

monte carlo world championship

## DENMARK'S PETER HALLBERG WINS WORLD TITLE

by Harald Johanni

30-year-old Peter Hallberg from Denmark, director of his own computer consulting firm, is the new World Backgammon Champion. It's the fourth year in a row that a northern European has won the event which was held 12–18 July at the Grand Hotel in Monte Carlo, Monaco.



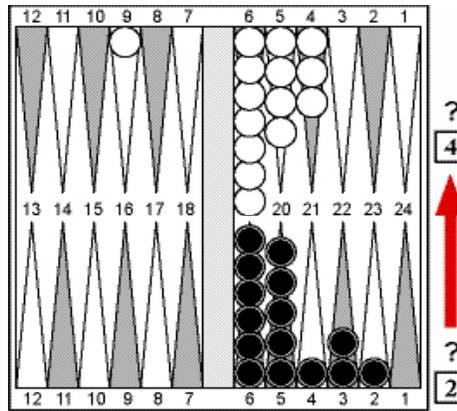
*Backgammon World Champ Peter Hallberg of Denmark. [Photos by Harald Johanni]*

The Fortis Team Event had repeat winners from last year: the Finnish team of Matti Haak-sila, Petri Pietilä and Teppo Salo. Additionally, the 128-player Super Jackpot was captured by the 2001 Super Jackpot winner, Najib Sal-lamzy (Afghanistan/Germany). So you could say that there was a certain feeling of *déjà vu* at this year's event.

Monday, 12 July started as a rainy day, but the sun came out when Championship player registration at the Grand Hotel (formerly Lowe's Monte Carlo) reached 271—exactly the same number as in 2003. The sun accompanied the thrilling and exciting tournament action all week long.

1984 World Champ Mike Svobodny (USA) seemed on his way to winning the event for a second time. He beat two former World Champions: Ion Ressu (1992), and Peter Jes Thomsen (1993) to face #55 Giant of Backgammon Bob Wachtel (USA) in the round-of-16. Leading the 21-point match by 18–16, Svobodny was on roll:

Pos. 1. Monte Carlo Round-of-16 match to 21. Mike Svobodny (Black) leads Bob Wachtel (White) 18 to 16. **BLACK ON ROLL. RECUBE ACTION(S)?**

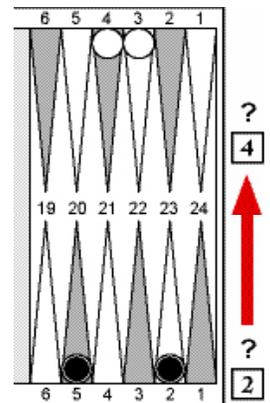


After much deliberation, Svobo recubed. The correct decision is relatively straightforward: If Wachtel passes, he trails 16–20 Crawford yielding 15.7% match-winning chances (MWC). If he takes (and recubes to

8 for the match), his MWC must be at least 15.7%. Behind in the pip count 73–83, Wachtel has a marginal take/pass position for money. So at this score, with approximately 21% MWC, Bob's take is trivial.

Svobo's correct action is not so trivial. With 79% game-winning chances, Mike is well inside the doubling window at this match score. But often, "volatility" is the answer to questions on whether to double:

Pos. 2. 21-point match. Black (on roll) leads 18–16 holding a 2-cube. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



[Continued on pg. 5]

## MAKING THE 5-POINT EARLY



*New York subscriber Joe Sullivan believes you're never too young to learn backgammon. Here's his 19-month-old daughter Ivy quickly becoming a 55/45 favorite after just one roll of the dice.*

# 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

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## BACKGAMMON FOR BLOOD

Has anyone ever identified the person writing behind the alias "Bruce Becker"? Becker wrote the infamous *Backgammon For Blood* in 1974.—*Ian Flint, via Internet*

*Backgammon For Blood is now considered a cult backgammon classic due to the incredibly bad advice it advocates (e.g. Play 13/7, 13/8 with an opening 6-5).*

*I met Becker at the October 1975 National Backgammon League Marathon Tournament in Chicago. His name really was Bruce Becker, a starving author who was simply trying to cash in on the backgammon book boom of the mid-1970s.—Ed.*

## USES FOR PAPER AND PENCIL

I have never been to a live backgammon tournament. In photos, I notice that participants often have paper and pencil at their side. Can one keep a running track of the

[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.*

Aug 12-15	11th Georgia Championships & Peach Cup, Hilton Garden Inn, Atlanta, Georgia	770/333-1876
Aug 14	Hot as Hades Open, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Aug 14	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Aug 19	Third Thursday Bonus (Illinois State), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Aug 21	Double Trouble Tournament, New York Chess & BG, New York, New York	212/869-6057
Aug 21	32nd Hawaii State Championship, Elks Club, Honolulu, Hawaii	808/922-2674
Aug 21	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
Aug 22*	Miami Valley Monthly, Holiday Inn McKenna's Grille, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Aug 28	Atlanta Summer Party Tournament, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
Aug 29	Ace Point Club Monthly, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/888-2231
Sep 3-6	52nd Indiana Open, Sheraton Hotel & Suites, Indianapolis, Indiana	317/255-8902
Sep 7*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Sep 11*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Sep 11*	Red, White, & Blue Open, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Sep 12*	South Florida Monthly, NorthRidge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Sep 12*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, Ohio	330/268-4610
Sep 16*	Third Thursday Bonus (Florida State), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Sep 18*	Double Trouble Tournament, New York Chess & Bg, New York, New York	212/869-6057
Sep 18*	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
Sep 18-19	25th Jon Vietor Invitational Cup, Vietor residence, La Jolla, California	818/901-0464
Sep 19*	Austin Club Bimonthly Tournament, JC's Bar & Grill, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
Sep 24-26	<u>Pacific Northwest Championships, Muckleshoot Casino, Auburn, Washington</u>	<u>253/856-7513</u>
Sep 25*	Atlanta Fall Chouette Tournament, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
Sep 26*	Ace Point Club Monthly, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/888-2231
Sep 26*	Miami Valley Monthly, Holiday Inn McKenna's Grille, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Oct 2	Bar Point Saturday Tournament, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Oct 3*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, Ohio	330/268-4610
Oct 8-10	<u>Illinois State Championships, Pere Marquette Hotel, Peoria, Illinois</u>	<u>217/528-0117</u>
Oct 15-17	<u>Florida State Championship, Sheraton Suites, Fort Lauderdale, Florida</u>	<u>954/564-0340</u>
Oct 29-31	<u>2004 Minnesota Open, Mystic Lake Casino, Prior Lake, Minnesota</u>	<u>651/699-6758</u>
Nov 5*	22nd Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney, Clarion Hotel, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Nov 6-10	Las Vegas Pro Am, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
Nov 10-14	Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
Nov 21*	26th Flint Area Club Championships, Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Dec 3-5*	<u>California State Championship, Airtel Plaza Hotel, Van Nuys, California</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Dec 4	Bar Point Saturday Tournament, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jan 14-16*	5th Carolina Invitational, Hilton University Place, Charlotte, North Carolina	704/814-0850
Jan 23-30	Backgammon On Board VII, Star Princess, Ft. Lauderdale to E. Caribbean	773/583-6464

### OUTSIDE USA

Aug 14-15	Gammonitis Rollout Trophy, George Ramada Hotel, Solihull, England	44163-4304908
Aug 19-22	BG on the Beach/7th Friuli Championship, Grado Beach, Gorizia, Italy	39269-018168
Aug 20-22	1st Rotterdam Beach Tournament, City Beach, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	31650-818573
Aug 21-30	8th MindSports Olympiad, Manchester Conference Centre, England	44170-7659080
Sep 3-5	Mittleuropa Championship, HIT Park Hotel, Nova Gorica, Slovenia	392-69018168
Sep 4-5	Backpacker Backgammon Trophy, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	44152-2888676
Sep 11-12	2nd Antwerp Open, Café Den Bengel, Antwerp, Belgium	31650-818573
Sep 11-12	Stavanger Open, Cementen Pub, Stavanger, Norway	4751-590940
Sep 20-23	2nd Tango Tourney, Iguazú Grand Hotel, Puerto Iguazú City, Argentina	5411-43736138
Sep 24-26*	1st Valle Maggia Trophy, Grotto Lafranchia, Ticino, Switzerland	39328-3380725
Sep 30-Oct 3	11th German Open, Hotel GlockenSpitze, Altenkirchen, Germany	49521-64314
Oct 7-10*	Austrian Open & Doubles Championship, Veronika Hotel, Seefeld, Austria	43512-287244
Oct 9-11	Sandy Osborne Trophy, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	44152-2888676
Oct 9-11	Japan Open, Nakano Sun Plaza, Tokyo, Japan	813-33733814
Oct 14-17	Munkebjerg Scandinavian Challenge, Casino Munkebjerg, Vejle, Denmark	4529-724214
Oct 19-20	Giants Double Consultation, Casino Barrière, Enghien-les-Bains, France	49171-5422222
Oct 20-24	2nd Lucien Barrière Open, Casino Barrière, Enghien-les-Bains, France	49171-5422222
Oct 23-24	Gammonitis 2nd Birthday, Ramada Jarvis Hotel, East Grinstead, England	44163-4304908
Oct 23-24	Swiss & Casino Baden Championships, Casino Baden, Baden, Switzerland	4179-4015811
Oct 30-31	12th Irish Open Championship, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin, Ireland	3531-6030891
Nov 4-7*	24th Swedish Open, Clarion Hotel, Stockholm, Sweden	468-6523033
Nov 6-7*	Townharbour Trophy, Hanover Hotel, Hinckley, England	44152-2888676
Nov 12-14*	Backgammon Live in London 2004, Spice Island & YHA, London, England	442077001798
Dec 4-5*	United Kingdom Finals, Hanover Hotel, Hinckley, England	44152-2888676
Dec 11-12*	Gammonitis Christmas Tournament, George Hotel, Solihull, England	44163-4304908

# LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

pip count on paper: is this permitted, or is it often done?—*Jim Corey, via Internet*

*Rule 1.5 of the US Tournament Rules and Procedures answers your question: "AIDS. Once a match is in progress, neither player*

*may use mechanical or written aids except to keep score."*—*Ed.*

## TWO STAR-GAMMON PROBLEMS

Regarding Star-Gammon on the July 2004 CHICAGO POINT front page, what really were the two major problems in the picture that Dave Cardwell noticed?—*Roz Ferris, Arlington Heights, IL*



*Dave Cardwell answers: "The 3-way board has no bar to contain 'hit' checkers, and no doubling cube(s) are visible."*

*Here's another photo of the Star-Gammon girl Suzanna.—Ed.*



### AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2004

Compiled through 1 August after 10 tournaments  
(Upcoming events: Georgia Championships, Indiana Open)



Ray Fogerlund 31.96	Arnold Freeman 9.09	Phil Simborg 4.16	Bill Minser 2.40
Frank Talbot 31.11	Jason Lee 9.09	Milad Doueihy 4.16	Dave Settles 2.32
Bob Stringer 22.88	Eric Johnson 8.47	Ben Elliott 3.96	Kevin Kelly 2.12
Wayne Jeffcoat 22.72	Vadim Musaelyan 7.61	Jim Hall 3.88	Rich Catalano 2.12
Lucky Nelson 22.69	Mark Antranikian 7.58	Ed Bennett 3.88	Julian Haley 2.12
Malcolm Davis 22.22	Michel Merlitti 7.56	Arman Karamian 3.78	Jonah Seewald 2.08
Faddoul Khoury 21.40	David Rubin 7.56	Joe Sylvester 3.78	Patty Geoffroy 2.08
Emil Mortuk 18.22	Philip Smith 6.91	Chuck Bower 3.78	Kathy Sorci 1.99
Gregg Cattanch 17.47	Mary Franks 6.89	Bruce Russell 3.44	Arlene Austin 1.98
Lloyd Upper 15.50	Mary Hickey 6.80	Brad Andersen 3.40	Cookie Frazin 1.70
Bill Versaw 15.33	David Haddad 6.80	Ernie McCombs 3.37	Troy Will 1.69
Bob Glass 15.33	Tak Morioka 6.40	Sandy Barnes 3.37	Alex Rosenberg 1.68
Dave Wetzell 13.64	Woody Woodworth 6.22	Dan Cramer 3.20	Kwong Chan 1.59
Neil Kazaross 13.60	Carl Sorg 6.20	Spencer King 3.13	Ron Sanders 1.55
Mike Corbett 12.02	Don Faix 6.20	Joann Feinstein 3.01	Petko Kostadinov 1.55
Alan Robinson 11.61	Neil Garvie 5.75	Randy Reiff 3.01	Tom Machaj 1.53
Denny Leatherman 11.50	Mark Anshus 5.60	Dan Kiurski 3.00	Terry Leahy 1.50
Brian Barber 11.20	Jordan Lampe 5.08	Roger Hickman 3.00	Abdul Alchalabi 1.50
Dan Grogan 10.80	Rob Maier 5.08	Joan Hac 2.92	Philip Little 1.38
Brent Cohen 10.23	Steve Brown 4.86	Joe Feldman 2.92	Ed Johnson 1.30
Norma Shyer 9.83	Ilia Guzei 4.80	Richard Martin 2.71	Carol Kerr 1.25
Ron Wagner 9.48	Sassan Kamali 4.55	Dean Adamian 2.70	Akemi Ota 1.16
Doug Roberts 9.48	Norm Wiggins 4.55	Cem Aslan 2.59	Susan Lindauer 1.16
Alan Fenster 9.28	Bear Lumbra 4.24	Bruce Ballance 2.52	Becca Thompson 1.10
Betty Coppic 9.14	Asad Zaltash 4.24	Danielle Bastarache 2.50	2 tied with 1.01

## AN OPEN LETTER FROM LIZ BARKER

As many of you will now be aware, *Make Your Point* and *European Backgammon News* have terminated their partnership. Up until now I have refrained from making a public statement on this subject, however, it has come to my attention, that I have been cited as "a liar and a cheat"—allegations which I refute entirely.

In my view, the dissolution of our partnership was due to professional differences and miscommunication. My attempts to resolve these differences were ignored.

Please rest assured that the reversion to its original title will not adversely affect the content or the quality of *Make Your Point* in any way. Many thanks.—*Liz Barker, Editor and Publisher, Make Your Point, Chatham, England*

## PRINTED AS WRITTEN

Write to You the prize winner of first world olympiade has taken place in Venice in 1992 Gurgun Tadevosyan/50years old/

After long torments in 2002 I recognized the "Backgammon" club, which has

[Continued on page 6]



### CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2004 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU 31 JULY

Bob Zavoral 19.20	Norma Shyer 7.20	Eric Johnson 2.72	Josh Riddell 0.84
Tak Morioka 17.04	Lucky Nelson 7.12	Arline Levy 2.48	Elaine Kehm 0.84
Gary Kay 13.24	Bill Bartholomay 7.04	Bill Keefe 2.32	Cookie Frazin 0.80
David Rockwell 13.04	Joe Auszmann 6.68	Tom Meyer 2.24	Rick Sorci 0.80
Herb Roman 12.84	Linda Rockwell 6.48	Royal Robinson 2.24	Kathy Sorci 0.80
Tim Mabee 12.08	Joann Feinstein 6.28	Mark Phillips 2.16	Jake Maandekok 0.76
Carter Mattig 11.28	Alice Kay 5.92	Ron Washington 2.04	Amy Trudeau 0.72
Bill Davis 11.24	Bob Steen 5.84	John Jennings 1.92	Roy Cohen 0.72
Mike Sutton 10.92	David Marcus 5.64	Ken Tyszko 1.92	Robert Ring 0.72
Val Zimnicki 10.08	Roger Hickman 5.28	Roland Dieter 1.88	Brooke Gottshall 0.72
Joe Wollick 9.48	Les Moshinsky 5.12	Felix Yen 1.76	Mary Franks 0.72
Phyllis Smolinski 9.32	Paul Baraz 4.96	Bill Stegich 1.52	John Stryker 0.72
Phil Simborg 8.80	Peter Kalba 4.48	Tim Carroll 1.44	Harry Cohn 0.72
Steve Klesker 8.08	Wayne Wiest 3.88	Dave Cramer 1.20	Paul Klein 0.64
Jacob Moreno 8.04	Paul Franks 3.44	Barbara Levinson 1.04	Gaby Kairouz 0.64
Adrian Rios 7.88	Michael Peters 3.32	John O'Connor 1.04	Will Hare 0.64
Ken Bond 7.84	Georgina Flanagan 3.16	Nora Luna 1.04	Jay Bleiman 0.56
Howard Ring 7.76	Mark Murray 3.04	Mark Swanson 0.96	

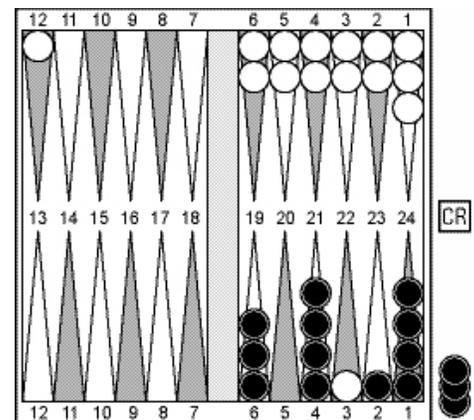
TAK MORIOKA and JACOB MORENO each earned 3.60 points to share July POM honors. Herb Roman placed third for the month with 3.00 points.

*your move*

## PROBLEM #302

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

Match to 7 points. Black trails White, 5-6 Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-3.**



# DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS



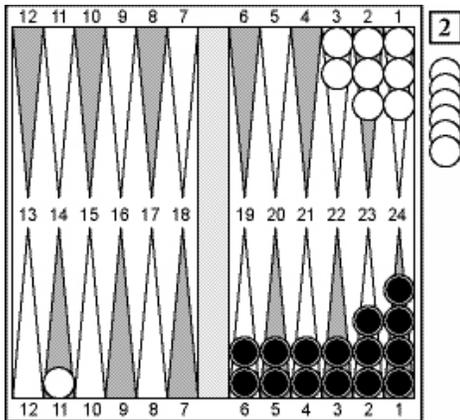
© 2004 by Danny Kleinman

## THE SLOW DOUBLE

**D**ear Miss Lonelyblots: There was bad news and good news and more bad news at this year's Michigan Summer Backgammon Championships. The bad news was that of the 92 players in the Championship division, only three were women. The good news was that ten of the eleven matches I played were very pleasant. The more bad news came in the other match, when I encountered Hotlips Hooligan. Unlike my other opponents, she did not behave well, but perhaps I should just tell you what happened and let you judge for yourself.

Hotlips is a seasoned world-class player, but she plays painfully slowly—just as slowly as I do. Early in our 11-point match—I believe the score is 4-4—she owns a 2-cube as White in the following position:

Match to 11 points. Black and White are tied at 4-4. **WHITE (Hotlips) IS ON SHAKE AND THINKING.**



On roll with six checkers off to my none, she thinks and thinks and thinks. She counts her pips, she counts my pips. She caresses her checkers, she caresses my checkers. She looks at the score, she looks at the board, she looks back at the score again. Finally, after about three minutes, she turns the cube to 4.

Now I have not given this position to Snowie, but I'm pretty sure my winning percentage is in single digits. I do not appreciate her three-minute huddle and her other antics prior to redoubling, which look to me to be a hustle to sucker me into taking. So before acting on the cube, I say

to her, "Harriet [nobody calls her "Hotlips" to her face], just what do you think my winning chances are in this position?"

Well, that really pisses her off. She starts screaming at me: "Your cube actions have been erratic. I have many things to think about before redoubling. How dare you accuse me of slow-doubling to con you into taking!"

Her use of this language only heightens my suspicions. When she finishes with her tirade, I reply, "Hotlips, I'm not accusing you anything. I'm just curious what you think my winning chances are in this position."

She knew what I really meant, no matter how hard I pretended to be innocent, and she was steaming for the rest of match.

So, Miss Lonelyhearts, tell me: Who was ruder, Hotlips for trying to con me into taking a clear pass, or me for calling her on it? —Shtick Victim

**DEAR SHTICK:** You are surely right about the position. Without bothering to do computer rollouts, or consulting any bearoff charts, I would judge Harriet to be able to bear off, on average, in six rolls. You can expect to need eight—seven if you roll a useful doublet.

However, just as I was about to say more, I noticed two peculiar things about your letter.

First, even without having witnessed your match, I wonder whether this was really the position. How did it arise? What was the position last turn, when Harriet, a top expert as you say, did not redouble you? Yes, there are several sequences that could have given her a redouble now though not at her last turn, but it seems as likely as not that in the heat of your upset you misremembered the position.

Second, at the end of your letter, you address your question not to me but to "Miss" Lonelyhearts. I just happen to have a sister who writes an advice-to-the-lovelorn column, but Toni worked very hard to earn her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and prefers to be called *Doctor* Lonelyhearts. Sensing that your problem isn't really about backgammon, I'm turning your letter over to her. —Miss Lonelyblots

**DEAR VICTIM:** Very interesting! You complain about the shortage of women at the tournament, but then when you are lucky enough to meet one, instead of acting seductively, you manage to get into a brouhaha with her. When you describe her actions, you do not say she "fingers" the checkers, you say she *caresses* them. My sister, who knows immeasurably more about backgammon than I do, doubts that you got the

position right. Were you so distracted by Hotlips Hooligan that you failed to focus on the game itself?

Without having you on my couch for a fifty-minute hour, I cannot advise you with real confidence, but here goes:

A man without a woman is definitely *not* like a fish without a bicycle. Your problem is not with the silly game that unaccountably fascinates you as well as my sister, but with women, in a society that unfortunately has too many lonely men. While Hotlips Hooligan had her fingers all over the little pieces on the backgammon board, you were wishing that her fingers were all over you.

You can't go back and replay your match against Hotlips, but if you could, you might do better to smile sweetly and say:

"Harriet, you're such a lovely woman that I have an impulse to take, letting you win four points instead of two and helping you win the match. However, that would be unfair to the player who will face the winner of our match, and figures to fare better against me than against you. So I'll suppress that impulse, just as I am suppressing my other impulses towards you, and make you grind it out one or two points at a time, prolonging the match and thereby lengthening the time in which I can enjoy your beauty and the pleasure of your company." —Dr. Antoinette G. Lonelyhearts, Ph.D.

Do you have a backgammon-related question for Miss Lonelyblots involving people problems, game etiquette or the play itself? Write: CHICAGO POINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155 or e-mail [bg@chicagopoint.com](mailto:bg@chicagopoint.com).



## ILLINOIS ACTION



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Tuesday, 6:00 P.M. at the Clarion Hotel, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago; 773/693-5800.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON at Champs Sports Bar, 17 W. 517 Roosevelt Rd., Oakbrook Terrace; 630/691-1888.

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 Tuesday, 6:30 P.M. at Damon's Grill, 1701 Fort Jesse Road, Normal. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wed., 6:15 P.M. at Damon's Grill, 3050 Lindbergh Blvd., 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).

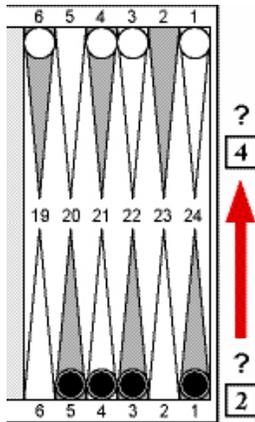
# MONTE CARLO...

[Continued from page 1]

Black's winning chances are 77.5%—lower than in Mike's problem position. But Black has a redouble at this match score because the following roll or two will decide the match. The volatility is high.

Let's look at another position:

**Pos. 3.** 21-point match. Black (on roll) leads 18–16 holding a 2-cube. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Black's winning chances are about 79%—higher than in Mike's position. But Black should not redouble because the volatility is not high enough.

In a long race, the 18–16 leader of the 21-point match needs at least 82% winning chances to justify a redouble to 4. Long races are the positions with the lowest volatility in backgammon; hence the leader should be very near to the trailer's pass-point before redoubling. If the rolls make the winning chances leap over the doubling window and you get a pass by redoubling later, most of the time the (market) loss is small.

Mike was punished by Bob's boxes three rolls after the recube. He later told the spectators that his decision to redouble was the result overvaluing the rolls that would lose his doubling market on the next turn.

After this tough match, Bob Wachtel's dice warmed up for an easy 21–5 win against Arild Idsoe (Norway). Then in the semifinals, Bob had to play Serge Engelhardt, a relatively unknown player from Germany who had already rolled over Carsten Joh (Germany), François Tardieu (France), and Mike "Falafel" Natanzon (Israel). Wachtel's dice continued to behave and he was able to stop the giant killer in a 23-point fight to reach the finals.

The other half of the draw sheet was dominated by Peter Hallberg. In the round-of-64 he had a tough match against Antoinette-Marie Williams (USA). After trailing the 19-point match by 6–17, Peter managed a remarkable comeback. His next victim was another well-known American, Nevada Backgammon Association director

Howard Markowitz.

When Hallberg defeated fellow Dane Kristian Stegenborg, he found himself paired against another top player from the States in the quarterfinals: Ed O'Laughlin. O'Laughlin also fell short and Hallberg was in the semifinals.

In a good 23-point match, Peter Hallberg was the luckier player winning the all Northern Europe semifinal against Dag Ekmark (Norway). After this victory, Hallberg phoned home to his wife Helle and told her to hop on a plane and fly to Monte Carlo for the finals. She arrived at the Grand Hotel one hour before the match started. (Peter Hallberg told me afterwards that he was very happy to share such an important moment of his life with his wife.)



*Peter Hallberg flew his wife Helle from Norway to Monte Carlo for the finals.*

On Sunday afternoon, the finals commentary was provided by Paul "X-22" Magriel, Lars Bonding (Denmark), and Snowie. All three did a very good job!



*The finals commentators (from left): Paul Magriel, Lars Bonding, and Snowie!*

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Caribbean Cruise Tournament

23–30 January 2005

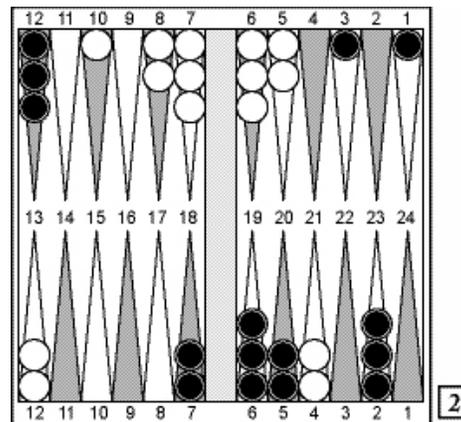
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[chicagopoint.com/bgonboard.html](http://chicagopoint.com/bgonboard.html)

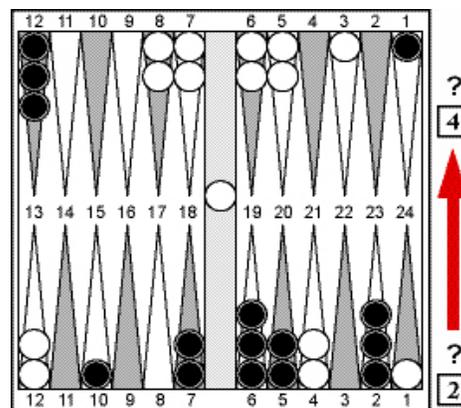
Although Peter Hallberg trailed the 25-point match 3–7, and then 7–13, he was always able to come back and equalize the match score. When Peter was again trailing 15–19, Bob Wachtel offered a good cube but played his subsequent roll inconsistent with the position:

**Pos. 4.** 25-point finals. Bob Wachtel (White) leads Peter Hallberg (Black), 19 to 15. **WHITE TO PLAY 2-1.**



Bob Wachtel is not facing blitz position because Hallberg has the better board. He is facing a priming position. Therefore, Bob should play to build a prime with 10/8, 6/5. Instead Wachtel tried to blitz Hallberg with 6/3\*. Two rolls later, Hallberg redoubled to 4:

**Pos. 5.** 25-point finals. Bob Wachtel (White) leads Peter Hallberg (Black), 19 to 15. **BLACK ON ROLL. CUBE ACTION(S)?**



To figure out correct cube decisions over the board in critical positions, here is the thought process I go through to calculate match equities:

1. Determine the match equity for the player whose equity is easier to estimate. For me in this situation, it is Peter Hallberg because he is the underdog.

2. If Bob Wachtel passes the cube Peter

[Continued on page 10]

# Bad Plays & Blunders

## 12 QUIZ PROBLEMS by Duane Jensen

Nack Ballard rolled double 2s in the bearoff to win the game. The late Ed Petrillo, his opponent and friend, typed: *wow*  
Nack: *skillful finish, I thought*  
Ed: *indeed*  
Nack: *artful, even*  
Ed: *legendary*  
Nack: *statuesque*

Nack and Ed played each other in an online session that went on for months. Many of the games and positions were interesting and an 8- or 16-cube would frequently spice the pot. I watched Nack to pick up some tips from one of the best backgammon players around. I watched Ed because I felt I had a bond with him. Both Ed and I excelled in making bad plays and blunders.

When I analyzed this game between Nack and Ed, I found a span of seven consecutive rolls in which Ed made six bad plays, mostly blunders. Now there's a player I can relate to—someone who can string together bad plays like pearls on a necklace.

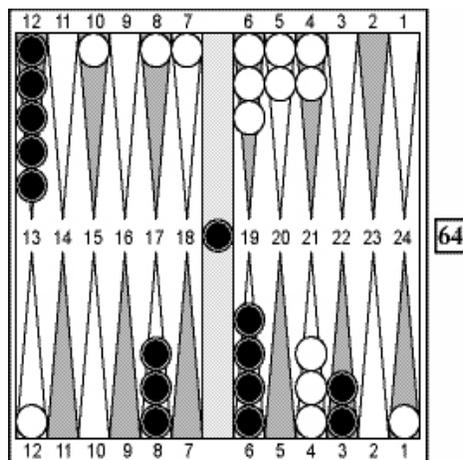
What's a "bad play"? A play starts to smell if the best play is 0.050 greater in equity than the bad play. If the bad play is more than 0.100 from the best play, the bad play is upgraded "blunder" status.

Bad plays and blunders come about in three ways.

(A) OMISSION: The greatest blunders come from this group. The player doesn't see the board thoroughly. Here's an example from Jack Kissane who failed to see that he could make his 5-point with double

aces and instead played Bar/23, 13/12\*(2).

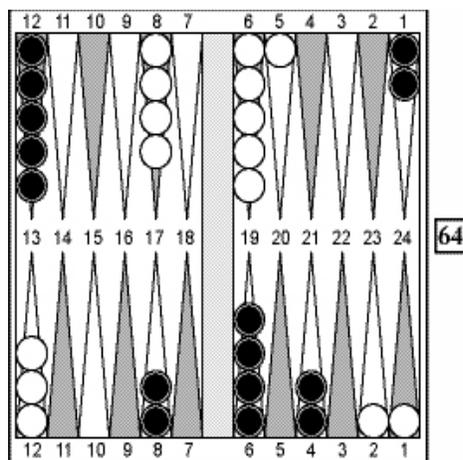
**Example (A).** 7-point match. Jack Kissane (Black) trails his opponent 0–1. **BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.**



(B) CONFUSION: Most of the bad plays and blunders fall into this group. Two or three plays look so similar in equity to the player that he just picks one that feels right.

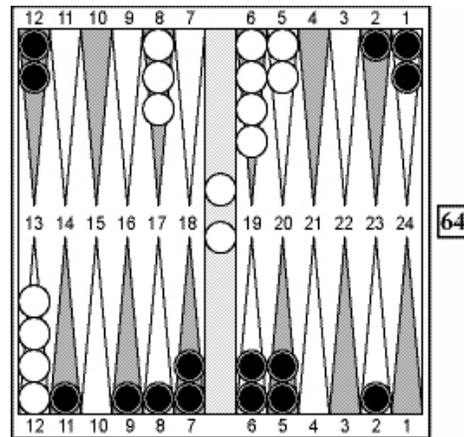
Example B shows one of my bad plays. I made the 2-point instead of playing 24/20\*/14 (which is much better).

**Example (B).** 3-point match. Duane Jensen (Black) and his opponent have no score. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-4.**



(C) OVERCONFIDENCE: These bad plays occur because they meet one of the player's goals, such as making a prime. The chosen play looks so good that the player doesn't look for a possible better play. Here's an example from a Mike Senkiewicz money game.

**Example (C).** Money game. Mike Senkiewicz (Black) is on shake. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-2.**



Senkiewicz moved 13/8, 11/9 to make a 5-prime. A much better play is 7/2, 24/22, continuing the blitz threat.

**NOW IT'S QUIZ TIME.** When a backgammon bot analyzes checker plays for a given dice roll, it ranks them by equity with the play having the highest equity listed at the top. Those plays listed with equities 0.050 worse than the best play are considered "bad" plays. Are there some dice rolls that have only *one* good play with all other plays ranking as bad? Of course. And that's what this quiz is about.

Each of the 12 checker play questions on Page 7 has but *one* correct play with all other plays being "bad" or "blunders." Since there's only *one* correct play that stands apart from all the others, the quiz should be easy and the scoring exacting. If you answer all 12 questions correctly, you pass. If you get even one wrong, you fail. [Answers on Page 9]—Duane Jensen

## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

named "Yerevan", by name of the capital of Armenia Yerevan, which is accepted for the "Backgammon" world Federation since the same year.

If you are informed, the Armenia is a new formed, independent state and is in not so good social-economic situation. Even the activity of casinos are previously prohibited at our place. The great expenses are required for the organization

of construction works and acquiring the sporting business and it is difficult for me to acquire it. I apply you with request as a person of the same category. Please render me an humane, material assistance for the organization of club works within the limits of possibility. You know that 50-100\$ is a great help for me. If you have a desire to help me you can transfer the sum on this account number: [Intermediary Bank, Beneficiary's Bank, and Beneficiary information provided.—Ed.]

Please inform me how and when you

can send me the sum.—Gurgen Tadevosyan, via Internet.

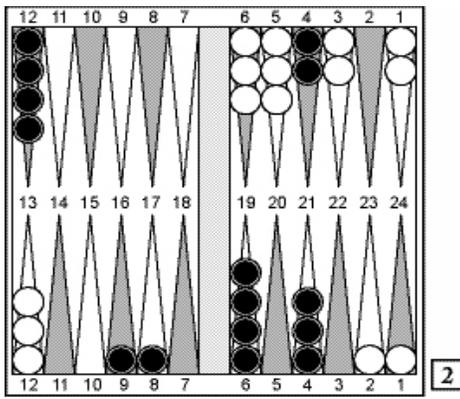
Don't hold your breath.—Ed.

## "FORMING A CLUB"

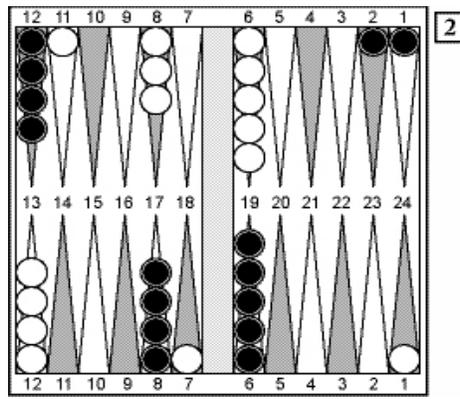
I have reformatted your fine article "Tips on Forming and Operating a Local Backgammon Club." Readers can now find it at: [www.bkgm.com/articles/FormingABackgammonClub](http://www.bkgm.com/articles/FormingABackgammonClub) —Tom Keith, Webmaster, Backgammon Galore, via Internet

Looks great, Tom. Thanks.—Ed.

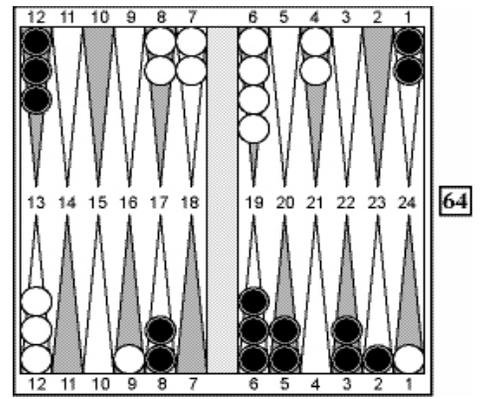
1. No score in a 5-point match. Wendy Kaplan (Black) to play 4-1.



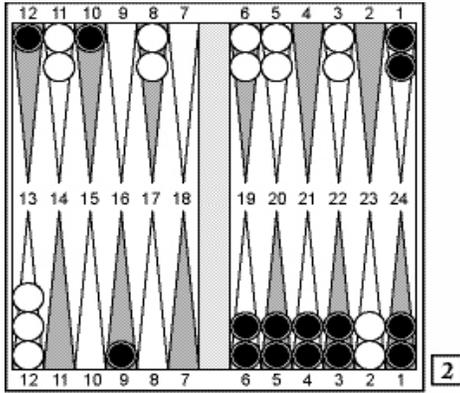
2. Black trails 2-5 in a 7-point match. Duane Jensen (Black) to play 6-5.



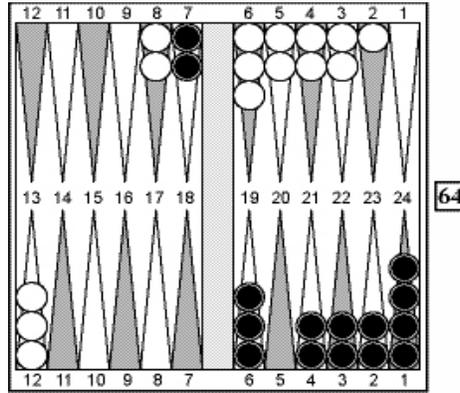
3. Black trails 0-1 in a 3-point match. Neil Kazaross (Black) to play 5-4.



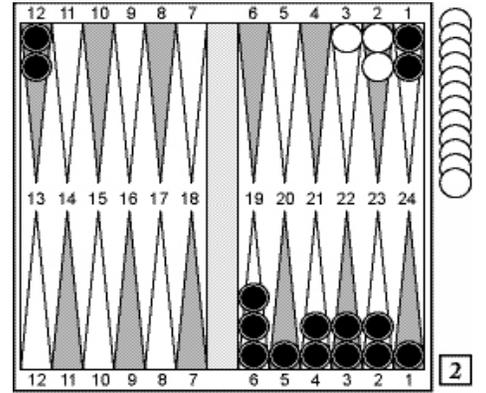
4. No score in a 5-point match. Duane Jensen (Black) to play 6-2.



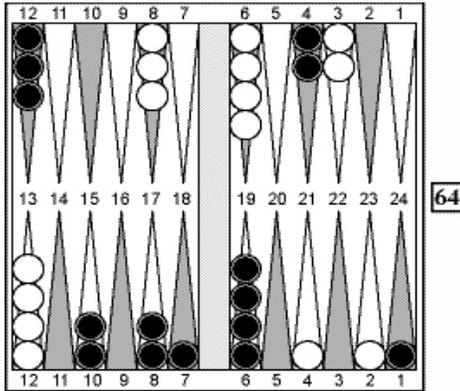
5. Black leads 4-1 in a 7-point match. Hossein Zafarianian (Black) to play 5-4.



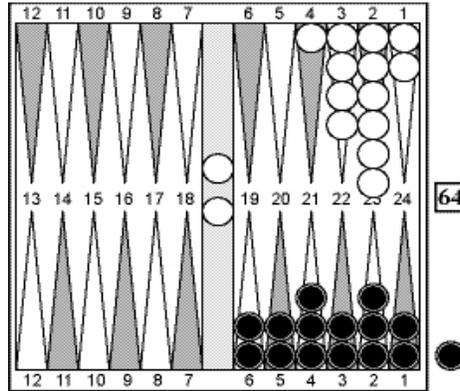
6. Black leads 10-3 in a 13-point match. Duane Jensen (Black) to play 4-4.



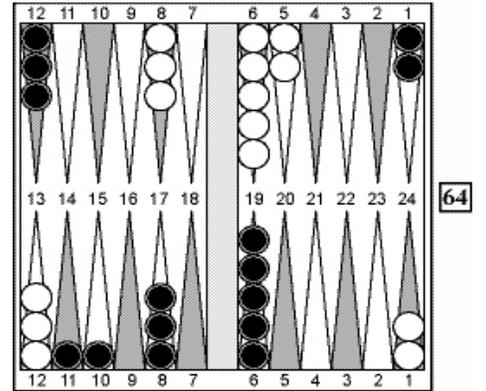
7. Black leads 1-0 in a 3-point match. Howard Ring (Black) to play 4-3.



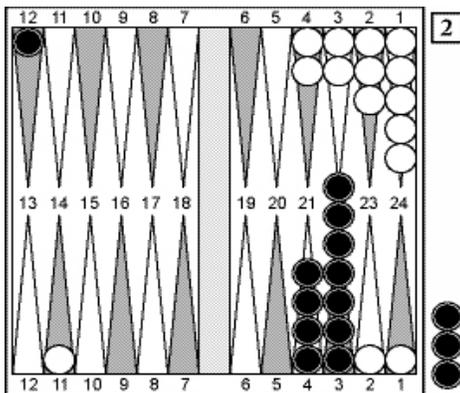
8. Black leads 6-0 in a 9-point match. Duane Jensen (Black) to play 5-4.



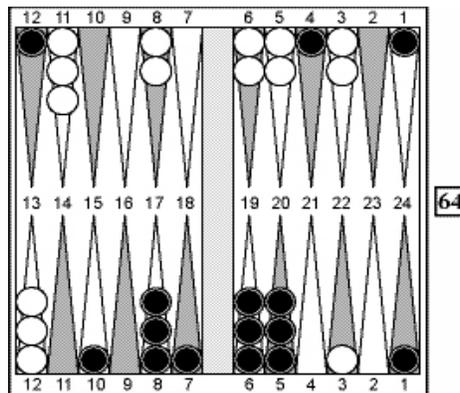
9. Black leads 4-3 in a 7-point match. Masahiko Nasu (Black) to play 3-2.



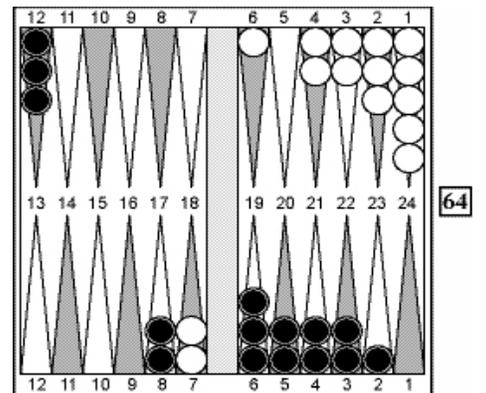
10. Black trails 2-4 in a 7-point match. Duane Jensen (Black) to play 2-1.



11. Black trails 2-4 in a 7-point match. Ray Fogelrund (Black) to play 1-1.



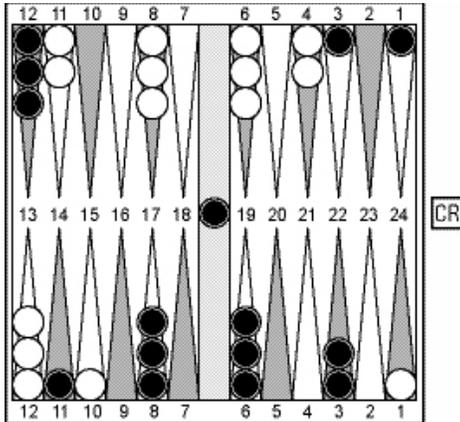
12. Black trails 1-4 in a 7-point match. Jack Kissane (Black) to play 6-4.



## PROBLEM #301 ANALYZED

by Antonio Ortega

7 point match. Black trails White 5-6 Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.**



This position arose during a match at the Bar Point Club, where Bill Davis runs weekly tournaments.

As we know, the trailer may not double during the Crawford Game. However, at 2-away/1-away, gammons take on added value for the trailer (winning the match outright), but have no value for the leader. At this score, Black can take extra risks to gammon White, while White must play cautiously to avoid losing a gammon. Therefore each will often do well to make plays that would be wrong at other match scores or in money play.

Black trails in the race 169-150 before

playing this 2-2 from the bar. After entering on White's 2-point, he can make the 5-anchor, the 4-point, or the 9-point with the rest of his roll; or he can use parts of his roll to anchor on White's 3-point, cover the blot on his 11-point, or switch to the 1-point while hitting. Let's examine the plausible plays:

### Play (1) Bar/23, 13/9, 11/9

This play looks weak because it makes neither a defensive anchor nor another inside point. Having already made the 3-point, Black has little use for the 9-point, which is six pips away.

### Play (2) Bar/23, 13/11, 22/20, 8/6

This is not quite so weak, as it exerts more pressure in the outfield, but it risks having White point on the 5-point with his three active builders.

### Play (3) Bar/23, 13/11, 24/22, 8/6

Anchoring on White's 3-point is slightly better than advancing one checker to White's 5-point, as it leaves only one blot, but like Play (2), it removes a useful spare from the 8-point.

All three of the plays we have considered so far are passive: weak in money play, and weaker still at this score.

### Play (4) Bar/23, 13/11, 3/1\*(2)

This aggressive play, which covers the 11-point and switches to the 1-point, is more in keeping with Black's gammon-seeking strategy at this score. Having to use half her roll to reenter from the bar, White will find it more difficult to bring her outfield blot to safety. After this play, White will dance with four rolls (1-1, 1-6, 6-6), and leave her outfield blot exposed to a double

shot with another nine rolls (1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 3-3). The downside of this play is that Black doesn't have much ammunition in range to continue the attack. In money play, switching points would be premature.

### Play (5) Bar/23, 24/20, 22/20

This solid play makes the golden anchor, pre-empting that valuable point before White can make it. With this point, Black can play aggressively on the other side of the board. In money play, or at scores where gammons have their usual value for both sides, this play is clearly best.

### Play (6) Bar/23, 8/4, 6/4

Finally, Black can make a third inside point, impeding White's escape and making reentry more difficult if White gets hit. Black's third inside point constrains White to avoid shots, thus protecting indirectly the three Black checkers in White's home board, as hitting loose becomes dangerous. For example, although White would hit twice (8/3\*/1\*) with a 5-2 in money play, she can ill afford to do so at this score, and would therefore do better to move 15/8 safely. Play (6) is more gammonish for both sides than Play (5), but the gammons that Black wins are especially valuable, while the gammon that White wins are meaningless.

When this position arose, Black chose Play (5), the solid play that is clearly best in money play. Play (6), aggressively making a new inside point, is definitely better. In fact, at this score, where Black needs to be aggressive, Plays (4) and (5) are so close that rollouts with Snowie 4 can't distinguish between them. — Antonio Ortega Δ

## AMALGAMATION

Visiting the Chicago Bar Point Club in July: **Alan Grunwald** (NJ), **Paul & Mary Franks** (NV)... Congratulations to **Linda Rockwell** who joined the 1000-to-1 club for earning her 10th BPC win in a row on 3 August... The Pacific Northwest Backgammon Championship (24-26 Sept. in Auburn, Washington) is entering the ABT with a bang: \$900 board giveaway (if 48 players attend), **Ray Fogerlund** (CA) Seminar, **Peter Kalba** (IL) Calcutta Auction, and a casino venue. For details, go to: [www.backgammon-northwest.com](http://www.backgammon-northwest.com)... The 8 July New York Times had a front page feature story about the obsession of online backgammon. The two websites mentioned are [itsyourturn.com](http://itsyourturn.com) and [dailygammon.com](http://dailygammon.com)... Congratulations to **Iliia & Galina Guzei** who were married in Madison, WI on 10 July... Good luck to two new clubs. Backgammon re-

turns to Denver with the Rocky Mountain BG Club. Call **Tom Christner** at 720/283-4546. And there is now action in Missouri at the Kansas City BG Club. **Eric Barr** (816/561-4330) is the leader... "I, Robot" star **Bridget Moynahan**



(shown at left) fears she's yet to see sports hero boyfriend **Tom Brady** at his worst, because his Super Bowl-winning team the New England Patriots has never lost since she began dating him. "We played dodgeball once and I got him out on that, and we play backgammon. I beat him a lot at backgammon"... Thievery at the Monte Carlo World Championships. **Peter Bennet** (UK) had his camera stolen from the Grand Hotel playing room. Two Armenian players, **Mlikyan Khachik** and **Jakik Bakhalbahcyan** were found

guilty and sentenced to two weeks in jail. They have also been barred from Monaco for life... Looking for a modernistic art deco backgammon board in leather? Check out [www.deuce.fr](http://www.deuce.fr). Definitely different... We wonder if there will be any backgammon exhibits at the International Toy & Game show at Navy Pier in Chicago 4-6 September... The Vietor Cup (at **Jon Vietor's** home in La Jolla, CA 18-19 Sept.) will change its format to modified Swiss Movement this year. Only 32 players can participate, so call Gammon Associates director **Patrick Gibson** at 818/901-0464 to reserve a spot... Speaking of Patrick, he is very excited about a change of name and venue for his December tournament. The California Open will roll off 3-5 Dec. at the Airtel Hotel in Van Nuys, CA. Expect a big crowd for what is now the last ABT event of 2004... Finally, what's true in life is true in backgammon: "To achieve genuine success, you must overcome the fear of being successful." Δ

# WINNER'S CIRCLE



JUL.-AUG. 2004

•**NEBC 2003-04 Playoffs** (Massachusetts; July)... EXPERT PLAYER OF THE YEAR (7): 1-Herb Gurland, 2-Alex Zamanian. WIZARD OF WED. NIGHT (3): 1-Alex Zamanian, 2-Herb Gurland.

•**16th City of Venice International** (Venice, Italy; 8-11 Jul.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (39): 1-Mogens Knudsen (DEN), 2-Lars Trabolt (DEN), 3/4-Vittorio Castro / Marcel Liechti (SWZ); 1C-Shinichiro Kaneko (JPN), 2C-Piergiorgio D'Ancona, 3C/4C-Hans-Uli Koch (GER) / Hugh McNeil (CAN); 1LC-Kenji Shimodaira (JPN), 2LC-Steve Sax (USA). INTERMEDIATE (39): 1-Giulio Alessandri, 2-Ivano Zanenghi, 3/4-Yvonne Nanga (AUS) / Roberto Piccioni; 1C-Hisako Nishizawa (JPN), 2C-Vazgen Matevosyan (ARM), 3C/4C-Frederic Andrieu (FRA) / Silvio Carrese (SWZ); 1LC-Nasser Hadjihosseini (IRN), 2LC-Marc Werner (GER). AMATEUR (35): 1-Gaghil Bachalbachyan (ARM), 2-Giancarlo Fassina, 3/4-Luca Boni / Alberto Profumo; 1C-Roland Herrera (UK), 2C-Marcello Zancarello; 1LC-Sandro Mescola, 2LC-Giuseppe Baù. SUPERJACKPOT #1: 1-Lars Bønding (DEN). SJ #2: 1-Dario de Toffoli. WARM-UP (64): 1-Yoshito Takeuchi (JPN), 2-Cyrus Afchani (GER). DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Shahab Ghodsi (NOR) & Kenji Shimodaira (JPN), 2-Andrea de Zandonati & Ivano Zanenghi. DOUBLES INTERMEDIATE: 1-Giuseppe Baù & Sandro Mescola, 2-Sergio Fragiaccomo & Damian Plesec (SLO).

•**Firecracker Classic** (Houston, TX; 10 Jul.)... OPEN (17): 1-Gonzalo Molina, 2-Gary Fomby, 3/4 Kerry Blodgett / Scott Ward; 1C-Tom Wright, 2C-Drew McCulloch.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 11 Jul.)... OPEN (14): 1-Ai Tesoro, 2-David Glass.

•**Riviera's Challenge II** (Cannes, France)... CHAMPIONSHIP (109+19 rebuys): 1-Jan Andrew Bloxham (ENG/DEN), 2-Andreas Humke

(GER), 3/4-Howard Markowitz (USA) / Steve Sax (USA); 1C-Jyri Lammi (FIN), 2C-Yuri Krivoy (ISR), 3C/4C-Pawel Bielewicz (POL/SWE) / Zbigniew Szczerek (POL); 1LC-Ghodsi Shahab (IRN/NOR), 2LC-Serge Engelhardt (GER); Ladies Prize: Veronica Dabul (ARG). INTERMEDIATE (45+19 rebuys): 1-Avetis Rostomian (ARM), 2-Frédéric Andrieu (FRA), 3/4-Harutyun Martirosyan (ARM) / Eli Schvidler (ISR); 1C-Hanna Nilsson (NOR), 2C-David Sneoual (FRA), 3C/4C-Cyrus Afchani (GER) / Hisako Nishizawa (JPN); 1LC-Olivier Lafon (FRA), 2LC-Dan Zanzouri (FRA). BEGINNER (26+6 rebuys): 1-Benjamin Lambert (FRA), 2-David Fischelis (FRA), 3/4-Andranik Harutyunyan (ARM) / Massimiliano Maini (FRA); 1C-Eric Benichou (FRA), 2C-Andrey Nepomniatchy (RUS); 1LC-Dominique Leboulenger (FRA), 2LC-Terumi Takeuchi (JPN). NATIONS CHALLENGE (24 teams): 1-Mexico (Malcolm Davis & Jose Farca), 2-Argentina (Veronica Dabul & Leo Fernandez), 3/4-Norway (Arild Idsøe & Jon Røyset) / Poland (Pawel Bielewicz & Zbigniew Szczerek). DOUBLES (32 TEAMS): 1-Najib Salamzy (AFG/GER) & Krassimira Yaneva (GER), 2-Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (ISR) & Felix Ziva (ISR). #1000 SUPERJACKPOT #1 (16): 1-Paul Magriel (USA), 2-Yomi Peretz (FRA). #1000 SJP #2 (16): 1-François Tardieu (FRA), 2-Constantin Mezadourian (FRA). #500 JACKPOT (32): 1/2-Mogens Knudsen (DEN) / Lars Trabolt (DEN). #500 JP (16): 1-Shinichiro Kaneko (JPN), 2-Tobias Hellweg (GER/AUS).

•**Thousand Islands—ABT** (Alexandria Bay, NY; 30 Jul.–1 Aug.)... OPEN (31): 1-Lloyd Upper (Canada), 2-Alan Fenster (IL), 3-Woody Woodworth (IN). DOUBLES (8 teams): 1-Matt Reklaitis (PA) & Marty Storer (NH), 2-Beverly Flowers (NJ) & Larry Liebster (NJ).

•**Arizona Club Monthly** (Phoenix, AZ; 3 Aug.)... OPEN: 1-Pete Campbell, 2-Darin DuMolin, 3-Gary Crain.

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 8 Aug.)... OPEN (15): 1-Linda Rockwell, 2-Carter Mattig, 3/4-Bill Davis / Ken Bond; 1C/2C-Bill Bartholomay / David Rubin. INTERMEDIATE (3): 1-Jolie Rubin... Linda's 3rd Sunday win in a row. Δ

## KHOURY CAPTURES WISCONSIN

Another great Wisconsin State Tourney 30 Jul.–1 Aug. at the Radisson Madison. Congrats to divisional winners Faddoul Khoury (Open), Ron Wagner (Adv.), and Carol Kerr (Ltd.). Δ



Top from left: Director Sonya Sidky, Emil Mortuk, Faddoul Khoury, Director Tom Machaj. Bottom from left: Randy Reiff, Ron Wagner; Ilia Guzei & Tak Morioka.

## 2004 WISCONSIN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (31): 1-Faddoul Khoury (IL), 2-Emil Mortuk (MI); 1C-Mary Franks (IL/NV); 1LC-Bruce Russell (WI). ADVANCED (27): 1-Ron Wagner (IL), 2-Randy Reiff (IL); 1C-Joann Feinstein (IL); 1LC-Terry Leahy (IL). LIMITED (5): 1-Carol Kerr (WI), 2-Akemi Ota (Japan/MI). BADGER CLASSIC (10): 1-Sho Sengoku (Japan/CA), 2-Todd Obadal (MD). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Ilia Guzei (IL) & Tak Morioka (IL), 2-Phil & Randee Simborg (IL). OVERFLOW DOUBLES (4 teams): 1-Mary & Paul Franks (IL/NV). EARLYBIRD JACKPOT (16): 1/2-Brad Andersen (WI) / Bill Minser (WI). BLITZ (64): 1-Marv Arnol (WI), 2-Karen Chung (MD). QUICKIE KNOCKOUT (64): 1/2-Howard Markowitz (NV) / Sho Sengoku (Japan/CA). BACKGAMMON QUIZ (8): 1-Ray Foglerlund (CA).

## 'Bad Plays & Blunders' Solutions

[From Duane Jensen Quiz on Pp. 6–7]

1. Wendy Kaplan played 13/8. The best play is 9/5, 6/5 leaving a direct shot.
2. Duane Jensen played 24/18, 23/18. The best play is 13/7\*, 6/1\* primarily because of the score and the cube.
3. Neil Kazaross played 13/9\*, 13/8. The best play is 13/9\*, 6/1\* putting two on the bar.
4. Duane Jensen played 13/7, 9/7 making a 5-prime. The best play is 24/18, 15/13. The 5-prime is overrated with two men still stuck back on the 24-point.
5. Hossein Zafarianian played 6/2, 6/1. The

best play is 18/14, 18/13. If you're not hit, you can usually cash. Also, if hit, you might hit back with a good board of your own.

6. Duane Jensen played 24/16, 13/5. The best play is 24/16 (2) surrendering the gammon but escaping the backgammon. With a big lead in the score, you should attempt to save points and not stay for a desperation shot.

7. Howard Ring played 8/4\*, 7/4. The best play is 7/3, 6/3. Pointing on the 4-point exposes blots unnecessarily in this close race.

8. Duane Jensen played 5/1, 5/off. The best play is 5/off, 4/off exposing a blot. This game hasn't been doubled yet, the opponent has two men on the bar, a weak home board and a blot. Exposing a blot on your

5-point carries little risk.

9. Masahiko Nasu played 24/21, 13/11. The best play is 13/10, 11/9. Splitting is too dangerous; it invites an attack from the spares on the 6-point.

10. Duane Jensen played 4/2\*, 3/2. The best play is 13/11\*, 11/10 because hitting the third man creates more gammons.

11. Ray Foglerlund played 8/7, 6/4, 5/4 making the 5-prime. The best play is 5/3\*, 3/1. This play builds another point and aids in protecting your many blots scattered around the board.

12. Jack Kissane played 13/3. The best play is 13/9, 8/2 which creates a number of gammonish positions for the opponent. Δ

## MONTE CARLO...

[Continued from page 5]

Hallberg's MWC is 39%.

3. If Bob Wachtel *takes* the cube, the gammon wins give Hallberg a 23–19 lead and 79% MWC (say 80% for simplicity). Single wins tie the match at 19–all putting the equity at 50%.

4. I estimate that Peter Hallberg will win the game 55% of the time.

5. I estimate that 30% of Hallberg's wins will be gammon wins.

6. Hallberg's MWC with the estimated numbers are as follows: Gammon win for Hallberg:  $30\% \times 80\% = 24\%$ . Single game win for Hallberg (don't forget to deduct the gammon wins):  $[(55\% - 30\%) \times 50\%] = 12.5\%$ . Losing the game yields 8% MWC for Peter, so:  $45\% \times 8\% = 3.6\%$ .

Add Hallberg's MWC:  $24\% + 12.5\% + 3.6\% =$  about 40%.

7. Compare the MWC after take and pass: Taking gives Hallberg 40% match winning chances; passing gives him 39%.

8. Make your decision: I give Hallberg less winning chances by passing the redouble. So the correct action is Hallberg: Redouble, Wachtel: Pass.

I know that everybody cannot perform these calculations over the board. It's a lot of hard work and pressure makes it even more difficult if you are sitting at the World Championship final table. But I think you can train yourself to do this if you practice. When people say that backgammon is all

about luck, show them positions like this!

In fact, the numbers from a Snowie rollout are better than what we estimated for Hallberg (BG-wins: 2%, Gammon-wins: 35%, Single wins: 57.4%) and therefore the pass is even more correct.

Bob Wachtel took the cube and lost the game. Peter Hallberg never trailed the match again to win 25–22 and claim the

title of 2004 World Backgammon Champion. Congratulations, Peter. Well done!

We had a wonderful, unforgettable week in Monte Carlo and I am sure everybody who attended agrees and will be back again to try and win the big one. Me too! See you next year at the 30th Anniversary World Backgammon Championship 11–17 July 2005.—Harald Johanni, Germany  $\Delta$

### 29TH MONTE CARLO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (271): 1-Peter Hallberg (Denmark), 2-Bob Wachtel (USA), 3/4-Dag Ekmark (Norway) / Serge Engelhardt (Germany); 1st Consolation: 1C-Volker Sonnabend (Germany), 2C-Arnaud Mattern (France), 3C/4C-Perry Gartner (USA) / J. Rodriguez (France); 2nd Consolation: 1C-Bernard Morel (Switzerland), 2C-F. Elghanyan (Iran), 3C/4C-David Ben-Zion (Israel) / Henrik Gwinner (Denmark); 1LC-Morten Nielsen (Denmark), 2LC-Morten Holm (Denmark), 3LC/4LC-Olivier Croiselle (France) / Jon Røyset (Norway); Ladies Prize: Carina Meile (Denmark).

INTERMEDIATE (106): 1-G. Goldreich (Israel), 2-Harutyun Martirosyan (Armenia), 3/4-Gilbert Grimberg (France) / Luca Lodi (Italy); 1st Consolation: 1C-Will Richardson (England), 2C-Ingo Meissner (Germany), 3C/4C-Laurent Arnone (France) / Torben Krogh (Denmark); 2nd Consolation: 1C-Rogier Van Gemert (Netherlands), 2C-Khacik Melikian (Armenia), 3C/4C-S. Drmoyan (Armenia) / Michael Hansen (Denmark); 1LC-Patrick Svennson (Sweden), 2LC-Henrik Veje (Denmark); Ladies Prize: Nathalie Guez (France).

BEGINNER (88): 1-Rolf Hauswirth (Switzerland), 2-V. Mikhaylets (Russia), 3/4-B. Bachal (Armenia) / Justin Silver (England); 1st Consolation: 1C-Claus Cato (Denmark), 2C-Carlo Costanza (Italy), 3C/4C-Guil Draï (Israel) / Meo Migliore (Italy); 2nd Consolation: 1C-B. Gadalean (Romania), 2C-S. Hasoglu (Turkey), 3C/4C-René Hansen (Denmark) / Alex Naylor (England); 1LC-Terumi Takeuchi (Japan), 2LC-Judy Olsen (Denmark); Ladies Prize: Terumi Takeuchi (Japan).

SUPERJACKPOT (128): 1-Najib Salamzy (Afganistan/Germany), 2-Ary Nogueira (Brazil), 3/4-Pawel Bielewicz (Sweden) / Carsten Joh (Germany), 5/8-Gadi Carmeli (Israel) / Steve Sax (USA) / Hugh Sconyers (USA) / Ricardo Spinola (Brazil).

FORTIS WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP (80 teams): 1-Finland: "Sisu" (Matti Haaksila / Petri Pietilä / Teppo Salo), 2-United Kingdom: "Mad Hatters" (Peter Bennet / Paul Gilbertson / John Slattery).

ELEGANCE TROPHY: Kazuko Numazawa (Japan).

FIDELITY TROPHY: Martin de Bruin (USA/Spain).

TRAVEL TROPHY: Ryan Jones (Australia).

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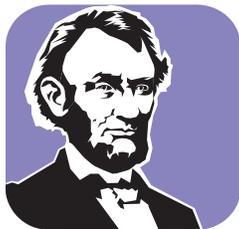
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