

BIBAFAX

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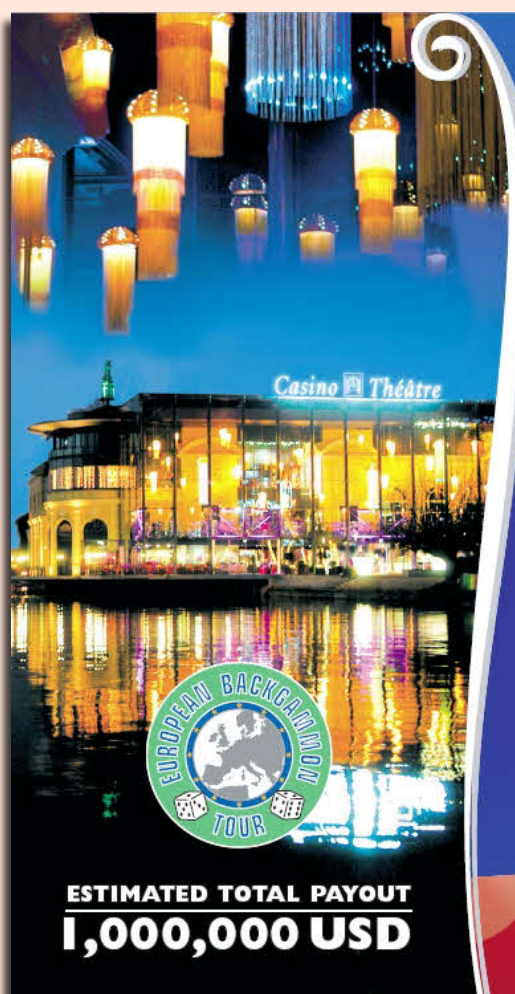
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d'Enghien-les-Bains
Lucien Barrière

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UP TO **50.000€**

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Edward O'Laughlin Leads the PartoucheGammon 2008 Ranking List



For the 2008 PGT Ranking system, players earn Participation Points for each match played, and gain additional Performance Points for winning matches according to a scale posted on the PartoucheGammon website. At the moment (8 Sept.) it is headed by Edward O'Laughlin.

As a player, you accumulate points on PGT Ranking List whenever you attend and play in any stop of the 2008 PartoucheGammon Tour. The 32 players that accumulate the most points by PGT8 qualify for the Grand Finale which will again be hosted at Grand Hôtel de Divonne and will have Eu €150,000 in added prize money contributed by PartoucheGammon - EU €100,000 will go to the winner of the Grand Finale. The Top 32 to date are shown here ►

NB: There will be 64 players battling it out in the Grand

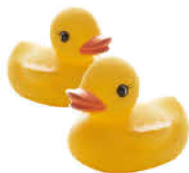
37	Nodar Gagua	247
54	François Tardieu	163
69	Nicky Check	83
84	John Hurst	71
98	Rafaelo Gatti	59
99	Rida Hassan	56
100	Mike Heard	59
103	Rogier Gemert Van	57
104	John Clark	56
106	Julian Fetterlein	54
108	Simon Barget	53
113	Marc Heindenfeld	50
115	Carter Mattig	50
120	Sean Casey	45
124	Zoe Cunningham	43
169	Sami Akirov	21
170	Peter Bennett	21
203	Perry Gartner	12
206	Rene Van Der Pluijm	12
207	Sean Williams	12
211	Adrian Jones	8
217	John Broomfield	3
225	Michel Lamotte	3
229	Andrew Plater	3
232	Victoria Smirnof	3

Finale - the 32 that top the 2008 PGT Ranking List and 32 others that will come from either satellite tournaments or by direct enrollment. The cost of a package to the Grand Finale is EU €3,250 which includes the Registration Fee and a five-night stay at the Grand Hôtel de Divonne.

Within the 32 top ranked players there are 5 Biba players (shown in red). The second list on the left shows the remaining Biba players and their position in the rankings. It is possible that some of them might well make it to the top 32 and thus gain their place in the Grand Final to be held 22/26 October 2008 in Divonne-les-Bains at the Casino Grand Domaine de Divonne.

1	Edward O'Laughlin	509
2	Mario Sequeira	454
3	Alain Babillon	411
4	Gotz Hildsberg	404
5	Jan Jacobowitz	399
6	Giorgio Castellano	399
7	Pia Jeppesen	392
8	Volker Sonnabend	392
9	Chris Ternel	380
10	Jean-Philippe Rohr	377
11	Olivier Croisille	376
12	Raj Jansari	362
13	Zoran Maric	360
14	Oliver Schneider	359
15	Thierry Manouck	356
16	Bartolomeo Migliore	346
17	Miki Suzuki	338
18	Jurgen Orlowski	331
19	Fernando Braconi	310
20	Minh Nguyen	307
21	Fabrizio Lo Surdo	297
22	Andy Bell	296
23	Philip Vischjager	296
24	Olivier Decultot	291
25	Uli Koch	288
26	Tassilo Rzymann	279
27	Frédéric Andrieu	278
28	Andreas Humke	276
29	Reiner Witt	273
30	Kakhaber Natchkebia	270
31	Franck Stepler	270
32	Alexis Vincent	269



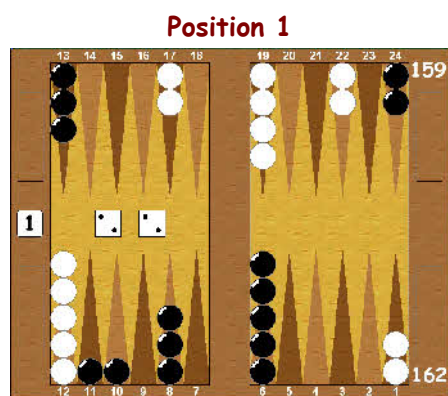


Two Little Ducks Quack! Quack! By Michael Crane



It was my 'job' during the 2000 World Cup in Istanbul to report on the event for the Mind Sports Olympiad, and I did a fair job of it even if I say so myself - however, I couldn't report on everything that happened, but what I did miss, others caught. One such catch was the 2nd Round match in the Doubles between Dag Ekmær & Chris Ternel (above left) vs Elliot Winslow & Harald Johanni (above right). The recorder of this match (and several thousand over many years!) was Harald himself; he recorded it and then turned it into a JellyFish file which I later turned into a Snowie file. It is this that forms the basis of this article.

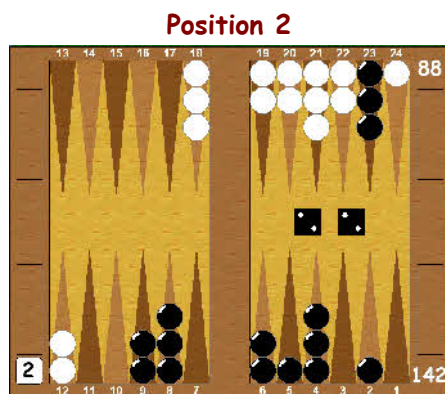
The reference in the title: Two Little Ducks - Quack! Quack! is a bingo term for 22 or in this instance, double-two. During their 7 point match there were no fewer than 96 2s on the dice; this is high considering that the theoretical appearance of any number is 78.7. Its nearest rival was 5s on 84. Within the 96, 2s were paired together for a dozen or more rolls, and within the next few pages we'll look at eight of them - some good, some bad, some indifferent. Dag and Chris are playing as white and Elliot and Harald as black.



Black 0 White 0

Black started with 32 and moved both checkers from their mid-point. This is an excellent opening roll when played 13/10 13/11: Twenty-two rolls (Quack! Quack!) for black now point on their bar or 5-point! This potential for making one of the two most sought after points on the board is the key to what move white should make with their 22. It is 24/20(2) occupying the Golden Point. It secures it

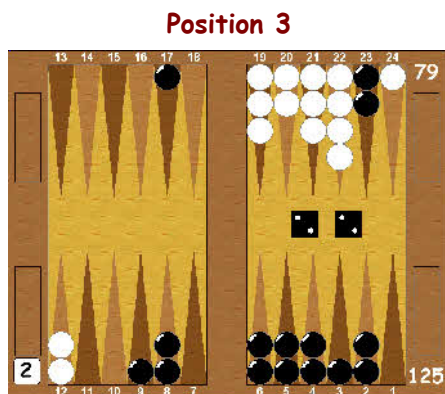
as an advanced anchor and immediately puts white's two blots under pressure. White actually moves 24/22(2) 6/4(2); an error @ -0.059. By not going to the 20-point, white could see themselves blocked on 6s if black makes their 9-point; and this is exactly what happens when black rolls 21 and plays 11/9 10/9.



Black 0 White 0

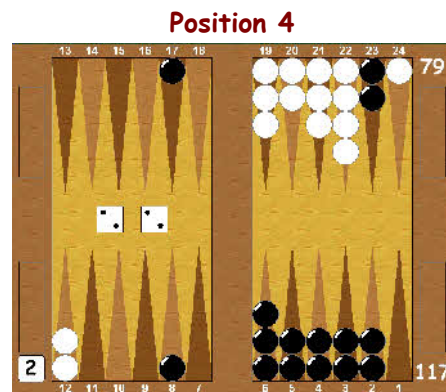
Black's timing is a bit out at the moment and they would have preferred 21 instead of 22. Covering the two blots with 9/5 and 4/2 leaves just one more 2 to play. In order to get as many chances as possible to make the 3-point, the remaining 2 is shifted off the 8-point, 8/6. Our next position isn't too far away so we'll let the rolls guide us there:

White) 41: 7/3 4/3 -- This is an error @ -0.063. Playing 13/9 7/6 was Snowie's favourite. Black) 63: 23/17 6/3 -- This is correct. Although 9/3 6/3 looks very good, it's a borderline blunder @ -0.110. White) 31: 7/4 7/6 -- White is forced into abandoning their bar-point.



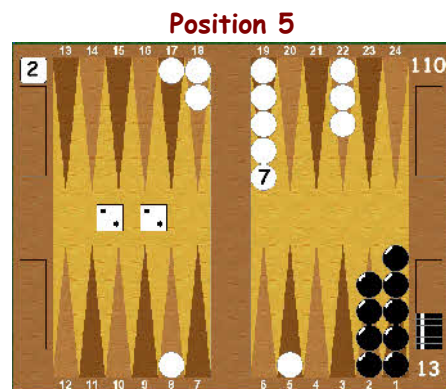
Black 0 White 0

Black is unable to cover their 17-point blot so they do the next best thing and cover the 3-point with 9/3, and then 8/6. If they can weather white's next roll they could turn the game in their favour.



Black 0 White 0

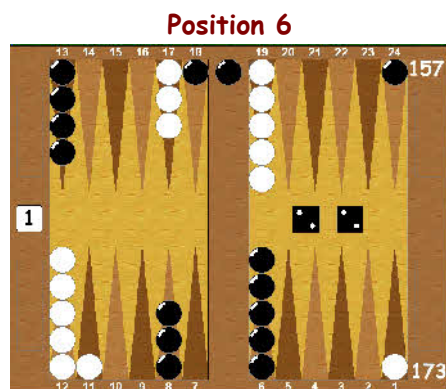
Well, black's blot is left untouched as white moves 13/9(2). Some of you might think that making the 1-point with one or two of the 2s is a good idea, but you'd be making an error or even a blunder. The 1-point isn't a problem at the moment, the two checkers on the mid-point are. They need to get as close to their home board as they can and 13/9(2) does it well.



Black 0 White 2

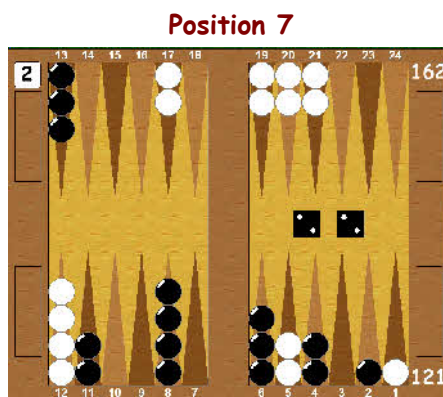
White, holding a 2-cube is in danger of losing a gammon here and letting the score swing in black's favour, 4-2. At the moment both sides will be finished in nine crossovers (five rolls): for black this is 100% certain, but white has to get in two crossovers per roll to save the gammon. Having rolled a double, albeit a small one, white has gained a full roll; however, it's only of use if they crossover at least three checkers. The actual

move of 20/14 8/6 is a borderline error @ -0.033. Snowie rates it in 5th position and prefers 20/18 17/15 8/6 7/5. The remaining three moves all advocate at least two crossovers. The gammon losses for white with the actual play is 54.4% whereas with Snowie's play it is 52.1%. It might seem a small difference, 2.3%, but in backgammon even the 0.3% can mean the difference between winning and losing. As it turned out it didn't really matter what white did, black rolled two doubles, 22 (no surprise there!) and 66 to easily win the gammon.



Black 4 White 3

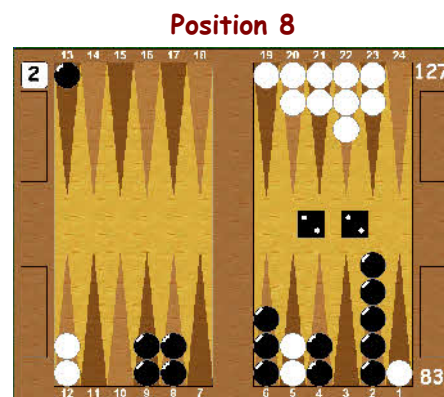
This is easy stuff, and I only include it to see if anyone actually plays anything else! The play is 25/23 13/11* 6/4(2). It's nearest rival is so far away it needs the Hubble telescope to track it down @ -0.250!



Black 4 White 3

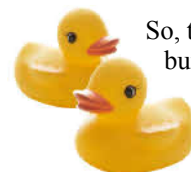
White's home board is filling up nicely and black do not want to be behind it, therefore covering the 2-point blot is essential. The question is: How? I am sure a few of you will want to keep blocking white's 6s by remaining on the 11-point and have decided upon moving 13/11 to place a spare checker on the 11-point and then cover the blot with 8/2. If you did choose this then you've made a blunder @ -0.128.

Often players reckon it's a good thing to block off your opponent's 6s, but that's not always so - when you're well in the lead (41 pips) and bearing in against opposition **they** are blocking **you** more often than not. So, the best move here is the actual play 11/9(2) 6/2.



Black 4 White 3

This is an ugly roll for black. Prior to this, white made a huge blunder @ -0.279 and opened up their 6-point; but this roll from black fails to exploit it. It could be exploited with 13/9 (9/7(2) leaving a blot vulnerable to 4s and 62, but to do so would be a big error @ -0.098. The best play, and the least pleasing to the eye, is 13/9 8/6(2). Sixes will play very poorly in this position; at least in the error they could have been of use with 5s or 1s, but now they only work with 3s.



So, there you have it, a nice bunch of Quack! Quacks! Elliot and Harald went on to win the match, 7-3.

13th Liverpool Open



John Wright: There were close on a million visitors to Liverpool for this busy weekend, the majority attending The Open Golf and The Tall

Ships Race, with 48 choosing the Liverpool Backgammon Open.

Saturday consisted of 5 rounds of nine point matches with 4 wins securing a place in the last 16. Ten players achieved this with 13 players on 3 wins going into the hat for the last 6 places.

The weather stopped us from playing outdoors this year but the tournament progressed in a friendly atmosphere.

By 7pm we had our 16 finalists, which included Brian Lever who forfeited his

first match after informing us earlier in the week that he would be arriving late, players then dispersed to enjoy the evening delights of Liverpool.

Sunday morning, with everyone back on time, The Main and The Consolation were soon underway and we soon reached the last 8, which saw the following matches:

Marcus Wrinch	vs	Irving Czechowicz
Ann Pocknell	vs	Brian Lever
Martin Barkwill	vs	Jimmi Wong
John Wright	vs	Pat Holly

After this round, the semi final saw Ann v Irving and Jimmi v Pat and with Ann and Jimmi victorious, the finalists were known. British Open Champion, Ann, showed her class and became 13th Liverpool Open Champion.

In the consolation final, Mick Vacarey beat Lee Wood, the Last Chance was won by John Wright beating Rachel Rhodes and Jeff Barber beat Peter ►

IS THIS YOU?
RELAXED AND
UNWORRIED?



Chan to win the '1- pointer'.

The whole weekend went very smoothly and was played in a great atmosphere. Our club would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part and helped to make the weekend a success. I would also like to thank those people who emailed me with some very kind comments soon after the event. We look forward to seeing you all next year.

One sour note from the weekend was the 'very vocal' negative comments of one particular player (for the second year) that I personally found rude and completely uncalled for. After talking to two respected players, their opinion was that perhaps the player was ignorant rather than intentionally rude. However, now that some of these comments have appeared in print, maybe it would be better if this player doesn't attend next year, as they clearly don't appreciate the time and effort put in by everyone at our club.



Tournament virgin,
Deana Fawcett:

Saturday: 47 entries in the main. Paul G beat Tony F in 1st round - all the way to Liverpool to play one another. Tony played Brian Lever in 2nd round and had a lesson in how to play, losing 9-2.

Paul G beat Lucy in 2nd round and Cynthia in 3rd round after being 8-3 down to win 9-8.

Everyone is amazed that Irving has won 3 out of 3 and qualifies for the last 16 with 4 wins – two being 9-1 wins. Deana played four rounds and lost four rounds. In 4th round Deana plays Alan Greenwood who was very patient and helped Deana along the way.

Alan gives Deana the cube at 5-1 up and Paul G then wonders why it was Deana's

roll, the cube then goes back on 8 and Deana loses. Paul G reaches the last 16 and Tony F goes in the hat.

1 pointer: Paul G lost his 1 pointer to a very noisy Peter Chan. Tony F then lost his 1 pointer to a very noisy Peter Chan!

Deana actually won her first 1 pointer against Lars and was then waiting to play Marcus.

Sunday: Six people are picked from the hat Tony is not one of them.

The last 16:

Marcus beat Jeff Barber
Irving beat Steve Hallett
Ann Pocknell beat Dave Wallbank
Brian Lever beat Cynthia
Martin Barkwell beat Bob Parmley
Jimmi Wong beat Rachel Rhodes
John Wright beat Dave Gates
Pat Holly beat Paul Gilbertson

Then we went home having lost in the Consolation and the 1 pointer, with Peter Chan in the semi final and waiting noisily for his next opponent.

Michael will probably never ask me to do this again!

MC: Oh yes I will ★

Brian Lever pointed out to me that for the past couple of years a pattern has been emerging regarding the winner of the Liverpool Open. Last year Brian won it - and he was the 2007 British Champion, Ann won it this year and she is the current British Champion!

I (and a few others who have emailed me) didn't attend this year due to the lack of accommodation available because of the Golf tournament taking place the same weekend. I hope next year it doesn't clash again - Sharen wants to go shopping!



Main: Jimmi & Ann
Consolation: Mick & Lee
Last Chance: John & Rachel
1-Pointer: Jeff & Peter

Obituary



Jon Samuel
Died July 2008

Michael Crane: I didn't know Jon that well. He came to a few Biba tournaments and I have to say he was always cheerful and very friendly. I last saw him in January 2008 when he came to Brighton after a long illness. He looked tired and drawn but he was still cheerful and optimistic about entering future events. Sadly, he never returned.

Nicky Check: I first met Jon about 5 years ago, although we only really got friendly about 3 years ago. Jon was a regular at Biba during that period, and always played the game with a smile on his face. I guess to describe John - he was a young man in his fifties. No one who plays backgammon ever grows up, and he was no exception to the rule. Not a bad player, he was always up for a challenge. He would do anything for his many friends and was a founder member of the Croydon Backgammon Club. Jon was a keen music fan, and was a semi famous rock star in the seventies touring America and taking full advantage of the scene on offer. Last year Jon had major surgery, and never fully regained his strength. He last came to Biba in January and enjoyed seeing all his friends. I last spoke to him at the beginning of the month (July), and he told me he was looking forward to getting his strength back. Sadly this was not to be

SAC Trophy

Report by Michael Crane

Friday 500 (12)

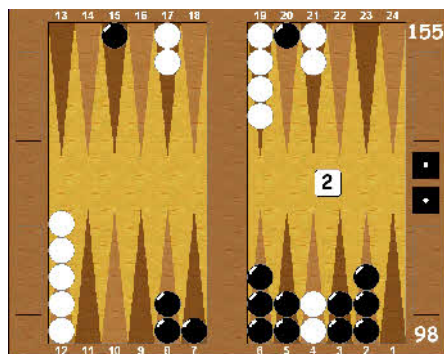
With a field of 12 we had an open draw of 16, this allowed four players to re-enter. Two of these were Gerry Enslin and I - and we met as 15th & 16th in the draw - an encounter from which Gerry emerged the winner . . . despite trailing 4-0! He then progressed through the draw into the final where he played - and beat - Myke Wignall.

Nicky Check, who had a good lead in the Friday 500 failed to win a single match and his new score still puts him in the lead, but only by 1 point. Myke Wignall moved up into 2nd place thanks to his loss in the final. [See page 31](#)

Main (20/40)

Forty! What an unexpected turnout. Forty players battling down to just one. On the Sunday morning (following a false alarm, fire alarm that got most of us out of bed or the restaurant) we were now split into two fields, Main and Consolation. In the Main we had five on 3/3: Tony Fawcett vs Raj Jansari; Peter Christmas vs Steve Rimmer; Phil Tutchings vs John Thomas (a random, 2/3).

Because we we're not guaranteed 6/6, a 5/6 could come 1st or 2nd. Raj beat Tony and Peter beat Steve - however, Phil lost to John which left us with Raj vs Peter both on 4/4. Raj prevailed and he then faced Phil Tutchings in the 6th Round. If Phil won we'd have a Prize Draw Rollover - so we were all cheering Phil on! Phil managed to win the first game, but then Raj won a couple of points and we get to this position in the 3rd Game to 11 points, Phil (b) 1, Raj (w) 2:



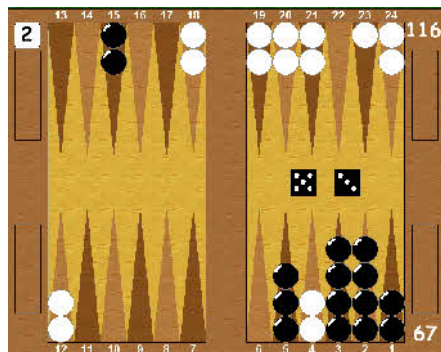
Black cube action?

Phil (b) has a substantial lead of 57 pips and offers across a 2-cube. There's no doubt about the cube; and there's no doubt it's a take. White's 21-point anchor

isn't going anywhere for a while and black's two runners are split and facing plenty of opposition. Phil is on 65.6% (34.4% for Raj) and it's a double/take from Snowie.

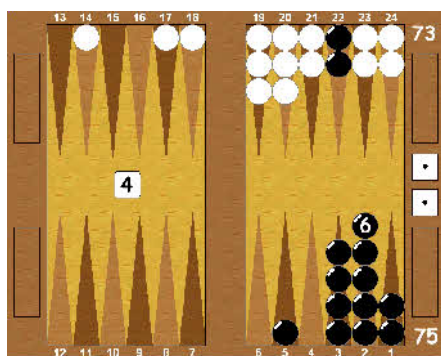
Snowie stats		
Double, take	0.693	
No redouble	0.678	-0.015
Double, pass	1.000	+0.307

White scoops it up and the game continues. Black rolls 32 and plays 20/15 making his 15-point . . . and that's where these two checkers remain for four more rolls until Phil is forced into leaving a shot:



Black to play 53

Phil correctly plays 15/7 duplicating 3s - and Raj rolls 53 and hits and covers by playing 21/18* 7/2. Phil dances, Raj rolls another 53 and scoops up the second blot; a position from which Phil never really recovers. Eventually he rolls in both checkers with 33 and Raj promptly ships across a 4-cube.:



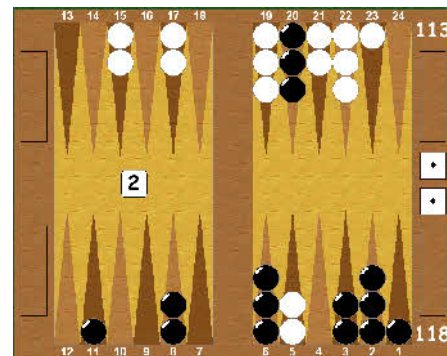
White cube action?

Phil's previous lead of 57 pips has dropped by 59 and he now trails by 2 pips and drops the cube. Snowie concurs, Phil is now on just 13.7% and Raj is on 86.3% and it's over for Phil in this game.

Snowie stats		
Redouble, pass	1.000	
No Redouble	0.974	-0.026
Redouble, take	1.573	+0.573

The score went with Raj for a while, then

Phil levelled at 5-5. From here the score went fairly evenly until the 13th Game when Phil was leading 9-8 when he faced this cube from Raj . . .



Black 9 White 8
White cube action?

Another case of double, take, being the correct play:

Snowie stats		
Double, take	0.961	
No Double	0.714	-0.246
Double, pass	1.000	+0.039

But then disaster struck! Raj rolled 66 playing 20/14*(2) 14/2 and covered the blot - much like above! Although Phil re-entered quickly with 53 he never got a shot at Raj, and eventually Raj rolled out to win two points taking the score to 10-9 Crawford in his favour. The Crawford went (almost) all Raj's way and Phil resigned after it was impossible for him to win the match. Well done, Raj, and hard luck, Phil. On countbacks and tie-breaks 2nd place was awarded to Chris Ternel.

Consolation (20/40)

Mike Heard beat Richard Holness, Paul Barwick and John Reddinton to get 3/3. He was joined by Stewart Pemberton who beat Arthur Wright, Mrs. Pemberton! (Vicki) and Rachel Rhodes. One other player, Gerry Enslin could have made it three on 3/3 if he won his 3rd match against Stephen Drake, but alas he didn't. Because we had plenty of time and both players agreed, Mike and Stewart had an 11-point playoff, a match from which Stewart came out the winner with Mike as Runner-up.

Team (9)

Nine players were soon whittled down to two teams after the team I was in were robbed by a joker 33 allowing our opponents to bearoff their last three checkers. This winning team were later whittled down to two, John Hedge vs Nicky Check - an encounter from which John emerged the winner. ➡

Raj Jansari
SAC
Winner



Bacon Sarnie **Chris Ternel**



Mike & Stewart - Consolation



Arthur sleeps through the excitement of the fire drill as Tony Fawcett looks on bemused!



Poker (9)

Not the biggest of fields but enough to make it worth winning in the Grand Prix. Our two resident 'professionals', Tony Fawcett and Myke Wignall predictably came 1st and 2nd with 'Mr Annoying', Mick Butterfield in 3rd. If talking was an Olympic event, Mick would now be on his way to Beijing with high hopes of a medal! **See page 31**

At one stage of the poker Mick Vacarey saw that three of the remaining players had beards and he bet a tenner that the night's winner would have a beard - he lost, for as we all know, Tony's face is as smooth as a babies bottom!



Two of the bearded Poker players, Roy Hollands and David Horner (playing backgammon - not poker!)

Finally

The fire alarm proved to be very entertaining and Peter Chan was present with his camera to capture the moment. I vacated the restaurant with a bacon sarnie and a cup of coffee - Arthur Wright managed to sleep through it all despite being on his feet - and Deana and Sharen were upset because Peter photographed the fire engine but not a fireman!



The tournament went along very well indeed although the playing-rooms were a bit stuffy - no opening windows or natural ventilation.

This Swiss event was unique in that not one player asked to drop out! That reminds me, where were David Nathan and Ray Tannen? ☆

MSO Backgammon 2008



I wasn't directly involved this year with the backgammon, although I was indirectly via Mike Main when he asked me to work out the medal positions for the Vincent Square Cup. It was quite complicated (even for me!) but I cracked it eventually in the fairest way in which I felt I could. Unfortunately my decision was overruled a week later by the MSO Event Manager!

I am a bit peed off by this to say the least. So much so that I have decided that next year Biba will not be allocating Grand Prix points in any of the events. I think it best that I don't get involved and just leave them to it.

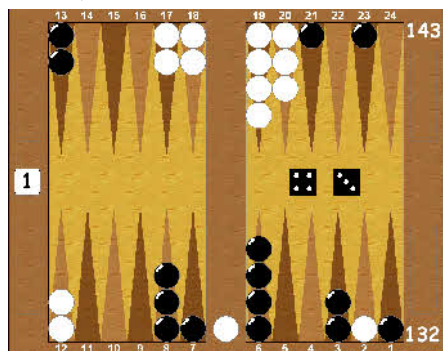
I have listed the GP points awarded this year and they will be added to the Championship list following the Backgammon-in-London tournament. I don't have the full results at the moment but hopefully I will be able to publish them in the next issue of Bibafax.

MSO Grand Prix Vincent Cup and Olympiad		
Peter Bennet	18.58	.
John Reddington	15.48	6.19
Irving Czechowicz	15.48	.
Nicky Check	13.42	.
Vicki Pemberton	12.39	6.19
Steve Rimmer	9.29	7.74
Chris Purchase	9.29	.
Mike Heard	8.25	.
Geoff Oliver	6.19	.
Rachel Rhodes	6.19	.
Cynthia Roberts	6.19	.
Stewart Pemberton	6.19	.
Lawrence Powell	4.13	.
Paul Gilbertson	4.13	.
Cliff Connick	4.13	.
Dale Taylor	4.13	.
Mick Vacarey	2.58	4.13
Rosey Bensley	2.58	.
Mahmoud Jahanbani	.	17.55
Wayne Felton	.	16.52
John Broomfield	.	10.84
Alan Beckerson	.	9.29
Uldis Lapikens	.	7.74
Monica Beckerson	.	4.13

World-Class Blunders!

By Michael Crane & Peter Bennet

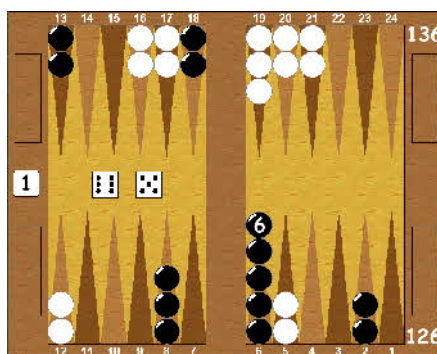
During their finals match in the 2008 Keren Di Bona tournament, Peter Bennet and Martin Barkwill both played at world-class level. They both made the same number of blunders according to Snowie, two each. What is interesting about the blunders is that apart from Peter's first one (which was Snowie 2nd), the remaining three were 8th, 9th and 9th. Let's take a look at them; Peter (above left) is playing as black and Martin (above right) is playing as white - to 11 points.



Game 3 Position 7
Black 0 White 2
Black to play 43

Martin already has one checker on the bar and Peter now decides to make his 1-point, playing 8/1. Snowie says this is a blunder @ -0.133 and the better move is the simple, 8/4 7/4, making the more valuable 4-point. The 1-point isn't often a point worth making, and in this position it is inferior to its colleague, the 4-point. The 1-point blot might well be hit by 11 rolls but that's not a bad thing for it will easily re-enter with 32 rolls (if white's home board remains as it is) and 21 of those 32 make an anchor, 17 of which make the advanced anchor.

PB: I decided to avoid leaving a direct shot and try a blitzing play here, where order of inner board points is not so important. However I am unlikely to be able to close white out, and my own back checkers are behind a prime; therefore counter-priming looks a more promising strategy.



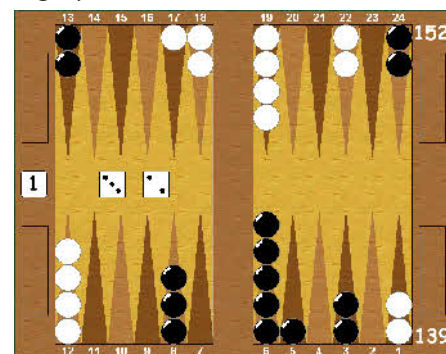
Game 4 Position 5
Black 0 White 2
White to play 65

There are seven plays better than the actual play of running the back checkers out, 20/14 20/15. Snowie rates it -0.209, 0.028 less than its nearest rival, 8/2 6/1 @

-0.177. Even though black doesn't have a home board yet, giving him a double shot is very wrong and doesn't achieve anything for white. The only thing in its favour is that of all the plays that run a back checker out, this one is the 2nd 'best' one; it is pipped by 20/9 @ -0.112. Granted, white has got to move these checkers eventually, but not with this roll, one that loses almost 4% game winning chances.

Snowie's fave is the pure, 9/3 9/4 with 8/2 8/3 close behind @ -0.006. Black is very flat in the outer boards with just one spare checker on his 8-point. The match play gives black good 2s and 3s which are otherwise not particularly constructive. As it turned out, black rolled 65 and vacated his mid point.

PB: Martin tries running, and challenges my stripped mid-point while my home board is still weak. However, running is probably not the best plan while trailing slightly in the race.



Game 11 Position 3
Black 8 White 6
White to play 32

This time there are eight better plays than 24/21 13/11 @ -0.248; however, only part of this play is incorrect, the 24/21. It gives black extra chances to hit and point thus putting white at a disadvantage. The better play is 13/10 and 13/11; ►

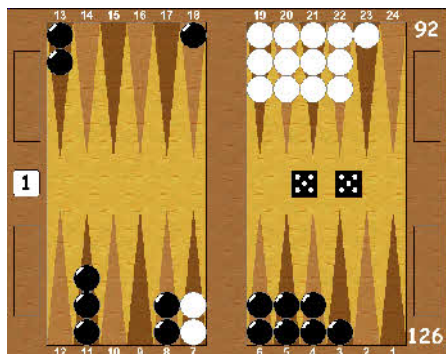


IS THIS YOU?
UPSET, FED-UP
AND OUT IN
THE COLD?

clearing two checkers off a laden point and in the process adding good builders for the higher home board points. All three of white's blots are indirect (they need two dice to hit them) and therefore, to hit any of them means black's 5-point blot cannot be made safe. A close 2nd to 13/10 13/11 is making the 5-point, 8/5 7/5 @ -0.005. Although it leaves a blot hit by a direct 6, black will need 61 or 63 or 33 to cover his 5-point blot (or 62 to move it to safety).

As a consequence of moving off the black 24-point, white was hit a little later and soon he had two checkers on the bar and he eventually lost a gammon going 10-6 down, Crawford.

PB: Martin decides to move up in my board before getting hemmed in, but I have eleven checkers in the attack zone, so this is not a good idea. He has better structure and timing than me for a priming battle, so that should be his game plan.



Game 12 Position 9 Black 10 White 6 (Crawford) Black to play 55

Up until this move both players had been playing without fault, but this all changed when Peter moved 18/13 11/6(3) @ -0.158. The difference between this play and Snowie's 18/3 11/6 is it returns almost 8% fewer game winning chances (about a two and a half percent reduction in match winning chances)!

White cannot play 6s without moving off his 18-point and perhaps leaving a blot - and ironically, it is for this reason that Peter's play of 11/6(3) works tremendously in his favour for Martin rolls 64 and has to play 18/8! Black then rolls a 64 of his own, his game/match winning chances soar to 76% and he continues to win the match.

PB: I don't want a completely stripped position when white's board is at its strongest. If I make Snowie's play and white doesn't roll a 6, my next play might be awkward (and 6-1 would leave a shot). However it appears that covering my blot in case white does roll a six is more important.

It was this victory that gave Peter his second consecutive tournament win and his second, 1000-to-1 trophy. Well done, Peter.

MC: This match is available as a Snowie or JellyFish matchfile or as a html file viewable via your web browser. Details from Biba HQ. See panel below.

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Can you guess which of these two didn't book his accommodation early enough? The one on the left ignored numerous pleas and advice to book his accommodation before the Biba allocation ran out or the hotel became fully booked. The one on the right paid attention to the pleas and took the advice; he booked his accommodation early and is now sitting pretty, knowing full well he'll be able to attend all Biba tournaments and not have to worry about where to stay.



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A Tale of Four Tournaments

Or how I went for the million . . .
but only managed thirty-two thousand (to one)

By Peter Bennet



No I haven't done a 'Mike Hanson' on the TV show 'Who wants to be a Millionaire'. All will become clear if you persevere to the end of this article.

There is much discussion about luck in backgammon, usually taking the form of hard-luck stories. If the story-tellers really did have such bad luck, their opponents must have had correspondingly good luck, but perhaps they are more likely to keep quiet about it.

They say that luck 'evens out' in the end, but it ain't necessarily so. And even if, over a long period of time, most players experience good and bad luck in roughly equal measure, the randomness of its distribution frequently results in 'clumps' - when everything seems to go right (or wrong!) for what seems to be an improbably long period. This clumping comes in very handy for winning tournaments.

If someone plays well enough to win, on average, two-thirds of his matches, but this distribution holds true for every tournament, he would never win an eight (or more) player tournament! I feel I have had more than my fair share of clumps of good luck over the years resulting, among other 'lucky' wins, in my completing the 1000-1 (ten 11-point matches in a row) eight years ago, and again in the last few months. I decided to write this rather self-indulgent article about 'the secret of my success' with the addition of a few interesting positions I encountered along the way.

Players sometimes search for a reason to explain a run of luck. When they find a common factor, such as something they do before each match or tournament, or maybe a particular shirt they were wearing, there is a tendency to latch onto this in an attempt to extend their run of good fortune. Such superstitions are of course just that, and cannot affect events in the real world.

Tournament One

The Magic of Persia, 1st June

Back in May 2008 I considered, and then decided against, playing in this charity tournament to be held at Home House in London on Sunday 1st June. Shirley

Elghanian is the driving force behind the event which was directed by Mike Main. However Shirley telephoned me towards the end of May to see if I was coming, and happened to mention that a Geoffrey Parker board in the style specially made for Crockfords would be awarded to the winner as an added prize. For a long time I had wanted to own one of these boards but had never been able to justify shelling out the four-figure sum required. This added prize was therefore all the incentive I needed to turn up at Home House on June 1st.

My chance of winning the board appeared to be zero after losing in the first round, and I drifted unenthusiastically into the Consolation. However it was then announced that a second identical Parker board (except for colour), which had previously been auctioned off for the benefit of the charity, had been generously donated back by the buyer and would be awarded to the winner of the Consolation. With renewed vigour I battled my way to the 9-point Consolation final, where I met a lovely lady by the name of Natasha who only played backgammon socially and was unfamiliar with the cube. A few minutes later my over-confidence was well and truly shattered as I found myself at the wrong end of a 7-0 scoreline. Undaunted, I battled on, eventually winning 9-8. The board was mine!



You might wonder what all this has to do with my recent BIBA success but, you see, this new Parker board provides the explanation. Maybe some of the 'Magic of Persia' rubbed off onto it because I have only lost one match on it and that was to my daughter. When I use it for a serious match, as I did for nine out of my ten BIBA matches in the June and July

tournaments, I cannot lose on this magical board!! This has to be the secret behind my recent wins. Of course I am now reluctant to 'waste' the board's power on any old game, reserving it for the more important tournaments. Many players are very particular about dice (and with good reason, bearing in mind events at the Partouche Gammon Tour tournament in Normandy earlier this summer). However, few appreciate that it is the combination of dice *and* board which is important. After all there is a physical interaction between the two and, in modern parlance, the 'synergy' must be right. Naturally the board came with precision dice in green and pink which complemented the green and maroon leather, providing a soothing visual experience thereby engendering a relaxed demeanour in the player. This only works for me of course, not my opponent.

Tournament Two

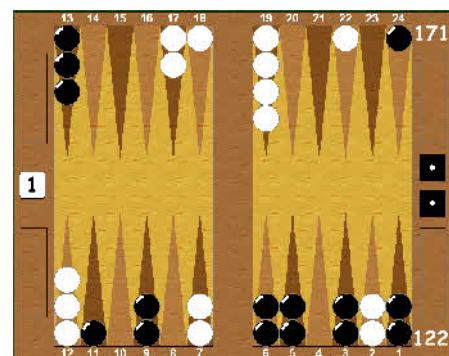
BIBA English Open, 7/8th June

Round 1, Eddie Barker

Eddie was totally unaware of my board's powers (as was I at the time) and he never really got much of a look in. Leading 8-5 to 11 in Position 1, I seem to have powerful threats with lots of gammons, so I cubed and Eddie took. In all 15 positions (1-15) I am playing as Black.



Position 1



Black on roll, cube action?

(a) Black leads 8-5 to 11

(b) Money game

For money this would have been a reasonable double and an easy take. Eddie has those two solid anchors on my 2- and bar-points which will keep him in the game, and potentially cause me grief, for a long time. In the meantime he can set about repairing his front position. Leading 8-5 to 11, my gammons are already slightly devalued (I cannot use all four points) and Eddie can kill them completely with a recube if he gets any kind

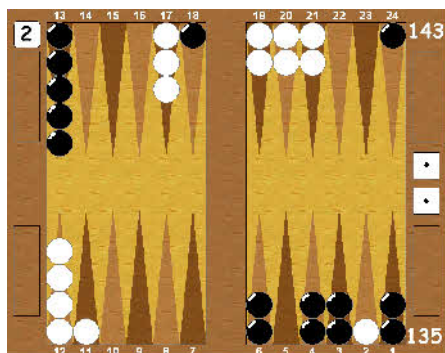
of threat. Snowie says wait, but Snowie knows nothing about my board of course. Eddie took and I cruised home for a gammon and the match.

Round 2, Ann Pocknell

Ann is the current British Open champion and was not about to surrender without a fight. Things went badly for me from the first game: my early blitz fizzled out; Ann (White) turned the game around and then had the temerity to redouble me in Position 2.



Position 2



Score 0-0 to 11
White on roll, cube action?

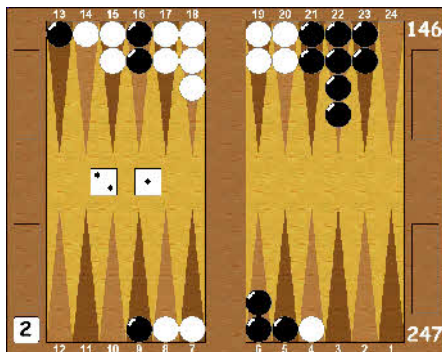
Had someone not told her about my board? Evidently not. Ann has the tactical 'first strike' capability here (28 shots) from which I may never recover; still the double is only just correct. My stronger board allows me to snap back into the game with any return hit before she has completed her 6-prime. Also her eight misses give me a breathing space. I avoided the gammon to trail 0-4, and later 5-10 Crawford, before I found the appropriate incantations to win a gammon in the Crawford game, and then another to win the match.

Round 3, Kevin Stebbing

Kevin is, of course, an accomplished magician himself. In Position 3 from our first game (next column), Kevin (White) has contrived to make most of my checkers disappear and reappear again as prisoners in his home board.



Position 3
Score 0-0 to 11
White to play 21



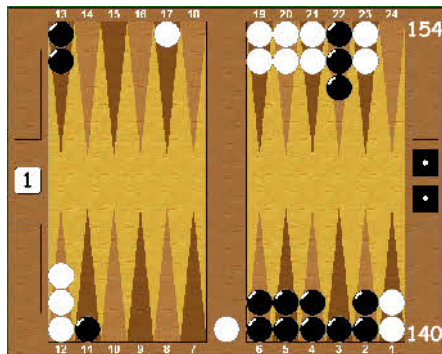
Fortunately Kevin's magical powers were no match for those of my board, which seemed to relish the challenge. I haven't the faintest idea what the correct play is here: I just want to show the position! I won this game by going forwards after hitting a very early shot, thanks to numerous big doubles and Kevin's poor rolling. In fact throughout our match, whenever Kevin looked like he had a winning position everything seemed to fall apart for him, and I progressed to the next round 11-1.

Round 4, Dorothy Lee

Two games into the match I was leading 2-1 and had offered Dorothy (White) the unappetising cube shown in Position 4.



Position 4



Black leads 2-1 to 11,
Black on roll, cube action?

I have 20 great numbers – an eight or ten to cover my blot and other fives plus 4-1 to hit again. According to Snowie I will win the game two-thirds of the time and half of those wins will be gammons, making this a fairly thin take. Dorothy showed she wasn't going to be intimidated and took after some thought, eventually losing just a single.

But Dorothy, playing well and intensely focused on the match, recovered from this early setback and stormed ahead 10-6. Reaching Crawford was the wake-up call for my board which finally started to

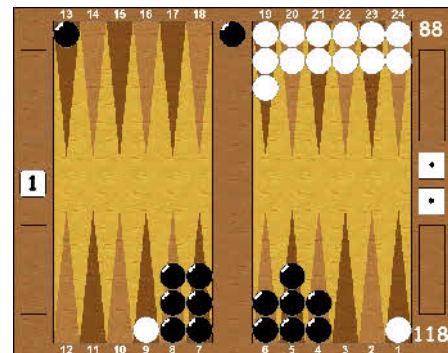
work its magic, although in several of the subsequent games I initially looked dead and buried.

Semi-final, Stewart Pemberton

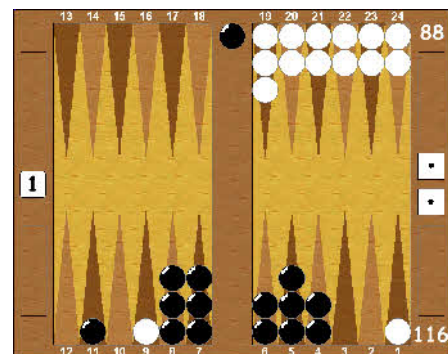
From the first game of the semi-final it was clearly going to be tough for both of us. In the sequence leading up to Position 5, instead of meekly capitulating, Stewart (White) has very inconveniently rolled a 3-6 joker (Bar/16*) to give us both an interesting puzzle. The following diagrams show the original position (5), plus two variants (5.1 and 5.2):



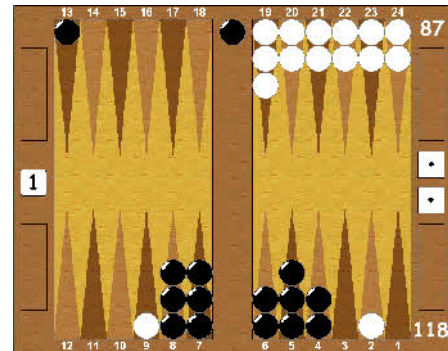
Positions 5



Position 5.1



Position 5.2



In each case: Score 0-0,
White on roll, cube action?

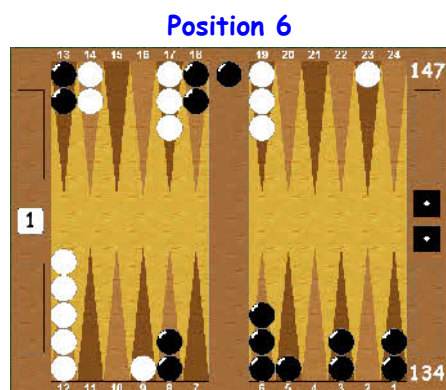
Over the board (Position 5) I thought I simply had to take and gather in all those wins when Stewart crunches before he escapes. However I hadn't made

sufficient allowance for the extra time, and extra gammons, which White banks in all the games where he manages to hit my midpoint blot. With two of my men on the bar he may escape his straggler after breaking his board and while I am still struggling to enter. Rollouts indicate a marginal pass.

White's diversification is very important here: he has twos to move up in my board and fours to hit. If you modify the position by moving my blot to the 11-point (Position 5.1), it becomes partially immune: White must use his first two to advance to the edge of my prime which considerably reduces his chance of eventually picking up the second man. Not surprisingly this results in fewer gammon losses which translates to an easy take.

Slightly more surprising is that if you modify the original position by moving White's back checker up to my 2-point to produce Position 5.2, I also have an easy take. This small change reduces the number of White's rolls which get him to the edge from 12 (all twos plus double one) to 11 (all ones only). There are two other more subtle effects of this change: it duplicates three of White's hitting numbers (31 and 11); and White must now move a two elsewhere (rather than a one in the original position). This extra pip that White has to move when he rolls a two makes it just that little bit more likely that he will crack before escaping. To quote Jeremy Bagai: every checker matters.

My punishment for taking this cube was to get gammoned, but by now I was quite used to trailing badly. I was 6-9 down before I began to pick up any momentum; then at 8-9, the following position arose.



Black on roll, cube action?
(a) Black trails 8-9 to 11
(b) Black trails 7-9 to 11
(c) Money game

Stewart had just hit loose on his 2-point giving me twos to shoot at from the bar, fours to hit in my outer board, and ones and threes to cover. Considering the score, I thought this was probably a pass but Stewart took: my rollouts indicate a borderline take/ pass. This is another position where score is all-important. For money the double is borderline; whereas if I had been trailing 7-9 I would get maximum value from a gammon and it becomes a big pass. During the match itself my board now knew what was required of it, and I duly won a gammon to earn a place in the final.

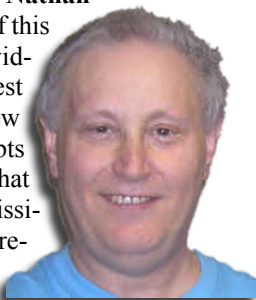
English Open Final, Dave Motley

The final did not seem to produce as much drama as some of my earlier matches. We used Dave's board, rather than mine, because it was a bit smaller and more easily fitted within camera shot for the match recording. Fortunately for me, being deprived of the use of my own new board did not prevent me from rolling well – perhaps I had acquired some of its magic – and I won the match 11-4. The entire match is available for all to see, so I won't dwell on it here.

Tournament Three BIBA Keren di Bona Trophy, 5/6th July

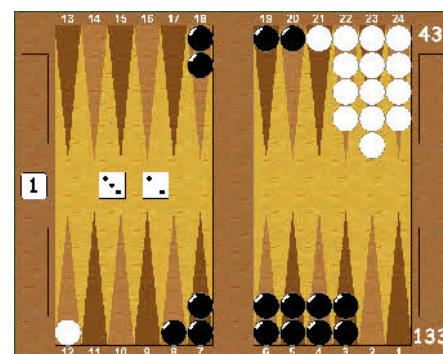
Round 1, David Nathan

The first round of this tournament provided the sternest test yet for my new board. Any doubts I may have had that its powers had dissipated over the preceding four weeks were soon dispelled.



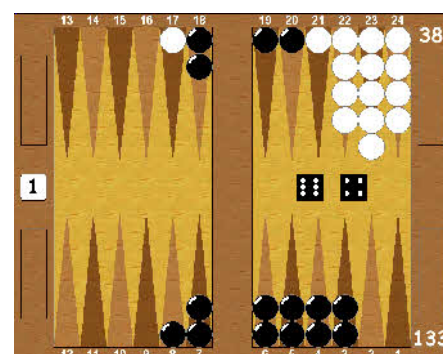
The first eleven games split the points evenly at seven apiece. Three games later, David had pulled ahead 10-7 Crawford. Of course by now I knew that on this board such a lead was fatal for my opponent. At first it didn't seem so, for he appeared to be big favourite on more than one occasion in the Crawford game. The second time occurred after the sequence shown in the next two positions (7 & 8) in which David is playing the White checkers.

Position 7



White to play 32
leading 10-7 Crawford

Position 8



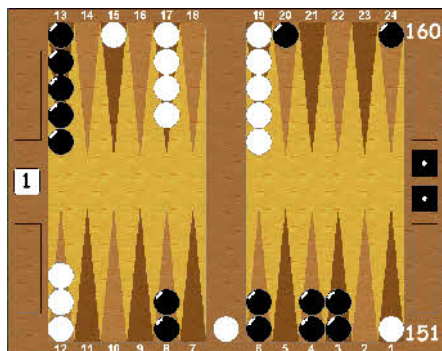
Black to play 64
trailing 7-10 Crawford

I had previously hit a shot, David had escaped my home board and, in Position 7, he had hoped for a big number to get to safety and win the match. Instead he rolled 32 which he correctly played 13/8 giving me 27 numbers to hit, but almost assuring that it will be all over if I miss. The crucial word in the last sentence is 'almost'. I rolled 64 (played 8/2 7/3) and surprisingly at this point I still have about a 5% chance to win this game. As far as the tournament and the 1000-1 are concerned, I am now about 500-1 against, so for the 1000-1 at least I am still better off than when I started the previous tournament!

Well obviously this wouldn't be very interesting had David not rolled a 21, forcing him to hit (8/6* 4/3) and then I hit and covered, winning the game to take me to 8-10 post-Crawford. In the next game I tried the post-Crawford, odd-away ploy of not cubing immediately in the hope that I may later be able to steal a point, which is just about as good as two points at this score. The beauty of this 'trick' is that the perpetrator does not have to know what the exact gammon win/game loss ratio is: he just hopes his opponent will get it wrong. Technically the match

leader should take the cube if his game-winning chances exceed his gammon-losing chances, but these percentages can be difficult to evaluate and the match trailer gains whenever his opponent errs. However, the trailer is skating on thin ice and the trick will cost him if the position suddenly becomes gammonish and he misses his market.

Position 9

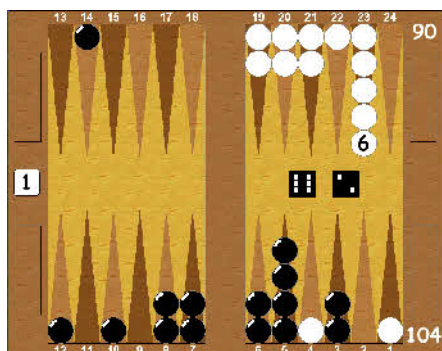


Black on roll trailing 8-10 to 11, post Crawford, cube action?

I thought I (as Black) *had* missed my market when, after a very favourable exchange, I finally doubled in Position 9. However David took, so I was happy after all. A Snowie rollout shows me winning 32% gammons which compares favourably with my losses of 30% or so, indicating a pass. On this occasion, at least, my instinct had been correct. I didn't get the gammon, but was grateful to win the game and get to DMP.

There were many anxious moments in the last game, Position 10 being a case in point.

Position 10



Black to play 62 at DMP

Here I developed a blind spot and did not consider hitting at all for some reason. I played 12/10 14/8, hoping to keep White locked behind my prime. White's board is in danger of collapsing and hitting 10/4* with the six is definitely correct, but the two is a little more difficult. One tactic is

to carry on, 4/2, on the grounds that if White hits on the 2-point he doesn't simultaneously reach the escape hatch of my open 4-point. The problem with this idea is that I would quite like to *make* the 4-point, and this will now be very difficult. Another plan is to leave the 4-point slotted but take out a bit of life cover with 14/12. If disaster strikes and White hits and leaps, at least he won't be able to harvest additional blots in the outfield, thereby giving him more time to escape his last man. These last two plays are a dead-heat in my rollout.

My subsequent bear-in was awkward and I got hit a few rolls later, but by then I was able to scamper round again and win the race, and match. Sorry David.

Round 2, Dave Motley

Dave was next up, but once again my board and dice did the business, as I sped to an 11-1 victory. I find that I didn't actually record any positions from the match either, so again I am able to give only a brief summary. Sorry Dave.

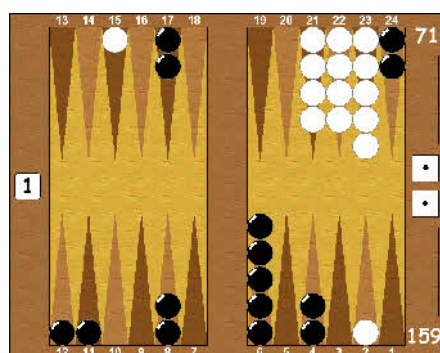


Semi-Final, Myke Wignall

The scoreline against Myke (White), 11-2, also implies an easy ride but there were several long complex games that could have gone either way. Position 11 is an example.



Position 11



White on roll trailing 0-7 to 11, cube action?

I got the impression that Myke had had enough of me finding jokers to turn round games which he had been winning. Sensing a possible gammon to help his comeback he shipped over the cube here.

About half of Myke's wins will be gammons, and he wins just under half the time, but this isn't quite enough to cube, even when trailing 0-7. Myke did win this game, but only a single, and I went on to win the match 11-2.

Keren di Bona Final, Martin Barkwill

Once again the whole match is available if anyone is interested (well, I know that Neil Kazaross expressed an interest!), and I believe our (thankfully few) blunders have been dissected elsewhere in this issue. I won't dwell on the match here, except to say that I *was* using my magic board for this final, and once again I fell behind (0-6 this time). But then the magic kicked in with a vengeance: Barkers never won another point; I won the tournament and with it my second 1000-1. On this occasion we also both justified our places in the final by playing with a World Class Snowie error rating. Those are the matches you want recorded for the world to see! The bad ones are probably more useful to analyse and learn from, but preferably not for everyone to pick over.



Tournament 4 Mind Sports Olympiad Vincent Square Cup 16/17th August (Swiss format)

My story had originally ended here, but I felt I should perhaps add to it after encountering more interesting positions during the MSO weekend in the middle of August. I didn't use 'The Board' for any of the six matches (mustn't wear it out!) plus it was rather too heavy and cumbersome to lug around on the tube. Nevertheless, my winning streak continued. Rather than deliver a blow-by-blow, or round-by-round, narrative of the whole tournament, at the end of this article I present a few cube action problems from some of my matches. In each case you must also decide whether the correct cube action is the same in money play.

After five rounds I was in the fortunate position of being the only player on five wins. The unfortunate part for me was that I had to play a sixth round, which I lost to John Reddington 11-8. Prior to this, I had won 15 eleven-point matches in BIBA (or BIBA-sponsored) events, and had dreams of extending this to 

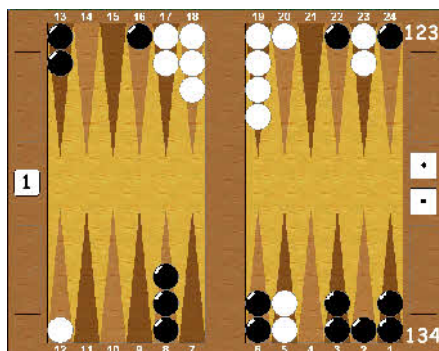
20 (which would have been 1,000,000-to-one). Still, I can't really complain about 15 in a row (or 32,000-to-one; hence the title of this piece). For those who don't know Mike Hanson - as well as being an airline pilot he played backgammon in the UK before going off to fly planes in the far east a few years ago. (I believe he may since have resurfaced in this country at a tournament or two.) On the 'millionaire' TV show, he was unlucky with his £32,000 question which he lost on a 50:50 guess, and went back down to £1000.

In spite of my lost match, which resulted in a four-player tie with five wins each, I was declared the winner of the MSO tournament by a whisker ahead of Irv Czechowicz after two tie-breaks had been brought into play. Some people have all the luck..... *..... and in Peter's case, his luck seems to have run out! The decision that placed Peter in Gold, Irv in Silver and John Reddington in Bronze was mine, a decision I calculated after the Director, Mike Main asked for my advice. My ruling was overturned by Andrew Havery (Event Co-ordinator) and Tony Corfe (Event Manager) leaving John in Gold, Peter in Silver and Irv in Bronze. MC*

I am looking forward to giving the board its next outing at the September BIBA tournament, sponsored by 'Backgammon in London', which will have taken place by the time you read this. Of course I don't really believe all that magic mumbo-jumbo, and naturally neither do you. But I wonder how many of my future opponents will insist on rolling to decide on whose board we play....?

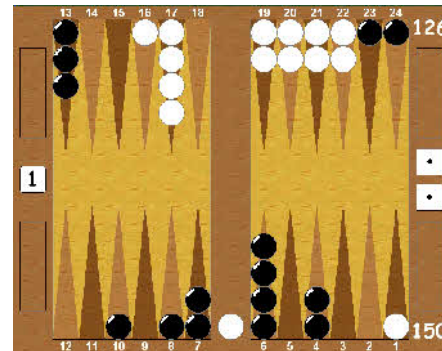
Peter's MSO Doubling Quiz

Position 12



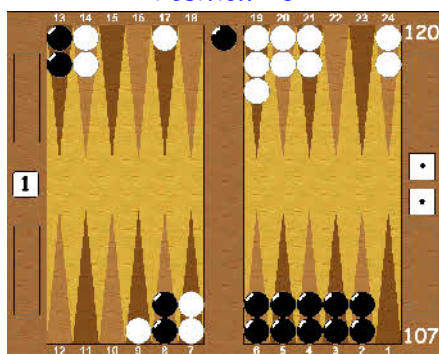
Black 7 White 6
White on roll, cube action?
a) at this match score
b) for money

Position 14



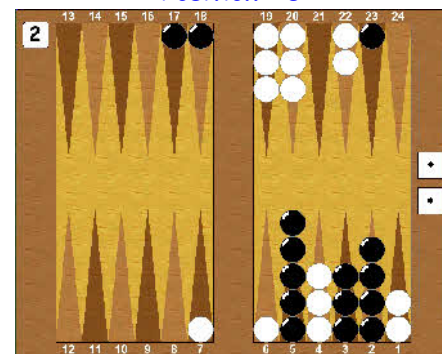
Black 7 White 3
White on roll, cube action?
a) at this match score
b) for money

Position 13



Black 9 White 8
White on roll, cube action?
a) at this match score
b) for money

Position 15



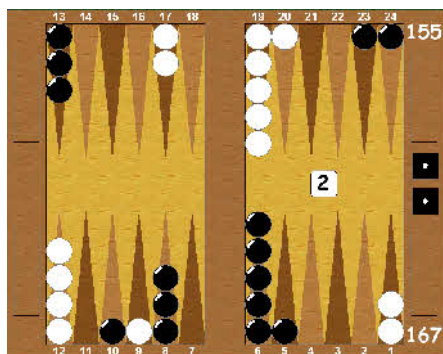
Black 4 White 0
White on roll, cube action?
a) at this match score
b) for money

Answers on the next page ►

Competition 2008 No2. 9401-06 Solutions

By Michael Crane

9401



11 point match
Black 2 White 2
Black cube action

MC: Let's start off this edition with a couple who have bucked the trend and gone for Double/Take.

Bob Young: Double/Take

Every roll is constructive i.e. hits, or covers or races, but with only the one point in each home board, and white having an anchor, it must be too early to drop. The race is close (pip count shown is reversed), the match not critical, and all to play for.

Dorothy Lee: Double/take

A volatile position such as this argues for a double/take. Both sides have roughly the same game going on, the 5-point slot-

ted, two men back; black's advantage lies in the fact he is on roll and has slightly more flexibility. However, of his good numbers, there's an awful lot of duplication in 3s and 4s, so I make it that there's 15 rolls which hit and cover (including 44's which do everything), but none of his 6s do anything constructive, so that gives white a take. If black rolls good, will white still be able to take? I think possibly, yes, which is what makes this a difficult decision for me. Oh, and black also has a racing lead (yes I spotted the deliberate mistake you have reversed the pip-counts!) although in this position, the pip-count didn't really influence my decision. ►

Answers to Cube Action Problems 12, 13, 14, 15

12(a) and (b) Double/Pass

White has a race lead, 12 checkers in the zone, three Black checkers to attack, and she trails 6-7 in the match. Big pass at the score; small pass for money.

13(a) and (b) No double/Take

Black's power-board gives him great chances to win so he must not let the fear of a gammon deter him from taking. White trails in the race and has to tread so

carefully to avoid an accident that she cannot quite double even when trailing 8-9. Almost a money beaver.

14(a) Double/ Borderline take/pass

There are many costly gammon losses for Black and, leading 7-3, he will almost never be able to recube.

14(b) Double/easy take for money

Too many wins to let this one go.

15(a) Redouble/Take . .

but getting close to a pass at this score: the cube will be virtually dead for Black.

15(b) No redouble/take for money

Black wins more gammons here than White and it will be a long time before White threatens a closeout.

◀ **MC:** *Well the only thing you both got correct was spotting my (deliberate) reversal of the pip-count! Now, the question is – did you do your own pip-count or did you plonk the position into Jelly or Snowie??? It's an easy take for white – and that makes it no-double. Here's the rest of the bunch . . .*

Steve Hallett: No Double/Take

Black behind in race with 1s, 3s and 4s to hit and 1s, 3s and 5s to cover his blot on the 5-point, with both sides only having 1 point boards. White has no checkers out of play and still has his 24-point anchor. Even though black is hitting with 27 rolls he only has 18 rolls that hit and cover his blot on the 5-point and only double-four is a killer putting two blots in the air and covering the 5-point. I think white has a fairly easy take at the moment and it's still too early for black to double.

Cedric Lytton: No Double/Take

1s, 3s and 4s are duplicated all over, 5 is good but isolated 2s and 6s don't play very well; even after hitting twice black won't be a massive race favourite, he hasn't made any more home points yet, still has two men back, only 44 could lose his market and white still has his ace-point anchor.

Peter Christmas: No Double/Take

It is early in the match and the game but black does have some threats with the joker 44 making the 5-point and the double hit, but mostly black is going to have to settle for making his point or hitting one or other of the blots. White has a small lead in the race and no more than a slotted home board point but with his 1-point anchor he still has a solid position.

White is on the back foot with the threats but does not have too much to fear and should relish the cube with the opportunity to even up the match score. Bar the joker roll and dance from white I can't

see much that would put white off taking next go and for this reason I think black really should wait and see for at least another roll or two if he has still not established a solid advantage. Verdict: no double, take if offered.

MC: *Peter susses the easy take scenario . . . but doesn't suss the pip-count being transposed!*

Richard Biddle: No Double/Take

I can see why someone may consider a double here. We have many good rolls next time. Any one, three or five makes my 5-point. We can use fours to hit. But I think black is trying to do too much here. Of the three, Race, Position and Threat, we only have the latter. I think next roll, we may well be in a position to double but not yet. Needless to say it is an easy take.

MC: *As usual, Richard is being a PraT. Opps, I mean, using PraT! ☺*

Phil Tutchings: No Double/Take

Although black has established an early racing lead and has some flexibility ahead of this roll this is too early to double. Although favourite to make the 5-point this roll the home board is still underdeveloped. White has ample opportunity to turn this game around and it seems rash to risk the match lead this early on in the game. It may be worth waiting a roll or two before considering a double - potentially cashing in on a 3-0 lead seems like better value than risking the double this early.

MC: *Yep, it is too early.*

Brian Lever: No Double/Take

This is one of those deuce-point positions where black's advantages appear greater than they actually are. Black may make his own 5-point, hit white off his 5-point or hit the outfield blot – but the duplication of 1s, 3s and 4s means that he's

unlikely to achieve more than one of these aims. Double-four is his only really crushing number, and even then white still has his 1-point anchor. Possible double next roll – not this one.

MC: *Brian sees everything and comes to correct conclusion. Our next entrant is a newcomer to the competition.*

David Phillips: No Double/Take

True that most numbers are good for black. Especially 3s and 4s which hit and cover the 5-point. Black is marginally ahead in the match and so doesn't need to take chances and this is still very early in the game. White still has an anchor and maybe black won't get a 3 or 4 in which case white is all set to make its 5-point. It's just too early and unclear. Yes, black might win a gammon but could find an unpleasant redouble coming back if all does not go according to plan. Easy take for white for all the same reasons.

MC: *Sorry to 'fool' you, David, but the race is wrong – I transposed them, so black is in fact black 12 pips up. Mind you, it didn't stop you getting it correct. Let Snowie tell you what he thinks.*

Snowie: No Double/Take

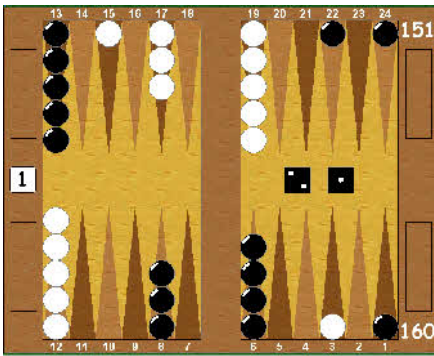
This is a typical very early game position where black has the advantage. The match score is not really a factor. Is there enough advantage and is it sufficiently volatile to double? The answer to both questions is no.

Double-four is black's best roll but after virtually all two roll sequences white will still be taking next turn so it is premature to double here. Another factor is the duplication of black's 1s, 2s and 3s.

It is better to hold the cube for one roll with the hope of giving white a much more difficult decision next turn.

No double and very easy take. ▶

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11 point match
Black 4 White 10 Crawford
Black to play 21

MC: This is an interesting position and unique (I think) in that not one of the entrants got it correct. Is this proof that no one is cheating and using Snowie?

Cedric Lytton: 13/11 24/23

Black should try to prevent white escaping his last man, and this increases his outer-board coverage without coming under the gun (by 22/21). I prefer this to 24/22, 6/5 (8/7 is even worse) as the minor anchor is not particularly inspiring and there is no need just yet to leave white's back man a direct shot.

MC: The 13/11 doesn't do an awful lot to prevent white's escape.

Bob Young: 13/11 24/23

(If I thought I could get away with it, I might try 24/22, 1/0) 😊

Black doesn't want to move to the point that white is aiming for, the white 5-point. This would allow black to hit and slot there if necessary, as he wouldn't slot otherwise, nor move under the gun to the 21-point, so just put a checker in play for black's own 5-point, and bring the back checker up as nothing else is constructive. If the mid-point checker moves on from the 11- to the 10-point, it places black checkers on every other point, and reduces future point-making rolls on that side of the board.

MC: I like Bob's logic regarding checkers on every other point. However, he fails to find a constructive move for the 1, so he just brings up the back checker.

Peter Christmas: 13/11 24/23

At 10-4 Crawford, black needs this and the next three games on the 2-cube, and with gammon losses being immaterial, but even so mixing it up with 6/3* just seems too loose to me. It gives white numerous double hits and black may fall

to the blitz without an anchor and four blots around it just seems to be throwing too much initiative to white too early. Black is not in good shape, with the 1-point blot it is hard to formulate a good game plan even this early and argues against bringing up the back man with 24/21, as apart from being behind in the race it is open to more pointing numbers also. So I think something on both sides seems best, 13/11 gives some outfield cover and has half the number of hits then moving on to the 10-point. While 24/23 would mean that dice with 1 apart like 21, 32, & 45, can make an advanced anchor, while dice that are 2, 3 or 5 apart can make good points on the other side; so with good diversity most rolls can be constructive next time if you are not on the bar.

MC: Peter is the first to mention – and then discount – the best move. He, as those above him, move off the 24-point – not the best of 1s.

David Phillips: 13/11 22/21

Black's aim is to win the game. Never mind gammons ... just win and get the cube moving and go for gammons from then on. So what should black be aiming to do? First of all he needs to forget about covering his 1-point. That will only have value in a blitz and as things stand that isn't going to happen. Black should have two aims. Firstly secure an advanced anchor and secondly start building a prime to trap the checker on the 3-point and any later hits.

MC: It's not a good thing to move off your opponent's 1-point – he can play behind you if he needs to. David aims for an advanced anchor

Steve Hallett: 13/11 22/21

Black slightly behind in a long race, with both sides having one point boards. White has already escaped one man and the saying "prime two checkers, attack one" could be followed through with 6/3*. Another alternative is to provoke contact on white's side of the board by playing 22/21 attacking white's blot on his 10-point and bring a builder down with 13/11. Or we can go all out with the pure play of 13/11, 6/5 putting checkers where you want them. Even though 6/3* takes away half off white's roll it doesn't do anything else and leaves two blots in black's home board. 13/11, 6/5 is a bit too loose and I prefer the provoking play of 22/21, 13/11 which only backfires if white rolls one of his eight pointing rolls.

MC: Steve now toys with Snowie's choice and then talks himself out of it! At least he and David don't vacate white's 1-point. Our next four go for the 22-point anchor and a 5-point slot.

Dorothy Lee: 24/22 6/5

Black should slot the 5-point, the one he wants to make this appears to be the most constructive use of the one. Then, he has a choice of either anchoring up, or bringing a builder down from the mid-point. I am discounting the option to carry on and hit on black's 3-point, I can't see anything going for that line of attack. At 7-away, a gammon won't help much, with that in mind, I would take the security of the anchor, with two home board blots for black, white is going to want to hit anywhere he can. Also, by making that point, this only leaves a 2 for white to hit with and 2s already play very well for him on his side of the board.

MC: Dorothy almost gets it correct but refrains from going the whole hog. I don't see how 2s "play well" on white's side of the board??

Phil Tutchings: 24/22 6/5

Establish anchor with 24/22 - more long term value than hitting with 6/3 (although black should be prepared to take risks at this score there is nothing really constructive in hitting and leaving two blots as the position doesn't justify entering a risky back game with no established home board). Move 6/5 to start the 5-point.

MC: Phil talks of taking risks . . . and then lacks the courage to take one.

Richard Biddle: 24/22 6/5

Black is already behind in the race, has a wasted checker on the 1-point and is yet to make an anchor. Oh, and we are getting stuffed and in the Crawford game, which we absolutely must win. Firstly, I think we need to build an asset by making that anchor with 24/22. We want contact and we want to make our home board in order, so I have no qualms moving 6/5. No problems getting hit as we want contact. In fact, my second choice move, might even be 6/3* so that we might recycle the checker on the one-point.

MC: Ah, Richard, if only you'd have gone with your second choice! You'd have been right on the money.

Brian Lever: 13/11 6/5

Crap roll, not helped by the fact that black has for some reason plonked a checker out of play on his 1-point – must ►

have been pretty desperate to do this given the match score. Gammons are pretty irrelevant for black here – he just needs to win the game; he would be better off playing purely and putting his checkers where he wants them to be. I don't like the loose hit on the 22-point, and 13/10 seems a trifle passive which for me leaves only two candidate moves; both involving 6/5 – with either 13/11 or 24/22. The score and his racing lead argue against white hitting loose in his own board, so leave those checkers where they are, unstack the mid-point and play 13/11, 6/5.

MC: Brian has taken two moves from some of the above and come up with his move. I like it, it doesn't just slot the 5-point, it provides a covering checker as well. But no one has chosen the same play as Snowie, nor has anyone mentioned tempo.

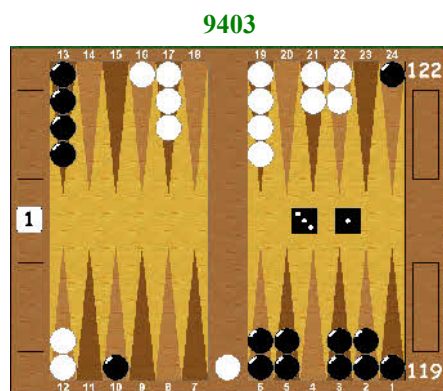
Snowie: 6/3*

This position is a classic demonstration of one of you humans' most common failings. The opening is all about establishing your position and stopping your opponent from establishing his.

Most humans do not hit frequently enough in the opening, thus taking a tempo from their opponents. There are lots of reasonable plays in this position: 13/11, 22/21; 13/11, 24/23; 13/10 and 24/21 and in a chouette you wouldn't argue too long about making any of these moves.

However, the move that meets the demands of the position is 6/3*, stealing that vital tempo. Two blots in the home board are nothing to worry about in the opening because of white's undeveloped home board but too often fear of blots leads to the wrong play being made. This is a great position to learn from.

MC: Let's hope they all learn, Snowie.



11 point match
Black 5 White 2
Black to play 31

MC: This move sorts out the men from the wimps. Do you make the 10-point blot safe or not – after all, it's not under much of a threat, is it?

Steve Hallett: 24/23 13/10

Black slightly ahead in the race with a four point board and one white checker on the bar. His downside is the blot on his 1-point. White's strength is his three point board and his weaknesses are his checker on the bar and his blot on the 9-point. Being unable to cover his blot on the 1-point or to hit white's blot on white's 9-point, black has to decide what his priorities are.

Black could play 10/6 or 10/7, 2/1 or even 10/7, 24/23 hoping white dances or comes in and is unable to hit, hoping to cover next roll. Or black could lock up the 10-point with 13/10, blocking sixes if white enters on black's 4-point, and then either play 24/23 or 2/1 with the 1. Of the two plays 13/10, 24/23 appears better. Or black could just bring another builder down with 13/9.

Another approach is to attack white's blot on his 9-point with 24/20, this also has the added advantage of giving black the chance of an advanced anchor if white does enter hitting black's blot on the 1-point. Overall I think it's very close but if faced with this position in a match I would probably lock up the 10-point with 13/10 and then play 24/23 with the 1.

Richard Biddle: 24/23 13/10

We could have a problem here as we have three blots spread around the board. Now we have a strong home board, but that would be to no avail if we are up in the air because we have been hit on our 1-point, danced and then one of our other blots is hit. So, I am going to play the ultra-safe 13/10. Our next priority is to escape our back checker, possibly picking up the loose white blot on the way. I have no interest in trying to cover on the 1-point, preferring to keep the builders focused on making the 4-point. By moving up 24/23, we have four hitting rolls next time as opposed to three.

MC: So, here we have two wimps who cover the blot and then move their only realistic 1. The remainder aren't so soft.

David Phillips: 24/23 10/7

What are black's aims? He wants to escape and complete his home board. There is a temptation to move 24/20 and start running home but that does nothing for the home board. 10/7 connects with the

1-point and although 24/23 is not a huge advance, it makes a 5 good next time ... and 6 will cover the 1-point so there's a bit of variety.

MC: An aggressive, manly move if ever there was one! But moving up to the 7-point would look pretty stupid if white rolls 61, or any of the other 7s.

Phil Tutchings: 24/20

Main point here is to escape the back checker. This move starts this and paves the way for potential anchor on white's 5-point should white hit from the bar next roll. Also gives a direct shot at white's blot on the 15-point.

MC: Phil has missed the 'real' main point. The 20-point is a very dangerous place to be.

Dorothy Lee: 24/20

Black could have used a big fat 9 to cover his 1-point once and for all, but he didn't roll that. I like 24/20 because if black is hit, he would prefer to be shooting at making a better point than the 24-point upon entering. Stepping up there with three builders aiming at it would normally be too risky, but he can take advantage of white being on the bar. If white doesn't hit or dances again, black might just be sending another man back to keep him company on the bar.

Moving 10/6 or 10/7? I don't fancy wasting this and the next roll trying to make the 1-point when it's not the one he wants to make next anyway. Another possibility is to bring another builder down from the mid-point, 13/9 leaves additional shots for white to hit, and I think it's not necessary when with 24/20, lots of good things could happen after that; if hit, black may make the 20-point, if not, he could either send another man back, or escape.

MC: Dorothy toys with the right play and then thinks she's "wasting" the roll!

Bob Young: 24/20

24/23, 13/10..., 24/20,...10/7, 24/23...,10/6 - flip a coin....24/20 (final answer, as Chris Tarrant would say).

Black would like to move his back checker all the way to the 20-point, but white would be happy to hit there if the rolls allowed, or maybe cover the other blot to give less for white to aim at. 10/7 or 10/6 is the fastest way to try and close the ace-point, but white might roll his one, or a four, entering and jumping out, giving black only a single shot at this es- ►

capee. (This is my most difficult puzzle to solve, but you never know, it may be the only one I get right!). Mind you, I still fancy moving up while white is on the bar, but I might change my mind yet!!!!. still thinking.yep, because of the open 4-point, I think the efforts to cover the ace-point are wasted, and black should step up now while white is on the bar.24/20 and grin broadly while the opponent rolls.

MC: You should have gone for the fastest way to make the 1-point . . . except, not with the 10/7 play - too manly.

Cedric Lytton: 24/20

A good opportunity to escape white's partial prime, and to threaten his 8-point blot should white fan again. Observe that 1s and 4s are duplicated. Black, with four home-board points to white's three, will be favourite in any blot-fight and doesn't need to worry about his ace-point blot, indeed he might welcome it being recirculated and possibly making the Golden Point.

10/6 would be safe but reduces black's outer-board coverage; 13/10 would make a point in front of white's back man and the accompanying 24/23 would still leave white's 4s duplicated, but would give black's back man no extra escape numbers.

MC: For 'recirculated' read, on the bar! Black wants to do several things at the moment, but, if he's 'recirculated' with a 1 from white, he can do none of them. This is the key to the correct play.

Our final, 24/20 is an ironic entry. Brian originally sent in 10/6 as his move - but later changed it to 24/20!

Brian Lever: 24/20

Black has an exercise in priorities here - cover home-board blot, hit loose white checker, control own outer board, make own 4-point, escape back checker, get into doubling position.

I see three plays, which all aim at one or more of these goals: 13/10 with 24/23 or even 2/1; 24/20; and 10/6. Another play, 13/9, I think is too loose in the circumstances because I see this game continuing for a while unless black can nail down a definite advantage; of course he does have an advantage now - he's slightly ahead in the race, has a slightly better board and a white checker relaxing at the bar. I would go for 24/20; it advances the rear checker, provides some duplication

of white's entering 4s and 1s, threatens white's outside loose blot (possible doubling advantage in itself) and starts an advanced anchor if white enters on black's 1-point.

MC: Brian mentions the 'p' word - priority. Getting the 1-point blot safe is top of the priority list. Snowie got his priorities right, as you can see, as did Peter, the only one to work it out.

Peter Christmas: 10/6

I don't really like moving 24/23 as it cuts down the escape options and gives white some extra pointing numbers, so with the 3 this kind of discounts 13/10 and 10/7, which does leave some extra shots off the bar.

So for me there are only two candidates, 24/20 readying the back man to escape and putting the blot on 16-point under direct threat which is good. But I think 10/6 is the best as it can directly cover the 1-point blot next go if not hit and it cuts out all the combination shots off the bar when black really wants to keep ahead in the race. It is also good diversity as now 5s work to cover while 4s and 6s are good to escape the back man.

MC: Well reasoned, Peter.

Snowie: 10/6

This one is a good lesson in prioritisation. Black wants to do many things: make his ace-point, close his home board, hit white's other blot and escape his rear man.

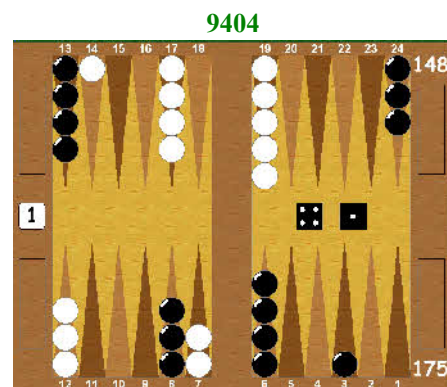
The question is which objective takes priority? The answer is that if the blot on black's ace-point is hit by white then all the other objectives become much more difficult so that becomes the number one priority.

24/23, 13/10 and 24/20 are both very reasonable moves but they are not as strong as 10/6 which gives a direct cover for the ace-point next time.

Some might be tempted by 24/23, 10/7 with the idea of making the bar-point but that play is much looser and duplicates 6's anyway. Given the score black wants to steer for simplicity and non-gammonish positions and therefore 24/23, 10/7 is the wrong idea. Simple is best: 10/6.

MC: So, the wimps were right . . . but it took a brave wimp to get the correct play. Often it is the simple solutions that are overlooked by seeking something more dynamic.

The first two entrants in the next position are well off the mark with their stacking play. With three checkers on their 24-point they miss the urgent need to shift one off.



11 point match
Black 2 White 4
Black to play 41

Phil Tutchings: 13/8

Bring checker safely down to prepare building higher points in the home board.

Cedric Lytton: 13/8

Process of elimination. Not 24/20, coming under the gun, with the 4; not 8/4, 6/5 as black, well behind in the race, wants a good holding game without three home-board blots; 6/2, 3/2 would make far too deep a point, while 8/3 would also be deeper than we like and would strip the 8-point.

MC: Phil was very succinct! Cedric isn't in any danger of stripping his 8-point with this play. What these two have missed is the fact that black has three checkers on his 24-point and that's at least one too many.

Brian Lever: 24/20 24/23

First thing black must do is get the 3rd checker off the 1-point. Plays like 8/3 don't deal with the immediate need to get the back men moving. White has an advanced anchor, black would like one as well. I've narrowed down to two choices: 24/20 with the 4, then go the whole hog and play 24/23 - opening up the possibility of a blitz. Or the quieter 24/23, 13/9? No - go for the blitz inviting play; white has nine good rolls which make the 5-point but he'd make that anyway regardless of where the black checkers are - and if he does, splitting 24/23 gives a better anchoring opportunity.

MC: Brian has fallen into the 'anchor trap' and in so doing gets just half his move correct. He admits he's inviting a blitz; and even though he does need ►

some contact, being on the bar isn't it.

Bob Young: 24/23 13/9

I guess this is to see how many of us elect to make the 3-point, or even worse, making the 2-point, and then you have a good laugh at us, so ignoring the poorest moves, black needs contact in this situation. Moving two checkers up from the back is the most confrontational, but looks a bit too flashy to me, I prefer to initially get one back man split, to pressurise any loose blots that white may want to leave in his outfield. The starting of the 9-point may make white think about rolls that hit there, and if missed, to make that point next roll, blocking white, albeit a small block at present.

MC: Bob has identified the need for contact but is going about it the wrong way. The remaining entrants do it the right way.

Steve Hallett: 24/20 6/5

Black behind in the race with three men on the 24-point, with both sides only having one point boards. With white having made an advanced anchor black must go for one himself so the 4 should definitely be played 24/20, even more so with his three men on white's 1-point, threatening white's blot on the 14-point and going for the best advanced anchor. We now have a choice of 1s, 24/23, 6/5 or 3/2. Black's objective after his advanced anchor is to start building his board to contain any hit checkers. 3/2 doesn't achieve anything whilst 6/5 starts the strongest point. 24/23 does give black more chances to get an advanced anchor at the risk of having two checkers on the bar if white can't point on black's blot on white's 5-point. So I would retain the anchor on white's 1-point and play 6/5 with the 1.

MC: Steve is after the advanced anchor, when all he really needs is contact. Having said that, he has worked out that he needs to construct a home board, starting with the 5-point.

Peter Christmas: 24/20 6/5

I looked at the simple 8/3 but it is a little closing the gate after white has bolted and it does nothing to address black's biggest flaw, having three men on his 24-point. 8/4, 24/23 does this but is not too dynamic as white is ahead in the match and this game and black really needs to shake it up a bit, but 24/20, 24/23 is maybe going a little far as it does give white a fair few pointing numbers, and with the blot in the home board it is encouraging white to start a blitz while black has no anchor.

Again I am looking at a play on both sides and there is a saying "if you can't see anything better, put your men where you want them" and here that points towards the Golden Points. It has the security of keeping an anchor and it starts the two most valuable points with a good chance to make at least one or both next turn if left alone.

MC: Yes, it is a flaw having three checkers stuck on your opponent's 1-point in this position.

Richard Biddle: 24/20 6/5

This move is all about making both 5-points. We are going to need our home board made soon as the only way we can win this is through contact. Let's unstack the heavy 6-point to play 6/5. Let's also unstack our heavy 24-point, by slotting on white's 5-point. I ordinarily wouldn't do this as we are "under the gun" (Magriel, 1976). I might even have considered 13/9 to tease some contact out of white but I think we can force a better reaction playing 24/20. This forces white to take uncomfortable action next move to protect the blot.

MC: Being 'under the gun' is a great way to provoke contact, and unstacking your heavy 6-point gives good Golden Point options.

Dorothy Lee: 24/20 6/5

So what does black need to do here? He needs to get his back men moving, and to build his board PDQ. So, should he use the 4 or the 1 to split with? At this early stage in the game, I think, nothing ventured, nothing gained, he should make a big play and split to the 20-point, then slot the 5-point on his side, hoping to consolidate next roll. If he just splits 24/23, then where is his 4? just creating another home board blot in a place he doesn't want. With 24/20, there are actually only 7 rolls that point on him, not as bad as it looks. Still, if there was a better 4 elsewhere, I would probably think again.

MC: Well, Dorothy, it's just as well there wasn't a better 4, without one you've come to the correct answer.

David Phillips: 24/20 6/5

Black is behind in the race and the score. I suppose we could make the 2-point in anticipation of a blitz later but it doesn't appeal. 24/20 is an attempt to secure an advanced anchor before white has any more points or builders. I like 6/5 as it reduces the number of pieces on the 6-

point and makes a start on the 5-point ... then see what happens.

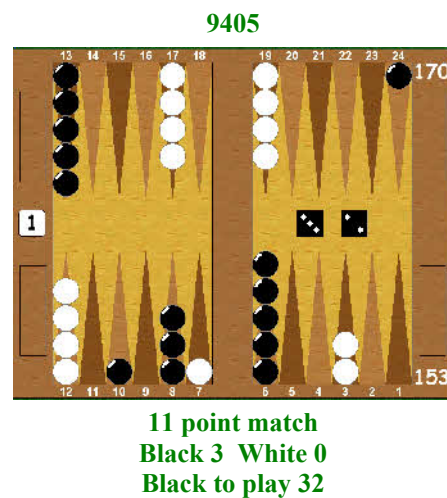
MC: Going for the anchor (contact) and starting your 5-point are good choices. Snowie explains why.

Snowie: 24/20 6/5

Those three men on white's ace-point mustn't all stay there (don't they just look horrible?) so we can immediately discount 13/9, 6/5 or 8/3.

Black is way behind in the race so he should be looking for contact. The 4 must be played 24/20. The question then is whether to play 24/23 or 6/5 with the 1. Too often players panic about the need for an advanced anchor in this sort of position and so play 24/23 to diversify their options next turn.

The problem with this play is that it opens up black to a blitz attack. White has ten men in 'the zone' so black must exercise some caution. Black's plan should be to promote contact whilst building his home board. 24/20, 6/5 is the move that best plays to this plan and in fact my neural nets rate any other move as a blunder!



MC: I will let Snowie start us off.

Snowie: 13/10 24/22

Once again establishing the right game plan leads to an easy choice of the right move.

Black leads in the race and has only one man back. "When ahead in the race, race" is one of the oldest adages in backgammon but also one of the best.

Go to the bottom of the class if you selected a move that included hitting with 10/7*. The 3 must be played 13/10 making a very useful new point for black. There is an argument for playing ►

6/4 with the 2 to develop that stack of men on the 6-point but if we go back to the adage then the correct 2 becomes obvious - 24/22, getting ready to escape the last man.

MC: We start with those at the bottom of the class!

Dorothy Lee: 10/7* 13/11

White's position is a little inflexible, by hitting, black makes it difficult for white to make new points, and at the same time diversifies his own point-making rolls. If he doesn't hit, plays something like 13/10 24/22, to be sure he doesn't risk losing his racing lead, but what happens next; white runs his blot round to his side - black either tries to escape or has to take a risk to build a point. Better to take action now while the opportunity (and the shot) presents itself.

Cedric Lytton: 10/7* 13/11

This gives black good chances of making the bar-point and a healthy 3-point prime, which will make it easier to come home after escaping his back man. 13/10, 24/22 would make the 10-pt. for sure and start the escape, but black's position with equi-spaced points would be far less flexible, and if white pops a 4, her 22/18 would give her and even mutual-holding game

MC: With just a one-point board, the one you start with, hitting right now isn't going to achieve much. Our next entrant isn't bottom of the class – but he is seeking membership!

David Phillips: 13/10 13/11

Black is ahead in the match and the race. The aim is to get home safely. Black's problem is that he has no points other than those he started with. Black will find it difficult to run home without getting hit and should accept that that isn't going to happen. Black has to make some points and that means taking chances. The best time to take chances is now ... before white has made any useful points.

MC: David mentions that the black runner will find it difficult to get home without being hit ... and he then decides to leave a blot on that might keep it company and make it doubly difficult! Every one else gets it right.

Steve Hallett: 13/10 24/22

Black ahead in the race and has escaped one of his back checkers, both sides with one point boards. The first question to ask is does black hit the blot on his 7-point

with 10/7*? With white having an anchor and with black only having a one point board hitting doesn't achieve anything except the chance of his escaped checker being sent back; so the first thing to do is to make the blot safe so play the 3, 13/10, which makes another landing point for black and unstacks the heavy 13-point. We now have the choice of 2s. If we want to leave a shot then 6/4 appears better unstacking the 6-point and making white break his anchor to hit, but who wants to leave a shot? I don't, so we have the choice of 24/22 or the ugly 8/6 ... 24/22 gets it every time.

MC: The reason Steve moves 24/22 is that he doesn't like the 6/4 or 8/6 alternatives. He gets it correct for the 'wrong' reason.

Peter Christmas: 13/10 24/22

Hitting was the obvious place to start but it is hard to see any great advantage as there are 13 return shots just at the 7-point plus a couple if the 2 is played 13/11 or 24/22 (33-55). White already has an advanced anchor and as black has escaped a back man and has a handy racing lead he really wants to preserve his advantage. Making the 10-point gives black some nice blocking points and goes some way towards making an outside prime and it can provide future builders for the 4- and 5-points. The best 2 with this play is to bring up the back man to the 22-point in readiness to spring out or jump to the 13-point with a roll of 9.

MC: Peter knows why 24/20 is correct.

Richard Biddle: 13/10 24/22

Black has a strong advantage here, being 17 pips ahead and having already escaped one back checker. The immediate temptation would be to hit 10/7*, but the risk far outweighs the reward. White gets a return hit 14 rolls for a loss of 18 pips. The reward is only a gain of 7 pips. Black should instead concentrate consolidating his position by playing 13/10 and beginning to escape the back checker 24/22. I wish I could remember this rule more often when I play and not rush my moves looking for a hit. When ahead in the race, stay ahead by playing safe.

MC: And so does Richard.

Phil Tutchings: 13/10 24/22

Candidate plays:
24/21 10/8 - Early racing lead and 3 points advantage in the match calls for conservative play. This play balances minimising contact with preparing to es-

cape the back checker.

13/10 24/22 - 13/10 unstacks mid-point and provides flexibility in landing points. The added flexibility seems to make this the better play.

MC: Flexible Phil arrives at the correct play.

Bob Young: 13/10 24/22

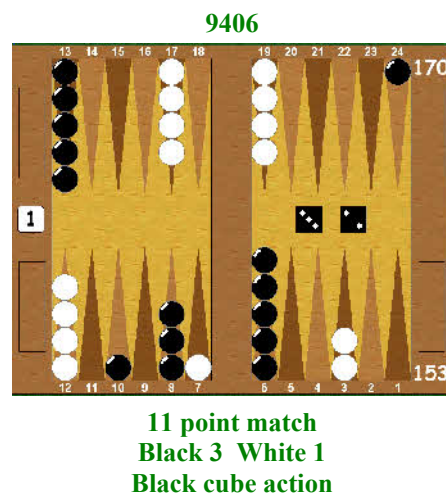
No need to hit, achieving very little and risking a lot, better to button up the loose blot and get the back man running, taking advantage of his racing lead.

MC: I think Bob is flagging – this is his shortest answer ever – short but sweet.

Brian Lever: 13/10 24/22

The "obvious" play is to hit on the bar with the 3 and look around for a good 2; less obvious, but my choice is 13/10 plus A.N.Other. Black's ahead in the race, one checker back to three back and doesn't need to start a hitting war. Play either 13/11 (duplicating 4s) or – my choice – 24/22, with the 2.

MC: Recognising the racing lead and the need to preserve it, Brian opts for 24/22, but he seemed to almost pick 13/11!



MC: The 'correct' action here according to Snowie relies on you knowing your opponent and being able to assess whether or not they will drop this cube. Because none of the entrants do know who they are 'playing' we have to settle for the 'technical' answer – and it isn't Double/Take!

Cedric Lytton: Double/Take

Black has a racing lead and only one man back to white's three, one still on the bar; black holds five useful points and a 3 (played 13/10) would give him a killer 5-point prime, while white has only three home-board points and a stacked

6-point. Black has market-losing rolls like 55, 64, 66, 63, 33. White has a take with his major anchor in defence and some timing – but he will need to make his own bar-point or 4-point fairly soon.

Bob Young: Double/Take

Having my biggest error last comp on the 6th position, I would feel that this has been placed here just for me!. But I might surprise you here, I feel pretty confident for a change....PRT as PL taught us once, Position is good, Race is good, Threat is not much as white has a high anchor, and no more blots, but never-the-less, white is no favourite, and his three home points will pay dividends whenever white can pick up any loose blot that gets hit. Must take these.

Phil Tutchings: Double/Take

White's anchor and black's blots (potential for black's blot in white's home board to get stranded whilst black concentrates on prime building and strengthening home board) point to a take for white. If black's chances improve significantly after this roll the market will be lost. There seems little chance of a gammon against black but the threat of a re-cube should be considered. Despite the possibility of a turnaround this seems the optimum time to double - the benefits of going 5-1 ahead outweigh the risks of losing for 3-3 relatively early in the match.

David Phillips: Double/Take

Black is ahead but not by much and there's still a long way to go in the game. Black's position is not without risk. Double-fours and sixes would not be particularly pleasant and white has a good anchor. So I don't think black is too good to double. However, black has many more good numbers than bad and could win a gammon so should double. White still has a decent chance. Maybe the man on 24- won't get away and white can make his bar-point. White has a good anchor which should make a gammon less likely. So it's a take.

Peter Christmas: Double/Take

Black has some good advantages, in this position the home boards are equal but with one back against three it translates as a good racing lead at just over 20%. White would have a drop if there was no contact. Black's main threat is to spring his last man and safety his blots, 55 immediately or by just jumping out without white managing to hit next go would probably make him a big favourite to tidy up any blots next turn. White has a solid

position with three home board points, and an advanced anchor and his outfield anchors gives him some control over each quarter of the board. He has a 75% chance of getting in next roll and black does not look ready to make any new home board points for at least a couple of rolls yet. The question black could be asking is how many market losers do I have that would leave white unable to take next turn? I am tempted to say black could afford to leave it another roll but maybe the race, the position and a man on the bar is just enough to put it into the doubling window. White has an easy take he wants to catch up with the match score and he is going to get some shot equity, he may yet trap the back man and the race is not completely over as black's bear-in could be hampered by the anchor.

Steve Hallett: Double/Take

Black is ahead in the race with one white checker on the bar. White has an advanced anchor with no checkers out of play but all outside points stripped. Both sides having three point boards. Well let's start from white's perspective, if black doubles do I take? With no checkers out of play, anchored on the black 4-point, behind in race and outside points stripped, white is definite underdog; but black still has to escape his back checker and with the chances of being gammoned not that high, I would take. Now from black's perspective, ahead in the race, white checker on the bar, his only problem is his back checker and blot on 10-point, black can't escape his back man and safety the blot except with double-five but if he does escape and white doesn't hit from the bar he could lose his market, so I would double now.

Brian Lever: Double/Take

Black is ahead in most departments and has a cube now; he might also have a cube next turn as well, but the difference is whether white will then have a take – white might not have if black escapes his rear checker and/or white enters awkwardly and has to break one of his stripped outside points. White has a take now because he has the advanced anchor and black has yet to make a successful run for it.

MC: They all agree with the take, as do the remaining pair; but, it is technically, a No Double!

Richard Biddle: No Double/Take

This is a tricky one. I will start with the easier decision. It is early in the match; white has a forward anchor, has no other

loose blots and despite having a checker on the bar, can happily take this. On the premise that white will take, should black be happy playing on for two points? Black has the Race and Position but no real Threat. You can double with that but black has very few good rolls next time and is likely to leave a blot against a three point white home board. If hit, black could very soon be facing the 4-cube. I think black should reluctantly wait here a roll to either escape the back checker safely or make the bar-point or 10-point. The reason why this might be a double in a real game is that white has obviously just danced and nothing beats making your opponent squirm when this has happened. But I will be sensible for today.

MC: Richard, without knowing who his opponent is has worked out that the answer lies in knowing how your opponent might react. Clever bugger!

Dorothy Lee: No Double/Take

Black has a substantial racing lead and a good position, but I ask myself, what is the best black can hope for in this roll? Either escape his back man, or make his bar point, that's all. And IF - big if, he does accomplish either one of these things, white will still be able to take, since if he enters, he has time to hold his position due to the two men on his 11-point.

MC: Good one, Dorothy.

Snowie: No Double/Take

Black has the edge in all three key elements: race, threat position and normally that would lead to a very reasonable double.

However, this position has virtually no volatility. After the next roll by both sides there probably won't be much difference and black may well be able to give white a more difficult decision next turn.

An extensive rollout tells me that technically this is no double/take and so that must be the answer. However, my nets also tell me that if there is a 6% chance that white would drop the double then doubling is correct.

As a computer I can't make such a judgement (my only weakness) but you can, and it is a vital part of playing expert backgammon. Consider your opponent!

Technical answer: no double/take.

Stats overleaf ►

Name	9201	9202	9203	9204	9205	9206	Score
Peter Christmas	No Double	13/11 24/23	10/6	24/20 6/5	13/10 24/22	Double/Take	59.22
Steve Hallett	No Double	13/11 22/21	24/23 13/10	24/20 6/5	13/10 24/22	Double/Take	59.06
Richard Biddle	No Double	24/22 6/5	24/23 13/10	24/20 6/5	13/10 24/22	No Double	58.82
Brian Lever	No Double	13/11 6/5	24/20	24/20 24/23	13/10 24/22	Double/Take	57.55
David Phillips	No Double	13/11 22/21	24/23 10/7	24/20 6/5	13/10 13/11	Double/Take	56.58
Phil Tutchings	No Double	24/22 6/5	24/20	13/8	13/10 24/22	Double/Take	56.38
Dorothy Lee	Double/Take	24/22 6/5	24/20	24/20 6/5	10/7* 13/11	No Double	56.10
Bob Young	Double/Take	13/11 24/23	24/20	24/23 13/9	13/10 24/22	Double/Take	55.89
Cedric Lytton	No Double	13/11 24/23	24/20	13/8	10/7* 13/11	Double/Take	55.66

Well, that's the 2nd one over with and it's congratulations to Peter Christmas for coming out on top. This victory has placed him 2nd place overall, just 0.01 behind current leader, Steve Hallett. Not far behind in 3rd place is Richard Biddle; however, it is wide open at the top and the 3rd competition could well see these positions changing.

Name	Pts	Pts	Total
Steve Hallett	59.87	59.06	118.93
Peter Christmas	59.70	59.22	118.92
Richard Biddle	59.58	58.82	118.40
Brian Lever	59.88	57.55	117.43
Cedric Lytton	58.87	55.66	114.53
Dorothy Lee	57.46	56.10	113.56
Bob Young	56.06	55.89	111.95
Phil Tutchings	55.28	56.38	111.66
David Phillips		56.58	56.58

Action	Score
9401 No Double	10.00
Double/Take	8.60
9402 6/3*	10.00
13/11 6/5	9.67
13/11 22/21	9.65
13/11 24/23	9.52
24/22 6/5	9.11
9403 10/6	10.00
24/23 13/10	9.71
24/20	9.52
24/23 10/7	8.24
9404 24/20 6/5	10.00
24/20 24/23	8.66
24/23 13/9	8.55
13/8	8.05
9405 13/10 24/22	10.00
13/10 13/11	8.99
10/7* 13/11	8.87
9406 No Double	10.00
Double/Take	9.70

Competition 2008, No3.

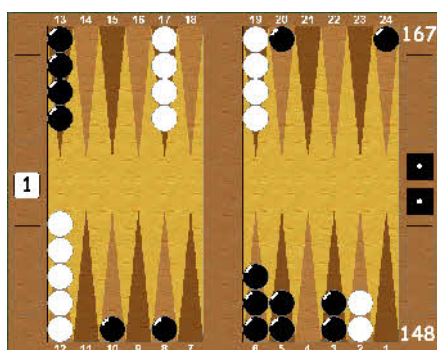
9601-06 Positions By Michael Crane

Welcome to the last of the three 2008 season Competitions

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

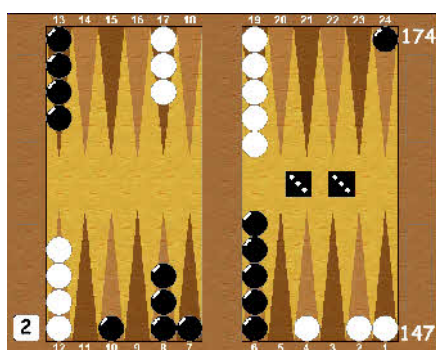
Entries in by 15 November - Answers mid-January 2009, Bibafax 98
Email: info@backgammon-biba.co.uk and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ

9601



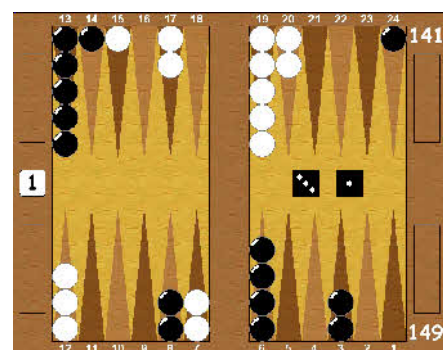
11 point match
Black 3 White 8
Black cube action

9602



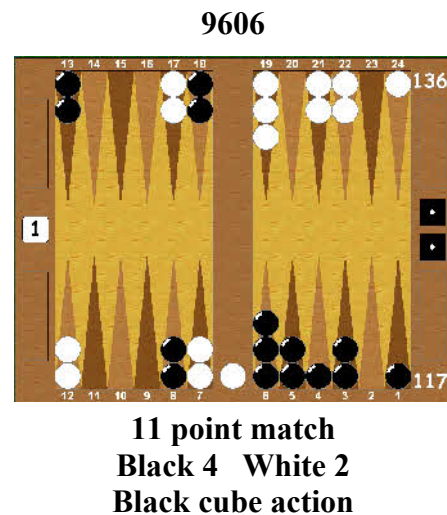
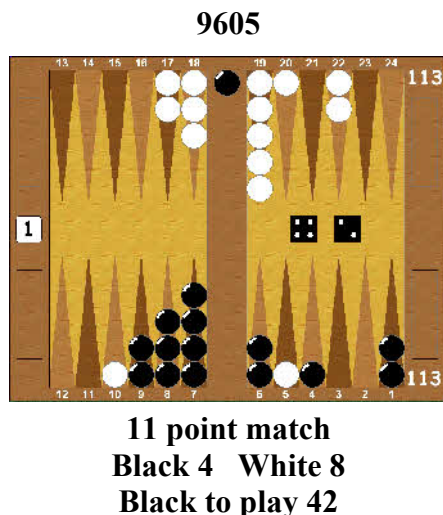
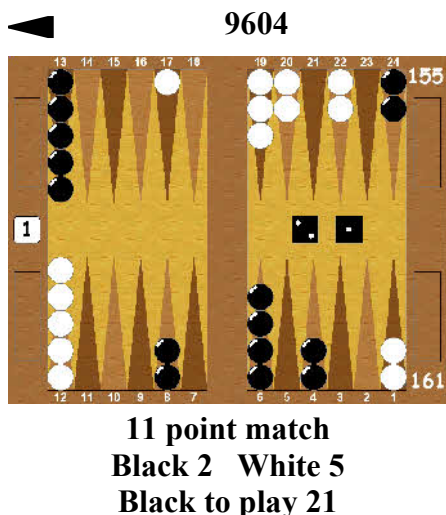
11 point match
Black 10 White 5 Post Crawford
Black to play 33

9603



11 point match
Black 4 White 1
Black to play 31

The remaining three positions are on the next page ►



Backgammon in London @ Biba

Mike Main, the sponsor of the event is a man of many trophies. Last year he provided so many trophies that everyone who entered went home with one! OK, so I'm exaggerating, but it was pretty close. This year the turnout was double that of last year and entrants actually had to compete for a trophy!

In the **Main (42)** one of the keenest entrants was Peter Bennet; already on 10 consecutive wins in 11-point matches and the recipient of the prestigious 1000-to-1 Trophy, Peter was aiming a lot higher and going for 20 wins in a row, which would earn him a Million-to-One trophy! Unfortunately it was not to be, he was knocked out in his 3rd match when he went up against Andy Darby in the quarter-finals. He didn't get his Million-to-One but with 12 wins he did equal Michael Brereton's total which has stood since 2001.

Peter's peers in the last 8 were, Zoe Cunningham vs Sean Williams (husband and wife pairing - been married two weeks!); Marcus Wrinch vs Chris Ternel; Mike Heard vs Lawrence Powell. In each pairing the latter won. The semi-finals saw Sean lose to Andy and Lawrence lose to Chris, resulting in a Chris vs Andy final.

I have yet to plonk the match into Snowie so I can't relate any positions (I have to get the Bibafax formatted and to the printers by tomorrow morning) but the match went Chris's way and he came out the winner.

In the **Consolation (38)** there was a bit of controversy when it became clear that the

draw (as devised by Mike and powered by his spreadsheet drawsheet) was biased against Main 1st Round losers and biased towards Main 2nd losers who had a bye in the Main. The upshot was there became a two-round gap between the two entries which meant that the 1st Round Consolation entrants had to play 7 rounds and the others, 5 rounds. Also, the draw pitched a few players against the opponents they were knocked out in the 1st Round of the Main. The drawsheet used by Biba is free from such 'problems' so players are less likely to get double-byes or meet the same player twice in the same event.

None of the Consolation non-prog 1st rounders made it to the last four in their draw, these places went to Myke Wignall vs Simonetta Herrera and Richard Owsley vs David Motley - encounters from which we had a 'final' between Myke and Richard from which new-member, Richard went into the Consolation final. Here he met Nicky Check from the prog side who had beaten Marcus Wrinch in the semi. Nicky proved a bit too much for Richard to handle as Nicky left Richard in 2nd place.

Having faired badly in the Main and Consolation, Jeff Barber played into the **Last Chance (16)** final to face Phil Tutchings. Jeff had already beaten Phil's son, Daniel in Round 2 and Phil was hoping to regain the family honour - but Jeff was having nothing to do with him as he took home the winner's trophy. Not to be outdone, Daniel powered his way into the **Mad Monkey (16)** final where he hoped to prevail where his dad had floundered -



Chris Ternel - Winner
Andy Darby - Runner-up

but his opponent, Lee Wood wouldn't give in and it was Lee who brought about the second, Tutchings Runner-up place of the weekend.

In the **Friday 500 (12)** it was David Nathan who took home the Weekend Break when he beat Julian Fetterlein in the final. The battle between Myke Wignall and Nicky Check continues as each vies for the top spot and the £100 prize money! Myke went a couple of rounds ahead of Nicky and Nicky's 1st place was relegated to 2nd. Mind you, the £100 could still go to someone else, there are a few within striking distance. Also, there are quite a few who can still make the Final 16, all they need to do is enter and win a few rounds! There is the Sandy Osborne (Oct) and the Townharbour (Nov) left to enter. [See page 31](#)

On Saturday evening a couple of events took place. One, The **Gang (9)** saw two teams battling it out, loudly and rowdily, for a shot at the 'winner-takes-all' fund. My team was robbed (yet again!) and the winning team split in two and then in two again until Nicky Check emerged the winner - for which he got one of Mike's many trophies. The second event of the Saturday evening was the **Poker (9)**. Won by Myke Wignall, the changes to

the listing were not major, but Rosey Bensley has been nudged out of the money and Myke Wignall gains on the top position. Paul and Tony are keeping him at bay, but with two more poker nights, October & November, there could still be some major changes. Certainly Lawrence will be in the money as soon as he gets in that 5th entry. [See page 31](#)

So, that's the end of the Biba elements, but Mike had a few more trophies to shift and he did so with three jackpots, Friday - Saturday and Sunday, the winners of which were David Motley, John Reddington and Jeff Barber. I'm not 100% certain but I suspect Mike handed out a few more trophies, but by this time I'd lost count!

Finally

I'd like to thank Mike for sponsoring the event and for being the 'director' and allowing me to 'assist'. Also I'd like to thank him on behalf of the many, many, many trophy winners for the many, many, many trophies! No doubt if you log onto his web site, <http://www.backgammoninlondon.com/home.html> Mike will be posting his own report and more pictures.



Above, left to right

John Reddington

David Motley

Jeff Barber

Myke Wignall - Poker
Nicky Check - Gang

Top to bottom

Cons - Nicky Check

Cons - Richard Owsley

Last Chance - Phil & Jeff

Mad Monkey - Daniel & Lee

Forthcoming Events - also see page 27

The 16th Irish Open Backgammon Championship 2008 - Wynn's Hotel, Dublin - 24/25/26 October
Tournament Organizer : Liz Perry -- Tournament Director: David McNamara

Friday 24th: €200 Optional Jackpot starts 7.30 pm. Saturday 25th: Registration opens 11.00 am.
Play starts promptly at 12.00 noon. Consolation 1st Round at 3.00 pm
(If you are arriving late or your flight is delayed, call David on 087 9710 917)



Sunday 26th: Last 16 10.00 am
Consolation continues 11.30 am. Last Chance starts at 1.00 pm
Scheduled finishing time: 6.00pm

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

**BIBA 2008
UK FINALS
QUALIFIER**

Further Information - Liz Perry eperry@iol.ie 0035312985282, 00353872144270

3,4,5 October - Sandy Osborne Trophy

The popular memorial event for one of Biba's first members, Sandy Osborne. A knockout featuring the usual four elements, Main, Consolation, Last Chance and 3-pointer as well as the Friday 500 and Poker Grand Prix.

31 October, 1,2 November - Townharbour Trophy

The last of our four Swiss format events and the last event this year to be a UK Finals Qualifier event. If you like playing 6 x 11 point matches over the weekend, then this is the event for you. This final Swiss event offers your last opportunity to rack up championship points, both Grand Prix and Ranking - and could well place you in the money! This is the weekend reputations are made!

The Gilbertson UK Finals - 5,6,7,December,

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

This is one of the most popular events in the Biba calendar; and this year it is set to be even better! I have been informed by the Walton Hotel that rooms are being taken up very quickly and that our allocation is in danger of being exhausted before the end of September!

IF YOU WANT A ROOM - BOOK NOW!



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

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

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

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

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

Sunday: Main: 7 point 16 player Knockout.

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

Last Chance : 3 point open draw Knockout

2008 & 2009 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 @ Daventry, Hinckley & Walton Hotel

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		▶ Note venue changes ◀		
Oct 3,4,5	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP -	Daventry	Knockout
Oct 24,25,26	16 th Irish Open	GP UK	Dublin	Knockout
Oct 31, Nov 1,2	Townharbour Trophy	GP UK	Hinckley ◀	Swiss
Dec 5,6,7	Gilbertson UK Finals	-	Walton Hotel ◀	Double KO
2009 Backgammon Calendar				
Jan 9,10,11	12th Bright 'n' Breezy	GP UK	Brighton	Knockout
Feb 6,7,8	Jarvis Trophy	GP UK	Daventry	Swiss
Mar 6,7,8	Biba International Championship	GP -	Daventry	Knockout
Apr 3,4,5	British Open	GP UK	Daventry	Knockout
Apr ??	Manchester 1-Day	GP -	Manchester	Combination
May 8,9,10	County Cups Trophy	GP UK	Daventry	Swiss
Jun 5,6,7	The English Open	GP -	Daventry	Knockout
Jul 3,4,5	* Biba World Championship *	GP UK	Daventry	Knockout
Jul ??	14th Liverpool Open	GP -	Liverpool	Combination
Jul 31, Aug 1,2	SAC Trophy	GP UK	Daventry	Swiss
Aug ??	13th Mind Sports Olympiad	GP -	tba	Swiss
Sep 4,5,6	Backgammon in London at Biba	GP -	Daventry	Knockout
Oct 2,3,4	Sandy Osborne Memorial	GP -	Daventry	Knockout
Oct ??	17th Irish Open	GP UK	Dublin	Knockout
Oct 30,31, Nov 1	Arthur Wright's Big 70!	GP UK	Daventry	Swiss
Dec 4,5,6	Gilbertson UK Finals	-	Daventry	Double KO

2009 Rates

Single: 1 night £63.50, two nights £110.50

Double/twin: 1 night £103, two nights £193

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.



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

3,4,5 July 2009

Barcelo Daventry Hotel

Registration Fee: £20. Entry: £20

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

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

Hatrick Backgammon Board

Backgammon To Win - by Chris Bray

52 Great Backgammon Tips - by Kit Woolsey & Patti Beadles

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For 2009 sponsors have already stepped forward for the Biba World Championship (an anonymous benefactor who wishes to remain anonymous!); Mike Main with his usual September sponsorship of Backgammon in London at Biba; Arthur Wright's Big 70! sponsored by Arthur Wright; and Paul Gilbertson's, UK Finals. This leaves the remainder of the year's events up for grabs. Have you a special event or occasion to celebrate, or would you simply like to support Biba in its quest to provide backgammon for everyone at a reasonable cost?

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I expect the biggies, Bright 'n' Breezy, International, British Open and English Open to go quickly. If you want to sponsor an event next year contact me via Biba HQ or email info@backgammon-biba.co.uk.

Tournament Results

Liverpool Open, 19, 20 July 2008

Main		Consolation		Last Chance		1-Point Shootout	
1	Ann Pocknell	1	Mick Vacarey	1	John Wright	1	Jeff Barber
2	Jimmi Wong	2	Lee Wood	2	Rachel Rhodes	2	Peter Chan
3,4	Irving Czechowicz	3,4	Fak Laight	3,4	Angie Dell	3,4	Marcus Wrinch
3,4	Pat Holly	3,4	Kevin Jones	3,4	Susan Bourne	3,4	Ann Pocknell
5,8	Marcus Wrinch	5,8	Dave Motley	5,8	Dorothy Lee	5,8	David Phillips
5,8	Brian Lever	5,8	Jon Williams	5,8	Carl Dell	5,8	Steve Hallett
5,8	Martin Barkwill	5,8	Vicky Chandler	5,8	Vicky Chandler	5,8	Paul Gilbertson
5,8	John Reddington	5,8	Peter Chan	5,8	David Motley	5,8	David Motley

Grand Prix @ Liverpool:

18.58	Ann Pocknell	6.19	John Reddington	4.13	Jeff Barber	2.58	Neil Everitt
13.42	Jimmi Wong	6.19	Marcus Wrinch	4.13	Paul Gilbertson	2.58	Simon K Jones
13.41	Mick Vacarey	6.19	Martin Barkwill	4.13	Steve Hallett	2.58	Tim Brown
9.29	Irving Czechowicz	6.18	Fak Laight	4.12	David Motley	2.58	Tony Fawcett
9.29	Pat Holly	6.18	Kevin Jones	4.12	Peter Chan	2.56	Carl Dell
9.28	Lee Wood	6.16	John Wright	4.12	Vicky Chandler	2.56	Dorothy Lee
9.26	Rachel Rhodes	4.13	Bob Parmley	4.10	Angie Dell	1.55	Uldis Lapikens
6.19	Brian Lever	4.13	Cynthia Roberts	2.58	George Hall		
		4.13	David Wallbank	2.58	Michael Maley		

The SAC Trophy, 1, 2, 3 August, 2008

Main (20/40)		Main	GP	Consolation (20/40)		Con/Main	GP	Friday 500 (12)	
1	Raj Jansari	6	24.77	1	Stewart Pemberton	3 / 4	10.84	1	Gerry Enslin
2	Chris Ternel	5	15.48	2	Mike Heard	3 / 3	6.19	2	Myke Wignall
3	Peter Christmas	5	17.55	3	Stephen Drake	2 / 3	6.19	3&4	Jeff Barber
4	Steve Rimmer	5	16.52	4	Paul Barwick	2 / 3	7.74	3&4	Marcus Wrinch
5	Brian Lever	4	10.84	5	Rachel Rhodes	2 / 3	6.19	5to8	Tony Fawcett
6	Phil Tutchings	4	11.35	6	Neil Everitt	2 / 2	4.13	5to8	John Hedge
7	Marcus Wrinch	4	11.35	7	Gerry Enslin	2 / 3	6.19	5to8	John Reddington
8	John Thomas	4	11.35	8	Uldis Lapikens	2 / 3	6.19	5to8	Fanika Petkovska
9	Mick Butterfield	4	10.84	9	Roy Hollands	2 / 3	7.74		
10	Andrew Darby	4	10.84	9	John Reddington	2 / 2	4.13		
11	Mick Vacarey	4	10.84	11	Fanika Petkovska	1 / 2	4.13		
12	Peter Chan	4	9.29	12	Vicky Pemberton	1 / 2	4.13		
13	John Hedge	4	10.84	13	Nicky Check	1 / 2	4.13		
14	Adrian Jones	3	6.19	14	Myke Wignall	1 / 2	5.68		
15	Edwin Turner	3	7.74	15	Arthur Wright	1 / 2	5.68		
16	Tony Fawcett	3	9.29	16	Daniel Tutchings	1 / 2	4.13		
17	David Horner	3	8.25	17	Larry Bennet	1 / 1	2.58		
18	Jon Barnes	3	6.19	18	Richard Holness	1 / 2	4.13		
19	Tim Mooring	2	6.19	19	Mike Barrett	0 / 1	2.58		
20	Jeff Barber	2	4.13	20	Linda Taylor	0 / 0	0.00		

Ranking Changes @ SAC:

New	Old								
1941	1925	Brian Lever	1663	1699	Nicky Check	1489	1507	Daniel Tutchings	
1871	1827	Chris Ternel	1655	1665	Roy Hollands	1485	1483	David Horner	
1840	1853	Adrian Jones	1640	1611	John Thomas	1472	1489	Neil Everitt	
1827	1770	Peter Christmas	1631	1599	Stewart Pemberton	1461	1481	Richard Holness	
1816	1747	Raj Jansari	1603	1604	Edwin Turner	1457	1481	Myke Wignall	
1815	1842	Uldis Lapikens	1601	1607	Jon Barnes	1430	1482	Larry Bennet	
1801	1810	Stephen Drake	1600	1568	John Hedge	1426	1381	Mick Vacarey	
1796	1810	Rachel Rhodes	1589	1591	Tony Fawcett	1419	1441	Arthur Wright	
1768	1784	Mike Heard	1577	1543	Andrew Darby	1376	1348	Paul Barwick	
1763	1719	Steve Rimmer	1575	1607	Jeff Barber	1332	1336	Vicky Pemberton	
1735	1713	Mick Butterfield	1556	1588	John Reddington	1321	1396	Linda Taylor	
1682	1716	Tim Mooring	1554	1519	Marcus Wrinch	1260	1255	Fanika Petkovska	
1673	1649	Peter Chan	1530	1588	Mike Barrett				
			1506	1507	Gerry Enslin				
			1497	1454	Phil Tutchings				

Backgammon in London @ Biba 5, 6, 7 September 2008

Main (42)

1	Chris Ternel
2	Andy Darby
3&4	Sean Williams
3&4	Lawrence Powell
5to8	Zoe Cunningham
5to8	Peter Bennet
5to8	Marcus Wrinch
5to8	Mike Heard

Consolation (38)

1	Nicky Check
2	Richard Owsley
3&4	Myke Wignall
3&4	Marcus Wrinch
5to8	Simonetta Herrera
5to8	David Motley
5to8	David Nathan
5to8	Zoe Cunningham

Last Chance (16)

1	Jeff Barber
2	Phil Tutchings
3&4	Peter Christmas
3&4	Uldis Lapikens

Mad Monkey (16)

1	Lee Wood
2	Daniel Tutchings
3&4	Roland Herrera
3&4	Richard Holness

Friday Jackpot (8)

1	David Motley
2	Phil Tutchings

Saturday Jackpot (8)

1	John Reddington
2	Gary Brooker

Sunday Jackpot (8)

1	Jeff Barber
2	Roland Herrera

Friday 500 (12)

1	David Nathan
2	Julian Fetterlein
3&4	Myke Wignall
3&4	Irving Czechowicz
5to8	Jeff Barber
5to8	Paul Gilbertson
5to8	Marcus Wrinch
5to8	Andy Darby
9to16	Nicky Check
9to16	Ray Tannen
9to16	Tom Duggan
9to16	Mike Main

Poker (9)

1	Myke Wignall
2	Lee Wood
3	Tony Fawcett
4	Paul Gilbertson
5	Lawrence Powell
6	Cecilia Sparke
7	Simonetta Herrera
8	Peter Bennet
9	Andy Darby

Team (9)

1	Nicky Check
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Grand Prix @ London:

18.58	Chris Ternel
13.42	Andrew Darby
13.42	Sean Williams
13.41	Nicky Check
9.29	Lawrence Powell
9.29	Zoe Cunningham
9.28	Myke Wignall
6.19	Mike Heard

6.19	Peter Bennet
6.19	Paul Gilbertson
6.19	Adrian Jones
6.18	Lee Wood
6.18	Richard Owsley
6.17	Jeff Barber
4.13	Ray Tannen
4.13	Julian Fetterlein
4.13	David Nathan
4.13	Tom Duggan

4.13	Roland Herrera
4.13	Irving Czechowicz
4.13	Marcus Wrinch
4.13	John Reddington
4.13	Chrissi Williams
4.12	Uldis Lapikens
4.12	David Motley
4.12	Simonetta Barone
4.11	Phil Tutchings
2.58	Tony Fawcett

2.58	Howard Furr-Barton
2.58	Daniel Tutchings
2.58	Mike Barrett
2.58	Gary Broker
2.57	Peter Christmas
2.06	Jackie Griffiths
2.06	Karen Lipyeat
2.05	Richard Holness
1.55	Peter Chan
1.55	Neil Everitt

Ranking Changes @ BGIL:

New	Old	Player
2002	2017	Julian Fetterlein
1941	1920	Lawrence Powell
1928	1871	Chris Ternel
1910	1916	Peter Bennet
1864	1882	Ray Tannen
1840	1840	Adrian Jones
1811	1815	Uldis Lapikens
1804	1827	Peter Christmas
1792	1783	David Nathan
1769	1768	Mike Heard
1735	1745	Tom Duggan
1728	1663	Nicky Check
1724	1719	Paul Gilbertson

1650	1655	David Motley
1647	1673	Peter Chan
1630	1577	Andrew Darby
1595	1575	Jeff Barber
1592	1604	Roland Herrera
1582	1529	Sean Williams
1577	1601	Jon Barnes
1574	1589	Tony Fawcett
1571	1539	Zoe Cunningham
1570	1565	Richard Owsley
1562	1554	Marcus Wrinch
1559	1565	Chrissi Williams
1553	1556	John Reddington
1544	1565	Karen Lipyeat
1544	1565	Gary Broker

1539	1545	Howard Furr-Barton
1537	1528	Lee Wood
1535	1559	Cecilia Sparke
1510	1530	Mike Barrett
1494	1457	Myke Wignall
1484	1497	Phil Tutchings
1482	1482	Irving Czechowicz
1477	1489	Daniel Tutchings
1470	1483	Jackie Griffiths
1466	1471	Simonetta Barone
1453	1470	Robert Tutchings
1443	1472	Neil Everitt
1442	1461	Richard Holness
1350	1376	Paul Barwick

Grand Prix Championship September 2008 (10.30 and above)

81.52	Peter Bennet	45.93	John Hedge	36.11	Jon Barnes	21.66	Mahmoud Jahanbani
72.76	Chris Ternel	43.80	Brian Lever	36.08	Gerry Enslin	19.61	Raymond Kershaw
69.14	Mike Heard	43.34	Irving Czechowicz	35.07	Phil Tutchings	19.61	Kevin Stebbing
68.10	Uldis Lapikens	42.83	Steve Rimmer	35.06	Arthur Wright	19.61	Dave Treacy
66.04	John Reddington	42.32	Paul Gilbertson	34.06	Raj Jansari	19.59	John Wright
59.34	Stewart Pemberton	42.29	Edwin Turner	30.97	Vicky Pemberton	19.59	Roland Herrera
58.30	Ray Tannen	41.28	Peter Chan	30.45	Andrew Darby	18.58	Mike Hanson
57.80	Ann Pocknell	41.28	Marcus Wrinch	29.88	Dorothy Lee	18.58	Zoe Cunningham
56.20	Rachel Rhodes	41.26	David Motley	29.39	Julian Fetterlein	18.57	Stephen Drake
55.22	Tony Fawcett	40.24	Adrian Jones	28.89	Paul Barwick	18.57	Bill Young
53.14	Nicky Check	39.72	Tom Duggan	27.86	Martin Barkwill	18.56	Cynthia Roberts
52.11	Mick Vacarey	39.70	Jeff Barber	27.35	Lawrence Powell	18.56	Michel Lamote
50.56	Peter Christmas	38.17	David Nathan	26.32	Roy Hollands	18.04	Crispin Duke
49.54	Myke Wignall	36.12	Mark Heidenfeld	26.26	Mardi Ohannessian	17.55	Dave Moon

17.54	Sean Williams	15.48	Chris Purchase	13.42	Arthur Musgrove	11.85	Simon K Jones
17.54	Rida Hassan	15.48	Ian Davidson	13.42	Neil Davidson	11.35	John Thomas
17.50	Angela Dell	15.48	Cecilia Sparke	13.42	David Barker	10.84	Bill Spiers
17.03	Mick Butterfield	15.47	Richard Holness	13.40	Philip Virschjager	10.84	John Broomfield
17.00	Rosey Bensley	15.46	Lee Wood	12.89	Daniel Tutchings	10.82	Linda Taylor
16.52	Wayne Felton	15.45	Michael Bennett	12.38	Kevin Jones	10.32	Stuart Mann
16.50	Vicky Chandler	14.97	Neil Everitt	12.37	Nigel Merrigan	10.31	Sue Keeble
16.49	Fak Laight	14.96	Larry Bennet	12.36	George Hall	10.31	Jonathan Powell
16.00	Paul Plumptre	14.44	David Horner	11.87	Howard Furr-Barton	10.30	George Miltiadou
15.48	Ralph Eskinazi	13.42	Jimmi Wong	11.86	Paul Watts		

Ranking Championship, September 2008

played / points / player (played 8 or higher. Q = Qualifier)

Q	2230.07	Chris Ternel	Q	1825.43	David Motley	11	1603.36	Paul Plumptre
Q	2201.36	Peter Bennet	Q	1824.36	Phil Tutchings	11	1417.18	Richard Holness
Q	2155.36	Stewart Pemberton	Q	1821.86	Jon Barnes	10	1958.60	Raj Jansari
Q	2136.64	Tony Fawcett	Q	1768.14	Rachel Rhodes	10	1387.40	Crispin Duke
Q	2117.50	Adrian Jones	Q	1742.00	Paul Barwick	9	1792.78	Mick Butterfield
Q	2098.43	Uldis Lapikens	Q	1696.43	Ray Tannen	9	1689.11	David Horner
Q	2091.14	Mike Heard	Q	1671.50	Stephen Drake	9	1467.89	Neil Everitt
Q	2066.00	Myke Wignall	Q	1664.00	John Reddington	9	1296.44	Rosey Bensley
Q	2038.57	Peter Christmas	Q	1520.29	Mardi Ohannessian	8	1941.63	Mark Heidenfeld
Q	2038.43	Paul Gilbertson	Q	1451.29	Larry Bennett	8	1860.63	Cecilia Sparke
Q	2027.64	Nicky Check	Q	1440.07	Vicky Pemberton	8	1852.50	Zoe Cunningham
Q	2025.07	David Nathan	Q	1372.79	Arthur Wright	8	1815.00	Ray Kershaw
Q	2000.43	Mick Vacarey	Q	1225.36	Linda Taylor	8	1756.38	Martin Barkwill
Q	1990.36	Marcus Wrinch	13	1637.08	Tom Duggan	8	1660.63	Ian Davidson
Q	1970.64	Jeff Barber	13	1601.54	Roy Hollands	8	1502.13	Tim Mooring
Q	1955.79	Peter Chan	12	2230.07	Ann Pocknell	8	1361.25	Daniel Tutchings
Q	1937.93	Ed Turner	12	1696.25	Brian Lever	8	1316.13	Paul Watts
Q	1937.14	Gerry Enslin	11	1761.91	Lawrence Powell	8	1253.50	Fak Laight
Q	1845.57	Andy Darby	11	1746.00	Kevin Stebbing	8	1212.38	Mike Barrett
Q	1887.50	John Hedge	11	1738.45	Dave Treacy			



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Who Will Win What?

Grand Prix: The GP points from the MSO have now been added as have the points from the Backgammon in London @ Biba event. Uldis has been toppled by Peter Bennet and Chris Ternel knocks Mike Heard into 3rd place. John Reddington jumps in at 5th and Mick Vacarey drops out of the Top 10. Nicky Check rises to 11th and will soon be in the money if he continues winning! There's still time for some major changes to occur either in Dublin or at the Sandy Osborne or the Townharbour. So, if you're near the Top 10 and have chance of the money - go for it!

Grand Prix	£2180	Ranking
Peter Bennet	£305.20	Chris Ternel
Chris Ternel	£218.00	Peter Bennet
Mike Heard	£174.40	Stewart Pemberton
Uldis Lapikens	£130.80	Tony Fawcett
John Reddington	£87.20	Adrian Jones
Stewart Pemberton	£65.40	Uldis Lapikens
Ray Tannen	£43.60	Mike Heard
Ann Pocknell	£21.80	Myke Wignall
Rachel Rhodes	£21.80	Peter Christmas
Tony Fawcett	£21.80	Paul Gilbertson

Ranking: Peter Bennet and Chris Ternel have swapped places. Paul Gilbertson jumps in at 10th, knocking Mick Vacarey out, Mick is further displaced by Nicky Check and David Nathan, both of whom are knocking on the prize money door! With two more events, Sandy Osborne & Townharbour, to come it can still alter quite a bit.

Friday 500 Positions - Sept.			
93	Myke Wignall	47	Stewart Pemberton
89	Nicky Check	46	Vicki Pemberton
65	David Nathan	45	Tony Fawcett
65	Gerry Enslin	43	Tom Duggan
63	Jeff Barber	41	Rosey Bensley
57	Ray Tannen	29	Marcus Wrinch
56	Paul Gilbertson	<u>Top 16 players above here</u>	
54	Mardi Ohannessian	28	Andy Darby
52	Ed Turner	27	John Hedge
51	Julian Fetterlein	26	Paul Watts
		24	Paul Barwick
		23	Nigel Merrigan
		20	John Reddington
		18	Brian Lever
		16	Irving Czechowicz
		16	Mike Main
		16	Crispin Duke
		16	Martin Barkwill
		16	Rida Hassan
		12	Mike Waid
		12	Peter Christmas
		12	Ralph Eskinazi
		12	William Spiers
		<u>Top 32 players shown</u>	

The battle between Myke Wignall and Nicky Check continues as each vie for the top spot and the £100 prize money! Mind you, the £100 could still go to someone else, there are a few within striking distance. Also, there are quite a few who can still make the Final 16, all they need to do is enter and win a few rounds! There is the Sandy Osborne (Oct) and the Townharbour (Nov) left to enter.

Poker Grand Prix - Sept.			
Pts	Ents	Player	
99	Q	Paul Gilbertson	53 3 Ann Pocknell
96	Q	Tony Fawcett	50 3 Crispin Duke
96	Q	Myke Wignall	50 3 Roy Hollands
90	Q	Vicky Pemberton	42 1 Steve Hallett
42	Q	Mick Vacarey	40 1 Jon Sharp
29	Q	Rosey Bensley	34 1 Felix Vink
71	4	Lawrence Powell	32 1 Philip Vischjager
69	3	Kevin Stebbing	31 3 Stewart Pemberton
66	3	Paul Watts	30 3 Cecilia Sparke
			28 2 Jerry Limb
			28 2 Simonetta Herrera
			28 1 Paul Learmount
			26 1 John Batty
			24 2 Rida Hassan
			24 1 Alison Lee
			23 1 John Sprague
			22 2 Nigel Merrigan
			22 1 Tony Lee
			21 1 Dave Moon
			20 1 Blaine Buchanan
			19 1 Mark Dixon
			<u>Top 30 shown</u>

Rosey has been nudged out of the money and Myke Wignall gains on the top position. Paul and Tony are keeping him at bay, but with two more poker nights, October & November, there could still be some major changes. Certainly Lawrence will be in the money as soon as he gets in that 5th entry.

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