Gordon Burgin's Puzzles

May 2026 solutions

The Maypole Dancers Puzzle – it's a May Day tradition!

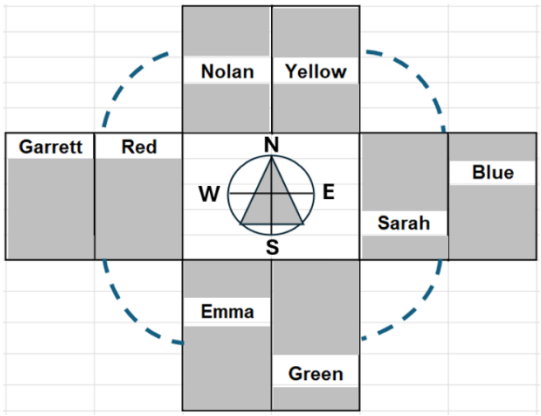
Four dancers – Garrett, Emma, Nolan and Sarah – each hold a ribbon on the Maypole of a different colour (Red, Blue, Yellow and Green). They stand at four different positions around the Maypole (North, South, East and West).

Using the following clues and diagram, determine each dancer's ribbon colour and position on the Maypole. (Note: There is only one unique, fully constrained solution.)

1) The dancer at the South position does not hold the Blue or Yellow ribbons.
2) The dancer at the North position does not hold the Blue ribbon.
3) Sarah is standing East of Garrett.
4) Nolan stands directly opposite the dancer with the Green ribbon.
5) The dancer with the Yellow ribbon is not in the West position.

Solution

- Clue 3 fixes positions: Garrett = West, Sarah = East.
- Clue 5 forbids Yellow in the West → Garrett ≠ Yellow.
- Clue 4 forbids Green in the West (it would force Nolan to East, but Sarah is East) → Garrett ≠ Green.
- So Garrett is Red or Blue.



Case 1: Garrett = Red

- Clue 1: South ≠ Blue/Yellow → South = Green.
- Clue 4: Nolan opposite Green → Nolan = North.
- Clue 2: North ≠ Blue → Nolan = Yellow.
- Remaining colour Blue goes to Sarah at East.
- Emma takes the remaining position (South) with Green.
  → Fully determined and unique.

Case 2: Garrett = Blue

- Multiple valid completions → not unique → rejected.

Final (unique) solution:

- West: Garrett – Red
- South: Emma – Green
- North: Nolan – Yellow
- East: Sarah – Blue

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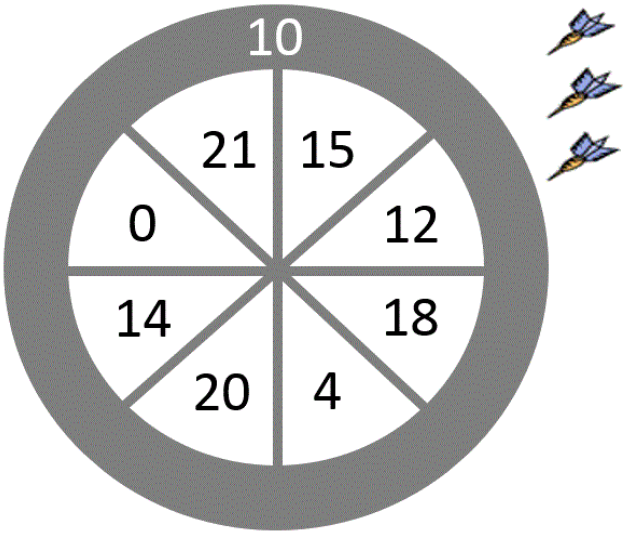
A Dartboard Scoring Puzzle

Using only three darts for each go and the following dartboard, how many different combinations can you find to score the exact sum of 42? Each dart must score a number on the board. Once three numbers have been used, the same three numbers cannot be reused in any other order. (Note: Numbers can be used more than once per go.



Solutions:

1. 0 + 21 + 21 = 42
2. 4 + 18 + 20 = 42
3. 10 + 12 + 10 = 42
4. 10+ 14 + 18 = 42
5. 12 = 12 = 18 = 42

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