

2004 midwest championships

ALL HAIL BOB STRINGER AND STEVE BROWN

Midwest Championships
Go Egyptian

Bob Stringer of San Anselmo, California defeated Chicagoan Phil Simborg in particularly gruesome fashion, then rallied from a 14-8 deficit scoring seven straight points vs. Ray Fogerlund (CA) to win the 2004 Midwest Backgammon Championships. The Egyptian-themed tournament drew over 200 players (including 185 main-eventers) from across the US to the Wyndham Hotel in Lisle, Illinois 19-21 March. Bill Davis directed with great assistance from Peter Kalba, Carol Joy Cole, Dru Heggen, Amy Trudeau, and Greg Tomlin.



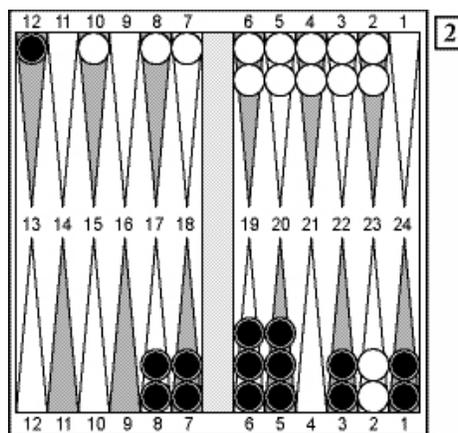
Egypt-fun! From left: Greg Tomlin, Dru Heggen, Bill Davis (Director), Carol Joy Cole, Amy Trudeau, Peter Kalba.

After his incredible semifinal victory against Phil Simborg (read the first-person account of it on page 5), Stringer was paired against one of the hottest players in America: Ray Fogerlund. Nobody doubted who the favorite was in this 15-point contest: Stringer is a relative tourney newcomer while Fogerlund stands 5th on the American Backgammon Tour all-time list.

After leaping out to a 6-1 advantage, Stringer watched his lead evaporate as Fogerlund rattled off 13 of the next 15 points to jump ahead 14-8 Crawford. But Bob

remained focused winning the next three games. Now trailing 12-14, Stringer faced a 2-2 play:

15-point finals. Bob Stringer (Black) trails Ray Fogerlund (White), 12-14. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.**



Bob correctly played 8/4(2), leaving Ray a potentially winning 6-5 shake in exchange for filling the dangerous 4-gap. (13/5 is actually third best behind 6/4(2),



Midwest Champion Bob Stringer (L) with runner-up Ray Fogerlund (R).

5/3 which shifts the gap from the 4-point to the 6-point, leaving White no hitting numbers in the process.)

Bob eventually won from here setting up a double match-point game worth nearly \$6,000 in prize money, a beautiful trophy/statue of Ra, the Egyptian sun god, and the lead in the 2004 ABT points race.

The deciding game was uneventful except for this play occurring on Bob Stringer's second move:

[Continued on page 6]

DID BACKGAMMON KEEP THEM TOGETHER?



Here are June Allyson and Dick Powell playing backgammon at home in the late 1940s. The Hollywood couple married in 1945 and remained together until Powell's death from stomach cancer in 1963. Δ

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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CHICAGO POINT is published monthly. The subscription rate is \$30/year (\$40 international airmail in USD check drawn on US bank).

Advertising Rates: 2 3/8" x 3 1/4" = \$40. 1/4 page = \$70. 1/2 page = \$115. Full page = \$200. If the ad is not "camera ready," request layout and typesetting for an additional charge.

LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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

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NELSON HUEY

Nelson Huey had surgery for esophageal cancer 14 January and never got out of intensive care. He died 11 February. The family still can't grasp it.

I knew you would wonder why there was no response to your newsletter renewal notice. Nelson loved your CHICAGO POINT.—*Susan Huey, Little Rock, Arkansas*

Our condolences to you, Susan, and to all the other family members and friends of Nelson Huey.—Ed.

OVER 80 DISCOUNT

I am 88 years old and recall that you once mentioned a discount for subscribers over 80. Regardless, I value your outstanding publication highly and eagerly look forward to receiving it. Enclosed is a check for \$30 to insure continuance of the POINT.—*Lee Hoge, M.D., Saratoga Springs, New York*

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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31					

by Carol Joy Cole
810/232-9731
cjc@tir.com

*Denotes new or revised listing

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

NATIONAL

Apr 10	Tax Refund Classic, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Apr 10*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/688-9722
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 16-18	<u>10th Ohio State Championships, Marriott Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio</u>	<u>330/268-4610</u>
Apr 17*	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
Apr 18*	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/779-8209
Apr 18*	3rd Battle of Bull Run, Best Western Tyson's Corner, McLean, Virginia	703/396-7224
Apr 24	Springfield Series Grand Finale, Wildlife Sports Bar, Springfield, Illinois	217/622-3182
Apr 24*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Apr 24*	Atlanta Mini-Blitz Tournament, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
Apr 24*	Double Trouble Kickoff/Salzer Memorial, New York Chess & BG, New York, NY	518/398-7979
Apr 25	21st Fleet Underwood Memorial & Benefit, Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Apr 25*	Ace Point Club Monthly, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/888-2231
May 2*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, Ohio	330/268-4610
May 4*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
May 5-9	10th International Cup Tournament, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
May 6*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, McKenna's Grille, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
May 8*	Mother's Day Open, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
May 15	Michigan Club Challenge/Singles Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
May 15*	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
May 16*	Austin Club Bimonthly Tournament, JC's Bar & Grill, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
May 16*	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/779-8209
May 20*	Third Thursday Bonus (Wisconsin State), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
May 22*	Atlanta Spring Doubles Tourney, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
May 22*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
May 28-31	<u>25th Chicago Open, Oak Brook Hills Hotel & Resort, Oak Brook, Illinois</u>	<u>847/674-0120</u>
May 30*	Ace Point Club Monthly, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/888-2231
Jun 1*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Jun 3*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, McKenna's Grille, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Jun 6	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jun 11-13	<u>53rd Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Jun 30*	Michigan Summer Warm-Up, Sheraton Hotel, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 1-4	<u>29th Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton, Novi, Michigan</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
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 8*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Aug 12-15	<u>11th Georgia Championships & Peach Cup, Hilton Garden Inn, Atlanta, GA</u>	<u>770/333-1876</u>
Sep 3-6	<u>51st Indiana Open, Sheraton Hotel & Suites, Indianapolis, Indiana</u>	<u>317/255-8902</u>
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	<u>2004 Minnesota Open, Mystic Lake Casino, Prior Lake, Minnesota</u>	<u>651/699-6758</u>
Dec 3-5	<u>54th Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Jan 23-30*	Backgammon On Board VII, Star Princess, Ft. Lauderdale to E. Caribbean	773/583-6464

OUTSIDE USA

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	49171-5422222
Apr 25-29	1st Tango BG Tourney, Buenos Aires Hilton-Iguazu Falls, Argentina	5411-43736138
Apr 29-May 2	4th City of Jesolo BG & Gin Tournament, Hotel Casa Bianca, Jesolo, Italy	3941-5211029
May 2*	National Capital Monthly, Bobby's Bar, Gloucester, Ontario, Canada	613/741-2530
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
May 22-23*	14th Città di Torino Torneo, Turin, Italy	3934-72304145
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
Jul 20-25*	Riviera's Challenge II, Palm Beach Partouche, Cannes, France	331-42618080

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

Yes, Lee. The subscription rate for readers aged 80 and over is half price: \$15/12 issues. So you will be receiving 24 issues for the fee you mailed in. You can't beat that. Of course we can't beat dedicated subscribers like you, either! —Ed.

MBC THANKS

Thank you very much for the fine job you and your staff did in organizing and running the 2004 Midwest Backgammon Championships. Although I didn't do well tournamentwise, I had an excellent time and learned a lot. I hope to be back next year. —Steve Shoemaker, Director, Harrisburg Backgammon Club, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Loved the tourney. It was a lot of fun. You guys run a great ship. But I do have a few questions about your "Battle of the Sexes" tournament [woman can be any age to enter, but men must be 50+ years old]:

1. Why do the men need to be balding and wearing dentures to compete? Do you figure that Alzheimer's has kicked in and this levels the playing field?
2. Are the men permitted to use Viagra and Geritol for the later rounds?
3. Does the fade in testosterone level make the men less aggressive and make for a more social event with more mutual holding (games)? Hehe. —Jonah Seewald, Centennial, Colorado

No comments.—Ed.

I had lots of fun at the Midwest Championships. Thanks for creating and organizing

such a diverse set of competitions.—Patrick Gibson, Director, Gammon Associates, Los Angeles, California

Thanks for a terrific tournament! All of your hard work was greatly appreciated. It was lots of fun and I had a really good time.—Nan Feiber, Chicago, Illinois

At this year's Midwest Championships, I thought your side event Pyramid Gammon was quite interesting and I'd like to see it played again. Of course in 2005 your theme is Beargammon, so I assume you'll be playing Grizzly Gammon . . . to win, you have to rip out your opponent's entrails. (Early sign-ups include Steve Goldman, Simon Naim . . . :-). —Jake Jacobs, Tucson, Arizona

BACKGAMMON IN VIRGINIA

Do you know of any backgammon club in Richmond, Virginia area, or have you heard from others in the area interested in getting one going? I saw only two in Virginia on your map [www.chicagopoint.com/usaclubs.html], and they were both in the Northern Virginia area.—SteveG, via Internet, sgrsbrgr@aol.com

BPC FALL TOURNEY DATE SET

Last year, you switched the Chicago Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney to Friday night and a number of out-of-staters attended. Will you continue with a Friday date this year? Please advise when you know.—Roland Dieter, Deerfield, Illinois

We will stay with Friday in 2004. The date is set for 5 November at the Clarion Hotel in Chicago.—Ed. Δ



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2004

Compiled through 21 March after 4 tournaments
(Upcoming events: Ohio State, Chicago Open)



Bob Stringer	22.88	Mark Anshus	5.60	Dan Cramer	3.20	Kwong Chan	1.58
Malcolm Davis	22.22	Philip Smith	5.41	Richard Martin	2.71	Ron Sanders	1.55
Ray Foglerlund	20.63	Norma Shyer	5.19	Dean Adamian	2.70	Petko Kostadinov	1.55
Gregg Cattanach	17.47	Jordan Lampe	5.08	Cem Aslan	2.59	Becca Thompson	1.10
Dave Wetzell	12.11	Rob Maier	5.08	Bruce Ballance	2.52	Joe Davidson	1.01
Brian Barber	11.20	Ilia Guzei	4.80	Danielle Bastarache	2.50	Susan Hathaway	1.01
Dan Grogan	10.80	Bear Lumbr	4.24	Bill Minser	2.40	Matt Little	1.00
Brent Cohen	10.23	Asad Zaltash	4.24	Kevin Kelly	2.11	Lawrence Miller	0.97
Betty Coppic	9.14	Phil Simborg	4.15	Rich Catalano	2.11	Joe Szewo	0.73
Mike Corbett	8.23	Milad Doueih	4.15	Julian Haley	2.11	Stacy Turner	0.67
Vadim Musaelyan	7.61	Ben Elliott	3.96	Jonah Seewald	2.08	Les Moshinsky	0.63
Tak Morioka	6.40	Jim Hall	3.88	Patty Geoffroy	2.08	Alex Miller	0.63
Carl Sorg	6.20	Ed Bennett	3.88	Arlene Austin	1.97	Tony Garcia	0.57
Don Faix	6.20	Ron Wagner	3.48	Cookie Frazin	1.69	Bruce Brinson	0.57
Doug Roberts	6.08						



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2004 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 MARCH

Bob Zavoral	6.56	Joe Wollick	4.20	Paul Franks	1.92	Georgina Flanagan	0.80
Howard Ring	6.24	Paul Baraz	4.20	Roland Dieter	1.88	Les Moshinsky	0.80
Phil Simborg	6.16	Gary Kay	3.96	Royal Robinson	1.76	Roy Cohen	0.72
Norma Shyer	6.00	Phyllis Smolinski	3.68	Bill Stegich	1.52	Robert Ring	0.72
David Marcus	5.64	Peter Kalba	3.60	Roger Hickman	1.36	Brooke Gottshall	0.72
Tim Mabee	5.52	Alice Kay	3.44	Dave Cramer	1.20	John Jennings	0.72
Val Zimnicki	4.92	Carter Mattig	3.36	Ron Washington	1.20	Mary Franks	0.72
David Rockwell	4.88	Mark Murray	3.04	Joann Feinstein	1.08	Paul Klein	0.64
Herb Roman	4.72	Joe Auszmann	2.68	Barbara Levinson	1.04	Jay Bleiman	0.56
Mike Sutton	4.60	Michael Peters	2.60	Tom Meyer	0.96	Linda Rockwell	0.56
Lucky Nelson	4.56	Steve Klesker	2.56	Adrian Rios	0.80	Amy Trudeau	0.56
Tak Morioka	4.32	Bill Keefe	2.32	Cookie Frazin	0.80	Bill Bartholomay	0.48
Bob Steen	4.32	Wayne Wiest	2.28	Rick Sorci	0.80	John O'Connor	0.40
Bill Davis	4.28	Mark Phillips	2.16				

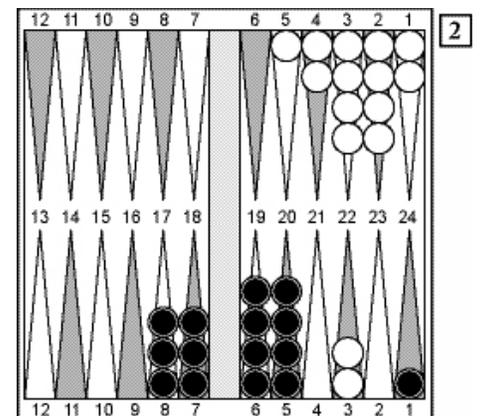
LUCKY NELSON won the closest monthly competition for Player of the Year in memory earning 3.84 March points. Norma Shyer placed second with 3.64 points. Tak Morioka and Peter Kalba tied for third earning 3.60 points each.

your move

PROBLEM #298

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

Match to 5 points. No score. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**



SHADES OF GRAY

A RULES AND RULINGS COLUMN

© 2004 by Danny Kleinman

2004 RULING QUIZ

United States tournament directors actually had to make a ruling on the following four situations over the past six months. If you were directing, how would you have decided? Make your ruling, then check Danny Kleinman's answers at the bottom of the page.—Ed.

1. White hits Black. Black lifts his own checker for White and holds it in his hand. White proceeds to close her board with Black still holding the checker. On her next turn, White forgets about the checker in Black's hand and bears off her 6-3 roll in such a manner as to leave two blots. Black then rolls a 3-3 and hits both checkers (B/3*/6*).

You are immediately summoned to make a ruling.

(A) Black's checker is repositioned on the bar vs. a closed board and his 3-3 roll will stand. But first, White may replay her previous 6-3 roll accordingly.

(B) Black's checker is repositioned on the bar vs. a closed board and his 3-3 roll is voided. After White plays her previous 6-3, Black must reroll.

(C) Black is permitted to hit both checkers with his 3-3 roll.

(D) Black's checker in his hand is ruled borne off and he must now play his 3-3 roll legally.

2. White, on shake, has four checkers left against two for Black. She rolls a double 6, screams "Yes!" puts her dice into the cup, scores the game up and starts to set up for the next game. At this point, Black calls for the director. Black claims that when White picked up her dice without actually bearing the final four pieces off the board, she ended her turn without officially winning.

Ruling, please.

(A) White's pieces are ruled "borne off" even though she didn't actually pick them up. White receives a warning from the director to avoid similar careless bearoff actions in the future.

(B) White's pieces are ruled "borne off" even though she didn't actually pick them

up. Black receives a warning from the director to avoid taking similar end-of-game cheap shots in the future.

(C) White's pieces are ruled "borne off" even though she didn't actually pick them up. Both players receive a lecture on proper play etiquette.

(D) When White put the dice in her cup prior to bearing any checkers off the board, she relinquished her turn. Black is now on shake.

3. White, holding a 2-cube, has turned the game around and is on roll. She reaches for the cube, lifts it about one inch off the table, and says to herself, "Maybe I should redouble here."

Black, in jeopardy of getting gammoned, quickly says "I drop" and begins scoring his two-point loss.

When the director is called, White claims that she was only thinking out loud about doubling. She never actually offered the cube in a direction towards her opponent, nor did she ever say, "I redouble."

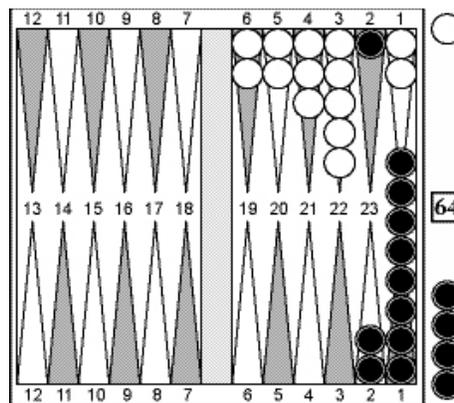
What is your decision?

(A) Black may decide whether he wants White to redouble or roll.

(B) White is judged to have redoubled and Black has dropped. The players should set up for a new game.

(C) It is still White's turn and she must decide whether to redouble or roll the dice. However she is warned that further capricious handling of the doubling cube will be punished.

4. White rolls 3-1 in the following position:



She plays 3/Off, 3/2*. Instead of putting Black's checker on the Bar, she places both her borne-off checker and the Black checker she hit off the board to the side with her other borne-off checker. It is now Black's roll and he plays his 2-1 by bearing off two pieces.

... "Director!"

(A) The removed Black checker is ruled borne off and Black is permitted to bear two pieces off.

(B) The removed Black checker is returned to the bar and Black is required to play his 2-1 throw B/23*, 2/1.

(C) The two players must roll high die to determine whether the Black checker is returned to the bar or remains borne off.

Danny's Ruling Quiz Answers

1. (A) Black's violation of the rules (handling the checkers during his opponent's turn) put White at risk. That cannot be permitted by the rules. White may replay her 6-3 roll with full knowledge that Black's is 3-3, a price that Black must pay for his infraction.

2. (C) Scoring the game and starting to set up for the next game is tantamount to claiming the game. White's claim is legitimate and must be allowed. The director should tell White to avoid gloating (no "Yes!") and in future, to bear off her checkers without claiming ... and tell Black not to make an issue over harmless informality.

3. (B) White should not lift the cube capriciously, especially while uttering the word "redouble" (never mind that she didn't say "I redouble" specifically). White has redoubled and Black has passed. Under the circumstances, to permit White not to redouble or Black not to pass would be to enable players to test each other's reactions to the cube actions, which is contrary to the rules and spirit of the game. "Thinking out loud" is not permissible when words and the accompanying deeds may be interpreted as cube actions.

4. (A) White has made an illegal play. As soon as she lifts her dice, her right to correct her illegal play terminates. When Black rolled, he condoned White's illegal play. Although here Black gained thereby, in other positions, condoning such a play would be disadvantageous, so a proper ruling must subject a player who bears an opposing checker off (in- stead of putting it on the bar) to some risk.—Yours, Danny

Have you ever been involved in a questionable ruling? Get Danny Kleinman's opinion. Write to: Shades of Gray; c/o CHICAGO POINT; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155 or e-mail: bg@chicagopoint.com.

HOW TO LOSE

First person account of a Brutal Beat at the 2004 Midwest Championships

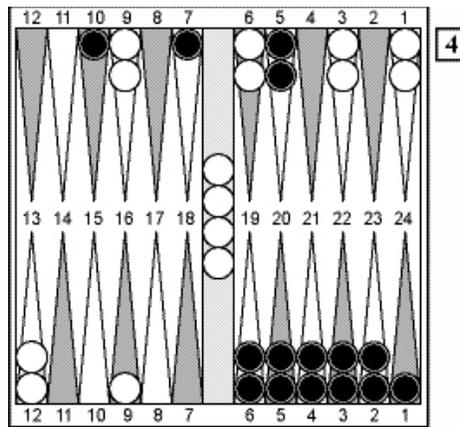
By Phil Simborg

So, here's how I lost the semifinal round of the Midwest Backgammon Championships to Bob Stringer of San Anselmo, California.

Trailing 9-11 in a match to 13, Bob gave me a very poor cube, which I grabbed and rewhipped to DMP. Several rolls later, I reached the following position on roll and playing the Black pieces.

Snowie says I'm 92 percent to win this game and the match, which surprises me. This looks like 99% to me. I almost said out loud, "What can go wrong?" Can you guess what I rolled? . . .

13-point 2004 Midwest Championships semifinals. Phil Simborg (Black) vs. Bob Stringer (White). The cube position makes this game double match-point. **BLACK ON SHAKE.**



You guessed it . . . I rolled 1-1. What would you do with 1-1?

Well, I made the 12th best play: I played 5/1 covering my acepoint, thinking that I could remake the 5-point more easily than any other point. (Later, Carter Mattig said he saw my play and liked it, and that's when I knew it was wrong.)

Snowie says it's right to clear the 4 point, leave no blots, and cover the ace.

Though mine was the 12th best play, it was only a 0.033 error, which for me, is like a brilliant play! (Even Jake Jacobs didn't come up with the best play, as he thought about clearing the 3 point and covering. Of course, Jake will keep rolling it out until his play comes out on top.)

Naturally Bob hit me with a 5, but that didn't bother me too much because I entered and hit his checker off my 9-point. Of course, you know what he rolled next.

After he rolled the double 5s, I was still not looking too bad, and a couple of rolls later I was coming around pretty good, but I was forced to leave him an indirect. I know lightning doesn't strike twice, so I left him a 10 shot. His second double 5s was as pretty as the first, and the rest is history as he advanced to the finals.

Except for his poor double at the end, I could not fault Bob's game and I was happy to see such the nice guy from the San Francisco area go on to the Championship match as opposed to the many jerks (like myself) from Chicago who might have been there.

Bob went on to defeat Ray Fogelrund in the finals to capture the 2004 Midwest Championships, and that's something I've never done . . . so poor Ray! — Phil Simborg

AMALGAMATION

Talk about a "cut in pay"! Winnetka Club regular **Tom Holmberg** (IL) won \$2,200,000 in the Illinois State Lottery twenty years ago and received his final payment of \$110,000 last month. . . Recent visitors to Chicago Bar Point Club: **Robert Ring** (CA), **Ronnie Griggs** (CA), **Nora Luna-Righter** (MA), **John Jennings**, **Mark Jennings**, **Emily Fisher** (CA), **Paul & Mary Franks** (NV), and former Chicago Chess & Backgammon Club director (1974-1980) **Ron Washington** (MN). . . Speaking of the BPC, on Tuesdays at the Clarion Hotel you can now arrive as late as 7:00 p.m. and still play in the tournament. . . **Kit Woolsey** (CA) informs us that he will no longer be publishing new *GammOnline* issues (www.gammonline.com). However, you can still subscribe to all of the past archived 53 issues and enjoy the interactive Online Match and Bulletin Board forum for a one-time \$36 fee. Well worth it. . . The Nickelodeon Games and Sports Network will promote the upcoming Ohio State Backgammon Championships. Director **Joe Miller** tells us that the spot will air approximately once per hour on 16-17 April — the same dates as the tournament. . . Illinois to Missouri: **Joe Sylvest**. . . New Minnesota Twins pitcher **Joe**

Nathan is described as the "cerebral type" with a degree in business management and a passion for backgammon. . . A mistrial in the Tyco corporate scandal investigation gives former officers **Dennis Kozlowski** and **Mark Swartz** (accused of taking \$600 million from Tyco) a temporary reprieve. We doubt they'll be playing backgammon in Mr. Kozlowski's seized \$18-million duplex on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, which included a \$38,000 backgammon set. . . It was nice to meet **Jim Oberweis** at the Midwest Championships. Although Mr. Oberweis lost his bid to become the Illinois Republican senate nominee (placing second), his outstanding Oberweis Dairy provides Chicagoland with best quality milk and ice cream! . . . Attention backgammon directors. Check out the backgammon club online database that can be used to maintain your club records at www.backgames.org. . . **Bill Minser** and **Beth Martinson** (WI) made a great team winning the Midwest Doubles Championship last month. It was just a week after they announced their desire to "double" for life. Congratulations on their engagement. . . **Paul Wick's** (PA) business card describes his occupation as a "Time Domain Reflectometrist." Say what? . . . Finally, although there is a lot of luck in backgammon, "Luck never gives; it only lends." Δ

Celebrate our 25th!

PRIZE
BACKGAMMON
CLUB OF CHICAGO



The 25th Annual
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OPEN

Memorial Day Weekend
May 28-31, 2004

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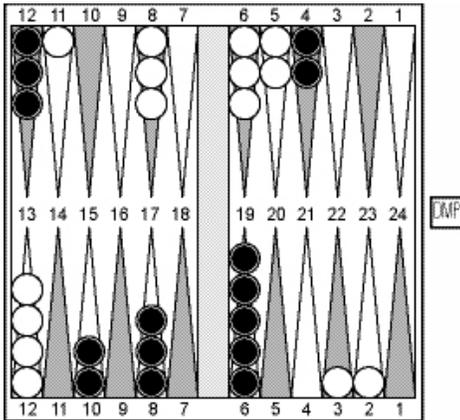
Championship: *Double Elimination*
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Masters, Doubles, Blitz, Mini-Matches

Information
Joann Feinstein: 847-674-0120

MBC...

[Continued from page 1]

15-point finals. Bob Stringer (Black) vs. Ray Foglerlund (White). Double match-point. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-5.**



Bob played 8/3(2)*, 10/5(2) which is wrong by a mile at this score. With gammons of no value to anyone, Black's best winning play is simply to run 21/11(2). (The only scores that make Bob's play right are ones where he needs a gammon, but getting gammoned costs him nothing. For example: trailing 13-14 Crawford.)

Despite his error, Bob managed to roll the position home and become the 2004 MBC Champion—a fantastic achievement considering this was only the third regional event of his life.

BROWN TRAPS A BEAVER

In the other high profile event, Twin Cities (MN) director Steve Brown entered a \$700 Grand Crystal Beaver qualifier defeating defending GCB Champ Bob Zavoral (IL). He then proceed to knock off Tom Meyer



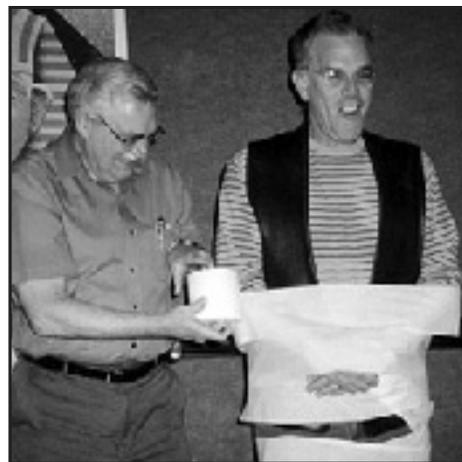
Grand Crystal Beaver VI Champion Steve Brown moves towards victory.

(IL), Dana Nazarian (CA), and Brian Barber (NY) before going up against the always-tough Texan Stuart Hosen. When the smoke cleared, Steve Brown was still standing. His 11-9 victory earned him \$7,000 and the coveted Swarovski Grand Crystal Beaver trophy on a mirrored wooden base.

TOURNEY HIJINKS

The Egyptian theme was utilized in many ways including full Egyptian costuming by the entire staff. A clue written in hieroglyphics in the tourney invitation told attendees to “bring a compass” to the Calcutta Auction. Three players did just that splitting \$100.

An audience game at the Calcutta called up six players on stage who paired up in teams of two. Each team was given a roll of toilet paper. Whoever could best “mummy wrap” his partner in the time it took to play Steve Martin's “King Tut” would win \$100. As the MBC staffers danced to the music, Michael Plog and Paul Klein wrapped up the cash.



Michael Plog (L) sees to it that Paul Klein is covered at the Calcutta Auction “Mummy Wrap.”

The trophies were Egyptian gods purchased from the Las Vegas Luxor Hotel. Neil Kazaross (IL) called them “. . . the best I've seen in nearly 30 years of tourney BG.”

PYRAMID BACKGAMMON

One of the most interesting tourney side events was “Pyramid Backgammon.” 16 players participated in the game where you could win by either normal backgammon methods, or by constructing a 1-2-3-2-1 pyramid checker structure anywhere on the board at any time.

Eight players qualified for the event by rolling high pyramid dice (a free entry for everyone). The other eight qualified by pulling an ace of spades from a dealing



(L) Pyramid Backgammon champ Sho Sengoku and his \$1200 Taki-Egyptian set. (R) Carol Joy Cole with an old acquaintance.

shoe containing eight mixed decks of playing cards. The cost of each pull was a \$3 donation to the Anti-Cruelty society. Actually, prior to commencement 52 cards were randomly selected, boxed, and taped shut not to be opened until the other seven decks had been purchased. Sho Sengoku bid \$200 for that unknown deck at the Calcutta Auction and qualified when an Ace of Spades luckily turned up in his deck.

Sho, who admitted he would have gone to \$300 in the bidding, was the odds-on favorite in Pyramid-Gammon. Two months of study paid off as he played brilliantly to win the first prize: a \$1200 Taki-Egyptian backgammon board. You can read all about it in Jake Jacobs' article (including photos) at: www.chicagopoint.com/2004mbc.html

OTHER WINNERS

In the \$150 Open division, it was Dan Grogan (MI) over Vadim Musaelyan (NC). Congrats to Advanced Champion Dave Wetzell of Minnesota who outlasted Chicago's Norma Shyer. Also to Limited Champ Ron Wagner who bested Kwong Chan (both from Illinois).



Parade of champions from left: Dan Grogan (\$150 Open), Dave Wetzell (Advanced), and Ron Wagner (Limited).

The Doubles Champions were the newly engaged Bill Minser and Beth Martinson (WI) over Barbara Levinson and Tak Morioka (IL). Chicagoan Alice Kay topped Lucky Nelson (IL) in the 3rd Battle of the Sexes. Lucky came back to win his trophy

[Continued on page 7]

in Hypergammon. Carter Mattig (Chicago) won the 128-player Quickie tournament and Steve Mellen (NY) captured the Mummy's Blitz.



Pig-Rolling champ Hiro Asari is flanked by Pig-mistress Dru Heggen and her assistant J.A. Miller.

FINALLY . . .

Huge thanks to Barb Levinson of "Barbara's Balloons" (Northbrook, IL) for her beautiful playing room decorations. Also to my niece Janet Davis who filled in for Dru Heggen at Friday's "Relics Hunt." Thanks to those donating Calcutta Auction prizes, and of course to all the donors who helped us raise a record \$3500 for the Anti-Cruelty Society.

It's "Beargammon" at the next Midwest Championships 18-20 March 2005. Growl! Δ

2004 MIDWEST CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-Bob Stringer (CA), 2-Ray Fogerlund (CA), 3/4-Milad Doueih (IL) / Phil Simborg (IL); 1C-Brian Barber (NY), 2C-Ilia Guzei (WI); 1LC-Tak Morioka (IL).

ADVANCED (64): 1-David Wetzell (MN), 2-Norma Shyer (IL), 3/4-Patty Geoffroy (MA) / Jonah Seewald (CO); 1C-Mark Anshus (WI), 2C-Bill Minser (WI); 1LC-Dan Cramer (MN).

LIMITED (39): 1-Ron Wagner (IL), 2-Kwong Chan (IL), 3/4-Alex Miller (WI) / Les Moshinsky (IL); 1C-Cookie Frazin (IL), 2C-Joe Szewo (IL); 1LC-Lawrence Miller (WI).

\$150 OPEN (18): 1-Dan Grogan (MI), 2-Vadim Musaelyan (NC); 1LC-Dean Adamian (MI).

GRAND CRYSTAL BEAVER (16): 1-Steve Brown (MN), 2-Stuart Hosen (TX).

DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Beth Martinson & Bill Minser (WI), 2-Barb Levinson & Tak Morioka (IL), 3/4-Hiro Asari & Stan Livingston (WI) / Julian Haley (SC) & Wendy Kaplan (IL). SATELLITE DOUBLES (10 teams): 1-Patrick McCormick & Norm Wiggins (CA), 2-Lucky Nelson & John Stryker (IL).

BATTLE OF THE SEXES (32 men & 16 women): 1-Alice Kay (IL), 2-Lucky Nelson (IL), 3/4-Gary Kay (IL) / Linda MacLean (MA).

MUMMY'S BLITZ (128): 1-Steve Mellen (NY), 2-Neil Kazaross (IL).

HYPERGAMMON (32): 1-Lucky Nelson (IL), 2-Jonah Seewald (CO), 3/4-Sean Garber (IN) / John Rockwell (CA).

QUICKIE! (128): 1-Carter Mattig (IL), 2-Lee Pflugrad (WI), 3/4-Ray Fogerlund (CA) / Lucky Nelson (IL).

PYRAMID BACKGAMMON (16 qualifiers): 1-Sho Sengoku (CA), 2-Patrick McCormick (CA). PIG-ROLLING: Hiro Asari (WI). RELICS HUNT: Adrian Rios (IL). MUMMYMATCH: Greg Merriman (MI). MUMMYWRAP: Paul Klein (IL) & Michael Plog (IL). ROSETTA STONE TOURNAMENT: Joe Wollick (IL). BACKGAMMON WHEEL OF FORTUNE: Sam Pottle (WI).

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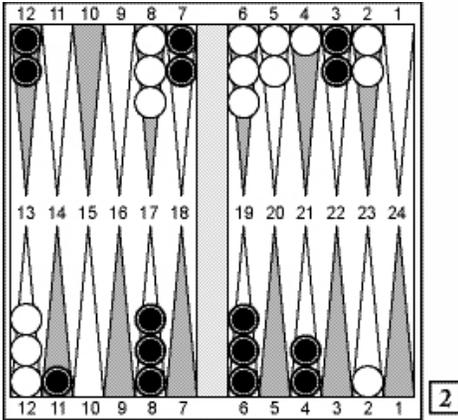
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PROBLEM #297 ANALYZED

by Walter Trice

Match to 5 points. Black leads White 3 to 1. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-5.**



Life is easy when tactics point to a play that fits your game plan, but the exact opposite is true here. Over the board I would probably have played 8/2*, 11/5, duplicating White's deuces while hitting for tempo, hoping to prevent White from covering the blot on her 4-point. I'd have made this play with a certain amount of regret: 13/7, 13/8 is the "pure" play that I'd much prefer with four men back. But can it possibly be right to give White complete freedom to play her whole roll, with 5s and 6-3 to hit when she needs 2s and 4s to cover the blot?

The arguments in favor of each play are clear and simple. Play A (13/7, 13/8) is the positional approach. Black is down in the

race, so he wants to maintain contact, build a strong board or a prime, and wait for a shot. He will probably have to give up the midpoint soon anyway. Holding it serves no real purpose, and the checkers that make it up should be put to better use elsewhere. Play A produces good builders for key points and a slot for the bar. If Black can make the bar then White's checker on the 23 might get stuck, and if he can make the five too then he'll really have something—a five-prime. Although one usually prefers to attack (rather than prime) against one checker, attacking play tends to fail when you have too many checkers back, as here.

Play B (8/2*, 11/6) is not pretty. It stacks the 6-point, puts a checker deep in Black's home board, and "color-codes" Black's near-side checkers, making his even numbers weak. In its favor, play B gives White far fewer ways to either hit a blot or make the 4-point. I count 18 rolls that hit or cover for B, and 30 for A. That's quite a difference.

Snowie rollouts make play A better. A loses more gammons, as one might expect, but by less than 1%, while it wins more than 2% more games.

When one comes across a surprising result it often helps to look at how the response rolls work after each play. The following table gives White's equity for all her rolls after both of Black's candidates, in descending order of strength. The equities are Snowie 3-ply analysis shown below:

The first thing that catches my eye here is that play A makes White's good rolls better and her bad rolls worse. That characteristic tends to favor the underdog, simply because the favorite's downside always has more elbow room than his upside. Note that it produces a root number—a 6-6 that forces White to bury three checkers while isolating her midpoint and straggler. White has four dances if Black hits, but three of them are rolls that White would be happy to forego!

Second, the crossover between the two plays occurs only a third of the way down, and for the middling rolls, play A is distinctly the better performer. Many of the rolls for which play A is better are either hits or covers for White. My interpretation of these results is that play A gives Black compensation for the hit when White doesn't simultaneously cover (the direct shot at the 4-point blot) and compensation for the cover when White doesn't hit (counterplay against the White straggler in Black's home board.) This works out well for Black because both plays produce the same number of response rolls that hit and cover—only four. With play B, Black has the same two sources of compensation on the 32 rolls that either don't hit or don't cover, but he rates to get less counterplay because his position will be less strong. In particular, play A's bar-point slot makes a big difference when it survives.—Walter Trice Δ

WHITE RESPONSES TO BLACK CANDIDATE PLAYS RANKED HIGH TO LOW

Black's Play A: 13/7, 13/8

White Rolls	White Plays	White's Equity
5-4	23/18*, 8/4	0.959
5-2	23/18*, 6-4	0.912
5-5	23/18*/13, 13/8(2)	0.752
5-3	23/18*, 8/5	0.747
6-5	23/18*/12	0.732
6-3	23/14*	0.722
4-1	23/18*	0.699
3-2	23/18*	0.699
5-1	23/18*, 6/5	0.690
4-4	13/9(3), 8/4	0.586
4-3	23/20, 8/4	0.554
2-2	13/11(3), 6/4	0.546
6-1	23/16	0.544
2-1	23/22, 6/4	0.536
3-1	8/4	0.535
4-2	13/11, 8/4	0.520
3-3	23/20, 13/10(3)	0.519
1-1	13/11, 6/4	0.506
6-2	13/5	0.448
6-4	8/2, 8/4	0.384
6-6	8/2(3)	0.134

Black's Play B: 8/2*, 11/6

White Rolls	White Plays	White's Equity
2-2	B/23*, 13/11, 8/4	0.887
4-2	B/23*, 8/4	0.882
1-1	B/23*, 6/4	0.823
5-4	B/20, 8/4	0.714
4-1	B/24, 8/4	0.713
5-5	B/5	0.708
4-3	B/22, 8/4	0.704
5-2	B/23*/18	0.686
2-1	B/24, 6/4	0.681
3-3	B/22, 13/10(3)	0.675
3-2	B/23*/20	0.674
5-3	B/20, 8/5	0.617
6-3	B/16	0.607
6-5	B/14	0.601
3-1	B/24, 8/5	0.599
6-1	B/18	0.586
5-1	B/24, 13/8	0.580
6-2	B/23*, 8/2	0.575
6-4	--	0.458
6-6	--	0.458
4-4	--	0.458



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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 Damen's Place for Ribs, 1701 Fort Jesse Road, Normal. 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).

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

WINNER'S CIRCLE



FEB.-APR. 2004

•**Armbruster's Friday the 13th Bash** (Los Angeles, CA; 13 Feb.)... **DOUBLES** (8 teams): 1-Richard Armbruster & Mirori Okuma, 2-Kirsten & Matt Armbruster; 1C-Judy Collins. **BLACK CAT TOSS**: Matt Armbruster. **BLACK CAT HUNT**: Judy Collins.

•**Columbia Memorial Tournament** (Houston, TX; 14 Feb.)... **OPEN** (14): 1-Al Johnson, 2-Jim Wood, 3/4-Gary Oleson / Bill Riles; 1C-Darrell Hauck, 2C-Gary Fomby.

•**Back The Movie Trophy Tourney** (E. Grinstead, England; 21-22 Feb.)... **OPEN** (32): 1-tom Duggan, 2-Ray Tannen; 1C-Dave McNair, 2C-Mike Heard; 1LC-Paul Statter, 2LC-Peter Bennet. **SATURDAY JACKPOT**: 1-John Slattery, 2-Monica Beckerson. **TEXAS HOLD 'EM**: 1-John Leavey, 2-Dod Davies, 3-Kazu Niki.

•**5th Paris Masters & Open** (Paris, France; 23-29 Feb.)... **MASTER** (24+8 rebuys): 1-Alain Babillon (France), 2-Thierry Manouck (France), 3/4-Yam-Tay Peretz (France) / Slava Pryadkin (Ukraine). **CHAMPIONSHIP** (49+15 rebuys): 1-Joel Schiff (Israel), 2-Ed O'Laughlin (USA), 3/4-Didier Assaraf (France) / Olivier Decultot (France); 1C-Serge Rived (France), 2C-François Tardieu (France), 3C/4C-Tobias Hellwag (GER) / Michel Sneoul (France); 1LC-Sergey Kurilenko (Russia), 2LC-Amschel Nadjar (France), 3LC/4LC-Yanju Shimoni

(Israel) / Felix Ziva (Israel). **INTERMEDIATE** (21+11 rebuys): 1-George Balkandjisky (Bulgaria), 2-Uli Koch (Germany), 3/4-Medhi Hassani (France) / Andrey Markov (Bulgaria); 1C-Nikos Kountouriadis (France), 2C-Herve Thiriez (France), 3C/4C-Serge Alard (Belgium) / Cecile Wolf (France); 1LC-Andrea Olson (Denmark), 2LC-Martin de Bruin (USA/Spain). **BEGINNERS** (16): 1-Kimmy Duong (France), 2-Ange Taieb (France), 3/4-Yaneva Krassimira (Germany) / Rafael Zerbib (France); 1C-Charles Nivaux (France) 2C-F. Bernard Delsere; 1LC-Amelie Viennois (France), 2LC-Pierette Hovnanian (France). **LADIES PRIZES**: Kimmy Duong (France) & Maria Krancheva (Bulgaria). **e1000 SUPER JACKPOT #1** (8): 1-Howard Markowitz (USA), 2-Eric Sfez (France). **e1000 SUPER JACKPOT #2** (8): 1-François Tardieu (France), 2-Jacques Elbilba (France). **GAMESGRID / HECTOR SAXE WARM-UP** (33): 1-Alain Babillon (France), 2-Sergey Kurilenko (Russia), 3/4-E. Andrea / R. Ovida. **CONSULTATION DOUBLES** (32 teams): 1-Gerard & Michel Siegel (France), 2-Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (Israel) & Najib Salamzy (Afghanistan/Germany).

•**Miami Valley Club Monthly** (Fairborn, OH; 4 Mar.)... **OPEN** (5): 1-Larry Buckingham, 2-Jeremy Weyland.

•**Springfield Series #5** (Peoria, IL; 6 Mar.)... **OPEN** (18): 1-Jena Jennings, 2-John Jennings; 1C-Michael Flohr, 2C-Ramez Abi-Akar; 1LC-Wally Kuester.

•**Ohio State Monthly** (Canton, OH; 7 Mar.)... **OPEN**: 1-Larry Schultz, 2/3/4-Paul Berg / Howard Shirey / Mary Hickey.

•**6th Abu Dhabi International Championships**

(Abu Dhabi, UAE; 9-12 Mar.)... **CHAMPIONSHIP** (83): 1-Arild Idsoe (Norway), 2-Andreas Humke (Germany), 3-Shahab Ghodsi (Iran), 4-Rainer Witt (Germany); 1C-Torben Hasseris (Denmark), 2C-Badzi Gercvadze (Georgia), 3C-Lars Bonding (Denmark), 4C-Marcus Faltermann (Germany)... Andreas Humke won the drawing for a new car.

•**Ides of March Tournament** (Houston, TX; 13 Mar.)... **OPEN** (24): 1-Patrick Lee, 2-Todd Schenk; 1C-Jim Hallers, 2C-Drew McCulloch.

•**Slattery Scottish Open** (Daventry, England; 13-14 Mar.)... **OPEN** (53): 1-Rachel Rhodes, 2-Rosey Bensley, 3/4-Mochy Mochizuki / Emmanuel Di Bona; 1C-Julian Minwalla, 2C-Lawrence Powell; 1LC-John Slattery, 2LC-Mardi Ohannessian. **FRIDAY WARM-UP** (24): 1-Zibis Szczerek, 2-Adam Robac, 3/4-Paul Gilbertson / Myke Wignall. **HAGGIS** (32): 1-Paul Slatter, 2-David Nathan. **DOUBLES** (8): 1-Claro, 2-Darryl & Jeff. **£50 JACKPOT** (8): 1-Nicky Check, 2-Peter Bennet.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 14 Mar.)... **OPEN** (13): 1-Isaac Perez, 2-Ken Bond (IL).

•**Ace Point Club Monthly** (New York, NY; 28 Mar.)... **OPEN** (9): 1-Chris Trencher, 2-Steve Elkin; 1C-Roy Appey. **INTERMEDIATE** (13): 1-Gil O'Brien, 2-Peter Kerpen, 3-Alan Robinson (Canada).

•**Springfield Series #6** (Normal, IL; 3 Apr.)... **OPEN** (26): 1-Rob Farmer, 2-Rndy Reiff; 1C-Randy Armstrong, 2C-Jim Zimmerman; 1LC-Josh Riddell.

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 4 Apr.)... **OPEN** (14): 1-Linda Rockwell, 2-Joe Wollick, 3/4-Bill Bartholomay / Tim Mabee; 1C-David Rockwell, 2C-Gaby Kairouz. **INTERMEDIATE** (4): 1-Adrian Rios, 2-Amy Trudeau. Δ

Second Choice



By Duane Jensen

Recently, I invited some friends over for a late night chouette. George came with his own refreshments: a six-pack of beer and a bottle of wine. He drank most of it himself, becoming "Obnoxious George," and wasn't fit to drive when he wanted to leave at 1:00 a.m. There are three things I don't do after I've been drinking:

1. Drive a motorized vehicle,
2. Yodel with a mouthful of food, and
3. Play backgammon for money.

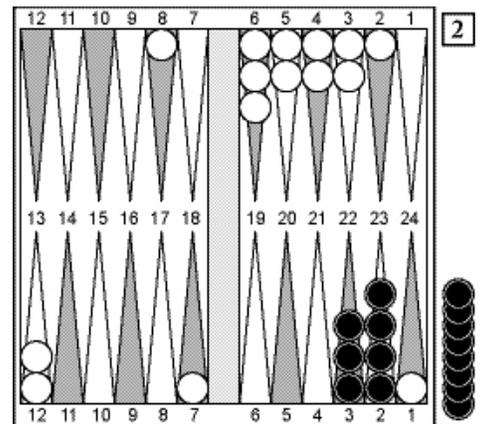
George had already committed the third sin (losing all of his cash), and now he was going to violate the first. The other players were leaving but didn't want to drive him to his distant rural home. So I suggested that he stay for a couple hours and play more backgammon while he sobered up. George replied "I only play backgammon for money and I lost all of that!"

I told him that we could play a different backgammon variation that would be fresh to him. The game is called *Second Choice*. The usual backgammon rules apply, but each player has the option of making his opponent replay the roll if he chooses. If on the opening roll your opponent plays his 3-1 by building the 5-point, you can say "Second Choice" and he must replay the 3-1 with a different legal play.

George caught on quickly, proclaiming "I get it. A 6-4 opening roll now becomes very good because there are two or three decent options."

Two hours later I was ready for the sober George to leave. He was obnoxious as a drunk but insufferable as a self-proclaimed expert at "Second Choice." In the last game, I was crushing him when I rolled a 6-2 from this position:

"Second Choice." BLACK TO PLAY 6-2.



I played 3/off, 2/off, but George quickly giggled "Second Choice!" This forced me to leave two blots, and well . . . you know what happened then.

I shoved George's coat at him and led him to the front door. As he walked out he said, "I'm coming back to your house tomorrow night. Tomorrow we'll play that game for money."

I said "If that's your plan, I have two words for you . . . Second Choice! Find someplace else to go tomorrow." — Duane Jensen Δ

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