1046-52-576 **David G Larman*** (d.larman@math.ucl.ac.uk), Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, England.

*Blocking numbers for $l_p$ balls in three dimensions.* Preliminary report.

(Joint work with Selvinaz Szegin) The blocking number of a convex body $C$ in Euclidean Space is the minimum number of non-overlapping translates of $C$ which touch C and prevent, without overlapping, any other translate from touching $C$. A well known unsolved conjecture is that the blocking number of every convex body in 3 dimensions is at least 6. Here we show that, for $l_p$ balls in 3 dimensions, $p < \infty$, the blocking number is at most 6. (Received September 08, 2008)