

Adam Versaw

backgammon sets in the hands of students and cultivating their interest, he says, is the only way to make the game thrive.

Adam would like GridGammon to add some features. It's a cool site, he says, but it would be nice to have the option of shutting off outside chat. He also often watches portions of his friends' matches when he has some free time -- and in those situations he would like to be able to save the whole match even if he wasn't present throughout. ♦

- KAREN DAVIS



⬆ THE VERSAW FAMILY

Iris, Adam, and Isaac Versaw photographed by Adam's wife, Michelle Versaw.

BACKGAMMON TUTOR

Backgammon Insights in a Fun Interactive Way!

For beginners, intermediates, AND expert players.

Quizzes, lessons, and exercises created by top authors & players explain concepts of play in a simplified format.

Flash card option to test yourself & improve mastery.

App and sample Topics are free. Additional Topics start at only 99 cents.

Available at www.mindgamescenter.com or on your Android as Backgammon Tutor.

www.mindgamescenter.com

EVA ZIZKOVA

Winner of the 2013 USBGF Circuit Monthly for June

Interview by Karen Davis

“

I like participating in the USBGF Circuit. On the one hand, it presents an opportunity to play with excellent players; and because it is not a money game, I do believe there are not the same attempts to cheat as on other servers.



⬆

EVA AT WSOB

Eva Zizkova seen here at the 2009 World Series of Backgammon at the Corinthia Hotel in Prague.

Q&A

Q: When and why did you start playing backgammon?

A: I was told about backgammon in 2003 by my husband. Up to that moment, it was a totally unknown game to me. In fact, I didn't like it much in the beginning. Some time after that, I discovered the GNUBG program; and once I managed to move the checkers, I thought I had learned the game. We played backgammon with our son, who was then 5 years old, only at home. My son always loved numbers and calculat-

ing, so this was exactly the game for him. By accident I found out there was a small tournament in Prague which my son could attend. There I met Ivo Kovář, the doyen of Czech backgammon, who had lived in the States for many years. He told me about a group of enthusiasts who regularly played in a chouette. I started playing with them (without my son, of course :-)) and then I started to understand how wonderful, exciting and complex a game backgammon is.

Q: Do you play in live tournaments as well as online?

A: Backgammon is almost unknown in the Czech Republic. That's why I play more often online. Sometimes I play chouette with friends, but I prefer tournaments. In the Czech Republic, we have a few local tournaments and also the Czechoslovak backgammon league. Its first year just finished this June. I finished in second place, right after the best Czech player Honza Cerny. For the last 4 years I have gone to one international tournament per year. This year I took part in the Nordic Open tournament. I was excited by the number of players and by its perfect organization.

Eva Zizkova

Q: What have been your most memorable experiences playing live, online?

A: An unforgettable experience which influenced my future orientation in backgammon was the WSOB in 2009 at the Corinthia Hotel in Prague. This was the first time I could see the world's top players in action. I took part in the tournament, though only in the Intermediate division and without any theoretical study. Since I can't attend international tournaments very often, every tournament I take part in is an experience for me.

Q: Which do you prefer and why?

A: I prefer matches, or tournaments rather than money games. I like both live and online playing. Online games can be played whenever I have time and I can stay with my family. The advantage is also the post-

game analysis in ExtremeGammon and the chance to see my errors. Nevertheless, I prefer live games because they are more exciting. I can't really say why :-)

Q: How did you find your experience participating in the USBGF Online Circuit?

A: I like participating in the USBGF Circuit. On the one hand, it presents an opportunity to play with excellent players; and because it is not a money game, I do believe there are not the same attempts to cheat as on other servers. I think of my participation in the USBGF tournaments as a good preparation for live tournaments and I try to play as responsibly as possible.

Q: What suggestions would you have for USBGF to enhance playing opportunities for members?

A: I am not sure if it's possible for online tournaments, but I like the format of dual-duel, of which I heard for the first time this year. On one side of the tournament bracket is the classical system of wins and losses; the other side of the bracket measures the quality of the player's performance. Each game is analyzed in ExtremeGammon, and the better performer moves ahead without having to win.

Thank you and all your USBGF team for your great work for backgammon! ♦

- KAREN DAVIS



MARIO SAVAN

Winner of the 2013 USBGF Circuit Monthly for March

By Karen Davis

A SAVVY PLAYER

Mario Savan, winner of the USBGF March 2013 Circuit, loves backgammon. It shows! Mario has a Win-Loss record of 43-16 – more winning matches on the U.S. Backgammon Federation Online Leader Board than any of the more than 350 players registered in the Online Circuit. At 59 matches played as of the first of August, his nearest competitor for total matches played is far behind at 42. And at 73 percent wins, he ranks in the top 20 on the Online Leader Board on that measure of performance. His USBGF online Elo rating of 1822 puts him in the top fifth of the field.

When he can take time away from his busy real estate/mortgage loan business, Mario plays in live American Backgammon Tour (ABT) tournaments as well. In



THE AFTER TOURNAMENT AFTER-TOURNAMENT

A priceless shot of Mario Savan after the After-Tournament Tournament in San Francisco in 2012.