

**ONLINE QUALIFIER SENSATIONS DOMINATE WORLD'S  
RICHEST BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT  
MAERTENS WINS RICHEST PRIZE EVER AT  
PARTYGAMMON.COM MILLION  
GERMANY AND DENMARK ARE SKILL GAME'S  
SUPERPOWERS**

GIBRALTAR: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2007: 33-year-old German Andreas Maertens is celebrating after winning the inaugural PartyGammon.com Million at the Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas (21<sup>st</sup>-25th January), scooping a world record \$600,400 payout for a backgammon tournament. Maertens beat 36 year-old Danish backgammon ace Lasse Hjorth Madsen 23-22 in a thrilling final in front of Matchroom Sport's television cameras. Both players were online qualifiers from [www.PartyGammon.com](http://www.PartyGammon.com) in a field that featured 10 former World Champions and 25 of the top 32 'Giants of Backgammon.' The total prize pool exceeded the guaranteed \$1 million and hit over \$1.2 million. Maertens qualified online for \$440, while Madsen reached the tournament from a \$35 online satellite.

A PartyGammon.com spokesman said: "We saw the huge rise of the internet qualifier in poker and, remarkably, at the very first attempt we have seen online qualifiers compete and beat the world's best players at backgammon. Like poker, the entrance of the online aces promises to change the game of backgammon forever."

Maertens, from Bielefeld, Germany, has form in both backgammon and poker, winning the German Backgammon Open in 1996 and regularly playing on the poker circuit. He was blown away by his win: "When I came here I hoped I had a chance but never ever really thought that I could win as there were so many strong players in the field. I'm not sure what I am going to do with the money, I'm certainly going to play more high stakes backgammon but I am also going to buy my girlfriend Monica a car."

Asked what he thought of becoming a backgammon superstar from its biggest ever tournament he said "It doesn't get much better than this. How am I going to top this? I certainly didn't count myself as the best player here – I think I would be in the top 100 though." This concurred with the views of bookmakers [www.PartyBets.com](http://www.PartyBets.com), who placed Maertens middle of the field pre-tournament with France's Francois Tardieu and Denmark's Sander Lyloff the favourites.

The fact that the final was Germany v Denmark didn't surprise the players watching on the Dragon's Patio at the Atlantis Resort or even the winner, backgammon's new superstar Maertens: "Germany and Denmark were the strongest countries represented in terms of numbers and had excellent players. There are more skilful individuals from other nations but in terms of quantity these countries are the superpowers."

Maertens built up a huge lead in the final and it seemed like his win would be inevitable but Madsen, a Research Executive from Copenhagen, who scooped \$144,096 for finishing runner-up, made a huge fight back and was pragmatic about his failure to clear the final hurdle after coming back to just one point away from victory. "In backgammon you can be almost there, then all of a sudden far away from the winning post again, it makes the game so thrilling. I am disappointed but I will be back to fight another day."

A PartyGammon.com spokesman continued: "This tournament has taken backgammon to a new level and taken a previously unknown community into the mainstream. There were plenty of characters around from groups that enhanced their sports betting by using a doubling cube, to Victoria Smirnoff, an attractive Russian player who was staying in the suite James Bond occupied

during Casino Royale. One thing is for sure though, the internet qualifiers have arrived and are here to stay.”

PartyGammon.com is a popular member of PartyGaming Plc's growing suite of online games that includes PartyPoker.com, PartyCasino.com, PartyBingo.com, PartyBets.com, Gamebookers.com and EmpirePoker.com. [www.PartyGammon.com](http://www.PartyGammon.com) burst on the scene in June 2006 and has quickly moved to become the favourite of online backgammon players.

## **PARTYGAMMON.COM MILLION BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT**

(January 21-25, 2007 - Paradise Island, The Bahamas.)

### Main Flight

Winner: Andreas Maertens (Germany)  
Runner-Up: Lasse Hjorth Madsen (Denmark)  
Semi-Finalist: Nack Ballard (USA)  
Semi-Finalist: Ralf Jonas (Germany)  
Quarter-Finalist: Alex Lehmann (USA)  
Quarter-Finalist: Sander Lylloff (Denmark)  
Quarter-Finalist: Arkadiy Tsinis (USA)  
Quarter-Finalist: Henrik Veje (Denmark)

### Consolation Flight

Winner: Lars Tralolt (Denmark)  
Runner-Up: Torsten Haase (Germany)  
Semi-Finalist: Kent Goulding (USA)  
Semi-Finalist: Yaniv Shimony (Israel)

### \$200 JACKPOT (11)

Winner: Odin Spillum Svendsen (Norway)  
Runner-Up: Steen Grønbech (Denmark)

### \$500 JACKPOT (16)

Winner: Neil Garvie (Canada)  
Runner-Up: Frank Frigo (USA)

### \$1,000 JACKPOT (18)

Winner: Nodar Gagua (Russia)  
Runner-Up: Sakura Sugawara (USA)

### \$2,000 JACKPOT (16)

Winner: Rick Barabino (USA)  
Runner-Up: Morten Holm (Denmark)

### \$5,000 DOUBLES (8 teams)

Winners: Lars Bønding (Denmark) & Mark Teltscher (England)

Runner-Ups: Leo Fernandez (Argentina) & Christian Toth (Brazil)

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