

*monte carlo world championship*

## WORLD TITLE TO JÖRGEN GRANSTEDT

by Harald Johanni

**M**aintain the same tournament organization for over 10 years and things should run smoothly. That was the case at the 1999 World Backgammon Championship held at the Monte Carlo Grand Hotel (formerly Loew's) in Monaco 12–18 July. 379 international players participated in the three divisions of play: an increase of 19 players over 1998. Congratulations to Henri Lorenzi, André Rolfo Fontana, Patricia Oliver, James Ballié and coordinators for another job well done.

### Super Jackpot Draws 80

On Wednesday, a big rush for the \$1,000 Super Jackpot produced an awkward field of 80. The organizers correctly divided the players into fields-of-16 which resulted in five winners: Mads Andersen (DK), Gadi Carmeli (ISR), Joe Dempsey (USA), Mika Lidov (USA) and Ed Petrillo (USA).

### Championship Semifinals

On Saturday, the 231 Championship players had been reduced to four semifinalists. Israeli Gadi Carmeli vs. Mario Sacchi of Italy was the televised match. In the other contest, it was Jörgen Granstedt (Sweden) vs. Mario Sequeira (Portugal). Granstedt jumped ahead 7–0 in the 23-point match, but Sequeira, cheered on by his wife Luisa, equalized things at 16-all.

The Swede took the lead again, going ahead 22–19 Crawford. However, as is often the case, a double match-point game decided the outcome of the match and in the end, Granstedt was the more fortunate.

Snowie's statistics of the match agreed with the outcome, rating Granstedt's play (expert level) superior to that of Sequeira (advanced level):

Player: Move errors / Cube errors / Overall error rate

Granstedt: 0.82% / 1.3 / 0.51%

Sequeira: 0.91% / 7.7 / 0.98%



1999 World Backgammon Champion Jörgen Granstedt of Sweden. [Monte Carlo photos by Harald Johanni]

**THE OTHER 23-POINT** semifinal (Carmeli vs. Sacchi) was like Carmeli's matches in previous rounds. The games when Gad, a 43-year-old soccer coach from Israel, doubled prematurely, he won easily; the games that Sacchi doubled, Gad won most of the time via a recube.

Final score: 23–7 for Carmeli who ended the match taking a 4-cube that was a clear pass.

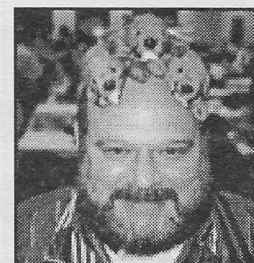
This time, Snowie's statistics showed how cruel backgammon can be with Sacchi outplaying his victorious opponent (expert level to advanced level), yet still losing:

[Continued on page 8]

*47th indiana open*

## BRUSSEL IS 'INDY' MONEY

Apparently, he's healed. In his first tourney following major surgery, Chicago's John Brussel has won the Indiana Open Labor Day weekend event. Not only did he win in the Swiss format, he won *every* match (9 in a row), including a tough 13–12 finals victory over Durb Oldham (KY) to capture his first ABT title since winning Georgia in June 1997.



Indy Champ John Brussel and his loyal fan club. [File Photo]

As a touch of irony in round one, John began his quest on a sour note, arriving late and being penalized one point against current ABT leader Neil Kazaross. It was Neil's only point of the match!

Congratulations to all the Indy winners and to directors Butch & Mary Ann Meese for another job well done. Complete results on page 9. Δ

## Grand Prix de Suisse

# 1999

## Lugano–October 26–31

## DANCING ON THE BAR



We found this photo of Fred Astaire on sale at an eBay auction. Apparently Mr. Astaire had other dancing talents.



# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

## EDITOR & PUBLISHER

**Bill Davis**

3940 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue 504  
Chicago, IL 60659-3155

Tel: 773/583-6464 ♦ Fax: 773/583-3264

E-mail: [bg@chicagopoint.com](mailto:bg@chicagopoint.com)

[www.chicagopoint.com](http://www.chicagopoint.com)

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

**Carol Joy Cole (MI)**    **Laila Leonhardt (IL)**  
**Jake Jacobs (IL)**    **Antonio Ortega (C.R.)**  
**Duane Jensen (MN)**    **Walter Trice (MA)**  
**Danny Kleinman (CA)**    **Kit Woolsey (CA)**

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## LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504  
Chicago, IL 60659-3155

E-mail: [letters@chicagopoint.com](mailto:letters@chicagopoint.com)

## "GO FIGURE" ERROR—CONTEST EXTENDED

My investigation of last issue's "Go Figure" problem seems to indicate that there is no set of numbers that satisfies the stated conditions. My work could be flawed, but I don't think so. It will be interesting to see what puzzle creator Joe Wollick comes up with.—*Bob Sahagian, Teaneck, NJ*

*Joe Wollick responds: Unfortunately I submitted a problem with insufficient parameters and a major error. Please refer to last month's puzzle or go to the Internet ([www.chicagopoint.com/figure.html](http://www.chicagopoint.com/figure.html)). Note that each letter must represent one unique single-digit, positive number throughout the equation. And yes, any of the letters can be zero.*

*I regret the error and in addition to the 2-year subscription to Chicago Point (or*

*[Continued on page 3]*

coming attractions

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BACKGAMMON											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31					

by Carol Joy Cole

810/232-9731

E-mail: [cjc@tir.com](mailto:cjc@tir.com)

\* Denotes new or revised listing

## NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Sep 16	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Sep 19*	Backgammon by the Bay, Marines Memorial Club, San Francisco, CA	831/688-9722
Sep 19*	Best of FIBS Worldwide Autumn Open, via computer	<a href="mailto:dpalta@lightspeed.net">dpalta@lightspeed.net</a>
Sep 24-26*	<u>1st Ohio State Champs &amp; NetGammon Festival II, Comfort Inn, Canton, OH</u>	<u>773/404-0726</u>
Sep 24-26*	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Towpath Inn, Turin, NY</u>	<u>716/387-0767</u>
Sep 25*	Clarine's Monthly Tournament, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA	213/822-9745
Sep 26*	Ace Point Sunday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Sep 26*	All the King's Men Tourney, Universal Mall, Warren, MI	810/558-4790
Oct 1*	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer	<a href="mailto:tournaments@cyberarts.com">tournaments@cyberarts.com</a>
Oct 3*	Backgammon by the Bay, The Whole Shabang, Alameda, CA	831/688-9722
Oct 3*	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Belden Commons Restaurant, Canton, OH	330/966-2811
Oct 4*	FIBS 1999 Fall Tournament, Via computer modem	<a href="mailto:davide@sco.com">davide@sco.com</a>
Oct 8-10*	<u>Nation's Capital Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD</u>	<u>301/593-8030</u>
Oct 10*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyway's Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/583-6464
Oct 10*	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, MA	781/938-7852
Oct 15-17*	<u>1999 Florida State Championships, Oceanfront Inn, Ft. Lauderdale, FL</u>	<u>954/938-4304</u>
Oct 17*	Backgammon by the Bay, Marines Memorial Club, San Francisco, CA	831/688-9722
Oct 21*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Oct 22-24*	<u>Northeast Regional Tournament, Comfort Inn, Albany, NY</u>	<u>603/863-4711</u>
Oct 24*	All the King's Men Tourney, Universal Mall, Warren, MI	810/558-4790
Oct 27-31	1999 Las Vegas Open, Harrah's Casino & Hotel, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025
Oct 30*	Clarine's Monthly Tournament, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA	213/822-9745
Oct 31*	Ace Point Sunday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Nov 1*	Lainer's November/December Tournament, via computer	<a href="mailto:fibs@lainer.com">fibs@lainer.com</a>
Nov 1*	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer	<a href="mailto:tournaments@cyberarts.com">tournaments@cyberarts.com</a>
Nov 7*	Backgammon by the Bay, Marines Memorial Club, San Francisco, CA	831/688-9722
Nov 7*	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Belden Commons Restaurant, Canton, OH	330/966-2811
Nov 12-14	<u>Illinois State Championships, Hilton Hotel, Springfield, IL</u>	<u>217/528-0117</u>
Nov 14*	21st Flint Area Club Championships, Holiday Inn Holidome, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Nov 14*	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, MA	781/938-7852
Nov 18*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Nov 21*	Backgammon by the Bay, Marines Memorial Club, San Francisco, CA	831/688-9722
Nov 26-28	<u>5th Thanksgiving Weekend, Belden Village Holiday Inn, Canton, OH</u>	<u>330/966-2811</u>
Nov 27*	Clarine's Monthly Tournament, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA	213/822-9745
Nov 28*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyway's Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/583-6464
Nov 28*	Ace Point Sunday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Nov 28*	All the King's Men Tourney, Universal Mall, Warren, MI	810/558-4790
Dec 3-5	<u>44th Gammon Associates Invitational, Los Angeles, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Feb 18-20*	<u>22nd Pittsburgh Championships, Greentree Radisson Hotel, Pittsburgh, PA</u>	<u>412/823-7500</u>

## OUTSIDE USA

Sep 11-12*	Roy Hollands Trophy, Hilton, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Sep 12	Toronto Sunday Monthly, Doghouse Riley's Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
Sep 25-26*	2nd Humlebæk Open 1999, Baunebjerg Skolen, Humlebæk, Denmark	4520-671995
Sep 30-Oct 3	Asian Championships, Ladies Recreation Club, Hong Kong, China	8522-5231306
Oct 2-3*	Sandy Osborne Trophy, Hilton National, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Oct 2-3*	3rd Solrød Open, Erhverv & Kulturcenter, Solrød Strand, Denmark	4556-146836
Oct 7-10*	International Austrian Open 1999, Casino Seefeld, Seefeld, Austria	43181-8128533
Oct 10*	Toronto Sunday Monthly, Doghouse Riley's Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
Oct 12-17*	3rd Moscow Open, Cosmos Hotel & Casino, Moscow, Russia	7095-1209005
Oct 15-17	Swiss Open, Jackpot Spielcasino, Bern, Switzerland	4179-4015811
Oct 16-17*	Fyns Mesterskaberne, Fyns BG Union, Fyns, Denmark	4540-535547
Oct 26-31*	Grand Prix de Suisse 1999, Royal Splendid Hotel, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-3374425
Oct 30-31*	7th Irish Open, Wynns Hotel, Dublin, Ireland	3531-6689332
Nov 3-7*	Brazilian Open, Clube de Regatas do Flamengo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521-2676033
Nov 5-7*	19th Swedish Open, Scandic Hotel, Stockholm, Sweden	468-6523033
Nov 14*	Toronto Sunday Monthly, Doghouse Riley's Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
Nov 19-21*	5th Kaiserbrunnen Cup, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Nov 20-21*	Townharbour Trophy, Hilton National, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Dec 8-12	6th Tournament of the Americas, Westin Regina Cancún, Mexico	USA: 773/583-6464
Dec 10-12*	8th Open von Thun, Hotel Seepark, Thun, Switzerland	4179-6569700
Dec 11-12*	United Kingdom Championship Finals, Hilton National, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Dec 12*	Toronto Sunday Monthly, Doghouse Riley's Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
Jan 7-16*	World Cup Challenge VI & Giant Jackpot, Hyatt Regency Istanbul, Turkey	9723-6728918
Feb 15-20*	Paris Master & Open Tournament, Hotel de Castiglione, Paris, France	33060-7551516

## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

\$25), I'll add another prize of equal value. Submit your answers to the POINT by 30 Sept.—Joe Wollick, Hoffman Estates, IL

### CHUCK PAPAZIAN'S FINAL BEAROFF

I first met Chuckie at a New York City chess club in the late 1960s. We didn't become good friends until I became acquainted with him at the 1977 San Francisco Black & White Backgammon Championships.

I recall playing Tony Goble in a difficult quarterfinal match. I mentally wrestled with what is now a standard play in mid/endgame positions—whether to hit a blot

in my inner board to gain racing equity or to play safe and die a "coward's death." After much thought, I hit the blot, Goble fanned and Chuckie kibitzed "nice play, kid."

I wrote the forward to the book he co-wrote with Bill Kennedy in the early 1980s (*Backgammon Master Games*). In my opinion, he possessed the sharpest wit and sense of humor that was unique to this Yogi Berra/Yoda/Everyman of the backgammon world.

He was responsible for a number of expressions that we still use today such as: "May the *Fours* be with you," and before that, when an opponent had a difficult fourth move to make with a double, "Where fourth art thou?"

His greatest forte was the quick wit or rejoinder that he exhibited frequently and spontaneously. A group of us in San Francisco nicknamed him the "Great Swami" or the "Swam what am" after a remarkable exercise in backgammon instruction/psychokinetics during an all-night chouette in the early 1980s.

I know he lit the candle at both ends during much of his life, but he was a special person and the backgammon world will miss him. I know I will.—Nick Maffeo, Palm Springs, Ca

### HAND-HELD COMPUTER GAMES

Do you have any information about hand-held computer backgammon games? I realize that a computer version such as JellyFish would be better, but I don't have a laptop. Any information would be helpful.—Jonathan Bar-on, via e-mail

[Continued on page 3]



**ABT**  
AMERICAN  
BACKGAMMON  
TOUR ★ 1999

## AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1999

Top 100 compiled through 6 Sept. 1999 after 9 events  
(Coming in September: Ohio State Champs and Towpath Inn Tourney)



**ABT**  
AMERICAN  
BACKGAMMON  
TOUR ★ 1999

NAME	TOTAL	Fred Gehlhoff	9.44	Leslie Lockett	4.18	Dan Grogan	2.09
Neil Kazaross	46.59	Charlie Russell	9.29	Stuart Hosen	4.16	Sean Garber	2.08
Gary Margosian	29.69	Steve Brown	8.00	Mary Franks	4.12	Vince Frigo	2.00
John Brussel	27.48	Steve Mellen	7.85	Mike Rezai	4.06	Patricia Main	2.00
Paul Franks	20.59	Jack Kissane	7.42	Paul Klein	4.06	Gordon Bass	1.94
Bruce Brown	16.00	Andy Palumbo	7.42	Gerald Beck	4.00	Jim Johnson	1.94
Frank Frigo	14.87	Sam Pottle	6.90	John O'Hagan	4.00	Tom Penney	1.88
Lincoln Bedell	14.84	Sig Skolnick	6.42	Gyl Savoie	3.69	Dave Wetzell	1.88
Jeff Burdsall	13.74	Art Benjamin	6.11	Jon Stephens	3.69	George Maloyan	1.75
Steve Hast	11.80	Rudy Citrom	6.11	Neil Young	3.69	Aaron Ashmann	1.71
Phil Undieme	11.65	Rudy Langenbach	5.83	Roz Ferris	3.20	George Barr	1.71
Paul Weaver	11.65	Len Dangremond	5.83	James Roston	3.13	Rick Johnson	1.53
Mike Shanas	11.44	Christopher Yep	5.83	Aram Kouleyan	3.05	Fred Ishac	1.45
Matt Reklaitis	11.20	Niel Borden	5.77	Glenn Swanson	2.95	Denny Leatherman	1.45
Carol Falk	11.03	Carol Joy Cole	5.40	Adam Versaw	2.90	Ramez Abi-Akar	1.44
Durb Oldham	10.80	Gary Marchenia	5.25	Pete Lewandowski	2.90	Dirk Hogan	1.34
David Groner	10.80	Gary Wong	5.22	Jobey Calitri	2.89	Luther Lute	1.25
Alice Kay	10.75	Harold Elgazar	5.22	Gary Fries	2.59	A.J. Fronce	1.05
Jim Slomkoski	10.44	Joann Feinstein	5.20	Ralph Levy	2.40	Irv Taylor	1.05
Clarine	10.40	Hugh Sconyers	5.17	Jerry Kruth	2.22	Kay Tennenbaum	1.04
Steve Sax	10.29	Malcolm Davis	5.17	Ed King	2.22	Gail Latter	1.04
Fred Kalantari	10.29	Roger Nellist	5.06	Lucky Nelson	2.21	Mark Haley	0.99
Paul Friedman	9.82	Steve McCormick	4.80	Dean Kaloudis	2.17	Gilles Blais	0.99
Drew Giovanis	9.65	Howard Markowitz	4.76	Paul Mangone	2.17	Glenn Martells	0.82
Ed Johnson	9.58	Harvey Huie	4.41	Kerim Urkun	2.14	Two tied at	0.75



**CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB**

## CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1999 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU 31 AUG.

Bob Zavoral	16.24	Ken Bond	5.92	Mark Dalton	2.40	Bill Bartholomay	0.64
Jake Jacobs	13.84	Arlene Levy	5.36	Georgina Flanagan	2.00	Joe Ausmann	0.64
Steve Mellen	13.68	Steve Klesker	4.64	Mark Ryan	1.92	Amy Valerio	0.52
Tim Carroll	13.00	Phyllis Smolinski	4.32	Joann Feinstein	1.52	Marty Tatosian	0.48
Harold Elgazar	11.76	Gary Kay	4.32	Paul Klein	1.52	Sarg Serges	0.48
Paul Franks	10.80	Bill Davis	4.24	Richard Stawowy	1.36	Mark Murray	0.48
Carter Mattig	10.48	Mary Franks	3.84	Ralph Byrns	1.28	David Robbins	0.48
Phil Simborg	9.92	Sam Yoyen	3.76	George Barr	1.28	Dave Cramer	0.48
Joe Wollick	9.40	Peter Kalba	3.56	Tim Roberts	1.28	Stan Kucharz	0.36
Ed Buerger	9.16	David Araiza	3.52	Ralf Boettger	1.28	Femi Owiku	0.36
Bob Steen	8.80	Brian Kozin	3.44	David Rockwell	1.28	Harry Cohn	0.32
Neil Kazaross	8.64	Laila Leonhardt	3.44	Glenn Martells	0.88	Jim Roland	0.32
Norma Shyer	8.04	Alice Kay	3.36	Richard Lloyd	0.88	Tom Machaj	0.30
Herb Roman	7.52	Elaine Kehm	3.28	Jolie Rubin	0.88	Reginald Porter	0.28
Tak Morioka	7.08	Jerry Brooks	3.04	Ed Zell	0.88	Frank Callea	0.24
Tim Mabee	7.00	John Jennings	2.88	Paul Lombardo	0.88	Sonja Peacock	0.24
Marc Rosset	6.96	Paul Friedman	2.80	Sam Pottle	0.86	Rodney Bell	0.20
Bill Keefe	6.08	Don Jayhan	2.64	Daniel Lillian	0.64	Ken Tyszko	0.16
Rick Bieniak	6.00						

**JAKE JACOBS** (5.28) grabbed July Player of the Month honors. Runner's-up were Steve Mellen (3.36) and Carter Mattig (2.16).

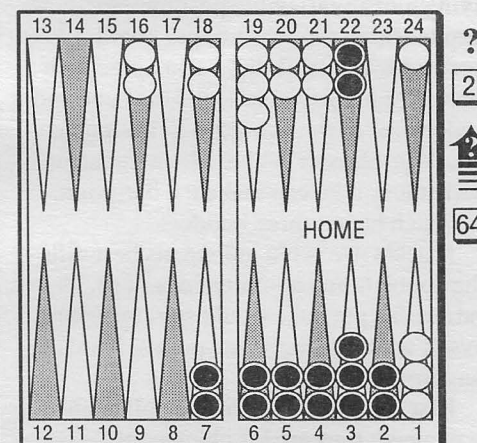
BPC top honors for August go to **CARTER MATTIG** (3.92). Finishing 2nd/3rd were Tim Carroll and Paul Friedman, both with 2.80 points.

your move

## PROBLEM #257

to be analyzed by Neil Kazaross

Money game. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**





# ASK DANNY

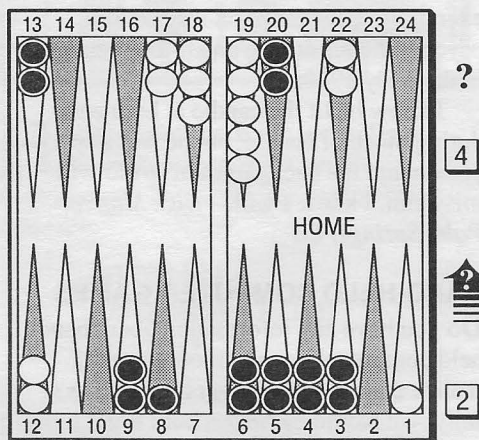


© 1999 by Danny Kleinman

## KILLING THE CUBE

**D**ear Danny: In July, I wrote you about Tad Morkan's interesting 4-2 play at our club. Thanks for your analysis. Now I have another one that occurred in August at our club. Lots of talk about this one, but no really lucid over-the-board analysis.

Match to 5 points. Tad Morkan (Black) trails Steve Melvin (White), 2 to 1. Black on roll. **SHOULD BLACK RE-DOUBLE?** Following "redouble/take," **HOW SHOULD BLACK PLAY 4-2?**



Tad recubed, Steve took and Tad had a 4-2 to play. First off, do you like the cube actions? Second, how would you play the 4-2? I could tell you Tad's play, but that might influence your analysis.—Searching for Reasons

**DEAR SEARCHING:** The race is close, and White has only one man back to Black's two, with escape to the outfield possible on 6s. Moreover, Black has seven points, giving him an inflexible position. So despite Black's much stronger board, I agree with White's take. I also agree with Black's redouble, which kills the cube and renders one of the two extra points put at stake worthless to White. Black threatens market loss if he can make the bar-point, for which he has three builders.

Black's 4-2 is not among his best rolls (the doublets and combinations of 6s, 2s and 1s). To play it, I would start by asking myself which of the seven points, if any, I can afford to relinquish.

Black's four strong inside points must be retained: they are his chief asset.

I wouldn't dream of breaking the golden anchor, exposing the man that runs to a direct shot and the blot that remains to 10 pointing rolls.

Though 13/9, 13/11 is possible, Black's midpoint is useful for maintaining pressure on White's midpoint and covering Black's outer court. I want to keep the midpoint, and I don't want to give White 6-6 and 6-4 jokers, so I'd play 13/9, 13/11 only if no other move were reasonable.

That leaves playing from the 9- and 8-points.

8/2 is poor because it gives White good aces to hit and move to the edge of Black's prime. If White neither hits nor escapes, Black remains with a vulnerable blot and no direct covers.

9/7 combined with either 9/5 or 8/4 is poor because it lets White escape and hit with all 6s and 5-1.

The only plays that look reasonable are 9/3 and 9/5, 8/6.

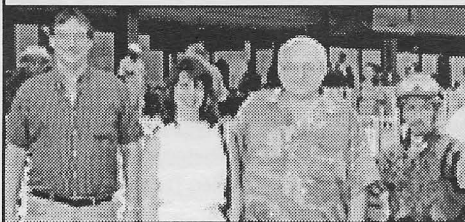
9/3 has the merit of retaining three builders for the bar-point. Against that, it leaves two blots (four shots) and does nothing to build for the mildly useful 2-point (making the bar-point next with a 6-1 is more important).

9/5, 8/6 reduces Black's chances of making the bar-point next (6-1, 2-1 and double aces no longer work), but leaves only one blot (two shots). In exchange for the five fewer rolls that make the bar-point, Black gets five rolls (5-4, 4-3 and double-4s) that make a fifth inside point. If that were all that could be said for 9/5, 8/6, I would favor 9/3, for the bar-point is more important than the 2- and 1-points.

However, 9/5, 8/6 also threatens loose hits, which Black can afford because of his anchor and much stronger board. That's my play.—Yours, Danny Δ

Questions for Danny Kleinman should be addressed to: Ask Danny, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155 or send e-mail to: [bg@chicagopoint.com](mailto:bg@chicagopoint.com)

## HAWTHORNE CHAMPS CROWNED



From left, Tim Mabee and Amy Valerio receive congrats from Peter Kalba for winning the Hawthorne BG Classic on 17 July. Full results on page 7.

## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

The hand-held games are all very weak compared to new computer software for the PCs. If it's financially possible, we suggest that you invest in a reasonable laptop and get either JellyFish or Snowie. The basic JellyFish game can be downloaded off the Internet at no charge, so that saves you some money. And if you learn to play these programs on relatively even terms, you can enter any Championship division event in the world knowing that you will be competitive.—Ed.

## ONLINE SEXIST?

I saw your ad in NetGammon and went to the website. When I scrolled down and saw the scantily-clad woman in your index, it turned me off. Is this really relevant, or are you just another online sexist? Well, don't count me as a subscriber.—Tigerlillie, via Internet

The woman is changed monthly. In the United States, sex sells! Just watch TV ads and you'll see what we mean.

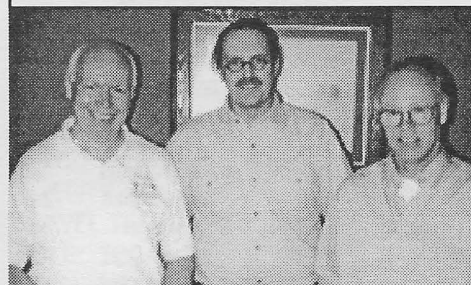
Send us your mailing address and we'll send you a complimentary Chicago Point newsletter. There are no scantily-clad women in it, we promise!—Ed.

## JOHN ON THE MEND

My Dearest Friends: I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the outpouring of cards, calls and e-mails I received wishing me a speedy recovery from my recent surgeries. Coming from as far away as Hawaii and Paris, they confirmed for me that the Backgammon World is indeed one big family.—John Brussel, Chicago, IL

You're back, John. We can tell by your fine results in Indianapolis!—Ed. Δ

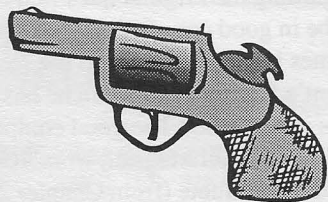
## STEVE BROWN WINS MINNESOTA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP



From left: Master's Champ winner Ralph Stowell, Director Steve Maas, and Open Champ Steve Brown. Results on page 7.



## Is it Ever Right to . . .



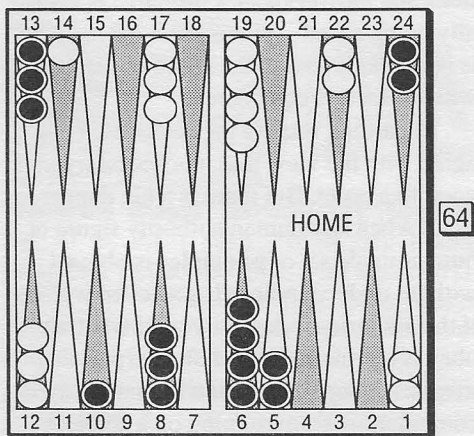
# Come Under? The Gun?

by Mary Hickey

We have all heard it said: “Don’t split to your opponent’s 5-point when he has three or more builders ready to attack.” Like so many principles in backgammon and elsewhere, this does have exceptions. People often don’t discover the exceptions over the board because playing by reasonable-sounding principles is easier than making the mental effort to constantly question them. To find the exceptions, we must look at the basis behind the principles, then be sure we are in their “design range” before we go ahead and apply them.

Even when analyzing a position “off-line,” when the game is long over, experts can go astray by summarily discarding a play that violates a principle they all accept as axiomatic. For example, Black has a 4-3 to play in this position:

Money Game. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-3.**



A few years ago, several excellent players debated the merits of splitting with 13/9, 24/21, slotting with 8/4, 13/10, or setting up the Crisloid to build good points later with 13/9, 8/5. Apparently, none of them even considered the big split, 24/20, 13/10!

One of the original debaters was Ed “The Maz” Maslansky of Maryland. Then,

he supported the builder-creating 13/9, 8/5. He still does. Among the reasons he gave then are the large number of builders this creates for desirable points, and the opportunity to add to the advantage of having made a superior inner-board point. Now he adds that compared to the big split, his play leaves fewer jokers, creates a 5-5 horror roll for the opponent, and allows no opportunity for White to hit twice. He says with a superior point made (meaning the 5 versus the 3), it is better to play a building game rather than try for an exchange of hits.

At the time of the original discussion (1991), he didn’t have a computer simulator to help him. We will discuss JellyFish 3.0 simulations in detail presently, but for now let us just note that the results showed a somewhat inconclusive equity difference between The Maz’s play and the big split, but a large difference between these two plays and the rest of the field. For this reason, I have narrowed this discussion down to just these two plays.

The play I would make instinctively is the big split, 24/20, 13/10. Sure, I won’t be happy if White makes his 5-point on me, but I wasn’t too thrilled with the idea of him making his 5-point anyway. At least with this play, White has to make the 5-point *now*, or else risk letting me get it instead. If he decides to fight for the point by hitting loose, I have a good chance to send a third White checker back, which will put him under pressure to roll something good enough to avoid a cube turn by Yours Truly.

Another reason for the big-split play is timing, but not in the sense it is normally used in backgammon. Usually timing refers to the presence or lack of spares that allow one to play comfortably while the opponent is forced into awkward or even destructive plays. Here, the meaning of timing is closer to what it is in chess. It is the idea of putting the opponent under pressure to make certain plays before he is ready. Here, Black has a slightly better board, but White is threatening to swing that advantage in his direction in a roll or two. Therefore, Black would like to “make his move” now, before it becomes more dangerous.

The second part of Black’s roll is important, too. Since he plans to force some action in his opponent’s home board, he would just as soon not have any stray blots lying around the board for White to hit if his game stalls at some point. Hitting a flyshot would give White back the elusive timing advantage that Black wants to take away from him. The argument that “the blots are actually builders” works with

The Maz’s play, but doesn’t wash if Black splits because the fight for the Golden Point is likely to keep Black occupied for awhile. It may be several turns before he is able to build anything with them, but they will be targets all that time. For this reason, the superficially similar play 24/20, 8/5 is actually a blunder.

An additional consideration is that the 10-point may not seem critical now, but it isn’t useless, either. It isn’t all that hard to imagine later situations where Black may be very glad he has it.

As we noted earlier, JellyFish 3.0’s Level 7 evaluations and also the Level 6 rollout results make it at least reasonable to eliminate all plays except the big split and The Maz’s play. The evaluation puts these two plays at the top of the list, with equities of 0.118 and 0.091 respectively. The first Level 6 rollouts of all the plays put these two not only in the top spots, but even further ahead of the rest of the possible plays than the evaluation did. Based on my first 108-game Level 6 cubeless rollouts, which Jelly assures us are the equivalent of over 2,000 games in each case, the two equities are 0.156 and 0.154 respectively—a dead heat based on equity alone.

An on-line player questioned me about the validity of only a 108-game trial. I would have explained JellyFish’s variance reduction routines to him, except that I don’t understand them myself. Simpler was to run a 1080-game trial, which is supposed to be equivalent to over 20,000 games. This resulted in a small difference also, of only 0.015 equity in favor of the big split, though the equities themselves were considerably lower: 0.119 for the big split and 0.104 for The Maz’s play. These lower numbers are more consistent with the Level 7 evaluations already discussed, and also with the best of the Level 5 cubeless rollout results, which we’ll get to in a moment.

If you need a gammon badly, the Level 6 rollouts indicate that The Maz’s play may be preferable assuming the game will be played out with the gammons still counting. For example, at 4-away, 4-away, it most likely will be. But at 2-away, 4-away, it may not be, since your opponent may commit gammicide on you by turning the cube if he sees daylight in an otherwise gammonish ending. The Maz’s play wins 19.0 percent gammons, versus 16.8 for the big split, based on the 1080 game trial.

The Maz’s play may be slightly favored if you are instead trying harder than usual to avoid being gammoned, giving the opponent 14.9 percent gammons versus

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## ...Under The Gun?



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15.7 for the big split in the 1080 game trial.

So far so good. But since I also wanted to see if cube position made any difference, I ran Level 5 rollouts with an active cube for these plays. The results shocked me.

The first cubeless 1296-game Level 5 full rollouts showed a large difference between the two plays. The big split yielded an equity of 0.106, while The Maz's play rated a perfect goose egg, 0.000. With the active cube, the big split was similarly favored: 0.215 versus 0.117 with a center cube, 0.007 versus 0.109 with the opponent on roll, and 0.317 versus 0.227 with the original player on roll.

These results were so unexpected that I ran four more sets of 1296-game rollouts comparing the two plays. These rollouts yielded considerable differences in equity as high as 0.10 for the same play, same cube position! I also ran a 5184-game trial, which gave equities for both plays and all four cube positions at least reasonably close to the average values for all the rollouts, which all favored the big split by about 0.05—that is, about half the difference seen in the first set of rollouts.

Of course, there is no significance to which pair of rollouts we put side-by-side to compare. But if we had only run one trial, all we would have to compare would be two sets of data. And what a difference this might make in our conclusions!

The second trial I ran showed a preference for The Maz's play in the case where Black owns the cube, but not where White does. The fourth trial showed the opposite!

So what do these results mean? First of all, even though the default for a JellyFish Level 5 rollout is 1296 games, this is not enough. My results with this one problem cautiously suggest that 5184 games may be a large enough sample, since the equities from that trial were close to the averages for all the trials. More would probably be better, but in the future, I will certainly not roll out a problem on Level 5 with any less than 5184 games.

Second, JellyFish will not play as well on Level 5 as on Level 6. For example, after the big split, on Level 5 Jelly plays a 6-5: 24/13, not the better 11/5\*, 6/1\* that it plays on Levels 6 and 7. With The Maz's play, on Level 5 Jelly plays a 3-2: 24/21,

13/11, and on Level 6 it plays the better 8/5, 13/11. However, on Level 7 it likes 13/10, 11/9! No doubt, differences like this accrue throughout the rollouts, casting doubt on the end product in all cases.

Third, if we trust the Level 6 rollouts at least a little, we can note that they rated the plays close to equal, while the cubeless Level 5 rollouts showed them differing by about 0.05 on average. In the cubeless case where they are only 0.034 apart on average, and with a centered cube, they are 0.063 apart. If the cube has been turned, it doesn't seem to matter a lot who owns it (0.046 when Black owns the cube, 0.052 when White owns it). This suggests that the cube actions have little effect on the results compared to the basic differences in how JellyFish plays the games out on Level 5 versus Level 6.

A practical consideration beyond the scope of computer analysis is that The Maz may have learned from experience, even if only subconsciously, that his opponents tend to make more checker play and/or cube errors after his play. If that is so, this decision is close enough that his play would probably be correct even if it could be demonstrated that the other is better against a "perfect opponent," whatever that is.

A concrete example of this would be what a hit-happy player might do with a 3-3 following The Maz's play. The right response would be 24/21(2), 8/5(2), establishing a strong position to build upon until hopefully it becomes powerful enough to permit a double. But an impetuous player might try for an early kill with 24/15\*, the 4th one probably then played 24/21 to keep them "connected."

Sounds reasonable, at least to him; and in a chouette even an expert partner may prove unable to talk him out of it despite the obvious merits of the sounder alternative. (JellyFish also gongs it, giving it an equity of 0.163, versus 0.303 for the 21- and 5-points with a Level 7 evaluation.)

A related observation is that this problem was first proposed back in the Dark Ages before computer simulators, "24-seven" play on the Internet, and the information explosion of the last decade. All of these have raised the general standard of play by light years. Since I didn't play during 1987 through 1995, I may prefer the play I do because my instincts, opponents, and experience are different. Perhaps, as some professors are said to do to prevent cheating, the question is the same years later, but the answer has been changed!

What I would take away from all this?

Regarding the original question, I would be in good company saying, "Yes, sometimes it is right to split to the opponent's 5-point even when he has three builders aimed at it." The good company I would be in is Paul Magriel, who '70s players used to quote (from Chapter 21 of *Backgammon*) as saying not to "come under the gun." He does say that, but these same players usually forgot that immediately following that general guideline, Magriel discussed several exceptions, including the desirability of provoking immediate action.

Regarding backgammon in general, I would take the idea of pacing one's game—that is, recognizing that barring doubles, I will only get two numbers to play each turn, and must not start more than I can reasonably expect to finish. And when I do choose where to focus my efforts, I must consider the match score and the resulting distortions of the normal value of gammons, the cube used for maximum effectiveness, the psychology and known technical weaknesses of my opponent, and any other relevant factors—not just a single number some computer has labeled "equity."

Regarding computers, I would take away a healthy skepticism regarding their answers to the questions we think we asked. Computers give an illusion of precision with their tables of figures to two and three decimal places. But the human mind can leap past the machine's limitations and answer the question that is actually being asked—in this case, "What play is most likely to win the game or the match, with *all* factors considered."

Regarding respect for authority, I can agree with the view that it is necessary and good to a point. But there is a big danger to us all when any human authority figure or human-made set of principles is obeyed without understanding. It gets even worse if the authority is derivative—if what we obey is a principle based on the (possibly misinterpreted) output of a human-written computer program running on a soulless machine incapable of questioning the relevance or validity what it has been told to do.

Do you still have one of those "Question Authority" bumper stickers from the 1960s? If you do, take both it, and the attitude it expresses out of mothballs and put them back into service. The future of the world—and backgammon, too—may very well depend on it. Δ



# WINNER'S CIRCLE



Jul.-Sep. 1999

•**BG By The Bay Summer Sizzler** (San Jose, CA; 10 Jul.)... OPEN (17): 1/2-Steve Koontz / Clint McClintic, 3/4-Gene Chait / Sho Sengoku; 1C-Jonathan Weinstein, 2C-Lorien Armstrong.

•**City of Venice Tournament** (Venice, Italy; 8-11 July)... CHAMPIONSHIP (89): 1-Xavier Braun (GER), 2-Gad Carmeli (ISR), 3/4-Andreas Fischer (AUS) / Cyrus Afchani (GER); 1C-Neil Kazaross (USA), 2C-Harald Johanni (GER), 3C/4C-Francois Tardieu (FRA) / Teppo Salo (FIN); 1LC-Andrea Bolzoni (ITA), 2LC-Nicola Pagano (ITA). INTERMEDIATE (55): 1-Martin de Bruin (SPA), 2-Roberto Gobbo (ITA), 3/4-Tobias Hellweg (GER) / Damian Plesec (SLO); 1C-Cristiano Russo (ITA), 2C-Daniel Bruni (SWI), 3C/4C-Gordan Markotic (CRO) / Matteo di Napoli (ITA); 1LC-Alexander Mentrup (GER), 2LC-Enrico Dell'Anna (ITA). BEGINNER (39): 1-Stefano Cantelli (ITA), 2-Luca Martinetti (ITA); 1C-Paolo Montanari (ITA), 2C-Daniele Deco (ITALY); 1LC-Danielle Bastarache (USA); 2LC-Giacomo Caterini (ITA). WARM UP (128): 1-Gianmichele D'Onofrio (ITA), 2-Neil Kazaross (USA). TEAM TOURNAMENT (29): 1-*GamesGrid Warriors* [Ingeborg Wais (Austria) / Michael Higatsberger (Austria) / Rudolf Kempter (Germany)], 2-*Europa Trash* [Wolfrang Kargl (Austria) / Walter Jarc (Canada) / Tony Lawand (USA)]. SUPERJACKPOT #1 (16): 1-Udo Gieb (GER), 2-Gianmichele D-Onogrio (ITA); #2 (16): 1-Phil Laak (USA), 2-Elmar Kofler (ITA). 98/99 ITALIAN CHAMPIONSHIP: Elmar Kofler (Champion), Andrea Sgardi (Intermediate).

•**Hawthorne Backgammon Classic** (Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL; 17 Jul.)... OPEN (16): 1-Tim Mabee, 2-Herb Roman; 1C/2C-Jake Jacobs / David Cramer. INTERMEDIATE (7): 1-Amy Valerio, 2-David Araiza; 1C-Reggie Porter.

•**Ace Point Monthly** (New York, NY; 25 July)... OPEN (13): 1-Mike Senkiewicz, 2-Steve Elkin, 3/4-Martha Ghio / James Pascoe; 1C-Chris Trencher. INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Donald Gabbai, 2-Yannis Vallianos; 1C-Carlos Salgado.

•**Thousand Islands Tourney—ABT** (Alexandria Bay, NY; 30 Jul.-1 Aug.)... OPEN (32): 1-Bruce Brown (NY), 2-Ed Johnson (NY), 3-Sig Skolnick (FL). NOVICE (8): 1-Patricia Main (NY), 2-Dee Webster (Canada). DOUBLES: 1-Larry Liebster & Rachel Liebster (NJ), 2-Jim Pascoe & Carol Gonda (CT).

•**Downstate Illinois Braggin' Rights** (Bloomington, IL; 1-16 Aug.)... OPEN (10): 1-Ed Bauder, 2-John Jennings, 3-Ed Zell... *A real test of skill organized by Ed Bauder with very long matches. Ed defeated John Jennings in the finals 31-19.*

•**Studio Anne Carlton Trophy** (Coventry, England; 7-8 Aug.)... OPEN (56): 1-Al Hogg, 2-John Clark. FRIDAY KO (16): 1-John Broomfield, 2-Emmanuel Di Bona. DOUBLES (14): 1-"Al & Raj," 2-"Dod Willing We're Blonde."

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 8 Aug.)... OPEN (12): 1/2-Bill Davis / Carter Mattig; 1C-Ken Bond, 2C-Peter Kalba. INTERMEDIATE (9): 1-Femi

Owiku, 2-Richard Stawowy; 1C-Stan Koucharz, 2C-Sonja Peacock.

•**Friday the 13th Backgammon Bash** (Richard Armbruster's residence, Los Angeles, CA; 13 Aug.)... DOUBLES: 1-Pat Gibson & Judy Collins, 2-Ron Bruns & Nicole Masarani. OPEN: 1-Norm Wiggins, 2-Tom Gillen. BLACK CAT TOSS: 1-Matt Armbruster. BLACK BAT AWARD: Paul Armbruster.

•**Minnesota State Championships—ABT** (Bloomington, MN; 13-15 Aug.)... OPEN (16): 1-Steve Brown (MN), 2-Gerald Beck (Germany); 1C-John O'Hagan (IL). INTERMEDIATE (15): 1-Rudy Langenbach (WI), 2-Tom Penney (MN); 1C-Dave Wetzell (MN). NOVICE (3): 1-Mouika Beck (Germany). MASTERS (4): 1-Ralph Stowell (MN). DOUBLES (8): 1-Bill Davis (IL) 7 Gerald Vangsness (WI), 2-Carter Mattig & Lindsay Mattig (IL). BLITZ

(16): 1-Phil Williams (MN). 2-POINT MATCH (64): 1-John Christner (WI). 1-POINT MATCH (8): 1-Fred Gehlhoff (MI). SUNDAY TOURNAMENT (8): 1-Steve Maas (MN)... *The amazing Mall of America is within walking distance of the hotel. A great tournament to bring your non-backgammon playing spouse.*

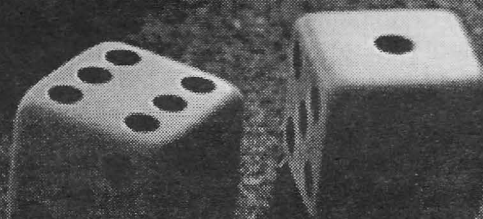
•**1999 Lacon Open** (Lacon, IL; 22 Aug.)... OPEN (32): 1-Jake Jacobs, 2-Bob Zavoral, 3/4-Ed Bauder / Dave Rockwell; 1C-Mark Jennings, 2C-Cliff Mayoh... *Ed & Lisa Zell hosted a party at their home in E. Peoria the day before the tournament. The best \$8 steak dinner in the world, cooked to perfection by Cliff Mayoh.*

•**Ace Point Monthly** (New York, NY; 29 Aug.)... OPEN (10): 1/2-Antoinette-Marie Williams / Rick Barabino; 1C-Steve Mellen. INTERMEDIATE (7): 1-Ray Javadi, 2-Bernard Vennekohl; 1C-Hayley Eber.

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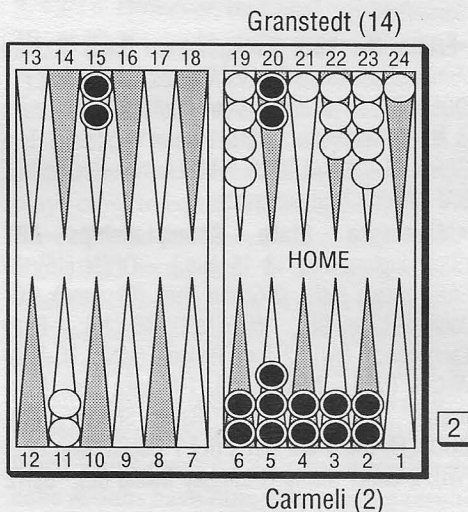
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# GRANSTEDT...

[Continued from page 1]

## Position #1: BLACK TO PLAY 4-1.



Player: Move errors / Cube errors / Overall error rate

Sacchi: 0.88% / 6.9 / 0.78%

Carmeli: 0.49% / 9.2 / 0.83%

## The Finals: Carmeli vs. Granstedt

Sunday's Championship finals began promptly at 2:30 P.M. This 25-point match between Gad Carmeli and Jörgen Granstedt would decide whose name would forever join the 23 other "Past Winners" list of Monte Carlo Backgammon World Champions.

As usual, the finals took place in the Salon Lacoste refereed by André Rolfo Fontana (tourney chairman and president of the SBM) and the 1979 World Champion Luigi Villa. The match was televised to the Salle d'Or where two top American masters, Paul Magriel (X-22) and Nack Ballard provided expert commentary.

From the opening roll, the 35-year-old Swede from Hagersten (near Stockholm) was on fire, jumping to a 14-0 lead. Game #10, with Granstedt ahead 14-2, pretty much decided the match. Open a board and follow along:

Game #10 of 25-point World Championship match. Jörgen Granstedt (White) leads Gadi Carmeli (Black) 14 to 2.

Carmeli (Black)	Granstedt (White)
1) 54: 13/8, 24/20	41: 24/20 6/5*
2) 54: Bar/20*, 24/20	51: Bar/20, 24/23
3) 65: 13/2*	62: Bar/23*, 13/7
4) 61: Bar/18*	51: Bar/24, 13/8
5) 42: 8/4, 6/4	66: 24/18, 13/7(3)*
6) 64: Bar/21, 13/7*	51: Bar/24, 23/18*
7) 21: Bar/23, 8/7*	43: Bar/18*
8) 64: Bar/21, 13/7*	51: Bar/20, 8/7
9) 32: 7/4, 23/21	21: 24/22, 7/6
10) 63: 21/15, 6/3*	65: Bar/20, 8/2
11) 51: 21/16, 4/3	41: 7/2
12) 51: 21/15	66: 20/14(4)
13) 62: 13/5	41: 14/9*
14) 42: Bar/21, 8/6	Double to 2

The position isn't volatile and Black has a good holding game. White's position isn't very flexible with the 2-point already made. White will have problems filling the gaps in his weak board and bringing home his checkers safely. Correct cube action: No double/take.

15) Take	61: 14/8, 9/8
16) 52: 21/14	63: 8/2, 6/3
17) 63: 14/5	41: 8/3
18) 52: 8/3, 6/4	64: 8/2, 8/4
19) 11: 6/5, 4/2, 3/2	64: 7/1, 7/3

Before playing any roll, you should always keep your eyes open for extraordinary situations. This is where the world class player differs from the average player. In Position #1, White has two blots in his board. Black must search for the play offering the best chance to hit White.

By playing 5/1, 2/1, Black worsens his position (if he is fortunate enough to later hit White) by changing his 5-prime home board into an easier-to-escape 4-prime.

20/15 maintains positional strength, but fails to improve hitting chances.

The expert's play is 20/16, 5/4! With the 16-blot, Black guarantees himself a double shot if White rolls any 6 (except 6-6). He also continues to block White's worst numbers, the fours, by keeping the 15-point. 20/16 maintains Black's offensive structure. His big hit-generating play is only possible because of White's board weakness. Clearly best play: 20/16, 5/4.

20) 41: 5/1, 2/1	61: 14/8, 14/13
21) Redouble to 4	Take
22) 42: 6/2, 6/4	

Should Black have redoubled? And what about his 4-2 play?

Prior to the 4-2, 18 of 36 rolls hit a White checker. That makes the position extremely volatile. After a hit, Black is able to win a lot of gammons (20%). Trailing in the match, now is the time for Black to make his move. Black has to redouble and White has winning chances high enough to justify a take. In a money game, Black's advantage justifies only an initial double (not a redouble). Correct cube action: redouble/take.

If Black would have correctly played his 4-1 (see Position #1 analysis), the correct cube action would now be redouble/pass. With a 4-2, Black has to maximize contact because White has four

blots. Best play: 20/18 15/11.

22)	53: 13/8, 4/1
23) 51: 15/10, 15/14	32: 6/1

Because Black's takepoint for an 8-cube with the option to redouble to 16 is about 6%, White isn't able to redouble that easily.

24) 33: 14/5, 10/7	43: 8/1
25) 21: 20/17*	54: Dancing
26) 62: 17/11, 7/5	

Best is 20/14, 17/15. Outfield control!

26)	52: Dancing
27) 31: 20/16	61: Bar/19, 3/2

The priorities in Position #2 are clear:

1. Minimizing your opponent's shots; and
2. Maximizing your own outfield control.

Black should not touch the checker on the 16-point. It's hardest to hit (3 shots) and provides better outfield control compared to a checker on the 15- or 14-point. If Black stays on his 16-point, White can get home safely only by rolling 3-3, 4-4, 6-6 or 6-5. Even after 5-5, he has to leave a direct shot.

Now the question is where to play the aces? Black leaves the fewest shots (11+3) by playing 11/7. However, the disadvantage of this play is that he loses direct control of the 7-, 8- and 9-points. After 11/7 Black can move his back checker to any of these points without leaving a direct shot.

Advancing to the 8- or 9-point isn't good for similar reasons.

If Black goes to the 10-point, White's 6-4 is duplicated as a hitting number. Therefore Black leaves just 16 shots and only gives up control of the 10-point. The correct ace in the outfield is 11/10 (duplicating the four). Black must play the other aces in his home board: 5/2. Therefore, the best play is 11/10, 5/2.



The finals (left to right): Gadi Carmeli, referee Luigi Villa, chairman André Rolfo Fontana and Jörgen Granstedt.

28) 11: 11/7	64: 19/9*
29) 53: Bar/17	

Better is Bar/20, 7/4.

[Continued on page 10]



Don't Miss the Big

# 3RD MOSCOW OPEN

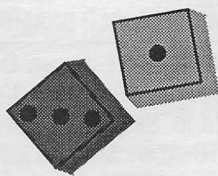
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## WINNERS...

[Continued from page 7]

•**European Championship/Miteleuropa Tourney** (Nova Gorica, Slovenia; 3-5 Sep.)... **MASTERS:** 1-Mario Sequeira (POR), 2-Guido Flamigni (ITA). **CHAMPIONSHIP:** 1-Werner Reisel (GER). **INTERMEDIATE:** 1-Kazuko Namazawa (JPN)... *Partial results supplied via e-mail by Martin de Bruin.*

•**47th Indiana Open** (Indianapolis, IN; 3-6 Sep.) ... **OPEN** (54): 1-John Brussel (IL), 2-Durb Oldham (KY), 3-Carol Joy Cole (MI); 1C-David Groner (IN), 2C-Steve Hast (PA). **ADVANCED** (47): 1-Jim Slomkoski (MI), 2-Gary Wong (AZ); 1C-Harold Elgazar (IL), 2C-Sam Pottle (WI). **INTERMEDIATE** (19): 1-Dan Grogan (MI), 2-Kay Tennenbaum (NJ); 1C-Gail Latter, 2C-Fran Miller (OH). **NOVICE** (5): 1-Luther Lute (OH). **DIRECTOR'S CUP** (16): 1-Steve Hast (PA), 2-John Brussel (IL). **MASTERS JACKPOT** (16): 1-Jack Kissane (NY), 2-Jeff Acierio (NY). **AMATEUR JACKPOT** (16): 1-James Roston (NY), 2-Larry Whittenburg (IL). **AMATEUR OVERFLOW** (8): 1-Harold Elgazar (IL). **DOUBLES** (16): 1-Carol Joy Cole (MI) & Tak Morioka (IL). **DOUBLES OVERFLOW** (8): 1-Bruce Russell & Gary Hines (WI). **MICROBLITZ: Open** (64): 1-Rob Maier (IN). **Online** (32): 1-Steve Sax (CA). **Limited** (32): 1-Tim Johnson (IL). **SEE YOU IN SEPT. JACKPOT** (48): 1-Hank Chesko (PA). **LABOR DAY JACKPOTS:** \$200 (8)-Karen Davis (NY), \$100 (8)-Greg Cattanach (MI). **QUICKIES:** \$20 (64): Julian Haley (SC), \$10 (16): James Roston (NY). Δ

## AMALGAMATION

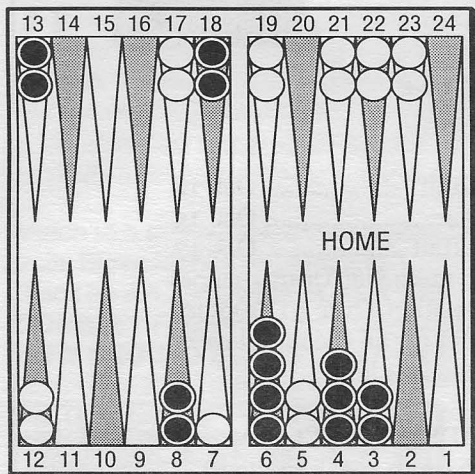
Visiting the Bar Point Club in July: **David Robbins** (London, England)... Get well wishes go out to **Roz Ferris** (IL) who is recovering from a mild stroke; also to **Marty Tatosian** (IL) who is fighting a long illness. And our prayers are with 1999 Nevada State Champ **Ed Petrillo** (FL) who has some difficult health problems to deal with... Condolences on the passing on the father of **Leslie Lockett's** (IL) children, **David**... Best wishes to **Henry Gray** (IL) and **Stacey Lewis** who were married on 7 August. The couple honeymooned on a cruise ship in the Caribbean... NetGammon spark plug **Heather Noreen** (France) gave birth to a beautiful baby boy last month: **Alexander**. Baby, mom and dad are doing well... **Linda Woods** (IL) is making a speedy recovery from cataract surgery in both eyes. The upside—the doctor implanted a permanent lens in each eye that allow Linda to see 20/20 without glasses!... **Jake Jacobs** (IL) experienced a first as he boarded a plane in the Far East this summer: they made him get on a scale before boarding. Talk about cutting it

close!... **Harald Johanni** (Germany) will end publication of the highly-respected *Backgammon Magazin* with the December issue. Look for details on ordering back issues next month... **Elaine Kehm-Tallackson** (IL) will be teaching a beginning backgammon course Thursdays on the 11th and 18th of November at Francis Parker (330 W. Webster, Chicago). If you know any brand-new players who might be interested, have them sign up by calling 773/549-5904. Price: \$40... Club news: the Tysons Corner Club has moved to the Doubletree Hotel in Falls Church, Virginia Mondays at 7:00 p.m. For info, contact **Bill Etue** at [billetue@aol.com](mailto:billetue@aol.com). **Terry Valentine** (AZ) invites you to the Border Backgammon Club. They meet Thursdays (6:00 p.m.) at Eddie's Dugout in Phoenix, AZ. To learn more, call Terry at 602/791-0300... On a personal note, thanks for all your cards of sympathy on the passing of my dear mother, **Marion Davis**, 31 July 1999. Mom assisted me with all of the CHICAGO POINT mailings, folding every newsletter prior to envelope stuffing, even over the past seven years when she suffered from breast and bone cancer. She is survived by her husband, three sons and one granddaughter. Δ

# PROBLEM #256 ANALYZED

by Kit Woolsey

Match to 5 points. White leads Black, 4 to 3, Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.**



Hitting makes no sense, considering the many return shots and White's strong board. Therefore, the logical candidates are:

- a) 18/14(2)
- b) 18/16(2), 13/11(2)
- c) 13/9(2)

13/9(2) has the advantage of giving Black some time while he sits and waits for those big doubles. If necessary, he can clear the 9-point and/or the 8-point in the next couple of rolls and force White to play.

The problem with this approach is twofold. First of all, only 5-5 and 4-4 will see Black home safely. Secondly, this play splits Black's army in two. The checkers on the bar point are left all by themselves, which could be a serious problem in the future. In addition, if Black does get squeezed off the defensive bar point, White will have shooters covering all parts of the board. Since Black is so far ahead in the race, White has a big timing advantage and will probably be able to hang onto enough points to give Black big problems.

18/14(2) takes the opposite approach. By advancing the back men, Black will now make good progress with any doubles and with 6-1. If Black rolls a six (other than 6-1 or 6-6), he can choose between breaking the 8-point or paying immediately by moving one of the back checkers to the 8-point. Other numbers Black can handle by playing in his inner board. The problem with this play is that Black will be short on

## GRANSTEDT...

[Continued from page 8]

- 29) 61: 9/3, 1/0
- 30) 63: 17/11, 7/4 63: 6/0, 3/0
- 31) 65: 11/0 66: 6/0(2), 3/0(2)
- 32) 62: 5/0, 2/0 Redouble to 8
- 33) Pass (*Granstedt leads 18-2*)

GAD SUCCEEDED in making a match of it, getting as close as 10-19. But the Swede captured the next five games to win by a final score of 25-10.

Snowie statistics show a well-played match by both competitors:

Player: Move errors / Cube errors / Overall error rate

Granstedt: 0.60% / 2.1 / 0.42%

Carmeli: 0.90% / 4.5 / 0.74%

Snowie commentary: Carmeli played at an expert level and Granstedt played at a

spares to play, and if he doesn't roll well quickly, something's got to give.

18/16(2), 13/11(2) is sort of a compromise approach. This hems White in (if that becomes important), and gives Black chances to bring the position home either by rolling doubles and running, or by clearing the 11-point with a 5-3. Unfortunately this play makes Black's 6s terrible, and even if Black succeeds in running the back men home, he still has to worry about clearing the 11-point.

All the candidates have their good and bad points. Which one should be chosen?

When faced with such a problem, I usually consider one of my favorite themes: When ahead in the race, race. When behind in the race, don't race. Here Black is well ahead in the race, which argues for racing. 18/14(2) is the racing play which potentially minimizes contact and threatens to turn the position into a straight race. That is my choice.

In today's modern era of backgammon with the emphasis on timing, primes, and flexibility, the race is often forgotten. However it should be an important consideration for almost all positions.

Keep in mind that backgammon is, in essence, just a race. The object is to run your checkers around the board and take them all off before your opponent. If you are ahead in the race, it is up to your opponent to prove himself, either by containing one of your checkers, hitting a shot, or rolling large enough to catch up in the race. You want to avoid complications; just run on home and win. Problem 256 is a good illustration of this theme. Δ

world class level—fitting for the 1999 World Backgammon Champion. Congratulations to him and the other winners. Complete results. Δ

## 1999 MONTE CARLO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPIONSHIP (231): 1-Jörgen Granstedt (SWE), 2-Gadi Carmeli (ISR), 3/4-Mario Sacchi (IT)/Mario Sequeira (POR); *First Consolation*: 1C-Allan McLean (GB), 2C-Sigurd Karwen (GER), 3C/4C-Patrick Didisheim (SWIZ)/Mauro Fenocchio (IT); *Second Consolation*: 1C-Harald Johanni (GER), 2C-Dale Taylor (GB), 3C/4C-David Nahmad (ISR)/Antonio Ortega (CR); 1LC-Abraham Eitan (ISR), 2LC-Werner Hertel (GER); Ladies Prize: Katie Scalandre (USA). INTERMEDIATE (93): 1-Moshe Tissona (ISR), 2-Kolya Masoyan (ARM), 3/4-John Jacobs (NETH)/Corinne Sellens (GB); *First Consolation*: 1C-Jürgen Schettler (GER), 2C-J.P. McGirr (USA), 3C/4C-Jim Bowman (USA)/Tobias Hellwag (GER); *Second Consolation*: 1C-Heinz Wieland (GER), 2C-Brian Ullitz (DK), 3C/4C-Jan Ebbe Jensen (DK)/Teppo Salo (FIN); 1LC-Stephanie Bazin (FR), 2LC-Torben Nielsen (DK); Ladies Prize: Corinne Sellens (GB). BEGINNER (55): 1-Aaron Davidian (ISR), 2-Tsaruk Manakyan (ARM), 3/4-T. Altendeitering (GER)/Janek Mistowski (DK); *First Consolation*: 1C-Lars Utzon (DK), 2C-Henrik Gwinner (DK), 3C/4C-Edith Afchani (GER)/Jergen Lindgaard (DK); *Second Consolation*: 1C-Lars Boje (DK), 2C-Walter Grob (SWIZ), 3C/4C-Klaus Bierhenkel (GER)/Robin Neumann (DK); 1LC-Morton Nielsen (DK), 2LC-Patricia Rossini (MON); Ladies Prize: Haley Eber (SAFR).

\$1,000 SUPER JACKPOT (80): 1/2/3/4/5 (split)-Mads Andersen (DK) / Gadi Carmeli (ISR) / Joe Dempsey (USA) / Mika Lidov (USA) / Ed Petrillo (USA).

FORTIS WORLD TEAM EVENT (74 teams): 1-26 Red: Phil Laak (USA), Karsten Neilsen (DK) & Elliott Winslow (USA), 2-The Bald & the Beautiful (GB): Simon Gasquoine, Roy Hollands & Corinne Sellens (GB).

LADIES WARM-UP (15): 1-Carol Joy Cole (USA) WEEKEND WARM-UP (64): 1-Martha Ghio (USA) CHAIRMAN'S TROPHY: Carol Joy Cole (USA) COURTESY TROPHY: José Salerna (POR) ELEGANCE TROPHY - LADIES: Marion Eber (SAFR). MEN: Akaki Kikaleichvili (GEO) FIDELITY TROPHY: Jaakko Salava (FIN) TRAVEL TROPHY: Jay Mahathéva (MAL) GOLF TOURNAMENT: 1-Phil Stewart (USA), 2/3-Joe Dempsey (USA) / Walter Grob (SWIZ).

DOUBLES TENNIS TOURNEY (8): 1-Lagana & Andy Rubien (USA), 2-Bensaid & Bazin.



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*"My thanks to all the players who have supported the Nevada Backgammon Association since 1991."*

*—Howard Markowitz, Director*

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