

8th worldwide twin championships

WINNERS CROWNED IN VEGAS

**Wachtel, Robertie, and Fernandez
Share the Champions' Spotlight**

Bob Wachtel displayed great play and enjoyed well-behaved dice as he cruised to victory in the 2001 Nevada State Championship. Conversely, Bill Robertie, who played equally, faced a path to glory in the International Cup that was anything but smooth.

The two events make up the 8th Worldwide Twin Championships held 12–17 June at the Treasure Island Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Nevada Backgammon Association director Howard Markowitz was in charge, assisted by an able staff.

Nevada State

The 18th annual Nevada State tournament has often been considered the de facto US Open because of the field size and number of master players competing. Although this year's attendance was down (like nearly every other 2001 event thus far), the "expert quotient" among the 93 players was extremely high with Ballard, Senkiewicz, Goulding, Woolsey, Barabino, Schiemann, Sax, Sconyers, Jacobs, Robertie, Lidov, and Malcolm Davis in the mix.

Bob Wachtel had great success in 1992 winning the Venice Olympiad and Cannes, and placing at the Isle of Man. 2000 and beyond hasn't been bad, either including a Pro-Am Doubles title (with Joe Russell) last year, and first in the 47th G/A Invitational in April.

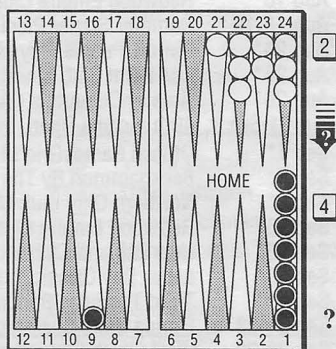
Five comfortable victories in the Main

Flight earned Bob a spot in the Sunday finals. Although a seed himself, he was fortunate not to face any other top-rated players in his trek to the championship match. The same was true for Wachtel's finals opponent, Danilo Sahione of Brazil.

Although Sahione won the first game with a cube turn, he never led the 17-point match again. This position from the fifth game seemed to foretell Sahione's future:

POS. 1.

17-pt. Nevada State finals.
Bob Wachtel (Black) and Danilo Sahione (White) are tied at 2-all. White on roll. **CUBE ACTIONS?**



Sahione is a huge favorite to be off in five rolls or less. Wachtel would need double 3s or better on his first shake, or any double on his

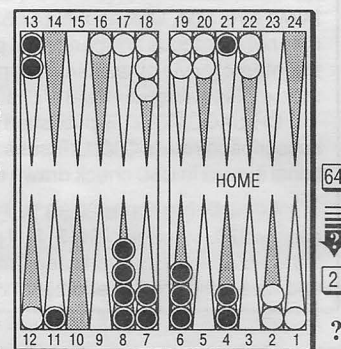
next 3 turns to win this game. Sahione decided against recubing which actually worked out better for him. Wachtel rolled a working double to take a 4–2 lead.

Trailing 3–10, Danilo offered a borderline double leading Bob 109–118 in the race. Wachtel scooped the cube and turned the game around within a few shakes to win via recube.

Trailing 3–12, with the match slipping away, Sahione tried to make something happen:

POS. 2.

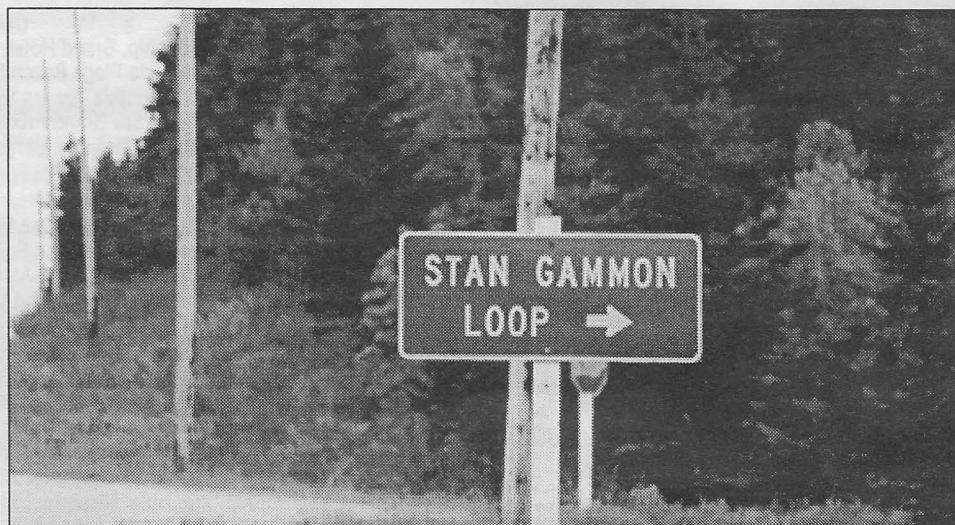
17-pt. finals.
Wachtel (Black) leads Sahione (White) 12 to 3. White on roll. **CUBE ACTIONS?**
After double/take, **WHITE TO PLAY 6-2.**



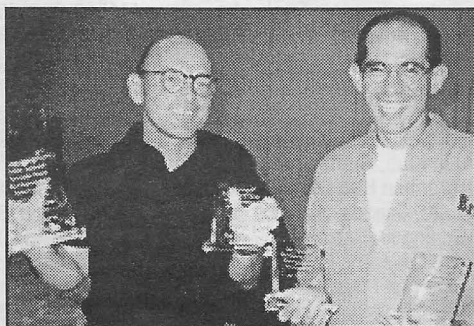
There's no way that Sahione would cube this position in a close match. He simply fell in

[Continued on page 8]

WHERE IS STAN GAMMON LOOP?



While summer vacationing somewhere in the world, John Petergal (IL) came across this sign showing the direction to "Stan Gammon Loop." Your summer challenge is to find the whereabouts (city and country) of this location. The individual who is closest wins a one-year CHICAGO POINT subscription. Ties will be broken by random draw. Send your guess to Chicago Point; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155, or e-mail bg@chicagopoint.com. Entry deadline is 24 August 2001. Happy hunting! Δ



Bob Wachtel (1st–Nevada State, 1st–Doubles) and Danilo Sahione (2nd Nevada State, 1st Blitz) cleaned up in the trophy department.

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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KEEP CRITICISM CONSTRUCTIVE

I find Paul Weaver's articles informative and interesting. Regarding feedback directed at Paul in last month's "Letters" column, criticism in a public forum is natural and a good thing. However, shouldn't we keep the criticism constructive, and not personal in nature?

Based on talking to Paul, playing matches against him, and reading his articles, I believe that he is a very strong player and a sincere student of the game.—
Drew Giovanis, Clearwater, Florida

THE FEEBLE FACTOR

I always thought I played pretty good backgammon, but I never realized how good until I read "Everything's Jake" in the June 2001 issue. Wow! I'm now afraid to

[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.

Jul 15	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, OH	614/771-0981
Jul 19	Third Thursday Bonus (Indiana Open), Day's Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Jul 19	Firecracker Classic, Triple Crown Sports Bar, Houston, TX	713/567-1639
Jul 21	Redwood Empire Club Monthly, Embassy Suites, San Rafael, CA	707/824-9715
Jul 22	Milwaukee Club Monthly, John Hawks Pub, Milwaukee, WI	414/962-8549
Jul 28	Georgia Warm-up & Peach Cup Qualifier, Tony's Grille, Roswell, GA	770/333-1876
Jul 28-29	8th Annual Summer Cooker, Steve Hast residence, Pittsburgh, PA	412/823-7500
Jul 29	Ace Point Club Monthly Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Jul 29*	Hoosier Summer Tournament, Arni's, Indianapolis, IN	317/255-8902
Aug 1*	MSN Gammonzone Medallion Monthly, via computer	GZMedallion@gammonzone.net
Aug 1	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer	tournaments@cyberarts.com
Aug 3-5	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY</u>	<u>716/387-0767</u>
Aug 4	Universal Mall Bimonthly Tourney, All the King's Men, Warren, MI	810/558-4790
Aug 5	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyway's Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/252-7755
Aug 5*	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, OH	330/966-2811
Aug 9-12	<u>Georgia Championships & Peach Cup, Hilton Garden Inn, Atlanta, GA</u>	<u>770/333-1876</u>
Aug 12*	Backgammon By The Bay Monthly, TGI Friday's, Oakland, CA	831/688-9722
Aug 16*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament (Florida State), Day's Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Aug 16*	Hot-As-Hades Shootout, Triple Crown Sports Bar, Houston, TX	713/567-1639
Aug 18*	Redwood Empire Club Monthly, Embassy Suites, San Rafael, CA	707/824-9715
Aug 18-19	Summer Sizzler Picnic & Tourney, Zell's, W. Peoria & Sly Fox, Lacon, IL	309/674-0557
Aug 26*	Games People Play Monthly, Java Oasis, Chicago, IL	312/719-1245
Aug 26*	Ace Point Club Monthly Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Aug 26*	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, OH	614/771-0981
Aug 31-Sep 3	<u>49th Indiana Open, Sheraton Hotel & Suites, Indianapolis, IN</u>	<u>317/255-8902</u>
Sep 1*	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer	tournaments@cyberarts.com
Sep 9*	Backgammon By The Bay Monthly, TGI Friday's, Oakland, CA	831/688-9722
Sep 9*	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, OH	330/966-2811
Sep 15*	Redwood Empire Club Monthly, Embassy Suites, San Rafael, CA	707/824-9715
Sep 16*	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, MA	617/491-8710
Sep 20*	Labor Day Classic, Triple Crown Sports Bar, Houston, TX	713/567-1639
Sep 20*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament (Canadian Open), Day's Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Sep 21-23	<u>Florida State Championships, Sheraton Suites, Ft. Lauderdale, FL</u>	<u>954/564-0340</u>
Sep 22-23	Vietor Invitational, Jon Vietor's residence, La Jolla, CA	858/456-3829
Sep 30*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyway's Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/252-7755
Sep 30*	Ace Point Club Monthly Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Sep 28-30	<u>Towpath Tournament, Towpath Inn, Turin, NY</u>	<u>716/387-0767</u>
Oct 19-21	<u>Illinois State Championships, Springfield Hilton Hotel, Springfield, IL</u>	<u>217/528-0117</u>
Oct 26-28*	<u>Northeast Regional, Comfort Inn Airport, Albany, New York</u>	<u>603/863-4711</u>
Nov 2-4	<u>48th Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Nov 16-18	<u>Minnesota State Championships, Thunderbird Hotel, Bloomington, MN</u>	<u>612/378-1536</u>
Nov 23-25	<u>Ohio State Championships, Akron Holiday Inn, Akron, OH</u>	<u>330/966-2811</u>
Nov 28-Dec 2*	Las Vegas Open, Harrah's Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025

OUTSIDE USA

Jul 9-15	World Championship, Grand Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	<i>USA contact:</i> 954/527-4033
Jul 16-17	10th Nice Open, Lido Plage Beach Bar & Restaurant, Nice, France	33493-879436
Jul 18-22	Czech Open III, Corinthia Towers Hotel, Prague, Czech Republic	49911-409505
Jul 18-22	Master Chouette & 6th Grand Prix de Lugano, Hotel Eden, Lugano, Switz.	4179-3374425
Jul 27-29	Bergen Open 2001, Sardinien, Bergen, Norway	4755-981544
Aug 3-6	Backgammon Summer Bash, Cairn Croft Hotel, Niagara Falls, Canada	<i>Fax:</i> 661/275-6460
Aug 4-5	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Hilton National, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Aug 12*	Toronto Club Monthly, Doghouse Riley's, Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
Aug 18-19	Danish Doubles Championship, Solrød, A.B.C., Denmark	4556-144282
Aug 18-27	BG at Mind Sports Olympiad V, Alexandra Palace, London, England	441522-888676
Aug 31-Sep 2	13th European Championship, Hit Casino Park, Nova Gorica, Slovenia	3902-69018168
Sep 5-9*	First Romanian Open, Casino Blindo/Sofitel, Bucharest, Romania	97252-581329
Sep 8-9	Roy Hollands Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Sep 8-9	Sjællands Mesterskaber, Roskilde Backgammon Klub, Denmark	4546-366012
Sep 9*	Toronto Club Monthly, Doghouse Riley's, Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
Sep 29-30*	Humblebæk Open, Humlebæk Backgammon Klub, Humlebæk, Denmark	4520-671995
Sep 29-Oct 3*	8th German Open & Poker Tourney, Kaiserbrunnen Hotel, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Oct 5-7	Canadian Open, Le Nouvel Hotel, Montreal, QC, Canada	904/777-8816
Oct 5-7*	Schwaben-Cup, Hotel Mercure, Stüttgart-Gerlingen, Germany	49711-486190
Oct 6-7*	Sandy Osborne Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Oct 6-8	7th Japan Open & 31st Championship, Nakano Sun Plaza, Tokyo, Japan	813337-33814
Oct 6-7*	Sandy Osborne Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Oct 11-14*	4th Austrian Open & Doubles Champs, Casino Seefeld, Seefeld, Austria	431-9715889
Oct 13-14	10th Åbne Fynske Mesterskaber, Bridgehuset, Odense, Denmark	4566-177719
Oct 31-Nov 3*	Consulting Doubles Championship, Hotel Royal Splendide, Lugano, Switz.	4179-3374425
Nov 2-4*	6th Grand Prix de Suisse, Hotel Eden, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-3374425
Nov 2-4*	21st Swedish Open, Quality Hotel Nacka, Stockholm, Sweden	468-189346
Dec 4-9*	First Mexican Open, Ritz Carlton Hotel, Cancun, Mexico	49911-409505

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

play myself a practice match until I lay me 6-to-5.

The article seemed to suggest that I had, should have, or could have, employed the often controversial "fish factor" when cubing my finals opponent Richard Del Furia. Since I honestly cannot recall him making any errors in our match, I am not sure that "fishing" would have been appropriate. I did, however, make use of the little

known "feeble factor."

The Feeble Factor takes into account the weakness of an opponent's rolling. Richard hit direct shots less than one-third of the time, failing to meet the standards expected of Championship players. His prime leaping was "weak intermediate" at best, and when entering from the bar against three-point boards (a feat that even beginners manage about 75% of the time), he consistently danced. Accordingly, I was able to double aggressively, and if he was planning to roll so poorly, he probably

should not have taken.

Knowing his tendencies, I shall continue to cube aggressively the next time we meet in a finals. Based upon his non-dice related backgammon skills, I expect that to be soon.—*Jake Jacobs, Des Plaines, Illinois*

PRAISE FROM GERMANY

Thank you very much for sending us issues 125–138 of your fine newsletter. It is very important for our new magazine *Backgammon Today* to get sound information out of the States, still the motherland of our game with its greatest players and authors. I really envy you for contributing editors like Jake Jacobs, Danny Kleinman, Kit Woolsey, Walter Trice etc.—*Thomas Zimmer, editor, Backgammon Today, Germany*

For information on subscribing to *Backgammon Today*, e-mail Thomas Zimmer at: bg-magazin@realizesoft.de —*Ed.*

SEARCHING FOR TRI-GAMMON

We were wondering if you could give us some info on a Tri-gammon board. We have been unable to find one here and would like to purchase one. Thanks!—*Gwen Mavery, via e-mail*

We've seen them, but not for a long time. Your best bet is to look for one on eBay (www.ebay.com).—*Ed. Δ*



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2001

Top 100 compiled through 1 July 2001 after 6 events
(Coming in August: Thousand Islands, Georgia Champs, Indiana Open)



Jake Jacobs	52.87	John Greci	6.08	Norm Wiggins	3.22	Matt Armbruster	1.56
Rick Todd	28.00	François Margot	6.08	Doug Roberts	3.22	Ed King	1.53
Bruce Russell	24.13	Chris Wilson	5.60	Mark Tremayne	3.20	Mark Murray	1.53
Gyl Savoie	21.45	Tom Daniel	5.22	Gregg Cattanach	3.05	Saad Ghiso	1.53
Steve Sax	16.20	Keith Kuligowski	5.20	Jewell Morris	3.05	Glenn Nunez	1.53
Richard Del Furia	15.67	Marianne Gatenby	5.11	Bill Keefe	2.95	Vadim Musaelyan	1.47
Dennis Culpepper	14.86	Brian Barber	5.11	Will Horton	2.94	Doug Johnson	1.47
Sakura Wells	14.00	Dana Nazarian	4.50	Dave Cardwell	2.77	Roger Hickman	1.44
Emil Mortuk	14.00	Paul Weaver	4.44	Ken Lazar	2.62	Hunter Jones	1.44
Bob Wachtel	12.89	Howard Shapiro	4.44	Gary Lohr	2.46	Ali Malik	1.34
Chen Fu Yu	12.69	Richard Munitz	4.44	Mike Flohr	2.40	Sam Denno	1.21
Carl Sorg	12.15	Julian Haley	4.40	Glenn Ramsey	2.27	Ed Buerger	1.13
James Roston	11.44	Tim Mabee	4.14	Mark Haley	2.27	Bob Courtney	1.00
Bob Glass	10.46	David Rockwell	3.90	Adam Versaw	2.27	Suzanne Hayden	0.83
Greg Lilley	8.80	David Groner	3.90	Steve Maas	2.08	Tracy Galloway	0.82
David Wells	7.00	Ron Rogers	3.56	John Meyers	2.08	Jay Cordes	0.78
Fred Kalantari	7.00	Tak Morioka	3.51	Mariano Gonzalez	1.92	Luther Lute	0.63
Glen de Guzman	6.73	Chuck Bower	3.51	Jim Zinkhon	1.83	Lynn Marsella	0.62
Herb Roman	6.69	Jane Lewandowski	3.49	Connie Tipton	1.78	David Rogers	0.62
Eliot Bean	6.45	Masayuki Mochizuki	3.49	Paul Lombardo	1.78	Dick Nelson	0.53
Greg Merriman	6.34	Tim Carroll	3.35	Landon Leming	1.56	Erik Erland	0.53
Rob Maier	6.34	Bill Minser	3.35				



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2001 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 30 JUNE

Bob Zavoral	18.08	Bob Steen	5.60	Mark Murray	1.76	Jozsef Auszmann	0.88
Tim Carroll	12.28	Howard Chow	4.96	Paul Lombardo	1.76	Karsten Nielsen	0.88
Jake Jacobs	11.08	Bill Keefe	4.48	Georgina Flanagan	1.68	Wayne Weist	0.80
Glenn Martells	10.36	J.A. Miller	4.32	Ed Buerger	1.64	Brian Leventhal	0.64
Brian Barber	10.32	Alice Kay	4.08	Roger Hickman	1.60	Paul Friedman	0.64
Bill Bartholomay	10.04	Elaine Kehm	3.84	John Brussel	1.36	Mike Sutton	0.64
Tim Mabee	8.96	Scott Richardson	3.68	Don Marek	1.28	Roger Blaine	0.64
Joe Wollick	8.60	Arlene Levy	3.60	Ken Bond	1.28	Brian Kozin	0.64
Norma Shyer	7.76	Peter Kalba	3.52	Erik Erland	1.12	Beverly Becker	0.64
Carter Mattig	7.20	Steve Klesker	3.04	Jerry Brooks	1.12	Reginald Porter	0.56
Tak Morioka	6.64	Marc Rosset	2.96	Ken Tyszko	1.12	Tom Roberts	0.48
Lucky Nelson	6.44	Joann Feinstein	2.80	Leo Campos	0.88	Barbara Levinson	0.48
Phyllis Smolinski	6.32	Mark Ryan	2.56	Bob Katz	0.88	Richard Stawowy	0.48
Herb Roman	6.24	David Araiza	2.40	Richard Lloyd	0.88	Joe Szewo	0.32
Don Jayhan	6.20	Tom Meyer	2.24	Wendy Kaplan	0.88	Sakura Wells	0.24
Bill Davis	5.88						

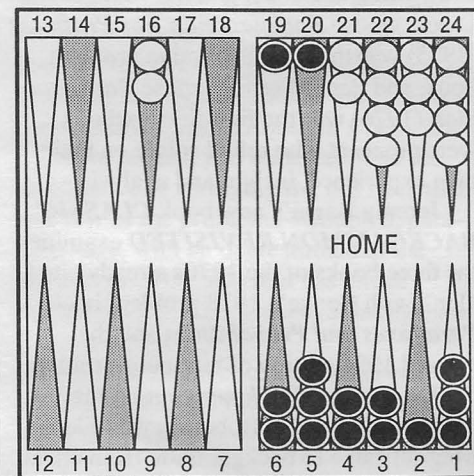
TIM CARROLL parlayed ten wins in a row to earn 4.52 points and June Player of the Month honors. **Lucky Nelson** (3.56) finished second and **Bill Davis** (2.84) was third.

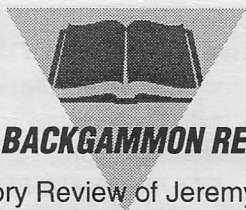
your move

PROBLEM #274

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

Tournament double match-point.
BLACK TO PLAY 4-1.





CLASSIC BACKGAMMON REVISITED

A Laudatory Review of Jeremy Bagai's
Groundbreaking New Book

Reviewed by Danny Kleinman

Classic Backgammon Revisited © 2001 by Jeremy Bagai. Published by Flaming Sparrow Press. Soft cover, 200 pages. Price: \$35 plus shipping. Available *Backgammon à la Carte* (Carol Joy Cole), 810/232-9731. E-mail: cjc@tir.com.



"The Frail Shoulders of Giants"

The first backgammon craze in the United States began in the 1920s, when the doubling cube was introduced, and continued until World War Two. Gamesters of that era who took to the game included Millard Hopper (born 1895, World Unrestricted Checker Champion 1933–1951), bridge champions Oswald Jacoby (born 1902, originator of the "Jacoby Rule" for money play) and John Crawford (born 1915, originator of the Crawford Rule for match play), and games-lover (baseball and bridge) Barclay Cooke (born 1912). When these men studied backgammon in earnest, they had no good textbooks to guide them.

In 1940, when Cooke learned backgammon, Hopper had just written a book on checkers (reprinted later as *Win at Checkers*); the next year, Hopper wrote *Win at Backgammon*. There is no indication from backgammon authors of the 1970s (the heyday of the second backgammon craze) that they learned anything from Hopper's book or any other prior to the first modern book, *The Backgammon Book* (1970) by Jacoby and Crawford. Old-timers Jacoby, Crawford and Cooke, and the younger Joe Dwek, whose *Backgammon For Profit* (1975) was the first instructive problem book, and Paul Magriel, whose *Backgammon* (1976) was the first fine textbook, were pioneers who relied solely on their own experience, insight and analysis.

Jeremy Bagai's new book *CLASSIC BACKGAMMON REVISITED* examines the three books of the 1970s already cited, along with Cooke's 1978 problem book *Paradoxes and Probabilities* and the revised 1991 edition of text-cum-problem book *Advanced Backgammon* by the modern analyst Bill Robertie, who like Magriel came to backgammon from chess. Armed with rollouts from Snowie (a fine

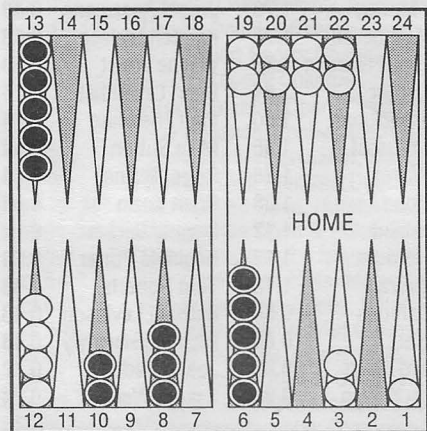
computer program unavailable to earlier authors), Bagai seeks to identify and correct the biggest and clearest errors in these "classic" books on which most of us have relied for instruction. He finds 120 of them (120 if we count the duplicated errors of Dwek and Magriel), including some whoppers.

When I learned backgammon in 1973 and wanted to improve, every good player I knew recommended *The Backgammon Book*. This is the book in which Bagai finds the fewest big errors (only four), yet I learned little from it. Simply put, the book wasn't very meaty; it tackled mainly easy plays and told me what I already knew. As my friend Barclay might say, it was like a shortstop who leads the league in fielding percentage every year because he has a limited range and doesn't reach hard-to-field grounders through the hole. For one of the four bad plays Jacoby and Crawford recommend, they offer no analysis at all, just calling it the best of a bad lot.

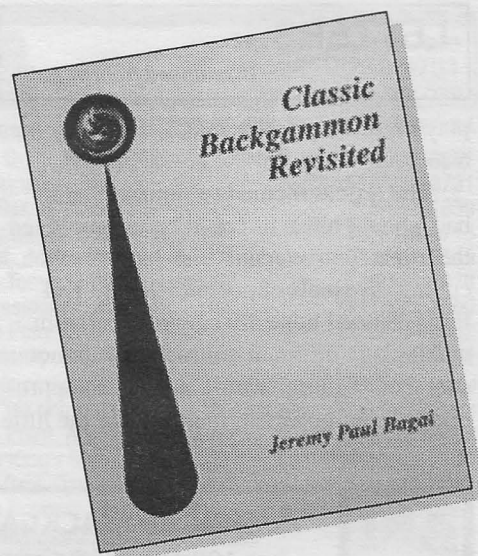
Backgammon For Profit was the first truly good backgammon book, posing challenging problems and giving well-reasoned answers to them. Yet Bagai finds 20 clear errors in it, and I suspect there are more (for reasons he explains, he did not look for *all* clear errors). Dwek dedicated his book to Barclay Cooke's son Walter, who had died the year before at age 37, "To W.C.—Only begetter of aggressive backgammon." Nearly all the errors in his book stem from overaggressive tendencies: underrating the values of points, primes and anchors; underrating the impact of hits and the dangers of shots and blots; overrating slots, diversification and flexibility.

Dwek's #23 illustrates a typically modern error, the "small risk now to save a big risk later" error.

Classic Backgammon Revisited Problem #76. Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-2.**



Bagai (in his #76) makes a telling point: "In order to offset 6 immediate



shots, Black would have to save over 19 directs on the subsequent roll." As worded, this sounds confusing and incredible, but the confusion is purely linguistic. The air of paradox disappears if instead of saying "directs" we specify what Bagai means: *blotters*, in other words, rolls that leave direct shots next turn. If the chance that the blot will be hit is 11 in 36, then 19 blotters result in $19 \times 11 = 209$ hits in 1296, or slightly less than 6 hits in 36 (the number of "shots").

I don't know whether Magriel himself or an editor at Quadrangle Press (his publisher) changed the title of his book from *The Complete Book of Backgammon*, as his Introduction calls it, to just plain *Backgammon*, as it's called on the title page and the dust jacket. While avoiding the arrogance of "complete" in the title, the dust jacket makes an extravagant claim: "the *only* book a player at any level will ever need." However, the dust jacket's boast that "the game's basic concepts, ideas and principles . . . have never before been organized or categorized so lucidly" is correct.

In 1950, when I excelled at both, other boys sometimes asked me, "Which is more difficult, chess or checkers?"

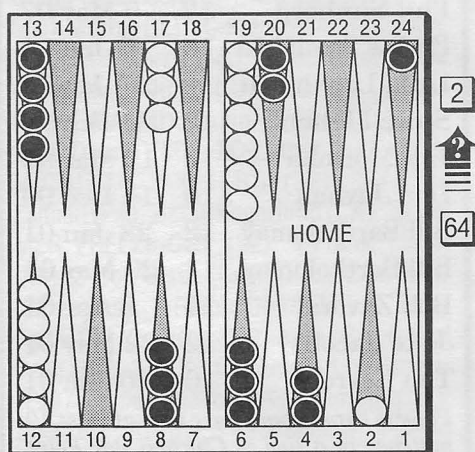
I answered, "Checkers. In chess, you have principles to guide you: control of the center, fast development, knights before bishops, avoiding doubled and isolated pawns, seizing open files for your rooks, overprotecting your strong points, and so forth. Checkers is all tactics."

Magriel's book was for backgammon what Nimzovich's *My System* was for chess. It explained everything that the best players of the time knew but couldn't (or wouldn't) articulate for the public. Perhaps the phrase "of the time" should be italicized and the word "knew" should be in

doubt-connoting quote-marks. Soon others found new things to “know” about backgammon. Now, a quarter-century later, Bagai finds 28 clear errors . . . despite, as Bagai notes, the clarity of the explanations and the astounding simplicity of the problems themselves, which math professor Magriel apparently chose just as he might choose integer lengths to illustrate the Pythagorean Theorem in a Plane Geometry textbook.

Except for one (surprising) technical error, Magriel’s errors flowed from a flawed concept of the game. Bagai addresses this in an early problem (#14):

Classic Backgammon Revisited Problem #14. Money game. White has just rolled 2-1 and played 8/6, 24/23. Black on roll. **SHOULD BLACK DOUBLE?**



Here Bagai has taken the first position from Magriel’s Chapter 15 and given White his worst roll. Magriel had written, “In an expert game, Black would double on the next roll if White failed to improve his game.” In fact, Black’s double is wrong by -0.170 , refuting Magriel’s contention.

Bagai writes, “Which is more valuable, positional equity or racing equity? For centuries, the dominant answer was the race . . . Everything changed in the early 1970s: primes and purity became the watchwords, and if all else failed you could always play a back game. Races were for the unenlightened.”

Magriel’s modern concepts weren’t wrong. They were right, a needed *partial* antidote to the traditional advice “Hit blots, make points, avoid blots and shots” taken as gospel. However, like the traditional advice, Magriel’s concepts could be carried too far. Above all, backgammon requires *weighing* of one kind of advantage against another, of benefits or assets against costs or liabilities. Underrating the race, you can underrate hitting plays that set your opponent back in the race, and (the flip side of this coin) become too willing to let your

opponent hit you, leaving blots and shots unnecessarily.

Many of us became, in effect, overzealous Magriel disciples. For this we shouldn’t blame Magriel. In his “Basics” section (on page 27), he actually repeats the traditional advice, with the prefatory clause, “If you are a beginner, . . .” Of course, nobody wanted to remain a beginner. So we moved on to the advanced concepts like “flexibility,” “diversification,” “slotting,” and “action play” to which Magriel devoted later sections, and overapplied them. Impressed by the importance of the “Golden Point” (better called the *golden anchor*, “golden point” already having been used to refer to *one’s own* 5-point on page 21 of *Backgammon: The Cruellest Game*, Cooke’s earlier book), we refused to break it “merely” to hit our opponents’ outfield blots, and we cheerfully strewed blots in our own outer board, daring our opponents to break anchor to hit, ignoring the fact that the best time to break anchor is when you can hit while doing so. Some of us experienced a “Magriel Slump” as we found ourselves less successful after reading Magriel’s book than before; but we shrugged it off as due to incomplete mastery.

Magriel’s book suffers much less from excess application of modern concepts than some of us did after reading it, but nonetheless such excess accounts for nearly all its 28 clear errors.

My one gripe about *CLASSIC BACKGAMMON REVISITED* is the cruel sarcasm Bagai directs at Barclay Cooke, whose *Paradoxes and Probabilities* he calls an “infamous work” in which “a third of the solutions are *badly* wrong.” By my arithmetic, 44 badly wrong solutions come to 26%, not 33%, of the 168 in the book. Barclay and I were pen pals from 1978, when he was just finishing the book, until three years later when he died. On my birthday in 1980, wondering how to celebrate, I thought to caricature Barclay’s writing in *The Barclay Cooke Quiz*. Bagai calls it “a deadly pastiche,” but it was written in good fun and Barclay loved it.

However, despite a caustic tone, Bagai is right about Cooke’s errors. Cooke makes the typical errors of the 1970s—underrating hitting and the race; favoring slot- and blot-happy plays; purity that includes (Cooke’s own words) “a visceral aversion” to the 1-point; a brave willingness to take risks now in the misguided belief that they will prevent bigger risks later—but with some added twists:

- Faith that anchors will protect his loose plays on his own side of the board, and a

consequent reluctance to split.

- A disregard of the race that often leads him to prefer hitting on his own side to hitting on the opponent’s.
- An inflated concept of timing that he invokes to justify loose plays by the rationale that getting hit “slows him down” usefully.
- Most glaringly, a contrarian spirit that manifests itself in dismissing “routine,” “obvious,” or “natural” plays while seeking out plays that “seem perverse” and “spectacular” alternatives.

Bagai counters with “Don’t look for excitement in boring positions.” Well, yes—but can’t we admire thinkers who see subtle hidden problems while rejecting their outlandish solutions?

Robertie wrote his book later, and had the benefit of the giants of backgammon literature who preceded him. Most likely too, he was aware of some of their errors, for soon after *Paradoxes and Probabilities* was published, sharp analysts were already challenging many of Cooke’s plays. For example, soon after winning the Plimpton Cup, David Leibowitz scoured Cooke’s book for errors and found 20 plays with which he disagreed (7 that appear in Bagai’s book, 13 that do not). Robertie enjoyed another benefit: feedback about the first (1984) edition of his book that he was able to use in producing the second (1991) edition. (Some of the feedback, alas, came from experts who delivered it by playing propositions against him.) Perhaps Robertie’s greatest asset was his balanced, eclectic approach, an absence of any overriding prejudice for or against purity, aggression, or taking early risks in hopes of avoiding later risks. To this he added a healthy dose of empiricism, performing rollouts of many positions.

For these reasons, we might expect *Advanced Backgammon* to have fewer errors than the other books Bagai examines. Surprisingly, Bagai finds 28 errors, the same number as in Magriel’s book. Unlike the errors of the others, however, these are not stylistic errors. The closest to a systematic error in Robertie’s book is an apparent tendency to underestimate the importance of springing the last back man in a few of the problems—coupled, paradoxically, with an overestimate of the advantage of the side that has already sprung the last man when evaluating cube actions.

Though Bagai enumerates the errors in all five books, he makes no explicit judgment as to which is most error-free. I’ll cast

[Continued on page 6]

CLASSIC BACKGAMMON REVISITED...

[Continued from page 5]

my ballot for *Advanced Backgammon*, however. Of Robertie's seemingly numerous 28 errors, 15 are cube errors. Cube decisions require *cardinal* appraisals ("How good is this position?"), but play decisions require only ordinal judgments ("Is my position after this move *better* than after the other?") and are often much easier. Robertie's remaining 13 play errors compare favorably even to the four errors in the Jacoby & Crawford book, which addresses far fewer difficult problems.

If Bagai merely pointed out the errors in these five classic backgammon books, he would be doing backgammon players a great service. However, he doesn't stop there. Instead he describes the features of the positions that make the alternatives he favors (or rather, the ones for which Snowie rollouts yield higher equities) superior to the erroneous plays and cube actions he unearths. Without sound analyses to replace the faulty ones, all we could learn from the book would be not to trust supposed authorities in backgammon.

Sometimes Bagai's analyses are brief and to the point. For example:

"Simple plays for simple positions. Robertie outthinks himself and the rest of the world by suggesting 16/8 [*bringing an outfield blot to safety*—DK] over the natural,

safe, productive and correct 24/16 [*springing the last back man to cover that blot*—DK]. Will the stripped 16- and 13-points be all that hard to clear? The 16-point, perhaps, but the midpoint certainly won't be, and those checkers will soon become the builders that Robertie thinks are so immediately important. The 16-point is not a 'liability' and does serve the purpose of covering both outer boards. Moreover, it does so *safely*. 16/8 is simply a blunder."

At other times, Bagai offers detailed explanations. For a problem whose (mis-)analysis Cooke begins with, "It looks routine . . . to make [the 4-point] and secure a prime, but . . ." and ends with a recommendation to break anchor by leaping a 4-prime and leaving a double shot, Bagai rattles off nine relevant points, starting with "1. Six-primers are very strong," ending with "10. Six-primers are very strong," and including:

"7. Black now has only seven numbers to make the 4-point; 20 numbers to escape. When choosing between two or more constructive plays, it's usually correct to do what will be hardest to do later."

If you wonder why I, who am usually so critical, have written such a laudatory review, I offer you a choice of two cynical explanations:

The Carrot. Jeremy paid me to write it.

The Stick. If I say anything bad about Jeremy's book, his next book may be a scathing examination of the errors in my books.—Danny Kleinman Δ

Chicago Bar Point Club 1000-to-1 Club

Name	Wins in a Row	Date Completed
David Rubin	11	1 Feb 94
Neil Kazaross	10	8 Feb 94
Phil Simborg	11	5 Apr 94
Frankie Farjood	11	25 Apr 95
Harry Cohn	11	9 May 95
Neil Kazaross	10	19 Sep 95
Neil Kazaross	11	12 Dec 95
Herb Roman	10	11 Aug 96
Andy Krenitz	12	5 Nov 96
Neil Kazaross	10	23 Dec 96
Wendy Kaplan	10	7 Jan 97
Phil Simborg	12	6 May 97
Phyllis Smolinski	10	6 Jan 98
Laila Leonhardt	10	27 Jan 98
Steve Mellen	12	1 Feb 98
Tak Morioka	12	17 Mar 98
Don Jayhan	10	14 Dec 99
Bill Bartholomay	12	23 Jan 01
Bill Bartholomay	11	20 Mar 01
Bob Zavoral	14	3 Apr 01
Jake Jacobs	12	22 May 01
Tim Carroll	10	26 Jun 01

Players listed above have won at least 10 matches in a row in Chicago Bar Point Club competition since 1994.

michigan summer championships

RICK TODD IS BACK ON TOP IN MICHIGAN

Zaltash over Foglerlund in Michigan Masters

Rick Todd wins! What an incredible story at the Michigan Summer Championships.

Carol Joy Cole's annual 4th of July party was held a few days early this year: 28 June–1 July at the Novi Hilton Hotel. Over 200 players attended from as far away as Israel and Japan.

Todd, a native Michiganiian, was Flint Player of the Year in 1994 and runner-up in 1995. Then on 15 January 1996, while sheeting a roof, he slipped and fell nearly 30 feet onto the ground breaking 34 bones (hip, back, shoulder) and suffering head injuries. He was hospitalized for three months and confined to a wheelchair for six months thereafter.

But he continued to play backgammon,

which he believes made the difference in the recovery of both his mind and body.

Rick went undefeated in the tournament defeating Chicago master David Wells 13–10 in the semifinals. His victory over David's wife Sakura in the finals (13–11) earned him \$6,000 in prize money and robust congratulations from his many

backgammon buddies. Well done, Rick!

The 32-player Michigan Masters field saw Pittsburgh's Abbas Zaltash come from behind to defeat Ray Foglerlund (CA). The win was worth \$10,000 to Zaltash. Foglerlund earned a respectable \$5,000 for finishing second.

[Continued on next page]



2001 Michigan Summer Champ Rick Todd.



Michigan Masters victor Abbas Zaltash.

Other main division winners included Carl Sorg (SC) in the Intermediate section and Gary Lohr (MI) in the Novice.

Congratulations to CJC and staff for a near-flawless event. Kudos to auctioneer John Carrico who generated nearly \$15,000 in the 84-player Champion division alone!

Mark your calendar for the 2002 Michigan Summer Champs: 4-7 July. Results: Δ

MICHIGAN SUMMER CHAMPIONSHIPS

OPEN (84): 1-Rick Todd (MI), 2-Sakura Wells (IL), 3-David Wells (IL), 4/5-Chuck Bower (IN) / Tak Morioka (IL); 1C-Emil Mortuk (MI), 2C-Fred Kalantari (MN), 3C/4C-Jane Lewandowski (MI) / Masayuki Mochizuki (Japan). INTERMEDIATE (73): 1-Carl Sorg (SC), 2-John Greci (PA), 3-Gregg Cattanach (GA), 4/5-Ed King (OH) / Mark Murray (IL); 1C-François Margot (KY), 2C-Jewell Morris (MI), 3C/4C-Saad Ghiso (MI) / Glenn Nunez (CA). NOVICE (22): 1-Gary Lohr (MI), 2-Jim Zinkhon (IL), 1C-Sam Denno (MI), 2C-Luther Lute (OH). MICHIGAN MASTERS (32): 1-Abbas Zaltash (PA), 2-Ray Fogelund (CA). SUMMER FREEZE-OUT (32): 1-Frank Talbot (MI), 2-Bob Glass (CA). OPEN DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Ralph Dietz (MI) & Peter Kalba (IL), 2-Gregg Cattanach (GA) & Carl Sorg (SC), 3/4-John Greci & Lou Steiner (PA) / Randee Shapiro & Phil Simborg (IL). LIMITED DOUBLES (15 teams): 1-Brian Barber & Palu Lombardo (IL), 2-Ernie Denenfeld & Wally Wolf (MI). MICHIGAN BLITZ (128): 1-Reza Rezaian (NY), 2-Mike Rezai (OH). FIRECRACKER JACKPOTS \$300 (16): 1-Patrick Didisheim (Switzerland), 2-Dana Nazarian (MN). \$100 (16): 1-Julian Haley (SC), 2-Brian Barber (IL). \$100 (8): 1-Lincoln Bedell (NH), 2-Ken Wroblewski (MI). LAS VEGAS-MICHIGAN BONUS TOURNAMENT (38): 1-Jon Vietor (CA), 2-Mary Ann Meese (IN). \$20 DETROIT QUICKIES #1 (64): 1-Laila Leonhardt (PA), 2-Jack Kissane (NY). #2 (64): 1-Patrick Gibson (CA), 2-Phil Simborg (IL). \$10 DETROIT QUICKIE (64): #1 (64): 1-Rich Rahmey (NY), 2-Luther Lute (OH). #2 (32): 1-Guy Nicosia (MN). EARLYBIRD JACKPOTS: Open (16): 1/2-Bill Finneran (VA) / Sakura Wells (IL). Limited (16): Jeb Horton (NC) / Carl Sorg (SC). WEDNESDAY WARM-UPS. \$50 (32): 1-Patrick Gibson (CA), 2-Mary Hickey (OH); 1C-Patrick Didisheim (Switzerland), 2C-Jim Slomkoski (MI). \$30 (32): 1-Jack Takala (MI), 2-John Christner (WI); 1C-Carl Falk (MI), 2C-Carl Sorg (SC). \$20 (17): 1-Abdul Alchalabi (MI), 2-Luther Lute (OH); 1C-Ron Brouckaert (MI), 2C-Phil Undieme (MI).

AMALGAMATION

International backgammon directors **Michael Crane** (UK) and **Chris Ternel** (Denmark) are seeking qualifiers for their \$1,000,000 World Masters Championships tournament scheduled to be held 4-8 May 2002 at the Caribe Royale Hotel in Orlando, Florida. The million dollar prize money (half of it goes to the winner) is based on attracting 1024 players at \$2,160 each—a very tall order. Participants can either pay the entire fee up front, or enter a qualifying knockout with entry fees ranging from \$37.50 to \$600. It is hoped that directors across the globe will run hundreds of qualifiers over the next 10 months. In addition, www.progammon.com is authorized to conduct them online. Qualifying entrants get a complimentary 1/2 room accommodation for five nights during the event. For more information, Crane and Ternel ask that you visit: www.backgammon-global.com... Visiting the Bar Point Club in June: **Bobbie Shifrin** (Las Vegas)... Congratulations to Hoosier Backgammon Club directors **Butch & Mary Ann Meese** (IN) who celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary on 13 June. Effective 11 July, HBC moves from Thursday to Wednesday nights at Neon Johnny's in Indianapolis. Get the details at 317/255-8902... **Antonio Ortega's** (Costa Rica) new book *Backgammon With the Giants: Neil Kazaross* is now available through **Carol Joy Cole's** "Backgammon à la Carte" (cjc@tir.com). 224 pages, \$40. Look for a review in Chicago Point in the September issue... Former Turkish World Cup director **Abraham Eitan** (Israel) is back with a new BG event. The First Romanian Open in Bucharest, Romania rolls off 5-9 September and has \$30,000 added money. And Eitan has hinted at an even bigger event in Rhodes, Greece in late October. Added money could be *substantially* higher... **Michael Strato** (Canada) suggests that for the best in Monte Carlo World BG Championship coverage (9-15 July), go to www.gammonvillage.com... It's a good bet that future Las Vegas Masters event will utilize timing clocks. A petition was circulated at the Nevada State event stating that "We, the undersigned will not play in another Las Vegas Masters event unless clocks are used." Over 40 players signed the petition... The 15 June *Daily Herald* featured an article on the recent Mystery Writer's Conference in Rolling Meadows, Illinois. Chicago's own **Jake Jacobs** was pictured. He presented a

workshop discussing cheating at gaming... Want your match recorded by a backgammon babe? Contact Danish recorders



Danish hotties Tanja Lewis (left) and Anna Höskuldsson will record your match for \$50/hour.

Tanja Lewis or Anna Höskuldsson. The girls get \$50/hour to record and will provide you with JellyFish or Snowie files for an extra fee. For more info, go to www.matchrecording.com... If you're planning on attending the annual Central Illinois Summer Sizzler Cookout/Tournament 18-19 August, contact Peoria director **Ed Zell** right away (ed@thezells.com or 309/674-0557). Sunday tourney spaces fill up fast, and **Cliff Mayoh** needs to know how many steaks to order for the Saturday pool party at the Zell's house... We're taking the month of August off. Watch for the next POINT to be mailed out 10 September. Enjoy your summer... Finally, **Confucius** say: "The more you know, the more luck you will have." Δ



ILLINOIS ACTION



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB
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.

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY: Tourn. Monday, 6:30 P.M. at Chatham Computers; 8119 S. Cottage Grove, Chicago. Reginald Porter (708/715-2917). Sunday monthly, 11:45 A.M. at Java Oasis; 2240 S. Michigan, Chicago. J.A. Miller (312/719-1245).

PUB CLUB: Tourn. Mon., 7:00 P.M. at Danny's Grill and Bar; 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Joe Wollick (847/942-2068).

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 Wednesday, 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 Winnetka Community House; 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Chibnik (847/446-0537).

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

VEGAS...

[Continued from page 1]

love with his gammon chances, forgetting about the three stragglers still behind enemy lines. Following Wachtel's easy take, Danilo tossed a 6-2 horror shake and played it 13/11, 8/2. Bob rolled 3-3 (making his 5-point); Danilo tossed double 6 destroying his position, and it was nearly "lights out." Sahione needed 5-5 or better on his last shake to save the gammon. He rolled 5-5.

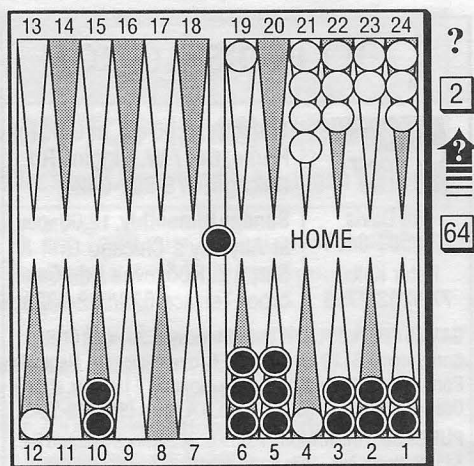
But two game later, it was over. Bob Wachtel had defeated his Brazilian opponent 17-4 to earn over \$14,000 in prize money.

International Cup

The International Cup is run like a giant Blitz event: win an 8-player knockout and you qualify for the finals. Reaching the finals were 2-time World Champion Bill Robertie (MA) and Argentina's lovely Veronica Dabul. It would be no cakewalk for the modern-day backgammon legend: Veronica can play!

And play she did. The 15-point finals started out like "Ladies Day" to the throng of spectators surrounding the table. Veronica won the first 8 points and was still ahead 12-9 when the following position developed:

POS. 3. 15-point International Cup finals. Bill Robertie (Black) trails Veronica Dabul (White), 9 to 12. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTIONS?**



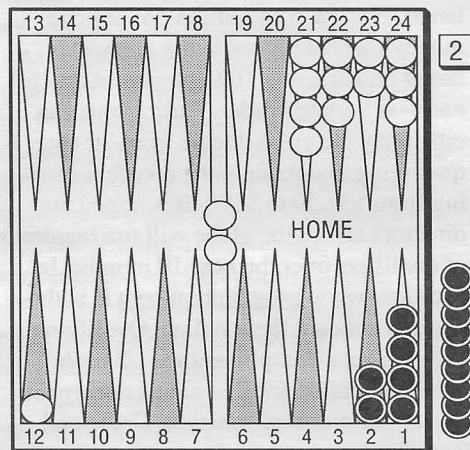
Dabul had just rolled 5-3, hitting Robertie on the 12-point. Although Bill has only 15 immediate ways to hit (any 6, 5-1, 5-2), it's an excellent double due to future shot equity and the number of gammons the position produces for Black. Veronica accepted, although it's so close that no one would fault her for dropping.

Bill entered with a 6-2 hitting two

checkers and was eventually able to close them out. As he peeled off checkers while Dabul floundered on the bar, the gammon became more and more certain until...

POS. 4. 15-point International Cup finals. Bill Robertie (Black) trails Veronica Dabul (White), 9 to 12.

BLACK TO PLAY 4-1.



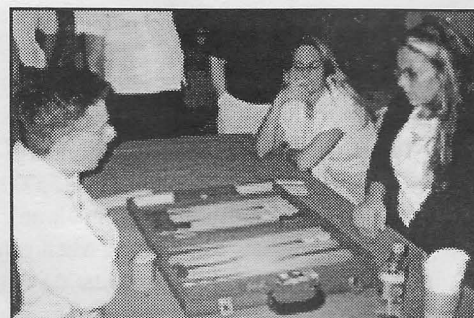
Robertie could simply play safe and virtually guarantee four points, but made the right play of taking two off and going for the match-ending backgammon. Veronica rolled 5-1, then 4-3 to lose the triple and a heart-breaking match. Bill's play is right on two fronts. First, six points efficiently ends the match; and second, White's weak board means that even if she hits, "off the gammon" is not a sure thing. In fact, given the match score, Robertie's play is not wrong by much even when Dabul's board is closed.

Masters Invitational

The \$3,000 Masters Invitational generated an awkward 24 entrants which yielded 3 finalists: Leo Fernandez (Argentina), Ed O'Laughlin (FL), and Steve Sax (CA). The decision was made to roll high dice to see who would get a bye into the finals. Usually an arrangement is made whereby the winner pays the two losers something for his good fortune (a hedge), but Leo balked at the idea and went for it all. Leo and Steve tied for the bye, and on the roll-off, Leo rolled a 4... then Steve answered with a 3! Big swing.

O'Laughlin defeated Sax, then lost 21-11 to Fernandez to settle for second. Leo's first place prize money totaled nearly \$40,000. A sweet victory.

THE LAS VEGAS OPEN is set for 28 Nov.-2 Dec. at Harrah's Hotel. If it's anything like last year's event, expect lots of action. Complete results at right: Δ



Bill Robertie battles Brazilian beauty Veronica Dabul in the Las Vegas International Cup finals.

LAS VEGAS 8TH WORLDWIDE TWIN CHAMPS

Nevada State Tournament

CHAMPIONSHIP (93): 1-Bob Wachtel (CA), 2-Danilo Sahione (Brazil), 3/4-Chris Trencher (NY) / Jean Phillippe Rohr (France); 1C-Rageb Shadallah (Cuba), 2C-Michael Maxakuli (NV), 3C/4C-Mary Franks (IL) / Richard Lloyd (IL); 1LC-Kit Woolsey (CA), 2LC-Molly Anderson (WA). **INTERMEDIATE (87):** 1-Alan Tavel (IN), 2-Paul Mangone (CA), 3/4-Anna Marie Zarb (Switz.) / Scott Cole (NV); 1C-Pierre Semour (France), 2C-Casey Wahi (OR), 3C/4C-Toshikatsu Ejiri (Japan) / Al Lunder (WA); 1LC-Andy Natale (IL), 2LC-Tom Schmitz (TX). **BEGINNER (38):** 1-Fernando Uribe (Mexico), 2-Saad Henein (CA), 3/4-Ward Hudspeth (TX) / Ron Hedington (WA); 1C-Norman Reiss, 2C-Bob Fleck (AZ); 1LC-Angel Houghtaling (NV), 2LC-Judy Nutting.

International Cup

CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Bill Robertie (MA), 2-Veronica Dabul (Argentina), 3/4-Gadi Carmeli (FL) / Shel Segal (MN). **INTERMEDIATE:** 1-Jeff Whitelaw (NV), 2-Al Lunder (WA), 3/4-Ted Kirit (NY) / Bill Piland (OR). **BEGINNER:** 1-Rodrigo Fernandez (Mexico), 2-John Kurtz (NV), 3/4-Chris Bautista (Philippines) / Omo Osamu (Japan).

MASTERS JACKPOT (24): 1-Leo Fernandez (Brazil), 2-Ed O'Laughlin (FL), 3-Steve Sax (CA).

LIMITED JACKPOT: 1-Henrik Gwinner (Denmark), 2-Ernie McCombs (TX), 3/4-Paul Franks (IL) / Rafael Lopez de Lara (Mexico).

BLITZ (352): 1-Danilo Sahione (Brazil), 2-Nack Ballard (CA).

SENIORS (64): 1-John Rockwell (CA), 2-Ron Coffin (CA), 3/4-Pierre Semour (France) / Jeff Burdsall (NV).

DOUBLES (32): 1-Derek Lewis (NV) & Bob Wachtel (CA), 2-Curtis Lucas (TX) & Walter Stein (TX).

MINI-MATCH #1 (128): 1-Andranik Safarian (Argentina). **MINI-MATCH #2 (128):** 1-Ricardo Spinola (Brazil).

AFTER TOURNAMENT TOURNAMENT \$50 (32): 1/2-Jorge Salazar (TX) / Kit Woolsey (CA). **ATT \$20 (18):** 1-Sho Sengoku (CA), 2-Wally Wolf (MI).

SOUTH FLORIDA BACKGAMMON CLUB presents the

2001 South Florida State Championship

featuring the

Royal Palm Classic

September 21-23, 2001

at the luxurious

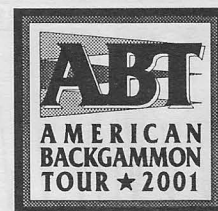
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Join us for the **EARLY BIRD TOURNAMENT**: 7:00 P.M. Thursday night (Sept. 20) at the Big Apple Sports Grill, 2671 E. Oakland Park Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale. \$25 entry fee. 90% return.

Entry Fees

Royal Palm Classic:	\$500
Open:	\$200
Intermediate:	\$125
Novice:	\$40
Doubles:	\$120
4-Man Blitz:	\$25
"Gator Roll"	Free

Hospitality!

A modest hospitality fee of \$10 will be charged to all participants. Coffee & donuts served Saturday and Sunday; munchies and soft drinks throughout the weekend. Pizza served Friday evening. Subs served late Saturday evening.

Information

For more information, or to request an invitation, contact

Elayne Feinstein: (954) 564-0340
BGINFLA210@aol.com

Don Heinsler: (954) 444-0413
don.heinsler@anixter.com

who did what

WINNER'S CIRCLE



May-June 2001

•**Northern Ohio Club Monthly** (Canton, OH; 6 May)... OPEN (11): 1-Joe Miller, 2-Mary Hickey.

•**Toronto Club Monthly** (Toronto, Canada; 13 May)... OPEN (16): 1-Ernie Kwong, 2-Nick Farrow, 3/4-Al Jones / Peter Walsh.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (Oakland, CA; 13 May)... OPEN (12): 1-Glenn Nunez, 2-Robert Caradien; 1C-Bob Gekas, 2C-Robert Virnig. BEGINNER (4): 1-Anna Estrada, 2-Frank Berkenkotter.

•**May Flowers Stakes Tournament** (Houston, TX; 17 May)... OPEN (14): 1-Bob Rucoba, 2-Greg Pettit; 1C-Dewayne Lee, 2C-Jack Erwin.

•**Milwaukee Sunday Monthly** (Milwaukee, WI; 20 May)... OPEN (11): 1/2-Bob Holyon / Marv Arnol; 1C-Wally Berglund.

•**Atlanta Club Chouette Tournament** (Roswell, GA; 20 May)... OPEN: 1-Dave Cardwell, 2-Mark King.

•**Greater Columbus Club Monthly** (Hilliard, OH; 20 May)... OPEN (7): 1-David Steinberg, 2-Mary Hickey.

•**8th Oslo Open** (Oslo, Norway; 25-27 May)... CHAMPIONSHIP (55): 1-Torben Hasseriis, 2-Shahab Ghodsi, 3/4-Martha Gjelseth / Audun Klubnes; 1C-Jostein Flood, 2-Geir Pedersen; 1LC-Hans Liby, 2LC-Thomas Fuglheim. ADVANCED: 1-Christer Hagenfeldt, 2-Terje Dalhaug, 3/4-Gabriel Adnersen / Are Stray; 1C-

Dagfinn Snarheim, 2C-Are Haugan; 1LC-Trond Dalhaug. INTERMEDIATE: 1-Gayana Meyburg, 2-Frank Stenersen, 3/4-Brendan Bensley / Andre Rasmussen; 1C-Jan Ivar Nilsen, 2C-Yvonne Hjorth; 1LC-Per Jacobsen. BEGINNER: 1-Thomas Mangen, 2-Carina Eriksson. TEAM EVENT (23): 1-"Jedi Academy" (Samson Hoiigard, Geir Pedersen, Jon Røyseth), 2-"Favoritter" (Shahab Ghodsi, Hans Liby, Henning Roschberg)... *Marianne Husum forwarded us this report.*

•**7th Kaiserbrunnen Cup** (Brakel, Germany; 1-4 June)... MASTERS: 1-Torsten Haase, 2-Ronald Reinhardt, 3/4-Harald Johanni / Leonid Riskin; 1C-Henning Frick, 2C-Norbert Hornemann; 1LC-Dirk Schiemann. CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Peer Röwer, 2-Axel Schürmann; 1C-Dieter Münster, 2C-Gerald Richter; 1LC-Franz Kettler. SUPER JACKPOT: 1-Nodar Gagoua Rus., 2-Rainer Siebrecht. INTERMEDIATE: 1-Torsten Bischoff, 2-Ralf Aigner, 3-Andrea Habel, 4-Eduardo Weber. BLITZ 50: 1-Norbert Lisiecki, 2-Rainer Witt, 3/4-Jürgen Schettler / Stefan Bobenhausen... *Results provided by Andreas "Bonzo" Born.*

•**Hilton Trophy Tournament** (Coventry, England; 2-3 June)... OPEN (64): 1-Michael Brereton, 2-Martin Hemming, 3/4-Tony Lee / Paul Martin; 1C-John Clark, 2C-Tim Mooring, 3C/4C-Gavin Crawley / Mike Grabsky; 1LC-Simon Macbeth, 2LC-Kevin Berry, 3LC/4LC-Harry Bhatia / Paul Gilbertson. SUICIDE! (64): 1-Colin Laight, 2-Helen Helm-Sagar, 3/4-Jeff Barber / Emmanuel Di Bona. FRIDAY NIGHT KNOCKOUT (22): 1-Rosemary Bensley, 2-Kevin Stebbing, 3/4-Peter Bennet / Michael Crane. DOUBLES (16): 1-Precision Dai's, 2-Wignail & I, 3/4-Balkan Bandits / Tale of Two

Cities... *Michael Crane supplied the results.*

•**4th Annual Northern Ohio/Pittsburgh Club Challenge** (Canton, OH; 10 June)... 1-Northern Ohio Club, 2-Pittsburgh... *This is the Northern Ohio Club's third win in four attempts.*

•**Carolina Invitational—ABT** (Gastonia, NC; 8-10 June)... OPEN (22): 1-Greg Lilley (VA), 2-Julian Haley (SC); 1C-Dennis Culpepper (VA), 2C-Dave Cardwell (GA), 3C-Tom Daniel (GA). ADVANCED (13): 1-Will Horton (NC), 2-Vadim Musaelyan (NC); 1C-Doug Johnson (NC), 2C-David Rogers (NC). QUEEN CITY CUP (9): 1-Jeb Horton (NC) 2-Helmut Klug (GER). FRIDAY WARMUP (Chouette Tournament) (10): 1-David Rogers (NC) 2-Tom Daniel (GA) 3-Homer Hector (GA) 4-Carl Sorg (GA). LAST CHANCE (8): Carl Sorg (GA). MICRO BLITZ (4): Wilder Wadford (NC). *A great start for this new ABT event thanks to Jeb Horton and Don Faix.*

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 10 June)... OPEN (14): 1-Tom Meyer, 2-Jerry Brooks, 3/4-Tak Morioka / Jake Jacobs; 1C-Ken Tyszko, 2C-Bill Davis. INTERMEDIATE (6): 1-Richard Stawowy, 2-Elaine Kehm.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (Oakland, CA; 10 June)... OPEN (14): 1-Christian Stoddard, 2-David Marona; 1C-Elliott Winslow, 2C-Cindy Moss. BEGINNER (8): 1-Bill Marsh, 2/3-Loretta Bowen / Anna Estrada.

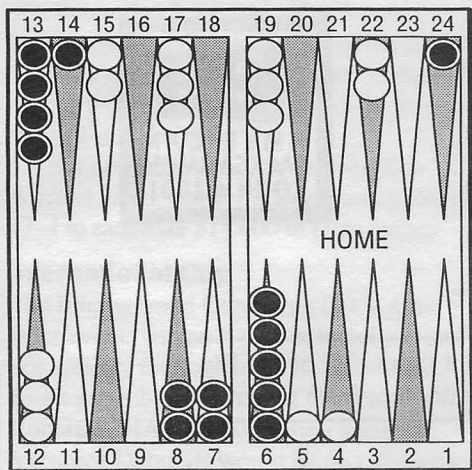
•**Houston Club Father's Day Open** (Houston, TX; 21 June)... OPEN (17): 1-John Jennings (IL), 2-Tom Wright.

•**Ace Point Monthly** (New York, NY; 24 June)... OPEN (10): 1-Boris Golubov; 1C-Rageb Shadallah. INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Gabby Golan, 2-Lonny Lindenbaum; 1C-Dave Posmantier. Δ

PROBLEM #273 ANALYZED

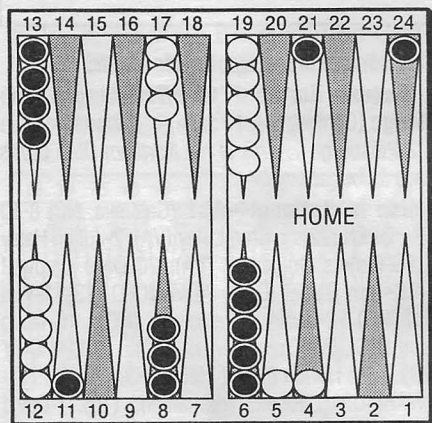
by Walter Trice

Tournament double match-point.
BLACK TO PLAY 4-1.



Suppose Black opens with 3-2, playing 24/21, 13/11, and White's response is 4-3. Should she consider advancing both back men 1/5, 1/4?

Diagram A. After White has played her 4-3 roll 1/5, 1/4.



64

A few years ago, when the world was a bit cooler and JellyFish™ had not been invented, I spent the duration of a classic New England blizzard rolling out 4-3 plays in response to an opening 3-2. The double advance was one of several oddballs I looked at. It is unconventional, but it does some good things: activates the back men, slots the two best advanced anchors, controls the outfield, and prevents having a third man sent back. The drawback is that the blots are left unprotected and exposed on the points where Black most wants to attack. In addition to the rolls that immediately point on one of them, there are several, otherwise mediocre, that allow Black

to hit both. The loose double hit—for instance 2-1: 6/5*, 6/4*—is a potent option.

One of my conclusions about this position was that Black should usually hit both blots when possible. Snowie™ agrees. The easy double hit rolls are 2-1, 4-1 and 6-2. With 3-2 Black has a very constructive alternative—24/21, 13/11—but 8/5*, 6/4* comes out best. With 6-4, 21/11 may be right, but 11/5*, 8/4* is a contender, better in any case than 13/7, 11/7. 4-3 for Black is interesting. 8/5*, 8/4* breaks a valuable point, leaving him with six blots and a remarkably ugly position. 8/4*, 24/21 is more appealing visually, but the double hit is once again the right play!

Diagram A is a handy reference position, early and easy to remember. Given the reference, I would have considered 8/4*, 6/5* (Play A) the natural play in Problem #273, pausing just long enough to be sure I had not overlooked something.

Passive plays are weak. After 14/13, 6/2, White has a small lead in the race and a clear positional edge. A number of rolls let her anchor up, either on the 5-point or in the outfield. Her back men are ready to escape and not easy to attack. Black's back checker has nowhere to hide unless Black specifically rolls 6-5.

14/13, 24/20, launching the escape, is well motivated, but it enhances White's immediate attacking chances. Escape is, of course, a mixed blessing when you are

losing the race. To hit nothing and invite White to play her full roll is just asking for it.

24/20, 6/5* is worth a look. This play links the back man with the 14-point blot, gives Black a chance for an advanced anchor if he gets hit, and duplicates White's 5s and 1s. Other 4s (aside from 8/4*) are not as good with 6/5*. The blot on the 14 is safer where it is than on the 10-point, and 13/9 creates a 3rd blot. So we may consider 24/20, 6/5* our Play B.

A clue to the superiority of A over B could be worked out over the board. It is that more of White's rolls will leave Black the favorite after A than after B. A bad roll for White after B consists of any 6 other than 6-5: nine rolls. After Play A, any roll that doesn't hit leaves Black the favorite. There are 14 of these.

A further clue is that White has a clear advantage no matter what. Black is looking for a big play that can turn the game around, and the double hit fits the bill.

Even so, Play A is not an all-or-nothing proposition. If White hits back, Black may cover the remaining blot making a good home board point. If neither blot survives, Black's checkers are all still in the game. This is the hidden strength of the double hit on the high home board points: though an attacking gesture, it is "pure." Black remains uncommitted to deep points, preserves his priming options, and stays flexible.—

Walter Trice Δ



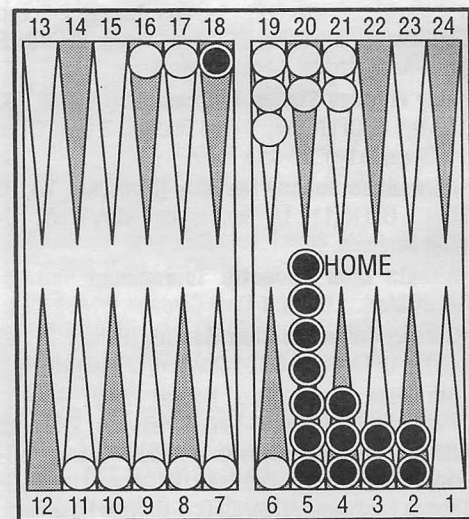
Help Me Reconstruct This Position SOLVED

by Joe Wollick

In the May CHICAGO POINT, Joe Wollick was trying to reconstruct a backgammon position and asked your help in doing so. You were provided with the following statement:

"All I remember is that it was my opponent's turn and that he had three or more home board points (all of which had been made in order) with a spare on his 6. My last shake was a 6-1 and I was forced to play it to his bar-point. Then I noticed that all of his rolls hit even though he had the fewest number of direct shots. I had at least a four point board and my pip count was one less than half of my opponent's count."

The \$50.00 winner by random draw among 10 correct answers is **KEITH KULIGOWSKI** of Bolingbrook, Illinois. The following diagram satisfies all criteria outlined in Joe's puzzle statement. To date, it is the only correct answer that has been found. (The pip count is 152 for Joe (Black) and 75 for White.) Δ



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Abraham Eitan, *Tournament Director*

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Monday, August 27

19:30-20:00 Registration
Backgammon Tournament at Park Hotel
20:00 Black-jack Tournament
at the Casino
22:30 Quarter-entries, Jackpots
and Minijackpots

Tuesday, August 28

10:30 Excursion
19:30-20:00 Registration at Park Hotel
20:00 Black-jack Tournament at the
Casino
22:30 Quarter-entries, Jackpots
and Minijackpots

Wednesday, August 29

10:30 Excursion

19:30-20:00 Registration at Park Hotel

20:00 Black-jack Tournament at the Casino
22:30 Quarter-entries, Jackpots
and Minijackpots

Thursday, August 30

17:30 Public draw for warm-up Memorial
Heiner Haussleiter (free of charge)
18:00 Start of play Warm-up,
Quarters, Jackpots
and Minijackpots
20:00 Black-jack Tournament at the
Casino; Public draw for Sperti Trophy
(free of charge - only for WBF supporters)
20:00-22:30 Break for Dinner
22:30 Start of Sperti Trophy

Friday, August 31

17:00 Warm-up, Sperti Trophy,
Quarters, Jackpots
and Minijackpots continues
19:00-20:00 Registration at Park Hotel
20:00 Welcome cocktail in hotel lounge;
Black-jack Tournament at the Casino
22:00 Last registration
22:30 Public draw
23:00 Start of play, Quarters, Jackpots
and Minijackpots

Saturday, September 1

16:00 Main Tournament continues and
start of Progressive Consolation
Tournament
17:00 Quarters, Jackpots
and Minijackpots

20:00 Black-jack Tournament at the Casino

20:00-22:30 Break for Dinner
22:30 Saturday Franz Josef
Super-Jackpot and play continues

Sunday, September 2

15:00 Start of Last Chance Tournament,
Finals, Quarters, Jackpots
and Minijackpots
17:00 Black-jack Tournament at the
Casino: Semifinals and Finals
20:30 Schönbrunn dinner party and
awarding ceremony at Park Hotel

**All registered players
will receive
the official celebration
polo shirt**

The organization reserves the right to change the program in any of its parts. Changes will be announced in advance and posted on the Notice Board. The Trophies will be presented only during the awarding ceremony.



DAL NEGRO

