

28th chicago open

CHRISTOPHER YEP WINS CHICAGO OPEN

Christopher Yep of Worthington, Ohio defeated two backgammon giants en route to winning the Chicago Open. The 28th version of this long-running Memorial Day tournament was co-directed by Howard Markowitz and Roz Ferris and was held at the beautiful Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Illinois. A one-year event layoff coupled with a weak economy took its toll on the attendance which plummeted to an all-time low of 69 players.

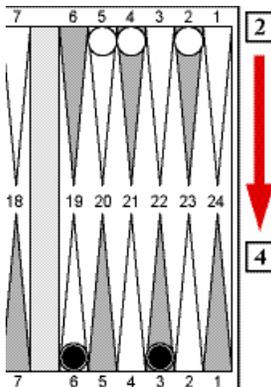


2008 Chicago Open Champ Chris Yep.

After winning his first match in the buyback format, Christopher Yep defeated in order, #27 BG Giant Mike Corbett (FL), #29 BG Giant Petko Kostadinov (SC), and 2008 two-time Masters Champ Alan Grunwald (NJ). This set up a 15-point final against Illinois expert John Jennings.

After five games, Yep found himself trailing 3-4 and facing a 4-cube in a game where Jennings had turned a race around:

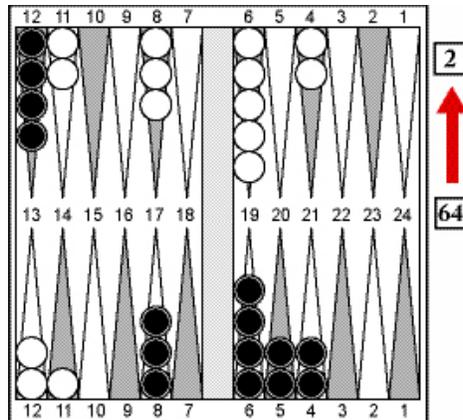
Pos. 1. Chicago Open 15-point finals. Christopher Yep (Black) trails John Jennings (White), 3-4. White on roll. CUBE ACTION(S)?



Although an easy take for Yep, Jennings' recube is perfectly timed. John rolled 6-1 (5/Off, 2/1), Chris threw 6-1, and John bombed out with a 2-1 sending Chris ahead 7-4.

Leading 8-4, ahead 6 pips in the race (118-124), and aiming at an enemy blot, Yep cubed here:

Pos. 2. Yep (Black) leads Jennings (White) 8-4/15. Black on roll. CUBE ACTION(S)?

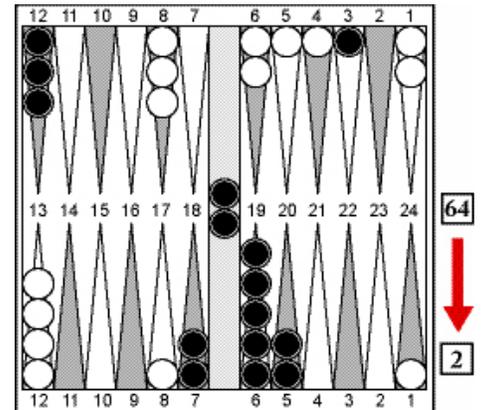


A good double because when he hits, 6.7% of the wins are gammons. Yep hit the

shot and went on to win two points.

In the next game trailing 4-10, Jennings has just played 8/5*, putting a third checker on the bar. Yep entered one man with 6-3 presenting John Jennings with an interesting doubling decision:

Pos. 3. Yep (Black) leads Jennings (White) 10-4/15. White on roll. CUBE ACTION(S)?



The match score and Jennings' gammon threat makes this a clear double. A Snowie 3-ply evaluation says that Yep

[Continued on page 4]

A REAL SENIOR MOMENT



92-year-old Richard "Dick" Ryder defeating former World Champ Mike Svobodny in a recent friendly chouette. Mike took "extras" and Dick promptly backgammoned him. That's "Jersey" Jim Pasko looking on in the background. [Photo by Steve Sax] Δ

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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CATTANACH ENDS SOUTHEAST CHAMPIONSHIPS

I first want to thank everyone that attended the last two Southeast Backgammon Championships in Atlanta. I enjoyed running the events and hoped you all enjoyed the competition. However, many considerations, economic and otherwise, make it unfeasible for me to continue running the event. The 2008 Championships just completed will be the last.

Thanks again, and I look forward to seeing all of you at future ABT events. —
Gregg Cattanach, Doraville, Florida

CLARIFY CLOCK USAGE

What's up with clock usage at various ABT events? Sometimes clocks are optional, sometimes they're used is at the discretion of the director, and other times clocks are mandatory. I think the fairest thing is

[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.

| | | |
|--------------|---|--------------|
| Jun 6-8 | Los Angeles Open, Airtel Hotel, Van Nuys, California | 818/901-0464 |
| Jun 8 | Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio | 937/864-1748 |
| Jun 8 | South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida | 954/564-0340 |
| Jun 8 | New England Monthly & Playoffs, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, MA | 781/324-0892 |
| Jun 14 | Anti-Cruelty Society Invitational, Ambassador East Hotel, Chicago, Illinois | 773/583-6464 |
| Jun 14 | Southwest Ohio Summer Solsitce Tournament, Peter's, West Chester, Ohio | 513/777-7862 |
| Jun 14 | Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana | 219/785-2082 |
| Jun 19 | Third Thursday Bonus (Florida State), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan | 810/232-9731 |
| Jun 29 | Colorado Monthly, Bennigan's Restaurant, Denver, Colorado | 303/791-0271 |
| Jun 29 | Pair-O-Dice Monthly, Cavendish Bridge Club, New York, New York | 212/222-1777 |
| Jul 2 | Michigan Summer Warm-Up, Sheraton Hotel, Novi, Michigan | 810/232-9731 |
| Jul 3-6 | Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Novi, Novi, Michigan | 810/232-9731 |
| Jul 7 | Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona | 602/296-4307 |
| Jul 7 | Roy's Monthly, Restaurant Roy, Santa Barbara, California | 805/966-5636 |
| Jul 12 | Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana | 219/785-2082 |
| Jul 12* | Kansas City Club Monthly, Westport Flea Market, Kansas City, Missouri | 816/916-6599 |
| Jul 13* | Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio | 937/864-1748 |
| Jul 13* | Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio | 330/268-4610 |
| Jul 17* | Third Thursday Bonus (Wisconsin), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan | 810/232-9731 |
| Jul 20* | Pub Club Summer Sunday Tournament, Playoffs Bar, Carol Stream, Illinois | 630/606-2388 |
| Jul 25-27 | Minnesota Open, Marriott Hotel, Bloomington, Minnesota | 612/718-2613 |
| Jul 27* | Colorado Monthly, Bennigan's Restaurant, Denver, Colorado | 303/791-0271 |
| Aug 1-3 | Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York | 585/752-5393 |
| Aug 3 | Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois | 773/583-6464 |
| Aug 3* | Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio | 330/268-4610 |
| Aug 4* | Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona | 602/296-4307 |
| Aug 4* | Roy's Monthly, Restaurant Roy, Santa Barbara, California | 805/966-5636 |
| Aug 15-17 | Florida State Championship, Marriott North, Fort Lauderdale, Florida | 954/564-0340 |
| Aug 29-Sep 2 | Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin | 608/516-9109 |
| Sep 20-21* | Jon Viator Cup Invitational, Jon Viator's residence, La Jolla, California | 818/901-0464 |
| Sep 26-28 | Colorado State Championships, Holiday Inn, Denver, Colorado | 303/791-0271 |
| Oct 10-12 | Illinois State Championships, Ramada Hotel, Peoria, Illinois | 847/845-3579 |
| Oct 17-19 | Mid-Atlantic Championships, Days Inn, Timonium, Maryland | 954/564-0340 |
| Nov 12-16 | Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada | 702/893-6025 |
| Dec 5-7 | California State Championship, Airtel Hotel, Van Nuys, California | 818/901-0464 |
| Jan 18-25 | BackgammonPoker On Board, Princess Cruise, Ft. Lauderdale to Caribbean | 773/583-6464 |

OUTSIDE USA

| | | |
|--------------|--|-------------------|
| Jun 5-8 | 2nd Braunlage-Harz-Cup, Hotel Hohenzollern, Braunlage, Germany | 49521-64314 |
| Jun 6-8 | Barceló English Open, Barceló Daventry Hotel, Daventry, England | 441522-888676 |
| Jun 6-8 | Strawberry Hill High Stakes Tournament, Irishtown, Jamaica | 876/999-0471 |
| Jun 7-8* | WBF-Turkiye 12th Championship, Arma Restauraat, Istanbul, Turkey | 905332-352555 |
| Jun 19-22 | PGT: Forges Gammon Challenge, Grand Casino, Forges-les-Eaux, France | 331-47645938 |
| Jun 19-26 | 17th Zakynthos Festival of BG & Poker, Peligoni Club, Zakynthos, Greece | 447946-801801 |
| Jun 20-22 | Córdoba Open, Restaurant Arcadia, Córdoba, Argentina | 543514-522885 |
| Jun 28-29* | Campionato Italiano a Rimini, Italy | 3941-5211029 |
| Jul 4-6 | Keren Di Bona Memorial, Barceló Daventry Hotel, Daventry, England | 441522-888676 |
| Jul 6-15 | 33rd World Championship, Fairmont Hotel, Monte-Carlo, Monaco | USA: 212/222-7177 |
| Jul 11-12* | Festival of Games 5th Czech Open, CEZ, Pardubice, Czech Republic | 420466-535200 |
| Jul 15-20 | WSOB/PGT: Nations Cup & Riviera 6, Palm Beach Casino, Cannes, France | 331-47645938 |
| Jul 19-20 | 13th Liverpool Open, Liverpool Bridge Club, Liverpool, England | 447931-553829 |
| Jul 21 | WSOB: Championship Finale, Palm Beach, Cannes, France | 3314764-5938 |
| Jul 31-Aug 5 | EBGT: Gogi Bukia Memorial & Georgian Open, Tiflis, Tbilisi, Georgia | 491715-422222 |
| Aub 1-3* | Australian Open, Waxy's Irish Pub, Surfers Paradise, Australia | 61402-863825 |
| Aug 1-3 | Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Daventry Hotel, Daventry, England | 441522-888676 |
| Aug 7-10 | 2nd Casino-Cup, Casino Kleinwalsertal, Riezlern near Oberstdorf, Austria | 49711-486190 |
| Aug 8-10 | Pohojanmaa Open, Backgammon Suomi, Alavus, Finland | 3540-5789579 |
| Aug 23-24 | Newcastle Open, Kotara Bowling Club, Kotara, NSW, Australia | 612-49469222 |
| Aug 23-24* | Danish Doubles Championship, Kulturcenter, Solrød Strand, Denmark | 4522-614800 |
| Sep 5-7* | Backpacker Backgammon Trophy, Barceló Hotel, Hinckley Island, England | 441522-888676 |
| Sep 5-7* | 17th Mitteleuropa & 21st Italian Championships, Nova Gorica, Slovenia | 390331-923537 |
| Sep 18-21* | PGT: Aix-en-Provence Cup, Casio Aix, Aix-en-Provence, France | 331-47645938 |
| Sep 20-26* | Egyptian International Tournament, Domina Hotel, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt | 2016-3308375 |
| Sep 22-27* | Aldiana-BG-Poker-Golf Cup, Aldiana Club, Nabeul, Tunisia | 49711-486190 |
| Sep 26-29* | 3rd Sorrento Coast Tournament, Villa Angelina, Sorrento, Italy | 39335-221412 |

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

for clocks to either be required for all (and everyone entering the event knowing this), or be used when the director determines that a particular match is delaying the tournament.

The problem with “clocks optional” is that it gives certain players a tool to gain an angle against (for example) newcomers

who are likely to feel more “pressured” by the clock. For this reason, I don’t think players should be able to pick-and-choose which opponent they want to clock, unless they can make a case that the opponent they are paired against is known for his slow play, or that their match is holding up a bracket.

The ultimate goal of the tournament should to treat everyone fairly and make them feel welcome so they will keep com-

ing back. Allowing players to selectively clock matches, potentially for psychological reasons is the wrong approach.—Alan Grunwald, Director, Mid-Jersey Backgammon Club

SCOTT'S NOT

Portuguese Open Director Chiva Tafazzoli says he lost Chicago Open Intermediate winner Scott Casty’s contact info and asked me for it. I don’t have a current e-mail address for Scott. Can anyone help me with this?—Carol Joy Cole, Director, Michigan Summer Championships

Phil Simborg replies: In answer to your request for Scott Casty contact information, I do have an e-mail address of blparr@gmail.com, but I must tell you in all honesty: Scott Casty is not who he appears to be.

Scott is a male prostitute that Carter Mattig hires to accompany him on backgammon trips. (That is why you never see Scott without Carter.)

When I first told this to some friends, they laughed and thought I was kidding. Then I asked them one simple question: “If you were a normal person and were not hired to do so, would you choose to travel around the world with Carter Mattig?”

People nodded in agreement and totally understood.

Please keep this information confidential as I don’t want to be accused of “spreading rumors.”—Phil Simborg, Chicago, Illinois Δ



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2008

AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2008

Compiled through 26 May 2008 after 8 tournaments

(Upcoming events: LA Open, Michigan, New York, Minnesota)



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2008

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|------------------|------|---------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
| Bob Koca | 23.33 | Reggie Proulx | 8.20 | Justin Bor | 4.52 | Carsten Muecheberg | 2.56 |
| Mike Senkiewicz | 22.33 | Stepan Nuniyants | 7.84 | Bill Davis | 4.50 | Dennis Rutkowski | 2.56 |
| Ray Glaeser | 21.33 | Stick Rice | 7.40 | Ed O’Laughlin | 4.50 | Kamyar Hosseini | 2.56 |
| Jon Vietor | 18.67 | John Jennings | 7.40 | Milton Gonzalez | 4.10 | Frank Ley | 2.56 |
| Drew Giovanis | 18.07 | Rose Sheedy | 6.89 | Julius High | 4.02 | Petko Kostadinov | 2.26 |
| Jeff Acierno | 15.84 | Owen Black | 6.20 | Ken Bond | 3.70 | Gary Schachtschneider | 2.26 |
| Christopher Yep | 14.80 | Joe Freedman | 6.00 | Sam Pottle | 3.70 | Susie Hathaway | 2.13 |
| Michael Edge | 13.67 | Vadim Musaelyan | 6.00 | Bob Pietras | 3.33 | Charles Toots | 2.05 |
| Carol Joy Cole | 12.00 | Robert Lessard | 6.00 | Joseph Jemal | 3.10 | Tom Rebelo | 2.05 |
| Antoinette Williams | 12.00 | Steve Hast | 6.00 | Beth Raby | 3.10 | Judy Field | 1.72 |
| John O’Hagan | 11.17 | Alan Gold | 5.71 | Malcolm Robertson | 3.00 | Roy Cohen | 1.67 |
| Matt Reklaitis | 10.76 | Rick Barabino | 5.58 | Stuart Thomson | 3.00 | Chris Scott | 1.67 |
| Greg Merriman | 10.67 | Neil Deutsch | 5.58 | Neil Kazaross | 3.00 | Evan Etter | 1.55 |
| Tak Morioka | 10.67 | Antonio Ortega | 5.58 | Tami Jones | 2.86 | Ben Elliott | 1.55 |
| Barry Miller | 10.67 | Eric Barr | 5.33 | Albert Yakobashvili | 2.70 | Josh Racko | 1.54 |
| Jolie Rubin | 10.56 | Les Moshinsky | 5.33 | Peggy Neubig | 2.67 | Richard Wisniewski | 1.43 |
| Jonah Seewald | 10.22 | Herb Roman | 5.33 | Mark Donaldson | 2.67 | Ryan Hast | 1.38 |
| Kit Woolsey | 9.85 | Larry Liebster | 5.33 | Lynda Clay | 2.67 | Murray Bryntesen | 1.35 |
| Ray Fogerlund | 9.33 | Bruce Ballance | 5.28 | Harold Roberson | 2.67 | Jacob Moreno | 1.35 |
| Dave Settles | 9.30 | Karsten Busch | 5.11 | Jesse Eaton | 2.64 | Bob Weigel | 1.30 |
| Justin Nunez | 9.04 | Jeff Whitlaw | 5.11 | Arthur Sutton | 2.64 | Alan Epstein | 1.30 |
| Joe Russell | 9.04 | Dana Nazarian | 4.67 | Gary Fishman | 2.64 | Raul Carregha | 1.28 |
| David Rubin | 9.00 | Howard Markowitz | 4.67 | Lynn Ehrlich | 2.64 | Bob Sahagian | 1.28 |
| Scott Casty | 8.84 | Jona Alexander | 4.52 | Kate Elmore | 2.60 | Karl Pearson | 1.28 |
| Chris Knapp | 8.72 | Ed Bennett | 4.52 | Neal Rosensweig | 2.60 | Josh Rechnitz | 1.25 |



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB

2008 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 MAY

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------|------|---------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| Rory Pascar | 15.10 | Carter Mattig | 4.74 | Jerry Brooks | 2.12 | Les Moshinsky | 0.80 |
| David Rockwell | 13.84 | Oleg Raygorodsky | 4.64 | Dave Settles | 1.96 | Paul Baraz | 0.80 |
| Herb Roman | 12.60 | Jacob Moreno | 4.56 | Ken Tibbs | 1.84 | Dan Weymouth | 0.72 |
| Phil Simborg | 9.08 | Alex Owen | 4.44 | Roger Hickman | 1.76 | Tim Rockwell | 0.68 |
| Bill Davis | 8.84 | Tim Mabee | 4.38 | Eric Johnson | 1.60 | Henry Gray | 0.60 |
| Bob Zavoral | 8.54 | Michael Ginat | 4.08 | Lucky Nelson | 1.52 | Wendy Kaplan | 0.60 |
| Nora Luna Righter | 8.40 | Wayne Wiest | 3.80 | Mike Pufpaf | 1.40 | Elaine Kehm | 0.56 |
| Tak Morioka | 6.52 | Adrian Rios | 3.36 | Albert Yakobashvili | 1.36 | Linda Rockwell | 0.56 |
| Gary Kay | 6.44 | Scott Casty | 2.72 | Mike Wolock | 1.20 | Sherry Nelson | 0.56 |
| Steve Klesker | 5.96 | Alice Kay | 2.64 | Nicole Tibbs | 1.12 | Bill Gradl | 0.56 |
| Mike Sutton | 5.44 | Georgina Flanagan | 2.48 | Tom Machaj | 1.12 | Kathy Sorci | 0.52 |
| Royal Robinson | 5.20 | Larry Goldstein | 2.48 | Ray Lass | 1.04 | Arline Levy | 0.48 |
| Christopher Shanova | 4.80 | Bob Steen | 2.48 | Sargon Benjamin | 1.04 | Mark Swanson | 0.40 |
| Bill Bartholomay | 4.80 | Bill Keefe | 2.40 | Mary Franks | 0.96 | Roz Ferris | 0.32 |
| Richard Stawowy | 4.80 | Ken Bond | 2.32 | Mark Murray | 0.88 | Phyllis Smoliński | 0.24 |

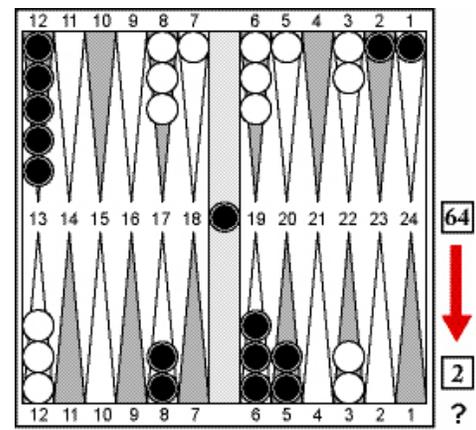
Player of the Month **RORY PASCAR** scored points in all four May play dates for a 4.28 total. Bill Davis completed a 14 match win streak on 20 May to finish with 3.68 points. Herb Roman, Tak Morioka, and Carter Mattig tied for third with 1.92 points each.

your move

PROBLEM #333

to be analyzed by Mary Hickey

Chicago Open Doubles semifinals tied at 3-3 to 7. Phil & Randee Simborg (White) double Bill Davis & Nora Luna Righter (Black). **SHOULD BLACK TAKE?**



ASK DANNY

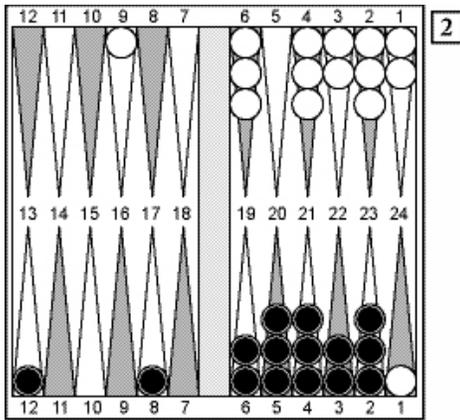


© 2008 by Danny Kleinman

THREE REASONABLE OPTIONS

Dear Danny: Here is an interesting problem for our recent chouette. I should tell you that we are not “world class” players. We play for \$2 per point and that is more than enough to keep our interest.

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-1.**



In the position shown above (with the man in the box playing the white pieces and holding the cube on two), I rolled a 6-

1. I wanted to hit but my two partners had entirely different ideas.

“Why risk a hit?” said Alan. Just play it as safe as you can. Bring in one checker 12/6, and play 4/3 to maximize attackers if he the Box doesn’t roll a 6.

Bob had a different plan. “Alan’s play allows the Box to run free if he throws a 6. Why not play 8/2, 4/3? This will give us a shot at White when he rolls 6-1, 6-2, 6-3, and 6-4.”

I listened to all the arguments, but I still hit figuring that if I get away with this, it’s “game over.” What play would you make in this situation, Danny?—Just wondering

DEAR WONDERING: I wonder if you realize what a nice position you have. You don’t have to hit to win. Even if White escapes, say with a 6-2, you will be on shake with a lead in the race that a mere pip count does not fully reflect. White will have two crossovers more than you, and a gap on his 5-point that will force him to play 5s to his 1-point, creating a pileup there. His slight bulge on the 2-point may cause him to waste pips in the bear-off. Your slight bulge on the 2-point will do you no harm at all, as the gap on your 1-point complements it; you can use your missing aces constructively to fill the gap from your pudgy 2-point.

The main danger to you in this position comes from getting hit, not from being out-

run, which is why you should reject hitting with 12/6, 2/1* or the slightly weaker 8/1*.

Between Bob’s 8/2, 4/3 outfield coverage play and Alan’s 12/6, 4/3 race-and-builder play, you should prefer Alan’s. Remember, contact favors the player who trails in the race. Besides the lesser flexibility of Bob’s play, it fails to decrease contact.

Suppose White escapes with a 6-2. After leaping 24/18, he’ll do better to slide 9/7 than to continue 18/16, despite the additional shot, for your small rolls next (3-1, 2-1 and 1-1) will give him winning chances (11 or 12 hitting rolls) and some of your own hitting rolls (4-1 and 3-2) will leave return shots.

Likewise, if White fails to escape, leaving your man back on the 12-point creates continuing shot danger for you. Your 3-2 and 3-1 will fail to bring your last man home, and your 6-5, though playable safely for the moment (12/6, 5/0) will create dangerous “oddage” (three men on your 6-point with only two men on your 5-point).

Still, if the race were a bit closer, with White’s outfield checker being home instead, I would go along with hitting 12/6, 2/1*.—Yours, Danny Δ

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

CHICAGO OPEN...

[Continued from page 1]

should pass this cube; however a 720 roll 3-ply precise rollout vindicates Yep making it a blunder to pass. Yep went on to win a fluke backgammon in the position to win the match 15-4. Congratulations to Christopher Yep on winning his first ABT title.

OTHER WINNERS

Gary Bauer had a big payday by winning the 32-player Memorial Day Masters event defeating Christopher Yep in the finals.



Memorial Masters Champ Gary Bauer.

Special recognition is due to Scott Casty and Daughter Lauren who both won their first ABT events (Scott: Intermediate, Lauren: Beginner).



Chicago Open director Howard Markowitz (L) with Advanced Champ Scott Casty and Beginners Champ Lauren Casty.

Check out the tournament results and note how many Chicago Bar Point Club players cashed at the Chicago Open. Δ

28TH CHICAGO OPEN

CHAMPIONSHIP (37+11 rebuys): 1- Christopher Yep (OH), 2-John Jennings (IL); 1C-Stick Rice (OH), 2C-Sam Pottle (WI); 1LC-Ken Bond (IL). **INTERMEDIATE** (27+9 rebuys): 1-Scott Casty (IL), 2-Albert Yakobashvili (IL); 1C-Julius High (NY), 2C-Jacob Moreno (IL); 1LC-Murray Bryntesen (FL). **BEGINNERS** (5): 1-Lauren Casty (IL), 2-Jenna Longman (MI). **MEMORIAL DAY MASTERS** (21+11 rebuys): 1-Gary Bauer (NJ), 2-Christopher Yep (OH), 3/4-Mike Corbett (FL) / Alfred Mamlet (MD). **LIMITED JACKPOT** (8): 1-Julius High (NY), 2-Murray Bryntesen (FL). **BLITZ** (32): 1-Herb Roman (IL). **SENIORS TOURNAMENT** (32): 1-Bruce Russell (WI), 2-Danielle Bastarache (FL). **DOUBLES** (17 teams): 1-Phil & Randee Simborg (IL), 2-Tim Mabee (IL) & Lucky Nelson (IL). **\$50 JACKPOT** (8): 1-Linda Rockwell (IL), 2-Carol Joy Cole (MI).

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EXPERT *Match Cube Action* IN ATLANTA

By Paul Weaver

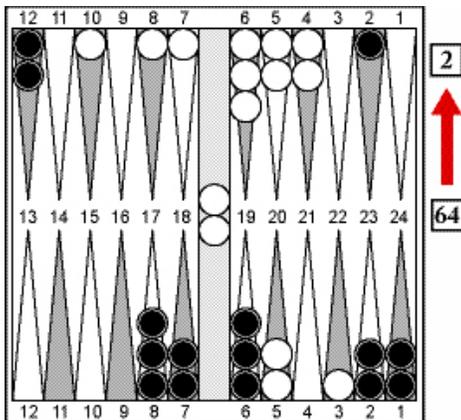
Gregg Cattanach directed the Southeast Backgammon Championships in Atlanta May 2–4 for the second year in a row. Regrettably, he has announced that he will not be able to continue. It is far more difficult to organize a successful and profitable tournament than most of us realize. We thank Gregg for doing a great job for two years and wish him the best of luck as he continues to be very active on the backgammon scene.

In the Championship Division, Carol Joy Cole (MI) defeated Joe Freedman (VA). In the Southeast Masters, Alan Grunwald (NJ) defeated Malcolm Davis (TX) in the semifinals and Perry Gartner (NJ) in the finals. Alan's wife Joan Grunwald won the Novice event.

This article will examine the expert match cube action of Alan, Malcolm and Perry, three gentlemen that are well known and greatly respected. They have more than one hundred years of backgammon experience among them. All three are strong players and tough competitors, with many tournament victories.

Malcolm is a member of the Elite Eight, having been voted to the Giant-32 list all eight times since 1993. He played exceptionally well, with a Snowie error rate of 2.75 in his losing semifinal match. There may be fewer than five players in the world who consistently average below 2.75.

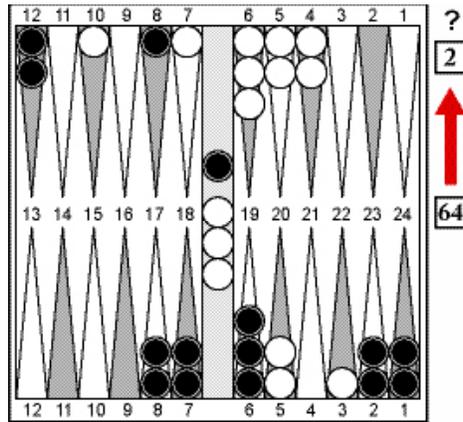
Position 1. 13-point Masters semifinals. Black (Malcolm Davis) on roll leading White (Alan Grunwald) 2–0. **CUBE ACTION(S)?** Then **BLACK TO PLAY 6-5.**



In Position 1, Black's (Malcolm's) advantage is overwhelming. He leads by 62 pips, has two of his opponent's checkers on the bar and is shooting at four additional blots. Not playing on for the gammon is a common mistake that all of us make at times, but Malcolm correctly played on here. Black wins a gammon roughly 50% of the time.

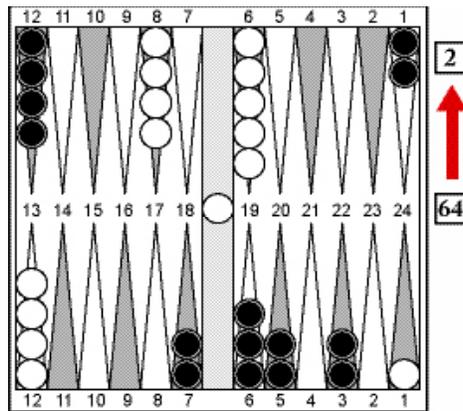
With his 6-5, Malcolm correctly played 23/17*, 8/3*. If White doesn't hit back with a 3, Black will usually play on for the gammon. And when White does manage to hit, Black will usually have a strong double.

Position 2. Black leads White 2–0/13. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Position 2 arose after White hit Black, who then made the mistake of dancing. Malcolm (Black), who last roll was playing on for the gammon, alertly doubled here. With three checkers on the bar, Alan correctly passed.

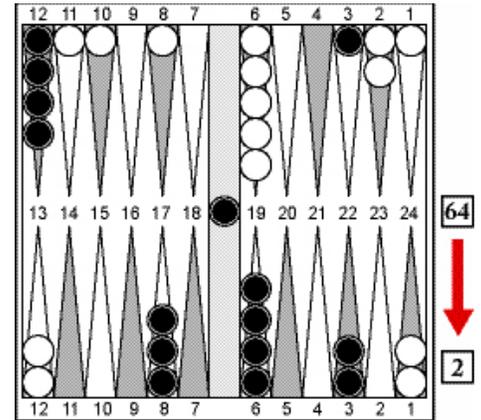
Position 3. Black leads White 7–0/13. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



If Position 3 occurred in a money game, Black should double and White would have a clear pass. However, in this match situation, trailing by seven points, Alan (White) can take many positions that he would pass for money. Alan's take at this score was correct.

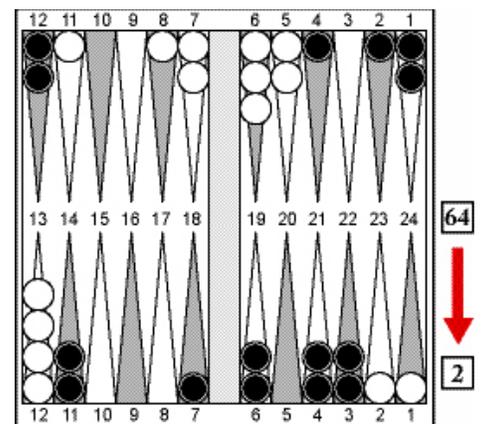
White will need little excuse to redouble to 4. Indeed, he should frequently redouble positions at this score that would be beavers for money.

Position 4. Black leads White 9–0/13. White on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



With White (Alan) on roll in Position 4, doubling would be absurdly early if this were a money game. However, at the given match score, Alan correctly doubled. Although he wins only 52% of the games, he has real blitzing potential with 11 checkers in the zone. He wins a gammon 27% of the time and cannot afford to wait to double due to the numerous market-losing sequences. Malcolm, of course, has an easy take.

Position 5. Black leads White 9–4/13. White on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



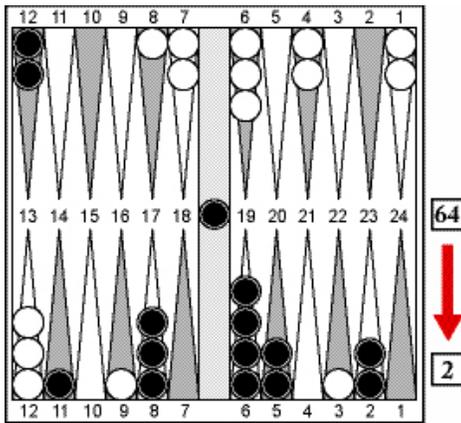
White (Alan) leads by 13 pips, has numerous hitting numbers and threatens to make a four-prime, trapping at least four enemy checkers. On the other hand, he has only nine checkers in the zone, has two checkers back without an anchor and has a weaker board than his opponent. Black would have an easy take for money, but trailing by five points, Malcolm made the correct match score pass.

[Continued on page 6]

EXPERT MATCH CUBE ACTION . . .

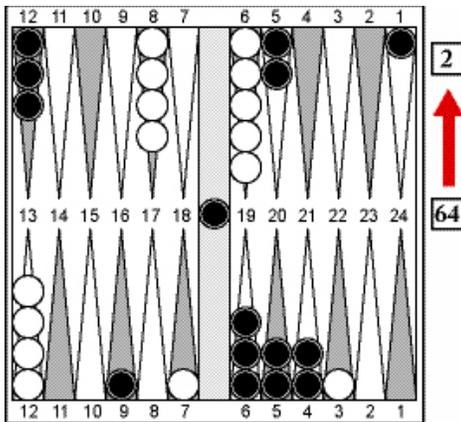
[Continued from page 5]

Position 6. Black leads White 9–5/13. White on Roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



In a money game, White (Alan) would have a close double/no double decision. Trailing by four points, the double is mandatory. White has to capitalize on his 25% gammon-winning chances by doubling now, hoping to win a four-point game. Alan correctly doubled and Malcolm correctly took.

Position 7. White leads Black 10–9/13. Black on shake. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**

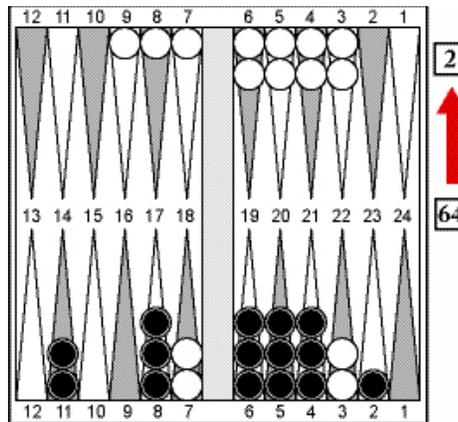


Black (Malcolm) once lead 9–0, but then failed to score again. In Position 7 he trails 9–10 in the 13-point match. Trailing in the race and shooting from the bar, Black is far short of a double in a money game. However, trailing by only one point at four-away/three-away, Black doubles much earlier than for money. Malcolm correctly doubled and Alan correctly took.

THE FINALS

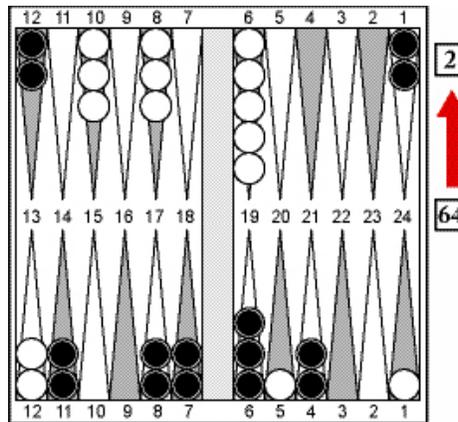
We now look at a few positions from the 13-point Masters final match between Perry Gartner (Black) and Alan Grunwald (White).

Position 8. Black (Perry Gartner) vs. White (Alan Grunwald). 0–0/13. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



In Position 8, Black (Perry) leads by 47 pips. White's (Alan's) 24.5% winning chance is not enough to allow him to take because he has more than a 10% chance of losing a gammon. Perry correctly doubled and Alan correctly passed.

Position 9. White leads Black 3–1/13. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?** Then **BLACK TO PLAY 6-6.**

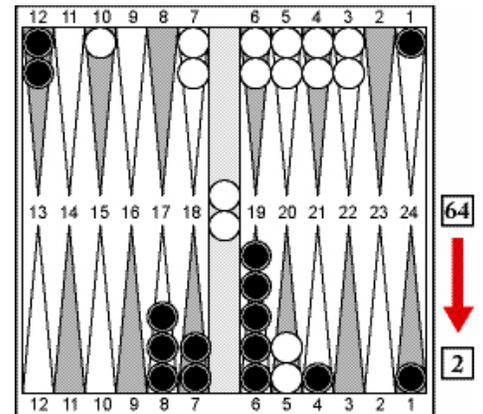


Black (Perry) has 17 numbers that point on White on his 5-point. There are many market-losing sequences. However, White will usually have return shots, and owning the 10-point, he will have his own counter-attacking chances. Perry correctly doubled and Alan correctly took.

With Black to play 6-6, how could 24/18(2), 11/5*(2) be wrong? It makes a five-prime, puts White on the bar, and makes a great advanced anchor. However,

it also gives White a chance to anchor on the acepoint. Perry correctly played 7/1*(2), 11/5*(2), giving himself a 54% chance of winning a gammon.

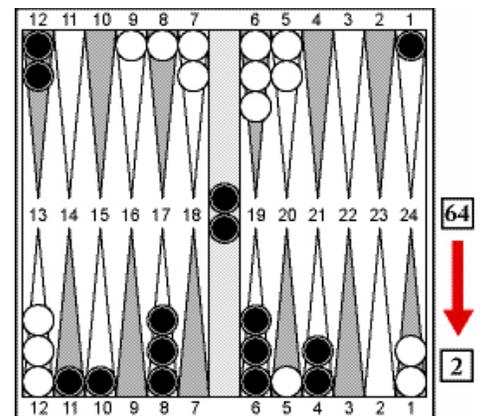
Position 10. Black and White tied 5–5/13. White on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



White (Alan) might be tempted to believe he is good enough to play on for the gammon here. He has a five-prime, a four-point board, a Black checker back on his 1-point, and a double shot from the roof. These advantages give him a solid double and force Black to pass; but he is not too good. Black's racing lead gives him about a 26% chance to win the game.

Alan correctly doubled and Perry correctly passed. Incidentally, according to the Snowie analysis, Perry played the checkers perfectly this entire game.

Position 11. White leads Black 8–6/13. White on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Position 11 is another situation where many players would be tempted to play on for the gammon. White (Alan) has two enemy checkers on the bar and is shooting at two more. However, he has only nine checkers in the zone and has two back on the 24-point. White is not too good. Alan correctly doubled and Perry correctly passed.

Alan Grunwald went on to win the match for his second Masters title of 2008.—Paul Weaver Δ

Are you enlightened? Backgammon Openings Book A

By **Nack Ballard & Paul Weaver**
\$39+ s&h from www.nackbg.com

VIDEOTAPING MATCHES: WHOSE RIGHTS PREVAIL?

For years, a small number of dedicated backgammon students have been toting their video equipment to tournaments and recording their matches. Later, they enter the moves into either Snowie or Gnu computer software for analysis in order to learn from their mistakes. In most cases, these players offer to send the findings to their opponents. It certainly seems like a win/win situation.

Is it “legal” to record a match? Although the US rules contain no references to video recording, it has rarely been a problem. Only a few players have ever objected to being filmed. But now there are a number of videographers led by expert Malcolm Davis of Dallas, Texas who want to always guarantee the right to record by instating an official rule into the *US Backgammon Tournament Rules & Procedures* such as:

“Absent a ruling from the tournament director to the contrary, no participant in an ABT event may prohibit or interfere with the taping or filming of a match, provided that the process is not unduly distracting.”

That sounds reasonable . . . but what if a newcomer finds the video camera “unduly distracting” to his concentration? Should the studious player always get his way?

Different people play backgammon for different reasons. For sociable players, it is more important to have a fun weekend with friends rather than to become a giant of backgammon. When someone puts a camera on their match, it makes them feel pressured—like they are under a microscope. This belittles them by exposing their inferior level of play and takes away from their enjoyment. Does a lesser-skilled player really want to pay one thousand dollars for entry fees, hotel accommodations, and travel expenses just to find out that based on a Snowie analysis, he is effectively flushing his money down the toilet?

Backgammon is not craps; but it is not chess, either. Backgammon is far more sociable than chess with the perfect blend of luck and skill allowing for a diverse field of entrants. Yes, in the long run, the better players will win more often; but on any given weekend, David can defeat Goliath. That is the beauty of the game and why weaker players are still willing to pay big bucks to take a shot at beating the best in the world.

Personally, if I were a master player, I would prefer to lay low and do nothing that might embarrass or belittle a weaker player. After all, weak players increase the strong players’ overall equity. Why send someone a match report that effectively says, “Yes you won, but you played like a rank beginner and I played world class”? Or even worse, “I won, and based on Snowie’s skill analysis, that’s your normal outcome 80% of the time.”

In May, 308 unique voters responded to the following online poll at chicagopoint.com:

Should a player be able to videotape his ABT match, even if his opponent objects?:

- A. Yes, in all cases. **35%** (109 votes).
- B. Yes, unless the director determines that the opponent has a valid reason for his objection. **24%** (74 votes).
- C. No, the opponent should be able to stop his match from being recorded with no reason given. **41%** (125 votes).

On Tuesday, 13 May at the Chicago Bar Point Club, 29 players voted live yielding the following results: A. **18%** (5 votes) B. **43%** (12 votes) C. **39%** (11 votes).

So these two polls (worded identically) show us that if a video rule is officially instated, roughly 4 players in 10 want the ability to stop their match from being recorded.

I am strongly against changing the US Rules to include a section on match recording rights. I believe that the videotaping of matches is a policy that should be left up to individual tournament directors and included in their invitations or welcoming letters.

In order to determine which future events will be “camera friendly,” Malcolm Davis is asking some directors if he will be able to videotape all of his ABT matches without opponent objection. I want very much for students of the game to attend the Midwest Championships next March. However, at our event, fun and social considerations will always come first. Since I am being asked to take a stand, I have decided to side with the 40% who want the ability to disallow recording. Therefore, the 2009 MBC policy will be as follows:

“Videotaping and/or transcription of the Grand Crystal Beaver masters event and the Championship final and semifinal matches is permissible by any party without objection. At other times, a player may stop his match from being recorded with no reason given. The Director has the final decision in all cases.” Δ

TEN TIPS FOR LIVE BACKGAMMON PLAY

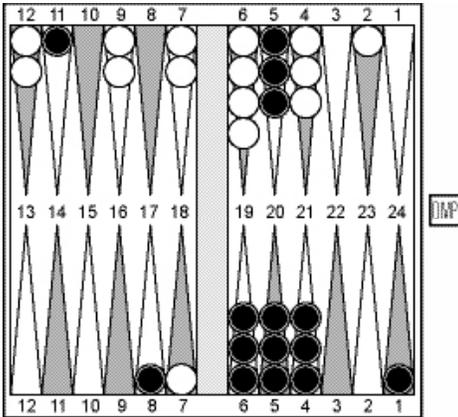
By Phil Simborg

1. Know all the tournament rules and verify the match length before you sit down to play.
2. Make sure you are not hungry, thirsty, or distracted by anything, and that you are completely focused on playing backgammon.
3. Before you start EVERY GAME, figure out the doubling take points for you and your opponent. Also determine what your basic checker and cube strategy should be and how critical gammons are for and against you before and after the cube has been turned. If you’re unsure about any of these variables, call a time out, take a walk, and give it more thought.
4. Do NOT focus on the rolls or the luck. Just concentrate on making the very best plays and decisions after every shake, no matter how the game or match is going.
5. Study your opponent’s moves and decisions, not just to make sure he has played legally, but also to find out where he might have weaknesses that you can exploit.
6. Live backgammon is like poker. Never let them see that you are worried, concerned, or disappointed. Never give a sure cube too fast. Never let them know you are not sure you should be doubling. Take your time, but give every cube with great confidence.
7. Any time you are not completely sure of a checker play or cube decision, put yourself in your opponent’s shoes. Ask yourself which play you hope HE wouldn’t make against you . . . and then make it.
8. Any time you are not sure whether or not to double, turn the cube. Just like a raise in poker, doubling gives you two ways to score: when your opponent drops, and when he takes you you go on to win.
9. Don’t get caught up in the excitement of winning or the disappointment of losing. Approach the game as an intellectual exercise to see how well you can play regardless of the results.
10. Learn from experience. Any time you have a play or cube decision you are unsure of, take a picture or record the position and study it as soon as possible. With this approach, every match, win or lose, will raise your skill level.—*Phil Simborg Δ*

PROBLEM #336 ANALYZED

by Kit Woolsey

Tournament double match-point.
BLACK TO PLAY 3-3.



Black has various places from which he can take his stand. He can make the 17- and 14-points. He play from the 20- and 14-points. He can make the 17- and

8-points. Or he can just make the 8-point and play inside, playing from the 20- and 8-points.

The race isn't as bad as it might look. After Black plays this roll, he will be down only two pips. Thus Black should definitely be thinking in terms of winning the race, as well as outfield coverage and getting a shot. For this reason, I would reject any play which leaves a direct shot. Getting hit is just too costly in the race. White has several builders for her 2-point, which means that if Black leaves a direct shot that is hit, White will have some hit-and-cover numbers. It just isn't worth taking this risk for what can be at best a marginally superior choice of outfield points to hold. Whatever Black does, this is basically going to be some kind of holding game which will probably turn into a race when somebody rolls doubles or some other number to fly on by to safety.

If Black is going to play safely, he can play from the 20- and 14-points with 20/14, 8/5, 4/1 or he can play from the 20- and 8-points with 11/8, 4/1, 6/3 (or 5/2 with the final 3). I think 20/14, 8/5, 4/1 is the route

to take. It gets that awkward spare off the 20-point, which is very important. If Black instead leaves three checkers on the 20-point, he could be starved for moves very quickly. It is true that this play doesn't put direct shot pressure on White's blot, but the indirect pressure of six shot numbers (all 7s) is hefty.

If White stays put, Black may have some awkward rolls, but these are more than compensated by the chance of hitting White's blot. If White moves the blot to safety Black will have little difficulty breaking off the 14-point, and then he can play his 5-point holding game in comfort with two outfield checkers to swallow the next few rolls while waiting for his big doubles. Any way things go, Black figures to have close to an even game.

When playing a holding game where the race is close, preparing for the race and playing safe is very important. It isn't necessary to get a direct shot and hit it to win the game. Simply the threat of hitting even an indirect shot will be sufficient to force the opponent to clean up his outfield blots and allow you to continue comfortably.—Kit Woolsey Δ

5 QUESTIONS FOR CAROL JOY COLE



Carol Joy Cole accepts her Southeast Championships trophy from director Gregg Cattanach 4 May in Atlanta, GA.

Carol Joy Cole, Flint Area and Michigan Summer Championships Director, newsletter editor, flintbg.com webmaster, and keeper of the internationally respected "Mark Your Calendar" is also a fine Championship level backgammon player. Last month, Carol won her first American Backgammon Tour event vaulting into the ABT Top 10 for 2008.

CHICAGO POINT caught up with Carol Joy and asked her five questions about her big win:

POINT: How did it feel to win your first ABT title at the Southeast Championships in Atlanta May 2-4?

CJC: Sweet! A great adrenaline rush! That's why I play the game!

POINT: Was there ever a time during the tournament when you thought, "I'm going to win this thing!"?

CJC: I had high hopes when I reached the finals, but I never feel invincible when dice are involved.

POINT: Did you do anything differently in Atlanta with regard to your attitude or style of play?

CJC: For one thing, I was well-rested in Atlanta. For another, I tried to keep the pressure on my opponents even when I had a big lead. I didn't back off and play conservatively to "protect" my lead.

POINT: What does a win like this do for your confidence?

CJC: It's a nice boost. I'm inspired to play in more tournaments. At the same time, it's a humbling experience. I know I was lucky, too.

POINT: Can you offer any advice to the hundreds of players who have yet to win their first ABT title?

CJC: Two things . . .

1. Play different people every week in clubs or online. The bots are valuable study tools, but there's a sameness to their games. Playing against humans is better practice for dealing with diverse opponents in live tournaments.
2. Work with a mentor or expert on strategy and game plans. Snowie can tell you which play is better, but a tutor can tell you *why*. Δ



ILLINOIS ACTION



Bill Davis
773/583-6464

Peter Kalba
312/316-1432

Tuesday, 6:30 P.M. at Holiday Inn, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago. 773/693-5800.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON at Holiday Inn, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago. 773/693-5800.

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB: Tournaments Tuesday, 6:00 P.M. at Los Potrillos, 201 Landmark Drive, Normal. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wednesday, 6:00 P.M. at Capitol Teletrack, 1766 W. Wabash Ave., Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

WINNETKABG 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 (309/224-9579).

WINNER'S CIRCLE



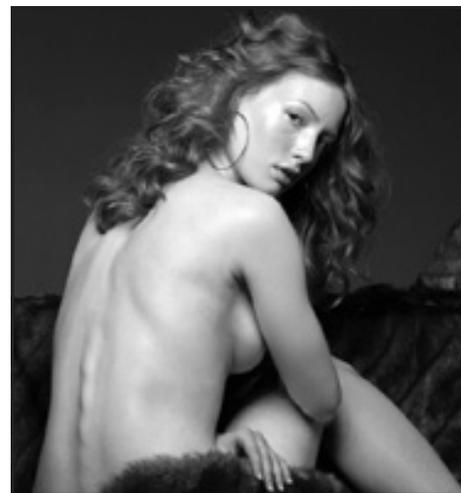
APR.-JUN. 2008

- Backgammon by The Bay** (Cupertino, CA; 26 Apr.)... OPEN (13): 1-Mark Antranikian, 2-Ken Bame; 1C-David Levy. INTERMEDIATE (4): 1-Fernando Corredor. BEGINNER (3): 1-Jordan Mazur.
- Kansas City Club Monthly** (Kansas City, MO; 3 May)... OPEN (6): 1-Eric Barr, 2/3-Dorsey Troutman / Curt Wilhelmson.
- New England Club Monthly** (Malden, MA; 10 May)... OPEN (16): 1-Gil Evans (NH), 2-Matt Reklaikis, 3/4-John Smidt / Howard Rosenthal; 1C-Walter Trice, 2-Greg Jukins.
- Greek Monthly Tournament** (Athens, Greece; 10-11 May)... CHAMPIONSHIP (31): 1-Andreas Kourouklis, 2-Filomila Karantzali, 3/4-Costas Mitrelis / Herbert Bornand; 1C-Costas Costopoulos, 2C-Yiannis Valianos; 1LC-Pavlos Thanopoulos.
- South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 11 May.)... OPEN (8): 1-David Glass, 2-Sebastian Fiorini.
- 20th WBF European Championship/7th Velden Open/5th European Double Consulting** (Velden, AUS; 15-18 May)... MASTERS (35): 1-Fernando Braconi (ITA), 2-Philip Vischjager (NED), 3/4-Manfred Holleder (GER) / Tassilo Rzymann (AUS); 1C-Cemalettin Yüksel (TUR), 2C-Florin Popa (ROM/ITA), 3C/4C-Stefan Bobenhausen (GER) / Mario Sequeira (POR); 1LC-Fabrizio Lo Surdo (ITA), 2LC-Hans-Uli Koch (GER). Ladies Prize: Andrea Riebler (AUS). CHAMPIONS (38): 1-Feza Diyarbekir (TUR), 2-

- Michael Roth (GER), 3/4-Thomas Leitner (AUS) / Claudio Cantoni (MEX/ITA); 1C-Markus Kuntaritsch (AUS), 2C-Alexander Reichel (AUS), 3C/4C-Karl Baranyi (AUS) / Wolfgang Haas (AUS); 1LC-Peter Neumann (GER), 2LC-Helmut Gerdenits (AUS). Ladies Prize: Giovanna La Falce (ITA). INTERMEDIATE (26): 1-Seda Koc (TUR), 2-Rizcallah Alkhoury (LEB/SPA), 3/4-Shadi Azizian (IRN/ITA) / Maria Grigis (ITA); 1C-Renato Sovani (ITA), 2C-Viorel Popa (ROM/ITA); 1LC-Jeanne Nanga (CAM/AUS), 2LC-Domenica Torrielli (ITA). Ladies Prize: Seda Koc (TUR). LADIES EVENT (11): 1-Simona Cirulli (ITA), 2-Laura Monaco (ITA). SUPER JACKPOT (8): 1-Fernando Braconi (ITA), 2-Hans-Uli Koch (GER). WARM-UP (33+22 re-entries): 1-Thomas Löw (GER), 2-Ingeborg Haussleiter (GER). SPERTI TROPHY (25+17 re-entries): 1-Thomas Löw (GER), 2-Karl Baryani (AUS). ONE-POINT PRESIDENT'S TOURNEY #1: 1-Cemalettin Yüksel (TUR). #2: 1-Abdullah Sorguven (TUR). #3: 1-John Broomfield (ENG). EUROPEAN DOUBLE CONSULTING CHAMPIONSHIP (18 teams): 1-George Simpson (TUR) & Cemalettin Yüksel (TUR), 2-Axel Etten (GER) & Hans-Uli Koch (GER).
- Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 18 May.)... OPEN: 1-Julius High.
- Ohio State Club Monthly** (Akron, OH; 1 Jun.)... OPEN: 1-Joe Miller, 2-Mark Keenleyside.
- Bar Point Sunday** (Chicago, IL; 1 Jun.)... OPEN (21): 1-Carter Mattig, 2-Albert Yakobashvili, 3/4-Herb Roman / Efim Liberman; 1C-Dave Settles, 2C-Alex Owen. INTERMEDIATE (5): 1-Wayne Wiest, 2-Lucia Armenta. Δ

AMALGAMATION

Visiting the Bar Point Club last month: **Greg Adamavich** (NV) and **Mark Murray** (OH)... **Jim Gibbs** (CA) informs us of a big backgammon chouette in Berkeley, California on Thursday evenings at the Albatross Pub (1822 San Pablo Avenue). Interested players should contact Jim at 415/846-5516... The time is NOW to call **Sue Will** (309/699-6005) and put down your deposit for Backgammon & Poker On Board. Life is short. Take a winter Caribbean cruise January 18-25, 2009 with friends!... If you're in the Tampa Bay, Florida area, check out the new Tampa Bay Backgammon Club. It meets Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. at the Macedonian Society Club. Director **Dimitur Alipiev** has the **particulars at (727) 786-9133...** Get well wishes go out to backgammon giant **Neil Kazaross** (IL) who is recuperating from an operation... Backgammon is featured in a scene from the new Ironman movie... Congratulations to **Val Zimmicki** who has earned enough points this year to edge ahead of **Ed Bauder's** 139.58 points as the all-time Pub Club point leader... "Law & Order: Criminal Intent" star **Alicia Witt**



Alicia Witt apparently lost her shirt playing Yahoo online backgammon.

was so hooked on Yahoo backgammon, she had to make a New Year's resolution to stay away from it... From the April 7, 1908 *Washington Post*: "Backgammon was invented in Wales in the 11th century and derived its name from two Welsh words—"back" (little) and "cammon" (battle)... Two Presidents—**Van Buren** and **Jackson**—were adepts"... It was **Thomas Jefferson** who said: "I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it." Δ

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For more info: Tim Mabee

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MIKE CORBETT, world class player and author of Backgammon Problems will present his popular backgammon lecture on Saturday, August 16 at 10:00 A.M. immediately preceding the Calcutta Auction

Hotel Accommodations: Marriott Hotel (6650 North Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale, 954/771-0440 or 800/228-9290) is offering tourney participants the rate of \$82/night, single or double. Reserve by July 30 and mention "Backgammon"

Information: Elayne Feinstein, Director 954/249-1416 -or- bginfla210@bellsouth.net charmcityopen.com/FLORIDA_ST.html

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