

# BIBAFAX

No. 98 2009

January

February

Magazine of the British Isles Backgammon Association

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## Dedicated To Backgammon



John Hurst  
Bright 'n' Breezy  
Winner 2009

# Backgammon Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

## by Gabriele Falk via GammonVillage.com



Backgammon is the oldest game on the planet. It has been around in multiple variations for the past 6,000 years and it is without any doubt one of the most thrilling, exciting and interesting games. The unique combination of mathematical calculations, strategy and luck helped the game to survive in spite of many other popular games such as chess, bridge, bingo and poker.

In the 70s and 80s of the last century, it was the favourite game of the rich and famous, the aristocracy and the jet-set. Huge amounts of money could be lost or won over a board and on the many and various tournaments around the globe. The glitz and glory of the game was unmatched.

In the computer era and with the birth of specialized software, the gap between very strong and very weak players vanished and the level became somewhat more equal. Other games, especially poker, took the edge over backgammon and became widely popular. Online gaming sites appeared and ever since, offline tournament

backgammon has been decreasing. All the big tournaments lost players and their shiny glitz. The World Cup disappeared, the World Championship is nowhere close to what it used to be and all the other major events are facing difficulties in attracting players.

There have been attempts in the recent past to revitalize backgammon. The PartyGammon Million, the WSOB and the Crowns Cup have been brought to TV and broadcast worldwide. Regardless of the quality of the shows and the production budgets, they all contributed to the promotion and popularity of tournament backgammon. In the past decade, organizers such as Eric Guedj (Partouche) and Chiva Tafazzoli (World Backgammon Association) have come up with sponsorship money and a series of high class tournaments with added money. Other organizers such as the Worldwide Backgammon Federation and the American Backgammon Tour have promoted the game in their own way with a different strategy. Credit has to be given to those efforts which all are

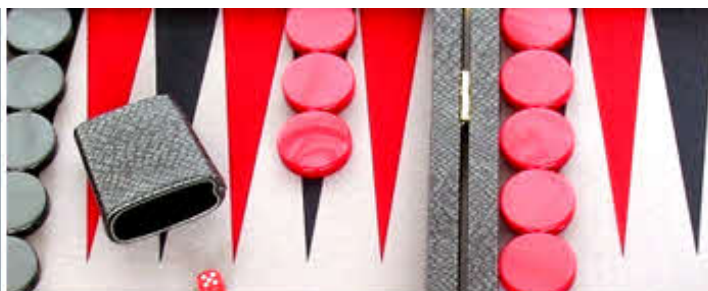
excellent for the game.

As an events specialist by profession, I have gained enough insight about what it takes to put up such an event, in terms of effort, time, money and hard work. I personally tip my hat to those people with the passion and vision dedicated to promote our game of backgammon.

The organizers take good care of the players. They provide excellent equipment, a professional staff, fantastic playing facilities, hotels with special rates, all kinds of backgammon action and challenges, gala dinners and cocktails, and loads of money on top. They advertise widely, they come up with live-brackets and reports, they maintain websites and they update ratings and rankings.

Even though there is not a unified body dedicated to backgammon and tough competition among organizers, there are other examples of successful work. Take boxing, where 3 bodies (WBC, ➤

The logo for Gammon Village, featuring the word "gammon" in a stylized orange script font and "VILLAGE" in a white serif font, set against a dark blue background.



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WBA, WBF) compete against each other, and still, the sport is hugely popular.

What caught my eye and shocked me about various recent tournaments, is the behavior of the players. They seem to have exaggerated and unrealistic expectations from organizers and they do not support them in their work to promote the game. I recently heard complaints about the change of policy within the PartoucheGammon Tour, regarding their guaranteed money being decreased and their final being postponed. I also regularly hear about registration fees and rakes being too high at live tournaments.

I have witnessed players complaining about cheaters and "dice mechanics" while at the same time, I have seen tournament equipment and lipped dice-cups being destroyed (which by the way, are a measure used to thwart "dice-mechanics"). I have witnessed people at the gala dinners and cocktails that had nothing to do with the tournament except enjoy the "free food and drinks".

I have seen people showing up in shorts and sandals, or in the same attire with a clear lack of hygiene and aesthetics. I have seen food and drinks on the playing surface of the boards, checkers spread around the playing room, chairs in perfect disorder after a match, and misbehaving, harsh words and fights over the board.

To be honest, and as a newcomer, it turned me off and it did little in the way of attracting me to live challenges in the future so I started to ask myself questions.

I know for a fact that backgammon today is a rather small community, compared to other games and

sports. I also know that the potential of backgammon is enormous. Surveys show that over 800 million people enjoy the game regularly.

I know how tough and difficult it is to attract sponsors and money to the game, considering the size of the actual market. Sponsors have some expectations too and organizers have to satisfy everyone and ensure that all parties involved meet their requirements. Some requirements are very easy to spot if one thinks a bit deeper.

One major requirement is participation: take part and support the game by showing up and participating at tournaments. There are usually several divisions and something for every level and budget. My guess is that if enough participation was observed at the PartoucheGammon Tour, the guaranteed money would not have to be shortened.

One other requirement is usage of service: official tournament hotels usually offer good "backgammon" rates, restaurants, bars, etc. Venues affiliated with the sponsors are expecting players to show up and use their facilities. This is another thought behind a sponsorship. Just because you might save a buck, don't go sleeping in cheap Bed & Breakfasts, buying your food in the supermarket or sharing your hotel room with 3 other people.

One other requirement which should be self-understood is behavior: The organizers and sponsors much prefer to see decent attire and gentlemen-players rather than sandals, undershirts, bad odor, and fights.

The short-sighted view of some of the equity-chasers, not only is a

hassle to handle, but also counter-productive to the efforts brought up by organizers. All the efforts are done for the players and for the game but this simply can't be a one-way-street. The money made from a backgammon tournament and the registration fees is a joke compared to the work and the expenses related to it.

It is the responsibility of all parties to make backgammon grow, so the market will be more interesting for sponsors and more money is put into the game for the benefit of everybody.

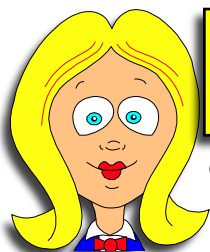
Like Chiva Tafazzoli said in his speech at the awards ceremony of the "French Open" recently: *"Organizers work very hard for backgammon but it is about time each and every person involved started to think of what they can do to contribute to the game in order to pull the rope in the same direction and support the efforts to promote the game."*

What made backgammon survive for over 6 millennium were the main actors, i.e. the players. If players don't help the game, then no one can ensure that the game helps the players.

I look forward and wish that one day, backgammon gets the attention and the popularity it truly deserves, with worthy ambassadors and representatives.

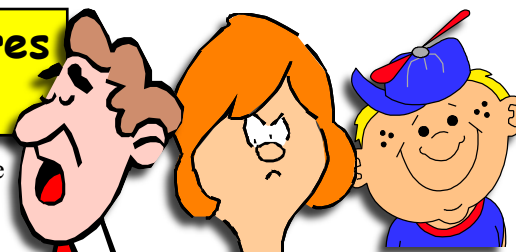
My friendly advice is: co-operate and think further than the actual size of your wallet. Be less greedy and more appreciative. Give credit when credit is due and give something back to the game that we all love so much.

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# Goldiblots and the Three Bores

By R Umplestiltskin

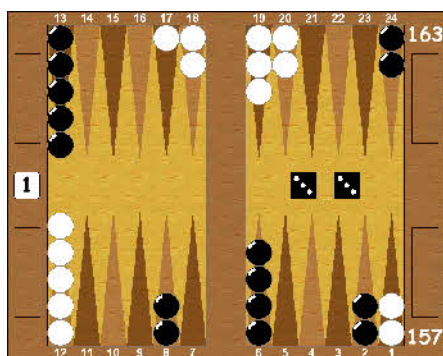


Once upon a time there were three bores, Daddy Bore, Mummy Bore and Baby Bore. All day long they'd play backgammon on the webernet for peanuts, they liked peanuts - a lot.

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

This week's first problem was:

## Problem 1



**11 point match**  
**Black 0 White 0**  
**Black to play 33**

First to go was Daddy Bore, he being the biggest bore. "Dear, dear me, this is so easy," he began, his chest puffed out, "it's as clear as the mud in your eye. The only move is to make two home board points by playing 8/5(2), 6/3(2). Every top player knows that home board points are very important, and this lot will make it very difficult for white to get in off the bar when he's hit." He sat down, pleased that by going first he had been able to make the correct move before either of his opponents could.

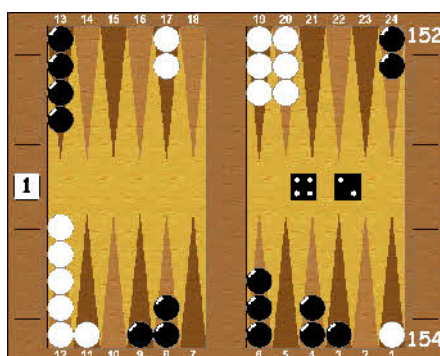
Next was Mummy Bore. "Oh, my, Daddy, you're only half right. You can't see the best move, 24/21(2) with 8/5(2) for the mud in your eye." Daddy Bore huffed. Mummy continued, "White has already formed a 3-prime and is threatening to make it a 4-prime with any roll containing a 5. It's best right now to get to the front of the prime and put white's

17-point blot under pressure." She sat down, smiling a smile of certain victory over Daddy Bore, who was still huffing, though quietly confident.

Baby Bore piped up, "Mummy, you too have only gotten it half right, it should be 24/21(2) with 6/3(2) shifting two checkers off the heavy 6-point." Smugly he added, smirking at his parents, "I am pleased to go last because I was able to pick the best move from each of you to get the best move of the lot!" Daddy and Mummy both huffed, and Daddy didn't look so confident!

The second problem was:

## Problem 2



**11 point match**  
**Black 3 White 1**  
**Black to play 42**

Doing things fairly, it was Mummy Bore's turn to go first. "This is a very easy one," she said cheerfully, "I am glad I got first dibs. 13/9 13/11\* is the only move. It puts white onto the bar, makes my 9-point and gives me loads of good builders into the bargain." She sat down, a self-satisfied smile creeping over her lips.

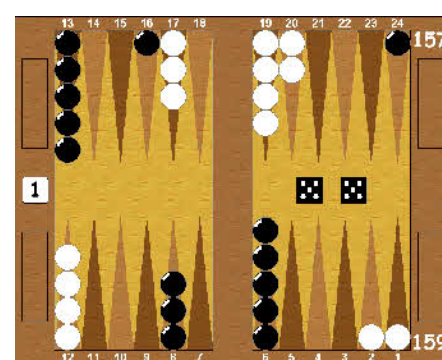
"What a waste of a good roll," said Baby Bore, looking down his squat, pudgy nose at his mother. "Hitting here is big mistake, the best play here by far is the pure covering play of 9/3. Where's the sense in hitting when you have a blot on? White must be larfing his head off with 3s or 2s to hit back with! Mine, I believe," he said as he punched the air in victory.

"Is it any wonder I have the biggest pile of peanuts in the house?" enquired Daddy Bore, emphasising his comment by munching a fistful of the tasty blighters. "Covering the 3-point is a typical begin-

ner's play - panic stations, there's a blot on!" He turned to Baby Bore and patted him patronisingly on the head. Baby sneered at him. "Once again, your mother was half right, she got 13/11\* right but she should have continued with 11/7 so that you get loads of good covering rolls next time. I am not surprised you two missed it, it is a radical play but very very productive." He strutted back to his chair like a modern-day Mussolini, his jaw stutting out, his lips turned down in a smile of arrogant superiority.

The final problem was:

## Problem 3



**11 point match**  
**Black 7 White 3**  
**Black to play 55**

Saving the best 'til last, Baby Bore got in first. "Well, folks, I am going with 8/3(2) and 6/1\*(2)." His mother groaned, his father choked on a peanut. "Yep, I thought you'd like that," said Baby Bore as he sidled back to his chair confident he'd left nowt at all for his parents to pick from.

Daddy Bore annoyed a peanut lodged between his front teeth. "Why oh why would you want to go and move 8/3(2) for? Now, any 6, except 66, 36 or 16 is going to send you onto the bar. The way to do it is to be canny and move 16/11, then 13/8, and then you can move 8/3(2) and protect 6s! I am not surprised you didn't see that, it takes a superior mind to see the bigger picture." He returned to his chair and his annoying of the peanut which steadfastly refused to be annoyed, clinging on for dear life.

Mummy Bore took to the floor, stepping over a pile of peanut husks, tutting. "The key here is making full use of the 16-point checker. All you have to do is move him all the way round to hit, 16/1\* and then cover with 6/1." She looked at her family, her husband still annoying his peanut, and her son already gloating about being the overall winner. "This move makes a blot safe and puts white on the bar with no return shots. Clean, efficient and elegant . . . just like me," she concluded, sitting down as cleanly, efficiently and as elegantly as she could.

Goldiblots took to the floor announcing, "Well this is fun, isn't it? Would you believe one of you got all the problems correct?" She looked from one to the another to another and back again.

"It's me, isn't it?" asked Mummy Bore.

"Of course not," retorted Daddy Bore, "There's only one person here smart enough to get 'em all right, and that person is currently munching on peanuts!"

"I wonder?" mused Baby Bore, "I won-

der, how much would it cost to divorce my parents? You are both well wrong, innit?"

They all looked to Goldiblots. She held their full attention. She began, "And the winner is . . . . .

Who do you reckon the winner is? Turn to page 11 and discover whom Goldiblots declared the week's winner.

## The 16th Irish Open

### Report by David 'Cracker' McNamara

In winning this year's title, Allan Christensen (Denmark), qualified for the Biba UK Finals. Also, he won €1000, comprising the €30 pool and the Tote. However, runner-up, Stuart Mann, did better financially in winning €1900 from the €100 pool. Other big money winners were Cracker (€2000), for winning the Friday night jackpot and Brendan Burgess, who received €800 as runner-up.

The format this year was changed from the Swiss System to a straight 13 point Knockout with no re-buys for the Main. Brendan Burgess facetiously observed that Cracker proved the new format to be idiot-proof. The tournament was certainly easier to run. Cracker, on his debut as Tournament Director, will testify to that.

#### Main (58)

Fancied first round losers included John Broomfield to Sean Casey, in what was undoubtedly the big clash of the round. Mark Heidenfeld lost to the wily veteran from Lincoln, Jeff Ellis. Paul Gilbertson lost to Felix Vink. Chris Ternel succumbed to Frank Conway. Rosie Bensley lost to Peter Bennett and former winner Adrian Jones was knocked out by Arthur Cater. In the second round, Casey lost to Stuart Mann and Peter Bennet gave way to Anthony Fawcett. The 2007 winner, Jacob Andersen (Denmark), lost to Nicky Check; and, a big surprise, Gary Sweeney defeated twice British Open Champion, Rachel Rhodes. In the last 16, casualties included Mike Heard losing to Larry Bennett, Brian Lever losing to Anthony Fawcett and Nicky Check losing to Gary Sweeney.

And so to the Quarter Finals. Stuart Mann defeated Felix Vink. Slow play upset Vink, who called for one of the only two clocks used all weekend. In an all-Danish clash, Ulrich Hansen beat Brian Herbol, Anthony Fawcett beat Larry Bennett and Allen Christensen defeated Gary Sweeney. In the semi-finals, Allen Christensen and Stuart Mann defeated Ulrich Hansen and Anthony Fawcett respectively. In the Final, score 7-2 to the Dane, a 4-cube offered by Stuart was taken. A situation developed where Stuart had a 1 to play, either 7/6, to close his home board with the Dane on the bar or 23/22, moving to the edge of a prime. Stuart elected for the latter as timing was a problem. Christensen hit and poor Stuart never really recovered. Allen Christensen was a worthy champion and, at the presentation, accepted his prize from last year's winner, fellow Dane, Jacob Andersen.

#### Consolation (48)

This was a semi-progressive competition and a few buy-backs were allowed to balance the numbers. Paul Gilbertson beat Mike Heard in the final. Semi-final losers were Juliet Fennell and Frank Conway. ►



**Top: The Entrants**

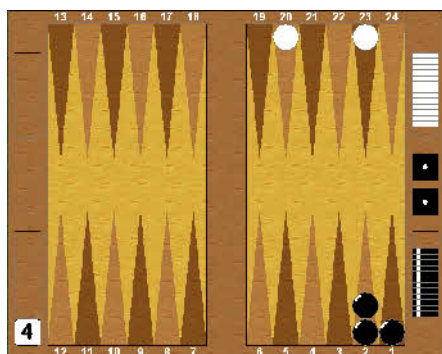
**Middle: Main - Alan, Stuart, Cracker**

**Bottom: Cons - Tracey, Mike, Paul, Cracker**

Gilbertson had earlier beaten Chris Ternel and Brendan Gasparro, who had caused somewhat of a surprise by ousting John Broomfield. Heard had a tough route to the final disposing of Brian Lever, Nicky Check and Jeff Ellis. Paul Gilbertson was a gracious and worthy winner. However, his real success this weekend was to have his proposal of marriage to the lovely Tracey Dowling accepted on Friday night. We in the backgammon community wish Paul and Tracey a long and happy future together.

### Last Chance (32)

Martin Barkwill defeated Mark Heidenfeld in the final. Earlier, Heidenfeld accounted for Brian Lever, Liz Perry and Peter Bennett. Meanwhile, Barkwill re-entered the pool to fill three remaining spaces and beat Arthur Cater, Larry Bennett and Malcolm Robertson before meeting Peter Chan in the semi-final. An interesting situation arose in this 5 point match. Peter was on roll, holding the cube at 4 in the first game. In the bear-off, Peter (playing as black) was on roll in this position:



**Black cube action?**

Snowie says re-double-take. Peter, having thought about it, missed the opportunity. He won that game but went on to lose the match. On the very last roll, he needed a double to win the match and Peter took fully five minutes between shaking and mis-throwing. Is this a record for one throw of the dice? *MC: Is this a record? Not for Peter it isn't . . . it's quite normal!*

### Friday night Jackpot (14)

Fourteen entries at €200 gave a prize fund of €2800. First round casualties were Brian Lever to Brendan Burgess, Sean Casey to Steffan Lundstrum, Mark Heidenfeld to Rachel Rhodes, John Broomfield to Paul O'Kelly, Frank Conway to Cracker and Peter Bennet to Chris Ternel. In the second round, Brendan beat Steffan, Paul beat Rachel, Cracker surprised Chris and Tage Mellegren got the better of Jousef. Brendan and Cracker emerged to contest the final, which Cracker won – ample compensation for having to be Tournament Director on Saturday and Sunday.



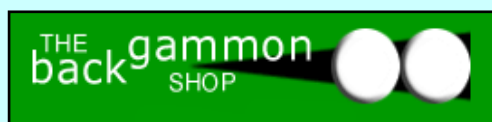
**Last Chance  
Mark & Martin**

**Friday Jackpot  
Cracker & Brendan**

**Irish Open 2008  
Champion  
Allan Christensen**



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# How Good Is Your Backgammon?

Asks Michael Crane & Snowie

This continuing article is based on the 1981 2nd Holiday Tournament, Las Vegas, between Kent Goulding and Mike Maxakuli. In this series I have slightly changed the format, instead of you deciding on a particular move I have listed the options..

When you come to ??? the position is shown along with five candidate moves (if five are available). Cover up the text below the moves and decide which of the moves is your choice. Keep a record and at the end see how you scored. The match is to 15 points, Kent is playing Black and Mike, White.

We continue coverage in Game 13 with just one point (again) separating the two players.

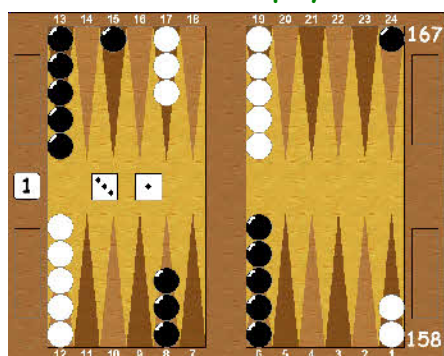
## Game 14

Goulding : 10

Maxakuli : 11

01) 63: 24/15

### ??? White to play 31



8/5 6/5  
13/10\* 6/5  
13/10\* 8/7  
13/10\* 10/9  
24/23 13/10\*

Black has almost escaped one back checker so is it correct to hit it back or go for the very valuable 5-point? Well, as good as it might look playing 8/5 6/5 is an error. Usually keeping one lone checker back is easier to handle than two; two can make a point and anchor, one cannot. However, it is just too early to concentrate on the back black checker - you'd only do that if black's opening roll had been 65 instead 63.

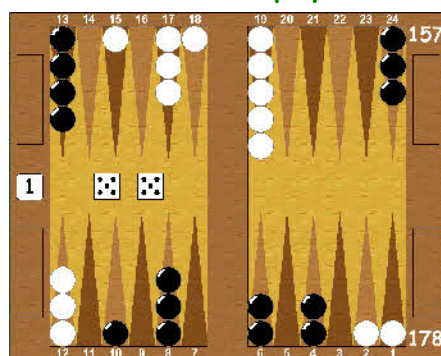
So, if hitting is correct, which one? The answer should now be obvious: if you're

going to hit it back you don't really want to be giving return shots off the bar play playing 6/5 - so that's out for starters. Likewise, 8/7 makes an non-entry roll of 6s play very well, unless it's 66! Continuing with 10/9 isn't too bad but the best move here is to start off one of your own runners, 24/23. Whilst you rob black of half a roll you just might be able to make good use of him being in the air.

24/23 13/10\* 5 A  
13/10\* 10/9 4  
8/5 6/5 3  
13/10\* 6/5 2  
13/10\* 8/7 1

02) 51: 25/24 6/1\* 31: 13/10\* 24/23  
03) 21: 25/24 6/4\* 21: 25/24\* 23/21  
04) 32: 13/10 6/4 62: 25/23 13/7

### ??? White to play 55



23/8 7/2  
23/8 10/5  
23/13 8/3(2)  
23/13 13/8(2)  
23/18 13/8 8/3(2)

After a few blot-hitting rolls we settle down and white now has four 5s to play. The question here is whether or not to make the 2-point. The quick answer is yes - but it depends upon which of the two 3-point rolls you pick. Of the two 23/18 13/8 8/3(2) looks the better: It duplicates 6s; whereas 23/13 8/3(2) leaves three blots in the white outer board. But it's the latter that is the clear winner of the two, and by a large margin. Although the former duplicates 6s this 'benefit' is offset by the fact that you can add direct 3s and 1s to the equation.

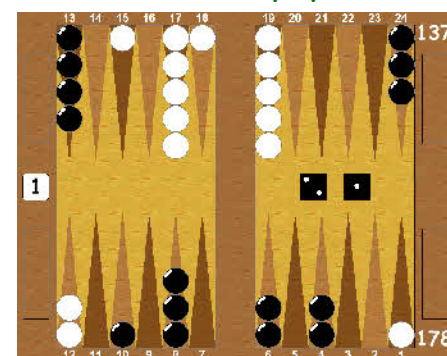
Running a back checker to the 8-point and then removing a 6-shot (17 rolls) by moving 7/2 (11 rolls) is a close 2nd but

playing to the 2-point is a tad too deep. 23/8 10/5 is the first error move - it slots but offers white a double-shot; and the actual roll of 23/13 13/8(2) stacks too many checkers on the 8-point.

23/13 8/3(2) 5  
23/8 7/2 4  
23/8 10/5 3  
23/13 13/8(2) 3 A  
23/13 10/5 7/2 2

55: 23/13 13/8(2)

### ??? Black to play 21



13/10  
24/22 8/7  
24/23 8/6  
24/22 10/9  
24/23 13/11

Only one candidate move advocates covering the 11-point blot with 13/10, and to do so is an error. Its only use is to stop 63 and 54 and that's not good enough. By concentrating solely on black's side of the board you are missing white's potential for making a very useful point: bar-point or 5-point or 4-point; therefore moving a runner off the 24-point is essential in ensuring that not all three black checkers occupy the one point.

Of the four remaining moves we can discount 24/23 8/6 because it gains nothing but shifts a checker from one point to another. 24/22 10/9 simply moves one point nearer the home board without much benefit - the best that can be said of this is that it makes 62 and 21 good rolls, but then if left where it was 63 and 31 would be good rolls. Leaving a direct 6 with 24/22 8/7 is wrong - why leave a shot?

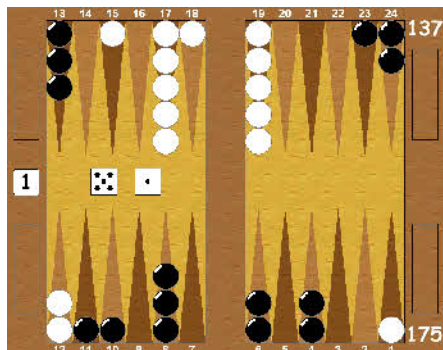
So, by a process of elimination we are left with the best move, 24/23 13/11. It only increases the risk of being hit by one roll, 64, but on the plus side it greatly increases the chances of making the bar- or 5-point.



24/23 13/11 5 A  
 24/23 8/6 2  
 13/10 2  
 24/22 10/9 2  
 24/22 8/7 1

05) 21: 13/11 24/23

??? White to play 51



13/7  
 8/3 8/7  
 10/5 6/5  
 10/5 8/7  
 10/9 7/2\*

All but one of the above moves is a blunder, and if you chose to hit then you've lost the plot and a whopping chunk of equity. This 51 is crying out for a point-making move, and you have two choices: the 5-point or the 7-point.

Only one roll, 10/5 6/5, makes the 5-point and it is this that's the best move. More often than not if given the opportunity to make the bar- or the 5-point it's the 5-point that comes in first. Once you've made it you'll keep it right until the bearoff (in most games) whereas the bar-point must be cleared at some time.

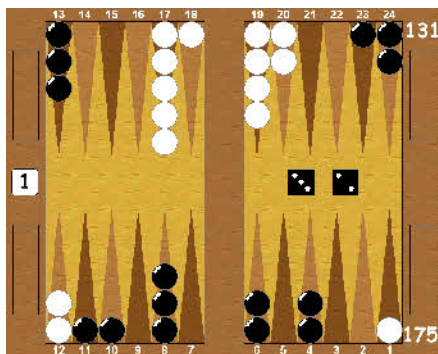
Black can obviously hit with a double shot, 6s and 5s, but at the moment black doesn't have a very good home board and the risk of being hit is lessened by the occupation of the strongest point on the board.

10/5 6/5 5 A  
 10/5 8/7 2  
 8/3 8/7 0  
 13/7 0  
 10/9 7/2\* 0

NB: I was tempted to give minus points, but decided against it on the grounds it might discourage a few of you in going any further! However, I do hope none of you got zero points.

51: 10/5 6/5

??? Black to play 32



23/18\*  
 13/11 8/5  
 13/10 11/9  
 13/10 13/11  
 24/21 23/21

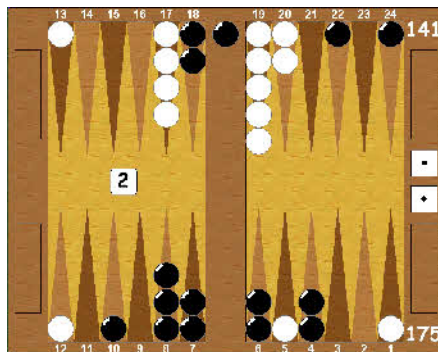
Here's another one in which I considered minus points! It should be a plain as the nose on your face that hitting 23/18\* is correct. White is threatening to make a 4-prime straddling the bar and you must thwart this immediately. A 'reasonable' 2nd play is 24/21 23/21 making the advanced anchor, but really it is a poor second choice compared to the hit. I am not even going to discuss the remaining moves - if you chose one of them please write to me and explain why!

23/18\* 5 A  
 24/21 23/21 3  
 13/11 8/5 0  
 13/10 11/9 0  
 13/10 13/11 0

06) 32: 23/18\* 52: 25/20 8/6  
 07) 66: 24/18 13/7(2) 11/5\* 51: 25/20\* 13/12\*  
 08) 53: 25/22

A great 66 from black backfires when white rolls the killer 51 and sends two black checkers to the bar. Black only manages to get one checker back onto the board and now white has a doubling decision to make:

??? White cube action?



No Double  
 Double, Take  
 Double, Pass

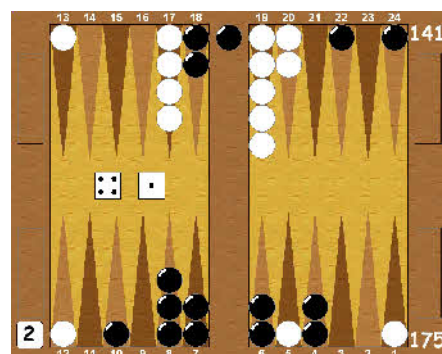
When on the bar and offered a double it is often a drop, and in this position black has five checkers back and another (on his 10-point) facing a hit - so it's a double, pass is it? No, it's not! Take a look at white's overall position: all he's got going for him is three points on his side of the board and four blots scattered around; black on the other hand has four good points on his side of the board and white's bar-point. This is not a double for white and black has an easy take.

No Double 5  
 Double, Take 3 A  
 Double, Pass 0

Doubles to 2

09) Takes

??? White to play 41



6/1\*  
 8/3\*  
 20/15\*  
 24/20 6/5  
 24/20 13/12

Well, what do to here? There appears to be plenty to choose from: Hit to stop black making an anchor? Knock back another black checker? Make an advanced anchor? Unfortunately they might all look good, but hitting to stop the anchor are very wrong, the last thing white needs are checkers on the bar. Hitting 20/15\* has some merit but it is a largish error even though it does increase gammon chances more than any other play.

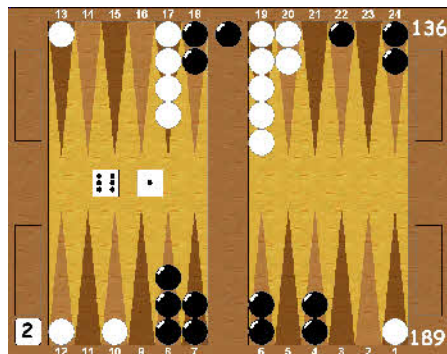
So we are left with making an advanced anchor with 24/20 and then deciding where to play the 1. Although 6/5 increases the number of builders available and at the same time lessens the stack on the 6-point, it is better to make the 12-point and tidy up a couple of blots. ▶

24/20 13/12 5  
 20/15\* 3 A  
 24/20 6/5 2  
 8/3\* 0  
 6/1\* 0

41: 20/15\*

10) 61: 25/24

??? White to play 61



13/6  
 12/5  
 13/12 8/2  
 15/9 13/12  
 24/23 12/6

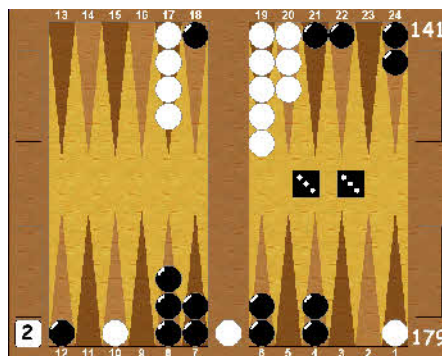
Black's stronghold on white's bar-point is very annoying to white. He'd like to see him move off there and this roll of 61 offers an enticement when played 15/9 13/12. Leaving a home board blot on with 13/12 8/2 is surprisingly the 2nd best play - it at least makes the 12-point. The actual play of 12/5 looks very flexible, and although it entices a 6 from black with 18/12 it doesn't offer enough return shots to make it viable. The remaining two rolls playing to the already laden 6-point are not worth mentioning.

15/9 13/12 5  
 13/12 8/2 4  
 12/5 3 A  
 13/6 2  
 24/23 12/6 1

61: 12/5  
 11) 64: 25/21 18/12\* 64: Dances

White's 64 isn't as constructive as black's and now black has a great 33 to play.

??? Black to play 33



21/18 8/5(3)  
 24/18 8/5(2)  
 24/21 8/5(3)  
 24/21(2) 8/5(2)  
 24/21 18/15 8/5(2)

Making the 5-point is clear, the only choice to make is to use two or three checkers? The drawback of using three is that you lose a builder (though in keeping one checker on the 8-point you do leave a risk of being hit on re-entry: 12, 22, 32, 62, 15, 25, 35).

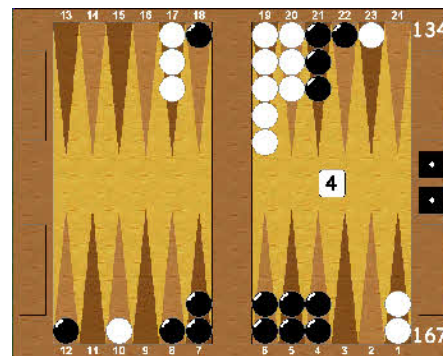
Despite the risk the extra builder is worth it - the question now arises, which of the two moves is best: 24/21 18/15 or 24/21(2)? The former is better by 0.060 equity (an error, but nowhere near a blunder), not a lot, but it removes a blot (18/15) and lessens the chance that black will be on the bar next roll.

Of the 8/5(3) plays, the best of these is 24/21, the anchor is quite important and offers a safe haven for any black blots. Making the white bar-point with 21/18 isn't so hot, the black 18-point isn't a point worth holding at the moment; and the same can be said about 24/18 - but without an anchor black could be in big trouble.

24/21 18/15 8/5(2) 5  
 24/21 8/5(3) 4  
 21/18 8/5(3) 3  
 24/21(2) 8/5(2) 2 A  
 24/18 8/5(2) 1

12) 33: 24/21(2) 8/5(2) 61: 25/24 8/2

??? Black cube action?



No Redouble  
 Redouble, Take  
 Redouble, Pass

White's earlier double now comes back to haunt him in the shape of a 4-cube. Not only is this not a redouble, it is too good to redouble and black is very pleased to pass. Black should have played on, he has over a 20% chance of a gammon here giving him those much-needed four points, but instead he opts for the easy two points and takes the score to 12-11, this time in black's favour and yet again, only one point separates the pair of them.

No Redouble 5  
 Redouble, Pass 2 A  
 Redouble, Take 0

13) Redoubles to 4 Drops  
 Goulding wins 2 points

Goulding : 12 Maxakuli : 11

So, how good is your backgammon?

|       |                                |
|-------|--------------------------------|
| 50    | You are better than the others |
| 40-49 | You are the others             |
| 30-39 | You are Mike or Kent           |
| 20-29 | You have learnt something      |
| 10-19 | You have something to learn    |
| 9-0   | You are beyond learning        |

This article will continue in a later issue of Bibafax.

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 THE SMARTER WAY TO PLAY

# Coventry Open Tournament- 9th November 2008

Report by Phil Tutchings. Pictures by John Tutchings

Fak Laight of Redditch is the inaugural Coventry Open Backgammon Tournament winner. Fak was a worthy winner being one of only four players not to receive a bye into round two winning five tough eleven point matches on the way to the final. His opponents in order were Phil Tutchings, Richard Baldwin, Uldis Lapikens, Daniel Tutchings and Matthew Fisher in the Final. Matthew's semi final against Marc Turner was a close thing with Matthew pipping Marc 11-10 after a last game race.

The 5 point Consolation event was won by David Motley (beating Phil Tutchings in the final).

Paul Plumtre became the only Coventry club regular to claim a winner's trophy beating Paul Ash in the 3 point Final.

Matthew Fisher took the 1 point event in his second final of the day beating Phil Tutchings.

Thanks to all that played (especially those coming from beyond Coventry), to Michael at Biba for the trophy donations - and to Peter Bennett and Uldis Lapikens for donating trophies back to Biba. Also thanks to Di for her help in administering the tournament and the staff at Whitefriars for providing the catering.

The general feeling was that a good day was had by all and hopefully this will become an established annual event.



**Main: Matt & Fak**



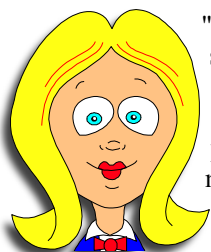
**Cons: David & Phil**



**1-Pointer: Matt & Phil**



**3-Pointer: Paul A & Paul P**



"... Mummy Bore" said Goldiblots.

Daddy Bore turned puce and spluttered a mouthful of half-chewed peanuts over baby proclaiming, "I wanna divorce!"

"You and me, both," echoed Baby Bore.

Mummy Bore smiled contentedly as Goldiblots revealed the Snowie Stats:

#### Position 01:

24/21(2) 8/5(2)  
24/21 (2) 6/3(2) -0.131  
8/5(2) 6/3(2) -0.290

#### Position 02:

13/9 13/11\*  
9/3 -0.100  
13/11\* 11/7 -0.181

#### Position 03:

16/6 6/1\*  
16/11 13/8 8/3(2) -0.010  
8/3(2) 6/1\*(2) -0.263

## Gilbertson UK Finals

### Report by Michael Crane

The Saturday, Double-Knockout provided us with some of the very best Biba players to join the pre-qualifiers for the UK Finals. From KO #1 emerged Julian Fetterlein, Nigel Merrigan, Lawrence Powell and Mike Heard. From KO #2 Tony Lee, Gerry Enslin, Tom Duggan and Julian Minwalla. On the Sunday, these were matched thus:

|          |    |                   |
|----------|----|-------------------|
| Julian F | vs | Mark Heidenfeld   |
| Tony     | vs | John Hedge        |
| Nigel    | vs | Ray Tannen        |
| Gerry    | vs | Ann Pocknell      |
| Lawrence | vs | John Reddington   |
| Tom      | vs | Raj Jansari       |
| Mike     | vs | Allan Christensen |
| Julian M | vs | David Motley      |

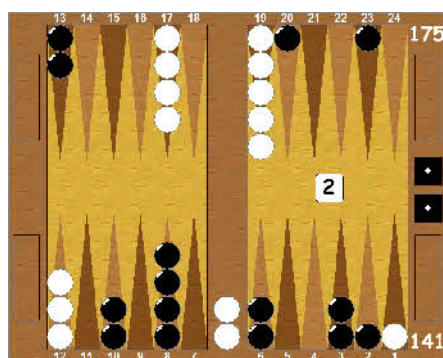
The 2nd Round paired up:

Mark vs Tony, Nigel vs Ann, Tom vs John and David vs Allan; encounters from which the latter won leaving the last four: Tony vs Ann and John vs Allan, fixtures that left two pre-qualifiers in and two Saturday-qualifiers. It was one of each that triumphed, Tony went into the final to face Allan.

Allan, the Irish Open winner faced Tony, a previous UK Finals winner from 2003. Could Tony become the second player to win the title twice? Well, the quick answer is Yes! But it was an exciting match and everything eventually hinged on Game 5 and it all kicked off thus...

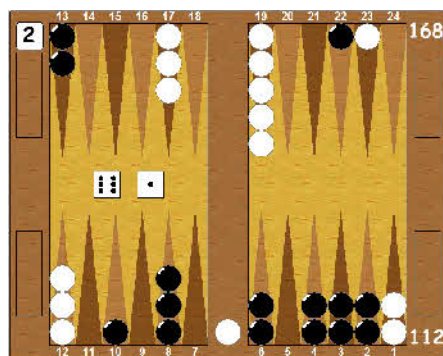
When I record a match on video prior to inputting it into Snowie I get the added bonus of sometimes hearing each players comments. I get to hear some pretty useful stuff as I play back the recording, but as yet I am still waiting to hear any pin numbers for chip & pin! After the match was over, Tony and Allan set up a position that occurred in what was to be the last game, Game 5. It was a 2-cube from Tony (b) while Allan had two on the bar

and another under threat:



**7 point match**  
**Black 3 White 2**  
**Black cubes**

Allan took. Was it a double or not? Was it a take or not? Although Allan and Tony discussed the merits of the cube action they decided to leave it to snowie to reveal all. Snowie is almost shouting out, Pass! Pass! Pass! For money, Tony is almost 70% with just over 36% gammons, and it is the gammon chances that make all the difference. Passing this cube would have meant a measly equity loss of -0.019, whereas the take meant a massive -0.622! Four rolls later and Allan had an opportunity to lower his gammon losses to about 29% when he rolled this 61:

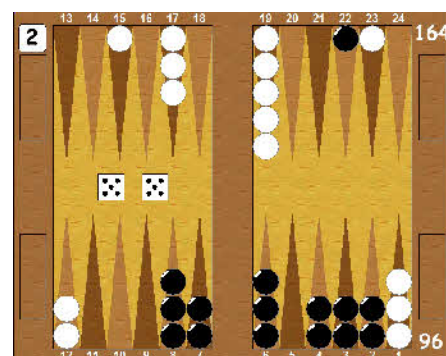


**White to play 61**

Allan moved 25/18 (a blunder) which is almost guaranteeing being back on the bar next roll. He should have made his

2-point here. He needs to get a hit, but at the same time he needs to make home board points to help contain the black checker(s) when he's got them on the bar. Tony rolls 53 and Allan is back on the bar.

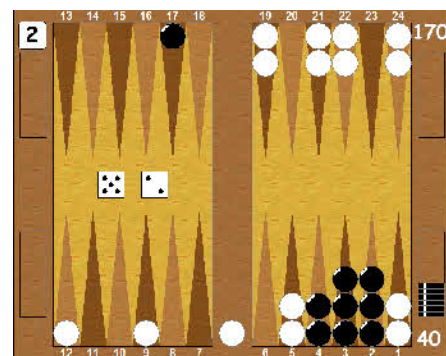
Three rolls later Allan rolls 55:



**White to play 55**

Pointing on the 3-point is clear, but Allan makes a blunder by then playing 6/1(2) and closing off his 1-point. The one point should be left open for Tony to enter upon. The lower down he is in Allan's board the greater the chances of him crunching and perhaps leaving Allan another blot. Snowie's fave by a long chalk was 13/3\*(2). The actual play increased Tony's gammon chances to just over 40%!

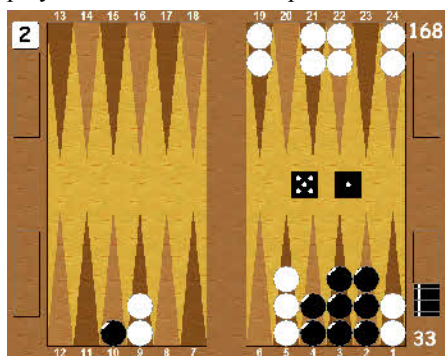
Tony managed to get this blot home, but he was eventually hit during the bearoff, thus giving Allan a slim chance of saving the gammon or even winning the game. Here he is on the bar and his move, a blunder, further increases his gammon losses to over 50%:



**White to play 52**

Allan plays 25/20 13/11. It is the

25/20 part that's incorrect. He already has two checkers on that point and he should have played on to his 18-point to maximize his hitting chances. In the game Tony rolled 43 and hit 17/14\* 14/10 whereas he would have been forced to play 17/10 had Allan played 25/18, and in doing so left Allan with a quadruple shot at the blot. Instead, Allan was on the bar and his roll of 63 (which would have hit from his 18-point!) missed the blot. He played 25/16 to leave this position:



**Black on roll**

Tony rolls 51! Once again, Allan is in with a chance! He hits with 21, but Tony can't be retained and he eventually rolls out for a backgammon and the match - and his second UK title.



**Main: Tony & Allan**



**Consolation: Ray & Marcus**

In the Consolation (20) non-progressive side the quarter-finals was between Paul Gilbertson (our sponsor) vs Paul Learmount, and Marcus Wrinch vs Jeff Barber. Paul and Marcus made it to the non-prog final and it was Marcus that made it to the Consolation final. Here he waited on the Main 1st Round losers to

battle it out to meet him. In the end it came down to Raj vs Julian Fetterlein, and Raj prevailed . . . only to lose to Marcus in the final.

The Snowball (10) for those players who didn't win any qualifying matches on the Saturday was won by last year's Main winner, Mick Butterfield whose attempt at three-in-a-row titles was unsuccessful. He beat Jeff Barber into 2nd place.



**Snowball: Mick & Jeff**



**Last Chance: John & David**

The Last Chance (16) was the only element in which a pre-qualifier took home a trophy. John Hedge beat David Wallbank to go home a happy bunny.

Ann Pocknell won the Champion of Champions (7) when she got the better of John Reddington in the final.



**Ann Pocknell**

The 1-point Knockout and the Wii Boxing events were both non-starters with players showing little or no interest in entering either. The Secret Santa faired a

little better with six presents being exchanged. Perhaps it was too secret! Rosey's Rollout was better supported and six players shared her roll of sixteen but only one, Sharen Crane managed to match it twice and she took home a lovely bottle of Rosé champagne.

The Team (6) was a little under-subscribed, but this didn't bother Mark Heidenfeld when he went through to beat Richard Biddle in the final. The freeze-out Poker (18) saw John Hedge beating all-comers in his favourite poker format. Mick Butterfield came 2nd with Rosey Bensley 3rd.

Going back to Friday night's final of the Friday 500 (16), Tom Duggan just missed out on the £500 prize losing to David Nathan. And, in the Friday Jackpot (8) I stormed through the field to come out on top after beating John Reddington in the final . . . mind you, the best bit was beating Mick Butterfield in the 1st Round!

Finally

It was a good weekend marred only by the total entry of 34. The hotel refused to release any additional Biba rate rooms thus denying several members the chance to enter. I cannot stress enough how important it is to book early. It is far easier to cancel a reservation that it is to make one close to the event date.

I'd like to thank Paul for the trophies and Rosey for the champagne. Their sponsorship and support of Biba is very much appreciated. I'd also like to thank all entrants that braved sub-zero temperatures to make it to Walton and especially to Mark Heidenfeld who flew in from his new home in Germany and to Allan Christensen who flew in from Denmark.

Footnote: John Broomfield didn't make it to the UK Finals - but he was there in spirit! Here's Mike Heard doing a 'Broomfield' in his Consolation match against Raj Jansari.



**And really, really finally!**

Tom Duggan, the sponsor of the ►

Biba - World Championship has provided a stunning centrepiece to publicise the July event.

It's a globe thingy!

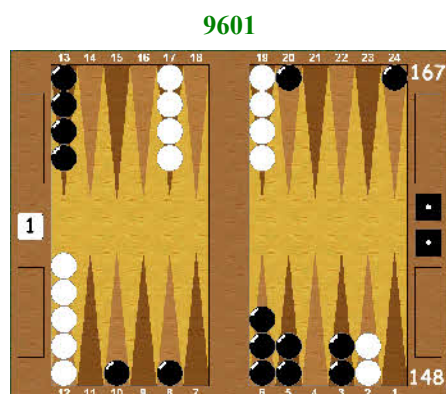
With £1000 first prize guaranteed this event is expected to draw a big entry. If you want to reserve accommodation you need to book it now! Don't leave it too late and miss out on being Biba's first world champion and going home £1000 richer!



## Competition 2008 No.3 Solutions

By Michael Crane

*MC: Well, here we are at the last competition of the year and to the last of our six positions.*



11 point match  
Black 3 White 8  
Black cube action

*MC: Our first three are keeping the cube in the middle.*

### Steve Hallett: No Double

Black ahead in race and position and threatening to prime white's back checkers. White has an anchor and no men out of play or any loose blots at the moment but with only the 6-point and 8-point to land on has to throw perfectly not to leave blots later in the game. With the score at 8-3 to white, should white accept if doubled? The answer is definitely No. So should black double or play on for a gammon? I think black is in complete control of the game at the moment and should refrain from doubling, just continue building his prime and picking up any loose blots if possible keeping his eye on the cube if white manages to improve his game.

### Phil Tutchings: No Double

Black is in a decent position - racing lead, three point home board (with the potential of making the 4-point or bar-point this roll). In contrast white has a weak home board.

Despite black having four blots exposed before roll white's immediate threats seem minimal (even if hit black has enough flexibility and strong connectivity to recover).

Risks may be justified at 8-away, 3-away but a recube by white could put the match on the line. There are risks of the game swinging so it could be worth waiting a couple of rolls.

### David Phillips: No Double

Black has lots of decent but not necessarily game winning rolls. But it's early in the game and too early for me though for black to double as he/she (and I won't do that again!) is not quite far enough behind on the score. I think double, take might be correct if black was a further point behind and heading for Crawford, then a double is in order with only the faintest of advantages.

*MC: Snowie disagrees, this is certainly a double, albeit a tad soon. The next pair think white should be dropping here.*

### Bob Young: Double/Pass

At this score, I figure that white is never going to be a favourite for many rolls, no home board, back men still trapped, behind in the race. Giving black a single game at this stage still leaves white a huge match favourite.

### Cedric Lytton: Double/Pass

Black leads in the race, has a vastly superior position, threatens to make his 4-point with 64, 62, 42, 22 (7 rolls), can, also make his 5-point with a 5 or 2, and his Golden Anchor with a 4. Also he trails in the match, and while points scored give the leader more MWE (match winning equity) than the trailer which pushes up the doubling window, Snowie has obviously been programmed to think that: (a) the trailer must seize any chance of cube action to catch up, (b) if white takes his cube will be almost dead, (c) White won't want black to catch up with a doubled gammon if black can send another checker back - quite likely as white may well have to leave a shot next time. Snowie will say, money take, match pass.

*MC: Well, it is a double . . . and a take.*

### Brian Lever: Double/Take

Start by stating the obvious - a doubled gammon would be very welcome for black, and he should be looking for opportunities to play his way into a gammon-threatening position. Ideally, he'd like a position where he had a nice juicy blot to shoot at; here he's got one where white is anchored up, with nothing loose at present. Next turn black will make one of three key offensive points - 4-point, 8-point or bar - or the white 5-point; every roll works. Of these, the offensive points are the most important - and in my view, black does better to leave the back checkers split anyway.

Once again, the double whether right or wrong, is in practical terms correct. Black is likely to have an even stronger offensive position next roll.

Can white then take? His undeveloped position may lead to a loose blot very quickly, but anchored up, and therefore with considerably less gammon risk, he probably can, and all his checkers are in play. It's no bargain, but who said it had to be. Double definitely, and Take perhaps reluctantly. I think black might welcome a take here, and a crack at a gammon but equally he might get a few drops from timid match lead preservers.

### Peter Christmas: Double/Take

Black being 3-8 behind in the match should be keen to double early as he doesn't need the full 75% advantage as the cube is almost dead to white unless he puts the whole match on it. Black is well placed here with the better Position, ►

ahead in the Race and Threatening to prime white's two runners but the gammon prospects look fairly low. The real question is can white take? He has advanced his anchor by 1 pip but his count is no greater than when he started the game. Still his position is solid with no blots or men out of play and should have some shots as black has four blots around and will really want to cover the 8-point to block sixes.

At 3-away he has almost no re-cube value but gammons are match winning and a single on 2-cube will push him to Crawford with black needing the next eight points, so it is still a valuable game for white. I think it is a good cube from black and he could expect a fair percentage of people to drop it but I think white can get some value from taking, he should be able to keep his anchor and should get some shot equity and he is far from out of the race being about 13% behind in a long race is within the margins of a take.

#### Richard Biddle: Double/Take

Black is behind in the match and needs to get the cube moving. This position is quite gammonish as white has little flexibility and is likely to leave a blot next roll. This may mean a third checker being sent back behind black's partly-formed prime. Three checkers back should be enough for a gammon most times. So there is some reward here for black to double with moderate risk. Having four black blots may be a deterrence to doubling, but actually this emphasises the builders that black has available and the great outfield coverage to pick up another white blot. However, these same four blots also mean that white can take this as they lead to high game winning chances to counter the gammon chances that black has.

**Snowie says:** As ever, an excellent set of positions covering many different aspects of the game. In particular they demonstrate yet again that the match score is critical to doubling and play decisions as we shall see.

#### Snowie: Double/Take

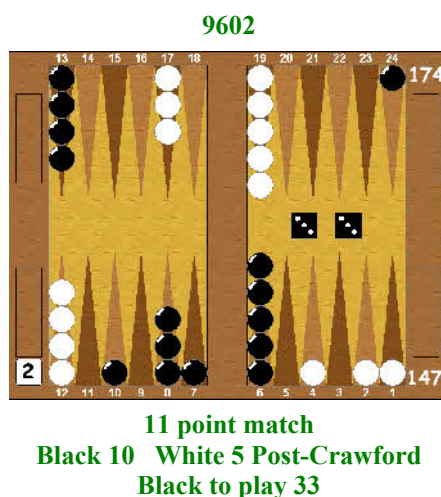
Black is ahead in all three key elements: race, position and threat. He should certainly be considering doubling. Against an unknown opponent this is definitely a double as I've seen players drop from the white side of such positions.

The one factor in the position that might give black pause for thought is the fact that the position is relatively non-volatile

and he might seek some improvement before doubling. The 2-point game is remarkably resilient and all of white's men are in play.

For money this is technically not quite a double though as noted above it is a good practical double. One of the more useful features of my rollout capabilities is that I can tell you what percentage chance that my opponent might drop would make the double correct - in this case it is 9%.

At 3-8 to 11 it is a different story. When trailing you want to win 2 or 4 points, not a measly 1. Black wins enough gammons to make this a crystal clear double. White has a relatively easy take particularly as winning 2 points gets him to the Crawford Game with his opponent on an odd number of points.



**MC:** Well, what have we here? No one has got it correct – which probably proves no one is cheating by using Snowie! Our first effort goes for the double-hit.

#### David Phillips: 7/4\* 4/1\* 6/3(2)

What a great roll (but double-4 was better) and so many ways to play it. Black only needs 1 point to win the match so perhaps it's safety first. So what's that? Maybe make the 7-point and 3-point? I don't think leaving a man on the 4-point is a good idea so that's not it.

So my starting position here is to hit the man on the 4-point with the checker on the 7-point. That leaves three more 3s. The obvious move is to cover the 4-point from the 11-point which would leave one last 3 which could be played to no great effect in a number of ways but I don't like it. It's only putting one man on the bar so let's start again. In his comments on my suggestions for competition question 9403 Michael described my move as ag-

gressive and manly (oh yes ... and wrong!) ... well it must be my nature. I know black only needs to win and doesn't need a gammon but taking account of the lack of development of white's board, I think attack is the best form of defence. I am going for a blitz.

So it's 7/1 which takes off two men followed by 6/3(2) which makes the 3-point, unstacks the 6-point and leaves plenty of builders. If black gets hit ... so what! It's attack attack attack!

**MC:** It is because black only needs one more point to win the match that this gammon play is wrong. Double-hitting won't give him the easy one-point win he needs. Our next two like to hit while covering the bar-point.

#### Cedric Lytton: 13/7 7/4\*(2)

Black must hit and make his 4-point denying white a major anchor there, and this play (rather than 10/4\*, 7/4, 24/21) makes 6s (except 65) awkward for white.

#### Bob Young: 13/4\* 7/4

Need to take advantage of this excellent roll, with many possibilities. Whatever choice made should include putting white on the bar, leaving no direct shots, making home board points, preferably in order down the home board, and flexible position after picking up the dice. Three on the bar is a waste of time, making the 5-point is good but isn't threatening white unless hit on both the 4- and ace-point to minimize return shots, so I go for making the 4-point on white's head, and keeping the checker on the 10-point with the plan to make the 5-point as soon as possible. The rear checker can escape when the battle is won on the other side of the board.

**MC:** The next pair see the need to get the back checker moving, but they still like to hit.

#### Phil Tutchings: 24/21 10/7 7/4\*(2)

This move creates a new home board point reducing the threat of a white anchor. It also safeties the 10- and 7-point blots (safety an important consideration at this score). Moving 24/21 duplicates white's good 2s and 4s.

#### Peter Christmas: 24/21 10/7 7/4\*(2)

There are so many feasible plays, you could even put none, 1, 2 or 3 on the bar but the latter would not even be considered unless you had about two minutes left on your clock and needed a gammon to win the match. Even two on the ►

bar with 8/5(2) 7/4\* 4/1\* would be unnecessary here with black only needing the single point to win the match he can look at some of the more solid moves. The simple 24/15 10/7 adheres to the 'when ahead, race' rule, and if not hit could lead to a winning advantage, but it is often useful to do something constructive when you have a double so as not to waste it. Other non hitting moves are going for the outside prime with 13/7 13/10 and 24/21 or unstacking the 6-point with 6/3(2) 10/7 24/21. Both have some merit but will allow white a free hand to make an advanced anchor next roll.

The move I like most is to point on white's head with 10/4\* 7/4 and start the back man moving while white is on the bar. It is low risk, it opens up some blitzing possibilities and if you can squeeze white back to the 1- or 2-point it makes it less risky to bring the back men around to the outer board. Black is a little spoilt for choice with this good roll but making an inner board point while putting white in the air and bringing up the back man, (dropping another man off the 13-point is also reasonable as a builder for the 5- or 7-point although open to the joker 55 and leaves the back man a bit isolated.) So 10/4\*, 7/4, 24/21 just edges it for me.

*MC: It is a pity that Peter didn't follow his own advice, "when ahead, race!" The final batch don't bother hitting.*

**Brian Lever: 24/21 10/7 6/3(2)**

And here is a score-based play, where black doesn't need excitement, just a steady positional play. Alternatives are

- make the bar- and 10-points, or
- bar- and 3-points, or
- make the 4-point with 10/7, 7/4(2),

in each case with 24/21 as the final choice.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> play, making the 4-point is the play black would make if the scores were reversed and he was the one needing gammons. But I like the other steadier plays, more so the one making the bar- & 10-points – prettier position, the checkers are nicely grouped together - and the bringing down of two from the mid-point adds weight to a possible attack if black wants to switch to attack mode. Black's got a sizeable racing lead though, and he just wants to come home safely. I reckon all the plays are fairly close.

**Richard Biddle: 24/21 10/7 6/3(2)**

I have come across positions like this before when, ahead in the race and only

needing a single point to win, I have had to fight off the temptation to keep on hitting like a man possessed. Hitting and pointing on the 4-point would be the first move most players would see. It makes sense; it makes a home board point and takes half a roll away from white.

But do we need to slow white down? Are we not more concerned with giving ourselves a safe journey home? We will need the bar-point to do that so let's make that instead. Tempting to make the 5-point as well, but ideally we would like to unstack the heavy 6-point. This gives a very firm foundation to race home safely which has to be our primary focus, we want to avoid the distraction of contact. We continue the racing theme by bringing the back checker forwards, now white has the double task of trying to make an anchor and prevent black from escaping the last checker.

**Steve Hallett: 24/21 10/7 6/3(2)**

Post-Crawford all black has to do is win, safety is paramount so his first 3 has to be 10/7. So what to do next? Keeping safety in mind the 7-point should be kept as a landing point for black's checkers on the 13-point. So even though 7/4\*(2) looks good, at this score I don't think it is right. Running out with 24/15 is OK but allows white to hit whilst bringing builders into his outfield. So we have a choice for the next two 3s of 13/10(2) or 6/3(2). 13/10(2) makes an outer board point and does threaten white's checker on black's 4-point but it makes a point that black would have to break in the future and takes away a lot of flexibility. 6/3(2) unstacks the 6-point and makes an inner board point and leaves flexibility with spares on most points.

We now have the last 3 to play which with safety in mind the choice is between 24/21 and 6/3 everything else leaves another blot which black definitely doesn't want to do. 6/3 diminishes the value of the spare to make inner board points so 24/21 has it.

*MC: Steve actually mentions the correct move but is put off by the fact that it leaves a 3-shot. It's all about the race, as Snowie explains.*

**Snowie: 24/15 10/7**

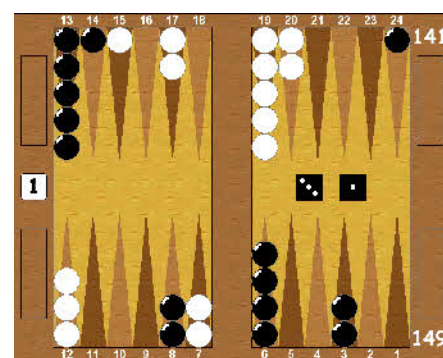
This is the most fascinating of all the positions. In a money game you would spend your time deciding between 13/7, 7/4(2)\* and 24/21, 10/7, 7/4(2)\*. There isn't much between the two plays but the latter play is slightly stronger.

At 10-5 post-Crawford it is a vastly different position! Black can't win with the cube, winning a gammon is valueless while losing a gammon is extremely expensive. All he wants to do is win the game. What is the play that does that with the least downside risk?

The answer is the very simple running play 24/15, 10/7 (when ahead in the race - race) with 24/21, 10/7, 6/3(2) a close second. The key is that surprisingly 24/15, 10/7 loses 10% less gammons than a play such as 24/21, 10/7, 7/4(2)\*.

I have to admit that my neural nets were confused by this position and if I had relied on my 3-ply evaluation I would have got this wrong. It's only after a few thousand rollouts that 24/15, 10/7 becomes obvious.

9603



11 point match  
Black 4 White 1  
Black to play 31

*MC: After all the entrants fail to get it correct last time we now some that do. To slot, or not to slot, that is the question. I'll leave my personal comments 'til last.*

**Bob Young: 14/11 6/5**

Coming up to edge of the white mini blockade is asking to get clobbered, making safe the blot onto the mid-point leaves no good 3s, so may as well try for the 5-point by slotting, and bringing the direct shot blot round the corner, where it will give white problems if made next roll, or hard decisions if decide to leave the anchor for the hit.

**Cedric Lytton: 14/11 6/5**

Starting the Golden Point with a surplus man, and shifting a blot to where white will think twice before hitting it and leaving his anchor (unless, he rolls 54 or 44). The aggressive 8/5, 6/5 would give black the better board but leave too many blots; 14/13, 24/21 would be coming under the gun; 14/13, 6/3 would make no progress and take a checker too far in; 14/13, ►

8/5 looks nice, again giving white a nasty decision if he rolls a 1, but would leave black an even more stacked position.

#### David Phillips: 14/11 6/5

So what's going on here? White's trying to escape, black's last man is in danger of getting stranded, nothing significant in the race. First decision is to leave the last man where it is. Moving it three points brings it within range of the man lurking on white's 10-point and moving it just one point brings it within a direct hit of the man on 7-point. We can play absolutely safely by moving the man on black's 14- to 13-point and 6- to 5-point ... not such a bad move ... and wait and see.

Black could make his 5-point and tempt white into splitting those men on black's 7-point, but that would leave a possible double hit and it's all too risky. Final option is running the man from 14- to either the 11- or 10-point ... again, this is to tempt white to split the men on black's 7-point. I quite like this ... white's board is not a major threat yet and there will be lots of return hits. So I am moving 14/11 and rather than carrying on with the 1 to the 10-point, I am going to slot my 5-point.

#### Steve Hallett: 14/11 6/5

Black slightly behind in the race and could play completely safe with 14/13 and either 6/3 or the more dangerous 24/21 but a much better play is either 14/10 or 14/11, 6/5 Of the two I prefer 14/11, 6/5 bringing the loose checker round and starting the 5-point.

#### Peter Christmas: 14/11 6/5

If you didn't work out the pip count over the board it maybe tempting to play the safest move, 24/21, 14/13 but being slightly behind it is the wrong idea as it takes the pressure off white as if he can't attack he can play behind the blot until he rolls a double or something to escape his back men. The pure but risky 8/5, 6/5 leaves three blots around and if I was playing white I would be tempted to cube knowing there are a lot of hitting numbers, quite a few double hits and it could be a good opportunity for white to score a gammon and move into a 5-4 lead in the match. 1

4/13, 6/3 is just too passive but I think it is good to move the 14-point blot away from the mid-point spare man and a low risk hit, where as at least on the 11-point white has got to break his back anchor and so give black more return shots. So

slotting the 5-point or moving on with 11/10? I prefer the slot as the one advantage of not having opposition checkers in your home board is you can slot and cover points as quickly as possible in preparation for any later exchanges.

*MC: The last three agree with Snowie's move.*

#### Phil Tutchings: 14/10

Although black wants to escape a back checker 24/21 would be risky - some good rolls for white bearing in on the 4-point. 6/3 14/13 gives immediate safety but lacks flexibility. 14/10 seems a good option providing a builder to black's home board and duplicating 3s.

#### Richard Biddle: 14/10

Black, behind in the race, wants contact and to start building the home board for when contact occurs. First move I see is 14/11 6/5, however, I can do better than this by duplicating white threes by moving 14/10; threes to hit, threes to make the white 10-point. I miss out on strengthening my home board, so I ponder 8/5 6/5. This move still invites contact and better prepares the home board, but without the benefit of duplication. There isn't much to choose between these three moves. I will plump for the duplication move, as I suspect this is what I would do over the board.

#### Brian Lever: 14/10

There are a multitude of plausible plays here; black's lead in the match argues perhaps for a conservative approach, but it's relatively early and he can avoid e.g. over-stacking the mid-point This roll also still leaves him moderately behind in the race so I wouldn't step up to the 21-point with the 3 - besides that's asking for trouble with a number of hungry white checkers in the zone.

My personal favourite in this sort of position is to make the 5-point - strengthens the home board and dares white to break the bar-point anchor with a hit, but I'm less inclined to do this here because of the 2<sup>nd</sup> vulnerable outside blot, and would instead play the simple 14/10. White isn't favourite to hit, and the follow up is easy - possibly the making of the 10-point as an extra inhibitor to white's future movement. And as a by-product, the 8-point is retained as a landing spot.

*MC: To be fair here, there's not a lot to choose between the two sets of answers. I'd have gone with the slot duplicating 3s and hoping that if white were to roll a 3*

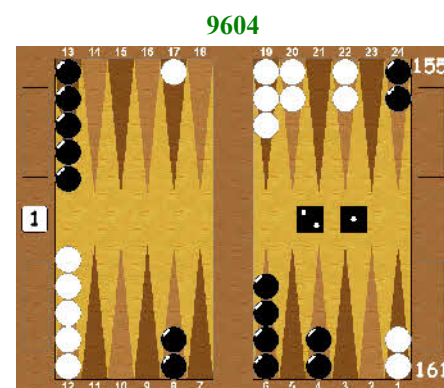
*it was with a 6.*

#### Snowie: 14/10

I hope nobody went for 14/13, 6/3? Go to the bottom of the class if that was your choice. Your men need to be put to work for you not sent to the wastelands! Also award yourself a black mark if you went with 24/21, 14/13 which is completely the wrong idea - white will attack the blot on the 21-point with all guns blazing. That rear man should stay safely on the 24-point.

The choices are 14/10; 14/11, 6/5 and 8/5, 6/5. The latter play, leaving two blots exposed, is a good play to consider for money and in fact it is the second best play for money but leading 4-1 exposing two blots is a little too frisky.

14/10 and 14/11, 6/5 both duplicate some of white's good numbers and there is very little to choose between the two plays. My nets give a very slight edge to 14/10.



11 point match  
Black 2 White 5  
Black to play 21

*MC: I had thought there'd be a better spread of answers here, but as it turned out only one entrant went off on a tangent.*

#### Brian Lever: 24/23 13/11

Black's 42, followed by white's double-3, right? And is there any reason to play other than 13/11, 24/23, incidentally duplicating 64? Nope. Forget slotting the 5-point - white's bigger board says not - and the split play has an edge over 13/10, as it threatens the white 8-point blot. That's it! (Can you tell I'm running out of time to get my answers in?) [and I've got to put David to bed]

#### Richard Biddle: 24/23 13/11

I can only consider two moves; both involve playing two from the mid-point to unstack a builder. So, do I slot the 5-point to duplicate white's 64 required to double hit or make another home board- ►

point? But we are only a handful of pips down so it would be insane to risk so much when we still have racing chances. So for this reason we should move one back checker up one. It puts pressure on white's blot, it still duplicates white's 64 to make a home board point or hit a fly shot. But white now has to contend with challenges on both side of the board.

#### Steve Hallett: 24/23 13/11

Race fairly close with white having the better board. Possible plays are 24/21, 24/23 13/11 or 13/10. Even though white has a three point board black must split his back men to make it more difficult for white to bring builders down into his outfield, it also puts direct pressure on white's blot on his 8-point, so the 1 is to be 24/23. We now have the choice to carry on to white's 4-point with 23/21 or to unstack the midpoint with 13/11. White would much rather hit loose on his 4-point than his 1-point or 2-point so I think 23/21 is too dangerous in this situation. 13/11 is much better bringing a builder down.

#### Cedric Lytton: 24/23 13/11

Position after white 31, black 42, white 53 when white has the better board so that the slot alternative 13/11, 6/5 would leave black at a disadvantage should white roll a 4 and start a blot-fight. Black challenges white's 8-point blot and creates more useful run-out numbers. 24/21, hoping to make the anchor, would again invite a risky blot-fight, particularly after 43: 8/4\* 4/1\* and 23: 6/4\* 4/1\*.

#### Phil Tutchings: 24/23 13/11

Duplicates white's good 64 and splits back checkers before too much danger of a white prime. Sets up builder to home 5- and bar-point.

#### Peter Christmas: 24/23 13/11

Not so many options with this roll but both sides will be looking to get their back men moving fairly soon but White has the stronger board and some spares, so 24/21 is a fair effort to grab an advanced anchor but will be hit loose if not able to point on. Equally playing 13/11, 6/5 is a fair attempt to improve the home board before splitting the back men but could lead to the ideal opportunity for white to hit and escape his back men. So playing on both sides with 24/23, and 13/11 gives good diversity with some direct pressure on the white blot on the 8-point and some good anchor making rolls while increasing the chances to make some valuable points in or around the home board. With white having the

advantage in the race and the position I think it is better for black to make a small play rather than a big play at this time.

#### David Phillips: 24/23 13/11

It's early in the game, black is behind in the match and so needs to be aggressive and play 13/11 and slot 6/5 .... Or does he? I don't think so as whilst all that is true, white's home board is too strong and the risk is too great. Black must have two aims here. He needs to start extracting his back men and at the same time try to develop a prime of some sort. So let's split the back men before white brings any builders down and use the 2 to bring down a builder from the 13-point. So it's.... 24/23 (and 13/11 which will help towards making the 5- or 7-point).

*MC: Well, have you sussed who went off on his own?*

#### Bob Young: 13/10

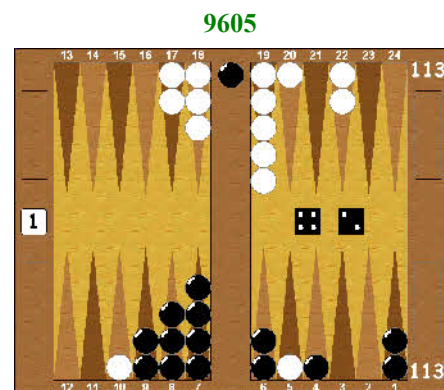
Can't split back men with white's stronger home board, too loose to slot the 5-point for the same reasons, (black will be keen to make it naturally, but not by aggressive slotting in my opinion), so one choice only for me. PS. can't really see choices for answers here, but we will see, I may be the only idiot playing 21, maybe everybody else has 33 to play in their magazine!

*MC: You're too harsh on yourself, Bob. You're just silly, not an idiot!*

#### Snowie: 24/23 13/11

This is the easiest position in the set. There is no need to panic and step up with 24/21 giving white a nice juicy target but the back men need to be split while white has very few attackers in 'the zone' and so 24/23 is mandatory with the 1.

After that it is a simple thing to get one of the stack of men on the mid-point into play with 13/11. 6/4 would be wrong with the 2 as it takes a man beyond the open 5-point and fails to develop the men on the mid-point.



11 point match  
Black 4 White 8  
Black to play 42

*MC: I had hoped to draw a couple or so into playing safe – but all entrants went for the aggressive hit on the 5-point. What more can I say? i must admit, finding contentious positions is a pain in the arse!*

#### Bob Young: 25/21 7/5\*

Entering low down in white's home board is poor, Black will get trapped very easily, so the 25/21 looks clear to me. The blot will probably be hit here, and another home board point made, either on him or in front of him, so to take away this real danger on that side of the board, black can't afford to play passively on the other side of the board. White needs to be put in the air. This forces white to roll a four or five immediately or be in serious trouble. If hit, black may still be able to re-hit on entering, or form an advanced anchor.

#### Richard Biddle: 25/21 7/5\*

By playing this roll tamely, black will lose by being doubled out. Black cannot enter on the 2-point as this greatly decreases escaping chances. But if we come in on the 4-point we will most likely be hit next roll, as white is not afraid of our home board and is looking temptingly at picking up the blot in our home board and two of our checkers are out of play on our ace-point. Time for the bold play, yes, come in on the 4-point but hit 7/5\*. I am sure this is what all good players ►



would do as every other move achieves nothing whereas this gives white something to think about. Go large!

**Steve Hallet: 25/21 7/5\***

Race even with both sides poised to blitz. Black is unable to hit white's blot on white's 5-point or escape into white's outfield. Playing safe with 25/23, 8/4 or 25/21, 8/6 or 4/2 gives white way too much freedom, allowing white to escape his back checker or continue to blitz black. Black must take the initiative even though he leaves two blots he must hit white's blot on black's 5-point and the best play to do this is 25/21, 7/5\*

**Peter Christmas: 25/21 7/5\***

Although there are similarities in the positions when you look at the safe play for black, 25/23, 8/4 it quickly becomes apparent how much of a disadvantage there is here. Any 5 or 6 for white escapes his last back man and gives him total control of the outfield, while any 1 or 2 will cover his 5-point and a 43 would point on black on the 2-point. Black's biggest problem apart from being on the bar is having no mid-point or outfield control and the two checkers out of play on the 1-point.

Black really can't afford the luxury of sitting back, even 25/21, 8/6 leaves white a free hand to do his worse, with the match score advantage he is not going to be doubling just yet but he is threatening to grab an unassailable advantage unless black does something proactive. 25/21, 7/5\* looks drastic with two blots in your home board but it should stop white from doubling at 3-away, 7-away in a volatile position and at the moment they both only have two points made in the home board. So there are four dancing rolls and seven that miss directly but double-three would be crushing on the other side as would double-two but overall in a bad position it gives black some chances to mix it up rather than sit back and get rolled over.

**David Phillips: 25/21 7/5\***

What a mess! Black would like to do three things ... get off the bar, hit a white man (no racism intended) and cover the exposed man on his own 4-point. Unfortunately the numbers do not allow black to do all that. Well black has to come on and whilst black can enter on either the 4- or 2-points, instinct says it's got to be the most advanced point so as to avoid getting trapped by white's developing prime. So the starting position is 25/21. That leaves the 2.

I already know where this is going! The meek and mild 2 is to play 8/6 and it's probably the correct answer but I can't do it! It leaves all numbers too good for white. Big rolls allow the man on black's 5-point to escape and small rolls will see white making its 5-point and/or hitting black on the 4-point. Instead black should try and put some pressure on white and make white throw a good number and leave white with a chance of a bad roll. My choice for the 2 is to hit white on black's 5-point. It leaves two men exposed but white's home board isn't that great (yet) and it gives white a chance of a bad roll.

**Brian Lever: 25/21 7/5\***

An odd position to have an even race in. I'm mightily tem-pointed to play 25/21, 7/5\* for the hell of it – can that be right? Could almost lose the match here and now. But actually, the most plausible alternatives are pretty hopeless. Bar/23, 8/4 is likely to leave black behind a broken 6-prime; 25/21, 8/6 at least aims for a sort of race where black is (sort of) ahead, but he could be clobbered. And doubled?

The advantage of the loose hit is balance – i.e. keeping white off it. It's likely to be perceived as such a bizarre move that white might double into a potentially very gammonish situation – and wouldn't black like that at 8-4 down? The probable result is a white hit but not a hit & cover of his own loose blot – and that will give black the chance of a return hit or an anchor. It's really his best way out of an awkward situation

**Cedric Lytton: 25/21 7/5\***

Even though white can double this volatile position from the bar and, assuming black takes, win the match with a gammon (one point wastage), black does better to take the fight to white rather than the passive 25/21, 8/6 or 25/23, 8/4 when white would be favourite to escape his back man or make his 5-point or both, leaving black a considerable underdog. Some 6s play badly for white, also 21, and if black can make his own 5-point he will have a 5-prime and the advantage, even if white extends his own 3-prime into a 4-prime. If white hits back, black still has chances of hitting white's 5-point blot or making a 4-point major anchor.

**Phil Tutchings: 25/21 7/5\***

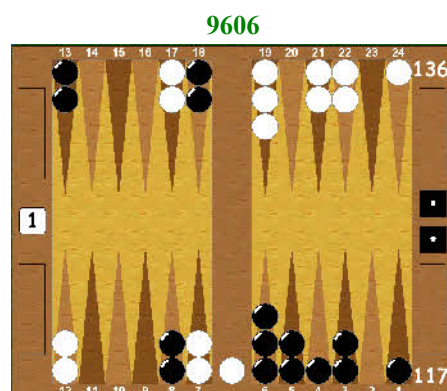
Maintains a four-prime and could complicate things for white. If hit there is the possibility of anchoring on white's 4-point, hitting on the 5-point (or both).

**Snowie: 25/21 7/5\***

This is a simple case of kill or be killed. Any passive play such as 25/23, 8/4 or 25/21, 8/6 is wrong by a country mile. Left to his own devices white will attack or escape his rear men and black will be struggling.

Black isn't favourite here so he needs to take positive action and the only viable play is 25/21, 7/5\*. This is the right play for money and even more so at this match score where black should welcome the complications and the gammon potential.

If you didn't hit but voted for a 'wait and see' approach in this position then you still have much to learn about the aggressive nature of backgammon.



11 point match  
Black 4 White 2  
Black cube action

*MC: Thankfully we have disagreement in the ranks! The correct answer is determined by market forces.*

**Brian Lever: Double/Take**

And finally! Black is going to have a 4 or 4 and a half-point board after this roll – 5-point if he rolls 44. It's got to be a double. Dare white take, with his 5-point open, a loose blot in board and all outside points stripped? He can, I think. The most likely scenario is that he'll be aiming at a black blot, but more than that he does have some security in the shape of the bar-point and six black checkers have to get past it. Stripped or not, his position is solid and it would be very hard to give it up. Might turn out to be a close decision, though I don't think the match score has an enormous influence and he'd be very unlucky to be gammoned.

**Peter Christmas: Double/Take**

Black's decision is easier than white's here in that he is ahead in the race, has the better position and threatening to close out the white checker on the bar. He has 3/36 market losers: 54 and 44 would ►

cover both blots in the home board, white would need to enter and hit to stay in the game. All other rolls give black a four point board and white, having the psychological blow of just dancing and missing tow blots, could well drop the cube which makes it worth offering anyhow.

Having the luxury of time and a pen and paper does allow one to look a bit deeper than I would over the board at least. With the safest plays, (i.e. 51, 65, 43) black is going to leave no direct shot on 19 rolls but a third leave a blot and five rolls leave two blots next turn, (64, 65 & 66). Also two thirds of black's rolls will leave at least one outside blot and white is still going to be a 20/36 favourite to enter next roll on 33/36 rolls and it is the stripped back anchors that could give black the most trouble bringing the position home. White needs at least 25% winning chances and getting a hit is not winning but it evens up the race and puts everything back in the mix.

There are real gammon threats if white dances or gets blitzed, or closed out so he needs some extra winning chances to compensate for this, but his reasonable home board and solid position should stand him in good stead in the games he can re-enter, especially when black is forced to break the back anchors prematurely. Being 7-away, 9-away it is unlikely to cost him the whole match, it could get pretty hairy but white should get sufficient chances where he does re-enter to justify the take.

#### **Steve Hallett: Double/take**

Black ahead in race and very likely to make a four point board next roll, white has his own three point board and the fact that he could turn the game around very quickly if black fails to cover both blots in his home board makes this an easy take for white. So should black double? I think the race has it, even though having two blots in your home board is scary I think black should double now.

#### **Richard Biddle: Double/Take**

It is most likely we will have a four-point board after our next move. Do we have a blitz on? Do we know for sure whether white will take? Is it Woolsey who said, give your opponent the problem if you don't know if it is a take or not. So for this reason I double in a not very scientific way. Having said all that, I think this really is a borderline decision to take or not. I would probably take because of black's two blots; black's stripped posi-

tion in the outfield also creates difficulties on the run for home.

#### **Bob Young: Double/Take**

My first impression was a drop, but I thought I recognised something similar in my mental pattern recognising brain, that everyone says that we should be using, i.e. making patterns....are they sure it is patterns?, or is it a spelling error, and should be making kittens? Any way, found what I was looking for, not a sex kitten, (already got one of those), but Bill Robertie's analysis of the 1981 World Championship between Lee Genuid and Joe Dwek, game 18 to be precise .. In their match, they have two home-board points and two home blots, but two on the bar, while in our game we have three home-board points, two home blots, but only one on the bar, but a safe base nearby on the bar-point when he enters. For me this balances out the gains and losses for both sides.

In the World match, the rear checkers were still back at base, while in our example they have escaped, but in a very stripped position, which to me again cancels out both side's merits. The match analysis deemed it a proper double and a big mistake with Dwek dropping this cube. The match score in both cases is not important. I feel the double is certain, it could all go black's way, and if he wasn't sure if it was a drop or not for white, then this suggests to him that he should be doubling anyway. PS. Any knitting patterns you would like me to look at?

*MC: The final three won't double this. Although taking is considered, it's a moot point because without an initial cube a take is not on.*

#### **Phil Tutchings: No Double/Take**

Despite the potential of establishing a four point home board after this roll (and a strong racing lead) it may be safer for black to wait a roll or two before doubling. If things look good later black could consider trying to double white out of a potentially awkward holding game.

Prior to this roll white has a take - with the likelihood of two open re-entry points and no immediate covering options for black. White should consider the take even after black's best rolls - so No Double/Take.

#### **Cedric Lytton: No Double/Take**

Currently both aides have boards the same strength, though black can make another point with 5s or (preferably) 4s or

2s; white has the partial security of a bar-point anchor, and black may have a lot of trouble weighing his own bar-point anchor. Black only has 54: 8/4, 6/1 and perhaps 44: 8/4 13/1, as a market-loser. Black is ahead in the race, but that could easily translate into a well-timed holding game for white. In the PRaTS formulation, black has only race and half of a combined position and threat factor in his favour; effectively 1.5 factors - not enough.

#### **David Phillips: No Double/Take**

Black is ahead in the match and so is not looking to create a high scoring game in such a volatile situation. There are plenty of decent numbers for black and there are gammon possibilities but black might not cover both men white's board isn't too bad .... All too early and too risky for me. Perhaps if black was behind in the race it would be different. From white's perspective, I think it's easy. Behind in the match, a fair chance of a shot next turn ... must take.

*MC: As Snowie explains, double before you lose your market.*

#### **Snowie: Double/take**

The score has no real impact on this last position. Again black leads in race, position and threat but this time the position is very volatile and he must double now. By next turn it could be too late his market may have disappeared.

White has a good structure. He holds black's bar-point and his own home board is quite strong. In addition quite often he will be shooting at a blot in black's home board next turn.

He will lose a gammon quite frequently (about 35% of the time) but he also wins about 35% of the time giving him a comfortable take.

*MC: So, that's all folks!*

Now, after it's all over we can reveal who the winner of this competition was, and who is the overall, annual winner.

To find out look to the next page ►

| Name            | 9601        | 9602               | 9603      | 9604        | 9605       | 9606        | Score |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------|
| Richard Biddle  | Double/Take | 24/21 10/7 6/3(2)  | 14/10     | 24/23 13/11 | 25/21 7/5* | Double/Take | 59.86 |
| Brian Lever     | Double/Take | 24/21 10/7 6/3(2)  | 14/10     | 24/23 13/11 | 25/21 7/5* | Double/Take | 59.86 |
| Steve Hallett   | No Double   | 24/21 10/7 6/3(2)  | 14/11 6/5 | 24/23 13/11 | 25/21 7/5* | Double/Take | 59.54 |
| Peter Christmas | Double/Take | 24/21 10/7 7/4*(2) | 14/11 6/5 | 24/23 13/11 | 25/21 7/5* | Double/Take | 59.37 |
| Bob Young       | Double/Pass | 13/7 7/4*(2)       | 14/11 6/5 | 13/10       | 25/21 7/5* | Double/Take | 58.49 |
| Cedric Lytton   | Double/Pass | 13/7 7/4*(2)       | 14/11 6/5 | 24/23 13/11 | 25/21 7/5* | No Double   | 57.80 |
| Phil Tutchings  | No Double   | 24/21 10/7 7/4*(2) | 14/10     | 24/23 13/11 | 25/21 7/5* | No Double   | 57.63 |
| David Phillips  | No Double   | 7/4* 4/1* 6/3(2)   | 14/11 6/5 | 24/23 13/11 | 25/21 7/5* | No Double   | 56.53 |

Well, this month we have a draw between Richard and Brian, so each will get £25 off their accommodation. The overall winner is Steve who just pipped Peter to the post by a very narrow margin.

Well done, Steve. Your cheque's in the post!

| Name            | 92    | 94    | 96    | Total  |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Steve Hallett   | 59.87 | 59.06 | 59.54 | 178.47 |
| Peter Christmas | 59.70 | 59.22 | 59.37 | 178.29 |
| Richard Biddle  | 59.58 | 58.82 | 59.86 | 178.26 |
| Brian Lever     | 59.88 | 57.55 | 59.86 | 177.29 |
| Cedric Lytton   | 58.87 | 55.66 | 57.8  | 172.33 |
| Bob Young       | 56.06 | 55.89 | 58.49 | 170.44 |
| Phil Tutchings  | 55.28 | 56.38 | 57.63 | 169.29 |
| Dorothy Lee     | 57.46 | 56.10 |       | 113.56 |
| David Phillips  |       | 56.58 | 56.53 | 113.11 |

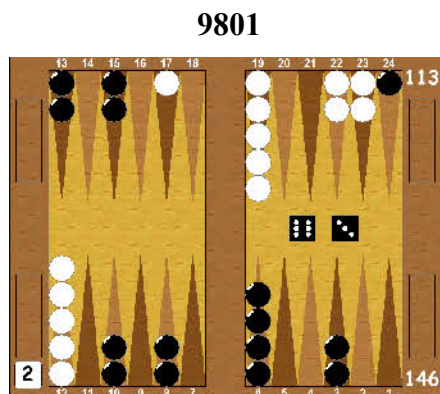
| Action             | Score |
|--------------------|-------|
| 9601 Double/Take   | 10.00 |
| Double/Pass        | 9.90  |
| No Double          | 9.81  |
| 9602 24/15 10/7    | 10.00 |
| 24/21 10/7 6/3(2)  | 9.86  |
| 13/7 7/4*(2)       | 9.71  |
| 24/21 10/7 7/4*(2) | 9.50  |
| 7/4* 4/1* 6/3(2)   | 8.53  |
| 9603 14/10         | 10.00 |
| 14/11 6/5          | 9.87  |
| 9604 24/23 13/11   | 10.00 |
| 13/10              | 9.01  |
| 9605 25/21 7/5*    | 10.00 |
| 9606 Double/Take   | 10.00 |
| No Double          | 8.32  |

## Competition 2009, No1 9801-06 Positions By Michael Crane

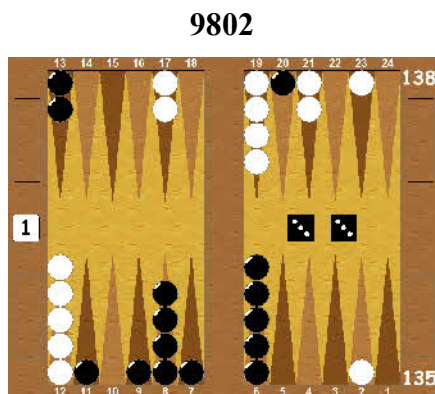
### Welcome to the first of the three 2009 season Competitions

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

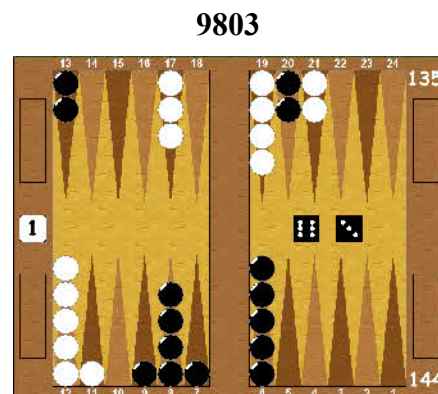
Entries in by 1 March - Answers in May 2009, Bibafax 100  
Email: [info@backgammon-biba.co.uk](mailto:info@backgammon-biba.co.uk) and all 'hard copy' to Biba HQ



11 point match  
Black 4 White 0  
Black to play 63

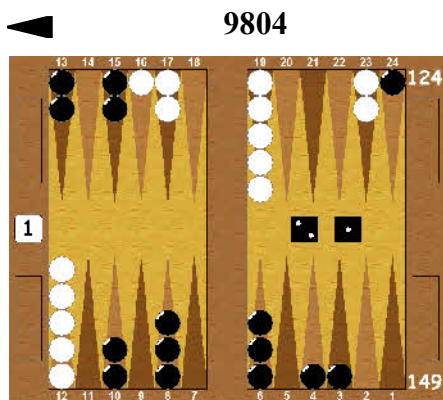


11 point match  
Black 6 White 2  
Black to play 33

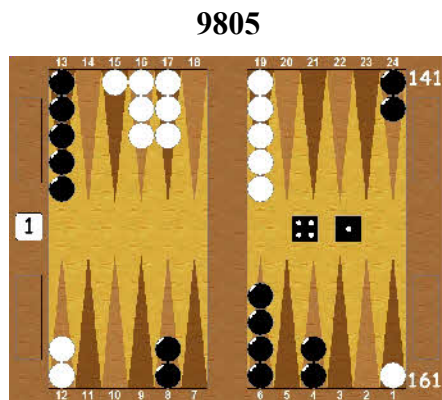


11 point match  
Black 6 White 2  
Black to play 63

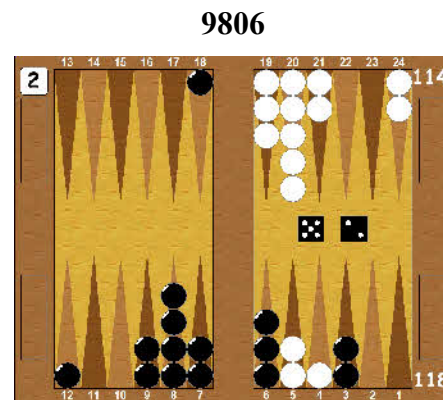
The remaining three positions are on the next page ►



11 point match  
Black 4 White 0  
Black to play 21



11 point match  
Black 2 White 6  
Black to play 41



11 point match  
Black 0 White 0  
Black to play 52



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

**3,4,5 July 2009**

**Barceló Daventry Hotel**

Registration Fee: £20. Entry: £20

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

In addition to the £1000 (minimum) 1st Prize, donations for prizes so far are:  
Hatrack Backgammon Board \* Backgammon To Win - by Chris Bray \* 52 Great Backgammon Tips - by Kit Woolsey & Patti Beadles \* Backgammon wristwatch \* One year's subscription to colour Bibafax for 2010 \* Entry into the Last 16 of the December UK Finals including one night's accommodation.

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

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



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Backgammon**



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**1% BACKGAMMON RAKE**

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# A CUT BELOW THE REST

## Backgammon rake levels reduced to just 1% on leading skill gaming site

Casinorip.com, the sponsors of the Biba web site, have unveiled the lowest backgammon rake available anywhere online ranging from 5% to just 1% according to stake size. *"Most backgammon providers are keen to avoid explaining how much rake or commission they charge and a quick review of their terms and conditions doesn't leave you much the wiser"*, says Casinorip.com CEO Kevin Dale. *"Not surprising really, as there are some sites out there taking a rake of 19% which is absurd. You'd need to beat a player 5 times in every 8 games just to break even at that level! We'd like to think that our rake levels will ensure that we remain the premier location for all online Backgammon players"*.

### Backgammon Rake

Many firms vary the rake they charge by length of game (the more points the higher the commission), by stake (the higher the stake, the lower the rake) and also by your skill 'rating' versus your opponent. This last one is probably the most confusing and controversial as ratings can be manipulated (open a second account and you're back to a beginner's rating again) and this sliding rake makes it very unattractive for players of unequal ratings to play each other.

It's probably best to give you an example here. You have just opened an account and agreed to play a 3 point match (first to three points wins) for £100. Your rating is 1500, your opponent's is 1800. You win 3-0 which means they lose £100. But what do you net from the transaction? And does it 'feel' like the right fee has been deducted for the service? At Casinorip.com, the winner would receive £194 including his stake, i.e. a £94 win with £6 paid out in commission. Stated as a percentage of the pot this equates to a rake of 3%. Were you to play that same game, however, at play65, the net profit to you would only be £72, i.e. a rake of 14%! And it gets worse, the more points you play. On a 5 point game ending 5-3, for example, you are likely to be charged up to 19% - this means that if you won 60% of your games you would not be any richer. As backgammon, like poker, is a game which combines skill and chance, this is a tall order.



## Forthcoming Events - also see page 21

### 6, 7, 8 February - Jarvis Trophy

The first of our four Swiss format events and the second 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. Make an early start and rack up championship points, both Grand Prix and Ranking - it could be the start of being in the money!

### 6, 7, 8 March - Biba International Tournament



A knockout featuring the usual four elements, Main, Consolation, Last Chance and 3-pointer as well as the Friday 500 and Poker Grand Prix. Also, the Main winner gets one night's free accommodation and registration for the Biba - World Championship in July and a chance to walk away with £1000 guaranteed prize money! Book your room now!!

# Casino**rip**.com British Open 2009 3,4,5 April

Casino**rip**.com are proud to sponsor this prestigious tournament. The usual four elements plus extras from the sponsors are awaiting your entry.

# Casino**rip**.com

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

## 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 free entry Friday 500 \*\*, Saturday night backgammon,

Poker Grand Prix and Jackpots subject to demand.

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

### FRIDAY

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

### SATURDAY

Registration 1030 / 1230  
Play starts 1300 prompt

### SUNDAY

Play resumes 1030  
(penalty points apply 1035)

### Dinner, bed and breakfast @ all Barceló Hotels

Reservations on 0870 1610 797 (Hinckley & Daventry)

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

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

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

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

### 2009 Backgammon Calendar

|                  |                                         |    |    |            |             |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------|----|----|------------|-------------|
| Feb 6,7,8        | Jarvis Trophy                           | GP | UK | Daventry   | Swiss       |
| Mar 6,7,8        | Biba International Championship         | GP | -  | Daventry   | Knockout    |
| Apr 3,4,5        | Casino <sup>rip</sup> .com British Open | GP | UK | Daventry   | Knockout    |
| Apr 26           | 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               | -  | -  | tba        | Swiss       |
| Sep 4,5,6        | Backgammon in London @ Biba             | GP | -  | Daventry   | Knockout    |
| Oct 2,3,4        | Sandy Osborne Memorial                  | GP | -  | Daventry   | Knockout    |
| Oct 23,24,25     | 17th Irish Open                         | GP | UK | Dublin     | Knockout    |
| Oct 30,31, Nov 1 | Arthur Wright's Big 70!                 | GP | UK | Daventry   | Swiss       |
| Dec 4,5,6        | Gilbertson UK Finals                    | -  | -  | Daventry   | Double KO   |

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

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

### Advice on Booking Accommodation

The calendar above lists all the Biba events. The wise member books every tournament they want to enter in one block booking. If, nearer the date they are unable to attend, they simply cancel the room (one weeks notice is required) and they are not charged. This guarantees that you'll never have to worry about accommodation ever again and you can relax in the full knowledge that no matter what, you'll always have a room.

# casino<sup>rip</sup>.com

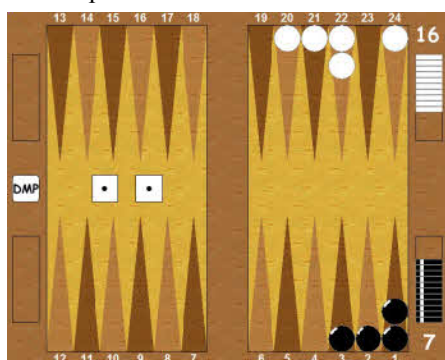
## BRIGHT & BREEZY



Two players stand out above all the rest when it comes to Brighton - John Hurst and Mark Heidenfeld. Since 2005 they have won it twice each, Mark in '05 and '08 and John in '06 and '07. This year Mark was unable to attend (he moved to Germany from Eire last year) and this left the trophy for John to pursue without the second favourite's interference.

John was the last player to be drawn in the 82 player field and his journey via a 1st Round bye to the final was a tough one: Lee Wood, Ann Pocknell (current British Open Champion), Kevin Dale (CEO of Casinorip.com, the event sponsors), Tony Lee (current UK Champion), Martin Barkwill and Gerry Enslin. Gerry's journey was via the 1st Round: Paul Barwick, Mardi Ohannessian, Talan Evans, Brian Metcalf, Sean Williams, Simon Heath and then John. John's hardest match prior to the final was against Tony and it drew a large crowd of on-lookers.

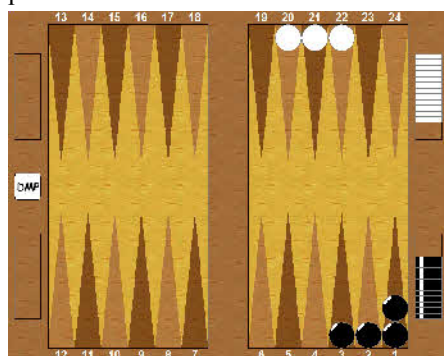
The final got off to a good start for John and he was soon 8-3 ahead. He then took a 2-cube and was gammoned and the score moved to 8-7, from there it progressed to 10-7 and Gerry pulled it back to dmp. The final game went back and forth and in the end it came down to the last couple of rolls.



Gerry, playing as white rolls 11

More than likely Gerry will get one last roll and he therefore needs to maximize his chances of bearing off with doubles. Gerry thinks about the move for a while

and then moves 3/1 1/0(2) leaving this position:



This is a mistake for the only doubles that'll clear next roll are double 6, 5 and 4. He should have played 5/3 4/3 1/0 leaving four checkers on his 3-point thus adding double-three to his rolls. As it turned out he didn't roll a clearing double and John won his third Bright 'n' Breezy title, his second in a row.

During the Main a 'pick up a penguin' was introduced. This was a stuffed toy penguin that was thrown to the players and whomever caught it kept it for as long as they could, it being worth £100 if kept all the tournament. However, if you lose a match it is passed onto your opponent and you got £10 from the £100 for losing it.



When initially tossed to the crowd, Myke Wignall launched himself forward and grabbed it by the scruff of its neck. However, his hold was short-lived when Brain Metcalf made off with it in Round 1; and Brian lost it later to Gerry . . . who lost it to John in the Final. The losing semi-finalists were Simon Heath and Martin Barkwill.



From the top: Main, Gerry & John. 3rd/4th, Simon & Martin.  
Consolation: Sean & Paul. Last Chance: Peter & Marcus.  
Tidal Wave: Ed & Andy

In the Consolation (78), finalist, Paul Barwick made it all the way from Round 1 in the non-progressive side. In the non-prog 'final' he met - and beat - his toughest opponent, Chris Ternel (2009 runner-up Biba Grand Prix and Biba Ranking). Chris had a 1st Round bye, but it came at a price, he played against Mike Heard, Mardi Ohannessian and Rachel Rhodes before being felled by Paul. In the progressive side, Sean Williams beat Kevin Dale (see credentials above) in their 'final' and then he went on to beat Paul in the Consolation Final.

The Last Chance (64) saw Marcus Wrinch beating Richard Biddle, and Peter Chan beating Crispin Duke in the semis. In the final it was Peter - out-rolling as only he can! - that emerged victorious; and all without taking 30 minutes to shake his dice as he did in Dublin (those Irish are too soft, I'd have put a stop to it after 25 minutes!).

The Tidal Wave (32) didn't reach anything like a 64 draw, but the smaller field favoured Ed Turner and Andy Darby, the two finalists. It was Andy who came out on top, leaving Ed the runner-up.

On the Saturday evening the Poker Freeze-out (24) saw a few upsets: The 'regular suspects' didn't feature in the results until Myke Wignall appeared in 5th position . . . and Tony Fawcett didn't show until 21st place! This is bound to alter . . . isn't it Tony? One Tony that did

much better was Tony Lee, he took 1st place ahead of John Hedge and Martin Barkwill. The Team (12) saw Peter Christmas take the lion's share of the pot (his partner, Elena Magana from Casinorip.com had to leave before the end). There was also a Doubles Knockout but this was arranged by the entrants themselves and I didn't get any results handed to me - however, I can report that the final wasn't played Saturday evening and the four players involved wanted to play it Sunday afternoon but I didn't allow it because one or more of the entrants were still playing in the elements organised by Biba, and of course, Biba takes priority.

Going back in time, the Friday 500 (44) had a great turnout and taking home the free accommodation and registration for the Biba World Championship was Peter Bennet. Not a regular Friday-nighter, the 20 points he gained might encourage him to attend a few more - who knows, he might win five hundred quid in December!

Finally

From my point of view it was a great weekend, and it went along as smoothly as I'd hoped. I had a couple of disputes but nothing controversial. I know a few of you had issues with the hotel, mainly over cold bedrooms and meals - but it was a very very cold weekend, and if food was a long time arriving, I hope my report to the hotel addresses this for 2010.

Lastly I'd like to thank Casinorip.com for their sponsorship of the event, with special thanks to Kevin Dale (CEO) and to Elena Magana for patiently setting up accounts for the dozens of Biba members who signed up over the weekend. Also to Per Petersen who worked behind the scenes via countless emails.



## Tournament Results

Casinorip.com Bright 'n' Breezy. 9,10,11 January

### Main (82)

|      |                 |
|------|-----------------|
| 1    | John Hurst      |
| 2    | Gerry Enslin    |
| 3&4  | Simon Heath     |
| 3&4  | Martin Barkwill |
| 5to8 | Sean Williams   |
| 5to8 | Paul Gilbertson |
| 5to8 | Michael Proto   |
| 5to8 | Tony Lee        |

### Consolation (78)

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 1    | Sean Williams     |
| 2    | Paul Barwick      |
| 3&4  | Chris Ternel      |
| 3&4  | Kevin Dale        |
| 5to8 | Stuart Mann       |
| 5to8 | Rachel Rhodes     |
| 5to8 | Malcolm Robertson |
| 5to8 | John Hedge        |

### Last Chance (64)

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 1    | Peter Chan        |
| 2    | Marcus Wrinch     |
| 3&4  | Richard Biddle    |
| 3&4  | Crispin Duke      |
| 5to8 | Mike Ireland      |
| 5to8 | Mike Williams     |
| 5to8 | Jeff Barber       |
| 5to8 | Mardi Ohannessian |

### Tidal Wave (32)

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 1    | Andy Darby        |
| 2    | Ed Turner         |
| 3&4  | Uldis Lapikens    |
| 3&4  | Chris Johnson     |
| 5to8 | Ray Fard          |
| 5to8 | Mahmoud Jahanbani |
| 5to8 | Tony Fawcett      |
| 5to8 | Scott Parker      |

### Friday 500 (44)

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 1    | Peter Bennet      |
| 2    | Marcus Wrinch     |
| 3&4  | Peter Chan        |
| 3&4  | Raj Jansari       |
| 5to8 | Andy Darby        |
| 5to8 | Paul Gilbertson   |
| 5to8 | Mahmoud Jahanbani |
| 5to8 | Neil Young        |

### Poker (24)

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Tony Lee        |
| 2 | John Hedge      |
| 3 | Martin Barkwill |
| 4 | Neil Young      |
| 5 | Myke Wignall    |
| 6 | Paul Gilbertson |
| 7 | Vicki Pemberton |
| 8 | Nick Valley     |

### Team (12)

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Peter Christmas |
|---|-----------------|

**casinorip.com**



The Grand Prix points awarded at this tournament are equal to the points in the Grand Prix Championship listing on the following page.

# Tournament Results

## Gilbertson UK Finals. 5, 6, 7 December 2008

### Main (16/34)

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 1    | Tony Lee          |
| 2    | Allan Christensen |
| 3&4  | Ann Pocknell      |
| 3&4  | John Reddinton    |
| 5to8 | Mark Heidenfeld   |
| 5to8 | Nigel Merrigan    |
| 5to8 | Tom Duggan        |
| 5to8 | David Motely      |

### Consolation (24)

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 1    | Marcus Wrinch     |
| 2    | Raj Jansari       |
| 3&4  | Paul Learmount    |
| 3&4  | Julian Fetterlein |
| 5to8 | Jeff Barber       |
| 5to8 | Paul Gilbertson   |
| 5to8 | Gerry Enslin      |
| 5to8 | Mike Heard        |

### Friday 500 (8)

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 1    | David Nathan      |
| 2    | Tom Duggan        |
| 3&4  | Jeff Barber       |
| 3&4  | Gerry Enslin      |
| 5to8 | Myke Wignall      |
| 5to8 | Marcus Wrinch     |
| 5to8 | Tony Fawcett      |
| 5to8 | Mardi Ohannessian |

### Poker (18)

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 1 | John Hedge       |
| 2 | Mick Butterfield |
| 3 | Rosey Bensley    |
| 4 | Ann Pocknell     |

### Team (6)

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Mark Heidenfeld |
| 2 | Richard Biddle  |

### Last Chance (16)

|     |                |
|-----|----------------|
| 1   | John Hedge     |
| 2   | David Wallbank |
| 3&4 | Jeff Barber    |
| 3&4 | Richard Biddle |

### Snowball (10)

|     |                  |
|-----|------------------|
| 1   | Mick Butterfield |
| 2   | Jeff Barber      |
| 3&4 | Myke Wignall     |
| 3&4 | Paul Barwick     |

### Friday Jackpot (8)

|     |                 |
|-----|-----------------|
| 1   | Michael Crane   |
| 2   | John Reddington |
| 3&4 | Paul Learmount  |
| 3&4 | David Wallbank  |

### Champion of Champions

Ann Pocknell

### Ranking Changes @ UK:

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 2058 | Julian Fetterlein |
| 1908 | Lawrence Powell   |
| 1894 | Tony Lee          |
| 1858 | Mark Heidenfeld   |
| 1839 | Ray Tannen        |
| 1807 | Raj Jansari       |
| 1800 | Ann Pocknell      |
| 1789 | Nigel Merrigan    |
| 1757 | Tom Duggan        |
| 1756 | Mike Heard        |
| 1711 | David Motley      |
| 1592 | John Hedge        |
| 1579 | Alan Christensen  |
| 1543 | John Reddington   |
| 1491 | Julian Minwalla   |
| 1479 | Gerry Enslin      |

## Grand Prix Championship - January 2009

|       |                   |      |                |      |                   |      |                    |
|-------|-------------------|------|----------------|------|-------------------|------|--------------------|
| 24.77 | John Hurst        | 6.19 | Geoff Conn     | 4.13 | Bill Young        | 2.58 | Uldis Lapikens     |
| 24.77 | Gerry Enslin      | 6.19 | Mark Dixon     | 4.13 | Mardi Ohannessian | 2.58 | Mahmoud Jahanbani  |
| 18.57 | Paul Barwick      | 6.19 | Neil Davidson  | 4.13 | Raymond Kershaw   | 2.58 | Leslie Singleton   |
| 13.42 | Martin Barkwill   | 6.19 | Andrew Darby   | 4.13 | Chris Evans       | 2.58 | Myke Wignall       |
| 13.42 | Sean Williams     | 6.19 | Adrian Jones   | 4.13 | Tom Duggan        | 2.58 | Simon Morecroft    |
| 13.42 | Simon Heath       | 6.19 | John Ingamells | 4.13 | Ann Pocknell      | 2.58 | John Batty         |
| 13.40 | Peter Chan        | 6.19 | Gaz Owen       | 4.13 | Fanika Petkovska  | 2.58 | Nick Valley        |
| 9.29  | Michael Proto     | 6.19 | Kevin Dale     | 4.13 | Jackie Griffiths  | 2.58 | Sidney Van Gelder  |
| 9.29  | Tony Lee          | 6.19 | Talan Evans    | 4.13 | Ray Fard          | 2.58 | John Reddington    |
| 9.29  | Paul Gilbertson   | 6.18 | Raj Jansari    | 4.13 | Mike Ireland      | 2.57 | Peter Bennet       |
| 9.29  | Brian Metcalf     | 6.18 | Wayne Felton   | 4.13 | Scott Parker      | 2.57 | Howard Furr-Barton |
| 9.29  | John Hedge        | 6.18 | Neil Young     | 4.12 | Steve Taylor      | 2.06 | Nicky Check        |
| 9.28  | Rachel Rhodes     | 6.17 | Richard Biddle | 4.12 | Jason Dennis      | 2.06 | Tim Vasiljevic     |
| 9.28  | Malcolm Robertson | 6.17 | Crispin Duke   | 4.12 | Mick Vacarey      | 2.06 | Tony Fawcett       |
| 9.28  | Stuart Mann       | 4.13 | Cliff Connick  | 4.12 | Chris Johnson     | 2.06 | Gill Bray          |
| 9.28  | Chris Ternel      | 4.13 | Roy Hollands   | 4.12 | Vicky Pemberton   | 2.06 | Pat Parkes         |
| 9.27  | Marcus Wrinch     | 4.13 | Mike Heard     | 4.11 | Jeff Barber       | 1.55 | Arthur Wright      |
| 6.19  | Peter Christmas   | 4.13 | John Wright    | 4.11 | Mike Williams     | 1.55 | Linda Taylor       |
| 6.19  | Bob Young         | 4.13 | Chris Bray     | 4.10 | Edwin Turner      |      |                    |

## Ranking Championship, January 2009

played / points / player

|   |         |                 |   |         |                   |   |         |                 |
|---|---------|-----------------|---|---------|-------------------|---|---------|-----------------|
| 7 | 1887.14 | Gerry Enslin    | 3 | 1694.67 | Adrian Jones      | 2 | 1534.00 | Crispin Duke    |
| 6 | 2146.00 | John Hurst      | 3 | 1688.67 | Bob Young         | 2 | 1532.00 | John Wright     |
| 5 | 1930.40 | Martin Barkwill | 3 | 1650.33 | Talan Evans       | 2 | 1522.50 | Scott Parker    |
| 5 | 1854.60 | Simon Heath     | 3 | 1645.00 | Andrew Darby      | 2 | 1511.00 | Mike Heard      |
| 5 | 1824.40 | Sean Williams   | 3 | 1634.67 | Peter Christmas   | 2 | 1494.50 | Wayne Felton    |
| 4 | 1884.75 | Michael Proto   | 2 | 1862.50 | Ann Pocknell      | 2 | 1488.50 | Tom Duggan      |
| 4 | 1818.25 | Tony Lee        | 2 | 1731.00 | Chris Evans       | 2 | 1486.50 | Chris Ternel    |
| 4 | 1804.50 | Brian Metcalf   | 2 | 1724.50 | Cliff Connick     | 2 | 1467.00 | Ray Fard        |
| 4 | 1769.50 | Paul Gilbertson | 2 | 1693.50 | Jackie Griffiths  | 2 | 1420.50 | Ray Kershaw     |
| 4 | 1702.50 | John Hedge      | 2 | 1685.50 | Malcolm Robertson | 1 | 1439.00 | Chris Johnson   |
| 3 | 1925.33 | John Ingamells  | 2 | 1672.50 | Mike Ireland      | 1 | 1394.00 | Tony Walters    |
| 3 | 1868.00 | Gaz Owen        | 2 | 1612.00 | Bill Young        | 1 | 1340.00 | Mick Vacarey    |
| 3 | 1815.33 | Neil Davidson   | 2 | 1611.50 | Chris Bray        | 1 | 1318.00 | Simon Morecroft |
| 3 | 1786.33 | Mark Dixon      | 2 | 1578.00 | Fanika Petkovska  | 1 | 1307.00 | Gill Bray       |
| 3 | 1722.00 | Geoff Conn      | 2 | 1555.50 | Roy Hollands      | 1 | 1306.00 | Lee Wood        |
| 3 | 1711.00 | Kevin Dale      | 2 | 1551.00 | Mardi Ohannessian | 1 | 1300.00 | Peter Bennet    |



|   |         |                    |   |         |                   |   |        |                   |
|---|---------|--------------------|---|---------|-------------------|---|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | 1257.00 | Richard Biddle     | 1 | 1070.00 | Jason Dennis      | 1 | 980.00 | Tim Vasiljevic    |
| 1 | 1256.00 | Raj Jansari        | 1 | 1045.00 | Stewart Pemberton | 1 | 979.00 | Paul Barwick      |
| 1 | 1177.00 | Zoe Cunningham     | 1 | 1025.00 | Sue Metcalf       | 1 | 976.00 | Sidney Van Gelder |
| 1 | 1155.00 | Tim Mooring        | 1 | 1025.00 | Arthur Wright     | 1 | 975.00 | Nicky Check       |
| 1 | 1140.00 | John Batty         | 1 | 1023.00 | Karen Proto       | 1 | 971.00 | John Reddington   |
| 1 | 1136.00 | Jeff Barber        | 1 | 1015.00 | Neil Young        | 1 | 970.00 | Ed Turner         |
| 1 | 1110.00 | Mike Williams      | 1 | 1006.00 | Pat Parkes        | 1 | 946.00 | Uldis Lapikens    |
| 1 | 1101.00 | Marcus Wrinch      | 1 | 1006.00 | Peter Chan        | 1 | 929.00 | Steve Taylor      |
| 1 | 1093.00 | Vicky Pemberton    | 1 | 998.00  | Rachel Rhodes     | 1 | 882.00 | Stuart Mann       |
| 1 | 1092.00 | Leslie Singleton   | 1 | 996.00  | Linda Taylor      | 1 | 760.00 | Tony Fawcett      |
| 1 | 1083.00 | Howard Furr-Barton | 1 | 985.00  | Myke Wignall      |   |        |                   |
| 1 | 1082.00 | Mahmoud Jahanbani  | 1 | 984.00  | Nick Valley       |   |        |                   |

#### Friday 500 Positions - January

|    |                   |   |                 |   |                   |
|----|-------------------|---|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| 20 | Peter Bennet      | 7 | Mike Ireland    | 4 | Gerry Enslin      |
| 16 | Marcus Wrinch     | 7 | Martin Barkwill | 4 | John Wright       |
| 12 | Peter Chan        | 4 | Sue Metcalf     | 4 | Myke Wignall      |
| 12 | Raj Jansari       | 4 | Tony Lee        | 4 | Mark Dixon        |
| 9  | Andy Darby        | 4 | Ann Pocknell    | 4 | Brain Metcalf     |
| 9  | Paul Gilbertson   | 4 | Kevin Dale      | 4 | Tony Fawcett      |
| 9  | Mahmoud Jahanbani | 4 | Tom Duggan      | 4 | Jeff Barber       |
| 9  | Neil Young        | 4 | John Ingamells  | 4 | Mardi Ohannessian |
| 7  | Chris Johnson     | 4 | Gaz Owen        | 4 | Fanika Petkovska  |
| 7  | Ed Turner         | 4 | Arthur Wright   | 4 | Paul Barwick      |
| 7  | Sidney Van Gelder | 4 | Ray Kershaw     | 4 | Anne Ryder        |
| 7  | Rachel Rhodes     | 4 | Richard Biddle  | 4 | Geoff Conn        |
| 7  | Chris Evans       | 4 | Tony Walters    | 4 | Jason Dennis      |
| 7  | Neil Davidson     | 4 | Tim Vasiljevic  | 4 | Talan Evans       |
|    |                   | 4 | Steve Taylor    |   |                   |
|    |                   | 4 | Roy Hollands    |   |                   |

#### Poker Grand Prix - January

| Pts | Player          | Pts | Player       | Pts | Player       |
|-----|-----------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|
| 34  | Tony Lee        | 20  | Nick Valley  | 8   | Ray Fard     |
| 32  | John Hedge      | 16  | Roy Hollands | 7   | Jason Dennis |
| 30  | Martin Barkwill | 15  | Ed Turner    | 6   | John Batty   |
| 28  | Neil Young      | 13  | Kevin Dale   | 5   | Gaz Owen     |
| 26  | Myke Wignall    | 13  | Tony Walters | 4   | Tony Fawcett |
| 24  | Paul Gilbertson | 12  | Andy Darby   | 2   | Chris Evans  |
| 22  | Vicki Pemberton | 11  | Mick Vacarey | 1   | Mark Dixon   |
|     |                 | 10  | Lee Wood     |     |              |
|     |                 | 9   | Alison Lee   |     |              |

For 2009, Saturday night Texas Holdem tournaments will adopt a new format which will be a freeze out. All these tournaments will be £30 no limit, with 4000 deep stack starting chips, with the exception of the April, July and October events which will have an added twist of a bounty of £5 on your head (£35 entry fee). The Jarvis, County Cups, SAC, and Arthur's 80th tournaments (Swiss events) will be a rebuy as last year's format. All entry fees can be paid when registering for the backgammon or at any time before 8.30pm. Entries after 8.30pm will not be allowed. All the entry, rebuy and add-ons will be returned in prizes minus 10% rake off for the end of the year.

The blinds will start at 25/50 and rise to 50/100 after 20/30 minutes and 100/200 after a second 20/30 minutes, Thereafter the blinds will increase every 20 minutes according to either schedule as shown on the Biba web site.

# Backgammon in Iran



As you know, backgammon is officially banned by the Islamic Republic and the current government in Iran. However, as the birthplace of the game, it is hugely popular and players gather in private circles to compete and celebrate the game. There are also attempts to legalizing the game and create a national federation for it.

I'm sure that even if you're not a dessertarian (one who likes desserts), you'll love the photo of the cake

Chiva K. Tafazzoli - World Backgammon Association



*The photos have been kindly provided by Mr. Parviz R. from Tehran.*

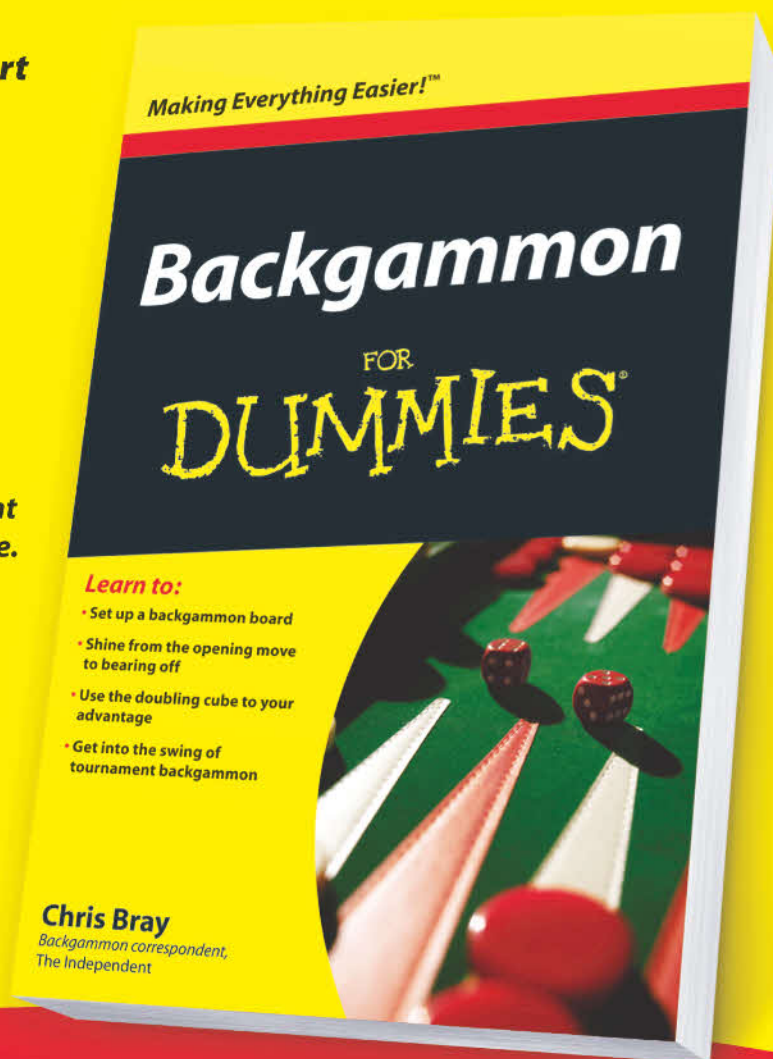
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## Backgammon's most prestigious Tour is ongoing for 2009 "The European Backgammon Tour" (EBGT)

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



**TMG Portuguese Open, Estoril, May 14-17**



**Georgian Open, Tbilisi, July 29 - Aug 5**



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



**City of Venice, Venice, November 2009**



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

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

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

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

**Web address: [www.world-backgammon-association.com](http://www.world-backgammon-association.com)**

**Email for more info: [info@world-backgammon-association.com](mailto:info@world-backgammon-association.com)**