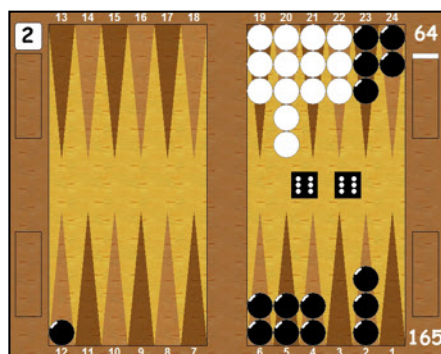
Game 11



Black 7 White 9
Black 32: 13/8

Use the clock properly

Game 11



Black 7 White 9
Black to play 66

I thought I was a quick player and I am experienced at using a clock from my chess playing days but one lesson I took from this weekend was that I need to speed up. I was down to my last second against Lawrence Powell in the quarter final and in the final had a little more time at this stage, but not much!

This final error of the match, 23/17(2), 17/11, 12/9, is simply down to the clock. I mistakenly thought that I had to move two from the 23-point. Of course I should maintain both anchors if I can, the better play being 23/5, 12/6.

The Irish Open - Report by Brendan Burgess

It has been some years since we had an Irish winner of the Irish Open and we were desperate to remedy that. We did everything in our power to achieve it this year. We scheduled the event to clash with the WSOB event in London and with Paul Gilbertson's wedding. Although this reduced the overseas contingent very considerably, we still had to make a last-minute designation of Felix O' McVink as an Irish citizen to achieve our objective.

The final was really thrilling with the lead switching back and forwards between Felix and Adrian Jones until it reached double match point and a mad bear-off scramble where Felix out-rolled Adrian. Most tournament winners smile politely and acknowledge the applause. Not so Felix, who let out a triumphant roar. Joe Dooley said all the Dutch behave like that, but he was told to shut up, that Felix was Irish. Cracker had watched the entire final and felt it incumbent upon him to point out all of Felix's mistakes after the match. With Felix's boot applied firmly to Cracker's rear, the roar from Cracker was just as loud.

The Friday night €200 jackpot was won by Rachel Rhodes who beat Sean Casey in the final adding €1100 to her considerable winnings this year. Sean Casey beat Phil Tutchins in the final of the Consolation to add a further €350 to the runner-up prize of €400 from the Friday night Jackpot. Frank Conway beat Liz Perry in the final of the Last Chance.

So despite the international attendance from Lithuania, Slovenia, Malta, Germany, England and Scotland, the Irish won all three events.

As tournament director I had one very difficult decision. The consolation was scheduled to continue at 10.30 am on the Sunday. Brendan Gasparro's opponent, Tom Duignan did not show up on time. I asked his friends where he was and apparently, I had told him that his match was not due to start until 11.30. The rule is very clear. His opponent gets a penalty point for every 5 minutes later after the first 5 minutes and the latecomer forfeits the match after half the points have been scored. That gave Tom 25 minutes to arrive. Tom was not answering his mobile. But Tom would have a fairly valid argument that the Tournament Director told him 11.30. However, I would have ruled that the drawsheet took precedence but then advised him to appeal to the appeals committee.

As it happens Brendan Gasparro saved me the embarrassment by declining any penalty points and agreeing to play the match. For which he was later awarded the €100 spot prize for sportsmanship.

Other spot prizes this year – Kevin Jones for being the first person to be knocked out of the main and Claudia for being the best placed newcomer to the Irish Open.

The only other ruling I was asked for, which was very clear cut, was when



The Winners: Sean, Felix and Frank



Runners-up: Liz, Phil and Adrian

Claudia discovered in the middle of a game that she only had 14 checkers. Her opponent, Joe had not noticed this either.

The rule is simple

4.7 Error In Set-Up

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

It reminds me of a ruling some years ago when most players had the same SAC boards. Joe was involved again, but ►

he was playing Cracker that time. When Joe built an 8 point prime, Cracker suspected that something was amiss. I gave the same ruling, which Cracker appealed. He argued that while having 14 checkers instead of 15, was a disadvantage, having 16 gave Joe a huge advantage. Cracker argued that it would be "virtually impossible" to jump an 8 point prime compared to a 7 point prime. The appeals committee backed up my ruling.

Accommodating late arrivals for a knock-out format: At many overseas tournaments I have attended, there is usually someone who arrives just after the draw is done and they can't be let in "because the draw is done". In some cases, the draw is held up because someone has phoned to say that they will be late. Obviously, people who arrive long after the tournament starts can't be accommodated. But we catered for those who arrived up to 30 minutes late as follows.

We had 46 players. This meant we had 14 first round matches and 18 byes. The 14

first round matches were drawn first and they started immediately. The 18 byes were then entered onto the drawsheet in the round of 64. As late comers arrived, they were assigned to the byes in order. So Adrian Jones was the first bye to be drawn. The first late arrival played him in the first round and so Adrian lost his bye.

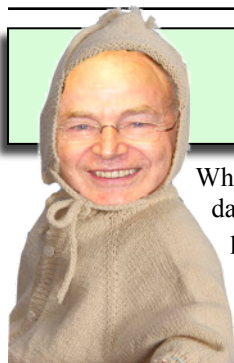
Can we make backgammon more interesting to spectators? The final this year between Felix and Adrian was a pleasure to watch. Two players playing at a reasonable pace. They rolled. They moved. They rolled they moved. They stopped to think only when there was something to think about which is what the spectators want. If you took a break from the match, you might miss something.

Compare that to some matches you have watched in recent years. Even in races, they think about their moves. Moving checkers and then putting them back. Occasionally polishing each checker with their finger and then pointing out different points on the board. You could go off

to the loo, get a pint, come back and you will have missed nothing. Clocks facilitate this with the generous time allowance. While clocks stop matches going a lot over time, they probably extend the average time for each match.

Could we make the game more enjoyable for the spectators by reducing the time available? Backgammon is not chess. It is not blitz chess either, but it is somewhere in between. Critical decisions need some time, but not every decision. Could we change the time available to 12 seconds per move on average. If you make a lot of moves in under 12 seconds, you would store up time for those moves where you do need time to think.

MC: Biba already allows 12 seconds per move. This has proven to be plenty for the 'easy' rolls and with 2 minutes per match point (11 point match = 22 minutes each) in reserve, few if any players take longer than the time allowed.



Arthur Wright's 70th Birthday Bash

Report by Michael Crane

When it comes to birthday celebrations some people opt out for a quiet meal out or perhaps a few friends or family round to the house for a party. Not Arthur Wright! He opted to celebrate his 70th birthday by sponsoring a backgammon tournament with over 40 other backgammon players and a dozen or more family and friends. It was not a quiet affair!

Throughout the weekend he was feted and fed copious amounts of alcohol that would have floored a 50 year old, let alone a 70 year old! He was bombarded with cards and gifts and more alcohol for a full two days. In a way he was treated like royalty - he had two 'birthdays' - one on the Saturday, and one on the Sunday, the 'proper' one. Both were hectic and highly enjoyable.

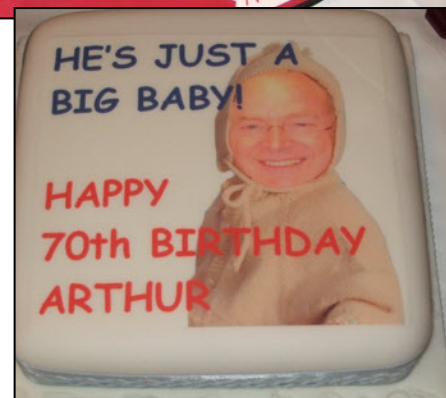
The playing-room was decorated with photos and banners and balloons and two birthday cakes - yes, you read that correctly, two cakes. One, a work of art that resembled a backgammon board down to the finest detail - the ring-binder on the scorer being an example. This was

Arthur's cake, he had it specially made for the occasion, the only drawback being, it was going back home to (even more) family and friends to be eaten. The second cake, supplied by Biba, although smaller, was itself a work of art and featured a photo of Arthur dressed as a big baby - a theme carried through in tee-shirts worn by yours truly, Sharen, Tony and Deana, plus Rachel Rhodes. I gave one to Arthur, who wore it for the remainder of the weekend, taking it off only for his birthday dinner on Saturday night.

And what a dinner that was! Tony Fawcett took Halloween to heart and dressed himself up as a zombie, and Rosey Bensley was the Mistress or Ceremonies reading out the cards and handing out the gifts. Peter Chan was dragooned into being the 'official' photographer - he didn't need much persua-



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



sion! We had a fantastic evening and it culminated in Arthur opening his 'biggest' gift of the evening, a Space-Hopper from (the newly wed Paul and Tracey Gilbertson)! Only Paul ➡

would think to buy a 70 year old a SpaceHopper. The (smaller) cake was cut after dinner and it went round the whole of the backgammon crowd with a few spare slices - some of which I scoffed - but don't tell Sharen!

As well as the party there was a bit of backgammon going on as well. We had a turnout of 39, divided into Main (20) and Consolation (19). In the Main, 6th Round we had two on 5/5, Mardi Ohannessian and Stewart Pemberton. I was happy with this pairing for it gave me a 6/6 but it left me with four on 5/6. Eventually the Runner-up was Paul Gilbertson after tie-breaks were applied.

The **Consolation (19)** element saw three players on 3/3 on the Sunday, Nicky Check, Brian Lever and Peter Christmas. Head-to-head and shared opponents couldn't decide in which position each would be placed so the average score of opponents was brought in and it was Nicky and Brian 1st and 2nd leaving Peter in 3rd place.

In addition to the Swiss we also ran a 64 draw **1-point Knockout**, free entry with a 1st prize of £25. Arthur had set his hopes on winning something during his own tournament and he knew after some time that it wouldn't be via the Swiss. With just the 1-pointer to do it in he fought his way into the Final where Tony

Fawcett dashed his dreams and left him in 2nd place. Boo! Hiss! Boo!

The **Friday 500 (15)** concluded with Gerry Enslin (making a welcome return after being absent due to business commitments) who got the better of Brian Lever in the Final. **The Poker (12)** also came to a conclusion after Myke Wignall came out the winner with Tony Fawcett (at last!) in 2nd place with John Hedge in 3rd. And in the **Team (9)** I was robbed again and this time the final was between Gerry Enslin and Jean Wade. Having given advice and helped Jean win in the semi-final, Gerry then went his own way and left Jean in 2nd place.

Finally

It was a fantastic weekend and one full of memories, many of which Peter Chan captured on camera and they can be seen via the web site.

I'd like to thank Arthur for sponsoring the event and allowing us the pleasure of sharing his 70th birthday; Tony and Dean for their invaluable help and to everyone who turned out and made it the success it was.

Following this event we now have our annual champions in the Ranking, Grand Prix and Poker, plus the final pairings for the Friday 500. They can be seen starting on page 29.



Top: Main. Paul and Mardi
Middle: Consolation. Brian and Nicky
Bottom: 1-pointer. Tony and Arthur
100s more photos via the Biba web

The final between Stewart and Mardi was one of the shortest on record, taking fewer than 40 minutes from start to finish. It was made short by cube decisions in the final game. Stewart took an early lead of 5/0 and then Mardi began pulling it back. He took it to 5/5 and off they went again. What clinched it was the cube action in the 8th game.

Mardi is playing as black in the following positions and the match is to 11 points, the score 7-6 to black. In the Pos #1, white ships across a 2-cube.

Stewart took some time to decide on offering this cube - Mardi took far less time to take. This isn't that good a cube, Stewart leads by six pips, but this is an easy take for Mardi. Stewart should have held on to it for a tad longer.

The game continues:

Then in Pos #2, Mardi re-cubes to 4.

This is a re-cube and a take. To hang onto the cube now would be a mistake; of course it'll be winging its way back on 8 on Stewart's next turn.

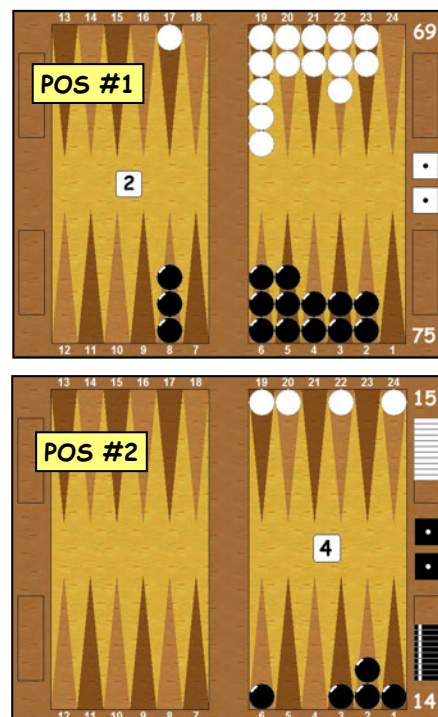
Takes 64: 6/0 3/0

On his next roll Stewart ships across the 8-cube, as expected.

Re-cubes to 8 Takes 22: 6/0 5/3 54: 2/0 2/0 53: 3/0 3/0 ... and resigns.

Mardi wins 8 points and the match.

So, Mardi took home the winner's trophy for the third time leaving Stewart eventually in 5th place following the tie-break.



The Sandy Osborne Trophy, 2,3,4 October 2009

Main (42)		Last Chance (32)		Friday 500 (15)		Grand Prix @ Sandy	
1	Adrian Jones	1	Rachel Rhodes	1	Julian Fetterlein	18.58	Adrian Jones
2	Peter Bennet	2	Peter Christmas	2	Marcus Wrinch	18.58	Peter Bennet
3&4	Arthur Musgrove	3&4	Paul Plumtpe	3&4	Tony Fawcett	13.42	Arthur Musgrove
3&4	Julian Fetterlein	3&4	Brian Lever	3&4	Fanika Petkovska	9.29	Julian Fetterlein
5to8	Chris Ternel	5to8	Richard Coburn	5to8	Peter Christmas	9.29	Chris Ternel
5to8	Simon K Jones	5to8	Chris Evans	5to8	Nicky Check	9.28	Stewart Pemberton
5to8	Mardi Ohannessian	5to8	Martin Barkwill	5to8	Jeff Barber	9.28	Mick Vacarey
5to8	Jon Barnes	5to8	Uldis Lapikens	5to8	Mardi Ohanessian	9.28	Tony Fawcett
Consolation (38)		The Sandy (32)		Poker (18)		9.27	Rachel Rhodes
						6.19	Simon K Jones
						6.19	Mardi Ohannessian
						6.19	Jon Barnes
						6.19	Phil Tutchings
						6.18	Paul Gilbertson
						6.18	Vicki Pemberton
						6.17	Peter Christmas
1	Stewart Pemberton	1	Andy Darby	1	Carl Dell	6.16	Andrew Darby
2	Mick Vacarey	2	Martin Barkwill	2	Marcus Wrinch	4.13	Carl Dell
3&4	Tony Fawcett	3&4	Ann Pocknell	3	Peter Chan		
3&4	Chris Ternel	3&4	Philip Tutchings	4	John Hedge		
5to8	Vicky Pemberton	5to8	Marcus Wrinch	5	Julian Fetterlein		
5to8	Paul Gilbertson	5to8	Peter Chan	6	Chris Evans		
5to8	Jeff Barber	5to8	Nicky Check	7	Rosey Bensley		
5to8	Mardi Ohannessian	5to8	Jeff Barber	8	Tony Fawcett		
4.13	Jeff Barber	4.13	Neil Everitt	4.10	Martin Barkwill	2.06	Paul Barwick
4.13	Chris Evans	4.13	Mick Harris	2.58	Nicky Check	2.06	John Wright
4.13	Rosey Bensley	4.12	Marcus Wrinch	2.58	Myke Wignall	2.06	Fanika Petkovska
4.13	David Nathan	4.11	Brian Lever	2.58	Arthur Wright	2.05	Peter Chan
4.13	Tim Vasiljevic	4.11	Ann Pocknell	2.57	Uldis Lapikens		
4.13	John Hedge	4.11	Paul Plumtpe	2.57	Richard Coburn		

The Irish Open, 23,24,25 October 2009

Main		Consolation		Last Chance		Grand Prix @ Irish Open	
1	Felix Vink	1	Sean Casey	1	Frank Conway	24.77	Felix Vink
2	Adrian Jones	2	Phil Tutchins	2	Marcus Wrinch	18.58	Adrian Jones
3&4	Stuart Mann	3&4	Irving Czechowicz	3&4	Brendan Burgess	13.42	Marcus Wrinch
3&4	Claudia Gohnert	3&4	John Reddington	3&4	Liz perry	13.42	Rachel Rhodes
5to8	Clem Byrne	5to8	Brendan Gasparro	5to8	Brendan Gasparro	13.41	Phil Tutchins
5to8	Marcus Wrinch	5to8	Philip Redden	5to8	Billy Sharpe	13.41	Sean Casey
5to8	Billy Sharp	5to8	Jackie Murphy	5to8	Mike Waid	9.29	Clem Byrne
5to8	Rachel Rhodes	5to8	Paul Rooney	5to8	John Reddington		
9.29	Dave McNamara	9.27	Frank Conway	6.19	Irving Czechowicz	4.11	Liz Perry
9.29	Stuart Mann	6.19	Brendan Gasparro	6.19	Joe Dooley	4.11	Brendan Burgess
9.29	Uldis Lapikens	6.19	Dave Sheehy	6.19	Paul O'Kelly	2.57	Mike Waid
9.29	Billy Sharpe	6.19	Gary Sweeny	6.18	John Reddington		

Annual Championships Prize Fund £2555 Payout 2009		
Grand Prix	Payout	Ranking
Rachel Rhodes	£357.70	Paul Gilbertson
Marcus Wrinch	£255.50	Marcus Wrinch
Adrian Jones	£204.40	Uldis Lapikens
Chris Ternel	£153.30	Brian Lever
Brian Lever	£102.20	Nicky Check
Paul Barwick	£76.65	Julian Fetterlein
Peter Bennet	£51.10	Chris Ternel
Paul Gilbertson	£25.55	Mardi Ohannessian
Nicky Check	£25.55	John Hedge
Uldis Lapikens	£25.55	Peter Bennet

Well, that's another year of Championship events out of the way and a quick glance at the table shows there are a few players getting a double-bonus in Brighton in January - a good start to anyone's year!

Marcus will have to bring a wheelbarrow to get all his home!

Arthur's 70th (TT Trophy), 30,31 Oct, 1 Nov, 2009

Main (22)

1	Mardi Ohannessian	6	24.77
2	Paul Gilbertson	5	17.55
3	Marcus Wrinch	5	16.52
4	Paul Plumptre	5	13.42
5	Stewart Pemberton	5	18.58
6	Stefan Paliwoda	4	9.29
7	Rosey Bensley	4	11.35
8	Gerry Enslin	4	10.84
9	Phil Tutchings	4	10.84
10	Adrian Jones	4	11.35
11	Peter Chan	3	9.29
12	Jeff Barber	3	7.74
13	Rachel Rhodes	3	7.74
14	Linda Taylor	3	7.74
15	Tony Lee	3	8.25
16	Richard Holness	3	8.25
17	Larry Bennet	3	6.19
18	Paul Barwick	3	6.19
19	Tim Vasiljevic	2	6.19
20	Mick Butterfield	2	4.13

Wins / GP

Consolation (20)

1	Nicky Check	3 / 4	9.29
2	Brian Lever	3 / 4	10.84
3	Peter Christmas	3 / 4	9.29
4	Rowena Paliwoda	2 / 2	4.13
5	Chris Ternel	2 / 3	7.74
6	John Hedge	2 / 3	6.19
7	Chris Evans	2 / 3	7.74
8	Peter Bennet	2 / 3	6.19
9	Tony Fawcett	1 / 2	4.13
10	Brian Metcalf	1 / 2	5.68
11	Arthur Wright	1 / 2	4.13
12	Uldis Lapikens	1 / 1	2.58
13	Vicki Pemberton	1 / 1	2.58
14	Jean Wade	1 / 2	4.13
15	John Gilbertson	1 / 1	2.58
16	Mick Harris	0 / 2	6.19
17	Bob Bruce	0 / 0	0.0
18	Myke Wignall	0 / 1	2.58
19	Julian Fetterlein	0 / 1	2.58

Con / Main / GP

Friday 500 (8)

1	Gerry Enslin
2	Brian Lever
3&4	Mardi Ohannessian
3&4	Paul Gilbertson
5to8	Arthur Wright
5to8	Jeff Barber
5to8	Rosey Bensley
5to8	John Gilbertson

Poker (12)

1	Myke Wignall
2	Tony Fawcett
3	John Hedge
4	Rosey Bensley
5	Paul Gilbertson
6	John Gilbertson
7	Mick Butterfield
8	Julian Fetterlein

1-pointer (64)

1	Tony Fawcett
2	Arthur Wright

Team (12)

1	Gerry Enslin
2	Jean Wade

Ranking changes @ Arthur's 70th

1965	1998	Julian Fetterlein	1697	1705	John Hedge
1952	1984	Chris Ternel	1645	1605	Stefan Paliwoda
1932	1931	Brian Lever	1639	1582	Paul Plumptre
1905	1932	Peter Bennet	1635	1623	Peter Chan
1899	1900	Adrian Jones	1620	1637	Tony Fawcett
1867	1883	Tony Lee	1542	1588	John Gilbertson
1853	1799	Paul Gilbertson	1540	1510	Gerry Enslin
1851	1804	Marcus Wrinch	1520	1532	Jeff Barber
1823	1845	Rachel Rhodes	1513	1477	Phil Tutchings
1794	1777	Peter Christmas	1474	1480	Brian Metcalf
1768	1747	Nicky Check	1466	1409	Rosey Bensley
1755	1667	Mardi Ohannessian	1457	1469	Tim Vasiljevic
1733	1813	Uldis Lapikens	1451	1435	Chris Evans
1710	1735	Mick Butterfield	1446	1472	Mick Harris
1709	1671	Stewart Pemberton	1435	1464	Myke Wignall
			1423	1422	Larry Bennet



The Gilbertson UK Finals 4,5,6 December 2009

Bright 'n' Breezy	Gerry Enslin *
Jarvis Trophy	Michael Bennett
British Open	Jon Barnes
County Cups	Rachel Rhodes
Biba - World Championship	Chris Ternel
S.A.C Trophy	Tony Fawcett
Irish Open	Felix Vink
Townharbour Trophy	Mardi Ohannessian

The above players will be attending the UK Finals and are already into the Last 16. If your name isn't there, don't despair, you can still qualify by entering the Saturday Qualifier on 5 December. It's a Double Knockout giving you a couple of chances to sit down in the final and to win the last major title of 2009.

* Gerry Enslin replaces John Hurst who is unable to attend.

Grand Prix Championship 2009

Stamping her mark on the GP Championship, Rachel Rhodes (believed to be the UK's top female player) managed to stay in 1st place but last month's 2nd place, Adrian Jones, failed to keep his slot and he relinquished it to Marcus Wrinch.

Marcus has, month-by-month, improved his game and has rightly clinched Runner-up, narrowly missing out on the #1 spot by just 2.03 points! Perhaps next year, Marcus?

Congratulations, Rachel. After winning the British Open twice it seems fitting that you have now shown consistency over the year and have come out ahead of everyone to become the 2009 Grand Prix Champion.



Grand Prix Championship Final Placings 2009 (174 entrants)

83.06	Rachel Rhodes	26.84	Sean Williams	9.81	Raymond Kershaw	4.13	Bill Young
81.03	Marcus Wrinch	25.80	Eric Westbrook	9.29	Michael Proto	4.13	Jackie Griffiths
80.50	Adrian Jones	25.80	Mick Harris	9.29	Tim Mooring	4.13	Ray Fard
73.79	Chris Ternel	25.77	Tom Duggan	9.29	Billy Sharpe	4.13	Cecelia Sparke
70.70	Brian Lever	24.77	John Hurst	9.29	Clem Byrne	4.13	Athanasia Petselis
67.03	Paul Barwick	24.77	Michael Bennett	9.29	Lee Wood	4.13	Scott Parker
66.93	Peter Bennet	24.77	Gaz Owen	9.29	Dave Ablett	4.13	Luan Howitt
65.54	Paul Gilbertson	22.69	Richard Holness	9.29	Ian Hesketh	4.13	Taka Ito
60.89	Nicky Check	22.18	Bob Young	9.29	Todd Young	4.13	Namazawa Kuzuko
60.36	Uldis Lapikens	21.66	Tony Lee	9.28	Malcolm Robertson	4.12	Steve Taylor
59.33	Gerry Enslin	21.66	Gheorghe Filipas	8.76	Neil Young	4.12	Julian Minwalla
58.82	Martin Barkwill	21.14	Irving Czechowicz	8.25	Fak Laight	4.12	Tim Brown
58.31	Mardi Ohannessian	20.11	Stefan Paliwoda	8.25	Shea Mulhall	4.12	Marc Turner
58.25	Peter Chan	19.59	Angie Dell	8.24	George Hall	4.12	Michael Brigdale
57.28	Julian Fetterlein	19.59	Sean Casey	8.23	Edwin Turner	4.11	John Broomfield
56.76	John Hedge	17.53	Dave McNamara	8.23	Chris Johnson	4.11	Liz Perry
55.71	Lawrence Powell	17.02	Kevin Jones	6.71	Lewis Young	4.11	Mike Williams
55.18	Wayne Felton	16.51	Linda Taylor	6.69	Nigel Merrigan	4.10	Steve Fowles
54.69	Stewart Pemberton	16.49	Carl Dell	6.69	Jason Dennis	2.58	Andrew Smith
54.67	Tony Fawcett	16.47	Ann Pocknell	6.69	Mike Waid	2.58	Mahmoud Jahanbani
54.19	Jon Barnes	15.99	George Miltiadou	6.19	Paul O'Kelly	2.58	Steve Simpkin
50.04	Paul Plumtre	14.94	David Motley	6.19	Geoff Conn	2.58	Leslie Singleton
47.99	Phil Tutchings	14.45	Mike Ireland	6.19	Brendan Gasparro	2.58	Zoe Cunningham
45.37	Simon K Jones	14.44	John Reddington	6.19	Mark Dixon	2.58	Nick Valley
43.32	Felix Vink	14.43	Steve Rimmer	6.19	Gary Sweeny	2.58	Paul Learmount
40.75	Peter Christmas	13.42	Chris Purchase	6.19	Mike Main	2.58	Sidney Van Gelder
39.70	Richard Biddle	13.42	Simon Heath	6.19	Neil Davidson	2.58	Tomohiro Shimada
39.21	Rosey Bensley	13.42	Mike Heard	6.19	Dave Sheehy	2.58	John Gilbertson
39.21	Arthur Wright	13.41	Jean Wade	6.19	Eamon Keogh	2.57	David Wallbank
39.19	Mick Vacarey	13.40	Frank Conway	6.19	Mark Heidenfeld	2.57	Peter Snape
38.68	Jeff Barber	13.40	Roland Herrera	6.19	John Ingamells	2.57	Howard Furr-Barton
37.13	Vicki Pemberton	12.89	Simon Morecroft	6.19	Miles Farren	2.57	Richard Coburn
36.08	Andy Darby	12.87	Fanika Petkovska	6.19	Kevin Dale	2.06	Ian Tarr
35.08	Kevin Stebbing	12.38	Reg Wegener	6.18	Raj Jansari	2.06	Ralph Eskinazi
35.02	Talan Evans	12.38	Rowena Paliwoda	6.18	Adam Stocks	2.06	Alan Greenwood
34.56	Neil Everitt	11.87	Mick Butterfield	6.18	Dorothy Lee	2.06	Steve Grundy
34.54	David Nathan	11.87	Larry Bennett	6.18	Michael Horne	2.06	Gill Bray
33.53	Myke Wignall	10.83	David Phillips	6.17	Crispin Duke	2.06	Pat Parkes
32.48	Chris Evans	10.81	Simonetta Herrera	5.16	John Batty	2.06	Ken Osakabe
31.99	Stuart Mann	10.32	Joe Dooley	5.15	Rodney Lighton	2.05	Daniel Tutchings
31.48	Brian Metcalf	10.32	Michy Kageyama	4.13	Cliff Connick	2.05	Robert Tutchings
27.35	Tim Vasiljevic	10.31	David Startin	4.13	Roy Hollands	1.55	Ian Shimwell
27.33	John Wright	10.30	Brendan Burgess	4.13	Steve Hallett		
26.84	Arthur Musgrove	9.81	Mike Barrett	4.13	Chris Bray		

Ranking Championship 2009

Following one of his poorest ever Swiss format performances Uldis Lapikens slipped from 1st to 3rd as he failed to better last month's score. Paul Gilbertson and Marcus Wrinch were snapping at his heels and it was they that came out on top in 1st and 2nd place respectively. This is a great finish for Paul who came to Arthur's 70th determined to become #1 and he pulled it off with style . . . and hard work.

However, as in the Grand Prix Championship, the man to watch is Marcus! Second in both Championships and well worth a punt for next year's #1 spot.

Congratulations Paul. All your hard work this year has paid off with a great achievement. Not only are you a new Champion but you are also a new husband! Every happiness to you and Tracey.



Ranking Championship 2009 (153 entrants, 43 qualifiers)

2307.14	Paul Gilbertson	1483.93	Linda Taylor	1692.20	Michy Kageyama	1516.50	Shea Mulhall
2247.43	Marcus Wrinch	1452.29	Talan Evans	1582.60	Simon Morecroft	1500.00	Taka Ito
2221.93	Uldis Lapikens	1444.50	Richard Holness	1399.20	David Motley	1486.50	N Kuzuko
2196.36	Brian Lever	1343.29	Jean Wade	1336.40	David Nathan	1476.00	Luan Howitt
2175.36	Nicky Check	Qualifiers above this line		1321.60	Fanika Petkovska	1467.00	Ray Fard
2173.14	Julian Fetterlein	1593.62	Gheorghe Filipas	1241.20	John Gilbertson	1439.00	Steve Hallett
2166.93	Chris Ternel	1921.58	Kevin Stebbing	1884.75	Michael Proto	1262.00	John Batty
2149.43	Mardi Ohannessian	1475.08	Larry Bennett	1855.25	Dave Ablett	1255.50	Tony Walters
2143.57	John Hedge	1470.83	Michael Ireland	1617.25	Mike Barrett	1171.00	Angie Dell
2141.29	Peter Bennet	1911.18	Simon K Jones	1559.00	Ann Pocknell	1531.00	Michael Brigdale
2118.50	Jon Barnes	1893.18	Sean Williams	1512.00	Carl Dell	1439.00	Chris Johnson
2111.50	Paul Plumptre	1736.73	Stefan Paliwoda	1433.25	David Startin	1384.00	Roger Coram
2098.43	Gerry Enslin	1594.73	Mick Butterfield	1925.33	John Ingamells	1337.00	Julian Minwalla
2080.29	Arthur Wright	1548.09	Tony Lee	1892.67	Brendan Burgess	1310.00	Daniel Tutchings
2079.86	Stewart Pemberton	1937.10	Arthur Musgrove	1841.67	Mike Main	1307.00	Gill Bray
2065.93	Peter Christmas	1422.90	Rowena Paliwoda	1841.33	Eamon Keogh	1306.00	Tomohiro Shimada
2062.50	Martin Barkwill	1949.67	Gaz Owen	1830.00	Kevin Jones	1256.00	Raj Jansari
2055.93	Lawrence Powell	1641.89	John Wright	1815.67	Mark Heidenfeld	1256.00	Marc Turner
2054.64	Tony Fawcett	1628.89	George Miltiadou	1815.33	Neil Davidson	1178.00	Ian Tarr
2036.14	Wayne Felton	1297.33	Reg Wegener	1786.33	Mark Dixon	1126.00	Andy Bell
2034.79	Rosey Bensley	1446.25	Ray Kershaw	1722.00	Geoff Conn	1110.00	Mike Williams
2001.00	Adrian Jones	1376.50	Tom Duggan	1711.00	Kevin Dale	1092.00	Leslie Singleton
1985.21	Jeff Barber	1124.13	Neil Young	1559.33	Miles Farren	1083.00	H Furr-Barton
1941.21	Rachel Rhodes	1712.86	Lee Wood	1548.67	Cliff Connick	1082.00	M Jahanbani
1931.14	Chris Evans	1512.00	Steve Rimmer	1477.00	Ed Turner	1070.00	Jason Dennis
1920.71	Phil Tutchings	1449.71	John Reddington	1389.67	Dave McNamara	1042.00	Paul Learmount
1848.79	Richard Biddle	1318.57	Lewis Young	1109.33	Simonetta Herrera	1037.00	Anne Ryder
1839.86	Brian Metcalf	1172.29	Zoe Cunningham	1730.00	Frank Conway	1035.00	Ken Osakabe
1832.50	Paul Barwick	1032.43	Bob Bruce	1693.50	Jackie Griffiths	1025.00	Sue Metcalf
1769.36	Neil Everitt	2146.00	John Hurst	1685.50	M Robertson	1023.00	Karen Proto
1739.36	Myke Wignall	2032.33	Michael Bennett	1619.50	David Phillips	1006.00	Pat Parkes
1720.36	Eric Westbrook	1763.33	Mike Heard	1612.00	Bill Young	1003.00	Sean Casey
1698.36	Tim Vasiljevic	1739.67	Roland Herrera	1611.50	Chris Bray	1000.00	Robert Tutchings
1663.36	Mick Harris	1726.67	Stuart Mann	1574.50	Felix Vink	984.00	Nick Valley
1645.50	Andy Darby	1544.67	Todd Young	1555.50	Roy Hollands	976.00	Sidney Van Gelder
1644.43	Bob Young	1353.67	Athanasia Petselis	1552.50	Irving Czechowicz	929.00	Steve Taylor
1601.14	Mick Vacarey	1886.40	Chris Purchase	1537.00	Cecilia Sparke	856.00	Richard Coburn
1560.43	Vicky Pemberton	1854.60	Simon Heath	1534.00	Crispin Duke		
1540.36	Peter Chan	1707.00	Tim Mooring	1522.50	Scott Parker		

Poker 2010: Starting in January at the Bright 'n' Breezy, the Poker Grand Prix will be freeze-outs with *ad hoc* bounties. Also, instead of finishing in November, the final event will be held at the Christmas UK Finals in December. The prize awards will be given out on the Sunday morning @ 10:30

Friday 500 Final Positions

118	Marcus Wrinch	19	Simon K Jones	7	Neil Davidson
87	Paul Gilbertson	16	Jeff Bailey	7	Rachel Rhodes
84	Jeff Barber	16	Michael Crane	7	Richard Cobourn
76	Julian Fetterlein	16	Mick Butterfield	7	Rob Tutchings
74	Richard Biddle	15	Reg Wegener	7	Sidney Van Gelder
63	Gerry Enslin	14	Lewis Young	4	Angie Dell
57	Mardi Ohannessian	13	Mahmoud Jahanbani	4	Ann Pocknell
57	Tony Fawcett	13	Ray Kershaw	4	Geoff Conn
56	Brian Lever	12	Athanasia Petselis	4	Ian Tarr
52	Andy Darby	12	David Phillips	4	Jason Dennis
51	Tom Duggan	12	Peter Chan	4	John Ingamells
50	Martin Barkwill	12	Raj Jansari	4	Kevin Dale
49	Rosey Bensley	11	Ed Turner	4	Kevin Stebbing
47	Myke Wignall	11	Gheorghe Filipas	4	Luan
38	Peter Christmas	11	Irving Czechowicz	4	Marc Turner
37	David Nathan	11	John Wright	4	Mark Dixon
<u>Top 16 Qualifiers above this point</u>		9	John Gilbertson	4	Paul Barwick
36	Arthur Wright	9	Dan Tutchings	4	Paul Learmount
34	Mike Ireland	9	Mike Main	4	Phil Tutchings
32	Mick Harris	9	Todd Young	4	Rowena Paliwoda
28	Roland Herrera	8	Anne Ryder	4	Roy Hollands
28	Simonetta Herrera	8	David McNamara	4	Stefan Paliwoda
27	Michy	8	Gaz Owen	4	Steve Rimmer
25	Neil Young	8	Tony Walters	4	Steve Taylor
24	Fanika Petkovska	7	Carl Dell	4	Stuart Mann
23	Simon Morecroft	7	Chris Evans	4	Sue Metcalf
21	Jean Wade	7	Chris Johnson	4	Taka
20	Brain Metcalf	7	Gilberto	4	Talan Evans
20	Nicky Check	7	Kazuko	4	Tim Vasiljevic
20	Lee Wood	7	Ken Osakabe	4	Tony Lee
20	Peter Bennet	7	Kevin Jones		
		7	Linda Taylor		

Well, as we all knew, Marcus Wrinch has ended up top of the table and is the worthy winner of the £100 for being so. All that matters now is will he continue his winning streak at the UK Finals and add £500 to his winnings? The draw will be 1 vs 16, 2 vs 15 etc, so those lucky enough to be in the Top 16 will know who plays whom. David Nathan (last year's winner) just crept in ahead of Arthur Wright by one point! However, if any of the Top 16 fail to attend, Arthur is the first sub as are those in descending order beneath Arthur.

Poker Grand Prix 2009

Pts	Player	Payout	Pts	Player	Pts	Player
133	Myke Wignall	£214.00	47	Alison Lee	14	Gaz Owen
125	John Hedge	£133.75	38	Kevin Stebbing	13	Ann Pocknell
114	Rosey Bensley	£107.00	38	Carl Dell	13	Lee Wood
107	Paul Gilbertson	£53.50	34	Ed Turner	13	Kevin Dale
96	Chris Evans	£26.75	32	Julian Minwalla	12	Tom Duggan
92	Tony Fawcett		30	Roger Coram	12	John Gilbertson
85	Marcus Wrinch		29	John Batty	12	Shea Mulhall
85	Vicki Pemberton		27	Robert Tutchings	11	Daniel Tutchings
83	Mick Vacarey		25	Dave McNamara	10	Paul Learmount
71	Andy Darby		24	Peter Chan	8	Ray Fard
65	Julian Fetterlein		22	Cecilia Sparke	7	Jason Dennis
64	Martin Barkwill		21	Frank Conway	6	Marc Turner
60	Lawrence Powell		20	Simonetta Herrera	6	Mardi Ohannessian
30	Mick Harris		20	Talan Evans	5	Rita Butterfield
<u>Qualifiers above this line</u>			20	Angie Dell	5	Felix Vink
71	Neil Young		20	Lewis Young	5	Stefan Paliwoda
52	Tony Lee		20	Nick Valley	4	Philip Tutchings
48	Simon K Jones		19	Tony Walters	3	John Wright
			17	Mick Butterfield	3	Eamon Keogh
			16	Roy Hollands	1	Mark Dixon
			15	Tim Vasiljevic	1	Steve Hallett

After leading the pack for most of the year, Myke Wignall managed to keep ahead until the bitter end and he emerged to win the 2009 Championship - he is the first player to win it twice, having won the inaugural event in 2006. John Hedge was hoping for a late burst but it never arrived and he settled for 2nd place. Rosey Bensley, Paul Gilbertson and Chris Evans all made modest increases in their scores but their relative positions remained as last month. Tony Fawcett (not on form this year) managed to gain 6 points but it wasn't enough to get him into the payouts.

Congratulations to Myke on his second Championship win; and thanks to Tony and Deana Fawcett for the organising and directing.

I would like to say thank you to a few people who have been invaluable to me during 2009.

Deana Fawcett for her skill, sense of humour and ability to pick up my mistakes during tournaments. She keeps me grounded and is a dab hand when it comes to tallying up the money! Tony Fawcett for his part in the poker (assisted by Deana) and for his patience in dealing with some very difficult poker players. I don't know how he keeps so calm. Chiva K. Tafazzoli, President of the World Backgammon Association for his support of the Bibafax and the Biba web site. He's almost as dedicated to backgammon as I am! CasinoRip for sponsoring the Biba web site as the sole games server and for their event sponsorship. Tom Duggan, Mike Main, Paul Gilbertson (and Rosey Bensley) and Arthur Wright for their event sponsorship, it is much appreciated. To the local clubs and their dedicated members who have staged Biba Grand Prix events over the year. To Peter and Helen Christmas of CottageWebs for their occasional help with the Biba web site whenever I get into difficulties. To Peter Bennet for my 2010 At-A-Glance Calendar. To David Startin and John Broomfield who are kind enough to point out all my errors on the web site and in the Bibafax! To Brendan Burgess who makes me laugh. To all the members who have played in the tournaments over the year, and to those who support Biba via their subscriptions to Bibafax - without you I would be alone . . . or not, for finally, Sharen Crane for indulging me in my job and supporting me for many years.

Thank you all. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS
FROM THE WBA,
AND HAPPY
NEW YEAR**



26th – 29th NOVEMBER 2009

Golden Tulip Hotel & Casino Nicosia (Lefkosa), Cyprus



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