

2002 midwest championships

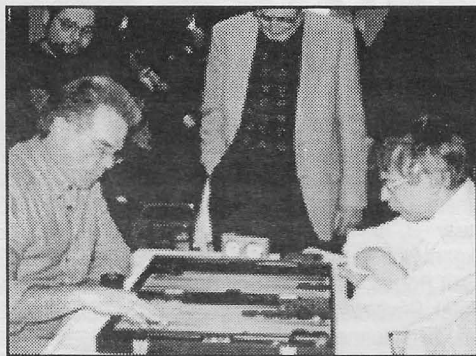
KLEIN AND WOOLSEY SHINE AT THE 2002 MBC

"The Case of the Deadly Roll" is solved.

There were artistic performances on many fronts at the 2002 Midwest Backgammon Championships—"The Case of the Deadly Roll." The Chicago Bar Point Club's 19th annual event was held 22-24 March at the Wyndam Hotel in the Chicago suburb of Lisle, Illinois. Well over 200 players from across the United States and Canada (including 192 main division registrants) were in action. CHICAGO POINT editor Bill Davis directed with outstanding support from Peter Kalba, Carol Joy Cole, Dru Heggen, Greg Tomlin, and Amy Trudeau.

THE CHAMPIONSHIP

Paul Klein, proprietor of Klein Art Works in Chicago, won his first major event prevailing over a strong 64-player Championship field including Kit Woolsey (CA), Dennis Culpepper (VA) and David Wells (IL).



Paul Klein (left) en route to his defeat of Joe Freedman in the 2002 Midwest Championship finals.

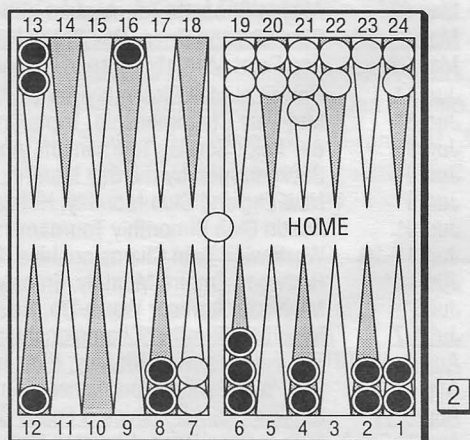
Following a tough quarterfinal upset victory over Fred Kalantari (MN), Klein eliminated Kurt Schurecht (IL) to face Joe Freedman of Virginia. Freedman's trail of victims was equally impressive including David Wells (IL) and 3-time MBC champ Frank Talbot (MI).

As Sunday's 15-point finals was about to commence, Phil Simborg stepped up to

Paul and quipped, "Let me offer you one word of advice: hedge." But there was no hedging. Klein immediately painted his opponent into a corner winning a quick four points and never looked back.

Ahead 13-6, Klein was in the final bear-in of what would be the final game when:

Pos. 1. Midwest Championships 15-point finals. Paul Klein (Black) leads Joe Freedman (White), 13-6. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.**



Paul reports, "All I had to do was safely bring this position home for the victory. Sitting on a 2-cube and not needing a gammon, I thought about making the 5-point (8/5, 6/5) for a long time. I finally settled on the mundane 12/8. Although Snowie disapproved of my action, I was glad I had made the cleaner play when Joe rolled 5-3, which would have entered and hit."

The 15-6 victory gave Klein nearly \$6000, a beautiful Lucite trophy and the current lead in the 2002 American Backgammon Tour.

GRAND CRYSTAL BEAVER

"It's the only trophy I've ever wanted."

So said Sally Woolsey prior to the start of the Grand Crystal Beaver finals between her husband Kit and Michigan master Frank Talbot. 16 experts anted up \$600 for a chance to shoot for \$6,000 and the coveted GCB trophy: a Swarovski crystal beaver on a mirrored walnut base valued near \$200. Kit did not disappoint Sally, defeating Frank in four games 11-1.

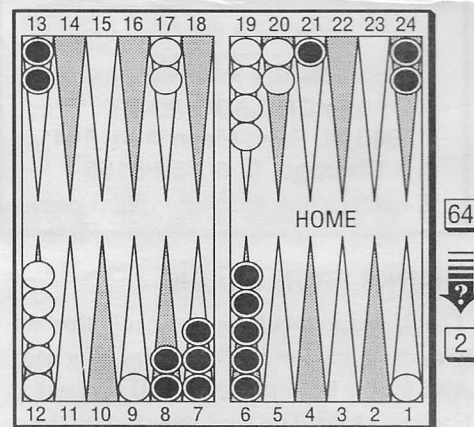
Although for the most part, the compe-



Grand Crystal Beaver IV Champ Kit Woolsey takes a break in the action with wife Sally [Photo by Diane Varner.]

tition was at a high level, the match was marked by a couple of huge blunders. This wasn't one of them:

Pos. 2. Grand Crystal Beaver 11-point finals. Kit Woolsey (Black) leads Frank Talbot (White), 2-0. White on shake. **SHOULD WHITE DOUBLE?**



[Continued on page 5]



MBC staff from top left: Greg Tomlin, Bill Davis, Peter Kalba, Dru Heggen, Carol Joy Cole, Amy Trudeau. [Photo by Diane Varner.]

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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THANKS FROM ELAINE

Thank you so much for the lovely flowers with the teddy bear and balloons attached. Also for the beautiful Swarovski crystal humming bird. The workmanship on the crystal is superb. I will enjoy it for many years and call it my "back" trophy. (Now I just need a backgammon trophy.)

The generosity from all of you was overwhelming. It was a wonderful surprise and thank you again.—*Elaine Kehm-Tallackson, Chicago, IL*

Elaine continues to improve following her Scoliosis corrective surgery.—Ed.

MORE CHEATING OBSERVATIONS

Of course players can cheat with dice cups by shaking the cup in a special way and/or holding their finger(s) over the mouth of

[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.

Apr 12-14	8th Ohio State Championships, Radisson Cleveland, Middleburgh, Hts., OH	330/966-2811
Apr 13	Tax Refund Classic, Triple Crown Sports Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Apr 14*	Austin Club Bimonthly Tournament, JC's Bar & Grill, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
Apr 14*	Backgammon by the Bay Monthly, TGI Friday's, Oakland, California	831/688-9722
Apr 18	Third Thursday Bonus (Chicago Open), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Apr 20*	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
Apr 21	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, Ohio	614/771-0981
Apr 26-28	49th Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA	818/901-0464
Apr 26-28	<u>Granite State Championships, Comfort Inn Albany Airport, Latham, NY</u>	<u>603/863-4711</u>
Apr 28	Ace Point Monthly Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/753-8042
Apr 28	Milwaukee Club Monthly, John Hawks Pub, Milwaukee, Wisconsin	414/962-8549
May 1*	MSN Gammonzone Medallion Monthly, via computer	GZMedallion@gammonzone.net
May 1*	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer	tournaments@cyberarts.com
May 5	New England Bonus Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/491-8710
May 11	May Flower Stakes, Triple Crown Sports Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
May 16*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
May 18*	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
May 19*	Backgammon by the Bay Monthly, TGI Friday's, Oakland, California	831/688-9722
May 19*	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, Ohio	614/771-0981
May 19*	Milwaukee Club Monthly, John Hawks Pub, Milwaukee, Wisconsin	414/962-8549
May 25*	Atlanta Chouette Tournament, Sidelines Grille, Marietta, Georgia	770/333-1876
May 24-27	<u>23rd Chicago Open, Oak Brook Hills Resort, Oak Brook, Illinois</u>	<u>702/893-6025</u>
May 26*	Ace Point Monthly Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/753-8042
Jun 1*	Universal Mall Bimonthly Series #3, All The King's Men, Warren, MI	313/381-6639
Jun 8*	Mid-Year Championship, Triple Crown Sports Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Jun 9	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyways Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/252-7755
Jun 9*	Backgammon by the Bay Monthly, TGI Friday's, Oakland, California	831/688-9722
Jun 9*	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/491-8710
Jun 9*	Austin Club Bimonthly Tournament, JC's Bar & Grill, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
Jun 11-16	Worldwide Twin Championships, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
Jun 15*	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
Jul 3*	Michigan Summer Warm-Up, Novi Hilton, Novi, Michigan	910/232-9731
Jul 4-7	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton, Novi, Michigan</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Aug 2-4	<u>Thousand Islands Tourney, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York</u>	<u>716/387-0767</u>
Aug 4*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyways Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/252-7755
Aug 8-11	<u>Georgia Championships & Peach Cup, Hilton Garden Inn, Atlanta, Georgia</u>	<u>770/333-1876</u>
Aug 30-Sep 2	<u>50th Indiana Open, Sheraton Hotel & Suites, Indianapolis, Indiana</u>	<u>317/255-8902</u>
Sep 27-29	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Towpath Inn, Turin, New York</u>	<u>716/387-0767</u>
Oct 4-6	<u>Florida State Championships, Sheraton Suites, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida</u>	<u>954/564-0340</u>
Oct 11-13	<u>Illinois State Championships, Springfield Hotel, Springfield, Illinois</u>	<u>217/528-0117</u>
Nov 12*	20th Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney, Chicago, IL	773/583-6464
Feb 1-8*	BG on Board VI, Ft. Lauderdale/ St. Maarten/St. Thomas, Golden Princess	773/583-6464

OUTSIDE USA

Apr 13-14	5th & 6th Ranglistenturniers, Kaiserbrunnen Hotel, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Apr 13-14	Åbne Jyske Mesterskaber, Royal Casino Århus, Århus, Denmark	4540-621789
Apr 14	Toronto Club Monthly, Smilin' Jack's, Toronto, Ontario, Canada	416/722-9709
Apr 25-28	2nd Backgammon & Gin Rummy Tournament, Lido di Jesolo, Venice, Italy	3932-90513415
Apr 26-28	9th Oslo Open, Vika Atrium, Oslo, Norway	4797-036786
Apr 27-28	Sjællands Mesterskaber, Roskilde Backgammon Klub, Denmark	4546-366012
Apr 30-May 5	8th EBN Mayday Tournament, Casino San Roque, Costa del Sol, Spain	34950-113009
May 4-5	County Cups Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
May 9-12	2nd Süddeutscher-Cup, Hotel Seminaris, Bad Honnef, Germany	49711-486190
May 12*	Toronto Club Monthly, Smilin' Jack's, Toronto, Ontario, Canada	416/722-9709
May 16-19*	1st Velden Open, Casino Velden, Velden, Austria	392-69018168
May 17-20	6th Kaiserbrunnen Cup, Kaiserbrunnen Hotel, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
May 23-26*	2nd Romanian Open, Marriott Grand Hotel, Bucharest, Romania	9723-7516912
Jun 7-9	Austrian Championship Finale, Cafe Laudon, Vienna, Austria	431-9715889
Jun 8-9	Hilton Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Jun 13-20*	Backgammon & Bridge Extravaganza, Peligoni Club, Zakynthos, Greece	44798-614800
Jun 14-16	3rd Süddeutscher-Cup, Hotel Mercure, Stuttgart-Gerlingen, Germany	49711-486190
Jun 15-16*	Danish Mixed Doubles Championship, Humlebæk BG Klub, Denmark	4520-671995
Jun 15-16	Tournament of Spirits, Europe's Go Cultural Centre, Amstelveen, Holland	3120-4633724
Jul 4-7	14th Venice International Tournament, Venice Casino, Venice, Italy	3941-52111024
Jul 6-7	Keren Di Bona Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Jul 8-14	World Championship, Grand Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	USA contact: 954/527-4033
Jul 17-21*	4th Czech Open, Corinthia Towers, Prague, Czech Republic	Germany contact: 49911-409505
Aug 3-4	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

the cup while throwing the dice. The US Backgammon Rules are poor and often ineffective in this respect. You often have to play police instead of backgammon to make sure that the opponent isn't doing magic tricks. For this reason, I have constructed the "Baffle Cup," but for one reason or another, it wasn't accepted.

Alternatively, I have also played with only one cup and one pair of dice as Larry described; but I went even farther. Each player finishes his turn by putting the dice in the cup and starts his turn by taking the cup with the dice in it. This is the best incentive to make your opponent shake the dice well!—*Dan Frank, Stuttgart, Germany*

NICE JOB, GREG

I returned from Hong Kong and Bali the night before last. Naturally, the first thing I

did, almost before unpacking, was to read CHICAGO POINT. After years of covering foreign affairs for you, it's nice to see I'm getting some help. Greg Tomlin did a nice job reviewing backgammon play in Amsterdam, though why do I think that wasn't the only place he visited while there? (I would have found a way to work it into the article, GT—even in a family publication like the POINT!)

One thing worries me: since he is overseas and I'm back, I hope this doesn't mean I have to milk his cows while he's gone?—*Jake Jacobs, Tucson, AZ*

Greg Tomlin is a farmer by profession with a passion for acting.—Ed.

TRADING HIS MOUSE FOR A DICE CUP

I am getting tired of playing on the Net and would like to roll the dice again without touching a mouse. I am looking into setting up a Backgammon Club in Orange County, Southern California. Could you please E-

mail me a copy of your Master Point System?—*Chris Hewlett, via Internet*
Our pleasure, Chris. Good luck with your club.—Ed.

EASILY RECOGNIZABLE

Who does CHICAGO POINT recognize as the reigning World Backgammon Champion?—*Tim Serges, Arlington Hts., IL*

Anna Kournikova.—Ed.



Aren't you glad we didn't choose the more conventional Jörgen Granstedt?

MIDWEST CHAMPIONSHIPS REVIEWS

Thank you guys for hosting a phenomenal tournament. Great people, Greater competition, greatest hosts & staff. I will be there next year, and I'll try to make the Michigan

[Continued on page 4]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2002

Compiled through 24 Mar. 2002 after 3 events
(Coming in April/May: Ohio, Gammon Assoc., Granite State, Chicago Open)



Paul Klein	22.88	Chen-Fu Yu	5.29	Ilia Guzei	3.59	Charles Walter	1.71
Ed O'Laughlin	22.35	Jolie Rubin	5.20	Bud Bowers	3.39	Connie Tipton	1.70
Dennis Culpepper	16.99	Jeff Acierno	5.18	Wally Wolf	3.25	Luther Lute	1.70
Keith Kuligowski	12.50	Dan Grogan	5.11	Stan Livingston	3.20	Patrick Donelly	1.32
Owen Black	11.44	Eric Johnson	5.11	Ben Elliot	2.50	Shane Joos	1.06
Barry Murphy	11.36	Vadim Musaelyan	5.00	Gary Branton	2.50	Rachel Bass	0.88
Fred Kalantari	11.20	Hank Chesko	4.99	Jeb Horton	2.40	Erik D. Erland	0.79
Denise Hemingway	10.59	Dave Cardwell	4.80	Abdi Zaltash	2.27	Fran Miller	0.71
Arman Karamian	10.59	Al Tesoro	4.71	Glenn Ramsey	2.27	Tim Johnson	0.68
Joe Freedman	10.40	Bob Wilensky	4.19	Ray Woo	2.27	Dennis Portell	0.68
Linda MacLean	10.02	Greg Lilley	4.19	Tom Green	2.22	Glen De Guzman	0.59
Emil Mortuk	8.39	Kurt Schurecht	4.16	Femi Owiku	2.08	Stephen Spudic	0.59
David Rubin	6.25	Frank Talbot	4.16	Jena Rooney	2.08	Ashley Farrow	0.55
Bill Bartholomay	5.29	Boris Mindich	3.76	Bill Chibnik	1.83	Joe Meyer	0.32



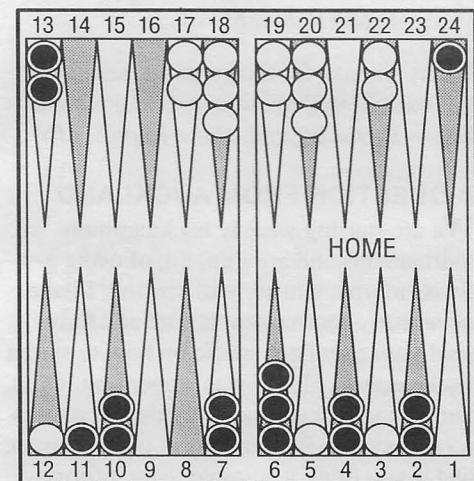
CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2002 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 MAR.

Lucky Nelson	7.12	Tak Morioka	2.56	David Araiza	1.28	Terry Weiss	0.64
Mike Sutton	5.68	Peter Kalba	2.52	Jon Vietor	1.28	Bob Steen	0.64
Tim Mabee	5.52	Tom Meyer	2.48	Paul Franks	1.20	Roz Ferris	0.60
Herb Roman	5.36	Tim Serges	2.48	Mitch Pomper	1.20	John Stryker	0.60
Steven Coren	5.12	Richard Stawowy	2.16	Karen Meyer	1.16	Ronora Stryker	0.60
Carter Mattig	5.04	Joe Auszmann	2.16	Lindsay Mattig	1.16	Kendra Welsey	0.56
Paul Baraz	4.80	Wayne Wiest	2.16	Bill Keefe	0.88	Glenn Martells	0.56
Richard Lloyd	4.48	Bill Bartholomay	1.92	Georgina Flanagan	0.88	David Wells	0.56
Phyllis Smolinski	4.00	Alice Kay	1.92	Jason Fishbein	0.88	Sakura Sugawara	0.56
Tim Carroll	3.68	Eric Johnson	1.92	Ken Tibbs	0.88	Bill Davis	0.24
Norma Shyer	3.60	Don Jayhan	1.84	John Brussel	0.88	Barbara Levinson	0.24
Joe Wollick	3.12	Arlene Levy	1.52	Steve Klesker	0.64	Scott Zucker	0.24
Bob Zavoral	2.56	Ed Buerger	1.28	Tia Bailey	0.64		

LUCKY NELSON's 3.69 points was enough to earn him March Player of the Month honors, his first such Bar Point Club recognition ever. Steven Coren placed second (3.20) and Richard Lloyd tied with Tak Morioka for third (2.56).

Match to 7 points. Black leads White, 6 to 3, Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-2.**



DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS



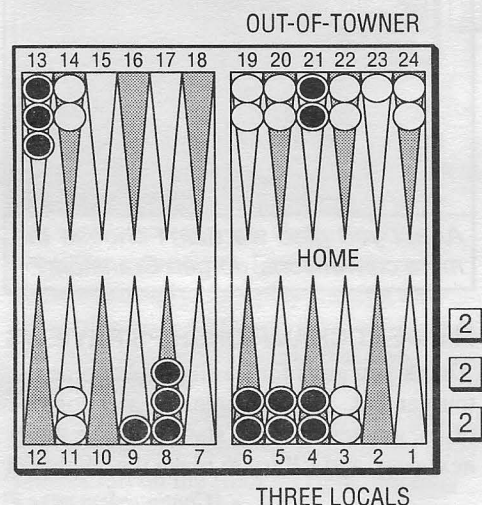
© 2002 by Danny Kleinman

THE CHOICE

Dear Miss Lonelyblots: Three of us play a weekly chouette at a local bar every Wednesday night. Last week, an out-of-towner asked if he could join our nickel chou. We agreed and it proved to be very costly to us. The position we want to ask you about occurred in the middle of our visitor's long box run:

Chouette money game. Out-of-towner (White) vs. Three locals (Black).

BLACK TO PLAY 3-3.



Maybe it was because we were all minus on the scoresheet, but we just could not agree on a move. One of us wanted to build a 5-prime by making the bar point 13/7(2). I didn't like that because it left two direct shots. Another wanted to play 13/4, 9/6. That wasn't bad, but I preferred advancing the back men with 21/18(2), and moving two checkers into attack range with 9/6, 8/5. Because I was the Captain, that was the move our team eventually made.

As it turned out, none of our plays would have made any significant difference, as White rolled double-6s, escaped his stragglers and won the ensuing race easily.

Although we all were big losers for the evening, we figured out a way where at least one of us could win. It involves you, Miss Lonelyblots. Tell us the best move in this position and the player with whom you agree will get dinner and drinks from the other two.—Choose Me!

DEAR "ME" (???): Why should I choose you, when you haven't even included me in your dinner plans? I agree with your assessments of the moves favored by your Crewmates. Five-primers are lovely, but two blots and 21 shots are dangerous when the opponent has a four point board, even with a blot in it. The safe builder-bringing 13/4, 9/6 does too little to further your main objectives, which are containment of the opponent's back men and springing of

your own back men. Your play, 21/18(2), 9/6, 8/5, is slightly better in this regard, leaving your men more connected and a useful spare on the midpoint, and increasing the pressure on White's outfield points.

However, I wonder why neither you nor your Crewmates liked 21/9, which serves both main objectives reasonably safely. The broken prime that it makes is nearly as effective as the solid prime created by 13/7(2). The one blot that it leaves is in the opponent's builderless home board and almost immune to hitting. White can hit safely only with double-1s and double-2s, as the combination 7s that hit leave two blots in his stripped board.

I suspect that all of you would prefer 21/9 to any of the moves you suggested, and that none of you argued for this play only because none of you saw it. Many backgammon players are myopic when it comes to utilizing three or four of the numbers on doublets to move one man a long distance. It has little to do with being minus on the scoresheet.

So I think all three of you owe me. A steak-and-lobster combination will do very nicely.—Miss Lonelyblots

Do you have a backgammon-related question for Miss Lonelyblots involving people problems, game etiquette or the play itself? Write: Dear Miss Lonelyblots, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155 or e-mail bg@chicagopoint.com.

LETTERS...

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tourney this year as well.—Bob Gekas, Novato, CA

Your tournament ran super smoothly, and Jolie and I had so much fun, I can't tell you!—David Rubin, Skokie, IL

Many Thanks for the great weekend. The tournament was quality, up and down the line.—David Wetzell, Coon Rapids, MN

A QUESTION FROM AUCKLAND

We are starting weekly backgammon tournaments and are thinking of using a Swiss tournament style of scoring. I have never run a tournament before and have read your excellent article on how to start a backgammon club. I was wondering if you know where I can find more details on this scoring system for tournament backgammon, and if you think it suitable. Any informa-

tion would be most welcome.—Richard Theunissen, Auckland, New Zealand

We suggest you contact Butch and Mary Ann Meese of the Hoosier Backgammon Club. Every Labor Day, Butch and Mary Ann run the Indiana Open which utilizes a "Indiana Style" Swiss movement in all divisions of play. You can get more info online at: <http://www.hoosierbgclub.org/50swiss.html>.

For info on the upcoming 50th Anniversary Indiana Open (30 Aug.–3 Sept.), call the Meese's at 317/255-8902 or E-mail meese@worldnet.att.net.—Ed.

WHO'S BEST?

Who makes the best software for playing back gammon online against other people for money?—Andrew Lersider, Media Cyber Center, via Internet

That's a tough question to definitively answer, Andrew. What do POINT readers think?—Ed. Δ



ILLINOIS ACTION



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

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

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

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

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY: Tourn. Monday. Chicago location. Call for information. Reginald Porter (708/715-2917).

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).

T/P BACKGAMMON CLUB: Tournaments Wednesday, 6:30 P.M. at Java Oasis; 2240 S. Michigan, Chicago. J.A. Miller (312/719-1245).

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

MBC...

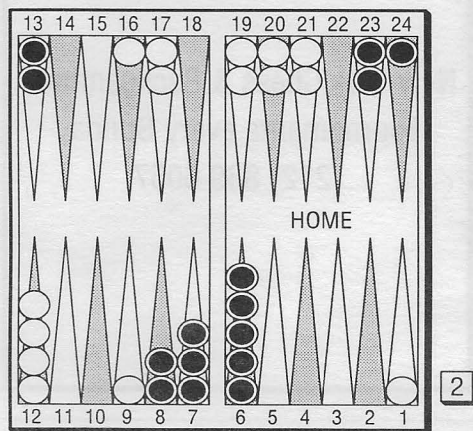
[Continued from page 1]

A close initial doubling decision and although it is better not to cube, the margin of error is minimal. Talbot cubed with Woolsey making the easy take.

Later in the game, Talbot's checker error might have cost him the match:

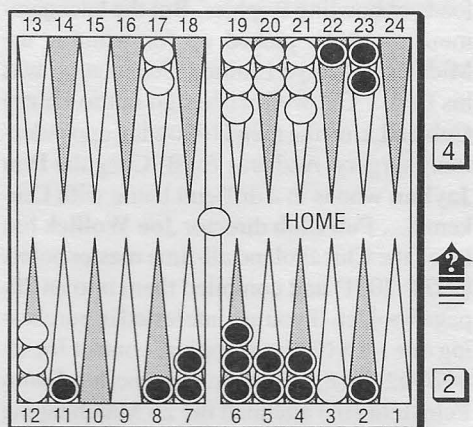
Pos. 3. GCB 11-point finals. Woolsey (Black) leads Talbot (White), 2-0.

WHITE TO PLAY 4-1.



The ace is optional, but Frank should definitely make his 9-point with the four. Five of six points towards a prime is too valuable to overlook. Frank chose to run his outfield checker around the corner (16/11) and leave his 9-point slotted. Big mistake as Kit soon hit the 9-blot and was in the process of blitzing his opponent when:

Pos. 4. GCB 11-point finals. Woolsey leads Talbot (White), 2-0. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Woolsey decided to press his action by recubing to four. Snowie rollouts show that redoubling here is a major blunder decreasing Black's match-winning equity from 63.6% (no redouble) to 59.3% (redouble/take).

That technicality didn't phase Kit as he tossed 5-1, hitting and covering and skipped home to cash an 8-point redoubled gammon for a 10-0 lead. It was over in two more

games with Kit Woolsey taking home the treasure.

"THE CASE OF THE DEADLY ROLL"

One of the highlights of the tournament was the pulp fiction theme inspired by the invitation that contained Chapter One of "The Case of the Deadly Roll." The conclusion to the backgammon murder mystery was performed live on stage at the Saturday Morning Calcutta Auction by Greg Tomlin and Amy Trudeau (with the inimitable Bob Zavoral as the dead body).



Greg Tomlin and Amy Trudeau had their act together at the Saturday Calcutta. [Photo by Peggy Froh Asseo, ACS]

It was great fun and you can read the entire murder mystery online at: www.chicagopoint.com/mbcmystery.html [For a printed copy of the mystery, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: CHICAGO POINT; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155.—Ed.]

Keeping in theme with the story, Judge Hamilton Rice's purple pass keys were hidden in and around the tournament playing room on Friday and Saturday. The first 16 players to find the keys earned free entry into the \$500 "Deadly Roll" tournament where hitting shots provided clues to discovering the deadly roll sealed in an envelope prior to play. Needing only one



"Yes!" David Rubin wins the \$500 prize.

more clue to assure victory, Kit Woolsey was a virtual lock to win on his next turn unless David Rubin could roll an ace to hit a shot. That would entitle him gain an additional clue and reduce the deadly roll possibilities to six. David eventually guessed 3-1, the roll he had just thrown to hit the shot. Tourney administrator Peter

Kalba ripped open the envelope, paused, and flipped down the roll in front of David. It was 3-1. David was \$500 richer and it's rather obvious from the picture (below left) that he was quite excited about it.

BATTLE OF THE SEXES

The new "Battle of the Sexes" event proved quite popular as women were positioned on



Battle of the Sexes champ Norma Shyer.

the top half of the drawsheet and men were on the bottom. The twist was that men had to be old—at least 50-years-old to participate.

The Sunday finals paired the female winner Norma Shyer of Chicago against

Milwaukee's finest, Bob Holyon. The rock-em, sock-em battle ended with Norma taking home the trophy for herself and all of womanhood—at least until next year.

MORE WINNERS

Special congratulations are in order for Advanced winner Owen Black (VA). Playing in his first major event, Owen



Advanced Champ Owen Black (left) and Limited winner Boris Mindich.

defeated Chicagoland's always-tough Jolie Rubin 13-7. And after seven years of trying, Chicago area player Boris Mindich won his first Limited Division title besting Charles Walter (WI).

THANKS...

Thanks to all of the participants at the 2002 Midwest Championships who helped us raise \$2,065 in donations for the Anti-Cruelty Society. That will help to take care of a lot of Chicagoland cats and dogs.

Look for us next year for more fun and games at the Midwest Backgammon Championships 20th Anniversary Edition 21-23 March at The Wyndam Lisle Hotel. Complete results appear on page 8. Δ

HASTY PLAYS



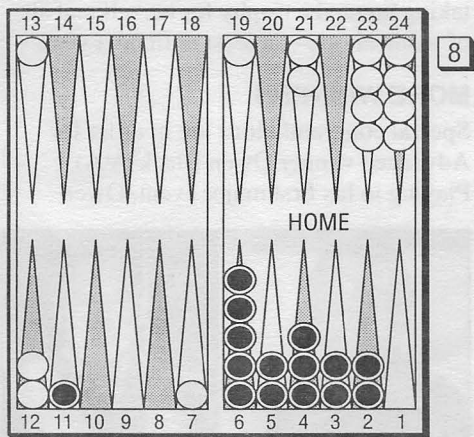
by Duane Jensen

DON'T GET HASTY WITH A BIG LEAD

For several rolls, I'd been simmering in my own stupidity. Leading 14-1 in a 17-point match, I had recubed to 4 thinking I was doubling my opponent out. Instead, he grabbed the cube and reshipped to 8. This was a painful hasty play—releasing a large cube that could erase my lead in the match.

My opponent got lucky and then got even luckier by hitting a blot. Kismet. A dumb play on my part was being justly punished. But just as the skies darkened, a lucky roll (6-1 from the bar) saved me from my careless recube. Now if only my opponent could miss my blot...

17-point match. White leads Black 14-1.
BLACK TO PLAY 5-3.



A miss! I could breathe easier now. I had almost certainly escaped the gammon and might even win the race with my "fast" inner board. Things were looking up.

My opponent must have been depressed by my lucky roll because he was taking a long time on his 5-3. I finally asked if he was choosing between 11/6, 3/off and 11/6, 4/1.

"Nooo..." he said. "I hadn't even considered those plays. I'm deciding between 6/1, 6/3 and 6/1, 4/1."

My heart rate increased and my breathing quickened as two frightening facts became clear to me. First, I hadn't yet escaped the gammon. Rolls of 1-1, 2-1, and 3-1 couldn't get past his last checker, and rolls of 2-2, 4-4, and 6-4 (with which I would hit), might lead to gammons. Second, I realized that my opponent was the better player—much better.

Rather than close his board, he played 6/1, 6/3. If he hit, he wanted me to enter on the ace point hitting his blot so he could

recycle a checker for the chance to pick up more of my blots.

Every player's attention should be drawn to this position because it's framed by two anomalies: the large score differential and the large cube. These peculiarities were alerts for my wise opponent to make the extraordinary play of leaving his outfield blot exposed, threatening me with more gammons if I failed to leap past. The normal play would be to run the checker home, but not here. Not when a gammon win is so valuable. A normal 8 point win puts my opponent 8-away, 3-away leaving him with only 20% match equity; but his gammons win the match.

In the end, I won the game and the match. The win was satisfying, but my poor play rattled me. But at least I learned a few lessons:

- (1) Don't let the cube escape your possession if you have a big lead, and
- (2) Try to squeeze every gammon from the cube if you're trailing by a bundle.

I've learned backgammon lessons before. Remembering them is the hard part.—Duane Jensen Δ

AMALGAMATION

We need your Backgammon On Board VI \$25 deposit ASAP to hold space on our 1-8 February 2003 cruise from Ft. Lauderdale to St. Maarten and St. Thomas aboard the new Golden Princess. For more info, go to: www.chicagopoint.com/hgonboard.html ... Soon to be 90, **Herb Avram** (MD) is probably the oldest active backgammon tournament player in the country. Did you also know that Herb was a 2300 chess player who once defeated **Bobby Fischer**?... **Jeremy Bagai**'s (PA) shoulder continues on the mend following a tear in the joint. It was not backgammon-related!... Visiting the Bar Point Club in March: **Jon Viator** (CA) and **Dennis Culpepper** (VA)... **Julian Wood** (England) has developed a form of backgammon that he claims is a far greater test of skill than our present version. The game is called "Khajuraho" and it allows for some pieces to recirculate around the board more than once. For a detailed explanation of the game, go to: www.dhyanvijen.com... Speaking of websites, check out **Butch & Mary Ann Meese**'s new Hoosier Backgammon Club address: www.hoosierbgclub.org. While there, pick up information on the upcoming 50th anniversary Indiana Open over the Labor Day weekend. It should be a biggie... The 2001 Giants of Backgammon votes are compiled and the winner is **Nack Ballard** (CA). Rounding out the top 5 are **Jerry Grandell**

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(Sweden), **Johannes Levermann** (Germany), **Dirk Schiemann** (Germany), and **Jörgen Granstedt** (Sweden). The top 64 is printed in **Carol Joy Cole**'s March *Flint Area Backgammon* (cjc@tir.com). Giants founder **Yamin Yamin** (IL) will present certificates to any of the top finishers who attend the Chicago Open over the Memorial Day weekend... Winnetka Club director **Trudie Chibnik**'s husband **Bill** was a pro bowler averaging 204 in the 1960s. So he has loads of bowling trophies. But the backgammon trophy he picked up for winning the Midwest Champs Limited Consolation was his first... Get well wishes go out to **Harry Cohn** (IL), on the mend following appendectomy surgery. And pray for BPC regular **Don Jayhan** who is in a difficult battle with Leukemia... Pub Club director **Joe Wollick** has taken the Chicagoland all-time master points (1974-2001) and compiled them into an 80-page booklet. If you are interested in purchasing one for \$10 plus shipping, contact Joe at: 847/942-2068... Don't tell anyone, but **Joann Feinstein** (IL) attended the 26 March taping of the *Jerry Springer Show* to help "celebrate" granddaughter **Jennifer**'s 18th birthday... Finally, from **Charles Even Cardwell**: "You hear it said that people make their own luck. But if you take 'luck' to mean chance events, happenstance, then the statement isn't true. Luck happens to everybody. You don't make your own luck. It comes and goes on its own. But you can make your own fortune, by staying alert and using luck wisely." Δ

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Tournament Events

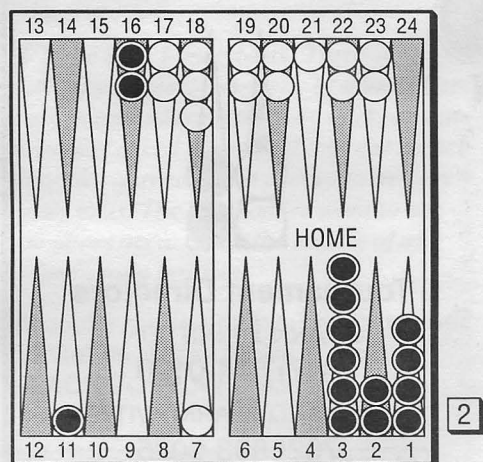
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PROBLEM #279 ANALYZED

by Bob Zavoral

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-4.**

I considered it an honor when asked (for the first time) to provide the position and analysis for CHICAGO POINT Problem #279. So I waited and waited for a juicy position to occur in our chouette. This would be a position where I would make some stunningly right play causing the other players to all fall on the floor agog at the sheer genius and insight that I had demonstrated.

Instead I got this humbling little gem. It is a very prosaic position. It made the other players fall on the floor all right, but only because I brilliantly butchered it! However, isn't that the very essence of how we learn? We learn from our mistakes. If that were not the case, we would all make the 5-point with our opening 3-1 and get very little right after that.

When we play backgammon, we play with a mental series of benchmark positions that guide our play. Instead of laboriously evaluating each position in detail, all of us have an arsenal of tactics that we rely on. When I blundered here, I basically ignored two common tactical considerations for a position like this:

- (1) When in doubt hit, and
- (2) It is very rarely right to volunteer anything.

These are the only four moves that make any sense:

- (a) 16/11, 16/12
- (b) 11/7*/2
- (c) 16/7*
- (d) 11/2

So which play did I make over the

board? Maybe after reading the above you will immediately guess that I played the non-hitting 16/11, 16/12, volunteering 15 shots and "smartly" discarding both of the aforementioned cardinal rules. I thought I would have a powerful recube if missed. While I do indeed have a recube when White fails to hit, the move is wrong because the other plays will usually provide me with a powerful recube in one or two rolls anyway without such high immediate jeopardy.

11/2 is a better play. It doesn't volunteer anything, but it also doesn't hit. Hitting in some form or another seems right. Putting White on the bar is just too darn sweet. She fans a quarter of the time (9/36) right away and fans twice in a row just over 6% of the time (81/1296). Hitting followed by a fan is a tremendous boon to Black as he can now move his stragglers in the outfield with more safety.

Between the two hitting plays, which is right? Referencing above tactic (2) suggests that we volunteer nothing. Giving White nine immediate shots (6-1, 5-2, 4-3, 6-5 and 4-4) is much too much. Very often, this is all you are going to give White anyway. Moreover, don't underestimate White's very strong board (blot and gap on the 4-point notwithstanding). It is made even stronger by the weakness of Black's game. He has very little defense. Trying to survive against White's board is like trying to ward off a swarm of bees with a fly-swatter.

So we are left with 11/7*, 7/2. This play gives no immediate shots, puts White on the roof and has the added merit of getting a man home. And guess what? This is your goal in positions like this. One man home, two men home, and threaten to get the third home. Ollie Ollie oxen free.

2002 MIDWEST CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS

(From story on pp. 1, 5)

CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-Paul Klein (IL), 2-Joe Freedman (VA), 3/4-Kurt Schurecht (IL) / Frank Talbot (MI); 1C-Fred Kalantari (MN), 2C-Dave Cardwell (GA); 1LC-Dennis Culpepper (VA).

\$150 OPEN (22): 1-Keith Kuligowski (IL), 2-David Rubin (IL), 3-Wally Wolf (MI).

ADVANCED (64): 1-Owen Black (VA), 2-Jolie Rubin (IL), 3/4-Femi Owiku (IL) / Jena Rooney (IL); 1C-Denise Hemingway (MD), 2C-Jeb Horton (NC); 1LC-Stan Livingston (WI).

LIMITED (42): 1-Boris Mindich (IL), 2-Charles Walter (WI), 3/4-Tim Johnson (IL) / Dennis Portell (MO); 1C-Bill Chibnik (IL), 2C-Erik D. Erland (IL); 1LC-Shane Joos (IL).

GRAND CRYSTAL BEAVER (16): 1-Kit

There are no fine strategic considerations to be made in this and similar positions, where Black has no defense to speak of. The idea here is to slither, slink and slime home. Also, this play leaves only two men vulnerable. White will never be the favorite to gammon by closing out only two checkers. The hitting play leaving three blots in the outfield gets gammoned almost twice as often as the safer hitting play. And the volunteering play is almost as bad. Say White hits after you play 16/11, 16/12 and you immediately enter with 4-3. Oops! Suddenly all three men can be closed out.

A final thought about this type of position where you are just powering your checkers home and you own the cube. Say you have only one man left in the outfield 8, 9, or even 10 pips away from White's catcher. Or you manage to move the outfield anchor to the 9-point while White has one man on your 4-point. In both types of positions, you have serious threats to get your last man home. *Please ship the cube over!* Sure you might leave a shot and lose, but you are a huge favorite even if you do leave one. You never know. Your opponent might freak out and pass, or better yet, beaver. (If you don't believe anyone would beaver this, come play in Chicago for a week.)

For those lacking the intestinal fortitude to let your opponent roll at that shot, you can always settle the game. In that case your settlement should be twice what it would have been if you didn't have the correctness and guts to redouble.

Lastly, for those of you who firmly believe in backgammon justice, I won this game in spite of my egregious blunder. Ain't life grand?—Bob Zavoral Δ

Woolsey (CA), 2-Frank Talbot (MI).

MIDWEST DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP (32): 1-Dr. Bob Hill (NY) & Al Tesoro (FL), 2-Richard del Furia (MN) & Rudy Langenbach (WI), 3/4-Jeff Henry & Renata Henry (IL) / Faddoul Khoury & Terry Leahy (IL)

SATELLITE DOUBLES (12): 1-Greg Cattanach (GA) & Diane Varner (NC), 2-Sean Garber (IN) & Dana Nazarian (CA).

BLITZ (128): 1-Hugh McNeil (Canada)

QUICKIE! (128): 1-Fouad Malouf (IL), 2-Sho Sengoku (CA).

DEADLY ROLL (16): 1-David Rubin (IL).

PIG ROLLING: Ken Tyszkowski (IL).

U-BLUFF: Larry Strommen (IN).

DICE LAG: Jim Opre (IL).

BACKGAMMON WHEEL OF FORTUNE: Ed Bauder (IL). Δ

who did what

WINNER'S CIRCLE



FEB.-MAR. 2002

•**NEBC Sunday Monthly** (Somerville, MA; 10 Feb.)... EXPERT (13): 1-Ernie Pittelli, 2-Herb Gurland; 1C-Nora Luna, 2C-Alex Zamanian. A/B DIV. (8): 1/2-Jim McKenna / Rich Waddington, 3-Dean Carmeris.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (Oakland, CA; 10 Feb.)... OPEN (8): 1-Kit Woolsey, 2-Rawlin Pullen; 1C-Timothy Jaxon. INTERMEDIATE (26): 1-Sean Holcombe, 2-Anna Estrada, 3/4-Mark Antranikian / Jacob Shapiro; 1C-Ted Chee, 2C-Eric Barr. BEGINNER (3): 1-Kris Olson.

•**Toronto Club Monthly** (Toronto, Canada; 10 Feb.)... OPEN (26 + 6): 1-Hugh McNeil, 2-Peter Walsh, 3/4-Oded Minond / Mary Lee Pinkney.

•**Redwood Empire Saturday Monthly** (San Rafael, CA; 16 Feb.)... OPEN (6): 1-David Montgomery, 2-Dana Nazarian. INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Christian Stoddard, 2-Cole Alanson.

•**Studentbar Cup** (Århus, Denmark; 23-

24 Feb.)... OPEN: 1-Jan Andersen, 2-Søren Larsen, 3/4-Claus Jensen / Rolf Nielsen; 1C-Lars Bønding, 2C-Jørn Thyssen. B-CLASS: 1-Raju Steffens, 2-Per Rosendahl.

•**Hoosier 2001 Awards Tournament** (Indianapolis, IN; 24 Feb.)... OPEN (16): 1-Larry Strommen, 2/3-Jim Curtis / Peter Kalba (IL).

•**Groupe Partouche Trophy** (Cannes, France; 28 Feb.-3 Mar.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (58): 1-Tobias Christensen (DK), 2-Marcel Liechti (SWIZ), 3/4-Gus Jacobsen (DK) / Raviv Shevach (GER); 1C-Francois Tardieu (FRA), 2C-Mike Svobodny (USA); 1LC-Andreas Humke (GER). INTERMEDIATE (30): 1-Kolya Mosoyan (ARM), 2-Karolina Bonde (SWE); 1C-Khalik Melikian (ARM), 2C-James Coates (ENG); 1LC-Khalik Melikian (ARM). WARM-UP: 1-Tobias Christensen (DK).

•**19th Fleet Underwood Memorial & Benefit** (Flint, MI; 10 Mar.)... OPEN (25): 1-Judy Field, 2-Carol Falk, 3/4-Emil Mortuk / Frank Talbot. INTERMEDIATE (27): 1-Paul Kenzie, 2-David Emerson, 3-Jeff Clark, 4/5/6-Walt Smith / Steve Grob / Dan Kiurski.

•**Ohio State Club Monthly** (Akron, OH; 3 Mar.)... OPEN (13): 1-Esse Zaltash (PA), 2-Mike Vasilatos, 3-Mary Hickey.

•**Ides of March Open** (Houston, TX; 9 Mar.)... OPEN (13): 1-Jack Erwin, 2-Gary Fomby; 1C-Paul Marshall, 2C-James Bray.

•**Slattery's Scottish Open** (Leeds, England; 9-10 Mar.)... OPEN (79): 1-Ray Tannen, 2-Brian Busfield, 3/4-Tony Lee / Rachel Rhodes; 1C-Brian Lever, 2C-Mike Butterfield; 1LC-Paul lamford, 2LC-Peter Bennet. HAGGIS (64): 1-Paul Gilbertson, 2-John Batty, 3/4-Dave Mcnamara / Jim Moore. FRIDAY KNOCKOUT (44): 1-Rachel Rhodes, 2-Emmanuel di Bona. DOUBLES (19): 1-They May Take Our Dice But They'll Never Take Our Freedom, 2-Posh & Becks.

•**NEBC Sunday Monthly** (Somerville, MA; 10 Mar.)... EXPERT (15): 1-Roger Rondeau, 2-Bill Robertie, 3/4-Joe Moore / Walter Trice; 1C-Alex Zamanian, 2C-John Smidt. A/B DIV. (7): 1-Rich Waddington, 2-Paul Sciaraffa; 1C-Martha Reed.

•**4th International Abu Dhabi Championships** (Abu Dhabi, UAE; 12-15 March)... CHAMPIONSHIP (88): 1-Morten Nielsen (DK), 2-Dirk Schiemann (GER), 3-Bashar Zako (UAE), 4-Roger Nou Jeim (UAE). DRAWING FOR NEW VW BEETLE: Nasr Kenan. Δ

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