

2009 wisconsin state championships

TAK ATTACK IN WISCONSIN Bar Point Club Players Dominate

Tak Morioka has captured the Wisconsin State Championships. The event, directed by Tom Machaj, was held Labor Day weekend (4–7 Sept.) at the Radisson Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin. Although sparsely attended (68 main event players from the US and Canada), the tournament ran like clockwork.



Tak Morioka

Tak, who is known worldwide for making high quality backgammon boards (he just sold one for \$2,500), gave an equally high quality performance in the modified Swiss

movement format. Going into the quarter-final playoffs with a 6–2 record, Tak ran the table defeating in order: Joe Freedman,

2009 WISCONSIN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (46): 1-Tak Morioka (IL), 2-Mary Hickey (OH), 3/4-Neil Kazaross (IL) / Scott Casty (IL); 1C-John O'Hagan (IN), 2C-Joe Freedman (VA). ADVANCED (23): 1-Rose Sheedy (IN), 2-Lloyd Webber (VA); 1C-John Baron (OH), Cliff Mayoh (IL). BADGER CLASSIC (24): 1/2/3-Gary Bauer (NJ) / Ed O'Laughlin (VA) / Richard Munitz (NY). AMATEUR JACKPOT (8): 1-Jesse Eaton (MN), 2-Steve Binstock (MN). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Peter Kalba (IN) & Steve Sax (CA), 2-Steve Brown (MN) & Petko Kostadinov (SC). EARLYBIRD JACKPOT (16): 1-Sean Garber (IN), 2-Mary Hickey (OH). BLITZ (36): 1-AI Hodis (NY), 2-Howard Markowitz (IL). CANCELGAMMON (16): 1-Sean Garber (IN), Ray Foglerund (CA). QUICKIE KNOCKOUT (8): 1-Carol Joy Cole (MI). \$200 LABOR DAY JACKPOT (4): 1-Ray Foglerund (CA). \$100 LABOR DAY JACKPOT (8): 1-Matt Cohn-Geier (IL), 2-Bruce Russell (WI). \$50 KNOCKOUT (8): 1-Ray Foglerund (CA), 2-David Todd (MO).

Neil Kazaross, and Mary Hickey in a 9–1 blowout finals. And as Tak put it, “Mary’s a terrific player, but my dice were so good, she was lucky to get a point.”

Chicago Bar Point Clubbers had an outstanding showing. In the main events, we placed Tak Morioka (1st), Scott Casty (3rd/4th), Neil Kazaross (3rd/4th), and John O'Hagan (1st Cons.). The Doubles event

was captured by another Bar Pointer, Peter Kalba (with California partner Steve Sax).

Steve’s regular partner Bob Glass came down with an infection en route to Madison. At the hotel on Thursday night, his fever reached 102.7. Fortunately, Steve was able to convince him to go to the hospital. Good thing. The infection was severe enough to keep Bob hospitalized for four days. Δ

monte carlo world championship

'MOCHY' EARNS WORLD TITLE Defeats defending champ 25–20

Masayuki Mochizuki is the 2009 World Backgammon Champion. “Mochy” as he is known, defeated the 2008 Champion Lars Trabolt (Denmark) in a hard-fought 25–20 match. He is the first Japanese champion in the history of the event.



2009 World Champion
Masayuki Mochizuki

Longtime Monte Carlo fixture James Ballié co-directed the event with the Nevada Backgammon Association’s Howard Markowitz. 263 worldwide players participated in the main divisions—down 80 from 2007.

At 30, Mochy (who learned the game in 1998), is the youngest World Backgammon Champion. He gave up an investing career to devote all of his time to the study of backgammon and it paid off: first prize was just under \$100,000 US.

It appeared that Lars Trabolt might be the first back-to-back World Champion since Tim Holland won the 1967 and 1968 world titles in Las Vegas. In the 25-point final match, he enjoyed leads of 4–0 and 9–6 before Mochy began his points run. It looked like a runaway after game 22 with Mochizuki ahead 22–14. But Lars went on a six point run to make things interesting at 22–20. In the next game, Mochy prevailed. Δ

MONTE CARLO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (173): 1-Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN), 2-Lars Trabolt (DEN), 3/4-Roland Herrera (ENG) / Philippe Lecomte (FRA); 1st Conso: 1C-Morten Holm Lassen (DEN), 2C-Najib Salamzy (AFG/GER), 3C/4C-Jorge Pan (ARG) / Jon Kristian Røyset (NOR); 2nd Conso: 1C-Giorgio Castellano (ITA), 2C-Mario Sequeira (POR), 3C/4C-David Ben-Zion (ISR) / Yves Negre (FRA); 1LC-Sami Akirov (ENG), 2LC-Khvicha Kurtanidze (GEO). INTERMEDIATE (58): 1-Boris Mamporia (RUS), 2-Christine Mochon (FRA), 3/4-Omid Badiiei (SWE) / Sara Utku (SWE); 1st Conso: 1C-Torben Krogh (DEN), 2C-Kenji Osakabe (JPN), 3C/4C-Stefan Livbozarov (BUL) / Fred Westerby (NOR); 2nd Conso: 1C-Lorenzo Rinaldo (ITA), 2C-Sam Ahmed (EGY), 3C/4C-Kaj Nielsen (DEN) / Lise Nielsen (DEN); 1LC-Alain DeFoucher (FRA), 2LC-Halil Tulan (SWZ). BEGINNERS (32): 1-Arakli Sabulua (GEO), 2-Vasgen Matevosyan (ARM), 3/4-Julie Thabault (FRA) / Cécile Wolf (FRA); 1st Conso: 1C-Jacques Ravier (FRA), 2C-Dierk Lemcke (GER); 2nd Conso: 1C-Robert Willems (HOL), 2C-Yilmaz Hasoglu (TUR); 1LC-Yoshiyuki Nakamura (JPN), 2LC-Roland Skibinski (GER). SUPER JACKPOT (32): 1-Alvaro Savio (BRA), 2-Raul Timerman (ARG), 3/4-Stick Rice (USA) / Kazuhiro Shino (ENG). €500 JACKPOT (32): 1-Henrik Veje (DEN), 2-Gary Bauer (USA), 3/4-Frederic Andrieu (FRA) / Bob Koca (USA). DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Ary Nogueira & Ricardo Spinola (BRA), 2-Pedro Carvalho & Alberto Chreem (BRA), 3/4-Patrick Didisheim (SWZ) & Alan Grunwald (USA) / Nevzat Dogan (DEN) & Kenji Shimodaira (JPN). OVERFLOW DOUBLES (8 teams): 1-Michihito Kageyama (JPN) & Kazuhiro Shino (JPN/ENG). SENIOR TOURNEY (64): 1-Artur Muradian (ARM), 2-Alan Grunwald (USA), 3/4-Elli Nache (USA) / Robert Willems (HOL). LADIES TOURNEY (16): 1-Laura Monaco (ITA), 2-Inge Christoffersen (DEN). OVERFLOW LADIESTOURNEY (8): 1-Inge Christoffersen (DEN), 2-Scarlett Serrero (FRA). FORTIS WORLD TEAM EVENT: (50 teams): 1-Nemo: Henrik Bang / Mort Holm Lassen / Thomas Jespersen (DEN), 2-The 3 Musketeers: Frank Gonsenhouer (SAF) / Roy Schneider (SAF) / Julian Wilson (ENG).

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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Subscription Rates: \$30/10 issues (\$50/20 issues) in US and Canada. \$40/10 issues (\$70/20 issues) international airmail in USD check. Make PayPal payments to bg@chicagopoint.com.

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

LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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WALTER TRICE TOP 10

Doug and I counted Walter and Donna Trice among our best friends. We stood up for them at their wedding, spent vacation time together, attended concerts, and spent many hours in a car traveling to and from backgammon events. In remembering Walter, I would like to borrow from David Letterman.

The Top 10 Things You Should Know About Walter Trice:

- #10. He was a genius and could talk about almost anything.
- #9. I never heard him say a mean word about anyone.
- #8. He started looking dapper after Donna started picking out his clothes.
- #7. He was a talented pianist who made playing Scott Joplin look easy.
- #6. He never threw a dice cup.
- #5. He adored his wife and though being

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	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.

Sep 12	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Sep 12*	New England Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Sep 12*	Tampa Bay Club Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/786-9133
Sep 13*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Sep 13*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Sep 17*	Third Thursday Bonus (Mid-Atlantic), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Sep 19-20	Jon Vietor Cup Invitational, Jon Vietor's residence, La Jolla, California	818/901-0464
Sep 20*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly Tournament, Cosi, New York, New York	212/222-7177
<u>Sep 25-27</u>	<u>Colorado State Championships, Hilton Airport Hotel, Aurora, Colorado</u>	<u>303/791-0271</u>
Sep 27	31st Flint Area Club Championships, Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Sep 27*	16th Annual Fall Tournament on FIBS, online via computer <i>E-mail: david@escoffery.com</i>	
Oct 3*	New England Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Oct 4	Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Oct 4*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Oct 5*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	480/286-8239
<u>Oct 9-11</u>	<u>Illinois State Championships, Ramada Inn, Peoria, Illinois</u>	<u>847/845-3579</u>
Oct 10*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter Indiana	219/785-2082
Oct 11*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Oct 15*	Third Thursday Bonus (Las Vegas Open), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
<u>Oct 16-18</u>	<u>Mid-Atlantic Championships, Marriott Berkshire, Towson, Maryland</u>	<u>954/564-0340</u>
Oct 24	2nd Anti-Cruelty Society Invitational, Ambassador East Hotel, Chicago, IL	773/583-6464
Oct 25*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly Tournament, Cosi, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Nov 1*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Nov 2*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	480/286-8239
<u>Nov 4-8</u>	<u>2009 Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada</u>	<u>702/218-8238</u>
Nov 8*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Nov 13	Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Nov 14*	New England Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Nov 14*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter Indiana	219/785-2082
<u>Dec 4-6</u>	<u>California State Championship, Airtel Plaza Hotel, Van Nuys, California</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Dec 6*	Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464

OUTSIDE USA

Sep 11-13	29th Swedish Open, Elite Palace Hotel, Stockholm, Sweden	46762-644266
Sep 12-13	Hessen-Cup Season-end, Restaurant Stadthalle Bergen, Frankfurt, Germ.	491743-397363
Sep 12-13	7th Antwerp Open/Diamond Edition, Café den Bengel, Antwerp, Belgium	32475-256734
Sep 16-20	WSOB: WSOB Prague, Corinthia, Prague, Czech Republic	447980-122344
Sep 20-22	15th Japan Open, Shidax Hall, Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan	813/33733814
Sep 24-27*	4th Sorrento Coast Tournament, Villa Angelina, Sorrento, Italy	39335-221412
Sep 25-27*	WBF-Türkiye 4th Bodrum Championship, Delfi Hotel, Bodrum, Turkey	905332-352555
Sep 26-27	35th Annual Finnish Open, Puotilan Kartano, Helsinki, Finland	358400-467777
Sep 30-Oct 4	Doubles Challenge/12th Austrian Open, Hotel Veronika, Seefeld, Austria	390331-923537
Oct 2-4	19th Norwegian Championship, Thon Nordlys Hotel, Bodø, Norway	47958-33404
Oct 2-4	Sandy Osborne Memorial, Barceló Daventry Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Oct 6-11	CANCELLED: EBGT: Moroccan High Stakes Open, Marrakech, Morocco	491715-422222
Oct 10-11*	Istavder Championship #10, GreenPark Hotel Bostanci, Istanbul, Turkey	905324-008211
Oct 17-18*	4th Milano Open, Hotel Admiral, Milan, Italy	393478-063950
Oct 21-26	WSOB: UK Masters & WSOB Championship, Loose Cannon, London, UK	447980-122344
Oct 23-25*	17th Irish Open Championship, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin, Ireland	358-72144270
Oct 27-Nov 1	EBGT: European Doubles/7th French Open, Enghien-les-Bains, France	491715-422222
Oct 29-Nov 1*	Stockholm Events, Piperska Grottan, Stockholm, Sweden	4676-2335759
Oct 30-Nov 1*	Arthur Wright's Big 70!, Barceló Daventry Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Nov 7-8*	Australian Open, City Tattersalls Club, Sydney, Australia	612405-373225
Nov 7-8*	Danish Championships, Prøvehallen, Valby, Denmark	4533-363601
Nov 13-15*	Backgammon Live in London, The King's Stores, London, England	447985-941729
Nov 14-15*	7th Torneo delle Città, Castello di Modanella, Tuscany, Italy	393478-336862
Nov 21-22*	New Zealand Championships, Founders Heritage Park, Nelson, NZ	643-5468622
Nov 26-29*	EBGT: 1st Cyprus Open, Hotel-Casino Golden Tulip, Nicosia, Cyprus	491715-422222
Dec 1-6*	6th Cancun Invitational Tournament, Ritz-Carlton, Cancun, Mexico	USA: 775/829-8403
Dec 4-6*	Gilbertson UK Finals, Barceló Oxford Hotel, Oxford, England	441522-888676
Dec 5-6*	50th Thun Open/BEO-Cup/Doubles, Waadtländerstube, Thun, Switzerland	4179-4329378
Dec 10-13*	Meribel International Tournament, Hotel L'Eterlou, Meribel, France	33620-902726

LETTERS...

(Continued from page 2)

a grandfather was (as we say in Boston) wicked cool.

#4. He was patient with people and generous with his knowledge.

#3. His humor and wit would make me laugh so hard I would cry.

#2. He convinced Dougie not to do a comb-over and embrace his bald spot.

#1. And the number one thing you should remember about Walter Trice is that he was the consummate gentleman, a modest man, gracious in winning and losing and gracious in how he lived his life. It was cut too short and I will so very, very much miss him.—
Wanda Roberts, Amherst, Massachusetts

A SUBSCRIBER IN KAZAKHSTAN

As I wrote you when I renewed my POINT subscription, we are living in Kazakhstan (since November 2007), and my surface mail is rerouted from France to my new address.

For some reason, I didn't receive the #209 (April, 2009). Could you send it again?—*Pierre Zakia*

You certainly have the resent issue by now, Pierre.—Ed.

MIDWEST VIEWPOINTS

I read about your ending the Midwest Championships in the July POINT. Nothing in backgammon will ever be the same without your event, Bill. No tournament will ever compare!—*Kathleen Davis, Kansas City, Missouri*

I just received my newsletter and was very surprised to read about the Midwest Championships coming to an end. It makes me very sad having played 25 of the last 26 years. I so appreciate your hard work and everything that you did to make it a wonderful tournament.—*Trudie Chibnik, director, Winnetka Backgammon Club, Illinois*

Thanks for the kind words, ladies. Amy Trudeau and I will continue forward with a more standard (but still fun) event, CSI (Central States Invitational) at the Wyndham Lisle 5-7 March 2010.—Ed.

JOHN BASHIAN RETIRES FROM BG

As you know, I haven't participated in a BG tournament for many years (except

(Continued on page 8)



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2009

Compiled through 7 Sept. 2009 after 15 tournaments
(Upcoming events: Colorado State, Illinois State, Mid-Atlantic)



Ray Fogerlund	43.10	Shinichiro Kaneko	10.37	Gary Fishman	5.27	Wendy Kaplan	3.96
Stick Rice	35.80	Dorn Bishop	10.18	Matt Reklaitis	5.25	Charles Morrison	3.86
Ed Bennett	33.77	Brandon Macklin	10.17	Herb Roman	5.25	Dennis Culpepper	3.70
Neil Kazaross	32.68	Ed Johnson	10.00	Al Faller	5.25	Robert Regan	3.60
John O'Hagan	29.10	Carol Joy Cole	10.00	Bill Calton	5.20	Frank Talbot	3.33
Adam Bennett	26.50	Steve Sax	9.58	Rory Pascar	5.19	Bill Bartholomay	3.25
Mary Hickey	21.69	Bob Schumacher	9.33	Ramon Eleazar	5.19	Bill Davis	3.25
Julius High	21.33	Matt Cohn-Geier	9.15	Rose Sheedy	5.11	Bob Carpenter	3.20
Bob Glass	21.00	Philip Smith	9.00	Jona Alexander	5.09	Malcolm Robertson	3.20
Rod Covlin	20.73	Charlie Silverman	8.60	Malcolm Davis	5.09	Mike Hendrickson	3.11
Scott Casty	17.37	Rick Barabino	8.50	Sal Chehayeb	5.08	Roger Foster	3.11
Victor Ashkenazi	17.00	Falafel Natanzon	8.50	Ramez Abi-Akar	5.08	David Taniguchi	3.10
Tak Morioka	16.73	David Rockwell	8.40	Joe Russell	5.00	Cheryl Anderson	3.10
Dean Adamian	15.83	John McDonald	8.38	Brian Barber	5.00	Bill Pow	3.00
Alan Grunwald	15.43	Joe Freedman	8.14	Charles Toots	4.67	Joe Eckert	3.00
Petko Kostadinov	15.00	Mike Senkiewicz	7.92	Bill Devine	4.67	Joe Nolan	2.88
Philippe Salnave	14.80	Bill Riles	7.92	Jon Viotor	4.50	Gerard Jendras	2.64
Larry Taylor	13.00	Majid Jahanbani	7.20	Pernille Rosendal	4.25	Dick Bennett	2.64
Murray Bryntesen	13.00	Richard Munitz	6.75	Boris Dekhtyar	4.25	Michael Flohr	2.60
David Todd	12.80	Neil Garvie	6.67	Harvey Gillis	4.20	Alex Shoshoo	2.60
Lucky Nelson	12.73	Stacy Turner	6.50	Jerry Kressin	4.20	Gary Bauer	2.59
Rob Maier	11.54	Ed King	6.22	Eric Johnson	4.00	Mark Schiffer	2.59
Scotty Kelland	10.96	Trisha Hegland	6.20	Bob Howayeck	4.00	Justin Nunez	2.59
David Rubin	10.67	Jesse Eaton	6.10	Neal Rosensweig	4.00	Frank Frigo	2.57
Harold Rex	10.55	Tom Hodous	6.00	Ray Glaeser	3.96	J. Baron/L. Webber	2.56



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2009 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 1 SEPT.

Rory Pascar	23.66	Oleg Raygorodsky	7.20	Jacob Moreno	3.12	Eric Johnson	1.08
Lucky Nelson	22.04	Tak Morioka	6.72	Richard Stawowy	3.00	Wendy Kaplan	0.96
Herb Roman	21.76	Christopher Shanava	6.48	Bill Keefe	2.84	Sonja Peacock	0.88
David Rockwell	20.52	Peter Kalba	6.16	Steve Hines	2.48	Henry Gray	0.88
Bob Steen	15.08	Roger Hickman	6.12	Mark Ostrovsky	2.36	Roz Ferris	0.80
Howard Markowitz	13.52	Albert Yakobashvili	5.92	Dan Weymouth	2.16	Dustin Lindgren	0.80
Bill Davis	10.36	Michael Ginat	5.52	Dan Cox	2.00	John Jennings	0.80
Matt Cohn-Geier	10.28	Ken Bond	5.36	Royal Robinson	1.92	Dujuan Meekins	0.80
Wayne Wiest	9.52	Alex Owen	5.00	Georgina Flanagan	1.92	Roy Cohen	0.68
Alice Kay	9.48	Gary Kay	5.00	Rob Maier	1.68	Leslie Lockett	0.64
Steve Klesker	9.24	Adrian Rios	4.96	Jeff Fischer	1.64	Elaine Kehm	0.64
Larry Goldstein	9.00	Dave Settles	4.68	Linda Rockwell	1.52	Joe Rafson	0.64
Mike Sutton	8.44	Tim Mabee	4.56	Neil Kazaross	1.44	Bob Pondelicek	0.60
Carter Mattig	8.30	Phil Simborg	4.40	Scott Casty	1.36	Lindsay Mattig	0.56
Bill Bartholomay	8.24	Jerry Brooks	4.24	Paul Baraz	1.16	Barry Miller	0.56
Mike Minkovski	7.88	David Rubin	4.08	Alex Aleyev	1.12	Rodney Gonzalez	0.48
Mike Wolock	7.64	Mike Pufpaf	3.52	Richard Pearlman	1.12	Jolie Rubin	0.32
Nora Luna Righter	7.44	Alexander Medvedev	3.20				

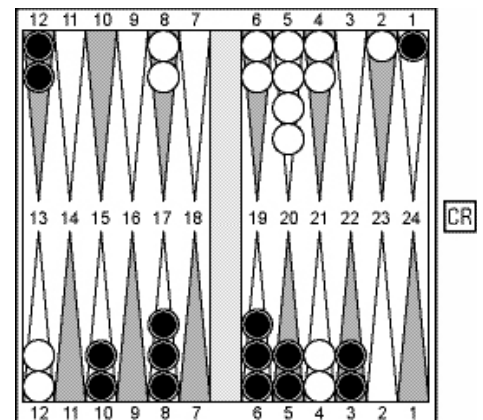
MATT COHN-GEIER won the Sunday Open Consolation event, then won or split three Tuesday Masters tournaments to earn 6.72 points. He goes into September with 15 wins in a row. Runners-up for August were Wayne Wiest (4.20) and Howard Markowitz (3.76).

your move

PROBLEM #348

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

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

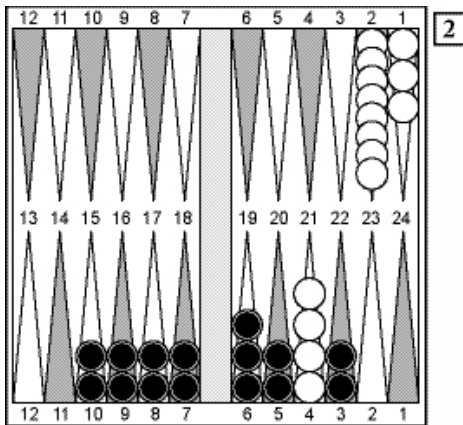


ASK
DANNY

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WALTER'S BIRTHDAY CAKE

Dear Danny: As the readers have learned on the adjoining page of this issue, Walter Trice passed away unexpectedly last month. For his 60th birthday, Doug and Wanda Roberts celebrated by bringing a cake to the December 2008 New England Backgammon Club tournament. Of course for Walter, it seemed appropriate to have a very challenging backgammon problem decorated into it.

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-3.**

Douglas Zare wrote about this in his recent tribute column to Walter at gammon-village.com. But he didn't say what was the best play. Can you suggest a strategy for us, Danny? — Bill Davis

DEAR BILL: You can ask me for an opinion, or you can conduct voluminous computer rollouts using any of several excellent backgammon programs to find out which plays work best. Sometimes you will get very different answers. As a devout empiricist, I advise you: bet on the rollouts, not on the human analyst.

When I looked at this problem with an unaided human eye, only three plays tempted me:

- (B) Break from the Rear: 10/5, 10/7.
- (K) Keep Maximum Blockage: 6/1, 5/2.
- (C) Compromise: 8/3, 8/5.

Play (B) is safest for avoiding shots, and is the “natural” play that I would make reflexively. Yet a moment’s thought led me to reject it, for it gives White an immedi-

ate double-6s joker. Moreover, any 6 that White rolls now will be playable, and double-6s may loom as a joker that eliminates White’s gammon danger while resurrecting his racing chances for several turns, not just his next turn. Play (B) reduces Black’s gammon chances dramatically.

Play (K) makes aces good for White instead of bad. If White hits a blot on Black’s 5-point, he not only gains in the raise but threatens to anchor on Black’s 5-point. Black may be able to contest White for the 5-point, but having blots on his lower points risks turning the game into a donnybrook, especially as each side has the same number of inside points (2). So I rejected Play (K).

Play (C) appealed to me more. Double-4s next will give White 16 pips, instead of 24, a significant difference in the race, and of the other 4s that White may roll, only 4-6, 4-5 and 4-3 will use the full roll constructively. Though the shot danger is greater with Play (C) than Play (B), Black has a board advantage, three inside points to two, that will only grow greater as he fills in his 2-point and perhaps his 1-point. Yes, resisting my initial impulse to Break from the Rear, upon reflection I chose the Compromise.

I did not consider seriously plays that break an outer-board point while leaving a blot there. I thought, why get hit when White springs a man (or four)?

In that, I was mistaken. Those plays have two merits. Except for plays that break the 10-point, leaving a blot creates a future option of remaking the point from a higher point later. Much more significantly, breaking an outside point without clearing it lets Black use one of his numbers to slot a lower point, building a stronger board quickly in anticipation of an exchange of hits. At least that’s my guess as to why these deliberately blot-leaving plays produced the best results in rollouts.

2880 full 3-ply, precise rollouts left it “too close to call” among the five most successful plays. Only one of the three plays that appealed to me is a candidate for the best: yes, the blot-happy Play (K). The other candidates are the plays that leave a blot on the 7-point or 8-point while keeping White’s 6s and 5s blocked at least for the moment. Play (C), which I liked best before seeing the rollout results, ranked 11th best, but is only a small error, but Play (B), ranking last among the 19 rolled-out moves is a blunder.

I wonder how Nack Ballard, Kit Woolsey and other top analysts would have viewed this problem prior to computer rollouts.

In 2001, Jeremy Bagai looked at Barclay Cooke’s 1978 masterpiece, *Paradoxes*

and *Probabilities*, through the lens of Snowie rollouts and found an error rate in excess of 25%, which was higher than the error rate of the other books he examined in *Classic Backgammon Revisited*.

Despite acknowledging his errors, I do not share the contempt for Cooke that I have seen others express. I remember Barclay fondly, and parodying the supreme parodist Tom Lehrer, who said in the 1960s, “It is sobering to think that when Mozart was my age, he had been dead for three years,” I note that when Cooke was my age, he had been dead for three years also. I do not suppose that I have any more flair for backgammon than Barclay had.

Perhaps the time has come for someone younger and smarter than me, or better at guessing why computer rollouts produce the results they do, to provide insights into thorny backgammon problems. Or should all of us humans yield to silicon-based life forms? — Yours, Danny Δ

ROLLOUT RESULTS: TOP 19 PLAYS

(Numbers in parentheses are (in order) BGs, Gammons, Wins for Black.)

8/5, 6/1 Best (0.4, 20.7, 89.6)	8/3, 8/5 -0.043 (0.2, 16.7, 89.4)
7/2, 6/3 -0.006 (0.4, 21.2, 89.1)	9/6, 8/3 -0.050 (0.6, 22.9, 86.6)
7/2, 5/2 -0.009 (0.6, 24.1, 87.9)	10/7, 6/1 -0.053 (0.4, 21.1, 87.2)
8/5, 7/2 -0.009 (0.5, 24.0, 87.9)	8/3, 5/2 -0.057 (0.6, 22.6, 86.5)
6/1, 5/2 -0.010 (0.4, 20.9, 89.2)	10/5, 6/3 -0.063 (0.4, 20.4, 87.1)
9/1 -0.027 (0.3, 19.4, 89.1)	10/7, 8/3 -0.086 (0.6, 22.7, 85.1)
8/3, 6/3 -0.037 (0.4, 19.7, 88.5)	10/5, 8/5 -0.088 (0.5, 22.7, 85.1)
9/6, 7/2 -0.037 (0.7, 22.3, 87.3)	10/5, 9/6 -0.108 (0.6, 21.6, 84.6)
6/1, 6/3 -0.038 (0.4, 20.6, 88.1)	10/5, 10/7 -0.139 (0.1, 10.7, 88.0)
10/2 -0.042 (0.6, 21.6, 87.4)	

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

WALTER TRICE'S PASSING SHOCKS BG COMMUNITY



Walter Trice, renowned backgammon player/author/analyst died suddenly on Sunday, August 23 at his home in Worcester, Massachusetts. He was 60.

Mr. Trice was born in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He graduated from Wesleyan College and worked as an actuary for 20 years before retiring in 1987. His loss is felt across the backgammon world. He ranked 26th on the current Giants of Backgammon International listing and 8th on the American Backgammon Tour all-time chart. He was the #1 ranked player at the online GamesGrid site. Additionally, he was a feature columnist at *GammonVillage.com* and contributed to both *Chicago Point* and *Flint Area Backgammon* newsletters.



Walter winning the 2004 Indiana Open tournament. He also won the Las Vegas Open in 2004. Had it been an ABT event, he would have been Player of the Year.

Trice, who was the current secretary of the New England Backgammon Club, coauthored *Can A Fish Taste Twice As Good* with Jake Jacobs in 1996. In 2004, he authored the very popular *Backgammon Boot Camp* compiled from an online series of the same name.

The former US Chess Federation master player was also an avid cyclist. He was an active member of the Easy C Riders cycle club. In fact, on Saturday, August 22, he had competed in the Blazing Saddles Century bike ride. His wife of five years, Donna describes the events leading up to his death:

“This was the third year Walter had participated in the Blazing Saddles Century event. He came home follow-

ing the 100 mile ride in excellent spirits and was the picture of health and happiness. In fact, he wrote many messages on the Easy C Riders Facebook page about what a phenomenal ride he had.

“The next day (Sunday afternoon), Walter was watching the Fareed Zakaria news program on CNN. I was roasting a turkey breast for dinner and doing household chores. Walter would take a nap every day because it was good for his heart! That day, he set the alarm for 3:55 p.m. because we were planning to watch the Tour of Ireland bike race at 4:00 p.m. When the alarm went off, I went in to wake him up and could not.

“An autopsy was performed and the death certificate was signed by Richard Evans, the Boston Medical Examiner on August 25. It states that the immediate cause was Atherosclerotic Coronary Artery Disease and that the significant conditions contributing to death were old myocardial infarction and Hypertensive Heart Disease.”

Blazing Saddles Century

Saturday August 22, 2009

Triton Regional High School—Byfield, MA

Blazing Saddles is one of the earliest rides of the Fall century season. Travel through the rural towns of Boston's North Shore and southern New Hampshire; ride along beautiful rivers, lakes, and bridges; see New England churches, town halls, and farms. The terrain includes rolling hills, long flats, and rural roads. The nearby ocean furnishes cool breezes. Trees provide plenty of shade, and the sun lends warmth on those open flats.



This is the bike ride Walter participated in the day before his passing.

Aside from his wife Donna, Walter leaves two step-children William Galeckas and Lisa Galeckas of Worcester and three beloved step-granddaughters Tia, Taniah, and Corynn. He is also survived by brothers

James, Stephen, and Thomas, and sisters Elizabeth, Barbara, and Lillian.



Walter (left) with a friend participating in an Easy C Riders bike ride last month.



Walter in the finals of the 1991 Beaver Baseball Midwest BG fun side event.

A memorial service will be held on September 12th at 1:00 p.m. at the O'Conner Brothers Funeral Home in Worcester. To make a donation in memory of Walter, send a check payable to: Trice Education Fund, c/o Lillian Trice Murphy, 1501 Old Mill Road, Wyomissing, PA 19610. 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.

CHICAGO BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION: Tourn. suspended Monday, 6:30 P.M. at The Parthenon; 314 S. Halsted, Chicago. Call Carter Mattig (312/493-2911) for new startup date.

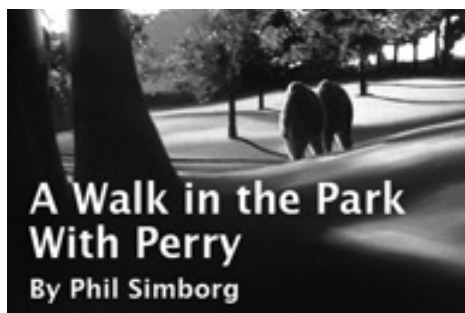
BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB: Tournaments Monday, 6:00 P.M. at Ride The Nine; 503 N. Prospect Road, Bloomington. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wednesday, 6:00 P.M. at Capitol Teletrack, 1766 W. Wabash Ave., Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

WINNETKA BG 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).



Perry Gartner came through Chicago recently and I was fortunate to have a few hours alone with him to discuss backgammon.

As Perry and I are both ardent students of the game, we often talk about backgammon strategies and theories, but we have something else in common as well—we both teach backgammon. I have been teaching beginner and intermediate players on line from all over the world for about 20 years. Perry pretty much teaches Open Level players. Once my students get to that level (as several have), I generally pass them on to Perry to help them get to an even higher level.

But Perry and I have another relationship. He has become one of my key teachers over the past few years. He has not only taught me how to be a better player, but also how to be a better teacher. We have shared some teaching concepts, lesson plans, and positions that are ideal for illustrating certain points.

We took a nice walk on this visit, and I think it is extremely interesting to convey to you the gist of our conversation, as it opened my eyes to one very important concept about backgammon that had escaped me for years. I can't assure you that the dialogue below is accurate word-for-word, but the meaning is accurate, and I did get Perry's input and permission relative to quoting him.

PERRY: You mentioned that you had reached a stumbling block in one area of teaching your better students. What seems to be the problem?

PHIL: I have several students who are high-intermediate or low-open level players, but they don't fully understand how to properly use the cube in match play. I have a process of teaching match equity, take points, price of gammons, doubling windows, market losers, etc. that works very well. After about two or three lessons most of my students have a pretty sound understanding of these concepts at all match scores from 5-away/5-away on down. But when it comes to applying the concepts over the board, I have to admit that knowing the doubling

windows and take points is only half the battle. They must also be able to look at the position in front of them and estimate the wins, losses, and gammon chances.

I know of no way to do this except with experience and knowledge gained from trail-and-error and study. It's not uncommon for a student to say, "So I know the take point is 18.9%, but how do I know if this position is above or below that?" And I usually tell them they are just going to have to make their best guess based on their experience and hope their guesses are better than the guesses of their opponents.

PERRY: So you feel you are able to give them only half of what they need to make the right decisions and you are leaving them high and dry on the other half?

PHIL: Exactly!

PERRY: Well, first let me say that I don't disagree with you. In order to look at a position and decide what percentage of the time you win or lose games or gammons you must apply skills that can only be learned with time and study. But to help your students, you must also teach them the methodologies to apply in order to make the right decisions. Once you have given them the right tools to work with, they can use them over the board to determine whether or not to double or to take or drop a cube.

The same principle also applies to checker play decisions. First you have to have an understanding of the key principles and methodologies, then you have to learn how to prioritize the various methodologies, and then you need to learn how to apply them over the board.

PHIL: Makes sense. But let's get specific. Let's take a position that's a toughie for me. Take a typical position . . . say, in a money game. Your opponent is clearly up in the race and has an advanced anchor and you have two checkers back on your 24-point and a weaker position. Your opponent has a clear double and you have a clearly inferior position; but it might well be over the 25% take point—it's close. It seems to me that the decision-making process and methodology over the board to try and figure out how often you win or lose the game, and how often you win or lose gammons, could take a half hour or more to work through even if you know what to apply. How could you possibly spend that much time and energy on every close decision, even if you were allowed to spend that much time playing the game?

PERRY: MCV.

PHIL: Who is MCV and why should I be looking at her?

PERRY: The answer is to always look for shortcuts. Always prioritize your thinking in any situation so that you spend your time and energy looking at the *Most Common Variation*.

Look, in just about any cube decision, you can break down the decision into three major components: race, opportunities, and threats. Very quickly you can estimate how critical each of those areas are in a given position. Once you do that, you can spend your time and energy on the areas that are "most likely" to determine the outcome of the game.

For example, in the position you described, if your opponent is very far ahead in the race, you know your winning chances hinge on your ability to get a shot, hit it, and win from that position. So you concentrate on looking at what your odds are of getting a shot. What are your odds of getting more than one shot? What are your odds of hitting the shot? What kind of winning chances do you have if you do hit the shot? How often will you get gammoned if you don't hit the shot? How often will you win gammons if things go well? So by applying MCV you have pretty much narrowed down the decision-making process to concentrate on the area that is likely to be most important.

That doesn't mean you completely ignore the other areas, such as the race. Even a lopsided race is going to be won occasionally. But you can simply make an estimate of how many extra wins you might get if it turns into a pure race without spending a lot of time on it.

Conversely, if the race is fairly close and there is not a lot of shot possibility, then the race becomes the MCV and you should spend most of your time and attention to determine what your racing chances are in the given situation.

PHIL: Okay, so step 1 is to look at the position, consider race, opportunity, and threats, and decide which of the three areas is most important to consider, and then make your best guess on that area. So I'm still leaving my students high and dry to make their best guesses there, aren't I?

PERRY: You sure are, if you stop there. MCV and prioritizing is only step 1. The next step is to apply proper methodology to each area to come up with estimates that will tell you whether you are over or under

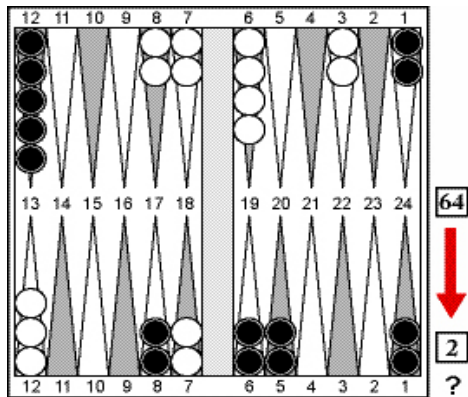
the cube or take point. For example, if it is a pure race, there are all kinds of formula to determine your odds of winning or losing at various pip counts. There are several different theories about how to adjust for distribution and crossovers. And there are several shortcuts to apply to determining the odds of getting gammoned from various positions. You and I have discussed many of these methodologies and we have our favorites: the Walter Trice formula, for example. If you teach these to your students you are not leaving them high and dry at all.

PHIL: Great point, and I do teach these methodologies and use them myself. But while there are some pretty definitive and specific methodologies for analyzing pure races, I don't know of basic formula to apply to analyzing prime-vs.-prime, back games, and holding game positions where the contact and timing aspects tend to get complicated.

PERRY: Oh, but there are. Virtually any position can be broken down into components that can be analyzed either from a conceptual or a mathematical viewpoint, and often both.

At this point we had finished our walk and were back at my place, and I decided to show Perry a position that came up the day before. As Black, I was doubled and had no idea whether to take or drop.

Money game. White doubles. SHOULD BLACK TAKE?



PHIL: Here is a position that I find quite difficult. I am Black and have no idea whether to take or drop this. I would love to know how, other than experience and “gut feeling,” to use your strategies to determine what to do.

PERRY: Well, as I said, the first step to me is to determine the Most Common Variation (MCV). I usually look first at the race.

In this case, White is up 18 pips and is on roll, and Black has those two checkers back on the 24-point, so without getting too technical, even if Black is able to move up his back checkers and get them into a pure racing position (which would be a difficult feat), it's still not a very strong likelihood that Black can win this race. So I won't spend a lot of time and energy figuring out Black's winning chances by racing; but off the top of my head, I would say Black could get lucky and win the race about two out of 36 times. So the MCV here for Black to win is if White leaves a shot, Black hits it, and then either goes on to win the game or redouble White to end the game.

Now, I know it would be very difficult to guess the odds of every possible roll that both White and Black might roll from now until the end of the game, but it isn't that difficult for me to take a look at what is likely to happen on the very next roll of the game and make some predictions from that.

I know that on the next roll, White has a few numbers that would be pretty sure market losers almost no matter what Black rolls on his next rolls. For example, 1-1, 1-2, 2-2, 2-4, 3-3, 4-4, 4-6, and 5-5 would immediately put White in a very strong position. That's 12 out of 36 rolls. So that tells me right off that it's a pretty good double for White. But I also know that with some of those rolls, Black would still have a few good returns that give him a reasonable position to get a shot. The key here is those two checkers White has on the 18-point. Those are the two checkers that are going to be the toughest for White to bring around without leaving a shot. So it looks like there is a reasonable chance to get a shot at one of those checkers, and it looks like Black has the timing to have a decent board, or enough builders to make a stronger board if he hits the shot.

Now if Black doesn't get and hit that shot, Black still ends up with an ace point holding game. I know that if that happens, with reasonable timing, Black's winning chances are around 15%, even if all else goes poorly. Now I try to look at what is likely to happen to those two checkers White has on the 18-point. Once in a while, White will roll good doubles and be able to safely advance both checkers; but more often than not, he will be forced to leave a shot—let's say 70% of the time.

At this point I don't want to go into all the math I use to estimate the number of times Black hits, and the number of times Black wins when he hits. Over the board, there usually isn't enough time to do precise calculations; but these are the thoughts and considerations I look into in positions

like this.

For this particular situation I have concluded that Black wins enough games from getting a shot at the checkers on the 18-point, combined with wins from holding the ace point, combined with a couple of wins from getting into a pure race, to be an easy take.

Now we have to consider gammons. I know that the odds of Black getting gammoned in a 2-checker ace point game are around 15%. I also know there is a possibility that Black could get another checker hit and that would raise the odds. But there is also the possibility that Black will not have to play an ace point holding game at all, which reduces the gammons. So I would put Black's chances of getting gammoned somewhere in the range of 22%.

From that we must subtract the gammons that Black could win. Some of the time when Black gets a shot, he could end up closing his board; he could end up with a prime that would allow him to pick up more checkers; and he could simply win a gammon with only one of White's checkers back. Again, I won't go into all the math, but I would put those odds somewhere around 8% to 10%. So the net difference between gammons lost and gammons won would be around 10%. When you consider the price of gammons in a money game is 0.5, that means the affect of gammons is 5%, or about 2 games out of 36.

So when I look at the MCV and give Black about 12 game-winning chances, and the price of gammons and the likelihood of wins from the race cancel each other out, I am able to estimate Black's chances at something in the range of 12 out of 36, or 33%.

Since the take point in money games is around 22.5% (it's less than 25 percent because of the potential for redoubling and either winning the game that way or winning 4 or 8 points if the redouble is accepted), I conclude that this position is an easy take.

AT THIS POINT I put the position into the bots and rolled it out, and sure enough, Perry's numbers were right on. It was a clear take for Black, and it would be a .259 error (blunder) to drop. Perry's estimates about wins, losses and gammons were very close. I have learned something today that will not only help me to be a better teacher, but a far better player as well.

The real lesson here is that sometimes you can learn more about backgammon away from the board. You can learn a lot from a walk in the park—just make sure you take someone like Perry along with you! —Phil Simborg Δ

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

Cleveland last year). Please consider this letter as my resignation from CHICAGO POINT. I enjoyed my past membership for many years including my participation in your humorous and well organized Midwest tournaments.

After practicing General surgery for 35 years, I finally retired for the second time in 2001. For the past two years, I have been at an assisted living facility. I turned out to 85 recently. Nevertheless, I still use the treadmill and stationary bicycle. Please say "Hi" to those who might remember me.—*John Bashian, Chardon, Ohio*

Thanks for your past support over the years, John and best wishes.—Ed.

CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

I know you took some sexist heat for running that nude sunbathing cartoon caption contest in June, but I still like these items. They remain part of backgammon history and lore regardless of content. To not have them is a form of censorship. To me, anything relating to backgammon is acceptable.—*Maurice Barie, Ferndale, Michigan*

Maurice has recently finished archiving all nine Backgammon Times newspapers and has begun work on the Las Vegas Backgammon Magazines. We will keep you posted on this Herculean task.—Ed.

GIANTS AND BOTS

Thanks for the good reading for three decades. Enclosed is \$70 for the next two years.

By the way, in the "olden days," Danny Kleinman (Hi, Danny!) wrote his first book "Vision Laughs At Counting." Does counting laugh at vision nowadays? What would be your estimate? How many of the 32 Backgammon Giants regularly use a bot (Snowie, GNU, etc.) every day to study and evaluate positions?—*Jaakko Salava, Helsinki, Finland*

We would not be surprised to learn that all 32 use a bot for study purposes.—Ed.

BACKGAMMON ON THE IPHONE

If anyone would know, you would. What is the best backgammon playing app for the iPhone?—*Bob Frydell, Indianapolis, IN*

Backgammon by PosiMotion (99¢) is currently the best all-around BG app at this time. Does it cheat as some reviewers think? That's for you to decide.—Ed. Δ

14th minnesota open

ROCKWELL PREDICTS WIN Harvey Gillis Cashes Twice

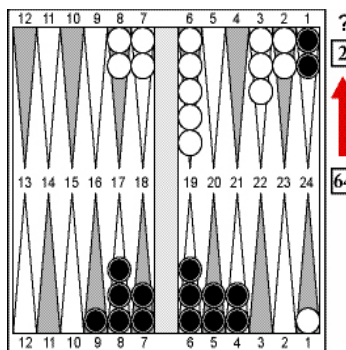
"I feel unstoppable and have a great feeling for the upcoming weekend." So wrote David Rockwell (IL) in an e-mail to Wayne Wiest two days prior to his winning the Minnesota Open. Dave Minikus directed the 24–26 July event held at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel in Bloomington.



David Rockwell (right) accepts Harvey Gillis's congratulatory handshake upon winning the Minnesota Open.

Rockwell prevailed over the strong 21-player field for the second time in three years. His 13 point finals against Harvey Gillis (WA) was a nail-biter. After jumping ahead 3–2, David lost the lead but rallied to regain it. Then, ahead 11–10, David cubed here.

David Rockwell (Black) leads Harvey Gillis (White) 11–10. Black doubles. Should White take?



Long Snowie rollouts show Harvey's decision to be correct. A victory in the Crawford game then gave David the title. But the loss didn't dissuade Harvey. He defeated Yury Millman (MN) to capture the Masters event. Δ

14TH MINNESOTA OPEN

OPEN (21): 1-David Rockwell (IL), 2-Harvey Gillis (WA); 1C-Jerry Kressin (MN), 2C-Ed Bennett (NM); 1LC-Ray Fogelund (CA). INTERMEDIATE (11): 1-Kyle Wagner (MN), 2-Jesse Eaton (MN); 1C-Kurt Thompson (MN), 2C-Ron Kompelien (MN); 1LC-Kevin Ahtou (MN). MASTERS JACKPOT (12): 1-Harvey Gillis (WA), 2-Yury Millman (MN). DOUBLES (8 teams): 1-Kurt Thompson (MN) & Wayne Wiest (IL). HYPERGAMMON (16): 1-Matt Cohn-Geier (IL). BLITZ (16): 1-Art Grater (CA), 2-Julius High (NY).

AMALGAMATION

Visiting the Bar Point Club this summer: Pittsburgh director **Rob Maier** (WV)... In August, Senator **Robert Menendez** (D-NJ) introduced S 1597, the Internet Poker and Games of Skill Regulation, Consumer Protection, and Enforcement Act. Menendez's bill specifically identifies internet skill games as a legal activity. It defines "internet skill games" to mean "an internet-based game in which success is predominantly determined by the skill of the players, including poker, chess, bridge, mahjong, and backgammon."... **Kent Goulding** (MD) finished 77th at this year's World Series of Poker: good for \$69,000. Watch for him on ESPN's weekly coverage. **Joe Monro** (MI) and **David Wells** also cashed... According to *OK!* magazine, singers **Reba McEntire** and **Kelly Clarkson** are very competitive at board games, especially backgammon... An interview, "The Charismatic **Carter Mattig**" is featured in the most recent Danish Backgammon Federation *Gammon Magazine*. If you would like PDF copy, email bg@chicagopoint.com... Congrats to **Jim Zimmerman** (IL) who has lost 160 pounds over the past 18 months... Don't forget Bar Point Sunday BG 4 October at noon at the Holiday Inn O'Hare... According to the 13 August Palm Beach (FL) Post, a bomb squad put in hours of painstaking work before determining that a suspicious case outside the sheriff's office substation was not a bomb, but rather a backgammon set... **Romeo Kapudija** (IL) is back playing at the Bar Point Club. Romeo is a race car driver for the Grand Am Rolex Series and was part of **Patrick Dempsey's** racing team. Check out his site: romeokapudija.com... Best wishes to Bar Pointer **Henry Gray** and **April Davis** who wed 5 September in St. Louis. And another BPC player, **Mike Sutton** marries Kathleen Steffek on 27 September... **Richard Ryder** of California passed away in August. He was 93. Although mostly a bridge player, he also played backgammon... In June, Commonwealth Fund president **Karen Davis** (NY) was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in recognition of her outstanding contributions to her profession and to society. As a member, she joins the company of **John Adams**, the founder, **Albert Einstein**, **Margaret Mead**, and many others... The Chicago Backgammon Association has suspended play. **Carter Mattig** informs us that play on Mondays at the Parthenon Restaurant may be resumed later in September... 16 months until Backgammon & Poker On Board X sails: 22-29 January 2011 from Fort Lauderdale. The Western Caribbean Princess cruise will dock in Grand Cayman Island, Roatan, Honduras, and Cozumel. Invitations available in October... Finally, this quote from **Jean Cocteau**: "I believe in luck: how else can you explain the success of those you dislike?" Δ

PHILIPPE SALNAVE IS FLORIDA CHAMPION

O'Laughlin/O'Hagan Split Masters

Phillipe Salnave of South Miami, Florida defeated Lucky Nelson (IL) to capture the Florida State Championship. Phillippe's name may be new to ABT tournament players, but he has been playing in New York, California and Florida for quite a while.

"I consider Paul Magriel, Nack Ballard, and Nick Maffeo to be my mentors. They helped me tremendously in the early

1980s," said the native born Haitian following his stunning victory.

Elayne Feinstein's annual Florida event drew 93 players to the Sheraton Airport Hotel in Dania, Florida. More impressively: 56 of those players were Intermediate/Beginner players.

Trailing 1-2 in the 13 point finals to Nelson, Phillippe got his game in gear and never looked back. Final score 13-6.

The Open Consolation was a thriller. Relative tournament newcomer Scott Casty (Chicago) defeated Dennis Culpepper (VA) in a thrilling DMP victory 9-7. Scott rallied from a 2-5 deficit to take the trophy.

In the 16-player Al Tesoro Palm Classic

Masters, the newly-retired John O'Hagan (IN) split first with Ed O'Laughlin(VA).

Kudos to Elayne Feinstein and her excellent family staff for this year's tourney. She next directs the Mid-Atlantic Championships October 16-18 in Towson, Maryland. Δ

2009 FLORIDA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (37): 1-Phillipe Salnave (FL), 2-Lucky Nelson (IL); 1C-Scott Casty (IL), 2C-Dennis Culpepper (VA); 1LC-Ray Foglerund (CA). ADVANCED (40): 1-Murray Bryntesen (FL), 2-Bob Howayeck (FL); 1C-Neal Rosensweig (FL), 2C-Richard Prus-Wisniewski (NJ); 1LC-Ben Elliott (NC). NOVICE (16): 1-Molly Alfonso (FL); 1C-Preston Reed (FL); 1LC-Suzanne Auer (MD). AL TESORO PALM CLASSIC (16): 1/2-John O'Hagan (IN) / Ed O'Laughlin (VA). \$1600 was raised for the First Serve Tennis Program for disadvantaged children. AMATEUR JACKPOT (23): 1-Eran Maerovitz (FL), 2-Evan Etter (FL). DOUBLES (24 teams): 1-Danielle Bastarache (FL) & Mike Corbett (FL), 2-Ray Foglerund (CA) & Lee Genud (FL). DAVID MENKES MEMORIAL (30): 1-Bill Riles (TX), 2-Danielle Bastarache (FL). \$150 was raised for the Best Friends Animal Society.



Open Champion Phillippe Salnave shown with Open Consol. winner Scott Casty.

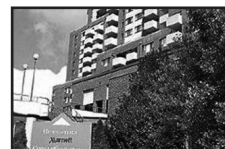


Masters co-champs Ed O'Laughlin & John O'Hagan flank director Elayne Feinstein.

BACKGAMMON TIMES

Between 1981 and 1984, *Backgammon Times* was the finest publication in the game. Now you can own all nine issues in a searchable PDF format thanks to the efforts of Maurice Barie. All serious backgammon collectors must have these historical works. \$35 + \$5 p&h to anywhere in the world.

Send cash or a US funds check to: **Maurice Barie; 860 Spencer Street; Ferndale, MI 48220 USA.**



2009 MID-ATLANTIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

October 16-18, 2009

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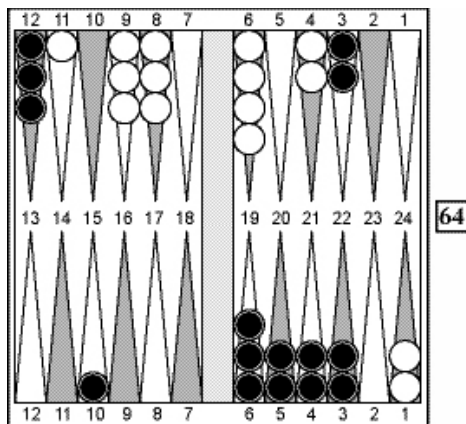
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**PROBLEM #347
ANALYZED**

by Mary Hickey

7-point match. No score. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-3.**

When you are the “game favorite,” that doesn’t mean you have some kind of right to win. You still may have to take major risks to bring it home. That is the case for Black here, since White has plenty of counterplay and is well-set to improve her game next roll. The most likely improvement for White will be making her 5-point, and after that any risk Black takes will have a considerably larger downside. If Black wants to act decisively to build on his current advantage, he needs to do it right now—this game needs to be shaken, not stirred!

For that reason, we can quickly eliminate any “weenie plays” such as 10/3 or 13/6. These plays merely temporize and don’t work toward any improvement. Black’s game is not strong enough, nor is White’s threat against him great enough, to justify Black’s simply letting things drift. The question comes down to which objective he should pursue, and how.

There is a case for simply running, with 22/15. Though it is often wrong to leave the 22-anchor with this big an army amassed against the straggler, there are reasons to consider it here that don’t always apply. For one thing, White can’t do everything at once, and may be unable to attack effectively without making her 5-point first. For another, Black has plenty of *passive counterplay* in the form of his best-four home board. If Black manages to hit back even once during the attack that follows his run, White had better throw a crusher back from the bar, or else Black will end the game by turning the cube.

These factors would be sufficient to

make running clearly correct if the leaving checker were able to get completely free. It is often the case with anchor-leaving plays that it’s wrong to run when the opponent gets a parting whack at the runner, usually from the midpoint. But here, the threat against the second checker isn’t great, and most of the hitting aces are duplicated by rolls that make the 5- or bar-point, so the running play remains a contender.

If you don’t run, you are in effect choosing to play a “prime versus prime” game. White will probably make her 5-point, which will block you in quite effectively for the moment; but you hope not permanently. You hope to keep her blocked longer than she can hold onto you, and the best way to do that is to extend your own block by making your bar-point. If you go into this game plan, the question becomes, just how badly do you want the bar? What risk are you willing to take to get it?

If you want to take the major risk of slotting, as we noted at the start, this is the time to do it. After White makes her 5-point, it will be too risky, and she will be the one holding the “passive counterplay card.” It is now or never for 13/9, 10/7.

The competing alternative is the builder-distributing 13/9, 13/10. This gives Black three builders for the bar plus good diversification for playing his poorer rolls next turn, all at the expense of only three immediate shots. That cannot be an excessive risk for the gain, so this play also is a contender. The only question is whether the moment calls for the greater risk of the run or the slot before it’s too dangerous later.

When a decision is this sharp-edged, and the timing matters this much, looking at the cube actions which may arise can help clarify our thinking. It’s not enough to look at “live cube” numbers from Snowie or any other bot, because they may have missed some opportunities that we can find if we take the time. We can’t take an exhaustive look at everything downstream of this decision, but we can make time to examine a few key sequences even if we’re playing “on the clock.”

The most volatile of the plays we are considering is the slot play, 13/9, 10/7. On the upside, let’s check out what happens if White misses, but rolls a 3-1 which lets her make her 5-point without using very many of her precious timing pips. Snowie 3-ply thinks we don’t have a cube, but a weak-settings rollout indicates we may actually have a skinny cube in a match even if not for money, with just under 22% gammons coming our way.

Would we want to offer such a weak double? The answer is definitely maybe.

Against stronger opponents than ourselves, we probably would. They will be conceding less equity play after play throughout the match, so causing there to be fewer total plays by shortening the number of games is beneficial to us. But there’s another reason to double stronger opponents here, and that is you might see them blink and pass! Oh, they’d get it right on a quiz six months from now, but over the board minds can take strange detours.

But the opponents won’t always roll that well when they miss. If they roll a 4-2, Snowie finds the double easily, and your opponents should equally easily find the take (except those few who do a walk-about and pass). But if they roll something lame—5-2, for example—this position becomes a pass. In that case, you will double any and all opponents, and the opportunities for error will arise with the weaker players. I doubt you will get many takers in that circumstance, but if you do that is your good fortune.

What about the downside of the slot play? If White hits twice with a 6-2 you may think you’re in a world of hurt, but still have a huge take even if you fan. Now you are the one that must not blink and pass! But what if she hits only one (let’s say with a 6-3, hitting and continuing past you) and you bounce? She then has nothing resembling a double, even though three back on the 22-anchor isn’t the world’s greatest game. For one thing, you aren’t committed to it yet, and for another, she has so much work to do that you may be able to unwind it early even if you do get trapped in it for awhile.

We could go further and explore the cube actions after the other volatile play of running, though the subject of blitz cubes would make a good entire book—are there any aspiring backgammon authors out there? But I don’t see the need to go further now that we’ve found that the danger of slotting is actually not all that great. Black should seize this fleeting moment when that is the case, put White under maximum pressure with 13/9, 10/7, and set up for a powerful cube if White fails to perform.—
Mary Hickey Δ

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**WINNER'S
CIRCLE**



JULY.-AUG. 2009

•**3rd Nice Casino Ruhl Open** (Nice, France; 10-12 July)... **MASTERS** (25): 1-Giorgos Klitsas (GRE), 2-Michel Serrero (FRA), 3/4-Ed O'Laughlin (USA) / Michihito Kageyama (JPN); 1C-Alan Grunwald (USA), 2C-Nils Ravnbø (NOR); 1LC-Ian Macfarlane (BRZ), 2LC-Chris Yep (USA); Ladies Prize-Angelina Charakoglou (GRE). **CHAMPIONS** (21): 1-Kenji Osakabe (JPN), 2-Arda Findikoglu (TUR), 3/4-Irakli Sabulua (GEO) / Markus Kuntaritsch (AUT); 1C-Laura Monaco (ITA), 2C-Abdullah Sorgüven (TUR); 1LC-Akaki Kikaleishvili (GEO), 2LC-Marco Tamigi (ITA); Ladies Prize - Laura Monaco (ITA). **INTERMEDIATE** (13): 1-Jean-Marc Pagès (FRA), 2-Maria Grigis (ITA); 1C-Giuliano Fugazza (ITA), 2C-Vasily Kavun (UKR); 1LC-Maria Croce (ITA), 2LC-Elizabeth Jernigan (USA); Ladies Prize - Maria Grigis (ITA). **SUPER JACKPOT** (8): 1-Edward Leighton (ENG), 2-Vincenzo Riceputi (ITA). **DOUBLES** (11 teams): 1-Gary Bauer (USA) & Alan Grunwald (USA), 2-Arda Findikoglu (TUR) & Abdullah Sorgüven (TUR). **LADIES EVENT** (6): 1-Scarlett Serrero (FRA), 2-Annalisa Agosti (ITA). **WARM-UP** (32): 1-Michihito Kageyama (JPN), 2-Nihat Sorgüven (TUR). **SPERTI TROPHY** (23): 1-Michihito Kageyama (JPN), 2-Bambi de Bruin (SPN). **ONE-PT. PRES. TOURNAMENT**: 1-Jack Zyber (ITA).

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 12 July)... **OPEN** (8): 1-Bob Howayeck, 2-Bob Paris.

•**Chicagoland 3-Man Team Event** (Northbrook, IL; 12 July)... **OPEN** (4 teams of 4): 1-Herb Roman, Bill Bartholomay, Lyle Rubin, & Ron Thomas, 2-Matt Cohn-Geier, Scott Casty, Larry Goldstein, & Serge Bondar.

•**2nd Pub Club Summer Sunday Tourney** (Carol Stream, IL; 19 July)... **OPEN** (26): 1-Don Marek, 2-Tak Morioka, 3/4-Linda Rockwell / Adrian Rios; 1C-Tim Mabee, 2C-Gary Kay.



Alan Grunwald

•**ABT—Thousand Islands Tournament** (Alexandria Bay, New York; 31 Jul.-2 Aug.)... **OPEN** (27): 1-Alan Grunwald (NJ), 2-Scotty Kelland (CT), 3-Charles Morrison (Canada). **DOUBLES** (12 teams): 1-Neil Garvie (Canada) & Garry Kallos (Canada), 2-Lynn Ehrlich (NY) & Mel

Rappaport (NY). **FRIDAY MINI-EVENTS** of 8: Winners - Frank DiMaggio (NY), Michelin Chabot (Canada), Mel Rappaport (NY) / Martin Veltmann (Canada).

•**WSOB—World Series of BG & Team World Cup** (Cannes, France; 21-26 July)... **CHAMPIONSHIP** (74): 1-Najib Salamzy (AFG/GER), 2-Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (ISR), 3/4-Steen Grønbech (DEN) / Jürgen Orłowski (GER), 5/7-Frédéric Andrieu

(FRA) / Shahab Ghodsi (NOR) / Fabrizio Lo Surdo (ITA); **Second Chance**: 1-Steen Grønbech (DEN), 2-Sander Lylloff (DEN), 3/4-Gary Bauer (USA) / Yoshito Takeuchi (JPN). **SUPER SATELLITE SUNDAY** (64): 1-Nevzat Dogan (DEN), 2-Sven-Olav Norén (SWE). Prize = 10K seat at WSOB CHAMPIONSHIP in London. **WSOB ONLINE SATELLITE**: 1-Christian Plenz (GER). **TEAM WORLD CUP** (16 teams): 1-Armenia: Vasgen Matevosyan / Artur Muradyan / Levon Petrosyan, 2-Sweden: Konrad Fröschl / Sven-Olav Norén / Sara Utku. **INTERMEDIATE** (16): 1-Lorenzo Rinaldo (ITA), 2-David Asplund (SWE); 1C-Vasgen Matevosyan (ARM). **DOUBLES** (12 teams): 1-Didier Assaraf (FRA) & Nodar Gagua (GEO), 2-George Devlin & Edward Leighton (ENG). **SUPER JACKPOT** (32): 1-Michihito Kageyama (JPN), 2-Matthias Strumpf (GER), 3/4-Ian Macfarlane (BRZ) / Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN). **SPEED BLITZ** (32): 1-Matthias Strumpf (Germany), 2-Ferat Guendogan (TUR/GER). **LADIES TOURNEY** (10): 1-Sara Utku (SWE), 2-Natalie Kovalevskay (UKR).

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 26 July)... **OPEN** (16): 1-Steve Grill, 2-Frank DiMaggio; 1C-Ron Seaborn.

•**EGBT: 3rd Gogil Bukia Memorial Georgian Open & 4th Davis Doubles** (Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia; 1-5 Aug.)... **MASTERS** (18): 1-Kakhaber Natchkebia (GEO), 2-Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (ISR); 1C-Artur Muradyan (ARM), 2C-Boris Mamporia (GEO); 1LC-Stick Rice (USA). **INTERMEDIATE** (16): 1-Omari Janjalia (GEO), 2-Jemal Chachua (GEO); 1C-Karen Sarkissian (GEO), 2C-Teodor Pkovelishvili (GEO); 1LC-Edisher Takvareli (GEO). **GEORGIAN NARDI** (32): 1-Giorgi Chumburidze (GEO), 2-Jambuli Esebua (GEO). **DAVIS DOUBLES** (4 teams): 1-Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (ISR) & Stick Rice (USA). **PRO/AMDOUBLES I** (8 teams): 1-Tamaz Nanitashvili & Tedo Pkhovelishvili (Georgia). **PRO/AMDOUBLES II** (4 teams): 1-Irakli Sabulua & Edisher Takvareli (Georgia). **EXHIBITION MATCH**: 1-The Rest of the World, 2-Republic of Georgia.

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Chicago, IL; 2 Aug.)... **OPEN** (18): 1-David Rubin, 2-Neil Kazaross, 3/4-Ken Bond / David Rockwell; 1C-Matt Cohn-Geier, 1C-Albert Yakobashvili. **INTERMEDIATE** (11): 1-Henry Gray, 2-Dan Weymouth, 3/4-Dujuan Meekins / Jolie Rubin; 1C-Rodney Gonzalez, 2C-Dujuan Meekins.

•**4th Summer Sizzler** (Bloomington, IL; 8 Aug.)... **OPEN** (23): 1-Lucas Bauer, 2-Sean Garber (IN); 1C-Rose Sheedy (IN), 2C-Vinton Knarr; 1LC-Mark King. **LIMITED** (4): 1-Mike Bender, 2-Wendy Russell; 1C-Barb McGuire. **3-POINT QUICKIES**: 1-Faddoul Khoury, 2-Scott Rudebeck.

•**Iowa State Fair Tourney** (Des Moines, IA; 15 Aug.)... **DIV. 1**: 1-Dan Kennedy (CO). **DIV. 2**: 1-Kal Nossuli.

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 16 Aug.)... **OPEN** (16): 1-Chris Trencher, 2-Victor Ashkenazi; 1C-Alan Grunwald. **INTERMEDIATE** (2): 1-Sam Danielian. **BEGINNER** (3): 1-Marsha Spore.

•**Somboons Weekly Tournament** (Pattaya, Thailand; 21 Aug.)... **OPEN** (16): 1-Gabriel Davis, 2-Khun Tiwa... *Gabriel Davis writes that the event*

was attended by Gary & Alice Kay and former Chicagoan Jake Jacobs.

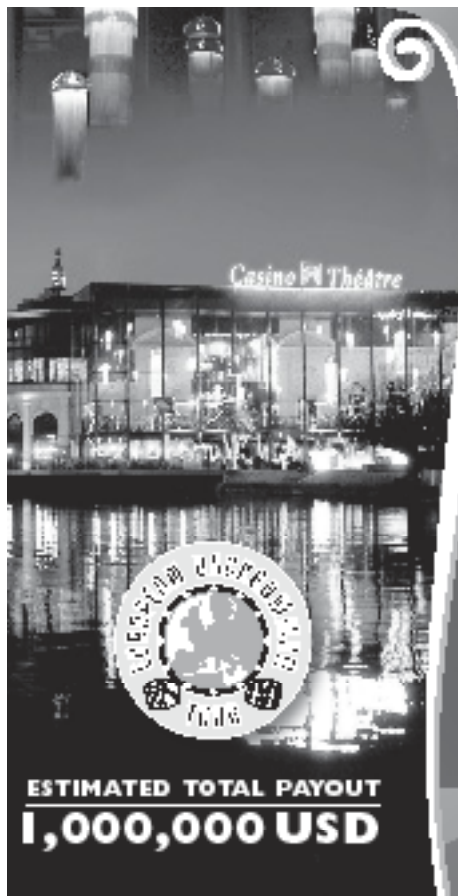


Gary and Alice Kay check out the pilot's seat en route to Thailand last month.

•**German Backgammon Championships** (Wiesbaden, Germany; 21-23 Aug.)... **MASTERS** (31): 1-Christian Plenz, 2-Manfred Holleder, 3/4-Athanasios Lagopatis / Andrea Wirth; 1C-Ferat Gündogan, 2C-Peter van de Bruck; 1LC-Frank Mogler. **CHAMPIONS** (30): 1-Matthias Krings, 2-Denise Kaiser (SWZ), 3/4-Jimmy Anywar / Uwe Dable; 1C-Corinna Blaschke, 2C-Werner Kettler; 1LC-Christian Derichs. **AMATEURS** (7): 1-Jürgen Kunkel, 2-Bambi de Bruin (Germany/Spain). **SUPERJACKPOT** (8): 1/2-Manfred Holleder / Peter Raugust. **GAMMONER-CUP** (64): 1-Bambi de Bruin (Germany/Spain), 2-Volker Sonnabend. **WARM-UP** (46): 1-Frank Brinkmann, 2-Volker Wenzlaff.

•**2009 Swiss Championships** (Montreux, Switzerland; 28-30 Aug.)... **CHAMPIONSHIP** (59): 1-Sefik Mancilikilar (SWZ), 2-Mario Sequeira (POR), 3/4-Denise Kaiser (SWZ) / Rolf Vetsch (SWZ); 1st Conso: 1C-Georg Grünbaum, 2C-Eddy Pfenninger; 2nd Conso: 1C-Agripa Leib-Ionesco, 2C-Gianmarco Canzi (ITA); 1LC-Peter Grünbaum, 2LC-Samir Gabour. **CASINO OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP** (15): 1-Georg Grünbaum, 2-Patrick Didisheim; 1C-Zoran Maric, 2C-Peter Grünbaum. **CASINO OPEN INTERMEDIATE** (14): 1-Richard Gerber, 2-Georg Brandobranski; 1C-Viorel Popa (ITA), 2C-Serge Oechsli. **SWISS TEAM** (13 teams): 1-Pin Parasol: Gian-Reto Iseppi / Zoran Maric / Damian Plesec (SLO), 2-Sound Go Round: Christian Liebe-Harkort (GER) / Hendrik Muysers (GER) / Claus Weissbarth (GER). **SWISS 1-POINT** (64): 1-René Kälin, 2-Silvio Carrese. **SUPERJACKPOT** (8): 1-Ion Ressu.

•**4th International Bristol Open** (Bristol, England; 28-30 Aug.)... **CHAMPIONSHIP** (64): 1-Lawrence Powell (ENG), 2-Martin Barkwill (ENG), 3/4-Michael Malmros (DEN) / Malcolm Robertson (HK); 1C-Michael Sørensen (DEN), 2C-Raj Jansari (ENG); 1LC-Pia Jeppesen (DEN), 2LC-Mike Heard (ENG). **ADVANCED** (26): 1-Ann Pocknell (ENG), 2-Ali Shimeri; 1C-Fiona Oldham (AUS/ENG), 2C-Tony Fawcett (ENG); 1LC-Richard Holness (ENG), 2LC-Steve Morris (ENG). **INTERMEDIATE** (10): 1-Duncan Lee (ENG), 2-Shadow Hamilton (ENG), 3-Carel Lindley (ENG). **ROLAND'S QUIZ #2**: 1-Michihito Kageyama (JPN), 2-Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN), 3-Pia Jeppesen (DEN). Δ



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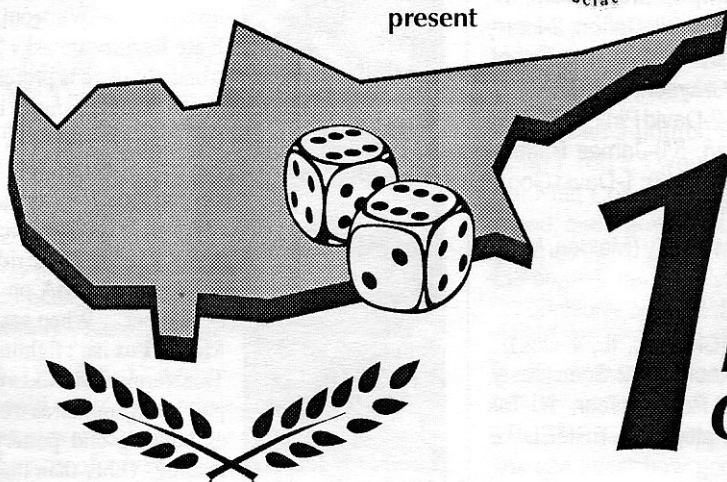
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