

California State Championship

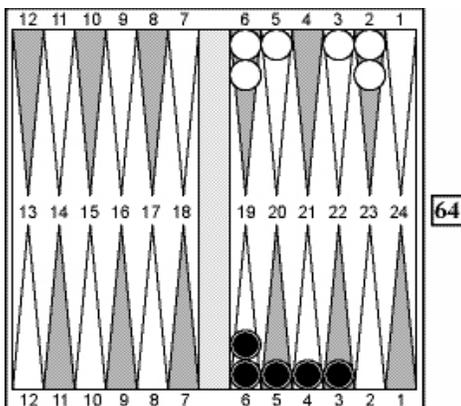
CALIFORNIA DECIDES ABT Sconyers Defeats Koca to Preserve Kazaross's Tour Title By Richard Munitz

Patrick Gibson's California State Championship (5-7 December at the Airtel Hotel in Van Nuys) was the most exciting event in years. At this final American Backgammon Tour (ABT) event of 2008, six players had a chance to win it all, and many more were competing for one of three trophy positions and/or a top-10 finish, good for a one ounce solid silver eagle coin.

I was in smelling distance of the money on several occasions, but could never quite pull through. My first loss in round three of the undefeated was the most heartbreaking. After being at 96.5% match equity, my opponent managed to roll doubles in a three-roll bearoff to save the match at 1-away/6-away Crawford, then won the next three games in a row.

Bob Koca was also rather unfortunate to lose in the undefeated bracket after being ahead 1-away/5-away Crawford, but hung on to win several tough matches in the double elimination format. His greatest stroke of fortune came in the second chance finals. Trailing 2-away/4-away, his opponent pondered a 6-1 play in the following position (I'm not certain of where Bob's checkers were, but this is close enough):

California 2nd Chance 11-point finals.
Black leads Bob Koca (White), 9 to 7.
BLACK TO PLAY 6-1.

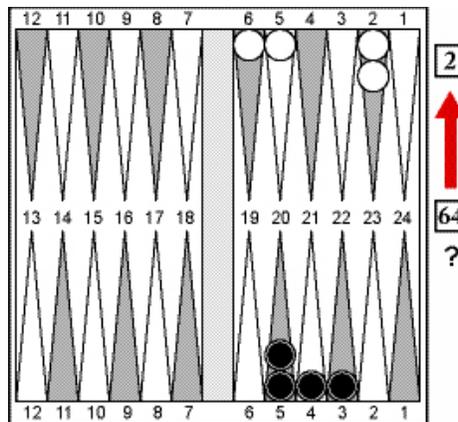


Hugh Sconyers (L) defeated Bob Koca in the Open finals. That's Richard Munitz (L) looking on. [Photos by Patrick Gibson]

Black moved 6/off, 6/5. This was the worst of all plays as it wastes a pip on future 6s in order to capitalize on double 5s which in all likelihood wins anyway.

A turn later, Bob's opponent reached the following position:

Black (on roll) leads Bob Koca 9-7 to 11.
SHOULD BLACK DOUBLE?



- Incredibly, Black doubled! Snowie 3-ply evaluation shows this to be a 0.619 blunder. Black rolls 6-1, playing 5/off, 3/2 (Note the wasted pip.)
- Koca, wiping the drool from his mouth, recubes to make it DMP. He then rolls 2-1, playing 2/off, 5/4.
- Black rolls 3-1, playing 4/off.
- Koca rolls 6-5 playing 6/off, 4/off.
- Black rolls 4-3. *One pip short!*
- Koca wins game and advances to the finals.

Of course, Bob's fortune was my misfortune as his runner-up tourney finish

[Continued on page 9]

UNPRECEDENTED 4TH ABT TITLE FOR KAZAROSS

Neil Kazaross is the 2008 American Backgammon Tour Player of the Year. It's his fourth title in the 16 year history of the Tour. No other player has ever won twice.



Neil's 43.83 points were earned at five tournaments, the lion's share of them coming via his big win at the Michigan Summer Championships. His other ABT

victories came in 1994, 1999, and 2005. Using the word "dominant" is accurate in describing the "An-Neil-ator's" performance over the past 16 years. Neil was Player of the Year in the five full seasons he played at the Chicago Bar Point Club (1993-1997). He currently holds the record for the highest annual total (73.22 in 2005) and his four winning totals all rank 7th or better over the 16 year history. Additionally, his all-time ABT total of 341.82 points leads the player in second (Ray Foglerlund) by nearly 100 points. Worldwide, he is the #5 Giant of Backgammon.

Placing second this year was Pub Club (IL) director Tim Mabee. Tim put together two state championship titles in Wisconsin and Illinois to earn all of his 36.00 points.

Bob Koca, who won a 2008 Partouche-gammon Tour event in Cannes, captured third place with 34.24 points. Bob needed his second place finish at the December California Open to edge out last year's Player of the Year Richard Munitz by .02.

All three players will be awarded at this year's Pittsburgh Championships 20-22 February [Invitation: www.chicagopoint.com/pitt09.pdf]. In addition, the top ten players will receive silver eagle coins as a memento for their achievement. The final standings are on page 3. Δ

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Bill Davis

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

Tel: 773/583-6464 ♦ Fax: 773/583-3264

E-mail: bg@chicagopoint.com

www.chicagopoint.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Carol Joy Cole (MI)	Danny Kleinman (CA)
Mary Hickey (OH)	John O'Hagan (IN)
Jake Jacobs (IL)	Steve Sax (CA)
Duane Jensen (MN)	Phil Simborg (IL)
Neil Kazaross (IL)	Kit Woolsey (CA)

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LETTERS



c/o CHICAGO POINT
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Chicago, IL 60659-3155

E-mail: letters@chicagopoint.com

ALMOST A DIFFERENT DUMMY AUTHOR

I read your *Backgammon for Dummies* book review with interest. Around a decade ago, the late John Brussell's Chicago-based PR company had the *Dummies* publishers as an account and pitched *Backgammon For Dummies* (with a certain CHICAGO POINT contributing editor as author). The proposal was working its way up the ladder when John's company lost the account. Some years later they were hired again, and John was ready to pitch it once more when his health declined.—*Jake Jacobs, Sommerville Park, Singapore*

BACKGAMMON IN BUENOS AIRES

After 14 years of traveling the USA and hopping in and out of backgammon clubs, I've landed indefinitely in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The weekly backgammon scene

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BACKGAMMON						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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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.

Jan 15	Third Thursday Bonus (Pittsburgh), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jan 16-18	9th Carolina Invitational, Hilton University Place, Charlotte, North Carolina	704/651-2949
Jan 18-25	BackgammonPoker On Board, Princess Cruise, Ft. Lauderdale to Caribbean	773/583-6464
Jan 24*	Backgammon By the Bay, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/261-4583
Jan 24*	New England Monthly, Docksider Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Jan 25*	Colorado Monthly Tournament, Old Chicago, Denver, Colorado	303/791-0271
Jan 25*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly tournament, Cosi, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Jan 29*	Flint Club Awards Party & Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232/9731
Jan 31	Bar Point Club Doubles Championship, Holiday Inn O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Feb 1*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Feb 2*	Arizona State Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	480/286-8239
Feb 7*	Springfield Series #4, Ramada Hotel, Peoria, Illinois	217/622-9447
Feb 8*	Illinois State Challenge Cup, Ramada Hotel, Peoria, Illinois	630/606-2388
Feb 8*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Feb 15*	New England Monthly, Docksider Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Feb 15*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly tournament, Cosi, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Feb 19*	Third Thursday Bonus (Midwest), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Feb 20-22	31st Pittsburgh Championships/ABT Awards, Holiday Inn, Pennsylvania	304/685-3214
Feb 22*	Colorado Monthly Tournament, Old Chicago, Denver, Colorado	303/791-0271
Mar 1*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Mar 2*	Arizona State Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	480/286-8239
Mar 2*	2nd Annual Pub Club Trophy Tourney, Playoffs Bar, Carol Stream, Illinois	630/606-2388
Mar 7*	Springfield Series #5, Ride the Nine, Bloomington, Illinois	217/622-9447
Mar 8*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Mar 20-22	2009 Midwest Championships, Wyndham Lisle, Lisle, Illinois	773/583-6464
Apr 3-5	15th Ohio State Championships, Airport Marriott Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio	330/268-4610
Apr 15-19*	25th Nevada State Tournament, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Apr 5*	Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
May 1-3	Atlanta Spring Classic, Crowne Plaza Ravinia, Atlanta, Georgia	678/441-1005
May 15-17*	2nd Annual Atlantic City Tourney, Best Western, Pleasantville, New Jersey	732/608-7100
May 22-25	29th Annual Chicago Open, Eaglewood Inn & Resort, Itasca, Illinois	702/218-8238
Jun 4-7	US Open-Washington DC, Doubletree, Arlington, VA ckt@world-backgammon-association.com	
Jun 12-14	Los Angeles Open, Airtel Plaza Hotel, Van Nuys, California	818/901-0464
Jul 2-5	Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Aug 6-9	Florida State Championships, Sheraton Airport, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Sep 4-7	Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin	608/516-9109
Sep 25-27	Colorado State Championships, Hilton Airport Hotel, Aurora, Colorado	303/791-0271
Oct 9-11	Illinois State Championships, Ramada Inn, Peoria, Illinois	847/845-3579
Oct 16-18	Mid-Atlantic Championships, Marriott Berkshire, Towson, Maryland	954/564-0340
Nov 4-8	2009 Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Dec 4-6	California State Championship, Airtel Plaza Hotel, Van Nuys, California	818/901-0464

OUTSIDE USA

Jan 17-18	1st Zürich Open, Restaurant Rotel, Zürich, Switzerland	4178-6329404
Jan 17-18	Rhein-Neckar-Cup 2008 Year-End, Phönix Clubhaus, Mannheim, Germany	496204-620396
Jan 31-Feb 1*	WBF-Türkiye 5th Ankara Championship, Enerji Hotel, Ankara, Turkey	905332-352555
Feb 6-8	Jarvis Trophy, Barceló Paramount Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Feb 10-15	PGT: PartoucheGammon Tour Grand Finale, Palm Beach, Cannes, France	331-4764-5938
Feb 15*	31st South Australian Open, Hilton Hotel, Adelaide, South Australia	618412-836266
Feb 19-22	Innsbrucker BG & Poker Open, Casino Innsbruck, Austria	49711-486190
Mar 6-8	BIBA International Championship, Daventry Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Mar 6-8*	New South Wales Open, Ryde Ex-Services Club, Sydney, Australia	6199-536986
Apr 2-5	Combination BG & Poker Tournament, Casino Seefeld, Seefeld, Austria	49711-486190
Apr 3-5	Casinorip.com British Open, Barceló Daventry Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Apr 9-13*	21st Nordic Open, Helsingør or Copenhagen, Denmark	4533-363601
Apr 15-19	21st WBF European Championship & 8th Velden Open, Velden, Austria	390331-923537
May 8-10*	County Cups Trophy, Barceló Caventry Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
May 14-17*	EBGT: TMG Portuguese Open, Casino Estoril, Estoril (Lisbon), Portugal	491715-422222
May 29-Jun 1*	14th Kaiserbrunnen-Cup, Hotel Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49711-486190
Jun 5-7*	Austrian Masters Finale, Restaurant Sofra, Vienna, Austria	436642-127412
Jun 5-7*	Barceló English Open, Barceló Daventry Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Jun 11-14*	3rd Braunlage-Harz-Cup, Hotel Hohenzollern, Braunlage, Germany	495204-880305
Jul 3-5*	BIBA World Championship, Barceló Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Jul 8-12*	3rd Nice Casino Ruhl Open, Casino Ruhl, Nice, France	390331-923537
Jul 12-19*	34th World Championship, Fairmont Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	USA: 212/222-7177



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2008

Final standings after 19 tournaments
Top 100—229 players earned points



NEIL KAZAROSS	43.83	Jeremy Bagai	12.80	Eric Barr	8.33	Julius High	5.65
TIM MABEE	36.00	Sal Chehayeb	12.50	Reggie Proulx	8.20	John Rockwell	5.64
BOB KOCA	34.24	Dave Settles	12.46	Paul Berg	7.83	Eliot Bean	5.64
Richard Munitz	34.22	Barry Silliman	12.40	Lynn Ehrlich	7.64	Rick Barabino	5.58
Ray Foglerlund	31.88	Carol Joy Cole	12.00	Dana Nazarian	7.40	Neil Deutsch	5.58
Stacy Turner	28.44	Antoinette Williams	12.00	John Jennings	7.40	Antonio Ortega	5.58
Chris Knapp	28.00	Roy Gandy	11.27	Gary Bauer	7.11	Peter Wagner	5.45
Stick Rice	23.07	John O'Hagan	11.17	Alvaro Savio	7.11	Badei Khoury	5.45
Mike Senkiewicz	22.33	Mary Hickey	10.93	Steve Flam	7.00	Les Moshinsky	5.33
George Matthews	22.18	Matt Reklaitis	10.76	Rose Sheedy	6.89	Herb Roman	5.33
Hugh Sconyers	21.82	Greg Merriman	10.67	David Olson	6.52	Larry Liebster	5.33
Ray Glaeser	21.33	Tak Morioka	10.67	Larry Taylor	6.52	Bruce Ballance	5.28
Steve Brown	21.20	Barry Miller	10.67	Michael Flohr	6.40	Karsten Busch	5.11
Bill Davis	20.17	Jolie Rubin	10.56	David Escoffery	6.40	Jeff Whitelaw	5.11
Matt Cohn-Geier	18.92	Jonah Seewald	10.22	Alfred Mamlet	6.40	Jesse Eaton	5.04
Jon Vietor	18.67	Alan Robinson	10.00	Carter Mattig	6.40	Stevie Grund	5.00
Drew Giovanis	18.07	Adam Bennett	9.40	Saad Ghiso	6.25	Evan Etter	4.81
Jeff Acierno	15.84	Justin Nunez	9.04	Owen Black	6.20	Howard Markowitz	4.67
Stepan Nuniyants	14.95	Joe Russell	9.04	Bill Versaw	6.20	Bob Sahagian	4.54
Christopher Yep	14.80	David Rubin	9.00	Rod Covlin	6.20	Jona Alexander	4.52
Mike Corbett	14.00	Scott Casty	8.84	Joe Freedman	6.00	Ed Bennett	4.52
Kit Woolsey	13.77	Kevin Jones	8.83	Vadim Musaelyan	6.00	Justin Bor	4.52
Perry Gartner	13.71	Gary Schachtschneider	8.66	Robert Lessard	6.00	Ed O'Laughlin	4.50
Michael Edge	13.67	Faddoul Khoury	8.60	Steve Hast	6.00	F. Schaffrath/L. Lusk	4.42
Petko Kostadinov	13.18	Tom Hodous	8.40	Alan Gold	5.71		
Johathan Bennetts	13.04						

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

here is unique and fun! When you arrive, expect a kiss from most of the players (both from men and women) on the right cheek as this is the normal custom here.

Play starts Wednesdays, 9:00 PM at the Utopia Bar-Resto in the Plaza Serrano area (Barrio Palermo) for social games (tournament registration is 9:45 PM). The tourney begins around 10:15 PM. As is South American fashion, the time is anything but rigid.

The entry fee is 10 Pesos (about \$3 US) with 100% payback. The tourney is a single elimination, 5-point matches, and usually between 14–22 players ante up. If more than 16 come and you make it to the finals, expect to be asked to split the kitty, as it will probably be about 1:00 AM (just about everything happens later in Argentina). Don't expect much \$\$ side action, though; this group plays more for camaraderie.

The folks are fun, warm, and friendly, and some will try to practice their English with you. It all happens in a small, crowded, noisy bar with good food (pizza, steaks, Italian). But be warned! . . . smoking occurs.

So if you're in Buenos Aires on a Wednesday evening, drop by and join us. For more info, contact the English speaking Pablo via e-mail at vetdrpablo@hotmail.com, or call him at 15-4448-5260. Good travels! — Fred Badagnani (AKA Freddy Fourpoint), Buenos Aires, Argentina

IN MEMORY OF PAUL

Please renew my subscription to CHICAGO POINT. My late husband Paul (who passed

[Continued on page 4]



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2008 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

FINAL STANDINGS
78 players earned points

Rory Pascar	39.66	Jacob Moreno	9.86	Elaine Kehm	2.92	Sargon Benjamin	1.04
David Rockwell	32.72	Bill Bartholomay	9.52	Mike Pufpaf	2.76	Ken Tyszko	0.96
Phil Simborg	26.32	Wayne Wiest	9.12	Scott Casty	2.72	Mary Franks	0.96
Herb Roman	24.88	Alex Owen	8.68	Arline Levy	2.52	Amy Trudeau	0.96
Carter Mattig	22.78	Bob Zavoral	8.54	Henry Gray	2.28	Cookie Frazin	0.88
Bill Davis	22.76	Gary Kay	7.56	Mark Murray	2.08	Chiva Tafazzoli	0.72
Ken Bond	17.48	Richard Stawowy	6.80	Ken Tibbs	1.84	Tim Rockwell	0.68
Nora Luna Righter	16.16	Bill Keefe	6.32	Dan Cox	1.76	Ben Schneider	0.64
Tim Mabee	15.74	Roger Hickman	6.16	Lenny Loder	1.60	Sherry Nelson	0.56
Tak Morioka	15.32	Mike Wolock	6.12	Mitch Pomper	1.60	Bill Gradl	0.56
Steve Klesker	13.64	Bob Steen	5.84	Dan Weymouth	1.44	Bill Devine	0.56
Oleg Raygorodsky	13.56	Adrian Rios	5.76	Les Moshinsky	1.36	Kathy Sorci	0.52
Albert Yakobashvili	13.20	Royal Robinson	5.20	Linda Rockwell	1.28	Andrew Mack	0.48
Lucky Nelson	13.16	Jerry Brooks	4.68	Yamin Yamin	1.28	Jacki Singleton	0.48
Dave Settles	12.80	Georgina Flanagan	4.32	Peter Kalba	1.16	Mark Swanson	0.40
Michael Ginat	12.36	Howard Markowitz	3.84	Nicole Tibbs	1.12	Roz Ferris	0.32
Larry Goldstein	11.76	Paul Baraz	3.68	Tom Machaj	1.12	Phyllis Smolinski	0.24
Christopher Shanova	11.40	Eric Johnson	3.40	Efim Liberman	1.12	Lucia Armenta	0.24
Alice Kay	10.92	Wendy Kaplan	3.20	Ray Lass	1.04	Roy Cohen	0.24
Mike Sutton	10.16	Jeff Fischer	2.94				

GARY KAY had an incredible 9.92 November point total (highlighted by 20 wins in a row) dominated otherwise outstanding monthly performances by Bob Zavoral (5.18) and Val Zimmnicki (4.52).

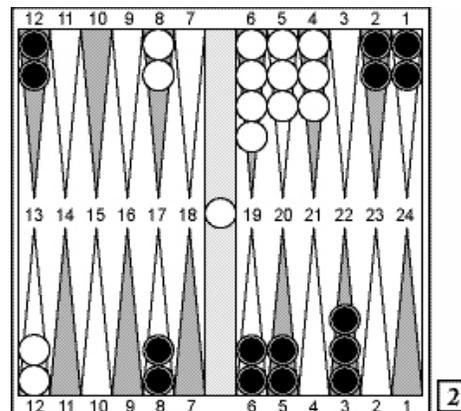
If you finish in the Top 20 for 2009, you'll be entered in a drawing for over \$300 worth of valuable merchandise. The higher you finish, the better your winning chances. Individual awards: 1st: Trophy + \$100, 2nd: \$70, 3rd: \$50, 4th–6th: \$30. 1st through 20th—one ounce silver eagle dollar coin. 1st through 6th—Invitation to participate on the Chicago Bar Point Club team in the 2010 Illinois State Challenge Cup. (\$30 of the cash awards will pay the entry fees of those players actually entering the Challenge Cup.)

your move

PROBLEM #342

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

Money game. BLACK TO PLAY 4-1.



ASK DANNY

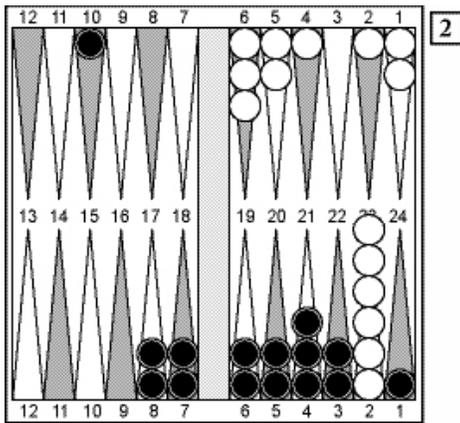


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A SALTY ONE

Dear Danny: This problem arose in an opening round club match last month. Trailing 3–5 to 7, I doubled early and played aggressively trying for a match-ending gammon. Things went my way and I was looking good until I rolled a somewhat awkward 4-4:

7 point match. Black trails White, 3 to 5.
BLACK TO PLAY 4-4.

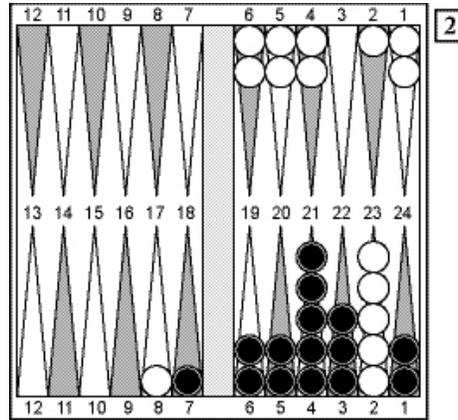


I'm no expert, Danny, but it seems to me the question is whether to safely clear the 8- and 7-points now with 8/4(2), 7/3(2), or just clear the 8-point and run the outfield checker to my barpoint 8/4(2), 15/7. I do see the benefit of the latter play: it forces

White to bury her 5s (except 6-5) in her home table. In fact, this is the play I made.

The problem is that White rolled a 6-2 exiting 23/17 and covering her 4-blot, I tossed 6-4 playing 7/1, 7/3, and White cast double 5s, hitting 23/18*, then covering her 3-blot 17/2.

WHITE TO PLAY 5-5.



Naturally, I never entered and was closed out for a very salty loss. So tell me, Danny . . . was this just horrid luck, or did I miss a better play?—*Snake Bit*

DEAR SNAKE: You were indeed bitten by bad luck. You didn't have to roll a blotting large number at your next turn, and White could just as easily have rolled a 5 before a 6 than the other way around. However, you did miss a better play.

Piling a third man on your rearmost point, the 7-point, with your 6-point and even your 5-point stripped, created an enormously awkward position with substantial

jeopardy of future shots. For this reason, I prefer clearing both the 8-point and the 7-point while you can do so safely to the play you made, and indeed 8/4(2), 7/3(2) is the uninspired play I might have chosen at the table.

However, I do see the merit of your play: retaining White's 5s as unfavorable crashing rolls instead of favorable escaping rolls. To your credit, you took into account your opponent's position as well as your own. Alas, you did not look deeply enough into your opponent's position . . . as admittedly, neither did I at first glance.

White has two inside blots and will have a 5-prime or 4-prime to leap, depending on how you move now. Getting hit immediately may not harm you very much. Even if you don't hit back, getting hit immediately may enable you to keep a 5-prime longer, making it more difficult for White to spring additional back men before crashing.

So . . . why not keep your 7-point, which blocks 5s, and leave a blot on your 8-point instead of putting a third man on your 7-point? On reflection, I like 15/3, 8/4 better than either of the two plays you considered. Yes, some of White's 6s (6-2 and 6-4), the ones that hit and cover, will hurt you a little; but then none of White's subsequent 5s will hurt you at all.—*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

LETTERS...

(Continued from page 3)

away 1½ years ago) loved reading each and every issue and I would like to continue receiving it in his honor.

Paul was the kindest, sweetest, and most amazing man I ever met and I miss him dearly. He enjoyed his backgammon, the BG community, and the tournaments to the hilt!—*Suzy Dingwell, Sierra Madre, California*

RENAME THE RULE?

Just noted in the Dec. POINT the new ruling #4.6 on premature dice actions. Bravo to the unanimous approval of the directors!

Do you remember my letter nearly a year ago suggesting a change similar to the one implemented? I'm glad I'm being listened to and sure other players also responded in kind. If not, #4.6 should be

called the "Liebenthal Rule"!

Seriously, very good rule change.—*Andrew Liebenthal, Monroe Twp., New Jersey*

PROBLEMS WITH THE WORDING

Whose atrocious English was used to draft the new Premature Actions Rule change for 2009, and how could every one of the ABT directors have voted for it without questioning it? As quoted, it says "The opponent of a player who rolls prematurely shall complete his turn and then either let the premature roll stand or require a reroll. The opponent of a player who doubles prematurely shall complete his turn and then pass or take." I assume the drafter meant to say something like "The player whose opponent rolls prematurely shall complete his turn and then either let the premature roll stand or require a reroll. The player whose opponent doubles prematurely shall complete his turn and then pass or take."—*Terry Valentine, Middletown, Delaware*

Wordsmith Danny Kleinman responds: I don't answer a letter that is so rude as well as so wrong.—D. K.

ACCIDENTAL PHYSICAL INTERFERENCE DOES NOT VOID A ROLL

I've been trying to tell some BG players in a chouette that if the dice hit an opponent's hand, but land flat on correct side of board, the roll stands. Is that correct? Can you send a BG website where I can see that rule and print it out?—*Seth, via e-mail*

The US Tournament Rules do not spell out this situation. However, directors we have talked to generally handle the rule as used by the Las Vegas Backgammon Club in the 1970s. This is from the June 1978 Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine.—Ed. Δ

MENT RULES

21. Physical interference with a player's throw does not invalidate the roll.

Backgammon Clubs in North America

Information for this listing has been obtained directly from the featured backgammon clubs. Changes are inevitable and we suggest that you always call before attending. CHICAGO POINT would like to maintain an accurate listing of USA Backgammon Clubs online at: www.chicagopoint.com/usacclubs.html. Please send club information, including new clubs and club closings and updates to: **CHICAGO POINT; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr 504; Chicago, IL 60659. 773/583-6464. Fax: 773/583-3264. E-mail: bg@chicagopoint.com**

WEST

CLUB NAME	LOCATION	CITY & STATE	MEETING DAY & TIME	CONTACT (E-MAIL)	TELEPHONE	MAIL INQUIRIES TO
Arizona Backgammon Club	Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub	Phoenix, AZ	1st Monday monthly-7:00 PM	Pete Campbell (gentlebin@operamail.com)	602/279-0215	928 E. Berridge Lane; Phoenix, AZ 85014
Phoenix Backgammon Club-USBL	16th Street Sports Bar & Grill	Phoenix, AZ	3rd Thursday monthly-7:00 PM	Joni Brummer (jonibrummer@hotmail.com)	623/206-1450	8613 N. 50th Lane; Glendale, AZ 85302
Gammon Associates	Acapulco Cantina	Burbank, CA	Tuesday-5:45 PM	Patrick Gibson (pgibsonmfc@oadrunner.com)	818/901-0464	7641 Orion Avenue; Van Nuys, CA 91406
"	A.R. Private Club	Los Angeles, CA	Sunday-2:00 PM	"	"	"
"	Airtel Plaza Hotel	Van Nuys, CA	3rd Thurs. monthly-6:00 PM	"	"	"
Backgammon By The Bay	Peking Express Restaurant	Berkeley, CA	2nd Sat. monthly-12:00 PM	Ted Chee (ted_chee@yahoo.com)	831/261-4583	137 La Mesa Drive; Salinas, CA 93901
"	Britannia Arms Pub	Cupertino, CA	4th Saturday monthly-1:00 PM	"	"	"
Backgammon Club of San Diego	Coast Cafe / Embassy Suites	La Jolla, CA	Tuesday-6:00 PM	Tom Fahland (tom_fahland@yahoo.com)	858/472-1516	10153 Camino Ruiz #18; San Diego, CA 92126
Orange County BG Association	Kean Coffee	Newport Beach, CA	3rd Thursday monthly-7:00 PM	Paul Barth (barthp1@ca.rr.com)	714/564-0893	15610 Tustin Village Way #45; Tustin, CA 92780
Boulder Backgammon Club	Boulder Broker Inn	Boulder, CO	1st & 3rd Thurs.-7:00 PM	Lynda Clay (info@coloradobackgammon.com)	303/791-0271	5516 Samuel Peak; Highlands Ranch, CO 80130
Colorado Backgammon Association	Old Chicago	Denver, CO	4th Sun. except Sep. & Dec.-1 PM	"	"	"
Denver Backgammon Club	Old Chicago	Denver, CO	2nd & 4th Thursdays-7:00 PM	"	"	"
Backgammon Club of Las Vegas	Jackson's Bar & Grill	Las Vegas, NV	Tuesday-7:00 PM	Jason Lee (jlee@vegasbg.net)	702/301-4987	1154 Heavenly Harvest #1; Henderson, NV 89002
Nevada Backgammon Association	Varies (www.nvbg.com)	Varies	Event dates: www.nvbg.com	Howard Markowitz (howard114@wowway.com)	702/218-8238	1201 N. Mitchell; Arlington Hts., IL 60004
Backgammon Club of Santa Fe	La Posada Resort	Sante Fe, NM	Tuesday-6:00 PM	Barbara McIntyre (b@barbaramac.com)	505/820-1815	3101 Old Pecos Trail #707; Santa Fe, NM 87505
Puget Sound Backgammon Club	Wizards Restaurant/Casino	Burien, WA	Tuesday-7:30 PM	Ruth Robbins (ruthles5@comcast.net)	425/226-3120	12611 155th Avenue SE; Renton, WA 98059

CENTRAL

Pub Club	Playoffs Sports Bar & Grill	Carol Stream, IL	Thursday-6:45 PM	Tim Mabee (Timmabee1@gmail.com)	630/606-2388	224 Split Oak Road; Naperville, IL 60565
Chicago Bar Point Club	Holiday Inn-O'Hare Hotel	Chicago, IL	Tue.-6:30 PM, Sun. bimthly-12 PM	Bill Davis (bg@chicagopoint.com)	773/583-6464	3940 W. Bryn Mawr #504; Chicago, IL 60659
Bloomington-Normal BG Club	Ride The Nine	Bloomington, IL	Monday-6:00 PM	Michael Flohr (mflohr0925@verizon.net)	309/662-7967	707 Broadmoor Drive; Bloomington, IL 61704
Peoria Backgammon Club	Peoria Pizza Works	Peoria, IL	Thursday-6:30 PM	Sue Will (cruiserbag@comcast.net)	309/699-6005	147 Field Grove Court; East Peoria, IL 61611
Sangamon Valley BG Association	Capitol Teletrack	Springfield, IL	Wednesday-6:00 PM	Randy Armstrong (randyrt@comcast.net)	217/622-9447	2012 N. 20th Street; Springfield, IL 62702
Sangamon Valley Springfield Series	Various locations	Central Illinois	1st Sat/Nov to Apr-11:30 AM	"	217/528-0117	"
Winnelka Backgammon Club	Winnelka Community House	Winnelka, IL	Wednesday-7:00 PM	Trudie Chibnik (winnbackgammon@aol.com)	847/446-0537	740 Ballantrae Drive; Northbrook, IL 60062
Hoosier Backgammon Club	Buffalo Wild Wings	Indianapolis, IN	Wednesday-7:00 PM	Sean Garber (hosierbackgammon@yahoo.com)	317/241-0605	1824 N. Auburn Street; Speedway, IN 46224
Northwest Indiana BG Association	VFW Hall	Porter, IN	2nd Sat. monthly-1:30 PM	Charlie Halberstadt (chbg@flintbg.com)	219/617-5566	P.O. Box 84; Westville, IN 46391
Flint Area Backgammon Club	Days Inn	Flint, MI	Thursday-7:00 PM	Carol Joy Cole (cjc@flintbg.com)	810/232-9731	3719 Greenbrook Lane; Flint, MI 48507
Grand Rapids Backgammon Club	Cascade Roadhouse	Grand Rapids, MI	Tuesday-7:00 PM	Bob Kamp (4thekamps@comcast.net)	616/956-1910	322 Clements Mill Court; Ada, MI 49301
Plymouth Backgammon Club	Box Bar & Grill	Plymouth, MI	Wednesday-7:30 PM	Dean Adamian (Dean3491@hotmail.com)	734/981-5706	42954 Barchester; Canton, MI 48187
Metro North Backgammon Club	Crash Landing Restaurant	Warren, MI	Monday-6:30 PM	Paul Berg (p.berg@att.net)	313/330-7803	921 Winchester; Lincoln Park, MI 48146
Twin Cities Backgammon Club	The Little Wagon	Minneapolis, MN	Thursday-7:00 PM	David Minikus (dminikus@comcast.net)	612/718-2613	6300 Phoenix Street; Golden Valley, MN 55427
Rochester Minnesota BG Club	Mickey's Irish Saloon	Rochester, MN	Wednesday-5:30 PM	Ray Bills (ray@us.ibm.com)	507/280-8956	618 23rd Street NE; Rochester, MN 55906
Columbia, MO BG Club-USBL	Rag Tag Cinema	Columbia, MO	Occasional Sundays-7:00 PM	Carl Hill (freudatease@yahoo.com)	573/442-3683	109 Hubbell; Columbia, MO 65201
Kansas City BG Club-USBL	Granfalloon Bar & Grill	Kansas City, MO	Tuesday-6:30 PM	Eric Barr (eric@kcbbackgammon.com)	816/916-6599	421 E. 65th Street; Kansas City, MO 64131

(Continued on opposite side)

Backgammon Clubs In North America*(Continued from opposite side)***CENTRAL (continued)**

CLUB NAME	LOCATION	CITY & STATE	MEETING DAY & TIME	CONTACT (E-MAIL)	TELEPHONE	MAIL INQUIRIES TO
Ohio State Backgammon Club	Spaghett Warehouse	Akron, OH	1st or 2nd Sun. monthly-2 PM	Joe Miller (osbc@neo.rr.com)	330/268-4610	1066 Winston Street, Akron, OH 44314
Dayton Backgammon Club-USBL	Barnes & Noble	Beavercreek, OH	Last Sun. monthly-12:45 PM	Roger Foster (WBackgammon@woh.rr.com)	937/864-1748	4151 W. Eron Drive, Eron, OH 45323
Miami Valley Backgammon Club	Parera Bread	Dayton, OH	2nd Sunday monthly-12:45 PM	"	"	"
Cincinnati BG Players Club	Sitwell's Coffee House	Cincinnati, OH	3rd Monday monthly-7:00 PM	Peter Carrieri (pac417@cincybg.com)	401/286-7336	6926 Jerry Drive, West Chester, OH 45069
"	Metropole Coffee Company	Sharonville, OH	1st Sunday monthly-12:00 PM	"	"	"
Dallas Backgammon League	IHOP	Addison, TX	Wednesday-8:00 PM	Tom Wheeler (zwheel@sbcglobal.net)	972/484-3038	3705 Pageant Place, Dallas, TX 75244
Austin Backgammon Club	Doubletree Hotel	Austin, TX	Mon.-7:00 PM	Leslye Joy DeMoss (lessye@isp.com)	512/251-3719	5107 Gregg Lane, Manor, TX 78653
Madison Backgammon Club	JT Whitey's Pub & Brewery	Madison, WI	Tuesday-6:30 PM	Tom Machaj (tom.machaj@madisonbg.com)	608/516-9109	5313 Tolman Terrace, Madison, WI 53711
Milwaukee Backgammon Club	John Hawks Pub	Milwaukee, WI	2nd Wednesday-7:00 PM	Bob Holyon (bholied4@yahoo.com)	414/530-9283	911 S. 11th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53204
Becker's Backgammon Club	Becker's Restaurant	Oshkosh, WI	Monday-7:00 PM	Kris Larson (welson@beckersrestaurant.com)	920/230-3333	1 City Center, Oshkosh, WI 54901

NORTHEAST

New England Backgammon Club	Dockside Restaurant	Malden, MA	Occ. Wed.-2 PM; Sat. or Sun. mthly-12 PM	Herb Gurland (propeye@juno.com)	781/324-0892	62 Newman Road, Malden, MA 02148
Baltimore Backgammon Club	Treelhouse Restaurant	Cockeysville, MD	1st & 3rd Thursday-7:00 PM	Vic Morawski (vmorawski@juno.com)	443/570-0400	3358 Hickory Ave., Baltimore, MD 21211
Mid Jersey Backgammon Club	Town & County Inn	Keyport, NJ	Thursday-7:30 PM	Alan Grunwald (agwald@gmail.com)	732/598-2988	205 Doe Trail, Morganville, NJ 07751
Midtown Backgammon & Chess Club	Club Room	New York, NY	Daily-12 PM, Side play only.	Beverly Flowers (flowers_beverly@hotmail.com)	212/575-2003	265 W. 37th Street 303, New York, NY 10018
Times Square Backgammon & Chess	Bryant Park	New York, NY	Daily except Sun.-12 PM Apr.-Dec.	Victor Ashkenazi (socratob@gmail.com)	973/204-6932	1021 Harmon Cove Towers, Secaucus, NJ 07094
Pair-O-Dice Backgammon	Così Restaurant	New York, NY	Sunday monthly-12:30 PM	Antonette Williams (a.williams@verizon.net)	212/222-7177	135 W. 106th Street #4C, New York, NY 10025
NYC Backgammon	Varies (www.nycbg.com)	Greater NYC area	Varies (www.nycbg.com)	Rod Govlin (rod@nycbg.com)	646/607-5802	PO Box 4668 #20370, New York, NY 10163
Northern Virginia BG Club	Bailey's Pub & Grille	Arlington, VA	Monday-6:45 PM	Bill Pow (bill.22003@hotmail.com)	703/577-1927	9310 Hedgerford St., Manassas Park, VA 20111
Beltway Backgammon Club	O'Malley's Pub/Crowne Plaza	McLean, VA	18± Sundays/year-12:15 PM	Barry Silliman (sillybazz@beltwaybg.org)	240/674-7222	P.O. Box 612, Walkersville, MD 21793

SOUTH

Suncoast Backgammon Association	New York, New York Lounge	Clearwater, FL	Monday & Friday-6:30 PM	Bob Carpenter (gammon167@yahoo.com)	727/771-6544	1801 Eastlake Rd. 12E, Palm Harbor, FL 34685
South Florida Backgammon Club	NorthRidge Raw Bar	FL, Lauderdale, FL	Sat.-1 PM; Sun. mthly-1 PM	Elyane Feinstein (Bgnf1210@bellsouth.net)	954/249-1416	649 W. Oakland Park 108A, Oakland Park, FL 33311
Atlanta Backgammon Association	Landmark Diner/Red Raven	Atlanta, GA	Monday-7:00 PM	Dave Cardwell (info@BGrnGA.com)	770/365-0974	2340 Ithica Drive, Marietta, GA 30067
Northside Backgammon Club	Tony's American Grille & Tap	Roswell, GA	Wednesday-7:00 pm	Jerry Godsey (jerrygod2000@hotmail.com)	770/612-0818	1795 High Trail, Atlanta, GA 30339
"	Varies (www.northsidebg.org)	Greater Atlanta area	Last Sunday monthly-1 PM	"	"	"
Louisville Backgammon Club	Fox and Hound Pub & Grille	Louisville, KY	1st & 3rd Tuesday-6:30 PM	Quint McTyeire (nrm@qdm.com)	502/567-3672	4906 Crofton Road, Louisville, KY 40207
Charlotte Backgammon Club	O'Charley's on University	Charlotte, NC	Monday-7:00 PM	David Rogers (dashrc@bellsouth.net)	704/965-3573	1701 Bonnie Lane, Charlotte, NC 28213
Durham/Chapel Hill BG Club	Jason's Deli	Durham, NC	Monday-6:00 PM	Ken Larsen (klarsen1@nc.rr.com)	919/942-8635	807 Emory Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27517
Charleston Backgammon Society	Smokely Bones Bar	N. Charleston, SC	Sunday-5:00 PM	Brett Meyer (mbmeyer@comcast.net)	843/532-5426	8058 Long Shadow Ln., N. Charleston, SC 29406
Nashville Backgammon Club	Blackstone Brewery & Pub	Nashville, TN	Monday-6:15 PM	Rollow Mickle (rollmick@comcast.net)	615/383-3998	1518 Compton Ave. #C, Nashville, TN 37212

CANADA

Natl'l Capital Backgammon Club	Resto Bar Marina	Gatineau, QC	1st Sun. May, Jun., Sep., Oct.-10 AM	Eden Windish (eden-windish@rogers.com)	613/741-2530	396 Bangs St., Ottawa ON, K1K 2N6, Canada
"	Puzzles Sports Bar	Ottawa, ON	1st Sun. Nov. thru Apr.-10:00 AM	"	"	"
Vancouver Backgammon Club	The End Café	Vancouver, BC	Sunday-1:00 PM	Pat MacNeil (snappy@sshaw.ca)	604/241-1986	9131 Glenallan Dr., Richmond, BC, V7A 2S6, Canada

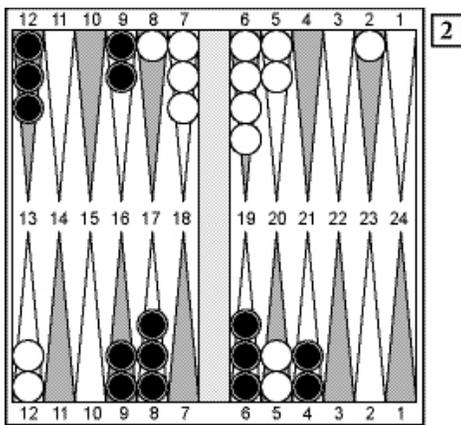
The Las Vegas Open Finals: Volunteering a Double Shot

By Paul Weaver

In the finals of the Las Vegas Open in November 2008, the experienced Stacy Turner (GA) defeated the young, fast-improving Matt Cohn-Geier (CA). Congratulations to Stacy for playing a fantastic match and winning the tournament!

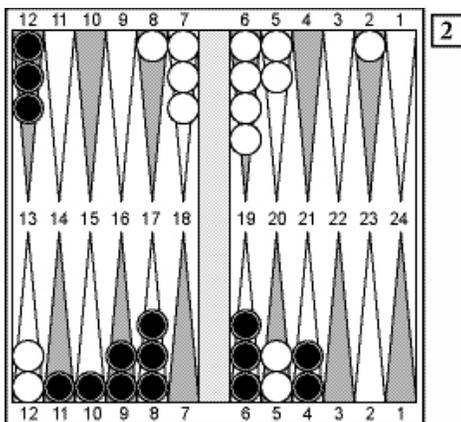
In Position 1, very few players would have made the correct play over the board with 6-5. Although Stacy got this one wrong, he played the entire match with an outstanding Snowie error rate of 3.8 which is indicative of the fact that he is an exceptionally strong player.

Pos. 1. Las Vegas Open 15 point finals. Stacy Turner (Black) trails Matt Cohn-Geier (White) 12 to 13. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-5.**



The correct play is 16/11 16/10, voluntarily exposing two blots and leaving White twenty-four hitting numbers. The position after this play is shown below.

Pos. 2. After Black has played 6-5 16/11, 16/10.



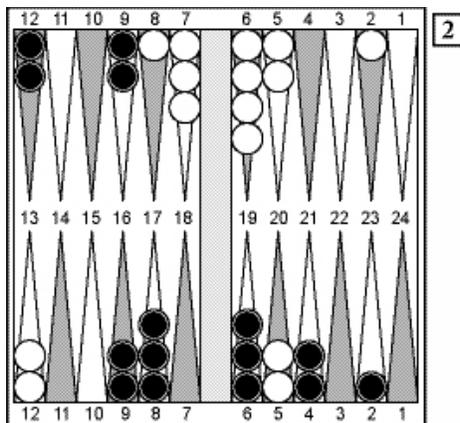
Although White could hit with twenty-four numbers (6s, 5s, 4-2, and 3-2), he should not hit unless he can also either cover the blot on his 2-point or hit two

checkers. There are only ten numbers that accomplish this: 6-6, 6-5, 5-5, 6-4, 5-4, and 5-1. By moving 16/11, 16/10, Black duplicates White's good 6s and 5s which can be used to both hit Black's blots and cover White's own 2-point blot.

Black gains more than enough on White's twenty-six non-hitting numbers to compensate him for White's gain on his ten hits. If White does not hit in Position 2, Black will be able to make a new outfield blocking point with 30 numbers (all but 5-5, 4-4, 6-5, and 5-4). By making his 10- or 11-point and clearing his 16-point, Black becomes a definite favorite in this holding game even though the pipcount is virtually even.

Another subtle advantage of the play shown in Position 2 is that it may tempt White into making the mistake of hitting with one of these fourteen numbers: 6-3, 6-2, 6-1, 5-3, 5-2, 4-2, and 3-2. Black would welcome an exchange of hits because only White can lose a gammon at this score.

Pos. 3. Following Black's actual 6-5 play of 13/2.



Pos. 3 shows the play Stacy Turner made in the match: 13/2. This is the correct play for money.

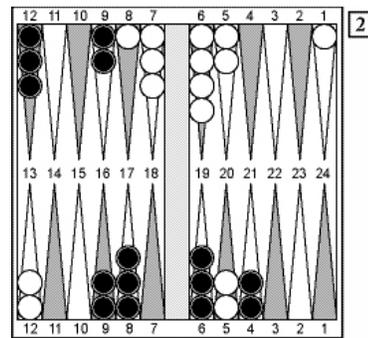
Why is 16/10 16/11 correct at the given match score and 13/2 correct for money? With the cube on 2 and White needing only 2 points, Black cannot lose a gammon at the match score. He is therefore willing to take risks that he would not take for money.

When I showed the original problem (Pos. 1) to Nack Ballard, not only did he find the correct play, but he suggested that it would be instructive if I studied three variations of Position 1: moving White's 2-point blot to his 1-point, 3-point, and 4-point.

Making small changes in problems of this nature can be a very instructive way of improving one's checker play for money and at certain match scores. Let's see how these slight alterations affect the way we choose to move.

Pos. 4.

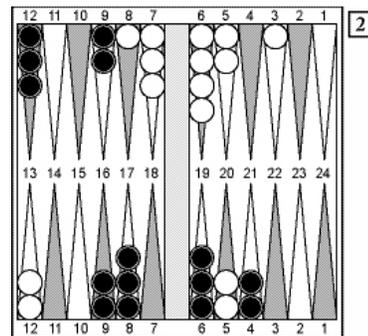
Black to play 6-5. White's spare is on the 1-point.



In Pos. 4, 16/11, 16/10 is correct both at the match score and for money. After Black plays 16/11, 16/10, White has only six numbers (6-6, 5-5, 6-5, 5-1) compared to ten in Pos. 1 that hit and cover or hit both blots.

Pos. 5.

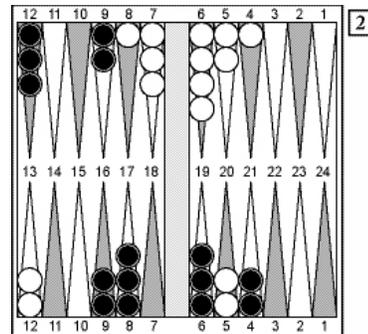
Black to play 6-5. White's spare is on the 3-point.



When the blot is on White's 3-point, if Black plays 16/11, 16/10, White will have thirteen numbers (6-5, 6-4, 6-3, 5-5, 5-4, 5-3, and 5-1) that either hit twice or hit and cover. Black should play 13/2 for money. At the match score, the decision is very close, but 16/11, 16/10 is probably correct.

Pos. 6.

Black to play 6-5. White's spare is on the 4-point.



When the blot is on White's 4-point, if Black plays 16/11, 16/10, there is no duplication of White's 6s and 5s if Black plays 16/11, 16/10. White will have sixteen numbers (6-5, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2, 5-4, 5-3, 5-2, and 5-1) that either hit twice or hit and cover. Black should play 13/2 both for money and at the given match score. —Paul Weaver Δ

Paul Weaver & Nack Ballard are co-authors of *Backgammon Openings: Book A* which is available for purchase at www.nackbg.com. —Ed.

EVALUATE TOURNAMENT CLOCK USAGE IN 2009

Tournament chess uses a timing clock, so do 9-ball pool tournaments; and even poker players can call for a clock if they believe an opponent is taking too long to act. What about backgammon?

That is the question players are asking at Stick Rice's BGonline.org forum. This month, Chuck Bower started a discussion thread titled, "It's here—2009, the year of the Clock PR Campaign." BGonline contributors are serious about their efforts to instate timing clocks into backgammon, even so much as choosing to participate in Jeb Horton's "clock's allowed" Carolina Invitational (Open & Masters events) in favor of Howard Markowitz's New York Met Open, where clocks were not mentioned in the invitation. [In "clock's allowed" events, either player may require clock usage.]

The Midwest Championships has always been at the forefront of clocked tournament backgammon. The 1990 MBC was the first major event to include a clock statement in the conditions: "Director may require use of a chess clock at any time if a match is unduly delaying the tournament."

Then in 1995, the Midwest went one step further *requiring* the use of clocks for both the semifinals and finals of the the Advanced and Championship divisions. But this rule wasn't well received and was dropped. It was reinstated in 2001 and discontinued again due to a continued cool reception.



In 2001, the Grand Crystal Beaver Masters event at the MBC became a "clocks required" event. This policy remains in place for 2009.

What are the positives for clocking backgammon matches? It seem the general BG public likes the idea now. 263 people participated in a chicagopoint.com online survey last year. Asked about playing with a timing clock in a major BG tournament, an overwhelming 73% of those responding favored the clock. Only 17% either disliked or strongly disliked using one.

Clock usage will relieve one the director's major headaches: match monitoring so that one slow player cannot disrupt the flow of the tournament. Dice misreads and fast-rolling will become a thing of the past. Spectators prefer watching clocked backgammon matches. And quite simply, using a clock adds an element of fairness to the game. Why should anyone playing at a reasonable pace be subjected to an inpolite opponent who takes an inordinate amount of time for every move?

"... using a clock adds an element of fairness to the game."

But there are negatives to consider for both "clocks allowed" and "clocks required" events. New players have a hard enough time breaking into our game. A clock would certainly place undo stress on them. If the event is "clocks allowed," then an individual possessing a clock will gain a psychological advantage over any opponent inexperienced with its usage. And if the event is "clock's required," who will supply all of the clocks? They cost money, they break, they disappear, and the director already has enough materials to bring to the tournament.

We agree with Mr. Bower. Let's make 2009 a year to evaluate clock usage in backgammon. Let's see how "clocks allowed" events are received. Should Beginner events be exempt from clock usage? Who will supply the clocks if a tournament announces "clocks required"? With the information collected in 2009, ABT directors will be in a better position to determine the role clocks will play in the 2010 season.—*Bill Davis* Δ

PASCAR IS TOP BAR POINTER IN 2008

Rory Pascar is the Chicago Bar Point Club's 2008 Player of the Year. After a seesaw battle with 2007 champ David Rockwell, Pascar pulled away in the last two months to claim his first title since he began playing at the BPC in 2002.



Chicago Bar Point Club's 2008 Player of the Year Rory Pascar.

Rockwell held a slim lead until the 7 October tourney when Pascar, who was runner-up in 2007, moved in front for good. Victories in the Fall Trophy Tourney (21 Nov.) and the Bar Point Sunday event (7 Dec.) sealed the deal. Pascar ended the year with an impressive 39.66 points ahead of Rockwell's 32.72. Phil Simborg finished third with his best-ever BPC total: 26.32.

Pascar will receive \$150 in cash plus a personalized trophy for his effort at the BPC Awards night Tuesday, 13 January at the Holiday Inn O'Hare. Rockwell and Simborg also receive cash awards, and the top 20 each get a silver eagle coin memento. Additionally, the Top 20 will be entered in a drawing for \$400 in prizes.

The Bar Point Club will take on the other five Illinois Clubs at the 2009 Challenge Cup to be held in Peoria 8 February. Herb Roman, Carter Mattig and Bill Davis make up the rest of the 6-player team.

Final BPC standings are on page 3. Δ

Chicago Bar Point Doubles 2009 Club Championship

Saturday, January 31
(The day before the Super Bowl)
Holiday Inn O'Hare • Chicago
\$60/team with \$40 side pool
\$50 bonus to the male/female
partnership that wins this event

Bill Davis: 773-583-6464

CALIFORNIA...

[Continued from page 1]

pushed me out of the third place trophy position in the overall 2008 ABT race by 0.02 points! As it turned out, if I had stayed home, Bob would have needed an outright victory to knock me out of third place. For some reason, Patrick was unwilling to allow me to withdraw retroactively. Go figure.



2008 ABT leader Neil Kazaross, having been eliminated early and helpless to control his own destiny, was circling like a buzzard over both Bob's and my matches waiting for us to expire (well,

at least during the time he was not busy trouncing the field in the Super Jackpot).

Anyway, pondering the nose-out from third place, I was thinking about where else this tiny difference in points might have been reversed. I realized that I was a victim of the 96 player cap rule at the Las Vegas Open. Had points been awarded for the full 98 players at the November event, that would have made the difference in my consolation victory. Regardless, I was the beneficiary of the lopsided point award at the Thousand Islands event in August (which I also thought was unfair), so one must accept the minuses along with the pluses.

However, this did make me realize that the 96 player cap is probably not an optimal rule. The rule's goal after all, was to keep a single event from having too dominating a role; meaning that a player winning one monster event (which someone must) should not automatically lock up one of the three ABT trophy positions. I agree with that, but I think it is the huge first place award we are concerned with, not that a bunch of players get 5 or 10 ABT points.

The cap does not take into account the number of positions being paid out, or the distribution of the shares to paid positions. For example, since Michigan with 94 players only paid nine places (four of which were at a one-share, leaving five positions to split the bulk of the points), Las Vegas, by paying ten positions (of which only three were at a one-share, leaving seven players to split the bulk of the points), would have still awarded fewer points to first place with 105 players if there had been no cap. So it makes no sense to penalize an event that is not actually functioning as the dominating event. In my opinion, the best way to ensure a level playing field is to cap the total number of points that can be awarded to any single player in a single

event. Perhaps cap max player points for an event at 30 points? The nice thing is that if there are two large events, the two first place finishers will be exactly tied and that is certain to generate interest, better competition, and more attendance.

That's my take on the situation. Prior to the California State Championship, it would have been reasonable to say "It's never mattered." Now it has.



Neil Kazaross won the Super Jackpot and hung on to capture the 2008 ABT.

Congratulations to veteran master Hugh Sconyers for winning the event and to runner-up Bob Koca on an incredible breakout year (on both sides of the Atlantic) and his well deserved third place finish in the ABT. Many people were certainly pulling for Bob to win the event and the ABT title, but alas, fairy tails don't always have happy endings.

And congratulations to Super Jackpot winner Neil Kazaross upon winning an unprecedented fourth ABT title. I suspect Neil has no plans to ride off into the sunset just yet. But when he does, the view of his back will be one familiar to every player on the American Backgammon Tour.—Richard Munitz, Δ

CALIFORNIA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

OPEN (60): 1-Hugh Sconyers (NV), 2-Bob Koca (MD), 3-Badei Khoury (CA); 1C-George Matthews (CA), 2C-Peter Wagner (NV), 3C/4C-Chris Knapp (Canada) / Dana Nazarian (CA). ADVANCED (25): 1-Stevie Grund (PA), 2-Harry Borekcian (CA); 1C-Kathleen Davis (MO), 2C-Patrick McCormick (CA), 3C/4C-Irving Gold (CA) / Josh Racko (CA). SUPER-32 (32): 1-Neil Kazaross (IL), 2-Zafer Yasa (CA), 3/4-Mark Antranikian (CA) / Ted Chee (CA). PAUL DINGWELL AMATEUR JACKPOT (16): 1-Jim Slomkoski (MI), 2-Rudee Gessie (Canada). 2-POINT QUICKIES (16): 1-Saul Meir (CA), 2-Ted Chee (CA). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Jona Alexander (CA) & Nick Maffeo (CA), 2-Odis Chenault (CA) & Julius High (NY). OVERFLOW DOUBLES (8 teams): 1-Richard Armbruster (CA) & Norm Wiggins (CA), 2-Harry Borekcian (CA) & Edward Donigian (CA).

2008 WORLDWIDE PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

NATIONAL (Alphabetized by State)

American Backgammon Tour: Neil Kazaross (IL)
Phoenix BG Club-USBL (AZ): Proctor Ritchie
Gammon Associates (CA): Justin Nunez
Backgammon By The Bay (CA): *Open*: Matt Cohn-Geier, *Intermediate*: Peter Chechele, *Beginner*: Nina Novitski.

South Florida BG Club (FL): Neal Rosensweig
Northside Backgammon Club (GA): Carl Sorg
Bloomington-Normal BG Club (IL): Scott Rudebeck
Chicago Bar Point Club (IL): Rory Pascar
Pub Club (IL): Tim Mabee
Peoria Backgammon Club (IL): Faddoul Khoury
Sangamon Valley BG Assn. (IL): John Jennings
Winnetka Backgammon Club (IL): Neil Banoff
Hoosier Backgammon Club (IN): Jim Curtis
NW Indiana Backgammon Assoc.: Dave Settles
Louisville BG Club (KY): Quint McTyeire
Baltimore Backgammon Club (MD): Bob Koca
Beltway BG Club (MD): Ed O'Laughlin
New England BG Club (MA): Gil Evans
Flint Area BG Club (MI): Jim Slomkoski
Grand Rapids BG Club (MI): Bob Kamp
Plymouth Backgammon Club (MI): Dean Adamian
Metro North BG Club (MI): Maurice Barie
Twin Cities BG Club (MN): Yury Millman
Rochester Minn. BG Club (MN): Mark Donaldson
Kansas City BG-USBL (MO): Denis Vasalinda
Kansas City BG (MO): Kathleen Davis
Charlotte Backgammon Club (NC): Philip Smith
Durham/Chapel Hill BG Club (NC): David Hamill
Las Vegas Backgammon Club (NV): Cy Yehros
Ohio State Backgammon Club: Farhad Forudi
Miami Valley BG Club (OH): Roger Foster
Cincinnati BG Player's Club (OH): Tony White
Dayton Backgammon Club (OH): John Crockford
Charleston BG Society (SC): Kristi Meyer
Dallas BG League (TX): Malcolm Davis
No. Virginia BG Club (VA): Frank Raposa
Puget Sound BG Club (WA): Rick Voeller
Madison Backgammon Club (WI): Brad Anderson

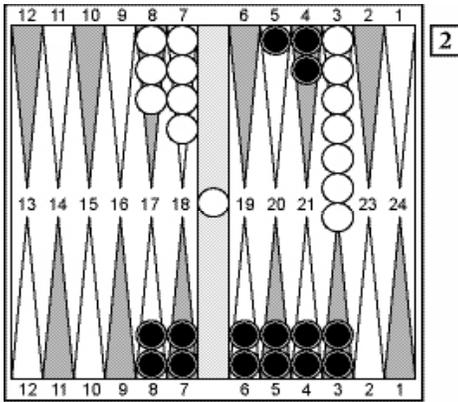
INTERNATIONAL

World Champion: Lars Trabolt (Denmark)
World Series of Backgammon: Rida Hassan (Egypt)
WBF Golden Circuit: To be determined
EBGT European Champ: Fabrizio Lo Surdo (Italy)
European Champion: Fernando Braconi (Italy)
Mitteleuropa Champ: Fabrizio Lo Surdo (Italy)
Danish Champion: Inge Christoffersen (Denmark)
Italian Champion: Fabrizio Lo Surdo (Italy)
French Champion: Fabrizio Lo Surdo (Italy)
BIBA Grand Prix Champ (UK): Peter Bennet
BIBA Ranking Champion (UK): Peter Bennet
Nat'l Capital BG Club (Canada): Mick Tomicic

**PROBLEM #341
ANALYZED**

by John O'Hagan

5-point match. White leads Black 3 to 1.
BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.



Double 2s in this position is not a good roll for Black. It breaks his 6-prime and gives White an immediate 6-2 joker. Black would definitely have preferred something like 6-6, 6-5, 5-5, or 3-3 to make his 2-point and improve his (match-winning) gammon chances or at least something that would allow him to run off the 21- or 22-point and keep his prime intact. But he's managed to find the only number that forces him to break his prime.

This 2-2 roll could be the start of one of those hard luck stories we've all heard several times before. Something like:

"I rolled the only number that forced me to break my 6-prime, she then rolled the 17/1 against 6-2 joker to escape. She still had a real ugly position to bring home and left me three winning direct shots in the bear-in/bearoff, but I missed them all to lose the game and the match. It was unbelievable."

Black can't worry about fluke sequences. He just needs to find the play that maximizes his chances of winning the match. He's trailing 4-away/2-away and the leader owns a 2-cube. A single game win will tie the score and give him 50% match equity (ME), a loss (single or double) loses the match with 0% ME, while a gammon win wins the match with 100% ME. The difference in ME between winning a single game and a gammon is therefore 50% which is equal to the difference in ME from winning or losing a single game (50% if you win, 0% if you lose). The 2-cube "gammon price" for the trailer at this score is therefore 1.0 or 100%.

The gammon price in money play and money-like match scores is 50%. In money play, single game swings are from +2 to -2, a swing of 4 points. A gammon win is worth only 2 points more than a single win (+4 vs. +2) which means the gammon price is 2/4 or 50%. So a gammon win is twice as valuable as normal for the trailer at this score while a gammon loss is meaningless. This score and others (like the trailer at 2-away/Crawford) are called "gammon-go" and you should play aggressively to win the gammon.

At gammon-go scores, plays that increase your gammon chances and your losing chances are correct as long as you net more additional gammons than you do additional losses. In money games and most match situations, this ratio of additional gammons to additional losses has to be at least 2/1 to be correct. Let's now look at Black's possible plays with 2-2, keeping gammon-go considerations in mind:

21/19(2) 8/4. This might be best at DMP but probably not at gammon-go. It's good if White rolls the 6-2 joker since the extra man back gives you another potential hitter; but it advances your anchor too high in White's board which allows White to play safely behind you. White's 3-2 and 3-1 which force a blot with any other play are safe here.

21/19 8/6 8/4. I think this is better. You now get a shot on White's 3-2 and 3-1 but you lose by not being hit on White's 6-2.

21/19 8/2. Slotting is more likely to be right at gammon-go than at other scores since the payoff is bigger when it works and less when it fails. Although 1-1 and 2-2 double hit, that's not the end of the world. If White dances, you can cover with any 6 or 5. If White enters with an ace, you can cover with any 6.

8/2 8/6. Another slotting play. This keeps your anchor and leaves fewer blots which could come in handy in a few real long shot sequences. (i.e. 1-1 or 2-2, fan, 4-3, fan, etc.)

So which of these is best? The slots look better to me. After a slot-dance-cover sequence, there's a reasonable chance that White won't move again until you're bearing off. If this happens, your gammon chances will be very good. How good? I had GNU roll out a position where Black had a closed board with spares on the 6, 5, and 4 and I gave White her current position. The rollout showed 40% gammons for

Black. White's seven outfield checkers are just ten pips away from her 6-point but they need seven crossovers to get in the home board and White frequently can't get them in quickly enough to get off the gammon.

How about additional losses from slotting and getting hit with a 2? Slotting gives White twelve ways to hit, but I think you would want to be hit with a 6-2 so I would only count this as ten additional hits. How many of these ten should count as additional losses from slotting? Certainly not very many. White's "board" is a complete joke, and if you're able to enter on White's 1- or 2-point, being hit is likely advantageous. *Bottom line:* you probably suffer one or two additional losses from being hit after slotting.

I'm pretty sure you gain more than one or two additional gammons when things go well, so I would definitely slot at this score. You also gain some extra single game wins when White fails to hit and you cover the 2-point with a number that wouldn't have made it if you hadn't slotted.

Which slot is better? It looks like a close decision, but over the board, I would have chosen to go all out with 8/2, 21/19.

A GNU 2-ply rollout shows 8/2, 8/6 to be slightly better than 8/2, 21/19:

Play	Wins	G/BG	ME
8/2, 8/6	82.8%	30.5%	56.68%
8/2, 21/19	83.2%	29.2%	56.24%
21/19, 8/4, 8/6	82.4%	29.1%	55.76%
21/19(2), 8/4	83.2%	25.4%	54.31%

—John O'Hagan Δ

**ILLINOIS ACTION**

Bill Davis
773/583-6464

Peter Kalba
312/316-1432

Tuesday, 6:30 P.M. at Holiday Inn O'Hare, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago. 773/693-5800.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON at Holiday Inn O'Hare, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago. 773/693-5800.

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB: Tournaments Monday, 6:00 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect Road, Bloomington. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wednesday, 6:00 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. Sue Will (309/699-6005).

**WINNER'S
CIRCLE**

NOV. 2008–JAN. 2009

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 16 Nov.)... OPEN (5): 1-Andy Rubien, 2-Julian Schulman. INTERMEDIATE (3): 1-Joe Miller, 2-Vincent Reece.

•**20th Venice International Tournament** (Venice, Italy; 28-30 Nov.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (34): 1-Sergio Fragiaco (Italy), 2-John Hurst (England), 3/4-Adrian Jones (England) / Mario Lazzer (Austria); 1C-Piergiorgio D'Ancona (Italy), 2C-Giuseppe Rigon (Italy); 1LC-Nodar Gagua (Georgia/Russia). INTERMEDIATE (27): 1-Stefano Chiosi (Italy), 2-Fabio Cappelletti (Italy), 3/4-Chiva Tafazzoli (Iran/Germany) / Federico Toledo (Italy); 1C-Stefano Selvi (Italy), 2C-Antonio Iaquina (Italy); 1LC-Massimiliano Calusio (Italy). AMATEURS (22): 1-Stefano Battain (Italy), 2-Viorel Popa (Romania/Italy); 1C-Francesco Russo (Italy), 2C-Maurizio Maver (Italy); 1LC-Fanika Petkovska (England). DOUBLES (26 teams): 1-Piergiorgio D'Ancona (Italy) & Andrea Sterling (Ireland), 2-Massimiliano Calusio (Italy) & Riccardo Bernascone Percacciolo (Italy), 3/4-Michael Grabarczyk & self (Germany) / Francesco Grimaldi (Italy) & Giuseppe Rigon (Italy). KICK-OFF (64): 1-Maurizio Maver (Italy), 2-Chiva Tafazzoli (Iran/Germany), 3/4-Sergio Fragiaco (Italy) / Malcolm Robertson (England). LADIES TOURNAMENT (16): 1-Fanika Petkovska (England). SUPERJACKPOT (8): 1-Hamza Nar (Turkey). ESTORIL QUALIFIER (32): 1-Hamza Nar (Turkey), 2-Mario Sequeira (Portugal). SWING TOURNAMENT (28): 1-Carlo Melzi (Italy), 2-Michael Michael (England), 3-Stefano Sinopoli (Italy). UISP—NO MONEY EVENT (48): 1st board: 1-Peter Chan (England), 2-Stefano Sinopoli (Italy); 2nd board: 1-Andrea Sandi (Italy), 2-Richard Coburn (England); 3rd board: 1-Michele Danesin (Italy), 2-Giovanna La Falce (Italy). LUCKY DRAW for Romagnoli Board: Stefano Selvi (Italy).

•**Springfield Series #2** (Bloomington, IL; 6 Dec.)... OPEN (24): 1-Vinton Knarr, 2-Dave Settles; 1C-Jena Jennings, 2C-Cliff Mayoh; 1LC-Sean Garber (IN)

•**Bar Point Club Sunday** (Chicago, IL; 7 Dec.)... OPEN (26): 1-Rory Pascar, 2-Alex Owen, 3/4-Tak Morioka / Adrian Rios; 1C/2C-Carter Mattig / Phil Simborg. INTERMEDIATE (6): 1-Christopher

Shanova, 2-Roy Cohen.

•**Backgammon by The Bay** (Berkeley, CA; 13 Dec.)... OPEN (9): 1-Matt Cohn-Geier, 2-Ted Chee; 1C-Kit Woolsey. INTERMEDIATE (6): 1-Leon Eskenazi, 2-Jack Scheinman; 1C-Fernando Corredor.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 14 Dec.)... OPEN (7): 1-Bob How-ayeck, 2-Scott Casty (IL).

•**Hoosier Club Fall Trophy Event** (Indianapolis, IN; 14 Dec.)... OPEN (18): 1-Roger Hickman (IL), 2-Rose Sheedy (IN); 1C-John Jennings (IL), 2C-Sean Garber (IN)... *Due to some last minute Christmas party conflicts, director Sean Garber reports that the tournament was forced to move to a record four different venues on the same day: McAlisters, Paradise Bakery, La Margarita restaurant, and for the consolation finals, John Jennings and Sean Garber finished outside in the rain on a trash can!*

•**Backgammon by The Bay** (Cupertino, CA; 20 Dec.)... OPEN (9): 1-Ken Bame, 2-Matt Cohn-Geier; 1C-Mark Antranikian. INTERMEDIATE (6): 1-Peter Panagotacos, 2-Josh Racko; 1C-Nina Novitski.

•**WBF Turkiye 13th Istanbul Tournament** (Istanbul, Turkey; 20-21 Dec.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (157+42 rebuys): 1-Ayse Deniz Akalin, 2-Cemalettin Yüksel, 3/4-Fatih Ünal / İrfan Mizrakçi. DOUBLES (39 teams): 1-Ercan Özçelik & Mehmet Hulusi Tümer, 2-Rifat Bulut & Aysun Utkular, 3/4-Akay Can Dagkiran & Mehmet Ersoy / Ergun Sen & Erkul Sen. ARENA EVENT (238): 1-Dilek Gülen, 2-Erhan Dogrusöz, 3/4-Cevat Araz / Mehmet Manav. LADIES PRIZE (11): 1-Ayse Deniz Akalin, 2-Dilek Gülen.

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 28 Dec.)... OPEN (8): 1-Chris Trencher, 2/3-Julius High / Al Cantito. INTERMEDIATE (6): 1-Jay "Ninja" Smith, 2/3-Luciana Abes / Peggy Neubig (NJ).

•**Northside Backgammon Club Monthly** (Atlanta, GA; 28 Dec.)... OPEN (16): 1-Gregg Cattanach, 2-Steve Kovach; 1C-Richard Newfield.

•**Springfield Series #2** (Springfield, IL; 3 Jan.)... OPEN (21): 1-Scott Rudebeck, 2-Steve McGuire; 1C-Randy Armstrong, 2C-John Jennings; 1LC-Sean Garber (IN).

•**Ohio State Club Monthly** (Akron, OH; 4 Jan.)... OPEN: 1-Joe Miller, 2-Paul Berg.

•**Bloomington/Normal 2008 Club Play-offs** (Bloomington, IL; 5 Jan.)... OPEN (12): 1-Greg Michaels, 2-Michael Flohr; 1C-Scott Rudebeck, 2C-Faddoul Khoury. Δ

AMALGAMATION

The second season of "Damages" starring **Glenn Close** began on the FX channel this month. When **William Hurt** (Glenn's former costar in *The Big Chill*) guest-starred, Glenn says they played a lot of "competitive backgammon between takes"... Condolences to the family and friends of the following backgammoners who have recently passed away: **Dr. Edward Steinberg** (South Florida Club supporter who died 6 Nov.), **Jim Zinkhon, Sr.** (Illinois State tourney staffer who died 25 Dec.), and **Durb Oldham** (founding member of the Louisville Backgammon Club who died 4 Jan.)... Get well wishes go out to **Kathleen Davis** (MO) and **Tim Mabee** (Pub Club director), both recovering from surgery... According to thestar.com, a daily routine can either help or hinder you. They site **Charles Darwin** who maintained a rigid schedule even when he had visitors. He worked in two-hour blocks and took regular breaks by reading, walking, or playing backgammon in the evening... Kudos to **Dale Kerr** of Australia who created map of 2009 ABT events with driving directions: tinyurl.com/abt2009... **Simon Woodhead** has created an excellent BG diagram generator. Check it out here: backgammonaustralia.org/gabbi.php... A tip of the hat to 16 Bar Point Club players who braved a blizzard to attend our 16 December event at the Holiday Inn O'Hare. **Bill Bartholomay's** normal 30 minute trip from downtown took almost 3 hours. Steve Klesker was ever more dedicated. His 40 minute drive from Green Oaks took over 3½ hours!... On 23 December, **Carter Mattig** joined the Bar Point Club's 1000-to-1 club winning his 11th match in a row... If you can read Italian, consider purchasing **Dario de Toffoli's** new 500+ page book, *Il Grande Libro Del Backgammon*. It appears to be quite a thorough publication... Lots of new backgammon clubs have sprung up this year including Beckett's Backgammon Club in Oshkosh, WI, Orange County Backgammon in Newport Beach, CA, Backgammon Club of Santa Fe in New Mexico, Durham/Chapel Hill Club in North Carolina, and Vancouver Backgammon Club in BC, Canada. They're in this issue or online at chicagopoint.com/usaclubs.html... **Andrew Kay** (VA) won the *Backgammon for Dummies* online contest and a copy of **Chris Bray's** new book... According to the Snowie-Group Team, "the development of Snowie 5 is currently on hold"... How will new Pittsburgh director **Rob Maier's** failure to put out invitations for the Pittsburgh Backgammon Championships (20–22 at the Airport Holiday Inn) affect attendance? The Calcutta features the 2008 ABT Awards Ceremony, so a big crowd is desirable. Δ

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