

21st chicago open

DOUG ROBERTS ROLLS THROUGH CHICAGO

**Masters Title to Bob Glass
Chris Wilson Grabs Intermediate**

Roberts on a roll. That's a scary sound to any backgammon player. Doug Roberts of Amherst, MA plays well enough to occupy the number two spot on the all-time American Backgammon Tour list. But when he gets on a roll, he is unstoppable. Such was the case at the 2000 Chicago Open.



Doug Roberts receives a handshake from Hugh Sconyers upon winning the Chicago Open title. That's 3rd place finisher Wendy Kaplan in the background.

This year's Memorial Day holiday tourney was held 26-29 May at the Wyndham Hotel in the Chicago suburb of Itasca. Joann Feinstein and Howard Markowitz directed the 21-year-old event with assistance from John Brussel and Linda Rockwell.

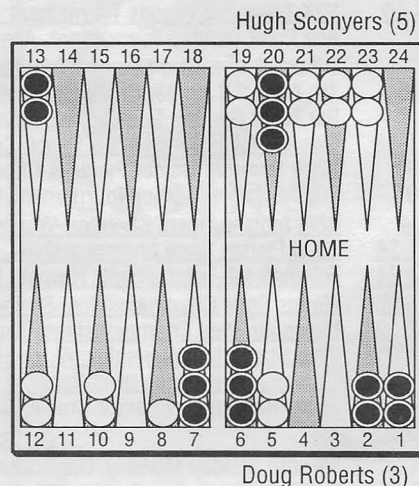
After five rounds, Roberts remained undefeated in the double elimination format (the field had included the likes of Ballard, Davis, Goulding, Senkiewicz, Wells, Sconyers, Jacobs and Winslow). One more victory would make him the winner of the undefeateds and a 3-to-1 favorite to capture first place (the Second Chance victor would need to beat him twice).

Roberts' Saturday evening victory vs. Hugh Sconyers of Austin, TX put him in the catbird seat. Now Hugh would need to

work his way through the Second Chance if he was to gain another title shot. And with his Sunday morning win over Wendy Kaplan (Palatine, IL), that's exactly what happened.

The first Roberts/Sconyers 15-point match would be the last if Doug could win. Trailing 5-3 with an awkward 5-3 to play, things didn't look all that good for Doug:

15-point Chicago Open final. Doug Roberts (Black) trails Hugh Sconyers (White), 5 to 3. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-3.**



Masters champ Bob Glass (left) also won the Doubles tourney with Steve Sax. That's tourney director Joann Feinstein in the center.

Opting against the hit which would leave two blots, Roberts played 20/15, 7/4. Sconyers doubled, and with so many White men to bring home, the take for Roberts was straightforward. Eventually, a holding game developed (see Problem #264, page 3) which went Roberts' way to knot the score at 5-all. He never looked back.

Fast forward to game 12 with Doug

[Continued on page 6]

POSTCARD FROM THE FRONT



Here's a group of Russian army soldiers taking a break from their World War 1 duties to fight another kind of war. The great thing about a backgammon battle: if you get "killed" one day, you can come back the next! Δ

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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OUTFALL FROM THE KG EDITORIAL

I was very happy to see Laila Leonhardt finally begin to resurrect the KG Rating List, something she has been trying to do for quite a while. I know how difficult it was for her to restart the damn thing (not the least of which was to enlist the very competent Matt Reklaitis.) Therefore I was very surprised and quite aggravated to see first an e-mail questioning her efforts or better said the direction of her efforts, followed by an editorial in CHICAGO POINT. So, having only read the headline of the editorial, I was a little PO'd at the POINT for not fully supporting Laila and Matt's efforts.

But to be fair, I read the article and realized you indeed had problems only with certain rules—some very valid concerns that could possibly need to be addressed.

I realize now that *my* problem with the

[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.

Jun 11	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyway's Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/252-7755
Jun 11	New England Club Monthly & Swapfest, Holiday Inn, Somerville, MA	781/938-7852
Jun 11	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, OH	330/966-2811
Jun 11*	Backgammon By The Bay Monthly, Q Cafe, Palo Alto, CA	831/688-9722
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 22*	Green Country Club Opening Tournament, Baxter's Restaurant, Tulsa, OK	918/396-3535
Jun 24*	NEW DATE: Atlanta Monthly Tournament, Lake Hartwell, GA	770/333-1876
Jun 25	Ace Point Sunday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Jun 29	Michigan Summer Warm-up, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI	810/232-9731
Jun 30-Jul 3	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jul 1*	Lainer's Bimonthly Tournament on FIBS, via computer modem	lainer@fibs.com
Jul 1*	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer	tournaments@cyberarts.com
Jul 9	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, OH	330/966-2811
Jul 9*	Backgammon By The Bay Monthly, Q Cafe, Palo Alto, CA	831/688-9722
Jul 15	Redwood Empire Club Monthly, Embassy Suites, San Rafael, CA	707/824-9715
Jul 20*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Jul 22*	Central Connecticut Summer Tournament, Rob Roy's home, Milford, CT	203/592-9207
Jul 23*	New England Club Midsummer Tournament, Holiday Inn, Somerville, MA	781/938-7852
Jul 23*	Atlanta Monthly Tournament, Tony's American Grille, Roswell, GA	770/333-1876
Jul 23*	Austin Bimonthly Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/261-8518
Jul 28-30	<u>Y2K Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY</u>	<u>716/387-0767</u>
Jul 30*	Ace Point Sunday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Aug 1*	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer	tournaments@cyberarts.com
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
Aug 11-13	<u>Georgia Championships & Peach Cup, Hilton Garden Inn, Atlanta, GA</u>	<u>770/333-1876</u>
Aug 19*	2000 Summer Sizzler Picnic & Chouettes, Jubilee State Park, Peoria, IL	309/691-8983
Aug 20*	2000 Summer Sizzler Tournament, Sly Fox Pub, Lacon, IL	309/691-8983
Sep 1-4	<u>48th Indiana Open, Sheraton-Westin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN</u>	<u>317/255-8902</u>
Sep 22-24	<u>2000 Florida State Championships, Sheraton Suites, Ft. Lauderdale, FL</u>	<u>954/938-4304</u>
Sep 22-24	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Towpath Inn, Turin, NY</u>	<u>716/387-0767</u>
Oct 13-15	<u>Illinois State Championships, Springfield Hilton, Springfield, IL</u>	<u>217/528-0117</u>
Nov 17-19*	<u>Minnesota State Championships, Thunderbird Hotel, Bloomington, MN</u>	<u>612/378-1536</u>
Nov. 24-26	<u>Ohio State Championships, Akron Holiday Inn, Akron, OH</u>	<u>330/966-2811</u>
Dec 1-3*	<u>Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Dec 3-10	Backgammon on Board V Cruise, New Orleans-Montego Bay-Cozumel	773/583-6464

OUTSIDE USA

Jun 11	Toronto Sunday Monthly, Doghouse Riley's Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
Jun 23-25*	3rd Casablanca-Cup Turnier, Billardcafe Casablanca, Witten, Germany	49230-2963977
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, Humlebæk 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 15-16*	Bergen Open, Sardinien, Verftet, Norway	4755-321132
Jul 17-18	10th Nice Open, Lido Plage Beach Bar & Restaurant, Nice, France	33493-879438
Jul 19-23*	2nd Czech Open, Millennium Casino/Marriott, Prague, Czech Republic	49911-409505
Jul 27-30	6th Kaiserbrunnen Cup, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Aug 3-6*	Israeli Championship, Eilat Resort (on the Red Sea), Israel	97252-501329
Aug 5-6	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44152-2888676
Aug 11-15	Grand Prix de Lugano 2000, Hotel Grand Eden, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-3374425
Aug 19-20	Danish Doubles Championship, Solrad 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 2-3*	Sjællands Mesterskabet, Roskilde Backgammon Klub, Denmark	4546-366012
Sep 30-Oct 1	Sandy Osborne Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44152-2888676
Oct 5-8	3rd Austrian Open & Doubles Champ., 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 Åbne Fynske Mesterskaber, Fyns BG Union, Odense, Denmark	4565-912551
Oct 20-21	Swiss Meisterschaft 2000, Zurich, Switzerland	4179-4015811
Oct 25-29	Doubles World Championship & Grand Prix de Suisse, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-3374425
Oct 27-29	Grand Prix de Suisse 2000, Hotel Royal Splendid, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-3374425
Nov 1-5	7th German Open, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Nov 11-12	Town Harbor Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44152-2888676

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

editorial is the headline, which seems to be a bit of yellow journalism in action: fanning the fires where I'm not sure any exist. A more suitable title might have been, "An Evaluation of the KG Rating Rules" or "A Good Idea that Needs Some Work."

In other words, a critique, not a full out call-to-arms using words like "questionable" and "tainted." These words imply suspicion, uncertainty and dubious motives skewing (tainting), in my opinion, the editorial's excellent points in the article.

In conclusion, I would urge CHICAGO POINT to continue to prod good changes in the BG community, but to more carefully select his vocabulary in doing so.—Bob Zavoral, Chicago, IL

If the intent of last month's editorial was to raise some points about some of the details (some valid, most subjective), why not tone down the title and the appearance of suspicion and criticism for Laila, and make a strong point that we're lucky someone cares enough to take the time to compile and report the information?

And why do it all so publicly and visibly? Why not pick up the phone, call Laila, and make your suggestions? If she doesn't agree, okay. No big deal. She's a friend. Why make her look like a villain in public?—Phil Simborg, Chicago, IL

I spoke to Laila Leonhardt regarding rating your Grand Crystal Beaver event at the Midwest Championships and she said that it would qualify in terms of importance. (Just looking at the draw is pretty scary.) I

don't know if she has the draw sheet yet, but if not, forward it to her and she will include it in the KG Rating List.—Steve Sax, Burbank, CA

Sorry Steve, but we don't believe that this year's Grand Crystal Beaver should be rated. First off, it doesn't qualify according to KG Rating Rule 2 (an event needs 32 players to qualify). But even if Laila does waive that rule, there was no advance notification that the Crystal Beaver would be KG-rated. (You won the tournament. Would you have talked to Laila about rating the event if you had lost your first match?)

This year, the players only received advance notification that the MBC Championship division would be submitted for KG rating. So that's the only 2000 MBC event that we feel should be rated.—Ed

Steve Sax responds: You bring up a good point. I didn't ask her if she was rating the Masters at the Chicago Open where I lost in the second round. I am not aware of the criterion she is using for rating events but at least for next year, Grand Crystal Beaver III should be rated due to the level of competition I expect to see.—SS

CURIOUS

You may or may not believe this, but it's certainly worth a try.

In your daily thoughts or when you need to remember something or want to find something you lost or misplaced, say

[Continued on page 7]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2000

Compiled through 29 May 2000 after 4 events
(Coming in June & July: Michigan Summer Champs and Y2K Thousand Isles)



Paul Franks	22.88	Steve Maas	5.60	Eliot Bean	3.27	Roy Appy	1.76
Bob Bishop	22.35	Walt Swan	5.47	Perry Firooz	3.27	Andy Natale	1.76
Doug Roberts	21.83	Phyllis Smolinski	5.25	Tom Leahy	3.21	Paul Lombardo	1.58
Sam Pottle	17.32	Mark Anshus	5.20	Jim Price	3.20	Leon Weiner	1.46
Mike Ungerleider	16.36	Timothy Jaxon	5.00	Sal Chehayeb	2.50	Tom Hodous	1.25
George Barr	15.39	Steve Kovach	5.00	Gary Fries	2.50	Boris Mindich	1.23
Joe Ausmann	11.44	Alan Gaarder	5.00	Phil Michelson	2.50	Jay Cordes	0.94
Jeff Kane	11.40	Guy Nicosia	5.00	Ed King	2.50	Bob Sexton	0.90
Ed Zell	11.20	Bill Tallmadge	5.00	Elayne Feinstein	2.40	Jacquie Lee	0.88
Hugh Sconyers	10.92	Matt Reklaitis	5.00	Bobbie Shifrin	2.24	Fran Miller	0.86
John Greci	10.75	Jake Jacobs	4.68	Tom Machaj	2.08	Jeff Dillinger	0.68
Andy Palumbo	10.59	Roz Ferris	4.37	Don Heinsler	2.08	Tony Burbach	0.59
Ray Baker	10.40	Laila Leonhardt	4.16	David Rubin	1.90	Glenn Martells	0.59
Chris Wilson	9.62	Linda Rockwell	4.16	Ken Ellenberger	1.89	Ellen Allen	0.53
Jona Alexander	6.55	Garo Tchalabian	3.78	Charles Toots	1.89	Richard Plumer	0.44
Bob Glass	6.55	Wendy Kaplan	3.65	Joe Davidson	1.81	Nan Spector	0.44
Sean Garber	5.70	Steve Michelson	3.53	Dee Webster	1.81		



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2000 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 MAY

Herb Roman	10.56	Mary Franks	3.84	Bob Steen	1.92	George Marasas	0.64
Jake Jacobs	9.52	Romeo Kap	3.76	Ralph Byrns	1.28	Brian Barber	0.64
Ken Bond	9.44	Don Jayhan	3.76	Steve Klesker	1.28	Bobbie Shifrin	0.64
Tim Carroll	9.44	Paul Lombardo	3.68	Georgina Flanagan	1.20	Keith Kuigowski	0.60
Harold Elgazar	8.92	Paul Friedman	3.52	Elaine Kehm	1.12	Val Zimnicki	0.56
Tim Mabee	8.84	Paul Klein	3.44	Andy Natale	1.12	John Brussel	0.48
Phyllis Smolinski	8.24	Ed Buerger	3.08	Marc Rosset	1.00	Wendy Kaplan	0.40
Tak Morioka	6.96	Joe Ausmann	2.72	Gary Kay	0.96	Howard Chow	0.36
Joe Wollick	5.84	Bill Bartholomay	2.64	Reggie Porter	0.88	Jerry Brooks	0.24
Sinan Yoyen	5.60	Norma Shyer	2.64	Mike Cyrkiel	0.88	Roger Blaine	0.20
Bob Zavoral	5.28	Mike Sutton	2.48	John Jennings	0.88	Richard Stawowy	0.20
Carter Mattig	4.72	Rodney Bell	2.28	Bill Davis	0.84	Ann Thomas	0.16
Richard Lloyd	4.56	Joann Feinstein	2.16	Bridget McCoy	0.80	Brian Kozin	0.16
Paul Franks	4.48	Bill Keefe	2.16	Chris Wilson	0.72	Tom Machaj	0.12
Paul Baraz	4.00	Harry Cohn	1.92	Peter Kalba	0.72	Jon Sion	0.08

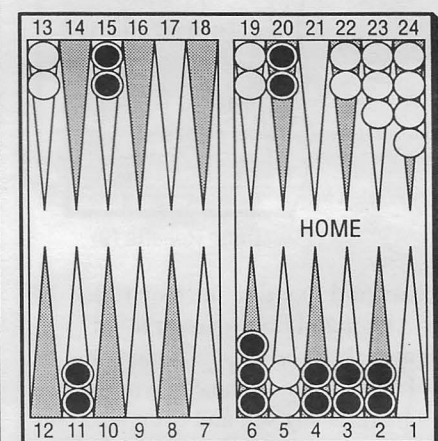
HAROLD ELGAZAR is the Bar Point Club's May Player of the Month. Harold earned 4.72 points—enough to edge out runner's up Ken Bond (4.40) and Jake Jacobs (3.76).

your move

PROBLEM #264

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

Chicago Open 15-point finals. Hugh Sconyers (Black) leads Doug Roberts (White), 5 to 3. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-3.**



ASK DANNY

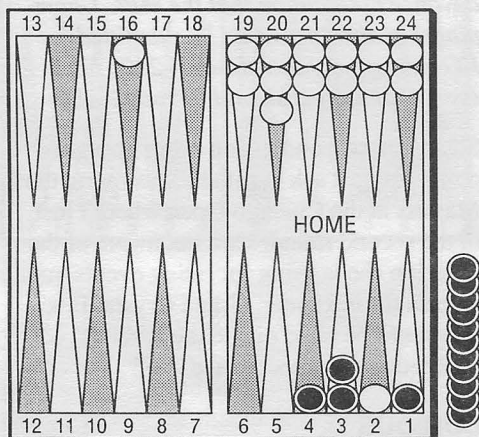
© 2000 by Danny Kleinman



TWO ENDGAME PUZZLERS

Dear Danny: I just returned from the Chicago Open where I witnessed two end game positions, both of which puzzle me. The first play was from a Championship Consolation round:

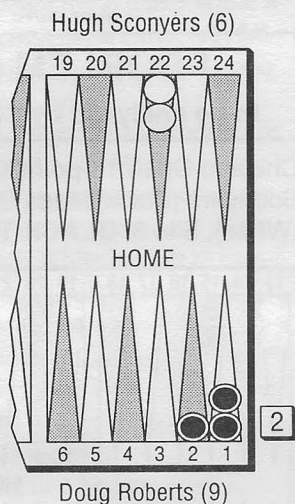
Tournament double match-point.
BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.



Since Black has to leave a shot, why not just take another piece off with 4/3/2*/1/Off? Apparently the player didn't even consider this move.

The other curiosity occurred in the Championship finals:

2000 Chicago Open 15-point finals. Doug Roberts (Black) leads Hugh Sconyers (White) 9-6. Black on roll.
CUBE ACTION(S)?



Roberts didn't redouble, then rolled 3-3 to win. Although I don't have a lot of experience, shouldn't Roberts have redoubled to 4? After all, he can win right away if he rolls any set, and even when he doesn't, Sconyers is not favored to bear off

anyway.

Can you help me out with these two?—*Slightly Puzzled*

DEAR SLIGHTLY: "Slightly" better is exactly what I'd call (3/2*, 2/1, 3/1), the play I presume Black chose in the first of your two puzzles. Though this fails to bear a man off, and leaves 14 immediate shots instead of 11 (plus occasional less damaging shots next turn if White dances or enters on the deuce point), it has one great merit: White can never pick up more than one man.

After (4/2*, 2/Off), the play you favor, White will sometimes pick up two or three men. If White is lucky enough to roll an ace, his strategy will be to break his 1-point early in the bear-off and hope that Black hits on the ace point, then rolls a deuce or another ace exposing two new blots.

Admittedly, the decision is a close one, for most of the time White won't be able to pick up additional men, and saving two or three immediate shots is significant.

BLACK'S CUBE DECISION in your second puzzle isn't close: redoubling to 4 would be a serious error for a player who leads 9-6 in a 15-point match. I could prove it to you by calculating Black's match-winning chances after each combination of cube actions, but I doubt many players would attempt such a feat at the table. ("Mathemagician" Art Benjamin may be one of the only exceptions.) Instead, I'll examine only the relevant extra points won and lost by redoubling.

First let's see what will happen if White gets another turn owning a 4-cube. He'll be a 17-to-19 underdog to win the game, but a redouble to 8 will give him 4 extra points if he wins while costing only 2 extra points if he loses, since the 16th and 17th points for Black are worthless. So White will surely turn the cube to 8.

Here are three outcomes with the number of times in 216 they figure to occur and the extra points Black wins (+) or loses (-) for each outcome by redoubling:

SEQUENCE	SCORE	FREQUENCY	SWING
(a) Black rolls doublets	13-6	36 times +2 =	+72
(b) Black rolls singlets, White misses	15-6	95 times +4 =	+380
(c) Black rolls singlets, White bears off	9-14	85 times -6 =	-510

Black's net from redoubling is thus -58 points in 216 games, or about -0.27 points per game. True, the 95 times Black wins 4 extra points by redoubling, he wins the match, so (b) understates Black's gain

slightly, for the match-winning point is more valuable than any other. However, the point that brings a player to Crawford-Odd is the second most valuable, so (c) understates Black's loss by almost as much.

I hope these explanations resolve the puzzles for you.—*Yours, Danny Δ*

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

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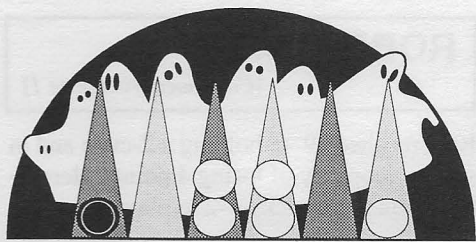
PUB CLUB: Tourn. Mon., 7:00 P.M. at Danny's Grill and Bar, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Joe Wollick (847/755-0887).

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).



PHANTOM DIRECT SHOTS

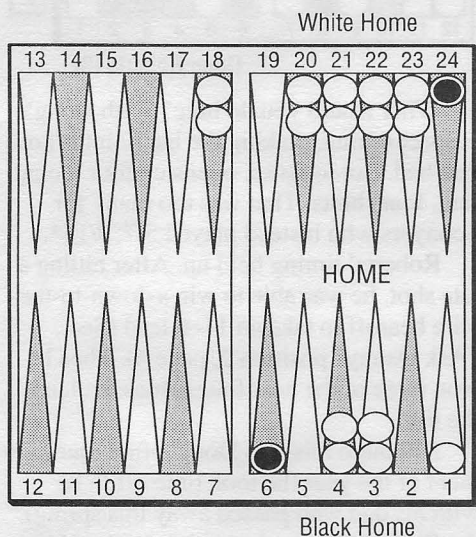
The \$100 Challenge

by Ray Kershaw

With no men on the bar, you have a single direct shot. How many times out of 36 should you hit?

If you answered "At least 11," you're not always right. It could be as few as three as Position 1 shows. (I first revealed this in the Summer 1982 *Backgammon Times*.)

Pos. 1. Black (on roll) has a single direct shot and three hitting numbers.



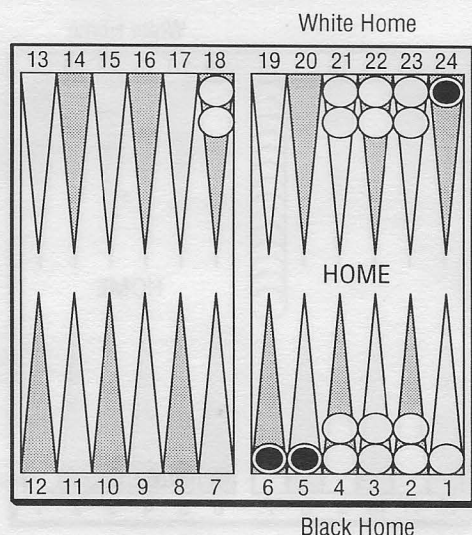
Black has a direct shot from the 6-point at the White blot on the 1-point, but because you have to play both dice if possible, Black can hit only three ways (5-5 and 4-1). Except for shifting the top part of the position to the left, I believe this is a unique position for the least number of hits with a single direct shot.

Here are the least number of hits I have found for double, triple, quadruple and quintuple direct shots, again, with no men on the bar. Better any of my solutions and CHICAGO POINT will pay you \$100.

THERE ARE AT LEAST eight positions with double direct shots and only eight hits. Frustratingly, I can't beat that. Here are three contrasting examples to stimulate you.

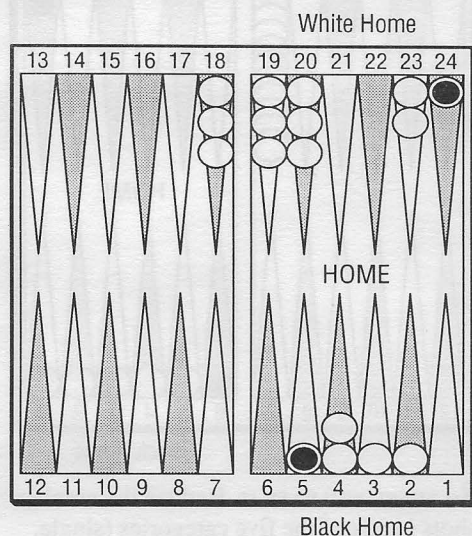
In Position 2A, Black has a double shot at White's blot. He can hit with 5-5, 4-4, 5-4, 4-2 and 4-1. (Look at 5-1.)

Pos. 2A. Black (on roll) has a double direct shot and eight hitting numbers.



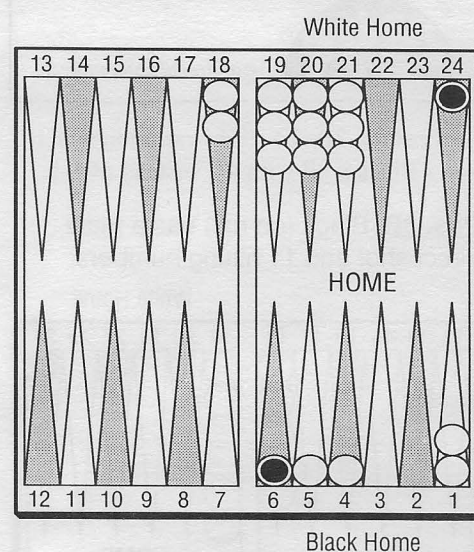
In Position 2B, Black has one checker aiming at two blots. He can hit with 3-3, 2-2, 3-2, 3-1 and 2-1. (Look at 4-2.)

Pos. 2B. Black (on roll) has a double direct shot and eight hitting numbers.



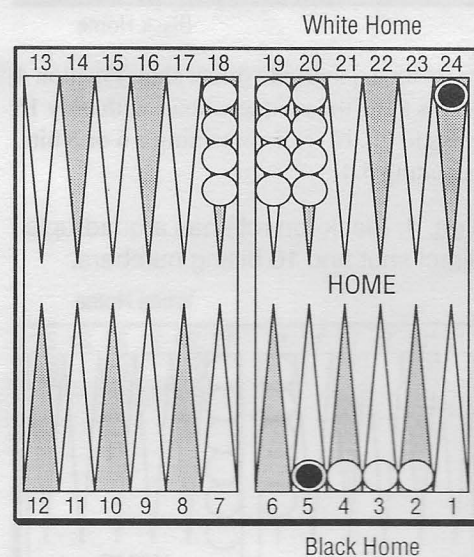
Finally, in Position 2C, Black's checker is again in direct range of two white blots. (Look at 4-2, 4-1 and 3-2.)

Pos. 2C. Black (on roll) has a double direct shot and eight hitting numbers.



I have just two positions with a triple direct shot and 11 ways to hit. In Position 3A, Black can hit with 3-3, 2-2, 1-1, 3-2, 3-1, 2-1 and 5-1.

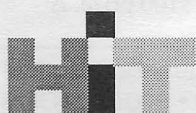
Pos. 3A. Black (on roll) has a triple direct shot and 11 hitting numbers.



[Continued on page 6]

12th EUROPEAN BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIP & MITTELEUROPA BACKGAMMON DECENNIAL

1st-3rd September, 2000



HIT Hotel Casino Park
Nova Gorica (Slovenia)



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Watch for our back page ad in the July/August Chicago Point.

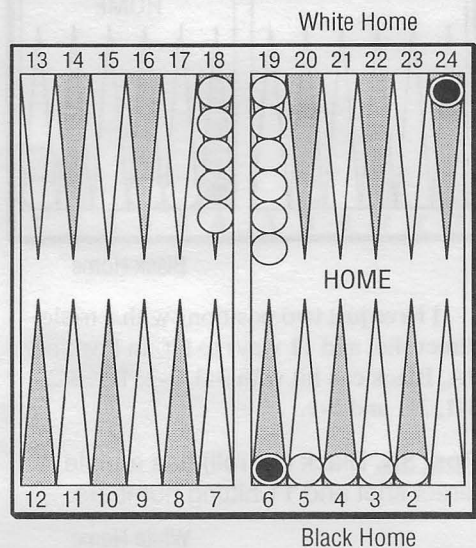
PHANTOM DIRECT SHOTS



[Continued from page 5]

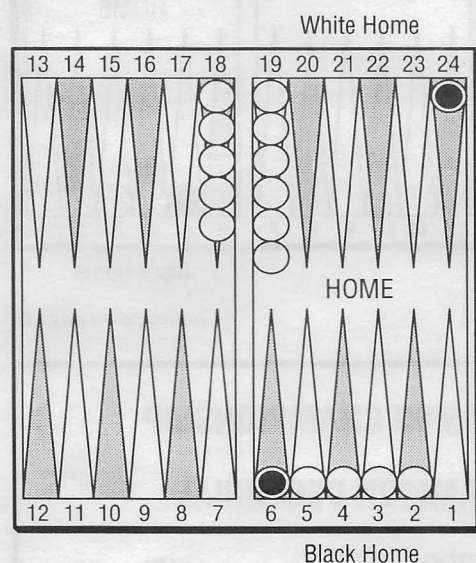
Position 3B is a slight variation which gives Black a hit with 4-1 instead of 5-1.

Pos. 3B. Black (on roll) has a triple direct shot and 11 hitting numbers.



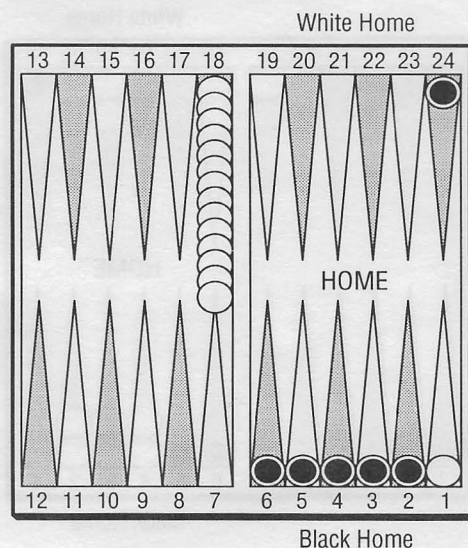
With a quadruple direct shot, Position 4 seems to be the unique winner with only 16 ways to hit. No roll containing a 6 or 5 hits, including 5-1.

Pos. 4. Black (on roll) has a quadruple direct shot and 16 hitting numbers.

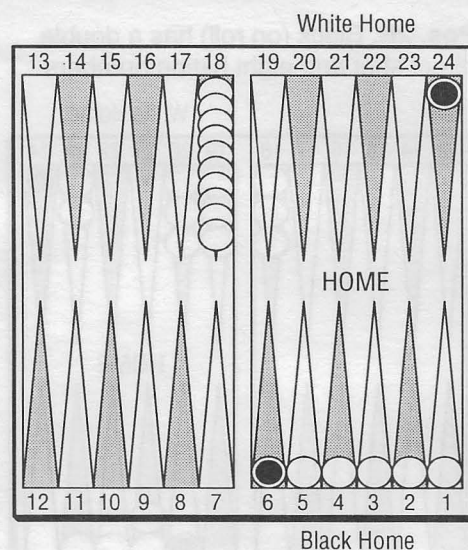


Finally, with a quintuple direct shot, 25 hitting numbers seems the minimum. In Position 5A, Black has five checkers in direct range of the white blot. In Position 5B, Black has one checker aiming at five White blots. In both cases, Black misses with any roll containing a 6.

Pos. 5A. Black (on roll) has a quintuple direct shot and 25 hitting numbers.



Pos. 5B. Black (on roll) has a quintuple direct shot and 25 hitting numbers.



SO THERE YOU HAVE IT. Reduce the number shots in any of the five categories (single, double, triple, quadruple or quintuple direct shots) and CHICAGO POINT will pay you \$100 for each acceptable reduction. Remember, no men can be on the bar.

To be eligible, send your entries by 1 September 2000 to: CHICAGO POINT; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155. E-mail entries will be accepted at: bg@chicagopoint.com. Only the first submission received in each category will be eligible for a \$100 prize. Δ

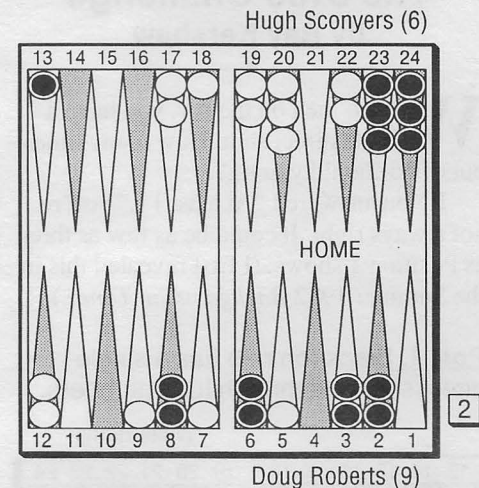
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ROBERTS...

[Continued from page 1]

Roberts ahead 9–6, holding a 2-cube and in serious jeopardy of losing 4 points. Here Sconyers has a tricky 4-2 to play:

15-point Chicago Open final. Doug Roberts (Black) leads Hugh Sconyers (White), 9–6. **WHITE TO PLAY 4-2.**

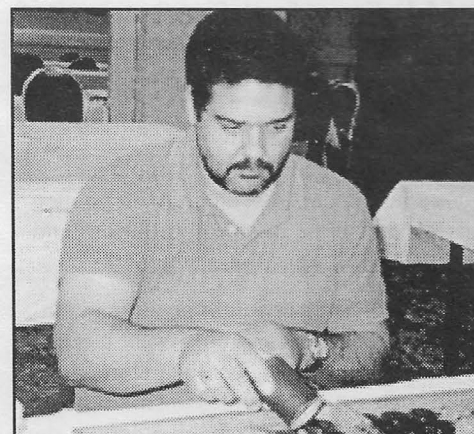


What would you do here? With Doug's suspect timing, making the bar point is not that bad. But to do so, opens up four (count 'em, four) blots. That was too many for Sconyers who instead played 5/7, 9/13*.

Roberts' timing held up. After hitting a late shot, he was able to win a down-to-the-wire bearoff to take an 11–6 lead (See "Ask Danny" position 2, page 4). Then he won three of the next four games to claim the title.

Although this was Doug's first tournament of the year (he took time off to be with his dad who passed away this spring), the Chicago Open victory has vaulted him into the number 3 spot on the American Backgammon Tour.

In other results, Californian Bob Glass
[Continued on page 7]



Intermediate victor Chris Wilson hits it big in the second tournament of his life.

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

the word "reach" in your mind—not out loud, just think it, and if you believe it will work, it will. You will be surprised at everything you can now remember, and in the case of something misplaced, how your body suddenly takes you to the item's hiding place. But have faith or it won't work.

Oh, by the way, when you need good dice, a perfect roll or a nice double, the word to say in your mind in this case is "together."
—Michael Strato, www.gammonvillage.com

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Regarding the report in Amalgamation last month that only Nack Ballard showed up to receive his certificate at the "Giants of Backgammon" Award Ceremony in Las Vegas, it was mainly my fault. Without thinking, I gave most of the top eight their certificates the day before. Also, some of the winners present in Vegas did not know about it. Anyway, I will plan better next time.—Yamin A. Yamin, Chairman, *Giants of Backgammon*

BACKGAMMON AND THOROUGHBREDS

There are two occurrences which I eagerly await:

1. Arrival of CHICAGO POINT,
2. Saratoga Race Meet each August.

The first has to do with the classic game of backgammon which has been played by a great variety of outstanding people such as Winston Churchill and Thomas Jefferson (who on 10 June 1776, took time off from writing the first draft of the Declaration of Independence to play backgammon, winning 2 pounds 6).

Then there was Lucille Ball with her beautiful and elaborate backgammon boards (I enjoyed seeing the picture of Edward G. Robinson playing backgammon in last month's POINT). Also, athletes such as Michael Jordan, Jimmy Connors, Brett Favre and many others.

The second event I anticipate is the Saratoga Race Meet where the best thoroughbreds and jockeys appear. The thoroughbred is the most beautiful of all animals. They have class and performance which is stimulating but not always accurately calculable—similar to backgammon.

Many thanks for the POINT. It's the best!—Dr. Lee Hoge, *Saratoga Springs, NY*

SORRY ABOUT THAT, DAVID

I received your May issue today and just had to comment on one oversight. On page 5, you mention the "fine Chicago showing" in Vegas, but neglected to mention that my wonderful husband David was a championship semifinalist in the International Cup. I'm so proud of him . . . just had to brag a little!—Linda Rockwell, *Skokie, IL*

MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT DICE RANDOMNESS

Like most backgammon players, I win when I play well and lose when I am unlucky. Although luck is a large part of our great game, I have come to suspect that something more than luck effects Internet backgammon. Maybe I am getting paranoid in the middle of my mid-life crisis, but it seems that extraordinary dice exchanges are quite common and there is concern among the players about the randomness of the dice on the Internet backgammon servers.

I would like some comment from FIBS, GamesGrid and NetGammon as to how the

dice rolls on their respective systems are generated. And, why, if they are not randomly generated, a random number generator is not included.

Also, how are the rolls generated on Snowie™ and JellyFish™? I have seen comments in previous POINT issues suggesting that rolls on JellyFish are less than random and that somehow the program "knows" its good rolls or its opponent's bad rolls and generates numbers accordingly. This seems unlikely to me, but I have to admit that some of the frequent extraordinary dice sequences that occur there lead me to think that something is amiss.

Is it possible that the presence of an analyzer such as Snowie or JellyFish can impact the dice that are generated? Please investigate.—Doug Amenda, *Phoenix, AZ*

We doubt we'll ever get a definitive answer on this one, Doug.—Ed.

AN OPTION FOR MAC USERS

In regards to your question on a good Macintosh backgammon game, my answer is to purchase either SoftWindows™ or Virtual PC™. Either of these will allow you to run the latest JellyFish™ or Snowie™ programs. I know of nothing better out there.

I run JellyFish on a 400 MHz PowerMac G3 using SoftWindows and am very pleased with its performance. Gosh, even with emulation, it's probably faster than on a Wintel system. :-)

The downside, of course, is the extra money required for a Windows emulation package in addition to the software costs. I would hope that either of these fine programs is one day made available to run directly on the Mac.—Ron Dumont, *via e-mail Δ*

ROBERTS...

[Continued from page 6]

prevailed over a tough 32-player field to capture the Masters Championship. Glass also teamed with Steve Sax to win the Doubles.

The Intermediate title went to Chicago's Chris Wilson. It was only the second "live" tournament of Wilson's life (he's played six years online, most of the time while living in Guam). Chris also won the Blitz event. Very impressive.

Congratulations also to Boris Mindich (Beginner), and Larry Leibster (Mini-Match) as well as the entire Chicago Open staff. This tournament is always a nice way to spend a Memorial Day weekend: especially when it's a rainy one! Results: Δ

21ST CHICAGO OPEN

CHAMPIONSHIP (52): 1-Doug Roberts (MA), 2-Hugh Sconyers (TX), 3-Wendy Kaplan (IL); 1C-Sam Pottle (WI), 2C-Jake Jacobs (IL).

INTERMEDIATE (50) 1-Chris Wilson (IL), 2-Roz Ferris (IL), 3/4-Roy Appy (NY) / Andy Natale (IL); 1C-Phyllis Smolinski (IL), 2-Bobbie Shifrin (NV).

BEGINNER (7): 1-Boris Mindich (IL), 2-Ellen Allen (FL).

MEMORIAL DAY MASTERS (32): 1-Bob Glass (CA), 2-Howard Markowitz (NV).

DOUBLES (18): 1-Bob Glass & Steve Sax (CA), 2-Phyllis Smolinski & Bob Zavoral (IL).

BLITZ (64): 1-Chris Wilson (IL), 2-Paul Berg (MI).

MINI-MATCH (128): 1-Larry Leibster (NJ), 2-Lucky Nelson (IL), 3/4-Carol Joy Cole (MI) / Steve Mellen (NY).

Have a great summer. See you in September!
—Butch & Mary Ann Meese



Labor Day Weekend
September 1-4, 2000

Sheraton-Indianapolis Hotel/Suites
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Butch & Mary Ann Meese



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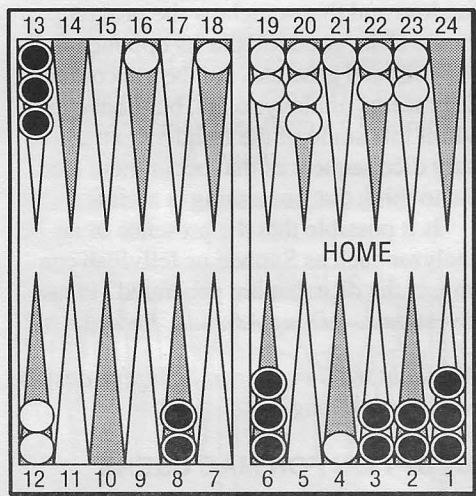
meese@worldnet.att.net



PROBLEM #263 ANALYZED

by Steve Mellen

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



Leading 1-away, 2-away (Crawford) is a treacherous score. Everyone “knows” what to do at this score: just avoid getting gammoned and you get another chance to win the match next game. But playing too cautiously can result in effectively giving away the game, and on occasion, will cost you a gammon anyway. Sometimes you just have to play to win.

The first step in analyzing Problem #263 should be to identify the candidates. The strongest try for an immediate match win is the brave 8/4*. If leaving two blots is too scary, we could try to make White’s straggler sweat a little with either 8/5, 6/5 or 13/9. Finally, there is the safe play only a mother could love, 6/2.

We can eliminate the two compromise plays of 8/5, 6/5 and 13/9. Neither play brings Black close enough to winning the game to compensate for leaving all those shots. Even though White has yet to complete her board, there will be several hit-and-cover numbers, and when Black gets hit and doesn’t hit back, he is dead. Because Black has enough outside crossovers to worry about the gammon, these two options are just not viable.

The remaining two plays present a tough choice. Leaving 13 shots and two blots with 8/4* is pretty big, but at least it gives Black chances to bring the game home without any further shots. 6/2 is safe for this roll, but look at the ugly position Black is left with. Black could easily be forced to leave multiple shots as he

struggles to find safe landing spots for his checkers. Meanwhile, White will complete the 5-point board next turn, making her position a lot more dangerous.

In addition, White still has some race equity (more than the pip count would indicate, given Black’s checkers on low points), and leaving White alone gives her a chance to get back into the race. Even at this score where Black desperately wants to avoid risking a gammon, it looks like the risky 8/4* may be the best chance.

Everyone else likes to ask Snowie™ for its opinion, so why don’t we?

The results of a rollout are shocking. 8/4* is a *huge* blunder, resulting in Black losing almost 7% more matches compared to the safe play. Even for money or at DMP, 6/2 is the standout play. What’s going on here?

I did 36 manual rollouts to try and gain some insight into the position. This is not nearly enough rollouts to determine the equity of the plays, but we have bots for that. Hand rollouts are just as useful as ever to help us understand how a position is likely to play out.

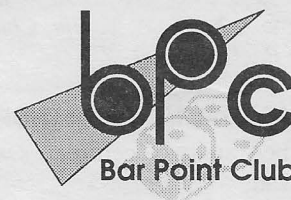
I found out two interesting things. One is that, as we might have guessed, 8/4* is quite far from gin even if White misses. In about half of the games where White doesn’t hit, one of two bad things happens on the next roll: either White enters on the 5-point and continues to harass Black, or White dances and Black fails to cover. Even in Black’s best variations, White still gets a chance to hit fly shots from the bar. All of this is on top of the 13 immediate shots that should gammon Black about half of the time.

The other interesting fact is that 6/2 is not all that ugly. Keeping the 8-point turns out to preserve a very useful landing spot. Black also gets the opportunity to roll a lucky double or a pick-and-pass number, allowing her to bear in with minimal jeopardy. Finally, even when Black does get hit after 6/2, it often comes only after she has brought a few more checkers home, meaning she loses a lot fewer gammons. This more than compensates for the gammon danger created by letting White close the 4-point.

We’ve all heard the principle that it is almost always right to “pay later” rather than “pay now” without a very good reason. It turns out this position is no exception. Playing safe with 6/2 crushes all the other candidates. So make those safe plays with confidence, and if the kibitzers snicker, tell ’em you read it in the POINT! Δ

AMALGAMATION

There’s CBPC Sunday Backgammon action at Anyway’s Grill (5 E. Roosevelt Road, Oakbrook Terrace, IL) on 11 June. Signups begin at 11:30 a.m. with drawing for byes at noon... Longtime Chicago backgammon player **Stuart Katz** died of a heart attack on 26 May. Katz, who ranked 20th on the all-time Chicagoland Backgammon master point list, also designed backgammon web pages for backgammon groups including Chicago Board of Backgammon and the Flint Area Club. Atlanta Backgammon Association director **Dave Cardwell** informs us that former Backgammon In Georgia president **Bob Clay** died 20 May. Clay was 66... Players attending this summer’s World Championship at the Monte Carlo Grand Hotel 10–16 July should contact **Antoinette-Marie Williams** at 212/222-7177 or e-mail her at antoinette33@worldnet.att.net for a special rate... After 17 years, it’s time for a new Chicago Bar Point Club logo. Look for T-shirts in the near future...



More Associated Press coverage last month for **Kathy Posner** who admits to a degree of voyeurism by occasionally watching the “doorman cam” in her Chicago high-rise apartment. According to the newspaper story, it’s becoming the new rage... There’s a new club in Ontario, Canada: the Kingston Backgammon Club. Director **Alex Juskovic** invites you to Curley’s Super-Star Eatery in Kingston (841 Norwest Road) Monday nights at 6:30 p.m. For more info, call Alex at 613/389-4603 or e-mail cool@coolcanadian.com... Backgammon by the Bay director **Beth Skillman** asks: If a checker gets hit when it’s 100 degrees outside, does it go to the bar and grill?... Hungarian webmaster **Dean Kezan** has created some very nice backgammon desktop themes (wallpaper, start-up screens, etc.) available for download at: www.kezan-design.com/backgammon... New York City to Chicago: **Harry Cohn**. Welcome back, Harry!... Visiting the Chicago Bar Point Club in May: **Bobbie Shifrin** (Las Vegas)... See you at the Michigan Summer Championships this 4th of July weekend (June 30–July 3). Need last minute info? Contact **Carol Joy Cole** at: 810/232-9731. Δ

WINNER'S CIRCLE



Apr.-May 2000

•**Nordic "Wide" Open** (Copenhagen, Denmark; 20-24 Apr.)... **CHAMPIONSHIP** (99): 1-Peter Jes Thomsen (Denmark), 2-Save Wood (UK), 3/4-Andy Rubien (US) / Michael Fardan (UK); 1C-Dirk Schiemann (Germany), 2C-James Vogl, 3C/4C-Niels Frey / Elliott Winslow (US); 1LC-Nevzat Dogan, 2LC-Hans-Heinrich Stahl. **ADVANCED** (93): 1-Halvor Losnedahl, 2-Klaus Switon, 3/4-Henrik Thue / Kasper Andersen; 1C-Morten Nielsen, 2C-Kevin McDonough (US), 3C/4C-Peter Friberg / Patrik Thelin; 1LC-Hannu Lyyjynen, 2LC-Detlef Stolz. **INTERMEDIATE** (98): 1-Bjarne Tolstrup, 2-Clifford Phillips, 3/4-Jøran Jansson / Tanja Lewis; 1C-Peter Switon, 2C-Flemming Nielsen, 3C/4C-Anders Skajalde / Søren Andersen; 1LC-Joel Sundberg, 2LC-Kirupa Selva. **NOVICE** (80): 1-Paw Christiansen, 2-Joachim Kreutzfeldt, 3/4-Henrik Skejelmose / Margrethe-Louise Pedersen; 1C-Lennart Straarup, 2-Peter Kühne, 3C/4C-Bjørn Ø. Rasmussen / Jakob K. Jørgensen; 1LC-Maibritt Rørmand, 2LC-Dina Hansen. **BEGINNER** (28): 1-Jess Danielsen, 2-Tommy Andersen, 3/4-Torben Rasmussen / Svend-Erik Schmidt; 1C-Flemming Petersen, 2C-Jens Chr. Blem, 3C/4C-Maria Krebs / Annie Friberg; 1LC-Jan Lund, 2LC-Marlene Adlev Hansen.

•**Willowbank Invitational Tournament XXX** (Shelburne, VT; 29 Apr.)... **OPEN** (24): 1-Jim Pascoe (CT), 2-Heather Van Vlarcom (MA); 1C-Ivan Van Blarcom (ME), 2C-Alex Kimbell (VT)... *Director Gardner Soule reports that this was the final Willowbank Invitational. Founded in 1971 by Soule, it was named after the family's estate on Lake Champlain and is almost certainly the longest-running continuous directorship backgammon event in the world. Gardner felt melancholy about handing out the trophies for the final time. He plans to slow down, and hopefully enter other directors' tournaments for a change!*

•**Country Cups Trophy Tourney** (Coven-try, England; 6-7 May)... **OPEN** (64): 1-Dod Davies, 2-Rob Dean; **Top Intermediate**-Albert Tinker. **FRIDAY KO** (15): 1-Brian Lever, 2-Roy Hollands, 3/4-John Clark / Michael Crane. **DOUBLES** (16 teams): 1-The Dregs, 2-Timbutoo.

•**NEBC Sunday Monthly** (Somerville, MA;

7 May)... **EXPERT** (15): 1-Jon Weinstein, 2-Jerry Padova; 1C-Herb Gurland, 2C-Ed Abou-Zeid. **A/B DIVISION** (7): 1-Brad Mampe, 2-David Menkes; 1C-Marcus Hermansen, 2C-Rob Papp.

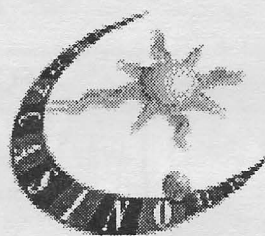
•**Microsoft Zone Semi-annual Championship Series** (via Internet; 13-14 May)... **OPEN**: 1-Phil Simborg (IL), 2-Alex (Sweden)... *The Zone has a 9000 player pool, so Phil's win was quite a feat. Live finals commentary was provided online by Jake Jacobs, Laila Leonhardt and Dorn Bishop.*

•**Oslo Open 2000** (Oslo, Norway; 19-21 May)... **CHAMPIONSHIP** (44): 1-Jörgen Granstedt (Sweden), 2-Brian Ullitz (Denmark), 3/4-Hans Liby (Norway)/Eirik Milch

Pedersen (Norway). **INTERMEDIATE** (51): 1-Svein Dybvik (Norway), 2-Stefan Berger (Norway).

•**Redwood Empire Club Monthly** (San Rafael, CA; 20 May)... **OPEN** (14): 1-Timothy Jaxon, 2-Unes Gollestani, 3-Sho Sengoku, 4-David Montgomery. **INTERMEDIATE** (6): 1-Pia Winslow, 2-Marge Gibbs.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (Palo Alto, CA; 21 May)... **OPEN** (21): 1/2-Sam Ahmed / Timothy Jaxon, 3/4-Pierre Golde / Rawlin Pullen. **BEGINNER** (12): *Flight A*: 1-Oostur Riza, 2-Marilyn Stettler, 3-Barbara Liston; *Flight B*: 1/2-Duane Fuller / Pia Winslow, 3-Gloria Lee. Δ



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Intermediate	280,000	70,000
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Thursday, 6th July

15.00 - 20.00	Registration
15.00	Jackpot Programme
17.30	Quarter entries
22.00	Warm up (free)
23.30	Superjackpot

Friday, 7th 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, 8th July

14.30	Progressive Consolation
16.00	Tournament continues
23.00	Superjackpot

Sunday, 9th July

13.00	Last Chance
15.00	Finals
19.00	Prize-giving & cocktail

marbella backgammon open

June 30 – July 2, 2000

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THURSDAY, JUNE 29

- 18:00–20:00 Registration at Casino Marbella.
Quarter entries, Jackpots and
Minijackpots
- 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

ENTRY FEES

MASTER (13-pt. match)	75.000 Pesetas (Euro 450.77)
Master Quarter-entry	20.000 Pesetas (Euro 120.21)
CHAMPION (11-pt. match)	25.000 Pesetas (Euro 150.26)
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INTERMEDIATE (7-pt. match)	11.000 Pesetas (Euro 66.11)
Intermediate Quarter-entry	4.000 Pesetas (Euro 24.04)
Registration Fees	
Master and Championship	5.000 Pesetas (Euro 30.05)
Intermediate	4.000 Pesetas (Euro 24.04)

PRIZES

100% of all entry fees will be returned with a minimum guarantee of 4.000.000 Pesetas (Euro 24.041). The taxes of the prizes are paid for in advance by the Casino Marbella. The prizes will be divided as follows for each category:

- Main: Winner 40%, Finalist 15%, Semifinalist 7.5% each
- Consolation: Winner 15%, Finalist 7.5%
- Last Chance: Winner 7.5%

Casino Marbella offers a free weekend for two persons in Hotel Andalucia Plaza for the Warm-up winner.

TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

To be announced at the Tournament under the Presidency of Alberto da Pra, president, Worldwide Backgammon Federation.

DIRECTOR

Marco Fornasir
Sanctioned by the Worldwide Backgammon Federation

ACCOMMODATIONS

Prices (breakfast included) are per person, but valid only on reservation made directly and not through a travel agent. The players must reserve by mentioning "Backgammon."

It is preferable to book in advance. For reservations, please send a fax by **JUNE 15, 2000** to the following number: ++34 952 814792 (attention Reception Office). You will receive confirmation shortly thereafter.

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