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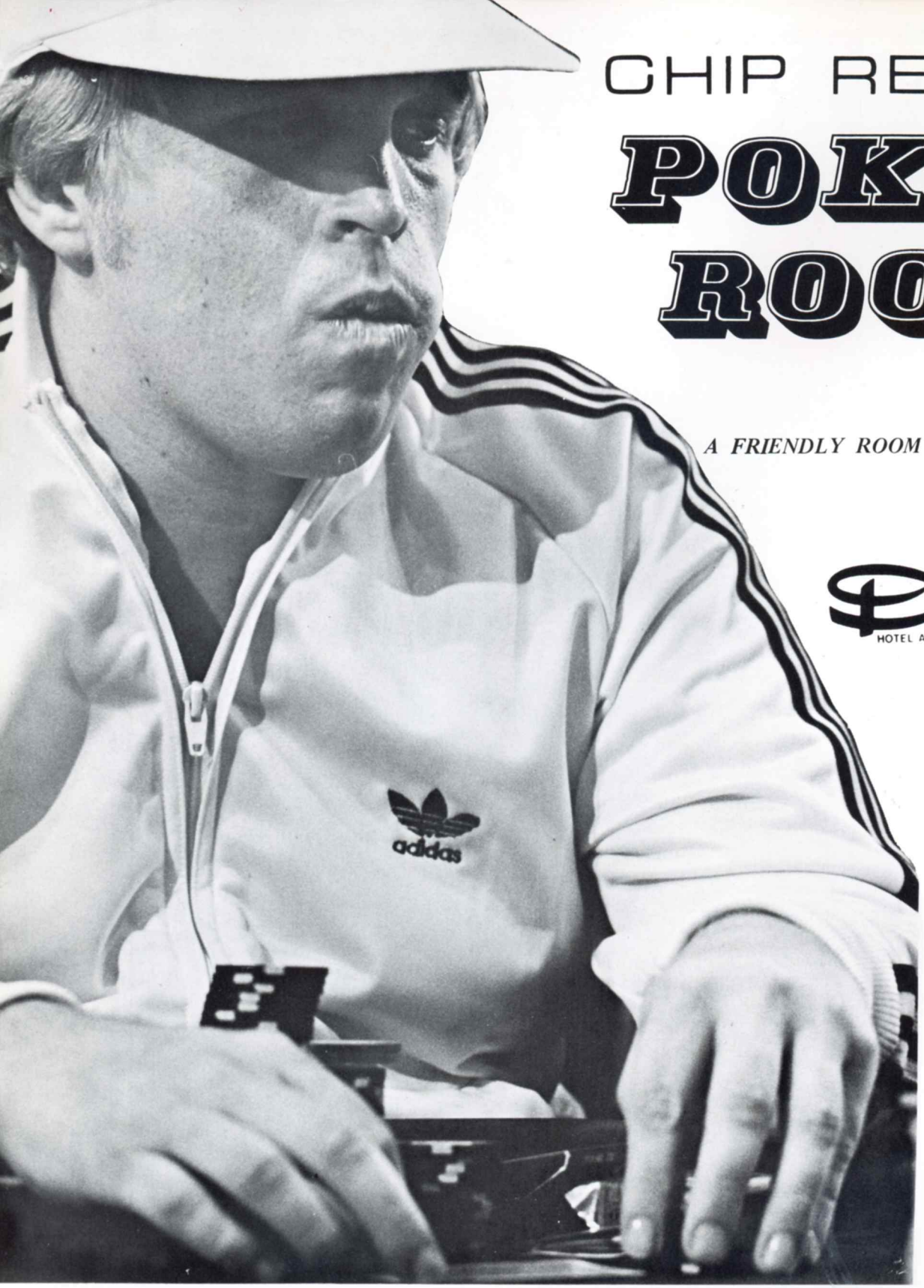
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VOLUME IX, NO. VII

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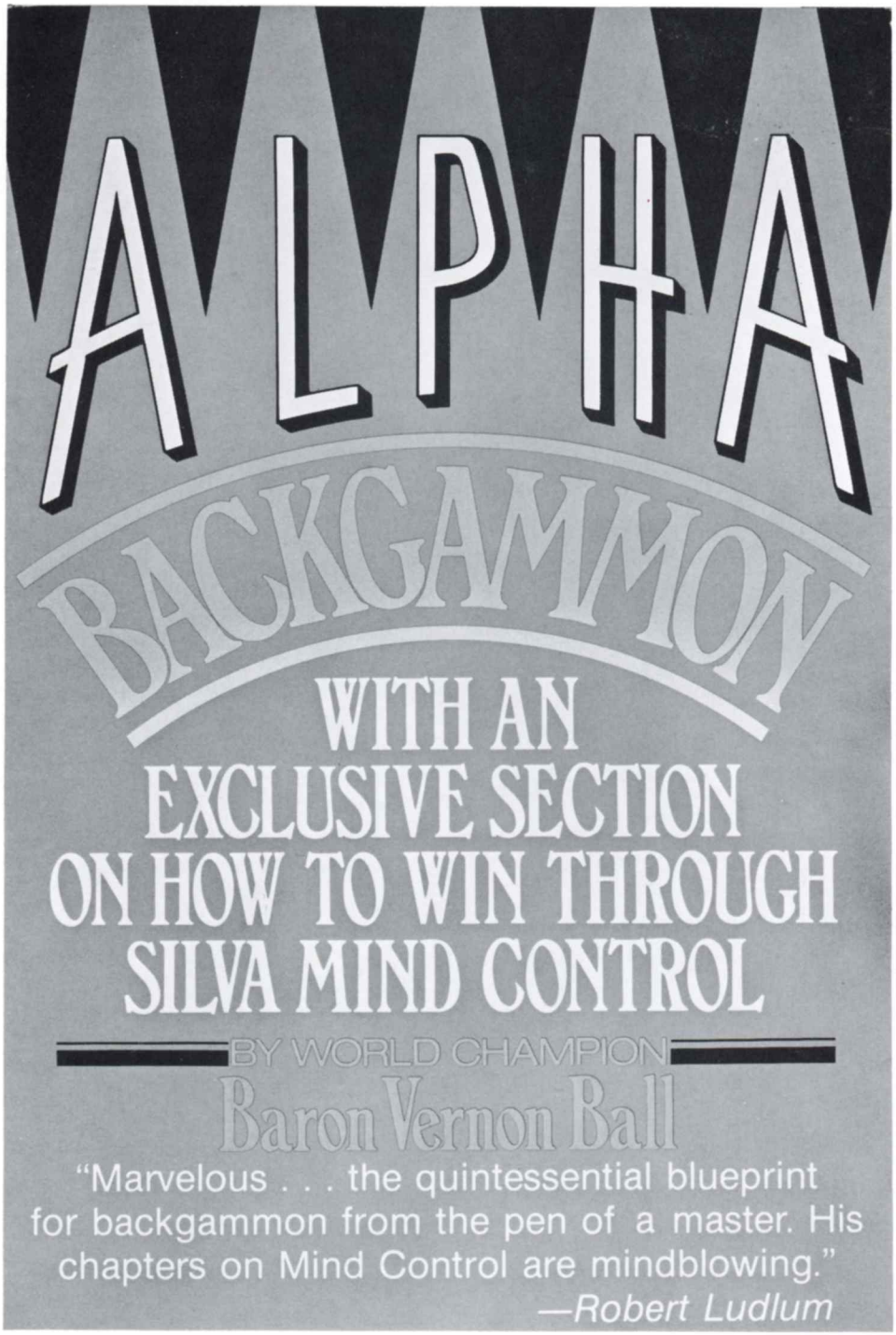
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POSTMASTER: Send address changes, undelivered copies and orders for subscription to P.O. Box 19567, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119. Vol. IX, No. VII, 1981, Las Vegas Backgammon Club, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Changes of Address: Allow four weeks advance notice and include old as well as new address. All articles must be submitted no later than publishing month. Subscription prices: $12.00 for one year, $17.00 for two years, $25.00 for three years. Add $5.00 per year for postage outside the United States. Renewal orders must be received at least eight weeks prior to expiration date to assure continued services. Published since 1974.



COVER: DON ADAMS

"GET SMART" — successful NBC comedy series (1965-69) spoofing the movies and TV shows concerned with international espionage. Comedian Don Adams played bumbling Secret Agent Maxwell Smart, and Barbara Feldon and Ed Platt were featured. When NBC canceled, CBS picked up the series for an additional season (1969-70).

While the original program enjoys a healthy, syndicated life, Adams has appeared numerous times on television, most recently in commercials. He has also starred in the feature movie "The Nude Bomb."

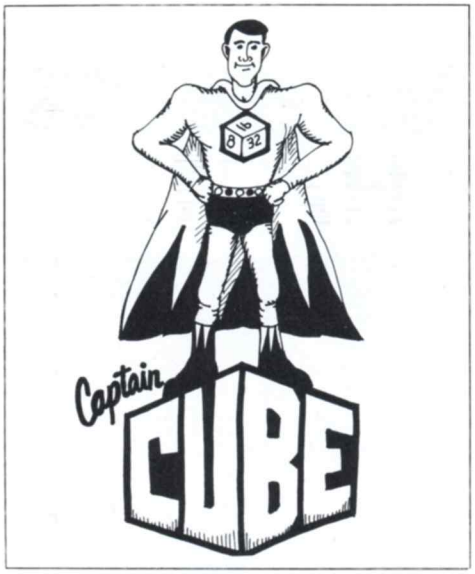
Concerning the backgammon scene, "Agent 86" has been spotted at tournaments both in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Rumor has it that the avid backgammon player has won 320 consecutive matches . . . would you believe 32 . . . how about two games in a chouette?

PHOTO BY MIKE BAKER



STUART UNGAR best gin and poker player in the world.

See Story on Page 35

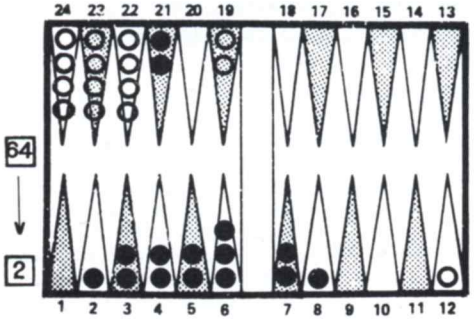


by David Eig

WHITE Doubles, does BLACK take?

(A) Money game

(B) 9 to 9 in 11 point match



In a money game it is a rather simple matter to estimate roughly Black's chances in this game. The fact that Black has 9 crossovers to his own board is deceptive, as the gammon chances for either side is almost negligible with White being a little better off in that respect. To see how the following rolls play for White we have to break down the 36 possible rolls into 7 categories.

Category 1 NO SHOTS - NO POSSIBLE SHOT LATER. Consists of 2 out of 36 rolls: 6-6 and 5-5.

Category 2 NO SHOTS - POSSIBLE SHOT LATER. Consists of 10 out of 36 rolls: 5-2; 4-3; 6-4; 6-5; 6-1.

Category 3 INDIRECT SHOTS - VERY LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF SHOT LATER. Consists of only 1 out of 36 rolls: 1-1.

Category 4 INDIRECT SHOTS - POSSIBLE SHOT LATER. Consists of 7 out of 36 rolls: 2-1; 2-2; 5-3; 5-4.

Category 5 DIRECT SHOT - NO POSSIBLE SHOT LATER. Consists of 2 out of 36 rolls: 3-3; 4-4.

Category 6 DIRECT SHOT - POSSIBLE SHOT LATER. Consists of 12 out of 36 rolls: 3-1; 4-1; 5-1; 3-2; 4-2; 6-2.

Category 7 DOUBLE SHOT AND REDOUBLE BY BLACK. Consists of 2 out of 36 rolls: 6-3.

(continued on page 35)

CONTEST
Ultimate Backgammon



First Prize: LEATHER GAME ROLL
Four Runner-Up Prizes: LVBC T-SHIRT

by Bill Davis

The gentleman playing the black pieces is in the process of backgammoning his opponent with fifteen men on the bar. When Black removes his final checker, he will have achieved **The Ultimate Backgammon.** A fantasy, to say the least, but **not** an impossibility.

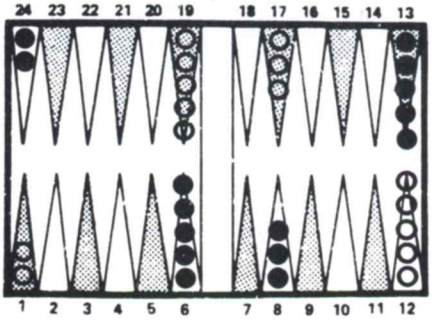
The Challenge

Determine, from the opening set-up, the fewest number of legal moves necessary for Black to backgammon White in the **Ultimate** fashion (fifteen checkers on the bar). You must count all of your selected throws and moves for both players. The opening throw may not be doubles.

Winning

The entry with the fewest legal throws and plays that is acceptably recorded wins. Ties will be resolved in favor of the entry utilizing the fewest throws of doubles. Further ties will be broken by random drawing.

Acceptable Methods Of Game Recording



Backgammon Magazine recommends the following method of game recording:

- A roll for White of 4-2 is recorded W (4-2).
- A move from the six-point to the five-point is written 6/5.
- 6/5x indicates that a man was hit on the five-point.
- 19/20 (2) denotes that two checkers were moved.
- Bar/23 indicates that a man from the bar was entered on the twenty-three-point.
- -0- denotes that no play is possible. Remember to record the throw that resulted in "no play."
- 4/Off indicates that a checker on the four-point was borne off.

For example, assume that you choose Black to win the opening roll with 3-1 and make his five-point. For White's first move, you select 6-5, running a back man to the midpoint. The first two moves should be recorded as follows:

1. B (3-1) 8/5 6/5
2. W (6-5) 1/12

Any other method of game recording is acceptable so long as it is complete and presented in an understandable manner.

I have attained the **Ultimate Backgammon** in _____ moves.
I have utilized _____ throws of doubles in my solution.
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
T-Shirt Size: S M L XL

Along with this entry or facsimile, include the additional sheets necessary to record your game and mail to:

The Ultimate Backgammon
P.O. Box 19567
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119

All entries must be received by October 12th and become the sole property of the **Backgammon Magazine.** No substitutions will be returned.

Editorial

SHAME SHAME SHAME

As a rule, we don't comment on this kind of drivel, nor do we dwell on someone's misery; but, in this case, we feel obligated to jump up in defense of the people who were swindled. After all, they are a hell of a lot more miserable than Orrill Martin, who now has "unauthorized" use of their money. Also, we resent that veiled threat of bankruptcy and the "everyone let me down" whimpering.

There are many legal ramifications involved, including possible bunko, bad check, and mail fraud charges — but, that's for the lawyers to pursue. It so happens that the winner of the Washington D.C. tournament, Dan Harrington, is an attorney — no doubt he will have plenty to say in this matter.

Editorially, we want to comment on the morality of the Orrill Martin incident.

There are no legitimate excuses.

There are no legitimate excuses. It wasn't a matter of not enough money taken in to meet a guarantee. The money was there — it was simply converted to personal use by the promoter with no thought or responsibility. Checks collected form the tournament were used to pay off gambling debts, and several were cashed in a Las Vegas casino.

Sincere promises to pay the money back at a future date are not enough. A promoter has no authority to use the winners' money. The money from the tournament is held by him in trust for the participants. It must be paid out immediately after the winners are declared.

To: Persons holding obligations from the A.B.A.

From: Orrill Martin

Due to serious financial problems; bad checks, unfullfilled (sic) obligations, and other mis-deeds, the A.B.A. is currently unable to fulfill its promised obligations.

Therefore I have herewith cancelled the remainder of the 1981 tour and disbanded the A.B.A. on a temperary (sic) basis until all obligations have been fullfilled. (sic)

This is being done to avoid a full fledged backruptcy (sic) proceeding where every body will lose everything.

I have personal holdings that I am going to liquidate to fullfill (sic) these A.B.A. obligations. However I need time to obtain purchasers to obtain the highest possible value for this liquidation.

Please bear with me on this. There was never any intention of mine that things would get to this level. I just tried to do too much with too little, and the people that told me I could count on them for help, changed their minds when I asked for it.

Orrill Martin disgracefully betrayed this trust. It's hard to determine who is more angry: the winners, who received bad checks, or the non-winning participants who, having spent their money to play, found that they had no chance to win. It is a black eye for backgammon.

Martin, despite his lament to the contrary, was received with open arms by all. His organization amounted to a recorded message on a code-a-phone and printed invitations. It was regional promoters who distributed his invitations and assured others of his character. He deserves no sympathy in spite of his personal charisma.

Specifically, in Washington, the local backgammon enthusiasts helped with hotel location, organization, and tournament operation. Martin was left with the responsibility of collecting and distributing the money — a job which he obviously flubbed.

Don't rock the boat or I'll file bankruptcy, he implies. Well, rocking the boat wasn't exactly what those holding bad checks had in mind.

To prevent similar incidents in the future, the American Association of Backgammon Clubs and the Backgammon Magazine will not support or promote tournament directors who cannot show financial guarantees. It is unlikely that any promoter can succeed without our support.

Backgammon has had problems in the past and they have always been resolved amicably. We don't doubt that this episode will also have a happy ending — but, who wants to bother with all the rigamarole. Tournaments are an important part of backgammon. They should be run by responsible people. They should be fun and hassle-free.

Better organization means better protection.

Better organization means better protection. Backgammon is in its organizational infancy. Future growth and increased exchange of information will create a safer atmosphere. We are confident that the Washington/Martin fiasco was an isolated incident. Tournaments have been, and will continue to be, exciting and worthwhile affairs. Let's work together to keep tournaments alive and honest. ☆☆

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LETTERS FROM READERS

An Open Letter To Lewis Deyong

Your "Retort" to Robert Meese concerning the Black & White tournament format was quite revealing. It underscored your lack of empathy for the grassroots player, the local who cannot afford to hobnob with you at Crockford's or Monte Carlo, whose support you need, though you may not wish to acknowledge it.

First, your claim that Meese's letter was the first recorded complaint was inaccurate. The October 1980 issue of the "Flint Area Backgammonews" (which is published monthly and read by over 250 clubs and players) carried an appraisal of the Chicago B & W. The appraisal was mainly positive, but it did criticize your format, which did not feed first-time losers into the Consolation after the second round. That newsletter was sent last October to you, your staff, and to the public relations firm for the B & W tournaments.

Second, I find your attitude toward player equity, particularly as it affects the working-class player, to be very distressing and unbecoming of a man of your influence Instead of making snide remarks about your well-reasoned critic (Meese), you should have examined more honestly the weaknesses of your format. You alluded to timing problems on Saturday. They were probably due to the very nature of your non-progressive Consolation, and the fact that the party at Zorine's took away a large chunk of playing time. The party was a nice option for those who like that sort of thing and were willing to pay $35-plus per ticket, but I assure you that most of us were not "anxious" to go to Zorine's, especially at the cost of a fair chance at the Consolation flight. I know of several players who left the tournament early when they found out they were locked out of the Consolation. They did not care to wait around for the party or the Last Chance on Sunday afternoon. There was no organized backgammon activity for them for almost twenty-four hours!

It is true that your tournaments have drawn some overflow crowds in the past — that doesn't mean there is no room for improvement. I have been to many successful regional and national tournaments which offered a Consolation flight to everyone, if not a full double-elimination format.

You may feel you don't need us. You certainly won't miss me as an individual at your events. However, in a larger sense, you do need local players. We are the farm clubs for your Championship fields. We are the audience for your "celebrities." We fill your Intermediate fields. Moreover, your sponsors expect you to have broad-based support — or you lose their sponsorship. A good director puts player equity first. A good director holds himself accountable. A good director is receptive to constructive criticism. He owes that much to the players and to the clubs which hire him.

Carole Cole, President
Flint Area Bg Club, MI

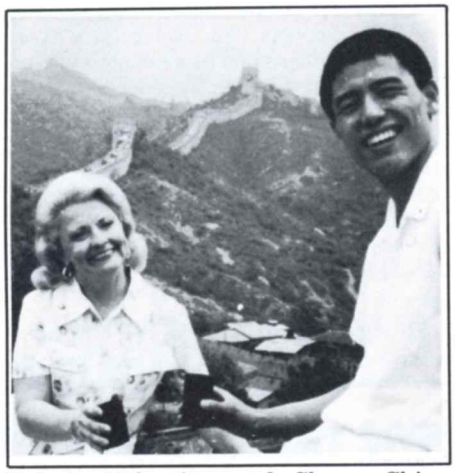
Picture This . . .

Dear Backgammon Magazine,

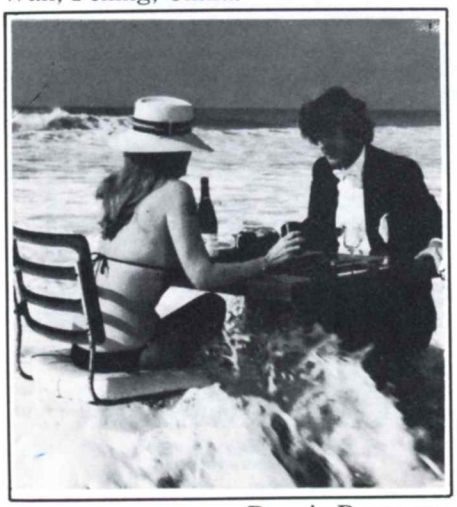
I enjoyed the "Backgammon in the Strangest Places" feature — but I think I have seen some other very interesting photos. Where? Keep up the good work.

D. Rachev
New York NY

Editor's Note: We have the pictures you're referring to. They were previously published and not eligible for the contest. The Omaha Backgammon Club's cornfield shot is now a classic. The other two appeared in Gammon Magazine. Our favorite is Valerie Valentine playing backgammon on the great wall of China.



Valerie Valentine and Chang Chien Kuo play backgammon on the Great Wall, Peking, China.



Dennis Borgogno

Windy City Blues

Mr. Lewis Deyong,

I recently read your article, "Retort," in the Backgammon Magazine. It addressed Butch Meese's complaints in the Chicago Black and White Classic in September, 1980.

I played in this tournament and I personally experienced no problems with the format — but does this mean the format is perfect? Is it free of any complications? Do you have to play in World Class tournaments to recognize these fallacies? Did everyone have fun? I answer each of these questions with a resounding NO.

I am not a World Class player, but that doesn't make me ignorant. I know that if I get bumped off in the first round I have nothing else to do the rest of the day. The same goes for the Consolation. I wouldn't even be able to "play," if I won the first two rounds on Friday and lost the first round on Saturday.

Yes, "play" has been emphasized. After all, I drove 250 miles from Flint to play backgammon; others came from further away, If things hadn't gone just right I could have spent most of my time watching everyone else. I sometimes do enjoy watching but I came to play, not go off to some party. I can always watch while I am waiting for my next opponent.

What if there isn't a next opponent, and it's twelve noon? This is the situation Butch Meese was placed in. He wasn't the only one, either — I know of a number of others who left the tournament early because there was no one to play.

I am not saying the tournament format was bad — but one doesn't have to be a genius to figure out it's not perfect. It does have its shortcomings.

It is absurd to suggest that you have to play all night as an alternative. What you can do is have mini-tournaments, for those who have been fortunate to be idled early in the day. These mini-tournaments, also called knock-outs are single-elimination, involve between eight and sixteen people, have entry fees, and prize money that is distributed to the first two or four places. You could have a number of knock-outs daily, depending on player interest. In this way there is an abundance of play at all times. You could decide for yourself whether you wanted to play, watch, or even party — not have it decided for you.

These mini-tournaments have been successfully used with other tournaments, but they have their shortcomings, also. The main one, of course, is that they take planning to develop, and must be organized while in progress.

Obviously no one wanted to take the time to organize them or even develop

(continued on page 10)

BACKGAMMON IN THE PUBLIC EYE

by Joel Rettew

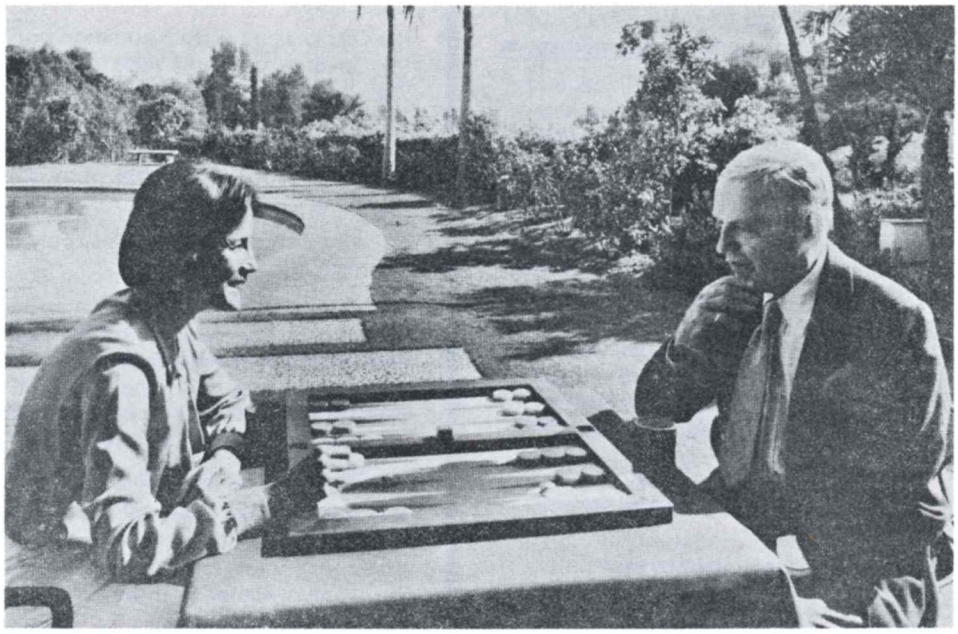
The World Amateur Backgammon Championship always gets a lot of press. We'll be seeing a lot of Dunes tournament in the coming months. Several major news groups including NBC planned to cover the affair. The June issue of Business Week was particularly kind to the Amateur Championship mentioning that the estimated total field numbered over 1500 contestants.

Rita Copeland managed a half-page feature on herself in the Ocala (FL) Star-Banner. She is quoted as saying, "There is a special feeling about backgammon for people who like to gamble. If you don't use the cube, there is an excitement that is missing."

The new US Ambassador to Ireland, William E. McCann, is an avid backgammon player. His official family publicity picture shows his clan happily gathered around a backgammon table.

The Airstream Caravan Club (motor homes) holds backgammon tournaments during their annual outings. It is just one of the activities of this travel group.

Backgammon has become a popular teaching tool for school children. It is a way of making mathematics exciting for students. The game of backgammon is math-oriented. In order to be good at it, a person needs to know math probabilities and permutations. Leonia High School (Palisades Park), Wilkinsburg Library (Pennsylvania), Twelve Corners Middle School (NY), Waterloo Elementary (Wisconsin), and Albany Girl's Club (NY) all hold regular backgammon tournaments for students.



The Nick the Greek line of casino games is a hot line for A.R.C. One, called "A Game A Week," fifty-two classic games in one box, including backgammon.

People Magazine did a piece on Fred Astaire in which he says, "I never watch my old movies." No wonder — he is too busy playing backgammon with his wife Robyn.

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For further information call **LARRY STRASBERG, 3114 Kipling Way, Louisville, Kentucky 40205, (502) 451-3950.**

LETTERS FROM READERS

(Continued from page 8)

other alternatives. Since the Chicago format was used before (in World Class tournaments) you mentioned in your article that the fallacies in the format surely must have come up. If they haven't, I point them out to you. If they have, I fault the person in charge for not taking the time to organize the tournament thoroughly. That person was the director — yes, you — Lewis Deyong. In fact I couldn't make the suggestion to you at the time because I couldn't find you. In my search I heard you were playing in a private game somewhere in the motel. It seems Butch and I weren't the only ones who came to play.

Frank Talbot, Jr.
Bloomfield Hills, MI

ENCORE, ENCORE!

Dear Mr. Maxakuli,

This is to inform you of my displeasure regarding the format (Chicago Black & White tournament) chosen to be used last year.

After driving 250 miles with the express purpose of playing backgammon, and winning both of our Friday night matches, we had the misfortune to lose our first Saturday morning match. With the established format, this left us out of the tournament for the next twenty-four hours. At this point we decided to return home, rather than waiting Sunday.

We enjoy playing backgammon very much and are looking forward to future tournaments, hopefully with a more active format.

Robert Tripp
Vice-President, Nan Jo Inc.
East Lansing, MI

GIANT KILLER

Gentlemen,

I read with great interest your listing of "America's Giant 32," but must admit I am puzzled by:

The inclusion of David Leibowitz. Although I have never met him, he qualified as an Amateur for the 1978 Plimpton Cup. From "never having won $1,000 in a single tournament," to one of the thirty-two best players in the world in three years??? He must have a superb P.R. department!

It seems to me, like baseball's All-Star balloting this is a popularity contest.

My only experience with the "Giant 32" was two matches against Jim Pasko. I came in second both times and thoroughly enjoyed the privilege of playing with him.

May I hear from you?

Jack Singer
Bronxville, NY

TOURNAMENT

1. **GAME RULES**

The Official Laws of Backgammon apply for all games.

(A) Optional doubling rules such as "Automatics on Open," "California Opening," or "Beavers" are not used.

(B) The Jacoby Rule is not used; however, any player on the team facing the Man-in-the-Box is permitted to drop at any time independently of his/her teammates by either selling their seat to another player, if possible, or by giving up points to The Box.

2. **CHOUETTE RULES**

The standard rules for chouettes apply for rotation of players and acceptance or refusal of the doubling cube.

3. **PLAYER ROTATION**

Players cast one die each to start. Highest number becomes the first man-in-the-box, next-highest becomes captain of the team (field), each additional player may volunteer to be official scorekeeper; if none volunteer, the lowest number rolled takes the position.

(A) Losers, whether box or captain, rotate to the last position in the team.

(B) Winners, whether box or captain, are in the box for the next game.

(C) Players dropping during any game retain their position.

(D) Players selling their seat to another player retain their position.

(E) If the captain drops an offered double or sells his/her seat, the next player in rotation becomes captain for the remainder of the that game only or until he drops out. If this player is the eventual winner, he moves into the box and the former captain again becomes captain in the next game.

4. **SEAT SALES**

Players may sell their seat in the field to another player or to the box at any time, for any negotiated amount of points, subject to the approval of the box.

(A) The box may tax any seat sale for any negotiable amount of points or refuse to allow the sale.

(B) If the box refuses to permit a sale, the offering player may either retain his position or drop to the box however many points are indicated by the doubling cube.

5. **SCORING**

Standard scoring, e.g.: Game = 1 pt., Gammon = 2 pts., Backgammon @ 3 pts., multiplied by the face value of the cube when last accepted during the game is used.

(A) The box wins the same game score from **each** player in the field or loses the same game score to each player in each game played.

Example: Box wins doubled gammon (2 x 2 = 4 pts.) against a field of four players: 4 x 4 pts. = 16 pts. total.

(B) In tournament chouettes, all contestants begin play with the same amount of starting points from which losses are deducted and to which wins are added. **The player having the highest total of points at the end of the match is the winner of that round** and proceeds to the next round.

(C) Starting points are determined by **squaring** the number of players in the chouette.

Example: If there are a total of five players in the chouette, multiply 5 x 5 = 25 starting points for each.

(D) Each player at each chouette table in the tournament must start with the same number of points in each round, based on the above formula; however, the tournament director or committee may elect to retain the same number of starting points for each player in each round throughout the tournament regardless of reduced number of players in a chouette during rounds played after the first.

Example: Twenty players start Round I in chouettes of five per table. In the play-off round, the four winning players would start with twenty-five points each rather than sixteen points each. If the twenty players start Round I in tables of four, the five winning players would also start the playoff with twenty-five pts. a piece.

(E) Players losing all of their starting points are dropped from the tournament unless

HOW GOULDISH!

Dear Giant 32,

Your March list was a good start. Unfortunately "Middle America" was overlooked. As it stands the list is essentially of three tones; 1. Mayfair, 2. Los Angeles and 3 South Florida (New York transplants).

But there is true talent between the coasts.

Let me introduce probably the strongest player in the non-Florida South — Larry Gould.

Larry Gould is almost universally considered Atlanta's best. He has clocked an amazing claim of 85% of his chouettes for black ink.

He demolished Ken Duchamp, a Southern player who has had good results in Florida and Caribbean tourneys.

CHOUETTE RULES

consolation events are available or re-entry is permitted.

(F) Players may not double or redouble for point values in excess of their total as shown on the official scorecard; however, they may **accept** such doubles if offered, provided one other member of the field also accepts, or if he/she is in the Box.

(1) If a member of the field which wins such a double or redouble, the affected player wins only as many points as they were able to offer, multiplied by either two for gammon or three for backgammon, if such occurs.

Example: Player has a balance of three points when **team** redoubles @ 4. Player wins only three, six, or nine points.

Example: Player has a balance of three points and one or more teammates also accept a redouble @ 4 from the Box. Player then wins four eight or twelve points from the Box.

(2) If a member of the field which loses such a double or redouble, the affected player loses all points and is dropped from the chouette.

(3) If in the box when double or redouble is offered, the affected player wins all points in full from each player in the field, but offering players may only win as many points as losing Box has in balance, multiplied by the gammon or backgammon factor.

Example: Box has a balance of eight points when redoubled by a four-member team @ 4. Box will win four, eight, or twelve points from each; however, team players may only win eight, sixteen or twenty-four points, divided equally among them, e.g. two, four, or six points each.

6. TIME LIMITS

Each round of the tournament is played to a specified time limit; the surviving player at the end of playing time having the highest total of points is the winner of that match.

(A) Time limits are determined by multiplying the number of players by fifteen minutes and adding one hour.

Example: There are five players in each chouette. Time limit for the round will be 5 x :15 = 1:15, plus 1:00 = 2 hrs., 15 min.

(B) Time limits may be varied by the tournament director or committee to increase the challenges of later rounds and/or to accomodate the tournament schedule.

(C) Players, especially if leading on the scorecard, may not engage in lengthy discussions with teammates regarding plays, takes, or seat sales in order to use up time limits. If such appears to be happening, the other members of the field may specify a limit, e.g. one minute, thirty seconds, etc., for the conclusion of such discussion, and if ignored may request a penalty assessment against the offending player by the tournament director. Penalties may consist of score point deductions from the player's score.

7. AWARDS

At the option of the tournament organizers, awards may be given for runner-up scores at each chouette table after each round, for net high scores per round among all tables, for playoff runners-ups, etc.

8. HAVE FUN!

NOTES & COMMENTS:

The purpose of Rule 5F is to curtail "sandbagging" by losing players, as well as to avoid players "ganging up" on players temporarily low on their scorecard; thus, a player may not wager more points than he has remaining whether in the box or on the team. Other players may not take undue advantage of him by offering a double for greater amounts of points than he has in balance; any such double may be accepted, and the player may rightfully earn any points the others are thus indicating they are willing to allow. There is a limit to the points that can be won by doubling in this situation. In fairness to all, any gammon or backgammon won multiplies the value of the cube in all cases, except that special situation wherein one player loses all of his points which are less than the cube value multiplied by the gammon or backgammon factor. Although this creates a bit of anomaly in that winners are given points the losing partner did not have when gammoned, etc., it justly rewards the skillful play that achieved the double or triple score.

Superior checker style. The psychologically imposing Gould table presence. Intense, imperturbable and unsmiling. There are other faces you'd rather see across the table than Gould's.

Originally from Detroit, Gould's almost executioner-like image and high gammon ratio, have earned him the same name as Detroit's welterweight champion Thomas Hearns — Larry Gould is "the Motor City hitman."

Showing his metal at Mayfair Gould did well in a short contract with Eric Seidel.

I've seen many of your top 32 perform. As a deletion may I suggest Buddy Khoury.

Prediction: If Khoury ever played Gould, Khoury's wallet would look like it received a bad chainsaw vasectomy.

Harry Pace
Atlanta, Georgia

☆☆

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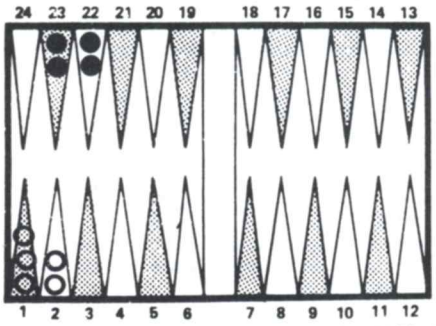
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FALL TOURNAMENTS

DATE	TOURNAMENT	DIRECTOR	LOCATION	SPONSOR/OPERATOR
Aug. 5-9	8th Annual Green Mountain Festival of Backgammon	Les Boyd (305) 527-4033	Stratton Mountain, VT	Green Mountain Bank & So. Vermont Chapter MS
Aug. 22-23	Texas Backgammon Tournament	Jim Howe (713) 493-4968	Houston, TX	TBA/Ramada Inn
Sept. 12-13	Renaissance Barclay Cooke Cup	Lee Silverstein (612) 698-4436	Shakopee, MN	Minnesota BG Club
Sept. 19-20	Texas Backgammon Tournament	Jim Howe (713) 493-4968	Dallas, TX	TBA/Executive Inn
Sept. 25-27	Dunhill Far East Backgammon Club	Peter Edwards	Hong Kong	Dunhill & Hong Kong Backgammon Club
Oct. 23-25	Nebraska Challenge Cup	Carolyn Caniglia (402) 330-3333	Omaha, NE	BG Club of Omaha
Oct. 30-Nov. 1	N.E.B.C./B.S.O. Backgammon Benefit	Francesca Parkinson (617) 563-5787	Boston, Mass.	Boston Symphony
Nov. 26-29	Chicago Cup Tournament	Valerie Valentine (312) 782-0142	Chicago, IL	Hyatt
Nov. 27-29	Southern Open	Les Boyd (305) 527-4033	Breakers, Palm Beach, FL	IBA

ANALYSIS

BY DAVID H. FLETCHER



Should White double? If White doubles: Should Black drop? Should Black accept? Should Black beaver?

Alfred Sheinwold in the March 1, 1981 edition of the Los Angeles Times suggests that White should double Black, and that Black should accept White's double. He feels that White is a "two to one favorite to win the game in this position."

Here is another example of a well-known backgammon analyst gone astray in his use of the doubling cube. I like the position because it can be precisely analyzed mathematically to show that even though Black will win less than fifty percent of the variations from this position, Black will win more than fifty percent of the points that the position will generate.

Actually Black wins $\frac{740124}{1679616}$ = 44.07% and White wins $\frac{939492}{1679616}$ = 55.93% of the variations from the positon. Black should redouble White, however, and win $\frac{460800}{1679616}$ variations at four points, while White wins only $\frac{187200}{1679616}$ variations at four points. Overall Black should net 148464 points, if the position were played 1679616 times, if Black merely accepts White's double. Actually, Black should beaver White's double and thereby net 296928 points if the position were played 1679616 times.

The exact mathematical analysis of the position proceeds:

I. White rolls 6-6, 5-5, 4-4, 3-3, 2-2, or 1-1
White: $6/36 \times 32/36 = 248832/36_4$

Black: $6/36 \times 4/36 = 31104/36_4$ (Black rolls 6-6, 5-5, 4-4, or 3-3)

II. White rolls 6-5, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2, 6-1, 5-4, 5-3, 5-2, 5-1, 4-3, 4-2, 4-1, 3-2, 3-1, 2-1
White: $30/36 \times 32/36 \times 6/36 = 207360/36^4$ (Whtie rolls 6-6, 4-4, 4-4, 3-3, 2-2, 1-1)
Black: $30/36 \times 4/36 = 155520/36^4$ (Black rolls 6-6, 5-5, 4-4, 3-3)
Black: $30/36 \times 12/36 \times 30/36 \times 26/36 = 280800/36^4$ (Black rolls 6-5, 6-4, 6-3, 4-4, 5-3, 4-3)
Black redoubled to 4 points
White: $30/36 \times 12/36 \times 30/36 \times 10/36 = 108000/36^4$ (Black rolls 6-5, 6-4, 6-3, 5-4, 5-3, 4-3)
Black redoubled to 4 points
Black: $30/36 \times 8/36 \times 30/36 \times 25/36 = 18000/36^4$ (Black rolls 6-2, 5-2, 4-2, 3-2)
2 redoubled to 4 points
White: $30/36 \times 8/36 \times 30/36 \times 11/36 = 79200/36^4$ (Black rolls 6-2, 5-2, 4-2, 3-2)
Black: $30/36 \times 1/36 \times 30/36 = 32400/36^4$ (Black rolls 2-2)
Black: $30/36 \times 1/36 \times 30/36 \times 17/36 = 15300/36^4$ (Black rolls 1-1)
White: $30/36 \times 1/36 \times 30/36 \times 19/36 = 17100/36^4$ (Black rolls 1-1) $1/36 \times 30/36$
Black: $30/36 \times 10/36 \times 30/36 \times 5/36 = 45000/36^4$ (Black rolls 6-1, 5-1, 4-1, 3-1, 2-1)
White: $30/36 \times 10/36 \times 30/36 \times 31/36 = 279000/36^4$ (Black rolls 6-1, 5-1, 4-1, 3-1, 2-1)

So, as you can see, the following results are tabulated:
Black wins $\frac{(460800 \text{ @ } 4 \text{ points})}{1679616} + \frac{(279324 \text{ @ } 2 \text{ points})}{1679616}$ = 2401848 points
White wins $\frac{(187220 \text{ @ } 4 \text{ points})}{1679616} + \frac{(752292 \text{ @ } 2 \text{ points})}{1679616}$ = 2253384 points
Black therefore wins a net of 2401848 - 2253384 = 148464 points.

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BACKGAMMON BEAUTIES — Las Vegans Sondra Sillman and Shelley Hynds age 26. Born in Oceanside, New York. They work together, exercise, swim and play backgammon.

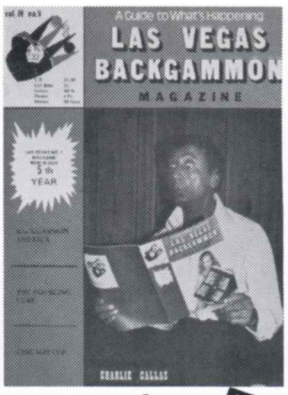
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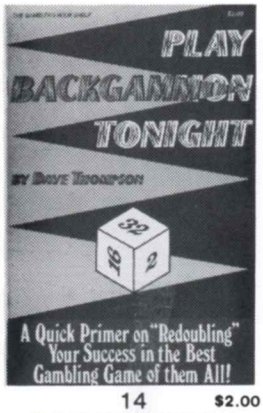
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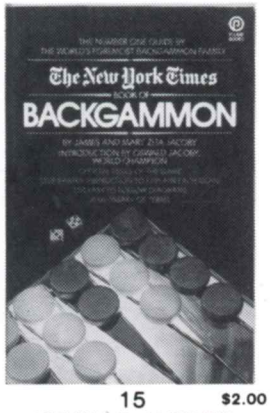
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INSIDER'S BACKGAMMON

by Arnawood R.

We continually talk about improving backgammon skills - sometimes going into great detail over some small point which will slightly increase your percentages. And of course it is important to know the odds and use them in your favor, so that you get every edge possible. However, it sometimes seems that the concentration level, your awareness and attentiveness to the game, can be a more important factor than a tremendous amount of knowledge. If you're not aware of what's going on, not paying attention to the board, you won't play well. This is my way of reintroducing the chart "The Winner" again, and looking at it from a little different angle - the recognition that attention is just as important as skill. If you're missing plays and missing moves because you're preoccupied or overtired, drinking too much, or paying attention to that gal over there, your game is going to fall off. The factor of attentiveness may be the most underrated point in the game.

THE WINNER

Rate in each category using 1-10 rating. 10 is best.

YOU	CATEGORY	OPPONENT
	1) Mental attitude	
	2) Backgammon skill/knowledge of odds	
	3) Financing	
	4) Money/cube management	
	5) Concentration/attentiveness	
	6) Playing the opponent/unpredictability	
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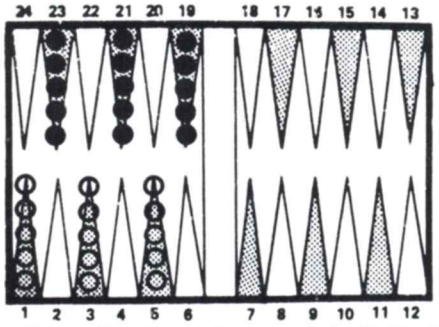
You might think that someone playing for serious money, or playing in a tournament, would naturally be attentive. But it's not always so. In some cases a rookie or slow player may be able to use psychological warfare against an opponent by taking a great deal of time to make his play — giving time for the better player to become a bit bored, allowing his attention to wane.

But whatever it may be, whatever causes your attention to drift away, the key is to pull yourself together, get back to the board. Many times I've witnessed a backgammon game, and one person will say to the other, "What did you have? What did you move?" They were half-asleep, they weren't paying attention. No amount of study in the world can improve a game when you just don't pay attention. So study the chart, take it seriously, it will improve your game — so long as you stay attentive to your actual play. ☆☆

A PIP IS A PIP IS A PIP, or is it?

by Kent Goulding

I don't recall where I first encountered the following position. It is one of several interesting riddles which pop up from time to time. This problem reminds me a lot of the famous "is five men off with one on the bar a take or pass?" hustle. It seems that nobody remembers just what happened when that famous backgammon master hustled the Mayfair Club in New York and walked out with a bundle. Was it FIVE checkers off or SIX checkers off? Was it a drop, or a take? Ask any two players who were there, and you'll get two different answers. So it is with this position.



The position is usually presented with Black (even numbered pips) on roll against White (odd numbered pips). Even is on roll, but odd is fifteen pips ahead — or is he? The point is that whenever Black (even) rolls an odd number he can fill in one of the holes on the odd points. When White (odd) rolls an even number he retains his gaps and must 'waste' that part of his roll. So, who is winning? Should Black double? Should White accept? Should White beaver? Should White pass?

Perhaps if we break the position into three separate problems it will help. Let's try — divide the position into three parts as follows:

In problem ONE White is ten pips ahead. It should be obvious that many of these ten pips are in fact, wasted. That is, if White rolls a 3, 4, 5, or 6 it has the exact same result. Any roll over 3 is 'wasted'. Black also has some waste, but not as much as White. As it turns out White will actually win just over fifty percent of the games with no cube involved. It would be an error for Black to double here. White should beaver.

Position TWO still shows White ten pips ahead. Much of White's waste has gone by the wayside, though. Now White can play any number that misses (1, 2, or 4) to an open point. Indeed, in this position White gets almost full value out of his ten pip lead. If the game is played to a conclusion (no cube) White wins almost fifty-nine percent of the games!! Certainly Black would be foolish to double. White would have an easy beaver and probably redouble on the very next roll!

Position THREE again shows that White is ten pips ahead. Now what is going on? White misses on 2's, 3's or 4's; but most of these numbers fill in vacant points and are therefore not totally wasted. In fact, White still has most of his ten-pip lead and will win well over half of the games (57%+) with no cube. Again, if Black has access to the cube he would be foolish to double. White would be an even bigger than 57-48 favorite if he had the cube, and would beaver instantly.

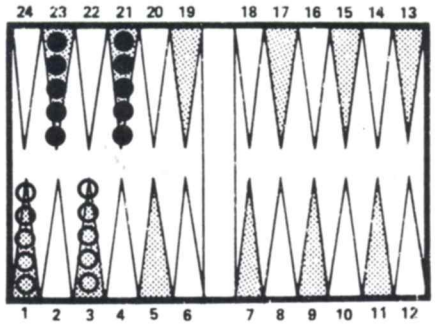
Does any of this help you to understand the original problem? Does any of this have anything to do with the original problem? Is a pip a pip? How much does waste matter in a close race?

Certainly you should see that the original position has a lot of waste for White. But does it have enough to overcome the apparent FIFTEEN-pip lead?In each of our three mini-problems Black would have been quite foolish to double. In each case White would be perfectly safe to beaver. What do you think now about the main problem?

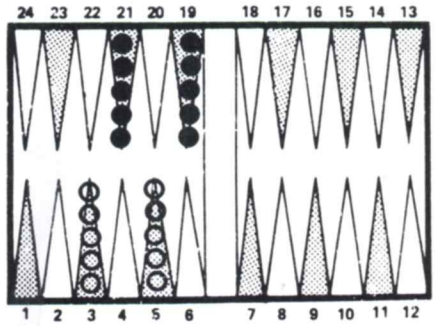
At the recent tournament in Clearwater, Florida this position reared its ugly head. A well-known, respected New Yorker, along with a room full of kibitzers, informed me that Black had a double AND that White SHOULD PASS!! I was somewhat amazed, but volunteered to donate some of my money by simply taking White with the cube (if, in fact, it was a clear pass, they should have been willing to give the cube on 2 PLUS one point per game. They were delighted to hustle me with just giving up the cube).

What do you think? Was I foolish? Were they foolish? Your comments are welcome. I'll publish my findings in a later issue. ☆☆

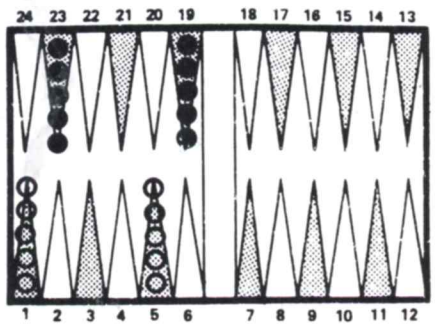
PROBLEM ONE



PROBLEM TWO



PROBLEM THREE



Prince Joli Kansil

His Honolulu Backgammon Club had over 200 members and is one of the most successful local clubs in the country. He wrote THE BACKGAMMON QUIZ BOOK. And now he has invented a board game called Marrakesh, which GAMES Magazine has praised as a "fast two-player game that could well become a classic." We interviewed the noted game inventor recently and Prince Joli Kansil had a number of candid comments on backgammon, its players, and his new game.

Q: Let's talk about Marrakesh first. Do you think the game will catch on?

A: I do indeed, although it is going to be awhile before the hard-core backgammon player takes up Marrakesh because of his natural reluctance to put aside a game he is expert in for one in which he has to start from scratch. But the game is catching on among all other groups of players, and the feedback from customers has been very gratifying.

Q: Why?

A: In addition to luck and skill, Marrakesh has a third element-ESP: the ability to "outwit and outguess your opponent," as Martin Gardner has commented. To further compare, in backgammon you have to contend with the dice, which can be treacherous, as we all know; in Marrakesh, however, special cards are used, and the player always has control over what card he wishes to play, so there is none of the frustration of throwing bad dice. But like backgammon, Marrakesh has big swings and the excitement of being able to come from behind to win. The last two factors should appeal to players who are accustomed to playing for stakes.

Q: What gave you the idea for Marrakesh?

A: In 1974, I thoroughly analyzed bearing off techniques with two, three, and four men left on the board. I became fascinated with this phase of backgammon and thought it would make a wonderful game in and of itself. I decided to use cards instead of dice, but the key rules governing the card play did not strike me until four years later when my wife and I were visiting Marrakesh, Morocco. As with the other games I have marketed Marrakesh took a bit of inspiration, but much of the game's creation was through rigorous testing and sheer trial and error.

Q: All right, before getting on to other questions, we'll let you tell the readers where they can obtain Marrakesh.

A: As yet, only a few stores stock it but you can order Marrakesh by mail from: **Xanadu Leisure, Ltd., Box 10-Q, Honolulu, Hawaii 96816. The price of $45 includes airmail delivery.**

Q: On to backgammon. Your BACKGAMMON QUIZ BOOK has been both praised and damned by the critics. Do you maintain that the answers in your book are accurate?

A: Backgammon theory has changed markedly even in the short time since I wrote my book in 1977. There is no question that some of the suggested answers to the quizzes now need revision, and if a second edition is published by Playboy, these revisions will be made. Overall, though, this paperback at $2.50 is the cheapest backgammon lesson around, and readers have also found the quizzes to be a downright fun and relaxing way to sharpen their game and learn to think as an expert does.



Q: Your book employs your own Kansil Backgammon Notation which Oswald Jacoby has complimented highly. Yet, the notation system has not caught on. Why?

A: Lettering the board A to Z instead of using numbers 1 to 24 makes a backgammon diagram easy to read and it can be employed to record a backgammon game as it is played — even if the players move quickly. The only flaw is that the points on an actual backgammon board must be lettered prior to the start of the play, and players have been unwilling to physically paste on letters so that the "KBN" system can be implemented.

"Have a strong set of by-laws which give the director almost dictatorial powers."

Q: Among your other innovations in backgammon is a handicap system which a few other local clubs have adopted. How does this work?

A: The players are given a rating from 5 (Beginner) down to 0 ("Scratch" or Expert). All matches are played to 15 and if a "4" players is pitted against a "1" player, the score is 4-1 at the start of the match. A tournament committee decides the handicaps and meets periodically to make adjustments. Besides rating a player, this system of handicaps makes it possible for all players to play in the same bracket. So, for example, instead of having a Championship bracket of eighteen players and an Open bracket of fourteen players, you have just one field of thirty-two and any one of the thirty-two participants has a shot at winning the grand prize.

Q: As a veteran of many years of running a successful club, what advice do you have for club directors?

A: Have a strong set of by-laws which give the director almost dictatorial powers. If you have a weak, non-profit setup and one or two members cause serious problems, the club is virtually helpless to oust such troublemakers. In contrast, if you have a strong director and an advisory board to back him up, the club can be much more effectively governed. Let's face it. Backgammon brings out the best and the worst in people. All it takes is for one petty or obnoxious player to ruin everybody's fun, and, before you know it, club attendance has declined. A director must have the authority to do whatever has to be done to make the club a congenial place to play and enjoy oneself.

Q: Any advice to help directors in running tournaments?

A: Be alert! It is the director's responsibility to see that one match does not drag out and slow the whole tournament to a standstill. Shorten a match, if necessary, or award penalty points to the opponent of a very slow player. Another thing: Always have the pairings done out in the open. No draw sheets should ever be rendered in the back room by only the director and one or two of his cronies.

Q: What are your general comments about the major tournaments of today?

A: I do not mean to sound snobbish, but the tournaments of the mid '70s were posh affairs where players dressed well and behaved well. Nowadays, the tourneys are not nearly as well organized as were the great events of before. For example, in the $100,000 tournament of December 1979, Leslie Stone and I breezed through our first two doubles matches, but then we had a 4½-hour wait for our third rounds. And these were supposed to be speedy seven-point matches!

Q: Who is the best player you have ever come up against?

A: I would have to say Kumar Motaksses, a Persian expert who lives in Europe. He beat me in the finals of the Consolation in Divonne in 1976, and I have never seen such mastery of the game. I had better dice, but he won handily, and he made it look so easy!

Q: Thank you. Best of luck with Marrakesh and your other game inventions, and we hope you continue to be active in backgammon. ☆☆

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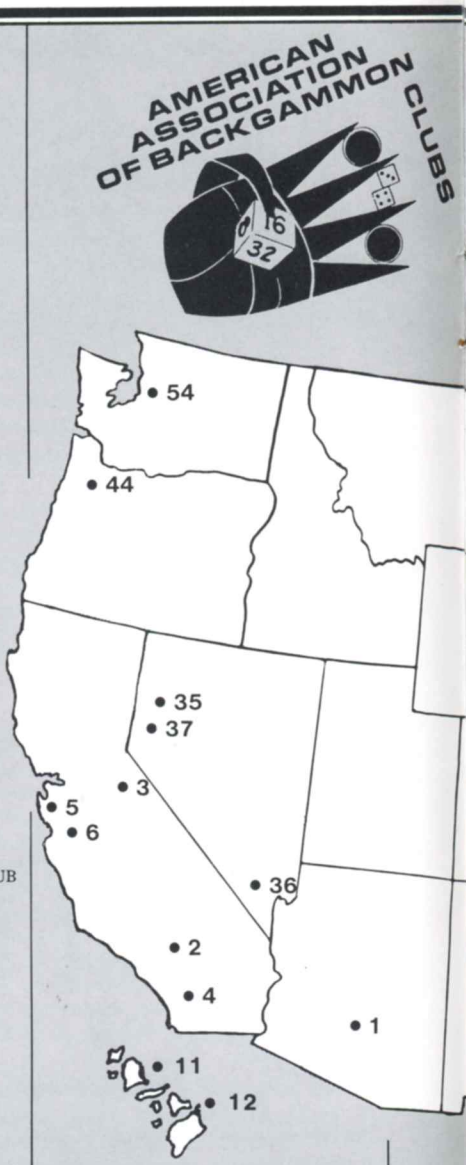
The Rose Garden

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.

Improve your game.





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

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

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

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

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



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NEW ASSOCIATES

ESCAPE BACKGAMMON CLUB

Kevin Brandt looks like an English Beefeater but in reality is a legal research consultant from Pompano Beach. He formerly owned an operated the Bar Point Backgammon Club in New York City.

Kevin decided what Florida needed was a classy and permanent backgammon site. His new plush club is located inside the Escape Beach & Tennis Hotel in Fort Lauderdale. Food and drink service will be available and players will enjoy a bay window view of the olympic size pool. You can make arrangements to visit the club and attend the weekly tournaments by calling (305) 785-0069.



HOOSIER BACKGAMMON CLUB

The Hoosier Backagammon Club conducts tournaments each Wednesday at LeClub (Indianapolis), and it sponsors free instruction and challenge matches with experienced players. The approximately 300 members who comprise the non-profit HBC, also sponsor the annual Indiana Open. The Indiana Open Championships is the longest running major tournament in America; this year was number twenty-eight. The Hoosier contributions to backgammon are many including the invention of the now famous Aristotle backgammon computer by an HBC member Kem Brand.

Ralph Roberts is the director of this prestigious club. His incredible success is due to a keen understanding of good community relations, publicity and a regular schedule. This group is prospering. Congratulations. HBC, 1759 Pemberton Lane, Indianapolis. (317) 872-0892.

MILWAUKEE BACKGAMMON

One of the charter associates of the AABC was from Milwaukee. The club was disbanded when their headquarters burned down. Now, after a long absence of organization, a new group has formed in the Cream City.

Donald Zunker is the director, Lenore Holyon is the secretary. She is also the wife of the wellknown tournament champion Bob Holyon. This group is headquartered at a pretty nifty club on Milwaukee's East Side called Century Hall. We are glad to have this group with us. After all most of the staff, the Backgammon Magazine and the AABC is from Wisconsin. For more information call (414) 276-6763.



TOURNAMENTS DOs and DON'TS

by Butch Meese

Backgammon has reached a level of competition achieved by no other board game. A major tournament is held somewhere in the world every weekend of the year. A person probably can attend a monthly regional tournament within a five-hour drive of his home. Local tournaments are held weekly in nearly every city in the country, and still are the backbone for getting people introduced to competitive backgammon.

A backgammon survey was conducted during the summer of 1980. The survey was sent to 100 backgammon clubs. One question asked to list the DOs and DON'Ts of running a backgammon tournament. The results of that question are as follows:

DON'T show any type of favoritism toward anyone.

DON'T be pushed around by strong personalities.

DON'T make exceptions to rules for anyone.

DON'T ever tolerate poor sportsmanship: it is a very contagious disease.

DO protect players' equity at all cost, both in judging and financing.

DO give the players as much as possible for their money.

DON'T take more than 15% from players' or calcutta pools.

DO explain the distribution of prizes.

DO provide trophies, not just cash.

DO pay in cash immediately after each player wins his prize.

DON'T allow any player to make suggestions on how to run the tournament.

DO be considerate, cooperative, helpful, friendly, courteous, etc.

DO let people know what is going to happen in advance — NO surprises.

DO explain the tournament format and calcutta buy-back before the auction.

DON'T allow in late entries.

DO start at announced time.

DO explain all rules carefully.

DON'T play in your own tournament.

DON'T list names of people under "tournament committee" who will not be attending the tournament.

DO your best.

Some of the responses did not relate directly to tournaments, but deserve mentioning:

DO give free lessons.

DO publish a newsletter.

DO familiarize new players with rules and formats.

DO reward members for bringing in new members.

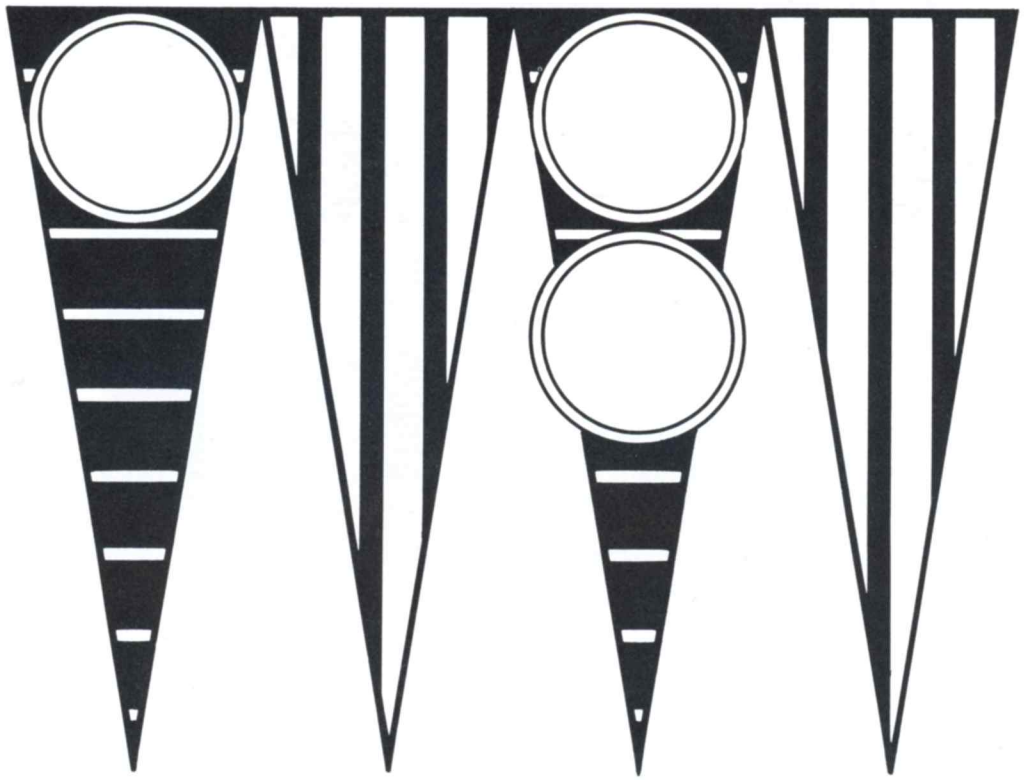
DO try new things and get opinions.

DO encourage spectators and kibitzers to play in up-coming events.

These responses were probably made through past experiences, either as a player or director. Most people who put on the tournaments get little in return for their efforts, and do it because they enjoy playing backgammon and providing an opportunity for people to compete. Like Murphy's Law, if anything can go wrong, it will; the same pertains to tournaments. Each director has his list of DOs and DON'Ts, in hopes of preventing problems.

A player takes his skills to a tournament hopeful of piecing together enough wins to get recognition for his play. He should realize what efforts are put forth to organize and run a tournament and be courteous and gracious, win or lose. Players should provide feedback to directors: be it positive responses or constructive criticism. Players always have the option to go to the tournaments which offer the most fair play and best return on their investment.

Any questions or comments can be sent to **BACKGAMMON SURVEY, 52 Knoll Court, Carmel, Indiana 46032.**



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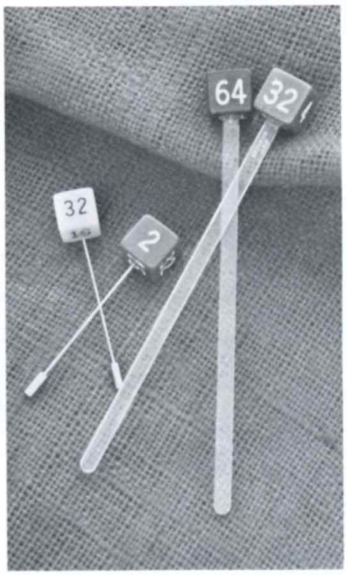
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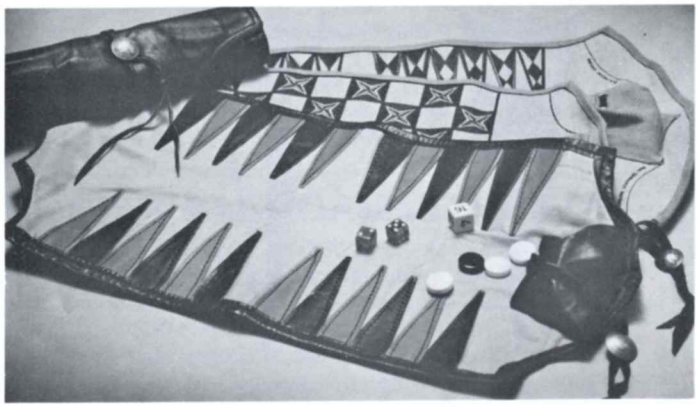
First over the Bar

NEW PRODUCTS



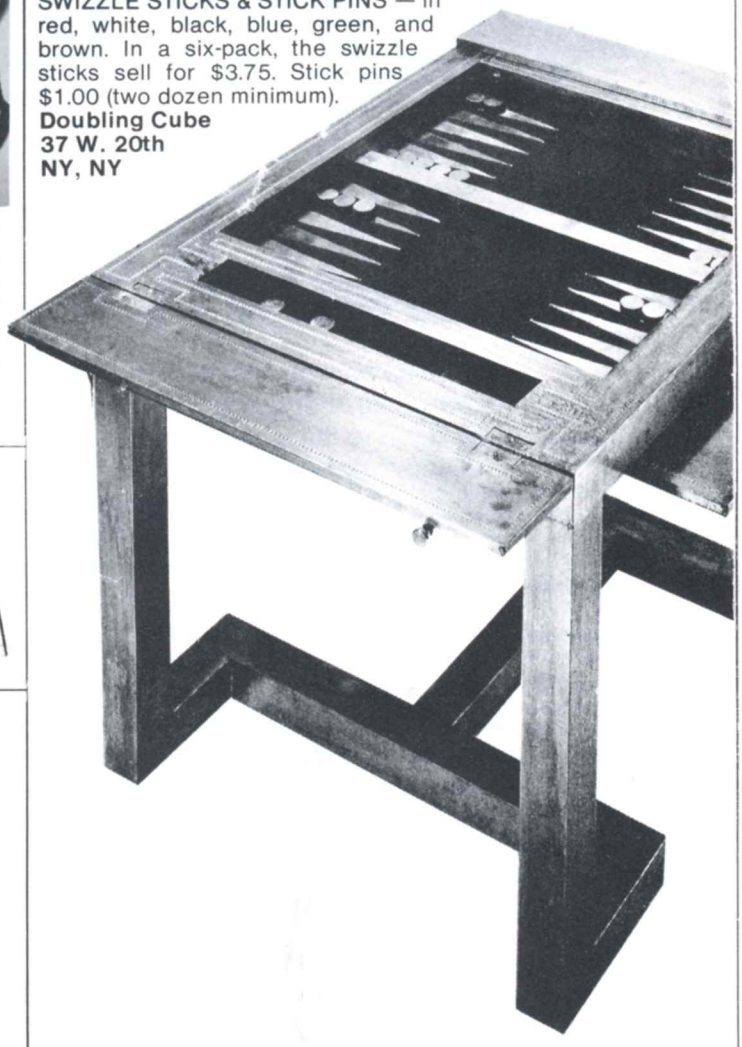


BACKGAMMON TEACHER — special set for the beginner. Complete with special instruction book by Prince Alexis Obolensky. 14½" x 8¼" x 2¼" hardboard folding case, opens to playing board. Includes playing pieces, four dice, doubler, and cup. **Joan Cook Inc., Ft. Lauderdale, FL. $10.00.**

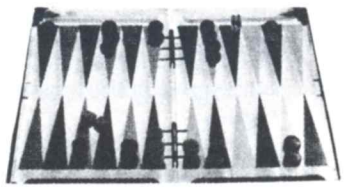


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SWIZZLE STICKS & STICK PINS — in red, white, black, blue, green, and brown. In a six-pack, the swizzle sticks sell for $3.75. Stick pins $1.00 (two dozen minimum). **Doubling Cube 37 W. 20th NY, NY**



ELEGANT SOLID OAK — backgammon board with marbleized pieces. Add matching doubler, precision dice, and leather cups. **Chess & Games Unlimited, 336 N. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, CA.** About **$165.**





BACKGAMMON CHEESE — a smart gift idea. A travel board packed with cheese, nuts, and sausage. Great for a picnic. From the **Carriage House Fruits & Nut Co., $14.95.**

THE RICH MAN'S BACKGAMMON — the height of elegance is demonstrated in this solid brass and pewter backgammon table made in Italy. It measures 34" wide, 26" deep, and 26" high. When table is in use for backgammon, remove center piece, slip it in space underneath, and open both ends. Replace center and close ends to use as an occasional table. The finish is an excellent reproduction of Old World Antiquing. **Touch of Class, North Conway, NH. $1,500.**



BACKGAMMON SPICE

by Nick Maffeo

From my travels and acquaintances, I have come across many weird and wonderful things. Below is a description of regional nuances that I'd like to share with you. They are not terribly complicated, and will certainly increase the excitement at your backgammon games.

"Automatics" (starting the cube at 2 when both players toss the same opening die roll) are common everywhere. In chouettes they are ordinarily played at the option of the box. In Texas, however, the *"Mayfield Rule"* allows the box (or player losing) to start the cube at 2 without the ritual of waiting for an automatic to occur naturally. *"Dado loco"* (crazy cube) is a hot item in parts of Mexico. An undesirable opening throw (5-1, 5-2, etc.) is nullified followed by jacking up the cube and throwing again. The initial *reply* can also dado loco. I once saw a game where both players rejected a 3-1, then 4-2, opener so they could jack up the stakes. When asked why they didn't play for more per point one replied, "Oh, we don't want to play for that much." As Chuck "The Great Swami" Papazian eloquently instructs, "If you can't get even in one game, then you're not playing for e-nough." *"Individual cubes"* have appeared more often in chouettes and are a real boon when that wimp captain refuses to flip the cube or be bought out of his game; or that other nightmare: Captain Stuck 'N' Steaming wants to ship the cube after the opening roll.

If a player disagrees with some cube action in San Francisco, s/he might offer to take or give an *"extra"* before play resumes, e.g., if you take the cube against the box and someone else thinks the position is a pass, s/he can give you 1 point for an extra cube at 2 or vice versa. Naturally, this can lead to some sordid propositions later, but in the meanwhile you are in action in a game that would ordinarily hold no interest for you.

I first encountered a *"non-consulting interlocking"* chouette in Los Angeles several years ago. Two adjacent boards and at least six players are necessary to make this exciting variation work successfully. The box(es), independent of each other, reside on one side of the table, and the team captain(s) on the other. While a player can be the box in one game, s/he is a partner in the other. Precise rotation order is simple in this fast action format: If using tags, drop the loser to the bottom; otherwise circle the loser on the scoresheet. "Non-consulting" is frequently used in conjunction with interlocking chouettes. In non-consulting chouettes, players refrain from offering advice on checker play and can only participate with cube action: double, take, pass, or beaver . There are regional differences regarding tolerance for gagging, cheering, or consulting on pip count during the play of a non-consulting chouette.

One day in Oakland a no-nonsense game of *"drop-beaver"* took place prior to a regular chouette. This variation reduces the cube action to offering the double, declining the double, and beavering. No simple takes, nor can you raccoon (redouble the beaver), which leads us to the once and for all time official order of succession in the backgammon city zoo — so here goes

The Man in the Box doubles from 2 to 4 and all the players gang *"beaver"* from 4 to 8. The Box seeing a chance to get even in one game *"raccoons"* from 8 to 16. The natives get restless and *"harpoon"* the whale from 16 to 32. The Box, foaming at this insult, resorts to the penultimate *"baboon"* and begins some chest thumping simian antics. At this point, watch out for any player who *"kangaroos"* from 32 to 64, for surely s/he's the type who would hop and skip right out without paying a dime to anyone. ☆☆

AUSLEY'S LAWS OF BACKGAMMON

by John Ausley

1. When all else fails . . . try winning.
2. Don't count your chickens before they rip your lips off.
3. Be courteous until it is important.
4. Pay all debts, both ways.
5. Games are for fun. Backgammon is a game of luck. Luck is a game of skill.
6. Steaming is for losers. Revenge is for steamers.
7. All players think they are better than they are. Except for Pros . . . they KNOW they are better than they are. And they are right.
8. Regarding becoming good . . . it takes longer than it takes.
9. Regarding becoming great . . . there are no pips to watch here, so stop counting on it.
10. Training is important. Beginners study books. Intermediates study lessons. Champions study propositions. Pros study everyone.
11. Kings play backgammon. Clerks play backgammon. Kings very rarely play backgammon with clerks. Clerks vary rarely play with anyone but themselves.
12. Any idiot can learn to play perfect dice, correctly. However, very few do.
13. The best players in the world are genuinely friendly . . . before they play and right afterwards.
14. If you cannot stand to lose, others will help you master this difficulty.
15. When finally challenging your mentor-master-tutor-guru, realize that they have taught you everything YOU know, NOT everything they know.
16. The cube is probably 90% of the game. The other 10% is the careful observation of your opposing player and when he will double, redouble, decline or give.
17. Head-to-head play is for beginners and bruisers Yearly tournaments are for mathematicians and Pros. Weekly tournaments are for people and other creatures. Chouettes are for the rich and the wise. Backgammon is for fanatics . . . but then again, so is Life.
18. A player's REAL weaknesses only truly appear when he is highly up or tremendously down. Keep your own greed in check and utilize his.
19. Lower-level tournament play is like a goldfish bowl with sharks in it. Any given fish may survive for awhile, but basically they are just fattening-up to provide a better feast.
20. The average player "ain't in it for the practice."
21. Steaming is the viewpoint that something unfair has happened to you, before you could properly engineer your unfairness against another.
22. In backgammon, you either make money or learn something. The most important thing to learn is to make money.
23. In a chouette . . . look around for the weakest player. They are the fish, the pigeon, the donator. If you don't see one, YOU'RE IT.
24. Professionals:
    In the long run, Pros will take your money.
    In the short run, Pros might take your money.
    Pros don't play for low stakes.
    Don't play Pros for high stakes.
    Don't play Pros.
    If you must play with a Pro, pay them up-front for a lesson. Then realize he is only teaching you what he is willing to reveal.
25. The rules in any Chouette vary in the favor of the smartest player there. If they're better than you, make sure it's a talking-party. If you're good, make it no-talking. If much better, make it seperate cubes. If you don't quite grasp some of this, watch your ass in a Chouette.
26. Any two-bit Pro has a book to hustle, but publishers own the cube and maintain considerable gammon-equity.
27. Settlements are offered by the weak and scared but also by the strong and bold. While deciding which is which, always demand more or offer less.
28. A "TAKE" with the cube at 2 for one-dollar a point, while playing with a friend and you nicely up is NOT NOT NOT the same "TAKE" with the cube at 16 for twenty-dollars a point, with you in the box in an 8 man Chouette and badly down. ANYONE telling you this would definitely prefer that you believed him.
    Corollary: You cannot put Theory in your wallet.
29. Beware of a player asserting the rightness of a move. If he were any good he would probably keep the knowledge to himself. ☆☆

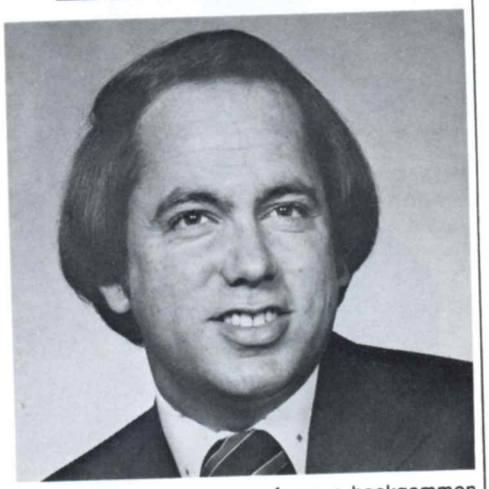
backgammon across america



FISHING BACKGAMMON

Ralph Roberts of the Hoosier Backgammon Club announces the Backgammon Fishing Trip. You won't have to kill time with gin, poker, or bridge because you'll be with fifteen or twenty other backgammon players. Meet in Chicago about Sept. 17th, fly together to Kenora, Ont. (probably Ash Rapids Camp) for three or four days of fishing and backgammon. We'll put it all together if there is enough interest. Sound good? Call **(317) 872-0892.**

ZEMBY'S



Bruce Zemby was a famous backgammon personality who died recently. In his honor, **Ted Barr** named his new elite backgammon club Zemby's. The new club which bills itself as the "Northwest's finest private club", is located at 1100 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, Washington. For more information call the Pacific NW Backgammon Assn. **(206) 285-6768.**



Hamilton Backgammon Tournament THE BEST EVER

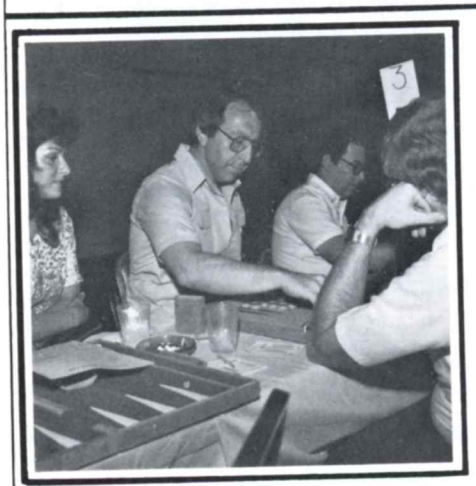
The Hamilton Squash Club played host to another super backgammon bonanza on Sunday, April 26th.

Players from Ottawa, Rochester, Buffalo, Toronto, London, and Hamilton filled the sixty-four-place draw in the best-attended tournament ever held in the area. Extra players that arrived were accommodated in small mini-tournaments that took place through the afternoon and continued into the early hours of Monday morning.

The two winners received a full entry into the World Amateur Backgammon Championships in Las Vegas as well as return flight and accommodation.

Constantin Kritsonis of Toronto and **Genghis Khan** of Buffalo were the two main winners with third, fourth, and fifth prizes going to **Barry Moss, Ray Leger,** and **Fred Kapuscinski,** respectively.

California Open - Nissenson



California Championships Inc. (Sid Jackson) ran a pretty good June tournament at the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles. Emphasis was placed on intermediate and novice competition. This is a good policy, since it encourages new players and shows them that backgammon can be fun. The director of the novice tournament was **Jim Stern,** from the Sacramento backgammon scene.

The championship division was well attended also. **Nick Maffeo,** who has been knocking them dead in recent tournaments, took second place. The winner was the new, improved **Ron Nissenson.**

Nissenson is the familiar tournament player noted for his flamboyant lifestyle. He happens to also own the original Nagel painting, a reproduction of which this magazine uses on the letters to the editor page. Rah, Ron!

No other results were available at press time.



SAN FRANCISCO CLEANS UP

They say there are no bad players in San Francisco. It must be true, because both Amateur and Championship divisions at the Las Vegas tournament were won by Golden Gaters.

Lucky **Nick Maffeo** whipped them in the pro division. He beat the improved and daring **Chuck Giallanza** from Los Angeles. Giallanza had a very difficult schedule eliminating, among others, Stan Tomchin, who is considered by many the best tournament player in the world.

The numbers at the Dunes tournament were staggering, both in terms of players and money taken in. It was hard to follow who was doing what to whom. Someone commented after seeing the piles of drawsheets that now he knew how many holes it took to fill Albert Hall.

There were two big winners in the Amateur tournament: Bill Kennedy, a flawless player from San Francisco, and Wattson, a clever promoter from New York. An investigative report on the Las Vegas tournament will be presented in the next issue of the magazine by Danny Kleinman, who was at the Dunes tournament on assignment for the Backgammon Magazine.

NORTHERN NEVADA

The sister club of the LVBC has announced some changes. Former director **Bill O'Brien** has relocated to Sun Valley, Idaho and now has the status of advisor and director Emeritus. The new co-director is **Dave Heffner (847-0553). Jim Roderick,** of course, remains as director. He and O'Brien founded the group and brought it to national attention with their upbeat newsletters and fine regional tournaments.

MAYFAIR CLUB MOVES

Alvin Roth is one of our favorite people in backgammon. This famous bridge personality has done more than anyone to keep backgammon alive in America. The finest players in the world have come out of his Mayfair Club in New York. Since the Mayfair Hotel went co-op, the New York backgammon club moved to the Gramercy Park Hotel. This hotel affords the Mayfair Club a permanent, attractive, and comfortable new home.

The new club will have a dining room, a lounge, and separate rooms for cards and backgammon.

Two nights a week a room will be reserved for social (no stake) bridge and backgammon. This is in keeping with the Roth policy of encouraging and developing new players. The Mayfair tradition of the free midnight buffet on weekends and free Sunday brunch will continue, as well as bonus coffee and soft drinks to members (gratis) at all times.

A special membership rate is being offered — $300 lifetime for residents, $150 lifetime for non-residents.

The following changes in policy will be initiated at the new Mayfair:

1. A reasonable dress code will be enforced.
2. A closing hour of 4:00 a.m. will be maintained.
3. The Mayfair will be a club for members and out-of-town guests only.

The Far East

TOKYO Bureau

by Steve Herman

Backgammon activity continues to flourish in Tokyo these days. This was exemplified in a tournament sponsored by the Daimaru Department Store chain. The open tournament was held on the eighth floor of the high-rise department store next to the Tokyo Subway & Train Station.

There were a total of ninety-six entrants, and hundreds of spectators were on hand to watch the action. It was a sudden-death, round-robin tournament using non-Jacoby and five-point match format to decide the winner from the two highest scoring finalists on each side.

The outcome was a surprise — the winner was a housewife from Yokohama, Mrs. Takako Yagi. She defeated Kyoshi Shirakawa for the championship. Mrs. Yagi had only been playing backgammon for a year.

"I practice often with my husband. This is only the second tournament I've played in," the quiet housewife said after accepting the winner's trophy and a cachet of prizes donated by the department store chain. Runner-up Shirakawa is a thirty-year-old professional photographer who lives in Tokyo.

There were three Americans who played in the tournament; however, the Japanese competition proved to be too tough for them this time. The entrants from the U.S.A. were: Beau Tolleson from Malden, Missouri (he learned to play backgammon in Japan five years ago, and is currently a salesman in Tokyo), San Franciscan David Lee Edisonis, a translation editor who also works in Tokyo, and Backgammon Magazine correspondent and free-lance writer, Steve Herman from Las Vegas.

Japan Backgammon Notes



Tournaments are now being held in Tokyo every other Thursday night at 6 p.m. in the Ginza area. The location is the Villa Coffee Shop and Lounge near the corner of Showadori Avenue about a four-minute walk from the Theatre Tokyo on the famous Ginza Dori Avenue. The other Thursday is also a backgammon night sans tournament play.

The serious player who is looking for a little action and some English-speaking competition should check out the Com'Inn Lounge near Ebisu station in Tokyo; however, be forewarned they close at 10 p.m.

In Harajuku, there's a place to count pips, sip coffee, and eat pasta until 4 a.m.! It's called La Boheme, and it has an atmosphere to match the name — antiques and an Old World design and atmosphere.

A major international tournament will be held in Tokyo late this year. A definite date has not been set as yet, but November seems to be the month preferred. By the time of publication of this issue, the decision should have been made. All those interested in entering should write to: **Backgammon Assoc. of Japan, Daini-Ishii Bldg. 32-3, 2-Chome Shinkawa, Chuo-ku, Tokyo.**

That's it for now from Tokyo —

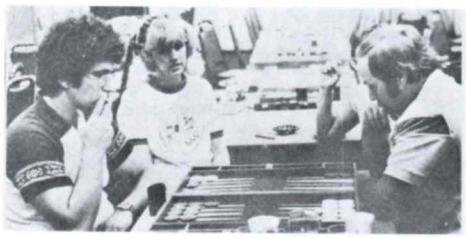
SAYONARA!

What Do You Do On Cape Cod?



According to **Francesca Parkinson** (Pres.), **Frances Vallone** (Tres.), and **Betty Heartfield** (board member), you start a backgammon club.

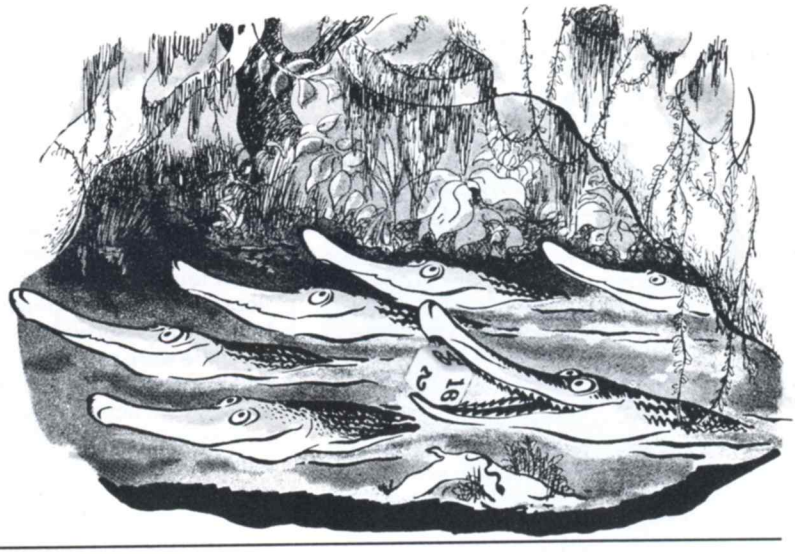
WILDFLOWER CLASSIC



The first annual Desert Wildflower Classic Backgammon Tournament was held by the Antelope Valley Backgammon Club of California. **George Gaskins,** VP of the AVBC, won the beginner's division. **Yvonne Photias,** sixteen-year-old daughter of club president **Dr. George Photias,** won the advanced division. Other finalists were: **Donna Silverstein, Rainier Stackowitz,** and **Dan Stephens.**

RUSSELL WRESTLES WITH THE ODDS

by Russell Sands



1. Although the answer seems obvious, it does require some careful thought, although it must be obvious to the reader that Black always has a double here. But does White always have a take? The answer is no. First of all, let's assume it's a straight money game. All the mathematicians will count ten numbers that miss for Black, whereas only nine misses are sufficient for it to be a take, and will therefore advise to take the cube; but reducing backgammon to pure mathematics includes having to make some restrictive assumptions. Specifically, the well-known and oft-quoted 3:1 rule only holds true when the players are of exactly equal strength, which can be defined as having a fifty percent expectation of winning any given game; if you are the better player, this means that your expectation in any given game, which hereby can be defined as the next game which you will start, will be greater than fifty percent. Therefore, it may be better to concede this game and get on to the next one. In this example, if you are better than a fifty-three percent favorite (assuming, of course, that your evaluation of the player's abilities is accurate), you would be giving away points if you were to take this cube. The conclusion here is that the heavier you are favored over your opponent, the more the position has to exceed the strict mathematical take/pass line for you to have a justifiable take.

In the second situation, that of being at double match-point, we see an example where, assuming that you are both equal players, it is clearly correct for White to pass. The reason here is strictly mathematical and has to do with the match score. If White takes, he will win the game and thus the match 10/36 or 27.77% of the time; but if he drops the cube, he is down 10-9 in an eleven-point match, which gives him a thirty percent chance of winning the match (this figure is calculated by taking White's chances of winning two games in a row, .50 x .50 = 25%, and adding to it the chance of White winning the match in one game with a gammon, which is about five percent).

2. This position is similar to one which occurred in a 1978 amateur final between David Leibowitz and Jack Barney. In this and many similar positions, most players will instinctively clear their midpoint with 13/11 (2), thinking they are ahead in the race. Although the pip count is close to even, White will have more trouble bringing his last two checkers home and will also have an inefficient bearoff.

All in all, the race is actually pretty even, but most importantly, the race is not the most crucial aspect of this particular type of game. It should be viewed as a form of two-way holding game. In this sense, Black is much better off to remain back on his midpoint and play 5/1. Now, White will have to break and leave a double shot (in most cases twenty-four numbers) on twenty-two out of his next thirty-six rolls: 6-5, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2, 5-4, 5-3, 5-2, 5-1, 4-3, 4-2, 4-1. If Black were to mistakenly play 13/11(2) White is forced to leave a double shot on twelve number (6-1, 6-4, 5-1, 5-4, 4-3, 4-2) and a single shot on eight more numbers (5-2, 6-3, 5-2, 5-3).

3. This position was taken from 'Vision Laughs at Counting; by Danny Kleinman, and occurred in a match between Chuck Papazian and Hugh Sconyers, both world-class players. The position looks pretty even — certainly not a double in a money game. The equity of owning the cube probably makes this a beaver.

Fig. 1 Does Black double? a. for $
Does White take? b. 9-9, 11 pt. match

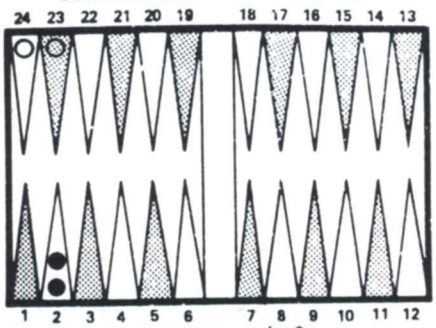


Fig. 2 Black to play 1-1 Friendly session with D. Leibowitz

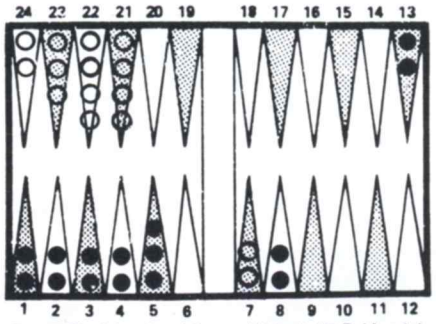


Fig. 3 Does Black double? a. for $
Does White take? b. Black behind by 9-6
Papzian vs. Sconyers by D. Kleinman

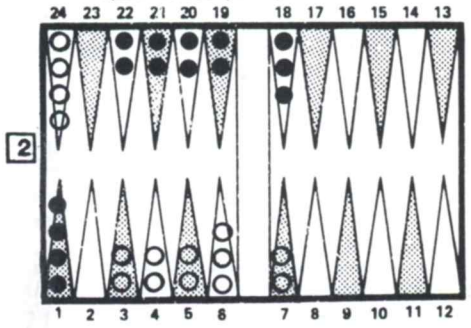


Fig. 4 Does Black double? a. for $
Does White take? b. Black ahead by 10-6
Sands vs. Zaltash 1980 WABC round of 16

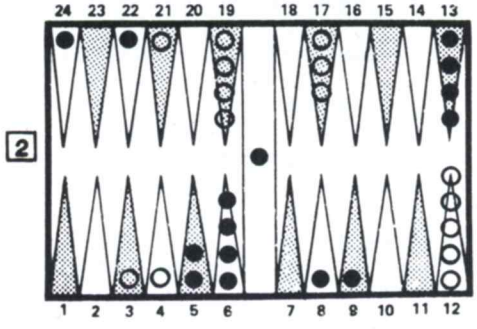


Fig. 5 Black to play 4-3 HW set #5 P. Magriel
a. same position, Black owns cube
b. center cube

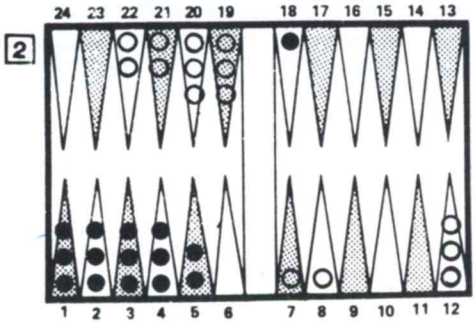
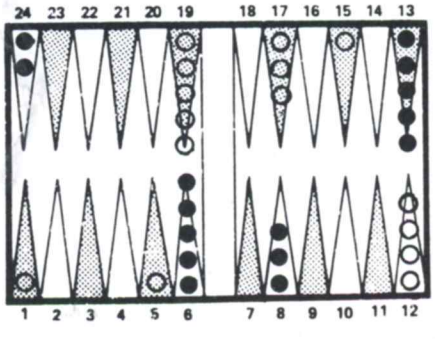


Fig. 6 Black to play 5-3 Commonly misplayed opening roll after 0:4-3



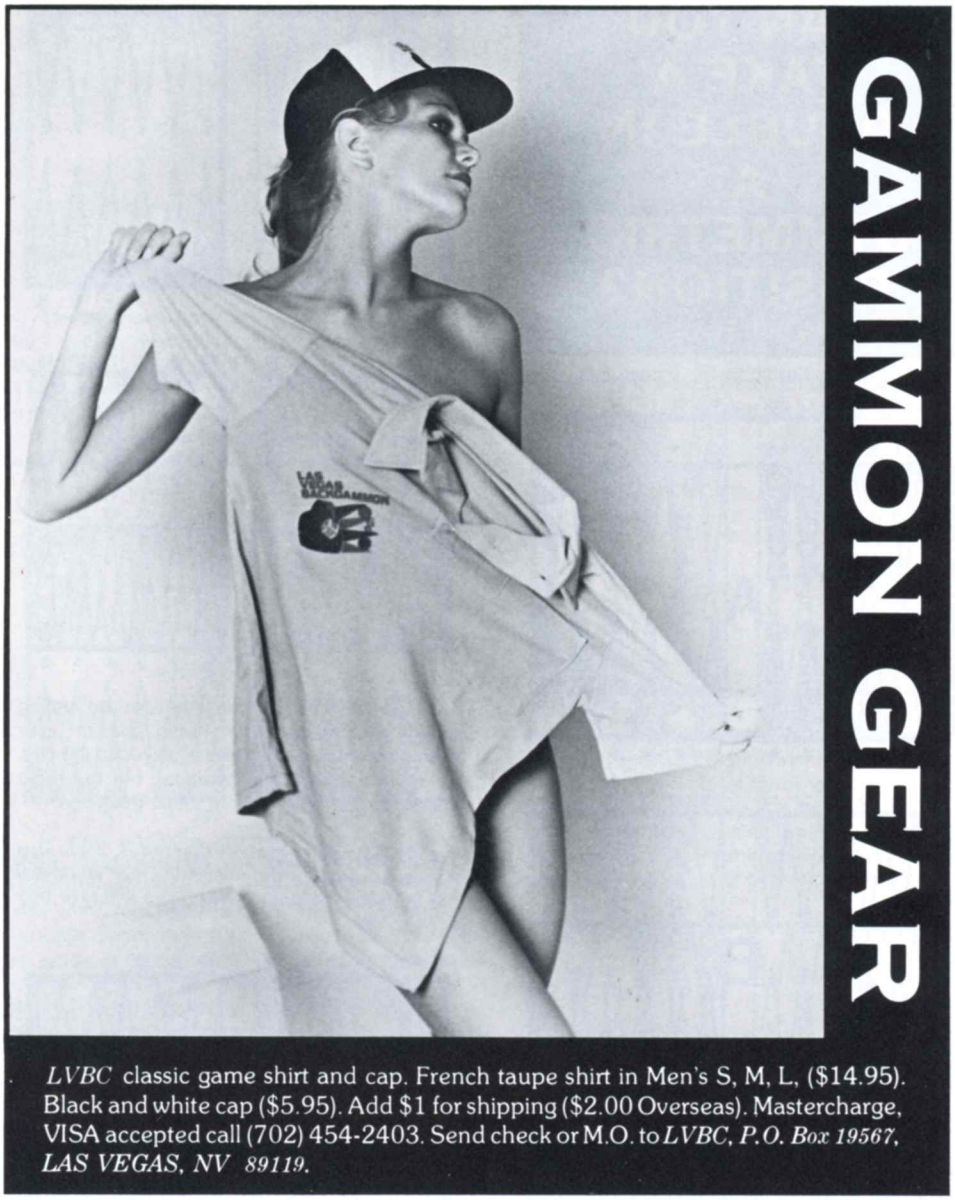
But in a match, this is a very good double, and for the same reason that makes it such a strong double, White should pass. The reason is as follows: While the game is pretty even, it can also be defined in the dynamic sense as being highly volatile, meaning that the game can swing widely on one roll; more importantly, whichever side crashes first is likely to be gammoned. This means that the game will probably be worth four points, making it twice as valuable to White, since Black only needs two points to win the match and the gammon won't help him at all. If White drops, he will still be ahead 9-7 in an eleven-point match, which makes him about a seventy-four percent favorite to win. If he takes, he has a fifty percent chance to win the match now (assuming it's an even game), and the other half of the time he'll be down 10-9 (assuming he gets gammoned if he loses) giving him an additional fifteen percent winning expectation (1/2 x 30%) for a total of sixty-five percent.

4. This position occurred during tournament play in Las Vegas against Ali Zaltash. I was leading 10-6 in a thirteen-point match. In a money game, this is clearly an aggressive double, since every number for Black hits something and continues the attack. Because Black has such an aggressive game, and White has such a weak and undeveloped game, I'd probably not want to take a cube like this for fear of getting gammoned. But concerning match-play, it is better in this case to refrain from turning the cube. When ahead in a match, you must be more conservative about doubling — here it is much too early. It is wiser and more flexible to play on for a few rolls, either in case the attack fizzles and White gains a playable position, or in case the attack succeeds and you can win a gammon and get to a Crawford game. In match-play White has a take because of the fact that he is behind in the match and must be a little more liberal in his takes; more specifically, he has a chance to win two points and narrow the score to 10-8, while there is not that much difference in being down 11-6 or 12-6 (both are pretty bad).

5. This example is provided to test your awarenes of the position of the cube during the game. In the original case, the correct play is 18/11. Although this play leaves twenty-four shots, Black will be safe on the other twelve numbers which miss. Although 18/15 leaves only twenty-two shots, it also leaves fourteen numbers which don't get Black home safely. Remaining on White's bar is the worst, leaving only nineteen shots, but making it almost impossible for Black to get home safely without leaving at least another double shot on his next roll.

However, if Black owns the cube, or the cube is in the middle, the correct play is 18/15. Here the main concern is to leave the least number of shots on this roll twenty-two numbers and then you will win the game immediately by redoubling White out (staying back on his bar, you can't redouble).

6. Although I may get a lot of argument on this one, my preferred play in all situations is 8/5*, 6/1*. Playing 13/5* just doesn't accomplish very much. It doesn't really provide anything as a tempo move, since it doesn't seriously affect White's development, and it's not that strong a move to try and make your five-point since White has twenty return shots at your blot. Hitting twice on the other hand, makes you a favorite to cover your five-point next time, since White has only eleven return shots, and does act as a full tempo move since White must use his whole roll (except doubles) just to bring both checkers in from the bar. ☆☆



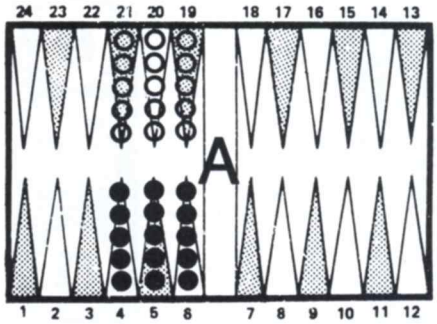
LVBC classic game shirt and cap. French taupe shirt in Men's S, M, L, ($14.95). Black and white cap ($5.95). Add $1 for shipping ($2.00 Overseas). Mastercharge, VISA accepted call (702) 454-2403. Send check or M.O. to *LVBC, P.O. Box 19567, LAS VEGAS, NV 89119.*

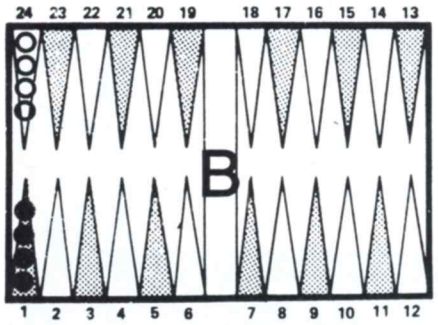


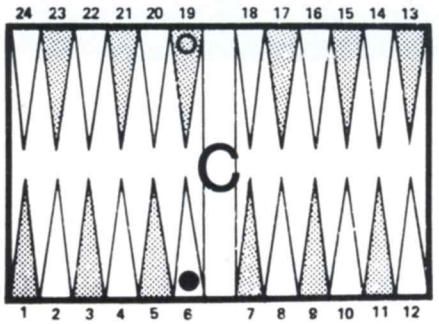
CAN YOU TAKE A DOUBLE IN A SYMMETRIC POSITION?

by Bob Floyd

As position (A), (B), and (C) show, the answer is (A) yes, (B) no, and (C) maybe.

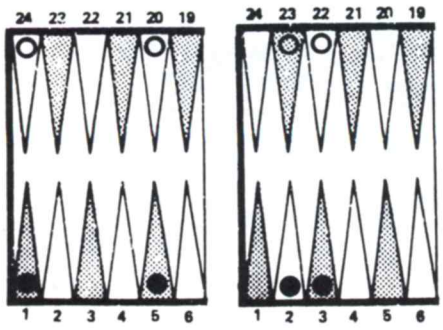


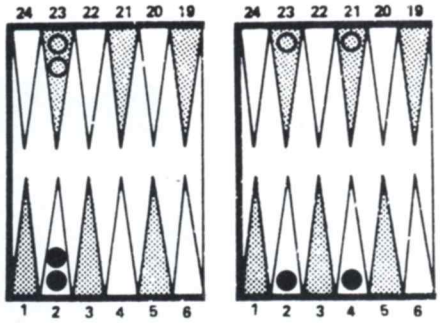


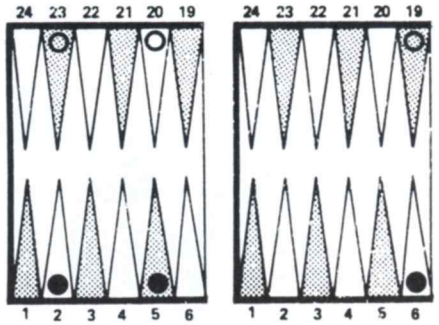


Surprisingly often, though, the answer turns out to be yes.

A one-roll symmetric position is only a take if you have between eighteen and twenty-seven rolls that bear off. These are the only one-roll symmetric takes:*

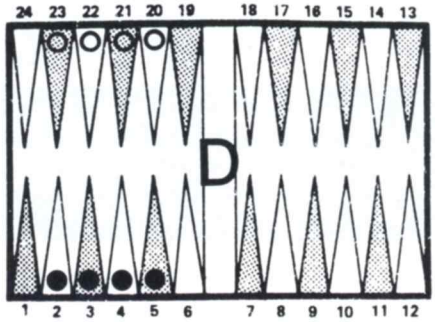






They are only takes because of your redoubling equity. In a one-roll symmetric position your winning chance, if the game is played to the end, is less than twenty-five percent, but the cube makes up the deficiency in these positions.

**Danny Kleinman observes that 3-4 vs. 3-4 is also a take, because of the possibility that White will roll 1-2 twice. Dropping gives up an equity of .002 of the cube.*



In a two-roll position, like (D), the decision to take depends on your chances of bearing off in one, two, and three rolls. In position (D), your chance of bearing off in one roll is 2/36 (5-5 or 6-6). Your chance of needing three (or more) rolls to bear off is 685/1296, or about 19/36. Your chance of bearing off in two rolls is 15/36. Overall, your chance to win, ignoring the cube, is:

$\frac{34}{36} \times \frac{2}{36}$ (large doubletons win)

$+ \frac{19}{36} \times \frac{15}{36}$ (your opponent misses, you don't)

$= \frac{353}{1296} = .27$, a take.

(Your actual chances are better, because your rolls of 2-2, 3-4, 3-5, 3-6, 4-5, 4-6, and 5-6 will give you a powerful redouble).

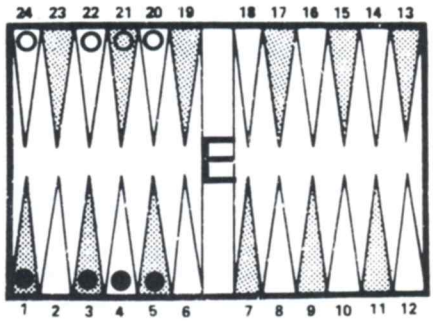
In such two-roll symmetric positions, you can usually tell whether to take a double if you know three numbers. Let A be the chance you are off in one roll (usually large doubletons), B the chance you are off in two rolls (found by examining all possible two-roll parlays), and C the chance that you will need three or more rolls. In position (D), A is 2/36, B is 15/36, and C is 19/36. You can always take $A^2 + B^2 + C^2 + « 1/2$. In position (D), $A^2 + B^2 + C^2 + = (4 + 225 + 289)/1296 = 518/1296 = .40$, well short of 1/2.

The reason for the formula is that your chance to win, ignoring the cube, is

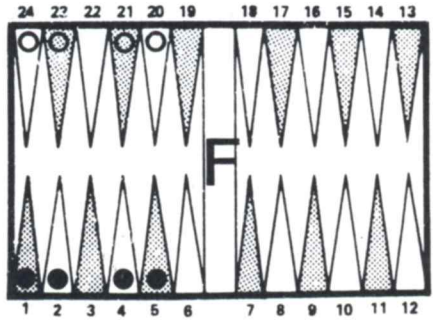
$A(B + C) + BC = 1 (1 - (A^2 + B^2 + C^2))$.

Another way to look at it: $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ is the chance that you and your opponent bear off in exactly the same number of rolls. You lose all those games, and half of the rest.

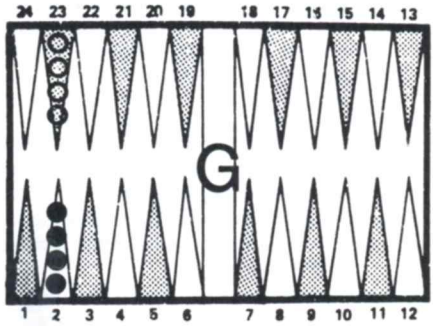
Here are some positions that are takes, by the $A^2 + B^2 + C^2 « 1/2$ criterion:



A = 2/36, B = 17/36, C = 17/36 $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ = 17/36 $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ = 582/1296, a take.

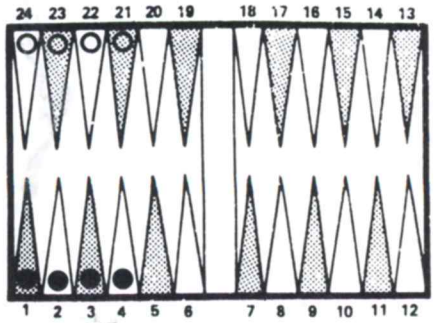


A = 2/36, B = 19.5/36 C = 14.5/36; $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ = 594.5/1296, a take.

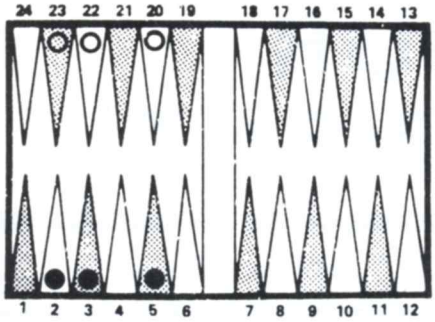


A = 5./36, B = 16.6/36, C = 14.4/36 $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ = 508/1296, a take.

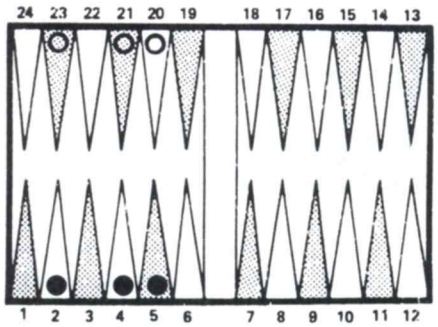
These, however, are clear drops.



A = 2/36, B = 29/36, C = 5/36, $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ = 1070/1296, much larger than ½, a drop.



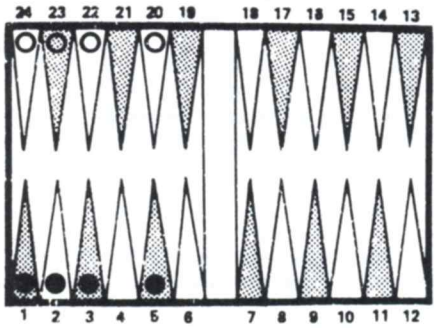
A = 4/36, B = 29/36, C = 3/36, $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ = 866/1296, a drop.



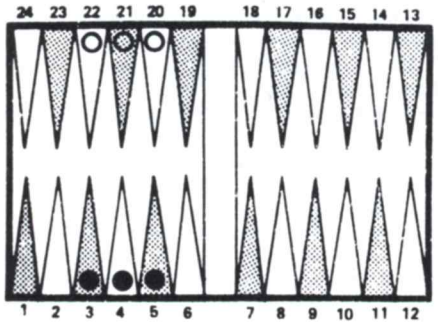
A = 3/36, B = 27/36, C = 6/36 $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ = 819/1296, a drop.

In case you don't want to evaluate $A^2 + B^2 + C^2 +$ in your head over the board, a rule of thumb deals accurately with almost all cases;

Drop if any of A, B, or C (usually B) is larger than 2/3; take if none is larger than 7/12. In the few cases (2/36, 23/36, and 11/36, for example) not handled by this rule, the decision is close, and your redoubling equity probably gives you a take.

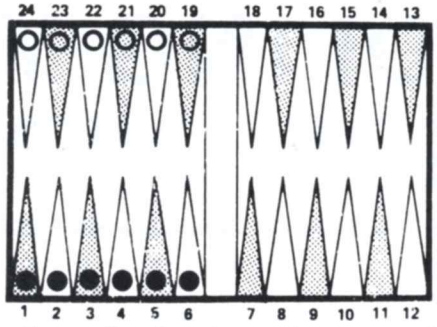


A = 2/36, B = 23/36, C = 11/36, $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ = .504; Black's redoubles give him a take.



A = 3/36, B = 24/36, C = 9/36, $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ = 514; Black's redoubles give him a bare take. (To drop gives up an equity of two percent of the cube.)

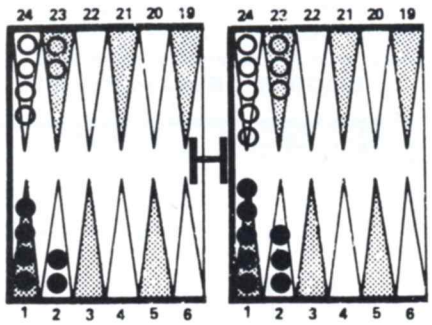
Looking back at position (D), you could say, without doing the calculation exactly, that all three numbers must be well under 2/3, and by rule of thumb the position is a take.



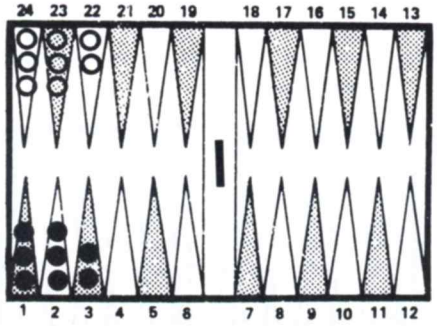
The position above is a well-known proposition. Each player's chances to be off in two rolls, three, and four or more are respectively 3/36, 12/36, and 21/36. $A^2 + B^2 + C^2$ = 594/1296 = .46, a clear take.

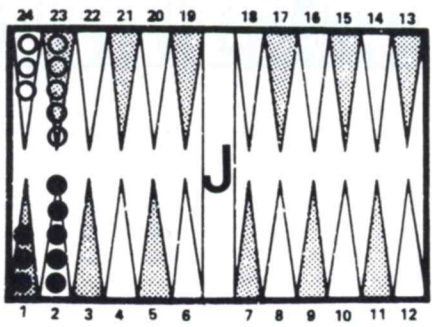
Positions where neither player can miss are only takes if there is redoubling equity:

A drop. A take.



In such positions, where a doubleton gives you a good redouble, you must still have a no-cube winning chance of at least 3/16 (.1875) to take the cube. Position (C) is the only possible position for taking with a chance of exactly 3/16; as a rule of thumb, always frop if your no-cube chance is less than twenty-three percent (i.e., your chance for a helpful doubleton is less than thirty-six percent. In position (H) your chance to go off in three rolls or less is .42; your winning chance is .42 x (1-.42) = .243, which, when supplemented by a little redoubling vigor, gives you a take. In position (I), however, nether 1-1 nor 2-2 help you, your chance to go off in three rolls or less is about .30, your winning chance is .3 x (1-.3) = .21, and you should drop.





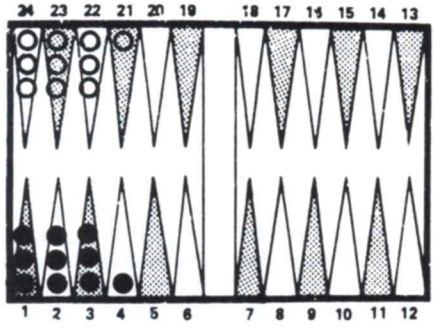
In position (J), your chance to go off in three rolls or less is about .36, and your no-cube winning chance is .36 x .64 = .230. By redoubling you also win in those games where your first roll is a doubleton, and White's third roll would have been. This gives you an additional chance of about

31/36 (White starts with a singleton)
X 5/36 (Black rolls a useful doubleton)
X 31/36 (White rolls another singleton)
X 31/36 (Black rolls a singleton)
X 5/36 (White bears off with a doubleton)
= .012.

Finally, you may roll two doubletons to your opponent's one, with a chance of $(5/36^2 \times 2 \times (5/36) \times (31/36)$ = .005.

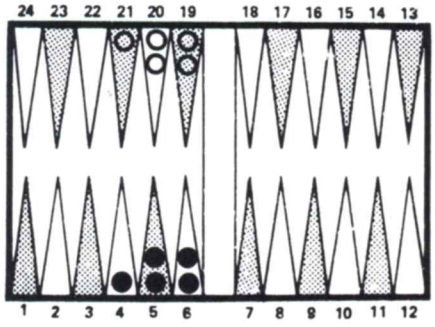
Your overall chance to win is then .230 + .012 + .005 = .247, just short of a take.

In a five-roll position, however, you have an easy take even if not all doubletons play well.

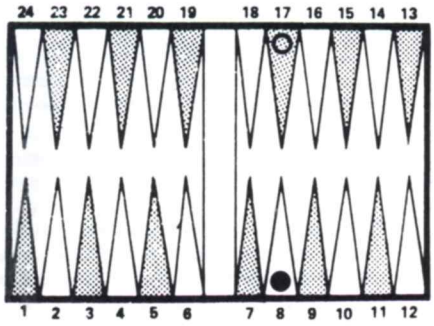


Here, your chance to bear off in four rolls or less is about .42, and your no-cube winning chance is, at least, about .24. Your redoubling equity is substantial, and the position is a definite take.

If the race depends simply on pip count, as in this position, a symmetric position is always a take at any pip count of twelve or more.



Pip counts from eight to eleven are normally drops. There is one exception:



where the slight chance that White will fail to bear off in two rolls gives Black a take. His chance to win is .256.

Conclusion:

With one or two checkers remaining, take only if you will have a takeable redouble. With three checkers remaining, take if the pip count is twelve or more. With four checkers remaining, take if your opponent has a substantial chance of missing, usually a gap on a low point.

In a three-roll position, take if there is any substantial chance (say, 6/36) that your opponent will miss. With five or more rolls remaining, always take. ☆☆

HANDLING YOUR SUPERIOR OPPONENT

Accompanying backgammon's meteoric rise in popularity during the past decade was the realization that backgammon was, at least in part, a game of skill. It is no longer a secret that the more informed player who consistently applies his knowledge at the table rates to emerge victorious over his less informed opponent. This is particularly true in money games or tournament matches of long duration. Time, which tends to mitigate the vagaries of the dice, works in favor of the technically advantaged player.

Realistically, however, most tournament matches are not sufficiently long to allow the skill factor to express itself in comparison to the capriciousness of the dice.

The vast majority of money games, the planning of which can best be expressed in seconds rather than hours, do not continue long enough for a fair expression of skill disparity to occur.

The above factors often allow the weaker player to best a technically superior opponent.

Life would be much easier for the weaker player (or to paraphrase Joel Rettew: the dwarf playing the giant) if he only understood the following simple truth:

The weaker player must roll the right numbers at key points in the game in order to have a chance to defeat his superior opponent. The more skilled player can win with average or, less frequently, inferior numbers.

The most common strategical error committed by the weaker player is trying to "hang in" the match as long as possible.

This results in overly conservative checker movement and cube action and a complete unwillingness to "put the match on the line." This type of strategy increases the time factor of the match, which we already know works in favor of the more skilled player.

In a strong vs. weak confrontation the weaker player should exploit every opportunity to put the match on the line. This will often require taking risky and aggressive moves both with the checkers and the cube. If successful, however, he has succeeded in eliminating the time factor which is continously working to his disadvantage. Additionally, the superior player with an intense dislike of big swing situations will feel the pressure and many times pass a technical take rather than risk a big swing.

It is vital that the weaker player understand the difference between the following two strategies:

A. **Slow "grind" to avoid accidents, and**

B. **Quick, volatile, almost suicidal actions oriented towards the threat to end the match in one or a few games..**

It is axiomatic that unless you are a very skilled or very weak player you will probably be pitted against inferior and superior opponents in most tournaments; therefore, it is absolutely essential for you to be able to **objectively** assess your **true** abilities with respect to those of your opponent.

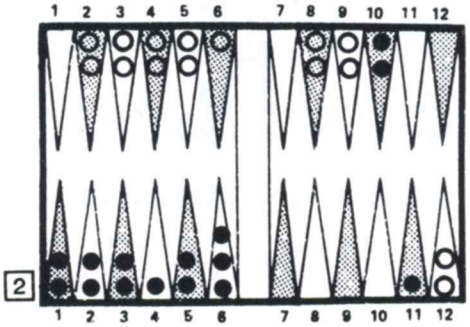
It is not uncommon to observe both players in a match playing over-conservatively **and** offering the same explanation at the conclusion of the match, "He was so bad, I didn't want to give him a chance to . . . "

Computer aficionados can often be heard talking about the "Garbage In, Garbage Out" factor (in relation to the validity of information obtained from a computer). This is no less true for the backgammon competitor. It is far more productive to admit, if only to yourself, that the opponent is more skilled than you, and to then employ the appropriate strategy for this particular adversary. The alternative is to refuse this admission and to proceed with the incorrect strategy thus **increasing** your opponent's already favorable odds.

The position illustrated in Diagram 1 occurred in the weekly Championship Tournament at the Cavendish West.

Black, an intermediate player, was leading 6-4

DIAGRAM 1 Black to Play 2-2



in a match to 11. His opponent was a very skilled championship level player with an impressive string of tournament victories.

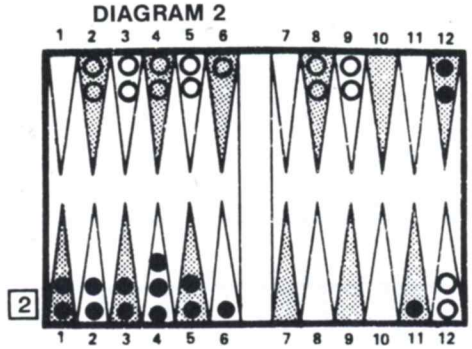
Owning the cube at 2, Black has the option of using his 2-2 to either:

A.) Redouble White into a **pass** and secure an 8-4 advantage in the match, or

B) Redouble White into a **take**, and if he wins the game, advance to the Crawford Game (10-4).

Black realized that an 8-4 advantage is a substantial lead on paper, but not that difficult for a skilled veteran, such as White, to overcome. Thus he chose to slightly "misplay" the 2-2 (Diagram 2) by denying himself two very valuable

DIAGRAM 2



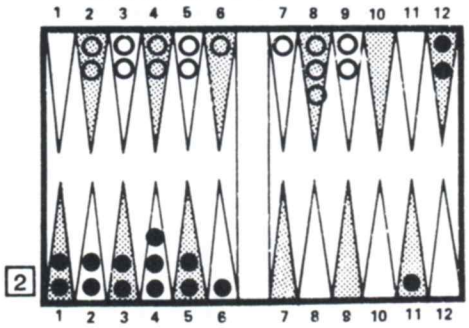
crossovers.

White shook his head with a condesceding smile. He quickly rolled a 6-5 and was then trailing by only six pips (Diagram 3).

Black redoubled to 4, erasing the smile from his opponent's face. White, after a short hesitation, accepted the redouble, lost the game, and subsequently the match.

Black did exactly what he should have done as the weaker player in Diagram 1. He created a more takeable position in a non-skill confrontation in order to put the match on the line.

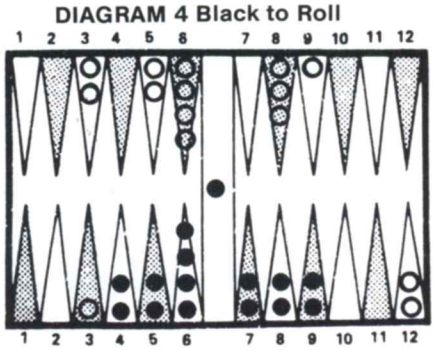
DIAGRAM 3 Black to Roll



As we have stated in previous articles and books it is commendable to know the correct technical or mathematical move for any given position. However, one would be quite remiss in using that datum alone in determining one's final decision. Many times other parameters are more important. In Diagram 1 the relative skill levels and match score were of paramount importance, not the theoretically correct move.

The position in Diagram 4 occurred in another tournament at the Cavendish West.

DIAGRAM 4 Black to Roll



Black, the substantially inferior player, was leading 9-8 in a match to 11.

After a quick assessment of the position Black decided not to double, but to play on for the gammon. His decision was based mainly upon having one of White's men trapped behind a full prime.

Although he has practically no bad numbers on his next roll, the probability of a gammon is minimal, because he has a substantial amount of work to do in order to effect a gammon.

While it is certainly true that a gammon would secure the match, moving ahead 10-8 and to the Crawford Game would give White excellent chances for the ultimate victory.

The majority of players, experienced veterans included, have a difficult time objectively assessing when to go for the gammon (as opposed to doubling the opponent into a pass or a take). The main factor to evaluate is the **potential gain versus the potential loss in relation to the score.**

In positions in which the gammon possibility is high it is obviously correct to take the small necessary risks to attain it. This is especially true if, in obtaining the gammon, your score remains odd, you go to the Crawford Game, or win the match.

In positions such as Diagram 4, however, where effecting a gammon requires much work,

by Gaby Horowitz and Dr. Bruce Roman

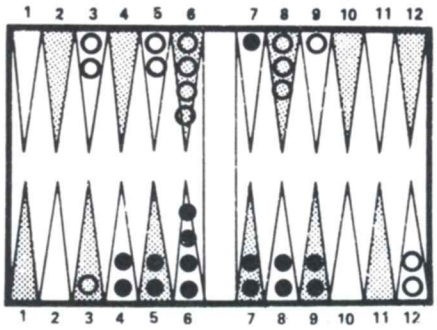
fortuitous parlays and swings, one should be content with cashing in for the one point rather than to risk losing it (or more). It is a common foible to continue on for "imaginary" gammons.

Black's prime, although sufficient to obtain one point by doubling, lacks sufficient spare men on the higher points to last for a long period of time. If he had spare men on B8 and B9 it would be a different situation.

Also, should White feel adventurous and accept the double, Black would be in an enviable position. The match would be on the line versus a superior opponent in a position in which he has the best of it.

Black rolled a 6-1 from the bar and White replied with a 2-1 (Diagram 5).

DIAGRAM 5 White to Play 2-1



White has the following two options:

A) Make his bar-point and hope that Black re-enters on W1 or W2 and is then unable to escape. This move gives Black several bad rolls immediately and decreases White's chances of losing a double game — less blots. However, White's chances to win will also not be great without establishing W4 (Diagram 6).

B) Hit on W7 and slot W4 (Diagram 7). This greatly increases the gammon danger **for one roll**, but tremendously improves White's chances for an outright victory because it works towards building a **permanent position of strength.**

DIAGRAM 6

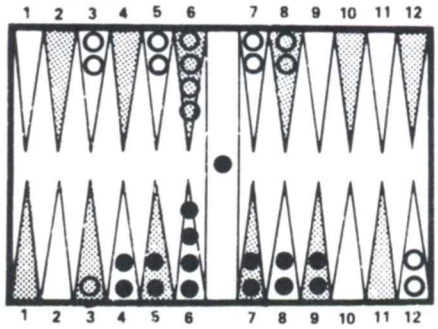
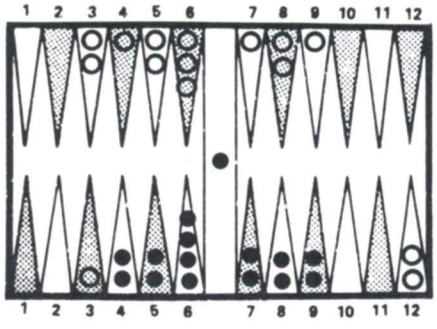


DIAGRAM 7



If White was certain that his opponent would not double with either play, it is clear that Play B is a **free** chance to turn the game around. Based on Black's previous decision to refrain from doubling and play on for the gammon, White could reasonably assume that he could make Play B and not be offered the cube.

Black has exactly a 50-50 chance of hitting one of the blots on W4 or W7. Having accomplished that, however, the gammon is by no means guaranteed. White will have several rolls in which to re-enter and/or anchor.

By losing the game without being gammoned White is in no worse a position than if he had been doubled out of the game earlier.

Thus if Black fails to double to put the match on the line, White has a **free aggressive play** with minimal extra risk.

In the actual match, White made the bold move (Play B, Diagram 7) and Black danced. White then rolled a miraculous 6-2, completing his prime, and Black replied with a 6-1. White played on for the gammon and moved ahead 10-9 in the match, and finally on to victory.

It is a very instructive game and the following two lessons can be learned from it:

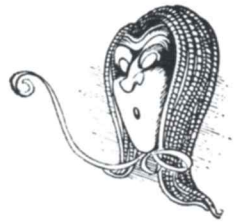
1. **In almost every match there is one or several key games or even plays upon which the entire outcome of the match rests.**
2. **Do not push a desperate man against the wall, particularly if he happens to be a skilled player with abundant resources to turn the game around.**

Being aggressive when playing a superior opponent is definitely the desirable approach. You must, however, be careful to differentiate aggressiveness from pure greed. Black's downfall in the last game described stemmed from just such an inability. ☆☆

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CAN THAT PLAYER REALLY TALK TO HIS DICE?



by Mary

"Telekinesis" and "mind control" seem to be replacing plain old "dumb luck" as the words backgammon players use to explain their losses. Baron Vernon Ball devotes a section of his book, **Alpha Backgammon**, to this phenomenom. Recent tournament winner Russell Sands claims he used mind control to give himself the better of the dice. Even Barclay Cooke (LVBC, October 1980) professes to believe there is something to it.

I will not attempt to prove that mind control does not exist. What I will propose instead is that all natural explanations be eliminated before esoteric or supernatural explanations such as mind control are considered. This is a variant of Occam's Razor that is certainly applicable to backgammon.

The backgammon world is rife with superstition. For example, I have one otherwise agreeable opponent at the Cavendish Club of Philadelphia who will not let me talk to the dice. Others are firmly convinced that I roll more double 5's than other people (sometimes I believe it myself).

We have a female player at the club who has driven grown men practically to tears with her "unbelievable luck." People will recount her errors, especially with the cube at great length, but will neglect to mention what she does right. However, an impartial kibitzer would tell you that she is perfectly capable of playing well, and even of making good cube decisions. On the other hand, since she can easily afford to take bad doubles to see how the games turn out, she often does just that.

There is a fellow at the club, known informally as "The Arm," who many players believe is unbeatable in a race. Players will tell you stories of totally lost games that he brought back from the dead by rolling a series of large doubles. However, they blame their entire loss (say, twenty or thirty points) on that game, when in fact the swing due to that game alone was only four, or perhaps eight, points. The rest was probably due to their mental state after losing that game.

To his credit, "The Arm" plays a solid game, is versatile and plays well with the cube. His many years of tournament experience have not been wasted. However, he seldom gets credit for playing well — only for rolling well!

There is another lady at the club who never plays in chouettes, and who plays only for minimum stakes. Always even-tempered and agreeable, she never steams or complains. Her opponents criticize her playing frequently. After all, she has even been known to make "Selma's point" with an opening roll of 6-4.

However, when the dice are suitable for races, she can beat the young sharks without too much difficulty. She can play a straight race as well as anybody else, and if she wins a few points the young sharks will generally add to their own woes by pressing to catch up. After all, they wouldn't want kibitzers to come by and see them losing to **her**!

So the next time you lose, don't rush off to one of Russ Sands' $50-an-hour dice rolling lessons. Instead, take a hard look at that player who seems to have such a great arm. Maybe he's erratic — maybe he's underrated — who knows, maybe he's actually a better player than you!

As for Russ Sands, if he can continue to convince his opponents that he has special powers, or at least distract them with his antics, the psychological advantage he gains will undoubtedly aid him in winning many more honors. ☆☆

FUN FACTS



DID YOU KNOW THAT:

• Last year, a four-year-old boy tried to enter the Amateur Championships? They were very tempted to accept him because he walked up with cash in hand.

• The youngest person ever to win a tournament was Leslie Stone, who, at nine, won the Obolensky Intermediate World Championship? She collected nearly $2,000. The tournament was held in conjunction with the Island Casino, and Leslie was forced to play on the adjoining terrace because she was too young to enter.

This record still stands, in spite of the fact that Dan Pasko, son of Jersey Jim, took second place in the doubles championship at the Washington D.C. American Championships '81. Jersey Dan's partner in the doubles was coincidentally, Leslie's father, Tobias Stone, but Dan was already ten.

• Ogden Nash wrote a poem in 1962 titled, "Gammon me once, gammon me twice, you can count on gammoning me thrice?"

• Some men of science have gone so far as to try to prove that you can influence the roll of dice by talking to them? When they rolled the dice 100 times in silence, 7 came up sixteen times. When they rolled 100 times while repeating "come on, 7," the number came up nineteen times. They tried the experiment repeatedly, and always got more 7's when they chanted to the dice.

• You can load transparent dice by letting them stand for a few weeks in a saucer containing mineral oil an eighth of an inch deep? The impregnated side of each die thereafter will be a little heavier than the other sides, and will tend to wind up on the underside at each throw.

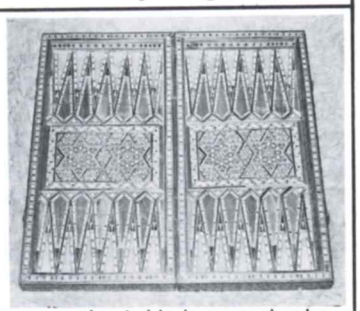
BG ART

by Craig K. Tyndall

As I write this article I'd like for you to understand my background concerning backgammon boards. I have been fortunate to have seen and manufactured some of the finest backgammon boards in the world.

Recently, I was shown a board that far surpasses any backgammon set that I have ever seen. From a distance it appeared to be just another backgammon set from one of the Persian Gulf countries; however, upon closer examination I realized that every piece had been individually inlaid by hand — over 200,000 pieces in all. Since I've had experience in using exotic woods in building backgammon sets, I could easily identify some of the woods that this set was made of: olivewood, oak, walnut, mahogany, paduk, green heart, sycamore, and pearwood. There is also extensive use of ivory and mother-of-pearl.

This set belongs to a friend of mine who says that it has been in his family for many years. It was



passed on to him by an uncle who had received it as a gift from a sheik in Baghdad for his efforts in helping that country set up its boxite mining operations.

The true value of this treasure is unknown. I am sure that in the near future it will be among the other works of art in some metropolitan museum, or privately owned by someone who is in a position to appreciate its rare beauty and its investment potential. Needless to say, my friend has his bank keep this beautiful backgammon set securely locked up in its vault.

DYNAMIC CUBE STRATEGY

by Gaby Horowitz and Dr. Bruce Roman

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

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Excerpt from Alpha Backgammon



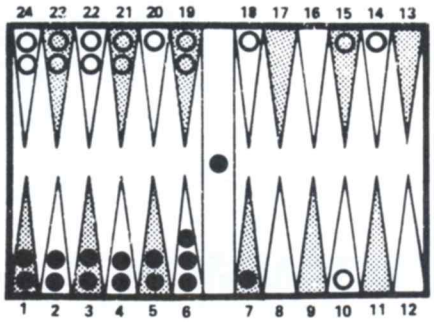
by Baron Vernon Ball

"Relax . . . take a deep breath and go deeper . . . the following beneficial phrases are for your benefit and you may use them for occasional reinforcement while at this level of mind. Repeat mentally after me. My increasing mental faculties are growing each and every day . . . my increasing mental faculties are causing me to be a winner . . . successful . . . in each and every undertaking . . . every day in every way I am getting better, better, and better . . . for positive thoughts bring me benefits and advantages I desire . . . increasing my luck . . . increasing my capacity to win . . . increasing the quickness of my thoughts so that I can function faster and easier and with greater control . . . I have full control and complete dominion over my faculties and centers at this level of the mind and any other level, including the outer conscious level. This for your benefit, you desire it, and it is so. You will find that with each and every breath you take, you are surrounding yourself with an energy field in which you are successful and a winner, and all persons who enter this energy field will sense these feelings and know it, and they will constantly reinforce for you the feelings that you are successful; you are a winner . . . and the more you know this at alpha levels of mind, the more it manifests itself at the outer conscious level . . . and each time you play a game you are the winner . . . whenever you play, you will be completely relaxed . . . you will feel no stress, no anxiety, no tension, only complete relaxation . . . you are a winner, and your luck will increase, and you are growing more in the ability to roll the right dice, at the right time, and you will win, again and again, and again, for this energy becomes reinforced the more you think about it . . . relax . . . take a deep breath and go deeper . . . you will find that negative thoughts will never have any influence over you while you are playing and winning. You will find that negativity around you will only serve to make you more relaxed, more in control, more aware, and luckier. Anytime there is anyone negative around you, speaking negatively or thinking negatively, it will only reinforce in your subconscious mind the fact that you are relaxed, in control, and becoming a greater player and winner, here and in every place in the world that you will play. Negative thoughts will only create within your mind a positive outlook and a winning attitude. You will find that each and every time you play over a long period of time, you will gain in strength . . . your mind will function quicker and more easily . . . your concentration will increase and become effortless . . . your energy will continually renew itself. Every time you touch the dice or the pieces your energy will increase, and you will become more relaxed, and your luck will increase more and more. You will find that you always roll the right numbers on the dice when you need them . . . these are phrases, and after each phrase, I am going to pause a few moments, and you will allow them to take total and tremendous effect at the subconscious level. So relax, take a deep breath, and repeat these phrases over and over mentally. My hands are the hands of a winner . . . and with these hands I will always roll the numbers that are the best for me . . . I always reenter from the bar on my first roll. I always reenter from the bar on my first roll . . . relax, take a deep breath, and go deeper . . . I am always calm, relaxed, and in control. I always reenter form the bar on my first roll . . . I hit my opponent's blot whenever I choose . . . I am a winner, and my abilities increase with each and every game I play . . . I always roll doubles and numbers that are good for me when I need them . . . I am a winner . . . I always roll doubles and numbers that are good for me when I need them . . . I am very lucky . . . my mind is always in tune with the dice and I am always in control . . . I find that my mind and my energy influence the dice favorable to me . . . my energy is that of a winner, I will always roll the special numbers I need to win, when I need them . . . relax . . . take a deep breath and go deeper . . . I always roll high numbers and large doubles when bearing off in a race . . . I am very lucky . . . I always roll high numbers and large doubles when bearing off in a race . . . I never leave blots when bearing off . . . I am very lucky . . . I never leave blots while bearing off . . . I am a winner . . . I am very lucky . . . because my mind is always in tune with the dice . . . I am successful, I am productive, and I am a winner, for I desire this, and this is so. ★★

Double-Beaver Revisited

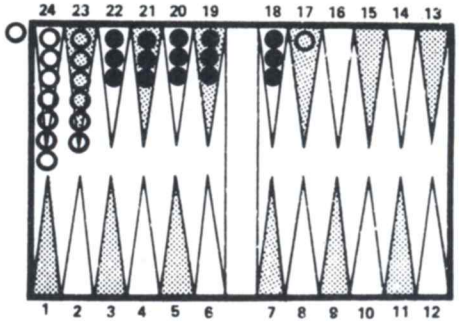
by Arthur Ramer

In the July, 1979 issue of Backgammon Magazine M. Leifer suggested that there exist positions where the correct doubling strategy is to double for one opponent (say White) and to beaver for the adversary (say Black). The proposed illustrative position



was subsequently criticized by W. Robertie as not providing sufficient equity for the doubling side — in order to win gammon White has to risk about a five percent chance of losing the game altogether.

The following position meets all the requirements of a simultaneously correct double and beaver:



White is on roll and eleven out of thirty-six times will jump the prime and win gammon from Black (Black does not have even a theoretical chance of saving a double game). In the remaining twenty-five instances Black will double (or redouble) and White has to pass. To see that this is the case, let's note that White has a 90%+ chance of moving the prime (with all fifteen men in play) around the board and containing Black without ever giving him a chance of escaping (add to it a very high likelihood of White not escaping in the remaining cases when Black may, on occasion, keep a five-point prime only).

Black, having closed his home board with White's one man on the bar (and only one man borne off), has at least a ninety percent chance of winning.

The combined probability of success is 81%+, sufficient to force White to drop (under any assumptions, continuous game or sudden death).

In light of the above discussion we can now compute White's equity. If White does not double his equity is

$\frac{11}{36}$ when he jumps the prime

and $-\frac{25}{36}$ when he fails

for the total of $-\frac{14}{36}$.

If White does indeed double, he is beavered (optimum strategy for Black) and his equity becomes:

$\frac{11}{36} \times 8$ (gammon with the beavered cube)

and $-\frac{25}{36} \times 4$ if he fails.

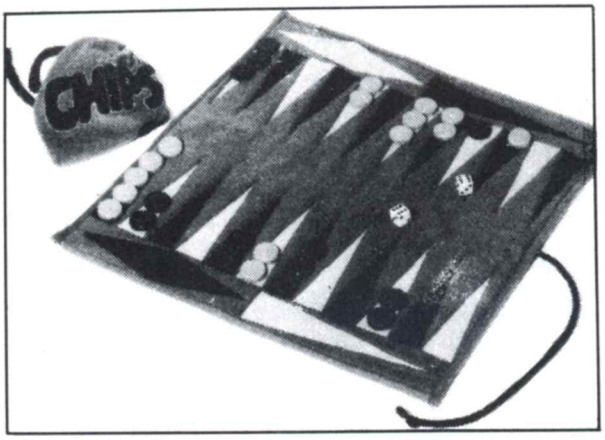
The total now becomes $-\frac{12}{36}$, a better result (that is a smaller average loss) for White.

The suggested position may appear a rather contrived one, but similar situations may arise as a result of a massive back game by Black, when White has proceeded to hit all his opponent's checkers. ☆



BEHEMOTH BACKGAMMON

The dice are larger than a sixth-grader's head in this huge quilted backgammon the kids at Notre Dame Academy made this year. Their annual fund-raising project, a quilt, this year took on a fun-and-games dimension, obviously a project which drew enthusiastic response from all.



QUILTGAMMON

The experts at Viking sewing machines tell us there are four basic forms of quilting being used today: mola, trapunto, applique, and basic machine quilting.

Mola is reverse applique. A design is stitched through several layers of different colors and types of fabric. The fabric is then clipped away to expose the desired color and create a design with depth and dimension.

You can make a colorful and functional backgammon board using the mola technique. Choose three colors of firm fabrics such as felt or velour. They need not be red and black

Cut two 24-inch squares of the background color and one 24-inch square of each of the other two colors.

Baste three fabric squares together, with the background color on top. Reserve the other background color square.

Draw the design of the board on tissue paper. There are twelve long triangles to a side (the triangles are about seven inches long) and two design motifs. Pin pattern to three layers of fabric. Using a straight stitch, sew through the pattern and all three fabric layers. Pull away when stitching is finished.

Begin trimming away fabric to expose desired colors. Playing points should alternate color and should point to opposite color. Trim close to stitching.

Then set machine for a medium zigzag stitch and zigzag over lines of straight stitching. Finally, pin the other square of fabric to the bottom of the board, wrong sides together. Use an overcast stitch to sew all layers together. Bind around board with trim cut from background color or use ready-made binding. Make chips from bottle tops, painted the same color as the cloth.

(NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE ASSN.)

FLINT BACKGAMMON

Six Tips for Running a Successful Club at the Grass-Roots Level

1. Meet in a cozy, comfortable place, preferably with food and drink service. Stress the **sociability** of the club.
2. Be 100% **player-oriented** (as opposed to profit-oriented). Give them full play for their investment, plus throw in extras, such as a master-point system and special prizes.
3. Maintain a **mailing list** and send regular **newsletters**, so players can compare and be kept informed.
4. Avoid bulky committee structures or heavy membership fees. An **informal, open**, friendly atmosphere will make any player feel more welcome.
5. Grab free **publicity** opportunities: use TV newsreel spots, the club news page or entertainment section of the newspaper, and posters. Use free passes as prizes and incentives for new players. Join a national backgammon association and exchange ideas and newsletters. Put club logo on T-shirts and tote bags.
6. Expose club members to stronger, expert players, either in person or through books. Hold events which attract better players, or encourage your players to go to bigger tournaments. **A club thrives only when its players continue to grow in skill.** ☆☆

CENTSIBILITY (True Backgammon Tales of Woe)

by Frank Incardona

The backgammon circuit is being invaded by bright young players who fancy themselves "earners." Armed with secrets gleaned from a half dozen backgammon books, they march to battle with the old pros.

On such tyro was a firm believer in the positive thinking principles dictated by Ball's "Alpha Backgammon." He prided himself in being able to control the game with his imposing personality and intimidating conversation. The modus operandi was to learn all he could about his opponent and browbeat him with this edge — the method worked well.

Finally, in Detroit, this champion found the play of his dreams. A mild-mannered old-timer agreed to play a twenty-one point match for a four-figure sum. This was a real stroke of luck since our man knew this veteran player to be weak on the cube and easily flustered.

He wasted no time in applying his theories. "I know all about you and your game and I can win," he bullied.

The old guy just smiled and nodded.

"I know all about you?" he repeated and was pleased with the scare.

The new gladiator racked up point after point. The rush to twenty-one points was interrupted only by the reiterated phrase, "I know all about you and I can win."

The score wasn't even close. The results were pleasing. The young man congratulated himself on his psychological tactics that had successfully cowed his adversary.

Now, it was time to collect. The veteran stood up and headed for the door.

The greenhorn was nonplussed.

"You forgot to pay," he sputtered. The old warrior stopped in the middle of buttoning his coat and looked offended.

"Son," he drolled, "if you knew all about me, you would have asked me to put the money up!"

BACKGAMMON HISTORY



MR. GLADSTONE PLAYING A GAME OF BACKGAMMON WITH HIS SON.

This Is the Latest, and, Possibly, the Last, Picture of England's Great Statesman, Who Is Now Lying on What is Believed To Be His Deathbed at Hawarden. Despatches Received This Morning Say That His Family Has Been Summoned and That He Is Sinking Fast.

(From the London Graphic — April 25, 1898)





Lewis Deyong & Polly Bergen Pondering Over Backgammon Boards — Time Magazine 1973

1972 CHAMPIONS

Any ranking of backgammon players will be argued feverishly by the *cognoscenti*, but the following list of the world's top fifteen players (in order) represents a consensus among the leading players at the Racquet, Clermont, and Mayfair clubs:

1. Tim Holland, New York
2. Barclay Cooke, New York
3. Walter Cooke, Vale, Colo.
4. Paul Magriel, New York
5. Claude Beer, New York
6. Ralph Chafetz, New York
7. Louis de Yong, Miami
8. Joe Dwek, London
9. Gino Scalamandre, New York
10. Philip Martyn, London
11. Oswald Jacoby, Dallas
12. Tobias Stone, New York
13. Proter Ijams, New York
14. Jimmy Goldsmith, London
15. Arthur Dickman, New York

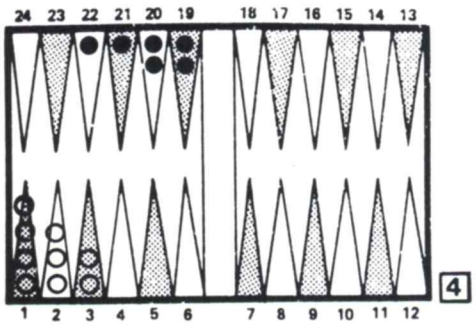
GRAHAM CRACKERS

by C.H. Jeans

As you may know, the Grosvenor Backgammon Club has been running a £50 monthly tournament since October of last year. Such players as Lewis Deyong, Alan Lorenz, and Richard Olsen have played in the tournament, no doubt attracted by the auction, which is often in excess of £4000. Before the March tournament, no one had reached the final more than once; however, this time two previous winners met in the final to do battle over seventeen points. Nick Nicholson, arguably the best player in the club, had narrowly beaten me in the semi-final and was now due to face the might of New Zealander Graham Hounsell. As I had not beaten Nick in a match for three years, while Graham had won many of our weekly tournaments, I decided I might have something to learn by notating the match.

In the first game Graham gave a good early double, having to win a gammon, but Nick survived the blitz and eventually turned the game around, recubing to 4 in the bear-off.

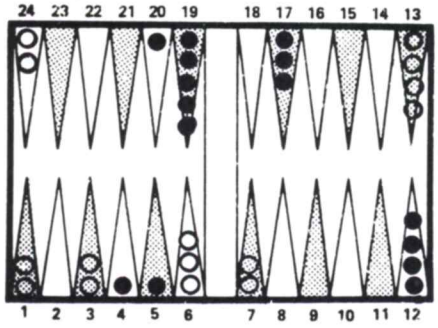
Figure 1 Nick (●) Graham (○)



Graham obviously was not prepared to have the psychological disadvantage of losing four points in the first game and chose unwisely to drop. He may have reasoned Black to be off in four rolls requiring two doubles for himself to win. But Black could easily miss three times, turning it into a five vs. five-roll situation; then any double, which White is favorite to find in four rolls, could easily win the game for him. Certainly White is better than 70/30 against in this position, and as it is early on in the match, the dropping point is no different to that of a money game and so must be a take.

Further aggressive doubling by Hounsell paid off, though, and he soon found himself 11-6 up. Perhaps now a modicum of caution would have been advisable with regard to the cube, now that he had a commanding lead. But this was not the style of Graham Hounsell, and so in the reset game he cubed after his second roll.

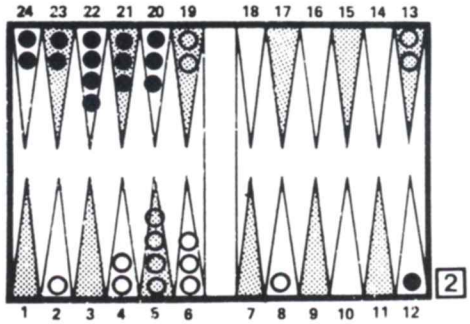
Figure 2 6-2 7,14 6-3 20 5-4 6-1 7 5-5 3 1 0 doubles



The 6-3 from Black is better played by coming out to the nine-point as this at least duplicates White's 4-2 and 3-1. The other play breaks the 11th Commandment — "Thou shalt not split and slot" — and was duly punished with 5-5. But after Black brings both men in has White sufficient advantage to cube? Playing Jacoby in a money game this would probably be a double but in a tournament at this score I am not so sure. Apart from the nine rolls which hit twice and five rolls which make a point White cannot do anything spectacular. Note that four rolls do not hit at all. It would be more prudent for White to play for a gammon here without cubing, and if it goes wrong, he has only lost one point. If he doubles, Black, who has gammon chances himself, will recube as soon as he becomes a slight favorite and White could be faced with a possible eight-point loss. However, as often happens in backgammon, the theory went out the window and White won the gammon to go 15-6 up.

In the next game Nick doubled early and eventually reached the following position when Graham (White) rolled 4-3 and had the interesting choice between hitting and risking a gammon or playing safe and hoping for another shot.

Figure 3 0 to play 4-3 15-6 17 pt. match

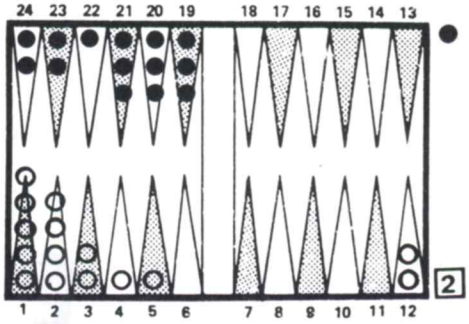


With this problem "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing". Most players would hit without thinking, but many experts would think twice and some would just quietly make the two-point. The decision is not easy, especially as White cannot double his opponent out. He leaves fourteen return shots immediately and with another two blots exposed around the board he can easily lose a gammon. This would make the score 15-10, putting Black back in the match. If he decides not to hit, Black is not a favorite to get past and five rolls — 6-1, 2-1, and 1-1 — leave fifteen return shots, which, combined with the other fourteen bad rolls, gives White a nineteen percent chance of hitting on his next roll. Black may fail to escape to safety a second time, so 4/1 would be closer. In spite of White's inability to double he would still be better than a three to one favorite to win the game should he hit. Therefore, his actual chance of winning is about fifteen percent. As gammons are involved, we must work in expectations rather than probabilities to solve the problem. Clearly, if White has a fifteen percent chance of winning (if he plays safely with the 4-3), his expectation is 0.15 -0.85 = -0.7, assuming for simplicity that the cube is on 1, and that he cannot lose a running gammon. The 64,000-dollar question is whether White stands to lose more than 0.7 by hitting. The problem is complicated by the fact that White doesn't necessarily lose a gammon if he loses the game. If White: a) either won the game or b) lost a gammon, then it can be shown mathematically that he would need about a forty-three percent chance of winning to justify hitting. The calculation would be simpler still if White had no chance of winning without hitting as then we could just look at the ratio of a) and b) and we would find perhaps surprisingly that one's chance of winning the game need only be just greater than half one's chance of losing a gammon to justify hitting. However, simple principles can very rarely be applied easily to backgammon positions, and this case is no exception. A point which may be missed is that if White is hit and comes in immediately and Black is unable to pick another man up, White is a good favorite to save the gammon even if he misses Black on the way around. Taking an estimate of White's chances of losing a single to be thirty-three percent (which may be a bit high), it is found that White needs almost as much chance of winning the game as he has of losing the gammon to justify hitting. Applying this information to the position, it is not difficult to come to the conclusion that White must hit with the 4-3.

Graham came to that conclusion rather more quickly but soon regretted when Nick rolled 6-2 picking up both blots to win a gammon!

With the score 15-10, the next game developed into a runner with Graham becoming a good favorite but wisely showed some restraint regarding the cube. Finally he could wait no longer and with gasps from the crowd he cubed in the following position two pips behind!

Figure 4 ● doubles ● ○ 15 10



The spectators couldn't believe their eyes and Nick snatched the cube with glee and turned it back to 4 after a 4-1 from Graham. Nick rolled 3-3 to bring his last two men in, resulting in a close race. However, Nick failed to find the double he needed on the first roll and once again Graham Hounsell had won the monthly tournament.

It may surprise you to know that this last double which was thought to be so premature is in fact not even a take. White would have had more chance of winning the match 16-10 down. It is not completely hopeless 6-0 down in a 7 point match as the match can be won by winning 3 games (instead of 4) as long as the second or third one is a gammon. Gammons are won roughly twenty-five percent of the time, assuming the game is played out to a finish; so using this information it is not difficult to compute one's chances 6-0 down. It is found to be about nine percent, or ten to

(continued on page 38)

HORSESHOE POKER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Las Vegas Backgammon Club members cleaned up at this world-famous tournament. Winner of the main hold'em event for an amazing two years in a row — our hero **Stuart Unger**. Unger is now considered the best gin and poker player in the world. He privately expects to play backgammon equally well within a short time. No doubt in our mind — Lord knows he practices hard enough!

P.S.: Unger also won the deuce to the seven event for another $100,000. Unger's partner and best friend is **Chip Reese**. Reese has been called the best all-around gambler in the world. In this tournament, he placed in five out of eight events.

The two of them are headed for the gambler's hall of fame. There is no doubt that they are the most famous gambling team ever. Years from now the legend of glamorous gamblers like Nick the Greek will pale in comparison to the exploits of the Reese-Unger team.

The mixed doubles poker event was also won by an LVBC-er. **Frankie Incardona** joined up with **Juanda Mathews** and they took all the money home. Congratulations!

CAPTAIN CUBE

(Continued from page 6)

As you can see Category 6, containing 2 more rolls than the next largest category, leaves White in an almost double jeopardy position. The fact that Black has good to fair possibilities in all but Categories 1 and 3 (which comprise a total of 8.33% of the time) gives Black a surprisingly strong money take.

In an 11-point match however, with the score at 9 to 9, many other things have to be considered. Assuming both players are of equal skill, if one player doubles the other at 9 to 9, the player being doubled needs only a 30% chance of winning and not a 25% chance as in a money game to accept. Keeping that in mind, the answer in match play at 9 to 9 is a definite maybe! Other factors now come in to play. Case in point: Am I the better player? Or am I an intermediate up against an experienced open player. If the former, you have a better chance of winning the match by either winning two consecutive games or 1 gammon. If the latter, grab that cube, for you don't want to play any more games where you may be anywhere from a 10 to 9 to 7 to 5 underdog. For that would in fact decrease your chances drastically of winning the match.

Try to remember that match play entails many subtleties and nuances not found in money play and as such should not be viewed in the same one-dimensional light.

TEAM TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

— Round Robin Play —

TOURNAMENT DESIGN by Gary Jay

Team backgammon is a means of combining all the excitement of team sports with the strategy of backgammon. The first "Sport of the Mind" Tournament was an experimental success. Last fall, the Backgammon Board of Rochester presented the first Great Lakes Team Championship held in their city, the same site or origin as team basketball. A total purse of $4,215.00 attracted eighty-eight entrants from Detroit, Toronto, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse. Team Toronto won $2,300.00 in the major event of the weekend. Mark Faiz, winner of the Can-Am Championship (November 8th) in Buffalo, was captain of that five-man team. Jerry Nathan headed Buffalo's team to a second-place finish. Detroit was represented by Mike Giordano's Cavendish North Team and Lloyd Jerrauld, backgammon author from Syracuse. Rochester's high point for the weekend came early at the awards roast dinner, when several team members were given master-point plaques, and gave humorous accounts of their road to success.

The team format was round-robin play for each of five team members, with each individual win counting as one match point. Upon completion of round-robin play, the two teams with the highest match-point totals played off for first place. Substitutions and kibitzers from team members were allowed to add an interesting chouette concept. Everyone concluded that team backgammon was here to stay and looked forward to the beginning of team Backgammon - Sport of the Mind!

Each team plays each other team once in the preliminaries.

1st Round	1st Singles	2nd Singles	3rd Singles	1st Doubles
11 Pt. Match	1 Match Pt.	1 Match Pt.	1 Match Pt.	2 Match Pts.

Play includes team chouette — any players who have finished their match may join a teammate still playing a match as consultants. Substitutes can't consult.

The **match**-point scores are cumulative:
example - if one team wins one singles match and the doubles match while the other team wins two single matches, then the score is 3 to 2. Those match-points earned are added to subsequent rounds. After all preliminary round-robin play is completed, the two teams with the most **match**-points meet in the finals the next day in a format of three rounds.

1st Round	4 Singles Matches = Match-Points
2nd Round	2 Doubles Matches = 4 Match-Points
3rd Round	1 Team Chouette Match = 3 Match-Points
	Total = 11 Match-Points

TEAM TOURNAMENT RULES

1. Las Vegas Club Tournament Rules will apply.
2. Each team has a minimum of four players.
   A) a single player is allowed to play the doubles pair of another team if necessary or desireable.
3. Each team has a maximum of seven players.
   A) two substitutes are allowed on each team and the captain of each team may substitute a player at any point in a match once during every match in the tournament.
   B) all seven players must be named prior to the start of the tournament.
4. The captain writes the names of his starting first, second, third singles players and doubles team on a sheet of paper and exchanges sheets with the other captain at the beginning of each round. Any substitutions must come from the remaining members of his team not playing.
5. A team chouette match involves all team players and a captain decides who is chouette captain for each game. Team members may consult on all moves, but the captain of the chouette has final decision. Captains cannot be substituted in the middle of any single game.
6. In the preliminaries if a team can't score enough match-points to win in the last preliminary round, the two teams most in contention play instead. No other settlements can be made on match-points.
7. The winning team of the tournament wins all in the purse.
   A) only a settlement between the final two teams can be made re: the purse.
   B) money distribution of any winnings among team members is decided by each team's management.
8. Any collusion in the tournament to eliminate any team will be considered grounds for a penalty to be determined by a majority of the tournament committee.
9. The tournament committee will consist of one representative from each team and the tournament director.
10. The tournament committee should communicate prior to the day of the tournament to determine by quorum vote any additional rules needed.

(continued page 43)

DUNES
FREDRIC APCAR'S
CASINO de PARIS

HOLIDAY
CASINO
THE WILD WORLD OF
BURLESQUE

HACIENDA
Ice Fantasy

Flamingo
Razzle Dazzle

STARDUST
Lido
de Paris
'81

TROPICANA
Folies bergere

THE THIRD DEGREE

by Joel Rettew

Could You Please Dig Up The Rules For "Acey-Deucey?" I Played This Game Thirty Years Ago In The Navy, But My Sons Seem To Have Different Modern Moves. I'd Like To Know The Original Ones.

In talking with a lot of old sailors, we found a very interesting thing: there are two completely different Acey-Deuceys — one a version of backgammon, the other a card game. We don't know which one you played, but the rules for the card game are duck-simple and don't vary much. The players ante to the pot and get two cards each, face up. They then bet against part or all of the pot that the next card dealt them will fall in between the two. Many people know the game today as "In Between."

Since you mention moves, however, we think it's probably the backgammon version you played in the Navy. Lots of World War II servicemen played the Acey-Deucey variation of backgammon. The basic idea of Acey-Deucey is that special privileges are attached to the player rolling 1-2: he can make the move, name any double of his choice, and move again. He may then roll the dice again. If he can't use both the 1 and 2, he loses the bonus privileges. The player may also deliberately choose a doublet of which he could not use all four numbers, thereby forfeiting said privileges.

Other differences from regular backgammon are:

- All stones are on the bar at the outset. With one or more stones duly entered, the player can use subsequent rolls to enter additional stones, or to move those already entered as he pleases.
- In rolling single dice for the first turn, ace is high, and the first player rolls his own two dice for his first numbers.

Some people who play Acey-Deucey say that if you cannot use the 1-2 privilege it goes to your opponent. Others say if a player rolls a third successive 1-2, it not only goes to the opponent, but the player's most advanced man is deemed to be hit and goes to the bar.

Then, to further complicate matters, there is an entire "European" version of Acey-Deucey! One European rule, which states that one must roll the exact number of the point on which the man sits in order to bear him off, was used frequently by U.S. servicemen.

What Is The Wisecarver Paradox?

It was too complicated for anyone on the magazine staff to figure out; but we can tell you where to find the answer — on pages 196, 197, and 198 of Danny Kleinman's book. In the chapter dealing with Cube Provocation, you will find the Wisecarver Paradox — it is a mathematical oddity. In a position where there are two plays, Wisecarver proves that the play that gets you the cube is mathematically correct. Tim Wisecarver, a former professor of Greek and English, now lives in Las Vegas and deals craps.

Vernon Ball's "Alpha Backgammon" Has A Chapter On Backgammon And Drugs. Is This The First Time That The Subject Of Drugs And Backgammon Has Been Discussed?

It is the first time that it has been approached intelligently. Baron Ball tackles the subject of drugs in a clinical manner. On the other hand, the gonzo "Fear and Loathing" angle was tried in High Times magazine last year. The feature story on backgammon with a drug angle was titled **The Devil in the Dice Cup — Backgammon Destiny and Dope** by John Groff.

Who Runs The Super-Exclusive Park 65 Backgammon Club?

Park 65 in New York is Tim Holland's domain. This club is perhaps the most select backgammon group in the world. It is expensive and restrictive. You've heard the expression "I'd like to get you to play me on a slow boat to China"? Well, Holland docked his slow boat on Park Avenue.

Tim Holland is a world backgammon champion, teacher, and author of two best-selling backgammon books. He was a glamorous figure on the '60s tournament circuit, but has settled down to play almost exclusively at his Park 65 Shangri-La.

Sean Connery, Henry Fonda, and Burt Lancaster are only a few of the famous that Holland counts as his friends and backgammon opponents. His second wife is now Johnny Carson's third.

Among Holland's many famous comments on backgammon is the revealing quote: "It's great for the ego". You bet, Tim.



BLACK & WHITE/NEBC B.S.O. BACKGAMMON BENEFIT

by Michael R. Teilmann

Al Hodis (New York City) defeated Doug Mayfield (Danville, Illinois) to win the 1981 Black & White Boston Classic Backgammon Championship (April 24-26). The final score was 22 to 11.

In all, some 200 of the country's top backgammon players participated in this final event on the Black & White Scotch Championship Backgammon Circuit. The Boston program, held at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, was organized by the New England Backgammon Club as a benefit for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This was the third year in a row that the three-day championship program was sponsored by Black & White.;

Hodis, who lists his profession as a professional backgammon player, will now add the 1981 Black & White Boston Classic to his impressive list of wins which includes: second place in the World Backgammon Championships in Monte Carlo, 1980; first place in the Virgin Islands Tournament, 1979; first place at the Kentucky Championships, 1979; and first place at the Fort Lauderdale Backgammon Championship, 1981. The New York champion was a semi-finalist at the Black & White San Francisco Classic in 1980.

The 128 championship division players and 64 in the intermediate class shared total prize money of $35,200, one of the richest backgammon purses in the country, and a record for the Boston program.

The Black & White Championship Backgammon Circuit was directed by Lewis Deyong (London). Tournaments were held in Pebble Beach, Boston, Chicago, Miami, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.





CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION	
128 Players at $225	**28,800**
INTERMEDIATE DIVISION	
64 Players at $100	**6,400**
TOTAL PRIZE POOL	**35,200**

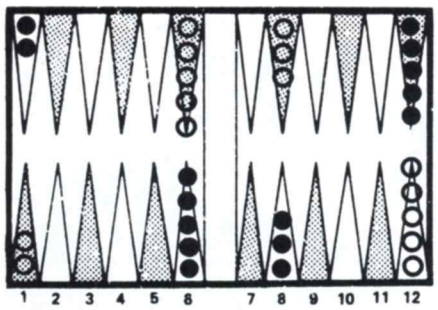
Championship Division
MAIN EVENT 65% - 18,720
Winner 30% - 8,640 - Al Hodis 8,340
Finalist 15% - 4,320 - Doug Mayfield 4,170
Semi-Finalist 10% - 2,880 -
Chris Peterson 2,780
Semin-Finalist 10% - 2,880 -
Tommy Harrison 2,780

CONSOLATION 25% - 7,200
Winner 12% - 3,456 - Bob Cowley 3,336
Finalist 7% - 2,016 - Perry Gartner 1,946
Semi-Finalist 3% - 864 -
Dr. Kamran Ghoranico 834
Semi-Finalist 3% - 864 - William Khani 834

LAST CHANCE 10% - 2,880
Winner 7% - 2,016 - Howard Skan 1,946
Finalist 3% - 864 - Gambis Zordelian 834

BACKGAMMON

by Robert Eighteen-Bisang



Years ago, the "1+ openings" were usually played by bringing a man down from B12 and splitting the back men, W1-W2. Modern theorists recommend slotting on the five-point, B6-B5, with the one. Why?

As Barclay Cooke says in *Paradoxes and Probabilities* (p. 3), "(As) soon as the first die is cast, try for the moment to forget the race and seek position by forming blocks against your opponent. This is backgammon's first great paradox. Basically, the game is a race . . . but if you play with only that thought in mind, you will have little success." In contrast, the older play is oriented. It avoids leaving a blot on B5 for, if it is hit, you will lose 20 (or more) pips in the race. It increases your chances of escaping a man from White's inner board or of making an advanced point with a 6 + 5, 4 + 3, or 3 + 2. One of the advantages of the 1-2 split is that these rolls, which are otherwise mediocre, now play well for you (but most doubles no longer play as well). Splitting your back men also increases your chances of hitting any blot which your opponent brings into his outer board and prevents him from slotting in his inner board.

It is unrealistic to expect to play a game of backgammon without leaving a blot. Realizing this, the experienced player asks not, "How can I avoid leaving blots?" but, "**When** and **where** can I leave them for constructive purposes?" The best time to take chances is in the early game, before your opponent has built up his board or amassed any other threat(s) against you and while the cube is not yet in play. Modern theory stresses the importance of the two 5-points — yours and, especially, your opponent's — and slotting on B5 is an attempt to secure it yourself and prevent White from doing so. It is superior to the other plays for a) 1 + 2, b) 1 + 4, and c) 1 + 5, which include:

a) W1-W4; W12-B10; W12-B11, B8-B7; and the whimsical B6-B5, B6-B4.

b) W12-B8, which does nothing constructive.

c) W1-W7; or W12-B7. Note that slotting on B7 is inferior to slotting on B5 for, not only is a blot on B7 more easily hit than one on B5, but your 5-point is more valuable in the early game.

White is **not** favored to hit your blot on B5. With 1 + 1, he will make his own 5- and bar-points, so only 14 of his 36 rolls hit. Had you not slotted, he could have used 4 of these to make a point in his inner board, while other rolls would have played well for him anyway. If you are not hit, all 1's, 3's and 8's — or 24 rolls — cover B5 (and 5 + 2 now safeties your blot while making B3). If you have also brought down a builder to B11 or B9, 31 or 30 rolls respectively cover B5, but White now has another target. With a blot on B11, his 6 + 4 hits both your blots. He can also hit on B9 with a 6 + 2 or 5 + 3; while double 4's or 2's allow him to hit twice and/or make his 4-point. Many players slot on B5 with a 1 + 2 or 1 + 4 (or 6 + 2), but split with a 1 + 5 because it does not furnish an extra builder. Yet, the difference between 24 and 30 or 31 rolls which cover B5 barely justifies the risk of being hit twice.

A further argument in favor of the slotting play is that it is wrong, in principle, to split your back men gratuitously before the game has assumed a definite shape. Your anchor on W1 is your chief defensive outpost. Its value is illustrated by the fact that even if you are hit twice and subsequently fail to re-enter, having an anchor on W1 keeps you in the game (compare this to your dilemma if you had made the split play and "danced" after White hit you twice with a 4 +, or rolled double 5's or 4's and hit one of your men while making a three-point inner board). What is more, if White hits only one of your blots, this is not necessarily a disadvantage. Having a third man sent back increases your chances of making an advanced anchor — in fact, 5 + 4, 4 + 3 and 3 + 2 allow you to do so immediately.

Finally, we must consider various "situational factors." If you are playing a stronger opponent, you must be aggressive. Your best chance of upsetting him consists in taking every reasonable chance that you can to improve your position and hoping that the dice will back you up. You should therefore slot on B5 in an effort to bring your game to a position of strength as quickly as possible. With a little luck, you may be able to confront him with the cube. Paradoxically, the modern play is also recommended against a weaker opponent — but for entirely different reasons. Here, you want to complicate the game so that your superior skill will be able to assert itself. When facing an opponent of equal ability — often, someone you see as "slightly inferior" — you should be familiar with both alternatives and try to choose the one that will give him more difficulty. For instance, if he does not understand the blitz and is either overly enthusiastic about it or afraid to attack your blots in his inner board when he should, many of the drawbacks which are associated with the split play are negated, and it may then be your most profitable alternative. While more research will have to be done in order to determine which alternative is best suited to various tournament situations, the slotting play is stronger in most cases. The Jacoby Rule states that no gammon or backgammon can be scored unless the cube has been turned during the game. It is increasingly popular in money games, especially in chouettes. When it is in effect, you afford to play aggressively in situations where you have a number of good moves but the more forceful one may put you in danger of being gammoned if it fails. Because of the Jacoby Rule, you cannot lose more than one point if your position deteriorates so much that you cannot afford to take the cube.

These are some of the factors which come into play when deciding upon a "simple" and "routine" opening move. Many plays are much more complicated. But this is why backgammon is such a dynamic and exciting game. ☆☆

Graham Crackers

(Continued from page 34)

one against, as opposed to fifteen to one against if you were compelled to win four games. It might be argued that at 6-0 up you would protect yourself from losing a gammon, but you could only do so by reducing your chances of winning the game.

So when forced with the problem of dropping or accepting a cube 5-0 down in a seven-point match you have to know three things.

1. **Your probability of winning 6-0 down (9%).**
2. **Your probability of winning 5-4 down the score if you win the game).**
3. **Your probability of winning the game - (A).**

(Remembering that although you recube to 4 you have no power to cube your opponent out as you would in a money game).

For #2 40% is generally accepted to be a close estimate. Now we use a simple equation to find (A). You should take the double if -

(A) x (Chance of winning match 5-4 down) = (Winning chance at 6-0)
or
(A) x 0.4 = 0.09
(A) = 0.09 = 0.225

0.4
= 22.5%

So the dropping point is only two and one-half percent less than that of a money game.

In this position Black has tremendous positional advantage in that he already has a man off and will probably bear another four off while White is struggling to bring his men in. Black's only problem is the partially stripped three-point, which is the least troublesome of points to be denuded (as threes play nicely from the six-point to fill the gap). Surprisingly, Black is better than a five to one favorite here, so White is well advised to drop. The point is that White will waste about seventeen pips in bearing off on the average, while Black, with a near perfect distribution, only wastes five. This means Black is effectively ten pips ahead in a short race — little wonder, then, that his advantage is so decisive.

Even when you are leading 5-2 you should be quite happy to cube when you are a four to one favorite in spite of the possibility of going underdog in the match if you lose the game; however, at 5-3 you should wait until you are nearly a five to one favorite, as at 6-3 down your opponent has an eighteen percent chance of winning the match. ☆☆

THE MAN IN THE BOX

by Dennis Stone



Miracle Time

Baby Mason's insect-like chest was rising and falling spasmodically, as though it belonged to a consumptive Sunday afternoon opera buff trying to keep pace during a Wagnerian recitative.

He was Siegfried in search of the Magic Ring, Sir Gawain in pursuit of the Holy Grail, Mason the Magician attempting to conjure a six-one from the bar. He was holding onto the dice cup as though it were a box containing the planets and the stars.

Superstitious Paul, who had been into the intangibles of the game long before Baby Mason, thought his Captain was breathing much too rapidly and irregularly to generate any true power over the dice; and although he himself had a vested interest in the roll, was not about to pass on any mantras, mandalas, or Mephistophlean manifestos to so unworthy a practitioner of the rolling arts. The bottom line was: it could cost Paul in the long run.

Arthur the Expert did not believe in such things, never did, and was not about to start. Compulsive Kal was irritated by the delay and was waiting for his chance at the box. Boxes held a fatal fascination for Kal — the club's, the track's.

The Mathematician was computing the probability of Baby Mason going into cardiac arrest; or more likely, taking a sudden breath, fainting, and passing out of the chouette forever.

The man in the box, gargantuan, loomed across the table, casting a shadow over his diminutive adversary. He was amused by the spectacle of someone trying to implode and explode at the same time. The cube was only at the eight level, and therefore not of sufficient magnitude to generate the man in the box's interest in the game. Probably a gammon, he thought. Eighty more points. Two thousand dollars. Bucket drops.

Baby Mason was slipping into trance-state. His face was emptied of expression, eyes glazed. The super-oxygenated cells within his cranial cavity were sparking effulgently across their synaptic chasms. His mind was turning into a micro-universe. He was, he felt certain, achieving connectedness.

The **sound** of the dice . . . the **feel** of the dice . . . even the smell of the dice . . . they were becoming the focal points of his universe . . . and his universe was fast becoming THE universe.

All the curves along all the planes of existence were converging toward a single point — the point known as CERTAINTY.

Baby Mason was seeing in his mind's eye: the future, the past, the present. They were all one now. Fused together in an instant. The universe reunited. The dice were the nucleus. Falling . . . falling . . . falling . . . through space . . . through time . . . all sixes . . . all ones. His mind followed them in their trajectory as they plummeted toward the green cloth below.

In another moment it would be . . . MIRACLE TIME.

Kal's patience did not last that long. "Will you roll already? You're shaking the spots off the dice."

The crystal ball of Baby Mason's vision shattered. His universal, cosmological certainty exploded as though at the beginning of time. He came crashing back to smoke-stained reality. It was, after all, only the Saturday night chouette.

Baby Mason looked up at Kal sadly, too world-weary for the moment to generate any anger. How close he had come to the perfect vision. The perfect roll. The perfect. Tears welled into Baby Mason's eyes.

It wasn't the game, Baby Mason thought. Perhaps it never had been the game. But something more. For a moment all the pettiness, all the desperation, all the alienation vanished as if it had been but a chimera in a snowflake.

When would all the forces in the universe ever again be in such perfect alignment? When could he ever again hope to be at its center? Never. He had missed his chance.

Baby Mason gave a huge sigh, all the cells in his body exhaling simultaneously, going limp, the carbon dioxide rushing back into his system. He looked down at the board. Same position. It seemed a century ago.

What difference did it make now? Any of it. Nothing would ever matter again. The game wasn't important. Kal wasn't important. The chouette wasn't important. For all Baby Mason cared, he could stay on the bar until the points faded away and the dice crumbled to dust.

His wrists went limp and the dice dribbled out of the cup and onto the table.

SIX ..... ONE.

Hmmmm, Baby Mason thought, smiling, suddenly himself again, maybe it worked after all.

Am I in time?

★★

DOUBLE-ACE QUIZ by Kit Woolsey

While many awkward rolls restrict our possibilities, the most flexible roll is undoubtedly double-aces. With this roll there are usually many options available, and we can position our men as we wish in order to carry out the game plan called for by the type of position. In the following quiz, black has double-aces to play in each case. Decide on the best game plan, and then play the double-aces to carry out 'that' plan.

FIGURE 1

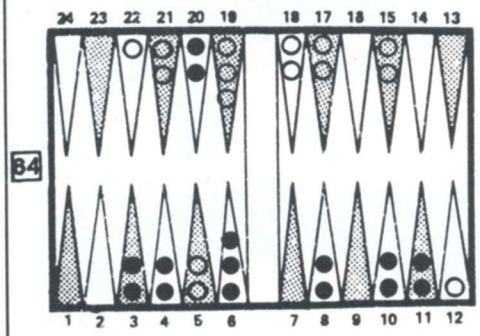


FIGURE 2

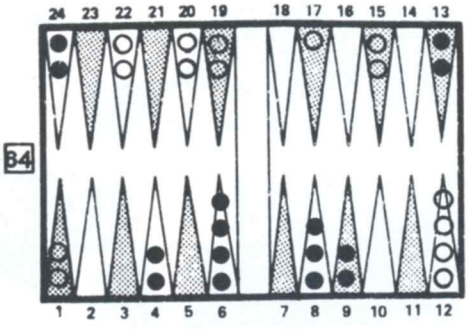


FIGURE 3

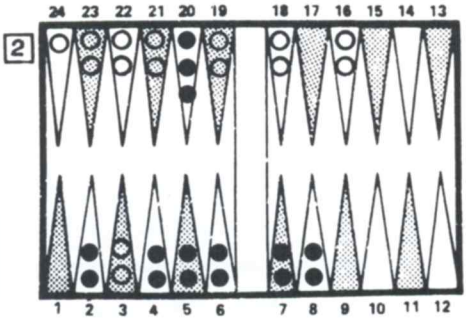


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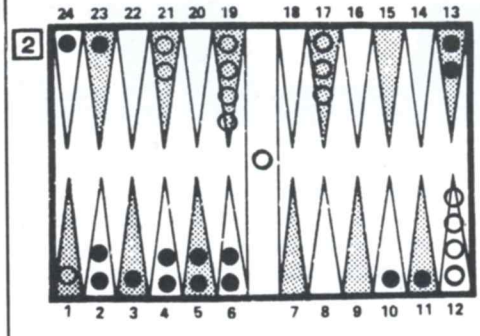


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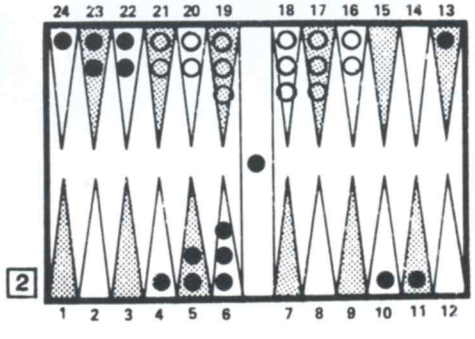


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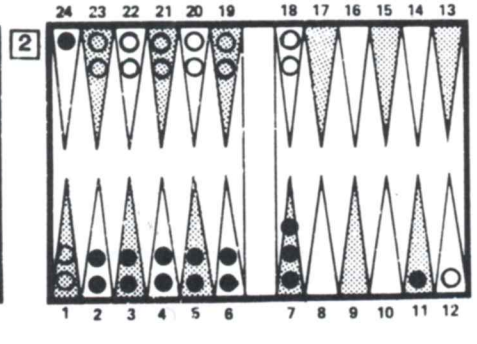


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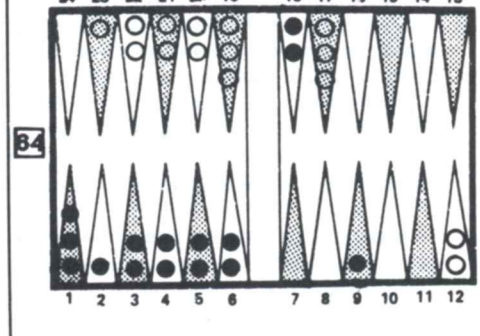


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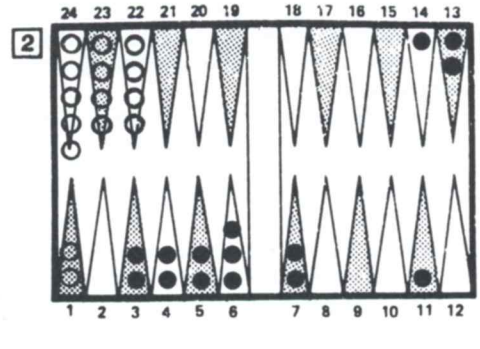


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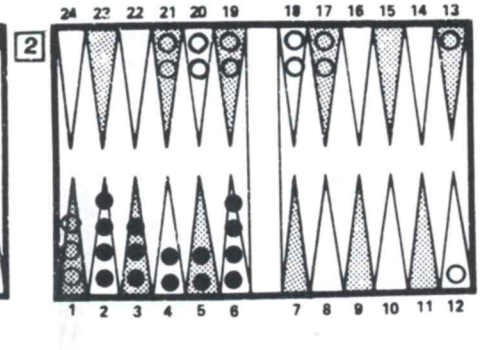


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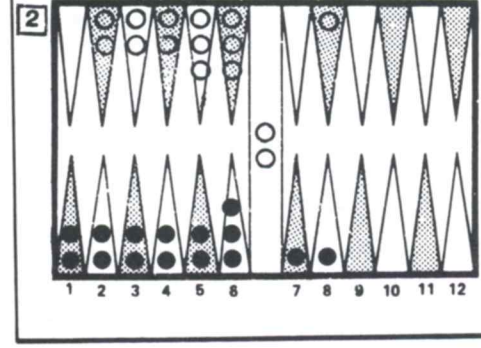


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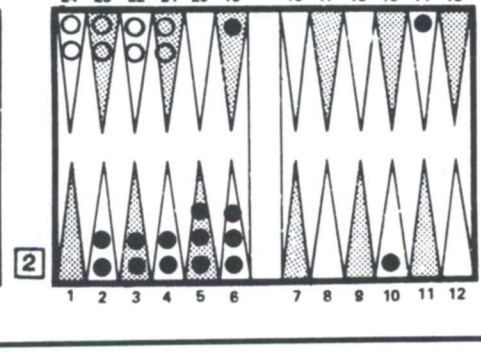
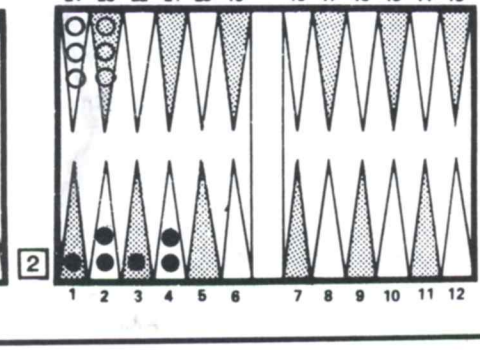


FIGURE 12



ANSWERS

1. 11-8, 11-10. Black is running out of time, and must prepare to play future awkward rolls while waiting for an opportunity to leave the opposing five-point. Rather than shifting points, which will lead to problems if a bad roll comes next, Black should break the eleven-point. This leaves him three spare men to play with, so he can comfortably absorb most rolls and still threaten the opposing men on his five-point.

2. 6-5(2), 24-23(2). Black has the stronger front board by making his five-point, so he should use the rest of his roll to improve his position on White's side of the board. With the recommended play Black attacks the man on White's eight-point and guarantees that he won't be easily shut in. If Black instead makes his bar-point, White may counter by making his own bar-point, and we will have a prime-against-prime battle in which Black will have no particular advantage.

3. 7-4, 7-6. White is likely to escape with one man on his next roll; if he doesn't his board will start to crack. Consequently, it is important that Black maximize the number of builders bearing upon the remaining man on his three-point. The recommended play leaves three builders — any other play leaves only two.

4. 2-1(2), 5-3. Black must go all out for the blitz, for if White succeeds in forming an anchor he will have a well-timed game. Consequently, Black must hit on the ace-point. The recommended play leaves two builders bearing on the slotted point — any other play leaves at most one, and making a fifth point has the highest priority here.

5. Bar-22, 24-23. Black has a potentially strong backgame, but if he attempts to hold all three points in White's board he will slow White up and possibly lose his timing. Clearing the ace-point forces White to play all his numbers, virtually guaranteeing Black timing. In addition, with a spare man on both defensive points, Black can afford to hit an early shot without losing his backgame if he fails to contain the hit man.

6. 11-7. Black wants to slow himself up so he can win the battle of primes. The recommended play deprives Black of sixes, so if he rolls a six on his next roll he won't have to play half the roll. Any other play leaves Black sixes he can play, which is what he doesn't want.

7. 6-2. Black does not want to bring in his back man, for he would then be forced to play a six from the eighteen-point, which could be disastrous. The recommended play avoids gaps in Black's board which may be difficult to cover late, allows Black to keep as many points in his board as possible on future rolls since he has started breaking from the back, and is better for the race than any other play.

8. 6-2. Black's game plan is as follows: 1. make the two-point as fast as possible. 2. release the bar-point, squeezing White out with a six. 3. pick up both men, close White out, and gammon him. The fastest way to make the two-point is to slot it. There is virtually no danger in this; in fact, White won't hit even if he can.

9. 6-4, 5-4(2). Safety is the number one criterion here. The recommended play is completely safe for the next roll, and also clears the five-point for good, which more than compensates for the gap which makes the six-point harder to clear. 6-4(2) leaves a potential double shot on a 6-5 and still leaves the five-point uncleared, 6-5(4) makes fours awkward for several rolls, an 6-5, 6-4, 3-2 leaves the three-point stripped which can be a serious defect later in the bearoff.

10. 6-4, 7-5. Black's general goals are: keep builders spread out, stay on high points, clear the six-point, and be able to handle large doubles. The recommended play satisfies all these criteria. Clearing the six-point with the double-aces would be slightly safer, but would hurt Black's gammon chances too much.

11. 10-6. Black's goal in getting off the gammon is to not waste pips, which means not bringing any men in past the six-point. Consequently, any man which can be brought exactly to the six-point satisfies the goal, so the recommended play is best. Crossovers are relatively unimportant at this stage, since Black can plan on three more rolls. It may later be right to slot to the ace point, but that is a decision to be made later, when Black sees his formation going into his last roll. To not waste any pips is now the highest priority.

12. 1-off, 2-off, 2-1. Obviously, Black must take two men off. The fourth ace is best played to the ace-point. If Black now rolls two large numbers on his next roll he can double White out, while if he plays to the three-point White will still have a take. Since there is no compensation for going to the three-point, moving to the ace-point is the best play. ☆☆

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TWO-CHECKER BARE-OFF FORMULAE

by Daniel Klempner

The following is a description of a mathematically and logically sound method to calculate the exact number of rolls needed to bear off the last two checkers, no matter what points they are on. The only basic statistical knowledge needed is the number of rolls containing a specific number, or one of several numbers on one die, i.e. eleven rolls out of thirty-six will have any single number on one die, twenty rolls either (or both) of two numbers, twenty-seven rolls for three numbers, etc. There are two basic approaches to this problem, depending on which points the checkers are on.

Method I: Count the number of good rolls (rolls that bear off both checkers) when one (and only one) of the two checkers is on the four-point or higher (the one exception to this is with checkers on the six- and four-points).

Step 1: Start with the checker on the higher point. Count the number of rolls that will produce this number or higher on one die.

Step 2: Now the checker on the lower point must be considered. Determine the number of rolls that only bear off the checker on the higher point, i.e. rolls in which one die can be used to bear off the higher checker and the other die is below the point of the lower checker. Subtract this number from the number of good rolls determined in step 1.

Step 3: Now we must correct for doubles. Add to the number determined in step 2 the number of doubles lower than the point of the higher checker which bear off both checkers.

As an example, consider the case with checkers on the three- and five-points. Barring doubles, which will be adjusted for the end, one die must be a 5 or 6. Twenty rolls out of thirty-six will contain a 5 or 6 on one die; however, if a 1 or 2 accompany the 5 or 6, only one checker can be borne off. Thus, the bad rolls containing a 5 or 6 on one die are: 5/1, 5/2, 6/1, 6/2. Since there are two ways in which each of the above four rolls may be realized, there are a total of 4 x 2 = 8 bad rolls containing a 5 or 6. This leaves 20 - 8 = 12 good rolls. We must now correct for doubles, i.e. determine the number of doubles (excluding 5's or 6's which were already counted in the original twenty) which bear both checkers off. Only two additional doubles (3's and 4's) bear both checkers off; consequently, the total number of rolls that bear off both checkers is 12 + 2 = 14.

Let's now make the calculation for checkers on the five- and one-points, the same as in Mr. Parniani's article. Twenty rolls contain a 5 or 6 on one die and they are all good rolls (since the second checker is on the one-point). Double 2's, 3's, and 4's are also good; therefore, the total number of good rolls is 20 + 3 = 23.

For checkers on the six- and two-points (the other example in Mr. Parniani's article), there are eleven rolls which contain a 6 on one die. However, two of them (6/1) only bear one checker off. There are, then, barring doubles 11 - 2 = 9 good rolls. Double 2's, 3's, 4's, and 5's also bear off two checkers. The total number of good rolls is therefore 9 + 4 = 13.

Method II: If neither or both of the checkers is on the four-point or higher, it is more convenient to count the number of bad rolls first (unless they are on the six- and four-points).

Step 1: Start with the checker on the lower point (if they are on different points) or the point they are both on. Count the number of rolls in which one die is lower than the point of the lower checker. Barring doubles, this is the number of bad rolls.

Step 2: Now we must correct for doubles. Subtract from the above the number of doubles, less than the point number of the lower checker, which bear both checkers off. This gives the total number of bad rolls, which then may be subtracted from thirty-six to determine the number of good rolls.

For example, let's take the case with checkers on the three- and two-points. The only bad rolls are those containing a 1 on one of the dice. Double 1's are no good, so there are simply eleven bad rolls, or 36 - 11 = 25 good rolls.

If both checkers are on the three-point, barring doubles, any roll containing a 1 or 2 is a bad roll — there are twenty such combinations. However, double 2's will bear both checkers off, so there are 20 - 1 = 19 bad rolls, or 36 - 19 = 17 good rolls.

If the checkers are on the four- and five-points, any roll containing a 1, 2, or 3, (barring doubles), is bad; thus, there are twenty-seven bad rolls. However, double 3's will bear off both checkers; consequently, there are 27 - 1 = 26 bad rolls, or 36 - 26 = 10 good rolls.

The only position which is not included in the above two methods is checkers on the one- and three-points, it is obvious that only two rolls (2/1) are unfavorable. Also, with checkers on the four- and six-points, Method I should be used (i.e. counting the number of good rolls containing 6 on one die first).

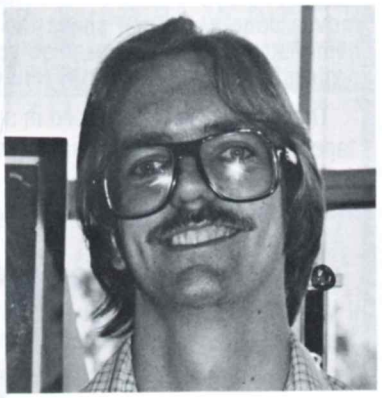
Naturally, in some instances the number of good rolls is obvious and can be even more simply calculated (e.g. both checkers on the five- or six-point). ☆☆

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TEAM TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

(Continued from page 35)

TEAM MATCHUPS

— preliminaries —

(dice roll determines team letters)

	1st Round	2nd Round	3rd Round	4th Round	5th Round
3 Teams 11 Points	AB (C bye)	BC (A bye)	AC (B bye)	2nd high vs. low High bye into finals	
4 Teams 11 Points	AB CD	AC BD	AD BC	2nd high vs. 3rd high High bye into finals	
5 Teams 11 Points	AB CD (E bye)	AC BE (D bye)	AE BD (C bye)	BC DE (A bye)	AD CE (B bye)
6 Teams 11 Points	AB CD EF	AC BE DF	AD BF CE	AE BD CF	AF BC DE
7 Teams 11 Points	AB (C bye)	BC (A bye)	AC (B bye)	2nd high vs. 1st high	
2 Groups	EF GH	EG FH	EH FG	2nd high vs. 1st high	
8 Teams 11 Points	AB CD	AC BD	AD BC	1st high vs. 2nd high	
2 Groups	EF GH	EG FH	EH FG	1st high vs. 2nd high	

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BACKGAMMON and the Married Woman





by Sandy Bingen

Did you say Backgammon again tonight, dear?

Single people — you're so lucky — why wasn't backgammon around when I was footloose and fancy-free.

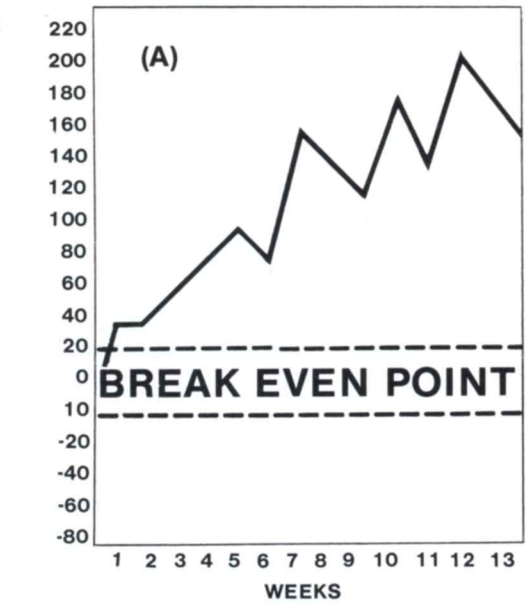
On tournament nights you can simply leave your office or wherever, take a leisurely drive home or directly to the restaurant where the tournament is being held, have dinner and a few games before the tournament begins. Not a bad way to calm the frayed nerves of a busy day.

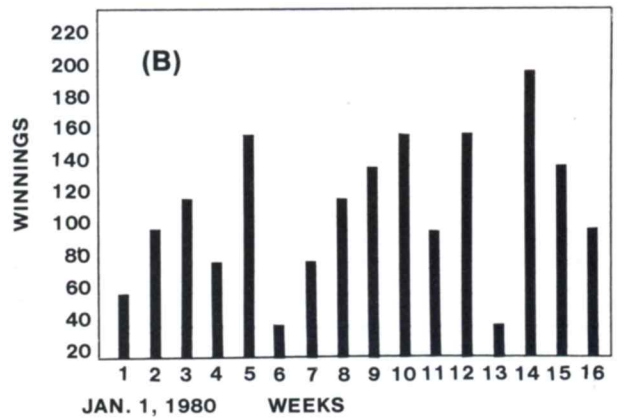
We married ladies with children have quite a different start to our evening of play. It is race home to start dinner, feed the dog, throw the underwear in the washing machine (what do you mean I don't have clean underwear because you played backgammon last night) and get dinner on the table. It's a harrying experience, to say the least, when you're married to a man who expects cocktails, a gourmet meal and conversation over coffee. Kids materialize out of nowhere, all want your attention at the same time. Suddenly it's 7:10 and registration closes at 7:30. A quick glance in a full-length mirror before running out the door reveals makeup that needs redoing, chipped nail polish and pantyhose with a run. An extra five minutes for a quick repair job — I didn't look this bad when I got up this morning. I make the twenty minute drive to the tournament in fourteen minutes only to hear the tournament director tell me that if I got there early some night I would probably get a bye.

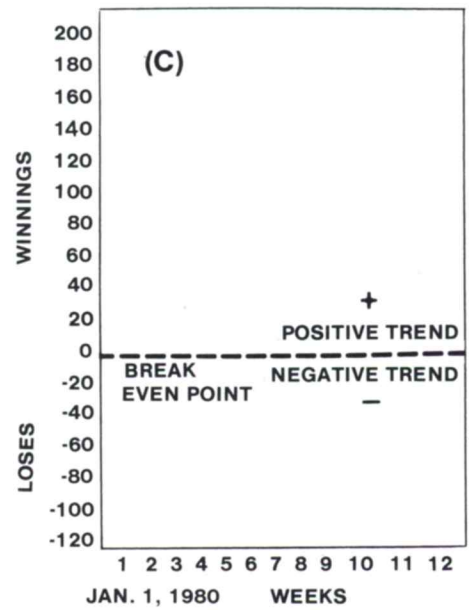
The tournament begins and my board looks good when I'm jarred into reality with my opponent doubling. Where was I leading up to this double? I was thinking about my daughter calling from college at 2:30 A.M. the night before (3:30 A.M. where she is) telling me not to worry because she's back at the dorm and the party was great. Now how could I worry if I didn't know she was out? Now I'm worried about what she was doing until that time in the morning. A double requires an answer so I cup my hands around my forehead and proceed to count. What I am counting while looking at the board is the three loads of wash, the proposal that must be ready at noon tomorrow, the television to be picked up, a ride to the orthodontist, grocery shopping to be done and a committee report due the next night that I haven't even started on. I take the double, not because I've counted, but because my board looks better than your board. I tell my opponent he's going to have a tough time and he thinks I know something he doesn't know.

It's obvious this game is not going to be won with skill. I reach back into my vast repertoire of diversionary tactics and begin to hum, bob my head, expose a little cleavage, tap my fingernails on the table, talk to my dice and his, and sometimes all of the above. It's my game and my opponent can't believe I've won it. He just didn't realize the caliber player I am.

The large tournaments, hotel away from home variety, are a blessing in disguise. No one to take care of but me. Fresh makeup, beautiful nails and new pantyhose. I can actually count when I'm doubled. A local shopowner isn't surprised anymore when I buy a dozen T-shirts and a dozen pairs of shorts for my husband. He simply asks, "Where is the tournament this time?" ☆☆







BACKGAMBLING
Winning vs. Losing

by Robert E. Howayeck

Every expert backgammon player has a history of winning and losing, and the records of these events are mentally stored in often hard-to-find files.

Some players claim of winning more often than losing, while other players boast of hardly every losing, and present verbal figures of eighty-five or ninety percent on the plus side of the score sheet. When one asks them for evidence, or records, they claim they don't have any, "but you could ask the people I play with." Stories seem to change as often as the nature of the dice.

The truth is that most players don't keep records and are in reality guessing as to their own success or failure in the game. They may know if they are winning but can't present any documents to verify the fact. The records of the games one plays and the figures should all be logged and graphed. One's trend chart is a most valuable tool in improving one's game. It is an historical picture of the nature of one's game, and is valuable in helping one correct mistakes. It can be constructed for tournaments and kept separate from gambling activity.

Backgammon is a game that requires a lot of energy, a wasted investment if records are not kept.

A trend chart can be constructed in many ways.

Example:

A personal backgammon record should answer these questions:

1. How much money did I win or lose last month?
2. Which players did I play and have the most success with?
3. Which players did I lose to and probably should avoid for at least the time being?
4. How often did I play in or at the cube and how much did I pay in table fees last month?
5. Of the doubles I accepted how many did I win and lose?
6. Of the doubles I offered how many did I win and lose?
7. Of the doubles I accepted what percentage of them were gammons for my opponents?
8. What percentage of the games played were wins?
9. What percentage of the games played were dropped (by player)? Dropping too many doubles is a losing method of play. One should accept when feeling right about the take. Percentages are often vague in accepting doubles where position is the main criteria.
10. What is my best chance of winning? Playing chouettes, heads on or up (one by one) or playing in tournaments.

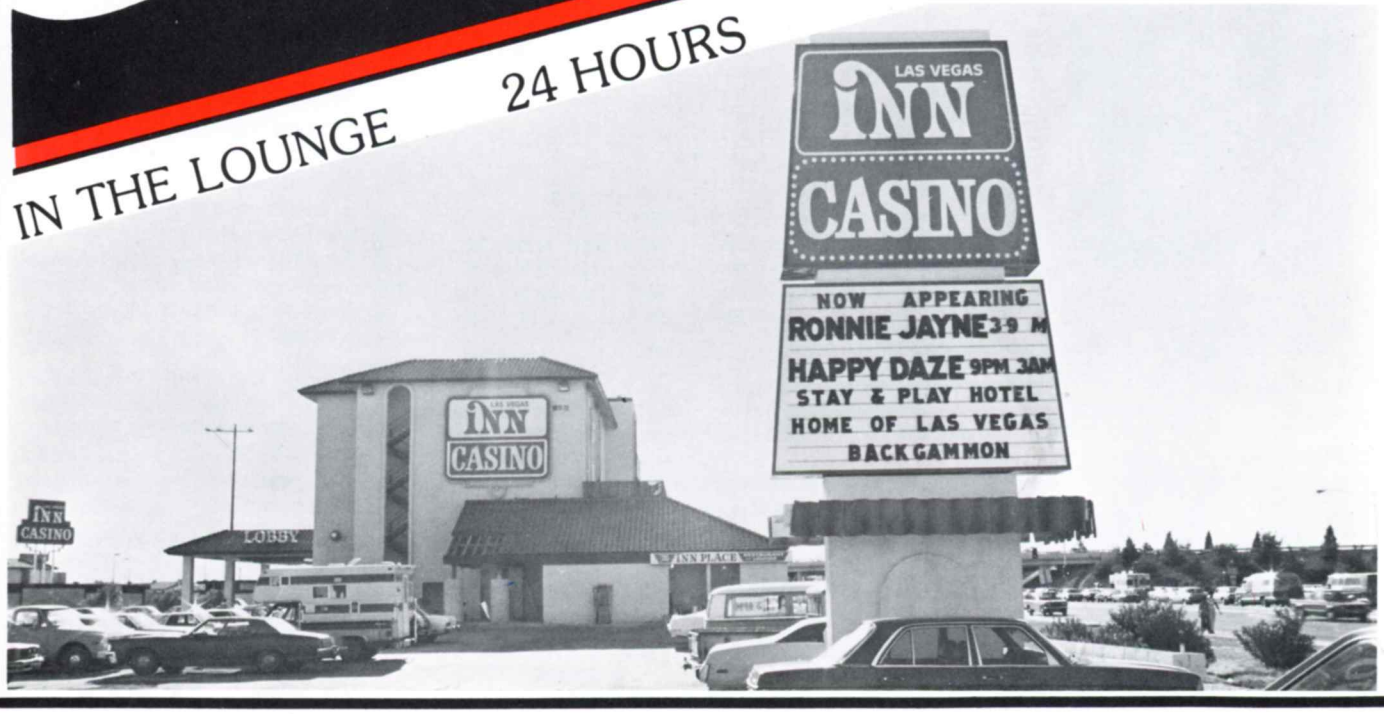
If these criteria are utilized, the chances for a successful income-producing game can dramatically increase. ☆☆

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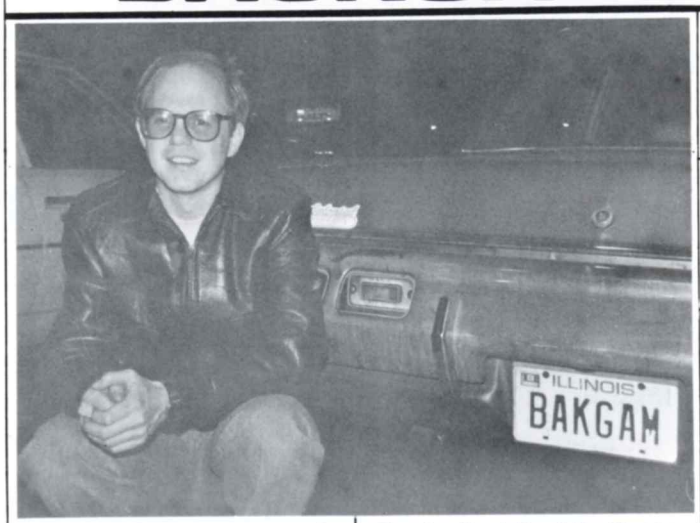
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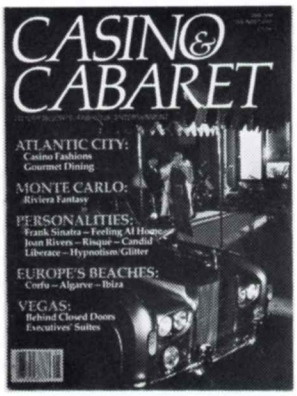


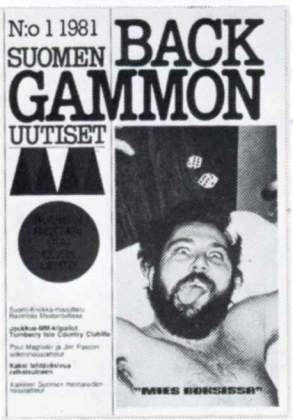
BACKGAMMON BITS



Bill Davis, Chicago backgammon sparkplug, is the publisher of the Gammon's newsletter and author of many articles, some of which have appeared in the Backgammon Magazine. We thought you'd like to see how he gets games. He cruises the loop with his unique license plate . . .

In the we-are-not-alone department, there are two new magazines of interest to backgammon players. Casino & Cabaret is a slick gambling magazine headquartered in San Diego. Casino & Cabaret plans to cover backgammon somewhat. If you are Finnish, you'll want to subscribe to the unusual backgammon magazine published by the Finnish Backgammon Association in Helsinki





Carolyn Caniglia of the Omaha Backgammon Club (AABC) is giving up real estate and opening a women's shoe store. We bet there will be a backgammon table in there somewhere . . .

Vander Pluym and **Crowly** held a test meeting for a new group tentatively called the International Backgammon Federation. Those attending the meeting were **Howard Markowitz, Candace Mayeron, Marty Miller, Jim Howe, Joel Rettew, Kenny Wattson, Danny Kleinman,** and **Jim Pasko,** among others . . .

Early in April, **Darrell Peavey,** a resident of the Virginia State Penitentiary, got in touch with **Rasim Kasim,** director of the Virginia Backgammon Assn., to see about starting a backgammon club at the penitentiary. A couple of weeks later, **Larry King** went to the penitentiary to meet with some of the people who want to start the club. There are at least a dozen players there who'd like to get organized. This will be the second official inmate backgammon club. The other one has been flourishing in the Oregon State Penitentiary for two years . . .

It is rumored that the dark horse winners at the California Open and Dunes Championships **(Ron Nissenson** and **Chuck Giallanza)** were secretly coached by backgammon teacher and author **Gaby Horowitz.** The **Horowitz-Roman** team had more than 100 students playing the Las Vegas affair . . .

Las Vegas **Dave Ashley** won the kick-off tournament at the Dunes Hotel. A small entry fee got him nearly $10,000 and he got to be on TV too. **De Ane** and **David Schroeder** of Las Vegas also made it to the semi-finals in the doubles . . .

Backgammon promoter **Sid Jackson,** with Tiny Tim flair and publicity, married **Donna Silverstein** at the Dunes Hotel during the Amateur tournament . . .

Speaking of Las Vegas, did you know that gambling debts are legally uncollectible? Las Vegas therefore loses about $10 million a year to welshers . . .

Dr. Jeff Ward is preparing a new book which will contain seventy-five articles on "how to play backgammon". Jeff is a nationally syndicated backgammon columnist. The book is to be called **"Winning Is More Fun"** and will sell for $15. It is published by **Aquarian Enterprises, 3272 Via Bartolo, San Diego, CA . . .**

Tony Goble has been highrolling in Las Vegas for the month of June. He is celebrating the drilling of three new oil wells in Oklahoma, none of which were dry. The righ get richer . . .

Famed author and gambling expert **Roger Dionne** is working on a new book on the life of **Oswald Jacoby.** Dionne is currently planning to move to Las Vegas . . .

BACKGAMMON CHAIN LETTER

Who hasn't received a chain letter at one time or another? Some promise money if the chain is unbroken; others warn of instant disasters if the enclosed instructions are ignored. The Henry Wattson Backgammon Chain Letter only guarantees some good luck — a witty and novel promotion for the Amateur Backgammon Championships.

THIS IS YOUR LUCKY LETTER!

Backgammon is a game with a unique blend of luck and skill! This chain letter will increase your luck in everyday games, and your chances of winning some of the $400,000.00 prize money in the 5th annual World Amateur Backgammon Championships, June 9 - 14th, 1981, at the Dunes Hotel, Las Vegas.

Put your name at the bottom of this letter — copy it and mail to seven friends within four days.

If this chain is unbroken, and once a day on June 10th, 11th, and 12th, you wish everyone on this list "Good Luck," you will have 5,764,801 people wishing you well; therefore, these must be your lucky days!

TO BREAK THIS CHAIN
MIGHT BE BAD LUCK!



The Backgammon Magazine was banned at the Amateur tournaments because the promoters did not agree with the editorial in the JIM BROWN issue. Comments heard around the tournament on the controversial policy: "Picky, picky"; if the shoe fits, wear it"; "pick me up on your way down"; and "never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity" . . .



Laughgammon

• Two backgammon players were sitting at a bar waiting for their next match in the weekly tournament. True to form, neither one had ordered a drink.

To make conversation, one asked, "Did you have a good run of dice?"

"The best," was the reply. "I scored two gammons and a yours."

"What's yours?" asked the puzzled friend. "Double Scotch on the rocks, thank you very much!"

• It is said of Noah Webster that he played backgammon regularly with a friend who tended to be very lucky.

In a particularly close race, his opponent suddenly rolled double sixes.

"Mr. Webster," he said, "I'm surprised." The lexicographer gazed upon him in mild amusement.

"No," he replied, "You are amazed. It is I who am surprised."

Recording Backgammon Games

by Hideo Kato

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

FIG. 3

FIG. 4

FIG. 5

FIG. 6

FIG. 7

FIG. 9

FIG. 10

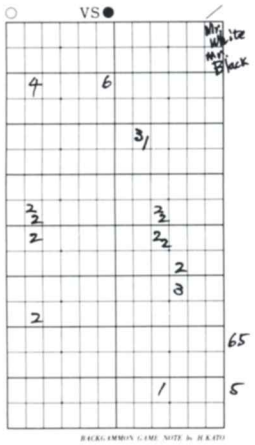


FIG. 11

FIG. 12

FIG. 13

FIG. 14

FIG. 15

FIG. 16

FIG. 17

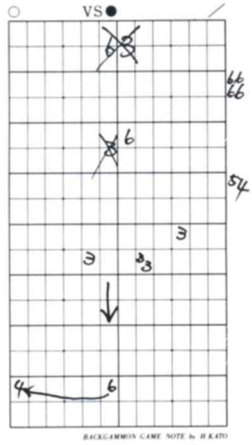
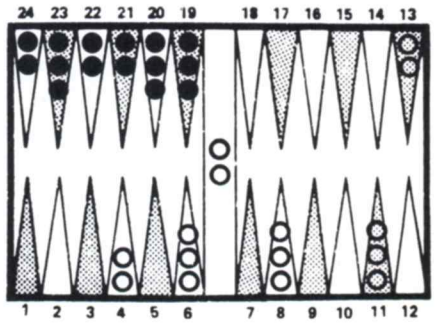


FIG. 18



'GO' and 'SHOGI' are the most popular games in Japan. They have the same method to take record of games similar to Chess' method which only require to note when one piece was moved and where it was moved to. Comparing backgammon with those games, it has a disadvantage when we want to record games. For one roll, we should note numbers of dice, from where and to where two men (four men with doublet) were moved. But the fatal difference is that backgammon is played much faster than the other three games.

Usual notations of recording a game would be like the following:

White 4-3: B12W9, B12W10
Black 3-1: B8B5, B6B5
White 5-1: W10W5, W6W5
so on

This is good to show the moves but not good and practically too difficult to record games. You would possibly need to ask players to hold their roll until you finish your notation if you use this method, thus slowing down the game.

I have invented a system of recording games of backgammon which can be used to record games played at normal speed. Of course you would not need to do any recording with pencil and paper if games are played on some device with microprocessor and memory chips which can record the games itself. But I believe my system is very helpful to take record of such games as the final of a tournament or expert vs. expert match which are played on usual backgammon board and in usual expert's speed.

What you need . . .

1. 'GAME RECORDING NOTE' as shown the picture and Fig. 1. You can make by photocopying Fig. 1 or of course by paying money to a printer. One page of my note paper has eight compressed backgammon boards without bar: I suppose you could improve it by making the points triangle-shaped and dark-and light-shaded, but this plain board is sufficient for me. You will find those small dots help to locate necessary point quickly.

2. A pencil, ball-point pen, or felt pen which is not thirsty.

3. A place where you can conveniently look at the board.

4. Your concentration. Even if you find a beautiful girl (or nice guy) beyond the board, look only at the board!!

HOW TO NOTE . . .

1. Before the opening roll, you should note player's names. Write each name or initial where his (or her) backmen are. Fig. 2 means Mr. White is sitting on your side and Mr. Black is sitting on the opposite side, and Home is on Mr. White's right side.

2. Now they rolled and Mr. White got 6-4 to open the game. You write down the number with which he moved in the square where a man touched down. Thus Fig. 3 means he moved one man from B1 to B7 and the same man from B7 to B11 (THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE CASE WHERE ONLY ONE MAN IS MOVED USING BOTH DICE).

3. Next Mr. Black rolled 3-1. Remember you always write down the number with which he moved in the square where a man touched down. Thus Fig. 4 means he moved from B8 to B5 and from B6 to B5 making B5 (THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF A CASE WHERE TWO MEN ARE MOVED AND TOUCHED DOWN ON SAME POINT).

4. Mr. White rolled 2-2 and made W11 with two men from B12 and made W4 with two men from W6. Noting is as Fig. 5 (THIS IS A CASE OF DOUBLET).

5. Mr. Black rolled 2-2. He hit the blot on B11 from W12, made B4 with two men from B6 and split a back man. Fig. 6. We do not need to note the hitting because it is evident when you replay this game (THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF HITTING).

6. Mr. White rolled 3-2 and entered on B3 with 3 and moved one from B12 to W11. Fig. 7. I know making B3 is better with this roll. If it was his move, '3' and '2' are written down in same third square in upper row (THIS IS A CASE OF ENTERING).

7. Mr. Black next rolled 5-5 and punished Mr. White's for not making B3 with his last roll and hereafter Mr. Black managed his blitzing technique successfully, and the position became as Fig. 8 after several rolls.

8. Mr. Black's next roll is 6-5, and Fig. 9 means he bore off two men with 6 and 5. You will see which men he bore off if you replay the game (THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF BEARING OFF).

9. Mr. Black's inner board is closed and so the next roll is again Mr. Black's. He rolled 5-1 Fig. 10 means he bore off one man with 5 and moved one man from B5 to B4 to save blot.

10. Now Mr. White rolled 6-3 and cannot enter either man. In the case one cannot play die or dice, you write the number(s) in the center of the board and overwrite 'X' as shown in Fig. 11 (THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE CASE OF CAN'T PLAY ONE DIE).

11. Mr. Black rolled 6-6 and bore off four men leaving a blot on B4 (Fig. 12).

12. Mr. White rolled 6-3 and entered with one man on B6 but cannot enter with another, so you write '3' in the center and overwrite 'X' (Fig. 13).

13. Mr. Black rolled 5-4 and bore off two men from B4 and B3 leaving a blot on B3 (Fig. 14).

14. Mr. White rolled the best come back shot, which is 3-3. Now I think you are accustomed with this notation system and can see how Mr. White played this roll (Fig. 15).

15. Even though he is on the bar, Mr. Black doubled at this point. Only an arrow is meaningful in any case of doubling action (Fig. 16). You will see if it is a double, redouble to 4 or redouble to 8 if you replay the game (THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF A CASE OF DOUBLING).

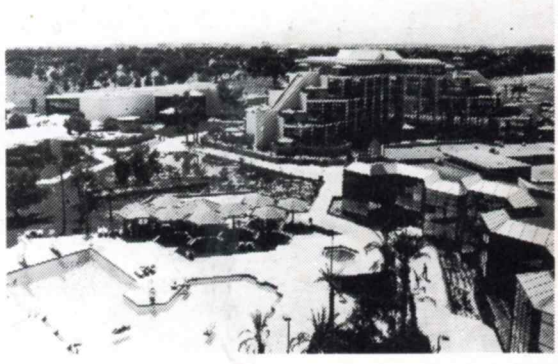
16. Finally I must add the case of illegal moves. Fig. 17 means Mr. White made lover's heap with 6-4. (How cheap cheating!) When one makes an illegal move, use an arrow to indicate how he moved. (THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF ILLEGAL MOVE).

I think I have included most of the cases which are sufficient to explain my system of the recording backgammon games. However, you might experience some difficulty with this notation system at first try, but I believe you will find it won't be long before you are an expert. ★★

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At the center of the Las Vegas strip the Desert Inn offers a unique elegance for an inner circle of vacationers. For those who expect the finest in accommodations, hospitality, dining, stage entertainment, tennis, golf and swimming, they find it all at this "Preferred" hotel. A lavish combination of suites and rooms, each with free first-run movies on closed circuit TV, looks out across 200 acres of one of America's most challenging golf courses. Three elegant dining rooms and sunlit country club restaurant offer a variety of relaxed settings. Along with a giant sparkling pool, a number of small outdoor steaming hot pools presents special contentment. A perfect combination for a romantic interlude and sophisticated adult fun awaits every guest.



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