

# Madison Backgammon News



Number 48

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## INTERVIEW WITH ANTONIO ORTEGA

By Ilia Guzei

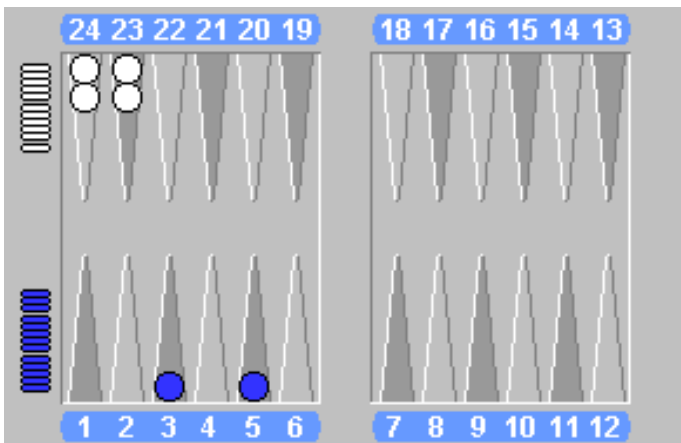
My guest today is an author of the imperative “Backgammon with the Giants” series, Antonio Ortega. The retired 64-year-old Costa Rican started playing backgammon in 1980 when he read *The Backgammon Book* by Jacoby and Crawford. In 1992 he wrote his first backgammon book in Spanish followed by six other books in English. Here is his view on contemporary backgammon.

**IG:** Hello Antonio. Please tell a little about yourself.

**AO:** I worked for 25 years with United Nations in the field of social statistics. Now I’m retired but still working as promoter. I was trained in Statistics, and have a Ph.D. in Social Statistics and Population. I have a wife, Virginia, and two sons, Manuel and Pablo.

**IG:** What about the game of backgammon fascinates you?

**AO:** Backgammon is fast, it involves calculation and decision-making, and yet it is unpredictable until the very end. At times, it is frustrating and exasperating, exhilarating and rewarding, and much more...but it is never boring. To play backgammon you must be willing to lose frequently, often through no fault of your own. Many players blame bad luck for their losses but take credit for skill when they win. A truly fine player may be less than a 60% favorite against an intermediate in a match of moderate length. So any player can win. Sometimes you lose because your opponent makes a bad play, as the following example illustrates.



Black to play an ace.

The right move is 3/2, which gives Black 19 winning rolls in 36 on the next shake. If 5/4 lets him win on the next shake with only 17 of the 36 numbers. However, in one match a weak player moved 5/4, and won by rolling 4-3 next. Had he correctly played 3/2 with his ace, he would have lost! (A very similar position is mentioned by Jake Jacobs in his article “A proper Bostonian” link at:

[http://www.gammonvillage.com/backgammon/news/article\\_display.cfm?resourceid=1680](http://www.gammonvillage.com/backgammon/news/article_display.cfm?resourceid=1680)).

**IG:** You are ranked about ~1870 on FIBS. How much backgammon studying did you require to achieve your level of skill?

**AO:** Barclay Cooke said that backgammon is almost unique among games that combine luck and skill in that a beginner can beat a master in a game or a short match. The modicum of skill necessary to play reasonably well, at an “intermediate” level, can be acquired in just a few weeks. To progress from intermediate to master is much harder and takes much longer.

Players who want to reach a championship level should read the best authors: Paul Magriel, Danny Kleinman, Tim Holland, Joe Dwek, Bill Robertie, Jeff Ward, Kit Woolsey and Jeremy Bagai. They should also replay and study matches of top players, and use computer programs like JellyFish and Snowie.

**IG:** When did you first become interested in writing backgammon books? Is it very time consuming? What motivates you?

**AO:** In 1992 I wrote my first backgammon book in Spanish. Then I wrote other six books in English. And yes, it is very time-consuming. Much more time-consuming than people who don’t write books imagine. Each book has taken me about one year to write. In the early 1990s, there was a need for books about match play. The comments about my first books, *Fascinating Backgammon* (in 1993) and *Costa Rica 1993* (in 1994), were extraordinarily laudatory and encouraged me to write more.

The most important backgammon books I own are:

*Paradoxes and Probabilities* by Barclay Cooke

*Backgammon for Profit* by Joe Dwek

*The Backgammon Book* by Oswald Jacoby and Johnny Crawford

*Better Backgammon* by Tim Holland

*Vision Laughs at Counting* by Danny Kleinman

*Backgammon* by Paul Magriel

*Advanced Backgammon* by Bill Robertie

*How to Play Backgammon Tournaments* by Kit Woolsey

I have other books, of course.

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## INTERVIEW

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**IG:** Are you working on a new book?

**AO:** I'm not working on any new books. I still write articles once in a while. I no longer have the urge to write backgammon books that I had when I wrote my first, for now players have already learned how to estimate equities in match play and can use computer programs to make those estimates.

However, I think players rely too much on computer programs. One player told me he had found some errors in my last book. When I asked how he caught the errors, he answered "I verified the results with Snowie." Of course the book may have errors, but although Snowie is very good, the program is far from infallible. I made hundreds of rollouts using Snowie 3 and often got conflicting results from cubeless rollouts and rollouts that used the cube. Moreover, Snowie's results for match play rely on empirically-based Match Equity Tables that are only approximately correct.

**IG:** There are some excellent backgammon writers who do not play much (in live tournaments). What is your take on their approach to the game?

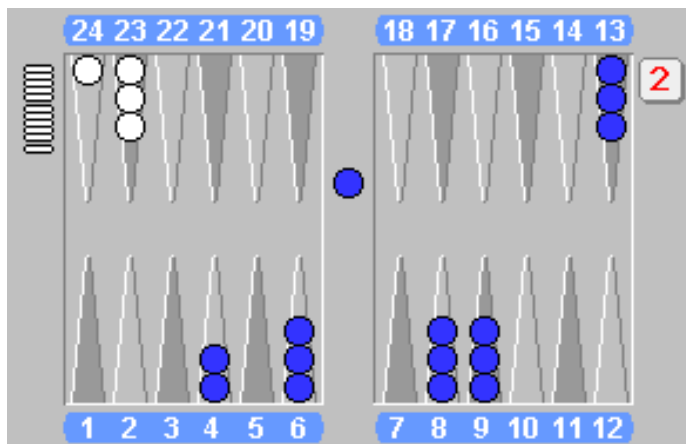
**AO:** I think the excellent backgammon writers can become excellent players in the long run, because they know the theory. However, in the short run, a lack of practice may produce inconsistencies, especially in the form of bad doubles and bad takes, that rarely afflict the most experienced players.

**IG:** Who is the toughest player you have ever faced?

**AO:** All matches are hard to win, even against weak players. For example I remember a match against an intermediate player in which I led 10-0 entering the Crawford Game only to lose 11-10. By the way, I think the scoring rules in tournaments make it too easy for a player who trails in a match to catch up.

**IG:** What's your most memorable backgammon experience?

**AO:** If you ask a player about his last tournament, he will surely say, "You won't believe what happened to me." In backgammon, it appears, extraordinary events occur more often than in other realms. Here's a good example. The position arose in a preliminary round of the Third Tournament of the Americas in Costa Rica. Hugh Sconyers was Black (X) and Mario Madrigal was White (O). Sconyers trailed 8-11 in a 13-point match and was on roll from the bar, in what might have been his last roll of the championship:



13-Point match. Black trails 8-11.

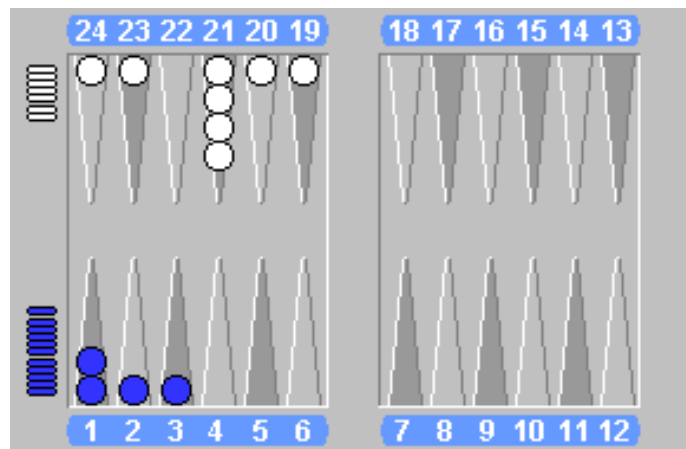
Black (X) rolled 2-2, dancing. Then White rolled 3-2, bearing off two checkers, and Black rolled 2-4 hitting the more advanced of White's men. From here Black managed to pick up White's other man, close his board, and then win game, match, and incredibly, the entire important championship.

**IG:** What do you consider your best achievement in backgammon?

**AO:** Among my best backgammon achievements were winning the Open and Doubles championships in the Tournament of the Americas (which drew many top players); winning two Doubles championships in Las Vegas; reaching the semifinals in a Consolation Tournament in Monte Carlo; and winning the National Championship of Costa Rica five years in a row. However, I personally consider my best achievement to have come in 1994, when I won the World Cup Quiz contest, a very difficult quiz with 25 questions posed by Bill Robertie and Kent Goulding in *Inside Backgammon*. That required (to quote Robertie and Goulding) "keen positional judgment, sharp calculating ability, and a willingness to research some obscure points of backgammon trivia and history." My prize was a free entry in the World Cup, but that year I also won a free entry by winning Carol Cole's qualifying tournament in Flint Michigan, so I really should have been given a cash rebate.

**IG:** What was your worst or most frustrating performance in backgammon?

**AO:** My most frustrating performance came at a big tournament in Buenos Aires, with about six hundred players, during a marathon all-night session of qualifying matches for the finals. I was ending my last match at about 6:00 am, at double match point, when I reached the following position as Black (X) in the bear-off:



15-Point match. Double match-point. Black on roll.

Then the Backgammon God delivered these rolls:

| Black  | White       |
|--------|-------------|
| 1. 2-1 | 2. 4-4      |
| 2. 2-1 | 3. 6-6 wins |

Look what had to happen for me to lose. I had to roll 2-1 twice. The probability of that is  $(2/36)(2/36)$ , or  $4/1296$ . My opponent had to roll 4-4 then 6-6, which has a probability of  $1/1296$ , or 6-6 then 4-4 or better, which has a probability of  $3/1296$ ; a total probability of  $4/1296$ . The combination of events has a probability of  $(4/1296)(4/1296)$ . That's  $16/1,679,616$ , or  $1/104,976$ , a less than *one in a hundred thousand* chance. The highly improbable occurs more often in backgammon than in other domains of life.

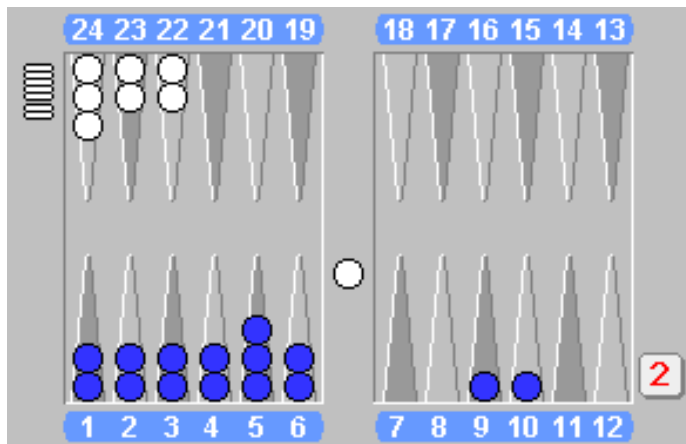
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## INTERVIEW

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**IG:** If you face an unfamiliar position, how do you study it? Do you analyze the position, perform simulations, or do something else?

**AO:** I usually compare the position with a similar position that I've studied previously. Suppose, for example, it's a position like the following one. Your opponent was bearing off while you were on the bar. He left a blot; you hit it and have just closed your board. Should you redouble? If not now, when?



Black on roll. Cube action?

I know from studies of other positions that Black (X) should redouble and White (O) should take when Black has borne off five fewer checkers than White with White still on the bar. In the position above, White has borne off 7 checkers. Black should not redouble until he has borne off at least 2 men. His winning chances now are only about 60%, not enough to redouble.

**IG:** You have worked with well-known BG personalities.

**AO:** To work with Danny Kleinman was a great experience. Danny, as we know, is a world-renowned analyst and backgammon theoretician. He is a master writer and a very disciplined worker, so we were able to write several books together in just a few years. In my opinion, Neil Kazaross is the most charismatic player in the world. As Steve Sax said in the review of our last book, "Neil's comments take the reader inside his thought process and emotions." Nobody understands backgammon positions like Neil does.

**IG:** Do you play in chouettes?

**AO:** In Costa Rica we often play chouettes in which less experienced players can gain valuable experience. Our lowest stake is a dollar per point, our highest stake is five dollars. Not higher, because Costa Rican players do not have much money, and one of our guidelines for money backgammon is to be comfortable with the stakes; that is, not to play for more than you can afford to lose.

**IG:** What do you think dominates backgammon - luck or skill?

**AO:** In a short backgammon match, luck predominates, but in the long run skill does. Actually, luck is intertwined with skill. For example, a good player moves to maximize the numbers of

rolls that will play safely next turn and minimize the number of rolls that will leave shots. That is why we sometimes say that the good rolls are attracted to the good players. A well-known story goes that when a journalist asked a successful man if he thought he'd been lucky in life, the man replied, "I don't really know. All I can tell you is that the harder I worked, the luckier I became."

**IG:** What current backgammon periodicals are worthy? What recent book would you recommend?

**AO:** I recommend two good newsletters, *Flint Area BackgammonNews* (edited by Carol Joy Cole) and *The Chicago Point* (edited by Bill Davis). The recent books I recommend are *Classic Backgammon Revisited* by Jeremy Bagai, and of course *Backgammon With the Giants: Neil Kazaross*, which I wrote with Danny Kleinman.

**IG:** Any humorous incidents from backgammon games, chouettes, or propositions?

**AO:** The Costa Rican Backgammon Association organized a Tournament for "Novices" consisting of 3-point matches. With the score tied 2-2 in one of the matches, a player doubled. The opponent thought for a minute and passed, thereby losing the match. ☺

**IG:** What habits of your opponents irritate you most when you play over the board?

**AO:** Smoking. Excessively slow play. Shake the dice while thinking about one's move. Talking to others while playing. Beware of opponents who talk during the game, for some do so deliberately to irritate you.

**IG:** Any particular tournament you'd especially like to play in?

**AO:** The tournament I would most like to play in doesn't exist. I'd like to play in a World Champion Tournament in America. Every year, players who want to enter the World Championship must go to Europe to play in Monte Carlo, which is expensive, repetitive and tiresome. The World Championship Tournament should be alternate between Europe and America, so more people could afford conveniently to participate.

**IG:** What are your criteria for choosing a partner in a consulting doubles tournament? (I want a partner who is stronger than I am, yet so many couples are one-sided).

**AO:** I prefer a player at my own level who can help me to select the best move in each case. I do not want a partner who insists on making his own decisions when he is the one rolling the dice and moving the checkers. I'll end with a tribute to Neal Kupferman of Oregon, the partner with whom I won the Doubles Championship at the 1996 Las Vegas Open. He exemplified the qualities I like in a doubles partner. Alas, just a few months later, in March of 1997, Neal died in an automobile accident.

**IG:** Whom do you consider the new rising stars of backgammon today?

**AO:** Mads Andersen and Morten Nielson of Denmark, Jorgen Granstedt and Jerry Grandell of Sweden, Francois Tardieu of France, and Steve Sax of the USA.

**IG:** Thank you, Antonio.

# RUDENESS IN BACKGAMMON: RHYTHM WRECKERS AND SHARKS

BY SONYA SIDKY

In the game of backgammon, one gains enjoyment from becoming engaged by the game and continuing to be engaged by the game. There is a back and forth. A game starts. It progresses and then comes to an end. One important ingredient of having a positive backgammon experience is to enjoy the progression of the game or match. The match can cease to be an enjoyable experience if it loses its rhythm. There is something about the human psyche that prefers smooth and timely transitions from one experience to the next. Why do we prefer to read a book that is well written? Why does getting stuck in traffic upset us?

I have noticed that two types of players threaten to lessen my joy in playing the game of backgammon because each in their own way interferes with the rhythm of the game. They seem to be mutually exclusive in that I cannot recall a backgammon player that strongly possessed both of these traits. In fact I absolutely shutter to think about the interaction effect produced by the combination!

The two traits are slow play and chatty play. We all are confronted with difficult choices in the game of backgammon, but slow players typically finds more positions that they feel worthy of very careful consideration and spends a longer time in the analysis phase. By contrast, the chatty player's game may be somewhat slowed down for a chat session with the opponent or a sidekick, but the chatty player tends to be more impulsive and less likely to over think a position. Of course, the other side of the coin must be acknowledged. A slow player could argue that the fun of the game is diminished if he or she feels rushed. Likewise, some players are naturally chatty and sociable, and for these players, banter with the opponent, or a side conversation may enhance the backgammon experience tremendously. The key here is balance and respect for differing preferences. While I might feel psychological claustrophobia or distraction if someone chats throughout a match, another social type may really enjoy the chat fest. I am, however, convinced that some players use slow play, and especially chatty play, as ploys to annoy their opponent, and thus gain the psychological edge. How fun is that? The name of the game is to have fun, right?

But sometimes there legitimate occasions to interrupt the pace of a match in order to service a higher purpose. That said, I must admit to rude behavior that I could only partially rationalize as being for the greater good. What was my crime? I slowed down the pace of a match by recording two positions in a row for this article! The first position was completely justifiable in this intermediate player's humble opinion. I had a tough decision to make about how to play my 6-2. It was a great roll that got me out of a jam and turned the game in my favor. My opponent then preceded to role a stinker that left him in a world of hurt. Of course I was thrilled! Once again I took the time to record the resulting position after his terrible roll. Perhaps this was a little rude because it could be considered as "rubbing it in." Also, it was getting late and we were playing in the semi-finals in the consolation bracket so the loser (very likely my opponent at this time) would get to go home. You be the judge; this is what transpired:

I was behind 2 to 3 in a 5-point match and found myself with two men stuck behind a five-point prime (see figure 1). My situation was not looking very good until I rolled a 6-2. My sixes were duplicated since I could accomplish two important objectives with a six; I could pop a checker out from behind my opponent's five-point prime, or I could hit a blot. I even had a double hit option (15/9\* and 6/4\*). I considered this aggressive play but felt that giving myself some more timing by running from my opponent's home board was a more urgent need. This left me the option of hitting loose in my inner board or playing safe. I felt that since my opponent would still have one of my checkers trapped behind his five-point prime and since he had some timing that I had to take a chance and hit him loose on my four-point. So my play was 21/15 and 6/4\*.

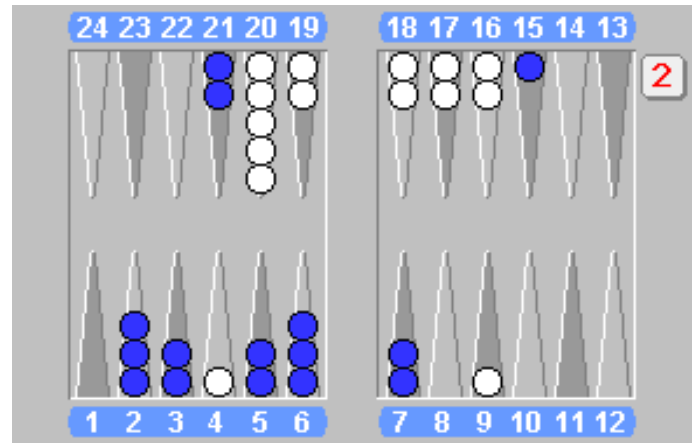


Figure 1: Black to play a 6-2

This was also Jellyfish's first choice, with the double hit being Jellyfish's second choice. Jellyfish's third choice, 15/9\* and 15/7, included a hit with no return shots, but failed to accomplish the important task of escaping! Interestingly enough, after rolling out the top three moves with the seed = 55599 at two-ply, there was very little difference in equity, winning and gammon changes between these moves. The first two moves gave me better gammon chances (25.7% and 25.5%, respectively) than the third choice (22.4%). Although my gammon chances were best with Jellyfish's original first pick and my play, my winning chances and equity were slightly higher with the double hit (55.7% wins, equity = .282) than with my play (55.4% wins, equity = .252). Of course, since my opponent was holding a two cube, a gammon meant I would win the match. However, I had to consider that my opponent's low gammon chances meant nothing because if he won the game, he would win the match.

At any rate, my roll turned the game slightly in my favor and gave me real gammon chances, which translated into a much greater chance of winning the match. My opponent's roll made my future look rosy indeed. I could not resist recording the carnage after my opponent was left with three bad ways of playing a 6-1. Figure two shows the resulting position after my opponent's play.

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# RUDENESS

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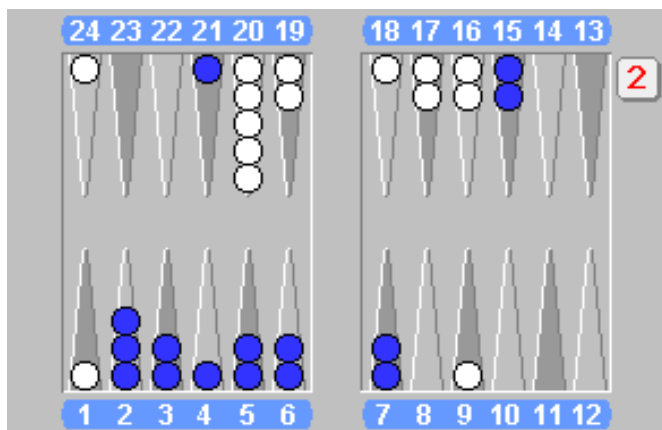


Figure 2: White played 6-1

His play was Jellyfish's third choice originally, but ended up being the best play after rolling out his three possible moves. Coming in on my one-point was forced and then he had the choice of three sixes, each of them destroying his prime and leaving me with several shots. My opponent's play gave him the best winning chances (24.0%) and as well as giving me the least gammon chances (45.9%). Playing 17/23 only gave my opponent a 21.2% chance of winning and left me with a 49.2% chance of gammoning him and playing 16/22 gave my opponent a 23.7% chance of winning and left me with a 47.9% chance of winning a gammon. At any rate, I did not mind any of my opponent's plays; I was left a huge favorite in all cases and I went on to backgammon him for the match. I then went on to lose in the finals of the consolation to a very slow player! Perhaps I will touch on coping strategies for dealing with slow play and chatty play in a future article, but I want to end this article by taking a closer look at the assumption that people play backgammon for the enjoyment of the game. After all, even a successful backgammon player who has cashed in number of events, such as Bruce Russell, has acknowledged that you do not make money playing backgammon.

Of course, there are important exceptions to Bruce's level-headed mentality. I would like to get one very important exception to this generally true rule off of my chest. There are sharks that play for money! They prey on fish! I am sure some of these folks may also enjoy a well-paced game, but I have heard a few of them confess that they are willing to put up with chatting up a storm with a fish as long as they are getting their

money. Is the sport in winning the game or making a living? A few months ago I found out that a well-intentioned intermediate player such as myself was not immune to shark attacks. I found that although it is exciting to hear war stories of sharks and their fish, it can damper my enjoyment of the game to be the target of this predatory element.

Appropriately, I received an education about sharks and fish at the tournament in Springfield only a day and a half before my encounter with an actual shark and a shark-in-training. In the lounge, after breakfast, I had the rare opportunity to talk with a few famous backgammon players that included a renounced shark. I was very fortunate that weekend to win the intermediate event and get to put a little money in my wallet. I was also fortunate that I was leaving that tournament with a heightened awareness of the feeding habits of sharks, because I sure would need it for the van ride home! Apparently the smell of an intermediate player with a trophy and a little cash was too much for a hungry shark that had not eaten during the tournament.

We started a three-person chouette for two dollars a point. The shark would not play for less and made reference to the fact that I had prize money for him to win from me. When I was the box and shark junior was the captain, shark senior signaled shark junior to start playing a backgame against me by not so subtly pointing to where the checkers should be played. No cubes had been turned, so consulting was not permitted. I was annoyed; they were toying with me. This particular shark is famous for playing a mean backgame so I was really feeling hunted. Fortunately, I had to go to the bathroom, so we stopped at a convenience store. To my disgust, as I sat in the restroom, I heard the entire conversation between shark junior and shark senior who shamelessly plotted a nasty backgame against me over by the soda coolers. God blessed me with excellent hearing. I listened for about five minutes; they were both really pumped. I was pissed. I exited the restroom, informed them that they were caught and fined them each twenty-five cents for their immoral behavior. They also had to forfeit the game. I hope I don't smell as good next time.

In spite of some of the rudeness and greed that exist in the game of backgammon, I really do enjoy the game. I will continue to strive towards raising awareness of the areas that could impede enjoyment of the game and suggest alternative attitudes and behaviors. If you have a backgammon related gripe or would like some assistance in dealing with rudeness—your own or that of others, please feel free to send your questions my way and I will respond in this column!

## **Madison Backgammon News is On-line!**

In an effort to reach more people and reduce printing and mailing expenses, *Madison Backgammon News* is being published on our unofficial web site, The Douse at: <http://128.104.70.72/share1/bg/thedouse.htm>

Click on the "Newsletter" link. The newsletters are available in a .pdf format so that you can view the newsletters in the same way as they appear in the printed format. Also, you may print a copy at your PC. You will need to install Adobe Acrobat 5.0 or higher (available free from Adobe). A link to their site is provided. Back issues of the newsletter are available, too.

An e-mail will be sent to everyone who provides me with their e-mail address each time a new issue is published. I will continue to print and mail the newsletter to individuals who do not have easy Internet access, and to the other backgammon clubs with whom we exchange newsletters with.

# Annual Results Review

By Ilia Guzei

The club has gammoned away another year. If in 2001 there was a very close race for the first place, this year Brad Andersen became virtually unreachable early on while Ilia Guzei and Stan Livingston were the most likely contenders for the second place with Tom Machaj, Bill Minser, and Sam Pottle close behind. Stan's 10 match winning streak propelled him from the 6<sup>th</sup> place into the second position after 23 tournaments, but Ilia acquired 3.7 points in the last tournament of the year to reclaim the second position. Tom Machaj was in the second place after 18 tournaments but then went on his longest losing streak and dropped to the 6<sup>th</sup> place before the last annual tourney. However, Tom won the consolation bracket in the 24<sup>th</sup> tournament and re-entered the top four. Last year, winner Bill Minser finished 5<sup>th</sup> followed by Sam Pottle, club player #4 in 2002 and 2001.

The informative Douse has calculated some backgammon data on its web pages.

**Club.** A few records have been broken. 30 players have played in the club tournaments throughout the year (10 more than in 2001) and an all-time single tournament attendance record (16) was set. Unfortunately, seven of the newcomers participated in just one tournament, but one new person, John Pippen, has become a regular and played in nine tournaments defeating such barracudas as Stan Livingston, Tom Machaj, Sam Pottle, and Bruce Russell.

The participants played 416 matches. Bill Minser and Steve Mayer have played each other a record 10 times with Bill having the edge (6:4). The following couples met eight times: Brad Andersen and Stan Livingston (5:3), Brad Andersen and Tom Machaj (4:4), Ilia Guzei and Lee Pflugrad (5:3), Stan Livingston and Bruce Russell (5:3). The most lopsided outcomes are Brad Andersen and Bruce Russell (5:0), Brad Andersen and Sam Pottle (5:1), Sam Pottle and Bill Minser (4:0), and, Ilia Guzei and Tom Machaj (5:1).

At the beginning of the year I predicted that the person acquiring over 2.00 points per tournament would be the winner. Brad Andersen is the winner with a 2.03 ppt average. The top three players in 2002 are Brad Andersen, Ilia Guzei, and Stan Livingston. The iron man award goes to three people this year – Stan Livingston, Tom Machaj, and Bill Minser, all of whom showed the perfect attendance (24 tourneys).

The club newsletter is now a truly bimonthly publication which is also available on-line.

The club web site maintained by Ilia Guzei publishes a lot of new statistics and has been visited over 1500 times since February. The statistics calculations are now performed with Ilia's program Ratings14, as opposed to the manual approach utilized last year.

While the attendance escalated significantly, the average number of matches each person played per tournament increased only slightly, by about 0.15 mpt. This is due to the fact that there were still 3 to 4 tour draws with players getting byes on regular basis.

## Personal achievements.

Highest rated players:

Brad Andersen -1552.21, Ilia Guzei -1543.82, Gary Hines -1543.42.

Master Point top three:

Brad Andersen -37.50, Stan Livingston -36.25, Tom Machaj, -29.50.

Most tournaments won – Stan Livingston, 4.

Most often cashed – 8 times– Brad Andersen, Stan Livingston, Tom Machaj.

Most trips to the main flight final – 7 times – Brad Andersen.

Most wins in the consolation final – 5 times – Bill Minser.

Most matches played – 68 – Brad Andersen and Ilia Guzei.

Most matches won – 41 – Brad Andersen.

Highest winning percentage:

Gary Hines – 77.78, Brad Andersen – 60.29, Ilia Guzei – 58.82.

Longest winning streak – 10 in a row – Stan Livingston.

Shortest losing streak among regulars – 2 matches– Ilia Guzei and Gary Hines.

Longest losing streak – 8 in a row – Hiro Asari.

Most points acquired in a month – 7.80 – Brad Andersen.

Fewest number of tournaments without acquiring points – 0 – Ilia Guzei.

Most often voted player of the month – 2 times – Sam Pottle, Brad Andersen, Stan Livingston.

Player with the toughest draw – Steve Mayer.

Player with the easiest draw - Steve Reuschlein

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# Annual Results Review

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A comparison of this year results with last year's shows that the top two finishers (Brad and Ilia) were not even in the top 6 in 2001. Stan finished third, repeating his last year achievement. While there is not enough stats for Brad (too few matches in 2001), it is obvious that Ilia significantly improved his game upping his match winning percentage from 43 to 59, while Stan enjoyed a 6% increase from 48% to 54%. Several people followed the suit: Tom (+6%), Sonya Sidky (+2%), Lee Pflugrad (+5%), Bruce (+1%), Steve Reuschlein (+2%).

In the annual standings, Sonya moved to the 7<sup>th</sup> place from 10<sup>th</sup> in 2001, Steve Mayer to 8<sup>th</sup> from 13<sup>th</sup>, Alan Gold to 9<sup>th</sup> from 12<sup>th</sup>.

If the year 2001 stats were dominated by Sam Pottle by a large margin, this year certainly had the Big Cube constellation twinkling above it.

For more stats and number visit the **NEW** Douse web site at: <http://128.104.70.72/share1/bg/thedouse.htm>

## Final Club Standings For 2002

|                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| Brad Andersen    | 46.70 |
| Ilia Guzei       | 41.75 |
| Stan Livingston  | 40.65 |
| Tom Machaj       | 34.90 |
| Bill Minser      | 34.75 |
| Sam Pottle       | 33.65 |
| Sonya Sidky      | 29.10 |
| Steve Mayer      | 27.50 |
| Alan Gold        | 27.15 |
| Lee Pflugrad     | 26.70 |
| Bruce Russell    | 26.65 |
| Gary Hines       | 17.20 |
| Steve Reuschlein | 14.95 |
| Charlie Walter   | 11.40 |
| Hiro Asari       | 9.50  |
| John Pippin      | 6.40  |
| Susanne Boucher  | 4.60  |
| Warren Oberman   | 4.60  |
| Mark Tremayne    | 3.05  |
| Beth Martinson   | 2.60  |
| Bob Croucher     | 2.00  |
| Bob Holyon       | 1.80  |
| Marianne Gatenby | 1.00  |
| Errol Hartman    | 1.00  |
| Merrill Schrager | 0.80  |
| Mike Craig       | 0.80  |
| Rachel Andersen  | 0.00  |
| Kim Marshall     | 0.00  |
| Gary Demars      | 0.00  |
| Craig Andersen   | 0.00  |

## Recent Club Tournament Results

**Nov. 5** – (13 players) 1<sup>st</sup> Ilia Guzei,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Bruce Russell, Cons. Stan Livingston.

**Nov. 19** – (9 players) 1<sup>st</sup> Stan Livingston,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Bruce Russell, Cons. Steve Mayer.

**Dec. 3** – (12 players) 1<sup>st</sup> Stan Livingston,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Steve Mayer, Cons. Lee Pflugrad.

**Dec. 17** – (14 players) 1<sup>st</sup> Gary Hines,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Ilia Guzei, Cons. Tom Machaj.

## >>> REMINDER <<<

Club tournaments start promptly at 7:00 p.m. If you want to get into the tournament, but you may be a few minutes late, leave a message for Tom at 276-8144 or Sam at 258-9815 or e-mail: [ttmachaj@hotmail.com](mailto:ttmachaj@hotmail.com) After 5:30 p.m., call J.T. Whitney's at 274-1776 and leave a message with the staff. We want you to play!

Watch for upcoming news  
on the  
**Wisconsin State Championships**  
to be held  
July 25-27, 2003  
at Radisson Inn  
in Madison, Wisconsin.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## Upcoming Events

**Jan. 7 – Club Tournament.** JT Whitney's Pub & Brewery, 674 S Whitney Way, Madison, WI. (608) 274-1776. 6:30 p.m. Registration. 7:00 p.m. Play begins. \$6/Entry, \$4/1<sup>st</sup> Side pool, \$5/2<sup>nd</sup> Side pool.

**Jan. 17 - 19 – Carolina Invitational.** Holiday Inn - Woodlawn, 212 Woodlawn Rd, Charlotte, NC. (800) 847-7829. 1:00 p.m. Sign-up for Warm-ups and Quickies begins. 10:00 a.m. Saturday registration closes. 10:35 a.m. Calcutta auction. 12:00 noon, play begins. \$225/Open w/ \$100/side, \$125/Intermediate w/ \$50/side, \$40/Novice. Doubles/\$140 per team. Several other events.

**Jan. 21 – Club Tournament.** JT Whitney's Pub & Brewery, 674 S Whitney Way, Madison, WI. (608) 274-1776. 6:30 p.m. Registration. 7:00 p.m. Play begins. \$6/Entry, \$4/1<sup>st</sup> Side pool, \$5/2<sup>nd</sup> Side pool.

**Feb. 4 – Club Tournament.** JT Whitney's Pub & Brewery, 674 S Whitney Way, Madison, WI. (608) 274-1776. 6:30 p.m. Registration. 7:00 p.m. Play begins. \$6/Entry, \$4/1<sup>st</sup> Side pool, \$5/2<sup>nd</sup> Side pool.

**Feb. 9 – Bar Point Doubles Championship.** Champ's, 17 W 517 Roosevelt Rd, Oakbrook Terrace, IL (630) 691-1888. Starts at 12 noon. Doubles entry \$60/team w/ two \$5 coupons. \$40/Open w/ \$10/side, \$20/Intermediate. Entries includes \$5 food & drink coupon.

**Feb. 14 - 16 – The 25th Annual Pittsburgh Backgammon Championships.** Greentree Radisson, 101 Radisson Dr, Pittsburgh, PA. (800) 333-3333. 1:00 p.m. Friday, registration begins.

10:00 a.m. Saturday registration closes. 10:15 a.m. ABT Awards, Calcutta auction. 12 noon play begins. \$235/Championship w/ \$100/side, \$120/Advanced w/ \$50/side, \$35/Novice. Doubles per team: \$150/Open, \$80/Ltd. Several other events.

**Feb. 18 – Club Tournament.** JT Whitney's Pub & Brewery, 674 S Whitney Way, Madison, WI. (608) 274-1776. 6:30 p.m. Registration. 7:00 p.m. Play begins. \$6/Entry, \$4/1<sup>st</sup> Side pool, \$5/2<sup>nd</sup> Side pool.

**Mar. 4 – Club Tournament.** JT Whitney's Pub & Brewery, 674 S Whitney Way, Madison, WI. (608) 274-1776. 6:30 p.m. Registration. 7:00 p.m. Play begins. \$6/Entry, \$4/1<sup>st</sup> Side pool, \$5/2<sup>nd</sup> Side pool.

**Mar. 18 – Club Tournament.** JT Whitney's Pub & Brewery, 674 S Whitney Way, Madison, WI. (608) 274-1776. 6:30 p.m. Registration. 7:00 p.m. Play begins. \$6/Entry, \$4/1<sup>st</sup> Side pool, \$5/2<sup>nd</sup> Side pool.

**Mar. 21 - 23 – 2003 Midwest Backgammon Championships.** Wyndham Lisle, 3000 Warrenville Rd, Lisle, IL. (800) WYNDHAM. 3:00 p.m. Friday, registration begins. 10:30 a.m. Saturday registration closes. 11:00 a.m. Calcutta auction. Play begins following auction. \$300/Championship, \$150/Advanced, \$30/Limited. Doubles/\$120 per team w/ \$80/side. Several other events.

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*Madison Backgammon News* is published bimonthly to promote the game of backgammon in south central Wisconsin. Madison Backgammon Club meets every Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m. at J.T. Whitney's Pub & Brewery. Club tournaments are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of every month. Chouettes and one-on-one play are conducted on all other Tuesdays and after players have completed their tournament matches. For further information, contact Tom Machaj at 608-276-8144 or e-mail: [ttmachaj@hotmail.com](mailto:ttmachaj@hotmail.com)