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WORLD BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION

BIGGEST PRIZES



Dedicated To Backgammon

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15/18 NOVEMBER 2007
CASINO THE EMPIRE**

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BACKGAMMON LIVE IN LONDON 2007

9th, 10th 11th November



WORLD SERIES of BACKGAMMON

Think the Game

**Hail! Hail! The Gang's
All Here! - Day 1 of
WSOB's UK Masters,
Empire Casino London**

**UK MASTERS:
15/18 NOVEMBER 2007
CASINO THE EMPIRE**

Report by Will Cockerell.



Sickening tension...danger at every corner...unbelievable drama... and that was just my journey to the casino – as, after dropping off

the baby with his grandfather, I got stuck in Knightsbridge gridlock hell, abandoned the car, and ran the final 4 kms to the theatre of dreams... arriving just in time for the opening ceremony.

What a magnificent, fizzing atmosphere awaited me. It was immediately obvious that, win or lose, tonight this was to be the peak experience of my backgammon career. On Wednesday night, having lost three consecutive gammons in a satellite final to fail to automatically qualify, I decided not to play in the UK Masters. My game was too flaky, I hadn't earned the right. On Thursday morning I woke up, and two words sang from my brain: "I'm in." The lure was irresistible.

The draw stretched to an incredible 123 – the 5 'rebuys' [for a plum 128 draw] were a formality, and duly snapped up. My first match was against a fellow British journeyman Simon Barget. Terribly nervous, in over 2 hours of play I didn't manage to ship a single cube that he felt was a take. I sure did it the hard way then, as I stumbled over the line 13-9. The sublime charms of former European champion Katja Spillum await me in round two.



Katya

Elsewhere the carnival atmosphere was intoxicating as the some of the greatest



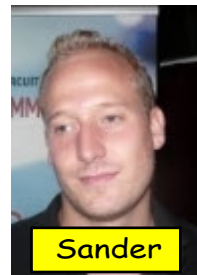
names in backgammon fought like buffaloes to reach the holy grail of the last 64. Many didn't make it. Tournament commentator and world poker superstar Gus Hansen was cruising his match, before it swivelled on a sixpence and he lost out at the death. The tournament has also lost one of its biggest names in Falafel Natanzen who bowed out to his Israeli teammate from the Nations Cup, in a thrilling double-match-point. Leading British threat Raj Jansari, who has been winning everything it seems of late, is already in the showers. The American threat of Carter Mattig will not repeat his march to the Las Vegas final of a year ago



Raj

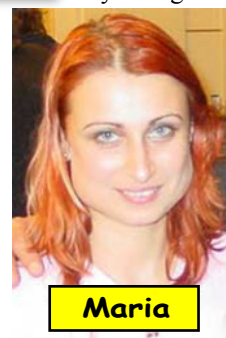
However, the great Mochi Moziyuki lives on by dint of a gruelling win against the wily Brit Julian Minwalla; WSOB Riviera champ Sander Lylloff is still with us; so is Maria Krancheva (who has swapped

sides by the way – at last year's Riviera Cup she died her hair the colour of the yellowy-orange



Sander

checkers, now she is very much on dark red's side). And there are more... so many more magnificent players – at least 20 of whom are from the ominous threat of Scandinavia.

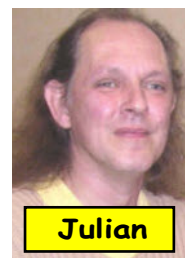


Maria

As for the Brits, well many were cut down in the trenches, but there were something like 44 in the draw, so surely a few still stand? Indeed they do. The two biggest British names of John Clark and Julian Fetterlein were, at latter stages, 2% and 10% respectively to win their matches before both launching spectacular Houdini escapes. Newspaper Backgammon correspondent Chris Bray is



John



Julian

still there, so is Las Vegas Over-50s champ Peter Bennet. Dod Davies...John Hurst...and don't forget redoubtable



Chris



Peter

match player, World Champs quarter-finalist Mike Heard – into the next round by dint of toppling American legend Ed O'Laughlin

I left the casino breathless and euphoric. It had been a marvellous, heady night of drama, intrigue and camaraderie, all played in a fine, gung-ho spirit.



Dod



Mike



John

The WSOB's mission to put backgammon back on to the world map is fast coming to fruition, and there's still three days of thrills and spills to go. Fasten your seatbelts – we haven't begun to work!

A Line-Up That's Laden With Venom - Day 2

It was another dramatic and memorable day at the WSOB UK Masters, in which you had to add back-to-back victories to your day one triumph to remain standing. Twenty-two Brits attempted this feat. Just four managed it - but what a four they are. All four are regulars at my local chouette in Battersea, south London, which is no place for the faint-hearted. (When one of the members – with a faint-heart - arrived for the session a few years ago, saying his doctor had just told him he was 60-40 to live till Christmas, a player shot back: "that's a no-double, take then.")

One backgammon giant I didn't mention in yesterday's dispatch was Francois Tardieu who cruised to the last 32 before being shot down in flames by Maria Krancheva 13-3.



François

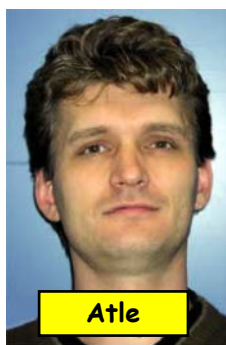
Wow. Krancheva is in spell-binding form, defeating John Broomfield 13-0 in round two. She



John

meets Peter Bennet from Ealing, Middlesex in the last 16 (2005 Las Vegas Over-50s winner). Peter is tremendously experienced and has every chance of giving Krancheva a tough match. A clearly delighted Krancheva told me that she accepts that Tardieu followed by Bennet is a tough draw: "to win this tournament I will have to beat the greatest players. Today was my luckiest day ever – it was amazing."

The rest of the draw may not quite contain the 'marquee' names one might have expected, but it is still laden with venom. It contains two 'freaks', a term used to describe that select band of players who have won 14 – yes that's FOURTEEN – major tournament matches in a row – that's the old 16,000-1 parlay. Atle Von Der Fehr of Norway has done it, by dint of winning the Swedish Open in 2004 and 2006 (he skipped 2005), and then getting to the semis in 2007. And that was a disappointment to him, "I was 14-6 up in that semi-final to 19, and I was so angry to lose!" Now that's just getting greedy.



Atle

Battersea's John Hurst's 14 on the spin was acquired by winning the Brighton Open for the last 2 years which always boasts a mega field. John knows nothing of pressure, and is certainly a good bet now.

As I was leaving the casino I collided with a rather drunk and dishevelled man who looked out of place in the smart surroundings. But he was wearing a WSOB cap at a cocked angle and it proved to be none other than supreme match player Mike Heard of Britain. Mike was the 2005 Monte Carlo quarter-finalist, from where he almost advanced to the semis. He defends his inebriation: "I won the Rotterdam Open under the influence – I can do the same here! John Hurst is giving it some in the bar as well. Don't worry Will, we'll be alright!"

Mike goes on to note, "I haven't had a close match yet: 13-7, 13-7, 13-8!"

Perhaps Italian Piergiorgio D'Ancona can give him a close match. Piergiorgio of the pretty name defeated Spillum of the pretty face in the last 32, who in turn defeated me of the pretty calf muscles in the last

64. My match with Katja was a very exciting battle and at 7-9 down I was in a last roll position, on a 4-cube with two checkers on my deuce point to go into an 11-9 lead. Out popped the dreaded 31, and out I went.

Two rolls earlier I had a very technical checker play in the bear-off which the crowd criticised me greatly at the end for making a huge blunder. It is easy to describe here. You have five checkers left: one on the ace, two on the deuce, one on the 5 and one on the 6, and you roll 41. I played 1/off, 6/2. Everyone preferred 5/off. My error was actually only 0.0142 a loss of equity: 36.3% wins, as opposed to 36.4% with the crowd's play. As it turned out, the minute error did cost me the match, as my following rolls were 62, 31. 0.1% is often the margin between success and failure in this game.



Shino

The final British flag in the draw is Kazuhiro Shino, who reached the semi-finals of Monte Carlo last year. I congratulated him on reaching the last 16 here, but he waved me off: "this is nothing, I haven't got anywhere yet. My trophy cabinet is very full – I expect to progress further than this." Kazuhiro defeated British front-runner John Clark en route, who can now concentrate on his TV commentaries.

Two other big names still standing are former French Open winner Jean Philippe Rohr, and Henrik Veje, a quarter-finalist at the Bahamas Backgammon Million.



Jean-Philippe



Henrik

The stage is set then – can a British player make it to Sunday's semis? Will Krancheva boost the television viewing figures by a few hundred thousand by being there? Will one of the seven unheralded players who I haven't spoken of here also survive till Sunday? Most probably – I look forward to telling you all about them tomorrow.

The Day the Smiling Assassin said, 'Hello World.' - Day 3

The game of backgammon has a new star, who announced himself on the world stage in sensational fashion on Saturday with play of incredible confidence, decisiveness and bravery. He made two plays which were so radical, courageous and unusual that he had the crowd gasping. His name is John Hurst, and he lives under four miles from the casino. The British flag is being waved twice over though. Kazuhiro Shino is in the semi-finals of a major championships again, and the two Brits are joined by German Christian Plenz, and Dane Alan Westerman, of whom more later.



Alan



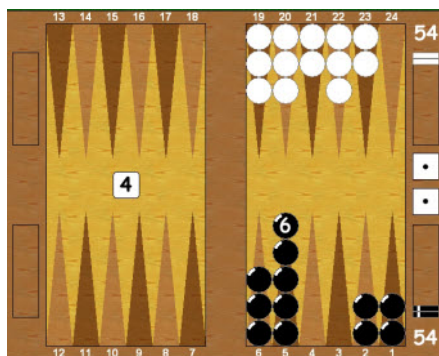
Christian

But back to Hurst. First a little background about this humble, erudite, and deadly high-roller. His nickname in the Battersea Backgammon Club is: 'the smiling assassin', and he is renowned for being a maniac of a roller in a close race. We don't know how he does it, but Hurst seems to be able to call upon 'boxes' or 'snowflakes' almost at will, if he sees a race getting close. He, like many backgammon players, is a master of sports betting, and is very good at it. Here's a good tale: last summer he saw the odds flash up of England's chances to beat Pakistan deep into the match of the final Test Match. 50-1 against. Hurst pounced. England were doing badly, but not that badly. He stuck on £250. Little more than an hour later the Pakistanis were accused of ball-tampering, refused to play on in protest, and the match was duly awarded to England. 12 grand in the hand, thank you very much!

The only luck I have ever had against him was when a check I dished out to him last week was not accepted by his bank because I'd written the date in Roman numerals, and the cashier didn't speak Latin. Well...he ain't getting another one! Through dint of hundreds of thousands of games of practice and play – often for high stakes, Hurst is an incredibly natural, confident and smooth player.

Against Seong in the fourth round Hurst was 9-2 up, and in a complicated late position after having hit a shot in his opponent's bear-off, Hurst, with minimum fuss or delay, whipped the cube to 4. Who whips to 4 when there's still contact and volatility and a huge lead?! All the spectators thought it was a big error, including me for sure. Hurst was about 85% to win the game – easy take at that score. But you know what – the position was deceptive. Hurst was actually 89.9% to win, the cube was correct, and the correct response was **pass**! Amazing, he had got it spot on.

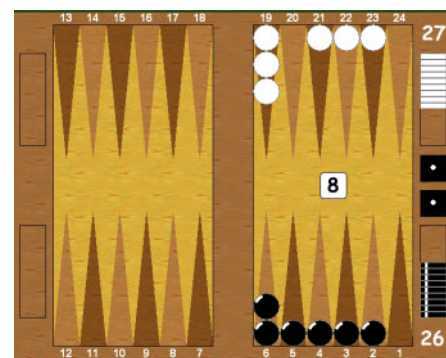
Hurst's quarter-final against Maria Krancheva under the glare of the TV lights will live long in the memory of all who saw it. Krancheva had conceded an almost unbelievable tally of just five points in her last three matches, 13-0, 13-3, 13-2. Her highly-anticipated match against Peter Bennet was almost a walk-over as Peter had no answer to the electricity of her dice. Krancheva's only problem was that she hadn't been tested yet in the tournament pressure-wise, not asked any really searching questions under duress. That was all about to change. In 20 minutes against Hurst she had already lost 80% of the points she had lost in the previous 48 hours. 0-4 down. She grimly pulled it back to 2-4. Then came one of the all-time great games. Krancheva took Hurst's cube when stuck on his 4 point behind a 4-prime, with Hurst not having any more gaps in his bear-in, and a whopping 28 pips up. Bit naughty to take that. She scuttles off the anchor with a 63. Hurst can't point on her. Bang – Krancheva nails her 66 dead centre – the race is on. But she's still not good enough to recube. She soon is though, as she sends over a delicious shipment to 4, in a position that has baffled many of the world's leading players. 54 pips-all it was, both with two borne off. Krancheva's distribution lovely and smooth, Hurst with ugly gaps on his 3 and 4 points:



Krancheva (w) recubes to 4

Many think this means he must pass. Actually the cube from Krancheva is a magnificent one: correct by 0.003, and the take is trivial. Hurst responds instantly with 55. Wow! No longer six men on his 5 point anymore! Could we be seeing an 8 cube?!

Both players limp along somewhat, nip-and-tuck, far too close to put the match on the line surely, when suddenly **bang**! Straight out of the clear blue sky, Hurst sends Krancheva a snowman. **Unbelievable** drama! It's not so much the position that had me gasping, or the fact that it was an 8-cube; it was the way Hurst did it. Absolutely no delay whatsoever: Krancheva hit her clock, and the cube came flying at her in under 5 seconds. There's thousands and thousands of pounds at stake here! I would have taken at least 90 seconds over the decision (and then not cubed), I suspect that's about average. I reckon less than 10 per cent of the players in the tournament would have had the balls to cube when Hurst did.



Hurst (b) recubes to 8

And you know what?! Hurst's cube is **correct**!! By 0.003 – the identical paper-thin margin of Krancheva's scintillating 4-cube. How did he do it? How did he know? The mathematics of the situation were far too onerous to be done over the checkers – especially in the four seconds Hurst gave himself. He did it by instinct. Like the way Agassi flicked his wrist at just the right moment to return a 140mph serve from Sampras for a cross-court winner. Or Botham hooking the ball off his eyebrows for six off Lillee in the famous Manchester Test of 1981. The commentator said that day: "Look at Botham's head, he's not even looking at the ball, but he still smashes it for six, almost like he's swatting a fly." Hurst was the same, he didn't look at the ball, he just made a natural, dynamic reflex action, to smash Krancheva for six (or for a home run, if you prefer).

Hurst explained to me later: "Although I didn't understand every facet of the ►

problem, I did recognize it to be a difficult one – one that was hard to solve. So I decided not to solve it, and to let Maria solve it instead. I also felt that by cubing in such a dangerous, high pressure situation, I might just force Maria into an unlikely error.”

Krancheva warily studied this poisonous 8-cube as though it were a snarling, spitting cobra which at any moment might lurch forward and sink its fangs into her fragrant neck. Her hand slowly reached out to take the cube, but her fingers failed to close around the lethal paperweight. Instead they bypassed the cube altogether, and sought out the tiny pause button on her clock, signalling a pass.

A mesmerizing sequence of backgammon then, stretching back to Krancheva's poor take of the original 2-cube. Her pass of the 8-cube is of course catastrophic. It is almost a **triple** blunder, and reduces her match winning chances from above 26% to around 21%. Exactly 5.75%. The players decided to take a break.

When they returned Krancheva gammoned Hurst in the next, but you've got to get radical with the cube at 2-8 down - she wasn't and never got the chance to ship. 4-8. In the next Krancheva made a dodgy take and quickly had a back man stranded behind Hurst's 6-prime. Then the game swung with a juicy 33 for Krancheva to counter-prime Hurst. Then she crunches him, and puts him on the roof, and escapes. Wow! Hurst staring down the barrel of another gammon which would put us at 8-8. A dreaded 26 from the bar would be nice now, to enter, hit, leap the 5-prime and hit again. Out it pops, no problem, and the gammon goes to Hurst. What a sicko. 12-4. But, well, it was a ropey old take to begin with.

In the Crawford, Hurst dominated before Krancheva threw a last gasp boxes to leap over his 5 prime with her two stranded men. However, John had just one man to scuttle past Maria's two lone sentries, 5 pips away. Out popped 32. Oops. Krancheva duly missed and went into a 3% race. But then, ker-ching! – another 66 for Maria, and she goes about 70% in the race. 5 checkers left each but Krancheva's by far the more advanced. Only boxes would really work for Hurst now – well 55 perhaps. Nah – he preferred 66, just to make sure ya' know? Krancheva offered him her hand which Hurst – in a delightful piece of sportsmanship – rejected, pointing out that he

could yet roll 21, and her a double. But he rolled 63.

There were two other real thrillers yesterday. Mike Heard felt he could be in line for a 13-9 win against Piergiorgio D'Ancona by dint of his previous results of 13-7 13-7 13-8. [13-9, 13-10, 13-11, 13-12 for his next four matches would do very nicely, thank you]. Heard duly went 12-9 up – no sign of a hangover for him after the previous night's binge. Jerry Garcia crooning away in his ear. He stopped for a ciggie, and out came the day's first bottle of beer. “Don't do it, Mike!” I implored. “Ah,” he sighed, taking a sup of the amber nectar, “I'm home.” But he wasn't quite home in the match yet, as Piergiorgio won a very tense Crawford game, and then wriggled like an eel at 10-12 down. Heard very calm and clinical, D'Ancona visibly shaking at the tension. Finally Piergiorgio was on life support when he danced on Heard's 3-point board, missing a crucial ace-shot. Heard had a 1,2,3 cover to settle the account. Out pops 54. Piergiorgio nails a 16. Heard fans. Alarm bells suddenly going off big time. D'Ancona picks up Heard's final straggler, Heard keeps on dancing. D'Ancona closes his board. Heard's vital organs screaming in protest. And he gets gammoned for match. So, so unlucky – a gut-wrenching loss for this fine ambassador of the British game.

It is hard to begrudge Piergiorgio his win though, he beat some big names to get to the quarter-final, plays a solid game, and is charming and friendly. He hung on to Germany's Christian Plenz well in the quarters before going down fighting. Plenz has been playing the game for 10-15 years, and rocks at poker as well. He is described by teammates as very concentrated and collected over the board. He wears ear-plugs in his matches to drown out the noise, and tends to grind his opponent down. Like John Hurst he is a master at sports betting. His business partner is the best sports bettor in Germany, Christian particularly excels at tennis and football betting.

Britain's other survivor into the semis is Kazuhiro Shino, he of Monte Carlo semi-

final fame. Shino ground down his two opponents yesterday, the double Swedish Open winner Atle Von der Fehr, and Henrik Veje (Bahamas Million quarter-finalist), both 13-10. Most of Shino's matches have been long and gruelling – it's how he likes to play. Not to blow his opponents away like a Hurst or a Krancheva, but more to anaesthetize them into submission.

The semi-final line-up is completed by Denmark's Alan Westerman. He plays in Copenhagen's second division, was the Danish champion last year, and qualified for the Japan Open by right, by winning a Danish satellite. He is noted for always being totally relaxed in tournament play – treating a match exactly the same whether it for 25 euros or 25,000 euros, which is what he's about to play for.

The biggest match in the Consolation tournament came in a last 16 showdown between BG giants Falafel and Francois Tardieu. It was a long and gruelling encounter (to 9 points). At double match point 8-8 Tardieu fell into real time difficulties. He rolled a 66 and had to do a count to consider whether to partially or completely break contact. The difference in race was just 2 pips. Whilst Francois was deciding upon this tricky little conundrum, he took his eye off the clock which ran out of juice. Ping it went, Tardieu was timed out, and Falafel took his place against Krancheva in the quarters.



It was that sort of day.

The Semi-finals - Day 4

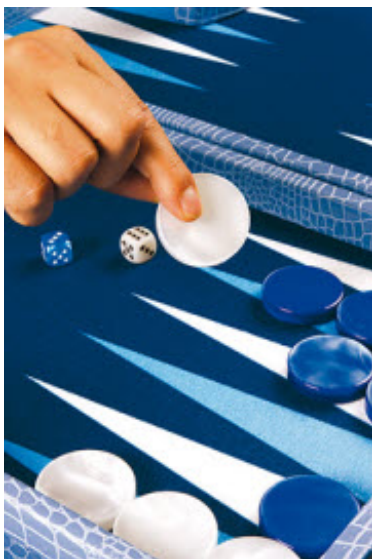
Kazuhiro Shino (UK) versus Christian Plenz (GER) Alan Westerman (DEN) versus John Hurst (UK)

Shino vs Plenz

The Shino-Christian Plenz encounter was an absorbing contest right from the get-go, as they both quickly [or should ▶



I say slowly] ran into time trouble. A juicy gammon first up for Shino was doggedly turned into 6-2 lead at the first break, they'd already both used up nearly half their time. Game five was sensational – and a total disaster for Shino. He used up over 7 minutes of time, made an atrocious error to slot his 4-point with Plenz on the roof of Shino's 5-point board, got hit, danced on Plenz's 4-point board, got hit again in the outfield, and got gammoned when Plenz found a last gasp 66. Without the slot Shino was within a couple of rolls of cashing the 2-cube. Instead of 8-2 to Shino, it was 6-6. Plenz then went ahead for the first time in the next – both players in time hell: Shino 3:07, Plenz a tad more robust at 5:32. Another long break – could Shino get his momentum back? When they returned, they both started playing like greased lightning. Shino levelled at 7-7. In the next, a radical cube came over from Shino, who had a board and outfield that were rather 'sievey', but lots of blitzing potential. But Plenz takes, hits a big shot, and suddenly it's Shino on the roof against a 5-point board. Plenz has gammons, but decides to cash for 9-7. Check out the clocks! 2:25 (Shino), 3:13 Plenz.



Another spectacular, volatile cube by Shino in the next. Plenz is desperately holding with a broken 4 prime. Shino finds an atrocious sequence of 55 53 55 to badly crunch. Wonderful drama. An amazing double hit for Plenz, and suddenly Shino is in real gammon danger. He pulls out a critical 66 when a near-certain goner, to scrap to 7-11 down. What a match. Plenz clock tumbles to *under a minute* in the next. Shino just needs to keep him out there. Shino whips over the cube yet again – he doesn't want to die wondering. But the game turns badly as he has two on the roof to Plenz's 5-point board. Shino is screaming for 2s.

He finds 22!! This hits as well. Suddenly Plenz is in gammon danger. He needs 2s as well, as Shino makes a 5-point board of his own. **22 For Plenz!** Wow – two 35-1 shots there. Shino rolls a great set of boxes to extricate his back men and go big favourite in the game. *But then Plenz returns the compliment* with boxes of his own! Plenz edging the race now, and applies the coup-de-grace with a 55 encore. Shino limps along miserably and the match is gone. Plenz has taken 11 of the last 12 points – what a sickener.

Westerman vs Hurst

Game 1: Hurst has to do a lot of wriggling, but then escapes from the bar with a terrific 52. Finally though, Westerman has an ace shot which he nails and Hurst must pass. 1-0 Westerman.

Game 2: a 17-1 fly-shot 64 puts Hurst in trouble, but he responds with a sweet 54 anchor. Hurst assembles his men in front of Westerman's one man back, and cubes when probably too good. 1-1

Game 3: another nip-tucker before Hurst's rip-snorter of a pointing 22 probably puts him too good again, but for the third game in a row the conservative option to cash is taken. 2-1 Hurst.

Game 4: a much bigger cube this from Hurst with not a point in board, and Westerman anchored on his 3 point. Hurst addresses his lack of a blockade with the old 11, 55 sequence to give him a mean 5 prime. Hurst is really starting to hum here; but then, when attempting to clear his bar point so he can start his bear-off, Hurst finds a shocking 64. It's a shot, and Westerman hits! A yukky 4-point swing as the cube comes sailing back. 3-2 Westerman.

Game 5: This game is on a dangerous knife edge for a while before it dramatically swings toward Denmark. A dangerous cube is fired in, but Hurst takes these! He promptly rolls a scrummy 43 from the bar to anchor up on the 21 point. But Westerman continues to blitz away at Hurst who suddenly starts fanning BIG time. Soon the 4-point is all he can aim at from the bar, and he is ghoulishly gammoned. In 45 minutes Hurst has lost more points than in his last two matches put together. He's down big in this match now, but if anyone can come back from this, he can. 7-2 Westerman.

Game 6: A critical game which Hurst really needs to grab. He makes a bad start and is soon stuck in an unsavoury 1-8

back game. The cube comes flying over yet again. A big pass for money, but at this score Hurst tries his luck. He briefly threatens to turn things with a dazzling 11, but Westerman leaps his prime. Just when it looks plain-sailing for the Dane, a surprising apple falls off the tree as Hurst has a shot at an ace from his ace-point. He hits! And Westerman can't take the reec. Instead of being 9-2 or even 11-2 down, Hurst is back in the match. 7-4 Westerman.

Game 7: Another humdinger of a game this. They both secure their golden 5-point anchors, before Westerman bravely scuttles for home. Hurst fails to point on the remaining man. Westerman is soon bearing in on Hurst's golden anchor. He clears all his points except for the small matter of the 11 point. Hurst is waiting for a six-something from Westerman. It comes in the form of a 62. Hurst doesn't miss these babies and duly rolls the 42 for the cash. 7-5 Westerman.

Game 8: Hurst's 1-4 back game is badly timed. He must let it go. 8-5 Westerman.

Game 9: A ropey old game for both players as they play the game without anchors. It soon gets even ropier for Hurst though and he can't risk the take. The British boy is right back in the manure. 9-5 Westerman.

Game 10: An early blitz edge for Hurst, but Westerman scrambles to safety yet again. A flukey 65 for Hurst escapes his one-man-back and gives him a semblance of a race. A whole lot of freight to shift though. He warms up with a 44 to postpone the cube. And then ignores the next gear entirely and proceeds straight to his trusty old friend double-six. Wow! John Hurst doing what he does best! 9-6 Westerman.

Game 11: Great early boxes for Westerman. Terrible fanning by Hurst invites a venomous cube. He passes. 10-6 Westerman.

Game 12: Westerman has never allowed Hurst to get any momentum going in this match, and once again the next game is tight and tense. Hurst secures the golden anchor, Westerman takes Hurst's bar point. A classic Mexican stand-off - who was going to blink first? They both start stripping [their other points that is]. A 44 arrives for Westerman and contact is finally all but broken with no casualties. We arrive at a thrilling bear-off race. You can't take your eyes off the action ►

for a moment. A 22 works well for Hurst but he's still 31-24 down. **Boxes** for Hurst!! The maniac strikes again – boy, did he need that. 10-7 Westerman.

Game 13. One of the all-time great games coming up. Are you sitting comfortably? It starts identically to the last: Hurst securing the golden anchor, and Westerman the bar point. Then it's all change. Hurst hits a nice ace shot but then has to give up his 6-point with a bad 55. A seriously tough cube comes his way. He has a little going for him... the golden anchor gives him shot equity and he has a sniff of a race. Hurst **takes!** Wow. Boxes arrive from Westerman – a real hammer blow that. He only has his 8-point to clear. Desperate times. Out pops a startling 63 for Westerman to leave a shot. Even the hit won't be that great for Hurst though. His board is: gap on the six, 2, 2, 1, 2, 2. A checker out on Hurst's 9 point could come in useful though... six pips away from the slotted 3 point. **Hurst rolls a sensational 33!!** Magnificent drama and one of the best rolls of the entire championship. A huge roar is heard from the crowd watching on the plasma screens downstairs. His joy is short-lived though as Westerman is straight in with a 64. He has sixteen shots back at Westerman: an ace, plus 63, 33, 54, or else he's almost certain to go 7-12. But before he rolls, **Hurst pulls the trigger and cubes to 4!!** (Although this is a blunder, it is only a tiny one.) Unbelievable scenes as he puts the match on the line right here, right now. To go with his stunning cubes against Seong and Krancheva, this is another radical, revolutionary piece of backgammon, that could just change how millions play the game the world over. Westerman takes of course. ("I was shocked when he cubed – they don't play like this where I am from," he told me later.) and **Hurst nails the ace dead centre!** Westerman fans, and then fans again, and Hurst closes him out with a beauty of a 22. I tell ya' – I've never seen anything like it. 11-10 Hurst.

Game 14: Hurst starts well – he has momentum for the first time in the match. A nice 65, then a terrific 64 fly-shot. Hurst makes his 4-point, and Westerman anchors on Hurst's 3-point. Hurst studies the position **and cubes!** Surely a bit early that. Analysis shows he was 72.2%. He needed to be 75%... so not such a big error really. Westerman takes and duly pings it back to 4 to put the match on the line. Hurst makes his 5-point quite quickly, and then a really excellent 61, hits, makes the bar and a tangy 5-prime. Hurst

approaching 90% now. 5 points to clear, which quickly become 4. **Boxes for Westerman!** Should he run with everyone? He decides bravely to hedge and leave one brave sentry to stand guard in Hurst's home board. Westerman's board is ready should Hurst decide to hit loose. Hurst bears in quietly, he's so nearly there now – up to nearly 95%. Westerman needs another set of boxes immediately. **And there they are!!** The race is on, and Hurst is only a few measly pips up now. The pip count comes down until it is around 28 pips all, with Hurst on roll, and a very loaded 4-point. What's it going to be for London's politest pick-pocket? WHAAAAHH!! Hurst finds a glorious 44 and the five awkward checkers on his 4-point become one; and that's surely sealed it! The crowd roar, and 20 seconds later it's all over. A fabulous end to a fabulous match.

UK Master's Final - 25 points



Welcome to the perfect final match-up between the delightful, friendly German Christian Plenz, who has called his mum and dad back home, to tell them he's, "doing quite well," and Britain's John Hurst. Will Plenz take as long with the clock as in his semi-final? Will he get as twitchy? We know what we'll get from Hurst: the same suave, aloof, clinical, radical, fearless, and tremendously entertaining play that we always do. The man has become a backgammon legend this weekend, but what an anti-climax it'll be for his fans if he can't bring home the spoils, and the finest win by a British backgammon player for 30 years. We kick off at 11.08pm, over 4 hours behind schedule, but 'am I bovvered'?"

Game 1: Plenz tumbles into something of back-game and starts to nibble at his clock immediately. Soon though it is a classic holding game with both on the 5-point. Lots of punching and counter-punching before finally things become too dangerous, and Hurst passes the cube. 1-0 Plenz.

Game 2: Hurst blitzes but Plenz keeps entering on the 5. Then later on it's Hurst hanging on to the golden anchor. Plenz ships in late, the go before would surely have been better. JH is off to another sticky start, and CP is playing quicker this time too. 2-0 Plenz.

Game 3: A dramatic, crunching 11 hands the initiative to Hurst, but his cube still oozeschutzpah. He has made his 4 and 5 points, Plenz is anchored on the 3, and has lost his 6-point. However, Hurst has one man stranded back on the 24 – it could all kick off here. Hurst tries to escape his man and gets smacked. He tries again and pulls it off. Suddenly looks like a rocking cube this. Bearing in to his board he has to leave a scary fly shot. Plenz misses and the British boy is up-and-running. Plenz has a minor time issue with 15:22 left. 2-2.

Game 4: A great entering fly-shot briefly makes Plenz too good, before he cashes. 3-2 Plenz.

Game 5: Plenz immediately escapes his back game and then cashes on the back of a sweet, pointing 22. The luck is all with Plenz here, Hurst has done well to be only two points down. 4-2 Plenz.

Game 6: It's not long before Hurst has his two back men pinned behind Plenz's 5-prime. Does he have possible counter-priming or blitzing chances though? He hits speculatively in the outfield. Plenz fans on Hurst's four point-board! Hurst nails a 65 to escape one of his back men – what a volatile position. Plenz fans again, and **Hurst cubes!** A superb "action double" that. Take. Hurst's sweet 62 then closes his 4-point! Now Hurst is screaming for one more 6 to escape that primed man. It doesn't come but meanwhile he closes Plenz out, who now has two on the bar, and two more men on a point in the outfield. It's a near certain gammon if Hurst could only find the 6. **Finally it comes** just in the nick of time. When Hurst is bearing-off, Plenz races desperately to get off the 'G'. A big, booming 55 makes him big favourite to do so, although there are question marks over how he played it. Hurst isn't ►

going to do this... he has one final roll at a compulsory double, and even then a 6-something will do it for Plenz. **Hurst nails 33!** And out pops a pitiful 31 for Plenz. Fantastic gammon, and time for a break. 6-4 Hurst.



Game 7: A long, complex fascinating holding game. Both players managed to negotiate their men around the minefield and their opponent's snipers, with a 22 here, a 33 there. Contact is broken, and Hurst rolls a 55 in the bear-off to get right back into the race. A 33 from Plenz is effective though, and he ships in a cube 34-38 pips down, but Hurst has big wastage and ugly distribution and must pass. 6-5 Hurst.

Game 8: A cube for Plenz with JH pinned back on the 23-point behind a broken 5-prime. Hurst gets the chance to smack a straggler, but misses. Hurst in real trouble in this one now, and there's no way back. Dodgy take methinks. 7-6 Plenz.

Game 9: Wow – Plenz has roared back after the break with three tasty points. They're both doing fine for time. Plenz constructs a robust defence in this one with a 5-7 holding game. Plenz crunches his board desperately waiting for his shot. It comes, a double shot no less, and Hurst FANS on Plenz's 4-point **Double blot** board. Plenz cashes and that's a gutting loss for Hurst who had bossed the game. You've gotta hand it to the German though, that was spirited stuff. 8-6 Plenz.

Game 10: Fasten your seatbelts, folks, the business end of the match has arrived. Hurst is immediately in trouble in the next. Is the match slowly slipping away from him – or is he gearing up for a final big push? A 33 is critical for Hurst as it advances his anchor to the 21-point. Plenz holds the one on the other side. Hurst constructs an edge with a broken five-prime. Then he gets a shot at an ace as Plenz slots the 5-point. This is volatile! There's another blot in the outfield, seven pips away... Hurst scents the danger – **and cubes!** Magnificent action-double. Plenz happy to take. **Hurst rolls 16!!** It's the perfect number and the best roll of the match. You simply can't give this maniac a chink of light like that! Hurst descends on Plenz like a stray dog would an old chicken carcass. Plenz searches desperately for a second anchor off the roof but Hurst won't hear of it, and soon Plenz is aiming solely at the anchor on the 21 point. A fat lot of good that'll do him. Hurst quickly swings his men around the

board and rips those babies off for a sensational gammon. It's savage! It's brutal! It's John Hurst. 10-8 Hurst.

Game 11: Plenz looks on tilt here and miserably fans on Hurst's one-point board with boxes. Hurst is a little too good at this score as his outside 4-prime is only going to get bigger. Plenz does have counter-priming chances though, and then rolls a rocking 53 to leap through Hurst's prime and anchor on the 15-point. Suddenly Plenz can cube, and Hurst takes – he has one man back behind a 4-prime. Oh dear, it quickly becomes a 5-prime after Plenz's boxes. No way is Hurst talking his way out of this, and for a moment later he even gets into gammon danger, before he calls up boxes. Whaaaaah, it's a 3 point match. 10-10.

Game 12: Plenz nabs the golden anchor, while Hurst escapes his men and has a strong edge, but then he starts to get very stripped. He has to give up his 8-point, which leaves the 11 and 13 points to clear. This could get ugly. Where's that famous Hurst big doublet when he needs it? It doesn't come and he has to give up the point he was born with, the sacred 6-point. Plenz is starting to look very ominous in this game. He has a big race, and will surely get shots. He even starts pausing before he rolls to consider you know what. Hurst rolls a 21 to avoid the music, then Plenz keeps a five-point board but must break his 6-point so to do. Hurst rolls and has to give Plenz a shot at a 4! Could this be a radical action-double by Plenz? **He cubes!** Wow, that was big one, trivial take for Hurst. **There's a 4 for Plenz!** Hurst fans, then again, then again. It's suddenly a tad gammonish. Finally Hurst enters and Plenz has one final point to clear, 5 pips away. He rolls 64 to leave Hurst an ace-shot. Uncharacteristically Hurst misses. And embarks on a miserable 3% race. Plenz has ripped off 6 checkers before any for Hurst. Hurst has the much faster bear-off though. He fires off a 33 to Plenz's solicitor and tears off 3 men. Hurst up to over 10% now. Hurst rolls 21 to munch two more. He really needs a 6 next go to gobble two more... **and rolls 44** to tear off another three men!! Fabulous rolling by Hurst, but he still requires yet another double! 7 checkers left, to Plenz's 4, which becomes 5 to

Plenz's 3, which becomes 3 to Plenz's one. Any double now for Hurst! He smiles wanly at a face in the crowd. Heck – he almost winks. **Double-twos!!!** The man is a MONSTER! What an unbelievable 4-point swing that was. 12-10 Hurst.

Game 13: Was this ever going to be anything but a double-match pointer? Far from lying down, Plenz launches a brutal blitz in the next which comes off beautifully. Gammon. 12-12.

Game 14: Here we are at the great England-Germany penalty shoot-out. For the second match in a row, Hurst has had to go a mind-numbing, gut-wrenching 14 games. Plenz down to 2:59 in time – he has managed it well, but immediately starts to nibble seconds in the decider, and goes to under 2 minutes with an early 33. It was worth thinking about though, Hurst is in trouble here and is screaming for a 5 to anchor on the bar point. It's not there and he is smacked and has to settle for the weak 23-point anchor instead. Plenz's time comes down to 1:03, then 36 seconds. But as his time dwindles his match winning chances are rising – to around 70%. A typically flamboyant Hurst 62 from the roof enters, leaps and hits the fly-shot. Big cheer from the crowd. But an even better 64 from Plenz, enters, leaps and anchors on 15. The Germans roar their approval. Hurst is down to about 20%, still stuck on that grisly 23-point.

The final phase of the match is upon us then: Plenz starts to get a little stripped and awkward, and has to leave Hurst a 61 62 fly shot. Hurst rolls 63! Ooooooooh. Plenz brings down a checker from his mid-point leaving Hurst an ace-shot from his own mid-point to put him back in the game. Hurst also has a 62 65 hit available to him. **Hurst rolls 65!!** A superb roll that boosts his chances... He has a four point board and a slotted deuce. He needs Plenz to **please** do a little dance. Plenz finds the deuce and lunges out at Hurst's standed checker back on the 23 point. Is that an error? Who cares! Hurst has two in the air now, he **must** hit back on the deuce, **And finds it!** This is a breathtaking, stunning sequence of play. Now Plenz is screaming for another deuce of his own to anchor up. It's **there!** ▶

Hurst **must** re-anchor himself now back on the 23-point, or else he'll get blitzed. He fans with 61, but Plenz can't capitalize, and then Hurst **does** find the 2! Both players punch-drunk now, it really is like a boxing match.

Look at this, Hurst has the better timing here! Plenz is rather stripped and must run from the back with a 53. He can't break his 4 prime in front of Hurst's two men on 23. There is a gap on Plenz's 3 point, so in a way it is a phantom 5-prime.

Hurst rolls a glorious 21 to smack Plenz's running man, and creep to the 22-point from the back! **That could be it you know!** Plenz finally fans, and Hurst points gloriously on the deuce with a 42, for the 5 point board. He's over 90% now for sure, just gotta extricate those two back men. 55 gets one of them out of stir, and Hurst stylishly switches to his ace-point to get Plenz out of his hair. Boxes would be a minor embarrassment for Hurst but he'd still be well up in the race. Hurst frees his last man and he's there!!

Plenz has a million-to-one race which his 66s can't do anything about! 13-12 Hurst.

Jessie Cantrell bounds onto the stage, microphone in hand.

"Congratulations John! how do you feel?"

"Tired," he says.

On November 15th, 2007 125 players assembled at the Empire Casino Leicester Square for the first leg of the World Series of Backgammon.

For me, John Hurst, the tournament started with a lucky omen, I was first out of the draw and was drawn against Rogier Van Gemert of The Netherlands. The same thing happened earlier in 2007 at the Brighton 'n' Breezy which I won. Anyway Rogier rolled as badly in London as he had in Brighton and I rolled as well. Afterwards Rogier told me that if I carried on rolling like that I was bound to win the competition. To win a tournament luck is needed and I had a lot of it in the 2nd



round. I was playing Mochizuki Masayuki of Japan and was 12/8 down Crawford on the bar against a closed board. I was resigned to being knocked out when Mochi rolled a high double leaving me a shot. I hit and went on to win that game and the next two. I continued to roll well in the subsequent rounds and won the final 13/12 against Christian Plenz of Germany.

It was a good tournament for British players, London based Shino Kazahiro reached the semi final, Neil Davidson won 8 consecutive matches to reach the final of the progressive consolation and Lawrence Powell and Nicky Check won the doubles.

This article is reproduced from the World Series of Backgammon web site and appears here with acknowledgements to Will Cockerell and all concerned. Pictures are from several sources, for which I would like to thank: Biba, World Series of Backgammon, PartoucheGammon, GammonVillage, Gammonlife, Backpacker Backgammon, Backgammon in Camden, Peter Halberg, World Backgammon Association.



Mike had a few problems this year, the main one being the original venue cancelled his booking just 10 days before the event! He, and several friends had a frantic time sorting out alternative venues and they eventually ended up with multiple venues! The full saga of what, why, where and who (I think it needed a 'w'!) can be read at his web site (see later). MC

So we started our weekend off in the YHA bar. The inaugural BGLIL was held entirely in the YHA so this was something of a return to our roots sort of evening. The bar prices were good and we took over the YHA bar with backgammon boards strategically placed on every table available. Actually I decided that were were doing the younger YHA residents a favour by not encouraging them into a bar! We had a sufficient dinner in the YHA and at 9.30 pm we started The Weekend Knockout. We were exactly 32 players; surely this boded well for an easy running weekend. Rounds 1 and 2 were played leaving us a round ahead of schedule but that's always a handy thing at a BGLIL due to the busy schedule. We also had 2 Tric Trac Tournos and 2 Jackpots on the Friday evening. I lay down to sleep at an early 4.00 am.

Alarm clocks sounded at 06.45 for some of the Crew. A quick breakfast and we went out to jump into our pre-booked cab. The cab driver had arrived early and, seeing us still eating breakfast, left 1 minute before his booking time. No replacement cab was available so cursing and loaded with bags galore we made our way to the tube. A black cab came past and was hailed down. Schedule still on track.

We had just 2 hours to rig The King's Stores for a full day of backgammon. But with the rapid work of about 6 people we

BACKGAMMON LIVE IN LONDON 2007

9th, 10th 11th November



Report of Backgammon Live in London 2007 by Mike Main

got it all set up by 9.00 o'clock. All that is except the master laptop. It was running slow, really slow. Upon investigation I discovered a new program had been installed on it and was the cause of the problem. However it took a staggering 2 hours to remove it. So another laptop was borrowed and put in place. However the replacement laptop didn't have the printer program on it so I couldn't give the bar list of 70 drinks that were due to be standing on the bar at 11.30. While this was all going on Adam Tansley gave his "Pipped at the Post" seminar in the peace and tranquillity of upstairs. About 30 players attended and came downstairs at just after 10.30 all geed up and ready to play their best. Sean Williams ran the Auction at 11.00 o'clock and, bang on time, at 11.30 the draw happened. 5 registered players were missing and we had 5 reserve players in-situ. Reserves were promoted to players and the late players would be slotted in where they could be if they turned up. I make no apology for running tournaments on time. In fact I consider it my duty. To not do so would



Adam

be rude to those that do turn up on time. If I were to hold up the start of a 64 player tournament for just one player who is 5 minutes late this would not be starting 5 minutes late. 63 players would have been kept waiting 5 minutes each so that's $63 \times 5 \text{ minutes} = \text{over } 5 \text{ hours late}$.

What was late were the 70 drinks. However our host Farhad came over to me and told me he was going to go round all the players and ask what they would like to drink. "Go for it" I replied. He did. Just 20 minutes later he came back over to me with my coke and calmly said "Everybody now has their drink Mike." I love good caterers.

Meanwhile 3 of our late players arrived. Rather than have them standing about doing nothing they were offered seats in the Plate 1 Tournament. Considering that I didn't want to exclude them from the action and I really didn't have the time to run a separate event for them I considered a fair proposal. They all took up on it and Plate 1 got off to a slightly earlier start than I had expected - excellent especially considering that we had a boat to catch at 3.45 pm. With just 5 point matches being played in the Main it wasn't too long before results started coming in. Round 2 started in good time and Plate 1 filled up nice a quickly. Farhad was going the rounds offering drinks and finger food meals. Dice were heard to be rolling in every corner of the pub, downstairs and upstairs too and, best of all, nobody came to me and said there wasn't a table to play upon; The King's Stores was large enough.

If 5 point matches don't take long then it follows that 3 point matches, as being played in Plate 1, take even less time. So shortly I had reports coming in from both brackets. As soon as Plate 1 was



BACKGAMMON in LONDON



Welcome to Backgammon in London (www.backgammoninlondon.com). Launched on January 6th, 2008, it replaces Backpacker Backgammon which is now past its sell by date. The idea now is to concentrate on improving the availability of Backgammon in the London area.

filled I moved onto Plate 2 (also 3 point matches.) With the impending coach to get to the boat looming ever closer I was very much aware that we needed to keep this part of the day very much on schedule so I was pleased to see the Singles moving along so well. Well, that as in general; there was in truth a couple of matches progressing at snail's pace. And low and behold it was the usual suspects. Well, not all of them. A certain well respected player from the West Country who has been called (to his face) "The slowest player in Christendom" was not amongst them. However a young Lady from London was.



Another tip for other Tournament Directors: Don't organise a boat trip half way though your largest tournament. It's a really silly idea. But the players like it. So you do it. Where's that while coat of mine? In other years I've had a fleet of mini-cabs take the 80 or so people 500 yards down a straight road to the pier. After the boat trip they would walk back. This year I had 80 or so people to get over 1 mile from a pub on the edge of a cordoned off area of London to a different pier and I really couldn't expect them to find their way back though the tiny streets of the old City of London. So I hired a 35 seater coach. Budget for boat trip - way outta the window. Boat Trip still on course. Yes. Finding a vacant pier just before a big event such as the Lord Mayor's Fireworks Display (that happens on the river) is like finding a needle in a haystack. However the boat company managed to secure a 15 minute berth at the pier of my choice, St Katherine's Pier. Boat Trip still on course. Yes.

By 2.00 pm Plate 3 was full now it was a question of getting all Singles brackets played up until the Semi-Finals before most players left on the coach. At 2.30 I went out to Bishopsgate and called the coach driver. He was at Old Street roundabout and had 15 minutes to do the last mile or so. I bought the first wave of passengers out onto Bishopsgate so he could load easily. But he took longer than I expected. His started 5-10 minutes passed and there was no while coach on Bishopsgate. I called him again. He was "Oh arse, just going along Bethnal Green Road I think it was and down Commer-

cial St I think it is - they're busy these street of London ain't they". Those of you who know this part of London will now be holding their heads on their hands; at least I was. To those of you who don't know or don't wish to know this part of town but do know backgammon terminology let's just say that this was a blunder. It took Ted ten further minutes to find his way round. Ted, nice country sort of chap, watched from his seat as 35 passengers (I'm sure Ted thought they were sheep) were on board then he turned round to his bails of hay and asked "Does anybody know the way to where we are going?"

This was it I thought. This is when the weekend falls apart. Last night in the YHA was a good one, everybody has been great about the different venues, the Saturday Seminar happened and was good, the auction happened fine, the draw was cool, play in the Singles is looking pretty good, the service in the Pub has been fantastic but now, right now, happening at no other time than right now, I've got 35 passengers who are going to go on a not so magical mystery tour of London that is going to go nowhere near the river let along St K's Pier and a further 35 passengers who ain't even going to get that.

Part of the ethos of a BGLIL is that players do things as well. If you see something that needs doing for the greater good; do it. We're all in this together and everybody has a part to play. Irving was hovering over the front seat of the coach. Irv might live in Manchester but, as he's often keen to point out, just in case it's not overly obvious, he's a cockney boy. From the East End. Of London. This, in his people's speak is, "his manor." They are quite rightly proud folk are Cockneys. I turned to Irv and said "Ive, St Katherine's Pier by St Katherine's Dock on St's Katherine's Way E1, start of The Highway E1 at the junction of East London side of Tower Bridge." I'm sure Irv relied "right guv." Off they went. My hand went in my pocket where my fingers crossed.

I stayed in touch with the "progress" of the coach via Richard. They made it to the Pier but, given how long that had taken them and considering that Ted had now amply proved that he had no idea of this part of town, I really didn't have faith that Ted would return in time to pick up his second load of whatever he though he was carrying and get them to the pier. So I made what some call an executive decision. I called it a "let's keep this show on

the road" decision. A black cab came down Bishopsgate. I hailed it and put 5 of our passengers in it and a £20 note. Then another. And another. By 3.15 I had only myself to talk to on Bishopsgate. I wandered slowly back to The King's Stores. Slowly enough to see Ted pull up on Bishopsgate at 3.30. Good job I'd used cabs.

Irving was also our On Board Tournament Director. 25 small backgammon boards were laid out on the tables, the computerised draw was done with the



help of Sean and players sat down to play 1 point matches. Those that lost re-entered the next tournament available. The bar was open and all was well as players cruised up river past the sights of London. By 4.45 the backgammon boat was berthed at Temple Pier - the best seat in the house from which to view the Fireworks Display. And splendid they were too this year I'm told. The 12 winners of the On Board Tournaments were due 3 Champ 'o' Champs points each and a glass of bubbly from the Captain of the boat. However since then I've seen photos taken on the boat and at least 30 glasses of bubbly being poured. I'm not sure what "went wrong" with this and I might just fail to investigate it!

Meanwhile back at The King's Stores more tournaments were going on for those who didn't go on the boat trip. Given the lower number of players matches tended to be longer than 1 point shootouts. As 6.00 pm neared the larger boards were moved upstairs where the Singles Knockout could complete without others milling around. I knew that everybody, boat trippers especially, would be hungry so all the downstairs tables were cleared of boards and laid for meals. As players returned the bar staff offered them a drink and asked which meal they would like. Farhad and his team placed in front of sitting clients 70 excellent meals in less than an hour and I was hearing nothing but praise about the establishment.

At 7.00 pm it was presents time. In previous years this has been run by Michelle but she couldn't be with us this year so Zoe took on the role. Seeing as BGLILs are as much backgammon parties as backgammon tournaments players ►

are asked to bring along a present for another player. This year there was an added incentive of 3 Champ 'o' Champs points per giver. 49 people bought presents. It would have been a nice round 50 but one present got broken before the draw and the bringer of the present withdrew. The draw happened via computer and was put up on the big screen. It won't exaggerate and say it was like a stampede of elephants but I suddenly found a huge crowd around my T.D. desk where the presents were.

Next up for the delight and entertainment of the masses was The Doubles Tournament. 27 teams this year which is 7 up on last year which in itself was a record. Before the start of it I went round the pub checking if tables were in any state of readiness for doubles matches - I really shouldn't have bothered - Farhad had already made sure of that.

Meanwhile The Singles Knockout completed. Tony O'Halloran continued his winning ways and picked up Plate 3 and 5 Champ 'o' Champ points, Crispin Duke won Plate 2 + 10 C'o'C points, Stuart Mann (aka the slowest player in Christendom) won Plate 1 + 10 C'o'C points and it was a very pleased Mr Nicky "Noodles" Check who walked away with the Singles Main Trophy and 18 Champ 'o' Champs points.

I like to take a moment during any gig I organise to let my eyes wander around the venue and look at all the people doing what they want to be doing. It's why I go to all the trouble of doing what I do. It need only be a fleeting moment but it's my way of enjoying myself. As I did so I was reminded of something that I really wanted to do. Every year we have the Annie Prize. 7 years ago BGLILs were inspired by 3 people going to an internet players party in Stockholm which was the invention of Bedstefar. Annie is Bedstefar's wife. Annie doesn't always come to London (Bedstefar always does) but always sends a glass plate that she makes

specially. They're not only beautiful but are more so because they are made with love. As such they really do represent the sentiment of these events being meetings of those who love one thing and have come along to get along well together with people of similar persuasion.

The Annie Prize is traditionally given to the Player or Crew Member that has done the most towards the successful running of the weekend. This year there was no question in my mind as to who the recipient should be. When I had no venue a man had stood forward and offered his premises. He had stood on the side while I checked out rival establishments. He stayed in touch with me. I told him I was still looking though I peeked back at his pub for a second look. That time I met Jita the Assistant Manager who remembered me from 2005 and asked eagerly if we were using the King's Stores this year. But still I tramped the streets of London going into far more pubs that a man of my age should still looking at other venues and thus having to have a drink in everyone of them. Farhad called me to remind me we needed to get a late licence in place if I was to use his venue. When yet again I popped into The King's Stores the barmaid was wonderfully helpful. But still I tramped the streets and ra,ra,ra. Then things were sorted with the normal venue so Farhad was informed that his services were no actually required. He took it on the chin with good grace. 2 days after that things had gone really pear shaped with the normal venue and I went straight over to Farhad with my tail between my legs. If he saw it he never mentioned it and we sat down and went through the details of the day. 1 hour later we were done. The service, drinks and food have been excellent. Ladies and Gentlemen, never been given to a non-player before, the Winner of the Annie Prize 2007 is Farhad Farjad on behalf of all at The King's Stores, 14 Widegate Street, off Bishopsgate, London E1. Thank you.

Back in the Doubles some players were now knocked out and thus Jackpots had started. But, this year, no Tric Trac Tournos on Saturday evening. Where was Michelle? We became a jovial crowd of backgammoners, some nipping outside for a fag, some ripping inside with the booze, cries of joy and jolly banter around. There was some other cries and other banter but we won't go into those here. Upstairs in the more sedate backgammon parlour there were bottles of champagne bottom up in buckets and

downstairs came flowing a young lady with the aid of the banister. One half of the Doubles was taking an age but the other remaining half were busy doing other things so there were no worries there.

Also going round the house were the Saturday Quizzes. Hey, it's all action at these gigs. Sean was the Quiz Master and he also has intentions of writing a book of the weekend so he was doing the rounds.

But ever onwards with the Tournaments we went and at a modest 12.30 the Doubles Final (admittedly shortened to a 1 pointer) was played and Two'up overthrew Number 10. Jackpots were played out and trophies awarded. At 1.00 o'clock we had the quickest clear out from a big backgammon day I've ever seen and shortly after we moved by what ever means possible back to homes or the YHA.

"Hello weekend home" I said as I re-entered the YHA. The bar was already looking full, the ice-box of beer was out and backgammon boards were open. Here we go again. Jackpot time now. I've no idea what time I went to bed, I'd no idea who had won but I fell asleep as my head hit the pillow. I'm getting too old for this!

Another 06.45 am alarm call, another quick breakfast and another cab company to get the early Crew to Doggett's Coat and Badge Bar on Blackfriars Bridge. Another quick set up, no computer problems this morning and we managed to plug into a large plasma screen in our upstairs backgammon room.

Free tea and coffee was served in the public bar to early arrivals before they made their way up to the main backgammon room where Chris Bray was to his seminar "The 10 Commandments of Backgammon."

Chris is probably the best published British writer on backgammon. He's been doing a column in the Independent on Saturdays for the last 13 years and this year his 4th book "Backgammon to Win" was published by New Holland Publishers. Chris spends hours upon hours checking his material so that when he put pen to paper you can take it as gospel. His publishers had very generously donated 40 copies of ►



**Tony
Stuart
Nicky**



Chris

"Backgammon to Win" which would be handed out to the first 40 people though the door to his seminar. I was expecting about 30 but (another tip to other T.D.s) if you announce a worthwhile freebie please expect more. Suffice to say every book is now in the hands of those that attended and most are signed. The seminar was, as always, excellent and the slide show of it can be seen here.

Then we were into Sunday registrations. This was always going to be a manic little period; we had a 32 player League / Knockout Tournament, an 8 player Team Tournament, Jackpots and Tric Trac Tournos. In previous years we had had about 40 players on the Sunday but this year we had about 64. Some players that had registered for the League swapped to the Team and others took their place, others arrived for Sunday play only and didn't know the form, pools money was taken and the raffle was being offered. However by 11.15 I thought I was all straight with everybody slotted into a tournament. Richard did the League Auction and we got the League started downstairs and the now 2 Team Tournaments started upstairs. Next to kick in would be the Jackpots and Tric Trac Tounos. But I'd made 1 error; I'd missed out one player. I kicked myself. By the time I'd realised my error it was too late place the player where by rights he should have been playing and the best I could do was to offer him a Jackpot seat. This I'm sorry to say was not what he was looking for and he left. I could take the attitude that I'd lost just one player in over 100 though mis-management but for me it was one too many.

The League / Knockout was a new format being played this year. Players were grouped in 4s to play round robins. Match scores were recorded in case of equal points gained. The top two players from each round robin went into a Main Knockout and the lower two players went into the Consolation Knockout. It's a neat little format worked I thought very well indeed. It certainly worked for Chris Bray who won both his round robin and the Main.

Meanwhile upstairs the two Team Tournaments were played. There's very little for the T.D. to do in this format and a rather tired Richard



Richard

handled proceeding upstairs. Sean Williams had bought along his fan club and they played a team against Sue's Sweeties while DailyGammoners took on Gorton, Bennett + 1.



Sean

Jackpots kicked in but there was a distinct lack of Tric Trac Tournos play this year. Where was Michelle? Come 4.00 o'clock most play was finished. Now we had a scramble to find all the prizes; the medals were missing. They were found later when an "empty box" was investigated. They'll be handed out at the next available opportunity.

The Weekend Knockout was still in need of being played out. The Weekend Knockout T.D. had not showed up on the Sunday (last seen heading for Liverpool St Station at 1.00 am Sunday) so it fell to me sort this little problem out. However this is the one and only tournament I play in at BGLILs and I had a vested interest in the match because I was a finalist. So the Committee was called in to make the decision. I knew that the outcome of the match would have a big bearing on the Champ 'o' Champs table. Also what with all the extra tournaments played due to the higher than expected number of players I needed to double and triple check the Champ 'o' Champs table before a winner could be announced. The Committee decided that the announcement of the Champ 'o' Champs should be delayed and the Weekend Knockout played out. It was Sean Williams who won the Weekend Knockout and, in due course, this was just enough to give him the title of Champ 'o' Champs 2007.

At 4.00 pm it was time for The Gang Tournament. The most fun play of the weekend. 19 players split at random into 2 teams, first names out of the hat are captains and a 3 point match is played. Winning team is split at random again until only one player has never been on a losing team. As an end of weekend finale it's great. Social backgammon with a fun twist and everybody having to reason why their play should be played. The first round takes about 1 and a half hours!

Doggett's Coat and Badge proved to be a very popular venue. It overlooks the river and is pretty central in London making it

easy for players to get to and leave. The two floors worked well and the terrace was good for smokers. The food was a little disappointing and the promised table service wasn't there. But by this stage of the weekend people were cruising and just enjoying themselves to worry too much about what was slightly lacking.

Again the massive clearout at the end of the evening went quickly and smoothly. Cabs were hailed and the remainder of us went back to the YHA. For some sleep? Don't be silly - we played another 2 Jackpots and a Tric Trac Tournos too.

Summary:

It was a small miracle that this event happened this year. At one stage I seriously considered cancelling it but The Crew rallied round and came up with suggestions and got the show back on the road. My eternal gratitude to them. My gratitude also to our Sponsors BackgammonMasters. Their sponsorship is the difference between this event being possible and impossible to put on. Thanx also to our four venues; The YHA, The King's Stores, The Backgammon Boat and Doggett's Coat and Badge all of whom did a wonderful job. Thanx also to the behind the scenes people who did their bit to make it all go so well.

However the largest thanx must go to the players and others who came along. This event is laid on for you and long may it continue.

But we're not quite done yet. Sean is now busy collating all the writings he is collecting from players and "Live in London - The Book!" should be published in a month or so.



Mike Main

**BACKPACKER
BACKGAMMON**

More photos, including a few of the winners and a fuller report can be found on Mike's Backpacker web site

www.backpacker-backgammon.com/



The Gilbertson UK Finals - 30 November, 1 & 2 December, 2007

Sponsored by Paul Gilbertson

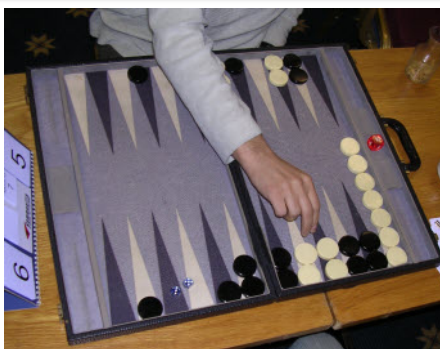
Once again, the Gilbertsons, Paul and Rosey, did us proud. Forty-five entrants turned out, thirty-nine of which sat down on the Saturday to see if they could qualify for one of the ten places up for grabs. It should have been only eight but John Hurst, Stuart Man, Giorgio Castellano and Adrian Jones didn't take up their places in the Last 16! To make up the extra two places is was decided that the 1st and 2nd in the Snowball (the event reserved for those that don't win their first two qualifying matches) would get a "backdoor" chance to enter the Main.

Thus, in the Snowball (10), four players sat down in the semi to see who would sneak in. Uldis Lapikens fought off Ron Havenhand, and defending UK Champion, Mick Butterfield saw off Myke Wignall. In the final of the Snowball, his plan of winning back-to-back UK Finals back on track, Mick Butterfield took the Runner-up spot and Uldis added another trophy to his vast collection.

The ten qualifiers were as follows with their pre-qualifier opponent (or Mick and Uldis in their pairings):
 Uldis v Julian Minwalla
 Gerry Enslin v David Nathan
 Jacob Anderson v Ed Turner
 Nicky Check v Peter Christmas
 Stephen Drake v Vicky Chandler
 Jerry Limb v Rosey Bensley
 Brian Lever v Ray Tannen
 Mick Butterfield v Paul Learmount

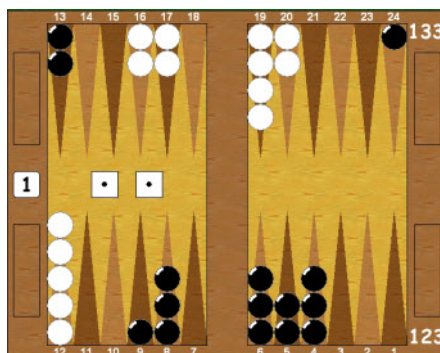
Of the six pre-qualifiers, only three of them got into the second round: Jacob v Peter Christmas, Jerry Limb v Vicky Chandler and Brian Lever v Mick. They were joined by Julian v David to make up the last eight. Jacob failed to get past Peter, and Peter met Julian in the semi. In the bottom half of the draw, Jerry became the only surviving pre-qualifier, and in the semi he met Mick who was now uber confident he could do it, win back-to-back UK Finals!

Before we go any further, take a look at this backgame (picture in next column) that Julian found himself playing against Peter. He is trailing 6-5 to 7 - Crawford, and he's nicely ensconced on Peter's 1-point with seven checkers and two on



each of Peter's 4- and 5-points. He's approx 28% at the moment, but, as you might gather, he went on to win the point; however, he failed to win the deciding game and it was Peter that went into the final. Mick beat back Jerry's attempt to rob him of his back-to-back crusade and it was a Peter v Mick final.

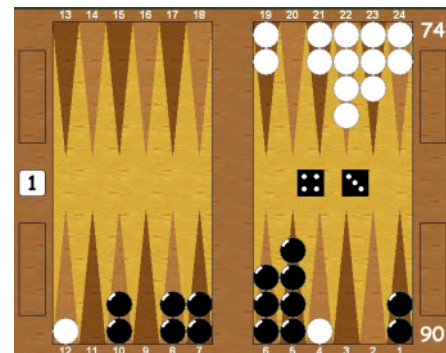
It was a scrappy match with both players being classed as Beginners by Snowie! Between them there were over 40 errors, including more than 20 blunders, more than half being Peter's. However, here's a position in which he played correctly - would you?



7 point match
Mick (B) 1 Peter (W) 1
White to play 11

Having escaped one back checker, Mick just has to get his second one out, so is making the bar-point the correct move or is it the 4-point? Well a lot of inexperienced players would go for the bar-point, and they'd be wrong. Shifting off the laden 6-point, 6/4(2) is by far the better move. Making the bar-point is a huge blunder and gives away over 6% game winning chances (gwc). Peter made the correct play - but as it turned out, it wasn't that good for him. Mick rolled a 65 two rolls later and escaped. He then cubed next turn, Peter took and eventually lost 2 points!

The score went up (black first): 3-1, 3-2, 4-2, 4-4, 4-5. It was here that Mick had a 43 to play that caused some discussion afterwards.



Mick (B) 4 Peter (W) 5
Black to play 43

Here's a few candidate moves: 6/2 5/2, making the 2-point; 8/4* 4/1, pick & pass; 8/4* 7/4, point on the blot; 10/6 10/7, clear the 10-point. Three of these are blunders, one of them a massive one @ -0.742! The correct play is to hit and cover. It returns approx. 63.3% gwc including 3.9% gammons, the remaining moves are 6/2 5/2 @ -0.119, 8/4* 4/1 @ -0.280 and you already know the equity loss for clearing the 10-point! Mick's 'bold' play of hitting and covering enabled him to cube Peter out after he danced with a 41.

With the score at 2-away, 2-away, Mick doubled early and Peter took; and from thereon it all went Mick's way. Peter did have a couple of chances to turn the match but he never did. Mick bore off against two on the bar; a Joker 66 later cleared a path for Peter and he rolled 64 and the match was over. Mick is the first player to win back-to-back UK Finals, and he now has his sights on a third win next year. Watch him!

There's some good news for everyone though. No one had purchased Mick in the tote so it is rolled over for Brighton and it'll start at £145. This should ensure a big payout for the year's first tote.

It's a Tote Rollover
£145

Meanwhile in the Consolation (37), Tony Fawcett, Chris Gibbins (recovering ►

nicely after a car accident), Paul Gilbertson and Tom Duggan had made it to the semis of the non-progressive side. Tom, who had previously won the last three tournament's he'd entered, was disappointed that this time he wouldn't be going home with the Main trophy. However, his wasn't too disappointed for he met Myke in the non-prog final, and beat him! He now faced Uldis Lapikens, who had fought his way through the progressive side. Unable to take home the Main trophy, Tom settled for taking home the Consolation runner-up trophy, leaving Uldis with his second UK 1st trophy. It should be noted here that Uldis now holds the record for winning the most elements in Biba's history. This weekend's two 1sts give him a total of 13 (starting in 1998), one more than John Slattery! Well done, Uldis.

The final element of the weekend, the Last Chance (32) saw four very strong players pitted against each other in the semis: David Motley v Mardi Ohanessian and Nigel Merrigan v Stephen Drake. David and Nigel prevailed, and in the final, it was Nigel that came first.

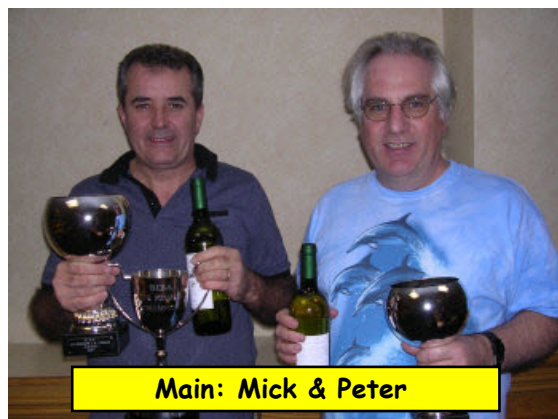
To keep our six pre-qualifiers occupied they played a Round Robin (6), a format from which two entrants faced each other on 3/4; Jerry Limb and Jacob Anderson. It was Jerry who came out of the encounter with 4/5 and won the title (and the money), Champion of Champions. Jacob qualified at the Irish Open, and because he lives in Denmark, he had quite a journey to get to Coventry, so I was very pleased to see him attend. There are thousands of backgammon players in Denmark, of which I have met relatively few; but I have to say, all those I have met have been friendly, cheerful, sporting players, and Jacob was no exception. He is a great ambassador for his game and his country, and it was a pleasure to meet him.

The above elements were just some of the weekend's programme designed to keep everyone busy. We had 'Rosey's Rollout' for a bottle of champagne - which was won by Julian Minwalla. Julian was one of eight who matched Rosey's roll of 15, but he was the only one to equal it in the roll-offs. There was the Whiskey Galore (64) open draw for a bottle of Jameson Backgammon Whiskey, and it was gratefully won by Brian Lever. In the Team (6), Peter Christmas saw off the opposing team, and then saw off his two rivals, Richard Biddle and Sharen Crane, in the final, taking all the pot for himself! There was late night Poker (16); an event from which Tony Lee came 1st with Mick Butterfield 2nd (money to money!), and Nigel Merrigan, 3rd.

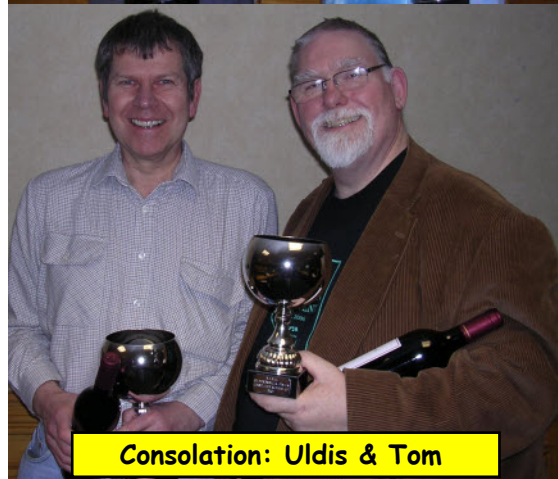
Let's not forget the Friday 500 Finals(16). Giorgio and Slat's didn't turn up for the final, and so their places were filled by Richard Biddle and Paul Christmas, both of whom had turned up hoping for such to happen. They both won their first match, and they then met in the 2nd Round. Richard was victorious and he went on to meet (but lose to) Myke Wignall in the semi-final. Meanwhile in the other half of the draw, Rosey Bensley was rolling hot hot hot! Paul Learmount, Gerry Enslin and Paul Watts all fell before her dice; and Myke was to become her final victim. Taking home £500, Rosey became the first ever, Friday 500 winner; and has shown us all that you can get something for nothing when you gain free entry into the Friday 500s!

Because we had a big turnout on the Friday night - no doubt boosted by players hoping for a chance to get into the 500! - Caroline organised a Jackpot (12) for those that didn't make it. It was down to Tony Fawcett and Paul Gilbertson to battle it out in the final, and it was Paul who came out the winner; however, Tony had something waiting for him on the Saturday . . .

Another element concluding this weekend was the Poker Grand Prix (8). Playing a freeze-out format, the payout was for 5th to 1st place, and going out 1st and 2nd and out of the money were Myke Wignall and Paul Learmount. The remaining players all cashed: 5th was Rosey, 4th was Paul Christmas [Paul got in in a similar way to his Friday 500 route - five higher placed players didn't attend!], 3rd was Paul Watts. Our weekend's sponsor, Paul Gilbertson came 2nd, the this left Tony Fawcett as the 2007, Poker Grand Prix Champion. Potential entrants for the 2008 season starting ►



Main: Mick & Peter



Consolation: Uldis & Tom



Last Chance: David & Nigel



Snowball: Mick & Uldis

in January should note the new format. It can be seen on the web site or in Bibafax 91.

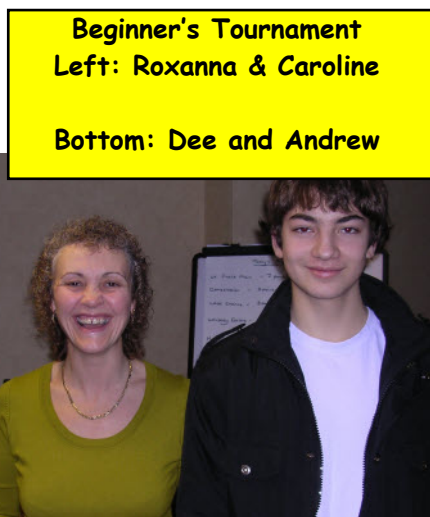
OK, so now you're thinking it's all over, aren't you? Well, it's not! Now we get to the Beginner's Tournament (11). Paul put up £100 prize money and Caroline ran the free entry elements: Main, Consolation and 1-pointer. Played without the cube and to a maximum of three points all the entrants enjoyed their first tournament entry - especially those that took home a few quid! Roxanna won the Main with Marc, runner-up; Dee Fawcett won the Consolation with Andrew Bennet, runner-up; and Martin Maynard won the 1-pointer (and the winner-takes-all pot of £22) leaving William Chandler as runner-up. Caroline reports that all entrants had a great time and it has been decided that a Beginner's event will take place in March of next year.

Match detailed statistics for UK Finals		
Player	Mick	Peter
Rating	Beginner	Beginner
Overall	17.290/47.9	16.183/43.2
	26	55
Errors(blunders)	31(17)	30(16)
Checker play errors		
Checker play	8.467/27.086	12.240/29.8
		74
Errors(blunders)	20(9)	22(14)
Double errors		
Overall	4.986/10.648	3.872/13.251
Missed double	4.886/10.417	2.566/9.957
Wrong double	0.100/0.231	1.306/3.294
Errors(blunders)	10(7)	8(2)
Take errors		
Overall	3.837/10.192	0.071/0.130
Wrong take	0.000/0.000	0.071/0.130
Wrong pass	3.837/10.192	0.000/0.000
Errors(blunders)	1(1)	0(0)
Peter was 54.67% - 45.33% favourite		

Right, it's over now! But before I say my thank yous I'd like to tell you of the 'table magician' we had at dinner on the Saturday evening, arranged by Rosey. I was expecting some geezer in a dress coat and cravat - instead we got a young lad with an unruly mop of hair and trainers! Disappointed? No at all. It was none other than Andrew Bennet (from the Beginner's), son of Peter Bennet; and he was tremendous. His display of legerdemain was unbelievable. It was impossible to see how he did it - it was truly magic. My only regret was that I had to get back to work and I wanted to stay at the table and see more. Was he better than Paul Daniels? Yes, a lot!

Finally

Big thanks to Paul and Rosey for sponsoring the UK Finals. It is a popular event, and they are big supporters of Biba in general, but they have made the UK Finals, their own - and long may they continue to do so. Everyone had a great time and many, if not all, will be back next year . . . especially Mick Butterfield!



Beginner's Tournament
Left: Roxanna & Caroline
Bottom: Dee and Andrew



Top: Julian & Rosey
Middle: Brian
Bottom: Tony

Zakynthos - A Pair of Dice in Paradise

Report by 'Becca Thompson.

Pictures by Becca Thompson and Dave Marshall

The temperature was sizzling hot in Zakynthos, Greece and we received a warm welcome from The Peligoni Club staff: enthusiastic, hotblooded college kids all looking like they just stepped out of a Calvin Klein ad. Play began before we had even unpacked our suitcases, most of



us peeling down to as little clothing as possible under the island sun.

This was to be a hugely anticipated week of great backgammon players, raucous late nights of poker, fabulous food and all the offerings of water sports you could squeeze in between matches. The week also brought with it a heat wave with the highest temperatures Greece had seen for 60 years. Eek! There were 34 players representing 14 countries - the best, most diverse turnout yet! Had the United Nations needed a summit committee for backgammon it could easily have been our group.

Amongst the gammoners were notables like Lars Trabolt, Carter Mattig, Mike Heard, John Hurst, Dan O'Farrell (Zakynthos 2006 Champ), the Godfather of televised backgammon, Andy Bell and of course our beloved but formidable host, John Clark. Renowned violinist and cellist Roland Herrera and Simonetta Barone joined us sans instruments



John Clark

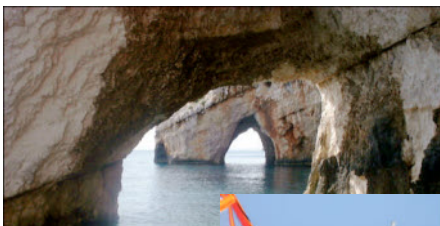
though Simonetta rarely began a match without her iPod. A few of us treated ourselves (and our bank accounts) to a break from the action to take in the local geography by boat and scooter.



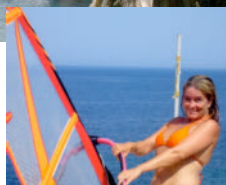
I especially enjoyed the natural beauty of the Blue Caves and the thermal streams

of Sulphur Beach, whose mineral properties are said to rival even the best spa treatments.

Irreplaceable Peligoni staff member, Sheila, was always available to play tour guide and shared some of the best kept secrets, like the whereabouts of the baby fruit bats, with us. My partner Dave and I were the only ones to give windsurfing, the signature sport of Club Peligoni, a try and I must admit we got the hang of it



right away, grinning like Cheshires during a few long, wind-runs.



Late into the night, raucous poker was a real education for me, not for the faint-hearted and it was great to see a table almost entirely of women dominating the action one evening. John Leavey was a



most patient and committed coach as he ran us poker newbies through the etiquette and strategies of Texas Hold 'Em, on a daily basis, always willing to share his knowledge.



Peligoni's delightful owner, Ian Shearer, who always joined us in both gammon



Peligoni Staff - They did a wonderful job

and poker graciously offered up his gorgeous sea front villa, Figari for a cocktail party one evening and I was lucky enough to get a personal tour with details on the art and specially imported Moroccan wood throughout its magnificent design. It was a record breaking week in several ways and most memorable for all of us. As a first-timer my gammon week at Zakynthos already holds a special place in my heart and I can hardly wait till next year! The dates are 19-26 June; hope you will join us. See the next page ►

This article first appeared in Make Your Point and appears here with its owners permission.

This is the second report from Zakynthos - and it isn't referring to the one published in Bibafax 91, they are separate events!. It appears that the first 'Festival' might have given the impression it was well attended, certainly the photograph does suggest a good turnout - however; I have been informed that the staff outnumber the players by a ratio of nearly 2-to-1.

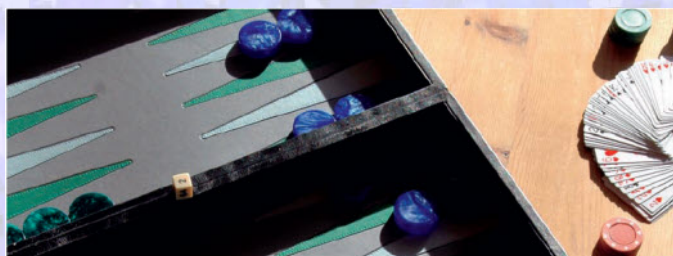
I have published both accounts so that you, their potential customers, can make up your mind with whom to spend the next Festival.

For more information contact John Clark: john_clark0@talk21.com

Michael Crane - Biba

The 7th Zakynthos Festival of Backgammon and Poker

June 19th – 26th 2008



The Peligoni Club is delighted to be hosting the 7th annual event with John Clark as the event director, John Leavey (who will also be giving daily tutorials) as Poker Director, and Gay Roberts as Chip Dolly.

Play takes place on the terraces of The Peligoni Club with breathtaking views over the Ionian Sea to Kefalonia. The restaurant serves brasserie type food and both the Rock Bar and the Driftwood Bar are open until the last guests go home. With the use of all the Club facilities and a wide choice of accommodation, players and their families are in for a fabulous week.

Backgammon

- Intermediate and Advanced Play
- Daily £50/75€ Backgammon Tournaments
- All tournaments will be 100% return
- Added Money TBA
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Poker

- Daily £20/30€ no limit Hold'em Poker
- Unlimited re-buys within 90 minutes
- Added Money TBA

All results will be recorded and lead to overall championships based on backgammon winning percentages, including consolations, and an overall aggregate for the finishing positions for poker.

Package Includes:

- Accommodation, Airport and Local Transfers
- Lunch and Dinner at the Peligoni Club
- Club Membership
- Prices (2007 level held!) £545 single £515 sharing.
- Private Villas and Luxury or Super Luxury accommodation also available. (Prices on demand)
- All the tournaments will be 100% return, & No Registration Fees for Guests.

There will be a £10/15€ registration fee for all Non-Guests per Tournament.



Enjoy Glamorous Backgammon and Poker in the true secret of the Mediterranean

Reservations and Registration

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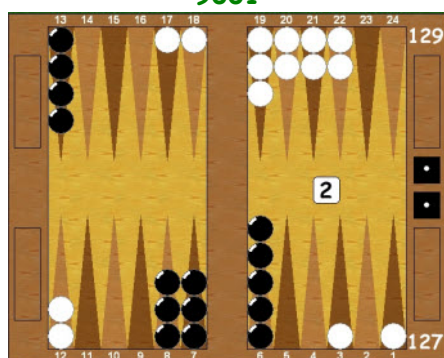
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Competition 2007 No3. 9001-06 Answers

By Michael Crane

9001



11 point match
Black 4 White 8

MC: Our first three panellists think this isn't a double.

Cedric Lytton: No Double/Take

Black may have a lot of trouble coming home without leaving fatal shots and/or indirect shots, he has no particular threat

beyond making points with 21 etc, White's position is excellent and the race is level.

Bob Young: No Double/Take

Level race, with Black having four blot leaving rolls already, (62, 63) White must have a take here. True, Black's doubles all play well, as do a few point-making rolls, but White will have chances to own an advanced anchor, and probably have future rolls where Black may leave blots. With White having a strong home board, a hit will be very significant. Giving White a 2-cube and able to win the match from here, I think Black should leave it in the middle for the moment. Maybe early in a match, the cube should go over, and see if White is the timid type, by dropping.

Rodney Lighton: No Double/Take

Black has a small race lead and some threats, but White's position is better; any hit by White would be fatal. The score

favours early doubles, but I don't think that Black has sufficient threats yet and some of Black's rolls e.g. 61, 62 and 63 are quite awkward.

MC: Leaving it in the middle at the moment isn't that bad, although Snowie roll-outs do give the edge to doubling. The next three go that little bit further and actually double now.

Peter Christmas: Double/Take

My first instinct was let's make a home board point before doubling from Black as the race is very close and White has the better home board, but Black has escaped his back men and has spares on all his points. Mind, in the last competition it was the two that I changed my opinion on after a deeper look that I got wrong so maybe my instincts are better than my analysis. There is nothing that forces Black to leave a direct shot next roll in fact only 63, would force him to ▶

leave an indirect shot. Obviously being 4-8 down he needs to get some points on the scoreboard and the doubling window is going to open a little earlier for Black and close a little earlier for White.

A quarter of Black's rolls point on White; he may make two points with some doubles but even the double hit with 55 leaves a return shot, (44). Two thirds of Black's next roll make a point so I guess the question is, how many market losers are there if White is still without an anchor next roll and Black has improved his position with either points or pointing numbers? I think this problem may split the field and there may only be a gnat's whatsit between them but I will come down on the double, take, Black can go for the gammon, White still has good chances of making an advanced anchor, hitting a fly-shot and is close in the race.

Brian Lever: Double/Take

I would double this position, particularly given the match situation, where a couple of joker rolls could lead to a score leveling gammon. Issues in favour of the double are the fact that Black has no immediate direct shot leaving rolls; over half of his rolls make new points; he has a slight race lead pre roll; the match score means he'll rarely face a recube. White can take, quite easily I think, since he has a much stronger board, is only marginally behind in the race & can use the points as much as Black. In fact, with Black not having made any new points, there's an argument for saying that he should wait a roll, as he'll have a double and White will have a take on most sequences. Which is precisely why I'd double now, since it's the joker sequences which might lead to a pass next time round. How many times have players regretted "waiting a roll". Bet the answer is that I should have!

MC: No, Brian, waiting is marginally wrong ☺ Clever of you and Peter to spot the gammon chances, Richard does the same.

Richard Biddle: Double/Take

Despite White's threatening home board and the even position in the race, I think Black can double here to maximise the point scoring opportunity. All rolls work well next time, bar 63 which leaves eight indirect hits. If Black can Blitz, a gammon is possible and the match will be tied.

White should take the cube as escaping chances are still strong and the race within reach. By making an anchor White can still cause problems and will go on to win

from this position enough times for it to be an easy take. Even gammons or recubes are still on for White because if Black does have to leave a blot soon, White could close them out easily in a strong home board.

MC: Our final panellist wants to double, but then he also wants to pass.

Mark Oram: Double/Pass

It looks like Black has a good opportunity (possibly his best) to blitz White. Since Black needs to gain points quickly, a double seems clear.

White clearly needs to form an anchor to have any real chance, although even if White can form an anchor, Black – with his excellent distribution – will likely be able to avoid leaving a blot for a few rolls. By then, most of his men will be in or near his home board, and then even if he gets unlucky and had a single shot hit, Black's gammon risk will be minimal. With a quick anchor, however, White would not be significantly far behind in a (long) race, so could win a few games that way. Let's guess that White can win 20% of the games here at most, with very few gammons.

More generally, how often will White get any kind of anchor? I have no real idea, but maybe a little less than half the time: say 40% for the sake of argument. (This obviously includes the 20% wins for White, as estimated above.) It means Black would win 60% of games.

White's worst case scenario is to be blitzed and needs to (a) bring in two men and (b) save a gammon with four men on Black's side of the board. I estimate that Black will have 25-30 pips left to clear his board before White has both men in and can race home to save the gammon. He then needs to roll, say, sixty or so pips to save a gammon, so this will not occur often. I'm going to guess 10% of the time at best.

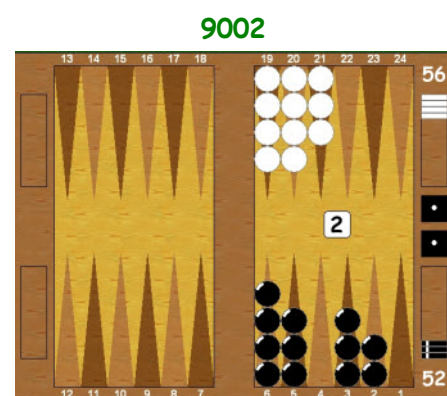
So if Black wins 60% of games, most will be gammons: 54% by the preceding paragraph. Where does this get us? White could win some games – 26% on these numbers – but since Black seems clear favourite to win a significant proportion of gammons (possibly approaching 50% of all games) White's take point would be something like the standard 25% plus half of Black's gammon total, so this would be high: say 40% or more. Since I estimate White's chances around 26%, clearly he needs to drop.

MC: It appears that Mark has his sums wrong . . . or it could be me! According to the rollouts Black wins approx. 67% with almost 8% gammons; therefore White's chances are at almost 33%. Passing this cube is a mistake. Here's what Snowie has to say on the position.

Snowie: Double/Take

Does Black have anything here? A two-pip lead and some mild threats are not normally enough to double. In addition he would be breaking the rule first stated by Dimitri Kordoulou at the Double Fives Club twenty years – never double without at least one new point in your home board.

If this were a money game all of the above would be sufficient to stop Black doubling and in fact it would be an error to double. However, this is match play and Black trails 4-8 to 11. He can make full use of a gammon whilst his opponent cannot (he only needs three points to win the match). This and the fact that virtually all of his numbers play well are just enough to turn the position into a double (and a trivial take). It is so close that it is not a mistake to hold the cube but my rollouts give a slight edge to doubling.



11 point match
Black 9 White 9

Rodney Lighton: Double/Take

At this score according to Kit Woolsey someone should have doubled ages ago. Any market loser is a double for Black and here Black has plenty. An easy take for White who looks to be better than the 30% needed to take with better distribution and more checkers off.

Richard Biddle: Double/Take

You wait years for a bearoff position and then they come along in pairs like London buses. I see a nasty old gap on the 5-point but 4s can play off the 5-point onto the 1-point where the other gap is; 1s play off the 5-point onto the 4-point ▶

gap. So isn't too bad as it first looks. White's checkers, on the other side, are spread higher in their home board and will have many rolls where only one checker is borne off. Only 2s and 3s nicely fill the gaps, 1s should be played to the 5- or 4- point. So, I figure with this advantage, Black should double and play for the match. White will not like taking this cube as it now becomes dead but must take nevertheless. One big double or Black rolling several ones and the match will be White's.

Peter Christmas: Double/Take

My first question was at 2-away, 2-away how did they manage to get so far without a double already as it could have been double take since the first roll? I think it is an easy decision for Black, he is slightly ahead in the race has some checkers on more points, nearer the front and is on roll. White has one more off and his checkers are in the most effective position for the pip count, it is not ideal but dropping leaves him on Crawford needing a gammon or to win the next two games, so I think he has a pretty big window to take as his match winning chances at 2-away, 1-away could only be about 25% whereas he should get around six rolls to throw a big double or at least roll about 10% to 12% higher on average than Black.

Mark Oram: Double/Take

In general, shouldn't one turn the cube straight away at a 2-away, 2-away score? (The argument being that each player has more chance of winning a single game than two in a row). The position here looks close enough in terms of the race, and all I can do is guess that the two separated gaps in Black's board are equivalent to White's three adjacent gaps. Since I can see no significant advantage to White's position, and Black could win the match immediately here from a close position, I think Black should double. White should of course take, as if he drops he needs to win those two games in a row before Black wins one more: he also gets the additional power (and equity) of the recube option.

MC: Well, they all agree it should have been doubled ages ago – about three days by my reckoning! Mark, what recube option? The score is 2-away, 2-away; you said so yourself!

The next three don't think it's a cube at all, now.

Cedric Lytton: No Double/Take

Black's 4-point gap will carry a massive 4-pip effective penalty for several rolls, and Black has one man more than White to get off.

MC: What about the three open points that White has?

Brian Lever: No Double/Take

With the score at 9-9, how did this game get so far without a double? And not having doubled before, is now the time? Black's problem is his 4-point gap, meaning that he's probably going to have to play 4s from the 5-point to the most useful place, his open 1-point, and strip the 5-point perhaps quicker than he'd want to. Shame he hasn't got four checkers on his 5-point rather than his 6-point. That gap could make a difference. White has more misses, though he can smooth his distribution. I would consider the position not quite good enough. It looks a relatively easy take at the score; Black could afford to roll on and give a harder decision later.

MC: Another case of "mind the gap." But no mention of White's 'gap'.

Bob Young: No Double/Take

If White passes, he would be 30% match winning chances at 2-away, 1-away, Crawford game. Not able to work out the formula for missing points, and gaps etc, leaves me guessing, but I guess that White with one extra checker off at this stage, and all non bearing-off numbers at least filling empty gaps, then White would have a take. So I guess that Black should not put the match on the line, the 4-point gap being particularly disadvantageous for him. OK. OK, you made me feel guilty and go and look at Paul Lamford's book, and that, after a quick calculation gives 57 pips each, Black would need a lead of four pips to double, so no double, and take.

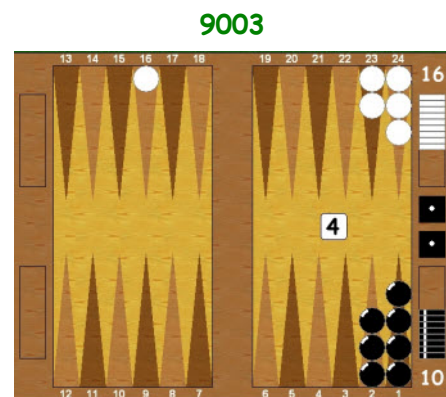
MC: What does Paul Lamford know? After all, he's only one of the UK's top players! It all narrows down to market losers, as Snowie explains.

Snowie: Double/Take

What is the doubling cube doing in the centre at this late stage of the game with score tied at 9-9 to 11? You humans should know by now that at 2-away vs. 2-away the cube should always be turned within a couple of moves of the start of the game. Whenever there is even one sequence of rolls that could lead to a market loss by your next turn it is always correct to double.

This position is a trivial example of the application of that theory. Any good roll for black followed by a poor roll for white would lose black's market so he must double – white has an easy take. For money this is no double/take.

It must be assumed that this position occurred between two players who didn't know the optimal cube strategy for this score – back to school please!



11 point match
Black 4 White 0

MC: Our first panellist is out on his own.

Rodney Lighton: No Double/Take

Most rolls for White get one checker off, reducing to a three-roll position. Hence in this case we have a four-roll position, which in theory is an initial double and take but not a redouble (if I remember correctly). Is this any better? White's most annoying roll is 53 which doesn't get a checker off. That might be enough to make it a redouble, but I would be happy to wait and not risk a nasty 8-cube if White threw a double first roll. White has an easy take at this score.

MC: In this instance, Rodney, it is as 'usual', redouble/take. However, two others think it's a redouble/pass . . .

Bob Young: Double/Pass

The cube value and match score make it "thought provoking", but if White drops, and walks to the next game with about 20% match winning equity, the game at present is just not that good for White. It looks better for White than it really is, he only misses on six rolls this time to get a checker off, the deceptive point is that the need to get one off this time is not crucial, it's the need to get good value out of all the rolls and doubles that will save his skin in the two remaining rolls that he may have after this roll. For example, a roll of 42 or 41 or 32 (and there are ►

more) will get one checker off, but followed by 22 will still leave White with three checkers remaining. The deception is that it looks like a four-roll situation, which may be a marginal take, but it's not guaranteed to be that sure for White.

MC: It is a close call for White, but he should take this cube.

Mark Oram: Double/Pass

Not sure what I'm missing here, but it seems that a double is mandatory. Black will have at most five men left to bearoff after this roll, with White then having 6 men **and** a crossover in response. I guess the real question is whether White can take at this score. Does he have more chances of winning a seemingly hopeless race here, or winning a match from 8-0 down? I again couldn't do more than guess, but both seem unlikely. I do know that if I were Black here I'd be trying to double White out, rather than in. Based on that I would say that Black is too good to take: hence White should drop.

MC: Not necessarily mandatory, but going 6-0 down is a big gap for White. He now has the chance to close that gap by taking. Getting it right, here come our last panellists.

Richard Biddle: Double/Take

The big deciding factor in my decision here is the advice I received on the Sunday morning from Geoff Conn at the Townharbour Trophy. We were talking in general about cubing during the final few rolls of a match. Geoff told me with both sides on three rolls away, it is cube/drop; four rolls away, cube/take; five rolls, no-redouble/take. Geoff, in case he hasn't told you, once took a terrible 64 cube in Monte Carlo, much to Kevin Stebbing's delight and financial gain. Did I really want to advice from this man? He did go on to beat me that day. This position looks like being four rolls away and a re-cube/take is what Geoff would do. I'll go with that and offer him a beer if I win the competition.

MC: After me, Richard, "Thank you, Geoff!" ☺

Peter Christmas: Double/Take

Another position where at first glance I didn't think White would have enough to take. Black has a four-roll position which according to Bill (I don't have Kit) it is just correct to redouble-take. Obviously White having a man back on the 9-point instead of a couple of men on the 1-point, leaves him with a few numbers that don't

work but maybe not as many as expected. Only an initial 21 leaves him needing to throw a six or a double before missing with a 3, 4 or 5 or even a double won't win it for him, but everything else either gets a man off or reverts to the normal now three-roll position. Even double-one gets a man off leaving White no worse off, while other doubles would get at least two men off; and with a double 3, 4, 5 and 6 he would have a comfortable recube to 8, assuming Black had not already thrown a double. With this full use of the recube and three rolls to get a double before Black does I think it maybe the narrowest of takes.

Cedric Lytton: Double/Take

This differs from a pure 4-roll position (double and, at 27% GWC, narrow take for money) in that:

- White will not take off two men in two rolls if he first rolls 21 and then doesn't get a 6 second roll (between 3% and 4% reduction)
- White needs maximum value from any set at any stage, and will not get it if he happens to roll 11 next time (a further 2% reduction).

At the score a risk/reward calculation gives a take point of around 18%, a decrease of about 6% on the money take and about the same as the sum of the two reductions, so again a narrow take.

MC: Any advance on two narrow takes?

Brian Lever: Double/Take

This is a crossover position of sorts. Barring doubles both side have seven, which usually equates to four rolls. If it were a straight four-roll position (both sides men on 1- and 2-points) then double take. And with most rolls, both will have five crossovers (and a three-roll position) next go – almost double take. But White could miss a roll with sequences like 21 followed by a number like 53.; very minor, I know, but little things count. And Black has no such misses, This problem has caused me no end of trouble, wondering whether the score has an influence and whether Black should hold on to the cube and home in on a clearer winning position. But I'd guess it's right to double, even at the score, and I'd guess as White I'd take, though it must be close.

MC: It's relatively close, but at least the latter three agree with our silicone friend.

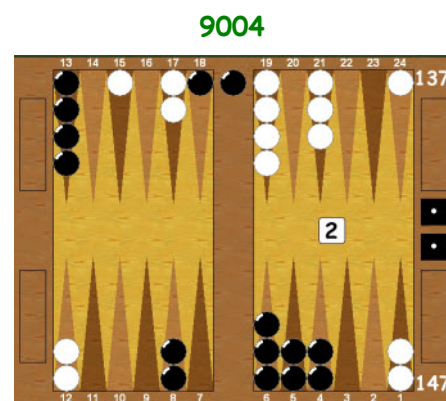
Snowie: Double/Take

The score is not a huge influencing factor

here although being behind 4-0 should lead white to take a little more liberally than usual.

We know that four rolls versus four rolls is double/take so that should be our benchmark for analysing this position. Black will certainly be off in four rolls and so will white most of the time but if he rolls a couple of small numbers in his first two rolls that could hurt him.

Enough that he should drop? Not quite but it is close. For money it is very close but trailing 4-0 white has a relatively comfortable take here.



11 point match
Black 0 White 4

MC: OK, occasionally I get it wrong and everyone agrees on the same cube action. In the actual game White dropped! I don't think I need to comment further. ☺

Rodney Lighton: Double/Take

Black has the better position and the threat to hit off the bar with 1s and 3s which look like market losers. Even if Black doesn't hit White's position is messy. White can take with an anchor and some counter-play against Black's back checkers (plus the four non-entering rolls).

Richard Biddle: Double/Take

Black is on the bar, but can still double as they will send at least one White checker back half the time and will only dance 3/36 times. It is a great opportunity to make some points back. Even without hitting, a strong home board against White's weak home board is a strong enough advantage.

White will be looking at the eighteen rolls that don't hit and thinking of the Black blots that may be left, plus the 1-point anchor. Black has not made the bar-point and is short of builders bearing in on this so White will also see this as a ▶

weakness.

Peter Christmas: Double/Take

Black is slightly behind in the race but he has some direct and indirect shots (17/36) including the double hit (31) and the better board with only four dancing numbers, which could be very costly if he ended up with two on the bar. Still being 0-4 down Black does need to get some points on the scoreboard and having the assets and threats he may not be able to wait to carry them out as White may well not take next go if he is on the bar with another blot laying around. I think White can just about take now as Black is not favourite to hit and he has the security of the anchor if he is. White is still leading in the race for now and has no checkers out of play and a fairly sound position to attack Black's back men if they fail to escape any time soon.

Mark Oram: Double/Take

I'm assuming all positions are a double decision from Black? At first glance, it seems that White should be doubling here (if he is on roll). Black is behind in the race, has a man on the bar and no anchor, unlike White, who still holds Black's ace-point. But let's assume that we are asking to decide on a Black double: although behind in the race and having an inferior home board, a seven rolled with the dice (6/36 chances) would make Black very strong, with 61 being particularly crushing. Black could lose his market in a single roll, in other words. In addition, he is behind in the match, so can be an aggressive doubler.

Since the game is still young, and in particular four of Black's rolls cause him to dance and leave White in a good position to blitz Black, a take by White seems trivial enough. I would certainly take in a money game, and since the match is also young the cube decisions would approximate money decisions as well

Cedric Lytton: Double/Take

A PRATS action: Black has the better position (3-point board, White's scattered points and stripped mid-point), is a bit behind in the race but has threats to hit with 1s and most 3s. White, with his ace-point anchor and fair timing, will be in the game to the end, and gammon losses will leave him still level.

Brian Lever: Double/Take

I'm not too keen on White's position here, even though he has Black on the bar. That 4-point is a checker too full and the blot on the 1-point is out of play; in

fact Black would do White a favour hitting it. But the thing is that Black is on the bar, does have some dances and some awkward entering 6s and White does have an anchor however poor when things go wrong. The score argues for some aggression on Black's part, but even with the other loose White blot, I'd still take as White.

Bob Young: Double/Take

Twenty-one good rolls (all hitting ones or entering and hitting with a 3, or entering and anchoring), suggest Black at this match score should notch up the scoring potential of this game. White, with an anchor, and 15 average rolls for Black, suggest a healthy take. (All sixes for Black, except 61 look good news for White).

Snowie: Double/Take

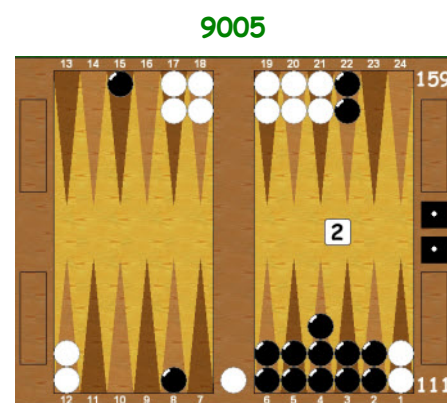
Another position where the score doesn't change the decision but once again Black should be more willing to spin the cube as he is trailing.

Using the three basic criteria for doubling how does Black stand? He trails in the race but has the better board and he certainly has threats. Two out of three means he should consider doubling and given that when things go well for him he could win a gammon this is a fairly clear double – he could certainly lose his market by next turn.

What about White? Well for a start Black will fan 11% of the time. White has a secure anchor if things go badly so he will always have that equity. His men are well placed to attack Black or build a prime, and Black hits a blot less than 50% of the time on his next turn.

I have seen many a player drop doubles in positions like this but that would be a mistake although it is closer than one might think if only because of the score.

For money, dropping would be a gross blunder.



11 point match
Black 1 White 4

MC: Well at least this one had the panel split.

Rodney Lighton: No Double/Take

Black has a big race lead and the threat to roll a 6 to escape. The problem is that in priming battles race is not everything, timing is much more important. If Black does not roll a 6 within a roll or two then his board is going to crunch and White will then have a killing redouble.

Richard Biddle: No double/Take

Black needs to roll a 6 and has twenty-one spare pips to do so. That is just about two and a half rolls to do this. Black can expect to roll a 6 within 3½ rolls. So I think this is a classic case of waiting for the 6 before doubling. Hence White can take, with much value in the cube with the ace-point game and a solid prime with timing.

Peter Christmas: No Double/Take

Prime verses prime are probably the most difficult to evaluate and where you have to be most cautious about giving the cube away as it can come back surprisingly quickly if things don't go according ➤

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to plan. As here, double 3 forces Black to break his home board and double 4 and 5 would use up nearly all of Black's spare pips and needing a six to spring another man before the home board starts breaking up. Black's other problem is he needs two 6s before White throws a 1 and still has to bring home four blots without getting hit as White has plenty of timing before his board starts to crunch. Black has a big racing lead, the better home board and needs to catch up being 1-4 down, but I think all this is negated with two men being stuck behind the 5-prime. Even if he springs both back men and brings in some of his stragglers, any hit for White could be fatal as White is well placed to contain a lone man until Black's home board starts to break. Black needs to spring another back man before White comes in before he can double and even so White could have a take - so I would say Black must wait.

Mark Oram: No Double/Take

I actually don't like the look of Black's position much at all. True with any 6 he is in great shape, but if no 6 is rolled for three or four rolls suddenly all Black's men have made it home and a low roll then forces us to open the home board. In addition, 33 is very unpleasant right away here and 44 and 55 burn up all of our timing in one roll. Another problem is that a lot of our losses, if we are forced to break our board and then be hit, look like they will be gammon losses (say at least one time in three?) so we would be suddenly 8-1 down in an 11-point match. So I'm going to err on the side of caution here, and let the smaller dice try and win us the point(s) in this game, rather than turning the bigger one.

Brian Lever: No Double/Take

I had a similar position in the last Biba - well, not that similar, because I only had one Black checker to escape and a White blot to aim at. But here, the White blot is already on the bar and I've got at least twenty-one spare pips before I break. Even if I do break, White has still to escape three men and he may still be on the bar. If in the meantime I've escaped one checker, I've probably lost my market. Chances are that if I do successfully escape I'll win a gammon. On the other hand, White's just as likely to throw an entering 1 on his first shake as I am to throw a 6, so I might find myself in a priming battle where he's got more time. I think the guiding factor here is that I'm moving and getting ready to crunch whereas, likely as not, White's prime is staying put. There's an adage I've come

across which says it's better to double someone out in a prime v prime battle, so I'll wait till I can.

MC: If it's not waiting for Godot, it's waiting for a 6! White is very happy to sit on the bar and wait to see if Black can roll one. Because this would make White happy, Black should hold back. However, here's a couple of brave souls that decide to double.

Cedric Lytton: Double/Take

A general rule of thumb is that Black can double if he has about eleven pips of playability to wait for a 6 before his board collapses. Here Black has twenty-one, the equivalent of nearly three rolls. As ever with ace-point anchors and prime v. prime positions, the gammon risk is high and a few bad sequences could leave White's board crashed, but it looks like a narrow take.

MC: Yes, the gammons are high, around 27%; but they won't be of any use if Black fails to roll a 6 and his board crumbles.

Bob Young: Double/Take

Too good to double if Black can roll a 6 before White rolls a 1, he probably has three rolls to find one with the use of the spare checkers before his board collapses. The odds of Black rolling a 6 in three rolls are $1 - (0.7 \times 0.7 \times 0.7)$ is 70% so with 30% chances, early in the match, White should take. Black's position collapses if he doesn't find that 6, whereas White just stays still and strong if he doesn't find a 1. White can enter, and escape one checker, or form a 6-prime yet, so plenty of ways this game can go.

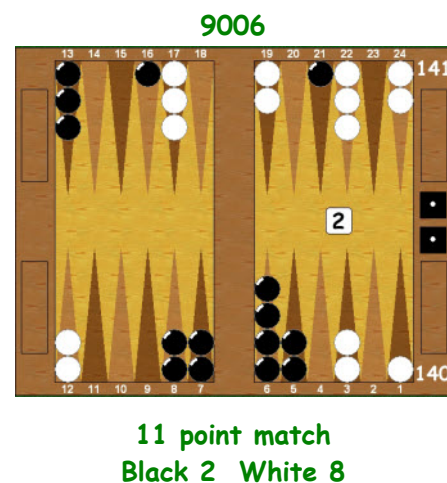
MC: Bob's final sentence is a cry for No double! Also the maths are a little out, $.7 \times .7 \times .7 = 0.343$: $1 - 0.343 = 66\%$ approx. Would fewer chances of rolling a 6 have made Bob's decision to double any different? Only Bob's knows!

Snowie: No Double/Take

The only thing that gives Black positive equity here is the fact that he wins more gammons than White. It is a finely balanced prime-versus-prime where one bad roll could see black's position self-destruct - look at 55 or 33. Meanwhile White's position will remain as it is until he re-enters. Before Black can double he must at least escape one of his back men with a 6.

Doubling would be premature but not a blunder but only because of the score. For money this would be a whopper of an

error. White has a trivial take of course. He would be giving up a mere 0.67 points of equity by dropping. Nobody would pass this I hear you say? Believe me I have seen worse.



MC: Almost got a lean sweep of agreement again. They all agree except Cedric:

Cedric Lytton: Double/Take

At the score and with an excellent game the double is obvious. But with a 3-point anchor and some defensive chances, so is the take.

MC: The double is obvious, but it isn't a take. Why is Cedric wrong? I'll be very lazy and let the others explain why!

Rodney Lighton: Double/Pass

Three checkers back against one checker back is often a double. Here White's position is fairly poor with his 1-point made and an ugly spare too far advanced on the 3-point. Black's position is good with a nice four-prime. I would pass as White, especially with a good match lead.

Richard Biddle: Double/Pass

Well, we have had five takes so this must be a drop, especially at this match score where White wants to keep the value of the cube down unless holding the advantage. Black has a good position and the back checkers, though blots, represent a threat. The race is even. Black needs to make some points up so this is a good double. Black would love White to take this. But White has a nothing board, having five checkers deep in the home board, a stripped mid-point and a halfway-house anchor. Nope, this is time for White to bide time and wait for the opportunity to sprint to the finish without danger.

MC: Typical Richard logic: "Well, we have had five takes so this must be a drop", and he is correct. At least he ►

goes on to justify it, though.

Peter Christmas: Double/Pass

Looks like White may have OD'd on a couple of double 5s. He hasn't wasted any checkers yet but prime chances are gone and Black has so much control he can leave his back man hanging around while he uses his other checkers to try to extend his prime at the front and/or the back. White's slim chances may lie in moving up his anchor, springing one of his back men and keeping the race quite tight but at 8-2 up I don't think he needs to take on these sort of odds. Even if Black forces White into a speed board with three or four men on to the 3-point anchor, there are not too many gammons to make it too good to double, so I would have to go with double/pass here and White still has a good lead in the match.

Mark Oram: Double/Pass

It looks like White started with an early blitz attempt with a 55, but now is stuck with five men relatively buried in his home board. So he would be hoping for a quick finish: the longer this game goes on the more this positional weakness will bite. Nor should we fear a long positional struggle for the same reason, and we should be in excellent shape if we can make White's 9-point in our next roll. I also suspect that these five men make White's virtual equality in the race a bit more of an illusion than otherwise: by this criterion White is deficient in the three areas – position, race, threat – and this scenario in itself seems to point to a mandatory double on our part. I don't know if we could expect too many gammons however, but at this match score we can double aggressively and make up the ground in two-point steps where possible.

I suspect White would have a take if we were aiming at an additional blot (he could re-take our ace-point and his two anchors would give him a strong defence) but as it stands this is not happening any time soon. In addition, White is stripped on all key points except his 8-point, so he

doesn't seem to have an easy way to improve even if he does take the cube. All this seems to point to a drop being White's best option.

Brian Lever: Double/Pass

Bit stripped and ugly aren't I, says White, with two and possibly five men out of play, depending on how you view those men on the 3-point. OK, gammons aren't likely with a halfway anchor, but it's no bargain. Little things count (haven't I already said this?). Put the extra 3-point checker somewhere else, eg on the mid-point or 6-point and it must structurally make a difference – just look at the resultant position. If White's to take this, he must get that spare on the 24-point moving and out into play, must use the extra checker on his 3-point to help make the 2-point. Neither of these things is immediately likely, and I think this pushes us into pass territory. Besides, why give away a commanding match lead on a miserable position like this.

Bob Young: Double/Pass

With this match score, and White having five checkers way out of the battle down on the 1- and 3-points, and Black having a useful prime, White should drop and go to the next game smiling like a Hampshire hyena. Black should capitalise on this and get a quick point.

MC: Yes, White's poor position is well against him, and thanks to his good lead of 8-2 he is right to pass.

Snowie: Double/Pass

A one pip lead in a race in a relatively static position – can this be a double? Yes it can. White has two major problems; he has three men behind a four-point prime and the rest of his position is disjointed – his ace-point has been made and what is that third man doing on his 3-point?

For White to win he will have to put humpty together again and then hit a shot at the right time or roll a couple of big doubles at the appropriate moment. Giv-

en that he will also lose quite a few gammons and he already leads 8-2 it should be pretty clear that he should pass Black's double.

For money this is right on the borderline and White's equity is the same whether he takes or passes but at 2-8 the decision isn't close.

MC: So, we come to the end of this competition. This part was a draw between Richard and Peter, so I will award both of them £30 each towards accommodation. These two have been neck-and-neck all year and at the post, Richard does it by just 1 point! £75 is wining its way to you as you read this.

Competition 2008 is overleaf

Name	Pts	Pts	Pts	Tot
Richard Biddle	47	57	60	164
Peter Christmas	49	54	60	163
Rodney Lighton	45	51	55	151
Brian Lever	51	44	55	150
Bob Young	41	44	44	129
Cedric Lytton	30	39	44	113
Mark Oram		49	49	

	Action	Score
9001	Double/Take	10
	No Double/Take	8
	Double/Pass	4
9002	Double/Take	10
	No Double/Take	5
9003	Double/Take	10
	No Double/Take	7
	Double/Pass	5
9004	Double/Take	10
9005	No Double/Take	10
	Double/Take	6
9006	Double/Pass	10
	Double/Take	5

Name	9001	9002	9003	9004	9005	9006	Tot
Peter Christmas	Double/Take	Double/Take	Double/Take	Double/Take	No Double/Take	Double/Pass	60
Richard Biddle	Double/Take	Double/Take	Double/Take	Double/Take	No Double/Take	Double/Pass	60
Brian Lever	Double/Take	No Double/Take	Double/Take	Double/Take	No Double/Take	Double/Pass	55
Rodney Lighton	No Double/Take	Double/Take	No Double/Take	Double/Take	No Double/Take	Double/Pass	55
Mark Oram	Double/Pass	Double/Take	Double/Pass	Double/Take	No Double/Take	Double/Pass	49
Bob Young	No Double/Take	No Double/Take	Double/Pass	Double/Take	Double/Take	Double/Pass	44
Cedric Lytton	No Double/Take	No Double/Take	Double/Take	Double/Take	Double/Take	Double/Take	44

Competition 2008 No1. 9201-06 Positions

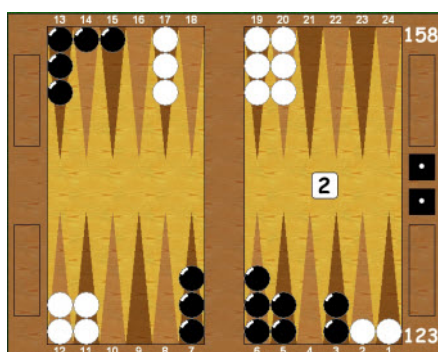
By Michael Crane

Welcome to the first of the three Competitions that make up the 2008 season.

- The winner will win £30 off their accommodation at any Biba tournament.
 - The member with the highest points total at the end of the year will win £75.
- Entries to be in by 15 April 2008 - Answers published 9 May, 2008, Bibafax 94.
Email: to info@backgammon-biba.co.uk
and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ via Royal Mail.

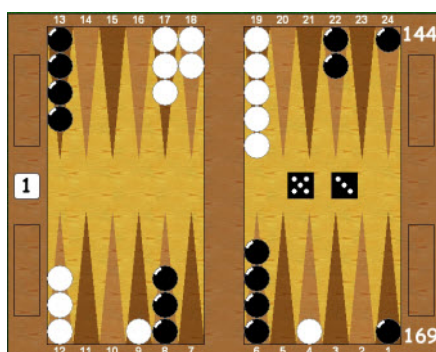
We (partially) return to our original format with this mixture of checker and cube problems. Scoring will be based upon Snowie's analysis of the correct play.

9201



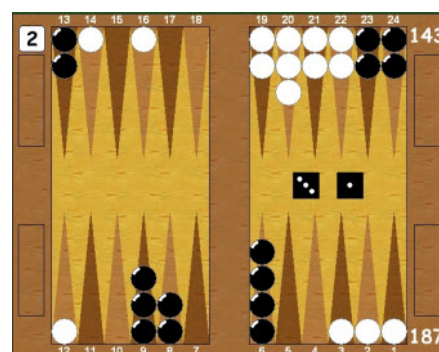
11 point match
Black 7 White 7
Cube action

9203



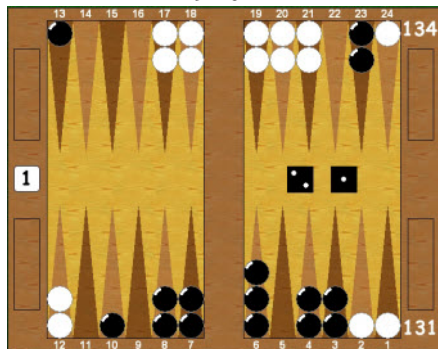
11 point match
Black 7 White 7
Black to play 53

9205



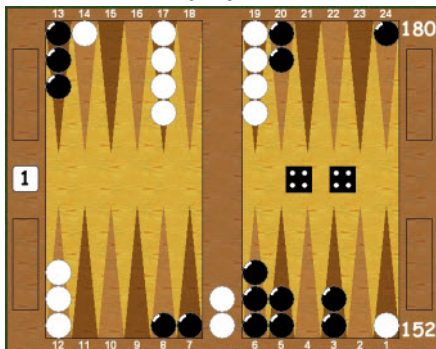
11 point match
Black 7 White 7
Black to play 31

9202



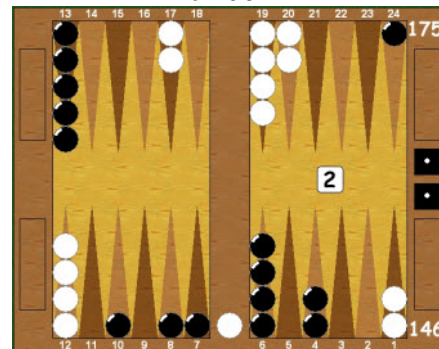
11 point match
Black 7 White 7
Black to play 21

9204



11 point match
Black 7 White 7
Black to play 44

9206



11 point match
Black 7 White 7
Cube action

gammon
VILLAGE



www.GAMMONVILLAGE.com

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

Bath - sarah.alexander6@btinternet.com - Tuesday, 7pm
Birmingham - Dave Motley. 0121 4764099 davemotley@blueyonder.co.uk - Monday
Brighton - Ian Eiloart - <http://bbc.eiloart.com/>
Bristol - Ian Tarr, 0117-9556862 or 07940 284652, brismgammon@btinternet.com - Thursday
Broomfield (Kent) - Bob Bruce 01227 362181 or mobile 077745 12902 - Last Tuesdays
Coventry - Phil Tutchings – tutchingsp@aol.com Tel: 02476 44546 - Thursdays @ 8.00pm
Dublin - Brendan Burgess 603 0891. wildlife@indigo.ie - 2nd Mondays
Dunfermline - Graeme Campbell, 01383 738968. graeme.campbell@tiscali.co.uk - Wednesday
Eastbourne and Bexhill - John Thomas. Tel: 01424 219415 Email: info@ebbc.org.uk - Wednesday @ 8.00
East Malling - david_lettington@hotmail.com or 01732 870356 - Monday 7.30pm to 9.30pm
Exmouth - James Homer jim_homer@tiscali.co.uk Tel: 01395-227659 & 0777-277-8367 - Phone first
Glasgow - John Paul Vass 0141 587 0255, johnpaulv3@hotmail.com - 1st Tuesday @ 7pm
Halifax/West Yorkshire - Rachel Rhodes 07961 355433 dicewitch@yahoo.co.uk - Phone first
Herefordshire - Andy Robertson, 07989 345494 / 01981 240016 - Saturday, 6pm
Huddersfield - Rachel Rhodes 07961 355433 dicewitch@yahoo.co.uk - Tuesday
Lincoln - Michael Crane, 01522 829649, michael.a.crane@ntlworld.com - Tuesday from 19:30 to 23:00
Liverpool - Simon K Jones (0151 428 3082) vineries@btinternet.com - Last Fridays
London (Fox Reformed) - Robbie (020) 7254 5975, robbie.richards@fox-reformed.co.uk - Monday
London (Tric Trac Tournos) - MikeMadMonk 0207 3540595 - 1st Wednesday
London (Croydon) - 07737 735 556, croydonbackgammonclub@yahoo.co.uk - Thursday
London (Piccadilly) - backgammoninpiccadilly@goolemail.com - Monday
Manchester - Rodney Lighton 0161 445 5644 email lighton@btinternet.com - 1st & 3rd Tuesdays
Middlesex - 07989751717 or claudiatops@yahoo.co.uk - Monday
Nottingham - Conrad Cooper. conrad_cooper@excite.com ; 0115 9113281 - Monday @ 9pm
North Norfolk - Cedric Lytton 012663 824157, Gerry Enslin Fgc1700@aol.com - 1st Sunday in Sept to May
Perth - Steve Wallace. info@perthgammon.org.uk 01738 587574 - Tuesday, 7.30pm
Preston - Nigel Merrigan 01772 517672 acumen1@blueyonder.co.uk - 2nd & 4th Tuesdays
St Albans - John Ingamells john.ingamells@ntlworld.com - Tuesday 19.45 (for 20.00) to 23.30
Tyneside - Cal Pearson calpearson2000@yahoo.co.uk is hoping to set up a club in Newcastle. Call him!
York - Kevin Stebbing 01904 611172, Kevin@stebbing1900.fslife.co.uk - 3rd Wednesday

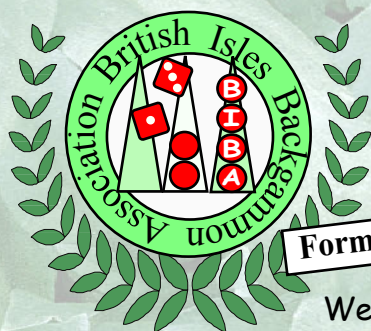
- 1 Club Name
- 2 Venue
- 3 Address/location
- 4 Club contact
- 5 Club web page
- 6 Club nights
- 7 Club format and activities
- 8 Club fees or cost to join/play
- 9 Accepted playing standard
- 10 Can beginners/guests play
- 11 Comments

Local Clubs

Where - Who - When

Forthcoming Events

► Also on pages 28 & 29



Formerly, Scottish Open

Biba International Championships

7, 8, 9 March 2008

Welcome to a new event in the UK tournament calendar. This International tournament offers the usual four elements: Main, Progressive Consolation, Last Chance and The 3:32. For those that are looking for BIG TIME action there will be an optional £100 pool - and for those of you who want a smaller time, there will be a £10 pool. In addition there will be a £150 bounty placed on the head of one of the players. If you beat them you'll be able to steal whatever bounty is left for yourself ... but then you become the hunted! Can you hold on to the money? If not, perhaps you'll walk away with the Poker pot ... if you aren't shot first! And, for those new to backgammon we will be staging a Beginner's Event. It is anticipated that this will be a large turnout, so you are advised to book your room now!



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

2008 Details, Deals and Dates



Registration: Saturday 1030 to 1230

Play Starts: Friday 2100, Saturday 1300, Sunday 1030

Auctions: Group, Saturday 1245, Individual, Sunday 1015

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

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

All tournaments feature a Friday 500, Saturday night Knockout,

Poker Grand Prix and Jackpots subject to demand.

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

FRIDAY

2100: Friday 500
+ Jackpots (on demand)

SATURDAY

Registration 1030 / 1230
Play starts 1300 prompt

SUNDAY

Play resumes 1030
(penalty points apply 1035)

Dinner, bed and breakfast @ Barceló (Formerly Paramount) Daventry

Reservations on 0870 1610 797

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

Single room: 1 night £61, two nights £106.

Double or twin room: 1 night £98, two nights £188

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

2008 Backgammon Calendar

Feb 1,2,3	Jarvis Trophy	GP UK	Daventry	Swiss
Mar 7,8,9	NEW: Biba's International Championships	GP UK	Daventry	Knockout
Apr 4,5,6	New: Birthday Boy's British Open	GP UK	Daventry	Knockout
Apr 13	Manchester 1-Day	GP -	Manchester	Combination
May 2,3,4	County Cups Trophy	GP UK	Daventry	Swiss
Jun 6,7,8	Barceló English Open	GP -	Daventry	Knockout
Jul 4,5,6	Keren Di Bona Memorial	GP -	Daventry	Knockout
Jul ??	13 th Liverpool Open	GP -	Liverpool	Combination
Aug 1,2,3	SAC Trophy	GP UK	Daventry	Swiss
Aug ??	12 th Mind Sports Olympiad	GP -	tba	Swiss
Sep 5,6,7	Backpacker Backgammon Trophy	GP -	Daventry	Knockout
Oct 3,4,5	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP -	Daventry	Knockout
Oct ??	16 th Irish Open	GP UK	Dublin	Swiss/Knockout
Oct 31, Nov 1,2	Townharbour Trophy	GP UK	Daventry	Swiss
Dec 5,6,7	Gilbertson UK Finals		Daventry	Double KO

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

Forthcoming Events

1, 2, 3 February. The Jarvis Trophy: The first of our four Swiss format events and the second UK Finals Qualifier event. If you like playing 6 x 11 point matches over the weekend, then this is the event for you. Swiss events offer great opportunities to rack up championship points, Grand Prix and Ranking - and could well place you in the money!



Nicky Check's 'Birthday Boy' British Open 2008

Join Nicky Check, personal sponsor of the 2008, British Open, as he celebrates his 40th birthday. Nicky is also giving £100 to the winner! The usual four elements are awaiting your entry, and the opportunity to enter a 'free' raffle for Friday night accommodation at the Paramount, English Open in July. To get your free raffle ticket just bring Nicky a birthday present (£5 to £10) - anonymity guaranteed!

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

For the remainder of the 2008 we return to the Barceló (formerly Paramount), Daventry Hotel. The hotel has undergone extensive refurbishment since our last visit, and over £2 million has been spent to turn it into a superb venue.



As part of our deal with Barceló Daventry, Biba has negotiated complimentary wi-fi in the playing rooms, plus the welcome return of the weekend prize for the Friday evening. In 2008, Friday nights will become 'must attend' nights: The Friday 500, plus the weekend free for the 500 winner! Also, accommodation has been kept at the 2007 rate.

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

Single: 1 night £61, two nights £106 / Double or twin: 1 night £98, two nights £188

To book accommodation call 0870 1610 797

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



Bringing You Backgammon

Barceló
HOTELS & RESORTS
Formerly Paramount Group of Hotels



Bright 'n' Breezy 2008

Report by Michael Crane

Before leaving home I looked at the weather forecast, paying especial interest in the Brighton area - the 5-Day Forecast told me: Wind & Rain, Wind & Rain, Wind & Rain . . . need I go further? Needless to say, it was spot on. Mind you it wasn't all gloom, well not for the weekend's winners, it wasn't. In the first of the **Friday 500 (42)**, Paul Barwick tore through the field like the wind outside tore through your warm winter undies. Martin Barkwill tried to stop him in the final but he was blown away. Not only does Paul take an immediate lead with 20 points in the 500, he also walks away with a free weekend at The Ship and one for the Barceló English Open in June; well done, Paul.

Was John Hurst able to win his third Bright 'n' Breezy **Main (90)** in a row and continue his winning streak after the UK Masters? The short answer is No! Despite the luxury of a bye and beating Irving Czechowicz in the 2nd Round, he was then knocked out by George Miltiadou; and then George fell to Howard Furr-Barton in the next round, an action that propelled Howard into the Last 8: Mark Heidenfeld vs Ray Kershaw; David Barker vs Mike Heard Roy Hollands vs Adrian Jones Arthur Musgrove vs Howard Furr-Barton

Mark was the only one of the eight that had won the event before (2004) and he had his sights set on doing a 'Hurst' and getting his name on the trophy twice. In each of the fixtures above the former player won - and Mark was on track. David tried to block his progress but Mark wasn't being cooperative; and in the bottom half of the draw, Roy took on Arthur and rolled his way into the final. Unfortunately for Roy the final didn't go

his way at all. I have yet to input the match into Snowie, but poor Roy was unable to even score a single point as a wind-backed Mark stormed through the match, sailing to an 11-0 victory. Were the Dice Gods against Roy? Did they favour Mark? Hopefully these questions will be answered after the analysis. So, Mark gets his name on the trophy for the second time, and in the process he qualifies as the first entrant in the Gilbertson UK Finals; well done, Mark. No doubt he'll be aiming for a 3rd engraving next January . . . and who can stop him?

In the **Progressive Consolation (86)** the new Excel spreadsheet made my job a lot easier and all those weeks (and I am not joking!) of hard work and brain-sapping writing were worthwhile as the boxes filled themselves in and the draw hummed nicely along. From the Non-Prog side Ray Tannen & Bill Young, and Andy Bell & Rachel Rhodes battled it out in the 'semi-final', battles from which Bill emerged to play against Rachel . . . and Rachel emerged victorious to go into the Consolation final. Here she awaited the outcome of the Progressive 'semi' between Ray Kershaw (last 4) and Rida Hassan (last 8). New-member, Rida saw off Ray, and then he saw off Rachel to win his first ever Biba trophy. Well done, Rida.

My boast of the BB being the favourite of many backgammon players from around the world proved true when Rida (Germany) was joined by Michel Lamote when Michel beat former world champion, Philip Vischjager in the final of the **Last Chance (64)**. The **Tidal Wave (64)** saw two 'local' players fight it out in the bar due to the fact that we had to vacate the playing-room. Ed Turner fell at the last fence when he was beaten by Ian Davidson.

Of course, there was also action on the Saturday evening. We had a very noisy



**Top: Main
Roy & Mark**

**Middle: Consolation
Rachel & Rida**

**Bottom: Tidal Wave
Ian, Sharen & Ed**

The Last Chance picture of Philip and Michel didn't come out, unfortunately

and raucous **Team (19)** event. With two teams, 9 and 8 on either side of the single board, there was bound to be a bit of bover . . . and there was! At one stage the barracking from one side was so powerful that the opposing team captain walked out! This departure was ►

greeted by cheers and jeers from both sides of the table . . . and when the captain returned a little later, the cheers and jeers were repeated! Eventually it all settled down to a 3 vs 2 team, and it was the 2 that prevailed, Ian Simpson and Dorothy Lee; who, seeing the time was 3.30am Sunday, decided to stay Joint 1st and split the pot. Good idea! The **Poker (22)** was a success, well it was for winner, Philip Vischjager. Roy Hollands (who openly admits to not knowing anything about how poker is played) came in 2nd, followed by Paul Learmount, John Batty and Alison Lee. It goes without saying, these five lead the Poker Grand Prix. Nicky Check's **£50 Jackpot (4)** wasn't as well supported as he'd hoped but that didn't stop him from winning it and leaving Rachel Rhodes in 2nd place!

Finally

The weekend was a bit like the curate's egg, good and bad. From my point of view it was a great venue and the playing-rooms were superb, spacious and sparkling. I enjoyed the meals and my room

was adequate considering the age of the hotel. However, some members didn't have the same experience. The restaurant failed in several ways - especially when serving tables of 6 and 10 guests; this led to some of the food being lukewarm and even cold a couple of times. One guest, ordering a vegetarian meal was served one containing fish and meat! Although the bars and rooms on the Reception level were well decorated and bright and airy, the bedrooms (of some guests) were not as good as they could (or should) be. One room even had a gale blowing in through a broken window pane - how was that missed by housekeeping? The curtains billowing out at right angles to the window should have been a major clue! I am afraid the hotel is like an aging actress; no longer will a lick of mascara and a dab of foundation cream cover up the cracks and lines. Something more substantial is needed - like a facelift.

One thing that that stood out for me was the staff. I couldn't fault them. They were attentive and helpful and made sure the

playing-rooms were properly served and looked after . . . which was lacking at the Hilton, I'm afraid to say. My thanks to all concerned in making it a good venue for the tournament. If I can get a good deal and the Manager will have us, I think we'll be back next year. Watch the calendar for details.

Footnote: There was only one ruling incident that marred the weekend . . . surprise, surprise, it was a clock issue! I had to assign a clock to one match and as a consequence one of the players involved lost on time. He wasn't very happy about it (as you can imagine), and when he complained to me about my decision to impose a clock he said, "You did the same thing to me last year!"

Friday 500 Positions, January 2008

20	Paul Barwick	7	Andy Darby	4	Michel Lamote
16	Martin Barkwill	7	Mike Ireland	4	Tony Fawcett
12	Ray Tannen	4	John Hurst	4	Richard Biddle
12	Paul Watts	4	EdTurner	4	Rachel Rhodes
9	Brian Metcalf	4	Philip Vischjager	4	Simon Barget
9	Rosey Bensley	4	Myke Wignall	4	Geoff Conn
9	Anne Metcalf	4	Raj Jansari	4	Paul Learmount
9	Nicky Check	4	Arthur Wright	4	Mardi Ohannessian
7	Tom Duggan	4	Irving Czechowicz	4	Ray Kershaw
7	Brian Lever	4	Marcus Wrinch	4	Adrian Jones
7	John Hedge	4	Sue Keeble	4	Stephen Drake
7	Tony Lee	4	Gerry Enslin	4	Chris Ternel
7	Jeff Barber	4	Peter Bennet	4	Sue Metcalf
7	David Nathan	4	Rida Hassan	4	Dorothy Lee

Poker Grand Prix Positions, January 2008

32	Philip Vischjager	11	Mick Vacarey
30	Roy Hollands	10	Ray Fard
28	Paul Learmount	9	Rosey Bensley
26	John Batty	8	Rida Hassan
24	Alison Lee	7	Steve Pettit
22	Tony Lee	6	Myke ignall
20	Lawrence Powell	5	Tony Fawcett
18	Paul Watts	4	Eamo Keogh
14	Mo Vafaei	3	John Hurst
13	Jacky Hamilton	2	Andy Bell
12	Stephen Drake	1	Andy Darby

Tournament Results

Gilbertson UK Finals, 3 & 4 November, 2007

Main (16/45)

- 1 Mick Butterfield
- 2 Peter Christmas
- 3&4 Julian Minwalla
- 3&4 Jerry Limb
- 5to8 David Nathan
- 5to8 Jacob Anderson
- 5to8 Vicky Chandler
- 5to8 Brian Lever

Consolation (37)

- 1 Uldis Lapikens
- 2 Tom Duggan
- 3&4 Myke Wignall
- 3&4 Paul Learmount
- 5to8 Tony Fawcett
- 5to8 Michael Horne
- 5to8 Ed Turner
- 5to8 Rosey Bensley

Last Chance (32)

- 1 Nigel Merrigan
- 2 David Motley
- 3&4 Mardi Ohannessian
- 3&4 Stephen Drake
- 5to8 Paul Barwick
- 5to8 David Wallbank
- 5to8 Bob Bruce
- 5to8 Jacob Anderson

Snowball (10)

- 1 Uldis Lapikens
- 2 Mick Butterfield
- 3&4 Ron Havenhand
- 3&4 Myke Wignall

Friday 500 Finals (16)

- 1 Rosey Bensley
- 2 Myke Wignall
- 3&4 Richard Biddle
- 3&4 Paul Watts
- 5to8 Paul Christmas
- 5to8 David Nathan
- 5to8 Tom Duggan
- 5to8 Gerry Enslin

Poker GP Finals (8)

- 1 Tony Fawcett
- 2 Paul Gilbertson
- 3 Paul Watts
- 4 Paul Christmas
- 5 Rosey Bensley

Friday Jackpot (12)

- 1 Paul Gilbertson
- 2 Tony Fawcett
- 3&4 Cassie East
- 3&4 Alison Lee

Poker (16)

- 1 Tony Lee
- 2 Mick Butterfield
- 3 Nigel Merrigan

Team (6)

- 1 Peter Christmas

Champion of Champions (6)

- 1 Jerry Limb

Whiskey Galore (64)

- 1 Brian Lever

Rosey's Rollout

- 1 Julian Minwalla



Thanks
for coming.
See you all
there next
year.

Bright 'n' Breezy, 11, 12, 13 January, 2008

Main (90)

- 1 Mark Heidenfeld
- 2 Roy Hollands
- 3&4 David Barker
- 3&4 Arthur Musgrove
- 5 to 8 Ray Kershaw
- 5 to 8 Mike Heard
- 5 to 8 Adrian Jones
- 5 to 8 Howard Furr-Barton

Consolation (86)

- 1 Rida Hassan
- 2 Rachel Rhodes
- 3&4 Bill Young
- 3&4 Ray Kershaw
- 5 to 8 Ray Tannen
- 5 to 8 Andy Bell
- 5 to 8 George Sulimirski
- 5 to 8 David Nathan

Last Chance (64)

- 1 Michel Lamote
- 2 Philip Vischjager
- 3&4 Simon Barget
- 3&4 Uldis Lapikens
- 5 to 8 Ian Davidson
- 5 to 8 Crispin Duke
- 5 to 8 Mahmoud Jahanbani
- 5 to 8 Bob Young

Tidal Wave (64)

- 1 Ian Davidson
- 2 Ed Turner
- 3&4 Brian Lever
- 3&4 Richard Biddle
- 5 to 8 Eamon Keogh
- 5 to 8 Andy Darby
- 5 to 8 Nick Valley
- 5 to 8 Simon Morecroft

Friday 500 (42)

- 1 Paul Barwick
- 2 Martin Barkwill
- 3&4 Ray Tannen
- 3&4 Paul Watts
- 5 to 8 Brian Metcalf
- 5 to 8 Rosey Bensley
- 5 to 8 Anne Metcalf
- 5 to 8 Nicky Check

Poker (22)

- 1 Philip Vischjager
- 2 Roy Hollands
- 3 Paul Learmount
- 4 John Batty
- 5 Alison Lee

Team (17)

- 1 Ian Davidson & Dorothy Lee

£50 Jackpot (4)

- 1 Nicky Check
- 2 Rachel Rhodes

Grand Prix points @ Brighton . .

- | | |
|-------|--------------------|
| 32.00 | Mark Heidenfeld |
| 18.58 | Roy Hollands |
| 18.57 | Bill Young |
| 18.56 | Michel Lamote |
| 13.42 | Mike Heard |
| 13.42 | Arthur Musgrove |
| 13.42 | Raymond Kershaw |
| 13.42 | David Barker |
| 13.41 | Ray Tannen |
| 13.41 | Rachel Rhodes |
| 13.41 | Rida Hassan |
| 13.40 | Philip Virschjager |
| 9.29 | Raj Jansari |
| 9.29 | Neil Davidson |



9.29	Adrian Jones	4.13	Bob Young	2.58	Chris Bray
9.29	Howard Furr-Barton	4.13	Malcolm Robertson	2.58	Nicky Check
9.29	Ian Davidson	4.13	Richard Biddle	2.58	Tony Lee
6.19	Jeff Barber	4.13	John Hurst	2.58	Mardi Ohannessian
6.19	Stephen Drake	4.13	Peter Bennet	2.58	Alistair Hogg
6.19	Lawrence Powell	4.13	George Suilimirski	2.58	Tony Fawcett
6.19	Stuart Mann	4.13	Chris Ternel	2.58	Tim Brown
6.19	Rosey Bensley	4.13	Jon Barnes	2.58	Andrew Pogson
6.19	David Nathan	4.13	Ann Pocknell	2.58	Fanika Petkovska
6.19	Tom Duggan	4.13	Alastair Simpson	2.58	Brian Metcalf
6.19	Andrew Darby	4.13	Mick Vacarey	2.57	Eamon Keogh
6.19	John Batty	4.13	Christopher Baxter	2.57	Gerry Enslin
6.19	David Horner	4.13	Ray Fard	2.57	Dorothy Lee
6.19	George Miltiadou	4.13	Nick Valley	2.56	Simon Morecroft
6.19	Walter Busato	4.13	Paul Learmount	2.06	Peter Christmas
6.18	Andy Bell	4.13	Marcus Wrinch	2.06	Myke Wignall
6.18	Sue Keeble	4.12	John Hedge	2.06	Paul White
6.18	Jackie Griffiths	4.12	Martin Barkwill	2.06	Simon Heath
6.18	Irving Czechowicz	4.12	Eddie Barker	2.06	Chris Reeves
6.18	Mike Ireland	4.11	Arthur Wright	1.55	Cliff Connick
6.17	Uldis Lapikens	4.11	Simon Barget	1.55	Geoff Conn
6.16	Edwin Turner	4.11	Mahmoud Jahanbani	1.55	Paul Watts
4.13	Paul Ramsey	4.10	Crispin Duke	NB: This is also the Grand Prix Championship listing.	
			Brian Lever		

Ranking Changes @ B 'n'B:			1583	1532	David Barker	1479	1470	Richard Biddle
			1577	1580	Eddie Barker	1476	1485	Malcolm Robertson
			1576	1558	George Miltiadou	1476	1500	Paul Watts
1953	1941	Lawrence Powell	1575	1500	Rida Hassan	1473	1479	Arthur Wright
1890	1921	Brian Lever	1571	1556	Andrew Darby	1472	1484	Andrew Pogson
1869	1869	Stuart Mann	1560	1575	Alistair Hogg	1466	1481	Crispin Duke
1866	1793	Mark Heidenfeld	1545	1575	Geoff Conn	1464	1461	Alastair Simpson
1855	1870	Tony Lee	1545	1513	Howard Furr-Barton	1446	1458	Cliff Connick
1846	1822	Ray Tannen	1541	1556	Gerry Enslin	1438	1459	Myke Wignall
1845	1838	Stephen Drake	1540	1532	Michel Lamote	1428	1443	Jon Samuel
1843	1822	Adrian Jones	1538	1535	Sue Keeble	1416	1393	Rosey Bensley
1834	1817	Rachel Rhodes	1529	1545	Mahmoud Jahanbani	1390	1389	Paul Learmount
1806	1815	John Hurst	1526	1549	Simon Morecroft	1366	1374	Tim Brown
1794	1795	David Nathan	1519	1485	Neil Davidson	1365	1394	Paul Barwick
1791	1811	Nicky Check	1517	1502	Ian Davidson	1336	1354	Alexis
1776	1800	Peter Christmas	1517	1535	Dorothy Lee	1307	1289	Mick Vacarey
1747	1724	Raj Jansari	1517	1500	Walter Busato	1255	1268	Fanika Petkovska
1742	1733	Peter Bennet	1511	1499	Christopher Baxter			
1740	1729	Tom Duggan	1510	1525	Tony Fawcett			
1733	1703	Arthur Musgrove	1509	1500	John Hedge			
1731	1762	Tim Mooring	1507	1500	Marcus Wrinch			
1731	1737	Simon Barget	1506	1467	Bill Young			
1728	1704	Philip Virschjager	1496	1489	Ray Fard			
1726	1723	Ann Pocknell	1492	1468	Andy Bell			
1717	1731	Uldis Lapikens	1492	1500	Simon Heath			
1709	1707	Chris Ternel	1490	1500	Irving Czechowicz			
1702	1636	Roy Hollands	1488	1468	John Batty			
1682	1642	Mike Heard	1488	1500	Sue Metcalf			
1655	1644	Jeff Barber	1488	1500	Mike Ireland			
1640	1629	Bob Young	1486	1480	Paul Ramsey			
1640	1641	Edwin Turner	1486	1481	Nick Valley			
1638	1646	Martin Barkwill	1485	1500	Brian Metcalf			
1636	1651	Chris Bray	1485	1500	Paul White			
1635	1616	George Suilimirski	1485	1500	Sidney Van Gelder			
1634	1647	Mardi Ohannessian	1485	1500	Mo Vavaei			
1631	1575	Raymond Kershaw	1485	1500	Chris Reeves			
1625	1645	Eamon Keogh	1483	1455	David Horner			
1587	1584	Jon Barnes	1483	1478	Jackie Griffiths			



Top 374 Ranked Biba Members

1997	Julian Fetterlein	1669	Jason Champion	1596	Graham Sievers	1551	Peter Howe
1964	John Clark	1667	Paul Money	1596	Tim Found	1551	Lynne Sim
1953	Lawrence Powell	1666	Richard Beagarie	1595	Francine Brandler	1550	Brian Tilley
1947	Paul Lamford	1665	Peter Ozanne	1593	Paul Stebbing	1550	Amir Mossanen
1942	John Slattery	1664	Joachim Johannsson	1593	Nigel Briddon	1549	Richard Howes
1890	Brian Lever	1663	Michael Crane	1592	Neil Webb	1549	Phil Caudwell
1869	Stuart Mann	1662	Connor Dickinson	1592	Graham Greensit	1549	Jens Neregaard
1866	Mark Heidenfeld	1662	Tomax Neto	1591	Alan Papier	1548	Diane Sulimirski
1855	Tony Lee	1655	Jeff Barber	1591	Martin Sims	1546	Dave Raynsford
1846	Ray Tannen	1654	Neil Kazaross	1589	Andrew Grkow	1546	Ahmet Baydar
1845	Stephen Drake	1653	Adam Robac	1589	Guy Rankin	1545	Romolo Mudu
1843	Adrian Jones	1652	Barry McAdam	1589	James Grenier	1545	Jay Lewis
1834	Rachel Rhodes	1650	Mike Greenleaf	1588	Kamal Verma	1545	Ayhan Balli
1823	Jim Johnson	1650	Brian Busfield	1588	Murat Imamoglu	1545	Jim Salter
1822	Salvador Leong	1647	David Motley	1588	John Gilbertson	1545	Richard De La Nougerede
1814	Nigel Merrigan	1646	Mike Loughman	1587	Tom Breheny	1545	Alex Aronsohn
1806	John Hurst	1645	Ed Rogers	1587	Kevin McDonough	1545	Geoff Conn
1803	David Startin	1644	Helen Helm-Sagar	1587	Jon Barnes	1545	Howard Furr-Barton
1802	Dave McNair	1642	Tim Line	1585	Ed Perry	1544	Hercules
1794	David Nathan	1641	Paul Turnbull	1583	John Wright	1544	Alan Lennox-Smith
1791	Nicky Check	1641	Zibia Szczerek	1583	Martin Kendall	1544	Maurice Moore
1788	Dod Davies	1640	Bob Young	1583	Brian McDonald	1543	Paul Edwards
1786	Mark Adkins	1640	Edwin Turner	1583	David Barker	1543	Conrad Cooper
1779	Steve Bibby	1638	Martin Barkwill	1582	Adam Jacobs	1542	Anthony Patz
1776	Peter Christmas	1638	Gerry Corolan	1582	Simon Osborne	1542	Richard Gibney
1773	David Levi	1638	Martin Hemming	1581	Adrian Hills	1542	Barry Bradshaw
1768	Thomas Connor	1636	Chris Bray	1580	Adrian Chambers	1542	James Vogl
1757	Richard Granville	1635	George Sulimirski	1580	Karl Simpson	1541	Chris Liston
1756	Steve Hallet	1635	Zbigniew Papierniak	1577	Paul Ashley	1541	Henry Lewis
1756	Steve Pickard	1634	Bill Pope	1577	Eddie Barker	1541	Wayne Auty
1749	Ralph Eskinazi	1634	Mike Ridley	1576	Glen Bollington	1541	Gerry Enslin
1748	Danny Cohen	1634	Mardi Ohannessian	1576	George Miltiadou	1540	Tim Taylor
1747	Raj Jansari	1634	Richard Webb	1575	Peter Girdler	1540	Michel Lamote
1742	Peter Bennet	1634	Cato Fordham	1575	Rodney Lighton	1539	Philip Tabberer
1740	Tom Duggan	1633	Shahid Baig	1575	Rew Francis	1539	Nigel Gibbions
1737	Mike Grabsky	1631	Laure Dell	1575	Paul Statter	1539	John Harrison
1735	David Eggert	1631	Raymond Kershaw	1575	Rida Hassan	1538	Peter Walker
1733	Arthur Musgrove	1629	John Broomfield	1574	Simon Gasquoine	1538	Sue Keeble
1731	Geoff Oliver	1629	Charlie Hetherington	1574	Neil Clarke	1538	Brian Kenny
1731	Tim Mooring	1628	Colin Owen	1573	David Barker	1538	Khachik Melikyan
1731	Simon Barget	1627	Vincent Versteeg	1573	Grahame Powell	1537	Ian Hutson
1730	Philip Ward-Ackland	1626	Derek Matheson	1573	Nev Hyde	1537	Andreas Giannopoulos
1728	Philip Virschjager	1625	Dave Robbins	1572	Damon Dennis	1537	Bill Harding
1727	Kazu Niki	1625	Vicky Chandler	1571	Michael Earnshaw	1537	Darryl Kirk
1726	Ann Pocknell	1625	Eamon Keogh	1571	Andrew Darby	1537	Richard Theunissen
1725	Ian Tarr	1623	Steffen Nowak	1570	Andy Zajczyk	1536	Cait Skelly
1723	Kevin Stebbing	1621	John Bazigos	1570	Andrew Wedgebury	1536	Anderson Whamond
1722	Simon K Jones	1621	Keir Fitz-Gibbon	1570	Joseph Levy	1535	Martha Littlehailes
1717	Uldis Lapikens	1620	Jeff Ellis	1569	Julian Hayhurst	1535	Sean Williams
1712	Stephen Turner	1620	Peter Chan	1569	Paul Arnott	1534	Gerry Cornish
1711	Steve Rimmer	1618	Dan O'Farrell	1569	Mark Dixon	1534	Alan Sammonds
1710	Barry Williams	1618	Rogier Van Gemert	1568	Ken Staines	1534	Rosemary Hicks
1709	Rick Janowski	1618	Carter Mattig	1568	Ray Pelly	1534	Nick Bromfield
1709	Sean Casey	1616	Paul Grant	1568	Bill Spiers	1534	Paul Martin
1709	Chris Ternel	1616	Ian Shaw	1568	Diana Lines	1534	Wolf Pfeiffer
1708	Dave Coyne	1615	John Mackay	1568	Ricardo Falconi-Puig	1534	Freddy Mossanen
1708	David Gallagher	1614	Peter Fallows	1566	Shay Shannon	1533	Jim Moore
1705	Brendan Burgess	1613	Mike Waxman	1566	Nigel Buchan	1533	Miriam Harper
1703	Giorgio Castellano	1611	John Thomas	1566	Mark Lemon	1533	David Hale
1702	Roy Hollands	1611	Stefan Paliwoda	1565	Martin Lee	1533	Mark McCluskey
1702	Peter Cruickshank	1610	James Browning	1564	Jackie Littlewood	1533	Martin Sloane
1702	Mick Butterfield	1610	Rod Jones	1563	Roland Herrera	1532	Alan Beckerson
1701	Andrew Plater	1609	Ian Gwynne	1560	John Dean	1531	Phil Charlton
1700	Harry Bhatia	1608	Corinne Sellers	1560	Alistair Hogg	1531	Simon Morris
1697	Darren Kernighan	1606	Alison Jones	1560	Stavros Elia	1531	Andrew Sarjeant
1696	Dale Taylor	1605	Manlam Wong	1559	Paul Taylor	1531	John Jacobs
1691	Paul Gilbertson	1605	Richard Wenban	1559	Shaun Herd	1530	Jenny May
1689	Marc Steyvers	1605	Gavin Crawley	1558	Len Brailey	1530	Alex Naylor
1688	Tim Wilkins	1604	Simon Baker	1558	Paul Waters	1529	Peter Gittins
1687	Mochy Masayuki	1604	Murray Sharp	1557	Jacek Brzezinski	1529	Mahmoud Jahanbani
1684	Nodar Gagua	1602	James Hatt	1556	Martin Potter	1528	Kevin Berry
1682	Mike Heard	1601	Michael Steingold	1556	Chris Gibbins	1528	Rene Van Der Pluijm
1680	Graham Brittain	1600	Roger Porter	1556	James Eibisch	1528	Lee Wood
1679	Mark Teltscher	1600	Kerry Jackson	1555	Tom Allsop	1527	Theo
1677	Emmanuel Di Bona	1600	Ken Gibson	1553	David Halstead	1526	Barry Teece
1677	David Brown	1599	Paul Christmas	1553	Gary Jackson	1526	Steve Rudall
1676	Tim Cross	1599	Clyde Wolpe	1553	Simon Macbeth	1526	Simon Morecroft
1676	Geoff Hall	1599	Brian Barber	1552	Ewan McLeod	1526	Juliet Fennell
1676	Shino Kazuhiro	1598	David Edwards	1552	Howard Barlow	1525	Joseph Saab
1675	Michael Brereton	1597	Ray Ager	1552	Paul Van Dijke	1525	Ray Mills

1525	Paul O'Kelly	1523	Mark Halliday	1523	Drew Caudwell
1525	Nigel Belton	1523	John Harriss	1523	Jonathan Bennetts
1525	Don Howard	1523	Geoffrey Gay	1523	Kevin Johnson
1525	Finlay Greirson	1523	Johanna Johns	1523	Johan Aschan
1525	Malcolm Pinfold	1523	Lee Houlthy	1523	Russell Elston
1525	Simon Jones	1523	Stephen Kinch	1523	Josophine Allen
1525	Paul Shirley	1523	John Lewis	1523	Crisapin De Nys
1525	Phil Kane	1523	Dawn Crewe	1523	John Barron
1525	Yerry Felix	1523	John Hodgson	1523	Linda Wathen
1525	Giles Ashton	1523	Penny Lillie	1523	David Sasson
1525	Erik Sorensen	1523	Mark McAnaw	1523	Rachel Davies
1525	Ali Safa	1523	Robert Harris	1523	Neil Goldenberg
1525	Brian Walker	1523	Anthony Helliwell	1523	Karen O'Connor
1525	David Dunkley	1523	Kim Grais	1523	Antony Macmillan
1524	Bill Brierley	1523	Steve Trowbridge	1523	Harvey Bernstein
1524	Chris Jeans	1523	Tony Polykalas	1523	Greg Goodale
1524	Jeremy Limb	1523	David Horwich	1523	Ian Pennicott
1523	Philip Croft	1523	Debbie Horwich	1523	Alison Hamill

Ranking Championship 2008

played / points / player

7	2031.29	Mark Heidenfeld	2	1661.00	Nick Valley	1	1141.00	Myke Wignall
6	1970.17	Roy Hollands	2	1628.00	Ian Davidson	1	1136.00	Cliff Connick
5	1987.80	Ray Kershaw	2	1601.50	Alastair Simpson	1	1129.00	Geoff Conn
5	1979.40	David Barker	2	1588.50	Jon Barnes	1	1116.00	Tim Mooring
5	1852.00	Mike Heard	2	1564.00	Ann Pocknell	1	1084.00	Sue Keeble
5	1821.40	Arthur Musgrove	2	1557.50	Ray Fard	1	1084.00	Sidney Van Gelder
4	1928.00	Adrian Jones	2	1544.00	Bob Young	1	1058.00	Chris Bray
4	1866.25	Howard Furr-Barton	2	1529.00	John Hurst	1	1056.00	Tony Fawcett
4	1856.00	Raj Jansari	2	1517.50	Paul Learmount	1	1032.00	Uldis Lapikens
4	1811.50	Neil Davidson	2	1499.50	Richard Biddle	1	1013.00	Al Hogg
4	1797.75	Rida Hassan	2	1492.50	Malcolm Robertson	1	1002.00	Michel Lamote
3	1995.00	David Nathan	2	1487.50	Rachel Rhodes	1	1000.00	Brian Lever
3	1918.67	David Horner	2	1484.00	Chris Ternel	1	1000.00	Bill Young
3	1854.00	Stuart Mann	2	1483.50	John Hedge	1	1000.00	Simon Morecroft
3	1826.33	George Miltiadou	2	1457.00	Ed Turner	1	1000.00	Philip Vischjager
3	1804.00	Stephen Drake	1	1441.00	Simon Heath	1	999.00	Nicky Check
3	1779.00	John Batty	1	1369.00	Tony Lee	1	989.00	Arthur Wright
3	1773.00	Tom Duggan	1	1322.00	Peter Christmas	1	985.00	Brian Metcalf
3	1747.67	Rosey Bensley	1	1317.00	Eddie Barker	1	985.00	Chris Reeves
3	1739.67	Jeff Barber	1	1315.00	Irving Czechowicz	1	981.00	Paul White
3	1710.33	Andrew Darby	1	1295.00	Tim Brown	1	980.00	Martin Barkwill
3	1697.67	Walter Busato	1	1293.00	Gerry Enslin	1	970.00	Jon Samuel
3	1691.33	Lawrence Powell	1	1275.00	Crispin Duke	1	968.00	Paul Watts
2	1876.00	Chris Baxter	1	1233.00	Simon Barget	1	968.00	Eamon Keogh
2	1787.50	Peter Bennet	1	1229.00	Sue Metcalf	1	961.00	Mo Vafaei
2	1748.00	Marcus Wrinch	1	1224.00	Jackie Griffiths	1	945.00	Ray Tannen
2	1745.50	George Sulimirski	1	1223.00	Andrew Pogson	1	893.00	Paul Barwick
2	1719.50	Paul Ramsey	1	1207.00	Mike Ireland	1	889.00	Dorothy Lee
2	1684.50	Andy Bell	1	1203.00	Fanika Petkovska	1	838.00	Mardi Ohannessian
2	1670.00	Mick Vacarey	1	1144.00	Alexis Hogg	1	789.00	Mahmoud Jahanbani

Grand Prix	Prize	Ranking
1	£63.00	1
2	£45.00	2
3	£36.00	3
4	£27.00	4
5	£18.00	5
6	£13.50	6
7	£9.00	7
8	£4.50	8
9	£4.50	9
10	£4.50	10

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Cannes - Palm Beach Casino - WSOB** : July 15/20

Pasino Aix-en-Provence: September 18/21

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Divonne-les-Bains - Casino Grand Domaine de Divonne: October 22/26

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