

michigan summer championships

GIBSON IS MFIC AT MSBC Petko Wins Michigan Masters

When Gammon Associates director Patrick Gibson calls himself the MF In Charge (he even has it on his doubling cube) he's not kidding. Gibson rolled right past 90 other competitors at the Michigan Summer Championships to win perhaps the biggest Open field event of the year. Carol Joy Cole's annual 4th of July weekend backgammon festival drew nearly 200 players to the Sheraton Novi 5-8 July. Good times were had by all with \$700 raised for the Gastro-Intestinal Research Foundation.



Winner Patrick Gibson (L) and runner-up Ray Fogelrund enjoy a photo op following their finals match. [Photo by Dan Pelton]

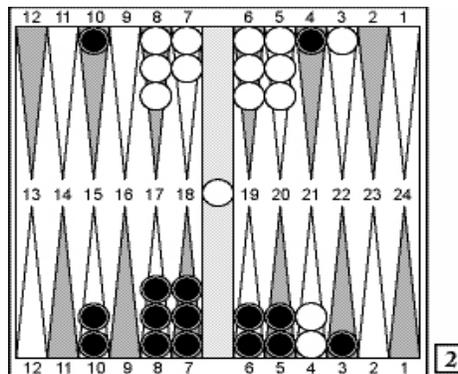
Gibson, an ABT runner-up in 1994, defeated Ray Glaeser (OH) and Bob Zavoral (IL) en route to winning the undefeated bracket. On Sunday morning, Ray Fogelrund (CA) and Petko Kostadinov (SC) battled to a crowd-pleasing double match point finish to see who would face Gibson. Ray prevailed to set up the all-California finals—but he would need to defeat Patrick twice to take the title.

Gibson jumped ahead 7-1 in the 13 point match. Then following a break, Fogelrund rallied to knot the score at 7-all. The match eventually reached 11-9 in favor of Gibson. At the start of the match,

Gibson stated that he was not going to be afraid of making a big play to go for the win. And that's just how he played 6-2 (shown in the position below *after* his move). Instead of playing the quiet 8/6, 7/1, Gibson went for the win with 21/15, 5/3*. According to Snowie, Patrick's play loses more gammons (11.8% vs. 9.5%), but on the upside, it wins a lot more games (61.7% vs. 56.3%). Snowie rollouts show Gibson's play to be right by 0.062.

Following Patrick's big play, Ray faced a challenge of his own:

13-point Open finals with Black leading 11-9. Patrick Gibson (Black) has just played 6-2 correctly (21/15, 5/3*). Now Ray Fogelrund (WHITE) TO PLAY 1-1.



Year after year, Ray Fogelrund proves that he is one of the best BG players in the world, but on this move, he missed the mark. According to Snowie, Ray's play, B/24, 6/5, 5/4*(2) ranked 4th best 0.058 behind the correct B/22*, 5/4*. Hitting two checkers wins 1.5% more games and 1.5% more gammons compared to Fogelrund's choice.

Later in the game, Patrick survived two game-winning shots to take the title. In the end, Ray showed a lot of class, applauding his G/A director on a job well done. Δ



Master's Champ Petko Kostadinov with tourney director Carol Joy Cole.



Eventual winner John Herron & Jolie Rubin battle it out in the Intermediate finals.

2007 MICHIGAN SUMMER CHAMPIONSHIPS

OPEN (91): 1-Patrick Gibson (CA), 2-Ray Fogelrund (CA), 3-Petko Kostadinov (SC), 4/5-Tom Keith (Canada) / Bob Zavoral (IL); 1C-Richard Munitz (NY), 2C-Harvey Gillis (WA), 3C/4C-Neil Kazaross (IL) / John O'Hagan (IN). INTERMEDIATE (64): 1-John Herron (MI), 2-Jolie Rubin (IL), 3-Ed Johnson (NY); 1C-Cem Aslan (TX), 2C-Joe Maize (MS), 3C/4C-Betty Coppic (FL) / Dave Pink (MI). NOVICE (19): 1-Dean Schneider (MN), 2-Philip Little (MN); 1C-Greg Smith (WV), 2C-Gail Newburn (GA). MICHIGAN MASTERS JACKPOT (32): 1-Petko Kostadinov (SC), 2-Sean Garber (IN), 3/4-Bob Glass (CA) / Howard Markowitz (NV). HOWARD RING MEMORIAL (32): 1-Phil Simborg (IL), 2-Steve Brown (MN), 3/4-Ray Glaeser (OH) / Claude Landry (Canada). SNOWIE FREEZE-OUT (32): 1-Terry Leahy (IL), 2-Frank Talbot (MI). TRUEMONEYGAMES BLITZ (128): 1-Alan Gold (WI), 2-Fred Ishac (MI). DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Rory Pascar (IL) & Stick Rice (OH), 2-Phil & Randee Simborg (IL), 3/4-Bill Davis (IL) & Tak Morioka (IL) / Bev & Lenny Loder (IL). SATELLITE DOUBLES (12 teams): 1-Steve Brown (MN) & Peter Kalba (IN), 2-Barry Miller (IL) & Gordon Miller (IL). LTD DOUBLES (8 teams): 1-Angie & James Baltes (MI), 2-Bill Calton (MI) & Reggie Harvel (MI). NEWCOMERS FREE ROLL (40): 1-Steve Neidecker (IL), 2-Kathy Sorci (IL). \$200 LUCKY 7 JACKPOT (16): 1-Jim Hickey (GA), 2-Nora Luna Righter (MA). \$100 LUCKY 7 JACKPOT (16): 1-Garry Kallos (Canada), 2-Michael Edge (SC). DETROIT QUICKIES \$20 (64): 1-Jim Lawrence (MI), 2-Claude Landry (Canada). \$10 (64): 1-Garry Kallos (Canada), 2-Mike Rezai (OH). WARM-UPS \$50 (29): 1-Yuri Millman (MN), 2-Gregg Cattanach (GA), 3/4-Mary Hickey (OH) / David Todd (MO). \$30 (24): 1-Rick Todd (MI), 2-Peter Kalba (IN), 3/4-John Grayson (MI) / Rose Sheedy (IN). \$20 (6): 1-Dan Pelton (AZ), 2-Bill Calton (MI). SUNDAY JACKPOT \$50 (8): 1-Sandy Kaplan (MI), 2-Bob Glass (CA). \$25 (8): 1/2-David Rubin (IL) / Herb Roman (IL). AFTER-TOURNAMENTS \$50 (15): 1-Barry Silliman (MD), 2/3-Maurice Barie (MI) / Mary Hickey (OH). \$20 (16): 1-Perry Berlinski (MI), 2/3-Reggie Harvel (MI) / Ryan Hast (PA).

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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JUST A COINCIDENCE?

Early in 2006 in New York City, a new backgammon club run by Beverly Flow-ers and named the Midtown Backgammon Club opened. At Howard Markowitz's Memorial Day Nevada State Tournament (one of the larger events in the US) Mid-town Club's players placed in the following events: Open Main Flight (1st and 2nd), Open Consolation (1st), Seniors (1st), and Super Jackpot (1st and 2nd).

As stated so eloquently at the Awards Ceremony: "New York Rules." —*Larry Liebster, Ridgefield Park, New Jersey*

INTERMEDIATE?

Regarding your coverage of the recent Nevada State Tournament where you wrote: "It's a mystery why an individual [*Tim Lawless*] who was a member of the winning Monte Carlo World Team event, finished second in the Vegas World Doubles

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31				

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

*Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Jul 14	Backgammon By the Bay Bonus, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
Jul 14	Firecracker Classic, Dugout Sports Bar & Grill, Houston, Texas	281/687-1673
Jul 18*	Kansas City Club Monthly, Harpo's, Kansas City, Missouri	816/916-6599
Jul 19	Third Thursday Bonus (Wisconsin), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 21*	Austin Club Bimonthly, Java Gardens Restaurant, Austin, Texas	512/385-8858
Jul 21	Phoenix Free Monthly-USBL, Glendale Gaslight Inn, Glendale, Arizona	602/296-4307
Jul 22	Colorado Monthly, La Loma Restaurant, Denver, Colorado	303/791-0271
Jul 28*	Backgammon By the Bay Bonus, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/261-4583
Aug 1	Kansas City Club Monthly, Harpo's, Kansas City, Missouri	816/916-6599
Aug 4	New Mexico State Championships, Santa Fe Country Club, New Mexico	303/519-5711
Aug 5	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Ramada Plaza, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Aug 6	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Aug 3-5	Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York	585/396-0969
Aug 11	Backgammon By the Bay, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/688-9722
Aug 11	Hot as Hades Open, Dugout Sports Bar & Grill, Houston, Texas	281/687-1673
Aug 12	New York Monthly, Midtown BG & Chess Club, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Aug 12	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Aug 12	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Aug 16*	Third Thursday Bonus (Colorado), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Aug 16-19	Florida State Championship, Marriott North, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Aug 18*	Phoenix Free Monthly-USBL, Glendale Gaslight Inn, Glendale, Arizona	602/296-4307
Aug 19*	Summer Sizzler, Ned Kelly's Steak House, Bloomington, Illinois	309/662-7967
Aug 25*	Backgammon By the Bay, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/261-4583
Aug 25*	Puget Sound Club Annual Tournament/Party, Lake Retreat, Washington	425/226-3120
Aug 26*	Colorado Monthly, La Loma Restaurant, Denver, Colorado	303/791-0271
Aug 26*	Dayton Monthly Free Roll-USBL, Barnes & Noble, Beavercreek, Ohio	937/890-2536
Aug 31-Sep 3	Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin	608/516-9109
Sep 1*	Kansas City Club Monthly, Harpo's, Kansas City, Missouri	816/916-6599
Sep 15-16	Jon Viator Invitational Cup, Jon Viator's residence, La Jolla, California	818/901-0464
Sep 28-30	Colorado State Championships, Holiday Inn Airport, Denver, Colorado	303/791-0271
Oct 5-7*	12th Minnesota Open, Comfort Inn, Bloomington, Minnesota	612/718-2613
Oct 14*	29th Flint Area Club Championships, Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Oct 19-21	Illinois State Championships, Holiday Inn City-Centre, Peoria, Illinois	309/224-9579
Nov 9	Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Nov 7-11*	2007 Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
Nov 12-15*	2007 World Doubles Championship, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
Nov 30-Dec 2	California State Championship, Airtel Plaza Hotel, Van Nuys, California	818/901-0464

OUTSIDE USA

Jul 9-15	32nd World Championship, Fairmont Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	USA: 954/527-4033
Jul 13-15	Festival of Games 4th Czech Open, CEZ, Pardubice, Czech Republic	420466-535200
Jul 17-22	PGT: Nations Cup & Riviera 5, Palm Beach Casino, Cannes, France	331-4764-5938
Jul 28-29	12th Liverpool Open, Liverpool Bridge Club, Liverpool, England	441514-283082
Aug 11-12	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Aug 17-19*	Pohjanmaa Open, BG Suomi, Helsinki, Finland	35405-789579
Aug 31-Sep 2	16th Mitteleuropa & 20th Italian Championships, Nova Gorica, Slovenia	390331-923537
Sep 1-2	Backpacker Backgammon Trophy, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Sep 1-2	Danish Doubles Championship, Solrød Strand, Denmark	4533-363601
Sep 6-9	PGT: Partouche Finale 2007, Grand Domain de Divonne les Bains, France	331-47645938
Sep 7-9	17th Norwegian Championship, Rica Park Hotel, Drammen, Norway	47991-53113
Sep 8-9*	5th Antwerp Open, Café den Bengal, Antwerp, Belgium	32475-256734
Sep 14-16	Gammonitis Highgate Tournament, Highgate House, Creaton, England	441634-821107
Sep 21-23	2nd Sorrento Coast Tournament, Villa Angelina, Sorrento, Italy	39335-221412
Sep 22-24	13th Japan Open, Nakano Sunplaza, Tokyo, Japan	81333-733814
Oct 5-7*	European Doubles & 10th Austrian Open, Hotel Veronika, Seefeld, Austria	390331-923537
Oct 6-7*	Sandy Osborne Memorial, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Oct 13-14*	5th Roma Open, Rome, Italy	393356-031493
Oct 19-21*	Gammonitis 5th Birthday Tournament, Woodside, Kenilworth, England	441634-821107
Oct 20-21*	15th Irish Open Championship, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin, Ireland	358-72144270
Oct 20-21*	33rd Annual Finnish Open 2007, BG Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland	3540-5789579
Oct 30-Nov 4*	EBGT: European Doubles/5th French Open, Enghien-les-Bains, France	491715-422222
Oct 31-Nov 2*	4th Caribbean Open, Casino Royale, Sonesta Beach, St. Maarten	390331-923537
Nov 3-4*	Townharbour Trophy, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

Championship, won the Minnesota Masters and was Minnesota State runner-up all in 2006, would want to enter the Intermediate tournament and Limited Jackpot . . .”

An even greater mystery is why a tournament director or his staff would permit a

player with Mr. Lawless’s 2006 credentials to enter the Intermediate Division? It’s difficult to see how incidents like this can be good for the game or good for tournament play in general.—Ben Elliott, Durham, NC

CORRUPTED

Pages 5 and 6 of the June CHICAGO POINT were corrupted and unreadable.

Please send me another copy as I hate to miss anything.—Jim Allen, Reno, Nevada

Sorry about that, Jim. Anyone else suffering a similar inconvenience should call us (773/583-6464) or e-mail us at bg@chicagopoint.com—Ed.

ABT CHAMPIONS LIST

Is there a list of American Backgammon Tour champions on one Internet page? If so, what is the address?—Bart Brooks, N. Vancouver, BC, Canada

You can find the ABT champions and top 25 for every year (1993–present) at www.chicagopoint.com/abt.html. But to see all ABT top 3 finishers on one page, visit Tom Keith’s Backgammon Galore website: “Hall of Fame” page: www.bkgm.com/features/HallOfFame. Tom also lists other significant BG titleholders dating back to 1967.—Ed.

BUYING SNOWIE

I’m thinking of (finally!) purchasing Snowie, but have heard that there might be technical issues with the latest version. If this is true, should I merely wait until these issues have been resolved, or buy the previous version and upgrade later? Or should I wait for an upcoming debugged version?—Dr. Michael Shanas, St. Louis, Missouri

Snowie guru Gregg Cattanach responds: There are several things wrong with the Snowie 4.6 upgrade:

1) It deletes your bearoff databases, and the build programs (allowing you to create them yourself) weren’t distributed with the patch (a BIG problem).

[Continued on page 10]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2007

AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2007

Top 100 through 8 July 2007 after 8 tournaments
(Upcoming events: 1000 Islands, Florida State, Wisconsin State)



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2007

Patrick Gibson	32.77	Adam Bennett	8.51	Jim Pasko	5.04	J.A. Miller	2.92
Ray Fogelrund	30.77	Luis Rivera	8.42	Stewart Pemberton	4.89	Jobey Calitri	2.82
Dana Nazarian	29.36	Carmen Webb	8.00	Tim Lawless	4.89	Arnold Freeman	2.82
Gary Bauer	23.11	Harvey Gillis	7.58	Rory Pascar	4.44	Betty Coppic	2.78
Bart Brooks	22.56	Petko Kostadinov	7.58	Herb Roman	4.44	Joe Maize	2.78
Steve Brown	21.33	Steve Sax	7.40	Bill Davis	4.33	Ed Johnson	2.78
Alan Grunwald	20.15	Emil Mortuk	7.11	Alfred Mamlet	4.33	Jesse Eaton	2.67
Malcolm Davis	19.84	Walter Trice	7.11	Dave Settles	4.30	Harold Roberson	2.67
Paul Weaver	17.33	Bud Bowers	6.92	Michael Valliere	4.30	Glenn Ramsey	2.67
David Todd	16.49	Linda MacLean	6.08	Pete Townsend	4.00	Tak Morioka	2.52
Richard Munitz	15.17	Gregg Cattanach	6.08	John O’Hagan	3.79	Bill Robertie	2.52
Ed O’Laughlin	14.75	Christopher Yep	6.08	Neil Kazaross	3.79	Jason Lee	2.52
Maurice Barie	14.22	Vladi Gudgenov	6.00	Bob Zavoral	3.79	Gail Goetze	2.44
Fred Kalantari	12.16	Beth Raby	5.84	Tom Keith	3.79	Justin Nunez	2.44
Phyllis Shapiro	11.68	Ken Fischer	5.64	Perry Gartner	3.70	Jerry Jabaghourian	2.44
Art Benjamin	11.27	Cem Aslan	5.57	Mark Antranikian	3.70	Joe Sylvester	2.22
John Herron	11.13	Jolie Rubin	5.57	David Taniguchi	3.60	Roz Ferris	2.15
Howard Markowitz	10.67	Mark Dean	5.41	Sina Bigdeli	3.60	Samra Hadden	2.15
John Jennings	10.67	Matt Reklaitis	5.33	Thomas Meyer	3.56	Dean Schneider	2.11
Kieth Hvamstad	10.67	Vadim Musaelyan	5.33	Gil Evans	3.46	Karen Meyer	2.00
Arkadiy Tsinis	10.07	Yury Millman	5.33	Doug Roberts	3.04	Reza Daryabegi	1.80
Paul Mangone	9.78	Paul Franks	5.33	Paul Teitelbaum	3.00	Nick Greci	1.78
Terry Leahy	8.89	Matt Cohn-Geier	5.33	Owen Black	3.00	Mike Freeman	1.63
Stick Rice	8.67	Scott Johnston	5.33	Arlene Austin	2.92	Glenn Chee	1.57
Paul Strasberg	8.60	Jinelle Girard	5.04	Vic Morawski	2.92	C.Leatherman/R. Hast	1.56



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB

2007 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 30 JUNE

David Rockwell	20.84	Mike Sutton	5.44	Paul Franks	2.28	John Jennings	0.84
Rory Pascar	14.62	Jacob Moreno	4.80	Allen Tish	2.24	Harold Elgazar	0.80
Bob Zavoral	13.20	Bill Bartholomay	4.64	Alex Owen	2.16	Steve Klene	0.72
Phil Simborg	12.72	Peter Kalba	4.48	Linda Rockwell	1.80	Glenn Martells	0.72
Herb Roman	10.40	Alice Kay	4.08	Felix Yen	1.68	Ron Wagner	0.64
Albert Yakobashvili	10.32	Mark Murray	4.04	Eric Johnson	1.68	Arlene Levy	0.64
Bill Keefe	9.78	Ken Tyszko	4.00	Adrian Rios	1.60	Sargon Benjamin	0.56
Mike Wolock	9.68	Larry Goldstein	3.96	Gary Kay	1.60	James Roston	0.56
Oleg Raygorodsky	8.84	Dave Settles	3.80	Richard Stawowy	1.44	Elaine Kehm	0.56
Tak Morioka	8.64	Steve Klesker	3.60	Kendra Wesley	1.32	John Poulos	0.56
Carter Mattig	6.48	Wayne Wiest	3.56	Dan Simborg	1.28	Jerry Brooks	0.48
Roger Hickman	6.12	Nora Luna Righter	3.52	Denise McDermott	1.16	Tim Stoddard	0.48
Bob Steen	5.84	Royal Robinson	3.44	Neil Kazaross	1.12	Charles Melidosian	0.48
Bill Davis	5.80	Christopher Shanova	3.28	Tim Rockwell	1.04	Ken Bond	0.48
Tim Mabee	5.80	Georgina Flanagan	3.12	Bob Koca	1.04	Bev Loder	0.48
Michael Ginat	5.76	Lucky Nelson	2.96	Paul Baraz	0.96	Jordan Sanders	0.40
Mike Pufpaf	5.56	Shaw Dogan	2.88	Les Moshinsky	0.96	Wendy Kaplan	0.32
Willis Elias	5.52	Lenny Loder	2.56	Dick Nelson	0.84	Mark Penacho	0.32

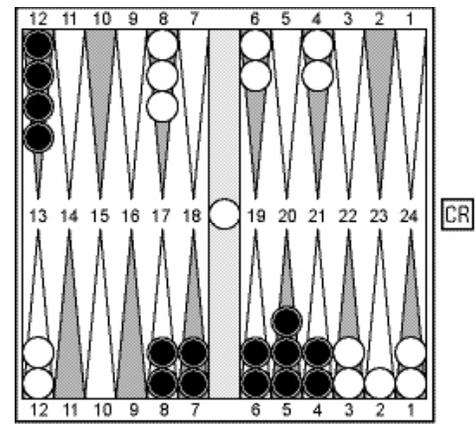
DAVID ROCKWELL extended his first place lead by winning 4.56 points and June Player of the Month honors. Bob Zavoral (3.84) was second and Albert Yakobashvili (3.60) finished third.

your move

PROBLEM #329

to be analyzed by John O’Hagan

5-point match. Black leads White 4 to 2 (Crawford). **BLACK TO PLAY 5-2.**



ASK DANNY

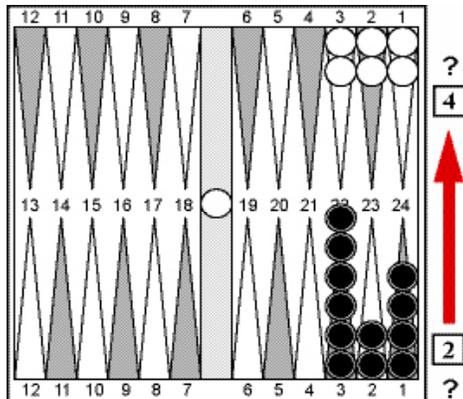
© 2007 by Danny Kleinman



WHEN TO DOUBLE

Dear Danny: Is there a system for figuring out when to give and take end game doubles? I know that in a straight race, there is some kind of formula about doubling where the leader subtracts his pip count from the trailer's higher pip count and then divides that by the leader's pip count. If the total is greater than 8%, the leader can double. Supposedly the trailer only has a take if the percentage is less than 12% (or something to that effect). But when pieces have been borne off, the percentage count system doesn't seem to work. For example:

Money game. Black (on roll) owns a 2-cube. White is on the bar. **Should Black redouble? Should White take?**



Here Black's count is 26 and I don't know exactly how to count White's position because she might dance on her next turn.

But I'll call it 25 for the checker on the bar plus 12 more pips in the home board for a count of 37. Doing the math yields:

$$37 - 26 = 11 \text{ pip lead for Black}$$

$$11/26 = 42\%$$

42% is much higher than 12%, so it looks like a trivial recube and a stone cold drop. But one expert told me he would take as White. Can you shed any light on positions like this?—Puzzled positional percentage player

DEAR PUZZLED: Do not use "raw" pip counts without making any adjustments. And do not use pip counts when a more appropriate measure of the race is rolls. Because "rolls" ignores doublets, 1 roll translates to 7 pips. Black has basically a 6-roll position, which translates to 42 pips. We must take into account the chance that Black will "miss" by rolling three 2s before clearing his 3-point; that will cost him a full roll. If that chance is slightly less than 50-50, we should add about 3 pips, giving Black, in effect, about 45 pips.

White's position is a "hybrid" of pips and rolls. The men in his home board represent 3 rolls, which translates to 21 pips. The man on the bar adds another 25 pips, plus about 2 pips for 25% chance that White will dance. So in effect White has about 48 pips.

The 3-pip difference in adjusted pip counts is thus less than 7% of Black's 45 adjusted pips. According to your formula, Black doesn't even have a double.

However, I do not buy your formula. The formula I use makes one more adjustment, subtracting 4 pips from the count of the player who is on shake. So Black leads, in effect, by 7 pips: 41 to 48. The formula I use divides the square of the difference

in adjusted pips by the sum of the adjusted pips, and expresses this quotient as a percentage.

In homage to the late Barclay Cooke, whose loves were the "three B's" (baseball, backgammon and bridge, in that order), I developed thresholds that I can remember by answering three questions about baseball.

For initial doubles: What uniform number did Hank Aaron, the lifetime major-league home-run king (at least until Barry Bonds overtakes him), wear? (Hint: home runs are 4-baggers.)

For redoubles: How many home runs did Roger Maris, who held the record for homer in a single season for more than three decades, hit in his record-breaking year? (Hint: he broke the record in 1961.)

For passing: How many yards must a baseball player traverse in his home-run trot after hitting a ball over the fence? (Hint: the distance from one base to the next is 90 feet.)

Applying my formula, we get a quotient of about 55%:

$$(7 \times 7) / (41 + 48) = 0.55$$

That's higher than the 44% needed for an initial double, but lower than the 61% needed for a redouble, and not close to the 120% that calls for a pass. At the table, I would redouble Colonel Whiteflag (who might pass), but would wait to redouble Barry Bigplay (who would still take after reentering with a 5-1 or 4-2) or Diana Dialacube (who would still take after dancing).—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

SNOWIE CHALLENGE GAME

By Phil Simborg

My friends and I here in Chicago have developed a form of BG that is by far the most challenging, fun, and educational way to play the game I have ever seen. We call it the "Snowie Challenge Game."

If you don't have Snowie, you can play this game the same way on Jellyfish or GNUBG, both of which can be downloaded free off the web. We use Snowie because we find it to be the best software, not only for analyzing positions, but also for looking at take points and other detailed analysis.

Here's how it works. We simply play matches or games against each other, usu-

ally for small stakes that are just enough to keep things interesting. Then we add the "Snowie Challenge"—the ability to bet on every single play and cube decision.

Let's say I roll a 5-2 and decide to play it a certain way. Before he rolls, my opponent can "challenge," betting me that my play is not as good as the play he selects. Then we run a 3-ply analysis on Snowie to see what the program says is the right play, awarding a point to the winner.

If I don't double and my opponent thinks I should have cubed, he can challenge that. You can also challenge takes or drops.

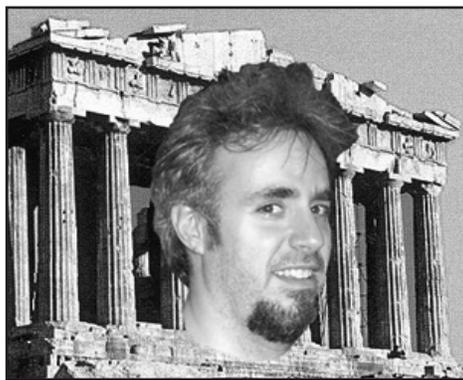
I guarantee you that when you play this way, you will give the game your total and complete concentration. I can also assure you that when you make a mistake, you are

much more likely to remember the error and that will improve your game.

Sometimes, to make it more exciting, we play that you can beaver a challenge (redouble his challenge and double the bet) if you really feel you are right. We also agree that if the difference between the two plays is 0.020 or less, it is a tie. (You could agree to break ties with a mini-rollout, but that is optional.)

By the way, at the end of the match, we still have Snowie do a full analysis to see how many unchallenged mistakes were made. Again, this is a terrific learning tool.

This method of playing truly awards players on their skill and truly sharpens one's game. Try it, and let me know how you like it.—Phil Simborg Δ



GREECE IS THE WORD

By Carter Mattig

People often ask me what the best tournament abroad is, since it seems like I'm always traveling to tournaments outside the United States. Monte Carlo, if I ever would make it past the second round could qualify; the Japan open has the most amazing hospitality with directors Keji and Mochi; but, my personal favorite is in Greece on the island of Zakynthos. It is a week-long tournament with backgammon after lunch and poker after dinner.

The 6th Zakynthos Festival of Backgammon & Poker took place this year 21–28 June and it did not disappoint. You land at the airport and are brought to the Club Pelagoni by the staff. Upon arrival, they hand you a glass of welcoming champagne. Then, immediate tournament!

The number of players varied from a field of 32 at the start to a 16 draw during the end, with an 11-point main and 7-point consolation. the buy-in is set at 50 pounds sterling or 75 euros (just over \$100 US), with added money from Iain Shearer, the owner of the club and one of the nicest people you will meet.

The tournament was directed by John Clark, one of England's leading players, and he rules with an iron fist (Imagine Pat Gibson with a British accent.) A no-jerk policy is enforced before the tournament even begins, so you don't run into the problems like you do with other tournaments with players that seem to attend only to complain (rhymes with "mogerlund" . . . thought I would forget that water slide joke ;-)!). There was not one ruling needed the whole week, so he is doing something right.

Now, this tournament is not for everyone. There are seven tournaments in all, and at the end of the week there is a dinner and celebration to the person with the best overall results. You have the option of not playing in all the matches, but it would

have a negative affect on your ranking. So most people interested in winning play them all. There are a big range of players, from world class like Lars Trabolt (winner of the Bahamas Million consolation), John Clark, Andy Bell and Mike Heard (2005 Monte Carlo quarterfinalist) to more intermediate players and a few beginners looking to learn.

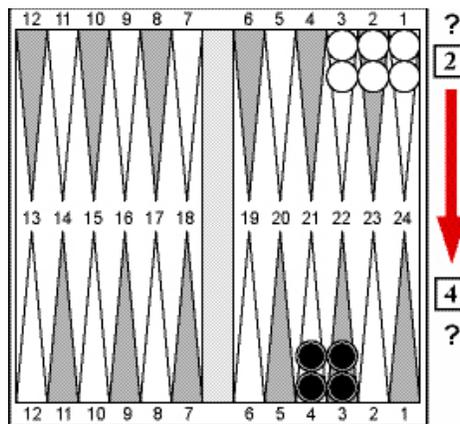
There are other dangers too, not just on a backgammon board. There are six poker tournaments as well, with 20 pound buy-ins (anyone detecting a British theme here?) This is also a world class resort, so you have drinks flowing like water throughout the events. A video will be posted on youtube.com showing the result of one of these dangers. A local named Scotty bet the author of this piece on a waxing of his chest vs. my goatee. My 3 of clubs lost. Ouch. The Brits and locals are a bloodthirsty bunch and seemed upset that I didn't cry like a little schoolgirl!



Carter "enjoying" his goatee being waxed off in a wager gone wrong. [Photo by 'Becca Thompson of Make Your Point.]

However, this is a backgammon publication so let's get back to the backgammon. Chouettes break out at every tournament, and this was no exception:

Money game chouette. White on roll.
CUBE ACTION(S)?



Andy Bell recubed Martin Barkwill and I (but not our Captain Mike Heard). We knew the misses, but went back to a simple theory: can we win in one shake? When you can and your opponent can't, usually it's a take. Thank you for the 4 cube

. . . 27% wins for us . . . thank you for the double 4s next roll Mike!

The week ended with two players neck-and-neck for the crystal decanter trophy: Lars Trabolt of Denmark (boo!) and your very own Carter Mattig of Chicago (yay!). We faced each other the last night in one final match. I had won two tournaments during week as had Lars. Lars won (double 6, double 5, whoops, in the bear off). As the awards were being presented, my only recourse was to mock the size of the decanter. Another 2nd place trophy to join my others? . . .

However, this was on the overall record and Lars had the misfortune of losing twice in the Open and Consolation back-to-back-to-back-to-back during the week—sucker!

With a winning percentage of 76.2% overall, Carter Mattig is your new Zakynthos champion! Next article: complaining about heavy first place trophies :-).

Special thanks to Simo and Roland Herrera for taking me in one night when I was a bit too intoxicated to make it home. And if anyone asks about the big bruise on my leg . . . well, alcohol and cliff diving don't mix.—Carter Mattig Δ

ZAKYNTHOS FESTIVAL OF BG & POKER

ZAKYNTHOS BACKGAMMON ROYAL FAMILY EVENT: 1-Carter Mattig (76.2%), 2-Lars Trabolt (69.6%), 3-Dan O'Farrell (36.2%), 4-Hanna Nilsson, 5-John Hurst (55.6%), 6-Andy Bell (54.5%). TOP POKER STARS: 1-Sven Thorson, 2-Andrew Sarjeant, 3-Lars Trabolt, 4-John Hurst, 5-Hanna Nilsson, 6-Fiona Oldham, 7-Iain Shearer. SPIRIT OF BACKGAMMON AWARD: 'Becca Thompson.

ILLINOIS ACTION



Bill Davis
773/583-6464
Peter Kalba
312/316-1432

Tuesday, 6:30 P.M. at Ramada Plaza, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago. 773/693-5800.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON at Ramada Plaza, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago. 773/693-5800

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB: Tournaments Tuesday, 6:00 P.M. at Ned Kelly's Steak House, 1603-A Morrissey Drive, Bloomington. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wednesday, 6:30 P.M. at Capitol Teletrack, 1766 W. Wabash Ave., Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

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

PUB CLUB: Tournaments Thurs., 6:45 P.M. at Playoffs Bar, 720 E. North Ave., Carol Stream. Tim Mabee (630/606-2388).

PEORIA BG CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Ed Zell (309/689-1964).

“Looking Back In Time” Revisited



By Nack Ballard

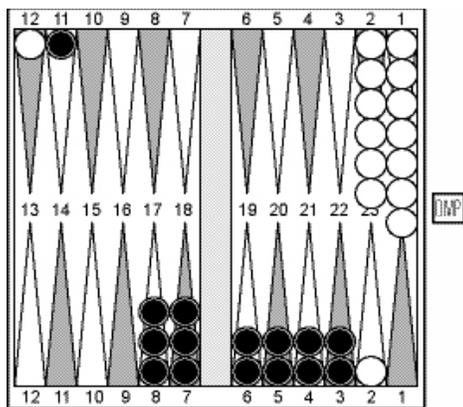
Imagine that even POINT editor Bill Davis was surprised by the degree of controversy his inspired article “Looking Back in Time” (in issue #192) provoked. I bet he loves it.

In one sense, the easiest match score to understand is DMP (Double Match Point), where you and your opponent each need only one point to win the match. Your straightforward goal is to win the game.

From another perspective, DMP is not so simple. Most match situations and all money games carry an additional reward or penalty for winning or losing a gammon (or backgammon). Hence, you are often required to make radical adjustments to decisions you are accustomed to making.

In position #1 (below), Black has 4-1 to play. For money and at most match scores, it would be a blunder *not* to hit the outside checker. By contrast, at DMP, hitting outside would be a big mistake.

Pos. #1. DMP: Black to play 4-1 or 6-1



Even at DMP, hitting the second checker is not without meaning. With two checkers closed out, White wins less than 1% of the time. By contrast, If Black hits inside, closes his board but fails to hit the second blot, White wins about 2% if the outside checker is still on her 12-point, or 3-4% if she is able to limp it home before her other checker is closed out.

Despite this incentive to minimize White’s chances, hitting on the 13-point with 4-1 is definitely premature. Black’s primary goal is to close White out, denying her an *anchor*. Hitting the outside checker conflicts with this objective.

In position #1, after Black correctly hits inside (7/2*), White wins only 4% of the time. The danger in hitting outside is that if White rolls a 2 or double 1s (one time in three), her chances jump to more than 9%. Moreover, if White rolls a 1 or even fans, she might still anchor on a subsequent roll. In short, hitting the outside checker right away is a poor gamble.

Now, let us suppose that in the same position #1, Black has 6-1 to play.

Anybody that tells you that hitting twice is obvious and there is nothing to think about either does not appreciate the subtleties of the position or does not understand DMP.

Hitting inside is not tantamount to “giving up” on the second checker. With luck, you will get three or more rolls to hit with an ace (under better circumstances) or your slotted blot might get sent back and ultimately used to hit the second blot.

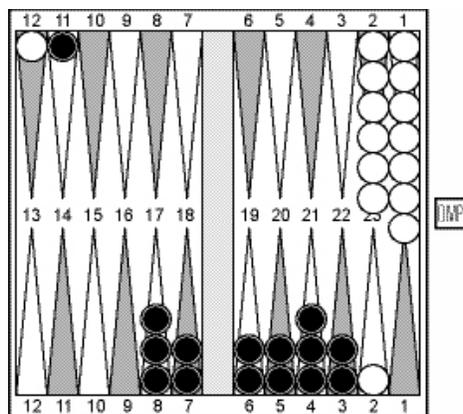
The decision with 6-1 is essentially a tie. One play wins the game more often than the other by less than 3/10 of 1%.

It is much more reasonable for Black to hit outside with 6-1 than it is with 4-1 because he can put two checkers on the roof. White immediately anchors only with 2 numbers (double 1s and 2s) instead of 12 numbers, and otherwise she will require a *parlay* to anchor (e.g., roll a 2, not get hit back, and roll another 2).

In short, once White’s primed blot is on the bar instead of her 23-point, the risk of her anchoring is small enough that Black can begin to justify his aggressive bid to close out two checkers instead of one.

This brings us to the actual position (#2 below) that I faced 27 years ago:

Pos. #2. DMP: Black to play 6-1



This position differs from #1 by 3 pips. In #1, the non-hitting ace can be used to slightly improve the position of the 7-point spare, whereas in #2, the non-hitting ace further weakens the location of the 4-point spare. Self-duplication of aces (14/13* and 3/2) adds to the inefficiency. I win the game 1.4% less often hitting only one checker, due to the poor placement of my resulting 3-point spare.

It required astonishing technique to reach such a commanding position in the first place. Why this error now?

I’m kidding; I make tons of errors. Later after the match, I committed another mistake: when asked about the play, I jokingly said that hitting once was three times as good as hitting twice, not realizing that it would be published as part of a survey!

In fact, it seemed to me that I would not be able to figure out the right play at the table, so I guessed. Did I “overanalyze,” as Russell Sands’ letter in the June POINT suggests? That may depend on how long I thought; I don’t remember. But it’s interesting to revisit the situation. [*Sands’ letter incorrectly claimed that Nack played in the World Amateur in 1980. In fact, he played in the Open division, often referred to as the World Professional Championship.—Ed.*]

Not long after, in his book *Wonderful World of Backgammon*, Danny Kleinman devoted an entire chapter cleverly entitled *Anchoraphobia* to this position. He stated that the decision is close but favored hitting twice. This was a remarkably accurate assessment for the pre-bot era. (I noticed something else remarkable: *Anchoraphobia* is an anagram of *Arachnophobia*—fear of spiders.—NB)

In his counter to Kit Woolsey’s analysis in issue #193, Gregg Cattanach concludes that “Kit is going to have to work hard to prove [Snowie’s] rollout wrong.”

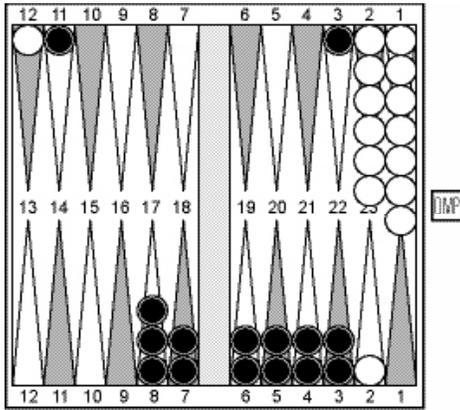
However, proving whether a play is “right” or “wrong” is not all that matters. If a rollout bias exists, there is value in determining its *size*. In that way, bots can continue to serve a wider variety of uses without leaving us with false impressions.

In #2, GNU’s DMP-specific rollout result differs from Snowie’s and provides convincing evidence that the size of the single-hit error is *smaller* than previously reported. Bill’s Snowie rollout plus mine (6768 trials) average to an error size of just over 0.036 for hitting once. GNU’s rollout (10368 trials) indicates only 0.028.

There is no guarantee that GNU does not also misplay the position, but aiming for the right objective (winning the game, ignoring gammons) is clearly an accuracy advantage. GNU’s result is more reliable.

Snowie's rollout bias of 0.01 or so in this kind of position will sometimes cause its rollout to end up on the wrong side of zero. For example, let's back up Black's 4-point spare three quadrants, creating position #3 (below). Again, Black to play **6-1**.

Pos. #3. DMP: Black to play 6-1 or 5-1



The best play is to hit with 8/2* but NOT to also hit outside with the ace. Instead, it is better to inch up with 22/21. Black's back checker in #3 gives him a better chance (than in #2) to hit the second checker after securing the 2-point. Black can afford to be patient.

Hitting twice may look compelling, but it gives White too great a chance to roll a 2 or 1 and subsequently anchor—an event Black should deftly dodge at this score.

To drive this point home, suppose that Black hits once (8/2*, 22/21), White rolls 6-2 or 2-2 (hitting and slotting her 6-point) and Black rolls 4-2. He should NOT hit back; he should play bar/21, 14/12, letting White's second checker slip by.

Snowie's play in #3 is to hit twice. Moreover, in a rollout, after hitting once and getting hit back, it prioritizes hitting the outside checker (as it does in #1), producing a result that fulfills its play bias. By repeatedly jeopardizing its winning chances to go for a gammon, Snowie robs the single-hit play of its mojo.

Snowie's rollout supports hitting **twice**, by 0.007. GNU's rollout reveals that hitting **once** is best by 0.005.

Snowie also misplays against *two* checkers back because DMP-conflicting trap plays and greedy bearoffs grant White unnecessary chances to slime her game home. However, the anti-DMP pitfalls that ensue from hitting one checker and getting hit back (or not) are larger.

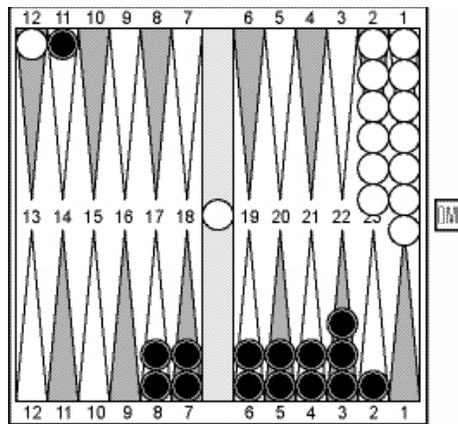
In other words, Snowie misplays Black's side after the single hit *more* than after the double hit. In #3 (our current example): Hitting once, Snowie wins 95.1% compared to GNU's 96.8%. Hitting twice, Snowie wins 95.4%, GNU 96.5%.

In #3, another interesting contrast arises with Black to play **5-1**. Snowie's rollout makes 14/13*, 7/2* (hitting twice but breaking the 7-point) and 8/2* a dead heat (within 0.001). By comparison, GNU's rollout results show the single hit to be best by 0.013.

Gregg wrote: "The fear that 'the rollout is not according to score so it is bogus' is *highly* overrated, in my opinion." I don't know if he meant overrated by Kit or by backgammonderos in general, but I do not disagree: it is important to put Snowie's 0.01 DMP double-hit bias that this article demonstrates into perspective.

Kit painted a continuation of #2 where Black hits once (8/2*, 4/3) and White fans, resulting in position #4 below.

Pos. #4. DMP: Black to play 4-1



Here, Kit examined Black to play **4-1**. The best play is 14/13* with either 8/4 or 13/9 (tied). The relative equity of the third best play, 8/4, 3/2, is -0.006 by GNU rollout (or -0.021 by Snowie rollout!). I'll readdress this play later.

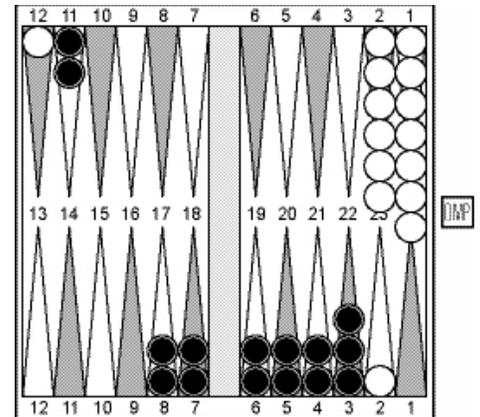
Kit also pondered Black's equity in #4 with random dice (instead of 4-1)—call this #4a, and a variant with the 14-point checker on the 12-point—call this #4b. His Snowie rollouts have Black winning 94.5% in #4a and 95.5% in #4b, but my Snowie rollouts get 95.3% in #4a and 94.8% in #4b. That's a 1.5% swing.

#4a just has to be better: 6-1, 5-1 and 1-1 hit and cover. Even IF tricking Snowie out of hitting with the other aces helped, it could not compensate. And when we check GNU's rollouts, they concur: #4a triumphs by 95.8% to 95.4%.

I caution Kit (in case this was the problem), and others, not to rely on only a few hundred iterations. If you lack CPU time, do *truncated* rollouts; the error that can result from failing to roll out the game to completion is much smaller than the error that can result from high variance.

Finally, consider position #5. Black to play **6-1**.

Pos. #5. DMP: Black to play 6-1



After hitting with 8/2* (clear), play an ace. If you cover the 2-point, you are thematically choosing the same 4-1 play that Kit liked in #4 (i.e., 8/4, 3/2). The key difference between the two positions is that 3/2 is *right* in #5 because Black has 10 additional pips of timing.

Pointing on the 2-point is best by 0.007, according to GNU's rollout. (Snowie's rollout, with a predictable bias, has the double-hit play exactly tied.)

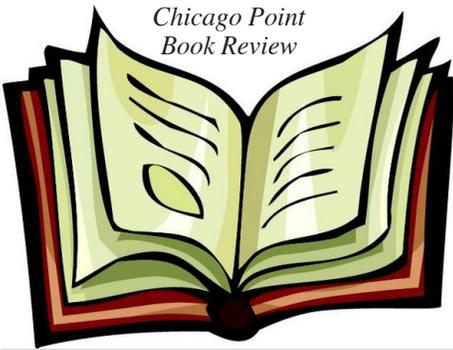
Closing comments: For our book series on early game positions, Paul Weaver and I use Snowie. Although it is slower than GNU, Snowie's money game play is a little stronger, in our opinion. For close match play decisions, we consult GNU.

If you think you might like to participate in the rollout project for *Backgammon Openings*, go to www.nackbg.com and click on "Rollout Project."

The salient points of this article are:

- When you have one enemy blot behind your six-prime at DMP, focus on closing that checker out; do not let your opponent anchor easily.
- When the trapped blot is on the bar, it might *then* be right to hit a second blot. It depends, in large part, on how far advanced your spare checkers are.
- Bots that fail to play DMP-specific have a bias towards hitting twice. Increase the relative rollout equity of hitting once by 0.01 (= 0.5% MWC).

Many thanks to Jacob "Stick" Rice for so generously donating his CPU time. All rollouts supporting specific claims in this article are "full" (to the end of the game), precise, 3-ply, and with a minimum of 3000 iterations for Snowie and 5184 for GNU.—*Nack Ballard* Δ



SECOND WIND – a “Cool Breeze”

Chris Bray's New Book
Reviewed by Neil Kazaross

Second Wind © 2007 by Chris Bray. 267 pages. Soft cover. Order at www.flintbg.com. \$32 + \$4 s&h (United States).

Chris Bray is the backgammon columnist for *The Independent* newspaper in London. His new book *Second Wind*, like the well written predecessor, *What Colour is the Wind?* is an anthology of his recent BG columns. This new book has articles from 2002 to 2006, grouped according to year. By my count, there are 249 one-page articles and I must say that is quite a lot. It's good to see so much packed into one book.

The book starts with an interesting introduction that mentions the growth of BG due to online play and also the positive effects that bots and online play are having on our beloved game. The intro also mentions that the perfect player doesn't exist and that, as is discussed in some of the column which are from actual chouette play, players may wish to cube earlier or later than what a bot would deem correct due to opponent tendencies. This fine book concludes with an addendum addressing a few of the columns and a bibliography.

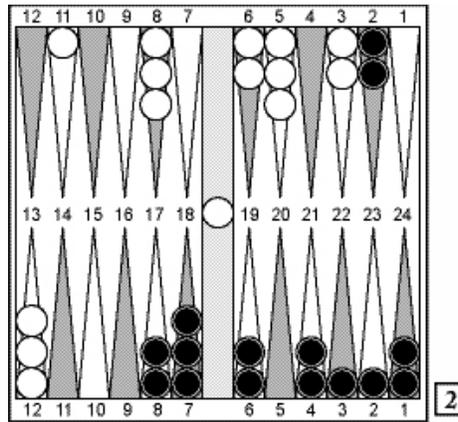
Second Wind's appearance is very fine and production quality is very good. I have dragged my copy all over the planet and it has held up perfectly. Each problem has a diagram that is easy to read and (very important) displays the pip count. The author states that he has used rollouts from Snowie and/or GNU to verify the accuracy of his answers and conclusions. (I have no reason to doubt that). This is an absolute must for any good book.

The author's writing style is British as one would expect and most enjoyable to me. There are fun anecdotes featuring Sherlock Holmes and Watson as well as many positions from actual UK chouettes and from tournaments around the world, including a Monte Carlo finals. The chouette characters have colorful names such as the Tempestuous Turk and others and (as far as

I know) most are real life players, many of whom I have played against (including the author).

As this CHICAGO POINT issue will be chocked full of BG info and results, my space for this review is limited, but I will show you two positions from this fine book. The first one comes from page 116 and is titled, “Imagination.”

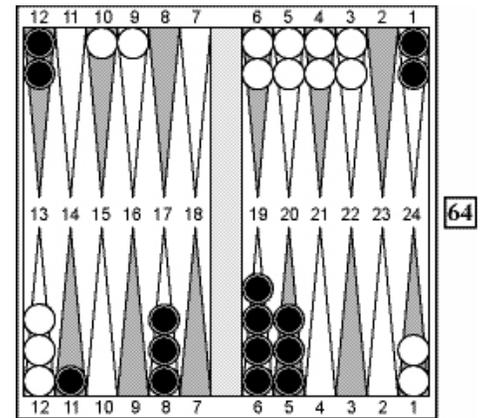
Money game. BLACK TO PLAY 6-2.



No match score is given so we can assume that it doesn't matter. Black has a 3-2 to play owning the cube here and the author states that if this came up in a chouette, most players would be discussing the merits of 7/2 vs the more blotty 8/3, while never considering the alternative play of making the 5-point, leaving two blots inside the home board. This is very true, and I'll admit that unless this position was presented as a problem, I might just play 7/2 quickly unless I was really on my game at the time. However, looking ahead a turn, one sees that after making the 5-point followed by one of White's 16 dancing rolls, Black can throw a very strong recube, which White can just barely take if she dares. After the routine 7/2 or 8/3 Black has lots of work to do and his game is not nearly so strong. The author concludes his fine analysis by congratulating Kit Woolsey for getting this one correct over the board!

Onward to page 244 and a play that many would miss even if it were presented in problem form. It is a fine lesson in pausing to consider game plans and all 30 checkers.

Money game. BLACK TO PLAY 4-1.



This article is entitled, “A Conversation with Snowie” and occurred when the author was quite surprised that it is clearly better to make the bar point instead of the 4-point with this 4-1. A well written and humorous conversation with the bot makes up most of this fine article. I have to admit that I would have also misplayed by making the 4-point for a stronger inner board.

So, dear readers, what do I think of *Second Wind*? It is a very fine book for intermediates to advanced players, and has some things to interest experts as well. For true novices, it is a bit much, but nearly every reader of this newsletter will enjoy and benefit from this fun book. The book isn't on the cutting edge of new backgammon findings; but seriously, there haven't been too many recent BG discoveries anyway.

I am a very tough and critical grader when it comes to backgammon books, since many of them leave much to be desired. I'll rate the BG content in “Second Wind” as a B and the overall book as a B+ since the writing style and quality make it most enjoyable to read over and over.

When I rate a book this highly, all would do well to pick up and study a copy. The book could be improved a bit by using the space below some of the problems to add more things for experts such as a brief in-depth discussion and/or detailed rollout results. A few of the problems have a little something added, but only a few.

Bottom line: I certainly recommend Chris Bray's *Second Wind* to all. —Neil Kazaross Δ

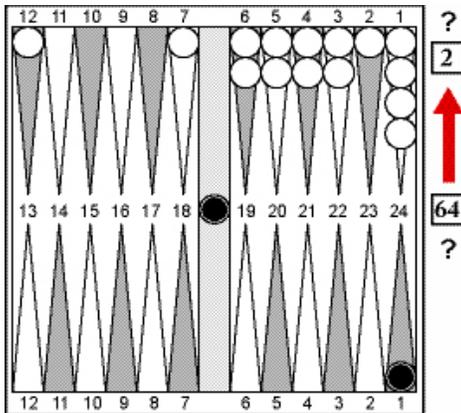
NAILING A GAMMON

Brenda Cohen (Philadelphia, PA) got her nails done for the recent Michigan Summer Championships and the result is shown at right. Unfortunately she was unable to claw her way to victory.



**PROBLEM #328
ANALYZED**

by Kit Woolsey

Match to 9 points. Black leads White 7 to 5. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**

First of all, let's look at the match equity situation from White's point of view if Black does double. If White passes, she is behind 8-5 Crawford (1 away, 4 away). If White takes, she will of course immediately redouble for the match. How often will White win behind 8-5? This figure will vary slightly depending upon which match equity table you use, but it is safe to say that 18% isn't far off. So I'll use 18% as White's take point at this match score. White needs better than 18% winning chances to justify taking.

Let's suppose that White has a pass. Could it be right for Black to not double but play on for the gammon? That doesn't seem likely. If Black rolls 2-5 or 2-6, clearly his best gammon rolls, will he be happy with his decision to play on as White is shaking the dice aiming for that ace which might win him the game? Not at all clear. If Black rolls any other deuce, he will definitely wish he had cashed. If Black

flunks, he clearly won't have gained anything by playing on. So if White has a pass, Black should definitely double.

Let's suppose that White has a take. Are there sufficient market-losing sequences to justify doubling? Black might roll a 2, and then White misses the ace shot. That is certainly a big market loss, but it that happens (particularly if Black has rolled 2-5 or 2-6), Black will then be just as happy playing on for the gammon without risking losing the match on a 4-cube. The main market losers occur when Black flunks. Whatever White rolls, Black's winning chances will probably be better than they were going into this roll. Whether the gain in these scenarios constitutes a large enough market loss on balance is unclear.

What is really going on in this position? Let's look at a reference position—same position for Black, but White has a closed board with spares perfectly placed on the 6-, 5-, and 4-points. White wins this about 17 or 18% of the time. Is the actual position better or worse for White? Her structure is far from perfect with four checkers on the ace point. On the plus side, White has a chance of picking up a second checker. She could do so from the closed board also, but that might be difficult to organize conveniently. On balance, I would judge that the chance of picking up the second checker slightly outweighs the poor structure, so I'll guess that White wins about 19% of the time. If that is an accurate assessment, White has a take if Black doubles.

Should Black double? If he flunks he will almost certainly lose his market whatever White rolls, since any advance of White's checkers hurts White's chances whether or not White covers the blot on the 2-point. However, this market loss doesn't figure to be a large market loss—White will still be close to a take. If Black rolls a 2 and White misses the ace shot Black will be just as happy having not doubled, since

he will have a pretty free shot at a gammon without risking match loss. If White hits the ace shot, then obviously Black will be very happy he didn't double. Putting this all together, I believe that Black is supposed to hold off doubling, planning on cashing if he flunks whatever White rolls but not doubling if he hits (too good if White doesn't hit back, not good enough if White does hit back).

This position reminds me of an actual problem I faced several years ago. I was ahead 2 away, 6 away, which makes my opponent's take point a little higher since he doesn't use the 4 points as efficiently as he does at 2 away, 4 away. My position was the same—one checker on the ace point, and one on the bar. My opponent had a closed board with his other three checkers in the outfield. If I doubled, I didn't think he was supposed to take, but I wasn't sure. Also, if I doubled I wasn't sure how he was supposed to play an ace—should he play 2/1 and go after the second checker or not?

The one thing I was sure of was that if I did not double he would not be able to risk playing 2/1 with an ace, since that would involve risking getting gammoned for at best a small increase in his winning chances. Therefore, I waited until he had all his checkers home so a gammon wasn't in the picture and then I doubled. He took (which was probably an error) and I went on to win.

Kent Goulding who was watching asked me later why I didn't double earlier—was I going for the gammon? When I said yes he looked at me incredulously. But it was true. Obviously I couldn't get a gammon unless my opponent broke his board voluntarily, but the threat of having the gammon be meaningful was sufficient to prevent him from maximizing his winning chances by volunteering a shot while he still had checkers in the outfield.—Kit Woolsey Δ

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

2) Several major goof-ups with the export to HTML and export to RTF functions, both in match and position export.

3) The profile manager (to create new boards or modify existing ones) doesn't work at all.

4) The new count of borne-off checkers display doesn't work at all with some boards.

None of these problems exist with 4.5, so that's the patch I recommend. If you've already installed 4.6 and want to revert

to 4.5, you have to reinstall from your CD (right on top of your current installation) and then apply the 4.5 patch. But this doesn't take any extra registration and won't delete any account manager info or saved matches and positions.—Gregg

PLAYING ONLINE

POINT readers know the dangers of playing for high stakes money online because of the risk of facing players using bot programs. However, now there are many playsites that offer an option to qualify for live events online for free or for a small fee.

Is it possible for you (in Amalgamation)

or Carol Joy Cole (in Mark Your Calendar) to indicate which online tournaments offer this option? That way, CHICAGO POINT will stay "A prime source of backgammon information."—Pierre Zakia, Pau, France

You're probably talking about freeroll events such as when True Moneygames offered online winners trips to Monte Carlo. "Mark Your Calendar" compiler Carol Joy Cole is already spending a great deal of time keeping track of hundreds of tournaments. Our best suggestion is to check out official online playsites for information on their freeroll events. If they're of any value, they will be prominently displayed.—Ed. Δ

**WINNER'S
CIRCLE**



MAY-JULY 2007

•**3rd Aix-les-Bains Open** (Aix-les-Bains, France; 25-28 May)... **CHAMPION:** 1-François Tardieu (FRA), 2-Alexis Vincent (FRA); 1C-Ed O'Laughlin (USA), 2C-Alain Babillon (FRA); 1LC-Sami Sallak (GER). **AMATEUR:** 1-Bao Ha (FRA), 2-Laurent Azoulay (FRA); 1C-François Coignard (FRA), 2C-Laura Monaco (ITA); 1LC-Stéphane Noël (FRA). **BEGINNER:** 1-Pierre Delporte (FRA), 2-Mathias Azoulay (FRA). **DOUBLES:** 1-Serge Nadjar (FRA) & Michel Serrero (FRA), 2-Ed O'Laughlin (USA) & Tobias Ellwag (GER). **TEAM TROPHY:** 1-Ed O'Laughlin & Tobias Ellwag (GER). **LADIES TOUREY:** 1-Scarlette Serrero (FRA).

•**Arizona Club Monthly** (Phoenix, AZ; 4 Jun.)... **OPEN (10):** 1-Michael Ramsey, 2-Dave Perkins, 3-Dan Pelton.

•**PGT: Saint Amand Tournament** (St. Amand-les-Eaux, France; 7-10 Jun.)... **OPEN:** 1-Jürgen Orlowski (GER), 2-François Tardieu (FRA); 1C-Jan Jacobowitz (GER), 2C-Ion Ressu (SWZ); 1LC-Christian Fauré (FRA), 2LC-Pierre Zakia (FRA). **DOUBLES:** 1-Müge Altay (TUR) and Manos Mastorakis (GRE), 2-Antonio laquinta (ITA) and Fabrizio LoSurdo (ITA). **FAIR PLAY TROPHY:** Martin Foldager (GER).

•**2007 Los Angeles Open—ABT** (Van Nuys, CA; 8-10 Jun.)... **OPEN (62):** 1-Bart Brooks (Canada), 2-Art Benjamin (CA), 3-Ken Fischer (NV); 1C-Ray Foglerlund (CA), 2C-Gary Bauer (NJ), 3C/4C-Jobey Calitri (CA) / Arnold Freeman (CA). **ADVANCED (36):** 1-Luis Rivera (Mexico), 2-Sina Bigdeli (CA); 1C-David Taniguchi (CA), 2C-Reza Daryabegi (CA), 3C/4C-Richard Armbruster (CA) / Arash Tabrizi (CA). **LIMITED (12):** 1-Scott Evans (CA), 2-Sean Cooper (CA); 1C-Ryan Cochran (CA). **SUPER-32 JACKPOT (32):** 1-Norm Wiggins (CA), 2-Steve Sax (CA), 3/4-Bob Glass (CA) / Sasan Taher (CA). **DOUBLES (16 teams):** 1-Claire Robinson (CA) & John Rockwell (CA), 2-Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Jabaghourian (CA). **OVERFLOW DOUBLES (8 teams):** 1-Claudia Imatt (CA) & Howard Markowitz (NV), 2-Sina Bigdeli (CA) & Sasan Taher (CA). **2-POINT QUICKIES (48):** 1-Jonah Seewald (CO), 2-Roy Gandy (CA). **\$50 JACKPOT #1 (8):** 1-Mary Franks (NV), #2 (8): 1-Antonio Rahaminov (Italy), #3 (8): 1-Patrick McCormick (CA).

•**Miami Valley Club Monthly—USBL** (Dayton, OH; 10 Jun.)... **OPEN (8):** 1-Tom Siebold, 2-Roger Foster.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 10 Jun.) ... **OPEN (8):** 1/2-Neal Rosensweig / Kirby Poore.

•**Phoenix Backgammon Club—USBL** (Glendale, AZ; 16 Jun.)... **OPEN (6):** 1-Dave Perkins, 2-Dan Pelton, 3-Bob Baxter.

•**New England Club 96/97 Playoffs** (Massachusetts; June)... **OPEN:** 1-Herb Gurland, 2-Anne Bidner.

•**Arizona Club Monthly** (Phoenix, AZ; 2 Jul.)... **OPEN (11):** 1-Proctor Ritchey, 2-Dan Pelton, 3-Pete

Campbell.

•**1st Nice Casino Ruhl Open** (Nice, France; 5-8 Jul.)... **MASTERS (25):** 1-Fausto Pescini (ITA), 2-Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN); 1C-Giorgio Castellano (ITA), 2C-Artur Muradian (ARM); 1LC-Chris Ternel (UK). **CHAMPIONS (29):** 1-Espen Selbæk (NOR), 2-Harutyun Martirosian (ARM); 1C-Michihito Kageyama (JPN), 2C-Florin Popa (ROM/ITA); 1LC-Akaki Kikaleishvili (GEO). **Ladies Prize:** Jeanne Nanga (CAM/AUS). **INTERMEDIATE (28):** 1-Andranik Harutyunyan (ARM), 2-Alberto da Pra

(ITA); 1C-Gagik Baxalbashyan (ARM), 2C-Lorenzo Reinaldo; 1LC-Fabio Cappelletti (ITA). **Ladies Prize:** Conny Schoch (Switzerland). **WARM-UP (24):** 1-Masayuki Mochizuki (Japan), 2-Asbjørn Arntzen (Norway). **SPERTI TROPHY (29):** 1-Fabrizio Lo Surdo (Italy), 2-Michel Lamote (Belgium). **SUPER JACKPOT #1 (8):** 1-Tassilo Rzymann (Austria). **#2 (8):** 1-Michel Serrero (France). **LADIES TOURNAMENT (11):** 1-Seda Koc (Turkey), 2-Conny Schoch (Switzerland). **1-POINT PRESIDENT'S TOURNAMENT (64):** 1-Espen Selbæk (Norway). Δ

AMALGAMATION

Congratulations to **Jake Jacobs** who will marry **Kumpa Duoseyn** in Thailand in February... **Peter Kalba** (IN) is on the mend following food surgery in June... Monte Carlo World Champs tidbit: **Carter Mattig** (IL) went to the notorious Jimmy's Disco at the Monte Carlo World Championships and bought a round of drinks (five beers that is). He got the bill and said: "Looks like you misplaced a decimal!" They hadn't; it cost him 230 euros (\$315) before the tip... Did we congratulate **Steve & Kathy Hast** (PA) on their 21 April wedding? The couple honeymooned in the Caribbean... In January, registered nurse **Mary Ann Meese** (IN) makes her third medical mission to Haiti with her church group. It's a dangerous trip, but the needs are desperate... **Nack Ballard's** and **Paul Weaver's** much anticipated *Backgammon Openings, Book A* is at the printer and should be available within the next month. Look for Jake Jacobs' review along with order information in the September POINT... **Amy**

Trudeau (IL) was hit by a car last month. Her injuries are not serious... Good luck to **Ed** and **Adam Bennett** (303/519-5711) who are hosting the first New Mexico State Championship at the Santa Fe Country Club on 4 August... **Trudie Chibnik** announces that there will be no Winnetka Backgammon in July. Trudie and husband **Bill** will be going to Italy for a family wedding. Their trip was almost canceled when Bill sliced two of his fingers in a meat-cutting accident in June; but 40 stitches and skin grafts have proved successful... **Phil Simborg** (IL) tips us on a very funny "How to Play Backgammon" movie. To find it, go to www.youtube.com and then search for "tuvli backgammon."... Two new backgammon playsites were announced: turbogammon.com promoted by the Million Dollar backgammon tournament organizers, and gammonitisgames.com by the Gammonitis Club in England... Finally, we received this fortune cookie message that perfectly fits backgammon: "The only sure thing about luck is that it will change."... See you in September with the next POINT issue. Δ

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