

2011 central states invitational

BACKGAMMON DRESSES UP

Kazaross over CJC in Throwback tournament. Millman wins Beaver

Proving dress codes are not just a thing of the past, Ms. Amy Trudeau and Mr. Bill Davis requested minimal dress standards at their 2011 Central States Invitational. Over 100 players accepted them. In fact nearly 75% of the male participants went above and beyond the collared shirt request, instead wearing a dress shirt and tie. (No doubt the \$700 added money to be split amongst divisional winners sporting said attire was a fashion incentive.)

We had three Europeans in attendance: Mr. Tom Duggan and Ms. Dorothy Lee (England), and Mr. Tobias Hellweg (Germany). Mr. Duggan and Ms. Lee were awarded Directors' Trophies for their outstanding wardrobes. Ms. Lee had three new outfits, and Mr. Duggan changed into formal wear at 6:00 p.m. each evening.



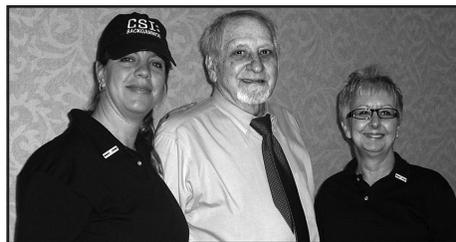
Best dressed Ms. Dorothy Lee (England) and Atlanta's Mr. Larry Taylor.



Mr. Steve Blanchard now ... and in 1975 when he played 83 straight hours to win the Chicago Backgammon Marathon and enter the Guinness Book of World Records.

Including Mr. Duggan, at least three men including Mr. Rory Pascar and our Auctioneer Mr. Peter Kalba wore tuxedos. And the women (including Ms. Jena Jennings and Ms. Nora Luna Righter) also dressed with style. Check out lots of pix online at chicagopoint.com/csireport.html

The affair doubled as a fundraiser for the Anti-Cruelty Society. This year, we managed to raise \$2000 bringing our MBC/CSI all-time donations to \$61,200. Special thanks to Mr. Mike Weinberger (LA), Mr. Arnold Zousmer (CA), Mr. Tom Walthes (IL), and Mr. David Cramer (IL) for their continued support.

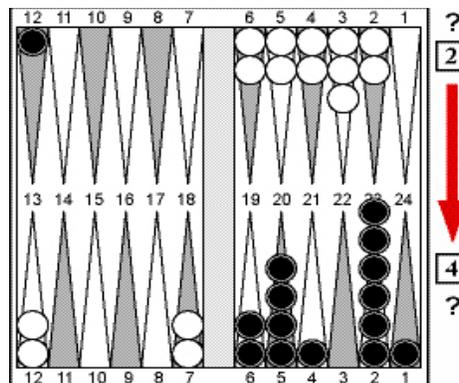


Ms. Amy Trudeau (L) and Ms. Mary Ann Meese flank Mr. Marv Arnol (WI).

The Championship field saw two crowd favorites, backgammon giant Mr. Neil Kazaross (IL), and backgammon queen Ms. Carol Joy Cole (MI) reach the 15 point finals. It was an exciting match with Neil jumping out to a 3-0 lead only to watch it shift to a 3-8 deficit.

Neil rallied to come within one point. Then in game 12, Neil, having doubled earlier, faced a very nasty CJC redouble:

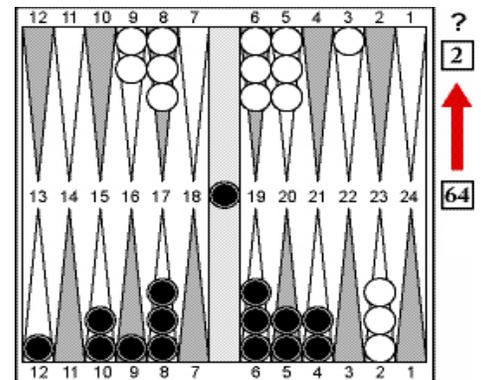
CSI 15 point finals. Mr. Neil Kazaross (Black) trails Ms. Carol Joy Cole 7-8. White on roll. **RECUBE ACTIONS?**



Carol was quick to flip over this recube. But even though the recube is a blunder, Neil was not so quick to take. There is no doubt that based only on skill, CJC is way outmatched by the A-Neil-lator. What better way to garner four quick points than pushing over a recube when you have 24 out of 36 ways to hit?

Neil did take and ended up on the bar, eventually losing four points. But he would battle back to trail 12-13 before offering a double in the following strong position—a position that Carol should have dropped:

CSI 15 point finals. Mr. Neil Kazaross (Black) trails Ms. Carol Joy Cole 12-13. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTIONS?**



Championship winner Mr. Neil Kazaross (L) with runner-up Ms. Carol Joy Cole.



Mr. Herb Roman (in the suitcoat) and Mr. Ray Fogelrund review a position.

[Continued on page 8]

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Bill Davis

3940 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue #504
Chicago, IL 60659-3155

Tel: 773/583-6464 ♦ Fax: (E-mail PDF file)

E-mail: bg@chicagopoint.com

www.chicagopoint.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Carol Joy Cole (MI)	Danny Kleinman (CA)
Mary Hickey (OH)	John O'Hagan (IN)
Jake Jacobs (IL)	Steve Sax (CA)
Duane Jensen (MN)	Phil Simborg (IL)
Neil Kazaross (IL)	Kit Woolsey (CA)

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504
Chicago, IL 60659-3155

E-mail: letters@chicagopoint.com

CSI FEEDBACK

I enjoyed your CSI pictures online at chicagopoint.com/csireport.html. There are those from our club who really looked good dressed up: Rory Pascar, Oleg Raygorodsky, Peter Kalba, Tak Morioka, and Phil Simborg. Great idea for you and Amy Trudeau to hold a "dress-up" tournament. Looks like the players really enjoyed it! It reminded me of Lincoln Park games 35 years ago.—*Mike Wolock, Chicago, Illinois*

I loved the CSI pictures. Everyone looked so nice. See it can be done!—*Sue Rodenkirk, Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Great CSI pix. Congratulations to you and Amy on a classy event!—*Russell Sands, Boca Raton, Florida*

I love the dress code at the Central States Invitational. It doesn't appear that people

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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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.

Apr 9	New England Club Monthly, Docksie Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Apr 9*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Apr 9*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
Apr 9*	Tampa Bay Club Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/786-9133
Apr 10	Cincinnati Club Monthly Tournament, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Apr 10	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Apr 10*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly, Lincoln Center Atrium, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Apr 10	Portland Club Monthly, Spring Creek Coffee House, Milwaukie, Oregon	503/805-1218
Apr 12	Arizona Club Monthly, Teakwoods Tavern & Grill, Phoenix, Arizona	602/762-2288
Apr 13-17	27th Nevada State Tournament, Bally's Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Apr 17	Bellingham Club Monthly, Pacific Martial Arts, Bellingham, Washington	360/733-6173
Apr 21*	3rd Thursday Bonus (Chicago Open), Sharky's Bar, Burton, Michigan	810/232-9731
Apr 23*	Backgammon By the Bay, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/261-4583
Apr 29-May 1	Atlanta Spring Classic, Crowne Plaza Ravinia, Atlanta, Georgia	770/633-0001
May 1*	Cincinnati Club Monthly Tournament, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
May 1*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Brubaker's Pub, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
May 4*	Charlotte Club Monthly, Dilworth Grille, Charlotte, North Carolina	704/965-3573
May 7*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
May 8*	Portland Club Monthly, Spring Creek Coffee House, Milwaukie, Oregon	503/805-1218
May 10*	Arizona Club Monthly, Teakwoods Tavern & Grill, Phoenix, Arizona	602/762-2288
May 12-15	First Golden Gate Open, Embassy Suites, South San Francisco, California	304/685-3214
May 14-15*	Ohio Valley Challenge Cup, Wingate by Wyndham, Indianapolis, Indiana	513/807-6926
May 26-30	31st Chicago Open/1st Giants Invitational, Holiday Inn O'Hare, Rosemont, IL	617/699-9100
Jun 5	Chicago Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Ruby Tuesday, Skokie, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jun 9-12	Los Angeles Open/1st USBGF Invitational, Four Points LAX, Los Angeles, CA	818/901-0464
Jun 30*	Michigan Summer Warm-Up, Sheraton Novi Hotel, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 1-4	Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Novi Hotel, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 22-24*	16th Minnesota Open, Marriott Hotel, Bloomington, Minnesota	612/718-2613
Aug 21-23*	Florida Championship, Marriott North, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Sep 2-5*	Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson, Madison, Wisconsin	608/354-7573
Sep 23-25*	Colorado State Championships, Hilton Garden Inn Airport, Aurora, Colorado	303/916-5170
Oct 14-16*	Illinois State Championships, Grand Hotel, Peoria, Illinois	847/677-6852
Nov 9-13*	Las Vegas Open, Imperial Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238

OUTSIDE USA

Apr 8-10	British Open, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Apr 8-10	9th Torneo Città di Cavalese, Hotel Bellavista, Cavalese, Italy	393283-380725
Apr 15-17	TBT: 3rd Antalya Open/WBF-TR, Sealife Resort, Antalya, Turkey	905322-329228
Apr 21-25	NBT: 23rd Nordic Open, Scandic Hotel, Copenhagen, Denmark	4531-392791
Apr 27-May 1	23rd WBF-European Championship & 10th Velden Open, Velden, Austria	390331-923537
Apr 27-May 1	Play65/EBGT: European Pro Championships & Doubles, Lefkosa, Cyprus	491715-422222
May 3-5	17th Ouisen Tournament (Tokyo Open), Bunkyo Civic Center, Tokyo, Japan	817055-775016
May 6-8	County Cups Trophy, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
May 6-8	11th Torneo Città di Jesolo, Hotel Atlantico, Jesolo Lido, Italy	393477-938686
May 14-15	CBT: 2nd Dubrovnik Open, Hotel Petka, Dubrovnik, Croatia	385989-772316
May 14-15*	New South Wales Open, Ryde Ex-Services Club, Ryde, NSW, Australia	61405-373225
May 20-22	TBT: 2nd Mediterranean Open/WBF-TR, Sealife Resort, Antalya, Turkey	905332-352555
May 20-22*	Blackpool Imperial Cup, Imperial Hotel, Blackpool, England	447931-553829
May 28-29	37th Annual Finnish Open, Oulun Eden Hotel, Oulu, Finland	358466-153751
May 28-29	Austrian Masters Grand Finale, Montesino, Vienna, Austria	436642-127412
May 28-29*	Rotterdam Open, Café oKay, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	316535-79164
Jun 3-5	BBT: English Open, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Jun 3-5*	NBT: 16th Norway Open, Anker Hotel, Oslo, Norway	4797-513941
Jun 10-13	16th Kaiserbrunnen-Cup, Hotel Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	497152-3593466
Jun 10-13*	Funen Open Pentecost Cup, Hotel Faaborg Fjord, Faaborg, Denmark	4520-116201
Jun 15-19	Play65/EBGT: 6th Portuguese Open, Hotel Riviera, Carcavelos, Portugal	491715-422222
Jun 18-19	TBT: 18th Istanbul Championship/WBF-TR, Armada Hotel, Turkey	905322-329228
Jun 25-26*	CBT: Bol Open, Elaphusa Blueson Hotel, Bol (Brac), Croatia	385989-736414
Jul 1-3*	BIBA World Championship, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, England	441522-888676
Jul 6-10*	2nd Menton Open, Casino Barrière de Menton, Menton, France	390331-923537
Jul 15-23*	36th World Championship & Monte Carlo Open, Fairmont Hotel, Monaco USA: 702/218-8238	
Jul 30-31*	BBT: 16th Liverpool Open, Liverpool Bridge Club, Liverpool, England	447931-553829
Jul 30-31*	TBT: 6th Kdz. Eregli Championship/WBF-TR, Romantique Café, Turkey	905322-329228

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

minded getting dressed up. *Finally!* I am so disappointed when we go to a nice restaurant and we're dressed up and I see people in blue jeans and logo t-shirts. Nice manners and dressing up have gone out the window . . . but at least they're back at the CSI! —*Gayle Wolf, Troy, Michigan*

Wow! Are those really backgammon players? That's the best looking tournament group I've seen in years! Congratulations—I didn't think it was possible. Good job. And congratulations on another

successful tournament. Sorry I missed it.—*Lynn Ehrlich, director, New York Metro Open*

Thanks for a great tourney. I also loved the little side things like the "Liar's Dice" charity game which kept us poor performers busy.—*Eric Hiner, Carver, Minnesota*

Congratulations on the success of your CSI dress code event. Kathleen (Davis) and I think it was a great idea. We were very disappointed that it didn't work out for us to attend this year. We hope you do it again next year and that we'll be able to attend. We also hope the idea catches on with other directors.—*Eric Barr, Kansas City, Missouri*

The CSI dress code tradition will continue March 9–11, 2012.—Ed.

WHAT HAPPENS TO PIGS?

In response to Leslie Lockett's question last month regarding a possible backgammon expression referring to pigs, I believe the phrase originated in stock market discussions: "Bulls make money, Bears make money, Pigs get slaughtered."—*Arnold Zousmer, Rancho Santa Fe, California*

THREE DICE RULING

I had an interesting ruling to make at our club last night. Player A won the opening roll and made his move. Player B then picked up both his die and Player A's die and rolled out three dice from his cup. I was called to make a ruling. Player A contended that because Player B made an illegal roll, he should lose his turn. Player B countered that it was an honest mistake and he should be able to reroll using two dice. Although there is nothing specifically covering this in the US Rules, my judgment was in favor of Player B allowing him to reroll using two dice.

How would you rule in the above situation?—*Bill Pow, director, Northern Virginia Backgammon Club*

US Rule 4.2 states that "Both dice must come to rest flat on the playing surface to the right of the bar; otherwise they are "cocked" and must be rerolled."

In your situation, not "both," but three dice have been cast. Therefore, we would rule the dice "cocked," require a dice mix, and have Player B reroll using two dice.—Ed.

[Continued on page 4]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2011

Compiled through 27 Mar. 2011 after 6 tournaments
(Upcoming events: Nevada, Atlanta, Golden Gate, Chicago)



Ray Fogerlund	35.91	Neal Weiner	4.46	Brandon Macklin	3.06	Lyle Rubin	1.13
Neil Kazaross	17.33	Brian Scorben	4.46	Kathleen Davis	2.67	Mike Valentino	1.13
Bill Robertie	15.70	Frank DiMaggio	4.33	Bob Goldstein	2.67	Gerard Jendras	1.12
Bob Koca	14.22	Petko Kostadinov	4.33	Richie Adams	2.23	Ben Fleurant	1.12
Dennis Culpepper	12.80	Tak Morioka	4.33	Bob Hickey	2.23	Early Gardner	1.06
Mary Hickey	12.80	Eden Windish	4.10	Alex Gerding	2.23	Janet Genter	1.06
John O'Hagan	12.44	Daniel Barabas	4.10	Erik Sawyer	2.11	Brandy Thorward	1.05
Ben Friesen	10.86	Larry Taylor	3.93	Roman Abramovsky	2.10	Rochelle Hasson	1.05
Stewart Pemberton	10.59	Kit Woolsey	3.93	Mike Vasilatos	2.05	Irina Litzenberger	1.05
Greg Merriman	10.55	Mike Senkiewicz	3.93	Robert Lessard	2.05	Kathy Weiner	1.05
Carol Joy Cole	8.67	Harvey Gillis	3.93	Omar Dessouky	1.96	Homer Hector	0.90
Allen Tish	8.67	Nan Feiber	3.83	Bill Riles	1.96	Susan Randall	0.90
Rachel Rhodes	7.85	Oleg Raygorodsky	3.83	Brent Cohen	1.96	Alex Gerding	0.83
David Shadi	7.85	Murray Bryntesen	3.60	Cliff Mayoh	1.92	Keith Gershenson	0.83
Ramez Abi-Akar	7.67	Gregg Cattanaach	3.56	Mike Minkovski	1.92	Sybil Sha	0.67
Ed O'Laughlin	7.11	Garry Kallos	3.33	Tom Duggan	1.92	Scott Carlson	0.56
Peggy Neubig	6.67	Robert Sisselman	3.33	Lucas Bauer	1.92	Donna Davenport	0.56
Bill Calton	6.40	Bill Davis	3.20	Juan Rospigliosi	1.80	Charlene Britton	0.56
Alfred Mamlet	6.40	Gary Fries	3.20	Sandra Sha	1.80	Elvira Greci	0.53
Mike Corbett	6.40	Mark Gordon	3.20	Kyle Wittles	1.67	Mike Wasson	0.53
Lee Genud	6.40	Grant Schneider	3.20	Debra Oles Campbell	1.67	Joe Fitzpatrick	0.53
David Rubin	6.22	Mario Sequeira	3.20	Larry Shiller	1.67	Theres Delaney	0.53
Jonathan Leusden	5.33	Dmitriy Obukhov	3.11	Josh Racko	1.33	Jenna Longman	0.53
						Frank Kovarick	0.33



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2011 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 3 APR.

Rory Pascar	14.96	Linda Rockwell	3.60	Dujuan Meekins	1.68	Matt Cohn-Geier	0.88
Carter Mattig	11.32	Howard Markowitz	3.44	Wendy Kaplan	1.60	Leslie Lockett	0.88
David Rockwell	7.92	Peter Kalba	3.36	Serge Bondar	1.44	Terry Weiss	0.72
Herb Roman	7.12	Mike Wolock	3.32	Wayne Wiest	1.44	Mike Peters	0.68
Bob Steen	5.92	Larry Goldstein	3.28	Nora Luna Righter	1.44	Kevin Berg	0.68
Lucky Nelson	5.76	Mike Sutton	2.88	Bob Zavoral	1.36	Amy Trudeau	0.64
Bill Davis	5.28	Adrian Rios	2.80	Allen Tish	1.36	Les Moshinsky	0.56
Christopher Shanava	5.12	Steve Klesker	2.68	Alice Kay	1.28	Gary Kay	0.56
Bill Bartholomay	5.04	Bill Keefe	2.64	Mitch Pomper	1.12	Beth Whitney	0.48
Tobias Hellwag	4.76	Tim Mabee	2.56	Eric Johnson	1.04	Jerry Brooks	0.48
Phil Simborg	3.88	Russ Lyutik	1.92	Mike Minkovski	0.96	Dave Settles	0.48
David Rubin	3.76	Alex Owen	1.88	Mark Murray	0.96	Jeff Fischer	0.32
Tak Morioka	3.76	Joann Feinstein	1.72	Roger Hickman	0.92		

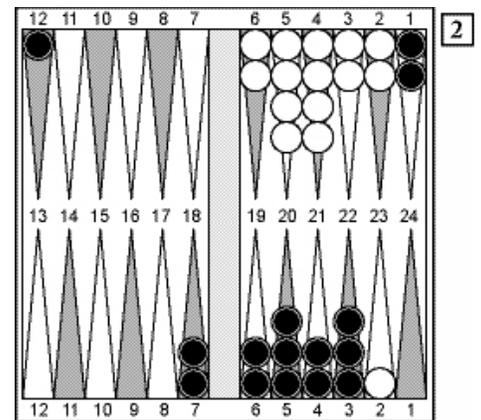
RORY PASCAR had a "Player of the Month" March winning 5.20 points. Placing second was Lucky Nelson with 3.84 points. Carter Mattig finished third earning 3.80 points.

your move

PROBLEM #363

to be analyzed by Steve Sax

9-point match. Black leads White 5 to 4. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-5.**



THE UNAIDED EYE



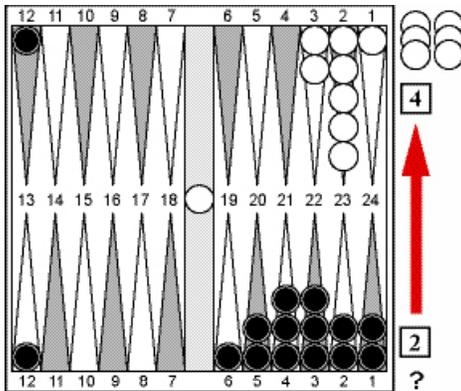
© 2011 by Danny Kleinman

IS THE "COVER THREAT" ENOUGH TO REDOUBLE?

Dear Danny: I'll be the first to admit that my doubling skills are suspect. I've been playing for only about two years, and I've been told that it can take a decade or more to get a handle on this very difficult part of the game.

I faced the following position in a seven point match last night.

7 point match tied at 3-3. Black on roll.
SHOULD BLACK RECUBE?



I really don't know how to go about solving this one. Any suggestions?—*Double Trouble*

DEAR TROUBLE: You might start by asking yourself whether you can *lose your market* if you don't redouble now. At this score, redouble and a take puts the match on the line, so you can expect your opponent to be conservative in taking. If you cover your slotted 6-point, he should pass, so yes, you can lose your market and are a 20-to-16 favorite to do so.

Next, you might ask yourself what will happen if you don't cover the 6-point?

For two reasons, you should want to keep your 6-point slotted. First, closing your opponent out provides your main chance to win. Second, if your opponent enters and hits, the blot on his 1-point will often offer return shots, letting you regain winning chances.

At other scores, and in money play, you should be reluctant to redouble, but note that here turning the cube to 4 kills the fluke gammons that are possible if your opponent hits your blot on the 6-point and one or two other blots.

You are a big favorite to win the game and a clear favorite to lose your market. That justifies redoubling.—*Yours, Danny*

eXtreme Gammon Rollout

A 100,000 game rollout using eXtreme Gammon yields the following results:

Winning Chances ND (click for D/T)

● 61.52% (G:0.00% B:0.00%)

○ 38.48% (G:2.16% B:0.09%)

Cubeless Equity



Cubefull Equities:

🎲 No redouble +0.735

Redouble/Take +0.713 (-0.022)

Redouble/Drop +1.000 (+0.265)

Best Choice: No redouble/Take

Danny Responds

Oops, I'm wrong again, at least according

LETTERS...

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'LEGAL MOVES' FEEDBACK

I'm on your side with regard to "legal moves." Suppose both players agree at the start to play legal moves and there comes a play where Player A makes an unintentional illegal move which Player B does not notice and rolls his dice.

Now suppose player A then says, "Wait, I just realized my prior move was illegal." Does he still get to play it over since Player B had agreed to play "legal moves"?

Player A will think that B purposely allowed an illegal move favoring himself. Player B would have to prove he meant no harm and was just not paying close attention on that move. Does B reroll after A replays legally or does an illegal move stand in that case?—*Mel Leifer, Germantown, Maryland*

Your example points out that playing "legal moves" can also cause bad and suspicious feelings between players.—*Ed.*

Regarding your legal moves article, I don't think the seeing of the dice or the physical moving of the checkers is really what the game should be about, and so I don't think misreading the dice or clumsily putting your own checker on the bar are mistakes that should be punished within the rules. Therefore, I don't think your comparison to double-hitting the ball in golf is valid. In

to the reported rollout results. I must admit that these results mystify me. Surely the numbers do not represent chances of winning the match, as a redouble and pass leave you slightly better than a 2-to-1 favorite but not a lock.

And yet, upon reflection, maybe it is better to withhold the cube for one more turn, for rollout results do not reflect the chances of human error.

Suppose you are playing against an opponent who thinks he can take a redouble after you close him out (as he might with six men off in money play). Then you can wait until you do so. However, if there is any chance that he might pass a redouble now, a truly gross error, you should surely turn the cube.—*DK*

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

golf, that's what the game is: hitting the ball.

Would you allow a quadriplegic to enter one of your tournaments? He wouldn't be able to move the checkers at all. What about a blind person? He can't read the dice at all.

No other board games that I know of has backgammon's rule. If you move a piece to the wrong place in chess, there's no question that you have to take back the move and play the piece to somewhere it is allowed to go.

I think Joe Russell's point about the sociability of the legal moves rule is right on. Your position on legal moves seems to fly in the face of your emphasis on BG as a social game.—*Adam Bennett, Madison, Wisconsin*

Danny Kleinman responds: "Adam isn't telling the entire story in tournament chess (which is always played with clocks). First, it is possible that nobody draws attention to the illegal move; this can occur in two ways: (1) nobody notices the illegality; (2) one of the players notices but does not say anything about it. Of course, nobody but a mind-reader can tell whether (1) or (2) has occurred. Second, if discovered, an illegal move incurs a penalty (2 minutes on the clock), and a third illegal move in a game results in a forfeit to the opponent."—DK

I enjoyed, as always, reading your latest POINT newsletter. The cover article about "Legal Moves" was really well done with

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LETTERS...

[Continued from page 4]

both sides being presented appropriately.

I just reread our 2009 US Backgammon Tournament Rules and Procedures (as I do periodically), particularly searching for the phrase “Players may not agree to change any of the rules without getting permission from the director” (or something similar to that), but I do not see it in our current version. I’m sure that at one time, we did include such a statement—or am I having a “senior moment”?

I will look through my files to see exactly what it used to say. When I read your article, I was thinking that that this “missing statement” would *not allow* players to abrogate the official rules, and therefore invalidate their agreed-upon “Legal Moves” rule.

Do you recall such a statement?—*Patrick Gibson, director, Gammon Associates*

The following rule was considered for US Rules acceptance in 2001 but was never approved for inclusion.

1.8 CHEATING AND COLLUSION.

Cheating, and collusion among players and spectators, shall result in the forfeit of all matches and claims on the prize pools for those involved, and their barring from future tournaments.

During discussion, Danny Kleinman judged this rule to be “unnecessary, unclear, and unfair,” going on to explain that different situations call for different penalties, best determined by an “intelligent, experienced and objective director.”

The current British Isles Backgammon Association (BIBA) rules state that collusion is a serious offense that must be reported to a tourney official:

6.2 TESTIMONY. Spectators are required to report any suspected cheating, collusion or faulty equipment directly to a tournament official and not to the players involved.

So does this mean that BIBA officials consider playing “Legal Moves” an illegal form of collusion? What say you, Michael Crane?—Ed. Δ

BACKGAMMON RESPECT THE GAME

Show your pride in Backgammon. Buy this beautiful Cloisonné Pin. \$3 postage paid. Send US funds to our mailing address or PayPal funds to bg@chicagopoint.com

BACKGAMMON LIMERICKS



Wikipedia defines the limerick as “a kind of a witty, humorous, or nonsense poem, especially one in five-line . . . meter with a strict rhyme scheme (aabba), which intends to be witty or humorous, and is sometimes obscene with humorous intent.”

Below are nine backgammon limericks we have collected over the years. Should you have one to add to our “Backgammon Limerick” collection, send or email it to Chicago Point.—Ed.

As the captain looked over the rubble.
His team knew that they were in trouble.
He stumbled and fumbled, 
The cube really tumbled,
And the box quickly scooped up the double.—*Mark Richardson*

There was a young stripper named Star,
Whose club act was well below par.
In her backgammon game 
It was sadly the same,
She did nothing but dance on the bar.
—*Bill Davis*

Backgammon Bob is so droll,
When he caught Steve misplaying his roll,
Bob said, “Give me a break!
Steve, correct your mistake,
Or I’ll impale you upon a sharp pole!” —
Duane Jensen 

There was an accountant named Smith,
Whose backgammon skill was a myth.
As her first match began
She put dice in a can,
And “juggled the numbers” forthwith.
—*Mark King*

A brazen young wench, Antoinette,
Invaded an all-male chouette. 
She stripped to her socks,
And cried, “Who wants the box?”
They haven’t stopped arguing yet! —
Marty Storer

There was a director named Jill,
Who had too large a bracket to fill.
She gave so many byes
That three “byes” shared first prize,
And the second prize went to a shill! —
Danny Kleinman 

In the boy’s chou, a girl Doralynn,
Needed only one big set to win.
She leaned over the checkers,
Exposing her twekkers,
And purred, “Will these do?” with a grin.
—*Bill Davis* 

A backgammon baby named Owen,
Had a face that just never stopped glowin.’
He would look straight at you,
And say “Gaa-gaa, goo-goo,”
While dub sixes and fives he was
throwin.’—*Mark King* 

A gamer named Theodore Cleaver,
Played backgammon against a live beaver.
Cleaver offered a double,
But he still was in trouble,
So the beaver then “beavered” the
Beaver!—*Bill Davis Δ* 



ILLINOIS ACTION



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

Tuesday, 6:30 P.M. at Ruby
Tuesday, 5203 Old Orchard
Road, Skokie. 847/967-8292.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON
at at Ruby Tuesday, 5203
Old Orchard Road, Skokie.
847/967-8292.

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. Wash-
bash 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).

THE BEAROFF PROJECT

By Duane Jensen

It's time to push my rocking chair onto the front porch and reminisce about a few of my past loves. My first was *Expert Backgammon*. No man can ever forget the novelty and excitement of his first. *Expert Backgammon* could do things I'd never experienced before like position rollouts. She was talented, but had her flaws. I was hoping something better would come along.

My second love was *Jellyfish*. She had the cutest name and she was so small I could carry the program disk in my shirt pocket.

My third was *Snowie*. Now there was one expensive lady who only Charlie Sheen could afford. She was worth every penny because she had the most attractive interface, and she could put out, roll out, and print out.

The fourth had an unpronounceable name, *GNUBG*. She was plain in appearance, but she could do tricks the other programs never dreamed of.

My newest conquest is *eXtreme Gammon*, a maiden still developing, and still open to new ideas and suggestions.

THE EARLY 1980s

Today we have many backgammon resources including books and sophisticated backgammon programs. This was not the case thirty years ago. There were many books, but no backgammon software. A few people were using computers to study backgammon at that time. Across the country a number of people independently wrote programs that generated all the bearoff equities. A group of Twin Cities backgammon players created such a bearoff program in the early 1980s.

Robert Erin Weiss and Kevin Leialoha Ahtou were friends in high school. They lived in the Twin Cities suburbs and were bright students who carpooled to chess tournaments. They joined the Twin Cities Backgammon Club in their college days. Before Rob's final year in college at the University of Minnesota, his roommate Kevin suggested that Rob should concentrate on probability and statistics in his senior year. Rob took Kevin's advice and that choice led Rob to his career as Professor of Biostatistics at UCLA. While at the University of Minnesota, Rob and two other friends took on the challenge of computing all the bearoff positions.

As Rob tells it, "I was involved in a project that solved all the backgammon bear off positions. Brad Johnson of the University of Minnesota wrote the program. Robert Schachter funded the effort and was the instigator. I possibly hooked the two up and maybe as a kibitzer on the recursive algorithm, though

even that's probably overselling myself.

"It cost \$500 of supercomputer time to do all the calculations. The program didn't report optimal moves; rather for each position it calculated the probability distribution of the number of rolls to fully bear off all the men. Schachter could then calculate odds of winning for any two competing bearoff positions."

Brad Johnson described himself as a minor league backgammon player. He played socially at The Valli, a 24-hour restaurant and hangout in Dinkytown next to the University of Minnesota. The son of UM Physics professor Walter Johnson, Brad graduated with a degree in mathematics in 1981 and while in grad school, worked as a teaching assistant in the School of Statistics and as a research assistant at the UM Computer Center.

Brad said of the bearoff project, "The bearoff algorithm was not difficult to write. I think the only part that required any cleverness was the hash function that converts back and forth between bearoff positions and linear computer addresses. The rest was just turning the crank."

COMPUTER TIME: \$1/SECOND

The bearoff program was run on the UM Cray supercomputer. It only took a few minutes and that was good because Cray time sold for \$1 a second. Brad Johnson recalls, "I applied for a commercial account on the U of M Cray. Now this was 1984, 'The Day After,' a nuclear holocaust movie, had come out the year before, and it was still some years before the Cold War was understood to be over.

I got a phone call from the director of the computer center who needed to know exactly what I was up to; I gathered that he had to keep track of everything that was run on the Cray. I said that I was working on a dynamic programming problem. When he wanted more detail, I said that it involved the backgammon endgame. He laughed and said that he'd put down 'Dynamic Programming Problem.' It was determined that the bearoff program was not a threat to national security and it was allowed to proceed."

THE PROFOUND BOB SCHACHTER

The third participant in the project was Bob Schachter, a man who played chess well, who played bridge even better, whose best game was probably Go, and locally is the best backgammon player who no longer plays the game.

Bob was a man of contrasts. He would carry around a bag of healthy food to snack on including apples, oranges, and even raw yams. Then in an instant, he might get hungry for a chocolate sundae topped with whipped cream.

Bob could be seen cruising around in an old Jaguar, but usually he would zip through downtown Minneapolis on his bicycle. His mind was mathematical and organized, but his billfold was a different story. He rarely

carried one. He would reach into his pocket and pull out a lump of money which, when freed, would expand and unfold like a giant chrysanthemum head.

For years Bob spent much of his time playing games and hanging out. He had not chosen a career or a life partner. My wife Kimber recalls a date she had with Bob Schachter. At dinner Kimber spoke of her varied interests and activities and Bob responded that she appeared to be a "Renaissance Woman." My wife didn't take that well. Her fist tightened and, as she told me later, "I was ready to clock him!" She misunderstood the compliment "Renaissance Woman" thinking he meant "Rubenesque Woman" which she took as an insult to her curvy shape.

Years later Bob Schachter found his "Renaissance Woman" in Karen Sue Rylander, a UM graduate with a mathematics degree.

Bob Schachter never liked to play a game without an edge. But with an edge, he'd push the game to the limit. While in Vegas, Bob suggested to me that we pool our money and play video poker. I couldn't imagine Bob putting coins into a machine while sitting on a stool next to a blue-haired lady. Bob explained that the video poker progressive jackpot on our machine had grown so large that the payoff was more than a fair bet. We put many hundreds of quarters into that hungry machine without winning. Bob would later show the same fearlessness when risking his money on calculated bets when he joined the Minneapolis Grain Exchange. His knowledge and boldness have rewarded him in his years as a trader.

Bob Schachter's investment in the bearoff project was not fruitful. The bearoff printouts were difficult to sell. The bearoff positions were printed on pages that included sixty positions per page. The complete 15-checker printout was a tome with hundreds of pages. I got the "lite" version of fifty pages that included all positions up to eight checkers. It was satisfying to work with new backgammon information and not just guess at which bearoff play was better. It was not an easy process because you had to transfer numbers from the printout into a calculator, tedious and slow work but still rewarding because, with a little arithmetic, you could calculate the exact bearoff probabilities in cubeless positions.

The bearoff printouts quickly became obsolete when home computers became ubiquitous. Hal Heinrich created a program called "Boinq" which allowed the user to manipulate and study bearoff positions. Hugh Sconyers marketed his set of DVDs that stored all the bearoff positions and the doubling and redoubling choices making it the final word on bearoffs.

But at least for a brief time, Bob Schachter's bearoff printouts had value because they offered new information about old questions.—Duane Jensen Δ

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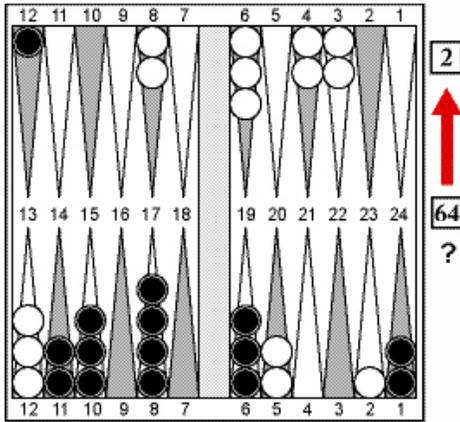
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**PROBLEM #362
ANALYZED**

by Kit Woolsey

1978 Chicago Cup finals. Paul Magriel (Black) and Vladimir Dobrich (White) are tied 16–16 to 19. **SHOULD BLACK DOUBLE? Then after double/take, BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**



The problem analysis will be divided into two parts.

1. CUBE ACTION PROBLEM:

Is this position a take? First of all, it is necessary to look at the match equities involved. Ignoring gammons and recube vig for the moment, we have:

White passes: Behind 3-away/2-away, 40% equity.

White takes and wins: Ahead 3-away/1-away, 75% equity.

White takes and loses: Behind 3-away/1-away, 25% equity.

White would be risking 15% (40% to 25%) in order to gain 35% (40% to 75%). Doing the math: $15\% / (15\% + 35\%) = 30\%$. So if White can win 30% or more of the time, the take is justified.

The gammon danger is there, but it is relatively small. White has full recube value. With these observations, I estimate that White needs to win about 28% or 29% of the games (cubeless) to have a take.

White is behind 33 pips in the race, so his path to victory generally involves hitting Black. His shot-hitting chances are considerably better than they would be with a normal five-point holding game. Black's position is ragged, with two checkers buried on the ace point. White's back checker makes it very difficult for Black to play safely. In addition, Black has a loose blot that might remain exposed. White hasn't completed his board, but his structure is good and it figures to improve, so a hit is likely to produce a win. It looks like White will easily win often enough to justify a take.

Is the position a double? In order to justify doubling what appears to be a pretty clear take, Black needs some decent-sized market losers. Does he have them? Suppose he rolls something like 5-2, safeing the blot. Will White then have a take? It looks like it.

Suppose Black does better with something like 6-1, making the bar point. Will White then have a take? Probably not, but it won't be a big market loser. White will still have plenty of play. In order for Black to lose his market big time, he would need to roll a crusher like 6-4 or 6-6 and not be hit back. That could happen, but there aren't many such rolls.

The conclusion is that Black doesn't have a theoretical double. He might have a practical double if he thinks that there is some chance that White will pass, but if he is confident that White will take the cube, he should wait.

2. PLAY PROBLEM AFTER DOUBLE/TAKE AND BLACK ROLLS 5-1:

There are 5 possible plays. Let us count up the shots:

13/7: All 2s, 5s, and 4-1 (22 shots).

13/8, 11/10: All 6s, 4-2, 2-2, 5-4 (16 shots).

13/8, 10/9: All 4s, 2-2, 5-2, 6-1 (16 shots).

11/10, 11/6: All aces, 2-2, 4-4, 6-2, 6-5 (17 shots).

8/2*: All 2s, 3-1, 4-1, 5-1, 4-4 (18 shots).

Shots aren't everything. 13/7 is the best structural play if the shot is missed since Black can follow by making the bar point or a new inner board point. 13/8, 11/10 is ugly. The plays that break the 11-point are fine if White misses; but if White hits, Black will want the 11-point back for containment purposes. The structural superiority of 13/7 is probably good enough to outrank these other plays even though they leave fewer shots.

8/2* is in a category by itself. There is a potentially big advantage in knocking White off the 2-point. If White enters high, Black will have a much easier time bearing in. Against that, there is a big disadvantage in leaving two blots since getting hit might be immediately fatal. With one checker back Black will have plenty of play, but with two checkers back or even the threat of having two back, Black may be forced to pass a recube.

Do the gains from knocking White off the 2-point compensate for the second blot? Probably not quite; but factoring in the four fewer shot numbers is sufficient in my mind to play 8/2*. —Kit Woolsey Δ

[Editor's note: In Issue #1 of GAMMON MAGAZINE (1979), Elliott Winslow wrote: "After a long series of small games with the score now tied at 16-all, Magriel (Black) doubled. Dobrich took and Magriel rolled 5-1, hitting on the 2-point. After the match, he and Roger Low felt starting the bar was better—it's 22 shots vs. 18 with the move played, but one blot vs. two. Need I add that Dobrich rolled the two, Magriel fanned, Dobrich hit the other blot and went on to win the gammon and the tournament."]

CSI...

[Continued from page 1]

Neil eventually won a doubled gammon to capture the 2011 CSI and his 13th ABT title. Contrats to both players on a fun match.

In other results, Yury Millman (MN) bested Frank DiMaggio (NY) to win the Grand Crystal Beaver, Steve Binstock (MN) captured the Advanced Jackpot, Ramez, Abi-Akar (IL) won the Advanced, and Mike Valentino (IL) grabbed the Limited.

If you missed this dress-up event, join us next year as CSI continues the tradition. Δ

2011 CENTRAL STATES INVITATIONAL

CHAMPIONSHIP (52): 1-Neil Kazaross (IL), 2-Carol Joy Cole (MI), 3/4-Frank DiMaggio (NY) / Greg Merriman (MI); 1C-Allen Tish (IL), 2C-Petko Kostadinov (SC); 1LC-Tak Morioka (IL). ADVANCED (46): 1-Ramez Abi-Akar (IL), 2-Nan Feiber (IL), 3/4-Cliff Mayoh (IL) / Mike Minkovski (IL); 1C-Oleg Raygorodsky (IL), 2C-Tom Duggan (England); 1LC-Lucas Bauer (IL). LIMITED (9): 1-Mike Valentino (IL), 2-Ben Friesen (MI); 1LC-Scott Carlson (IL). GRAND CRYSTAL BEAVER XIII (15): 1-Yury Millman (MN), 2-Frank DiMaggio (NY). ADVANCED JACKPOT (8): 1-Steve Binstock (MN), 2-Adrian Rios (IL). DOUBLES

(13 teams): 1-Nabil Fady (IL) & Faddoul Khoury (IL), 2-Scott Casty (IL) & Phil Simborg (IL). 10th BATTLE OF THE SEXES (32 Men & 8 Women): 1-Bill Bartholomay (IL), 2-Dorothy Lee (England), 3/4-Joann Feinstein (IL) / Phil Simborg (IL). QUICKIE TOURNAMENT (64): 1-Eric Johnson (IL), 2-Nora Luna Righter (MA). LIAR'S DICE: 1-Carter Mattig (IL), 2-Peter Kalba (IN). DIRECTOR'S TROPHIES: Dorothy Lee (England) AND Tom Duggan (England). MIKE WEINBERGER BOARD FUNDRAISER (8): 1-Yury Millman (MN). TAKI-RETROBAKELITE BOARD FUNDRAISER (13): 1-Steve Brown (MN), 2-Herb Roman (IL).

WINNER'S CIRCLE



FEB.-APR. 2011

•**New England Club Monthly** (Malden, MA; 12 Feb.)... OPEN (24): 1-Herb Gurland, 2-Greg Jukins, 3/4-Tom O'Riordan / John Smidt; 1C-Matt Reklaitis, 2C-Mark Houser.

•**Play65/EBGT-3rd Istavder Anniversary/WBA Championship** (Istanbul, Turkey; 25-27 Feb.)... MASTERS (82): 1-Talat Papatya, 2-Gökay Güleç, 3/4-Bülent Bahar / Bozhidar Stoyonov (Bulgaria); 1C-Oguz User, 2C-Omar Dvali (Georgia); 1LC-Kakhaber Natchkebia (Georgia). ADVANCED (48): 1-Mert Bulgan, 2-Metin Erikler, 3/4-Yavuz Genç / Seyfi Uslubas; 1C-Altay Akmaz, 2C-Murat Imamoglu; 1LC-Murat Nalbantoglu. DOUBLES CONSULTING (40 teams): 1-Burak Gören & Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (Israel), 2-Ufuk Aksak & Ali Alçelik, 3/4-Jürgen Orlowski (Germany) & Frank Simon (Germany) / Tolga Akbaytug & Mustafa Altuntas. SUPER JACKPOT (16): 1-Sabri Büyüksöy, 2-Tolga Akbaytug. 1-POINTER #1 (64): 1-Chiva Tafazzoli (Iran/Germany). #2: (64): 1-Aziz Yilmaz. #3 (64): 1-Murat Kapikiran. SPECIAL PLAYER AWARDS: Falafel Natanzon (Israel), Jürgen Orlowski (Germany), Anna Mielech (Poland), Kakhaber Natchkebia (Georgia).

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 27 Feb.)... OPEN (11): 1-Samuel Wang, 2-Rod Covlin; 1C-Nasser Sedaghatpour. INTERMEDIATE (7): 1-Dmitry Dragomeretskiy, 2-Greg Aponte; 1C-Ira Gardner. BEGINNER (5): 1-Gina Dilorenzo, 2-Burt Goldstein (UK); 1C-Anna Covlin.

•**BIBA International Championship** (Hinckley, England; 4-6 Mar.)... OPEN (21): 1-Julian Feggerlein, 2-Ginge Fullen, 3/4-Brian Lever / Paul Plumptre; 1D-Phil Tutchings, 2-Nicky Check; 1LC-Rachel Rhodes. TIME TRIALS (8): 1-Gheorghe Filipas, 2-Mark Calderbank. FRIDAY 500 (8): 1-Arthur Wright, 2-Myke Wignall. DOUBLES (7): 1-The Gee Gees.

•**Ohio State Club Monthly** (Akron, OH; 6 Mar.)... OPEN (15): 1-Farhad Forudi, 2-Stephen Trundy; 1C-Mike Vasilatos.

•**New England Club Monthly** (Malden, MA; 12 Mar.)... OPEN (16): 1-Alex Zamanian, 2-Greg Jukins, 3/4-Matt Reklaitis / Roger Rondeau; 1C-Tom O'Riordan. 2C-Joe LaRochelle.

•**Springfield Series #6** (Lincoln, IL; 12 Mar.)... OPEN: 1-Faddoul Khoury, 2-Chris Scott; 1C-Ed Zell, 2C-Terry Leahy; 1LC-Sean Garber (IN).

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 13 Mar.)... OPEN (14): 1-Alan Grunwald (NJ), 2-Jeff Acierno (NJ); 1C-Julian Weinberg. INTERMEDIATE (4): 1-Greg Aponte. BEGINNER (3): 1-Lisa Pelaez.

•**2nd New Orleans "Sweet 16"** (New Orleans,

LA; 18-20 Mar.)... OPEN #1 (16): 1-Larry Smith (LA), 2-Brian Ross (GA); 1C-Jack Takala (MI), 2C-Ray Gaudet (LA). OPEN #2 (16): 1-Larry Taylor (GA), 2-Ray Gaudet (LA). FRIDAY WARM-UP (8): 1-Jack Takala (MI), 2-Larry Taylor (GA)... A fun tournament played at the Inn on Bourbon Street in the heart of the French Quarter.



"Sweet 16" directors Will Hunn & Mike Weinberger

•**2011 Indiana State Challenge Cup** (Porter, IN; 19 Mar.)... Northwest Indiana Club (John O'Hagan, Dave Settles, Charlie Halberstadt, DuJuan Meekins, Roger Hickman, Randy Pals) defeated Hoosier Backgammon Club 11-7.

•**ABT-17th Ohio State Championships** (Cleveland, OH; 25-27 Mar.)... OPEN (28): 1-John O'Hagan (IN), 2-Greg Merriman (MI); 1C-David Rubin (IL), 2C-Dmitriy Obukhov (MI). ADVANCED (41): 1-Ben Friesen (MI), 2-Eden Windish (Canada), 3-Mike Vasilatos (OH); 1C-Daniel Barabas (OH), 2C-Robert Lessard (Canada). NOVICE (9): 1-Lyle Rubin (IL), 2-Donna Davenport (OH); 1C-Charlene Britton (OH). OHIO MASTERS (8): 1-Ray Fogelrund (NV), 2-Jon Stephens (OH). AMATEUR JACKPOT (16): 1-Prince Barlow (MI), 2-Daniel Barabas (OH). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1/2-Ryan Hast (PA) & Steve Hast (PA) / Ed Johnson (NY) & Eden Windish (Canada). QUICKIES (32): 1-Jon Stephens (OH). MICRO BLITZ (16): 1-Oleg Raygorodsky (IL), 2-Peggy Neubig (NJ). THURSDAY WARM-UP (15): 1-Farhad Forudi (OH), 2-Paul Berg (MI). USBGF QUIZ: Open-Mary Hickey (OH); Advanced-Ben Friesen (MI)... John O'Hagan beat the undefeated Greg Merriman twice to win it all. Joe and Fran Miller's event saw an attendance increase compared to 2010.



John O'Hagan

•**Springfield Series Grand Finale** (Lincoln, IL; 2 Apr.)... OPEN (23): 1-Faddoul Khoury, 2-Don Marek; 1C-Scott Rudebeck, 2C-Sean Garber (IN); 1LC/2LC-Oleg Raygorodsky / John Jennings.

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Chicago, IL; 3 Apr.)... OPEN (29): 1-Rory Pascas, 2-Peter Kalba, 3/4-Wendy Kaplan / Tak Morioka; 1C-Bill Davis, 2C-Mitch Pomper. INTERMEDIATE (8): 1/2-Joann Feinstein / Dave Settles, 3/4-Amy Trudeau / Roger Hickman; 1C-Jeff Fischer, 2C-Leslie Lockett. Δ

AMALGAMATION

Visiting the Bar Point Club in March: **Mark Murray** (OH) and **Matt Cohn-Geier** (Planet Earth)... **Bob Koca** (Maryland) is now giving backgammon lessons over Skype. He'll give you a sample one hour first lesson for \$15 and then \$40 thereafter. If you're interested, contact him via email: bob_koca@hotmail.com... It's official. The Illinois State Championships will again be held at the Grand Hotel in Peoria, Illinois 14-16 October with **Linda Rockwell** (IL) directing... Shame on **Peggy Neubig** (NJ) for unjustly defaming BPC player **Oleg Raygorodsky's** reputation at bgonline.org... Condolences on the passing of **Phelicia Krakow** on 1 March. She was 71. Phelicia was the party planner for Faces Nightclub for 20 years, organizing backgammon events there. Additionally, she and **Ida Weil** were co-directors of the North Shore "House of Backgammon" club back in the 1970s... Congratulations to **Carol Joy Cole** (MI) who in a relatively short period, has had over a quarter million unique daily visitors to her "Mark Your Calendar" online. Get new tournament listings from CJC as they break at chicagopoint.com/calendar.html... **Adrian Rios** (IL) is a good backgammon player, but his best game is chess. Playing the late Russian Grandmaster **David Bronstein** (yes, the Bronstein who introduced a digital clock that adds a small time increment for each move) in a simultaneous chess match, Adrian played to a draw... POINT subscriber



Ira Siegler (NJ) sends us his backgammon-related license plate. If you have one, sent

it along, with you pictured next to it!... Who do some consider to be the inventor of backgammon? According to iranian.com/main/node/79738, it is was **Bozorgmehr**, the Chancellor of Sassanid **King Khosrow Anushiravan** (ruled 531-579)... According to adelaidenow.com.au, the hut on Mount Kenya where **Prince William** proposed to **Kate Middleton** has a backgammon table in the living room... **Renée Magriél Roberts** put **Paul Magriél's** first backgammon board (made by Crisloid) along with a *Backgammon* signed bookplate on Ebay last month. The starting bid of \$500 was too high for any takers... A short backgammon segment is included in the **Vanessa Hudgens** bombed movie *Beastly*... Finally, a luck quote from Tennessee Williams: "Luck is believing you're lucky." Δ

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