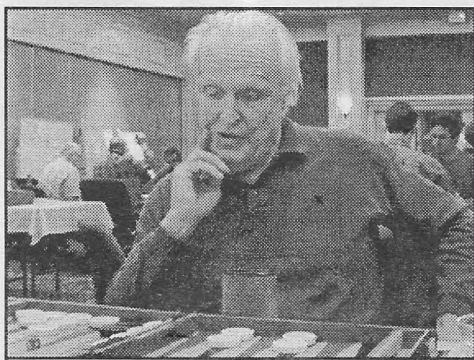


24th chicago open

## ED BENNETT ROLLS THROUGH CHICAGO

Bob Zavoral wins another Masters

Ed Bennett of Santa Fe, New Mexico has moved into the winner's circle defeating San Diego's Sho Sengoku at the 2003 Chicago Open. 100 player partook in the 24th annual Memorial Day event, held 23-27 May 2003 at the beautiful Oak Brook Hills Resort in Oak Brook, Illinois. Joann Feinstein and Howard Markowitz were co-directors, assisted by Roz Ferris and Linda Rockwell.



Ed Bennett (Arizona) was unbeatable in the Chicago Open Championship.

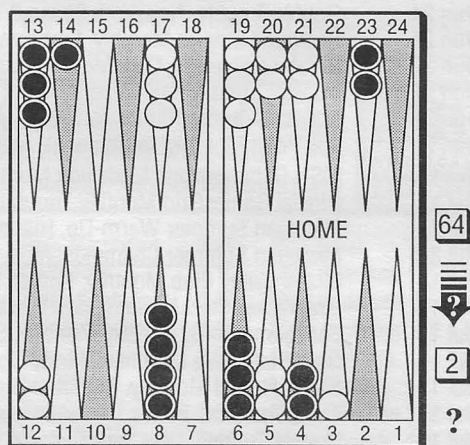
Although second place finishes at the 2002 Nevada State Championship and Florida State Royal Palm Classic are nice, it's understandable that Ed Bennett would want more. And more he got. Ed won undefeated bracket in the double elimination tournament besting Herb Roman (IL), Jeremy Bagai (PA), Tak Morioka (IL), 2002 Player of the Year Steve Sax (CA), and Sho Sengoku. The very tough Sengoku (Fall 2001 Gammon Associates champ) fought back in the second chance bracket to earn another shot at Ed.

Undefeated Bennett was favored in the 13-point finals because he could afford to lose the first match. When Sho jumped out to a quick 6-0 lead, it looked like a rubber match was in the offing. But Ed Bennett had other plans taking his first lead (9-8) of the match in game 12.

The next game was pivotal with both

players with cube-handling in the spotlight.

13-point finals. Ed Bennett (Black) leads Sho Sengoku (White) 9-8. White on roll **CUBE ACTION(S)?**

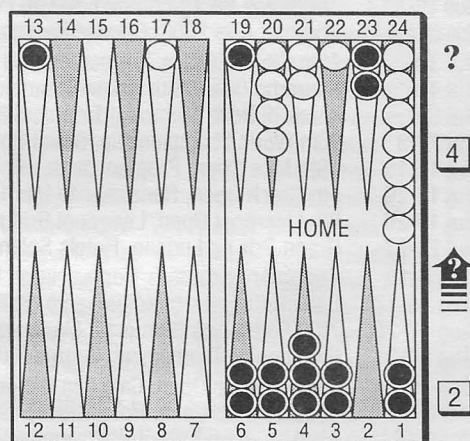


Sho doubled and Ed took. According to Snowie 4 [Thanks to Michael Strato of Gammon Village—Ed.], both decisions are exactly right:

Double, take:	0.932
No double:	0.848
Double, pass:	1.000

Ed was able to maintain his timing, while Sengoku was struggling to bring his game home. A horrible 6-1 for Sho set up the following position and a complicated decision for Bennett. Should he recube, or was he either too good or not good enough?

13-point finals. Ed Bennett (Black) leads Sho Sengoku (White) 9-8. White on roll **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



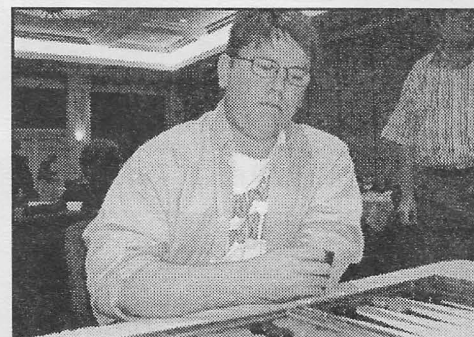
Bennett found the right action: offer a 4-cube. But Sengoku decided to pass (going down 8-11) and try his luck in another game. Snowie numbers indicate that Sengoku is supposed to take. Was he a big enough favorite against Bennett to make his play correct despite Snowie's analysis? Here are the numbers:

Redouble, take:	0.951
No redouble:	0.903
Redouble, pass:	1.00

The battle continued until a score of 12-12 was reached. The final double match-point game quickly developed into a race with Ed rolling the bigger numbers. To the victor go the spoils. Congratulations to Ed Bennett.

## Memorial Day Masters

Bob Zavoral captured Grand Crystal Beaver V at the Midwest Backgammon Championships in March 2003. Two months later, he proved that the first title wasn't a fluke by grabbing the Memorial Day Masters. The field was not world class, but it was certainly strong with Robertie, Sax, Markowitz, Glass, Kalantari, Bagai, and McNeil in the mix (sometimes more than once as reentries were permitted).



Bob Zavoral ponders a difficult 6-3 in the Memorial Day Masters finals.

After defeating Minnesota State co-director Fred Kalantari (MN) in the semifinals, Zavoral faced the other Minnesota State co-director, Steve Brown (MN). Steve, who came from behind in all of his matches including the semifinals vs. Bill Robertie (MA), would need to do it one

[Continued on page 5]



# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

## EDITOR & PUBLISHER

**Bill Davis**

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

Tel: 773/583-6464 ♦ Fax: 773/583-3264

E-mail: [bg@chicagopoint.com](mailto:bg@chicagopoint.com)

[www.chicagopoint.com](http://www.chicagopoint.com)

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

**Carol Joy Cole (MI)**

**Danny Kleinman (CA)**

**Mary Hickey (OH)**

**Antonio Ortega (C.R.)**

**Jake Jacobs (IL)**

**Steve Sax (CA)**

**Duane Jensen (MN)**

**Kit Woolsey (CA)**

All rights reserved. You may copy any of this for noncommercial purposes as long as you give full credit to "CHICAGO POINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504, Chicago, IL 60659-3155." You may not reproduce any part of this publication on the internet or via other electronic media without the express-written consent of CHICAGO POINT.

CHICAGO POINT is published monthly. The subscription rate is \$30/12 issues (\$40 international airmail in USD check drawn on U.S. bank).

**Advertising Rates:** 2 3/8" x 3 1/4" = \$40. 1/4 page = \$70. 1/2 page = \$115. Full page = \$200. If the ad is not "camera ready," request layout and typesetting for an additional charge.

## LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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

E-mail: [letters@chicagopoint.com](mailto:letters@chicagopoint.com)

## SUMMER ABT CANCELLATION IN NYC

Please announce that our June ABT event, "Summer in the City," is postponed until further notice. Sorry for the late notice, but there is simply too much going on here. Our club is experiencing growing pains right now . . . and our family will be growing soon, too!

The Ace Point Club will be hosting a Daillygammon Social Event the weekend of 7-8 June as originally scheduled.—*Alan and Lourdes Steffen, Ace Point Club, New York, New York*

*Best wishes to Alan and Lourdes on the impending birth of their second child.—Ed.*

## WHAT DID ANTONIO USE?

Last night, I tried "redoing/reviewing" the answers to CHICAGO POINT Problem #289, by Antonio Ortega [May 2003, p. 8]

[Continued on page 3]

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole  
810/232-9731  
[cjc@tir.com](mailto:cjc@tir.com)

\* Denotes new or revised listing

### NATIONAL

*American Backgammon Tour events underlined.*

Jun 5	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Buffalo Wild Wings Bar, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Jun 6-8	51st Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA	818/901-0464
Jun 7*	Universal Mall Bimonthly #3, All the King's Men, Warren, Michigan	313/330-7803
Jun 7-8*	Ace Point Daily Gammon Social Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Jun 7-8*	<u>CANCELLED: Ace Point Summer in the City, Ace Point Club, New York, NY</u>	<u>212/753-0842</u>
Jun 8	Bar Point Sunday Bimonthly, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jun 8	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Shattuck Hotel, Berkeley, California	831/688-9722
Jun 8	New England Club Playoffs, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/779-8209
Jun 8	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, Ohio	330/866-2811
Jun 8	South Florida Monthly, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Jun 14	Father's Day Open, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Jun 19	Third Thursday Bonus (Georgia), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jun 21	Double Trouble, New York Chess & Backgammon Club, New York, NY	845/373-7272
Jun 21	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
Jun 22	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, Ohio	614/771-0981
Jun 22*	Hoosier Sunday Tournament, Arni's Restaurant, Indianapolis, Indiana	317/255-8902
Jun 28	Atlanta Monthly Tournament, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
Jun 29	Ace Point Monthly Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/753-0842
Jul 1*	MSN Gammonzone Medallion Monthly, via computer	<u>GZMedallion@gammonzone.net</u>
Jul 1*	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer	<u>tournaments@cyberarts.com</u>
Jul 2	Michigan Summer Warm-Up, Hilton Hotel, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 3-6	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Hilton Hotel, Novi, Michigan</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jul 10	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Buffalo Wild Wings Bar, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Jul 12	Firecracker Classic, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Jul 13	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Shattuck Hotel, Berkeley, California	831/688-9722
Jul 13	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, Ohio	330/866-2811
Jul 13	South Florida Monthly, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Jul 17*	Third Thursday Bonus (Indiana Open), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 19*	Double Trouble, New York Chess & Backgammon Club, New York, NY	845/373-7272
Jul 19*	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
Jul 20*	Austin Club Bimonthly Tournament, JC's Bar & Grill, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
Jul 20*	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, Ohio	614/771-0981
Jul 25-27*	<u>1st Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Inn, Madison, Wisconsin</u>	<u>608/516-9109</u>
Aug 1-3	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York</u>	<u>585/396-0969</u>
Aug 3	Bar Point Sunday Bimonthly, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Aug 7-10	<u>Georgia Championships &amp; Peach Cup, Hilton Garden Inn, Atlanta, Georgia</u>	<u>770/333-1876</u>
Aug 16-17	Summer Sizzler, Zell residence (Sat.) & Pizza Works (Sun.), Peoria, IL	309/674-0557
Aug 29-Sep 1	51st Indiana Open, Sheraton Hotel & Suites, Indianapolis, Indiana	317/255-8902
Sep 19-21	<u>Florida State Championships, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Fort Lauderdale, FL</u>	<u>954/564-0340</u>
Sep 20-21	24th Invitational Vietor Cup, Jon Vietor's residence, La Jolla, California	818/901-0406
Oct 10-12	<u>Illinois State Championships, Springfield Hilton Hotel, Springfield, Illinois</u>	<u>217/528-0117</u>
Oct 31-Nov 2	<u>Minnesota Open, Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, Prior Lake, Minnesota</u>	<u>651/699-6758</u>
Nov 15-19	2003 Backgammon Pro Am, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
Nov 19-23	Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
Dec 26-28	<u>Ace Point Holiday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, New York</u>	<u>212/753-0842</u>

### OUTSIDE USA

Jun 7-8	Hilton Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44152-2888676
Jun 14-15*	Gammonitis Rollout Trophy, George Hotel, Solihull, England	44127-3261073
Jun 14-15	"Open Air" Maghetti, Quartiere Maghetti, Lugano, Switzerland	4178-7674600
Jun 14-15*	12th Danish Mixed Doubles, Forsamlingshuset, Humlebaek, Denmark	4528-388798
Jun 19-Jul 3	Zakynthos Backgammon Festival, Peligoni Club, Zakynthos, Greece	44127-3261073
Jun 24-Aug 15	Sommer Cup 2003, Odense Backgammon Klub, Denmark	4566-139097
Jul 3-6	15th City of Venice Tournament, Cà Vendramin Palace, Venice, Italy	3932-90513415
Jul 4-6*	Sanremo Open/16th Italian Championships, Casino Sanremo, Italy	3902-69018168
Jul 5-6	Keren di Bona Memorial Trophy, Hilton National, Coventry, England	44152-2888676
Jul 7-13	28th World Championship, Grand Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	<u>USA contact: 954/527-4033</u>
Jul 14-15	13th Nice Open, Promenade des Anglais, Nice, France	33493-879436
Jul 16-20	5th Czech Open, Renaissance Marriott Hotel, Prague, Czech Republic	49911-409505
Jul 19-20	8th Liverpool Open, Liverpool Bridge Club, Liverpool, England	44793-1553829
Jul 24-27	Grand Prix de Lugano, Hotels Splendide & Eden, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-3374425
Aug 9-10	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, Coventry, England	44170-7659080
Aug 16-17*	Danish Doubles Championship, Søroed BG Klub, Denmark	4533-363601
Aug 16-25*	7th MindSports Olympiad, Manchester Conference Centre, England	44170-7659080
Aug 30-31	Gammonitis Tournament, George Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Solihull, England	44127-3261073
Sep 13-14*	First Antwerp Open, Café den Bengel, Antwerp, Belgium	32347-5256734
Oct 2-5*	10th German Open, Hotel GlockenSpitze, Altenkirchen, Germany	49521-64314
Oct 9-12*	Austrian Open & Doubles Championship, Hotel Veronika, Seefeld, Austria	43512-287244



## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

using my Snowie 4. Since Mr. Ortega cited specific valuations, I had some basis with which to compare.

My non-rollout setup always favored Black, value-wise, over the numbers Antonio gave. This makes me believe that because Snowie 4 is "better at back games," Antonio is using some other program or version to arrive at his stated values. For example, using 3-ply, "Precise," I got (positives) 0.335 for the best move versus 0.292 provided by Antonio.

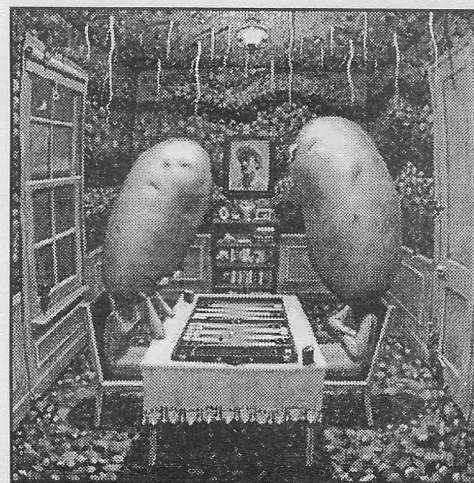
For a 108 rollout, I got 0.342. This is a significant 0.050 difference.

Can you find out what version (and rollout parameters) Antonio is using?—*Roland Dieter, Deerfield, Illinois*

*We'll check with Antonio but think he's using Snowie 3.—Ed.*

### DICED POTATOES

I work with an artist that has recently sold an amazing painting relating to backgammon. It is 12" x 12" oil on canvas titled "Diced Potatoes." The artists name is Jean Jacques Bastarache. Jean did this painting for his cousin Danielle Bastarache and her partner Mike Corbett of Florida. Some of



"Diced Potatoes" by Jean Bastarache. \$15 gets you a color reproduction.

their furniture is actually in the painting, and that's a picture of Mike's dad hanging on the wall.

This work is sold so we are now looking for commissions on other ideas from backgammon enthusiasts. Jean is very inventive so if the player has a story, Jean could do a painting relating to the person commissioning the painting. This is a great opportunity to create a personalized backgammon art piece.

We can also sell "Diced Potatoes" as a print for \$12 (postage paid in the US). It's a high quality 8" x 10" color print. For more info, e-mail me at [res6lmyh@verizon.net](mailto:res6lmyh@verizon.net). —Julie Rico, Los Angeles, California

### IN IRAQ, THE GAME GOES ON

Enclosed is an article from the 13 May

[Continued on page 5]



## AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2003

Compiled through 26 May 2003 after six events  
(June/July events: 51st G/A (Los Angeles), Michigan Summer, Wisconsin State)



Malcolm Davis	22.88	Jeff Kane	6.90	Beth Martinson	3.29	Ron Zimet	1.61
Gyl Savoie	22.39	Mary Franks	6.40	Carol Falk	3.10	Mike Charison	1.57
Ed Bennett	16.73	Jim Zimmerman	6.02	Petko Kostadinov	3.00	Brad Andersen	1.57
Sam Pottle	15.64	Greg Merriman	5.58	Rainer Stachowitz	2.96	Mary Downing	1.50
Dave Cardwell	15.01	Jeremy Bagai	5.27	Mike Cyrkiel	2.58	Steve Delpero	1.46
Brian Barber	13.80	Walter Trice	5.27	Ben Elliott	2.57	Max Muench	1.25
Steve Sax	13.18	Tom Hodous	5.15	Bob Green	2.57	Matt Holleman	1.25
Raymond Rickard	12.29	Marilyn Kubiak	5.15	Rich Madzel	2.45	Steve Kovach	1.06
Gregg Cattanach	12.03	Philip Smith	4.82	Dixie McGaffick	2.45	Jim Price	0.95
Hunter Jones	11.15	Frank Talbot	4.80	Terry Seymour	2.45	Neal Uphoff	0.93
David Rubin	10.57	Gayle Wolf	4.73	Wendy Kaplan	2.30	Bill Etue	0.89
Bill Finneran	10.57	Bob Glass	4.73	James Bray	2.24	Michelle Garmise	0.81
Tak Morioka	9.18	Vadim Musaelyan	4.50	Ray Woo	2.24	Angela Hoffman	0.75
Simon Kennedy-Rose	9.00	Herb Roman	4.44	Peter Roubicek	2.24	Betty Coppic	0.74
Ron Sanders	8.89	Ed Ratajczyk	4.28	David Rogers	2.10	Eloise Johnson	0.71
Wally Wolf	8.66	Dana Nazarian	4.16	Mark Murray	2.04	Bill Chibnik	0.70
Curtis Lucas	8.66	Bob Zavoral	3.94	Kathy Garmise	1.94	Paul Lombardo	0.61
Sho Sengoku	8.36	Greg Feller	3.93	Connie Tipton	1.78	Kent Williams	0.61
Richard Reasin	7.13	Trina Smith	3.56	Rebecca Marti	1.78	Jill Brown	0.32
Drew Robinson	7.08	Terry Leahy	3.44				



## CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2003 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU 31 JAN.

Tim Mabee	15.08	Richard Stawowy	4.56	Gary Kay	2.44	Nora Luna-Righter	1.04
Bob Zavoral	13.64	Tim Carroll	4.48	Bob Steen	2.28	Barry Miller	1.04
Tak Morioka	9.46	Brian Barber	4.04	Howard Ring	2.16	Joe Szvedo	0.96
Lucky Nelson	9.44	Arlene Levy	4.00	Bill Bartholomay	2.04	Kathy Sorci	0.96
Michael Peters	8.88	Bill Davis	3.96	Larry Goldstein	1.92	Linda Rockwell	0.96
Phil Simborg	7.60	Paul Friedman	3.92	Mitch Pomper	1.84	Aaron Ashmann	0.88
Carter Mattig	7.04	Peter Kalba	3.84	Joann Feinstein	1.76	James Roston	0.72
Herb Roman	6.72	Joe Sylvester	3.40	Doug Rodgers	1.76	Elaine Andrews	0.72
Phyllis Smolinski	6.64	Ed Buerger	3.16	Glenn Martells	1.72	Elaine Kehm	0.72
Joe Wollick	6.16	Tim Serges	3.14	Royal Robinson	1.68	Don Jayhan	0.64
Mark Murray	5.96	Barbara Levinson	3.12	Rory Pascal	1.64	Los Moshinsky	0.64
Val Zimnicki	5.84	Roland Dieter	2.96	Jake Jacobs	1.44	David Araiza	0.64
David Rockwell	5.64	Wendy Kaplan	2.80	Steve Klesker	1.44	Brian Levanthal	0.56
Roger Hickman	5.36	Georgina Flanagan	2.68	Ken Tibbs	1.36	Don Garner	0.56
Alice Kay	5.32	Norma Shyer	2.64	Phil Martorelli	1.12	Bobbie Ivanova	0.48
Paul Baraz	5.28	Ken Bond	2.64	Carol Hooker	1.12	Wayne Wiest	0.48
Bill Keefe	4.88	Eric Johnson	2.52	Rodney Gonzalez	1.12	Matt Beach	0.32

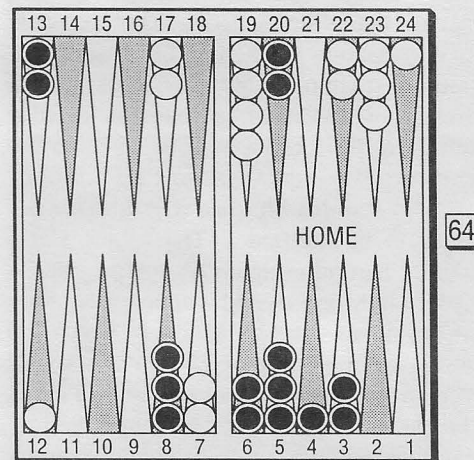
TIM MABEE captured his second Player of the Month title in a row winning May with 3.36 points. Paul Baraz (2.80) was second and Ken Bond tied with Peter Kalba for third at 1.92 each.

your move

## PROBLEM #291

to be analyzed by Steve Sax

Match to 11 points. Black leads White, 9 to 8. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-1.**



# ASK DANNY

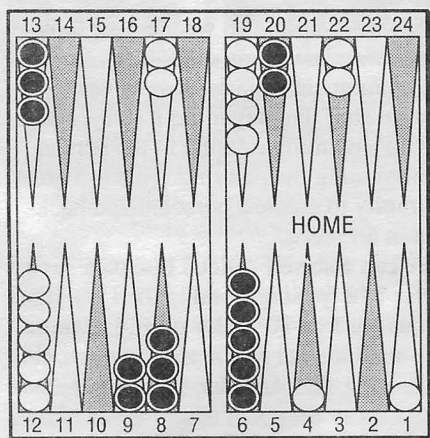


© 2003 by Danny Kleinman

## SHOULD YOU GIVE THE SHOT?

**D**ear Danny: Although I only classify myself as an Intermediate, I was lucky enough to find myself in the finals of a major Blitz tournament last month. My opponent was a master level player, but in a five point match, anything can happen. In the first game, following 5-3 for my opponent, 4-4 for me, and 2-1 for my opponent, I rolled 6-6 and faced an interesting decision:

5-point match tied at 0-0. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-6.**



*I always play safe in these positions . . . except here. Instead of 20/8(2), I opted for 20/14(2), 13/7(2). My reasoning was straightforward: if I am missed and my opponent fails to make an advanced anchor in my board, it looks like I have a solid double that my opponent might very well pass. However, if I play safe, my opponent will have an easy take no matter what.*

*My "advanced" play was punished as I was smacked with 6-3. Things turned from bad to worse and I ended up losing a doubled gammon from which I could never recover. Was my play bad luck, or just bad?—Confused*

**DEAR CONFUSED:** I would certainly not call your play "just bad," for the alternative you rejected, 20/8(2) creates a pair of candlesticks that only an old San Francisco Giants fan could love. In contrast, your aggressive play creates a 4-prime that anyone would love.

However, there are reasons for choosing the temporarily safe alternative. Your two sets of large doubles have given you a hefty lead in the race, while your opponent's smaller numbers have let him make an inside point. A large racing edge coupled with a small board disadvantage suggests conservative play.

Your argument boils down to this: take a risk if by so doing you can convert a clear take of your hoped-for double next turn to

a marginal pass/take of a very efficient double. I don't buy that argument for a very simple reason: it is not quantitative. The size of the gain from the risky play when it works is only one factor (a) in your decision. Other factors are (b) the size of the loss from the risky play when it fails, (c) the frequency of gain, and (d) the frequency of loss. Taking the risk is right when the product (a)(c) exceeds the product (b)(d); wrong when (b)(d) exceeds (a)(c).

In this position, only (c) and (d) are readily observable. (d) is 13/36, the chance that your opponent will hit; (c) is 23/36, the chance that he will not. Is the gain—the improvement in your position when your opponent misses—at least 13/23 as large as your loss is when he hits?

I think not, especially as many of your opponent's missing rolls (6s that spring a back man, 3s that anchor on your 4-point, and the 4-1 that makes the golden anchor) still give him a sound take. Change the number of shots you leave, however, and your choice of plays should change. A shot count of 6, for example, instead of 13, would justify a play like yours.—Yours, Danny

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

## AMALGAMATION

Visiting the Bar Point Club in May: **Nora Luna-Righter** (MA) and **Steve Sax** (CA)... **Joe Wollick** (IL) informs us that his Thursday Pub Club meeting date has been canceled. Instead, Joe (847/942-2068) will concentrate on building Monday attendance at Danny's Grill & Bar in Villa Park... **Dave Cardwell** (GA) announces a change of venue for the Atlanta Backgammon Association 1st and 3rd Thursday monthly: Rock Bottom Brewery, 3242 Peachtree Road, Buckhead at 7:30 p.m. Call Dave at 770/333-1876 for details... Congratulations to **Phil Simborg** (IL) and **Randee Shapiro** (IL) who are engaged to be married... The Monte Carlo World Championship invitations are out (7-13 July in Monaco) and it appears that they are trying to save on brochure costs. No glossy color photos of MC this year. To receive an invitation, call **Sue** or **Les Boyd** (FL) at 954/527-4033... Although the betting line had him a 6-to-5 underdog in the

recent Nevada State Championships, and even though he lost, **Ray Fogerlund** (CA) in fact outplayed **Kit Woolsey** (CA) according to a Snowie4 match analysis... When **Roland Dietor** (IL) says "Drop," he's not kidding! Last month, Roland, as part of the National Amusement Park Historical Association, rode the new "Top Thrill Dragster" roller coaster at Cedar Point Park in Sandusky, Ohio just 14 days after the grand opening. At 420 feet high with a top speed of 120 mph, it's the fastest, tallest roller coaster in the world... We received two calls asking about backgammon in the Denver, Colorado area. Can anyone help?... The Bar Point Club will soon lose **Brian Barber** (IL) to grad school in New York... **Wendy Kaplan** (IL) has begun work as the producer of "The Rocky Horror Show," a new summer play at the Stage Two Theatre in Lincolnshire, Illinois. Order your tickets now at the website: [www.stagetwotheatre.com](http://www.stagetwotheatre.com) ... Finally, from **Phil Simborg** (IL), "Backgammon is like dating. The better your moves, the more points you make with the end goal remaining the same: take everything off." Δ

who did what

## WINNER'S CIRCLE



Apr.-May 2003

•**South Australia Open** (Adelaide, South Australia; 6 April)... OPEN (18+14 re-buys): 1-Chris Benham, 2-John McLean, 3/4-Angelo Ali / John O'Grady.

•**Redwood Empire Monthly** (San Rafael, CA; 19 Apr.)... OPEN (6): 1/2/3-Timothy Jaxon / David Marona / Bob Stringer. INTERMEDIATE (7): 1-Dale Rose, 2-Joan Clark.

•**Ohio State Monthly** (Canton, Ohio; 4 May) ... OPEN (11): 1-John Baron, 2-Bob Green.

•**May Flowers Stakes** (Houston, TX; 10 May)... OPEN (27): 1-Gary Fomby, 2-Jim Wood; 1C-Kathy Tubbs, 2C-Al Johnson.

•**Omar Sharif Charity Tournament** (London, England; 11 May)... OPEN (80): 1-John Broomfield, 2-Richard Bernstone, 3/4-Eitan Goury / Charles Wigoder. Δ



## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

2003 New York Times describing the popularity of backgammon in Iraq and one of the country's best coffeehouse players.



Backgammon in Iraq. The game goes on.

The regime has changed, the electricity is off, the water doesn't run, but the game goes on!—Quincy White, New Buffalo, Michigan

Antoinette-Marie Williams (NY) also e-mailed us the story. We have posted the entire article with a photo online at

# ABT

## 1000 Islands Backgammon Tournament

August 1–3, 2003



**Pine Tree Point Resort**

Alexandria Bay, New York

(800) PINE-BAY or (315) 482-9911

Info: **Renée Rosenbloom**

(330) 966-2811

[reneer@rochester.rr.com](mailto:reneer@rochester.rr.com)

*"The most beautiful backgammon tournament surroundings in America."*

[www.chicagopoint.com](http://www.chicagopoint.com). Just click on the Iraq story in the June Preview section.—Ed.

### MASTER POINTS IN MINNESOTA

I have recently assumed the roll of "points keeper" for the Twin Cities Backgammon Club from Steve Maas. Steve has suggested that we change our scoring method to match that of Flint, Michigan and/or Chicago. He gave me a master point chart and an explanation page. My question is: before I reinvent the wheel, do you have a spread sheet already created that I could use for scoring?—David Minikus, Golden Valley, Minnesota

We are sending you the spreadsheets used to keep track of points at Chicagoland backgammon clubs. Check it out, and if you discover an easier system, let us know!

If anyone else would like a sample copy, e-mail [bg@chicagopoint.com](mailto:bg@chicagopoint.com).—Ed.

### BACKGAMMON IN OREGON?

Do you know if anyone has expressed interest in starting a backgammon club in Portland, Oregon? I've recently been trying to find gammon people around Portland. Any feedback from your readers would be appreciated.—Gary M. Malone, Oregon, via e-mail Δ

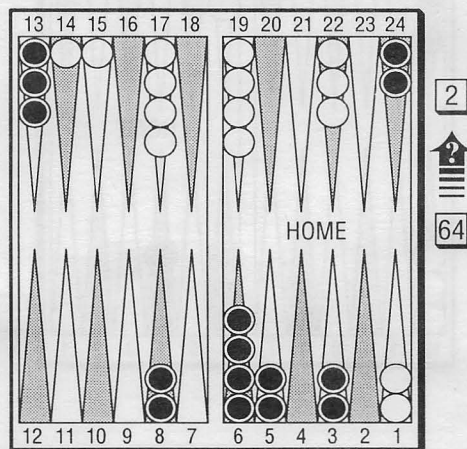
## CHICAGO OPEN...

[Continued from page 1]

more time as he found himself trailing 3–9 to 11 after seven games.

When Bob Zavoral, leading 9–8, doubled in this position, it looked like Steve's comeback might succeed:

11-point finals. Bob Zavoral (Black) leads Steve Brown (White), 9–8. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



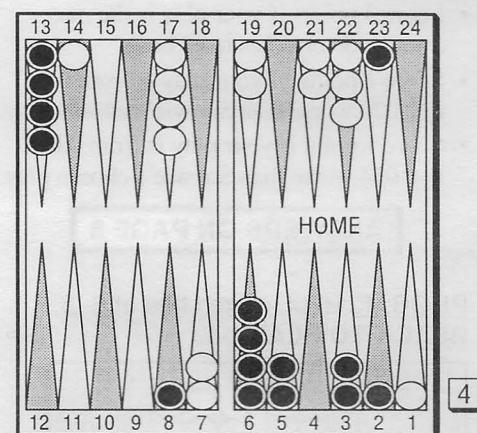
It was a terrible double that Snowie rates a clear blunder. [In defense of Bob, he was playing in his 20th match of the week-end and admitted to being tired.—Ed.] Steve happily scooped the cube and flipped it back to set up a double match-point situation. The Snowie numbers tell the doubling tale:

No double:	0.596
Double, take:	0.326
Double, pass:	1.000

The game see-sawed back and forth when Brown was presented with a pivotal play (shown above right).

Steve shifted points 6/2(2)\*, 8/4, 11/7. Curiously, Snowie favors 6/2\*(2), 18/14(2), and 18/10(2) ahead of Steve's play. However,

11-point finals. Bob Zavoral (Black) leads Steve Brown (White), 9–8. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Steve had another plan that nearly worked.

Bob danced, Steve rolled 6-3 (making his ace-point), Bob danced again, Steve ran to the midpoint with 6-5, Bob danced, Steve hit a second checker . . . AND BOB ROLLED 5-5! New leader on the 18th fairway.

Entering both pieces was critical, giving Zavoral a huge positional advantage with all his checkers still in play. He was able to contain Brown and win the title. Congratulations to Bob Zavoral on another big win.

### A SWEEP FOR THE WOLFS

Special kudos to Wally and Gayle Wolf for their double victory in the Intermediate event (Wally–Main, Gayle–Consolation). Apparently the new car they purchased just prior to the trip put them both in a good rolling mood.

Although mother Kathy Garmise (NJ) got the best of daughter Michelle in the Beginner finals, it was still a great event for both.

A tip of the hat to the other winners: Lucky Nelson (IL) for winning his second Chicago Open Blitz in a row, Doubles pick-up team Bill Bartholomay (IL) & Dave Cardwell (GA), and Mini-match victor Carol Joy Cole (MI). Results on page 7. Δ

[Continued on page 7]



# Psycho Phil's problems

by Phil Simborg



All of the following are decisions I made wrong over the board. Hopefully you will have the same problem.

## INSTRUCTIONS

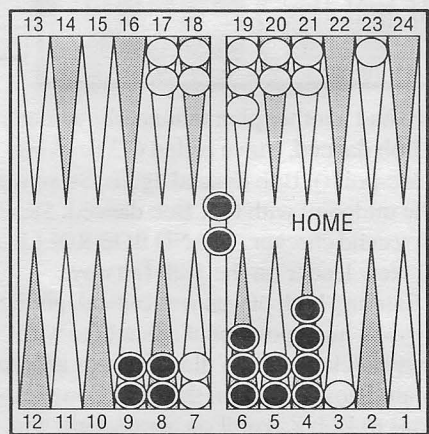
For each of the eight problems, pick the move that you would make over the board.

## SCORING

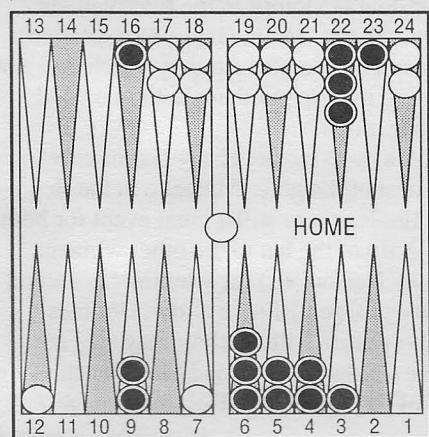
- Score 3 points if your play is the one Snowie determines to be best.
- Score 2 points if your play is from 0.007 to 0.020 worse than Snowie's chosen play.
- Score 1 point if your play is from 0.021 to 0.034 worse than Snowie's chosen play.

## ANSWERS ON PAGE 8

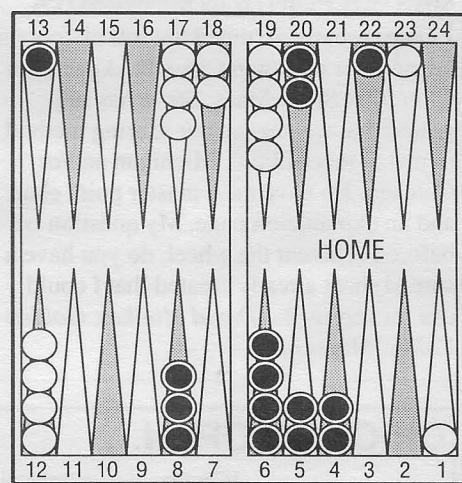
PROB. 1. 15 pt. match tied at 6-6. **BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.**



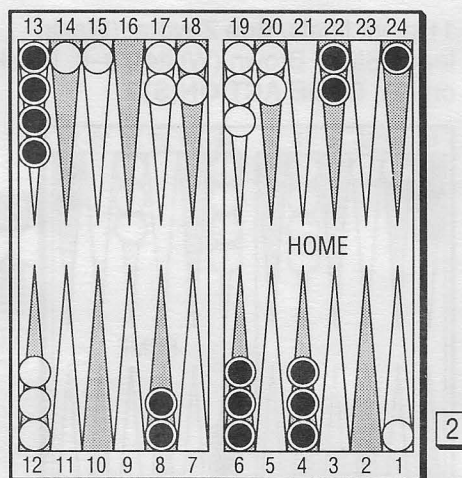
PROB. 2. Tournament double match-point. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.**



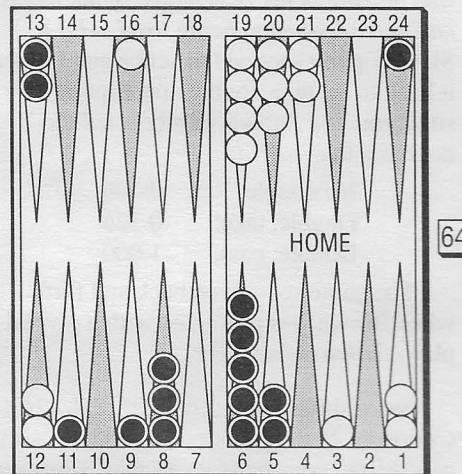
PROB. 3. Tournament double match-point. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-4.**



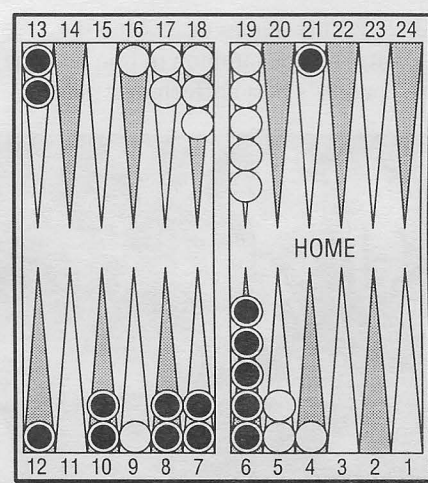
PROB. 4. 11 pt. match Black leads White, 8 to 6. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-3.**



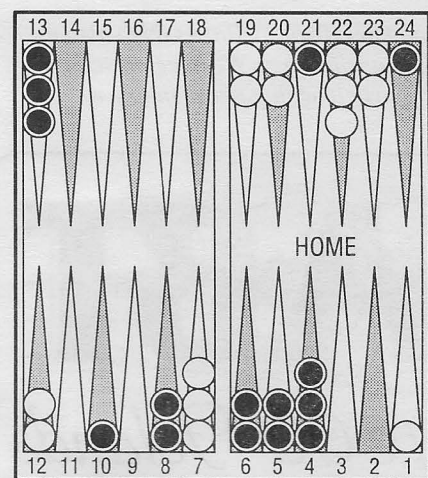
PROB. 5. 11 pt. match Black leads White, 7 to 2. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-4.**



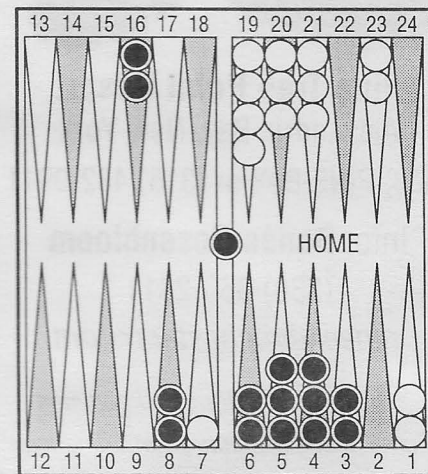
PROB. 6. 3 pt. match tied at 0-0. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-3.**



PROB. 7. 15 pt. match. Black trails White, 3 to 4. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-3.**



PROB. 8. 15 pt. match. Black leads White, 13 to 11. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**







## Improve Your Backgammon

*Paul Lamford's new book gives us a lot of good information for a very reasonable price.*

reviewed by Bob Zavoral

*Improve Your Backgammon* © 2002 by Paul Lamford & Simon Gasquoine. Published in the UK by Everyman Publishers. Soft cover, 128 pages. Price: \$15 + \$4 p&h US (\$9 p&h overseas). Order from Carol Joy Cole's Backgammon à la Carte (cjc@tir.com).

I have never played British Champion Paul Lamford, the primary author of *Improve Your Backgammon*. And after reading his book, I have no burning desire to do so. If he plays over the board anywhere near as well as his book would indicate, I might just forfeit and hope to win the Consolation or Last Chance.

Having read just about everything about backgammon from Tim Holland through Magriel and Dwek on to Barclay Cooke, Danny Kleinman, KG, Robertie and Kit Woolsey, I wasn't expecting to be unduly impressed. How does anyone have the chutzpah to attempt to walk in the footsteps of such BG Giants? Yet I almost find myself rendered speechless by this book.

Recommending a backgammon book isn't something I do lightly. They tend to be expensive and sometimes downright bad. A year or two ago I bought a book based upon the review of a friend and respected player only to find I might as well have bet the \$25 on the hard eight in one of my ill-advised gambling jaunts. I confronted him about it: "Did you really like such-and-such a book?"

His reply? "I was trying to be nice." You know who you are. Shame on you.

My recommendation on this book? Buy 3 copies . . . it's ridiculously cheap (\$15) and you're going to wear them all out trying to absorb the contents or reluctantly give them to your backgammon friends for birthday or Christmas gifts.

Why do I like this book so much? First a short preface.

It was only a matter of time before someone wrote a backgammon book incorporating Snowie (or one of the equally good BG analytical bots) and the ideas gleaned from it, post-modern backgammon concepts, so to speak. Not only using these concepts but using them fluidly in the prose; then extrapolating axioms if you will and laying them out in an organized and

easily understandable fashion for all levels of players. Benchmark ideas to keep in your thought processes as you play. Any one of these ideas is easily worth the price of the book.

Of course other authors have used Snowie before. But usually it is used only as an arbiter of sorts:

"This play is so much better."

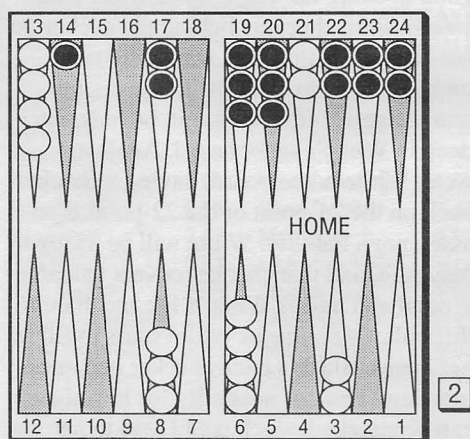
"This play wins so many gammons."

"Snowie rollouts prove my point."

Paul goes beyond that. He uses Snowie the way good students of the game should and, by the way, a careful reading of the book should help you improve your own use of Snowie.

Let me toss out an example of what I mean:

**Dia. 37. Money game. White owns a 2-cube. WHITE TO PLAY 6-1.**



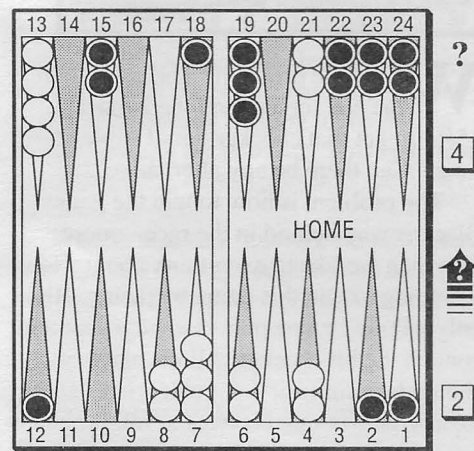
Talking about giving up the anchor in order to hit, Paul writes: "Should White hit and risk a gammon, or should he wimp

out? Rollouts show that the decision is very close." Paul then goes on to give some key ideas to think about when making such a play. And then (and this is key) "Even small modifications can radically change the decision." He goes on to give at least two variations of this theme shifting checkers in the positions to try and understand why hitting may or may not be right in other very similar positions.

Bravo! This is how Snowie should be used! Not as some *lawgiver from on high*, but as a malleable tool which one can use to pry insight from all the numbers and percentages that it spews at the analyst.

Paul continually does this throughout the book. It practically reads as a user's manual for Snowie. Witness here talking about redoubling and failed blitzes:

**Dia. 40. Money game. White owns a 2-cube. White on roll CUBE ACTION(S)?**



[Continued on page 9]

## CHICAGO OPEN...

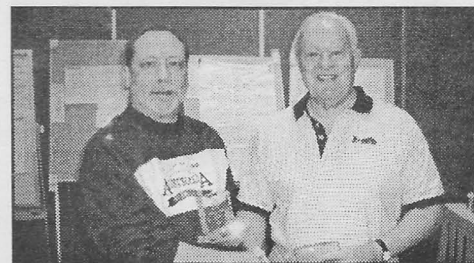
[Continued from page 5]

### 24th CHICAGO OPEN

**CHAMPIONSHIP (41):** 1-Ed Bennett (NM), 2-Sho Sengoku (CA), 3-Steve Sax (CA); 1C-Tak Morioka (IL), 2C-Bob Zavoral (IL). **INTERMEDIATE (45):** 1-Wally Wolf (MI), 2-Greg Feller (IL), 3/4-Brad Andersen (WI) / Mike Charison (MI); 1C-Gayle Wolf (MI), 2C-Mark Murray (IL). **BEGINNER (11):** 1-Kathy Garmise (NJ), 2-Michelle Garmise (NJ). **MEMORIAL DAY MASTERS (32):** 1-Bob Zavoral (IL), 2-Steve Brown (MN), 3/4-Fred Kalantari (MN) / Bill Robertie (MA). **DOUBLES (16 teams):** 1-Bill Bartholomay (IL) & Dave Cardwell (GA), 2-Terry Leahy (IL) & Neal Uphoff (IL). **BLITZ (88):** 1-Lucky Nelson (IL), 2-Dan Cox (NY). **MINI-MATCH (128):** 1-Carol Joy Cole (MI), 2-Howard Markowitz (NV).



Wally and Gayle Wolf (MI) celebrate their sweep of the Intermediate event.

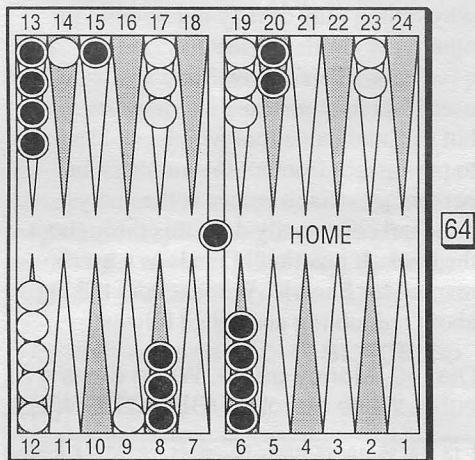


Winning Doubles team: Dave Cardwell (Atlanta) and Bill Bartholomay (Chicago).



## PROBLEM #290 ANALYZED

by Kit Woolsey

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-2.**

What's the problem? The entry with the 5 is forced, and the 2 must be 15/13 to get that checker out of triple-shot range. Can there be any alternative?

The problem is how to win the game. Black is way behind in the race—more pips than we like to even think about. He is not going to win this game by racing. His only winning game plan is to hit a shot and contain the hit checker. All his plays should be aiming at that goal. It isn't going to hurt his winning chances to fall farther behind in the race. While being on the bar may be inconvenient, it won't be the racing consideration of having lost more ground.

Now that we know what Black is trying

to do, this position can be examined in an entirely different light. Let's take a look at B/20, 6/4. As far as starting to build the board Black will eventually need to contain a hit checker, slotting is definitely a plus. But that is a relatively minor consideration. The big question is whether or not Black is better off bringing that outfield checker to the safety of the midpoint or leaving it where it is.

How does Black feel about being hit on the 15-point? It could be bad. This is not a great time to get stuck on the bar and have to use half the roll to enter while White is scrambling to get her outfield blots safe. Black will not have as many shot numbers at an outfield blot if he is on the bar as he would have if not on the bar.

On the other hand, there may be some good in being hit. Right now, White can safely dump checkers behind the anchor on her 5-point while she is waiting to roll lucky doubles to clear the midpoint and win the game. If Black is hit, he may enter deep in White's inner board. Against a weak White home board, having a checker back on the 24-point or the 22-point is an asset, not a liability. White will be trying to play safe, and that checker covers valuable ground and makes White's life much more difficult. Of course as White starts to fill in her board, Black's back checker becomes more and more of a liability for him since it can be attacked which could lead to getting gammoned.

How does Black feel if the blot on the 15-point is missed? That would be great. Black would have the opportunity to roll a 5 and make the 15-point with the spare on the 20-point. If that happens, Black's

chances of later getting a shot will go up considerably. Making White's 10-point will be a big roadblock in White's way as he tries to clear the midpoint safely.

How eager will White be to hit the blot? White would like to hit if she can do so conveniently, but it may not be too convenient. White already has two blots, and if she must hit with a 3, it could create a third blot. Depending on what White rolls, hitting the blot may result in several return shots from the bar. Black won't be able to contain a hit checker just yet, but simply stirring the checkers around has to be to Black's advantage since he is so far behind in the race.

In addition to other considerations, leaving the checker on the 15-point puts White under much more pressure to clean up her outfield blots. That checker gives Black a lot more diversification and flexibility than piling it on the midpoint where Black is already heavy. Black needs to have his position flow smoothly, and this sort of diversification is the way to achieve that goal.

It may be an unusual play, but upon close analysis it appears that the plusses of B/20, 6/4 easily outweigh the minuses. It's a flashy sort of play, but there is quite a bit of logic behind it. I do believe that it is correct.

It would be nice to think that I would find this play at the table, but in the heat of battle I'm pretty sure I would have played the stodgy 15/13 along with everybody else. On a good day when I was really on top of the game, I hope I would be able to come up with this sort of play.—Kit Woolsey Δ

## Psycho Phil's Psolutions...

[From quiz on page 6]

1. Bar/24(2), 4/3\*(2) — 3 points  
Bar/24(2), 24/23\*/22 — 1 point
2. 16/12\*, 9/7\*(2) — 3 points
3. 20/16(2), 13/5 — 3 points  
20/16(2), 13/9, 8/4 — 2 points  
20/16(2), 6/2(2) just missed earning a point
4. 24/21, 8/5(2), 4/1\* — 3 points
5. 11/5, 9/5 — 3 points  
24/18, 9/5 — 2 points
6. 21/12 — 3 points.  
21/15, 12/9\* — 1 point

7. 24/21, 10/4 — 3 points

8. Bar/24, 16/11 — 3 points

Bar/24, 8/3 — Huge blunder. Minus 1 point

### RANKING

21–24 points: Genius. Or maybe you are either a cheater or your name is Snowie. Or your name might be Jerry or Nack. Either way, please stay away from me.

17–20 points: Expert. Please let me know if you scored in this range, as I want to be sure to watch you play (and be sure I don't play you for money).

13–16 points: So-so. You need some lessons, dude!

9–12 points: Feh! You stink.

0–8 points: Please give me a call and let me know when we can play for money!—Phil Simborg



**Hot Fun in the  
Summertime!**

**Michigan Summer  
Backgammon Championships  
July 3–6, 2003  
Novi Hilton, Michigan**

Call Carol Joy Cole at 810/232-9731  
E-mail: [cjc@tir.com](mailto:cjc@tir.com)



# IMPROVE YOUR BACKGAMMON...

[Continued from page 7]

Lamford writes: "Black has just rolled an unfortunate six when entering from the bar, and now White should consider a redouble." He uses a diagram to show that it is marginally wrong to redouble and explains "...a small change [shifting White's men from the four-point to the five point] to the position gives black a border-line pass." Then: "Move the two checkers on the five-point back to White's six-point and it becomes hugely wrong to double," with a final diagram illustrating this point. Finally, in true Lamford fashion, three concise benchmark ideas are outlined to keep rattling around in your over-the-board-playing-head. Any one of these axioms properly applied will pay for the book—I guarantee you!

Paul does this again and again throughout Part One. Part Two (co-authored by Simon Gasquoine) delves into match play. It is very comprehensive and far more than adequate for any intermediate player and most championship players I know.

I particularly appreciated page 64 where they try and explain how match equity charts are generated instead of simply plopping a chart down in front of the reader and saying "Here. Memorize this." If this section of the book is too mind-boggling for you, go to page 103: "Points to remember" (about match play). These seven extremely general points will

improve your match play—no doubt about it. Especially if you are as lazy as I am!

Part 3 of the book simply titled "Technology" is written by Stefanie Rohan. It is a guide to the various backgammon programs available, a multitude of Internet play sites. She evaluates the pros and cons of each site in terms of what they have to offer to the player. This is very useful to the Internet BG junkie and even more so to a neophyte bewildered by where to play on the World Wide Web and why. Also included are Internet sites where one can buy BG equipment or books. It is fairly comprehensive although she didn't include my website for boards (or Tak Morioka's) but I supposed I can forgive her a little European prejudice.

The book is loaded with diagrams (don't turn it upside down . . . some might

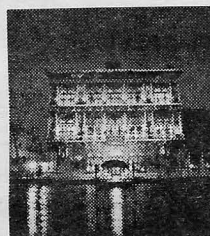
fall out) and well organized. Additionally, the prose in this book is very good and at times humorous.

Is there anything I didn't like about Paul Lamford's work? Yes. Too short. Only 128 pages. But each one is loaded with about \$20 of value. The cover is great. My real sticking point is the title. Too prosaic—too dumbed down. I suspect they were shooting for bookstore sales. But it certainly is true it will *Improve Your Backgammon*.

My suggestion for a title? How about *Only the Checkers are Black and White*? Because believe me, Paul sees shades of gray in every position (as a good player rightly should) and lets the reader know why. But the title I really like? *Snowie Slept Here*. You figure out why.—Bob Zavoral Δ



CASINO DI VENEZIA



15th  
city of venice  
international  
backgammon  
tournament

casino of venice  
3rd - 6th july 2003

the event will be held in ca' vendramin calergi, the historical 1500 palace on the gran canal, which hosts the glamorous casino of venice in the city center ([www.vendramincalergi.com](http://www.vendramincalergi.com)).

	entry fees €	registration €
champion	630	70
intermediate	250	50
amateur	50	20
double (champ.)	500 per team	50
double (interm.)	120 per team	30

\* quarter entries will be organized for both categories

## thursday, 3rd july

- 15.30 registration / jackpot programme
- 16.00 quarter entries begin
- 18.30 warm up
- 23.00 1st superjackpot

## friday, 4th july

- 14.00 registrations
- 15.30 double consulting
- 17.30 champion public draw
- 18.00 champion tournament start
- 21.00 interm. & amateur public draw
- 22.00 interm. & amateur tournaments start

## saturday, 5th july

- 14.30 progressive consolation
- 16.00 tournament continues
- 23.00 2nd superjackpot

## sunday, 6th july

- 13.00 last chance
- 15.00 finals
- 19.00 prize-giving & cocktail

## studiogiocchi

san polo 3083  
30125 venezia  
[backgammon@studiogiocchi.com](mailto:backgammon@studiogiocchi.com)  
[www.studiogiocchi.com](http://www.studiogiocchi.com)



## ILLINOIS ACTION



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

**Tuesday, 6:00 P.M.** at Clarion Hotel, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago; 773/693-5800.

**Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON** at Champs Sports Bar, 17 W. 517 Roosevelt Rd., Oakbrook Terrace; 630/691-1888.

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

**BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BACKGAMMON CLUB:** Tournaments Monday, 6:30 P.M. at Caboose Smokehouse, 608 W. Seminary, Bloomington. Rob Farmer (309/821-9766).

**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).

Friday July 4th - Sunday 6th, 2003

Warm-up, Sperti Trophy & Jackpots - Friday July 4th, 2003  
*Sanremo Casino Privé*

### Program

#### Friday, July 4

17:00 - 20:00	Registration at Sanremo Casino
17:30	Public draw for Warm-up; start of Jackpots and One Point Matches
18:00	Start of Warm-up
19:00	Public draw for Sperti Trophy
19:30	Start of Sperti Trophy
20:00	Welcome cocktail in the Casino privé
22:00	Last Registration
22:30	Public draw
23:00	Start of play Main Tournament; Jackpots and One Point Matches continue

#### Saturday, July 5

16:00	Main Tournament continues and start of Progressive Consolation Tournament
17:00	Warm-up, Sperti Trophy, Jackpots and One Point Matches continue
20:00-22:30	Break for Dinner
22:30	Sanremo Super-Jackpot 1000 Euro (deduction only 2%) and play continues

#### Sunday, July 6

15:00	Start of Last Chance Tournament
15:30	Start of Finals; Warm-up, Sperti Trophy, Jackpots and One Point Matches continue
20:30	Farewell cocktail and awarding ceremony in the Casino privé

### Entry Fee

<b>Master</b> (13 points match)	700 €
<b>Champion</b> (11 points match)	250 €
<b>Intermediate</b> (7 points match)	50 €

### Registration Fee

2003 WBF MEMBERS **free of charge**  
*(offered by WBF to celebrate the restart of this famous Tournament)*  
**OPEN 10 €**

*The 2003 WBF GOLDEN CARD will be available for only 10 €  
(until September 30th, 2003 - including the European Championship)*

### Prizes

100% of all entry will be returned.  
The prizes will be divided for each category as follow:  
**Main:** Winner 40%, Finalist 15%, Semi-finalist 7,5% each;  
**Consolation:** Winner 15%, Finalist 7,5%  
**Last Chance:** Winner 7,5%

### Route

Sanremo is 20 km from the French border and **only 37 km from Monte-Carlo**. You can drive (130 km from Genova) or fly to Nice Airport (65 km to Sanremo) or Genova Airport (130 km to Sanremo). Sanremo is the enchanted and famous city on the Riviera dei Fiori.

### Tournament Committee

To be announced at the Tournament under the presidency of  
Alberto da Pra, President of the Worldwide Backgammon Federation

### Director

**Marco Fornasir**  
sanctioned by the Worldwide Backgammon Federation

For more information **Marco Fornasir** - Ph +39 02 69018168 - F +39 02 69018163 - E fornasir@iol.it - W www.wbf.net

