

*26th pittsburgh championships*

**MALCOLM STAYS HOT!**  
**Defeats Foglerlund in Pittsburgh**  
**Culpepper tops Sax in Masters**

Another Pittsburgh Backgammon Championships, another weekend of food, fun, and great backgammon. This year, director Steve Hast welcomed 133 players to the Pittsburgh Greentree Radisson 13–15 February, generating sellout fields in the Championship (64), both Masters (32), and Doubles (32 teams).

For the 11th straight year, the ABT Award Ceremony was held prior to the Saturday morning Calcutta auction (auctioneer Jeb Horton raised \$1100 for charity). Top 2003 finishers Malcolm Davis (TX), Dean Adamian (MI), and Ray Foglerlund (CA) were presented with trophies with honorable mention given to the 4th place finisher Gregg Cattanach (GA). Saturday evening, with only eight players left in the Championship field, the top four ABT finishers were still in contention!

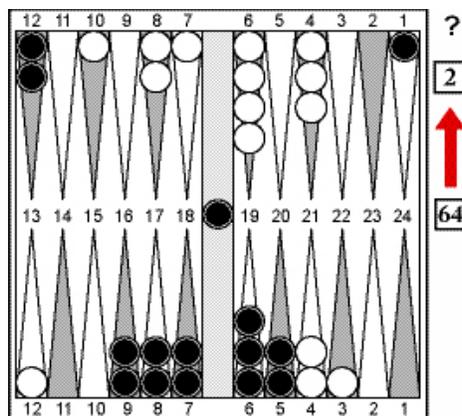


ABT 2003 award winners (from left) Dean Adamian (2nd), Malcolm Davis (1st) and Ray Foglerlund (3rd). Malcolm and Ray finished 1–2 in Pittsburgh.

After defeating Adamian in the quarterfinals, Malcolm was paired against Cattanach in the semifinals. On the other side of the drawsheet, Ray Foglerlund faced Rob Maier (WV). Victories by Malcolm and Ray set up a crowd-pleasing 13-point finals among two of America’s best. And an exciting match it was, highlighted by two 8-cube games. Let’s join the contest in pivotal game three with Davis leading

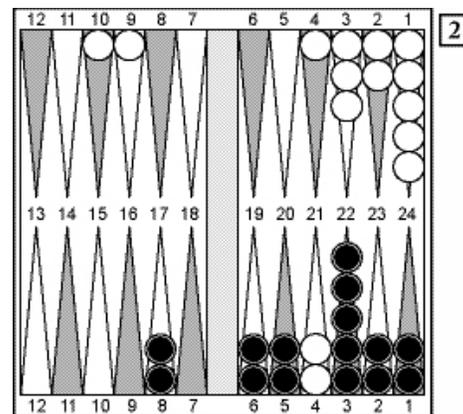
Foglerlund 2–1:

13-point finals. Malcolm Davis (Black) leads Ray Foglerlund (White), 2 to 1. Black on shake. **CUBE ACTIONS?**



It’s the right time to double, but the wrong time to take. Snowie 4 rates cube acceptance here a blunder.

13-point finals. Malcolm Davis (Black) leads Ray Foglerlund (White), 2 to 1. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.**



He could have safely broken his 6-point, but instead, Malcolm volunteered a shot with 8/5, 8/7. This play is clearly correct, winning slightly more games and 4% more gammons that 6/3, 6/5. 8/5, 3/2 is another good way to play the move.

[Continued on page 8]

**Inside:** Carolina Invitational report by Paul Weaver, plus “Uncle Jake the Giant Killer” by Jake Jacobs.

**BAR POINT CLUB WINS ILLINOIS CHALLENGE CUP**



Congratulations to Chicago Bar Point Club members (from left) Tim Mabee, Phyllis Smolinski, Gary Kay, Bob Zavoral, Lucky Nelson, and Herb Roman who compiled an 18–12 record to capture the 2004 Illinois State Challenge Cup. Six clubs from across the state brought their top six finishers of 2003 to Champs Bar in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois for the annual event, now in its 24th year. Team results are on page 9. [Photo by Ed Zell] Δ

# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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## LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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## BACKGAMMON IN SCOTLAND

A fellow player and I have finally bitten the bullet and decided to set up a club in Perth, Scotland. So if you're in the neighborhood . . . :-)

Our club starts this week with some new players coming and (hopefully) staying. We have just about figured how to make the tournament draw, but scoring a league with ratings is a bit different.

We have obtained a system where points are + or - for wins and losses, but as in your article ("How to Form and Operate a Local Backgammon Club"), we don't want to go down the road of deducting points as this will put off novices (and probably myself).

We would be grateful if you could send details of your system to help us out.—  
*Steve Wallace, Perth, Scotland*

*We will be glad to send you the master*

*[Continued on page 3]*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole  
810/232-9731  
[cjc@tir.com](mailto:cjc@tir.com)

\*Denotes new or revised listing

### NATIONAL

*American Backgammon Tour events underlined.*

Mar 4	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Holiday Inn Sugars Lounge, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Mar 6	Springfield Series #5, Peoria Pizza Works, Peoria, Illinois	309/674-0557
Mar 7	Colorado State Tournament, Cadillac Jacks, Denver, Colorado	719/574-5598
Mar 7	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, Ohio	330/268-4610
Mar 13	Ides of March Tournament, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Mar 14*	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, Ohio	614/771-0981
Mar 14	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/779-8209
Mar 14*	South Florida Monthly, NorthRidge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Mar 18	Third Thursday Bonus (Ohio State), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Mar 19-21	2004 Midwest Championships, Wyndham Lisle Hotel, Lisle, Illinois	773/583-6464
Mar 21*	Austin Club Bimonthly Tournament, JC's Bar & Grill, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
Mar 27*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/688-9722
Mar 27	Atlanta Spring Chouette Tourney, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
Mar 27*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Mar 28	Ace Point Club Monthly, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/888-2231
Apr 1*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Holiday Inn Sugars Lounge, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Apr 3*	Springfield Series #6, Damon's the Place for Ribs, Normal, Illinois	217/528-0117
Apr 4	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Apr 4*	11th Spring FIBS Tournament, via computer at <a href="http://www.fibs.com">www.fibs.com</a> e-mail: <a href="mailto:david@escoffery.com">david@escoffery.com</a>	
Apr 4*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, Ohio	330/268-4610
Apr 6*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Apr 10*	Tax Refund Classic, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Apr 11*	South Florida Monthly, NorthRidge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Apr 15*	Third Thursday Bonus (Chicago Open), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Apr 18*	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/779-8209
Apr 16-18	10th Ohio State Championships, Marriott Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio	330/268-4610
Apr 24*	Springfield Series Grand Finale, Wildlife Sports Bar, Springfield, Illinois	217/528-0117
Apr 25*	21st Fleet Underwood Memorial & Benefit, Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
May 5-9*	10th International Cup Tournament, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
May 15*	Michigan Club Challenge/Singles Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
May 28-31	25th Chicago Open, Oak Brook Hills Hotel & Resort, Oak Brook, Illinois	847/674-0120
Jun 6*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jun 11-13*	53rd Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA	818/901-0464
Jul 1-4	29th Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 30-Aug 1	Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York	585/396-0969
Jul 30-Aug 1	Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin	608/516-9109
Aug 12-15	11th Georgia Championships & Peach Cup, Hilton Garden Inn, Atlanta, GA	770/333-1876
Sep 3-6	51st Indiana Open, Sheraton Hotel & Suites, Indianapolis, Indiana	317/255-8902
Oct 8-10	Illinois State Championships, Pere Marquette Hotel, Peoria, Illinois	217/528-0117
Oct 15-17	Florida State Championship, Sheraton Suites, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Oct 29-31*	2004 Minnesota Open, Mystic Lake Casino, Prior Lake, Minnesota	651/699-6758
Dec 3-5*	54th Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA	818/901-0464

### OUTSIDE USA

Mar 4-7*	1st Braugold Cup, Salzunger Hof, Bad Salzungen, Germany	49-52164314
Mar 7-13*	Le Trophée des Alpes, Palace Hotel, Gstaad & St. Moritz, Switzerland	33147-587179
Mar 9-12*	6th Abu Dhabi International Championships, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates	9712-4436333
Mar 13-14	Slattery Scottish Open, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	44152-2888676
Mar 26-28*	Schwaben-Cup goes Franken, Ramada Hotel, Nürnberg, Germany	49711-486190
Apr 3-4	At-A-Glance British Open, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	44152-2888676
Apr 8-12	16th Nordic "Wide" Open, Scandic Hotel, Copenhagen, Denmark	4533-363601
Apr 17-18	British Time Trials, George Ramada Hotel, Solihull, England	44163-4304908
Apr 22-25	1st Casino Salzburg Open, Casino Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria	49171-542222
Apr 25-29*	1st Tango BG Tourney, Buenos Aires Hilton-Iguazo Falls, Argentina	5411-43736138
Apr 29-May 2	4th City of Jesolo BG & Gin Tournament, Hotel Casa Bianca, Jesolo, Italy	3932-90513415
May 8-9	County Cups Trophy, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	44152-2888676
May 21-23*	16th European Championship/3rd Velden Open, Casino Velden, Austria	392-69018168
Jun 5-6	Hilton Trophy, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	44152-2888676
Jun 10-13*	Schwaben-Cup goes Franken, Ramada Hotel, Nürnberg, Germany	49711-486190
Jun 19-20	Peter Bennet's 50th Birthday, Ramada Jarvis, East Grinstead, England	44163-4304908
Jul 3-4*	Keren Di Bona Memorial, Hanover Hotel, Hinckley, England	44152-2888676
Jul 8-11*	16th City of Venice International Tournament, Venice, Italy	3932-90513415
Jul 12-18	29th World Championship, Grand Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	USA: 954/527-4033

## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

point chart we use at the Bar Point Club, Steve. If you want to increase your attendance, you are right to use a system that adds to the player's point total when he wins but doesn't diminish his total when he loses.—Ed.

### PRIVATE PLAY ONLINE

Is there a website that two players can both access and play a private game? Even after checking your valuable Gammon Links site ([www.chicagopoint.com/links.html](http://www.chicagopoint.com/links.html)), I still am unable to find one.—Robert Lee, via Internet

Webmaster Art Grater responds: GamesGrid for one will let you exclude everyone else (or particular persons) from watching. I'm sure other sites allow that as well (a server listing is at my website [www.back-gammon.com](http://www.back-gammon.com)). Additionally, some of the player programs facilitate that. I suggest [www.bg-blitz.com](http://www.bg-blitz.com).—Art Grater, Pebble Beach, California

### JJ x 2

Quick update from Las Vegas: For all the doubters, we did it! ;-)

Attached is a pic from our "Little White Chapel Drive-up" wedding on January 29 (the only way to go). We went to the same place that Britney got married (LOL): in-and-out for only \$40.00. Helped offset some of the damage from the tables.

Take care all and see everybody soon.  
—John and Jena Jennings, Springfield, IL



Mr. & Mrs. Jennings pose for a wedding pic at the Little White Chapel Drive-Up.

### BACKGAMMON TABLE

I will be moving from my large house to a condo and it (sadly) necessitates my selling my wonderful backgammon table. Do you have any venue to offer this for sale? Attached you will find pictures of the table.—Ed Bergman, Fountain Hills, Arizona



The table is quite expensive. Interested parties may contact Chicago Point for further information.—Ed.

### BUILDING A BOARD

You have an impressive list of retailers of backgammon boards, but the top quality boards are quite expensive. Do you know of any woodworking plans if I want

[Continued on page 4]



## AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2004

Compiled through 29 February after 3 tournaments  
(Upcoming events: Midwest Championships, Ohio State)



Malcolm Davis	22.22	Philip Smith	5.41	Richard Martin	2.71	Ron Sanders	1.55
Gregg Cattanach	17.47	Rob Maier	5.08	Cem Aslan	2.59	Becca Thompson	1.10
Ray Fogelrud	10.23	Jordan Lampe	5.08	Bruce Ballance	2.52	Susan Hathaway	1.01
Brent Cohen	10.23	Asad Zaltash	4.24	Danielle Bastarache	2.50	Joe Davidson	1.01
Betty Coppic	9.14	Bear Lumbra	4.24	Julian Haley	2.12	Matt Little	1.00
Mike Corbett	8.24	Ben Elliott	3.96	Rich Catalano	2.12	Stacy Turner	0.67
Don Faix	6.20	Ed Bennett	3.88	Kevin Kelly	2.12	Dave Wetzell	0.67
Carl Sorg	6.20	Jim Hall	3.88	Arlene Austin	1.98	Bruce Brinson	0.57
Doug Roberts	6.08	Vadim Musaelyan	3.11	Petko Kostadinov	1.55	Tony Garcia	0.57



## CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2004 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU 29 FEB.

Tim Mabee	5.04	Bill Davis	2.72	Mark Phillips	1.60	Cookie Frazin	0.80
Bob Zavoral	4.80	Mike Sutton	2.68	Bill Stegich	1.52	Rick Sorci	0.80
Phil Simborg	4.32	Phyllis Smolinski	2.48	Roger Hickman	1.36	Lucky Nelson	0.72
David Rockwell	3.92	Norma Shyer	2.36	Dave Cramer	1.20	Tak Morioka	0.72
Bob Steen	3.60	Carter Mattig	2.00	Wayne Wiest	1.16	Roy Cohen	0.72
Joe Wollick	3.48	Val Zimnicki	1.96	Michael Peters	1.16	Joe Auszmann	0.60
Herb Roman	3.44	Bill Keefe	1.92	Joann Feinstein	1.08	Jay Bleiman	0.56
Howard Ring	3.12	Alice Kay	1.92	Barbara Levinson	1.04	Linda Rockwell	0.56
David Marcus	3.00	Royal Robinson	1.76	Tom Meyer	0.96	Amy Trudeau	0.56
Gary Kay	2.88	Mark Murray	1.60	Adrian Rios	0.80	John O'Connor	0.40
Paul Baraz	2.76						

January Player of the Month: **BOB ZAVORAL** (3.36) was a finalist in three out of the four January tournaments to grab the early lead in the 2004 BPC points race. Bob Steen (2.40) and Mike Sutton (2.28) placed second and third respectively.

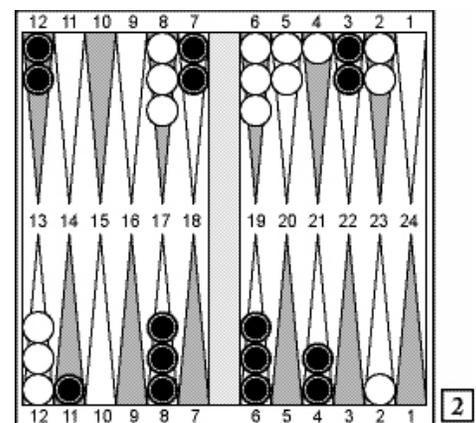
February Player of the Month: **TIM MABEE** earned 4.32 points in February to take the top spot. David Rockwell (3.20) placed second and David Marcus (3.00) was third.

your move

## PROBLEM #297

to be analyzed by Walter Trice

5-point match. Black leads White 3 to 1. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-5.**



ASK  
DANNY

© 2004 by Danny Kleinman

## WHAT'S IN A NICKNAME?

**D**ear Danny: Recently I talked with a well-known backgammon champion, Dallas Backgammon League director Tom Wheeler, at the Riviera Backgammon Tournament in Las Vegas. At that time, Tom insisted that henceforth, I should refer to him by the moniker "Z."

Here is the problem. There is already a very prominent backgammon champion, Steve Zolotow, who everybody already knows as "Z." He has used this nickname for 35 years. Shouldn't this interloper be obligated to at least refer to himself as "Z junior," or "Number Two Z"? Can, for example, a newcomer to boxing refer to himself as Mohammed Ali—"The Greatest"?

Backgammon is a line of business and name identification is valuable (e.g. X-22). Can someone usurp another's celebrity name?—Michael "Max" Maxakuli

**Dear M:** Funny you should mention Mohammed Ali, a military leader and contemporary of Napoleon's who was born in Turkey and became ruler of Egypt, Syria and Arabia. His name was usurped by Cassius Clay, a prizefighter from Louisville who claimed to be "The Greatest" (although the greatest heavyweight boxer was actually Joe Louis—er, Joseph Louis Barrow).

Speaking of Louisville, some years ago I received a telephone call from a woman whose name I did not recognize. She was trying to get in touch with an old school-mate of hers named Danny Kleinman and asked if I was he. "Did you go to school in Louisville?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied. "I attended George Rogers Clark School in 1944."

"You're not the one. I went to school in Louisville with Danny Kleinman in 1951."

Some upstart had usurped my name, even before I became a celebrity.

I met Steve Zolotow, a most pleasant young man, about 35 years ago, when we played bridge and O'Hell together. Another Danny (yes, many people usurped my name) nicknamed him "Chuckles." I should think one nickname enough for any person, but apparently Steve was so greedy as to demand two, and adopted the nickname "Z" (which I didn't know until I received your letter, M). I guess "Z" is a "natural" nickname for someone whose surname begins with that letter.

However, Tom Wheeler's usurpation of Z's nickname isn't the first in the world of games. When I moved from New York to Los Angeles, I found that "The Beast" was no longer Ira Rubin (now a Hall-of-Famer) but another bridge player, the pro Conrad Potvin (who unlike Ira, *looked* like a beast but was a gentle soul). In Los Angeles O'Hell games during the 1960s, a player named Irving spoke with a heavy Brooklyn accent and thus acquired the nickname "Oiving." Soon another Irving, also with a Brooklyn accent, joined our games and usurped the nickname "Oiving." How

could we distinguish the two? By calling the first "the Original Oiving," which soon became abbreviated "OO."

In the 1970s, an intelligent and informed young man who played bridge and backgammon, Richard Rodgers, arrived at the Cavendish West Club. Soon, eschewing the obvious choice of nickname "Hammerstein," he began calling himself "RR." I was present when an older bridge and backgammon player, Richard Ryder, objected, "You can't be RR: I'm RR."

Intervening quickly to prevent an incipient fistfight, I turned to Richard Rodgers and said, "You're EE."

"EE?" he asked. "What's that?"

"You're the *Erudite Englishmon*," I replied. The nickname stuck.

Names and nicknames are not proprietary, M. Titles, whether of books or songs, cannot be copyrighted. Soon after Beatles Lennon and McCartney wrote *Words of Love*, Papa John of the Mamas and Papas wrote a very different song with the same title, only to have his own nickname usurped by a pizza company.

Although Tom Wheeler is certainly entitled to use "Z" as a nickname, I'll offer him one that is more appropriate: the first letter of *his own* surname. From now on, Tom, please call yourself "Dubya" and leave poor Chuckles alone.—*Yours, K Δ*

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

## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

to build one myself?—Peter Gordon, via Internet

Buy the checkers before constructing the board. Then build the storage tray and quadrants to accommodate them. When six checkers are laid on the 1- through 6-point, there should be about 1/8 inch of play between the checkers and the frame.

Additionally, we have the January 1931 Popular Mechanics that includes the article "Inlaid Backgammon Board Made Easy." The described board is designed for 1.25 inch checkers, but everything can be relatively increased for larger checkers.

If you would like a copy, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Chicago Point; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue 504; Chicago, IL 60659.—Ed.



# Play to win.

## 10th Annual Ohio State Backgammon Championships

April 16–18, 2004

Cleveland Marriott Airport Hotel

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\$67 room rates, single or dbl.

(Reserve by March 17)

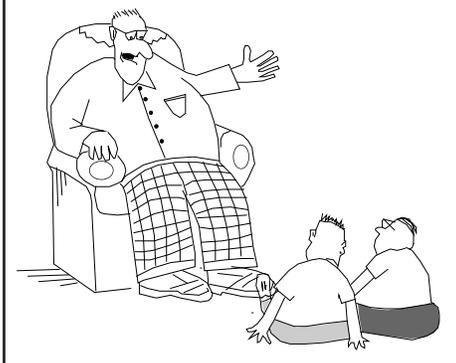
Rooms: (800) 228-9290

Joe Miller: (330) 268-4610

[osbc@neo.rr.com](mailto:osbc@neo.rr.com)

# UNCLE JAKE, THE GIANT-KILLER

By Jake Jacobs



“Why didn’t you stay with us when you were Los Angeles, Uncle Jake?”

“I would have Nick, but after our matches we went out to the sushi restaurant next door, and it was too late to drive up to Santa Clarita.”

“What were you doing there, Uncle Jake?”

“Research, Alex. We were trying to discover which cold saké goes down best after you’ve lost all your matches.”

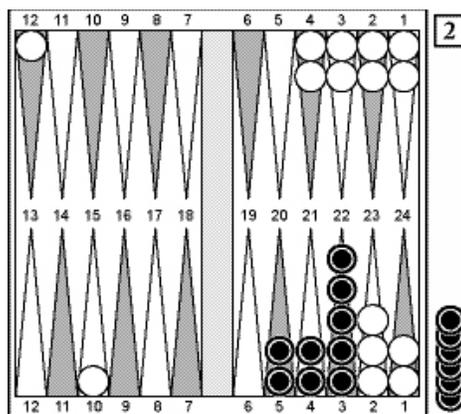
“That sounds hard!”

“It was, Nick. Fortunately among the research assistants I assembled for this project were Uncle Carter, Uncle Frank, and Uncle JJ. For a project of this nature you couldn’t ask for a more dedicated team of professionals.”

“What did you learn, Uncle Jake?”

“That it is possible to spend \$300 in a Beverly Hills sushi bar without ordering any food. Speaking of eating . . . Alex, stop your cousin Aiden. He’s trying to eat the checkers! Good boy Aiden! Put those down and I’ll show you a tasty position from the tournament.”

Money game. **BLACK ON SHAKE.**



“This happened in one of the chouttes. First Black rolled 6-4 and left a

triple shot, then White missed with 6-1. Then, Black rolled 3-3! I love it when the horror builds and builds.”

“What happened then?”

“Does it matter, Nick? White redoubled and Black failed to beaver, so from that point on *neither* of them deserved to win. No way both sides could get what was coming to them.”

“Do they usually?”

“Sometimes. Once, I was playing in Las Vegas against a giant.”

“A real giant, Uncle Jake?”

“Better believe it, Alex! He was almost as tall as Shaq, and he moved the checkers with fingers the size of bananas.”

“Beanstalk!”

“No beanstalk, Aiden, but this giant was way up in the clouds. He stacked *three* chairs on top of each other, and his head was so high that if it were ski season he would have been above the snowline from the jowls up.”

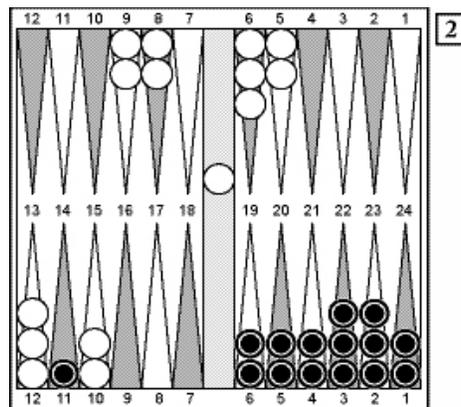
“Was he a friendly giant, Uncle Jake, like Hagrid?”

“No Nick, he was a mean giant. Whenever I got a good roll he’d make rumbling noises, like he was about to chant *Fee! Fie! Fo! Fum!* And he’d flap his elbows like he was getting ready to grab my ears and twist my head off!”

“Wow, I bet you rolled really bad after that!”

“Are you kidding! I rolled my a \_\_ . . . I, um, got pretty good dice. The better I rolled, the more he rumbled and flapped. Then, when I was leading 11-1 to 13, it seemed like things were finally going his way.”

Match to 13 points. Uncle Jake (White) leads the Giant (Black), 11-1. **BLACK ON SHAKE.**



“He was Black here, and I was on the bar. What do you think he rolled?”

“His dice?”

“Cute, Nick, very cute!” He rolled 1-1.”

“That isn’t so bad.”

“No kidding! Forget winning, he still *gammons* me three quarters of the time.

But when he saw the roll, he roared ‘*Arrgh!*’ at the top of his lungs. He snatched the dice off the board, and hurled them across the room. The playing room in the hotel was huge, and we were over against one wall. The dice sailed the length of the long, long table, whizzed across the aisle, sailed the length of the table across the aisle, and hit the far wall.

“Just at that moment, coming down the aisle, was Max, who used to publish your uncle’s stuff in the old *Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine*. Max stopped in his tracks when he heard the giant roar. A good thing, too, because those dice whizzed by so close Max’s five o’clock shadow got trimmed back to one-thirty.

“The giant got up, and went lumbering after the dice. As he did, he chanted ‘*Fee! Fie! Fo! Fum!*’ Actually, he changed the words a little, but they still started with ‘F.’

“Max stood there in the aisle, and he cocked one eyebrow at me, as if to ask: ‘What did you do now?’ The giant stomped by him like T-Rex, and he had to crane his neck way back to watch him. Max stood there, hands on hips, watching as the giant went to the far away wall and retrieved the dice. He watched as the giant came huffing back, craning his neck once again for a better view. Then he cocked his other eyebrow at me, as the giant came down the aisle and returned to his seat.

“The giant had to readjust his three chairs—they were askew from when he jumped off of them. All that walking and deep breathing had calmed him down. He sat down, took a deep breath, and carefully arranged the dice on the board, so they once again showed ace-ace. Then do you know what he did?”

“What, Uncle Jake?”

“He screamed ‘*Arrgh!*’ once again, snatched up the dice, and hurled them once more!”

“Did he ever finish the game?”

“Alex, when he got back the second time he was all screamed out. He cleared his 6-point, and then I rolled 6-5 off the bar, and won the game and match.”—“Uncle” Jake Jacobs Δ

## Midwest Backgammon Championships

March 17-19, 2004

Wyndham Lisle Hotel, Illinois

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



# STUART THOMSON WINS AN OUTSTANDING QUEEN CITY CUP

Cattanach Captures Championship  
By Paul Weaver

John and Robin Horton did an amazing job in organizing and directing the 4th annual Carolina Invitational. This outstanding and enjoyable tournament was held in the spacious Woodlawn Holiday Inn January 16-18. Once again, attendance increased this year, up to 67 main flight participants from as far away as Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Mexico City.

In the Open division, Atlanta area expert Gregg Cattanach got off to a quick start in the 2004 ABT points race by defeating local player Don Faix twice to win the double elimination format. Congratulations to Gregg, who continues to be one of the hottest players in our game.



Carolina Open winner Gregg Cattanach

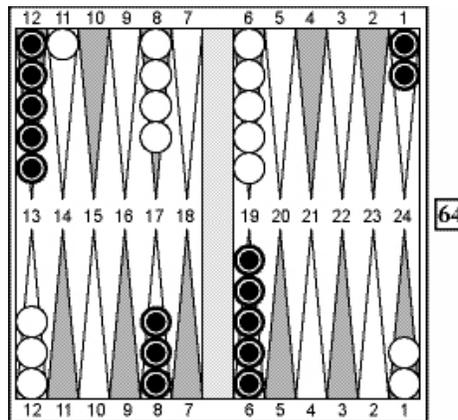
The Queen City Cup Masters event drew a full 16-player field with Stuart Thomson meeting John O'Hagan in the finals. Stuart, originally from Ottawa, has lived in Atlanta for the past seven years, and is one of the strongest players in the Southeast. John, the best player in Indiana, is also top-ranked in the Midwest.



Queen City Cup champ Stuart Thomson.

The Snowie error rates for both players in the finals were between 2.1 and 2.3, making this one of the best-played finals in the history of backgammon. In addition to being outstanding players, Stuart and John are gentlemen who exhibit exemplary etiquette both during and after their matches. Let's take a look at a few interesting positions from the match.

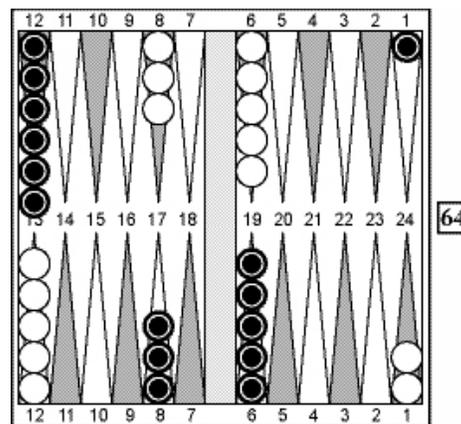
**Pos. 1:** 13-point match. John O'Hagan (Black) and Stuart Thomson (White) tied at 2-2. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-1.**



Stuart opened with 5-2 (bringing two down) and John correctly slotted the 5-pt with his 4-1 response. Extensive rollouts on Jellyfish, Snowie-3 and Snowie-4 indicate that slotting (13/9, 6/5) with 4-1 in the opening position is fairly close but measurably wrong. However, the case for slotting with 4-1 in Position 1 vs. slotting in the opening position is much stronger for these reasons:

- Some of White's 4s (4-1 and 6-4) are more constructive here than in the opening position. Slotting duplicates more of White's 4s.
- Black's race is 7 pips less favorable. It is less costly for Black to get hit when he already trails in the race.
- By slotting his 5-pt, Black begins to construct a prime. If he is missed and a prime-versus-prime position evolves, Black's less favorable race will work to his advantage.
- The alternative play of splitting with an ace (24/23, 13/9) may seem innocuous when White has only a one-point board; but in fact, it is riskier when White has more ammunition on his side of the board.

**Pos. 2:** 13-point match. John O'Hagan (Black) leads Stuart Thomson (White) 7 to 6. **WHITE TO PLAY 2-1.** (See position, upper right.)



John opened with 6-5 running and Stuart (White) responded with 2-1. This exact position was discussed in my Saturday morning seminar, just 28 hours earlier. Many experts routinely split (24/23, 13/11) here. Indeed, before the advent of Snowie and Jellyfish, nearly everyone split in this position. Stuart correctly slotted, 13/11, 6/5.

By contrast, the slot/split decision with 2-1 in the opening position is very close (within 0.005). The case for slotting with 2-1 in Position 2 is much stronger than the case for slotting with 2-1 in the opening position, for these reasons:

- White's race is 11 pips less favorable. It is less costly for White to get hit when he already trails in the race.
- If there is an exchange of hits on White's 5-point, Black will have only a single shot from the bar (15 numbers) at White's 5-point blot, compared to a double shot from the bar (21 numbers) if Black had two checkers back. Moreover, Black will be unable to anchor with only one checker back.
- One of Black's hitting rolls, 4-1, awkwardly forces him to leave a shot on his own side of the board.



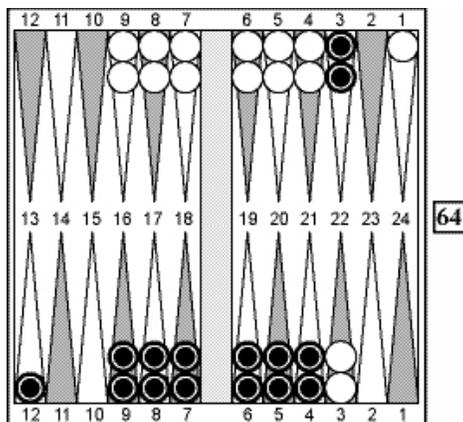
Calcutta Auctioneer Peter Kalba with tourney administrator and Skunk Dice referee Robin Horton.

The player who understands the subtleties of early game checker play has a great advantage over his opponent who does not.

[Continued on next page]

[Positions 1 and 2 and a myriad of other positions will be discussed in great depth in a book about early game checker play by Nack Ballard and Paul Weaver, scheduled for publication later this year.—Ed.]

**Pos. 3:** 13-point match. John O'Hagan (Black) leads Stuart Thomson (White) 10 to 6. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-3.**



Position 3 dramatically illustrates that backgammon is an interesting, challenging and difficult game. I believe that over the board, the vast majority of players would make a whopper with 6-3. (Paul Magriel defines a “whopper” as an error of 0.10 or greater.) Undoubtedly, when presented as a problem, more would find the correct play.

Unfortunately for Black, he must break his six-prime with 6-3. Notice that White, also, is in danger of breaking his own six-prime.

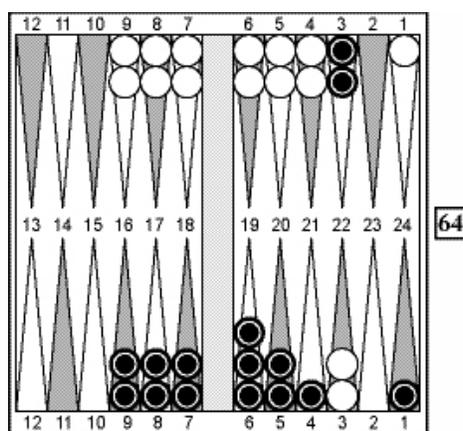
Black's candidate plays are:

- a. 12/6, 9/6 White breaks with 25 numbers.
- b. 8/5, 8/2 White breaks with 27 numbers.
- c. 7/4, 7/1 White breaks with 29 numbers.
- d. 12/6, 5/2 White breaks with 32 numbers.
- e. 12/6, 4/1 White breaks with 34 numbers.

I believe that most players would quickly play 8/5, 8/2 or 7/4, 7/1, and either not see or quickly dismiss the best move.

In this position, Black should sacrifice any notions of purity. The prime consideration (pardon the pun) is how often White, on his next roll, will be forced to break his own six-prime. As the above chart illustrates, White is most likely to break if Black makes the bizarre-looking play (e) (diagrammed in 3A), breaking his 4-point.

**Pos. 3A:** Black has played 6-3 correctly: 12/6, 4/1.



The best play is 12/6 4/1; all other moves are whoppers! A play that breaks an inner point and slots a lower one is sometimes known as a “banana split” (though

perhaps “banana slot” would be a more accurate term).

In the actual game, John played 8/5, 8/2. Stuart doubled a few rolls later, but John won the game with double 3s on the last shake, taking a 12–6 lead in the 13-point match. Stuart then went on a rampage, winning the last five games to claim the match and the Queen City Cup title. Congratulations to both Stuart and John for their world-class play!

I am very pleased to acknowledge and thank Nack Ballard for his valuable suggestions in helping me with this article.

On behalf of all the participants, I thank Jeb and Robin for their hard work and the pleasurable experience they gave us for the entire weekend!—Paul Weaver Δ

#### 4th Carolina Invitational

**OPEN (31):** 1-Gregg Cattanach (GA), 2-Don Faix (NC); 1C-Carl Sorg (SC), 2C-Vadim MUSAELYAN (NC), 3C/4C-Petko Kostadinov (SC) / Ron Sanders (NC). **INTERMEDIATE (27):** 1-Philip Smith (NC), 2-Ben Elliott (NC); 1C-Richard Martin (NC), 2C-Cem Aslan (GA), 3C/4C-Stacy Turner (FL) / Dave Wetzell (MN). **NOVICE (9):** 1-Becca Thompson (NC), 2-Bruce Brinson (NC); 1C-Tony Garcia (NC). **LAST CHANCE (12):** 1-Phil Simborg (IL), 2-Robin Guthrie (VA). **QUEEN CITY CUP (16):** 1-Stuart Thomson (GA), 2-John O'Hagan (IN). **DOUBLES (16 teams):** 1-Diane Varner (NC) & Dave Wetzell (MN), 2-Charlie Cole (WV) & Peter Kalba (IL). **BLITZ (16):** 1-Randy Armstrong (IL), 2-Peter Kalba (IL). **QUICKIE KNOCK-OUT (16):** 1-Tony Garcia (NC), 2-Cem Aslan (GA). **SKUNK DICE:** 1- Carl Sorg (SC).



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**PUB CLUB:** Tourn. Mon., 7:00 P.M. at Danny's Grill and Bar, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Joe Wollick (847/942-2068).

**BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BACKGAMMON CLUB:** Tournaments Monday, 6:30 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

**SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.:** Tournaments Wed., 6:30 P.M. at Brewhaus, 617 E. Washington, Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

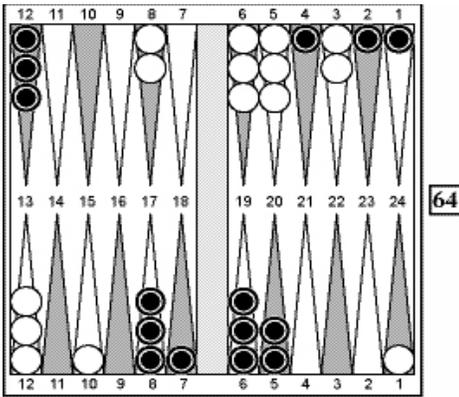
**WINNETKABG CLUB:** Tournaments Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Chibnik (847/446-0537).

**PEORIABACKGAMMON CLUB:** Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Ed Zell (309/674-0557).

# PROBLEM #296 ANALYZED

by Kit Woolsey

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



So many things to do, so little time. Black can make an anchor, make the offensive four point, or hit. All of these plays improve his position.

If Black makes the anchor, he should

probably play 13/9 with the four rather than 7/3. This improves his chances of making a blockade, and duplicates White's hitting sixes. 7/3 would create a new hitting number. Thus, the choices are 24/21, 13/9; 13/10\*, 10/6; and 8/4, 7/4.

Making the anchor secures against a crushing blitz and keeps Black in the game. The problem is that the game isn't very attractive. Black is behind in the race, behind in board development, White has only one checker back, and White has several hitting rolls. This approach may concede fewer gammons, but it doesn't make an attempt to win the game.

Hitting sends a second checker back and puts White on the bar. There are several blots, but White has to enter first. White has the stronger inner board so a blot-hitting contest favors White, but as long as Black survives he won't mind an exchange of hits. With reasonable luck he could wind up with an anchor and two or more of White's checkers back, which would give Black very reasonable winning chances.

Making the 4-point equalizes the inner board strength and leaves Black with a very

pure position. The problem with this play is that it is then White's roll. White's builders are nicely distributed, and Black has three vulnerable checkers in White's board. There is a significant danger that White will be able to carry out an attack if she has her full roll to play.

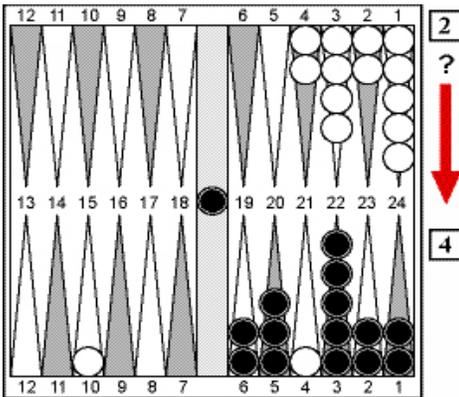
While all three plays have their advantages, the arguments for the hitting play are strongest. This both sends a second checker back—which is helpful for winning the game—and puts White on the bar which prevents her from attacking next roll. Leaving four blots is dangerous, but the odds are that White won't be able to take full advantage of them since she must use half of her roll to enter. Black will probably emerge with some anchor and a decent chance to win frontwards.

"When in doubt, hit" is a good motto. This position nicely illustrates the power of hitting. The alternatives only work on one aspect of Black's position and leaves White free to improve. Hitting both improves Black's position and cuts down on White's good rolls. Δ

## PITTSBURGH...

[Continued from page 1]

13-point finals. Malcolm Davis (Black) leads Ray Foglerund (White), 2 to 1. White on shake. **RECUBE ACTIONS?**

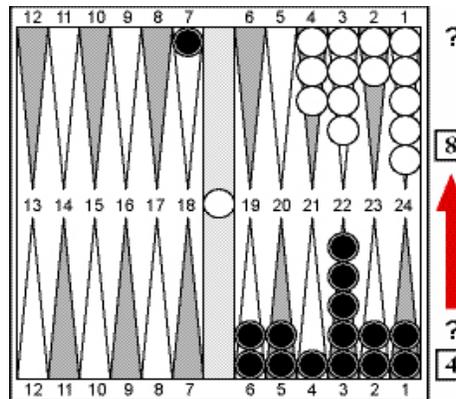


Despite an eight pip race lead, Ray should not double yet. On this turn, he only loses his market when he rolls a 10 or greater (8 shakes).



Director Steve Hast awards the Advanced winner's trophy to Betty Coppic.

13-point finals. Malcolm Davis (Black) leads Ray Foglerund (White), 2 to 1. Black on shake. **RECUBE ACTIONS?**



Here Malcolm offers the perfectly timed redouble that Ray must take. If Malcolm waits a roll, he very likely loses his market.

Malcolm went on to win eight points and closed out the match 13–1 (holding an 8-cube) in the next game. Overall, Snowie ranked Malcolm's play as World Class with a 2.75 error rate. Once again, the tall Texan is the man to catch in ABT 2004.



Master's Champ Dennis Culpepper.

In the Master's Jackpot, congratulations to Dennis Culpepper (VA) defeated Steve Sax (CA), 11–6. Look for a review of the match by Steve in the April CHICAGO POINT. Congrats also to Betty Coppic (GA) on her big win in the Advanced division, and to Arlene Austin (PA) for capturing the Beginner title. Complete results: Δ

CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-Malcolm Davis (TX), 2-Ray Foglerund (CA), 3/4-Gregg Cattanach (GA) / Rob Maier (WV); 1C-Brent Cohen (PA), 2C-Jordan Lampe (NY); 1LC-Doug Roberts (MA), 2LC-Jeb Horton (NC). ADVANCED (53): 1-Betty Coppic (GA), 2-Bear Lumbr (VT), 3/4-Rich Catalano (PA) / Kevin Kelly (NJ); 1C-Asad Zaltash (PA), 2C-Julian Haley (SC); 1LC-Bruce Ballance (PA). NOVICE (16): 1-Arlene Austin (PA), 2-Joe Davidson (PA); 1C-Susan Hathaway (VA). MASTERS JACKPOT (32): 1-Dennis Culpepper (VA), 2-Steve Sax (CA), 3/4-Mary Hickey (OH) / John Rockwell (CA). AMATEUR JACKPOT (32): 1-Pete Townsend (PA), 2-Jonah Seewald (CO), 3/4-Ilia Guzei (WI) / Woody Woodworth (IN). DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Jonah Seewald (CO) & Sho Sengoku (CA), 2-Marilyn Kubiak (PA) & Jon Stephens (OH), 3/4-Carol Joy Cole (MI) & Boris Dekhtyar (NJ) / Gregg Cattanach (GA) & Jeb Horton (NC). LIMITED DOUBLES (8 teams): 1-Bob & Susan Hathaway (VA), 2-Bear Lumbr (VT) & Alan Robinson (Canada). PITTSBURGH MEMORIAL CUP (16): 1-Steve Mellen (NY), 2-Abbas Zaltash (PA). (In memory of John Brussel.) THREE RIVERS AMATEUR CUP (8): 1-Rainer Stachowitz (VA), 2-Bob Greenhill (NJ). EARLY ELIMINATION TOURNEY (8): 1-Woody Woodworth (IN). MICRO BLITZ (96): 1-Vadim MUSAELYAN (NC), 2-Stuart Katz (NY). \$10 QUICKIES (32): 1-Sho Sengoku (CA). \$20 (8): 1-Mary Hickey (OH).

**WINNER'S  
CIRCLE**



JAN.-FEB. 2004

•**9th Thai Open** (South Pattaya, Thailand; 1-6 Jan.)... OPEN (44): 1-Ernest Ho (USA), 2-Frank Simon (GER), 3/4-Joachim "Khun Kim" Frobel (GER/THAI) / John Slattery (SCOT); 1C-Markus Michel (GER), 2C-Jurek Peter Sarzynski (GER/THAI); 1LC-Hardy Janotta (GER). SUPER JACKPOT (16): 1-Markus Michel (GER), 2-Shinichiro Kaneko (JPN), 3/4-Vichai Kwatra (THAI)/Gerhard Schulze (GER/THAI). CROCODILE CATCHER (128): 1-Shinichiro Kaneko (JPN), 2-Max Modesti (HK). DESPERADO CUP (11): 1-Markus Michel (GER), Rosey Bensley (UK).

•**Springfield Series #3** (Normal, IL; 3 Jan.)... OPEN (32): 1-Randy Reiff, 2-Chuck Bower (IN); 1C-John Jennings, 2C-Randy Armstrong; 1LC-David Rockwell.

•**Ed Chambers Memorial** (Houston, TX; 10 Jan.)... OPEN (27): 1-Gary Oleson, 2-David Cohen; 1C-Ira Hessel, 2C-Jack Erwin.

•**Bright 'N' Breezy BIBA Tournament** (Brighton, England; 10-11 Jan.)... OPEN (110): 1-Mark Heidenfeld, 2-Nicky Check, 3/4-Peter Christmas / David Robbins; 1C-Eddie Barker, 2C-Dod Davies, 3C/4C-Mardi Ohannessian / Elliot Smart; 1LC-Raj Jansari, 2LC-David Markwick, 3LC/4LC-Nodar Gagaa (Republic of Georgia)/Diana Sulimirski. TIDAL WAVE (64): 1-Alex Naylor, 2-Peter Bennet, 3/4-Dan Boxall / Lawrence Powell. SUPER JACKPOT (8): 1/2-Peter Bennet / Raj Jansari. £100 JACKPOT (8): 1-Clyde Wolpe (South Africa), 2-Raj Jansari. FRIDAY NIGHT WARM-UP (32): 1-Mardi Ohannessian, 2-Paul Statter. DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Bright 'n' Teasy, 2-Cirque de Son, 3/4-Another Charitable Donation / Im 'n' Er.

•**NEBC Monthly** (Somerville, MA; 11 Jan.)... OPEN: 1-Ed Abou-Zeid, 2-Dean Carmeris; 1C-Alex Zamanian.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 11 Jan.)... OPEN (8): 1-Phil Simborg (IL), 2-Dimitri Vesselinov. INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Danielle Bastarache, 2-John Gdowik.

•**3rd Boston Open & Masters Jackpots** (Boston, MA; 15-19 Jan.)... OPEN (18): 1-Ed O'Laughlin (FL), 2-Jon Viator (CA), 3/4-Al Cantito (CT) / Greg Thomajan (MA); 1C-Thomas Hanlon (CT). ADVANCED (24): 1-Robert Tansi (MA), 2-Jeff Kerper (NY), 3/4-Stewart Pemberton (NJ) / Belle Pronman (MA); 1C-Igor Sheyn (MA). INTERMEDIATE (27): 1-Donald Gabbai (NY), 2-Richard Jacobs (RI), 3/4-Dan Miller / Jim Van Sciber; 1C-Victoria Ondis (NJ). GAMESGRID MASTERS JACKPOT (5): 1-Ed O'Laughlin (FL), 2-Boris Golubov (NY). MASTERS GIANT JACKPOT (8): 1-Howard Markowitz

(NV), 2-David Sherrill (NY). AMATEUR JACKPOT (4): 1-Doug Zare (MA), 2-Martha Ghio (NY). QUIZ GAMMON CONTEST (9): 1-Doug Zare (MA) with a score of 66 out of 100 points. SENIORS TOURNAMENT (13): 1-Gil Evans (NH), 2-Dean Carmeris (MA). LADIES TOURNAMENT (10): 1-Andrea Dedekam (MA), 2-Victoria Ondis (NJ). DOUBLES TOURNAMENT (10 teams): 1-Rod Covlin (NY) & Larry Liebster (NJ), 2-Martha Ghio (NY) & Howard Markowitz (NV). LOBSTER CHASE (128): 1-Greg Thomajan (MA), 2-Larry Liebster (NJ). CHOUETTE TOURNAMENT (12): 1-Doug Zare (MA), 2-Carlos Salgado (NY). MASTERS FINAL JACKPOT (4): 1-Howard Markowitz (NV), 2-Ed O'Laughlin (FL). LAST CHANCE: 1-Joe Moore (MA), 2-Doug Zare (MA).

•**Springfield Series #4** (Springfield, IL; 7 Feb.)... OPEN (17): 1-Greg Michaels, 2-Ed Zell; 1C-Milad Doueih, 2C-Jena Jennings; 1LC-Sean Garber.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 8 Feb.)... OPEN (8): 1-Ken Bond, 2-Larry Ferruzzi. INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Don Heinsler, 2-Robert Christensen.

•**BPC Doubles Championship** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 8 Feb.)... OPEN (19 teams): 1-Bill Davis & Bill Stegich, 2-Cookie Frazin & Rick Sorci, 3/4-Amy Trudeau & Val Zimmnick / David & Linda Rockwell.



2004 Bar Point Club Doubles Champions Bill Davis & Bill Stegich. [Photo by Peter Kalba]

•**2004 South Australia Open** (Adelaide, S. Australia; 22 Feb.)... OPEN (22): 1-Theo Georgiou, 2-Emil Andawos, 3/4-Peter Geelen / Gordon Neilson.

•**2004 Illinois State Challenge Cup** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 22 Feb.)... (6 teams): 1-Bar Point Club (18-12), 2-Sangamon Valley (17-13), 3-Winnetka (16-14), 4-Bloomington (14-16), 5-Pub Club (13-17), 6-Peoria (12-18). BEST INDIVIDUAL RECORD: 7-way tie at 4-1.

•**Southern Open — ABT** (St. Simons Island, GA; 26-29 Feb.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (16): 1-Mike Corbett (FL), 2-Jim Hall (GA); 1C-Ed Bennett (NM). INTERMEDIATE (10): 1-Danielle Bastarache (FL), 2-Ben Elliot (NC); 1C-Cem Aslan (GA). BEGINNER (4): 1-Matt Little (GA). DOUBLES (8): 1-Vadim Musaelyn (NC) & Petko

Kostadinov (SC). SOUTHERN CLASSIC (7): 1-Bill Finneran (VA), 2-Mike Corbett (FL). KICK-OFF (8): 1-Danielle Bastarache. CHOUETTE WINNERS: Dave Cardwell (GA), Gregg Cattanch (GA), Mike Corbett (FL). MICRO-BLITZ (16): 1-Terry Bennice (NC). POKER GAMMON (52): 1-Lou Esposito (NJ).

**AMALGAMATION**

Oops! Our Players of the Year table incorrectly listed **Mads Andersen** as the 2003 World Champion. In fact it was **Jon Kristian Røyset** of Norway... **Carol Joy Cole** (MI) has a new address for her Flint Backgammon Club/Flint Area Backgammon News website: www.flintbg.com... ABT trophy supplier and former Pub Club director **Jeff Henry** (IL) is on the mend following hip replacement surgery in February... Congrats to **Paul & Amy Klein** (IL) who were married 2 January. Paul also informs us that he is in the process of selling his Chicago gallery Klein Art Works... Chicago area snowbirds won back-to-back South Florida monthly tournaments: **Phil Simborg** in January and **Ken Bond** in February... According to the 23 January *Wall Street Journal*, Gen-Xers are maturing and growing into games including dominoes, cribbage, and backgammon... During the NFL playoffs, Indy Colts quarterback **Peyton Manning** told receiver **Brandon Stokley** he had to quit playing backgammon in the locker room because it was interfering with his football concentration... **Nick Begakis** was elected president of the Backgammon Association of South Australia... Lucky folks! Winnetka Backgammon director **Trudie Chibnik** and husband **Bill** are off for a luxury cruise on the Queen Mary 2. If that's a bit pricey for you, try Backgammon On Board VII 23-30 January 2005 on the Princess Star. The one week cruise (Ft. Lauderdale to San Juan, St. Thomas and Tortola) begins at only \$785 per person... **Michael Maxakuli** has moved his Backgammon Club of Las Vegas to Jackson's at 6020 W. Flamingo Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. For more info, call Max at 702/696-1096... If you are visiting Hawaii, **Daniel Price** invites you to the Mililani Backgammon Club. The club meets first and last Saturday monthly at the Mililani Golf Club. For details, phone Daniel at 808/221-9754... **Paul Weaver** (AL), who gave an excellent seminar at this year's Carolina Invitational. Where did he get his public speaking experience? Turns out his father was a minister in the Church of Christ, and Paul preached nearly every Sunday for six years for the time he was 17 until age 23... Finally, remember **Stanley Goldstein**'s words during your backgammon learning practice: "No mistakes, no experience; no experience, no wisdom." Δ

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