Volume VIII No.III



U.S.	$1.50
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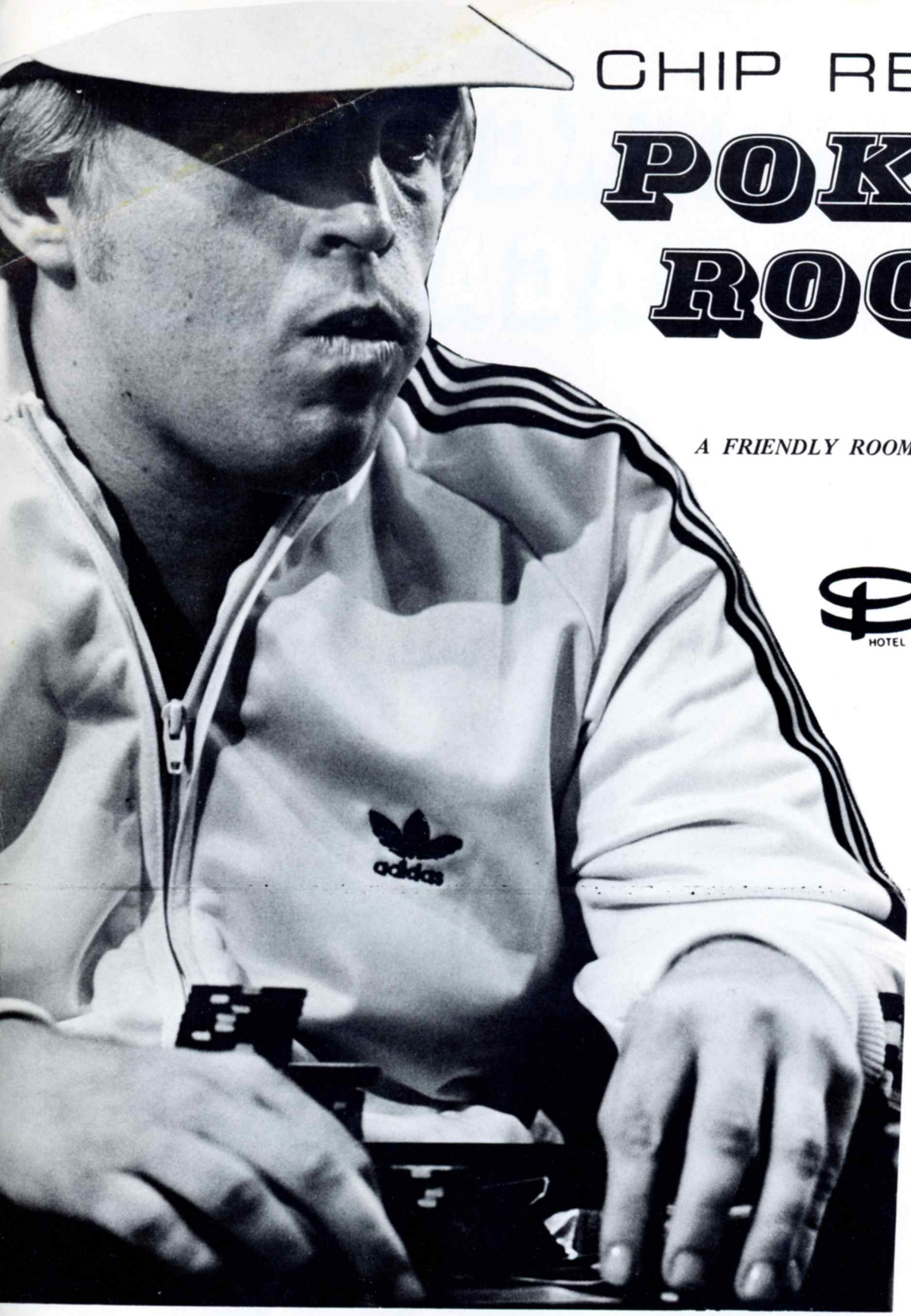


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If your club IS NOT LISTED, please contact the Las Vegas Backgammon Club and we'll see that it is!

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PUBLISHER
Michael Maxakuli

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Linda Kruegel

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CORRESPONDENTS
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PHOTOGRAPHER
Andrea Waller

PROBLEM PAGE
Tim Wisecarver

TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS
Harold Hanson
Ronda Stoltz
Debbie Lanham

TYPOGRAPHY
Executive Publishing

DISTRIBUTED BY
Las Vegas News Agency, Inc.

PRINTED BY
Executive Publishing

LAS VEGAS OCT. 1980

BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE

An International Publication

Editorial Offices: 9457 Las Vegas Blvd. So. #58, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119. Published since 1974. Advertising Offices: 9457 Las Vegas Blvd. So. #58, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119



COVER: JAMES DARREN, actor, singer and current strip star of the Sahara Hotel. His screen triumphs include "Guns of Navaronne," "Diamondhead" and the "Gidget" movies in which he stole the show with the "Moondoggie" character.

"Goodby Cruel World" was just one of his top ten hits during his teen idol recording star period.

James Darren also starred in the long running "Time Tunnel" T.V. series. He is currently doing dramatic roles on T.V. and appearing at the Sahara Hotel.

James Darren is a motorcycle and automobile enthusiast who also finds backgammon a relaxing pastime.

Cover courtesy of Sahara Hotel and David Dearing.
Photo by Andrea Waller

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LAS VEGAS BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE (ISSN 0119-6320) is published bi-monthly by the Las Vegas Backgammon Club, Inc. Michael Maxakuli, President. Editorial and advertising offices at 9457 Las Vegas Boulevard So., #58, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119, (702)454-2403. Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Las Vegas, Nevada. POSTMASTER: Send address changes, undelivered copies and orders for subscriptions to be sent to 9457 Las Vegas Blvd. So. #58. Las Vegas, Nevada 89119. Vol. VIII, No. III © 1980, Las Vegas Backgammon Club, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Change of Address: Allow four weeks advance notice and include old as well as new address. All articles must be submitted no later than publishing month. Subscription prices: $10.00 for one year; $15.00 for two years; $20.00 for three years. Add $5.00 per year for postage outside the United States. Renewal orders must be received at least eight weeks prior to expiration date to assure continued service.

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For more details see your Travel Agent or call Club Med, toll-free, at 800—528-3100.



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BACKGAMMON BUSTS

There is a serious threatening trend that forebodes trouble for backgammon. Backgammon's future is being jeopardized by continued harassment from self-rightous authorities. Police, district attorneys and various other upholders of community morals are hassling backgammon players with alarming and ever increasing regularity. In spite of the fact that backgammon has been proven again and again to be a game of skill, the powers in many communities choose not to see past the dice (in their minds a traditional gambling implement). This is especially true during an election year as this is.

In the beginning, it was amusing to hear of an occasional raid or anachronistic ruling. But, now, the increased incidence of anti-backgammon stands is starting to worry us.

The Las Vegas Backgammon Club is in the unique position of enjoying the obvious benefits of a pro-gambling state. For that same reason, we are contacted by backgammon promoters throughout the country for advice and information. Although, each case is unique, they all stem from plain public ignorance.

It is time for a united effort by backgammon promoters around the country to educate the public. We propose a national fund to be set up and administered by one or several of the well-known and respected names in backgammon. The next time a local backgammon enterpreneur is harassed, let's get in there and fight for him with money and expertise. A legal pro-backgammon precedence must be set somewhere no matter how small the community.

THE LAS VEGAS BACKGAMMON CLUB IS IN THE UNIQUE POSITION OF ENJOYING THE OBVIOUS BENEFITS OF A PRO-GAMBLING STATE.

The American Association of Backgammon Clubs has contacted attorney William E. Boyd of San Francisco. He is the most well-known backgammon lawyer. He numbers among his clients some of the most famous backgammon players in the world. He has agreed to serve as an advisor to any backgammon club being harassed by local authorities.

Boyd, a backgammon enthusiast, should henceforth be contacted on backgammon legal matters (415-433-0303).

He should be made aware of any cases of precedence in the last few years. All pending cases should also be referred to him so that a legal information bank can be established.

We can't ignore the problem. The AABC intends to fight. Backgammon must not be turned into a back alley game.

Support the effort to keep backgammon free and legal everywhere.



FALL TOURNAMENTS

DATE	TOURNAMENT	DIRECTOR	LOCATION	SPONSOR OR OPERATION
Sept. 11 - 14	U.S. Backgammon Championships	Orril Martin (813)536-8712	Florida	American Backgammon Assoc.
Sept. 12 - 14	Geneva Tournament	Roland Jakober (50) 20 06 63	Switzerland	Middle East Airlines
Sept. 13 - 14	3rd Annual Barclay Cooke Traveling Cub Tournament	Lee Silverstein (612) 698-4436	St. Paul, Minnesota	Minnesota Renaissance Festival
Sept. 19 - 21	Venice Cristal Cup	Luigi Villa 02-6591612	Italy	Merit/Venice Casino
Sept. 26 - 28	Chicago Classic	Valerie Valentine (312) 782-0142	Illinois	Lewis Deyong/ Black & White
Sept. 27-28	Portland Amateur Open Championships	Russ Kolemaine (503) 289-2309	Oregon	Aldo's
Oct. 3 - 5	San Diego Open	Drew Tanzman (714) 753-5940	La Jolla	So. California Backgammon Assn.
Oct. 4 - 11	Club-Med Backgammon Championship	Billy Eisenberg (213) 552-3693	Bahamas	Club-Med
Oct. 6 - 9	Scottish Backgammon Championship	Libby Weir-Breen	Scotland	Buchanan's
Oct. 25 - 26	Nebraska Challenge Cup	Carolyn Caniglia (402) 330-3333	Nebraska	Great Plains Backgammon Club
Oct. 25 - 26	Buchanan's Caracas Clasico	Caracas Bridge Club	Venezuela	Buchanan's Reserve
Nov. 1-2	Salishan 2nd Annual Amateur	Ted Barr (206) 285-6768	Oregon	Pacific N.W. Backgammon
Nov. 7 - 9	Italian Backgammon Championship	Luigi Villa (93) 30 99 31	Italy	Merit
Nov. 7 - 9	Cloud's Cal'Neva Lodge Classic	Jim Stern (916) 392-1396 or (702) 831- (702) 831-4506	Crystal Bay, Nevada	Cloud's Cal'Neva Lodge
Nov. 13-14	NEBC Benefit	Francesca Parkinson (617) 563-5787	Massachusetts	New England Backgammon Club
Nov. 28 - 30	Singapore Classic	Mary McIntyre (713) 781-0720	Singapore	Hilton

Attention tournament directors: Send extra invitations to the LVBC for distribution to players requesting tournament information



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Portofino
Cocktails and Gourmet dining with the lighter touch of Northern Italy. 5:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

Licorice Schtick
At the entrance to La Promenade. Ice Cream, snacks and all kinds of goodies. 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

It is a special summer treat for you and yours at the Desert Inn. The new restaurants have become the talk of the town. Lunch in the Grill Room in the La Promenade has become business persons' favorite. And at night, in the popular Portofino, couples find food and fun while dining above the casino. The ultimate in dining delicacies is found evenings in the world famous Monte Carlo French Restaurant.

Yes, dining is a true delight at the Desert Inn and Country Club.

For reservations call: 733-4444.

DESERT INN and Country Club

MONTE CARLO — 1980



It is hard to write in superlatives only, so here are the cut and dry facts of the Lewis Deyong/Merit/La Société des Bains de Mer Monaco tournament.

Main Tournament (280 players × $500 + $15,000 added + Calcutta)

1ST WALTER CORTELLA – Mexico
2ND AL HODIS – U.S.A.
3RD ROGER LOW – U.S.A.
3RD LUIGI VILLA

1st Consolation

1ST LORENZ — U.K.
2ND TISSONA – Israel
3RD LITREL – U.S.
3RD DIRNFELD – Colombia

2nd Consolation

1ST SCONYERS – U.S.A.
2ND KING – U.K.
3RD MAXAKULI – U.S.A.
3RD BIONDA – Italy

Last Chance

1ST PAPAZIAN – U.S.A.
2ND SNEOVAL – Monaco

Jackpot Special (over 100 players at $1,000 each — winner takes all).

1ST ROGER LOW – U.S.A.
2ND KUMAR MOTAKHASSES – Israel
3RD NACK BALLARD – U.S.A.
3RD S. SOBIESKI – U.K.

... AND THE BOOK

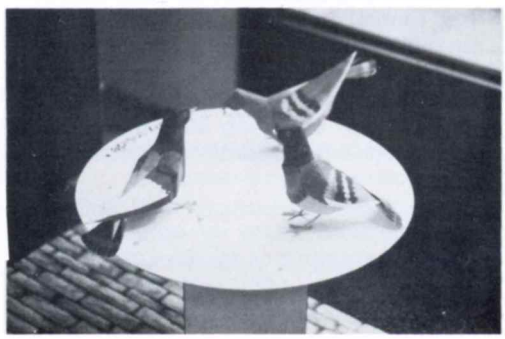
Peter Gold, the fretter, was the official bookie in partners with the casino. Thanks to Cortella and Mexico, they cleaned everyone out. The betting service was one of the highlights of the Monte Carlo tournament.

Instant betting with an ever changing odds and situations was exciting. Here are the opening day odds of the Official Betting Service a.k.a. the book.

PRIZE MONEY
280 Entries @ $500 $140,000

CHAMPIONSHIP	60% = $84,000	
WINNER:	60% =	$50,400
RUNNER-UP:	20% =	$16,800
SEMI-FINALISTS:	10% =	$ 8,400 each
FIRST CONSOLATION	15% = $21,000	
WINNER:	60% =	$12,600
RUNNER-up:	20% =	$ 4,200
SEMI-FINALISTS:	10% =	$ 2,100 each
SECOND CONSOLATION	15% = $21,000	
WINNER:	60% =	$12,600
RUNNER-UP:	20% =	$ 4,200
SEMI-FINALISTS:	10% =	$ 2,100 each
LAST CHANCE	10% = $14,000	
WINNER:	70% =	$ 9,800
RUNNER-UP:	30% =	$ 4,200





J. Dwek	(UK)	33/1
K. Motakhasses	(Iran)	33/1
P. Magriel	(USA)	33/1
R. Low	(USA)	33/1
J. Lester	(USA)	33/1
G. Scalamandre	(Italy)	33/1
E. Tissona	(Israel)	33/1
A. Martin	(USA)	40/1
N. Erdeniz	(Turkey)	40/1
C. Papazian	(USA)	40/1
K. Larsen	(USA)	40/1
B. Lorenz	(UK)	50/1
B. Eisenberg	(USA)	50/1
J. Tissona	(Israel)	50/1
R. Olson	(UK)	50/1
M. Carson	IUSA)	50/1
T. Goble	(USA)	50/1
H. Sconyers	(USA)	50/1
E. Seidel	(USA)	50/1
B. Abadjian	(USA)	50/1
L. Villa	(Italy)	50/1
J.N. Grinda	(France)	66/1
M. Elganyian	(Iran)	66/1
S. Zolotow	(USA)	66/1
M. Senkiewitz	(USA)	66/1
J. Pasko	(USA)	66/1
K. Goulding	(USA)	66/1
S. Lorenzin	(France)	66/1
D. Eshed	(Israel)	66/1
M. Beattie	(USA)	66/1
J. Mirzoeff	(USA)	66/1
G. Sulimirski	(UK)	66/1
A. Dickman	(USA)	66/1
L. Labrosse	(Holland)	75/1
G. Baguenault	(France)	75/1
A. Lorenz	(UK)	75/1
M. Corbett	(USA)	75/1
K. Woolsey	(USA)	75/1
R. Rosenzweig	(Germany)	75/1
S. Raphael	(UK)	75/1
H. Perlman	(USA)	75/1
vD. Liebowitz	(USA)	75/1
N. Maffeo	(USA)	75/1
K. Robinson	(USA)	75/1
K. Duchamp	(USA)	75/1
V. Ball	(USA)	75/1
M. Davis	(USA)	75/1
K. Wright	(USA)	75/1
L. Genud	(USA)	75/1
A. Hodis	(USA)	75/1
N. Pakzad	(Iran)	75/1
Y. Zographos	(Greece)	75/1
V. Najjar	(Lebanon)	75/1
J. Munro	(USA)	75/1
D. Winn	(USA)	75/1
P. Atencio	(Venezuela)	75/1
M. Baquiche	(Egypt)	75/1
A. Avedisian	(USA)	75/1
J. Wykoff	(USA)	75/1
J. Suzyn	(USA)	75/1

ALL OTHER PLAYERS ARE INDIVIDUALLY: 100/1

SPECIAL BETS: Any Woman to win tournament 33/1

COUNTRY TO WIN TOURNAMENT

USA	6/4
UK	5/1
Iran	8/1
Israel	8/1
France	15/1
Italy	20/1
Any other	20/1
Germany	25/1
Holland	33/1
Mexico	50/1
S. Africa	66/1
Venezuela	50/1

BACKGAMMON IN THE PUBLIC EYE

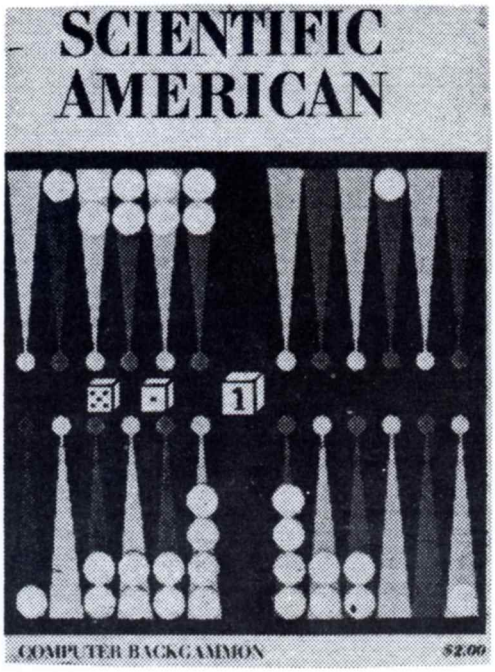
MAGAZINE: Backgammon got the cover of *Scientific American.* Computer backgammon to be exact. The June 1980 issue carries an in-depth article by Hans Berliner and a full-color cover. Computer backgammon it seems is contributing to progress in the technology of artificial intelligence.

San Diego Physician Magazine with a two page layout on Dr. Roy Springer, backgammon competitor. Dr. Springer currently filling a contract to practice in Saudi Arabia, is quoted as saying "it (backgammon) certainly is not supplementing my income."

Several magazines have carried the "List of Baseball Lists" in which the category, "Players Favorite Partners in Lobbies," is noted. Backgammon rates fourth behind electronic games but in front of poker.

Gammon Erotica – Games for Lovers is a magazine published by Playgirl Enterprises. Some of the features are erotic crosswords and games to play with the shades down. On the cover in full color entangled in a hot tub, are a semi-nude blonde, a tall dark and handsome male, and a backgammon board.

Velvet magazine (June Issue) has outdone everyone. If you haven't seen this piece called "Gammon Amour," you haven't seen anything. The most torrid lovemaking on a backgammon board ever. "Redhead Lisa" and "Mouthwatering Margo" are supposedly



showgirls who get together over a backgammon board between shows.

NEWSPAPER: *St. Louis Dispatch* carried a full page puff piece on Elliot Winslow and his champion fantasies. *Tahoe Bonanza,* a full page with pictures on the Incline Village Backgammon Club and their high school backgammon project. Phoenix newspapers report on the Backgammon Mike tee-shirt phenomenom. Shirts seen everywhere read B. G. Mike's father, B. G. Mike's friend, B. G. Mike's mechanic, etc. The writer wondered how long it would be before there was a Backgammon Mike's Governor tee-shirt. Soon!

UPI – carried that most colorless article on backgammon and the World Amateur Tournament. Goldsmith, Markowitz, Jackson, and Boyd are all quoted and come off sounding like they're asleep. Markowitz is reported to echo "The game's popularity soared when it became a social phenomenon." What does that mean, Howard!

The stupidity award was won hands down by Joe Scott, reputed developer of Pips in Beverly Hills. No longer with Pips, he now operates the Club Barrington, a private disco and hangout for the movieland elite. Scott is quoted in a major column featuring his eliteness. "Backgammon is no longer popular with most of the Hollywood crowd." This new club will provide only a couple of backgammon tables. The next time we're with the "Hollywood crowd" we promise not to mention backgammon. ☆☆

BINGEN ON BACKGAMMON



JEFF HENRY & SANDY BINGEN



EARL RISCH & SUE ZEMAN

One of the friendliest places to play backgammon in the Chicago area is the weekly Pub Club Tournaments at the Ground Round in Downers Grove on Monday nights. Jeff Henry, the Tournament Director, strives to make everyone feel welcome and even a newcomer is engaged in friendly banter in a matter of minutes. Jeff produces a monthly newsletter with current master point standings along with other backgammon tidbits. We're each others' Monday night family, and whether you want to be consoled or cajoled, there is always someone ready and willing.

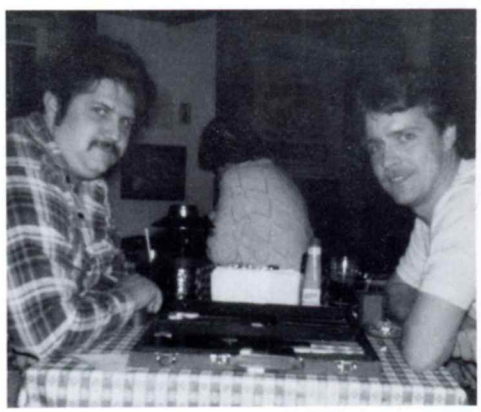
On a recent Monday night several of the men presented a surprise baby gift to one of the pregnant women. We have our own Kenny Rogers look-alike that I would defy anyone to pick out the real Kenny Rogers if they were side by side.

With the abundance of male players at the Pub Club and at most tournaments, I don't understand where all the female players are. Ladies of the Chicago area, I personally invite you to the Pub Club Tournaments to share the joy of friendly criticism and stimulating conversation with my Monday night family.

Editors Note: Sandy will be teaching beginning backgammon for the College of Du Page in the fall. Ladies, sign up! ☆☆



FRANK MASSI & JIM OPRE



PAUL HOSTELAND & FRANK MROZEK

PROFILE PAGE

Dennis Stone

The question on the lips of every top backgammon player in the world today is: "Whatever became of Dennis Stone?"

Backgammon Magazine, in its efforts to find out, has added one more intriguing question of its own: Did Dennis Stone, in fact, ever exist?

We set out to explore the numerous rumors.

True or false? Was Dennis Stone, three years ago, one of the top players in the world? Was he, indeed, one of the dashing and daring members of Prince Oblensky's original jet-set, globe-trotting backgammon circuit? Did he destroy Paul Magriel in a 25 point match in a men's world championship in Florida? Did he crucify Phillip Martyn in Monte Carlo? Was Chuck Papazian once heard to say, "I've never beaten him."?

The answer to these and many more questions is: "We don't know."

The records say yes, but there are few reliable witnesses.

We searched through the archives and found an incredible thing. If Dennis Stone, in fact, ever did exist, there is not one picture in any backgammon magazine ever printed to prove it.

Is Dennis Stone a myth?

We went to Magriel. We asked him if the records were correct. Did he play Stone in Florida? Or more to the point, did he play Stone even more recently in a semi-final match in the Eldorado Classic in Reno? Mr. Magriel responded by saying he himself was wearing dark glasses on both occasions, never looked up, and never knew whom he



was playing.

One more dead end.

Both Phillip Martyn and Chuck Papazian were unavailable for comment.

Chico Felderbaum, however, who made his mark in backgammon history by winning the first Las Vegas million dollar tournament, was more cooperative: "I think I recollect playing Stone in the semi-final match of that tournament. I could tell that he was a superior player, but what it came down to was, we were playing one game of backgammon for $100,000. match point. Stone must have been a 100-1 favorite in the bearoff, but after my second set of doubles he began to fade away, and by the fifth set he seemed to disappear. By the time I had won the match and the kibitzers started to disperse, I wasn't sure if he had ever existed."

Another cul-de-sac.

We sent reporter after reporter into the bridge world, the scrabble world, the chess world, and even the seamy world of high stakes home poker games in search of Dennis Stone, and they all came back with empty smiles, blank copy, and the same story. In each one of those worlds, Stone left behind him a reputation as an expert, but it was only a reputation, and there were no tangible remains. No proof that Stone had ever really existed.

The life of Dennis Stone was taking on mythical proportions.

But just as we were about to abandon our search and accept the fact that Stone had never lived and was a product of imagination, we got the break we needed.

An informant called. A hushed, conspiratorial voice: "Check out the women's wear circuit."

It didn't make sense, but nothing was making sense, and we had to check it out.

We began an exhaustive, systematic, door-to-door search of women's wear stores across the country . . . and we found out the sordid thruth: Dennis has retired from big time game playing to hustle backgammon in women's dress shops of America.

When we found this out, frankly, we didn't even wish to interview him . . . but we did take a picture. He never knew we were there. It was pathetic.

Lee Genud

The game of backgammon is serious business to Lee Genud, the only woman on the winning US team in the First International Backgammon Tournament, co-owner of a backgammon club in New Hyde Park, and author of a highly successful backgammon book.

The champion of the game board is also a world class bridge player and has acquired life master status three times over. Being a woman in a male dominated game has advantages and disadvantages. On the upside, she is continually under-rated despite her tournament record.

"I think that this relates a lot to my sex as well to my fast style of play, which more than occasionally causes an error that might have been avoided. I find that some people want to play me solely because I am a woman while others would avoid me like the plague for the same reason."

"I think that women will continue to take a more significant role in backgammon. Emotionally, we may be better off when the cube comes our way, with less ego investment in passing a double than our male counterparts." Lee Genud is working hard to keep up her winning roll of the dice. As she says, "Backgammon is my job."

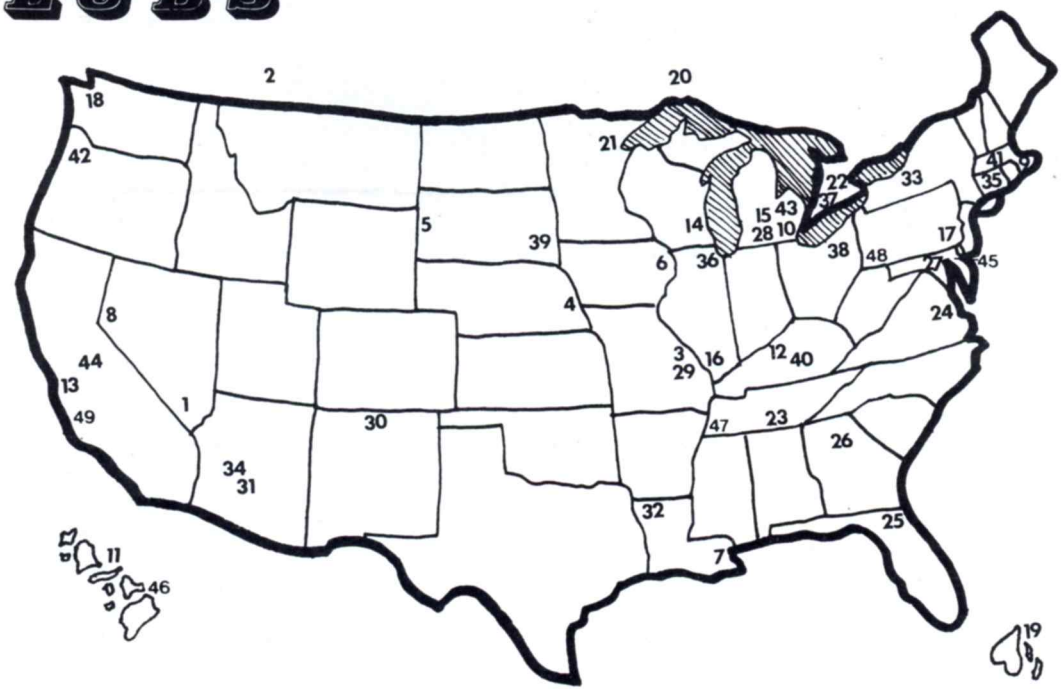
Presently, Lee is planning to create a woman's tournament for later this year with added prize money.

Lee may have compiled the best "in the money" tournament record of any American player in the last couple of years. Her record includes:

1978 Women's World Championship
1979 Women's World Championship
1979 1st Place Remy Martin Doubles
1979 1st Place Remy Martin Open
1979 Semi-finalist Monte Carlo Consolation
1979 Semi-finalist Turnberry Consolation
1979 1st Place last chance Stratton Mountain
1979 Semi-finalist Reeport Consolation
1979 Member of winning team vs. European team via telecom
1980 Semi-finalist Turnberry Consolation
1980 Semi-finalist Boston Consolation
1980 1st Place last chance Reno



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1. LAS VEGAS BACKGAMMON CLUB
Las Vegas, Nevada
Michael Maxakuli
(702) 454-2403

2. GALGARY BACKGAMMON CLUB
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Wayne Roberts
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3. GATEWAY BACKGAMMON ASSN.
Florissant, Missouri
Shirley Dunlop
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Carolyn Caniglia
(402) 330-3333

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Belle Fourche, South Dakota
Rod Woodruff
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Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Tom Owens
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Bill O'Brien
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Barcelona, Spain
Jorge M. Arque
218 58 50

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Campbell, California
Martin Miller
(408) 378-3711

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Merrill Schrager
(414) 271-0493

15. FLINT BACKGAMMON CLUB
Flint, Michigan
Carol Cole
(313) 732-8594

16. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Carbondale, Illinois
Jim Gevas
(618) 549-5555

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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Mae Block
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Ted Barr
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Ed Brister
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Gerald Mortimer
(605) 332-4593

40. FRANKFORT BACKGAMMON CLUB
Frankfort, Kenturcky
Michael S. Goddard
(no phone at this time)

41. AMHERST BACKGAMMON CLUB
Amherst, Massachusetts
Scott Mitchell
(413) 253-5757

42. PIPMASTERS BACKGAMMON CLUB
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(503) 289-2309

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Barbara McCoy
(313) 775-3695

44. RIVER CITY BACKGAMMON ASSN.
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Jim Stern
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45. BALTIMORE BACKGAMMON CLUB
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Bob Addison
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John Brussel
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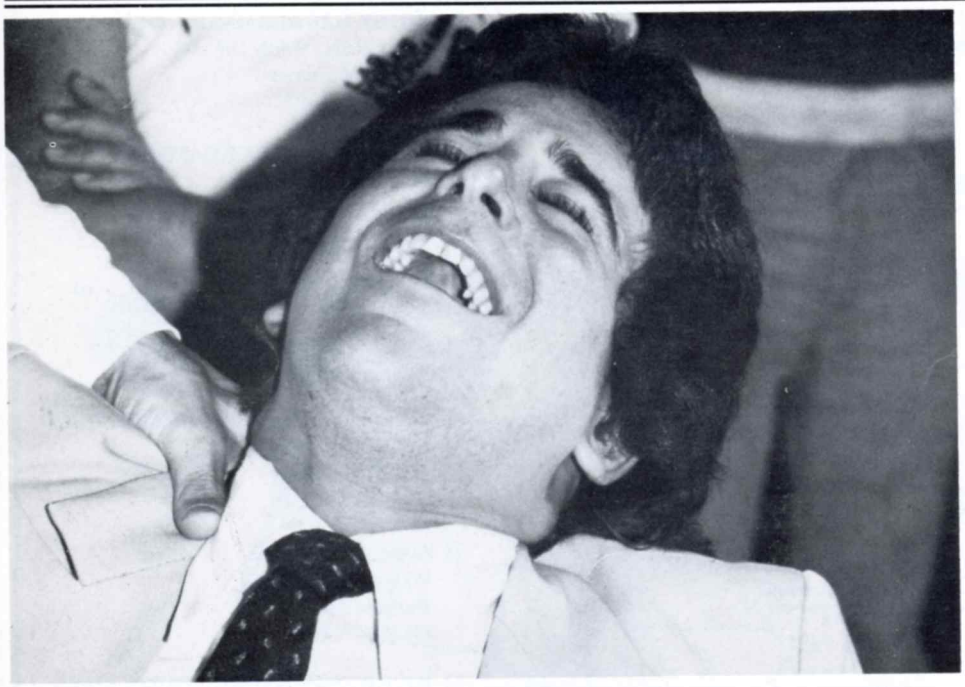
The American Association of Backgammon Clubs is a group of grass roots backgammon clubs devoted to the love and promotion of backgammon.

The cost of belonging to this group is $25 per year. For this small fee the associates have access to the club hotline, receive hospitality benefits for their members visiting Las Vegas, receive aid in setting up and operating their club and/or tournaments, receive free space to publish their ideas and schedules in the Backgammon Magazine (Cir. 20,000 worldwide), receive 25% discount off rate card if they wish to advertise in the magazine, receive complimentary copies of the Backgammon Magazine for club use, and have access to the most complete files on backgammon players, current information and backgammon history.

The Associates are bound together by the need to protect themselves from those looking to take advantage of the small clubs. Strength is derived from mutual support and free exchange of information.

The Associates agree to adhere to the Official Las Vegas Tournament Rules and the Common Rules of Etiquette. All in all, the Associate members enjoy many shared benefits which a union of organizations can provide, including reciprocal visiting rights between clubs in the AABC.

For details on the AABC write the Las Vegas Backgammon Club or call (702) 454-2403.





Las Vegas

Few remember that the Amateur Backgammon Championship started as the $1,000,000 tournament. The Wattson group bailed out the floundering million dollar promoter and the Amateur Championships were born. Well, a million dollar status of sorts had been reached. American Backgammon Championships, Inc. has been sued for one million by the World Championships of Blackjack, Inc., promoters of blackjack tournaments at the Sahara Hotels, for alleged infringement of registered rules of blackjack play. What a bunch of hogwash!

As it was, the blackjack tournament proved to be an inconvenience to the backgammon event. Kate, Louise, and Henry were too busy babying blackjack to give their usual loving attention to the backgammon players. Blackjack proved a money loser for them anyway. Seventy-five played in the Championship division and 315 in the beginners. The blackjack affair fell to stiff competition from too many good backgammon events.













Bar Psychokinesis

The new breed has taken over. Psychokinesis, the power to influence physical objects or events, or what have you, won the tournament! It was amusing to watch Champion Russ Sands meditate and handle each and every piece of equipment. But, it worked. He couldn't have rolled better if he had called his numbers, which after all, was what he was attempting to do. It was fascinating to watch. Alpha waves, gamma waves, EST or whatever he used was effective. His power was awesome. He hypnotized his opponents and left the audience agog. He was the brujo. Sands possesses the techniques, the concentration, the knowledge of the hunter. The champion treated the audience to a mysterious demonstration of seeing — finding all around him the power that he has learned to use and control. We can't bar mind dynamics so let's make a rule against hyperventilating.







Record of Sorts

There were 1,200 people at the Dunes Tourney and we promised everyone a mention in the magazine. Of course, we lied. But, David Huffner of Reno fooled us. He gets his name in the magazine by setting a tournament record of sorts. He entered every backgammon and blackjack event, some several times. The Huffner documented world record is fifteen separate entries and no wins.

Fred Chamanara deserves a mention too. The affable Chicago player volunteered to help finance this issue of the magazine. We'll be seeing a lot more of Fred, after all, this magazine is a bi-monthly.







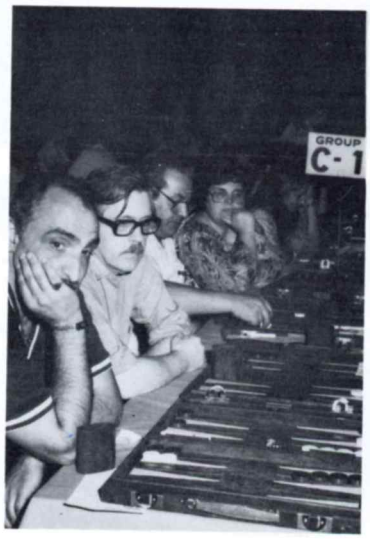




WHY, HENRY?

Why do you do it, Henry? Guarantee a quarter of a million, give away the rooms ($100 per person-6 days), provide an excess of tournament directors, give everyone a lifetime worth of backgammon in five days, smother everyone with good will and services, throw the highest equity tournament in the world, plow marginal profits back into the promotion of the game, and on and on. Do you love backgammon that much?







Odds and Ends

New rules for next year's tournament will disqualify intoxicated participants. This is a result of the exasperating incident in the beginner's finals.

Final tally — 744 in amateur, 224 in doubles, 650 in begginers and 64 in championship.

Videotapes of the finals (Sands vs. Drogseth) are now available. The tapes, complete with Magriel commentary, are available for $50 total. Order by writing: Tapes, Box 19567, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119.

RESULTS

AMATEUR

Top 16

*SANDS ..... 1st Place (Russ Sands, L.A.)
ZALTASH

*HAMMAN
COJAB

BURMOHAMAD
*JONES

GOULD
*HOFFNER ..... 3rd Place

*SCHROEDER
SHAGALIAN

*DROGSETH .... 2nd Place (Wayne Drogseth, L.V.)
SARAF

*DEMIREL
SHERMAN

DANIEL
*GILBERT ..... 4th Place

BLACKJACK WINNERS

Beginners 1st ..... PAUL MAGRIEL
Champion 1st ..... TOM WAGNER
Women 1st ..... DIANA LANNI

BEGINNERS

1st Place ..... JOHN HENDERSON
2nd Place ..... STEVE GOLDMAN
3rd Place ..... NED BEABANAYAN
4th Place ..... STEVE CHOI





















Rulings Column

Candace Nyles Mayeron

For a long time we have been aware of the need for a forum where difficult ruling questions can be answered and explained. Too many players enter high stakes tournaments unsophisticated in the basic rules of backgammon. The regular appearance of a Rulings Column will help draw attention to this area of backgammon, and begin the process of educating the playing public.

(Q): My opponent and I were using a baffle box instead of cups. On the opening roll I dropped my die first and it landed as a 3. His landed as a 1, but in landing, his die knocked mine over so that it became a 2. I said my opening roll should be a 3-1, he insisted I must play 2-1. Who was right? (B.G., Chicago, Ill.)

(A): *He was, but with a qualification. Individual clubs may have different rulings on your situation. In the absence of club policy, we think the proper rule is that the dice must be played as they land finally, not intermittently. Such a rule prevents arguments concerning where the die first lay.*

We must admit to mixed emotions about baffle boxes. While they do prevent arguments as to the proper method for shaking and rolling dice, they can create problems of whether or not the dice went through, as well as this type of opening roll problem. We suggest when using a baffle box on the opening roll, both players simultaneously drop dies of different colors.

(Q): Can you please settle for us, once and for all, what the procedure is where a discrepancy occurs, and there are kibitzers present? (E.H., Mexico City.)

(A): *We doubt we can settle this "once and for all," because players are everlastingly coming up with abnormal situations! However, we assume you are talking about the very common occurrence wherein Player A rolls a 4-1, and thinking it is a 3-1, plays it as such very quickly, and lifts his dice before the actual roll can be visually ascertained. An argument ensues.*

A kibitzer should not volunteer his opinion until — and this is the crucial part — both players have appealed to him. If you are the kibitzer and one player asks your opinion, you FIRST inquire of the other player if he wishes you to respond. If you are a player, you FIRST inquire of your opponent if he, the opponent, wishes you both to consult one or more of the kibitzers present. Only then may a kibitzer respond. Prior to this any remark by a kibitzer is gratuitous and therefore void.



The author is a practicing Los Angeles attorney, CANDACE NYLES MAYERON. She is an experienced tournament player, and was Tournament Director for the 1979 World Amateur Championships in Las Vegas. "While I am solely responsible for this column," says Mayeron, "not one single answer appears unless it has been agreed to by not less than three other rules and procedures experts."

Notice however, that this rule does not apply to a tournament official. An official, called to the table to determine the roll, may unilaterally ask any kibitzer for his opinion. The official need not obtain prior permission from the players; however he should first give both players a chance to disqualify that kibitzer for cause.

In the event there are not kibitzers present, or several who disagree, then the correct ruling is that the roll stands as played. The rationale, is that the nonrolling player should have pointed out the error while the rolling player's dice were still down and the roll ascertainable. A player always has the right to demand his opponent not "quick-lift" the dice.

Lastly, we wish to point out that once a kibitzer with permission to speak and who asserts that he did in fact see the roll, states what the roll was, both players become bound by his statement. Obviously, the disagreeing player cannot interrogate other kibitzers until he finds one who agrees with him. This is not true, however, where the dispute is over a proper rule — but only where the dispute is factual, i.e. what was the roll? Where the dispute is over a rule, the players are not bound by the opinion of a kibitzer. The disagreeing player may call for a ruling from a tournament official. The distinction is that as to a matter of fact, the kibitzer is an expert — he actually witnessed the roll. In a rulings dispute the tournament official is (hopefully) the expert.

(Q): I am constantly frustrated by opponents who merely wiggle their dice cups and plop the dice out. They argue that so long as the dice have rotated a few times on the board before coming to rest, I shouldn't complain. (K.L., Honolulu, Hawaii.)

(A): *We are constantly frustrated by this too, for even when players are not trying to cheat with an illegal mix, the differences in style of mix invariably cause rulings headaches!*

The entire process of rolling the dice consists of a shake and a cast. The dice must be mixed in the cup and on the board.

The SHAKE must immediately precede the throw. It should be vigorous and somewhat lengthy — at least three times up and down. (Place the fingers of your shaking hand, or place your other hand, over the top of the cup.) That is, the shake should be reasonably calculated to cause the dice to mix within the cup. A sideways wiggle will not accomplish this.

The CAST (or throw) is an additional mix. Preferably, the dice should rotate over themselves at least once before settling. The cast may not be made with the fingers extended inside the cup. David Leibowitz is one example of a player with a picturebook shake and cast.

One way to alleviate the problem of "plopped" dice is to play with ball-cornered dice ("rounded" or "barbout") instead of square-edged; and with trip cups instead of those with no lip or rim.

Got a ruling, procedure or etiquette question? Send it to CANDACE NYLES MAYERON, in care of this magazine. All requests must be accompanied by your name, address and phone number with area code, in case we need more information. For a personal response include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. ✯✯

NEW ASSOCIATES

Backgammon Club of San Diego

It is hard not to say good things about this club. Jeff Ward, editor of the *Anchor* (backgammon newsletter) is a contributor to the *Backgammon Magazine.* Judy and Ray Freedman came to our Eldorado Classic and gave us rave reviews. Jan Beauchamp makes us happy. We're not sure what president Roy Springer does. The club operates three weekly tournaments at the Blue Parrot (La Jolla), D.O. Mills (Mission Valley), and Aspen Mine Company. The tournament directors are: Dick Holsinger, Vicki Whelan, and Linda MacMillan. A good job of delegating authority by the president. Welcome! (714-460-9910).

Pittsburg Backgammon Association

This Club is so well organized that they have more directors than General Motors. Six vice-presidents, corresponding and recording secretaries, and two treasurers keep things running. The current president is John Brussel, who is as impressive as the company he leads. Where there is an institution, there is a chairman of the board. That man is the well-known backgammon enthusiast, George C. Stamets. He and the rest of the volunteers have operated tournaments in the Pittsburg area for years including the weekly tournament at the Athletic Association and the Annual Easter Seals Society Charity Tournament. The Association also publishes *Gambit,* an excellent twelve page newsletter. A fine addition to the association. (412-931-6800).

Bombay Backgammon Club

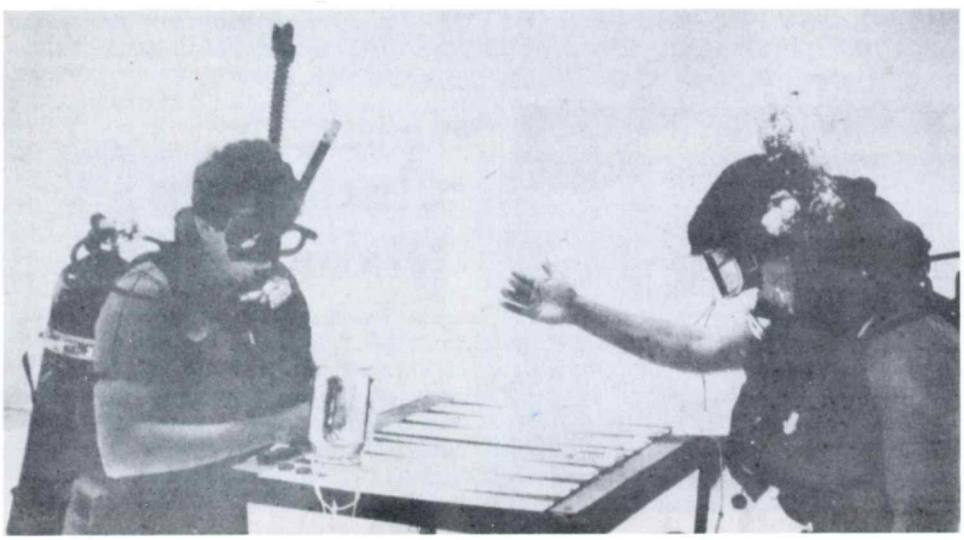
For two years on every Sunday this club has held a tournament with cash prizes and no entry fee. Memphis, Tennessee has supported backgammon well. The Annual American Cancer Society Backgammon Tournament is a famous local event. Director, Mac Thompson is an enthusiastic and capable backgammon promoter. Welcome to the association — (901-726-6055).

Honolulu Backgammon Club

HBC, originally founded in 1974 as the Hawaii Backgammon Club, operated for many years by author and game inventor, Prince Joli Kansil, and then later became backgammon for profit club under the direction of Greg Blotsky, is now newly reorganized as a non-profit corporation, under the able directorship of Dennis J. Krum. The club holds weekly tournaments (Sunday and Monday) at La Mancha restaurant in Honolulu (800-367-5212).

Backgammon Club of Baltimore

The former Patti Heyman jewel of a club is one of the oldest and well-known clubs in America. Ms. Heyman remains a partner while the reins have been taken over by Bob Addison (301-744-6564) and Larry Lauer (301-661-7041). The tournament schedule includes Saturdays at the Ramada Inn and Wednesdays at Charlie Chiapparelli's in Touson. The Baltimore Backgammon News will continue to be edited by Patti Heyman. Welcome!



INTERVIEW

Barclay Cooke



BM: How are you feeling Mr. Cooke? We've heard you were ill.

Cooke: It's just my back. I had some bones taken out. It hurts really bad.

BM: Has your back curtailed your backgammon activities?

Cooke: My mind is O.K. I play a lot of backgammon. It is very easy to sit for long periods of time. Walking is the very painful thing, though.

BM: They call you the best. How about it?

Cooke: I'm not the best, just the least jaded.

BM: But your writings are highly respected.

Cooke: Writing is an effort. I'd rather play.

BM: Other than yourself, who has worthwhile backgammon theories?

Cooke: Danny Kleinman is a fantastic theorist. He is the best there is. I read all his stuff. He's worthwhile.

BM: What do you think of all this psychokinetic stuff? Especially now that Russ Sands, a student of mind dynamics, has won the World Amateur tournament.

Cooke: There must be something to it. I've seen too many powerful rollers not to believe. Sometimes I won't play without a neutral roller. I was in London playing Bobby Lorenz, and I called for a neutral roller. Bobby's power of positive thinking was incredible.

Cooke: When I'm feeling better, I'll get around to some tournaments. I've got some things I'm writing, too. ☆☆

COOL COMPETITORS

A friendly game of underwater backgammon in Jensen Beach is one way to cool off during these hot summer days. Some 100 Florida Institute of Technology students who are members of the Blue Water Diving Club participated in a 168 hour backgammon marathon. Approximately 617 games were played at the campus pool, according to Doug Reinhart and Bob Artley.

Black & White

San Francisco Classic



Computer programmer and games expert Allen Van Gelder, of San Francisco, won a series of grueling matches, $10,710 in prize money and a place in the record books by winning the first-ever Black & White San Francisco Classic Backgammon Championship.

The Memorial Day weekend event – held at the Stanford Court Hotel on San Francisco's Nob Hill — drew participation by some 200 of the best backgammon competitors in the United States, along with a sprinkling of leading players from Europe, Asia and Canada.

Sponsored by Black & White Scotch Whiskey, it was the first time that a championship backgammon circuit event has been held in the Western U.S. Prize money in the 2½ day program totaled $34,550 — one of the richest backgammon purses in the country, and a record for western players.

Organized and conducted as a benefit for the Cystic Fibrosis Summer Camp program, the Classic was directed by Lewis Deyong, of London. San Francisco attorney William E. Boyd served as tournament coordinator.

Excitement ran high during the final match between Van Gelder and *Backgammon Magazine* publisher Michael Maxakuli. The championship match was telecast on closed-circuit television to an enthusiastic audience of several hundred backgammon fans. Paul Magriel, the 1978-79 World Backgammon Champion, was commentator for the broadcast. According to Magriel, the two players were exceptionally well matched, and played one of the finest "textbook" competitions he had ever witnessed.

The final score was 21 to 16, giving Van Gelder the honors and some $10,000.

San Franciscan Ted Kim won first place in the championship division's consolation program, while Timothy Behr, of San Rafael, finished first in the last chance event. The intermediate division winners were: Richard Mauer, of Los Altos, who won first place in that division's main event, narrowly edging-out Mike Margolis, of San Francisco. The intermediate consolation event was won by Daly City's Marv Porten, and Don Burns, of San Francisco, won the last chance program.

The Black & White Championship Backgammon Circuit is the game's only major commercially-sponsored circuit in the United States. Other cities on the 1980-81 tour include: Chicago, Atlantic City, Miami, Washington, D.C., Boston and Los Angeles. ★★

Two Points To Go

by Kit Woolsey

Several years ago when I played in my first big backgammon tournament, I was fortunate enough to reach the quarterfinals. The score progressed to 19-19 in the 21 point match. I started with 3-1 and 4-2, while my opponent's first two rolls accomplished nothing much. I then chose to double, figuring that I might as well put the match up for grabs while I had an advantage. He took, and I eventually lost the game and the match. Afterward, I asked a couple of good players if my double was corrrect. The general consensus was that it was a good double if my opponent dropped, but otherwise it was questionable. As we shall see, I actually doubled one roll too late!

A couple of years later I was kibitzing a 15 point match at the European championships, along with Al Lorenz, one of Europe's best players. The score progressed to 13-13, at which point Al whispered to me, "If these guys know what they are doing, the next game should be the last game of the match." At the time this seemed to be somewhat of an overstatement. I knew that it was correct to double earlier than usual at this score, but is it right to always double so early that it becomes a take, regardless of the sequence of rolls? It turns out upon careful analysis that Al was quite correct. With proper play at this score, no double should be made so late that the opponent has a drop.

The argument for doubling on any advantage when each side has two points to go in a match can be seen by examining the possible costs of being wrong by doubling or not doubling. Suppose we start with a 3-1 roll, making our 5 point, and our opponent rolls 3-2, bringing two men down. The cost of being wrong by not doubling is the same as always -- we might roll a joker such as 4-4 or 6-6 on our next roll, and our opponent will now have a drop when we would have preferred to play the game for the match.

Now, what is the cost of doubling when things fail to go well immediately? We lose the opportunity to double our opponent out later, but should that situation arise we will be happy to have already doubled. Suppose the game turns around. If the cube is still in the middle, and our opponent knows what he is doing, (i.e., if he has read this article), he will double early enough that we will still have to take. Consequently, we will be playing the game for the match whether we double now or not, even if things go sour and we lose our advantage. Therefore, there is no cost at all in doubling immediately if we are wrong, so we should double now to avoid the risk of losing our market.

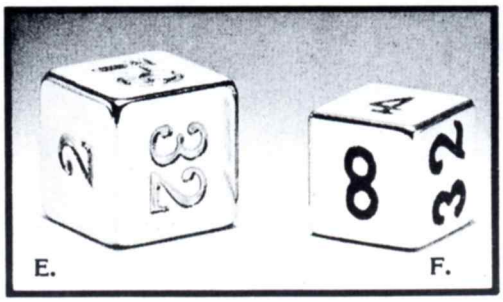
Another way of seeing the argument is as follows: The reason we do not double on a slight advantage in regular money play is that our opponent would then own the cube, which means that he has the option for the rest of the game of jacking the stakes up to 4, while we do not have that option. However, when each side has two points to go in the match, this cube ownership becomes worthless. Consequently, we are giving away nothing by giving away the cube, so we should double if it is at all possible that we will lose our market on the next roll. ★★

new products

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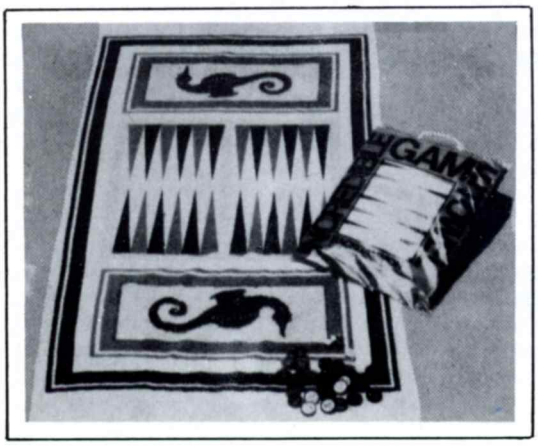
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Price 15.00, Incredible Tee Shirt Company, Toronto.

Phillip Martyn on Backgammon

by Mary

I would like to call the attention of your readers to an excellent book that has been available in England since 1976 but has yet to appear on American bookstore shelves. The book is *Phillip Martyn on Backgammon* (Stanley Paul & Co., Ltd., 3 Fitzroy Square, London, U.K.). Written by one of England's top players, this book is a valuable complement to the more familiar volumes by Magriel, Cooke, and Deyong.


Phillip Martyn

Phillip Martyn provides sound advice on chouettes and the doubling cube for players of all levels. His early chapters on the game's basics give the American player a British perspective on routine material. His clear, concise treatment of common settlement situations can start a player who normally never settles on the road to understanding and making use of this feature of the game.

My only criticism of the book is its extreme pessimism regarding the merits of backgames. My own fondness for backgames may be warping my judgment a bit, but I cannot accept his unconditional statement that when in a backgame, one should drop if doubled. In short tournament matches this is sensible, but certainly a well-placed, well-timed backgame is not ordinarily as bad as all that.

If you write to Stanley Paul about this book, remember to ask for a current price. The U.K. price listed on the jacket of my copy is £3.95, but I paid a somewhat higher price for it to the friendly young aficionado of the game who taught me to play. I have not regretted the purchase.

I have read at least 20 backgammon books since I learned to play a year and a half ago in order to be competitive at my club, the Cavendish Club of Philadelphia. After winning their tournament last month, I can say that it has paid off. However, I can also say that there's plenty more for me to learn! Next on my reading list is Barclay Cooke and Rene' Orlean's new book, *Championship Backgammon.* ✯✯

TOURNAMENT PSYCHOLOGY
Winning

by Joel Rettew

You, too, can succeed if you know the power within you.

The difference between money games and tournaments are so great I am surprised that there has not been more written about them. For a long time I have been looking for the right words to describe the difference and last month while teaching my 16 year old son to drive, the words came to me: automatic and manual.

As I have been driving for many years, the thousands of bits of information that I had learned were implanted in my subconscious, and I drove automatically without thinking. Now in teaching my son, I had to take the information out of automatic and put my learned expertise in manual to explain them to my son. (In other words, I had to think about everything I did.)

Comparing this to backgammon, I realized that the average player played far more money games than tournament games and didn't realize that many of the takes that were "good takes" in a money game were drops in tournaments. If I can give you just one thought, it would be during a tournament, shift your mind from automatic into "manual," and look at every point as if it were the most important point of the match. Play tournaments with your mind in manual and not in automatic.

The more I play this game called backgammon, the more I realize that I have a lot more to learn, with all the subtle skills involved and because most players tend to rationalize the dice. It is difficult not only to recognize your mistakes but to evaluate your abilities.

Remember always the most important thing is ATTITUDE; it is not who you are, but who you think you're not. It is the attitude you have when you sit down to a match that determines the winners.

I heard someone say at the last tournament I attended, "Guess who I just drew — Paul Magriel." This person further added that he couldn't beat him, and you know what, he didn't. He lost before he sat down because he told himself he couldn't win. When I play in a tournament, I play to win and I look at my opponent as my adversry, whom I am going to battle. My attitude is I CAN WIN, and I play hard with my mind in manual; I don't do anything automatic. Once the dice have been thrown, a battle begins and each succeeding roll will alter the position, tactics and strategy. This is a game of few absolutes; it is an ever-changing fluid, with unlimited options.

At the start of the match never appear nervous or uncomfortable when you sit down to play. Say little or nothing to your opponent, maintain table presence, never refer to dice rolls as "good rolls" or "my worse." Don't be intimidated by an opponent. Take your time but play with a steady rhythm that is comfortable for you. The positions are in front of you at all times. While I am waiting for my opponent to move, I use the time to go over the positions with a "what if" I rolled 6-2 or 5-3, and then when one of the rolls comes up, I know what to do.

Attempt to size up your opponent quickly, look at his weaknesses, and use your strengths, especially while playing against a well-known player. I then try to find the odds on the match. If I'm the underdog, I then will take a little side action. Without his knowing I have moved the odds over to my side of the table with my attitude.

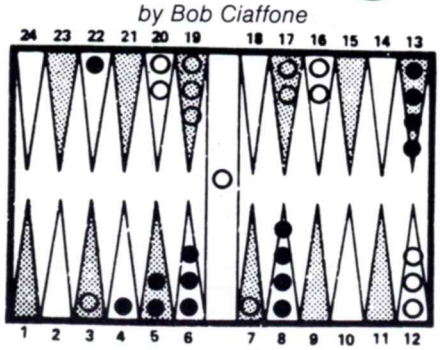
There is a certain gamemanship to be employed in backgammon tournaments. And if you are to win at this game, you must understand the specific skills and psychology of the traps laid by your adversary. I watch my opponent very carefully and try to guess what he is thinking. For example, in a match when my opponent had doubled me to two, and he has the best of the position, I see him looking at the score sheet, and I can almost feel that he is scoring the 4 points from this game that is not yet over. As I turn the game around in my favor, I watch him look at the score sheet again, and with his eyes he removes the 4 points. When I go on to win this game and it's scored, I call a break. I have never heard anyone talk about the importance of breaks in a match and who calls them and at what point. Think about it for a moment, wouldn't you like to control the breaks, and pick your spots? Change your attitude, shift from automatic to manual, and play to win one point at a time. ☆☆

THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW!

by Bob Ciaffone

White rolled a 4-3 and entered from the bar, continuing on with the checker to make his opponent's bar point. However, instead of picking up the enemy blot on the opponent's four-point, he mistakenly picked up his own man on the three-point and put it on the bar. Black rolled double sixes and, thinking he had a man on the bar (we hope), picked his dice up. White rolled double fives and started to point on the man on his own three-point, whereupon Black "woke up" to point that it was a *White* checker that was on the bar. A ruling was asked for. The players were (properly) told "illegal plays stand once the next player rolls the dice." White was forced to remain on the bar, and Black went on to win the game.

Was justice done in this case? Well, the penalty here was quite harsh, but the rules are the same for all, aren't they? Well, yes and no. The fellow who had the white pieces in this case was one of our weaker players; elderly, nervous, and somewhat absent-minded, but a likeable person and quite courteous toward other people. Who is it in *your* club that would be a likely candidate for the kind of mental error mentioned here?



Quite probably, the last time you saw this type of mistake occur, the person who made it fit the description I have just given you. Shouldn't this type of person be given more protection by the laws of backgammon than he presently receives?

The situations that are most frequently dealt under the "illegal moves" rule are:

1. Moving a man an incorrect number of pips.
2. Playing an incorrect number of moves when rolling doubles.
3. Failing to put the opponent's man on the bar even though the point it occupied was or could have been used as a landing place for part of the move.

The present rule seems to work fairly enough in these situations. The areas where we need an improvement are when

1. A player moves the wrong-colored men.
2. A player hits his own blot and puts it on the bar.

These situations are so disruptive to the normal course of the game and so obvious for the opponent to notice, that it should be the responsibility of *both* players to prevent their occurrence. I am not exactly sure how the amended rule should read. Perhaps the position should always be returned to that prior to the infraction, no matter how much later the error is discovered. Perhaps this type of play should only become official after the offender rolls the dice again, to give more time to rectify the mistake than is presently allowed. I do know there ought to be a law governing this situation that is fairer to the weaker players than the all-purpose law now in common use. Which law appeals to your sense of fairness? ☆☆

ON THE BAR... BEHIND BARS

Even if we were caught in possession of the dice, the worse that would happen to us would be to get thrown in the hole for a couple of weeks and our dice taken away.

It happens to be my misfortune that I currently find my sleeping quarters within the confines of a state correctional institution. My woes are further compounded by the fact that dice are considered contraband here. This can and does present a number of problems if you happen to be a gammon-crazed, doubling demon such as I am.

I have discovered, however, that if you take several decks of playing cards and remove the ace through the six, with each player drawing two cards at a time and playing the numbers accordingly, a reasonable facsimile of backgammon can be played. In fact, this method of playing adds to the strategy as far as the cards are played. They are placed in the discard pile and remain there until one of us gets ambitious enough to shuffle them back into the deck.

If you play as many backgammon games an evening as my friend and I do, you understand why it can become tiresome to have the flow of play interrupted by frequent shuffles. And though, either player can shuffle the deck at any time; it is usually not done unless you require a certain number that may be in short supply because of previous play. Therefore, if a player has a keen memory for numbers, he can gain a small advantage when it comes to important decisions on where to leave blots or build points.

This unorthodox style of backgammon was how my friend and I had been playing until fortune brought us a pair of contraband dice. Now our only problem is to not get caught using them. Because of the guards making frequent patrols of the playing area, it has become a game of hide and seek. The cards are visible to any passing guard and the dice get slipped in when the coast is clear.

We have been playing with the dice for almost three months now, and have yet to be detected. That is not to say there hasn't been any close calls. One time during a fit of reentry difficulty, I threw the dice a little too hard and flung them on the floor. If you have ever seen how fast a set of dice can travel when they are thrown on a waxed, tile floor, you may well understand our panic. Fortunately, the guards were otherwise distracted, and my carelessness went unnoticed.

Even if we were caught in possession of the dice, the worse that would happen to us would be to get thrown in the hole for a couple of weeks and our dice taken away.

The thought of not being able to play backgammon for a couple of weeks is so unbearable that we remain on our toes at all times. I have even come up with an ingenious method to transport the dice back and forth to the playing area. I conceal them in my coffee cup with about an inch of coffee left in the bottom. Then, if necessary, I can just take a drink of coffee and transfer them to my mouth. Several times, during routine frisks, I have been able to conceal them in this manner.

Backgammon is slowly gaining in popularity here and my partner and I have been discussing the possibility of approaching our keepers with a request to form a club. The major difficulty lies with the dice being considered contraband. The administration fears that the dice will end up in crap games. We still may press the issue, and if worse comes to worse, we could always use cards instead of dice. At least we might gain a place where backgammon players could meet and share knowledge of the game. Perhaps we may even interest an outside club to offer assistance in the way of supplies, books, and teachers.

We will keep you updated on our struggles and would appreciate any correspondence, even if it's just in the form of your fine magazine. Happy gammon to you all and BEWARE: I will be getting out of here soon and have all intentions of financing my good living from backgammon proceeds. Now ain't that criminal! ☆☆

BACKGAMMON BIZ

In the last issue we mentioned enterprising experts who taught advance backgammon in exchange for a piece of the students' winnings in future tournaments. And it happened. The winner of the 1980 Amateur Backgammon Championships was a graduate of the coach and cuddle school of backgammon. Rumor has it that 35% of his winning will go to his mentor, David Leibowitz. Now that it has been proven that the method works, expect to see a boom in the backgammon business schools.

Black & White Scotch continues to make hay with backgammon. They spend heavily on each and every tournament primarily for promotion and direction. Very little finds its way to players' pockets and only 10% to the participating charity.

The small businessman is alive in backgammon, too. Several tournament regulars carry their wares with them. Jewelry is a common item and so are other luxuries at bargain basement prices. The usual back alley items are also being pandered. Someone was selling battery operated stick pins in the last few tournaments.

The most likable enterpeneurs are the players who sell themselves. They travel in backgammon circles, promoting backers, and arranging future games preferably with pigeons. The next thing you know, they're in your hometown with a friendly "remember me." But, how are you supposed to remember? Very simply, they'll give you a card. Some cards are very creative and informative, but this is the best one we have ever seen!



That's Style

Backgammon may never be the same.

Former film idol Marlene Dietrich insisted she needed something out of the ordinary in a backgammon board. So artist Neal Orfaley went to work, the New York *Daily News* reported today.

The result was a board encrusted in gold and solid silver with dice cups cast from silver bearing the actress's monogram in solid gold.

She plays constantly with her housekeeper in Paris on the $17,000 board, the *News* reported.

(Reprinted from *Lexington Herald-Leader*)

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HARVEY, HARRY
HUNTER, TIM
JONES, FRANKIE
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FUN FACTS

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- **Backgammon received its biggest push in 1920 when English archeologist, Leonard Wooley, uncovered backgammon boards during the dig at the ancient biblical city of Ur. They were inlaid with shell, bitumen and red limestone.**
- **Roman Emperor, Claudius, wrote the first actual book on backgammon. Backgammon had previously only been mentioned in writings by Plato, Herodotus and Homer.**
- **James I of Scotland spent the last evenings of his life playing the game before being murdered in 1437.**
- **Shesh-besh (five, six) is the Middle Eastern name for backgammon. It is more widely used than the word backgammon. Puff, the German word for the game in the middle ages, has almost completely passed from use.**
- **Gammon is an actual English language word. As a noun it is the thigh of a hog, picked, smoked or dried, and more commonly known as smoked ham. As a verb it means to make bacon. Coloquially (slang) it is used to mean a hoax – as "what, another gammon!"**

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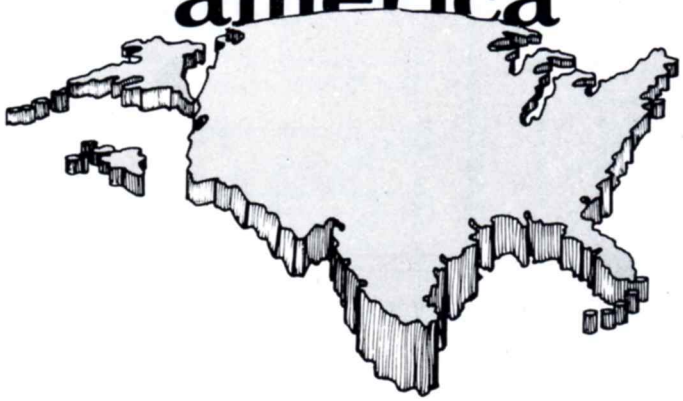
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backgammon across america



New Tournaments In Los Angeles

Steve Goldman and his partner, Bob Honoroff felt that there were too few tournaments in L.A. They also thought the rake was too big and the atmosphere too severe. They decided to start their own "social affair" tournaments and restrict the cut to 15%. The sights of the two alternating weekly tournaments are Intrigue on Wilshire and the Bootleggers on Pico. Further information can be acquired by calling (213) 836-3937.

Georgia Backgammon

The GBA has started a new once a month tournament at Easy Street in Atlanta. In the last issue of the *Backgammon Magazine* the editorial dealt with the backgammon stiff. We now quote from the Georgia Newsletter. "Easy Street has now adopted a two drink minimum and an automatic 15% tip added to each check for the tournaments. This has become necessary because of a few players who never order, or who don't understand what tipping is all about." Bravo Georgia! Current Club Point Leaders: 1) Dave Schroeder, 2) Debbie Ingram, 3) Kathy Posner, 4) Tome Daniel, 5) Steve Maffitt, 6) Bob Wilensky.

GBA

New Director Joins NNBA

Dave Heffner, aka, "Gambling Dave," "Dave the Hat," "The Backgammon Nevadan," is now the NNBA's Associate Director. In addition to being one of the highest ranked players, he has participated in many national and regional tournaments, and has won more money in side games than any other player. He has just returned from San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas where he played with the "Big Boys" in chouettes, and pocketed a fair amount of change. Dave will assist Bill O'Brien and Jim Roderick in running the weekly tournaments. Besides winning money at backgammon, Dave and his charming wife, Glenda and their son, Richard operate the Brass Rail (soda fountain and novelty shop) in Virginia City. Now you know where backgammon is played in Virginia City. Congratulations, Dave.

NORTHERN NEVADA BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION

Phoenix Booms



Backgammon Mike throws backgammon bashes faster than we can report on them. No sooner was the Annual Arizona Backgammon Championships (Winner: Kevin O'Sullivan) over, and the Summer Classic was on!

The Summer Classic was co-sponsored by the Hyatt Regency for the benefit of the Boys' Clubs of Phonix. The $20 donation allowed participants to compete for over $10,000 in prizes, including the grand prize, one acre of land. Now that's unique. So was the city-wide billboard promotion. Backgammon needs more of this kind of high energy affairs. Winner and new landowner, Craig Chellstorp.



Owen Trayner Memorial — Florida —

The Second Annual Memorial Tournament was held at Le Club International. Mr. Trayner, a teacher and prime backgammon mover, was known as Mr. Backgammon in Southern Florida. His memory is being kept alive by this well attended yearly event. Al Teasow won the event with Les Boyd taking second.



Cavendish North

Bay Valley Inn Results

OPEN DIVISION
Main Flight
1) Howard Perlman
2) Steve Landen
3) Bob Ciaffone
4) Ken Young
Consolation Flight
1) Elliot Winslow
2) Sandy Kaplan
INTERMEDIATE DIVISION
Main Flight
1) Peter Kalba
2) Elayne Feinstein
3) John Struss
Consolation Flight
1) Nick Jourbran
2) Mitch Schecter

Flint Area Club



Bruce Denison, a pre-med student and backgammon pro, is the new director of tournaments held weekly at the Rusty Nail in Flint. Former director, Amy Mitoma, has left the Flint area for Florida. The Mitomas helped found the Flint Club and with Carol Cole made it the huge success it is today. The Club recently celebrated its 2nd anniversary with a well-attended special tournament event. Current club point leaders are: 1) Edde Soto, 2) Carol Cole, 3) Dr. Stephens, 4) Nick Joubran, 5) Ven Sparks, 6) Farid Nassar.

Indiana Open

The Indiana 27th Annual Open Tournament went right down to the wire with the score at 18 - 18 in the 19-point finals; Darrell Marcus, Chicago, won over Chem-fu Yu, Dayton.

Most of the 76 players in the championship flight had high praise for the Hoosier Backgammmon Club technique of dividing the flight into five sections, in order to avoid the first round with 40 byes and time-consuming complications in the consolation event.

Fifty-eight players competed in the Intermediate flight with Sterling Sherman defeating Phil Dunlop, St. Louis, for first money. Directors for the event were Frank Cook, Mark Jones and David Groner. Jack Bernstein was the auctioneer.

Next year, the 28 Annual Indiana Open will be held about a month earlier according to Ralph B. Roberts, president of the club.

OPEN

Winner . . . . . **Darrell Marcus, Chicago**
Finalist . . . . . **Chem-fu Yu, Dayton**
***Semi-Finalists** . . . . . **Marilyn Turner, Detroit**
. . . . . **Elliott Winslow, St. Louis**
. . . . . **Orrill Martin, Clearwater, Florida**

Chouette Portland Tournament

Finally, after several months of discussion with local players on a variety of possibilities, the light dawned. The fun way to organize a chouette tournament is to play it out the same way blackjack tournaments are done!

At least, the format works the same, and the chouette isn't all that different from a "21" game as played by the gang at someone's home, where the deal is passed from player to player according to a fixed rotational system.

Certain adjustments in scoring procedures are neccessary along with an admonition about "running out the clock" while ahead, but essentially the simplest form for a chouette tourney would require players to **start** play with a specified number of points, play to a specified time limit for each round, and the surviving player with the most points at the end of the allotted time is declared the winner for each table, or chouette.

For the benefit of *Backgammon* readers who would like to give it a try, the Pipmasters Official Chouette Tournament Rules are available by sending a self-addressed, postage paid, business envelope to Pipmasters, 2652 North Winchell Street, Portland, Oregon 97217. Rules include formulas for establishing time limits and starting points, special scoring requirements, etc. Russ Kolemaine/ Pipmasters Club.

St. Louis Now Gateway

The St. Louis Backgammon Club, Inc. has put on a new face. We are now the Gateway Backgammon Association and directed by Shirley Dunlop. Our aim is to promote backgammon and run tournaments throughout St. Louis. Presently, we have a tournament the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Contempo's in the airport Ramada Inn. Our first tournament, June 17th, was a big success. The winners were Phil Dunlop, 1st; Shabaan Benpoorat, 2nd; Elliot Winslow, and Claude Harris, 3rd and 4th. We tried a modified Swiss Movement followed by single elimination to give new tournament players more playing time. We plan to try some doubles tournaments in the future. Anyone wishing more information should contact: Shirley Dunlop, 4352 Caracalla, St. Louis, MO 63033, (314) 839-2365.

.....and Europe

CHAYTO BLACK TIE TOURNAMENT

The first CHAYTO BLACK TIE TOURNAMENT was held at the Hotel Le Richmon in Geneva.

This was certainly the most elegant and fascinating Tournament ever and the 250 invites at the opening cocktail party could admire the exposed jewels including the unique emerald necklace, which belonged to Marie-Antoinette.

The 165 participants in this invitational Tournament, included four former World Champions: Joe Dwek, Jean-Noel Grinda, Paul Magriel and Dr. Luigi Villa.

The total prize money exceeded Sfr. 200,000.00 and an exciting final, watched by many admirers saw George Allouche from Beirut win the Championship over Joe Dwek by 21-20.

Later on the Swiss Team took a revenge over the Lebanese to win the Team Championship.

The half dozen press people and all the participants agreed that this was a memorable event and everybody is looking forward to the weekend of September 12 to 14 where our Lebanese friends will join us again to compete for the Middle East Airlines Challenge Cup at the Hotel La Reserve in Geneva.



COMO RESULTS

Director: Luigi Villa

MAIN	Championship	Junior
WINNER	RIGGI M.	BALSAMO F.
FINALIST	BALASSIANO S.	CICOGNA F.
SEMI-FIN.	CIBOLDI A.	BOLOGNINI G.
SEMI-FIN.	PORCU' P.	CAJANI F.
CONSOLATION		
WINNER	BEATTIE M.	SANDRI F.
FINALIST	GINEPRO E.	LACOVICH
SEMI-FIN.	CAVAZZI G.	MAMBRI U.
SEMI-FIN.	VARLEY J.	HALTER
LAST CHANCE		
WINNER	CAPRIO R.	BALASSIANO M.
FINALIST	BRAVE MEIR	BADRAN K.
SEMI-FIN.	GASTALDI R.	BENZ R.
SEMI-FIN.	MULLER T.	PIGHINI C.

CROCKFORD'S

TOURNAMENT RESULTS



CHAMPIONSHIP
1) DENNIS WATERMAN
2) MARSHAL BEATIE
3) EZRA TISSONA
4) ROWER LOW

1st CONSOLATION
1) JOE MONRO
2) SIMENON

2nd CONSOLATION
1) PAUL MAGRIEL
2) LEE CARPENTER

LAST CHANCE
1) MICK SPENSER
2) CHUCK PAPAJIAN

Total Prize Pool = 55,000 += 10,000 added.

David Oxley runs backgammon at Crockfords with an iron hand. It was lucky he ran the July tournament just that way or there would have been player mutiny to contend with.

Five hundred pounds is a lot of money to pay and play in a crowded, litle 3rd floor walk-up with no air conditioning, no ventilation and no aisle space.

Considering the song and dance that the Henry McDowell group makes participants go through for the privilege of entering the casino and tournament, one would think that Xanadu would be beyond.

Future success of this tournament is going to depend on assuring players that physical conditions will improve.

The other side of the coin is that Mr. Oxley's aides were pleasant and helpful. The equity was high; fairness and efficiency were the order of the day.

DIVONNE - HOTEL GOLF



Director: Roland B. Jakober.

MAIN	Championship	Junior
WINNER	NARBONI F.	DA PRA ALBERTO
FINALIST	MOGHRABI	FACCHETTI C.
SEMI-FIN.	BUD-MONHEIM	YEHESKAEL
SEMI-FIN.	BIMES	NIQUILLE
CONSOLATION		
WINNER	ZEHIL	CARTER
FINALIST	DURUZ	AFKAMI
SEMI-FIN.	AALAI	MEHRAN
SEMI-FIN.	DAIGNAN	BOERO R.
LAST CHANCE		
WINNER	AVRAMIDIS	KHALIFE
FINALIST	CAPRIO R.	YEHESKAEL
SEMI-FIN.	SALEMA	ALPHANDERY
SEMI-FIN.	CALIARI	PRANDSTATTER



BOOK REVIEW

The Cooke Book

CHAMPIONSHIP BACKGAMMON by Barclay Cooke and Rene' Orlean, C.R. 1980, is published by Prentice-Hall of Englewood Cliffs, N.J. The list price is $19.95.

REVIEW I — *by Mary*

Barclay Cooke's latest book, *Championship Backgammmon,* provides a rare insight to the thought processes of a master player during the tense drama of a big match. Assisted by Canadian expert Rene' Orlean, Barclay Cooke presents a fascinating play-by-play analysis of the first eight games of the 1973 championship match between Great Britain and the United States. In this extraordinary confrontation, Phillip Martyn and Joe Dwek represented the U.K., and Barclay and his late son Walter represented the U.S.

This book is written in a format that invites controversy. The potential for second-guessing is enormous when entire, real-life games are given, rather than book problems with cut-and-dried answers. While this makes the book a bit too confusing for beginners, I do wholeheartedly recommend it to players of intermediate level and higher.

Barclay's previous book, *Paradoxes and Probabilities,* was an excellent study in tactics. This new book branches out into overall strategies as well. The authors stress the importance of a consistent, and preferably conservative, doubling strategy. They repeatedly emphasize the conservative tactics of locking up the game before trying for the gammon, and of taking playable doubles rather than giving them. However, they are careful to note the differences between tournament and money play. A case in point is Game 3, Table I, between Barclay and Joe. Barclay drops a double that would be a take in a money game because of the risk of being gammoned, which of course, can be far more disastrous in a tournament than in a money game or chouette.

The tactics emphasized in this book are consistent with those in *Paradoxes and Probabilities.* Among the tactical principles that the authors bring out most often are the importance of an anchor, the defensive value of the opponent's bar point, and the danger of splitting the back men too early. Many technical fine points are explained in the footnotes, which practically make up a backgammon mini-course of their own.

Perhaps the most important lesson in this book is that susceptibility to pressure pervades all levels of play. Great player make errors under stress just like everyone else, as shown by the four-page list of errors given at the end of the book. It is easy to look at some of the bloopers on this list and smugly state, "I would never make an error like that!" It is easy for us to say, because no-one analyzes our games in depth. If anyone did, we'd probably be amazed at the atrocities we commit at even our best sessions.

Another important point is that widely varying doubling strategies can all be effective in the hands of the right players. The authors express surprise that Walt drops an early double in Game 7, and offers one that they consider premature in Game 1. Barclay himself prefers both to double and to take later, which Walt might very well have felt was too defensive. The fine tournament records of both of these professionals may go to show that there is no "correct" doubling strategy that is the same for all players. Personality evidently plays a large role in doubling decisions.

Barclay tries valiantly to avoid prejudice in his criticisms of the players' errors, but doesn't always succeed. The book really is too hard on Martyn. While Phillip certainly makes his share of the mistakes, he gets far more than his share of the recriminations. Barclay has since stated that he regrets belaboring Phillip's errors so much. He had not intended to make Phillip look so much worse than the rest.

I recommend that as you read this book, you play out the games on your own board. Take your time, and feel free to disagree. After all, you have been invited to kibitz one of the most exciting matches in the history of backgammon.

REVIEW II

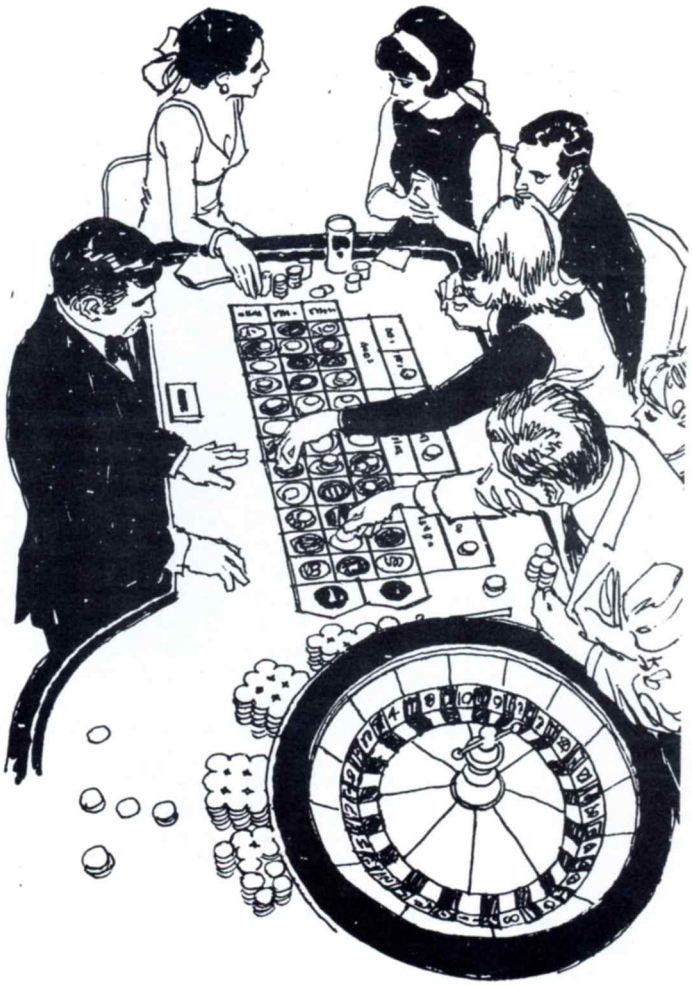
by George Brandt

An addendum to the title says "Learning through Master Play" and the cover piece adds the words "an expert analysis of backgammon strategy and tactics as played on the World Class Level." The authors have taken a duplicate tournament played in 1973 between two well-known players from England, Phillip Martyn and Joe Dwek as one team, and Barclay and Walter Cooke, father and son, from the U.S. whose individual credentials had been firmly established in world-class backgammon tournaments. In brief, eight games in the duplicate format are reviewed play by play with analytical comments of each play provided by Barclay Cooke. In the format of duplicate backgammon, this means sixteen games are described. It quickly becomes apparent, however, that the duplicate-dice system is without redeeming value. Almost without fail, within three plays, the games diverge so there is no similarity of patterns on the pair of adjacent boards. Consequently, the attempt to equalize dice for opposing partners fails completely. What is a game saving pair of 4's at one table is the horror throw of the recipient of the same number at the other table. Duplicate backgammon should have died at the conclusion of this tournament.

The illustrations in this book do not require the setting up of your own board to follow the moves of the players. The illustrations are many and of good clarity. The positions before and after the physical move are well illustrated in a single diagram. The extensive comments of the authors help us follow the logic and reasoning for the plays 'in situ' both in terms of the flow of this particular game and the match as a whole. The value and intent of the book is this accompanying analysis, primarily by Barclay Cooke.

This is not a book that professionals are going to praise, for as Barclay points out, there is an unbelievable number of errors made throughout by all four champions. Let us recall, however, that this was 1973 and very few people were consistently beating the players involved. Many of the young lions of today would pounce hard on the errors of movement and cube. They probably will do so without asking how well they were playing the game eight years ago. The Barclay Cooke of today, as well as the young lions, would probably defeat the Barclay Cooke of 1973. So the book provides a learning experience both in terms of errors made, the well executed plays and, more importantly, the thought process that lead both to the erroneous and to the clever plays. Barclay is very critical of Phillip Martyn, his opponent — in the business world it would be close to slander — but Barclay is also equally critical of his own errors and gaffs. He treats Joe Dwek with some professional indifference. Walter Cooke, Barclay's son, died tragically in 1974. The book serves, in a very appropriate way, as a memorial and tribute from a loving father to a prodigal son. Knowing this, Barclay's critiques of Walter are somewhat more meaningful. Barclay is a little more tolerant of Walter's youthful exhuberance and vacillation between aggressive and conservative checker and cube usage. This reviewer, as a 30 year participant in the game, first played against Barclay Cooke in tournament play in 1971. We have had some experience in observing those who collect trophies, ego props, and money at every opportunity. By contrast, Barclay Cooke has put far more into the game than he has asked or expected to take out, for he deals h the game as an art form. This book is another example of Barclay at his best. ★★

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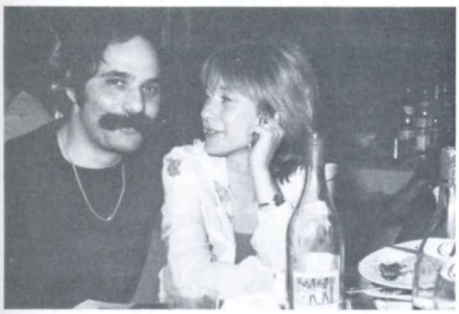
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BACKGAMMON BITS

The grapevine has it that Black & White Scotch will discontinue sponsorship of the San Francisco affair in favor of SID JACKSON California Open in L.A. Black & White also in negotiations with Atlantic City through LEWIS DEYONG on a possible $100,000 added backgammon extravaganza. Did you know that in addition to B & W Scotch, HUBLEIN also owns Kentucky Fried Chicken? Why is it then we only get assorted nuts during tournament cocktail parties? .....

□ □ □



NORM and DONNA PAVALON Off the New York. CLARINE and her beaux RANDY to Hawaii possibly for good.

□ □ □

A "Cheat Team" has been formed by Metro Police in Las Vegas to patrol casinos to catch cheaters who take millions per year.....

□ □ □



JOEL RETTEW Concording to the European tournaments with famous friend. JOEL, a familiar figure in backgammon, writes a weekly column for the *Los Angeles Times* on numismatics called "Coin Corner." Boston MEL DRAPKIN in town looking fit after long rest at La Costa. JOYCE ARQUE in Las Vegas for gaming conference then flew anxiously to L.A. to pick up KLEINMAN writings .....

□ □ □

The elite N.Y. backgammon den, Park 65, has barred some of the most famous players in the world. Winning is against the rules in the Holland-Jacobson Club. One on one play is also prohibited. Chouettes only is the rule .....

□ □ □



Married long time LVBCer GORDON RITHOLZ to LISA, and DR. K. eloped with KATHY .....

□ □ □

RON COX, B & W Scotch official, in Las Vegas with SIDNEY JACKSON, LEWIS DEYONG meanwhile, off to Japan for conference with orient al investment group planning major casino in Las Vegas with backgammon feature. Also on the fire, Holiday Inn (Memphis) DEYONG tournament.....

□ □ □

LVBCer BOBBY SCWING now in the chips with a $50,000 win in Horeshoe World Series Poker ....

□ □ □

Marriott Hotel's new L.A. night club, Gammons, claims to have been designed with the career woman in mind. It is a bar for the traveling businesswoman. A place to pick up pips no doubt .....

□ □ □

The good looking kibitzer at the Dunes tounament who had a magic way with dice and an unnatural interest in certain games was GEORGE JOSEPH. He is a magician par excellence currently in charge of internal security at the Dunes .....

□ □ □



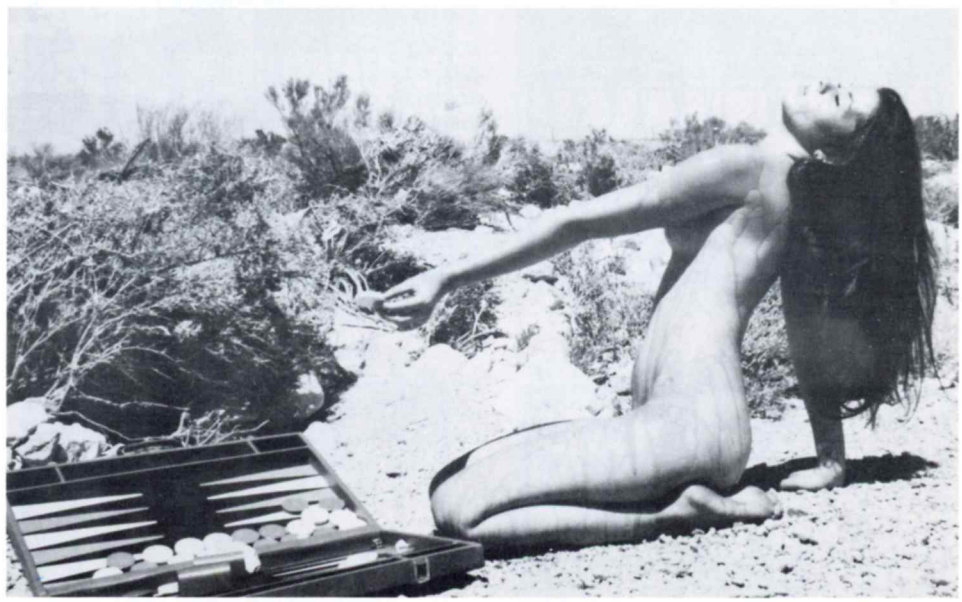
"La Sociëtë' des Bains de Mer" is happy to announce that the following service will be available throughout the tournament.

Fixed Odds Betting (AntePast) on every round of the World Championship.

Yeah, well, we like Peter better!



Long time LVBCer ELI BRUSH and PAULETTE MURRAY.



Backgammon Honey, KIM REICHELT, is a turnaround coordinator for air and bus junkets and an avid backgammon player. This pretty LVBCer loves the sun, honey and backgammon; so we poured it all in one picture for you.

DOUBLING QUIZ

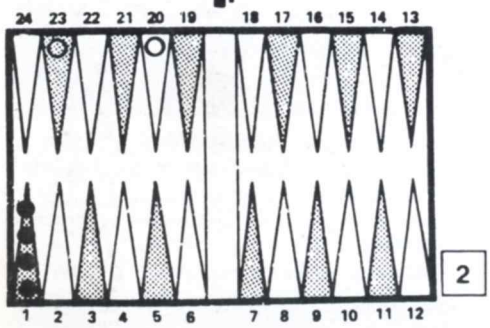
In each of the following positions, BLACK is on roll in a money game with the Jacoby Rule and beavers in effect. For each position, answer these two questions:

A) Should BLACK, on roll, double or not?

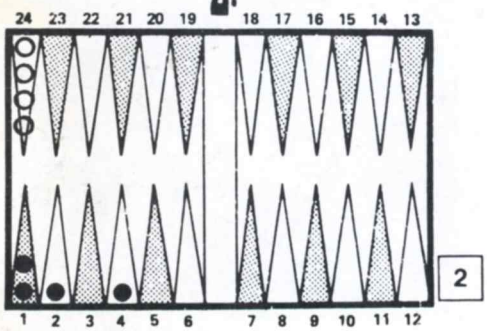
B) If BLACK doubles, should WHITE drop, take, or beaver?

Pay attention to the position of the cube. (It might make a difference !) Solutions and comments on next page. Give yourself one point for each correct solution.

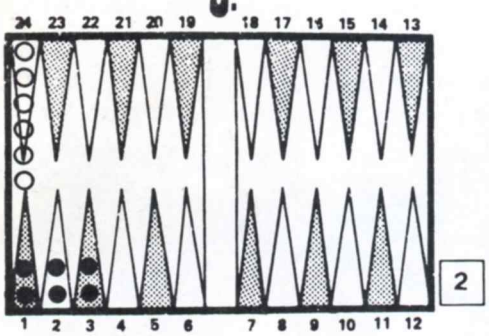
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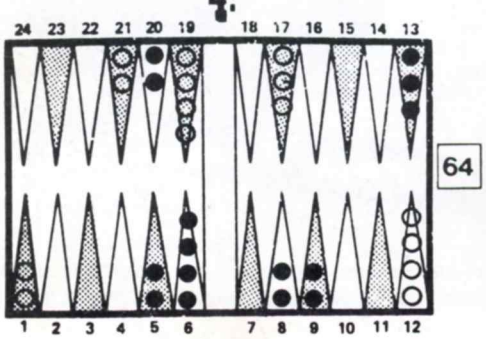
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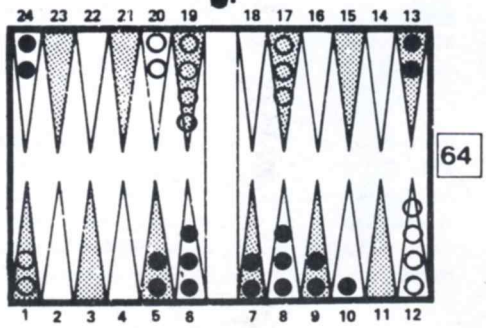
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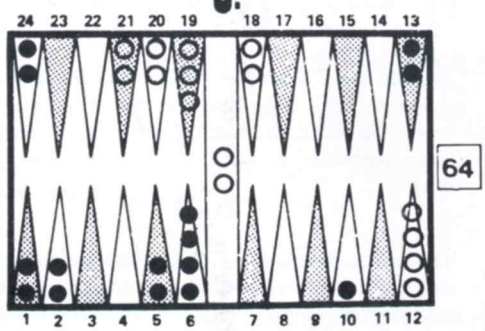
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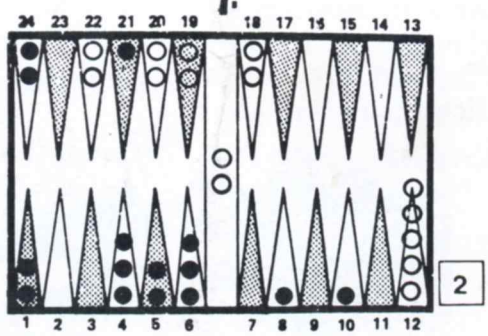
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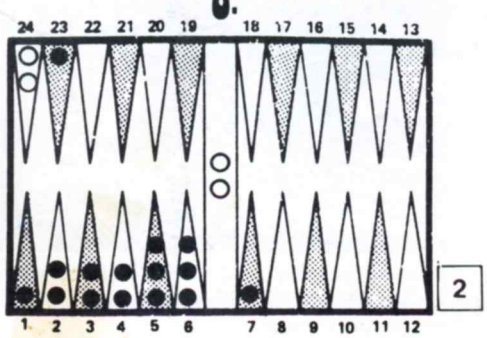
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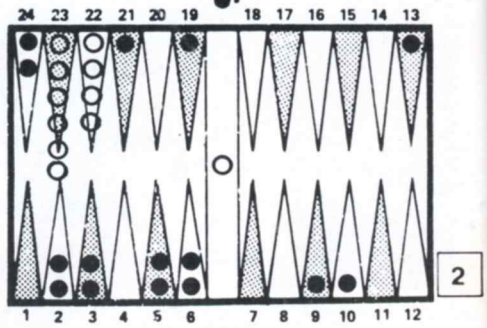
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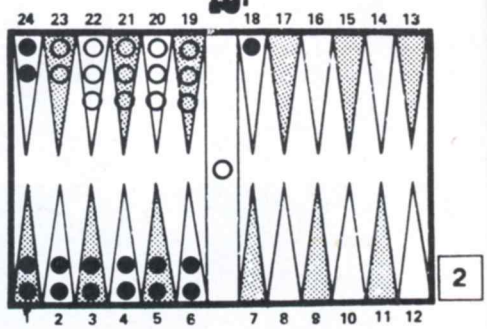
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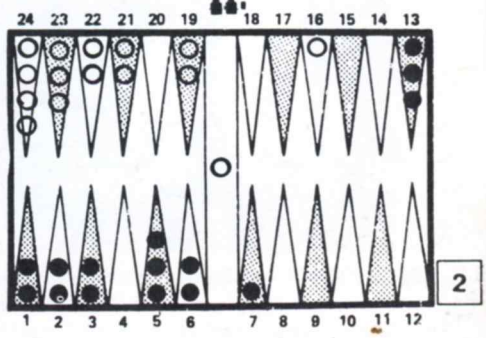
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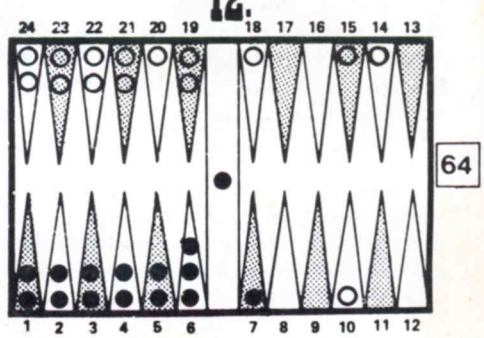
10.



11.



12.



Solutions and Comments

1) A: Yes B: Take

A cute position: BLACK can win 1/6 of the time with a double. Although he will be redoubled when he misses, he will then be only a very slight underdog (19-17). The chance of winning immediately makes this a correct double. White has far better than a 25% chance of winning, so he should take.

2) A: Yes B: Take

Black must double; this is effectively the last roll of the game and BLACK is a favorite. Evaluate WHITE's equity as consisting of three parts:

1. White can roll a double after BLACK doesn't (approx. 14%)

2. Black rolls 3-1 or 3-2 and loses (approx. 11%)

3. Black rolls 2-1 and subsequently misses (approx. ½%)

Since the sum of all these equities is greater than 25%, WHITE should take.

3) A: Yes B: Take

In a pure three-roll position (6 men each on the one-points), BLACK would double and WHITE would pass. (White's equity would then be 22%). Here WHITE has the extra possibility that BLACK can roll three ones in a row (probability approx. 3%). In fact, after the sequence BLACK: 2-1, WHITE: non-double, BLACK: 2-1, WHITE can redouble! Therefore, take.

4) A: Yes B: Take

Obviously BLACK has a double. What's not so obvious is that WHITE has just enough equity to take. This type of position is particularly difficult to evaluate since WHITE has no constructive game plan. His best strategy is to wait and hope to get a lucky shot as BLACK brings his men around the board, relying on innate randomnmess of backgammon. In 100 trials of this position, WHITE lost a total of 90 units owning the cube at 2 (as opposed to the 100 units he would have lost by dropping).

5) A: Yes B: Take

Again, an easy double. Curiously, this is an easier take than in position 4. Although BLACK's home position is stronger, WHITE still has the possibility of building a prime of his own. This problem illustrates the defensive value of owning your own 5-point. Without that point, WHITE would have to pass.

6) A: No B: Take

Black's double here is overly optimistic in view of WHITE's 4-point prime. However, BLACK is still a slight favorite, so WHITE should only take.

7) A: No B: Drop

Too good to double! Black's distribution of men makes him a favorite to win a gammon. Don't be deceived by WHITE'S semi-4-point-prime; once BLACK closes his board he'll have no trouble escaping his back men.

8) A: No B: Take

White still has a clear take in position 8 even after BLACK closes the one-point. BLACK should therefore wait to avoid the variation where BLACK rolls 2-a and WHITE subsequently makes the one-point. BLACK should not double until he sees the distribution of his three spare checkers for the bear-off.

9) A: No B: Take

Black must wait, since he will still have a double and take even after closing the 4 or the bar-points. White should not beaver; BLACK is still a slight favorite.

10) A: No B: Take

An interesting position which violates the usually reliable principle that you should wait until the last possible moment, **when your opponent still has a take,** before doubling. White has a clear take now, and will have a clear drop after BLACK rolls a single six. Nonetheless, BLACK almost doubles his equity in the position by waiting until he rolls a six, then cashing the game.

11) A: Yes B: Take

A good example of the general principle mentioned in problem 10. Black should double now. After next turn, he may have three or four builders aiming at the 4-point, and WHITE would have to pass if still on the bar. White has a 15-pip lead in the race and just enough equity to take now.

12) A: No B: Beaver

Time to put this problem to rest once and for all. It is true that with the Jacoby Rule in effect, there **theoretically** exist positions which are both initial doubles and beavers. For such a position to occur, three conditions must hold:

1) Black must win between 30% and 33% of the time.

2) Black must win a gammon whenever he wins.

3) Black must lose a single game whenever he loses.

In position 12 (from an article in the March 1980 *Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine* conditions (1) and (3) hold, but condition (2) fails. If BLACK hits, he will win a gammon about 80% of the time, win a single game about 15%, and lose about 5%. Unfortunately, the more blots BLACK hits, the greater his chances of leaving a blot in the bearoff and losing. The next effect is that BLACK's initial double is incorrect. WHITE, of course, should still beaver. (In fact, WHITE **must** beaver to make BLACK's double incorrect).

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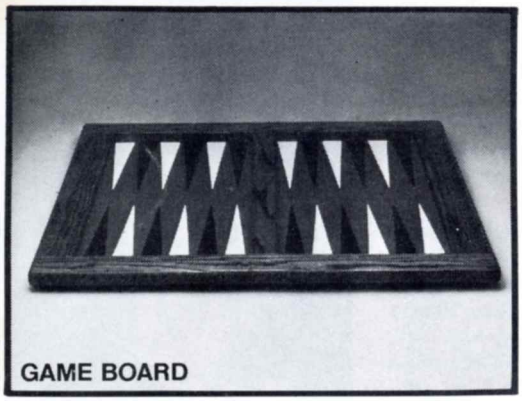
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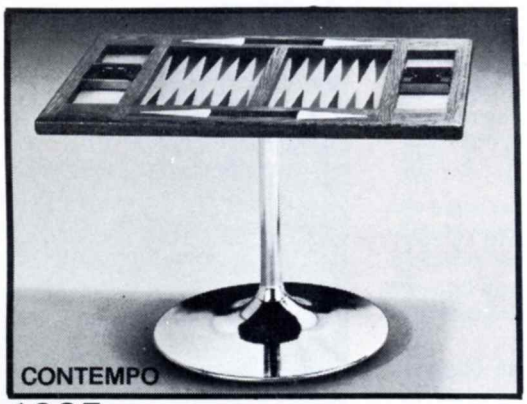
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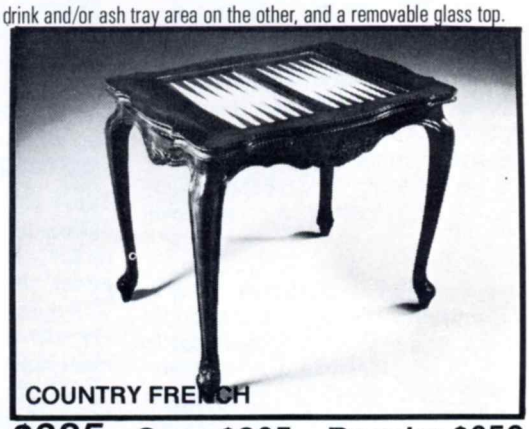
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Beware Of The Obvious

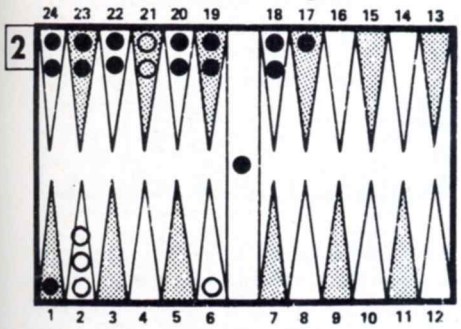


by Arthur Dickman

Looking at this set-up, most players would say, "What's the problem?" Hit the blot on the 6 point and move to White's 7 point. Let's project the possible course this game might take after the above move.

It would not be unusual for White to spend some time on the bar. It could be a problem coming into a 5 point board. In the meantime Black would be moving his pieces toward home. In about 4 rolls Black should have all his men home. About this time, let's assume that White re-enters and starts to move one man around the board. With one good roll White would take his remaining two men out of Black's inner board and head homeward. One fortuitous double would make White a favorite to win this game, especially if Black had redoubled.

Black to Play 6-1



Let's examine the alternate move. Black plays 6-1 without hitting, landing on White's 7 point. Now White is forced out of Black's board with many rolls (6-1, 6-2, 6-3, 5-1, 5-2, etc.). If he isn't forced out the first time, it will be the second time. At this point Black could redouble the game and if White is foolish enough to accept, wipe him out by picking up at least 2 of the blots, closing his board and winning easily.

Notice by not hitting the blot on the 6 point, Black forced White into an impossible situation. Many games are lost by hitting too often.

PIP TIP:

Anyone who does not know how to make the most of his luck has no right to complain if it passes him by.

— Cervantes

THE THIRD DEGREE

Who invented the Doubling Cube?

This is the most interesting question in backgammon. Yet, no one knows the answer. As close as experts can figure, the doubling cube was invented around 1920 and probably in the United States. The new twist prompted the first rules of the game to be published in 1931 by the New York Racquet Club. Since then, the cube has been used to add new life to other games such as golf and gin.

How can I get comped in Las Vegas?

This was a much asked question during the Dunes Amateur Backgammon Championships. It is true that many players were at the tournament as guests of the hotel. This was done by establishing a credit line and meeting certain requirements such as: minimum bets ($25) and minimum play (3 or 4 hours per day). The following guideline reprinted from *Rouge et Noir News* will give interested readers an idea of what it takes to get comped.

$3,500 – Room not to exceed three nights.
$5,000 – RFB (Room, Food & Beverage) for a maximum of three nights.
Total restaurant and room service charges limited to $110 per day.
$7,500 – RFB for a maximum of three nights. Return of one tourist air fare to a maximum of $300.
$10,000 – RFB for reasonable stay. Return of one tourist air fare to a maximum of $600.
$15,000 – RFB for reasonable stay. Return of two tourist air fares to a maximum of $1,200.
$20,000 – RFB and return of one first class airfare.
$40,000 – RFB and return of two first class airfares.

The average gambling budget for all visitors to Las Vegas has been determined to be $611.

How do I run a tournament?

Fake it, like the expert directors do. Just tell everyone you would have ruled in their favor if it was up to you. Explain to each one that the format isn't working well because it is innovative, but that it is designed to favor players of his skill level. On the serious side, look to the Obolensky – James book – *Backgammon the Action Game.* Chapter 10 deals with tournament backgammon including draw sheet layout. Information is also available through the American Association of Backgammon Clubs. The most complete book on tournaments is probably harder to find since it was printed twenty years ago. It is called *Staging a Successful Tournament* and is written by Roger G. Burton and E. Douglas Bayler. Good luck with your tournament. Remember service, not format, makes a tournament successful.

Las Vegas
TOURNAMENT RESULTS

DATE	OPEN CLASS	INTERMEDIATE
April 27	Kit Woolsey	Mike Eshragh
April 30	David Eig	Dan Komperda
May 4	Gary Ford	Dan Komperda
May 8 (Doubles)	Max/Karen Wolfson	
May 7	Tim Wisecarver	Chris Romero
May 11	Clarine	Jerry Mohammadali
May 14	Gary Ford	Randy Carlton
May 18	Karen Wolfson	Simeon Mishaikoff
May 21	Craig Chellstorp	Mariann Soulek
May 22 (Doubles)	Max/Karen Wolfson	Dr. K/Kim Llewellyn
May 25	Dr. K	Rachel Karr
May 28	Tim Wisecarver	Steve Herman
June 1	Ed Green	Jack Reynolds
June 8	Richard Kiskis	Dan Cameron
June 15	Tim Wisecarver	Jerry Mohammadali
June 18	Ed Green	Bob Williams
June 19 (Doubles)	David Schroeder/Schroeder	
June 22	Tim Wisecarver	Kevin Orengil
June 25	Vartan Sarkissian	Gabbie Mendoza
July 6	Karen Wolfson	Mike Eshragh
July 13	Karen Wolfson	Kim Llewellyn
July 20	David Hershleder	Bob Gromek
July 27	Craig Chellstorp	Tony Mancari
Aug. 3	Munchkin	Ray Misch
Aug. 10	Karen Wolfson	Pete Ginsberg

END GAME DOUBLING: A SCIENCE, NOT AN ART

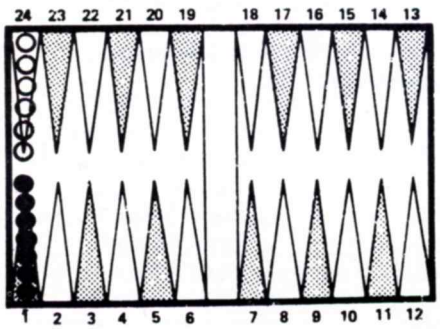
by: "Dr. J." Jeff Ward, Ph.D.

Proper use of the doubling cube is probably the most important and most difficult part of backgammon beyond the beginner level. One reason it is so difficult is that it is normally hard to prove whether a particular doubling decision is correct or not. About the best that can usually be done is to play out a position (as a "proposition") to the end of the gave over and over again, and keep track of the results. After a large number of repetitions the correct answer usually becomes clear. This is a slow and laborious process, however, and one could do this night and day and still not investigate more than a tiny fraction of the situations that can come up. As a result, good cube play is more the product of much playing experience and the development of a feel for positional strengths and weaknesses. In this sense it is more an art than a science.

There is, however, one important part of backgammon where art gives way to science (mathematics), and doubling decisions can be determined precisely. This is the part of the end game when both sides are bearing off. Correct cube play has been determined for many such end game positions through mathematical analysis. Since mathematics is primarily of interest only to mathematicians, I leave a discussion of how this is done to the end of the article. It is suffice to say that the process is rather complicated and involves very expensive computer time even for simple positions.

One group of positions is worth some special attention because they occur fairly often and because they offer guidance as to how to handle more complicated positions. This is the group of positions characterized as "guaranteed, no-miss." A typical group of such positions are those in which both players have all their remaining checkers on their respective 1-points. With each normal roll a player will bear two checkers off, and with a double, four checkers off. These positions are best described by the number of normal rolls it takes to complete the bear-off. For example, three or four checkers on the 1-point is the "2-Roll" position, nine or ten checkers is the "5-Roll" position, and fifteen checkers is the "8-Roll" position.

FIGURE 1



Now, what do you do if you encounter one of these situations during a game? In Figure 1, assume you are BLACK and it is your roll. Should you double? If so, should WHITE take? Or assume it is WHITE's roll. Should he double and shoud BLACK take? Mathematics provides the answer to each of these questions.

Let's first consider the situation in which one player needs more rolls to bear off than the other player. For example, in Firgure 1 BLACK needs four rolls to complete the bear-off, and WHITE needs three. If it is the rn of the player needing **more** rolls, he should not double. Of course, if he mistakenly doubles, it is a take by the other player. If it is the turn of the player needing **less** rolls, he should double and his opponent should drop. In Figure 1, if it is BLACK's turn, he should not double. If it is WHITE's turn, he should double and BLACK should drop.

This takes care of most possiblilities, but what if each player needs the **same** number of rolls to bear off? Here is where it gets interesting, because it depends on **how many** rolls are needed (Table 1). If BLACK is on roll, and needs three or less rolls, he should double and WHITE should drop. If BLACK needs four rolls, he should double and WHITE should take. When five or more rolls are needed, BLACK should double only if the cube is in the middle. In other words, BLACK should not redouble; WHITE should take in all cases.

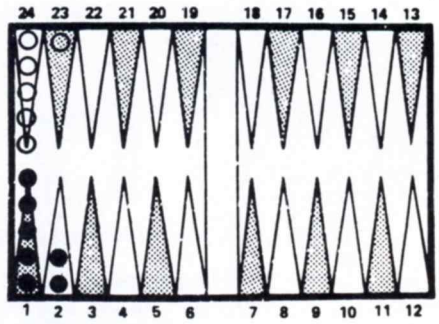
TABLE 1

Black's Position		White's Position								
No. of Rolls	No. of Checkers	1 (1 or 2)	2 (3 or 4)	3 (5 or 6)	4 (7 or 8)	5 (9 or 10)	6 (11 or 12)	7 (13 or 14)	8 (15)	No. of Rolls / No. of Checkers
1	1 or 2	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
2	3 or 4	–	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
3	5 or 6	–	–	•	•	•	•	•	•	
4	7 or 8	–	–	–	+	•	•	•	•	
5	9 or 10	–	–	–	–	/	•	•	•	
6	11 or 12	–	–	–	–	–	/	•	•	
7	13 or 14	–	–	–	–	–	–	/	•	
8	15	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	/	

After studying Table 1, you may say to yourself, "OK, but how often will both my opponent and I have 13 or 14 checkers stacked on our 1-points?" The answer is: probably not very often. But the information is still useful because it can be applied to a large number of closely related positions. For example, the rules still apply if a few of the checkers are on the 2-point instead of the 1-point. In Figure 2, Table 1 applies because all doubles still remove four checkers and non-doubles remove two checkers.

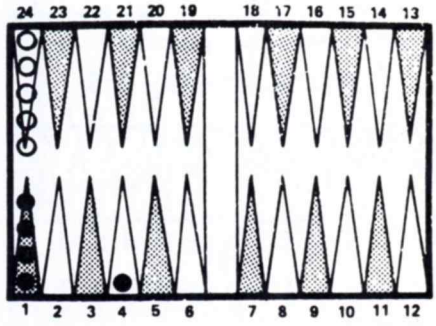
Table 1 can be applied in another way. If a player has an odd number of checkers remaining, he can afford while bearing off to

FIGURE 2



miss once and not have it hurt him. In Figure 3, BLACK has five checkers left. If he misses by rolling, say, a 3-1 and takes only one checker off, he will be left with four checkers. But he is no worse off than if he rolls something like 6-1 and has three checkers left. In each case, he needs two more normal rolls to complete the bear-off. Therefor BLACK should consider this the equivalent of the 3-Roll vs. 3-Roll situation of Table 1. This means BLACK should double and WHITE should drop.

FIGURE 3



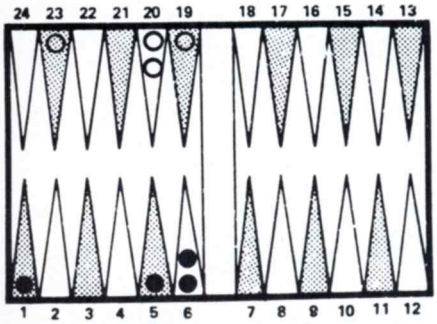
With a little thought, Table 1 can be extended further. In Figure 4 both players have four checkers, and the pip count in each case is 18. As a starting point, Table 1 says that 4 checkers vs. 4 checkers is a double and a drop. Because of the checker placement, however, both players are likely to miss should they roll a non-double. This means that 3-Rolls vs. 3-Rolls is a better indicator. But most rolls that are doubles fail to take four checkers off, and so are not as effective as in the earlier positions we looked at. This necessitates making the judgment that 4-Rolls vs. 4-Rolls is probably an even better indicator.

PIP TIPS

If you're always the first to see the dirt, perhaps you ought to clean your glasses.
—Van Buren

Ability wins us the esteem of the true men, luck, that of the people.
—Sir Rochefoucauld

FIGURE 4



If you are BLACK, you say to yourself, "Well, it's still a double (or redouble) in any case," and confidentally thrust the cube at WHITE. If you are WHITE, you think it's a take but are not sure. You know, however, that at e very least, it is almost a take. (Incidentally, it is a take.)

One important word of caution needs to be made. Table 1 applies to stakes play (money games); it does no necessarily apply to match play (tournament games). When you are trying to be the first player to reach a certain number of points, as in a tournament match, the general rule is to be more conservative than usual with the cube when you are ahead, and less conservative when you are behind. The recommendations given in Table 1 should therefore be adjusted accordingly. Exact mathematical solutions to tournament doubling situations can be worked out, but space prohibits a discussion of the topic in this article.

The derivation of the information n Table 1 is based upon the mathematical concept of **expectation.** In this case, expectation is the expected return per one unit bet on the game. In order to know the correct doubling strategy for BLACK's position vs. WHITE's position, it is necessary to know the expected return to BLACK should he double, should he not double owning the cube, and should he not couble with the cube in the middle.

Table 2
Expected Return for BLACK In Selected Cases

Case	Number of Rolls Remaining for: BLACK	WHITE	Black Doubles	Black Does Not Double: Black Owns Cube	Black Does Not Double: Cube in Middle
#1	3-Roll vs. 2-Roll		−1.444	−.491	−.722
#2	3-Roll vs. 3-Roll		+1.000	+.768	+.768
#3	5-Roll vs. 5-Roll		+.727	+.753	+.704

Table 2 shows the expected return for BLACKwith BLACK on roll in three different situations. BLACK always wants to maximize his expected return. In case #1, BLACK will probably lose money, but will lose more money ($1.44 per dollar of original stake) if doubles. So he doesn't double. Notice that he will lose less money if he owns the cube than if the cube in is the middle. (-.491 means that if BLACK had to repeatedly face this same situation in many different games, he would lose on the average 49¢ out of each dollar bet in these particular games.)

In case #2, on the average BLACK will win no matter what he does, but will maximize his return if he doubles. This assumes WHITE will drop and forfeit his original stake of one unit. If WHITE takes, WHITE will lose even more.

In case #3, with the cube in the middle, BLACK does slightly better if he doubles. However, if BLACK owns the cube, he does slightly better if he doesn't double. Notice that WHITE does better if he takes. By taking, WHITE loses an average of .727 units per game versus one full unit if he dropped every time. ★★

QUIZ PICTURE

WHO IS THIS CHAMPION?

Reprinted from *Collier's* March 28, 1936.



To win a championship is one thing. To defent it is another. In the first five years that the nation's leading contract bridge players have been ranked, there was not one repeater. Now at last the champion player has defended his title. Oswald Jacoby, who landed the top position for the season of 1934-1935, has won first place again for the competitive season of 1935-1936.

Besides ability to re peat, there is another quality expected of a real champion at bridge. Can he win with different partners? Young Mr. Jacoby has answered that emphatically by having differ ent partners in all of the events he won during the season just closed.

Still one other test might be applied to the record. Is his ability confined to just one style of game, such as team of four or pairs? Or does it cover the range of various kinds of contests? The reply is that it encompasses every possible king of contract championship.

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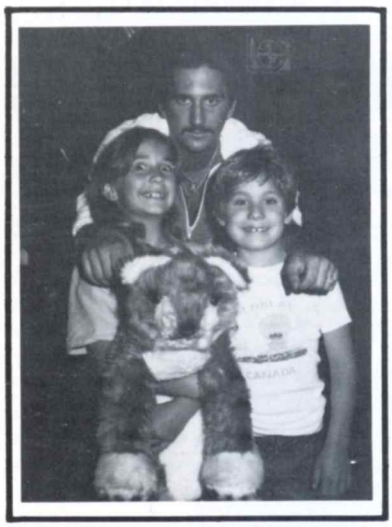
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Kiddie Backgammon Tourney

by Steve Herman







It could have been just another typical tournament at the Country Club. In the backgammon room, several dozen backgammon aficionados were hunched over their tables in fierce competition. Once in a while an argument would erupt over a disputed move — but if anything was out of the ordinary it was that these outbursts were less frequent than at most tournaments.

In fact, these players seemed to enjoy playing backgammon for backgammon's sake rather than point accumulation or money. Very strange indeed.

The players that had been eliminated from the tourney were out on the dance floor boogieing for a first place shot at rhythm, rather than with a rocking cube.

Indeed this was no typical Las Vegas backgammon tournament; it was the 2nd Annual Children's Backgammon Tournament.

The children ranging in age from 5 to 16 were divided into three age brackets. They played with all the vigor and skill that astonished some of their senior counterparts.

"Sure, there were a couple of players who moved their stones the wrong way, but I've seen some of the open class players do that occasionally," cracked tourney director Ronda Stoltz after it was all over.

When the smoke cleared, there were three winners.

In the 5-8 year old bracket, Jennifer Holt emerged the victor. She had lost her initial match but reentered to go all the way.

In the 9-11 age category, Jacki Jaquez was the winner. She was one of the junior hot shots that was brought to the tournament by an anonymous school teacher. (And we thougt they were supposed to be learning the 3 R's!)

The big kids (11-16) had a big battle in their division. The only male champion was here – Chris Nassiai.

The youthful players seemed to be unfazed by the publicity they caused. This was evidenced by the clicking of a newspaperman's camera during the tourney. In fact, *Review Journal* photographer, Wayne Kodey, acted like he was covering a Monte Carlo tourney or something. His work resulted in a first section picture in the Sunday edition to cute 10-year-old Maria Timmins rolling the dice.

The future LVBC members (we hope) didn't go into the board battle with empty stomachs, thanks to the generosity of Carl's Donuts and Mama's Pizza.

Also thanks to all who donated their Saturday at the tournament by acting as monitors, judges, bartenders, and other various jobs.









RANDOM THOUGHTS ON TOURNAMENT PLAY

by Oswald Jacoby

This is intended to supplement Barclay Cooke's excellent article in the May issue. Maybe there is no need to suggest proper tournament procedure, but today it seems that in a short match no one is more than a 6-5 favorite against anyone else. It wasn't so in the 60's. In the international championships at Nassau, I won 27 straight matches to win three years in a row, and lost in the finals the fourth year. Today no one wins more than one tournament out of ten.

The first rule of tournament doubling is to double when behind and keep the cube low when ahead. An extreme instance of this occurred in the 1978 Children's Cancer Fund Tournament. I led 3-1 in a 17-point match; I doubled early. Blakewell Williams, my opponent, redoubled and I took it. Later on in an extremely complicated position, I elected to make it 8. I thought he would drop (sure hoped he would), but he took it and made it 16 at his next turn. Now the whole match hinged on one game. I won but was lucky indeed.

The year I won at Las Vegas I led John Crawford 15-3 in a 23-point semi-final match. I doubled to 8 with three men on the one point against his three men on the five point. I failed to shoot a double and he made it sixteen, but did not get his big double.

The odds in my favor were better than 20 to 1, but it is still a matter of dispute as to whether my double has been a proper one.

Now for a couple of normal match situations:

1. You need 2 points; your opponent needs 1 point. You roll 3-1. He rolls 5-2. Should you double? The answer is a decided no because he will refuse and play a final game at even money. Wait a while until you see little or no chance for gammon.
2. You both need 2 points. You roll 4-2; he rolls 5-2. Should you double? Yes, you have the advantage. ☆☆

COMPUTER BACKGAMMON

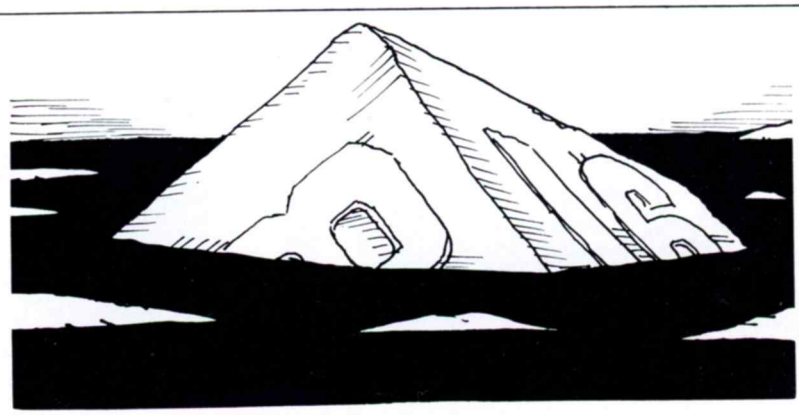
USER: "What stage is the game in?"
PROGRAM: "You are winning and you are in the process of bearing off."
USER: "What does my advantage consist of?"
PROGRAM: "You are ahead in the running game."
USER: "What should I try to do?"
PROGRAM: "You should lift your blockade and try to get your men home safely."
USER: "What do you mean by blockade?"
PROGRAM: "The degree to which your opponent's pieces are blocked in."
USER: "What does that depend on?"
PROGRAM: "The number of men that are in front of a set of points you have made and the difficulty of passing those points.
USER: "How strong is my blockade?"
PROGRAM: "It is moderately strong."

DIALOGUE BETWEEN HUMAN PLAYER AND BKG will be possible in the future. The human player will select his questions from a list, and the program will formulate its answers by examining its own knowledge base and the set of possibilities in the current game positions.
Hans Berliner on Computer Backgammon in *Scientific America* JUNE / 80.

ment results saw John McGoogan of Lisle, Illinois turn back a strong challenge from Denise Mowery of St. Louis. And in the Super Consolation event, local players dominated with Yamin Yamin winning a toss-up match over Chris Stanford.

Tournament Directors Howard Markowitz and Ida Weil wish to thank the tourney Chairman Sid Jackson, equipment supplier Loui Michel Cie, an able staff, and of course, all of this year's entrants for helping to make the premier Chicago Open Backgammon Championships a success. Watch for this event to grow in 1981. ☆☆

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Tip of the Iceberg

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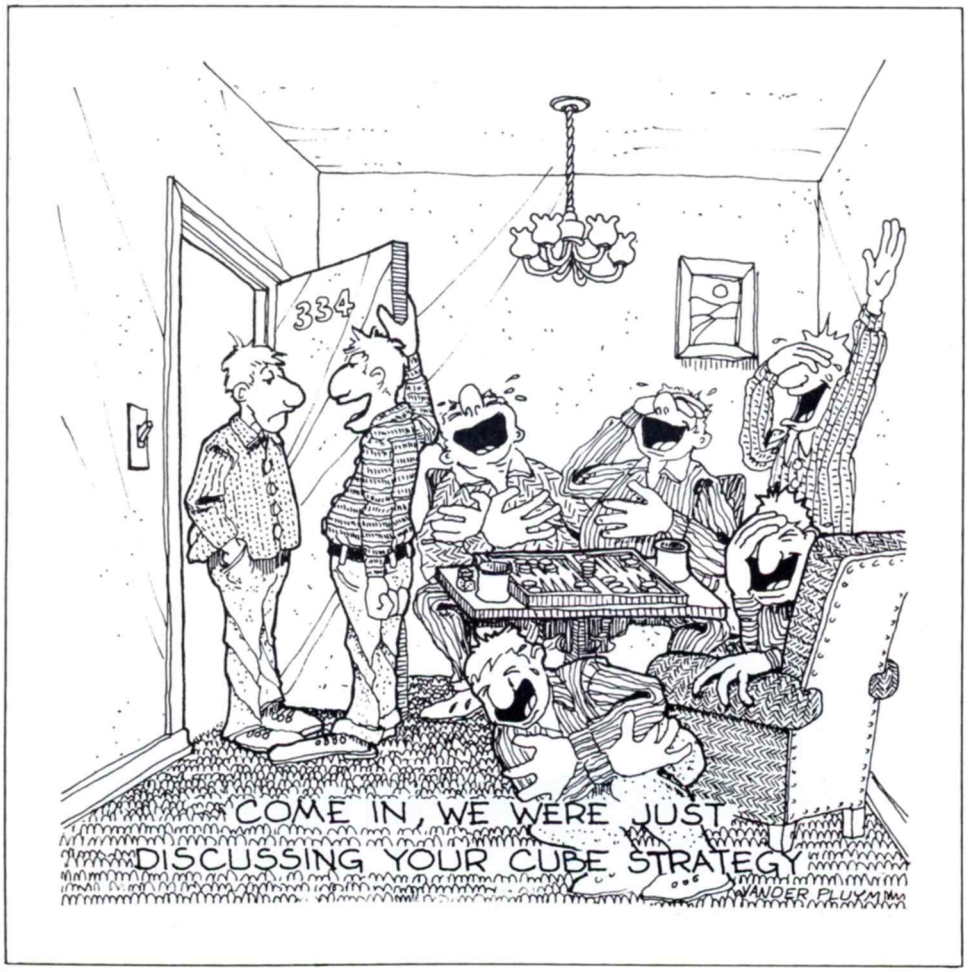
Paul Magriel is the **IT** in backgammon. His book sells out printing after printing. He travels in the company of sheiks, jet sets all over the world, and his presence is constantly in demand.

Personalities reach superstardom when they are recognized by a single name like Elvis, Sammy, or Frank. Magriel has outdone them all and is simply known by a single letter — X. Is it fair then that this same should enjoy the company of the beautiful Diana Lanni?

If you scoff that she's just another pretty face, you're wrong. Diana is also the fourth ranking woman chess player in the U.S.A. While "X" was winning $21,000 in the beginner's blackjack tournament at the Dunes, Diana took the Women's championship prize home.

She's too cerebral you say? Not quite, while studying to become a championship chess player, she worked as a topless dancer in Florida. "X" says that she will be the best woman backgammon player in the world within a year. He is amazed with Ms. Lanni's timing and cube perception.

And how does she feel about him? Well, she calls him Button. It seems Button is Magriel's real name. Paul is just a name he adopted because his real name, Button, was too cute.







MORE ON PHOENIX



Sunday, June 29th, the Phoenix Backgammon Club, along with the Hyatt Regency, Phoenix, sponsored the 1st Annual Summer Classic to benefit the Boys Clubs of Phoenix. The fund raiser for the Boys Club drew the largest Arizona backgammon crowd to date (208 players competed for over $10,000 in prizes). Among the top prizes was an acre of land in Northern Arizona valued at $4,200. Entry fee for the tournament was a $20.00 tax deductible donation for the Boys Clubs.

The event took place on the Atrium level of the Hyatt. Entertainment was provided by Arizona's favorite, Richard Asch, otherwise known as Backgammon Mike's Pianist.

People from all over came to show their support for the Phoenix Backgammon Club. Our grand prize winner was Craig Chellstrop from Las Vegas. Runner up was Michel Ramsey from Phoenix. Semi-finalists were Michael M. Shaldjian and Charles Hofer, both from Phoenix.

When asked what he had planned for the future, Backgammon Mike said, "Everything you could possibly think of!"

So, next time you are traveling by Phoenix take some time out to visit Backgammon Mike and the Phoenix Backgammon Club; they are both always filled with surprises!

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Magazines

Back issues of *Backgammon Magazine.* Limited Availability. $2 per issue plus postage. P. O. Box 19567, Las Vega,s Nevada 89106.

Wanted. Information on a backgammon course taught at the University of Miami in the early seventies. The professor was a Mr. Oberfelder. Write P. O. Box 19567, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119.

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Lost and Found Column

FOUND: World amateur backgammon champion rumored to be young, good-looking, and to possess new-found wealth, interested in teaching backgammon. Checker play and cube theory at rate of $25/hr. or, learn to roll dice at rate of $50/hr. $200 for comprehensive six-hour course. Also interested in meeting attractive young ladies for purposes totally unrelated to backgammon. Anyone taking this advertisement seriously is invited to respond in confidence: Russel Sands, 301 E. 45th Street, NYC 10017.

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WANTED FOR LOAN: Backgammon videotapes (¾ format or otherwise), 16 mm film, color or B&W still photos. Visual materials that can "dress up" a new TV show starting this fall, which will cover the better parts of the Portland Oregon Metro area.
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Personal

To my wife: Just because you ran off with the money, the car, and the TV set before I could lose them all at backgammon, don't think I've changed my feelings about you. I still love backgammon and hate you!
D.M.

REGIONAL TOURNAMENT RULES

by James Milner

CLUB NAME	CRAWFORD	HOLLAND	JACOBY	AUTOMATIC DBLS	SETTLEMENT
Cavendish West	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
American Backgammon Championships	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Merit Rules	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pacific Backgammon Association	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Mayfair, New York	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
American Backgammon Players Assn.	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO
Las Vegas Backgammon Club	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO

LETTERS

Fantasy

Dear Sirs:

I'm a young accountant, reasonably attractive, who lives by himself in a high-rise. I noticed last week that there were two attractive young ladies living across from me in another high-rise. They liked to sit in front of the window and play backgammon. You can imagine how excited I was when I watched with a pair of binoculars and discovered I could read the dice. Then one of them spotted me! Instead of getting angry she just smiled invitingly. I waved back and the next thing I know they were both in my living room. I'd always fantasized having a gammon session with two girls at once, and now it was coming true. First I teased them with a stream of fancy opening moves. Then I pounded away at one of them with a steady run of doubles while the other's full moist lips parted in awe and admiration. Soon all three of us were into the act together, and it was hard to separate shaking cups and slapping pips as we gammoned each other again and again. We even got into several backgames. They seemed to especially enjoy coming off the bar after two hours of the most fantastic backgammon experience of our lives. We fell back on the living-room rug, exhausted. Thought your readers might appreciate this "fantasy come true."

Gary Rand
New York, N. Y.

Oh! Oh!

Dear L.V.B.C.:

If you are going to print odds for craps in a backgammon magazine, you should specify that they are craps odds and not backgammon odds.

I'm referring to page 19 of your June '80 issue. There are 6, not 5 ways to make an eight. (Double 2's); 5 not 4 ways to make a nine (Double 3's); three ways to make a twelve (Double 4's and 3's); six, not five ways to make a six (Double 2's); and four, not three ways to make a four (Double 1's).

Backgammon Mike

The Orient

Dear Mr. Maxakuli:

It is a pleasure for us to inform you that backgammon is getting considerably popular in Japan, and many department stores ask us to do backgammon events. We often do a backgammon school in which we teach backgammon to the customers. We sometimes do a star vs. star backgammon match, in which a famous musician or Shogi player or Go player competes. We enjoy to hear about backgammon from your magazine and look forward to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,
Hideo Kato
Tokyo, Japan

Lawyers Only

Dear Sirs:

We are a unique group – the only attorney's backgammon club. To be eligible you must be an attorney member of the Bar Association of San Francisco. Legal secretaries, law students and other law office personnel are allowed to play in the monthly tournaments. Over thirty consecutive tournaments have been held. An Annual State Bar Backgammon Tournament is also part of the club's activities and it's held in conjunction with the Annual State Bar Convention. Over 100 attorneys participate in the club. Many of those members also participate in the PBA tournament. Our Third Annual Event will be held September 26 preceding the State Bar Convention.

Att. August B. Rothschild, Jr.
Backgammon Committee Chairman

The Roll of the Cards!

Until recently, members of our associate club (The Corrections Division of the O.B.P.A., located inside the walls of The Oregon State Correctional Institute, in Salem, Oregon) were forced to use cards instead of dice if they wanted to partake in the ultimate game of position and timing. Dice were strictly forbidden as they were considered a gambling tool.

The few that were fortunate enough to smuggle in dice were forced to 'hide out' like the ancient Christians in the catacombs.

Now that backgammon's been approved as a game of competitive excitement and strategic challenge, rather than merely a gambling game, some play night and day, rolling the dice and discussing strategies, some even refusing to go to chow!

Indeed backgammon is everywhere.

Norm Hunter
Oregon Backgammon Players Association

Dear Editor:

It was very flattering of LVBC Magazine to depict me as an "untiring, unselfish, and enthusiastic promotor" of backgammon in the June, 1980 issue. However, backgammon has always meant a good time and good company to me, and I can hardly take the credit for the loyal following of backgammon enthusiasts that appear at our PBA tournaments. Among the names of real hard-working PBA contributors are Ralph Powell, Beth Skillman, Brad Sherman, Herb Cofman and many other friends and fanatics.

By the way (I mention this whenever the topic of backgammon periodicals comes up), the LVBC Magazine is truly the #1 backgammon magazine in the world. Congratulations and keep up the good work.

Yours
Yours truly,
Nick Maffeo

Backgammon Aesthete



John Demian works as a conceptual artist and is a backgammon tyro who felt the desire to contribute his art to the backgammon world.

His interest in backgammon is psychological and esthetic. Psychological backgammon is a healthy substitute for doing something dangerous and exciting.

The cube, checkers and dice being modulated into animated symbolic forms, trigger offensive and defensive motore responses like an attacking tiger lulled into submissiveness.

The Paintings:

1. Cobra
   The duel of infinity, the chargin patter of projected checkers and fanged dice, probe, sense, prepare for an encounter to estrange the enemy into oblivion. Falling into the infinite depths of the canyon score sheets, a random victim of time and space.

2. A Backgammon Fantasy
   A backgammon cat with glasing eyes of dice, with a keen sense of cube smell, teeth of glimmering sharp pips, chouettes with a poker snake, a spiraled projection of cards flushing out dice. The chess croon, dressed in full piece plumb, directs movement of bar frogs and frog primes.

3. Backgammon Magic
   Levitated, doubling cubes, accenting checkers in spiraling revolution and dice images dance in and out of projected quantum spaces.

4. The Egyptian Backgammon City
   Pyramid pips, flanked by dice and cube buildings, sphinx dice rollers, and floating checkers maneuver on the Nile. ✯✯



DAN RIVER RUNS DEEP
IN THE DAN RIVER COLLECTION

BACKGAMMON IN ADVERTISING

Madison Avenue continues to use backgammon appeal to sell products. Not through backgammon publications, of course, but through backgammon. The two ads shown here were so unusually appealing that we made room for them in this issue. Try to imagine them in color.



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— Chouettes — Individual Cubes Variation

by Mary

How many times have you found yourself on a team with a captain who has a large minus on the score, and doubles on the second roll of the game, before you have a chance to say "Boo"? If you have ever been the victim of this situation, consider trying this new type of chouette, where individual cubes are used. That is, each player on the team has his own cube, and may double — or not double — whenever it suits him, regardless of the actions of the others. Conversely, the box may accept the double from some members of the team but not others, and may double team members individually at different times if he so chooses.

At my club, the Cavendish Club of Philadelphia, this new variation caught on fast after its introduction by the redoubtable Ami Oged. Ami got the idea three years ago at a tournament in New York, but only recently began teaching it to other players.

The rules of this game that differ from those of straight chouette are as follows:

1. The man in the box must sho a profit in order to stay in the box.
2. When a team member offers a double, the box may not answer until all the players have decided whether or not they want to double.
3. The box is allowed to double his opponents one by one, waiting to hear each player's decision.
4. When the box drops the captain's double and takes one from another player, who then wins the game, the former captain gets the box, even if he won fewer points.

Partners can be taken in this variation, as in regular chouettes. However, I do not recommend the practice, since the rationale for taking partners is to reduce the risk when in the box. When individual cubes are used, one can easily reduce one's risk by dropping some of the players when doubled. Taking partners can turn mere confusion into total chaos even in a regular chouette, and when individual cubes are used there is no need for it.

I do not intend to expound upon the strategy of this game in much depth here. However, a few observations are in order regarding appropriate strategies for players at the extremes — the strongest or the weakest in their games.

First, if you are *a* very strong player and are known to be such, the other players (unless they are total wimps) will quickly learn to double you "out" rather than "in," and drop your doubles when they are in the box. You will then have the profitable but boring experience of being sidelined with an extra point in many of the games. To stay in, you may have to double considerably earlier than you normally would.

Second, if you are the weakest player in your game, you may find yourself presented with extraordinary opportunities. The box may decide to drop all the other players and beaver you (in order to insure that he will make a profit if he wins), figuring that you'll probably butcher the game once your stronger advisers have been silenced. However, if you really put your best foot forward when this happens, you can potentially win some pretty big games. You may actually be at an advantage relative to the second – or third-weakest players, who will probably not be given these opportunities.

Who benefits from this new arrangement? Opinion varies. Several average and below-average players have indicated to me that they prefer individual cubes because it's "cheaper." Yet some very strong players also prefer individual cubes.

I have come to the conclusion that a good player can win more than ever when playing in a chouette with individual cubes. In general, he can keep the box longer and win more games by doubling out the stronger players among his opponents. In addition, he runs less downside risk because he can protect himself against a huge loss in the box by taking only one or two players when the decision is close.

So why do the weak players feel that individual cubes makes the game cheaper? Probably because they, too, are protected against large downside swings. Also, they are in the box less often, which in general is beneficial to them. In addition, the very weakest players may profit, at least occasionally, from the unusual opportunities described earlier.

Then who is losing? My suspicion is that, as with income taxes, it is the guy in the middle who is picking up the lion's share of the tab. The average player is at a disadvantage as a team member because his stronger partners are likely to have been doubled out by the time he really needs their advice.

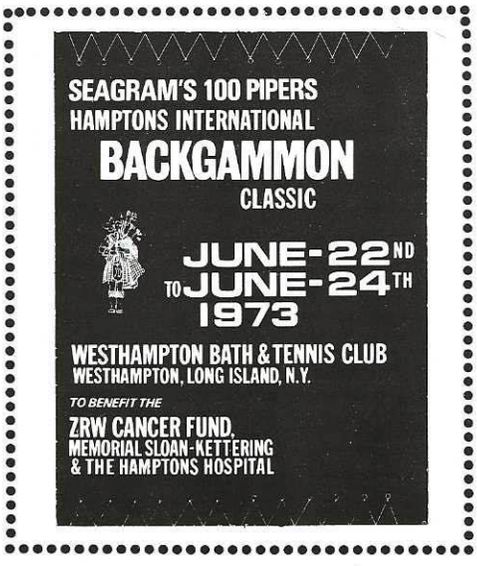
For awhile, it looked as though this new form of chouette would completely replace 'straight" chouette here in Philadelphia. Now the tide has turned, and many players have returned to the old, familiar variety. However, the new game still has a dedicated following that never plays the old way any more.

The experiment has been a lot of fun for all of us here, and I recommend you give it a try. The insights you gain will undoubtedly make you a tougher opponent in any chouette.

"Vibing the Dice"

Northern Nevada Backgammon Association

The NNBA is considering passing an ordinance prohibiting the telling of "hard luck" dice stories within Reno city limits. This director has heard them all. What goes around comes around, so be patient. We all win some of the time. Why, I still remember the last time I won back in '76. It gives me a warm glow just to think about it. I'm going to take this time to pass on a little backgammon tip that you won't find in any available book on the game. It concerns the metaphysical approach to backgammon. "Vibing the dice" is what we're talking about here. Many of you probably engage in this practice from time to time, but there is a right and wrong way to go about this telekinetic phenomenon. I have seen it work too often to write it off as chance. I have seen it defy the laws of probability. The secret in vibing the dice is to *visualize* the dice you want to see before they stop spinning. You can practice this on your dice *and* your opponent's dice. Most professional tournament players swear by it. Further, the more people concentrating on a certain roll, the greater the likelihood that roll will appear. This explains the reason many national tournament players discourage spectators at their matches. They have an intuitive feeling that the laws of probability will be bent with someone silently rooting for their opponent. It requires concentration, but I think you'll agree after some practice that the results can be startling. There are certain times when this technique seems to work better than other times. Why, I don't know, although one's attitude and energy level I feel play a distinct role. All things being equal, this "vibing the dice" can be the winning edge. For more on this and other things you know nothing about, consult my book, *Mystical Backgammon Secrets*, with such chapters as *'Hexing Your Opponent," "Fast Eddie's Dice Loading Tips,"* and *"Hypnotizing Your Opponent Through Dice Cup Shaking Techniques,"* found in finer used book stores everywhere.



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