

Las Vegas International Cup

GARY FRIES CAPTURES INTERNATIONAL CUP

Nack Ballard is "Super" Winner

Gary Fries of Arlington, VA dominated the 72 player Champ field to win the 10th International Cup held at the Riviera Hotel May 5–9. 200 players attended. Fries edged Argentina's Jorge Pan 13–10 for his first title.

The Super Jackpot was captured by Nack Ballard. Nack's report is at right. Δ



International Cup Winner Gary Fries.

10TH LAS VEGAS INTERNATIONAL CUP

CHAMPIONSHIP (72+128 reentries): 1-Gary Fries (VA), 2-Jorge Pan (Argentina), 3/4-Doug Mayfield (CA) / Mary Ritchie (KS). INTERMEDIATE (94+154 reentries): 1-Mario Savan (CA), 2-Ted Chee (CA), 3/4-Paul Loginoff (CA) / Harold Seif (NV). BEGINNER (34+46 reentries): 1-Mark Gross (CA), 2-Nash Jost (CA), 3/4-George Ramia (IL) / Dan Wittkopp (WA). SUPER JACKPOT (13 @ \$4,000 level): 1-Nack Ballard (CA), 2-Mike Senkiewicz (NY), 3/4-Ray Fogelund (CA) / François Tardieu (France). LTD. JACKPOT #1 (16): 1-Ray Baker (CA), 2-Ted Chee (CA). LTD. JACKPOT #2 (16): 1-Jonah Seewald (CO), 2-Arman Karamian (NY). SENIORS (64): 1-Tom Wheeler (TX), 2-Bear Lumbra (VT). DOUBLES (32): 1-Gregg Cattanach (GA) & Larry Taylor (GA), 2-Jeffrey Ansari (CA) & Mike Sharp (CA). BLITZ (224): 1-Jan Andrew Bloxham (Denmark), 2-Bob Glass (CA). MINI-MATCH (256): 1-Sho Sengoku (CA), 2-Judy Collins (CA). MOTHER'S DAY \$400 TOURNEY (37): 1-Shinichiro Kaneko (Japan), 2-Gadi Carmeli (Israel/FL); 1C-Tom Wheeler (TX), 2C-Ray Fogelund (CA). MOTHER'S DAY \$100 TOURNEY (56): 1-John O'Hagan (IN), 2-Pat McCormick (CA); 1C-Aram Kouleyan (CA), 2C-Art Grater (CA).

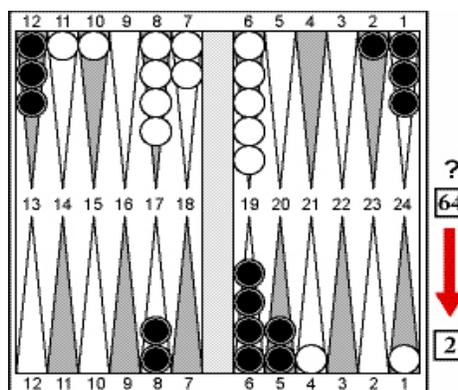
Rumble at the Riv

by Nack Ballard

It is hard to match the adrenaline rush of a high stakes finals with a big cube on the line, especially when the favorite and underdog keep switching roles. Add a priming battle that tantalizes the players as much as it pleases the observers, and one has the makings of a story worth telling.

At the recent Super-Jackpot finals held in the Penthouse ballroom atop the Las Vegas Riviera Hotel May 5–8, I found myself pitted against the 1995 #1 Giant of Backgammon, Mike Senkiewicz. After good fortune allowed me to build up a lead of 13–8 (to 23), I got a poor start in this game, reaching Pos. 1. Should Mike (White) double, and how should he play 4–1?

Pos. 1. 23-point match. Black (Nack Ballard) leads White (Mike Senkiewicz) 13–8. White on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?** Then **WHITE TO PLAY 4-1.**



Demonstrating one reason that he is such a dangerous opponent, the wily veteran Senk immediately turned the cube. A confident quick-ship is a good gambit because players overprotecting a lead will pass often enough to make it pay.

(This fast-doubling tactic, when successful, is called "stealing a point" and is the main reason that top players still rate to outperform bots in a tournament. On the



Backgammon Giants Nack Ballard and Mike Senkiewicz square off in the 23-point Las Vegas Super-Jackpot finals.

flip side, an expert may cleverly wait to turn a theoretically marginal cube that is an obvious take in order to give the opponent a more difficult decision later.)

Pos. 1 is nowhere near a double for money. However, trailing 8–13, it is almost technically legitimate. Mike's break-even for a successful bluff is that I pass only one time in 40. Unfortunately for him, I snapped up this cube.

Right away, another interesting problem arose: White to play 4-1 (Pos. 1). Being one of the top players in the world since the 1970s, Mike invoked a pure play from that era with 11/7, 24/23. In fact, hitting (11/10, 6/2*) is 0.09 better (and 11/10, 8/4 is second best). Burying a checker is a small price to pay for owning a fourth offensive point (the 10-point). My next roll was instant "justice" as I hit his outfield blot with 6-2.

[Continued on page 4]

OUR 300TH NEWSLETTER

Problem #300 appears on page 3 of this issue of CHICAGO POINT. Over the span of four Chicago newsletters (National Backgammon League (1977–1979), Gammon's of Chicago (1980–1983), Chicagoland Backgammon Newsletter (1983–1988) and CHICAGO POINT (1988–present), this is our 300th issue.

Over the past 27 years, thanks to all our contributing editors, and thanks to you the readers for all of your support.—Bill Davis

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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GREAT DECISION BY NEIL

I liked Position A in Ray Fogelund's Ohio State Backgammon Championships report in the May 2004 CHICAGO POINT. That was a really fine recube by Neil Kazaross. How many of the best players in the world would even think of it? And it is a blunder not to double!? I was really impressed.—
Jaakko Salava, Helsinki, Finland

CHICAGO OPEN VISITOR

I visited Chicago over the Memorial Day weekend. I didn't arrive at the Oak Brook Hills Hotel early enough to enter the Chicago Open tournament, but did get a chance to play a few games and was lucky enough to win a few dollars. I want to thank all that were so helpful and friendly during my visit, especially Tim. Please tell him Al says "Thanks."

See you all soon, I hope.—*Al Morrone, Olathe, Kansas*

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BACKGAMMON						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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

*Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Jun 11-13	53rd Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA	818/901-0464
Jun 12	Father's Day Open, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Jun 12*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/688-9722
Jun 13	South Florida Monthly, NorthRidge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Jun 13*	Miami Valley Sunday, Holiday Inn McKenna's Grille, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Jun 13*	Rocky Mountain Tournament, Cadillac Jack's, Denver, Colorado	720/283-4546
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 26*	Double Trouble Tournament, New York Chess & BG, New York, New York	212/869-6057
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
Jul 1-4	<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
Jul 8*	Miami Valley Sunday, Holiday Inn McKenna's Grille, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Jul 10*	Firecracker Classic, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Jul 11*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, Ohio	330/268-4610
Jul 11*	South Florida Monthly, NorthRidge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Jul 15*	Third Thursday Bonus (Georgia), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 17*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Jul 17*	Redwood Empire Monthly, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael, California	707/477-6430
Jul 18*	Austin Club Bimonthly Tournament, JC's Bar & Grill, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
Jul 18*	4th Battle of Bull Run, Best Western Tyson's Westpark, McLean, Virginia	703/396-7224
Jul 24*	Double Trouble Tournament, New York Chess & BG, New York, New York	212/869-6057
Jul 24*	Georgia Warm-Up & Qualifier, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
Jul 25*	Ace Point Club Monthly, Ace Point Club, New York, New York	212/888-2231
Jul 30-Aug 1	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York</u>	<u>585/396-0969</u>
Jul 30-Aug 1	<u>Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin</u>	<u>608/516-9109</u>
Aug 1*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Canton, Ohio	330/268-4610
Aug 3*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Aug 5*	Miami Valley Monthly, Holiday Inn McKenna's Grille, Fairborn, Ohio	937/864-1748
Aug 8	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Aug 12-15	<u>11th Georgia Championships & Peach Cup, Hilton Garden Inn, Atlanta, GA</u>	<u>770/333-1876</u>
Sep 3-6	<u>51st Indiana Open, Sheraton Hotel & Suites, Indianapolis, Indiana</u>	<u>317/255-8902</u>
Oct 8-10	<u>Illinois State Championships, Pere Marquette Hotel, Peoria, Illinois</u>	<u>217/528-0117</u>
Oct 15-17	<u>Florida State Championship, Sheraton Suites, Fort Lauderdale, Florida</u>	<u>954/564-0340</u>
Oct 29-31	<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
Dec 3-5	<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

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	44163-430498
Jun 19-20*	13th Danish Mixed Doubles Championship, Humlebæk, Denmark	4533-363601
Jun 24-Jul 1	3rd Festival of Backgammon, Peligoni Club, Zakynthos, 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: 212/222-7177
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 7-8*	2nd Nagoya Open, Nagoya Kowan Kaikan, Minato-ku, Nagoya, Japan	813-33733814
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
Aug 21-22*	1st Rotterdam Beach Tournament, Boompjes Centre, Rotterdam, Holland	31650-818573
Aug 21-30	8th MindSports Olympiad, Manchester Conference Centre, England	44170-7659080
Sep 3-5*	Mittleeuropa Championship, HIT Park Hotel, Nova Gorica, Slovenia	392-69018168
Sep 4-5*	BIBA Tournament, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	44152-2888676
Sep 11-12*	2nd Antwerp Open, Antwerp, Belgium	31650-818573
Sep 11-12*	Stavanger Open, Cementen Pub, Stavanger, Norway	4751-590940
Sep 20-23*	2nd Tango Tourney, Iguazú Grand Hotel, Puerto Iguazú City, Argentina	5411-43736138
Sep 30-Oct 3*	11th German Open, Hotel GlockenSpitze, Altenkirchen, Germany	49521-64314

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

BAD EXPERIENCE IN CLEARWATER

While on business in the Clearwater area, I visited the Suncoast Backgammon Club 24 May at the New York, New York Lounge in Clearwater, Florida. When I arrived around 6:15 P.M., there was one chouette in progress. I walked up the the chou and said, "Hello, fellows."

There was no response—in fact, nobody even looked up to acknowledge me. I stood watching for a few minutes and eventually, a waitress came over and asked

me if I would like a drink. I said something to the effect that it didn't appear I was welcome there – still no response from the players. Finally, I confronted the players directly, asking: "Is it safe to assume that no visitors are welcome here?"

Still without looking up, one of the players replied, "Yes, goddammit."

Eventually, I was approached by an older gentleman who was bothered by the way the players had treated me. He pointed me to the listed club director Bob Carpenter who was playing cards at the time. Bob proved no help in getting me into the chouette, however, and was likewise wholly

unsociable. After the players responded to my final request by swearing at me one more time, I left the lounge.

Based on my experience, this so-called backgammon club should be removed both from your listing on the Internet (at www.chicagopoint.com/usaclubs.html) and from your printed listing in CHICAGO POINT. — *Michael Edge, Lexington, South Carolina*

FREE POSITION CARDS

I found a pdf computer download for position cards (created by Francois Hoshede) at the rec.games.backgammon archive and wanted to share it with your readers:

<http://gammon.free.fr/download/poscarle.pdf>

Download the file to your computer, open it with Acrobat Reader, and print out as many copies as you like (they come 10 cards to a page). For added durability, I print mine on a light cardboard stock. — *Adrian Rios, Wilmette, Illinois*

A QUESTION FOR TAKI

Some months back, I purchased a Tak Morioka backgammon board. My board's points are red and brown and the inner surface is a light tan. Over time, the light surface has become darker (dirty) due to hand residue.

I wanted to ask Mr. Morioka a very simple question. What can I use to clean the surface without causing the pips to fade? — *Carlos Azcarante, via E-mail*

Regular Scotch-Garding protects a new Taki-Board surface nicely. But if your board is already soiled, it is probably too

[Continued on page 8]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2004

Compiled through 31 May after 6 tournaments
(Upcoming events: 53rd G/A, Michigan Summer Champs)



Ray Fogerlund	31.96	Don Faix	6.20	Dan Cramer	3.20	Petko Kostadinov	1.55
Bob Stringer	22.88	Carl Sorg	6.20	Spencer King	3.13	Ron Sanders	1.55
Lucky Nelson	22.69	Alan Robinson	5.86	Joe Feldman	2.92	Tom Machaj	1.53
Malcolm Davis	22.22	Mark Anshus	5.60	Joan Hac	2.92	Philip Little	1.38
Gregg Cattanach	17.47	Philip Smith	5.41	Richard Martin	2.71	Ed Johnson	1.30
Dave Wetzell	13.64	Rob Maier	5.08	Dean Adamian	2.70	Becca Thompson	1.10
Neil Kazaross	13.60	Jordan Lampe	5.08	Cem Aslan	2.59	Susan Hathaway	1.01
Emil Mortuk	11.33	Steve Brown	4.86	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
Norma Shyer	9.83	Milad Doueihy	4.16	Rich Catalano	2.12	Wanda Roberts	0.75
Doug Roberts	9.48	Phil Simborg	4.16	Kevin Kelly	2.12	Joe Szwedo	0.73
Betty Coppic	9.14	Ben Elliott	3.96	Patty Geoffroy	2.08	Stacy Turner	0.67
Eric Johnson	8.47	Ed Bennett	3.88	Jonah Seewald	2.08	Alex Miller	0.63
Mike Corbett	8.24	Jim Hall	3.88	Kathy Sorci	1.99	Les Moshinsky	0.63
Vadim Musaelyan	7.61	Faddoul Khoury	3.84	Arlene Austin	1.98	Bruce Brinson	0.57
David Haddad	6.80	Arman Karamian	3.78	Cookie Frazin	1.70	Troy Will	1.69
Mary Hickey	6.80	Ron Wagner	3.49	Troy Will	1.69	Tony Garcia	0.57
Tak Morioka	6.40	Brad Andersen	3.40	Kwong Chan	1.59	Adrian Rios	0.38



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2004 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 MAY

Bob Zavoral	13.84	David Marcus	5.64	Linda Rockwell	2.80	Dave Cramer	1.20
Tak Morioka	10.56	Steve Klesker	5.44	Jacob Moreno	2.68	Barbara Levinson	1.04
David Rockwell	9.60	Bob Steen	5.12	Georgina Flanagan	2.44	John O'Connor	1.04
Carter Mattig	9.60	Alice Kay	4.84	Bill Keefe	2.32	Tom Meyer	0.96
Gary Kay	8.96	Joann Feinstein	4.60	Mark Phillips	2.16	Cookie Frazin	0.80
Joe Wollick	8.76	Peter Kalba	4.48	Ron Washington	2.04	Rick Sorci	0.80
Bill Davis	8.44	Adrian Rios	4.44	Paul Franks	1.92	Kathy Sorci	0.80
Herb Roman	8.40	Paul Baraz	4.20	John Jennings	1.92	Amy Trudeau	0.72
Val Zimnicki	8.28	Roger Hickman	4.00	Roland Dieter	1.88	Roy Cohen	0.72
Tim Mabee	8.00	Michael Peters	3.32	Eric Johnson	1.84	Robert Ring	0.72
Mike Sutton	7.80	Joe Auszmann	3.24	Royal Robinson	1.76	Brooke Gottshall	0.72
Howard Ring	6.96	Ken Bond	3.08	Felix Yen	1.76	Mary Franks	0.72
Norma Shyer	6.72	Mark Murray	3.04	Les Moshinsky	1.60	Paul Klein	0.64
Phyllis Smolinski	6.68	Wayne Wiest	3.00	Bill Stegich	1.52	Gaby Kairouz	0.64
Phil Simborg	6.16	Bill Bartholomay	2.96	Tim Carroll	1.28	Jay Bleiman	0.56
Lucky Nelson	6.16						

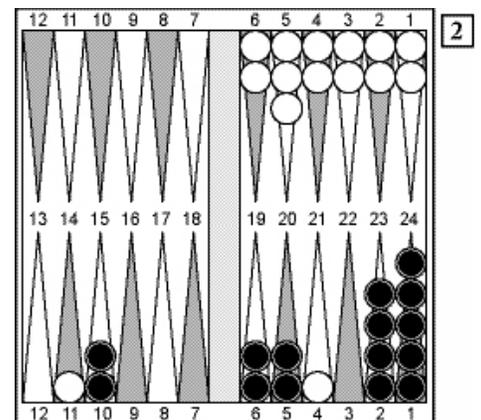
CARTER MATTIG cashed in every May tourney to earn 4.56 points and move to 4th in the 2004 standings. Joe Wollick finished 2nd with 3.44 while Bill Davis & Val Zimnicki finished with 3.36 each.

your move

PROBLEM #300

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

Match to 7 points. Black trails White, 4 to 6. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-1.**

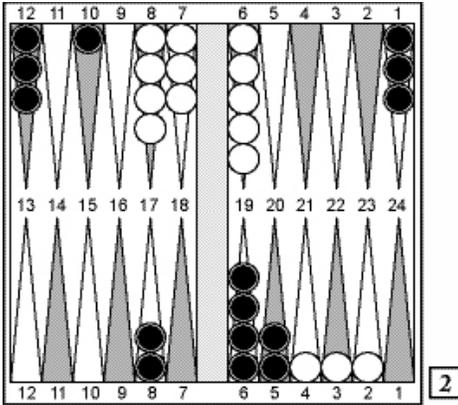


RUMBLE...

[Continued from page 1]

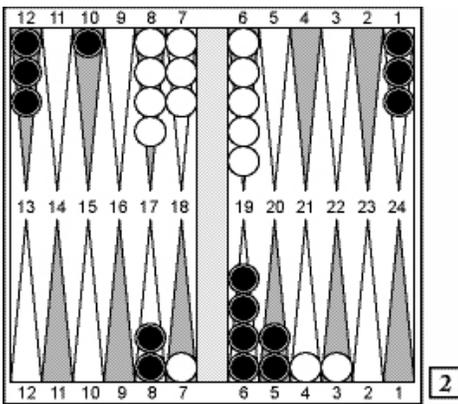
Mike rolled 5-3, entering with the 3. Now, he has a lone 5 to play in Pos. 2:

Pos. 2. Black (Nack) leads 13-8 to 23. **WHITE (SENK) TO PLAY A LONE 5.**



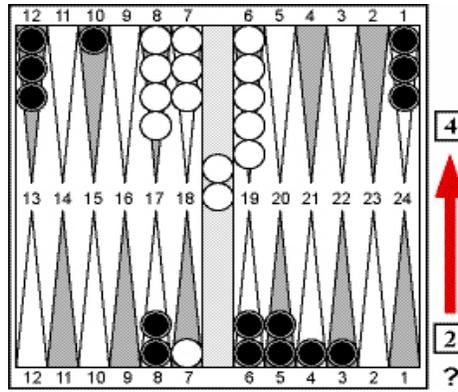
Even top players commonly err (usually with a 6) by coming out to the opponent's bar point when running with the front checker is usually better. Black's stripped 8-point combined with what would be a double shot at the 9-point blot makes the decision much closer. Still, 23/18 is wrong because it risks too many double hits on high points and it fails to give a return 6 (or 5) to hit back in the outfield. The resulting position after his small error (only 0.02) is shown below. I now rolled 3-2. What is my best play?

Pos. 3. Black (Nack) leads 13-8 to 23. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-2.**



I used both my 6-point spares to hit two blots, leaving Senk a double-direct shot from the roof. Even with a 13-8 lead, this aggressive play is 0.02 better than hitting with the 2 and splitting with the 3. My reward was disproportionately handsome when Mike fanned reaching Pos. 4 [shown above right]. Should I take that as a good sign and redouble?

Pos. 4. Black (Nack) leads 13-8 to 23. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?** Then **BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**



You are quite correct if you said that at this score Pos. 4 is an initial double but not a redouble. By contrast, for money it is a monster redouble and a borderline take/pass.

The second part of the problem is how to play 5-1. In retrospect, I find this to be the most paradoxical roll of the match. The two best plays make a three-point board: 15/10, 4/3 brings down a new builder and leaves no shot, while 8/7*, 8/3 hits a third checker but leaves a blot on the 4-point.

In the post-game analysis, everyone seemed to think that my play of 15/10, 4/3 was obviously correct. Nor did I think it was a real issue until I consulted Snowie. To leave a costly direct shot seems unnecessary; it looks like the third blot will be scooped up in the natural course of the attack.

There are offsetting factors, however. After 15/10, 4/3, Black has six numbers that miss the third blot giving White a better chance to anchor. After 8/7*, 8/3, if White fails to roll a 4, Black creates a four-point board with 21 numbers. If White fans, Black's position is strong enough to cash even at this score (not so after 15/10, 4/3). Finally, when Black does not hit the third checker, White's entering doublets of 1-1 and 2-2 make a point on both sides of the board.

15/10, 4/3 is better (usually by 0.05) in almost all scenarios:

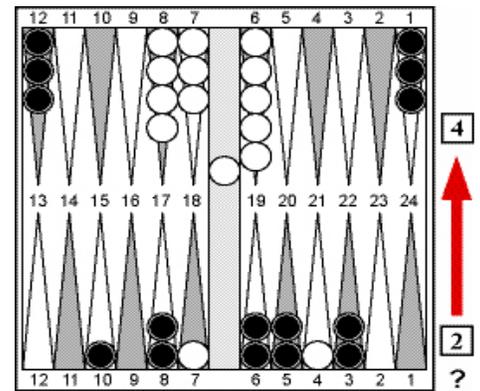
- (a) For money;
- (b) if the cube is centered;
- (c) if the match is tied; or
- (d) if Black is behind.

However, if Black owns a 2-cube and is ahead by three to five points, the more aggressive 8/7*, 8/3 is better by almost 0.03. If Black is ahead by eight or more points, the difference drops to within 0.01. If you ask me to explain this paradox, I will say "something to do with cube efficiency,"

but I would love to hear a more articulate explanation.

We arrive at Pos. 5, where I have another cube decision.

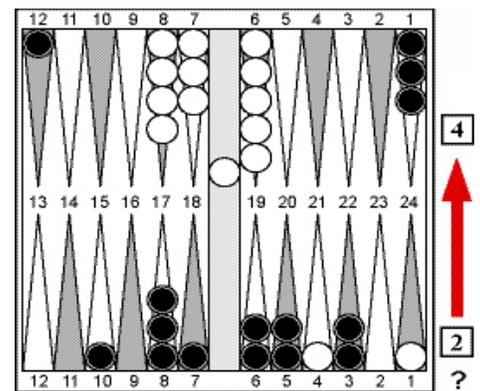
Pos. 5. Black (Nack) leads 13-8 to 23. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?** Then **BLACK TO PLAY 6-5.**



This position didn't fool me either. Again I held back on the redouble. (My roll of 5-1 and Mike's 4-entry were equally subpar. It's still an initial double but not a redouble at this score, even though for money it's a close take/pass.)

The correct play with 6-5 is trivial. There are some positions where hitting a second blot inside is better than hitting outside (usually when the opponent has a blot in his own inner board), but this isn't one of them. I made the obvious play of two down with 6-5 and Mike limped in with an ace. This brings us to Pos. 6, where again I must consider whether to redouble.

Pos. 6. Black (Nack) leads 13-8 to 23. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?** Then **BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.**



Every once in awhile, I discover that I've made a redouble that is a "whopper" (a game-equity error of 0.10 or more) when leading in the match in a volatile position. (The last one before this was in the semi-finals of Paris in 2001 versus Johannes Levermann.) The amount of time between whoppers seems to be growing, so I have at least the illusion of making progress.

It is common wisdom that the underdog (who in this case is 15 points away) can aggressively rewhip to 8 when he can use all or most of the points from a gammon while the favorite (who in this case is 10 away) cannot. Even so, after the match I did not hear a single expert give the *correct* reason for not redoubling to 4—that the position is simply *not good enough* at this score (even though for money, White has a clear 1.13 equity drop).

Some experts said that Black should not redouble because the position is too good and White is relieved to pass, but that's false on both counts. Although they would have made the right decision for the wrong reasons in this case, such misperceptions ultimately lead to bigger errors.

Other experts claimed that Black should sit on the 2-cube regardless at this score—that this sort of volatile position will almost always be too good or not good enough, or both at once. This theory is over-espoused and often latched onto by a player who doesn't know whether his position is too good or not good enough, but can later claim whichever appears to best defend his action.

"Not good enough or too good, or both" is not just an excuse for lazy players and cowards; it is a prudent default strategy because it tends to result in smaller errors when wrong. However, for those aspiring to elevate their game to the highest level, it is necessary to study at what point and to what degree the redoubling window narrows or overlaps.

For money, the redoubling window (good enough but not too good) is wide enough to drive a truck through. At 13–8 (to 23), the window is relatively narrow, but there is still room to redouble even volatile positions. At 14–8, the remaining window is cut in half. At a lead of 15–8 or greater, the window for volatile positions disappears—it is almost always not good enough or too good, or both.

In other words, it is okay to redouble at 13–8—I just missed the mark. To demonstrate how sensitive the situation is, I performed rollouts altering Pos. 6 one pip at a time. If Black's 8-point spare is on his 7-point, the position is a borderline redouble. Move another checker 24/22 and it is a whopper *not* to redouble. (White has a pass!) Instead of 24/22, substitute either 24/20(2) or 24/14 and the position is too good to redouble.

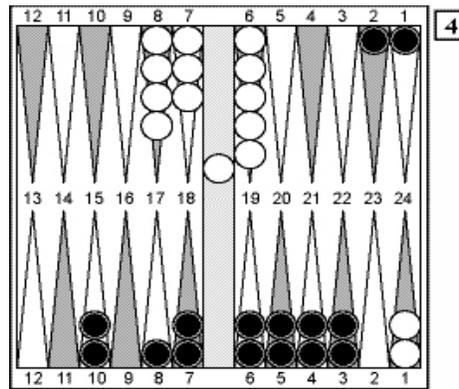
In short, I missed the edge of the redoubling window by only one pip. Moreover, it is clearly possible to make a sizable error inside of this window (one that is several pips wide) by *not* redoubling. It is a highly error-prone situation.

In Pos. 6, the redouble still gains if I can bluff Mike out at least 60% of the time. Many experts would have fallen for it (as indicated by their post-game comments), but Senkiewicz is especially strong in prime-vs-prime positions and he is unafraid to put the match on the line when his back is against the wall. Anyway, the break-even for a bluff-out is too high here to have pushed the cube.

With my double 1s, the straightforward play of 5/4*(2), 8/7, 24/23 is optimal. After the match, an expert wagered me that 5/4*(2), 8/6 is better, but it's wrong by 0.07. Having the bar point locked up is actually worth about 0.03 *more* than the diversification of the 6-point builder and the 24/23 split is worth another 0.04.

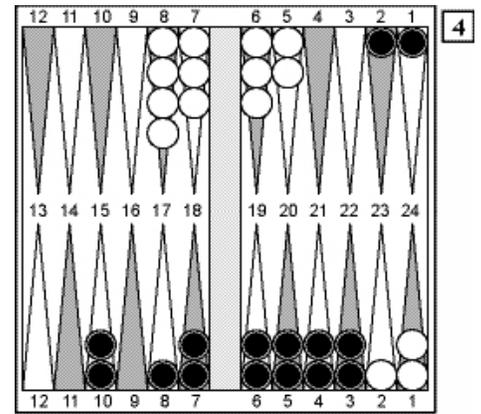
Mike anchored with an ace and I remade my 5-point with 3-2. While Mike fanned twice on my four-point board, I remade my bar point with 6-3 (13/7, 24/21) and ran around with 6-5 to my 10-point (0.02 better than 21/15, 10/5 and much better than making the 2-point). We have now reached Pos. 7. Is Mike dead yet?

Pos. 7. Black (Nack) leads 13–8 to 23. White (Senk) on roll. **WHAT NUMBER SHOULD WHITE ROOT FOR?**



This contest is not over by a long shot. Double 1s, Mike's best roll by far, puts him right back in the match. Having made his 5-point (see Pos. 8), timing becomes a meaningful factor and Mike's prospects are actually better than in Pos. 6 before I had my prime!

Pos. 8. Black (Nack) leads 13–8 to 23. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-4.**



Still reeling from Mike's double 1s, I threw the lame duck 5-4 (only 5-5 and 6-6 are worse). Experienced prime-vs-prime players know what to look for here. Putting the spares on the 5- and 4-points would be a big mistake, because the 3s and 2s that play to the 2-point are duplicated with the 3s and 2s that come up to the edge of the prime on the other side of the board. 10/6, 8/3 wins by default.

It turns out that 10/6, 10/5 is almost as strong (within 0.02). The extra builder is useful, Black's 6-5 is not a follow-up horror shot, and getting hit with a 6 is not as bad as it looks. Even more notable is that 10/6, 7/2* rolls out best at a "Gammon Go" match score (i.e., if Black were down 2-away/1-away Crawford).

After I played 10/6, 8/3 even Senk, one of the best prime-vs-prime players in the world, did not pause to consider recubing to 8. However, it is instructive to realize how strong White's position has become in view of his match score leverage. A White redouble sacrifices only one-third of 1% of his match-winning chances. Indeed, if I make any play other than 10/6 8/3, a White rewhip becomes correct!

Mike did not let me relax for long, though. After he escaped with 6-5, I tossed 6-4 (my third worst roll again). Now what's going on with the cube in Pos. 9?

[Continued on page 6]

Backgammon on Board VII

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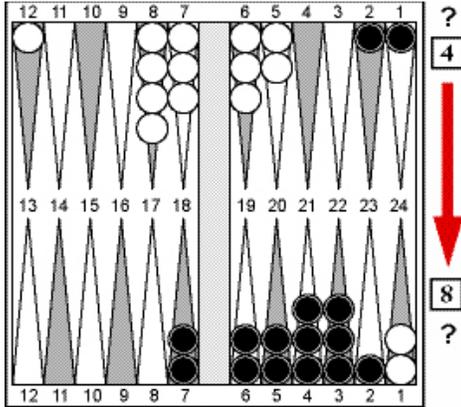
www.chicagopoint.com/bgonboard.html



RUMBLE...

[Continued from page 5]

Pos. 9. Black (Nack) leads 13–8 to 23. White (Senk) on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**

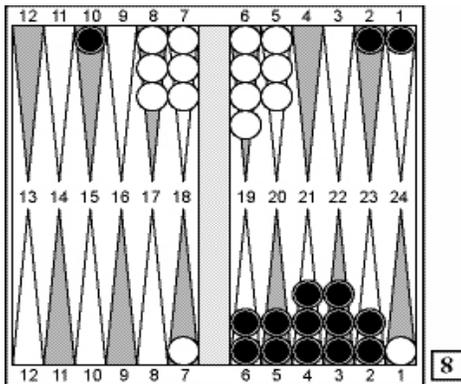


This is a horrific redouble for money—it is a clear beaver. Nevertheless, Mike is right on target. At this score, Pos. 9 is a huge redouble (though it is also a huge take).

Having given this powerful 8-cube, Mike rolled the lemon 6-2 and played safely. (An interesting tidbit: If Black's last roll of 6-4 is not yet played—that is if his checkers on the 4- and 2-points are still back on the 10- and 6-points, White's correct 6-2 play is to slot the 4-point into a double-shot. Any other move is a blunder!)

Next, there was a flurry favoring Mike. I rolled 6-5 (playing just a 5 from 7/2), he hit on my bar point with 6-1 (diversifying with the ace), and I hopped off the bar with 6-4, reaching Pos. 10 below. How should Mike play his 5-4?

Pos. 10. Black (Nack) leads 13–8 to 23. **WHITE (SENK) TO PLAY 5-4.**



Spectators were standing on tables, craning their necks for a glimpse of this wild melee. As Black, I was now reduced to a mere 4:3 favorite in the match, and every roll could have a further dramatic effect on the odds.

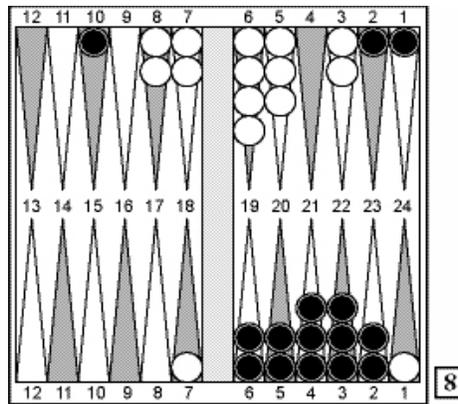
Demonstrating true grace under pressure, Mike made his 3-point with 5-4, the classiest

move of the game. Given Black's threat to hit with 8s, 3s and 2s, a lesser man might well have counterattacked by pointing on the 2-point. Several experts chimed in after the match that making the 2-point looked clearly right, when in fact it is an error of 0.05+. The position after Mike's brilliant play is shown in Pos. 11.

What is pivotal is the duplication of Black's 3s and 2s if he is left alone, whereas hitting Black gives him good 4s off the roof. If Black's offensive spares are on his 5- and 2-points (instead of his 4- and 3-points), where his 4s and 1s are *diversified* with his 3s and 2s on the far side, then pointing on the 2-point is correct and making the 3-point is a 0.16 error!

Next, it was my turn to be clever, with a roll of 3-1 in Pos. 11:

Pos. 11. Black (Nack) leads 13–8 to 23. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.**

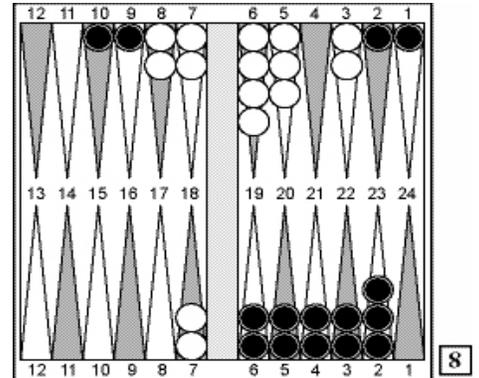


Obviously, I must hit with the 3—White has too many crushing numbers otherwise. With the ace, it is important to un-duplicate my 2s (3/1 or 24/22) for the next roll. Even though playing 3/2 entails a

local loss in flexibility and one fewer cover number, it is hugely correct (0.11 better than 15/14). In short, if I am missed I will have good 1s as well as good 2s and 3s.

Unfortunately, this finesse did not help me as Mike promptly rolled 1-6 from the bar, drawing a Wimbledon-like ooh-aah from the crowd. My reply roll of 5-4 (allowing me to bounce out to White's 9-point) was not as resourceful, but it kept the game interesting. We now arrive at Pos. 12 where Mike has a slightly below average roll of 4-2 to play:

Pos. 12. Black (Nack) leads 13–8 to 23. **WHITE (SENK) TO PLAY 4-2.**



White's only safe play (7/5, 7/3) is ridiculous, so Mike made his 4-point. After this priming play, there was a 31% chance that I would get gammoned, losing the match on this very game. However . . .

I threw the clutch 6 (the actual roll was 6-4, played 23/17*/13 to duplicate White's 1-6), and three rolls later I extricated the other back checker. Meanwhile, Mike fanned helplessly, coming in only just in time to get closed out and gammoned.

Moral: When in doubt, don't redouble when you are leading in a match and the position is volatile. It is, however, helpful to study the exceptions.

Though this is not meant to be followed blindly, a good rule of thumb is as long as you can use all the points if you win a gammon at the level to which you are turning the cube *and* the number of points you need exceeds the margin of your lead, a (re)doubling window for volatile positions still exists.

THANKS VERY MUCH to Paul Weaver for his generous assistance in the editing of this article and with rollouts.—*Nack Ballard*

Nack Ballard (the recently-voted 2003 #1 Giant of Backgammon) and Paul Weaver are writing a book series on early game checker play decisions, entitled BACKGAMMON GENESIS. The first volume is planned for publication by year's end.—Ed.



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 Tuesday, 6:30 P.M. at Damon's Grill, 1701 Fort Jesse Road, Normal. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wed., 6:15 P.M. at Damon's Grill, 3050 Lindbergh Blvd., Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

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

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

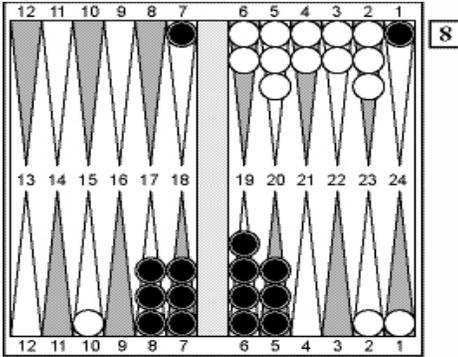


Mother of All Quizzes

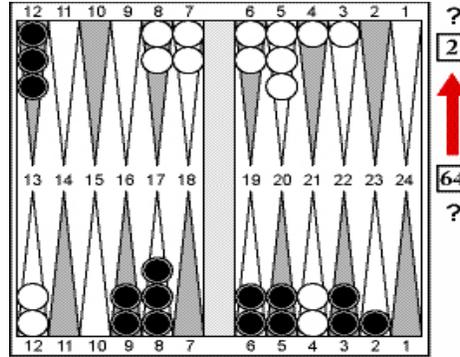
By Jake Jacobs

A tournament-winning offspring: it's what every mother wants! Accordingly, over 200 players were in Las Vegas for last month's International Cup tournament (which ran through Mother's Day) hoping to make their mothers proud. The 12 problems composing this quiz were taken from Vegas matches. Do well on this quiz and make your own mother proud. *Answers on back page.*

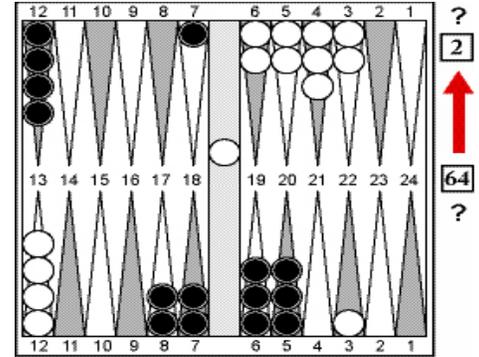
1. Black trailing 8-13 to 23 to play 5-4.



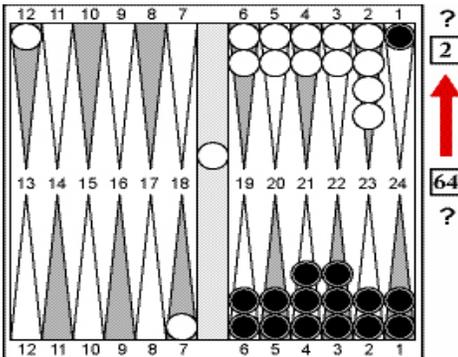
2. Black trails 4-5 to 7. Cube actions?



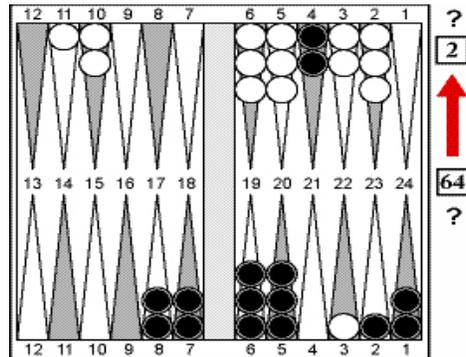
3. Black trails 4-5 to 9. Cube actions?



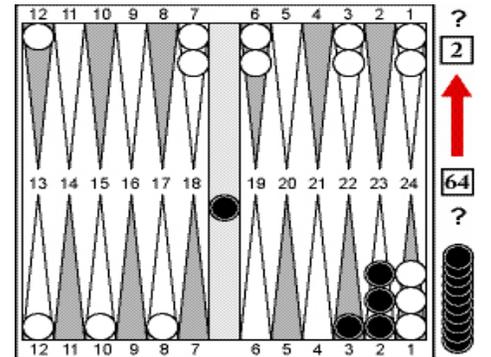
4. Black leads 7-6 to 11. Cube actions?



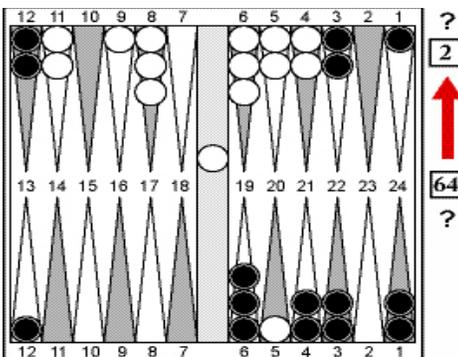
5. Black trails 7-9 to 11. Cube actions?



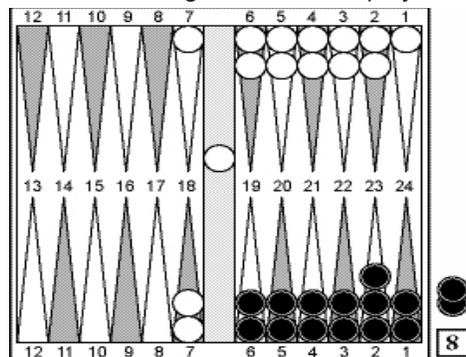
6. Black trails 6-9 to 21. Cube actions?



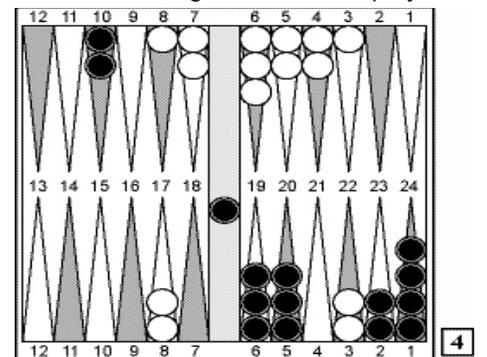
7. Black trails 4-9 to 23. Cube actions?



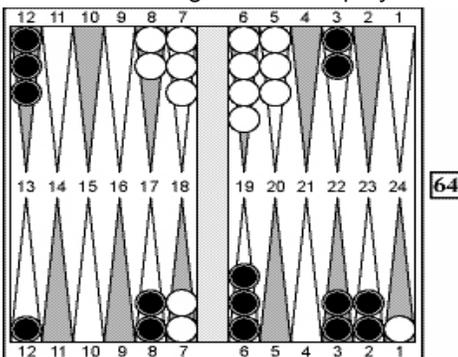
8. Black leading 13-8 to 23 to play 3-1.



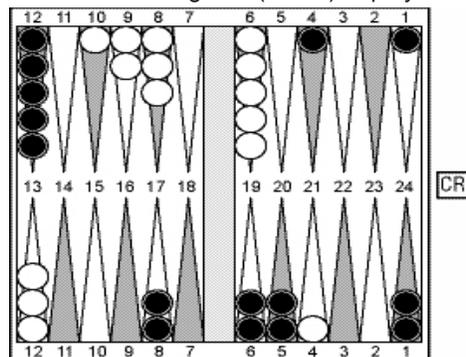
9. Black leading 10-6 to 19 to play 5-1.



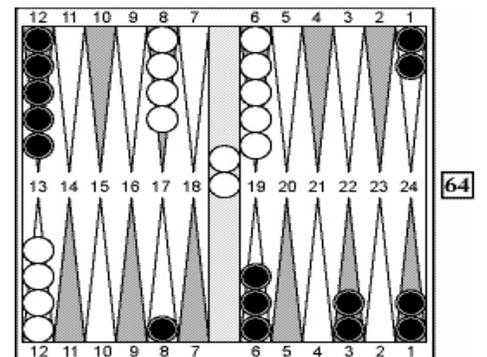
10. Black trailing 2-5 to 9 to play 3-1.



11. Black leading 8-7 (Craw.) to play 6-6.



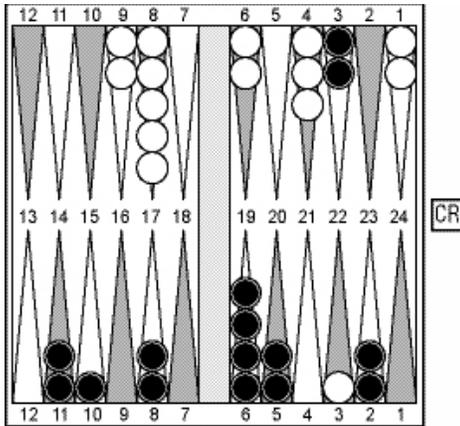
12. Black tied 7-7 to 9. Cube actions?



PROBLEM #299 ANALYZED

by Mary Hickey

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



Black's match situation is bad news, scoreless at opponent's Crawford. What he'd really like to do is start some fireworks that would lead to a backgammon, leaving him needing only one more doubled game to win the match. This game, though, has no potential for that now and is unlikely to develop any. On to Plan B then—playing almost as if it were DMP in an effort to simply win the game, and taking virtually no risks to win gammons since all they will cost the opponent is her free drop.

Now that we've decided on the objective, what game plan works best toward this worthy goal of helping Black win the game? Let's first make sure we don't overlook any viable possibilities:

- 1) We can maximize the active builders to point on White's straggler, should she be unable to leave, by playing 11/5.
- 2) We can make the 4-point, leaving a direct 5-shot. In return for this risk, we get a permanent asset plus excellent attacking potential if White can't get away.
- 3) Slotting the 4-point with 10/4 leaves two fewer shots than making the 4-point, plus keeps the 8-point to impede her escape.
- 4) There's always 11/7, 6/4, slotting both the bar and the 4-point. This threatens to start a powerful attack, or at least attempt to prime White if she doesn't do something. The drawback, of course, is it leaves her with quite a lot to do!

These are the four main contenders. I looked at two others for completeness, but you need not. One was 11/7, 10/8 which

slots your second choice next point and so has to be worse than Play 3 (10/4) which slots your first choice next point while leaving two fewer shots. The other play was 10/8, 6/2 which is the only half-reasonable blot-free play. It *looks* bad because it *is* bad, turning a very useful builder into a near-useless dilly for no gain that could possibly offset this loss. Rollouts confirm that these plays would be blunders both at this score and for money.

Play 3 seems offhand to be too much risk for too little gain. If we believe keeping the 8-point is crucial, 11/5 achieves this with no direct shots, Leaving an ace shot here is especially bad because White has no good aces to play anywhere else at the moment. Rollouts done both cubeless and according to score show this play to be inferior to the three other plays in contention.

Play 4, slotting the bar and 4-points, would be out of the question for money, but must be considered here because of the score. The price of being hit is far less than normal, since we can't get gammoned or recubed, and our anchor prevents our being closed out. If the gains are large enough, it could be correct.

If Black's only chance to win the game were to contain this checker which right now has excellent chances to escape, perhaps this approach would be best. However, this isn't the case by any means, since his 22-anchor with that awkward structure in front of it leaves Black with plenty of game if White gets away now.

Since Play 4 also looks really cool, it is only with reluctance that we discard it in favor of the flexible but more moderate 11/5, or making the 4-point. If these more "solid" options weren't available, the rollouts indicate the double slotting play would be best at this score, since it outperforms all the remaining possibilities in terms of games won.

The choice between the last two plays, 11/5 and 8/4, 6/4 is a harder call. 11/5 leaves no directs, but it costs the 11-point, which is still useful here even though the point six pips away from it is already made. Specifically, it prevents 4-4 from being a super-joker for White, and it also stops her from escaping with 6-2.

The bigger cost of 11/5, though, isn't the indirects or the loss of the 11-point. It's the opportunity lost, of not having made the 4-point when there was a chance to do it efficiently with builders that wanted to go there. The question is whether leaving the direct shot on the 8-point is too big a risk to take in exchange for this long-term asset.

Not all risks are created equal. If you

knew White would roll a 5-4 next, what would you do? This roll escapes in both cases, but hits on the way out only if you've made the 4-point. With White's awkward builder distribution, is getting a third man back all bad? If it enters on the 2-point, it may sometimes act almost as a second backgame point. If it enters on the 5- or 3-point, it's less likely to generate shots, but at least the pips it can move will help time Black's 22-anchor game.

Rollouts show that White is still supposed to hit, but after she does, Black's winning chances remain better than they would be if White rolled that 5-4 and escaped after 11/5. This doesn't prove that Black would make the 4-point even if White were sure to hit with some other 5, but it certainly demonstrates something about the great value of the 4-point here. Rollouts by Snowie 4, Snowie 3 according to score, and JellyFish all support this view and show Black gaining at least 2.1% GWC by making the 4-point now.

One more nuance in favor of making the 4-point: if White runs and Black hits with an indirect from the 22-point, he'll be glad he has a bigger board. The hit will leave him a bit off-balance, but if White stays out or just has fewer options with her entry rolls, Black will be better placed to consolidate on the following roll. Δ —Mary Hickey

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

late for Scotch-Gard now. Tak Morioka advocates a damp cloth and a just a little very mild soap for any attempt at cleaning the surface. (Be careful not to rub hard on the painted points, though.)

Over time, Tak's playing surface does wear and/or become soiled. When it gets really bad, Taki charges \$150 plus shipping for a complete resurfacing (and retuning) of your investment.—Ed.

BUYING A BOARD

Is there a Chicago-based store where I can view and purchase a quality backgammon set? I see some wonderful sets online, but am worried about purchasing something I cannot see.—Amy Smith, via E-mail

We believe that you get ripped off if you buy a board from a retail store, Amy. We suggest that before you buy elsewhere, contact Carol Joy Cole in Michigan at 810/232-9731, or e-mail her at cjc@tir.com. You will find that Carol has a large supply of boards at very fair prices.—Ed.

WINNER'S CIRCLE



APR.-JUN. 2004

•**1st Casino Salzburg Open** (Salzburg, Austria; 22-25 Apr.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (17): 1-Tobias Hellweg (GER), 2-Thomas Lenz (GER); 1C-Nodar Gagua (RUS); 1LC-François Tardieu (FRA). INTERMEDIATE (18): 1-Harutun Martorisian (ARM), 2-Rosmary Bensley (UK) (*Also Ladies Prize*); 1C-Martin de Bruin (SPA); 1LC-Andy Bell (UK). AMATEUR (9): 1-Serge Paukovics; 1C-Jo Curl (UK); 1LC-Robert Theuermann. DOUBLES (16): 1-Thomas Lenz (GER) & Chiva Tafazzoli (IRAN). WARM-UP (26): 1-Andy Bell (UK). SUPER JACKPOT (8): 1-John Slattery (UK). LADIES TOURNEY (8): 1-Bambi de Bruin (SPA). 1-POINT PRESIDENT'S TOURNEY (128): 1-Nadya Marinova (BUL). GAMESGRID NACKGAMMON BLITZ (32): 1-Arda Finkikoglu (TUR). AFTER TOURNAMENT (8): 1-Dod Davies (UK).

•**4th City of Jesolo Tournament** (Jesolo, Italy; 29 Apr.-2 May)... CHAMPIONSHIP (47): 1-Lars Trabolt (DEN), 2-Andreas Fischer (AUS); 1C-Alexandre Reichel (AUS); 1LC-Valerio Scremin (ITA). INTERMEDIATE (32): 1-Harutun Martyrosyan (ARM), 2-Antonio Sinigaglia (ITA); 1C-Stefano Chiosi (ITA); 1LC-Sandro Mescola (ITA). TEAM TOURNAMENT (15 teams): 1-Lorenzo Laganà & Valero Scremin & Mario Sequeira, 2-Alexander Reichel & Andreas Reichel & Tobias Hellweg. DOUBLES (23): 1-Marcel Liechti & Lise Howard (SWIT), 2-Andrea de Zandonati & Giancarlo Fassina (ITA). CASABIANCAALMARE TROPHY (56): Champion 1st-Dario de Toffoli (ITA); Intermediate 1st-Peter Sarzynski (THAI). GIN-RUMMY (152): 1-Jerry Weismeijer (NL), 2-Rolf Schreuder (NL).

•**Mothers Day Open** (Houston, TX; 8 May)... OPEN (17): 1-Jim Hallers, 2-Mary Morse; 1C-Todd Schenk.

•**2004 County Cups** (Davenport, UK; 8-9 May)... OPEN (60): 1-Tony Lee, 2-Mick Butterfield, 3-Stuart Mann, 4-Jason Champion; 1C-Tom Allsop, 2C-Mike Heard. FRIDAY WARM-UP (16): 1-Martin Hemming. £50 JACKPOT (8): 1-John Slattery. DOUBLES (8): 1-Michael Crane's Secret Lovers.

•**16th European Championships** (Velden, Austria; 21-23 May)... MASTERS (46): 1-François Tardieu (France), 2-Frank Simon (Germany), 3/4-Marcus Faltermann (Germany) / Vincenzo Riceputi (Italy); 1C-Lorenzo Rusconi (Italy), 2C-Rainer Spörk (Austria), 3C/4C-Alain Babilion (France) / Heimo Krainer (Austria); 1LC-Dod Davies (England), 2LC-Tobias Hellweg (Germany). CHAMPIONSHIP (46): 1-Hans-Uli Koch (Germany), 2-Roberto Catalano (Italy), 3/4-Jessico Rusconi (Italy) / Wolfgang Haas (Austria); 1C-Arda Findikoglu (Turkey), 2C-Peter Winkler (Austria), 3C/4C-Damian Plesec (Slovenia) / Andrea Riebler (Austria); 1LC-Günther Hegglin (Germany), 2LC-Giuseppe Ricciardi (Italy). Ladies Prize: Jessica

Rusconi (Italy). INTERMEDIATE (38): 1-Alfredo Sperti (Italy), 2-Federico Ferrer (Italy), 3/4-Jo Curl (England) / Nong Simon (Thailand); 1C-Francesco Malvetani (Italy), 2C-Peter Neumann (Germany); 1LC-Maria Croce (Italy), 2LC-Karol Szczerek (Poland). Ladies Prize: Jo Curl (England). SUPER JACKPOT (16): 1-Tobias Hellweg (Germany), 2-Hans-Uli Koch (Germany). WARM-UP (55): 1-Thomas Löw (Germany), 2-Karol Szczerek (Poland). SPERTI TROPHY (53): 1-Karol Szczerek (Poland), 2-Heimo Krainer (Austria). PRESIDENT'S 1-POINT WINNERS: Thomas Lenz (Germany), Rudolf Prohaska (Austria), Rainer Spörk (Austria).

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 6 Jun.)... OPEN (23): 1-Linda Rockwell, 2-Ken Tyszko, 3/4-Tom Meyer / David Rockwell; 1C-Bob Zavoral, 2C-Mark Swanson (IN). INTERMEDIATE (4): 1-Wayne Wiest, 2-Tim Carroll. Δ

AMALGAMATION

The deadline for the "Creative Backgammon Photo Contest" is 25 June. \$200 in prizes. Send your submission to bg@chicagopoint.com... Tampa Bay BG Club (Florida) director **Stacy Turner** is moving and informs us that **Don Boyer** will take over as club director. Don can be e-mailed at dboyer@tampabay.rr.com... Two club changes in Illinois. (1) **Michael Flohr** informs us that the Bloomington Club will not meet Monday nights as Damon's Grill. And **Randy Armstrong** has moved the Sangamon Valley (Springfield) Club to a different Damon's Grill. They still meet Wednesdays. For more info, check out "Illinois Action" on page 6... Great Poker results for backgammon

players **Phil Laak** and **Dan Harrington**. Phil (shown at right), formerly backgammon's "Ultra-Man," now Poker's "Unibomber," won \$100,000 in the WPT Celebrity Challenge televised 2 June on the Travel Channel. Dan was 4th at the final World Series of Poker last month in Las Vegas—good for 1.5 million dollars... Now is the time to look forward to a January Backgammon On Board VII Cruise. Mail your \$25 refundable deposit to Chicago Point today. For more info: chicagopoint.com/bg onboard.html... GammonVillage.com, a great website, had unfortunately been forced to tighten its belt. Because of that, **Jake Jacobs** (AZ), **Mary Hickey** (OH), **Steve Sax** (CA), and **Bill Robertie** (MA) lost their regular column slots... **Dave Rockwell** (IL) slipped on a handicapped sidewalk ramp and remains "handicapped" on crutches a month later... Did you see **Lindsay Lohan** in bed with a backgammon board in the June Vanity Fair?... Finally, it's a Persian proverb that states: Luck is infatuated with the efficient. Δ



LUCKY NELSON AND ERIC JOHNSON WIN IN CHICAGO

120+ players enjoyed their Memorial Day weekend at the 25th Chicago Open. Joann Feinstein & Howard Markowitz directed at the beautiful Oak Brook Hills Hotel.

Lucky Nelson bested Michigan's Emil Mortuk to win the first Championship title of his life. Additionally, Ray Foglerlund won the Consolation to take over first place in the American Backgammon Tour.

Congrats to other winners Eric Johnson (Intermediate), Spencer King (Beginner), and Ed O'Laughlin (Masters). Δ



Top: Chicago Open champ Lucky Nelson. Bottom: Director Joann Feinstein with Intermediate winner Eric Johnson (R) and runner-up Faddoul Khoury (L).

25TH CHICAGO OPEN

CHAMPIONSHIP (54): 1-Lucky Nelson (IL), 2-Emil Mortuk (MI), 3-Arman Karamian (NY); 1C-Ray Foglerlund (CA), 2C-Steve Brown (MN). INTERMEDIATE (44): 1-Eric Johnson (IL), 2-Faddoul Khoury (IL), 3/4-Tom Machaj (WI) / Dave Wetzell (MN); 1C-Norma Shyer (IL), 2C-Kathy Sorci (IL). BEGINNER (18): 1-Spencer King (IL), 2-Philip Little (MN). MEMORIAL DAY MASTERS (32): 1-Ed O'Laughlin (FL), 2-Sho Sengoku (Japan/CA). BLITZ (32): 1-Bill Whitney (MA), 2-Doug Mayfield (CA). MINI-MATCH (64): 1-Sonya Sidky (WI), 2-Carter Mattig (IL). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Mike Edge (SC) & Petko Kostadinov (SC), 2-Emil Mortuk (MI) & Akemi Ota (Japan/MI). \$500 JACKPOT (4): 1-Howard Markowitz (NV).

MOM'S QUIZ ANSWERS

[Jake Jacobs' quiz appears on page 7]

1. 9/3, 8/3 – 7 points. This is from the Masters finals. Senk (who got it right at the table) and I both believed that the duplication of White's 2s and 3s was irrelevant, but actually, while it is a blunder to make the deuce here, if White's spares are on the 5- and 1-point, not making the deuce is a blunder.

2. No double – 4 points, Take – 5 points. From the Mother's Day Consolation. Black wins 73.5%, but the position is so stable that he does better waiting. Of course White must take.

3. Double – 2 points, Take – 7 points. White trails by only six pips, and the four-point board offers enough protection that he should be able to secure a decent anchor.

4. Double – 4 points, Pass – 4 points. The scores favors an aggressive double by the leader, and rewards his doubled gammons. White would have a close take for money, but has a big pass at the score despite winning 35%.

5. Double – 4 points, Take – 5 points. Black's attack is potent, but White has a big race lead, and his better board will help him survive the blitz.

6. Double – 5 points, Take – 5 points. The take is clear, it is the double that is questionable, but since most people would pass, I give both actions equal credit. Senk, who took this from François, told me I had the position wrong, but since I wrote it down at the time, and since this version was confirmed by François, I'm going with it. (Senk's alternate version was also double/take.)

7. Double – 6 points, Take – 2 points. A five point deficit is more than you think. At the score this is a sound double.

8. 6/5, 6/3 – 7 points. Yes, this play leaves a shot after nine numbers, whereas clearing the 4-point is only exposed after two, but with one checker up clearing from the back is best with this number.

9. Bar/24, 15/10 – 8 points. This was a play that most experts said (while admitting they would play safe) they wished was right. You got your wish, boys!

10. 8/5, 6/5 – 8 points. The 5-point solidifies Black's board, pinning White's back checker. Most times, if White hits it will be from his barpoint anchor.

11. 24/18, 21/15*, 13/7(2) – 10 points. Three are easy, but that last one is tough! At DMP Black's priority is to win the game, not gammon White. Black takes advantage of White's being on the bar to escape.

12. Double – 4 points, Take – 3 points. Despite all the gammons, Black does better to double. White wins over 32%, and has a take, but many White's will pass this, making the double even more correct.

SCORING

- 100-81 Mom should be giving you a gift!
80-61 Mom will share her candy with you.
60-41 Take this home and have mom sign it before you can be readmitted to class.
40-21 At least your mother still loves you.
20-0 Your mother just moved and didn't leave a forwarding address.

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