

## Backgammon: Nerves on Fire



On Saturday, July 12, the Leuven backgammon team travelled to Ghent for their next 4 Cubes encounter, hosted at the beautiful Sandeman venue.

Leuven showed up strong with Toon, Michel, Johan S, Ronny, and Odette.

Ghent fielded Nick, Steven S, Alf, and Antonio.

On paper, Ghent was the clear underdog, with their top-ranked player sitting only at #15 on the national rating list — while Leuven boasted *three* players in the top 5. This had all the markings of a “walk in the park” for Leuven.

But Ghent came with a different mindset — think Mel Gibson in *Braveheart*.

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### Round 1

- Nick loses to Toon.
- Steven S falls to Michel.
- Alf and Antonio, channelling their inner warriors, beat Johan S and Ronny.

Leuven’s captain switches things up and gives Odette a chance to play in round 2, replacing Ronny. Is he overplaying his cards?

**Score: 2 – 2**

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## Round 2

- Nick loses a key point to Odette.
- Steven S and Alf keep Ghent's hopes alive by beating Michel and Toon.
- Antonio goes down to Johan S.

### Score: 4 – 4

The final round will be decisive — unless it ends 6–6, in which case a dramatic double consultation match will settle it all.

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## Round 3

- Alf finds himself in a decisive position: 65% winning chance, cube on 4, ready for bear-off. Ronny is on the bar. The *only* number that could save Ronny is a 3...  
**Lightning strikes.** Alf loses.

**Score: 4 – 5** Leuven pulls ahead.

- Nick recovers and beats Michel.

**Score: 5 – 5**

Two matches remain...

- Antonio is ahead against Toon, 6–4 Crawford. Ghent is close...

**Lightning strikes again.**

**Score: 5 – 6**

Only one match left. Ghent needs a win to push for the double consultation.

No problem — Steven S is in a near-certain winning position in the bear-off: 95% equity.

Only a 6–1 or 6–2 roll could cause trouble.

A 6–2 is rolled. It leaves a blot on the 4-point.

If Johan S rolls a 4 from the bar...

(You can finish the story yourself. I'm feeling a bit sick right now.)

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## The Winner Takes It All

**Final Score: Leuven wins 7 – 5**

Ghent fought valiantly, but Leuven holds firm.

**Next Encounter: Brussels 2 vs. Leuven**

**Deadline: End of September**