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Dedicated To Backgammon



SAC Winner 2009

Tony Fawcett

Can you guess how long
it took Tony to win his
first ever Biba 11-point
tournament? To find out
check out the report.

Profile: Page 2
Match Report: Page 7
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Tony Fawcett, SAC 2009 Champion

A little insight into Tony Fawcett

A long long (9 years) time ago in a small village in a small pub in a small room, two veterans who I knew not at the time were about to commence battle of a game I heard of only in folklore. Backgammon was this strange game. These two gladiators sat down with a laugh and a smile and lots of money on the table and started to do battle over a strange board; of which I had not seen the likes of before. Intrigued I was, so sat down to watch and started to ask questions like, "What you doing that for?" and "Why does that go there?" all intellectual questions as you could guess from a northern bloke who knew nowt about this strange game.

As time passed by I had to ask who these gladiatorial giants were "Mick Butterfield" came back the first answer and the other guy said "Albert Tinker" (now sadly passed away but I am sure Albert will be playing wherever he is !)

Over the next few weeks I had asked enough questions to bore the pants off any respectable person and therefore learnt enough to sit down to play my first ever game against the mighty Mick now calling himself the "Cube Boss" . . . and lost of course.

As you can imagine Mick never drew breath and proceeded to tell me all he knew about this once strange game of a few months ago.

Albert joined in with the odd quip and bit of knowledge he had gained over the years. He then offered me the chance of learning lots more by lending the, as many say and he did, the "holy bible of backgammon by Paul Magriel". Eagerly I read this book; everywhere I went I had the bible with me, for 6 months I digested the knowledge it foretold. What power I now had, all this knowledge - I was sure to win my first game against the mighty Mick . . . not so. The Dice Gods had other ideas; not disheartened but lighter in pocket I have learnt now that it's not all knowledge but it's a sure way of helping to come out on top.

My first ever tournament was 8 years ago at Brighton travelling down with Albert, Wayne Auty and Mick. We had a fantastic time playing in this huge tournament run by a Michael Crane chap who made me feel welcome - but then who wouldn't when you're handing over loads of dosh to them? :-)

Truly one of the most captivating games I have ever played.

This once upon a time tale was to end two years ago (tragic I know !) but for a chance idea that Michael had; he'd lost his little helper and was in need of another. Deana (Mrs Fawcett) was to step up to this challenge; she who had so far poo-poo'd the idea of ever playing in or attending a backgammon tournament (can you believe that?!!). So I

find myself now accompanying she who must be obeyed. And we all now know who actually runs Biba while Michael sits back and relaxes (only kidding Michael).

So now in the modern world of the fast and furious pace of backgammon I find myself still playing, still going to Biba and still going to some of the international events which are so many; and now playing online too; so many games so little time.

"What a life we all lead in this strange little world of ours"

For those who are not bored to death by my little tale I enjoy mostly money donations, plenty of drinks, good company and good looking women to look upon.

P.S. and if my wife is reading this none of the above love, except good company :-)

Tony Fawcett
SAC Champion and all round good chap (some say very round)



See page 7 for full report



This is the first Iranian "backgammon wedding" as far as I know.

Two young people met at a tournament in the beautiful city of Isfahan and got married there, and are now celebrating their common life as Mr. & Mrs. Hoda....

Chiva K. Tafazzoli / President
World Backgammon Association





Marcus

Second-Class or World-Class?

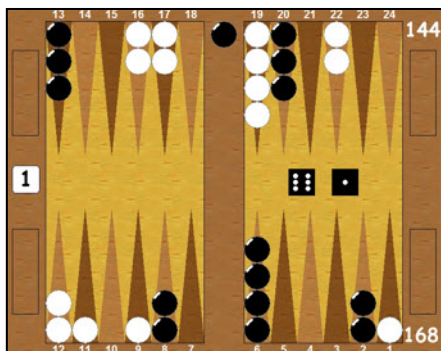
By Michael Crane

Early Snowie analysis of the Biba World Championship revealed that one of the two finalists had achieved a world-class rating from the bot. Surprisingly it wasn't the new Biba World Champion, Chris Ternel, but his opponent, Marcus Wrinch! Are you a world-class player? Cover up each board and write down your choice before moving to the next position.



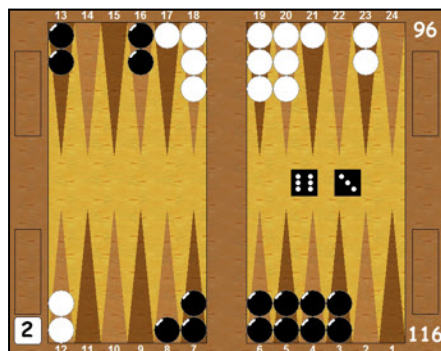
Chris

Position 01



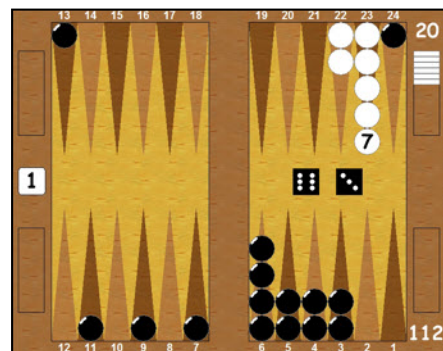
Black 0 White 0
Black to play 61
25/24, 20/14 or 25/18

Position 04



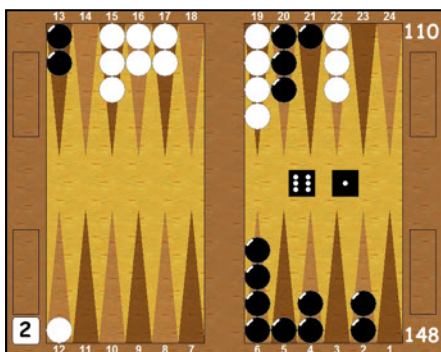
Black 0 White 2
Black to play 63
16/10, 16/13 or 8/2, 7/4

Position 07



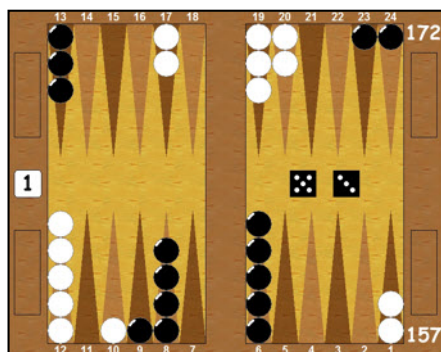
Black 4 White 7
Black to play 63
24/18, 9/6 or 11/5, 9/6

Position 02



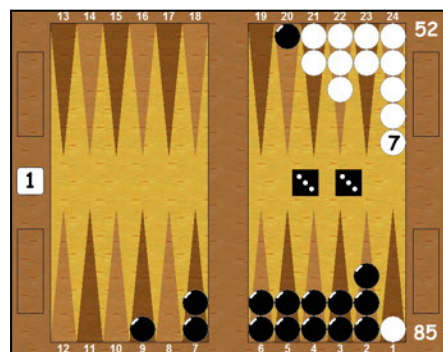
Black 0 White 0
Black to play 61
20/14, 13/12* or 13/7, 13/12*

Position 05



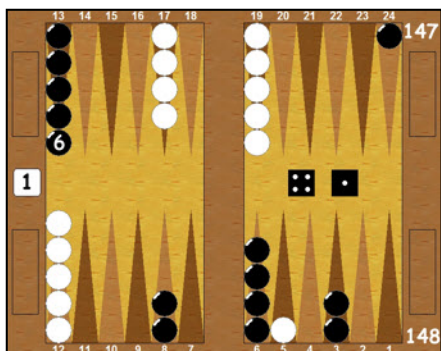
Black 2 White 7
Black to play 53
23/18, 13/10* or 8/3, 6/3

Position 08



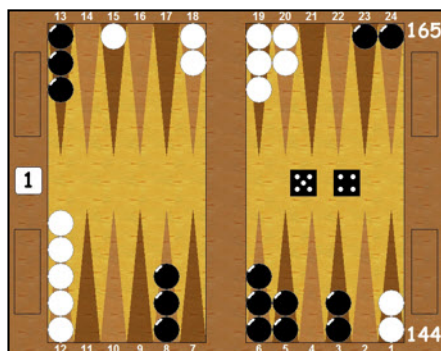
Black 4 White 9
Black to play 33
20/11, 9/6 or 7/1*(2)

Position 03



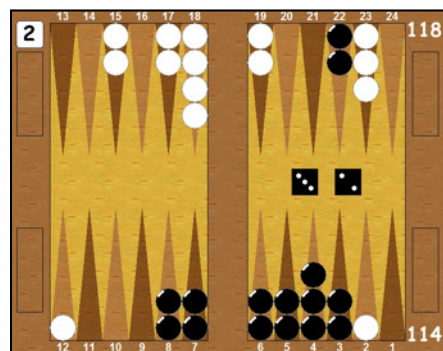
Black 0 White 2
Black to play 41
20/20, 6/5* or 13/9, 6/5*

Position 06



Black 2 White 7
Black to play 54
13/9, 8/3 or 13/4

Position 09



Black 8 White 10, Post-Crawford.
Black to play 32
22/20, 4/1 or 8/5, 4/2*



Position 01: 25/18

Playing out to the white bar-point looks as if it places the checker under-the-gun somewhat: A direct triple hit with 6s, 2s, & 1s, plus a roll of 43. But, the only good roll for white here is the 43, the direct shots will mean breaking off a point (unless a double is rolled) and perhaps leaving more blots on. White is more likely to be looking to getting his two blots safe rather than looking to hit. Playing out to the 14-point let's white hit with 3s and 5s without having to break off any points.

Position 02: 20/14 13/12*

How many of you moved 13/7 to maximise builders to cover the blot should white fail to re-enter or not roll a 5 to hit back? This looks like a good move and indeed it might have been acceptable, perhaps, if black didn't have three checkers fronting a 3-prime block allowing only 6s as direct escaping rolls. It is essential here for black to get a checker out and that is more important than trying to keep the white checker on the bar.

Position 03: 13/9, 6/5*

Although running with 24/20 looks good - if the 6/5* play is hit there's a good chance of making the Golden Point, but it also let's white play his heavy 6- and 8-points over you and begin slotting/making some home board points. By remaining on the white 24-point white won't be able to do this, plus, you have the added bonus of an extra builder to cover your blot or make another point.

Position 04: 8/2 7/4

After this roll the race is going to be close with just 11 pips in it. With this in mind it's an easy mistake to think you're actually *in* a race and clear your 16-point, but this would be wrong. There's still some contact in the game and you need to keep this pressure on white's mid-point checkers by moving 8/2, 7/4. You won't be getting a shot next roll and have good chances of making a 5th home point.

Position 05: 8/3 6/3

All that hitting with 13/10* gets you is white on the bar and favourite to re-enter, that and a stripped mid-point. The spare checkers on the 8- and 6-points are there for this roll - to make a point. The 3-point is about as deep as you'd like to go but it is an important one and could soon become part of a good prime. Don't strip points for an arbitrary hit unless you've got a home board capable of making it worthwhile.

Position 06: 13/4

There are many paradoxes in backgammon and the correct move here is one of them. By actually leaving a blot playing 13/4 black increases his chances of winning the game and gets more gammons! 30.5% of white's rolls will hit the blot, whereas your chances of coving next roll are 72%!

Position 07: 11/5 9/6

Anything is better than moving off the 24-point. White needs five rolls to bearoff and this gives you some time before you need to think about gammon saving moves. While you have a chance of a hit (in this position, all 2s except 22) and you have good moves elsewhere, stay put and wait to see if one comes along. While you remain on white's 1-point you have a (slim, in this position) chance to win the game, but if you move off in this position you have none.

Position 08: 20/11 9/6

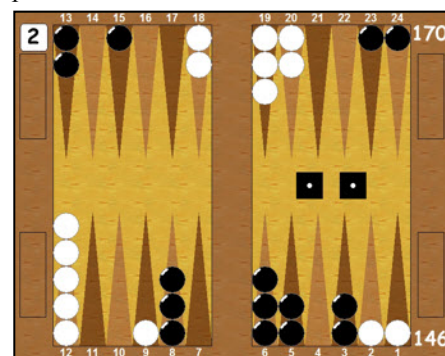
Black is massive favourite to win this game, yet hitting 7/1*(2) and blocking white out loses approx 2% winning chances. It is possible that white could roll a 64 or 54, or 66, 55, 44 or 33 thus exposing a blot and, if black can pick it up after hitting loose on his 1-point, he could improve his gammon chances quite a bit.

Position 09: 8/5, 4/2*

If you thought that giving yourself 4s as well as 6s to escape your back checkers

was correct, think again! It'd be nice to increase your chances of escape but by splitting your back checkers you allow white to perhaps point on you and even force your prime to collapse. If it's going to 'collapse' it's better to do it on your terms, and with him on the bar, the terms favour you. He has twenty re-entry rolls, twelve of which will hit, but he's more likely to remain in your home board and thus under pressure still. If he does hit, but doesn't do a cock-shot, then you'll have three checkers to attack with.

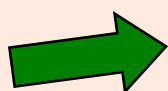
Of course, a world-class player makes the occasional mistake, even the odd blunder; but what was Marcus thinking in this position?



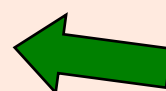
Black 2 White 7
Black to play 11

Trailing at 9-away, 4-away, Marcus could do with a gammon in this game, and Snake Eyes is the perfect roll to maximise that outcome. By far the best play here is to hit twice: 3/2*(2), 2/1*(2). That'll place two on the bar and leave the third blot on the 9-point ready to be hoovered up next roll with 6s and 4s. His winning chances are about 60% of which around 40% are gammons. However, Marcus didn't hit anything! Instead he played 15/13 getting a blot safe, and then exposed a blot with 8/7(2)! This returned a measly 53% chance including just 22% gammons. In the end he won a single game; but it could so nearly have been a gammon.

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



IMPORTANT VENUE CHANGE



The December 2009, Gilbertson UK Finals has been moved to the Barceló Oxford Hotel. This change has been brought about so that the Biba room allocation can be increased, thus avoiding turning members away as happened last December. I apologise for this change but I felt it necessary to ensure that all those that wanted accommodation for the UK Finals got it. **BOOK NOW!**



Backgammon BBQ

Fun in the sun, a report from host, Fanika Petkovska

There were eight players warming up in my back garden on Sunday 28th of June, sunbathing in the sun, tanning themselves and gearing up for a sizzling tournament, as well as sizzling sausages.

The tournament began at 12:30, with a somewhat unusual format. Our friends from Liverpool, Peter Chan and Adrian Jones came up with a genius idea to play a Swiss - Round Robin - Last Four, 3 point matches. Not everybody understood the rules (including myself), so we produced a board and started marking the wins. Steve Grundy had 6 wins out of 7 matches, and as he was the only one with six wins, almost all of us thought that he had won. But not so! Peter and Adrian, the masterminds behind the tournament rules, told us that all four best players were to play another round! Dorothy Lee then went on to beat Adrian in the final.



The Garden - The BBQ

The Masterminds - The Final

Dorothy receives her unique trophy from the BBQ host, Fanika.



SAC Trophy Final, August 2008

A personal view from Raj Jansari ...

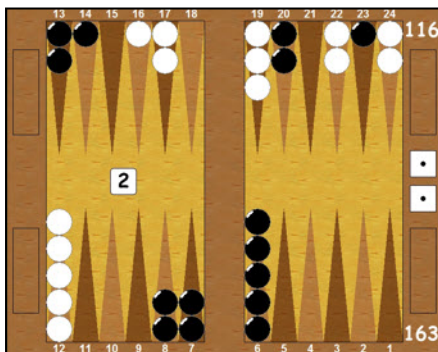
... Further comments from Peter Bennet ...

The comments continue from Paul Plumptre ...



In Bibafax 99, pages 9 to 12, Raj Jansari wrote about some of the positions in his SAC Trophy final of August 2008 against Phil Tutchings. In Bibafax 100, page 29 & 30, Peter Bennet added further comments and asked at the end of the article if someone could perhaps run a couple of positions through GNU. I did, and this is my analysis of two of the positions.

Position: Game 5, Move 8



Black 5 White 1
White Cube Action

This is the Take/Drop decision for Raj Jansari (black), 47 pips behind, but holding white's 5-point. Peter Bennet observes that Snowie3 rates this a Drop at cubeful equity 1.04; whereas Snowie4 rates it a Take at cubeful equity 0.95. This seems to me rather a large equity difference for two roll-out results. I investigated with GNU. GNU's basic neural net, at ply2, ply3 or ply4, rates this a narrow Drop, at cubeful equity 1.06, 1.14 or 1.03. *An irritating feature of GNU, is that its ratings at different ply levels are consistently different; and one can never know which is more likely to be 'correct'.*

I have done two GNU roll-outs of this position, with slightly different roll-out

Rollout #1

Edit match to -11 vs -11. GNU full roll-out says: (2592 trials, cpu 1¼/hr)
1. 21/16 13/9 B_eq cubeless = 0.646 + 0.260 - 0.354 - 0.083 = +0.469 : +0.480 ±.003
GNU's move: B_eq cubeful = +0.653 ±.008
2. 21/16 6/2 B_eq cubeless = 0.630 + 0.220 - 0.370 - 0.082 = +0.398 : +0.403 ±.003
Raj's move: B_eq cubeful = +0.604 ±.007

Rollout #2

Edit match to -1 vs -2. GNU full roll-out says: (2592 trials, cpu 1¼/hr)
1. 21/16 13/9 B_eq cubeless = 0.640 + 0.404 - 0.360 - 0.089 = +0.504 : +0.101 ±.004
GNU's move: B_eq cubeful = +0.101 ±.004
2. 21/16 6/2 B_eq cubeless = 0.618 + 0.361 - 0.382 - 0.087 = +0.410 : +0.064 ±.004
Raj's move: B_eq cubeful = +0.064 ±.004

settings. Both rate the position a narrow Drop. The first gives a cubeful equity of 1.05, and the second an equity of 1.02. *In both cases, I performed 2592 trials, such that GNU's estimate of the standard error of its estimate is ±0.009.* I do not know which rollout to trust more, but it appears that GNU agrees more with Snowie3 than with Snowie4, which is slightly surprising.

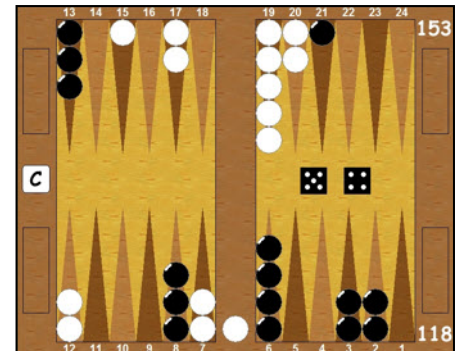
However, this is not the end of the story. GNU gives us the facility to switch match equity tables easily. *Match equity tables record the probability of winning from every match position; they are needed to set the measure of cubeful equity for match positions.* The above GNU results are with match equity table known as g11.met. This was generated by GNU playing itself, and has a gammon rate of some 28%. Snowie uses its own match equity table, known as snowie.met, which is said to have a gammon rate of ~25%.

Of such small differences do larger differences grow. For example, g11.met records that one's probability of winning a match at 11-away 7-away is 29.7%; whereas Snowie.met records this probability at 30.9%. When we re-run the GNU analysis using the Snowie match equity table, GNU reduces the cubeful equity by 0.06. This means that both roll-outs now narrowly Take the cube, and GNU now agrees with Snowie4, which is reassuring.

I think Peter Bennet has the last word here. This analysis is academically interesting. But it is not worth a practical player getting worked up about.

The second position (next column) is Raj's play decision of a roll of 54, with him leading at Crawford 1-away, 2-away vs a man on the bar. Peter Bennet wonders what GNU makes of the decision, given it can account for the match position in its roll-out.

Position: Game 14, Move 10



Black 10 White 9 Crawford
Black to play 54

To understand GNU's opinion on this, it is first worth giving the GNU roll-out, cube centre at -11 vs -11 – this is effectively the decision at money play. *See Rollout #1.*

Of course, as we all suspected, the more adventurous move 21/16 13/9 is correct at money play. It wins 1.6% more games and 4.0% more gammons; and so it is +0.071 better cubeless. It happens to be only +0.049 better cubeful – this is not important for our story, but illustrates the effect that, approaching a good Double, black does not want to take too many risks.

Now we tell GNU to roll-out this position at the actual match score of 1-away, 2-away. *See Rollout #2.* The interesting feature is that, cubeless after GNU's move 21/16 13/9, black's probability of winning only slips from 64.6% to 64.0%, and his probability of being gammoned only rises from 8.3% to 8.9%. Likewise after Raj's move 21/16 6/2, black's probability of winning only slips from 63.0% to 61.8%, and his probability of being gammoned only rises from 8.2% to 8.7%.

These are very slight changes in probabilities for the change in match score. I have observed this often in comparing GNU's roll-out at different match scores. GNU is doubtless playing quite a few rolls differently at the different match positions; but the end result is usually a less than 1% change in the probabilities of wins, ▶

losses and gammons. The effect that white (here) is playing to maximise gammons is largely offset by the fact that black is playing to minimise gammons. On this basis, I do not think that Peter Bennet need distrust GNU's cubeless roll-outs at these sorts of match scores. Good play by both sides cannot swing the cubeless result much.

Of course, there is a huge impact on the cubeful equity of changing the match score. After either play, black's cubeful

equity at -1 vs -2 is said to be +0.101 or +0.064. This is way less than the cubeful equity of +0.653 or +0.604 at money. This is of course because black's gammon wins do not count, and black cannot win with the cube.

The final important point to note in choosing between the two plays is that black's probability of being gammoned is smaller at either match score, after 21/16 13/9 than after 21/16 6/2. The human instinct to make the safe-looking play is

in fact wrong. The way to avoid gammons is simply to win the position, and 13/9 does that more often.

I have done my own full write-up of these positions. Due to their complicated formatting they are not included within this article but can be obtained from Biba HQ via email in Word format.

SAC Trophy 2009

Report by Michael Crane

Main (13/27)

Not the best turnout we've ever had, but August is always a lean month. What we lacked in quantity we made up for it in quality - this cliché is turned out every time numbers are fewer than expected, have you noticed that?

By the Sunday morning we had four on 3-3: Brian Lever vs Tony Fawcett and John Hedge vs Gheorghe Filipas. Ten others were on 2-3 and had a chance to win with 5-6 if we didn't produce a 6-6. Tony beat Brian, and John beat Gheorghe. From this sequence the draw was Tony vs John and Gheorghe vs Brian - with Tony winning going to 5-5 and Brian winning to equal John on 4-4. In Swiss formats the top four players, when possible, play against each other but although the pairing of Brian vs John was perfectly correct, Tony couldn't play Gheorghe. However, three others emerged on 4-5 and were potential opponents for Tony in the 6th Round: Paul Plumptre, Marcus Wrinch and Paul Gilbertson. The latter had already played Tony and it was Paul Plumptre who was drawn out to play him. Although this left Marcus and Paul Gilbertson as a possible pairing, such a match would have meant that Gheorghe and Peter Christmas (playing in the Main as a spare and a refugee from the Consolation, brought in during the 4th Round to level off both elements) would have to play each other for the second time that weekend. Because Marcus had already played Peter he was matched with Gheorghe and Paul played the spare man.

In what was a very one-sided 6th Round match between Paul Plumptre and Tony, Tony emerged victorious over Paul in a very short time. Regrettably I was unable to record the match so Tony's victory (and Paul's crushing defeat) will not become public knowledge! The Runner-up

was decided on the tie-breaker between John Hedge and Marcus who both ended up with 5-6. Personal head-to-head ties didn't part them, but on shared opponents John triumphed for beating Paul Plumptre whereas Marcus suffered his only defeat against him.

I checked the Biba records and discovered it has only taken Tony Fawcett 8 years, 6 months and 17 days to win his first ever Biba 11 point event! What a patient man he is!!

Consolation (14/27)

We had three on 2-3 and they were paired off: Nicky Check vs Stewart Pemberton, leaving Peter Bennet vs Richard Biddle, a 1-2 randomly drawn to play against Peter. Both Stewart and Peter won which produced a play-off for the trophies and it was Peter who came out on top.

Friday 500 (8)

Peter Christmas beat Mick Butterfield in the Final, leaving Arthur Wright and Marcus Wrinch as losing semi-finalists. However, Marcus Wrinch is still #1 in the chart, but Paul Gilbertson has slipped back to a 13 point gap in 2nd place. Richard Biddle remains static in 3rd and Jeff Barber moves up to 4th. We lose Neil Young, and Peter Christmas, this weekend's winner, enters in 15th place. With a potential 60 points up for grabs between now and December the bottom half of the list is at risk of missing out on the chance of the £500 first prize. Latest on page 31.

Poker (7)

Mick Vacarey triumphed in the poker with Tony Fawcett (at last making some



Main: John and Tony



Consolation: Stewart and Peter

inroads) in 2nd place. Lawrence Powell and John Hedge being 3rd and 4th respectively. Myke Wignall remains #1 despite not being at the SAC. John Hedge and Paul Gilbertson swap positions for 2nd and 3rd; Vicki Pemberton remains at #4 and Tony Fawcett finally makes the money at #6. Latest on page 31.

Team (5)

The usual suspects triumphed here with Nicky Check taking 1st place and Richard Biddle 2nd. I went out in the 1st Round to give them both a chance.

Finally

The weekend went along smoothly - until the end and afterwards when an accusation of botching the draw was made against me.



Goldiblots and the Three Bores

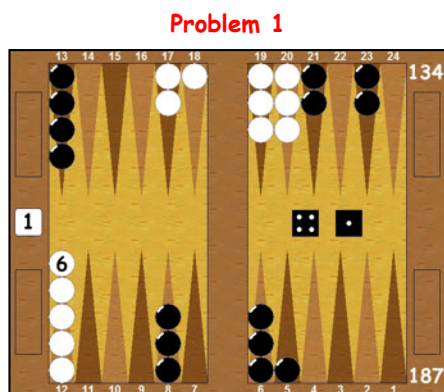
By R Umplestiltskin

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

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

It was a nice afternoon when Goldiblots came round so they all decided to go out into the garden and have a barbeque and backgammon event. Daddy Bore actually invited a load of folks but apparently they were already at another barbeque event that clashed. "Their loss," he thought. They thought, " " because they didn't even know the Bores existed!

Daddy Bore took control of lighting the charcoal, and like all men, frustrated by its slow progress squirted on copious volumes of lighter fuel. Goldiblots called Mummy over to have first stab.



11 point match
Black 0 White 0
Black to play 41

Glancing sideways at Daddy Bore whom she could hardly see for smoke she began. "At first I thought that hitting would be the best option but really what good would it do me? I have no board to speak of and a blot on my 5-point. I've got two good anchors in white's board and I can take this opportunity to make the 5-point, 6/5 and slot the 4-point 8/4 so that I can begin to form a continuous prime from

the 6-point to the 1-point."

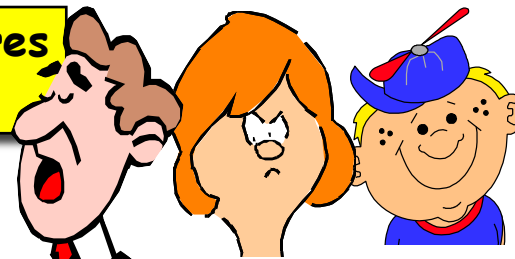
She sat down pleased with her analysis. Goldiblots called Daddy Bore away from the barbeque he was lighting.

Daddy Bore turned from the flaming barbeque to the backgammon board and before he could draw breath the rest of the family were convulsed by laughter. Perplexed, Daddy Bore asked, "What's so funny?" "You," said Baby Bore, tears of laughter running down his cheeks, "you're face is all black from the smoke." Wiping it on a tea towel (Mummy Bore was angry at that!) he started.

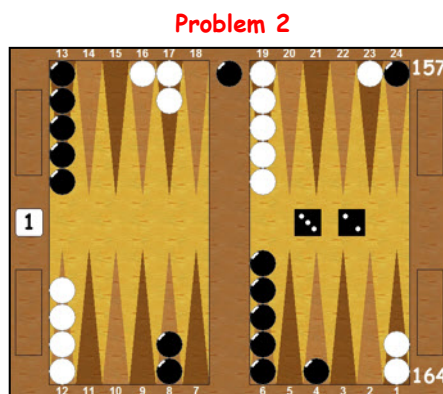
"I don't know why women bother to play backgammon, I really don't." Mummy Bore glared at him. He turned towards her totally unaware of the look that could kill. "You discard the best move, 23/18*, on the grounds of your poor board. So what? Anything but hitting here is a mistake. What good is the anchor on the 21-point except to be used to wallop white as soon as you can?" He sat down wiping his still blackened face on his sleeve.

Baby Bore got up. "Why oh why do I have such dim parents? Hitting is wrong and playing 8/4 is wrong, but the 6/5 is correct. But, Mummy Bore," he turned to his mother, "there's no need to slot, just come over with 13/9. This way you don't have any vulnerable blots in your home board."

Mummy Bore went over to the nicely greyed charcoal and began placing a neat row of sausages and some chicken hips on the grill. "My job! My job!" called across Daddy Bore, elbowing Mummy Bore to one side. "Outdoor cooking is man's work," he said, poking a sausage with a fork. "Well, not for the moment." interrupted Goldiblots, "it's your turn to go first." Begrudgingly he handed the fork to Mummy Bore, but he kept the tongs. Mummy Bore, her mind on something (or someone) pricked a sausage with the prong of the long fork and out squirted a spray of melted fat. It landed on the hot charcoal and was instantly vapourised - and she smiled quietly to



herself in her own little world where the sausage was a metaphor for something else, not too dissimilar to a sausage, especially a chipolata!



11 point match
Black 5 White 0
Black to play 32

Daddy Bore turned from the barbeque to the backgammon board and before he could draw breath the rest of the family were convulsed by laughter. Perplexed, Daddy Bore asked, "What's so funny now? My face can't be black still, can it?" Mummy Bore piped up, "No it's not, and that's what makes you so funny," and she couldn't go further for laughing. Baby Bore took over, "now that your face isn't black we can see you've got no eyebrows!" He and Mummy Bore and Goldiblots fell to the grass clutching their sides as they ached with laughter. Daddy Bore felt above his eyes and found a distinct lack of eyebrows.

A little perturbed he began, "I am not falling for the beginner's play of hitting here at all. I am simply going to come in with 25/22 and make my 4-point, 6/4. It's too early to hit and I might well be hit back should white roll 4s or 3s." He sat down feeling once again for the absent eyebrows.

Baby Bore got up. "Talk about a U-turn. First you tells us to hit, and then you tells us not to hit! I am in two minds whether you're schizophrenic or not."

He giggled at this witticism, but it was completely lost on mater and pater. He continued, unwilling to explain. "It's very early in the game and even if the 4-point blot is hit, it can re-enter easily. Hitting 25/23* robs white of half a roll and several pips and, if played with 13/10 I can bring in another builder for my 4-point." He finished and went over to see how the sausages and chicken hips were doing.

Daddy Bore had (forcibly) taken the fork from Mummy Bore and proclaimed that *he* was the chef and that very soon the food would be ready. He prodded a chicken hip as Mummy Bore took her second go.

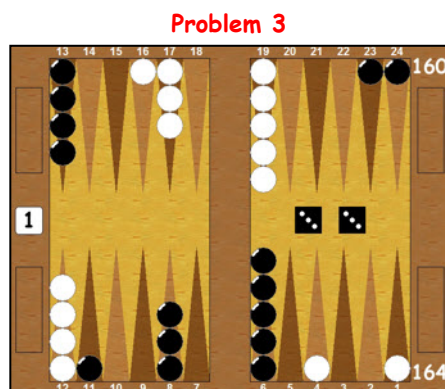
"In my opinion," she started, "the only players that *wouldn't* hit are those that don't have eyebrows!" She turned and smirked at Daddy Bore as he tried to rescue a fallen sausage from the charcoal. She went on, "after hitting 25/23* the best thing to do is to move 24/21 and get a direct 6 shot at white's blot. If white does hit back off the bar and this blot is still there I will get a free shot at it with a 6, which isn't a re-entry number." She went over to the barbeque as Daddy Bore shouted, "Grub's up!"

Mummy Bore was given a blackened, cylindrical object that looked like a turd from the hound of the Baskervilles. "I can't eat this," she said, "it's black and hard." "Don't talk so daft," Daddy Bore reprimanded, adding, "that's a perfect barbequed sausage." Goldiblots on hearing the words, black and hard was thinking of something entirely different!

Baby Bore bit into his chicken hip . . . and spat it out immediately. "Yuk! It's not even cooked inside. It hasn't even defrosted!" "Whadda you mean?" Daddy Bore asked, slightly upset by such remarks, "that's how barbequed chicken hips always are; crispy on the outside and nice and soft and cold on the inside. Proper barbeque food, that is."

Goldiblots cut in, her mind drawn back to the real world. "Why is it?" she asked, "that when in the house and kitchen

grown men can't boil an egg or make a decent cup of tea, yet when it comes to cooking food outside they all of a sudden become the Galloping Gourmet?" Baby Bore, quick as a flash retorted, "Galloping Gormless, more like." Everyone laughed; everyone except Daddy Bore, that is. Goldiblots brought them back to earth, "Come on, Baby Bore, it's your turn to go first."



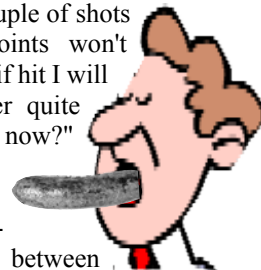
**11 point match
Black 5 White 1
Black to play 33**

Wiping rivulets of chicken blood from his chin he said, "I have two points that are quite heavy ..." "Yeah, your ears!" interjected Daddy Bore. Baby Bore ignored him, "... my mid-point and 6-point, therefore the correct move is to use these *laden* points by playing 13/10(2), 6/3(2). I now have good blocks to inhibit white's runners from escaping." He sat down, and without thought his left hand stroked the lobe of his left ear, his fingers getting caught on the neck of his tee-shirt..

Mummy Bore got up. She was about to start when Daddy Bore giggled like a girl. "What?" she asked him. "What?" He pointed, "You've got all black specks between your teeth." He giggled like a girl again. Mummy Bore ignored him as she tried, surreptitiously, to wipe her tongue across her teeth. "You are wrong, Baby Bore. This is an excellent roll to form a 3-prime straddling the bar with 13/7(2). The 3-point is a tad too deep and doesn't keep the blocks connected; and if anyone was daft enough to play 8/5(2), 6/3(2) and leave a shot with direct 4s plus

7s and a 64, then they are plain daft." She sat down, her tongue flicking back and forth across her teeth like a serpent gearing up to strike at its prey.

Daddy Bore, a chicken hip clenched in his greasy hand was the last to go. "8/5(2), 6/3(2) is the only move here ..." He was interrupted with cries from Mummy Bore and Baby Bore of, "Daft! Daft!" "You two are full of steins," he said. Goldiblots, stifling a snigger injected, "Don't you mean Philistines?" Daddy Bore ignored her. "I have three good home board points and they are well worth leaving a couple of shots on for. Those points won't move for ages and if hit I will be able to re-enter quite easily. Who's daft now?" He returned to the barbeque and lifted a blackened sausage and placed it between his lips, "Yum, yum," he said, chomping away on it.



"Well, said Goldiblots, "let me work out who has done what and see if we have a winner or not." After some deliberation she announced, "One of you has got them all correct, well done."

"I'll bet it was me," said Daddy Bore, puffing out his chest, "master of the barbeque and backgammon, that's me." "I doubt it, people without eyebrows never were very clever," said Mummy Bore, "I think I am the one Goldiblots is referring to." "Honestly," began Baby Bore, "I do not believe it. You both clearly got at least one wrong, *virgo*, neither of you could have all correct. I, on the other hand got none wrong, so *ipso fatso*, it is I who is the barbeque champ."

Goldiblots put them out of their collective misery. "The winner is . . ."

So, dear reader does the absence of eyebrows make a difference? Did Mummy Bore get the bit between her teeth or just the bits? Or did Baby Bore get the backgammon correct but the Latin incorrect? Turn to page 18 to find out.

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THE backgammon SHOP

One week after Monte-Carlo - Backgammon World Championship - it is Liverpool Open. This year during the weekend of July 25th-26th twenty-five British pounds make it a low threshold tournament, negligible compared to +500 Euro tournaments.

The Liverpool Open

Report by Nardy Pillards



Three holiday makers/vacationers started in Amsterdam - Schiphol and took it "easy" towards John Lennon International. They were curious about Liverpool before take off... and surprised afterwards! The



Liverpool Open is an annual event of the Liverpool Backgammon Club, organized by an enthusiastic trio: Simon Jones, Peter Chan and John Wright. This fourteenth edition was the first we visited. So did over 50 other backgammon players, men and women, younger and elder, English and non-English.

How much does Liverpool Open cost, without turning around every penny? Registration is £25 or 30€. In return you can play five matches on Saturday and another three on Sunday. "Even when I lose?" Yes, even when you lose. There is an optional side bet - £5 or £20 - to enlarge your price money, if you're confident enough.

The format on Saturday is Swiss: everyone plays 5 matches of 9 points. The Top 16 play the Main tournament on Sunday (11 pts) and the others start the Consolation (7 pts). Losing on Sunday puts you in the Last Chance. Also, there is a 1-point knock-out during the week-end, £1 extra for that one.



Included in the registration fee is food and drink (coffee and tea) for both days. A four-table-wide buffet varying from breakfast to lunch via tea-time or coffee-time to dinner... all included. And an extra event on Saturday night: a friendly poker game.

Most remarkable of this tournament is not the format, not the buffet nor the complementary coffee (!!), not the place of venue - a private English house, home of Liverpool's Bridge Club, with garden - and not the sunny weekend.

Most remarkable are the ambiance, the courtesy, the friendship,... *enjoying*. The backgammon matches are real, harsh and cruel like the game can be - "Backgammon is War" - but we will especially remember the friendly and sociable atmosphere. As if we were at home.

We flew Friday to Liverpool and returned Monday evening. Peter Chan picked us up on Friday and gave us a ride back on Monday. Thank you Peter! As if that was not enough, he also offered us a guided tour throughout Liverpool.

The Old Liverpool isn't anymore. In 1986 it still was : *"But as they left Liverpool's silent streets far behind to march east, the city smog began to clear enough for a pale dawn to shine through."* But the ever-lasting smog, which also characterized London and the other "Black Cities", that smog has vanished. The city glows with green parks, green alleys and nowhere a black cabbage white butterfly to spot, the species "created" by the industrial area. A sunny day really is a sunny day. The City is big enough to visit without getting lost and it is worth visiting with its friendly ever-showing layer.

The Beatles, two of the biggest cathedrals, Albert Dock, the bus-boat, two football (soccer) stadiums, two universities, Europe's oldest China Town... your pick . . . and... the Liverpool Open Backgammon Tournament! Thank you Peter Chan, John Wright and Simon Jones. "You made our weekend" We will be back! Nardy Pillards. From Amstergammon. www.backgammonamsterdam.nl/



Main: Adrian Jones & Rachel Rhodes



Cons: Jon Williams & Kevin Jones



LC: Roger Keys & Felix Vink



1-Point Shootout
Steve Rimmer & Mick Vacarey

Results on page 29

Reflections of the Monte Carlo World Championship 2009

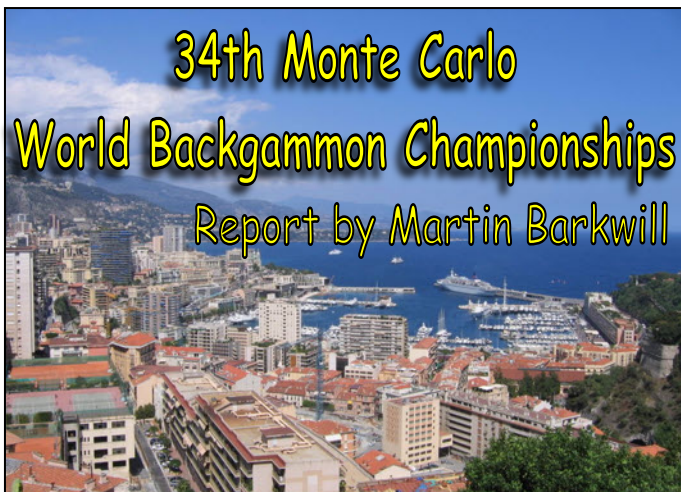
I had only played twice before this year at Monte Carlo, the last occasion being in 2002.

My reasons for not giving the tournament priority are partly the sheer cost - several alternative holidays may be accomplished for the cost of one week in Monte Carlo including the tournament entry fee (1,240 Euros including registration). I have also felt the tournament has been characterised by poor organisation; I could never see the sense of Wednesday being earmarked for the tennis and golf tournaments, the entertainment afforded on Wednesday night disappointed me in 2002; and I have not rated my chances of success highly.

This year I decided to make the effort and I am very glad I did.

Notable improvements were evident this year for example:

- Howard Markowitz was appointed Tournament Director a year or two ago. Howard has run the Las Vegas Open for several years and I believe Monte Carlo is greatly benefiting from his experience.
- In previous years late arrivals have not been penalised and I have known rounds to start 40 minutes late due to my opponent's late arrival. For the Main Event penalty points started after 30 minutes which may seem relaxed by Biba standards but is an improvement on previous Monte Carlo practice.
- Our very own Mike Main joined the tournament committee this year and contributed his experience.
- The tennis and golf tournaments no longer disrupt the tournament schedule.
- The Gala Dinner this year included a performance by George Benson, a mega intergalactic superstar in the early 1980's whose hits I remember well. He performed a tribute to Nat King Cole and then his usual fare over the course of two hours. Unforgettable!
- The table I was on was treated to a display of card tricks performed by Andrew Bennet, son of Peter. He really is very good!
- One grouch was the unreasonable delay in the checking of tickets for the Dinner and commencement of



food and drinks.

- Additional impromptu entertainment was provided by Gus Hansen who pitched up at the tournament hotel after being knocked out of the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas. We were all able to watch him playing high stakes money games with Mike Svobodny and Najib Salamzy. According to one report the stakes were 1,000 Euros a point and I observed one 64 point game!
- Yet more entertainment was provided by one of the prize winners in the Senior's event who was so delighted with his success (he beat me in the 2nd round, this being the first time I have ever played in a senior's tourney) he burst into song at the prize giving ceremony.
- A questionnaire was distributed to the players on the last day. It is good that the Committee should invite suggestions and hopefully they will take notice of the feedback.
- The Brits were there in force and therefore able to eat out together in small groups and provide mutual support.

The roll call of Brits included:

Martin Barkwill reached 4th round. Roland Herrera semi final. Simonetta Herrera 5th round. John Broomfield 4th round. Julian Wilson who won a £1 satellite tournament run by CasinoRip and with two South African players was a member of the runner-up team in the Team Event. Sean Williams 3rd round. Peter Bennet. Andrew Bennet. Lawrence Powell. Nicky Check. Clive Kaye who has been an overseas resident for the last 24 years. Chris Ternel. John Clark. Gay Roberts resident of the Isle of Man. Kevin Dale 3rd round. George Miltiadou. Shino. Sami Akirov who won the Last Chance. Engin Ongel Liz Park.

Without a shadow of doubt the star turn

was provided by Roland Herrera who reached the semi final. Roland is a professional violin player and teacher, anyone can view him performing on YouTube. His wife Simonetta also performed well in reaching the last 16 for the second time in her backgammon career. She lost to defending Champion Lars Trabolt after leading 16-4 to 21 points. Their joint success received extensive coverage in the West Country press and a mention on BBC Radio 2.

Roland's semi final to 23 points against Lars Trabolt has to be one of the most exciting matches which I and the many spectators have ever seen. Lars is of course one of the most respected players in the world and was ranked number 16 in the last published giants list. Roland led throughout, but Lars fought back and whilst the match was in progress Peter Bennet was sending texts with the updated score to several Biba members.

At 21-21 the tension was unbearable. Roland was down to literally one second on his clock. He had no time to think and had to move instantly or face loss of the match on time. He was playing one of the most feared players in the world who has plenty of experience in playing under the pressure of big money events. The cube was offered early in the game and accepted making it double match point. Roland fell into a 1-2-5 backgame which eventually converted into a 2-5 backgame. Whilst attempting to bear in against Roland's anchors Lars rolled an anti joker which exposed two blots and Roland hit both. Roland had the added benefit of a five-point board with only the 3-point open as well as good outfield coverage. However Lars re-entered and escaped both chequers into the outfield. Subsequently and in spite of Roland's two outfield checkers Lars was able to scramble both his checkers home and win.

That is how close Roland came to getting in the Final.

In partial compensation we were able to look forward to a final of two world ranked players, Lars and Mochy, and the likelihood of a master class in backgammon play. Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon provided the commentary assisted by Neil Kazaross who had GNU to support Falafel's analysis. In the latter half of the match Lars appeared to suffer a loss of nerve and dropped at least two ►

cubes which rollouts have demonstrated were clear takes. Nevertheless Mochy, who is the first Japanese World Champion, is a very worthy winner and holder of the title and who, incidentally is also a Biba member.

He has played in several UK tournaments including the recent London Open and at Roland and Simonetta's Wedding Tournament in 2005 where he gave me a good beating in the Final.

173 players entered the main flight this year which is well down on the entry of 199 in 2008 and the 280 on my last visit in 2002. This is disappointing although the field included many well known legends of the game such as the two finalists, Falafel, Mike Svobodny, Ed O'Laughlin, Neil Kazaross, Stick Rice and Hugh Sconyers.

I fear that the event is simply too expensive for many players whilst the prize money is unattractive to high rollers. Some sponsorship was forthcoming from CasinoRip however the event rarely has significant added money and in recent years it has clashed with the World Series of Poker. This year several players chose to skip Monte Carlo and play instead in the following World Series of Backgammon event in Cannes. I believe there is also concern over the percentage rake in jackpot events.

Although the organisation was much improved over previous years I still experienced the frustration of waiting many hours to play rounds in the Consolation tournaments due to one or two individuals playing in jackpots when they should have given priority to the Consolation. This is one area where the tournament committee needs to be more strict. Also many players were disappointed that the Welcome Cocktail, previously held on Monday evening before commencement of the tournament, has been dispensed with.

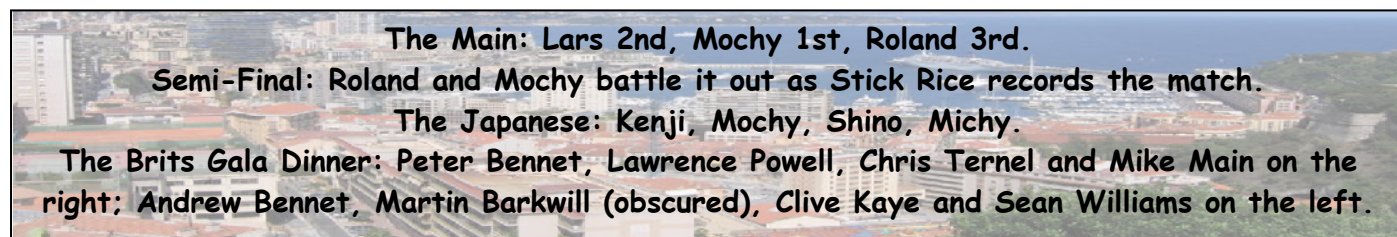
Of course it would be wonderful if a British player were to win the event and, although we have been well represented over the years, the record of British players is generally poor. No player has won Monte Carlo since Joe Dwek in the 1970s before it was recognised as the World Championship. No British player has reached the Final since Dr John Simon in 1992, at the time resident in Hong Kong. Before him you have to go back to 1981 when Joe Dwek faced Lee Genuid.

Roland's performance was truly outstanding and should serve as an inspiration to us all to have a go in future and bring the title to Britain. I am sure all Biba members would like to have the chance of playing and beating the Monte Carlo World Champion in UK events so let's make it a reality. I shall be discussing with Peter Bennet, Roland and Simonetta how we can better prepare next time.

This could include practice matches with clocks and if anyone else who is planning the trip next year would like to be included they are welcome to get in touch with me. John Slattery, Peter Bennet and I used to have regular long matches, albeit without clocks, but during which we would record critical decisions and roll them out on Snowie. I have always thought the practice gave us an edge.



Photos: Main by Roland Herrera, the remainder by Peter Bennet



The Main: Lars 2nd, Mochy 1st, Roland 3rd.

Semi-Final: Roland and Mochy battle it out as Stick Rice records the match.

The Japanese: Kenji, Mochy, Shino, Michy.

The Brits Gala Dinner: Peter Bennet, Lawrence Powell, Chris Ternel and Mike Main on the right; Andrew Bennet, Martin Barkwill (obscured), Clive Kaye and Sean Williams on the left.

The Scottish Open returns to Scotland! Scheduled for mid-March 2010, this popular knockout tournament will be taking place at the Barceló Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh. Although Biba is seeking a sponsor for the event (see bottom of the page) there is already a guaranteed first prize of £500 minimum! Keep your eyes peeled for other goodies including something special for the Friday 500 Knockout. Details of the hotel and all 2010 rates and deals are already online in the Biba web site www.backgammon-biba.co.uk, and all can be booked now!

Advice on Booking Accommodation (including for 2010 events)

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

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

2009 Backgammon Calendar						
Oct 2,3,4	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP -		Daventry		Knockout
Oct 23,24,25	17th Irish Open	GP UK		Dublin		Knockout
X Oct 30,31, Nov 1	Arthur Wright's Big 70 Birthday Bash	UK GP		Daventry		Swiss
X Dec 4,5,6	Gilbertson UK Finals	-		Oxford		Double KO
2010 Backgammon Calendar						
X Jan 8,9,10	Bright 'n' Breezy, Cliff Connick's 90th Birthday	GP UK		Brighton		Knockout
Feb 5,6,7	Jarvis Trophy	GP UK		Hinckley		Swiss
Mar 5,6,7	Biba International Championships	GP -		Hinckley		Knockout
Mar 19,20,21	*new* The Scottish Open *new*	GP -		Edinburgh		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
X Sep 3,4,5	Backgammon in London @ Biba	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	The UK Finals	GP -		Hinckley		Double KO

* Looking for a new sponsor! *

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.

2009 & 2010 Details, Deals and Dates



Registration: Saturday 1030 to 1230

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

Auctions: Group, Saturday 1245. Individual, Sunday 1015

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

All tournaments feature a free entry Friday 500 **

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

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

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

FRIDAY

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

SATURDAY

Registration 1030 / 1230
Play starts 1300 prompt

SUNDAY

Registration 1030
(penalty points apply @ 1035)

Dinner, bed and breakfast @ Barceló Hotels for 2009

Reservations on 0870 1610 797 (Daventry & Oxford) 
(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

Dinner, bed and breakfast @ Barceló Hotels for 2010

The Barceló Old Ship - Brighton

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

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

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

The Barceló Carlton Hotel - Edinburgh

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

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

The Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nice Double!

Let me introduce two new potential Biba members, Genevieve and Freddy. I'm not sure who is who in the first picture, but I am pretty certain Genevieve is on the left in the bottom picture! Those two oldies with them are mum and dad, Jackie Griffiths (known to many of you as ZenGirl) and Howard Furr-Barton. I must question the lager and white wine - are they suitable drinks for little babies?

Mum and dad *love* backgammon! They both play on-line every single day - Jackie has been known to having played while in labour once, though I don't think it was during this particular two-some bundle! They both discovered the game when they lived in Italy seven years ago. Before that they didn't know the game existed. A friend brought an ornate, engraved board over from Turkey and they were intrigued. She taught them how to play. When they returned to England they looked online for backgammon events and saw the Mind Sports Olympiad in Cambridge and went along. That was their first live match. They were "shit scared" (Jackie's words!). Sean Williams was Howard's opponent in that first event. Their hearts were in their mouths and thumping away with nerves when they first played, and according to Jackie that still happens.



She was once complimented by Raj Jansari who said that she didn't play as he would have expected and was more challenging - how sweetly he lies eh? All four are planning to attend the Brighton Breezy this year, although probably only Jackie will play in the tourney as Howard will be on full-time twin guard duty. It's what modern fathers do, you know.

The Sandy Osborne Memorial Trophy: 2, 3, 4 October

This is the last Knockout event of the year before the December UK Finals. As usual it offers the four elements, Main, Progressive Consolation, Last Chance and The Sandy. Also, poker and backgammon on the Saturday night just to keep you topped up.



Arthur Wright's 70th Birthday Bash

(formerly the TT Trophy)

30 October, 31 & 1, November

This year Arthur is sponsoring the Townharbour Trophy to celebrate his 70th birthday. The event offers the same 6 x 11 point matches expected of a Swiss format tournament plus a few extras that Arthur is putting on. As usual, this event is the last chance you have to rack up the Grand Prix and Ranking Championship points in your attempt to take home a thick wad of dosh from the championship prize pool.

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

Due to him being a very popular bloke (he told me he was!), this weekend should be busier than ever so book your accommodation now and make sure you're there to have a fun-filled weekend's backgammon . . . and birthday cake.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Sunday: Main: 7 point 16 player Knockout.

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

Last Chance : 3 point open draw Knockout

Plus several extras including Rosey's Rollout!

NB: This is Paul's final year as the UK Finals sponsor. If you'd like to sponsor the 2010 UK Finals, please refer to the bottom of page 13 for details of what's expected of you.

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

Sponsored by Cliff Connick to
celebrate his 90th birthday



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



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

To avoid disappointment all players are advised to book their accommodation now because Biba has a limited number of rooms. See page 14 for details.



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





"Well," said Goldiblots, you might not like it but the analysis speaks for itself. Daddy Bore is the winner, and as his prize he gets to eat the last 12 remaining chicken hips"

"Yum, yum," said Daddy Bore.

Position 1

23/18*		Daddy
13/9 6/5	-0.052	Baby
8/4 6/5	-0.64	Mummy

Position 2

25/22 6/4		Daddy
25/23* 13/10	-0.139	Baby
25/23* 24/21	-0.145	Mummy

Position 3

8/5(2) 6/3(2)		Daddy
13/10(2) 6/3(2)	-0.017	Baby
13/7(2)	-0.147	Mummy

"Every one's a cigar," quipped Daddy Bore as he reached for the one sausage that wasn't as black as charcoal.

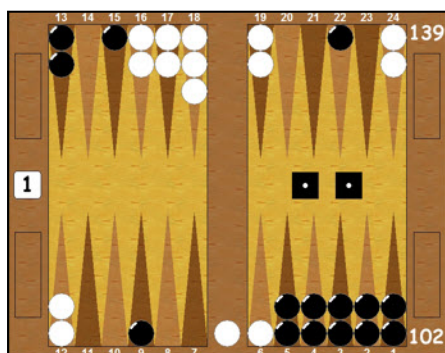


Competition 2009 No.2 Solutions 100.01 to 100.06

By Michael Crane

Welcome to the second competition of 2009. This issue's set of problems divided the entrants more than usual and resulted in some very low scores. Let's start at #1 . . . which I always find a good place to start!

100.01



11 point match
Black 4 White 5
Black to play 11

MC: The first problem had the entrants divided 4-3. Let's start with those that didn't agree with Snowie. Everyone agrees with hitting 9/6*, but is how the remaining 1 is moved that's the key.

Bob Young: 9/6* 6/5

Black would like to leave the 6-point slotted, but he doesn't have much cover for it at present. As the white prime is an effective blockade with black not on the edge of it yet, a hit by white from the bar would mean two checkers trapped and serious problems for black. As black can win the game with his racing lead, he should play safe until forced to leave a blot, using the last 1 to lift the blot. The rear checker will have plenty of time to escape if all goes well, and a gammon could be a real possibility with white having no anchor and two on the bar.

Brian Lever: 9/6* 6/5

"Identify the candidate plays", we're always being told. Where doubles are con-

cerned, there are usually lots of them. I'll stick with three. Firstly 22/20, 15/13 – can't be bad – prepares to escape the last checker, safeties a loose blot, leaves the 9-point checker as a landing spot, or to pick and pass. Perhaps if gammons didn't count, this might be the play, but they do, and frankly it's a bit wimpish.

Next 22/21, 9/6*. I think hitting is definitely the way to go here – second white checker on the bar, advance the back checker to a direct escape point, get a good chance of a close-out if white fails to enter anytime soon. But it's the "if white doesn't enter" bit that concerns; what if he does enter? That's another checker behind a 4-prime, and "4 in a row is more than you think" says Michael.

The point is that black doesn't need to close white out to win a gammon, but if he does want to do so, he can do it in a far more risk-free way, putting the second checker up with 9/6*, 6/5. He will have plenty of time to run his rearmost checker round, and if things get a bit sticky (e.g. white enters one checker before black escapes the back man) he can always offer a difficult to take cube. So my choice, and I guess the choice of everyone else, is 9/6*, 6/5.

Phil Tutchings: 9/6* 6/5

9/6* puts white's blot back on the bar. The decision now is whether to complete a pick-&-pass movement or to start to make the 6-point in the home board. Leaving a blot on our own 6-point would leave us open to white's 66 return joker. This would result in us having two checkers on the bar against a 3-point board with white looking to close us out over the next few rolls. This could potentially lead to a gammon against us putting white just a doubled gammon away from the match. Our general approach here should be to maintain pick & pass potential for subsequent rolls keeping white's checkers on

the bar to maximise our gammon chances. We still have time to safety the back checker.

MC: No one has mentioned how poor white's home board is at the moment – leaving a blot on the 6-point isn't going to be the end of the world if it is hit, and don't forget, it is only hit with 6s, 30% of the time. The rest get it right.

Cedric Lytton: 22/21 9/6*

This slots the open 6-point with two indirect numbers (7 & 9) to cover if missed (cf. Dwek-Genud, World Championship 1981), threatens to win (with a probable gammon) immediately, and positions the back man to escape with 6s. Alternatives: 22/20, 15/13 safeties a blot and gives the black man 5s as well, but if white anchors now or next roll on black's 6-point she gets a good holding game; 9/6*, 6/5 keeps everything safe now, but then all depends on whether black can escape with a 1 or 2, and then with a 5 or 6, before white gets two 6s.

Richard Biddle: 22/21 9/6*

The easy part is picking; the question is whether to pass or not. Traditionally, I would always prefer to stay there whereas others would prefer to pass. This non-passing behaviour has led to lively debate in chouttes and gang tournaments I have been involved with. Yes, I am sure we lose more times with my play, but the increase in gammon chances must outweigh that. No pussy play for me.

Peter Christmas: 22/21 9/6*

Having started the blitz it is usually correct to keep going with it as long as possible for if white anchors even on the 6-point, as possible here, it allows the fight back to begin and it is surprising how quickly it can turn around. So the passive 22/20, 15/13 would be giving too much opportunity for white with only two home board points but a sem- ▶

blance of a prime forming. 9/6* putting two in the air, is a given but moving on to safety with 6/5 or giving the back checker 6s to escape with 22/21 is a difficult choice. Given the poor board and the three black checkers only 7 and 9 away I think I would go for full prime now. If white managed to get one in knocking us back I think we could cash the game with the cube at any time, otherwise play on for the gammon.

Paul Plumptre: 22/21 9/6*

We obviously hit 9/6*. We have to decide whether to play the last 1: (a) wimp out 6-5; (b) 15/14 does little; or (c) 22/21. (b) is pretty meaningless – it still only contributes five covering rolls next turn. With white only having a 2-board, I am not much afraid of a white 6 hitting next roll, and I have got 11 covering numbers if white fans. So my final 1 is 22/21, preparing to run, if I can close out; bots have taught me to watch out for these final runs – e.g. think of the sequence white fan black 66. Finally, if white fans, I think I will have a good double next turn – I do not know if white can take, given I am pretty safe for a gammon if I can win the fight for my 6-point.

MC: Peter and Paul both mention white's home board – the key to the slotting play.

Snowie: 22/21 9/6*

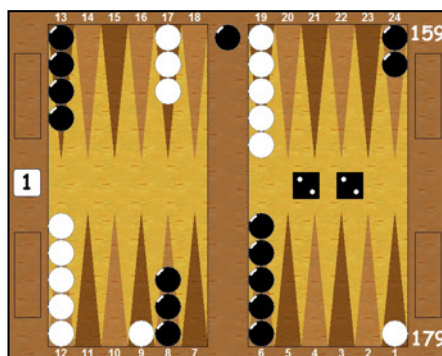
There are only two real candidate plays here: (a) 9/6* 6/5 and (b) 22/21, 9/6*.

The question is, after the hit on the 6-point should you leave the point slotted or lift the blot to safety? The two key influencing factors in such positions are firstly the strength of your opponent's home board and secondly how much freight you have to shift to get your remaining checkers home.

Here white's board is very weak and black still has a lot of work to do to bring all his checkers home so both indicators point to leaving the blot slotted despite the lack of a direct cover number.

This lack of a direct cover makes it closer than I at first thought but slotting is right by a relatively small margin.

100.02



11 point match
Black 3 White 2
Black to play 22

MC: Well, this has got them all in a tizzy! Seven entrants, five different solutions! Let's start with those on their own:

Bob Young: 25/23 13/11 6/4(2)

I guess I would always hit in my usual style, but given enough time to look at things in a relaxed light, I realise nothing "lasting" has been achieved by the hit, certainly still behind in the race and no trouble to white from the "post-hit" position. So perhaps the next two 2s, making a home board point is a sensible thing, and then debate the last 2 to take.

Once again, my usual play, to get the back men going is good, but (probably just me going for this), I would play one down from the mid-point, to benefit the bar- and 5-point making potential, which is my next priority. If hit, I usually worry that this would be bad, but on reflection, I don't think this would be, as it would go towards shoring up the rear men, almost a win-win situation, useful in attack or defence.

MC: The correct answer lies with hitting, something Bob considered and then rejected. The next two 'loners' both hit – but not on the same point.

Phil Tutchings: 25/23 13/11(2) 11/9*

It is early both in the match and the game. We can afford to hit and leave two blots (indirect shots whilst white has not yet developed a home board). The hit takes away half of white's move and gives us builders onto our home board and bar-point.

Cedric Lytton: 25/21 13/9*

After coming off the bar, black must send the escaped checker back so hasn't time to make his 4-point; then he shouldn't strip his mid-point with 13/11 so may as well start a major anchor.

MC Phil's choice of 11/9 is an error, whereas Cedric's choice of 13/9* coupled with 25/21 is (almost) as good as it gets! The next two don't hit, but there move isn't that bad.*

Paul Plumptre: 25/23 24/22 6/4(2)

The constructive options with the 2s are 13/11(2), 24/22(2), 13/9*, and 6/4(4). I rank them in that order, increasing. There is no rush to make only a 3-point anchor, when white still has an open board. I rank my 4-point above the hit 13/9*, because with only one point in my own home board, hitting white is not so valuable. So it only remains to find a fourth 2 after 25/23 6/4(2). 13/11 would give white a gratuitous hit with a 2 for little gain, and so 24/22 diversifying at the back looks best.

Richard Biddle: 25/23 24/22 6/4(2)

Many more options with this double than the first problem. We have to come on 25/23. The next question we have to ask is do we want to hit, 13/9*, or do we want to make a valuable home point, 6/4(2). Hitting doesn't really achieve that much other than bringing down another builder. However, making a home point unstacks a heavy point and begins to make a home board. So finally, do we proceed onto the opponent's 4-point with our loose checker or invite some action by leaving three blots in white's home board? We have a stronger home board now. Again no pussy play for me.

MC: No pussy play, Richard? I'd have thought anything that didn't hit would be considered a pussy play! At least Peter and Brian have got balls!

Peter Christmas: 25/23 24/22 13/9*

Legally we have to come in 25/23 otherwise it would be a straight forward make the 4 point and hit on the 9-point which is the main dilemma. Instinctively I like 6/4(2), 24/22 as it does something constructive with the double, it gives us ▶



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Starting @ 12 noon: 9 Point, 7 Point and 5 Point KO events
Cash Prizes & Buffet - Entry £20 (32 maximum entrants)
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43 Hermitage Road. Wyken. Coventry. CV2 5GF

a more solid position early in the game. The three open back men are vulnerable to 55 and a few pointing numbers but gives good coverage to slots in the outer and inner board and a good chance to build a high anchor, the safer 25/21 seems a little passive.

I have been trying to list some negatives to the hit but there are not many. Unlike if we had to hit on the 7-point it would leave 16 return shots, here I can only see 5 and I am not even sure everyone would hit back with 44 and 54 as there are some reasonable alternatives. Hitting brings the race back to just three pips instead of 12 behind and it stops white from either making the 9-point or making a nice outer board point. It also reduces the risk to the home board blots if we spread them out for the reasons already given. Not hitting gives white some decent rolls to compound his advantage so as the (match) trailer he could be in a position to cube fairly soon.

Knocking the runner back leaves this game pretty even with less opportunities for either side to be looking to cube for a few rolls at least. There are merits to the pure point making play but having the extra builder on the 9-point aimed at any blots in our home board could prove as effective and it does seem to stop white grabbing the initiative immediately so I will have to go with the hit this time.

Brian Lever: 25/23 24/22 13/9*

And we all got the first 2 right as well, 25/23; the rest is a teeny bit trickier. I'd take the next pair of 2s together – got to be either 6/4(2), unstacking the 6-point, or 13/9* sending another checker back without stripping the midpoint. And for the final 2, 24/22, stringing out three blots deeper in the board than white wants to hit without a joker double of his own. So definitely 24/22 – but which of 6/4(2) or 13/9*? I do like pretty plays, and set up on a board 13/9* actually looks better balanced. There are spares on key points, with added advantages – that a white checker is put on the bar and may enter awkwardly (or not at all), that the hit protects the blots in white's home board – he can only now make a point there if he also rolls a double – that the play is more active than passive. Still, the 4-point is a good point not to be sniffed at, but here, for me, 13/9* just wins out.

MC: Cedric failed to re-enter, 25/23, but it only cost him a gnat's to do so. Let's see what our silicone pal has to say about this divisive problem.

Snowie: 25/23 24/22 13/9*

This is the most difficult position of the set. Should black use the roll to build his board or should he hit the blot on the 9-point?

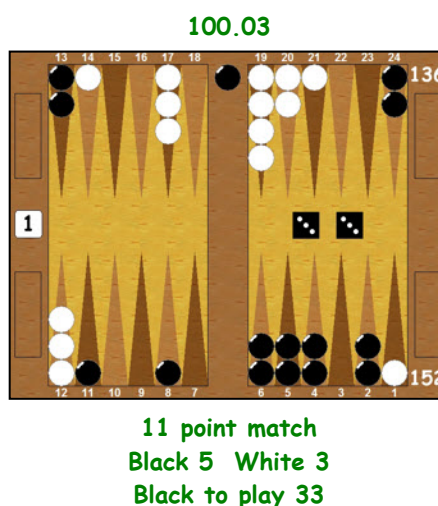
This is another type of position where the thinking has changed over the years because of the neural nets of myself and my colleagues. A lot of humans grab the opportunity to make a long-term asset in such positions but backgammon is still a race so hitting is nearly always good.

The other benefit of hitting is to take a tempo away from your opponent and unless he rolls a double he won't be doing much damage next roll. So the correct idea is to hit.

As your opponent is on the bar then the right play is to diversify the checkers on the opponent's side of the board. The best play is 25/23, 24/22 13/9*.

My rollouts show all the plays (including making the 4-point) to be very close.

For interest I contacted my new young cousin Extreme Gammon and asked him to look at the position. He was in no doubt that 25/23, 24/22, 13/9* is the best play and, in his opinion, by a very long way. From what I have seen of his performance I am beginning to think that he might actually be a better player than I am. Still machines are never jealous so I wish him all the best!



MC: According to Snowie, a couple of entrants are stuck in the 70s when it comes to solving this problem!

Cedric Lytton: 25/22 24/21*(2) 11/8

Just about our best roll, with 43 second preference; send a man back, make a major anchor putting two white men (on the 6-point) out of play, and make our

8-point. Our game-plan now is to escape our back man with a 4 or 6 and prime white's two.

Phil Tutchings: 25/22 24/21* 21/18 11/8

Moving up to the 18-point (at the expense of making an anchor on the 21-point) moves us to within a direct shot of white's blot on the 14-point whilst a 6 next turn would give us an anchor on the bar-point. The 11/8 move safeties both blots and hampers white's chances of escaping from our home board. Taken together these moves balance safety with our need to escape our back checkers and maintain our gammon chances.

MC: More often than not, two in the air is usually correct, here this also robs white of establishing a 1-point anchor and opens the door to a possible blitz – and great gammon chances.

Paul Plumptre: 25/22 24/21* 4/1*(2)

This is a choice between (a) the anchor 25/22 24/21*(2) 11/8, and (b) the shuffle 25/22 24/21* 4/1(2). No other options come close. The anchor is obviously pretty safe and valuable, and I judge leaves me close but not quite at a double (ahead in the match) if white fans. The shuffle leaves two white men on the bar, and it is a question of whether I have enough ammunition to attack the lone men as (on average) they come onto my 3-point or 4-point one at a time. With three men back, I might normally side against the shuffle, but with white's blot on his 11-point, I can hope to pick that up on my way round to continue the attack. So I play the shuffle (b). And since I rate this stronger than (a), I expect to double white out if he fans, and to have a strong double/take if only one white man comes on. Four points for a gammon will be very acceptable at this match score.

MC: Mmm, "I expect to double white out if he fans" would be a mistake, this play gives you excellent gammon chances (44.7%), it'd be best to play on.

Brian Lever: 25/22 24/21* 4/1*(2)

OK the first 3s are easy – 25/22, 24/21* – and then I think it's a straight choice between 4/1*(2) or 24/21 again with 13/8. 4/1*(2) is the blitzing play and even though black has three checkers back with not quite enough in the zone to blitz, a dance by white could open up gammon possibilities and/or a single white entry when black has mobilised, say, the two checkers on the mid-point might lead to a very volatile – i.e. ideal doubling – position.

On the other hand, 24/21,13/8 gives a very solid position where nothing bad is likely to happen whatever white rolls and where at worst black will have a solid advantage with his advanced anchor, and we can all live quietly and happily ever after. Much too quietly though. Black has just rolled his second best number and he has to use it to the max and put two on the bar. He's got much the stronger home board and barring a miracle return by white a continuing threat to close out and/or pick up the loose white checker – no I hadn't forgotten it - loitering on the 11-point and/or win a gammon. In fact a gammon win is very likely, what with nine white checkers away from home. So 25/22, 24/21* and 4/1(2)* it is.

Richard Biddle: 25/22 24/21* 4/1*(2)

Again, we have to enter from the bar, 25/22, and certainly should hit the white checker, 24/21*. So the big question on this move is whether we want to make the white 4-point or put two on the bar. Latter option better by far. Like position 100.01, we prefer the option of more gammons, so again no pussy play for me.

Bob Young: 25/22, 24/21* 4/1*(2)

The first two 3s are almost forced, enter and hit the home board blot, and then look around for the other two. Making an anchor is always positive, but with a stronger home board, switching points, and hitting again pushes white into a game of trying to stabilise, and only when anchored, will white have any equity in the game. With only two points of entry for white, one black checker already in the war zone and more on their way, white may be struggling to avoid a gammon if it goes black's way.

Peter Christmas: 25/22 24/21* 4/1*(2)

At first glance I saw 25/22, 24/21*(2) and lastly 11/8 and was beginning to wonder if there was any alternatives at all. Until I thought about switching points, something the bots have perfected in blitzes to great effect, here can be used to put two in the air which is always a powerful play with sufficient back up. Certainly 25/22 and 24/21 are a given, 4/1*(2) could be stretching things only one checker in direct range of the gaps in our home board now but there are a lot of factors for this play. We have the stronger board but we are behind in the race, so it can be a time to take risks. There is also another blot indirectly available so there is good prospects for a gammon and access to the cube if white manages to gain an anchor we could still cash the game.

MC: Good analysis from the last three, each looking for the increased gammon chances . . . just like Snowie prefers.

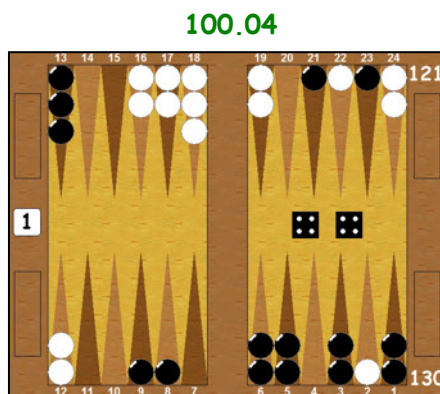
Snowie: 25/22 24/21* 4/1(2)*

After entering 25/22 and hitting 24/21* the question is how to play the other two 3s.

Back in the 1970s purity would have been the order of the day and either 24/18 or 24/21, 11/8 would have been the chosen play.

Here in the 2000s the bots have taught us how to blitz and win gammons and to hell with purity! The right play by a long way with the other two 3s is 4/1(2)*. This wins a fraction less overall than 24/21, 11/8 but it picks up a whopping 10% extra gammons.

If you chose one of the quieter plays you need to study this type of position more deeply and learn to take away your opponent's anchor whenever you can.



11 point match
Black 4 White 5
Black to play 44

MC: Oh dear, this problem proved a real problem for a couple of entrants. Their solutions proved to be huge errors.

Paul Plumptre: 13/9 9/5(2) 8/4

First, the shuffle 6/2(2) is pointless; even if white conveniently fans twice, my back men won't get out to win direct. Next, there is no point in playing loose, e.g. 13/5(2) or 13/5 9/5 8/4, because even if two men get hit and manage to anchor, I still won't have the timing for a back game. So I need to maintain what position I can on this poor roll, and it is a choice between (a) 13/5 9/5 8/4 keeping the 13 point, and (b) 13/5 13/9(2). After either roll, if white runs clear, e.g. with 54: 23/14, I have to hope to anchor with a 2, and get a fair holding game. (a) slots the 4-point, and has to pay to a white 2;

(b) keeps the 8-point slotted, and pays to a white 6. But (b) looks inflexible hereafter, and (a) keeps hitters on the 13-point, who can come down later. So I play (a). In play, I might try to do this fairly fast, because I have a tough decision if white cubes me.

Phil Tutchings: 13/9(3) 8/4

Although this roll puts us slightly ahead in the race we need to maintain contact and try to prevent white's back checker from escaping as our own back checkers are now in danger of becoming stranded.

MC: "Any move that does not include 6/2(2) as part of it is a mega-mega blunder . . ." says Snowie. Ignoring such a play displays a lacking of understanding of this sort of position and of blitzes in particular. Paul did mention it, and deemed it "pointless"! In a way he was 100% correct as a glance at the points awarded for his and Phil's moves shows. Phil's son Dan took a look at his dad's answers and told him they were rubbish – perhaps he should have a go next time! To his credit, Phil still sent them in – I wonder if Dan dare (pun intended!)?*

Cedric Lytton: 13/5 6/2*(2)

In the diagram, white is well diversified with 6s and 5s to escape, 4s to cover 7/3 and perhaps 2s to safety 3/1 if needs must. After my move, white's 4s are duplicated and white fans after 16 rolls, giving black badly needed time to escape 21/15 with a 6 and maybe to pick up another blot with a 1. White only has seven indirect shots from the bar, so we reject 8/4 (instead of 9/5) which would leave 11 direct shots. Black's position is not good, but this bold play, even though it gives up the 6-point, looks better than giving up the mid-point and losing communication.

Brian Lever: 13/5 6/2*(2)

Well this is a bit of a mess on both sides of the board; black has to hit 6/2*(2) with the first couple of 4s, and then what? I'd slot 8/4, if I had more direct covers, but I don't so I can't. And besides, I don't really want another checker back behind white's 4-prime if I can help it – see position 1 above, which appears to be a close relative of this one. And that rather narrows down the options somewhat – either 13/9(2), or 13/5. My maths is a bit shaky (especially around midnight, which it is now) but they both seem to leave the same number of shots – seven. Purely because I'd rather hang on to the mid-point for some semblance of outfield control, I would play 13/5. I know it ►

doesn't put a checker in an ideal place and it may duplicate a hitting 1 but black may need that mid-point to act as a restraint or a landing spot in this awkward position.

MC: Playing 13/5 just isn't aggressive enough according to Snowie. It plays past the now vacated 6-point giving fewer chances to make it as soon as possible.

Bob Young: 13/9(2) 6/2*(2)

Left alone, white will escape his rear checker and hit en-route if necessary, or maybe hit and point in his home board with about a quarter of his rolls, so black has to stall that threat, i.e. hit him. Switching points, although opening up the top end of the board is useful. 13/5 is placing a checker behind white if he should enter on the 6-point, so move 13/9 and look for the last 4. Another one down makes another blot, or do I go for the slot, and hope to cover before white re enters? Trouble deciding, but in the end chose another 13/9 and make the entry rolls of 63 and 54 problem rolls, rather than enter, hit and escape rolls for white. The blot on the mid-point will recycle if hit, or be useful where it is anyway.

Peter Christmas: 13/9(2) 6/2*(2)

Similar here, switching points was an early consideration mainly as the back men are stuck and black is in real danger of crunching his board anyhow. We can't safety the 8-point blot so attacking is the only option, 6/2*(2) and the main choice looks to be between 13/5 and 13/9(2). The spare on the 5-point looks to give some extra chances to fill in the 4-point but really we would need a 1 to hit the blot on the 22-point if we still have that option. I wouldn't think there was much in it but it tends to be correct to bring in new builders aimed at the open points or ammo for open hitting if needed so I would go with 13/9(2) as the blot count is the same and again we have access to the cube if needed.

Richard Biddle: 13/9(2) 6/2*(2)

Thankfully this time we don't need to enter from the bar as in previous positions, but we are still seduced by gammons and this may cause us to play an unorthodox 6/2*(2). Most players would rather chew their own face off than break their 6-point, but every now and then it has to be the right move. We then have to focus on remaking that point ASAP so should play 13/9(2) rather than 13/5. Provided we can keep white on the bar, we should be ok, timing-wise, to escape our back checkers and possibly pick up the

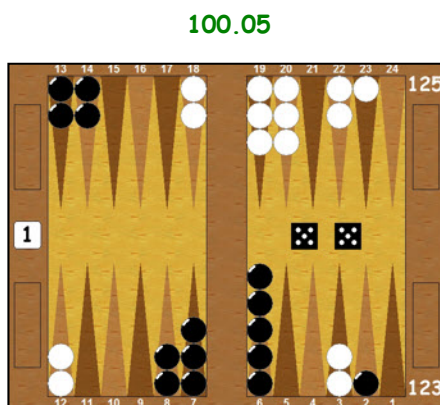
other white blot. You guessed it - this is a pussy-free zone.

MC: No pussies here, eh Richard? Good to see you're back on track.

Snowie: 13/9(2) 6/2(2)*

If you have understood the preceding position then it will come as no surprise to you that this position must be played as a blitz. Any move that does not include 6/2(2)* as part of it is a mega-mega blunder with an equity loss of nearly 0.7 points! If you didn't find 6/2(2)* then you must seriously study the theory of blitzing.

After the hit it is a question of bringing as much fire power as possible to bear on the home board so the other two fours should be played 13/9(2). 13/5 might seem OK but although it is not a blunder it is quite a big error. When blitzing be as aggressive as possible and hope to close out your opponent very quickly. Thus 13/9(2) is the right idea.



11 point match
Black 5 White 5
Black to play 55

MC: Only a couple don't agree with Snowie this time.

Phil Tutchings: 14/9(2) 13/8(2)

This roll has given us a good racing lead so it makes sense to break contact with white's mid-point checkers and safely contain white's back checkers for at least one roll. Although there are few gammon chances here we should be in a strong position to cash in this match on the next or subsequent rolls giving us a lead in the match.

Brian Lever: 14/9(2) 13/8(2)

The race was close till this roll came up, and black must use it to race. Playing 14/9(2) seems obvious and the only question is whether those same checkers

should continue on to the 4-point or whether they should stop where they are and be joined by the two others played 13/8(2). And my choice is 13/8(2) – good for racing, avoids a “clear the mid-point” problem, blocks white's killer 66 reply, provides more builders for the open 4- and 5-pointss. And one other important factor – puts black clearly into double territory. OK, I am a little worried about the fact that there is the gap on the 4- and 5-points but there's time and numbers to fill it and nothing appears to play awkwardly.

MC: Brian's worry about the gap in his home board is a valid worry, and one to which he should have paid more attention, for it is the correct play of 14/4(2) that leaves Brian's and Phil's a blunder.

Bob Young: 14/4(2)

Ahead in the race after this big roll, dictates a racing plan, and when racing, race. That is to say, break contact, as soon as possible. Clearing the mid-point is one obstacle overcome, just the rear white anchor to clear. Only rolls of 63, 62 and 52 will leave a blot next roll. Or so I thought on auto pilot. Well, on closer inspection, I have made the point six pips away from whites rear checkers, and I will have to clear this again soon, so I prefer to clear it now 9/4(2) with the last two 5s, and admittedly have a slight downside giving white an escaping 66 roll, but a much more safe position for me after this roll. Not clearing the mid-point seemed initially illogical to me, but on closer inspection, there is no roll that won't clear it next time, at the worst leaving an indirect shot, or if rolling a 1, then all rolls can be played safely elsewhere. If this is correct, I have learnt something here, if wrong, nothing surprises me anymore in backgammon.

Paul Plumptre: 14/4(2)

What a useful roll. It is a choice between (a) 14/9(2) 13/8(2) (“when ahead, race”), and (b) 14/4(2), which builds and trusts to clear the 13-point safely later. After either roll, and almost all replies by white, I will double, and white can take from his 3-point hold. But the take looks more difficult after (b), which decides my play.

Richard Biddle: 14/4 (2)

So well ahead in the race after this roll, we can race for home by neatly bringing round our four back checkers; however, we will have done nothing to improve our home board, which we will be trying to bear in on. This could cause us problems later on, for instance, 63 and 53 ►

plays awkwardly for us next time leaving a direct shot. However, playing 14/4(2) leaves us no rolls that leave a direct shot next time. It does leave us the 66 white joker that would have been blocked with the first option but that would only even the race and would not spell disaster.

Peter Christmas: 14/4(2)

Firstly going over the top with 7/2 or 6/1 would be a mistake as we really need to fill in some of the gaps in front of the three-point anchor with these spares. As we will be 22 pips ahead after our move anything less than a double 3 in reply should leave us open to a double based on the race so something solid is called for. The main options are 14/9 (2), 13/8 (2) which blocks 6s and is solid. The only down side being the open 5- and 4-points could be difficult to fill especially if we have to dump some spares over the top, so our most difficult throws could come up as white perfects his own home board. The alternative 14/4(2) leaves some pressure on white's mid-point but more importantly is another home board point and a safe landing place while greatly reducing the risks of having to leave a blot later. On balance making the 4 point seems better for the long term safety of the position.

Cedric Lytton: 14/4(2)

Clears the 14-point and makes a useful point for the bearoff race and as bear-in sanctuary. Black has several good safety moves while waiting to clear his mid-point, including 2/1 if he rolls an unwanted 1; also if white rolls a small number, black can double. Alternative 14/9(2), 13/8(2) leaves white no joker 66, true, but black has not the bear-in sanctuary and will be lucky to get one, and could have trouble clearing his 9-point, - "a point cleared is a point not to be feared."

Racing, avoids a "clear the mid-point" problem, blocks white's killer 66 reply, provides more builders for the open 4- and 5-points. And one other important factor – puts black clearly into double territory. OK, I am a little worried about the fact that there is the gap on the 4- and 5-points but there's time and numbers to fill it and nothing appears to play awkwardly.

MC: "Mind the gaps!" seems to be the order of the day.

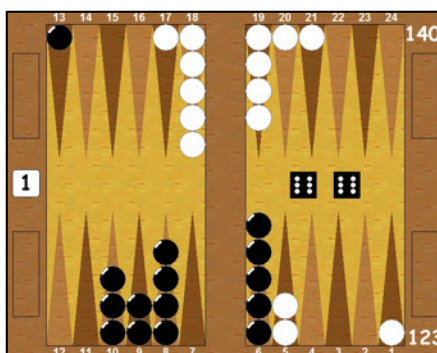
Snowie: 14/4(2)

There are only two moves to consider here: (a) 14/4(2) or (b) 14/9(2), 13/8(2). At first sight there doesn't look as if there

is much to choose between them. Then I did my rollouts and was staggered to find an equity difference of 0.25 between the two plays! (a) is correct and (b) is a huge blunder. Why is there such a big difference between the plays?

The principles of connectivity might indicate that (b) is the right play but the key to the position is the double gap between black's 6-point and white's anchor on the 3-point. It is very difficult to bring such positions home unless you happen to roll some small numbers at the right time. It is far better to remove one of the gaps immediately by playing 14/4(2).

100.06



11 point match
Black 0 White 4
Black to play 66

MC: Another problem that divides the entrants giving us five different solutions. Out on his own (Dan probably predicted this!) is Phil.

Phil Tutchings: 13/1* 9/3(2)

This play duplicates white's 5s and retains builders to the bar-point. The risk of white's joker 11 return seems worthwhile as we attempt to turn around an early match deficit. There is still plenty of play in this game and we may be able to get some value with a double/take on our next roll - despite our big lead there is some volatility with white's back checker giving nuisance value (and the reassurance to white of the anchor on our 5-point).

MC: Hitting doesn't really do that much. Here's two more that hit.

Paul Plumptre: 13/1* 8/2(2)

One way to look at this problem, is to consider what to do with the lone man on the 13-point. It can stay there, being only hit by a 62 or a 66 at present; it can slot the 7-point, which I do not like, because white can hit and cover one of his home blots with 17 of his 36 rolls; or it can

attack all the way onto the 1-point. If 13/1*, we might as well play 8/2(2), building safely. The only safe play is 9/3(2) 8/2(2), which looks a bit disjointed. The key for me, is that I want to get the cube across efficiently. (Note in passing, that the match position is near- irrelevant for cube action against a hold.)

After the safe play of 9/3(2) 8/2(2), I do not think it is a double next turn. But after the aggressive 8/2(2) 13/1*, it will be double/take if white enters missing me; it is probably double/drop on white's four fans; and there are plenty of interesting continuations if white hits me with a 1, depending how well he covers, and whether I re-hit on entry.

Cedric Lytton: 13/1* 8/2(2)

After this inconvenient boxes (66), the only rolls that do not leave a shot are sets off the 8-point and/or the 9-point, leaving an awkward bear-in while white strengthens his board and waits. Four white rolls fan; if white is forced forward with a 4 or 5, black's bear-in problems will be much easier, and if white does return hit from the bar black may get shots at at least one of white's inner-board blots. Again, with a big race lead black may have a powerful cube next time.

MC: Again it's the hitting part that lets this move down. Let's look at a couple who don't hit. Although their moves are just one pip apart (3-point or 2-point) the difference is quite large with the latter of the two just sneaking into error territory.

Richard Biddle: 10/4(2) 8/2(2)

Many players would automatically play 9/3(2) 8/2(2) here seeing it as a safe move as it only leaves an indirect shot. Probably an easy mistake to make in clock play. We are ahead in the race, why take risks? However, we are also behind in the match and we need some points on the scoreboard pronto. Let's try and open things up to pick up another checker and chase the gammon.

Let's look at the merits of 10/4(2) 8/2(2). 8/2(2) is obvious as it unstacks a heavy point and makes a home board point, a little deep but still ahead of white's last checker. When made with another home board point, deep points can be forgiven. 10/4(2) is more interesting as it leaves a direct shot but actually we would probably prefer for white to hit us from our 5-point. It removes the danger white poses on that point and allows us to go back and potentially pick up another white checker possibly and chase the

gammon. White has not a board to concern us yet.

Brian Lever: 10/4(2) 9/3(2)

And finally- a position where I don't really like any of the plays. The safest play appears to be 9/3(2) with 8/2(2) but look at the resultant position – lots of gaps and none of the compactness that we're supposed to strive for. The loose white blots in board encourage a bolder play, and I think making the 4-point with 10/4(2) must be the first consideration – and after that it's a straight choice between 9/3(2) and 8/2(2). I prefer the former, because of the aforesaid compactness, but I wouldn't quarrel with the latter if a chouette partner wanted to play it; the plays must be close.

MC: Their dismissal of 9/3(2) 8/2(2) costs them both a 1st place – but not by much for Richard, but a lot for Brian. Brian's play fails to use the spare checkers on the 8-point and leaves it top heavy. Peter and Bob have it sussed.

Peter Christmas: 9/3(2) 8/2(2)

Playing 13/1*, 8/2(2) maybe considered as a way to bring the white blot up the board so black can play over the top safely with the white blots on the 4- and 5-point as a deterrent to hit back with a 1 but I don't think white would really mind this. Apart from the joker reply of 11 black could get in trouble if the back man gets stuck (i.e. 61) and white is not going to mind mixing it up a bit. Black has a handy lead already and should be wanting to double, but being 0-4 down he may have lost his market already. The obvious 9/3(2), 8/2(2) only leaves white with a

handy double 4 (24/12*, 8/4) but it is a bit gappy for black so could leave some awkward rolls later when white has strengthened his board considerably. 10/4(2) and 9/3(2) makes the better home board points but leaves the direct 5 shot, albeit with white having to leave an array of blots around the board. Still on balance I prefer the solid 9/3(2), 8/2(2), we need some match points and this looks to put us in a strong position to cube next roll maybe even if white rolls the joker 44.

Bob Young: 9/3(2) 8/2(2)

An even bigger race lead than the last board, don't hit, unless no risk, which is not possible here. The choices are really for me to either move all the checkers from the 8-point or clear two points to the home board. My choice of making two home board points has the merit of still blocking a hitting roll of 53 from white (albeit allowing 44 to now hit). The sight of two blots in white's home board is not a factor, very swiftly they could be shored up, and black should play as safe as possible now.

MC: Snowie makes his final summing-up.

Snowie: 9/3(2) 8/2(2)

Given the state of white's home board now is the time for black to improve his position by making two inner board points. Hitting with 13/1* is the wrong idea as it doesn't really gain anything. It is far better to build those points.

The question is which two points to build? The safest play is to make the 3-point and 2-point but could it be

right to leave a blot on the 10-point in order to make the better home board point, i.e. the 4-point? If black makes the 4-point should he then make the 3-point or the 2-point to go with it?

	Action	Score
100.01	9/6* 6/5	10.00
	22/21 9/6*	9.78
100.02	25/23 24/22 13/9*	10.00
	25/21 13/9*	9.98
	25/23 24/22 6/4(2)	9.89
	25/23 13/11(2) 11/9*	9.50
	25/23 13/11 6/4(2)	9.36
100.03	25/22 24/21* 4/1*(2)	10.00
	25/22 24/21*(2) 11/8	9.56
	25/22 24/21* 21/18 11/8	8.31
100.04	13/9(2) 6/2*(2)	10.00
	13/5 6/2*(2)	9.24
	13/9 9/5(2) 8/4	2.84
	13/9(3) 8/4	2.11
100.05	14/4(2)	10.00
	14/9(2) 13/8(2)	7.48
100.06	9/3(2) 8/2(2)	10.00
	10/4(2) 8/2(2)	9.97
	10/4(2) 9/3(2)	9.65
	13/1* 8/2(2)	9.00
	13/1* 9/3(2)	8.82

Competition # ...	98	100	Total
Peter Christmas	58.89	60.00	118.89
Richard Biddle	58.19	59.86	118.05
Bob Young	58.35	59.14	117.49
Brian Lever	59.71	56.15	115.86
Cedric Lytton	57.07	57.78	114.85
Paul Plumptre	57.99	51.73	109.72
Phil Tutchings	57.23	46.00	103.23

Well, this appears to have been a successful competition, especially for Peter Christmas who got 60 out of 60! Richard wasn't too far behind, but Brian was let down by the double-five. Overall, this now puts Peter into 1st place with Richard close behind. Brian, has to recover from his 55 error to have any chance of winning this year's competition. Can he do it? Possibly. We'll know in January! The final six positions are on the following page

Name	100.01	100.02	100.03	100.04	100.05	100.06	Score
Peter Christmas	22/21 9/6*	25/23 24/22 13/9*	25/22 24/21* 4/1*(2)	13/9(2) 6/2*(2)	14/4(2)	9/3(2) 8/2(2)	60.00
Richard Biddle	22/21 9/6*	25/23 24/22 6/4(2)	25/22 24/21* 4/1*(2)	13/9(2) 6/2*(2)	14/4(2)	10/4(2) 8/2(2)	59.86
Bob Young	9/6* 6/5	25/23 13/11 6/4(2)	25/22 24/21* 4/1*(2)	13/9(2) 6/2*(2)	14/4(2)	9/3(2) 8/2(2)	59.14
Cedric Lytton	22/21 9/6*	25/21 13/9*	25/22 24/21*(2) 11/8	13/5 6/2*(2)	14/4(2)	13/1* 8/2(2)	57.78
Brian Lever	9/6* 6/5	25/23 24/22 13/9*	25/22 24/21* 4/1*(2)	13/5 6/2*(2)	14/9(2) 13/8(2)	10/4(2) 9/3(2)	56.15
Paul Plumptre	22/21 9/6*	25/23 24/22 6/4(2)	25/22 24/21* 4/1*(2)	13/9 9/5(2) 8/4	14/4(2)	13/1* 8/2(2)	51.73
Phil Tutchings	9/6* 6/5	25/23 13/11(2) 11/9*	25/22 24/21* 21/18 11/8	13/9(3) 8/4	14/9(2) 13/8(2)	13/1* 9/3(2)	46.00

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THE SMARTER WAY TO PLAY

Competition 2009, No3 102.01-06 Positions By Michael Crane

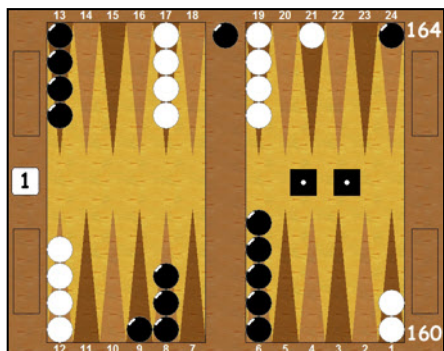
Welcome to the final one of the three 2009 season Competitions

- 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 November at the very latest (members only) - Answers in January 2010, Bibafax 104

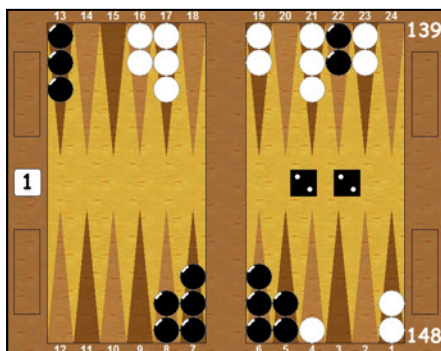
Email: info@backgammon-biba.co.uk and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ

102.01



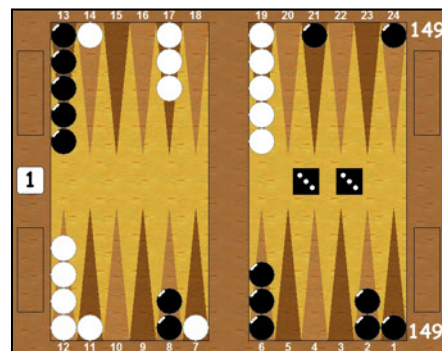
11 point match
Black 0 White 2
Black to play 11

102.02



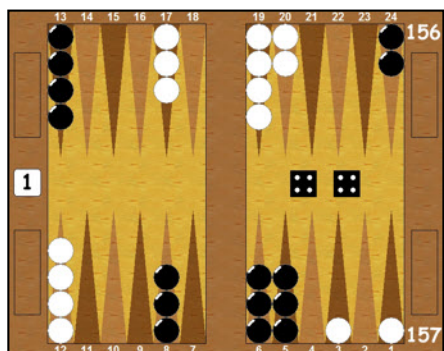
11 point match
Black 2 White 0
Black to play 22

102.03



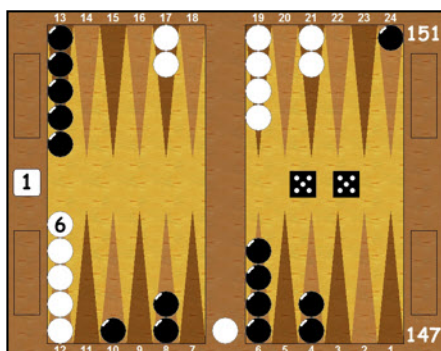
11 point match
Black 0 White 1
Black to play 33

102.04



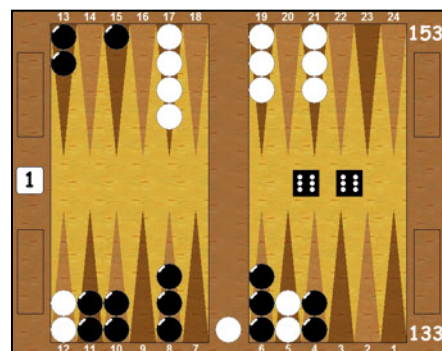
11 point match
Black 3 White 4
Black to play 44

102.05



11 point match
Black 3 White 8
Black to play 55

102.06



11 point match
Black 4 White 6
Black to play 66

OBITUARY



Walter Trice
1948 - August 2009

Backgammon has lost one of its finest exponents and champions, Walter Trice, who died aged 60 during an afternoon nap. I didn't know him personally but I knew of him through his books and publications, his best known being *Backgammon Boot Camp*, and his co-written, *Can a Fish Taste Twice as Good?* with Jake Jacobs.

His books have been constant companions of many backgammon players who have gained enormous insights into the game thanks to his mathematical analysis and unique writing style. He might have passed away, but he was left a legacy that will live on as long as there are backgammon players eager to learn how to improve their game.

Douglas Zare, a personal friend of Walter's, has published a tribute on www.GammonVillage.com. You can read it there. If you are not a member of GV, I urge you to become one if only to read Douglas's tribute and Walter's prolific contributions.

The 17th Irish Open Backgammon Championship 2009 - Wynn's Hotel, Dublin. 23-25 October

Tournament Organizer : Liz Perry -- Tournament Director: David McNamara

Friday 24th: €200 Optional Jackpot starts 7.30 pm. Saturday 25th: Registration opens 11.00 am.

Knockout. Entry Fee: €40 (There will be optional €30 and €100 side-pools)

Play starts promptly at 12.00 noon. Consolation 1st Round at 3.00 pm

(If you are arriving late or your flight is delayed, call Liz on 00353 872 144 270)

Sunday 26th: Last 16 10.00 am

Consolation continues 11.30 am. Last Chance starts at 1.00 pm

Scheduled finishing time: 6.00pm

Further Information - Liz Perry eperry@iol.ie 00353 1 298 5282, 00353 872 144 270



**BIBA 2009
UK FINALS
QUALIFIER**



Backgammon in London @ Biba



Report by Michael Crane

The weekend started with the **Friday 500 (18)** and we had a very good turnout for this 5-pointer. Thanks to Roland and Simonetta Herrera we had a contingent of Japanese entrants who put up a bloody good show. Simon Morecroft trounced me in the last 8 and then he went on to beat Roland in the semi-final to place himself in the final against Michy Kageyama (Michy's most memorable Biba match was that against Rosey Bensley in the 2004 Scottish Open when, after leading 10-5 he bowed out at 10-11 to Rosey!). Michy had no intention of bowing out this time and it was Simon who did the bowing. Latest listing on page 31.

Mike Main is renowned for the number of trophies he hands out at his Biba events, on some occasions you could pick one up for just rolling your dice! So, it was quite a shock to see that this year Mike hadn't brought any trophies at all! Instead he was handing out to each winner one of his branded score cards. He explained this to



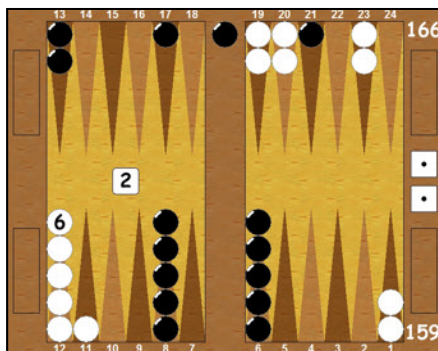
the entrants, many of whom didn't seem too impressed; however, he made emends by buying everyone a drink. At hotel prices it'd have been cheaper to have

given everyone a trophy!

Main (42)

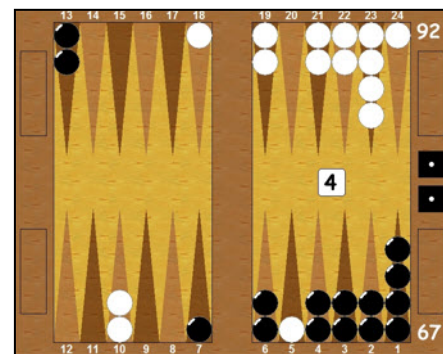
Many chatbots, when asked about the meaning of life, will answer "42". So goes a line from Douglas Adam's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. The answer can be said of the entry numbers of Mike's tournament, for this last year it was 42 and it was 42 this year. Of those 42, two of them made it to the final to battle it out head-to-head. Jon Barnes (current British Open winner) and Simon K Jones, playing in his 6th 11-point final and yet to win one!

Playing with clocks (all Sunday Main rounds are played with clocks) Simon went 3-1 down and then leveled it off at 3-3. He then remained static as the score moved: 3-4, 3-5, and then (playing as black) he took the cube in this position:



**Black 3 White 5
White cubes**

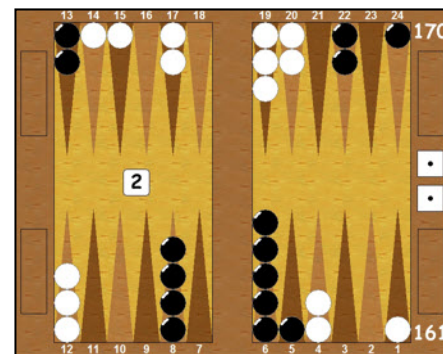
According to Snowie this is not a double (an error). Simon takes and turns it around much later when he re-cubes to 4:



Black re-cubes

It would have been a big blunder to have not doubled in this position, and this time both players get it correct, Re-double, pass. The score moves to 5-5. Simon wins the next game: 7-5 now to Simon.

In the next game Jon cubes.



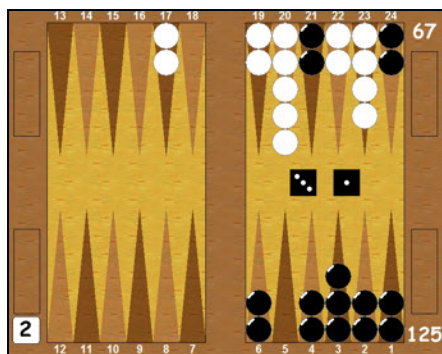
White cubes

This is a good double, there's plenty of play left in the game and Simon correctly takes. The game trundles along with both players hitting blots this position: ▶



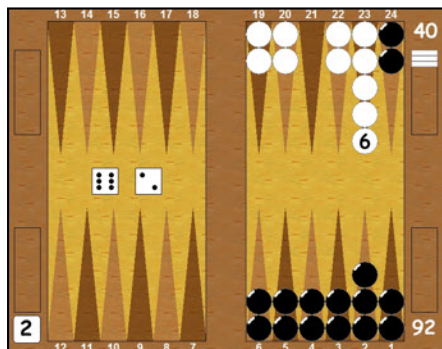
Backgammon in London @ Biba





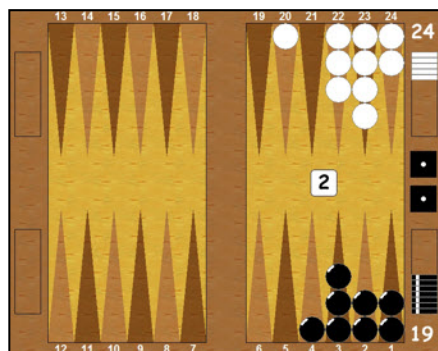
Black to play 31

Simon moves 21/18, 3/2 and the game eventually moves to this position:



White to play 62

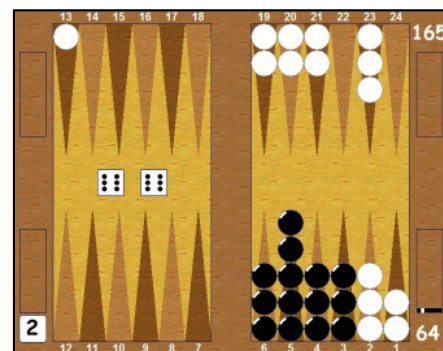
Jon is forced to leave a blot as he plays 6/0, 6/4. Simon rolls the very least roll that keeps everything tidy for him: 31, 24/21*, 2/1! Although Simon is well in control from hereon, unable to get more than a single win he should have cubed on his next roll, instead he left it until much later . . .



Black re-cubes

. . . when Jon gladly passes. 9-5 to Simon. Jon wins the next game, 9-7 and then we start what turns out to be the last game, a game in which Jon has just 1.05 seconds left on his clock! At 2-away, 6-away in Simon's favour, winning with so little time left was always going to be difficult; however, his time was reduced even fur-

ther when he used up 18 seconds over this:



White to play 66

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

Progressive Consolation (38) From the non-prog side of the draw, David Nathan fought his way through five opponents to get into the final. Here he met Martin Barkwill who entered via the last 16 Main losers; an entry from which he battled through four opponents to meet with David. It was the last match of the weekend and everyone except these two and Sharen and me had gone home. I had hoped for a quick match - but then I realised it featured David so I settled in for the night! Mind you, it didn't take as long as I'd feared and it was David who came out the winner.

Last Chance (32) Having failed to notch up a single win in the Main or the Consolation, Wayne Felton was determined to take home something from the Last Chance. His determination was worthwhile for he made it to the final - and on his first and only attempt! His opponent, Peter Chan (also a one-time entrant) was looking to keep Liverpool's interest in the tournament alive and take home another 1st place but Wayne was having nothing of it as he emerged victorious - and relieved!

Mad Monkey (32) This open-draw 3-pointer saw quite a few re-entries. Peter Bennet made it in one, but his opponent in the final got there on his third entry, not that it bothered Jeff Barber. Rolling hot and determined to make his investment worthwhile, Jeff took 1st place and left Peter in 2nd.

Poker (18) The drunker he gets the better he plays! Mick Vacarey showed them how it's done. He confounded them all by winning the poker despite him telling everyone what cards he actually had! Was he bluffing? Was he not? No one could tell and it worked in his favour for only her knew the truth. Liverpool entrants Simon K Jones and Angela Dell came in 2nd and 3rd, with Rosey Bensley and Andy Darby 4th and 5th - with none of the 'pros' even getting a look in! Latest listing on page 31.



Top. Main: Jon and Simon
Bottom. Consolation: David and Martin

Team (12) It looks as if the Michael Crane/Richard Biddle/Nicky Check stranglehold has been finally broken. Irving Czechowicz took home all the dosh as he beat the final pairing of Crane & Biddle!

Jackpot (8) No one actually won this, it was shared between Rachel Rhodes and MichyKageyama when he offered her a favourable settlement. Perhaps he was thinking, "Once bitten, twice shy" when it comes to Biba female players?

Finally

It was a fair turnout and it all went along without incident; however, the absence of shiny, glittery things reflecting in the bottles of wine on the trophy table did cause some dismay among the entrants. I think next year Mike you should bring a trophy or two with you ;-)

However, the best news is there's a £615 Rollover for the Sandy Osborne in October!



Simon K Jones
Backgammon in London @ Biba
Winner 2009

Top. Last Chance: Jeff and Peter
Bottom. Mad Monkey: Wayne and Peter



Backgammon in London @ Biba, 4, 5, 6 September 2009

Main (42)

1	Simon K Jones
2	Jon Barnes
3&4	Nicky Check
3&4	John Hedge
5to8	Roland Herrera
5to8	Mike Main
5to8	John Wright
5to8	Lawrence Powell

Consolation (38)

1	David Nathan
2	Martin Barkwill
3&4	Simon Morecroft
3&4	Roland Herrera
5to8	Myke Wignall
5to8	Michy
5to8	Rosey Bensley
5to8	Lawrence Powell

Last Chance (32)

1	Wayne Felton
2	Peter Chan
3&4	Kazuko
3&4	Tony Fawcett
5to8	Neil Everitt
5to8	Marcus Wrinch
5to8	Uldis Lapikens
5to8	Richard Biddle

Mad Monkey (16)

1	Jeff Barber
2	Peter Bennet
3&4	Rachel Rhodes
3&4	Angela Dell
5to8	Irving Czechowicz
5to8	Stefan Paliwoda
5to8	Andy Darby
5to8	Richard Holness

Friday 500 (18)

1	Michy
2	Simon Morecroft
3&4	Roland Herrera
3&4	Simon K Jones
5to8	Michael Crane
5to8	Richard Biddle
5to8	Simonetta Herrera
5to8	Mike Main

Poker (14)

1	Mick Vacarey
2	Simon K Jones
3	Angie Dell
4	Rosey Bensley
5	Andy Darby
6	Marcus Wrinch
7	Simonetta Herrera
8	Carl Dell

Jackpot (8)

1st	Michy & Rachel
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Team (12)

1	Irving Czechowicz
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Grand Prix @ BG in London

24.77	Simon K Jones
18.57	David Nathan
13.42	Jon Barnes
13.42	Nicky Check
9.29	Roland Herrera
9.29	John Hedge
9.28	Martin Barkwill
9.27	Wayne Felton
7.13	Marcus Wrinch
6.19	John Wright
6.19	Lawrence Powell
6.19	Julian Fetterlein

6.19	Mike Main
6.19	Andrew Darby
6.18	Myke Wignall
6.18	Simon Morecroft
6.17	Peter Chan
6.16	Jeff Barber
4.13	Uldis Lapikens
4.13	Rachel Rhodes

4.13	Rosey Bensley
4.13	Irving Czechowicz
4.13	Michy Kageyama
4.13	Jean Wade
4.13	Numazawa Kazuko
4.12	Richard Biddle
4.12	Simonetta Barone
4.12	Talan Evans

4.11	Tony Fawcett
4.10	Peter Bennet
2.58	Chris Ternel
2.58	Mick Vacarey
2.58	Eric Westbrook
2.58	Tomohiro Shimada
2.57	Richard Holness
2.57	Neil Everitt

2.56	Angela Dell
2.06	Stefan Paliwoda
2.06	Rowena Paliwoda
2.06	Chris Evans
2.06	Phil Tutchings
1.55	Carl Dell

The Liverpool Open 25, 26, June. 2009

Main (16 from 58)		Last Chance (32)		Grand Prix @ Liverpool	
1	Rachel Rhodes	1	Felix Vink	18.58	Rachel Rhodes
2	Adrian Jones	2	Roger Keys	13.42	Adrian Jones
3/4	Ian Hesketh	3/4	Carl Dell	9.29	Angie Dell
3/4	Angie Dell	3/4	John Broomfield	9.29	Ian Hesketh
5/8	Mick Vacarey	5/8	David Motley	9.28	Kevin Jones
5/8	Fak Laight	5/8	Nigel Merrigan	9.27	Felix Vink
5/8	Susan V D Heijdon	5/8	Peter Chan	6.19	Brian Lever
5/8	Brian Lever	5/8	Mike Waid	6.19	Fak Laight
Consolation (36)		1-Pointer (64)		6.19	Mick Vacarey
1	Jon Williams	1	Mick Vacarey	6.18	John Wright
2	Kevin Jones	2	Steve Rimmer	4.13	Uldis Lapikens
3/4	John Wright	3/4	Dama Cunningham	4.13	Steve Rimmer
3/4	Joe Derry	3/4	Joe Derry	4.13	David Motley
5/8	Simon K Jones	5/8	Dorothy Lee	4.13	Joe Dooley
5/8	Arthur Wright	5/8	David Wallbank	4.13	Ann Pocknell
5/8	Michael Horne	5/8	Ali Shimeri	4.13	George Hall
5/8	Ali Shimeri	5/8	Noel Byrne	4.12	Simon K Jones
				4.12	Arthur Wright
				4.12	Michael Horne
				4.12	Mike Waid
				4.12	Shea Mulhall
				4.11	John Broomfield
				4.11	Carl Dell
				2.58	Peter Chan
				2.58	Andrew Smith
				2.58	Steve Simkin
				2.58	Rodney Lighton
				2.58	Tony Fawcett
				2.58	Irving Czechowicz
				2.58	David Phillips
				2.57	Nigel Merrigan
				2.06	Alan Greenwood
				2.06	Richard Biddle
				2.06	Tim Brown

The SAC Trophy. 31 July, 1, 2 August 2009

Main (13/27)			Main GP		Consolation (14/26)			Con/Main GP		Friday 500 (8)		
1	Tony Fawcett		6	24.77	1	Peter Bennet		3 / 4	11.35	1	Peter Christmas	
2	John Hedge		5	17.55	2	Stewart Pemberton		3 / 4	9.29	2	Mick Butterfield	
3	Marcus Wrinch		5	13.42	3	Nicky Check		2 / 2	4.13	3&4	Arthur Wright	
4	Uldis Lapikens		4	10.84	4	Lawrence Powell		2 / 3	7.74	3&4	Marcus Wrinch	
5	Paul Gilbertson		4	11.35	5	Jeff Barber		2 / 2	4.13	5to8	Jeff Barber	
6	Chris Ternel		4	9.29	6	Richard Biddle		1 / 2	5.68	5to8	Julian Fetterlein	
7	Paul Plumptre		4	11.35	7	Peter Christmas		1 / 2	4.13	5to8	Paul Gilbertson	
8	Brian Lever		4	12.39	8	Wayne Felton		1 / 2	4.13	5to8	Richard Biddle	
9	Julian Fetterlein		3	6.19	9	Jean Wade		1 / 1	2.58	Poker (7)		
10	Gheorghe Filipas		3	8.25	10	Vicki Pemberton		1 / 2	5.68	1	Mick Vacarey	
11	Mick Butterfield		3	7.74	11	Mick Vacarey		1 / 2	4.13	2	Tony Fawcett	
12	Arthur Wright		3	7.74	12	Linda Taylor		0 / 0		3	Lawrence Powell	
13	Steve Rimmer		2	6.19	13	Paul Barwick		0 / 1	2.58	4	John Hedge	
					14	Eric Westbrook		0 / 1	2.58	5	Vicki Pemberton	
Ranking changes @ the SAC					1713	1743	Steve Rimmer			6	Mick Butterfield	
2008	2033	Julian Fetterlein			1687	1630	John Hedge			7	Paul Gilbertson	
1981	1981	Chris Ternel			1635	1534	Tony Fawcett			Team (5)		
1952	1954	Brian Lever			1618	1586	Stewart Pemberton			1	Nicky Check	
1926	1921	Peter Bennet			1596	1561	Paul Plumptre			2	Richard Biddle	
1870	1892	Lawrence Powell			1589	1610	Wayne Felton					
1826	1794	Uldis Lapikens			1579	1579	Gheorghe Filipas			1391	1415	Paul Barwick
1821	1781	Marcus Wrinch			1525	1546	Jeff Barber			1368	1366	Mick Vacarey
1803	1776	Paul Gilbertson			1513	1515	Richard Biddle			1306	1317	Vicki Pemberton
1782	1815	Peter Christmas			1511	1511	Jean Wade			1200	1200	Linda Taylor
1735	1735	Mick Butterfield			1490	1490	Eric Westbrook					
1732	1770	Nicky Check			1444	1425	Arthur Wright					



New rankings after BG in London @ Biba		1793	Simon K Jones	1537	Simon Morecroft	1434	Simonetta Barone
1985	Julian Fetterlein	1768	Nicky Check	1537	Numazawa Kazuko	1421	Rosey Bensley
1964	Chris Ternel	1718	John Hedge	1531	Tomohiro Shimada	1413	Chris Evans
1898	Peter Bennet	1697	Jon Barnes	1527	Talan Evans	1413	Neil Everitt
1875	Lawrence Powell	1655	Peter Chan	1515	Jeff Barber	1370	Richard Holness
1854	David Nathan	1623	Tony Fawcett	1514	Richard Biddle	1367	Rowena Paliwoda
1832	Uldis Lapikens	1610	Roland Herrera	1478	Myke Wignall	1365	Carl Dell
1831	Rachel Rhodes	1605	Stefan Paliwoda	1478	Irving Czechowicz	1356	Mick Vacarey
1829	Martin Barkwill	1594	Wayne Felton	1467	Eric Westbrook	1351	Angela Dell
1808	Marcus Wrinch	1586	Andrew Darby	1463	Phil Tutchings		
		1571	Michy Kageyama	1463	Jean Wade		
		1565	John Wright	1448	Mike Main		

Grand Prix Championship, September 2009 (Top 70 entrants)

Top 10: Marcus Wrinch and Chris Ternel remain in place despite not bettering their previous scores; as do Rachel Rhodes, Paul Barwick, Brian Lever and John Hedge; however, Uldis Lapikens slips down as we gain Martin Barkwill and Nicky Check who displace Paul Gilbertson and Gerry Enslin. With just three events: Sandy Osborne, The Irish Open and Arthur Wright's 70th Birthday (Swiss-format - formerly the TT) left offering Grand Prix points there's still some time remaining to enter and earn yourself some cash.

69.65	Marcus Wrinch	42.30	Adrian Jones	26.84	Sean Williams	15.48	Mick Harris
68.63	Chris Ternel	39.70	Richard Biddle	25.80	Eric Westbrook	14.95	Irving Czechowicz
67.06	Rachel Rhodes	39.20	Arthur Wright	25.80	Brian Metcalf	14.94	David Motley
64.97	Paul Barwick	36.62	Paul Plumptre	25.77	Tom Duggan	14.45	Mike Ireland
62.43	Brian Lever	35.08	Kevin Stebbing	25.27	John Wright	14.44	Richard Holness
58.82	Martin Barkwill	35.03	Jeff Barber	24.77	Gaz Owen	14.43	Steve Rimmer
56.76	John Hedge	35.02	Talan Evans	24.77	John Hurst	13.42	Arthur Musgrove
55.87	Nicky Check	34.04	Andy Darby	24.77	Michael Bennett	13.42	Chris Purchase
55.71	Lawrence Powell	33.52	Myke Wignall	24.25	Phil Tutchings	13.42	Simon Heath
55.20	Uldis Lapikens	33.02	Simon K Jones	23.73	Rosey Bensley	13.42	Mike Heard
55.18	Wayne Felton	33.00	Vicky Pemberton	22.70	Stuart Mann	13.41	Tony Lee
54.18	Paul Gilbertson	32.49	Mick Vacarey	22.18	Bob Young	13.40	Roland Herrera
52.62	Gerry Enslin	31.48	Mardi Ohannessian	21.66	Gheorghe Filipas	12.89	Simon Morecroft
52.11	Julian Fetterlein	30.43	Neil Everitt	19.59	Angie Dell	12.38	Reg Wegener
51.54	Peter Chan	30.41	David Nathan	19.09	Tim Vasiljevic	12.36	Carl Dell
48.00	Jon Barnes	29.41	Peter Christmas	18.55	Felix Vink	12.36	Ann Pocknell
47.30	Peter Bennet	29.41	Stewart Pemberton	17.02	Kevin Jones		
46.41	Tony Fawcett	28.86	Chris Evans	15.99	George Miltiadou		

Ranking Championship, September 2009 (Top 60 entrants)

Top 10: Paul Gilbertson didn't enter this weekend as a result he slips into 2nd place as Uldis Lapikens jumps into 1st place. Marcus remains where he was last month and Nicky Check rises to 4th. John Hedge moves up one place pushing Julian Fetterlein one spot below him. Lawrence Powell comes in and Peter Bennet drops out. With just two more events to go how many of the current Top 10 will remain?

2221.93	Uldis Lapikens	1839.79	Mardi Ohannessian	1426.86	Vicky Pemberton	1696.13	Adrian Jones
2220.50	Paul Gilbertson	1829.43	Peter Christmas	1214.50	Linda Taylor	1446.25	Ray Kershaw
2200.79	Marcus Wrinch	1793.71	Stewart Pemberton	2037.85	Jon Barnes	1376.50	Tom Duggan
2142.64	Nicky Check			1593.62	Gheorghe Filipas	1124.13	Neil Young
2138.57	Chris Ternel	1746.07	Jeff Barber	1434.85	Tim Vasiljevic	1712.86	Lee Wood
2136.00	John Hedge	1720.36	Eric Westbrook	1921.58	Kevin Stebbing	1512.00	Steve Rimmer
2124.57	Julian Fetterlein	1707.79	Andy Darby	1470.83	Michael Ireland	1449.71	John Reddington
2062.50	Martin Barkwill	1674.64	Neil Everitt	1893.18	Sean Williams	1368.14	Peter Chan
2055.93	Lawrence Powell	1670.71	Brian Metcalf	1669.73	Rachel Rhodes	1318.57	Lewis Young
2036.14	Wayne Felton	1662.29	Rosey Bensley	1481.36	Mick Harris	1172.29	Zoe Cunningham
2015.93	Peter Bennet	1644.43	Bob Young	1949.67	Gaz Owen	2146.00	John Hurst
2004.43	Brian Lever	1598.50	Chris Evans	1628.89	George Miltiadou	2032.33	Michael Bennett
1975.50	Arthur Wright	1590.79	Myke Wignall	1378.67	Richard Holness	1763.33	Mike Heard
1960.79	Gerry Enslin	1576.29	Phil Tutchings	1310.67	Jean Wade	1739.67	Roland Herrera
1921.50	Tony Fawcett	1534.36	Paul Barwick	1297.33	Reg Wegener	1726.67	Stuart Mann
1889.93	Paul Plumptre	1521.00	Mick Vacarey	1952.50	Simon K Jones		
1848.79	Richard Biddle	1452.29	Talan Evans	1720.25	John Wright		

Friday 500 Positions - September

95	Marcus Wrinch	29	Peter Christmas	12	Simon K Jones
75	Paul Gilbertson	28	Roland Herrera	12	Athanasia Petselis
74	Richard Biddle	28	Simonetta Herrera	12	David Phillips
66	Jeff Barber	27	Michy	12	Fanika Petkovska
56	Julian Fetterlein	27	Arthur Wright	12	Peter Chan
51	Tom Duggan	25	Neil Young	12	Raj Jansari
45	Andy Darby	23	Simon Morecroft	11	Irving Czechowicz
43	Martin Barkwill	20	Lee Wood	11	Ed Turner
43	Gerry Enslin	20	Peter Bennet	11	Gheorghe Filipas
40	Brian Lever	18	Mick Harris	11	John Wright
40	Myke Wignall	16	Michael Crane	9	Mike Main
38	Tony Fawcett	16	Jeff Bailey	9	Dan Tutchings
36	Mardi Ohannessian	16	Mick Butterfield	9	Todd Young
34	Mike Ireland	15	Reg Wegener	8	Anne Ryder
33	Rosey Bensley	14	Jean Wade	8	David McNamara
30	David Nathan	14	Lewis Young	8	Gaz Owen
		13	Brain Metcalf	8	Tony Walters
		13	Mahmoud Jahanbani		
		13	Ray Kershaw		

Top 16 Qualifiers above this line

Full list on the Biba web site

Marcus Wrinch stretches his lead to 20 points over nearest rival, Paul Gilbertson and looks on target for the £100 prize for topping the list after the November event. Peter Christmas (absent this weekend) drops out and in comes David Nathan to replace him. With two more events to go, Sandy Osborne and Arthur's 70th (formerly the TT) there's still time for some big changes. With 40 points up for grabs none of those hanging onto the lower positions are safe!

Poker Grand Prix - July

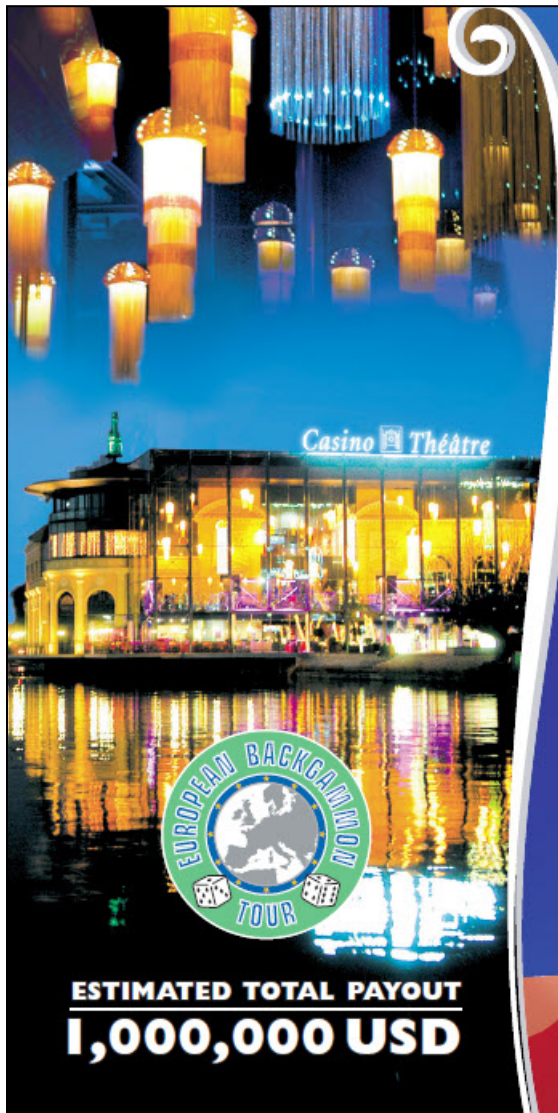
<u>Pts</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Pts</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Pts</u>	<u>Player</u>
130	Myke Wignall	47	Alison Lee	16	Roy Hollands
114	John Hedge	45	Tony Lee	15	Tim Vasiljevic
107	Paul Gilbertson	39	Simon K Jones	13	Kevin Dale
98	Rosey Bensley	34	Ed Turner	12	Shea Mulhall
85	Vicki Pemberton	29	John Batty	11	Daniel Tutchings
83	Mick Vacarey	25	Dave McNamara	10	Carl Dell
82	Tony Fawcett	20	Simonetta Herrera	10	Paul Learmount
79	Chris Evans	20	Talan Evans	8	Ray Fard
70	Andy Darby	19	Tony Walters	7	Ann Pocknell
66	Marcus Wrinch	14	Gaz Owen	7	Jason Dennis
60	Martin Barkwill	13	Lee Wood	7	Mick Butterfield
60	Lawrence Powell	12	Tom Duggan	6	Marc Turner
		32	Julian Minwalla	6	Mardi Ohannessian
		30	Roger Coram	5	Felix Vink
		27	Robert Tutchings	5	Stefan Paliwoda
		22	Cecilia Sparke	4	Philip Tutchings
		21	Frank Conway	3	Eamon Keogh
		20	Angie Dell	2	John Wright
		20	Lewis Young	1	Steve Hallett
		20	Nick Valley	1	Mark Dixon

Qualifiers above this line

Myke Wignall remains #1 despite not bettering last month's score. John Hedge and Paul Gilbertson (absent) remain in 2nd & 3rd. Rosey Bensley pushes Vicki Pemberton into 5th place as she in turn pushes Tony Fawcett into 5th and (for the time being?) out of the money.

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7th French Open
d'Enghien-les-Bains
Lucien Barrière

28TH OCT. -
1ST NOV. 2009



TOTAL ADDED PRIZE
UPTO 50.000 €
LAST YEAR'S TOTAL PAYOUT 200.000 €

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26th - 29th NOVEMBER 2009

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present



1st
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SEASON III

Estimated total payout
1,000,000 \$