

BIBAFAX

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

Office: 01522 888676, Mobile: 07900 916468

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



Dedicated To Backgammon



HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY

BIBAFAX

Welcome to the world's only colour, black & white, pdf, and email backgammon magazine!

This landmark issue celebrates a long and illustrious succession of the magazine from its first appearance in February 1990 when it was published just four times a year and in black & white only. A time long before digital cameras and the internet, long before online backgammon and bots to teach us how to better our game. Long before many of you began playing backgammon!

In this age of PCs and laptops and handheld computers it is comforting to know that a physical magazine such as Bibafax is still popular and is read all over the world. Within this 100th issue some of my friends have allowed me to reproduce some of their own original material for the delight of all Bibafax readers. I urge you to seek out their publications or web sites or services, for it is these friends that have supported me over the years and have been my inspiration.

Our first historic article (see page 3) is one I hinted at in Bibafax 99, page 7, concerning the origin of the doubling cube. It is from Bill Davis, Editor of Chicago Point Backgammon Magazine, and is the result of some exhaustive and exhausting research.

The second article (see page 10) is from Carol Joy Cole, Editor of the Flint Area BackgammonNews. It lists the Top 32 Giants of Backgammon, which is something that happens every couple of years. Carol also gave her kind permission for Biba member, Julian Fetterlein's article which she published.

Jon Barnes British Open Champion 2009

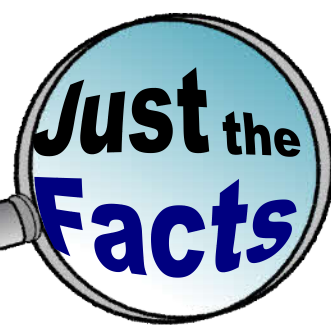
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See page 26 for full report



Backgammon and Doubling



By Bill Davis, Editor of Chicago Point Backgammon Magazine

A person could dedicate his entire life studying the history of backgammon. Much has been written about the game over the years. But there is one historical backgammon topic that remains for the most part, a mystery: the introduction of optional doubles and the invention of the doubling cube.

David Levy, in a 2003 GammOnLine forum discussion, references Francis Willughby's Book of Games: a 17th Century Treatise on Sports, Games, and Pastimes (ca 1660 in England), edited by David Cram, Jeffrey L. Forgeng and Dorothy Johnston, and published by Ashgate in 2003. In "Ticktack," one of the described backgammon-like games, doubling the stakes is part of the rules. The term "vie" means to double. If a player accepts the double, he says "I see it." Otherwise, he can yield the game. The big difference is that only the initial "vie" doubles the stakes. Future "vies" in the same game triple and next quadruple the stakes.

But that is ancient history and doesn't relate directly to our game. Permitting players to optionally double and redouble the

stakes prior to rolling was responsible for backgammon's resurgence in the United States (and later across the globe) from about 1927 into the 1930s.

Over the past two years, *Chicago Point* has collected a treasure trove of backgammon doubling information from old newspapers, magazines, and books. Special thanks to Ed Bennett (who made a trip to the New York City Racquet & Tennis Club and interviewed the older players), Ken Bame, Chris Bray, Frank Frigo, Kathleen Davis, David Levy, Vic Morawski, and Grant Schneider for their help in this project.

Let us first list all of the facts we know regarding doubling and the cube. Later in 2009, we will analyze the known information and make our best guess on what we really know.

In the meantime, if you can provide an earlier reference for any of the material shown herein, please e-mail me bg@chicagopoint.com.

Bill Davis

The most commonly quoted year for the introduction of doubling into backgammon is 1925.

The following publications reference that year:

1. George Mead Rushmore, Racquet & Tennis Club: Some History and Some Memories (1964), page 92. *"The present game is played by doubling and may be due to Jack Wemple who, about 1925, introduced the doubling game. I was told that Wemple invented it, but at least one writer on subject says it came from Scotland or England. Madison Avenue was not quite as publicity conscious in those days, so we are not told for sure, but at least I believe that Wemple introduced it to the clubs with which the Racquet was connected."*
2. National Geographic Society wire service, "Backgammon Hits It Big," New Castle (PA) News (June 6, 1973).
3. Mike Goodman, "Backgammon Hustlers--And How They Do It," Los Angeles (CA) Times (January 26, 1975).
4. Mike Goodman, "A Hustler's Dream Comes True," The Tucson (AZ) Daily Citizen (July 19, 1975), page 5.
5. Jacqueline Smith, "Oldest Game in History Earns Popularity in U.S. And Gains Followers Here," Naples (FL) Daily News (April 4, 1976).

Two men are credited with introducing the concept of doubling:



(L) Coco Chanel & Grand Duke Dmitri--circa 1921. (R) Grand Duke Dmitri, son Paul, and wife Audrey Emery--Nov. 1931.

1. Grand Duke Dmitri (Pavlovich) credited by Charles Cooke, "The Talk of the Town," New Yorker (Sept. 6, 1930), pp. 12-13, *"This, according to one story, was thought of by the Grand Duke Dmitri, who lives in Paris, where backgammon is called 'tric trac,' and who has been playing it for years."*

Also credited by John Longacre, "To Double or Not to Double," Vanity Fair (July 1931), page 52. *"The most recent example of this steady evolution in a game is the Doubling, or Modern, game of Backgammon..."*

2. Jack Wemple credited by George Mead Rushmore, Racquet & Tennis Club: Some History and Some Memories (1964), p. 92.

One man is credited with inventing the doubling cube:

W. Whitewright Watson credited by John De St. Jorre, Racquet & Tennis Club: An Historical Report (2007), page 148. *"An annual championship tournament began in 1925, and was won for four years in succession by W Whitewright Watson, who is credited with inventing the doubling cube, which ushered in the modern game."*

W. Whitewright Watson playing backgammon at a 1931 winter charity party in Palm Beach, Florida. (Tyrone PA Daily Herald; Feb. 2, 1931)



Other references to the origin of doubling include:

1. Frank Crowninshield, "Bridge or Backgammon?" in Vogue (September 14, 1929), pp. 90 & 188. *"It remained for a group of enthusiasts at the Racquet Club in New York to invent a further hazard in the shape of 'matches and doubles.'"*

2. J. Van Cleft Cooper, "Learn Backgammon In 5 Minutes a Day" column in the Lowell (MA) Sun, (Oct. 3, 1930). *"The doubling feature of bridge has been adapted to modern Backgammon."*

3. Grosvenor Nicholas, Modern Backgammon (1928) p. 23. *"It is said that the doubling, which has so greatly increased the possibilities of the game, as well as its popularity, was first originated on the continent of Europe in connection with the game of golf."*

4. National Geographic Society wire story, New Castle (PA) News (June 6, 1973) p. 17. *"Backgammon's rules were codified by England's Edmond Hoyle in 1743 and remained virtually unchanged until 1925, when some unknown American invented the doubling cube."*

5. John Longacre, Backgammon of Today (1930), pp. 3-4. *"The development and perfection of what may fairly be called -- in this country, at least -- the Backgammon of today, may be attributed to two New York clubs in which the game has been played intensively for over a generation."*

6. George Mead Rushmore, Racquet & Tennis Club: Some History and Some Memories (1964), page 92. *"... at least one writer on the subject says it came from Scotland or England."*

7. Oswald Jacoby & John R. Crawford, The Backgammon Book (1970), page 111. *"We don't know who first added the doubling feature to backgammon, but we feel we owe him a great debt."*

First mentions of using matches to keep track of doubling:

1. Frank Crowninshield, "Bridge or Backgammon" in Vogue (September 14, 1929), p. 90. *"Backgammon, as a game, was a dead and discarded pastime relegated to old men in chimney corners until the practise of doubling---'doubling by matches,' as it is called---was injected into it..."*

2. Elizabeth Clark Boyden, The New Backgammon (Foreword dated June 5, 1930), page 34. *"At present time, the popular method of counting the doubles is by the use of common matches."*

3. Lelia Hattersley, How To Play The New Backgammon (1930), p. 38. *"In order to regulate and simplify all doubling and the matter of credits and losses, New York society has invented a very simple device of matches."*



(left)
Elizabeth Clark Boyden
Playing bridge in the 1930s



(right)
Lelia Hattersley
Teaching back-gammon circa early 1930s.



(left) Backgammon matches (sometimes made of bakelite) were used for scoring prior to the doubling cube.
(right) Collier's April 11, 1931 cover illustrated backgammon being played using a container of scoring matches.

First written acknowledgment of doubling in backgammon:

Grosvenor Nicholas, Modern Backgammon (1928), page 6. *"It has remained for the Twentieth Century to further elaborate the game of backgammon, by the introduction of 'doubling' and 'chouette' and give us modern backgammon. This new game is gaining ground so rapidly that the sun seems destined again to shine upon dicing as it did in the time of the Caesars. Present circumstances are so propitious that we need consult no Cumean Sibyl or other augury to predict for modern backgammon and unprecedented popularity."*

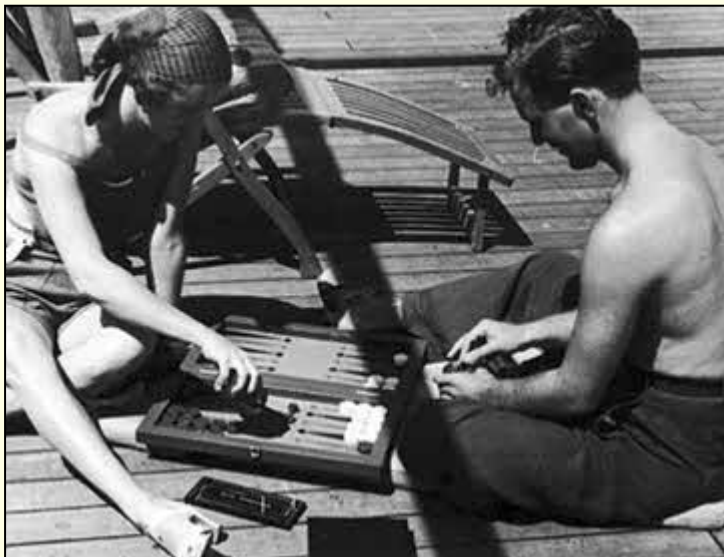
Other early methods for keeping track of doubling in backgammon:



1. Scoring Dial

(left) Scoring dial owned by Chris Bray
(right) Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and Joan Crawford at their home in 1931 using a scoring dial to keep track of doubling.

Other early methods for keeping track of doubling in backgammon (continued):



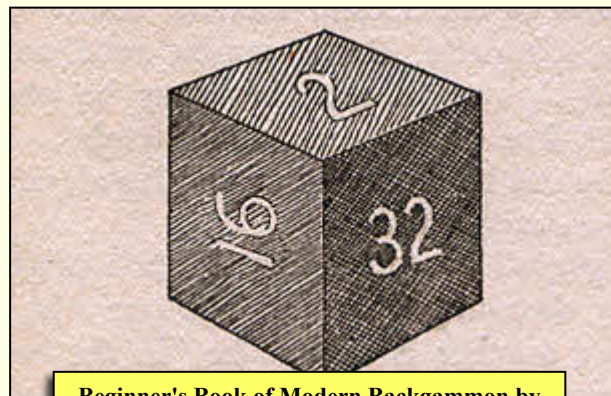
2. Peg board: (left) The peg board was another method used for scoring backgammon (right) A couple scores their game with a peg board cruising on the Conte di Savoia passenger ship in the early 1930s.

First written mention of the doubling cube in backgammon:

1. Lelia Hattersley, *How To Play The New Backgammon* (1930), p. 39. *"Many players, especially in Chouette, prefer to keep track of their doubles and the current stake with a device known as a doubling cube."*

2. Ralph A. Bond, *Beginner's Book of Modern Backgammon* (October 1930), page 77. *"The modern method of doubling is very simple. A cube, such as shown in the illustration below, is used."*

3. Elizabeth Clark Boyden, "How To Play Today's Backgammon," in the *Cumberland (MD) Evening Times*, (Oct. 3, 1930). *"Doubling cubes can now be purchased which eliminate the nuisances of matches. These cubes are about two inches square and are similar to dice except that they are numbered to correspond to the doubles as follows: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64."*



Beginner's Book of Modern Backgammon by Ralph A. Bond was the first book to illustrate a doubling cube.

According to the following references, automatic doubles were devised after the invention of optional doubles:

1. Grosvenor Nicholas, *Modern Backgammon* (foreword dated Jan. 4, 1928), page 35. *"Before concluding this chapter, we must mention one more recent development in connection with doubling. This is known as the automatic double."*

2. Lelia Hattersley, *How To Play The New Backgammon* (1930), page 37. *"A still more recent development of Backgammon is the additional form of doubling called the automatic double."*

3. Elizabeth Clark Boyden, "How To Play Today's Backgammon," newspaper column in the *Frederick Post* (Oct. 14, 1930). *"In addition to these old friends [optional doubling, gammons, and backgammons] there now is a new form of automatic doubles, as follows: Whenever two players throw the same number, when they each cast one die to decide the opening move, they must throw again and the score is automatically doubled."*

First reference to a doubling cube with a '1' on it (instead of a 64):

Prince Alexis Obolensky & Ted James. *Backgammon: The Action Game* (1969), page 140. *"There are now doubling blocks manufactured that start with the number one."* [The late Larry Strommen of Indiana manufactured this type of doubling cube in the 1980s and 1990s.]

The "64" has been replaced with a "1" on this type of doubling cube.



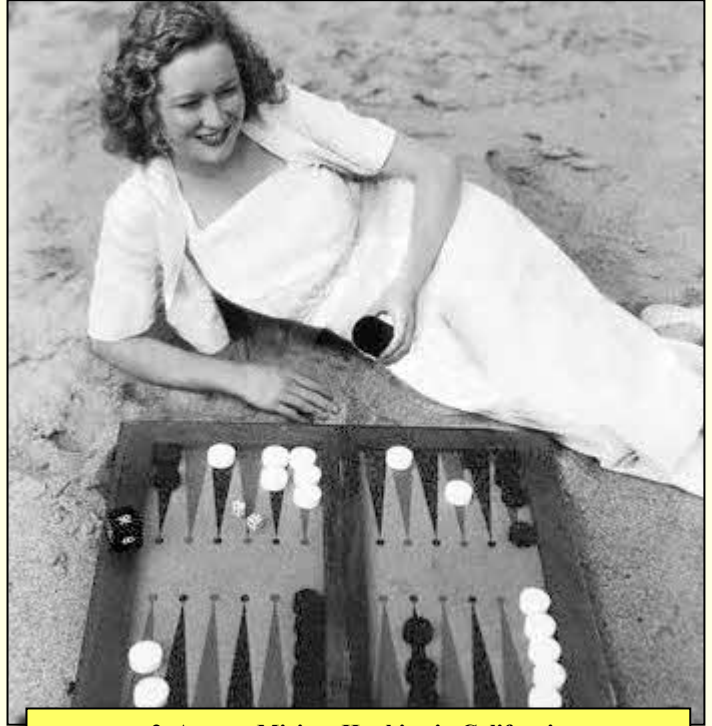
First two photographs of a doubling cube:

1. "America Goes Backgammon!" The Orlean (NY) Evening Times (Sept. 23, 1930): The 1930 caption reads: *"A swanky Chinese red leather-topped backgammon table may be converted into a bridge table simply by lifting out the backgammon board and turning it over."* (Photo from A. G. Spalding and Bros.)

2. Actress Miriam Hopkins in California (Picture taken Summer, 1931): The original 1931 caption reads: *"When Miriam Hopkins completed her role opposite Maurice Chevalier in Paramount's 'The Smiling Lieutenant' at Eastern Studios and was summoned to Hollywood to play a featured part in '24 Hours,' she paused at her hotel just long enough to unpack her trunks, then hurried to the nearest Pacific coast beach."*



1. "America Goes Backgammon!"



2. Actress Miriam Hopkins in California

First advertisement for a doubling cube:

"Doubling Dice" selling for 25 cents at Miller & Paine Store, appeared in the newspaper The Lincoln (NE) Star (Nov. 18, 1930):



Spirit Stirring!

S' O many potential Christmas gifts have arrived in our vicinity the last few days, that we wish to apprise you of the *holiday spirit* we have noted roaming about. It seems, people are really going to do their Christmas shopping early, this year—so many of them have begun. So, don't procrastinate on the inspirations you'll find below. The early shoppers have a penchant for the novel and unique!



Backgammon Sets

--an old game that the smart set has revived!

BACKGAMMON SETS. A game that is becoming a rival with bridge in many social circles. Delightfully entertaining and intriguing. Santa will have many of these in his pack this Christmas—one of them should be yours. Offered in the stationery section.

1.00, 1.50, 5.00 and 7.50

DOUBLING DICE—for backgammon.

25c

Stationery Section—

"HOW TO PLAY BACKGAMMON". Pamphlet with simplified directions.

10c

BACKGAMMON CARD TABLE COVERS. Made of stencilled oil cloth.

.125

BACKGAMMON SETS are also featured in our Toy Shop. An interesting assortment for both young and old.

50c, 75c, 1.00, 3.75 and 5.75

A 1930 pre-Christmas advertisement for backgammon equipment including a doubling cube.

Other types of backgammon doubling cubes:

1. Deliberate Doubler (Logicube) (right) Devised by Lawrence Sonn  in the 1980s, each side of the doubler has an arrow that points to the next multiple of doubling -- 64 to 2 to 4 to 8, etc. (Larry Strommen sometimes referred to this doubler as a "logicube.")



1. Half Cube: (below left) Married couple Jennifer Jones and Robert Walker play a game of backgammon in the early 1940s using a half cube.

(below, right) The late George Barr's doubling block that belonged to his father.



OBITUARY



Andy Plater
29/06/65 – 10/04/09

Mike Heard: It was a great big shock to receive the news on Easter Monday from Andy's sister that he passed away on Easter Friday. I had no idea he had a history of blood clots, and even his own family did not know they were life threatening. The latest one, however, let Old Father Time get hold of him and gave him a massive pulmonary embolism - and at the such early age of 43.

Many of you will be unfamiliar with Andy. He virtually never played any UK tournaments, and unfortunately never graced his presence at a BIBA Tournament. In fact, he only played a handful of Tournaments overseas. His main joy as a player was Online - and many of you may have played him at one time or another using one of his several nicknames - the latest being Hoopi. A short while ago he told me how he had just lost £1,000 in a one-point match. He thought he was playing for a hundred, but somehow made a bit of a faux pas!

One of my favourite times of the 2007 World Championships was getting him away from all the hubbub down to the beach for a head to head session. On his own he opened up and told me a lot of interesting stories. He looked so happy that day in the sun by the sea - a great big beam all over his face - and that's how I'll always remember him. What a tragic loss to life and to our game - and of course to his family.

More can be read on the Biba web site: <http://www.backgammon-biba.co.uk/obituaries.htm#plater>

Three newspaper column series taught backgammon to the masses and helped to popularize the game in the United States between September 1930 and April 1931:

HOW to PLAY Today's BACKGAMMON

Backgammon, Combining Luck And Skill, Is Played
All Over the World.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The beginner is introduced to backgammon in the following article, the first of a series on "Today's Backgammon" which Elizabeth Clark Boyden has written exclusively for the Times and NEA Service. She is the author of "The New Backgammon" and co-author of "Contract Bridge for 1930" and "Contract Bridge for 1931."

By **ELIZABETH CLARK BOYDEN**
Written for NEA Service

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1. "How To Play Today's Backgammon"
by Elizabeth Clark Boyden.

2. "Learn Backgammon in 5 Minutes a Day"
by J. Van Cleft Cooper.

LEARN backgammon

...IN 5 MINUTES A DAY...

Backgammon, which promises to be this winter's most popular parlor diversion, is learned easily. This article is the first of six which will teach you the game. Start now and follow



A New Game—Backgammon of Today

BY JOHN LONGACRE.

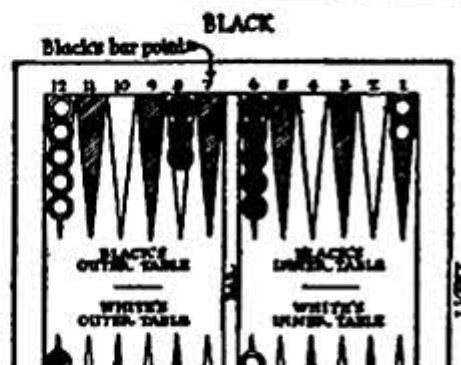
(This is the first of a series of articles. Others will follow on each successive Sunday)

INTRODUCTION.

Interest in the game of Backgammon is widespread, and is increasing daily. It is clearly most desirable that a standard method of play should be understood and adopted. There are at present in existence no adequate printed rules for the game, as it is now played.

The rules given herewith have been submitted to, and approved by the clubs where the game has been longest played, and where the modern variations have been developed. In some of the present rules, optional alternatives have been given, to cover certain minor differences in local procedure.

It is hoped that, as the game becomes more generally played, arrangement can be made for a committee composed of delegates from the clubs interested, which will



3. "Backgammon of Today"
by John Longacre
(reprints from his book of the same name).

Racquet & Tennis Club (New York City) backgammon-oriented members list with original membership year in parenthesis. From Racquet & Tennis Club 1932 and 1956 Club Books. All of these men very likely had input into the 1931 Laws of Backgammon as prepared by the Racquet & Tennis Club.

John Longacre (1920), Grosvenor Nicholas (1913), George Mead Rushmore (1928), C. Wheaton Vaughn (1904), John A. Vietor (1921), W. Whitewright Watson (1914), John P. "Jack" Wemple (1916)

The Backgammon Book, page 199 states that Wheaton Vaughn was the organizer and Oswald Jacoby was a committee member

This article is reproduced from the Internet article first published by Bill Davis, February 2009. It is reproduced here with his permission. A fuller version including several links to further text and picture references can be accessed via the Chicago Point web site (see below). Biba is grateful for Bill's work in researching this subject and wish him every success with future forays into backgammon cubing history. Michael Crane. May 2009

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GIANTS OF BACKGAMMON



Who are the top players in the world?



2007 GIANTS OF BACKGAMMON - "FALAFEL" IS GIANT #1

Every two years since 1993, backgammon directors and championship players around the world have been surveyed. In 2007, they have selected Mike "Falafel" Natanzon as #1 among the Giants of Backgammon. Falafel was #17 in 2001, #8 in 2003 and #4 in 2005. He is the latest and arguably the most prominent of great players from Israel. American Nack Ballard, who ranked #1 in 2001, 2003 and 2005, is Giant #2 in 2007. The great French player François Tardieu remains as Giant #3. Rounding out the top five: Denmark's outstanding Player of the Year, Sander Lyloff, is Giant #4, and perennial expert Neil Kazaross of Chicago is Giant #5.

Voting for the Giants began in 1993. The total number of ballots cast, in chronological order, stand at: 66, 55, 80, 92, 117, 98, and a record-setting 120 ballots for 2007. For the 2007 vote, 64 ballots came from outside the USA, a big increase from 44 non-USA ballots in 2005. The percentage of non-USA ballots jumped from 45% to 53%, providing good balance among the votes. Back in 1993, there were five non-Americans in the Top 32. The split in 2007 has improved to 14 non-Americans versus 18 from the USA.

We must again salute Denmark. This small Scandinavian country has six players in the Top 32, as they did in 2003 and 2005. The 2007 Giants also include two Germans, one Israeli, one Frenchman, one Japanese, one Swede, one Bulgarian and one Argentinian.

Notable gains from 2005 include Sander Lyloff up from #43 to #4, Masayuki "Mochy" Mochizuki from #28 to #6, Morten Holm from #27 to #10, Lars Trabolt from #31 to #16, Petko Kostadinov from #150 to #29, Dana Nazarian from #221 to

#31, Richard Munitz from un-ranked to #30, and Joe Sylvester from #250 to #38.

Significant drops from 2005 to 2007 include Dirk Schiemann from #8 to #28, Jerry Grandell from #9 to #46, Johannes Levermann from #11 to #47, David Wells from #25 to #50, Frank Talbot from #21 to #39, and Mads Andersen from #22 to #43. Not surprisingly, most of these players have moved over to poker.

We congratulate The Elite, the eight Giants who have been voted into the Top 32 every time since 1993: Nack Ballard, Malcolm Davis, Neil Kazaross, Paul Magriel, Bill Robertie, Mike Senkiewicz, Paul Weaver and Kit Woolsey.

The top two Giants, Falafel Natanzon and Nack Ballard, will receive trophies and certificates. The remaining Giants will be awarded certificates. They will be honored at the 2008 Nevada State Tournament, Chicago Open and Michigan Summer Championships. We'll deliver the awards to any giant unable to attend one of these events. We thank Director Howard Markowitz for his continued support at the tournaments.

Special thanks to Auditor Jake Jacobs, Editor Carol Joy Cole, and Data Manager John Stryker for their indispensable help. John sacrificed more than most. He had to find time away from his seven-month-old son who was sick for several weeks.

Finally, we congratulate all the Giants, especially Falafel, Nack, François, Sander and Neil, on their high rankings.

Yamin A. Yamin, Chairman, USA

Mike "Falafel" Natanzon moved from Israel to the USA when he was 13 years old, living here for 20 years before going back to Israel about five years ago. He played chess for a living on the streets of New York City where he also developed his backgammon skills. Immersed in the worldclass action at the New York backgammon clubs, and later with the help of *Snowie*, Falafel became an expert money player. His tournament record the last two years has been impressive, too. In 2006, he won the 500-euro Super Jackpot at the Riviera Festival in Cannes, he won the Las Vegas Open, and he cashed in the semis of the World Doubles in Vegas. In 2007, he cashed in the Partouche Open in Paris, the French Open Masters, and the UK Masters in London. His #1 ranking is well-earned.

Nack Ballard lives with his wife Hsiao-Yee in California. Nack was the #1 Giant for an unprecedented three times in a row. In 2007, Nack cashed in the final four of the PartyGammon Million in the Bahamas, and he won the American Doubles in Las Vegas, reminiscent of his three previous wins in the Pro-Am Doubles. Besides backgammon, Nack's passions include playing the piano, Scrabble, Go, Chess, and Color Lines (where he's ranked #1). He and Paul Weaver recently published *Book A: 3-1* of their series on *Backgammon Openings*. Nack is now working on the next volume which will analyze the roll of double aces.

Congratulations to all the 2007 Giants! They have been added to the Giants website www.flintbg.com/giants.html.

— Carol Joy Cole, Editor. *Flint Backgammon News*





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Flint Area BackgammoNews

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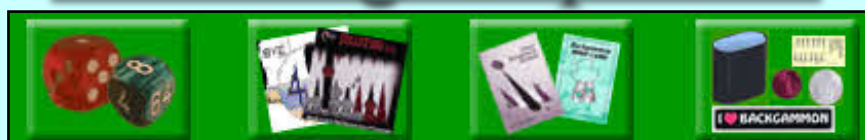
*This article appears with the kind permission of Carol Joy Cole,
Editor, Flint Area BackgammoNews and appeared in issue #293, March 2008.*

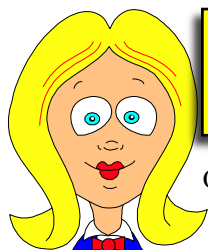
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We've got it!

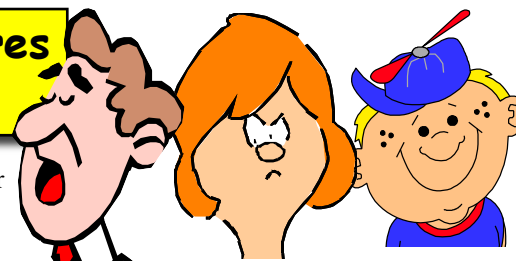
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Goldiblots and the Three Bores

By R Umplestiltskin

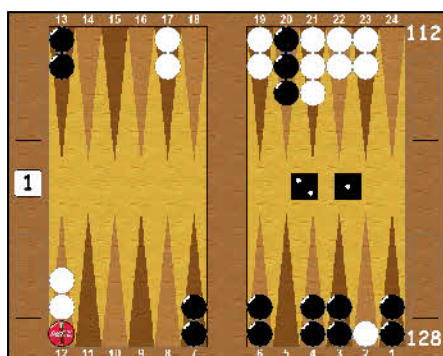


Once upon a time there were three bores, Daddy Bore, Mummy Bore and Baby Bore. All day long they'd play backgammon on the webnet for peanuts, they liked peanuts - a lot.

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

This week's first problem was:

Problem 1



11 point match
Black to play 21
Black 2 White 2

This time it was Daddy Bore's turn to go first. This pleased him no end because as far as he could see there was only one correct answer. He puffed out his chest. "It is impossible to not leave a shot so it has to be one that is of the most use if missed and covered next time. Therefore, without any further ado I play 7/5 7/6." He sat down, deep into the sofa, and in doing so, his 'Backgammon Players Do It On The Bar' tee shirt rose up, exposing his innie, belly button.

"My God, man!" exclaimed Mummy Bore as she got to her feet, "Cover up that unsightly hole. I do agree with you in leaving a blot next roll, but the best way to do this is to hit 4/2* 4/3. This way white is on the bar and has to re-enter, and the spare checker on my 3-point is there to cover the blot should I roll a 1 next time. Your *effort*," she stressed the

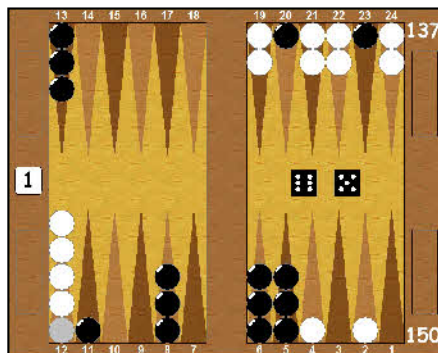
word '*effort*', "lets him hit you for nothing." She sat down, avoiding looking at Daddy Bore who was brogglng his belly button with his fingers.

Baby Bore rose, pulled himself to his full height (3' 6") and said, "You are both missing the point. In this position you have to look at ways in stopping white escaping with 6s, and this is best done by 13/10. Now, if missed by white's 1s or 6s, if I roll 52 next time I'll be able to block off his escaping 6s."

As he was about to sit down down, Daddy Bore exclaimed, "Well I never!" Baby Bore and Mummy Bore turned to see what all the fuss was about. They wished they hadn't. They turned in unison to see Daddy Bore extracting a Tic Tac from his belly button and depositing it in his mouth. "Gross!" they chimed together. Daddy Bore ignored them and sucked away on his find.

Goldiblots, standing behind Daddy Bore didn't see his gross behavior. "Don't sit down, Baby Bore," she said, "it's your turn to go first now."

Problem 2



11 point match
Black 3 White 7
Black to play 65

Still shocked at Daddy Bore he fought to put together his analysis. "Erm, I think, er, the best move is 11/6 8/2*. If you don't hit in this position you let white get a full roll in next time." He finished, showing off his backgammon parlance, "It is called 'ruining his temperature'."

Daddy Bore, having finished his Tic Tac, and - for a while at least - ignoring his belly button, got up for his turn, laughing

out loud. "Temperature? Temperature? You daft boy, it is called, 'ruining his tampon', not temperature!" Mummy Bore tittered. Daddy Bore glared at her. He continued, "Why on earth would you wanna hit here? In the past I have been a bit too aggressive and I think it's about time I slowed down. Therefore I think the simple and safe play here is best: 13/8 11/5." He sat down, his stubby fingers inexplicably drawn towards his belly button.

Still tittering, Mummy Bore got to her feet. "Tampon? Temperature? You are both so wrong. It is 'ruining his Tenko', so named after the TV series Tenko and refers to trying to escape from the Japs, or in this instance, trying to escape from a prime." She looked smugly across at her family - just in time to see Daddy Bore extract something else from his belly button. She shuddered.

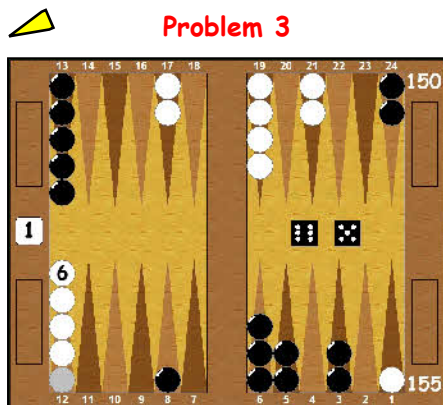
"Well I never," he called out, "I wondered where that white checker went to. We can get rid of that bottle-top now." He got up, and replaced the bottle-top they'd been using ever since, when, in a fit of pique, he had knocked over the board after losing half a crown in a chouette.

Mummy Bore shied away from the replaced white checker - it wasn't as white as its peers. She haltingly continued. "I agree with Baby Bore, this position is crying out for a hit, however if you play 11/6 8/2* you strip a very useful checker off the 8-point. The best way to hit is with 13/2*. This way you then have a spare checker on your 8-point to use as cover for the blot."

She sat down, but then realised it was her turn to go first. She got up again. 



July
3, 4, 5
2009



11 point match
Black 7 White 2
Black to play 65

"With one white runner already safely on the mid-point it is very important here to keep the one remaining runner boxed in. To do this we need to make out bar-point. Now, this is a little risky, but it is worth it, play both off the mid-point, 13/7 13/8. Although it gives direct 6s, if missed I'll have 6s to form a 4-prime, or a 1 for a 3-prime, but in each instance white will be blocked on 6s." She sat down having given, to her mind, a complete answer to the problem. From his expression it was obvious that Daddy Bore never heard a word she said, he was too engrossed in further belly button exploration.

Baby Bore toddled to the front. "I'll say it's risky. If white has already run with a 65 then the better move here is the same, 24/13. It is a better move than played by white because black has three points made and white only has two, therefore it'll be much harder for white to get out anyway." As he began to sit down he was

rudely pushed aside by Daddy Bore who was so intent on his belly button he didn't even see him. Near to tears, Baby Bore sat down, Mummy Bore stretching a comforting hand across his shoulders.

Daddy Bore stood up and just as he was going into his play he cried out in triumph, "Well I never. I wondered where that TV remote went to!" and he pulled from his belly button the TV remote. Mummy Bore and Baby Bore were almost sick.

Not noticing, Daddy Bore went on, "I know I said I wasn't going to be so aggressive any more but the play of 24/18 13/8 is a winner." Both Mummy Bore and Baby Bore were going to interrupt when Daddy Bore waved the TV remote at them, "I know what you're going to say, you're going to point out that the blot on the 18-point is under the gum, as it's known in backgammon circles, but it's only really bothered by 6s." He was stopped by snorts of derision from Mummy Bore.

"You mean, under the gum, you moron," laughed Mummy Bore, she explained, "it refers to an infected root canal. It means that if left alone it can become a real pain." She in turn was stopped by an even bigger snort than her own from Baby Bore. "Surely, Mater, you mean, under the tum, which in Pater's case is very apt!" he began crying with laughter.

Goldiblots called for order. "Actually, you are all wrong, but it's not my place to correct you. Now, if you'll all settle down I'll will reveal the results of tonight's

problems. Once again . . . " She was interrupted by a remark from Daddy Bore, "What a lovely piece of fluff."

"Why thank you," she said, smiling, as she turned to acknowledge Daddy Bore's compliment. Her smile soon faded as Daddy Bore continued, "What a lovely blue colour." He was admiring the latest foray into belly button world.

Biting her lip, Goldiblots restarted, "Once again one of you has gotten every problem correct, well done."

"Great news," celebrated Mummy Bore. "A hat-trick!"

"Don't be so previous Mummy Bore," said Baby Bore, "I think you'll find she is referring to your loving offspring."

"Balls!" said Daddy Bore. "I've just found two aniseed balls. She must be talking about me, it's my lucky day." He popped the aniseed balls into his mouth.

Trying hard not to gag, Goldiblots revealed the night's winner, "Tonight's winner is . . ."

Who do you think it is? Has Mummy Bore got her hat-trick, or is the only hat-trick she'll get anywhere near is a hatrick board? Perhaps it is Baby Bore, being Mummy Bore's offspring perhaps he has inherited her backgammon jeans? Or maybe it is Daddy Bore's lucky day. If it is, it won't be his lucky night tonight, Mummy Bore will see to that! Turn now to page 19 to see who the winner is.

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Fear and Surrealism in Vegas By Julian Fetterlein

There's always been a surreal feel to Las Vegas, something bigger than life-size in the middle of nowhere; for some reason the backgammon matched that this year.

Vegas continually reinvents itself. I was first there in 1982, then it was Henry Watson running the world amateur at the Dunes. In those days you could walk off the sidewalk straight into the desert. Since I was here last year the Trump and Turnberry Isle developments have been finished. The Venetian 2 aka The Palazzo has opened, and the Wynn 2 aka Encore is now built but not opened.

Entries were about the same as last year with a reduction in Beginners matched by an increase in the Championship. Maybe they all just got very good very fast. Howard's team as usual operated as a well oiled machine. Hotel prices were down 50% on last year and temperatures were at a record high.

Falafel was over from Europe and we discussed the recent Paris tournament where he finished second. One game started -

64: 24/18 13/9 55: 8/3*(2) 6/1*(2)
33: Fans Double
Take

Nothing unusual here except Falafel was trailing eight away, two away and on the bar. His opponent, LoSurdo from Italy, had presumably lost count of the score which is the only way to explain his blunder which Snowie considers to cost 1752 millipoints !

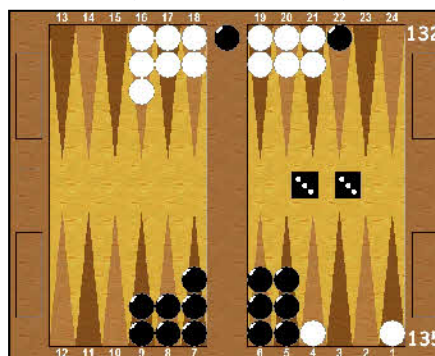
One night a few of the Brits took Falafel out to experience the terror rides on the top of the Stratosphere tower. I'm happy to report Falafel was returned in one piece; perhaps shaken, not stirred, but he failed to make much further impression on the tournament.

I had played with one of those concerned in the doubles last year, a man by the name of Tim Line, who, after fifteen years of touring the world with the British army followed by a spell as a rally car driver, seems not to know the meaning of fear. However on the Saturday night he was returning to the penthouse when the elevator shot past the top floor to the top of the shaft, never to move again. Tim calmly phoned the hotel on the emergency phone and then called Howard to apologise for being late for his match. When

the hotel told him he would have to wait for the emergency repair crew to be called out, Tim and his Brazilian "co-pilot" forced open the doors, jumped down to the penthouse floor and returned to the backgammon.

At DMP against rising star Justin Nunez, Peter Bennet seemed to be cruising to victory with four enemy checkers trapped behind a five prime when Justin rolled a magical double six, escaping two checkers and forming a six prime of his own. Two moves later Peter (playing as black) had this double three to play.

15 point match (dmp)

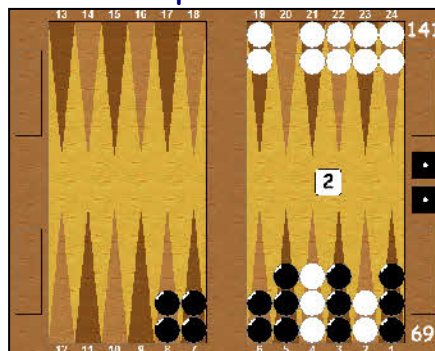


Black to play 33

If you are reading this in a magazine article you should find the "obvious" three blot play: bar/22 7/4* 6/3 5/2

Ray Fogelund managed to get time off from fighting the California brush fires to try and hold on to his ABT title. In the third round of the consolation this backgame came up. Ray's opponent is Peter Bennet, who found himself in the Consolation perhaps as a result of NOT finding the correct triple blot play above. Ray has just rolled a double four to all but destroy his timing so Peter (black) doubles to two and Ray correctly takes.

11 point match



Black 1 White 0

No doubt he was happy with his decision when Peter rolled 63 (7/1 8/5).

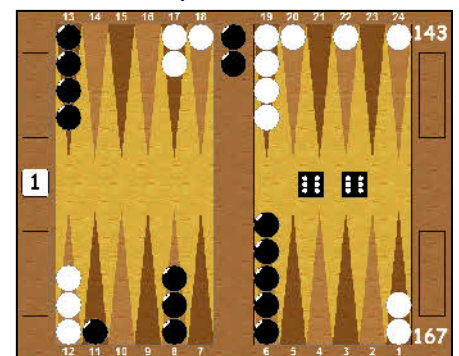


The astute reader might notice there's only two blots to shoot at but there are a whopping thirty-two shots and twelve double hits. Ray doubled and Peter took. In practice it's a great double since many would make the quadruple blunder of passing. Vegas seems to be about conquering fears and Peter was rewarded with a free play-on when Ray rolled a 21.

Ray lost the match but consoled himself with being a semi-finalist in the Super Jackpot. However he went down to Ian Macfarlane from Brazil who took on Jeremy Bagai in the final.

Ian took an early 5-1 lead but Jeremy looked to be coming back until he lost a four cube to a last roll double four. The next game was more exciting . . . Ian splits with 21 and Jeremy double hits with 41. Ian enters one checker with 56 which Jeremy hits again with 62. Ian enters one again with 63 and Jeremy replies with 65 which he plays 13/7 8/3*, giving us this position:

15 point match



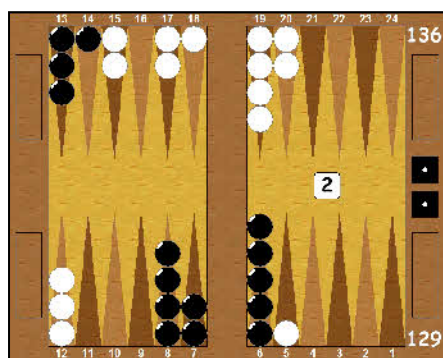
Black 9 White 1

Ian (black) rolls double 6 and correctly passes Jeremy's double.

This was about it for Jeremy's comeback and he went down 15-7.

The Championship was a close fought affair with Stacy Turner taking on Matt Cohn-Geier (black). Stacey built up a six point lead which Matt gradually clawed back to tie the scores at eleven all to fifteen. Then this cube came up ... ▶

15 point match



Black 11 White 11
Black cubes

This is a standard doubling position, a small racing lead plus some play against the opponent's last checker. Big numbers help in the race while small numbers point on the 5-point. This, and the score was enough to get Stacey to pass. However the loose blot on the 14-point is enough to make it a take. Either Matt must delay the attack for one roll or allow return shots if he makes the 5-point.

Sadly for Matt the dice turned against him and this was the last point he won, finally going down 12-15. In the Consolation Richard Munitz won over Gary Bauer in a repeat of last year's Last Chance final.

As for the reinvention and the Dunes, it's been completely redesigned and rebranded, now being known as The Bellagio car park !

This article first appeared in the Flint Area BackgammonNews and is reprinted with the permission of its Editor, Carol Joy Cole.

Julian continues below with an original article based upon the 2008 Sandy Osborne Final against Paul Learmount.

The Opening 61: 13/6 + Sandy Osborne Trophy 2008

By Julian Fetterlein

Before the main tournament started I overheard two players discussing Saturday night's events.

"Is it worth playing in the team tournament?" one player asked.

"It's great fun but only if you can stand waiting for five minutes discussing an opening 61 played 13/6!"

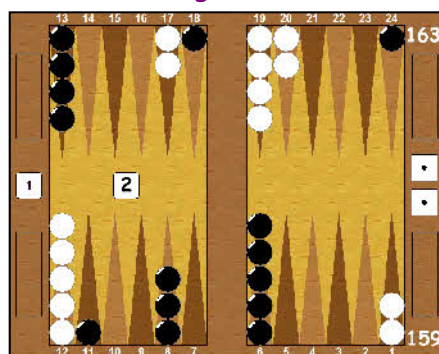
Clearly the team captain was a little overzealous in "winding-up" one of his team mates but what about the opening 61?

When I started playing backgammon Paul Magriel was experimenting with an opening 61: 13/7 6/5. Although not making a new point it unstacks both the "heavy" points and slots the most important 5-point. Unfortunately Snowie isn't too enthusiastic about the move rating it as a double blunder. So what does the silicon one "think" about 13/6, computers like safe moves don't they ? Well the answer is sadly not, Snowie rates it as even worse than the double blot play.

So on to the tournament; they say you need luck and skill to win tournaments, I will leave it to you to decide how much was one and how much the other. Certainly getting the bye to the last 32 was pure luck but after that?

It might seem I wasn't particularly lucky against Mick Vacarey. In **Diagram 01** (*I am playing in all positions as black and the games are to 11 points*) he doubled and I took, he rolled 66, pointing on the 1-point, and routinely gammoned me without me playing again.

Diagram 01



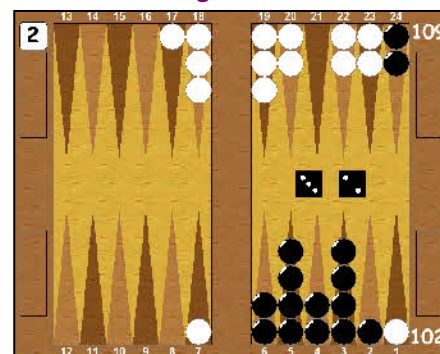
Black 8 White 6
White cubes

Although Snowie thinks the double is a little too early the 66 play was spot on. If the cube was still centred it's best to make the 7- and 18-points, aiming to double next roll. After having doubled a gammon takes Mick to Crawford so he's right to exploit his good fortune and aim for that target.

The lucky thing for me was that up to this point Mick had only accumulated six points. If he had already been on seven I would have been out of the tournament there and then. Fortunately I managed to win the Crawford game to take the match to DMP.

The deciding game was going against me when the position in **Diagram 02** arose. Until I wrote this article I presumed the play I made, to hit and split with 24/21 3/1* was so clearly right and I didn't bother to check. Fortunately Mick stayed on the bar and I managed to scramble home.

Diagram 02



Black 9 White 10
Black to play 32

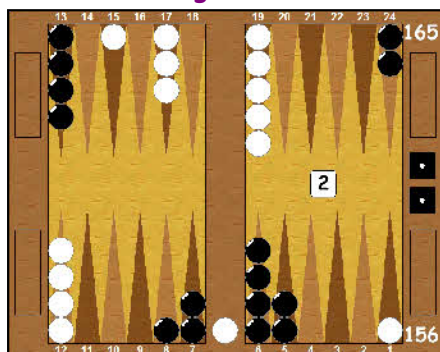
Everyone I showed the position to liked my play and it won, what more can one ask for?

Well, when I say "everyone" there was one dissenter - Snowie wasn't over keen. A long rollout showed 1/2% extra wins for the hit and cover play 5/2 3/1*. Lawrence Powell explained the diversification with this play; 6s can't play, a 4 or 2 will cover and a 3 will split. Provided I avoid a 5 my next roll will be a good one. In addition to giving Mick nine extra numbers to stay on the bar I am in much better shape if he enters with most 1s.

Round 2 brought Ray Tannen who is one of the top ten rated players and over the years I think I've lost more than I have won against him. The turning point came in game 8. A while back I had a position against Andy Bell which arose after the opening sequence 43: 24/20 13/10, 11: 8/7(2) 6/5*(2), 65: Fans. I remembered that the equity of the position was ►

about 0.650, so a double and easy take. The position against Ray was identical except that I had managed to slip in the new move 61: 13/6! See . . .

Diagram 03



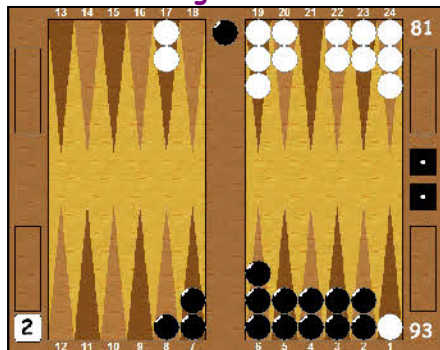
Black 7 White 5
Black cube action

After the game was over Ray and I discussed the position and we both thought it was a take. The equity for money is 0.850, at 7-6 it's a blunder to take, at 7-7 it's a double blunder to take but at the actual score of 7-5 it's a marginal take/pass decision. After Ray took I rolled a feeble 21: 24/22 6/5 and Ray came back with 22: 25/23 24/22 6/4(2). However after my next roll of 55 I managed to execute a match winning blitz.

Sunday brought the quarter-finals where I had drawn Tony Lee. Sometimes it's not worth getting out of bed and so it was for Tony. Suffice to say if the luck had been reversed so would the result.

In the semi-final I drew twice British champion Rachel Rhodes. In Game Five I had been playing on for a gammon when Rachel set a cunning trap with her last move in **Diagram 04**, rather than close me out with her double-two she left me with a root number of double-four.

Diagram 04

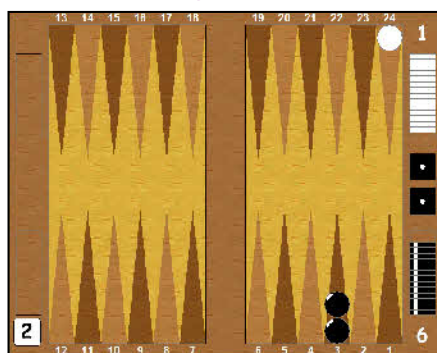


Black 7 White 1
Black on roll

It wouldn't be much of a story if I hadn't rolled 44; there's no gammon any more, just a struggle to actually win the game so I saved all the women and children with 25/21 8/4 5/1*(2).

Rachel entered immediately with 65: 25/15 and now I needed a joker to stay alive so rolled 64: 21/11*. Rachel entered immediately with 54 and although I am big favourite I can't recube for fear of the cube immediately coming back at eight.

Diagram 05

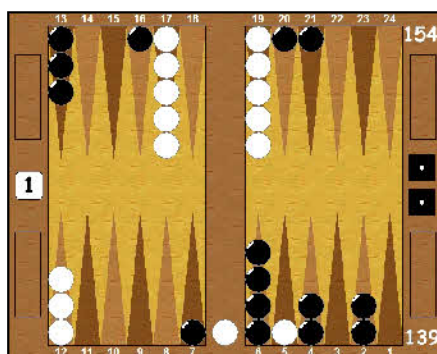


Black 7 White 1
Black on roll

I missed the shot and a tense race ensued resulting in **Diagram 05**. Although I'm 17/19 underdog I knew this was a good double at 2-away, 4-away because now there's no re-cube to fear. After doing the match equity calculations I couldn't see much difference between doubling or not, so decided to play a few more games. Snowie, using different match equity tables, makes it a blunder to double costing 1% match winning chances.

In the final, through some good fortune I was leading Paul Learmount 7-3 when this position came up. See . . .

Diagram 06



Black 7 White 3
Black on roll

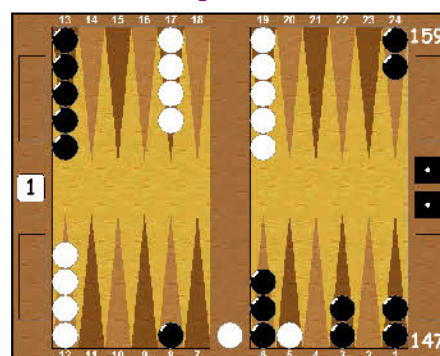
Before analyzing the position it's useful to see how each player's action is affected

by the score. We have already seen, in the match with Ray, that the trailer should be reticent about taking gammonish cubes when the leader is four points from victory.

There's another factor here, perhaps more significant, that the trailer is eight away. If Paul can slip in a well timed re-cube, a single win will tie the score or a gammon neatly wins the match in one go.

Quite an improvement to being five points behind. How soon should Paul recube? I asked Snowie if, on roll in the normal starting position, it was right to cube at this score and sure enough it's already an error not to re-cube.

Diagram 07



Black 0 White 0
Black on roll

Diagram 07 shows a standard double-five blitz position. I find this a particularly useful reference position since the blitzing side is almost exactly a 6:4 favourite with half the wins being gammons.

At 0-0 to eleven this is a very easy take, in fact a quadruple blunder to pass. At 7-7 (4-away, 4-away) it's a close take but at this match score, 4-away, 8-away it's now a triple blunder to double.

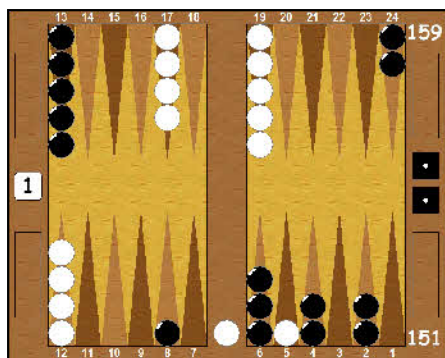
The next few diagrams will show changes to transform the normal blitz position to the one we actually encountered over the board.

Diagram 08 (shown on the following page) shows a blitz double-four rather than double-five.

I suspected this would be neutral in equity; although the blitz is less likely to succeed there's more advantage from not having committed to the 1-point. The cubeless money equity increases from 0.432 to 0.490.



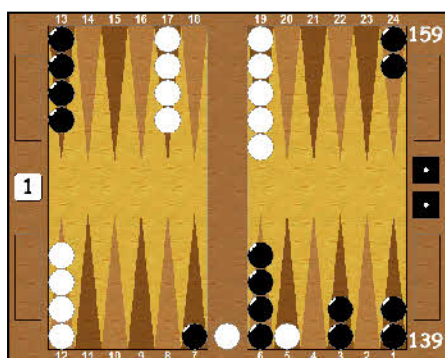
Diagram 08



Black 0 White 0
Black on roll

Diagram 09 shows the introduction of another builder; the increase in equity is even greater rising from 0.432 to 0.559.

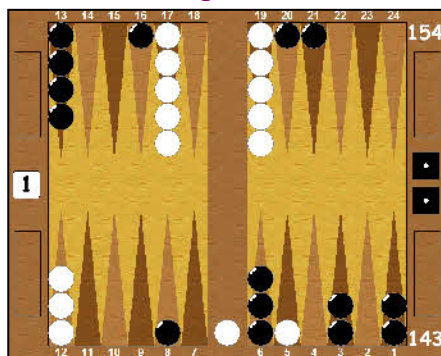
Diagram 09



Black 0 White 0
Black on roll

Lastly, **Diagram 10** shows the shuffling of the back checkers, although this adds nothing to the blitz it avoids a lot of the counter-priming opportunities and increases the equity from 0.432 to 0.545.

Diagram 10



Black 0 White 0
Black on roll

So the biggest improvement is playing 61 13/6.

Any one of these improvements still makes the position a take in a money game but it takes all three to make it a pass at this score.

Finally I must confess that I didn't actually play 61: 13/6 against Ray. The diagram position arose from the sequence 61: 13/7 8/7, 43: 24/20 13/10, 31: 8/5* 6/5*, 65: Fans.



". . . Daddy Bore!"

Mummy Bore was as sick as a parrot, a condition brought on by her shock at not winning and Daddy Bore's disgusting explorations.

Baby Bore was gobsmacked, and Daddy Bore, was so engrossed in his belly button he didn't hear a word she said as he plunged a finger into it in the hope of finding more treasures. He found a peanut, which he popped into his mouth with glee as Goldblots revealed the stats from the resident bot expert, Snowie.

Position 1

7/5 7/6	
13/10	-0.096
4/2* 4/3	-0.225

Position 2

13/8 11/5	
13/2*	-0.077
11/6 8/2*	-0.082

Position 3

24/18 13/8	
24/13	-0.079
13/7 13/8	-0.115

Competition 2009 No.1 Solutions

By Michael Crane

Welcome to the first competition of 2009 in which we have a mixed bag of solutions and entrants!

24/15. Instead we have a two-move split. Here's the bigger of the two:

Bob Young: 10/4 8/5

Need to hit to win, so keep back checker where it is. I don't want to help white's cause by leaving the mid-point, as it would greatly help white with only one point to go past, so sort of forced to slot the top two open points with a view to filling them as fast as possible. Next roll, white will leave a shot somewhere half the time. (Looks like black rolled 21, and then white rolled 65 in 9804 to get to 9801.)

Brian Lever: 10/4 8/5

Black is well behind in the race and although this roll takes him to a safe refuge, white can easily scoot past; so he shouldn't run but should continue to hide on white's 1-point. If things do get sticky, he can usually make a run for it later.

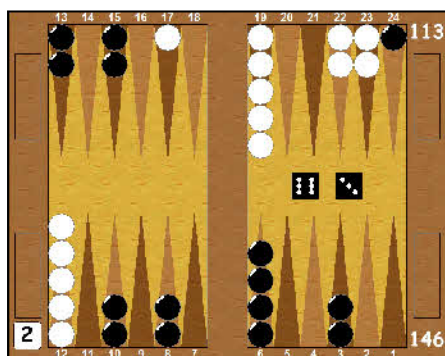
Meantime, he has immediate two objectives – prepare his inner board for containment of any white checker he might hit, and guard against the possibility of a fluke white gammon. It doesn't look very likely now but a 55 for white could change that. A lone stranded checker always faces the possibility of being blitzed into gammon territory, black's 4-point lead wiped out at a stroke. So making up the board without opposition still requires attention; not too many blots scattered around to encourage a white attack.

In this case the play appears clear - gaps on 5- and 4-point dictate that he should play this roll 10/4, 8/5, with the likelihood that he'll have an attack-detering and possibly winning 4-point board on the next shake.

Richard Biddle: 10/4 8/5

We are not looking good in a race situation but white has rather an awkward board. We are reliant on some hits to win this race unless we get some high double jokers. So we have to prepare for contact, which means leaving the points on ▶

9801



11 point match
Black 4 White 0
Black to play 63

MC: It's good to see that none of the entrants chose the beginner's play of

our mid- and 15-point, they will cause problems for white later. We can prepare our home board by playing 10/4 8/5. I did consider bringing the back checker forward to the 21-point, but the last thing we would want is for white to roll a 42, 11 or 22. It would also give white the opportunity to play over the back of us.

Peter Christmas: 10/4 8/5

Black, having taken the cube and being 24 pips (nearly 20%) behind after the roll, so running to the 15-point would reduce the small gammon risks to almost zero but the cost in winning chances seems to be too high. White will seldom have to leave a shot and the racing chances are a bit slim too. You wouldn't want white to pull the match score back to 4-4 but you still have to play for the best chance to win if feasible. Even coming up to the 21-point to put direct pressure on the blot and cover the 16-point is going to let a lot of rolls play better like 51, 52, 62 etc where white can play the checkers behind us now. Also even if we get the hit we need, our board is not really in good shape to hold white up for long. So we need to build our home board as quickly as possible, we can't make a point so at least slot the open points we need most with 10/4, 8/5 while the back man is not under too much pressure.

MC: The problem with the slotting play is what do you do if you get a flyshot next roll should white leave one on? Paul Plumptre and Cedric Lytton have sussed it out.

Paul Plumptre: 13/7 10/7

Thirty-three pips behind, and only against a 3-board, is much too early to run out with 24/15, or even to venture with 24/21. I suspect some bots would go all-out for building with 10/4 8/5, but I have hopes of a remote hit in white's outer board next turn. So I build a (pretty unimportant) 7-point with 13/7 10/7; the blot left on the 13-point is irrelevant - white is welcome to hit it (except with a 11). I am playing a long game here.

Cedric Lytton: 13/7 10/7

Black is still trailing by 24 pips after the roll, so his plan is to hit a shot as white comes home, or possibly as he clears his mid-point.

So, not 24/15. Black wants to build his board from the 5-point down, but 10/4, 8/5 would leave white two shots if black were to hit a fly-shot next time. 24/21, 10/4 would challenge white's outer board, but white with three home board points to

Black's 2½ would be better off in a blot-fight. With my move black has better chances of building a prime and still keeps his 15-point, both for communication and for a little later pressure against white's mid-point.

Phil Tutchings: 13/7 10/7

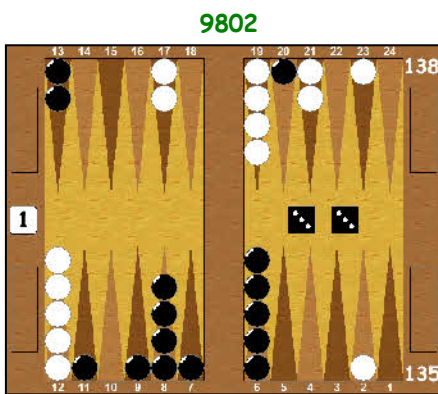
Racing deficit would normally mean maintaining contact. Here this has to be balanced with bringing builders bearing in on high points in home board – so mid-point should be sacrificed.

MC: Phil got there in as few words as he could manage, albeit without considering the possible flyshot.

Snowie: 13/7 13/10

Once we have rejected the absolute beginner's move of 24/15, entering a race 24 pips behind, we need a plan for black. Coming up with the 3 by playing 24/21 to put pressure on the blot on white's 8-point should certainly be considered but it gives white too much room to play behind the black man, so that ultimately it must be rejected.

Then the plan becomes clear – keep the checker on the 24-point and build a prime on the other side of the board as quickly as possible. Over the board I would probably choose 10/4, 8/5 slotting the two key points but my neural nets tell me that 13/7, 13/10 is fractionally better because I might get an indirect shot next turn and so having two inner board blots is just a bit too aggressive.



11 point match
Black 6 White 2
Black to play 33

MC: Bugger! Here I get the entrants picking two different moves and Snowie rates them both equal! However, I award points based upon the equity of each play and I have decided to stick with this despite the margin being marginal. So, the only entrant to gain 10 points is Bob.

Bob Young: 8/5(2) 6/3(2)

Hitting 8/2(2) is far too deep, white will not be troubled by this move. 13/7, 8/5(2) makes a reasonable semi-prime, but at the expense of losing the mid-point anchor, which will make it a long run home for the rear checkers if the mid-point remaining blot is hit. For future hitting equality, making two home board points, albeit leaving direct fives keep the mid-point for the rear checker to land on, and, despite no duplication on the other side of the board, it is worth trying. Unstacking high points and using those constructively is productive at least.

Brian Lever: 13/7 8/5(2)

Double 3s – one of my favourite rolls! As usual with doubles, there is a multiplicity of choice. As usual with an early 33, make the 5-point with part of the roll if you conveniently can. So 2 of the 3s are played 8/5(2). And what, realistically are my choices after that? Make the bar- and a 4-prime to boot, or reduce the stack on the 6-point to make the 3-point? The 3-point is the pretty play – puts the spare checkers on the 6-point to work. Lovely if you can get away with it. The trouble is the four blots it leaves within easy range, and white, well behind in the match, will be itching for an opportunity to turn the cube. 13/7 is my choice with the remaining 3s; Still four blots, mind you, but aces are duplicated, the other checkers may well combine to make a 5-prime next go, and white has to be circumspect with a loose blot of his own waiting to be sent back behind the black prime.

Paul Plumptre: 13/7 8/5(2)

Moving 8/5(2) obviously must be used for the first two 3s. The choice is between 13/7 and 6/3(2). Is the 7-point plus a blot on 13-point worth more than the 3-point plus a blot on the 7-point? Intrinsically, I rate the 7-point worth less than the 3-point + unstacking my heavy 6-point; but I decide for 13/7, because I think that white will gain a lot more after 6/3(2) with a 5 to hit on my 7-point, than he will gain after 13/7 with a 1 to hit on my 13-point. I hope to attack white's last man anon; and meanwhile I trust that he does not mount a good attack with the likes of 31 or 11 on my last man.

Cedric Lytton: 13/7 8/5(2)

This gives black a 4-point prime which white cannot escape directly, with chances of making the 9-point or 4-point as well, and duplicates white's 1s; if black can keep white's runner back, the loss of the mid-point will not matter. White's 2-point blot will be a liability if he ►

does hit. 8/5(2), 6/3(2) would only make a broken prime with important gaps on the 4-point and bar-point, and most of white's 5s would play well; 8/2*(2) would make a far too deep point and not impede the back man much.

Peter Christmas: 13/7 8/5(2)

Black will have a 15 pip lead but can't escape yet so needs to improve his front end, the obvious 8/5(2) 6/3(2) is certainly good if white doesn't throw the 5 with some double hits or hit and cover numbers too. 13/7(2) doesn't equalise white's home board strength hence leaving the back man a little more vulnerable. Whereas 13/7 8/5(2) does leave the extra blot on the mid-point but it does make a good solid 4-point prime with a lot of threats to extend either from the back or the front. Nothing is ideal but as white has the blot on the 2-point and even if hit black could make the 20-point and it does give black some good chances to prime the white straggler so I just prefer it to the making two points. The joker double-one could leave us facing a tricky cube if we didn't hit back but we have a handy match lead and it is a risk worth taking to pursue the win.

Phil Tutchings: 13/7 8/5(2)

Establishes 4-prime and duplicates white's good 1s.

MC: Steady on Phil, you almost took up two lines!

Richard Biddle: 13/7 8/5(2)

I would love to unstack the 6- and 8-points with this move, but I fear that would be just too loose. I also think the value of making the bar-point outweighs the benefit of making the 3-point in my home board. With a four point prime, a white checker contained and a poor white home board, we don't need to fear the hit. If I can survive not being hit, I may have a very good double next roll.

Snowie: 8/5(2) 6/3(2) or 13/7 8/5(2)

This is the sort of position that is very difficult to solve over the board because of selecting the right plan and then balancing up safety against aggression. The plan is to restrain white's last checker but how to go about this – prime or attack? The three candidate plays are: (a) 8/2(2)*; (b) 8/5(2), 6/3(2) and (c) 13/7, 8/5(2).

All three of these plays have 8/5(2) in common so the sensible thing is to play those two threes first and then decide upon the other two. Playing the common

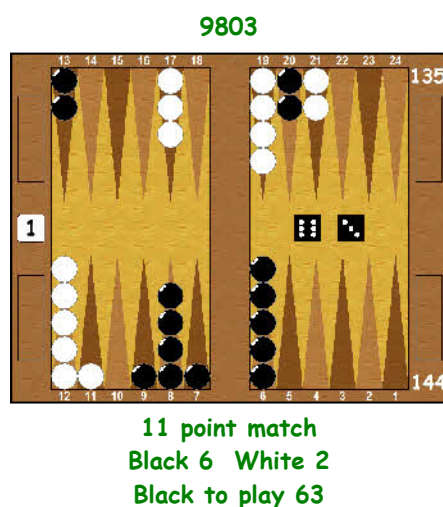
part of a number of different possible moves is a very useful trick to learn and use when selecting moves.

While taking away half of white's roll (a) doesn't really accomplish that much. It gains on the four rolls when white fans but the 2-point is a bit too deep in black's board. This means that one of the priming plays must be correct.

(b) unstacks the 6-point and makes two good home board points. On the downside it leaves white with a good five to play (hitting). (c) duplicates one of white's hitting numbers (ones). It creates a solid four-point prime with the fifth point already slotted.

Which is better? Actually it's a dead heat. (b) both wins and loses more gammons and doesn't win as many games overall as (c). The equity difference is 0.002 which is meaningless statistically. (b) comes out as the narrowest of winners but full marks should be given for both plays.

MC: Sorry about the 0.02 loss of points, but I have to stick to my original scoring system.



MC: At last, a problem that splits the entrants into three camps. Unfortunately for the first two they have gone off at a tangent into huge blunderland!

Richard Biddle: 20/11*

There are a few moves that begin to build our home board but for me the only move is the hit. It also coincides with what is shown in 9802 which looks like the position after this one when white enters with a 62 and fails to get a return hit. That could either be a clue or a red-herring. I will go with the former.

MC: It was a red-herring!

Cedric Lytton: 20/11*

I cannot improve on 20/11* which is obviously what black played to reach 9802 after white's 62: 25/23, 8/2. After anything else (even 9/3, 6/3), black is a slight racing underdog, even though he holds white's Golden point.

MC: Another one that didn't smell fish! The next two are purists according to Snowie.

Paul Plumptre: 9/3 8/5

I judge 20/11* too risky. White has 12 rolls that re-hit directly in my outer board, and another 14 that hit on my 20-point (via 8/5* or 6/5*). So I keep the asset of my 5-point anchor. One naturally thinks of 9/3 6/3 building, but only white 22 and 52 leave a shot this turn. Hence I need to start a carpet to build as fast as possible, so 9/3 8/5 it is.

Bob Young: 9/3 8/5

So black ran and hit, white entered with 62 from 9802 to get here. That looks too "blotty" for me, albeit that black did get away with it initially. Could make the 3-point, but not useful yet, so, no hit, don't leave the mid-point, go for pure play, slotting the next open home board point, and cover swiftly looks like a good plan. White has the stronger home board, the race is the same, and good match lead, so no volatile plays for me. Only three rolls for white will leave shots next time. I have been accused of leaving an anchor too early, and this was set for me I know!

MC: They both discuss and then discount the 3-point making move. The next three get it right.

Peter Christmas: 9/3 6/3

Hitting would give black a small lead in the race (pip count tied if not) but it does leave four blots strewn around and maybe playing into white's hand somewhat. The advanced anchor is just about the only good thing black has achieved so far and giving it up for a blot hitting contest when white starts with the stronger board and no other blots on, could be quite a risky gamble. Leading 6-2 it is better to edge forward rather than going for gammonish positions which could erode our advantage. Black can build his home board uninterrupted, while white may well stack awkwardly in trying to avoid leaving blots later. Black could slot a couple of points but I would prefer to make the 3-point so white is more likely to play safe rather than having the luxury of being able to leave more blots around building his outer board. So 9/3, 6/3 as ►

the only point I can make this go.

Brian Lever: 9/3 6/3

This is the position before 9802; in 9802, white was just congratulating himself on a probable escape when black rolled a hitting 9 and white re-entered with everyone's favourite - 62 from the bar. But of course, the question here is – should black have hit with the 9? There's a risk for sure in abandoning the anchor and I don't on balance think this position warrants it. True, black potentially gains a race lead (if not hit back – and there are a lot of returns) but there are many factors pointing to a quiet play. The match lead, the exposure of multiple blots and a potentially gammonish position, white's slightly stronger board and the fact that black can play comfortably enough, making his board up and maintaining an even race. There are many ways here of making the board up without opposition, and there can't really be an enormous equity difference between them – the difference will come between the hit and the many non-hitting plays. So purely because it makes a point, I'll choose 9/3, 6/3. You never know – white and black might both then roll 22.

Phil Tutchings: 9/3 6/3

Makes home point and unstacks 6-point whilst retaining builders bearing in on 5- & 4-points and retaining mid-point to hamper white.

MC: Well, Phil got it again, but his analysis is a little terse. A word of advice, Phil. Give a little more depth to your answers in future. We need to know a bit more about how you came to your decision.

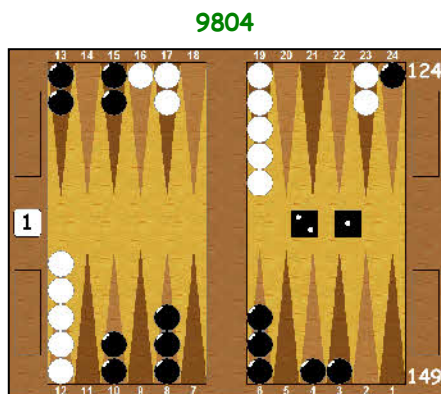
Snowie: 9/3 6/3

This looks like a variation or continuation of the previous problem. The only trap to avoid here is the highly ambitious 20/11* which is a huge blunder. After playing this 63 the race will be equal and black will have the safety of his golden-point anchor – particularly important when leading in a match as he will very seldom get gammoned.

His plan is to build his board as quickly as possible and as purely as possible by which I mean build the points in order. The basic theory for this type of position is: slot and cover, slot and cover and so on until the home board is complete.

However, there are also tactical considerations in the position as white's blot on his 14-point may not reach safety next

turn. Thus strengthening the home board immediately with 9/3, 6/3 might be the right play. In fact there is very little equity difference between the top four plays and the tactical considerations mean that 9/3, 6/3 just wins out over the purer 9/3, 8/5.



11 point match
Black 4 White 0
Black to play 21

MC: Here's another problem that Snowie gives multiple solutions to. However, the entrants are split all over the place. Richard chooses one of the choices

Richard Biddle: 8/6 4/3

Now this position looks like the position before 9801 where white has rolled 65 after black has moved 8/6 4/3. This certainly is one of a few candidate moves. It keeps things tight for black anticipating some contact. 10/9 6/4 prepares the home board, but has the disadvantage of being useless if black does get a hit next turn. 6/3 makes a deep home point. 24/23 4/3 is a variation on 8/6 4/3. But I didn't like stepping up the back checker in 8601 and I still don't like it. So that leaves me with the move actually made.

Selecting the actual moves made could be the wrong tactic, as I think Michael has put these positions in because he was so shocked that Snowie has told him he has made the wrong move. Mmmm, perhaps they are a red herring after all. Can't be bothered to change my answers now, they are due in tomorrow.

MC: No fish here, Richard. It's the 3rd best solution . . . but you only lose a gnat's in points! Phil's move, on the other hand isn't even mentioned by Snowie!

Phil Tutchings: 8/5

Behind in race - so need to prepare the home board and maintain contact without stripping the 6-point (giving a chance to make the 5-point later)

Paul Plumptre: 24/22 4/3

White is highly inflexible, and is likely to leave a shot next roll. If I advance 24/22 to put the question to white's blot on his 9-point, I reckon 14 of his rolls leave a shot. This is worth playing for. So I accompany it with 4/3 to gain the maximum benefit from my intended hit.

MC: Although Snowie says no one should be criticised for playing 24/22, 4/3 this move from Paul is a tad lower than some. The next three are very close.

Peter Christmas: 8/7 6/4

Similar predicament but not as bad as 9801, Black will be 22 pips (about 15%) behind in the race after the roll and needs to build some home points and hope to get a hit or a run of big doubles. Handy match lead so again try to avoid any gammons but hard to achieve much with only 3 pips to move. There is 24/22, 4/3 which attacks the outer board points and tidies up the home board but it still looks too early to move up. I would prefer to cover the 4 point with 6/4 and maximise the cover for the 3- and 5-point with 8/7 putting the spare man to some good use. 10/9 gives good pointing numbers too but having four blots may take longer to cover up if a good hitting number suddenly comes up or white rolls something like double-five and starts blitzing.

Cedric Lytton: 8/7 6/4

Making the 4-point and positioning another builder for the 5-point which is the next point black wants to make while waiting for a shot. White would not have had a double after this, unlike after the timid 8/6, 4/3 (which obviously produced 9801 after white 65: 9/3, 8/3).

Bob Young: 8/7 6/4

The slotting pure play of 8/5 we know wasn't chosen (see 9801), nor would I chose it as it looks like too many blots with white about to leave a blot, which I would like to hit and have a reasonable home board to contain the hit checker. Also I don't like the actual move played of making the 3-point (too deep for the moment). One third of white's upcoming rolls will leave a blot somewhere, so I prefer to keep the rear checker back. As black is behind in the race, make a good, albeit not the best point, and bring builders into position to make the 5-point next. Good practice dictates not using the last spare checker on the 6-point, but rules are made to be broken, and slotting the bar-point acts as a builder as well as the start of the bar-point, achieving two things at once. ▶

MC: Only one gets it almost on the button – but the points difference is very small at the top. No entrants got it exactly correct.

Brian Lever: 10/9 6/4

So this is position 9801, before it became 9801. Same principles apply – behind in race = don't run (not that this is a running roll); make up board; beware of gammon threat. When making up the board without opposition, there's not likely to be much equity difference between the top few choices; but slot/make the points in order is still the main objective. Here, I would watch out in case there's a white shot about – his position looks awkward. The best play to ready black's board for said shot appears to be 6/4, 10/9, making the 4-point and leaving all subsequent numbers playing pretty well. 10/9, I reckon, is slightly better than 8/7, because it gives better 6s. But all the plays will be fairly close.

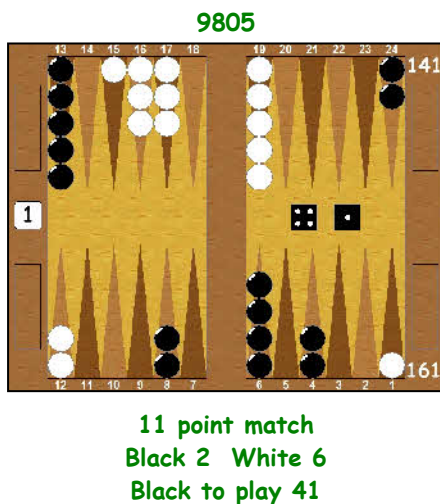
There is, incidentally, an argument for stepping up to the 22-point, which gives an immediate shot on a number of white's next rolls – but several other rolls become pointing rolls or allow white the freedom to play to his 1-point. Black should stay there for the mo.

Snowie: 10/8 4/3 or 10/9 6/4 or 8/6 4/3

This is probably the most difficult problem in the set. The first option to consider is stepping up with the 2 by moving 24/22 to put pressure on the blot on white's 9-point and the stripped 8-point. In this case the 1 is played 4/3. While this is a good plan black can do very slightly better, although it would be very difficult to find over the board, and no-one should be criticised for playing 24/22, 4/3.

White's position is awkward and black will get a lot of indirect shots very quickly and so while he would like to build his board purely he must temper that wish with the practical issue of not leaving too many return shots if he does hit a shot.

My first thought was that 10/9, 6/4 was the right play and that is certainly the most natural play. My neural nets tell me that this play is marginally inferior to 10/8, 4/3 and marginally superior to 8/6, 4/3 but the equity difference is only 0.001 in both cases which is statistically completely insignificant. Even to my electronic mind 10/9, 6/4 just looks more flexible than the other plays but who am I to argue with my own rollouts? I would suggest that all three moves receive full marks!



MC: Another good one that splits the entrants nicely. We'll start in reverse order of correctness. Bob is here on his own – Snowie doesn't mention his play!

Bob Young: 24/20 6/5

Hitting white on the ace-point at least makes rolls like double-four and double-six good for black with white trying to get in from the bar, but leaving him where he is makes double-three and double-five no help for the rear checker, but from the bar-point much better for white, so not much advantage either way in those choices. I think black will be facing a double next roll from white, so why not try for both the strong points, and see if the cube comes over. It would be a drop for black if he keeps his back men together on the ace-point, so plays like 13/9, 6/5 preparing to start a prime won't get any mileage, but maybe the double slot might erroneously induce white into rolling on, looking for gammons. 13/9, 24/23 looks a reasonable second choice, but not really active enough with the back men for me. White is highly likely to form a solid prime in front of black, with black checkers nowhere near the edge of the prime.

MC: The next two hit, but with a two-point board it isn't going to harm white too much.

Phil Tutchings: 6/1*

Takes away half of white's next roll – reducing prime building opportunities. Even if hit by return on the 1-point there will be chances of making anchor on white's home board.

Paul Plumptre: 6/1*

Because of white's open board, this is not the time for the passive 13/8. To improve my blockade, it is tempting to try 13/9 6/5, which may at least divert white from building. But white's position is tactically strong, and 13 of his 15 non-doublers are

going to build his 7-point, 5-point or 4-point next roll; hence I divert him with 6/1*. A return hit will not cost me much – I am already 20 pips behind in the race.

MC: Paul goes for the diversion – after discarding the best move! The next four entrants are split 50/50, the first two being close, but not close enough.

Cedric Lytton: 24/23 13/9

Pretty obvious, as 24/20 with the 4 would be really under the gun. Now several odd-even rolls make another point in the prime black wants to contain white's back man. Some might try 6/1* on the principle, "attack a single back man", but here this does very little except put one man where black doesn't want him. Although this looks like the same game (with colours reversed) as 9302-3, not evident what was played as difficult to get sensibly from here to 9803.

Peter Christmas: 24/23 13/9

24/20 looks a little too much under the gun and black is trailing again so 13/9 seems to offer the best diversity with the 4. The 6/1* hit seems to offer too much pain for not enough gain as there is not much back up and the only other blot is not even in direct line of fire. While 6/5 offers the quickest way to build a prime to trap the last straggler but white is also well placed to build a prime so playing 24/23 doubles the attack against slotting and offers the best chance to secure a slightly more advance anchor before being hopelessly trapped. Trailing 2-6 can justify bigger plays but having developed nothing at the back yet it warrants splitting over slotting.

MC: And now we get to the 'winners'.

Richard Biddle: 13/9 6/5

Black is in the poop and needs some drastic action. For me the move is 13/9 to unstack the mid-point and a bold 6/5 to try and build a last ditch prime to contain the white back checker. No great concern if hit, it just means we may swing into a back game. Most other moves are lame. The only other move that might require consideration is the tempo 6/1*. But I would only consider this move if the first choice was not available.

Brian Lever: 13/9 6/5

This isn't the time for a weeny play (like 13/9, 24/23); white is poised to make points in board – possibly on black's head if he splits. Magriel's "bold play" criteria seems to apply here – behind in the race, more men back, stronger board, ►

means an aggressive (diversionary) play is called for- either hitting 6/1* or slotting 13/9 6/5.

Hitting takes away half of white's next roll – possibly all, if black gets lucky - but what's the follow-up? That play says “blitz/attack” – but without any ammo. Bring the ammo up with 13/9, 6/5. Barring 22 or 44, white won't be making any points on his side of the board if he hits the slot, and if he can't hit, black is poised for rapid improvement. It also makes for a more gammonish situation both sides of the board, something black, behind in the match, should encourage.

Snowie: 13/9 6/5

This is another difficult problem. Black must do something to improve his position or stop white improving his and so the do nothing play of 13/8 can be rejected.

Black can keep white busy with (a) 6/1*. He can split with (b) 24/23, 13/9, the objective being to make advanced anchor next turn, or he can try to build a prime on his side of the board with (c) 13/9, 6/5.

Black should notice that white has 12 checkers in the attack zone and quickly discount move (b) – he will get blitzed too often. (a) is not a bad idea but its hard for black to improve his position after the hit and, after all, he only has a 2-point home board.

The best plan is to try to build a prime while maintaining the security of an anchor and (c) turns out to be the best play by quite some distance. The three candidate plays all have very different ideas behind them and making a judgement between the varying plans can only be done with experience, something that my neural nets obviously provide for me but a beginner would struggle with this position.

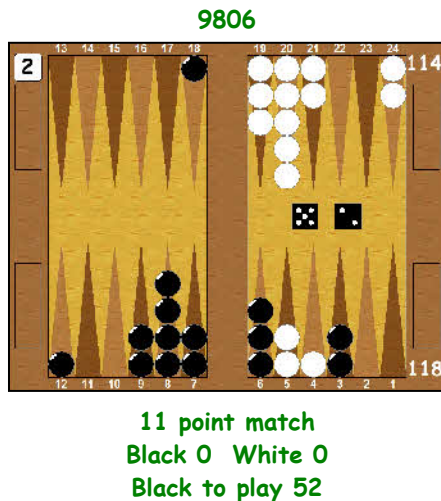
MC: The final position (top of next column) splits the entrants into two choices. We'll start with Phil's succinct answer ☺

Phil Tutchings: 12/7 8/6

Retains builders for high points.

Paul Plumptre: 12/7 8/6

Given that I have got the cube across, am I really going to get many more gammons via the attack 9/4* 6/4? No, so that it's not worth the risk of white's return shots evening up the game. Hence I merely safen up one outer blot with 12/7. There is no need to risk a white 66 or 65 with



18/16, since I am happy to bring one more man in with 8/6. My back man may not get home safely, but for now he is well placed for a shot at white's forced runs with a 6. Here I am trying to win a single game as safely as possible.

Cedric Lytton: 12/7 8/6

Lifts a blot, brings one man in and leaves white no joker 65 or 66, which 18/16 would do. Black can wait for a 9 or better, and his back man might be useful in some sequence where white does get men out.

MC: Actually, Paul, you do get more gammons with the attack play: 8/5% compared to 5/4%. Both these entrants are being too passive, and it is to the attackers that the top points go to.

Brian Lever: 9/4* 6/4

And finally, my favourite. One of the benefits of a quiz is that you can take the time to look into a position. Yes, I know Michael is going to say that I already do too much of that during my matches anyway. [He does!] Black has a good pointing number, which he should use to point. It looks more dangerous than it actually is (only six returns) and the most obvious alternative “neat” plays – 12/7 with 18/16 or 8/6 - leave a pretty even race, which I guess is what white wants to get into here.

In fact what he wants to do is sit tight and pop a 6 – or a 1 will do next roll, and he then has 5s and 6s to play - while still holding position on black's 5-point. But look at the resulting mess if he's pointed on and then rolls 61 or 62 - yummy blots all over the place, just what black wants when he's doubled. Or he might roll one of the nine dancers. Pointing provides double the number of good rolls versus bad. So don't be a wimp, smack away with 9/4 6/4 - and don't blame me if it all goes horribly wrong

I could actually write a lot more – such as white's 41 and 42 hits still leave him behind a prime - but I won't. Enough is enough.

Incidentally, the score should not be a factor here; both sides can use a gammon, neither need be over-cautious about losing one.

Richard Biddle: 9/4* 6/4

Safe or bold? Safe 12/7 18/6 leaves only three shots and leaves a checker back to attack any of white's escaping checkers. Bold 9/4* 6/4 puts a checker on the bar and leaves six return hits and still presents difficulties in bringing all of black's outfield checkers home. If we make the bold play, are we in a position to double the following role? I don't think so. However, I think we need to hit to throw the race more demonstratively in our favour.

Peter Christmas: 9/4* 6/4

It maybe foolhardy to pass over the only totally safe move 12/7, 8/6 but it seems a little too passive here, having given the cube over black needs to play to his strengths as the race is too close to call and white has the stronger home board. Sitting back when any big double or hitting a flyshot could bring on a re-cube can't be best in the long run. Even the tiny risk of 12/7, 18/16 misses the point, left unhindered it is easy for white to improve his position if he can either spring his spare back man to the 10-point and/or slot and make the home board his position will continue to improve.

I think in this position it is going to be best for black to take the initiative with positive action playing 9/4*, 6/4 it does give white some potential game winning return shots and even opens up some gammons if the three outside blots get hoovered up. But it also gives black some immediate gammon chances, if white enters with 61, or 62 he has to break off the 5-point and the problem persists if he gets stuck back, exposing the flaws in white's inflexible position if he can't spring his spare back man he will have less chance to build his home board and may even crunch or at least waste pips damaging his racing chances. The lack of any match score means this game is unlikely to decide the match so you can take some risks to stop the game slipping away and it could pay off handsomely.

Bob Young: 9/4* 6/4

The only totally safe next roll is to leave the rear checker where it is, but ►

eventually it has to come home, and may well leave indirect shots as it gets nearer, so if there are likely to be shots some then, then pointing on white's rear checker now only provides white with seven return shots, while boosting black's gammon chances, as well as giving a good psychological pointer to white that black is no pussy-foot. Black could lose the race next roll if white were to roll 66, putting him on the bar removes that possibility.

Snowie: 9/4* 6/4

Again two very different plans are available. The passive 12/7, 8/6 or the more aggressive 9/4*, 6/4 which leaves six return shots (54, 45, 24, 42, 14, 41).

The plan behind the first move is to hit white a couple of times as he runs into the outfield and gain in the race. It also leaves white with some difficult decisions on fives, should he burn checkers in his home board or run from black's 5-point?

With the second move black does risk being hit but also gives white four horror numbers (16, 61, 26, 62) which could well lead to a gammon for black. Because white's home board has only four points in it then black will still have chances even if he is hit.

A key element here is the position of the doubling cube. Black has already doubled so he must win this game with his play of the checkers alone. It is normally correct to be a little more aggressive once you have doubled and that is the case here. Black must risk the six hits in order to improve his position. Pointing on white is the right move.

Well, this first one got off to a good start for Brian. Richard was let down by 9803 and he really wasn't able to claw back the lost points. Well done, Brian.

	Action	Score
9801	13/7 10/7	10.00
	10/4 8/5	9.74
9802	8/5(2) 6/3(2)	10.00
	13/7 8/5(2)	9.98
9803	9/3 6/3	10.00
	9/3 8/5	9.94
	20/11*	8.49
9804	10/8 4/3	10.00
	10/9 6/4	9.99
	8/6 4/3	9.98
	8/7 6/4	9.91
	24/22 4/3	9.79
	8/5	8.97
9805	13/9 6/5	10.00
	24/23 13/9	9.26
	6/1*	8.85
	24/20 6/5	8.76
9806	9/4* 6/4	10.00
	12/7 8/6	9.43

Name	9801	9802	9803	9804	9805	9806	Score
Brian Lever	10/4 8/5	13/7 8/5(2)	9/3 6/3	10/9 6/4	13/9 6/5	9/4* 6/4	59.71
Peter Christmas	10/4 8/5	13/7 8/5(2)	9/3 6/3	8/7 6/4	24/23 13/9	9/4* 6/4	58.89
Bob Young	10/4 8/5	8/5(2) 6/3(2)	9/3 8/5	8/7 6/4	24/20 6/5	9/4* 6/4	58.35
Richard Biddle	10/4 8/5	13/7 8/5(2)	20/11*	8/6 4/3	13/9 6/5	9/4* 6/4	58.19
Paul Plumptre	13/7 10/7	13/7 8/5(2)	9/3 8/5	24/22 4/3	6/1*	12/7 8/6	57.99
Phil Tutchings	13/7 10/7	13/7 8/5(2)	9/3 6/3	8/5	6/1*	12/7 8/6	57.23
Cedric Lytton	13/7 10/7	13/7 8/5(2)	20/11*	8/7 6/4	24/23 13/9	12/7 8/6	57.07

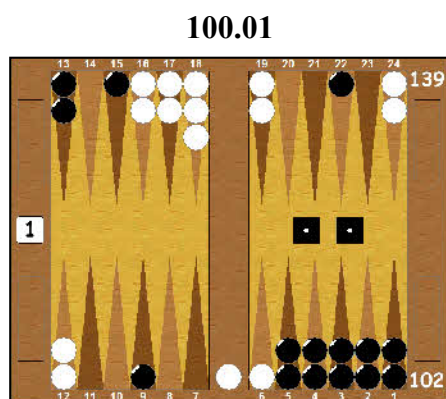
Competition 2009, No2 100.01-06 Positions By Michael Crane

Welcome to the second of the three 2009 season Competitions

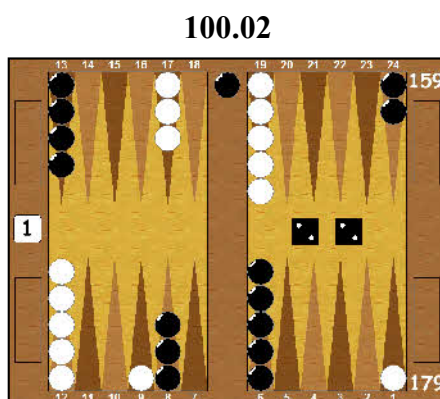
- The winner will win £30 off their accommodation at any Biba tournament of their choice.
- The member with the highest points total at the end of the year will win a cheque for £75.

Entries in by 15 July (members only) - Answers in August 2009, Bibafax 102

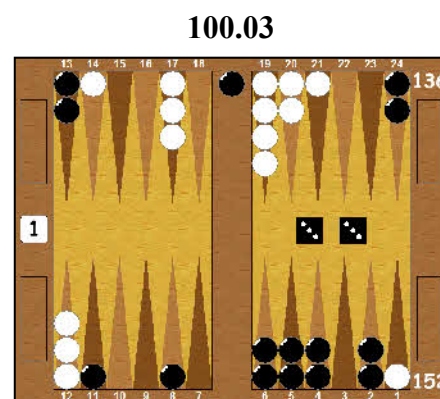
Email: info@backgammon-biba.co.uk and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ



11 point match
Black 4 White 5
Black to play 11



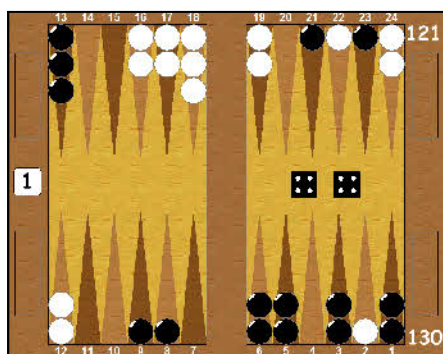
11 point match
Black 3 White 2
Black to play 22



11 point match
Black 5 White 3
Black to play 33

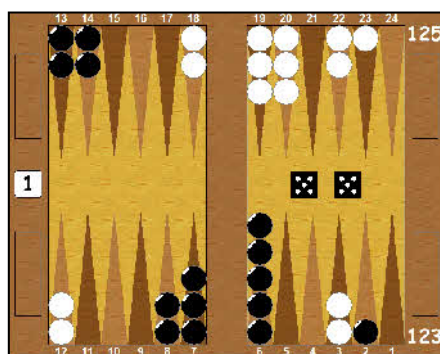
The remaining three positions are on the next page ►

100.04



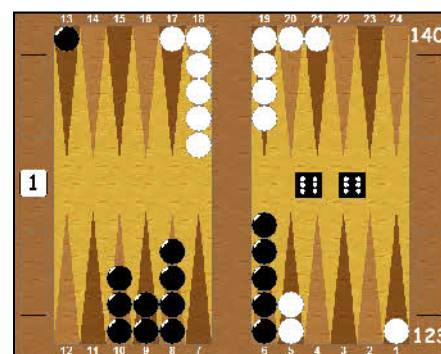
11 point match
Black 4 White 5
Black to play 44

100.05

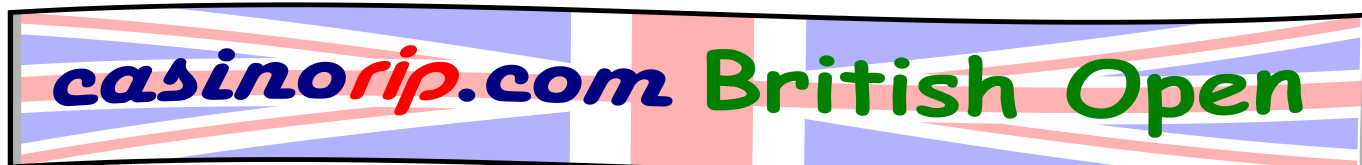


11 point match
Black 5 White 5
Black to play 55

100.06



11 point match
Black 0 White 4
Black to play 66



It was a good weekend, bright and sunny and quite pleasant outside . . . and I saw none of it, being cooped up indoors for two days so that over seventy players could compete for the casinorip.com British Open.



But, I didn't mind. I had my Assistant, Deena and wife, Sharen to help me out and keep me happy and the weekend just flew by. The only 'problem' I had to face was the fact that the carrier responsible for delivering the casinorip posters didn't! They remained in Coventry even though a second parcel was delivered to the hotel. Gilberto Nieto, the Affiliate Manager of GameAccount Global Ltd, casinorip's representative was very angry that they failed to turn up but could do nothing about it. I did my best with a tee-shirt, but it wasn't the same.

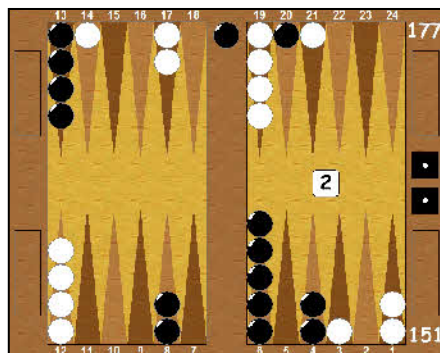
Main (77)

Uldis Lapikens and I have often said of Jon Barnes that he's the strongest player at Biba tournaments never to have won one. Well, we can't say that any longer now that he is the new, British Open Champion! In an almost, one-sided, final against Gaz Owen it was clear from the



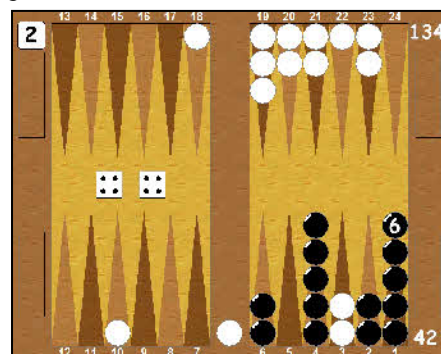
start that Jon was the better player. Jon is heard on the video telling Gaz at the end of the match that he'd been playing for 25 years - and it showed. Gaz commented that I only allowed him a 5 minute break between matches, but this was not so, I gave him 15, and it was more like 20 when they sat down to play. However, having watched Jon playing no break would have been long enough to break through his good rolling and top quality moving.

Jon (black) took an early lead after Gaz lost a gammon on a 2-cube.



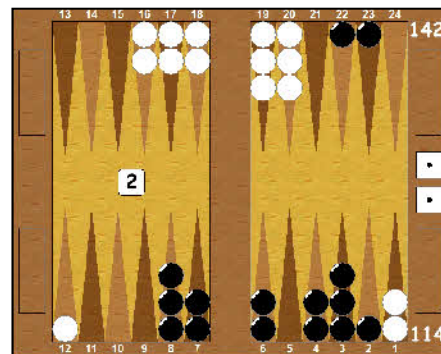
Black 0 White 0
Black cubes

It is a clear take, but a borderline double according to Snowie. However, Jon does seem to cube sooner rather than later and this worked in his favour. Later, in this position:



White rolls 44

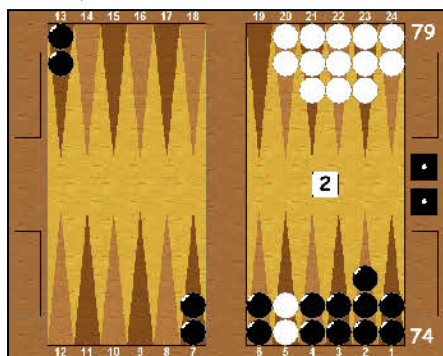
Gaz dances with 44 and Jon rolls 54 and clears his 6-point. Gaz doesn't get a shot and even a double-six a few rolls later fails to save the gammon. Gaz wins a point in the next game when he ships across a 2-cube in this position:



Black 4 White 0
White cubes



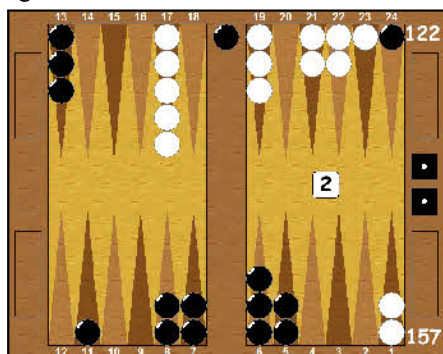
Jon drops and Snowie agrees, Double, pass. But, on the next cube, Jon once again falls foul of Snowie's advice of No double, take!



Black 4 White 1
Black cubes

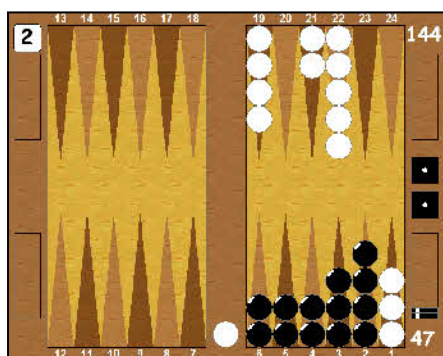
Again, a clear take, but the cube is an error. Jon would do better to hold back for another roll. He rolls the 62: 13/7 3/1 and Gaz replies with 32 and misses the blot. Jon gets his checker safe next roll and then soon after Gaz rolls 55 and the race is on. Jon has an open 4-point and it is this that prompts Gaz into the re-cube to 4, which Jon correctly, passes.

In the next game Jon cubes too early again:



Black 4 White 3
Black cubes

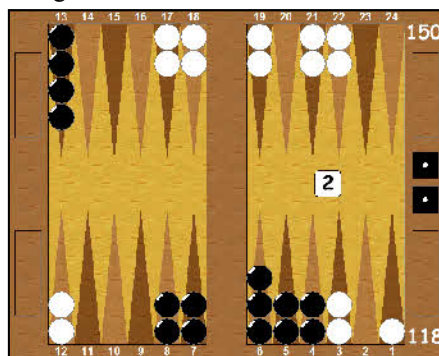
The cube is an error and Gaz takes. There's still a lot of play in this game and it progressed to this position:



Black on roll

Gaz is in trouble and in big danger of losing a gammon. He does actually get a hit but it's not good enough and Jon bears

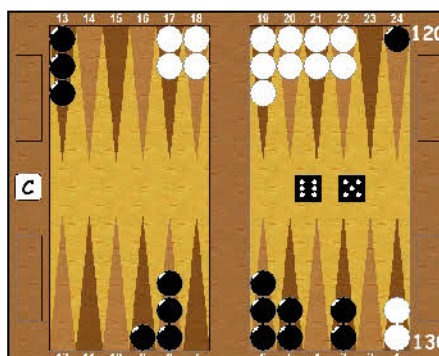
off to win the gammon and four more points. In the 5th game Jon actually gives a correct cube! And Gaz takes and makes a huge blunder:



Black 8 White 3
Black cubes

Jon was perhaps hoping to take a point here, but the video shows that although Jon thought about the cube before shipping it across, Gaz took it immediately with little or no consideration for the possible gammon chances (approx 20%). Gaz manages to save the gammon and Jon moves the score to 10-3, Crawford.

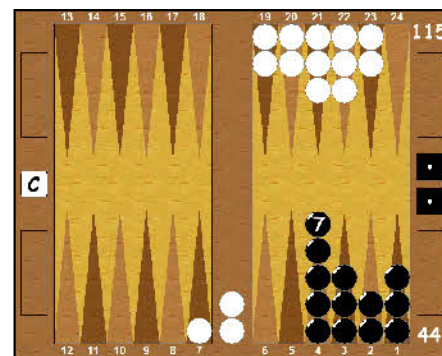
The Crawford sees Jon trapped behind a 6-prime, and Gaz with two back checkers on Jon's 1-point. It was here that Jon makes a massive blunder:



Black to play 65

Jon moves a provocative 13/7 13/8! Snowie doesn't like it @ -0.235. Gaz misses the blot rolling 31: 24/21 24/23; and Jon's reply is a stunning 43: 8/4* 7/4. Although Gaz soon anchors on the black 2-point, he has to break his holding prime and Jon not only escapes but in doing so picks up a third white checker. Not long later 66 and then 22 bring the game to this position shown at the top of the next column.

From here Gaz doesn't get a shot and eventually resigns the match. Both players played well, Jon @ World-class and Gaz @ Expert. Congratulations to Jon on becoming the 18th British Open Champion, and hard luck to Gaz, it being his misfortune to meet a very, on-form Jon Barnes.



White on roll



Consolation (74)

Paul Barwick is very crafty. He's a quiet, unassuming player who has crept to the top of the Grand Prix Championship without anyone really noticing! He gained enough points to do so by beating Kevin Stebbing (from the prog-side) in the Final.

Last Chance (64)

Richard Biddle and I always joke about his uncanny ability to get right up the money-next-round stage and then lose! He does it time and time again. But, he's now had the last laugh as he finally lost his cherry after beating John Wright in the semi-final, and then Tom Duggan in the final. In fact, I have even less to laugh at now since in the **Team(12)** Richard and George Miltiadou knocked me ▶

out in the semi-final. Richard then went on to beat George and won his second event of the weekend.



Last Chance: Tom & Richard

R.I.P: Rachel & Ann



R.I.P. (32)

You can't keep a good champion down. The final of this 3-pointer saw two-times British Open winner, Rachel Rhodes pit-

ted against last year's Open winner, Ann Pocknell. It was Rachel who emerged victorious to take home the 'least important' trophy to side between her two 'more important' ones.

Poker (34)

Chris Evans came out tops in the poker and he relegated current Grand Prix leader, Myke Wignall into 2nd. Rosey Bensley and Alison Lee took 3rd and 4th and Neil Young 5th. Regulars, Tony Fawcett and Paul Gilbertson only managed 9th and 12th respectively, not even making the last-eight table.

In the GP Poker Championship Myke Wignall keeps his 1st place position with a very healthy 107 points, a lead of 29 points over nearest rival, Paul Gilbertson. Thanks to his win this weekend, Chris Evans enters in 3rd place and we lose John Hedge and Vicki Pemberton and gain Rosey Bensley. Tony Fawcett is hanging back for bets! See page 38.

Jackpot (8)

Nicky Check and John Wright decided to split the final between them and they were declared Joint 1st.

Friday 500 (33)

So far this year no one has won it twice. This time it was Gerry Enslin's turn after he beat Jeff Barber in the final. As a

consequence of this Marcus Wrinch remains in 1st place and has a 10 point lead over nearest rivals, Jeff Barber, Andy Darby and Mike Ireland, all of whom share 2nd place with 34 points. With a maximum of 20 points for winning, Marcus can be caught and/or overtaken by any of the above, plus Richard Biddle if Marcus gains the minimum 4 points next time out. See page 38 for latest table.

Finally

It was a great tournament and we had players from some very exotic places: Japan (pictured below), Italy, Eire, Scotland, Germany, Birmingham! It was good to see so many turn out and I thank them all for doing so.



Also, thanks to casinorip for the excellent trophies. Made of glass they were a tad fragile and survived the entire weekend until one player couldn't resist picking one up . . . and dropping it. He chipped it, but it was OK because I gave that one to him when he won one. ★

Jon Barnes, 41 years young, lives in St Albans and attends the St Albans Backgammon Club on Tuesdays and on occasions he plays in Camden (both of which he recommends). He is a Maths teacher at a top independent school and has always been into board games - he runs the school's chess club and backgammon club (perhaps the only one in the country?), and learnt to play backgammon properly in Hong Kong in the 90s. He studied hard, read all the literature and was fortunate to play regularly with top players including John Simon, Steve Nelson, Andre Hoffman among others. By the time he left in 1999 he could hold his own with any of them - at stakes he wouldn't dream of playing for now!

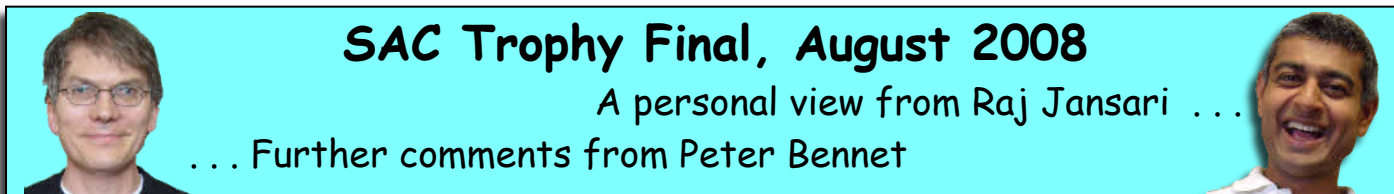
In Hong Kong he was his own boss in and was fortunate enough to be able to come home in the summer and play in the Monte Carlo World Championships (with little success mind you!). He won a few tourneys in Asia and won the consolation at Nice once. Also a couple of Gammonitis wins but until now he'd done bugger all in Biba tournaments.

As with most people who grow up and have a family, Jon's backgammon now takes a back seat. He was a big fan of FIBS when it first came out but he no longer plays online. He still regularly plays Snowie and the occasional rollout after a blunder is his only means of studying nowadays.

Jon became a member of Biba in April 2000 and it took him almost exactly nine years to the day to win his first title, British Champion. His awful run at Biba tournaments prompted a change in the way he plays this year. In the past he would strive for the lowest error rating and would play anyone in the same way he'd play Snowie. Nowadays he makes plays at the beginning that mix things up a bit - plays that he knows would not be #1 on Snowie's list and overall, although he knows his error rating would go up, he gambles that his opponents will make more errors than he. In a similar vein his early cubes are justified if he occasionally gets a drop (which did happen over the weekend of the British Open).

At the end of the day even the best player in the world needs luck to win a tournament. Jon admits he was certainly not the best player at the British Open (for instance Michy played superbly against him in their Last 16 match) but he does think he was very probably the luckiest!

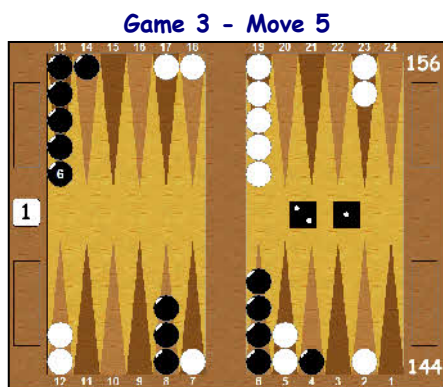




I enjoyed Raj's article (Bibafax 99, page 9), and was particularly interested in some of the non-intuitive plays chosen by Snowie. Raj's remark about Snowie's play in one of them - "No doubt someone will explain it to me but I didn't like it" - prompted me to investigate further.

Backgammon often presents a difficult choice between a strategic, or long-term, play (usually much prettier and following the theme of putting your men where they belong) and a sometimes ugly tactical, or short-term, alternative (typically involving the minimising of shots, stacking rather than diversifying, or an anti-positional hit). This conflict is illustrated in some of the positions discussed. Raj used Snowie 3 for the analysis and so I also wondered whether Snowie 4 would give different (better?) answers. My rollouts were all done 3-ply precise and of sufficient length to give reasonable statistical confidence. Most were truncated at depth 7, although as an additional check I did some full rollouts as well.

My comments should ideally be read in conjunction with the Bibafax 99 article, assuming you still have it to hand. Note that there was an error in all the original position diagrams in that the scores were reversed: so for example in Game 3 Move 5 the score was originally shown as Black 1, White 2, but this should read Black 2, White 1. In all cases Raj is playing the black checkers. I have selected only those positions in which either my rollout disagreed with the original, or I had something to add to Raj's comments, or both.



Black 2 White 1
Black to play 21

The match play here is almost automatic. But unless we suspect Snowie has gone on tilt - and it doesn't look like the sort of position to give it any trouble - the right play by a long way (according to both versions of Snowie) is 8/7* 6/4 leaving two blots exposed to multiple shots. As with many risk/reward decisions in backgammon the relevant questions are: what does this play gain if missed; and how bad is it if the blot is hit?

Firstly, if missed, it leaves a more flexible position compared to the rather stiff and stacked appearance of 14/13 4/2. If White fails to hit back there is little doubt that the hitting play is superior. It prevents White from making Black's bar next turn with a five, and Black now has a good chance of making it himself. Being hit also prevents White from making his own 4- or 5-point with small combinations and, behind in the race, he urgently needs these points to contain a Black checker which he hopes to hit soon. Currently his board does not pose much of a threat even if he does manage to hit.

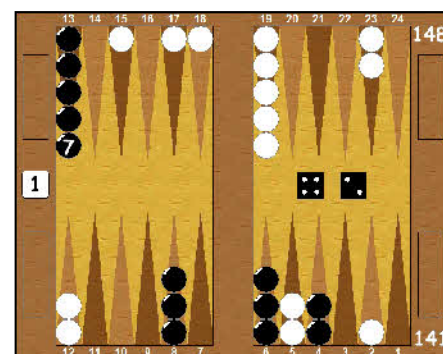
So how bad is it for Black if he is hit after 8/7* 6/4? (Incidentally there are 16 hitting rolls rather than 14 which Raj counted.) The answer is, apart from the joker 22, not that bad at all. White currently has only a poor two point board with blots on the 7- and 8-, and even if he finds one of the other eleven rolls which hit without breaking a point he will be leaving four blots scattered around. If he rolls 21 or 32 and is forced to break either the 20- or the 13-point to hit, his position turns into a disjointed mess.

Of course Black would rather not be hit, but getting hit now is far from disastrous. If missed, the pretty play should make life easier for Black later when White's board is likely to be much more threatening.

In the next position there is a stark example of positional factors taking precedence over short-term tactical considerations.

In Raj's rollouts 13/7 comes out on top, and in my Snowie 4 rollout there are three plays virtually tied for first place: 13/7, 13/9 8/6, and 13/11 8/4.

Game 3 - Move 6

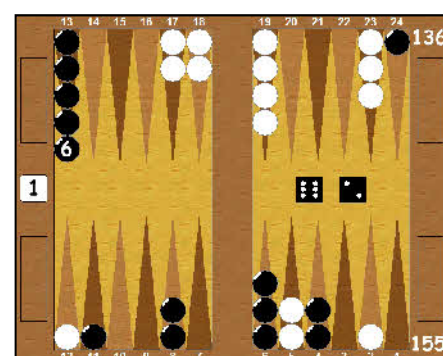


Black 2 White 1
Black to play 42

All these plays leave a direct shot, either single or double, *in front* of White's anchor. There are similarities with the previous problem, except that this time the slot does not confer the tactical advantage of a simultaneous hit. Raj's play of 8/2* *does* do this, and prevents White from making an inner board point, and yet still the positional slotting play is better, although the difference is not so great here (0.07).

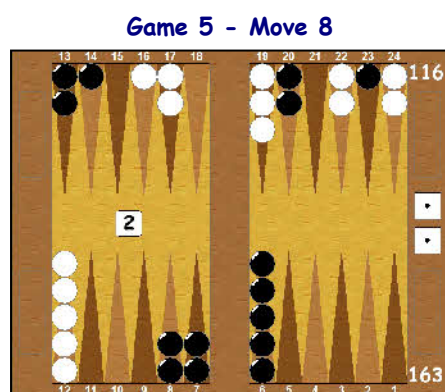
Strategic themes take precedence because Black is going to have trouble bringing the position home safely, irrespective of whether or not White is moved forward by a loose hit. Black has a stacked mid-point and insufficient safe landing places. Rather than hitting loose on the two which doesn't achieve a great deal even when it works (i.e. when White fails to hit back), addressing his main structural weaknesses - his midpoint stack and lack of safe places for those checkers to land - takes priority.

Game 3 - Move 8



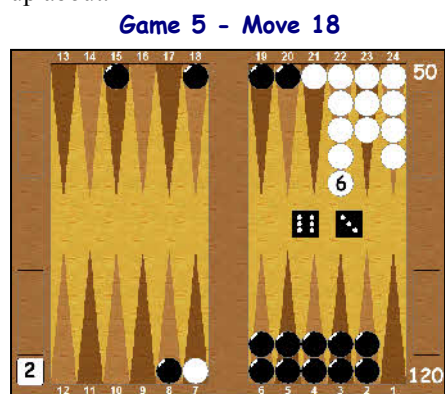
Black 2 White 1
Black to play 62

Later in the same game and now with a significant racing deficit Black's strategy should be to block his opponent rather than to race. He would like to extricate his back checker if he can, but it is not too vulnerable to attack on the 24-point. Covering the blot on the 11-point is therefore the obvious two, and the logical six is then 13/7. This is good if missed – continuing to work on strengthening the prime – and not too serious if hit. The reasons are again similar to those in Game 3 Move 5, only this time Black is already behind in the race so has less to lose from being hit. Running with 24/16 loses nearly a quarter of a point!



Black 5 White 1
White Cube Action

Raj's rollout made this a small pass (1.04). However my Snowie 4 rollout makes it a small take (0.95). Interesting difference, but not enough to get worked up about.

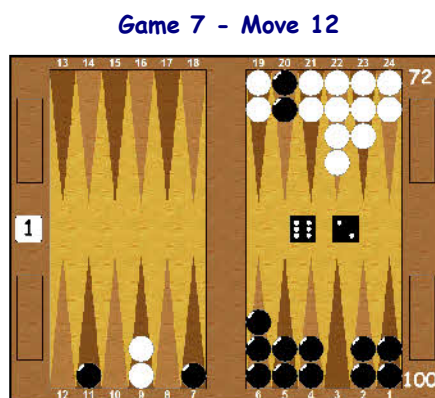


Black 5 White 1
Black to play 63

There are many reasonable plays, and some disagreement between Snowie 3 and Snowie 4, the latter ranking 20/17 8/2 as a fairly clear winner after a 648 game rollout. This play gives up on trying to block a specific double, although double-4 for White at least leaves Black a direct shot. Instead it goes for maximum outfield coverage whilst only leaving indirect shots – not so serious with White's

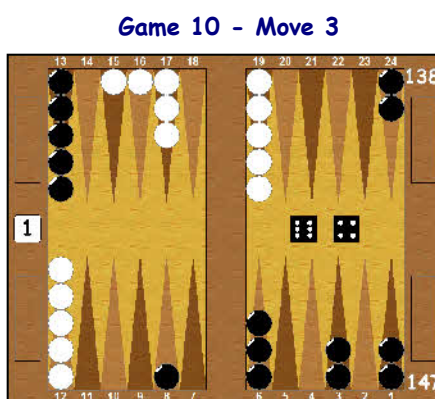
blot in board. The next three plays are essentially tied and each represents an error of about 0.07:

- 19/16 8/2 Similar to the top play, but leaving White 9s instead of 10s to hit. With the top play, all five 9s are terrible.
- 18/12 15/12 Snowie 3's rollout choice, blocking double-5 but leaving a direct ace and a gap in outfield coverage.
- 18/15 8/2 Raj's play of saving the blot and blocking double-4, again at a cost of depleted outfield coverage.



Black 5 White 5
Black to play 62

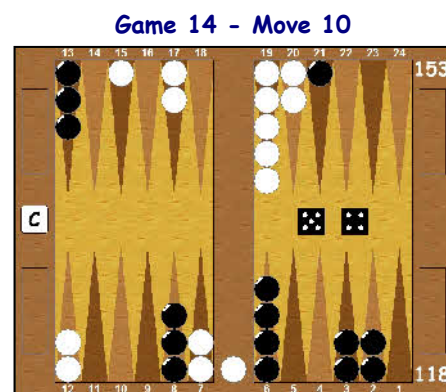
My Snowie 4 rollout results in a dead heat between Raj's play of 20/18 11/5 and the play he subsequently thought was better, 11/3. The anchor-breaking play loses heavily on 9s and 11s plus double-1, but gains on most 7s and 8s, as well as 41, 42, 43 (and to a lesser extent 46), when White can't break his outfield point without leaving a direct. Evidently the downside of being hit is just about balanced by the additional shots White will be forced to leave as he tries to clear his outfield point, but I would find this almost impossible to evaluate accurately over the board.



Black 6 White 7
Black to play 64

Raj's play (24/14) comes out a bit worse

(-0.09), and is equal third with 13/7 13/9. Second (-0.03) is 24/18 13/9 which still covers all quadrants whilst avoiding the point White most wants to make. However it allows White to hit loose with fewer returns than the best play: 24/20 13/7.



Black 10 White 9 - Crawford
Black to play 54

Snowie 4 evaluates 21/16 6/2 and 21/16 13/9 as a dead heat, but the latter (prettier!) play edges ahead on rollout (by about 0.03), contrary to Raj's result. Interestingly gammon losses are about the same after 13/9, but I tend to mistrust Snowie rollouts in match positions when the gammon price differs significantly from the money play figure of 0.5. At Crawford, 2-away the gammon price is 1.0, meaning that a gammon win for White trades equally with losing the game: both are worth 50% in match equity compared with a plain win. It could be that during the rollout Snowie is not trying hard enough: both to win a gammon for White; and to avoid losing one for Black. Raj's play of 21/16 6/2 may therefore be correct - I'll let someone else check this on Gnu which, unlike Snowie, does adjust rollout checker play according to score.

Oh, and Raj – don't you think it's time to upgrade to Snowie 4?!

When Raj sent in his first draft of the original article he was playing as white. Because the majority of the positions were Raj's we decided to change them to show Raj playing as black - and it was here the scoring problem manifested itself. Despite the fact that I redid the entire article, and Raj saw and approved the correct adjustments, I still managed to cock it up and post the correct positions but with the wrong scores!

Sorry! 🌟

31 July, August 1, 2 - SAC Trophy

The third of our four Swiss format events and yet another UK Finals Qualifier event. If you like playing 6 x 11 point matches over the weekend, then this is the event for you. Keep racking up those championship points, both Grand Prix and Ranking - it could keep you in the money!

Advice on Booking Accommodation

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

2009 Backgammon Calendar

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

Jun 5,6,7	The Casino ^{rip} .com English Open	GP	-	Daventry	Knockout
Jul 3,4,5	Biba World Championship	GP	UK	Daventry	Knockout
Jul 25,26	14th Liverpool Open	GP	-	Liverpool	Combination
* Jul 31, Aug 1,2	SAC Trophy	GP	UK	Daventry	Swiss
Aug ??	13th Mind Sports Olympiad	-	-	tba	Swiss
Sep 4,5,6	Backgammon in London @ Biba	GP	-	Daventry	Knockout
* Oct 2,3,4	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP	-	Daventry	Knockout
Oct 23,24,25	17th Irish Open	GP	UK	Dublin	Knockout
Oct 30,31, Nov 1	Arthur Wright's Big 70 Birthday Bash	GP	UK	Daventry	Swiss
Dec 4,5,6	Gilbertson UK Finals	-	-	Daventry	Double KO

2010 Backgammon Calendar

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

What does sponsoring an event entail?

At the very least you are required to supply the trophies for the event - the costs vary, but are usually in the region of £150 to £200. If you wish to attract a good turnout then extras should be considered to boost attendance. You can rename some of the above events to suit your sponsorship, details upon request. Once sponsorship has been agreed you are obliged to supply/fund the trophies in order to exclusively reserve your event.

Casinorip.com

The English Open. 5,6,7 June 2009

The usual four elements plus added on-line prize money from Casinorip



Biba is proud to present a World Championship Knockout & Progressive Consolation, Last Chance and 3-pointer event that is open to all players (*see below*) who cannot afford the high Registration and Entry Fees that such events normally charge.

3,4,5 July 2009

Barceló Daventry Hotel

Registration Fee: £20. Entry: £20

**Guaranteed 1st Prize:
£1000 minimum**

In addition to the £1000 (minimum) 1st Prize, donations for prizes so far are:

Hatrick Backgammon Board * Backgammon To Win - by Chris Bray * 52 Great Backgammon Tips - by Kit Woolsey & Patti Beadles * Backgammon wristwatch * One year's subscription to colour Bibafax for 2010 * Entry into the Last 16 of the December UK Finals including one night's accommodation.

Biba is actively seeking donations of backgammon related merchandise and/or services. If you would like to contribute please contact Biba HQ or email info@backgammon-biba.co.uk quoting, Biba World Championship.

** Entrants must be subscribers to Bibafax and members of Biba. You can join on the day.*



Dedicated To Backgammon



2009 Details, Deals and Dates



Registration: Saturday 1030 to 1230

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

Auctions: Group, Saturday 1245. Individual, Sunday 1015

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

All tournaments feature a free entry Friday 500 **

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

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

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

FRIDAY

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

SATURDAY

Registration 1030 / 1230
Play starts 1300 prompt

SUNDAY

Registration 1030
(penalty points apply @ 1035)

Dinner, bed and breakfast @ all Barceló Hotels

Reservations on 0870 1610 797 (Hinckley & Daventry)

(9am to 9pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm @ weekends) and quote 'backgammon'.

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

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

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

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.

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

Manchester One-Day Tournament

Organiser, Rodney Lighton reports: Manchester's annual tournament at Manchester Bridge Club attracted 47 entrants this year from as far afield as Bournemouth, Hereford, London, Luton and Dublin as well as the usual groups from Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Yorkshire.

Contestants sat down to play five rounds of 5 point matches (interrupted by a delicious buffet lunch) to qualify for either the main final (16 players) or the consolation. Everyone who won five or four matches in the afternoon and 9 out of 20 (drawn at random) who won three matches went into the main final.

The main came down to a final between Manchester's Brian Lever, who had beat-

en Andy Darby in the semis, and Liverpool's Peter Chan (victorious against Adrian Jones). The final was soon tied at 5 all (match to 7) and the cube was quickly turned. A very long and complicated game ensued with a small group of spectators keenly watching. Both Brian and Peter played this game well, the crowd considered them each to have made one blunder. Unfortunately for Brian his turned out to be the more costly and Peter emerged victorious.

In the consolation final Yorkshire's Paul Barwick beat Londoner Richard Biddle comfortably.

A 32 place last chance event for those knocked out of the main and consolation early, led to an all Liverpool final with

Simon Jones collecting yet another trophy from Manchester when he beat Steve Fowles.

In the 64 player 1 point knock out, organiser Rodney Lighton was the player who was lucky 6 times in a row beating Uldis Lapikens in the last final to take place at 11 pm.

A tasty buffet in the evening was provided by Lorraine Lighton. Ellie Lighton did scoring and bar duties. Irving Czechowicz, Susan Bourne and Rodney Lighton did the administration and directing.

Thanks to all helpers without whom this fine event would not take place.



Main (47)

1	Peter Chan
2	Brian Lever
3&4	Adrian Jones
3&4	Andy Darby
5to8	Kevin Stebbing
5to8	Marcus Wrinch
5to8	Adam Stocks
5to8	Dorothy Lee

Consolation (32)

1	Paul Barwick
2	Richard Biddle
3&4	George Hall
3&4	Chris Johnson
5to8	Peter Snape
5to8	David Wallbank
5to8	Rodney Lighton
5to8	Uldis Lapikens

Last Chance (32)

1	Simon Jones
2	Steve Fowles
3&4	Mark Calderbank
3&4	Uldis Lapikens
5to8	Paul Harper
5to8	David Mottley
5to8	Ian Turner
5to8	Marcus Wrinch

1-pointer (64)

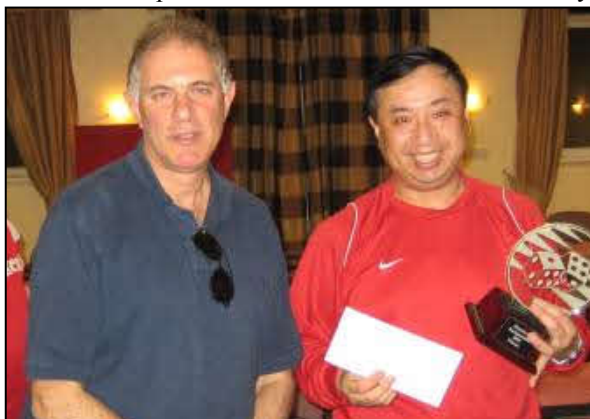
1	Rodney Lighton
2	Uldis Lapikens
3&4	Peter Chan
3&4	David Phillips
5to8	Brian Lever
5to8	Kevin Stebbing
5to8	Kevin Jones
5to8	David Mottley

Intermediate Prizes

4.12	Roger Keys
4.12	Susan Bourne
4.11	Chris Johnson
4.11	George Hall
4.11	Richard Biddle
4.10	Steve Fowles
4.10	Uldis Lapikens
4.10	David Wallbank
2.57	Peter Snape
2.57	Rodney Lighton
2.56	David Mottley
2.56	Ian Turner
2.56	Paul Harper
2.06	Fak Laight
2.06	Irving Czechowicz
2.06	Jon Williams
2.06	Michael Horne
2.06	Ralph Eskinazi
2.06	Steve Grundy
2.06	Tim Brown
1.55	Angie Dell
1.55	Ian Shimwell
1.55	Kevin Jones

Grand Prix @ Manchester

15.98	Peter Chan
13.41	Brian Lever
9.28	Adrian Jones
9.28	Andy Darby
6.18	Adam Stocks
6.18	Dorothy Lee
6.18	Kevin Stebbing
6.18	Marcus Wrinch
6.17	Paul Barwick
6.16	Simon Jones
4.12	Arthur Wright
4.12	Carl Dell
4.12	David Phillips
4.12	Mark Calderbank
4.12	Nigel Merrigan
4.12	Rachel Rhodes

**Main - Brian & Peter****Consolation - Paul & Richard****Last Chance - Steve & Simon****1 Pointer - Uldis & Rodney****County Cups Trophy - Report by Michael Crane**

I like the Swiss format, and although it isn't the most popular of formats with some players there are those that prefer them. Because they offer 6 x 11 point matches they are great for making good/bad changes to the Ranking and Grand Prix championships. It is for this reason alone that the November Swiss is so very important for those members chasing points in the championships.

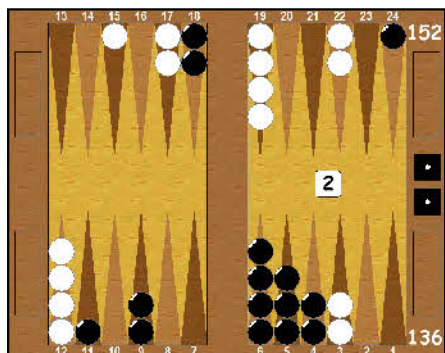
In the **Main (13/26)** it isn't often we get a 6/6 winner thus it's possible to win the tournament after losing one round; however, this weekend that was not the case. We had an outright winner in Rachel Rhodes when she beat Marcus Wrinch in the 6th Round and Marcus came 4th behind Nicky Check after a tie break was used to decide 3rd and 4th. In a good many of her six matches Rachel was behind (at one time, 10-1 behind!) yet she

prevailed in them all to take home the trophy.

Chris Ternel lost his 1st Round match against Neil Everitt, and if he was playing in a knockout he'd have been out of the running. However, those that know Chris will know he doesn't quit. He keeps on at it and to his credit (and skill) he finished the tournament with 5/6. As he was the only one to get 5/6 he nicely took second place to Rachel's first. George Miltiadou was also hoping to end up on 5/6 but he had the misfortune to meet the UK's ►

highest ranked player, Julian Fetterlein . . . and Julian is hard to beat - as George discovered.

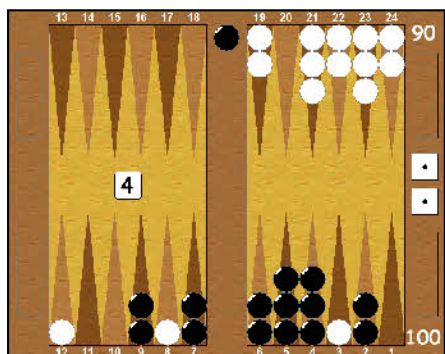
The match against Marcus was fairly short compared to many 'finals' I've covered, and this one was vastly shortened in Game 4 when Rachel (black) shipped across this cube (match to 11 points).



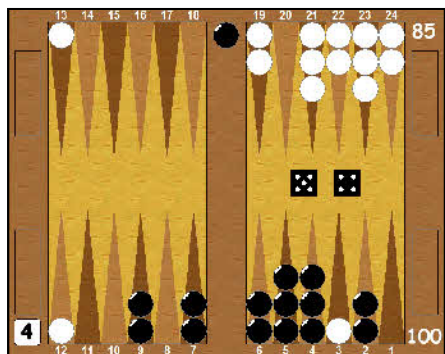
Black 1 White 3
Black cubes

This isn't a strong double and it's an easy take for Marcus. Rachel has a small racing lead but there's plenty of play in this game. She has a better home board, but her checkers on the 18-point will have to break off soon and white is ready with spare checkers to attack.

Several moves later Marcus re-cubes to 4.

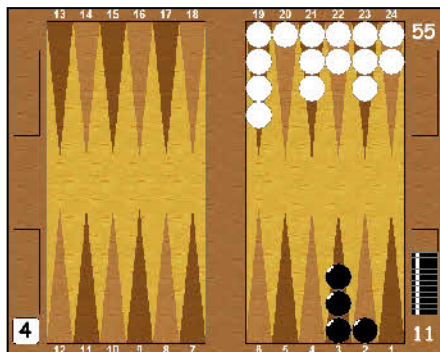


Whereas Rachel's premature cube was a slight error, this re-cube from Marcus is a big blunder. Even though Rachel is on the bar and Marcus has two 'free' checkers, it all hinges on rolling 5s. Marcus rolls 32: 17/12 and Rachel rolls the 5:



This is where Rachel's aggressive nature comes out. The safest play is 25/20 5/1,

but it isn't very good for gammons, and if Rachel can pull off a gammon win here she will streak into the lead, 9-3. With this in mind she plays 25/20 7/3*. Marcus rolls 62: Dances, Rachel replies with 53: 20/12* and now Marcus has two on the bar and Rachel has excellent blot-covering chances if Marcus doesn't hit. He rolls 62 and misses and then Rachel covers and later end up just here with black on roll:



Marcus has scurried home and now Rachel needs double-three or greater to get the gammon. She rolls double-four! Marcus wins one more game but he is unable to recover from the gammoned 4-cube and Rachel triumphs with 6-6 wins to take the trophy.

In the **Consolation (13/26)** the manipulation and rebranding of the Sunday matches has proved a success, and nowadays players are more likely to continue playing than ever before. Four that failed to impress on the Saturday made a big improvement on the Sunday. They were Richard Holness, Gerry Enslin, Paul Gilbertson and Arthur Wright. Richard lost to Arthur in the 6th Round and Paul beat Gerry to leave a playoff between Paul and Arthur for the trophy. In a very one-sided match Arthur completely out-rolled Paul - and he administered the coup de grace with a double-six to bearoff his last two checkers to steal it away from Paul who had just one to clear.

Of course, the weekend got underway with the **Friday 500 (12)** and it was a good start for Paul Gilbertson. He beat new-comer, Jeff Bailey in the final to take home the Weekend Prize. The backgammon continued on the Saturday night with The **Team (8)** event. Here, we had Richard Biddle in a second consecutive final, this time playing against Brian Metcalf. Richard won again - and is now looking for a hat trick next time out! See page 38 for the latest table.

In the **Poker (8)**, late (almost reluctant) entrant, Marcus Wrinch, ended up chip-leader with Paul Gilbertson in 2nd place. Mardi Ohannessian surprised us all by

entering - we didn't even know he could play! He raised a few eyebrows and blood pressures when he went all-in on his first hand. It proved a winning tactic as everyone else folded. However, he didn't last much longer and went out in 7th place. The latest table is on page 38.

Finally. Overall it was a good tournament if not a good turnout - however, it was only one short of last year's 27; and that would have been beaten had Tony Fawcett and Paul Barwick both played.



Main: Rachel & Chris
Consolation: Paul & Arthur

Footnote: Paul was a tad peeved about Arthur's winning double and he gave him a sneer before the photo above was taken. As you can see, the smiley one is so much nicer! 😊



The casinorip.com British Open 3, 4, 5 April 2009

Main (77)

1	Jon Barnes
2	Gaz Owen
3&4	Stuart Mann
3&4	Chris Purchase
5to8	Arthur Musgrove
5to8	Kevin Stebbing
5to8	Martin Barkwill
5to8	Tim Mooring

Last Chance (64)

1	Richard Biddle
2	Tom Duggan
3&4	Paul Gilbertson
3&4	John Wright
5to8	Simonetta Herrera
5to8	Eamon Keogh
5to8	Roland Herrera
5to8	Dave McNamara

Friday 500 (33)

1	Gerry Enslin
2	Jeff Barber
3&4	Brian Lever
3&4	Roland Herrera
5to8	Andy Darby
5to8	Mike Ireland
5to8	Richard Biddle
5to8	Peter Christmas

Team (12)

1	Richard Biddle
2	George Miltiadou

Jackpot (8)

1st	John Wright & Nicky Check
-----	---------------------------

Grand Prix @ Open

32.00	Jon Barnes
18.58	Gaz Owen
18.57	Paul Barwick
13.42	Arthur Musgrove
13.42	Stuart Mann
13.42	Chris Purchase
13.41	Wayne Felton
13.40	Richard Biddle
9.29	Martin Barkwill
9.29	Tim Mooring
9.29	Kevin Stebbing
9.29	Dave Moon
9.28	Lawrence Powell
9.28	Felix Vink
9.27	Tom Duggan
6.19	Brendan Burgess
6.19	John Wright

Consolation (73)

1	Paul Barwick
2	Kevin Stebbing
3&4	Wayne Felton
3&4	Mardi Ohannessian
5to8	Lawrence Powell
5to8	Chris Evans
5to8	Felix Vink
5to8	Julian Fetterlein

R.I.P (32)

1	Rachel Rhodes
2	Ann Pocknell
3&4	Marcus Wrinch
3&4	Peter Chan
5to8	Andy Darby
5to8	Philip Tutchings
5to8	Eric Westbrook
5to8	Gerry Enslin

Poker (34)

1	Chris Evans
2	Myke Wignall
3	Rosey Bensley
4	Alison Lee
5	Reg Wegener
6	Neil Young
7	Julian Minwalla
8	Roger Coram

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6.19	Nicky Check
6.19	Julian Fetterlein
6.19	Mardi Ohannessian
6.19	David Motley
6.19	Eamon Keogh
6.19	Mark Heidenfeld
6.19	Miles Farren
6.19	Marcus Wrinch
6.19	Michy Kageyama
6.18	Rachel Rhodes
6.18	Chris Evans
6.18	Sean Casey
6.17	Paul Gilbertson

4.13	Uldis Lapikens
4.13	Peter Chan
4.13	Rowena Paliwoda
4.13	Chris Ternel
4.13	Edwin Turner
4.13	Tim Vasiljevic
4.13	Andrew Darby
4.13	Frank Conway
4.13	Gerry Enslin
4.13	Cecilia Sparke
4.13	Mike Barrett
4.13	Eric Westbrook
4.13	Shea Mulhall

4.13	Taka Ito
4.12	Peter Christmas
4.12	Tony Lee
4.12	Rosey Bensley
4.12	Julian Minwalla
4.11	David McNamara
4.11	Simonetta Barone
4.11	Roland Herrera
4.10	Ann Pocknell
2.58	John Batty
2.58	Phil Tutchings
2.58	Paul Learmount
2.58	Richard Holness

2.58	Stewart Pemberton
2.58	Lewis Young
2.58	Mick Harris
2.57	Brian Lever
2.57	Stefan Paliwoda
2.57	Myke Wignall
2.57	George Miltiadou
2.06	Ian Tarr
2.06	Tony Fawcett
2.06	Vicky Pemberton
2.06	Ken Osakabe
1.55	Mick Vacarey

The County Cups Trophy. 8, 9, 10 May 2009

Main (13/26)

1	Rachel Rhodes	6	32.00
2	Chris Ternel	5	13.42
3	Nicky Check	4	11.35
4	Marcus Wrinch	4	10.84
5	George Miltiadou	4	9.29
6	Myke Wignall	4	13.42
7	Julian Fetterlein	4	10.84
8	John Hedge	3	8.25
9	Neil Everitt	3	8.25
10	Uldis Lapikens	3	6.19
11	Lawrence Powell	3	6.19
12	Phil Tutchings	3	9.29
13	Brian Metcalf	2	6.19

Main GP

Consolation (13/26)

1	Arthur Wright	3 / 4	9.29
2	Paul Gilbertson	3 / 3	6.19
3	Bob Young	2 / 3	7.74
4	Mardi Ohannessian	2 / 3	7.74
5	Wayne Felton	2 / 3	6.19
6	Richard Holness	2 / 3	7.74
7	Eric Westbrook	2 / 3	6.19
8	Gerry Enslin	1 / 2	4.13
9	Richard Biddle	1 / 2	4.13
10	Raymond Kershaw	1 / 2	5.68
11	Jeff Barber	1 / 1	2.58
12	Linda Taylor	0 / 1	2.58
13	Rosey Bensley	0 / 0	0.00

Con/Main GP

Friday 500 (12)

1st	Paul Gilbertson
2nd	Jeff Bailey
3/4	Marcus Wrinch
3/4	Mardi Ohannessian
5 to 8	Richard Biddle
5 to 8	Myke Wignall
5 to 8	Brain Metcalf
5 to 8	Ray Kershaw

Poker (8)

1	Marcus Wrinch
2	Paul Gilbertson
3	Rosey Bensley
4	Julian Fetterlein
5	Myke Wignall
6	Tony Fawcett
7	Mardi Ohannessian
8	John Hedge

Ranking changes on the next page

Team (8)

1	Richard Biddle
2	Brian Metcalf

Ranking changes @ County Cups

New Old

2075 2097 Julian Fetterlein
1918 1882 Chris Ternel
1913 1945 Lawrence Powell
1873 1806 Rachel Rhodes
1826 1848 Uldis Lapikens
1756 1734 Nicky Check
1727 1736 Paul Gilbertson
1692 1662 Marcus Wrinch

1642 1642 John Hedge
1641 1646 Mardi Ohannessian
1634 1628 Bob Young
1593 1555 George Miltiadou
1576 1570 Wayne Felton
1563 1620 Jeff Barber
1543 1580 Raymond Kershaw
1505 1503 Eric Westbrook
1502 1525 Gerry Enslin
1494 1461 Phil Tutchings

1493 1453 Myke Wignall
1485 1496 Richard Biddle
1480 1497 Brian Metcalf
1477 1459 Neil Everitt
1432 1422 Richard Holness
1404 1455 Rosey Bensley
1404 1370 Arthur Wright
1205 1236 Linda Taylor

Grand Prix Championship, May, 2009 (6.16 and above)

58.79 Paul Barwick	23.21 Jeff Barber	11.87 Stewart Pemberton	6.71 Lewis Young
51.58 Rachel Rhodes	22.70 Stuart Mann	11.85 Brian Lever	6.70 Carl Dell
46.43 Gerry Enslin	22.70 Arthur Wright	10.81 David Motley	6.69 Simonetta Herrera
45.90 Marcus Wrinch	22.19 Mardi Ohannessian	10.32 Richard Holness	6.69 Jason Dennis
44.87 Uldis Lapikens	22.18 Bob Young	10.32 Reg Wegener	6.19 Brendan Burgess
42.79 Peter Chan	21.15 Peter Christmas	10.31 Tony Fawcett	6.19 Geoff Conn
41.78 Lawrence Powell	20.61 Talan Evans	9.81 Raymond Kershaw	6.19 Mark Dixon
40.24 Nicky Check	19.60 Rosey Bensley	9.29 Michael Proto	6.19 Neil Davidson
36.62 Wayne Felton	19.59 Adrian Jones	9.29 Tim Mooring	6.19 Eamon Keogh
35.61 Julian Fetterlein	18.56 Chris Evans	9.29 Lee Wood	6.19 Mark Heidenfeld
35.58 Paul Gilbertson	17.53 Tom Duggan	9.29 Dave Moon	6.19 John Ingamells
34.57 Chris Ternel	17.03 Paul Plumtre	9.29 Todd Young	6.19 Miles Farren
32.00 Jon Barnes	16.51 Eric Westbrook	9.28 Malcolm Robertson	6.19 Kevin Dale
30.37 Richard Biddle	16.00 Phil Tutchings	9.28 Felix Vink	6.19 Michy Kageyama
29.91 John Hedge	15.99 George Miltiadou	8.76 Stefan Paliwoda	6.19 Rowena Paliwoda
29.28 Peter Bennet	15.47 Vicky Pemberton	8.76 Neil Young	6.18 Raj Jansari
27.86 Neil Everitt	15.47 Kevin Stebbing	8.26 John Reddington	6.18 Sean Casey
26.84 Martin Barkwill	14.45 Mike Ireland	8.26 Mike Barrett	6.18 David Startin
26.84 Sean Williams	13.42 Arthur Musgrove	8.25 Mick Vacarey	6.18 Adam Stocks
26.82 Myke Wignall	13.42 Chris Purchase	8.23 Edwin Turner	6.18 Dorothy Lee
25.80 Brian Metcalf	13.42 Simon Heath	8.23 Ann Pocknell	6.17 Crispin Duke
24.77 John Hurst	13.41 Tony Lee	8.23 Fanika Petkovska	6.16 Simon Jones
24.77 Michael Bennett	12.90 John Wright	8.23 Chris Johnson	
24.77 Gaz Owen	12.90 Mick Harris	7.74 Angie Dell	
23.73 Andy Darby	12.38 Tim Vasiljevic	6.71 Linda Taylor	

Ranking Championship, May, 2009 (played 5 and above)

Q 2067.07 Uldis Lapikens	11 1893.18 Sean Williams	7 1318.57 Lewis Young
Q 2042.50 Nicky Check	11 1801.73 Martin Barkwill	7 1172.29 Zoe Cunningham
Q 1958.93 Paul Gilbertson	11 1565.82 Andy Darby	6 2146.00 John Hurst
Q 1890.36 Marcus Wrinch	11 1486.27 Chris Evans	6 2032.33 Michael Bennett
Q 1883.07 Julian Fetterlein	10 1695.50 Peter Christmas	6 1726.67 Stuart Mann
Q 1853.07 Gerry Enslin	10 1541.70 Talan Evans	6 1717.33 Stewart Pemberton
Q 1833.29 John Hedge	10 1529.70 Paul Barwick	6 1648.17 Vicky Pemberton
Q 1800.64 Chris Ternel	10 1506.30 Mick Harris	6 1544.67 Todd Young
Q 1679.07 Wayne Felton	10 1479.10 Tim Vasiljevic	6 1513.83 Larry Bennett
Q 1670.71 Brian Metcalf	10 1465.40 Richard Biddle	6 1353.67 Athanasia Petselis
Q 1644.43 Bob Young	9 1949.67 Gaz Owen	5 1886.40 Chris Purchase
Q 1638.64 Lawrence Powell	9 1797.11 Paul Plumtre	5 1854.60 Simon Heath
Q 1570.29 Rosey Bensley	9 1628.89 George Miltiadou	5 1822.80 Arthur Musgrove
Q 1565.79 Eric Westbrook	8 1800.88 Rachel Rhodes	5 1723.80 John Wright
Q 1548.71 Myke Wignall	8 1446.25 Ray Kershaw	5 1707.00 Tim Mooring
Q 1540.57 Arthur Wright	8 1345.63 Tony Fawcett	5 1664.40 Tony Lee
Q 1481.93 Jeff Barber	8 1328.63 Reg Wegener	5 1455.40 Peter Chan
13 1703.46 Neil Everitt	8 1130.13 Mick Vacarey	5 1390.40 Tom Duggan
13 1653.38 Mardi Ohannessian	8 1124.13 Neil Young	
13 1442.62 Phil Tutchings	7 2221.00 Jon Barnes	
13 1208.69 Linda Taylor	7 1712.86 Lee Wood	
12 1860.83 Peter Bennet	7 1485.43 Richard Holness	
12 1470.83 Michael Ireland	7 1449.71 John Reddington	

Q refers to entrants who have played 14 or more 11 point matches thus qualifying for the Championship.

Friday 500 Positions - May

56	Marcus Wrinch	13	Brain Metcalf	7	Sidney Van Gelder
45	Paul Gilbertson	13	Ray Kershaw	4	Angie Dell
42	Richard Biddle	12	Athanasia Petselis	4	Ann Pocknell
41	Jeff Barber	12	Peter Chan	4	David McNamara
34	Andy Darby	12	Raj Jansari	4	Geoff Conn
34	Mike Ireland	11	Ed Turner	4	Ian Tarr
33	Myke Wignall	11	John Wright	4	Jason Dennis
31	Gerry Enslin	11	Julian Fetterlein	4	John Ingamells
27	Mardi Ohannessian	11	Mick Harris	4	Kevin Dale
27	Tom Duggan	9	Mahmoud Jahanbani	4	Luan
25	Neil Young	9	Peter Christmas	4	Mark Dixon
24	Brian Lever	9	Todd Young	4	Nicky Check
22	Rosey Bensley	8	Anne Ryder	4	Paul Barwick
22	Tony Fawcett	8	Fanika Petkovska	4	Paul Learmount
20	Lee Wood	8	Gaz Owen	4	Rowena Paliwoda
20	Peter Bennet	8	Reg Wegener	4	Roy Hollands
		8	Tony Walters	4	Stefan Paliwoda
		7	Linda Taylor	4	Steve Taylor
		7	Carl Dell	4	Stuart Mann
19	Simonetta Herrera	7	Chris Evans	4	Sue Metcalf
18	Martin Barkwill	7	Chris Johnson	4	Taka
16	Jeff Bailey	7	Ken Osakabe	4	Talan Evans
16	Roland Herrera	7	Michy	4	Tim Vasiljevic
15	Arthur Wright	7	Neil Davidson	4	Tony Lee
14	Lewis Young	7	Rachel Rhodes		

Top 16 positions above here

Thanks to a win this weekend at the County Cups Trophy, Paul Gilbertsom moves into 2nd place behind the now-entrenched, Marcus Wrinch. Though having his previous lead shortened somewhat, Marcus is still Top Dog! We have lost Simonetta Herrera and Martin Barkwill and gained Mardi Ohannessian and Rosey Bensley.

Poker Grand Prix - May

Pts	Player	Pts	Player	Pts	Player
117	Myke Wignall	44	Tony Lee	16	Kevin Stebbing
94	Paul Gilbertson	33	Ed Turner	16	Roy Hollands
67	Tony Fawcett	33	Martin Barkwill	14	Tim Vasiljevic
		28	John Batty	13	Kevin Dale
		18	Tony Walters	12	Julian Fetterlein
		13	Gaz Owen	11	Shea Mulhall
80	Rosey Bensley	13	Lee Wood	9	Paul Learmount
59	John Hedge	11	Tom Duggan	8	Ray Fard
39	Marcus Wrinch	7	Mick Harris	8	Simonetta Herrera
72	Chris Evans	32	Julian Minwalla	7	Jason Dennis
71	Neil Young	30	Roger Coram	6	Mardi Ohannessian
58	Vicki Pemberton	26	Gilberto	6	Ann Pocknell
45	Andy Darby	21	Cecilia Sparke	5	Stefan Paliwoda
41	Mick Vacarey	20	Frank Conway	4	Felix Vink
24	Lawrence Powell	20	Nick Valley	2	Eamon Keogh
52	Reg Wegener	19	Lewis Young	1	Mark Dixon
47	Alison Lee	17	Dave McNamara	1	Talan Evans

At last Tony Fawcett makes a meaningful entrance! But it is only because he is one of just three qualifiers to date! As can be seen from the points below him, he's perhaps in 3rd position on a temporary basis; however, he does have a couple of very small scores to drop. Myke Wignall still dominates the table, but Paul Gilbertson is making a good effort to oust him.



Backgammon's most prestigious Tour is ongoing for 2009 "The European Backgammon Tour" (EBGT)

The Season III 4 stops, all "added prize tournaments", are:



TMG Portuguese Open, Estoril, May 14-17



Georgian Open, Tbilisi, July 29 - Aug 5



French Open, Enghien-les-Bains, Oct. 27-Nov. 1



City of Venice, Venice, November 2009



Each round you win in the Champion's Division will contribute to your masterpoints. The length of the match you win is the number of masterpoints you will receive, no matter if it's the main, consolation or last chance round.

The winner of each stop will be granted a free seat in the next stop of the EBGT.

10% of the added prize of each stop will go towards the prize-pool of the EBGT: The overall winners of the EBGT will share a minimum of 10,000 €uro at the end of the season (60% for winner, 30% for second place and 10% for the third placed player).

Lots of other surprises coming up during the year !!!!

Web address: www.world-backgammon-association.com

Email for more info: info@world-backgammon-association.com



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SEASON III

Estimated total payout
1,000,000 \$

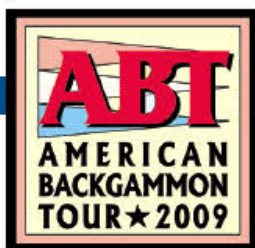
4th TrueMoneyGames Portuguese Backgammon Open

14 – 17 MAY 2009

For additional information, please contact:
info@world-backgammon-association.com
www.world-backgammon-association.com



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1st US Backgammon Open

JUNE 4-7, 2009
Washington DC
(Arlington, VA)

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