

31st monte carlo world championship

PHILIP VISCHJAGER WINS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Jeremy Bagai takes Super JP

By Neil Kazaross

Philip Vischjager, a 47-year old real estate investor from The Netherlands has won the Monte Carlo World Championship. 336 main event players from across the globe attended the 31st annual spectacular sponsored by Truemoneygames/Snowie. The 31st annual spectacular was held 10–16 July at the Fairmont Hotel and sponsored by Truemoneygames/Snowie. Despite a 10% drop in attendance to 336, energy remained high, the weather sunny, and the food and wine delightful.



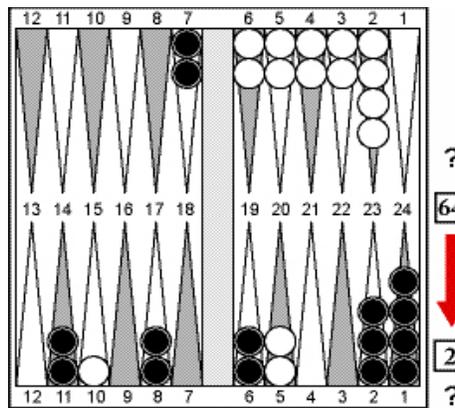
New World Champion Philip Vischjager displays a mock-up of the €75,000 check he received for winning. (Photo by Peter Bennet)

After defeating the likes of Peter Heitmuller, Christian Liebe-Harkort, and finally Kazuhiro Shino in the semifinals, Vischjager faced Italian expert Dr. Luigi Villa of Italy. Villa, who won the first Monte Carlo World Championship in 1979, was also a member of the Honorary Tournament Committee. Villa, an old school player, was the underdog in the majority of his matches defeating German expert Andreas Humke to reach the finals.

The 25-point finals was a knock-down-drag-out battle. Vischjager accelerated to a 6–1 lead only to watch Villa tie the score at 7–all. 15 games later, the match was still knotted at 17–all.

Game 27 proved to be a critical turning point in match. Luigi Villa had once again during the tournament, mounted a strong comeback. Leading the 25-point finals 21–19, he looked ready to become a two-time World Champion.

25-point Monte Carlo finals. Vischjager (Black) trails Villa (White), 21–19. White on roll. CUBE ACTION(S)?



Luigi is an old school player who uses his vast experience and instincts to win games. Seeing his powerful home board vs. Vischjager's stripped outer points, he decided to cube here and hope to win the match with a doubled gammon. As expected, Vischjager correctly grabbed the doubler.

This cube is too early since White has to move his pieces and may do so inconveniently. Black has not yet blotted and he has strong recube vig at this score. Luigi's double was incorrect by over 0.150 and cost him about 1% match-winning chances. Quite a few of the watchers online on TMG liked this aggressive cube, but it really isn't the best way to try to win the match and only about 1/9 of his wins are gammons.

The dice punished Luigi's early cube with a poor 5-3 roll. This is not an easy roll to play properly and many players watching online would have made Luigi's play (20/12) to retain his five point board. Unfortunately, for Luigi, his running play is a blunder and wrong by more than 0.120, costing him nearly 2% match-winning chances! The clearly correct play is to come out 20/15 and exercise some caution

[Continued on page 5]

54th indiana open

KALANTARI & HICKEY ARE LAST INDY WINNERS

The Meeses retire as directors

Hoosier directors Butch & Mary Ann Meese welcomed a record 156 main event players to their last Indiana Open 1–4 Sept. at the Sheraton Hotel in Indianapolis. Nationwide directors honored their achievements with a plaque and \$400+. This event will be missed!



In the tourney. Fred Kalantari defeated Gregg Cattanach in the Open and Mary Hickey topped Gregg Cattanach in the Masters. Complete results below. Δ



Mary Hickey

Fred Kalantari

54TH INDIANA OPEN

CHAMPIONSHIP (76): 1-Fred Kalantari (MN), 2-Gregg Cattanach (GA), 3/4-David Todd (MO) / Christopher Yep (OH); 1C-David Rubin (IL), 2C-Neil Garvie (CAN), 3C/4C-Petko Kostadinov (SC) / Bob Glass (CA). ADVANCED (51): 1-Lee Wood (GBR), 2-Joe Miller (OH), 3/4-Michael Flohr (IL) / Jim Pokela (MN); 1C-Yancho Hristov (BUL), 2C-Jolie Rubin (IL). INTERMEDIATE (20): 1-Bob Frydell (IN), 2-Lisa Brooks (OK), 3/4-Peggy Neubig (NJ) / Michael Valliere (PA). NOVICE (9): 1-Michael Moellinger (OH), 2-Remington Brooks (OK). INDY 300 JP (32): 1-Mary Hickey (OH), 2-Gregg Cattanach (GA), 3/4-Jeb Horton (NC) / Kit Woolsey (CA). AMATEUR JP (#@): 1-DAN GROGAN (MI), 2-MIKE REZAI (OH), 3/4-MICHAEL PLOG (IL) / JOHN GRAYSON (MI). DOUBLES (32): 1-Bob Glass & Steve Sax (CA), 2-Neil Garvie (CAN) & Ray Glaeser (OH), 3/4-Patrick Gibson & Doug Mayfield (CA) / Michael Edge & Petko Kostadinov (SC). JB JACKPOT (32): 1-Ken Fischer (CA), 2-Larry Whittenburg (IL). QUICKIES-\$20 (64): 1-Barry Miller (IL), \$10 (16): Mike Valliere (PA). KILL PHIL #1 (16): 1-Steve Brown (MN), 2-Dave Settles (IL), #2 (16): Phil Simborg (IL), 2-Linda MacLean (MA). LABOR DAY JPS-\$200 (8): 1-Yuri Millman (MN), \$100 (8): Larry Whittenburg (IL).

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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LARRY STOMMEN REMEMBERED

I am saddened by the news of Larry Strommen's death. Larry was a good man and he certainly had a profound, positive impact on our backgammon world, in the Midwest and across the US, over the past 25 years. Larry will be remembered and missed, for many years to come, as we fellow backgammoners gather and roll on through life. — *Jim Opre, Downers Grove, Illinois*

I want to commend you on the quality of Larry Strommen's obituary in the CHICAGO POINT and the pictures at www.chicagopoint.com. Those pictures were just the way I will remember him. — *Chuck Bower, Bloomington, Indiana*

KUDOS TO PAUL

I attended the Wisconsin State Championships last month and had the privilege of

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



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

*Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Sep 9*	Metro North Saturday Swiss #5, Crash Landing, Warren, Michigan	313/330-7803
Sep 9*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Sep 9*	Red, White & Blue Open, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Sep 10*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Gambits Bar, Marriott Hotel, Dayton, Ohio	937/890-2536
Sep 10*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Sep 10*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Sep 15-17	<u>13th Georgia Championships, Embassy Suites, Atlanta, Georgia</u>	770/333-1876
Sep 17*	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, Ohio	614/784-8132
Sep 17*	Pittsburgh Monthly Tournament, Hartner's Lounge, Cranberry Twp., PA	412/826-1334
Sep 19*	Phoenix Free Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/296-4307
Sep 21*	Third Thursday Bonus (Illinois State), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Sep 23-24	Jon Viotor Invitational Cup, Jon Viotor's residence, La Jolla, California	818/901-0406
Sep 29-Oct 1	<u>Pacific Northwest Championships, Holiday Inn SeaTac, Seattle, Washington</u>	253/856-7513
Oct 2*	Roy's Monthly Tournament, Restaurant Roy, Santa Barbara, California	805/966-5636
Oct 3*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Oct 4*	Kansas City Club Monthly, Harpo's, Kansas City, Missouri	816/916-6599
Oct 6-8	<u>Illinois State Championships, Holiday Inn City-Centre, Peoria, Illinois</u>	309/699-6005
Oct 7*	Rocky Mountain Regional, Ramada Inn Continental, Denver, Colorado	303/664-9617
Oct 8*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Gambits Bar, Marriott Hotel, Dayton, Ohio	937/890-2536
Oct 8*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Oct 8*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Oct 14*	Houston Fall Classic, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Oct 14*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Oct 15*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Purple Hotel, Lincolnwood, Illinois	773/583-6464
Oct 15*	28th Flint Area Club Championships, Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Oct 20-22	<u>11th Minnesota Open, Comfort Inn, Bloomington, Minnesota</u>	612/718-2613
Nov 1-5	<u>2006 Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada</u>	702/893-6025
Nov 5-9	2006 World Doubles Championship, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
Nov 10	Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney, Purple Hotel, Lincolnwood, Illinois	773/583-6464
Dec 1-3	<u>California State Championship, Sheraton Gateway Hotel, Los Angeles, CA</u>	818/901-0464
Dec 3*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Purple Hotel, Lincolnwood, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jan 12-14*	<u>7th Carolina Invitational, Hilton University Place, Charlotte, North Carolina</u>	704/814-0850
Jan 20-27	Backgammon On Board 8, Princess Cruise, Los Angeles to Mexican Riviera	773/583-6464
Feb 16-18*	<u>29th Pittsburgh Championships, Holiday Inn, Moon Twp., Pennsylvania</u>	412/823-7500
Mar 23-25*	2007 Midwest Championships, Wyndham Lisle Hotel, Lysle, Illinois	773/583-6464

OUTSIDE USA

Sep 9-10	Backpacker Backgammon Trophy, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Sep 9-10	4th Antwerp Open, Café Den Bengel, Antwerp, Belgium	32475-256734
Sep 16-17	Gammonitis League Tournament, Eynsham Hall, Oxford, England	441634-840592
Sep 20-24	1st Portuguese Open & Grand Prix d'Estoril, Casino Estoril, Portugal	491715-422222
Sep 22-24*	1st Sorrento Coast Tournament, Villa Angelina, Sorrento, Italy	39335-221412
Sep 29-Oct 1	Norwegian Championship, Vika Atrium Hotel, Oslo, Norway	4791-601277
Sep 30-Oct 1	East Coast Movers & Shakers Tournament, Byron Bay, NSW, Australia	614113-564838
Oct 5-8	European Doubles & 9th Austrian Open, Hotel Veronika, Seefeld, Austria	390331-923537
Oct 6-9	12th Japan Open, Nakano Sunplaza, Tokyo, Japan	817-55775016
Oct 7-8	Sandy Osborne Memorial, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Oct 14-15	Gammonitis 4th Birthday, Eynsham Hall, Oxford, England	441634-840592
Oct 19-22*	10th Rotterdam Open, Cafe Spiegel, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	31650-818573
Oct 21-22*	14th Irish Open Championship, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin, Ireland	35872-144270
Oct 24-27	2nd European Doubles Championships, Engchien-les-Bains, France	491715-422222
Oct 26-29	4th Lucien Barrière Open d'Engchien-les-Bains, Engchien-les-Bains, France	491715-422222
Oct 30-Nov 3	3rd Caribbean Open, Casino Royale, Sonesta Maho Beach, St. Maarten	39331-923537
Nov 2-5*	3rd OWL-Cup/Kaiserbrunnen Open/Amateur-Cup, Brakel, Germany	49711-486190
Nov 2-5	26th Swedish Open, Scandic Ariadne Hotel, Stockholm, Sweden	468-6523033
Nov 4-5*	Townharbour Trophy, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Nov 11-12*	4th Torneo delle Città, Modanella, Italy	39335-6031493
Nov 18-19*	Gammonitis League Tournament, Eynsham Hall, Oxford, England	441634-840592
Nov 28-Dec 3*	Cancun Invitational Tournament, Ritz-Carlton, Cancun, Mexico	775/829-8403
Nov 30-Dec 3*	18th City of Venice Tournament, Venice Casino, Venice, Italy	3941-5211029
Dec 2-3*	Gilbertson United Kingdom Finals, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Dec 2-3*	5th Thun Tournament & Doubles, Waadtlanderstube, Thun, Switzerland	4179-4811318
Dec 7-10*	NEW DATES: 13th German Open, GlockenSpitze, Altenkirchen, Germany	49521-64314
Dec 9-10*	Julian's Christmas Cracker, Eynsham Hall, Oxford, England	441634-840592
Jan 21-25*	PartyGammon.com Million, Atlantis, Paradise Island, Bahamas	info@partygammon.com

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

listening to a lecture given by Paul Weaver. Paul spoke about backgammon openings and the series of books he is co-authoring with Nack Ballard. The talk was an excellent preview of the content of the books

and the ideas which will be presented in them. But, Paul did much more than present opening theory. He painted an inspiring picture of the mind of a world class player and the opportunities for improvement open to the rest of us. I highly recommend attending one of Paul's lectures.—*David Rockwell, Skokie, Illinois*



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2006

Top 100 through 4 Sept. 2006 after 11 tournaments
(Upcoming events: Georgia, Pacific Northwest, Illinois)



Richard Munitz	51.15	Dana Nazarian	9.11	Michael Edge	5.77	Ralph Byrns	3.20
Gregg Cattanach	49.62	Lee Wood	9.05	Mark Rozans	5.65	Dan Cramer	3.15
Ken Fischer	28.13	Tak Morioka	8.83	Roz Ferris	5.64	Blaze Braden	3.00
Bob Glass	27.22	Sam Pottle	8.83	Stuart Katz	5.29	Chris Spieldenner	3.00
Doug Roberts	26.56	Christopher Yep	8.74	J.A. Miller	5.28	Mark Weiner	2.97
Fred Kalantari	25.50	Matthew Miner	8.20	Sean Garber	5.28	Ken Johnson	2.97
Stepan Nuniyants	24.94	Michael Battaglia	8.00	Steve Sax	5.20	Mike Rezaei	2.92
Richard Lloyd	20.68	Brent Cohen	7.39	Elayne Feinstein	5.12	Gary Fishman	2.92
Peter Beling	19.22	Joe Freedman	7.39	Mary Hickey	5.06	Bill Finneran	2.83
Petko Kostadinov	17.76	Art Moore	7.32	Yancho Hristov	4.52	Henry Gray	2.82
Perry Gartner	17.63	Steve Brown	7.32	Joe Miller	4.52	Nayan Shah	2.82
Peter Kalba	14.78	Barry Murphy	7.20	Beth Raby	4.42	Chris Martin	2.82
Jeff Nitschke	14.64	Sal Chehayeb	7.11	Bill Bartholomay	4.32	Keene Marin	2.72
Sal Pittelli	12.56	Tolga Ece	6.80	Peggy Neubig	4.21	Dave Settles	2.70
David Rubin	12.38	Raymond Rickard	6.66	Cole Parker	4.00	Greg Tomlin	2.70
Arlene Austin	12.25	Dennis Culpepper	6.64	Norm Hansen	4.00	Jesse Eaton	2.60
Nick Maffeo	12.00	Faddoul Khoury	6.48	Bill Minser	3.91	Stewart Pemberton	2.56
Malcolm Davis	11.59	Wayne Wiest	6.42	Jolie Rubin	3.83	Vadim Musaelyan	2.50
Chuck Bower	11.59	Bruce Russell	6.40	Doug Mayfield	3.78	Bob Frydell	2.48
Rose Sheedy	11.54	Carlos Azcarate	6.27	Pete Esposito	3.68	Jim Pokela	2.47
John Jennings	10.72	Ted Chee	6.00	Gary Schachtschneider	3.66	George Kierspe	2.40
Mark Donaldson	10.24	Harvey Gillis	6.00	Michael Flohr	3.56	Mark Haley	2.00
David Todd	10.10	Mario Savan	5.94	Nancy Takala	3.52	Jack Takala	1.83
Alan Robinson	9.90	Ray Fogelund	5.83	Eric Barr	3.26	Marlene Murphy	1.80
Neil Garvie	9.38	Robert Lessard	5.77	Patty Geoffroy	3.20	3 tied at	1.79

ABT BUYBACK SUGGESTION

I have a suggestion for awarding ABT master points in the Las Vegas buyback tournaments. When a player loses in the main flight and buys back, he can win money in the undefeated bracket, but not master points (he already had his chance in that flight). If, however, the player buying back loses and drops into the consolation or last chance bracket, he can then win ABT points.—*Wayne Wiest, Itasca, Illinois*

What do readers think of Wayne's idea?—*Ed.*

HORSES AND BACKGAMMON DO MIX

CHICAGO POINT is thoroughly appreciated because it is unique. Kudos to your writers. Phil Simborg's excellent articles let us know that if we wish to enjoy this great game, there are certain specific things to do and not to do. We must learn to accept losses with grace, style, and dignity. And we should develop habits in life and BG which allow us to enjoy our journey to the fullest.

Saratoga Race Meet starts July 26. I'll be in the back stretch area in the latter part of the morning when the horse workouts are completed; then to play backgammon with some of the trainers and their exercise riders.

Thanks again for CHICAGO POINT!—*Lee Hoge, Saratoga Springs, New York*

HOORAY FOR TAKGAMMON

I'm enjoying the Takgammon articles! Thanks for publishing them. Really makes me want a Taki-board more than ever.—*Steve Schreiber, Carmel, New York*

Takgammon Articles from the 1980s are posted every Wednesday. Find the article link at www.chicagopoint.com.—*Ed. Δ*



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2006 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 AUG.

David Rockwell	21.36	Mike Wolock	7.68	Carter Mattig	3.56	Felix Yen	1.20
Phil Simborg	18.80	Bill Keefe	6.94	Willis Elias	3.52	Ken Tibbs	1.12
Herb Roman	17.72	Roger Hickman	6.64	Peter Kalba	3.48	Adrian Rios	1.12
Tak Morioka	17.50	Albert Yakobashvili	6.36	Alex Owen	3.16	Marcia Karen	1.08
Steve Klesker	14.20	Wayne Wiest	5.88	Amy Trudeau	3.12	Tom Harrison	0.76
Bill Davis	13.28	Larry Goldstein	5.72	Jerry Brooks	2.68	Dave Cramer	0.72
Gary Kay	11.24	Alice Kay	5.64	Mike Sutton	2.68	Martha Ghio	0.72
Phyllis Smolinski	10.00	Michael Ginat	5.20	Richard Stawowy	2.64	Jordan Sanders	0.68
Tim Mabee	9.88	Jacob Moreno	5.08	Efim Liberman	2.32	Ryan Anderson	0.64
Bob Zavoral	9.68	Mark Murray	4.48	Russ Lyutik	2.16	Ron Washington	0.52
Oleg Raygorodsky	9.64	Glenn Martells	4.36	Vlad Genkin	2.16	Doug Rodgers	0.48
Bill Bartholomay	9.16	Sargon Benjamin	4.32	Nora Luna Righter	1.96	Judy Zager	0.48
Eric Johnson	8.76	Ken Bond	4.24	Elaine Kehm	1.80	Tony Santori	0.48
Paul Baraz	8.16	Boris Dekhtyar	4.16	Dave Settles	1.80	Elaine Andrews	0.48
Linda Rockwell	8.08	Rory Pascar	4.00	Kwong Chan	1.52	Tony Garcia	0.48
Georgina Flanagan	7.96	Arlene Levy	3.92	Steve Mellen	1.44	Daniel Lillian	0.32
Bob Steen	7.88	Les Moshinsky	3.68	Ken Tyszko	1.20	Kamau Jibri	0.24
						Michael Peters	0.16

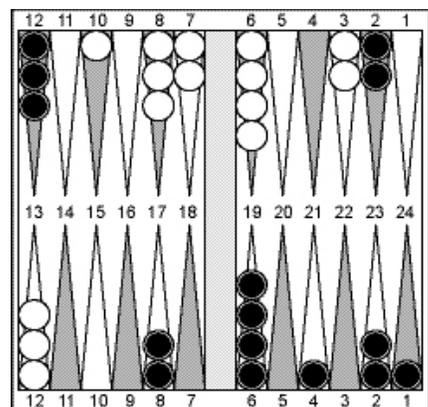
JACOB MORENO won points in every July event collecting 3.76 points and top monthly honors. Bob Zavoral (2.88) and Mike Wolock (2.44) finished second and third respectively.

PHIL SIMBORG had a memorable August winning or splitting four events en route to earning 6.52 points. Bill Davis's 10 wins in a row and 5.16 points place second. David Rockwell (4.96) was third.

your move

PROBLEM #321 to be analyzed by John O'Hagan

7-point match. Black and White are tied at 3-3. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-2.**



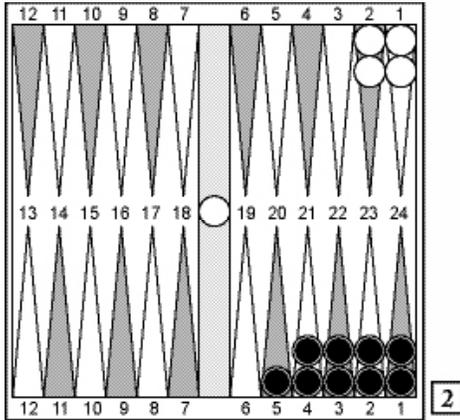
ASK
DANNY

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DOUBLING IN THE BEAROFF

Dear Danny: In the position below, Black has a recube and White has a take.

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



Now, lift that checker off of Black's 5-point and it's a drop. This kind of position

comes up frequently, and I'm often in doubt as to when to cube and when to take. I count crossovers, I consider potential shots and misses, but I end up just making my best guess much of the time. In simple positions like this, is there a "definitive" way to determine when to cube and when to take or drop? Of course, I know when you are on the fence you should double because you might get a wrong drop, but I would like to know the right decision assuming you are playing a strong opponent who would not make the wrong decision.—End-game error-maker

DEAR END-GAME: I don't think there's a definitive way to make cube decisions in positions like this. You have to look at the board, consider the possibilities, and count.

White is on the bar with only four more men borne off than Black. That makes Black a strong racing favorite, but White has substantial shot equity.

Black can avoid leaving a blot if he rolls any ace, or 3-2, or double-2s. That's 14 rolls, and if White rolls one of her dancing numbers (of which there will be 9 after Black's double-2s, otherwise 16), Black will have lost his market, a total of 217 times in 1296. Market loss looms also

if White dances after Black leaves a shot (some 178 times in 1296). That's enough to justify a redouble.

Can White take?

On each of Black's 22 blotting rolls, White will get 11 direct shots from the bar; if she hits, White becomes a strong favorite, especially when she owns the cube. Whether or not Black leaves a blot, White will also become a strong favorite on double-6s and double-5s next. Though other 6s and 5s will not win for White immediately, they allow him to turn the game around with subsequent doublets. Add to that the residual shot equity that White obtains when he misses a shot but remains on the bar, and it seems that he has enough ways to win, each with substantial probability, to let him take without qualms.

That's about all we human beings can do. If there were "definitive" rules, then backgammon would be such a simple game, a child could play.—Yours, Danny Δ

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

AMALGAMATION

Player International, organizers of the first million-dollar backgammon tournament to be held January 21-25, 2007 in The Bahamas (and sponsored by PartyGammon), commissioned Flightpath Media to create the world's biggest



backgammon board. The formation, created on the incoming flight path of London's Gatwick Airport, is over 100,000 square feet and is being reviewed by the Guinness Book for a potential world record... Linda Ring is looking for Children BG players for her "Ring's Research Roll" Backgammon Tournament honoring the memory of her late husband Howard Ring. The event will be held 17 September at Congregation Beth Shalom in Northbrook, IL. For

more info, contact Linda at 847/205-4431... Ron Washington had a full page write-up in the *Chicago Sun-Times* 24 July titled "King of the Gentle Hustle." It talked about his backgammon game daily at the North Avenue Beach chess pavilion... The rough draft for **Nack Ballard's & Paul Weaver's** much anticipated "Backgammon Openings" book is completed. They hope to have it available to the public later this fall... Visiting the Bar Point Club in July and August: **Paul Weaver** (AL), **Mark Swanson** (IN), **Leslie Lockett** (FL), and **Nora Luna Righter** (MA)... We will be teaching a beginner backgammon class at the Levy Center in Evanston, IL beginning 5 October. If you live in the Chicagoland area and know anyone who wants to learn BG, call 773/583-6464... Condolences to the family of former World Amateur Backgammon director **Henry Wattson** who died after an extended illness in Port Jefferson, NY on 1 September. We'll have more on Henry Wattson's life in the October POINT... Good luck to **Lynda Clay** who takes over for **Tom Christner** as director of the newly named Denver Backgammon Club. Boulder County Club director **Maia Khan Bergstrom** informs us that the two clubs are joining forces as part of the Colorado Backgammon Association with the possibility of an ABT event in their future. For Colorado information, visit www.coloradobg.org

org... Three BPC players entered the 2006 US Chess Open in Oakbrook 5-13 August: **Ron Washington**, **Michael Ginat**, and **Adrian Rios**. Michael and Adrian rate over 2300 and Ron is over 2000... The "Internet Gambling Prohibition and Enforcement Act" (HR 4411) passed in the House by a 317-93 vote. It's now in the Senate. The bill would cut off credit-card payments to illegal Internet gambling sites and give the Justice Department increased ability to prosecute illegal wagering. We'll keep you posted... A European TV deal is bring the World Series of Backgammon to Eurosport this fall. We'll let you know if the shows ever appear in the USA... Get well wishes go out to **Wally Wolf** (MI) who suffered a mild heart attack in late July. He's doing fine thanks to wife **Gayle** who pushed him to go when she noticed suspicious symptoms. And congrats to **Carol Hooker** (IL) on her successful quadruple bypass surgery following a summer heart attack... From the 13 August *Washington Post*: Smackdown in Kennebunkport! The **Bush** family's obsession with backgammon is "really serious," according to **George P. Bush**: "One of the most-read books in our family is *Backgammon for Blood*."... Finally, here's an anonymous quote about luck: "Good luck is often with the man who doesn't include it in his plans." Δ

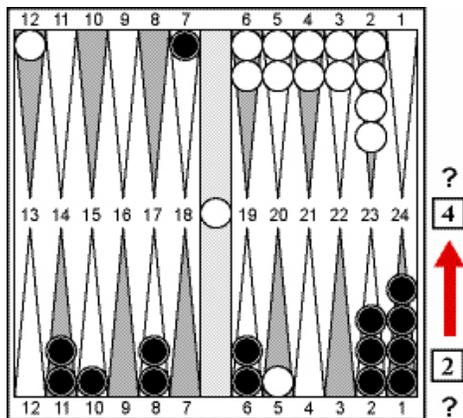
MONTE CARLO...

[Continued from page 1]

by breaking the 6-point (6/3). This play makes a forward move towards home, retains contact while only exposing one blot, and maintains a decent home board.

Philip rolled 6-2, hitting Luigi's blot on the 10-point and Luigi's punishment continued when he danced resulting in this position with Philip (Black) on roll.

25-point Monte Carlo finals. Vischjager (Black) trails Villa (White), 21-19. Black on roll. RECUBE ACTION(S)?



With Luigi on the bar, Philip would not be good enough to recube in money play since he has three dead checkers, and if he's ever hit, he's toast. But by redoubling to 4 at 4-away, 6-away, Philip is offering

Luigi a "dead cube" creating one-way gammons (Luigi's Gs have no extra value, while Philip's Gs win him the match). At the given score under the pressure of the finals, this is a superb recube.

Luigi couldn't bear the thought of losing the match this game after his aggressive cube and play had backfired, and passed a very clear take. This position isn't trivial for Philip to bring home nor is it all that gammonish. By passing, Luigi cost himself over 0.210 and lost more than 3% match equity.

With this game, Luigi's fine comeback ended. Philip Vischjager went on to win the match 25-23 and become the new World Champ.

The Snowie 4 error rates for this match were, Luigi-7.44 and Philip-6.67 proving that it can be quite difficult to play really well under such pressure after a long week of backgammon.

Could you or I have avoided these three costly errors? I hope so, but it truly can be difficult to evaluate everything objectively under pressure. Don't get me wrong. I'd like to think that I could handle all this without error and had no trouble picking the correct plays while commenting on the TMG live Internet feed, but when seated at the table, it may have been a bit more difficult for me!

Special congratulations go out to \$1500 Super Jackpot winner Jeremy Bagai (USA)



Super Jackpot winner Jeremy Bagai (R) shares a lighter moment in the finals vs. Rikard Persson. (Photo by Peter Bennet)



Fortis World Team Winners from left: Dennis Carlston, K. C. Carlston, and Tim Lawless. (Photo by Patrick Gibson)

who defeated Rikard Persson (Sweden) in the 64-player event. Also to Fortis World Team Champions Dennis Carlston (the 2005 World Champ), K. C. Carlston, and Tim Lawless of the USA. **Full Monte Carlo Results are on page 8.**—Neil Kazaross. Δ

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Phil Simborg's Beaver Quiz



Paul Magriel's Backgammon book defines a Beaver in backgammon as:

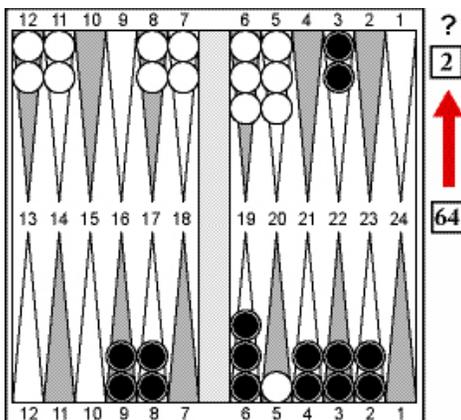
"A special convention by agreement in advance whereby a player, when doubled, may at this point redouble the stakes again but retain possession of the cube."

When you are offered the cube, it is a beaver if by holding the cube, you can generate a profit. There are many positions that without the cube, you would be an underdog. But the cube makes you a favorite because you can end or equitably redouble the game later—a valuable option that your opponent doesn't have. Simply put, you win more money if you beaver than if you don't.

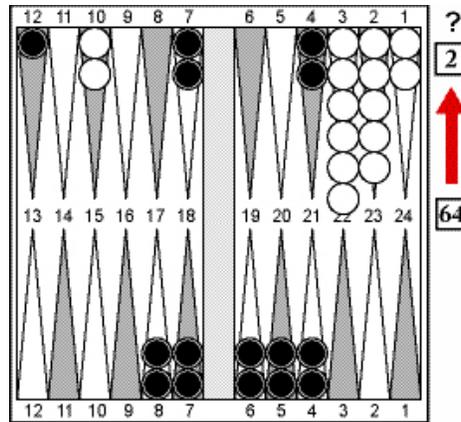
The problems shown below are based on positions that I have faced over the past year. I have made small changes in each setup so that even my study group will find the following quiz challenging.

There are only four Beavers among the seven problems shown below. Which ones are the Beavers?—*Phil Simborg*

1. Black on roll up 15 pips in the race. If Black doubles, should White Beaver?



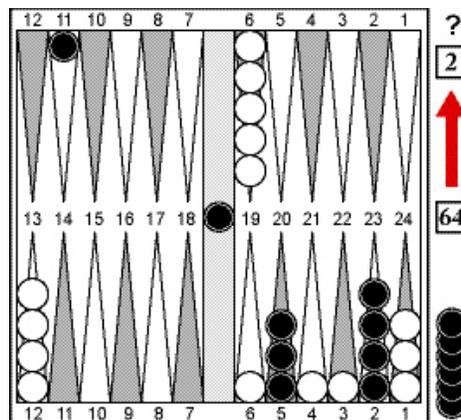
2. Black cubes expecting a double and maybe triple shot next turn. Should White take or Beaver?



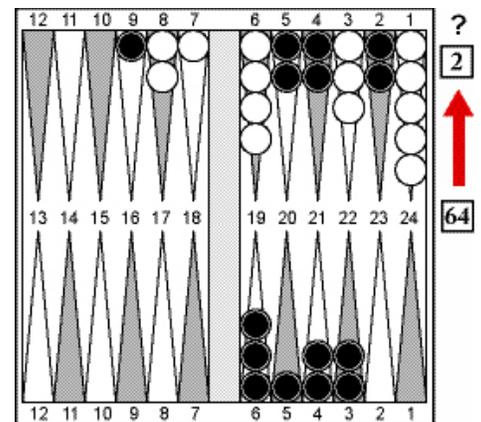
3. Take a close look at this one. Is it a Beaver, or simply a Jackass masquerading as one?



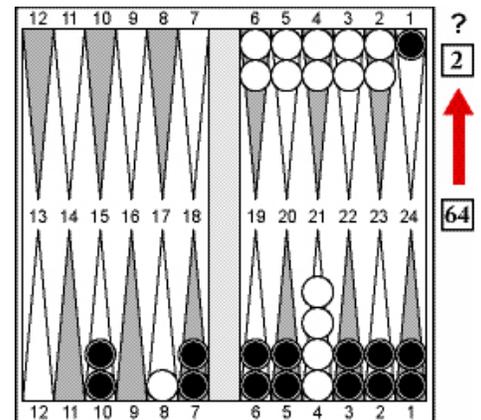
4. In this money game position, Black (on the bar) doubles. Does White have a Beaver or just a take?



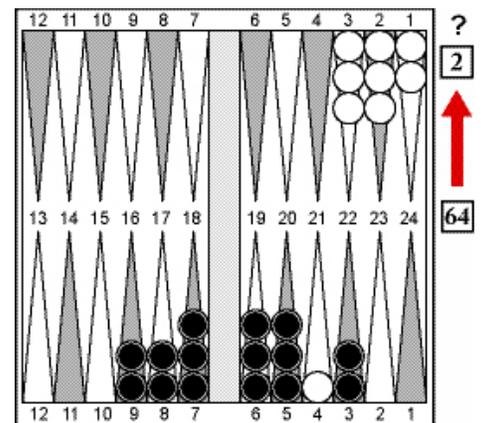
5. Presented with a triple shot and probably more shots in the future, Black doubles. Should White take or Beaver?



6. Leading the race, 92 to 141, Black doubles. White's take is easy, but is it right to Beaver here?



7. White has six men off and is facing a 2-cube. Should she Beaver the cube or just take?



INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the problem numbers that are Beavers:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Answers are on page 10. Δ

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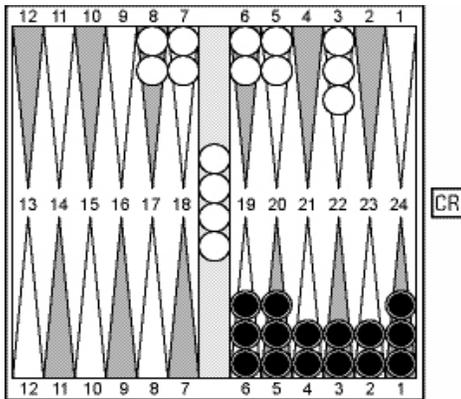
Casino Barrière
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24TH – 29TH OCTOBER 2006

Going for the Backgammon

by Paul Weaver

7 point match. Black trails White, 4 to 6, Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**

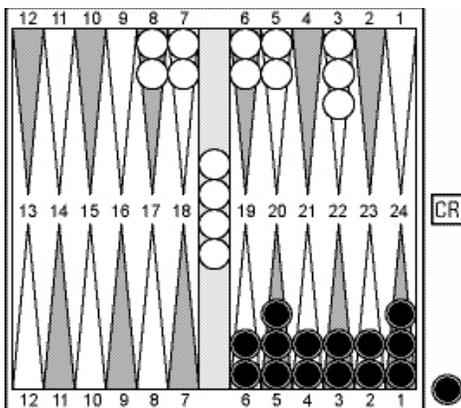


The match score is crucial in the position shown above. Black needs 3, White needs 1, Crawford. Nack Ballard has called this the “Backgammon Go” score. (Thanks to Nack for helping me edit this article.)

At the Backgammon Go score, the difference between winning a backgammon (100% Match Winning Chance) and winning a gammon (50% MWC) is the same as the difference between winning a gammon (50% MWC) and losing the game (0% MWC). The backgammon-to-loss price is 1:1 instead of 3:1.

Black has a realistic chance to win a backgammon and if he does so, he wins the match. Black should therefore bear off aggressively for the backgammon; but how aggressively? There are three candidate plays that do not leave a shot shown in Positions A, B, and C.

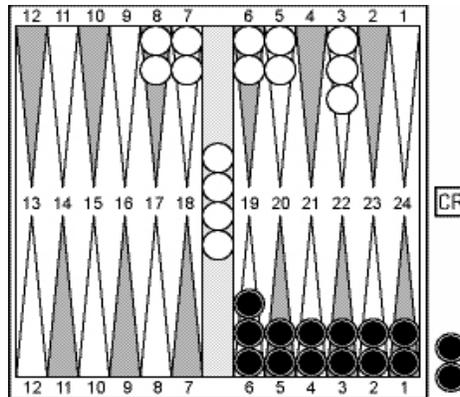
POS. A. Correct: 6/Off



The best play (as shown in Position A) bears off one checker and leaves only two shot numbers next turn (double 5s and double 6s). With an isolated spare on his 5-point, Black has many two-roll sequences that leave

a shot, but it is right for him to take this risk to increase his backgammon chances.

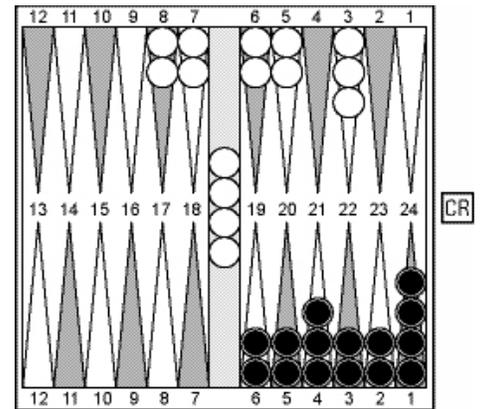
POS. B. Wrong: 5/Off, 1/Off



After bearing off two checkers (as shown in Position B), Black has 12 numbers that leave a shot next turn (double 5s and all 6s). With this greedy play, Black maximizes his chance of winning a backgammon, but he sacrifices too many wins.

The Snowie rollout has Position B essentially tied with Position A, but the GNU rollout (which is more reliable when a match score is relevant) indicates that taking two off (Position B) is incorrect.

POS. C. Blunder: 6/1, 5/4



Bearing off zero checkers (as shown in Position C) would be correct for money and most match situations. However, at the Backgammon Go score, this play is a serious error even though it is the only one of the three candidates that leaves no shot numbers.

This “safe but sorry” play maximizes Black’s wins and gammons, but drastically reduces his backgammon chances. It is therefore a blunder at the Backgammon Go score (Black needs 3 points, White needs 1 point, Crawford).—Paul Weaver Δ

31st MONTE CARLO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

CHAMPIONSHIP (212): 1-Philip Vischjager (NED), 2-Luigi Villa (ITA), 3/4-Andreas Humke (GER) / Kazuhiro Shino (JPN/England); First Consolation: 1C-Fabrizio Lo Surdo (ITA), 2C-Pierre Svava (MON), 3C/4C-Martin Foldager (DEN) / Daisuke Katagami (JPN); Second Consolation: 1C-Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN), 2C-Slava Pryadkin (UKR), 3C/4C-Oscar Carlsson (SWE) / Johan Moazed (IRN/SWE); 1LC-Jan Jacobowitz (GER), 2LC-K.C. Carlston (USA). Ladies Prize: Pia Jeppesen (DEN). INTERMEDIATE (76): 1-FredericAndrieu (FRA), 2-Bijay Anand (India), 3/4-Akaki Kikaleishvili (Georgia) / Michael Roth (GER); First Consolation: 1C-Jakob Andersen (DEN), 2C-Kolya Mosoyan (ARM), 3C/4C-Michel Lamote (BEL) / Kazuko Numazawa (JPN); Second Consolation: 1C-Arut Martirosyan (ARM), 2C-Patti Donner-Rubin (USA), 3C/4C-Adam Bennett (USA) / Zoran Maric (Bosnia/FRA); 1LC-Paul Van Dijck (NED), 2LC-Patrick Gibson (USA). Ladies Prize: Kazuko Numazawa (JPN). BEGINNER (48): 1-Valery Mikhaylets (RUS), 2-Vitalij Byrov (UKR), 3/4-Ingrid Sonnabend (GER) / Sara Utku (SWE); First Consolation: 1C-Vazeen Mayevosian (ARM), 2C-Per Andersen (DEN), 3C/4C-François Coignard (FRA) / Mirza Rasson (USA); Second Consolation: 1C-Andranik Harutyunyan (ARM), 2C-Laura MON (ITA), 3C/4C-Helle Hallberg (DEN) / Madoka Kitao (JPN); 1LC-Lorene Carlston (USA), 2LC-Ahmet Nar (TUR). Ladies Prizes: Ingrid Sonnabend (GER) / Sara Utku (SWE). SUPER JACKPOT #1 (64): 1-Jeremy Bagai (USA), 2-Rikard Persson (SWE), 3/4-Ary Nogueira (Brazil) / John O'Hagan (USA), 5/8-Gad Carmeli (ISR) / Abraham Eitan (ISR) / Andreas Grötsch (GER) / Lars Trabolt (DEN). SUPER JACKPOT #2 (16): 1-Leo Fernandez (ARG), 2-Ed O'Laughlin (USA). \$2,000 TRUEMONEYGAMES (64): 1-John O'Hagan (USA), 2-Adam Bennett (USA), 3/4-Mohamad Ghasem Badiei (Iran/SWE) / Nodar Gagua (Russia), 5/8-Jan Jacobowitz (GER) / Christian Liebe-Harkort (GER) / Ingrid Sonnabend (GER) / Timo Väättäinen (FIN). \$3,000 TMG LUCKY DRAW: 1-Ary Nogueira (BRA), 2-Carsten Simonsen (DEN), 3-Nadya Yordanova Marinova (BUL), 4-Laurent Arnone (FRA). FORTIS WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Dennis Carlston / K.C. Carlston / Tim Lawless (USA). YACHT CRUISE TOURNAMENT (23): 1-Carter Mattig (USA), 2-Martha Ghio (USA). CHAIRMAN'S TROPHY: Antoinette-Marie Williams (USA). COURTESY TROPHY: Malcolm Davis (USA). ELEGANCE TROPHY—LADIES: Cécile Wolf (FRA). ELEGANCE TROPHY—MEN: Sam Mizutani (JPN). FIDELITY TROPHY: Akaki Kikaleishvili (GEO). TRAVEL TROPHY: Bijay Anand (IND).

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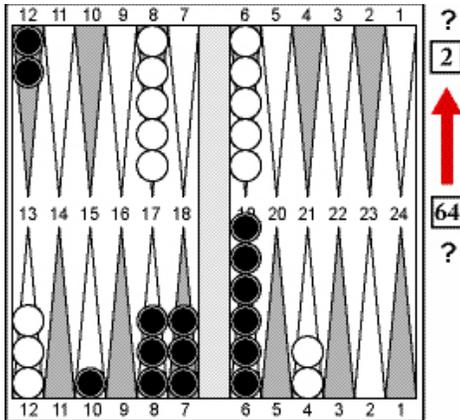


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**PROBLEM #320
ANALYZED**

by Kit Woolsey

7-point match. Black leads White, 5 to 0. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**

When contemplating a cube action where the match score is relevant, it is necessary to dig in and do a little match equity math. It isn't difficult. The key is to normalize the figures into a win/loss decision. Then you can examine the position, make an estimate of the win/loss percentages, and that will determine the proper cube action as far as the pass/take decision is concerned. The decision of whether or not to double may be more complex. But the first analysis should be the pass/take decision, since the solution to that may make the doubling decision very easy.

At this match score, if Black doubles and White takes, obviously White will immediately send it back to 4. We can now calculate the various possible scenarios. I will be using my match equity table—other tables might give slightly different results.

White passes: White is behind 6-0 (1-away, 7-away Crawford) for 9% equity.

White takes and loses: White loses the match for 0% equity.

White takes and wins: Here, the result will depend upon whether or not White wins a gammon. Clearly this position isn't very gammonish, but stranger things have happened. I will estimate that 10% of White's wins will be gammons. This is just a guess, but I have to use some number.

I'm probably not too far off, and any decent estimate will lead to a reasonably accurate result. So:

– If White wins a single game, she is behind 5-4 (2-away, 3-away), for 40% equity.

– If White wins a gammon, she wins the match for 100% equity.

Since we estimated that 10% of White's wins are gammons, that comes to a weighted average of 46% (10% of the way between 40% and 100%).

White is risking 9% (9% – 0%) in order to gain 37% (46% – 9%). So White is getting a little better than 4-to-1 odds on the take (36% vs. 9% would be exactly 4-to-1). At 4-to-1 odds White would need 20% wins, so she needs a little less—about 19% wins. Note that this is cubeless. White will of course redouble, but after that the cube is out of play and the game will be played to conclusion. Also, we have already taken into account White's gammon chances.

That wasn't so difficult. If one knows a match equity table, this sort of calculation can easily be done in one's head over the board. Many players don't make the effort to do these calculations, thinking it is too hard. They are potentially costing themselves some serious equity.

Now, let's examine the position. We know that a decent 4-point holding game is generally a close take. How much worse is White's position here? A lot worse. There are three factors which make White's position worse than a typical holding game.

They are:

- 1) The race. White is behind 34 pips. In your typical benchmark position for a holding game, the trailer is usually behind about 20 pips and thus has some racing chances. Here, White's racing chances are very small.
- 2) White has no board. This is very serious. In the typical holding game the trailer has a strong board which can improve, thus if she does hit a shot, she is likely to win. That is not the case here. If White hits an early shot, she will have a difficult time containing the hit checker. In addition, due to Black's big racing lead if Black is hit and is able to scamper around, he will still be ahead in the race.
- 3) Black has made his bar point. That is very valuable, as it is a landing place for Black as he tries to clear the midpoint.

The one feature in White's favor is that Black hasn't made his 5-point. That is very important. If Black is unable to make his 5-point, he will find it a lot more difficult to bear in safely. Of course Black might make it, particularly on this roll when he has four builders for the point (and with something like 2-1 he probably should risk the direct shot to make the point since White's board

is so weak). But Black might never close his 5-point.

In the typical holding game White probably wins in the mid 20s. The deficits we have discussed drop that figure considerably. Still, that open 5-point makes a big difference. I would judge that if Black had his 5-point and the other features of the position were the same that White's winning chances would be well below the critical 19% figure. But with the 5-point open, I believe that is just enough to push White's winning chances up to maybe 21%, so I do believe that if Black doubles White has a take.

Should Black double? The conventional wisdom is that at this match score Black should be trying to double his opponent out rather than in. Still, a market loss is a market loss, and if Black fails to double and then rolls a number which causes him to lose his market, he has cost himself equity. The position is not at all gammonish—a very important consideration. By my assessment, if Black makes his 5-point or successfully clears his midpoint next roll, he will have lost his market—sometimes by a fair amount. Nothing really terrible can happen. So even though the position isn't particularly volatile and Black knows he will be getting a 4-cube back, I do believe that Black's percentage action is to double. So, double and take.

What else is new?—Kit Woolsey Δ

BEAVER QUIZ ANSWERS...

[From quiz on page 6]

Explanation: If the value shown in parenthesis is negative, it means that the initial double creates negative equity. The larger the negative value, the clearer the beaver.

1. No double/take (0.046)
2. No double/beaver (-0.100)
3. Beaver (turn picture upside down)
4. No double/beaver (-0.072)
5. No double/take (0.072)
6. No double/take (0.106)
7. No double/beaver (-0.079)

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•**Houston Firecracker Classic** (Houston, TX; 8 Jul.)... OPEN (10): 1-Ira Hessel, 2-Dr. James Bray, 3/4-Kerry Blodgett / David Cohen; 1C-Gary Oleson, 2C-Scott Ward.

•**So. Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 9 Jul.)... OPEN (8): 1-Carlos Azcarate, 2-Jodi Weinreb.

•**Nations Cup & Riviera Festival IV** (Cannes, FRA; 18-23 Jul.)... NATIONS CUP (31 teams): 1-USA (Perry Gartner / Ray Fogelund / Howard Markowitz), 2-Denmark (Morten Holm / Sander Lylloff / Peter Jes Thomsen), 3-Russia, 4-Ukraine. RIVIERA CHAMPIONSHIP (99+29 rebuys): 1-Sean Casey (IRE), 2-Nodar Gagva (RUS), 3/4-Atanas Georgiev (BUL) / Peter Heitmüller (GER); 1C-Alexis Vincent (FRA), 2C-Patrick Gaillard (FRA), 3C/4C-Martin Foldager (DEN) / Arut Muradian (ARM); 1LC-Michihito Kageyama (JPN), 2LC-David Fischelis (FRA). ADVANCED (31+1 rebuy): 1-Anne Jeppesen (DEN), 2-Vazgen Matevosian (ARM), 3/4-Andranik Harutyunyan (ARM) / Simonetta Barone Herrera (ENG); 1C-Philippe Vouhe (FRA), 2C-Harutyun Martirosyan (ARM); 1LC-Michel Lamote (BEL), 2LC-Kazuko Numazawa (JPN). INTERMEDIATE (19): 1-Sergey Grinev (RUS), 2-Vitaliy Byrov (UKR); 1C-Rosario Nicoletti (ITA), 2C-Scarlett Serrero (FRA); 1LC-Laura Monaco (ITA). €1000 SUPER JACKPOT (16): 1-Jorge Pan (ARG), 2-Avetis Rostomian (ARM). €500 SUPER JACKPOT (32): 1-Falafel Natanzon (ISR), 2-Maya Peyicheva (BUL),

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•**ABT—Wisconsin State Championships** (Madison, WI; 28-30 Jul.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (37): 1-Jeff Nitschke (MN), 2-Art Moore (CA); 1C-Steve Brown (MN), 2C-Gary Schachtschneider (MN); 1LC-David Todd (MO). ADVANCED (27): 1-Wayne Wiest (IL), 2-Dave Settles (IL); 1C-Greg Tomlin (IL), 2C-Adam Bennett (WI); 1LC-Jolie Rubin (IL). LIMITED (9): 1-Steve Reuschlein (WI), 2-Bill Fady (IL); 1C-Sharon Steffens (IL). BADGER CLASSIC (13): 1-Fred Kalantari (MN), 2-Stan Livingston (WI). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Tak Morioka (IL) & Wayne Wiest (IL), 2-Cookie Frazin (IL) & Dave Settles (IL). BLITZ (64): 1-Linda Rockwell (IL), 2-Carter Mattig (IL). EARLYBIRD JACKPOT (16): 1-Wayne Wiest (IL), 2-Hiro Asari (WI). QUICKIE #1 (16): 1-Sean Garber (IN). QUICKIE #2 (8): 1-Bob Holyon (WI).

•**ABT—Thousand Islands Tournament** (Alexandria Bay, NY; 28-30 Jul.)... OPEN (33): 1-Richard Munitz (NY), 2-Alan Robinson (Canada), 3-Sal Pittelli (Canada). DOUBLES (8 teams): 1-Larry Liebster (NJ) & Renée Rosenbloom (NY), 2-Will Chu (Canada) & Alex Juskovic (Canada).

•**Kansas City Monthly** (Kansas City, MO; 2 Aug.)... OPEN (9): 1-Kathleen Schuler, 2/3-Harold Magariel / Eric Barr.

•**So. Australia Monthly** (Adelaide, South Australia; 2 Aug.)... OPEN #1 (8): 1-Emil Andrawos, 2-Nick Begakis. OPEN #2 (8): 1-Angelo Ali, 2-John McLean.

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Lincolnwood, IL; 6 Aug.)...

OPEN (19): 1/2-Bill Davis / Phil Simborg, 3/4-Tim Mabee / David Rockwell; 1C-Larry Goldstein, 2C-Linda Rockwell. INTERMEDIATE (5): 1-Dave Settles, 2-Les Moshinsky.

•**So. Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 13 Aug.)... OPEN (10): 1-Karen Davis, 2-Dimitri Vesselinov.

•**ABT—Florida State Championships** (Fort Lauderdale, FL; 17-20 Aug.)... OPEN (37): 1-Gregg Cattanach (GA), 2-Raymond Rickard (FL), 3/4-Blaze Braden (FL) / Chris Spieldenner (FL); 1C-Dennis Culpepper (VA), 2C-Ray Fogelund (CA); 1LC-Vadim Musaelyan (NC). ADVANCED (39): 1-Tolga Ece (FL), 2-Patty Geoffroy (MA), 3/4-José Canavesi (FL) / Fabricio Schaffrath (FL); 1C-Ralph Byrns (NC), 2-Dimitri Vesselinov (FL); 1LC-Evan Etter (FL). NOVICE (16): 1-George Kierspe (FL), 2/3-Dave Francis (FL) / Phillippa Biss (New Zealand). AL TESORO PALM CLASSIC (16): 1-Ray Fogelund (CA), 2-Mike Corbett (FL). AMATEUR JACKPOT (16): 1-Chiva Tafazzoli (IRN/GER), 2-Owen Black (FL). DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Melvin Rappaport (NY), 2-Carol Joy Cole (MI) & Howard Markowitz (NV). MENKES MEMORIAL WARM-UP (31): 1-Dennis Culpepper (VA), 2-Karen Davis (NY). HOLLANDIA BOARD TOURNAMENT (16): 1-Gokhan Gulec (Turkey/FL). CHILDREN'S TOURNAMENT (3): 1-Jonathan Munitz (NY). BLITZ (64): 1-Philippe Salnave (FL), 2-Ken Fischer (CA). GATOR ROLL: 1-Phil Simborg (IL).

•**Kansas City Club Anniversary Classic** (Kansas City, MO; 19 Aug.)... OPEN (16): 1-James Worley, 2/3-Vincent Ward / Marcia Karen.

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Presenting the **LARGEST BACKGAMMON FREEROLL TOURNAMENT IN HISTORY!!!**
20 Consecutive Tournaments, one each day!

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\$101,000

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Register Now for the **LAS VEGAS OPEN SATELLITE TOURNAMENTS!!**

Win entries to the Las Vegas Open Tournaments in November 2006! Satellite Tournaments begin Sept. 7th!

After the huge success of past tournaments, BackgammonMasters is proud to be sponsoring these upcoming Main Event Tournaments:

54th Indiana Open	Sept 1- 4
2006 Las Vegas Open	Nov 1-5
World Doubles Championship Las Vegas ...	Nov 5-9
California State Championship	Dec 1-3
7th Carolina Invitational	Jan 12-14

We want to thank everyone who participated in the tournaments and all of the players who are making BackgammonMasters the leader in online backgammon!