

WINKING WORLD 81 *PHAT*

MICHAELMAS 2003



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Those wishing to join ETwA should contact the Treasurer, Stew Sage (address inside back cover). Membership costs £10 for people in the real world, and £3 for cosseted academics.

Tiddlywinks equipment may be purchased from the Treasurer, Stew Sage (address inside back cover). He can provide information about prices and availability.

The front cover shows the participants in the National Singles play-off, just after the game had been decided: Andy “I don’t want to win it” Purvis and Larry “not a good winkend” Kahn.

PHAT is actually only a reference to the amount off stuff in this issue (and the shape of the editor), in comparison with the “lite” issue a few years ago. Interested parties can look up “PHAT” in an acronym dictionary and pick something appropriate. This is not an indication that ETwA has become any less stuffy. Flipmo.

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Editorial

Andrew Garrard

Well, the new Winking World is here. When I volunteered to become Editor, I had a cunning plan about having it ready well in advance of the NIHPper, and being able to use it to advertise and encourage undergraduates to turn up. Of course, a lot of people who know my time-keeping will have guessed how well that theory went. Many thanks are due to my predecessor, who put in a huge amount of work and had results more polished (and timely) than mine; I can only hope to catch up in the future.

That this journal's even nearly on time, though, is to the great credit of all the contributors — this Winking World probably has fewer material produced by the editor than any in recent memory, and it's still packed with articles. This means that I can save any article I was going to write on obscure shots (my famous click-Good, the indirect pile flip, and such constructs as the Sage Bristol and the Thorpe Trap — which is pictured in the colour centrefold) for a future date.

The last few tournaments I've attended have been particularly pleasant. I've been royally stuffed in all of them, but each has been memorable for being close fought both at the top and at the bottom of the score table, and each has thrown up interesting matches and entertaining shots. Since James Cullingham has expressed incredulity that I could enjoy a game which I lost 6–1, no doubt there's room for an article about that, too.

The most close-fought recent event was, of course, the Singles — and therefore there is a disproportionate amount of space devoted to its write-up (this issue is kind of a Singles special). My thanks to everyone who contributed their viewpoint on the events, and to anyone else who tried to respond to my request for write-ups. Unfortunately, while I've received a large number of emails (from people I don't know) entitled 'Singles' recently, strangely few of them are about winks. If your report isn't here and got lost in the spam, I'm sorry.

I should take this opportunity to remind those who need reminding that the next academic year marks the 50th anniversary of the foundation of CUTwC; there will be a dinner in Cambridge on the eve of the anniversary, on Saturday 15th January 2005. Interested parties after

more information should contact Stew Sage (see the inside of the back cover). I'd also like to encourage people to dig out their pictures of winkers over time, since a special edition of Winking World (whether or not I'm still editor) would seem likely to happen — and being able to put faces to the names would be a bonus.

That's more than enough ado. Enjoy the rest of this issue, and all the hard work put it by my contributors. All credit is due to them and, obviously, all the errors are mine.

Who are the Most Interesting Players in the Game?

Patrick Barrie

Interesting scorelines have been defined to be those that contain fractions. So which players have been responsible for obtaining the greatest proportion of interesting scores?

Analysis of the game scores in the ratings database shows that 66 players have played in 20 or more games resulting in fractional scores. Of these players, those with the highest and lowest proportion of interesting scorelines are listed in the table:

Rank	Player	Fractional scores	Games	Percentage
1	Steve Chamberlin	33	220	15.00
2	Chris Wilson	32	224	14.29
3	Dave Salter	28	201	13.93
4	John Haslegrave	24	182	13.19
5	Brad Schaefer	29	224	12.95
6	Alex Satchell	55	429	12.82
7	Elizabeth Whalley	24	194	12.37
8	Steve Phillips	30	243	12.35
9	Matt Fayers	71	600	11.83
10	Jon Carlaw	34	293	11.60
	All Players	1305	14448	9.03
57	Mike Surridge	37	449	8.24
58	Phil Scarrott	63	784	8.04
59	Matthew Rose	67	879	7.62

60	Jon Mapley	82	1079	7.60
61	Larry Kahn	82	1108	7.40
62	David Clarkson	21	287	7.32
63	Graham Hancock	22	310	7.10
64	Jon Williams	23	329	6.99
65	Phil Carmody	31	453	6.84
66	Rupert Thompson	23	404	5.69

Congratulations to Matt Fayers on making it, at least on this criterion, into the top 10 most interesting players in winking history. It can also now officially be claimed that tiddlywinks games involving Rupert Thompson are the most boring and tedious, which is something he may or may not have already suspected.

London Open 2003

Matthew Fayers

The Crosse Keys, Gracechurch Street

Despite Stew's concern that the venue lacked "the bonhomie that is the London Open", the Crosse Keys was used again this year. They thoughtfully opened rather earlier in the morning, so that those of us who weren't horribly hung over (and some of those of us who were) could start drinking shortly after 10am.

Meanwhile, the ETwA Tournament Organiser (who organised this tournament in the absence of a TO appointed by the host association, or even of a host association) circulated and tried to encourage people to buddy up, or at least to choose partners.

There were eight pairs, which obviated the need for a Fayers-convention Swiss, and so Julian's sexy all-play-all scoresheets were brought into operation. Julian later arrived to bask in the reflected glory and act as a roving umpire. Frankly, anyone who finds himself at such a loose end on a summer Saturday afternoon needs a good slapping.

Andrew arrived an hour and a half late — a record, even for him — and paid the traditional price. He seems to have managed to avoid being beaten up by Geoff on this occasion, though.

Some winks was played, of course, and in principle I'm supposed to report on this. The champions cheated by partnering each other again so that they were bound to win. They didn't, of course, which just goes to show.

In fact Charles and Alan won, marking the 750th anniversary of their first win together in style. Matt and Slu remained fairly well on their heels throughout. Some more observations from the Julian sexy scoresheet are as follows:

- Remarkably few games have asterisks next to them (whatever they mean) - only six out of twenty-eight. Three of the pairs (including the top two finishers) weren't starry at all.
- Barrie and Goodman got seven different scores from their seven games. Aren't they clever?

- During the tournament, some fat git wrote his own score in the scoresheet, but not his opponent's. How selfish is that?
- Whoever wrote in the score for Barrie & Goodman against Driscoll & Inglis has very silly asterisks.
- Stew hasn't won a London Open game for two years.

London Open results

Rose & Wynn	-	2½	2	2½	5*	4½	7*	6*	29½
Relle & Dean	4½	-	6	4	5	4	6+	5	34½
Moss & Cullingham	5	1	-	2	3	1	6	5	23
Fayers & Abram	4½	3	5	-	3	6	6	6	33½
Driscoll & Inglis	2*	2	4	4	-	7*	3	7*	29
Barrie & Goodman	2½	3	6	1	0*	-	7*	5½	25
Thorpe & Garrard	0*	1+	1	1	4	0*	-	6	13
Sage & Harper	1*	2	2	1	0*	1½	1	-	8½

(+ Thorpe played singles)

The Wessex Cup

Charles Relle

If you are free at the relevant time, the Wessex Cup is a tournament not to be missed. Those essential backups to any tournament, beer and food, are excellent and on the premises, and even better arrangements are in prospect for next year. So come to the King's Arms at Kidlington for good cheer and a warm welcome.

This year's format was devised by Matt Fayers. We were divided into three teams, each sensibly named after its captain. This was a relief after the Fours, in which team names are often meaningless, tedious and unnecessarily long. Though Oakley and Moss pulled away from Driscoll, each team had the lead at one stage, and Moss overhauled Oakley in the final round. Everyone had a game in every round, was able to partner all the other members of his team, and sometimes players from other teams. Each team played three games in each round, and was allowed to discard its worst result.

Only in one particular were the tournament organiser's intentions frustrated; he had hoped that all the teams would average over $3\frac{1}{2}$ points. Even this came very near to fulfilment.

At all tournaments we would like to see more people. At this one, we welcomed back John Kane. It was also good to see Paula Foster making her second appearance; she was, alas, the only lady participant, though greater female representation among student players is a pleasing development.

Maybe the beer, on tap from the start, had something to do with the absence of tension. It was a relaxed weekend, and one might have expected a good few potouts. But the first four rounds produced none. In fact they occurred in nine games out of forty-eight. James Murray took part in five of these. Even your correspondent, who firmly believes that the pot is useful only to mark the centre of the mat, took part in three.

At the end Moss had a p.p.g. of 5.04, Oakley, 4.7 and Driscoll 3.35. The full results are attached. We all look forward to next year.

“Wessex Trophy, 16-17 August 2003, King’s Arms, Kidlington”

Round 1	Alan Dean & Patrick Driscoll	4 - 3	Charles Relle & James Cullingham
	Alan Harper & Stew Sage	6 - 1	John Kane & Charlie Oakley
	Geoff Thorpe & James Murray	5 - 2	Tim Jeffreys & (singles)
	Patrick Barrie & (singles)	5* - 1*	Paul Moss & (singles)
Round 2	Andrew Garrard & John Kane	1 - 6	Charles Relle & James Murray
	Stew Sage & Patrick Driscoll	1 - 6	Charlie Oakley & Patrick Barrie
	Alan Dean & Alan Harper	4 - 3	Geoff Thorpe & Paul Moss
	James Cullingham & (singles)	5 - 2	Tim Jeffreys & Paula Foster
Round 3	Alan Dean & Paula Foster	1 - 6	John Kane & Patrick Barrie
	Charlie Oakley & Tim Jeffreys	6 - 1	James Cullingham & James Murray
	Alan Harper & Patrick Driscoll	3 - 4	Paul Moss & Charles Relle
	Stew Sage & (singles)	4 - 3	Andrew Garrard & Geoff Thorpe
Round 4	John Kane & Tim Jeffreys	1 - 6	Paul Moss & James Murray
	Patrick Driscoll & Paula Foster	1* - 6*	James Cullingham & Geoff Thorpe
	Alan Dean & Stew Sage	1 - 6	Charlie Oakley & Andrew Garrard
	Alan Harper & (singles)	3 - 4	Charles Relle & Patrick Barrie
Round 5	Paul Moss & James Cullingham	2 - 5	Patrick Barrie & Charlie Oakley
	Alan Harper & Paula Foster	1 - 6	Geoff Thorpe & Charles Relle
	Stew Sage & Alan Dean	4* - 2*	Andrew Garrard & John Kane
	James Murray & (singles)	0* - 7*	Patrick Driscoll & Tim Jeffreys
Round 6	Geoff Thorpe & James Murray	6 - 1	Charlie Oakley & Tim Jeffreys
	Alan Dean & Patrick Driscoll	3 - 4	Charles Relle & James Cullingham
	Stew Sage & Paula Foster	3 - 4	Patrick Barrie & John Kane
	Paul Moss & (singles)	5* - 2*	Alan Harper & Andrew Garrard
Round 7	James Cullingham & Tim Jeffreys	2 - 5	Rupert Wilson & (singles)
	Charles Relle & James Murray	0* - 7*	Patrick Barrie & (singles)
	Stew Sage & Alan Harper	1 - 6	Paul Moss & Geoff Thorpe
	Alan Dean & Patrick Driscoll	6 - 1	John Kane & Charlie Oakley
Round 8	Paul Moss & John Kane	6 - 1	Rupert Wilson & Patrick Driscoll
	James Murray & James Cullingham	4 - 3	Tim Jeffreys & Andrew Garrard
	Charles Relle & Geoff Thorpe	6* - 1*	Stew Sage & Paula Foster
	Charlie Oakley & Patrick Barrie	5* - 2*	Alan Harper & Alan Dean
Round 9	James Murray & Charlie Oakley	6* - 1*	Alan Harper & Paula Foster
	Paul Moss & Charles Relle	6 - 1	Andrew Garrard & John Kane
	James Cullingham & Geoff Thorpe	6 - 1	Stew Sage & Patrick Driscoll
	Patrick Barrie & Tim Jeffreys	1 - 6	Alan Dean & Rupert Wilson
Round 10	Paul Moss & James Murray	1 - 6	Patrick Barrie & Andrew Garrard
	Alan Dean & Stew Sage	3 - 4	Charles Relle & James Cullingham
	Geoff Thorpe & John Kane	4 - 3	Patrick Driscoll & Rupert Wilson
	Charlie Oakley & Tim Jeffreys	7* - 0*	Paula Foster & Alan Harper
Round 11	Paul Moss & James Cullingham	5 - 2	Rupert Wilson & Alan Harper
	Charles Relle & Tim Jeffreys	5 - 2	Stew Sage & Paula Foster
	Alan Dean & Patrick Driscoll	1 - 6	John Kane & Patrick Barrie
	Charlie Oakley & Andrew Garrard	7* - 0*	Geoff Thorpe & James Murray
Round 12	Rupert Wilson & John Kane	1 - 6	Geoff Thorpe & James Murray
	Stew Sage & Alan Harper	4 - 3	Charlie Oakley & Patrick Barrie
	Tim Jeffreys & Andrew Garrard	1 - 6	Paul Moss & James Cullingham
	Alan Dean & Paula Foster	1* - 6*	Charles Relle & (singles)

Summary of individual player performance

	Games	Points	PPG
Patrick Barrie	12	58 $\frac{1}{2}$	4.875
Geoff Thorpe	12	57	4.750
Charlie Oakley	12	54	4.500
Charles Relle	12	54	4.500
Paul Moss	12	51 $\frac{1}{2}$	4.292
James Cullingham	12	48	4.000
James Murray	12	41	3.417
Andrew Garrard	10	32 $\frac{1}{2}$	3.250
Tim Jeffreys	12	38	3.167
Alan Dean	12	36 $\frac{1}{2}$	3.042
Rupert Wilson	6	18	3.000
John Kane	12	34 $\frac{1}{2}$	2.875
Patrick Driscoll	11	31	2.818
Stew Sage	12	31 $\frac{1}{2}$	2.625
Alan Harper	12	29	2.417
Paula Foster	10	13	1.300

The 1st Maidstone Invitation

Chris Abram

27th September 2003

Occasionally, a day at a tiddlywinks tournament can feel like punishment for past sins, of the committing of which you have no memory. The malodorous miasma attendant upon the previous evening's Ceylon, mushroom rice, onion baji as a side dish, and that final, fatal, bonus pint of Indian Lager; the hangover which engenders a peculiar form of sea-sickness when you lower yourself to the plane of the table for the first squidge-off; the lunchtime, either far too short, or else far too long. Then there are the more spiritual afflictions: the slow play in rounds; the torment of your opponents faffing for ten minutes as you lie impotent, squopped-up, after a series of cruel flukes and unlucky breaks; partnering or playing against Paul Moss. These are the days which make me, at least, wish that I had chosen another minority sport with which to while away my few fleeting weekends in this transitory life. One which takes place in the fresh air, perhaps.

On the other hand, the first Maidstone Invitation, hosted by Charles Relle in September, was splendid. Barely a harsh word was spoken, sportsmanship ruled the day, and Charles's home was spacious and well-ventilated.

The players were drawn from all walks of winking life: Charles and those other winking stalwarts, Geoff Thorpe and Alan Dean were joined on this occasion by two young bucks from Cambridge (Patrick Driscoll, rising from his sickbed most bravely, and your reporter), representatives of the new and not-quite-so-new waves of winks at Oxford, Rupert Wilson and Charlie Oakley, and by Phil Wright, whom it was a particular pleasure to see assume the position (for potting) after some time away from the game.

The format was a conventional all-play-all, but with time being of the essence, Charles decreed that all games should be timed, with the fastest player of the day winning a special bonus prize. I think that this is a splendid idea, which might profitably be tried at ETwA events, although I would prefer the stick, rather than the carrot, to be applied, the slowest players attracting some form of penalty, such as being caned by a designated ETwA official during their turn, or

denied use of the toilet facilities. I digress. It should be noted that in Maidstone the quickness of play did not quite match the intention of the new scheme. Despite the friendly nature of the tournament and the bonhomie which characterised it, the competitive spirit cannot be quashed in those who ply their skills on the off-white felt, and the very first game saw twenty minutes of rounds pass by as two players (who shall remain nameless) argued over the minutiae of strategy. In the end, your reporter won Charles's prize for fastest player, mainly by getting entirely squopped in almost unbelievably short order in a couple of my games.

Lunch intruded into the winks at the appointed hour, and was entirely civilized and delicious. A number of bottles of excellent Beaujolais from the Brouilly appellation were consumed, which accompanied the beef most splendidly. Dessert was an unctuous cheesecake with local blackberries. It must be admitted that the lunch period occupied rather more of the day than our host had planned.

More winks ensued, to the point where we had played all the necessary combinations, and a winner could be crowned: Geoff Thorpe took the laurels on this occasion. We departed homeward, enriched by the reminder of the true potential of this great game played in its correct spirit among friends. Also enriched was the Mid-Kent Hospice: a collection among the participants raise the sum of £165 for this most worthy cause.

I would like to thank Charles and Eleanor for their hospitality, and to apologise to them and to posterity for the lack of scores: these have become lost in transit.

The National Singles 2003

Charles Relle

Will I qualify? This question haunts most of us at National Singles time, and was sharpened by the knowledge that there would be a ten person final if the entry did not exceed thirty. For years now we have been saying, "There are no easy games nowadays", and for most of us it was true.

As it happened, the entry was nineteen, which gave an all-play-all over the two days. Two people returned to the Singles after absence: Andy Purvis, the eventual winner, and Rupert Wilson. The venue was the Fitzpatrick Hall at Queens', in which there was a strange, slightly muffled, banging sound, hardly the best aid to concentration. It was eventually traced to the ventilation system, and stopped.

Round 1 suggested that the tournament was to be a tussle, for the lower ranked player won the majority of games. In particular, Alan Harper played with great accuracy for a 6 – 1 victory over Charles Relle. He was less lucky, however, in the next two rounds, encountering Andy Purvis, who was right in form, and Larry Kahn. These two set the pace throughout the weekend. Not until round 4 was either of them beaten, when Tim Hunt scored five against Larry. Round 6 saw Stew Sage take six off Andy. Larry and Andy each sustained one more loss, Andy to Larry 2 – 5, and Larry a 3 – 4 to Nick Inglis. Nick seemed to specialise in squeezing out wins against strong players; he also made 4 – 3 wins against Matthew Rose and Jon Mapley, but scored only three against Stew Sage (in the first round) and on three other occasions.

A comparatively rare visitor to tournaments these days is Jon Mapley. In the first round, he struggled to a 4 – 3 against Geoff Thorpe, an old enemy. One instinctively looks to see the result of his games against Alan Dean. This year Alan had the better of him, scoring 5½, though in general this was not one of Alan's better years.

The defending champion, Matthew Rose, fresh from a successful defence of the World Pairs title, made it to third place. Appropriately, his game against Matt Fayers, who shared third place with him, was close, ending 4 – 3 to Matt. One of the biggest surprises was Matthew's 1 – 6 against Charles, who put four bring-ins off the mat, but somehow managed to get back into the game. Matt himself stumbled in the

first two rounds, but was very successful thereafter, with numerous wins and no 1 – 6 loss after the first round. This was against Rupert Wilson, whose run of success was short, but who nevertheless seemed to enjoy the tournament: both he and Patrick Driscoll appeared to believe that any pile of winks was against the spirit of the game. In their match, they broke up a pile merely for the fun of potting.

The post-prandial threat, Stew Sage, had a triumph when he beat Andy Purvis in round 6, and another when he edged Dave Lockwood 4 – 3. Curiously, given the propensities of the two players, the game between him and Patrick Driscoll did not end in a pot-out. Dave had a reverse in the first round 3 – 4 against James Cullingham, and would have wished to finish higher up the table, and to have made a greater impression on the leading players. James also beat his Jubilee rival Matt Fayers, and otherwise had a weekend of mixed fortune.

Andrew Garrard, as reported in the last two issues of WW, has had a series of friendly (no really) matches against Charles Relle, and dismantled him comprehensively, gaining complete control before potting out. Another good result for him was a 5 – 2 win over Nick Inglis. Andrew had started promisingly with a 6 – 1 win over Tim Hunt, but found getting wins in most of the tournament something of a struggle.

A look at the results shows Tim and Geoff Thorpe in the middle of the table. Both of these players seem to be able overcome higher rated opponents, only to lose the more surprisingly. For example, Tim beat Larry Kahn and Dave Lockwood in successive rounds, and then lost 1 – 6 to James Cullingham.

The tournament featured three left-handed players besides Geoff: Andy Purvis, Simon Gandy and Charles Relle. In the between the latter two the following dialogue occurred —

Simon: “What’s going on in this game, Charles?”

Charles: “I don’t know.”

Charles rejoiced inwardly. Why? Charles is always at a loss to know what is happening, but his opponents rarely are. He was hopeful of winning a game of total ignorance, and his hopes were fulfilled to the extent of 6 – 1. But Simon had the more successful tournament overall.

Phil Scarrott had not played tournament winks since the last Singles; Andy Purvis had had a much longer break. However, he was the more successful, and in the last round scored a six against Jon Mapley to give himself a chance of the title. How it came about that Larry,

after potting out against Matthew Rose, found himself with the five points that gave Andy a tie, is described elsewhere. So is the playoff in which Andy secured the win.

“National Singles, 25–26th October 2003”

Position	Player	Games	Points	PPG
1=	Andy Purvis	18	$96\frac{1}{2}$	5.361111111
1=	Larry Kahn	18	$96\frac{1}{2}$	5.361111111
3=	Matthew Rose	18	81	4.5
3=	Matt Fayers	18	81	4.5
5	Jon Mapley	18	$76\frac{1}{2}$	4.25
6	Nick Inglis	18	67	3.722222222
7	Simon Gandy	18	$65\frac{1}{3}$	3.62962963
8	Dave Lockwood	18	$64\frac{1}{2}$	3.583333333
9	Charles Relle	18	64	3.555555556
10	Geoff Thorpe	18	$63\frac{1}{2}$	3.527777778
11	Tim Hunt	18	$62\frac{1}{2}$	3.472222222
12	Alan Dean	18	56	3.111111111
13	Phil Scarrott	18	$52\frac{1}{6}$	2.898148148
14	James Cullingham	18	50	2.777777778
15	Stew Sage	18	49	2.722222222
16	Alan Harper	18	45	2.5
17	Rupert Wilson	18	44	2.444444444
18	Andrew Garrard	18	$43\frac{1}{2}$	2.416666667
19	Patrick Driscoll	18	39	2.166666667

The Press Release about the Singles

Andrew Garrard

In an attempt to drum up enthusiasm and make Imago TV (who'd been due to attend the event) feel that they would want to turn up next year, I sent off a press release which tries to express some of the excitement of the last National Singles. The following is a bit overenthusiastic — I had my publicity hat on — and reports events better described elsewhere in this journal, but I include it for completeness, and in case it makes the other reports more meaningful to any readers from outside the winking community. For those who were there, the following is a shocking oversimplification and is a little unfair to the contenders not involved in the final; that's the difference between news and the facts, I'm afraid.

The English Tiddlywinks Association's National Singles tournament, held in Queens' College Cambridge last weekend, saw arguably the most hotly contested championship in the event's 32 year history.

The current World Champion, Larry Kahn of the USA, was expected to run away with the trophy, especially in the absence of two of the UK's leading contenders; indeed, over the first day Larry performed as predicted. After a sequence of safe wins and only a single blemish on his record, the other championship contenders were left trailing — all having had multiple upsets at the hands of lower-ranked players.

Larry's greatest threat emerged in the form of Dr Andy Purvis, a former World Champion and a lecturer at Imperial College, who had not been seen at a national competition for over two years. He was, however, left off the pace by back-to-back shock defeats, including one to last place finisher Patrick Driscoll.

In the second day the Brit was brought back into contention by a run of resounding victories, his only defeat being to the American. In contrast Larry's form began to falter; although he also only suffered a single defeat, his wins were consistently by fewer points than Andy's. In the last round of the tournament Larry needed at least six points out of a possible seven to secure the title, playing against Matthew Rose — the UK-based defending champion. Although Larry "potted

out” (putting all the winks of one colour in the pot, guaranteeing him at least five points), to get the vital extra point he still had to “follow in” by potting all of his second colour before Matthew did the same.

Matthew was in a terrible position, with winks “nurdled” under the lip of the pot. Normally, any leading player could be expected to pot all their winks — from a good position, as Larry was — on the first attempt, but the American crumbled under the pressure. Most players, rather than leave the opposition time to pot, would risk trying to pot themselves — even though they might be left in a worse position should they miss. Matthew, instead, mercilessly took his time to move his winks into easily pottable positions and, sensing Larry’s fragility, dared his opponent to take advantage of the chance to pot. Larry’s nerve failed utterly, missing a sequence of easy potting shots. Matthew stole the last two points, putting the American into a play-off, and earning himself a round of applause from the large contingent of spectating British players.

As the deciding game started, Larry had clearly not regained his composure. His first few shots were wild, and Andy found himself in an unexpectedly strong position. Taking the offered chance, he potted all six winks of one colour at the first attempt to take the title — and although he’d been claiming all weekend that he wasn’t really returning to the game, Andy couldn’t contain a leap of victory.

The minor placings were equally closely contested, with third place shared, and with less than five points splitting sixth to eleventh place. Larry’s bad weekend — on the Friday he and upcoming talent Matthew Fayers had failed in their World Pairs challenge against Geoff Myers and Matthew Rose — was rounded off with the theft of a rucksack containing his squidgers (the disks used to flick the winks, some of which Larry had owned for over twenty years). He has vowed to return after crafting replacements.

Tim's Tips from the Singles

Tim Hunt

When playing stronger players, an aggressive pot-squop strategy seems to be quite effective. I have never been a terribly rampant potter, but prior to the Singles I had not played winks for about 6 months, and a horrible 1–6 loss to Andrew Garrard in the first round convinced me that my squopping had suffered.

So a change of plan seemed to be in order, and I tried potting. The key thing is not to be completely reckless, but to keep one colour relatively uninvolved (it helps if you can bring in at least one colour well) and to be prepared to go for it at the right moment. And sometimes, if you concentrate on setting up your own pot-out, and don't worry so much about stopping the slightest pot-out thread by the opponent, your opponent is forced to try potting out themselves, and perhaps they fail, like Larry Kahn did against me. Ha! I counter-potted and beat him 5*–2*, which was better than anyone else did in the all-play-all. Of course sometimes it goes horribly wrong, but stirring things up is good against stronger players, who will otherwise grind you down to a 1–6 loss, and seems like a good idea to me. Against weaker players, a more nargy approach would be safer.

If you don't know what I mean by “an aggressive pot-squop strategy” you should read Andy Purvis's article in WW57, which describes it much better than I ever could. Look at the “tactics” page on the ETwA web site: <http://www.etwa.org/>. Andy demonstrated this tactic to perfection in his play-off against Larry Kahn to decide the winner. Despite being two doubletons up, he decided that the correct thing to do with his six flat blues near the pot was to pot them, and he did, to general acclaim. Perhaps he was just in a hurry to get home? Anyway, congratulations to him for winning the tournament.

Reports of a Bad Winkend

Larry Kahn

World Pairs

Don't remember too many details, but Matt and I just could never get anything going. It was just one of those days where nothing seemed to go horribly wring, but nothing went right, either. Geoff and Matthew played consistently well throughout. The critical game was that one where we had control of the big pile, but they broke it late and we missed some pots in rounds and ended up with 3 when it should have been 5 or 6.

National Singles

Here I'll just give details about a few of the games:

Last game against Matthew:

This was extremely disappointing, as I reverted to form and once again only got 5 after a potout. I took a calculated risk by letting Matthew try a non-trivial blitz and it paid off, but I then choked big time with my second color. I think the problem is a combination of age, not regularly playing in tournament games, and not being able to practice under ETWA conditions (fuzzy tables and hairy monster mats). Maybe I should move to England and start guzzling Viagra.

Game against Dave:

I lost a critical half point in a weird end position. I played the whole game with a small wink never having been brought in. After I let Dave blow a pile late (otherwise I would have had an easy 6), I regained control. But on the final shot of the game I had to try a 3 foot squop with the unused wink (this guaranteed a $5\frac{1}{2}$) rather than try a set of difficult shots that might have gotten me a 6 but more likely only a 5.

Game against Simon:

Someone has to count the number of rounds Simon and I get in before the time limit. I bet we get in over 50, when the average is supposedly half that. These games are always fun since there are always lots of great shots made, and you never can be confident you have control of the game. Plus I always seem to get at least one outrageously lucky rolling squop whenever we play.

The Game which Changed the Singles

Matthew Rose

The last game — knowing it made a huge difference to Larry and Andy meant it needed to be taken somewhat seriously. However I was feeling winks (and especially eye) fatigue and went for a slightly risky pot out to try to put some pressure on Larry — got 4 in well but when positioning my 5th gave Larry too much of a sighter and was soon squopped up. He worked the pot out perfectly but after potting out was fretting about getting the 6 he needed to win (5 tied it).

Alan Dean kept saying to me don't worry you will get more chances, and it was true — Larry (by his own admission) could not pot well under pressure. A great comment he made when getting a large squidger to pot a semi-nurdled wink — “come on boy, this is what I made you for!” still did not inspire a successful pot. The applause when I got a 2 — anyone would think it was for winning a tournament. Anyway — glad to have added some excitement to this final scheduled round.

As for Larry's squidgers — RIP — although someone out there must have them!

The World Pairs

Matthew Rose

Game 1 — this was a cagey game which was very tight. Excitingly if everyone made a shot (whether a pot or squop) in round 5 it would be $3\frac{1}{2} - 3\frac{1}{2}$. Everyone coped so first tie in WP history.

Game 2 — still tight but Matthew potted solidly in rounds and it was 5-2.

Game 3 — Larry and Matt played well and squopped up in around 15 minutes. However Geoff hassled very well and broke the pile releasing 4 of Matthew's winks, which were duly despatched. This turned the match from a small lead for Larry and Matt as looked likely to a larger lead for Geoff and Matthew.

Game 4 — Larry brought in well; almost too well, and Matthew had to attempt a pot out. He made 2 but missed the third. However Geoff squopped a doubleton of Larry's winks and it was even again, with position marginally favouring Geoff and Matthew who then got virtually every shot whilst Matt in particular had very bad luck. This left a lead of $18\frac{1}{2} - 9\frac{1}{2}$ going into a break.

Game 5 — Everyone brought in fairly well and Matthew went for a pot out - potting 5 and moving to a safe area. Larry and Matt each nearly squopped this but Matthew made the pot out, and this was a 6 - 1 to take the game dormie!

Game 6 — Larry and Matt were on top but never looked close to a pot out until Round 5 when Matt suddenly went for everything and potted 5! Only one had been flat with 4 on other winks and one of these put one of Larry's winks on Geoff's wink covering Matt's last wink. Had Geoff not made the short squop then Larry might have had a chance to pot Matt's wink from underneath and make the finalé more exiting. However, it was one of the best round 5 turns I have ever seen or will ever see from Matt.

Generally Geoff and Matthew were a little more solid and aggressive in tactics in the match overall.

Bluffer's Guide to Tournament Tiddlywinks

Part 2 — The Tournaments

Matthew Fayers

So you've read the first part of this article in WW75, and you feel able to comport yourself socially at a 'winks tournament (or, at least, as well as anyone else does). But which tournament is right for you? The various events in the winking calendar have their own idiosyncrasies, and the following guide will help you to choose when to make your entry on to the scene.

The National Singles

I suppose we'd better start with this one, as it's supposed to be the most prestigious event of the year. It comes in three flavours.

Qualifying

This is the bit where you spend all day getting stomped on by good winkers who are going to play in the final, and by average winkers who have practiced very hard hoping to play in the final. If losing is the best way to learn, you should come out of this with encyclopædic knowledge.

Format: leagues of between 7 and 12 players (fewer in recent years, because of Slow Play¹). The 12 highest-placed players qualify, and the rest of us have wasted our time.

Lunchtime factor: low. Tournament organizers have some funny idea that singles is quicker than pairs, and that we can play nine (or even eleven) rounds in a day. We can, of course, because the TO is always right, but we don't get to spend so much time in the pub.

Seriousness: high. Even the players who are certain to qualify (the Dave Lockwoods of this world) squeeze as many points as they

¹See 'An Encyclopædia of Winks Rants'.

can out of the poor beginners, hoping to get a high seeding for the second day.

Beginner suitability: low. But everyone plays in the singles, because if you don't play, you don't win.

Memorable moment: Dave Lockwood failing to qualify after being beaten by a Cambridge novice.

Plate

This was originally conceived as a second-day competition for those poor unfortunates who don't qualify for the final, but of late has become a focal point of the weekend, with some players playing in the plate without playing on the Saturday at all. It also has one of the sexiest trophies of any tournament.

Format: surprisingly, this isn't a singles tournament. Randomly-drawn pairs play each other until such time as the organizer is winning.

Lunchtime factor: medium to high. With no fixed schedule to get through, the plate participants can spend all the time they like in the pub; unfortunately, 'winks fatigue from the first day often curtails this.

Seriousness: low. The floating handicaps mean that whoever organizes the thing typically wins it, so for everyone else fun is the name of the game.

Beginner suitability: high. You get to partner some people who aren't sad enough to qualify, and the handicaps mean that you can get such points as you might wish to have (especially if you assist the organizer with the arithmetic).

Final

The moment (well, the nine hours) of truth for the great and the good. So exciting that non-qualifiers sometimes even spectate.

Format: for many years now, the format of the final has been a twelve-player all-play-all (and this will probably only change when the number of entrants drops below thirteen). This means an early start, a late finish and the ultimate in winks fatigue. You might just wake up again in time for next year's qualifying.

Lunchtime factor: very low. With eleven rounds to get through, there's only enough time to eat.

Seriousness: deadly. Even with the Singles turn-out so low in recent years that riff-raff qualify, this is the point we've all been building up to, and everyone tries as hard as he can.

Beginner suitability: very low. If you should accidentally qualify before you're fully formed (and we've all done it), then you can expect a thoroughly miserable day, getting almost no points. But ducking out of the final after having qualified is just not cricket.

The National Pairs

This is supposed to be the second most important event in the calendar, but how seriously you take it (and how much you enjoy it) depend on whom you're playing with; people will spend much time in the preceding months making arrangements for the pairs so that they don't have to turn up on the day and play with someone nasty.

Format: fixed pairs, playing an all-play-all, perhaps with bonus league bits before (if there are lots of players) or after (if there aren't).

Lunchtime factor: medium. The more casual players will often go for pot-outs with an eye on the clock, and jollity can be had, especially if the pot-out succeeds against a pair of nargs.

Seriousness: medium to high. The top players want to win this one, but once you get past the early stages of the tournament, you won't see any more of them. With a low turnout in recent years, the final stage has been run in divisions; the Narg Premiership, the Also-ran League and the Gin & Tonic Conference attach their own levels of importance to the winks at this stage.

Beginner suitability: medium. If you make sure of getting yourself a moderately competent (and friendly) partner, you should be able to play top-flight winks while avoiding humiliation.

The National Teams of Four

Another official (and constitutionally obligatory) ETwA tournament, this somehow lacks the impact of the singles and the pairs. Teams of four play against each other, each team splitting into two pairs for each match.

Format: people form teams of four people (although other numbers do happen, with people playing part-time), and these four teams play against each other; each team is split into two pairs for each match, and each pair from one team plays against each pair from the other.

Lunchtime factor: very high. When there's an odd number of teams, you might find yourself with a two-round bye, and a greasing of the TO's palm might make this immediately before or after lunch. This tournament has produced more alcohol-fuelled hilarity than any other: players' storming off in huff, eating each other's squidgers, turning the table over and causing the Death of English Winks² are just a few.

Seriousness: low. Until there's a World Fours title to challenge for, nobody will be particularly desperate to win this one.

Beginner suitability: very high. The handicap system means (a) that you're certain to win the tournament, and (b) that you'll be very popular when it comes to picking teams. Hold out for the nicest team-mates.

The London Open

The most serious one-day tournament in the 'winks calendar. Owing to this tournament's not being held in Cambridge (yet), the venue tends to be (a) found at the last minute, and (b) a pub. An event combining some serious 'winks with some good fun.

²See the first part of this article in WW75.

Format: fixed pairs, traditionally playing a Swiss (like an all-play-all, only smaller), but in fact these days playing an all-play-all. As with the National Pairs, make sure you line up a nice partner well in advance.

Lunchtime factor: fairly high; but when tournaments are held in pubs the boundaries between lunchtime and non-lunchtime become blurred (especially after you've had a few). Notable London lunchtime events have been Shu's Double Leaning Jowler and Charles's Forty-Pint Round.

Seriousness: low to middling. The fact that pairs are fixed means that there's not very much randomness, and therefore that the pair which plays best will win. But most of the pairs realize at a very early stage that they're not going to play best.

Beginner suitability: high. It's only one day out of your hectic schedule (and in any case you'd only be watching the Wimbledon women's singles otherwise), and (unless you're careless) you won't have to partner anyone nasty.

The Cambridge Open

The official Most Enjoyable Tiddlywinks Tournament of the Year. Players can drop in, drop out, drop off, fall out, pass out or sod off as much as they like, safe in the knowledge that (at least, after about 11 a.m.) some winkers will be in a nearby pub doing something much more fun. The fact that the CUTwC annual dinner happens on the Saturday evening only adds to the confusion.

Format: randomly-drawn partners and opponents, with the winner being the only person sad enough to play winks for the whole weekend.

Lunchtime factor: extreme; as soon as you get fed up because you are (a) doing badly, (b) being drawn to partner horrible people, or simply (c) playing 'winks, you can go to lunch and never be heard from again.

Seriousness: very low. The tournament really only exists as a framework for the lunchtimes; thanks are due to Patrick for bothering

to win it most years so that there is actually a tournament the rest of us are glad we're missing.

Beginner suitability: fairly high. Randomness means you'll get some very tough games, and there's no handicapping system to back you up. However, you'll learn/invent more drinking games than at any other point in the year.

The National Handicapped Individual Handicapped Pairs (Handicapped)

Not quite sure what this one is actually called. This is a new-fangled tournament which has proved very popular since its inception in 1572. The one-day feature is a good selling point, as is the fact that it's not held in Cambridge (yet).

Format: Randomly-drawn pairs, but with Categories. In principle, pairs should consist of one Novice and one Narg, so that beginners (or people who are just rubbish) don't get too stomped on. There are also Fours-style handicaps. The winner will of course be the narg who convinces the TO that he's a novice really.

Lunchtime factor: highish; Oxford has many fine pubs, and good fun is had by all (except those poor souls who drive us there — we love you). The drop-outability of the tournament means that hardened drinkers can be hard.

Seriousness: low; it's a sociable tournament to encourage new or returning players.

Beginner suitability: very high. In fact, this tournament is so set up to be nice for beginners that it's a wonder anyone else plays at all.

Where are they now?

Sadly, some tournaments are no longer with us; we remember them fondly.

The Oxfordshire Open (which used to be the Hampshire Open, which is why it was named after a county³ even though it was always held in the same city) was in many ways the forerunner of the Handicapped tournament described above. The most crucial difference was that the Oxfordshire had a terribly complicated bidding system, so that, even if you were going to lose, you could get lots of points by predicting this in advance.

The Scottish Pairs was unique simply for being a Very Good Reason To Go To Scotland⁴. It was famously the only tournament at which tea and coffee were served; however, when the cellar bar round the corner opened (shortly after 6am), the need for caffeine was not strongly felt.

The Somerset Invitation was held for many years in a pub in Somerset just after the New Year, and was a very jolly event for all those who were fortunate enough to be invited. When the proprietors of the Somerset Wagon (and parents of a well-known winker) retired, the tournament moved to Brussels (and had what some feel was its heyday). Sadly, Brussels is no longer with us, and the future looks bleak for the Somerset.

³There is no such thing as a county, or at least, most counties don't exist. See 'An Encyclopædia of Winks Rants'.

⁴There really is no such thing as this.

Auntie Gertie

Dear Auntie Gertie,

I have recently beat both Larry Kahn and Dave Lockwood in the same day. I am worried that this means that I might be becoming good. Is this likely? Is there any danger that I might now become a world champion? I don't think that would be compatible with my self-image.

What do you advise?

Habitual loser

Auntie Gertie writes...

Dear Habitual,

I recommend you get beaten by the editor. This will bring you down to earth, and make him feel better.

Auntie Gertie

Dear Auntie Gertie

I don't know what to do. Every time I play winks I end up hating the game and vowing never to play again. But I just can't stop myself from playing in all the tournaments and getting more depressed. What shall I do? I hate winks.

Crestfallen of Cambridge

Auntie Gertie writes...

Dear Crestfallen,

I recommend you beat the editor. This will bring him down to earth, and make you feel better.

Auntie Gertie

A Letter to the Editor

Tim Hunt

Dear Sir,

I must say that I am absolutely appalled — by myself. And I owe an enormous apology to Julian Wiseman.

I am referring, of course, to my defacement of Julian's article on the boundary in the last issue (see the penultimate paragraph of page 25). One short sentence was all it took to point out to me the error of my ways: "Winks in piles are not necessarily horizontal." — I received by email from Mr. Wiseman.

Perhaps, however, I am going too fast. Such was the magnitude of my idiocy that this matter is now indelibly writ on my brain, but it may be the case that the thrust of Julian's article is no longer fresh in your mind. The question addressed by this article was what to do about piles near the edge of the mat where one wink from the pile is crossing the boundary. The rules do not, currently, address this question adequately. I agree with Julian that the most logical rule would be what he called "One Out All Out". This may sound more like a trade-unionists approach to industrial relations than a some-time employee of the Bank of England's approach to defining the rules of Tiddlywinks, but what it means is that if any wink is part of a pile and is crossing the boundary, then all the winks in that pile are deemed to have gone off.

Why is this proposed rule best? Well, any other rule opens up the possibility of having to play a wink that is not on the mat, which is just silly. Or you could try just removing those winks that are crossing the boundary, but that is not a good idea. Currently in the rules, there is very clearly the idea that you don't mess with winks that are part of a pile. See, for example, Rule 7 (b), second paragraph: "If a wink comes to rest in a position where it is neither squopping nor squopped but supported by the pot (except as provided by rule 5(c)) so that part of the wink is higher than the rest, it is moved to lie touching the pot but no longer supported by it. ...", or Rule 12 (d) "...During his own turn, however, a player may turn or clean any of his own winks which is neither squopping nor squopped nor potted, and replace it in its correct position.". Notice the "neither squopping nor squopped"

clause in both these rules. So a rule that required some, but not all, of the winks in the pile to be deemed off would seem like a bad idea to me.

So, and now we reach the nub of the matter, entire piles may suddenly be deemed to be off the mat, and, even though they have not crossed the baseline, we must apply Rule 7 (a) (“The wink should be placed as near as possible to the point at which it crossed the boundary, but should not be placed closer than 10 cm to any other wink (nor closer than 10 cm to any baseline with unplayed winks behind it).”). That is, we need to agree where the winks that are still on the mat are considered to have crossed the base-line. Julian had three possibilities: each wink is considered to have crossed the boundary

1. at the point of the boundary nearest to the centre of the wink;
2. at the point of the boundary nearest to the point of the wink closest to the boundary; or
3. where the straight line from the centre of the pot, through the centre of the wink, crosses the boundary.

I favour option 2) because it is like the squidge-off. The other two have no parallel elsewhere in the rules. My foolish act was to add an editorial comment to the effect that options 1) and 2) were the same, and worse, to imply that Julian was an idiot not to realise this. Of course, if a wink in a pile near the corner of the mat is tilted at an angle, 1) and 2) can lead to very different answers. Any but the meanest intelligence would see this instantly, but under the pressure of finishing the last issue of *Winking World*, I erred.

I will have to live with that error for the rest of my miserable life.

Tim Hunt.

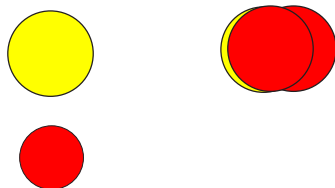
Ex-editor of this Organ.

Bristol Four

Charles Relle

After reading my last Bristol article, someone remarked that after describing many of the positions, I recommended readers to try them out, and that this advice was repeated too often. He may be right, but I know that you can do different things with different squidgers, that certain shots seems easy to some and hard to others, and that practice is necessary. Therefore, I will make the point once here and now in this article: you do need to try all these shots out to see if they will work for you, and try them several times. Small variations in the positions of winks make a big difference, and you need to memorise them. There are few generalities, and this is one of the charms of the game, and of Bristol shots in particular.

In the Jubilee in 1985 playing against Geoff Thorpe, I had this position:



It seemed to me obvious to Bristol the red and yellow off the other red onto the yellow. This gives a doubleton and two guards. After I played the shot, Geoff remarked, ‘No-one else would have taken that squop in that way’. Having tried to reproduce the shot for this article, I realise what a problem I was taking on. In most shots, your squidger hits the mat at the end of the shot, but when you want to Bristol off a wink in the diagram position and ones like it, you are playing an air shot in a special sense; you do not want to hit the bottom wink, so you have to play very delicately. These shots are more successful when the overlap between the top and middle winks is very small. The shot illustrated is complicated by the presence of a target wink; even a plain Bristol off is not easy.

Here is something that is a bit easier:

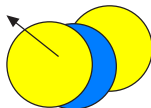


Playing in the direction of the arrow should accomplish a Bristol off. But be very careful with these shots. If the top two winks are too far apart, you will get the same position with the direction reversed, or, worse still, just slide off the middle wink.

This is the position referred to above:



Put your squidger at top middle of the top yellow, and slide off just below the point of intersection between it and blue. If you are playing from the bottom of the diagram, angle your squidger towards the black blob. This is not an easy shot. A mistake can free the blue, leaving it to squop both yellows.

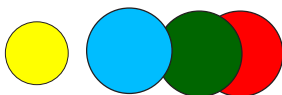


Now it is easier to free the bottom yellow. Imagine you are playing towards the bottom of the page. Place your squidger at the tail of the arrow, and move it towards the head. There are many variations on this shot, depending on the exact positions of the winks. It is interesting to put winks in different places near such piles as these, and see which ones you can squop while Bristolling off. Again, the bottom wink may well move a short distance; sometimes it too can be used to make a squop.

You will find, as noted above, that very small differences in the positions of the winks will make a big difference to the playability of the shot and the direction in which the winks will go. Practice is

necessary, as well as a good memory for what will go and what will not. The illustrations in this article show winks all of one size. Piles with winks of different sizes, other than big on big on small, are less easy to control. If you want to split them, very often the shot the Americans call the ‘piddle’ is preferable; otherwise there is the boondock.

One of the most satisfying parts of the game is to create a shot from nowhere, and to succeed in playing it. The second part is the more important; I leave to others to write articles on the situations in which my ‘Bristol imagination’ has conjured up a match-loser! Consider the diagram below:



Blue, on green which is on red, is to play. Yellow has just brought a small wink behind the large blue, which is on two other small yellows, not visible in the diagram. What to do? The obvious shot was a Bristol-boondock, sending green some distance away while freeing red and Bristolling back onto the other yellow. The shot had to be played with care, because a boondock is vigorous shot, and the Bristol rather delicate. But it worked!

This is my last ‘Bristol’ article. I hope others will write on other technical aspects of the game, for instance on opening theory. I am sure there is much to be discovered.

State of OUTS

Charlie Oakley

For the first time in 8 years, OUTS start the new year with the Varsity Trophy in their possession and if the army of Corpuscles keep coming to meetings then it may stay that way!

Although we had one of the most rubbish locations at Freshers' Fair, being tucked away in the corner behind Scrabble players and in the same room as the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, we managed a reasonable number of signatures thanks to the recruiting skills of Ruth Ludlam and Rupert Wilson.

So far this term, attendance at meetings has been good, 18 members are on the books, 7 of them new faces as well as Rupert making the odd appearance. Strangely only 4 colleges are represented, which will make our intercollegiate cuppers quite interesting later this year.

Another event of note was the appearance of Ruth, Rupert and myself on the Oxford Channel's Six Life programme, a kind of poor man's Richard and Judy, so poor in fact they only have one presenter. With the other guests to the show being a ram and a pottery dealer we were positively the highlight of the show. We were given the final quarter of an hour for me to talk to Matt McNamara, an Oxford Law Graduate who decided to go into media, about the game whilst Ruth and Rupert had a miniaturised game on a mat fragment. The usual questions and answers followed but luckily no baseline potting from the presenter this time, although he did manage to run five in once he had got the hang of it!

So, I guess as a sporting gesture I should wish CUTwC luck for this year and I look forward to seeing them in Oxford next year for the Varsity Match.

State of CUTwC

Liz Batty

Cambridge made a good start to the year with a stall at the Freshers' Fair, this year handily placed between volleyball and Eton Fives. Our tactic of playing winks and waiting till interested parties had a go seemed to work well, and fascinated the students on the Fives stall enough for them to sign up to our mailing list. And the presence of chewy sweets and Mars Bars on the stall did us no harm either.

The squash was well attended, with many freshers returning in the weeks to come once they recovered from the effects of the green punch. Many familiar faces from previous years are still around, and lending a hand to train up the new freshers. We currently have members from at least 10 colleges, which should prove interesting come Cuppers time. Many of the novices witnessed the National Singles, a valuable demonstration of the game at its highest level before they get a chance to participate in the NIHPper in a few weeks' time. As to the Varsity match, I wish our counterparts at OUTS the best of luck, and I look forward to challenging them next year.

On Handicapping Schemes

Patrick Barrie

I have expressed several of these comments before in electronic format, but the Winking World editor persuaded me that you might like to read them on proper printed pages.

Introduction

What is the purpose of handicaps in tiddlywinks tournaments?

The idea is that all players, regardless of skill level, compete in the tournament on an equal footing and, in principle at least, have an equal chance of winning. Handicapped tournaments can play an important role in the winking calendar as less experienced players are often encouraged by the fact that they are potential winners in these events. Hurrah.

The standard handicapping method

Tiddlywinks has a tried and tested handicap scheme: players are assigned a handicap number between 0 and 7 at the start of the event, and game scores are adjusted based on the difference between the handicaps of the participants. The handicap transfer is half the difference between the average handicap of each pairing. I like this handicapping scheme: it's easy to understand and easy to apply.

However, I am less keen on some aspects historically associated with the setting of handicaps. For instance, there is the convention "novices are given a handicap of zero, national champions are given a handicap of seven". This is fine in many tournaments, but I shall argue here that it should not be a general rule. Why do I say this?

In golf, a player's handicap can be used to give players an equal chance of winning a handicapped tournament. It turns out that golf is such a simple game that the same handicap can be used as a measure of the absolute ability of that player. However, this need not be the case for tiddlywinks. The absolute ability of a tiddlywinks player is actually not that good a method of setting handicaps on the traditional 0–7 scale if the objective is to give each player an equal chance of winning the tournament.

Let me give an example to illustrate my point. Consider a mid-ranking player such as, say, Stew Sage. If Stew played in a tournament full of beginners all handicapped zero, then he should be given a high handicap (say 6) so that his adjusted points-per-game over the tournament would be likely to be close to 3.5. On the other hand, if all the other players in the tournament were world champions (past and present) with handicaps of seven, then it would be best if Stew's handicap were set lower (say 3) for his adjusted points-per-game after handicap transfer to be likely to be 3.5. In other words, unlike golf, the handicap that should be assigned to a particular player in tiddlywinks depends on the quality of the other players in the tournament, and not solely on the player's absolute ability.

The world ratings program is capable of predicting scores in tiddlywinks games for those wingers who have played sufficient games, and could therefore be used to work out what the “best” handicaps should be in a tournament if the traditional 0–7 handicap scale was used. The web site www.etwa.org includes a scheme that does this (in the “how ratings are calculated” section). However, the scheme is somewhat impractical because it assumes that ratings are accurate; this is often not the case for people who have only played a handful of games, and so I don't particularly recommend ratings be used for this purpose. However, there is one useful result that does emerge from considering what the ratings program suggests as “best” handicaps. That is this working guideline: handicaps should be set so that the average handicap assigned to players in a particular tournament is about 3.5 (or at least in the range 3–4). This contrasts with an average assigned handicap of 4.9 in last year's Teams of Four. [Aside: this is not a criticism of the tournament organiser: I was one of those who set handicaps at the event!]

Possible improved handicapping systems

Before going further, let me state that I advocate continued use of the standard handicapping system discussed above because of its simplicity, rather than any more complex method.

One possibility is to modify the standard system described above if we really want handicap transfers to make the average points-per-game of all players as close to 3.5 as possible. A player's handicap

on the 0–7 scale could be assigned at the start of every game, rather than at the start of the tournament. For example, Stew Sage could be given a handicap of 6 in a game of singles against a beginner, but a handicap of 2 in a game of singles against Larry Kahn. Resetting players' handicaps every game makes it more likely that the adjusted points-per-game will be nearer 3.5 than the standard scheme...but it is far less practical to implement this scheme in a tournament.

Alternatively, the traditional 0–7 handicap scale could be abandoned. If the world ratings of players were considered sufficiently reliable, the algorithm's predicted game score function could be used to calculate what the handicap transfer should be in each game so that every player's adjusted points-per-game is likely to be close to 3.5. The recommended points transfers are given in the “how ratings are calculated” part of www.etwa.org if you want to see them. This would correspond to the best handicapping system that the ratings program could produce...but it's far more complicated than the basic scheme and depends critically on ratings being reasonably accurate.

Mad scheme for amusement only

It should be noted that the finishing order of players in a handicapped tournament is not random, even if the handicapping system adopted is perfect. The winner will be the person who plays better than expected and has the most luck at key moments. If a random finishing order is desired for amusement value, this could be decided by rolling dice...or by use of the Gary Shrimpton handicapping scheme.

In this scheme, the entire tournament is played initially without handicaps. Handicaps are then assigned based on the actual game points achieved by each player. Adjusted scores are then back-calculated using these handicaps and the standard method. This process generates a gloriously unpredictable finishing order. The method of assigning the handicaps after all the games have been played needs to be decided. For a pairs tournament in which partners and opponents change each round, possible assignment schemes (in order of increasing complexity) of the handicap H of player i are:

1. Set $H_i = 4PPG_i - 10.5$
2. Set $H_i = 4(PPG_i - PPG_{partner} + 2PPG_{opponents}) - 24.5$

3. Perform an optimisation calculation to find the values of H_i that minimize the function: $\sum_1^n (PPG_i(\text{adjusted}) - 3.5)^2$ (Note that handicaps in this scheme don't need to be integers and can fall outside the range 0–7).

The final table using this scheme is effectively a random finishing order with all adjusted points-per-game close to 3.5. Nobody knows what's going on in the tournament until all the scores have been analysed. It is important that the handicap assignment scheme to be used is decided in advance, as the different schemes generate different answers. Otherwise, precedent dictates that the confused tournament organiser will throw all the scores into a fire after spending three hours in a pub trying to work out the result.

(Footnote: if you want a measurement of someone's absolute tiddlywinks ability, I recommend using the tiddlywinks world ratings rather than "handicaps", possibly with the band classifications: rating over 2300 = grand master; over 2100 = senior master; over 1900 = master; over 1700 = expert; over 1500 = apprentice; less than 1500 = novice.)

Under the Lights

Charles Relle

It began with Charlie Oakley, at least for me. There was an email from him about a children's television programme in Maidstone. I live in Maidstone, and was quite keen to go on. Mad, of course, but being a school governor in Maidstone, I thought it might amuse the kids. I got in touch via email. Details escape me, and a system crash has destroyed all my emails of that time, so I cannot check back.

The programme is called Globo Loco, and my contact was Keith Cotton. We arranged to meet at Maidstone Studios. He was keen to have me on the show, probably because I lived in Maidstone, and he would not have to pay much in travelling expenses. We met, I took along a set and a mat, and potted a few winks, and missed rather more, and he seemed to think I would do. There it rested.

Another email: the show had been pencilled in for November 19. A telephone call told me I was to be pitted in some way against a footballer and a golfer. After some negotiation we agreed that I was to try to pot ten winks from nine inches in 45 seconds. I was to have one turn per wink. We decided I would use large winks so that the cameras could catch them better.

I made two mistakes, first I thought the show was going out live, and second that I would have plenty of time to practise. As it happens the show was recorded. Being retired I should have had lots of time, but rashly I had agreed to help organise the Church Fair on November 29. After all, being a pensioner, I would have lots of time! The team organising the Fair was completely new, and we decided that every household in the parish was to be notified of it. We could then invite everyone to our Christmas services. One member of the parish was in the local Ramblers' Association, and had done the Coast to Coast walk. No prizes for guessing who volunteered to do much of the delivery! Added to this, there was the sheer nervous energy consumed by the knowledge that the whole parish was watching like a hawk for the slightest possible mistake. Behold how these Christians love one another.

So the impending TV appearance, the fact that I had agreed to do mock interviews for Eleanor's school and had to read several books, even, almost, the Rugby World Cup and the rest of my life, were

pushed into the background.

Came the day, and I knew that I had in practice tried to pot a small number of winks and potted even fewer, and was likely to make a total fool of myself in front of the whole world, or that part of it that was watching Meridian TV at 3.30 on a Wednesday afternoon. Added to this, I was haunted by Andrew Garrard's helpful statement that my potting was abysmal.

There was a footballer from Gillingham. He had to chip ten footballs into a thing like a basketball basket, but five or six times as wide and about two feet high. He was four and a half metres away. There was a professional golfer, who had to chip golf balls into a thing very like a basketball basket, about two feet off the ground, from four metres. And there was me. We had rehearsals in the morning, then lunch, and the show was scheduled for 3.30 in the afternoon. It ran a bit late. It seems that television keeps the crews very busy, while people appearing have a long time doing nothing. I did manage to get away for a bit, and practise on the surface I was going to use. I discovered that I was quite likely to pot any number of the ten winks between two and eight, and I had no idea what difference an audience of screaming children would make.

What actually happened? We, the competitors, faced the audience, and behind us there were three boys and three girls. Both the audience and the selected boys and girls had to guess who was going to win the contest. The audience, tested by acclamation, went for the footballer, and the boys and girls, consulted separately, went for the golfer. Well, football is football, the golfer was impressive, and tiddlywinks is only tiddlywinks and I am old.

We were told that there would be a countdown of our last ten seconds, and to keep back a few shots for the end, a little bit of extra pressure. The whistle blew, and I started. Seven of the first eight went in, the kids screamed, and golf balls shot past me on one side and footballs on the other. I remembered to hold off for a bit, but heard no countdown, then suddenly, 'Four, Three...'; I had missed most of it in the din. Hastily I tried the other two winks and missed. The footballer had two in his 'pot', the golfer five. So the honour of Tiddlywinks was upheld.

There were a few more shots to be taken, and then it was all over. I think the programme is going out in February.

World Individual Winking Mile Record

Ralf Laue

I admit that I have a rather unusual hobby: to break world records (those that are published in the Guinness Book of Records.) I am already the world record holder for pancake tossing, domino stacking, the largest fan of cards and much more.

When I got an invitation to the “Impossibility Challenger Games” (an event where record breakers from all over the world come together and demonstrate their abilities), there was no question that I would agree to take part.

The only remaining question was which world record I would try to break on this occasion. Well, the best records for me are those who bring a lot of fun for the record breakers as well as for the audience, so the “fastest tiddlywinks mile” seemed to be a good choice.

The record published in the 2003 edition of the Guinness Book of Records reads as follows: “The fastest time for a tiddlywink to be propelled over a measured mile is 2 hours, 25 minutes and 24 seconds by AGS Home Improvements Ltd of Newton Abbot, Devon, UK, on November 20, 1999.” Well, this seemed to be beatable, even if the current record was established by a team while I would like to start a solo attempt.

In order to get some information about the rules for such records, I e-mailed the ETwA and Andrew Garrard was very helpful. The most important fact he told me was that the record had been broken in the meantime, and the new record breakers were Edward Wynn and James Cullingham with a time of 52:10 minutes. Well, 52 minutes sounds much faster than more than 2 hours, but on the other hand it would only be fair to accept my attempt as the inaugural record for the “fastest solo mile”, because it is obviously much harder to squidge a wink over one mile alone. (Andrew’s e-mail included the warning that “many of us had trouble standing for some days later. Please bear this in mind if you are considering a solo effort...”)

After some tiddlywinks training at home, I was sure that it would become a great event. The organisers of the “Impossibility Challenger Games” were already looking forward to my attempt, telling me that it will become one of the funniest (even if the other record breakers

did their best as well — for example Ashrita Furman from the USA, the “world record holder for breaking Guinness world records”, who balanced a milk bottle on his head for one mile).

I had the choice between an outdoor track and an indoor course on two basketball fields. Because of the cold weather, I decided to choose the indoor course. The referees have reserved a part of the court for me. (The rest of the court was used for other important activities like carrying 17 full beer steins over a given distance).

Me was told that I had to cover a course 36 times. While the first laps were difficult for me (because of the hard surface), the lap times between 3 and 5 minutes were okay. The most difficult points were at the end of each “lane” when I had to to squidge the wink around three traffic cones which were arranged in a triangle.

But to be honest, tiddlywinks skill was much less important for this attempt than physical condition. Kneeling, running, kneeling again, ...It's harder than it seemed to be to the audience. Luckily, I am a well trained long-distance runner. But even after more than 20 finished marathon races, I never had an experience like after one mile tiddlywinks — stiff muscles, but only in my right leg (because of the kneeling). (So I can repeat Andrew's warning: a one-mile tiddlywinks attempt is not a thing for untrained people.)

When I had done 18 laps (out of the 36 that I supposed to have to go), the jury told me that my time so far was 1:06:01 hours. I still felt good for the second half. However, after 20 laps they told me that they just have realised that I was already done, the mile was already over! (They have measured the course correctly, but in their calculation they have forgotten that in each lap, I had to go the distance back as well so the correct number of laps was just 18!).

The best idea in such a situation is to mistrust the jury and to ask them to measure again and to recalculate at least twice. However, it was really true: I had already done my mile. But I did not want to stop until I have covered the 36 laps for a second mile.

However, after exactly 2016 meters (and after 1:23:40 h), the wink got lost under a movable wall that can be used to separate the different parts of the sports centre. There was no way to get it back, and I felt that it would not be in the spirit of this record category to replace the wink.

So I can now claim to be the record holder for the fastest solo tid-

dlywinks mile. Maybe it will be published in the Guinness Book of Records, for sure it will be mentioned in a new record book (“The Alternative Book of Records”) that will be published in 2004 for the first time. (The reason for being so sure is that I am one of the co-authors of the book. So if somebody is interested in breaking some other unusual record — tiddlywinks related or not — feel free to contact me via our web site www.recordholders.org)

The Golden Rule

Patrick Barrie

The following article from Patrick appeared in the Financial Times magazine as part of a sequence of how strategy from sports are applicable to life in general (or something).

THE GOLDEN RULE

Dr Patrick Barrie, Chairman of the English Tiddlywinks Association and former world champion.

Tournament tiddlywinks games involve a lot of decision-making. Should you pot a counter, try to capture an enemy counter, or simply move one inch to the left? To win it's best to choose a shot that's likely to be successful. It's better to play easy shots rather than more difficult shots, which are great if they work, but you're likely to miss.

There's a lot more to tiddlywinks than just flicking counters around — it's not just a children's game. It's like a cross between snooker and chess; it has the manual dexterity of snooker, and the intellectual strategy of chess.

In tiddlywinks, as in life, it's better to take few risks and improve your situation gradually, rather than take big risks, even if they offer potentially high gains. If you can play difficult tiddlywinks shots then you're a good player. But if you never need to play difficult shots, then you're a great player.

The World Ratings

(As of after the National Singles.)

Rank	Player	Rating	Rating Change	RRF	Past Year Games	Past Year PPG
1	Geoff Myers	2493	-	91	10	5.200
2	Larry Kahn	2458	-29	100	94	4.872
3	Andy Purvis	2453	***	95	19	5.395
4	Matthew Rose	2362	-58	100	82	4.555
5	Patrick Barrie	2308	-	100	104	4.075
6	Matt Fayers	2269	-4	100	87	4.333
7	Jon Mapley	2225	-10	100	50	4.140
8	Dave Lockwood	2185	-67	100	81	3.858
9	Bob Henninge	2162	-	97	26	4.404
10	Charles Relle	2156	-54	100	102	4.137
11	Ferd	2154	-	96	23	4.413
12	Simon Gandy	2129	-29	100	53	3.563
13	Nick Inglis	2117	-11	100	77	3.859
14	Alan Dean	2106	-77	100	96	3.814
15	Ed Wynn	2092	-	100	76	3.658
16	Severin Drix	2087	-	93	16	3.594
17	Andrew Dominey	2056	-	69	5	4.900
18	Tim Hunt	2040	+4	100	82	3.376
19	Geoff Thorpe	1996	+35	100	40	3.713
20	Kilian Anheuser	1941	-	79	12	4.917
21	Phil Scarrott	1935	-10	100	32	3.057
22	Chris Abram	1932	-	100	55	3.473
23	James Cullingham	1900	+1	100	99	2.919
24	Christine Barrie	1894	-	86	13	4.231
25	Mac McAvoy	1890	-	83	11	3.455
26	Rupert Thompson	1884	-	95	12	2.250
27	Paul Moss	1880	-	100	77	3.660
28	Keith Seaman	1852	-	59	4	4.875
29	Tim Jeffreys	1833	-	95	18	3.167
30	Andrew Garrard	1809	+8	100	76	2.507
31	Aaron	1804	-	71	13	3.577
32	Rupert Wilson	1804	+76	96	24	2.583
33	Stew Sage	1801	+51	100	86	2.450
34	Patrick Driscoll	1788	-12	100	68	2.909
35	Charlie Oakley	1785	-	98	23	3.558
36	Dan Choate	1726	-	31	6	4.722
37	James Murray	1721	-	85	19	3.474
38	Alan Harper	1678	+94	100	81	2.372
39	Bhaskar Thakur	1674	-	25	5	4.800
40	Prabhas Pokharel	1669	-	92	26	2.904
41	Cyril Edwards	1669	-	82	4	3.875
42	Stu Collins	1640	-	57	4	2.500
43	Matt Moorhouse	1639	-	40	4	5.250
44	Vanya Temnykh	1627	-	85	16	2.438
45	John Kane	1598	-	77	12	2.875
46	Ben Fairbairn	1592	-	88	36	3.551
47	Paul Goodman	1576	-	70	12	3.083
48	Andrea Gorman	1568	-	32	4	5.250

Rank	Player	Rating	Rating Change	RRF	Past Year Games	Past Year PPG
49	Eric Trautmann	1538	-	26	1	0.000
50	Liz Batty	1528	+156	60	20	3.167
51	Claire Oakley	1522	***	41	4	3.500
52	Anthony Curl	1522	-	31	6	3.750
53	Rachel Gray	1505	-	20	4	3.083
54	MP Rouse	1495	-	46	1	1.000
55	Daniel Sachs	1475	-	44	2	3.000
56	Max Lockwood	1469	-	81	31	1.903
57	Rachel Chisholm	1456	-	21	5	3.100
58	Navindu Katugampola	1456	-	23	6	3.583
59	Jon Lockwood	1451	-	56	11	2.545
60	Robert Ochshorn	1451	-	50	7	2.214
61	Laura Clarke	1449	-	43	18	2.907
62	Peter Sherman	1449	-	38	4	1.500
63	Andrew Allen	1443	-	29	6	2.917
64	Louise Murphy	1439	-	13	2	3.000
65	Rachael Macdonald	1437	***	35	4	2.250
66	Nick Elser	1434	-	21	1	2.500
67	Ann Carter	1429	-	22	4	3.083
68	Rob Payne	1428	-	41	5	2.400
69	Hane Maung	1428	-	4	2	3.000
70	Andrew Walpole	1420	-	36	4	3.500
71	Mike Tilton	1411	-	45	7	1.857
72	Julian Hazeldine	1410	-	12	2	1.000
73	Claire Hart	1406	-	2	2	2.500
74	Matt Harper	1402	-	24	4	3.125
75	Anne Austin	1391	-	2	1	1.000
76	Donnacha Kirk	1388	***	16	1	1.500
77	Sarah Quinn	1377	-	27	6	2.667
78	Sarah Stewart-Johnson	1374	-	1	1	2.000
79	Poppy Aldam	1367	-	23	5	1.400
80	Naomi Stevens	1367	-	14	3	0.833
81	Oliver Frith	1365	-	16	5	1.600
82	Emma Drysdale	1363	-	7	2	0.500
83	Paula Foster	1360	-	49	16	1.625
84	Andrew Hodges	1358	-	15	3	0.667
85	Liz Bertoya	1350	-	11	2	0.500
86	Bryan Ellerbock	1341	-	37	7	0.571
87	Katy Carson	1327	-	6	2	0.000
88	Kate Nicholls	1320	-	9	3	0.000

Where Are They Now?

Christine Barrie is home from hospital, but still housebound, suffering from an infected foot; we wish her a speedy recovery.

Andrew Garrard (hello) is now being slightly less of a waste of space by starting work for a computer graphics company (again, but one without anything to do with lard this time). Expect more rounds to be bought, but less time for doing things like, er, doing two ETWA council posts.

Andrew Walpole & Andrea Gorman of OUTS were married in August (we think) — congratulations to them.

Ben Soares is alive — he pressed the wrong button on his mobile phone and phoned Christine by mistake...

Competitions

The **Fantasy winks** competition for 2002–2003 was won by Ed Wynn. Congratulations to him; Patrick informs me that there probably won't be another competition until 2004, but there should be one then.

The **Picture competition** from Winking World 80 resulted in precisely no-one sending me any entries on a piece of batter pudding (or anything else), so I'm obliged merely to report that the owner of the knees is Alan Dean.

The **Name the Baby competition** also received no entries; Timmy advises me that he feels the bottle of fizzy wine should go to Patrick and Christine for a) having picked a name in the past, even if not as part of this competition, and b) having picked the name actually being used, which has to count for something.

There is a **Crossword competiton**. This is quite simple. I was hoping that, since a number of eminent winkers are fans of cryptic crosswords, it might be possible to incorporate one. Sadly the experts did not have time to share, and even if I'd had time to do it myself the result would have been embarrassing. A much better idea, I feel, is to hold a competition for the best winks-related cryptic crossword (please send it to me *with* the answers — I know my place), the winner of which will appear in the next issue. Otherwise you'll get my effort. Horrible.

Your Feedback

This page is deliberately left blank(ish). If you have any rants, requests or remonstrations regarding the contents of this Winking World, please use this convenient bit of paper and send it to Andrew Garrard (address overleaf).

If you've been playing in the NIHP tournament, I'd be most grateful if you'd fill in a few lines about the games you found most interesting (which I've always felt would make better reading than those responsible for affecting the final winner) and ensure that it reaches me somehow.

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