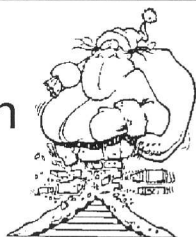


Hoosier
Backgammon
Club

December 2002



Texan Conquers Nevada

by Jake Jacobs

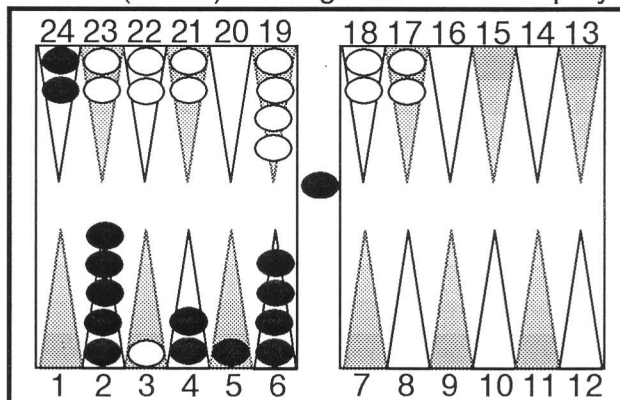
The last couple of years Butch and Mary Ann have seen a real growth spurt by the Indiana Open. There are few tournaments in the US larger. Recently, they went out to Nevada to take a look at one, the Nevada State Championships. I don't know exactly how many players Director Howard Markowitz drew between all the events, but there must have been well over 300. You could almost see Butch taking it all in, and thinking to himself: "It's doable." And Mary Ann figuring: "Just a few more \$20 quickies..." They also got to see some great backgammon.

The event opened with the \$13,000 entry ProAm, won by the team of **Armando Balbi** and **Jerry Grandell** in a 23-point thriller that came down to DMP before they hit a last minute shot, and claimed the title from challengers **Martha Ghio** and **Kent Goulding**. There was also the prestigious Super Jackpot, won by **Stu Hosen** in a victory over **Mike Svobodny**. **Stu** also won a \$1500 jackpot, beating **Nack Ballard** in the final.

The main event, the Nevada State Championships, had one of the strongest lineups ever. In a field of 118 players at least 40 were world class. In a normal tournament an Intergalactic Supernova like **Rick Barabino** would be a guaranteed seed. This time he was but half of a two-man field, the OTHER half being ProAm winner **Jerry Grandell**! There wasn't enough room in the two-man fields for all the Giant 32 players attending, so there were plenty of bargain five-man fields to be had. It is a measure of the overall level of backgammon being played these days that none of the final four were from the ranks of "top" players, yet they had had no trouble prevailing over the seeds.

The 17-point final saw youth meeting experience. Reza Rezaian, a fine young player from New York, faced Curtis Lucas, the Texas veteran. Rallying from a 13-8 deficit, Reza won a redoubled bearoff, and in the next game threatened to take the lead.

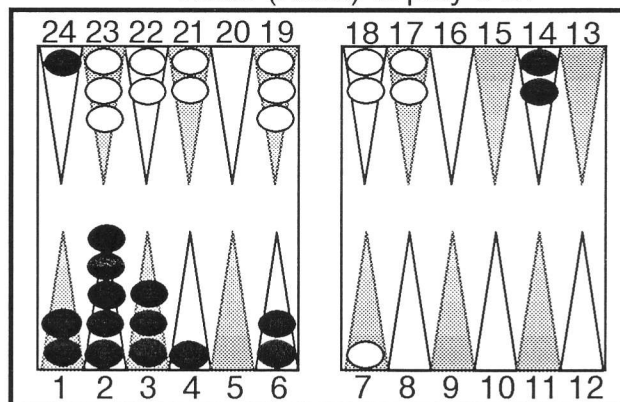
Black (Curtis) leading 13-12 to 17 to play 1-1?



2

The first two aces are obvious: bar/24, 6/5. Curtis chose 4/3(2)x for his last two, whereas I would have simply made the ace. As my granny used to tell my grandpa: "Don't bite down before you have your teeth in." (Actually, my grandfather didn't wear dentures, but these are the lengths I will go to for you, my readers, ripping every tooth from my grandfather's mouth just to prove a point!) As it turns out the plays are nearly pickem, so Curtis gets full marks for execution, if not for style. Reza was so impressed that he fanned several times, and by the time he was fully in, things looked like this.

White (Reza) to play 3-2?



2

I had thought there were five different plays here, but trust Paul Franks to announce that he liked a different one. So, I rolled out six different choices. Hitting, or making the 5-point are certainly both candidates. There is also 8/6, 8/5 slotting the 5-point, and the hide-the-bagel play of 8/3. There is simply running 18/13, and there is the duplicator (thanks Paul!) 18/15, 6/4.

Before looking at Snowie I would eliminate two plays quickly. I would not play 8/6, 8/5, as the small gain when Curtis rolls 4-1 or 4-2 can't compensate for the failure to make the solid board if missed. I would also eliminate 18/15, 6/4; duplication is usually only at all important when there is nothing else to think about, so killing a builder for the 6-point can't be right just for the

Hoosier Backgammon Club
Home Page: <http://www.hoosierbgclub.org>
E-Mail: indybg@comcast.net

Butch & Mary Ann Meese
1008 Tuckahoe, Indianapolis, IN 46260-2215
(317) 255-8902

sake of duplicating. Of the others, I would shy away from hitting, as it starts the wrong point (killing that same builder for the 6-point), makes it slightly easier for him to reach my 5-point, and gives him a chance to enter with an ace, and possibly scramble while I am on the bar. I don't like 18/13 much either, which was Reza's play. If hit I am not happy, and even if missed I'm not so happy. Suppose Curtis' throw is 5-4? I will have 13 immediate shots, then nothing. If I stay back, I have 6 immediate shots and will have many indirect or direct shots as he tries to swing those three men around. Numbers like 6-1, 5-1 and 3-1 are awkward for him, but, while 6-1 is a number that would make me glad to have moved, on the other two he'll be happy enough to clear, duplicating aces.

That leaves 8/3 and 8/5, 7/5 to choose from. The first, 8/3, is safest, and does the least as far as taking away builders for the 5-point, but that brings us to the crux of the matter. With all other plays we are left worrying about the pernicious gap on our 5-point. Only one play eliminates all worry. True, there is a bigger downside to match the bigger gain, but the risk is exaggerated. If hit, Reza is a favorite to enter immediately. With two lurkers awaiting Curtis' three stragglers he has lots of chances to recover. In fact, after a sequence like 6-2 (24/18x/16), 5-3 (bar/20, 8/5) Reza would have a money beaver if redoubled. At the score, even a six out, followed by a fan, would not permit Curtis to redouble.

Snowie prefers making the 5-point to all other plays, and prefers it by

a lot. The easiest way to arrive at the same conclusion is to realize that, if you had the ability to call your dice you would have called for a number that made the 5-point, and that's what the dice handed you.

Curtis rolled a 6-2, and Reza fanned, so neither his play nor the best play would have worked. Curtis took a 15-12 lead, but Reza won the next four points to lead 16-15 Crawford. But Curtis was able to win a gammon in the Crawford game. The Nevada State Champion...is a Texan.

HBC 2002 Standings

The Player of the Month for November was **Chuck Stimming** with **140** gammon points.

- 1 Jim Curtis..... 1565
- 2 Rick Steele.....1160
- 3 Butch Meese..... 1084
- 4 Larry Strommen..... 987
- 5 Sean Garber..... 912
- 6 Chuck Stimming.....841
- 7 Woody Woodworth... 821
- 8 Mary Ann Meese.....710
- 9 Gabe Stiasny..... 690
- 10 Terry Bateman..... 552
- Scott Day..... 458
- Josh Riddell..... 199
- Al Gomez..... 133
- Chuck Bower.....120
- Dan Moore..... 114
- Jeff Flowers.....108
- Frank Scott.....104
- Kevin Heacox.....100
- Walter Trice.....100
- Luke Clippinger..... 80
- Peter Kalba..... 69
- Dean Adamian..... 60
- Jon Vietor.....60

- Steve Hurst..... 59
- Joe Miller..... 51
- Mark Swanson..... 42
- Katya Beshparova..... 42
- Alan Tavel.....39
- David Schwind.....36
- Dragan Stevanovic..... 36
- Shaw Dogan..... 36
- Paul Franks.....36
- Doug Roberts.....36
- Terry Leahy.....36
- Diane Varner.....36
- Rob Adams..... 30
- Rob Maier..... 28
- Stan Denski.....26
- Mary Franks.....26
- Jeff Baker.....22
- Dave Groner..... 18
- Dion Hogan.....18
- Mike Kelley..... 16
- Carl Sorg.....16
- Ken Inman..... 16
- Charley Haley..... 12
- Roger Blaine.....10
- Butch Bates.....10
- Fred Kalantari..... 10
- Bill Wilner.....10
- Karen Davis..... 10
- Andy Liebenthal..... 10
- Bob Weeks..... 8
- Cathie Benneth..... 8
- Jim Roston.....8
- Rudy Silich.....8
- Jon Stephens.....8
- Jerry Godsey.....8

We wish you and your family and friends a Happy Holiday and Great New Year.

No Backgammon
Wednesday December 25th

No Backgammon
Wednesday January 1st

	November 6th	November 13th	November 20th	November 27th
1st	Rick Steele	Chuck Stimming	Chuck Stimming	Larry Strommen
2nd	Jim Curtis	Steve Hurst	Josh Riddell	Woody Woodworth
2nd	Mary Ann Meese	Jim Curtis	Jim Curtis	Sean Garber

Feb 14-16..... **25th Pittsburgh Champs & ABT Awards**, Greentree Radisson, Pittsburgh, PA..... (412) 922-8400
 Feb 27-Mar 02.. **Southern Open**, Sleep Inn, Atlanta Ga.....(270) 333-1876
 Mar 21-23..... **20th Midwest Championships**, Wyndham Lisle Hotel, Lisle IL.....(773) 583-6464
 Wednesdays.. 7:00 PM at **Neon Johnny's**, 86th & Township Line Rd (Cellular 442-4065)..... HBC 255-8902