

ohio state backgammon championships

SERIAL KILLER STRIKES AGAIN IN CLEVELAND!

Kazaross Over Hickey in Open Zavoral Wins Another Masters

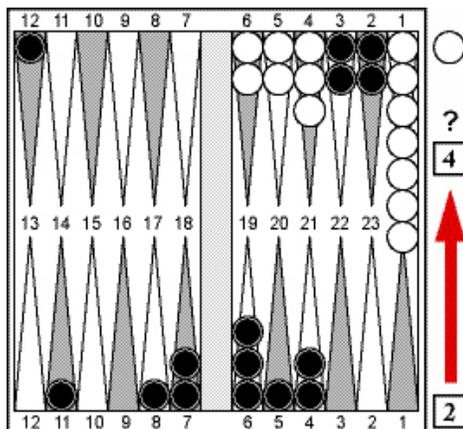
By Ray Fogerlund

I knew it wouldn't be long! Public enemy number one has struck again. Since he began his reign of terror atop the ABT (*American Backgammon Terrorists*) list, Neil Kazaross has remained relatively quiet. Perhaps the Chicago area master was resting on his laurels, or maybe he was just preplanning his next assault. I don't know, but I knew it wouldn't be long.

This time the attack took place at the 10th Annual Ohio State Backgammon Championships held April 16-18 in Cleveland, Ohio. Director Joe Miller and an able staff welcomed 75 main event players to the Cleveland Marriott Airport Hotel—a 20% increase over 2003.

The following is evidence of the *An-Nil-ator's* premeditated treachery. Pittsburgh director Steve Hast met up with Neil in the 11-point semifinals of the undefeated bracket. With Steve leading 8-7, Neil had accepted a double when Position A presented itself:

Pos. A. 11-point Open semifinals. Neil Kazaross (Black) trails Steve Hast (White) 7-8. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Neil had been lying in wait for the proper moment to redouble. He said he was



Ohio State Open champ Neil Kazaross and runner-up Mary Hickey display their plaques. [Photo by Joe Miller.]

aware that Steve knew his take point was 41% (Steve can pass and have that much equity trailing 8-9 in the match). So Neil redoubled, and Steve . . . passed! Highway robbery, pure and simple. But is it really

that simple?

I was floored to find that not to redouble here is a blunder by over 0.110 according to Snowie 4. I would have blundered by not redoubling, but it would have cost me the chance to plunder Steve. "Plunder," by the way, was the winning entry in my *Name-That-Double* contest, and this is an insidious derivative of it. By definition, you cannot plunder your opponent unless you make a blunder yourself. Then, you must benefit from it when he makes a bigger one! Here, Neil consciously avoided making a blunder of his own, and still reaped the plunder! What kind of a crime is this? It's like the difference between involuntary manslaughter, and premeditated murder. Can we reinstate hanging? While I blunder my way into extra equity, Neil plans for it!

[Continued on page 5]

SHAKE 'EM UP, JACKIE



Jackie Onassis throws the dice while playing "Counterstrike" with the game's inventor Roger Tuckerman in 1975. The game, very similar to backgammon, never caught on. The former First Lady's Social Secretary Letitia Baldrige and White House personal assistant Nancy Tuckerman are in the background. Δ

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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2.7 BEAROFF RULE

I have recently learned of Danny Kleinman's 2.7 Bearoff Rule. According to the rule, when you have a chance to space your last two checkers, move them so that they are as close as possible to 2.7 pips apart. Is there any special significance to the 2.7 number.—*Mark Ryan, Chicago, Illinois*

Danny Kleinman of Los Angeles, California answers: Not any more than to 2.6, 2.8 or 2.9, really, for practical purposes. What I really should have used was e, to which 2.7 is an approximation. How sophisticated that would have made me seem! However, some readers might have been unfamiliar with e (the base of natural logarithms).—Yours, Danny

DUANE'S BACK

Good to see Duane Jensen back in action as a contributing editor. I found his April

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



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

*Denotes new or revised listing

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

NATIONAL

May 5-9	10th International Cup Tournament, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
May 6	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, McKenna's Grille, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
May 8	Mother's Day Open, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
May 15	Michigan Club Challenge/Singles Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
May 15	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
May 16	Austin Club Bimonthly Tournament, JC's Bar & Grill, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
May 16	New England Bonus Tourney, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/779-8209
May 20	Third Thursday Bonus (Wisconsin State), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
May 22	Atlanta Spring Doubles Tourney, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
May 22	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
May 22*	Double Trouble Tournament, New York Chess & Backgammon, New York, NY	518/398-7979
May 23*	Grand Rapids Benefit for Hoss, Garden Room Cafe, Grand Rapids, MI	616/647-9965
May 23*	Hoosier Sunday Tournament, Arni's Restaurant, Indianapolis, Indiana	317/255-8902
<u>May 28-31</u>	<u>25th Chicago Open, Oak Brook Hills Hotel & Resort, Oak Brook, Illinois</u>	<u>847/674-0120</u>
May 30	Ace Point Club Monthly, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/888-2231
Jun 1	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Jun 3	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, McKenna's Grille, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Jun 6	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jun 6*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, Ohio	330/268-4610
<u>Jun 11-13</u>	<u>53rd Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Jun 12*	Father's Day Open, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Jun 13*	South Florida Monthly, NorthRidge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Jun 17*	Third Thursday Bonus (Georgia), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jun 19*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Jun 19*	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
Jun 20*	New England Club Playoffs, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/779-8209
Jun 26*	Atlanta Summer Chouette Tourney, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
Jun 27*	Ace Point Club Monthly, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/888-2231
Jun 30	Michigan Summer Warm-Up, Sheraton Hotel, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
<u>Jul 1-4</u>	<u>29th Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton, Novi, Michigan</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jul 6*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
<u>Jul 30-Aug 1</u>	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York</u>	<u>585/396-0969</u>
<u>Jul 30-Aug 1</u>	<u>Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin</u>	<u>608/516-9109</u>
Aug 8	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
<u>Aug 12-15</u>	<u>11th Georgia Championships & Peach Cup, Hilton Garden Inn, Atlanta, GA</u>	<u>770/333-1876</u>
<u>Sep 3-6</u>	<u>51st Indiana Open, Sheraton Hotel & Suites, Indianapolis, Indiana</u>	<u>317/255-8902</u>
<u>Oct 8-10</u>	<u>Illinois State Championships, Pere Marquette Hotel, Peoria, Illinois</u>	<u>217/528-0117</u>
<u>Oct 15-17</u>	<u>Florida State Championship, Sheraton Suites, Fort Lauderdale, Florida</u>	<u>954/564-0340</u>
<u>Oct 29-31</u>	<u>2004 Minnesota Open, Mystic Lake Casino, Prior Lake, Minnesota</u>	<u>651/699-6758</u>
Nov 5*	22nd Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney, Clarion Hotel, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
<u>Dec 3-5</u>	<u>54th Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Jan 23-30	Backgammon On Board VII, Star Princess, Ft. Lauderdale to E. Caribbean	773/583-6464

OUTSIDE USA

May 8-9	County Cups Trophy, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	44152-2888676
May 21-23	16th European Championship/3rd Velden Open, Casino Velden, Austria	39269-018168
May 22-23	14th Città di Torino Torneo, Turin, Italy	39347-2304145
Jun 4-6*	Austrian Masters Finale, Cafe Heine, Vienna, Austria	43664-2404285
Jun 5-6	Hilton Trophy, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	44152-2888676
Jun 6*	National Capital Monthly, Bobby's Bar, Gloucester, Ontario, Canada	613/741-2530
Jun 10-13	Schwaben-Cup goes Franken, Ramada Hotel, Nürnberg, Germany	49711-486190
Jun 19-20	Peter Bennet's 50th Birthday, Ramada Jarvis, East Grinstead, England	44163-4304908
Jun 24-Jul 1*	3rd Festival of Backgammon, Peligoni Club, Zakyntos, Greece	44779-8614800
Jul 3-4	Keren Di Bona Memorial, Hanover Hotel, Hinckley, England	44152-2888676
Jul 8-11	16th City of Venice International Tournament, Venice Casino, Venice, Italy	39329-0513415
Jul 8-11*	9th Kaiserbrunnen Cup, Kaiserbrunnen Hotel, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Jul 12-18	29th World Championship, Grand Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	USA: 954/527-4033
Jul 20-25	Riviera's Challenge II, Palm Beach Partouche, Cannes, France	33142-618080
Jul 24-25*	9th Liverpool Open, Liverpool Bridge Club, Liverpool, England	44152-2888676
Aug 7-8*	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Hanover Hotel, Hinckley, England	44152-2888676
Aug 14-15*	Gammonitis Rollout Trophy, George Ramada Hotel, Solihull, England	44163-4304908
Aug 19-22*	BG on the Beach/7th Friuli Championship, Grado Beach, Gorizia, Italy	39269-018168

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

article "Second Choice" very amusing.—
David Rubin, Skokie, Illinois

PERFECT PAPER FOR MICHAEL

I agree with all of Danny Kleinman's rulings in last month's *Shades or Gray Rulings Quiz* (Issue No. 163). Considering I make my living directing backgammon tournaments, it's quite a relief! Too many players see the rules in "black and white." It often takes the perspective of a "grayer" inspection to come up with a fair and proper solution.

Oscar Wilde was so right when he said, "Rules are for the guidance of wise men

and the obedience of fools!"—*Michael Crane, director, British Isles Backgammon Association, Lincoln, England*

MBC PHOTOS

Thanks for sending me pictures of my victory at the Midwest Championships. I cropped a photo off the Gammon Village MBC website report but so far, no one has taken me up on the offer to make wallet-size photos for them. Maybe they'll want these!

I'll be back to defend my MBC title next March.—*Bob Stringer, San Anselmo, California*

WHAT DO YOU GET?

I read on the Internet and in the April POINT

where Tyco Executive Dennis Kozlowski had the company buy himself a \$38,000 backgammon table. Does anyone know if the man even plays backgammon? And what do you get for \$38,000 that I don't have on my boards? Would I be a better player if I got one?—*Marcus Hermansen, Nashua, New Hampshire*

Hopefully, it came with precision dice, but we doubt it.—Ed.

MAKING POINTS

How does a person new to backgammon go about earning some ABT [American Backgammon Tour] points? Do you have to belong to the association? Is there a membership fee?—*Dale Wiseman, via Internet*

It's quite simple. Just check out Carol Joy Cole's "Mark Your Calendar" either in Chicago Point or on the Internet at: www.chicagopoint.com/calendar.html. Then choose an ABT event and contact the director for an invitation. There are no membership fees or special dues (other than the tournament entry fee) to play in ABT events. But you can only win points in the main tournaments (Open, Intermediate, or Beginner) and only if you cash in the event. See a further description online at: www.chicagopoint.com/abtexp.html —Ed. Δ



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2004

Compiled through 18 April after 5 tournaments
(Upcoming events: 25th Chicago Open, 53rd Gammon Assoc.)



Bob Stringer	22.88	Alan Robinson	5.86	Joe Feldman	2.92	Petko Kostadinov	1.55
Malcolm Davis	22.22	Mark Anshus	5.60	Joan Hac	2.92	Ron Sanders	1.55
Ray Fogerlund	20.63	Philip Smith	5.41	Richard Martin	2.71	Ed Johnson	1.30
Gregg Cattanach	17.47	Norma Shyer	5.20	Dean Adamian	2.70	Becca Thompson	1.10
Neil Kazaross	13.6	Rob Maier	5.08	Cem Aslan	2.59	Susan Hathaway	1.01
Dave Wetzell	12.11	Jordan Lampe	5.08	Bruce Ballance	2.52	Joe Davidson	1.01
Brian Barber	11.20	Ilia Guzei	4.80	Danielle Bastarache	2.50	Matt Little	1.00
Dan Grogan	10.80	Asad Zaltash	4.24	Bill Minser	2.40	Lawrence Miller	0.98
Brent Cohen	10.23	Bear Lumbra	4.24	Julian Haley	2.12	Jane Lasarenko	0.94
Doug Roberts	9.48	Milad Doueihy	4.16	Rich Catalano	2.12	Wanda Roberts	0.75
Betty Coppic	9.14	Phil Simborg	4.16	Kevin Kelly	2.12	Joe Szvedo	0.73
Mike Corbett	8.24	Ben Elliott	3.96	Patty Geoffroy	2.08	Stacy Turner	0.67
Vadim MUSAELYAN	7.61	Ed Bennett	3.88	Jonah Seewald	2.08	Alex Miller	0.63
David Haddad	6.80	Jim Hall	3.88	Arlene Austin	1.98	Les Moshinsky	0.63
Mary Hickey	6.80	Ron Wagner	3.49	Cookie Frazin	1.70	Bruce Brinson	0.57
Tak Morioka	6.40	Brad Andersen	3.40	Troy Will	1.69	Tony Garcia	0.57
Don Faix	6.20	Dan Cramer	3.20	Kwong Chan	1.59	Adrian Rios	0.38
Carl Sorg	6.20						



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2004 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 30 APRIL

Bob Zavoral	10.72	Bill Davis	5.08	Bill Keefe	2.32	Adrian Rios	1.12
Tak Morioka	9.12	Carter Mattig	5.04	Mark Phillips	2.16	Barbara Levinson	1.04
Gary Kay	8.24	Val Zimmnicki	4.92	Roger Hickman	2.08	Tom Meyer	0.96
Tim Mabee	8.00	Joann Feinstein	4.60	Ron Washington	2.04	Cookie Frazin	0.80
David Rockwell	7.28	Paul Baraz	4.20	Paul Franks	1.92	Rick Sorci	0.80
Mike Sutton	7.00	Steve Klesker	4.00	Roland Dieter	1.88	Amy Trudeau	0.72
Howard Ring	6.96	Peter Kalba	3.60	Royal Robinson	1.76	Roy Cohen	0.72
Herb Roman	6.96	Alice Kay	3.44	Felix Yen	1.76	Robert Ring	0.72
Norma Shyer	6.72	Michael Peters	3.32	Les Moshinsky	1.60	Brooke Gottshall	0.72
Phil Simborg	6.16	Mark Murray	3.04	Jacob Moreno	1.56	Mary Franks	0.72
Lucky Nelson	6.16	Wayne Wiest	3.00	Bill Stegich	1.52	Paul Klein	0.64
David Marcus	5.64	Linda Rockwell	2.80	Bill Bartholomay	1.28	Gaby Kairouz	0.64
Joe Wollick	5.32	Joe Auszmann	2.68	Dave Cramer	1.20	Jay Bleiman	0.56
Phyllis Smolinski	5.24	Georgina Flanagan	2.44	John Jennings	1.20	John O'Connor	0.40
Bob Steen	5.12	Ken Bond	2.36	Eric Johnson	1.20		

TAK MORIOKA won or split three April Masters events to earn 4.80 points and Player of the Month honors. Gary Kay was second with 4.28 points and Bob Zavoral finished third with 4.16 points.

BPC Sunday Backgammon

6 June 2004 • 12:00 noon

Champs Sports Bar
17 W. 517 Roosevelt Rd
Oakbrook Terrace, IL

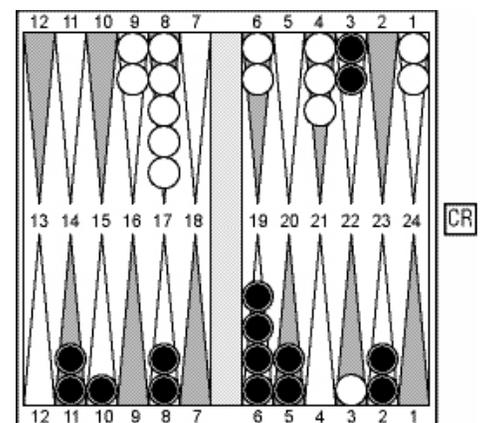
Information: 773/583-6464

your move

PROBLEM #299

to be analyzed by Mary Hickey

Match to 5 points. White leads Black 4-0 Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-2.**



DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS



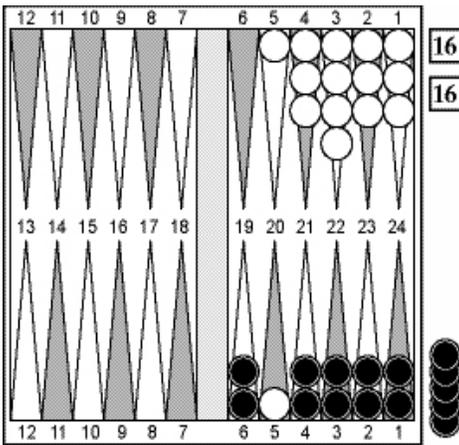
© 2004 by Danny Kleinman

GETTING GREEDY?

Dear Miss Lonelyblots: My friend and I are no longer talking after what happened at last night's chouette. Three of us (relative backgammon newcomers) had been playing Thursday night chouettes for about two months. Now it's over thanks to Jim and his inability to listen to reason. Let me explain.

Sid was having an incredible evening against Jim and me, beating us like conga drums. Finally, a situation arose where we could get all of our money back in one swoop. Sid was in the box holding two 16-cubes in the most incredible game we had ever played. Jim was rolling for us and it looked as though we were about to chalk up a couple of big pluses when:

Chouette money game. BLACK (Captain and partner) TO PLAY 5-1.



Not much chance to win a gammon here so I told Jim to simply play 6/1/off. But no! Jim had to make the greedy gammon play of 6/1, 6/5 and there was nothing I could do to talk him out of it.*

Both moves left the minimum 11 shots. But predictably, Sid rolled 3-2 dancing, we left a repeating shot with 5-2 (taking two off), Sid hit us with 4-2, we danced just long enough to give Sid the chance to flip 32-cubes in our faces, and we had to take. From there, it was downhill all the way. What a sick loss!

It's been two weeks since I've spoken to Jim. Although I'm still really mad at his stubbornness, there is no reason to hold a permanent grudge. I'm thinking about

calling Jim just to let him know everyone makes mistakes and that I am willing to forgive and forget. Do you think that would be a good first step in getting our chouette back together? —Ready to move on.

DEAR READY: I can see that the chouette did not take place at the Hustlers' Paradise Club, else Sid would have used his Dice Change and rolled the double-5s that Big Eddie says a Dice Change can produce and to which Bean's Law says each player is entitled at least once per game.

That, of course, is a defect of Jim's gammon-greedy 6-1, 6-5*: it gives Sid a joker, a roll that accomplishes three fine things, hitting, eliminating any return shots, and making a fifth inside point.

Jim's play has a less obvious second defect: minimizing the number of Sid's hits that leave return shots. Of Sid's 5s, only 6-5 fails to lift or cover the blot on Sid's 5-point.

As the course of the game illustrated, Jim's play has a third defect: leaving Black vulnerable to repeat shots on 22 rolls (all combinations of 6s, 5s, 4s, 3s and 2s, except 3-2 and 2-2) if Sid dances.

Finally, Jim's play has a fourth defect: failing to bear a man off, thus reducing Black's winning chances after suffering a hit.

I agree with you that your play avoids these four defects, but Jim's play has one merit: hitting creates a small gammon threat from what would otherwise be a nearly gammonless position, for players have been known to dance once or twice on a four point board.

Does that one merit outweigh the four defects? I think not.

However, I favor a third play that apparently neither you nor Jim considered: 6/5* hitting, then 5/off.

Let's compare it to the other plays:

- (a) It leaves no joker. In this respect, it is the equal of your play and superior to Jim's.
- (b) It provides return shots if Sid hits with 6-6, 6-5 or 5-1. The return hits on Sid's 6-5 and 5-1 can be deadly, as with two men to bring home, Sid incurs a substantial gammon risk. In this respect, it is slightly better than your play, which provides returns only on Sid's 6-1 and 5-1, and much better than Jim's play, which provides returns only on Sid's 6-5.
- (c) It creates future jeopardy on 15 rolls (all combinations of 6s, 5s, 4s and 3s except

3-3) if Sid dances. In this respect, it is significantly better than Jim's play, but of course worse than yours play (which avoids future jeopardy entirely).

- (d) It bears a man off, which improves Black's gammon chances as well as his chances of surviving a hit. In this respect, it is superior to Jim's play and the equal of yours.
- (e) It hits, creating a gammon threat. In this respect, it is the equal of Jim's play and superior to yours.
- (f) Because it leaves a combination shot, 5-1, it gives Sid two extra hitting rolls. In this respect, it is inferior to both your play and Jim's. But consider: how much does Sid benefit by hitting B/20/19*? The danger of getting a second man sent back almost (though not quite) negates Sid's gain.

All in all, the compromise hit 6/5*/off looks best despite losing slightly more often than your play. That being said, you are right to want to patch things up with Jim. Don't let a disagreement about a move in a game ruin a friendship.

Backgammon is partly a gambling game. The gambling element is small in tournament play, where your liability is limited to the entry fee; skill predominates. In head-to-head play, the gambling element is larger, thanks to the doubling cube, but nonetheless I would argue that the game is largely a game of skill, which outweighs the vicissitudes of the dice in the long run. In chouette, however, you place your fate in the hands of the Captain and wager on his skill too; for this reason, despite the substantial skill element that remains, chouette must be considered largely a gambling game.

If you're unwilling to risk 32 times the stakes on Jim's skill, don't chouette with him. Or alter your cube strategy in the early game.

For the cube to have reached 16 in the position you show, you must have gone along with Jim's first redouble. Why not insist on waiting until Jim could cash. Then you would "lose your market" but win 2 points and play the next game as Captain against Jim in the Box. How bad could that be?—Miss Lonelyblots Δ

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.

CLEVELAND...

[Continued from page 1]

His is the much more sinister crime, and he is a serial offender. And you thought he didn't belong at the top of the list?

Evidently, Neil (*Youuuu dirty rat*) Kazaross had "done in" last year's Ohio Masters champ Mary (Biggest Lady Rat) Hickey rather mercilessly in their first match to win the double elimination finals. Neil doesn't even give you a sniff of the cheese, and you most certainly will not get a cut. Headline: "Neil Cuts the Cheese Again in Cleveland!"

JOE MILLER DID A WONDERFUL JOB as the host and tournament director at this event. When he received my registration he sent me a courtesy e-mail and made a phone call to confirm. (Other directors, who shall remain nameless, have been known to give me only 10% credit towards my entry fees for the checks that I wrote to them!) When I had a problem with my hotel room rates, Joe contacted them immediately and again confirmed with me. When I left my board in the playing room to have dinner with ABT Public Enemy # 3 "Dougie-eee" Roberts and his lovely mouse Wanda, Joe called to tell me that he had taken it to the front desk of the hotel.

Joe was obviously touched by the turnout for this event—his best attendance ever. It ultimately gave him heart palpitations and he was taken to the hospital on Saturday evening. Testing produced the welcome news that everything was basically normal; he just had a reaction to the stress. Paul Berg filled in admirably, and so did the auctioneer, Michael Haney.

Oh, by the way, the next time someone is taken ill at an event like this, it would be wise to notify me or another with emergency medical experience, okay? One of the universal initial symptoms of a heart attack is denial, and one of the second ones is often . . . sudden death. Backgammon players in this country are not all spring chickens! Do *not*, under any circumstances, downplay chest pains, neck pain or pain that radiates to your arms or back. What kind of fool(s) did not call for immediate help when Joe began having trouble—even if he didn't want any help? Wake up, folks! Next time Neil's opponents might not be the only casualties at the tournament.

THE AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR is going great guns, and this was a tough and seasoned field. Joe Sylvester came out of retirement, at the "tender" age of 41. He

is every bit as sly as he ever was. Mark my words (and his): Joe will win a tournament this year. (Oops! He already did: the Blitz.) His only mistake was to bet against me rolling 2-6 from the bar . . . and giving Sean Garber the correct odds of 17-1 on it!

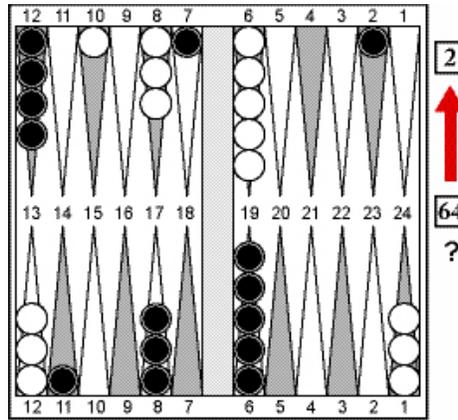
I was flattered when Joe asked me if I had a partner for the doubles in Vegas, and sad to say that I did. But I have been thinking that I would like to get on the Las Vegas Pro-Am stage . . . and with a pro the likes of Joe! So watch out world: I have the money, and a now a hired gun. Coolrey and Doc Holliday may be on their way to a gunfight at your corral real soon.—*Ray Fogerlund*

OHIO STATE MASTERS

The Ohio State Masters tournament drew a very strong 15-player field from across America. On Sunday afternoon the two remaining warriors, Bob Zavoral from Chicago and Carolina Invitational director Jeb Horton (2002 Ohio State Open winner) sat down to do battle in the 11 point finals.

Bob Zavoral, maker of fine backgammon boards, is running hot on Masters events having won two of them last year (Midwest Championships and Chicago Open). He was also the Chicago Bar Point Club's Player of the Year in 2001 and 2003. Bob plays an aggressive game demonstrated by this double (shown in Position B) from the swing game of the match.

Pos. B. 11-point Masters finals. Bob Zavoral (Black) trails Jeb Horton (White), 5-7. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



If you would not double this position, you are not alone. That's because there aren't that many market-losing sequences. Should Bob roll 5-3 (18/15*/10) and Jeb respond with 6-6 (dancing), 720 Snowie 4 full rollouts (3-ply, precise) say the position is still a take.

Despite this, Bob's double is not that bad! Another 720 game full rollout show's Bob's double to be wrong by only 0.024—not even an "error" according to Snowie



Ohio Masters champion Bob Zavoral.

4's default standards.

In fact, Bob was rewarded for his aggressiveness, winning a doubled gammon and taking the lead which he never relinquished. Final score: 11-8. Complete results: —*Bill Davis* Δ

10TH OHIO STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (34): 1-Neil Kazaross (IL), 2-Mary Hickey (OH), 3-Doug Roberts (MA); 1C-David Haddad (PA), 2C-Brad Andersen (WI). **ADVANCED (26):** 1-Alan Robinson (Canada), 2-Joan Hac (KY); 1C-Joe Feldman (MI), 2C-Ed Johnson (NY). **NOVICE (15):** 1-Troy Will (OH), 2-Jane Lasarenko (PA); 1C-Wanda Roberts (MA), 2C-Adrian Rios (IL). **OHIO STATE MASTERS (15):** 1-Bob Zavoral (IL), 2-Jeb Horton (NC). **BLITZ (32):** 1-Joe Sylvester (MO). **QUICKIES #1 (32):** 1-Tom Meyer (IL). **QUICKIES #2 (8):** 1-David Todd (MO). **DOUBLES (15 teams):** 1-Bud Bowers & John Greci (PA), 2-Steve Hast & Barb Sutton (PA).



ILLINOIS ACTION



Bill Davis
773/583-6464
Peter Kalba
312/316-1432

Tuesday, 6:00 P.M. at the 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. 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 Damon's Place for Ribs, 1701 Fort Jesse Road, Normal. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wed., 6:30 P.M. at Brewhaus, 617 E. Washington, Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

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

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

I've got a flight...
to miss.



By Steve Sax

The last time I missed a flight to a regional tournament was in Indiana in 2002. I happened to win that tournament anyway. So when in my mind, I flip-flopped the departure times for my flights of the February Pittsburgh tournament and the Midwest Championships in March, I missed the Pittsburgh flight by four hours and had to scramble to catch a late flight on standby.

Doubles partner Bob Glass, after expressing his disappointment at my organizational skills, commented that I figured to win the tournament based on the logic that a missed flight equals a win. That would make perfect sense, except that I've been doing quite well at tournaments where I make my flight. But as the Pittsburgh tourney progressed, things were beginning to look as if his prediction was going to come true. I won my first three matches in the Masters and my first three in the Championship division.

In my first round of the Masters I came from behind 10-2 Crawford to 11 to win versus a solid Ray Glaeser. My next three Masters matches weren't as close as I beat the always-tough David Todd, 2002 Minnesota Champion and Masters runner-up Doug Mayfield, and California backgammon veteran John Rockwell.

I stubbed my toe in the Championship division by losing in the money round to 2004 Carolina winner Gregg Cattenach, and then to eventual consolation winner Brent Cohen, also in the money round. Creative hedging decisions worked out well for me as I "lost at all the right times."

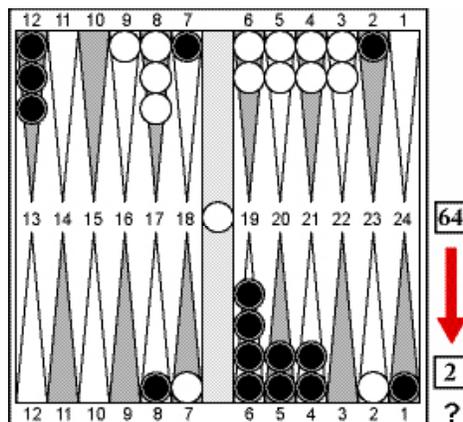
After being shown the door in the last chance by Steve Brown, that left only the Pittsburgh Masters finals to play. My opponent Dennis Culpepper who told me he hadn't played since Vegas two months earlier didn't miss a step in his way to the finals beating previous Pittsburgh Champ Bob Glass and a formidable Mary Hickey in the semifinals.

After losing in the Pittsburgh Masters finals in 2002 to Jeff Acierno and not having a record of the match, I wanted to see

how I played in the finals so Dennis and I procured the services of Linda MacLean as a match transcriber. Linda had never even tried to transcribe a match, but after a few tips, she did a flawless job.

After cruising to a 7-1 lead in the 11-point match, Dennis faced the decision of whether to double or wait here:

2004 Pittsburgh Masters 11-point finals. Dennis Culpepper (White) leads Steve Sax (Black), 7 to 1. White on shake. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



For money, it would be a clear double and an easy take; but with such a large lead in the match, Dennis should actually wait.

It seems tempting to double such a position since you have the best four point board and a broken five prime. With four

blots to shoot at, one in each quadrant, should White enter he would be a strong candidate to win a match-ending gammon, so why should he wait?

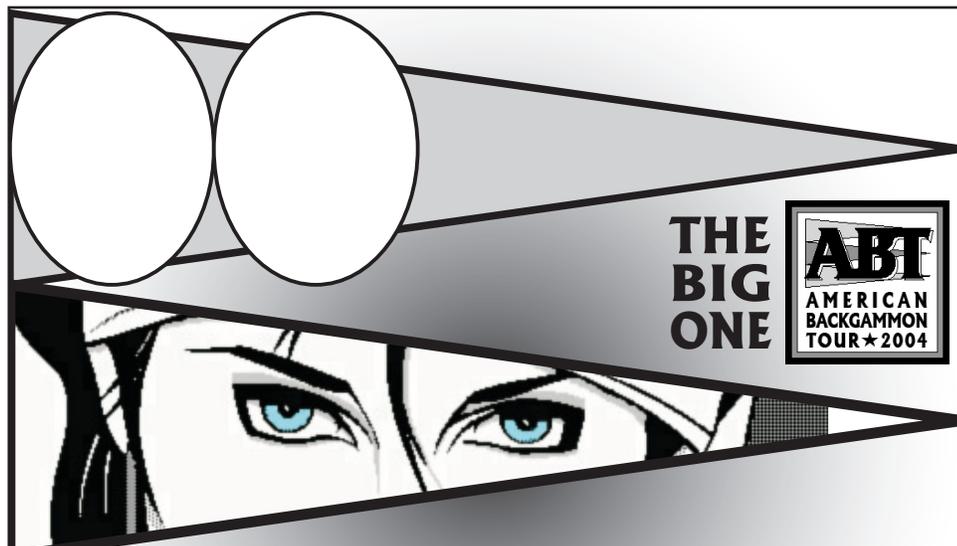
If he doesn't double and wins a gammon he is still up 9-1 to 11 and almost 92% to win the match. The key in waiting here is that you give Black tremendous cube leverage by doubling now. If you double and fail to enter, which happened in the actual game, Black can either redouble or even do a bit better by playing on. In the match I redoubled and Dennis passed but Snowie rates it as a bit too good. Even if Dennis does enter and hit, I can still win a deuce-point game or win some kind priming battle if he enters and doesn't hit me.

If Dennis feels for some strong reason that I might pass, then he can venture a cube. That would have to be a pretty strong feeling since this is far from a double.

After redoubling Dennis out, I trailed 7-3 and would eventually cut Dennis's lead to 9-6 before finally falling 11-6 after giving an overly aggressive cube at 2-away/5-away.

Dennis didn't make too many errors and played at a strong "expert" level according to Snowie. I played better than my usual and because this was a finals match, I was especially pleased . . . although winning would have been nice!

I'll see you all in Chicago for the Memorial Day tournament. If I miss my flight, watch out!—Steve Sax Δ



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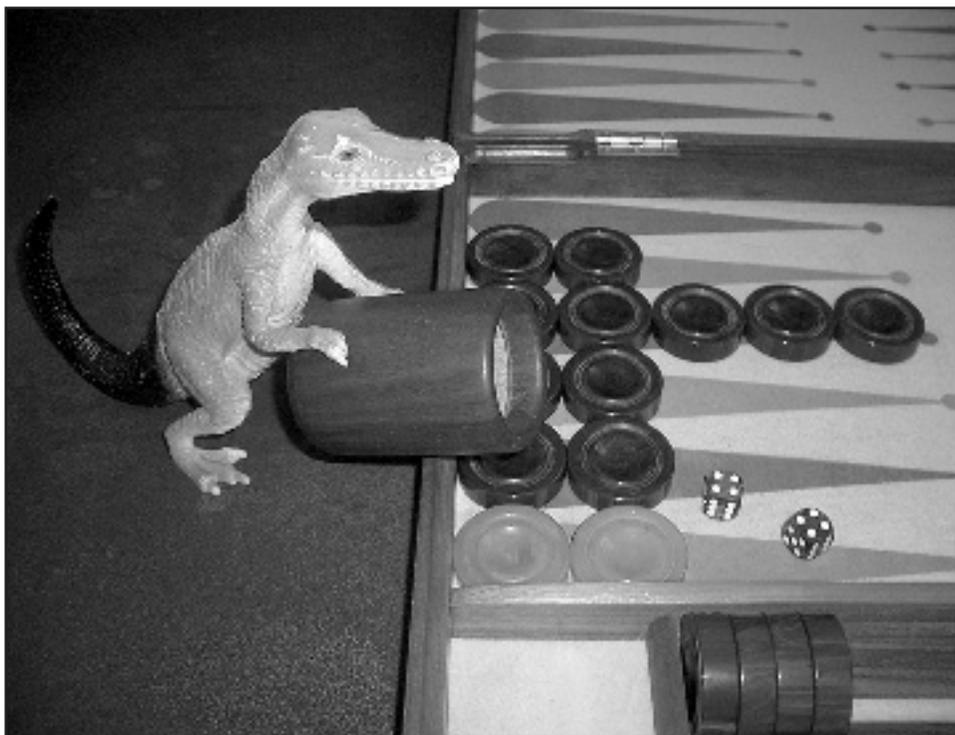
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"FORCED MOVE"

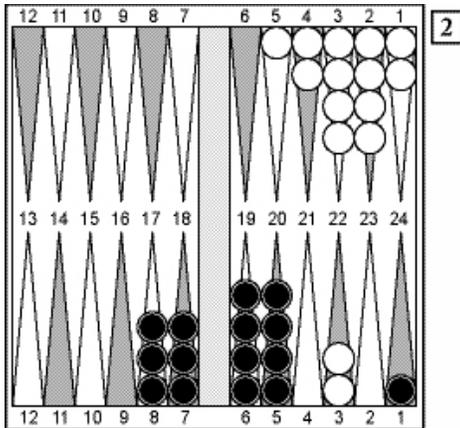


"IMPRESSIVE OFFERING"

PROBLEM #295 ANALYZED

by Kit Woolsey

Match to 5 points. No score. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**



In Problem 298, the decision is between playing the position pure, or playing it safe. Whether or not Black slots his 4-point (the pure play), he will be covering the ace blot. White will have to run with one checker if she rolls a single 6 or 5-1 next turn; therefore, Black needs to be able to attack her remaining checker following these 12 shakes.

7/1 and (8/7, 6/1) are the non-slotting plays to look at. Between these two plays, 7/1 looks best. This isn't a question of guarding against rolling 6-6 next turn. The race is Black's big danger. Bringing a checker home may help in that regard. More important, consider the variations where White runs one checker and Black attacks. If Black has played (8/7, 6/1) and

part of his attack consists of a 3, his 6-point will now be stripped which will cost him a builder for the next assault. Black can afford to give up his bar point in order to carry out an attack, but he can't afford to give up his 6-point.

If Black chooses to slot the 4-point, obviously his play is (6/1, 5/4). So we have to look at the two candidates: 7/1, and (6/1, 5/4).

The 4-point would be a very nice improvement for Black. With that point in his hip pocket, Black will be better placed to bear in safely and to attack if White runs one back checker. If White doesn't hit or run, Black will be almost sure to cover the 4-point next turn. We have to look at what happens if White does hit or run.

How dangerous is slotting? There is definitely a risk. White's board is stronger than Black's, so White doesn't mind a blot-hitting contest. All White's aces play decently. 5-1 and 6-1 escape, and other aces hit and lift the blot on her 5-point. If White does run with one checker, Black's plan should be to attack the remaining checker. He can't do so if he is on the bar. It is true that if White hits, Black might hit back, and the hit checker may help with a last minute capture of one of White's fleeing checkers. But these things happen only if Black is able to enter after being hit. If Black gets stuck on the bar too long, he could be in big trouble.

What happens when White doesn't hit but runs one of her back checkers? Black will have five builders aimed at the remaining straggler, but unless he rolls an ace or some doubles he will be leaving a blot somewhere after he hits. And if Black rolls a 6, he will be leaving two blots when he hits. Yet Black will probably have to hit

anyway, since he is so far behind in the race. It gets pretty scary. That blot on the 4-point might be quite a liability next roll.

How badly does Black need his 4-point? Let's examine his game plan. He isn't playing a priming game, since he owns his ace point. Of course he will try to maintain his blockade as long as possible. But when White runs a back checker, Black is going to attack. Owning the 4-point will be nice when that happens, but owning the 2-point is almost as good. The 4-point will be valuable when it comes to a straight race, of course. But for safety in bearing in, the 4-point isn't very important. Either White will run a back checker soon, or she will be forced to crunch her board to the point where Black isn't going to be overly concerned about safety.

How will things go after 7/1? If White runs, Black will attack of course. If White doesn't run, Black has several possibilities. He might make his 4-point, or make his 2-point, or slot one of these points. His distribution is decent, and all numbers except 5s will play okay. While Black is waiting, White will have to move. If White hasn't escaped a back checker in the next couple of turns she might be forced to give up her own 4-point, after which Black can play very aggressively.

While purity is nice, in this position it appears to be more prudent to play the safe 7/1. Slotting gives White a few hitting rolls which would otherwise not have been so great, and if White rolls a 6, she is probably happier that Black has the inner board blot to worry about.

In summary, Black's game plan is to wait and pounce. That won't work if he is on the bar. Sometimes simple is best.—Kit Woolsey Δ

FADDIOL KHOURY WINS 20TH SPRINGFIELD SERIES

By Randy Armstrong

The Springfield (IL) Backgammon Club's first tournament was held in 1982 as a one-day event. The following year, it expanded to a series of three tournaments. Then in 1984 it evolved into a six tourney format played between late fall and early spring. Originally all six events were held in Springfield, but as we became aware of the larger backgammon world, one event was held in Peoria and one in Bloomington. The event is now made up of two tournaments held in each of the three Central Illinois BG club cities.

A Grand Finale is held following the Series. The top 16 players are seeded

NCAA style and play for an added 15% prize money cut from the six tournament series plus entry fees and Calcutta. Congratulations to Faddoul Khoury who won this year's \$1,000 Grand Finale first prize in Springfield 24 April. A \$30 knockout was added this year (won by Randy Reiff), and Ben Zemaitis won the \$850 Taki-board in a drawing of Series participants, bringing this year's pay out to nearly \$4000. You must play in three of the events to qualify for the Finale.

We look forward to more Chicagoland participation when 2004/05 Series starts up in the late fall.—Randy Armstrong

OPEN (16): 1-Faddoul Khoury, 2-Randy Reiff, 1C-John Jennings, 2C-Ed Zell; 1LC-Randy Armstrong. 3-POINT TOURNEY (32): 1-Randy Reiff, 2-Ed Zell. TAKI-BOARD GIVEAWAY: Ben Zemaitis.



Top: Director Randy Armstrong (L) with Series winner Faddoul Khoury. Bottom: Ben Zemaitis (L) is about to win a Taki-board. Sue Oliver is holding the bucket.

who did what

WINNER'S CIRCLE



MAR.-APR. 2004

•New England Club Monthly (Somerville, MA; 14 Mar.)... OPEN: 1-Ed Abou-Zeid, 2-Joe Moore; 1C-Tom Meyers. A/B DIVISION: 1-Larry Yeager; 1C-Eric Schwartz.

•At-A-Glance British Open 2004 (Daventry, England; 3-4 Apr.)... OPEN (80): 1-Mike Greenleaf, 2-Roy Hollands, 3/4-Mick Butterfield / Raj Jansari; 1C-Martin Hemming, 2C-Dave McNair, 3C/4C-Peter Christmas / Tony Lee; 1LC-Frank Conway, 2LC-John Slattery, 3LC/4LC-Paul Christmas / Rachel Rhodes. SENT TO DAVENTRY (64): 1-Dawn Colley, 2-Nicky Check, 3/4-Michael Crane / Ray Kershaw. FRIDAY WARM-UP (23): 1-Eddie Barker, 2-Brendan Burgess, 3/4-David Markwick / Steve Pickard. £250 JACKPOT (4): 1-Lawrence Powell, 2-John Slattery. DOUBLES (12 teams): 1-The Pilgrims, 2-Play Fast and Lose. POKER (16): 1-Rosey Bensley, 2-Nigel Merrigan, 3-John Clark.

•16th Nordic "Wide" Open (Copenhagen, Denmark; 8-12 April)... CHAMPIONSHIP (87): 1-Thomas Lenz (Germany), 2-Jan Andrew Bloxham (Denmark), 3/4-Shahab Ghodsi (Iran/Norway) / Teppo Salo (Finland); 1C-Peter Hallberg (Denmark), 2C-Peter Fursund (Denmark), 3C/4C-Hans Liby (Norway) / Timo Vaatainen (Finland); 1LC-Lars Bønding (Denmark), 2LC-François Tardieu (France), 3LC/4LC-Karsten Bredahl (Denmark) / Mika Laukkanen (Finland). ADVANCED (99): 1-Michael Weile, 2-Vladimir Stokic, 3/4-Janne Bergström (Sweden) / Simoni (Russia); 1C-Jakob Andersen, 2C-Ulrich Thorngaard, 3C/4C-Keld Dyrmosø / Johnny Olesen; 1LC-Christian Bladt, 2LC-Rune Halvorsen (Norway). INTERMEDIATE (102): 1-Kirupa Selva, 2-Jørg Schneider, 3/4-Robert Jörn (Sweden) / Jonas Møller Nielsen; 1C-Yvonne Hjort, 2C-Claus Cato, 3C/4C-Lasse Ljungstrøm / Henrik Skjelmose; 1LC-Nikolai Nilsen, 2LC-Majken Johansen. NOVICE (57): 1-Peter-Michael Bosse, 2-Uwe Dable (Germany), 3/4-Kevin ElHmoud / Torben Nielsen; 1C-Flemming Mortensen, 2C-Tanja Skånstrøm; 1LC-Lars Ryaa, 2LC-Peter Lygteskov. BEGINNER (47): 1-Jim Skougård Rasmussen, 2-Tina Nielsen; 1C-Kim Lethan, 2C-Allan Larsen; 1LC-Lykke Pia Rasmussen, 2LC-Denise Frederiksen. 1,000⁺ SUPER JACKPOT (8): 1-Lars Trabolt (Denmark), 2-Jon Kristian Røyset (Norway). TEAM EVENT (23 teams): 1-Claps: Karsten Bredahl / Steen Grønbech / Claes Norreen (Denmark), 2-La Gondola: Georgio Caldera / Franco DiNatali / Lorenzo Lagana (Italy). CONSULTATION DOUBLES (61 teams): 1-Inger Hesselvang & Ulrich Thorngaard (Denmark), 2-Dod Davies & Wayne Felton (England). BEGYNDER DAN-

ISH CHAMPIONSHIP (71): 1-Thomas Hansen, 2-Simon Rimdal, 3/4-Kim Lethan / Bjarne Mejer. NETDINNER TOURNAMENT (57): 1-Markus Kornfeld (Norway), 2-Marinos Hindkjær; 1C-Jakob Garal (Germany). DANISH PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2003: Lars Bønding. DBGF PRIZE OF HONOUR 2003: Hans Kristian Mathiesen.

•Tax Refund Classic (Houston, TX; 10 Apr.)... OPEN (19): 1-Ira Hessel, 2-Scott Ward, 3-Tom Wright, 4-Patrick Lee; 1C-James Bray, 2C-Jim Hallers.

•South Florida Monthly (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 11 Apr.)... OPEN (8): 1-Al Tesoro, 2-David Glass.

•British Time Trials (Solihull, England; 17-18 Apr.)... OPEN: 1-Brian Lever, 2-Ray Kershaw, 3/4-Raj Jansari / Steve Lynch; 1C-Mike Heard, 2C-Tom Duggan, 3C/4C-Francine Brandler / Jim Johnson; 1LC-Wayne Felton, 2LC-Liz Park. SATURDAY JACKPOTS: (£25) 1-Alan Beckerson, (£50) 1-Mike Heard. TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER: 1-Liz Park, 2-John Clark, 3-Francine Brandler.

•New England Club Monthly (Somerville, MA; 18 Apr.)... OPEN: Dean Carmeris, 2-Dan Chicoine; 1C-Alex Zamanian. A/B DIVISION: 1-Ann Bidner.

•21st Fleet Underwood Memorial & Benefit (Flint, MI; 25 Apr.)... OPEN (21): 1-FRANK TALBOT, 2-Dean Adamian, 3/4-Maurice Barie / Paul Berg. INTERMEDIATE (24): 1-Steve Sherbel, 2-Mark Swanson (IN), 3/4-Art Gillis / John Grayson, 5/6-Abdul Alchalabi / Brad King. NOVICE (6): 1-Laura Hammer (IN), 2-Fran Miller (OH)... CJC reports \$250 raised for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Δ

AMALGAMATION

Congratulations to **Nack Ballard** (CA, voted #1 on **Yamin Yamin's** (IL) 2003 Giants of Backgammon list. The top 64 listing appears in the March *Flint Backgammon News*... Thanks to **Eyal** at gamestalks.com for providing extensive mention of (and links to) chicagopoint.com... CHICAGO POINT contributing editor **Antonio Ortega** (Costa Rica) is recovering from cataract surgery... Massachusetts to Chicago: **Felix Yen**... In celebration of his "Social Security entitlement" birthday, **Roland Dieter** (IL) bought drinks for all BPC attendees on 13 April... It's great having **Ken Bond** and **Elaine Kehm** back to Chicago from their winter vacation homes... Winnetka Backgammon Club director **Trudie Stern** reports that her 7 April tournament at the Winnetka Community House was interrupted by a fire drill! False alarm, thank goodness... Look for "Emotional Backgammon" to open soon near you—at least on video. The award-winning film is a romantic thriller with an international cast and the tagline says it all: "Love is like a game of backgammon... you take your chances."... Condolences on the recent passing of New Jersey player **Ron Salzer**... The Madison Backgammon Club has purchased their own domain name: www.madisonbg.com. Visit them for info on the upcoming Wisconsin State Championships in late July... Busy **Kathy Posner** was quoted in two April magazines (*Woman's Day* and *Today's Chicago Woman*). Additionally, she ran the City of Chicago March Woman's History Month event... Finally, in this age of Snowie, JellyFish, and Gnu, remember that 42.5% of all statistics are meaningless. Δ

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