

las vegas open & super jackpot

MEA MAXIMA CULPA

A Look At My Las Vegas Win

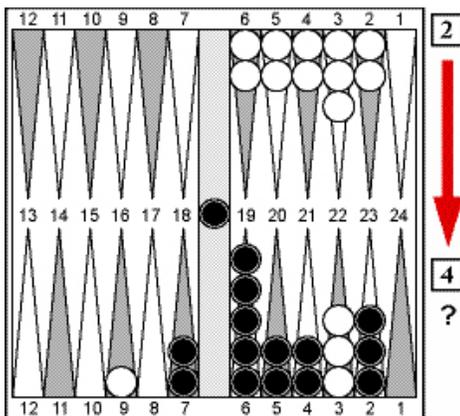
By Mike Corbett



Florida's Mike Corbett: the new Las Vegas Open champ. (Photo from 2009 Mid-Atlantic Championships by Mary Hickey.)

It was my good fortune to face Dallas, Texas backgammon giant Malcolm Davis in the finals of the recent Las Vegas Open Tournament (November 4–8 at the Riviera Hotel). Having prevailed against capable opponents in the earlier rounds (including Neil Kazaross), I found myself in fine fettle for the matchup with my old friend. This position came up late in the match:

Las Vegas Open 17-point finals. Mike Corbett (Black) leads Malcolm Davis (White) 12 to 3. White on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



After a long deliberation, I took the 4-cube and was treated to the gasps and

rumbles of a surprised gallery. I shall explain later why this pleases me. You will get my thoughts regarding this poor decision, not as a justification, but more to stimulate curiosity about an issue I have wrestled with for years.

My thoughts “in order of their appearance” were as follows:

- 1) Even at this match score, White has at best, a razor-thin double if the cube is centered. And when White does double, Black would make a huge blunder if he passed.
- 2) The gammon threat should be minimal (extended rollout suggests about 7.4%).
- 3) I thought I'd win about one-third of the games with a few more gammons than my opponent. (I need 36% with about 7% gammons against).
- 4) The decision seemed close and if I did win, I'd become an overwhelming match favorite. (6400 full 3-ply, precise Snowie rollouts show taking at this score to be a .147 error—yikes!) And finally,
- 5) Any intermediate playing the black checkers is likely to play at a lower error rate than an expert playing the whites.

Just try it. Whenever the directional complexity of the strategy is vague, beware. Playing the White pieces, you will be forced to consider balancing the merits of priming or closing out your opponent by slotting the bar, escaping the back checkers, and hitting on the ace point. I will feature the first three people who can do this perfectly (random dice) with a cash prize from my new sack of money.

So what could this certainty be worth? Would I get .02 or .03 back? I would be grateful for some feedback since my ability to quantify this information is limited.

I now confess to the maxima culpa for which this article is named. I love making a play that I sense will be wildly unpopular. It may be more than simple vanity. I may have deeper unhealthy tendencies, but if the biggest error I ever make in a match is .147, I will be hard to beat.

IT WAS GREAT to see young faces in this year's Super Jackpot finals. Congratulations



Super Jackpot winner Matt Cohn-Geier in an early round. (Photo by Mary Hickey.)

to Matt Cohn-Geier who defeated Stick Rice in an exciting double match-point victory.

As usual, Howard Markowitz and staff produced a quality event and I hope the backgammon community continues to support both Las Vegas tournaments. The word is that the Nevada State Tournament will be held at the Riviera in April and next year's Las Vegas Open will move down the strip to Bally's in November. Complete results below.—Mike Corbett Δ

LAS VEGAS OPEN

CHAMPIONSHIP (74+20 rebuys): 1-Mike Corbett (FL), 2-Malcolm Davis (TX), 3/4-Richard Munitz (NY) / Jon Vietor (CA); 1C-Fred Kalantari (MN), 2C-Tom Wheeler (TX), 3C/4C-Carter Mattig (IL) / Dana Nazarian (CA); 1LC-Ian Macfarlane (Brazil), 2LC-Rick Voeller (WA). INTERMEDIATE (79+33 rebuys): 1-Peter Zacks (CA), 2-Trish Hegland (CA), 3/4-Todd Crosner (AZ) / Aaron Foust (NV); 1C-Tom Magne (MN), 2C-Greg Cottle (NV), 3C/4C-Tom Horton (CA) / Karl Pearson (WA); 1LC-Elli Nache (CA), 2LC-Wil Goetz (OK). BEGINNER (19+2 rebuys): 1-Randy Ohel (NV), 2-Cherie Owens (AZ); 1C-Yehuda Hodara (NY), 2C-Don Thompson Sr. (NV); 1LC-Susan Lee (AZ). SUPER JACKPOT (16 @ \$2,000): 1-Matt Cohn-Geier (IL), 2-Stick Rice (OH), 3/4-Julian Fetterlein (England) / Alan Grunwald (NJ). LTD. JACKPOT (16 @ \$1,000): 1-Justin Nunez (CA), 2-Ken Bame (CA). \$400 OPEN JP (8): 1-Chris Yep (OH). \$300 SATURDAY JP (8): 1-Kit Woolsey (CA). \$100 SATURDAY JP (21): 1-Ed Bennett (NM), 2-Ted Chee (CA). \$50 BEGINNER JP (4): 1-Don Thompson Sr. (NV). DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Ed Bennett (NM) & Richard Munitz (NY), 2-Susan Randall (FL) & Stacy Turner (FL), 3/4-Myra Chapman (CO) & Richard Siebold (CO) / Tom Duggan (England) & Evan Etter (FL). BLITZ (184): 1-Nasser Sedaghatpour (NY), 2-David Taniguchi (CA). SENIORS (128): 1-Trish Hegland (CA), 2-Gil Evans (NH), 3/4-Mike Corbett (FL) / Elli Nache (CA). MINI-MATCH (64): 1-Yusuke Itagaki (Japan), 2-Josh Racko (CA). \$100 SUNDAY JP #1 (8): 1-Chris Yep (OH). #2 (8): 1-Herb Roman (IL). \$50 SUNDAY JP (8): 1-Yusuke Itagaki (Japan). AFTER TOURNAMENT TOURNAMENT \$50 (28): 1-Aaron Foust (NV), 2-Trish Hegland (CA). \$20: 1-John Wright (England), 2-Glen Arnold (NV).

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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LAST NEW AL IMM BOARD—THE BIDDING ENDS DECEMBER 14

I am watching with interest the bidding on the new Al Imm board you are offering at chicagopoint.com [link at top of page]. I have had my Al Imm board for about 25 years and use it all the time. Many players have asked about it and admired it over the years. I had it restored by an antique restorer about eight years ago. Some of the paint had worn away and the case was dinged in spots because I rarely used a carrying case.

I am curious about two things. (a) How is Al doing? (b) I was told when I bought the board from Joe Sylvester that the playing surface was pigskin. I assumed this to be accurate but maybe it wasn't. Do you know if all of Al's boards had cowhide surfaces?—Steve Brown, St. Paul, Minnesota

Al is doing fine living with his wife in Indiana. He did make some boards with a pigskin surface. If you send a close-up

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

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

*Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined

Dec 12	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Dec 12*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
Dec 13	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Dec 13	Pair-O-Dice Monthly Tournament, Cosi, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Dec 17*	NEW LOCATION: Third Thursday Bonus (New York Metro), Maxie's, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Dec 19*	37th Hawaiian State Championship, Elks Lodge 616, Honolulu, Hawaii	808/286-5133
Dec 20*	Cincinnati Tournament of Champions, Metropole, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Dec 22*	Flint Club Holiday Party/Tournament, Maxie's, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Dec 23*	Third Annual Maxakuli Cup, Jackson's Bar & Grill, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/301-4987
Jan 3*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Jan 4*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	480/286-8239
Jan 6*	Winnetka Club Awards Night, Winnetka Community House, Winnetka, Illinois	847/446-0537
Jan 7-10*	New York Metropolitan Open, Hyatt Regency, Jersey City, New Jersey	408/529-6769
Jan 9	Springfield Series #4, King Pin Lanes, Springfield, Illinois	217/622-9447
Jan 9*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Jan 10*	Cincinnati Club Monthly, Metropole Coffee Company, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Jan 10*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Jan 10*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Jan 12*	Chicago Bar Point Club Awards Night, Holiday Inn O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jan 16*	New England Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Jan 16-17	2010 Sunshine State Regional, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/786-9133
Jan 21*	Third Thursday Bonus (New York Metro), Maxie's, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jan 24*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly Tournament, Cosi, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Jan 29-31*	New Mexico State Championship, La Posada Resort, Santa Fe, New Mexico	505/982-2729
Jan 30	Third Annual Pub Club Trophy Tourney, Playoffs Bar, Carol Stream, Illinois	630/606-2388
Jan 31	Illinois State Challenge Cup, Playoffs Sports Bar, Carol Stream, Illinois	630/606-2388
Feb 1*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	480/286-8239
Feb 6*	Bar Point Doubles Club Championship, Holiday Inn O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Feb 19-21	Pittsburgh Championships, Holiday Inn Airport, Moon Twp., Pennsylvania	404/685-3214
Mar 5-7	CSI—Central States Invitational, Wyndham Lisle, Lisle, Illinois	773/583-6464
Mar 26-28	Ohio State Championships, Sheraton Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio	330/268-4610
Apr 14-18	25th Nevada State Tournament, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Apr 30-May 2*	Atlanta Spring Classic, Crowne Plaza Ravinia, Atlanta, Georgia	770/633-0001
May 14-16	2nd US Open & Masters, Club One Casino, Fresno, California	773/583-6464
May 28-31	Chicago Open, Holiday Inn & Suites, Rosemont, Illinois	617/699-9100
Jun 11-13	Los Angeles Open, Airtel Hotel, Van Nuys, California	818/901-0464
Jul 1-4	Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Novi, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 30-Aug 1	Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York	585/396-0969
Aug 20-22	Florida State Championships, Marriott Hotel, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/249-1416
Sep 3-6	Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin	608/516-9109
Sep 24-26	Colorado State Championships, Hilton Hotel, Aurora, Colorado	303/791-0271
Oct 8-10*	Illinois State Championships, Grand Hotel, Peoria, Illinois	847/677-6852
Oct 14-17*	Mid-Atlantic Championship, Marriott Hotel, Towson, Maryland	954/249-1416
Nov 10-14*	Las Vegas Open, Bally's Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Jan 22-29	2011 Backgammon & Poker On Board, Western Caribbean Princess Cruise	773/583-6464

OUTSIDE USA

Dec 10-13	Meribel International Tournament, Hotel L'Eterlou, Meribel, France	33620-902726
Dec 12-13	Stavanger Klubb Championship, Hovmesteren Bar, Stavanger, Norway	4799-153113
Dec 12-13	Open de la Vallée, Casino de Saint Vincent, Saint Vincent, Italy	39335-221412
Dec 19-20*	WBF-Türkiye Istanbul Championship, Merter Gunes Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey	905332-329228
Dec 26-29	Christmas Tournament, Somboon, Dongtan Beach, Pattaya, Thailand	6686-8187480
Jan 2-3	Thailand Open, Somboon, Dongtan Beach, Pattaya, Thailand	6686-8187480
Jan 8-10*	Bright 'n' Breezy, Barceló Oxford Hotel, Oxford, England	441522-888676
Jan 9-10	6th BG Masters International Open, Café Den Bengel, Antwerp, Belgium	31653-276835
Jan 9-10*	Istavder Championship #11, Green Park Hotel Merter, Istanbul, Turkey	905324-008211
Jan 16-17*	Rhein-Neckar-Cup 2009 Year-End, Phönix Clubhaus, Mannheim, Germany	496204-620396
Jan 23-24*	1st Bülacher Festival/Zürich-Open, Rössli, Bülach, Switzerland	41786-329404
Feb 5-7*	Jarvis Trophy, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Feb 6-7*	WSOB Championship Shootout, Adam Street Club, London, England	447980-122344
Feb 7*	32nd Australian Open, Hilton Hotel, Adelaide, South Australia	618412-836266
Feb 19-21*	1st Frühlings-Meeting, Hotel am Rosenberg, Hofheim, Germany	49711-486190
Feb 26-28*	Istavder 2nd Anniversary Tournament, Green Park Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey	905324-008211
Mar 5-7*	BIBA International Championships, Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Mar 19-21*	XI Scottish Open, Barceló Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh, Scotland	441522-888676
Apr 1-5*	22nd Nordic Open, Marienlyst Hotel, Helsingør, Denmark	4533-363601

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

picture of your surface, we will forward it to Al for his inspection. As we go to press, the high bid on the last new Al Imm board stands at \$2750.—Ed.

ELAYNE FEINSTEIN "RETIRES" AS DIRECTOR

It's with mixed emotions that I announce my "retirement" from directing the Florida State Championship and the Mid-Atlantic Championship. It was a labor of love for more than ten years (two years in Maryland).



My achievement in making Florida one of the major tournaments in this country is well known, and I am happy to announce that both the Florida State

and the Mid-Atlantic will continue. Bill Davis and I will be assisting Chiva Tafazzoli in direction and both events promise to be bigger and better than ever.

In addition, Bill and I will be on staff with Chiva in January 2011 when the US Open moves to its new home in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (annually over the King birthday weekend).—*Elayne Feinstein, South Florida Backgammon Association*

World Backgammon Association (WBA) director Chiva Tafazzoli responds: It is with great pleasure that I have decided to take over the Florida State and Mid-Atlantic Championships from Elayne Feinstein. Elayne has done a lot for those event in the past. I gladly take on the challenge to make them bigger and better than ever. I will dedicate the same focus and professionalism that I apply at my European events.

Bill Davis, Elayne and I look forward to seeing you in Florida and Maryland in 2010. And (after the 2010 US Open in Fresno, CA 14-16 May) in Fort Lauderdale, FL for the US Open every King birthday weekend in January.—Chiva Tafazzoli, Director, WBA

DISLIKES POLLING APPROACH

The most recent chicagopoint.com poll asked "In double elimination format events, to become champion, I prefer that the winner of the one loss bracket . . ."

[Continued on page 5]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2009

AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2009

Compiled through 8 Nov. 2009 after 19 tournaments

(Upcoming events: California State, 2010: NY Metro, New Mexico)



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2009

Ray Fogerlund 43.10	Lucky Nelson 12.73	Mike Senkiewicz 7.92	Rose Sheedy 5.11
Ed Bennett 40.77	Richard Munitz 12.23	Majid Jahanbani 7.20	Jona Alexander 5.09
John O'Hagan 36.70	Trisha Hegland 12.05	Karen Davis 7.00	Sal Chehayeb 5.08
Stick Rice 35.80	Peter Zacks 11.70	Neil Garvie 6.67	Ramez Abi-Akar 5.08
Neil Kazaross 32.68	Rob Maier 11.54	Stacy Turner 6.50	Joe Russell 5.00
Adam Bennett 26.50	Scotty Kelland 10.96	Michael Flohr 6.40	Brian Barber 5.00
David Rubin 25.87	Fred Kalantari 10.96	Ed King 6.22	Charles Toots 4.67
Mary Hickey 25.19	Harold Rex 10.55	Jesse Eaton 6.10	Bill Devine 4.67
Larry Taylor 24.00	Shinichiro Kaneko 10.37	Patty Geoffroy 6.04	Pernille Rosendal 4.25
Mike Corbett 21.93	Dorn Bishop 10.18	Tom Hodous 6.00	Boris Dekhtyar 4.25
Julius High 21.33	Brandon Macklin 10.17	Lynn Lusk 6.00	Harvey Gillis 4.20
Bob Glass 21.00	Ed Johnson 10.00	Tom Magne 5.85	Jerry Kressin 4.20
Rod Covlin 20.73	Carol Joy Cole 10.00	Robert Regan 5.60	Arthur Sutton 4.00
Scott Casty 17.37	Jon Vietor 9.98	Ed Rosenblum 5.50	Paul Strasberg 4.00
Victor Ashkenazi 17.00	Steve Sax 9.58	Alfred Mamlet 5.50	Bruce Whitaker 4.00
Tak Morioka 16.73	Bob Schumacher 9.33	Tom Wheeler 5.48	Eric Johnson 4.00
Malcolm Davis 16.05	Matt Cohn-Geier 9.15	Ian Macfarlane 5.48	Bob Howayeck 4.00
Dean Adamian 15.83	Frank Raposa 9.00	Jena Jennings 5.40	Neal Rosensweig 4.00
Bill Riles 15.52	Philip Smith 9.00	Gary Fishman 5.27	Ray Glaeser 3.96
Alan Grunwald 15.43	Charlie Silverman 8.60	Matt Reklaitis 5.25	Wendy Kaplan 3.96
Petko Kostadinov 15.00	Rick Barabino 8.50	Herb Roman 5.25	Charles Morrison 3.86
Philippe Salnave 14.80	Falafel Natanzon 8.50	Al Faller 5.25	Gerry Tansey 3.80
Brent Cohen 14.00	David Rockwell 8.40	Bill Calton 5.20	Dennis Culpepper 3.70
Murray Bryntesen 13.00	John McDonald 8.38	Rory Pascar 5.19	Ed O'Laughlin 3.50
David Todd 12.80	Joe Freedman 8.14	Ramon Eleazar 5.19	Frank Talbot 3.33



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB

2009 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 6 DEC.

Rory Pascar 35.34	Dave Settles 10.60	David Rubin 4.08	Jeff Fischer 1.64
David Rockwell 33.80	Mike Sutton 9.32	Bill Keefe 3.80	Paul Baraz 1.56
Herb Roman 27.76	Ken Bond 8.88	Richard Stawowy 3.64	Alex Aleyev 1.52
Lucky Nelson 24.92	Oleg Raygorodsky 8.56	Dan Cox 3.36	Neil Kazaross 1.44
Howard Markowitz 22.40	Mike Minkovski 7.88	Alexander Medvedev 3.20	Roy Cohen 1.32
Bob Steen 17.80	Gary Kay 7.88	Jacob Moreno 3.12	Sonja Peacock 0.88
Bill Davis 16.40	Scott Casty 7.68	Linda Rockwell 2.80	Henry Gray 0.88
Tak Morioka 16.00	Christopher Shanava 7.52	Eric Johnson 2.76	Roz Ferris 0.80
Carter Mattig 15.82	Albert Yakobashvili 7.36	Richard Pearlman 2.68	Dustin Lindgren 0.80
Matt Cohn-Geier 14.84	Peter Kalba 6.96	Steve Hines 2.48	Mark Murray 0.64
Wayne Wiest 13.36	Jerry Brooks 6.72	Georgina Flanagan 2.40	Leslie Lockett 0.64
Bill Bartholomay 13.12	Adrian Rios 6.56	Mark Ostrovsky 2.36	Elaine Kehm 0.64
Steve Klesker 12.68	Roger Hickman 6.52	Sam Yoyen 2.32	Joe Rafson 0.64
Nora Luna Righter 12.64	Tim Mabee 6.00	John Jennings 2.24	Bob Pondelicek 0.60
Larry Goldstein 12.12	Michael Ginat 5.52	Dujuan Meekins 2.00	Lindsay Mattig 0.56
Phil Simborg 11.76	Alex Owen 5.00	Royal Robinson 1.92	Barry Miller 0.56
Mike Wolock 11.72	Dan Weymouth 4.64	Rob Maier 1.68	Rodney Gonzalez 0.48
Alice Kay 10.84	Mike Pufpaf 4.48	Wendy Kaplan 1.68	Michael Peters 0.40
			Jolie Rubin 0.32

October POM: **DAVID ROCKWELL** zoomed into first place collecting 6.48 points to win top honors. Bill Davis (4.04) and Rory Pascar (3.68) placed second and third respectively.

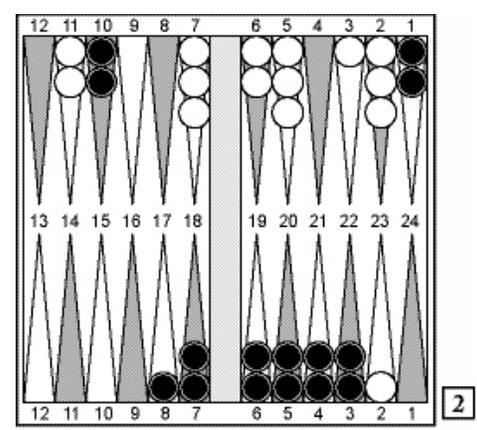
November POM: Congratulations to **DAVE SETTLES** who captured his first Player of the Month honor earning 4.08 points. Runners-up were Tak Morioka (4.00) and Rory Pascar (3.76).

your move

PROBLEM #350

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

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



ASK DANNY

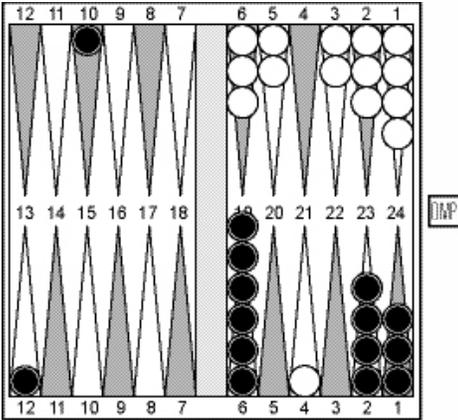


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CONSIDER THE RACE

Dear Danny: I was watching two Open players in a double match-point game when Black faced a tricky play:

Match to 7 points tied at 6-all (DMP). **BLACK (X) TO PLAY 3-3.**



If I have the count right, before Black's roll, he's down 74 to 65. The double 3 roll then puts him in the lead by three pips. That's basically nothing, yet Black chose to make his 9-point and slot his 3-point. Shouldn't Black stay back with 12/6, 6/3(2) for maximum outfield coverage? . . . or at least make his 12-point and play 6/3(3)?

Am I wrong or is the Open player all wet here?—*Max Coverage*

DEAR MAX: I make Black a distinct underdog in the race. First, a 3-pip lead with the opponent on shake means that the opponent is really ahead in the race, as the shake is worth about 4 pips. Second, Black's distribution is poorer than White's. Black's gap on the 5-point will cause him to waste 5s in the bearoff, for example, but White will bear off checkers with 5s.

For this reason, I can see the merit of staying back and making the 3-point, 12/3, 6/3. Contact favors the player who trails in the race. A distance of 11 pips between opposing blots is ideal for maximizing contact, and White is in danger of rolling 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 or 6-1 (an 8-in-36 chance) to give Black a direct outfield shot. That just about counterbalances the danger to Black, which

consists of White's immediate 6-5 shot as well as Black's blotting 6s when White stays back in Black's home court.

However, White can play a 5 in his home board, so if White rolls neither a doublet nor a 6, he will reduce contact by coming out to Black's 7-point or 8-point, giving Black only an indirect shot. So staying back does not favor Black. Making the 9-point gains when White rolls 5-2, 4-1, 3-2, 3-1, 2-2, 2-1 or 1-1, and gains big when White rolls the double-5s that it blocks and must remain on Black's 4-point for Black to point on, pick and pass, or even hit loose to gain in the race.—*Yours, Danny Δ*



Next month, Danny begins a new column: "The Unaided Eye." He'll look at problems from an "over the board" viewpoint. Then he'll see how his unaided impressions measure up with computer rollout data.

Mail questions for Danny Kleinman to: *The Unaided Eye*, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue #504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155 or send e-mail to: bg@chicagopoint.com

Marcy's BG Holiday Gift Ideas
by Marcy Sloan

Here's the 2009 sackful of backgammon-related goodies from our favorite Santa, Marcy Sloan (Boynton Beach, FL). Everything here can be purchased at the Internet address shown.—Ed.



Own a hand-drawn oil-on-canvas 24 x 36" reproduction of this and other backgammon paintings. \$175 from www.oilpaintingllc.com.



It's better to look good than to play good and you'll look marvelous with dice cufflinks. Prices range from \$19.99 up to \$695 for the 14 carat gold variety. Visit www.cufflinks.com. Keyword: "dice."



Backgammon is a sweet game and this gift proves it. All the pieces are made of chocolate. \$15.38 from www.sweetstall.com. Keyword: "backgammon."



By making poor "beavers" in backgammon, your money can quickly be gone with the wind. Here's the T-shirt if you don't care. \$18.95 from www.snorgtees.com. Search: "beaver."



Class up your game with a pair of oxford dice cups. Includes dice. \$14.39 each from www.scotweb.co.uk. Search: "dice cup."

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

The choices were (a) must beat the undefeated player twice, (b) must beat the undefeated player once, and (c) must beat the undefeated player who gets a point spot.

I alerted Art Benjamin to the poll and he defended (b) playing a one match finals with mathematics. I contend that your polling approach is *not* a fair presentation of the issue. Without anyone providing a positive case for change, the players are responding to their long-standing experience and “logic” for why it has been two wins required in the past.

I believe that you are well intended to gather the playing public’s opinion with your poll questions, but as in an election, we voters are provided with a *pro* and *con* position on all propositions. Perhaps getting such pro/con statements could be solicited prior to creating a Chicago Point “poll” and have them available (via a click) on the poll page?—Patrick Gibson, Gammon Associates, Van Nuys, California

Our polls do give the players a chance to comment; and those comments are only a click away. Despite Art Benjamin’s comments favoring (b), the results of 210 voters were as follows: (a) 150, (b) 43, (c) 17.—Ed.

“UNFAIR AUCTION” REPLY

In answer to the letter in your last newsletter complaining that the auction in Peoria was “unfair” because door prizes raised the price of specific teams:

1. The “goal” of the auctioneer is to get the bids as high as possible and have as much action as possible. Higher prices across the board do raise the investment for individual players, but their return is proportionately higher. Anyone who doesn’t want to invest so much can usually get the buyer to allow them to buy back half, or a person can find a partner to take part of the action.
2. There were only about three bigger added prizes—one for the buyer of the first team, one for a free room night, and one for the last team—all valued around \$100. Most other door prizes were under \$25. I doubt that *anyone* bought a team or bid more for those prizes. They were just a nice bonus for participating.
3. Nobody has to buy back. Why should Vinton Knarr, or CHICAGO POINT publishing Mr. Knarr’s letter, for that matter, encourage others to boycott buying back at the auction? Tournaments need this additional income to help cover costs. I commend the POINT for publishing a letter

MORIOKA WINS HIS SIXTH FALL TROPHY TOURNEY

Intermediate Trophy to Dave Settles

The Bar Point Club Fall Trophy has been held for 27 years. Tak Morioka has now won six of those years. The all-time Chicagoland master point leader topped a 25 player field in the 13 November at the Holiday Inn O’Hare in Chicago.

Congrats to Dave Settles who won both the Intermediate and 1-Pt. Tourney. Results: OPEN (25): 1-Tak Morioka, 2-Carter Mattig, 3/4-Wayne Wiest / Gary Kay, 1C-Rory Pascar, 2C-Herb Roman. INTERM. (15): 1-Dave Settles, 2-Richard Stawowy, 3/4-Michael Peters / Mike Wolock, 1C-Roy Cohen, 2C-Dan Weymouth. 1-Point Match (16): 1-Dave Settles. Δ



with a different opinion, but I wish I had been given the opportunity to respond in the same issue.

I do not know Mr. Knarr, but I question how much experience he’s had at auctions and tournaments. The Peoria auction sold teams for very reasonable prices compared to other events, and this is a tournament that is a labor of love for the directors. If you want quality tournaments, you must support the venues.—Phil Simborg, Chicago, Illinois

We agree with Mr. Knarr that giving \$100 or higher valued door prizes to winning bidders skews the team’s actual equity value. But this technique could also help to raise all other bids—good for the directors who collect 10% of the proceeds. If players believe that their team price is out of line, they don’t have to buy back. The owner shouldn’t be offended because he is the one who received the bonus gift for his high bid.—Ed. Δ

SCOTT CASTY PREDICTS VICTORY IN ANTI-CRUELTY SOCIETY INVITATIONAL

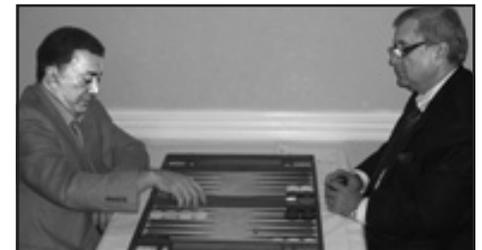
\$1700 Raised for Chicago Animals

Prior to the start of the 2nd Anti-Cruelty Backgammon Invitational, Scott Casty grabbed the winner’s trophy and posed for a photo as the “winner.” In fact, that’s just what happened. 13 players attended the jacket-and-tie event held 24 October at the Ambassador East Hotel in Chicago. Director Bill Davis reports that the prestigious event raised \$1,700 for ACS animals.



ACS winner Scott Casty (L) with runner-up Herb Roman.

Scott made a donational bid to secure a first round bye, then rolled past Phil Simborg and Howard Markowitz to reach the finals. He saved his best dice for last against Herb Roman, winning 9–1.



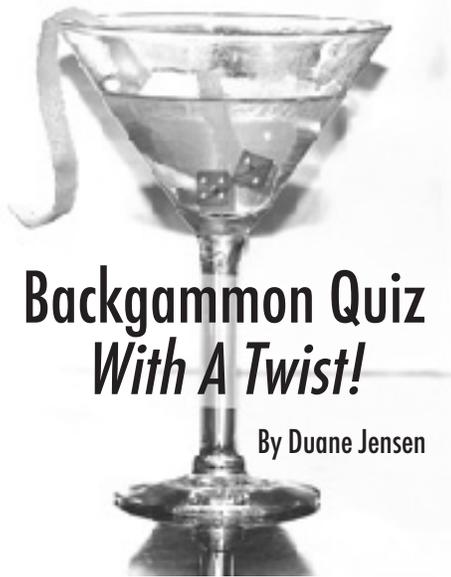
Fred Chamanara (L) defeated Phil Simborg in the Consolation finals.

In the Consolation bracket, Fred Chamanara defeated Phil Simborg.

Players enjoyed a dinner break at the famous Pump Room. All in all, another successful event. Δ



Director Bill Davis with ACS Vice President of Development Nadine Walmsley.

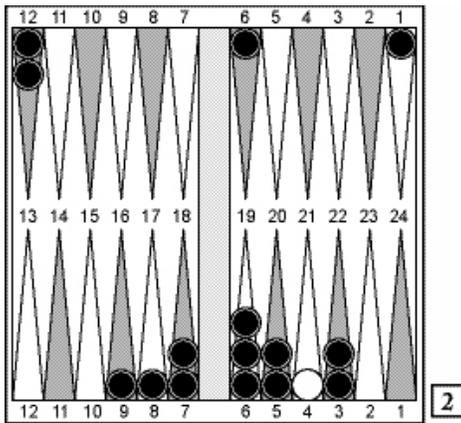


Backgammon Quiz With A Twist!

By Duane Jensen

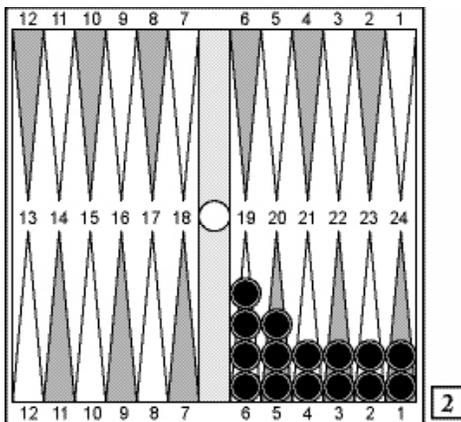
Do you like a twist with your backgammon quiz—where the questions are slightly twisted? Then drink up. This is the quiz for you. *Answers are on page 7.*

1. BLACK is on roll at double match-point. If a computer rollout shows BLACK winning 4% of the games from this position, how often does BLACK successfully “close out” WHITE’s last checker before bearing off?

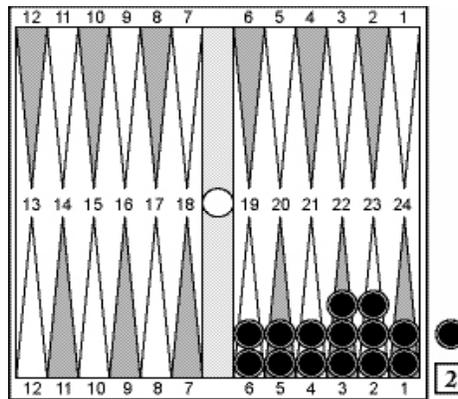


- (a) 10% (b) 75% (c) 50% (d) 75% (e) 90%

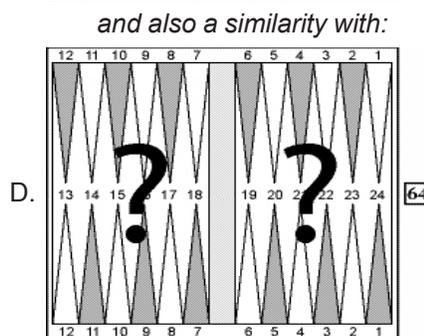
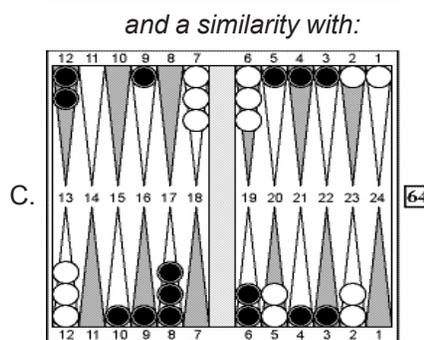
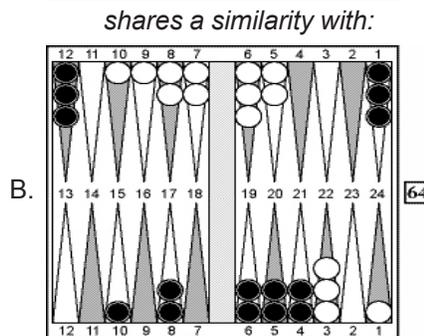
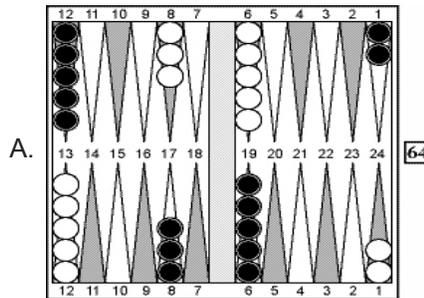
2A. BLACK rolls his best number. What is the roll and how should he play it?



2B. BLACK rolls his worst number. What is the roll and how should he play it?



3. Create a Position D that shares a similarity with Positions A, B, and C.

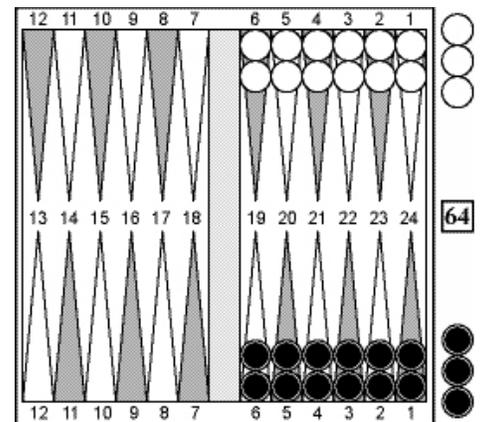


4A. If for the opening roll, your opponent’s single die number is random, but you can pick your roll, what number (1 through 6) should you choose?

4B. If you knew that you would win the opening roll no matter which single die number you rolled, what number (2 through 6) is your best?

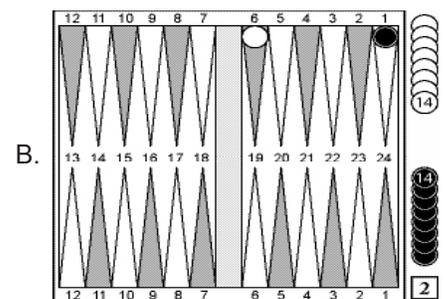
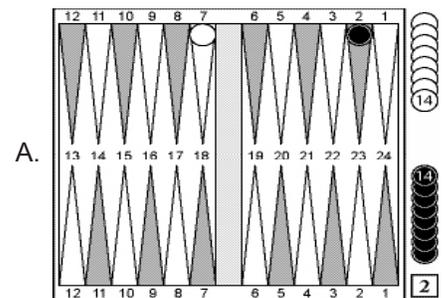
4C. If you knew that your opponent would win the opening roll, but you can still pick your die number, what number (1 through 5) should you choose?

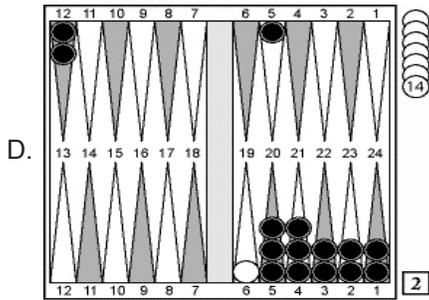
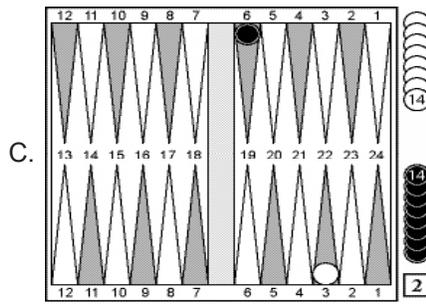
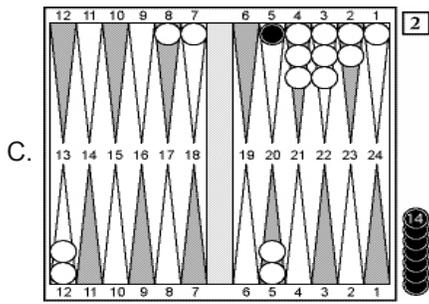
5. BLACK is on roll in this money game. If both sides play the checkers and the cube perfectly, how many games are finished without the cube being turned?



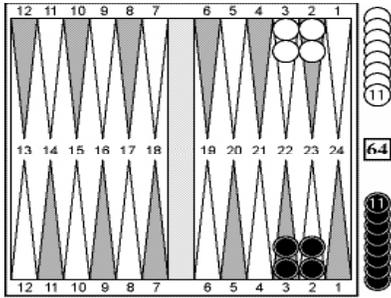
- (a) 2 in 100 (d) 8 in 100,000
(b) 4 in 1000 (e) 1 in a billion
(c) 6 in 10,000

6. With BLACK on roll, which of the four following positions can only be created by an illegal play?

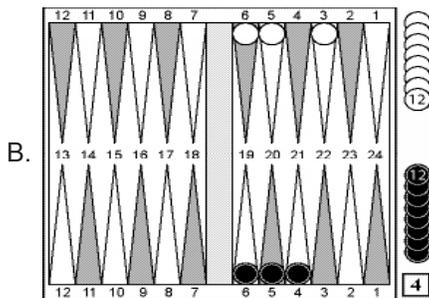
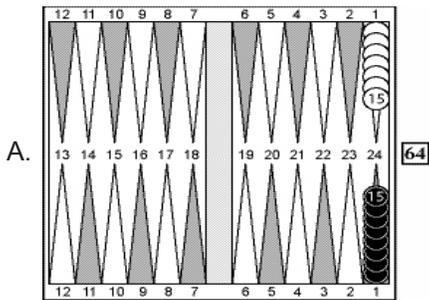




7. With BLACK on roll, the highest cube action that can occur with correct cube and checker play from this position is "BLACK redoubles WHITE to 8 and WHITE passes."



What is the highest cube action that can occur with correct cube and checker play from these three positions (with BLACK on roll in all cases)?



8. Five men were trapped between floors in a elevator. During the hour of their "imprisonment," the men exchanged jokes and stories to pass the time.

- The first man said, "Last week, my home burned to the ground."
- The second man said, "Last Friday, I learned that I have HIV."
- The third man said, "Last Thursday, I played backgammon at our weekly club."
- The fourth man said, "Last Saturday, while playing 5-card stud poker with my buddies, I was dealt a royal flush."
- The fifth man said, "Last Monday, there was a knock at my door during a heavy rainstorm. A soaked young lady explained that her car died and her cell phone wasn't working. She asked if she could use my phone to call for help. I let her in my house because she was Scarlett Johansson.

She finished her phone call and asked if she could use my bathroom. I said yes because she was Scarlett Johansson.



When she came out of the bathroom, she was wearing nothing but a bath towel. She explained that she hung her wet clothes in the bathroom to dry. Her car wouldn't be repaired for more than one hour, and she wanted to know, because I had been so helpful, if I would like to go into the bedroom and make passionate love with her. I agreed because she was Scarlett Johansson."

Each of the five previous stories has a probability attached to it. There are statistical odds against fires, HIV, and royal flushes. Which of the five events is least likely to happen?

- a. Home destroyed by a fire,
- b. Contracting HIV,
- c. Playing backgammon at a weekly club,
- d. Being dealt a royal flush in 5-card stud, or
- e. Having random sex with the lovely Scarlett Johansson.

Answers!

1. (c) 50%. Most of Black's wins come after closing out the checker. A last checker close-out wins about 8% of the time. If the rollout shows 4% wins, then the closeout occurs 50% of the time.

2. (a) Best roll is 6-6 played 6/off(4). (b) Worst roll is 4-4 played 4/off(2), 6/2(2).

3. Any position in which the pip count is 167 for both sides.

4A. 6 of course, so you will never lose the opening roll.

4B. 3 because half the time you win the opening roll with 3-2 and the other half you begin with a wonderful 3-1.

4C. 4 because your opponent will either begin with 5-4 or 6-4, two average opening rolls.

5. (b) 4 in 1000.

6. (a) and (d)

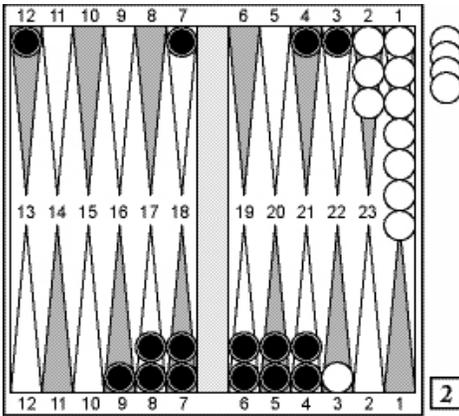
7. (a) Black redoubles White to 8 and White passes. (b) Black redoubles White to 512 and White passes. (c) This is still a contact position. There is no ceiling on how high the cube might go.

8. (c) Playing backgammon at a weekly club. Few gammoners play in their local weekly or monthly tournaments. Get out there and support your local club! —Duane Jensen

**PROBLEM #349
ANALYZED**

by John O'Hagan

Match to 9 points. Black leads White 7 to 5. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-2.**



Black is ahead 2-away, 4-away, owns a 2-cube, and has apparently just hit a shot in the bearoff to avoid losing a gammon and the match. Hitting that shot was a huge swing for Black since he's now a solid favorite in the game. He's far from gin of course, and this 5-2 roll leaves a lot to be desired. Nineteen numbers made a full 6-prime and most of the other 17 play better than this 5-2.

Remember to keep the match score situation in mind when thinking how to play this 52. This is one of those "gammon save" scores for Black which means that the opponent's gammons are worth twice their normal value and yours are worth nothing. At most scores, the gain from turning a single game loss into a single game win is twice as important and the extra loss from turning a single game loss into a gammon loss.

For example, at 3-away, 3-away with the cube on 2, a single game win/loss gives you 75%/25% match winning chances (MWC) while a gammon win/loss wins or loses the match for you. The gammon price is therefore one-half and a checker play that increased both your winning chances and your gammon-losing chances would be correct as long as the former was at least one-half of the latter. But at this 2-away, 4-away score with the cube on two, a single game win/loss gives you 100%/50% MWC while a gammon loses the match with 0% MWC. The gammon price is therefore 100% and plays that increase your wins and gammon losses need to increase the former by more than the latter to be correct.

With this in mind, how best to play this 5-2? It looks like your choices are: (1) hit

with the 5 (8/3*) and then play the 2 with one of your other checkers; (2) lift the blot on the 9-point with the 2 or the 5 and then play the other number with one of your checkers on White's side of the board; or (3) keep the back of the prime slotted and play the entire roll in some fashion with your four back checkers (although you should keep a checker on the 21-point since you'll get hit twice on 6-6 and might be able to hit if White blots on the 2-point).

Can any of these three be eliminated from further consideration? Probably not, even though hitting loose and not lifting are pretty big plays to be considering at this score.

Let's look at the hitting play, 8/3* with the 5. If we do this, what's the best 2? 13/11 would be my choice. 8/6 is too conservative and advancing any of your three rearmost checkers two pips forward doesn't do much to enhance your winning chances. A GNU rollout confirmed that 13/11 is indeed better than 8/6, 18/16, 21/19, or 22/20. Everything will play well if White doesn't hit you back. You'll have good 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, and 6s. If White does hit but doesn't escape from your 3-point, your non-entering 1s and 2s will allow you to remake a fifth blocking point.

Hitting takes away White's 6-6 joker but it does give White four strong double hitters (6-3, 5-3) which are very gammonish (especially if you dance with one or both) and two single hitters (6-2) which will also be very bad if you dance. The other ten hitters don't allow White to escape, but you will then dance one-ninth of the time and that could be disastrous. White would then have direct 5s and 6s to hit again and escape with tempo and be well on her way to gammoning you.

The second option with this 5-2 is to lift the blot on the 9-point. Lifting with the 2 is surely better than with the 5 since you don't want to front-load your builders. So what's the right 5 if you play 9/7 with the deuce? Playing either 21/16 or 22/17 give you excellent coverage; but 22/17 looks a little better since it gives you 4-4 to make your 9-point, 6-6 to hit loose on your 3-point (if White is still there), and some very slight hope if White rolls her 6-6 joker. Another possibility is to play 13/8 with the 5. That gives you fewer shots after White's 6-3, 6-2, or 6-1 but it does dodge getting hit with White's 6-4 and the spare on the 8-point will allow you to hit loose with a 5 without breaking the point. Not a bad play but I like the extra outfield coverage from 22/17 and a GNU rollout agrees. 22/17 9/7 is the best lifting play.

The third approach with this 5-2 is to keep the 9-point slotted. There are lots of

possible plays here but, as stated earlier, it's probably right not to move your checker on the 21-point since you'll still have a chance if White rolls her 6-6 joker. (A GNU rollout agrees with keeping the checker on the 21-point by the way.) All plays in this category are pretty risky since they give the 6-6 super joker, the 6-x & fan sequence, and all but 13/6 also leave the 6-4 semi-joker. These are all pretty gammonish and I'm afraid the extra win/extra gammon loss ratio will be well below the required 1.0 for all of these plays.

The five candidate plays appear to be: 13/6; 18/11; 18/13, 22/20; 22/15; and 22/17, 18/16. 13/6 and 18/13, 22/20 are too conservative (even at this score) while 18/11 is too loose. So that leaves 22/15 and 22/17, 18/16. I'd choose 22/15 since that gives 27 covers for the 9-point versus 25 after 22/17, 19/16. A GNU rollout disagreed. It showed 22/17 19/16 to be the slightly better play.

So the the final candidates are lifting with 22/17, 9/7, hitting with 8/3* 13/11, and not lifting with 22/17, 18/16. I definitely like lifting at this score. 6-6 will be a disaster of course, but there are 35 other numbers on the dice and you gain enough on these to more than offset the huge loss from the 1/36 super joker. Hitting loose gets hit back too often and the four double hitters are especially bad at this score. Keeping the 9-point slotted is also a little too bold at this score. Why take this chance? Lifting is safer and gives you excellent hitting chances even if White does roll a 6.

The GNU rollout agrees. Lifting is best, not lifting is second, and hitting is third.—
John O'Hagan Δ

	Wins	G/BG losses	MWC
22/17, 9/7	67.85%	14.65%	76.599%
22/17, 19/16	68.30%	16.01%	76.145%
13/11, 8/3*	67.72%	16.03%	75.848%

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WINNER'S CIRCLE



SEP.-DEC. 2009

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 20 Sep.)... OPEN (16): 1-Frank DiMaggio, 2-Leon Marini (NJ); 1C-Jason Pack (NJ). BEGINNER (4): 1-Easter Funlayo Woods, 2-Doug Pader.

•**New ENG Club Monthly** (Malden, MA; 3 Oct.)... OPEN: 1-Alex Zamanian, 2-Anne Bidner; 1C-Herb Gurland, 2C-Eric Wicklund.

•**2nd Mid-Atlantic Championships** (Towson, MD; 16-18 Oct.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (35): 1-Brent Cohen (PA), 2-Ed Bennett (NM); 1C-Karen Davis (OH), 2C-Ed O'Laughlin (VA); 1LC-Mary Hickey (OH). ADVANCED (40): 1-Frank Raposa (VA), 2-Paul Strasberg (VA); 1C-Arthur Sutton (NJ), 2C-Robert Regan (NY); 1LC-Bruce Whitaker (MD). NOVICE (14): 1-Hirsh Goldberg (MD); 1C-Terry Valentine (DE); 1LC-Jacki Singleton (WI). CHARM CITY CLASSIC (11): 1-Brent Cohen (PA), 2-Alfred Mamlet (MD). IMPERIAL CRAB CUP (26): 1-Brandon Macklin (MD), 2-Mike Battaglia (NJ). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-AI Cantito (CT) & Gerhard Roland (CT), 2-Michael Auer (MD) & Bill Counts (MD). BLITZ (64): 1-Murray Bryntesen (FL), 2-Joseph Jemal (NJ). SUNSHINE CUP FREE ROLL (16): 1-Alan Grunwald (NJ), 2-Tom Duggan (ENG). First prize was a backgammon board made by Vitor Hollanda. SHUT THE BOX FREE ROLL: 1-Jeff Aciermo (NJ), 2-Sherry Peters (VA). \$150 raised for the Women's Shelter in Charlotte, NC.

•**World Series of BG London/UK Masters** (London, England; 21-25 Oct.)... UK MASTERS (47+9 rebuys): 1-Thomas Jespersen (DEN), 2-Halvor Losnedahl (NOR), 3/4-Manfred Holleder (GER) / Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (ISR); 1C-Katja Spillum (NOR), 2C-Marcel Nabarro (NET). ADVANCED (12): 1/2/3 split-Sam Ahmed (EGP) / Michael Flesch (ENG) / Murray Sharp (ENG). WSOB CHAMPLAST CHANCE SUPER SATELLITE (20): 1-Mike Heard (ENG), 2-Eli Roymi (ISR), 3/4-Julian Fetterlein (ENG) / Shahab Ghodsi (NOR). WSOB RACE PLAY-OFFS (24): Final 4: Steen Grønbech (DEN), Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (ISR), Tage Mellgren (DEN), Kazuhiro Shino (JPN/ENG)... *These qualifiers will play in the WSOB Championship & Shootout 6-7 February 2010.*

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 25 Oct.)... OPEN (16): 1-Jason Pack (NJ), 2-Victor Brack (NJ); 1C/2C-Julian Schulman (NJ) / Andy Rubien. INTERMEDIATE (5): 1-Doug Pader; 1C-John Johnson.

•**5th European Doubles Championship/7th French Open** (Enghien-les-Bains, France; 28 Oct.-1 Nov.)... EUROPEAN DOUBLES (28 teams+4 rebuys): 1-Ray Fogerlund (USA) & Sasan Taherzadeh (IRN/USA), 2-Claude Lambert (FRA) & José Rodriguez (FRA), 3/4-Jürgen Orlowski (GER) & Christian Plenz (GER) / Alan Grunwald (USA) & Bob Wachtel (USA). FRENCH OPEN MASTERS (78): 1-Giorgio Castellano (ITA), 2-Michihito Kageyama (JPN), 3/4-Olivier Croisille (FRA) / Philip Vischjager (NET); 1C-Volker Sonnabend (GER),

2C-Jürgen Orlowski (GER), 3C/4C-Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (ISR) / Alexis Vincent (FRA); 1LC-Eli Roymi (ISR), 2LC-Sami Sallak (GER). ADVANCED (24): 1-Thomas Löw (GER), 2-Guy van Middellem (BEL), 3/4-Mads Peter Andersen (DEN) / Pedro Machado (POR); 1C-Charles Lecomte (FRA), 2C-Sam Ahmed (EGP/USA); 1LC-Peter-Michael Valeur Bosse (DEN), 2-Scarlett Serrero (FRA). INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Hans Werner Ketteler (GER), 2-Gilles Deshayes (FRA), 3/4-Christelle Laurent (FRA) / Roger Mouquin (FRA). PRO/AM DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Artur Muradian & Self (Armenia), 2-Damjan Plesec (SLO) & Vincenzo Riceputi (ITA). SUPER JACKPOT (8): 1-Thierry Manouck (FRA), 2-Steen Grønbech (DEN). DMP-KNOCKOUT (64): 1-Piergiorgio D'Ancona (ITA), 2-Thierry Manouck (FRA). CYPRUS QUALIFIER: Mads Peter Andersen (DEN). SPECIAL PLAYER AWARDS: Frank Simon (GER) & Stick Rice (USA). ELEGANCE TROPHY: Lynn Ehrlich (USA).

•**Springfield Series #2** (Bloomington, IL; 7 Nov.)... OPEN (19): 1-Ed Zell, 2-Randy Armstrong; 1C-Jim Zimmerman, 2C-Sean Garber (IN); 1LC-Gerry Tansey (MO).

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 8 Nov.)... OPEN (7): 1/2-Jeff Lester / Philippe Salmave.

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 15 Nov.)... OPEN (8): 1-Andy Rubien, 2-Victor Ashkenazi (NJ); 1C-David Metz. INTERMEDIATE (3): 1-Vicent Reece. BEGINNER (2): 1-John Johnson.

•**Rotterdam Open 2009** (Rotterdam, The Netherlands; 20-22 Nov.)... OPEN (16): 1-Misja Alma, 2-Hassan Rida; 1C-Paulus van Rooyen, 2C-H.W. Capel. SUNDAY JACKPOT (16): 1-Paul van Koningsbrugge, 2-Dirk Provoost; 1C-H.W. Capel; 2C-Susan van der Heiden.

•**Hoosier Fall Trophy Tourney** (Indianapolis, IN; 21 Nov.)... OPEN (16): 1-Scott Day, 2-Sean Garber; 1C-Scott Johnston.

•**1st Cyprus Open** (Lefkosa, Cyprus; 26-29 Nov.)... MASTERS (39): 1-Fuat Erdag (TUR), 2-Jürgen Orlowski (GER), 3-Shahab Ghodsi (IRN/NOR) / Mario Sequeira (POR); 1C-Sven Rümcker (GER), 2C-Hilmi Göchan (TUR); 1LC-Simonetta Barone-Herrera (ENG). INTERMEDIATE (25): 1-Peter Michael Valeur Bosse (DEN), 2-Dimitris Dimitriadis (GRE), 3/4-Murat Kapikirn (TUR) / Hulusi Tümer (TUR); 1C-Marios Kiryakou (CYP), 2C-Hakki Yillmaz (TUR); 1LC-Arzu Akincioglu (TUR). BEGINNERS (20): 1-Nurhan Gidutyan (TUR), 2-Umut Sari (TUR), 3/4-Özlem Gamze (TUR) / Ugur Taskan (TUR); 1C-Hisar Uyar (TUR), 2C-Seyfi Uslubas (TUR); 1LC-Amir Afesai (ISR). PRO/AM DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Oguz User (TUR) & Ali Vahabi (IRN). PRESIDENT'S TOURNAMENT #1 (64): 1-Cemalettin Yüksel (TUR). #2 (64): 1-Hilmi Göchan (TUR). SASSANGAMMON FREEROLL (84): 1-Haluk Oral (TUR). LONG DISTANCE AWARD: Michihito Kageyama (JPN). WBAMEMBERS OF HONOR: Steen Grønbech (DEN) & Fuat Erdag (TUR).

•**Chicago Bar Point Club Sunday** (Chicago, IL; 6 Dec.)... OPEN (22): 1/2-Nora Luna Righter / Howard Markowitz, 3/4-Linda Rockwell / David Rockwell; 1C-Rory Pascal, 2C-Mike Wolock. Δ

AMALGAMATION

Last minute gifts: Vegas Open champ **Mike Corbett** (FL) has written a comical look at life: *Laughter of the Damned* (\$11.95 + s&h). To buy, contact **Carol Joy Cole** (MI) or visit mikecorbettbooks.com. **Phil Simborg** (IL) is selling baffle boxes for \$60 + s&h. E-mail: psimborg@sbcglobal.net...

Rod Covlin (NY) has formed the non-profit US Backgammon Federation. BG promotion is the organization's primary goal. There are 12 Board of Directors and 15 Board of Governors. Read about it at www.simborgbackgammonlessons.com...

Recently visiting the BPC: **Frank Ley** (CA)... Condolences to family and friends of **C. Robert "Bob" Green** who died in his home in Ohio in August. Bob, an ABT player with 11.44 lifetime points, was also a successful tournament black jack player...

According to Alexa Web Ranking, the bulk of chicagopoint.com users come from India. Go figure... It's time to vote for the 2009 "Giants of Backgammon." Pick up a ballot online at flintbg.com/giants.html...

Lots of new club news. **Carol Joy Cole**'s Flint Club now plays Thurs. at Maxie's in Flint, MI; The Grand Rapids Club is now meeting under **Bob Kamp**'s direction at the Victory Club in Tues. Ada, MI; **Teresa Wonderly** is now directing the Dayton Club last Sun. monthly at Barnes & Noble in Beavercreek, OH; **Michael Shedroff**

has began The Villages Backgammon Club Tues. at Chula Vista Rec Center in The Villages, FL; **Will Hunn** opened the New Orleans BG Club Wednesdays at Flora's Cafe; and **Doug Amenda** is running Teakwoods BG Club Tuesdays at Teakwoods Tavern in Phoenix, AZ. Get all the updates next month as we publish "Backgammon Clubs in North America."...

Johannes Levermann (Germany) is reporting that *Snowie 5* will be released some time in the first half of 2010... KC backgammoners on the radio: **Kathleen Davis** was a guest hostess on **Eric Barr**'s weekly radio show on Thanksgiving.

Eric plays a great mix of music every Thursday from 10:00 am to noon (CST) at www.kkfi.org... The Treasury and Federal Reserve delayed the ban on Internet gambling 27 Nov. Although **Rep. Barney Frank**'s legislation to overturn the 2006 Internet ban on gambling has stalled, the current delay in enforcement until 1 June is considered a positive action...

Frank Frigo (KY) and **Chuck Bower** (IN) got good press from the *New York Times* regarding their "Zeus" computer program. Zeus uses computer simulations to determine proper football play. Although NE Patriots coach **Bill Belichick** was crucified in the press for his decision to go on 4th and two a few weeks ago, Zeus defended his call... The *Dallas Morning News* says 71-year-old ex-Cowboy QB and Monday Night Football announcer **Don Meredith** has emphysema. That forces him to stay home a lot, "...so he sits in his den, conquering backgammon challengers."... Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah from CHICAGO POINT! Δ



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