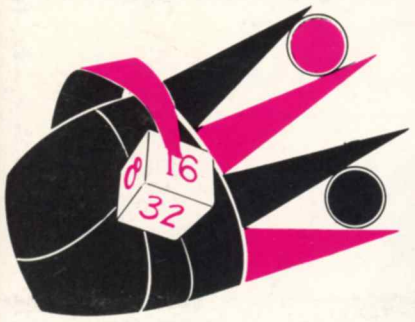
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If your club IS NOT LISTED, please contact the Las Vegas Backgammon Club and we'll see that it is!

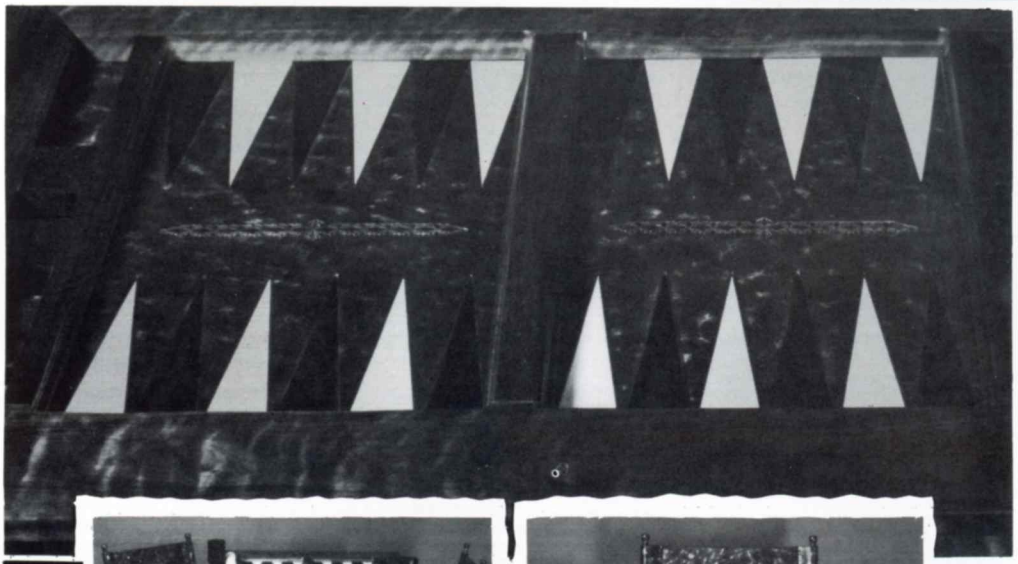
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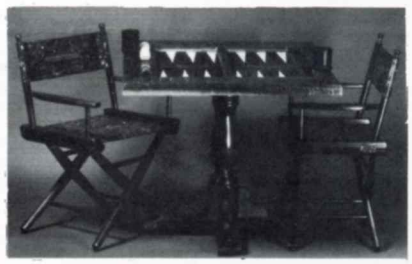
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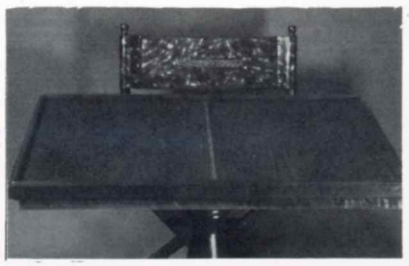
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An International Publication

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Published since 1974.



COVER: WAYLAND FLOWERS is the hottest act in Las Vegas. The Hollywood Squares regular is currently packing them in at the Casbar Theatre in the Sahara Hotel.

Wayland Flowers will be featured in the upcoming "Madame Follies Review" a unique show for which he is developing additional characters. This revue will open in the main Sahara Congo Showroom. It will be the most novel act to ever headline at a Las Vegas hotel.

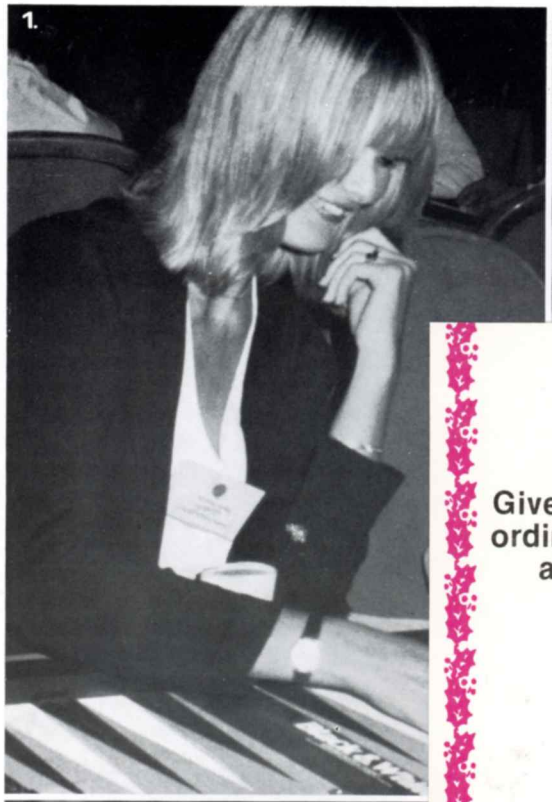
The *Backgammon Magazine* photographer caught Wayland on stage agonizing over a backgammon board as the curtain was about to go up. His opponent, the famous Madame, had him stuck several points and Wayland kept asking for one more game and to raise the stakes. Madame refused. After all, she's no dummy.

Cover courtesy of Sahara Hotel
and David Dearing
Photo by Linda Kruegel



Lucille Ball – see page 33.

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Miami: Championship Backgammon hosted by Black & White Scotch.

1. Carol Lorenz, an attractive model from London, England shows us how she looks when she plays backgammon in Miami, Florida. Nice Carol! **2.** Tremayne Rodd, or more properly Lord Rennell, looks confident. And well he should! As one of Great Britain's most colorful players, he is a world class backgammon champion. **3.** Jean Sobieski, an artist, is not thinking about painting today. Backgammon takes concentration! Carole Hultgren and Monika Sula ponder their next moves. **4.** Denise Hemingway concentrates on her next move. She never needs to concentrate when she orders a drink: it's always Black & White and soda. **5.** Lee Genud, Women's World Backgammon Champion, competes for the top prize in Miami. **6.** Paul Weiss from Munich, Germany enjoys a favorite drink among new traditionalists: Black & White & soda.

Black & White Scotch. The New Tradition.

Editorial

Don't Be Mad, Be Glad

Sooner or later, the whole backgammon world will be mad at us.

Everyone, it seems, is sensitive to press.

The BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE is accused of giving too much coverage, not enough coverage, slanted coverage, etc.

Readers complain that we didn't mention them or that we mentioned them too much.

Pictures are missed when they don't appear and thought unattractive when they do.

We are held responsible for writers' opinions, typesetters' mistakes, and printers' omissions.

Fortunately, no one has complained about the cover price. Perhaps that's because those voicing most of the opinions don't bother to subscribe.

The BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE has survived because its pages are open to all. We are not hawking anything. In the past, magazines were advertising sheets for tournament promoters.

Others failed because they tried to stroke everyone. To them backgammon was wonderful. All tournaments were wonderful, and all personalities were wonderful — except no one got in the magazine unless they were a world champion or Hugh Hefner.

And they all failed.

The BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE is a volunteer effort by the Amereican Association of Backgammon Clubs to get the news to the people.

Where others hold information close to their chest because it represents power, we freely share all with readers. Before us, it was impossible for a small operator to promote a tournament, find a good source for backgammon equipment, or reach important names in backgammon.

We've opened up the backgammon scene, giving it room to breathe and grow.

We don't censure our writers. After all, they don't get paid. We sympathize with tournament directors who receive bad press and are hurt financially; however, participants have an investment, too, and they should get their money's worth.

As for regional news, we can print only what we receive. Competitors in the same area tend to exaggerate their successes, while downplaying those of the other fellow.

Pictures don't always appear as promised, because our photographers are volunteer amateurs and not always perfect.

Recently, someone complained vehemently about a supposed slight to a name backgammon player, accusing us of taking a cheap shot. We explained that he had written it (tongue in cheek) himself, but we doubt the complainer believed us.

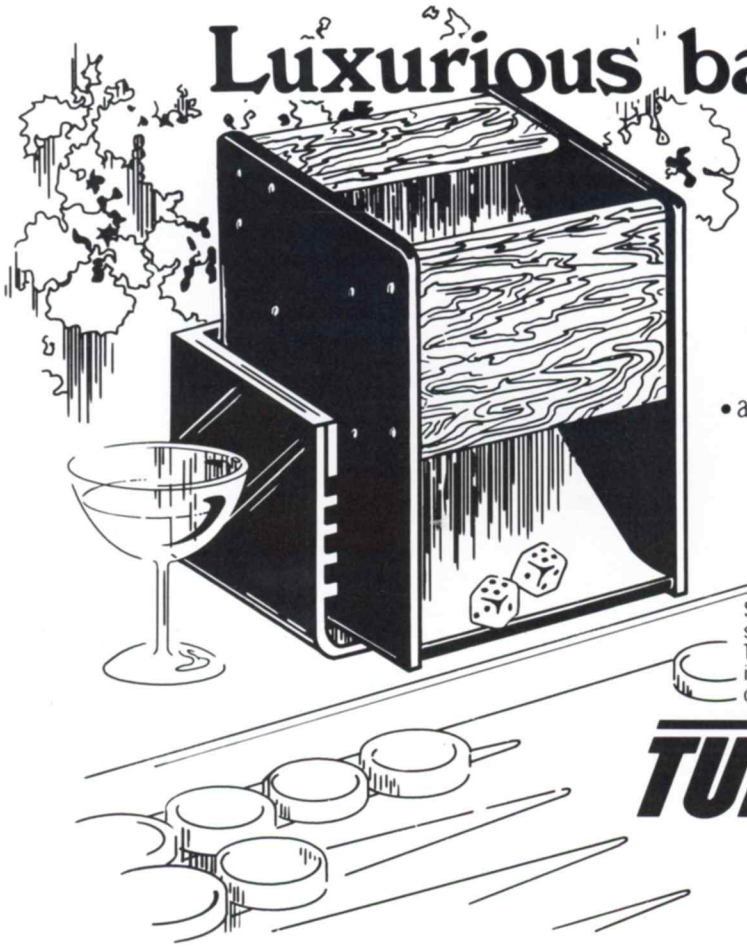
We can't please everyone. Be glad we exist. Our value is enormous. Backgammon needs a news center. The BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE is an open forum to all. If you have anything to say, say it through us. Our pages are open to all.

Subscribe! Subscribe! We need all the support we can get. Advertise if you can. We reach more backgammon people than anyone in the world. We have survived because we offer services to both subscribers and advertisers. Our growth has been slow (no color yet) because we have wanted to avoid the grand promises made by other magazines that have failed. We are going to be around for a long time, thanks to the support of the AABC and certain individuals.

Speaking of the support of certain individuals, we would like to announce a new publishing partner, Joel Rettew, the California entrepeneur and backgammon enthusiast, now co-publisher of the BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE. His support and enthusiasm was just the thing that the magazine needed to help it grow.

We are going to be stronger and better than ever.

Be glad we're here. Remember, it isn't what they say about you — as long as they say it. And we say it all. ☆☆



Luxurious backgammon dice tumbler

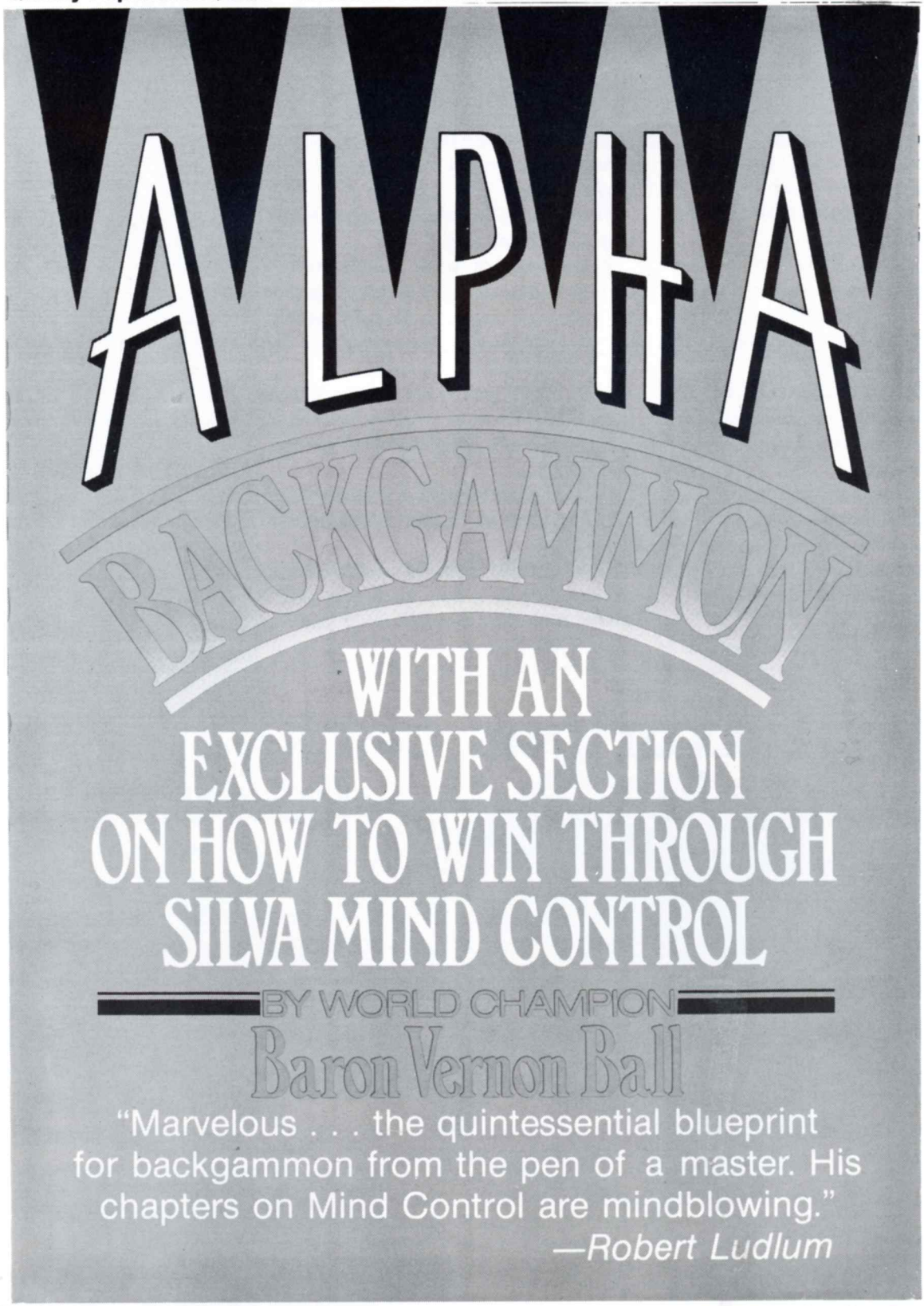
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LVBM 8





AWARDS 1980



KAREN WOLFSON is the 1980 master point champion of the Las Vegas Backgammon Club. It is the first time that a woman has taken this prize. In past years the LVBC has honored the two top players and the top woman player of the year. The two top players this year were women, so another tradition bites the dust.

Karen Wolfson, a box person in craps at the MGM, is a twenty-four year old gaming expert from Cincinnati.

The runner up for 1980 is CLARINE. Clarine is a famous name in backgammon. She formerly directed backgammon in Los Angeles, and was last year's top woman champion.

She flew in from Hawaii, where she currently resides, for the final confrontation with Wolfson. As if planned, the two woman met in the finals of the last tournament of the season. Wolfson triumphed in a close and exciting match.

In October, the LVBC threw a party for the champions. Hosted by Mr. & Mrs. Christiansen of Christiansen Pools, the party featured a feast by New York Bagel Boys, drinks by Danny and Tommy Corruzi, valet by Lyndon, security by Quick Guard, live music by the Johnny Jay group, Video by Mennco, comedy by Frank Citro, and mud wrestling by the Bogie girls. It was great!!!

☆☆



Photos by Mike Snider





LETTERS FROM READERS

Gentlemen,

Your Doubling Quiz was quite interesting till I discovered 17 men on the board in problem 5. Which two men shall I remove so I can determine if I'm a world class player or a parcheesi novice? I really enjoyed my first issue of your magazine.

Mike Kenner
Royal Oak, MI

Dear Backgammon Magazine,

I'm always glad to read about George Plimpton in your magazine. He is one of my favorites and a real character. I'm glad he supports backgammon. But, in his list of credentials you always fail to mention that he is also the Fireworks Commissioner of New York. Get with it.

Terry Hale
Brooklyn, NY

Editor's Note: We don't know what a Fireworks Commissioner does. We'll ask George about it in June 1981 Dunes' Amateur Backgammon Championships. Maybe, he'll light a cherry bomb for us.

Can Some People Actually Talk To Dice?

Dear Sirs,

After just being offered the cube and gladly accepting it, an astonished player at a recent tournament stated. "You must be able to see the future on some of those rolls. How do you do it?"

Player A rolled a 2-6, escaping his final back man and overcoming his opponents formidable 5-point prime. He has now become an immediate favorite in a game that has turned into a race. How many times have you heard a player say that who wasn't a beginner? Or how about, "You must be able to talk to those dice!" Can some people actually talk to dice? I think not, but I've often wondered that myself. I challenge any backgammon enthusiasts out there whose awareness in telekinetic powers surpasses mine to send to the Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine his opinions on this puzzling dilemma. Uri Geller, where are you?

Norm Hunter
Oregon Backgammon
Players Assn.

Dear Michael,

First, I want to acknowledge my sincere recommendation to all backgammon players across the United States and the world that you publish the finest, up-to-date backgammon magazine anywhere. Your latest issue was absolutely outstanding with its many pertinent articles, which were well written and defined. Please keep up the hard work and you and your staff will be applauded along with many other people, as having



been responsible for helping backgammon arrive as one of our greatest games.

As a show of support, on behalf of the Texas Backgammon Assn., I enclose a check to cover the fee for Associate membership. This payment represents my total commitment to backgammon as an unbiased organization, which is not married to anyone, but supportive of all well-organized associations, national and regional, in one united effort.

Jim Howe
Texas Backgammon Assn.

Minnesota Multi-Cube

Dear Sirs,

This letter is being sent as a supplement to the article entitled, "Chouettes — Individual Cubes Variation" that appeared in the October 1980 edition of Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine. Several members of our local club have banded together to form a group whose main objectives are to have fun and to produce venture capital for sponsoring members in area and regional tournaments. After much discussion as to the type of play to use in order to fund our "tournament kitty" we devised the following system, which basically is a chouette with individual cubes.

One player sits as the traditional box and plays against the other club members but not as a money game, instead a seven-point match determines the final monetary outlay. It is fascinating to note as to how quickly the match scores starts to vary and the man in the box has to develop multiple cube strategies for a singular game. The match rules do not stipulate any Crawford or Holland rules so a sound lead can quickly dissipate. The weakest part of this type of chouette variation is that one member may be playing for match, gammons not affecting his score, and another individual may have the gammon give the box the match. The unwritten rule of the club as to how to play in this situation is simply "let your conscience be your guide." Ostensibly, the most beneficial aspect of this type of play is that the individual gains valuable experience in tournament strategy and play.

Upon deciding a name for the club we decided upon a name that says it all, *The Minnesota Multi-Cube.*

Scott Clark
Minneapolis, MN

Dear L.V.B.G. Magazine,

Having attended a number of backgammon tournaments, I have always left feeling that everyone had a fun time and a fair shake. This changed in September at the Black and White sponsored tournament in Chicago.

The championship division had a full field of 128 and the intermediate division a full field of 64. Each division had 3 flights; the main, the consolation, and the last chance flight. Four places were paid in the main and consolation flights and two places were paid in the last chance flight.

Two rounds in both divisions were played Friday evening. The consolation flights of both divisions, composed of the losers of the first two rounds, along with third rounds of both divisions, was started at noon on Saturday. Once the third round results were reported is when the "bomb" was dropped on the losers. The losers were informed that their next match would be on Sunday in the last chance flight. This was also true for the fourth round losers of the intermediate division and the fourth and fifth round losers of the championship division.

What this means is 20% of the players who entered the tournament were given no chance to compete in the consolation flights. Although only 20% of the players were directly affected, the procedure is unfair to all players because any one of them could have been part of the 20%. And since 25% of the players' entry fee constituted the consolation prize funds, it only seems fair that they should get a chance to compete for it.

Rule 19 of the tournament rules states that . . . "A fresh draw will be made for all Consolation and Last Chance events. The number of matches won in previous rounds will not be considered relevant should byes be available." But nowhere in the rules or flyer did it state that players losing during Saturday's main flight matches would not be recycled into the consolation flights.

One wonders what effect there would be on the number of players wanting to play, if they had known beforehand the procedure to be used. It would have been easy enough with a little more effort, even with the rules as they are on consolation and last chance flights, to give everyone a chance at the consolation flights.

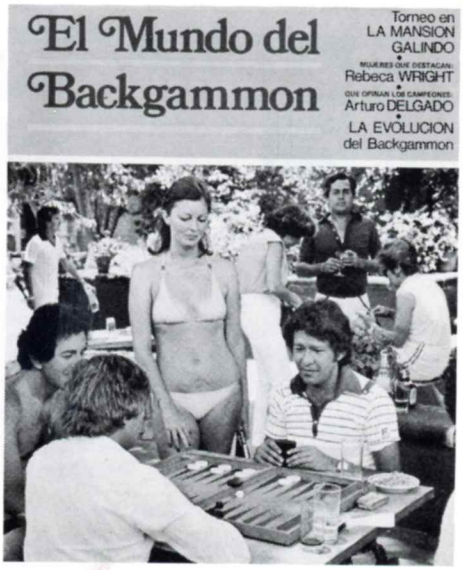
Robert Meese
Indianapolis, IN

WINTER TOURNAMENTS

DATE	TOURNAMENT	DIRECTOR	LOCATION	SPONSOR/ OPERATION
Dec. 3	Ohio Backgammon Tournament	Don Eagleton (216) 457-7134	Niles, Ohio	V.I.P. Entertainment Complex
Dec. 10-14	Holiday Tournament (No Plimpton Cup. This tournament is scheduled for June 23-28, 1981.)	Louise Goldsmith (212) 486-1489	Las Vegas	Dunes Hotel & Country Club
Dec. 15	Happy Holiday Tournament	Francesca Parkinson (617) 563-5787	New England	New England Backgammon Club
Jan. 3-11	Backgammon Festival at Sea (Starship Stella Solaris)	Alexis Obolsensky (Unknown)	Departs Houston/ Galveston	World Backgammon Club
Jan. 9-11	Torrey Pines Tournament	Drew Tanzman (714) 753-5940	San Diego	Torrey Pines Inn
Jan. 10-11	Lucille Ball-Salem Ultra Tournament	Lauren Fergson	Beverly Hills	Salem-Ultra
Jan. 27-Feb. 1	Turnberry Isle Gold Cup of Backgammon	Lewis Deyong 01-352-5400	Florida Florida	Turnberry Isle Yacht & Racquet Club
Jan. 27-Feb. 1	2nd B & W World Team Championship	Lewis Deyong 01-352-5400	Florida	Black & White Scotch
Feb. 13-15	Marian Del Ray Cup	Drew Tanzman	Los Angeles	Marriot Hotel
Feb. 14-15	Invitational Backgammon Tournament	Jim Howe (713) 493-4968	Houston	Soroptimist Int'l of Houston
Feb. 22	Fifth Annual Birthday Tournament	Francesca Parkinson (617) 563-5787	New England	New England Backgammon Club
Feb. 22	Bombay Bicycle Annual Tournament	Mac Thompson (901) 726-6055	Tennessee	American Cancer Society
Feb. 25-Mar. 1	Desert Inn Backgammon Classic	Lewis Deyong 01-352-5400	Las Vegas	Desert Inn Hotel & Country Club
March 29	Spring Doubles Tournament	Francesca Parkinson (617 563-5787	New England	New England Backgammon Club
April 24-26	28th Annual Indiana Open	Ralph B. Roberts (317) 846-0332	Indiana	Hoosier Backgammon Club
April 24-26	NEBC Tournament	Francesca Parkinson (617) 563-5787	New England	Black & White Scotch







El Mundo Del Backgammon

We are not alone; there is another magazine out there full of pictures, results and backgammon excitement. It averages sixty pages, has nearly full color, and comes out on time. Fortunately for us, it is in Spanish.

El Mundo Del Backgammon is a wonderful magazine published in Mexico City by Walter Coratella. Coratella, you'll recall, is the current Monte Carlo world champion. The magazine is closely associated with the Federacion Mexicana de Backgammon. If you read Spanish, you can subscribe by writing to El Mundo, Rio Tiber 62, Mexico 5, D.F.

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80% returned to players pool
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Enclosed is my $25. Deposit

PROFILE PAGE



Todd Vander Pluym

Todd Vander Pluym II is 39 years old, an architect and a friend to backgammon. He currently holds several world records in sandcastle building, including: highest (30 ft.), largest (500 cubic tons), longest (12 miles) and oldest (4 years).

His backgammon record is as follows: MGM-Reno 1979 – 1st place consolation and 1st place doubles; repeated the same in 1980; 1st in LA Open doubles 1979; last chance winner California Open; and semi-finalist B&W Boston 1979 and 1980.

Active as a player but totally committed to the growth and survival of backgammon, the "chronic gamer," as he likes to refer to himself, doesn't lament the passing of backgammon as a fad. "It's about time we got rid of the weakies," he says. "The freewheeling is over. Now it's time to act like a family. Weed out bad promoters and push together for the betterment of the game. I believe the first step toward this goal is a real players' association – formed by players, run by players, for the benefit of the players."

To this end Todd has unselfishly acted as an organizer and information source in the L.A. area. He has put together many travel packages to get players to tournaments that they would otherwise miss for lack of funds. He formed an investment syndicate to send the top American players to Europe, and is collecting data to form a non-profit players' association. Those interested in the players association or Todd can call him at (213) 376-8843. ✯✯

Leslie Stone

"Who do you like better, my daughter or me?" That's Tobias Stone's best line when he catches someone staring open-mouthed at his daughter, Leslie — and who wouldn't look? She is undoubtedly the most stunning and chic woman on the backgammon circuit.

The Black & White Scotch people were elated when the photogenic Ms. Stone won the 1980 Boston Tournament (yes, of course, she can play). She learned by kibitzing many a bleary-eyed session at her father's home. In the intensity of the game, the players would forget about the time and Leslie, until the dawn would surprise everyone and she would be led off to bed. Today no one has to hold Ms. Stone's hand. She knows her game and plays to win.

"I love backgammon and I love music," she says. Her boyfriend is a well-known musician. "I have a lot of interests, such as tennis and rollerskating; but backgammon is my first love. I can beat the best because I learned from the best. I don't just play — I win." ✯✯



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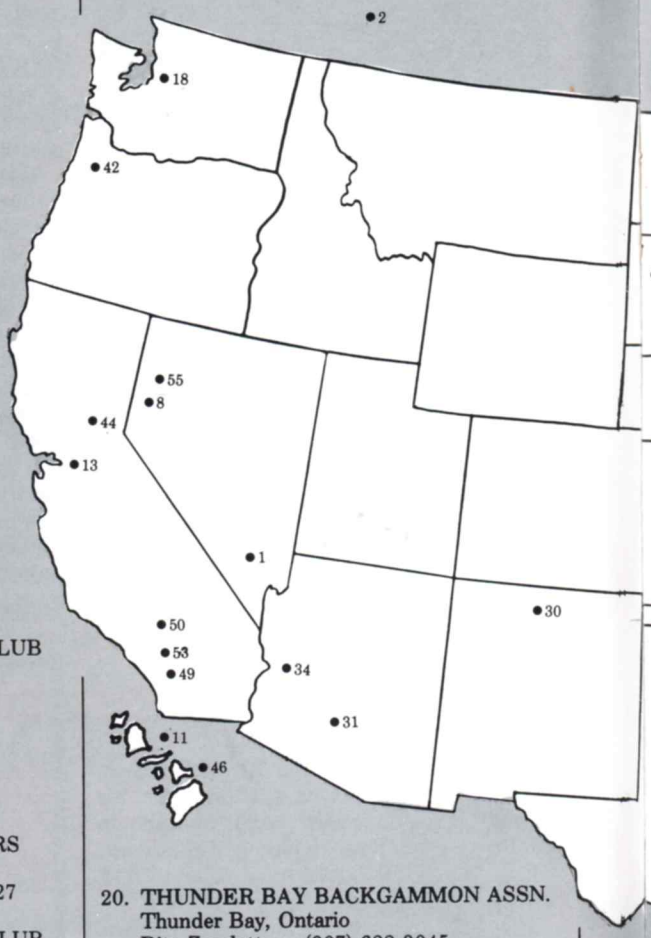
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The American Association of Backgammon Clubs is a group of grass roots backgammon clubs devoted to the love and promotion of backgammon.

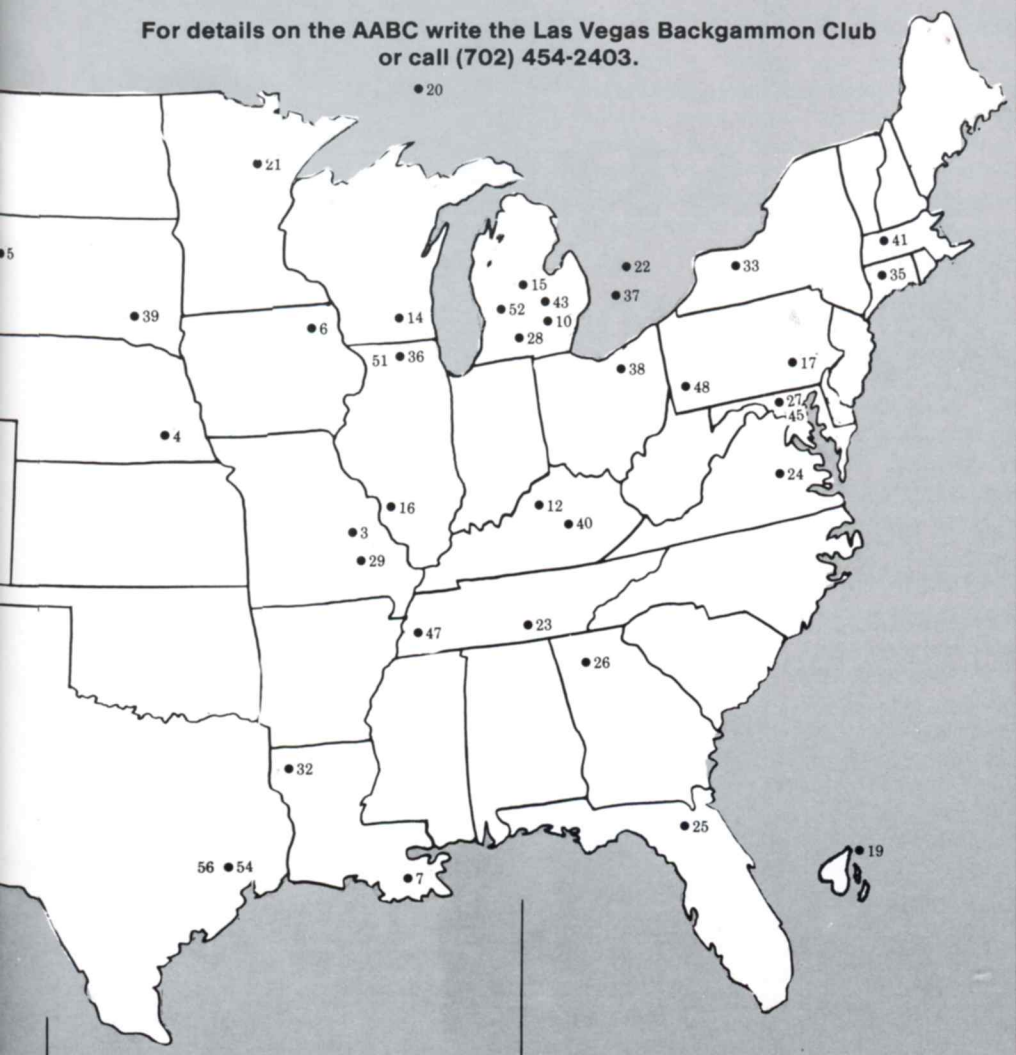
The cost of belonging to this group is $25 per year. For this small fee the associates have access to the club hotline, receive hospitality benefits for their members visiting Las Vegas, receive aid in setting up and operating their club and/or tournaments, receive free space to publish their ideas and schedules in the Backgammon Magazine (Clr. 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 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.



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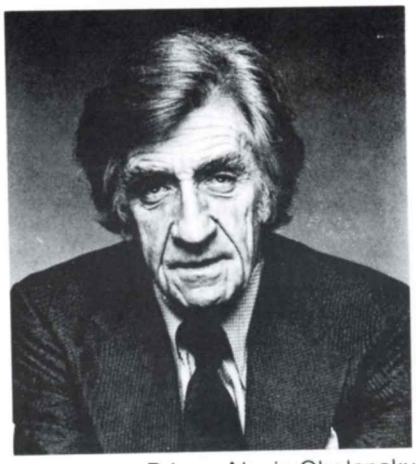
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Whatever Happened To . . . ?

Prince Obolensky plans to host a tournament January 3rd, 1981, on the Stella Solaris. Although he no longer maintains a known office, Total International Travel Inc. in Dallas (214) 361-4566 can be contacted for information.



Prince Alexis Obolensky

You are invited...

...to the BACKGAMMON FESTIVAL AT SEA created especially for you! Come and luxuriate in the warm Caribbean, forget the Winter weather and cares, let me teach you 'The Game of Kings'—BACKGAMMON!

Through my lectures and demonstrations around the world, it has been a pleasure to share my knowledge of this fascinating game. In the course of these past few years, I, together with Joe Pasternack, Director of Corporate Development of the WORLD BACKGAMMON CLUB, INC., have created a technique of instruction that can help the *beginner, intermediate* and *advanced* backgammon player. This system, combined with supervised play, is especially effective aboard a cruise ship.

During the course of our 8-day cruise aboard the "PARTY BOAT" the STARSHIP STELLA SOLARIS, the special backgammon program will feature a series of lessons for beginners, semi-private instruction for intermediates, and special tournaments for advanced players. In addition, we will have a CALCUTTA AUCTION for advanced players—if you are not participating, you will definitely want to watch this entertaining and unusual event.

The events will conclude with the SPECIAL CHALLENGE MATCH. Tournament winners from all three levels will have the opportunity to play ME on a gigantic, magnetic backgammon board for a super, surprise prize offered by Sun Line Cruises. Finally, there will be the Special Recognition Awards for all participants.

I am very much looking forward to my first Sun Line cruise experience and I hope you will make plans NOW, so you won't 'MISS THE BOAT'—join me on January 3, 1981, on board the STARSHIP STELLA SOLARIS in Galveston, Texas, for the BACKGAMMON FESTIVAL AT SEA!

Cordially,

Alexis Obolensky

Prince Alexis Obolensky
founder, World Backgammon Club, Inc.

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by Gaby Horowitz and Dr. Bruce Roman

... is the first of five works addressing the Doubling Cube. **Dynamic Cube Strategy** presents the overall principals involved in all cube handling and gives one the proper foundations from which to realize maximum gains from subsequent works.

☐ **YES, I'm tired of using the Doubling Cube as a paper weight. I want to learn to use it to win money and tournaments!**

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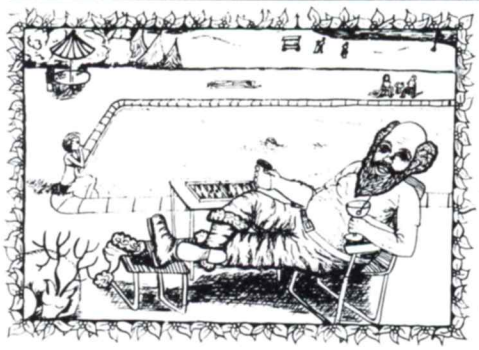
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NEW ASSOCIATES



Antelope Valley Backgammon Club

The AVBC was founded this year with an enrollment of fifteen. Already they have thirty and have held several tournaments. The club uses the Las Vegas rules of tournament play and the Robertie Master Point System. The founding officers are: Dr. George Photias, Pres.; George Gaskins, Vice Pres.,; Carol Jackson, Secretary; Mary Beth Stephens, Treasurer. The club is located in Lancaster, California. Call (805) 948-7611.



Southern California Backgammon Club

Everyone told us the tournaments on a regional basis would be a flop, but they forgot to tell Drew Tanzman, director of the Southern California Backgammon Club. He is into the second dozen tournaments in the last two years (they all have been well attended and enjoyable). The San Diego Championships, the L.A. Open, the Ranch Bernardo Classic and Southern California Championships are only a few of this club's events. Their motto is: Backgammon is Beautiful. To get on their mailing list, write to Tanzman at 2266 Cambridge, Cardiff by the Sea, Ca. (714) 753-5940.

Backgammon Unlimited of Houston

Marilyn L. Hirsty has been directing double elimination tournaments for this club going on three years. The club plays at The Honeycomb in Houston averaging seventy contestants a tournament. Doubles run twice a month. Backgammon seems to be alive and well in Texas. (713) 974-4377.

Greater Lansing Backgammon Assn.

Mitchell Schecter directs this club with weekly tournaments on Mondays at the Player's Club. Bob Aldrich, Secretary, reports that the double elimination tournaments are bigger than ever. The club is thirty strong. (517) 393-1025.

Texas Backgammon Association

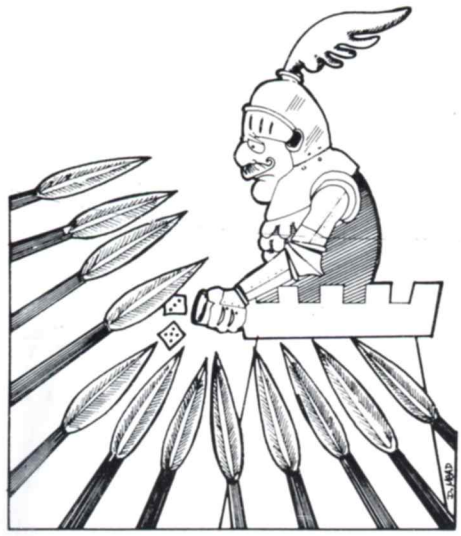
For as long as we can remember, the Texas Backgammon Association has been running monthly tournaments alternating between Dallas and Houston. The attendance is phenomenal. The credit goes to Jim Howe, who has been promoting backgammon since the Texas Pawn Shop days. The tournament director is Frank Lichtenstein. The club has more than 300 members and gets over 100 players per tournament with an average $5,000 calcutta. The TBA is perhaps the strongest independent club in America. We are glad to have them lend their strength to the AABC. For more information on the Texas tournaments, write to Jim Howe at 1358 Chardonnay, Houston, TX 77077 (713) 493-4968.





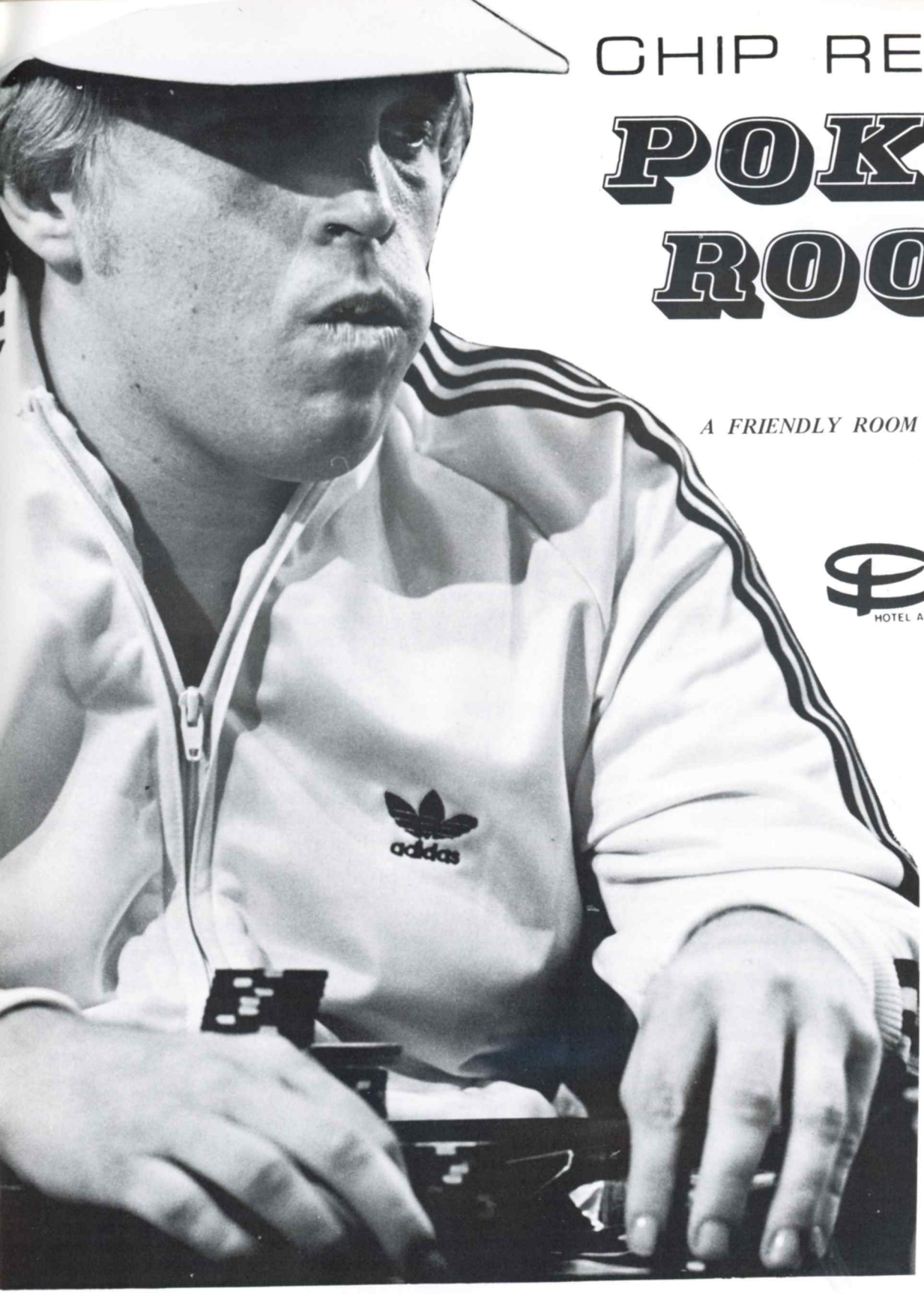
Backgammon Club of Chicago

Currently at Maxim's de Paris in Chicago, the BBC is one of the oldest clubs in America. This club was one of the original associates of Obolensky's World Backgammon group. It survived that era and today is the strongest link in Lewis Deyong's American backgammon circuit. The reason for the successful longevity is Valerie Valentine. Ms. Valentine, an enthusiastic and competent promoter, has shown us all that backgammon can prosper and grow. She never gave up on backgammon. We are glad to have here and the BCC in the Association. Welcome and efharisto! (312) 782-0142.



Village Backgammon Club

Bill and Dana Andrus have started the third club in Nevada at Incline Village near Lake Tahoe. Already the club has fifty members and has jumped into a casino tournament project with sister clubs in Sacramento (RCBA) and Reno (NNBA). Weekly tournaments are on Wednesdays at Carlo's Hideaway. Call Bill or Dana at (702) 831-4506.



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LVBM 18

DOUBLING QUIZ

by Bill Robertie

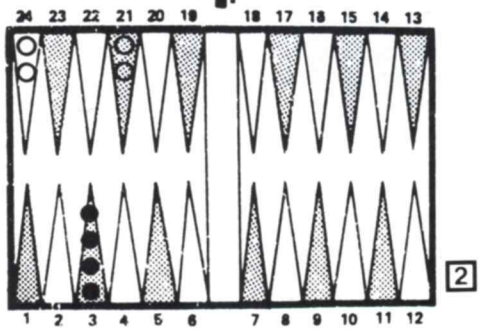
In each of the following positions, BLACK is on roll in a money game with the Jacoby Rule and beavers in effect. For each position, answer these two questions:

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

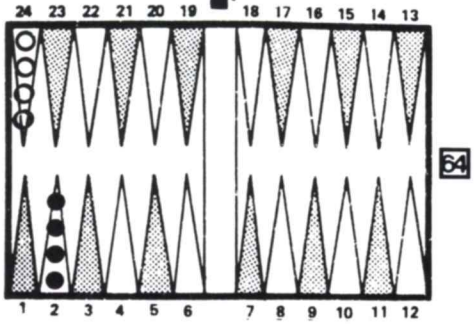
B) If BLACK doubles, should WHITE drop, take, or beaver?

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.

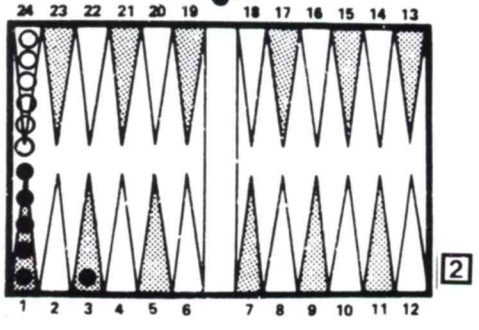
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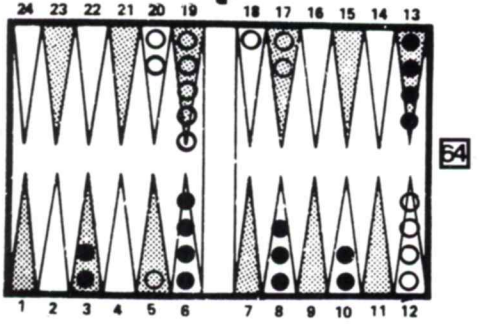
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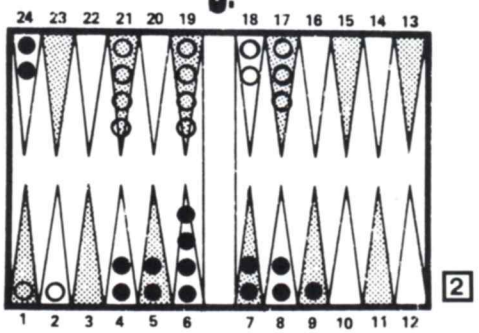
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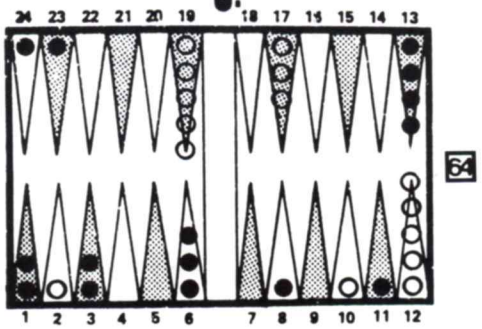
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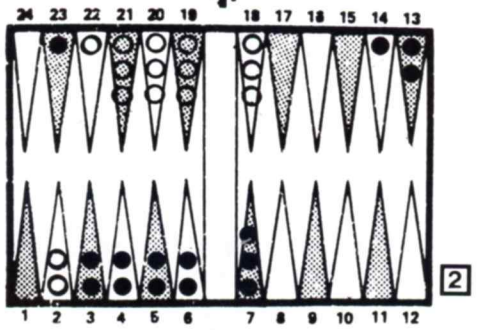
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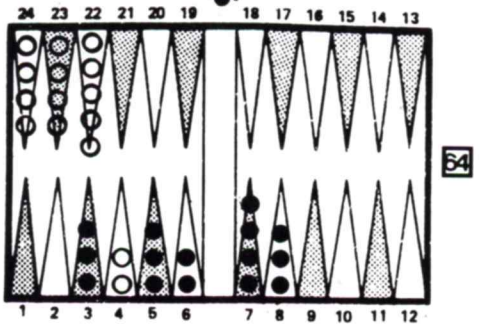
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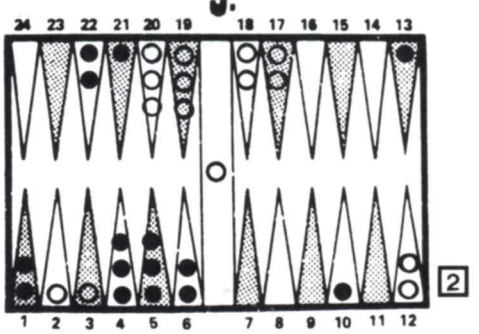
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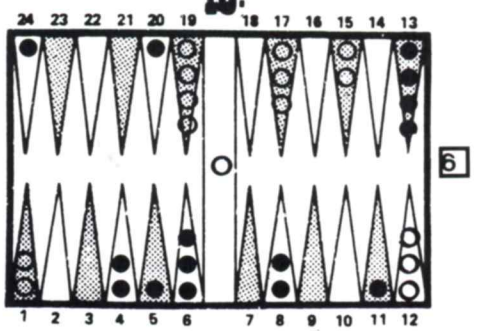
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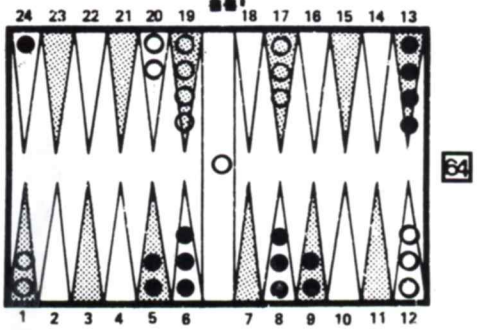
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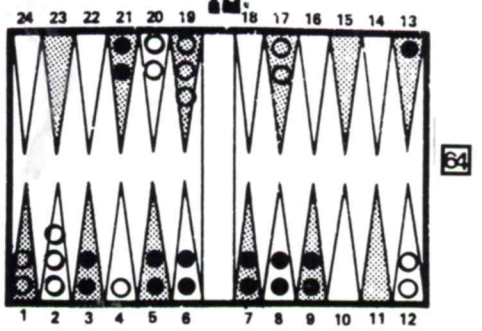
10.



11.



12.



DOUBLING QUIZ ANSWERS

1. A) YES B) TAKE
An easy take, but a somewhat surprising redouble. An extensive calculation revealed that Black's raw probability of winning is 63%. Normally with two or three rolls left in the game this would not be enough to justify a redouble. Notice, however, that even if Black throws his worst number (2-1), White will not have a strong enough position to redouble to 8. Since the cube has no value to White on his next turn, Black has no reason to hold onto it this turn. By redoubling now, Black insures that he will not lose his market if he bears two men off and White bears off only one man.

2. A) NO B) BEAVER
The easiest way to see that this is not a double is to consider the most likely case: Black and White both bear two men off next turn. In that case, Black can double and White can *still* take. (White's winning chances would then be 28%.) It is very rarely correct to double if your opponent will still have a take in most cases on the next turn. Owning the cube, White is actually a slight *favorite* in this position. Black can lose in three ways: by throwing a one next turn, by White's throwing a double, or by throwing a one on his second turn. The cumulative sum of these probilities is slightly greater than 50%, so White should beaver.

3. A) YES B) TAKE
The basic 3-roll position (6 men each on the one-points) gives White a winning probility of 22%. Here White has an additional winning chance: Black can throw an immediate 2-1, and be redoubled out of the game. The extra probability of a 2-1 is 5½%, so White has more than enough equity to take.

4. A) YES B) DROP
A position that can be evaluated using the pip count: Black's count is 126, White's is 135. Black's lead of 9 pips means that White would just have a take in a non-contract position. Here Black has the additional possibility of pointing on White next turn (with 10 rolls: 5-1, 3-1, 5-3, 1-1, 3-3, 4-4, or 5-%.) Even if Black misses, White may not be able to escape his straggler and could get attacked on a subsequent turn. So – drop.

5. A) YES B) DROP
Black has too many winning options in this position for White to risk a take. Black can win with an attack followed by a closeout, or by simply escaping his back checkers. White's distribution is too awkward for him to improve his position easily. White's most reasonable hope is to establish a 3-point anchor behind Black's prime, not much of a reason to justify a take.

6. A) NO B) TAKE
This is nothing like a double, and actually closer to a beaver than a drop. Black has a long way to go to complete a closeout in this position, even if he hits the checker on the 10-point. White will have a significant timing advantage as soon as he can establish an anchor anywhere. A healthy dose of caution is reasonable, but a drop in this position is pure cowardice.

7. A) YES B) TAKE
Black must double now; he loses his market entirely if he rolls a six next turn, and he has an advantage even if he doesn't. White, at the same time, has a very clear take. He is a long shot to be gammoned, his back men can't be completely trapped, and he has a chance to put Black behind a 5- or 6-prime should Black not escape his last checker soon. White even retains some equity in the position should Black escape his turn. Easy double, easy take.

8. A) NO B) TAKE
A widely misunderstood position. Four-point anchor positions need to be evaluated in terms of racing equity, in much the same way as non-contact positions. In the time it takes Black to dismantle his outside blocking points, White has many chances to escape his back checkers and join the race. Black has some extra equity in his ability to point on White's last checker (if White is forced to run with just one man) but most players overrate this factor in their doubling decisions. Here the pip count is: Black-88, White-69. No double.

9. A) NO B) TAKE
Like problem #6, this is almost a beaver. Black could double this sort of position if he had a reasonable number of throws to make the fifth point in his board. Here he has only 5: 2-1, 3-2, 1-1. Black will, of course, hit loose if he can. However, White's possibility of a return hit, coupled with his 4-point prime, give him excellent winning chances. Black should save the cube for next turn, where he will have chances to use it effectively.

10. A) YES B) TAKE
A solid double. White's take might look risky, but his ownership of the 15-point gives him a flexible structure, and once he enters his checker from the bar he can work on improving his own position. Of course, Black doesn't even cover the 5-point with 5 rolls (5-2, 5-4, and 5-5) after which it's anyone's game.

11. A) YES B) DROP
In contrast to position 10, Black's position here is stronger in two ways: he has only one man back, and he is one roll away from establishing a 5-point prime. White should definitely pass. Incidentally, many players overlook the strength of having just a single man back. One man back vs. two or three for the opponent is almost a doubling advantage in itself.

12. A) YES B) DROP
If you tend to take positions like this you need to seriously reassess your evaluation of back games. White's position is hopeless whether or not he ever succeeds in making the 4-point. Black's two men on the 21-point give him plenty f time to fiddle while White's game burns to the ground. Remember that playing a back game usually doesn't allow for any prolonged maneuvering. Unless the back game player is in position to recirculate checkers to the outer boards, he is continually threatened with disaster on every roll. The longer the game drags on, the more certain he is to roll the large double that spells finis.

GRADING SCALE

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20-22	Top regional player.
17-19	Advanced player.
14-16	Intermediate player.
11-13	Novice.
0-10	Lights out.

FACES & MORE



Alberto Da Pra

Alberto Da Pra heads up the European Backgammon Association out of Switzerland. He publishes the Backgammon News in Europe. – the mouthpiece of the BEA. Signor Da Pra is the European correspondent for the Backgammon Magazine. The beautiful pictures and detailed results from Europe that appear in the Magazine are sent to us faithfully by Mr. Da Pra. We met Alberto and his beautiful wife in Monte Carlo. He was excited to report that he had won his first tournament at the Casion of Divonne in France. We invited him to visit America, where tournaments are held with less pomp, but just as much circumstance.

BOOK REVIEW

DYNAMIC CUBE STRATEGY

Authors: Gaby Horowitz & Dr. Bruce Roman

Reviewer: Nick Maffeo, Pacific Backgammon Association

Dynamic Cube Strategy is an excellent contribution to the literature of backgammon. The authors, Gaby Horowitz and Dr. Bruce Roman, are articulate and thorough in their discussion of the principles of cube handling.

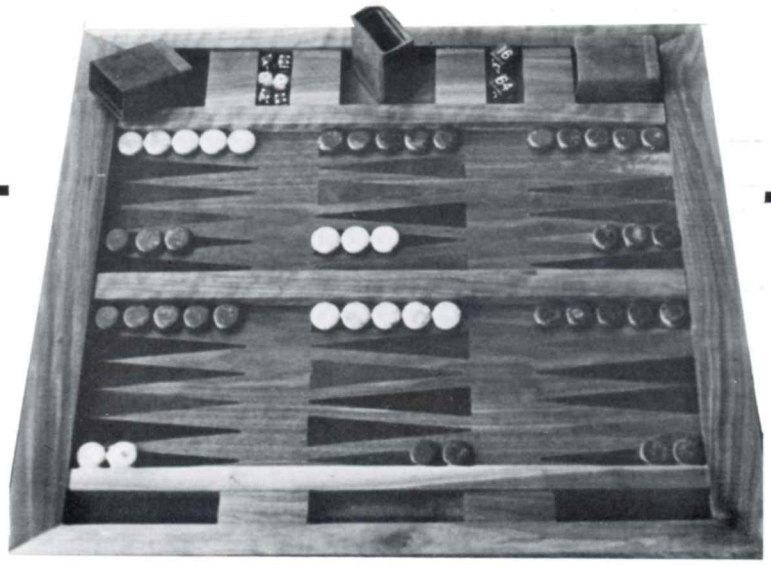
Dynamic Cube Strategy is much more than an introduction to the cube theory of future Advanced Backgammon Enterprise books, but rather a valuable tool for players at all levels. Inexperienced players will find concepts not discussed anywhere (not even in some high-level chouettes) and experienced players will discover a clarity of reasoning that will sharpen their play and hint at their own cube deficiencies.

Take, for example, the pneumonic C-U-B-E. **C**onsider the potential gain versus the potentail loss; too many players eschew the right decision for failure to follow through with the line of play yielding the greatest potential profit *or* minimum loss. **U**se the cube as a weapon not as a gift; pressure doubles are the spirit of the game. Doubling too late loses as often as doubling too soon. **B**lend checker movement with cube action; absolutely crucial for discerning play that measures the distinctions of cube position. **E**liminate emotional influence–a point I approve of in theory, but disapprove in practice. The idea is well taken, but is debatable semantically.

Dynamic Cube Strategy is not only an enriching course on cube handling, but a frank statement about backgammon and its players. Chapter 6, Skill Levels in Backgammon, may not be understood (or more probably overlooked), but it is a very important description of the personality and skill types you will encounter in everyday play.

Although I disagree moderately with only one or two plays, I did not find the problems "easy" ones. The text shows a skillful command of the English language, characteristic of Gaby and Bruce's writings, and a trademark of Mr. Horowitz's teaching style. The expressive commentary of Dynamic Cube Strategy provides important and constructive insights into a player's weak points and methods for deleting them from his game. After all, that IS the purpose of a great teacher and a great book.

At $25 per copy, Dynamic Cube Strategy is well worth the price. I was asked by a student, "Isn't that too much? How can I afford it?" "You can't afford not to have it," was my reply. ✯✯



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Three Dice Boxes—solid walnut with lip, suede-lining color coded to men.

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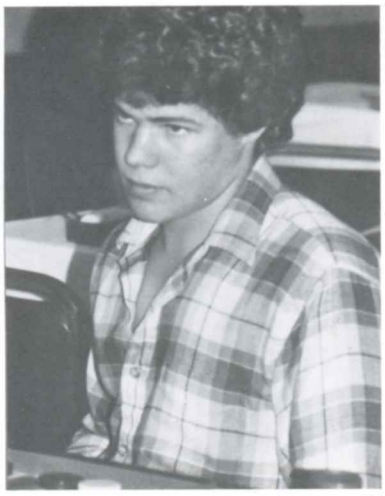
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LOUISVILLE LABOR DAY BACKGAMMON HOLIDAY

We are happy to report that our club has just completed the most successful tournament we have ever held. For four days over 175 players from all points of the compass — California, Canada, Florida — competed for over $20,000 in prize money. The winners were:

TEAM EVENT

(1st) Stuart Billington & Don Heavrin, Louisville, KY
(2nd) Larry Whittenberg & John Sherman, Carbondale, IL

INTERMEDIATE TOURNAMENT

(1st) Carol Cole, Flint, MI
(2nd) Willis Fitton, Peoria, IL

CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT

(1st) Vladimir Dobrich, Toronto, Canada
(2nd) Chen-Fu Yu, Fairborn, OH

We feel we can honestly say that everyone enjoyed themselves and are looking forward to our Spring Tournament in March.



Don Heaurin & Stu Bellington

NEW AT THE CAVENDISH – L.A.

The Cavendish West Club is pleased to announce that it will begin a bi-monthly Sunday Championship Backgammon Tournament under the experienced direction of Alan Martin, assisted by Bobbi Layne. Matches will begin at 2:00 p.m.; registration closes at 1:30.

Entry fee will be $100, of which eighty percent will be returned to the prize pool.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

This will be a double elimination tournament (if you lose once, you automatically return to the bracket sheet in a predesignated spot).

The field will be limited to the first sixty-four players to pay their entry fees. Matches will begin at eleven points.

The prize distribution will be as follows: 50% 1st, 30% 2nd, 10% 3rd, 10% 4th.

Any major disputes will be arbitrated by our ruling committee consisting of Alan Martin, Bobbi Layne, Hugh Sconyers, Bill Eisenberg, and Kal Robinson.

One of the most exciting new features of some backgammon tournaments is the team competition. Los Angeles has been challenged to play a nine-man squad from San Francisco under the captainship of Bill Boyd. These Sunday tournaments will help select a talented and experienced team. Alan is presently working out the details with Bill and we hope to have a site, complete with sponsors and attractive prize money, with- in the next few months.

HAMILTON GOLD

This picture was taken at the occasion of the annual "Gold & Silver" Tournament, in which, as the name indicates, the prizes are paid out in pure gold and silver.

The picture is of interest inasmuch as it captures the Backgammon "kingpins" of the various participating cities. Shown from left to right are: Ernie Geisel (tournament host of the Hamilton Squash Club); Jerry Nathan (Buffalo, New York); Mick Tomicic (Ottawa, Ontario); Hal Heinrich (backgammon director of the Hamilton Squash Club); Ron Bleier (London, Ontario); Betty Isserstedt (Toronto, Ontario); and Marcel Mathieu (Quebec City, Quebec).

Missing from the picture (having a snooze somewhere in the building) is Gary Jay (Rochester, New York).





(L – R) Emili Blaha, Randy Prater, Terry Peterson – Joe Munro – Carolyn Caniglia

Nebraska Challenge Tournament

The tournament was sponsored by the Omaha Backgammon Club and directed by Terry Petersen. 100% of entry fees were returned. Seeding was determined by the calcutta auction price. The winners were:

(1st) Joe Monro, Detroit
(2nd) Randy Prater, Austin; Jim Painter, St. Louis; and Eadie Boyer, Kansas City
(Picture by Dan McQuade.)



Bill Blaha & Steve Spratlin

Great LakesBackgammon League

As you have possibly heard, the first Backgammon League in the world is now being formed. Buffalo, Hamilton & Rochester are committed to send $500 teams to the Great Lakes Team Championship Nov. 22 & 23. Buffalo's CAN-AM Nov. 8 (with teams from Ottawa, Syracuse, St. Catherines, Detroit, Dayton and Quebec) could also provide healthy competition. Two teams could possibly emerge from Rochester, depending on the success of the raffle to raise funds for its support. Team members will be selected from eleven players who have earned "master" status (fifty or more master points) by the 3rd Anniversary of the Backgammon Board. In master point order, they are: George Zikos (127), Bob Cimino (108), Elliot Uchiyama (96), Alec Forrester (71), Lowell Weitkamp (59), Tom Allen (57), Van Apostolou (55), Bill McGrath (52), Gary Jay (51½), Renee Rosenbloom (51), and Sandy Gallant (50). These players do not need to play in the team qualifier Oct. 26. The remaining three positions will be filled from this qualifier to form two teams of seven players each.

Backgammon Place



Al Cooper from Brantford, Ontario
— two pictures worth a thousand words —



D. C. At Sea

An exciting opportunity was offered to backgammon enthusiasts to sail from the historic port of Alexandria, Virginia aboard the M/S CARIBE, the largest cruise ship to ever sail up the Potomac River, on a six-day holiday to Bermuda.

While on the "High Seas," unrestricted by the usual government rules and regulations, they were able to enjoy the action in the casino on board, and a schedule of tournaments, chouettes, calcuttas, etc.

Bob Paris was in charge of the backgammon tournaments and activities. Winners were awarded prizes at the end of the cruise. It was delightful!



Palm Springs

Kuini Lewenilavo of Hawaii directed the first Palm Springs Tournament at Cecil's Disco. Ninety percent of the money was returned. There were "buy back" offers and tag team doubles. Two Los Angeles players, Gaby Horowitz and Steve Goldman, met in the finals, with Horowitz the victor. The tournament was hosted by Mel Haber of the Ingleside Inn.









and Europe

VENEZIA

CASINO' LIDO & HOTEL EXCELSIOR

Results

19, 20, 21 September, 1980

Director: LUIGI VILLA
Number of Players: Champion 63
Intermediate 37
Fee: lire 200.000 for Champion
lire 50.000 for Intermediate
Added prize money by CASINO MUNICIPALE LIDO DI VENEZIA: Lire 6.000.000.000. =

MAIN	Championship	Intermediate
WINNER	HAUSSLEITER H.	CORVO CESARE
FINALIST	RATTI	WINKLER
SEMI-FIN.	CRESPI	DOLLEREDER
SEMI-FIN.	WEISS	SCHLENZ SIDY
CONSOLATION		
WINNER	RIGGI	BOLZONI
FINALIST	SULIMIRSKI	HUGUENARD
SEMI-FIN.	TESTA	DA PRA MARIA
SEMI-FIN.	BOVIO	SHEPARD
LAST CHANCE		
WINNER	BEATTIE (U S A)	DI SIPIO O.
FINALIST	BALSAMO G.	BURLI
SEMI-FIN.	CANTARUTTI	LAKOVICH
SEMI-FIN.	BONI	MANNOCCHI

LADY PRIZE: MARQUESA DE CANADA HONDA (SPAIN)

GENEVE

HOTEL LA RESERVE

Results

12, 13, 14 September 1980

Director: ROLAND B. JAKOBER
Number of Players: Champion 64
Intermediate 23
Fee: Frsv. 600 for Champion
" 200 for Intermediate

MAIN	Championship	Intermediate
WINNER	SULIMIRSKI	FACCHETTI CARLO
FINALIST	NORY	ALPHANDERY
SEMI-FIN.	DRAGOTA	MOTAKHASSES ROSY
SEMI-FIN.	LORENZIN	KHALIFE
CONSOLATION		
WINNER	MOGHRABI	LAWSON ALIA (USA)
FINALIST	PANTZATZIS	BEBIE
SEMI-FIN.	HEINRICH	DE PICCIOTTO
SEMI-FIN.	BUD MONHEIM	BOERO MARIA ROMANA
LAST-CHANCE		
WINNER	POZZI	FORNES
FINALIST	STERN	DA PRA ALBERTO
SEMI-FIN.	MOTAKHASSES K.	SHEPPARD
SEMI-FIN.	SAMUELS (U S A)	HEMMERLE

U.S.A.
CROCKFORD'S MONTE CARLO SYNDICATION

The ten (10) players listed below joined a syndicate formed by Todd Vander Pluym for the purpose of receiving their air fare, room, and entry fees at the 1980 Crockford's and Monte Carlo Tournaments. Any other expenses known or unknown were to be paid by the individual players. In return they were assigned seventy percent (70%) of their prize winnings at both tournaments in the form of shares which were sold to sponsors either individually or in groups of up to six (6) players.

Each player had a total of seventy (70) shares available for sale. Each share equaled one percent (1%) of that player's total winnings at each tournament. The total number of syndication shares for sale was 700. All were sold.

Each player was assigned a price per share, based on trip cost and/or availability.

SYNDICATION PLAYERS

Name:	Price per share:	Earnings:
Bill Eisenberg	$65	—
Kal Robinson	$50	$3,000 (Semi/ Crockford's)
Chuck Papazian	$75	$12,000 (2nd Place Last Chance/Crockford's — 1st Place Last Chance/Monte Carlo
Nick Ballard	$60	—
Dennis Waterman	$60	$43,000 (1st Place/Crockford's)
Todd Vander Pluym	$50	—
Joe Monro	$45	$15,000 Consolation/Crockford's)
Mike Senkiewicz	$55	—
Erick Seidel	$50	—
Lee Genud	$50	—
Total shares sold $34,000		Total earned $73,000

For information on next year's syndication call Todd at (213) 376-8843.



Oh, don't worry about them, when I'm happy, they're happy.

BACKGAMMON IN THE PUBLIC EYE

MAGAZINE: Greg Evigan, star of "B.J. and the Bear", was shown in *People* magazine playing with his wife and manager Pamela. The board they are playing on is the familiarly comfortable Subotnik Contempo table.

Playboy's beautiful nudes in Washington, had at least one naked beauty stretched out over a backgammon table.

Harper's feature on "The Cruelest Game" has an interesting twist on backgammon. The author E.J. Kahn, Jr. thinks that backgammon in strategy and position "is like the old-fashioned kind of football, where the same players struggle on offense and defense." Good point!

TELEVISION: When Family Feud asked, "What are the most popular board games?" Backgammon rated behind Monopoly and Chess.

NEWSPAPER: The Fenton Backgammon Club has been getting good coverage in The Independent. Evelyn Merecki, founder of the Fenton Club, was profiled recently in the local paper and said she was drawn to backgammon because it was a "very sophisticated and cosmopolitan game." Fenton's Reno Round-Up Night will also feature backgammon this year.

Don Eagleton of the Ohio Backgammon Assn. with a full page spread in the *Ohio Tribune Chronicle.* His best quote is "in competition you have to go for the throat."

The *Charlotte Observer* featured Ron Sanders and his friend Lucille Ball who helped make him make the Observer Backgammon Tournament in Charlotte a success.

Another full page on Paul Magriel, this time in the *Chicago Sun Times.* Magriel says, "To be a good player, you have to have a logical analytical intellect and a sense of probability."

Naples News, Florida reports the opening of a new pub and backgammon club. Arie's Pub is owned by Arie Juch, a backgammon pro from Holland.

Colorado Gazette-Telegraph laid out a full page in color to promote backgammon and Charles Keegan, a local enthusiast.

Ted Barr's (Pacific Northwest Backgammon Assn.) glass house in the woods, was the Personality House in the *Seattle Post.* The beautiful home is said not to have a single backgammon set.

Bad back-gammon has made national news through a news press photo showing contorted sea siders trying to play on the beach. Backgammon-back is becoming as prevalent as tennis elbow.

Famous Play Department: Bjorn and Marianna Borg's favorite pasttime is backgammon as reported in *News World.* The famous Nodine quadruplets of Southern California love to play backgammon. Ali Akbar Tobatabai, the Iran Freedom Foundation leader slain in Washington this year, will be remembered by some as a backgammon enthusiast who often played in Deyong's tournaments.

PLAYS: If you have seen the play, "Lithe Spirit," you'll know that the wife who is dead comes back from the other side during a backgammon game with Genghis Khan.

FILM: *Barbara Broadcast,* the all time porn film favorite, flashes on a giant backgammon board in torrid disco scene.

CRUISE: Norwegian American Cruises is promoting backgammon as one of its cruise features. The line promises to have professionals on board to give pointers while cruising the Carribbean. ★★

Rulings Column



Candace Nyles Mayeron

A practicing Los Angeles attorney, CANDACE NYLES MAYERON is an experienced tournament player, an editor of GAMMON magazine, 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."

(A): I have heard people refer to a "playto." What is it? (A.S., Minneapolis, Minn.)

(A): *The "playto" is the number of points needed to win that particular round in tournament match play. If the round will be won by the player first reaching seven points, then the "playto" is seven. Frequently you will hear players say, "What is our playto?" That is to what they are referring. It is one example of specific backgammon jargon.*

The playto should be posted at the top of each column on the drawsheet. The playto may — and usually does — vary from round to round. For example, in a field of 128 the first round matches may have a playto of 11, the second round a 13 playto, with each round increasing by two, to a 23 playto final. Tournament players are cautioned that it is their individual responsibility to ascertain the correct playto for that particular round. The responsibility is met by personally checking the drawsheet. One who has merely asked a roving tournament official, one's opponent, or a bystander, may not claim proper playto ascertainment in the event of a later discrepancy.

(Q): In chouette play, what is the rule for terminating the chouette? There is one guy in our club who, as soon as he gets a few points up, leaves the game. (G.B., Las Vegas, Nevada)

(A): *There is no rule for this situation, nor should there be. A player cannot be forced to remain in a game.*

However, the guidelines of **etiquette** *deal with this highly sensitive area. There are several ways for intelligent players to handle the situation. Ideally, discussion should occur before play begins. Your group can preestablish a reasonable quitting time. Or, you can request that a winning player give some reasonable notice of quitting — for example, three games or a half hour. It is also good etiquette to permit the current box player to run out his box — especially if he is or has been down. The only other alternative we can suggest if it really bothers you is not to play with this particular person in the future.*

Barclay Cooke thinks you should not be bothered by this behavior. "This is the type of imbecile who, when he is losing, hangs around all afternoon and night trying to get even. Thus, he gives himself no chance to win anything but peanuts. Welcome him, don't send him to another game!"

One thing is certain: it is never a breach of etiquette for a **losing** *player to quit early or without notice.*

(Q): My opponent rolled and the dice were cocked. He then turned the cube at me. I argued it was too late to double. He said that as a cocked roll is "void," he in fact had not yet rolled and could double. Wasn't I right? (B.D., Sasketchewan, Canada)

(A): *You certainly were right. Doubles (or redoubles) may be offered only before the player has first thrown or cast the dice. This is called the Continuation Roll Theory. It is immaterial for doubling purposes that the first cast results in cocked or off the board dice.*

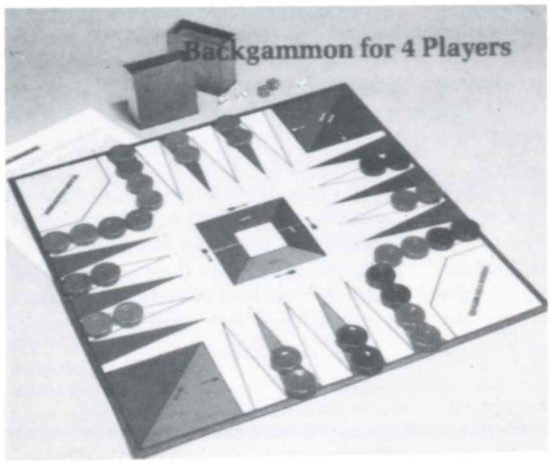
But notice that a player **may** *double after he has shook the dice, so long as he has not yet thrown, even though the rule for mixing the dice is that the "entire process of rolling the dice consists of a shake and a cast." (See LVBM Oct. 1980).*

Got a ruling, procedure or etiquette question? Send it to CANDACE NYLES MAYERON, in care of this magazine. All requests must be accompanied with 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 products

First over the Bar

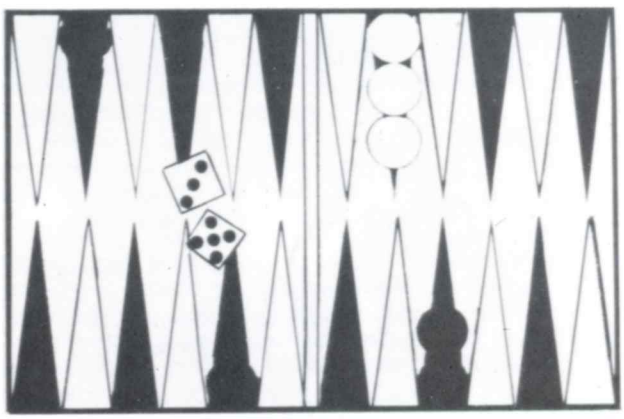




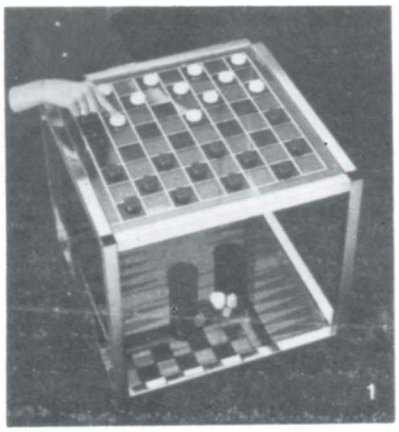
◀ **New Backgammon for Four Players:** Same game, same rules, but now four people can play together on this new 17" board, with 4 different color home tables, 4 bars, and 4 sets of men. Two pairs of dice, two cups, doubling cube, and slightly modified rules included — a much more social
Quadragammon
$9.95

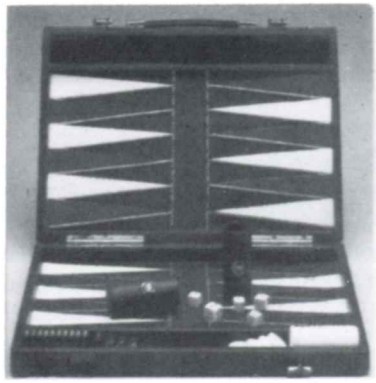
▲**Gammonball** — The game is a game of strategy not luck. It's played "in the round" with a new and exciting twist to the conventional 2000-year-old game of Backgammon. If you've enjoyed Backgammon in the past, you will especially enjoy this 21st century version. We've eliminated the repetition and added to the fun. It's the finest improvement of a classical game ever conceived!!! It can be played in teams of 3 to 20 players.
Fun-Time Products – Beverly Hills
$29.98

The **Hallmark Uptown greeting card.** Silver and gold embossed backgammon board-blank on the inside for your own personal message. A beautiful product. ▼

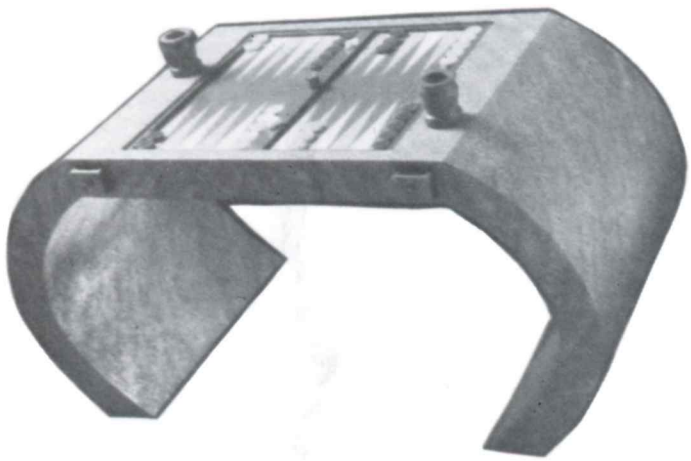


Backgammon Cube... available with chrome and glass table. One side for chess and checkers, other side for backgammon. All pieces are included. Measures 21" square, 18" high.
Joan Cook,
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$119.95 ▶





◀ The **Concorde Board** — a hand made leather set with gold blocked initials. Stamped with the Concorde emblem and available on the Conorde airplane.
Concorde Board
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▲A stunning, custom-designed **Marrakech backgammon table** with bone lacquer finish, from **Phyllis Morris of Los Angeles, $4500.**

The Computers

by
Barclay Cooke

Computers are taking over our lives. They seem to be everywhere. But, four or five years ago, when they first programmed Backgammon, they were not too sophisticated. I recall demonstrating one for a New York department store and two of its rather bizarre plays remain in my memory. In one game, I had rolled an eleven and had run with one man. The computer rolled 5-5, hitting me and making its one point. The other two 5's were played in its outer board. I entered on the three point and left my man there. The computer now rolled 3-2, hit me from the six point with the 3, and then went to safety, piling three men on the one point, putting three men out of play far too early. In a subsequent game, the computer made a move that guaranteed it would lose a triple game regardless of what my next roll was.

Nowadays, I am sure such nonsense would not happen. Just recently, a computer known as BKG9.8 beat the current World's Champion, Luigi Villa (so designated because he won Monte Carlo last year). In *Scientific American Magazine,* the newfound prowess of this current computer is written about in glowing terms. The author, Hans Berliner, who is also a chess expert, admits that it did have the best of the dice against Villa; nevertheless, he is justly proud of its victory.

However, there is one critical position where I disagree totally with one of its moves, a move heartily praised by Berliner. See what you think. I have a friend in Los Angeles, Danny Kleinman, whom I consider to be the finest analyst and technician in the game. If he says I am wrong and that the computer is correct, I will gracefully yield, but until then I feel strongly that its play was far off base here.

This is the position:

```
X X X X -- X -- -- -- -- -- --
  X X X    X
  X

      X      O O
O     X O X O O O O
O -- X O X O O O O O -- --
```

(X's Home Board) (O's Home Board)

The score is 5-1 in a seven point match, the computer leading. Villa (O) has doubled and X has a 2-2 to play. After considerable "thought" it moved 03 to 05 (3) and X3 to X1. The count now puts it 35 pips behind in the race with Villa to roll. Not only does this make the computer almost two double sixes behind, but also for a roll or two, unless it rolls a five or a six, its position will deteriorate, with its board having to break and five men still locked on 05. It is possible of course, to win a race from here but such a hope is hardly realistic. Now, if instead, X were to play 03 to 05, X6 to X4 (2) and X4 to X2 (specifically rejected by Berliner) he, of course, partially destroys his inner board. But his two defensive points still hamper O in O's board and X has a spare man which he can play from 05. Moreover, in a back game, there is always hope as long as the one point is still open, which is the case here. By this play, X keeps his game somewhat flexible. He may soon have to abandon 05 entirely. But these men may ultimately re-make his six point giving him once again a formidable board. He will still hold 03 to bother O for a long while. Also, if he chooses, X will be able to make X1 giving up the back game. The gammon threat against X is largely an illusion because his holding 03 is so strong. Therefore, it seems criminal to all but concede two points hereby the cowardly play of placing three men on 05. If X wins this game it wins the match and I think it showed very poor judgement in its handling of the 2-2.

Incidentally, I am not second guessing here, because the computer actually won this very game, and thereby, the match , in a straight race without hitting O. However, such a result in no way justifies its play. The cruel and unfair part of Backgammon is that in more than any other game, the wrong play so often turns out to be the winner. What do you think? Have I convinced you or do you go along with the computer? Danny will have the answer for us! ★★

THE THIRD DEGREE

What Is A Gammie?

It had to come to this. All glamour activities have devotees. There are trekkies and doo-wops and of course groupies. Backgammon has its own "gammies" now.

What About The Gianis Theory?

We don't know who Gianis is, but we believe in his principle which states: "If you can't roll an ace, don't play!"

Who Is The Green Machine?

If you haven't run into the Tyromaniac Monster, you haven't been around. The Green Machine is a novice who winds up, throws whatever number he needs. Often he doesn't speak English, has been playing for twenty years, and piles men up in long columns. You never hit his blots, and he always wins races.

What Is A Weaver Double?

We know the Tom Weaver that this double was named after. He carries a prop. The double is ingenuous. When holdling the cube and a huge favorite, he won't double waiting for the opponent to catch up. When he becomes only a marginal favorite, he then doubles. This accomplishes one of two things: first, the opponent's hopes are crushed just when he thinks he is catching up, and if he drops is left with self-doubt. Second, the opponent takes an underdog cube and loses a bigger game, faulting himself, and left with self-doubt. Nothing comes easy in this world.

Is Backgammon The Only Game Where The Cube Is Used?

The almighty cube is beginning to creep into other games. We've heard of several two-handed card games being played with the cube.

Football betting with the cube is an interesting proposition. Imagine it's halftime, your team hasn't made the spread, and a friend you're betting with calls you and passes the cube. With minutes to go, and your team threatening to score and make the spread, you send the cube.

Golf is also a great game to use the cube in.

There are some other board games that also use the cube. Counterstrike, a backgammon-like race game, is one of them.

COUNTERSTRIKE



How Do Experts Determine The Best Moves?

They used to play them out. But, there are new methods as Prince Joli Kansil reports in his *Games Magazine* column. "A number of enthusiasts have programmed computers to solve especially thorny backgammon problems. One such individual is David Rothman of Hawthorne, California, who uses a Data General machine that can take a given backgammon situation and run 1,000 trials in half an hour. Much less time is needed for an end-game or bearing-off problem. The computer simply generates random dice rolls and plays out the position in question, tabulating the results into the number of wins, gammons, and backgammons for each of the two players. The computer doesn't play on a very sophisticated level, but this flaw is fairly minor since it plays 'equally poorly' for both players." ★★

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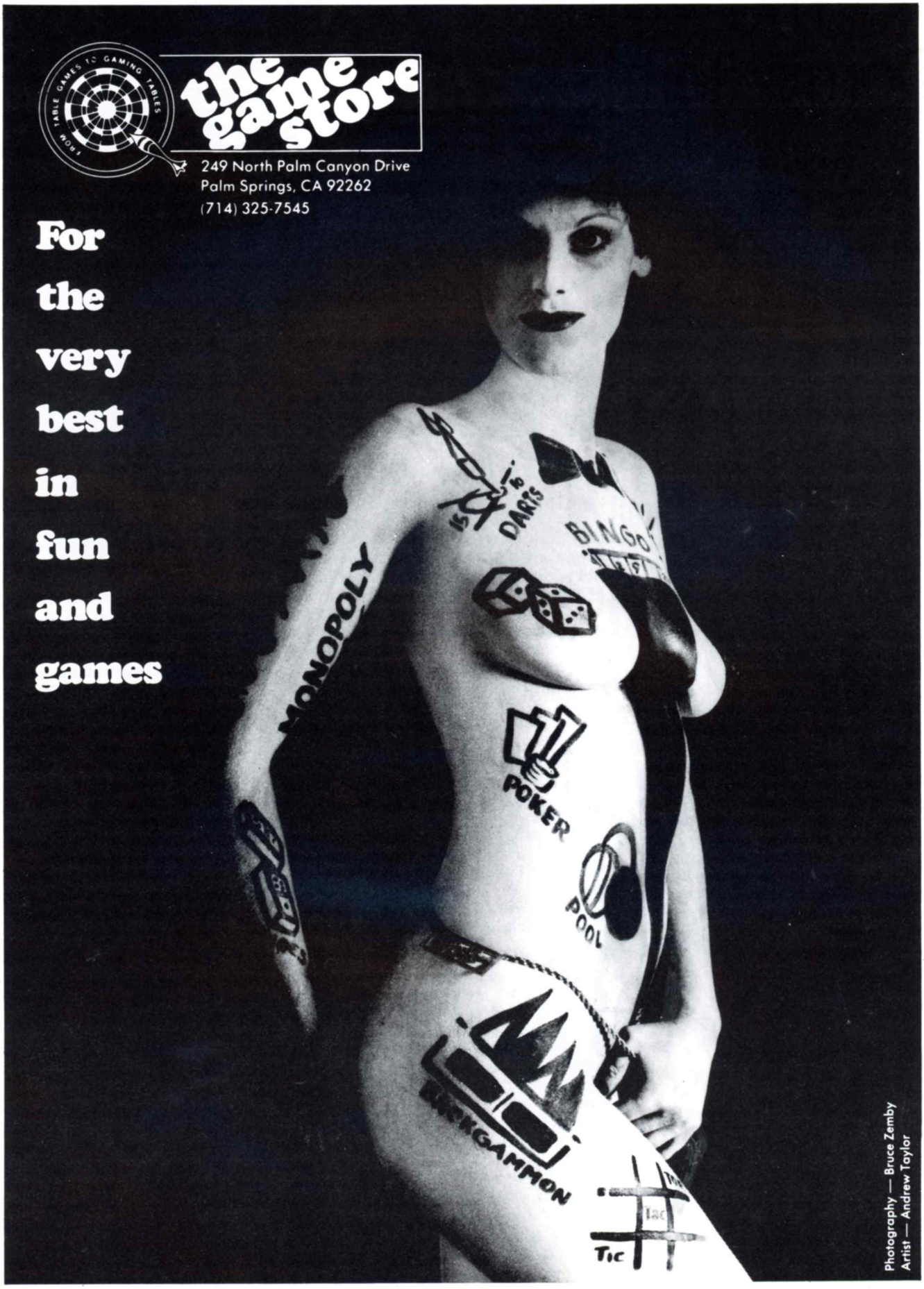
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MATCH DOUBLING QUIZ

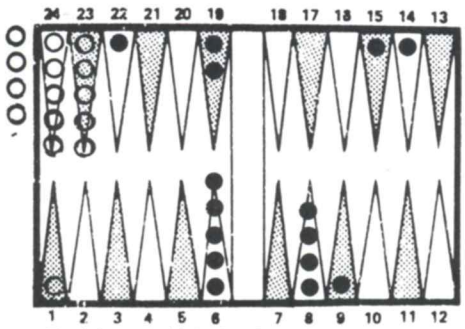
by Kit Woolsey

In the early stages of a long match, cube strategy should generally be the same as in money play. When one or both players are knocking on the door of victory, however, cube strategy becomes totally dependent on the score. Analyze the following positions, and determine whether or not you would send the cube over. The key questions to ask yourself are:

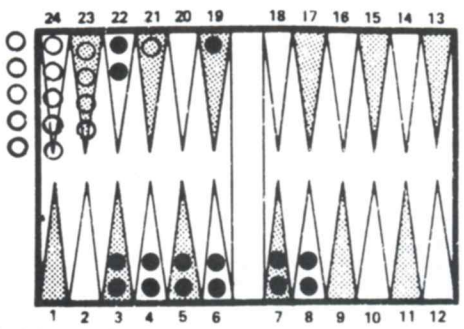
1) What are my chances of winning the match if I double?
2) What are my chances of winning the match if I don't double?
3) If I don't double, what are my chances of losing my market on the next roll?

Solutions and comments on next page.

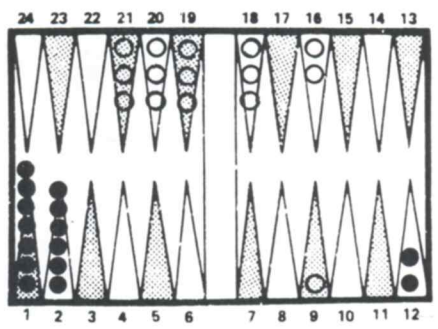
In each case, you are BLACK, on roll, playing a 15 point match against competent opposition.



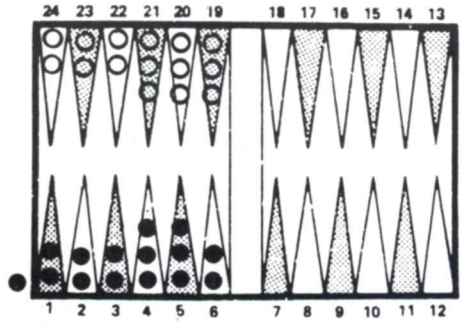
Problem 1: X-9, 0-13, cube in middle.



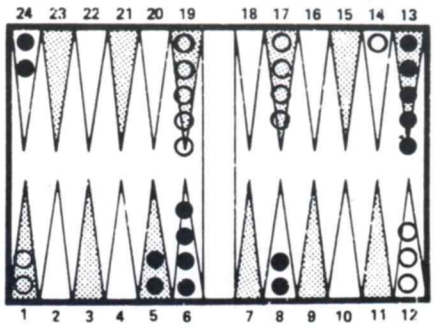
Problem 2: X-10, 0-10, BLACK owns 4 cube.



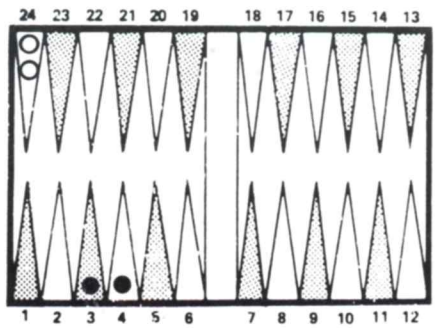
Problem 3: X-11, 0-9, BLACK owns 2 cube.



Problem 4: X-11, 0-12, cube in middle.



Problem 5: X-12, 0-12, cube in middle.

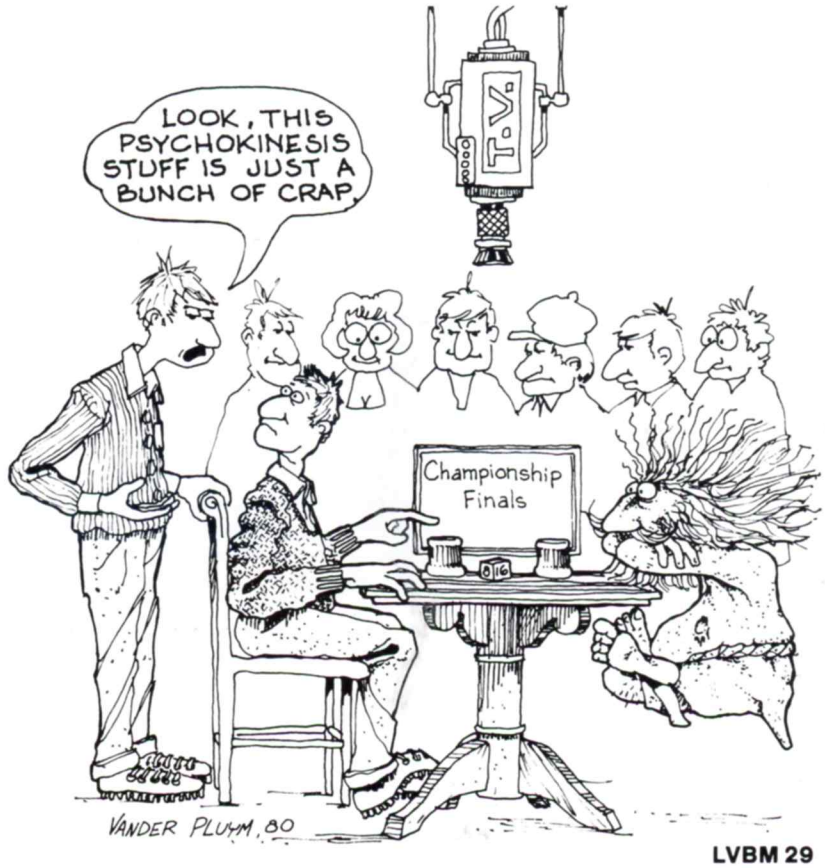


Problem 6: X-13, 0-11, cube in middle.

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BACKGAMMON SPLASH



In the last issue, we mentioned that the Blue Water Diving Club in Florida was trying to break the underwater backgammon playing record. Since then, we have received dozens of publicity releases on attempts to break the record. Interestingly enough, the first underwater marathon was a Baron Vernon Ball stunt some years ago. It is not surprising, then, that the Real People T.V. crew was down in St. Thomas to film the Baron playing underwater.

Recent attempts to break the underwater record have been made by the Albatross Scuba Club of Plainville, Conn., the University of Maine Scuba Club (who shot for 103 hours), the Odyssea Diving Club in Denver, Colo., and Southeastern Divers, Inc. (in conjunction with WOWL-TV in Florence, Alabama).

The only known record for playing backgammon underwater is 81 hours (established in July), as recorded in the National Association of Underwater Instructors' newsletter (although the Blue Water Diving group claims 168 hours). ☆☆



Nevada city artist Sherre Hart is pictured with her unusual stained glass backgammon set.

MATCH DOUBLING QUIZ
(Continued)

1: I had this position against Paul Magriel in a match a few years ago. Even though WHITE would have a beaver in a money game, since WHITE has good chances of escaping and gammoning BLACK, it is proper for BLACK to double at this score. There are two likely scenarios:

1) WHITE scampers around safely while BLACK is trying to build his prime. If this happens, BLACK will almost surely be gammoned, so the double won't cost.

2) BLACK succeeds in building the prime. In this case, WHITE will now have a pass, so BLACK would wish that he had doubled earlier (even though he might still lose the game).

Consequently, the double cannot cost. In addition, if BLACK rolls the 1-1 joker and WHITE does not move up WHITE would now have a pass at this score, so BLACK does risk losing his market. Therefore, it is correct to double. In actual play I did in fact double but failed to contain the loose checker and so lost the match, but the double didn't cost as I would have been gammoned anyway.

2: It seems pretty hopeless if BLACK doesn't hit the shot, so perhaps BLACK should double on the come, as my opponent did in a recent match. However, careful analysis shows that doubling is a mistake. Let's suppose that BLACK does, in fact, hit the shot. Will WHITE still take the double? Clearly yes, since WHITE is only a 3 or 4 to 1 underdog in the position, while his chances of coming back from 14-10 are 6 or 7 to 1 against.

Consequently, there is no reason to double, since BLACK won't lose his market for quite a while. BLACK should wait until he has started his bearoff and WHITE fails to enter at his first opportunity; WHITE will still have a take at this score. As it happened, my opponent hit the shot and succeessfully closed his board, but I entered at my first opportunity and won the race by a roll. At no point would I have refused a double, so my opponent gave away his chance to recover from 14-10 for no reason. Note that had the score been, say, 8-7 my favor his double would be correct, for if I am hit I would rather play behind 11-8 than play the game for the match, so he would be risking losing his market by not doubling.

3: This came up in a world championship match against Chuck Papazian. I had just rolled an extremely lucky 5-5 to escape my men, and now I could offer to put the match up for grabs. I have 10 completely safe rolls, 3-3 and 1-1 are pretty good, while anything else leaves a shot. Consequently, I will be hit about ¼ of the time. So if I double, I will win the match 75% of the time (assuming he takes). If I don't double, I have a 13-9 lead 75% of the time, and an even match 25% of the time. If we assume that a 13-9 lead is 80% to win the match, an estimate which intuitively seems high to me, then my probability of winning by not doubling is .80 x .75 + .50 x .25 = .725, so it is correct to double. A more difficult problem is whether or not WHITE should take the double (Chuck chose to pass the double, but I won the match anyway). Note how a slightly different score can change things: suppose I had been ahead 11-7 instead of 11-9. Now doubling would be foolish and taking would be clear-cut, since 13-7 is a big lead, and even if I lose I will still be ahead 11-9, while if I double the whole match will be up for grabs.

4: Pip count 51-57, cube in the middle, normally an easy double. But not at this score! The reason is that a 13-12 lead in a 15 point match is only slightly better than an even match (about 55-45 according to most experts) since the player with 12 has all the cube leverage, while 14-11 is much more serious than 13-11. Consequently WHITE needs the point more than BLACK does, so BLACK should wait a roll. Now, let's change things a bit -- same score, but BLACK owns a 2 cube. In a money game it would be a close double and an easy take, but at this score it is a clear double and an easy pass, since WHITE would rather play behind 13-12 than play this position for the match.

5: Surprisingly this is a double at this score, although it would be premature in a money game. The reason is that 13-12 is not a significant lead, so it is worth it to push for the extra point. Also, since being behind 13-12 is not a serious deficit, WHITE will be quick to pass the double if BLACK'S position improves at all on the next roll, so BLACK stands a good chance of losing his market. In fact, at this score, it might well be correct for WHITE to fold now!

6: This is quite a paradox. BLACK is leading in the match, he is an underdog in the position, yet it is correct for him to double! The reason is that the extra point is not too important for WHITE, but it is extremely important for BLACK since it puts him out. BLACK'S chances are:

Double: win match 17/36, even match 19/36
Don't double: have 14-11 lead 17/36, have 13-12 lead 19/36

If we assume a 13-12 lead is a 60% favorite (a very high assumption in the opinion of most experts), and a 14-11 lead is an 85% favorite, we have:

BLACK doubles: prob. of winning = 1 x 17/36 + 1/2 x 19/36 = .736
BLACK doesn't double: prob. of winning = .85 x 17/36 + .55 x 19/36 = .718
So doubling is clearly correct. ☆☆

FUN FACTS

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- **The pictorial history of backgammon includes many star-studded photographs, but none more appealing than Hugh Heffner playing on the Playboy jet with a playmate, or more elegant than the tuxedoed Peter Sellers rolling a few across from Dr. Christian Barnard, the famed heart surgeon.**
- **Recently, the Nevada Supreme Court reaffirmed not only that debts contracted in casinos are not collectible, but also that gambling debts of private games are not enforceable?**
- **The largest selling book on backgammon is *Play Backgammon Tonight* by Dave Thompson? The book is sold by mail order for $2.00 by the Gambler's Book Club.**
- **Canterbury Tales, (Geoffrey Chaucer) the "Song of Roland" and "Idle Pastimes" (John Northbrooke) all mention backgammon extensively?**
- **The worst way to lay out dice is 1 opposite the 6? Experts claim the center of gravity is wrong, causing moments of dice inertia.**
- **Chess & Games has the largest collection of game books in the world? Their library is often used by scientists for research.**
- **Backgammon and checkers, were known throughout the East thousands of years ago? The beautifully inlaid 5,000-year-old backgammon board of Queen Shub-ad was found in her tomb during the excavation of the ancient capitol of Babylonia, Ur of the Chaldees. Also found was a representation of a lion and an antelope at play over a draughts board, (as a point of information, the lion is in the act of grabbing the stakes).**
- **Backgammon, as we know it, is usually dated from the 10th century? The board was more or less standardized at that time. The word *gamen* in early English meant "game." Hence, backgammon really means "back game" because the pieces are often "sent back" to reenter the board.**



"What's this, thou shall not double without a point in your home?"

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Michigan Movement

by Bob Ciaffone

The player movement used at a tournament has a lot to do with the enjoyment and satisfaction of the participants. For example, the single elimination movement is very unpopular; no one wants to enter a tournament and be permanently eliminated from the competition in the first round. Therefore, many tournaments have consolation flights that the early losers can play in. A more popular system is the double elimination format, where a player must lose two matches before being knocked out of the tournament. In my 3-day Michigan Summer Championship Tournament, we even use a double elimination main tournament combined with a consolation flight. However, all these alternatives to the undesirable single elimination system have one very serious drawback for club tournaments; they lengthen the tournament by several rounds. For example, a 32-player single elimination format only takes five rounds to establish a winner; but the double elimination method takes eight or nine rounds. People who play in a tournament where they are not staying away from home overnight do not like 2-day tournaments; they want everything to be over in one day. The only way to run a double elimination tournament in one day is to have extremely short matches, and this also, quite rightly, does not sit well with the players. How can we use the basic idea of the double elimination system for a one-day tournament? This problem led to the establishment of the Michigan Movement, which takes the double elimination concept and adapts it to a movement that has no more rounds than the single elimination system. I shall describe this system to you and recommend it for your 1-day tournaments.

The Michigan Movement, which has some of its underlying concepts borrowed from movements used by the Texas Backgammon Association and the Louisville Backgammon Club, is based on the following idea: all the competitors who lose in the same round form one flight where they play off for one of the runner-up prizes. Here is how the movement would work for 32 people:

The 16 players who lose in the first round play off for 6th place.

The 8 players who lose in the second round play off for 5th place.

The 6 players who lose in the third round play off for 4th place.

The 2 players who lose in the fourth (semi-final) round play off for 3rd place.

The two remaining undefeated players play off for 1st and 2nd place.

Thus, you are only eliminated from first place by a loss; all the remaining prize winners will have identical records with one loss, and only the calibre of the competition separates the runner-up performances. Therefore, we use a payoff scale which does not distinguish sharply between the various runner-up places. For 32 people, we divide the prize money from the entry pool as follows: 30% for 1st, 18% for 2nd, 16% for 3rd, 14% for 4th, 12% for 5th, and 10% for 6th. In the Calcutta pool, we use a different scale, since players active in the auction usually want a larger payoff for first place. The Calcutta pool is divided 35% for 1st, 20% for 2nd, 15% for 3rd, 12% for 4th, 8% for 5th, and 5% for 6th.

Though the purpose of the Michigan Movement is to telescope the single and double elimination movements, we have found some undesirable byproducts. In many tournaments, most of the people go home before the championship finals, leaving the winners to play their match with only a handful of supporters for a gallery. With the Michigan Movement, all the prize matches are played at approximately the same time, making for a more emotionally satisfying victory and giving spectators a variety of matches to watch until the very end of the tournament. Another nice benefit of the Michigan Movement is the tendency of each prize flight to be made up of people fairly close in ability, competing against one another. For this reason, we prefer to have all the matches in the tournament of the same length. There will be fewer upsets in the early rounds; this helps the weaker players also, as their remaining matches will be more fairly competitive if the top players are not knocked off to compete with them in the runner-up flights.

I highly recommend that you start using the Michigan Movement at your club for one-day tournaments; your players will show their appreciation by increased attendance.

— *Coming Next Issue* —

Dennis Stones'

"Man In The Box"

SERIES

PIP TIPS:

Don't let foolish actions or obnoxious persons at your table nauseate you. They, too, win once in a while, but to each his own. If it irritates you, quit.

Numerical expectation probability will prevail, if you participate long enough.

A gambler is like a hunter – if the game be got with too much ease, he cares not for it.
— Fowler

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Lido de Paris '80

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Folies Bergere '80
Dinner show 8pm, from $17.50; cocktail show midnight, from $14



BACKGAMMON BIG WITH TEENS

America's teenagers just may be getting tired of board games, according to a Gallup Youth Survey showing that young people aren't doing the same things indoors that they used to.

Of ten popular indoor games, we found that teens are playing most of them slightly less than they did in a similar 1978 survey. Indeed, only one game, backgammon, enjoyed a significant increase in popularity between 1978 and 1980.

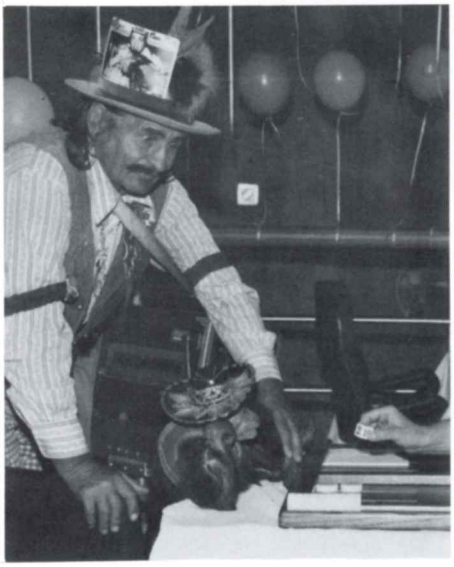
The next two on the list, Monopoly and checkers, registered drops in teen popularity, as did almost every other game on the 1978 list.

Backgammon, by comparison, soared in popularity. In the 1978 survey, only twenty-two percent of the teens said they had played the game in the past year, but in the latest poll the figure had risen to thirty percent. A very slight gain in the popularity of poker was the only other increase found in the ten games in the survey.

Backgammon is almost twice as popular among teens of above-average academic standing as it is with those of average or below-average standing; teens whose parents attended college are more than twice as apt to play the game as are those whose parents did not attend college. Furthermore, Western teens are much more likely to be backgammon players than their counterparts in other parts of the country.

The findings are based on telephone interviews with a representative national sample of 1,012 teenagers, thirteen to eighteen years of age. ★★

BACKGAMMON BITS



You've heard of pigeons playing backgammon. Well, in Los Angeles monkeys do it, too .....

□ □ □

And speaking of California, the SHEL SILVERSTEIN Poem in *Playboy* was called "California C's to Survive," one of them being "Chump to play you backgammon".....

□ □ □

Although HUGH SCONYERS doesn't play backgammon much because he has a low opinion of it as a game of skill, he continues to come to backgammon tournaments because of the "great comradery" .....

□ □ □

Bridge expert SYDNEY HARRIS claims dominoes is "one of the finest table games and more skillful than backgammon".....

□ □ □

The Gambler is a new publication from London (529 B. Finchley Road). The quarterly journal is devoted to games, including backgammon.....

□ □ □

The Poison Pawn is a new chess and backgammon club in Detroit .....

□ □ □

Cleveland backgammon tournaments are being held during morning hours at Hale's downtown department store. The MDA benefit affairs are directed by RICHARD JACOBSON, head of the Cleveland Backgammon Association.....

□ □ □

The Green Bay, Wisconsin library program now offers backgammon.....

□ □ □

A new backgammon group is starting in Ludington, Michigan .....

□ □ □

Vincennes, Indiana holds backgammon tournaments through its Recreation Department.....

□ □ □

Nonannotated backgammon matches for sale. Many world-class players included. For a price list, write or call BILL ROBERTIE, 382 Mass. Ave., #805, Arlington, MA 02174, (617) 641-0271.....

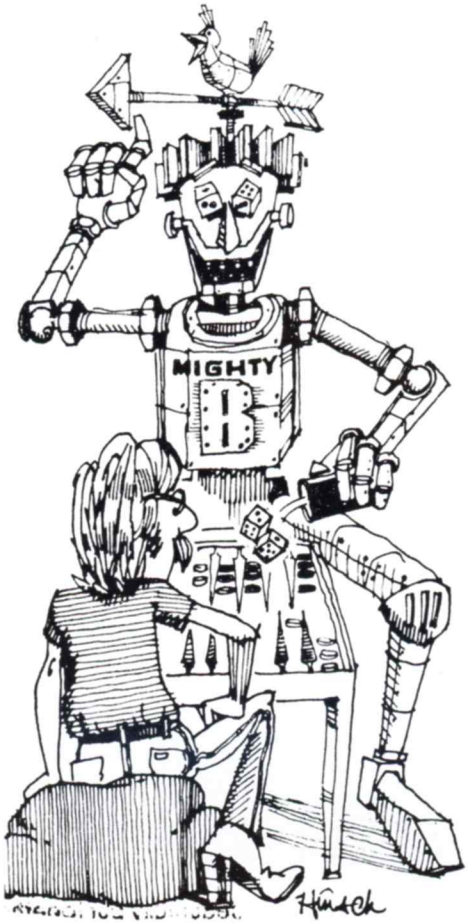
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PIP TIP:

Luck appears to be that quality that happens to other people when they play like I tell myself I should – but don't.

Other weekly tournaments around the country include the Delco Chess Club in Springfield, PA; Shelter Island Yacht Club, NY; and Gloucester House in Gloucenter, Mass.....

□ □ □



"Best backgammon graphics" applause to the Toledo Blade for their "Tumbling Dice" series...

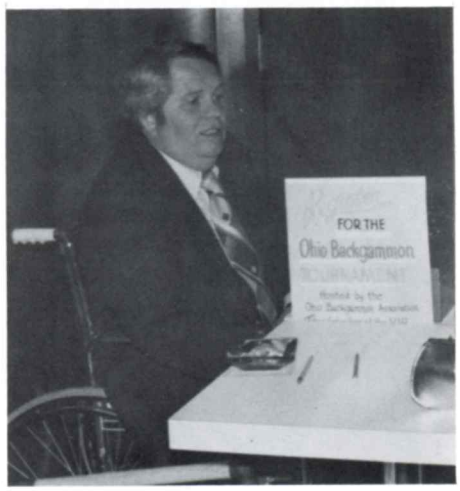
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Former Las Vegan HAROLD SEIF has moved to Chicago to manage the strange nightclub, Coconuts.....

□ □ □

PIP TIP:

Be honest with yourself — over a period of time the numerical statistical pattern of probabilty will express itself — in between anything can and does happen.



DON EAGLETON, director of the Ohio Backgammon Assn., will be having monthly tournaments at the V.I.P. Entertainment Complex in Niles, Ohio starting in January .....

□ □ □

The Honolulu Plaza Club announces that it has secured the services of BERNARD BERGSTEIN, backgammon grandmaster, to organize a backgammon program for its clubs across America.....

□ □ □

The *L.A. Times* reported on a letter received by the wife of one of the hostages, RICHARD MOREFIELD. Morefield, in his one page letter, acknowledged receipt of a backgammon set which he said was "an instant hit and is used many hours each day".....

□ □ □



A picture of the DUKE OF WINDSOR.....

□ □ □

DIPLOMATIC CHALLENGE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Capital City's most prestigious backgammon tournament, the Black & White Diplomatic Challenge Cup and Washington Classic, has been won by Washington Post columnist Rudy Maxa. The well-known newspaperman played a grueling final match against Mrs. Helga Orfila, wife of Ambassador Alejandro Orfila, Secretary General of the Organization of American States. The ending score showed Maxa ahead 9 to 7.

Semi-finalists in the Diplomatic Cup Division — which was limited to accredited members of Washington's Diplomatic Corps and local "celebrity" players — were Ambassador Omer S. Essia, of Sudan, and Colonel Antoine Barakan from the Lebanese Embassy.

Staged Sunday, October 12th, at the exclusive Pisces Club in Georgetown, the Black & White Scotch Championship Backgammon Circuit event was played in three divisions, the Diplomatic Challenge Cup, the Washington Division, for Pisces Club members, and the Expert Division, whose champion-calibre players were specially invited by the tournament committee. A total of 112 players participated in the day-long program.

BACKGAMMON BIZ

Hans Berliner continues to make hay with his backgammon programming . . . nice feature and picture of him in *Newsweek Magazine* . . .

Allen Weingarten writes to tell us that the following references are to articles dealing with betting in backgammon. They indicate precise methods of ascertaining when to double.

Keeler and Spencer, Operations Research, 23(1975) 1063-1071

Orth, Operations Research, 24(1976) 1179

Zadeh and Kobliska, Management Science, 23(1977) 853-858

Zadeh, Management Science, 23(1977) 986-993

There is now a Gammon's at the Hilton Inn East in Columbus, Ohio.

The Hiltons are also looking to putting backgammon in all their lounges for bored traveling businessmen.

Gaby Horowitz and Bruce Roman are jumping into the video cassette business with a series of 'how to' visual lessons. Meanwhile, they are getting stiff competition from other promoters who are teaching advanced backgammon in exchange for tournament earning percentages.

Selling personal contracts is also on the rise. For a fee, an investor can buy a piece of a professional backgammon gambler. It can be written off just like any investment in a professional whether he be a golfer or bowler. A doctor we know has done pretty well holding several such $2,000 contracts on some top players who were short on bankroll.

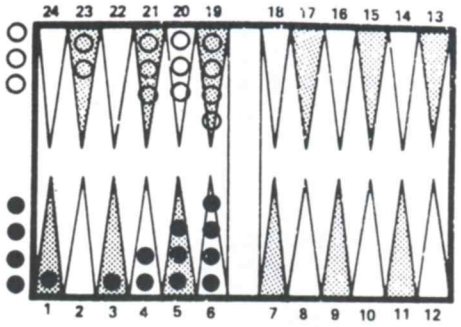
The Finesse of a Master

by
Gaby Horowitz and Dr. Bruce Roman

The Finals of the 1980 Eldorado Classic in Reno, Nevada brought two of the best face-to-face in an exciting confrontation.

It was the best two out of three nine-point matches with the first match going to Paul Magriel and the second to Chuck Papazian. Slugging it out point by point, Chuck was leading 6-5 in the final match when he doubled in the position illustrated in Diagram 1.

Should Black double?



Is a four pip lead in the race and one additional man off a sufficient technical advantage to warrant a double? Of course not.

In a tournament the most important variable to evaluate is the score. Leading 6-5 in a match to 9, Chuck wisely chose to double Paul *into a take.* If he is successful he will have reached the Crawford Game with the score 8-5. Should he lose the score would be 6-7 and he would still be in the match.

With approximately twenty-five per cent of the numbers on his next roll (3-3, 4-4, 5-5, 6-6, 6-5, 6-4, 5-4?) making his position too formidable, he had arrived at the *Point of Ultimate Take.* When you are two points away from the match with an even score, you should double your opponent for the match at the slightest advantage. Considering the skill level of both finalists, doubling Magriel to the Crawford Game is very close to doubling for the match.

The double by Papazian shows respect for Paul's game because we doubt that he would have doubled an inferior opponent in this position. This is an excellent example of the way in which the cube should move between equally skilled opponents.

The potential gain of leading 8-5 versus the potential loss of trailing 6-7 clearly indicates a double in this position.

This superb finesse was met with howls of disbelief by various "experts" kibitzing the match. Magriel, of course, accepted the double (after the match he admitted that he did not enjoy taking it) and proceeded to roll a double and several large numbers while Chuck responded with several misses. He was unable to accept the redouble and Paul continued on to win the match.

While menials from the "School of Judging Results" chorused their disapproval of the double, Gaby proclaimed, "I find the double superb!" This elicited an uproar of disagreement from a group of San Francisco players. Rather than attempt enlightenment at the end of a long three-day tournament, it was decided that fine food and wine were of a more immediate importance.

This incident should serve as a forewarning that you will not always be heartily congratulated for applying advanced principles. Do not seek agreement from the rabble, for it is not superior skill or awareness that earns them their title. If Papazian were to be confronted with the same decision under identical circumstances, he would unerringly offer the cube again. We suggest you employ a similar philosphy.

Point of Ultimate Take: The point at which, having obtained a sufficient positional advantage, the player must offer the cube, or risk "losing his market" for a take. Many times this point is reached immediately preceding a roll that could cause a marked change in advantage. When doubled at this point it creates a true dilemma for the player because his desire to accept the cube is directly opposed by a desire of equal magnitude to decline the cube. Regardless of his decision, he is unhappy with having to have made a choice at that particular point in the game.

Excerpted from DYNAMIC CUBE STRATEGY by permission of Advanced Backgammon Enterprises.

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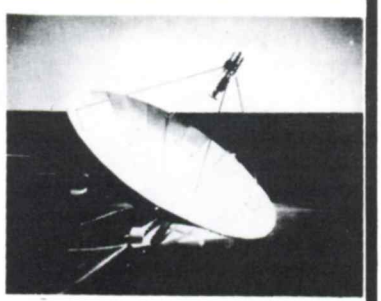
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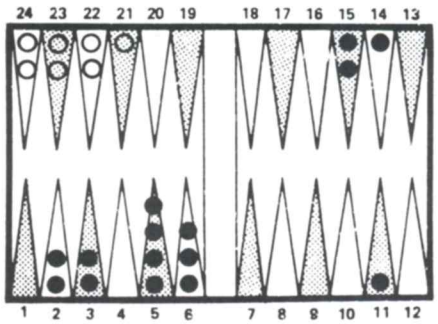


THE LAST ACT OF A DESPERATE MAN:
4 Exercises In Getting Off the Gammon

In each of the following problems, you are BLACK and are trying to keep from being gammoned. As the game draws to a conclusion, each of the two players, BLACK and WHITE, have several turns left with the dice beginning with a roll for BLACK. Your goal is to give BLACK the best chance to save the gammon at the end of the game. When it is BLACK'S turn, you decide how to play the roll. Then play WHITE'S roll, which in each case will be a forced play. After BLACK'S last turn, determine how many of the 35* possible rolls would save BLACK from geing gammoned should he be lucky enough to get one more turn. The correct answer to the problem is the series of plays that gives BLACK the most saving rolls.

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

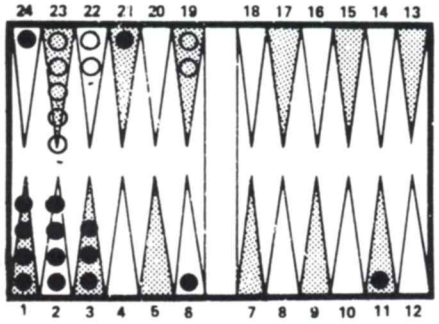
Problem (1)



Black Rolls	White Rolls
1. 3-3	5-4
2. 6-5	4-3
3. 4-2	******

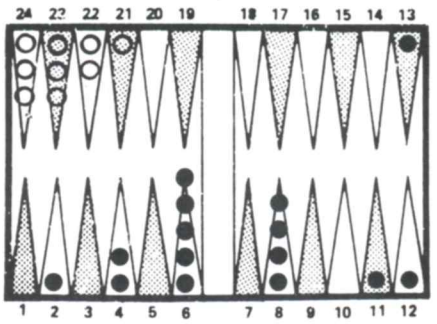
*A non-double (such as 4-3) counts as two possible rolls while a double (such as 4-4) counts as one.

Problem (2)



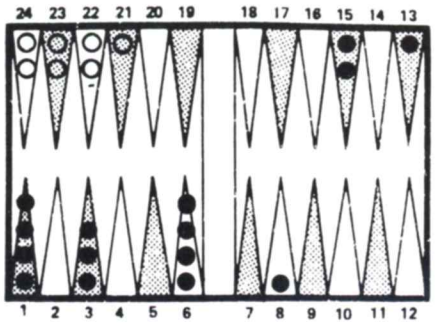
Black Rolls	White Rolls
1. 5-5	6-6
2. 5-4	3-2
3. 6-3	

Problem (3)



Black Rolls	White Rolls
1. 4-3	5-4
2. 5-2	4-3
3. 2-2	3-2
4. 2-1	

Problem (4)



Black Rolls	White Rolls
1. 6-3	5-4
2. 4-3	4-3
3. 5-1	

ANSWERS

1) 1. 15/6, 15/12
   2. 12/6, 11/6
   3. 14/10, 3/1
   BLACK now has 28 saving rolls and 8 non-saving rolls. The move 3. 14/8 gives only 26 saving rolls.

2) 1. 21/6, 11/6
   2. 24/15
   3. 15/9, 6/3
   BLACK now has only 3 bad rolls (2-1 and 4-4). This is better than 3. 15/6 which gives 4 bad rolls (5-4, 5-5, and 4-4).

3) 1. 13/6
   2. 11/6, 8/6
   3. 8/6(3), 12/10
   4. 10/8, 2/1
   BLACK now only has 5 bad rolls. All other posibilities produced more bad rolls. For example, moving the outside man all the way (10/7) gives 7 bad rolls. Also, moving 10/8 and then slotting the 5 point gives 10 bad rolls (slotting the 3 point is even worse, producing 11 bad rolls).

4) 1. 15/6
   2. 13/6
   3. 15/10, 3/2
   This is the only way to give BLACK 5 saving rolls (double 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's and 6's). Some possibilities, such as 15/9 or 15/10, 8/7, give only 3 saving rolls.



"Happiness is a lucky roll — at the right time!"

Las Vegas
TOURNAMENT RESULTS

DATE	OPEN CLASS	INTERMEDIATE
Aug. 31	Simeon Mishaikoff	Steve Herman
Sept. 7	Craig Chellstorp	Lee Kabase
Sept. 14	Marty Stein	Andrea Slinker
Sept. 21	Tony Zambus	Lee Kabase
Sept. 28	Dave Ashley	Dan Cameron
Oct. 5	Simeon Mishaikoff	Gary Benge
Oct. 12	Gary Benge	Paulette Murray
Oct. 19	Karen Wolfson	Margie Hamilton
Oct. 26	Cindy Mendoza	Lee Kabase
Nov. 2	Mark Bell	Mike Eshragh
Nov. 9	Jack Reynolds	Lavelle Charles

LAS VEGANS THAT PLAY

STUART UNGAR



Stuart Ungar has been in Las Vegas a little over a year, and already is legendary. His gentle, youthful appearance is deceiving. In reality, he is a twenty-six-year-old triple threat.

He is universally acclaimed as the best gin player in the world. He turned to poker because no one would play gin. And guess what–he won the Horseshoe's Texas Hold'em Championship (along with $365,000).

He is a gambling superstar acknowledged as the best in two fields. It is not unusual, then, that his interest in games brought him to backgammon.

"Backgammon is 'the nuts'," as he likes to say. "I find the game challenges me with every roll of the dice. It is so unpredictable, yet so logical. It moves faster than any other big money game. I only wish more people played at higher stakes."

We watched Ungar play at higher stakes with a known world champion and walk away with a wheelbarrow full of money.

"How did you do it," we asked. Stuart smiled and replied, "With a spot, of course. After all, I'm only a beginner." ☆☆

Cloud's
Cal-Neva Lodge
HOTEL AND CASINO

LAKE TAHOE CLASSIC BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT

A beautiful setting, great equity, marvelous organization. Jim Stern and Bill Andrus got together with the boys from the Northern Nevada Backgammon Association and threw a good time event with a calcutta. A group of sixty came in from Los Angeles alone. The designer T-shirts will become collector items. Everyone is looking forward to the next one. Winners: 1st Elliot Winslow — 2nd Aram Kouleyan.



GAMMON

Important Notice from Gammon Magazine!!!

Dear Subscriber:
GAMMON MAGAZINE *is no longer in existence. We are combining efforts with the* LAS VEGAS BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE *to continue to provide you with an informative magazine about backgammon. Your subscription will be honored by this venture. For any further questions, please contact: Max Maxakuli, P.O. Box 19567, Las Vegas 89119.*

Thank you for your continued interest in backgammon.

Sincerely,
Buddy Berke

UNITED STATES BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIPS

Who said the old ways are best? Orrill Martin is a newcomer to the National Tournament scene, and did a great job with his first affair. Nearly three hundred people gathered in Clearwater, Florida to share in the $25,000 guarantee.

Martin is the president of the American Backgammon Association, and has operated tournaments for many years in the Tampa area. He now plans to expand to other tournaments around the country. This tournament featured doubled elimination. Other innovations included: continous $200 knockouts, a $500 knockout, and continuous double knockouts. The results were as follows:

Championship
1st Billy Eisenberg - L.A.
2nd John Klein - D.C.
3rd Francis Desmones - N. Y.
4th Tobias Stone - N.Y.

Intermediate
1st Marty D'Alexander - Chicago
2nd Roberta Stark - St. Petersburg
3rd Dave Morrison - St. Petersburg
4th Tony Emanuel - Jacksonville



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BACKGAMMON TIPS

by Rob Roy

■One can never be completely safe from freak shots in backgammon. A good amount of security can be had by making an advanced anchor in your opponent's inner board. The best anchor is on the twenty point, often called the golden point.

Many things may be done with the golden point: any men hit can come in on this point (you cannot be shut out); it ruins your opponent's chances for an effective prime; it bears down on any blot your opponent may be forced to leave in his outer board; and it is a stable point from which to run when the time is ripe. In short, possession of the twenty point offers both defensive and offensive flexibility.

■In the end-game stage of backgammon, when hitting blots is no longer possible and both players are racing their men home, they should avoid piling all their men on the six point when bearing in. Even if it means that they will not get all their men into their inner board asfast, they will bear off more efficiently if they make sure their four and five points have enough men on them to avoid wasting pips when bearing off.

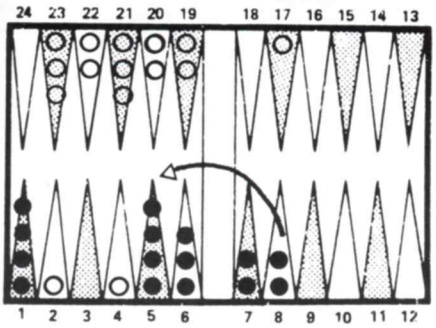
To self-illustrate this concept, set up all your opponent's men on his six point. Then set up your men (three each) on the four, five, six, seven and eight points. Both sides have a pip count of ninety, but even though your opponent already has all his men home while you still have six men on the outside left to bring in before you start to bear off, you will win most of the time! Roll the dice, play the same numbers for each side simultaneously, and see for yourself.

■Many weaker players complain about "unlucky" dice which are hard to play. They do not realize why good players' games fall into place so naturally. An experienced player keeps his position "fluid", taking into consideration the future moves for both him and his opponent.

One way to use your men effectively is to establish "builders," a blot, or a third man on a point. With only slight additional risk, you might be able to spread your men better, then on a subsequent play move them together to form a point. Do not consider your men as liabilities to be moved around the board, but as assets to be used constructively. ☆☆

OPINION

by C. H. Jeans



GABY HOROWITZ V MIKE SENKIEWICZ

11 pt. Match

9 6 BLACK WHITE

Black has played 2-1

I obtained a copy of your magazine 'Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine' at the Crockfords summer backgammon tournament this year and found it very interesting.

There was an article called an 'Objective Viewpoint' by Gaby Horowitz and Dr. Bruce Roman that particularly interested me. While I agree that the suggested play of coming off the bar is far better than making the 4 point, I think a third play may have been overlooked — that is, bringing a man from the 8 point to the 5 point as shown above. This play has an advantage — there are 4 builders with which to make the all-important 2 point. This would leave return shots in some cases of course, but they would only be indirect.

My play is initially more dangerous as 12 rolls (6-5, 5-4, 5-3, 5-2, 5-1, 4-2) all leave shots and 5-2 leaves a direct shot. Also, if white runs his man on the 4 point, which he should do with any 5 or 6 to maintain his timing, 4-2 will leave a direct shot. However, he is only 5/4 on to escape that man.

Playing off the bar, as suggested in the article, only gives 2 bad rolls 6-5 and 6-2, but 6-2 exposes 2 blots to 16 shots (14 if 4 point man goes) and if white can pick both blots up and close his board he would be about 70/30 on to win a gammon which would put him in the lead in the match 10-9 Crawford! Also 5-4 achieves nothing for black, while 5-1 leaves a very ugly position indeed.

A precise analysis of the 1st two rolls shows that if played my way, white has 5.6% chance return hitting while 4% your way. However, white's overall chance of winning I estimate to be about 20%, so a difference of 1.6% on the 1st roll is insignificant (a long term strategy being more important).

One other small point is that 3-3 plays very poorly for white after my play.

By the way, there is a new backgammon club starting in London soon called the Grosvenor Backgammon Club at 49, Grosvenor; so if Gaby Horowitz or Dr. Bruce Roman are in London in the near future, I would be happy to play this position out as a proposition there or at Crockford's.

Chicago CLASSIC

The Black & White Chicago Classic — leadoff event for the 1980-81 Champion Backgammon Circuit — has been won by games consultant and backgammon whiz Michael Senkiewicz of New York City.

In achieving his victory, and its reward of $11,520, Senkiewicz played an intense, lead-swapping match with stockbroker John F. Furey, also of New York. The final score was 21 to 19. For his second place finish Furey received $3,840.

Several hundred spectators attentively watched the match on giant-screen closed circuit television at Chicago's Sheraton Plaza Hotel, as Paul Magriel, former World Backgammon Champion, narrated and evaluated each move.

The new Chicago Classic title-holder has been playing backgammon for only eight years, the past seven in competition. He won first place honors in the Las Vegas Open, this past June, and finished "in the money" at the recent World Backgammon Championships in Monte Carlo.

The championship match was the concluding event in a three-day program of international competition sponsored by Black & White Scotch. The event saw nearly 200 of the world's best backgammon players vie for a record $38,400 in prize money.

In the tournament's consolation event, Francois Desmornes, of Haiti, bested Toronto's Vladimir Dobrich, while Joel Rettew won the event's Last Chance program by beating Allen Martin (both from Los Angeles).



The Black & White Backgammon Championship, presented as a benefit for the Organic Theatre, was organized by Valerie Valentine, president of the Backgammon Club of Chicago and one of the city's leading citizens. The program was directed by Lewis Deyong, of London. ☆☆



MODIFIED SWISS MOVEMENT AND TIE-BREAKER

by
Butch Meese

A backgammon survey was conducted with a large number of backgammon clubs during the summer of 1980. So far the response has been very good; and thanks go to those who have taken the time to fill out and return the surveys.

Backgammon is growing, with new ideas popping up all over the country. One of the purposes of the survey was to gather some of those ideas and make them available to all. The two articles below were information gathered from the survey.

MODIFIED SWISS MOVEMENT (MSM)

Finding a backgammon format for your weekly tournament, that can be played in reasonable time and satisfy both the players and the tournament director, may be well at an end. The most common format used is elimination with low point matches, usually 5 points. The major problems are limited time and the number of players it can accommodate comfortably. With 32 players, 5 rounds are needed for single elimination and 6 rounds for double elimination, which can easily run over the limit of 5 hours available during a week night.

The number of players, also, has a large effect on an elimination tournament. Without the nice bracket numbers of 8, 16, or 32, assigning byes is always a problem. And with odd numbers, some players have an advantage of playing less matches than other players. One way around this is to limit the number of players to the even bracket numbers and possibly leaving some people out. Accommodating late players is quite difficult since the first round matches are supposed to process at the same rate. From the players point of view, one or two matches and they are eliminated.

So with these problems, is there a better format? Maybe — you be the judge. The Hoosier Backgammon Club in Indianapolis has been using the Modified Swiss Movement on its weekly tournament — with much success. Club president, Ralph R. Roberts, says, "It's a director's dream."

The rules are as follows:

1. **GENERAL.** No elimination. Everybody plays the same number of matches, usually 4. Unlimited doubles. Crawford rule. No byes. No defaults. No automatic doubles.
2. **MATCHES.** Four rounds of 5-point matches unless otherwise announced.
3. **MOVEMENT.** First match opponents are determined by blind draw. Subsequent opponents determined by availability. Usually winners play winners, losers play losers, but NOT the same player twice.
4. **SCORING.** Losers score actual points. Winners score 5 points plus the spread. Examples: 5-0 = 10, 5-1 = 9, 5-4 = 6.
5. **POSTING.** After each match, scores are posted on the master score sheet. Next, enter name or number in the appropriate "NEXT MATCH" columns. Play the next available player. Opponents are not necessary in the same round.
6. **TIMING.** Slow matches will be called by the director. Delayed or late starting matches can be started with the cube at 2.

   Director will settle conflicts.

The Modified Swiss Movement format has a number of advantages over the elimination format as a weekly tournament. The MSM format has no elimination, so all players play 4 matches, no matter how they do in the matches. Inexperienced players, trying to gain experience, would benefit from this.

The MSM format will accommodate any number of players with no byes. Even the occasional late player can be accommodated as long as all other players have not finished their first matches. The average time needed to complete the MSM format is 3 hours. Waiting time between matches is minimal, because players play the next available opponent.

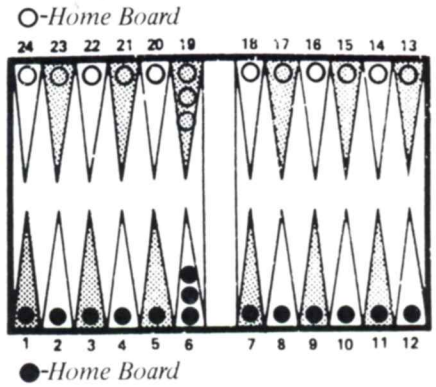
The number of places to be paid is determined by the number of players. The order of finish is determined first by the number of matches won then by the total number of points won.

For the benefit of the readers who would like to give it a try, Hoosier Backgammon Club (MSM) rules and score sheets are available by sending a self-addressed postage paid envelope to Backgammon Survey 1980, 1942 N. Moreland, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46222.

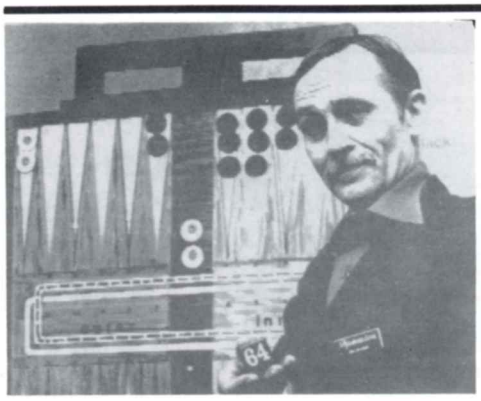
TIE-BREAKER – OPRE'S OPTION

Some clubs have a time limit on matches during their weekly tournament, which sometimes results in a tie. A tie-breaker mechanism, known as Opre's Option, was erected by Jim Opre when he was a member of the Flint Backgammon Club in Flint, Michigan.

The board is set-up in a simple bear-in, bear-off situation shown in the diagram. It does involve a high luck factor, but it also demands enough skill to make it a challenge and a learning device. The players roll for the first move and simply play it out as an end game. This mechanism is far more satisfying than rolling the dice.



If your club uses the MSM tournament format or the tie-breaker, I would like to hear from you on how you feel about using them.



LVBM 40

TEACHING BACKGAMMON

On Saturday, Oct. 4, Liberty Cable TV's Community Access Studio and Pipmasters of Portland premiered "The Pipmasters Backgammon Challenge" featuring Le Plus Grande Chouette du Monde, the World's Largest Backgammon Chouette.

Rush Kolemaine, founder of Pipmasters, is the host of the 60 minute live program of news, views, reviews, and interviews covering backgammon.

Meanwhile, in Tracy C., Leo Schools is teaching a series of backgammon classes on the Tracy High Campus. The classes will end with a tournament face-off between his students and experienced Tracy area players.

Cathy and Tom Wise have been teaching backgammon in Michigan through the St. Clair Shores Adult Education program. Each three hour seminar drew about forty students.

Classes are also available at the Boston Center for Adult Education, and the La Habra (Ca.) Leisure and Cultured Services Department with Eric Walton. ☆☆



Season's Greetings

From

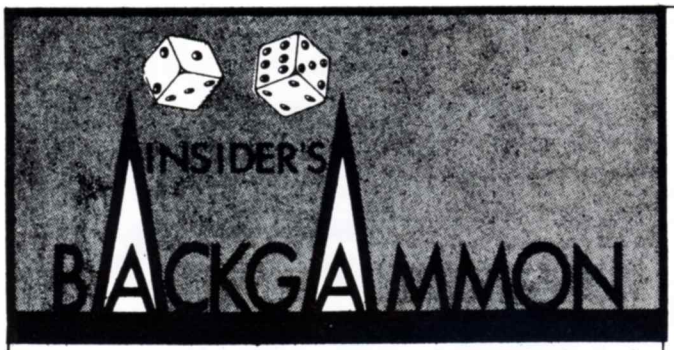
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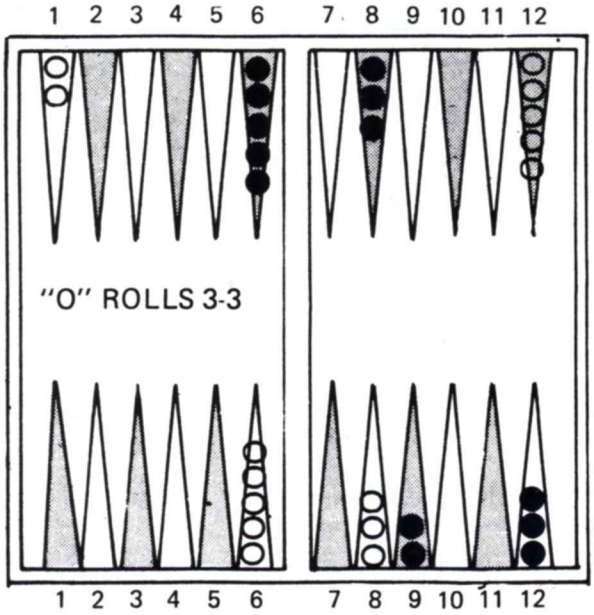
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In backgammon there is an interesting occurance where everyone decides their own game strategy and plays with it. If you believe in your game strategy, know it and feel comfortable with it, you will do better than you might with someone else's strategy, no matter how many ways they can prove that their plays are better. There are many strong players who learn the game a certain way, and stay with it because it is the winning way for them.

As we discuss the best plays to make, or elaborate on a play in this column, my feelings are mixed. On one hand, I lean toward my own natural way of playing. On the other, the odds don't lie. They don't vary or change. You apply your strategies to that, and if you know them, it makes your game stronger. They are the fixed factor.



We are discussing this here because it relates to an example in our anchor series. Double 3's are played, and I disagree with the board example in a book by Nicolaos and Vassilios Tzannes. These brothers are of Greek descent, and like most old-way Greek players, are believers in the running game. In the old game, there was no cube, you ran into your home board, there was less strategy or reversal because the cube wasn't involved and the odds didn't change so much.

Their book, "How Good Are You at Backgammon?" gives 75 test questions with scores rating 5 points for the best answer, the alternates being worth 3 points and 1 point, based on their opinions, and nothing for the wrong answer. Then you tally up your score. But first, you should know what their strategies are, otherwise you'll make the wrong play by the brothers standards, which is possibly the right play by the odds - who knows?

Today, we are going to discuss one of their board examples, Situation 3, which appears on page 13 of their book. I disagree with this play, however, it is so early in the game, that who can say what the odds are?

For the first roll, black had double 4's, and I would never suggest playing the way they played it, so it would make this example irrelevant. But assuming I was playing opposite one of the brothers, and I was white, and they had made their running double 4 play, I would play my double 3 roll by immediately taking 2 men from my 8 point, move it into my inside 5 point, which is considered to be one of the strongest points available. I would take my 2 men on blacks home board, move them to the 4 point, leaving myself an easy exit from his home board and eliminating the possibility of being primed out, so we could escape at any time that we had good dice. Also, we are building our own home board, so that if we have a shot, we can hit him and have an anchor to come in.

This is definitely "opinion play", but in my mind there is no comparison. The running game just isn't as strong and doesn't have the failsafe built in. Until next week,

Alohasville, Arnawood R.

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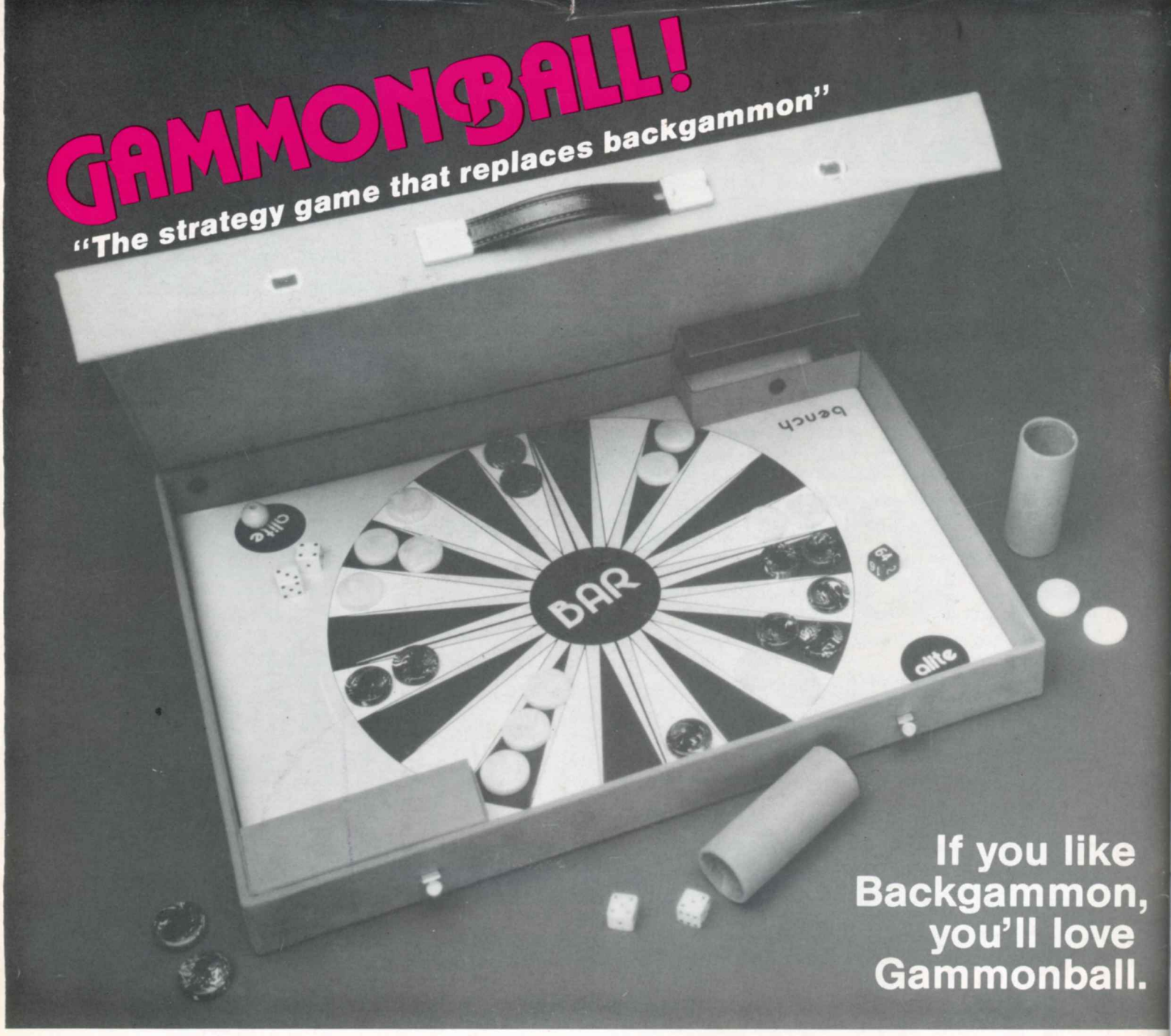
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