

7th worldwide twin championships

MADS IS THE MASTER

**Steve Clark Takes Nevada State
Nack Ballard Wins International Cup**

Mads Andersen is getting to like Las Vegas. After splitting more than \$100,000 with Gianni Bizzarro in the Pro-Am Doubles Championships at the Desert Inn in March, Mads returned seven weeks later to grab over \$50,000 by winning the prestigious 28-player Masters Invitational at the International Twin Championships.

Howard Markowitz and a capable staff put on the event, held at the beautiful Desert Inn 25-30 April. Attendance reached nearly 300 players from across the globe.

Anderson, a rising star from Denmark who spends half the year in New York, bested Mike Svobodny and Malcolm Davis to reach the Masters finals: no easy road. On the other side of the drawsheet, a German shooting star, Dirk Schiemann was rolling over Elliott Winslow and Fred Chamanara. There was anticipation of a great finals on Sunday afternoon.



Vegas Masters champ Mads Andersen of Denmark displays his trophy.

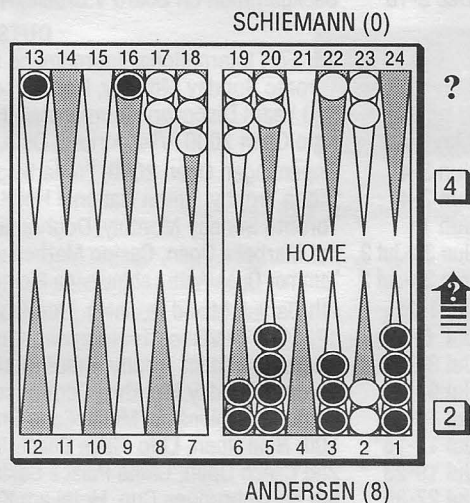
After three games in the 21-point championship match, it certainly didn't

2000 MASTERS INVITATIONAL—FINAL 8

Elliott Winslow	Schiemann	
Dirk Schiemann		Schiemann
Fred Chamanara	Chamanara	
Hugh Sconyers		Mads Andersen
Malcolm Davis	Davis	
Aris Hadji		Andersen
Mads Andersen	Andersen	
Mike Svobodny		

have the makings of a "great finals." Excellent play and cooperative dice helped Anderson to an 8-0 advantage. But Mads' solid lead didn't stop him from offering a 4-cube in the following position:

21-point Masters finals. Mads Anderson (Black) leads Dirk Schiemann (White), 8-0. **BLACK ON ROLL. RE-CUBE ACTIONS?**



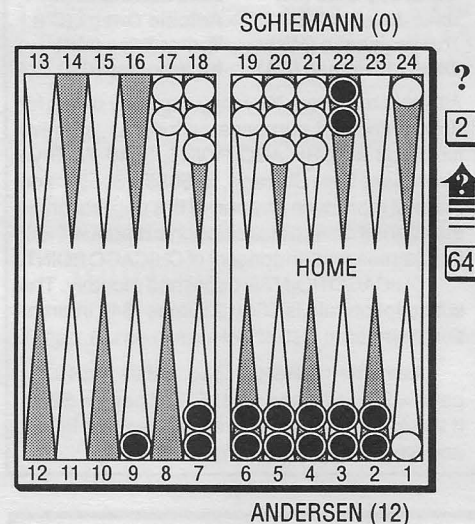
With Mads' huge pip count edge (74-118), the double is correct. But trailing 8-0, Dirk looked at this cube as an opportunity to quickly get back into the match and took.

Mads rolled 4-2 playing 13/9, 16/14. Dirk followed with 4-1 (7/3, 6/5) and Mads tossed an ugly 6-6. He could only play two of the 6s, giving Dirk 15 ways to hit (any 6, 4-2, 5-1). Dirk failed to capitalize. Four rolls later, Mads left another shot which Dirk again missed. Now the score was 12-0.

The next game also went Andersen's way as he showed that he wasn't afraid to

double with a big lead:

21-point Masters finals. Anderson (Black) leads Schiemann (White), 12-0. **BLACK ON ROLL. CUBE ACTIONS?**



[Continued on page 5]

I DOUBLE YOU GUYS, SEE!



When he wasn't gunning down gangsters on the screen, Edward G. Robinson had time for backgammon. Here he is at the BG table with his wife in their Beverly Hills home in a 1949 ad for Pabst Beer.

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Bill Davis

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

Tel: 773/583-6464 ♦ Fax: 773/583-3264

E-mail: bg@chicagopoint.com

www.chicagopoint.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Carol Joy Cole (MI)

Laila Leonhardt (IL)

Jake Jacobs (IL)

Antonio Ortega (C.R.)

Duane Jensen (MN)

Walter Trice (MA)

Danny Kleinman (CA)

Kit Woolsey (CA)

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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

E-mail: letters@chicagopoint.com

MBC REPORT WAS OLD NEWS

I'm a little concerned that the 2000 Midwest Backgammon Championships report appeared on a free backgammon website [gammonvillage.com] before I had a chance to read it in my paid-for Chicago Point. Can you explain?—*Michael Depreli, Kent, England*

It was a tough call, Michael, but we felt the publicity for our event would be a good thing. Rest assured, advance publication of Chicago Point articles won't happen for any event other than the MBC.—Ed.

PICTURE THIS

My daughter Dawn and I had a great time at the recent Midwest Championships. Thanks for sending us pictures from the event.

Dawn says Peter Kalba was right: I was a boat anchor in the Doubles tournament.

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



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

* Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

May 13	Rocky Mountain Club Tournament, Arthritis Fdn. Bldg., Denver, CO	719/574-5598
May 18	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
May 20*	Redwood Empire Club Monthly, Embassy Suites, San Rafael, CA	707/824-9715
May 21*	Ace Point Doubles Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
May 21*	Austin Bimonthly Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/261-8518
May 21	Atlanta Monthly Tournament, Tony's American Grille, Roswell, GA	-770/333-1876
May 21*	Backgammon by the Bay Monthly Tournament, QCafé, Palo Alto, CA	831/688-9722
<u>May 26-29</u>	<u>21st Chicago Open, Wyndham NW Chicago Hotel, Itasca, IL</u>	<u>847/674-0120</u>
May 28	Ace Point May Flowers Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Jun 1*	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer tournaments@cyberarts.com	
Jun 11	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyway's Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/252-7755
Jun 11	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, MA	781/938-7852
Jun 11*	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, OH	330/966-2811
Jun 15*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Jun 17*	Redwood Empire Club Monthly, Embassy Suites, San Rafael, CA	707/824-9715
Jun 25*	Ace Point Sunday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Jun 25*	Atlanta Monthly Tournament, Tony's American Grille, Roswell, GA	-770/333-1876
Jun 29*	Michigan Summer Warm-up, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI	810/232-9731
<u>Jun 30-Jul 3</u>	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jul 9*	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, OH	330/966-2811
Jul 15*	Redwood Empire Club Monthly, Embassy Suites, San Rafael, CA	707/824-9715
<u>Jul 28-30</u>	<u>Y2K Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY</u>	<u>716/387-0767</u>
Aug 5-6*	7th Annual Summer Cooker & Pool Party, Hast Home, Pittsburgh, PA	412/823-7500
Aug 6*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyway's Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/252-7755
<u>Aug 11-13*</u>	<u>Georgia Championships & Peach Cup, Hilton Garden Inn, Atlanta, GA</u>	<u>770/333-1876</u>
<u>Sep 1-4</u>	<u>48th Indiana Open, Sheraton-Westin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN</u>	<u>317/255-8902</u>
<u>Sep 22-24</u>	<u>2000 Florida State Championships, Sheridan Suites, Ft. Lauderdale, FL</u>	<u>954/938-4304</u>
<u>Sep 22-24</u>	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Towpath Inn, Turin, NY</u>	<u>716/387-0767</u>
<u>Oct 13-15</u>	<u>Illinois State Championships, Springfield Hilton, Springfield, IL</u>	<u>217/528-0117</u>
<u>Nov. 24-26</u>	<u>Ohio State Championships, Akron Holiday Inn, Akron, OH</u>	<u>330/966-2811</u>
Dec 3-10	Backgammon on Board V Cruise, New Orleans-Montego Bay-Cozumel	773/583-6464

OUTSIDE USA

May 8-14	6th EBN International Tournament, Casino San Roque, Spain	34950-133009
May 14	Toronto Sunday Monthly, Doghouse Riley's Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
May 18-20	500 Years Discovery Tournament, Hotel XAO, Porto Seguro, Brazil	5571-3511478
May 19-21	Oslo Open 2000, Vika Atrium, Oslo, Norway	4722-360966
Jun 3-4	Copenhagen Open 2000, Frederiksgård Skole, Denmark	4536-416035
Jun 3-4	Hilton Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44152-2888676
Jun 11	Toronto Sunday Monthly, Doghouse Riley's Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
Jun 30-Jul 2	1st Marbella Open, Casino Marbella/Hotel Andalucia, Marbella, Spain	3902-69018168
Jun 30-Jul 2	Tammer Open/Antti Lehmusvirta Memorial, Hotel Tammer, Tampere, Finland	358-5068061
Jul 1-2*	9th Danish Mixed Doubles, Humlebaek BG Klub, Denmark	4549-160749
Jul 6-9	12th City of Venice Tournament, Casinò Municipale, Venice, Italy	3941-5900769
Jul 8-9	Andrew Sarjeant Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44152-2888676
Jul 9*	Toronto Sunday Monthly, Doghouse Riley's Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
Jul 10-16	World Championship, Monte Carlo Grand Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	USA: 954/527-4033
Jul 17-18*	10th Nice Open, Lido Plage Beach Bar & Restaurant, Nice, France	33493-879438
Jul 19-23	2nd Czech Open, China Palace Casino, Prague, Czech Republic	49911-409505
Jul 27-30*	6th Kaiserbrunnen Cup, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Aug 5-6	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44152-2888676
Aug 17-20	Grand Prix de Lugano 2000, Hotel Grand Eden, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-3374425
Aug 19-20*	Danish Doubles Championship, Solrød ABC, Denmark	4556-144282
Aug 19-28	Mind Sports Olympiad/British Open, London, England	44152-2888676
Sep 1-3	12th European Championship, HIT Casino Park, Nova Gorica, Slovenia	3902-69018168
Sep 2-3	Roy Hollands Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44152-2888676
Sep 30-Oct 1	Sandy Osborne Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44152-2888676
Oct 5-8	3rd Austrian Open & Doubles Championship, Casino Seefeld, Seefeld, Austria	431-9715889
Oct 7-9	6th Japan Open & 30th Championship, Nakano Sun Plaza, Tokyo, Japan	813-33733814
Oct 12-15	Salvador Open, Clube da Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil	5571-3511478
Oct 14-15*	9th Abne Fynske Mesterskaber, Fyns BG Union, Odense, Denmark	4565-912551
Oct 20-21	Swiss Meisterschaft 2000, Zurich, Switzerland	4179-4015811
Nov 1-5	7th German Open, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Nov 1-5	Consulting Doubles World Championship, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-334425
Nov 3-5	Grand Prix de Suisse 2000, Hotel Royal Splendid, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-334425
Nov 11-12*	Town Harbor Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44152-2888676

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

She wants to play again next year, so I guess you will see my ugly mug again.

By the way, I've never been on the front page of any publication before. No "post office" photo jokes please!—*Dawn and Jerry Vangness, West Allis, WI*

POETRY CORNER?

I am a fan of your magazine, but have looked in vain for its Poetry Corner. I recognize that the omission is probably not just an oversight; nevertheless, enclosed is my submission.—*Quincy White, New Buffalo, MI*

Quincy's poem appears on page X.—Ed.

MORE ON TOURNEY "FAIRNESS"

In my April POINT article ("Making

Backgammon More Fair"), I suggested that directors give new players in a division a break on their entry fee, and/or charge a penalty for previous winners and top-ranked players. The comments I've heard were that of course, the better players won't stand for this kind of penalty.

To that, I have two comments. First, the better players are not penalized, because in fact, it will increase the return on their investment (or odds of winning money) simply because there will be more entrants and more total money in the pool. And the extra money will come from players who are not likely to be contenders to win the event, anyway.

Second, one tweak to my idea is that those players who are getting a "discount" for entering a new division may also be required to play a qualifying round to get into the main draw. So, in effect, the full-priced players got a bye, thereby increasing

their odds that way.

But the main point is that the average player in a field of 64, by virtue of his true odds of winning, is probably losing, say, 90% of his entry fee the moment he first rolls his dice, while a players like Neil Kazaross are only losing 60% of their entry fee. So when we charge Neil an extra 20%, or conversely, give the *worst* players a 20% break, we have only tilted those odds *very, very* slightly if at all.

The bottom line is that the better players do not get hurt, and there is incentive for more people to enter tournaments, particularly if their skill level is far from those near the top of their particular division.

[Continued on page 4]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1999

Top 100 compiled through 9 April 2000 after 3 events
(Coming in May & June: Chicago Open, Michigan Summer Champs)



Paul Franks	22.88	Steve Maas	5.60	Perry Firooz	3.27	Dee Webster	1.81
Bob Bishop	22.35	Walt Swan	5.47	Tom Leahy	3.21	Paul Lombardo	1.58
Mike Ungerleider	16.36	Mark Anshus	5.20	Jim Price	3.20	Leon Weiner	1.46
George Barr	15.39	Timothy Jaxon	5.00	Sal Chehayeb	2.50	Tom Hodous	1.25
Joe Ausmann	11.44	Steve Kovach	5.00	Gary Fries	2.50	Jay Cordes	0.94
Jeff Kane	11.40	Alan Gaarder	5.00	Phil Michelson	2.50	Bob Sexton	0.90
Ed Zell	11.20	Guy Nicosia	5.00	Ed King	2.50	Jacquie Lee	0.88
John Greci	10.75	Bill Tallmadge	5.00	Elayne Feinstein	2.40	Fran Miller	0.86
Andy Palumbo	10.59	Matt Reklaitis	5.00	Tom Machaj	2.08	Jeff Dillinger	0.68
Ray Baker	10.40	Laila Leonhardt	4.16	Don Heinsler	2.08	Tony Burbach	0.59
Jona Alexander	6.55	Linda Rockwell	4.16	David Rubin	1.90	Glenn Martells	0.59
Bob Glass	6.55	Garol Tchalabian	3.78	Ken Ellenberger	1.89	Richard Plumer	0.44
Sam Pottle	6.40	Steve Michelson	3.53	Charles toots	1.89	Nan Spector	0.44
Sean Garber	5.70	Eliot Bean	3.27	Joe Davidson	1.81		



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2000 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 30 APR.

im Mabee	8.84	Sinan Yoyen	3.04	Norma Shyer	1.76	Chris Wilson	0.72
Herb Roman	8.00	Mary Franks	2.96	Carter Mattig	1.52	George Marasas	0.64
Tak Morioka	6.96	Paul Lombardo	2.72	Ralph Byrns	1.28	Brian Barber	0.64
Tim Carroll	6.88	Bill Bartholomay	2.64	Steve Klesker	1.28	Val Zimnicki	0.56
Phyllis Smolinski	6.32	Paul Franks	2.56	Georgina Flanagan	1.20	John Brussel	0.48
Jake Jacobs	5.76	Mike Sutton	2.48	Elaine Kehm	1.12	Wendy Kaplan	0.40
Ken Bond	5.04	Rodney Bell	2.28	Andy Natale	1.12	Jerry Brooks	0.24
Joe Wollick	4.56	Paul Friedman	2.24	Marc Rosset	1.00	Roger Blaine	0.20
Bob Zavoral	4.40	Ed Buerger	2.20	Gary Kay	0.96	Richard Stawowy	0.20
Harold Elgazar	4.20	Bill Keefe	2.16	Reggie Porter	0.88	Keith Kuigowski	0.20
Paul Baraz	4.00	Joann Feinstein	2.16	Mike Cyrkiel	0.88	Ann Thomas	0.16
Romeo Kap	3.76	Harry Cohn	1.92	Bill Davis	0.84	Tom Machaj	0.12
Don Jayhan	3.76	Bob Steen	1.92	Bridget McCoy	0.80	Howard Chow	0.12
Richard Lloyd	3.68	Joe Ausmann	1.84	Peter Kalba	0.72	Jon Sion	0.08
Paul Klein	3.44						

HERB ROMAN's 4.24 points in April vaulted him into second place in the 2000 points race and earned him monthly honors. Runner's-up were Tim Mabee (3.04) and Phyllis Smolinski (2.44).

12th EUROPEAN BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIP & MITTELEUROPA BACKGAMMON DECENNIAL

1st-3rd September, 2000

HIT Hotel Casino Park
Nova Gorica (Slovenia)

To request an invitation, e-mail
Marco Fornasir: fornasir@iol.it

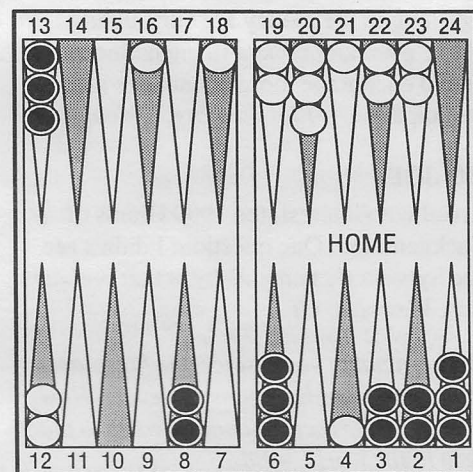


your move

PROBLEM #263

to be analyzed by Steve Mellen

Match to 7 points. Black leads White,
6-5 Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.**



ASK DANNY

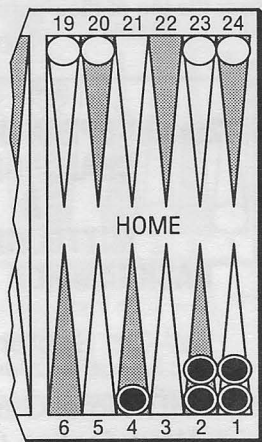


© 2000 by Danny Kleinman

OVER-THE-BOARD CALCS

Dear Danny: The following bear-off position arose in an early 15-point Open division match at the recent Nevada State Tournament. With the score tied at 11-11, Black offered a redouble to 4 which White accepted and won.

15-point match. Black and White are tied at 11-11. **BLACK REDOUBLES TO 4. SHOULD WHITE ACCEPT?**



Later, an analysis broke out among a number of expert players. Every expert was of the opinion that White should drop the recube. The real debate occurred when I changed the parameters of the problem making it a money game. Two experts thought it was a fairly clear pass whereas another two equally-skilled players were

certain that White should take.

Hugh Sconyers' bear-off program can solve this position in seconds. My problem is that I can't use Hugh Sconyers' bear-off program against my opponent. What is your thought process for estimating whether White should take or drop the redouble over the board?—Dependent on Computers

DEAR DEPENDENT: Not only can't you use computer programs at the table, but you can't use bear-off charts, pencil-and-paper calculations, or other mechanical aids. You can, however, use benchmarks. One benchmark you should have stored in your (human) memory is the simple "3-roll vs. 3-roll bear-off" in which each side has five or six men left, all on the 1-point. That's a redouble and a close pass: I find the taker's 21.22% chances an easy figure to remember, but "close" (within 4% of the 25% takepoint) is good enough.

How does this ending compare to that benchmark?

Black's position is slightly worse: double-aces, one of the rolls that will get him off in two shakes in the benchmark whether he rolls it at his first turn or his seconde, won't do so here if his other roll is any ace or 3-2.

White's position is significantly better for purposes of getting off in the one or two shakes required. Though two of his rolls, 1-1 and 2-2 won't always work, two other rolls, 6-5, always will. Eight other rolls, 6-2, 6-1, 5-2 and 5-1, leave White with more winning numbers on his second shake than they would in the benchmark. Moreover,

unlike in the benchmark, White will sometimes be able to redouble: at a small profit if he remains with men on the 5- and 2-points after rolling 6-1; at a substantial profit if he remains with men on the 5- and 1-points after rolling 6-2 or 2-2. Finally, White's double-6s get him off in one roll and win even if Black also rolls doublets.

These small differences, I would judge, combine to turn the benchmark close pass into a close take.

Now to answer another interesting question that you didn't ask: why were experts unanimous in thinking White should have passed the redouble with the score tied at 11-11 in a 15-point match?

A small reason (not enough to turn the close take into a pass): if White takes the redouble at this score, the cube is dead, so he won't be able to use it after rolling 6-2, 2-2, or 6-1.

The big reason: White's takepoint for a redouble at this score is not the "normal" 25% but the much higher 32%, the match-winning probability he can obtain by passing.—Yours, Danny Δ

Editor's note: Hugh Sconyers Bearoff Program tells us that the chance of White winning this position cubeless is 27.41%—a clear money game take. With the cube on 2, just prior to Black's redouble, Black is worth: $2 \times 0.4318 = 0.8636$ of a point.

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

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

I personally know many players (including myself) who play in fewer tournaments because we are aware that our odds of finishing in the money are very small. There's no doubt that a financial incentive would encourage more attendance and participation.—Phil Simborg, Chicago, IL

NO JOE

I read with interest, the 1999 Giants of Backgammon. One question: I didn't see Joe Sylvester's name. Why is that?—Larry Lau, Westport, CT

It's been many years since Joe has played in an important backgammon event. However, he still received enough votes to place 98th in the world.—Ed.

LOOKING FOR A GOOD MAC BACKGAMMON GAME

I recently downloaded a demo program called Expert Backgammon from the Pure Mac website: <http://www.pure-mac.com/board.html#expertbg>. As I have a Macintosh computer with OS 9, the only other program I can find for the Mac is David's Backgammon, which I'm not overly impressed with.

My problem is that I can't locate the company, Komodo Software in Las Vegas, or the gentleman who wrote the program, Thomas R. Johnson. If you or any of your members are familiar with the program or know where I might be able to get a copy of it I'd appreciate it if you'd let me know.—Sean Moriarty, seanachai51@earthlink.net

Can any of our readers help Sean find the best Mac backgammon program?—Ed. Δ



ILLINOIS ACTION



Bill Davis
773/583-6464
Peter Kalba
773/252-7755

Tuesday, 6:00 P.M. at Golden Flame, 6417 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago; 773/792-0424.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON at Anyway's Chicago Grill & Bar, 5 E. Roosevelt Rd., Oakbrook Terrace; 630/932-9323.

PUB CLUB: Tourn. Mon., 7:00 P.M. at Danny's Grill and Bar, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Joe Wollick (847/755-0887).

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BACKGAMMON CLUB: Tournaments Monday, 6:30 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Gary Daniels (309/452-3034)

SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wed., 6:30 P.M. at Brewhaus, 617 E. Washington, Springfield. Ben Zemaitis (217/483-4028).

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

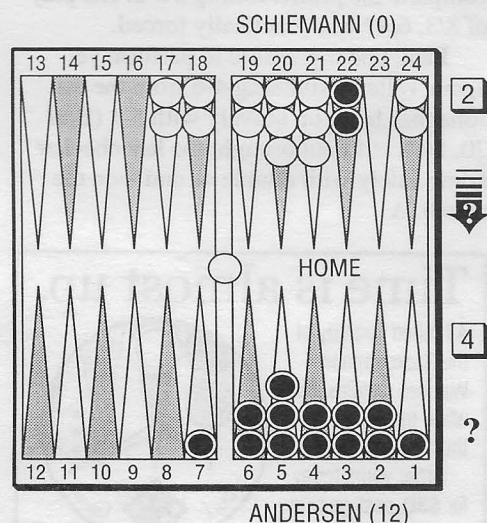
PEORIA BACKGAMMON CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Ed Zell (309/674-0557).

MADS...

[Continued from page 1]

Trailing 12-0, Dirk's take is easy. A couple of rolls later:

21-point Masters finals. Anderson (Black) leads Schiemann (White), 12-0. **WHITE ON ROLL. RECUBE ACTIONS?**



As he flipped the 4-cube over, Dirk said, "What should I wait for?" Andersen took the scary cube, perhaps partly because of his extreme good fortune in the first four games. Dirk again missed the critical ace-shot, but eventually won four points anyway. Score: 12-4.

Over the next 11 games, Schiemann battled back to trail 16-15. However, that was as close as he would get. The 29-year-old Andersen shut the door winning the final three games to earn the biggest victory of his life.



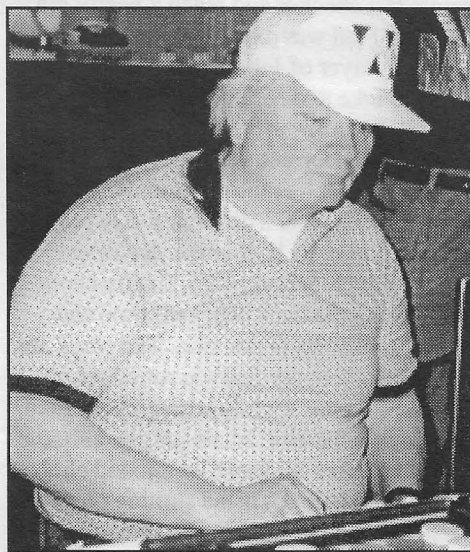
Another fab finish for Nack Ballard (right) as he defeats José Salema in the International Cup.

The Twin Championships

Making up the "Twin" in Twin Championships are the International Cup and the

Nevada State Championships. California's Nack Ballard (the highest-rated American on the Giants of Backgammon list), defeated José Salema of Portugal to capture the International Cup.

The 17th Nevada State Championship was won by Steve Clark of San Ramon, California. A former bridge player, Steve switched his interests to backgammon in the early 1990s at Kit Woolsey's prodding.



17th Nevada State Backgammon Champion Steve Clark.

Clark's opponent in the 17-point finals was San Diego expert Dorn Bishop. Although judged to be a match underdog, Clark played with confidence and flair, jumping out to an 11-4 advantage. Then Dorn got busy. In the next four games, Bishop erased the deficit to take a 13-11 lead.

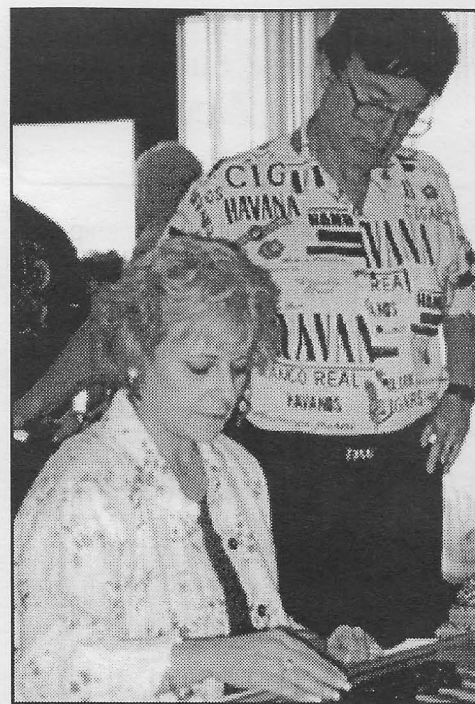
With the score tied at 15-all, Clark offered an advantage cube and won the uneventful final game and match 17-15. With first prize worth more than \$15,000, it was easily the biggest victory of Steve's life.

Mary Franks Leads Fine Chicago Showing

Chicago's Mary Franks, not to be outdone by husband Paul (1999 Chicago Open champ, 2000 Midwest champ), defeated a strong 90-player Intermediate field en route to winning the Nevada State Intermediate title. Mary's toughest match was in the semifinals where she won a double match-point thriller against another Chicago area player, Phyllis Smolinski.

Her final match vs. Dion Hogan (MI) was never in doubt, as good play and well-behaved dice helped her cruise to a 13-4 win.

In other Chicagoland results, Carter Mattig collected two trophies (2nd, Intermediate International Cup; 2nd Cons., Nevada State) and Jake Jacobs and Paul Franks both cashed by placing 3rd/4th in the Championship Consolation.



Mary Franks rolls home her prime en route to winning the Intermediate title. Husband Paul (background) was a Championship Consolation semifinalist.

WITH STEVE WYNN's recent purchase of the Desert Inn (as a birthday gift for his wife), the venue for the fall Las Vegas Open remains uncertain. Director Howard Markowitz did say that the Treasure Inn and Riviera Hotel are possibilities. Results: Δ

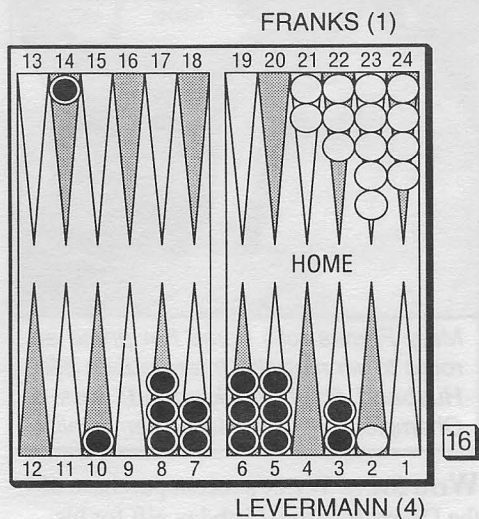
7TH WORLDWIDE TWIN CHAMPIONSHIPS

NEVADA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP (111): 1-Steve Clark (CA), 2-Dorn Bishop (CA), 3/4-Drew Giovanis (FL) / John Graas; 1C-Dennis Culpepper (VA), 2C-Jeff Acierio (NY), 3C/4C-Jake Jacobs (IL) / Paul Franks (IL); 1LC-Andre Nicoulin, 2LC-Mike Corbett (FL). **INTERMEDIATE (90):** 1-Mary Franks (IL), 2-Dion Hogan (MI), 3/4-Peter Mallen / Phyllis Smolinski (IL); 1C-Leo Liberal, 2C-Carter Mattig (IL), 3C/4C-Scott Sevel / Ted Kirit; 1LC-Joe Moore, 2LC-Guy Nicosia (MN). **BEGINNER (50):** 1-Joubert Malouf (NV), 2-Jacqueline Lee, 3/4-Sohrab Ghobadimanesh / Michael Robertson; 1C-Arsalan Najafi, 2C-Jason Lahmani, 3C/4C-Tim Oldfather / Glen Lipska; 1LC-Marge Koenig, 2LC-Afranio Aquinot. **INTERNATIONAL CUP CHAMPIONSHIP:** 1-Nack Ballard (CA), 2-José Salema (Portugal), 3/4-David Rockwell (IL) / Kenji Shimodaira (Japan). **INTERMEDIATE:** 1-Mark Ferrin, 2-Carter Mattig (IL), 3/4-Anna Maria Zarb / Unes Gollestani. **BEGINNER:** 1-Jacqueline Lee, 2-Alfranio Aquino, 3/4-Sohrab Ghobadimanesh / Ron Bernstein. **MASTERS JACKPOT (28):** 1-Mads Andersen (Denmark), 2-Dirk Schiemann (Germany), 3/4-Fred Chamanara (IL) / Malcolm Davis (TX). **LIMITED JACKPOT "A" (16):** 1-Dorn Bishop (CA), 2-Steve Mellen (NY). **"B" (16):** 1-Bill Phipps, 2-Joe Freedman (VA). **BLITZ (328):** 1-Alvaro Savio (Brazil), 2-Judy Collins (CA). **SENIORS (64):** 1-Yoshikazu Hashimoto (Japan), 2-Cy Yehros. **DOUBLES (32):** 1-Kaneko Shimichiro & Omo Osamu (Japan), 2-Norm Wiggins & Ron Coffin (CA). **MINI-MATCH (256):** 1-Nasu Mashakiko (Japan), 2-Betty Coppic (GA).

16-cube

by Steve Mellen

2000 Nevada State Championship 11-point Consolation quarterfinals. Johannes Levermann (Black) leads Paul Franks (Black), 4-1. Levermann owns a 16-cube. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-3.**



This position arose in the money round of the recent Nevada State Consolation bracket, between Chicago's own Paul Franks, who has been enjoying a great tournament run lately, and German superstar Johannes Levermann. No, the 16-cube on Levermann's side is not a misprint. Johannes, leading 4-1 in the 11-point match, had doubled to 8 on the previous roll, needing only to fill one point to prime Paul's last checker and reach a nearly gin position. Paul was disinclined to fall behind 8-1 to a player of Johannes's caliber and chose to take and recube for the match. Snowie™ confirms both players' cube actions to be correct.

Getting back to the diagrammed position, Johannes had a difficult 6-3 to play. He spent close to 10 minutes deciding between 8/2*, 5/2 and 14/5, finally choosing to bring the back checker home and keep his builders in position. The plays are close, but a lengthy Snowie rollout makes Johannes's play slightly worse (0.02) than pointing on the blot. Interestingly, although Snowie prefers 8/2*, 5/2, its second choice (only 0.006 behind) is the slotting play of 14/11, 10/4, which Johannes admits he never considered.

The continuation was exciting. After Johannes's 14/5, Paul rolled an immediate 2-5 to escape. The commotion among the spectators had barely died down when Johannes calmly rolled a hitting 6-1, played 10/9*/3. (He later wondered if 10/9*, 8/2, preserving an extra builder for the 4-point, might have been superior.) Paul entered with a 4-2. Johannes again failed to complete the prime, rolling a 5-2. His play of 8/3, 6/4* was practically forced.

Paul, under pressure to perform yet again, rolled a stunning 4-6 from the bar. Johannes hung on bravely with 5-1 (Bar/20, 5/4), but Paul brought the last checker home safely with double 4s and won the match. Δ

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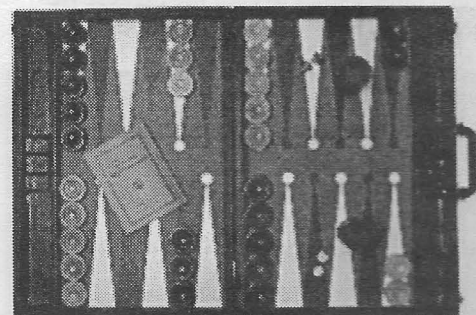


AMALGAMATION

Backgammon aficionado **Hugh Hefner** (CA) recently had a street named for him in Chicago (birthplace of his Playboy empire). Hugh has nothing on our **Bill Bartholomay** whose name appears on the Chicago street sign at Fullerton and Cannon... We're glad to see **Harald Johanni** is back to publishing Backgammon Magazin, this time in newsletter form. For info on subscribing, e-mail Harald at johanni@backgammonmagazin.de... **Jill Goldstein** (918/396-3535) announces the grand opening of the Green Country Backgammon Club. It will be at Baxter's Interurban Restaurant in Tulsa, OK on 22 June. Backgammon by the Bay is also back in action. Their grand reopening will be at QCafé in Palo Alto, CA on 21 May. **Beth Skillman** (beth@backgammon.org) has the info. For an up-to-date listing of all USA clubs, point your browser to: <http://www.chicagopoint.com/usclubs.html>... We may never see **Randall Witt** (TN) at another backgammon tournament. It seems Randall has found his niche at poker tournaments. His latest success (after only four years of serious play) was at **Jack Binion's** World Poker Open 6 April.

Randall won the Limit Hold'em Championship for a cool \$42,000... From Reuters News Service: Two chess players are facing possible bans from the gentle sport of intellectuals after a fist fight during Australia's premier Grand Prix tournament... Aren't you glad backgammon isn't a 'gentle sport of intellectuals'?!... Condo-lences to backgammon master **Neil Kazaross** (IL) on the passing of his mother last month. Also, our prayers go out to the family of **Marty Tatosian** (IL) who died on 17 April. An avid Chicago area player for 20 years, Marty ranked 39th on the all-time Chicagoland master point chart... On the mend: **Ralf Boettger** (IL) who was mugged and suffered a broken arm. We hope it wasn't his rolling arm... Was **Valerie Valentine's** Backgammon Club of Chicago the first organized backgammon in our town? Hardly. According to **Herbert Asbury's** 1940 book *Gem of the Prairie*, Chicago, circa 1840, "...harbored more gambling-houses than either Cincinnati or St. Louis. Short card games, such as brag, poker and seven-up, were principally played, with an occasional faro bank and sometimes a session of backgammon."... **Yamin Yamin** (IL) awarded diplomas to the top eight 1997 and 1999 Giants of Backgammon winners at the recent Nevada State Calcutta auction. What a shame that

although many winners were in Vegas, only **Nack Ballard** (CA) was present to receive his honors... An incredible bid for a 1940's backgammon board at eBay last month. The cork surface board in like-new condition with 1 3/4" beveled pieces sold for \$560...



This cork board, made by John Samuels of NY (circa 1940s), sold on eBay for \$560.

Bob Wilensky (GA), who breeds and races thoroughbred horses, has started to give them backgammon names. "Chouette Player" won his first race 13 April. "Dancing on the Bar" will start his career in Kentucky soon... And finally from **Kirk Douglas**: "A man likes to feel he's in control, but it's a damned illusion. The X factor is always there. You can have all the talent in the world, but without luck, you go nowhere. Δ

QUESTIONABLE RULES TAINT NEW KG RATING LIST

Hats off to Laila Leonhardt and Matt Reklaitis for their ongoing tireless work in resurrecting the KG International Backgammon Rating List (posted online at www.bg-info.com). The old rating list was destroyed in August 1996 when creator Kent Goulding's hard disk containing all the data crashed. Nearly 14 years of input, similar to the rating system utilized by the US Chess Federation, was lost.

With new software in place, the question facing Leonhardt and company is: how best to get the system up and running? The rules they propose to follow appear at www.bg-info.com:

1. Data entry has begun, beginning with tournaments from 1999.
2. A tournament must have a bracket of 32 or more players to be rated. Only Championship and Masters events will be rated.
3. Main, Consolations and Last Chance divisions will be rated.
4. A match has to have been played to be rated. Walkovers and/or forfeits will not be rated.
5. The tournament must be at least a 2-day event with a minimum equivalent of \$100 entry fee and open to players from other countries.
6. The tournament must announce in advance that it will be KG-rated, on the invitation and/or posted at Carol Joy Cole's "Mark Your Calendar" website.

Initial Player Seeding:

7. Any player with less than 1600 rating on the 1995 list will begin from 1500/0.
8. Any player with less than 300 experience points on the 1995 list will begin from 1500/0.
9. Players with 1600 or more points on the 1995 list will be seeded and receive their old KG rating with 0 experience points.

We foresee problems with these rules. Let's evaluate them point-by-point:

1. Making past events KG-rated without any player notification is unfair and opens up the possibility of selective reporting (e.g. I'll petition the director of Tourney A to submit the event I won, but won't say a word to the director of Tourney B where I lost three straight matches). To avoid this problem, Kent Goulding stated in 1991 that "... only tournament events abiding by the principles of advance notification will be rated." If it was good enough for Kent in 1991, why not follow this principle from the start now?

The new KG team argues that rating unannounced old events is necessary to achieve a "more stable rating list as fast as possible without letting another year pass."

We ask, 'Why is one year so important?' Do the players want a rating list based on incomplete data from 1999 (or perhaps before), or would they prefer a fresh, new listing beginning with results collected from 2000 tournaments that have followed the principles of advance notification?

The new KG team believes that if the advance notification rule is strictly followed, the "Midwest Championship would probably end up being the only tournament rated in 2000."

That's false. To comply with advance notification, directors of 2000 tournaments whose invitations are already printed need only post a notice at registration, or make a statement at the Calcutta as to which events will be KG-rated.

2. With the 32-player rule, the recent \$3000 entry fee Las Vegas Master's Jackpot (28 entrants) would not qualify for rating. Nor would the \$3500 Turkish Giant Jackpot. That's not right. If the event is Open, Championship or Master level, it should be rated regardless of the number of players.

3. There is a problem with rating Last Chance events (aside from the fact that they are usually only five points in length). Rule #4 states that a match has to be played to be rated. For 1999 (at least), it will be impossible to determine this in the early Last Chance rounds because staffers posting the scores have not specified whether a player won by forfeit.

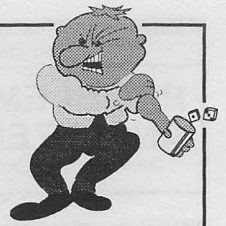
4. We are in complete agreement with Rule #4.

5. This rule is going to upset British Isles Backgammon players where their entry fee is less than \$100, but a typical bracket often consists of 100+ players. Why should money be

[Continued on page 8]

Battling Bear-off Bob

by Quincy White



Battling Bear-off Bob is the local club's Ty Cobb,
Though he may not be the player most able.
Seems he's often behind, but pays it no mind,
He's the scourge of the backgammon table.

You're eight rolls ahead. You're sure that he's dead.
He should never have taken your double.
You're leading by far. He has a man on the bar,
But it's you who are really in trouble.

For Bob is the kind who is good when behind—
At his best when behind quite a lot.
Your smile starts to wear off as you begin your bear off,
And see that you've left him a blot.

One shot at a blot, not a heck of a lot,
But enough for our conquering hero.
Go figure like this: The chance that he'll miss
Is somewhere way down there near zero.

He cups his dice and shakes them twice,
Rolls, hits. You're off and then stay out.
You're standing your ground. He's racing around.
Another Bob blowout is lurking about.

You come in repeatedly. He hits you immediately
And continues to step up the pace.
You finally get out. It won't be a rout,
but it'll still be a pretty good race.

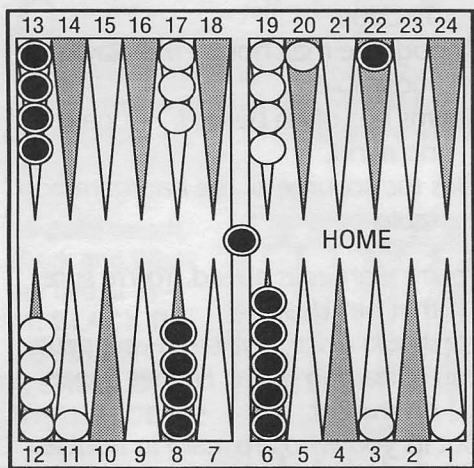
You take back the cube. He's facing no rube.
Your pip-count still shows you ahead.
He then rolls a double. You sense you're in trouble,
But let it be said that you're dead.

He pulls off his four. You lift one; he four more.
Nobody bears off better than Bob.
You're going to pay at the end of the day
'Cause Battling Bear-off Bob's on the job.

**PROBLEM #262
ANALYZED**

by Kit Woolsey

Match to 7 points. Black leads White, 6 to 5 (Crawford). **BLACK TO PLAY 6-1.**



Anyone can play the good rolls well. The mark of a good player is his ability to make the most of his bad rolls. This position is a good example. Black has

four legal plays. They are all possible, but none are appealing. What is the least worst play?

B/24, 8/2 is just too ugly. True, this duplicates White's aces so White probably won't be able to hit the blot, but so what? Black will have to worry about the blot next roll when there will probably be other important things for him to do elsewhere on the board. Even if Black manages to make the 2-point, that is not a great bonus. Black needs to do more than play safe—he needs some structure.

B/24, 13/7 is too dangerous. White has a lot of hitting numbers. Black loses plenty of ground if a third checker is sent back, and it is still worse if White is able to hit and cover. In addition the play starts to strip Black's midpoint without even slotting a key inner board point. This can't be right.

B/24, 22/16 looks okay. White will almost certainly be able to hit or make the 5-point, but she might not be able to do both. If White doesn't hit, Black is in decent shape since he will probably be able to escape the checker and play with one man back. If White doesn't make the 5-point, Black will have several numbers to

hit the blot and even up the position. Even if White hits and covers, Black is far from dead. White has only a two point board, so Black can enter. And since Black's checkers are far back, he should have time to reorganize.

B/24/18 is a more direct approach to making a good point. The problem is that White may have too many good numbers. The checker on White's 3-point will be more vulnerable than the checker on the ace point, and if White hits the blot on the bar point, she will be closer in for an attack. Since White is likely to have her 5-point after the next roll, Black has to worry about being attacked.

While B/24/18 is okay, I prefer the safer B/24, 22/16. Entering and moving to White's bar point communicates with Black's back checkers, but communication is a two-way street. That communication may just lead to Black getting blitzed. If Black hides out of reach on White's ace point, the danger of being blitzed is much less.

Black must accept the fact that he has rolled a bad number and go quietly, hoping to regroup later. B/24, 22/16 is the best way to wait out the storm. Δ

NEW KG LIST...*[Continued from page 7]*

a criteria in determining the skill of a backgammon player? Rule #5 should be eliminated.

6. This is the most important rule of all. Follow this rule and the new KG International Rating List will be pure.

7-9. Seeding players is totally biased. The list should start from scratch so everyone has an equal chance from day one. Why should those players listed at 1600 or more in 1995 be allowed to retain their rating while a player with a 1599 rating is reduced to 1500? Is this going to be an historical backgammon rating system where props are paid for past achievements? Our guess is that the backgammon public wants to know who the best players are now. Most of them are well aware who were the best players in the past.

WHEN YOU START a new rating system, start with credibility, even if it means getting there gradually. We hope that the new KG maintenance team will modify their rules. Δ

Editor's note: Voice your opinion in Backgammon Portal's online poll beginning in June at www.chicagopoint.com or any of six other backgammon websites.

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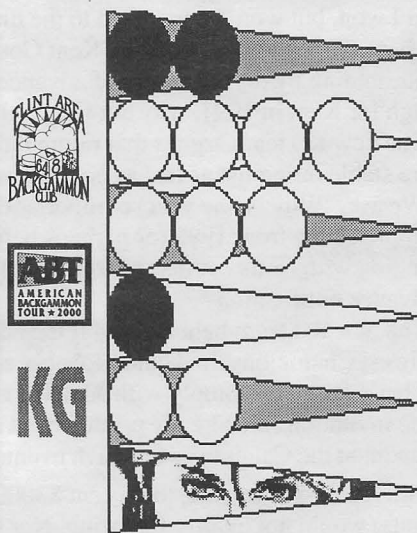
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WINNER'S CIRCLE



Mar.-Apr. 2000

•**NEBC Sunday Monthly** (Somerville, MA; 12 Mar.)... EXPERT (20): 1- Ed Abou-Zeid, 2-Ray McLaughlin; 1C- Nora Luna, 2C-Herb Gurland. A/B DIVISION (13): 1-Chris Barnes, 2-John Smidt; 1C-Brad Mampe, 2C-Charlie Barnes.

•**Colorado State Championship** (Denver, CO; 19 Mar.)... OPEN (16): 1-Charlie Raichel, 2-Roger Burgess; 1C- Michael Ginat.

•**Connecticut State Championships** (Danbury, CT; 25 Mar.)... OPEN (16): 1-Albert Cantito, 2-AI Schutz.

•**Springfield Series #7** (Springfield, IL; 1 Apr.)... OPEN (16): 1st-Greg Tomlin, 2nd-Ben Zemaitis; 1C-John Jennings, 2C-Chris Wilson; 1LC-Jim Zimmerman

•**45th Gammon Associates Invitational—ABT** (Los Angeles, CA; 7-9 Apr.)... OPEN (36): 1-Mike Ungerleider, 2-Jona Alexander, 3-Eliot Bean; 1C-Bob Glass, 2C-Perry Firooz. ADVANCED (17): 1-Garo Tchabalian, 2-Ken Ellenberger; 1C-Charles Toots, 2C-Jay Cordes. LIMITED (7): 1-Jacque Lee, 2-Richard Plumer; 1C-Nan Spector. SUPER-32 (31): 1-Norm Wiggins, Jim Pasko, 3/4-Rudy Citrom / David Marona. DOUBLES (8): 1-Ray Foglerlund & Steve Sax, 2-Gus Contos & Nan Spector. ONE-POINT BLITZ (48): 1-Ray Foglerlund.

•**BIBA's 10th Birthday Party** (Coventry, England; 8-9 Apr.)... OPEN (113): 1-John Hurst, 2-Salavador Leong, 3/4-John Slattery / Brian Lever; 1C-George Stephanopoulos, 2C-David Levy, 3C/4C-Stefanie Rohan / Steve Hallett; 1LC-John Clark, 2LC-Paul Turnbull. SUICIDE! (64): 1-Mark Oram, 2-Ray Kershaw, 3/4-Jim Pennington / Tim Wilkins. FRIDAY KNOCKOUT (34): 1-John Broomfield, 2-Dod Davies, 3/4-Roy Hollands / Tim Cross. DOUBLES (28): 1-Midlanders, 2-Socks & Gloves, 3/4-M & Ms / Anon.

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 9 Apr.)... OPEN (13): 1-Paul Franks / Mary Franks, 3/4-Joe Wollick / Wendy Kaplan; 1C-Val Zimnicki, 2C-Jerry Brooks. INTERMEDIATE (5): 1-Keith Kuigowski, 2-Howard Chow.

•**NEBC Sunday Monthly** (Somerville, MA; 9 Apr.)... EXPERT (18): 1- Belle Pronman, 2-Herb Gurland, 3/4-Ed Abou-Zeid / Doug Roberts; 1C-Nora Luna, 2C-Ernie Pittelli. A/B DIVISION (11): 1-Brad Mampe, 2-David Menkes, 3/4-Chris Barnes / Marcus

Hermansen; 1C-Marcus Hermansen, 2C-Charlie Barnes.

•**Springfield Series Grand Finale** (Springfield, IL; 15 Apr.)... OPEN (16): 1st-Randy Reiff, 2-Ed Bauder; 1C-John Jennings, 2C-David Rockwell; 1LC-Ramez Abi-Akar.

•**12th Nordic "Wide" Open** (Copenhagen, Denmark; 20-24 Apr.)... OPEN: 1-Peter Jes Thomsen (Denmark), 2-Save Wood (UK), 3/4-Michael Fardan (UK) / Andy Rubien (US).

•**Ace Point Club "April Showers" Tournament** (New York, NY 30 Apr.)... OPEN (16): 1-Toni Weursch, 2-Donald Gabbai, 3/4-Richard Munitz / Lev Tsukerman; 1C-Save Elkin. INTERMEDIATE (5): 1-Ellen Tittler; 1C-Laurent Colli. Δ



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Thursday, 6 th July	
15.00 - 20.00	Registration
15.00	Jackpot Programme
17.30	Quarter entries
22.00	Warm up (free)
23.30	Superjackpot
Friday, 7 th July	
15.00 - 17.30	Registration Champion
15.00 - 20.00	Registration Intern. and Beginner
15.30	Team tournament
18.00	Champion Public Draw
18.30	Champion tournament start
21.00	Intermediate and Beginner Public Draw
22.00	Intern. e Beginner tournament start
Saturday, 8 th July	
14.30	Progressive Consolation
16.00	Tournament continues
23.00	Superjackpot
Sunday, 9 th July	
13.00	Last Chance
15.00	Finals
19.00	Prize-giving & cocktail

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- 18:00-20:00 Registration at Casino Marbella.
Quarter entries, Jackpots and
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- 22:30 Public draw for Warm-up (free of
charge—only for registered players)
- 22:45 Start of play Warm-up, Quarters,
Jackpots and Minijackpots continue

FRIDAY, JUNE 30

- 17:00 Warm-up, Quarters, Jackpots and
Minijackpots continue
- 18:00-20:30 Registration at Casino marbella
- 20:30 Welcoming cocktail in Casino Marbella
- 22:00 Final registration
- 22:00-22:30 Public random manual draw
- 23:00 Start of play: Main Tournament.
Quarters, Jackpots and Minijackpots
continue

SATURDAY, JULY 1

- 17:00 Main Tournament continues.
Progressive Consolation Tournament
starts
- 17:30 Quarters, Jackpots and Minijackpots
- 20:00-22:30 Break for Dinner
- 22:30 Marbella Super-Jackpot. Play
continues

SUNDAY, JULY 2

- 15:00 Start of Last Chance Tournament.
Finals, Quarters, Jackpots and
Minijackpots
- 20:30 Cslon Marbella dinner party and
Awards Ceremony at the Casino

The organization reserves the right to change the program as necessary.
Charges will be announced in advance and posted on the Notice Board.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Marco Fornasir

WBF – Worldwide Backgammon Federation

Phone number: ++39 02 69018168

Fax: ++39 02 69018163

E-mail: fornasir@iol.it www.wbf.net

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MASTER (13-pt. match)	75.000 Pesetas (Euro 450.77)
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CHAMPION (11-pt. match)	25.000 Pesetas (Euro 150.26)
Champion Quarter-entry	7.500 Pesetas (Euro 45.08)
INTERMEDIATE (7-pt. match)	11.000 Pesetas (Euro 66.11)
Intermediate Quarter-entry	4.000 Pesetas (Euro 24.04)
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Master and Championship	5.000 Pesetas (Euro 30.05)
Intermediate	4.000 Pesetas (Euro 24.04)

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- Consolation: Winner 15%, Finalist 7.5%
- Last Chance: Winner 7.5%

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DIRECTOR

Marco Fornasir
Sanctioned by the Worldwide Backgammon Federation

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