

THE SET-UP AT THE START

■ The following are the explanations of the twenty-one opening moves in Backgammon illustrated in the diagrams on the page opposite, which are in accord with the principles of my book *Backgammon to Win*.

DOUBLE-SIXES—Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's bar-point, and two men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's bar-point.

The value of this opening throw is always overrated. It does afford a fine start for the running game; but, by its very uniqueness, often leads to final disaster. Many players double at once when opening with sixes. Such a double is absolutely unjustified; if made, it should always be accepted with alacrity.

The advantages of the correct play of double-sixes are obvious; both bar-points are secured and the all-important outmost men are well started on the retreat home.

Incorrect Plays—1. Three men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's bar-point, and one man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's bar-point.

2. Four men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's bar-point.

These two freak openings, the first a "modern" adaptation, the second a novice's dream, can be dismissed with a repetition of the principle expressed in the author's book: *The primary idea of Backgammon is to bring the two Outmost men Home as quickly as possible*. Neither of these openings commences this important maneuver as adequately as the correct play given above. Furthermore, neither secures the important opponent's bar-point.

DOUBLE-FIVES—Two men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's three-point.

One of the worst opening throws. There is no other way to play it.

DOUBLE-FOURS—Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's five-point, and two men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's nine-point.

Next to double-ones, this is the best opening throw on the dice. Two of the fours allow the player to retreat his important outmost men a valuable distance and to occupy the opponent's strategic five-point; the other two secure his own nine-point and give him a valuable building position.

Backgammon openings

BY GEORGES MABARDI

Incorrect Plays—1. Two men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's five-point. This would be a good play if, again, it were not for the first principle of Backgammon, i.e., retreat the two outmost men as quickly as possible. The player's five-point is important; but not as important as the fundamental principle of the game.

2. Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's nine-point. While retreating the two outmost men further than the correct play, this opening does not offer as speedy a trip home, because the player's nine-point is not waiting as a stop-over; nor does it secure the opponent's five-point.

3. Any play that includes the making of the player's two-point is fit only for the novice, because it definitely puts two men out of play. In the early game no point lower than the player's four-point should ever be made—save with a five-three opening.

DOUBLE-THREES—Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's four-point, and two men from the player's eight-point to the player's five-point.

A good opening, retreating as it does the outmost men to a strategic position in the opponent's inner table, as well as securing the player's important five-point. A blot is left, but the chances against being hit are 5-to-1.

Incorrect plays—1. Two men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's bar-point. This play, by its very simplicity, always attracts the novice; but it fails to retreat the outmost men and fails to make the player's five-point.

2. Two men from the player's eight-point to the player's five-point, and two men from the player's six-point to the player's three-point. While making the valuable player's five-point, this opening again fails to retreat the outmost men and, further, puts two men definitely out of play.

3. Four men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's ten-point. Again the outmost men are not brought up, nor the player's five-point secured. In the early game, builders are not as important as position.

DOUBLE-TWOS—Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's five-point.

An excellent opening, securing the opponent's five-point and retreating the outmost men effectively.

Incorrect Plays—1. Two men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eleven-point, and two men from the player's six-point to the player's four-point. Outmost men not retreated; no important point made.

2. Two men from the player's eight-point to the player's four-point. The same fault as in the first incorrect play.

3. Two men from the player's six-point to the player's four-point, and two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's three-

point. A half-hearted compromise. Ruthlessness and assurance win Backgammon games; temporizing loses them.

DOUBLE-ONES—Two men from the player's eight-point to the player's bar-point, and two men from the player's six-point to the player's five-point.

The best opening throw. So far, not even the most eccentric of Backgammon "authorities" has been able to devise an Incorrect Play for this combination.

SIX-FIVE—One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's twelve-point.

A sturdy throw that brings one of the outmost men within skipping distance of home.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's bar-point, and one man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eight-point.

2. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's bar-point, and one man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eight-point.

These two openings, aside from failing to retreat an outmost man as successfully as does the correct play, leave blots valuable to the opponent.

SIX-FOUR—Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's five-point and bar-point.

This is the sound play for a poor throw. Of course, the odds are 3-to-1 that one of the blots will be hit. But it is very difficult in this position for the opponent to hit and also to cover. Therefore, if one, or even both, the men are put on the bar-point, the re-entry to an open board gives the player an excellent opportunity to take up one or more of the opponent's men. Inasmuch as the opponent's men in this skirmish are already partially retreated and the player's are outmost, it is easy to see with whom the tactical advantage rests. In case the blots are not hit—when the opponent throws five-four, five-two or double-fives—the player has a splendid chance to turn a poor throw into a good one by covering for an important point.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's eleven-point. While this move does retreat an outmost man, it also leaves him open to be hit by a two (a 1-to-2 possibility), and offers no chance for the player in turn to take up the blot that hit him. Risks should never be taken in Backgammon unless, to take advantage of them, the opponent will be forced to risk himself.

2. One man from the player's eight-point to the player's two-point, and one man from the player's six-point to the player's two-point. Two men out of play.

This is called the novice-point.

SIX-THREE—Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's bar-point and four-point.

Another poor (Continued on page 90)



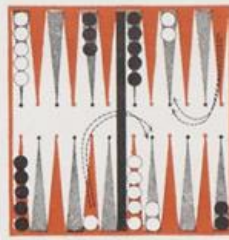
DOUBLE-SIXES—MAKING BOTH THE BAR-POINTS



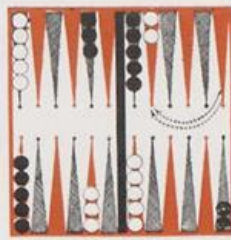
DOUBLE-FIVES—A BAD OPEN THROW



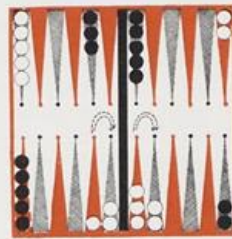
DOUBLE-FOURS—A SUPERIOR OPENING



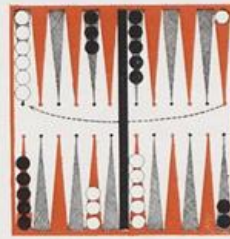
DOUBLE-THREES—THIS SECURES THE FIVE-POINT



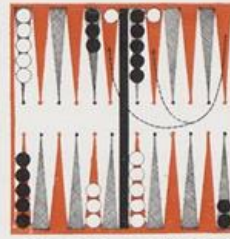
DOUBLE-TWOS—A VERY SOUND BEGINNING



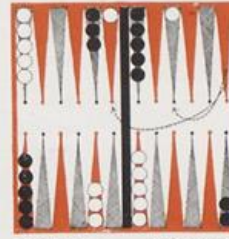
DOUBLE-ONES—THE BEST POSSIBLE THROW



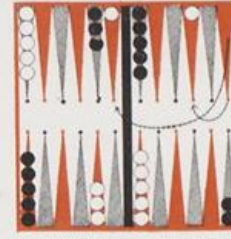
SIX-FIVE—A STURDY AND HELPFUL DICE SHAKE



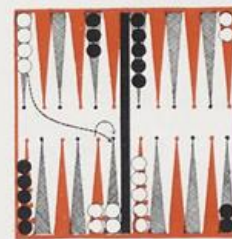
SIX-FOUR—A THROW OF NO GREAT VALUE



SIX-THREE — ANOTHER POOR SHAKE



SIX-TWO — THESE DICE HELP LITTLE



SIX-ONE — SECURES THE BAR-POINT



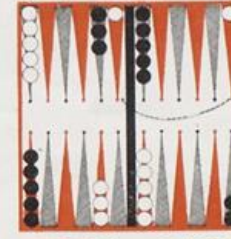
FIVE-FOUR — ONLY FOR BUILDING



FIVE-THREE—POOR BUT MAKES THE THREE-POINT



FIVE-TWO — A VERY POOR SHAKE



FIVE-ONE — PLAYED LIKE SIX-FOUR

Diagrams showing all the initial moves

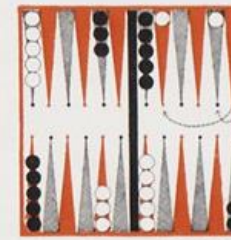
The opening move in Backgammon depends entirely on the player's own choice; the men are set up by law as shown in the diagram on page 58; the start is equal. There are just three ways of playing each of the twenty-one possible opening throws—two wrong ways and the right way. An opening move in Backgammon is determined by simple mathematical calculation and the indisputable judgment of long practice. The element of chance really does not enter. Both the correct and incorrect openings are discussed in the article opposite, so that there may be no doubt in the reader's mind as to which are the most advisable. The diagrams above should be memorized by beginner and expert alike. If the reasons behind some of them are not at first clear, they will undoubtedly become so after long play and practice.—GEORGES MABARDI



FOUR-THREE—ANOTHER OF THE POOR THROWS



FOUR-TWO — ONE OF THE BEST THROWS



FOUR-ONE — MISERABLE DICE SHAKE



THREE-TWO—A WEAK OPENING MOVE



THREE-ONE — THE BEST WITH UNEVEN DICE



TWO-ONE—THE WORST SHAKE OF THE DICE

Backgammon openings

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shake but soundly played as above. The same reasons for the correct play of six-four apply here.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's ten-point. Valuable blots are always unwise where recovery is hard.

2. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's four-point. This is one of the favorites of the "new" backgammon and is incorrect, inasmuch as it fails to retreat either of the outmost men and makes a 1-to-2 blot out of a well-retreated man.

SIX-TWO—Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's three-point and bar-point.

Another poor throw that must be played in the same manner—and for the same reasons—as 6-4 and 6-3.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's nine-point.

2. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's five-point. See comment on 6-4 and 6-3.

SIX-ONE—One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's bar-point, and one man from the player's eight-point to the player's bar-point.

Next to three-one, the best throw with uneven dice. There is no other possible way to play it.

FIVE-FOUR—One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's five-point, and one man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eight-point.

This is another poor throw, although it does allow the player to bring one of his outmost men up to the opponent's five-point, and to place a man on his own eight-point for building.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's ten-point. The player is too easily hit when far retreated.

2. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's four-point. Improper as is same play of six-three—too dangerous.

3. Two men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eight-point and nine-point. A good building play, but, again, the player is neglecting to retreat his outmost men.

FIVE-THREE—One man from the player's eight-point and one man from the player's six-point to the player's three-point.

A poor throw, best played as above. This is the only opening in which the player retreats men as far as the three-point in his inner table. The men are out of play, but there is no better move.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's five-point. Commendable as is its attempt to make the player's important five-point, but wrong in dangerously exposing a valuable man.

2. One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's four-point. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eight-point. Useless.

3. One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's nine-point. The odds are 3-to-4 the player will be

This is an exceedingly poor throw and must be played, as above, for building purposes only.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eight-point, and one man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's three-point.

2. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's six-point. Never pile up men on single points.

FIVE-ONE—One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's bar-point.

Another bad throw. Must be played similarly to the six-four opening. The odds that player will be taken up are 2½-to-1, but the possibility of revenge makes the risk worth while.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eight-point, and one man from the player's six-point to the player's five-point. The man from the player's six-point is too far retreated to be risked so brazenly.

2. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's bar-point. A fatal error.

3. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eight-point, and one man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's two-point. Futile exposure.

FOUR-THREE—Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's five-point and four-point.

Another of the poor throws but soundly played in the opponent's inner board. The odds that the player will be hit are 7-to-3, but again, he has an excellent chance for revenge.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's six-point. Piling them up.

2. Two men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's nine-point and eight-point. Good builders, but can be hit after a long retreat.

FOUR-TWO—One man from the player's eight-point and one man from four-point.

A nice throw. The only way to play it.

FOUR-ONE—Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's five-point and two-point.

A miserable throw. Player makes an attempt at the opponent's five-point and retreats his outmost men a little.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's nine-point, and one man from the player's six-point to the player's five-point. Do not expose blots in your inner table unless it is absolutely necessary.

2. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eight-point. Useless.

THREE-TWO—Two men from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's four-point and three-point.

A weak throw. Outmost men are retreated; opponent's five- and four-points are threatened.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eleven-point, and one man

twelve-point to the player's eleven- and ten-points. Risky exposure of valuable men. Outmost men forgotten.

3. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eight-point. Useless.

THREE-ONE—One man from the player's eight-point and one man from the player's six-point to the player's five-point.

The best opening throw with uneven dice. Makes the player's immensely

valuable five-point.

TWO-ONE—One man from the opponent's one-point to the opponent's four-point.

The worst shake on the dice.

Incorrect Plays—1. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eleven-point, and one man from the player's six-point to the player's five-point. Unnecessary risk.

2. One man from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's ten-point.

Mrs. Hopkins

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"That gun was give to me by my father, sir! I was a Grove before my marriage, and the Groves is an old Southern family. My father used to tell me, 'Nora, Nora Grove was my maiden name, 'Nora,' he said, 'you've always been used to gentlemen, but they's men in the world that's apt to take advantage of females, especially pretty females.' So he give me that gun you hold in your hand."

"I had always hoped that the occasion for using that gun would never come up, but you see, Mr. Hopkins has to be out in the country a good deal, and I am left alone. A pretty woman is apt to arouse a man's brutal instincts. So I thought it would be a good idea to get loads."

"I guess that'll take a .22 short," Floyd Evans said.

A few days later an Armenian rug pedlar came to town. He carried his

pack of rugs, tapestries, scarves and couch throws on his back in a great mass of color. He went from house to house, showing his wares.

Along late in the afternoon he came to the Hopkins home. He knocked on the front door, but he didn't get an answer. He rattled the screen.

About that time Mrs. Hopkins opened fire. The Armenian started running. Mrs. Hopkins came out on the back steps, firing after him.

The next morning Mrs. Hopkins dressed up and came to town. She went in to the Justice of the Peace's office to give herself up.

Mrs. Hopkins leaned her head over on one side. She said: "You know, Judge, after I think about it, maybe I was a little too rash. I thought that man had his animal passions aroused. But I guess all he really intended was just a little romance."

Portrait of a fashionable painter

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was true, they now belonged to the ages.

Gradually the crowd dispersed. Towards six o'clock the gallery was emptied. Arthur Faleck slipped into his fur-collared overcoat, and was about to leave, when he espied a young, rather seedy-looking man standing in the far corner of the gallery and gazing with frowning intensity at the portrait of an oil millionaire's wife. Drawn by the absorbed expression of the young man, whom he had never seen before, he casually sidled over to him.

"Well," he said genially, "what do you think of it?"

The young man barely glanced at him out of the corner of a ferocious brown eye. His pale, thin face contracted in a grimace of disgust.

"Arthur Faleck," he said, "had a genuine talent. But because he found he could paint flesh tints well, he sacrificed his art on the altar of Mammon."

"Ah?" said Arthur Faleck sardonically. "The way of all flesh-tints?"

"I mean," the young man said savagely, "he can paint. He has a genius for lustrous fabrics and flashy surfaces. And for likenesses. But the man has no soul. And he has evidently been too busy making money to learn anatomy, or to learn how to draw."

"You are right," said Arthur Faleck

"Yes. In a garret. God! If I only had half Faleck's opportunities, I could show this generation what a portrait painter ought to be!"

"Well," said Faleck to the young man, "I happen to be Arthur Faleck. If you will let me, I will be glad to come to see your work. If it is good, I'll get you a commission."

"Good Lord!" cried the young man, his white face flushing deeply. "After what I said? Why?"

"Because," said Faleck, with a cynical twist of his thin lips, "because you remind me so much of myself when I was your age."

BEAUX ARTS: Arthur Faleck had always been one of the moving spirits in the Beaux Arts Ball. It was largely owing to his untiring efforts on the Executive Committee that on this particular February night the ballroom of the Astor was a splendid and decorative replica of the Court of Henry the Eighth. In the pageant, Faleck himself had been Henry the Eighth, but, quite naturally obeying the instincts of that fickle monarch, towards four o'clock in the morning, he had deserted all of his eight wives (recruited from the pages of the Social Register) and, deep in wine, was sitting in a private bedroom on the ninth floor, caressing the flimsily clad figure of a little model

hit, with small chance for recovery.

FIVE-TWO—Two men from the opponent's twelve-point to the player's eleven-point and eight-point.

from the player's eight-point to the player's five-point. Dangerous exposure which is not worth while.

2. Two men from the opponent's

reflectively.

"I ought to be. I am a painter myself."

"Portraits?"

who had come to the ball as "An offering from the court of the Sultan". In the same room, Max Brinden, the
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