

Winking World 92

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On Matt Fayers and Free Turns

Charles Relle

Matt Fayers's stimulating article on free turns deserves consideration. It seems to me to raise three questions:

- 1) Should a squop-up bring about free turns?
- 2) If so, how many?
- 3) If not, what are the alternatives?

The free turns rule was introduced before I started playing, so I cannot say why it was cast in its original form, or what alternatives were considered. It is, however, reasonable to conjecture that people did not want the game simply to stop when a squop-up occurred, nor did they want the squopping side to have free turns for ever, so they looked for a compromise that would give the squopping side to have a fair reward for its superior skill, while allowing the squopped side a chance to get back into the game. Though the rule has been modified over the years to take into account new and potentially new situations, it has remained in essence the same. To my recollection, Matt himself has contributed to the formulation of this rule, and in the past work has been done by Jon Mapley, Mike Surridge and myself. Patrick Barrie has been responsible for its incorporation into the new rules.

To return to the three questions: should a squop-up bring about free turns? There has, as far as I know been no dissent to the answer 'Yes' to this question. No-one has proposed to the Rules Committee an alternative. The solution must have seemed fair and within the spirit of the game. Contrast this with the 'Sending-off' rule; several people think this rule unreasonable, though advocates of the rule in its present form do their best, with success, to stifle debate. The idea of free turns seems to carry approval.

Next question: how many free turns? This breaks down into two questions: a) should it reflect the skill of the two sides? b) should it reflect the state of the game? To clarify these points, suppose first that no winks have been potted, and that one side achieves a squop-up. Though there is some luck in Tiddlywinks, the present rule in great measure points up the difference in skill between the two sides. It also gives the squopped side a chance to get back into the game. To go to the other extreme: at a demonstration at the Ideal Home Exhibition in, I think, 1959, though I am not sure of the date, John Furlonger and Norman Bardsley, playing double-pot in those carefree days, landed the last green on the last yellow¹. The opponents made the squop, and thus had eleven free turns. If they could not pot out within eleven free turns, it was reasonable to let John and Norman have another try. Between the cases I have described any number of free turns (up to the unlikely eleven) can occur, each reflecting the state of the game and the skill or good sense of the players. My view is that the present rule is right, painful to me though it has been on occasions!

1) The colours may have been different. At that time, there were no fixed colour partnerships.



What if we decide on an arbitrary number of free turns, say four, as Matt Fayers proposes? It will exaggerate the difference between the two sides on some occasions, giving people the feeling that they have been unfairly treated; on others it will make it harder for opponents of rash and careless players to reap the reward of their more thoughtful play. Sometimes there will be little or no difference as against the present rule. My own feeling is that the number of free turns ought not to be arbitrary, but should be related to the state of the game.

What are the alternatives to the present scheme of a limited number of free turns? We could set an arbitrary number as set out above, or we could allow the squopping side an unlimited number of free turns, or compel it to free immediately. I have discussed the first possibility; the second, I am sure, would not command assent, for a side with a clear advantage could go on playing token shots until the end of the game; the third would not reward superior play. I cannot see that any change would improve the present rule.

Matt's rule question and its solution raise an interesting point. For the purposes of Rule 27.1, the state of the game is sampled at the end of a turn. This is inconsistent with other rules. In an article on page 6 of *Newswink* 14 (February 1982), Rick Tucker wrote 'I suggest that a shot is the increment of play in the game, and the state of the game is sampled when each shot is completed (all winks at rest)'. Suppose, for example, that Blue pots a blue and in the same shot sends another blue off. He loses his next shot, which would be the one gained by potting the blue. He cannot go on potting blues, perhaps including the one he sent off, and then lose his next turn, which of course would not exist if succeeded in potting out. Similarly, suppose Blue has a wink on the last yellow. He attempts to pot blue, but pots both the blue and the yellow. He cannot now pot out with blue at this turn and claim that he has tied for first place with yellow. Yellow will have won as a result of his first shot, and furthermore, all squops will have been manually desquopped. Do we accept the inconsistency I have pointed out, or try to modify the rules? At this stage I leave it to others to comment.

National Teams of (three to) Four

28th February–1st March 2009, York

Alan Harper

After our trip for the Wessex trophy last year, York University Tiddlywinks Society (YUTS) kindly organised a second visit to Pivo Cafe bar for the national teams of four. A disappointing turn out led to the decision to have 3 teams of 3 players. Controversial maybe, but definitely practical. After some haggling this led to the creation of a YUTS team (made up of DBW, Peter Rocker and Mark Eyles), a SEPTIC team (initially made up of Stew Sage, Ben Fairbairn and myself), and a team of winking all-stars strangely calling themselves “I got thrashed by my daughter!” (IGTBMD; made up of Alan Dean, Bob Wilkinson and Steve Phillips). The format was such that teams subdivided into a singles player and a doubles team that then proceeded to play all four sets of opposition players, before the teams then reassigned the singles and doubles player, until each team played the 3 possible combinations of their team mates over 12 rounds.

In the first round of matches, DBW, Steve Phillips and myself played singles for our respective teams. In these first 4 rounds DBW played some impressive games, and lost 4–3 to Bob and Steve, and Stew and Ben and followed this up with an excellent win over Steve Phillips 4–3. He was unlucky to lost 6–1 to myself, and with more experience he might well have won given the high quality squopping he demonstrated but this wasn’t backed up by the tactics which could have caused me some serious problems. In terms of my own games I started strongly with three 6–1 victories. Then in round 4 something miraculous happened. The national teams of four suddenly had one team with four players in it! Patrick Driscoll had driven up in the morning from Cambridge to play and joined the SEPTIC team, and therefore partnered me against Peter and Mark, who we mercilessly thrashed 7*–0*. This led, after handicapping to SEPTIC leading with 32½ points, followed closely by IGTBMD with 27 and YUTS with 24.

In the second round of games Ben and Patrick and myself and Stew played for SEPTIC, with Mark and Bob playing singles for their teams. Results generally went as expected up till the end of the day with heavy victories for Alan and Steve and myself and Stew being the most notable, however these two heavyweight teams were left to eagerly await their match for the next morning. After play we had probably the most sociable evening that I have ever known at any winks tournament with all players starting out on a mini pub crawl around York’s hotspots. En route, we also had an enjoyable al-fresco dinner of Cornish pasties standing outside York’s finest pasty shop. The evening eventually ended in an alcoholic blur.

The next morning, Alan, Bob, Steve and myself gathered outside Pivo to be joined by a fast-moving Tournament organiser who brought word of the events that unfolded after most of us had left the last pub. Now to try and recite an epic event in Winking World would do it a gross disservice, and so I suggest those of you who are truly interested about



this curious incident with DBW in the nighttime should ask either himself or his hero/over-zealous accomplice Patrick Driscoll for a proper rendition of this tale. However the reader would do well to mark these words of advice. When in York, if you wish for your modelling-quality cheekbones to stay intact, don't talk to strange men.

Anyway, back to the winks. The overnight worrying had ended and so myself and Stew took on the might of Steve and Alan. The bring-ins led to both sides group pretty much perfectly in opposite places with a few squops and only Alan Dean in control of all his winks. Now Alan is someone I expected to make all these pots, but we also decided that he would easily squop us up if we dived into his heavily fortified position, so we let the cocky wee ETwA chairperson go for it. Luckily, he missed the sixth wink and we squopped it. After an exciting cat and mouse game where Steve hassled extremely well we engineered Stew's six winks free at the end of time. Stew increased the tension by missing the first few but once he got started in rounds he potted well enough to secure us a 5–2 victory. This left SEPTIC leading after the second round of games with 69 points, with IGTBMD and YUTS scrabbling for second place on 50½ and 48½ points respectively.

In the last set of games Stew partnered Patrick Driscoll (who left after the first game) and I paired up with Ben, whilst Alan and Peter played singles for their teams. Notable moments in this series of games for me were against DBW and Mark, who both played brilliantly, and should probably have won, but were cruelly denied by my partner potting brilliantly in the last two rounds and we managed to sneak an undeserved 5½–1½ victory. Going into the twelfth and final rounds SEPTIC had pulled clear and left a tense battle for second between YUTS (64 pts) and IGTBMD (67), clearly demonstrating the handicapping had been effective. Whilst Alan D despatched Stew Sage 6–1, Myself and Ben put paid to the YUTS fightback by completing a highly speculative fifth round pot-out against Peter to take a 7*–0* win. This left the final scores SEPTIC winning with 106¾ pts, IGTBMD in second with 76½ pts and YUTS in third with 68¾ pts. Although the YUTS team did finish last, this team of the least experienced players performed well beyond expectation and with a bit more tactical nous could provide some strong opposition in the next few years.

I think this was an extremely enjoyable winkend for everyone concerned and the venue may not technically-speaking have things like flat floors or light, but it has amazing character in a beautiful city, has beer on tap, and extremely friendly staff making it my favourite place to play winks, so thanks to YUTS for organising this, and to Pivo for making us very full of beer, tea and cake!

[Editor's note: The scores for this tournament appear in the previous edition of Winking World.]

Sandy Winks 1

Saturday 18th April 2009, Sandy

Alan Dean/Andrew Garrard combo

Round	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Pos	Avg / Pos	Total Pts
Alan Dean	6	7*	6	6	3	6	4	6	1 st	23/7 = 3.29 1 st	44
Keith Seaman	3	6	6	2	4	1	5	6		30/7 = 4.29 3 rd	33
Charles Relle	4	6	2	4	6	6	3	1	2 nd	23/5 = 4.60 2 nd	32
Alan Harper	1	6	5	3	4	7*	2	2½	4 th	19/5 = 3.80 4 th	30½
Andrew Garrard	7*	1	1	1	1	7*	5	4½	3 rd	15/5 = 3.00 6 th	27½
Stew Sage	0*	1	5	5	3	0*	3	6		23/7 = 3.29 5 th	23
Steve Phillips	1	1	1	5	6	1	4	1		19/7 = 2.71 7 th	20
James Bruce	6	0*	2	2	1	0*	2	1		14/7 = 2.00 8 th	14

This small gathering of invited players convened at the Dean residence on Saturday 18th April, as a warm up for the forthcoming National Pairs. A knock out singles (suggested by Patrick Driscoll before he decided not to attend in favour of watching tennis in Monaco) was combined with an individual pairs, the places decided on points per game.

The singles games are shown shaded. Although the two competitions were distinct, the table includes a column of total points scored, to explain why Keith has been listed above Charles.

Minor hitches with the travelling arrangements (James missing the bus from Bedford, and Alan D offering to collect him before realising that Barbie was out in the car, and Steve cycling for three hours from the same town, via St Neot's because he didn't think to check a map before setting off) delayed the start a little. In fact we started without Steve because we didn't know where he was. His first round partner, Alan H, decided that Steve would take yellow if he arrived any time before the game ended. He did, just going into rounds, and was presented with a very strong position with several pottable winks but, without any time to recover from his much longer than planned bike ride, he failed to pot, and this helped Alan D and James, who was playing his first ever competitive game, to pull off an unlikely 6–1 win.

The significant result in round one was Charles' 4–3 victory over Keith. Charles remarked later how impressively Keith was playing despite his long absence from the game. This came as no surprise to Alan D, who had played a practice game with Keith before the others arrived, and had to work equally hard to beat him. Andrew, meanwhile, potted out competently and followed in incompetently to leave Stew enjoying the sun in the garden —



a harsh reintroduction to competition for the invalid. After round one the party adjourned for a Cambridge style (long and very beery) lunch at the Kings Arms, where James “do you mind if we call you Bruce” was introduced to Conjectures without apparently grasping the idea that the aim is not to drink. Barbie expressed concern that we’d been so long.

Andrew’s game after lunch (Sage after lunch, mustn’t lose with him) was highly tactical, and left Stew with a dock in round four to leave him potting for the win against Charles and Keith. A failed dock (a “nettle?”) left Stew off the mat, going from hero to zero with no more shots to play. Andrew would like to apologise for collapsing into a chair overcome by hysterical laughter, rather than being supportive of his partner.

The next round saw the singles semi-finals. A combination of stubbing a toe on a chair in the conservatory and a sequence of shots which turned out spectacularly badly left Alan

with the win and Andrew feeling hard done-by; Andrew would like to claim “a Garrard” as a name for subbing under a pile from the side away from the starting point of the wink, having managed to stack three winks on top of each other under one of Alan’s in this way. Alan, meanwhile, was deeply cross with himself for narrowly missing a wink of Charles’ which was on a pile in round five, leaving Charles able to pot off for the win.

Back to doubles matches, Andrew continued his run of ones, this time partnering James, in a game notable for a beer can being knocked off a piano stool half way through. This resulted in much scrambling to save the carpet and the threatened patches of varnish, and meant that the remaining games held in Alan’s back room had a trap damp patch of

carpet for those of us playing in socks to avoid. (This at least let Andrew cool the toe he bruised earlier.) James accounted far better for himself than the scoreline reflects — the loss was far more Andrew’s fault.

Partnering Alan H (defined both by surname and by algorithmically-decided letter coding for the draw — we complained that Alan Dean had carelessly not followed suit) in the following round, Andrew again potted out against Stew — this time taking James down with him and making Andrew feel a bit apologetic.

In the penultimate round — and for most of us the last round of pairs — Andrew partnered Keith against Charles and James. The “pick on Charles” tactics worked well, although the result was in dispute until the final rounds.

Image credit: Andrew Garrard



The last round saw the play-offs for first and third in the singles competition, and the decider for the pairs. Alan H and Andrew had a scrappy match which could have gone either way; Alan appeared to have a slight upper hand going into rounds, but a bounce off the pot freed a doubleton of Andrew's giving him the chance to win. Charles and Alan's match for the title was fraught and lengthy, with bad luck on Charles's side and a home advantage on Alan's. Stew's 6-1 with Keith assured him of fifth place in the pairs competition (although Keith's third was secure by this point), and pushed Steve below Andrew, but Alan "came up with the format" Dean was safe in first place. Hopefully James won't be put off by his bunny bashing, since he accounted well for himself against the assembled years of experience.

Thanks, as ever, go to Alan and Barbie for hosting and for the fine fare provided for supper.



Image credit: Andrew Garrard

Super-sexy winks

Alan Harper

The success of Twenty20 cricket and Rugby 7s has spurred a monstrous movement, whereby other minority sports are now looking to rebrand themselves. These involve short forms of the usual formats of the sports such that they can be packaged into action-packed spectacles that can be self contained within evening time slots to appeal to TV producers to cram into their schedules and to allow sports fans to come and spectate after work. Some of you will have heard about the recent inventions of the super 6's for snooker whereby the 15 red balls are reduced to just 6 per frame, and UK athletics have introduced the "Super 8" series whereby a new event starts every 5 minutes in both men's and women's events as part as a city-based team event. Whether these are successful rebrands or hideous creations that deform the original sports into a mockery of their former selves in a bid to whore itself to reap the lucrative rewards of televised sport only time will tell. In the mean time, I thought ETwA should explore a rebrand of winks such that we can use it to promote winks to a younger, less attentive audience who struggle to hold their attention on anything for more than a few microseconds. Here are the factors I feel are the crucial elements of any sports rebrand:

There must be a gratuitous use of a number in the title.

Therefore I'm going to call my new sport 20/20 winks (those with a mathematical nature might understand why I thought this to be an amusing name for the game).

The sport must be recognisable as a variant of the original incarnation.

The rules of this winks variant will be the same as normal winks in terms of legal shots and scoring however there will be some alteration to the duration of the game and a few of the other rules as specified below.

The games need to be short in duration.

Given games can last up to an hour in extreme case I think we need to introduce some rules to 20/20 winks to reduce this length. Therefore I suggest the game should simply consist of 20 rounds of play in total (i.e. each colour has 20 turns). I'd also like to suggest to prevent slow play ruining this variant of the game, the overall game should take 20 minutes total (hence $20/20 = 20 \text{ rounds}/20 \text{ minutes}$). This time limit would be ensured by giving each team a chess clock with 10 minutes set on it, at the start of the game. If a partnership runs out of time, they forfeit all turns they have yet to play. This should ensure a fast-paced game. A pot-out will win the game as normal, except that the ensuring potting race between the remaining colours must be completed within the normal time limits. If both teams run out of time, places are determined by the current number of potted winks.



The game needs to place an emphasis on the more spectacular or enjoyable shots of the game.

Although the purists amongst us may drool jealously over Larry's Squops, the clever pile shots that Alan D and Patrick B play to win games or the long bristols of Charles, we all secretly know that the newcomer to the sports enjoys nothing more than a good bit of potting. So potting must be incentivized here (note the deliberate use of marketing gobbledegook). I believe this is achieved by the round limits imposed above as the small number of rounds will make early potting of winks an attractive strategy and squopping only needed to prevent pot outs. However good squopping could still win matches and I would imagine a team strategy of pot-squop would be a popular way to play (but who knows?) Given the limited nature of piles and duration, squopping with a view to a pot-off, pot-offs, lunging and knock-off shots may also be more important in these games. Therefore the skills sets will be similar to the normal game but probably emphasised differently between the full version and this shortened variant.

There are no such things as draws.

TV loves winners, but equally loves losers. Therefore we can't have a game whereby a game of 20/20 winks has neither. Thereby in the event of a $3\frac{1}{2}$ – $3\frac{1}{2}$ tie, there will be a sudden-death pot off with a winks placed 3 inches from the cup, and one player from each team will pot followed by a member of the opposing partnership. Players from the same team must take alternating pots. Potting will continue until one player from one partnership pots in the same round of potting as player from the opposing partnership misses. This partnership will therefore be awarded a 4!-3! victory.

Teams and players need to be branded by possessing silly nicknames.

To increase the appeal of teams to a younger audience and also to increase the chances of merchandising, I think the introduction of nicknames for partnerships would be helpful. For instance the "Axis of Evil" has been the adopted team name for myself and Patrick Driscoll and I'd like to also suggest "The Babarbarians" for Patrick B and Dan!

And there you have it. Winking for the next generation! I hope to persuade CUTwC to trial this variant at a future meeting or possibly a long vac invitational tournament. If I succeed in this trial I will ensure I communicate the success/failure of this experiment to this journal. Also as this is a basic first-fling at a set of rules, I'd welcome any addition or modifications to the basic rules I set forth here.

ETwA National Pairs

25th–26th April 2009, Selwyn Diamond

Dannish Babar

In April the All-England Tiddlywinks Pairs Championship was played under the garish artificial lighting of the Selwyn college diamond room. Having never played in a major tournament before I was lucky enough to bag myself Patrick Barrie for a partner, with his remarkable ability to make a relative novice feel useful and confident without feeling in any way patronised. I therefore approached the tournament expecting an enjoyable weekend, albeit one marred by the demoralisation that results from being outplayed by a series of far superior opponents.

As it transpired the tournament was very well balanced, with no obvious bunnies to bash or bunny-bashers to do the bashing. There were, however, definite favourites, particularly the ever-potent combination of Alan Dean and Charles Relle (both previous winners of the tournament) and the self-styled “Axis of Evil” partnership of Alan Harper and Patrick Driscoll. The dynamics of serious tournament tiddlywinks were fascinating to me as a newcomer, with the tension of extended competitive play revealing in people previously unseen aspects of character and temperament. The differing ways in which various partnerships function would make for a hefty sociological survey and, while I do not remember the exact events of all the matches I played (I find ‘winks matches leave me with more an impressionistic blur than an exact recollection, and moreover find detailed descriptions of games tedious both to write and read) it was the way in which each pair approached their games that left the biggest impression on me. It was interesting, for example, to see Keith Seamen’s quiet and restrained demeanour attempting to subtly guide the impulsive and aggressive playing style of Steve Phillips; it was almost joyous to be opponents to the Lockwoods, with the encouragement and coaching that the sagacious Dave directed (in his mellifluous American tones) towards his worryingly competent young son Ben providing instructive hints to anyone who happened to be listening. From the CUTwC dark horses Stew Sage and Phillip Buckham-Bonnett, consciously attempting to restrain their natural aggressiveness, to the time-tested experience of Charles and Alan, to the camaraderie and mutual affection of Sick Boy and Alan, every pair made for excellent and intriguing match and it is this, more than anything else, that made the weekend so pleasant.

By the end of the first day Patrick and I were top of the pile. We had played a series of tightly-fought, attritional squopping games, holding our opponents down in well-guarded piles to secure a series of 6–1 victories. Patrick Barrie’s slow-burning, positional style was a revelation to me, with his counsel always emphasising the gradual building of dominant areas as opposed to aiming for the tempting but short-lived advantages of an immediate squop. I was fortunate enough to find good form, and, apart from losing a match to some remarkable play from Ben Lockwood, the first day went our way.

The second day saw the arrival of a documentary crew composed of a spiky-haired young interviewer, a bemused cameraman and a weary boom operator. Their decision to come on the second day, when 'winks fatigue was hanging heavy in the air along with the inevitable frustrations and pressures of a major international sporting event, turned out to be very lucrative as their camera had the opportunity to record some drama. When asked to act as umpire in a game between the Lockwoods and Alan H. and Patrick D., I leant on the table to get a better look, as is my unfortunate wont. Dave Lockwood suggested that in the future I should avoid doing this for fear of disturbing the winks, noting that such a tendency is common amongst British tiddlywinkers. This comment was interpreted by his opponents as a xenophobic jibe, and resultantly the next time an umpire was called for Sick Boy sardonically asked for an American umpire, before noting that this was not an option. This inevitably led to raised voices and raised tensions that could have sparked a minor diplomatic incident were it not for the quick calming measures taken by some of the more senior and mutually trusted winkers.

Still, the second day saw some good 'winks played, with an excellent if unlikely-sounding double pot from Andrew Garrard and a heroic victory for PBB and Stew over Alan and Charles. Our own second-day game against this latter pair was a tight and close affair that could have ended in victory for our opponents were it not for an almost unbelievably skilful final-round shot by my partner, who managed to manoeuvre a pile in such a way as to turn the scenario to our advantage. This meant that we entered our final game against the Axis of Evil with us needing two points to bag the trophy and our opponents needing a pot-out. Sick Boy started strongly, potting three close winks with quick and quiet confidence, but missed with a slightly longer shot. This meant we were able to hold him down sufficiently that, despite Alan's best attempts, we managed to secure the points we needed. Patrick and I were, therefore, the winners, but such was the quality of the tournament that I feel the real winner was the game of tiddlywinks. Massive respect must go to the ETwA and CUTwC powers that be (whoe'er they be) for organising a tournament that made me feel proud to be a member of Cambridge University, proud to be associated with Selwyn College, and proud to be tiddlywinker. Or at least less ashamed.

	Day 1								Day 2								Points
Dan Babar & Patrick Barrie		4	4	5	1	6	6*	6		3	3	$2\frac{1}{3}$	6	6	6	6	$64\frac{1}{3}$
Patrick Driscoll & Alan Harper	3		4	2	4	7*	6	4	4		4	1	6	6	$5\frac{1}{2}$	6	$62\frac{1}{2}$
Alan Dean & Charles Relle	3	3		5	4	$5\frac{1}{2}$	1	6*	4	3		$5\frac{1}{2}$	4	6*	5	6	61
Steve Phillips & Keith Seaman	2	5	2		$2\frac{1}{2}$	4	6	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$4\frac{2}{3}$	6	$1\frac{1}{2}$		6	1*	4	6	$52\frac{1}{6}$
Ben Lockwood & Dave Lockwood	6	3	3	$4\frac{1}{2}$		3	5	5	1	1	3	1		3	2	6	$46\frac{1}{2}$
Bob Wilkinson (singles)	1	0*	$1\frac{1}{2}$	3	4		3	2	1	1	1*	6*	4		5	4	$36\frac{1}{2}$
Phil Buckham-Bonnett & Stew Sage	1*	1	6	1	2	4		3	1	$1\frac{1}{2}$	2	3	5	2		$2\frac{1}{2}$	35
Richard Ackland & Andrew Garrard	1	3	1*	$5\frac{1}{2}$	2	5	4		1	1	1	1	1	3	$4\frac{1}{2}$		34

The National Pairs 2009

Charles becomes Museum Exhibit

Saturday July 18th 2009, Oxford

Alan Dean, using contributions from Andrew Garrard.

He has been telling us for years that he was too old for the game, and on Saturday July 18th, 2009 Charles Relle finally became a museum exhibit. The Oxford Museum of the History of Science held a day of talks, music, film, trails, workshops and tours on the theme of 'Circle', inspired by the then current exhibition 'Compass and Rule'. Various organisations were invited to contribute as part of this family-friendly event, including ETwA, on basis of the circularity of winks and squidgers. Charles accepted the invitation, and he was supported by Andrew Garrard, Tim Jeffreys, and Alan Dean. Alan accepted the invitation early enough to get a mention along with Charles in the official programme ('Winks and Squidgers: the English Tiddlywinks Association presents tournament-level tiddlywinks with former world and UK champions Alan Dean and Charles Relle')

The programme indicated that we had two slots, from 11:00 to 12:00 and from 14:00 to 16:00, and a table was provided for our use on the upper gallery. However, a second table was produced, and we were allowed to operate throughout the day. It was busy, with graduation day adding to the usual tourist numbers, so both tables were in use for much of the time. Most of the time the experienced players each took on a novice partner, but occasionally there were so many visitors wanting to have a go that some all-novice games were played. The experts did their best to provide help and guidance, although with varying degrees of success, depending on how keen people were to start flicking winks, and the extent of the overlap in linguistic abilities.

Charles had the opportunity to use his fluent French with one mother and daughter. A group of Argentinian children proved to be more of a challenge. Alan should have made more effort to establish the extent of their English skills before attempting to explain the rules of the game to them, but in any case their objective seemed to be to flick as many winks as possible in the shortest possible time. An American parent was looking for ideas to get her children away from computer game, and several people appeared to be intellectually interested in the sport. One lady who seemed particularly keen to learn the game expressed her sadness at living 'so far away', but it turned out that she lives in Maidstone, not far from Charles, and her interest stemmed from the fact that she runs a youth club. Charles agreed to provide them with some training, and phone numbers were exchanged.

Andrew was too busy playing to take many photos. A number of the visitors took some on their mobile phones. Leaflets were handed out, as were copies of Winking Worlds to some keen-looking adults. We had a surprising amount of interest and a surprising lack of abuse but as Andrew pointed out, perhaps once people have climbed to the top of a building in order to view a collection of astrolabes they're more than usually amenable to finding winks exiting.

The four of us adjourned to The Turf for lunch during which Alan unsuccessfully tried to get Charles to agree a date for his defence of the Jubilee. Charles wanted to wait until after his next grandchild was born. Andrew later commented that if he had known that was a valid excuse he would himself have held on to it longer. A few days later Charles emailed to say he was going to give up the title without playing, and Alan was unable to persuade him otherwise.

Alan had to be away by 6pm, as he had arranged to collect his mother, who was visiting a friend in Leighton Buzzard, on the way home. Being a little behind time he dashed across the room to the store where his bag had been kept, where he was told that someone on the gallery tour had just been heard to say ‘is that Alan Dean?’ It turned out to be Hugh Goyder, whom Alan had last seen thirty nine years previously! Hugh was a member of the winks club at Southampton University in the late 1960s. It was quite a coincidental meeting, as Hugh was not aware of the Winks demonstration, and in any case would not have expected anyone he had known to be still involved with the game.



Image credit: Andrew Garrard

Sandy Winks 2

Sunday 9/8/9, Sandy

Andrew Garrard

	Alan Dean		Steve Phillips		Matthew Rose		Rick Tucker		Andrew Garrard	
Round 1	1	cum.	1	cum.	6	cum.	6	cum.	—	cum.
Round 2	6	7	1	2	6	12	1	7	—	0
Round 3	5	12	2	4	2	14	—	7	5	5
Round 4	2*	14	5*	9	—	14	2*	9	5*	10
Round 5	2 ¹ / ₃	16 ¹ / ₃	—	9	2 ¹ / ₃	16 ¹ / ₃	4 ² / ₃	13 ² / ₃	4 ² / ₃	14 ² / ₃
Round 6	—	16 ¹ / ₃	2 ¹ / ₂	11 ¹ / ₂	4 ¹ / ₂	20 ⁵ / ₆	2 ¹ / ₂	16 ¹ / ₆	4 ¹ / ₂	19 ¹ / ₆
Round 7	6*	22 ¹ / ₃	6*	17 ¹ / ₂	1*	21 ⁵ / ₆	—	16 ¹ / ₆	1*	20 ¹ / ₆
Round 8	—	22 ¹ / ₃	2	19 ¹ / ₂	5	26 ⁵ / ₆	5	21 ¹ / ₆	2	22 ¹ / ₆
Round 9	3	25 ¹ / ₃	—	19 ¹ / ₂	4	30 ⁵ / ₆	3	24 ¹ / ₆	4	66 ¹ / ₆
Round 10	5	30 ¹ / ₃	2	21 ¹ / ₂	—	30 ⁵ / ₆	2	26 ¹ / ₆	5	31 ¹ / ₆
Win/Loss		4 – 4		2 – 6		5 – 3		3 – 5		6 – 2

Alan Dean had been feeling winks-deprived (in spite of the recent demonstration in Oxford), and kindly volunteered to let us descend upon his house again for another friendly tournament. “Us”, in this case, consisted of Steve Phillips, Matthew Rose, Rick Tucker and myself.

Despite my deciding to avoid the worst of the M25, my Sunday morning started with a traditional “I may be a bit late” phone call to Alan, which might just have something to do with an evening drinking to celebrate Dr Harper’s impending birthday and — more specifically — to do with a Chicken P(h)a(a)l(l). At least I managed the traditional four hours’ sleep before a winks tournament. Fortunately, Alan had budgeted for a couple of byes which could occupy my first two rounds (also deciding that pairs games with a bye were superior to a singles and a threesome), and I arrived with a few minutes to go in the second game. I gather I missed a “Rick-ochet”, in which Rick had predicted a rebound off the pot which caused some havoc to a nearby pile.

A later-than-usual (for a winks tournament) lunch provided by Barbie gave us time to get five rounds in beforehand, something that may be a record and may reflect on my slow play not influencing two and a pot-out (of the “run for the pot before the competent players squash us” variety) shortening a third. Before food arrived, I was pleased to be able to talk Rick into some very competent hero potting (after making his life hard by potting



Image credit: Rick Tucker

myself rather than making sure of his first place) to turn an apparent loss into first a 4–3 and then — spotting a chance for excitement — a $4\frac{2}{3} - 2\frac{1}{3}$. The lunch was, as ever, both delicious and very filling, and Barbie treats the invaders to her home better than we deserve.

By the time we'd finished stuffing our faces, the sun — which had remained behind the clouds all morning — finally appeared. Since we were playing in Alan's conservatory, this was not an especially good thing from my perspective: whether it was the heat, the fullness of food or some residual curry effects, my standard of play dropped through the floor. This was unfortunate for Matthew, who was the class player of the tournament and who was unlucky enough to partner me for three of the next four games while I was unable

to get a squop within fifty percent of the intended range. In one game we scraped a win with little involvement from me; the other saw Matthew run for the pot unsuccessfully. I hassled with more competence than might have been expected given my shot play ability at the time, but couldn't stop Alan from converting and won the race for last place against Steve.

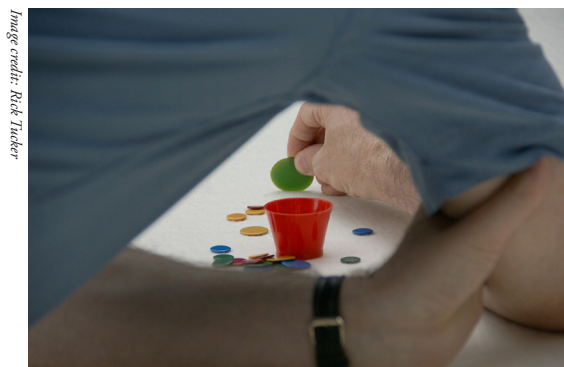


Image credit: Rick Tucker



By this point I'd been trying to compensate for the deterioration in my shot play by ever-more-radical attempts to cool down. This eventually led to my leaving the sink in Alan's bathroom full of water, so that I could dunk my head in it between shots. Surprisingly, this helped a little, at the cost of dripping on the mat. Alan, meanwhile, risked life and limb to drape some shade over the conservatory, for which I was very grateful.

Steve again saw little assistance from me in a 5–2 trouncing from Matthew and Rick, giving the former some revenge over my treatment of him in the previous rounds. The next round — rearranged so that Matthew could leave in time for an earlier train — saw me partnering him again. We were looking an easy loss in the face, but fortunately a pile blow in rounds (the first competent shot of mine for a while) caused enough damage to let Matthew gain first.

The scores going into the final round were very close; Alan was partnering me and, with a $\frac{5}{6}$ point deficit, therefore un-

able to win, but with Matthew preparing to depart, a 7*–0* to Rick would have given him the tournament. A $4\frac{2}{3} - 2\frac{1}{3}$ to Alan and myself would have left me tied with Matthew, and a 6–1 would have given Alan second place. As it happens, some quite intellectual play in rounds and attempts to minimise the number of stressful shots required (with Alan doing most of the hard work) left all Rick's available winks in the pot and left me needing a pot with the last shot of round five; fortunately, I didn't crumble quite as much as usual. A 5–2 gave me the tournament by $\frac{1}{3}$, with my "prize" being the write-up.

Since "it's not the Singles" became a bit of a motto for the tournament, some of the tactics employed were a little on the high-risk side and I'm probably failing to report a number of interesting shots — or at least, shot choices. The games were universally interesting (not that it was always possible to tell that I was paying attention, with my head in the sink) and usually close. Rick performed particularly well for someone whose last use of a squidger involved eighteen winks per side (see WW91).

Of note: the top three places were within a point of each other, everyone had a fractional total score and three of the five total scores involved sixths. The fractions are a little

less exciting when it's clear that they came from only two games, but no doubt the statisticians will enjoy it. The date and location were also very nearly palindromic.

We rounded off the day with a quick bash at Virtua Tennis on Alan's Wii. In spite of the weather, I appeared to be much more capable of playing that than I was of playing successful winks shots, which goes to show that you work up far more of a sweat playing winks than you do playing tennis.

Thanks again to Alan and Barbie, who did the whole thing again six days later (only with more people, one of whom was short), and apologies to Matty — who really should have won the tournament were it not for my inadvertently strategic incompetence.



Image credit: Andrew Garrard



Image credit: Andrew Garrard

Explaining Yourself in a Hurry

or

An ironically long article on knowing when to shut up

Andrew Garrard

Motivations

At a recent publicity event in Oxford I had the chance to watch Alan Dean attempting to explain the game to a selection of interested bystanders. Since I was waiting for him to finish before I could get involved showing people how to play, I had a chance to analyse the way the explanation was going down. What I noticed was that people started to look lost very quickly — evidently there's no way the finer points of the game are going to be understood by someone who hasn't actually played it.

If even I get the impression that an introductory speech has gone on too long, you can be sure that it has. The most awkward moment came when, after several minutes of explanation to a group of girls, it became clear that few of them had more than a basic grasp of English. The game that followed required a fair bit of translation and a lot of miming.

None of this was Alan's fault — I'm not suggesting that I would have been any more intelligible doing the explaining and I've seen every complaint I have with his technique exhibited by others — but it led me to consider how we can be more effective. So here's a discussion about:

- what should be said,
- what shouldn't be said,
- what can be brought up later,
- how to avoid unnecessary confusion,
- how to snare a prospective player, and
- what can go wrong.

I've seen — or been responsible for — every issue listed below, however implausible they sound.

Not another “Introduction to Tiddlywinks”

A lot of introductory guides have been written (the simplified rules on the ETwA web site being a fine example), but most are intended to be read by an interested party who is either trying to understand a game being played or who wants to be able to take up the game themselves. By contrast, when showing the game to someone, much of the information contained in these documents is superfluous: most demonstrations will involve asking people to pick up a squidger, so a lot of information can be revealed only when it becomes necessary — and an expert will be on hand to explain how each situation should be handled. The spiel given before someone has a squidger in hand should give only enough information to intrigue the prospective player — to inform them that there’s actually an interesting game to be played, that it’s worth giving it a go, maybe to hint at hidden depths.

To illustrate the distinction, a written description of winks needs to explain how the game is scored. This is of vital importance to a spectator who has just picked up a leaflet and wants to work out why some expert players have played a complicated shot in rounds; it’s equally useful to someone who needs an overview before attempting to read the rules. To someone about to be shown the game, however, the knowledge that a wink that hasn’t been brought in doesn’t score a tiddly is almost entirely irrelevant.

Audience wrangling

When introducing people to a game, you’ll usually be talking only to a small group — often only enough to make up a game. This is very different from reading a script to a large crowd, or text fixed on a page: instead of giving a prepared speech you can be far more intimate, tailoring what you say to your audience.

Begin with familiarity

Many people played tiddlywinks as children and, for all our pretensions to the contrary, the adult game is clearly derived from the children’s version. Newcomers need some basic premise of the game on which you can build your explanation, and if you start with something familiar then they’ll be reassured that they can understand you.

Watch for reactions

Printed descriptions can’t do this: as someone introducing a game one-on-one, you can see how your listeners react. If you say ‘winks is like the children’s game’ and they look blank, try another comparison. Familiarity is more important than similarity: winks may resemble croquet more than snooker, but CUTwC graduates might be surprised at the number of people who aren’t croquet experts. Pool is a reasonably good basis for comparison (with two sides, tactical positioning and the ability to have another shot after po[cke]tting). If pool either draws blank looks or doesn’t look like it’ll bear fruit, there’s always lawn bowls, curling, chess or draughts, even the positioning of players in team sports (useful if you’re talking to a rugby club, perhaps not if you’re talking to someone who never got to the

stage of learning a “play” in any team sport). Check you’ve got a reaction, then you know the listeners have something on which to build; try not to lose people early, because they won’t speak up if they’re confused.

Involve your audience

People will walk away at the end of a game. Most chances to hook people happen on a day when there are lots of other things competing for their attention. If you’re a quiet nut-job who spends his time flicking winks around, they’ll forget you; if you’re a caricature of a friendly, keen, eccentric winker (fess-up if you’re a lecturer or mad scientist) then they might come back.

Getting the names of the players is a good way to make them feel involved, although remembering the name of the thirtieth victim of the day can get tricky, especially when they come back an hour later.

Use props

You’ll usually be demonstrating while standing next to a table set up for a game if you’re intending to get people playing. Using a “squidger to play winks into the pot” probably won’t make sense to the complete novice; wave your squidger at them, show them a wink, show off the pot — ideally by potting into it. Once the listener knows what the squidger, pot, winks and mat are, everything else is much more likely to make sense. It’s easy to forget that these are abstract concepts if you’re talking to someone who’s facing away from the table. You can slip in the occasional bit of jargon in the interests of humour so long as it’s not too confusing — someone can work out what you mean by “a tempting doubleton” but a “gromp” is simply inviting trouble. Only try to teach people about a Lennon if you’re sure they’re hooked.

Get (or provide) help

Leaning down to demonstrate a shot or a piece of equipment breaks up your pattern of speech; you’re also more likely to miss if you keep swinging between the mat and the audience. If there are spare winkers on hand (often the case for games with one advisor per team) then they may be able to do the demonstrating for you. If your helpers know what you’ll say in advance — even if you’re deviating from script to a question — they can also set up scenarios while you talk.

Wow the audience

People have little interest in a game with no skill (something it’s easy to forget after years of playing Pigs). The motivation to play a game comes from being skilled at it. As (putative) experts we should be able to do things novices can’t. I like to demonstrate the “get another go” rule of potting by running a few winks from nearby: get in three in a row and the concept of a pot-out threat is much clearer than any abstract claim that it can happen. If you’re talking to novices, they don’t know that you’ve positioned the winks at your favourite

potting distance — although it helps if you don't have to think too hard about each pot. For extra wow factor, get one in with a phone card, or from a foot away (if you miss, try to make it look unexpected). You certainly don't have to explain how to pot until the novice wants to try it — no point in spoiling the magic!

Allow for missing

Don't try to demonstrate something and then explain what it is. Even easy shots can be missed, especially if you're awkwardly-positioned around a table for demonstrating, you're rushing, and you're trying to concentrate on talking to people. Taking five goes at doing something and then explaining what you did will mystify the audience; tell them what you're trying to do, then they'll sympathise — and appreciate that some skill is involved — if you miss (or know what to look for, so they can be impressed when you get it).

Don't be side-tracked by red herrings

Questions during the spiel need to be answered, but be brief, and get back on-topic quickly. A lecture on the details of squidger design won't drag anyone into the game as effectively as spending the time playing, although if someone's asking about squidgers you could make a point of showing how different squidgers are appropriate for different shots when those shots arise. (If someone has no interest in squidgers it's probably not worth confusing them.)

Try to reward a question with an interesting deduction, if only for the benefit of others who may be listening (so they don't feel the question wasted time). For example if someone asks about a squop-up, be as brief as possible in explaining that there are some free shots (the rules for how many are probably overkill) before a freeing shot, but you could mention that the squopping colours can improve their position unmolested or that a squop-up is more likely if someone ran for the pot too early. Don't give in to the temptation to explain table points just because someone wants to know — or thinks they want to know — what a “tiddly” is. Try not to discourage interjections with “I'm about to tell you that”.

Don't assume that people are listening

This is especially a problem when you've started to explain the game to one person and a friend turns up part way through. Look out for someone glazing over, or failing to understand — or forgetting — a concept. At a publicity event or a freshers' fair, people have other things on their minds. Don't assume that you can build on everything that you've said before. Again, the more you can boil down the preliminaries the better, but once you have people playing you should restate what you've told them as part of your shot advice.

What needs saying

Give context for the rules and style of play

Don't just state the rules, or they'll seem arbitrary. The biggest culprit in this is the omission of the "if you pot, you get another go" rule. Without that information the need to squop your opponent makes little sense (there's no such thing as a pot-out threat). The aim of winks is to pot out, just like the children's game; the differences come from how you stop your opponent potting and all the effects this has on the rules. It took a long time for double-squop to develop as a strategy. It only takes a second to give a background for rules and shot selection as these come up, and it avoids the appearance that you're inventing complications as you go along. The trick is not to introduce anything unnecessary so that you can avoid lengthy explanations, and don't get ahead of yourself by explaining solutions to problems that the listener can't foresee (like squop-ups).

Explain colour order simply and early

You don't have to explain the squidge-off before you've explained a squop, but knowing that there are two sides in the game and when each colour plays is important. If the listener gets the concept early it helps to abbreviate later explanations. Saying "yellow squopped blue" is much shorter than "the player playing yellow played a squop onto a blue wink".

Squops are important

Don't be afraid to set up some squop shots, but don't be afraid to miss either. Show a wink being captured by a one-inch squop. If you miss, claim you're showing colour order, and have a wink of the other colour to hand to give yourself another chance (plan ahead here). You could take the chance to demonstrate the difference between large and small winks (and how there's no legal difference) by stating how using one makes the squop easier, or you could leave that implicit and show that they're interchangeable by not commenting on it. It's worth drawing attention to the change in squidger position, because novices will need reminding of it. Make it clear that potting often isn't a good idea strategically, because you'll lose a squopping game.

Demonstrate, don't just describe, shots with multiple winks

Novices are easily confused by the "can't play the lower wink" rule. It's hard to explain this without losing your audience in technicalities. It is much better to show a wink being rescued: squop onto the singleton you just took. If you miss, show how missing can be dangerous by bristolling onto it to take a doubleton. This shows off the "playing the lower wink" nicely, while demonstrating another skill that a novice won't have and making the game look more complex; it helps if you have a nice solid bristol rather than one of Charles' sideways variations, and it also helps if you don't miss. You can then have another go at attacking. When you're on the squopped wink, showing a dock or chip-out can explain how the pot-out can be back on again; demonstrating how a wink is freed is much easier than

trying to explain it. The specifics of shot legality can wait until the prospective player is in that situation.

Explain that there is a time limit, but don't elaborate

A prospective player needs to know that there is an end to the game before committing to playing, at least if they're not a captive audience, and the concept that all the winks might not be in the pot after half an hour drums home the significance of squopping and piles. However, explaining the 25-minute, 20-minute or 22 ½-minute durations and then only playing for ten (it's usually best if someone's first game of winks is short, and unless you're actually at a squash it's unlikely that someone will commit to more than ten minutes, maybe only five) is only going to cause confusion. It's usual to lie about how long the game will last by only stating the timed period: a game with a novice that actually takes five minutes including rounds will have nothing happen and have to start in round two. Hopefully by the time rounds come up the player will be absorbed anyway. Besides, after the experience of a game and seeing the clock running down, it'll be easier to explain the point of rounds (to offset time-wasting). However, do give the novice a bit of warning that rounds are going to happen, otherwise they'll walk away the moment the timer goes off.

Don't worry about how or when the game ends until it does

Meanwhile, explain that if all their winks go in a player wins — but avoid expanding on that with “and all squops get unsquopped and everyone races for the second and third”. Say something woolly like “if there's no pot-out, we see who's winning at the end” (you can fudge over “who's winning” unless asked). Avoid explaining 4-2-1 scoring system or point transfer for a pot-out until you actually get near the end of a game. It's enough for a novice to know their short-term goals; typically you'll be advising them on strategy anyway, so tactics that they'll need in twenty minutes time are irrelevant until they get there. When the game end approaches, though, don't forget to explain enough for players to know how they're doing — it'll make your shot advice make sense. Explain early enough and you don't have to take score explicitly in each shot; even novices can count their own winks when not distracted, and repeated wink-counting is very time-wasting.

Explain the squidge-off when you get there

It's a simple enough concept, but introducing it at the wrong time distracts people from understanding the game itself. If the mat is set up waiting with most of the winks (other than the ones with which you're demonstrating) behind the baselines, astute audience members may work out how things begin.

Simplicity trumps accuracy

Teaching has been described as “lies to children” — the details may be fudged to clarify underlying principles. Until the novice has seen a chip-out played it is pointless to explain that a shot consists of “playing the upper surface of a wink with a smooth and continuous motion that can only touch winks vertically under the first wink played and not interfere

with other connected winks”. Similarly, you don’t have to explain the “going off” rule because it will inevitably happen during the game. Avoid explaining about round six — you can probably also get away without explaining rounds one through five, at least until the end of the timed period approaches. Only when the clock expires do you need to try to explain round zero (which is much easier to grasp in practice than theory), or who ends rounds.

Get people playing as soon as possible

Winks is more complex and nuanced than many games but you should get the basics over very quickly, with enough detail to describe the game in a minute or so. Most people won’t hang around for a game that takes ten minutes to explain. If they do, you’ll have to contend with boredom and wandering attention when they actually play. Let new players discover the details for themselves.

How to say it

Keep it simple

Talking faster is not a way to impart more information: if someone has come to learn about tiddlywinks, it's unlikely that they're in a hurry. If they look shifty after thirty seconds, trying to rush more information at them before they walk away won't help: you need to shut up and let them play.

Follow general rules of public speaking

Use the active voice, avoid verbiage like “basically”, “you know”, “the thing is” or even “the thing is, is that”. Keep sentences short but not so terse as to sound officious. Make eye contact. Use gestures. Avoid rhetorical questions (“How do we pot? We pot like this.”). Use concrete examples, not abstracts.

Be clear

It's easy to get tongue-tied after a day of talking to people. Be careful not to resort to jargon; answering “who wins?” with “the one with the most tiddlies at the end of rounds” doesn't help. Bear in mind that you may be somewhere loud and the person to whom you're talking may not find you especially comprehensible: enunciate and look for cues that you're being understood; dumb down or paraphrase if you have to.

Be natural and be prepared

Although I give an example spiel below, you shouldn't read out a script (even if it's your own variant). You need to sound natural and you need to be able to continue smoothly if things divert from plan (long questions, too many missed shots, losing a wink under a cabinet...) — otherwise you're no better than a pamphlet, and less convenient. Know at least the main points of what you're going to say, and know where you're going so you don't get lost, but be flexible. By the end of a day's demonstrating this won't be a problem, but be ready at the start, before you get practised. Have any equipment you need to hand — don't start talking to someone and then spend five minutes looking for your squidgers.

Attitude

Be enthusiastic, but don't be nuts

People respond to your enthusiasm. If you're thinking about getting to the pub, you may not send the right message. If you're going to bubble over with how much you enjoy winks, you need to back it up. If you get a good shot while demonstrating, show it on your face. If you need to concentrate, show it. If you miss, show your disappointment. If you're tired, hide it.

When the game starts, encourage or commiserate and show interest when an unusual position develops. Humour people — a bad miss might not be noteworthy in an established novice, but any comment on a shot can encourage a first-time player. If all else fails, enjoy how incredibly badly wrong it went (while showing how to fix it). People won't want to play winks if they think winkers aren't likeable people.

Get out of the way

When someone is itching to get on the mat, adapt to the opportunity, don't keep lecturing. If someone misses badly or lines up wrongly, tell them only once where they went wrong. If they're not listening to you because they're trying to concentrate on the shot they'll just blame the miss on the noise in their ear. Let them miss again, wait until they're listening, and then explain. Ideally, do this by demonstrating: note that telling a member of the public to "tilt the squidger in the direction of the shot" or "hold the squidger perpendicular to the line connecting the centre of the two winks" is unlikely to make sense to them, especially when they're in primary school. Until players understand the strategic side of the game — probably from losing due to an opponent's superior strategy — just let them enjoy the shot play and keep tactics simple. While someone is playing you probably shouldn't try to tell them anything that you couldn't explain in mime.

Have a thick skin

At many events people will turn up just to poke fun at the people with the odd sport. Show you have a sense of humour, show that you know the game's a bit silly (but that this doesn't stop you from making a real game out of it), and show that you might be a little less of a nerd than they think. (Those of us who are nerds might like to try to hide it for the purposes of demonstrations, however proud the rest of the time. The geek shall inherit the earth...) Having said that, it's probably better not to use the term "winker" if you can avoid it. There's a line between laughing at yourself and providing ammunition.

It's amazing how often someone who comes over to have a laugh at the expense of the winkers can be talked into having a game. Even if it doesn't go anywhere, they'll drag friends over, or people who want to know what's going on. A popular winks mat is a bigger draw than an empty one, no matter who occupies it.

Getting your hackles up does nobody any good. Most winkers are intelligent enough to hold their own in a jovial slanging match against the majority of the population, if they keep their cool. The only exception is when you're being heckled by someone too inebriated to partake in decent banter (or who takes genuine offence at being upstaged), in which case humouring them until they can be steered away from the table is the only option.

Be prepared for people to walk away after the explanation, before playing; not everyone is interested enough to take part, but they may come back.

Don't neglect people

If you're explaining the game and some people are lurking in the background, speak up a bit. If someone else is giving the spiel or there's a game going on and someone is lurking looking lost, go and say hello. Many people won't volunteer themselves unless dragged in; many more will only get interested in the game after they've had an explanation of the one they're watching given to them (in simple terms). Don't scare people away, though — some people will only play after lurking and watching another game to see how badly a novice might do, especially if they have poor English and an explanation hasn't sunk in.

Don't heckle

Keep an eye out for someone being hopelessly confused by someone else's explanation, but don't dive in unless the winker who's doing the talking is struggling for a way to paraphrase. Two people talking at once are hard to listen to, even if one of them is making sense. Certainly don't pull someone up on illegal (or incompetent) shots when they're trying to demonstrate to a novice — it's well known that if anything can go wrong, it'll go wrong during a demonstration. You can try to help, but double-teaming an explanation can be intimidating. Better to keep quiet and save your clearer explanation for during the game, when there's a natural change to bring it back up. A spare pair of eyes can be useful, though: if the talker is concentrating on demonstrating a shot, they may miss their audience glossing over, so some subtle feedback can be useful. Bear in mind that some people look naturally confused, even when they're not.

An example

Given the aims I've stated, here's an attempt to convey the main points of winks. It's not a script; no doubt others will disagree with what I find important, the details will need to be tailored to the audience, and just parroting the same phrases time after time will drive the speaker nuts. In writing, I can edit; in person I can't be as concise, and it's even more important to sound natural than to be brief. Still, the following may help.

Ingredients

You will need a pot with five or six blue winks nearby. Three or four should be at your favourite potting distance, preferably one of the others should be large. A green and a yellow should be about an inch from one of the blues (easy squopping range, but not so close as to look unmissable), preferably with a few others threatening. Another blue and a red should be about 2–3 inches away, ready to perform a rescue. Spend a little time getting used to playing the shots you'll need on the mat.

The Spiel

"The adult game¹ of tiddlywinks is based on the version you might have played as a child². The aim is still³ to take turns⁴ using your squidger⁵ to flick your winks⁶ into the pot⁷. When you get one in, you get another go, so expert players⁸ will be able to pot⁹ all six¹⁰ of their winks with one turn,

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- 1) Make the distinction that this is the adult game, and that there's more to it than the children's version.
 - 2) Look for recognition. Use another example if there is none. Use "before" instead of "as a child" if you're talking to someone under the age of twelve (teenagers will like you not to consider them to be a child any more).
 - 3) "Still" only if they knew what the children's game was, obviously.
 - 4) This implies that players take turns to play.
 - 5) *Stage directions*: hold up squidger.
 - 6) *Stage directions*: point at blue winks, including winks of both sizes to indicate that you're talking about both. There's probably no need to elaborate on the distinction between "winks" and "tiddlywinks". Note that it's worth pointing at any winks whose colour you name: blue and green can be infamously hard to distinguish in bad light, especially if the viewer doesn't know that both exist, and some prospective players (like some famous winkers) may be colour blind.
 - 7) *Stage directions*: indicate the pot (in case you're about to miss), then pot a blue wink (*sound effects*: *plink, ooh*). I'll correct the impression that the "aim" of the game is the way most games end up later on. For now, we need the listener to have a simple basis on which we can build.
 - 8) This implies that there is such a thing as an expert player. It does not necessarily imply that you are one...
 - 9) This introduces "pot" as a verb.
 - 10) This makes it clear that each player has six winks — again including both large and small — and implies that all the winks of one colour belong to a single player.



given the chance¹¹ — and if they all go in, that would win the game. To stop blue¹² potting, green — who always plays after blue¹³ — can cover a blue wink with one of his own¹⁴, which we call squopping¹⁵. A squopped wink can't be played, so red, who partners blue¹⁶, might try to rescue it¹⁷. When it's red's¹⁸ next go, he can then free the blue¹⁹ so long as his squidger touches the top wink first²⁰. It's often less important to pot than to build up and control piles of your opponents' winks and for your side²¹ to dominate

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- 11) This implies that there's a way to avoid them having the chance. Stage directions: pot another couple of blues to show the idea and prove that the first one wasn't a fluke. We've not discussed colours explicitly yet, so make sure it's blues that you're potting. Look for wry grins from the audience when you pot competently. Brush off any misses as rare and inconsequential. If you miss the fourth, that's a good explanation for the impending demonstration of squopping. Don't try to pot any winks that you're about to try to squop, so it may help to miss deliberately.
 - 12) Anthropomorphises a colour, and reinforces the idea that each player has a colour without having to say it explicitly.
 - 13) A simple introduction to colour order (there is one), and suggests that different colours are on different sides.
 - 14) *Stage directions*: squop the blue that you helpfully left next to a green. If you miss, get it with yellow instead. State what you're trying to do before you try to do it, because people will be confused if you miss (or maybe fail to understand if you get it.) Exaggerate the different squidger position.
 - 15) Expect to have to say "squopping" again when someone asks "what did you call it?" If nobody looks bemused, they probably weren't listening.
 - 16) If you missed the squop with green, instead talk about yellow being a partner of green when taking that squop, and talk about blue rescuing himself instead. Don't confuse matters by playing out of turn, since observant listeners might read something into it. Better to ignore a nearby wink that would logically have got involved instead. You probably don't need to explain that green and yellow are partners once you've said red and blue are (or vice-versa). Leave explaining about singles play until someone asks, or it becomes clear that they've not worked it out for themselves.
 - 17) *Stage directions*: squop onto the singleton. If you get it, your next pile shot will be a chip out; if you miss, you get to demonstrate a Bristol first, then take the pile with blue instead. Ignore the possibility of the spare blue being squopped before it can climb on unless someone brings it up.
 - 18) This assumes that it's red that's on top. Substitute blue if necessary.
 - 19) *Stage directions*: demonstrate some form of freeing shot, whether it's by bristolling off, chipping out, or docking. You've said "when...", so you can skip to the freeing shot rather than playing some fake intermediate shots.
 - 20) This suggests an option other than bristolling off, since the other shots have explicit contact between the squidger and the lower winks. However, it's clear enough, and being able to show the bristol as a tactical choice means that you can get away with it for flare. Under no circumstances elaborate on the need to touch an upper surface, or on exactly how the lower winks may be played.
 - 21) This repeats that a "side" is not the same thing as a colour.

areas of the mat²² strategically: if you go for the pot and miss after you get several winks in, your opponents have more winks left to play than you do, so if you then get squopped you won't have any free winks with which to rescue yourself. There's a time limit to a game²³, so lots of games don't end with all — or any — of the winks potted²⁴ — and the colour with the best position at the end wins²⁵."

Speaking slowly, and with pauses for shot time, this introduction should take about a minute and a half — possibly two minutes if you miss some shots. Since there are some shots for people to watch and provide a change of pace, it should be possible to maintain crowd interest until play starts — even with Twitter-Age attention spans.

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- 22) If you've ended up with (or prearranged) an area for one colour or the other, point it out. It's not worth having all the winks off the baseline just to demonstrate this, or to show an artificial pile, because you'll slow down the start of an actual game, but an "area" of three winks can make sense (especially if they are mixed colours).
- 23) No need to say what the time limit is, or to talk about rounds, until actually playing.
- 24) No point confusing matters with the term "pot out" at this stage.
- 25) "The best position" is detailed enough at this stage, unless someone really wants to know. Even then, keep the scoring to a single sentence and don't go into the placings. You can explain when it affects the strategy, in rounds. This phrasing does suggest that the colours are independent when it comes to scoring, in spite of the previous talk of teams.

The Game

Supervising a player's first game is somewhat beyond the remit of this article, but here are some guidelines.

Starting Play

Position people around the mat and start them playing with a squidge-off. Discuss the time available and only then make colour order explicit, even if it should have been clear from your introduction.

Bring-ins

It's unfair and discouraging to make novices miss shots when they go off. Equally, at least for the first few shots, any shots that barely cross the baseline should probably not count. Bring-ins are good first shots: nobody expects to be too accurate, so it's hard to get discouraged even if they go catastrophically wrong — let new players start with at least a couple of bring-ins. However, a conventional start with six winks brought in to an area is dull for novices who don't yet understand the positional game; you may like to let them get involved in squops (pointing out a threat or an opportunity) earlier than normal strategy would suggest.

Potting

Delay any attempts at potting; although it can be good to let people try near the end of the game, when they're itching for it. The wait while you explain about flick and squidger angle will break the rhythm, and a miss before the novice has any feel will just be discouraging. Pots don't get any easier when you miss them narrowly; squops do, so novices are more likely to feel a sense of achievement in a squopping game.

Rounds

Try not to think too hard about strategy when advising players in rounds — novices don't want to see that rounds take twenty minutes! Be ready to explain what happens when rounds start and be prepared for the players who expected to escape when the timer beeps.

End of game

Finally, be ready to explain the score efficiently at the end (or even when explaining the last few shots). After the last turn, people will want to leave or celebrate; now is the time to encourage them to attend a club meeting or contact ETwA, not to spend time counting the winks and detailing who came in which place. Make them leave on a high, not wait while you work out who won.

Some FAQs (and how to answer them briefly)

This abbreviated summary of winks will likely raise more questions than the detailed introductions available elsewhere. However, if you're introducing more than one person to the game (and it's usually better to get multiple novices to play against each other), a long answer will only alienate people. Here are a few ways of fending off such questions, with comments.

Q: What's a tiddly?

A: We use a "tiddly" as part of the scoring — you might see at the end of the game. [This subtly encourages the player to play.]

Q: What are the rules about squidgers?

A: That's "squidgers". They have to be disks about 1–2 inches across and thin. We have different squidgers for different shots, like golf clubs. [This is more than enough information — don't bother demonstrating until you have the chance to lend a specialist squidger to a novice during play. It's unusual for a novice to get the terminology right — be ready for questions that the novice can't phrase properly.]

Q: How long does a match last?

A: About twenty minutes, unless someone gets all their winks in the pot first. But we'll probably play for less to show you the game. [No need to elaborate on the time at this stage.]

Q: How do you decide who wins?

A: Either the colour who gets all six winks in the pot or the colour in the best position when time runs out. [This hides a multitude of sins (what's "best position?", what about rounds?) but also hints at a lot of information — there's a time limit, someone's position can be "best" which suggests there's more to the game than potting, the colours are independent... This is likely to be asked by someone who hasn't had the full explanation yet, so the details will probably just confuse them.]

Q: How does the scoring work?

A: If you haven't won by getting all your winks in the pot, each wink in the pot at the end of the game is worth three points and each wink that isn't squopped is worth one. The match is scored according to the colour which came first, second and third. [This is probably more than detailed enough. Be wary of encouraging players into confusing themselves with strategy. They'll need to know at the end of the game, though. Note that they'll want to leave after the last shot, so explain during rounds, not after. The phrasing of the question suggests that more detail is wanted than just "who wins?"]

Q: What's the difference between large and small winks?

A: About 6mm [hold them up to demonstrate, if only so that everyone knows what you're talking about]. The larger ones are a bit easier to squop with, but also a bigger target for getting squopped; otherwise there's no difference. [Ideally your demonstration should have let people deduce this, but you never know.]

Q: How do you start?

A: In the corners, one corner per colour. You each take turns to send winks towards the pot. [Only explain the squidge-off if explicitly asked, or when the time comes for it to happen, after which the benefit of tempo may quickly become evident.]

Q: How do the colours work?

A: Each player takes one colour; blue and red form a team and so do green and yellow. The colours take turns in alphabetical order. If you have two players, each takes a team; if you have four, each takes a colour. [This question assumes that either someone jumped in while you were explaining, or they weren't paying attention, although it's possible that someone hasn't worked out that the can play both colours in a team on their own. Keep it short unless the questioner still looks confused. Bear in mind that "alphabetical order" might need elaboration for someone without English as a first language (hopefully you've got some winks of each colour in the corners and can gesticulated in a clockwise manner); you may prefer to give the x-rated way of remembering it if you think the "humour" would be appreciated.]

Q: What happens if a wink goes off the mat?

A: Normally you'd miss your next turn, but we won't worry about that for now. [Makes it clear that there is a rule, but we're not playing normal rules. It's not worth explaining about sending someone else off. Assuming the expert is putting winks back on the table, the issue of separation of winks can be glossed over and doesn't need explanation unless someone asks.]

Q: Do many people play?

A: Quite a few. There are national championships in the UK and the USA, World Titles, and national tiddlywinks associations. There are university clubs. [This sounds better than an actual number, and can lead into a mention of ETwA, NATwA or CUTwC as appropriate, along with their respective histories. Otherwise there ought to be a link to one of the web sites on whatever publicity literature is available. If someone doesn't sound impressed, or if they might be scared off by the university connection, don't over-emphasise it.]

And finally

There's no one true "best way" to introduce the game. Most of this article assumes that you might be able to keep hold of your audience for long enough to get them to play a game, as you might expect in a public demonstration. If you're at a freshers' fair, I wouldn't expect the audience to want to listen to this much detail — and it's hard to get them involved in an actual game (although they may like to flick some winks around). You might get across that squops exist, but teams and colour order don't matter if you're not expecting people to play; they can get the full spiel if they ask. All you need to do is interest them enough to make them come back for a fuller treatment.

On the other hand, if you've got a captive audience and you can't get them playing immediately (if there's no table available) then you can afford to ramble on a bit. There's no substitute for seeing what you're talking about though, so pointing out features in an ongoing game or — if you're presenting or doing an after-dinner talk — producing some images (preferably as exaggerated as possible) is better than making someone listen to abstract waffle. The best way to get people playing the game is to get people playing the game.

Don't get too stressed about all this. It's better to enjoy yourself and project your enthusiasm for the game, to be fluent and natural, than to throw yourself off by watching your words. The worst thing you can do is to bamboozle your audience inadvertently, draw attention to the fact that you mis-spoke, and then enter a vicious cycle of nervous incoherence. Some of us aren't natural public speakers — and for some of us, talking to two members of the public still counts as public speaking. Don't try to think about what you're saying as you go along; keep an eye on the audience, and if you're losing them, think back on what you said when you have time to catch your breath. Then you can be more prepared for the next punters that come along. You could even write a sequel to this article.

Sandy Winks 3

Saturday 15th August 2009, Sandy

Andrew Garrard

	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Total	W/L
Andrew Garrard	6b	6*	1*	6a	5*	6	6	36	6/1
Patrick Barrie	6a	1*	5	6a	2*	5 ½	5	30 ½	5/2
Alan Dean	6a	6*	6*	6b	1	1	2	28	4/3
Tim Jeffreys	6b	1*	2	6b	6	1 ½	1	23 ½	3/4
Christine Barrie	1a	5	6*	1b	2*	1 ½	6	22 ½	3/4
Keith Seaman	1b	5	1*	1a	6	5 ½	2	21 ½	3/4
Richard Ackland	1a	2	5	1a	1	6	1	17	2/5
Liz Ackland	1b	2	2	1b	5*	1	5	17	2/5

“a” and “b” denote games, where the score-line is not sufficient to differentiate.

Less than a week after suffering an influx of winkers for a friendly tournament, Alan found himself hosting another, this time with even more attendees.

My tournament started much like the last, with a delayed arrival this time mostly down to the state of the M25. The individual pairs format had been intended to include another player, allowing for my lateness and — more importantly — allowing for CJ to have some company, but as it turned out Tim was even later than I was and was unexpectedly not accompanied by Paula. Game “a” had got under way while waiting for Tim’s arrival, so Tim was hustled into the conservatory — which was blessedly cool this week, due to Alan’s pre-emptive shading efforts and a strategic haircut on my behalf. Guilty that our game would finish long after the other, I made a hopeless attempt to Dave Taylor out of position, but fortunately failed early enough to keep a good selection of winks in play. Tim hassled well, and Liz was asked to do some tricky pots which were — at least at this stage in the day — beyond her (although she showed enough improvement that I made a note not to discount her potting later). Since everyone was playing, Barbie was deputised to CJ duty; fortunately there seemed to be some Wii tennis fun going on.

With the draw rearranged (and some confusion, at least on my part, as to whether the first game counted), Alan and I took on Patrick and Tim, in Alan’s back room. A degree of friskiness on my part and an extremely necessary level of support from Alan left me the chance to run at the pot before Patrick could, and I managed to evade Tim. The early finish gave me time to start snapping for Winking World, being the sole photographer present this time. Christine and Keith seemed jovially unconvinced by their win.

Again in the back room, Keith and I took on Christine and Alan. Alan ran for the pot, but got his last wink squopped, which turned into a squop-up in spite of some good hassling by Christine. Prepared to spend a while turning the game around into a safe win for us, I flinched with the first squop-up turn: an attempted pile separation freed Christine's wink that covered Alan's last, and the ensuing dock left Alan free to pot out. I ran six to follow (muttering about how I shouldn't have tried to squop when I was unsure about my squopping game), and left Christine and Keith to contend for the last point. Still, more time for photographs. Meanwhile, Barbie brought out a buffet feast of ever-increasing proportions, mostly because she kept remembering food that was still in the fridge. I took the chance to try to interest some of the older winking generation in Boom Blox on the Wii, with little success until it became obvious that blowing up fluffy animals was an option. Christine's nose was also a casualty, in this case of CJ's backswing.

After lunch I preemptively apologised to Patrick, recalling how much I'd gone to pieces when partnering Matty after lunch a week before. This time I wasn't hugely more convincing, but we still held Keith and Richard to a safe 6–1, even though Richard was still looking for options well into rounds. Alan and Tim were having similar success against Liz and Christine.

Round five brought one of the oddest winks games I've ever played, with Liz partnering me against team Barrie. I'd brought in four winks reasonably well, with one of Patrick's under (albeit not defensibly), and realised that Patrick was going to start eyeing me with suspicion. Indeed he did, commenting to Christine that I would soon need to be a target.



Image credit: Andrew Garrand

Correctly predicting that he'd wait until I had my fifth wink in before attacking, I decided to take the initiative, and got four winks into the pot before they were under pressure; applying the well-known strategy of running for the pot when you think your opponents will beat you in a squopping game. The fifth wink, sadly, got squopped; I had a chance to free it, but contrived to dock myself off the mat in one direction while leaving the other wink near Christine's corner.

That's where the game got weird: With two attempts to get it, Christine made short work of my penultimate wink, six inches from her baseline, and then captured Liz's attacker as well to make a doubleton. Patrick concentrated on making his own pot-out threat more credible, so I had the chance to try to free my last. Unfortunately, the obvious dock direction left to me would have placed Christine's wink on her baseline — too close to my winks for comfort. I went for a greedy exotic shot which actually resulted in my wink flying down the table and Christine having an easy shot to recapture. Another attempt put me back on the pile, better positioned — but this time docking Christine's wink nearer to the pot than I'd end up.

Patrick was becoming increasingly threatening, and we shortly got to the stage where I had two pottable winks next to the pot, but one of which was next to Christine who would play first, and with Patrick threatening to run six. Liz had the choice either to attack Christine, leaving me free, or to attack Patrick to stop him potting. Colour order favoured the brave, so Liz sat on Christine and left me able to pot two before Patrick got his chance. Patrick's follow-in was clinical, and Christine won the race for third, in spite of some good potting by Liz. A very strange game, and one which should have been well within Patrick's reach had he risked running for the pot earlier — he was caught by some unlucky shot outcomes and some good play by Liz.

Game six was the battle of the Acklands, with Richard and me taking on Liz and Alan. Out in the conservatory again, I rolled off early near Alan's corner and ended up squopped near a baseline for the second time in two games. While we didn't execute it particularly well, the "sit on Alan" strategy eventually restricted his options, although he never had to resort to freeing my wink. Richard potted well in rounds, and I had enough free winks to ensure I'd stay ahead of Alan; Liz had limited chances, but we kept her busy enough not to capitalise on them.

With the final round looming, Alan worked out the running totals. Realising that he was in with a shot of beating me, Alan commented that at least he wasn't partnering me this time; he needed four more points than me to win, with Patrick — whom he was opposing in the final round — only half a point behind. I encouraged them to have a really close match, and tried to encourage Christine, who would be partnering me, that this match mattered (well, relatively).

Our opponents were Tim and Richard, both of whom were playing well enough not to be discounted, but a fraught match in the back room left us looking secure in rounds,

with Christine — who had played well throughout — not needing to play her last shot. Patrick, meanwhile, clearly forgave Liz for the earlier defeat, and steered her to a 5–2 over Alan and Keith, putting Patrick in second place. They were kind enough to inform me I needed only a single point while we still had some time to go, which given that my game was squop-heavy was reassuring news and gave me the opportunity to throw it away in rounds if I'd needed to.

So for the second time in a week, the policy of getting the winner to write up a tournament has resulted in me doing it; I suspect Alan may be victimising me for all the Jubilee write-ups that I made him produce. Alan again came third, with the highest-ranked player — this time Patrick — again coming second. Statisticians may note that Richard, who was potting very well, was the only player not to be involved in a pot-out game. Everyone played pretty competently (even I was doing better than the previous Sunday afternoon, making me feel marginally less unworthy of the win) and the games were universally interesting.

The evening was rounded off with CJ — and then me — demonstrating my Wii Fit (in my case getting a personal best on the football heading game; typical that I do so at someone else's house...) Alan and Barbie apparently plan to acquire their own, after which it will no doubt nag them to get CJ back on the board. Barbie is to be thanked both for again allowing the invasion and for her cooking duties, and for keeping CJ company when we couldn't — even if it did cost us a cake. I'd also like to thank Alan for climbing precariously around the edges of his conservatory to avoid a repeat of my wilting.

It's also good to see the other attendees, all of whom acquitted themselves well, and who I hope we'll see more of at national tournaments in the near future.

Well, that's my winning out of the way for the year. Strangely, I'm not expecting to have to do the write-up for the National Singles.

Cheadle Hulme Invitation

29th–30th August, Cheadle Hulme

Stew Sage

The August Bank Holiday Weekend 2009 saw six intrepid winkers descend upon Paul Moss for his 40th Birthday Invitation Tournament. Two firkins of the Hornbeam Brewery's finest brews were on hand to dull any pain of extracurricular winks. The Bramling Cross was very fine and the Summer IPA exceptionally good.

Suitably fortified by bacon and sausage butties to alleviate any after effects of Friday night's excitement (Abominoes and Nurdle Boondock mainly), the winks began at around 11am. The Handicapped Individual Pairs started with me partnering Sarah Knight against Paul and Dannish Babar, while the top seed Alan Harper took on Nick Inglis and Ed Wynn. Alan opened his account with a 7–0 (6½–½ after handicap) whilst Sarah and I sank slowly to a 1–6 (5½–1½) loss. Since breakfast was still not long away, a second pre-lunch round was played. Alan and I took 5 (4½) playing Nick and Dan while Ed and Paul took 6 (4) off Sarah playing solo.

Lunch lasted about 4 hours as Pigs and other delights were played and some very fine Curried Parsnip Soup was enjoyed. The restart saw myself and Ed take 5 (4¾) off of Nick and Sarah while Alan and Paul took 6 (4) off Dan playing with himself. After tea and freshly made Welsh Cakes, the final round of the day saw Nick and Paul take 5 (3¾) off Ed and Dan, while the Sage-after-lunch effect saw me pot out against Alan and Sarah to take 6 (6). This meant Alan, who had led for the first three rounds, was pushed into third place overnight, overtaken by Paul and then myself.

The evening was whiled away over a variety of games, including a rare appearance of The Great Dalmuti, and the beer was diluted by Paul's excellent Carbonade de Boeuf à la Flamande. It all became a bit much for the CUTwC Secretary, and a nasty surprise for the piano was only narrowly averted.

The resumption on Sunday morning saw Nick take 6 (3¼) off of Dan and Sarah while my unexpected form saw me and Paul take 5 (5¾) from Alan and Ed. The tournament was then temporarily suspended for an inaugural session of Twenty 20 Winks. This was deemed a success and fared better against the weather than the England v. Australia Twenty 20 match just down the road at Old Trafford. It also delayed lunch by a suitable 20 minutes.

Although Paul was worried that two firkins would prove too much and had muttered things about carry-outs, the beer ran out early on the Sunday lunchtime, necessitating a mercy dash to the local Co-Op, which thankfully had suitable bottled supplies.

My poor performance with the Pigs at lunch may have contributed to the 6–1 (5–2) defeat I suffered with Dan against Ed soon afterwards. Meanwhile Alan and Nick secured 6 (4) against Paul and Sarah. This left Paul in the lead with 26 points, 1½ ahead of me as we

broke for tea and flapjacks, and nicely set things up for the final round in which Nick and I were to take on Paul playing solo. I confess to not noticing that Nick had 6 free yellows after about 15 minutes and maybe Paul didn't either. The old master ran 5 before missing a tricky pot off a doubleton, but survived to complete the pot out in the next round. I followed in, eventually, and the 7 (6¾) points were enough to secure a rare tournament win for me. Alan and Dan meanwhile only got 3 (2¼) against Ed and Sarah, which amusingly meant that even without handicap transfer, I would have come equal first with Alan.

The handicaps used were derived from the ratings as recommended on the ETwA web site and seemed to work well, with only 4 points separating all of the players other than myself and Sarah. It is a pity this method is not used in place of the random assignation of handicaps at ETwA tournaments.

A final evening of fun and games, punctuated with some excellent roast pork, concluded the weekend's entertainment. Our thanks to Paul for hosting the event that showcased perfectly his skills as both cellarman and chef. I look forward to his 50th.

Individual Pairs, 7 Players		Partner							Total After Round							Pos'n
	Player	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
A	Alan (6)	6½	4	1¼	4	4½	2¼	1	6½	11	15	16	17¼	21¼	23½	4
B	Nick (6)	4	3¼	½	3¾	6¾	2½	2¼	½	3	5¼	9	12¼	16¼	23	5
C	Ed (4)	1¼	½	5	4	4¾	3¼	4¾	½	5½	10¼	13½	14¾	19¾	24½	3
D	Paul (4)	4	3¾	4	¼	5¾	5½	3	5½	9½	13½	17¼	23	26	26¼	2
E	Stew (3)	4½	6¾	4¾	5¾	6	2	1½	1½	6	10¾	16¾	22½	24½	31¼	1
F	Dan (1)	2¼	2½	3¼	5½	2	3	3¾	5½	8	11	14¼	18	20	22¼	6
G	Sarah (0)	1	2¼	4¾	3	1½	3¾	3	1½	4½	6¾	7¾	11½	14½	19¼	7

Last updated June 2003.

Individual Pairs, 7 Players

Source: Matt Fayers via www.jdwiseman.com

Adjusted Scores

Individual Pairs, 7 Players		Partner							Total After Round							Pos'n
	Player	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
A	Alan (6)	7	6	2	6	5	3	1							30	(1=)
B	Nick (6)	6	6	0	5	7	2	2							28	4
C	Ed (4)	2	0	6	6	5	2	4							25	5
D	Paul (4)	6	5	6	0	5	6	1							29	3
E	Stew (3)	5	7	5	5	6	1	1							30	(1=)
F	Dan (1)	3	2	2	6	1	1	1							15	6
G	Sarah (0)	1	2	4	1	1	1	1							11	7

Last updated June 2003.

Individual Pairs, 7 Players

Source: Matt Fayers via www.jdwiseman.com

Raw Scores

Potting for Novices

or

What To Do When You Can't Squop For Toffee

Andrew Garrard

I find myself in one of those strange times when I'm on the same wavelength as Charles. I am, in fact, so in-tune with the thoughts he expressed in "Going for the pot" (Winking World 91) that I wrote an article on much the same subject while completely forgetting that he'd written his version. I offer this contribution as a complement to his musings.

This isn't an article about how to pot. Almost the first thing that any player is taught is how to tilt the squidger, how much flick to use, what a phonecard is for and how Matt practises by running 24. Charles will talk at great length about how to pot off winks at various angles, and how to pot a selection of winks out of a pile, often even without having been asked; my theory is that he treats these shots as a special case of a Bristol.

No, this is an article about when to pot, and why.

Novices are taught that the pot isn't as important a part of the game as the squop. Codswallop. Squopping developed as a way to stop people from potting out. Squopping games happen, almost universally, either because potting out has ceased to be an option for someone (a wink has landed where the squop is trivial) or because someone afraid of a pot-out has charged into an area. If your opponents don't think you can pot, the urgency in squopping you is much reduced. If your opponents do think you can pot, they'll commit suicide in an attempt to stop you doing so — if you can pot, you're much less likely to need to be good at squopping; as Matt Fayers says, "it's the pot-out threat that matters".

If your opponents are novices and are, themselves, not brilliant at squopping, throwing yourself at the pot has a lot of merit because of the high chance of success. On the other hand, if your opponents are much better at squopping than you are, there's a good argument for potting then, as well: if by rights you'll end up underneath in a squopping game, the longer the game goes on the worse your position is likely to get. The solution is to stop the game at a point where you're ahead, and the only way to do this is to pot out (or, admittedly, to encourage your opponents to pot out on your terms so that you have a chance of following in).

The best players in the world are very good at potting, but still may not actually be all that much better than a novice who's spent long enough practising. On the other hand, it's unlikely that a novice will make much of a dent in a national champion's squopping game, unless someone has tried to be greedy. It's also common to assume that novices can't pot just because they can't squop; this can come in handy as a way to counter the "sit on the experienced player" strategy, since the novice with six free winks has a way to rescue a game

in which the experienced partner is squopped up. A couple of pots from eight inches can be enough to turn a colour that can be safely ignored into one with a viable pot-out threat. Even a convincing miss from this range can be relatively low-risk (at worst, it's a bring-in) and your apparent belief that you'd normally get such a shot can bring about panic even if unmerited.

It's not just novices that can't squop, of course. Everyone has bad days, and I'm probably more variable than most. When one's game falls apart, it often does so one shot at a time; likewise a lack of confidence in squopping may not lead to insecurities about pots. Running for the pot can be more effective for the expert player, since opponents may not be prepared for a high risk strategy. I recently benefitted (see Sandy Winks 2) from a decision to run for the pot before my opponents were prepared for me to commit; although I didn't pot out immediately, it certainly shaped the game.

Even in a squopping game, reliable potting can get you out of trouble. If you have a pot-out threat, your opponents will usually — if they have any sense — try to attack two of your winks in one turn, one per colour. If you go for the pot and miss, at least one of your winks remains threatened. If you reliably go for the pot and get it, both your winks can be made safe. The pot which no-one sees coming is often the most effective: potting off a pile when I couldn't afford to miss recently gained me the third of a point necessary to win a tournament at Alan's. Potting off and taking the pile over with another wink is another good trick. Especially in rounds, it should not be discounted how useful it is to be able to get extra shots through potting. It's embarrassing if greed goes wrong, but this article is about potting, not missing.

Every novice gains from potting practice. If you partner an experienced player to a pot-out, decent potting can make the difference between a 5*-2* and a 7*-0*; knowing that you can do so also makes the expert's game much easier, since otherwise the strategy revolves around giving the novice the best possible chance at the pot. If you lose a pot-out, the ability to pot lets points be salvaged: there's nothing to make an opponent regret potting out against you like a 5*-2*. Well, almost nothing: docking a wink to the edge of the mat to secure the follow-in can result in embarrassment if the potting colour doesn't get there first, as Antony Proietti once showed me in the Nick Ashley. Nobody expects a novice to be solid at squopping, but a novice who can dump a few winks in the pot in rounds when everyone else is tied up on piles can be a valuable weapon.

While everyone would prefer to pot out from a position of six free winks and the opponents squopped up, sometimes one is forced into it. If one colour is badly inconvenienced — several winks squopped, or around the edge of the mat while opponents look threatening — running for the pot with the other colour can save the situation. It's also a valuable distraction: if opponents are rushed into taking a squop in your area they'll be neglecting the colour that's in trouble. If you lose a squop but have all your winks in, or free enough to balance the game, the tide of the game can be turned. Even if you have no intention of actually going for the pot, threatening to do so can provoke a distraction; a history of be-

ing unpredictable helps here, since opponents may be forced to get involved just in case. Sometimes, having your opponents see it coming can be an advantage, especially when it isn't. What's more, the belief that you can get your winks in the pot first can discourage opponents from doing anything too frisky themselves.

Potting is always a high-risk strategy; at least early in the game, if you don't pot out you're quite likely to lose through sheer weight of numbers, although a partner who can keep the opponents busy for long enough can make four or five potted winks a formidable target. However, it's a strategy that most costs the players at the leading edge of the draw. If you expect to lose 1–6, going for the pot and losing 0*–7* is not much worse, but the small chance of even a 5*–2* win can be significant and make the difference between the bottom places at a tournament. In contrast, a lead player will make very sure of the 7*–0* before choosing it over a safe 6–1; while single points can determine tournaments, an accidental 1–6 or 0*–7* loss against someone you should have beaten can do a lot of damage (not least to World Ratings). While experienced players should be more capable of getting a pot out, it is more in the interests of the weaker player to try to do so.

Because the squop is usually the more common shot, many experienced players are much more comfortable squopping than potting — even though the pot is a much larger target than a wink. Winks in the pot can force such opponents into a counter-pot just to get the requisite number of points, and the chance of a miss into your area can be valuable. At worst, it is rarely harmful to take an opponent out of their comfort zone. On the other hand, there's a lot to be said for stretching your boundaries: if your opponents are sure that you won't go for the pot just because you prefer squopping games, they have a strategic advantage over you. Being unpredictable can destroy many a secure position.

The worst thing to be in a winks game is irrelevant. If you can't pot, or if your opponents are convinced that you won't, they can control the strategy of the game.

Get into the habit of high-risk potting. It'll make people worry about you.

(Also, we'll get to the pub quicker.)

2009 NATwA Singles

29th–30th August, USA

Larry Kahn

Poll: What was the most impressive thing about the 2009 singles?

- Larry managing to run his winning streak to eight.
- Brandon averaging 1.5 PPG in his first ever tournament against very tough opposition.
- NATwA announcing the tournament date two months in advance and then actually holding the tournament on that date.

I guarantee the consensus from Britain would be choice C. Unfortunately, despite many attempts to bolster attendance, we only ended up with 8 quality entrants — Larry, Dave, Jon, and Rick as the local representatives; and Bob, Ferd, Matt, and Brandon travelling various distances to get there. Sunshine also made a non-playing appearance as he, Bob and Ferd made a futile attempt to tire Larry out on Friday afternoon with 3 hours of tennis in hot, steamy weather. The doubles tennis among the four of them has sort of become a singles weekend tradition, although normally after the tournament is over. The combo of Bob-Larry vs. Ferd-Sunshine has proven to be a close match up despite this being about the only time Larry actually lifts a racquet.

Play started more or less on time on Saturday, with the schedule being conveniently converted by Matt from a 9 player format to 8 players after the first round when an expected Kurt failed to show. First blood, more or less, was struck by Rick when he was able to get 2½ off of Matt in Round 1. As it turned out, this somewhat foreshadowed Matt's entire weekend, as he never really seemed to get untracked. Brandon's scores of the first round robin (mostly 1's with a few 0's) certainly did not reflect his grasp of the game and by the second round robin his results greatly improved (he had chances to win a couple games but missed pots in round 5). Most of the game scores followed form; the exciting action unfolded in rounds 6 and 7 on Saturday. Larry and Ferd had a very interesting, close game that ended up in a 6–1 win to Larry with tiddly scores of 3–3–2–2 (no potted winks). In Round 6, Larry missed the 4th wink of a very makeable potout against Dave, but did manage to struggle along and get 2. This briefly put Dave into the overall lead. Then in the very next game against Matt, he figured he needed the practice so tried it again. The result was much better this time (at least for Larry) as he ran the 6 and then the other 6 to hang a zero on Matt.

Jon was a known dropout for Sunday, so the second round robin only had 7. Going in, Larry and Dave had a decent lead on the rest of the field (40 and 37, respectively with Ferd at 27½), but with 7 games to go a lot could happen. Larry continued to methodically grind things out but Matt interrupted him to take a 4. Nobody else was managing to make a move, and in fact, his lead gradually increased. Dave battled a severe headache early on

Sunday and Rick got a 5½ (not to say Rick couldn't have beaten Dave anyway) which benefitted Larry greatly. With a few rounds to go, it looked like (barring a Purvis finish) first and second were fairly certain, but there was a huge battle for third through sixth. In fact, going into the final round, Larry had clinched first and Dave second. Oddly, up until that point Larry had averaged exactly 5.5 and in the final game against Dave he got a 5½! Meanwhile, Matt took 6 off of Rick to finish a disappointing third, and Ferd passed Bob for 4th when he was able to get a surprising 6 (Ferd/Bob games always seem to be of the 4–3 type).

Larry Kahn		7*	2	6	6	6	7*	6
Matt Fayers	0*		1	6	1	6	6	4½
Dave Lockwood	5	6		3	4½	7*	5½	6
Bob Henninge	1	1	4		4	6	5	6
Ferd	1	6	2½	3		6	6	3
Brandon Rahhal	1	1	0*	1	1		0*	1
Jon Lockwood	0*	1	1½	2	1	7*		1½
Rick Tucker	1	2½	1	1	4	6	5½	

Larry Kahn		5½	6	6	3	5	6
Dave Lockwood	1½		6	3	1	1½	6
Ferd	1	1		6	5	1½	6
Bob Henninge	1	4	1		4	3½	5
Matt Fayers	4	6	2	3		6	5
Rick Tucker	2	5½	5½	3½	1		4
Brandon Rahhal	1	1	1	2	2	3	

Position		Total	PPG
1	Larry Kahn	71½	5.5
2	Dave Lockwood	56	4.31
3	Matt Fayers	50½	3.88
4	Ferd	48	3.69
5	Bob Henninge	45½	3.5
6	Rick Tucker	42½	3.27
7	Jon Lockwood	14	2
8	Brandon Rahhal	15	1.15

The London Open 2009 — A Tragedy

Saturday 5th September 2009, The Crosse Keys

Patrick Driscoll

Stew Sage, Patrick Barrie, Alan Harper and Patrick Driscoll gathered at Cambridge Station to travel to the Cross Keys, London; Sarah Knight and Ed Wynn arrived just in time to catch the train.

The tournament began with eight pairs (although Richard Ackland was partnering Richard Ackland).

In the first round, Patrick Driscoll and Sarah Knight pinned themselves to the top of the trailerboard, being dominated until the buzzer went by Ed Wynn and Matty Rose.

During the second round, our (anti)-hero(in)es played Alan dean and his friend, James Bruce — a new recruit to the national winking scene — in a tightly-fought squopping game. Sarah and Patrick both fractionally missed critical squops on Alan. The squops were close, so Chris Abrams [sic] umpired, declaring in a deadpan tone that, when umpiring, he liked players to offer him photons — we could not tell whether this was intended sarcastically. The long digression on the umpire is merited as his accurate decisions were critical in shaping the position going into rounds, when Alan and James were in a dominant position.

Throughout three quarters of the third round (the round after lunch) Patrick Driscoll and Sarah Knight were slightly losing to Patrick Barrie and Chris Abram, who were threatening to pot out with Chris's blue. But in the last five minutes of time, Patrick and Sarah turned the game around and threatened to pot out with Patrick's green.

In the fourth round, Patrick and Sarah played Charles Relle and the defending champion, Alan Harper. By the end of this round, Chris Abram had potted 23 consecutive winks, a feat he described as "pretty cool". Patrick and Sarah played less well than Charles and (the other) Alan and so were behind going into rounds.

Next, Patrick and Sarah took on Stew Sage and Dannish Babar. During the course of a close, but low quality match, Bob Wilkinson turned up, claiming to be on holiday in London. As time expired, Patrick had potted five (the sixth was already squopped but unguarded); his partner had failed to rescue it and Dannish had demonstrated an ability to pot. The writing was on the wall for our heroes as the timer beeped.

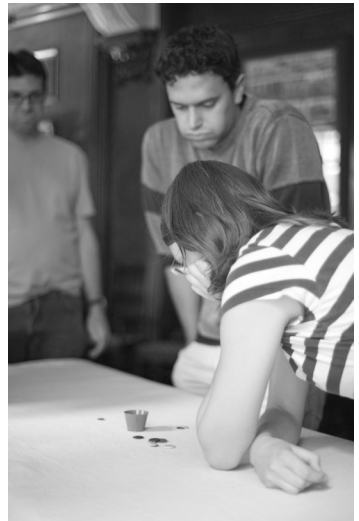


Image credit: Andrew Garrard

In the sixth act, Patrick and Sarah played against Richard Ackland, who was playing singles. Patrick played very badly, but Sarah potted out, taking advantage of a little inexperience in Richard's shot choice. This was a 7*-0* win for Patrick and Sarah. Patrick, Sarah, Alan Harper and Chris Abram played drinking games whilst waiting for the start of the final round. How critical was this? We shall see.

In the final round, Patrick and Sarah took on Andrew Garrard and Steve Phillips. Patrick and Sarah were far more competent, in another low quality affair, than their hapless opponents.

Patrick Driscoll and Alan Harper drank raspberry sambucas. James Bruce declared that his nipples were offset.

In rounds, Patrick and Sarah pitifully succumbed and threw away a winning position to allow Andrew and Steve to win 5-2.

In round one, Dannish converted his pot-out, he was followed in by Patrick; some days later, Stew followed in to secure 6*-1*.

Charles Relle and Alan Harper consolidated their advantages position to close out a 5-2 win.

Patrick Barrie and Chris Abram overcame their disadvantageous position, and converted a pot-out to win 6*-1*.

Alan Dean and James Bruce consolidated their dominant position to close out a 6-1 win.

The winners of this hopeless fiasco were declared: Ed Wynn and Matty Rose triumphed.

Everyone went to the pub — well, almost everyone — and had more beer than was strictly good for them. Thanks to Charles Relle, who bought a lot of beer in honour of his granddaughter, Claudia Rosalind Juliet Othello Sage. We all found the beer a little moreish.

[Ed note: I'd like to thank Patrick for handing in this write-up while we were still tidying the room after the tournament. The commendable efficiency was only slightly spoiled by the notes not having an obvious chronological ordering.]

Matthew Rose & Ed Wynn		6	6*	6	6*	6	6	6	42
Alan Harper & Charles Relle	1		5*	5½	6	6	5	6	34½
Chris Abram & Patrick Barrie	1*	2*		4	4	6*	6*	7*	30
Andrew Garrard & Steve Phillips	1	1½	3		1	5½	6	6	24
James Bruce & Alan Dean	1*	1	3	6		2	6	4	23
Dan Babar & Stew Sage	1	1	1*	1½	5		6*	4	19½
Patrick Driscoll & Sarah Knight	1	2	1*	1	1	1*		7*	14
Richard Ackland (singles)	1	1	0*	1	3	3	0*		9

World Singles 62: Battle of the Matthews

Friday 9th October 2009, Emmanuel College, Cambridge

Patrick Barrie

In game 1, dominant Matthew brought in far better than submissive Matthew, and the game ended up being played in his area. The result was a squop-up at the end of the timed period, and a 6–1 game score.

In game 2, dominant Matthew brought in his yellows well, and through most of the game kept open some threat of getting all six free in pottable positions. In rounds, he finally started potting them to guarantee first place. However, once recessive Matthew subbed under, rather than squopped onto, a yellow in round 4, dominant Matthew was able to pot off two singletons in round 5 to achieve a pot-out.

In game 3, dominant Matthew threw away several yellow winks at the start, but gradually fought back, and rescued a key doubleton near the end of the timed period. The game was very close in rounds. While dominant Matthew missed an easy squop in round 4 to win the game, passive Matthew missed a straightforward pot for first place in round 5 and (worse) landed where his enemy could easily capture him. Tiddlies were 9-8-8-7, and the game score was 5½-1½.

Game 4 had a similar pattern to game 3. Dominant Matthew got ahead initially, and gained an effective tripleton. However, acquiescent Matthew again fought back, rescuing the key pile just before rounds. Rounds were close, but acquiescent Matthew managed to squeeze an extra red free from a pile in round 4, and potted it in round 5 to gain first place and a 4–3 win.

In game 5 both players missed several shots onto piles. At the start of rounds, subservient Matthew was getting short of winks, so tried an awkward pile break. It didn't break up well for him, giving his opponent what looked a certain 4–3 win. However, dominant Matthew got an excellent pot off a singleton ending round 5 to give a tiddly count of 7,5,5,5 and a 5–2 win.

Game 6 was a scrappy affair, with docile Matthew making more shots than his dominant opponent. A series of tenuous squops gradually became a significant pile and a squop-up in rounds.

While several of the games were very close, I think Matthew played well enough and badly enough to beat and lose to Matthew by virtue of being slightly more and slightly less consistent.

Matthew Fayers	6	1*	5½	4	5	6	27½
Matthew Rose	1	6*	1½	3	2	1	14½

Bunnies, please

Matt Fayers

We've thought a lot in recent years about the format for the ETwA Singles, and we've tried some experiments with changes in format. In the 2008 Singles, even though we had the novelty of the Biden format in qualifying, we returned to the tried-and-tested twelve-player Palin for the final. And from my point of view, it worked very well. Generally when thinking about what format to use, we tend to think about how long various formats will take, and (in a tournament like the Singles, where we have qualifying) whether there will be enough non-qualifiers to make a reasonable plate competition.

But there's another aspect which we've largely ignored, which is how different players are suited to different formats. I've always felt that my strength in tiddlywinks tournaments has been in rabbit-bashing — I very rarely slip up against a weaker opponent — while I barely hold my own against the top players. This was put into sharp focus in the 2008 Singles final, where I won the tournament despite losing to three of the top seeds. I won by beating the bunnies: I was the only player to beat all of the bottom six finalists, and in fact I beat them all 6–1. Obviously this doesn't have encouraging implications for my performance in world championship matches (at the time of writing I haven't yet played a World Singles match, but my World Pairs record is less than stellar). But perhaps something to think about when deciding tournament formats is not just how long the final will take to complete, but how much important we want to make beating lower seeds rather than top seeds.

To illustrate my point, here's the final finishing order from the 2008 Singles final, together with what it would have been if we'd had a ten-, eight-, six- or four-player Palin final; these tables were obtained by deleting the scores of those players who wouldn't have qualified in each case. Of course, this assumes that we would have obtained the same game scores even if the format had been different. In an exciting turn of events, I had to use the new official ETwA tie-break policy to decide who would have qualified for an eight-player final (Andrew beat Charles by having a better record against qualifiers — they had the same number of points and the same number of wins in qualifying).

Fayers	53½	Rose	43	Rose	32	Rose	21	Barrie	13
Barrie	51½	Fayers	41½	Fayers	29½	Barrie	20½	Dean	12
Rose	50	Barrie	39½	Barrie	29½	Fayers	17½	Kahn	9½
Mapley	48½	Mapley	38½	Mapley	26½	Dean	17	Fayers	7½
Dean	44	Kahn	32½	Kahn	25½	Mapley	16½		
Kahn	43½	Dean	32	Dean	23	Kahn	12½		
Harper	41	Harper	32	Harper	21				
Relle	39	Relle	29	Garrard	9				
Moss	32	Garrard	19						
Garrard	30½	Phillips	8						
Haslegrave	19½								
Phillips	9								

The 2008 Singles Final results, with different numbers of qualifiers

The National Singles

Saturday 10th October, Selwyn Diamond

Patrick Driscoll

The death of tiddlywinks
Came as no surprise
Why did they bother?

Jonathan Mapley
Made us move the date
To mid-October

The death of tiddlywinks
In Selwyn diamond
Why did they bother?

Stewart and Alan
At a conference in France
Excluded from the game

The death of tiddlywinks
Only eight players
Why did they bother?

Final on Saturday
Everyone who came
Made it to the last round

The death of tiddlywinks
Happened this weekend
Nobody bothered

The death of tiddlywinks
Champion at the last
Was Patrick Barrie



Image credit: Christine Barrie

Patrick Barrie		6	5	6	7*	6	6	7*	43
Steve Phillips	1		6	1	2	5*	6	6	27
Matthew Rose	2	1		6	4	1½	6	6	26½
Matt Fayers	1	6	1		6	3	3	6	26
Patrick Driscoll	0*	5	3	1		6	5	5½	25½
Alan Dean	1	2*	5½	4	1		5*	7*	25½
Charles Relle	1	1	1	4	2	2*		6	17
Richard Ackland	0*	1	1	1	1½	0*	1		5½

National Singles 2009

Player	Initial Handicap	Final Handicap	Games Played	Real P.P.G.	Adjusted P.P.G.
David Bradley-Williams	4	4½	1	6	5¼
Stew Sage	4½	5½	5	4 ³ / ₅	4½
Matt Fayers	7	7½	5	4 ² / ₅	4 ² / ₅
Charles Relle	5½	6½	6	4 ¹ / ₃	4 ¹ / ₃
Alan Dean	7	7	6	4 ¹ / ₃	3 ⁹ / ₁₆
Christine Barrie	3	3½	4	3	3 ¹³ / ₃₂
June Welch	0	0	3	1 ² / ₃	3 ¹ / ₃
Dan Babar	3½	3	5	3 ¹ / ₅	3 ³ / ₁₀
Steve Phillips	6	5½	6	3 ¹ / ₆	3 ⁵ / ₂₄
Steve Welch	3	2½	3	3	2 ¹¹ / ₁₂
Christian Gowers	0	-½	2	2 ¹ / ₂	2 ⁷ / ₈
Alan Harper	6½	5½	5	2 ³ / ₅	2 ³ / ₂₀
Patrick Driscoll	5½	5	2	2	2 ¹ / ₈
Phillip Buckham-Bonnett	2	1½	1	1	1 ⁷ / ₈

National Singles Plate 2009

(Sunday 11th October, Selwyn Diamond)

The Golden Squidger

Saturday 24th October 2009, Epping

Matt Fayers

Alan Dean & Matt Fayers	6	4½	6	1	3	20½
Alan Harper & Charles Relle	1	2½	1	6	4	14½

The two Alans came by car, and chose to use a sat nav system rather than Matt's directions. This led to them somewhat strangely joining the M25. Having done this, Alan got on the wrong side of some roadworks, which meant that he couldn't leave the motorway at the right place, so he had to drive an additional 14 miles.

Meanwhile, Charles had come by public transport, and arrived on time. He and Matt had a practice game, which Matt won 5–2. The Alans arrived at 11:45, allowing time for one game before lunch. In this game, Alan D threatened a pot-out, and Alan H responded to the threat by trying a tough pot-out of his own. But he missed the first wink in enemy territory, and Alan D and Matt were able to take control of the position and win 6–1.

Lunch was taken in the George and Dragon on Epping High Street. Most of the beer drunk was London Pride, though Charles preferred Broadside, and Alan D switched to cappuccino. Matt had gammon steak with fried eggs, Alan D steak and ale pie, and the others aubergine moussaka. The general consensus was that lunch was good.

Back at Matt's flat, game 2 was a more close affair. A large pile developed, and towards the end the two Alans were fighting for first place. Alan D's superior potting allowed him to clinch the win. In game 3 Alan H and Charles started well, but it soon fell apart. Late on, Alan H resorted to potting in the hope of first or second place, but Alan D and Matt were able to exert enough control to get them six points.

Tea was taken, along with McVitie's cake (these were two for the price of one at Tesco). All opted for the ginger cake, leaving the golden syrup cake for Matt's parents to eat the following day.

Back in the match, Alan and Charles now needed at least one 7, and Matt and Alan played to avoid this. This resulted in an ugly game 4, which got rather worse when Matt played very poorly in mid-game. Alan and Charles were able to get an easy 6, but were never close to potting out. In game 5, both Alan and Charles brought in well, and Alan and Matt had to work to get them involved. Piles developed, but Charles's greens were never very far from the surface. He eventually potted five of his winks, hoping that his partner could dig the last one out, but Alan and Matt had enough protection.

On leaving, Alan D put on Matt's shoes.

New player profile — Pat Sobason

Phillip Buckham-Bonnett

This year CUTwC has seen a much larger intake of novices than in recent years and several them appear to have a lot of potential. Pat Sobason is one, and he had the bad fortune to be born with a natural love of everything winks related. He was very quick to grasp the basics through his innate fascination with small flying objects. Pat is



Image credit: Phillip Buckham-Bonnett

without doubt the nicest looking winker, and has most impressive whiskers (even better than Dr Nick's) but alas, his not knowing when to stop bidding means that lunchtimes predictably end with one outcome (he learned from the best!) Pat also has the undesirable tendency to leave hair on the mat after a game and last time I played against him, he rose to the occasion by dragging the mat off the table! I shall take this opportunity to point out to him that he is in danger of winning the money box for never taking funds with him on pub crawls.

Tactically, Pat still has a lot to learn and his tactics seem very odd to most people which is not surprising as he is not a person, Pat is a cat. He can easily be identified as brother to the deceased Jess, son of the disturbed Soba and possibly her thick brother Tibba, grandson of the store cat Chimomi Tea Factory and whichever male she happened to be with at that time, descended in a direct line (possibly) from the cats of the Pharaohs. He is also identifiable as the only cat that plays winks. Matches against him can be arranged (if you email him it won't take nine lives to read the response) but he has an unfortunate tendency to (in true Keevash style) cheat, and try to eat the winks, so you probably won't be able to beat him.

(Please note that no winks were hurt in this experiment.)

The Jubilee Trophy

Sunday 22nd November 2009

Alan Dean

Alan Dean	6	6	5	1	18
Steve Phillips	1	1	2	6	10

The Jubilee Trophy title became vacant in the Summer, with Charles Relle being unable to find time in his busy retirement schedule to play any further defences. At this point Alan Dean had the only recorded challenge so when Andrew Garrard joined the list it fell to these two to get things moving again. However Andrew was also very busy so he agreed that Alan could play the next challenger first. This was Steve Phillips, but Steve only had the use of the car on the weekends when he needed to look after the children, so Alan offered to play at his place.

The match was played in the kitchen/dining area. Limited space meant that there was not enough room to place chairs at the corners so the bringing-in was done from a standing position, an equal handicap as both players prefer to sit. The board placed on the table had a distinct ridge running along the entire length, about nine inches away from the pot, which also provided some added interest. On a number of occasions the mat was carefully moved sideways to avoid the need to play from the ridge.

Steve, clearly still fired up from his successes in the Singles, started extremely well, and Alan found himself in deep trouble after about ten minutes. He was forced to fight in Steve's area of influence, but managed to buckle down and slowly turn the game around. Once equality had been restored Alan quickly forged ahead, and the final position was a clear 6-1 near squop-up, with nothing potted.

Alan also won the second game 6-1. He led throughout until the position became unclear in round four, when Steve made an excellent squop onto three of Alan's winks on the edge of a large pile close to the pot. If Steve was able to smash this pile in round five, with his other colour ending, the game would become a potting race. Alan's only way to prevent this was to use a large wink which completely covered an enemy small one and was close to, and on the opposite side of, the pot. The over-the-pot bomb shot worked perfectly, freeing all three of his recently captured winks and without damaging anything else in the pile, leaving a simple squop for the 6-1.

By this time Becky, aged 7, and 5-year old Joe were getting restless, and asking to play too, so Alan suggested a game with them. This lasted about 15 minutes until it was sensed they had had enough, when an exciting draw was announced and all shook hands.

Match game three was another squopping game. Alan took control early on, and retained it. He did have a chance to get another 6, by playing a risky pile shot in round five, but decided to sit on the 5–2 he already had.

Although not strictly necessary for the five-game match, which Alan was now winning 17–4, a fourth game was played. In this Steve started well, and Alan lost a few winks of one colour early on, so decided to go for a risky pot-out attempt. He missed the fourth, which was easily squopped. Alan fought hard after this, but Steve just managed to get both his colours ahead in round five, to give him a 6–1, and make the match result a more respectable 18–10.

Instructions seen on a tube of Asda's Great Stuff Sun Cream

Bob Wilkinson

“Squidge into hands and apply liberally to face and body”.

Now if, like me, you find that squidging a wink into the pot can present its own occasional difficulties, you should try this! I have found best results were obtained using a phonecard-type squidger and a snapping wrist action but be prepared for a somewhat messy operation. I can't help thinking that better advice would have been to squidge the stuff directly onto the face and body, some of which happened anyway whilst attempting to use the hands as intermediates, but who am I to argue with the manufacturers?

On the plus side, however, I noticed a markedly diminished tendency of my squidgers to colour-fade when left out in the sun!

Editorial

Well, I'm back. I hope you enjoyed this issue of Winking World — or, if you skipped to the back, I hope you *will* enjoy it. I won't give away the plot.

I'd like to offer a big hand to Matt for all his hard work on the previous few editions of Winking World, and — as ever — to thank everyone who contributed to this issue.

Winking World survives only through submissions from the Winking community. Since an issue comprised solely of score sheets and the odd match report is very heavy going, I'd like to encourage anyone who feels they have a winks-related rant within them to share it with us. Even extremely short submissions come in handy, if only to fill up pages that would otherwise be mostly empty.

Your ETwA needs you.

Auntie Gertie

Dear Auntie Gertie,

Wasn't Winking World 92 supposed to be out at the National Singles?

I. M. Patient

Dear I,

Shh. I don't think anyone noticed.

Auntie Gertie



