

Norwegian takes Monopoly world title

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A lucky swap and some eager building propelled a 19-year-old Norwegian student to the top of board game fame and sent three would-be tycoons to the poor house at the Monopoly World Championship in Las Vegas.

Bjorn Halvard, who graduated this year from the Oslo Private Gymnasium school, captured the title on Thursday when the battleship token of 25-year-old Geoff Christopher of New Zealand landed consecutively on Pacific Avenue and North Carolina Avenue, and he couldn't afford the combined \$1,600 rent.

"(I'm) the most surprised you could ever be," Halvard told The Associated Press. "I think this was a really good final. It was the best game I played in the whole tournament."

Halvard won \$20,580 in real money for the title — the total amount in the bank of a standard Monopoly game. The other finalists won nothing beyond the trip that brought each of the 41 competitors to the Caesars Palace hotel-casino on the Las Vegas Strip to represent their home countries as national champions.

After taking out 24-year-old Russian Oleg Korostelev, Halvard bankrupted American champion Rick Marinaccio, a 26-year-old corporate lawyer from Buffalo, N.Y., who was trying to become the first U.S. player to win the board game championship since 1974.

Halvard was the only player without a monopoly after trades gave Marinaccio the magenta property group, Christopher the oranges and Korostelev the more expensive greens.

But the game turned when Korostelev swapped Halvard a cheaper light blue property

to gain the red property group, giving Halvard an inexpensive monopoly with cash to develop. The move surprised Halvard and the other players because Korostelev couldn't afford to build on the property group and didn't negotiate for cash.

"I thought I was in such a great position," Marinaccio said. "I didn't see that coming and I don't think New Zealand saw that either."

Halvard mortgaged his other properties and loaded up on hotels for Oriental, Vermont and Connecticut Avenues, seeing his opponents' tokens within range of the spaces on the board.

The move was risky because his iron token faced a gauntlet side of developed magenta and orange properties, and Halvard said he may have lost if his opponents dodged his hotels.

"Either they come to me and I get enough money to survive, or I go out," he said.

He finished with \$6,888 in cash and assets in the game.

Halvard said he planned to take a helicopter tour Friday night of the Grand Canyon and the Las Vegas skyline, then visit friends in Los Angeles before returning home from his first trip to the United States.

The final lasted about 45 minutes, quick for a tournament game and far less time than a typical casual Monopoly game. Home games traditionally take longer because of popular house rules — like \$500 under Free Parking — that give players more chances to stay competitive.

The tournament games also used a third die — known as the speed die — that sped up the action significantly. The tournament die manipulates moves and often forces players into spaces where they have to pay rent during the late stages of games.

The world tournament, held periodically and last staged in

Tokyo in 2004, began Wednesday at Caesars Palace with players from 41 different countries. Games were played in English, with interpreters on hand to help players who spoke different languages negotiate trades with one another.

The real-estate trading game based on the streets of Atlantic City, N.J. first sold in 1935, after inventor Charles B. Darrow of Germantown, Pa., showed the games to Parker Brothers executives. More than 275 million copies of the game's various versions have sold in 106 countries, according to toy and game distributor Hasbro, Inc.



Sheetz vs. Rutters for late-night snacking

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It is a very late night. Perhaps you have been studying all day for the big exam. Maybe you just got off a long shift at work. All you know is that you are hungry and your options are limited. Where can you go on a student budget at 11 p.m. or later? For the answer, I asked a few members of the student body.

Mark Minchoff is a senior communications major. With his Buddy-Holly glasses and laid back appearance, one gets the impression that this young man has seen a few late nights. He quickly mentioned a few of his favorite late night haunts.

Giant Foods was top of the list. Marc claims if he has any energy to cook, he can count on the 24-hour grocery store to have a big bag of Herr's salt and vinegar chips and whatever is on his menu that night. Next on his list is Midtown Pizza.

Marc says that the local pizzeria is open until 12 on weekends. The slices are "amazing, absolutely amazing" but he recommends the hot pepper relish over fries. Then again, if you are out past closing time, you may want to sit

down at the Capital City Diner.

"The only thing I ever get there is the Philly Salad," exclaims Marc, "it's grilled chicken, fries, and cheese in a big salad bowl."

Some would take a different late-night path. For them, the AM drive-thru is an inexpensive, low-fuss meal.

"I get the Wendy's Baconator," says freshman Dustin Hoepfor, "it's so good but it'll make you hate yourself."

Hoepfor's friend Ian Tambertino jumps in pointing out the seemingly infamous Wendy's dollar menu. His eyes look upward in mock fantasizing of a fast-food banquet. Next in line is the number 7 chicken quesadilla from Taco Bell.

I was not satisfied with the fast-food options I was slowly collecting from Dustin and others like him. I knew there was at least one place that delivered decent food at all hours on a student budget. The answer was virtually unanimous from my sources—Sheetz.

For those unfamiliar with the area, Sheetz is a gas station and convenience store chain extending from PA through MD, WV, VA and Ohio. What has distinguished them in recent years is the Made-To-Order (MTO) kitchens that many of

them now feature.

On the heels of this busy and expanding chain is Rutters. While also serving as gas station and convenience store, Rutters also boast it's own dairy and beverage products in addition to the MTO kitchens.

I thought it was time for a showdown of the 24-hour, late-night favorites of students and travelers so I pulled some facts and did a few visits to get a sense of both stores. Here is how the two chains compared.

First and foremost Sheetz wins in location. The Sheetz corporate website shows 426 locations for this state alone and search options based on whether you want one with "fryz", coffee bar, smoothie bar, or any other store specifics that may vary. Rutters sadly only has 56 present locations. The closest store is on Nyes Rd.

Next is the category of incentive. Sheetz offers "Advantage Cards" in three categories that provide gas discounts for shopping at their stores. Rutters similarly offers a "Rewards Card" that allow you to gain points toward discounts at their stores.

In menu category, Sheetz wins in sheer number of items. Their website offers a menu for download that does not even

have all the options listed at their Paxton St. location. This indicates that more items are being added regularly, as any Sheetz patron will attest.

Rutters may not have the same breadth of options as their competitor, but they do have a few noteworthy specifics that are lacking on the Sheetz menu. Numerous desserts such as cheesecake, brownie bites, and banana foster bites.

Sheetz lacks a dessert listing but offers several shakes and smoothies that make up for the difference.

Rutters offers soups that vary daily with the exception of the chili which is offered 24-7. Unfortunately, there is more flavorful chili to be found in other places. The side dishes make up for the sub par chili. All are worth a taste but I stand by the classic potato cakes.

I would not recommend the side dishes at Sheetz although the variety "fryz" are not entirely unworthy of eating. I would, however, recommend the Nachos Grande. These are not a side but an event. Customize them with vegetables, sour cream, and whatever your stomach desires. Your options far outweigh the pitiful spread by Rutters.

When it comes to subs, Sheetz

has more kinds of subs but Rutters has noteworthy options. Rutters has Garlic, wheat, white, Italian and everything rolls which they will toast for a warm late night bite. Rutters also has an option for seasoned mushrooms which compliment several sub choices.

For the salad eater, do not go to Rutters. In my research for this article, I have had a few too many poor comments on their salads. In terms of price and quality, go with Sheetz.

From Rutters, I opt for the Bacon, lettuce and tomato sub on a toasted garlic roll. I will usually have them add ranch dressing and the mushrooms. (It's a personal choice.) Add in a bowl of soup and I have a late-night meal both hot and filling.

From Sheetz, I have a split answer. For something small but delicious, I recommend the BLT pretzel melt sandwich. If you have not tried one, do yourself a favor and get one. Otherwise I opt for the low priced steak fajita (or two) with a nachos grande to share with a few friends.

If you find yourself up late with your stomach growling, I highly recommend both Sheetz and Rutters for a delicious meal. With MTO touch screen ordering, you decide how you want it. How can you go wrong? Happy Eating!