

1st georgian open backgammon championships

## FROM RUSSIA . . . WITH LOVE

Guspinov Over Steffen In The USSR/USA Finals  
United States Takes Team Title

by Tim Serges



Sometimes you'll hear backgammon players dejectedly question "WHAT'S THE USE?! What's the use of studying numerous books and countless positions just to be joked out of a game by some yo-yo? Why spend so much time and money on this torturous pastime for such little reward?" Well, for the international group of backgammoners who traveled to Tbilisi, Georgia (It is no longer proper to include Georgia in the USSR) last month, all these questions were answered. Perhaps the greatest backgammon tournament of all time was staged by a dedicated group of promoters, most of whom had never witnessed a Western style tournament in their life.

### A Warm Welcome From The Start

Although the official tournament dates were 7-15 December, the Georgian Backgammon Federation began their extraordinary hospitality on the 6th. As we arrived in Moscow to start our journey through this once-forbidden land, a warm welcome was just around the corner from customs. There was a man waiting to meet us holding a sign that said "BACKGAMMON." The Georgians sent "chaperones" to meet every arriving player for the 1500 mile trip to Tbilisi.

A shuttle bus took us to the domestic airport for a \$65 direct Aeroflot flight to Tbilisi. While waiting for the plane, the representatives bought food for all the players. Then it was time to take off. I must admit that an Aeroflot plane is not quite as comfortable as a DC-10, but I'm not complaining. The flight from Siberia arrived with chickens on board. At least our plane was chicken-free.

Arriving in the Tbilisi airport, the first thing I noticed was a huge poster announcing the "First International Backgammon Championship of Georgia." We were then

brought to the Iveria, a major hotel in Tbilisi. The sponsoring commercial firm Vesta paid for each player's individual room, along with his tournament entry fee.

The rooms were very simple—on par with 2-star U.S. hotels of the late 1940s. The riverfront view of this huge mountainous city from my room was breathtaking.

### A Lesson In Currency

The next day, all the players were free to roam the city and recoup from the jet lag. Stopping in the first restaurant was a wondrous experience. It was a lesson in understanding currency exchange and the power of the dollar. "Is one dollar enough for a cup of tea?" I asked. A dollar was enough to buy food for all the patrons in the entire restaurant.

After enjoying a hearty meal, I took a

[Continued on page 9]

## MORIOKA IS BAR POINT CLUB'S BEST...AGAIN

Tak Morioka owns Tuesday nights at Pat's Pub. Simple as that. For the fourth time in the last five years, Tak finds himself on top of the Chicago Bar Point Club master point list at year's end.

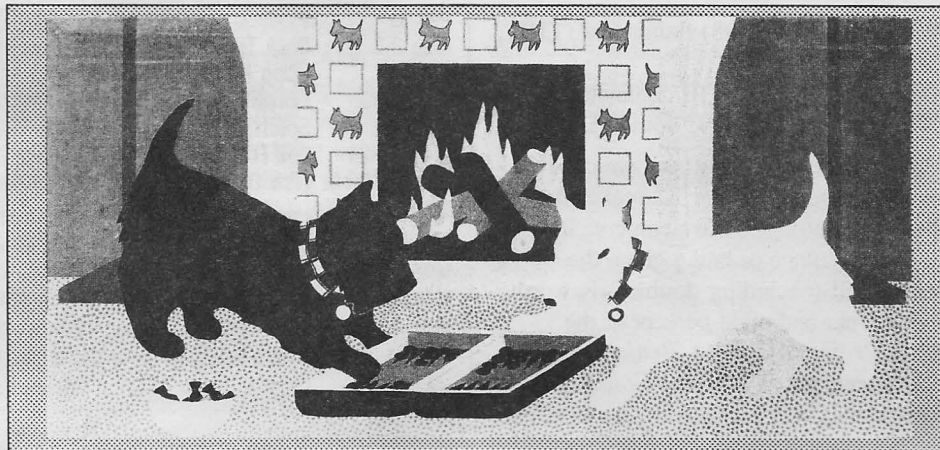
Trailing the 1989 runner-up, Gary Kay 22.56 to 22.40 with two months to play, Tak rallied for 4.08 points in November to regain the lead. He never looked back as Kay's dice picked the wrong time to turn cold.

The other four players to earn Illinois State Challenge Cup spots are Mark King, Bruce Wittert, Dave Cramer and Stu Katz. King, Wittert and Katz are new to the BPC team. Teams from Winnetka, Villa Park, Peoria and Springfield will also participate 10 Feb. at Bagwells in Chicago.

At Awards Night on 8 January, Tak Morioka and company will be honored for their 1990 achievements. There will be over \$800 in cash and merchandise given away and the Bar Point Club will buy each participant a drink.

The time is now. Join us for Bar Point Club backgammon in 1991! Δ

## 'BARK'-GAMMONED!



Unfortunately these backgammon-playing terriers (by artist Cathi Whiting) don't signify the return of Black & White Scotch as a backgammon tournament sponsor. But at least they make nice note cards. For order information, write ASPCA; 441 East 92nd Street; New York, NY 10128. [Submitted by Linda Woods, Peoria, Illinois.]

# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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## LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT  
2726 W. Lunt Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60645-3039

## HAL'S OPENING ROLL SURVEY GENERATES INTEREST

Hal Heinrich's Opening Roll Survey was very interesting. But readers should be forewarned that only three rolls yielded statistically significant comparisons at the 95% confidence level.

- With 2-1, (13/11, 6/5) dominates (13/11, 24/23),
- With 6-3, (24/18, 13/10) dominates 24/15,
- With 6-4, (24/18, 13/9) dominates 24/14.

Also, from these numbers, we can not conclude that an opening 3-2 makes the roller an underdog, but we can conclude that the advantage of being given the opening roll (excluding doubles) is worth between four and eight percent of the cube.—*Professor Arthur Benjamin, Math Department, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, CA*

With reference to Hal Heinrich's Opening Roll Survey, I seem to have discovered a discrepancy of 406 "trials" which can be attributed to the apparent statistical aberrations

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

coming attractions

BACKGAMMON						
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  
313/232-9731

\*Denotes new or revised listing

## NATIONAL

Jan 8	Bar Point Club Awards Night, Pat's Pub, Chicago, IL	312/338-6380
Jan 9	Winnetka BG Club Award's Night, Winnetka Community House, IL	708/446-0537
Jan 13	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/641-2091
Jan 13	Sandy Kaplan Invitational, Cavendish North Club, Southfield, MI	313/642-9616
*Jan 13	Hoosier January One-Day Tournament, Grisanti's, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
*Jan 13	NY/NJ Co-op Regional Tournament, Best Western Hotel, Hackensack, NJ	516/334-4833
Jan 17	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jan 19	Sangamon Valley Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/789-6275
Jan 19	College Park Winter Open, Promenade Party Room, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
*Jan 19	D.I. Long Memorial Invitational, Holiday Inn Rivermont, Louisville, KY	502/429-0153
*Jan 20	IBA Monthly Tournament, Ramada Resort, West Palm Beach, FL	305/527-4033
*Jan 20	Minuteman Tournament, Sit'n Bull Pub, Maynard, MA	617/863-0012
Jan 24	Flint Area Club Awards Party & Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jan 26	3rd Hawthorne Classic, Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL	312/338-6380
*Jan 26-27	1991 Georgia Championships, Holiday Inn Northeast, Atlanta, GA	404/921-0672
Jan 30-Feb 3	8th Nevada State Championship, Nugget Hotel/Casino, Reno, NV	702/826-1984
Jan 31-Feb 3	Pro-Am Doubles Tournament, Resorts International, Bahamas	301/299-8265
Feb 2	Sangamon Valley Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/789-6275
Feb 3	21st Annual Willowbank Invitational, Soule residence, Shelburne, VT	802/985-3932
Feb 9	Connecticut State Championships, Hall of Fame, Southington, CT	203/755-9749
*Feb 9-10	9th Valentine Tournament, South Shore Harbor Resort, League City, TX	713/784-6622
Feb 10	11th Illinois State Challenge Cup Invitational, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/338-6380
Feb 10	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/641-2091
Feb 10	NY/NJ Co-op Regional Tournament, Ramada Inn, Long Island, NY	516/334-4833
Feb 10	Hoosier Club 1990 Awards Tournament, Grisanti's, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
*Feb 10	IBA Monthly Tournament, Ramada Resort, West Palm Beach, FL	305/527-4033
*Feb 10	PBA Bimonthly Sunday Tournament, Champ's Bar, Pittsburgh, PA	412/371-5844
*Feb 17	Bar Point Mixed Doubles, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Feb 17	8th Fleet Underwood Memorial Tournament & Benefit, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
*Feb 21	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Feb 22-24	13th Annual Charity Tournament, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	412/371-5844
Mar 2	Sangamon Valley Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/789-6275
Mar 10	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/641-2091
*Mar 10	IBA Monthly Tournament, Ramada Resort, West Palm Beach, FL	305/527-4033
*Mar 10	Hoosier March One-Day Tournament, Grisanti's, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Mar 22-24	1991 Midwest Championships, Marriott Hotel, Oak Brook, IL	312/338-6380
*Apr 13	Spring Connecticut Open, Hall of Fame, Southington, CT	203/755-9749
*Apr 19-21	12th Annual Granite State Open, Tory Pines Resort, Franconstown, NH	603/863-4711
*Apr 20	College Park Spring Open, Promenade Party Room, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
*Apr 20-May 2	Queen Elizabeth 2 Cruise Tournament, New York to England/Europe	512/267-3968
*May 3-5	39th Indiana Open, Wyndham Garden Hotel, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435

## OUTSIDE USA

Jan 10-13	Seefeld International Tournament, Seefeld/Tirol, Austria	08341 12825
*Feb 2-3	BIBA Trophy Tournament, Post House Hotel, Crick near Rugby, England	0522/721630
Feb 4	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/3 689918
*Feb 7-10	Fiorelli's N. Queensland Championship, Radisson, Port Douglas, Australia	03/866 4209
*Feb 17	South Australian Open, Unley Citizens Centre, Unley, South Australia	08/373 2580
*Feb 21-24	2nd French Open, Hôtel Lutetia, Paris, France	1/4288 6645
Feb 28-Mar 3	Fifth Cannes International Tournament, Palais des Festivals, France	1/9339 0101
Mar 4	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/3 689918
Mar 7-10	27th Ted Bassett & Gstaad Palace-Cup, Palace Hotel, Switzerland	061/331 5816
Mar 14-17	17th Int'l Winter Championships, Palace Hotel, St. Moritz, Switzerland	061/331 5816
*Mar 29-Apr 1	Nordic Open, Copenhagen-Vedbæk, Denmark	45/31 22 46 00
*Apr 18-21	18th Byblos European Championship, St. Tropez, France	33/9497 0004
Apr 24-28	Australian Open Championship, Hyatt Kingsgate, Sydney, Australia	02/955 7726
*May 6-12	Championship of Great Britain, Torrequebrada, Costa del Sol, Spain	44624/851045

tions seen under "Roll 5-3" and "Roll 5-4." We can expect an average of 11,017/15 = 734 trials for each roll, but 5-3 and 5-4 showed 986 and 941 trials each. How come?—*Jim Painter, St. Louis, MO*

*Hal duplicated his results for certain rolls. Obviously, players didn't run 240 times (24/15) with the 5-4 roll. Hal lifted that running data from the 6-3 roll and reprinted*

[Continues]



it under 5-4 for comparison purposes. The same is true for slotting the 5-pt. with the 5-3 roll. That data was mostly obtained from the 6-2 roll. For more on Hal's Survey, see Harold Branch's article on page 7.—Ed.

### CUBE'S AT LEAST 61 YEAR'S OLD

I followed up on your December request to find the first written mention of a "doubling cube." Lelia Hattersley's *How To Play The New Backgammon* (1930) references the cube on page 39. Can anyone beat that?

By the way, two books from that era imply that matches were the more common way to keep the score. Hattersley writes:

"In order to regulate and simplify all the

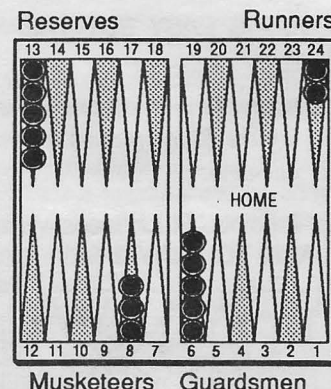
doubling and the matter of credits and losses, New York society has invented a very simple device of *matches*...At the outset of a game, one match is placed upon the bar. If a double occurs, another match is taken from the bowl and placed upon the bar; a third double would mean four matches, and so on.

"Once the game is over, the winner takes all the matches on the bar and they become his matches. Never, at any time, can both players have matches before them, because there can be only one winner...

"If you...have six matches before you, and lose a doubled game, or two matches, you return two matches to the bowl, leaving four matches net..."

"...The only matches a winner can receive are from the bar. To start each new game, one match is taken out of the bowl and placed upon the bar."

Hattersley also assigns names to the checkers in the starting position:



Note the number of musketeers.—

Duane Jensen, Minneapolis, MN

### STILL GOOD ADVICE, 200 YEARS HENCE

Brendan McInerney's extract from *Winning Backgammon* was quite interesting. It prompted me to visit the library where I found an entry on backgammon in the 1788 *Encyclopedia Britannica* (3rd Edition). It is fascinating to see how sophisticated the strategy was over 200 years ago. For example, slotting opening rolls of 5-1, 4-1 and 2-1 was advocated. The importance of an advanced anchor and bear-off strategy is also discussed.—Ray Kershaw, London, England

[Continued on page 8]



## 1990 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR FINAL STANDINGS

COMPILED  
THRU DEC. 31

TAK MORIOKA	27.76	Howard Markowitz	4.16	Beverly Klene	1.04
GARY KAY	25.04	Norma Shyer	4.16	Bob Holyon	1.04
MARK KING	21.28	Peter Kalba	4.00	Greg Try	1.04
BRUCE WITTERT	20.32	Rudy Emmelot	3.88	Merrill Schrager	0.96
DAVE CRAMER	17.56	Ralph Levy	3.84	Dave Rockwell	0.96
STU KATZ	17.04	Alex Caraplis	3.80	Scott Lynn	0.96
LUCKY NELSON	16.80	V.W. Zimnicki	3.80	Barry Miller	0.88
YAMIN YAMIN	16.76	Jay Ward	3.52	Randall Witt	0.88
JAKE JACOBS	16.36	John Spatafora	3.44	Sharon Lennon	0.88
PAUL FRANKS	15.36	Leslie Lockett	3.28	Jerry Brooks	0.88
JOHN DEMIAN	12.44	Mary Franks	3.24	Joe Wollick	0.80
DEEB SHALATI	12.28	Dean Muench	3.04	Harold Seif	0.72
TIM SERGES	11.52	Bart Levin	2.80	Ed Bauder	0.72
KEN BOND	11.04	Bill Hoeflich	2.80	Bill Hargrave	0.72
DON DESMOND	10.32	Arline Levy	2.68	Larry Deckel	0.64
PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI	10.32	Barbara Levinson	2.60	Hal Heinrich	0.64
DON JAYHAN	10.04	Ron Stur	2.60	Mike Fengya	0.64
BOB ZAVORAL	9.48	Kathy Rudnick	2.60	Dan Judd	0.64
HERB ROMAN	9.44	Mike O'Brien	2.56	David Rubin	0.56
MARCY SLOAN	9.20	Kurt Warning	2.48	Mike Siegel	0.56
George Barr	8.96	Mike Spiropoulos	2.48	Reggie Porter	0.52
Joann Feinstein	8.96	Harry Cohn	2.48	Jill Brussel	0.48
Joe Koucharian	8.44	Greg Shore	2.16	Terry Moskowitz	0.48
Bill Davis	8.20	George Kirkby	2.12	Bill Jenkins	0.48
David Lynn	7.12	Darcey Yamin	2.08	Judy Kaplan	0.40
Arnold Zousmer	7.04	Alex Itkin	2.04	Mickey Kaplan	0.40
Bobbie Shifrin	7.00	Jim Gibbs	1.92	David Adgishvili	0.36
Alice Kay	6.64	Steve Potashnick	1.92	Elaine Tallackson	0.32
Rich Galeba	6.56	Gabriel Kairouz	1.68	Mike Sutton	0.32
Ed Buerger	6.16	Jeff Kane	1.68	George Panagakis	0.32
Sarg Serges	6.04	Stan Kucharz	1.64	Mike Curcio	0.32
Andy Argy	5.88	Betsy Miller	1.60	Larry Knoll, Jr.	0.28
Femi Owiku	5.84	Grant Dace	1.60	Jamie Dodge	0.24
Howard Ring	5.60	Walt Schafer	1.44	Bernie Smuda	0.24
Frank Callea	5.52	Richard Stawowy	1.36	Larry Knoll	0.24
Lenny Loder	4.68	Jenny Miller	1.28	Jeff Ferguson	0.16
Bill Keefe	4.64	Mark Anshus	1.28	Joan Hegg	0.16
Judy Brown	4.44	Walter Trice	1.28	Marv Arnol	0.12
Jolie Lewis	4.28	René Wojtysiak	1.12	Ted Mann	0.12

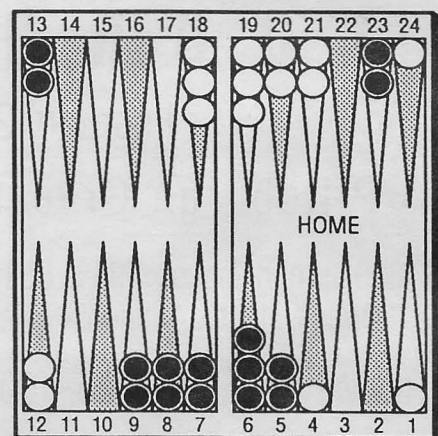
DAVID LYNN finished 1990 on a high note winning December monthly honors with 4.08 points. David won the 18 December tournament en route to an eight match winning streak.

Dave Cramer (3.44) and Bob Zavoral (2.68) were second and third respectively.

your move

### PROBLEM #167

Money game with Jacoby Rule in effect. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-3.**  
(Position submitted by Joe Russell.)



# ASK DANNY

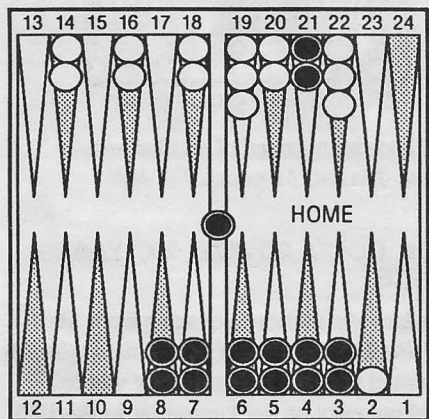


by Danny Kleinman

## THE DEUCE IS EASY BUT THE ACE IS HARD

**D**ear Danny: In a recent tournament, I (playing the Black pieces) encountered this dilemma:

Match to 7 points. Black leads White, 6 to 4. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-1.**



I saw at once the necessity of entering Bar/23 with the 2, so I could escape on 6s. But I appeared to have a choice between two nearly equal 1's. I could play 7/6, minimizing shots while maximizing active build-

ers. Or I could play 3/2\*, keeping a 5-prime while sending an enemy man to the bar.

I chose the aggressive hit, 3/2\*. If my opponent danced, I would have time to escape. If he hit me back, he still wouldn't be able to escape immediately unless he rolled 6/3. The timid 7/6, I reasoned, would let my opponent escape with any hitting 5.

My play worked; I won game and match. Despite this, I was unsure of my decision. I'm not even good enough to compare plays by doing roll-outs, for my checker play is far from perfect. So I posed the problem to the two best players in the tournament.

Careful Kalman insisted 7/6 was necessary. He noted that 3/2\* not only left more shots but exposed an extra blot, and mentioned that a gammon at this match score was twice as harmful as in money play.

Barry Bigplay, a hustler, preferred 3/2\* to keep the initiative. Perhaps he was used to money play, where gammons are not quite so harmful.

Is it possible that 7/6 is right leading 6-4 in a 7-point match but 3/2\* is right in money play?

I thought I knew the right play when I faced the problem, but now I'm—Torn Between Two Experts

**DEAR TORN:** I'm not good enough to compare plays by roll-outs, either. Too often, roll-outs produce subsequent problems no

less difficult than the one I'm trying to resolve. If the decision is at all close, even hundreds of roll-outs may yield too small a sample to rely on. And then if I do make checker or cube errors during the roll-outs, my initial preference for one play or another may skew the distribution of my errors. The few times I've done roll-outs, moreover, my results have always appeared freakish, with games being won or lost by flukish sequences of rolls seeming to have nothing to do with the merits of the plays being tested.

I agree with your bold hitting play, and your reasons for making it. Perhaps your judgment is more trustworthy than you think. Even if not, your own judgment is really all you have to rely on at the table.

Careful Kalman is right, of course, about the importance of avoiding gammons at this match score. But I don't believe exposing an extra blot subjects you to more gammons. True, your opponent may send an extra man back. But that will help your timing, and reduce your risk of crashing. A timing advantage is ample compensation for the extra man back.

In match or money play, I'd move as you did: Bar/23, 3/2\*.—Yours, Danny Δ

Questions for Danny Kleinman should be addressed to: Ask Danny, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645-3039.

The Pittsburgh Backgammon Association sponsors the

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## ILLINOIS ACTION



Bill Davis  
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**Tuesday, 7:00 P.M.** at Pat's Pub, 4343 N. Harlem Ave., Norridge 708/457-1166.

**Sunday Bimonthly, 12:30 at** Bagwells, 4636 N. Cumberland, Chicago 312/625-1717.

**PUB CLUB:** Tournaments Monday, 7:30 P.M. at Fiddler's, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Ed Bauder (708/985-1568).

**SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASSN:** Tournaments Tuesday, 6:15 P.M. at On Broadway, 210 S. Broadway, Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

**BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB:** Tourn. alt. Tues., 6:30 P.M. at Chuck E. Cheese, 1540 E. College, Normal. Lane O'Connor (309/454-1947).

**WINNETKA BG CLUB:** Tournaments Wed., 7:00 P.M. at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (708/446-0537).

**CENTRAL ILL. BG CLUB:** Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Sue Will (309/692-6909).

**TULEY PARK BG:** Side play alt. Sat., 1:00 P.M. at Tuley Park Fieldhouse, 90th & King, Chgo. J.A. Miller (219/883-6127).

**NORTH CLUB:** Daily side play Mon.–Sat. at 4747 W. Peterson (402), Chicago. Howard Markowitz (312/286-8417).



# Backgammon Clubs In North America

Information for this listing has been obtained directly from the featured backgammon clubs. However, some changes are inevitable and we suggest that you always call before attending. As a service to our readers, CHICAGO POINT would like to maintain an accurate listing of Backgammon Clubs in North America. Please send information including updates, club closings and new clubs to: CHICAGO POINT; 2726 W. Lunt Avenue; Chicago, IL 60645-3039.

## WEST

CLUB NAME	LOCATION	CITY & STATE	MEETING ON	TIME	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	MAIL INQUIRIES TO:
Campbell Bridge & BG Club	Clubroom	Campbell, CA	Friday monthly	7:30 PM	Jeffrey Hu	408/378-3711	175 E. Campbell Avenue; Campbell, CA 95008
Chess Palace Backgammon	Chess Palace	Long Beach, CA	Saturday	1:00 PM	Charles Rostedt	213/634-8477	3255 E. South Street (205); Long Beach, CA 90805
Antelope Valley Backgammon	Carrow's Restaurant	Palmdale, CA	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Norm Wiggins	805/943-5371	5125 W. Avenue (M-8); Quartz Hill, CA 93536
Backgammon Club of San Diego	Hindquarter Restaurant	San Diego, CA	Sunday	5:00 PM	Mike Fujita	619/294-2007	P.O. Box 178119; San Diego, CA 92117
Backgammon Club of San Diego	Carrow's Restaurant	San Diego, CA	Tuesday	6:30 PM	"	"	"
San Francisco Backgammon	Golden Gate Bar & Grill	San Francisco, CA	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Cheryl Silvers	415/552-6592	5 Divisadero Street; San Francisco, CA 94117
San Francisco Bridge & BG Club	Clubroom	San Francisco, CA	Mon., Wed., Fri.	9:00 PM	Cora Lee	415/776-6949	777 Jones Street; San Francisco, CA 94109
Gammon Associates	Little Messina	Van Nuys, CA	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Patrick Gibson	818/901-0464	7641 Orion Avenue; Van Nuys, CA 91406
Gammon Associates	Cavendish W. Hollywood Club	W. Hollywood, CA	Sunday	2:00 PM	"	"	"
Colorado Backgammon Assn.	J.L.'s Cheers	Denver, CO	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Earl Earp	303/778-1105	102 W. 4th Avenue; Denver, CO 80223
No. Nevada Backgammon Assn.	Rapscallion Seafood House	Reno, NV	Thursday	7:30 PM	Mark Richardson	702/826-1984	Box 70101; Reno, NV 89570
Pacific NW Backgammon Assn.	Shakey's Pizza	Bellevue, WA	Monday	7:00 PM	Chuck Breckenridge	206/778-8181	18204 Olympic View Drive; Edmonds, WA 98020
Puget Sound Backgammon Assn.	Shakey's Pizza	Seattle, WA	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Guy Thurber	206/244-6737	428 SW 127th Street; Seattle, WA 98146

## CENTRAL

Chicago Bar Point Club	Bagwells Food & Spirits	Chicago, IL	Sunday bimonthly	12:30 PM	Peter Kalba	312/252-7755	2510 W. Iowa Street; Chicago, IL 60622
Chicago Bar Point Club	Pat's Pub	Norridge, IL	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Bill Davis	312/338-6380	2726 W. Lunt Avenue; Chicago, IL 60645
North Club	Office Building	Chicago, IL	Daily except Sun.	12:30 PM	Howard Markowitz	312/286-8417	4747 W. Peterson (402); Chicago, IL 60646
Tuley Park Backgammon	Tuley Park Fieldhouse	Chicago, IL	Alt. Saturdays	1:00 PM	Reggie Porter	312/471-5066	7338 S. Claremont Avenue; Chicago, IL 60636
Pair O' Dice Backgammon Club	D.L. Boardwalk	Harwood Heights, IL	Friday	7:30 PM	Gary Kay	312/819-1122	175 N. Harbor Dr. (3204); Chicago, IL 60601
Bloomington-Normal BG Club	Chuck E. Cheese	Normal, IL	Alt. Tuesdays	6:30 PM	Lane O'Connor	309/454-1947	108 Riss Drive; Normal, IL 61761
Central Illinois Backgammon Club	Peoria Pizza Works	Peoria, IL	Thursday	6:30 PM	Sue Will	309/692-6909	6129 Jayar Drive; Peoria, IL 61614
Sangamon Valley BG Assn.	On Broadway	Springfield, IL	Tuesday	6:30 PM	Mark Kaye	217/789-6275	2602 Peoria Road (A); Springfield, IL 62702
Sangamon Valley BG Assn.	On Broadway	Springfield, IL	1st Sat./Nov-Mar	11:30 AM	"	"	"
Pub Club	Fiddler's Restaurant	Villa Park, IL	Monday	7:30 PM	Ed Bauder	708/985-1568	2151 Country Club Drive (2); Woodridge, IL 60517
Winnetka Backgammon Club	Winnetka Community House	Winnetka, IL	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Trudie Stern	708/446-0537	4200 W. Lake (302C); Glenview, IL 60025
Hoosier Backgammon Club	Grisanti's	Indianapolis, IN	Thursday	7:00 PM	Butch Meese	317/845-8435	7620 Kilmer Lane; Indianapolis, IN 46256
Flint Area Backgammon Club	Ramada Inn	Flint, MI	Thursday	7:00 PM	Carol Joy Cole	313/232-9731	3003 Ridgedcliffe Drive; Flint, MI 48532
Plymouth Backgammon Club	Box Bar & Grill	Plymouth, MI	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Dean Adamian	313/981-5706	42954 Barchester; Canton, MI 48187
Plymouth II Backgammon Club	Mayflower Hotel	Plymouth, MI	Sunday	2:00 PM	Jeane Eggenberger	313/453-0018	49850 Joy Road; Plymouth, MI 48170
Cavendish North BG Club	Clubhouse	Southfield, MI	Daily, Tour. Tues.	7:30 PM	Joe Sylvester	313/642-9616	30065 Greenfield Road; Southfield, MI 48076
The Club	Office Building	Southfield, MI	Daily	12:00 N	Marleen Carol	313/356-0480	19111 W. 10 Mile Rd. (208A); Southfield, MI 48075
Twin Cities Backgammon Club	Braxton's Seafood Grill	Minneapolis, MN	Thursday	7:00 PM	Steve Brown	612/521-9532	4122 Dupont Avenue N.; Minneapolis, MN 55412
Grand Forks Backgammon Club	Red Ray Bowling Lanes	Grand Forks, ND	Alt. Tuesdays	8:00 PM	Jim Schothorst	701/772-4721	P.O. Box 393; Grand Forks, ND 58206
Austin Backgammon Club	Bombay Bicycle Club	Austin, TX	Monday	8:00 PM	Randy Prater	512/344-6820	322 Summertime; San Antonio, TX 78216
Backgammon at Mimi's	Mimi's Pub	Dallas, TX	Monday	8:00 PM	Nancy Williams	214/960-1118	109 Spanish Village; Box 574; Dallas, TX 75248
Dallas Backgammon League	Don Carter Bowling Lanes	Dallas, TX	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Bill Barron	214/361-6191	P.O. Box 740306; Dallas, TX 77072
Bayou Backgammon Club	Houstonian	Houston, TX	Saturday monthly	7:30 PM	George Morse	713/498-4141	11534 Bellaire Blvd.; Houston, TX 77072

(Continued on opposite side)

**CENTRAL (continued)**

CLUB NAME	LOCATION	CITY & STATE	MEETING ON	TIME	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	MAIL INQUIRIES TO:
Celebrities Backgammon	Bombay Bicycle Club	Houston, TX	Sunday bimonthly	12:30 PM	George Morse	713/879-0370	11534 Bellaire Blvd.; Houston, TX 77072
Houston Backgammon Club	Bombay Bicycle Club	Houston, TX	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Jack Butler	713/774-9439	5931 Reamer Street; Houston, TX 77074
San Antonio Backgammon Club	Dad's	San Antonio, TX	Mon., Wed., Fri.	8:00 PM	Marcel Mommers	512/620-5210	3812 Greenridge Drive; Cibola, TX 78108
Fond du Lac Backgammon Club	Holiday Inn	Fond du Lac, WI	Thursday	8:00 PM	Mark Hicks	414/922-8235	366 East 10th Street; Fond du Lac, WI 54935
Milwaukee Backgammon Club	Y-Not-II	Milwaukee, WI	2nd, 4th, 5th Wed.	7:00 PM	Merrill Schrager	414/463-2498	9043 W. Grantosa Drive; Milwaukee, WI 53225
Milwaukee Backgammon	Univ. of Wis.-Milwaukee	Milwaukee, WI	Friday	7:30 PM	Rich Siebold	414/332-7501	2012 E. Lake Bluff Blvd.; Shorewood, WI 53211

**NORTHEAST**

Connecticut Backgammon Society	Hall of Fame Lounge	Southington, CT	Sat., Quarterly	12:00 N	Rob Roy	203/755-9749	54 Calumet Street; Waterbury, CT 06710
College Park Backgammon Club	Promenade Cardroom	Bethesda, MD	2nd & 4th Sunday	12:30 PM	Barry Steinberg	301/530-0603	6100 Westchester Pk. Dr. (T2); College Park, MD 20740
Cavendish Club of Boston	Clubroom	Brookline, MA	Daily	12:00 N	Carl Saldinger	617/734-2230	111 Cypress Street; Brookline, MA 02146
New England Backgammon Club	Sheraton Commander Hotel	Cambridge, MA	Sunday monthly	12:30 PM	Bill Robertie	617/641-2091	P.O. Box 294, Arlington, MA 02174
New England Backgammon Club	Sheraton Commander Hotel	Cambridge, MA	Monday	7:00 PM	"	"	"
Minuteman Backgammon Club	Sit'n Bull Pub	Maynard, MA	Sunday monthly	1:00 PM	Roy Friedman	617/863-0012	18 Potter Pond; Lexington, MA 02173
Cape Cod Backgammon Club	Burger King	W. Barnstable, MA	1st Sun. monthly	11:00 AM	Mark Shaevel	508/759-3900	P.O. Box 4; Monument Beach, MA 02553
Granite State Backgammon Club	Folkway Restaurant	Peterborough, NH	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Lincoln Bedell	603/863-4711	South Road; East Lempster, NH 03605
New Jersey Backgammon Assn.	Oritani Best Western Hotel	Hackensack, NJ	Tues. & Fri.	7:45 PM	Jay Rabinowitz	201/731-0996	99 Randolph Place; West Orange, NJ 07052
Bridge Deck Backgammon	Bridge Deck	Hartsdale, NY	Tuesday	6:00 PM	Alan Bouchman	914/949-5853	333 N. Central Avenue; Hartsdale, NY 10530
Bridge Deck Backgammon	Bridge Deck	Hartsdale, NY	Fri. & Sat.	12:30 PM	"	"	"
Greater New York BG Club	Vanderbilt Bridge Club	Manhasset, NY	Friday	8:00 PM	Dr. Bob Hill	516/334-4833	P.O. Box 410; Commack, NY 11725
Ace Point Backgammon Club	Clubroom	New York, NY	Daily, Tour. Wed.	3:00 PM	Michael Valentine	212/753-0842	41 E. 60th Street; New York, NY 10022
Coterie	Clubroom	New York, NY	Daily	1:00 PM	Louise Goldsmith	212/371-5151	Private club. Telephone for information.
Pittsburgh Backgammon Assn.	Champs Bar	Pittsburgh, PA	Sunday bimonthly	1:00 PM	Steve Hast	412/371-5844	5 Barton Drive; Pittsburgh, PA 15221
Pittsburgh Backgammon Assn.	Champs Bar	Pittsburgh, PA	Tuesday	8:00 PM	"	"	"

**SOUTH**

Suncoast Backgammon Assn.	Bombay Bicycle Club	Clearwater, FL	Mon. & Wed.	7:00 PM	Drew Giovanis	813/726-1398	25350 U.S. Hwy 19 N. (67); Clearwater, FL 34623
Hallandale Bridge & BG Club	Studio	Hallandale, FL	Daily	1:00 PM	Ed Silver	305/457-7328	780 E. Hallandale Beach; Hallandale, FL 33009
Orlando Backgammon Club	Dr. Phillips High School	Orlando, FL	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Al Aki	407/351-9986	8215 Sugarbush Court; Orlando, FL 32819
Palm Beach Backgammon	Safari & Polo Club	Palm Beach, FL	Monday	7:00 PM	Norma Miele	407/833-0499	44 Coconut Row; Palm Beach, FL 33480
International Backgammon Assn.	Ramada Resort	W. Palm Beach, FL	Occ. Sun./Jan-Mar	2:00 PM	Les Boyd	305/527-4033	1300 Citrus Isle; Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315
Backgammon Society of Sarasota	Crazy Fox Tavern	Sarasota, FL	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Cal Kendall	813/966-5357	2260 Lakewood Lane; Nokomis, FL 34275
Atlanta Backgammon Association	Copperfield's	Atlanta, GA	Monday	7:00 PM	Randy Cooper	404/921-0672	1413 Country Downs Drive; Norcross, GA 30093
Louisville Backgammon Club	Wilson Inn	Louisville, KY	Wednesday	8:00 PM	Scott Arche	502/429-0153	1513 Moonstone Way (7); Louisville, KY 40222

**CANADA**

Calgary Backgammon	Bottlescrew Bill's	Calgary, AB	Occ. Mondays	6:00 PM	Hal Heinrich	403/229-2024	402-1122 15th Ave. SW; Calgary, AB T2R 1K5; CANADA
Toronto Backgammon	Blues and Cues	Scarborough, ON	Thurs. & Sat.	7:00 PM	Carl Sellars	416/925-6929	565 Sherbourne (1707); Toronto, ON M4X 1W7; CANADA
Nat'l Capital Backgammon Club	Lunergan's Pub	Vanier, ON	1st Sun./Sep-Jun	12:00 N	Eden Windish	613/741-2530	15-392 Miller Avenue; Vanier, ON K1L 6V8; CANADA
Pips Backgammon Club	Clubroom	Montreal, QB	Daily except Sat.	4:00 PM	Michel Gagnon	514/284-0613	3774 St. Denis (200); Montreal, QB H2W 2M1; CANADA

**MEXICO**

Backgammon at Kycho's	Kycho's Cantina	Acapulco, GRO	Wed & Fri/Dec-Apr	9:00 PM	Mauricio Chavez	011 52 748 48918	Horacio Nelson/Costa Azul; Acapulco, GRO; MEXICO
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# HAROLD'S VIEW



by Harold Branch

## A SURVEY WORTH YOUR CAREFUL STUDY

**B**ecause of a full page of *real play* data submitted by Hal Heinrich in his "Opening Roll Survey," I'm having trouble putting my December CHICAGO POINT away. "Study it carefully," Hal said. Yes, indeed.

I believe the "Dbl Equity" column under "Who Doubled First" has to be the primary indicator. It avoids the ramifications of what happens later. The "Equity" figures under "Games Played To Conclusion" give some weird results, often distorted by the latter part of the game, I would think.

Questions pop up. You have the quick answers, of course!

- Looking at the obvious strength of split plays to opponent's bar, why didn't the 6-2 split do better?
- Would you rather roll a 6-4 or 6-5? According to Hal's results, the 6-4 played out-and-down is nearly twice as effective as 6-5. Is the leap really that weak? Maybe it would play stronger as a major split... maybe.
- Since the 2-1 slot play shows nice results,

why does slotting with 5-2 and 6-2 do so poorly?

Here, in order of "Dbl Equity" figure strength, is the lineup of plays that got my attention. (I avoided the regular "Equity" column findings fearing dizziness and other stresses.) There probably are some surprises:

Roll	Play	Trials	Dbl Equity
3-1	(8/5, 6/5)	691	.282
5-1	24/18)	25*	.200
6-1	(13/7, 8/7)	700	.183
4-2	(8/4, 6/4)	681	.178
6-4	(24/18, 13/9)	179*	.128
2-1	(13/11, 6/5)	636	.088
5-3	(13/8, 13/10)	135*	.081
6-3	(24/18, 13/10)	479	.069
6-5	(24/13)	671	.067
5-3	(8/3, 6/3)	546	.062
4-1	(13/9, 24/23)	36*	.056
4-3	(24/20, 13/10)	408	.029
6-4	(24/14)	492	.028
6-2	(24/18, 13/11)	418	.005

\*Skippy numbers, but still interesting

The biggest surprise to me is the relative weakness of 6-5. Next are the relative strengths of 6-1, 6-4 and 2-1. I see where I will change some opening plays and experiment with others.

I've had a long-time fantasy involving 6-6 as a responding roll. If the split to my opponent's bar is so contentiously strong, how about 24/18 and 13/7 (3)! A builder! It might or might not be inferior, but it has to be

worth something to watch my opponent roll his eyes.

My compliments to Hal Heinrich for his diligence and hard work in compiling this most fascinating table. Imagine. The 6-5 no stronger than that!  $\Delta$

## AMALGAMATION

The Feb. POINT won't be mailed out until the 12th. To paraphrase **Bart Simpson**, "Don't have a beaver, man!"... 1990 was a banner year for the Chicago Bar Point Club. Tuesday night attendance at Pat's Pub increased over 25% to 43 players per week... Look for a few major backgammon tournaments south of the border within the year. Details to follow... Visiting the Bar Point Club in December: **Bill Jenkins** (NJ), **Fred Badagnani** (NY), **David Adgishvili** (NY), **John Stryker** (OH) and **Munchkin** (CA)... A family grieves: **Sherry Catalano**, wife of Pittsburgh Backgammon Club codirector **Rich Catalano**, lies in a coma following a very serious auto accident last month... Get well wishes go out to former San Diego Backgammon Club director **Gary Oakes** who is recuperating from knee surgery. By the way, **Mike Fujita** is the new club director, assisted by **Neil Kazaross** and **John Viotor**... Central Illinois Club director **Sue Will** joins the staff of the Midwest Championships this year (22-24 March at the Marriott in Oak Brook, Ill.).

To request an invitation to this NO SMOKING event, write: Midwest Championships; 2726 W. Lunt Avenue; Chicago, IL 60645-3039... **Rob Roy**, director of the Connecticut Backgammon Society, is now providing a free computer bulletin board service for backgammon players that's on-line 24 hours. Use your computer and modem to dial 203/ 596-1443. Then go to file Area 9. You'll find shareware computer backgammon games that can be downloaded at no charge. You can also leave backgammon material (positions, analyses, tournament results, etc. for other players to access... Two new clubs begin "Illinois Action" within a month. **Lane O'Connor** (309/454-1947) starts the Bloomington-Normal BG Club 15 Jan. on alternating Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. at Chuck E. Cheese in Normal. And **Gary Kay** (312/ 819-1122) resurrects the Pair O'Dice Club in mid-Feb. with Friday play at 7:30 p.m. at D.L. Boardwalk in Harwood Heights... The stork rolled **Bernie** and **Dan Judd** a new baby boy on 28 Nov. 1990: welcome **Daniel James Judd, Jr.**!... **Bill Robertie** and **Patrice Pisano** also have a new family member at their home: **Spike the Cat**.  $\Delta$

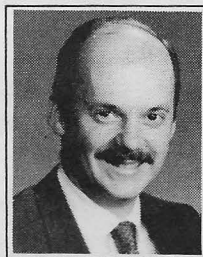
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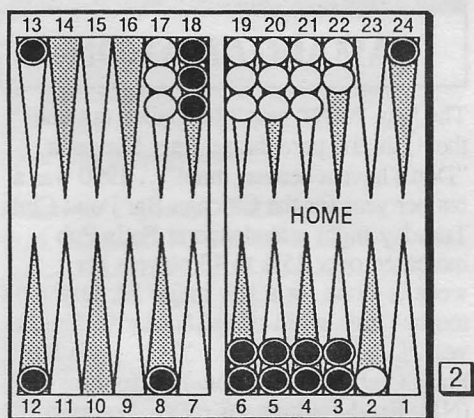
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# PROBLEM #166 SOLVED

by Kit Woolsey

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**

An interesting problem in the prime vs. prime area, where Black has to figure out how best to deal with the problems of containing the White checker and freeing his remaining back man. The apparent choices are:

- (a) 24/18
- (b) 8/2\*
- (c) 13/8, 12/11
- (d) 12/7, 8/7

The running play, 24/18, leaves White with 14 hitting numbers, all of which are likely to be devastating unless Black gets lucky and rolls an immediate joker off the bar. What if Black gets away with it? Does

he have anything? Not really. White is miles ahead in the race, so even if Black escapes his back man and then secures his 8-point with White having done nothing, Black still is a long way from a menacing redouble with White only one dash away from victory. This approach appears to lose a lot when it backfires while not gaining very much when it succeeds.

The hitting play, 8/2\*, suffers from similar defects. If White hits back, Black is in big trouble with two men behind the White prime and one of them in the air. Black will be out of ammunition so White will probably find it relatively easy to escape.

Suppose Black survives this roll. He is still a long way from home. He is likely to require at least two rolls to cover the blot on the 2-point, which means that White, being on roll, appears to be a favorite to hit the blot before Black can cover. Suppose black does manage to cover the blot. He still isn't home. He has the back man to free and if White merely enters on Black's ace-point, White will be in position to escape. Black can only achieve a doubling advantage if he covers the blot and White stays on the bar, and if Black hasn't also escaped his back man, White may still have a take, since it is Black, not White, who is in gammon danger. Black just doesn't have the ammunition to attempt to carry out a blitz.

Making the 8-point with 13/8, 12/11 is a good example of duplication for duplication's sake. True, White needs 5s to point on the blot on the 24-point; but that

is not important. What *is* important is that Black needs a strong prime for the future. Once the 8-point is made, it will be next to impossible to slide it up to the bar-point. If White makes a run for it, Black hits, and White enters on the ace-point, the difference between holding the 8-point and holding the bar-point could easily be the difference between being not good enough to double and doubling White out for the immediate win.

As is so often the case, the best play is the natural one: making the bar-point. White has some good numbers, but she can't do everything at once. White can run for it; however if Black hits back, he will be in excellent shape. White can hit and make the 1-point, but she then still has to prove herself by rolling the escaping 6 in time. And if White does none of the above (and there are several numbers which don't do much), black has the opportunity to escape the back man or bring the third man on the 18-point into play, improving his coverage of the outfield. then, if things go Black's way, he will be in position to claim.

When you are short of builders, it is important to put every man exactly where he belongs, which means making the bar-point (and completing a 5-prime) in this position. What should Black's overall goal be? Certainly not racing, since White is miles ahead. Certainly not blitzing, since he has no ammunition in range. It must be to prime the remaining White checker. What better way to carry out that goal then to make the bar-point? Δ

## LETTERS...

*[Continued from page 3]*

### WHAT HAPPENED TO PAUL?

I was looking over Paul Magriel's old New York Times backgammon columns in the library the other day and found that they suddenly vanished after 21 June 1979. But I know that there was at least one in the Spring of 1980. Does anyone know where the columns went after the 21 June date?—Glenn Daily, New York, NY

### SO YOU WANT TO START A CLUB

Do you have any information on starting a local backgammon club? I remember you gave a seminar on the topic last year at the Nevada State Championships.—Tim Helms, Lincoln, NE

The Reno seminar handout is still available. Send a stamped, self-addressed

envelope to: *Starting A Club; c/o Chicago Bar Point Club; 2726 W. Lunt Ave.; Chicago, IL 60645-3039.—Ed.*

### MAYBE DUANE'S NOT SO HASTY

It seems the December "Hasty Plays" column should have been titled "Hasty Conclusion!" The probability of White leaving two blots is 6/36 or 17%, not 20% as Duane Jensen implied. This alone brings Black's non-hitting chances below 8%.—Larry Strommen, Indianapolis, IN

*You're forgetting about the nine numbers that don't play for White. This should increase White's chance to leave two blots by at least 3%.—Ed.*

### ANOTHER PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Just a note to let you know that Geoff Oliver is the British Isles Backgammon Association Player of the Year.—Michael Crane, Director, BIBA Δ



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walk to the base of a lookout peak where a specially designed trolley took me up to the top for an overview of Tbilisi and the surrounding mountains. At the top was a small amusement park where for one American cigarette, five could ride the Ferris wheel.

## The Georgians Provide A Nonstop Food and Drink "Orgy"

That evening on the mountain peak, a spectacular formal banquet was given for all the backgammon players. We were offered all we could possibly eat including the best caviar and main course Georgian food, along with delicious local wines and champagne. Every five minutes, a toast was given to which we all answered "COW-MAR-GUS," which is Georgian for "To your good health." Michigan's Emil Mortuk made instant friendship with the Georgians when he received an "upside-down toast" and reciprocated by covering his wine glass with his palm, turning it over and sucking the wine through his fingers. In between toasts, Gypsy dancers sang and danced up and down the isles.

The following day was filled with specially arranged historical sight-seeing of Tbilisi and a discussion of their claim to independence from Soviet Russia. The most memorable sight was at a park in the center of the city where Lenin's statue had recently been removed.

The event for the evening was a fabulous performance of Georgian folk dancing, singing, and magic at the Royal Theater. The backgammon players were then introduced individually, followed by a public draw for the opening round pairings. Then it was off to a cocktail reception.

The day was so busy that there had been no time to eat and all the restaurants were closed by ten o'clock. But when Vesta director Merab Kikaleishvili found out that myself and the three other American players Alan Steffen (WA), Emil Mortuk and Jim Baroff (MD) had not eaten, we were all invited to his home. It was past midnight when we arrived, but within fifteen minutes, an elaborate spread of food fit for a king filled a table over thirty feet long. We again give deepest thanks to Merab and his family and the many other Georgian families who invited us into their homes for food, drinks, music, singing and dancing.

## The Games Begin

Finally after three party-filled days and nights, the backgammon tournament

began. 400 Soviets entered a preliminary event with 64 slots available to them. The other 64 spaces were reserved for invited foreign players from 12 countries, the majority from Germany. The 128 players were then grouped in fours and played a round robin within their group. 32 victors eventually emerged including Emil Mortuk and Alan Steffen.

## Slip-Slidin' Away

The players were then given a one-day break from backgammon for a ski trip to Gudauri, an Austrian ski resort in the Caucasus mountains. Unfortunately, the weather was very bad with heavy fog and icy roads. Within walking distance to the ski resort, the bus carrying 40 backgammon players lost traction and began to slide down the mountain road. Immediately, 40 backgammon players jumped out of the bus and began pushing the bus to stop it from going over the edge. What a sight!



Backgammon players unite to stop their ski bus from sliding off a cliff. [Photo by Tim Serges]

We walked up to the ski resort, but the conditions were too hazardous for skiing so we had to leave. On the way down, a player complained, "Now we can't say we skied the Caucasus'."

Another replied, "Sure we can. We just happened to do it while still on the bus!"

## The Soviets Are Weak With The Cube

On Wednesday the players were weeded down to the final-16 and standard single elimination format with Alan Steffen the last American hope. Over half the players remaining were either Soviet or Georgian which was surprising considering these people had been using the doubling cube for less than a year. Alan Steffen later commented, "Some of the Soviet and Georgian players I have encountered in this tournament have made near-perfect checker play. They only lack the power of the cube."

At the announced auction, we all debated over the various players' strengths and weaknesses prior to the bidding. However, the Georgian backgammon auction was a little different from what we're accustomed to in America. Instead of auctioning off the players, they auctioned off antiques,

crafts, and artwork.

The final four were determined the next day, with Steffen, Phillip Marmorstein (Germany), Michael Surguladze (President of the Georgian BG Federation), and Faik Guspinov (Azerbaijan, USSR) prevailing.

## USA Wins National Team Cup

Prior to the Championship semifinals, the National Team Cup competition began. Eight teams were assembled, four from Eastern Europe and four from the West including Team USA made up of Steffen, Mortuk, Baroff and myself. All the Western



Jim Baroff (left) encourages fellow USA team members Alan Steffen, Emil Mortuk and Tim Serges in an early round. [Photo by Levan Kipiani]

teams—USA, Germany, Holland, and a multinational Team Europa—advanced to the final four. USA was pitted against a strong German team in the semifinals. Mortuk lost, but Steffen defeated European Champion Thomas Lumper and Jim Baroff made a terrific comeback to defeat Heinrich Haussleiter 9-8 in the deciding match to send the USA team into the glory round.

In the finals, USA blanked Team Europa (Petri Pietilä-Finland, Arendt Lutz-Denmark, Harald Johanni-Germany) for the title.

## A "Rocky" Finals

In individual play, Steffen was pitted against Surguladze in the semifinals. Steffen, viewed as a god-figure over here, quickly grabbed a 13-2 advantage in the 17-point match. Many thought the match was over, but the Georgian player, with his freedom-fighting countrymen cheering him on, mounted a 13-9 comeback and looked like he was about to tie the match with the cube at 4 in the position shown on the back page. Surguladze elected to play safe, clearing the 6-point rather 6/off, 2/off with the chance to return hit on Steffen's 2-point if Steffen immediately rolled a 6. In fact, Steffen replied with 6-6 to win the match.

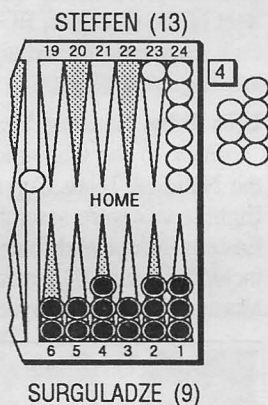
In the other semifinal, the aggressive—often wild—attacking style of Guspinov prevailed over 1988 World Champion Marmorstein. This set up a dramatic finals

[Continues]

# RUSSIA ...

[Continued]

1st Georgian Open Championship 17 point semifinal match. Alan Steffen (White) leads Micha Surguladze (Black), 13 to 9. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-2.**



match pitting USA against USSR with national pride added to the prize fund.



The finals. Faik Guspinov (USSR) vs. Alan Steffen (USA). That's Germany's Harald Johanni (right) recording the action. [Photo by Tim Serges]

The two combatants squared off in a flag-draped arena with a sunken center stage surrounded by a full-house crowd watching the play on a big screen TV. Again, Guspinov's aggressive attacking style coupled with Steffen's inability to enter from the bar on two and three point boards gave Guspinov a commanding 14-7 lead. As the final game drew near, emotional tears emerged from the Georgian crowd. On the final roll, when Guspinov's dice settled victoriously for a 19-14 win, he jumped up with arms outstretched as countrymen hugged him. It was a tremendous outpour of emotion, not unlike the final scene of Rocky I. But here the underdog had prevailed over the mighty giant shouting "Azerbaijan!" instead of "Adrian!"

## To The Victors...

At the awards ceremony, Guspinov received golden dice inlaid with diamonds and sapphires and \$5000 (USD) in a country where the average income translates into about \$20/month. Steffen collected \$2000. The USA team won a huge copper and bronze detailed plate.

The entire area was then transformed into a farewell banquet room. We all went out and danced to the live music of the Russian Beatles. They didn't look like John, Paul, George, and Ringo, but they sure did sound like them. The party went on until the

buses arrived early in the morning to take us to the airport.

## Back To The USSR

Many players agreed that this was the most incredible tournament they had ever attended. Leaving our hosts was very difficult. However, the Georgians have tentatively scheduled their next event for Sept. 1991 at an exotic Black Sea resort. And they tell us, "You ain't seen nothing yet."

Again, congratulations must be made to the organizers of this exceptional tournament: GBF president Micha Surguladze and officers Boris Zipuria, Nodar Giorgobiani, Tamaz Vrushadze, Merab Gachechiladze, and Bidzina Kiknadze; Merab Kikaleishvili, director of the sponsoring firm Vesta; and Werner Waschke of the German Backgammon Federation who helped co-direct the tournament. To say it in Russian:

ЭТО БЫЛО ПОТРЯСАЮЩЕ! Δ

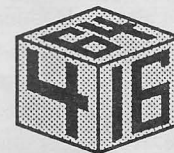
## 1st GEORGIAN OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPIONSHIP (128): 1st Faik Guspinov (AZER); 2nd Alan Steffen (USA); 3rd/4th Phillip Marmorstein (GER), Michael Surguladze (GEOR)  
NATIONAL TEAM CUP (8): 1st USA [Alan Steffen Capt., Jim Baroff, Emil Mortuk, Tim Serges-alt.]; 2nd Team Europa [Harald Johanni (GER), Arndt Lutz (DEN), Petri Pietilä (FIN)]  
LONGBACKGAMMON (32): 1st J. Babaev (AZER); 2nd V. Toreli (GEOR)

# \$15,000 Added



## THE EIGHTH ANNUAL NEVADA STATE BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIP



Jan. 30-Feb. 3, 1991

## Featuring

- Open, Intermediate & Novice
- Fifth Masters Invitational
- Backgammon Bonanza
- Jacuzzi Midnight Mixed Doubles
- Kickoff Tournament
- Jackpot Tournaments
- Doubles Tournament
- Rounds of Eight

## For More Information

Send your name and address to:  
**Northern Nevada Backgammon Association**  
P.O. Box 70101 • Reno, NV 89570-0101  
Or call Mark Richardson at 702/826-1984  
(weekdays) or 702/852-1221 (weekends).