

22nd nevada state tournament

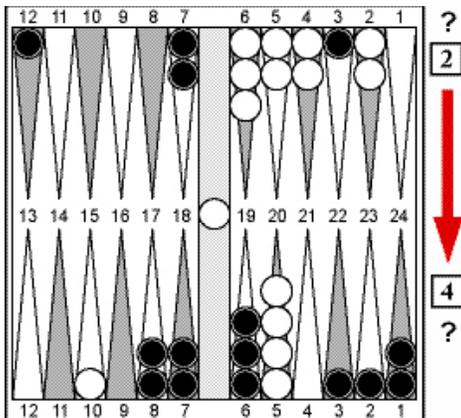
SCONYERS & NAZARIAN SHARE THE SPOTLIGHT IN NEVADA

Californian Jona Alexander entered the Intermediate Division at this year's Nevada State Championship (26-30 April at the Riviera Hotel). Director Howard Markowitz, who allowed Jona to play as an Intermediate at the November 2005 Las Vegas Open, saw no reason to now move him up. But Jona won the 2004 California State title and at this event, there were some complaints that he was overqualified.

So Jona was scratched off the Intermediate Calcutta sheet and penciled into the Championship, conveniently filling out a 64-player field. Two days later, he was in the finals against the 33rd-ranked Backgammon Giant Hugh Sconyers (TX).

After losing the first game, Jona regained the lead and compiled an 8-5 advantage in the 17-point finals. Steve Sax recorded the match, and according to Snowie, both competitors were playing at the high Advanced level prior to the following very strange redoubling sequence:

17-point Nevada State. Jona Alexander (White) leads Hugh Sconyers (Black), 8-5 White on roll. **RECUBE ACTION(S)?**



Although Jona is on the bar aiming at two blots, he is also 34 pips down in the race with six men to bring around. A redouble here would cost Jona 4.41% in match equity (a Snowie error of magnitude

NEVADA JOINS THE TOUR! ABT POINT CALCS TO BE MODIFIED IN 2007

[Details on page 7]

0.488). Jona's recube is a super blunder.

Hugh scooped up the gift, right? Wrong! Hugh dropped here costing himself 5.15% match equity (a whopping 0.570 blunder). Great double, Jona!



Nevada State winner Hugh Sconyers.

The match tightened up with Hugh Sconyers retaking the lead at 14-12. Hugh went on to win the Nevada State Championship 17-14 proving that one bad game does not necessarily decide a match.

\$2000 SUPER JACKPOT

Dana Nazarian rolled through a 16-player field including a nice win over Mike Corbett (FL) in the semifinals to reach the finals of the \$2000 Super Jackpot. The other finalist was fellow Californian Ray

[Continued on page 5]



Trailing 0-3 in the \$2000 Super Jackpot, Dana Nazarian ponders recubing to 4 in the biggest game of the match.

23RD NEVADA STATE TOURNAMENT

CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-Hugh Sconyers (NV), 2-Jona Alexander (CA), 3/4-Tom Wheeler (TX) / Audronis Zunde (CO); 1C-Alan Grunwald (NJ), 2C-Malcolm Davis (TX), 3C/4C-Ray Fogertlund (CA) / Dana Nazarian (CA); 1LC-Alvaro Savio (Brazil), 2LC-Norm Wiggins (CA). INTERMEDIATE (73): 1-Tami Jones (ID), 2-Scott Cole (NV), 3/4-Ron Bruns (CA) / Ernie McCombs (TX); 1C-Bear Lumbra (VT), 2C-Ron Genter (PA), 3C/4C-Larry Arnold (MN) / Charles Toots (CA); 1LC-Richard Ambruster (CA), 2LC-Michael Derylo (CA). BEGINNER (22): 1-Daniel Dangoor (NV), 2-Harry Kaneer (CA), 3/4-Carla Gibson (CA) / Ohannes Nalbantian (CA); 1C/2C-Ashford Kneitel (NV) / Mike Michaels (England); 1LC-Beth Raby (VA), 2LC-Ron Bernstein (VA). SUPER JACKPOT (16): 1-Dana Nazarian (CA), 2-Ray Fogertlund (CA). LIMITED JACKPOT (16): 1-Michael Maxakuli (NV), 2-Shinichiro Kaneko (Japan). BLITZ EVENT (152): 1-Akiko Abe (Japan), 2-Kit Woolsey (CA). MINI-MATCH EVENT (128): 1-Akiko Abe (Japan), 2-Howard Markowitz (NV). DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Chuck Bower (IN) & Frank Frigo (KY), 2-Nack Ballard (CA) & Hsai-Yee (CA). SENIORS TOURNAMENT #1 (64): 1-Ed O'Laughlin (FL), 2-Mike Corbett (FL). #2 (32): 1-Bear Lumbra (VT), 2-Leon Eskinazi (CA). SATURDAY \$300 JACKPOT (8): 1-Yaniv Shimony (Israel), 2-Bob Glass (CA). SATURDAY \$100 JACKPOT (32): 1-Joe Freedman (NM), 2-Doug Wilson (CA). SATURDAY \$50 JACKPOT (8): 1-Joe Apicella (NV), 2-Beth Raby (VA). \$50 AFTER TOURNAMENT TOURNAMENT (28): 1-Kit Woolsey (CA), 2-Steve Sax (CA). \$20 AFTER TOURNAMENT TOURNAMENT (12): 1-Ruth Robbins (WA), 2-Andy Palumbo (NY).

A KISS FOR 66



Nevada Backgammon director Howard Markowitz celebrated his 66th birthday at the Nevada State Championship with a kiss from staffer Carol Joy Cole.

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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CHILDREN ARE THE FUTURE

That Children's Tournament you held at the Midwest Championships this year is something that all directors should consider adding to their events. Backgammon needs new players or else old folks like us will become extinct along with the game!

I'm not playing as much any more—too busy tending to my beautiful 6-year-old daughter Gennifer. Keep up the good work.—*Andrew Liebenthal, Monroe Twp., New Jersey*

'WEAK' IS RELATIVE

I enjoyed reading Duane Jensen's article "Redoubles" in the April POINT. His theme of how weak and strong players approach redoubling to 4 is interesting, and especially for novices and intermediates it's important to learn not to be afraid of "cranking it up."

However, I was taken aback when I looked at the first position from a match I

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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.

May 13	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
May 14*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
May 21*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Gambits Bar, Marriott Hotel, Dayton, Ohio	937/890-2536
May 21	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, Ohio	614/784-8132
May 21	Pittsburgh Monthly Tournament, Hartner's Lounge, Cranberry Twp., PA	412/826-1334
May 26-29	<u>27th Chicago Open, Marriott Oak Brook Hills Resort, Oak Brook, Illinois</u>	847/674-0120
Jun 3	Metro North Saturday Swiss #3, Crash Landing, Warren, Michigan	313/330-7803
Jun 4	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Purple Hotel, Lincolnwood, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jun 4*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Jun 9-11	<u>Los Angeles Open, Sheraton Gateway Hotel, Los Angeles Airport, California</u>	818/901-0464
Jun 10*	Atlanta Summer Shootout, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
Jun 10*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Jun 11*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Gambits Bar, Marriott Hotel, Dayton, Ohio	937/890-2536
Jun 11*	New England Club Playoffs, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	617/945-1257
Jun 18*	Greater Columbus Club Monthly, Lucky's Grille, Hilliard, Ohio	614/784-8132
Jun 18*	Pittsburgh Monthly Tournament, Hartner's Lounge, Cranberry Twp., PA	412/826-1334
Jun 29	Michigan Summer Warm-up, Sheraton, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jun 30-Jul 3	<u>31st Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Novi Hotel, Novi, Michigan</u>	810/232-9731
Jul 28-30	<u>Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin</u>	608/516-9109
Jul 28-30	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York</u>	585/396-0969
Aug 6*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Purple Hotel, Lincolnwood, Illinois	773/583-6464
Aug 10-13	<u>13th Georgia Championships, Marriott Atlanta Perimeter Center, Atlanta, GA</u>	770/333-1876
Aug 17-20	<u>Florida State Championships, Fort Lauderdale Marriott North, Florida</u>	954/249-1416
Sep 1-4	<u>54th Indiana Open, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana</u>	317/255-8902
Sep 29-Oct 1	<u>Pacific Northwest Championships, Holiday Inn SeaTac, Seattle, Washington</u>	253/856-7513
Oct 6-8	<u>Illinois State Championships, Holiday Inn City-Centre, Peoria, Illinois</u>	309/699-6005
Nov 1-5*	<u>2006 Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada</u>	702/893-6025
Nov 5-9*	<u>2006 Las Vegas Pro Am, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada</u>	702/893-6025
Dec 1-3	<u>California State Championship, Sheraton Gateway, Los Angeles Airport, CA</u>	818/901-0464
Jan 20-27	<u>Backgammon On Board 8, Princess Cruise, Los Angeles to Mexican Riviera</u>	773/583-6464

OUTSIDE USA

May 18-21	18th WBF European Championship, Velden Casino, Velden, Austria	39331-923537
May 25-28	12th Oslo Open, Vika Atrium Hotel, Oslo, Norway	4791-601277
May 27-28	15th Città di Torino, Maison Musique, Rivoli, Turin, Italy	39349-648868
Jun 1-4	2nd Aix les Bains Open, Casino Grand Cercle, Savoie, France	336-62467001
Jun 2-4	Austrian Masters Finale, Café Heine, Vienna, Austria	43664-2404285
Jun 3-4	Hilton Trophy, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Jun 8-11	2nd BG & Poker Torneio, Flat-Home Green Home, Alto Capivari, Brazil	55118-2627775
Jun 10-11	Gammonitis League Tournament, Eynsham Hall, Oxford, England	441634-840592
Jun 14-18*	2nd Belgian Open, Grand Casino Kursaal Oostende, Oostende, Belgium	49171-5422222
Jun 15-18*	Torneio de Gamão, Pousada Do Xão, Arraiald Ajuda, Bahia, Brazil	55219-4982218
Jun 29-Jul 2	2nd Sommer-Cup & DBGL Team-Cup, Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49711-486190
Jul 1-2	Gammonitis League Tournament, Eynsham Hall, Oxford, England	441634-840592
Jul 6-9	2nd Lucien Barrière Gold Cup & Cannes Open, Cannes, France	392-69018168
Jul 8-9	Keren Di Bona Memorial, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Jul 10-16	31st World Championship, Fairmont Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	USA: 954/527-4033
Jul 14-16*	Festival of Games Czech Open, CEZ, Pardubice, Czech Republic	jmazuch@avekont.cz
Jul 18-21	3rd Nations Cup, Palm Beach Casino, Cannes, France	336-62467001
Jul 20-23	Riviera IV Tournament, Palm Beach Casino, Cannes, France	336-62467001
Jul 22-23*	Danish Mixed Doubles, Foreningshuset Strandlyst, Humlebæk, Denmark	4561-331133
Jul 29-30	11th Liverpool Open, Liverpool Bridge Club, Liverpool, England	441514-283082
Aug 5-6	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Aug 11-13*	BG Sommerfestival, Hotel GlockenSpitze, Altenkirchen, Germany	49521-64314
Aug 19-20*	Gammonitis Live Challenge Finals, Eynsham Hall, Oxford, England	441634-840592
Aug 19-28	10th MindSports Olympiad Backgammon, Manchester, England	441522-888676
Aug 23-30*	Bristol International Festival of Backgammon, Clifton, Bristol, England	441179-756349
Aug 31-Sep 3*	16th Mitteleuropa Championship, HIT Casino Park, Nova Gorica, Slovenia	39331-923537
Sep 1-3*	Franken-Cup Open-Air, Hotel Daucher, Nürnberg, Germany	49711-486190
Sep 9-10*	Backpacker Backgammon Trophy, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Sep 16-17*	Gammonitis League Tournament, Eynsham Hall, Oxford, England	441634-840592
Sep 20-24*	1st Portuguese Open & Grand Prix d'Estoril, Casino Estoril, Portugal	491715-422222
Sep 29-Oct 3*	1st Panorama-Open, Erfurt, Germany	49711-486190
Oct 6-8*	9th Austrian Open, Hotel Veronika, Seefeld, Austria	39331-923537
Oct 6-9*	12th Japan Open, Nakano Sunplaza, Tokyo, Japan	817-55775016

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

played against Neil Kazaross in the 2nd Chance bracket at the Minnesota Championships, (It was actually Oct. 2003.) I looked at the position and then read these phrases: "The weak player in this position is relieved because he accepted the cube and turned it around . . ." and "The weak player talks himself out of redoubling . . ." and ". . . Gregg should go for it."

I see that I have the black checkers, I own the cube and it's my turn to redouble. I guess that means I must be "the weak player"!?! If there are two players at a table and one is Neil, I grant you that perhaps 99.99% of the time the other guy is weaker. However, I've put forth considerable effort to work my way out of the *Weak Players'*

Club. I beat Neil in this match which put me in the finals of the Main event; I also won the Master's Jackpot that weekend. It was one of my best weekends on the ABT. (See "3-Away At Mystic Lake" in Chicago Point #160).

Also, I did not talk myself out of redoubling, but did double Neil to 4 at that point. It's a solid double and an easy take right in the middle of the doubling window. The last sentence could have read, "A weak player would often miss this opportunity, but Gregg properly took advantage here and spun it to 4."

In the first sentence I'm sure the author meant to say "A weak player might be relieved . . ." instead of "The weak player in this position is relieved . . ." It's funny how an indefinite article can change the whole meaning. But I'm glad my name was spelled

right, and it reminds me of that old adage: "There's no such thing as bad publicity."—*Gregg Cattanach, Doraville, Georgia*

We confess to making the change from "A weak" to "The weak," but only so it would match the reference to "the weak" shown later in the same paragraph. The world is in agreement that Gregg Cattanach, #50 on the current "Giants of Backgammon" list, is certainly not a "weak" player.—Ed.

USBL: BACKGAMMON FOR FREE

I've been the director of the Kansas City Backgammon Club for almost 2 years. Over that time I've thought a lot about how to attract new players to our club. I've enjoyed reading in the CHICAGO POINT about others' efforts to get new people involved, like a free first-time entry. I eventually ended up looking at other board game and card game clubs for ideas, such as the Amateur Poker League, the US Chess Federation, and the National Scrabble Association. Two attributes of these clubs that I think help attract members are no entry fees (at least for APL and most NSA clubs) and national ratings systems. I think that both of these would help increase the popularity of backgammon tournaments.

An entry fee does act as a barrier of entry for some people for various reasons. Many very new beginners are not willing to risk even a small entry fee when they barely even know how to play the game. And there are also many experienced online players who play online for free but are intimidated by live clubs that focus on money play. Online sites have proven that there are thousands of backgammon players who enjoy playing

[Continued on page 4]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2006

Compiled through 9 Apr. 2006 after 4 events
(Upcoming events: Chicago Open, LA Open)



Ken Fischer	28.13	Roz Ferris	5.64	Dan Cramer	3.15	D.J. Oles	1.52
Doug Roberts	26.56	Sal Chehayeb	5.57	Ray Fogerlund	2.83	Antoinette Rodi	1.52
Gregg Cattanach	25.04	Stuart Katz	5.29	Bill Finneran	2.83	Scott Johnston	1.47
Stepan Nuniyants	24.94	Sean Garber	5.28	Chris Martin	2.82	John Grayson	1.47
Petko Kostadinov	14.54	J.A. Miller	5.28	Nayan Shah	2.82	Beth Raby	1.25
Arlene Austin	12.25	Dana Nazarian	5.20	Henry Gray	2.82	Wayne Wiest	1.03
Chuck Bower	11.59	Steve Sax	5.20	Jesse Eaton	2.60	Kate Elmore	0.99
Malcolm Davis	11.59	Elayne Feinstein	5.12	Faddouh Khoury	2.57	Doug Johnson	0.99
John Jennings	10.72	Mary Hickey	5.06	Stewart Pemberton	2.56	Brendan Winslow	0.92
Mark Donaldson	10.24	Richard Lloyd	4.77	Christopher Yep	2.30	Scott Erickson	0.92
Matthew Miner	8.20	Peter Beling	4.44	Mark Haley	2.00	Pat Winslow	0.88
Michael Battaglia	8.00	Bill Bartholomay	4.32	Jack Takala	1.83	Stephen Liss	0.71
Barry Murphy	7.20	Norm Hansen	4.00	Marlene Murphy	1.80	Bill Schragel	0.55
Bruce Russell	6.40	Cole Parker	4.00	Bill Chibnik	1.79	Sharon Steffens	0.45
Carlos Azcarate	6.27	Pete Esposito	3.68	Gale Pollack	1.79	Joe Szwedo	0.45
Mark Rozans	5.65	Peggy Neubig	3.57	Steve Harris	1.79	Maxine Diamond	0.45
Richard Munitz	5.65	Nancy Takala	3.52	Dan Kiurski	1.60	Irv Taylor	0.40



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2006 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 30 APRIL

Tak Morioka	12.22	Wayne Wiest	3.84	Russ Lyutik	1.68	Tom Harrison	0.76
David Rockwell	9.84	Boris Dekhtyar	3.56	Peter Kalba	1.60	Kwong Chan	0.72
Gary Kay	7.96	Bill Keefe	3.54	Efim Leiberan	1.60	Richard Stawowy	0.72
Herb Roman	7.32	Albert Yakobashvili	3.48	Les Moshinsky	1.52	Dave Cramer	0.72
Tim Mabee	6.84	Mark Murray	3.44	Jerry Brooks	1.48	Martha Ghio	0.72
Steve Klesker	6.68	Georgina Flanagan	3.40	Vlad Genkin	1.44	Glenn Martells	0.56
Phil Simborg	6.68	Eric Johnson	3.12	Dave Settles	1.40	Doug Rodgers	0.48
Bill Bartholomay	6.20	Roger Hickman	2.84	Ken Tyszko	1.20	Judy Zager	0.48
Paul Baraz	5.76	Sargon Benjamin	2.68	Amy Trudeau	1.20	Tony Santori	0.48
Phyllis Smolinski	5.44	Carter Mattig	2.60	Adrian Rios	1.12	Elaine Andrews	0.48
Oleg Raygorodsky	4.80	Alice Kay	2.56	Marcia Karen	1.08	Ken Tibbs	0.48
Bill Davis	4.56	Mike Wolock	2.52	Michael Ginat	1.04	Tony Garcia	0.48
Linda Rockwell	4.40	Larry Goldstein	2.00	Arline Levy	0.80	Elaine Kehm	0.36
Bob Steen	3.84	Willis Elias	1.80				

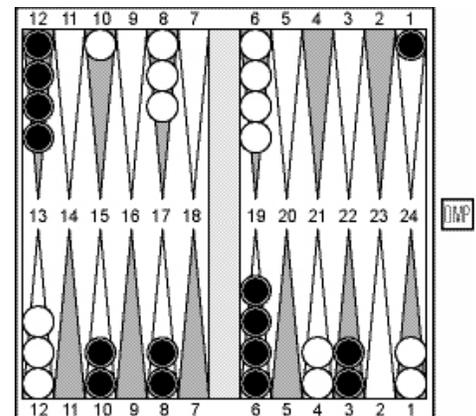
TAK MORIOKA reached the finals three times in April to earn 4.96 points and top monthly honors. David Rockwell was runner-up with 3.92. Tim Mabee, Oleg Raygorodsky, and Bob Steen each earned 2.16.

your move

PROBLEM #318

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

Tournament double match-point.
BLACK TO PLAY 6-6.



ASK
DANNY

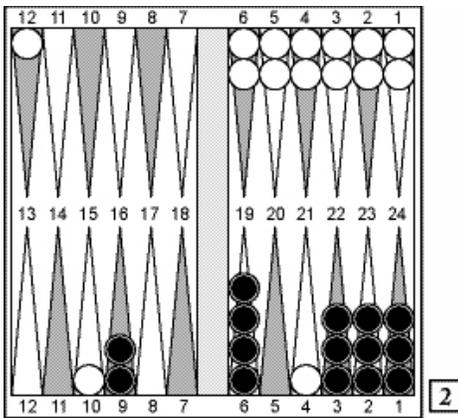
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WHAT A DIFFERENCE A POINT MAKES

As Danny Kleinman is busy with a bridge tournament (the third of the late great Barclay Cooke's "three B's," the first two being baseball and backgammon), this month's column has been ghost-written for Danny . . . by the ghost of his old friend Barclay Cooke.—Ed.

Dear Barclay: As a newbie to tournament backgammon, I recently had to play a 6-2 in the following position:

5 point match. Black leads White, 4-0.
BLACK TO PLAY 6-2.



An expert at our club wasn't sure what play to make. But he did say that if the score had been 4-1, he would definitely play 9/3, 9/7.

I don't understand what the big difference is. Why is one play so obvious with only a one point differential in the score? Also, with the score at 4-0, how would you

play 6-2?—Confused by the Score

DEAR HERB: Gil McDougald's line drive did damage enough to you. I'm more confused than you are. Now that Gil has taken up backgammon in his old age, how could you let him get away with even greater damage by doubling you in this game? Call the tournament director, who will inflict a penalty upon Gil for violating the Crawford Rule.

I should hope the director will drum that scoundrel out of backgammon, just as the Commissioner Happy Chandler (not to be confused with the wonderful pitcher Spud Chandler) should have drummed him out of organized baseball for ruining your wonderful career. However, if the director makes only a minimal adjustment, restoring the cube to the center at 1, then you should definitely move 9/3, 6/4* to put Gil on the bar and minimize shots (only direct 4s hit). The "safe" 9/3, 9/7 leaves 2 extra shots (direct 3s and 2-1 hit). Even though 9/3, 6/4* incurs future shot jeopardy if Gil remains on the bar, you may cover your 4-point . . . or Gil may enter on your 5-point . . . so the immediate risk from two extra shots outweighs the smaller delayed risk.

At 4-0 Crawford, you need not worry about getting two blots hit and losing a gammon, for a 4-1 lead is little better than a 4-2 lead. Losing the "free pass" that a 4-1 lead gives you is not nearly as bad as giving an "intentional pass" to Ted Williams with runners on second and third when Vern Stephens and Rudy York, two very dangerous batters, are coming up next. I've always thought baseball managers foolish for ordering their pitchers to issue intentional passes.

At 4-1, whether Crawford with the cube at 1 or post-Crawford with the cube at 2, losing a gammon is devastating.

At 4-1 Crawford with the cube at 1, losing a gammon instead of a plain game leaves you with a 4-3 lead instead of a 4-2 lead, reducing by one the number of games your opponent needs to win for the match (unless he gammons you next game).

At 4-1 post-Crawford with the cube at 2, losing a gammon instead of a plain game costs you the match immediately instead of leaving you ahead 4-3 with slightly better than 50% chances of winning the match (thanks to the tiny advantage of your "free pass").

In either case, avoiding gammon-loss has equal priority with winning the game. If Gil can win gammons in 2 of 11 times after hitting from the bar, that negates the two shots that you save by putting him there. Even if Gil hits with some other 4 than the double-hitting 4-5, his two outfield men provide ample timing to make him a favorite to pick up the blot on your 9-point while retaining his closed board.

The risk of delayed shots plus Gil's substantial gammon chances after 9/3, 6/4* and a return hit more than compensate for the two extra shots saved by this double-blotting play, so the expert at your club advised you wisely. Was he by any chance Lou Boudreau, the genius shortstop-manager who realized that the chance of a line drive or sharp grounder through the right side exceeded the chance that the Splendid Splinter would try to poke the ball through the vacated left side of the infield and so invented the Williams Shift?—*Yours, Barclay 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

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

tournaments when there is no money at stake. All that is at stake on these sites is a rating. Ratings alone can be very motivating. It is exciting to see your rating go up because it is positive feedback that you are improving at the game. This is a big motivating factor in online backgammon play and has been a vital part of all of the game clubs mentioned above.

So I have been working on starting a United States Backgammon League that will keep a national ratings system and will not charge entry fees for any of its tournaments. I have created a work-in-progress Web site that elaborates on the ideas mentioned above

and I have found a partner who has started the first League club. We had our first free tournament this week with donated prizes and a traveling trophy. Many players from our money club attended because, like me, they just love the game and don't care whether there is money involved or not. And several players attended who do not attend the money club, including a 14-year-old. It has been great to hear about the success of the recent children's backgammon event and I think removing entry fees will certainly encourage more kids to get involved.

The Web site is www.usbackgammon.org. I would love to hear feedback about the idea and would really love to hear if there are any other people interested in starting more affiliated free clubs. I'm certainly not trying to convince anyone who prefers playing for money

that they shouldn't. What I am trying to do is start additional clubs to attract a new base of players and increase overall participation.

Again, feedback is encouraged.
Thanks!—*Eric Barr, Director, Kansas City Backgammon Club; eric@kcbbackgammon.com; 816/916-6599*

AGING BEAUTIES?

Regarding your search for backgammon beauties in the April "Letters," we've all grown old, sagged and faded, turned into insurance sellers and CPA's. Maybe you can teach the Hooters girls or Lindsay Lohan how to use the cube. *Darcey Brady Wade (former backgammon beauty), Hobart, Indiana*

You're still a beauty, Darcey!—Ed. Δ

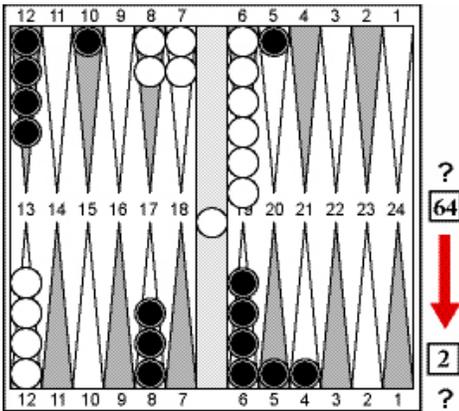
NEVADA STATE...

[Continued from page 1]

Fogerlund (the 36th ranked Giant of Backgammon according to recent international voting). Fogerlund marched over Gregg Cattanach, Bob Glass, and World Champ runner-up John O'Hagen to claim his seat at the final table.

But unlike in the Nevada State finals, one bad game *can and did* cost Ray Fogerlund possible victory. Leading Dana in the 15-point Super Jackpot, Ray offered the following double:

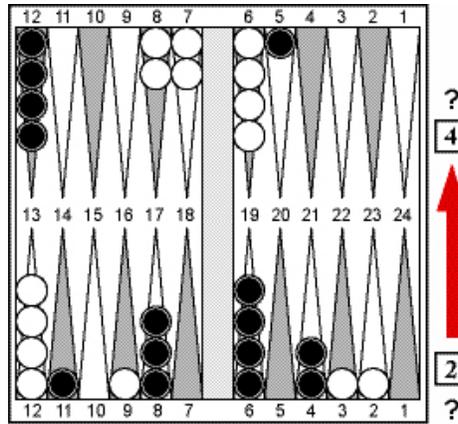
15-point Super Jackpot. Ray Fogerlund (White) leads Dana Nazarian (Black) 3-0. White on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



A 720 3-ply precise rollout shows Ray's cube to be a blunder. The race is nearly even and his inner board remains undeveloped. Dana's take is trivial.

The game quickly turned and a few rolls later:

15-point Super Jackpot. Ray Fogerlund (White) leads Dana Nazarian (Black) 3-0. Black on roll. **RECUBE ACTION(S)?**



Dana has 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, and 6s to hit and there are many double hits. Ray's board is still void of any points and he is now 28 pips down in the race. Taking a recube in this position is a very serious blunder because 26.6% of Dana's 67.9% wins are gammons. Ray accepted the recube and ended up losing 8 points. Trailing 3-8, he could never recover. Dana went on to win 15-9.

For Dana Nazarian, it was his second jackpot victory within the calendar year (he won both the Minnesota Jackpot and State Championship in October). We predict big things from Mr. Nazarian. Watch him soar in the coming years.

As for Ray Fogerlund, he has compiled an outstanding "in the money" record over the past five years and no doubt, it will continue.

[Continued on page 9]

NICE CATCH, KEN



We all know the knack Ken Bond has for rolling pairs at the Bar Point Club. It seems in Florida, he catches pairs. Now that's a big set!



ILLINOIS ACTION



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

Tuesday, 6-7 p.m. at The Purple Hotel, 4500 W. Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood. 847/677-1234.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON at The Purple Hotel, 4500 W. Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood. 847/677-1234.

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB: Tournaments Tuesday, 6:00 P.M. at Ned Kelly's Steak House, 1603-A Morrissy Drive, Bloomington. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

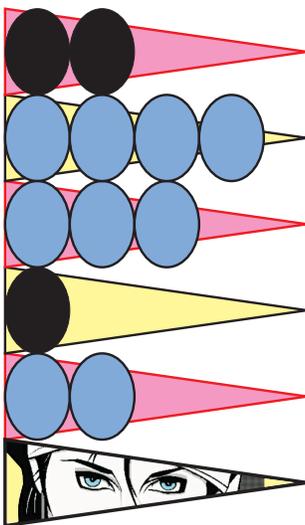
SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wednesday, 6:30 P.M. at Capitol Teletrack, 1766 W. Wabash Ave., Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

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

PUB CLUB: Tournaments Thurs., 6:45 P.M. at Playoffs Bar, 720 E. North Ave., Carol Stream. Tim Mabee (630/606-2388).

PEORIA BG CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Ed Zell (309/689-1964).

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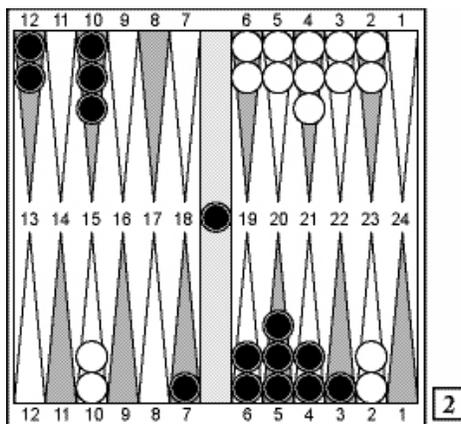
If we define a “joker roll” as a super shake that produces a major swing in a given position, then an “anti-joker” would have to be the opposite. In the four positions shown below, see how quickly you can find the “anti-joker.”

THE ANTI-JOKER CONTEST!

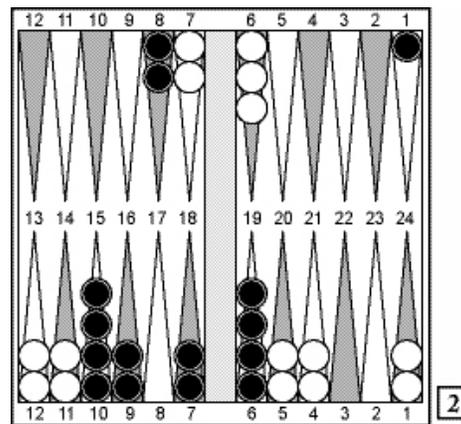
Create a position and then give Black a roll that is so horrible that it makes your stomach turn just looking at it. The absolute worst “anti-joker” roll and position as judged by a panel of ABT directors will win the \$50. The decision of CHICAGO POINT is final. Mail your position and “anti-joker” roll to: Chicago Point; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504; Chicago, IL 60659, or email us: bg@chicagopoint.com. Δ

QUIZ ANSWERS NEXT MONTH
CONTEST ENTRY DEADLINE 30 MAY

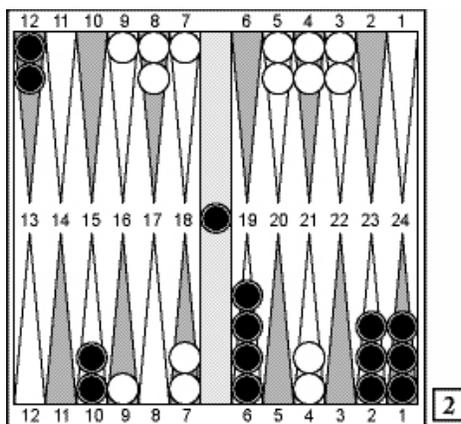
1. Money. Black's Anti-joker: _____



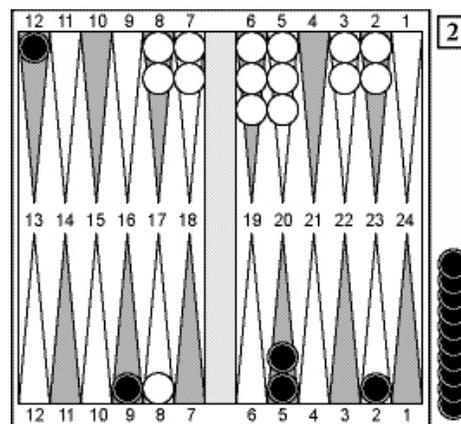
3. Money. Black's Anti-joker: _____



2. Money. Black's Anti-joker: _____



4. Money. Black's Anti-joker: _____



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NEVADA JOINS THE ABT. POINT CALCULATIONS TO BE MODIFIED IN 2007

A meeting was held at the Nevada State Tournament 29 April attended by the following ABT directors: Carol Joy Cole, Bill Davis, Patrick Gibson, Jeb Horton, Mary Ann Meese, Sam Pottle, Ruth Robbins & Molly Anderson (representing Pacific Northwest), and Gregg Cattanach (representing Atlanta). Also in attendance were Nevada Backgammon Association Directors Howard Markowitz and Lynn Ehrlich.

The major meeting topic was whether or not to admit the two Nevada Backgammon Association events (Nevada State and Las Vegas Open) into the American Backgammon Tour. In the past, there were two major reasons for disallowing the NBA inclusion in the ABT:

1. The large attendance threatened to dominate the overall points race, and
2. the payout percentages further skewed the point awards by heavily rewarding the tournament winner.

Nevada has not drawn triple-digit numbers since 2004 (the 2006 Nevada State Championship event fielded 64 players). But just in case the attendance grows beyond 100, Gregg Cattanach has proposed a new way of determining ABT points that, in the opinion of all the directors attending, is superior to the current method.

Presently, the ABT points are calculated as follows (Divisional factors: Championship = 1, Intermediate = 0.5, Beginner = 0.25):

Old Master Point Award = (Divisional Factor) x (# of Players in Division) x (Prize Money Won/Total Divisional Prize Money)

This simple formula has served the ABT well for 14 years. But Gregg's new formula

is superior for the following reasons:

- A. The total number of available points to be awarded will still be determined by the number of the players in the event with a cap at 96. This means that if Nevada (or any other event) reaches triple digit attendance, their championship event will only be able to award a maximum of 96 points.
- B. The awards will be standardized by removing the prize money from the calculation. A 1st place win is always worth exactly double that of a 2nd place win. A 2nd place win is worth exactly double that of a semifinal finish. For example, a double-elimination tournament paying 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th/5th (tie) would base calculations on the following "Standard" points: 8, 4, 2, 1 and 1. 2nd place in the top flight is always worth the same as 1st place in the next flight down. This means that 1st Consolation always receives the same portion as 2nd Main Flight, and 1st Last Chance (in a 3-flight event) always receives the same portion as 2nd Consolation. The smallest payout is awarded 1 "factor" point and the rest of the awards are determined by working backwards towards the 1st Main Flight winner.

Only players officially earning cash prizes (not including match money) receive ABT points. Determining how many cash prizes to pay is still up to the individual director.

Here is an example of how the 2007 Midwest Championships will award their points under Gregg's new equation.

The Midwest Championships awards seven payouts in the Championship division: Main Flight—1st, 2nd, 3rd/4th; Consolation—1st, 2nd; and Last Chance—1st.

The smallest payout (1st Last Chance) is awarded 1 "Standard" point and the rest of

the "Standard" points are determined thusly:

- 1st Last Chance: 1
- 2nd Cons.: 1; 1st Cons.: 2
- 3rd/4th Main Flight: 1 each
- 2nd Main Flight: 2; 1st Main Flight: 4.

Total up the "Standard" points and you get 12. The following formula can then be used to calculate the new ABT point awards:

New Master Point Award = (Divisional Factor) x (# of Players in Division) x ("Standard" Pts. Awarded/Total "Standard" Pts.)

In the case of the Midwest Championships, the 1st Main Flight winner in a 64-player field would receive (1) x (64) x (4/12) = 21.33 ABT points.

So with Gregg's new point award formula, the director's payout percentages have no bearing on how many ABT points are awarded. And with the point cap of 96, no single tournament will ever be able to dominate the points race.

Las Vegas is still different compared to the other weekend events. It runs two days longer (except for the holiday weekend events), and is also more expensive to enter (because of the larger entry fees and the extra hotel charges). However, all of the attending directors felt that these differences are no longer enough to exclude the Nevada events from the American Backgammon Tour. All of the non-attending ABT directors were informed of the proposed changes and all responding parties had favorable reactions to both inclusion of the NBA and of adopting the new point system. Therefore, this year's Las Vegas Open (1-5 November) will be added to the ABT points race (with a 96-player cap). Next year, both Las Vegas events will be part of the ABT.

Gregg Cattanach's new method for calculating ABT points will be put in place beginning with the 2007 calendar year.—*Bill Davis, founder, American BG Tour* Δ

AMALGAMATION

Big news for **Howard Markowitz** and the Nevada Backgammon Association. First, his two NBA events will become part of the American Backgammon Tour beginning with this year's Las Vegas Open (1-5 Nov.). And in a developing story, he has announced that he will direct the Backgammon Million, a tournament that is guaranteeing one million dollars in prize money including an incredible \$500,000 first prize. 64 players will pay \$10,000 + \$4000 in expenses to enter; the other 64 will come from online qualifiers. The event finals will take place, probably early next

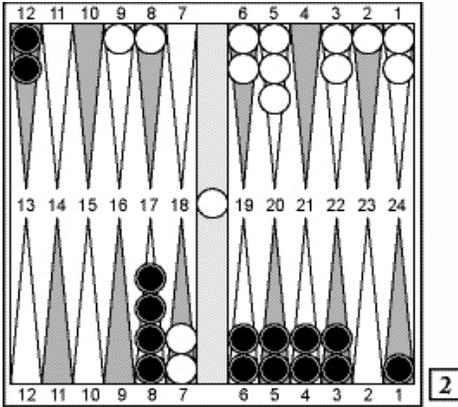
year, at the Atlantis Hotel in Paradise Island, Bahamas. For more info, go to backgammonmillion.com... Visiting the Bar Point Club in March: **Tony Garcia** (NC)... Get well wishes go out to **J.A. Miller** (IL) who suffered a mild heart attack forcing him to cancel his Vegas trip... Send the diceman **Larry Strommen** (IN) best wishes as he undergoes intense treatment for cancer (las.diceman@worldnet.att.net)... Two new clubs are starting up: the Rochester Minnesota Club will be directed by **Ray Bills** (507/280-8956). And **Kathleen Schuler** (913/706-1125) is starting up the United States Backgammon League in Kansas City, Missouri. Details are at chicagopoint.com/usaclubs.html... The 9 April *New*

York Times had a nice story about artist/designer/jetsetter **Lulu de Kwiatkowski** (NY) and her penchant for backgammon. Says Lulu: "When you have backgammon talent, you have a mysterious allure. It's good to have these little talents stored away for when men's egos are getting too big." Great news for backgammon! **Elayne Feinstein's** Florida State Championships (17-20 Aug.) will return 100% in all three divisions. Also **Butch & Mary Ann Meese**, in their final effort as tournament directors, are giving back 101% in every division at the Indiana Open (1-4 Sept.). Both equity increases are courtesy of backgammonmasters.com. Read about more positive equity ABT events in the June "Amalgamation." Δ

**PROBLEM #317
ANALYZED**

by Mary Hickey

9 point match. Black leads White 6 to 5.
BLACK TO PLAY 5-3.



What must Black do to win this game? Oops, wrong question! Black needs to ask instead, what must he do to win the match. Since part of the answer to that question is, “Don’t. Get. Gammoned,” it would seem his best bet is to simplify, not complicate. He’s ahead in the pip count, so converting the game to a race seems thematic. Right now, though, he can be hit on the ace point, which would not be thematic at all. Despite the weakness of White’s board, Black doesn’t want to be hit here.

One way to prevent being hit right now is to cover the ace point with 6/1, 6/3. This is great if White fans, but could force Black to play awkwardly later if White enters, especially if she comes in on the 2-point. Another approach for Black is to prepare to cover the ace more neatly next turn, with 8/3, 8/5.

Black could instead ignore the blot on his ace point and just try to convert to a race right now with 13/8, 13/10. Alternatively, he could split the difference with 13/5, creating a direct cover for the ace point but leaving his outfield blot farther from safety. Both these plays create a second blot that could lead to disaster if White hits and Black fans. They also dismantle the mid-point, which could still be useful if White hits now, whether Black enters immediately or not. The best situation for these two mid-point-clearing plays is when White enters with a 2, but not the 2-3 or 2-6 to hit.

Is this gain big enough to salvage this approach? Since the bots have all been known to wimp out in situations where they’re supposed to “pay now,” I did a Snowie 10-depth mini-rollout of 13/8, 13/10 and 13/5 to be sure. It turns out neither of these two-blot plays are contenders even for

money, so we can stop thinking about them. The decision is between the two approaches to containing the White blot while avoiding being hit by it, either now or later.

For money, I think we would all choose to move two from the 8-point to create covers for the ace, hopefully leading to a powerful five point board and a gammon. That will be worth eight points, since you did redouble here for money, right? If you hadn’t done so earlier in the game, a recube before this roll would be mandatory; and so would a pass. But appalling equity (about 0.70 in this case) doesn’t always stop people from taking cats and dogs like this position.

But in a match at 3-away, 4-away, you would not have recubed here. Your gammons are still useful, and so is your ability to recube later if the gammon slips away but your winning chances improve. With the cube still at your disposal, it would seem that bringing the game home quietly is the right concept, which in this case would mean clearing the 6-point. At this score, trading away not only some wins but also some gammons against you in the effort to get a gammon for yourself is a strategy best handled with extreme caution. However, a 3000-trial full rollout showed a statistically insignificant difference of 0.015 favoring the correct money play of 8/3, 8/5 over the odd-looking but temporarily safe 6/1, 6/3.

This is a position where playing the checkers according to the score, not only right now but later on, too, could matter quite a bit. Despite the difficulty of getting a non-buggy result, I ran a short Snowie 3.2

rollout set to live cube, checker play according to score to see if this would break the deadlock. The result showed a 0.055 pull toward 6/1, 6/3, which I might believe if an extended rollout confirmed it. However, efforts to extend it resulted in the “all the wins are gammons” bug kicking in at some point.

I’ve also not chosen to extend the 2-ply full rollout any further. Sometimes when we seek ever-greater precision, we risk throwing the original quest for accuracy off an overpass, and after 3000 trials I think we’re there. Instead I ran a Snowie 3-ply 324-trial full rollout to get a second opinion, and found it chose to clear the 6-point by the same statistically insignificant margin (0.015) that the 2-ply rollout found in favor of playing two checkers from the 8-point. JellyFish results were similar to Snowie’s, but showed a larger difference in wins, favoring clearing the 6-point by 2.0% wins vs. a margin of 1.4% for Snowie 3-ply and 1.1% for the large Snowie 2-ply full rollout.

Leading 3-away, 4-away and holding a 2 cube, in general Black wants to minimize volatility and avoid needless contact that could lead to his being gammoned for the match. This position shows there are limits to this concept. The top two plays are close, due to the high number of gammons Black can win by playing aggressively for a five point board. My choice, having seen all the rollouts, would be to clear the 6-point. Over the board, though, I suspect I’d bring two in from the 8-point without much thought. It looks right, and for money, it is right. — Mary Hickey Δ



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WINNER'S CIRCLE



APR.-MAY 2006

•**Springfield Series #6** (Bloomington, IL; 1 Apr.)... OPEN (24): 1-Sean Garber, 2-Greg Tomlin; 1C-Sharon Lefferts, 2C-Ed Bauder; 1LC-Scott Day (IN). TAKI-HOLD'EM QUALIFIER: Sue Oliver.

•**Ohio State Club Monthly** (Akron, OH; 2 Apr.)... OPEN: 1-Paul Berg, 2-Bob Green.

•**Kansas City Club Monthly** (Kansas City, MO; 5 Apr.)... OPEN (4): 1-James Worley.

•**12th Ohio State Championships—ABT** (Cleveland, OH; 7-9 Apr.)... OPEN (23): 1-Ken Fischer (CA), 2-Stuart Katz (NY); 1C-Mary Hickey (OH), 2C-Christopher Yep (OH). ADVANCED (32): 1-Barry Murphy (OH), 2-Pete Esposito (OH); 1C-Nancy Takala (MI), 2C-Dan Kiurski (MI). NOVICE (16): 1-Marlene Murphy (OH), 2-Brendon Winslow (OH); 1C-Pat Winslow (OH), 2C-Irv Taylor (OH). OHIO MASTERS (8): 1-Mary Hickey (OH), 2-Gregg Cattanach (GA). AMATEUR JACKPOT (16): 1-Stuart Katz (NY), 2-Dan Grogan (MI). MICROBLITZ (16): 1-Ken Fischer (CA), 2-Carol Joy Cole (MI). QUICKIES #1 (32): 1-Ken Fischer (CA), 2-Gary Fishman (FL). QUICKIES #2 (8): 1-Gregg Cattanach (GA). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Neil Garvie (Canada) & Dave Settles (IL), 2-Petko Kostadinov (SC) & Bill Riles (TX).

•**Northwest Indiana Monthly** (Porter, IN; 8 Apr.)... OPEN: 1-Sal Lovinello, 2-John O'Hagan.

•**Gammonitis League Tournament** (Oxford, England; 8-9 Apr.)... OPEN (17): 1-John Clark, 2-Andy Bell; 1C-David Startin, 2C-Raj Jansari; 1LC-Dmitri Psaltopoulos.

•**New England Club Monthly** (Somerville, MA; 9 Apr.)... EXPERT: 1-Roger Rondeau, 2-Tom Meyer; 1C-Dagfinn Snarheim. A/B: 1-Jim Gebhart, 2-Mark Kushinsky.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 9 Apr.)... OPEN (8): 1-Alan Martin, 2-Danielle Bastarache.

•**18th TrueMoneygames Nordic "Wide" Open** (Helsingør, DEN; 12-17 Apr.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-Athanasios Lagopatis (GER), 2-Morten Holm Lassen (DEN), 3/4-Claus Cato (DEN) / Andreas Reichel (AUT); 1C-Kim Valeur Andersen (DEN), 2C-Michael Hansen (DEN), 3C/4C-Søren Andersen (DEN) / Thomas Hansen (DEN); 1LC-Jakob Andersen (DEN), 2LC-Carsten Simonsen (DEN). ADVANCED (65): 1-Giorgio Castellano (ITA), 2-Damjan Plesec (Slovenia), 3/4-Andreas Christian Olsen (DEN) / Peter Holm Stampe (DEN); 1C-Jonas Moerhdel (DEN), 2C-Claus Berg-

green (DEN), 3C/4C-Andreas Becher (DEN) / Michael Schweitzer (GER); 1LC-Junko Nakamura (JPN), 2LC-Frans Munk Rediin (DEN). INTERMEDIATE (51): 1-Flemming Størgaard (DEN), 2-Niels Bergendorff (DEN), 3/4-Jens Quinn Hansen (DEN) / Søren Hedegaard Larsen (DEN); 1C-Martin Kaltoft (DEN), 2C-Jerker Sandberg (Sweden), 3C/4C-Martin Jensen (DEN) / Lasse Ljungström (DEN); 1LC-Wolfgang Griese (GER), 2LC-Lykke Pia Rasmussen (DEN). NOVICE (38): 1-Yuri Nakamura (JPN), 2-Saban Simsek (DEN); 1C-Fred Westerby (NOR), 2C-Claus Pedersson (DEN); 1LC-Inger Hesselvang (DEN), 2LC-Carl Erik Frost (DEN). BEGINNER: 1-Lis Tinson. DENMARK/JAPAN EXHIBITION MATCH: 1-Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN), 2-Thomas Hansen (DEN).

•**Springfield Series Grand Finale** (Springfield, IL; 22 Apr.)... 1-Jena Jennings, 2-Randy Armstrong; 1C-Rob Farmer, 2C-Sean Garber (IN); 1LC-Faddoul Khoury. TAKI-HOLD'EM BOARD WINNER: Sean Garber (IN).

•**IBA Live In Vegas** (Henderson, NV; 24-25 Apr.)... OPEN: 1-Joy_IBADirector, 2-Jahan; 1C-Marla, 2C-Big_Tom. ENERGIZER BUNNY RACE: 1-Big_Tom.

•**6th City of Jesolo Tournament** (Jesolo, Italy, 28 Apr.-1 May)... CHAMPION (53): 1-Wolfgang Haas (AUT), 2-Giorgio Castellano (ITA), 3/4-Franz Felber (SUI) / Sergio Fragiaco (ITA); 1C-Carlo Facchetti (ITA), 2C-Guido Flamigni (ITA). INTERMEDIATE (46): 1-Alvin Anderson (ITA), 2-Silvio Riccorbon (ITA), 3/4-Florin Popa (ITA) / Thomas Otto (AUT); 1C-Can Lepre (GER), 2C-Jeanne Nanga (CMR). TEAM TOURNAMENT (22): 1-Trapattoni (Christian Liebe-Harkort, Klaus Weissbarth, Damian Plesec), 2-Goschy (Wolfgang Haas, Mario Lazzer, Stefan Parlow). COPPIA DAVIS DOUBLES (24): 1-Daniel Scheidiger & Gian Reto Iseppi (SUI), 2-Andrea Reibler (AUT) & Martin De Bruin (ESP). SUPERJACKPOT: 1-Massimo Moretti (ITA), 2-Klaus Weissbarth (GER). SWING: 1-Alessandro Reitti (ITA), 2-Giuseppe Ricciardi (ITA), 3-Franco Modena (ITA).

•**Gammonitis/Sportingbet.com Leavey Trophy** (Oxford, England; 28 Apr.-1 May)... OPEN (32): 1-Julian Fetterlein, 2-Barry McAdam, 3/4-Tim Line / Chris Ternel; 1C-Ray Tannen, 2C-Peter Bennet; 1LC-Simonetta Herrera. FRIDAY WARMUP (13): 1/2-Ray Tannen / Andrew Sarjeant. TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER #1: John Leavey #2: John Hurst #3: Andrew Sarjeant. SPORTINGBET.COM WORLD CHAMPAMBASADOR PACKAGE: 1-Barry McAdam, 2-George Sulimirski. Δ

NEVADA STATE...

[Continued from page 1]

OTHER RESULTS

Congratulations to Tami Jones of Boise, Idaho. Tami, who currently writes a column for the British publication *Make Your Point*, continued her Vegas winning ways by defeating Scott Cole (NV) the 73-player Intermediate tournament. Tami attributed her good fortune to a 3" tall miniature boxer dog named "Puncher." Apparently "Puncher" is replacing Kit Woolsey as Tami's new "partner of choice" . . . NOT!



Tami Jones attributes some of her good fortune in winning the Intermediate event to "Puncher" the boxer (see insert).

(Kit and Tami have coauthored a book, and last November, they won the big-money Vegas Pro Am Doubles).

Other winners included Daniel Dan-goor (NV) in the Beginner Division, former *Las Vegas Backgammon* magazine editor Michael Maxakuli (NV) in the Limited Jackpot, and Chuck Bower (IN) & Frank Frigo (KY) in the Doubles.

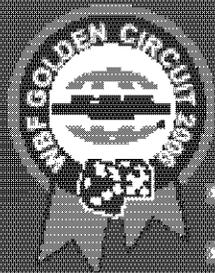
The tournament also honored Yamin Yamin's "Giants of Backgammon" in attendance including the two-time #1 Giant Nack Ballard (CA).



The world's #1 Backgammon Giant Nack Ballard was honored at the tournament.

Watch for excitement to build in November as the Las Vegas Open (and all future NBA tournaments) becomes part of the American Backgammon Tour (see page 7). Δ

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