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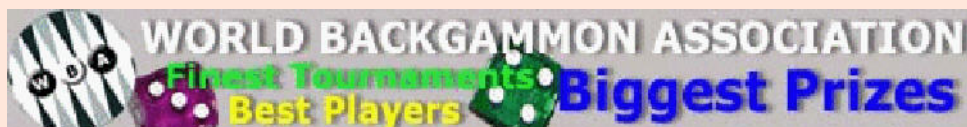
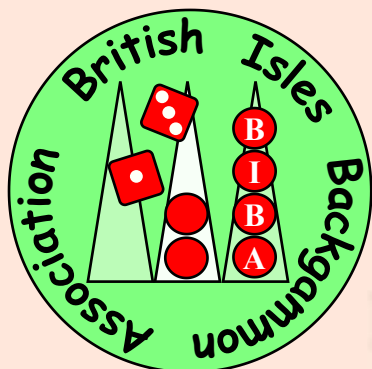
February

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Backgammon - Live in London 2006

By Mike Main

At the end of last year's Backgammon Live in London I was told by Richard Biddle that I was to delegate this year. So we had a meeting a couple of months before this year's event to decide who was to do what. It worked and we had a far smoother running weekend.

As ever the event was designed to be better; added this year were printed programs of events that were handed out to all participants, all players were asked to bring a present for another player, we had some new sponsors and massage for aching backgammoners. Altered was the Sunday format from a Swiss to an Olympiad Tournament and the Singles Knock-out was shaved down but On Shore and On Board Tournaments added. All entry fees were maintained as they always have been though the Boat Trip was increased.

The weekend kicked off with people arriving by the free cabs laid on by one of our Sponsors GLH or under their own steam. Drinks downstairs in the Spice Island were followed by dinner for about twenty. At 9.00 o'clock we moved to the YHA where we kicked off the backgammon with the Weekend Knock-out which was run by Zoe Cunningham. We had 28 players so we had time to play 7 pointer matches. Zoe did a grand job by getting all 2nd Round matches played by midnight (20 hours before they were due to be played.)

Michelle kicked-off the first of five Tric Trac Tournos to be played over the weekend at about 10.00 pm and by midnight we had our first winner of the weekend - Mike Bailey. Very apt that, Mike has attended every Bg Live in London. Not only did he pick up a trophy he also picked up a \$20 voucher for ClubGames who were the sole sponsors of TTTs over the weekend. They also donated bunches of flowers and boxes of chocolates for the 2nd and 3rd placed players. Later on we played the Friday night Jackpot which was won by Chris Gibbins at 4.00 am.

We had 24 people staying at the YHA



most of whom were looking forward to a good fry up breakfast before a long day of backgammon. But it was not to be so -

we'd been Jamie Olivered! That chap is a celebrity chef who this year had a go at the British Government about what children get for their school meals. I don't have a problem with that at all but I do have a problem when caterers decide they can provide not much more than a micro-waved croissant and a glass of watery orange juice in the interest of "not serving up junk food." I wasn't best pleased and told them so.

At 10.00 am we had a Seminar by Paul Lamford. The six positions had been handed out the evening before for people to work out and submit their answers. Instead of using a large display board the Seminar was given with the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation that projected Snowie (another sponsor) files onto a wall. The Seminar is now available on my website.

11.30 saw us back in The Spice Island and Richard Biddle doing an excellent Auction. The 64 player Draw took all of 2 minutes because instead of doing by names out of a hat it was done through a laptop. It's brilliant. No delay, just a press or two of the keyboard and random numbers are generated, assigned to players who are then assigned to slots in the Main with byes in the correct places. Is it really random I hear some ask? If anybody can predict who will play who correctly I offer a free weekend next year.

Numbers in the Singles Knockout were down slightly this year to 56 - that was a shame but at least we had a perfect 8

byes so we had no real delays to contend with. Of course some big names fell at the first hurdle but on the whole those who went through to the 2nd Round of the Main were those who would be expected to do so. I shaved down the Progressive Consolation this year so that only the 1st and 2nd Round Main losers would go into it. The reason for this is that we have a Boat Trip to see the Lord Mayor's Fireworks Display as part of the day. As if that doesn't cut into the backgammon as it is, this year

the tides on the river meant the boat needed to leave 30 minutes earlier than last year. Also I was certain that a number



of players would want to skip the boat trip having done it before. So I decided to abandon all hope of keeping the tournament running between 3.00 and 6.00 pm and laid on separate On Board and On Shore Tournaments instead. At 3.00 o'clock, with the Main, Consolation, Last Chance and Suicide about half way though, the Boat Trippers were off in cabs to the Pier where the boat awaited them.

Michael Crane of Biba (another sponsor) ran the On Board Tournaments while Zoe ran the On Shore Tournaments. I gave them both 6 x 8 player Knock-out Charts which I was sure was more than they would get played but Michael Crane had all of them full by the time the fireworks started at 5.00 pm. I'm told the fireworks were the best ever. I think he must have some experience in this field! Zoe ran, with only 9 players, four longer point Tournaments. The ten winners each received a plaque and 1 Champ'o'Champs point and shared a bottle of bubbly donated by the Captain of the Boat or the Landlord of the Pub. When all the players returned to the Spice Island we continued with the Singles Knockout.

In truth it had not progressed as far as I had hoped it would have (thank God I'd shaved the Consolation) and it looked like the start of the Doubles would be delayed. However seeing as it was not I (who was busy running the Singles) who was going to run the Doubles the T.Ds Sean Williams and Richard Biddle managed to run around and collect names and pool entries and thus pretty well start on time.

The Singles was drawn to a close with the Suicide being won by DailyGammon player Martin Coote, The Last Chance by Nodar Gagua, the Consolation by Stef Rohan and the Main by Steve Ferrer.

John Broomfield had an excellent day by winning 100% of the Auction.

As mentioned an addition this year was presents. Bg Live in London is designed as a party as well as a backgammon



weekend so it seemed obvious to me to ask players to bring present for other players. Those that did were given a raffle ticket and chose a present from the table. The most fun present was a basket ball net that attached to your waist with a ball on a string that you had to flip into the basket. Gigolos should all have one.

Another addition was the program of events. It not only did a marvelous job in cutting down the questions I was asked during the weekend but also included scorecards for every match players might play throughout the weekend and a page of position cards too. It'll be de riguer at every large event I organise in the future.

18 Teams in the Doubles meant no bye back ins and 14 byes so most of the 2nd round matches started straight away. Others elected to play in a Tric Trac Tourno which had its own section in the Pub with

a flat-screen facing them so they could see the scores as they played. This was won by Bedstefar which I must admit bought a smile to my face for it was he who inspired the creation of Bg Live in London after Liz Barker and I went to an internet players meet in Oslo that he organised some years ago. As soon as that was played there were clamours from knocked out Doubles players for another so we had our 3rd TTT of the weekend which was won by Tim Line. There were no takers for the Saturday evening Jackpot.

At midnight it was time to leave the Pub so we returned to the YHA where the Doubles continued and a Jackpot was played. Little Suzy Crabb and Matte Juggler (in his first tournament) won the Doubles. Later Suzy was awarded the Dod Davies - absent due to some little (!?!?) tournament going on in Las Vegas - 2 hour backgammon lesson prize.

Meanwhile the Weekend Long Knockout was doing well too - Zoe had somehow managed to keep it running and in fact it was ahead of itself by close of play on Saturday. Paul Lamford was a known finalist and the other semi-final was due to be played at 10.00 am Sunday.

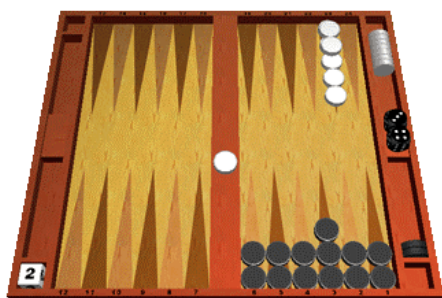
Breakfast was another disappointing affair but in truth I probably didn't have time for it because we had a Presentation on "The History of the Game and some of the people who play, have played, do play the game" by The Independent Backgammon Columnist Chris Bray. Again I missed it because I was busy setting up for the next event but everybody came out of it saying it was excellent. Many thanx to Chris who had a bad back but still managed to turn up.

11.30 and we're back in The Spice Island for the Olympiad Tournament. In previous years we have run a Swiss Tournament but we have only ever had 30 or so players turn up for it. I'm not surprised either - it's to my mind a pretty pointless format to use in backgammon. Players that have lost have very little incentive to play on. Hence they don't even take part.



So this year it got the sack and was replaced by a far more inclusive format. My Olympiad format has 7 brackets all with 3rd place play-offs for bronze medals, trophies and gold medals for winners and silver medals for losing finalists. Each bracket has an Optional Pool and there's an Auction in the Main to boot. It's about 7 hours of pretty intense backgammon for 32 people. Of course it's run via computer (program designed by myself and Sean Williams) with the charts projected onto a screen for all players to see their progress.

Here's an interesting position from the 2nd Round Main Olympiad:



7 Point match
Black: Paul Lamford 3
White: Chris Gibbins 3

Paul Lamford "In this position I redoubled and Chris took. I thought at the time this was an error, but when checking it out with my Equity Rating Chart, I found that for someone of his ability he was right to take. The window at this skill difference is: 63/75%. This assumes a 300 point rating difference. The approximate ratings were 1980 and 1680 at the time."

Star of the show was Paul Lamford who not only won the Main but also won 100% of the Auction. Paul may have been out of mainstream backgammon for a couple or so of years now but he proved that he still knows how to play the game. Chris Gibbins made up for, by his standard, a quiet Bg Live in London by winning the Consolation, Tim Line took the Last Chance, Nodar Gagua (en route back from the WBF event in St Maarten and visiting his daughter in London) took the Suicide, Sean Williams took the TTT and Hubert de l'Epine and Martin Coote the Satellites.



The Chouette Corner now wrapped up as well. Once again we were playing with monopoly like money in the Chouettes on the basis that this event is designed for backgammon learning rather than for sharks. In reality most players hustle with their chouette money by playing head to heads or having side bets on their tournament matches. This year it was Tim Line who walked away with the Chouette Hustlers Cup.

There were now trophies to award to tournament winners, sponsors prizes to give out - ClubGames vouchers, flowers and chocolates, Biba's Bibafaxes subscriptions, The Fox Reformed vouchers, GammonVillage subscriptions, Snowie CD Roms, Chris Bray and Paul Lamford books, The Lockside Lounge (venue of Backgammon in Camden) vouchers and Annie's plate and thanx to be said.



"They think it's all over..." Not at all - true, most players had made their exit but the diehards just wanted more. And quite rightly so for the best was yet to come. The Gang Tournament. Take 16 players, throw their names into a hat, draw them out in two teams and set 8 versus 8 in a 3 point match. Large round table required and large board to suit. You have on your hands a well mannered riot and a load of fun. It's a perfect finale to a weekend of backgammon.

Another 2 Tric Trac Tournos were played on Sunday afternoon. Alan Beckerson now has a trophy to match his wife Monica's from last year and Marios Contantinou, after a 3 player final play-off, took the other. In another corner of the Pub Chrissie was giving back massages to tired players.

David Rogers had progressed to the Final of the Weekend Knockout and thus sat down to play with Mr Lamford. This was Paul's 9th 7 pointer of the weekend and, yes, he made it 9 out of 9 to win the Weekender. Having won 2 of the major events of the weekend there was little doubt that Paul had also won the Champ'o' Champs tournament as well. So he walked away with 3 large trophies and bulging pockets. Perhaps you would like to take a look at his seminar.

Here's a position from the 2nd Round match that took the team concerned 20 minutes, with much goading from the opposition, to debate and decide upon.



3 point match
White (A) 1 Black (B) 0

Team A incorrectly cubed (against my advice I'm pleased to say - I thought it



was too good to double because we had loads of gammons to win because they would crunch and we would therefore win by a gammon anyway hence pushing the score to 2-1 Crawford with Team B needing 2 straight wins or a gammon in the following game. I also thought that Team B would drop so we'd only profit by 1 point by cubing.) Team B quite correctly dropped. The Gang Tournament was won in the smaller hours by Tim Line.

Later still we had a Jackpot trophy to play for. This was due to start at 11.00 pm but that time was well and truly missed. By the time the last two players standing (actually sitting now) were ready to play it was 3.00 am. As it happened those players were the Jackpot TDs so we fined ourselves 24 points each and played a 27 point match.

Summary:

Numerous players told me it was the best Bg Live in London yet. I took that with a pinch of salt because it was said to me but looking back on it now, yes it certainly was a good one. It ran very smoothly but not so smoothly and without its dramas



that it was over sanitised. The printed program certainly cut down on the number of questions I was asked during the weekend, having others doing things really made things easier for me, the On Board and On Shore tournaments worked a treat, a Presentation rather than a Seminar is better idea for tired brains on the Sunday morning, the Olympiad was a far better event than Swiss is and the presents

made it more party like. Oh, and the backgammon was good too. Thanx for being there.

Many thanx to The Crew 2005 (above).

Photos of event by Sue Keeble, Tim Line and Stef Rohan. Thanx too.

Grand Prix - 2006

Slight changes have been made for 2006 in the Grand Prix in the number of points awarded. As you can see from the chart, GP points will be awarded for each round won. Also, the number of points has been changed. They are based (loosely) upon the Mind Sports Olympiad, Pentamind formula, and have been adapted for use within the Grand Prix. The GP points will not be the sum of *all* GP points within the event but the *highest* attained.

Because the GP points are relative to the number of rounds won there will be occasions when the winner of the Consolation (normally 7-pointer) can gain more points than the winner of the Main (normally 11-pointer). This will happen if the Main winner gets a bye and wins only five rounds and the Consolation winner, starting from Round One wins seven rounds. If anyone doesn't agree with this they are perfectly welcome to lose in Round One of the Main and go directly into the Consolation!

Grand Prix - Knockouts				
Rounds won	11-Pointer	7-Pointer	5-Pointer	3-Pointer
7	32.00	24.76	18.56	13.39
6	24.77	18.57	13.40	9.26
5	18.58	13.41	9.27	6.16
4	13.42	9.28	6.17	4.10
3	9.29	6.18	4.11	2.56
2	6.19	4.12	2.57	2.05
1	4.13	2.58	2.06	1.55
Grand Prix - Swiss		* Five consecutive wins from Round One		
7	32.00			
6	24.77			
5/5*	18.58			
5	13.42			
4	9.29			
3	6.19			
2	4.13			
1	2.58			

Gilbertson UK Finals

Report by Michael Crane

Well, the Gilbertson siblings did us proud, some magnificent trophies, some good extras and a good turnout. Overall, a good weekend's backgammon and fun.

It all began on the Friday night with the **Warm-up (12)**. Overseas entrant, Rogier Van Gemert almost won the last weekend break prize of the year; but in the end it went to David Nathan after his victory in the Final.

We then moved to the Saturday daytime where two things at once were happening. The pre-qualifiers were pitched against each other in the **Champion of Champions (7)** knockout (Lawrence Powell was unable to attend); and while that was going on the remainder of the entrants (38) battled it out for the remaining eight places for the Sunday, UK Finals.

In the Champion of Champions, Uldis Lapikens tore through the field beating Adrian Jones, then Rachel Rhodes, and finally, John Slattery to take the 2006 title.

The **Saturday Qualifiers (38)**, meanwhile were battling it out to narrow themselves down to just eight players. Initially everyone played 2 x 7-point matches. All those on 2/2 played a knockout to place four in the Sunday Main, and those on 1/2 did the same.

All those that failed to win any matches at all were automatically into the Consolation starting Sunday morning. With hindsight the 0/2s were poorly catered for and next year they will be entered into a separate knockout on the Saturday – being joined by those that lose in the 1st Round of the other two knockouts.

One exciting extra provided by our sponsors was a £100 bounty hunt. One player was picked at random to be the hunted – for which they were awarded £25; and the first player to beat them was rewarded with £75. Richard Biddle was the hunted – and Julian Fetterlein got him with his first bullet! Anti-climax! Next time we'll rethink this event and try to make it last more than one round!

Rosey had her annual, **Rosey's Rollout** competition. Everyone rolled four dice and their score was recorded. If anyone could match Rosey's own rollout then

they would win a bottle of champagne.

Out of the 50odd rollouts, seven actually shared Rosey's roll of twelve - so we had a Rosey's Rollout, Rollout to decide the eventual winner.

First up was Eamon Keogh and he rolled a perfect twelve - the champagne was his unless someone else rolled twelve . . . they didn't!

Before I get to the Saturday eight and the Main, I'd like to report on the **Grand Prix Championship** play-off between John Slattery and Adrian Jones; both whom, you'll remember, had equal points in the Championship. They sat down Saturday evening to battle it out for the 1st place over a 17-point match. John took a good early lead of 14-4 and then the score moved to 16-8 Crawford to John. He failed to win that game – and any subsequent games as Adrian stormed through to win the Championship, leaving John in an unfamiliar, 2nd Place!

At the same time Adrian and John were battling it out the **Doubles (5)** was won by *A Right Pair of Christmas Anchors* after they defeated *Reet and Pettite* in their Final; and in the **£50 Jackpot (8)**, Julian Fetterlein and Roland Herrera split the pot between them; and in the **Poker (tba)**, organiser, Martin Hemming led from the start and ended up as chip-leader, winning a load of cash, a bottle of wine and a trophy donated by the sponsors. Martin is to compile a report which will appear soon and will also be in charge of next year's **Poker Grand Prix**.

Also included this Saturday evening was a bit of fun called **The Wallyball Championships**. I won't go into too much detail but it's a 'ball and hoop' game that involves some rigorous pelvic thrusting! Two members (no pun intended!) tied on scores and they battled it out but neither of them could better the other so they shared and pot between them. Modesty forbids me to name the two pelvic-thrusters, but suffice to say, they could be seen sat behind the admin desk throughout most of the weekend!

Back to normality: The eight from Saturday were drawn against the eight pre-qualifiers for the Main on Sunday in this order, the pre-qualifiers being shown first:

John Slattery vs Bob Young
Rachel Rhodes vs Kevin Stebbing
Mike Grabsky vs Simonetta Herrera
Adrian Jones vs David Nathan

Uldis Lapikens vs Brian Lever
Tony Lee* vs Rogier Van Gemert
Peter Christmas vs Paul Fox
Eddie Barker vs Julian Fetterlein

*Tony Lee was a replacement for Lawrence Powell who was unable to accept his entry into the last sixteen due to ill health.

The first three pre-qualifiers mentioned above fell in the 1st Round, as did Tony and Eddie. Five down, just three left standing. Falling in the 2nd Round was just one, Peter leaving the ¼ Finalists:

Adrian vs Bob and Uldis vs Julian. Both pre-qualifiers failed to make it any further and therefore Bob and Julian battled it out for the UK title having got there the 'hard' way. In a close match that went to 8-8 it was Julian that took it to Crawford, 10-8 and it was he that emerged as the 2006 UK Champion leaving Bob as Runner-up. I have recorded the match and it will appear on GammonVillage soon.

While these sixteen were being whittled down to just Bob and Julian, everyone else started in the **Progressive Consolation (32)**. The eight 1st Round losers of the Main were slotted in after the 2nd Round and it was from these players that the last four emerged: John Slattery vs Paul Fox, and David Nathan vs Tony Lee. The latter mentioned made it into the Final from which Tony emerged the winner and Paul the Runner-up.

The final event of the Sunday was the **Last Chance (32)**, an open draw with slots reserved for the next four to lose in the Main, subject to time. Despite a few players taking advantage of buy-backs, it was two first-time entrants that sat opposite each other in the Final, Roland Herrera vs Mark Hiedenfeld (from Dublin). After lots of toing and froing it was Roland that came out on top to leave Mark the Runner-up.

Finally. This was a fantastic tournament, full of good backgammon and plenty of fun. Lots of laughs and plenty of good food and wine – what a perfect weekend; for which I'd like to say a big thank you to Rosey, John and Paul; **Thank you!**

Pictures on the following page 

Main: Julian - Rosey - Bob

Consolation: Paul - Rosey - Tony

Last Chance: Roland - Rosey - Mark



Wallyball Championships

Above, Kevin White gets in the swing, while below, Paul Van Dyke gets a helping hand from Sharen . . . or is she helping herself!



UK Finals More Pictures



Adrian Jones
Grand Prix Champion 2005



Eamon Keogh
Rosey's Rollout Winner



<u>Match detailed statistics</u>		
Player	Julian	Bob
Rating	expert	intermediate
Overall	5.807/12.254	9.626/28.417
Errors(blunders)	17(3)	33(6)
Checker play errors		
Checker play	3.003/6.810	7.737/24.348
Errors(blunders)	11(1)	27(4)
Double errors		
Overall	1.375/2.596	0.847/1.867
Missed double	1.268/2.420	0.345/0.904
Wrong double	0.107/0.176	0.502/0.963
Errors(blunders)	5(1)	3(1)
Take errors		
Overall	1.429/2.848	1.042/2.202
Wrong take	0.000/0.000	0.810/1.596
Wrong pass	1.429/2.848	0.232/0.606
Errors(blunders)	1(1)	3(1)
Favourite: Julian was 66.16% - 33.84%		

As is the custom at the UK Finals, the staff put on their crimbo hats and pose for a piccy.

The girls were quite happy to do this - it was their idea after all; but the boys weren't too keen!

2005 Las Vegas Open Backgammon Tournament November 16th-20th 2005

I am writing the start of this report at 3.45am on Finals day. I am much too excited to sleep and I didn't want to disturb Slatts by fidgeting around so let's hope I am awake enough to make the report interesting.

It is dedicated to my great friend Janet who died in June this year aged 52. She was the really talented lady who made Slatts's sequined outfits that he wore every day of the tournament. When Slatts was getting ready to pack for the trip he asked me what I thought he should wear and I wanted him to wear these special and unique waistcoats. I would like to think Janet was watching over him and giving him a helping hand when he needed it!



November 11th arrived at last. I had been waiting since March for our first Backgammon trip to Las Vegas. Slatts (John Slattery) and my brother John Gilbertson and I decided this was the year to hit the States with the intention of the boys entering the \$10,000 entry Pro-am! Alas, their secretary let them down. I had forgotten what the jet lag would be like and booked the flights to suit my work holiday schedule instead! Talking to Dod Davis, Jo Curl and Wayne Felton who are old hands at this made me realise the error of my ways and so the two Johns pulled out of the Pro-Am and decided that the best idea was to put the \$10K in a kitty and for the three of us to have some fun in Las Vegas – see some shows, play some poker, enter lots of jackpots, eat, drink and be merry. Well, what a trip it turned out to be!

For those of you that read my reports you will know that I concentrate on the Brits abroad! I would, however, like to start this time with thanking all the new friends we made on this trip. First of all to Howard Markowich for nagging Slatts for so long, to come to the Las Vegas Open! Howard and his team did a great job of running the tournament and it went without a hitch.

To all the players that were nice enough

Rosey - The Roving Reporter

Follow the backgammon exploits of our intrepid reporter as she rolls her way around the world - ably supported by Slatts and a bunch of Brits!



to let me win a few games. Particularly to Tom McEnvoy who must have been the unluckiest player on Day 1 of the main tournament. Being a local, he managed to miss the Calcutta Auction (I must find out why it's called that!) where money is given out free. His name was called but he wasn't there so he lost out on \$500! He then got me in the first round and went 4-8 up after rolling some nice numbers in the bear-off after I'd given him a 4-cube. I then got lucky and beat him 11-8. When reporting the win my name went through as Rosey McEnvoy so I quipped "Poor Tom that's the third bit of bad luck for him in a day if you're marrying me off to him!" It didn't end there though, he played Rachel Rhodes after buying back in and lost at DMP! He didn't come back after the first day. I am only hoping he played poker that night, won a fortune and decided to enter the \$10K entry Poker Tourney at Bally's!

Back to my thanks and while I am on the subject of poker, thanks to the following great guys who I played some hands with: Ed Bauder (Illinois), Ward Hudspeth (Texas), Adrian Costa (California), Evan Etter (Florida), Jacob (USA somewhere!), the guys from Texas and Ken Fischer (California).



Carol Joy Cole

Thanks to Peter Chan who proved to be an ardent supporter of Slatts (especially when I wasn't there!) and who took loads of photos of the Brits at work! This trip to Vegas resulted in 3,500+ photos all together.

Thanks to Slatts opponents so far:

- Arjang Nowtash
- Ray Fogerland
- Dean Adamion
- Ken Fischer
- Herb Gurland
- Hugh Sconyers (semi-final)



Diane Iveson

Who helped me have some very anxious moments (to say the least)! They were all generous in defeat and must have wondered who Slatts prayed to because he as on the ropes so many times! To quote him "I don't follow Snowie, I follow voo-doo!" must have seemed true having seen some of the miracles that happened along the way!

A special thanks to Carlos Azcarate who lost to Slatts in the Jackpot at DMP. I didn't see the match but according to Slatts he was dead and buried five times and came back each time to win. Carlos said that he couldn't sleep that night because he kept going over the match wondering how he lost it! He then followed Slatts progress every step of the way encouraging him on!

Thanks to Bill Riles, who features twice in my report, both times for beating Brits. He's a great guy and it's when I meet such nice people I wish we could get some big tournaments going in the UK with decent prize money to encourage the Americans to cross the water to England.

Thanks to Mike Svobodny for making my day when he saw me playing poker





and came over and gave me his Personal Invitation to his Las Vegas tourney. I knew it was meant for Slatts but it made me feel important! When I told Mike this he said “No it wasn’t – we couldn’t invite Slatts dressed like that! If he came you would have to dress him in a potato sack!” Unfortunately, Mike, the Gilbertson tourney is on in the UK at the same time and as a sponsor I have to be there!

So here is the diary of events as far as I can remember it. I only decided to write a report when Slatts was 9-14 down in his first 15 point match so there was no writing until then!

Day 1-5

The three of us arrived at Las Vegas airport after a 10+ hour flight from Gatwick and were determined to stay up as late as possible, to try and beat the jet lag. So much for that theory! We got our hire car checked and into our timeshare resort The Sunterra Desert Paradise Resort and were very pleased with the accommodation. It was spacious and had everything we were likely to need for our 10 day stay. We were a bit concerned that it was 2km from the Strip but this proved to be no problem at all. John G did all the driving and exploring. Vegas was so easy as all the hotels did Valet Parking. This meant that we could choose a different hotel every day and explore the area. That first day we drove to The Bellagio and had a snack and then went on the tram to The Monte Carlo. We checked out the poker rooms but were far too tired to play anything and ended up in bed by 9pm! Woke next day at 5am so I was in the gym by 7.30! I made this part of my routine most days and even got bruv John trained to come with me. We followed the workout with 10 minutes in the hot tub and were then ready for action!

Las Vegas is exhausting it is sooooo big! Each hotel is enormous and like a mini town! They are all themed and have their own free attractions and of course are full of noisy slot machines! We visited the Luxor (Egyptian theme), Excalibur, Mandalay Bay, Bellagio, Monte Carlo, Mirage, New York, New York, MGM, Tropicana, Orleans, Treasure Island, Riviera Venetian, Paris and Aladdin. The Mirage had a fantastic night spectacular “The Volcano” where the water is set on fire. Treasure Island had a free pirate adventure called The Sirens. The Bellagio had a wonderful musical fountain display. There were lions at MGM and white tigers at the Mirage and all of these were free! We walked our socks off during the day and usually ended up back at the resort with a glass of wine before going to bed early. We did manage to find an evening to go to downtown. This is the original Vegas where we visited The Golden Nugget and Binnions and saw two of the overhead light shows, which cost \$50 million to create!



On the day the tournament started we were up at 5am as we were off to the Grand Canyon. We had decided to take advantage of the Graveyard Breakfast Special – Steak & Eggs for \$2.95! at The Orleans.

The headline here has to be – “**Slatts Nearly Arrested For Vagrancy!**”

As most of you will know Slatts is always dressed up to the nines at backgammon tournaments. This day, however, he was in a tee-shirt, jeans and was wearing a baseball cap. After the early start he sat in the foyer and closed his eyes. He wasn’t there long before a security guard came along and told him this was not acceptable behaviour. Slatts protested and said he was only meditating, not

sleeping, but this didn’t carry any weight. In Vegas, it’s eyes open or off to your room!

The Grand Canyon trip was something not to be missed. We had a stretch limo take us to the airport where we boarded a helicopter for a flight over the Hoover Dam and Canyon. We landed in the Canyon and then took a platoon boat ride up the Colorado River where we had a picnic and champagne. The scenery is breathtaking and I am sure the photos I took won’t do it justice but the memories will always be there.

So then on to the Riviera and the Las Vegas Open Tournament. So we had been in Vegas for five days and had not gambled at all! We had to put that right! We had already seen Dod and Jo earlier in the week when Dod and Wayne were playing in the Pro-Am. They were hoping to better their semi-final win last year. They made a good start by beating Steve Sax and his partner in the first round but unfortunately got beaten by Paul Weaver and partner in Round 2. Wayne didn’t stay for the Open. We met up with the rest of the Brits – 14 players in all. Laurence Powell (C), Ray Tanner (C), Peter Chan (C) Rachel Rhodes (I), Tom Duggan (I), Julian Fetterlein (C), Peter Bennett (C), Dave Edwards (I), Diane Iveson (B), Dod (C) Slatts (C), Jo (I) John G (I) and me (I).

John G and I signed up for the Seniors Tournament and I am pleased to report that I was asked to prove my age as no one believed I was over 50! This was also true of Peter Pan. Peter Bennett who having been knocked out in the first round made a good investment by buying back in and then went on to win the Seniors Tournament. An excellent result for the Brits. Quote from Peter on the flight back talking to Slatts “At least you



can't challenge me for my title for another five years".



John G and I were both out first round so we decided to check out the Poker tables. Neither of us had played cash games before but as this was all that was on offer we had a go.

Slatts had misunderstood the programme and thought there was a new Super Jackpot each day but there was only one! Howard decided to let him play in the Limited Jackpot this one time only! He won his first round and then joined us for the Poker. It proved to be a good first session with Slatts and John contributing a profit of approx. \$700 to the kitty.

The Main Tournament starts off with the Calcutta

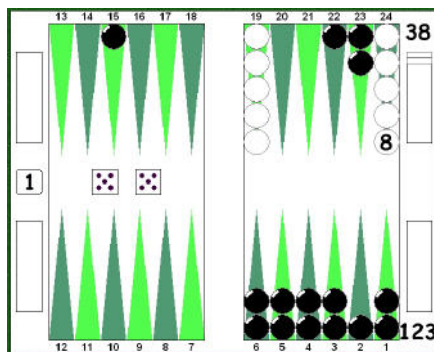
Auction at 11 a.m. The organisers pretty much make sure that there is a large number of people in attendance as they give away (yes, give away!) \$7,500 – 5 prizes of \$500 and 4

prizes of \$1,000. The only stipulation is that you have to be in the room at the time your name is called out. Guess whose name was pulled out first – no not mine unfortunately, it was Dod's – well done to him!

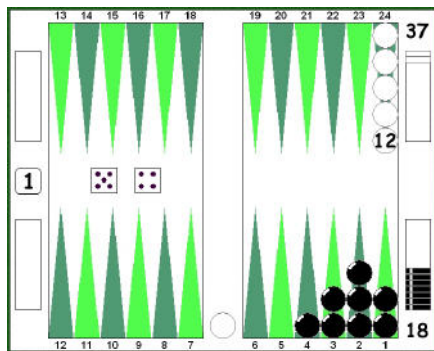
On Day 1 of the Championship Main Tournament only Lawrence and Slatts got through their matches to play in Day 2.



I started watching Slatts first match when he was 9-14 down to 15. He won the Crawford game and came back to 14-14. In this game it looked like it was all over when Arjang (white) was in this position



Arjang threw 55 to leave a slot on the 6-point. Slatts threw 21 to hit. He closed his board and was bearing off when he threw 66 to leave a slot on his 4-point.



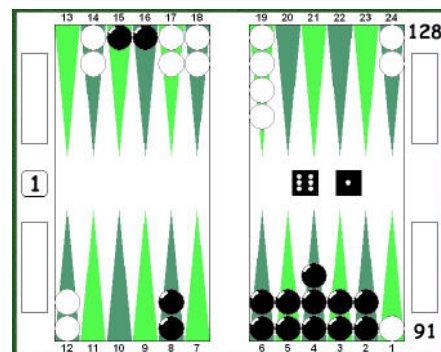
Arjang threw 45 but played 54 and didn't hit giving Slatts the match.

I didn't see the match against Ray Fogeland but Slatts won 15-12.

In his first Jackpot game on Day 1 Slatts won 13-3 but then he came up against Carlos Azcarate. He was trailing 9-12 down to 13 Crawford and looked like he was going to lose the match but managed to win this crucial game. With the score 10-12 they had a break and Slatts did his usual late double when they came back, Carlos dropped and the score was now 11-12. In the final game Carlos had three of Slatts's men back on his 2- & 1-points with a 5 point prime, but he still found a way to escape and win! This game had gone on for about an hour. Carlos thought he had the game won 5 times but each time Slatts came back from the dead. Carlos called him Freddie Kruger because it was all so scary!!

In the first round of the Main tournament Peter Bennett sat down to play Bill Riles from Houston. With Peter (black) leading the match 12-10 to 15, he felt quietly confident that he could win an un-dou-

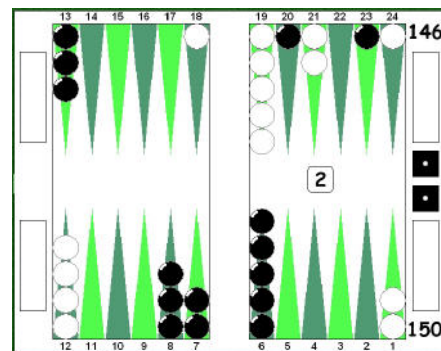
bled gammon to go to Crawford when the position was as follows:-



15 point match

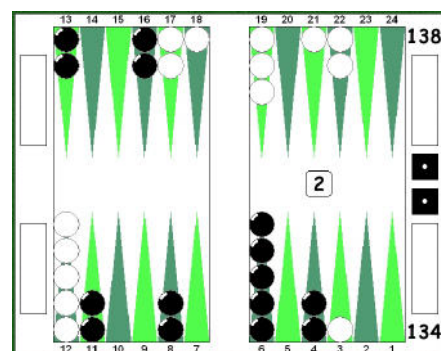
Black	White
61: 8/2 2/1*	61: 25/24* 24/18
62: 25/23 8/2	Doubles to 2
Takes	32: 13/10* 11/9*
33: 25/22 25/22 23/20 4/1	55: 10/5 7/2(2) 18/13
43: 25/18	53: 11/5 9/5

Peter continues to roll badly and loses 2 points instead of winning 2!. Bill picks up the next game and with the score now 12-13 Peter cubes ...



and Bill Passes, taking the score to 13-13

Peter rolls well and after rolling a 44, which gave him a good position, he cubes for match in this position and Bill takes.



Peter then rolls 55 and two rolls later he rolled 33 and two rolls later 66 which got all his men in leaving Bill with a lone checker on Peter's 1-point. Peter then rolls 65 leaving a blot on the 5-point (2 men off) and Bill hits it with 42. Now it was Bill's turn for the luck he rolls a 33 to give himself a 6 prime with his 1-point open. Peter throws the 1 but then has to



break his board. Soon after that Bill rolled a 55 giving him eight checkers off and goes on to win the match. Unlucky Peter.



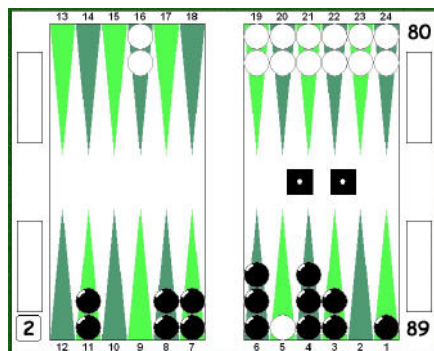
Rachel, Tom and I all made it through to Day 2 of the Intermediate Main, but our lucky dice ran out. I managed one more round and one round in the Consolidation before bombing out. Tom was the only one of us to play a match on Day 3 but he too ended up in the Last Chance on Sunday.

Lawrence was unlucky losing to David Todd, the eventual winner. With the score 2-away, 4-away in David's favour Lawrence got himself into a strong position where he looked liked he could get a gammon for the match. Unfortunately, for him he was hit in the bear-off and only won 2 points to level the match 13-13. The cube was turned early in the next game and he didn't get much of a look-in and lost the match.

After Day 2 the Brits had three horses to watch. Slatts in the Main and Limited Jackpot, Julian in the Consolidation and Super Jackpot and Peter in the Seniors. During the day Slatts had once again "found a way" (his now favourite saying!) when he once again came back from being down.

In his match against Dean Adamion from Michigan he trailed 7-11 to 15 to win 15-13.

In his match against Ken Fischer from California (Japan Open winner) it was neck and neck most of the time. With the score at 7-4 Slatts (black) had a 11 to play in this position.



After much deliberation he decided not to hit on the 5-point but to bring two men to the 9-point, 11/9(2). There were a few Brits spectating and the consensus of opinion was that Slatts should have hit on the 5-point. He had certainly considered it as he originally made that move and considered the hit on his 12-point before changing his mind and playing safe (for a change!) The wrong decision as it turned out as Ken rolled 55 to escape and win the race.

When the score reached 12-11 to Slatts they decided to break for dinner. Ken, Slatts, Peter C, Tom, John G, Diane and I headed for Kady's Café to eat. We amused Ken with some of our English words "Haggis" is a make of diaper (nappy to us!) in the USA. Slatts amused us by recalling his first visit to the States in 1978 when he went into a shop and asked for 20 fags!!

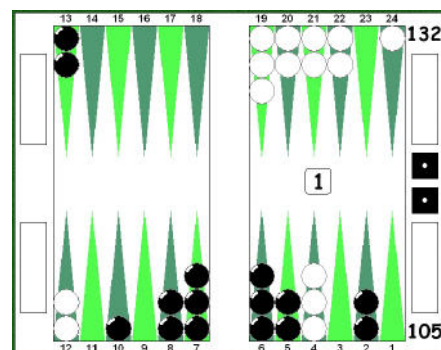
When play resumed Ken won the next three games and went 12-14 ahead Crawford, however, Slatts managed an un-doubled gammon to level the match. He then managed to win the last game to go through to Day 3.

Julian was having a busy day as he had to play 3 Consolidation matches and 2 Super Jackpot matches. I didn't see any of the games but know he was triumphant as he was still in both competitions the next day. Slatts won his next Jackpot game 13-2 and went straight into a match with Bill Riles. This was the same Bill that had beaten Peter B in the Main. In the early stages of the match Slatts and Bill both dropped each other's offer of the cube and were level at 4-4 when Slatts remarked, "Obviously neither of us is taking a cube against each other in case we get gammoned!" He then proceeded to take the next cube, got gammoned and went 4-8 down! He said, "See, I told you what would happen!" Bill then declined all further cubes! With the score at 12-11 to 13 Slatts looked like he was going to go into the next day unbeaten in the tournament. Bill had other ideas though

and managed to win an un-doubled gammon and the match. He did remark to Slatts that he was lucky to win the match and lucky to beat him. We were pleased to see that his luck and good play held out and he went on to win the Jackpot.

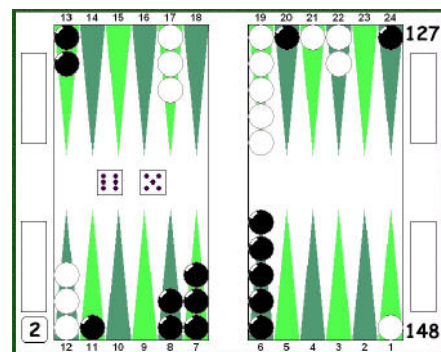
On the Saturday there is only play for those who are still in the Main or Consolation unless players want to enter new jackpots. Some of the Brits went machine-gun shooting. Dod led the expedition having been before. Both Peters, Lawrence, Tom and Diane went along and had a great time.

Meanwhile I stayed behind to watch Slatts battle it out against Herb Gurland from Boston. With the score at 12-9 to Slatts, Slatts (black) offers the cube in this position and Herb passes.

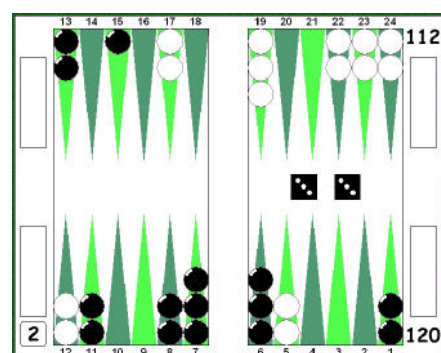


Score 13-9.

Next game Herb cubes and Slatts takes but Herb throws an awkward 65, he moves 13/7, 6/1* in this position:



The game continues until this position,



where Slatts has a 33 to play :

Black

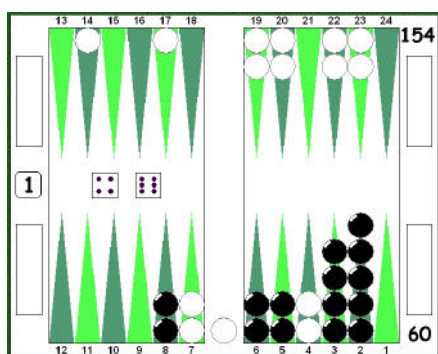
33: 13/10(2) 7/4 6/3
53: 25/20 4/1
21: 8/6 8/7
Dances

White

63: 13/10* 10/4
64: 20/10
54: 10/5* 8/4
53: 13/8

After several more dances Slatts still manages to throw a double-six and a double-two and saves the gammon. Score 13-11

Herb chooses to play a back-game and Slatts has trouble making a board, whilst Herb has his 6-, 5-, 3- & 2-points, Slatts only has his 6- & 2-points. Slatts rolls a fortuitous 44, which hits and makes his 5-point, followed by his 3-point. Herb keeps dancing.



Herb rolls 64 and comes in and out. Slatts rolls an awkward 64 and leaves two shots on, his 8- & 5-points. Herb considers cubing, he needs a 4 or a1 to hit. He does cube and Slatts takes! Herb misses by rolling 32.

Black

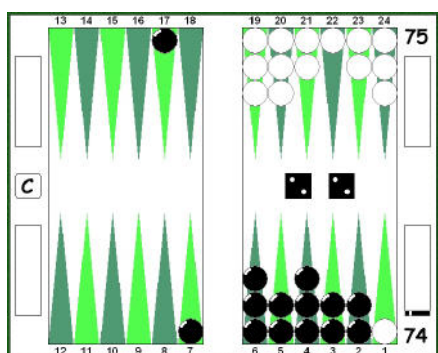
64: 8/2 5/1
Takes
32: 8/5 2/0
42: 5/1 5/3
11: 6/5* 6/5 5/4* 5/4

White

46: 25/21 21/15
Doubles to 2
32: 15/12 12/10
44: 11/7 10/6 8/4 6/2
21: 18/16 21/20

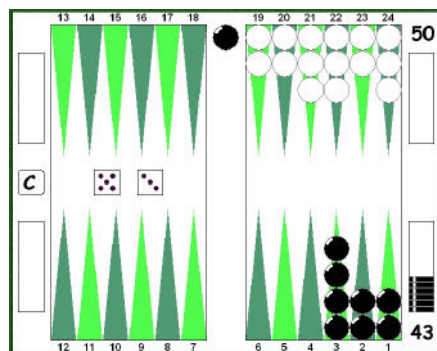
Slatts goes on to win 15-11.

I then saw Ken Fischer playing his Consolation match and went over to see how he was doing. He was 8-10 down Crawford, against Herb Roman.



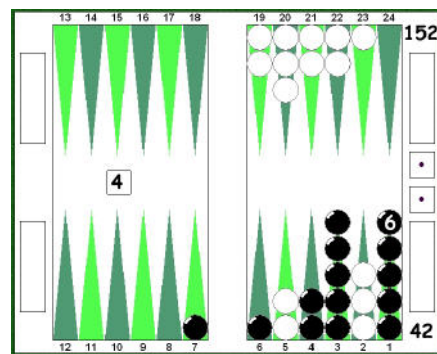
Ken (black) has a 22 to play and hits loose on the 1-point from his 7-point; not what Snowie would have done but it works out okay! Herb dances and Ken covers. When bearing off he rolls a 41 followed by a 51, leaves a shot and gets hit.

Herb has a closed board, rolls 53 and debates whether or not to clear his 6-point or to play 5/0.



Herb chooses to clear his 6-point. Ken dances and ends up losing the match. It wasn't to be his tournament this year.

Slatts now had a 15 point match to play against Hugh Sconyers in the semi-final. Slatts (black) had rolled a 44 followed by 55 to find himself in this position.



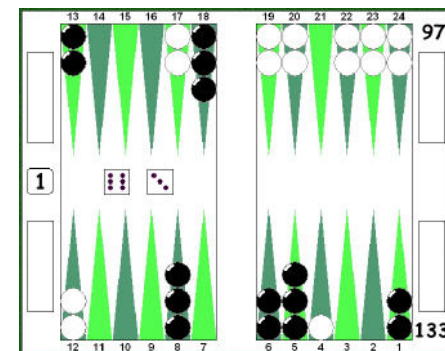
Hugh cubes to 4, Slatts drops score 0-2

Next game Hugh cubes to 2, Slatts takes and then gets hit twice. Hugh closes his board and starts bearing off. Slatts manages to save the gammon! Score 0-4.

Slatts was a favourite in the next game and cubed to 2 which Hugh took. Slatts then rolled an unfortunate 42 which meant he had to break his 5 point prime and leave a blot on Hugh's 7-point. Hugh threw the 6 to hit, Slatts danced, Hugh threw 66 to take three men out of Slatts's home board and re-cubed. Slatts had to drop. Score 0-6

Hugh was definitely getting the better run of the dice and obviously knew how to play them! He soon had a 4 point board, however Slatts managed to get his men out and on to Hugh's 7-point, Hugh had

one man back at this time.



Hugh has 63 to play and moves his two men off his 8-point, then play continues thus:

Black

43: 18/14 14/11
52: 8/3 5/3
44: 11/7 8/4 8/4 7/3
31: 5/2 3/2
21: 6/4 6/5
41: 13/9 9/8
62: 18/12* 13/11
Doubles to 2
33: 18/15 15/12 11/8 4/1
41: 12/8 8/7
43: 25/21* 21/18
33: 18/15 15/12 12/9 12/9
66: 9/3 9/3 8/2 8/2
41: 4/0 4/3
53: 5/0 5/2

White

63: 8/2 8/5
65: 21/15 15/10
52: 10/5 5/3
31: 6/3 2/1
61: 3/2
52: 6/1 5/3
63: 13/10 10/4
55: Dances
Takes
55: Dances
61: 25/19 19/18*
55: Dances
55: Dances
41: 25/21 18/17

Hugh goes on to roll a double-six and saves the gammon. Score 2-6

In the next game Slatts threw a badly timed 11 forcing the play 8/7 with four checkers. Hugh cubes and Slatts takes.

Slatts next roll was 44 and he moved two checkers from 24/16 and hit. Hugh has



Peter C

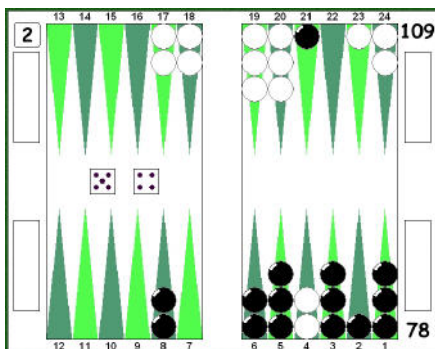


Rachel

three men back but a 5 point board. Slatts rolls 65 twice in a row forcing the play to the 1-point twice. Hugh rolls a 41 and has to break his 5-point. Slatts rolls 65 again but this time doesn't mind leaving the shot! Hugh misses! A few rolls later Hugh rolls 66 to get out of trouble. Slatts then has to leave a shot which Hugh hits, Slatts dances three times but rolls well enough to save the gammon. Score 2-8

Play resumes after a ciggie break for Slatts. Pay particular attention to this next game – Slatts at his rolling best!

With being so far behind in the match when Slatts has one man back against Hugh having two back, Slatts cubes and Hugh takes. Slatts (black) fails to run his back checker out as he can't roll high enough to jump over Hugh's 4-prime. Fortunately for him Hugh rolls high numbers and fails to point on him.



Black

White

41: 8/4* 5/4
43: 6/2 6/3
41: 8/4 3/2
62: 21/15 15/13
21: Dances
21: Dances
54: 25/21 21/16
21: Dances
41: 25/21 2/1

54: 21/16 6/2
31: Dances
21: Dances
65: 25/19 19/14
54: 16/12* 12/7
21: 14/12 7/6
52: 8/3 5/3
53: 8/3 12/9*
54: 7/2 9/5
51: 7/2 2/1

43: 21/17 17/14
42: 14/10 10/8
43: 8/4 3/0
63: 5/0 3/0
Takes
41: 4/0 1/0
66: 5/0 4/0 4/0 4/0
21: 2/0 1/0
21: 2/0 1/0
44: 6/2 6/2 6/2 5/1
51: 5/0 1/0
Doubles to 4
54: 5/0 3/0
61: 3/0 1/0
61: 3/0 1/0
42: 2/0 2/0

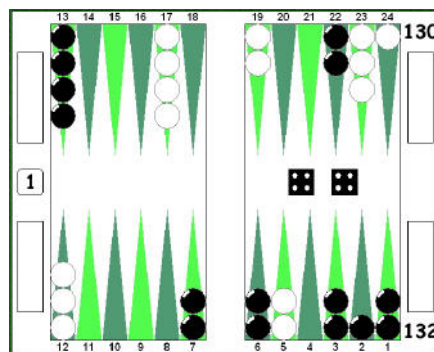
At this point Slatts contemplated over the board and John G thought he was going to re-cube – well Hugh could roll a one, I suppose or Slatts could roll a double.

66: 3/0 2/0 1/0 1/0 Voodoo over Snowie once again! Score 6-8

Poor Hugh must have wondered how on earth he lost those 4 points (as did everyone else!)

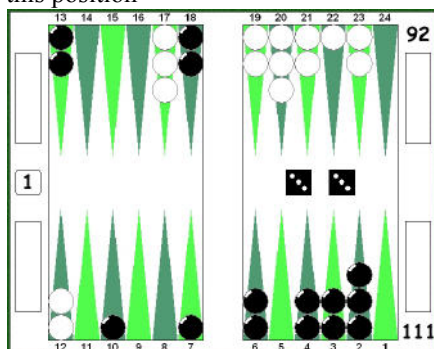
Nothing worth reporting on in the next game which Hugh won to make the score 6-9.

Slatts has a 44 to play in this next position.



He plays two checkers to his 14-point. Hugh considers giving the cube and eventually does and Slatts takes. Hugh later rolls an awkward 53 to leave a 7 shot. Slatts rolls the 7 hits and re-cubes, which Hugh has to drop. Score 8-9

Slatts dances early on a one point board in the next game and ends up with four men back. Hugh hits loose on his 5-point but Slatts misses. He makes up a bit of ground by rolling 66 (as he does!). A bit later in the game Slatts rolls double 3 in this position

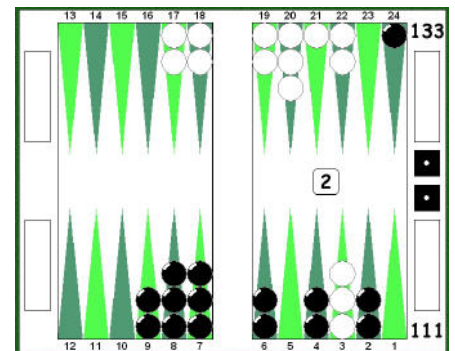


Black

White

33: 13/10 13/10 10/7 7/4
65: 10/4 10/5
41: Slatts misses
66: 8/2 8/2 8/2
64: 13/9 9/3

Herb cubes and Slatts drops.. Score 8-10



Slatts cubes and Hugh takes.

Doubles to 2

Takes

42: 8/4 4/2

52: 22/20 20/15

65: 7/1 9/4

Re-doubles to 4

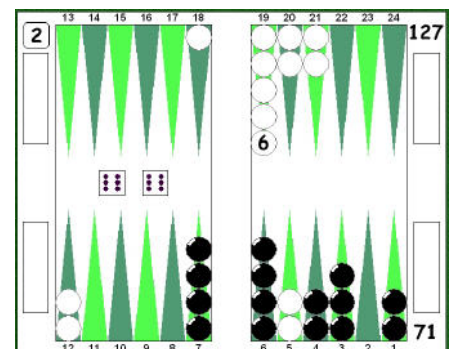
Drops

Wins 2 points. Score 8-12

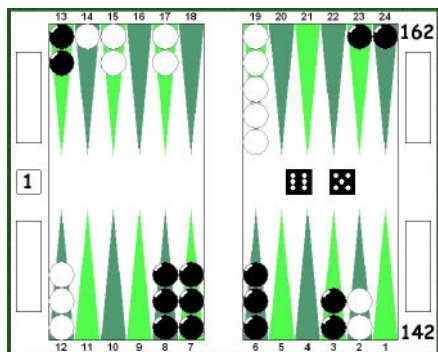


Ray

In the next game Slatts cubes early and Hugh takes. Hugh is on the bar but rolls double 5 which works well for him. Slatts has a lone man back on Hugh's 1-point and he moves it up to the 4-point. Hugh hits loose and gets hit back – he now has three men back on Slatts's 5-point. After several more rolls the position is:-

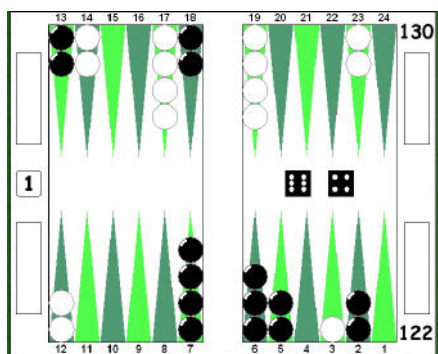


Hugh rolls double 6 and moves 20-2 / 7-1. He continues his run of doubles with double 4 followed by double 5, but S manages to roll a double 6 when both of them had six men left and wins the two points. Score 10-12



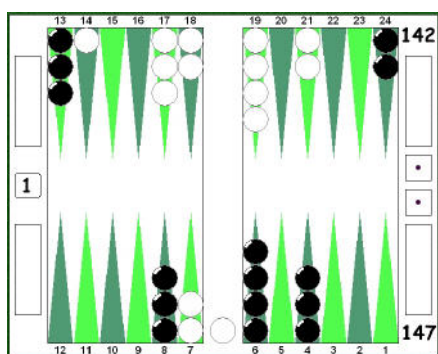
Black 65: 24/18 23/18
41: 18/14 14/13
Doubles to 2
Score 11-12

White 41: 6/2 11/10
21: 10/8 8/7*
Passes



Slatts has a 64 to play and hits loose from the mid-point, Hugh dances and passes the cube offered to him. Score 12-12

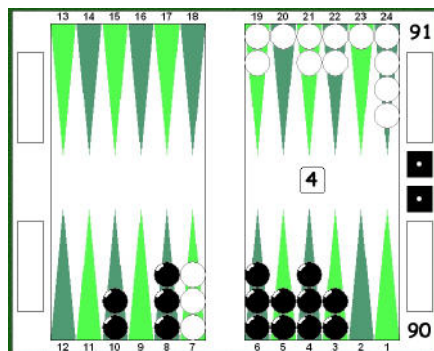
In the next game Hugh is on the bar and decides to cube in this position:



According to Snowie this is a No Double, take. Slatts takes.

A few rolls later it looks like curtains for Slatts when he has two men on the bar against a 4-point board, however, Hugh chooses to leave the double 4 shot too many times and on the 4th attempt Slatts hits!

Hugh comes in and out and after a few more rolls Slatts cubes to 4 for match:



Hugh takes, which is correct according to Snowie. They both roll two doubles each during the race home and bear-off. With Slatts on roll, Hugh has three checkers on his 2-point and one checker on his 1-point. Slatts has one checker on each of his 4- and 2-points. He rolls double 2 to go through to the Final. What a result!



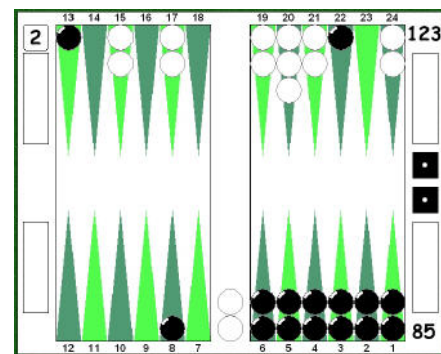
Tom

The night was still young so Slatts, John G and I decided to play some more poker. There was a tournament on at The Orleans so we headed there. When we got there we opted for a really nice meal in a Chinese restaurant with some Pinot Grigio to wash it down. John G and I played on a slot machine and ended \$17.75 up! This was about the sum of my contribution to the kitty!

With finals day here the Brits still had Peter in the Seniors, Julian in the Consolation and Slatts in the Main. We considered this to be a great result as there was a field of 225 players overall and a number of strong players.

When Slatts was playing his Final I was trying hard to lose my Last Chance matches so I could watch and support him. But could I lose – no! I went four rounds but unfortunately for Slatts his match was over too quickly. The final score was 3-17 to David Todd. Specta-

tors told me that Slatts had been rolled off the board. At 3-6 down Slatts recalled this position for me which resulted in a 4-point swing against him.

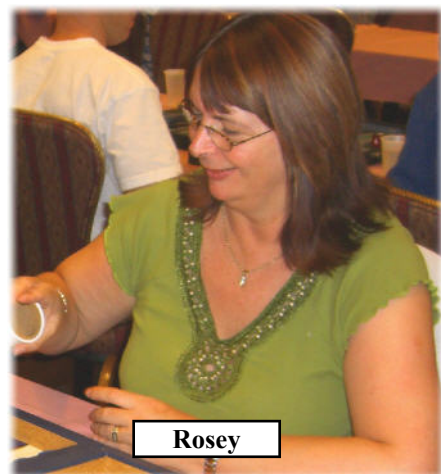


He felt confident of winning a gammon but could not succeed in rolling a 4 or 6 to escape his last back man. His board crunched and David won the 2 points. Slatts never got a look in and was very disappointed that he didn't have a chance to put on a better show for the Brits. Never mind Slatts to quote Myke Wignall "You're still my No.1 Player".



Slatts

Julian looked like he was going to win his Consolation match but unfortunately he came 2nd. I wish now that I had opted out of the Last Chance and had done a better reporting job as I didn't see one roll of Julian's match either. I'll bear this in mind next year!! We definitely will be back!



Rosey



The 3 of us had a great trip with Slatts finishing his winning streak with a late-night game of poker where he won \$1100 in one session making his overall winnings at poker \$2.5K.

For all of you readers out there that have not yet taken a trip across the water to the Las Vegas Open I can definitely recommend it. As well as the tournament there is just so much to keep you busy. Just remember to get there a few days early to ensure the jet lag doesn't take over!

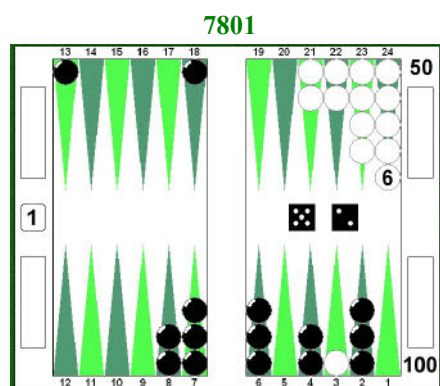


Lawrence, Tom, Peter B, Slatts, Pat, Carla, Jo, Dod, Julian, Rosey, Carter, John G, Peter C kneeling

Competition 2005 No3, 7801-06 Answers

By Michael Crane

MC: Well, here we are, the final competition of 2005. Joining the usual suspects this time is Brian Lever. Brian won't be able to win the annual prize of fifty quid, but he might get the £25 accommodation money. Let's see, shall we?



11 point match
White 0 Black 0
Black to play 52

MC: What a starter, seven panellists, five preferences. Two agree on one move and a second is endorsed by Snowie. Let's look at the top two first:

Bob Young: 8/3* 13/11

Can't let White run for home with such a big race lead, so despite the inferior home board, the hit is virtually forced. 18/16 with the other half of the roll gives better outfield control should White enter and escape, but I prefer to try and close the 5-point, so 13/11 to aim squarely at that point.

Richard Biddle: 8/3* 13/11

We are 50 pips behind in the race with our opponents looking almost evens to

escape our gapped prime. If we fail to hit then we are almost certainly facing the cube which would probably be a drop. We could try and position our outer checkers so that they are best placed to hit. The checker on the mid-point is well placed. Bringing the back checker forward two points to the 16-point gives good outer board coverage. The five could be played 6/1 but this buries a checker which may have become a crucial builder. What if our opponent only comes out as far as our 9-point, we only have one direct shot.

I think we need to be more proactive in holding up our opponent and put ourselves in a position to cube if our opponent dances. Let's hit with 8/3*. If we are hit (15 rolls), we are favourite to re-enter and recycle a checker. If our opponent dances or only enters and stays in our home board without hitting (11 rolls - I think), we are suddenly in a very strong position. With this attacking move, we need to focus on bringing on builders for our home board so our focus is no longer on the back checker, but bringing in our mid-point checker to bear on the 5-point. Best to keep our opponent on the back foot.

MC: This was my play, placing White on the bar and then looking to either keep him there else make the 5-point. Two others chose to hit but picked a different move for the 2:

Steve Hallett: 8/3* 3/1

Black is way behind in race and must stop White escaping. White's strength is his four-point board, but with no spares on

his 3- and 4-points he could start leaving inner board blots if his back runner can't escape.

I think Black must hit and this can only be done by playing the five 8/3*. We now have a choice whether to leave the blot where it is or carry on to the one point. With White having a four-point board and Black having two blots in the outfield (four blots in all) if White enters with a hit Black could be in trouble, so if the blot is on the 1-point it reduces the number of shots from thirteen to nine as White can't hit with 5/1 and would not want to hit with 3/1 exposing another blot in his inner board. Also the joker 5/3 would only put one checker on the bar not two.

MC: Playing 3/1 misses out on making the 3-point. If Black re-enters on the 1-point, he's going to have a harder job escaping.

Mark Oram: 8/3* 8/6

Ouch! I found this a very tough opening problem, so which is the 'least worst' move? We have two ways to stop White getting home free. We can hit him in the outfield if he jumps our blockade (suggesting we keep our back men where they are for the next turn) or we can put him on the bar. The big drawback with hitting is of course we leave him a return shot in our own home board, and will face his 4-point board to re-enter. Still, I chose this approach as it seemed that we have to hassle White's last man all we can before he makes it to his side of the board. So hitting it is, with 8/3*.



If we hit we definitely do not want to leave more than one exposed man, leading to the 8/6 move for the two. We face a big risk this way, but the main benefit is we delay White's passage home and (hopefully) prevent him from doubling us next turn.

MC: Picking up the 8-point blot misses great opportunities to make another point. Black's poor home board is nothing to fear. Our next entry is out on his own:

Rodney Lighton: 13/8 18/16

It is often correct to attack a single checker when behind in the race. However, I don't think that approach is correct here. 8/3* gives White good threes, whereas moving the back checkers 13/8, 18/16 gives White good sixes and then Black gets a shot at the fleeing checker as well as bringing another builder to point on White if White can't run.

MC: Worrying too much about sixes escaping? According to our last two, they are aiming at the Golden-Point.

Brian Lever: 18/11

A bit curious that there's been no cube turned; perhaps White had been playing for a gammon and got hit clearing. Anyway, how to contain the loose checker? Often it would be right to hit loose to prevent escape, but I don't think so here – I'd consider it with a 3 or 4, because Black can maintain his structure, but hitting with a 5 (something like 8/3*/1 or 8/3*, 8/6) simply leaves a mess. The blockade, such as it is, goes west and there's a blot to cover next go, assuming it hasn't been clobbered – not to mention two or three others. White does still have a four-point board to respect, and broken or not lots of blots means lots of gammons.

Personally, I'd gamble on White not escaping and play 18/11 rather than, say, 13/8, 18/16 (less connection between the outfield checkers). This provides double coverage of the outfield and aims at the 5-point, which Black really needs to make if he's going to win. True, most White 6s are winners, worse if they hit, – but 6s pretty much win anyway if you're not hitting. If White doesn't escape, his board might crumble a bit more, and then a loose hit, even with something as 'orrible as 5/2 would make more sense.

MC: Brian's gamble gets him second top points thanks to Snowie agreeing with his move and logic.

Snowie: 18/11

Not an easy problem to start with. Trail-ing by 50 pips in the race and with a slightly disjointed position (how did that third man get on the 2-point?) how is Black going to win from here?

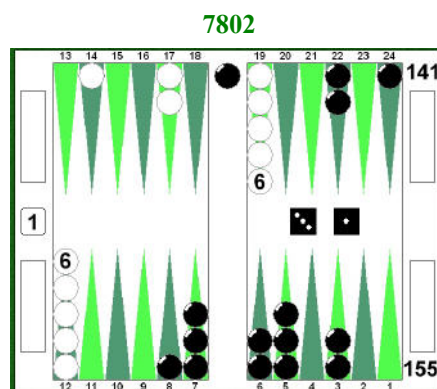
As usual there are (at least) two plans. (a) position the men in the outfield to hit White's rear man if it runs out. At the same time position those men to make new points in board where possible. (b) attack now and hope to close White out (or be near enough to a closeout to win with the cube).

The best play for (a) is 18/11 which brings a new builder for the 5-point and should be well placed to attack White if he runs out or creeps up to Black's 5-point.

For plan (b) the five must be played 8/3* and then the most logical two is 13/11, again bearing on the 5-point.

(b) will win more games but lose more gammons. Does it win enough extra games to compensate for the gammon losses? Over the board this would be virtually impossible to calculate and my human minder reminds me that he would take into account the nature of his opponent and his cube handling skills before making his decision.

I can't do that (my only weakness) so I must go by my rollouts that tell me that the quiet 18/11 is the right move, albeit not by much.



11 point match
White 2 Black 5
Black to play 31

MC: From five out of seven to 50/50. This move split the panel down the middle:

Rodney Lighton: 25/22 5/4

White has escaped the back checkers, but we are not far enough down in the race to play a 1-3 point back game, so we should

aim for a 22-point anchor game at worst. 24/22 gives us chances to get a better anchor, or run another back checker. 5/4 to start building the next point in our board.

Steve Hallett: 25/22 5/4

Black is only slightly behind in a long race and with the strength of a three-point board with builders ready. The only fly in the ointment is that White has escaped both back checkers. Black's game plan is to carry on building his board by slotting key points and then covering whilst waiting for the shot which must surely come unless White rolls exceptionally well

Possible plays being

1. 25/24 7/4
2. 25/22 5/4
3. 25/21

With the race so close, Black needs to get his spares in to the outfield to impede White and reduce his safe landing points as well as to stop his own home position collapsing. I think Black must slot his 4-point as he will need it to contain any hit checker and now is as good a time as any to do this so I would not play 25/21.

So the choice is to slot with the one or the three. If Black slots with the three the one has to be played 25/24 which is no good for running into the outfield. 25/22 5/4 puts checkers where they are needed.

Mark Oram: 25/22 5/4

White looks strong, but has a somewhat inflexible position. We are almost certainly too advanced to risk a back game, so 25/24 for that purpose does not seem right. Also, by anchoring on White's ace-point we risk being immediately blocked if he makes his bar-point, a point which he would dearly love to make. By setting up on his 22-point instead, however, we can either retain good chances to spring the third man into his outfield or have White block us on his less desirable 9-point. For the next move or two our blot on the ace-point is more of a hindrance to White than a target, so we can take the chance to strengthen our own board in the most efficient way, with 5/4.

(Actually, this approach for making an efficient board for ourselves makes 25/24 7/4 more desirable than I had first thought, although I'll stick to re-entering on White's 3-point for the reasons outlined above.)

MC: Slotting the 4-point looks good, but if Black gets a shot and hits and cannot



cover; what then? Also, an extra man on the 22-point is unnecessary. According to Snowie the answer is simple . . .

Bob Young: 25//21

Behind in the race, need contact and White is poor from a flexibility point of view. By spreading out the rear checkers, this will maximise contact when White rolls poorly, and with a strong home board, any hit for Black will prove to be very significant.

Brian Lever: 25/21

Safe/bold criteria here – more men back plus anchor, stronger board and White's awkwardness suggest positive not conservative play. Forget 25/24 plus anything in or near the Black home board; it's not nearly aggressive enough. Black has his anchor - and can afford to spread out in order to capture one of White's checkers. White's awkward position is surprisingly strong, in that very few rolls actually leave an immediate direct shot, and his position rates to improve – can hardly get worse I suppose – so those indirects have to be maximised. 25 /21 is the play.

Richard Biddle: 25/21

We are actually not in that bad a position in this game as it first seems. After this roll we are only 10 pips behind (16 cross-overs vs. 15 crossovers) in what is still a long race and we have a great home board. We could certainly accept any double that came our way. In my wasteful past, I would have made the ace-point and slotted in the home board and got ready for a back game hoping fruitlessly I could overcome my lack of timing. I like to think I have improved over the years (stop sniggering, Michael ... and the rest of you) so now would play to be ready to escape should the opportunity arise and also to spread the threat in order to pick up a loose checker or two in the outer board as our opponent is quite stacked. So there is only one move for me here to maximise our immediate hitting threats.

MC: Snowie's endorsement of this move gives the last three panellists top marks. Due to the fact that the other play stacked the 22-point I can only award the play six points – it also had an equity of -0.092.

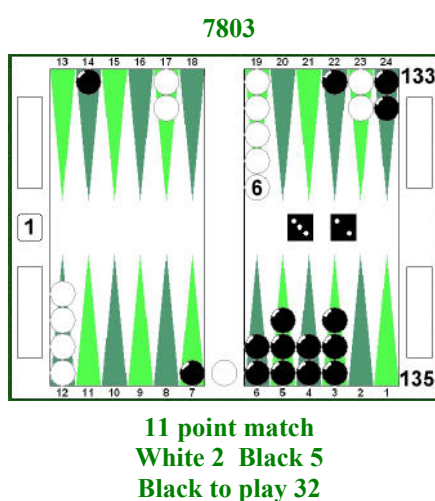
Snowie: 25/21

The key question here is: what is Black's plan? Long before I was invented this play would not have been perceived as a problem. 25/24, 7/4 would have been the standout play. A chance for a back game?

Let's take it!

Hopefully I have taught you carbon based life forms that a back game should be a last resort and not something to be entered into willingly. In this position Black will be only 10 pips behind after the roll and does not have the necessary timing for a back game. He should still be trying to win this game by going forward.

He could enter on the 22-point and slot his 4-point but three men on the 22-point is not a good idea (look at 55 next time). The simple 25/21 is the right play. It attempts to make the higher anchor and puts pressure on White as he tries to bring his men home. In this position simple is best.



and then safety the other checker with 14/11. I cannot see any other move that looks remotely close and predict (not very confidently) a unanimous vote.

MC: You were correct with your prediction, Rodney ☺

Steve Hallett: 24/22 14/11

Why is Black playing this roll? He should have doubled and White should have dropped. Anyway on with the quiz.

The race is even but Black has an overwhelming advantage with his better board and distribution of builders and one White checker on the bar. Black's game plan is to carry on building his board and stop White from escaping so the three must be used to bring the checker on the 14 point closer with 14/11.

We now have a choice of twos

1. 24/22
2. 22/20
3. 11/9
4. 7/5

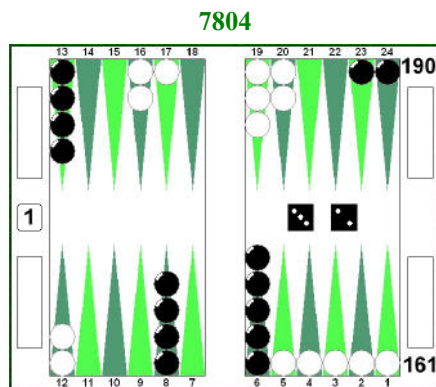
With three men back in White's home board Black can't be stacking his checkers, so even though being hit with 6/1 or 5/2 would be bad, Black must keep his bar-point slotted so 7/5 is out. 22/20 does cover all of White's outer board but leaves two checkers stuck on the one-point and pays off to double one. 11/9 brings an attacker closer but reduces shots if White does manage to jump out and also leaves two checkers stuck on the 1-point. So we are left with 24/22 which starts moving the back checkers - which I think is a must.

Snowie: 24/22 14/11

Why didn't Black double prior to this roll? Even at 2-5 behind this is a monster pass - White loses far too many gammons to venture a take. (This highlights another common fault with human play-

ers - they get too scared to double when ahead and give up huge amounts of equity by waiting until their opponents have a clear drop before doubling).

To that end unless White rolls extremely well Black will double next turn and White will drop. Black should protect against White's jokers and try to strengthen his own position. The 3 is clear - 14/11. This plays to both elements of the plan. The 2 should be played 24/22. This weakens White's 13 and 23 next turn and limits the damage should White roll 11 (particularly), 12, 25, 16 or 26.



**11 point match
White 0 Black 1
Black to play 32**

MC: As you all (should) know, the scoring method of this competition is based upon a majority vote for top place. However, at my discretion I am allowed to make adjustments - and this particular position warrants such an intrusion.

The majority of panellists chose to make the 21-point which is a huge blunder according to Snowie with an equity of -0.167. Therefore I have decided not to allow maximum votes for this move; blunders can't be ignored, nor should they be rewarded with top marks. For a change I shall begin with our non-carbon based expert, Snowie:

Snowie: 8/3* 5/3*

How did White reach this position?? No matter - if you play long enough all sorts of strange positions turn up from time to time.

It might seem that being 29 pips up Black should just play 24/21, 23/21. This play is actually a big blunder because it takes no account of the weaknesses inherent in White's six blots - they must be attacked.

I first considered 8/5*, 6/4* as the purest play but my circuits quickly realised that 8/5* 5/3* was also thematic and significantly reduced White's return shots.

8/5*, 6/4* is not a blunder but the fact that White has his own 5-point indicates a modicum of caution and 8/5* 5/3* is the move that takes account of all the factors in the position and maximises Black's winning chances.

MC: Only one panellist actually agreed with this play:

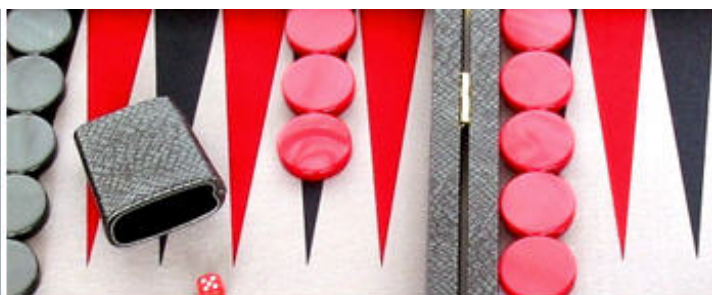
Steve Hallett: 8/5* 5/3*

Black is ahead in race but stacked on his 6- and 8-points with only a one-point board, White has a better forward position but with six blots. The first question is whether to hit or lock up the anchor with 24/21 23/21.

Even though Black is ahead in the race and the anchor beckons because of his poor forward structure unless he rolls exceptionally well he will be leaving blots in the near future when White's position could be even stronger so the anchor will have to wait.

So now we have the hits and it must be hits to minimise return shots

1. 8/5* 6/4*
2. 8/5* 5/3*
3. 6/4* 4/1*



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The safest is 6/4* 4/1* but White is almost certain to anchor next roll so a checker down on the ace-point is not best.

8/5* 6/4* knocks White off of both high anchors but does leave two blots; this would be great if White didn't hit back but I think the number of shots is too high.

So we are left with 8/5* 5/3* which puts two checkers in the air and starts a not too deep point and only a couple of more shots than 6/4* 4/1*.

MC: Also agreeing with a hitting play:

Richard Biddle: 8/5* 6/4*

I would love to know who allowed themselves to get into White's position. Having said that we, as Black, have a tough move to make here. We almost certainly need to hit to avoid our opponent making useful points in our home board. For this reason, I think the sensible 24/21 23/21 would not be right here even though we are ahead in the race and, in theory, wanting to simplify the game. But our opponent is beginning to build a prime and we would still have much work to escape both our back checkers.

In hitting, we are going to have to leave blots. How many blots and where do we want to leave them? 8/5* 5/3* lifts two blots but doesn't really prevent our opponent making a forward anchor on the four or five point (14 rolls).

I think we absolutely need to put two checkers on the bar but not in such a way that anchors are made anyway. The bold but wild 8/5* 6/4* does this and puts blots on points that we want to make ourselves; 32 rolls make at least one of the points next time for us. It also helps unstack our checkers in our poor home board. If hit (23 rolls) we can then make an anchor in our opponent's home board. You never know, our opponent may dance with double sixes.

MC: As usual, Richard picks what he sees as "bold but wild".

Brian Lever: 24/21 23/21

Here's something you don't see very often, and it presents Black with two distinctly different ways of playing – either attack or defence. There's no decent play which does a bit of both; it's one or the other (Black or White, you might say). It isn't worth attacking unless you're going to double-hit - a single loose hit on the only worthwhile point to hit on (White's 5-point) leaves too many returns – and

there are a few reasonable double-hit possibilities. It makes some sense too, because Black's structure isn't great, whereas White's is quite fluid. Trouble is, plays like 8/5* 5/3* and especially 6/4* 4/1* run the risk of leaving a blot too far in the White home board; even if the blot is missed, White still has plenty of opportunity to anchor in front of it, putting the loose checker effectively out of play. If hit, the checker goes back behind White's embryonic board, with the important 5-point made.

The best attacking play must be 8/5*, 6/4* - one checker may get hit but it's unlikely both will, so there's a good chance of securing a valuable point in board on the next turn. However, I wouldn't hit at all. There's a perfectly good and sensible anchoring play the other side of the board, in 24/21, 23/21 – all the more so because White has made his 5-point. White will then have six blots, Black none plus an advanced anchor. That's the time to attack.

MC: Brian is too focused upon the anchor and is not seeing White's potential for making a bloody good anchor of his own!

Bob Young: 24/21 23/21

Anchor to protect the race lead. Never mind the inflexibility, this will improve with half of Black's next rolls should White choose or fail to anchor any of the blots. Black's strategy is to play as safe as he can from this position, and develop the stacked points when rolls permit.

Mark Oram: 24/21 23/21

If White is apparently so keen to play a back game, why should we facilitate this for him? We have a huge racing lead and the cube available, so as long as we don't get hit too many times we are in excellent shape. We should simply bring our men home as smoothly as possible, and even if White does take a high anchor in our board we just play behind this. Of course, we may not manage to avoid a blot, particularly with so many of White's men in our home board; but should we get hit this way the 21-point anchor we form on this move would be very welcome. 13/8 is too inflexible, and any other combination which hits loose on White's blots seems to be playing into his hands.

MC: Mark mentions White's 'back-game' in refusing to hit him so as not to help him. White is far more concerned by making an anchor – and Mark's refusal to hit him is of considerable help!

Rodney Lighton: 24/21 23/21

Any hit (presumably a double hit) leaves most rolls for White giving return hits or getting a good anchor. Since we are well ahead in the race it seems an unnecessary risk to hit; making an anchor with 24/21, 23/21 looks best.

MC: The racing lead is fair, but are we really in a racing game at the moment? Once White consolidates in Black's home-board he'll be much stronger and could easily erode the racing lead that Black currently has.

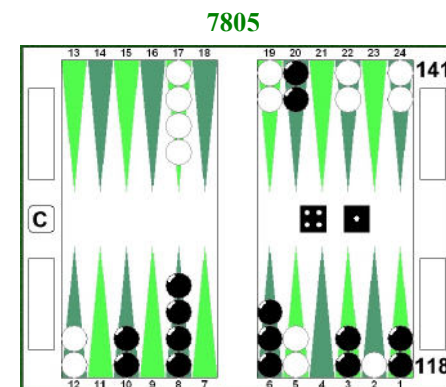
OK, so who was White; and how did they get into this position? Well, in this position John Slattery was White and Ian Gwynne was Black (although in other positions the colours are reversed – I changed the player each time to play as Black). These positions (78..) were taken from the 2004 UK Finals:

Game 2

Ian: Black

John: White

01) 51: 13/8 24/23	32: 24/21 13/11
02) 64: 24/18 18/14*	32: 25/22 13/11*
03) 63: 25/22 22/16	42: 13/9* 11/9
04) 41: 25/21 21/20	61: 8/2* 6/5*
05) 61: 25/24	53: 6/1* 8/5
06) 21: 25/23* 25/24*	52: 25/20 25/23
07) 32: 24/21 23/21	



11 point match

White 10 Black 9 : Crawford

Black to play 41

MC: Mark Oram is an outstanding panelist – well, he stands out here being the only on advocating a hit by shifting points:

Mark Oram: 6/2* 3/2

Winning a gammon would be highly desirable but unlikely with White holding our 5-point. With our racing lead a high double or two would be very welcome, but is this all we have to rely on? If so, we are still not home and dry by any means. We still want to play simply and bring our men home as best we can, and putting



White on the bar would give us more time to do this. 6/2* 3/2 seems to be the only way to do it without leaving more than one blot, and we do have additional cover numbers for our 3-point blot if he is missed. We each retain a 3-point board with a high anchor. Should the worst happen, however, at least our third man sent back gives us some more timing; should this game then become a mutual holding game.

MC: His peers all prefer to shift of the laden 8-point:

Brian Lever: 8/3

Key features

- At 2-away, 1-away gammons are match winners for Black, no use at all to White
- White has an advanced anchor, so gammons against are unlikely – unless the loose blot on the Black 2-point can be got at; Black should put himself in a position to do this
- Though gammons are valuable, Black shouldn't throw the game away in riskily trying to get one; he enjoys a healthy lead in the race, and - perhaps surprisingly with such a lead – still has good timing. So an anchor breaking play isn't indicated; he won't be forced off soon
- An immediately attacking play isn't indicated either; 6/2* strips the 6-point and leaves only one direct cover; more importantly, it dissipates the racing lead if the blot is hit.
- So "wait and see with eight to three". (I'm a poet and I didn't know it!)

MC: Brian goes with the flow, for his fifth go. Sheer poetry!

Bob Young: 8/3

Crawford, but unlikely to get two points from this game, but make no big plays that would risk losing the game, and match, for example breaking the anchor at this stage. Choice of only two moves, pick and pass, or develop flexibility for a future hit. While putting White in the air is good, burying a checker is bad, and as White has a high anchor, nothing is achieved. The developing strategy of making another builder to attack White and close a point will have better long-term prospects.

MC: Bob sees breaking the anchor as a big play . . .

Richard Biddle: 8/3

Is this the time to run with a back checker? We are convincingly ahead in the race and want to get home without any more contact, but our opponent's mid-point and 8-point builders pose too much of a threat for us to run for it yet, even if it is only a three-point home board. Could we live with ourselves if our opponent threw double threes? No this is time to make like a chicken, play safe and wait for our opponent to leave a blot.

MC: From bold to bashful, can Richard ever be consistent? Frightened of double-three? Cluck, cluck, cluck. At least one panellist sees the duplication of 3s as positive – see Steve's argument below.

Steve Hallett: 8/3

Black is ahead in the race and trying to fill in inner board points, not leaving any shots and waiting for doubles to get back men moving

Possible plays

1. 20/15
2. 8/4/3
3. 6/2*/1
4. 6/2* 3/2
5. 8/7 6/2*

Running one of the back men with 20/15 does duplicate White's threes but plays into White's hands allowing the two spares on the 8-point to go where they should go and gives White a chance to get an attack going which, with three men back and an advanced anchor he would be pleased to do.

8/7 6/2* is excellent if White doesn't hit back but could become a disaster if blots get hit, so is the risk worth it? I don't think so.

6/2* 3/2 puts White on the bar and is better than the previous move in that only one blot is left - but still not worth the risk.

6/2* 2/1 puts White on the bar but dumps a checker and I think Black needs all his checkers in play to have a chance of making further inner board points.

So we are left with 8/3 which is completely safe puts more pressure on White's blot and keeps the anchor safe, making White dump checkers behind the anchor if he can't escape his back man or leave an indirect shot on the mid-point.

Rodney Lighton: 8/3

A gammon would be good at this score, so hitting with 6/2 has to be considered.

However the remaining one is awkward and with White having a good anchor the gammon is unlikely. I prefer the safe and simple 8/3, we are ahead in the race but there is plenty of play left in this game. With future potential problematic rolls for both sides I see no reason to do anything too ambitious at this point.

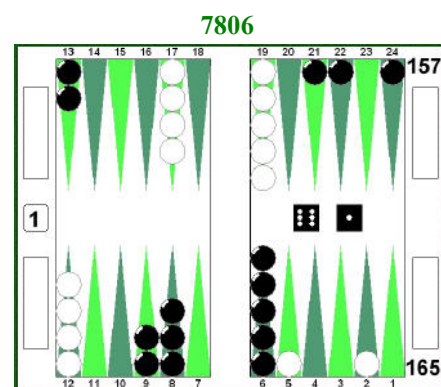
MC: As outstanding as Mark, Snowie stands aloft with the best move he can find – and an argument to suit leaving those above with poorer equities; but better marks.

Snowie: 20/15

The key here is (as usual) to have a plan and then play to it. Most of Black's men are well placed so there are two possible plans. (a) attack White's loose blot with 8/7, 6/2* with the idea of strengthening the home board before leaving the golden point anchor. (b) run for home now with 20/15, in the process duplicating White's hitting number.

Over the years I have taught you to be wary of running off anchors prematurely – the man left behind gets attacked and closed out more often than you would think.

This position is a good benchmark and in fact (b) turns out to be the right plan and thus 20/15 is the right move. Even so, the equity difference between this and the alternative 8/7, 6/2* is quite small, thus indicating how perfect conditions have to be before you run off the anchor.



11 point match
White 0 Black 6
Black to play 61

MC: Only one panellist doesn't play 6/5:*

Bob Young: 24/18 22/21

Playing 6/5 looks obvious, but probably will be hit, and with no anchor and four blots around looks a little loose at this stage of the game. Making the bar-point at the detriment of losing the mid-point



seems wrong, even though the bar-point would be useful, so use the 6 to run the rear checker. Then anchor with the 1, leaving an anchor, one blot and a level state in the game, with no player having developed anything serious on either side of the board. Double hitting achieves nothing at this stage, with five open points.

MC: Bob said the 6/5 was obvious; and he was correct for everyone else played this with the 1. Mark plays 6/5* but is on his own with 24/18:*

Mark Oram: 24/18 6/5*

The game and match are both young, and we should be trying to improve our position as best we can. We would like to develop the stack of men on our 6-point, and (related to this) prevent White taking the Golden-Point if we can. Making our own bar-point cuts our men into two halves and does not alter White's chances of making his 20-point, so the drawbacks seem to outweigh the value of the bar-point just for the moment. If we hit White off our 5-point, how do we then play the 6?

Hitting twice from our 8-point may be right, although our defence seems a bit too weak to make this entirely appealing. Moving either of the penultimate back men to White's outer board threatens to take an outer board point with some luck, but the point on White's side we would most welcome is his bar-point. This latter point argues for 24/18 for the 6. While White is on the bar he cannot both enter and point on the back man we just moved, so we can either take his bar-point from him, or at least get several return shots if he does both enter and hit loose there.

MC: Did Mark miss the duplication of 3s by moving 21/15?

Brian Lever: 21/15 6/5*

Those last two were long answers so I'll keep this one short(er). Besides, I'm tired!

Two plays stand out - the more obvious anchoring play of 22/21 and probably 24/18; or the more flexible (I think) 21/15, 6/5* I'm going for the flexible play because I like the look of it - that, plus it triplicates 3s all over the place and unstacks the heaviest point to the best point. Besides, I don't need an anchor yet, and I've more checkers back (another attack indicator). Close I'd say is 22/16, 6/5*, particularly as it "connects" the 16- and 21-points. But it only duplicates 4s.

MC: Brian spotted the 3s . . .

Rodney Lighton: 21/15 6/5*

Hitting loose on the 5-point is thematic in this kind of position, already down a bit in the race being hit back is not fatal. Then 8/2* is a possible choice, two on the bar is always good, but I think the game plan here with the made 8- and 9-points is to try to build a prime. The choice between which back checker to run is solved by duplication. 21/15 gives White hitting threes on both sides of the board.

Richard Biddle: 21/15 6/5*

Hitting on the 5-point is a must. We have three checkers back vs. their two. We might also be well placed for a blitz. And we do not want them making our 5-point. All good reasons for a hit. But only one hit. I don't think it necessary to hit the second blot in our home board. So for the six. We need to play from the back; they are all playable. What best achieves our aim of covering the blot on the 5-point. Playing 21/15 gives us an extra three rolls that cover and duplicates our opponent's threes next time. 20/16 only gives us two extra rolls. 24/18 doesn't really achieve anything and leaves a dangerous blot.

MC: So did Richard . . .

Steve Hallett: 21/15 6/5*

The race is even with both sides only having one point boards but Black is ahead in development with his 9-point. With no board and early in the game Black can't allow White the luxury of

staying on the 5-point so the 1 must be played 6/5*. We now have a choice of sixes.

1. 24/18
2. 22/16
3. 21/15
4. 8/2*

8/2*, the double hit might work but it goes too deep and also takes the only spare off the 8 point. 24/18 gives White good sixes and bunches back checkers up

So the choice is between 22/16 and 21/15. 22/16 keeps contact between chequers but 21/15 duplicates threes for White across the board, I think because of this duplication 21/15 just has it.

MC: As did Steve.

Snowie: 21/15 6/5*

This is a difficult problem because of the need to understand the position before making a plan (where have I heard that before?) and choosing the right move.

The first idea is to take the advanced anchor with 22/21 and then attack White's blots next time. If 22/21 is selected the only sensible 6 is 24/18 which doesn't quite meet the requirements of the plan as it gives White the attack and/or the chance to make an advanced anchor.

The second idea is to attack now. In this case 6/5* is the obvious ace and then 21/15 is the right 6 as it triplicates White's 3's. Is this play too loose?

Paul Magriel, for whom, even as a computer, I have the greatest respect, often talks about putting the men where you want them. Do you want five men on your own 6-point? No you do not. One or more of them clearly belong on the 5-point. You have the chance to start that process so do it now! The 21/15 element of the play is purely technique. ►

	7801	7802	7803	7804	7805	7806	Tots
Richard Biddle	8/3* 13/11	25/21	24/22 14/11	24/21 23/21	8/3	21/15 6/5*	58
Brian Lever	18/11	25/21	24/22 14/11	24/21 23/21	8/3	21/15 6/5*	56
Snowie	18/11	25/21	24/22 14/11	8/3* 5/3*	20/15	21/15 6/5*	56
Bob Young	8/3* 13/11	25/21	24/22 14/11	24/21 23/21	8/3	24/18 22/21	54
Rodney Lighton	13/8 18/16	25/22 5/4	24/22 14/11	24/21 23/21	8/3	21/15 6/5*	50
Steve Hallett	8/3* 3/1	25/22 5/4	24/22 14/11	8/5* 5/3*	8/3	21/15 6/5*	50
Mark Oram	8/3* 8/6	25/22 5/4	24/22 14/11	8/5* 6/4*	6/2* 3/2	24/18 6/5*	42

In the early game it is important to seize the initiative and humans hit far less often than they should. This position is a classic example and many would play 22/21, 24/18 but that is muddy thinking. Put the men where you want them! 21/15, 6/5* is the play.

MC: So, this time the winner is Richard Biddle with Brian Lever in second (Snowie doesn't count because he's a machine!). This is Richard's second win this year and it also places him at the very top of the marks to take home a lovely cheque for £75 for the year and £25 towards his next tournament accommodation. Well done, Richard.

I'd like thank all this year's panellists for taking part and sharing with us their thoughts and comments. I hope you'll all enter the 2006 Competition and hopefully a few more might join in with you.

The 2006 Competition starts on page 29

Name	Scores			Pts
Richard Biddle	56	59	58	173
Snowie	58	57	56	171
Steve Hallett	57	54	50	161
Bob Young	49	52	54	155
Rodney Lighton	43	46	50	139
Mark Oram	45		42	87
Brian Lever			56	56

Fax	Month	Questions	Answers
80	Jan	8001-06	7801-06
82	May	8201-06	8001-06
84	Sep	8401-06	8201-06

	Move	Score
7801	8/3* 13/11	10
	18/11	8
	13/8 18/16	6
	8/3* 3/1	4
7802	8/3* 8/6	4
	25/21	10
	25/22 5/4	6
	24/22 14/11	10
7803		
7804	8/3* 5/3*	10
	8/5* 6/4*	9
	24/21 23/21	8
7805	8/3	10
	20/15	8
	6/2* 3/2	6
7806	21/15 6/5*	10
	24/18 6/5*	7
	24/18 22/21	6

Local Clubs

Anyone requiring a fuller list can see one on the Biba web site or via the mail from Biba HQ. If your club isn't on this list then send me the details (*see right*) either via Biba HQ or you can email information in the order below, to: clubs@backgammon-biba.co.uk

Birmingham - Dave Motley - 0121 476 4099 - davemotley@blueyonder.co.uk - Monday.
Brighton - <http://eiloart.com/bbc/> - Tuesday 8pm until closing.
Bristol - Ian Tarr 0117-9756349 briscammon@blueyonder.co.uk 2nd Thurs of the month.
Dublin - Brendan Burgess - 603 0891 - wildlife@indigo.ie - 2nd Monday of every month.
Eastbourne & Bexhill - John Thomas - 01424 219415 - Jtprincesgaragelimited@btinternet.com - Mondays 19.30.
Enfield - Daniel Landsberger, (020) 8292 4991. Email: info@enfieldbackgammon.co.uk - Wednesdays, 8pm
Glasgow - Renfrew - John Paul Vass 0141 587 0255 - 1st Tuesday of month @ 7:00
Herne Bay/Broomfield - Bob Bruce - 01227 362181 or mobile 07754 549 576 - Monday.
Huddersfield - Rachel Rhodes - 07961 355433 - dicewitch@yahoo.co.uk - Tuesdays
Lincoln - Michael Crane - 01522 829649 - michael.a.crane@ntlworld.com - Every Tuesday.
Liverpool - Simon K Jones - (0151 428 3082) - vineries@btinternet.com - Last Friday of each month
London - Croydon - Danny Gallagher 0208 647 7767 - 1st Sunday of the month
London - Fox Reformed - Robbie (020) 7254 5975 - robbie.richards@fox-reformed.co.uk - Mondays
London - Ealing -Grahame / Geoff - 020 8 968 6327 - Ealingbackgammon@netscape.net - Every Sunday 3.00pm.
Manchester - Rodney Lighton - 0161 445 5644 lighton@btinternet.com - Tuesdays
Nottingham - Conrad Cooper - 0115 9113281 - conrad_cooper@excite.com - Monday, 9.00 pm.
Perth - Steve Wallace- info@perthgammon.org.uk 01738 587574 - Tuesdays, 7.30
Preston - David Wallbank - d.wallbank@blueyonder.co.uk - Last Tues of every month.
Reading - Kevin Carter - kevin@profundus.com - 0118-971 2948 - Alternate Wednesdays.
St. Albans - John Ingamells - john.ingamells@ntlworld.com - Every Tuesday 19.45.- 01442 885246
York - Leo Waters is hoping to start a club in York. Contact him on watersleo@hotmail.com.

- 1 Club Name
- 2 Venue
- 3 Address/location
- 4 Club contact
- 5 Club web page
- 6 Club nights
- 7 Club format and activities
- 8 Club fees or cost to join/play
- 9 Accepted playing standard
- 10 Can beginners/guests play
- 11 Comments

Forthcoming Events on page 28



2006 Details, Deals and Dates



Registration: Saturday 1030 to 1230

Play Starts: Friday 2130, Saturday 1300, Sunday 1030

Auctions: Group, Saturday 1245, Individual, Sunday 1015

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

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

All tournaments feature a Friday night Warm-up, Saturday night Doubles Knock-out, Poker Grand Prix and Jackpots on 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

**2130
Warm-up Knockout**

SATURDAY

**Registration 1030 / 1230
Play starts 1300 prompt**

SUNDAY

**Play resumes 1030
(penalty points apply 1035)**

Dinner, bed and breakfast @ Hilton Coventry 2006

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

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

To book accommodation call 02476 603000 and quote 'backgammon'

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

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

*Backgammon tournament weekends cannot be booked through any other special offer or promotional rate.
Players not on the Biba special rate or not staying in the hotel shall pay a surcharge of £10 to cover facilities*

2006 Tournament Calendar

Feb 04-05	Jarvis trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
Mar 04-05	Slattery Scottish Open	GP	UK	Coventry	Knockout
Apr 01-02	Play65 British Open	GP	UK	Coventry	Knockout
Apr ??	Manchester 1-Day	GP	-	Manchester	Combination
May 06-07	County Cups Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
Jun 03-04	Hilton Trophy	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
Jul 08-09	Keren Di Bona Memorial	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
Jul ??	10 th Liverpool Open	GP	-	Liverpool	Combination
Aug 05-06	SAC Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
Aug 19-28	Mind Sports Olympiad	GP	-	Manchester	Swiss
Sep 09-10	Backpacker Trophy	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
Oct 07-08	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
Oct ??	14 th Irish Open	GP	UK	Dublin	Combination
Nov 04-05	Townharbour Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
Dec 02-03	Gilbertson UK Finals	-	-	Coventry	Double KO

Michael Crane interviews Chiva K. Tafazzoli, President of the World Backgammon Association

When and why did you launch the World Backgammon Association?

The WBA was founded back in 2001. The purpose was to create one body, entirely dedicated to backgammon, acting globally. My impression, after 15 years of experience as a player, was that the backgammon world was fragmented; many tournaments, many organizers, some institutions acting regionally and no unity whatsoever. I felt it was time to act and to do something for the game. I have a love and passion for this sport of mind and I think that there is a great potential and a true need to make it become more popular and successful. The glitz and glamour of the 1970s can be brought back on a different scale.

It all started with an idea and a dream. As a one-man-show, I put a lot of hard work, time, effort and money to make the WBA be what it is today, i.e. the leading promoter of the game worldwide, with the most number of international tournaments and the biggest added prizes of the circuit, offering the best equity a player can get. I still have bigger plans but Rome wasn't built in a day....

What is your current membership and is it on the increase?

Actually, zero ! And for a good reason. My perception of the WBA is not to build an elite of the game, but to be the Number One name for it. Anyone is welcome to consult our web pages and to be on our mailing lists, to get answers to specific backgammon-related questions and be informed about our activities. For those who are regular tournament players, we offer a membership card which entitles them to a 10% discount on all registration fees and some other benefits such as preferred registration in limited events. The membership card is 40€ only (50 USD) per year, and valid from January 1st to December 31st.

Live face-to-face backgammon is having to compete with online games servers, both in backgammon and now in poker (which is proving to be very popular). How does the WBA compete with the online games?

That's a question that I love to answer and I have been waiting for.... I don't



Chiva K. Tafazzoli

think there is any competition. Even more, I think it's a great opportunity for all parties. Online is a new media and a great tool for the game, no matter if you play for fun, or for money, for equity or improvement purposes. The internet and specialized software such as Snowie, JellyFish and GNU-BG have revolutionized the game. Globally speaking, they have contributed to backgammon being more scientific and mathematical than ever with a mass of solid and good players on the scene. And playing online is a dream scenario for any player; 24/7 action – where else could you get that? I think that there is a lot of potential and mutual benefit in a cooperation between online platforms and offline tournaments. Online sites need players coming from the offline world and Tournament Directors and organisers can use the online sites in many ways to promote and upgrade their events. The WBA was one of the first institution to have a partnership with an online site; Ken Arnold and GamesGrid have been very supportive from the first day of our operations. We have also been approached by some of the other key players for partnership but so far, no agreements have been signed. I am positive that soon, we will have partners with whom we will feel comfortable to cooperate, for the benefit of the game and the players.

When it comes to poker, one should learn from the marketing brains behind the hype... They did a fantastic job, by bringing more money to the game, which attracted the media, which again attracted sponsors and more money, and ultimately more players. I think that backgammon can become the poker of tomorrow if we apply the same methods. Plus, the advan-

tage of backgammon is the fact that it is open. Unlike poker where you have closed cards, everything in backgammon is visible to everyone and it's all about the right decisions – much easier to understand.

Do you feel that you have to include poker in your backgammon events just to keep the attendance levels up?

There is a high synergy between both games. I think that coming from backgammon, having some knowledge of odds, probabilities and maths, it is easier to pick up poker than a regular player. If you go through the big names of poker, some of them will sound familiar to you from their backgammon achievements. Phillip Marmorstein, Jerry Grandell, Phil Laak, Dirk Schiemann, Gus Hansen, to name a few, were backgammon pros doing extremely well in poker now. Even our "backgammon-God", Paul Magriel (X-22), is poker-addicted now... That says it all! It's only natural to add poker to our events. We did this on a smaller scale in 2005 and it was a big success and Brits did pretty well (Slattery, Bensley, Gilbertson, etc. cashed in !!!). We have decided to add poker to most of our events in 2006, on a larger level, offering not only some action for backgammon players but attracting regular poker players to the tournaments, which will be significant in size.

We are very happy to have a cooperation and partnership with the leading promoter of poker in Europe, the IPF (International Poker Federation). They have done a great job by putting up the European Poker Tour, along with PokerStars.com and Eurosport-TV. The second season will be ending in March with the big final in Monte-Carlo and a total prize money exceeding 6 million € for the tour – a great success !!!

Thomas Kremser is as dedicated to poker as I am to backgammon and I am sure that together, we will offer excellent events to players in both games.

What got you interested in backgammon in the first place?

My first job was being a caddy on a golf course in Evian in the French Alps at the age of 15. There were these golfers ,



sitting for hours in the Club House, playing this strange game with dice and checkers and exchanging big bills after each game. I was fascinated by it and told my father about it. My late father was the one initiating me to the game, in its traditional way like it is played in our home country Iran and many other countries around the Mediterranean Sea. I still feel he is present watching me when I play. Later, Phillip Marmorstein gave me valuable introduction to modern backgammon and I simply loved it.

I think backgammon is the most fascinating game in the world. It's social, entertaining, challenging, and with a undeniable element of luck. You can play your entire life without playing the same game twice. And it has all elements of real life in it: it is constant decision-making under uncertainty – you have to maximize chances and minimize risks and be flexible enough to adapt your strategy to new constellations. And still, you can lose with an almost perfect play and you can win by making tremendous mistakes. Only in the very long run, the better player wins.

Who or what has had the most influence on you; firstly as a player and secondly as a Tournament Director?

As a player, like I said before, my father, Phillip and all the players I have encountered during my backgammon career. I have watched many and played many of them and every single game had an impact on me.

As a Tournament Director, I'd say my studies... As a multicultural and multilingual Marketing expert, I have learned to bring in partners and sponsors and create a win-win situation for all parties involved. I am trying hard to pay attention to the needs and interests of the players, the sponsors and mine as Tournament Director. This is crucial in a long-term and successful partnership

You are one of the busiest TDs (Tournament Directors) in the world of backgammon. Do you have a day job?

Yes, I am a consultant. I worked for many years for the film industry and the media. I have had my own companies and I am a

typical entrepreneur. There are two passions inside of me and two hearts beating: marketing management and backgammon. In order to combine both, I have switched markets and I am consulting marketing-wise to online-gaming companies, in addition to and as completion of my backgammon activities. It is a fascinating and booming industry, no matter if it's online sports books, online casinos, online poker or skill games such as backgammon.

If you do have a day job, how do you juggle it and your backgammon activities?

I work a lot, and my online friends can witness how little I sleep. My working day has at least 16 hours and I feel it's not enough. When you love what you do, it doesn't really matter how much you work and time flies. And whatever I do, I think, I breath, I eat, I dream backgammon. I can't help it!

What, if any, tournament successes have you had as a player?

Quite a few. I own some 50 trophies from various tournaments I have attended. I like the challenge more than the success and it's not important to me how much money I can win or how big the prizes are. I just love the game and I'll play just anyone, even for drinks, pennies or rice corns.

How do you rate yourself as a player?

Solid, not perfect. I have been able to improve my game playing a lot on the internet and analyzing my matches with Snowie. I guess I range somewhere between error rate 4 and 7. However, I am a very fast player and extremely aggressive (my friends know me for my early cubes and blitz attempts). I believe that backgammon is a very aggressive game by nature.

What do you do to relax?

I play backgammon !!! Competitive backgammon is, like physical exercise but ironically, it's relaxing too.

I love to travel, to be on the beach, to dive, to swim, I enjoy tennis and I love good food and drinks and I am a cigar

aficionado (my trademark). But in between or during those activities, some backgammon is a must.

What is your favourite WBA tournament?

I like them all, every single one in its own way and for its own reasons. But I would like to point out Enghien-les-Bains, our yearly event in October, not only for being the first one the WBA had, but also for being the most glamorous one with an unmatched added prize money of 50.000 € (60.000 USD) and the title of European Double Consultation Championships, along with partners who are smart enough to understand that it pay off to put efforts in organizing a classy tournament and spoiling the players. I also love the "Belgian Open" in Oostende in June, the location is breath-taking, the casino is brand new facing the North Sea and it's fantastic season. The Management is very enthusiastic and cooperative and willing to establish this event as a "must" in the calendar. This year, they will raise the added prize to 15.000 € (almost 20.000 USD). I also love the Vienna tournament. It offers a 24hours playing facility in a poker casino and to me, Vienna is one of most beautiful European capitals.

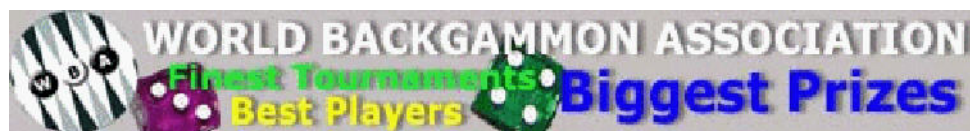
What is your favourite non-WBA tournament?

It might surprise the readers but not necessarily any of the big ones in July...

In spite of horrible personal results, even after 5-6 attendances, I love the Las Vegas tournaments, both in April/May and November. I meet many friends from the Americas and the level is pretty high. Howard Markowitz and his staff are running a very nice tournament. On top, poker being so big nowadays, Las Vegas is worth a trip.

The Nordic Open and the Scandinavian Challenge in Denmark are two of my favourites in Europe (I think especially the Nordic is the toughest challenge in the world). 200 players, all of them pretty strong.

I would love to attend the Japan Open and I am sure it's another challenging one and hey, Japan is the sushi-country.... ➡



Do you play online?

A lot !!! I play on different sites and I keep a good overview of the market – it's part of my job... Plus, it offers me all the advantages of being able to play at any time, without having to go somewhere.

This year you have launched a new Ranking system. What is its aims and uses?

Just one step towards unifying the backgammon world. I was inspired by the ABT and what Bill Davis has set up. It's a tool to reward players attending the WBA events and offering them a system to evaluate their performances. But the idea is to put it on a bigger scale and to add tournaments to the ones we have. Every major international Tournament can be part of the ranking and rating system. This will be somewhat representative for backgammon and the players at a certain point. Like you said, it is new and will grow with time but it's a start.

What sort of future do you see/want for backgammon?

I want it to be popular and respected as a sport of mind and THE skill game. WBA has become a real brand throughout the past 5 years and stands for quality and professionalism. What I am trying to achieve now is to develop backgammon. We need new players to ensure the future of the game. Most of the people don't know where and how to get them but it's easy....

There are millions and millions of players in traditional backgammon countries



such as Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Iran, Syria, Northern Africa, etc. They are like addicted and play hours and hours on a daily basis. With the help of dedicated partners such as Arda Findikoglu in Turkey, we will try to initiate them to modern backgammon and bring them over. I am very proud to have representatives in emerging countries such as Peru, India, Greece, etc. Those people are backgammon ambassadors in their respective countries and set up clubs, championships, competitions, tournaments, etc. I am sure that through their efforts, we will have excellent players from those countries in the circuit soon. WBA supports them with mainly with know-how and communication.

Recently we have seen backgammon televised (UK mostly) with 'Ernie's Game' being shown to a wider audience. Did you see it, and if so what was your first impression of Ernie Pick? Do you think his attitude towards the game will attract people or put people off from playing backgammon?

I have not been able to watch the show myself but having met Mr. Pick in person and on several tournaments (WBA and non-WBA), I have personal reservations when it comes to his qualifications as representative of the game. However, the backgammon world is like the real world, full of "strange" personalities, but whoever takes action in promoting the game, deserves my respect and has to be credited for it.

Finally, you are planning something very big for 2006 - would you like to give us a little info on it?

Well, as usual, I have not stopped to think bigger and bigger. I have plans to add new venues, to add sponsors and partners and to create a real Tour which will be present in relevant medias. I am working on them and at this stage, it's a bit too early to announce anything but I suggest the readers keep checking the WBA web site www.world-backgammon-association.com to be updated with the latest news. The objective is to bring in more interest, more sponsors, more money and ultimately more players. No matter if I succeed or not, it's important to give something back to the game which I love to hate and I sometimes hate to love.

Forthcoming Events . . . and on the next page ►

Jarvis trophy. February 4/5: Here's the first chance this year to play 6 x 11-point matches and make a good assault on the GP and Ranking Championships to be placed in the money.

Slattery Scottish Open

March 4/5: This tournament is getting more and more popular, and this year Slats has put up two of his excellent Hatrick boards for grabs! One will go to the winner and the other will be raffled off at £10 a ticket.



In addition to the usual four elements there will be the 'traditional' cabaret evening when we (hopefully) will be entertained by various members and their even more various acts. If you want to do a turn then please let me know so that we can sort out the evening's entertainment.

Please book accommodation as soon as you can to avoid disappointment.



Play65 British Open 2006

April 1st & 2nd

Play65, sponsors of the prestigious British Open are proud to repeat their successful format from the Bright 'n' Breezy and offer entrants the chance to win loads of online money - including Pass The Buck! If you haven't joined Play65 yet then do so by logging onto the Biba web site, www.backgammon-biba.co.uk and clicking on the Play65 logos or texts. Account holders win more money!

NB: Demand for accommodation is expected to be high so please book early



Competition 2006 No 1, 8001-06 Questions

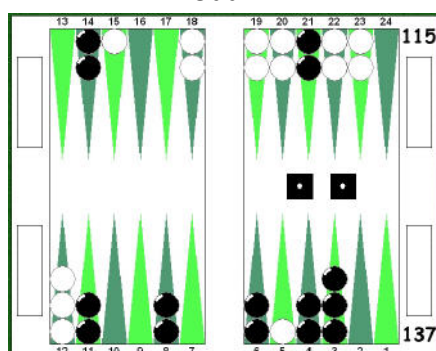
Welcome to the first of the three Competitions that make up the 2006 season.

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

Entries to be in by March 31st. 2006. Answers will appear in Bibafax 82, May 2006

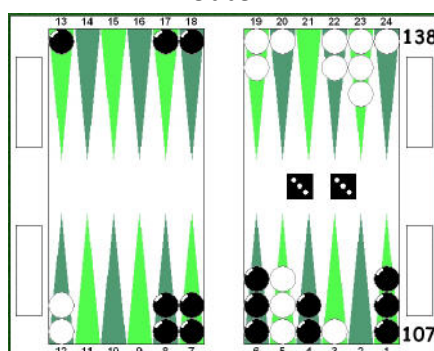
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and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ via Royal Mail.

8001



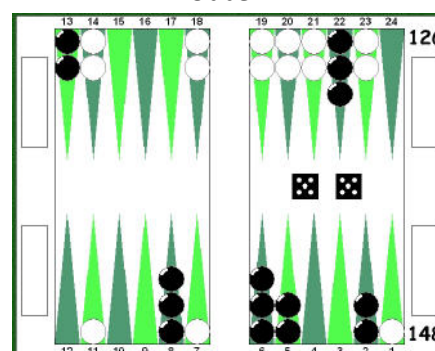
**11 point match
DMP
Black to play 11**

8003



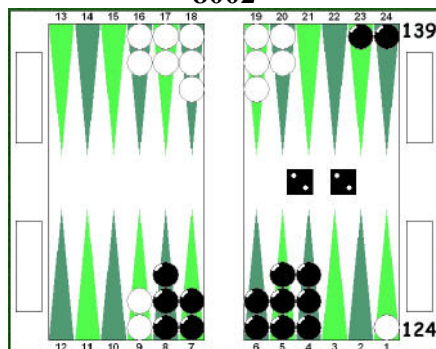
**11 point match
DMP
Black to play 33**

8005



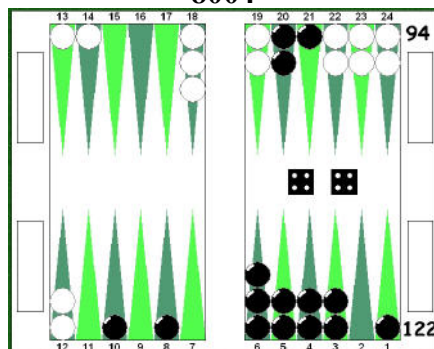
**11 point match
DMP
Black to play 55**

8002



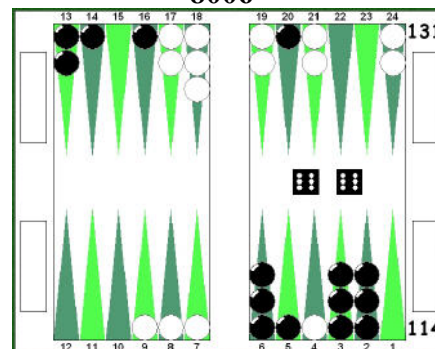
**11 point match
DMP
Black to play 22**

8004



**11 point match
DMP
Black to play 44**

8006



**11 point match
DMP
Black to play 66**



Play65 2006 Bright 'n' Breezy



Play65 Bright 'n' Breezy 2006 Report by Michael Crane

Last year we had ninety-one entrants; and we had the same this year. Last year's Friday Warm-up was forty strong; and so was this year! In fact the only difference between the two years is that in 2005, 20% of the entrants didn't return home with severe stomach upsets! A bug or virus struck many players down (including me, although I did manage to get home before it felled me) and it had its affect on the numbers of players returning to play Sunday morning.

Friday Warm-up (40)

A good strong field, boosted by some top players from mainland Europe, Belgium; however, the farthest any of them were able to go was into the last eight. Rogier Van Gemert (a veteran from last year) was knocked out by Malcolm Robertson, who then went on to beat Neil Webb in the semi.

Meanwhile, in the top half of the draw, Dave Motley was tearing through the field to face Malcolm . . . on the Saturday morning; an encounter from which Dave emerged the victor.

Main (91)

I haven't actually got any stats on it, but I wonder how often the first player drawn out goes onto to win the tournament? I might just keep an eye open in the future.

On the Sunday morning we were down to sixteen players:

John Hurst vs Michel Lamote
Julian Fetterlein vs Nicky Check
John Samuel vs Roy Hollands
Simon Morecroft vs Mike Main
Barry McAdam vs Sean Williams
Mike Greenleaf vs Paul Watts
Mike Grabsky vs Ray Fard
Paul Gilbertson vs Paul Van Dyke

It was good to see that last year's finalists, Mikes Grabsky and Main were into the last sixteen. They were both in separate halves of the draw-sheet and wouldn't meet until the final; however, that wasn't the case!

If the pairings above the first mentioned prevailed, which meant that Mike Main went out, but Mike Grabsky remained in. Yet another Mike, Mike Greenleaf, was the custodian of the Buck having had it passed to him by its first owner, Bill Spiers. What Buck? I hear you say.

Pass The Buck was a bit of fun wherein a cuddly toy rabbit (a buck) worth £100 online was given at random to Bill in Round 1. If Bill could play all the way to the final and not lose a single game then he would **not** have passed the buck and he'd have won £100. However, he did lose it to Mike Greenleaf in Round 2, and so he got just £10 and Mike continued on with a buck worth £90.

In the last eight the pairings were:

John Hurst vs Julian
John Samuel vs Simon
Barry vs Mike Greenleaf
Mike Grabsky vs Ray Fard
Paul Gilbertson vs Paul Van Dyke
Mike Grabsky vs Paul Gilbertson.

Once again the first mentioned going through. This left us with the semi-finalists:

John Hurst vs John Samuel
Mike Greenleaf vs Mike Grabsky

In the battle of the Johns, it was John Hurst who went into the final; and in the battle of the Mikes it was Mike Grabsky who joined John (his second in two years) taking with him the buck, now worth £80. Regrettably I was unable to record it this time, but, as you might have worked out

by now, John Hurst won and became the new Play65 Bright 'n' Breezy Champion – and owner of the buck; worth £70!

Consolation (87)

The progressive side of this element always holds up the fixtures but it is something that is hard to avoid. Having said that, it didn't go on for as long as I had expected it to – but it was a late finish at 7pm.

The last eight were:

Mark Hiedenfeld vs Paul Gilbertson
Barry McAdam vs Paul Watts
Julian Fetterlein vs Michel Lamote
Mike Main vs Simon Morecroft

Of those eight players just one of them started from Round 1; Mark. He had fought his way through the field, strewn with progressive entries at every turn and his encounter with Paul Gilbertson was no exception.

Joining him was his next opponent, Barry; and Julian was pitched against Mike Main; matches from which Barry and Julian made it through to the final. Mark's 'consolation' was a fistful of Grand Prix points due the number of rounds he'd won . . . but I know he'd have rather have won the event!

In the late final the score soon went to DMP, and it was Julian that came out as the winner.

Last Chance (32)

We had planned to have a 64 open draw, but, with so many players going sick or not bothering to return it was reduced to a straight 32 knockout.

Tony Walters tore through his opponents to face one of the toughest players around, Peter Bennet. However, Peter's attempts to be the Last Chance winner



were thwarted by Tony who proved to be unstoppable as he took home the winner's trophy.

Tidal Wave (64)

This time we were able to have an open 64 draw and it proved to be very popular – especially with those players that kept losing!

One player did a 'Hurst', Nicky Check. He went from being the first drawn to being the winner – a feat probably fuelled by Nicky's desire to spend as little as possible winning the pot! His opponent, Martin (Barkers) Barkwill managed to get into the final on his second attempt – but he just couldn't cope with Nicky's play.

£100 Jackpot (8)

The field for this event was very strong – impossible to predict who might win. Tony Walters was knocked out by Chris Ternel in the semi; and Rogier Van Gemert was knocked out by Peter Bennet in the other semi. In the final Peter came out on top to take the bigger share of the pot.

£50 Jackpot (8)

Nicky Check's a crafty bugger – he or-

ganises a £50 Jackpot – and then splits the pot in the final with Adrian Jones!

Doubles (8)

A small but high quality field! *A Right Pair of Anchors* were away thanks to *Foxed 'n' Boxed* who in turn were outfoxed by *Belgian Waffles*. *The Odd Couple* evened out *The Even Couple*, and then went on to split up, *Just Mates*.

In the final, *The Odds* were baffled by the *Waffles* who emerged the winners.

Poker (21)

Hopefully, Martin Hemming will be compiling a report on this, all I know is that Myke 'Mad Mullah' Wignall and Tony Lee shared top place and Neil Webb came in third. A bunch of players got a wad of Poker Grand Prix points; and I'll be dealing with that as soon as Martin sends it to me.

Sportsmanship Trophy 2005

As mentioned in previous reports, the 2005 Sportsmanship trophy was to be awarded in Brighton. Of the many worthy possible recipients one stood out from the rest. With a clear majority, Lawrence Powell received the trophy from its spon-

sor, Dod Davies, along with £100 of Dod's own money! The applause from the 90+ players was a good indicator of the result. Well done, Lawrence.

Finally

Although half of the Biba staff were laid in bed for the whole of Sunday suffering from the bug/virus, Tim and I were able to cope alone and the girls were left to 'get better'. I am very pleased that Tim and Julie attended the tournament; but this was their last one! They have decided to spend more time at home this year so, apart from the odd tournament now and again, we'll not be seeing them much this year.

Thank you, Tim and Julie for helping Sharen and I out these last few years; I appreciate it.



Mike & John



Barry & Julian





Tony & Peter



Mike & Buck



Martin & Nicky
(with Fanika, who made the presentation)



Lawrence - 2005 Sportsman
Dod presenting the trophie and £100



Play65
2006 Bright 'n' Breezy



I'd like to thank all those concerned at Play65 for their support in sponsoring this event;
and for their sponsorship of the Biba web site.

Tournament Results

Gilbertson UK Finals, 3 & 4 December, 2005

Main 16/46

- 1 Julian Fetterlein
- 2 Bob Young
- 3/4 Adrian Jones
- 3/4 Uldis Lapikens
- 5/8 Kevin Stebbing
- 5/8 Simonetta Hererra
- 5/8 Roger Van Gemert
- 5/8 Peter Christmas

Consolation (40)

- 1 Tony Lee
- 2 Paul Fox
- 3/4 John Slattery
- 3/4 David Nathan
- 5/8 Eddie Barker
- 5/8 Rachel Rhodes
- 5/8 Brian Lever
- 5/8 Mike Grabsky

Last Chance (32)

- 1 Roland Herrera
- 2 Mark Heindenfeld
- 3/4 Richard Biddle
- 3/4 Bob Bruce
- 5/8 Kevin White
- 5/8 Mick Vacarey
- 5/8 Vicky Chandler
- 5/8 Kevin Stebbing

Champion Of Champions (8)

- 1 Uldis Lapikens
- 2 John Slattery
- 3/4 Rachel Rhodes
- 3/4 Peter Christmas

Grand Prix Championship Play-off

- 1 Adrian Jones
- 2 John Slattery

Friday Warm-up (12)

- 1 David Nathan
- 2 Rogier Van Gemert
- 3/4 Tim Mooring
- 3/4 Myke Wignall

Double (5)

- 1 Right Pair of Christmas Anchors
- 2 Reet and Pettite

£50 Jackpot (8)

- Joint 1st Roland Herrera
& Julian Fetterlein

Poker

- 1 Martin Hemming

Play65 Bright 'n' Breezy, 14 & 15 January, 2006

Main (91)

- 1 John Hurst
- 2 Mike Grabsky
- 3/4 Mike Greenleaf
- 3/4 John Samuel
- 5/8 Julian Fetterlein
- 5/8 Simon Morecroft
- 5/8 Barry McAdam
- 5/8 Paul Gilbertson

Consolation (87)

- 1 Julian Fetterlein
- 2 Barry McAdam
- 3/4 Mike Main
- 3/4 Mark Heindenfeld
- 5/8 Paul Gilbertson
- 5/8 Paul Watts
- 5/8 Michel Lamote
- 5/8 Mike Main

Last Chance (32)

- 1 Tony Walters
- 2 Peter Bennet
- 3/4 Rachel Rhodes
- 3/4 Chris Ternel
- 5/8 Paul Baeyens
- 5/8 Brian Busfield
- 5/8 Miles Illott
- 5/8 Danny Gallagher

Tidal Wave (64)

- 1 Nicky Check
- 2 Martin Barkwill
- 3/4 Myke Wignall
- 3/4 Lawrence Powell
- 5/8 John Thomas
- 5/8 Ronny Coneart
- 5/8 Sue Keeble
- 5/8 Paul Barwick

Friday Warm-up (40)

- 1 Dave Motley
- 2 Malcolm Robertson
- 3/4 Tony Walters
- 3/4 Neil Webb
- 5/8 Rachel Rhodes
- 5/8 Adrian Jones
- 5/8 Paul Watts
- 5/8 Rogier Van Gemert

£100 Jackpot (8)

- 1 Peter Bennet
- 2 Chris Ternel
- 3/4 Tony Walters
- 3/4 Rogier Van Gemert

£50 Jackpot (8)

- Joint 1st Nicky Check & Adrian Jones
- 3/4 Geoff Conn
- 3/4 Brian Lever

Doubles (8)

- 1 Belgian Waffles
- 2 The Odd Couple
- 3/4 Just Mates
- 3/4 Foxed 'n' Boxed

Poker (21)

- Joint 1st Myke Wignall & Tony Lee
- 3 Neil Webb

Grand Prix at Play65 Bright 'n' Breezy

- 32.00 John Hurst
- 24.76 Mark Heindenfeld
- 18.58 Mike Grabsky
- 18.58 John Samuel
- 18.57 Brian Lever
- 13.42 Julian Fetterlein
- 13.42 Mike Greenleaf

- 13.42 Simon Morecroft
- 9.29 Roy Hollands
- 9.29 Nicky Check
- 9.29 Barry McAdam
- 9.29 Paul Gilbertson
- 9.29 Luc Lamote
- 9.28 Ann Pocknell

- 9.27 Tony Walters
- 6.19 Neil Webb
- 6.19 Chris Bray
- 6.19 Mike Main
- 6.19 Paul Watts
- 6.19 Andrew Darby
- 6.19 Andy Bell



6.19	Sue Keeble	4.13	Edwin Turner	2.58	Colin Harrocks
6.19	Sean Williams	4.13	Jon Barnes	2.58	Wayne Felton
6.19	Stephen Cole	4.13	Tim Brown	2.58	Vicky Gilbert
6.19	Ray Fard	4.13	Jason Champion	2.58	Eamon Keogh
6.19	David Dunkley	4.13	Christopher Baxter	2.58	Nick Saxon
6.18	Paul Statter	4.13	Fanika Petkovska	2.58	Arthur Wright
6.18	Mick Vacarey	4.13	Paul Van Dijke	2.57	Miles Illott
6.18	John Ingamells	4.13	Ian Davidson	2.57	Brian Busfield
6.18	Rutger Beijderwellen	4.13	Ronny Conaert	2.57	Diane Iveson
6.17	Peter Bennet	4.12	Mardi Ohannessian	2.57	Nick Valley
6.16	Martin Barkwill	4.12	Eddie Barker	2.56	John Thomas
4.13	Cliff Connick	4.12	Danny Gallagher	2.06	Rogier Van Gemert
4.13	Dale Taylor	4.12	Luc Lamote	2.05	Martin Hemming
4.13	David Edwards	4.11	Rachel Rhodes	2.05	Jo Curl
4.13	Uldis Lapikens	4.11	Chris Ternel	2.05	Zoe Cunningham
4.13	Paul Christmas	4.10	Lawrence Powell	1.55	Jeff Barber
4.13	Tim Mooring	4.10	Myke Wignall	1.55	Gerry Enslin
4.13	Tony Lee	2.58	Dan O'Farrell		
4.13	Dod Davies	2.58	Paul Barwick		
4.13	Andrew Sarjeant	2.58	Mike Heard		
4.13	Raj Jansari	2.58	Peter Christmas		
4.13	Geoff Conn	2.58	Malcolm Robertson		
4.13	George Suilimirski	2.58	Dave Motley		
4.13	David Nathan	2.58	Paul Baeyens		

NB: The Grand Prix Championship is currently identical to this listing

Active Rankings

1668	1668	Jeff Ellis	1790	1798	Mardi Ohannessian	1862	1862	David Startin
1495	1492	Cliff Connick	1717	1717	Emmanuel Di Bona	1506	1506	Martin Hemming
1962	1919	Brian Lever	1756	1756	Steve Pickard	1490	1490	Neil Young
1696	1690	Dale Taylor	1836	1836	Richard Granville	1488	1416	John Samuel
1568	1568	Grahame Powell	1662	1662	Connor Dickinson	1527	1527	Darryl Kirk
1670	1698	John Thomas	1688	1651	Mike Greenleaf	1391	1381	Tim Brown
1548	1563	Paul Barwick	1483	1483	Richard Biddle	1556	1517	Andrew Darby
1483	1502	Miles Illott	1788	1799	Dod Davies	1591	1589	Eddie Barker
1748	1748	Danny Cohen	1541	1546	Dave Motley	1566	1566	Vicky Chandler
1322	1322	Jon Sharpe	1821	1821	Stuart Mann	1460	1460	Simonetta Barone
1660	1660	Ian Tarr	1650	1663	Brian Busfield	1519	1519	Roland Herrera
1743	1739	Roy Hollands	1516	1507	Andrew Sarjeant	1705	1686	Ann Pocknell
1802	1802	Dave McNair	1815	1734	John Hurst	1395	1395	Bob Bruce
1722	1722	Brendan Burgess	1889	1889	John Slattery	1430	1430	Jane Oxley
1708	1708	Dave Coyne	1466	1466	Kevin White	1593	1593	Ron Havenhand
1754	1703	Mike Grabsky	1406	1406	Rosey Bensley	1382	1394	Jo Curl
1709	1733	Uldis Lapikens	1740	1746	Raj Jansari	1681	1629	Mark Heidenfeld
1517	1517	Matthew Fisher	1587	1572	Geoff Conn	1600	1600	Ken Gibson
1597	1613	Mike Heard	1818	1778	Peter Bennet	1490	1514	David Horner
1779	1779	Steve Hallet	1713	1713	Kevin Stebbing	1633	1633	Ian Gwynne
1583	1583	John Wright	1652	1624	Barry McAdam	1454	1415	Andy Bell
1534	1534	Peter Chan	1615	1615	Rodney Lighton	1444	1444	Malcolm Wilson
1592	1607	Jeff Barber	1843	1847	David Nathan	1575	1572	Paul Statter
1638	1654	Martin Barkwill	1367	1367	Cedric Lytton	1455	1479	David Markwick
1423	1423	Alan Greenwood	1489	1489	Julian Minwalla	1592	1594	Jason Champion
1568	1569	Paul Christmas	1535	1535	Stavros Elia	1343	1336	Mick Vacarey
1770	1792	Peter Christmas	1629	1605	Paul Gilbertson	1635	1635	John Gilbertson
1698	1696	Tim Mooring	1623	1623	Mick Butterfield	1385	1338	Stephen Cole
1722	1722	Simon K Jones	1459	1425	Mike Main	1483	1462	Tony Walters
1676	1676	Steve Rimmer	1408	1388	Paul Watts	1366	1366	Paul Fox
1768	1723	Nicky Check	1748	1737	Chris Ternel	1727	1727	Kazu Niki
1694	1694	Stephen Drake	1604	1599	Edwin Turner	1483	1483	David Sanders
1921	1936	Tony Lee	1423	1423	Leslie Singleton	1395	1395	Catherine Oldfield
1851	1863	Rachel Rhodes	1609	1609	Ian Shaw	1690	1683	Adrian Jones
1867	1876	Lawrence Powell	1380	1400	Myke Wignall	1332	1319	Fanika Petkovska
1721	1721	Arthur Musgrove	1471	1471	Rebecca Bell			
2011	1998	Julian Fetterlein	1248	1248	Alison Lee			
1692	1692	Bob Young	1469	1476	Wayne Felton			

As you will have read in Bibafax 79, page 5, there is a new prize structure to the Grand Prix and Ranking Championships. As the year progresses this chart will show exactly how much is at stake each month.

So, keep attending and keep winning. All matches count in the Grand Prix Championship; and in the Ranking Championship every 11-point match you play is counted towards your score.

Grand Prix 01	£63.70	Ranking 01
Grand Prix 02	£45.50	Ranking 02
Grand Prix 03	£36.40	Ranking 03
Grand Prix 04	£27.30	Ranking 04
Grand Prix 05	£18.20	Ranking 05
Grand Prix 06	£13.65	Ranking 06
Grand Prix 07	£9.10	Ranking 07
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Grand Prix 09	£4.55	Ranking 09
Grand Prix 10	£4.55	Ranking 10

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Beginner:	Free	Free
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