

# newsletter

Australia New Zealand Backgammon Federation

November 2023

## proving a point

In a first for Australian and New Zealand backgammon, the ANZBGF will introduce a points system for live events to encourage broader participation and crown our best tournament player.

The new system will award points depending on the size and stature of the event, with the ANZBGF Championship, Australian Open and New Zealand Open on the highest of three tiers.

The state titles such as the time-honoured NSW and South Australian Opens, along with the Australian Masters and Australian Speed Championship will be on the second tier. The third-tier events will include the Newcastle Open as well as SA's Nick Begakis, Angie Hambour and Spring championships.

Points will be displayed at all live events included and will be updated regularly on the ANZBGF web page.

The system will be launched at the Australian Open on the Gold Coast in November and run through to the end of 2024, after which they will run according to the calendar year.

## the spirit of co-operation

The ANZBGF Championship organisers are joining forces with Simon Woodhead, who puts on the Australian Open each year, to award the winners of each event with automatic free entry to the other event.

ANZBGF president Shane McNally says the concept is a means of bringing the backgammon community together and encouraging cooperation between the country's two major events. He says he would welcome approaches from other Australian and New Zealand tournament organisers with similar initiatives.

Australian Open organiser Simon Woodhead has gone a step further, providing the winner of this year's online Eva Bitel Memorial Tournament with entry to the major event on the Gold Coast – all at his own expense.



## the AGM

The ANZBGF AGM will be held via Zoom on Sunday, December 3. All members are welcome to be involved and are also eligible to nominate for a position on the board.

## everyone is heading to the Coast

The Australian Open is going from strength to strength, with the big event being held at the luxurious Sofitel Hotel at Broadbeach on the Gold Coast on November 24-26.

This year's event, which will require the use of clocks, will feature the Open, Masters and Speed Championship as well as several more auxiliary events to meet demand.

Entry to the Open, which will be a double elimination tournament, is \$100.

Organiser Simon Woodhead reports there has already been strong interest in the event and expects to run a 128-field Open. Buy backs are expected to make up some of those positions.

For further info and to register go to <https://bglog.org/2023-bg-champs.html>



Australian  
BACKGAMMON  
CHAMPIONSHIPS  
2023

# World Team doing us proud

The Australians playing in the 2023 WBIF World Team Championships are showing they're certainly not fazed by the elite quality of the opposition, after beating a Japanese side stacked with Grand Masters to advance to 15th position in a field of 72.

The team comprising Greg Kurrell, Mick Dyett, David McAllister, Martin Pikler and Malcolm Hutson, won 12 of its 25 matches at the mid-way point of the tournament. The event is seen as a great way for Australian and New Zealand players to get experience against the world's best players – and improving their games further. As for the Women's Team and the NZ Team, it's all good experience and there's always next year!

## stalwarts in showdown

In what was widely regarded as a fitting finale, Cindy Belonogoff and Steve Roberts went head-to-head in the final of the Eva Bitel Memorial Tournament in October.

Two of the genuine stalwarts of Australian backgammon – he is a multi-tournament winner and she is a tireless worker who has finished in the money at the Monte Carlo World Championships – met in an online best of 3 final.

Steve took the first match before Cindy bounced back in the second to take the title to a decider.

The final was a long-hard match in which Steve got out to a clear lead and looked the likely winner – but Cindy's determined play allowed her to somehow fight back for a 13-10 victory.

## Hossein dominates overseas tournaments

If there was any doubt about the credentials of Australia's regular number one player Hossein Haydari, he dispelled them by winning four tournaments in a short space of time in Turkey during October. Hossein was overseas visiting family when he saw they were running the inaugural Kusadasi Open at the Ephesia Resort Hotel and couldn't resist entering. While the reigning South Australian Open champion didn't win the main prize, he stormed to victory in four events and came away the owner of a brand-new championship board along with some very handy holiday spending money. In one of the tournaments, Hossein had to defeat a field of 128 players in the DMP single point event.

Hossein said it was a great experience competing against a wide variety of international players in a tournament overseen by world-renowned tournament director Arda Findikoglu.

## mark your diaries for melbourne in winter

Following the great success of the inaugural running of the ANZBGF Championships, the committee is happy to announce that the 2024 event will again be held at the Amora Riverwalk on the Kings Birthday long weekend in June. The committee is still in talks with the hotel in the hope of securing a room for the corresponding BMAB tournament to be held. Stay tuned for further info.



Hossein pictured on the right

# a note from the president

I can't recall a better time to be involved in Australian and New Zealand backgammon.

In the past few years, we've set aside our Trans-Tasman rivalry and joined forces to create the Australia New Zealand Backgammon Federation (ANZBGF), and now we have major tournaments occurring throughout the year – live and online. Recent initiatives have only strengthened that position. The ANZBGF has formulated a new system whereby players earn points for their performances in live tournaments, with the winner crowned best live player across the two nations. It will encourage players to participate in more live play, travel to places the events are being held and just add to the sense of community we're all trying to build.

I'm also proud to see the Australian Open and ANZBGF Championship are paying each other the mutual respect they both deserve by offering the winner free entry to the other's tournament. Congratulations to Simon Woodhead and the ANZBGF committee for brokering this deal. Let's hope NZ can get on board soon and we can work out something that encourages players to cross The Ditch for a holiday and a game of backgammon.

The backgammon scene is very busy right now, with the Australian Open taking place on the Gold Coast from November 24-26. The New Year starts with the SA Open in January before the NZ Open in March and then it's on to a raft of tournaments in the eastern states and NZ. And they all count towards finding our best live player.

Roll well and cube wisely - Shane McNally

## leaderboard

Positions at the top of the ANZBGF leaderboard have never been more strongly contested, with 3 players ranked above 1800 and several more in the high 1700s. SA's Hossein Haydari is continuing his remarkable form of recent years to lead on 1816 (at the time of publication), while David Reitzin and Saeed Nourmohammadi are not far behind. Perennial toplineers Steve Roberts and Simon Ustick are also within striking distance of top spot.

Here's a look at the Top 25 ANZBGF players at the time of publication:

|    |                     |         |
|----|---------------------|---------|
| 1  | Hossein Haydari     | 1,816.7 |
| 2  | David Reitzin       | 1,809.1 |
| 3  | Saeed Nourmohammadi | 1,801.0 |
| 4  | Steve Roberts       | 1,787.8 |
| 5  | Simon Ustick        | 1,787.8 |
| 6  | Martin Pikler       | 1,763.8 |
| 7  | Greg Kurrell        | 1,762.6 |
| 8  | Peter Boylan        | 1,756.4 |
| 9  | David McAllister    | 1,735.7 |
| 10 | Steve Nelson        | 1,727.4 |
| 11 | Mick Dyett          | 1,708.1 |
| 12 | John Parker         | 1,706.7 |
| 13 | Maricar Ustick      | 1,703.4 |
| 14 | Steve Quinn         | 1,699.3 |
| 15 | Joanna Kerinya      | 1,695.5 |
| 16 | Craig Elfenbein     | 1,691.7 |
| 17 | Grant Hoffman       | 1,677.0 |
| 18 | Bill Marczak        | 1,676.9 |
| 19 | Richard Theunissen  | 1,676.9 |
| 20 | Ian Dunstan         | 1,674.6 |
| 21 | Simon Woodhead      | 1,673.4 |
| 22 | Robert Disney       | 1,671.5 |
| 23 | Malcolm Hutson      | 1,669.7 |
| 24 | Joseph Heled        | 1,666.0 |
| 25 | Tom Chrysostomou    | 1,666.0 |

## are you an anzbgf member?

To stay up to date with all things backgammon in Australia and New Zealand, become a member today. This not only helps to keep you in the loop but it goes a long way in supporting our game and acclaimed events.

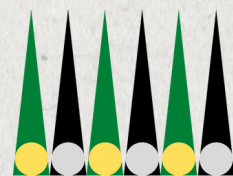
Become an ANZBGF member at <https://anzbgf.org/membership>

### Thank you to our Lifetime Members

Simon Woodhead (QLD)

Rosalind Baker (QLD)

Grant Hoffman (NZ)



AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND  
BACKGAMMON FEDERATION