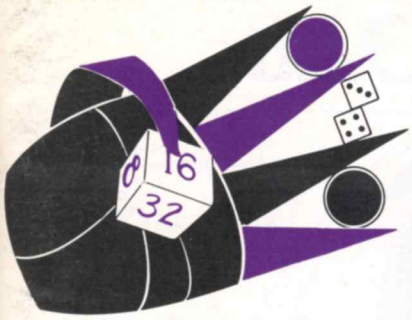
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Michael Maxakuli
Joel Rettew

EDITOR
Linda Kruegel

TOURNAMENT CORRESPONDENT
Buddy Berke

ADVERTISING
Joe Chiodo

ENTERTAINMENT
Mark Tan

GAMING
Dave Thompson

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Bob Ciaffone
Steve Herman
Bill Robertie

ART
Todd Vander Pluym
Paul Yohnka

CORRESPONDENTS
Sandy Bingen (Chicago)
Alberto Da Pra (Europe)
Bill Davis (Chicago)
Candace Mayeron (Los Angeles)
Gary Rand (New York)
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Jeff Ward (San Diego)

PHOTOGRAPHER
Dee Ennis
Andrea Waller

PROBLEMS & DATA
Gaby Horowitz
Butch Meese
Bruce Roman
Tim Wisecarver
Kit Woolsey

TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS
Harold Hanson
Debbie Lanham
Lewis Rosove
Ronda Stoltz

REVIEWS
Mary Hickey

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COVER: PARKER STEVENSON, star of former TV series, "The Hardy Boys," will soon be seen in ABC feature "House Possessed." He is also slated to appear in various ABC sports specials.

Photo by Shawn Randall



CONTEST Page 6



ASCHI Page 23

BELIEVE IT OR NOT
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4. Photos should be mailed to BACKGAMMON PHOTO CONTEST, P.O. Box 19567, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119.
5. Photos become the property of the Backgammon Magazine and will be published.

GOOD LUCK AND HURRY ! ! !

Editorial

— WET BIRDS DON'T FLY AT NIGHT —

A Panel of Experts

Jackie Vernon, the famous dry humorist, gets more perceptive nods than laughs from his "philosophy of life" anecdote.

It is a familiar joke. A man spends a lifetime risking his health and fortune to seek out gurus who might answer his question on the meaning of life. After many punishing years of searching, all indications are that the answer is possessed by a prophet living alone high atop a rugged mountain. The wanderer drags himself to the mountain and with his last breath asks, "What is the Answer?" The master replies, "Wet birds don't fly at night." The searcher is aghast. "How can you tell me wet birds don't fly at night," he screams. "They do?" asks the puzzled guru.

The answer is: what is the question? It is our job at this magazine to propose the questions. The answers are never concrete and ever changing. Looking over Old World Backgammon Club Magazines (last published in 1974) Some of the expert answers to problems are considered laughable by today's standards.

The proper use of the cube is an especially difficult and disputed area. Often, there are two problem articles in our magazine which argue opposite points of view convincingly. The reader is left with confusion and wonders whether he has the definitive answer. In our pursuit for that answer, we have decided to set up a

THE ANSWER IS: WHAT IS THE QUESTION?

panel of experts. This Blue-Ribbon Committee composed of the most renowned players in the world will wrestle with complicated problems. We will then publish their answers.

Billy Eisenberg, the well-known and respected backgammon champion, has kindly agreed to chair this committee. The remaining six members of the panel will be chosen by our readers and invited to join the group.

Those interested in suggesting a panel member should write to: PANEL, P.O. BOX 19567, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89119. Keep in mind that we are not necessarily looking for great players, but rather backgammon thinkers. The panelists will be named in the next issue of the magazine. From that point on, readers will be able to submit questions for consideration and analysis by the panel of experts.

We are not providing the answers — just the mechanism for getting close to the ultimate truth.



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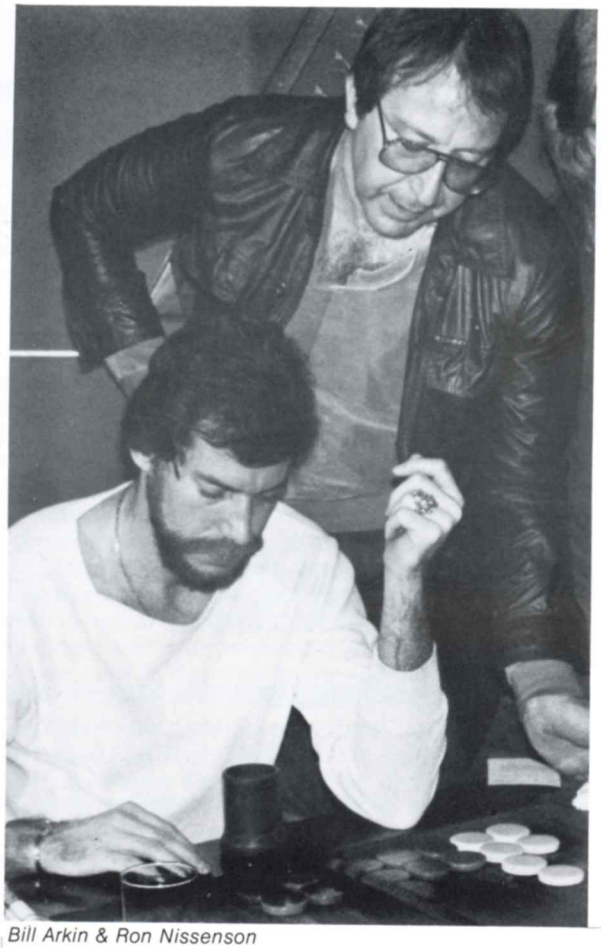
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Lucille Ball & Gaby Horowitz

Lucille Ball/Salem Tournament

This is not a money tournament. Participants come to rub elbows with the stars and hobnob with backgammon's "glitterati." The money all goes to benefit the Children's Hospital Orthopedic Division. The winners are happy with trophies and a lot of media hoopla. This year's winner, Gaby Horowitz, appeared on L.A.'s Sunday program, along with the Association and Bowser. We were particularly impressed with Gaby's performance, since he spent a good portion of it promoting the Backgammon Magazine. He also told the interviewer that he has earned his living playing backgammon ever since he was thirteen years old.

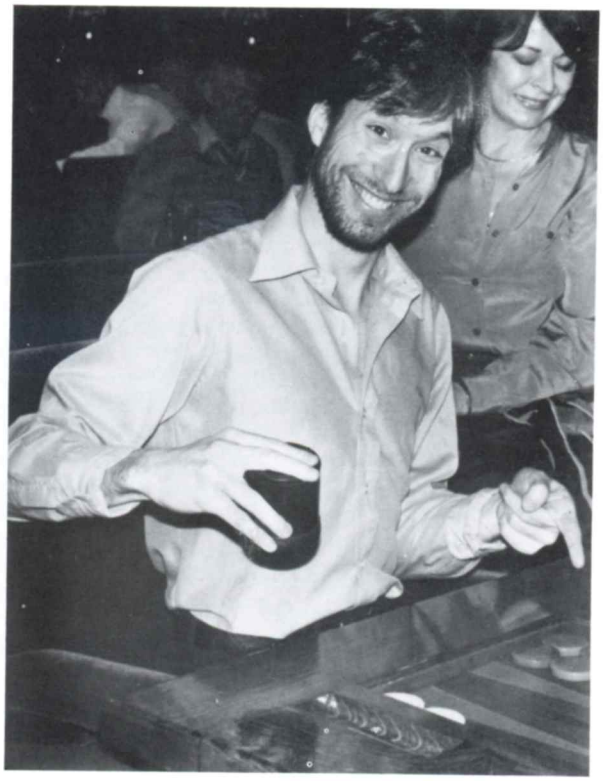
Pips of Beverly Hills hosted the tournament. Tom Gilbert, Pips backgammon pro, put together a fine crew of directors, led by Andrea Carriero and Candace Mayeron. Also assisting were Sid Jackson and Lauren Ferguson. Pips photographer Shawn Randell was everywhere, trying to capture the many stars making an appearance. This famous group included: Jim Brown, Hugh O'Brian, Connie Stevens, Parker Stevenson, Hal Linden, Peter Falk, Chris and Linda Day George, Altovies Davis, Dick Van Patten, Stuart Whitman, and of course, Lucille Ball.

The winner was Gaby Horowitz, who beat Elliott Winslow. Third place went to Alan Martin, who defeated Robert Glass. ☆☆



Hugh O'Brian & Carol Stevens

PHOTOS BY SHAWN RANDALL



Elliott Winslow

LETTERS FROM READERS

For Openers

Gentlemen,

Thank you for your reminder that my annual membership has elapsed. However, this was the first notice I received; and I am hurrying to pay my dues in order to avoid any interruption in receiving your magazine — it is without question, the very best around.

George Lane
Miami Beach, FL

Dear Max,

Got the magazine today — the usual fine job. Especially loved Todd's cartoons. Wondering if you got my last letter and article, and when you might run it? (I still get a kick out of seeing my name in print). See you at Turnberry.

Russell Sands
New York, NY

EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE PAGE #21

Taffie-Pull

Dear Bob Ciaffone,

I read your article in the October issue of the BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE and could not resist the opportunity to say thank you. As the director for the Dallas Backgammon Assn., I have been put in the position of decisions on many occasions. While I adhere to the rules, there have been many times that I truly felt they did need to be bent to meet the situation.

Once we begin to bend the rules, then we begin to draw lines and separate our players. One would have to decide the calibre of each individual player — and I, for one, have not the talent to make those decisions. I usually am for the underdog, and not necessarily for the one in the right.

I have one rather rotten apple in our group, as I am sure that all associations have, and I can bank on the notion that he would kick up the largest stink in our city should he feel that anyone playing was being given any special treatment. He would like to make all the decisions that require a ruling anyway. Some are so difficult, I would like to let him, except that we would still be listening to the explanation as to why he made his decision.

At any rate, I had to say that I am glad to know that I am not the only one having complications in making the decided ruling in the more difficult situations. If ever someone figures out how to be fair to the novice as well as the champion, while maintaining the game's integrity, please let me know!

Taffie Norris
Balch Springs, TX

Arm-Twisting A La Femme

Dear BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE,

I had to write to congratulate you on another excellent issue. Each year at this time I look forward to the pictures from the Las



Vegas Backgammon Club party. I know that a lot of individuals, myself included, get a real rush seeing sexy women playing backgammon — but I am wondering how you "hit on" lady wrestlers for entertainment at the party. What's the connection to backgammon?

D. Sylvester
Toronto, Canada

Editor's Note: Those were not lady wrestlers, but rather a couple of enthusiastic players. It seems that one of them rolled one double six too many.

Parlays Versus Parties

Dear BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE,

I'm a recent subscriber to the BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE, thanks to the persistent, but good-natured, efforts of Joel Rettew at the 1980 American Numismatic Association Convention. He suggested I write you regarding any comments, suggestions, etc. that I may have. I definitely enjoy the BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE, and am glad I subscribe. My only comment is that I'd like to see more on the theory and practice of backgammon itself, and a little less on the tournament "jet-set" aspect of the "BG scene." In particular, I think BG suffers from a woeful lack of published, annotated games (how many hundreds of such chess authologies are there?). I'd love to see a few games in each issue of the BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE.

Joel also suggested that I "aid the cause" by submitting an article to the BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE. I've enclosed a write-up of one of my most memorable games — you might find it amusing. If you can use it in the magazine, feel free — if not, just toss it away.

Denis Loring
Boston, MA

Editor's Note: See article page 32.

Goodby Abby, Hello Lonelyblots

Dear Mike,

I appreciate the good material that continues to appear in the BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE, and the kind words about me via Barclay Cooke.

The play of the 2-2 about which Barclay wrote in the December issue was one he and I discussed in an exchange of letters a few months ago. Of course I agreed with Barclay entirely. My only contribution to him was a suggestion, based on my own experiences programming Jack Gammon, as to why the "gammonoid" computer might vacate the 3-anchor even though this was clearly wrong.

Now for the bad news — somebody who calls himself "Rob Roy" has put something over on you. It's fine to utilize concepts stated by or learned from Paul Magriel, for Paul has stated so much of what we know about backgammon in his book; but "Rob Roy" didn't have to incorporate Paul's metaphors and phrases in a virtual paraphrase. When he did, he should have given credit, e.g. by saying, "As Paul Magriel notes in his textbook Backgammon, . . . "

My reaction to this was to write another "Letter to Miss Lonelyblots" in my usual manner. I am enclosing a copy for you. I grant you permission to use this material in your magazine if you so wish, gratis. Otherwise — after scolding this "Rob Roy" (whoever he is) — you might just want to put a note in your next issue crediting Magriel's book for the "Rob Roy" backgammon tips.

I am almost ready to put my own current writings together into another book. When I do, I intend sending you a copy.

Danny Kleinman
Los Angeles, CA

Editor's Note: Miss Lonelyblots by Danny Kleinman appears on page 28. Rob Roy is the irector of the Connecticut Backgammon Club. We are sure that no plagiarism was intended. The quotes were lifted from the Connecticut Backgammon Newsletter from a column that gives tips to players. The magazine added Rob Roy's name to the tips to acknowledge that they came from his newsletter.

Dear BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE,

In the Doubling Quiz, October '80, page 30-31, you suggest that the correct solution to Number 5 is a Double by Black and a Take by White.

If you still believe this to be true, please gather together all the money you can scrape up and come to Cavendish West in California.

Count the black men and you'll find out why I'm extending this eager invitation.

Paul Gedigian
Pasadena, CA ☆☆

SPRING TOURNAMENTS

DATE	TOURNAMENT	DIRECTOR	LOCATION	SPONSOR/ OPERATOR
Feb. 19-22	Florida Citrus Championships $25,000 Guarantee	Orrill Martin (813) 536-8712	Orlando, FL	Hyatt Hotel/ABA
March 12-15	U.S. Open Championships	Les Boyd (305) 527-4033	Reno, NV	MGM Grand Hotel
March 13-15	5th Annual Bluegrass Regional $2,500 Guarantee	Larry Strasberg (502) 451-3950	Clarksville, IN	Louisville Bg. Club/ Marriott
March 13-15	St. Moritz Open	James Ballie	Switzerland	Palace Hotel
March 20-22	Paris Tournament	Robert Perry (93) 30 04 28	Paris	Hotel George V
March 20-22	Crans Sur Sierre	Roland Jakober (50) 20 06 63	Switzerland	Hotel du Golf
March 25-29	U.S. Gold Cup $100,000 Guarantee	Orrill Martin (813) 536-8712	Washington, D.C.	ABA
April 24-26	28th Annual Indiana Open	Ralph Roberts (317) 846-0332	Indianapolis, IN	Hoosier Bg. Club
April 24-26	New England Bg. Tournament	Francesca Parkinson (617) 563-5787	Boston, MA	B & W Scotch/Deyong
April 30	Palm Spring Desert Classic	Sharon Douglas Jones (808) 533-2227	Palm Springs, California	Tennis Club
May 8-10	Los Angeles Classic $25,000 Guarantee	Sid Jackson (213) 822-2265	California	B & W Scotch/Deyong
May 15-19	National Capital Backgammon Classic	Michael Tomicic (613) 998-3781	Ottawa, Canada	NCBC
May 22-25	Chicago Open	Howard Markowitz (312) 296-7882	Chicago, IL	Gammon's of Chicago
May 29-31	J & B National Open Championship $20,000 Guarantee	Backgammon Club of Australia	Sydney, Australia	J & B Scotch
June 5-7	Frankston Open $9,000 Guarantee	Robin Carroll	Frankston, Australia	Frankston Bg. Club
June 9-14	Plimpton Cup $300,000 Minimum Guarantee	Goldsmith/Watson (212) 486-1489	Las Vegas, NV	Dunes Hotel
June 12-15	Australian Championship $5,000 Guarantee	Australian Bg. Club	Frankston, Australia	British Airways
July 6-11	World Championship $20,000 Added	Lewis Deyong (305) 833-7513	Monte Carlo	Merit SBM
July 16-19	Conferate State Championships $25,000 Guarantee	Orrill Martin (813) 536-8712	Atlanta, GA	ABA

GETTING THE MONEY

—Learn From The Pros—

by Joel Rettew

Stay cool on match point.

Ironically, perhaps the toughest moments can come when you reach match point — especially in a close contest. You're so near, yet so far. And your opponent, with his back up against the wall, is bearing down hard.

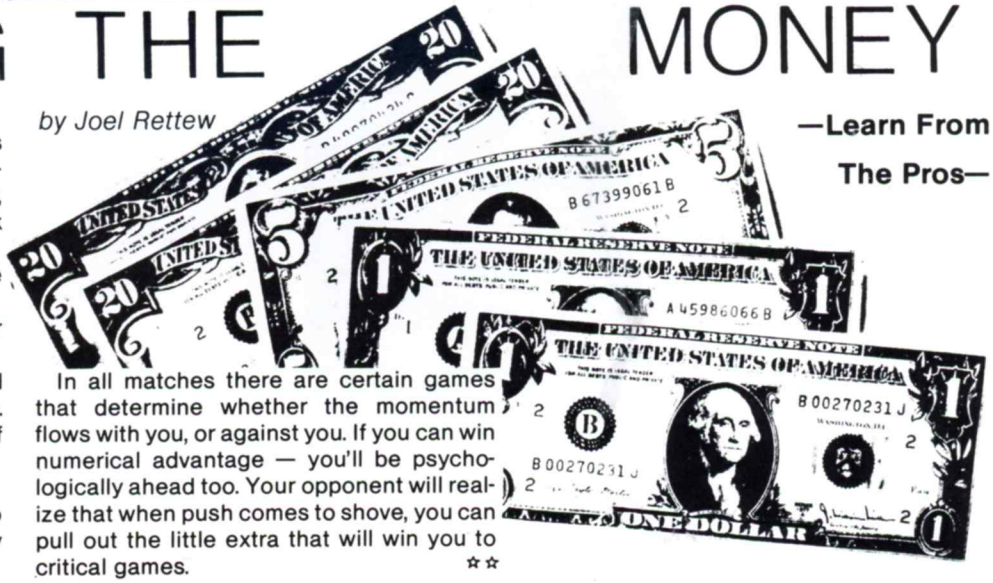
The pros take their time and wait for the other guy to make the errors.

Since gammons don't count, don't play for one.

To avoid choking — take your time and think out the moves — keep the game simple.

The key to winnng match point is, of course, no errors — good numbers.
no errors — good numbers.

You don't need to do anything special to make the last point. Just play the same way you have been doing all along.



In all matches there are certain games that determine whether the momentum flows with you, or against you. If you can win numerical advantage — you'll be psychologically ahead too. Your opponent will realize that when push comes to shove, you can pull out the little extra that will win you to critical games. ☆☆



BACKGAMMON IN ADVERTISING

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



DYNAMIC CUBE STRATEGY

by Gaby Horowitz and Dr. Bruce Roman

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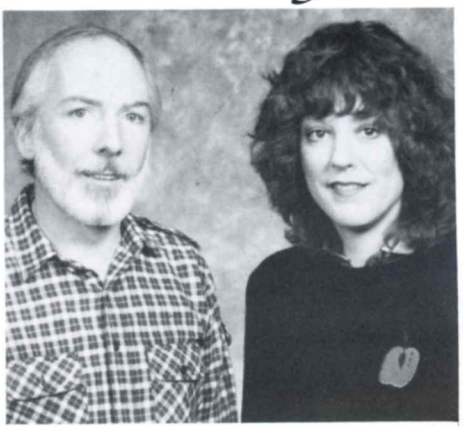
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PROFILE PAGE

Dan & Rena Caverly



Rena and Dan Caverly are familiar faces on the tournament scene in both the New York City area and the national circuit. Five years ago, they founded the New Jersey Backgammon Association, and now run two regularly scheduled weekly tournaments in northern New Jersey. With Long Island director Steve Kurzban and New York's Steve Carr, they have co-directed the Big Apple Backgammon Series. These are probably the largest one-night tournaments ever run, bringing out as many as 220 entrants for an evening of competition. Along with Kurzban, they sponsor Regional Cooperative Tournaments in the metropolitan area and twice yearly run one of the best events on the backgammon scene. This is a weekend tournament held at a dude ranch in New York State, and is known for reasonable entry fees, good prize money, marathon chouettes, and very little horseback riding. Dan has also assisted in directing both the Las Vegas Amateur and the Puerto Rico International Championships. Although most of their time is spent running tournaments, they also get to play in some. Rena's record is: 1978 Rhode Island Classic (semi-finalist, intermediate consolation); 1978 New York State Championships (second-place intermediate consolation and semi-finalist in the doubles) and 1979 Puerto Rico International Championships (first-place intermediate consolation). Dan's record is: 1977 New York State Championships (semi-finalist); 1978 Rhode Island Classic (quarter-finalist); 1979 Green Mountain Championships (first place consolation and first place, doubles); 1979 New York State Championships (semi-finalist, doubles); and 1980 Black & White Boston Classic (second place, last-chance). Anyone wishing to receive information on events in the New York City area can be placed on the mailing list by calling Dan at 201-785-1574 or writing him at **New Jersey Backgammon Association, 224 Overmount Ave., West Paterson, New Jersey 07424.** ★★

Howard Markowitz

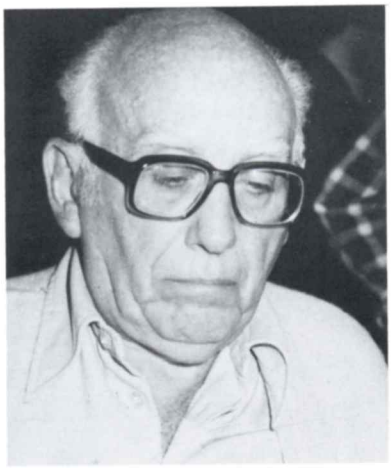


Howard Markowitz is the director of GAMMON'S of Chicago. After playing backgammon on the organized club level in 1976, and amassing the largest lifetime master point total in the Chicago area by playing four to five times a week at different hotels and restaurants, he opened — along with his partner Ida Weil, with great help from former National Backgammon League head Bill Davis — in December of 1979.

At this "permanent home" of Chicago Backgammon, he has tried to combine all facets of the game, including: regular small tournaments four times weekly, major annual tournaments, casual play twenty-four hours a day, and a program designed to develop new players. He feels the recent success of Chicago players at regional and national tournaments is at least partially due to the competitive exposure they get at GAMMON'S.

He hopes that anyone coming to Chicago will spend at least part of their time at GAMMON'S. Howard will make sure they get all the friendly action they want. ★★

Common Sense Backgammon



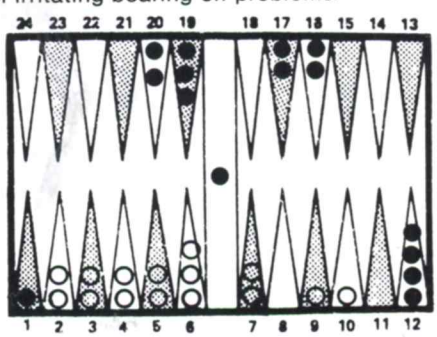
by
Arthur Dickman

How often we have heard the lament of frustrated players! "I had an easy win, left a shot bearing off, got hit and lost the game!" In some cases it is just bad luck; in other cases it is possible that with a little thought, we might avoid some of our disasters. Here is one common example which might stand some careful analysis.

White has just rolled 6-4. This looks too easy; move White (10) to White (4) and White (9) to White (5), thus creating two additional lovely builders in the inner board and ready to shut Black out to win an easy gammon. The only hitch is that Black might refuse to cooperate with your clever plan. He rolls a 1, securing White's one-point. Suddenly the picture changes; Black has plenty of time to build his board and wait for a shot. In the meantime, White will be struggling to bear off without exposing a blot. If hit, White will probably lose the game. On average, White will leave at least one shot; if there is more than one shot, Black should hit at least half of the time. Let's go back to White's 6-4 and see if we could improve our winning chances.

Let's blitz instead of trying to hold a prime. Hit with the 6 and bring the 4 to our five-point. If Black fails to enter, we close our board and win an easy gammon. If White hits (which in the above case would mean that he has secured White's 1 point), we re-enter Black's board and can continue our attack with all spare 4's, 5's, and 6's plus some doubles. With this line of play, Black would probably have to roll three consecutive 1's in order to make White's one-point. The odds on the first 1 are less than three to one, whereas the odds on three consecutive 1's are around thirty-five to one.

Not only would we win more gammons with this blitz attack, but we would avoid a lot of irritating bearing-off problems.



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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 thier club and/or tournaments, receive free space to publish their ideas and schedules in the Backgammon Magazine (Cir. 20,000 worldwide), receive 25% discount off rate card if they wish to advertise in the magazine, receive complimentary copies of the Backgammon Magazine for club use, and have access to the most complete files on backgammon players, current information and backgammon history.

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

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

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



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SON, I'LL GIVE YOU THE SAME GOOD ADVICE MY FATHER GAVE ME. THE QUICKEST WAY TO THE TOP ON WALL STREET IS THROUGH A BACKGAMMON BOARD.

THE FIRST STEP

by
Robert F. Hickey

"The first step, my son, which one makes in the world is the one on which depends the rest of our days."

Voltaire

In backgammon, the opening move has been considered an important advantage. It allows you to be aggressive, to throw the first punch, while your flat-footed opponent has only one point in his inner board. It is truly an edge, perhaps as much as eleven-to-ten, as you have the advantage not only in a race of pips, but also a race of position. True, BG is fickle. A forward game can revert to holding, positional patterns, or to back games or to "grim rimmers." However, the opening move is not only a static movement of checkers but also a dynamic declaration of philosophy! From the very first, you declare your intentions to play agressively, passively, tactically or mindlessly. In any case, you should be aware that your first step may not determine the result of this game, but it does determine the results of **your** game.

Now, what is **best?** I know you are absolutely certain. Most experts are, at least one capable of getting a publisher, and they give strident and dogmatic advice on the ideal way to play each of the possible fifteen (15) initial throws. Should you answer, "I play the following:

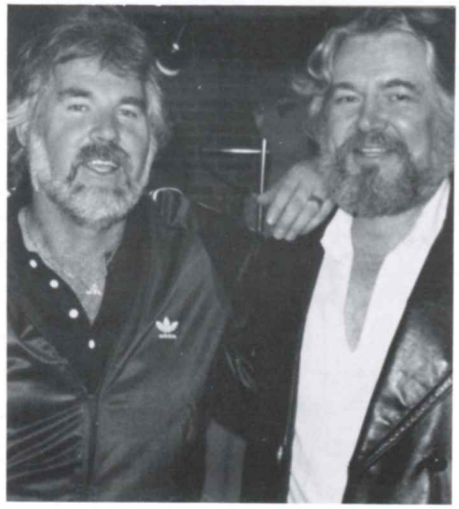
2-1	24/23, 13/11
3-1	8/5, 6/5
4-1	24/23, 13/9
5-1	13/8, 6/5
6-1	13/7, 8/7
3-2	13/11, 13/10
4-2	8/4, 6/4
5-2	13/11, 13/8
6-2	13/5
4-3	13/10, 13/9
5-3	8/3, 6/3
6-3	24/15
5-4	13/9, 13/8
6-4	24/14
6-5	24/13

. . . ", I would reply "You are certainly well-booked. You are going with the field, a perfectly strong field to be sure, but why are you so sure that you are right? Do you adjust your play for the given situation? Or do you only know **what** the experts recommend (on only one sacrosant prophet of truch) but not **why** and, therefore, **when**?"

Table I shows a compilation of thirty-nine (39) reference sources on backgammon. Note that there is complete agreement for only three rolls: 3-1, 6-1 and 4-2. Also, certain alternatives, such as 13/4 for a 6-3 rolls (which I often use) is not even given discussion in most texts. This implies that the art of backgammon is still not far from Hoyle over 200 years ago! Moreover, it implies that scientific precision is not yet possible even at this first step. Accurate play, even at this level, depends on a variety competition, of level, depends on a variety of factors not generally considered—tournament or head-to-head competition, scoring methods, strong or weak opponents, and your own skill and personality. In addition, relying on the **what** saps your strength and weakens your will, and courage; whereas, relying on the **why,** you become whole with a conviction of the self. Don't memorize, visualize! Courage, according to Deyong, may be as much as twenty percent of the game of backgammon.

Continued pg. 32

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF BACKGAMMON CLUBS



The Pub Club West

From the success of The Pub Club was born The Pub Club West. Tournament director Dave Utermark (Kenny Rogers lookalike!) has been running a weekly Wednesday night tournament at the Tally-Ho Restaurant in West Chicago, Illinois since last August. Recently Dave introduced Sunday tournaments once a month (second Sunday), which features the best brunch you've ever had, and a Calcutta Auction. Dave works in the graphic arts field, and has been instrumental in the promotion of the Pub Club and Pub Club West with ideas such as eyecatching posters, calendars and "Pub" coffee mug trophies, to name just a few. For more information call Dave at **(312) 932-0139.**

NEW ASSOCIATES

Backgammon Assn. of South Australia, Inc.

Formed in 1977 by Nicholas Begakis, this club has seventy financial members. The group holds the Annual South Australia Open and participates in the Australian Championships. The South Australia Backgammon Assn. was an inaugural member of the Australian Backgammon Assn. which includes: Backgammon Assn. of N.S.W., Backgammon Assn. of Vic., Backgammon Assn. of W.A., and the Backgammon Assn. of Canberra. The club meets weekly (Tuesdays) at Old Lion Hotel and Public Schools Club. **08-271 0275.**



Bluewater Backgammon Club

Bluewater is an offshoot of a backgammon course at Lambton College in Sarnia, Ontario. The founder of the club is Doug Bell (who taught the course). Membership in the club has passed 130 and is now the most active group in the Sarnia community. The club keeps statistics on its members, somewhat like a ballplayer's batting average. The average is found by totaling the wins and losses and dividing the total into the number of wins. At the end of 25 weeks the averages are wiped out and everyone starts at .000.

Bluewater currently meets at the Sarnia Gold and Curling Club on Monday nights. Membership is one dollar (for materials only). For information on the Backgammon Average System, write to: **Doug Bell, 1016 Lilac Avenue, Sarnia, Ontario.**

Red River Backgammon Club

Ken Lien and Paul Bernier established and direct the RRBC. It is the first backgammon club in North Dakota. They run a backgammon league where one match up to seven points is played against each of the participants. A North Dakota Open tournament is planned in the near future. Ken or Paul can be reached at **(701) 232-7755.**

THE PUB CLUB

The name and logo symbolize the relaxed, casual, and fun atmosphere present during the weekly Monday night tournaments. Originally, a small group gathered for backgammon, the club started a master-point system in 1979 as used by Gammon's of Chicago, and put out a monthly newsletter, naming itself the Pub Club. At one point, attendance dwindled to a weekly average of four. It was then the club moved to its present location at The Ground Round Restaurant in Downers Grove, Illinois (about twenty miles west of Chicago). Although only a short distance from the old club site, the new location did everything for the club, as the weekly tournaments now consistently draw over thirty participants. Every summer there is an annual "invitational" for sixty-four players. Tournament director is **Jeff Henry (312) 968-9081.**



COFMAN, MAFFEO, SKILLMAN & POWELL

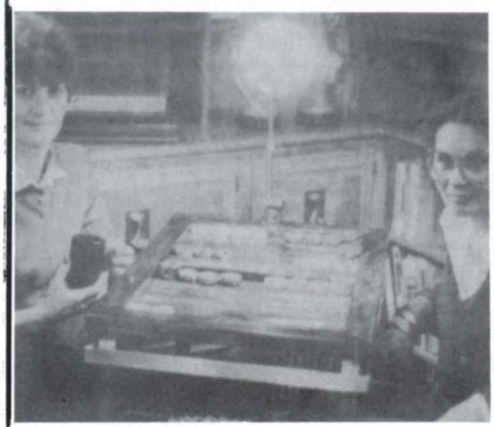
Pacific Backgammon Assn.

This group, one of the most powerful in America, was founded in 1976. In its membership, it boasts some of the best players in the world. Since 1979, the association has been directed by Nick Maffeo, with help from assistant directors Beth Skillman and Ralph Powell.

The average Wednesday attendance at their main tournament at Day's (San Francisco) is almost one hundred. Two other PBA tournaments run during the week (Spat's in Berkley, and San Mateo).

Brad Sherman and Herb Cofman are the current tournament directors.

This organization stresses and supports grassroots backgammon in America. Nick Maffeo pointed out to us that the BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE and the American Association of Backgammon Clubs were organized by a grassroots movement against celebrity-centered backgammon. We thank him for reminding us of our original pledges and join with the PBA to bring backgammon to the people. Welcome to the Association. We are stronger than ever. PBA hotline **(415) 668-4661.**



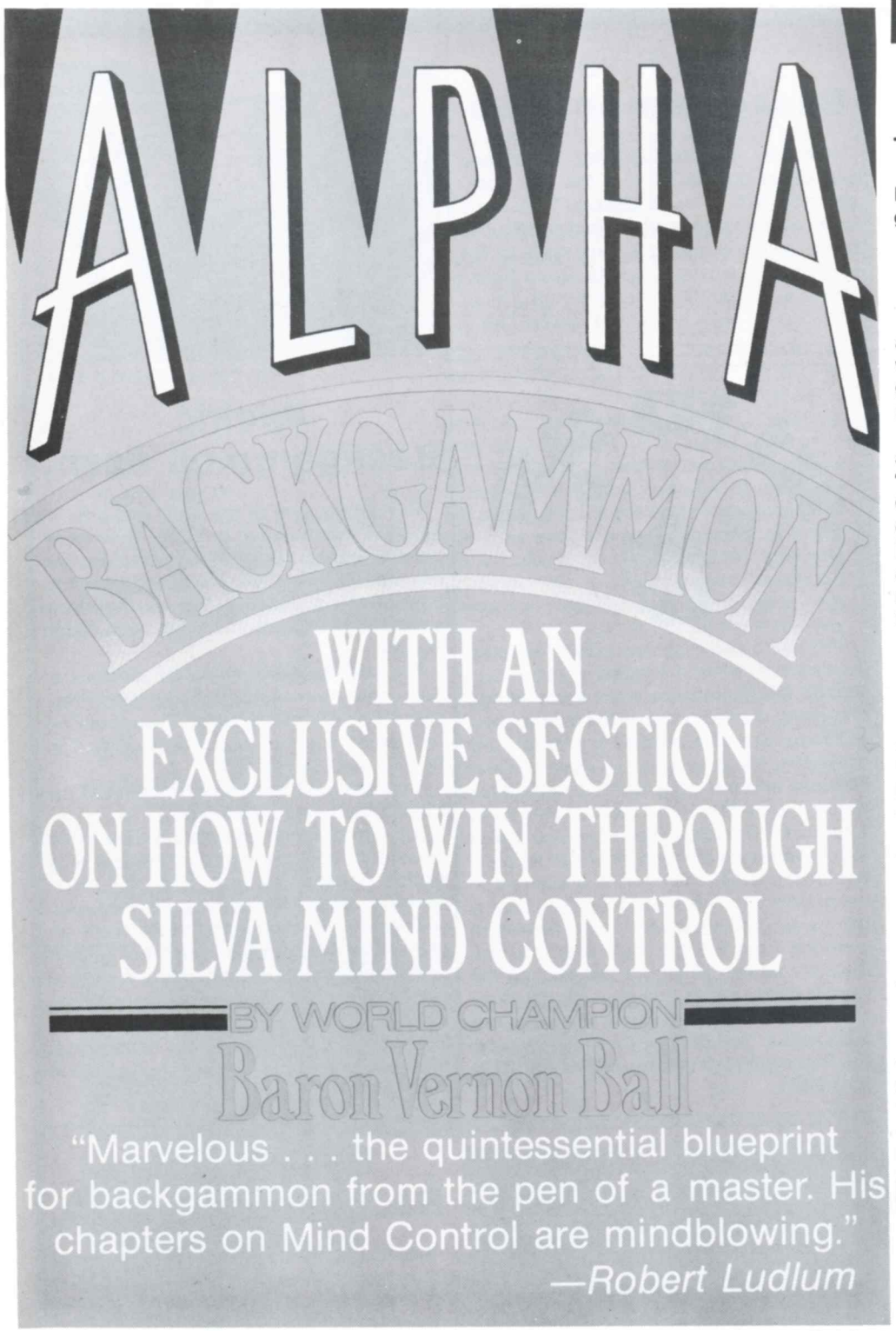
MERECKI & MISHALL

Fenton Area Backgammon Club

This club was established with the help of Carol Cole, director of the neighboring Flint BG club. The club meets every Tuesday at Jimmy G's on Fenton Road in Fenton. Already the group boasts over fifty members and oodles of publicity. They are a community-oriented club.

Reno-Roundup — St. John's Festival was just one of this year's backgammon projects for the club. The club was founded by president Evelyn Merecki, with the help of Linda Mishall. **(313) 629-3555.**

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THE THIRD DEGREE

I've Heard Backgammon Compared to Parcheesi. They Don't Seem Similar To Me. What Is The Connection?

Backgammon is considered a race game. Race games include ludo, the game of goose, and parcheesi.

What Is The Crockford Rule?

Many players confuse Crockford, which is a casino and backgammon club in London, with the Crawford rule. The Crawford rule governs match-point doubling in tournament play.

Chris Jeans, our English expert, suggests an appropriate Crockford Rule. He writes: "Considering the investigation into the Coral Casinos, of which Crockford's is one, it is not difficult to invent a rule. For instance: 'If it looks like you are going to lose a gammon always go into a long back game as the club may be closed down before the game finishes'."

What Is Fanning Fever?

It is a backgammon ailment — some say an epidemic. It comes from the verb, to fan, a baseball term meaning to swing and miss. In backgammon it is to stay on the bar — not come in.

Other expressions meaning the same thing include dancing, whiffing, re-entry failure, and choking.

Where Are The Great Backgammon Names of Yesteryear: Manny Wong, Claude Beer, Stan Tomchin, Etc.?

We would like to know, also. The BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE is looking for information on these and other famous players that have disappeared from the scene. If you have information, send it to us.

What is Mammon Gammon?

It's backgammon for the very rich — wealthy and healthy stakes, usually played for the base gambling thrill, not the art of the game.

What Is Dutch Backgammon?

This game is played in the same way as backgammon, except that all men, or stones, start on the bar, and each player must enter all his fifteen men before advancing any of them. He may not hit a blot until he has moved at least one man around to his own inner table. ☆☆

THE MAN IN THE BOX

by Dennis Stone



"The Night of the Raccoon"

"The guy's a looney bird!" shrieked Superstitious Paul.

The Mathematician scoffed.

Baby Mason giggled.

Arthur the Expert smiled.

Compulsive Kal beavered out of turn.

It was the Saturday night chouette.

Their favorite pigeon had flown into the loft several hours earlier, and there were now five-plus scores on the sheet -- and one very large omelette.

The five bird fanciers were thinking ahead to pigeon fricassee.

The man in the box — the bird in question — shifted his bulk against the frame of his chair, placing a severe strain on several screws, took a deliberately long suck at his cigar, exhaled, further polluting the air, and waited for the snickers to subside and the beavers to be duly registered.

With this done, the man in the box thought, pleased with himself, **trap sprung.**

He then leaned forward with a grace and agility that took the others by surprise, stretched a long, thick arm across the table into enemy territory, grabbed hold of a cube that was no longer truly his, twisted it one calibration upward, and then set it down again as if it were a fragment of high explosive with a delicate triggering device.

The entire operation could not have been heard by a mouse with its ear to the ground, but was loud enough just the same to bring the kibitzers, who sense these things, scurrying to the table.

They arrived just in time to hear the man in the box announce, "Gentlemen, seeing that this is the last game of evening, enjoying yourselves at my expense, I am certain you won't mind that I shall invoke the **raccoon.**"

Baby Mason, who was given to rather large mood swings, started to experience a rare form of hysteria. His immediate impulse was to scream, "We're not playing raccoons! We're not playing raccoons!", but then thought better of it, as even he knew it was not wise to alienate one's benefactors.

The Mathematician, who had already computed their plus expectancy at the four level, now added in a parameter for possession of the cube, multiplied the resulting figure by eight, and then stared casually over to the score sheet, fantasizing the expected increment.

The cube had moved quickly from the four to the eight level with the double, from the eight to sixteen level with the beaver, and from the sixteen to the thirty-two level with the raccoon. The Mathematician never ceased to be amazed by the simple beauty of geometrical progressions and the rapidity with which they arrive at very large numbers.

Two more double-beaver-raccoon sequences, he thought perversely, and we'll all be up to the 2,048 level. He did not go any further, however, as he remembered the man in the box **did not** settle. The moisture mysteriously began to disappear from the Mathematician's throat.

Arthur the Expert never particularly cared for the idea that he could labor brilliantly throughout the entire course of an evening only to find himself shot back into the minus column as the result of some last-minute madness. Large swings, he knew, were a necessary evil, but better they should happen to someone else than him. He looked over at Kal.

Arthur wondered if Kal's penchant for increased risk might make him susceptible to a favorable exchange of equity more favorable to Arthur than to Kal. His problem was how to make the correct psychological approach. This might not be easy, he felt, for Kal was winning at the moment, and might not be responsive to many of the ploys which were inevitably effective when he was losing.

Compulsive Kal was, for the moment, having his own problem. He was frantically trying to remember what came *after* a raccoon. He began to search systematically through the alphabet: aardvark, badger, coyote, dingo . . .

He hadn't gotten very far when he started to feel very foolish, and began to think that this game of backgammon might in fact be just a little bit silly, and what was he doing wasting his whole life on it. He immediately abandoned his search, thinking that the aardvark might have been correct, determining, however, to settle for the raccoon.

Kal even rejected Arthur's offer, when it came, to let him buy his game. This caught everyone off guard, including Kal, and reaffirmed all their beliefs, that nothing in this life is certain.

Superstitious Paul was trying to remember any raccoon that he had ever won, could not, decided anything in the raccoon family (Panda bears included) were not furry and cute, but rabid and deadly and likely to be the end of him, and that he was (there was not a doubt in his mind) destined to lose this game. He made no offers of a settlement, however, as he was mesmerized by his own prediction and even took a secret masochistic delight in knowing the terrible thing that was about to befall all of them.

The first inkling that he might be right came on the man in the box's first roll after his raccoon.

Baby Mason winced hard, almost gluing his eyes shut.

Arthur the Expert shook his head, the muscles around his mouth tightening, the twinkles going out of his eyes.

Compulsive Kal's expression darkened, all the nerve endings in his body going numb at the incipient, inevitable, injustice.

The Mathematician did a complete circle on the ball of his feet to eliminate some of his nervous energy.

Superstitious Paul nodded as if he knew it all along, and then walked away from the table as quickly as possible to the far side of

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THE MAN IN THE BOX

Continued pg. 19

the room, determined not to watch the rest of the game in an effort to appease the gods and perhaps circumvent his ill thought-out and already-regretted prediction.

The man in the box, as was apparent even to the most uninformed kibitzer, had rolled his one and only joker — bringing the game back to EVEN!

The game then proceeded for about ten rolls, during which period one excitable kibitzer — descended, no doubt, from a long line of albatrosses — kept flying back and forth between the game and Superstitious Paul, informing Paul that their position was disintegrating, in spite of the fact that Paul had his hands over his ears and kept screaming at the kibitzer, "I don't want to hear!"

Kibitzers are generally helpful in this manner if they can be. Superstitious Paul removed himself even further, into the next room, as far as he could go without leaving the club altogether, and threatened the albatross with bodily harm should it enter his final sanctuary.

Five minutes later, undaunted, the albatross stuck first its beak, then its neck, then its webbed feet, and finally its whole feathered apparatus into the room in which Paul was waiting, and as Paul rose with feather-plucking on his mind, the albatross announced deferentially, with "go fer" written on the outside, and mischief written on the inside, "They asked me to get you. They want to redouble." ☆☆

NEW *

MILLION DOLLAR BLACKJACK

By Ken Uston

Now you can own the most important blackjack book ever published. This long-awaited event in the world of gaming books presents the most complete coverage of the game ever printed. Only the world's most experienced professional blackjack player, Ken Uston, could have written this book. Heretofore unpublished details of professional play, cheating, team play, learning techniques,and a host of inside secrets are revealed for the first time in print. * This is the story of how Ken and six sets of teammates won over $4,000,000 from casinos around the world. * This is a textbook that will take you from beginner to intermediate, to advanced, to professional levels of play—with a system you can learn at each level. The Uston Advanced Point Count—complete in this book—previously sold for $97. * This is the most complete glossary of blackjack terms ever printed. * This is a guide to all the previously published blackjack books and the major blackjack schools. * This is over $500 worth of blackjack materials. * This is the book you cannot be without. BE THE FIRST TO HAVE YOUR COPY.

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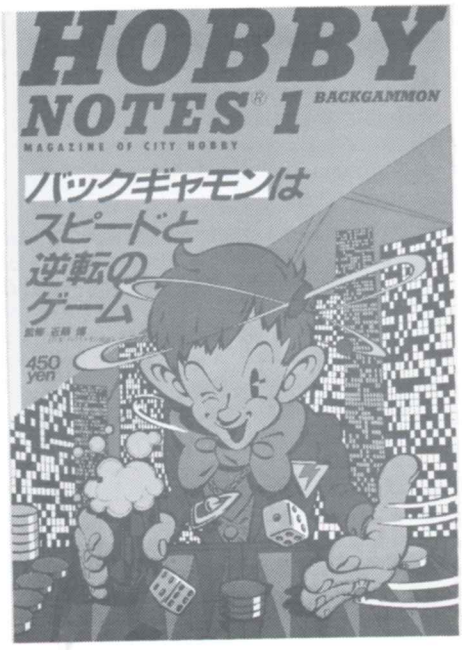
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Japan Backgammon News







In the "we are not alone" department; last issue featured the excellent Mexican publication El Mundo Del Backgammon. Now, we would like to introduce the BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION OF JAPAN and their fine publication, Backgammon News. The magazine is operated by club president Hiroshi Kondo and director Yo Wasama. So far we have been only able to read the pictures. If you read Japanese, you can subscribe by writing to: Hideo Kato, 2-32-3 Shinkawa, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

Playing and Thinking to Win: Backgammon and Mental Dynamics

by Russell Sands — 1980 W.A.B.C.

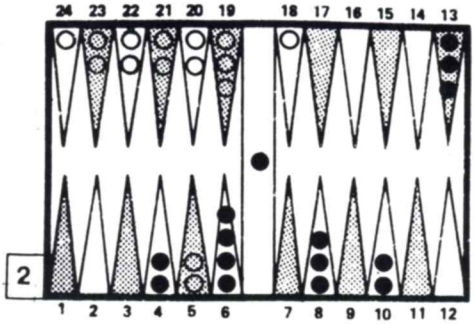
There have been numerous articles written over the past few years with regard to the subject of using mind control or psychokinetics to influence the rolling of a pair of dice. How many times have you heard of a player who is reputed to be a "good roller," or been in a situation where somebody is consistently turning around lost games by rolling a joker or a double at the right time? We've all seen examples of this often enough to realize that there must be something going on, and I would like to offer some observations and explanations of this "phenomenon."

To begin with, let me be the first to admit that I won the Las Vegas tournament this year due to my fantastic rolling ability. I have no delusions of having become a brilliant player overnight. However, I would like to point out that I didn't consider myself to have rolled lucky dice, there was a certain method to my madness which I firmly believe enabled me to roll so well. In "The David Leibowitz Quiz," reknowned backgammon author and theoretician Danny Kleinman says, "There is just as much skill in being lucky as there is in being skillful." Although Danny is writing in a satirical and comedic style, there is a profound truthfulness to his statement. Along the same line of thought, a well-respected player from New York who prefers to be known as "Swami," recently answered the argument of luck vs. skill by saying that backgammon was a game of half skill and half psychokinetics.

Secondly, I won the Vegas tournament because I knew that I was going to win it (I was walking around all week telling people that I was going to win, so I would've looked pretty foolish if I didn't). In a recent issue of this magazine, Joel Rettew wrote an article about the importance of positive attitude while playing in a tournament. Joel said that he always sits down to play a match knowing that he can win it. I'd like to take this one step further, and say sit down, knowing confidently and without a doubt, that you will win it. You must totally believe in yourself — there can be no room for doubt. (It sounds corny, but it works). The result of such thinking is that the energy in your mind somehow affects the game. This is really not as farfetched as it might sound, since it's pretty common in an important competition to talk about being able to "feel" the tenseness of a situation or to "see" the participant's concentration. In such a situation, psychologists will say that we may be in an "altered state of consciousness," what Vernon Ball calls the "Alpha State."

My experience has shown that in such a situation, there are certain alternatives which occur, either alone or in combination. One direct physical result can be that the outcome of the numbers on the dice are affected, in such a way that the characteristic "randomness" no longer holds true. A more subtle, and yet sometimes more frequent result is that your opponent will feel your energy and confidence and become intimidated, discomforted, or distracted, and will make a crucial error on an otherwise routine play. The first action here can be called psychokinetics, the second action can be called choking. But I believe that the basic cause of each can be attributed to a common source, the existence of this different state of consciousness.

As an appropriate illustration of what I'm talking about, I present the following position which occurred in the second game of my final match against Wayne Drogseth in Las Vegas. I was leading 1-0 in a nineteen-point match, and was in danger of getting gammoned immediately:



All good players, and even most intermediates, know that Black is supposed to roll 6-1 in this position. Most players will not do it, knowing that the odds against it are 17:1 and that it happens rather infrequently (it can be statistically shown that most players only roll this number about six percent of the time, which is not often enough to avoid usually getting gammoned). Some good players, and a lot of positive thinkers, will roll 6-1 more often than six percent of the time. They reason that the odds are only 17:1 (note the difference in attitude), and so they must be due since they can't remember the last time they did it, and it must have been at least seventeen or eighteen times that they've tried. I, on the other hand, knew that I would roll a 6-1 here. Rolling 17:1 shots had become almost routine for me during the past five days, and I knew exactly the trick that there was to it, namely, the absolute faith that I could do it. So I took a deep breath, closed my eyes, slowly shook the cup, and as I shook the cup I saw the number that I needed in my mind's eye. At first all the numbers were spinning around in my head, but slowly I was able to focus on the 6-1, and bring it to the foreground of mind... and then I threw the dice, and opened my eyes, and saw the 6-1 that had landed right in the



center of the board (I wasn't surprised). Then, I misplayed the number! I picked up my checker from the roof and slammed it down on my opponent's bar point, simultaneously picking up the blot on his bar point and putting it on the roof where my checker had just been. Then I picked up my dice. I completely forgot about the blot on his ace point. While everyone in the TV room watched in amazement, Magriel, doing commentary, pointed out that I might have technically made the correct play, since picking up both blots helped to preserve my opponent's timing and strong board. But even if this was technically correct, it certainly didn't enter my mind at the time, and could not be any use for my flagrant (and illegal) blunder. So here is an example of both of the things mentioned above. My mind was most definitely in an altered state of consciousness, as would anyone's in the midst of such an important situation. My hypnotic belief in my power to roll what I needed produced the 6-1 in the first place, and the immense external pressure of my surroundings caused me to totally choke on what certainly can be labeled an obvious play.

Now I realize that I've been looking at all of the above from a rather subjective viewpoint, and that the whole thing could have been one long fantastic coincidence, so I'd like to temper my discussion by warning you not to get too carried away by all of this. Although there is certainly something to be said for mental energy at the backgammon table, and I, for one, believe in its validity, it is absolutely no substitute for having a solid understanding of the fundamental theory of the game itself. The most proficient mind control experts should be able to affect the dice about fifteen percent of the time at the most — certainly not enough of an edge for

Continued pg. 24

backgammon across america


ZALTASH


HOBSON


FIERMAN


KINNEY




BAUM


BYRD


O'CAIN


EAGLETON

Ohio Backgammon Assn. Oh! Ohio!

Don Eagleton put on a great affair to benefit Multiple Sclerosis. The Mid-Ohio Backgammon Classic, held at the Hilton Inn East in Columbus, raised needed money for this charity. Abbas Zaltash captured first place and Jon Stephen was second. Intermediate Michael O'Cain took first and Barry Fierman second. Sally Byrd was first in beginners and David Baum second. Don has been a driving force for backgammon in Ohio. He is a master of using the media to garner free publicity for his club and its activities.

Kloian Comments — Plymouth

Backgammon is alive and well in Michigan, as you can see from the "clubs" popping up like hotdog stands.

On February 28th our club (American Backgammon Club) will host its Second Annual Championship Elimination Tournament and Awards Dinner at Topinka Country Club.

Recently, I submitted a letter to Louise Goldsmith concerning the "use of precision dice" for the ABC World Amateur Championships. In short, I feel the rule would be fair for all, that if both players agree to use precision dice, they should be allowed. If one player refuses to use them, then both players should not use them. The reason I think it's an issue is that many top players in the Open refuse to play with anything but precision dice. I, for one, don't like the cheap, cock-eyed, made-in-God-knows-where dice for a top money tournament. It would be interesting to know how other Plimpton Cup players feel about this specific rule.

For your information, I've been teaching beginner classes and "mini-maxi" seminars for Cranbook Institute and other colleges and high schools now for two years. Directly, I've taught well over 1,000 people and look forward to teaching more this year.

— Michael Kloian



Pittsburgh, City Of Champions


RETETAGOS

When you see the size of the Pittsburgh Backgammon Association's check to the Easter Seal Society, it makes you wonder about those big-time, name-brand tournament sponsors who dribble money to charities. This year's Fourth Annual Charity Tournament was held at the University Club. A gala tuxedo affair launched the festivities. Current president John Brussel conducted the calcutta auction.

A special award was presented to the founder and first president, John Dane. The tournament was directed by a committee headed by Russ Wilson.

Most of the PBA activities, including membership drives, are conducted by committee. The Pittsburgh club is one of the most sound in America with a legitimate, democratic structure that really works. The club has avoided the "single-personality" cult that characterizes most backgammon clubs in America. They hold orderly elections and pass on the power and responsibility of the club. Ex-officers don't drop out — they stay, and the club grows and prospers as a result.

Bill LeWinter is the president-elect of the Pittsburgh group. We read his backgammon holiday poem in the PBA newsletter and intend to steal it for next year's Backgammon Magazine Christmas issue. The newsletter, by the way, is called the Gambit, and it is excellent. Other club organizers should subscribe, just to see what can be done with a few volunteers and a lot of enthusiasm.

The PBA Charity tournament winners were Arlene Retetagas (first) and Mike Werner (second).


BRUSSEL

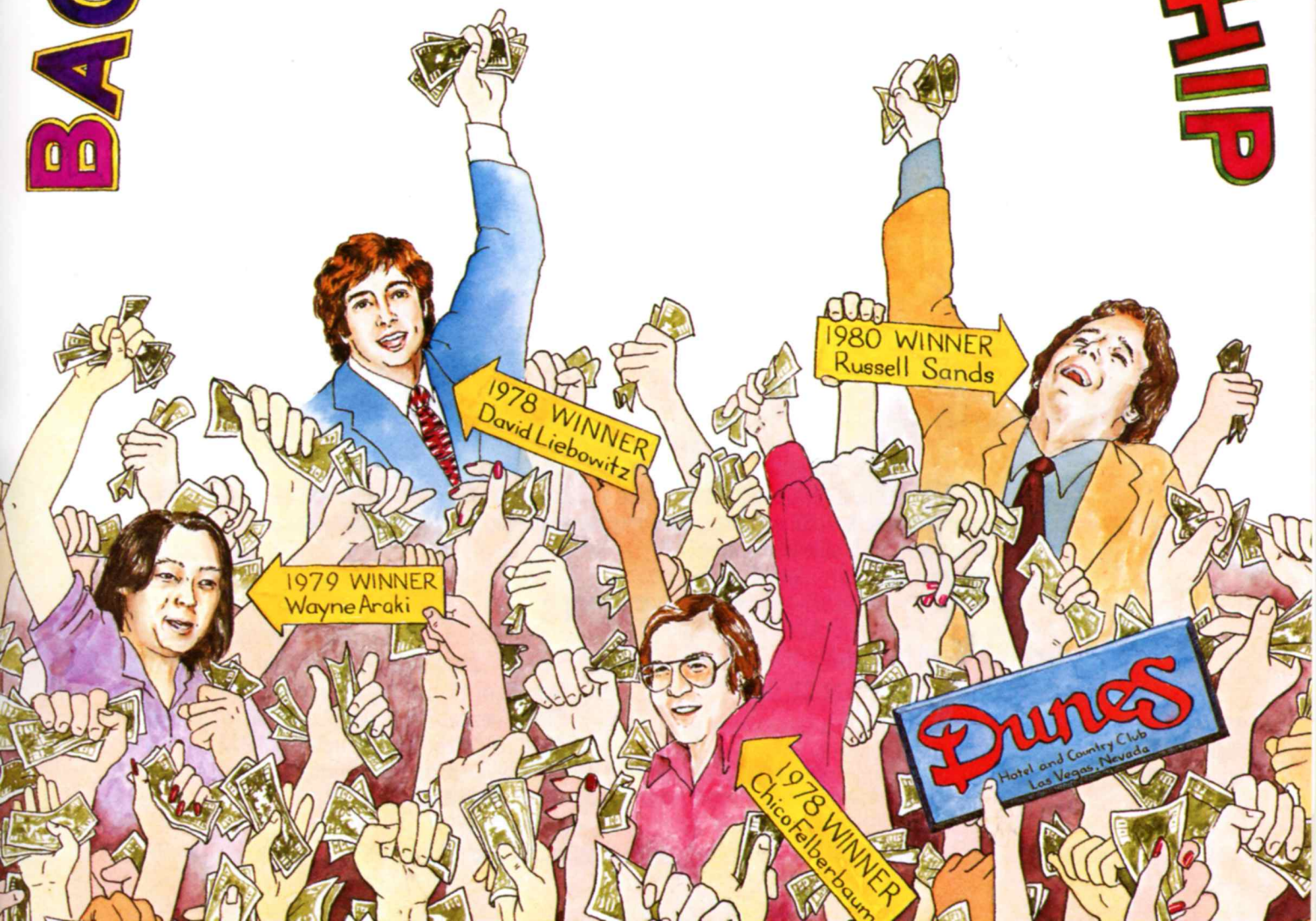

LE WINTER

The 5th annual Plimpton Cup

World Amateur BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIP

June 9-14, 1981

Total Prizes Exceed: **$400,000.00**



PRIZE STRUCTURE

	Plimpton Cup Amateur	United Airlines Beginner	Las Vegas Open
First Prize	**$100,000.00**	**$25,000.00**	**45%**
2nd	50,000.00	5,000.00	25%
3rd-4th	20,000.00 each	2,500.00 each	10% each
5-8th	5,000.00 each	1,000.00 each	—
BONUS PRIZES	Top prize winners are ineligible for these prizes		
1st 80 players to win 3 rounds in the Main Draw	500.00 each	100.00 each	$500.00 each
1st 40 players to win 4 rounds in Second Chance	500.00 each	—	500.00 each
SPECIAL PRIZES (split among eligible players who win 5 rounds in Main Draw)			
Early Bird	15,000.00	1,000.00	7%
Hotel	5,000.00	1,000.00	3%
Wed. Starters	10,000.00	1,000.00	—
Total	**$300,000.00**	**$50,000.00**	**$35,000.00** +$500.00 per player

Early Birds: Players who mail their entry form post-marked by April 30th 1981.

Hotel Prize: Players who stay at the Dunes Hotel and Country Club for the tournament and reserve through Karson Travel.

Wednesday Starters: Players who start play in the Plimpton Cup or Beginners Tournaments on Wednesday, June 10, 1981.

American Backgammon Championships, Inc. offers a variety of tournaments for players of all levels. It is possible for individuals to meet the eligibility requirements to enable them to play in more than one tournament. For example, Wayne Araki, a truckdriver from Vancouver Canada, lost in the first round of the beginner tournament, then entered the amateur tournament and became the winner of the third annual Plimpton Cup.

Plimpton Cup (Amateur) $300,000.00 in Prizes

Named after the great all-time amateur George Plimpton. This has become the biggest backgammon tournament in the world. Last year there were over 700 entries. Everyone has a chance of winning since professional players are barred.

United Airlines Beginner Tournament $50,000.00 in Prizes

Designed for the player who never played in a major tournament before. Where else does a player have a chance of winning $25,000.00 for a $60 entry fee!

Las Vegas Open $35,000.00 added

The Prize Pool will be: $35,000 + $500 per player. The Open Tournament is for professional backgammon players, or for any backgammon player wishing to try their skills with some of the best players in the world.

ADDED EVENTS

Kick-off Tournament

1st Prize $7,500 2nd Prize $2,500

$25 ENTRY FEE. Players wishing to enter this tournament must register in Las Vegas by 7 P.M. Tues., June 9, 1981. Five point matches: three rounds Tuesday, three rounds Wednesday, Finals Thursday

Doubles Tournament

$100 Entry Fee Per Team 80% Return

Groups of 16, playing 7 Point matches
Start Tues. at 3 P.M., Wed. at 9 P.M. or Sat. at 1 P.M.
5th thru 7th rounds Saturday at 7 P.M.
Byes given based upon order of entry.
FINALS SUNDAY at NOON

There will be no pre-registration in the added events

ELIGIBILITY

The basic definition of an "**Amateur**" is a player who has never won $1,000 (after deducting entry fees) in any backgammon tournament. Any monies won after entry form is received by A.B.C. Inc., does not jeapordize amateur status.

Due to the many tournaments that are now offering greater amounts of money to their winners in divisions other than championship division, American Backgammon Championships, Inc. feels that it is fair to review individual cases where players have won more than the $1,000 but still consider themselves amateurs. If a player has won more than $1,000 and still feels they are of "**Amateur**" standing, they may then write to the Eligibility Committee with all pertinent information regarding their tournament winnings. They will be advised of their status.

All professional players are ineligible for the Plimpton Cup regardless of winnings.

The Beginners Tournament is for Beginners players only! *A Player who has ever won $250 in cash or merchandise in any tournament, or has played in a championship division in a major national tournament does not qualify.* A Player may enter both the Amateur and Beginner tournaments.

The Eligibility Committee reserves the right to refuse entry, without explanation, to anyone it deems detrimental to the best interest of the tournament. A player who enters under the pretext of meeting our qualifications will be subject to disqualification at any point during the tournament. (Previously players have been disqualified as late as the 5th round.)

SECOND CHANCE

A unique feature in the Amateur and Open Tournaments will be the Second Chance flight. Those eliminated in the preliminary rounds will have a second chance at all the top prizes. 3 out of the final 8 players will come from Second Chance. There will be a $100 fee for those choosing to sign up for a second chance. Second Chance registration will close 3 hours after the last starting time. Chico Felberbaum lost in the main draw of the amateur tournament, entered the second chance and won the first annual Plimpton Cup tournament.

RULES

Standard American Backgammon Championships, Inc. rules will be used. Time permitting, re-entry will be allowed. All Prizes are to be paid on June 14, 1981 with the exception of the prizes of $20,000 or more. Those winners will be paid 20% of their winnings on June 14, 1981 with the remaining prize money to be placed in escrow at the Valley Bank of Nevada and will be paid in 4 equal annual installments beginning June 30, 1982.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT

Staggered starting times is a special concept of American Backgammon Championships, Inc. Players in the Amateur and Beginner tournaments may start playing in the tournament Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Open Players may start play either Thursday or Friday. This format enables tournament participants to attend the tournament on a schedule which is most convenient for them. A player may enter more than one tournament if he or she meets the eligibility requirements. Re-entry will be allowed time permitting.

AMATEUR $300,000.00 IN PRIZES

MAIN DRAW
Wed. starters: 2 Matches of 11 pts., Thurs. 3-5th rounds
Thurs. starters: 3 Matches of 11 pts., Fri. 4-5th rounds
Wed. and Thurs. starters: 6 and 7th round matches Fri. at 9 P.M.
Fri. starters: 4 Matches of 9 pts.
Last starting time: Friday at 7 P.M.
Fri. starters: 5-7th rds. matches Sat. at 10 A.M.

SECOND CHANCE
Sign up after losing in main draw.
7 point matches. Played down to 3 players which will be combined with 5 players from Main Draw to provide the 8 quarter-finalists.

All Byes given in the 6th round to Wed. and Thurs. starters based upon order of entry.
Winners in the Main Draw (5 players) & Second Chance (3 players) Combined Saturday at 3 P.M.
Finals at 11 A.M. Sunday (17 Points)

BEGINNERS $50,000.00 IN PRIZES

Wed. starters: 3 Matches of 5 pts., Thurs. 4-5th matches
Thurs. starters: 3 matches of 5 pts., Fri. 4-5th matches
Fri. starters: 5 matches of 5 pts.
Fri. at 7 P.M. Last starting time
Byes given in the 6th round based upon order of entry.
FINALS: Saturday 10 P.M. (9 points).

OPEN $35,000.00 ADDED

Start play Thurs. or Fri. Main draw 15 point matches,
Second chance 11 point matches
Fri. at 7 P.M. - last starting time
Byes given based upon order of entry
Sun. at 1 P.M. Second Chance & Main draw combined.
Finals: Sunday at 6 P.M. (21 points)

For additional information write or call:
American Backgammon Championships, Inc.
575 Madison Ave. N. Y., N.Y. 10022
(212) 486-1489

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	Amateur	Beginner	Open
Deposit, mailed by May 20,	$ 25	$ 25	$ 25
Balance June 9-12, (Cash Only)	275	35	475
	$300	$ 60	$500
OR			
Pay by cash when registering at the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas	$350	$100	$550

Amateur, Beginner & Open registration closes at 7 p.m. Fri. June 12th

INCENTIVES TO REGISTER EARLY

1. All byes will be given based upon order of registration. All entries by February 28, 1981 will be equal as to byes
2. $15,000.00 Prize for the Early Birds (reg. before April 30th) who win 5 rounds but don't win one of the top prizes.
3. Register prior to May 20 and save $50.00.

American Backgammon Championships has held tournaments with total prizes exceeding $1,500,000.00.

ENTRY FORM

LV

Player _____
Address _____
_____
CITY *STATE* *ZIP*
Telephone _____
Social Security # _____
☐ Here is my check for $_____ payable to:
American Backgammon Championships Inc.
Charge my Master Charge ☐ Visa ☐
Account # _____
Name _____ Exp. Date _____
Amount _____ Signature _____

Mail your entry form with deposit to:
American Backgammon Championships, Inc.
Suite 1006 575 Madison Avenue
N.Y. N.Y. 10022 (212)486-1489

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☐ Amateur ($25 deposit) ☐ Open ($25 deposit)
☐ Beginners ($25 deposit)
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BRANTFORD BACKGAMMON PLACE



COOPER

Al Cooper's Backgammon Place club meets twice a week at the nineteenth hole club of the North Ridge Golf in Brantford, Ontario. Tuesdays and Thursdays, the nineteenth hole turns into the twenty-fifth pip.

Also, every second Thursday at 8:30 p.m., at the Jarmain Cable TV studio, the club shoots two thirty-minute shows which are aired four times a week: Tuesday, 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, 5:00 p.m., Thursday, 10:00 p.m., Friday, 7:00 p.m. The name of the show is simply "Play Backgammon," with host Al Cooper.

As part of the show, Cooper has started a beach towel promotion, using film star Aschi Digard from California. This club really works (photography by Blinky).



ASCHI

FLINT AREA



COLE



SPARKS

The winter so far has been hot with excitement for Flint area players. It began with Winter Weekend II on Dec. 6-7. $5,000 was at stake in this double-elimination tournament which drew fifty-six players, plus sixteen teams entered the doubles event. CHRIS SMITH, a college math teacher from Saginaw, won the Open. Other results:

OPEN

1. Chris Smith (Saginaw)
2. Ken Young (Flint)
3. Arnie Lopez (Detroit)
4. Paul Harden (Flint)
5. Ken Sparks (Flint)
6. Tom Walthes (Valparaiso) *tie*
7. Chen-fu Yu (Dayton)

INTERMEDIATE

1. Jim Coulouris (Saginaw/Flint)
2. Don VanDette (Flint)

DOUBLES

1. Mike Giordano / Marilyn Turner (Detroit)
2. Carol Cole (Flint) / Tom Walthes

Champagne and cheesecake transformed Flint's weekly tournament into a Christmas party for forty people on Dec. 21. NICK JOUBRAN won the Christmas tournament, jumping him to runner-up behind KEN SPARKS for Flint Area Player of the Year. Club president CAROL COLE placed third in the year's Gammon Point Contest. These three were among the Top Ten honored by 50 players at Flint's Awards Night tournament on Jan. 8.

Looking ahead: Flint is planning a Valentine's tournament on Feb. 15 and its Third Anniversary Weekend on May 16-17.

JERSEY DOES GREAT!



One of the oldest continuous tournaments in America is the Annual Rocking Horse Tournament, directed by Dan & Rena Caverly of the New Jersey Backgammon Assn.. The Rocking Horse, a dude ranch, has hosted this regional event for eight years, which has averaged 150 entrants. Participants enjoy other activities, including horseback riding and outdoor sports. Jersey Jim Pasko struck gold again, winning the championship tournament. The backgammon-filled weekend features championship, advanced, intermediate, and beginner sections. The doubles and last-gasp divisions are also very popular. A perfect regional tournament!

CLEVELAND



JACOBSON GOREMAN

The Cleveland Backgammon Association proudly announced the success of the First Annual Backgammon Tournament. One hundred and sixty-three players participated.

The tournament served as a springboard for the formation of the Cleveland Backgammon Assn.. Seventy-nine members signed up. The group, under the leadership of Richard Jacobson, hopes to sponsor a number of events in 1981. The winner of the main flight was Bob Goreman, and the runner-up was Marty Kohler.

ROCHESTER ROLLS

Rochester recently hosted the First Annual Great Lakes Team Championship. The winning team came from Toronto. The Rochester Backgammon Players Association will hold its Fourth Annual Backgammon Championship of Rochester, February 21-22, at Rund's Periwinkle Pub. The tournament will be directed by Renee Rosenbloom. ☆☆

Bargaining for Hotel Rates

As the summer tournament season nears, many potential players are discouraged by high hotel rates; but, these rates are a lot more negotiable than you may think.

In a survey conducted by TRAVEL/HOLIDAY magazine, an individual called fifteen small hotels that had listed their rates in the newspaper. In all but one case, the caller obtained a discount of between fifteen and thirty percent. He asked four questions, in the following order, until he got the reduced rate:

- **"I can't afford your rate, can you make it lower?"**
- **"What if I come on the weekend or midweek? In a city, rates are usually cheapest Friday and Saturday nights and most expensive Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. At a resort, the opposite is true.**
- **"If I bring friends, can I get a group rate?"**
- **"Okay, can you tell me what time of year to come for a discounted rate?"**

If you're traveling in a business group of at least ten, hotels often will agree to your budget proposal. Says Jeff McIntyre of the Sheraton Corp.: "Don't be like the car buyer who says he's got only $7,000 to spend on a new car. Wait until the hotel has set a figure, then tell the sales manager what you can spend." ☆☆

Playing and Thinking to Win

Continued pg. 21

an otherwise hopeless player to defeat an expert (at least in the long run). However, if two equally talented players are pitted against each other, the one who can effectively harness his mental energy will have a definite advantage. But you are hereby warned that if someone who is otherwise better than you, either because you mistakenly believe you are the better player, or because you believe you can compensate for your inferiority by being able to outroll him, you are headed for trouble. The mind sometimes works in strange ways, and just when you think you are ready to conquer the world, this false confidence, which usually shows itself as cockiness, may result in catastrophe.

It is true that I gave David Leibowitz a percentage of my winnings in return for some very valuable private instruction, both in how tournament play differs from money play and in how to psych myself into rolling well and winning. I feel that I've learned my lesson well enough to offer a similar arrangement to anyone who is eligible and has a solid knowledge of the game, and who firmly believes that they are capable of winning the next Las Vegas Amateur Tournament. Please contact me — we should be able to work out some arrangement. The BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE will furnish my address and phone number. ☆☆

HOOSIER BACKGAMMON CLUB

April 24, 25, 26, 1981
Indianapolis Athletic Club

28th Annual Indiana Open

Entry Fee Schedule

Championship $150
(Advance registration $125)

Intermediate: $65
(Advance registration: $50)

Team—Early-bird Doubles: $65
(Advance registration: $50)

One-Day Specials: $25

Players' Pool: 80% of entry fees

"Bring-your-own-board" Door Prize

Entry Deadline—April 21

Refunds: Registration and prepaid entry fees are 100% refundable.

Personal Checks: Accepted prior to April 18. Payments at time of tournament must be in cash or travelers checks.

Deposit: $25 refundable deposit required with each reservation.

Distribution: Championship 65%; Consolation 25%; Last Chance 10%.

Awards: The Arthur S. Overbay Jr. Trophy to the winner and souvenir trophies for all participants. Players' pool. Calcutta.

Hotel: The Indianapolis Athletic Club is offering special rates to Hoosier Backgammon Club guests: Single $30, Double $38.

Information: Call or write Ralph B. Roberts, president, Hoosier Backgammon Club 317/872-0892.

Championship and Intermediate Tournaments with Consolation and Last Chance Flights. "Early-Bird" Doubles and a "Saturday Special"

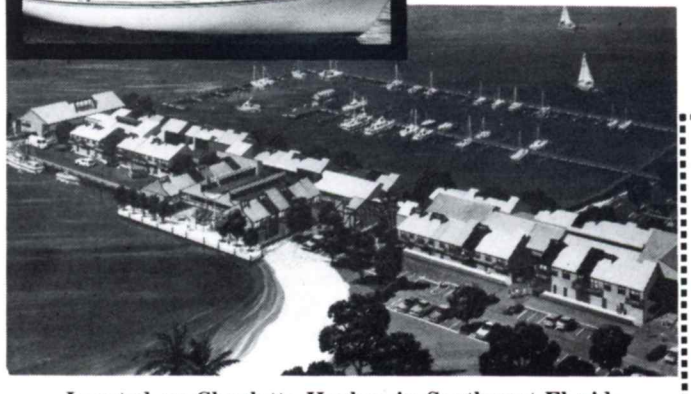
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BEAVER THEORY

by
David H. Fletcher

While most of the world may think of the beaver as a small animal that likes to build dams, the portion of the world's populace that plays backgammon seriously thinks of the beaver as a rule-option that allows punishment of an especially unwarranted double. But while the beaver rule-option is commonly employed today, not much has been written concerning "beaver theory." This article is an attempt to partially rectify this deplorable lack of information.

The beaver rule-option allows the player accepting a double to retain possession of the doubling cube and again immediately double the stake played for by "beavering" the double. Thus, if player A doubles player B to a level of 2 on the cube, player B has the option of "beavering" to a level of 4 on the cube and still retain its possession for later normal use. Player B accomplishes the beaver by turning the cube to 4 and saying, "I beaver your double." Player A has the right, as in any doubling situation, to drop the beaver and lose only the doubled stake of two points; or player A can accept the beaver and play on at a stake of four points with player B owning the cube; or player A can even "raccoon" the beaver to a stake of eight points with player B still owning the cube, if the "raccoon" rule-option is being played. The raccoon rule-option must be agreed upon prior to commencement of play, and is an opportunity for the original doubler to double the beaver.

It should be kept in mind that the beaver optional and that the players should decide upon its use prior to commencement of play. It should also be noted that the beaver rule-option is not commonly available for use in tournament play. This is understandable since tournament play is geared for attracting the less skillful player by limiting the number of games played. By doing this the skill of the expert diminishes in importance, in accordance with the brevity of the match, due to the inherent "luck" in the game. Since the use of the beaver rule-option would tend to favor the player most skillful in assessing a position for doubling purposes, it may be thought that beavers would discourage the less skillful player from tournament play. Paradoxically, the expert may also dislike the beaver rule-option because of the larger point swings that may result from its use, which might also tend to shorten the match in favor of the less skillful player. Outside of tournament play, however, it would stand to reason that the beaver rule-option favors the more skillful player, and the greater the skill of the player, the more likely will be the use of the beaver.

As was mentioned above, it is permissable for a player to drop a beaver. Illustrative of an example in which the correct reaction to a beaver is a drop is Diagram #1. Black, with men on the nineteen and twenty-one points doubles White, with men on the four and one-points. White beavers, and it's correct for Black to drop this beaver. Black will lose more on the average by accepting the beaver instead of dropping. Naturally it is psychologically very difficult to drop a beaver, since that would imply that an error of judgment had been made with the original double.

It stands to reason that one would want to beaver those positions in which one is the favorite to win the position. In other words, one's opponent has badly misjudged the position and has incorrectly doubled in a position in which the doubler stands to lose the position more times than he stands to win. An example of this type of mistake in judgment by the doubler is shown in Diagram #2. Black, with three men on the twenty-four point and three men on the twenty-two point doubles White, with five men on the one-point. White should beaver Black's double, since White will win this position 52.25% of the time. In *Phillip Martyn on Backgammon,* page 143, Martyn states that "... it would be idiotic to beaver," in reference to the position in Diagram #2. This simply shows how even the greatest players can be deceived by a position. By accepting the cube, White has become the favorite in the position, due to White's newly acquired ability to force Black to drop an appropriate double. For instance, if Black immediately rolls a combination containing the number 2, White should double and Black should drop.

Does one always have to be a favorite to win the position in order for a beaver to be correct? No! It can be correct to beaver a double even if one is less than a 50% favorite to win the position. This is exemplified by the position in Diagram #3. Black, with men on the nineteen and twenty-four points doubles White, with men on the three- and two-points. White correctly beavers even though White will win only 21/36 x 25/35 = 40.51% of the time. The beaver is correct because of White's power to increase the stakes in a position favorable to White. If the position were played 1296 times, White would be plus 192 points if White beavered Black's double, but White would be plus only 96 points if White merely accepted Black's double. Thus, White increases his equity by beavering.

Another example of an ending in which one can be less than a 50% favorite to win the position and yet it be correct to beaver a double is shown in Diagram #4. Black, with two men on the twenty-two point doubles White, with a man on the six-point. White correctly beavers even though White is only 19/36 x 27/36 = 39.58% to win the position if Black accepts White redouble. White's beaver is again correct because of White's power to increase the stakes in a favorable position, or because of White's power to force Black to drop a redouble. If the position were played 1296 times, White would be plus 288 points if White beavered, but White would be plus only 144 points if White merely accepted Black's double.

One last example to illustrate the fact that it can be correct to beaver a double even if one is less than a 50% favorite to win is the position in Diagram #5. This more complicated ending has Black, with three men on the twenty-four point and two men on the twenty-three point, doubling White, with men on the six-point, five-point, and two-point. White correctly beavers even though White wins the position only 46.81% of the time. If the position were played 1,679,616 times, White would be plus 4,032 points if White beavers Black's double, but White would be plus 2,016 points if White has merely accepted Black's double. This example is shown to illustrate that beavers can be correct in the more complicated endings where one is less than a 50% favorite.

These concrete, mathematically analyzed endings, have been chosen to illustrate the point that one need not be a favorite to win the position in order for a beaver to be correct theoretically. In fact, as has been shown, a beaver can be correct when one is less than a 40% favorite to win a position. What really is salient in considering a beaver is not whether one will win the position 50% or more of the time, but instead whether one will win 50% or more of the points that a position can generate. **If one is a favorite to win more than 50% of the points a position can generate, then one should beaver a double, even if one is less than a 50% favorite to win the position.** Of course, in the great majority of situations calling for a beaver, one will not be able to precisely analyze the situation mathematically. In this instance it may be helpful to think of the figure of 40% as a guide to beavering a double, just as one thinks of 25% or 20% as a guide to accepting a double.

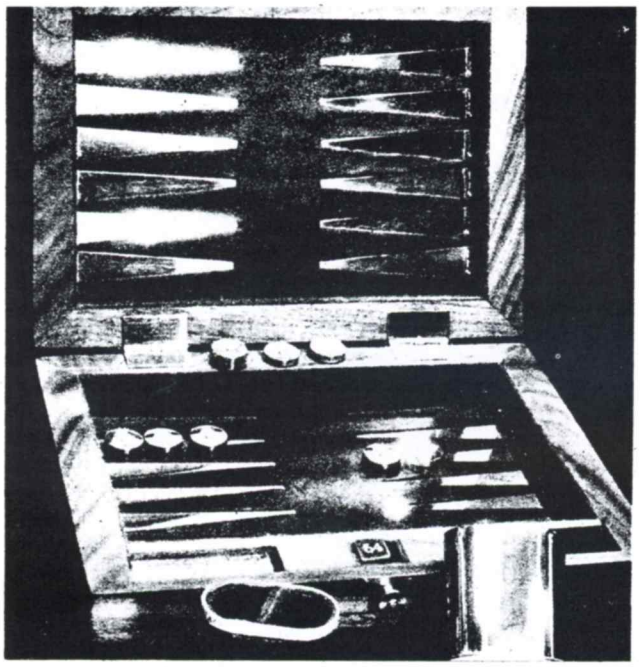
Naturally, there is a difference between theoretical and practical backgammon. Playing the beaver rule-option tends to produce larger swings of points from one game to another. Therefore, it might behoove an expert, who overall may have a great advantage over a less skillful opponent, to refrain from beavering certain doubles in which the expert may obtain only a very small advantage. By refraining from beavering, it would enable the expert's skill to demonstrate itself over a greater number of games, and thus tend to reduce the luck element of the game. On the other hand, between evenly matched players a beaver may produce practical psychological results, in the form of very timid future cube play by one's opponent if the beaver should prove successful. Or even better, a successful beaver may induce one's opponent to begin steaming away. At any rate, beavers tend to produce alterations in the game rhythm of one's opponent, and this tends to favor the player who has successfully beavered. *Continued pg. 32*

new products

First over the Bar



BACKGAMMON SET. Not even the sky's the limit with a new designer backgammon set from Stratton. A magnetic playing surface makes it ideal for traveling. Available with designer stripes and a blue or tan exterior, it measures only 9x14 inches when open, and comes complete with rules. Contact: **Stratton of London** (Canada Ltd., 504 Wellington St. W., Toronto, Ontario M5V 1E3. Suggested retail price of **$24.95**



GOLD & SILVER BACKGAMMON SET. Sidney Mobell, the San Francisco jeweler, has designed this 18K gold and platinum inlaid board set in walnut case. Hinges, handles, dice and cups with full cut diamonds weighing over 12 carats. Those interested can stop in at the Post Street store and plunk down **$475,000.00**





BACKGAMMON BOARD HAS FEMININE LOOK. "Lady Gammon" hatbox-style attache contains backgammon board with magnetic chips, rounded dice, dice cups and instructions. Fourteen-inch vinyl and linen case contains velour playing field. Board has a wrist tote and zippers shut. From: **Field Manufacturing.** Suggested retail price is **$36.00**

WORLD'S GREATEST LAPEL PINS — Anything you want to be, including "The Greatest Backgammon Player." Lapel pins available in gift shops. **$5.00**

THE PROBABILITY CARD. A very useful item for the novice and intermediate player. It's a handy card to carry in one's wallet. Many times it gives one something to study while he is waiting for an appointment. Available for tournament directors in bulk rates so that they can pass them out to players. From **Backgammon Card Company,** Dept. 33, 402 Acacia, Tracy, CA 95367 — **$2.00**



DELUXE GAME SET. The continuing popularity of backgammon adds consumer appeal to gift sales of Crown Royal in the new deluxe Game Set from **Seagram Distillers Company,** as part of Seagram's "Profit Plus" program (where permitted by local regulations). Crown Royal will be available in a handsome natural wooded box containing all the elements for backgammon or checkers. An exterior box of Crown Royal purple completes the look of luxury, pointed out Joel Weiner, Executive Vice-President, Marketing.

Rulings Column



Candace Nyles Mayeron

(Q): What is the proper method of changing dice?

(A): *First, for the uninitiated, a "dice change occurs when the four dice cubes are mixed in a single cup and redistributed to the players. Although players request dice changes for many different reasons, usually due to one player's feeling he has been getting "bad dice," i.e. bad rolls (or the opponent has been getting "good dice," i.e. good rolls), and that a dice change might change his luck. This is but one of several reasons experienced players play with dice of different colors. If Black plays with the two red dice (the color of his checkers), and Y with the two white, there is no way to vary the distribution.*

The rules on dice changes are very explicit, (See: "The Backgammon Book," Jacoby and Crawford, Chapter 14), but can use some amplification.

RULE: The rule of dice changes is: EITHER PLAYER HAS THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE DICE PRIOR TO THE START OF ANY GAME. Now let's examine each element of the rule.

a) "HAS THE RIGHT" — The nonrequesting player may not refuse to permit a properly requested dice change.

b) "PRIOR TO THE START OF ANY GAME" — Where the request is made during a game, the nonrequesting player has the right to refuse permission to change or redistribute the dice. Please note, this is NOT a suggestion that you should refuse such requests. Use your own standards of etiquitte or psychology.

Some clubs have expressly deviated from this rule, and permit dice changes during a game — either once or an unlimited number of times. But we think this is an unnecessary concession to superstition, and in tournament backgammon can slow play down.

Violation of this rule presently carries no penalty "per se" — that is, there are players who, without warning, grab the dice during the game and dump them into their cup. Obviously the damage is already done and the dice cannot be unmixed. This conduct does not carry its own penalty the first time it occurs — every dog is entitled to one bite. But if it happens, AND you as a player do not wish it repeated, you should call for a ruling; at which point the tournament director will explain to your opponent that such conduct is against the rules, and may not occur again. When it occurs thereafter, it then falls into the catagory of "unsportsmanlike conduct" and may be penalized as such by the tournament director.

c) "EITHER PLAYER" — Either player, BUT ONLY ONE PLAYER, may make the request. There may not be two dice changes prior to any one game, one at the request of X and one at the request of Y.

PROCEDURE: The requesting player mixes the four cubes in a cup and rolls them out. The nonrequesting player selects the first die. The requesting player selects the second (his first), then the nonrequesting player, then the requesting player takes the last.

The point is, the requesting player makes the mix, and the nonrequesting player gets the first (and third) picks.

(Q): I know that plays must be made for both dice where possible. But what happens where only one or the other number can be played?

(A): *The higher of the two numbers must be played, where it is impossible to create a play (however ugly) utilizing the entire roll. ILLUSTRATION: Suppose you have a single man on your opponent's 1-point, behind a six-point prime. You have seven men on your 1-point, six men on your 4-point. You have a single man on your 8-point. Your opponent is one the bar. You roll 6-4. If you play it as a 4, You have no 6. If you play it as a 6, you have no 4. You WISH to play it as a 4, as that is the safer play. Sorry, you must play the higher number rolled, the 6.*

(Q): What comes after "raccoon"?

(A): *Commitment to an insane asylum. (Tom Gilbert suggests "baboon").*

(Q): On the opening roll I rolled a 2, my opponent rolled a 6. He slotted my bar with the 6, then brought a man from the midpoint to his own ten-point (thereby playing it as a 3). After he lifted his dice, I pointed out the illegal move. (Four kibitzers substantiated my roll as a 2). He then attempted to put back the slotted checker, and play the 6-2 with one man from his midpoint to his five-point. I said he only could replay the illegal checker. Wasn't I right?

(A): *No. Where there has been an illegal play, the offended player has the right to insist either: (1) the play remain as illegally played, or (2) the play be made legally. He may not dictate how the move be replayed. The offending player may replay the entire move.*

Please note that the original choice belongs only to the offended player. The offending player may not "correct" his mistake after lifting his dice, unless the offended player permits the correction. Permission is then tantamount to direction that the play be made legally.

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.

Andrea Slinker

Andrea B. Slinker, 35, died in Houston, Texas. She was born in New York on Nov. 27, 1945. She moved to Las Vegas in the 1960's and was a graduate of Las Vegas High School.

Her courageous battle against a long-term illness earned her the respect of the entire community. She also worked tirelessly as a volunteer for the Nevada Diabetes Foundation.

Hundreds of prominent Las Vegans gathered recently at the Sahara Country Club to honor her on what was to be her last birthday.

Andrea was a charter member of the Las Vegas Backgammon Club. She was one of the best supporters the club ever had, rarely missing a tournament except for this last year of her illness. This past Sept. was the last time that Andrea played in a tournament. She won the intermediate division. Everyone will miss her and her enthusiasm for backgammon.



MISS LONELYBLOTS

by Danny Kleinman

Dear Miss Lonelyblots,

I know how hard it must be for you to write your advice to the dicelorn. Backgammon isn't an easy game, and writing required constant editing and revising — not really suitable work for a beautiful young woman like you.

Fortunately, Miss Lonelyblots, there is an easier way. I am a real pro, and I have started a service for backgammon writers which I call 'BACKGAMMON TIPS.' To convince you of the quality of my work, let me reproduce in its entirety the column I did for the BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE in December 1980. It appeared on page 38.

**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 blots 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 as fast, 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.**

Usually, Miss Lonelyblots, I charge a moderate fee for the material I supply. But in your case, I am prepared to work out other arrangements, "taking it out in trade" as we used to say. That way, you will not only save money, but you will get away from your desk and into the bedroom where you belong.

—"Rob Roy"

Dear Roy,

You flatter me by calling me a "beautiful young woman." By contemporary standards, women are no longer considered young at thirty-two — which, coincidentally, happens to be my bust size, too. Though I consider myself well-proportioned, I fall too far short of the current fetsh for large breasts to be called "beautiful" by most men.

I do not share your concept of women, however. I believe we should do good honest work, not just serve as playmates and bed partners for men.

I must admit that you offer excellent backgammon advice, comparable in quality to the best textbook, Paul Magriel's *Backgammon.* Come to think of it, your advice is not merely comparable to Magriel's, it's the **same** advice. Just wait a second — I have Magriel's book on my shelf. I want to check something out.

Yes! Just as I suspected! Your "tips" are thinly-disguised paraphrases of Magriel's words. For these are the things Magriel says:

(page 247, top of page 248)

**Backgammon is often a game of sudden reverses: A player who is in a winning position may get hit by a freak shot . . .*

You can gain a large measure of security throughout the game, however, by making a single point. This is your opponent's five point, called the golden point . . .

First, it is impossible to be closed out if you maintain an anchor in your opponent's home board . . .

Secondly, it is usually hard for your opponent to form a prime and blockade against his own five point . . .

*The golden point always bears directly on his outer board, making it hard for him to bring builders down safely into this crucial region.**

(pages 282 and 283)

**In a race, it is unwise to pile all your men on the six point . . .*

it is important to have men on the four and five points . . .

*Set up the pieces as shown in Position 11 (with Black having all 15 men on the 6-point, Rob Roy, and White having 3 men each on the 4- through 8-points) . . . we see that each side has the same number of pips (90). Now roll the dice and play the same numbers for each side simultaneously. Of course, Black begins bearing off first, but you will almost invariably find that at the end, either both Black and White bear the last man off simultaneously, or else white wins.**

(pages 149 and 165)

**Many weaker players complain about the large number of useless rolls they get, rolls which are not overtly constructive or which play awkwardly. They fail to notice or understand why good players' games so frequently fall into place naturally . . .*

An experienced player . . . takes into consideration future moves . . . for both him and his opponent. He tries to make his own position as fluid as possible . . .

*Instead of viewing men as liabilities to be gotten around the board, it is more useful to consider them as positive assets to be used constructively.**

Even if I were willing to pay your price, Rob Roy, it would be easier for me to crib my columns directly from Magriel, now that I know your technique.

But I don't want to copy Magriel or anybody else. Magriel does what he does superbly well. When he is quoted, he deserves credit — and royalties from the increased sales of his book, which such credit promotes. Think of all the labor I am spared by being able to refer my readers to Magriel's book!

"If you are using a pseudonym, Rob Roy, it is the wrong one. You should call yourself 'Rob Paul' instead.

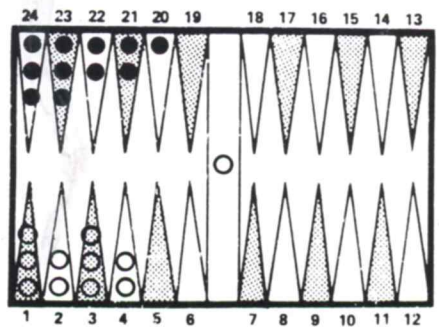
And as for your "Backgammon Tips," I will inform the publisher of the magazine which printed them (inadvertently, I presume) of their source at once.

—"Miss Lonelyblots" ☆☆

KATO's Quiz

by Hideo Kato – Japan

The situation is an end-game position A. WHITE rolled and moved and position changed to position B. Next BLACK rolled. The roll was same as WHITE'S last roll. And now the position returned to position A. What was the roll?



(Answer on page **37***)*









HOLIDAY TOURNAMENT

DATE — December 10-14, 1980
SPONSOR — Dunes Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada
OPERATOR — American Backgammon Championships
DIRECTOR — Goldsmith / Wattson, etal.

TOTAL PLAYERS
Championship = 128
Intermediate = 80
Beginners = 48

TOTAL PURSE = $46,500 plus $20,000 Added

WINNERS

Championship:

1. Bill Robertie	$17,450.00
2. Bill Jones	8,725.00
3. Mike Senkiewicz	4,362.00
4. Alan Martin	4,362.00

Intermediate:

1. Bill Koehler	7,575.00
2. Bobbi Layne	3,787.00
3. Terry Peterson	1,893.50
4. Bob Honoroff	1,893.50

Beginners:

1. David Levine	1,500.00
2. Rada Radovich	750.00
3. Ella Arastoozad	375.00
4. Scott Cole	375.00

















INCOME TAXES AND GAMBLING WINNINGS



by
Sonja K. Tafeen, Tax Accountant

How exciting! Here you are at the fifth annual Super Backgammon Tournament and you have just won your fourth match! Now you are "in the money," and guaranteed a prize of $1,000. Since you are partners with three other people, with an entry fee of $250, you think that the worst result is a break-even venture.

Think again! You can actually lose quite a bit of money on this proposition. How? Would you believe — income taxes?

Anyone paying out a gambling prize in excess of $600 is required to submit a Form W-2G (Exhibit A) to the Internal Revenue Service. Since the IRS matches Social Security Numbers from these forms to individual tax returns, you could trigger an automatic asseessment of taxes due with interest and penalties, if your prize winnings are not declared as income.

It is easy to see that if you are in an income tax bracket of 25% or more, you will actually **lose** money by winning the $1,000 prize! (25% x 1000 − $250 (income tax) + $750 (to partners) = $1,000). The higher the tax bracket, the worse it gets.

"This is terrible," you say. "What about my partners? Are they going to withhold on top of this, also? What about my losses all year? Can I deduct my expenses for this trip?" With a little advance planning, this problem need never arise. To begin with, the entire $1,000 need not be issued on a W-2G to one person when several partners are involved. The IRS has a Form 5754, "Statement by Person(s) Receiving Gambling Winnings" (Exhibit B) on which each person who is listed will share equally in any prize money. Part I states the person's name to whom winnings are paid, and Part II states the person(s) to whom winnings are taxed.

The withholding requirements under Internal Revenue Code Section 3402 are actually quite simple. The general rule is that any proceeds of more than $1,000 are subject to withholding if these proceeds are at least 300 times as large as the amount wagered. In other words, to have withholding on $1,000, the bet (or entry fee) must be less than $3.33. Therefore, if a tournament is entered for $250 — the winnings have to be at least $75,000 before the payer of the prize is required to withhold. The withholding amount is then 20% of the prize; remember, however, that even if there is no withholding, any amount in excess of $600 will be reported.

What do you do if you have substantial gambling winnings, and throughout the year you had nothing but losses, bringing you at best, to close to even for the year? If you want to avoid paying taxes on your win, you must substantiate your losses for the year. The best way to do this is to keep a diary. If you keep a diary, with the date and the amount won or lost for the day that you played, this will generally be enough substantiation for you to take a deduction against your wins. There have been several court cases, the most famous one being the *Jacoby Case (O. Jacoby,* TC Memo. 1970-244.), whereby the court said that if a taxpayer has adequate records of his gains and losses, that would be enough substantiation for a deduction. Bear in mind, however, that this must be a legitimate diary, and will not stand up if it looks like it was made up quickly to try to substantiate some losses.

Professional Gambler vs. Non-Professional Distinguished. How losses and expenses are to be deducted depends upon the "status" of a gambler. The definition of a professional gambler is: one who makes his living gambling, or operates a gambling establishment as a trade or business. A non-

Continued on pg. 34

[¶ 118G] 130 3-80

EXHIBIT – A 1025

For Official Use Only

Statement for Certain Gambling Winnings 1980

1 Type or print PAYER'S name, address, ZIP code and Federal identifying number.

Copy A For Internal Revenue Service Center

For Official Use Only

Statement for Certain Gambling Winnings 1980

1 Type or print PAYER'S name, address, ZIP code and Federal identifying number.

Copy B To be filed with winner's FEDERAL tax return if tax was withheld

2 Winner's taxpayer identifying no.	3 Gross Winnings	4 Federal income tax withheld	5 Type of wager	6 Date Won

7 Type or print WINNER'S name, address, and ZIP code below.

8 Transaction	9 Race	10 Cashier	11 Window

12 First I.D.

13 Second I.D.

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief the name, address, and taxpayer identifying number which I have furnished correctly identify me as the recipient of this payment, and that no other person is entitled to any portion of this payment.

Signature ► Date ►

Form W-2G This information is being furnished to the Internal Revenue Service. Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service

EXHIBIT – B

[¶ 1469H] 130 3-80 3441

Form **5754** (Rev. January 1980)

Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service

Statement by Person(s) Receiving Gambling Winnings

Date won	Type of winnings	Game number	Machine number	Race number

Part I Person to Whom Winnings are Paid

Name	Address

Taxpayer identifying number	Other I.D.	Amount received	Federal income tax withheld

Part II Persons to Whom Winning Payments are Taxable

Name	Taxpayer identifying number	Address	Amount won

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief the names, addresses, and taxpayer identifying numbers which I have furnished correctly identify me as the recipient of this payment and correctly identify each person entitled to any portion of this payment.

Signature ► Date ►

FUN FACTS

DID YOU KNOW:

- *Backgammon: Its History and Practice* **is one of the earliest known books on the game? It was published in London in 1844. It was reprinted in America in 1931 as** *Comic Backgammon,* **complete with the original illustrations. The American publishers at that time claimed that they were very lucky to find one last copy of the book in a private collection.**
- **The phrase "turning the tables" on someone comes from an early version of backgammon, popular in England as the game of "Tables?"**
- **At the turn-of-the-century backgammon was the sports on a die, playing card, or domino? combating an epidemic of card-playing?**
- **Backgammon has always been mentioned in literature as a game of refinement, yet in the Middle East it is considered the game of the lower classes?**
- **That although pip has come to mean one of the points on the board it originally referred to one of the sports on a die, playing card, or dominos?**
- **The actual name for the checkers, men, or chips is draghtsmen?**
- **Cheating is rarely dealt with in any backgammon book? A tongue-in-cheek exception, however, in Arthur Prager's 1977 publication** *Underhanded Backgammon.* **In this book, Prager discusses backhanded methods of psyching out opponents, as well as distracting, confusing, and hustling them – all in fun, of course.** ☆☆

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BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE
P.O. Box 19567
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119
702-454-2403

The First Step continued Page 16

Loose Pips Sink Ships

by Denis W. Loring

The Place: The Bar Point House of Backgammon, New York City.

The Time: February 26, 1978, "Late in the Evening."

The Circumstances: I was playing a fellow named Mark head-up for moderate stakes. This was to be our last game; I was up a few points on the night.

The Game: An automatic started the cube at 2. I doubled early on a potential blitz; Mark took. A wild free-for-all left three of his men on the bar against my closed board. I felt pretty good, figuring myself eight sure points richer for a nice evening's profit. This was the position:

The Game Proceeded:

BLACK 5- 6-1(2), 5-0(2). Clears two points. Now get off the bar and out of my hair.

WHITE 4-1 o. Refuses to oblige.

BLACK 4-2 4-0, 4-2. This could get messy.

WHITE 5-3 B-5. One comes in.

BLACK 5-4 3-0(2). Uh-oh.

WHITE 6-3 B-3x, B-6. Goodbye, eight points. It's a whole new ballgame.

BLACK 2-2 B-21. Up to the edge – could have been worse.

WHITE 4-2 19-21x, 17-21. On my head, Twelve shots hit back from the bar.

BLACK 5-2 B-18x. That's one! Unfortunately, **everything** return hits except 5-4. That is, of course, unless he dances . . .

WHITE 2-1 o. Mark's chin hits his knees. His eight blots suddenly look like fish in a barrel. I, on the other hand, find the position rather interesting.

BLACK 3-3 18-15x-12x-9-6x. Wheee! I try to keep a straight face, and almost succeed. Almost.

WHITE 1-1 o. His chin continues southward, thudding to the floor.

BLACK 5-1 6-5x-0. I can't resist it.

WHITE 6-1 B-6.

BLACK 6-3 2-0(2).

WHITE 6-2 B-6

Continued Page 34

Mode of Play Opening Roll	P POINTING (136)	C CHALLENGING (57)	B BUILDING (133)	S SPARRING (49)	A ATTACKING (71)	R RUNNING (100)	E "EASTERN" (22)	O OTHER (6)	U UNDECIDED (11)
2–1		24/21 3	13/10 1	24/23, 13/11 17	13/11, 6/5 16			13/11, 8/7 1	X/X 1
3–1	8/5, 6/5 39								
4–1				24/23, 13/19 18	13/9, 6/5 14	5	24/23, 24/20 1	13/8 1	X/X
5–1		24/8 6		24/23, 13/8 14	13/8, 6/5 18				X/X 1
6–1	13/7, 8/7 39								
3–2		24/21, 13/11 4	13/11, 13/10 30		13/11, 85 1		24/22, 24/21 3		X/X 1
4–2	8/4, 6/4 39								
5–2			13/11, 13/8 36		13/8, 6/4 2				X/X 1
6–2		24/18, 13/11 11			13/5 15	24/16 7	24/18, 24/22 4	13/11, 13/7 1	X/X 1
4–3		24/20, 13/10 6	13/10, 13/19 26		13/9, 85 1		24/21, 24/20 4	24/21, 13/9 1	X/X 1
5–3	8/3, 6/3 19		13/10, 13/8 16		13/5 2	24/16 1			X/X 1
6–3		24/18, 13/10 12	13/10, 13/7 1		13/4 0	24/15 21	24/18, 24/21 3	24/21, 13/7 1	X/X 1
5–4		24/20, 13/8 10	13/9, 13/8 23			24/15 5			X/X 1
6–4		24/18, 13/9 5			13/9, 13/7 1	24/14 28	24/18, 24/20 3	24/20, 13/7 1	X/X 1
6–5					13/8, 13/7 1	24/13 38			

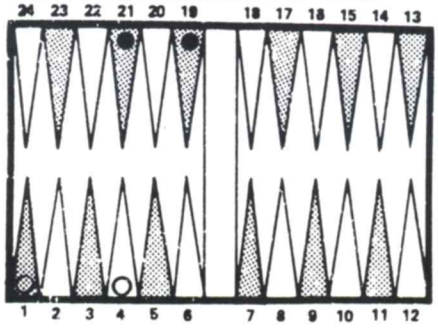
Phillip Martyn, in his excellent book (page 50) elucidates, "Backgammon is not a game of hard-and-fast rules." Even though this is only the first move, there are in several cases reasonable alternatives; sometimes as you will see, it is right to make a different move against a strong player from one you would make against a weaker player."

Unfortunately, little is written on the difference in checker play, given the type of situation. Worse, as a weak, intermediate player, I don't have the answers! However, in each of you there lies a great collective experience to which we can all tap. Write me:

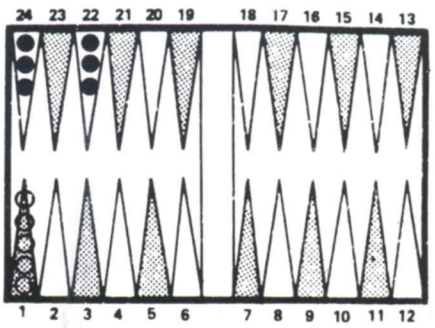
Robert F. Hickey
40 Overhill Road
Upper Darby, PA 19082

Give me your perceptions on the opening roll, particularly the difference between tournament and head-to-head situations. I will sift all letters, collate and take another step with you in this analysis. (Replies, anyone?). ☆☆

Should BLACK double? If BLACK doubles, should WHITE beaver? If WHITE beavers, should BLACK accept?

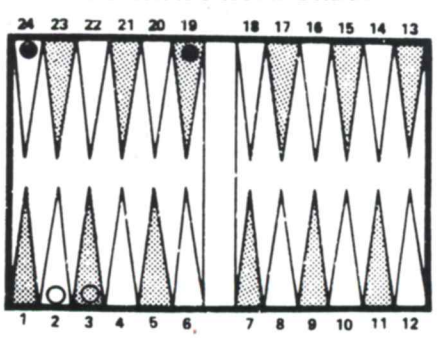


BLACK doubles. Should WHITE beaver?

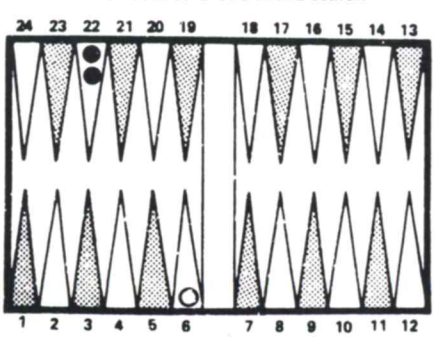


BEAVER THEORY (*Continued pg. 25*)

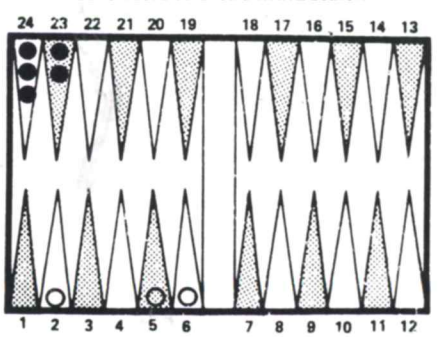
BLACK doubles. Should WHITE beaver?



BLACK doubles. Should WHITE beaver?



BLACK doubles. Should WHITE beaver?



BACKGAMMON IN THE PUBLIC EYE

LITERATURE: *Quicksilver* by Norman Hartley Avon pocketbook with pages and pages of backgammon game.

MAGAZINES: More Playboy Bunnies at Playboy Mansion West pip to pip across a backgammon board (January issue — Playboy).

Library Journal reviews Vernon Ball's book *Alpha Backgammon.* William Hepfer says of the book, "The author offers much public advice but does not provide substantial rationale to support his commendations. Presumably, this is because he has little use for the laws of probability... Ball's contention is that meditation produce a state of mind strong enough to influence the roll of the dice."

TELEVISION: Baltimore Channel 2 News 10/10/80. Lee Genud plays with a reporter who is secretly being fed the moves by the gammonoid Scottie. Eyewitness reporter loses and comments that after all, this is the woman champion who taught Jim Brown, James Caan and Hugh Hefner to play.

Baltimore, Channel 13 — 10/13/80. Scott, the anchorman, talks to Scottie, the robot. Scottie refers to himself as a genius. Mike Teilman explains that Scottie lost some of his parts in baggage "so we're going to have to go with Scottie with just his mobile, dancing, warm, charming, pleasant self."

Hartford, New Haven, Channel 3—10/23/80. Deyong commentates for game between TV reporter and Genud. Deyong, "Don (reporter) has made a very bold play, very imaginative. However, sometime imaginative plays get punished." Reporter wins.

Backgammon was also discussed on the Good Morning Washington Show—"11 AM" show — Phoenix, and "Midmorning LA", not to mention coast-to-coast sports coverage of underwater backgammon. NBC Magazine with David Brinkley showed an emotionally disturbed Viet Nam veteran fighting stress with the game of backgammon.

NEWSPAPERS: Tracy Press (CA) half-page on Leo Schools, the high school teacher, who developed the backgammon probability card.

Washington Informer (D.C.) full photo coverage of V.I.P.'s at the B & W Diplomatic Challenge Cup.

Record-Journal (Conn.) — Hall of Fame lounge backgammon extravaganza.

Florida Times Union — a half-page on Roberta Stark, former professional tennis player, who now considers herself a professional backgammon player. Miss Stark is quoted as saying, "When a woman plays a man, she can't win. If she beats him, she loses femininity. If she loses, she loses anyway." Far-out!

Hartford Courant (Ct.) — Boston Celtics basketball players Cedric Maxwell and Kevin McHale stop in for a quick match at the Games Convention at the Hartford Civic Center. Lewis Deyong gives advice to them and trades quips. He also tells reporters and McHale that in one infamous game an Egyptian Army Officer lost a multi-million dollar jet plane to an Arab dignitary. Good yarn enjoyed by all! ☆☆



CLASSIFIED

WANTED FOR LOAN: Backgammon video-tapes (¾ format or otherwise), 16 mm. film, color or B&W still-photos. Visual materials that can "dress up" a new TV show starting this fall, which will cover the better part of the Portland Oregon Metro area. **Russ Kolemaine (503) 289-2309.**

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GAMMON MAGAZINE: Second and final issue available from Collector's, P.O. Box 19567, Las Vegas, NV 89119. This was the best issue of the ill-fated **Gammon** publication and includes second installment of "Man in the Box," a continuing serial. Send $5.00

EQUIPMENT: GAMMONMASTER II — used, originally $200 will sell for $100. **Call (702) 451-2725.**

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X-22

"BACKGAMMON," by Paul Magriel. Announcement to all who have requested this popular book but have not been able to locate it. Write complaints and requests to the publisher — **New York Times Book Co., 3 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016.**

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A FAST WAY TO RECORD BG POSITIONS

by Jeff Ward

Sooner or later, you will probably want to write down a backgammon position. It may be an unusual situation or a difficult play that you would like to show someone, or perhaps study at a later time. Play may be interrupted, and you would like to save the position so that the game can be resumed later.

Whatever the reason, most people record a position by drawing a picture of the board and the men. To save time, some players use pre-printed diagrams of an empty board. Even so, it is still time-consuming and tedious to draw thirty men each time a position is recorded.

To get around this problem, the author has developed a notation system that is fast, easy to use, and does not rely on pre-printed diagrams. The notation system uses numbers, capital letters, small letters, slashes, and a check mark.

Letters represent the number of men on individual points. Each letter stands for the number of men equal to the letter's rank in the alphabet. The rule has one exception to be described later; but otherwise A equals 1, B equals 2, E equals 5, J equals 10, etcetera.

Capital letters are used for the dark-colored men, and small letters for the light-colored men. For example, B represents a point containing two dark men while d indicates a point with four light men.

Numbers represent groups of consecutive empty points within one of the four quadrants of the board. For example, Black's home board at the start of the illustrated game contained five black men on the six-point and two white men on the one-point. This would be written b4E with the 4 representing the four empty points. If Black made his four-point on the first roll, his home board became b2B1D.

Slashes (/) separate quadrants of the board. The two quadrants on the far side of the board are written on the same line and separated by a /. The two quadrants on the near side are written on a line beneath the other one.

The space between the lines is reserved for two symbols. In the center, a letter (or letters) indicates men on the bar; and at one side a check mark shows which pair of quadrants are the home boards.

Since there are fifteen men per player in backgammon, only the first fifteen letters of the alphabet are needed for the notation system. Within this group of letters, most corresponding capital and small letters are quite different from each other in appearance. For example, G does not look at all like g. This is a distinct advantage, for, with positions recorded in a hurry, capital and small letters often turn out to be about the same size.

There are two exceptions, however. The capital and small letters of both C (three men) and O (fifteen men) have the same shape. Although we can safely ignore the possibility of fifteen men of the same point; three men on a point is, of course, extremely common.

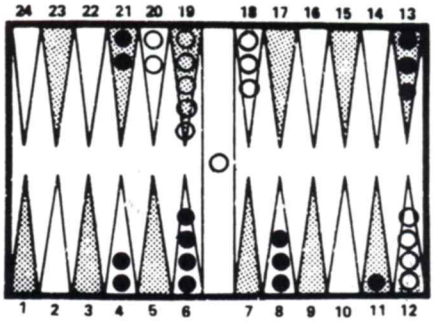
In practice, using C to represent three men on a point will often result in confusion as to which letters are capitals and which ones are not.

To avoid this problem, R is used for three men on a point. Capital and small R look totally different; and as the eighteenth letter of the alphabet, R's meaning cannot be misinterpreted since it has no other use in the notation system.

This completes the description of the notation system. An example of how it works is the illustrated position whic is written as follows:

3Bbe / r4R
✓ a
3B1d / 1R2Ad

This notation system should prove to be faster and just as accurate as drawing a picture. A temporary stumbling block for some people might be translating numbers into letters. But most backgammon positions require only the letters A, B, R, D, and E; letters beyond G are rarely, if ever, needed. Since the same few letters are used over and over again, with a little practive it should become easy to quickly substitute a letter for the appropriate number of men. ☆☆



Loose Pips Sink Ships

Continued from Page 32

BLACK 3-1 2-0, 2-1. It's all over, fans.

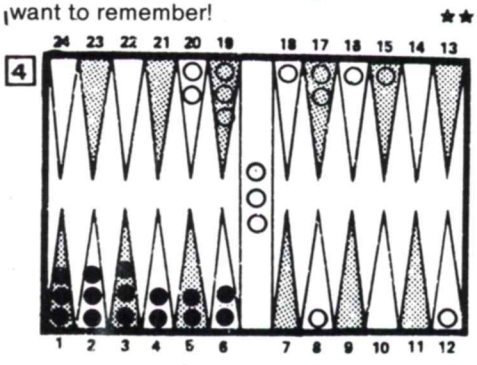
WHITE 4-3 B-4, B-3

BLACK 5-4 1-0(2).

WHITE 4-2 B-4, 6-8. Can't even get off the BG.

BLACK 3-3 A merciful (?) coup de grace, ending the slaughter.

Mark pays me off, justifiably muttering a few unprintables. Meanwhile, I grab a piece of paper and start scribbling. This is one I want to remember! ☆☆



INCOME TAXES AND GAMBLING WINNINGS

Continued pg. 30

professional gambler is: one who makes occasional bets, and is not in the business of gambling. To establish yourself as a professional gambler, you should make sure that the applicable laws of your state are met. are met.

Rules for the Professional Gambler. The professional gambler can deduct his losses to the extent of his wins "above the line," to arrive at adjusted gross income. If the losses are also business losses, as in the case of a owner of a gambling casino, the losses can be deducted to their full extent. Other expenses and items related to gambling activities, such as trips to Las Vegas to play in backgammon tournaments, can be deducted under IRC Section 162. Section 162 allows that "there shall be allowed as a deduction all the ordinary and necessary expenses paid or incurred during the taxable year in carrying on any trade or business." However, gambling losses, even in the case of a professional gambler, may not be carried backward or forward as offsets to gains of the other years (IRC Regulations Section 1.165-10).

Rules for the Non-Professional Gambler. A non-professional gambler, one who is not in the "trade or business' of gambling, may deduct his losses as an itemized deduction, to the extent of his winnings. If you do not have enough itemized deductions, however, you might not have enough gambling losses to cover the standard deduction (which is $2,300 for a single person, and $3,400 for a married couple), and would end up not getting any benefit from the deduction of your losses (IRC Regulations Section 1.165-11). In addition, since you are not in the trade or business of gambling, it is difficult to deduct other expenses, such as airfare and hotel. However, if it can be shown that the non-professional gambler entered into a transaction as an investment, with reasonable expectation of making money, he might be able to itemize any related expenses under IRC Section 212. This Code Section pertains to expenses incurred in the "pursuit and preservation of income," and is often difficult to apply.

Armed with the above information, you can hopefully avoid any unpleasant tax consequences of winning prizes in tournaments (or elsewhere). Good luck! ☆☆

Build Your Own Board



by Rick Hagendorn

With the popularity of backgammon constantly on the rise, having a nice, personal board is a must. The prices of a good backgammon set vary from $50–$500. However, you can build you own hardwood board for under $30, with no great carpentry skills involved.

MATERIALS LIST:

Two pieces of Pine Wood
1 x 2 - 27 lineal ft.
1 x 4 - 12 lineal ft.

One piece of dark hardwood (such as Teak or Walnut)
1 x 2 - 9 lineal ft.

A piece of ¼" ac Plywood
28½" x 26½"

A dowel
1⅜" dowel - 2 lineal ft.

A container of good white, wood glue.

INSTRUCTIONS:

The first step is to glue the pine flush with the edges of the plywood to form the outside border. Next, is to glue a 19½" piece of 1 x 4 pine down the center of the board, running the 26½" way. A piece of 1 x 4 pine is then cut to run down the center of the board, perpendicular to the first center 1 x 4. These pieces should be 9" each. They will be fitting the 28½" way. Next, cut the remainder of 1 x 2 pine and dark hardwood. All these pieces are to be cut into a triangular shape. The length is 8" and the base is 1½" and goes to a 0" point in the length of 8". There will be 40 pieces of pine shapes and 12 pieces of hardwood. These pieces are then glued to the plywood in alternating and staggering order. This will form the playing area. Next the dowel is cut into 30⅜" slices to form the playing pieces. Before continuing, keep in mind half of the round pieces should be stained a little darker than its natural color.

Finishing the board requires some #220 grit sand paper – silicone dioxide is the best – a quart of spar varnish, and a small can of stain. The assembled board and pieces are to be sanded smooth and then varnished. (Six coats will be fine.) A light sanding between coats is highly advised. Be aware to stir varnish and not shake (this causes bubbles in the finish). The first coat should be diluted by about fifteen percent with mineral spirits. All other coats will be full strength.

Good luck, and enjoy your new board. It will be something of which you can be very proud. ☆☆

WINNERS ALWAYS HAVE THE LAST ROLL!

by D. Parniani

In a game of backgmammon there are no rolls more important than the last roll. This is due to the fact that the winner either doubles the opponent out or bears off the last checker, either one of which requires having the last roll of the game.

One of the most common and game-deciding positions occurs when a player gets down to the last two checkers and has to position them most favorably for his next roll. In positioning the last two checkers a player is usually faced with A) side gap(s); B) middle gap(s); or C) a combination of A and B. For example, checkers on six- and two-points have a side gap on one point and middle gaps on the three-, four-, and five-points.

To position your last two checkers most favorably and to obtain exact odds — for cube action — follow the three simple steps below.

Step I: Find the number of non-bearing rolls due to side gap(s). (Every serious backgammon player must be able to ascertain the number of bad rolls due to side gaps in a bear-off, such as 11 for 1 side gap, 20 for 2, 27 for 3, etc. Of course, one must be careful t to include doubles that bear off at least two checkers.

Step II: Count the in between gap(s). In the 6 and 2 example this number is 3. Add 1 to this number (3 +1=4) and multiply these two humbers to get the number of bad rolls: 3x4=12.

Step III: The sum of bad rolls in Steps I and II is the total number of bad rolls. In cases where there are no side gap(s) Step I is eliminated, but in carrying out Step II you should consider non-bearing doubles, namely double ones. Example: checkers on 5 and 1 points. 3x4=12 plus 1 for double ones gives 13 bad rolls or 36−13=23 good rolls.

Try to experiment using the above method when bringing your last checkers home, especially when trying to save a gammon.

WHAT DID I MISS? *by Robert Hickey*

As a weak intermediate-level player, I often find myself confused by various plays in expert circles and current BG literature. The latest, from Labins' and Jerauld's book, *Competitive Backgammon Volume I*, **is only the third move by Lee Genud in a nine-point match (Game 1, page 7).**

Diagram A shows the placement of piec es after her move. I would have chosen 13-7 instead of 24-18 and produced Diagram B.

As I analyze it, her half-move 24-18 gives up the one-point anchor prematurely, duplicates own 3's, doesn't fight for her five-point —the number one priority here— and gives her opponent too much flexibility. Her opponent, if he enters, (an 8 to 1 favorite to do so), will hit on the five-point, (with a 5 or 4), the eighteen-point (with a 1, 3 or 6), and with double 2 on the five-point.

The other play 13-7 (Diagram B) maintains the defensive one-point and forces the opponent to throw a 4, 5, or 6. All other plays, except double 6's, are giving BLACK a wonderful opportunity to establish a strong block. In addition, in a hitting contest, he has that possible 2 to fight for the five-point. On the other hand, 5-2, 2-5 and double 2 are much better for her opponent now. However, on balance I still prefer building than splitting.

Diagram A: (as played by Lee Genud)

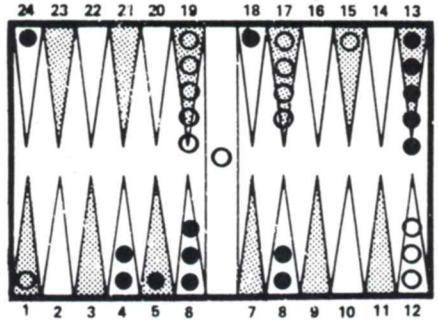
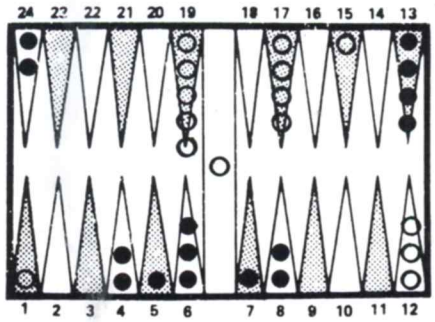


Diagram B: (a viable alternative?)



Unfortunately, the authors do not discuss the merits of either play, the relative strength of the opponent, or the psychological pressure this early in a match, (such as Barclay Cooke did in *Championship Backgammon*) **and I am left a little lost . . . what did I miss?**

BOOK REVIEW

VISION LAUGHS AT COUNTING

Author: Danny Kleinman

Danny Kleinman, a Los Angeles computer whiz and backgammon analyst, has put together two excellent collections of writings for serious backgammon players. The first is called *Vision Laughs at Counting,* and the second I will refer to as *Sequel,* as it is a supplement to the first.

Both books are collections of short articles on various backgammon topics. The articles vary widely in both subject matter and value. The subjects covered range from fine points of technique, doubling strategy, money management, and psychology to the wiles of backgammon hustlers and cheats. The articles' values range from indispensable (bear-ins and bear-offs, tournament situations, the ace-point game) to totally esoteric (hyperpips, the "shade-and-shadow" discussion).

Kleinman's chapter on the cube in *Vision* and his easy-to-remember "Simplified Doubling Guidelines" in *Sequel* are probably the best material available on the cube. However, the articles that make the books unique are those that cover the technical detail often hinted at, but never fully disclosed, by other authors.



Reviewer: Mary Hickey
Upper Darby, PA

For example, Magriel tells you that if you want to hit a lone man who is trying to escape with a lone man of your own, the right distance to be is eleven to fifteen pips away — but which of these distances is really the optimum? Magriel doesn't tell you, but Kleinman tells you that and more in his article on "Creeping" (p. 67 in *Vision*).

Another example involves the treatment of last-roll situations. Many authors give sets of rules or general principles to tell you how to place your last two men prior to the last roll in a bear-off. Kleinman has done them all one better — he has, with the aid of a computer, developed one single rule that obviates the need for the others.

This sort of crisp precision is typical of Kleinman's technical writings. There are not vague generalities or half-answered questions to keep you wondering. Even the reader who finds the mathematics too complex can still benefit from the conclusions reached.

There is a selection of quizzes at the end of both books. Each quiz is named for a particular player at the author's club, and the questions cover such important subjects as dice changes and meaningful kibitzing; however, these "quizzes" should not be taken as mere jokes. You may have never actually met Hersch Malamud or Alan Martin, but I'm sure you'll recognize them just the same in the quizzes named for them, and perhaps get to know them a little better.

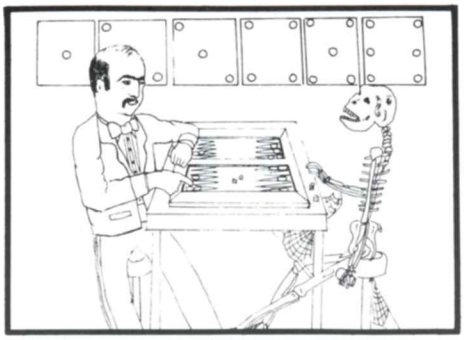
My only complaint about the books is the quality of the printing, and in particular, of the diagrams. Surely the creator of the backgammon-playing computer Jack Gammon could come up with a computerized text editor that would even up the margins, and maybe even invest in a rubber stamp for the diagrams.

Theses books are not for everyone. They are graduate level material, and contain little that will be of any benefit to the beginner or casual player. This is stuff for the serious player, preferably one with a strong mathematical bent. However, I strongly recommend both books to any player with an analytical mind. In these books you will find the answers to many puzzling problems.

Both books are available directly from Danny Kleinman. For more information, write to him at:

8924 Hargis Street
Los Angeles, CA 90034

The last price quoted was twelve dollars for either book. ☆☆



I QUIT!!!

by Robert Howayeck

Knowing your own tolerance is an important asset in BACKGAMMON. You should be aware that when your opponent has won there is no reason to fall deeper into debt. Understanding your ability to be in control in these pressure situations is part of your ever-developing BACKGAMMON SKILL. One does not like to ADMIT defeat, or give up a large number of points to his adversary, but this is part of BACKGAMMON.

The losing player thinks that if he keeps on accepting those cubes that sooner or later his luck will change. This unfortunately, is seldom the case; in fact, his financial reverses will usually worsen. Totally destroyed and emotionally twisted he writes out the check and punishes himself later for this foolish action on his part.

"I should have quit down twenty points. I knew I couldn't come back on him. Why, Why, Why," he says to himself.

The answer is GREED. He doesn't like the idea of paying twenty points to Mr. X. So he pays 100 points — good money after bad, no sense at all. The next time he is in a hole, he doubts he can get even and quit.

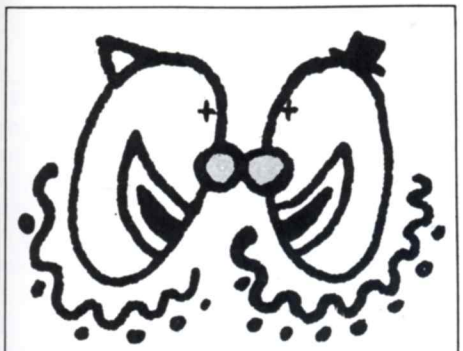
My advice is PAY your points, leave the table, and come back and win tomorrow. You will gain more in the end by CONTROLLING your LOSSES.

Remember you can win twenty points five times in a row. And lose once at 150 points and the ratio is 5 to 1 with a net loss of fifty points for all six times. So you can win five out of six and still be in a bad fix. ☆☆

BLACK & WHITE / NEBC
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Contact: Francesca Parkinson/NEBC
(617) 563-5787 / 563-5150

Free Gambling Books Catalog Contains More Than 1200 Titles

Gambler's Book Club in Las Vegas has published its 1981 catalog, listing more than 1200 gambling books, including more than 30 titles on backgammon. GBC has been selling and publishing books for 17 years. The 1981 catalog is its largest ever – 20 pages. GBC's catalog is free to anyone requesting one. Write GBC at 630 South 11th Street, Las Vegas, NV 89101. The store is open at that location from 9 to 5 every day but Sunday.



Laughgammon

***A small ship floundered, containing a priest, a lawyer, and a backgammon player. Fearing they might drift out to sea, they decided someone should attempt to swim ashore. The water was shark-infested and the lawyer declined the swim, arguing that if he perished the backgammon player wouldn't collect what was owed him. The priest was needed, in case last rites had to be performed. The idea of having the backgammon player make the attempt seemed reasonable. He jumped into the water and immediately the sharks formed a protective lane for him and he swam directly to the shore. "It's a miracle," cried the priest. "Not at all," replied the backgammon player, "simply a matter of professional courtesy."**

***A backgammon player we know is admired for his even temper. He is never involved in the usual disputes associated with aggressive backgammon. "How do you do it?" asked his friends. "I live by the words of three great philosophers," replied Mr. Cool. "W.C. Fields, who said, 'Trust everybody but cut the cards,' William Janz who said, 'Never tell a jerk he's a jerk. He probably already knows it', and Dick the Bruiser, who said, 'Even doing it right you're gonna get hurt sometimes'."**

Kato's Quiz

SOLUTION: In this position WHITE rolled 5,5 and BLACK followed suit.



MORE MICHIGAN MOVEMENT

by Butch Meese

This one-day tournament format is gaining popularity from its place of origin, the Cavendish North Backgammon Club in Southfield, Michigan. The tournament can accommodate thirty-two players with five rounds of eleven-point matches. Eight to ten hours is needed for completion of this double-elimination contest.

Twenty dollars is the average entry fee with a calcuta auction for those wishing more money action. Six places are awarded with percentages as follows:

PLACE	W/L RECORD	% PLAYERS' POOL	% AUCTION POOL
1st	5-0	30%	30%
2nd	4-1	16%	16%
3rd	4-1	15%	15%
4th	4-1	14%	14%
5th	4-1	13%	13%
6th	4-1	12%	12%

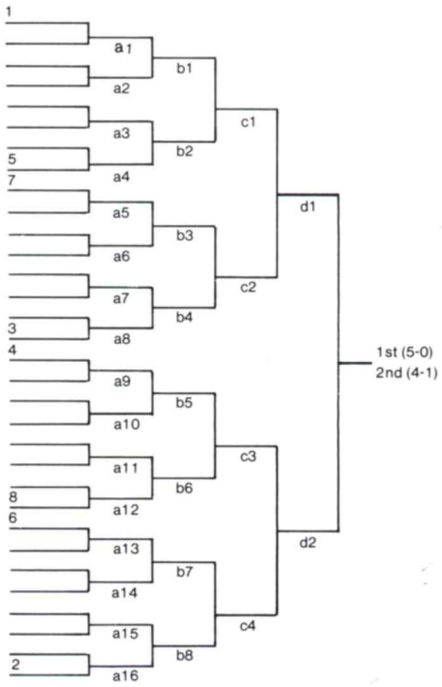
Here's how the system works. The auction is held first; the players receive the highest eight bids are seeded in the main flight (1 through 8 as shown). The byes if any, are awarded to the seeded players, the rest being randomly seated. Once the main flight has been made up, play begins.

All first-round losers are grouped into a sixteen-player bracket and the winner with a 4-1 record is awarded sixth place. All second round losers are grouped into an eight-player bracket and the winner (4-1) is awarded fifth place. This works the same for awarding fourth and third places. The two players with 4-0 records play for first and second places. All money matches should finish at approximately the same time.

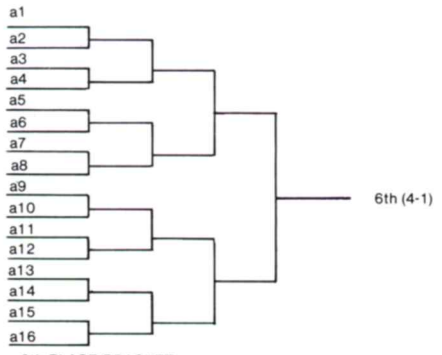
The Michigan Movement is a happy medium between a local and a regional tournament. It has the regional tournament flavor due to the eleven-point matches, without the additional expenses such as travel and hotel. Local players trying to gain experience benefit from this format.

It has been said that a well-organized tournament runs itself and the Michigan Movement is easy to organize. The clubs which have tried the Michigan Movement usually add it as a regular club activity.

If anyone has questions or comments, I would be glad to hear from you. Write to: **BACKGAMMON SURVEY /// 1980, 1942 N. Moreland, Indianapolis, Indiana 46222.**



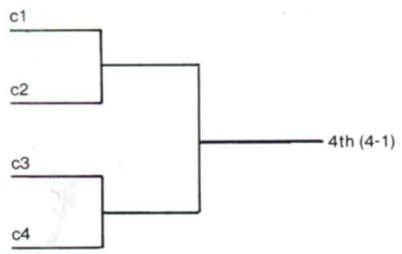
MAIN FLIGHT



6th PLACE BRACKET



5th PLACE BRACKET

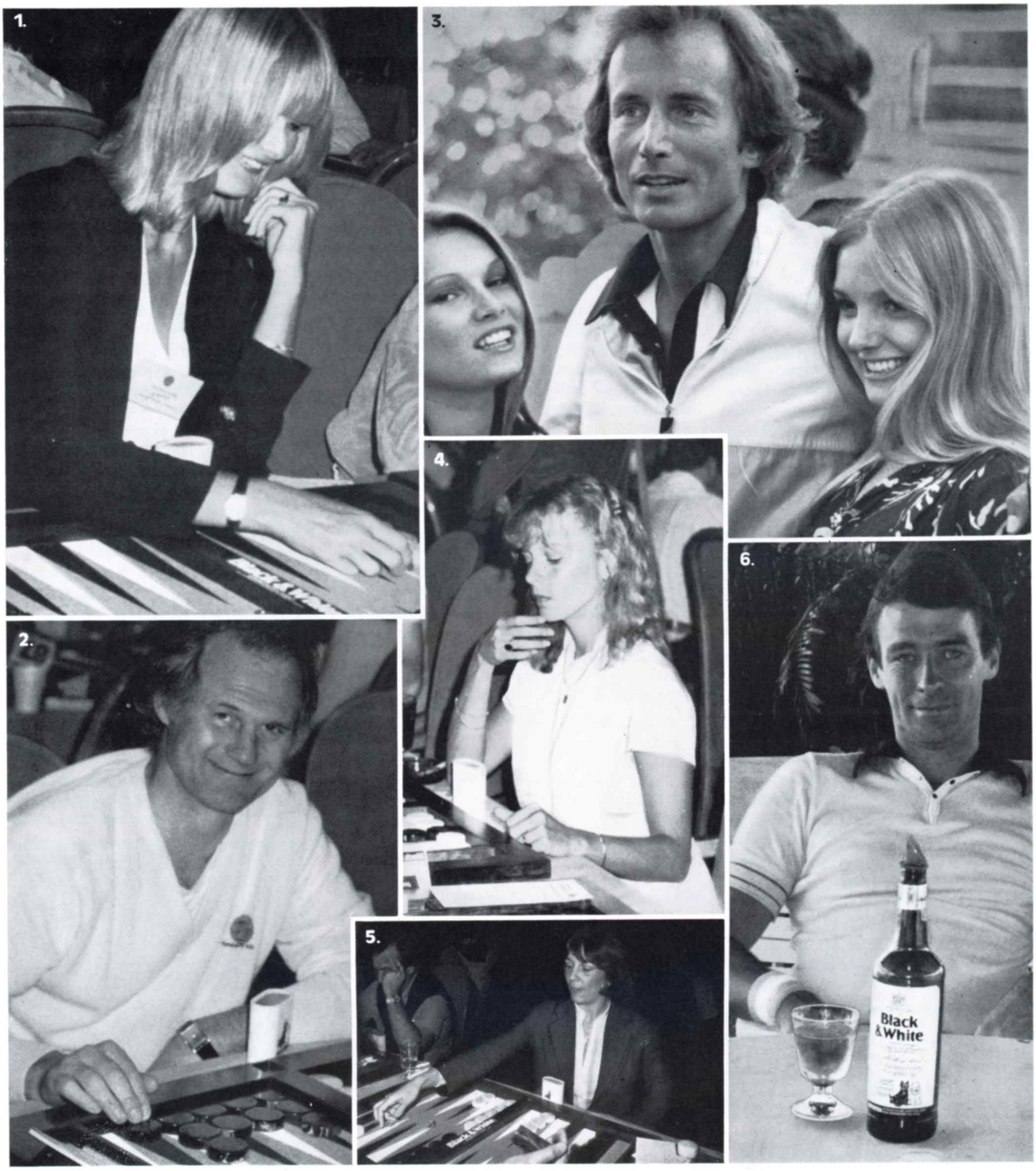


4th PLACE BRACKET



3rd PLACE BRACKET

IMPORTED BLACK & WHITE ® BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY. 86.8 PROOF. © 1980 HEUBLEIN, INC., HARTFORD, CONN.



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.

RETORT

Page 10 of your Dec. '80 issue contains a long letter from a Mr. Robert Meese, airing his views on the Chicago Tournament. If I may be permitted a few lines in reply, I shall take his points in turn. He writes:

i) "... I have always left feeling that everyone had a fun time ..."

While regrettable that Mr. Meese himself did not apparently have a "fun time," it would seem that the other 191 competitors did. Further, over seventy percent of the field had played in the Chicago Tournament of 1979. As America is happily a country where freedom of choice still exists, we can safely assume that victims of maltreatment would have stayed away in droves from the 1980 event.

ii) "... everyone had a fair shake ..."

This seems to refer to the "bomb" which Mr. Meese informs us was "dropped on the losers" of which we must sadly assume, he was included.

Your correspondent states in line one of his letter that he has "attended a number of backgammon tournaments." Unfortunately none of: the Black & White Circuit (USA), Merit World Championship (Monte Carlo), Merit Circuit (Europe), Crockfords Biarritz, Aspinall's, etc. etc. would seem to be included in his attendance record. In the past five years, no progressive consolation system has been implemented at any of the above contests.

iii) "... one wonders what effect there would be on the number of players wanting to play if they had known beforehand the procedure."

During the five years or more that the tournaments named above have been in existence, the organizers have processed many thousands of entries; in fact, the Chicago tournament was 100% full and had a waiting list of about twenty. This letter is the first recorded complaint received from any of these events on the subject of the non-progressive draw.

Considering the situation in light of this background, there is no need for readers to "wonder." Either thousands of players have been right for years or the whole army is out of step but Mr. Meese.

iv) "... it would have been easy enough...



by Lewis Deyong
Tournament Director,
B&W Chicago Classic

to give everyone a chance at the Consolation flights."

This is in fact, far from the case. On the Saturday morning of the Chicago tournament, ninety-six Championship losers were waiting to play in the Consolation. In order to accommodate the twenty-eight second-day losers, it would have been necessary to delay the start of the Consolation until 9:00 p.m. — hardly a "fun" afternoon for the others. If the twenty-eight losers would have been filtered in at different levels, the number of rounds of the Consolation would have been increased by three. This would have represented a finish at about 6:00 a.m. Sunday morning — a real "fun" day and night for the survivors.

Further, most of the players were anxious to attend the Zorine's party on Saturday night. Perhaps a six-hour recess could have been called for the party, then the players would have gone forty-eight hours straight.

One final point — regulations demand that play ceases in most hotels no later than 2:30 a.m. Further, at that hour most of the staff are not averse to five or six hours of sleep. The only solution I can see is for Mr. Meese to lose his second round Championship match,thereby insuring his place in the Consolation. ☆☆

YOWZAH YOWZAH YOWZAH

Backgammon featured at auction.

Jason Michael, backgammon world record holder, challenges all comers prior to an A & A Oriental Rug Auction at The Sarasota Holiday Inn, 8221 No. Tamiami Trail, at 11:30 a.m. Sunday – Bradenton, FL.

The public is invited. Anyone who beats Michael at his game will receive their choice of a $100 hand-crafted leather backgammon set or Chinese tile mahjong set, plus a $100 donation made to their favorite charity.

Michael is also a stand-up comic whose monologue will preface the actual auction. Backgammon challenge begins at 11:30 a.m.; followed by Michael's comedy act at 12:30 p.m.; plus auctioneer Col. Rosenblum's free lecture on Oriental rugs prior to the auction, which commences at 1 p.m.

Playing For Gammons

by C.H. Jeans

A lot has been written about when you should double and when you should take, but very little has been said with regard to playing for gammons. This is possibly because of the Jacoby rule. Here are two simple examples to illustrate an important principle. Three distinct questions have to be answered before one can come to the correct decision as to whether to play for a gammon or not.

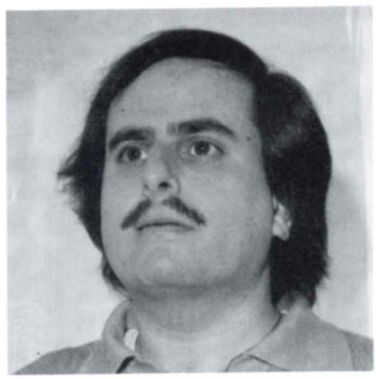
1. What are BLACK'S chances of losing the game?
2. What are BLACK'S chances of winning a gammon?
3. What is the ratio of #1 and #2?

In this example the situation is simplified in that we need only look two rolls ahead. Twelve rolls leave a blot making WHITE a 5/4 favorite to hit. Most players would mumble something about a bird in hand being worth more than two in the bush and double WHITE out. Let's look at the position more carefully. What is WHITE'S chance of losing the game on the next roll?

12 (BLACK LEAVES -- A BLOT)	5 (WHITE HITS IT)	= 5= 19% =	
36	9	27	

Continued Page 40

FACES & MORE



LEE SILVERSTEIN

1981 marks Lee's fifth year as president-for-life of the Minnesota Backgammon Club. He claims as his greatest backgammon achievement: the integration of social backgammon with strong competition. His greatest question: How can some tyros become consistent winners in a short time period? Think about that!

Lee has been associate director at every American Backgammon Championship held in Las Vegas and Aruba. Has taught over 1,000 beginners the basics of the game at local libraries.

A pioneer in organizing modern American backgammon, Silverstein predicts a healthy decade for the game in the eighties. ☆☆

AMERICA'S GIANT 32

There is a player in L.A. who refers to himself as a "backgammon dwarf" because of his lack of skill.

Upon hearing that, our co-publisher Joel Rettew assumed if there are dwarfs, there must be giants — and that's how the idea of the **GIANT 32** developed.

Initially, the plan was to have the top twenty-five players, but thirty-two seemed a more appropriate number. This leaves the door open for a "super-elimination" championship.

The players' names on this list were arrived at by consensus. Those asked to contribute to the list included: regional directors of backgammon clubs, authors, tournament promoters, and the top players who make it their business to know the competition.

These experts were asked to judge players on four levels: tournament performance, academic knowledge, money play skills, and flair.

The data was run through our computer and these are the results.

This list is not concrete — it is a living list that will change from issue to issue. Readers can suggest additions or deletions. All input will be considered and changes will be based on the mail we receive. Everyone has an opportunity to rally to the support of the player he most admires.

Mail suggestions and votes to: **GIANT 32, P.O. Box 19567, Las Vegas, NV 89119.**

Ball, Vernon
Ballard, Nick
Beattie, Marshal
Carson, Mike
Chellstorp, Craig
Cooke, Barclay
Dickman, Arthur
Eisenberg, Billy
Gilbert, Tom
Goble, Tony
Goulding, Kent
Hodis, Al
Horowitz, Gaby
Jacoby, Oswald
Larsen, Kyle
Lowe, Roger
Leibowitz, David
Lester, Jason
Maffeo, Nick
Magriel, Paul
Martin, Alan
Munro, Joe
Nivedano, Anand
Papazian, Chuck
Pasko, Jim
Robertie, Bill
Scalamandre, Gino
Sconyers, Hugh
Seidel, Erik
Senkiewicz, Mike
Tomchin, Stan
Winslow, Elliot

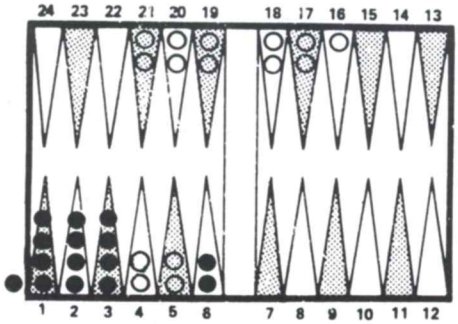
The following players missed **GIANT 32** status by one point: Dennis Carlston, Wayne McClintock, Mike Corbett, Malcolm Davis, Greg DeFotis, Dick Furlaud, Lee Genud, Tim Holland, Buddy Khoury, Aram Kouleyan, Sandy Lubetkin, Joey Mirzoeff, Howard Perlman, Chris Peterson, Kal Robinson, Tobias Stone, Kit Woolsey, and Kattie Wright.

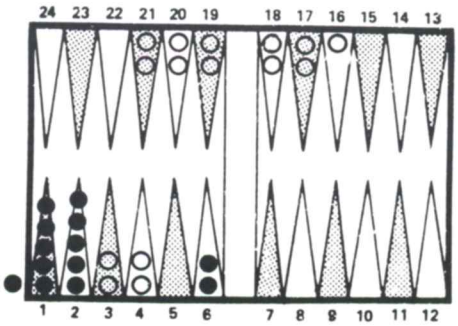
Playing for Gammons continued Page 39

Now his chance of wining a gammon. BLACK gets past with 16 rolls = 4 = 44% = 2
-
9

It can be shown mathematically that his chance of a gammon must be more than twice his chance of losing the game to justify playing on. Or 2 must be more than twice 1. In this case 44% is greater than 2 x 19 = 38% therefore it's a close decision to play on for a gammon. Note that if BLACK rolls a neutral roll he always has the option of doubling on the next roll. In this position nothing much could happen to alter his situation, but suppose BLACK rolled 2-2, twice he would be robbed of safe 20 and 30 and would be well advised to cube. In the following example it will come as no surprise that BLACK should cube rather than play for the gammon, but of course, WHITE still can not take.

It is an interesting paradox that although BLACK is favored to leave a slot and then favored to be hit, WHITE is unable to take the double. ☆☆





Unusual Plays For Unusual Positions



by Oswald Jacoby

The positions shown here don't come up often, but when they do, few people ever consider the right play.

In position one BLACK has several men on his one-point and two on his four-point and rolls 4-1. WHITE has fourteen men in a closed board and one man on BLACK'S two-point.

BLACK bears a man with the 4 and should consider his 1. The correct play depends on the number of men on the one-point. With nine or more there is no problem — he leaves them there and moves from the four- to the three-point to give the least possible number of shots. He is going to lose if hit and win if missed.

How about eight men there? He should still move up. Seven men there? Bear two men. Now if hit he can take a double — by bearing two men he is left with just seven men in all.

Six men there? Bear from the one point again. If hit you are now a reasonable favorite to win, and if missed have an excellent change to gammon your opponent.

How about just three men there? Now move to the three-point to allow the least number of shots. You have not reduced your chance to win the gammon if missed, and you still are a substantial favorite to win the game if hit. ☆☆

LAS VEGAS TOP TEN PLAYERS

1. SIMEON MISHAIKOFF
2. GARY BENGE
3. LEE KABASE
4. KAREN WOLFSON
5. CRAIG CHELLSTORP
6. DAVE ASHLEY
7. TONY MANCARI
8. CHRIS CAMPBELL
9. MUNCHKIN
10. JACK REYNOLDS

TOURNAMENTS

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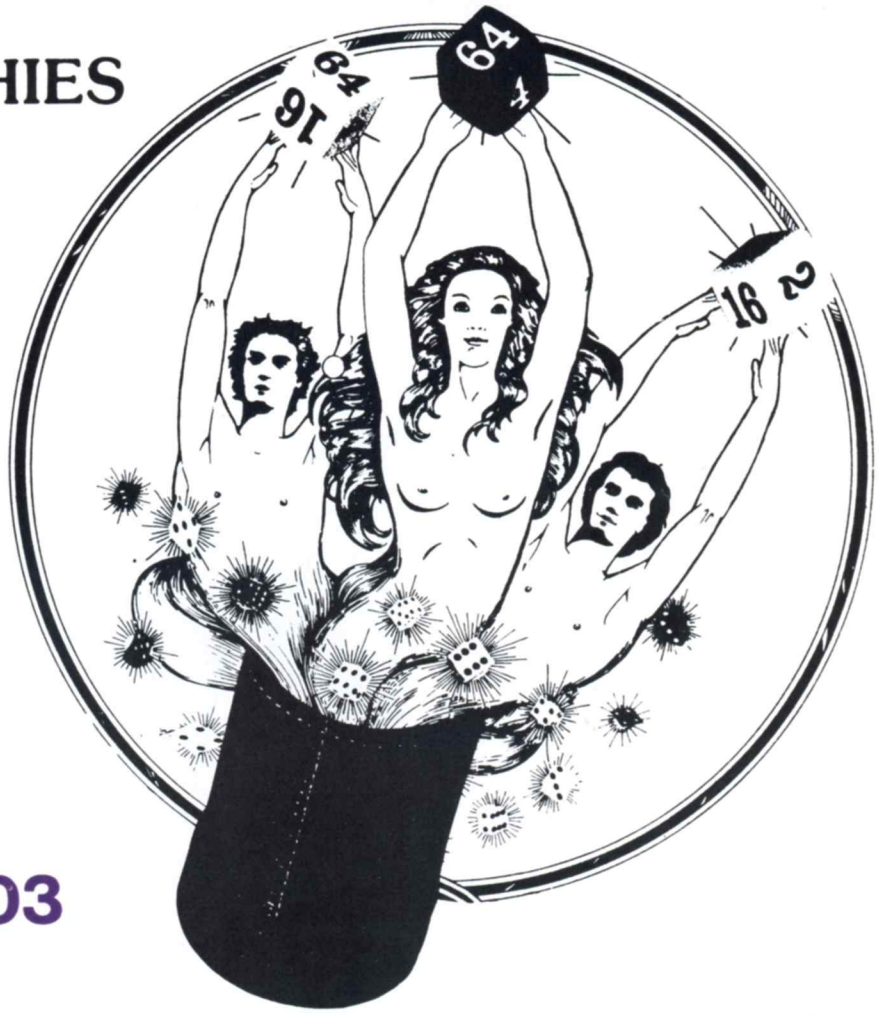
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BACKGAMMON BITS



DO YOU KNOW THIS MAN? This is BARRY FREED, aka ABBIE HOFFMAN. Hoffman, a sixties activist, became a fugitive in 1974. To conceal his identity, he had plastic surgery, dyed his hair, changed his gait and worked on an accent. He moved to the Thousand Islands region of the St. Lawrence River. By 1978, he and his companion JOHANNA had become important members of their community, they introduced backgammon that year. Hoffman was president of the Thousand Island Backgammon Association and director of its first tournaments. There is some kind of symbolism here, but we can't put our finger on it .....

□ □ □

MICKEY WIERNASZ, backgammon afficianado and organizer of the B&W tournaments has left Black & White Scotch .....

□ □ □

MARC FELDMAN, longtime LVBC'er and community leader was shot to death by a prowler .....

□ □ □

DR. JEFF WARD of San Diego is on his way to becomming a syndicated backgammon columnist. First newspaper to pick him up was the Las Vegas Review-Journal .....

BARON VERNON BALL reports that his backgammon book, "Alpha Backgammon," is the fastest selling backgammon book ever. Meanwhile, OSWALD JACOBY tells us that his publication, "THE BACKGAMMON BOOK," first published by Viking Press in 1970, has sold over a half a million copies. Currently, Mr. Jacoby is working on some computer bridge projects and a rewrite of his famous Doubleday Paper Book.....

□ □ □

Guess which Israeli/British backgammon player is rumored to have won $350,000 at a private backgammon game at Caesars Palace last month?...

□ □ □

MR. & MRS. LARRY STRASBERG spent a week in Las Vegas to vacation and promote their upcoming Bluegrass Backgammon Regional Tournament, now in its fifth year .....

□ □ □



Now-famous TONY GOBLE has been seen promenading in Las Vegas with VITAS GERULITAS. The couple drew more attention and feminine squeals than Las Vegas superstar headliners ....



Moved to Las Vegas — DAVE & DE ANE SCHROEDER from Georgia/Florida. EDUARDO MENDOZA, former Mexican backgammon director, and family. And, TOM OWENS, director of the Iowa Backgammon Assn., back to visit his family, reports that backgammon is stronger than ever in Cedar Rapids .....

□ □ □

ROGER MOORE argued for—and got—a lot more money for his latest James Bond role in "For Your Eyes Only." But from the set in Corfu come reports that producer CUBBY BROCCOLI may get it all back: "He and Moore play backgammon after every scene — and Broccoli is a hell of a player." .....

□ □ □

It was bound to happen — police in Warren, Ohio painted a brutal scenario of events that began with a friendly backgammon game that lasted for two days. It ended with the stabbing murder of JOHN A. McCOY and the subsequent suicide of his assailant .....☆☆

The LUCAN POINT

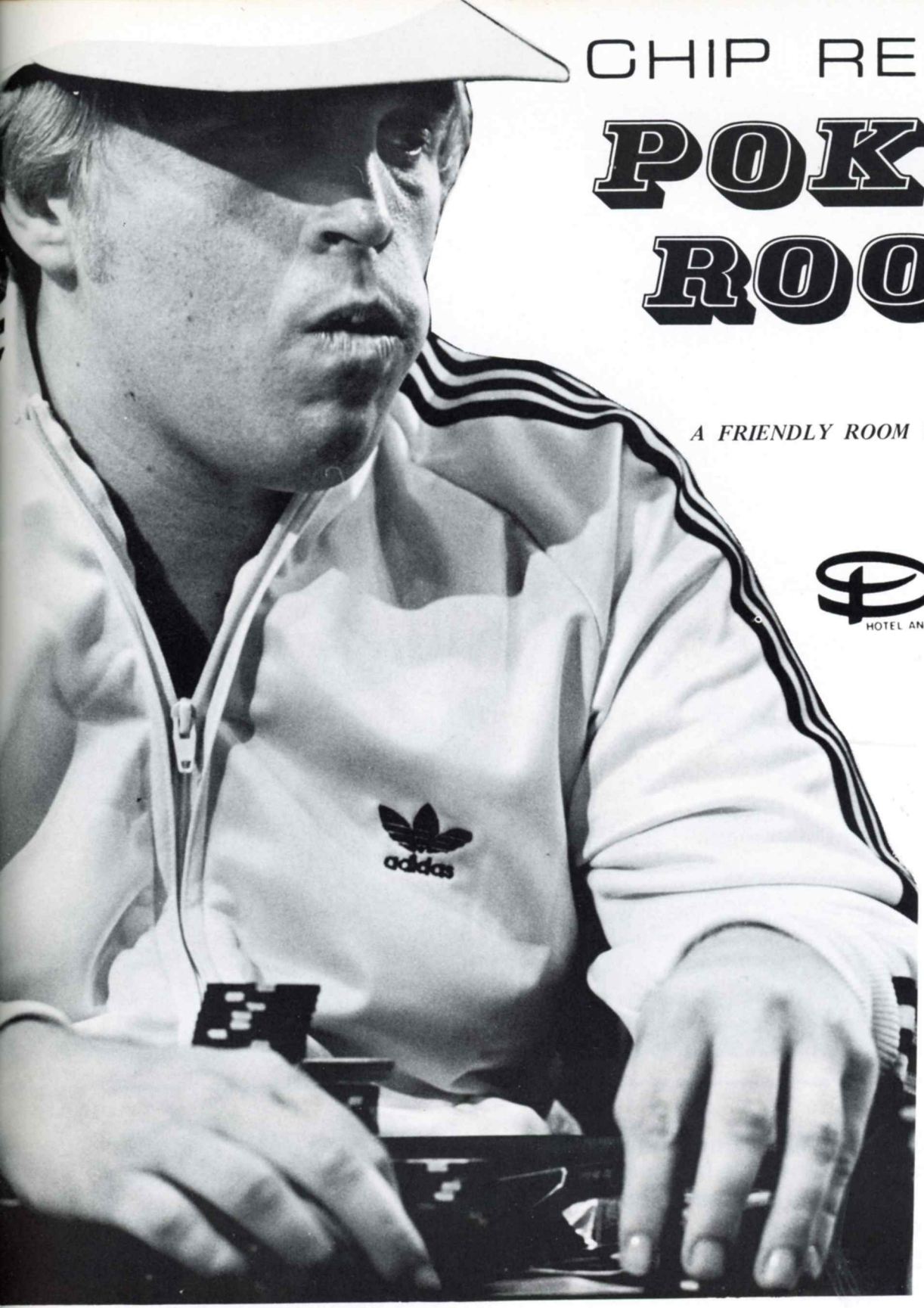
An interesting bit of backgammon jargon can be found in a fairly recent expression for the one-point: "The Lucan Point." Named after one Lord Lucan, the term describes the nobleman's questionable strategy of making the one-point as soon as possible.

The Earl of Lucas, a gambler who was called "Lucky" Lucan by his friends, vanished from sight after his children's nurse was slain in 1974, and is wanted on a murder warrant. Although sightings have been reported around the world, he has successfully evaded Scotland Yard's efforts to track him down.

The term "Lucan Point" is still used in some circles to this day.

LAS VEGAS TOURNAMENT RESULTS

DATE	OPEN CLASS	INTERMEDIATE
November 16	Lee Kabase	Jay Moses
November 23	Gary Benge	Rachael Karr
November 30	Karen Wolfson	Rada Radovich
December 7	Lee Kabase	Susan Keehn
December 14	Eli Brush	Bobbie Shifrin
December 14	Simeon Mishaikoff (special)	
December 21	Simeon Mishaikoff	Nikoli Drianovsky
December 28	Gary Benge	Jim Allen
January 4	Craig Chellstorp	Bill Young
January 11	David Schroeder	Mike Mladenov
January 18	David Schroeder	Mike Mladenov
January 25	Gary Benge	Harry Fritz
February 1	Cliff King	Len Phillips



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