

BIBAFAX

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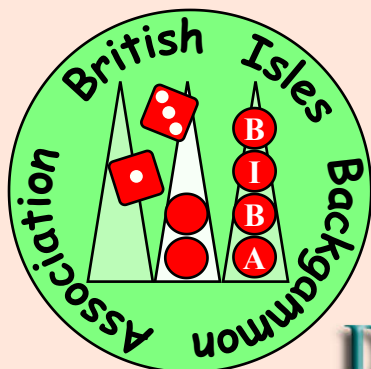
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How Good Is Your Backgammon?

Asks Michael Crane & Snowie

Once again we return to the marathon battle between Neil Kazaross (white) and Michael Meyburg (black) during the 1991 Monte Carlo World Championships ¼ Finals.

We restart the article in Game 16 with black leading 16-9. When you come to **???** Cover up the text below the position and decide your move. Keep a record and at the end see how you scored. The match is to 21 points.

Game 16

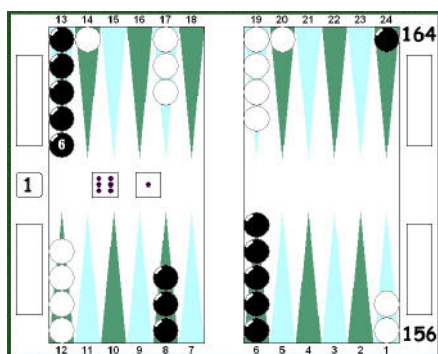
Kazaross : 9

Meyburg : 16

01) 21: 13/11 6/5

65: 24/13

Straight away, Kazaross starts with an aggressive 21 slotting his 5-point: a tactic usually employed against weaker opponents. If missed it gives excellent opportunities to make the most important point on the board . . . and 65 misses.



??? White to play 61

OK, now he's rolled a covering number, but is it the correct move? It's also possible to make the bar-point and block black's 6s and thus hampering his escape.

Well, the actual move was to make the 5-point using the 1 and then to launch a runner with the 6, 24/18. This was quite obviously the correct play. Making the bar-point was in fact a very poor choice coming in at Snowie 5th (-0.087). Once you've committed yourself to making the 5-point there's not much that should deter you from making it.

Alternative moves with the 6 were: 13/7, slotting the bar-point - aggressive yet effective if missed. 11/5, playing both checkers and creating a home-board builder. Using the 6, 11/5 to make the point and splitting the runners, 24/23 has some merit; but it only comes out at Snowie 3rd.

24/18 6/5

13/7 6/5

24/23 11/5

11/5 6/5

13/7 8/7

5A

4

3

2

1

02) 61: 24/18 6/5

03) 52: 18/11

04) 32: 13/10 11/9

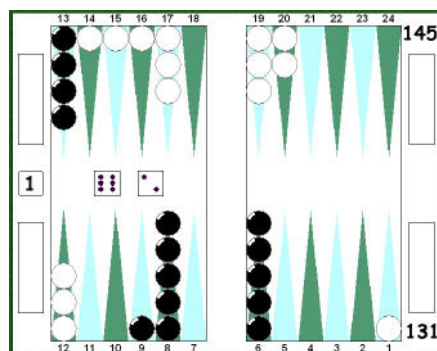
32: 13/8

65: 24/13

This move by white is a little too 'tame' for Snowie, he prefers to play 13/10 8/6 and make a start on home-board points on the off-chance that his lone runner might get the hit he needs to turn this game in his favour.

54: 13/8 13/9

05) 62: 24/16*



White rolls 62

Well, this is exactly what white was hoping for. Very often players see a lone runner as a liability but it is surprising how many times it turns out to be of great importance. White's only chance to win this game was to get black onto the bar; and now he's achieved it. He rolls a semi-cockshot . . . and he is grateful that he didn't slot his 4-point, thus leaving return shots off the bar.

51: 25/24 13/8

The hit from white has made a tremendous difference to his game winning chances (GWC), they moved from 43.6% to 68.5% after the 62 and it's a double/pass; a correct action from both players.

06) Doubles to 2

Wins 1 point

Drops

Game 17

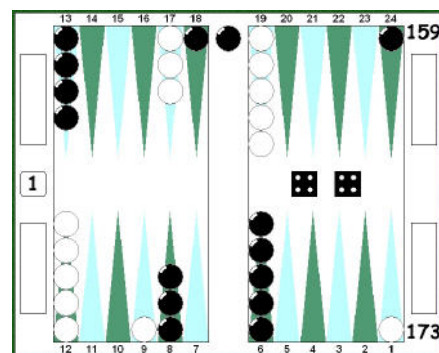
Kazaross : 10

Meyburg : 16

01)

64: 24/18 13/9

02) 53: 24/16*



??? Black to play 44

Clearly two of them are 25/21 and 13/9*; all that remains now is to decide how best to play the remaining two 2s. The actual play of 25/21 13/9* 8/4(2) looks good but it does leave a few indirect shots of the bar and is 3rd, just ahead of moving off the heavy 5-point with 6/2(2). Very close to the 2-point play is 25/21 13/9* 18/10, but it also leaves shots - albeit indirect.

Snowie favours making the 9-point. In its 2nd best move it moves 25/21 13/9*(2) and then moves 24/20 to hopefully make an advanced anchor and/or cover the outer-board. But, the favourite move is to play 25/21 13/9*(2) and then play off the 18-point, 18/14 to eliminate being hit with a 6, a non-entry number.

25/21 13/9*(2) 18/14

5

25/21 13/9*(2) 24/20

4

25/21 13/9* 8/4(2)

3A

25/21 13/9* 6/2(2)

1

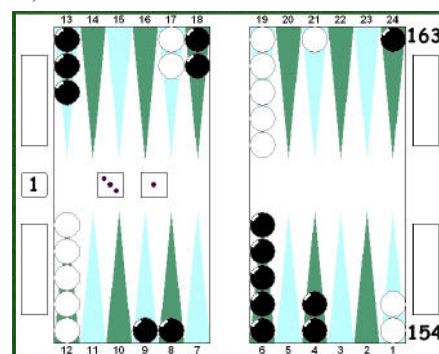
25/21 13/9* 18/10

1

44: 25/21 13/9* 8/4(2)

03) 41: 25/24 8/4*

61: 25/18



??? White to play 31

Here's a dilemma - should white make the 5-point or his 3-point, or even his 4-point? Obviously making the 3-point is totally safe whereas making the 4-point leaves one blot open to being hit by 1s, 52 43; and making the 5-point leaves 3s, 1s and 52 to hit. White played it safe and Snowie kicked it into 2nd place! Even with two blots on it rates the 5-point as

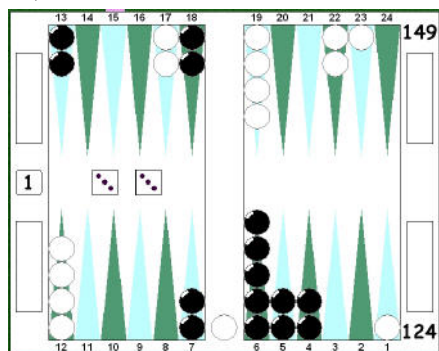


the better move. Let's look at black's 1s if he rolls one: 21, 31 and 41 are all excellent rolls on his side of the table which is a good trade-off for white if he's hit. Black's 3s aren't as good for white, but 31, which might have been used to make his 5-point will be used to put two in the air without doubt. The actual move returns 1.8% fewer GWC and an equity loss of -0.037.

Making the 4-point is as 'bad' as hitting loose, 24/23 4/1*; both are poor plays and I hope no one actually played them!

8/5 6/5	5
6/3 4/3	4A
8/4	1
24/23 4/1	1

04) 31: 6/3 4/3	22: 13/7 9/7
05) 65: 13/2	42: 24/18
06) 64: 24/14	43: 18/11*
07) 66: Dances	63: 11/5 8/5



??? White to play 33

White's 'refusal' to make his 5-point earlier has left him with big gaps in his home-board whereas black has progressed his prime well - and now white is behind a 4-prime with two checkers. White needs to take advantage of black's poor 6s and 5s, he's doesn't have any spare checkers to take them and therefore he's likely to leave a shot if he rolls one. With this in mind it makes sense to keep him on the bar if hit; and therefore the actual play 25/22 8/5(2) 6/3 is good.

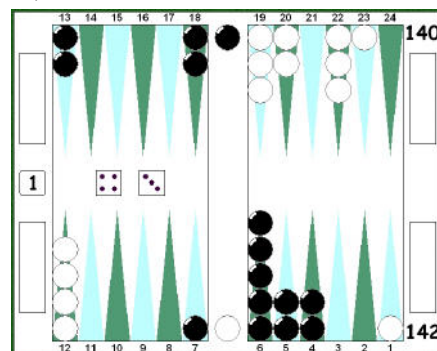
Blocking with 25/22 13/10(2) 6/3 is a good alternative but with fewer dancing rolls if hit, it lack's the ability to put too much pressure on black but it might produce more chances of the hit. 25/22 8/5(2) 5/2 is fair but it relies on a 1 to make the 5-point and it's possible a 1 will be needed to hit with. Leaving two blots with 25/22 13/10 8/2 is very provocative and might well lead to the cube being shipped across for a quick cash-in. The move returning the greatest GCW is 25/22 13/10 8/5(2); hit by a 3 it leaves a non-re-entry roll of 4 to cover the blot on

the 2-point and duplicates 3s.

It's too close to call on the equities so I have used the GWC to decide the order:

25/22 13/10 8/5(2)	5
25/22 8/5(2) 6/3	4A
25/22 8/5(2) 5/2	3
25/22 13/10(2) 6/3	2
25/22 13/10 8/2	1

08) 33: 25/22 8/5 8/5 6/3	42: 7/3* 3/1*
09) 61: 25/24*	53: Dances

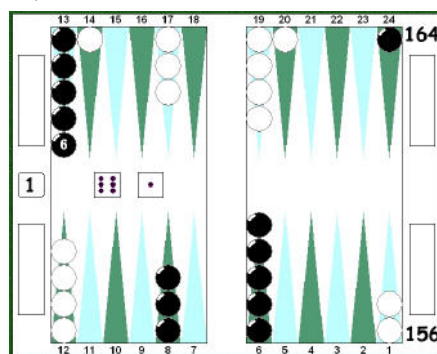


??? White to play 43

Two in the air with 25/18*? Or should it be played 'safe' by covering the 2-point blot? Realistically these are the only two options. White decided to play 'safe' and played 25/22 6/2; however, this is an error (-0.051). With the race almost even knocking black back another 18 pips is worth the risk of him rolling a 2 next roll.

25/18*	5
25/22 8/6	3A

10) 43: 25/22 6/2



??? Black to play 51

Once again just two realistic moves: 25/24 6/1* or 25/24 7/2. Each one leaves 1s to hit back with but the better of the two is the hit; this offers good covering rolls next time if white dances and still threatens the 3-point blot.

25/24 6/1*	5A
25/24 7/2	4

51: 25/24 6/1*

11) 22: 25/23 13/11(2) 3/1*

A good roll for white, black is almost certainly going to be cubed if he dances . . .

32: Dances

. . . which he does; and the double/pass action is correct for both players.

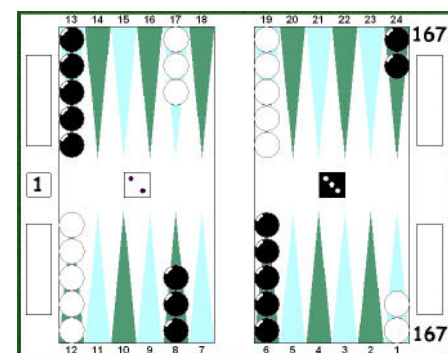
2) Doubles to 2
Wins 1 point

Drops

Game 18

Kazaross : 11

Meyburg : 16

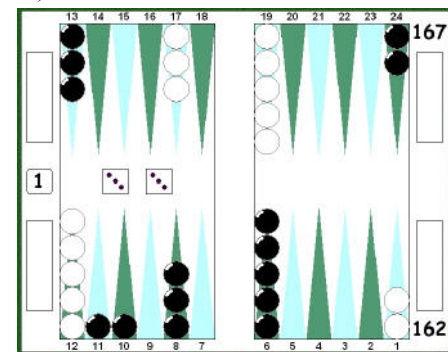


??? Black to play 32

Traditionally the preferred play with an opening 32 has been to move both checkers off the mid-point; and this is the better move even though Snowie rollouts prefer moving off the mid-point and splitting the back checkers with either 13/11 24/21 or 13/10 24/22. The former makes the usual 64, 42 and 22 play well and the latter lets the usually poor 63 and 54 play very well . . . but not so well as 55 53 or 33!

13/10 13/11	5A
13/11 24/21	4
13/10 24/22	3

01) 32: 13/10 13/11



??? White to play 33

Black's opening 32 has given him good chances to make his 5- or bar-point next



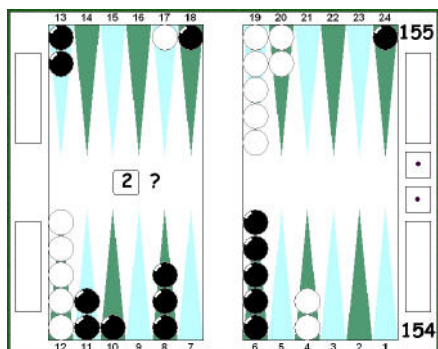
roll (perhaps even the 4-point) and this is a deciding factor in this move.

Making the 5-point is quite obvious (if it isn't to you then perhaps backgammon isn't your game!) and, to ensure that white's runners aren't compromised the remaining two 2s should be moved 24/21(2), making a good anchor if black should happen to make his 5- or bar-point.

Making two home-board points by moving 8/5(2) 6/3(2) is a good alternative but black's potential on the other side of the board make it slightly less attractive. Moving 24/21 is pretty much *de riguer* for Snowie, accompanied by: 6/3(2), it is just a bit too deep; 13/10(2) makes a nice point but it's of no immediate value; 24/21(2) 21/15* is a waste of a double despite its 'spoiling' affect.

24/21(2) 8/5(2)	5A
8/5(2) 6/3(2)	4
24/21(2) 6/3(2)	3
24/21(2) 13/10(2)	2
24/21(2) 21/15*	1

02) 33: 24/21(2) 1 8/5(2) 62: 24/18 13/11



??? White cube action?

- No Double/take?
- Double/take?
- Double/Pass?

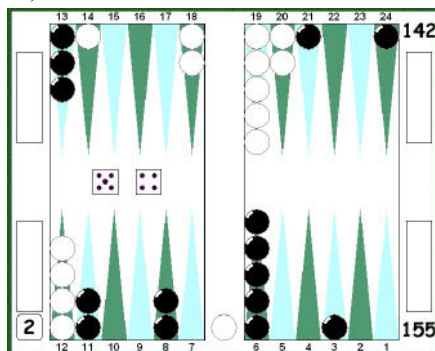
White's equity is eroded by this double/take. He'd have been wiser to leave the cube in the middle rather than let black have it all to himself for so little gain.

No double/take	5
Double/take	3A
Double/pass	-2

03) Doubles to 2 Takes
04) 61: 21/15* 8/7*

White quite correctly eschews the bar-point, 13/7* 8/7 for the better double hit. Two in the air increases his gammon chances.

41: 25/21 25/24
05) 65: 13/7 15/10 53: 8/3 24/21
06) 64: 21/11 62: 21/15* 15/13



??? White to play 54

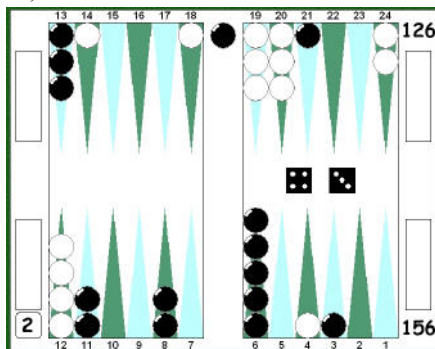
Snowie rated the actual play of 25/21 6/1* in 3rd place (-0.022); preferring to move 25/16 instead. It's a little risky but no semblance of a black prime at the moment is a plus for white and the risk is minimal. The safe building move of 25/20 11/7 falls between these two plays (-0.10) and was my choice.

25/16	5
25/20 11/7	5
25/21 6/1*	4A
25/21 11/6	2
25/21 13/8	2

07) 54: 25/21 6/1* 65: Dances

Thanks to a poor roll from black, white gets to cover his blot next roll and create another builder.

08) 61: 7/1 6/5

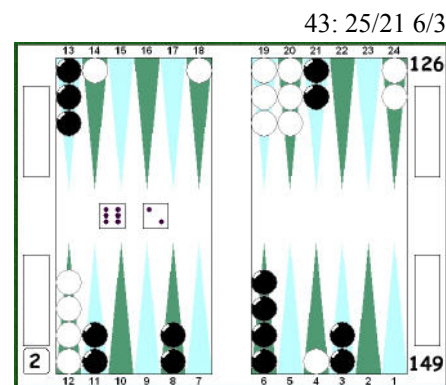


??? Black to play 43

Choices! Choices! So many ways in which to play this move: 25/21 6/3, anchor and make a point; 25/18* stopping white making his bar-point; 25/21 11/8 threatening the blot on the 4-point . . . but how much choice does black really have? None! There's only one move and that's 25/21 6/3. If you moved anything other than that then you'll lose points for being so silly!

25/21 6/3
Any other move

5A
-4



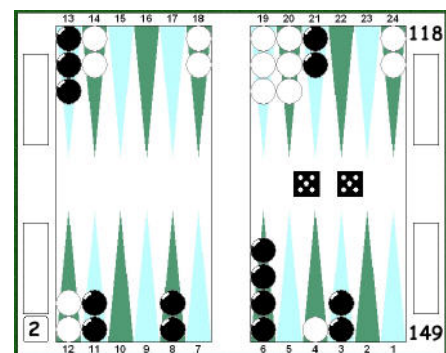
??? White to play 62

I'll bet you're wondering why I've even bothered including this one, aren't you? Well if white had chosen Snowie 1st then I wouldn't have bothered; but he didn't. Snowie 1st was 21/13 and not the obvious (and actual) 13/7 13/11 double-cover!

I suppose the fact that black must break a valuable anchor to hit is the reason; that and his poor home-board, perhaps. But, it looks all wrong! However, a rollout puts the actual play at -0.068 with GWC reduced by 3.3% so I guess Snowie is correct . . . but I suspect the majority of us made the covering play.

21/13 5
13/7 13/11 **3A**

09) 62: 13/7 13/11



??? Black to play 55

After this move the race is fairly close, black: 129, white 118, just eleven in it; so Snowie decides that this move is to be a racing move and he piles his runners onto the 11-point. Black disagrees and decides on advancing his anchor 21/16(2) and making his 1-point, 6/1(2); the pip-count remains the same but black has opted for pressure on white's three stragglers. Even though the actual move is -0.039 I think it better than piling onto already established points; but our frigid friend has

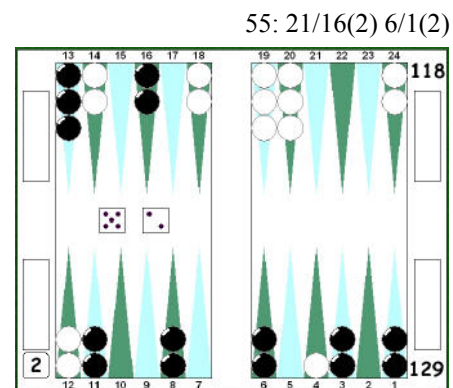


taken the trouble to roll it out for us and therefore he must be correct!

21/11(2)	5
21/16(2) 6/1(2)	4A
21/16(2) 13/3	3
21/16(2) 13/8 6/1	2
11/1(2)	2

2nd place. I suppose the problem with the slotting play is that if black leaves a blot on the next roll the two blots can be a liability, especially if it's an indirect blot. The same argument goes for 7/2 5/3; two blots. 7/2 7/5 leaves only one blot but the 2-point is too deep to be as useful as the double-blot plays.

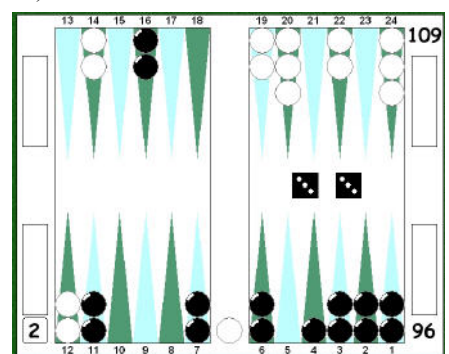
must be covered; the question is: how? Black did it 16/13(2) 7/4(2) which came in 2nd (-0.030); whereas the runner played 16/4 was 1st. Apart from the equity difference (not a lot) the gammon wins seem to be the deciding factor for Snowie, 30% for the snowman and 27.4% for black.



??? White to play 52

Once again Snowie decides to baffle me - this time playing both checkers off the mid-point, 13/8 13/11 and abandoning his runner. I think the merit of this move is that if white does get a shot next roll he's only leaving indirect returns of the bar. White plays two into his home-board, 7/2 6/4 in an attempt to make a good home-board prime, which I thought was a fair play; however, at -0.035 it's in

13/8 13/11	5
7/2 6/4	4A
7/2 5/3	2
7/2 7/5	2
10) 52: 7/2 6/4	64: 13/7 11/7
11) 41: 7/3 4/3	22: 8/4(2)*
12) 11: Dances	52: 13/8 13/11
13) 21: 25/23 2/1	62: 8/2* 4/2
14) 63: Dances	



??? Black to play 33

Well at least one 3 is clear, the 4-point

The extra 2.6% doesn't come without risk: 52 or 54 off the bar. It should also be pointed out that keeping the 7-point does give black something to land upon. A fair 3rd is 16/13(2) 13/10 7/4, just a bit worse on the equity (-0.039) but better gammon chances at 31.8%; however those blots look too risky for my liking - if white can Hoover up a couple of them he's going to be clear favourite to win the game and with good gammon chances.

16/4	5
16/13(2) 7/4(2)	4A
16/13(2) 13/10 7/4	3
33: 16/13(2) 7/4(2)	
15) 65: 25/20 11/5	44: 13/5*(2)

White's closed out and his dodgy cube earlier looks to be a big mistake. It is wise to remember just how powerful the cube can be on your side of the board. Recubes can be difficult to accept and all too often an early take can come back to bite you on the arse!

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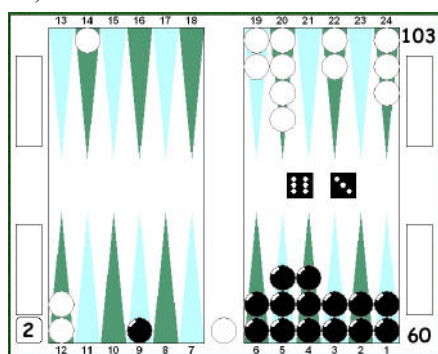
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16) 21: Dances
17) 21: Dances

62: 11/5 11/9



??? Black to play 63

Most books on backgammon tell us to keep your top point(s) even in case large doubles leave a blot when bearing off against opposition. So, why is it that Snowie decides that 9/0 is better than 9/3 5/2 by 0.061? Well the GWC are quite close, Snowie's play is better by 1%; but the gammon chances are vastly different, 43.2% as opposed to 35.1%; in Snowie's favour by over 8%; well worth the risk. Even if black does roll 66 or 55 leaving a shot, white still has to hit it; and if he does, black can always ship across a 4-

cube, making use of its power.

9/0
9/3 5/2

5
3A

18) 21: Dances
19) 31: Dances
20) 51: 25/20 13/12

63: 9/3 5/2

53: 6/1 6/3

53: 5/0 5/2

White re-enters and black's gammon chances recede to 22.7%

21) 22: 20/18 12/6
22) 44: 18/6 13/9
23) 54: 9/4 11/7

32: 3/0 2/0

43: 4/0 3/0

43: 4/0 3/0

Black's chances of a gammon are now zero and he should have re-cubed prior to this roll . . . something he does after his next roll. Strangely, Snowie says it's "Too good to re-double, pass"???

24) 63: 7/4 6/0
25) Drops

21: 2/0 1/0

Re-doubles to 4

Wins 2 points

Kazaross : 11

Meyburg : 18

So, how good is your backgammon? Check out your scores below and see if it's worth plodding on with the game or if selling your board might be your best course of action!

90	You are Michael Meyburg
80-89	You are Neil Kazaross
70-79	You are very good
60-69	You are good
50-59	You are not far off good
40-49	You are not very good
30-39	You might be good one day
20-29	You need to study more
10-19	You need to study
- to 9	You are wasting your time

The Case of the Deadly Roll

A Backgammon Murder Mystery by Bill Davis

Starring Greg Tomlin and Amy Trudeau (with Bob Zavoral as the Dead Body)

Photography by Peggy Asseo

Chapter I

THAT WAS NO BACKFIRE; it was a gunshot. Probably a .38 special. The ears of Johnny Riddell could tell. Ten years pounding the pavement as a Chicago P.I. had made my hearing sensitive to that kind of sound.

It was the edge of midnight in downtown Chicago at the Golden Point Club. This Monday had been quiet-almost too quiet. All evening, just two of the twelve private rooms had been occupied for head-to-head play, with the receptionist Macie Lewis up in front. And believe me . . . Macie Lewis had it all up in front. She was the most luscious, green-eyed, baby-faced brunette in the Windy City. Her daily presence at this exclusive penthouse backgammon parlor was a big reason male clientele ponied up the \$1000 annual membership fee.

I had other motives for paying the grand. It allowed me to feast on the most succu-



lent "fish" this side of the Dearborn Street Oyster Bar. I had just gutted my regular flounder Shad Riley for 55 points and sent him wriggling for the elevator not five minutes before the silence was broken. Rather than go right home, I had remained behind in Parlor 3 to review a position. Now my study was disrupted by a blast at the far end of the hall.

Each parlor door had a locking mechanism controlled by Miss Lewis so the vice squad couldn't enter unsuspectingly. My session was over. Why was my door still locked? I called for Macie to buzz me out. Where was she? Two minutes later, she screamed and I broke through the door.

I dashed down the hall. The Parlor 12

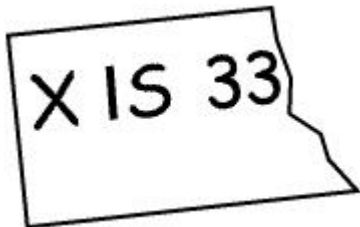
door was open. In the center of the well-appointed room was an old mahogany backgammon table and two leather armchairs, one of which had been knocked over on its side. To the left, not four feet from the table, was Macie standing over Judge Hamilton Rice. He lay still, as still as death, sprawling grotesquely on the richly carpeted floor. In his back was an exit wound just below his left shoulder. The beige carpet was slowly turning crimson.

I dropped to my knees beside him. His left hand clutched a dice cup. The dice had fallen out of the shaker with 4-1 facing upwards. The fingers of his right hand were curled around a small piece of paper. His arm was extended almost as if he were handing the paper to me. Judge Rice was a respected man. This matter had to be handled discreetly-without immediate police involvement. I took the paper out of his hand.

It was part of a scorecard and showed +61 marked under the initials "HR." On the



back of the card was the scribbled message:



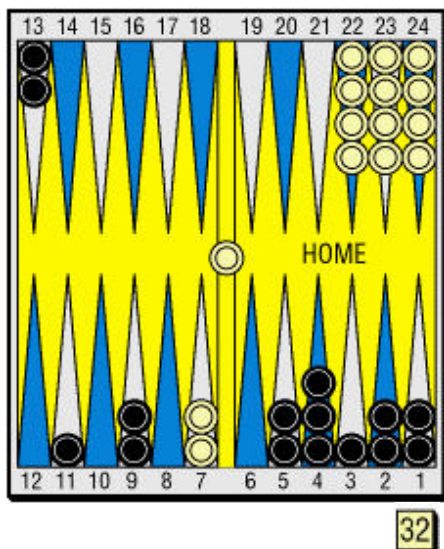
It looked a lot like Judge Rice's handwriting and style, and I expressed my thoughts to Macie.

"Why are you so sure it was written by Judge Rice, Johnny?"



"Because over the past 25 years, the Judge authored a dozen excellent backgammon books. And in every diagram of every book, he designated the Black pieces as 'X' and the White pieces as 'O.' It's a style he adopted from Paul Magriel's Backgammon. Just before his appointment with death, Judge might have been trying to tell us that X's last roll was double 3s.

I walked over to the board and examined the fateful setup. The chair was tipped over on the Black, or X side of the table. Hamilton Rice had apparently been playing the Black pieces and holding a 32-cube in the position shown below:



"Who was Judge Rice's opponent?" My question had evoked an uneasy concern in Macie's eyes.

"I don't know, Johnny. They were in session when I opened the place at 7:00 p.m. The Judge was the only club member to have a purple pass key. He had called yesterday to say he was going to start early. Against whom, I can't say."

"But you must have seen someone leave on the elevator following the gunshot . . ."

"I was freshening up in the powder room when the shot was fired and was afraid to come out. When I heard the elevator door open and close, I assumed the killer had left. I ran out and down the hall past your room and into Parlor 12. When I saw Judge on the floor, I screamed."

Something wasn't computing. Why was my parlor door locked following the shooting? And why would Black's roll of 3-3 push his opponent to gunplay? True, the shake allowed Black to cover his 3-blot, but White still had some chance if he could enter with a 6. There was something Macie was hiding, and Johnny Riddell was determined to drag it out of her gorgeous self before the dawn spit sunshine in our eyes.

Chapter II

The script from the 2002 Midwest Championships Calcutta Auction performance starring Greg Tomlin, Amy Trudeau (and Bob Zavoral as the dead body).

Johnny walks over to the table and notices a full ashtray.

JR: Looks like Judge's opponent was a cigar smoker.

ML: You can't say that for sure, Johnny. The cleaning service hasn't been here for two days. Those could be old butts.

JR: Not likely. This one's still smoldering. Ted Quinn is a cigar smoker. Isn't he Macie?

ML: Ted Quinn?

JR: Yeah, you remember Teddy. When he comes into the club, you're all over him like soy sauce on a chicken wing.

ML: I don't know what you mean.

JR: I'll tell you what I mean, honeybunny. I'm sayin' your checkers are spread and he's makin' your Golden Point. Everyone knows Teddy is about to leave his wife for you.



ML: That's not true!

JR: Maybe it is and maybe it ain't.

Johnny breaks away from the questioning. He looks at the backgammon board again, and then at the dice cup in the Judge's hand and the dice scattered nearby.

JR: Now if the Judge were X, and X is 3-3 like the note says, why are Judge's dice down here by his dice cup and not on the board?

Johnny drops the note. Macie bends over to pick it up. Johnny looks down her dress and notices a piece of paper in her cleavage.

JR: Give it up, baby.

ML: Give what up, Johnny?

JR: The piece of paper that you're using to pad your bra. Hand it over, or do you want me to go in after it?

ML: You wouldn't dare!

JR: You watch me . . .

Johnny grabs Macie, backing her up. Macie panics.

ML: No, wait!

Macie gives up the paper scrap. Johnny looks at both pieces and puts them together. He sees something, studies the board position, and looks enlightened.

(continued on the next page) ▶



JR: Come clean, Macie, or you'll be up the river without a paddle.

ML: It wasn't supposed to happen this way. Judge Rice was old. His game was weak. Teddy needed the money and told me he could beat him like a drum, so I sweet-talked Judge into playing him for a hundred a point. Teddy was going to leave his wife and take me to Monte Carlo with the winnings . . .

JR: But in reality, the dice were torturing him. Look at the scoresheet -- minus 61 points, and in this game, with Judge holding a 32-cube, Teddy desperately needed a 3 for a chance to turn the game around.

ML: And he rolled a 3! . . . he rolled a 3.

Macie is crushed -- near breaking down.

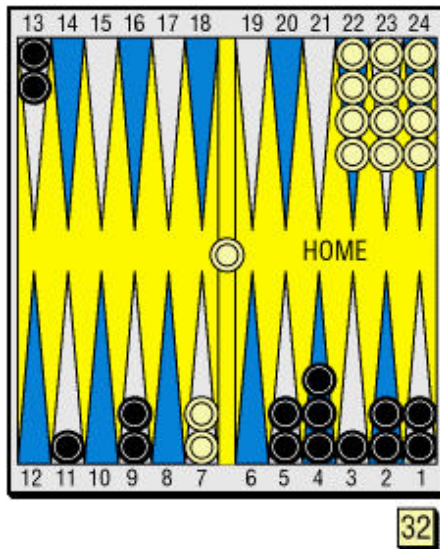
JR: I know.

Johnny puts the two pieces of paper together and shows them to Macie. By turning the "X IS 33" note upside down and fitting it together with the paper scrap from Macie's bra, the torn note reads:

TQ ROLLED THREE SIX

JR: Ted Quinn rolled 3-6.

ML: It was the only 3 that didn't hit.



JR: It forced Teddy to enter on the 6-point and leave three blots. The judge can hit with everything. I'm sure there are lots of gammon wins.

ML: Teddy was crushed. Then Judge said, "Poor little Theodore. Even when you hit, you miss." Teddy hates to be called Theodore. And he hates to be laughed at. That's when he pulled the trigger.

I looked down the hall and Ted was signalling me to lock your door. Then he came up front and told me what happened and said that if I really cared, I would cover for him. When I went back to the room, I found judge's fresh note and tore it in half to create confusion. You can't blame a girl for trying.

I loved him, Johnny. We were going to have such a nice life together... such a nice life...

JR: Teddy will still have a nice life, Macie.

ML: How's that?

JR: A nice life sentence.

Macie puts her head down. Johnny reaches into his pocket, pulls out his cell phone and dials 0.

JR: "Operator, get me the police."

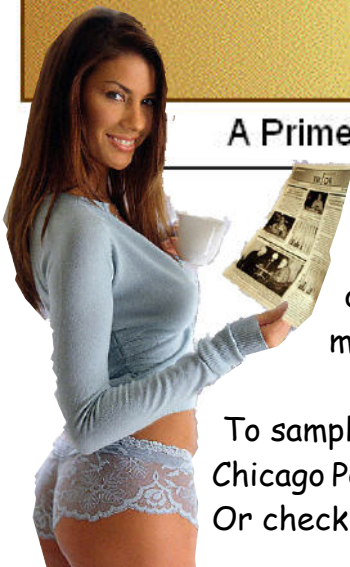
THE END

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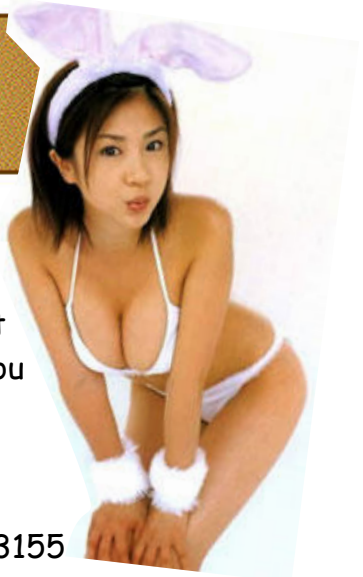
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**18th European Championship
5th Velden Backgammon Open
May 19 – 21 2006**

Held at the Casino Velden, Austria, this is the first overseas tournament Slatts and I have been to this year. Marco's tournaments are our favourite and Velden is such a lovely venue. There was a disappointing turn out from the Brits this year with only Martin Barkwill, John Broomfield, Gay Roberts and us there. In all there were 113 players from 26 countries and Prize Money of €38,000.

The play started on Friday evening and whilst I was winning my first match 9-5 to 11 points, I still managed to lose! Never mind I always had Slatts to entertain me! I joined him when he was 4-8 down against Koch (Germany). I had not decided to write a report at this stage of the tournament but am please to report that Slatts never lost another point. He won the match 13-8. The next round was due to be played on the Saturday but Haas (Austria) was on a roll having beaten his opponent, Di Bella (Italy) convincingly. He asked Slatts if he minded playing that night – this was music to Slatts's ears as

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!



Gay

he is a night bird! Haas must have regretted the decision as Slatts stormed through to the Quarterfinals with a score of 15-10. I wished by now that I had decided to start writing, as there was some brilliant play from both players.

On Saturday, having made quite a quick

exit from the Championship Consolation I made up my mind to write a report. I decided to start by reporting on the game being played between the European Champion in 2000 Harald Johanni (Germany) and Michel Serrero (France). For those of you that are not familiar with my reports it is worth saying that I am not a match recorder, but try and capture the essence of the game in words. Watching fast professional players does not leave me much time to record positions but hopefully, readers will still enjoy the report.

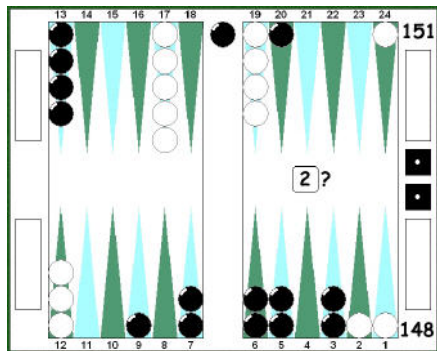
I joined the match when the score was 9-8 to Serrero (black) to 15 points. It was a quick game with lots of hitting backwards and forwards but when Serrero offered the cube Johanni had to decline. Score: 10-8.

Johanni cubed when ahead in the next



game (no contact) & Serrero dropped. Score: 10-9.

In the next game Serrero developed a board early and cubed when he had three points vs. Johanni's one, even though he was on the bar!



Black doubles

Johanni thought a long time but eventually dropped. Score: 11-9.

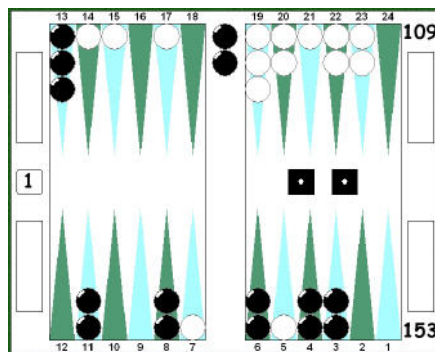
In the next game Serrero cubes and Johanni takes. Soon Johanni, having two men on the bar, looks bad as Serrero makes a 6-prime; however, with his next roll Johanni manages to come in and can now start to develop his 1-point board! He rolls 11 making his 5-point and & hitting Serrero onto the bar. Unfortunately for Johanni, Serrero is in hitting mode and hits two more checkers giving Johanni seven back on Serrero's 1-point. Can Serrero bear off safely against this? He needs a gammon for match. It's not the smoothest of starts when Serrero rolls 44 and has to clear his 4-point leaving three checkers on his 6-point and three on his 5-point. Johanni soon gets a double shot but misses! A lucky 33 means Serrero moves all his men to his 2- and 3-points. There is a chance for Johanni when a *Coup Classique* position arises – will it happen? No! It's not Johanni's day he rolls 66 and Serrero gets an unneeded backgammon to win the match and go through to the Quarter Finals of the Mas-



Rosey

ters Main! Final score: 15-9.

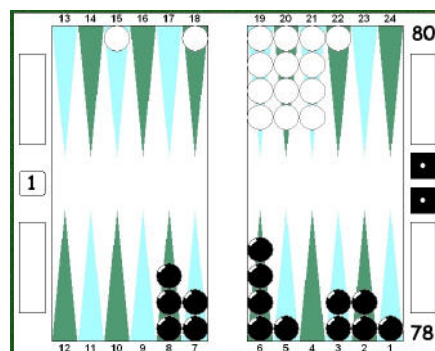
I commiserated with Johanni and he asked me if I had seen the game that turned the match around when Serrero rolled a superb double-one. I said I hadn't and asked Johanni to set it up for me – here it is!



Black to play 11

Serrero rolls 11 and comes in with two men and plays 6/5(2) to hit. Johanni danced with 43. Serrero cubes to 4 and Johanni has to drop. Instead of what looked like a likely gammon for Johanni to put him in the lead 7-12 the good roll (and play of course!) followed by Johanni's bad rolling made the score 9-8 to Serrero.

I then join an old friend of ours from the Netherlands, Phillipe. He was playing Nar from Turkey. The winner of this match plays our very own John Slattery (Slatts) in the Quarter Finals of the Masters Main. The score is 5-9 to Nar (white) in a 15 point match and the position is:-



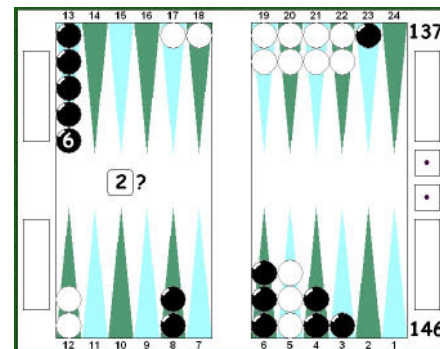
Black on roll

It is Phillipe's (black) turn and he is busy counting the pips but with only 2 pips in it he decides to roll. If he had known he was going to roll 66 two rolls later he would have cubed! Nar drops when the cube is offered. Score: 6-9.

In the next game Nar rolls an early 66 making both bar-points and Phillipe follows it with a 66 of his own which he can do little with. However, we all know how

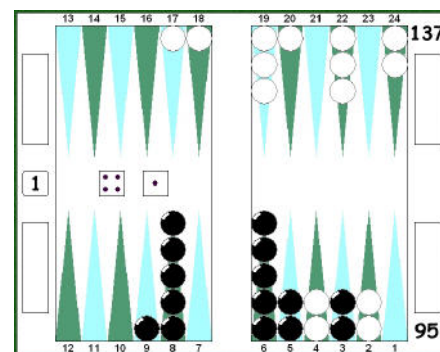
difficult it is to move off an opponent's bar so Nar throws the cube across in this position before life gets too awkward! Phillipe thinks about it for a long time before declining. Score: 6-10

Phillipe is hit early in the next game and rolls 66 to dance! Nar makes his 5-point and next roll hits Phillipe on his 4-point but Phillipe hits back! Nar now has three men back against Phillipe's one. Nar rolls 22 and hits Phillipe again making his 4-point. Phillipe comes in on the 3-point but Nar hits loose again, Phillipe dances and Nar covers. He now has a 4-point board but three men still on Phillipe's 5-point. Phillipe comes in next roll with 21 and Nar throws over the cube. Phillipe drops. Score: 6-11.



White cube action?

The next game starts with Phillipe getting the upper hand and soon making a 4-prime, 5 to 8. Nar has three men back and Phillipe offers an early cube. Nar takes. Nar rolls 55 and rather than jumping over the prime decided to hit Phillipe on the 1- and make his 1- and 3-points. Phillipe comes in with 64 and hits a loose checker on Nar's 10-point giving Nar four back behind the prime. Phillipe rolls a 22 and moves 7/3(2) and now has a 3-point board and a broken 4-prime. His next roll is an awkward 54 and he has to leave a blot on his 9-point.

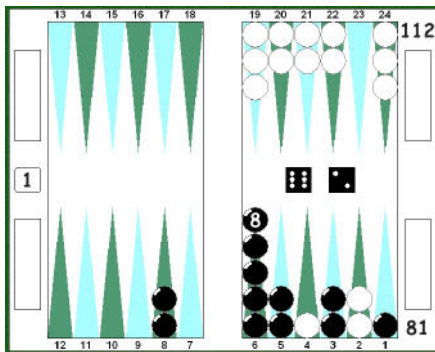


White to play 41

Nar misses with a 41. Phillipe does not roll well and fails to gain any more points. Nar meanwhile has a 5-point



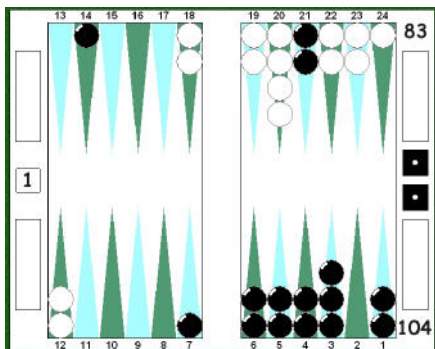
board so Phillipe cannot hit loose. A bad 62 in this position forces Phillipe to leave a one-shot on his 3-point.



Black to play 62

Nar misses again! Phillipe later leaves a blot on his 8- and this time Nar hits and now has control, and he is holding the cube! He closes his board with Phillipe still on the bar and needs a gammon for match. Phillipe comes in as soon as the 6-point is open. Nar cubes and Phillipe has to drop. Score: 6-13.

In the next game Nar has the best of the dice and escapes both his back men. Phillipe manages to make a 5-point board but still has three men back on Nar's side of the board.



Black on roll

Phillipe 65: 14/8, 7/2
Nar 33: 13/7(2)
Phillipe 21: 3/2, 8/6
Nar 44: 7/3(4)

Snowie says that Nar should have cubed here and Phillipe, Pass, but Nar continues to play.

Phillipe 51: 21/15
Nar 42: moves down

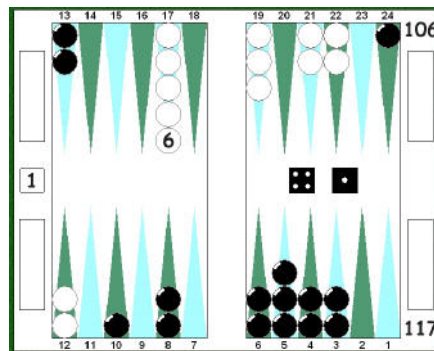
Nar doesn't leave a blot and wins the game by cubing Phillipe out. Score: 6-14 Crawford.

I had a small break and when I rejoin the match Nar rolls 66 and hits Phillipe on his 2-point giving him a 3-point board. Phil-

ipe comes in but has two loose checkers. Nar rolls 31 to hit Phillipe and make his 4-point. Phillipe dances, Nar rolls 55 making his 3-point and a 6-prime. Phillipe rolls 11 to come in on the 1-point and leaves a blot. Nar throws 65, which misses and is not a good roll. He leaves Phillipe's bar-point and Phillipe rolls another 11 to hit him and next roll creates a 6-prime. Nar hits loose on his 1-point Phillipe hits and now Nar has two back against Phillipe's 6-prime. Nar ends up having to break his board whilst Phillipe saunters home. Phillipe only has one man off when Nar rolls a 6/1 and runs. Phillipe cannot hit the loose checker and Nar runs with a 62 to try and win the race. Despite 66 followed by 22 he has to give in! Score: 7-14 Post Crawford.

Phillipe gets a better structure in the next game, however, Nar gets his two back men safe whilst Phillipe has one left on Nar's 1-point.

Black on roll



Phillipe 41: 10/6, 5/4
Nar 61: 13/7, 8/7
Phillipe 52: 8/3, 5/2 failing to hit the loose checker
Nar 31: makes 5-point
Phillipe 66: 13/1(2) not what he wanted to see – too big!

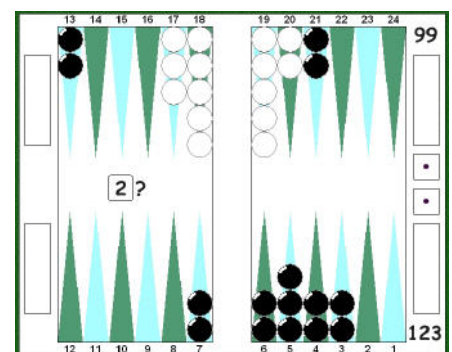
An awkward 63 next roll means his board breaks whilst Nar rolls his prime home, eventually hitting Phillipe and closing him out. Nar rolls the inevitable 51 and chooses to clear his 5-point and takes one off. Phillipe dances but Nar rolls 61, leaving a blot on his 5-point. Phillipe misses and comes in next roll with a 6 and it's all over. Nar wins through to meet Slatts in the quarterfinal. Final Score: 7-15

Nar won their last encounter (Slatts vs Nar) in Cannes at DMP so was looking confident, however, Slatts was looking for revenge! Match to 17.

Within two rolls Slatts (black) had a 4-point board having rolled 42 followed by 55. Nar wasn't feeling too bad though as

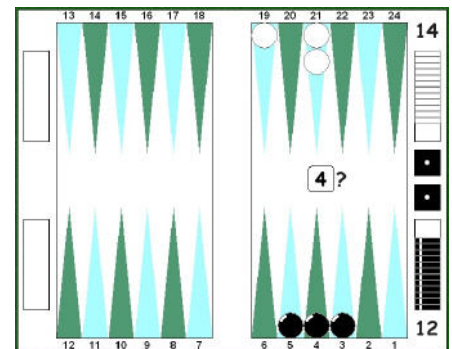
he hit on the 1-point which resulted in him making Slatts's 5-point. He didn't feel so good though after Slatts hit a 3rd checker and he danced for three rolls! Having come in on Slatts's 2-point, Slatts followed it with a 42 pointing on Nar! Slatts was going for an un-doubled gammon, however, when he had to clear his 6-point leaving three on his 7-point he decided to cube. Nar dropped. Score: 1-0.

In the next game Slatts opened with a 61 and whilst Nar made a 4-prime he had to give up his mid-point when he threw 66. Slatts made a broken 4-prime but Nar got over this with a 42 and Slatts missed the double shot. When Slatts threw 65 he thought about jumping out with both checkers but found himself 24 pips behind. So what did he do? He did it anyway!



White cube action?

Nar cubed and Slatts took. Fourteen rolls later the position looks like this:-

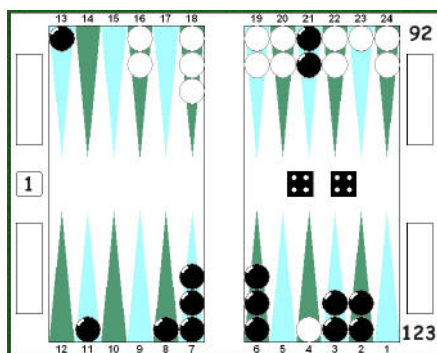


Black cube action?

Slatts cubes and Nar drops. Score: 3-0.

In the next game Slatts throws an early 66 and when Nar rolls a 66 part way through the game it means him having to leave his mid-point with two men still on Slatts's 1-point. Slatts leaves a 7-shot and Nar hits. Slatts returns the compliment with a 54 and battle continues with Slatts having three men on Nar's 4-point. Nar slots his 5-point, but Slatts rolls 64 which does nothing for him! A subsequent 44 puts Slatts in a quandary when in this position:-



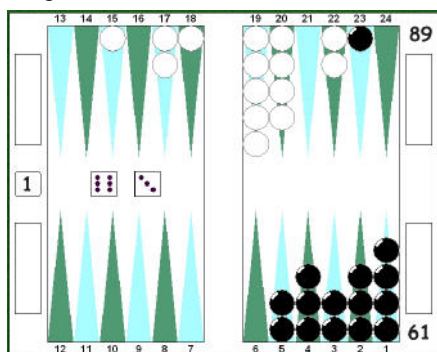


Black to play 44

He decides to take Nar and leave a blot on his 4-point. Nar misses the blot and comes in on Slatts's 1-point. Nar has to break his board as he fails to roll a 4. When Slatts cubes he has to drop. Score: 4-0.

At this point Nar gets out a small bottle of *Eau De Cologne* which he put on his forehead and Slatts jokingly remarks "No chemical warfare!" He did resort to his own secret weapon though *Red Bull*! In the next game Nar hits a blot and Slatts rolls 44 comes in and hits Nar twice leaving a blot on his 1-point. Nar hits it giving Slatts four men back. Nar cubes Slatts drops. Score: 4-1.

4-1 wasn't only the score but the first roll of both players in the next game! Nar played 13/9, 24/23 and Slatts chooses to hit on his 1- & 2-points. Whilst Nar didn't hit back he does manage to get his two back men out before Slatts does, but has not developed a board. Slatts rolls 44 twice and whilst his board looks good he still has blots on Nar's 3- & 5-points. A 31 by Nar hits and makes the 5-point but another 44 lets Slatts enter and hit, leaving Nar dancing for one roll only. His next roll, a 62, sees him come in and out. Nar now needs to keep outfield control and hit Slatts every time he comes out. However, Slatts now has a closed board and Nar has to be careful not to get hit himself. Nar only has a 2-point board but is holding points 5 to 8. A few rolls later the position is:-

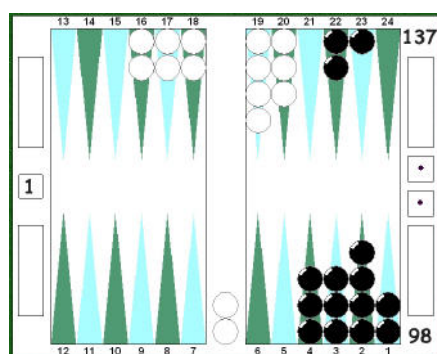


White to play 63

After rolling 63 he plays 8/2 5/2 to put Slatts on the bar. Slatts rolls 61 to hit. Nar dances. Slatts picks up another checker but Nar comes in quite quickly. Slatts cubes and wins 1 point. Score: 5-1.

Nar opens with a 31 and after Slatts splits his back two checkers with 51 Nar goes for the blitz. However Slatts rolls well and Nar ends up with four men back! Slatts only has a 1-point board though and finds it hard to develop anything, he leaves a shot and gets hit finding himself back on Nar's 1-point against a 4-point board (3 to 6). Nar leaves a blot on his bar-point but Slatts misses it. Instead Nar rolls 51 and puts Slatts on the bar. Slatts rolls a 21 but doesn't hit back choosing to leave himself at the edge of the 5-prime and covering a blot on his 3-point. Nar still has three men to bring round a badly timed 66 leaves him having to run from Slatts's 5-point with a 62 leaving two blots. Slatts hits the one in the outfield, however Nar rolls the 5 he needed to cover and makes Slatts's 5-point again. Nar gains the upper hand when he rolls a 55 to escape. He cubes and Slatts drops. Score: 5-2.

Slatts opens with 42 and follows it with 31 and then 61 giving him a 4-prime in quick time! Nar doesn't do so badly himself making a 5-prime 5 to 9. Slatts is on Nar's 3-point when he rolls a 66 and whilst he manages to get two of Nar's men on the bar it doesn't look good as his board breaks when he can't get to the edge of Nar's 5-prime. Nar cubes and Slatts takes! Snowie actually says this is too good to double and it is definitely not a take!!



White on roll

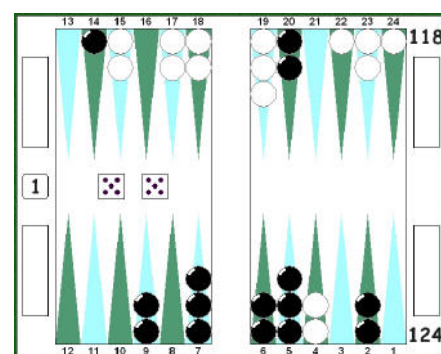
Nar eventually has to break his prime when he rolls 66. Slatts has one man on the bar still but holds the 3-point. Nar has three men off and two men on his 4-point when he rolls 31 and leaves Slatts a shot. He hits of course but has three blots and only his 2- and 1-points. Nar rolls 21! It now becomes a race with Nar favourite, even more so, when he rolls a double-4.



Slatts

Slatts gives in! Score: 5-4.

Slatts gave an early cube in the next game, which Nar takes. After several rolls Slatts has a broken 5-prime.



White to play 55

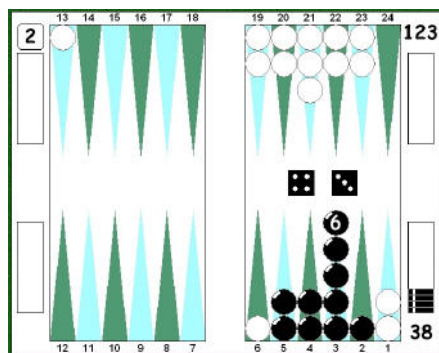
This time when Nar rolls a 55 it doesn't work so well. His next roll is 42, which meant he had to leave a blot, but Slatts misses. All it needs now is for Nar to roll a double-4 or double-6 and he goes favourite. He doesn't do that but does roll a 64 and runs with both men. Slatts hits with a 51 but has a blot on his 1-point. Nar rolls 41 and hits. Slatts covers and hits again on the 1-point. This time Nar misses. Slatts rolls 11 and chooses to leave his blot and make his 4-point instead. He hits Nar's second loose checker. Nar rolls two 61s and Slatts now has two on the bar. It's then a real roller coaster as there is hit followed by hit but Slatts eventually closes Nar out with two on the bar and Slatts looks for the gammon. He doesn't make it though but appreciates the two-point win. Score: 7-4.

Slatts has a 31 opener and I am meant to leave my reporting at this point to play in the ladies tournament. But I couldn't, as it got exciting!

Slatts cubes after Nar dances, having already got three men back. Nar takes. He subsequently makes a 1- & 2-point back game with good timing. Slatts bears in

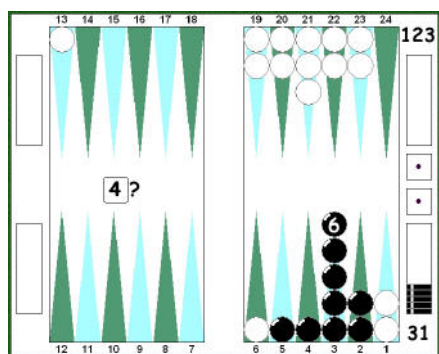


well and has three men off when Nar leaves the 2-point with one checker. Slatts has to hit it and Nar rolls 65.



Black to play 43

Slatts rolls 43 to leave two shots and Nar cubes.



White cube action?

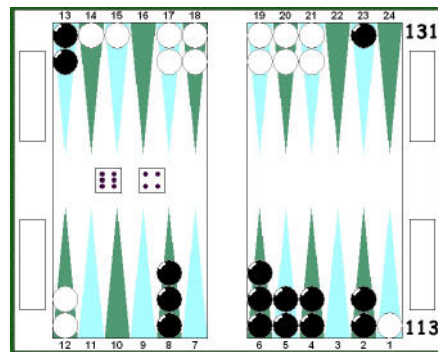
Slatts takes the 4-cube, and this time Snowie agrees with him – No Double, Take. After more eau-de cologne Nar rolls 31 and hits both blots! Slatts anchors but Nar hits another checker. Slatts has three on Nar's 2-point and six on his own 1-point when Nar has to leave a shot. Slatts misses! Nar goes on to win the four points despite leaving Slatts another shot! Score: 7-8.

So I did leave the match at this point and after having at last won a few games I found myself in the quarterfinal of the Ladies Tournament. This meant I could get back to my reporting and supporting Slatts!

I rejoined the match at 14-16 Post Crawford. I considered this to be a good score considering Slatts had been down 12-16. Nar wins the opening roll and true to form Slatts delays the cube until he gets a hit, has a 3-point board and has escaped his last checker. In fact he leaves it until he has only five checkers left to bring in with Nar on his 4-point, but Nar still takes. Slatts only has two checkers off when Nar makes a run for freedom but has seven off by the time Nar takes one off. So with a win of two points Slatts

makes it DMP. Score: 16-16.

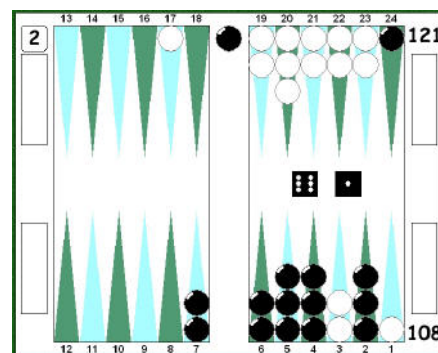
At this stage a 20% equity swap was done so this meant that they were both winners. The last game started off quite volatile with a lot of hitting backwards and forwards resulting in Nar having four back and Slatts ending up on Nar's 2-point with a 4-prime in front of him. Play continued and Nar makes a 5-prime.



White to play 64

Nar rolls 64 does he run or hit loose? The latter. Snowie does not agree with the hit and makes it the 15th choice of roll! Slatts rolls 52 and hits Nar on the 2-point and loose on his 1-point. Nar dances. A few rolls later Nar hits and Slatts dances. Nar then comes in with a 1 but has to leave the blot on his 3-point. Slatts rolls 43 and hits. The next series of rolls leave the crowd ooh-ing and aah-ing as the game swings back and forth. Right at the end Nar is left with two pieces: one on the 4- and one on the 5-point. Slatts has two left on his 1-point. It is Nar to roll and Slatts puts the customary "curse of the seven hedgehogs" on him! It works! Nar rolls 32 and Slatts goes through to the semi-finals. Final score: 17-16. This was a very friendly match and the crowd loved it!

So now it was my turn to fly the flag for Britain! I had to play Mrs Winkler (Austria) in the quarter-finals of the Ladies Tournament. The score was 3-3 to 5 with the 2-cube in play when I found myself, playing as black, in this position:-



Black to play 61

I rolled 61 and had to decide whether to come in and out again, which I did! There then followed a lot of activity!

Mrs W 22: 5/1 hits, 8/6, 24/22.

Rosey 31: come in and hit and move 18/15.

Mrs W 63: comes in and out

Rosey 54: 15/6

Mrs W 32: hits on her 1-point

Rosey 61: Hits and out

Mrs W 63: comes in and out

At this point I said I needed a 65 and promptly rolled it, much to my opponents dismay!

She closed her board but I never left a shot so won a place to the semi-finals. I must just point out that I was the only person in the semis who had to play four rounds to get there! The semi-final was going to be a long way off though as one of the Ladies, Nanga, was playing for a place in the Championship Main final.

I got back to watch Slatts playing Eric Guedj (France) in the Masters Main semi-final. The score was 5-4 to Slatts (black) playing to 19 points.

A game was already in progress and Eric cubes and Slatts takes only to find himself on the bar next roll against a 5-point board. Slatts proceeds to dance for a number of rolls. He eventually does come in but not until Eric has escaped his back men. He puts Slatts back on the bar and starts bearing off. Slatts rolls a 33 to come in and now has to save a gammon. He has five men to get round when Eric has two men off. Eric hit Slatts loose and he dances. Eric's next roll was 11, which gives him a 5-point board. Slatts dances and dances, but eventually Eric leaves the shot and Slatts hits! Eric now has the hassle of coming in on Slatts 5-point board, which he does straight away but Slatts hits him again! Eric comes in straight away again and Slatts hits again! Eric comes in and hits Slatts this time! Slatts comes straight in. Eric rolls a well-timed 66 and Slatts only just saves the gammon. Score: 5-6.

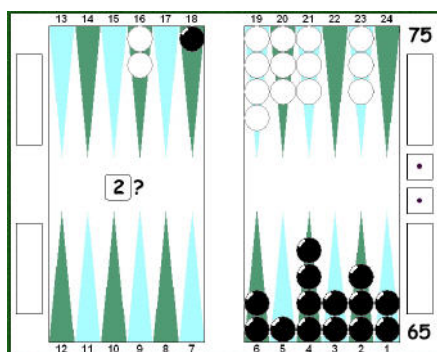
The next game started as a hitting contest with Slatts ending up with four men back behind enemy lines! It wasn't long before Eric also had four men back. After a lot of play Slatts rolled 66 to get all of his men his side of the board but Eric was still on his 3-point. Slatts had to leave a blot on his 5-point but Eric very nicely kept missing it. He also missed the blot on the 7-point until Slatts was able to get a man off. Eric eventually did hit a shot



and with a closed board offered Slatts the cube. He declined the kind offer. Score: 5-7.

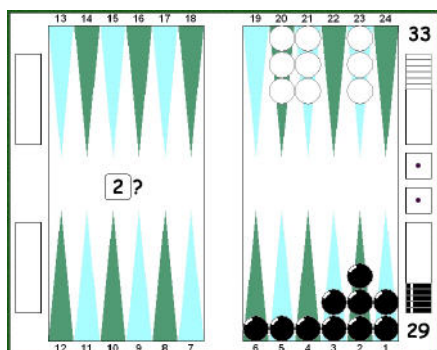
The next game went with Eric and Slatts could not develop anything. He refused the cube. Score: 5-8.

Eric went favourite in the next game as well after he hit Slatts in his home-board without leaving a blot. He dances a few times but eventually came in on the 1-point. Eric thinks about cubing but with Slatts having a 5½-point board and being ahead in the race he decides to wait. Slatts jumps out to his 18-point knowing that Eric can hit him if he rolls a 2. Eric again thinks about cubing but doesn't.



White cube action?

After a few more rolls the position is:-



White cube action?

Eric thinks again about the cube but he waits until he has two more men off. Slatts takes and his next roll is a 44, but Eric finishes him off with a 55. Score: 5-10.

Slatts has now lost 10 points in a row and must have been wondering what was going wrong. Eric cubes him again when he has a better board. Slatts takes. Eric hits loose on his 1-point and whilst missing the blot Slatts comes in and anchors on the 2-point. It doesn't get any better for him though when he throws an awkward 63 and has to leave several blots. Eric hits one of them. Slatts dances and then the next roll hits Eric on his 1-point. Eric

rolls 55 to come in straight away and moves on to his own 5-point. With 64 Slatts runs to Eric's 11-point but immediately gets hit and Eric makes his 1-point. It now looks like a definite gammon is on as Slatts fails to come in. Eric does leave a shot but Slatts misses and does get gammoned. Score: 5-14.

Slatts cubes early in the next game and Eric gives him the point. Score: 6-14.

Slatts gets a double shot early in the next game but misses and ends up getting hit himself on the next roll. He rolls 44 to dance. Eric cubes and s has to drop. Score: 6-15.

Slatts cubes after Eric dances on a 3-point board. Eric drops. Score: 7-15.

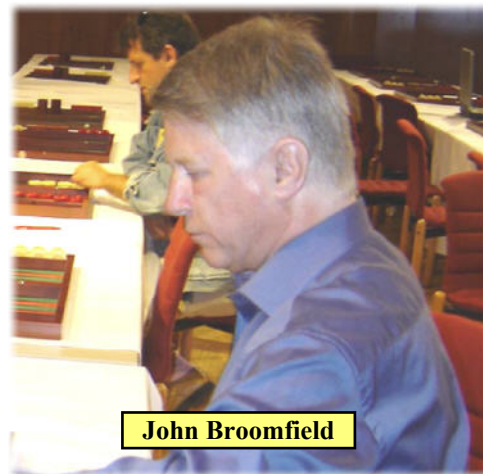
Where has Slatts's magic gone? He throws 66 twice when he is on the bar. Eric cubes and Slatts drops. Score: 7-16.

Lady luck has definitely gone for Slatts. As soon as he leaves a blot it gets hit! He has four men back on Eric's 1-point with Eric having made his 5- to 7-points. Slatts rolls a 33, which allows him to come up to Eric's 4-point with all four checkers. He has a blot on his 8-point, which Eric of course hits. He comes in on the 1-point, Eric hits it next roll and makes the point! Slatts comes in and now has five on the 4-point. When Eric does eventually leave a shot Slatts has 9s and 1s to hit but misses. Cube. Drop. Score: 7-17.

Slatts starts off well in the next game and soon has a 4-prime, however, when Eric jumps over it leaving a blot, Slatts misses. When Slatts leaves a blot next roll, Eric hits. Slatts closes his board but cannot escape the checker on Eric's 1-point. Eric closes him out and eventually cubes. Slatts drops. Score: 7-18. Crawford.

Eric hits every blot Slatts leaves but leaves himself unstructured and eventually has to leave a shot, which Slatts hits for a change! He makes a 4-prime (4 to 7) and Eric is stuck on his 1-point. Slatts manages to get another of Eric's checkers back and closes him out. He proceeds to bear-off but is well aware that Eric now has a closed board and so he has to be ultra careful. He is, and wins his first point for ages! Score: 8-18. Post Crawford.

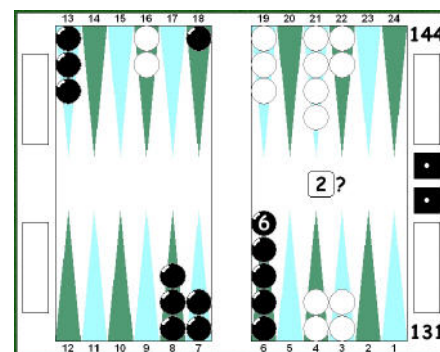
Slatts cubes late but Eric still takes. With two men on the bar Eric rolls 55 to go favourite – but there is still a long way to go. He follows the 55 with a 66 and now



it looks bad for Slatts! Slatts has three men on Eric's 4-point with a 4-prime in front of him. He escapes one man with a 64 and then miracle of miracles rolls double-5 – but is it good enough? Slatts has two men on his 14-point and Eric has two men on his 13-point. Who will clear first? Neither of the players can roll high enough for six rolls! Eventually Eric rolls a double-4 and Slatts can only manage a 43 followed by 11! A double-5 by Eric finishes it off. Final score: 8-19.

Eric now plays Serrero in an all French Final.

I then found another Brit to report on! John Broomfield (black) was playing Koch (Germany) in the semis of the Masters Consolation. I joined them when the score was 11-4 to Koch in a 15-point match.



Black cube action?

JB cubes and Koch takes. JB goes on to win the two points. Score: 11-6.

A well-timed roll of 44 gave JB the next game. Followed by another quick game when he cubed Koch out. Score: 11-8.

In the next game JB's habit of hitting loose in the early game resulted in him having a 1- and 4-point back game. Koch had cleared his back checkers so was just looking for an easy route home! This wasn't so easy though; however, JB

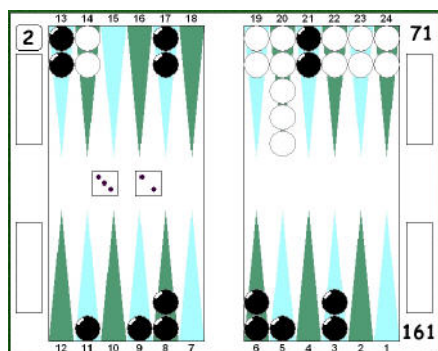


missed the first blot and with three men still back JB had to decline Koch's offer of the cube. Score: 12-8.

With two men on the bar JB carelessly rolls a double-6 early on in the game. Koch rolls a 66 himself when he has a 3-point board and hits JB again. This was promptly followed with a double-5. He now has a 4-point board but he hits JB loose twice on his 1-point and JB hits both times, which spoils Koch's momentum! Not that you would have noticed, as Koch rallies back and JB once again has two men on the bar. He hits Koch loose on his Koch's 5-point and manages to make it next roll so he is now in a 1-and 5-point back game. Sorry, I blinked! A double-6 rolled by JB ruins that. JB later gets a shot, which he hits, but Koch comes straight in and out. Koch cubes and JB takes, however, Koch follows the cube with a 66 putting JB on the back foot. They get down to three checkers each and Koch wins the two points. Score: 14-8 Crawford.

The Crawford game went JB's way with Koch dancing for a while on JB's 4-point board. JB rolled a double-1 and switched points to hit Koch, but this time he had no trouble in coming straight in on top of his two checkers on JB's 4-point. His next roll was double-4 and he comes out with all three checkers hitting JB in the process! JB later rolls a good double-4 of his own, hitting Koch. He dances and JB closes his board. Koch gets gammoned. Score: 14-10 Post Crawford

In the next game both bar-points are made when JB gives the cube and Koch takes. My writing was dwindling now having been doing it for 8½ hours! JB had two men on the bar and two men on Koch's 4-point which was the only point he could come in on! No wonder he kept dancing. Eventually the double-4 came – but was it too late to save the day?



White to play 32

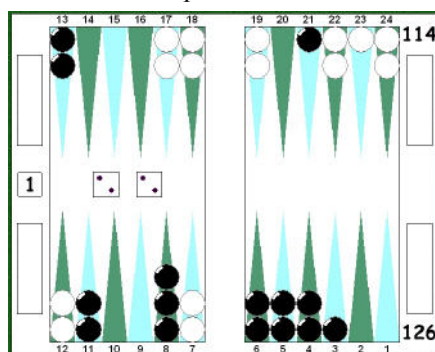
Several rolls later Koch nearly had all his men home but the gap between his 11-

point, where he had two men, and his 6-point must have looked enormous! Koch rolls a 32 and decides to leave a blot on the 11-point.

JB hits with a 61. Koch rolls 63 to dance. JB makes his 5-point and when Koch rolls a 41, he comes in on the 4-point and hits loose on his own 4-point. JB rolls the 4 to hit. What had looked like match for Koch now looked decidedly dodgy! When JB rolls another 44 to hit Koch twice you could sense Koch's disappointment. He ended up with two men on JB's 1-point against a 5-prime (2 to 7) and all of his own men were on his 1- and 2-points. He loses two points. Score: 14-12.

With the 2-cube in play Koch had built a broken 5-prime and had one of JB's checkers on his 1-point with his 5-point open. JB rolls a 54 to escape. Koch fails to hit the shot in his out-field and the race for home gets going. Koch is holding JB's bar-point with JB having his 13- and 8-points to clear. Koch rolls a double-3 and moves up to his 15-point and covers the blot on his 1-point. His next roll was a double-2 and he moved to his 11-point leaving a no-contact game with Koch slightly ahead. Another double from Koch and a poor 21 from JB meant that Koch was the first to bear-off. It was still close! Down to eight men each, then five men each and then three men each! Then JB rolls a double-5 and wins the two points. Score: 14-14.

So a place in the final looms for one of them! Koch gets off to a good start and holds both bar-points after rolling 66. JB's rolling wasn't too bad either and he soon has a 3-point board and only one man back on Koch's 4-point. Koch rolls double-2 in this position.



White to play 22

He chooses to pick and pass to cover his blot on his 2-point. JB dances first time but manages to come in with a 51 on his next roll. Koch picks and passes again but leaves blots in his outfield and JB manages to hit one of them. Koch comes in but

JB hits him loose. Koch is now behind in the race but is still holding JB on JB's bar-point. JB is relentless and keeps hitting Koch and soon has a 5-point board with only his 2-point open. He has two men off before Koch comes in. JB does leave a shot but Koch misses and JB wins a place in the final. Final score: 14-15.

So Sunday arrives and I play my Last Chance match and promptly lose it 5-0! Oh well, out comes the pad and paper! I had checked the status of the Ladies tourney but the quarter-final had still not been played and Nanga was now playing the final against our good friend Martin de Bruin (USA/Spain). I didn't get a chance to watch this match as my loyalty was with my fellow Brit, John Broomfield, who was about to start his Consolation Final. I would just like to report that Nanga was winning 16-4 to 17 and Martin made a brilliant come-back to win the match! Well-done Martin!

Slatts was able to have a nice lie in on Sunday as he had already cashed in the Masters Main and therefore had nothing to do on the final day.

The Masters Consolation Final was a 17-point match between JB (black) and Babillon (France).

The first game started with blots all over the place and JB cubing when Babillon was on the bar. Babillon takes. He soon had three men on the bar against a 5-point board and must have been regretting his hasty take! He was holding JB's 1-point though. JB resisted the urge to hit another blot. Babillon eventually rolled a double-1 (the French are good at those double 1s!) and came in from the bar but now had to try and create a board in case he got that important shot. It did come, but not until JB had all his men off apart from one on his 2-point. Babillon missed and was gammoned. Score: 4-0.

It looked like the next game would also be a hitting contest but JB decided to be more conservative and anchored on Babillon's 4-point. Babillon quickly made a 4-prime in front of him. This was soon to become a 5-prime when Babillon rolled a double-4. Wow! JB rolls a double-6 to jump over the prime (don't you just hate that when it happens to you??). Not only does JB jump out but he also makes a 4-prime in front of Babillon (6 to 9). JB cubes and Babillon takes. JB rolls a double-5 to put him ahead in the race and all he needed to do was come home safely. Babillon left his 5-point anchor



and JB rolls a 31 to hit the blot and now has a 7-prime! Babillon dances and JB closes his board. JB goes for the gammon but Babillon rolls some high dice and saves it. Score: 6-0.

An early 66 gives JB the edge in the next game but there's a long way to go and he is sitting on Babillon's bar-point (not the easiest point to clear). He decides to leave it when he rolls a 54 and Babillon pounces rolling a double-2. With a 4-point board he cubes and JB takes. JB dances and Babillon makes his 1-point leaving only his 3-point open. JB rolls the required 3 but the dice is cocked – aaaaaahhhhh! Eventually another one comes but he is not on the board for long as Babillon closes him out. He soon clears his 5- and 6-points when he rolls a double-4. JB comes in straight away and runs for his life to save the gammon. All to no avail as Babillon rolls a double-5 and the four points! Score: 6-4.

The next game starts with another blot-hitting contest and Babillon takes JB's cube when he has one on the bar and three others back. Babillon makes JB's 1- and 2-points and the game continues with JB hitting another checker and Babillon dancing on a 2½ point board. Babillon hits the blot next time but JB comes in with a double-1 and hits and whilst he does get hit back he now has a 5-prime in front of Babillon's five checkers on his 2- and 3-points. JB considers hitting another checker and decides it is the right play. He develops a 6-prime but also has two men back against a broken 4-prime. He manages to escape one man but it is soon pounced on and JB chooses to hit loose in board and gets hit again. He now has three men back. With another man loose inboard he has to think twice about hitting Babillon again and leaving his anchor. He does it anyway! Babillon misses the shot and JB remakes his 6-prime.

Babillon has five back at this stage of the game – one on the 1-point and four on the 2-point. His own board is breaking up and has three blots in it when JB chooses to hit loose on his 1-point. Babillon hits it but JB dances (only once though!) he hits a checker on the second attempt. Babillon now has a 4-point board and now makes JB's 1-point. JB bears in without mishaps but can he bear off without any mishaps?? Unfortunately not, but with Babillon only having his 1-, 2- and 3-points JB is not too concerned. He shouldn't have chosen that moment to roll a 21 though! After coming in and out next roll, he then rolls a double-1 which allows him to hit Babillon on his 1-point. Babillon dances and this gives JB the chance to get his loose checker safe. He goes on to roll a well-timed double-2 to get a gammon. Score: 10-4.

Well, this was exciting, three doubled gammon out of four games! I will let you into a secret though. JB had told me before the match started that he was going to have to play fast and furious as he had a plane to catch and had to leave at 4.45 p.m.! He had to get back to London to catch a plane early the next day to fly to the Philippines. His baby son, David (who is a delight!) was getting christened there the following Saturday.

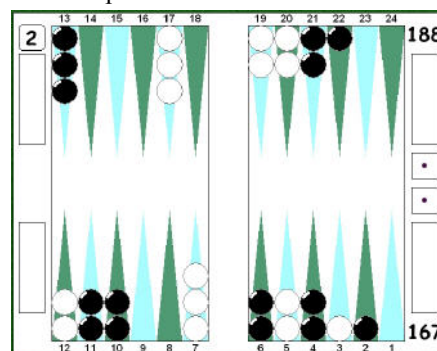
Game Five was another blot-hitting game with Babillon ending up with four back and JB three back. A couple of double-5s gave Babillon the edge but JB still accepted the 2-cube when it was offered! It was a brave take as he had two men on Babillon's 2-point behind a broken 6-prime (midpoint open). JB played to get another man back and succeeded but came in quickly which meant his board would crunch unless he could roll a 65 to escape. He was lucky enough to do this so his 5½ board remained intact. Will he get a shot? Yes! Babillon has to either hit

with a 2 or break another point. He chooses to hit but JB misses the blot. He comes in with a 6 and now has to run to save the gammon. He succeeds! Score: 10-6.

Wow, a game with no blots – how can this be? The first hit proved damaging though, JB splits his back men and Babillon ends up hitting both. It's game over when JB turns down the proffered cube! Score: 10-7.

The next two games are over quickly when Babillon cubes early and JB drops both times. Score: 10-9.

It was JB's turn to cube early in the next game and Babillon took. He had three men back but JB only had a 2-point board. Babillon hit loose, got hit back, and then hit two of JB's checkers. So both players now have four men back and only 2-point boards! JB escapes one man and hits Babillon again. Will either of them ever get around to making a board? Whoops, there goes another checker back for Babillon who now has six men back but is holding JB's 1- and 5-points. He gets the opportunity to hit two of JB's men but decides to hit only one and to get some structure to his game. A few rolls later the position is:-



White on roll



The Ladies

(left to right)

Finalist: Maria Grigis Italy
S/f: Inge Pfettrisch Germany
S/f: Andrea Riebler Austria
Winner: Rosey Bensley England

Unfortunately, play doesn't stop while I am writing so when I get back to looking at the board Babillon has no checkers in JB's home board and JB has Babillon's 3- and 4-points. JB gets a hit and Babillon throws 64 to dance. He does come in on the 1-point and JB develops a 4-point board. He gets another hit and Babillon comes in and makes JB's 3-point. JB is forced to leave a blot and gets hit. Babillon now has his 3-, 5- and 6-points. JB dances. Babillon makes his 2-point. JB rolls a 4 and comes in. Babillon leaves a one-shot but JB rolls a double-6. Babillon misses the 6-shot but rolls a double-5 to keep himself in the race; however, it also leaves a double shot. JB misses and leaves Babillon a one-shot, which he hits. JB dances and Babillon rolls a double-6 but he can only play three of them as JB is blocking. However, a double-5 later means Babillon ships the cube over and JB has to drop. Score: 10-11.

Babillon asked for a five minute break at this point. The time was 4 p.m. so JB knew he had to play aggressively. There had already been an amicable split on the money so if he had to concede the game it was not a total disaster.

The next game was over quite quickly as JB developed a 4-prime and Babillon dropped the cube when it was offered.

Score: 11-11.

Babillon developed a 5-prime early on the next game and JB already had a 4-point board so he took Babillon's cube despite having two back on Babillon's 1-point. Babillon left a blot on his 2-point and JB hit. He now has a 5-point board until a badly time double-5 meant he had to clear his 5-point as Babillon is holding his 3-point. JB meanwhile anchors on Babillon's 3-point at the edge of Babillon's 5-prime. When the 6 arrives Babillon has a welcoming committee and he needs a 2 or 3 to hit. He misses! JB gets the man safe and hits Babillon after Babillon hits him loose; to no avail as Babillon hits him loose again. This time JB dances and eventually finds himself on Babillon's 1-point against a 6-prime! He is eventually closed out but if he can come in quickly once the board breaks he has some chances. Babillon has three off when JB rolls a double-6! It wasn't good enough though and Babillon wins the two points. Score: 11-13.

In the next game JB finds himself stuck behind a broken 7-prime, but with Babillon dancing on his 5-point board he manages to find the 3 needed to move up. This was followed by a double-5 to jump over the remaining 4-prime. He closes Babillon out and goes for the gammon

but Babillon saves it. Score: 12-13.

JB took a cube in the next game, which I can only guess was based on his travel arrangements! He has three men back behind a 4-prime and whilst Babillon had three men back JB's board had crunched. He managed to regain a 5-point board but not until Babillon had started bearing off. He lost the two points. Score: 12-15.

JB cubed Babillon when Babillon has two on the bar against his 1- 3- and 6-point board. He is really conscious of the time now. After a lot of play he finds himself behind a 7-prime and his board is crunching. Babillon starts bearing off, he leaves a shot but JB misses. He concedes the match at the appropriate point and rushes for his plane. Final score: 12-17.

Well done to Babillon for winning and congratulations to both players for an exciting match.

So now I join the Masters Main Final with Eric (white) leading Serrero 11-7 to 21 points. Eric is holding a 2-cube and has a man back on Serrero's 2-point with all other points closed. Serrero hits him loose. He dances and Serrero closes his board. Serrero has five men off before Eric comes in but he saves the gammon by rolling a double-3. Score: 11-9. ▶

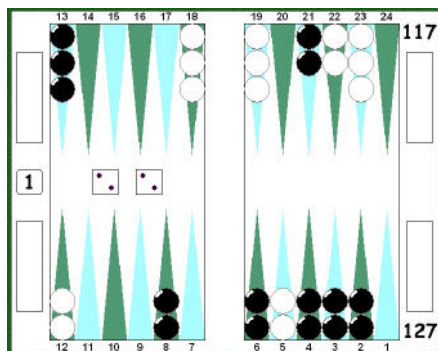
The Men

(left to right)

Main winner :	Michel Serrero	France
Main finalist :	Eric Guedj	France
Main semi-finalist :	Rainer Witt	Germany
Main semi-finalist :	John Slattery	Scotland
Consolation winner :	Alain Babillon	France
Consolation semi-finalist :	Rainer Spörk	Austria
Consolation semi-finalist :	Hans Uli Koch	Germany
Last chance winner :	Hans Uli Koch	Germany
Last chance finalist :	Nodar Gagua	Georgia/Russia



In the next game the position is:-



White to play 22

Eric has a 22 to play. He decides on 20-18(2) 13/11(2). Play continues and Serrero has a 5-point board (1 to 5) when Eric is forced to leave a shot. Serrero misses and has to run from his anchor leaving blots on his 19- and 14- points. Eric fails to hit. Serrero rolls a 54, which is a bad roll for him. He plays 19/11 giving Eric a direct 4-shot which he hits. Serrero dances, Eric cubes and with another blot Serrero has to drop. Score: 12-9.

In the next game Eric gains the first advantage, hitting Serrero with a 9-shot followed by a double-4 which puts Serrero on the bar against a 4-point board. Serrero comes in and hits Eric back. Eric offers the cube and Serrero takes. Eric comes in and hits Serrero. On his second attempt at coming in Serrero rolls a 54 and makes Eric's 5-point. Serrero rolls well and Eric now finds himself on Serrero's 2-point with two men against Serrero's broken 6-prime. He puts Serrero on the bar, but Serrero comes straight in with a 53 and Eric is now on the back foot. Serrero thinks about the re-cube but decides to carry on. Eric rolls the 53 he needed to jump out and over the prime but is still vulnerable. Serrero cubes and Eric drops. Score: 12-11.

They broke at this point so I went to see how Slatts was doing in the €200 jackpot. Not well as it happened he was 3-0 down

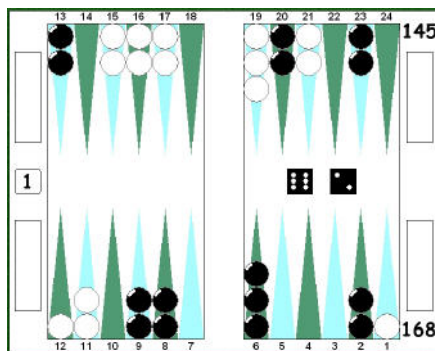


Martin

to 7. When the score was 4-2 his opponent cubed to 2 which Slatts took and re-cubed. He won the four points with some typical Slatts double-6s and went on to win the match!

So back to the Masters Main . . . and the game is quite well advanced. Eric is holding a 4-cube but has two men back on Serrero's 4-point. Serrero has all his other points closed. Eric's board is crunched and he has only his 1- and 2-points left. He has to run with a 65 and Serrero hits the checker on his 4-point and has to decide whether to leave the blot or pick and pass. He chooses the latter so Eric needs to roll a 54 to hit in Serrero's outfield. He dances. Serrero closes his board but Eric manages to come straight in and saves the gammon. Score: 12-15.

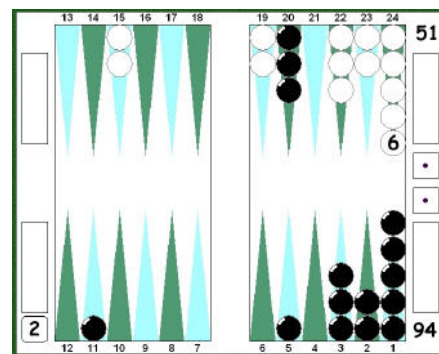
In the next game Serrero has a 62 to play.



Black to play 62

Should he hit on his 12-point? This was the first play he looked at before considering making his bar point. He opted for the hit.

Eric did come in but a timely double-3 from Serrero meant that Eric was soon on the bar again. He rolled 62 to come in and moved to his 15-point. Serrero hit this blot next roll. Eric came in with double-1 and now Serrero found himself on the bar. He rolled 42 causing him to leave a blot on his 9-point, but he was soon able to safety the checker. Eric soon found himself on the bar again, but with four checkers behind a broken 6-prime Serrero's board was soon going to crunch unless he could roll a 52 or a 62. Eric offered the cube whilst still on the bar and Serrero took. He left Eric a one-shot, which he missed the first time but when Serrero failed to safety it and Eric hit. Serrero now has five men back on Eric's 5-point – sooner or later the outside prime must crack! Eric rolled an awkward 43 leaving a 2-shot, but Serrero misses. Eric only had to bring two men in from his 10-point to win this important game, but can he do it without leaving a shot?



White on roll

No! Eric ended up leaving a shot on his 8-point but Serrero missed this one as well and Eric cleared next roll. He got his men safe with a double-3 and went on to win two points. Score: 14-15.

I went away for a short time and when I came back Serrero was 15-19 ahead. Eric was on the bar and Serrero already had three men off. Eric got a double-6 which he needed to try and save the gammon, which he did. Score: 15-20 Crawford. I missed the final game but Serrero went on to become European Champion 2006. Well-done Michel!

So off I went to play my semi-final in the Ladies tourney. I was lucky enough to win this 5-1 and got ready to play the 7 point final. I went into a three point lead and when I was offered the 2-cube with the score at 3-2 to me I thought it was a gift. Slatts, however, told me afterwards that he thought it was a drop and that the previous cube I had dropped was a take! Well, that's why he's a former European Champion and I'm not!! As it happens I did manage to turn the game around and win the two points to go 5-2 ahead.

This is definitely when I am at my most vulnerable – 2-away! In the next game I thought I was going to get an un-doubled gammon for match when I had a blitz situation but I kept hitting loose and getting hit back so I ended up with three men back myself! My opponent cubed at this point and I still thought it was worth taking. I went on to lose two points though! This was followed by me having to drop the cube in the next game taking the score to 5-5. I cubed quite early in the next game so we were playing for match. I think I would have probably dropped the cube if it had been offered to me as I was definitely in a stronger position. I didn't complain though as I went on to win the two points and the Match. I emailed my brother, Paul, to tell him and he wanted to know if that made me European Ladies Champion and did he now



need to bow and scrape!! I told him that of course he did - so if you see him bowing and scraping at the next BIBA tournament you will know why!!

So this was the end of what is likely to be our only international tournament this year and therefore (you may be pleased to know) my last report for 2006!

MC: I would like to thank Rosey for yet another of her stunning reports. They are almost as good as being there!

I'd also like to thank Michael Strato of www.gammonlife.com for the pictures.

Hilton Trophy

Report by Michael Crane

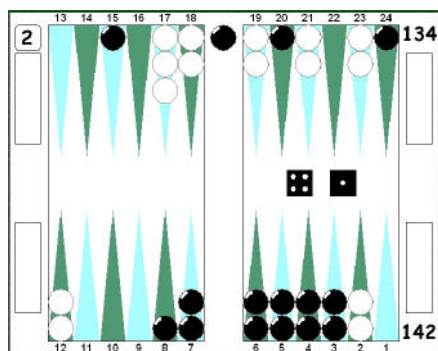
It never rains but it pours - Paul Gilbertson is a tempest! He won the the County Cups in May and now he's gone and won the Hilton Trophy in June . . . I wouldn't be surprised if he won the Keren Di Bona Memorial Trophy in July! At the moment it appears nothing can stop him. Not only has he won two consecutive tournaments but he's earned himself a 1000-to-1 Trophy into the bargain. In fact there's a rush on them this year; last month (May), Nigel Merrigan won one and now Paul has one. The last one to be won was in November 2002 by John Clark - and now it seems they're coming back into fashion!

Main (26)

OK, not the biggest entry we've ever had - but, as Sharen keeps telling me, size isn't everything . . . but I suspect she's lying to me to make me feel better! Paul's route to the Final was peppered with players who, on paper, should have beaten him, but they didn't know Paul can't read and so he trounced them all. His final opponent, David Nathan, is a veteran of Finals, he's been in six of them and he's won 50% of them. Paul has won 100% of his Final encounters!

David made just one blunder:

11 point match



Black 3 White 7
Black (David) to play 41



Pictures top to bottom:

Main: David & Paul

Consolation: Carter & Slat

Last Chance: David & Roland

Exterminator: Rosey & George

David played 25/24 8/4 as opposed to anchoring on the 20-point. Although the anchor would leave a shot with a 6 from Paul's runners, breaking off the deep anchor to do so isn't that bad. The advanced anchor for David is by far the best move and would have increased his game winning chances from 51.1% (with actual move) to 59.8%. However, perhaps in mitigation, the actual play returned more gammons; 18.6% compared to 17.8%.

The match was a good one for David, even though he lost! According to Snowie he played at World Class (must be something wrong with the bot, surely?) and Paul; played Intermediate.

Paul made eight blunders, all checker-play, and neither player made any cube blunders although they both had one missed double. Errors were plentiful, Paul 31, David 19, but overall it was a good match for both players. The stats are on the next page and the full match should be on GammonVillage.

Consolation (24)

I had fooled myself that Carter Mattig, the winner of the Consolation had travelled all the way from the States to play in the Hilton Trophy, but the truth was that he'd travelled over to attend the 'wedding of the year' - that of Dod & Jo, appropriately on June 6th . . . which, for those that know him relate to Dod thus: 666 (06/06/06). Jo knew she would get a resounding "I will" when she asked him to marry her on 6 June 2006 - what Satanist could resist?

Although new to Biba, Cater isn't new to backgammon - he's a member of the Chicago Point Club, a club that boasts some of the worlds' top players, among them



<u>Match detailed statistics</u>		
Player	David	Paul
Rating	world class	intermediate
Overall	4.284/12.179	9.296/25.702
Errors(blunders)	19(1)	31(8)
Checker play errors		
Checker play	3.426/10.672	7.851/22.436
Errors(blunders)	15(1)	24(8)
Double errors		
Overall	0.306/0.518	1.446/3.266
Missed double	0.306/0.518	1.446/3.266
Wrong double	0.000/0.000	0.000/0.000
Errors(blunders)	1(0)	7(0)
Take errors		
Overall	0.552/0.989	0.000/0.000
Wrong take	0.202/0.382	0.000/0.000
Wrong pass	0.350/0.608	0.000/0.000
Errors(blunders)	3(0)	0(0)
Favorite:David Nathan was 63.52% - 36.48%		

our own, Neil Kazaross (1999 British Open Champion). He didn't get an easy draw, he had to beat former English Open Champion - Rosey Bensley, two-times British Champion - Nigel Merrigan and four-times Biba Champion and former European Champion - John Slattery in his last three matches; and all from the 1st Round. His opponent in the final, Slats, had popped into the Consolation on the Progressive side after being beaten by Chris Ternel in the Main 3rd Round . . . but Slat's got his revenge when he knocked Chris out of the Consolation when they met in the Progressive semi-final.

In the Scotland vs USA final it was USA that came out on top leaving Scotland in the guise of Slats to take home the smaller trophy whilst Carter ran the risk of excess baggage on his flight home.

Last Chance (32)

I hate to be the bearer of controversial news but I have to reveal that Roland

Hererra is a wife-beater! I know it must come as a shock - but he beat her in the first game in the 1st Round! Gamely, Simonetta re-entered (twice more!) but she couldn't make it to the Final where Roland waited for her . . . but, not from that encounter, for he was knocked out by Nicky Check in the 2nd Round. Nicky in turn was beaten by David Startin; and it was David that played off against Roland in the Final.

Roland got to the Final only because I bullied him into re-entering and he took the final place on the drawsheet - a position that took him to the Final. Having got this far he wasn't going to be beaten - and he wasn't, leaving David with the Runner-up trophy.

Exterminator (32)

Regular readers of Biba events will know what an important role The Gilbertsons (Rosey, Paul and John) and John Slattery play in their support of Biba. Paul and Slats already have trophies this weekend - and it was only fair that Rosey had one too! She had hoped to take home a 1st place trophy but George Hall wanted that one. However, George was kind enough not to enter the pool so Rosey came '1st' after all!

Friday Jackpot (8)

Eight players, two boards! I can't believe that players come to a backgammon tournament and leave their boards at home. If they all did that it'd be a very short weekend! Thankfully after the 1st Round we had enough boards to go around and it was on one of them that Mardi Ohanesian beat Paul Gilbertson. This was to be Mardi's last appearance in the Hilton Trophy - he was up all night playing until 8:30 Saturday morning and was too tired

to play; poor dear.

Poker (10)

I find it impossible to direct and play, but Martin Hemming doesn't have any such problem. He rules the poker with a rod of iron and a stern will and a poker-face that'd be useful hanging over the fireplace to keep the kids away from the fire!



It was thanks to this face that his opponents had no idea if he was bluffing (or not) and it took him to 1st place. Slats came 2nd and Nigel Merrigan, 3rd.

Finally

I made good use of the new display feature that went a bit wrong at the County Cups and I am pleased to report that it all went smoothly. I didn't lose a single bit of data and everyone could clearly see who was playing whom and who their next opponent would be. If you'd like to see the drawsheet, you can have a PDF copy emailed to you from this email address: hilton2006@backgammon-biba.co.uk



10th Mind Sports Olympiad 2006

August 26th to September 3rd

University of Westminster, Marylebone Road





10th Mind Sports Olympiad 2006

August 26th to September 3rd

University of Westminster

Marylebone Road



Beginner's Tournament Saturday August 26 Play starts 09:30 (1 hour per round)	Qualification: Generally but not exclusively, the criteria for a beginner is anyone who has not previously won or has been highly placed in a backgammon tournament. The Director reserves the right to refuse entries if he thinks the entrant does not qualify for this category. Format: One day Swiss Format of 5, 3 point matches without the doubling cube. Prizes not given but 1st and 2nd will gain free entry into the English Open starting on Saturday, 2 nd September.
The London Cup Saturday & Sunday August 26, 27 Play starts 09:30 (2.25 hours per round)	Qualification: Open to all players. Format: Two day Swiss Format of 6, 11 point matches, three per day. 1st 2nd & 3rd will win Gold, Silver, Bronze.
1-point Wipeout Monday August 28 Play starts 09:30 (continuous play)	Qualification: Open to all players Format: One day Round Robin of 1 point matches without the cube. Entrant accruing the most points will be adjudged the winner, etc. 1st 2nd & 3rd will win Gold, Silver, Bronze.
Biba 1-Day Challenge Tuesday August 29 Play starts 09:30 (1.25 hours per round)	Qualification: Open to all players Format: One day tournament of 5, 5 point matches. 1st 2nd & 3rd will win Gold, Silver, Bronze.
The Blitz Wednesday August 30 Play starts 09:30 (45 minutes per round)	Qualification: Open to all players Format: One day Swiss Format of 6, 3 point matches. 1st 2nd & 3rd will win Gold, Silver, Bronze.
Olympiad Championship Thursday, Friday August 31, September 01 Play starts 09:30 (2.25 hours per round)	Qualification: Open to all players. Format: Two day Swiss Format of 6, 11 point matches, three per day. 1st 2nd & 3rd will win Gold, Silver, Bronze.
English Open Saturday & Sunday September 02, 03 Play starts 09:30 (1.25 hours per round)	Qualification: Open to all players. Format: Two day Swiss Format of 6, 5 point matches, four Saturday, two Sunday. 1st 2nd & 3rd will win Gold, Silver, Bronze.
Amateur Olympiad Champion (based upon positions in above using the Pentamind formula) Full Biba Rules Apply	The Amateur Olympiad Backgammon Champion will be the player with the best aggregate result over four Backgammon tournaments (excluding the Beginners tournament). Aggregate results will be based on the number of Pentamind points scored for each of a player's four best results. No extra fee. The winner will be awarded a special trophy.

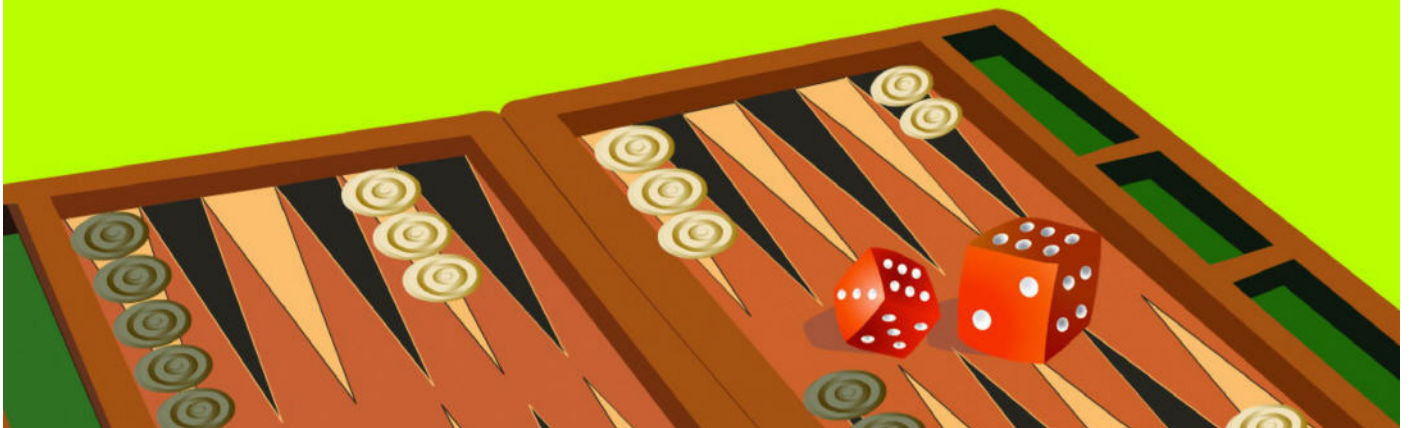
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Anyone requiring a fuller list can see one on the Biba web site or via the mail from Biba HQ. If your club isn't on this list then send me the details (*see right*) either via Biba HQ or you can email information in the order below, to: clubs@backgammon-biba.co.uk

- 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

Local Clubs

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 brismammon@blueyonder.co.uk 2nd Thurs of the month.
Dublin - Brendan Burgess - 603 0891 - wildlife@indigo.ie - 2nd Monday of every month.
Dunfermline - Graeme Campbell, 01383 738968 - graeme.campbell@tiscali.co.uk - tba
Eastbourne & Bexhill - John Thomas - 01424 219415 - Mondays 19.30.
Glasgow, Renfrew - John Paul Vass 0141 587 0255 - 1st Tuesday of month @ 7:00
Herne Bay/Broomfield - Bob Bruce - 01227 362181 or mobile 07754 549 576 - Monday
Herefordshire - Andy Robertson, 07989 345494 / 01981 240016 - Saturday, 6pm
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 - 07916-219-573 Danny Gallagher - croydonbackgammonclub@yahoo.co.uk - Sundays
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
Newcastle - Looking to start a club Cal Pearson calpearson2000@yahoo.co.uk
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 - Nigel Merrigan 01772 517672 acumen1@blueyonder.co.uk - 2nd & 4th Tuesdays
Reading - Kevin Carter - kevin@profundus.com - 0118-971 2948 - Alternate Wednesdays.
St. Albans - John Ingamells - john.ingamells@ntlworld.com - Every Tuesday
York - Kevin Stebbing 01904 611172 - Kevin@stebbing1900.fslife.co.uk - 3rd Wednesday

Where - Who - When

Forthcoming Events

THE 11th LIVERPOOL OPEN: Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th July 2006

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

**** Main Tournament ** Consolation ** Last Chance ** One Point Shoot-Out ****
**** Sweeps ** Cash Prizes! ** Bar ****

Fee: £25.00 (under 18 - £15) includes Saturday Buffet

Venue: Liverpool Bridge Club, 7 Croxteth Road, Liverpool L8 5SE

NB: For catering purposes, pre-entry is required

Details from: Simon K Jones : 0151 428 3082 / 07788 443123 vineries@btinternet.com
Please make cheques payable to Simon Jones and forward prior to Saturday 22nd July 2006



10th Mind Sports Olympiad 2006

August 26th to September 3rd

University of Westminster, Marylebone Road

Details on page 23



SAC Trophy: 5/6 August The 3rd Swiss event and a chance to rack up the GP and Ranking Championship scores with 6 x 11 point matches over the weekend.

Backpacker Trophy: 9/10 September Once again. Mike 'Mad Monk' Main presents his sponsored event offering the usual formats of Main, Progressive Consolation, Last Chance and the new 3-pointer 'Mad Monkey'!

Keren Di Bona

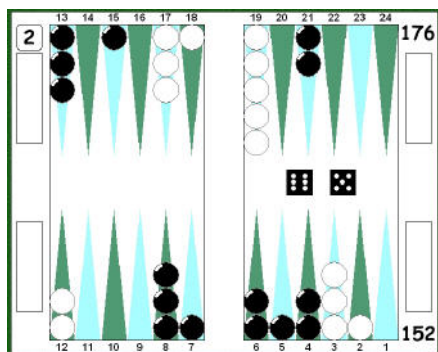
Report by Michael Crane

We don't get to see Emmanuel Di Bona often enough nowadays, so it's reassuring to know that we'll see him at least once year for his sponsored tournament. He had a good start to his event - he came 1st in the **Friday Jackpot** (8), leaving Nigel Merrigan in 2nd place. However, this early victory didn't auger well for the remainder of the weekend.

In the **Main** (28), he was a 1st Round loser to new-comer, Steven Crowden. Steven's victory was short-lived when he fell victim to Uldis Lapikens in the next round, and Uldis then suffered the same fate at the hands of Chris Ternel. Chris then continued to beat Gerry Enslin in the semi- and made it into the Final. His opponent, Jeff Barber had a couple of very tough opponents on the way: Nigel Merrigan in the last eight and John Slattery in the semi-; however Jeff prevailed in both matches and sat down to take on Chris.

In an 18-game match Chris was leading 8-1 in the 9th; and then Jeff upped a gear and began pulling back. At 8-5 to Chris the score moved to 9-5, then Jeff won a series of 1-points to catch up 9-8. Chris then took it to Crawford, 10-8 but was unable to get the better of Jeff and thus it went to DMP after Jeff's early double.

This final game went back and forth, after the 2nd roll and the cube there was a man of either colour on the bar for ten consecutive rolls as each player tried to gain an advantage. The very next roll saw Jeff (black) with a 65 to play:



Black to play 65

Having watched Jeff for most of this match and having witnessed the previous blot-hitting-contest I was certain Jeff was going to play 8/2* 7/2; but he didn't. He played the correct move of 15/10 13/7* and looked in a good strong position.

But..... Chris rolled 53 and Jeff had two in the air. Even if he had hit on the 2-point, the 53 from Chris would still have resulted in two in the air for Jeff.

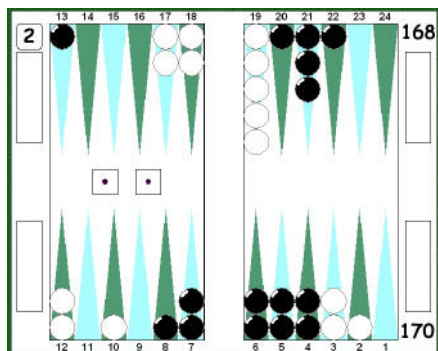


Top: Chris Ternel & Jeff Barber

Middle: Uldis Lapikens & Brian Lever

Bottom: Ron Havenhand & Khachik Melikyan

Some time later Jeff falls victim to a beautiful 'snake-eyes'



. . . . a roll he never recovers from as Chris goes on to win the title. It was a scrappy sort of match. At times each player was rated Beginner and at others, Extra-terrestrial, eventually levelling off at Intermediate for both of them. There were plenty of errors and several blunders as the statistics show.

So, how did Emmanuel fair in the **Consolation** (26)? As well as he did in the Main, I'm sorry to say! This time it was Stephen Drake who done 'im! Like Uldis, Stephen's win was short-lived when he was defeated by Brian Lever as he made his way to the Final . . . and it's here that we find Uldis waiting for him on the Progressive side of the draw! Brian prevailed in the end and Uldis had to settle for Runner-up.

Emmanuel faired better in the **Last Chance** (32 open draw) . . . on his third attempt; and then he was knocked out by George Hall. Now, there's a pattern emerging: George was then knocked out by Khachik Melikyan, and Khachik went on to the Final. Ron Havenhand fought his way through from his one and only entry to meet Khachik and he just kept on going to come out the victor.

Emmanuel faired the best in the **Mini World Cup** (8) where he got as far as the 2nd Round or the semi-finals as he called it! Here he was beaten by Stephen Drake who then beat Roy Hollands in the Final.

In the **Poker** (10) the 'Gilbertson' presence in the top three was there in the guise of John Slattery who came 2nd to Chris Gibbins, with Roy Hollands in 3rd place. Rosey just missed out coming in 4th place - and I'm not even going to mention Paul Gilbertson's position! However, Paul did rack up 12 consecutive 11-point wins over the weekend, a record he jointly holds with Michael Brereton - although Michael is yet to play a 13th.

Finally

It was a good weekend. Plenty of sunshine and plenty of backgammon. Emmanuel might not have been a winner in Coventry but I'm sure he felt one when Italy got the better of the French in the World Cup.

Lastly, an anonymous benefactor donated a bottle of wine over the weekend with which to toast Ernie Pick. Ernie left the UK and returned to sunny Spain on 10 July. Sad news indeed for backgammon - especially if you live in Spain :-)

Match detailed statistics		
Player	Jeff Barber	Chris Ternel
Rating	intermediate	intermediate
Overall	11.916/60.357	9.143/47.405
Errors(blunders)	49(21)	33(13)
Checker play errors		
Checker play	8.064/46.563	7.547/41.496
Errors(blunders)	32(13)	25(10)
Double errors		
Overall	3.852/13.794	1.596/5.910
Missed double	3.213/12.200	1.226/5.021
Wrong double	0.639/1.595	0.371/0.889
Errors(blunders)	17(8)	8(3)
Take errors		
Overall	0.000/0.000	0.000/0.000
Wrong take	0.000/0.000	0.000/0.000
Wrong pass	0.000/0.000	0.000/0.000
Errors(blunders)	0(0)	0(0)
Favorite:Chris Ternel was 62.95% - 37.05%		



Peter Chan, who took this photo, thinks that Roy and Ron could pass as father & son.

What do you think?

Footnote: Roy emailed me - *When I met Stephen Drake in the final of the Mini World Cup he said I would be getting the prize money as he had not paid his £10 entry. Stephen won and you then told me that you had paid Stephen's £10 and hence won the prize money.*

Does this mean that only the Director can put in money for others or can any of us do it? Shouldn't we all have a chance to have have taken up such options? Does it mean that if someone does not enter the Prize Fund then you could put in the money for them? Are others also allowed to pay in such cases and qualify to win the Prize Fund?

If you know a certain player hasn't entered a pool etc. and you are willing to pay it for them there's nothing to stop you doing it. I also 'backed' Stephen in the Consolation (and lost a tenner!). So long as the money is paid before the draw is made I see no reason why you or any one else can't do the same.

A precedent was set by Brendan Burgess when he 'backed' Stephen Turner, winner of the 1996 British Open . . . he got in there just before I did!



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 Knockout,

Poker Grand Prix and Jackpots subject to demand.

Registration Fees: Members only: £20 -you can join on the day-
Entrants not residing at the hotel, £10 extra to cover facilities
(all fees and surcharges to be paid on the day - prepayment not required)

FRIDAY

2130: Warm-up Knockout &
Jackpots (on demand)

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 £94, two nights £180

Reservations: 02476 603000 ask for 'Group Reservations' 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.*

Bright 'n' Breezy, 13/14 January 2007

Holiday Inn Brighton-Seafront

The rates for Dinner, Bed & Breakfast per room are:

Single room 1 night @ £75 -- Single room 2 nights @ £144

Double/Twin room 1 night @ £111 -- Double/Twin room 2 nights @ £214

The contact numbers are:

Tournament information 01522 888676 or info@backgammon-biba.co.uk

Accommodation 01273 828280 and quote 'backgammon'

It should be noted that the hotel have blocked off an allocation of 50 rooms and they will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis. To be certain of a room book as soon as you can and avoid being disappointed. The hotel has their own car park the cost of which is £12 per day. However, there is a NCP carpark nearby which guests can use if preferred.

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 provided.

2006 and 2007 Calendars on the next page ►

2006 Tournament Calendar

Jul 29-30	10 th Liverpool Open	GP	-	Liverpool	Combination
Aug 05-06	SAC Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
Aug 26-Sep 03	Mind Sports Olympiad	GP	-	Manchester	Swiss
Sep 09-10	Backpacker Trophy	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
Oct 07-08	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
Oct 21-22	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

2007 Tournament Calendar * = to be confirmed

Jan 13-14	Bright 'n' Breezy	GP	UK	Brighton	Knockout
Jan 26-28	5th Cotswold Tournament	GP		Nr. Stroud	Knockout
* Feb 03-04	Jarvis Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
* Mar 10-11	Slattery Scottish Open	GP	UK	Coventry	Knockout
* Mar 31-Apr 01	Play65 British Open	GP	UK	Coventry	Knockout
* Apr ??	Manchester 1-Day	GP	-	Manchester	Combination
* May 05-06	County Cups Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
* Jun 02-03	Hilton Trophy	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
* Jun 30-Jul 01	Keren Di Bona Memorial	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
* Jul ??	11 th Liverpool Open	GP	-	Liverpool	Combination
* Aug 11-12	SAC Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
* Aug ??	11 th Mind Sports Olympiad	GP	-	Manchester	Swiss
* Sep 01-02	Backpacker Trophy	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
* Oct 06-07	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP	-	Coventry	Knockout
* Oct ??	15 th Irish Open	GP	UK	Dublin	Combination
* Nov 03-04	Townharbour Trophy	GP	UK	Coventry	Swiss
* Dec 01-02	Gilbertson UK Finals	-	-	Coventry	Double KO

Tournament Results

Hilton Trophy, 3 -4 June, 2006

Main (27)

1	Paul Gilbertson
2	David Nathan
3/4	Chris Ternel
3/4	Tim Mooring
5/8	Roland Herrera
5/8	John Slattery
5/8	Nicky Check
5/8	Peter Bennet

Consolation (25)

1	Carter Mattig
2	John Slattery
3/4	Rosey Bensley
3/4	Chris Ternel
5/6	Jeff Barber
5/6	Nigel Merrigan
7/8	Peter Bennet
7/8	Tim Mooring

Last Chance (32)

1	Roland Herrera
2	David Startin
3/4	Tim Line
3/4	Adrian Jones
5/8	Nicky Check
5/8	Mick Vacarey
5/8	Kevin White
5/8	Martin Hemming

Exterminator (32)

1	George Hall
2	Rosey Bensley
3/4	Jeff Barber
3/4	Uldis Lapikens
5/8	Brian Barber
5/8	Nicky Check
5/8	Kevin Stebbing
5/8	Mick Vacarey

Friday Jackpot (8)

1	Mardi Ohannessian
2	Paul Gilbertson
3/4	Chris Ternel
3/4	Mark Dixon

Poker (10)

1	Martin Hemming
2	John Slattery
3	Nigel Merrigan

9.28	Carter Mattig
9.27	Roland Herrera
6.19	John Slattery
6.17	Nicky Check
6.17	David Startin
6.17	Tim Line
6.16	George Hall
4.13	Nigel Merrigan
4.13	Peter Bennet
4.13	Mark Dixon
4.13	Mick Vacarey
4.13	Adrian Jones
4.12	Jeff Barber
2.58	Brian Barber
2.57	Kevin White
2.56	Uldis Lapikens
2.06	Ray Tannen
2.06	Kevin Stebbing
2.06	Simonetta Barone
2.06	Jonathan Powell

Grand Prix @ Hilton Trophy

13.41	Paul Gilbertson
9.29	Tim Mooring
9.29	David Nathan
9.29	Chris Ternel
9.28	Rosey Bensley



Keren Di Bona Memorial Trophy, July 8 & 9, 2006

Main 28

1	Chris Ternel
2	Jeff Barber
3/4	Gerry Enslin
3/4	John Slattery
5/8	Kevin White
5/8	Uldis Lapikens
5/8	Nigel Merrigan
5/8	David Nathan

5/8	Peter Chan
5/8	George Hall
5/8	Chris Gibbins

9.27	Ron Havenhand
6.19	Nigel Merrigan
6.19	Uldis Lapikens
6.19	John Slattery
6.19	Kevin White

Mini World Cup 8

1	Stephen Drake
2	Roy Hollands
3/4	Michael Crane
3/4	Emmanuel Di Bona

6.18	Dave Motley
4.13	Nicky Check
4.13	Rosey Bensley
4.13	David Nathan
4.13	Paul Gilbertson
4.13	Mick Vacarey
4.13	George Hall
4.13	Steven Crowder

Consolation 26

1	Brian Lever
2	Uldis Lapikens
3/4	Rosey Bensley
3/4	Gerry Enslin
5/6	Dave Motley
5/6	Paul Gilbertson

Friday Warm-up 8

1	Emmanuel Di Bona
2	Nigel Merrigan

Poker 10

1	Chris Gibbins
2	John Slattery
3	Roy Hollands

4.12	Stephen Drake
4.12	Khachik Melikyan
4.11	Arthur Musgrove
2.58	Peter Chan
2.58	Chris Gibbins
2.58	Araik Parsilyan

Last Chance 32

1	Ron Havenhand
2	Khachik Melikyan
3/4	Arthur Musgrove
3/4	Mick Vacarey
5/8	Adrian Jones

Grand Prix @ Keren Di Bona:

18.58	Chris Ternel
13.42	Jeff Barber
9.29	Gerry Enslin
9.28	Brian Lever

2.57	Adrian Jones
2.06	Roy Hollands
2.06	Emmanuel Di Bona
2.06	David Startin
2.06	Ruben Gulustyan

Ranking Championship (Top 50) July 2006

14	2147.00	Nigel Merrigan	14	1649.29	David Startin	9	1426.44	Arthur Wright
14	2121.86	Paul Gilbertson	14	1610.21	Rosey Bensley	9	1368.67	Peter Bennet
14	2106.07	John Slattery	14	1599.86	Chris Gibbins	9	1364.11	Paul Christmas
14	2085.86	Chris Ternel	14	1566.93	Ron Havenhand	9	1198.56	Fanika Petkovska
14	2043.43	Gerry Enslin	14	1519.50	Myke Wignall	8	1770.75	Tim Mooring
14	2003.21	Jeff Barber	13	1813.77	Jason Champion	8	1703.25	Jon Barnes
14	1955.14	Uldis Lapikens	13	1630.54	David Nathan	8	1446.75	Paul Barwick
14	1952.86	John Samuel	13	1605.08	Mick Vacarey	8	1180.88	Jonathan Powell
14	1946.21	Martin Hemming	13	1510.62	Kevin White	7	2073.57	John Jurst
14	1886.14	Tim Line	12	1744.25	Rodney Lighton	7	1711.71	Rachel Rhodes
14	1847.36	Mardi Ohannessian	12	1650.17	Tony Lee	7	1586.29	Mike Heard
14	1809.36	Nicky Check	12	1536.58	Peter Christmas	7	1515.71	Tony Walters
14	1776.64	Stephen Drake	11	1759.09	Eamon Keogh	7	1457.43	Peter Chan
14	1769.50	Adrian Jones	10	1818.50	Ray Tannen	6	1924.83	Mike Grabsky
14	1750.71	Dave Motley	9	1812.78	Lawrence Powell	6	1754.00	Julian Fetterlein
14	1713.00	Stephen Cole	9	1610.89	Tony Fawcett	6	1676.67	Michelle Fisher
14	1687.71	George Hall	9	1480.00	John Gilbertson			

Grand Prix Championship (Top 50) July 2006

61.92	John Slattery	34.06	Uldis Lapikens	20.64	Stephen Cole
60.36	Nigel Merrigan	34.05	Rosey Bensley	20.62	Simonetta Barone
58.78	David Startin	34.03	Stuart Mann	19.61	Mike Greenleaf
51.60	Chris Ternel	33.52	Ron Havenhand	19.61	Chris Gibbins
51.60	Paul Gilbertson	33.01	Brian Lever	19.60	John Gilbertson
51.01	Martin Hemming	31.97	Ian Tarr	19.59	Tim Mooring
47.44	Jeff Barber	30.94	Stephen Drake	19.59	Tony Walters
43.30	Nicky Check	28.88	Julian Fetterlein	19.58	Lawrence Powell
41.28	John Hurst	28.88	David Nathan	19.09	Peter Christmas
40.23	Tim Line	27.86	Mick Vacarey	19.06	Paul Barwick
36.60	Myke Wignall	26.84	Jason Champion	18.58	Mike Grabsky
36.11	Mardi Ohannessian	24.77	Ray Tannen	18.56	Ann Pocknell
35.58	Adrian Jones	24.76	Mark Heidenfeld	18.06	Eamon Keogh
35.09	John Samuel	23.71	Kevin White	17.54	Dod Davies
34.58	Gerry Enslin	23.18	George Hall	16.49	Rachel Rhodes
34.55	Dave Motley	22.71	Tony Lee	16.00	Mick Butterfield
34.54	Peter Bennet	20.64	Rodney Lighton		

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Active Rankings (Top 90) July 2006

2005	2005	Julian Fetterlein	1723	1723	Kevin Stebbing	1604	1604	Edwin Turner
1952	1955	John Slattery	1722	1722	Simon K Jones	1600	1600	Ken Gibson
1939	1918	Brian Lever	1718	1688	Uldis Lapikens	1599	1599	John Gilbertson
1883	1883	Lawrence Powell	1715	1715	Sean Casey	1591	1591	Eddie Barker
1879	1879	Tony Lee	1709	1721	Arthur Musgrove	1583	1583	John Wright
1877	1913	David Startin	1708	1708	Brendan Burgess	1583	1582	Dave Motley
1853	1853	Rachel Rhodes	1697	1717	Emmanuel Di Bona	1575	1575	Paul Statter
1836	1836	Stuart Mann	1697	1712	Adrian Jones	1570	1570	Geoff Conn
1826	1761	Chris Ternel	1696	1696	Dale Taylor	1568	1568	Grahame Powell
1825	1835	Nicky Check	1694	1694	Steve Rimmer	1561	1561	Jon Barnes
1824	1812	Nigel Merrigan	1692	1692	Bob Young	1561	1561	Roland Herrera
1817	1817	Ray Tannen	1688	1688	Mike Greenleaf	1556	1556	Andrew Darby
1815	1815	John Hurst	1681	1681	Mark Heidenfeld	1551	1551	Eamon Keogh
1812	1820	David Nathan	1680	1640	Jeff Barber	1546	1510	Gerry Enslin
1802	1802	Dave McNair	1673	1673	Rodney Lighton	1539	1539	Vicky Chandler
1788	1788	Dod Davies	1672	1672	Ian Tarr	1537	1537	Darryl Kirk
1776	1776	Steve Hallet	1670	1670	John Thomas	1535	1535	Stavros Elia
1772	1772	Richard Granville	1669	1669	Jason Champion	1523	1523	Paul Barwick
1769	1769	Peter Bennet	1662	1662	Connor Dickinson	1522	1522	Paul Christmas
1765	1765	Stephen Drake	1658	1654	Ron Havenhand	1516	1516	Andrew Sarjeant
1762	1762	Mardi Ohannessian	1652	1652	Barry McAdam	1514	1505	George Hall
1756	1756	Steve Pickard	1650	1650	Brian Busfield	1513	1509	Peter Chan
1755	1760	Paul Gilbertson	1647	1647	Mick Butterfield	1512	1512	Felix Vink
1754	1754	Mike Grabsky	1646	1646	Martin Hemming	1495	1495	Cliff Connick
1752	1752	Ann Pocknell	1638	1638	Martin Barkwill	1494	1494	Matthew Fisher
1748	1748	Danny Cohen	1630	1630	Jeff Ellis	1490	1490	David Horner
1741	1741	Peter Christmas	1626	1626	Tim Line	1484	1484	Tony Walters
1740	1740	Raj Jansari	1617	1617	Mike Heard	1483	1483	Miles Ilott
1728	1743	Roy Hollands	1609	1609	Ian Shaw	1483	1483	Richard Biddle
1727	1727	Tim Mooring	1609	1609	Ian Gwynne	1483	1483	David Sanders

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