

las vegas open & pro-am doubles

ACTION ABOUNDS IN LAS VEGAS

**David Todd wins Vegas Open
Jones & Woolsey take Pro Am**

by Kit Woolsey & Tami Jones

The action was extreme 11–20 November at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas for the Backgammon Pro Am Doubles and Las Vegas Open. Well over 200 players from across the globe were in attendance for all or part of the 10 day extravaganza staged by Howard Markowitz and his Nevada Backgammon Association.

The Las Vegas Open was taken by David Todd (Missouri) who is getting back into the game in a big way. After cashing in a number of ABT events earlier in the year, Todd skyrocketed to a 17–3 victory over John Slattery (UK) in the finals of America's biggest annual event. Expect to see a lot more from Todd in 2006!



2005 Las Vegas Open champion David Todd. [Photo by Peter Chan]

The Super Jackpot was captured by Sander Lylloff (Denmark) who also won a carload of money with his partner Mark Teltcher (UK) in the Backgammon Pro Am Doubles tournament, a prelude to the Las Vegas Open. Understanding Backgammon coauthors Kit Woolsey and Tami Jones were the eventual winners of that high stakes event where the entry fee is \$10,000 per team. Shown in the next column is Kit & Tami's first-person account of their journey to win the big one.—Ed.

OUR QUEST FOR THE PRO AM

By Kit Woolsey & Tami Jones

The 2005 Las Vegas Pro Am Doubles tournament was as difficult as a tournament can be. Even with only 12 teams, there were no soft spots in this field. Every team had at least one player who is, has been, or deserves to be a member of the Giant-32.



Pro Am Director Howard Markowitz (L) presents Tami Jones & Kit Woolsey with their winning trophies and \$72,000 in prize money. [Photo by Carol Joy Cole]

As a doubles team, our luck has been infamous. Playing together for five years in at least three tournaments a year, we have managed to get into the money exactly one time. And while a win is a win, a small overflow tournament isn't much to brag about. When we saw the draw for the Pro Am, it looked like the same old dismal story. Not only did we fail to get one of the four valuable byes, but we had the glorious luck of drawing the team of Nack Ballard & Bill Bartholomay as our first round opponents. For those of you who have been living in a cave for the last few years, Nack is considered by most to be the best backgammon player in the world, hands down. He has been on the winning team in this event three out of the past four years. The only year he didn't win he had a really good reason . . . he didn't play! But never let it be said that the team of Woolsey & Jones isn't up to a challenge, and it certainly helps when the dice smile. We respectfully handed them a decisive loss and moved on to the next round.

Fortunately for us, our good dice

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IT'S KAZAROSS IN A RECORD-BREAKING ABT YEAR

Neil Kazaross (IL) finished the 2004 American Backgammon Tour race in 3rd place, just 2.41 points out of first. Unsatisfied, Neil vowed to win the 2005 race. And that's just what the "An-Neil-ator" did, breaking his own all-time annual points



record in the process. Neil won Pittsburgh, the Midwest Champs, and Wisconsin; he was a runner-up in Ohio and Minnesota; and split the Last Chance in Florida to earn 73.22 points. Awesome.

Another Illinoisan, Phil Simborg finished second (40.24) and Stepan Nuniyants (WA) won the California Open in December to edge out Jeb Horton (NC) for third (38.47).

Honorees will receive their trophies at the ABT Awards Ceremony in Pittsburgh 18 February just prior to the Calcutta Auction. Top 100 ABT for 2005 are on page 3. Δ

WHAT BACKGAMMON IS

Remember this classic T-shirt from the 1970s? It perfectly describes the game of backgammon.



A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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FRANKLIN MINT SET

I remember a backgammon board made by The Franklin Mint 20 years ago and am having a tough time locating it. It was made of solid cherry wood with 24-carat gold and silver pieces, but I can't remember the specific name of the set. Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated. — *Gary Groeneveld, via Internet*

It was called the Excaliber Backgammon Set and was sold in 1987. Although it looked nice, it played terrible. If you still want it, we suggest that you keep searching ebay.—Ed.

LOOKING TO PLAY

Hi, I'm looking to enter a live tournament and was just wondering if there is any age, experience, or other requirements involved in the upcoming Pittsburgh Tournament. I am a skilled player, but have only played

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole
810/232-9731

cjc@tir.com

*Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Jan 13-15	6th Carolina Invitational, Hilton University Place, Charlotte, North Carolina	704/814-0850
Jan 14	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Jan 14*	Backgammon By the Bay, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/688-9722
Jan 15*	Pittsburgh Monthly Tournament, Hartner's Lounge, Cranberry Twp., PA	412/826-1334
Jan 19	Third Thursday Bonus (Pittsburgh), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jan 21*	Ed Chambers Memorial, Sansone's Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Jan 26*	Flint Club Awards Party/Tournament, Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Feb 1*	Kansas City Club Monthly, Harpo's, Kansas City, Missouri	816/916-6599
Feb 4	Springfield Series, Wildlife Sports Bar, Springfield, Illinois	217/622-9447
Feb 5*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Tres Potrillos, Copley, Ohio	330/268-4610
Feb 6*	Roy's Monthly Tournament, Restaurant Roy, Santa Barbara, California	805/966-5636
Feb 7*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Feb 11*	Atlanta 2005 Awards Tourney, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
Feb 11*	Columbia Memorial Tournament, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Feb 11*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Feb 12*	Bar Point Doubles Club Championship, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/583-6464
Feb 12*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Gambits Bar, Marriott Hotel, Dayton, Ohio	937/890-2536
Feb 12*	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/945-1257
Feb 12*	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, Ohio	614/784-8132
Feb 12*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Feb 16*	Third Thursday Bonus (Midwest), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Feb 17-19	<u>Pittsburgh Championships, Holiday Inn Airport, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</u>	<u>412/823-7500</u>
Feb 18*	Austin Club Saturday Bimonthly, JC's Steakhouse, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
Feb 26*	Illinois State Challenge Cup, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Mar 1*	Kansas City Club Monthly, Harpo's, Kansas City, Missouri	816/916-6599
Mar 5*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Tres Potrillos, Copley, Ohio	330/268-4610
Mar 6*	Roy's Monthly Tournament, Restaurant Roy, Santa Barbara, California	805/966-5636
Mar 7*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Mar 11*	Drew McCulloch Memorial, Sansone's Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Mar 11*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Mar 11*	Springfield Series, Peoria Pizza Works, Peoria, Illinois	217/622-9447
Mar 12*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Mar 12*	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, Ohio	614/784-8132
Mar 12*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Gambits Bar, Marriott Hotel, Dayton, Ohio	937/890-2536
Mar 12*	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/945-1257
Mar 17-19	<u>2006 Midwest Championships, Wyndham Lisle, Lisle, Illinois</u>	<u>773/583-6464</u>
Mar 26*	23rd Fleet Underwood Memorial, Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Apr 2*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Champs Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Apr 7-9	<u>Ohio State Championships, Airport Marriott Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio</u>	<u>330/268-4610</u>
Apr 26-30*	22nd Nevada State Tournament, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
May 26-29	<u>26th Chicago Open, Oak Brook Hills Resort & Hotel, Oak Brook, Illinois</u>	<u>847/674-0120</u>
Jun 30-Jul 3	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Novi Hotel, Novi, Michigan</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jul 28-30	<u>Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin</u>	<u>608/516-9109</u>
Jul 28-30*	Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York	585/396-0969
Aug 10-13*	<u>13th Georgia Championships, Marriott Atlanta Perimeter Center, Atlanta, GA</u>	<u>770/333-1876</u>
Sep 1-4	<u>54th Indiana Open, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana</u>	<u>317/867-0229</u>

OUTSIDE USA

Jan 13-15	Franken-Cup, Hotel Daucher, Nürnberg, Germany	49711-486190
Jan 14-15*	Play 65 Bright 'n' Breezy Tournament, West Pier Hotel, Brighton, England	441522-888676
Jan 27-29	4th Cotswold Fireside BG & Hold'em Poker, Crown Inn, Blockley, England	441453-821479
Jan 28-29*	2nd Oulu Open 2006, Bar & Café Milou, Oulu, Finland	358405-806916
Feb 4-5	Jarvis Trophy Tournament, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Feb 11-12	Gammonitis League Tournament, The Grange, Bristol, United Kingdom	447900-983038
Feb 16-19*	2nd Scandinavian Challenge, Casino Munkebjerg, Vjile, Denmark	4561-633289
Feb 17-19*	Groupe Partouche Trophy, Palm Beach Casino, Cannes, France	33147-587179
Mar 1-5*	7th Paris Master & Open, Holiday Inn Republique, Paris, France	33662-467001
Mar 4-5*	Slattery Scottish Open, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Mar 9-12*	11th Kaiserbrunnen-Cup, Hotel Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49711-48190
Mar 11-12*	British Time Trials, Eynsham Hall, Oxford, England	441634-840592
Mar 23-26*	2nd Thüringen Cup BG & Poker, Salzunger Hof, Bad Salzungen, Germany	49521-64314
Mar 30-Apr 2*	Tegernsee Open, Hotel zur Post, Bad Wiessee, Germany	49711-48190
Apr 1-2*	British Open, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Apr 8-9*	Gammonitis League Tournament, Eynsham Hall, Oxford, England	447900-983038
Apr 8-14*	1st Trophee du Mont-Blanc, Latitudes Hotel du Golf, Arc, France	33672-008957
Apr 23-30*	BG Masters Cruise, Carnival Cruise Ship, Miami to Caribbean	888/972-6339

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

in tournaments online. Any information would be greatly appreciated.—Shannon

Lista, via Internet

Pittsburgh would be a great starting tournament as it is well-attended and has three divisions of play: Championship, Advanced,

and Novice. No matter how skilled you think you are, if Pittsburgh would be your first live event, we doubt that director Steve Hast would have a problem if you entered as a Novice.—Ed.



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2005

AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2005

Top 100—Final Standings after 17 tournaments

173 players earned points



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2005

Neil Kazaross	73.22	Perry Gartner	11.18	Kit Woolsey	5.88	Mark Murray	4.11
Phil Simborg	40.24	Wayne Jeffcoat	10.91	Alex Juskevich	5.83	Steve Neidecker	4.00
Stepan Nuniyants	38.47	Harvey Gillis	10.91	Herb Roman	5.80	Jack Fagan	4.00
Jeb Horton	31.05	Larry Strommen	10.61	Neil Garvie	5.72	Petko Kostadinov	3.80
Mike Corbett	26.79	Bob Hathaway	10.54	Stuart Thomson	5.65	Ed Johnson	3.68
Steve Sax	23.53	Bill Minser	10.40	Bob Glass	5.60	Murray Bryntesen	3.61
Ray Glaeser	18.39	Eden Windish	10.21	DeWayne Derryberry	5.60	Al Jones	3.57
Gregg Cattanach	17.38	Faddoul Khoury	10.00	J.P. Deleurme	5.46	Rick Todd	3.57
Howard Shirey	16.71	Sal Chehayeb	9.96	Jim Wark	5.40	Marc Gray	3.53
Dana Nazarian	16.63	George Barr	9.04	Mary Ann Meese	5.27	Jona Alexander	3.52
Ed O'Laughlin	15.50	Mark Rozans	8.64	Tom Green	5.27	Cookie Frazin	3.20
Ben Elliott	15.40	Todd Obadal	7.74	Michael Plog	5.20	Karen Chung	3.20
Carlos Azcarate	14.92	Ernie McCombs	7.71	Randy Armstrong	5.09	Lynn Lusk	3.20
Renee Rosenbloom	14.44	Joe Feldman	7.66	Joe Sylvester	5.00	Bruce Ballance	3.19
Jason Lee	14.40	Vadim Musaelyan	7.60	Gary Kay	5.00	Fred Lindsay	3.00
Jeremy Bagai	14.35	Tak Morioka	7.17	Jim Zimmerman	5.00	Neal Rosensweig	2.95
Carter Mattig	14.11	Mary Hickey	7.17	Boris Dekhtyar	4.99	Ralph Byrns	2.94
Chuck Bower	13.51	Dave Wetzell	7.11	Jeff Acerno	4.94	Cole Parker	2.93
Malcolm Davis	13.06	Ray Fogelrund	7.04	Joe Freedman	4.67	Katherine Denison	2.91
J. A. Miller	12.64	Michael Schechter	6.63	Lee Pflugrad	4.63	Tim Ferrell	2.91
Doug Mayfield	12.50	Stacy Turner	6.29	Jack Takala	4.49	Steve Goldstein	2.90
Ed Zell	11.99	Mike Friedman	6.22	Don Sloan	4.49	Doug Roberts	2.90
Michael Edge	11.55	Chris Spieldenner	6.22	David Todd	4.44	Connie Tipton	2.80
Richard Armbruster	11.40	Brad King	6.01	Carol Joy Cole	4.32	Molly Anderson	2.80
David Rogers	11.30	Wayne Wiest	5.92	Patty Geoffroy	4.19	2 players at	2.67

CLASSIC BACKGAMMON REVISITED

Thanks for your plug of my book, *Classic Backgammon Revisited*, in your "Letters" column last issue. It's nice to be remembered. Although I wrote the book in 2001 and not 1995 as stated, it seems the date confusion was actually prescient: December 2005 marks the release of the new edition.

The updated text features a better page layout, bigger margins, a thicker cover, and of course revised analysis where needed. You can read the preface to the new edition, the introduction, a sample chapter, and a complete list of all substantive changes from the first edition at www.fortuitouspress.com.—Jeremy Bagai; Oakland, California

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Hi Chicago BG players. God, I miss you guys from the 1970s and 1980s. It's been a long time, I only recognize a couple of names off the current Chicago Bar Point Club standings. Wish we had a club like yours in Portland, Oregon where I live now.

Anyway, can you suggest a good online club I could join? Internet action is better than no action at all.—Marty D'Alexander, Portland, Oregon

We are partial to our Midwest Backgammon Championships sponsor: TrueMoneygames.com—Ed. Δ



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB

2005 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

FINAL STANDINGS

90 players earned points

Tak Morioka	34.08	Jerry Brooks	7.72	Sargon Benjamin	1.92	Dan Simborg	0.72
David Rockwell	27.48	Larry Goldstein	7.24	Elaine Andrews	1.88	Bob Sexton	0.64
Herb Roman	25.20	Eric Johnson	7.20	Royal Robinson	1.84	Roland Dieter	0.64
Bill Davis	20.48	Joann Feinstein	6.84	Michael Peters	1.84	Ralf Boettger	0.60
Paul Baraz	20.28	Norma Shyer	6.72	Randee Simborg	1.76	Cookie Frazin	0.56
Phyllis Smolinski	18.88	Arlene Levy	6.32	Linda Rockwell	1.68	Julia Ring	0.56
Carter Mattig	17.32	Mark Murray	5.96	Alex Owen	1.58	Nan Feiber	0.56
Albert Yakobashvili	16.66	Kwong Chan	5.64	Shaw Dogan	1.38	Joe Szewdo	0.56
Phil Simborg	15.86	Georgina Flanagan	5.56	J. A. Miller	1.32	Russ Lyutik	0.56
Gary Kay	15.64	Richard Stawowy	5.16	Val Zimnicki	1.28	Dave Settles	0.56
Tim Mabee	15.56	Joe Auszmann	5.00	Josh Riddell	1.28	Don Marek	0.48
Ken Bond	15.28	Yamin Yamin	4.84	Will Thomsen	1.20	Mark Phillips	0.48
Lucky Nelson	13.72	Howard Ring	4.56	Mike Sutton	1.20	Les Moshinsky	0.48
Michael Ginat	13.28	Roger Hickman	3.84	Barbara Levinson	1.12	Bob Bartolone	0.48
Alice Kay	12.12	Dan Weymouth	3.76	Elaine Kehm	1.08	Roz Ferris	0.44
Steve Klesker	12.06	Adrian Rios	3.12	Kurt Thompson	0.96	Bill Stegich	0.40
Bob Steen	11.44	Mary Franks	2.88	Efim Liberman	0.96	Paul Klein	0.40
Bill Bartholomay	10.78	Igor Kaplunovsky	2.80	David Marcus	0.80	Jolie Rubin	0.40
Oleg Raygorodsky	10.48	Ken Tyszko	2.40	Ken Tibbs	0.72	Lisa Nelson	0.32
Boris Dekhtyar	9.80	Paul Knapp	2.08	Greg Merriman	0.72	James Roston	0.32
Bill Keefe	8.68	Dave Cramer	2.04	Michael Brand	0.72	Phil Martorelli	0.32
Wayne Wiest	8.04	Paul Franks	2.00	Jim Gibbs	0.72	Jordan Sanders	0.32
Mike Wolock	7.80	Vadim Genkin	1.92				

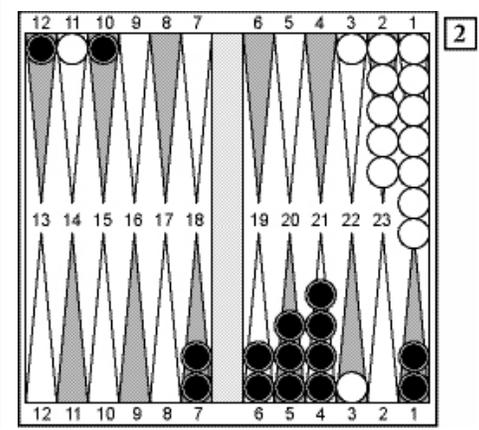
GARY KAY & MICHAEL GINAT split November POM with 4.56. David Rockwell place third with 4.28. **HERB ROMAN** gains December honors (and almost 2nd place overall) by winning three tournaments (and 12 matches) in a row (4.96). David Rockwell (3.52) placed second and Ken Bond (2.96) was third.

your move

PROBLEM #315

to be analyzed by Dana Nazarian

11-point match. White leads Black 6 to 4. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-3.**



ASK DANNY

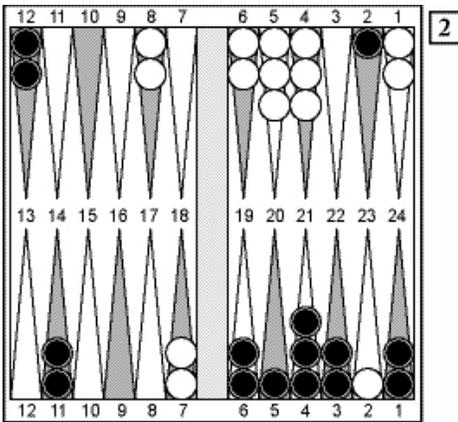


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GOING FOR IT

Dear Danny: Although I've only been playing backgammon for two years, I was lucky enough to get into the finals of our 2005 Club Championship tournament this past month. Trailing the 13 point match 9-11, I turned the cube hoping to win the match with a doubled gammon. My aggressive play didn't work out as I had hoped, but there was still a lot of game left when the following position occurred:

Match to 13 points. White leads Black 11 to 9. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-2.**



LAS VEGAS OPEN & PRO AM RESULTS

•**Backgammon Pro Am** (Las Vegas, NV; 11-16 Nov.)... PROAM (12 teams @ \$10,000): 1-Tami Jones (ID) & Kit Woolsey (CA), 2-Sander Lyloff (Denmark) & Mark Teltscher (England). \$500 JACKPOT (4): 1/2-Bill Bartholomay (IL), 2-Neil Kazaross (IL). \$500 JACKPOT (6): 1-Howard Markowitz (NV), 2-Jim Pasko (NV). \$1,000 JACKPOT (5): 1-Ray Foglerlund (CA), 2-Nack Ballard (CA).

•**Las Vegas Open** (Las Vegas, NV; 16-20 Nov.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (84): 1-David Todd (MO), 2-John Slattery (United Kingdom), 3/4-Art Moore (CA) / Hugh Sconyers (NV); 1C-Bart Brooks (Canada), 2C-Julian Fetterlein (England), 3C/4C-Kazuhiko Yotsushita / Mark Schiffer (OR); 1LC-Mike Corbett (FL), 2LC-John O'Hagan (IN). INTERMEDIATE (109+19 rebuys): 1-Jeff Whitelaw (NV), 2-Michael Derylo (CA), 3/4-Ron Bruns (CA) / David Taniguchi (CA); 1C-Sam Ahmed (CA), 2C-Scott Cole (NV), 3C/4C-Adrian Costa (CA) / Nash Jost (CA); 1LC-Jona Alexander (CA), 2LC-Toshikat-su Ejiri (Japan). BEGINNERS (32): 1-Motoko Murakami (Japan), 2-John Williams (WA), 3/4-

I've learned from my book studies that making a five point board in middle game positions is a solid strategy, so the quiet 11/5 was my play. White's response (2-2) made me feel like a jerk as he hit two men (18/14, 18/16, 4/2*). Naturally I danced and never saw daylight again.*

Following the two-roll sequence, one of the arrogant experts kibitzing our match shrugged his shoulders and walked away. It doesn't look like I had many options unless you think it's better to hit White on the deuce point and burn a checker (5/1). I know the "expert" isn't going to tell me; so I would be interested in what you think because I'm . . . — Still Learning

DEAR LEARNING: No, I don't think it better to bury a checker by hitting 4/2* and lifting 5/1. That gives you little chance of closing your opponent out. If he dances, only six rolls let you cover the blot on your 2-point to make a five point board.

Your play, 11/5, is better, but it is not good enough. It not only lets your opponent hit your outfield blot with direct 4s plus 1-1 and 3-1 (14 rolls), but also leaves him 6-3, 6-2, 3-2, 6-6, 3-3 and 2-2 (9 more rolls) to point on your lone back man while making a five point board of his own.

With your opponent owning a 2-cube and needing two points for the match, the gammons you lose are meaningless, but as you need four points for the match, turning a plain win into a gammon is just as impor-

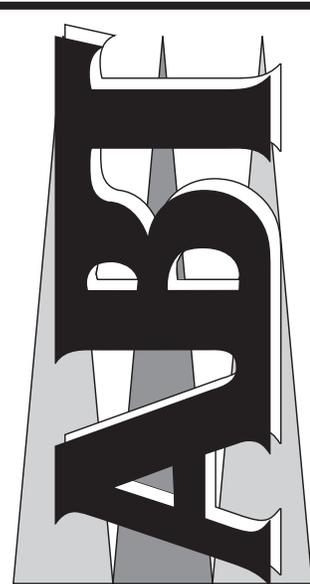
tant as winning the game.

This is an ideal score for making heedless, gammon-hungry plays. Why not make just such a bold play: 6/2*, 4-2? It leaves your opponent only 20 shots instead of 23, but that is not the main reason for making it. Rather, it maximizes your chances of winning a gammon if your opponent dances. If he dances, the builders you have trained on your slotted 5- and 6-points make you a heavy favorite to cover a fifth inside point next turn. Meanwhile, your opponent is immobilized and can neither attack you in his home board nor bring his outfield men home.

Go for it! Second choice: another bold play that leaves two inside blots, 4/2*, 13/9, but leaves two additional outfield blots that reduce your chances of recovery should things go poorly. — Yours, Danny Δ

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

Steven Naar (FL)/Paulo Antonio Torres (Brazil); 1C-Tara Mendicino (TX), 2C-Garry Boltjes (HI); 1LC-Denise Bonfilio (CA), 2LC-Kaoruko Kisuno (Japan). SUPER JACKPOT (bracket of 64 with buy-ups to round of 16): 1-Sander Lyloff (Denmark), 2-Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (Israel). LIMITED JACKPOT (bracket of 64 with buy-ups to round of 16): 1-Bill Riles (TX), 2-Norm Wiggins (CA). DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Norma & Perry Gartner (NJ), 2-Molly Anderson (WA) & Ruth Robbins (WA). MINI-MATCH EVENT (64): 1-Gregg Cattanach (GA), 2-Mike Sharp (CA). SENIORS TOURNAMENT (128): 1-Peter Bennet (England), 2-Charles Nordlinger (CA). BLITZ EVENT (240): 1-Rafael Lopez de Lara (Mexico), 2-Bob Glass (CA). SATURDAY \$500 JACKPOT (11): 1-Alan Grunwald (NJ), 2-Bob Glass (CA). SATURDAY \$100 JACKPOT (31): 1-Neil Garvie (Canada), 2-Jonah Seewald (CO). SATURDAY \$50 JACKPOT (8): 1-Louis Gordon (NV), 2-Kaoruko Kisuno (Japan). \$50 AFTER TOURNAMENT TOURNAMENT (12): 1-Steve Sax (CA), 2-Bob Wachtel (CA). \$20 AFTER TOURNAMENT TOURNAMENT (20): 1-Troy Longman (MI), 2-Hideo Tateno (Japan/CA).



April 7-9, 2006

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12th Annual Ohio State Backgammon Championships

Backgammon Clubs in North America

Information for this listing has been obtained directly from the featured backgammon clubs. Changes are inevitable and we suggest that you always call before attending. CHICAGO POINT would like to maintain an accurate listing of USA Backgammon Clubs online at: www.chicagopoint.com/usclubs.html. Please send club information, including new clubs and club closings and updates to: **CHICAGO POINT; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr 504; Chicago, IL 60659. 773/583-6464. Fax: 773/583-3264. E-mail: bg@chicagopoint.com**

WEST

CLUB NAME	LOCATION	CITY & STATE	MEETING DAY & TIME	CONTACT (E-MAIL)	TELEPHONE	MAIL INQUIRIES TO
Arizona Backgammon Club	Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub	Phoenix, AZ	1st Tuesday monthly-7:00 PM	Pete Campbell (arizonabackgammon@webtv.net)	602/279-0215	928 E. Berridge Lane; Phoenix AZ 85014
Gammon Associates	Acapulco Cantina	Burbank, CA	Tuesday-6:00 PM	Patrick Gibson (pgibsonmtf@adelphia.net)	818/901-0464	7641 Orion Avenue; Van Nuys, CA 91406
"	A.R. Private Club	Los Angeles, CA	Sunday-2:00 PM	"	"	"
Sacramento Backgammon Club	Player's Sports Pub & Grill	Fair Oaks, CA	2nd & 4th Tuesday-6:30 PM	Doug Wilson (dbwilson@pacbell.net)	530/756-4872	3016 Bryant Place; Davis, CA 95616
Backgammon Club of San Diego	Coast Cafe/Embassy Suites	La Jolla, CA	Tuesday-6:00 PM	Tom Fahland (tom_fahland@yahoo.com)	858/472-1516	558 Summer View Circle; Encinitas, CA 92024
Backgammon By The Bay	Peking Express Restaurant	Berkeley, CA	2nd Sat. monthly-12:00 PM	Beth Skillman (beth@backgammon.org)	831/688-9722	308 Arthur Avenue; Aptos, CA 95003
"	Britannia Arms Pub/Restaurant	Cupertino, CA	4th Saturday monthly-1:00 PM	"	"	"
Restaurant Roy Backgammon	Restaurant Roy	Santa Barbara, CA	1st Monday monthly-7:00 PM	Roy Gandy (roy@restaurantroy.com)	805/966-5636	7 W. Carrillo Street; Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Rocky Mountain Backgammon Assoc.	Cadillac Jack's	Denver, CO	2nd & 4th Tuesdays-7:00 PM	Tom Christner (poetom@yahoo.com)	303/400-6560	8386 Wheatgrass Circle; Parker, CO 80134
Aloha State Backgammon Club	Elks Club	Honolulu, HI	Friday-7:30 PM	George Quillin (georgeq@hawaii.rr.com)	808/922-2674	2999 Kalakaua Ave. 501; Honolulu, HI 96815
Backgammon Club of Las Vegas	Jackson's Bar & Grill	Las Vegas, NV	Tuesday-7:00 PM	Michael Maxakul (maxgammon4@yahoo.com)	702/696-1096	3351 Rome Street 2; Las Vegas, NV 89109
Nevada Backgammon Association	Riviera Hotel	Las Vegas, NV	Event dates: www.nvbg.com	Howard Markowitz (howard114@cox.net)	702/893-6025	3131 Espanol Drive; Las Vegas, NV 89121
Puget Sound Backgammon Club	Wizards Restaurant/Casino	Seattle, WA	Tuesday-7:30 PM	Ruth Robbins (ruthies5@comcast.net)	425/226-3120	12611 155th Ave. SE; Renton, WA 98059

CENTRAL

Pub Club	Playoffs Sports Bar & Grill	Carol Stream, IL	Thursday-6:45 PM	Tim Mabee (tim.mabee@experian.com)	630/606-2388	224 Split Oak Road; Naperville, IL 60565
Chicago Bar Point Club	The Purple Hotel	Lincolnwood, IL	Tuesday-6:00 PM	Bill Davis (bg@chicagopoint.com)	773/583-6464	3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504; Chicago, IL 60659
"	Champs Sports Bar	Oakbrook Terrace, IL	Sat. or Sun. bimonthly-12:00 PM	Peter Kalba (kalba4@aol.com)	312/316-1432	929 N. Dwiggin Avenue; Griffith, IN 46319
Bloomington-Normal BG Club	Damon's Grill	Normal, IL	Tuesday-6:30 PM	Michael Flohr (mflohr0925@verizon.net)	309/662-7967	707 Broadmoor Drive; Bloomington, IL 61704
Peoria Backgammon Club	Peoria Pizza Works	Peoria, IL	Thursday-6:30 PM	Ed Zell (bg2006@thezells.com)	309/689-1964	9019 N. Picture Ridge; Peoria, IL 61614
Sangamon Valley BG Association	Capitol Teletrack	Springfield, IL	Wednesday-6:30 PM	Randy Armstrong (randya@insightbb.com)	217/528-0117	2012 N. 20th Street; Springfield, IL 62702
Sangamon Valley Springfield Series	Various locations	Central Illinois	1st Sat/Nov to Apr-11:30 AM	"	"	"
Winnetka Backgammon Club	Winnetka Community House	Winnetka, IL	Wednesday-7:00 PM	Trudie Chibnik (winnbackgammon@aol.com)	847/446-0537	740 Ballantrae Drive B; Northbrook, IL 60062
Hoosier Backgammon Club	Neon Johnny's	Indianapolis, IN	Wednesday-7:00 PM	Butch & Mary Ann Meese (inbybg@comcast.net)	317/867-0229	539 Hadleigh Court; Westfield, IN 46074
Northwest Indiana BG Association	VFW Hall	Porter, IN	2nd Saturday monthly-1:30 PM	Charlie Halberstadt (chbug@yahoo.com)	219/785-2082	P.O. Box 84; Westville, IN 46391
Flint Area Backgammon Club	Days Inn	Flint, MI	Thursday-7:00 PM	Carol Joy Cole (cjc@tir.com)	810/232-9731	3719 Greenbrook Lane; Flint, MI 48507
Grand Rapids Backgammon Club	Cascade Roadhouse	Grand Rapids, MI	Tuesday-7:00 PM	John Drexel (info@grbg.org)	616/647-9965	4845 Brookgate Dr. NW; Comstock Park, MI 49321
Plymouth Backgammon Club	Box Bar & Grill	Plymouth, MI	Wednesday-7:30 PM	Dean Adamian (Dean3491@hotmail.com)	734/981-5706	42954 Barchester; Canton, MI 48187
Metro North Backgammon Club	Crash Landing Restaurant	Warren, MI	Mon-6:30 PM, 1st Sat. mthly-12 PM	Paul Berg (paulberg@wideopenwest.com)	313/330-7803	921 Winchester; Lincoln Park, MI 48146

(Continued on opposite side)

Backgammon Clubs In North America*(Continued from opposite side)***CENTRAL (continued)**

CLUB NAME	LOCATION	CITY & STATE	MEETING DAY & TIME	CONTACT (E-MAIL)	TELEPHONE	MAIL INQUIRIES TO
Twin Cities Backgammon Club	Little Wagon	Minneapolis, MN	Thursday--7:00 PM	David Minkus (dminkus@comcast.net)	612/332-4418	6300 Phoenix St.; Golden Valley, MN 55427
Kansas City Backgammon	Harpo's	Kansas City, MO	1st Wed. monthly--6:30 PM	Eric Barr (eric@kbackgammon.com)	816/916-6599	421 E. 65th Street; Kansas City, MO 64131
Ohio State Backgammon Club	Tres Potrillos	Copley, OH	Sunday monthly--2:00 PM	Joe Miller (osbc@neo.rr.com)	330/268-4610	1066 Winston Street; Akron, OH 44314
"	Boulevard Tavern	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Wednesday--6:30 PM	"	"	"
Miami Valley Backgammon Club	Gambit's Bar/Dayton Marriott	Dayton, OH	2nd Sunday monthly--1:00 PM	Larry Buckingham (lbucky@aol.com)	937/890-2536	3048 Benchmark Road, Dayton, OH 45414
Greater Columbus Backgammon Club	Lucky's Grille & Billiards	Hilliard, OH	Sunday monthly--1:30 PM	Trevor Dietkes (trevman07@yahoo.com)	614/784-8132	155 Delhi Avenue C; Columbus, OH 43202
Dallas Backgammon League	IHOP	Addison, TX	Wednesday--8:00 PM	Tom Wheeler (zwheel@sbcglobal.net)	972/484-3038	3705 Pageant Place; Dallas, TX 75244
Austin Backgammon Association	JC's Steakhouse	Austin, TX	Mon.--7:30 PM; 3rd Sat. mthly--12:30	Jackie Seiders-Smart (jackies@austin.rr.com)	512/261-8518	30 Hightail Way; Austin, TX 78738
Houston Backgammon Club	Sansone's West Oaks Bar	Houston, TX	2nd Saturday monthly--1:00 PM	Tom Wright (tomw64@hotmail.com)	281/556-0428	14147 Lost Meadow Lane; Houston, TX 77079
Madison Backgammon Club	J.T. Whitney's Pub & Brewery	Madison, WI	Tuesday--6:30 PM	Tom Machaj (tom.machaj@madisonbg.com)	608/516-9109	5821 Tolman Terrace; Madison, WI 53711
Milwaukee Backgammon Club	John Hawks Pub	Milwaukee, WI	2nd Wednesday--7:00 PM	Mary Arnol (mamrol@wi.rr.com)	414/355-5562	9031 N. 70th Street; Milwaukee, WI 53223

NORTHEAST

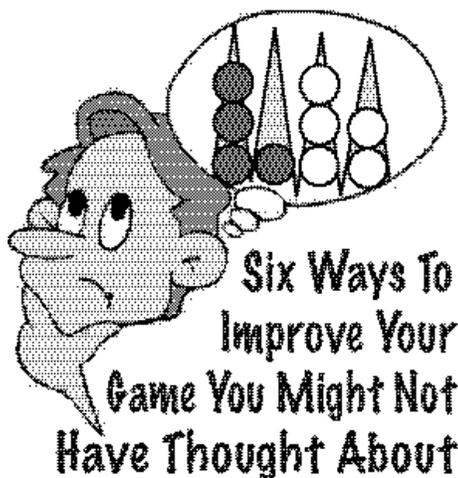
Beltway Backgammon Club	Promenade Cardroom	Bethesda, MD	18 Sundays/year--12:00 PM	Barry Silliman (sillybazz@beltwaybg.org)	240/674-7222	P.O. Box 612; Walkersville, MD 21793
New England Backgammon Club	Holiday Inn	Somerville, MA	Wed.--7 PM; Sun. mthly--12:30 PM	Doug Zare (douglas.zare@gmail.com)	617/447-4596	115 Fulkerson Street; Cambridge, MA 02141
Mid Jersey Backgammon Club	Town & County Inn	Keyport, NJ	Thursday--7:30 PM	Alan Grunwald (alan205@aol.com)	732/598-2988	205 Doe Trail; Morganville, NJ 07751
Midtown Backgammon & Chess Club	Club Room	New York, NY	Daily--12 PM; Tur. Sun--2:30 PM	Beverly Flowers (flowers_beverly@hotmail.com)	212/575-2003	265 W. 37th Street 303; New York, NY 10018
Times Square Backgammon & Chess	Bryant Park	New York, NY	Daily except Sun.--12 PM April-Dec.	Victor Ashkenazi (victorashkenazi@yahoo.com)	973/204-6932	1021 Harmon Cove Towers; Secaucus, NJ 07094
Pittsburgh Backgammon Club	Hartner's Restaurant	Cranberry Twp., PA	3rd Sunday Monthly--1:00 pm	John Grecni (JGrecni@MSA.com)	724/991-8725	129 Lincoln Avenue; Butler, PA 16001
Tysons Corner Backgammon Club	Bailey's Pub & Grille	Arlington, VA	Monday--6:45 PM	Bill Pow (bill_22003@hotmail.com)	703/936-7224	9310 Hedgerford St.; Manassas Park, VA 20111

SOUTH

Suncoast Backgammon Association	New York, New York Lounge	Clearwater, FL	Monday & Friday--6:30 PM	Bob Carpenter (5point@verizon.net)	727/771-6544	1801 Eastlake Rd. 12E; Palm Harbor, FL 34685
South Florida Backgammon Club	NorthRidge Raw Bar & Restaurant	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Sat.--1:00 PM; Sun. mthly--1:00 PM	Elayne Feinstein (BginFla210@aol.com)	954/249-1416	649 W. Oakland Park Bl. 108A; Oakland Park, FL 33311
Atlanta Backgammon Association	Landmark Sidedoor Lounge	Atlanta, GA	Monday--7:00 PM	Dave Cardwell (info@BginGa.com)	770/333-1876	111 Radford Circle SW; Marietta, GA 30060
"	Mazzy's Sports Bar & Grill	Roswell, GA	2nd Sat. bimonthly--12:30 PM	"	"	"
Louisville Backgammon Club	Fox and Hound Pub & Grille	Louisville, KY	1st & 3rd Tuesday--6:30 PM	Quint McTyeire (nm@gdm.com)	502/587-3672	4906 Crofton Road; Louisville, KY 40207
Charlotte Backgammon Club	O'Charley's	Charlotte, NC	Tuesday--6:30 PM	Jeb Horton (jebh@carolina.rr.com)	704/814-0850	2217-D Matthews Twp Pkwy 128; Matthews, NC 28105
Charleston Backgammon Society	O'Charley's	N. Charleston, SC	Monday--7:00 PM	Brett Meyer (bmbmeyer@comcast.net)	843/442-1841	8058 Long Shadow Ln.; N. Charleston, SC 29406
Nashville Backgammon Club	Sam's Place	Nashville, TN	Wednesday--6:45 PM	J.P. White (jpwwhite3@bellsouth.net)	615/824-9461	114 Dorcas Drive; Hendersonville, TN 37075

CANADA

Natl'l Capital Backgammon Club	Bobby's Bar & Restaurant	Ottawa, ON	1st Sunday monthly--10:00 AM	Eden Windish (eden-windish@rogers.com)	613/741-2530	396 Bangs St.; Ottawa ON, K1K 2N6; Canada
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By Phil Simborg

I don't pretend to be one of the game's great players—it's clear from Snowie's evaluation of my play that I am a far cry from the best. But you must remember that I've only been playing 45 years, so give me time.

Even if I had another 45 years, I would never be one of the game's greats—I'm simply neither smart enough nor talented enough. And I suspect that's true for 99% of us who play backgammon. But there are two things that keep me coming back for more: winning and learning. Funny, I think the two go hand-in-hand, as the more I learn, the more I seem to win.

If you want to get better, there are some logical things you can do to improve your game. If you read the many fine backgammon books and articles; if you practice; if you play with better players and learn from them; if you take lessons from great players; if you play against Snowie and learn from your mistakes; your game will improve. I have done all of the above, and it works. But there are some other things you should add to the above that will also greatly improve your results:

1. Become a good pip-counter and pip-count estimator. If you get in the habit of always knowing how you stand in the race, it will give you an edge. Knowing the pip-count affects your cube and checker play decisions most of the time. Pip-counting is a skill that anyone can learn. The more you do it, the easier it gets.

2. Develop the right attitude about luck. And the best attitude is to *forget luck*. Don't even think about who is getting the better rolls, or if you just got lucky or unlucky. Put it out of your mind completely. Whether you were lucky your last roll, last game, or last match has nothing to do with what will happen your next roll, next game, or next match. Thinking about luck

is simply a distraction from concentrating on what really matters—your cube and checker play decisions. You are more likely to make the mathematically correct play if you are not influenced by your “gut” feelings or fears about your opponent rolling a joker that there is no good way to avoid.

3. Want to be a winner? Pick your spots carefully. A true intermediate player has little chance in the Masters division. If you consistently play money games against players who are better than you, you will consistently lose. It won't be any fun hurting both your pocketbook and your ego, and it may even cause you to stop playing altogether.

4. Imitate great players. I've had the good fortune to play against and watch many of the greats, and I try to copy them in terms of their habits, their demeanor, and their approach to the game. David Wells and Neil Kazaross have an intensity over the board that lets you know there's no way they will ever give up on a match or a game—they're in it to the end!

When faced with a tough play, Jake Jacobs, Kit Woolsey, Perry Gartner, and Joe Sylvester don't just say, “What the heck” and play a hunch. They sit there and carefully analyze and calculate. (For example, Jake counts the pips, counts the shots, calculates the match equity differences and possible outcome for each play, searches his memory for a similar position or situation from a previous match he studied 30 years ago, remembers a joke or two and a story about someone long dead, and then makes the best play.) I find that when I “act” like the players I admire, I am more likely to go through similar decision-making processes

yielding better decisions.

5. I've saved the most important advice for last: You've got to want to win. Let's face it, backgammon is a zero sum game. You cannot win unless someone else loses. You need a killer instinct. If you don't like crushing your opponent; if you don't enjoy bringing a little misery to someone else by turning them into a loser; if you don't have a strong, competitive spirit; you've picked the wrong pastime. Every move and every cube decision you make is made with one goal in mind: that you will win and your opponent will lose.

I was fortunate enough to have been born the youngest of two brothers, a step-sister, and two stepbrothers, all of whom were smarter, bigger, and faster than me as we grew up. So I learned to fight and be competitive, and I know that helps me keep fighting and clawing away in every match and every game I'm in. If you give up, you lose. Keep fighting—keep looking for angles to minimize your losses and maximize your wins—and you are more likely to succeed.—*Phil Simborg*

[Phil Simborg finished as the American Backgammon Tour's No. 2 ranked player for 2005, and his all-time standing is 29th out of 1157. He readily admits (and experts agree) that his technical play is far below that of the backgammon giants, which makes Phil living proof of his philosophies on competition.]

Also note that his article is titled “Six Ways To Improve Your Game . . .” yet only five ways are presented, further demonstrating that you don't have to be that smart to be a winner!—Ed.] Δ



Carolina/Pitt Connection:

Play in both the Carolina Invitational (Jan. 13–15) and Pittsburgh Championships and you'll be entered in a drawing at the ABT Awards Ceremony in Pittsburgh. Two prizes: (a) \$75 and free entry into the 2007 Carolina Invitational, and (b) \$75 and refund on 2006 Pittsburgh Championships entry fee!

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TAKI TAKES TITLE— BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

International backgammon boardmaker extraordinaire Tak Morioka is the Chicago Bar Point Club's Player of the Year for 2005. Taki gained the BPC points lead in February and never looked back. His 34.08 points was



6.60 points ahead of his nearest competitor David Rockwell. Herb Roman finished third with 25.20.

En route to his first BPC Player of the Year title since 1991, Taki collected five monthly honors. The points earned this year bring Tak's all-time Bar Point Club total to 480.84 (since 1983), and his Chicagoland all-time total to 679.18 (since 1974). These incredible totals lead his nearest rivals by roughly 200 points in each category.

The Bar Point Club Top 20 will be honored at Awards Night 10 January at the Purple Hotel where more than \$1,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded. Δ

2005 PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

NATIONAL (Alphabetized by State)

American Backgammon Tour: Neil Kazaross (IL)
Gammon Associates (CA): Jim Wark
Backgammon Club of San Diego (CA): Tom Fahland
Backgammon By The Bay (CA): Ted Chee
Rocky Mountain Backgammon Club (CO): Tom Christner
South Florida Backgammon Club (FL): Carlos Azcarate
Atlanta Backgammon Assn. (GA): Gregg Cattanach
Bloomington-Normal BG Club (IL): Jim Zimmerman
Chicago Bar Point Club (IL): Tak Morioka
Peoria Backgammon Club (IL): Milad Doueichi
Sangamon Valley BG Assn. (IL): Jena Jennings
Winnetka Backgammon Club (IL): Larry Goldstein
Hoosier Backgammon Club (IN): Sean Garber
Northwest Indiana BG Assoc. (IN): John O'Hagan
Louisville Backgammon Club (KY): Quint McTyeire
Beltway Backgammon Club (MD): Barry Silliman
New England BG Club (MA): Walter Trice,

Wizard of Wednesday Night: Herb Gurland
Flint Area Backgammon Club (MI): Jim Slomkoski
Grand Rapids BG Club (MI): Chris Haviland
Plymouth Backgammon Club (MI): Ralph Dietz
Metro North Backgammon Club (MI): Sal Chehayeb
Twin Cities Backgammon Club (MN): Duane Jensen
Kansas City Backgammon (MO): Eric Barr
Las Vegas Backgammon Club (NV): Cy Yerhos
Charlotte Backgammon Club (NC): Jeb Horton
Greater Columbus BG Club (OH): Mary Hickey
Ohio State Backgammon Club (OH): Bob Green
Miami Valley BG Club (OH): Larry Buckingham
Pittsburgh Backgammon Club (PA): Bill Versaw
Charleston BG Society (SC): Brett Meyer
Nashville Backgammon Club (TN): Rollow Mickle
Dallas Backgammon League (TX): Tom Wheeler
Houston Backgammon Club (TX): James Bray
Tyson's Corner Backgammon Club (VA): Bill Finneran
Puget Sound BG Club (WA): John Gamalielson
Madison Backgammon Club (WI): Charlie Walter

INTERNATIONAL (Alphabetized by Country)

World Champion: Dennis Carlston (US)
World Backgammon Association: Horst Ernst (Germany)
European Champion: François Tardieu (France)
National Capital BG Club (Canada): Alan Robinson
Italian Champion: Francesco Mauri
BIBA Grand Prix (UK): Adrian Jones
BIBA Ranking (UK): John Slattery
Gammonitis Rating Champ (UK): Dod Davies
Gammonitis (UK): Martin Barkwill

Let the Backgammon



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www.chicagopoint.com/2006mbc.html



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Open to all kids who are not yet in High School, this event has a small \$10 entry fee with big prizes: iPod Nano, iPod Shuffle, plus \$100 in cash and beautiful trophies. Opening round will be best 4-out-of-7 games with **NODOUBLING CUBE**. Additionally, Gammons and Backgammons don't count for extra. Bring any kid you know (8th grade or younger) to this high-equity event!

GAMMON'S GATHERING

Eleven backgammon players from the old Gammon's of Chicago Club attended the Fall Trophy Tourney 11 November at the Purple Hotel in Lincolnwood, Illinois. Pictured from left: Richard Stawowy, Jerry Brooks, Peter Kalba, Ken Bond, Phil Martorelli, Ida Weil Zeman (former Gammon's codirector), Bill Davis, Yamin Yamin, Herb Roman, Dave Cramer, and Tak Morioka. Δ



PRO AM QUEST . . .

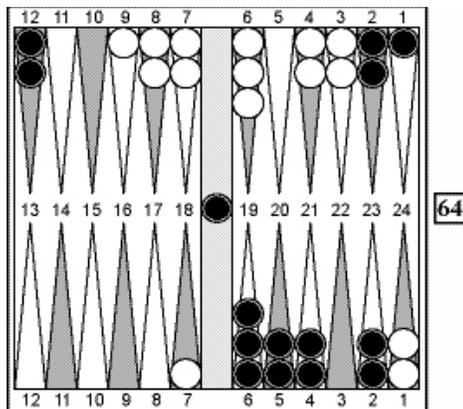
[Continued from page 1]

continued. We defeated Lars Bonding & Morton Nielsen in the quarterfinals, and Paul Weaver & Donald Kahn in the semi's. There are some great stories from these matches, including Tami actually winning a fight over a cube decision (although Kit was later vindicated by Snowie) and a non-punched time clock which resulted in a visibly shaken opposing team, but those stories are for another time. Never were we in jeopardy in either match and before we knew it, we were in the finals.

Appropriately, the finals match was our toughest tournament test. Our opponents, Sandor Lylloff (Denmark) and Mark Teltscher (England), may not be well known, but they are certainly top players. The evidence was readily apparent in their deft handling of the tough teams on the other side of the bracket.

It didn't take long for us to discover the 23-point finals was not going to go as smoothly as the previous matches. We had gained a 3-2 advantage when things started to go south. The dice hiccuped and we found ourselves in this position with a 3-1 to play:

POS. 1: 23-point Pro Am finals. Woolsey/Jones (Black) lead Lylloff/Teltscher (White) 3-2. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.**



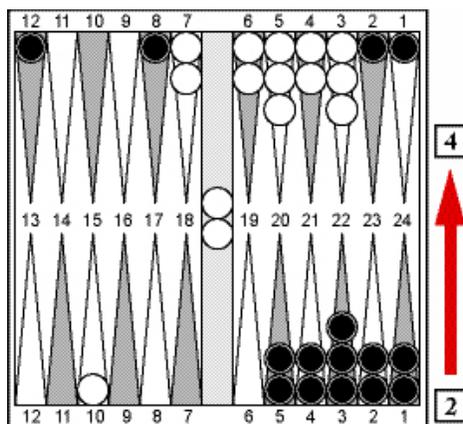
After discussing several options, we decided not to let our opponents attack us on their 5-point. We were completely off base in our analysis. We simply did not have the timing to play any kind of back game. We should have been focusing on escaping, either through making an advanced anchor or moving towards the outfield. If we didn't manage to shift forward, our game figured to fall apart in a hurry. But we followed our original line of thinking and played B/24, 6/3.

Our opponents promptly and properly doubled, and we decided to throw good money after bad by taking. The take would have been okay had we played our previous roll correctly, but in the actual position we

had a clear pass.

Before we knew it, they had their 5-point and we were in big trouble. But, never being ones to give up without a fight, we scrambled around with a desperate counterattack. A fortuitous 6-1 for us, played 24/17, and a flunk on the part of our opponents brought us to this position and had us itching for some cube action:

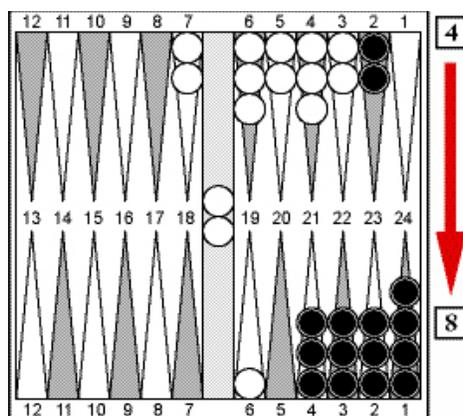
POS. 2: 23-point Pro Am finals. Woolsey/Jones (Black) lead Lylloff/Teltscher (White) 3-2. **BLACK RECUBES TO 4.**



We agreed that we wouldn't like to be doubled if we were in their shoes, and to us that spelled recube. Our action was premature at best. Wins generate lots of gammons, but too often we aren't going to escape in time and our board will collapse allowing them easy reentry. To make matters worse, releasing possession of the cube took away our guarantee of playing the game to conclusion. If things go badly for us, our opponents are likely to have a very efficient redouble to 8 in a position where we don't want to take, but the only other option is to drop a 4-cube. Failing to consider all of this, we incorrectly redoubled.

Our opponents made no mistake and immediately scooped up the cube. We failed to roll a 6, and soon reached this position:

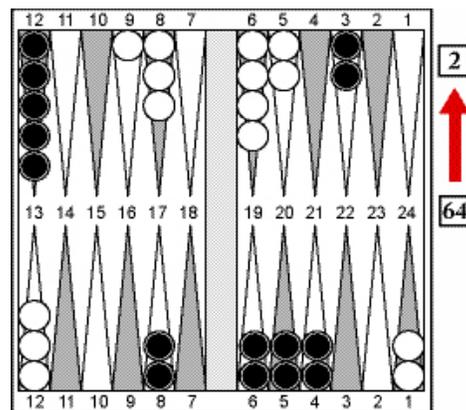
POS. 3: 23-point Pro Am finals. Woolsey/Jones (Black) lead Lylloff/Teltscher (White) 3-2. **WHITE RECUBES TO 8.**



Without missing a beat they shipped the cube. It was the perfectly-timed redouble we didn't want to see. Our position still had a lot of play, but most of time things will go badly and we could easily end up gammoned on an 8-cube. This early in a long match the score is usually irrelevant, but it certainly comes into play with this large of a cube. We finally decided to give up four points and trail 6-3, which turned out to be the proper decision.

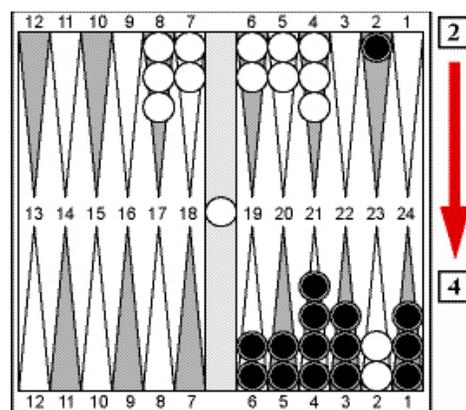
We lost more ground, falling behind in the seesaw battle 10-13. Then came the turning point of the match:

POS. 4: 23-point Pro Am finals. Woolsey/Jones (Black) trail Lylloff/Teltscher (White) 10-13. **BLACK DOUBLES.**



We speculated on an early positional double. They had an easy take, and properly did so. After some difficult priming decisions, our board started to collapse and we reached the following situation:

POS. 5: 23-point Pro Am finals. Woolsey/Jones (Black) trail Lylloff/Teltscher (White) 10-13. **WHITE RECUBES TO 4.**



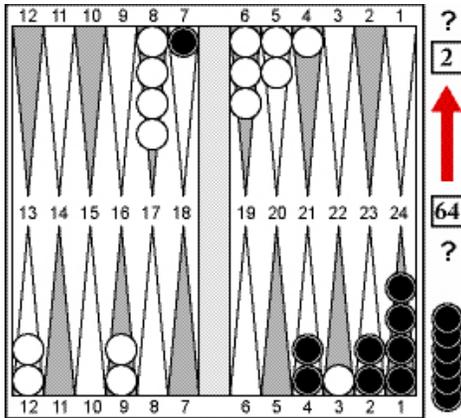
Our opponents misjudged the position and recubed to 4. This may look right, but their position is not nearly as strong (nor is ours as weak) as one might think. We still have our five point board and they still have three men back with one on the bar. If we roll an ace, they will be sweating

[Continued on page 12]

**PROBLEM #314
ANALYZED**

by Kit Woolsey

9-point match. Black and White are tied at 6-6. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Cube decision problems near the end of a match can be very tricky. Good strategy is to break these type of problems down into a series of questions. Here are the questions pertinent to the solution of Problem #314 (in the order they should be answered):

- If White takes, what will future cube actions look like?
- Should White take?
- Should Black double?

If White does take, she is close to a “nothing to lose” redouble. Almost all of the time either White will get gammoned or she will reach a position which is redouble/take anyway. There are three possible courses the game might follow:

- Black gets away, either now or sometime in the future. In that case White will get gammoned just about all the time, so an earlier redoubling would cost White nothing.
- Black is forced to leave a second blot which White has a shot at. If that happens White will redouble, and Black will still have a take (or at worst a very close pass), so it won't matter if White has already redoubled.
- White completes her prime, and walks it home for a closeout. If that happens White won't quite have a redouble unless the positioning of her other three checkers comes out very favorably. If White is inefficient and is forced to open her 6-point having taken only one or two checkers off and Black enters immediately, White will not have a redouble. This is the variation where

White will have gained by not redoubling immediately—where she can lose a single game with the cube on 2.

Of course there is no reason for White to redouble immediately. She won't be losing her market for quite a while whatever happens. But White doesn't gain much by waiting. Thus, White's match equity will be only a very small amount better than if she takes and redoubles immediately. This observation allows us to simplify the pass/take decision.

Should White take? If White passes, she'll trail 6-7 (3 away, 2 away) for about 40% equity (or slightly more depending on which match equity table you use). How often does White win the game? Black escapes completely with 4-4, and leaves a single shot with 5-4 and 6-4. Everything else (including 5-5) leaves a double shot. If White misses the first shot, she has potential later shot vig, particularly if Black is unable to advance past White's midpoint. That's a lot of shot-hitting potential. I would estimate that White will hit a shot around 70% of the time.

If White does hit a shot, how often does she win? The position figures to play quite comfortably, and White should be a substantial favorite to eventually make a prime and walk it home. Of course that won't necessarily win for her since Black has six checkers off. In addition, White has the possibility of picking up a second checker. So it looks like White will be a favorite to win the game if she hits a shot.

Let's say White is 60% to win after hitting. That gives her $70\% \times 60\% = 42\%$ winning chances—enough to justify taking even if we assume that White mistakenly redoubles immediately. White gets perhaps another 1% of juice from proper cube handling, getting her match-winning chances up to 43%. This is well above the 40% White gets from passing, so if the estimates are correct (or even close to correct) White has a take if Black doubles.

Should Black double? If Black owned the cube, the answer would be a resounding “no.” It would be important to keep the cube away from White as she is quite likely to wind up with an efficient double of her own. But Black doesn't own the cube, so he can't prevent White from doubling. In almost all variations, either Black will zip on by and gammon White, or White will get the advantage (either by completing a prime or getting a shot at a second checker) and double at some point. Thus, Black will almost always be winning or losing twice the value of the cube whether he doubles or not. Since the match score is even and

Black is a favorite in the game, that argues for doubling. This is somewhat analogous to the reason it is correct to double at 2-away, 2-away on any advantage. You can't stop the other guy from doubling, and once he does double the cube is dead, so you lose nothing by doubling yourself.

It isn't quite that simple. If Black doubles and White eventually makes her prime and redoubles, the cube is now dead. If Black waits and eventually takes White's 2-cube, the cube isn't dead. Black will have the potential to send it back to 4 if he enters quickly and pulls ahead in the race. Thus, Black's cube ownership after having taken White's inevitable double will be of some value. Also, Black might roll something like 2-1 with White missing the shot. Now Black wouldn't be good enough to play on for the gammon, as he would be if he had gotten by the midpoint and White had missed. Black would have an efficient double, and White would probably have a pass. Black wouldn't get his gammon and he would have wished he had doubled the previous turn. But Black still gets good use of the cube, so the cost of not doubling before isn't full value (as it would be if Black had gotten past the midpoint).

Are these factors sufficient to compensate for the fact that Black is simply a favorite and has market losers? Close, but I believe that they are, and that Black's theoretically correct action is to hold off doubling.

In an actual match, Black should probably double anyway. If doubling is wrong, it can't be wrong by much as we have seen. Turning the cube gives the opponent a chance to make a mistake and pass a take, or maybe take a pass if the previous estimates were off. They can't make a mistake if they aren't given the opportunity. Δ

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WINNER'S CIRCLE

NOV. 2005—JAN. 2006



•**25th Swedish Open** (Stockholm, Sweden; 3-6 Nov.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (69): 1-Fredrik Reinholdson, 2-Per-Ola Valfridsson; 1C-Timo Väätäinen (FIN). ADVANCED (32): 1-Kjell Jernselius, 2-Thomas Delbåge; 1C-Mikael Enbom. INTERMEDIATE (32): 1-Martin Lindblom, 2-Ralf Sundberg; 1C-Murat Ersöz. BEGINNERS (15): 1-Jan-Lennart Hallefjärd, 2-Simon Chabo. DOUBLES (25 teams): 1-Gina's Team, 2-Dr. Dägges.

•**Townharbour Trophy** (Hinckley, England; 5-6 Nov.)... OPEN (26): 1-Eddie Barker, 2-Mardi Ohannessian, 3-Peter Christmas; 1C-Bob Young. FRIDAY WARM-UP (10): 1-Mardi Ohannessian. £100 JACKPOT (8): 1-Peter Bennet, 2-Paul Gilbertson. DOUBLES (4): 1-"Fawking Hell."

•**BPC Fall Trophy Tourney** (Lincolnwood, IL; 11 Nov.)... OPEN (25): 1-Gary Kay, 2-Michael Ginat, 3/4-Jerry Brooks / Mary Franks (NV); 1C-Paul Knapp, 2C-Efim Liberman. INTERMEDIATE (16): 1-Joe Auszmann, 2-Phyllis Smolinski, 3/4-Alice Kay / Adrian Rios; 1C-Dan Weymouth, 2C-Phil Martorelli. 1-POINT TOURNEY (32): 1/2-Dave Settles / Dan Weymouth... *This was Gary Kay's second Fall Trophy win in the past three years.*



BPC Fall Trophy Tourney winners Gary Kay (Open) & Joe Auszmann (Intermediate).

•**Northwest Indiana Club Monthly** (Porter, IN; 12 Nov.)... OPEN (8): 1-John O'Hagan.

•**Turkey Trot Open** (Houston, TX; 12 Nov.)... OPEN (19): 1-Gonzalo Molina, 2-Gary Oleson; 1C-Jorge Salazar.

•**Gammonitis League Tournament** (Oxford, England; 12-13 Nov.)... OPEN (18): 1-Mike Heard, 2-Chris Ternel; 1C-Rob Wills; 1LC-John Clark. £50 JACKPOT (8): 1/2-Peter Bennet / Chris Ternel.

•**Miami Valley Club Monthly** (Dayton, OH; 13 Nov.)... OPEN (6): 1-Mike Rezai, 2-Roger Foster.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 13 Nov.)... OPEN (13): 1-R. Rickard, 2-M. Battaglia (NJ).

•**Atlanta Fall Shootout** (Roswell, GA; 19 Nov.)... OPEN: 1-Steve Kovach, 2-Gerry Tansey, 3-Ken Carlson.

•**Greater Columbus Monthly** (Hilliard, OH; 20 Nov.)... OPEN (8): 1-Paul Berg (MI), 2-Peter Isler.

•**Pittsburgh Monthly** (Cranberry Twp, PA; 20 Nov.)... OPEN (7): 1-Abbas Zaltash, 2-Phil Ritt.

•**Danish Championships** (Copenhagen, Denmark; 26-27 Nov.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (128): 1-Thomas Hansen, 2-Brian Ullitz; 1C-Kevin Jørgensen, 2C-Rasmus G. Hansen. DM at DMP: 1-Michael K.

Larsen. FUNGOLF CUP TOURNEY: 1-Jan Olsen.

•**South Australia Spring Tourney** (Adelaide, South Australia; 27 Nov.)... OPEN (16): 1-Emil Andrawos, 2-Peter Geelen; 1C-Chris Benham.

•**Ritz Invitational** (Henderson, NV; 29 Nov.-4 Dec.)... OPEN (32): 1-Abe Mosseri (NY), 2-Chip Reese (NV), 3/4-Dennis Carlston (CA) / Christoph Haller (AUT). FREEROLL 1-POINT WINNERS: Arkadiy Tsinis (NV), Steve Zolotow (NV), Larry Liebster (NJ), Christoph Haller (AUT), Bob Wachtel (CA), Martha Ghio (NY). FREEROLL POKER TOURNEY (50): 1-Ron Rubin (FL)... *Mike Svobodny and Louise Goldsmith hosted. Hurricane damage in Cancun forced the event to be relocated to the Lake Las Vegas Ritz Carleton.*

•**California State Championship—ABT** (Los Angeles, CA; 2-4 Dec.)... OPEN (60): 1-Stepan Nuniyants (WA), 2-Wayne Jeffcoat (CA), 3-J.P. Deleume (CA); 1C-Harvey Gillis (WA), 2C-Doug Mayfield (CA). ADVANCED (28): 1-Michael Schechter (CA), 2-Richard Armbruster (CA); 1C-Neal Rosensweig (FL), 2C-Roz Ferris (IL). LIMITED (8): 1-Albert Lee (CA), 2-Jamie Lind (CA); 1C-Denise Bonfilio (CA). SUPER-32: 1-Mark Antranikian (CA), 2-Oliver Fink (Germany), 3/4-Roy Gandy (CA) / Jon Viotor (CA). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Patrick Gibson & Steve Sax (CA), 2-Paul Gedigian & Jim Wark (CA). OVERFLOW DOUBLES (8 teams): 1-Michiko Okuma & Don Thompson (JPN). 2-POINT QUICKIES (24): 1-Carter Mattig (IL). \$50 JACKPOT #1 (8): 1-David Taniguchi (CA). #2 (8): 1/2-Avi Acioglu (CA) / Neal Rosensweig (FL). SUNDAY JACKPOT (8): 1-Michiko Okuma (JPN).

•**Bar Point Saturday** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 3 Dec.)... OPEN (16): 1-David Rockwell, 2-Ken Tyszko; 1C-Ken Bond, 2C-Michael Ginat.

•**Springfield Series #2** (Peoria, IL; 3 Dec.)... OPEN (20): 1-Sean Garber (IN), 2-Scott Johnston (IN); 1C-Wally Kuester, 2C-Faddoul Khoury; 1LC-Rob Farmer. TAKI QUALIFIER: Sharon Lefferts.

•**Gilbertson UK Finals** (Hinckley, UK; 3-4 Dec.)... OPEN (46): 1-Julian Fetterlein, 2-Bob Young; 1C-Tony Lee; 1LC-Roland Herrera. CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS (8): 1-Uldis Lapikens. BIBA GRAND PRIX PLAYOFFS: 1-Adrian Jones, 2-John Slattery. FRIDAY WARMUP (12): 1-David Nathan. DOUBLES (5): 1-"Right Pair of Christmas Anchors." £50 JACKPOT (8): 1/2-R. Herrera / J. Fetterlein.

•**New England Club Monthly** (Somerville, MA; 4 Dec.)... EXPERT: 1-Doug Zare, 2-Steve Cummings; 1C-Howard Rosenthal, 2C-Herb Gurland.

•**Kansas City Club Monthly** (Kansas City, MO; 5 Dec.)... OPEN (6): 1-Kathleen Schuler.

•**South Australia Monthly KO** (Adelaide, South Australia; 6 Dec.)... OPEN (8): 1-Angelo Ali.

•**Houston Tournament of Champions** (Houston, TX; 10 Dec.)... OPEN (16): 1-Scott Ward, 2-Bill Riles; 1C-Dr. James Bray.

•**So. Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 11 Dec.)... OPEN (8): 1-Mike Corbett, 2-Neal Rosensweig.

•**Games People Play Christmas Tourney** (Chicago, IL; 17 Dec.)... 1/2-J.A. Miller / Gary Kay; 1C-Elaine Andrews-Smith, 2C-Ken Tibbs. 2-POINT

QUICKIE (16): 1/2-J.A. Miller / Roger Hickman.

•**10th Thailand Open** (South Pattaya, Thailand; 2-8 Jan.)... OPEN (22): 1-Hardy Jonatta (GER), 2-Jake Jacobs (US); 1C-Martyn Nadoll (GER), 2C-Fabrizio Losordo (ITA); 1C-Paul Czapor (GER). INTERMEDIATE (13): 1-Hardy Jonatta (GER), 2-Marvin Khattar (SWE). XMAS TOURNEY (15): 1-Khun Deng (THAI). LADIESTOURNEY (7): 1-Samran Jaiman (THAI/GER)... *Results by Jake Jacobs.*

•**Bloomington/Normal 2005 Playoffs** (Normal, IL; 3 Jan.)... OPEN (10): 1-Dave Cornwall, 2-Jim Dammeyer; 1C/2C-Robert Nagle / Jim Zimmerman.

•**Springfield Series #3** (Normal, IL; 7 Jan.)... OPEN (21): 1-Randy Armstrong, 2-Mike Flohr; 1C-Terry Leahy, 2C-Faddoul Khoury; 1LC-Rob Farmer. TAKI HOLD'EM QUALIFIER: Dave Settles. Δ

AMALGAMATION

Introduce a child to backgammon at this year's Midwest Championships (17-19 March). The \$10 event is open to all kids 8th grade and under and the prizes are terrific: iPod Nano, iPod Shuffle, and \$100 cash... **Joann Feinstein** (IL) is enjoying her great granddaughter **Ayva Gonzalez** who was born 1 December... Watch for Chicago's **Fred Chamanara** on "High Stakes Poker" on the Game Show Network beginning 16 January. Fred put up \$100,000 of his own money to get a seat at the event... Condolences to the family and friends of former Chicagoland player **Harold Seif** (NV) who died of cancer 5 December... Two Winnetka BG player were interviewed in Chicago newspapers in December: **Wright B. George** (a former United Airlines pilot) on the recent Midway Airport runway accident in the Chicago Tribune, and **Ellen Goldsmith** on being a single mom... The New York Daily News reports that the Ace Point Backgammon Club was shut down for running high stakes poker games. **Robert Iler**, who plays **Anthony Soprano, Jr.** on "The Sopranos," was at the club during the raid but wasn't arrested. Only the dealers were busted... Bar Point Club player **Paul Klein** was pictured in the 1 Dec. Chicago Tribune. Klein, a former art gallery owner, is aggressively attempting to raise money to establish a Chicago Art Museum... Gammon Associates director **Patrick Gibson** got quite a surprise at his 8 November weekly event at the Acapulco Cantina in Burbank, CA. Wife **Carla** had 10 members of the USC marching band (Patrick's Alma Mater) march in and play for 15 minutes in honor of Patrick's 65th birthday... Have you heard of Nannon? It's a minute version of backgammon and available at www.nannon.com... A 268 year old French backgammon book (Le Grand Trictrac) sold for \$225 on eBay in December... *La Baraka*, a new restaurant in Skokie, Illinois (8820 Skokie Blvd.) is advertising itself as "a houkah and backgammon lounge." Δ

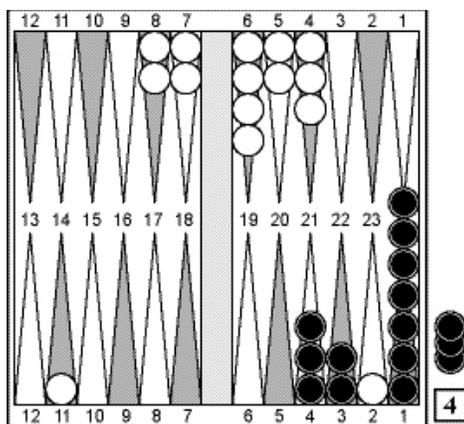
PRO AM QUEST . . .

[Continued from page 9]

big time. Sure things could go bad and we could leave another blot, get hit, and get gammoned, but that is a long shot parlay. They are the ones who have to prove themselves, even if our board does collapse. And, given that they have the lead in the match, this redouble is just too risky.

We had little difficulty taking. They flunked, and we rolled 6-2, maintaining our board for another roll. They flunked again, and we did a little better: 6-1! They stayed on the bar, so we properly played on for the gammon. There were some nervous moments, the scariest being:

POS. 6: 23-point Pro Am finals. Woolsey/Jones (Black) trail Lylloff/Teltscher (White) 10–13. **BLACK DOESN'T DOUBLE.**



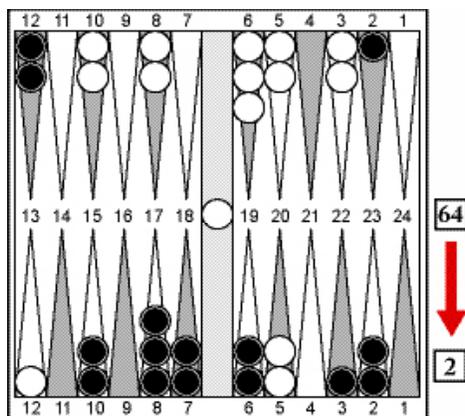
A mere 22 of our 36 rolls leave a shot! But if we do leave a shot they still have to hit it. Then, if they hit, they still have to win. We already have men off and will likely have more if and when they hit. But, more importantly, we own the cube. All this adds up to decent winning chances even if we do leave a shot. So we decided it looked right to risk playing on. And it was. After all, there was no rule saying we had to leave a shot, and we didn't, rolling double 2s, pointing on their blot and bearing off the spare checker. Things continued going our way and we gammoned them by one roll for a big 8-point win and an 18–13 lead.

But it wasn't even close to over yet. Our opponents wanted to win this title just as badly as we did and refused to give up. They kept the pressure on, aggressively utilizing the cube to their advantage and forcing us to drop a couple of doubles we probably should have taken. But they over-shot the mark here:

(See Pos. 7, next column)

Even trailing 17–20 to 23, this double is premature. It is an easy take and their advantage just isn't very strong. The concept

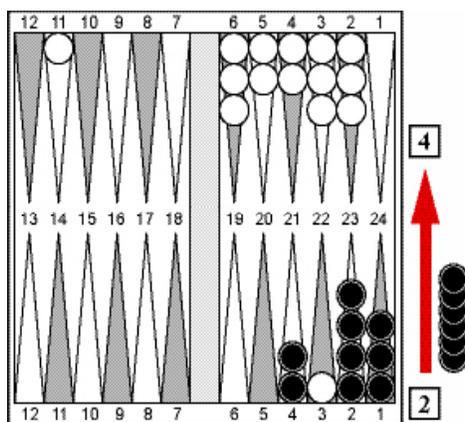
POS. 7: 23-point Pro Am finals. Woolsey/Jones (Black) lead Lylloff/Teltscher (White) 20–17. **WHITE DOUBLES.**



of doubling early at this match score is fine, but this is overdoing it.

With the leader of our team being Kit "of course I take" Woolsey, we didn't give the take a second thought and scooped the cube as soon as it hit the board. Before long, the advantage swung our way and we found ourselves bearing in against a three-point holding game. Facing both gammon chances and losing chances, combined with our match score advantage, it was clear not to redouble. That is until we reached the following setup:

POS. 8: 23-point Pro Am finals. Woolsey/Jones (Black) lead Lylloff/Teltscher (White) 20–17. **BLACK RECUBES TO 4.**



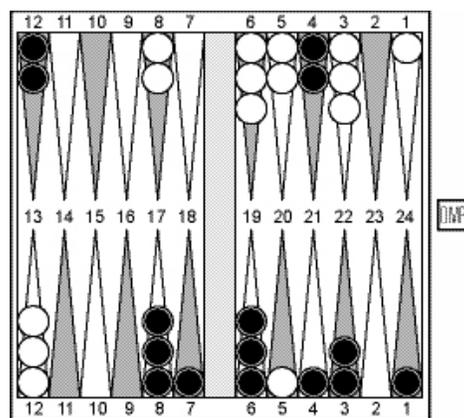
At this point we missed the chance to put the match away. Without a doubt, it is correct here to play on for the gammon. Our losing chances are small, and our gammon chances are quite real. But we mistakenly redoubled. Our opponents said "Crawford who?" and gave us the two points.

A 22–17 lead looked pretty good. But we lost the Crawford game when they hit a critical late shot and we failed to roll a needed set of doubles on the last roll. In the post-Crawford game, we mixed it up for a while and then things went badly and we got gammoned. Suddenly it was double match point! What happened to our nice

lead? Was *Lady Luck* just toying with us yet again? There was only one thing to do, breathe deeply and plunge into a one point match for all the marbles.

The DMP game started badly for us. They rolled an early 3-3, and we were on the ropes. We scrambled to make an advanced anchor on our 21-point to stay in the game. Our opponents had their 20-point and it looked to shape up as a mutual holding game. But they rolled a 6-1 and chose to run with 20/13, bringing us to this position:

POS. 9: 23-point Pro Am finals. Woolsey/Jones (Black) and Lylloff/Teltscher (White) are at DMP. White has just played played 6-1 running 20/13. **BLACK ON ROLL.**



Running was certainly a reasonable decision on their part, as they were ahead in the race and our board was in shreds. But *Lady Luck* decided she might just like it better on our side of the board. We rolled double 5s and played it safe with 21/16(2), 7/2, 6/1. They rolled a 4-1 and chose to stay on our 5-point. Our next roll was a 3-2 and we decided that attacking was the only course of action open to us if we wanted to win this match. We played 8/5*, 4/2 and prayed for a miracle. *Hallelujah*—they danced!

The dice were not quite through toying with us yet though. We rolled 6-6, which was a nice roll that enabled us to make our 4-point but not quite so nice in that it forced us to leave the blot on our 5-point uncovered. But fortune smiled as they danced again, and we rolled 6-2 *finally* closing them out. It was almost—repeat *almost*—anti-climactic after that. The checkers flowed off the board as smoothly as we could have asked, with *Lady Luck* bringing us home for the win and congratulating us on our new title of 2005 Pro Am Doubles Champions.—Kit Woolsey & Tami Jones Δ

(Complete Las Vegas results on page 4.)

In *Understanding Backgammon*, Master player Kit Woolsey looks at the game through an Intermediate's eyes (Tami Jones). The results are enlightening for players from beginner to expert. Price: \$35 from Carol Joy Cole (cjc@tir.com, or 810/232-9731).—Ed.