

32nd monte carlo world championship

WILD FINAL GAME GIVES JORGE PAN WORLD TITLE

O'Laughlin suffers bad Masters beat

Jorge Alberto Pan has won the 2007 Monte Carlo World Backgammon Championship. The 53-year-old experienced Argentinean player defeated Alvaro Savio of Brazil in the most exciting double match-point victory in the 32 year history of the event.



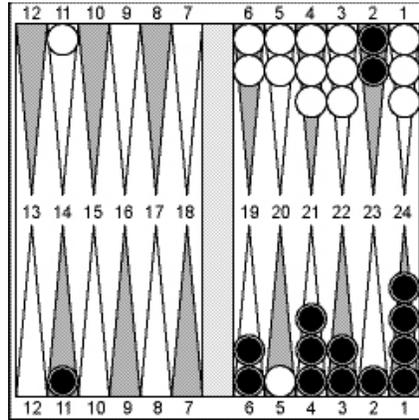
Argentina's Jorge Pan receives his World Championship trophy from director James Ballié. [Photo by gammonlife.com]

The 25-point final saw the lead change hands eight times. In the last game, leading 23-22, Savio gave a bad cube that cost him 5.8% in match equity. Statistics showed that Pan would win the game more than 35% of the time, so his take/recube for the match was a trivial decision.

A big controversy later ensued that was videoed by Marjorie Serrano Blanco. Savio rolled an awkward 6-3 and while trying out different moves, he appeared to accidentally knock the 6 die over to a 5. Instead of correcting the roll, match referee Luigi Villa incredibly required Savio to return his pieces to the original position and move a 5-3 which played much better! This horrific ruling evoked screams from the audience watching the match in another room. Check out the incredible last minutes of the match at: www.gammonlife.com/07wcfinalminutes.wmv

It looked like referee Villa's daydreaming might decide the winner. Fortunately, Pan got lucky and turned things around:

Monte Carlo 25-point finals. Jorge Pan (Black) vs. Alvaro Savio (White). Double match point. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-1:**

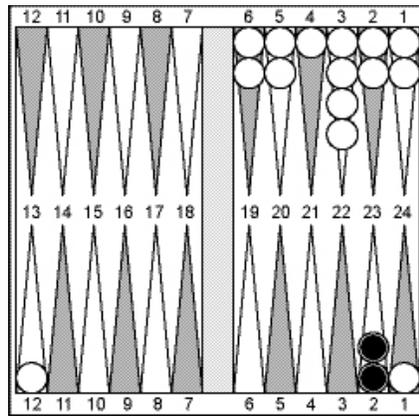


Jorge Pan correctly played 6/5*, 6/2 and was rewarded with the World Championship title when Savio danced eight times in a row.

Super Jackpot

The \$1500 Super Jackpot run by Les & Sue Boyd drew 64 top notch players from around the world. The finals pitted USA's Ed O'Laughlin against Sven Rumcker of Germany. The battle went to DMP with Ed in complete command:

Super Jackpot finals. Ed O'Laughlin (Black) vs. Sven Rumcker (White). Double match point. **BLACK ON ROLL:**



Well almost complete command. 99.7% favorites don't win every time! O'Laughlin rolled a non-doublet ace. Rumcker hit the shot, closed his board, and took off all his pieces before Ed could come in and around. Ed ranked it as the sickest loss of



This photo, taken before the finals shows Ed O'Laughlin (L) with eventual winner Sven Rumcker. [Photo by gammonlife.com]

his life involving a money swing of more than \$20,000. Complete results: Δ

32ND MONTE CARLO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPIONSHIP (218): 1-Jorge Pan (ARG), 2-Alvaro Savio (BRZ), 3/4-Jan Jacobowitz (GER) / Richard Munitz (USA); 1st Cons.: 1C-Patrick Didisheim, 2C-Matti Haaksila (FIN), 3C/4C-Alan Grunwald (USA) / Mark Larsen (DEN); 2nd Cons.: 1C-Andrew Plater (UK), 2C-Peer Rower (GER), 3C/4C-Didier Assaraf (FRA) / Jean-Philippe Rohr (FRA); 1LC-Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN), 2LC-Perry Gartner (USA). Ladies Prize: Maya Peycheva (BUL). INTERMEDIATE (76): 1-Marc Bodin (FRA), 2-Shunji Terao (JPN), 3/4-Michel Chabrol (FRA) / Klaus Switon (DEN); 1st Cons.: 1C-Jakob Truksa Andersen (DEN), 2C-Joel Sundberg (SWE), 3C/4C-Per Ulrik Andersen (DEN) / Peter Bardehle (GER); 2nd Cons.: 1C-Johnny Tonnessen (Norway), 2C-Martin de Bruin (USA/SPA), 3C/4C-Andrea Quadros (Brazil) / Alain Sormain (FRA); 1LC-Filippo Oddo (ITA), 2LC-Shirley Elghanian (IRN). BEGINNERS (48): 1-Vitalij Byrov (UKR), 2-Sergey Grinev (RUS), 3/4-Boris Mampozia (RUS) / Max Petersen (DEN); 1st Cons.: 1C-Jan Ivar Niilen (Norway), 2C-Laura Monaco (ITA), 3C/4C-Sandra Kaae Bauer (DEN) / Amor Boulkertous (FRA); 2nd Cons.: 1C-Liz Johansson (SWE), 2C-Sten Lorentzen (DEN), 3C/4C-Pia Aimonen (FIN) / Ingrid Soderstjerna (SWE); 1LC-Chiva Tafazzoli (IRN/GER), 2LC-Carsten Vick (GER). SUPER JACKPOT (64): 1-Sven Rumcker (GER), 2-Ed O'Laughlin (USA), 3/4-David Ben-Zion (ISR) / Christoph Wagener (GER). FORTIS WORLD TEAM (32 teams): 1-The Sharks (ITA): Claudio Cantoni / Roberto Maione / Fausto Pescini, 2-Blip Blop (SWE): Mohammad Badies / Salim Chabo / Marvin Khattar. SPECIAL TROPHIES: CHAIRMAN'S: Howard Markowitz (USA), COURTESY: Simonetta Barone Herrera (ITA/UK), ELEGANCE - MEN: Mikael Sørensen (DEN), ELEGANCE - WOMEN: Bai Ling (HK), FIDELITY: Alfred Schwarz (GER), TRAVEL: Jake Jacobs (USA/SIN), GOLF: 1-Jaakko Salava (FIN), 2-Robert Lindbom (SWE), TENNIS: 1-Detlef Stolz (GER) & Carsten Vick (GER), 2-Erky Aimonen (FIN) & Jaako Salava (FIN)

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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FOOTNOTE ERROR

I received my first issue of CHICAGO POINT. Thanks. I thought you might like to know that the July/August 2007 issue has "Jan./Feb. 2007" in the footnote section on each page.—Brad Baker, Zionville, Illinois

Thanks for the heads-up, Brad. You can depend on finding careless errors in the POINT every month!—Ed.

BRONSTEIN CLOCK SETTING

'When using a BRONSTEIN CLOCK, Director shall place two minutes per point (less one minute per point already scored by either player) in conjunction with a 12-second-per-move deductible on the clocks of both players. Players shall confirm the proper setting of the clocks.'

The above quote is from the official March 2004 Clock Rules. During our

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



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

*Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Sep 8*	Backgammon By the Bay, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
Sep 8*	Kansas City Club Monthly, Westport Flea Market, Kansas City, Missouri	816/916-6599
Sep 8*	Red, White & Blue Open, Dugout Sports Bar & Grill, Houston, Texas	281/687-1673
Sep 9*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Sep 9*	New York Monthly, Midtown BG & Chess Club, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Sep 9*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Sep 15*	Phoenix Free Monthly-USBL, Glendale Gaslight Inn, Glendale, Arizona	602/296-4307
Sep 15-16	Jon Viator Invitational Cup, Jon Viator's residence, La Jolla, California	818/901-0464
Sep 16*	Pittsburgh Monthly Tournament, Panera Bread, Wexford, Pennsylvania	412/826-1334
Sep 20*	Third Thursday Bonus (Illinois), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Sep 22*	Backgammon By the Bay, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/261-4583
Sep 28-30	Colorado State Championships, Holiday Inn Airport, Denver, Colorado	303/791-0271
Sep 29*	Austin Club Bimonthly, Java Gardens Restaurant, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
Oct 1*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Oct 1*	14th Annual Fall Tournament on FIBS, via computer modem E-mail: fibs@escoffery.com	
Oct 1*	Roy's Monthly, Restaurant Roy, Santa Barbara, California	805/966-5636
Oct 3*	Kansas City Club Monthly, Westport Flea Market, Kansas City, Missouri	816/916-6599
Oct 5-7	12th Minnesota Open, Comfort Inn, Bloomington, Minnesota	612/718-2613
Oct 7*	Bar Point Club Sunday Tourney, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Oct 13*	Backgammon By the Bay, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
Oct 13*	Columbia Memorial, Dugout Sports Bar & Grill, Houston, Texas	281/687-1673
Oct 14*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Oct 14*	New York Monthly, Midtown BG & Chess Club, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Oct 14*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Oct 14	29th Flint Area Club Championships, Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Oct 28*	Colorado Monthly, La Loma Restaurant, Denver, Colorado	303/791-0271
Oct 19-21	Illinois State Championships, Holiday Inn City-Centre, Peoria, Illinois	309/224-9579
Nov 9	Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Nov 7-11	2007 Las Vegas Open & American Doubles, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025
Nov 12-15*	POSTPONED: 2007 World Doubles Championship, Riviera, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025
Dec 2*	Bar Point Club Sunday Tourney, Holiday Inn (formerly Ramada), Chicago, IL	773/583-6464
Nov 30-Dec 2	California State Championship, Masonic Center, Tarzana, California	818/901-0464

OUTSIDE USA

Sep 6-9	PGT: Partouche Finale 2007, Grand Domain de Divonne les Bains, France	331-47645938
Sep 7-9	17th Norwegian Championship, Rica Park Hotel, Drammen, Norway	47991-53113
Sep 8-9	5th Antwerp Open, Café den Bengal, Antwerp, Belgium	32475-256734
Sep 8-9*	11th WBF-Turkish Championship, Arma Restaurant, Istanbul, Turkey	905322-564360
Sep 14-16	Gammonitis Highgate Tournament, Highgate House, Creaton, England	441634-821107
Sep 21-23	2nd Sorrento Coast Tournament, Villa Angelina, Sorrento, Italy	39335-221412
Sep 22-24	13th Japan Open, Nakano Sunplaza, Tokyo, Japan	81333-733814
Oct 5-7	European Doubles & 10th Austrian Open, Hotel Veronika, Seefeld, Austria	390331-923537
Oct 6-7	Sandy Osborne Memorial, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Oct 12-14*	Swiss Championships & Open, Hotel Marriott, Zurich, Switzerland	4179-3584825
Oct 13-14	5th Roma Open, Rome, Italy	393356-031493
Oct 19-21	Gammonitis 5th Birthday Tournament, Woodside, Kenilworth, England	441634-821107
Oct 20-21	15th Irish Open Championship, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin, Ireland	358-72144270
Oct 20-21	33rd Annual Finnish Open 2007, BG Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland	3540-5789579
Oct 26-28*	11th Rotterdam Open, Cafe Spiegel, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	316-53579164
Oct 30-Nov 4	EBGT: European Doubles/5th French Open, Enghien-les-Bains, France	491715-422222
Oct 31-Nov 2	4th Caribbean Open, Casino Royale, Sonesta Beach, St. Maarten	390331-923537
Nov 3-4	Townharbour Trophy, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Nov 9-11*	Backgammon Live in London '07, Spice Island & YHA, London, England	447985-941729
Nov 10-11*	5th Torneo delle Città, Modanella, Italy	393356-031493
Nov 13-18*	4th World Doubles & 11th Grand Prix de Suisse, Hotel Ascona, Switzerland	4161-2710137
Nov 15-18*	WSOB: Gammonitis UK Masters™, Empire Casino, London, England	441634-821107
Nov 24-25*	Danish Championships, Fungolf, Copenhagen, Denmark	4533-363601
Nov 27-Dec 2*	5th Cancun Invitational Tournament, Ritz-Carlton, Cancun, Mexico	775/829-8403
Nov 28-Dec 2*	EBGT: 19th City of Venice Tournament, Venice Casino, Venice, Italy	393290-513415
Dec 1-2*	Gilbertson United Kingdom Finals, Hilton Hotel, Coventry, England	441522-888676
Dec 6-9*	14th German Open, Hotel GlockenSpitze, Altenkirchen, Germany	49521-64314
Dec 8-9*	Thun Open, Beo Cup & Doubles, Waadtländerstube, Thun, Switzerland	4179-4811318
Dec 14-16*	Gammonitis Jule's Christmas Cracker, Highgate House, Creaton, England	441634-821107

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

recent Bloomington/Normal Summer Sizzler, we needed to clock a slow match and unfortunately, there were several interpretations of how many minutes should be put

on the clock. In a 9-point match with Black leading White 7 to 4, what is the proper setting?—*Michael Flohr, Director, Bloomington/Normal Backgammon Club, Illinois*

At the start of a 9-point match, director places 2 x 9 = 18 minutes on the clocks of both players. In your example, director

should place (2 x 9) - (7 + 4) = 7 minutes on both clocks.—Ed.

FLOODING DESTROYS BG BOOKS

Due to the severe August 23 storm, my basement took in 8" of water destroying a portion of my backgammon collection. I salvaged most items, but lost around 10 books and several publications.

This taught me a valuable lesson that I want to share with your readers: Never store valuable papers and/or books on a basement floor.—*Yamin Yamin, Giants of Backgammon Chairman, Wilmette, IL*

2008 MONTE CARLO DATES ARE ANNOUNCED

The dates for next year's Monte Carlo World Championship are officially set: July 7-13, 2008. We were HOPING for two weeks later, so as to avoid the World Series of Poker & the Michigan Summer Championships but that was not possible. Oh well, we did our best!

Still no news as to "who" will be running the event next year. We'll let your readers know any news as we get it.—*Sue & Les Boyd, Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

A NOTE FROM THE MFIC

I noticed you included my MFIC cube in last month's Michigan report. I'm very proud of my "handle." We directors must be fair and consistent, We do NOT run by democracy, but by (hopely) "benevolent dictatorship"—*ergo Mother Fletcher In Charge.*

I have used that handle for at least 25 years (including on FIBS), starting early on in my directing of weekly events.—*Patrick Gibson, Director, Gammon Associates, CA. Δ*



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2007

Top 100 through 19 Aug. 2007 after 10 tournaments
(Upcoming events: Wisconsin, Colorado, Minnesota)



Patrick Gibson	32.77	Herb Roman	8.94	Vadim Musaelyan	5.33	Gil Evans	3.46
Ray Foglerlund	30.77	Terry Leahy	8.89	Matt Reklaitis	5.33	Doug Roberts	3.04
Dana Nazarian	29.36	Stick Rice	8.67	Scott Johnston	5.33	Owen Black	3.00
Paul Weaver	26.33	Paul Strasberg	8.60	Matt Cohn-Geier	5.33	Paul Teitelbaum	3.00
Harvey Gillis	24.15	Adam Bennett	8.51	Jim Pasko	5.04	J.A. Miller	2.92
Richard Munitz	23.46	Luis Rivera	8.42	Jinelle Girard	5.04	Vic Morawski	2.92
Gary Bauer	23.11	Carmen Webb	8.00	Tim Lawless	4.89	Arlene Austin	2.92
Bart Brooks	22.56	Stefan Staykov	8.00	Stewart Pemberton	4.89	Ed Johnson	2.91
Steve Brown	21.33	Petko Kostadinov	7.58	Rory Pascal	4.44	Joe Maize	2.91
Alan Grunwald	20.15	Steve Sax	7.40	Alfred Mamlet	4.33	Arnold Freeman	2.82
Malcolm Davis	19.84	Walter Trice	7.11	Bill Davis	4.33	Jobey Calitri	2.82
Ed O'Laughlin	19.25	Emil Mortuk	7.11	Michael Valliere	4.30	Glenn Ramsey	2.67
Arie Bornstein	18.00	Bud Bowers	6.92	Dave Settles	4.30	Harold Roberson	2.67
David Todd	16.49	Roz Ferris	6.15	Frank DiMaggio	4.14	Jesse Eaton	2.67
Maurice Barie	14.22	Christopher Yep	6.08	Danielle Bastarache	4.00	Bill Robertie	2.52
Fred Kalantari	12.16	Gregg Cattanach	6.08	Pete Townsend	4.00	Tak Morioka	2.52
Phyllis Shapiro	11.68	Linda MacLean	6.08	Tom Keith	3.79	Jason Lee	2.52
John Herron	11.64	Vladi Gudgenov	6.00	Bob Zavoral	3.79	Jerry Jabaghourian	2.44
Art Benjamin	11.27	Beth Raby	5.84	Neil Kazaross	3.79	Justin Nunez	2.44
John Jennings	10.67	Jolie Rubin	5.82	John O'Hagan	3.79	Gail Goetze	2.44
Howard Markowitz	10.67	Cem Aslan	5.82	Mark Antranikian	3.70	Jeremy Zukerman	2.29
Kieth Hvamstad	10.67	Ken Fischer	5.64	Perry Gartner	3.70	Joe Sylvester	2.22
Arkadiy Tsinis	10.07	Mark Dean	5.41	David Taniguchi	3.60	Samra Hadden	2.15
Paul Mangone	9.78	Paul Franks	5.33	Sina Bigdeli	3.60	Dean Schneider	2.11
Steve Hast	9.00	Yury Millman	5.33	Thomas Meyer	3.56	Three tied with	2.00



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2007 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 AUGUST

David Rockwell	29.48	Gary Kay	5.88	Shaw Dogan	2.88	Sargon Benjamin	0.96
Herb Roman	18.96	Bob Steen	5.84	Lenny Loder	2.56	Paul Baraz	0.96
Rory Pascal	18.94	Michael Ginat	5.76	Adrian Rios	2.32	Dan Weymouth	0.96
Phil Simborg	14.88	Christopher Shanova	5.52	Paul Franks	2.28	Dick Nelson	0.84
Bob Zavoral	13.92	Alice Kay	5.40	Allen Tish	2.24	John Jennings	0.84
Albert Yakobashvili	13.76	Bill Bartholomay	5.36	Jerry Brooks	2.00	Harold Elgazar	0.80
Mike Wolock	13.60	Ken Tyszko	5.12	Linda Rockwell	1.80	Steve Klene	0.72
Tak Morioka	12.48	Georgina Flanagan	4.92	Felix Yen	1.68	Glenn Martells	0.72
Oleg Raygorodsky	11.68	Larry Goldstein	4.84	Henry Gray	1.68	Keith Hanson	0.72
Jacob Moreno	10.16	Nora Luna Righter	4.64	Roy Cohen	1.60	Ron Wagner	0.64
Bill Keefe	9.78	Mark Murray	4.60	Arline Levy	1.36	James Roston	0.56
Bill Davis	9.12	Peter Kalba	4.48	Kendra Wesley	1.32	John Poulos	0.56
Tim Mabee	8.52	Dave Settles	3.80	Dan Simborg	1.28	Tim Stoddard	0.48
Roger Hickman	8.28	Wayne Wiest	3.56	Elaine Kehm	1.20	Charles Melidosian	0.48
Alex Owen	7.72	Royal Robinson	3.44	Les Moshinsky	1.20	Bev Loder	0.48
Carter Mattig	7.44	Richard Stawowy	3.28	Denise McDermott	1.16	David Araiza	0.48
Mike Pufpaf	7.24	Eric Johnson	3.12	Neil Kazaross	1.12	Jordan Sanders	0.40
Mike Sutton	6.88	Ken Bond	3.12	Tim Rockwell	1.04	Wendy Kaplan	0.32
Willis Elias	6.56	Lucky Nelson	2.96	Bob Koca	1.04	Mark Penacho	0.32
Steve Klesker	6.56						

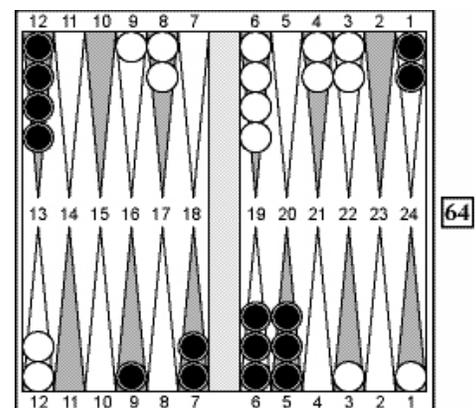
July Player of the Month: **HERB ROMAN** (5.60). Runner's-up: Tak Morioka (3.84) and Bill Davis (3.32). August POM: **DAVID ROCKWELL** (5.76). Runner's-up: Alex Owen (4.24) and Herb Roman (2.96).

your move

PROBLEM #330

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

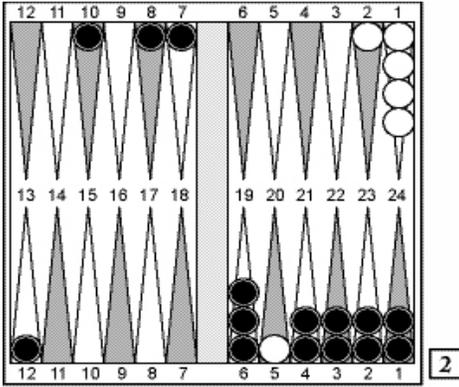
5-point match. Black trails White, 2 to 3.
BLACK TO PLAY 6-6.



THINK TWICE BEFORE MAKING VIRTUOUS RULINGS

A thought-provoking incident occurred in the Open Consolation semifinal of the July Michigan Summer Backgammon Tournament. ABT champions Neil Kazaross and Richard Munitz faced each other with the winner guaranteed second place and Calcutta auction prize money. Although this isn't the exact position, it will suffice for our purposes:

9-point match. Richard Munitz (White) trails Neil Kazaross (Black) 5-7. **WHITE TO PLAY 5-5.**



A great shot for Richard that hits and forces Neil to throw a deuce or be gammoned for the match. But in his excitement of rolling the big double, Richard inadvertently removed both his and Neil's hit checker from the board and placed them alongside his other borne off pieces.

Neil looked at Richard until he became aware of his error. Then Neil said "Put my checker on the bar. You owe me one."

Neil missed the deuce-shot and lost the match. Richard went on to win the Consolation defeating Harvey Gillis in the finals.

After the match, Neil was asked, "Why did you allow Richard to correct his error? Director Carol Joy Cole said she would have

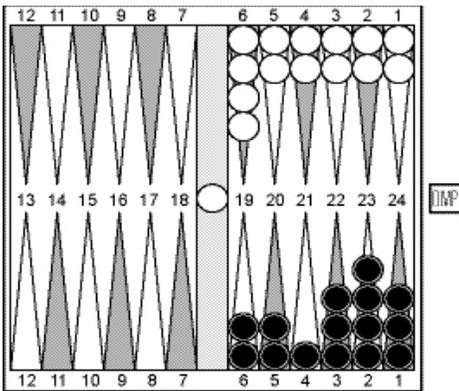
ruled that the misplaced checker was borne off and you would have saved the gammon."

Neil answered, "I didn't want to win that way." We wonder why it is more righteous for the opponent who was allowed to rescind his careless mental blunder to "win *that* way"?

Neil was well within his rights to let Richard correct his impetuous mistake. Backgammon tournament rules state that, "Upon drawing attention to an illegal move, player may condone it or demand that opponent legally replay the entire roll."

If Neil's replay request had occurred during a side event (substantially reducing his prize money equity), we wouldn't be writing this editorial. However it happened in the main tournament event. What about the individual who purchased the two-team field of Neil Kazaross/Bob Glass? What about the supporter to whom Neil sold half of his 30% Calcutta share? And what about Bob Glass who bought back a portion of himself and Neil? All these buyers lost significant equity because Neil Kazaross made a "personal moral decision" to overlook a specific careless blunder. Let's look at another example:

Double match point. **WHITE TO PLAY 6-4.**



Hitting Black and going to the 15-point is forced. If his opponent makes the play and picks up his dice without first putting the checker on the bar, would Neil now demand a legal play? Or what if his opponent rolled 6-6 in a non-contact bearoff and took off only three pieces. Would Neil require his opponent to bear-off the fourth checker? When a player has a policy of ruling against himself based on his own personal morals, where does he draw the line?

The Calcutta auction is not the only consideration. What about the possible ramifications a player's righteous decision could have on the American Backgammon

Tour points race? Richard Munitz's Michigan victory earned him 15.17 ABT points. Adding in his second place finish at the Thousand Islands event gives Richard 23.46 points—definitely within striking distance of the race lead.

And what if Richard Munitz does repeat as ABT 2007 Player of the Year? Would his victory be tainted? Definitely not. He has done nothing illegal. But his win would certainly be controversial.

Backgammon players should consider the repercussions of their actions before making any self-sacrificing "virtuous rulings" in main tournament events where Calcutta Auction money and ABT points are involved. Δ

ARIE THE GIANT-KILLER Arie Bornstein Edges Paul Weaver in Florida thriller. Weaver Wins Masters.

Talk about "beginner's luck"! Floridian Arie Bornstein has defeated Giant of Backgammon Paul Weaver to win the Florida State Championship. The Mexican native won a thrilling DMP victory to earn the title.



New Florida State Champ Arie Bornstein at double match point.

The 2007 edition drew over 100 players to the Marriott North Hotel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Elayne Feinstein directed with able assistance from her family members.



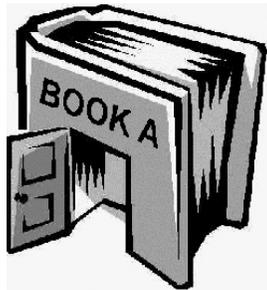
Jackpot victor Paul Weaver with tourney director Elayne Feinstein to his right.

Weaver won his title in the Al Tesoro Palms Jackpot defeating Karen Davis. But Karen was a winner, too. She made a \$1900 donation to First Serve tennis in memory of her good friend Al Tesoro. Results:

2007 FLORIDA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPIONSHIP (45): 1-Arie Bornstein (FL), 2-Paul Weaver (AL); 1C-Steve Hast (PA), 2C-Herb Roman (IL); 1LC-Ed O'Laughlin (FL). ADVANCED (40): 1-Stefan Staykov (FL), 2-Danielle Bastarache (FL); 1C-Roz Ferris (IL), 2C-Steve Naar (FL); 1LC-Leon Turner (MI). NOVICE (16): 1-Jeremy Zukerman (FL); 1C-Michael Raiman (FL); 1LC-Dan Glowa (FL). AL TESORO MEMORIAL PALM CLASSIC (19): 1-Paul Weaver (AL), 2-Karen Davis (NY). AMATEUR JACKPOT (17): 1-Stuart Katz (NY), 2-Arie Bornstein (FL). DOUBLES (29 teams): 1-Bob Paris (FL) & Michael Rayner (FL), 2-Gregg Cattanach (GA) & Antoinette Rodi (FL). BLITZ (64): 1-Steve Flam (FL). DAVID MENKES MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT (31): 1/2-Karen Davis (NY) / Lee Genud (FL). GATOR ROLL: 1-Beth Raby (VA). SUNSHINE CUP (16): 1-Rick Wolf (FL)

Backgammon Openings: Book A



Reviewed by
Jake Jacobs

Backgammon Openings: Book A
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A long time ago, on an airplane flying far, far away, I sat next to a young couple who opened a travel backgammon board and proceeded to play. The female half of the pair was in the seat next to me so I began mentally playing her moves . . . and quickly stopped! For the first twelve rolls of the game she threw either 3-1 or 1-1, and as I watched with morbid fascination she managed to never make her 5-point.

There were millions of people playing backgammon back then, and most of them were awful. Not as awful as that girl, perhaps, but still staggeringly bad. To describe the truly terrible, as opposed to the merely wretched, we said that they "couldn't even play a 3-1." I have bad news for you: you can't play 3-1 either! But I have good news too: the remedy is at hand!

In January of 1997 I traveled to Pattaya, Thailand, for the second Thai Open. That's ten years ago as you read this. There were several strong players in Pattaya that season. Magriel had just left, John Sjölin was roaming about, and Paul Weaver was staying down the beach from the Style Restaurant in a house that Vichai Kwatra had rented for the season. Paul had a copy of JellyFish, then the only commercially available bot, and he spent about 22 hours a day in the house rolling out positions. Occasionally he would emerge to have a plate of rice, and we'd ask: "What are you rolling out?"

"The opening rolls," he informed us.

Ten years is a long time. Since then, Paul teamed up with Nack Ballard. Together they solicited the aid of a great many others to help with the rollouts. Only the SETI Project can compare with the amount of computer power devoted to the task. People have done rollouts with JellyFish, they've done rollouts with Snowie. There are the old rollouts, and the GNU rollouts. The economies of several Chinese provinces, parts of the Dominican Republic, Mauritius, Vanuatu, and Senegal have been boosted as most of their workforces do hand rollouts. It is rumored that all the data on how to play 4-2 was destroyed when the Great Tsunami hit Sumatra, and Nack and Paul tried to persuade dice manufacturers to

temporarily remove those numbers from the product line until the rollouts were redone. At last this monumental labor has birthed the first baby of the litter.

Backgammon Openings: Book A is the ungainly title. (I think that a title like *Harry Potter and the Final Showdown* would sell a lot of books, but they didn't ask me.) The original outline called for six "volumes," each volume covering a category of opening. Volume 1 included the four non-doublet point-making numbers: 3-1, 4-2, 5-3, 6-1, and each of these was to be covered in one "book." Besides the 21 books needed to deal with all the rolls, Book O would give an overview of opening theory, and Book N would treat Nackgammon. That was the plan as of last fall. As Book A rolls to press the plan is not as far reaching. The second book, covering 4-2 is in the works, and then the authors will take stock. Reader interest will determine how they proceed from there.

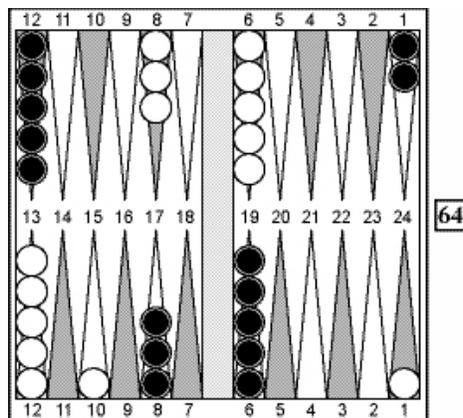
The book starts with **A1**, the opening setup. At least you will probably get this 3-1 play right. In fact, the authors have so much faith in you that the actual diagram shows the 5-point already made.

There follows a discussion of why making the 5-point is so good. But Nack is wrong in claiming that Paul was the first to write "ace-point" and "barpoint" as unhyphenated single words. I have been doing it for years (and am sure I stole the idea from someone else).

Meanwhile, back at the discussion . . . You may have *heard it all before* when it comes to reasons for making the 5-point, but then again, maybe you haven't. In any case they manage to pack a lot of backgammon theory into every few pages, and then build upon their work.

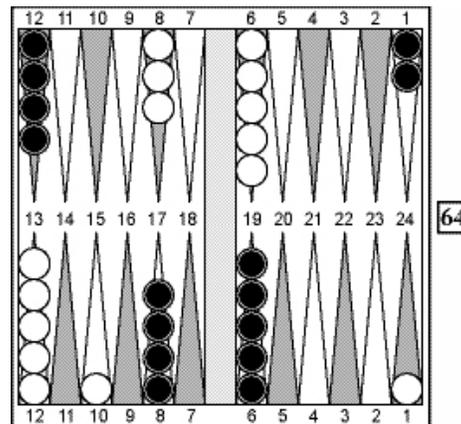
The book's format places a basic reference position at the upper left of each left-hand (even-numbered) page. The rest of the page has diagrams showing the correct and incorrect moves, and possibly a variation on the theme. The facing page has diagrams of contrasting positions; each page is a complete unit, and each two pages can be treating as a complete, larger unit. Here is an early example:

Diagram A18. BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.



This is **A18**. White has run with 6-3, and Black has a choice: hit and split, or make the 5-point. Diagrams **A19** and **A20** show hitting and splitting (correct) and pointing (wrong). At the bottom of the page is diagram **A21**:

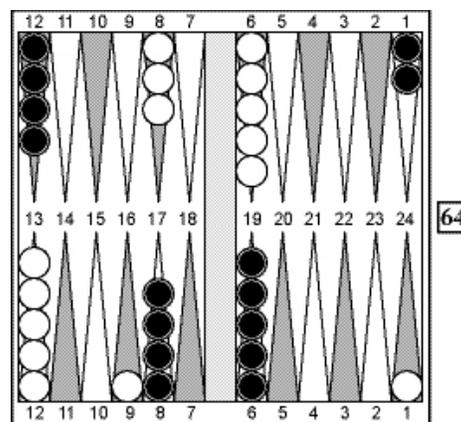
Diagram A21. BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.



White has run with 6-3. The extra builder on Black's 8-point dictates making the 5-point.

On the facing page White has run with 6-2 instead of 6-3, and that page discusses why that matters. The final position, **A25**, shows White running with 6-2, but Black having an extra on the 8-point:

Diagram A25. BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.



The authors sum up the advice of the preceding two pages: "The correct play (with 31) depends on whether:

- (1) Black can split when he hits, and
- (2) He has at most three checkers on his 8-point.

When (1) and (2) are both true (as in **A18**) Black should hit. When (1) and (2) are both false (as in **A25**) Black should make his 5-point. If only one is true, it is usually a close choice."

There are over 200 diagrams covering every significant variation on 3-1 within the first three rolls of the game. The explanations are concise, and the backgammon is solid. This is a book that belongs on everyone's backgammon shelf. — Jake Jacobs Δ



Backgammon & Doubling— What We Know

*An investigation into the
history of the Doubling Cube*

By Bill Davis

A person could dedicate his entire life studying the history of backgammon. Much has been written about the game over the years. But there is one relatively new BG historical topic that remains for the most part, a mystery: the introduction of doubling.

David Levy, in a 2003 GammOnLine forum discussion, references Francis Willughby's *Book of Games: a 17th Century Treatise on Sports, Games, and Pastimes (ca 1660 in England)*, edited by David Cram, Jeffrey L. Forgeng and Dorothy Johnston, and published by Ashgate in 2003. In "Ticktack," one of the described backgammon-like games, doubling the stakes is part of the rules. The term "vie" means to double. If a player accepts the double, he says "I see it." Otherwise, he can yield the game. The big difference is that only the initial "vie" doubles the stakes. Future "vies" in the same game triple and next quadruple the stakes.

But that is ancient history and doesn't relate directly to our game. Permitting players to optionally double and redouble the stakes prior to rolling was responsible for backgammon's resurgence in the United States (and later across the globe) from about 1927 into the 1930s. Let's lay out what we know regarding doubling and then offer the best possible documentation for our statements:

STATEMENT #1

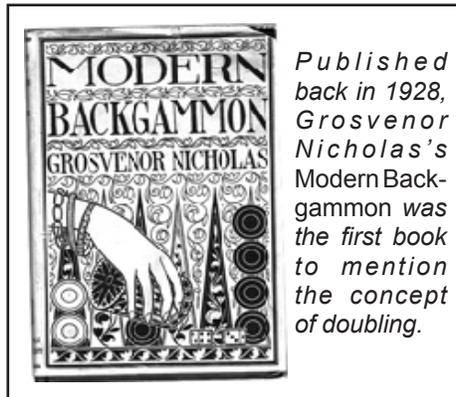
The concept of doubling was introduced into modern backgammon in 1926, or possibly 1925.

DOCUMENTATION

In the 1926 edition of *Hoyle's Games* by R. F. Foster—the accepted standard for game rules at that time—there is no mention of either doubling or automatic doubles. Of course Hoyle printed the standardized rules for games and would not have included a new rule until it had been widely accepted.

The 1928 edition of *Modern Backgammon* by Grosvenor Nicholas is the earliest book we have found that mentions backgammon "doubling" and/or "automatic doubles." Nicholas calls the advent of doubling and chouettes "Twentieth Century elaborations." On page 23 of his book, Nicholas writes:

"It is said that doubling, which has so greatly increased the possibilities of the game, as well as its popularity, was first originated on the continent of Europe in connection with the game of golf. It may be described as follows: After the game has commenced, either player may, at any time before he throws his dice, double the stake for which the game is played. When this is done his opponent may, at his option, give up, surrender the stake and commence a new game, or he may accept the double and proceed with the game."



Published back in 1928, Grosvenor Nicholas's Modern Backgammon was the first book to mention the concept of doubling.

One difference between the 1928 *Modern Backgammon* doubling rules and those written in books after 1930 is that when playing BG with the doubling option, Nicholas states on page 25 that "...gammons or double games are preserved, but not backgammons or triple games."

In her book *The New Backgammon* (1930) Elizabeth Clark Boyden helps us pinpoint the surge in backgammon popularity. Her forward, written June 5, 1930 in New York, states:

"About eighteen months ago Backgammon awoke from its Rip Van Winkle sleep, and suddenly became the mode at the smart summer resorts in the East. During the past winter the game has been strengthening its hold on the public, and today this fine old game, which

combines *the chance of the throw* with *the skill of the play*, seems to be on its way back to its former position among society's leading games."

Boyden goes on to mention "the introduction of doubles" as a modern innovation.

Eighteen months prior to June 5, 1930 is just a month or two before the publication of Grosvenor Nicholas's book *Modern Backgammon*. Nicholas completed the forward to his book on January 4, 1928 which means he probably wrote it in 1927. It is hard to imagine that doubling was a totally new concept when Nicholas was writing his book. And since books of the early 1930s call doubling a "modern invention," a good guess is that backgammon doubling originated in 1926 (or 1925 at the earliest) and didn't start to become popular nationally until after the publication of Nicholas's book in 1928.

STATEMENT #2

Doubling and the doubling cube almost certainly originated in New York City, perhaps at the Racquet and Tennis Club by an unknown player or players.

DOCUMENTATION

New York City was the hotbed for backgammon during the latter part of the Roaring Twenties. In his 1930 book *Backgammon of Today*, John Longacre states in his Foreword that "The development and perfection of what may fairly be called—in this country, at least—the Backgammon of today, may be attributed to two New York Clubs in which the game has been played intensively for over a generation."

We have not found one author of a backgammon book written between 1928 and 1931 that didn't live or play in New York City. As further evidence of NYC's impact on backgammon, the Backgammon and Card Committee of the Racquet and Tennis Club of New York City prepared the first nationwide "Laws of Backgammon" in 1931 including doubling rules that were officially approved by 25 clubs across the United States.

STATEMENT #3

The first method for keeping track of doubles was with parlor matches. A pointing device was also used prior to general acceptance of the doubling cube.

DOCUMENTATION

In *Modern Backgammon* (1928), there is no mention of how opponents should keep track of the value of the game and/or

who had accepted the last double.

Elizabeth Clark Boyden's book *The New Backgammon* (July 1930, page 34) is also the first to describe a method for scoring when playing the optional double game:

"Scoring in Backgammon consists mainly in keeping a record of the doubles and then in applying them to the type of game which is being played.

"At the present time the popular method of counting the doubles is by the use of common matches. A match is placed upon the bar whenever an Automatic or Optional Double is made. When the game is finished, the score is reckoned on the basis of a double for each match on the bar. The matches are then removed."

The April 11, 1931 *Collier's* magazine front cover shows a woman playing backgammon with a container of bakelite scoring matches on the side.



The April 11, 1931 *Collier's* magazine cover showed bakelite matches being used to score the game and keep track of doubling.

A photograph of Joan Crawford and her husband Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. shows them using a doubling pointing device for scoring. The picture was taken on their estate grounds in 1931 because Joan had blonde hair for only two of her movies between 1929 and 1933 (the years Crawford and Fairbanks were married): "Laughing Sinners" (released May 30, 1931), and "This Modern Age" (released August 29, 1931). [See picture above right.]



In 1931, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and Joan Crawford used a pointing device to keep track of backgammon doubling.

STATEMENT #4:

The doubling cube was first used around 1929 (more commonly for chouette play) at New York City backgammon clubs.

DOCUMENTATION

How To Play The New Backgammon (1930) by Lelia Hattersley is the first book to mention a doubling cube for keeping track of doubles. After describing how New York society presently uses ordinary parlor matches to keep track of the score and doubles, Hattersley writes this historical tidbit:

"Many players, especially in Chouette, prefer to keep track of their doubles and the current stake with a device known as a doubling cube.

"This is a cube, like a large die, numbered on its six faces as follows: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and 64.

"For convenience, at the beginning of the game, the cube is usually placed with the 64 face up.

"As soon as a double is established (automatic or optional) the 2 is turned up. At the second double, the cube is turned to 4, and so on.

"As a further tally, the cube should be placed before the player who has the privilege of the next double."

Hattersley puts no exact date on her 1930 book so we don't know if it was published before or after *The New Backgammon* (Boyden's July 1930 book) that states "At the present time the popular method of counting the doubles is by the use of common matches." But if Boyden did not even mention the existence of a cube (and

she was a well-known bridge teacher in New York at the time), it seems reasonable to assume that the doubling cube made its appearance in New York City on a limited basis no earlier than 1929.

The earliest dated picture of a doubling cube that I have found is one of 1930s movie actress Miriam Hopkins. The original caption for this picture reads: "When Miriam Hopkins completed her role opposite Maurice Chevalier in Paramount's 'The Smiling Lieutenant' at Eastern Studios and was summoned to Hollywood to play a featured part in '24 Hours,' she paused at her hotel just long enough to unpack her trunks, then hurried to the nearest Pacific coast beach."

"The Smiling Lieutenant" was released August 1, 1931 and "24 Hours" was released October 10, 1931, so this picture was taken sometime in the Summer of 1931.



This picture of actress Miriam Hopkins probably taken in the summer of 1931 is the first known picture of a doubling cube.

STATEMENT #5

Use of the cube did not become popular nationwide until after 1931.

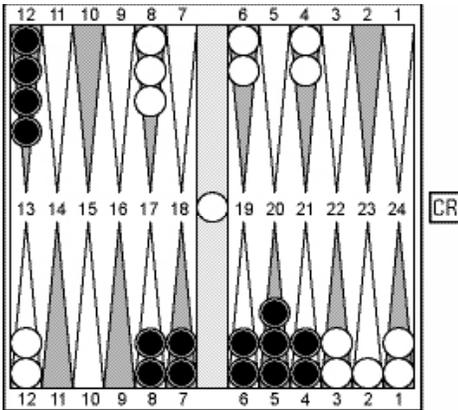
DOCUMENTATION

The illustrator for the April 11, 1931 *Collier's* (which was considered a trendy New York City magazine) included matches rather than a doubling cube for his cover. Additionally, we can find no picture earlier than Miriam Hopkins California shot in the summer of 1931 using a doubling cube. Finally, a few celebrity pictures exist showing players using both a doubling cube and matches. These go into the late-1930s.

So this is what we've found regarding the history of doubling and the doubling cube. Can you help us with our investigation? In October www.chicagopoint.com will have this article permanently online. Send any and all findings to bg@chicagopoint.com. Δ

**PROBLEM #329
ANALYZED**

by John O'Hagan

5-point match. Black leads White 4 to 2 (Crawford). **BLACK TO PLAY 5-2.**

The great Paul Magriel once said that most mistakes in backgammon are caused by the player trying to decide between plays A and B when the right play is actually play C. This problem is a case in point.

When Phil Simborg first showed me this position, I saw three possible 5-2 plays: 13/6; 13/8, 13/11; and 7/2*, 13/11. Hitting on the deuce and 13/11 looked clearly best. I don't want White to make my 2-point and being hit back with a 2 is no big deal. If White rolls a 2, it sends me back and probably helps my timing. Notice also that I will be able to use 4s and 6s (numbers which don't reenter) to cover the bar and remake a 5-prime. My play is better than either of the alternatives I looked at, but there is a slightly better play available that I didn't even notice.

There are two keys to finding the right play in this position. The first is to realize that you aren't really that big of a favorite in the position. White has a well-timed backgame (93 pips behind before this 5-2 roll) and therefore very good winning chances. The second key is to realize that gammon and backgammon wins have no value whatsoever for you at this score. This score is one of the few where, if you were given a choice between play A which gives you 10% more gammon wins and 1% more single losses or play B which gives you 10% fewer gammon wins but 1% more single wins, you would be right to choose play B.

A good approach against a well-timed backgame such as White's in this position frequently involves some out-of-the-ordinary type checker plays. Look at our 5-prime from the 8-point through the 4-point in this position. We humans usually think of these points as permanent assets which are

to be kept intact until the bearing in and off stage of the game. This is certainly correct most of the time but it's not really true when you're up against a well-timed backgame. Defending against a backgame such as this means you really need to go all out to slow yourself down. Ideally, you would like to recirculate some of your checkers. Frequently the best way to do this is to break the forward-most point in your prime, leaving two blots in your home board.

In most types of backgammon positions, it's almost always a good idea to turn two blots into one point. But sometimes when you're defending against a backgame, timing considerations compel you to do the opposite: you turn a point into two blots. You hope that the opponent will be forced to hit you back (or will do so voluntarily) since this delay usually improves your chances of winning the game. The longer the game goes on, the more likely the backgame player is to roll a disastrous double that ruins their timing.

The recirculate-at-all-costs play is therefore 13/8, 4/2*! If you didn't see this as an alternative, join the club. I think well over 90% of us would get this wrong over the board. A long 2-ply GNU rollout with checker play according to score gives your side 59.9% wins after this play vs. 59.0% after 7/2*, 13/11. Third place was 13/8, 13/11 at 58.1% wins with 13/6 next at 58.0%. So the "berserko" 4/2* play is correct at this score.

A long 3-ply Snowie rollout showed that

more normal 7/2*, 13/11 is better for money. It wins 1.2% more net BGs and 3.1% more net Gs while winning just 0.9% fewer single games than 13/8, 4/2*. But this isn't a money game so these extra Gs and BGs do you no good.

There are a few other comments I would like to make about the recirculation play. White's board is currently pretty weak so you really don't have to worry very much about White hitting one or both of your blots and then winning going forward. When White does hit, the game (for the time being anyway) becomes sort of a containment game where you will have one or maybe two checkers behind a skeleton prime while White will have six checkers behind a 4-prime.

White certainly won't like it if she doesn't get a 5 or a 6. She'll have to either break the midpoint or move a checker deeper than she wants from the 8-point. So you will be a solid favorite if a containment position like that develops. Most of the time, however, White will end up playing some kind of backgame. If that happens, we'll just have to hope that the extra delay caused by our recirculation play will result in a weaker backgame for White.

So the next time you're defending against a well-timed backgame, be on the lookout for opportunities like this to recirculate your checkers by breaking your forward-most point. It will give you a chance to ruin your opponent's timing which is the key to defeating a backgame.—John O'Hagan Δ

AMALGAMATION

Tom Madeux (MO) was a recent out-of-state Bar Point Club visitor... Colorado director **Lynda Clay** tells us you can win an additional \$500 at the upcoming Colorado State Championships (28-30 Sept.) just for staying at the hotel. For details, go to: www.coloradobackgammon.com... Congratulations to **Carter Mattig** (IL) and **Christina Pfeifer** who have an engagement party in September. They will marry in Greece in June...



Carter Mattig with bride-to-be Christina.

From CNN: **Anne Heche** is not a fan of her soon-to-be ex-husband **Coleman Laffoon**, as a recent filed declaration says he just "plays ping-

pong, backgammon and poker and views pornography online."... Check out former Monte Carlo director **Lewis Deyong's** (UK) historical backgammon articles online at backgammon.ladbrokes.com/en/backgammon-articles... Enjoy backgammon history? Go to www.time.com and search for "backgammon." You'll be able to read articles on the game as far back as 1926... **Arline Levy** (IL) won a seat, airfare and accommodations at Caesar's Palace for a huge blackjack tournament in August. Unfortunately, she had no luck in the playoffs... The Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Illinois will be the scene of the 2008 Chicago Open. **Howard Markowitz** (NV) is scheduled to direct with assistance from **Roz Ferris** (IL). Additionally, Mr. Markowitz will team with **Lynn Ehrlich** to run the NY Metro Backgammon Open (ABT) & World Doubles Championship to be held in Jersey City, NJ 10-13 January... Condolences to the family of **Frank Mazza**, an avid GamesGrid player who died of a massive heart attack in late July... Get well wishes to **Rick Todd** (MI) who had a heart valve replacement last month... Finally, we recently received a fortune cookie that contained good advice: "If you are afraid to shake the dice, you will never throw a six." Δ

who did what

WINNER'S CIRCLE



JUL.-AUG. 2007

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 8 July)... OPEN (7): 1/2-Alan Martin / Neal Rosensweig.

•**Backgammon By the Bay** (Berekely, CA; 14 July)... OPEN (10): 1-Kit Woolsey, 2-Ted Chee; 1C-David Levy. INTERMEDIATE (5): 1-Claudia Imatt, 2-Martin Baker.

PGT-5th Riviera & Nation's Cup Int'l BG Festival (Cannes, France; 17-22 July)... **NATIONS CUP** (16 teams): 1-Denmark: Morten Holm & Sander Lylloff, 2-Georgia: Badri Cercvadze / Akaki Kikaleichvili / Kaha Nachkebia, 3-France, 4-Turkey. **PARTOUCHE OPEN** (117+11): 1-Sander Lylloff (DEN), 2-Götz Hildsberg (GER), 3/4-Thomas Kokholm (DEN) / Volker Sonnabend (GER); 1C-Artur Muradian (ARM), 2C-Tassilo Rzymann (AUS), 3C/4C-Alexandros Kolonias (GRE) / Avetis Rostomian (ARM); 1LC-Jakob Garal (GER), 2LC-Jonas Moehrdel (DEN). **INTERMEDIATE** (8): 1-Andranik Harutunian (ARM), 2-Georges Issa; 1C-Majken Johansen (DEN). **BEGINNERS** (3): 1-Andrea Bonazzi (ITA). **CANNES DOUBLES** (32 teams): 1-Michihito Kageyama & Toyotaka Nakamura (JPN), 2-Claudio Cantoni & Fausto Pescini (ITA),

3/4-Andy Bell (ENG) & Hanna Nilsson (NOR) / Martin Foldager & Pia Jeppesen (DEN). **500 SUPER JACKPOT** (16): 1/2-Leonid Riskin (UKR/GER) / David Todd (USA). **LADIES TOURNEY** (10): 1-Rachel Rhodes (ENG), 2-Cécile Wolf (FRA). **FAIR PLAY TROPHY**: Perry Gartner (USA).

•**Phoenix Backgammon Club—USBL** (Glendale, AZ; 21 July)... OPEN (8): 1-Pete Campbell, 2-Walt Taylor, 3-Terry Valentine.

•**Backgammon By the Bay** (Cupertino, CA; 28 July)... OPEN (13): 1-Sasan Taher, 2-Karam Ashoo; 1C-Jenann Nakamura, 2C-Ted Chee. **INTERMEDIATE** (9): 1-Dale Rose, 2-Claudia Imatt; 1C-Loretta Bowen.

•**ABT—Thousand Islands Tourney** (Alexandria Bay, NY; 3-5 Aug.)... OPEN (29): 1-Harvey Gillis (WA), 2-Richard Munitz (NY), 3-Frank DiMaggio (NJ). **NOVICE** (3): 1-Wendy Gillis (WA). **DOUBLES** (12 teams): 1-Harvey Gillis (WA) & Ron Taylor (NY), 2-Alan

Grunwald (NJ) & Richard Munitz (NY). **MINI-JP WINNERS**: Martin Veltmann (Canada), Al Cantito (CT), Frank DiMaggio (NJ).

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Chicago, IL; 5 Aug.)... OPEN (19): 1/2-Alex Owen / Mike Wolock, 3/4-Richard Stawowy / Ken Tyszko; 1C-Roy Cohen, Albert Yakobashvili. **INTERMEDIATE** (6): 1-Christopher Shanova, 2-Les Moshinsky.

•**Ohio State Club Monthly** (Akron, OH; 5 Aug.)... OPEN: 1-Mike Hendrickson, 2-Joe Miller.

•**Arizona Club Monthly** (Phoenix, AZ; 6 Aug.)... OPEN (8): 1-Bruce Yee, 2-Pete Campbell, 3-Ken Grossman.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 12 Aug.)... OPEN (10): 1/2-Mike Corbett / Lee Genud.

•**Phoenix Backgammon Club—USBL** (Glendale, AZ; 18 Aug.)... OPEN (4): 1-Joni Brummer, 2-Dan Pelton.

•**Kansas City Double Points Classic** (Kansas City, MO; 18 Aug.)... OPEN (11): 1-Vincent Ward, 2/3-Eric Barr / Curt Wilhemsen.

•**Bloomington/Normal Summer Sizzler** (Bloomington, IL; 19 Aug.)... OPEN (26): 1-Greg Tomlin, 2-Randy Reiff; 1C-Larry Whittenberg, 2C-Ed Zell; 1LC-Scott Day (IN). **LIMITED** (6): 1-Sharon Lefferts, 2-Wendy Russell; 1C-Merle Day... *Directed by Michael Flohr.* Δ



1000 Islands winner Harvey Gillis.



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