

2010 central states invitational

BOB STEEN & MALCOLM DAVIS WIN BIG AT 1ST CSI

Positional comments by Neil Kazaross

Over 120 players attended the premiere Central States Invitational tournament. The event was held 5–7 March at the Wyndham Lisle in Lisle Illinois. Replacing the Midwest Championships on the ABT tour, the CSI was co-directed by Amy Trudeau and Bill Davis. Midwest regulars Dru Heggen (reprising her roll as Pig-Mistress) and Mark King were on staff along with newcomer Mary Ann Meese (IN). Peter Kalba returned as Calcutta Auctioneer.



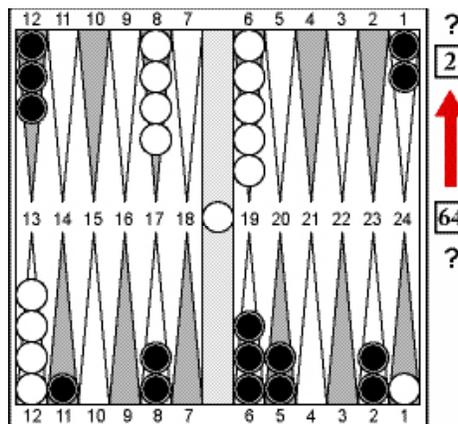
CSI Championship victor Bob Steen.

Bob Steen, a Chicago Bar Point Club regular from Libertyville, Illinois, was the big winner capturing the 52-player field Championship tournament. Among others, Bob defeated Wendy Kaplan (IL), Gregg Cattanach (GA), and David Rubin (IL) in the semifinals before facing the new #11 BG Giant John O'Hagan (IN). [The new Giants of Backgammon listing is posted at www.flintbg.com—Ed.]

Bob was nervous but stayed positive throughout the 15-point finals. And even though he was significantly behind at the first break, he remained confident that this was his tournament.

The break energized Bob's dice and he was soon ahead 11–9. A correct double by Bob made the score 12–9 when John correctly passed. A few rolls into the next game, a similar position developed with Bob on shake:

15-point Championship finals. Bob Steen (Black) leads John O'Hagan (White), 12–9. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Neil Kazaross comments: This critical position shows the difference between match and money play. For money, or at a nearly even score in a long match, this position is a close pass due to both Black's gammon potential and White's lack of positional development.

However, at the given match score, Black only benefits from one of the extra points gained from a gammon and White will be ready to recube with any excuse. This overage combined with huge recube vig means that this position is not good enough to cube at this score (although an XG 4-ply rollout says this is a 1.025 money pass).

Bob wasn't going to be cube-shy against his world class opponent. Seeing good chances to end the match with a G, he doubled. After 5-3 (dance) followed by a point-switching 5-5 and another dance, John was in dire straights. He was eventually closed out and gammoned for the match.

Note how deeply the trailer can take at this score. John likely has a take even after 5-3 (dance) from the diagrammed position. In general, when you lead 3-away vs. several more points away and can win a decent amount of gammons, you probably don't have a proper cube if your opponent has a clear take. This is especially true if the opponent can win some gammons himself—like here since a gammon loss on a 4-cube is crushing.

Congratulations to Bob Steen (who

nearly fainted following the match) for winning the first ABT points of his life in a really big way.

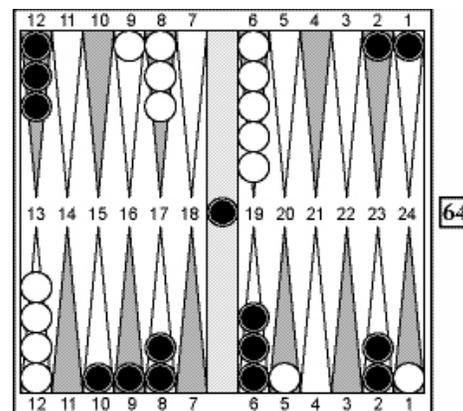
GRAND CRYSTAL BEAVER



CSI co-director Amy Trudeau awards Malcolm Davis (R) the Grand Crystal Beaver as finalist John O'Hagan looks on.

In the Grand Crystal Beaver, Malcolm Davis bested John O'Hagan to capture his first Swarovski crystal beaver. Malcolm's playing style is spotlighted in the following early match position:

11-point Grand Crystal Beaver finals. Malcolm Davis (Black) trails John O'Hagan (White) 0–2. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-2.**



Neil Kazaross comments: This play is a good example of Malcolm Davis's aggressive style. When playing through the match, I felt that hitting loose left too many blots and that 13/10 (duping 4s) was the correct 3. However, it took a long and very high strength XG 4-ply rollout to show that 13/10 is probably correct.

Malcolm's actual hitting play (8/5*)

[Continued on page 7]

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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STANDARD BOARD SIZE?

My friend Terry Weiss, who just won the CSI Limited tournament, is thinking about buying a better board and wonders if there are any sizes that are preferential to any others. I told him there are no required sizes that I know of, but that you would know better. — *Lucky Nelson, Arlington Heights, Illinois*

There is no standard size board per se; however the most common size by far is a board with 1.75" diameter checkers. The only two other sizes on the tour are the 1.5" diameter checker size and the extra large 2" diameter size.

We are presently taking bids on a beautiful pre-owned Al Imm 2" bakelite backgammon set. You can view the board at chicagopoint.com/imm2.html. As we go to press, the high bid is currently \$500. Bidding ends 25 April.—Ed.

[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.

Apr 10	Springfield Series Grand Finale, Rusty's Clubhouse, Lincoln, Illinois	217/622-9447
Apr 10	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
Apr 10	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Apr 10	New England Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Apr 10*	Tampa Bay Club Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/786-9133
Apr 11	Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Apr 11	Cincinnati Club Monthly Tournament, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Apr 11	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Apr 11*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Apr 11	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Apr 13	Teakwoods Club Monthly, Teakwoods Tavern, Phoenix, Arizona	480/286-8239
Apr 14-18	26th Nevada State Tournament, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Apr 15*	Third Thursday Bonus (Atlanta Classic), Maxie's Food & Spirits, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Apr 18*	Bellingham Monthly, Pacific Martial Arts, Bellingham, Washington	360/733-6173
Apr 24*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/261-4583
Apr 25*	Atlanta Northside Monthly, Veranda Greek Taverna, Roswell, Georgia	770/612-0818
Apr 25*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly Tournament, Lincoln Center Atrium, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Apr 30-May 2	Atlanta Spring Classic, Crown Plaza Ravinia, Atlanta, Georgia	770/633-0001
May 1*	West Michigan Monthly, Anazeh Sands West, Wyoming, Michigan	616/647-9965
May 2*	Cincinnati Club Monthly Tournament, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
May 2*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
May 7*	Portland Club Monthly, Spring Creek Coffee House, Milwaukie, Oregon	503/515-5682
May 8*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
May 8*	New England Bonus, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
May 8*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
May 9*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
May 13-16	WBGT: 2nd US Open, Embassy Suites Airport, So. San Francisco, California	304/685-3214
May 28-31	Chicago Open, Holiday Inn & Suites-O'Hare, 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 23-25	15th Minnesota Open, Courtyard by Marriott, Bloomington, Minnesota	612/718-2613
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 Championships, Marriott Hotel, Towson, Maryland	954/249-1416
Nov 10-14	Las Vegas Open, Bally's Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Dec 3-5	California State Championship, Airtel Hotel, Van Nuys, California	818/901-0464
Jan 22-29	2011 Backgammon & Poker On Board, Western Caribbean Princess Cruise	773/583-6464
OUTSIDE USA		
Apr 16-18	5th Strawberry Hill High Stakes Tournament, Irish Town, Jamaica	876/999-0471
Apr 16-18	TBT: 2nd Antalya Open/WBF-TR, Diva Café Bistro, Antalya, Turkey	905332-352555
Apr 17-18	Rhein-Neckar-Cup 2009 Year-End, Mannheim, Germany	496204-620396
Apr 24-25	Istavder 1st Izmir Championship, Green Park Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey	905324-279454
Apr 30-May 2	1st Kharkov Open, Hotel Mir, Kiev, Ukraine	49-241-74140
May 1-2*	Danish Doubles Championship 2010, River Club, Valby, Denmark	4533-363601
May 6-9	EBGT: 2nd Cyprus Open, Hotel-Casino Golden Tulip, Nicosia, Cyprus	491715-422222
May 7-9	County Cups Trophy, Barceló Hotel, Hinckley Island, England	441522-888676
May 14-16	15th Oslo Open, Bridgesenter Vest, Oslo, Norway	4797-513941
May 15-16	1st Dubrovnik Backgammon Open, Hotel Adriatic, Dubrovnik, Croatia	38598-345135
May 15-16	TBT: 4th Izmir Open/WBF-TR, Izmir, Turkey	905332-352555
May 21-24	15th Kaiserbrunnen-Cup, Hotel Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49711-486190
May 28-31	WBGT/ESOB: 2nd <i>Casinorip.com</i> London Open, London, England	442077-001798
May 29-30*	SBTT: 1st Flumserberg Open, Hotel Siesta, Flumserberg, Switzerland	4179-3584825
May 29-30*	Istavder Championship #12, Green Park Hotel Merter, Istanbul, Turkey	905324-279454
May 29-30*	14th Rotterdam Open, Café o'Kay, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	31653-579164
Jun 4-6*	English Open, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Jun 5-6*	4th Open de Genève, Bar L'Apéritivo, Geneva, Switzerland	4178-7685569
Jun 5-6*	Istavder Istanbul Championship #13, Green Park Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey	905324-279454
Jun 11-13*	Austrian Masters Grand Finale, Montesino, Vienna, Austria	436642-127412
Jun 12-13*	TBT: 16th Istanbul Championship/WBF-TR, Merter Gunes Hotel, Turkey	905322-329228
Jun 17-24*	ESOB: Zakynthos Festival/BG & Poker, Peligoni Club, Zakynthos, Greece	447946-801801
Jun 19-20*	SBTT: Swiss Club Championships/Montreux Open, Switzerland	4179-3584825
Jun 23-27*	EBGT: 5th Portuguese Open & Doubles, SANA Hotel, Estoril, Portugal	491715-422222
Jun 26-27*	CBT: Bol Backgammon Open 2010, Bol na Bracu, Croatia	38598-456788
Jul 2-4*	ESOB: BIBA World Championship, Barceló, Hinckley Island, England	441522-888676
Jul 11-18*	35th World Championship, Fairmont Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	USA: 212/222-7177

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

LOOK ALIVE

I loved Jena Jennings' answer as to why there is a lack of female players at the Chicago Bar Point Club ("You need better looking men.") Clearly Jena's home base, the Sangamon Valley Club, has the best looking men of all backgammon clubs in America.—Randy Armstrong, Sangamon director, Springfield, Illinois

PRAISE FOR MISS LONELYBLOTS

Your March CHICAGO POINT issue arrived in my mail today. Thanks! The Danny Kleinman's "Miss Lonelyblots" column did a great job in answering the "checker in the lap" issue.—Ken Larson, director,

Durham/Chapel Hill Backgammon Club, North Carolina

SUPER-STEEN

Is there a backgammon training manual from Bob Steen? If so, how can I get a copy? A friend of mine is looking for it.—Sharon Katzman, via e-mail

This is one of over 1000 letters we received regarding recent CSI winner Bob Steen. He's obviously developing a cult following and it's getting out of hand!—Ed.

CENTRAL STATES INVITATIONAL FEEDBACK

I can't say from backgammon tournament experience, but I can say from 20 years of chess tournament experience: you folks did a great job putting on the CSI. Hope to see

you again next year, and probably sometime before that at the Bar Point Club. I occasionally share a ride with John O'Hagan up to one of the Sunday events.—Randy Pals, Chesterton, Indiana

CRUISE QUESTION

Some friends asked us if we want to join them on your backgammon cruise (22-29 January 2011 from Fort Lauderdale, FL to the western Caribbean). What other activities are there besides backgammon? Any dancing? If so, any ballroom dancing?—Joe DiCarlo, via Internet

There is anything and everything to do on the cruise including ballroom dancing. There are bars scattered throughout the ship and each bar has different music. Also golf, ping pong, trivia, charades tournaments, art auctions, movies under the stars, "Princess Idol" karaoke contest, Vegas-style shows and of course food. And the backgammon tournament won't interfere with what you want to do.

The only problem is that in order to go, you have to put down a refundable deposit a number of months early. But it is fully refundable if your plans change between now and 15 September (the deadline for registering). Sue Will can answer all your cruise questions. Call her at 309/699-6005 or email cruiserbag@comcast.net.—Ed.

POINT ON FACEBOOK?

Is there a Chicago Point Facebook page?—Jeff Durkees, Chicago, Illinois

There currently isn't. We're not sure what would go on there if we created a site!—Ed.



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2010

Compiled through 28 Mar. 2010 after 5 tournaments
(Upcoming events: Nevada State, Atlanta, US Open, Chicago)



John O'Hagan	26.67	Paul Polatov	6.07	Barry Silliman	3.15	Marcy Kossar	1.52
Gary Fries	25.20	Greg Cottle	5.33	Al Faller	3.15	Randi Sachar	1.52
Bob Steen	17.33	Donny Lomuto	5.17	David Rockwell	3.11	Lyle Rubin	1.50
Gary Bauer	16.78	Glenn Ramsey	5.17	Garry Kallos	3.04	Lynn Lusk	1.33
David Rubin	16.77	Carter Mattig	5.04	Damian Plesec	3.04	Julie Schifferle	1.22
Ed O'Laughlin	15.11	Jeremy Bagai	4.50	Lynda Clay	2.67	Wendy Russell	1.22
Sean Garber	12.60	Mark Andrus	4.50	Ed Johnson	2.58	Molly Bennett	1.14
Jesse Eaton	11.07	Sal Chehayeb	4.38	Ryan Hast	2.58	Mihai Pop	1.00
Patty Geoffroy	10.33	Faddoul Khoury	4.33	Sheri Peters	2.44	Randy Pals	1.00
Mel Rappaport	10.08	Lucky Nelson	4.33	Ben McCracken	2.29	Jenna Longman	0.83
Dorn Bishop	9.00	Mark Antranikian	4.33	Adrian Rios	2.10	Pete Anderson	0.76
Paul Weaver	9.00	Dujuan Meekins	4.20	Richard Stawowy	2.10	Martha Ghio	0.76
Al Hodis	7.56	Ken Tyszko	4.20	Terry Weiss	2.00	Fran Miller	0.61
Richard Munitz	7.56	Rick Barabino	3.78	Steve Mellen	1.89	Sara Piazza	0.57
Prince Barlow	7.20	Michelin Chabot	3.78	Dave Kiurski	1.80	Tim Turner	0.50
Rory Pascar	6.93	John Baron	3.60	David Shaerf	1.67	D. Sculley	0.50
Gregg Cattanach	6.30	Bob Hickey	3.60	Fred Fado	1.52	Donna Davenport	0.50
Ray Fogelrund	6.22	Sergiy Rybiy	3.34	Jason Pack	1.52		



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2010 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED THRU 30 MAR.

Tim Mabee	8.56	Wayne Wiest	3.60	Mike Peters	1.96	John Spatafora	0.96
Phil Simborg	8.16	Larry Goldstein	3.48	John Gaski	1.92	Alice Kay	0.88
Rory Pascar	7.20	Herb Roman	3.20	Gary Kay	1.92	Paul Baraz	0.88
Julius High	6.80	Carter Mattig	2.88	Dujuan Meekins	1.92	Mihai Pop	0.80
Bill Bartholomay	6.32	Mike Wolock	2.88	Georgina Flanagan	1.68	Mitch Pomper	0.72
Nora Luna Righter	5.76	Michael Ginat	2.76	Adrian Rios	1.60	Stefan Pop	0.72
Mike Sutton	5.04	Serge Bondar	2.56	Ralf Boettger	1.56	Alex Aliyev	0.72
Eric Johnson	4.88	David Rockwell	2.56	Peter Kalba	1.56	Richard Pearlman	0.64
Bill Keefe	4.36	Mike Minkovski	2.40	Ken Tibbs	1.52	Scott Casty	0.48
Reginald Porter	4.36	Amy Trudeau	2.24	Dan Weymouth	1.44	Linda Rockwell	0.48
Bill Davis	4.08	J. A. Miller	2.20	Shaw Dogan	1.28	Beth Whitney	0.48
Howard Markowitz	3.84	Tak Morioka	2.16	Wendy Kaplan	1.28	Kwong Chan	0.48
Dave Settles	3.60	Bob Steen	2.08	Mark Murray	1.28	Paul Lombardo	0.48
Christopher Shanava	3.60	Steve Klesker	2.08	Royal Robinson	0.96		

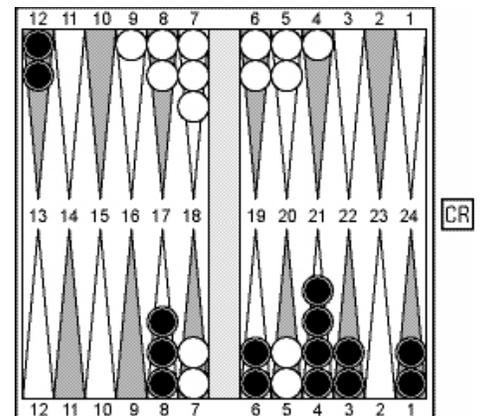
RORY PASCAR earned 4.56 points to become March's Player of the Month. Tim Mabee took over first place with his 4.24 point month. Bill Davis ranked third with 4.08—the first points of the year for him.

your move

PROBLEM #353

to be analyzed by John O'Hagan

7-point match. Black leads White 6 to 5 Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-3.**



THE UNAIDED EYE



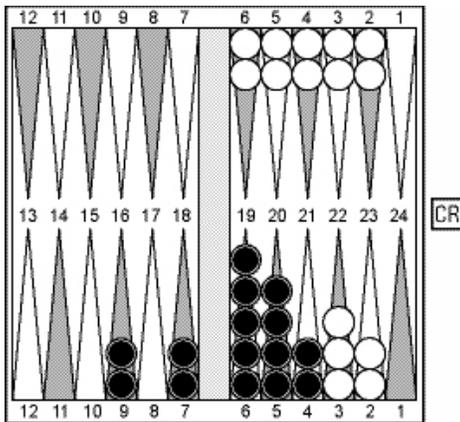
© 2010 by Danny Kleinman

In this column, Danny explores the problem from an “over the board” point of view. Following his analysis, we’ll print out extensive computer rollout results. Danny will then get the chance to comment on how well his analysis has measured up with the computer’s output.—Ed.

A DIFFICULT BEAR-IN

Dear Danny: I faced the following bear-in at the Central States Invitational Last Chance event—Advanced division.

Match to 5 points. Black leads White 4 to 3 Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.**



A position of this magnitude is beyond my skill level. I do see four reasonable alternatives:

1. Play 9/7 twice,
2. Move 9/8 (2) and play the other checkers inside,
3. Play 7/6 (2) and look for two other aces, or
4. Move all four checkers inside the home board.

The cube is out of play. What else should I be thinking about? I really have no idea how to solve a problem like this over the board.

So Danny, of the four moves above, what is the best, second best, third best, and worst of the litter?—*Bearly Incapable*

DEAR BEARLY: In this position, your priorities are (1) to force White to break her board, (2) to force White to break her rear-most anchor, and (3) to break your points safely from the rear.

I choose 9/8(2), 6/4 because it serves Priority (1) by preventing White from playing 5s safely with the spare on the 3-anchor,

thus forcing her to break her 6-point on all 5s but 6-5, and also serves Priority (3) by closing a gap.

Of the other plays, my next choice is 6/4(2), which serves Priority 2 by forcing White to break her 2-anchor on all 6s but 6-5.

My third choice is 9/7(2), which serves Priority 3 best of all but lets White keep both her board and her anchors on both 5s and 6s.

Worst of all is to break the 7-point, which doubles the gap between my outermost points instead of closing it, and lets White play not only 5s but also 4s constructively by springing a spare from the 3-anchor. Though I have distinct preferences among them, the first three plays are all plausible, as each does accomplish something, but breaking the 7-point is a horrid blunder.—*Yours, Danny*

Snowie Rollout Data

6000 cubeless, 3-ply, precise, full rollouts.

	BLACK			WHITE		
	BGs	Gammons	Wins	Wins	Gammons	BGs
1. 7/6(2) 6/4	1.2%	24.9%	74.4%	25.6%	1.4%	0.1%
2. 9/8(2) 6/4	1.2%	26.5%	74.4%	25.6%	1.6%	0.1%
3. 6/4(2)	1.1%	26.5%	74.0%	26.0%	1.8%	0.1%
4. 9/7(2)	0.9%	23.3%	71.8%	28.2%	1.5%	0.0%

Danny Kleinman Responds

Though agreeing with comparisons of my first three choices to one another, computer rollouts show the best results for the fourth play, which I labeled a blunder. I can understand my third choice, 9/7(2) being worst of all; but sorry, my unaided eye just can't see 7/6(2), 6/4 being as good as either of my first two choices.—*D.K.*

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: hg@chicagopoint.com

Los Angeles Open

June 11-13, 2010

Airtel Plaza Hotel
Van Nuys, California

For info, **Patrick Gibson** (MFIC):
818/901-0464
pgibsonmfic@gmail.com

TWO RUBINS WIN IN OHIO SEAN GARBER TAKES MASTERS

Congratulations to David & Lyle Rubin for capturing the Open and Novice division respectively at the Ohio State Champs. Kudos to Joe and Fran Miller for a fun event held at the Sheraton Hotel in Cleveland 26–28 March. Δ



Left: Lyle & David Rubin. Right: Masters Champ Sean Garber. [Photos: Mary Hickey]

OHIO STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

OPEN (28): 1-David Rubin (IL), 2-Ray Foglerund (CA); 1C-Gary Bauer (NJ), 2C-David Rockwell (IL). ADVANCED (36): 1-Prince Barlow (MI), 2-John Baron (OH), 3-Dave Kiurski (MI); 1C-Bob Hickey (OH), 2C-Sal Chehayeb (MI). NOVICE (8): 1-Lyle Rubin (IL), 2-D. Sculley (PA); 1C-Donna Davenport (OH). OHIO MASTERS (8): 1-Sean Garber (IN). AMATEUR JACKPOT (6): 1-Martin Veltmann (Canada). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Dan Kiurski (MI) & Dave Kiurski (MI), 2-Sean Garber (IN) & John Jennings (IL). BLITZ (16): 1-Joe Nolan (NY), 2-Carol Joy Cole (MI). QUICKIES (32): 1-Phil Simborg (IL), 2-Carol Joy Cole (MI). THURSDAY WARM-UP (12): 1-Sean Garber (IN), 2-John Baron (OH).



ILLINOIS ACTION



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

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

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

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL CLUB: Tournaments Monday, 6:00 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

MIDSTATE BG CLUB: Tourn. Tues., 6:00 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Ed Bauder (309/830-1632).

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).

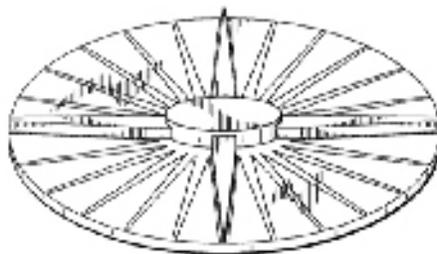
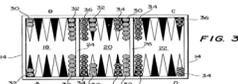
PUB CLUB: Tournaments Thurs., 6:45 P.M. at Playoffs Bar, 720 E. North Ave., Carol Stream. Tim Mabee (630/606-2388).

PEORIA BG CLUB: Tourn. Thursday, 6:30 P.M. at Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Sue Will (309/699-6005).

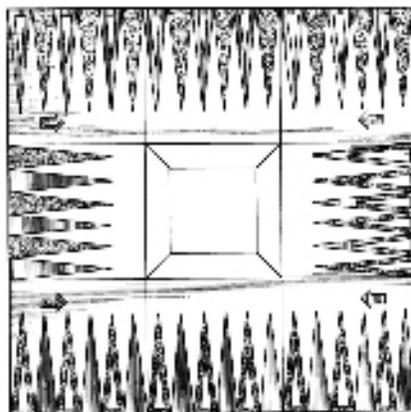
Patently

Silly Backgammon Patents

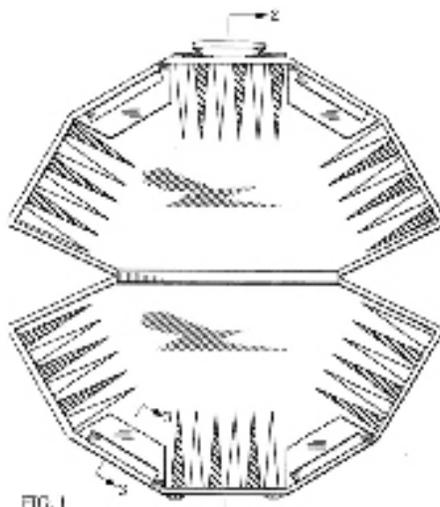
By Bill Davis



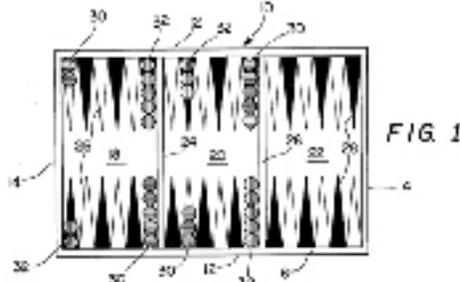
New playing designs are also popular among the inventors. Here's Robert Thomas's new **Backgammon Gameboard** version (Pat. No. D260661; 1979):



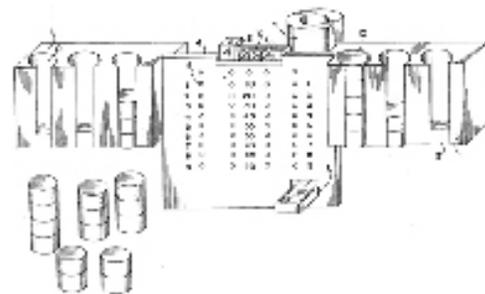
This is a **3-player** game from the mind of Gunes Ecer (Pat. No. D360232; 1993):



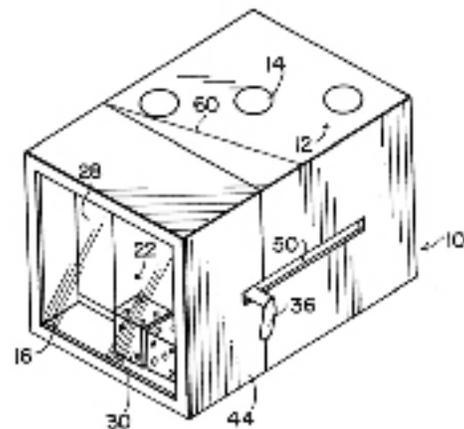
And here's a **4-player Backgammon** version by Herbert Barber. Basically, it's two boards overlaying each other with the middle quadrant shared by all four competitors. (Pat. No. 4286787; 1980):



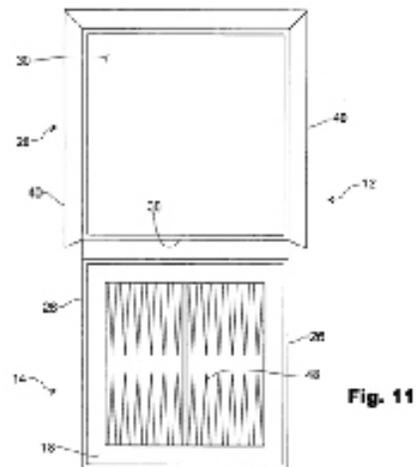
This BG invention seems to "do it all." Take a look at Raymond Francis's **Backgammon Score Tower** (Pat. No. 4877247; 1983) that offers checker storage, cube holder, game scoring, and even a built-in dice-casting device (drop the dice in the center section and they come out in the bottom right exit trough. Raymond thought of everything!



Then, there's this **Dice Shaker** designed by Marvin Monson (Pat. No. US4095796; 1976). We can't quite figure it out, but if it doesn't mix the dice, you can use it as a rat trap:



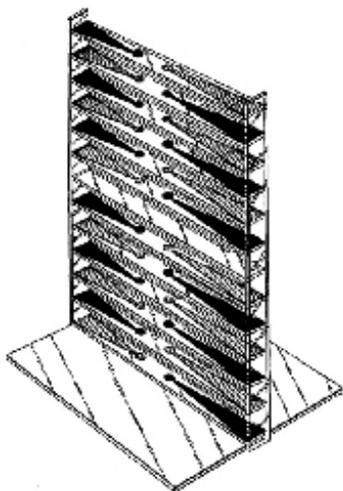
Finally, there's Harry Nouhan. He thought it would be a good idea for pizza parlors to offer a combination **Pizza Delivery Box and Board Game** "to enhance any activity such as a pizza party." (Pat. No. 20090058003; 2007) The pieces snap out of the sides of the box, but what about the dice? Two pieces of sausage, perhaps? Δ



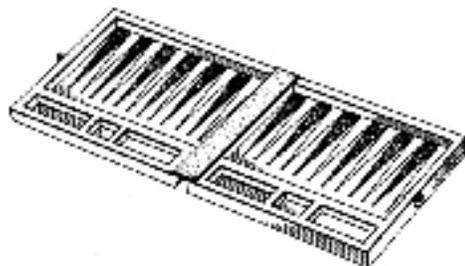
Search the word "backgammon" in a US Patent search and you'll find hundreds of backgammon or backgammon related items. The following are what each inventor thought was such a good idea that he was willing to pay for copyright protection.

The current board layout has stood the test of time for centuries; however a number of people thought they had a better idea.

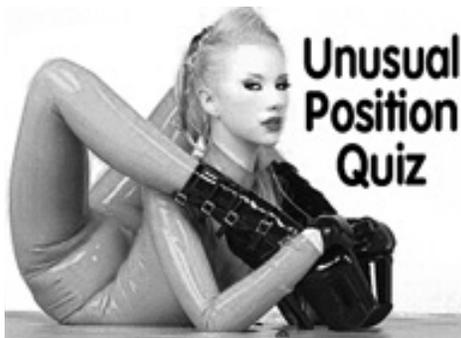
Take for example Joseph Davis's **Vertical Backgammon Board** (Pat. No. D245192; 1976). Imagine being put on the clock using a board like this:



Or how about Bruce Zemby's **Side-By-Side Board** (Pat. No. D256481; 1978). This one, designed for play on airplanes, in cars, or at restaurants, was written up in the June 1979 *Las Vegas Backgammon* magazine. Although promoters attempted to organize an airplane tournament for those flying to the Las Vegas World Amateur Championships, the concept never caught on.



A number of **Round Backgammon Boards** were designed. Although eye-catching, they weren't practical because each checker had to be carefully lined up on a point. Here's Jason Tesauro's version (Pat. No. D406280; 1998):

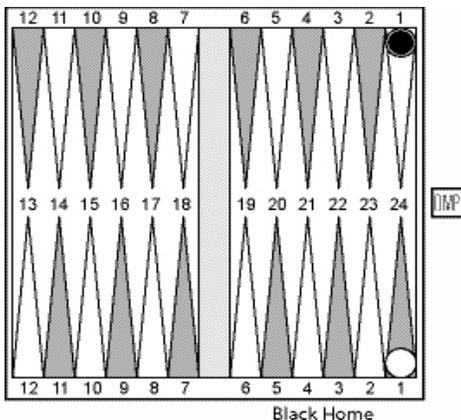


By Phil Simborg

There are lots of positions we generally understand from experience. The true test of backgammon talent is being able to understand new and unusual positions you've never seen before . . . and may never see again!

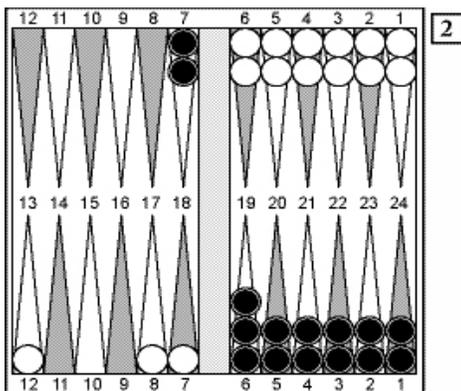
Here are some fun ones that should challenge your skills. Circle your choice in the ten problems that follow. *The answers are upside down on the next page. Don't peek!*

1. Double match point. Black on roll. Estimate Black's winning chances.



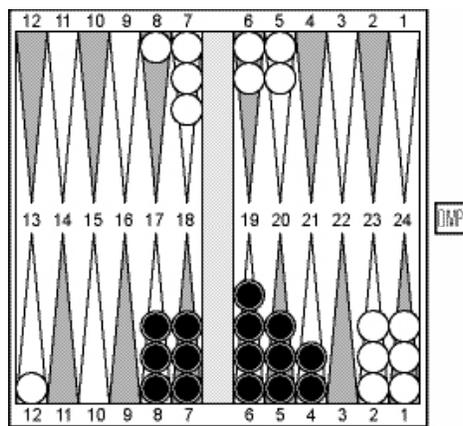
- A. Black wins about 60%
- B. Black wins about 70%

2. Money game. Black on roll. Estimate how many gammons Black wins.



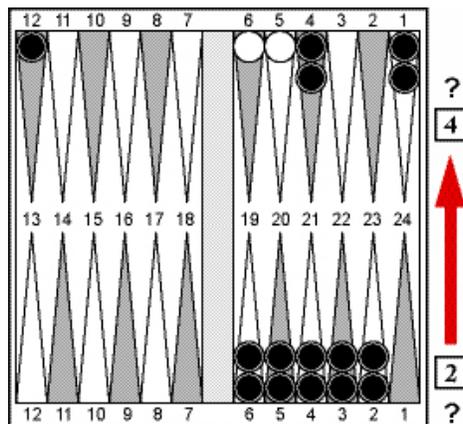
- A. Black wins about 20% gammons
- B. Black wins about 30% gammons
- C. Black wins about 40% gammons

3. Double match point. Black on roll. Estimate Black's winning chances.



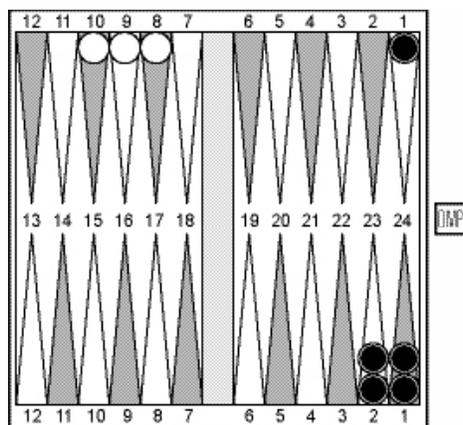
- A. It's about 50/50
- B. Black wins about 60%
- C. Black wins about 70%

4. Money game. Black on roll. What are the proper cube actions?



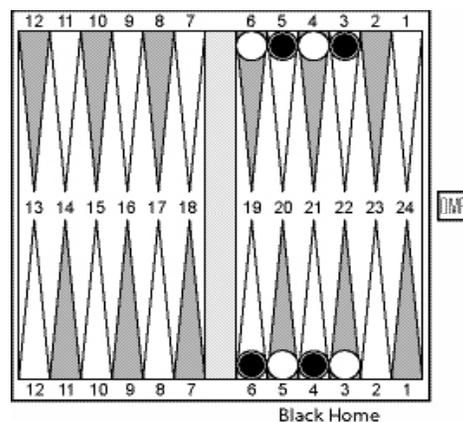
- A. No Redouble / Take
- B. Redouble / Take
- C. Redouble / Drop
- D. No Redouble / Beaver

5. Double match point. Black on roll. Estimate Black's winning chances.



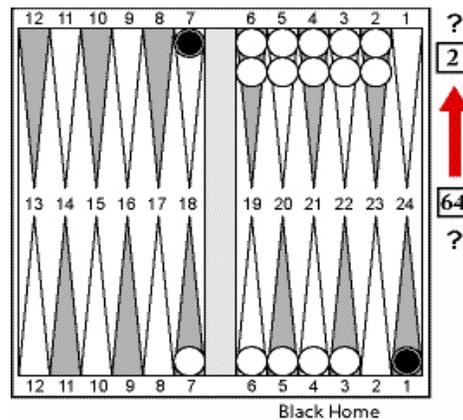
- A. It's about 50/50
- B. Black wins about 60%
- C. White wins about 60%

6. Double match point. Black on roll. Estimate Black's winning chances.



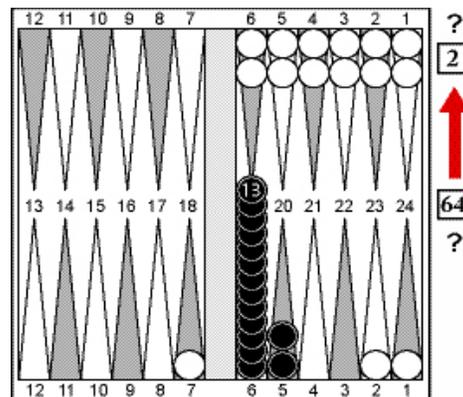
- A. It's about 50/50
- B. Black wins about 60%
- C. Black wins about 70%

7. Money game. Black on roll. What are the proper cube actions?



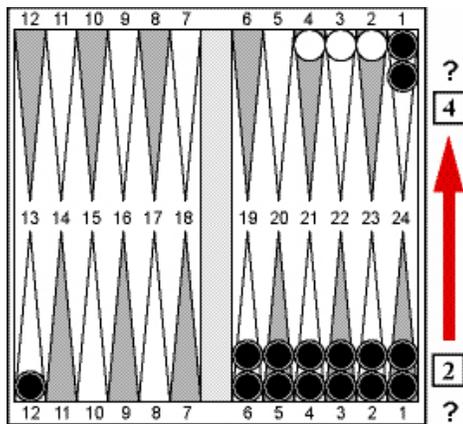
- A. No Double / Take
- B. Double / Take
- C. Double / Drop
- D. No Double / Beaver

8. Black on roll. Double match point. Estimate Black's winning chances.



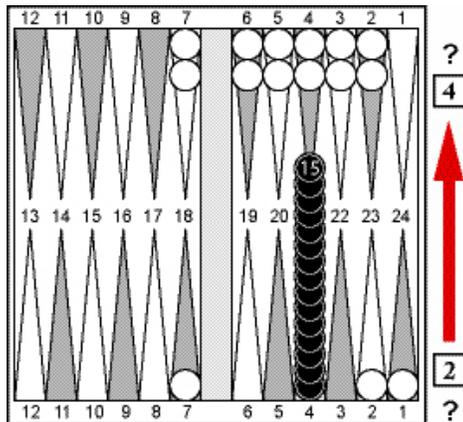
- A. No Double / Take
- B. Double / Take
- C. Double / Drop
- D. No Double / Beaver

9. Money game. Black on roll. What are the proper cube actions?



- A. No Redouble / Take
- B. Redouble / Take
- C. Redouble / Drop
- D. No Redouble / Beaver

10. Money game. Black on roll. What are the proper cube actions?



- A. No Redouble / Take
- B. Redouble / Take
- C. Redouble / Drop
- D. No Redouble / Beaver

ANSWERS

- | | |
|-------|------|
| 10. C | 5. A |
| 9. C | 4. D |
| 8. D | 3. B |
| 7. B | 2. B |
| 6. B | 1. A |

KEY

8–10 correct: You have proven your ability to analyze positions that you have never seen before.

5–7 correct: Still a very good effort considering how unusual these positions are.

0–4 correct: I am available for backgammon lessons. If you are interested, visit my site: www.simborgbackgammonlessons.com, or e-mail me: psimborg@sbcglobal.net Δ

STEEN & DAVIS WIN . . .

[Continued from page 1]

worked out well. Even with four checkers back, his blitzing threats were substantial enough to force John to pass.—*N.K.*

OTHER EVENTS

In the Advanced division, Jesse Eaton (MN) came from behind to edge Dujan Meekens (IL) 13–11. The Limited division was captured by long-time player Terry Weiss (IL) who bested newcomer Mihai Pop (IL).

The Advanced Jackpot was won by Mel Rappaport (NY) over Ken Tyszko (IL). Peter Kalba (IN) & Ray Foglerlund (CA) won the Doubles, Lynda Clay (CO) topped Prince Parlow (MI) in the Battle of the Sexes. Howard Markowitz won the Quickie, and Pig-Rolling (a Midwest Champs holdover) was “hogged” by Prince Barlow.

The tournament continued in the Midwest tradition, raising \$1200 for the Anti-Cruelty Society, \$500 of which was collected from a Taki-Board tournament won by Tim Mabee. Complete results: Δ

CENTRAL STATES INVITATIONAL

CHAMPIONSHIP (52): 1-Bob Steen (IL), 2-John O’Hagan (IN), 3/4-Faddoul Khoury (IL) / David Rubin (IL); 1C-Gary Bauer (NJ), 2C-Lucky Nelson (IL); 1LC-Mark Antranikian (CA). ADVANCED (42): 1-Jesse Eaton (MN), 2-Dujan Meekens (IL); 1C-Ken Tyszko (IL), 2C-Adrian Rios (IL); 1LC-Richard Stawowy (IL). LIMITED (20): 1-Terry Weiss (IL), 2-Mihai Pop (IL); 1C-Randy Pals (IN), 2C-Timothy Turner (FL); 1LC-Lyle Rubin (IL). GRAND CRYSTAL BEAVER XII (16): 1-Malcolm Davis (TX), 2-John O’Hagan (IN). ADVANCED JACKPOT (14): 1-Mel Rappaport (NY), 2-Ken Tyszko (IL). DOUBLES (16): 1-Ray Foglerlund (CA) & Peter Kalba (IN), 2-Bill Fady (IL) & Faddoul Khoury (IL). 9th BATTLE OF THE SEXES (32 Men & 8 Women): 1-Lynda Clay (CO), 2-Prince Barlow (MI). QUICKIE TOURNAMENT (64): 1-Howard Markowitz (IL), 2-Neil Kazaross (IL). PIG ROLLING: 1-Prince Barlow (MI). TAKI-RETRO BAKELITE BOARD FUNDRAISER (16): 1-Tim Mabee (IL), 2-Matt Reklaitis (MA).

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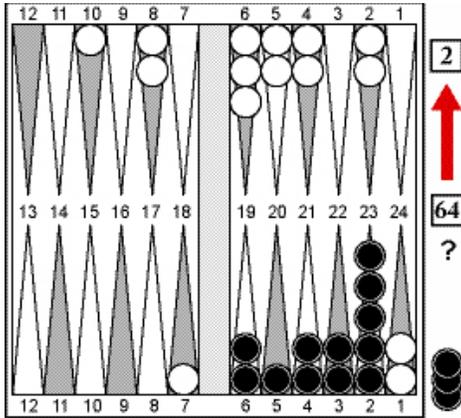
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**PROBLEM #352
ANALYZED**

by Kit Woolsey

White leads Black 7–6 to 11 points. Black on roll. **SHOULD BLACK DOUBLE?**



Any time you are considering turning the cube, which of course should be any time you are on roll and you have cube access, the first thing you should do is to mentally walk over to your opponent's side of the board and ask the question: If I had his position and were doubled, would I take? The answer to this question will clarify what you should be thinking about when you are considering doubling, and will often give you the right answer immediately.

There are three possible answers (not two) to the "Is it a take?" question:

- (a) Yes, I'm 100% sure it is a take.
- (b) No, I'm 100% sure it is a pass.
- (c) I'm not 100% sure.

If your answer is (a), you're 100% sure it's a take, then you must determine if you are good enough to double. This determination will be based on potential market-losers, volatility, how close to a pass the position is, and the match score.

If your answer is (b), you're 100% sure it's a pass, then you must determine if you're too good to double and should play on for a gammon. This determination will be based on your gammon chances, the danger of an immediate or future turn-around, and the match score.

If your answer is (c), you aren't 100% sure, then it is always correct to double unless you are ahead in the match and doubling will put you out or nearly put you out. In that case, the doubling decision can be quite complicated.

In Problem #352, the answer to the "Is it a take?" question is (b): 100% sure it's a pass. While White is likely to get another shot, she will still be an underdog to hit the shot; and hitting doesn't guarantee victory.

If White doesn't hit, Black has good gammon chances. This is definitely a pass. Thus, the question is whether or not Black should be playing on for the gammon.

Note that if Black does choose to play on, the cube will remain in the center, so both sides will have access to it. If White hits an early shot, she will be knocking on the doors of an efficient cube. She won't be quite there—she'll need to make her 3-point or get a shot at another checker first—but she'll be close.

Similarly, if Black takes several men off and White hits a late shot, it will be Black who will be knocking on the doors of an efficient cube. So, a fair simplifying approximation would be that if White hits a shot in the next roll or two, White wins; otherwise Black wins. This won't be 100% accurate, but it gives us a basis to work from.

How often does Black leave an immediate shot? We have to count them up. 1-5, 2-4, 2-6, 3-4, 3-5, 3-6, 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 5-6, 6-6. That's 20 out of 36. White hits these a little less than 1/3 of the time, for a net of about 6 out of 36. Of the remaining 30 out of 36, how often will White hit a shot on the following roll? Let's estimate she'll get a shot on the second roll 1/3 of the time

and hit slightly less than 1/3 of these, netting about 10% of 30 or 3 out of 36. So, I estimate White hits a shot in the next 2 rolls 25% of the time.

If White doesn't hit a shot, how often does Black win a gammon? That is not clear. White has plenty of crossovers to make.

On the other hand Black isn't going to be able to rip checkers off at will, since he will have to worry about playing safe which will cause considerable wastage. I'd guess that a little less than 2/3 of Black's wins will be gammons. Since we have Black winning 75% of the time, that comes to about 45% gammons.

Using these estimates, if Black plays on he loses the game 25% of the time and wins a gammon 45% of the time. That is a little worse than the 2-to-1 odds normally needed to justify playing on, since by playing on you are risking two points (from +1 to -1) in order to gain one point. Therefore, it appears that Black should cash.

Does the match score affect things here? Not really. It should be noted that winning one point gets Black to four-away while winning two points gets him to three-away. Since four-away puts him in the same immediate match-winning range that three-away does, the incremental gain from winning one point is a little greater than half the incremental gain from winning two points. Of course losing a point and allowing White to get to three-away is less serious than normal also. Thus, the match score probably doesn't affect this cube decision.

It should be noted that if some of my estimates are wrong that could swing the decision to a play-on, and of course some of my estimates could easily be wrong. At the table we don't have a bot by our side to give us the answers. We simply have to make the best estimates we can and live with them. The important thing is to follow the proper methodology so the estimates lead to a meaningful conclusion.—Kit Woolsey Δ

**TIM HOLLAND DIES AT 79
3-Time World Champ, Successful Author**

Tim Holland, an icon of backgammon's 1960s–1970s heyday, died 10 March of emphysema at his home in Palm Beach, Florida. He was 79.

After winning three consecutive World Championship titles (in 1967, 1968, and 1971), Mr. Holland authored the very popular *Beginning Backgammon* in 1973 followed by the *Better Backgammon* problem book in 1974. The books came out just as backgammon was taking off in the

United States.

In those days, Mr. Holland who lived in New York city, was considered a backgammon superstar in the genre of James Bond. We were fortunate enough to play and defeat him in the mid-1970s at a tournament at the Cavendish Club in Chicago.

Following the release of his two books, Holland never won a tournament of any significance again. He returned to bridge, his first game for the remainder of his life.

Tim Holland is survived by his fifth wife Nancy Zorn, a daughter Vanessa, and a grandchild Stephanie. Δ



Tim Holland at NY State Champs in 1977.

WINNER'S CIRCLE



NOV.-DEC. 2010

•**European Backgammon Tour 2009**... 1-Jürgen Orlowski (GER), 2-Frans Bergi (AUT), 3-Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (ISR)... Results provided by Chiva Tafazzoli.

•**New England Club Monthly** (Malden, MA; 13 Feb.)... OPEN (15): 1-Tom O'Riordan, 2-Eric Sulkala, 3/4-John Smidt / Matt Reklaitis; 1C-Herb Gurland, 2C-Anne Bidner.

•**Istavder 2nd Anniversary Championship** (Istanbul, Turkey; 26-28 Feb.)... MASTERS (64): 1-Jürgen Orlowski (Germany), 2-Dursun Çetin (Turkey), 3/4-Necati Doganaslan (Turkey) / Murat Nalbantoglu (Turkey); 1C-Chiva Tafazzoli (Iran/Germany), 2C-Osmin Girgin (Turkey); 1LC-Erhan Yenisen (Turkey). INTERMEDIATE (54): 1-Ilhan Koç (Turkey), 2-Çağlar Erdogan (Turkey), 3/4-Umut Sari (Turkey) / Refik Vural (Turkey); 1C-Gazi Çelen (Turkey), 2C-Ulvi Cangazi (Turkey); 1LC-Hisar Uyar (Turkey). BEGINNERS (25): 1-Serkan Yılmaz (Turkey), 2-Nizamettin Çirpici (Turkey), 3/4-Mürsel Ay (Turkey) / Gamze Demirkol (Turkey); 1C-Anil Ünlen (Turkey), 2C-Hülya Okta (Turkey); 1LC-Nurten Karaca (Turkey). DOUBLES (33 teams): 1-Murat Ates (Turkey) & Nedim Yardimci (Turkey), 2-Mustafa Altuntas (Turkey) & Sabri Büyüksoy (Turkey). SUPER JACKPOT (16): 1-A. Serif Rende (Turkey). ONE POINT TOURNAMENT #1 (64): 1-Hasan Yargan (Turkey). #2 (64): 1-Dursun Çetin (Turkey). #3 (64): 1-Ramazan Özkul (Turkey). FALAFEL'S PROFICIENCY COMPETITION: 1/2-Feza Diyarbekir (Turkey) / Mehmet Sirkeci (Turkey).

•**Indiana State Challenge Cup** (Indianapolis, IN; 27 Feb.)... Winner: Hoosier Backgammon Club (Jim Curtis, Sean Garber, Rose Sheedy, Scott Johnston, Scott Day, Brad Baker) over NW Indiana Club 14-4.

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 28 Feb.)... OPEN (14): 1-Boris Dekhtyar, 2-David Metz; 1C- Victor Ashkenazi (NJ). INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Drew Liebenthal (NJ), 2-Dennis Victor; 1C-Dan Mitlof.

•**Springfield Series #6** (Peoria, IL; 13 Mar.)... OPEN (25): 1-John Jennings, 2-Rob Farmer; 1C-Gerry Tansey, 2C-Scott Rudebeck; 1LC-Michael Flohr. Knarry Hold'em winner: Dan Eatherington.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 14 Mar.)... OPEN (8): 1-J.P. McGirr, 2-Bob How-ayeck... J.P. McGirr also won the 14 Feb. event.

•**Scottish Open** (Edinburgh, Scotland; 19-21 Mar.)... OPEN (33): 1-Stewart Pemberton, 2-Vaidas Novicenko, 3/4-Lawrence Powell / Ian Hesketh; 1C-Phil Tutchings, 2C-Neil Webb; 1LC-John Wright, 2LC-Mark Calderbank. BEGINNER (4): 1-Hazel Brown, 2-Derek Wilson. FRIDAY 500

(22): 1-Andy Darby, 2-Martin Barkwill. HAGGIS (16): 1-Arthur Wright. 1-PT. KNOCKOUT: 1-Arthur Wright. TEAM (13): 1-Richard Biddle. POKER (14): 1-Martin Barkwill, 2-Vicki Pemberton.

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 21 Mar.)... OPEN (11): 1-Victor Ashkenazi (NJ), 2-Peter Kastarus (NJ); 1C-Michael Battaglia (NJ). INTERMEDIATE (2): 1-Lee Fine. BEGINNER (2): 1-John Johnson... Director Antoinette-Marie Williams informs us that Pair-O-Dice play has relocated to the David Rubenstein Atrium at Lincoln Center.

•**27th Fleet Underwood Memorial** (Flint, MI; 21 Mar.)... OPEN (32): 1-Frank Talbot, 2-Sal Chehayeb, 3/4-Bill Calton / Rick Todd, 5/6-Joerg Picard / Jim Airgood. INTERMEDIATE (32): 1-Eric Musser, 2-Dmitriy Obukhov, 3/4-Stewart Kelman / Steven Sherbel, 5/6-Lorenzo Morales / Gary Tong. NOVICE (9): 1-Fran Miller (OH), 2-Ardash Apigian, 3-Linda Hoggatt. Δ

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Want a free year of CHICAGO POINT? Simply find trade mark information for these "Backgammon Matches." A precursor to the doubling cube, info on these matches could help pinpoint when doubling commenced. Send your findings to us by 31 May. Best submission will receive the free subscription.

AMALGAMATION

Visiting the Bar Point Club in March: **Mark Murray** (OH), **Glen Martells** (MI)... **Ed King** (OH) remains under hospice care, but he has started reading a 922 page book, so that is a good sign. Notes can be sent to Ed c/o melissaking@hotmail.com... Props to Chicagoans **David Rockwell & Neil Kazaross**. The "eXtreme gammon" BG program is now using the new Rockwell-Kazaross match equity table for play analysis. For more info, go to simborgbackgammonlessons.com and search: "Rockwell-Kazaross"... Best wished to **Dick Nelson** who retired as Pub Club co-director... In celebration of the Persian New Year, Northern Virginia Club director **Bill Pow** gave a short presentation on "How to play backgammon" at the Freer & Sackler Galleries in Washington DC on 7 March... Congrats to **Amanda & Dana Nazarian** (CA) on the 5 March birth of their son **Matteo Robert Werlang Nazarian**. After all the stress, Dana needed a bottle more than his son!...



Dana Nazarian with newborn son Matteo. It was a strenuous day for dad.

Kim & Brian Barber (NY) are new parents as well, welcoming **Roxanne Eliana Barber** into the world 23 January... We're hobbling around with a bad food injured following normal exercise. Hopefully everything will be OK for our trip to the US Back-

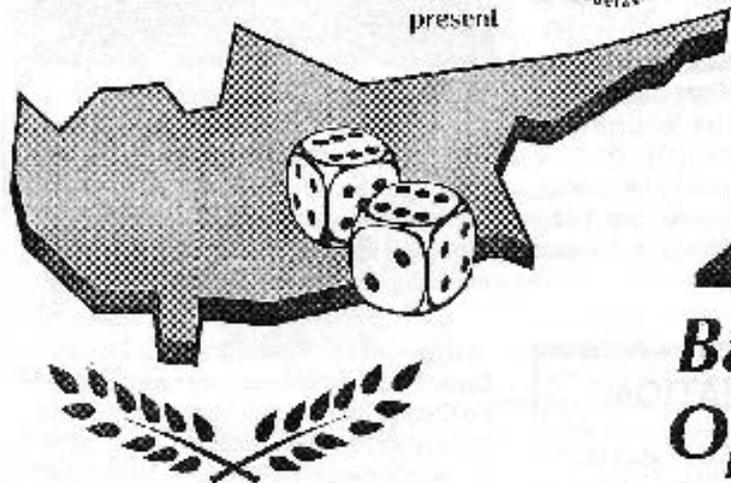
gammon Open in San Francisco 13-16 May... **Carter Mattig** and **Phil Simborg** have disbanded the Chicago Backgammon Association. The shift to Thursday play at the Parthenon did not generate the attendance as hoped for... British author **Chris Bray**'s newest backgammon book *Wind Assisted* is now available. To order go to lulu.com and search "Wind Assisted." Look for a review in the May POINT... Chicago to Atlanta: **Julius High**... We recently learned of the passing of our friend **Hercules Robinson**, the Baron of Culcreuch on 21 December 2009. He was 90. From the late 1980s until 1994, "Herky" and wife **Bridget** directed the Championship of Great Britain on the Isle of Man, their home country. In the 1990s, they also ran major events in Spain and Greece. Thanks for the memories, Bridget... Chicago Open (28-31 May) co-director **Rory Pascar** informs us the Holiday Inn-O'Hare had a computer glitch and altered the original online booking code. If you book a room online, use "BGC"... Congrats to **Clint Guttman**, director of the newly-formed Portland (Oregon) Backgammon Club. The premiere monthly tourney on 2 April drew an impressive 21 players. For more info, e-mail Clint at: cguttman@pdx.edu... Check out **Phil Simborg**'s in-depth interview with CHICAGO POINT columnist **Danny Kleinman** at his site simborgbackgammonlessons.com... At this year's Noric Open, the Danish all-stars (**Mads Andersen, Gus Hansen, Morton Holm, Pia Jeppesen, Thomas Kristensen, Sander Lylloff, Marc Olsen, and Lars Trabolt**) have defeated a group of world experts (**Fernando Braconi** (ITA), **Matt Cohn-Geier** (USA), **Peter Heitmüller** (GER), **Michihito Kageyama** (JPN), **Masayuki Mochizuki** (JPN), **Falafel Natanzon** (ISR), **Stick Rice** (USA) and **Katja Spillum** (NOR)) in a long exhibition event with various events. No question that Denmark is a hotbed of backgammon talent... Would you like to see backgammon adapt some form of touchmove? Express your opinion in the latest chicagopoint.com poll today. Δ

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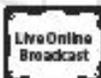
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