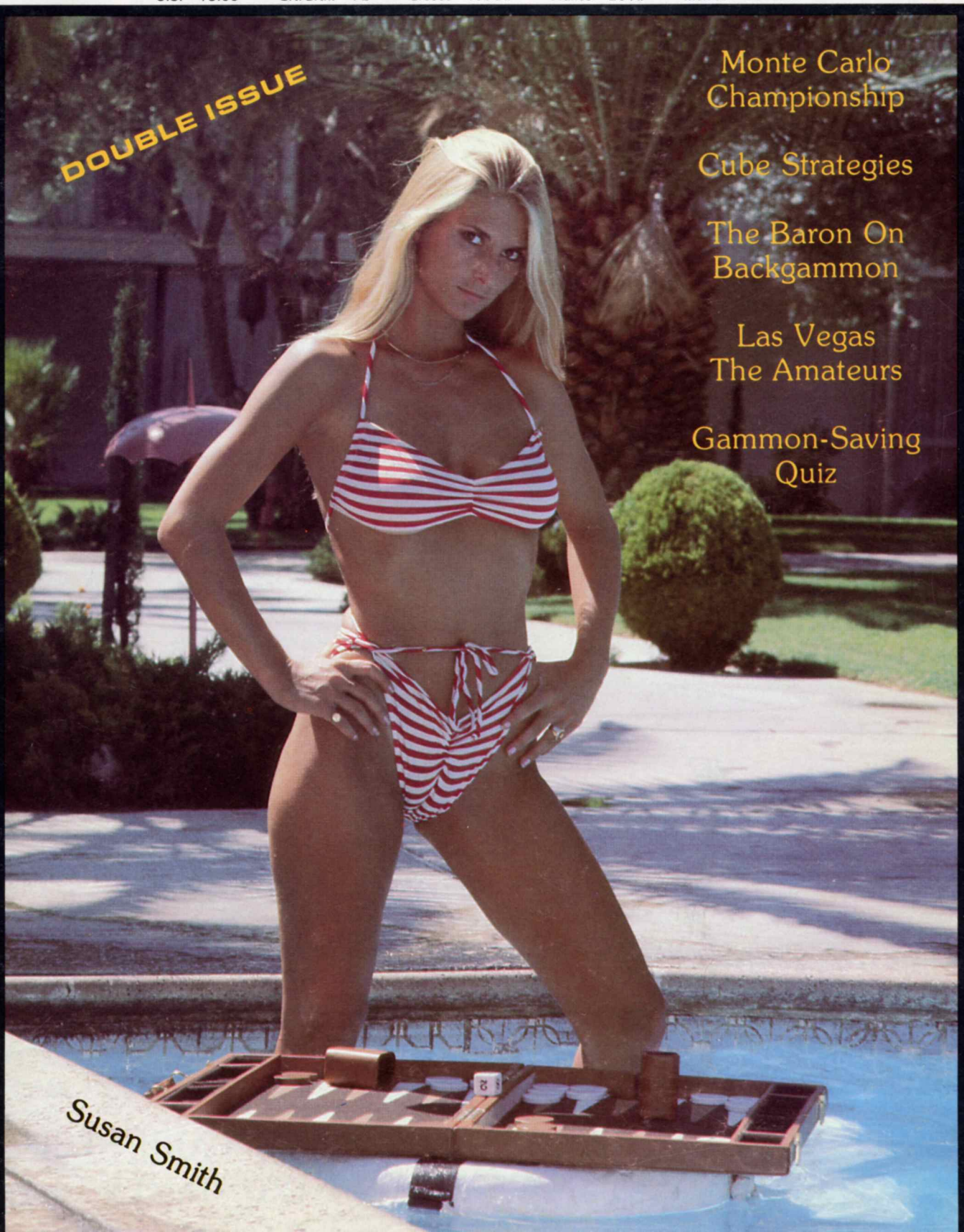
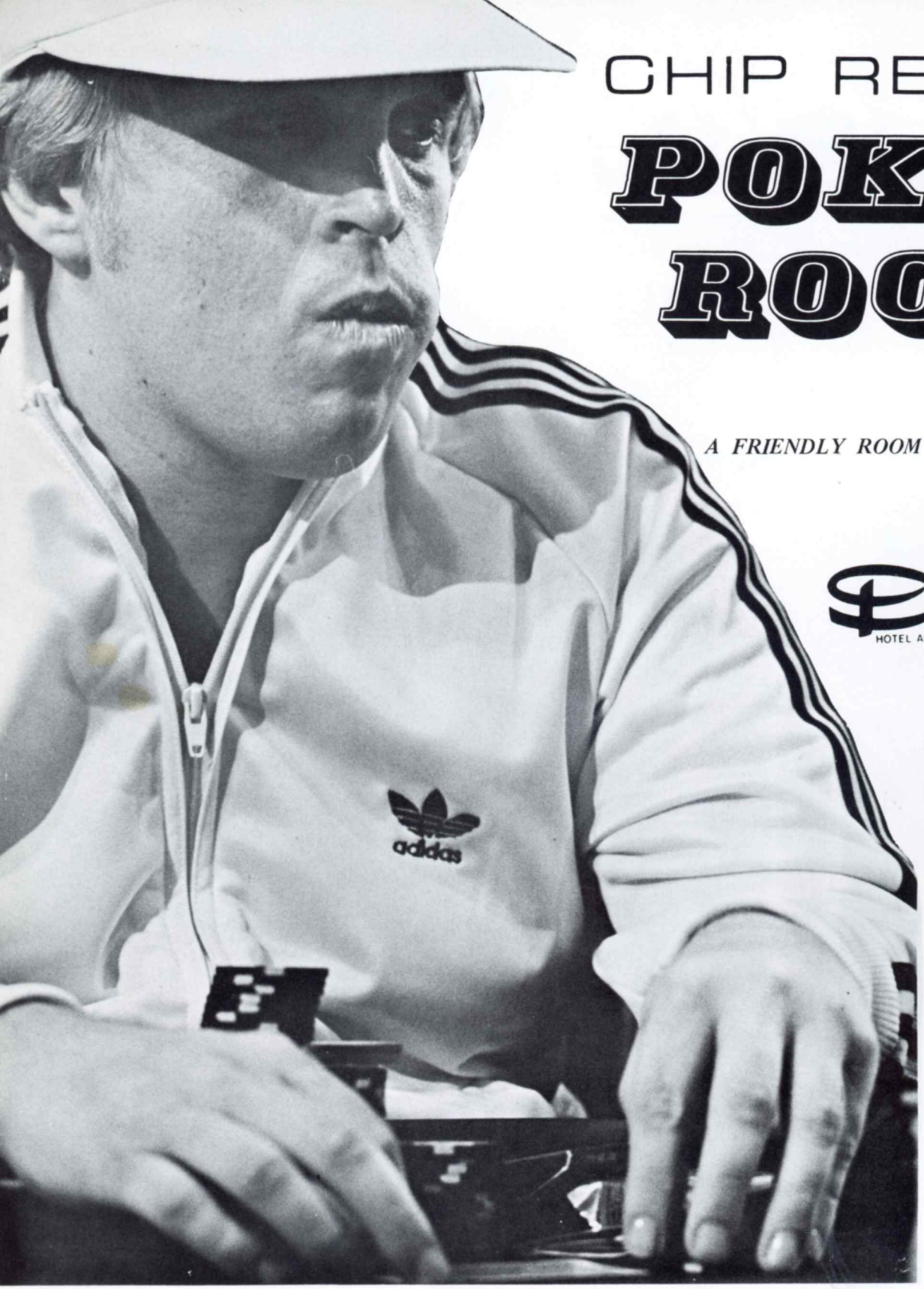
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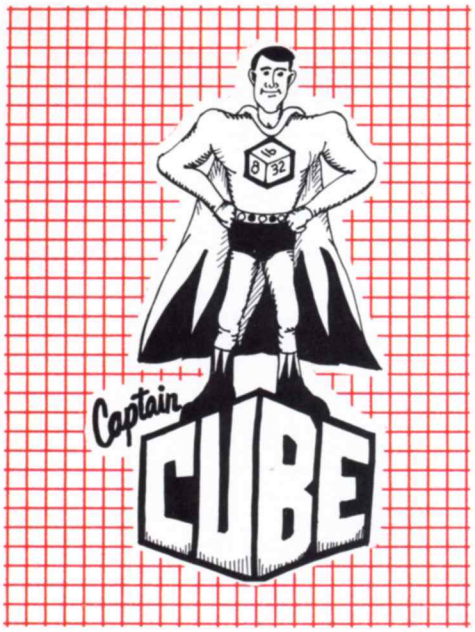
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by David Eig

Backgammon is a game that is played for pleasure and for profit. Everyone is familiar with the former, but usually only the skilled are recipients of the latter.

This is the story of a backgammon player so skilled that upon taking a huge lead in a four-way chouette felt that unless he lost some of it back he wouldn't be paid. This player, whom we shall call Mikey (pronounced Mi-kee), had gained his lead, not over all three players, but rather over one of the players in the chouette. This player had a reputation and a name that would go down in infamy — "Gonna B. Stiffed."

Now with a name like that and a reputation that followed suit you would think that Gonna wouldn't get many games, but Gonna only used his last name when he would lose by a *huge* margin and that margin was now the gap between Mikey and Gonna.

Mikey knew how to handle Gonna, but this time he let the score get out of hand at +55 and the place where they were playing was closing up in 10 minutes. Quite a problem, but luckily for Mikey, Gonna was in the box and doubling the three of them to 16 in this position:

Gonna (White)
Doubles to 16!

The dialogue went something like this: 1st player — What's this? 2nd player — Suppose to be one of them cubes that's bad for ya. 1st player — I'm not gonna take it, you take it. 2nd player — I'm not gonna take it. 1st player — Hey let's get Mikey. He won't take it. He doesn't take anything. Mikey — I take! 1st player — Hey Mikey! 2nd player — (amazed) He took it!

Mikey was no fool and figured the only way he was going to get paid was to lose thirty-two points by being gammoned in this position. Losing only the sixteen points wouldn't do it, as he would still be +39 on the score and the other players were now even on the score after they passed. By losing thirty-two points he would be +23 and be paid. The only numbers that would leave a direct shot for Gonna (White) on his next roll would be 6-2 and 3-3, and even then, he would be the big favorite, as Mikey (Black) would have to hit it to have a chance at the game.

Backgammon, though, is a game of the unexpected, and in line with that, Gonna rolled a 6-2, played 13/7 and 6/4, leaving Mikey a 4-shot. Mikey must have prayed hard not to roll the 4 but fate wouldn't have it, not only did he roll a 4 but double 4's to hit and bring all three in, as well as, cover the blot on the twenty-two-point. For Mikey this was a time of shocked incomprehension and stark-eye disbelief as he knew that no matter what, he wasn't getting paid.

Gonna now rolled and failed to enter his man on the one-point. With an apathetic look on his face Mikey handed the cube to Gonna at 32 in this position:

Mikey (Black)
Doubles to 32!

Gonna grabbed it. Now Mikey rolled a 6-5 and plays 4/10 and 10/13 so that on his next roll he could cover the eighteen-point with any 4 or 5.

If you think Mikey was shocked before, you should have seen his face when Gonna rolled a 6-1 from the bar hitting Mikey's loose checker on the eighteen-point. Although Mikey still had nineteen out of thirty-six shots to hit Gonna with his next roll, and only nine out of thirty-six that didn't come in, no one was surprised when Mikey rolled a 1-2 and stayed up on the bar.

Gonna was eating it up as he now proceeded to gammon Mikey, winning sixty-four points in that one game. The final outcome was that Gonna ended up +9 or $90 ahead in practical terms. Although Mikey lost $90 to Gonna on this occasion, it was a blessing in disguise, as Mikey now makes consistent money from Gonna and doesn't let it get out of hand.

If Mikey had won that game, not only would he have seen Gonna's last name in action, but his middle initial too, as Gonna would now be "barred" from playing Mikey.

BACKGAMMON

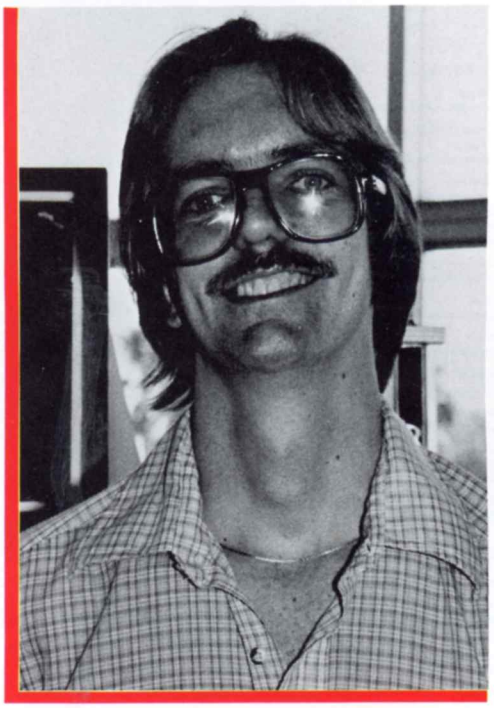
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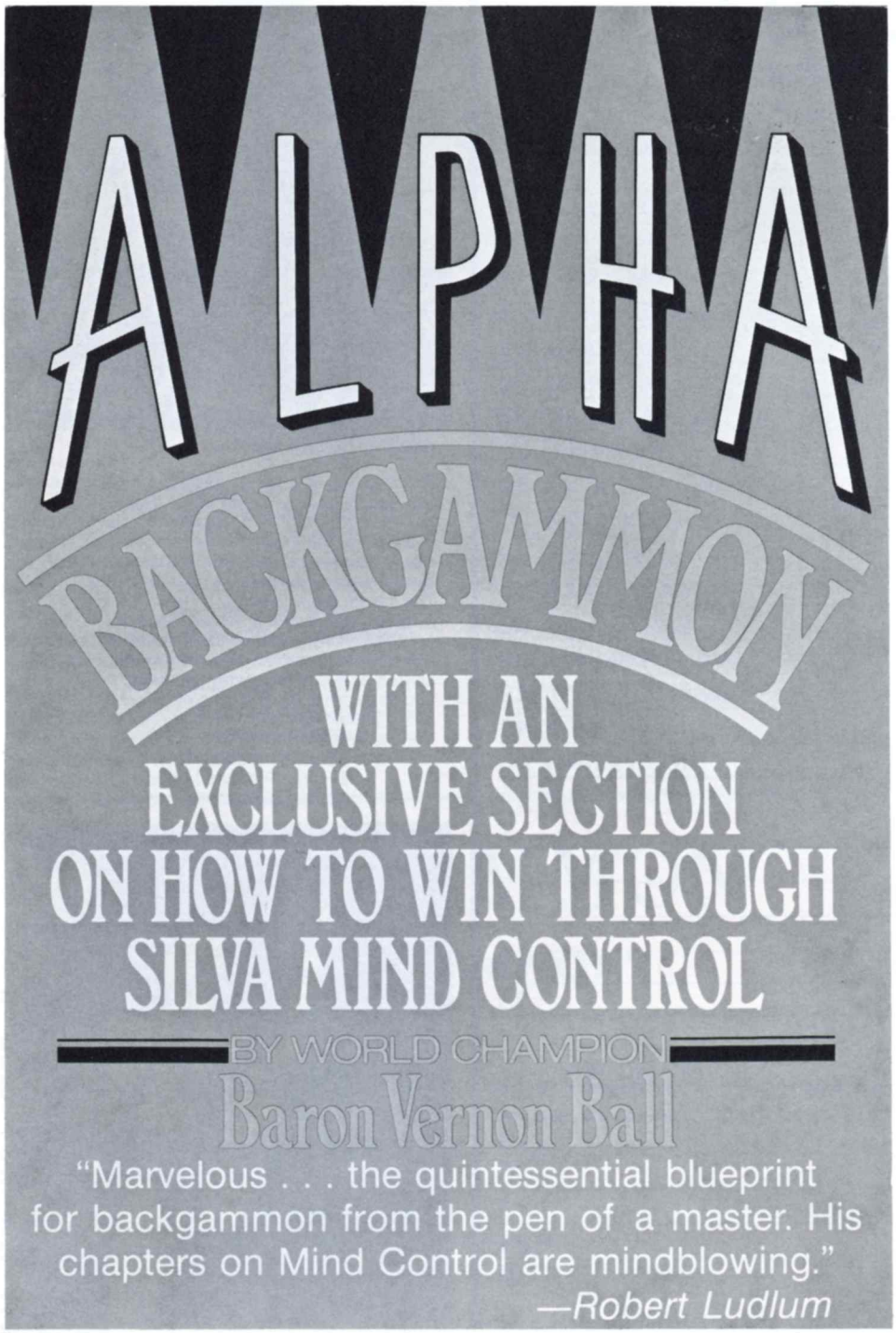
Gracing our new cover design is high-powered Las Vegan beauty Susan Smith. Besides being a knock-your-socks-off backgammon player Susan is also a karate expert — the serious kind. Sue is now in training to meet Andy Kaufman's wrestling challenge on this season's "Saturday Night Live." The fancy life is behind in New York and Los Angeles, where Sue is in hot pursuit of a modeling career. Las Vegas is the place to bring it all back home, where she can hike through the desert in search of a natural spring and calm. If you think you know "that face" from somewhere, try "Playboy" (September '81) featuring Susan Smith as the September Playmate.

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Editorial THE "Shapes" OF THINGS TO COME

Dice manufacturers advertise dice as being true to a tolerance of 1/10,000.

It is obviously important to their customers (such as casinos) that dice be as near perfect as possible.

Casinos would not wager ten cents on dice that were not made by hand to a precision of 1/10,000 and cast in indestructible material. Even then, they quickly discard them knowing that edges and corners wear from use and the dice become imperfect.

Yet, in backgammon, tournament players will sit down to play for $100,000 purses using machine-made, unbalanced, and often mutilated dice.

Drugstore or candystore dice as these are often called, are a common phenomenon of big-money backgammon tournaments.

The Desert Inn was the first to show concern. The DI ordered precision dice for their tournament last year. The dice were numbered and discarded after each use.

We were told by Desert Inn executives that it is foolish for all these so-called experts to be playing a game of statistical probabilities with dice that distort the odds.

It seemed to them that if two players of similar abilities sat down to play, that the result could be pre-determined by the condition of the dice.

The DI was surprised that tournament participants were not more demanding.

"Would Borg" they asked, "play with some random racquet handed to him by a linesman or found lying next to the court?"

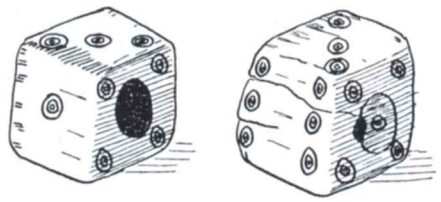
It makes sense.

We decided to check the quality of the dice at the next super tournament. With a micrometer caliper we randomly gauged dice that were being used in big-money matches.

Needless to say we found them to be as much as 20/1000 off. Some surfaces showed convex bevels, while others were concave. Many had high and low spots on them. Rounded edges were not uniform on all corners. Still others lacked a true right angle from side to side. Not to mention worn dice, chipped edges, and misdistributed weight.

We showed the dice to an expert who claimed that if he didn't know any better, he would think these dice were "SHAPES."

Shapes are dice made deliberately lopsided or shaved to favor certain numbers. The dice settle down most often on their larger surfaces. They are percentage dice. Knowing which numbers are favored will over a period of timegive a winning edge to a wise guy.



Hoping to get a good set of dice out of the batch of cheap ones is unrealistic. The odds are nearly 100% against.

A player sitting down at a tournament to play with drugstore dice provided by the promoter should not presume that the throws will adhere to a just probability table.

The famous backgammon story perhaps is not just a tall tale of woe but the result of erratic dice.

It is time for all this to change. Tournaments are now played for big-league money. Promoters are charging heavy fees and taking a large percentage for their troubles. They must be obligated to provide proper equipment. Perhaps it is an inconvenience to purchase perfect dice at $2/per but it is not necessarily money out of the promoters' pocket. This is one fee that all participating players will gladly pay.

It is ludicrous to study probabilities in hopes of improving one's game and then sit down to face abnormal odds. It is unheard of in any competition to go into a contest with less than perfect gear. Dice are as much stock-in-trade to a backgammon player as a properly balanced weapon to a sharpshooter or an unblemished ball to a pitcher. Would a card player enter a blackjack tournament and tolerate cards without a seal, or a deck that might or might not have fifty-two cards?

As we see it, precision dice are a priority item. Candystore dice have no business in backgammon. We must take our game seriously if we expect others to.

Tournaments promoters have an obligation to provide fair dice. Players have enough pressure without having to fight dice quirks.

Dice are the oldest gambling instruments known to man. We know enough by now not to trust them. Let's at least make an effort to compete with dice that deliver a fair roll.

Demand perfect dice now or beware of the "shapes" of things to come. ☆☆

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THE BARON ON BACKGAMMON

by Baron Vernon Ball



A CHALLENGE FROM ALI
or
I CALLED MUHAMMAD ALI WHITE AND LIVED

"How would you like to appear on TV with Muhammad Ali?" asked Dralin Purrington, an independent TV producer from Puerto Rico, as he strode into my private office in the Hotel 1829. Instead of answering, I just stared blankly up at the slowly turning blades of the overhead fan, waiting for Dral to finish what I though was a put-on. "No kidding!" he said, "I've been talking to Ali's people about shooting a twenty-minute tape of you — the World Backgammon Champion — interviewing Ali, the World Heavyweight Champion, on his upcoming Coopman fight; then for a switch, Ali will interview you on backgammon and you can give him some pointers on the game. What do you say?" What do I say? I'll tell you what: "I would swim the sixty miles of shark-infested waters between St. Thomas and Puerto Rico just to shake the Great One's hand, that's what!"

On the appointed day, I selected a backgammon set covered in black leather as a presentation gift to Ali and pointed my little Cherokee 140, which is just great for island-hopping, in a westerly heading toward Puerto Rico. Ali and his entourage were headquartered at a luxury beachfront hotel and when I arrived I found Dral and his crew setting up their TV equipment in a sunny spot adjacent to the main entrance. A few hundred onlookers and autograph seekers were milling about, apparently sensing that wherever there's a TV camera there's Ali, and they were right. Towering two feet above the crowd, dressed in black on black, the tall exotic Khalilah in pink flowing muslin robes at his side, and flanked by two of his mean-looking security types, Ali passed by us and without breaking stride, said to nobody in particular, "I'm gonna have a quiet breakfast. Be back in an hour. Be ready 'cause I only got ten minutes to spend with you," and he disappeared around the corner.

I spent the hour rehearsing the questions I would ask him and getting nervous. I really shouldn't have worried about either, because when Ali returned I only got a chance to ask the first question and Ali took over from there. What a showman! He put me so much at ease I could actually hold the mike in one hand without shaking. He had the crowd, the TV crew, and myself mesmerized for about twenty minutes. I finally got up enough nerve to ask Ali to join me at the backgammon table which I had previously set up. Ali asked all the right questions about the origin and the history of the game. Although he had seen it played in his travels throughout Europe and Asia, he didn't realize how popular the game is in America and finally said, "How long does it take to learn this game? Can you teach me to play in an hour or two?" A little of his self-assured, confident airs had rubbed off on me and I answered, "Sure." The board had red and white checkers and Ali was seated by chance on white's side of the board and the first sentence of instruction I uttered was, "**Ali, you are white**." First I heard the audible gasp from the onlookers, a chuckling from some of the TV technicians, and then observed the funny look on Ali's face. Then I realized I had just called the greatest living black man in the world, the man who's face and name is the most recognizable on our entire planet, **white**, while innocently referring to the color of the checkers he was to play. The law of self-preservation took over and I figured I'd better skim over the basics fast, before I had his fist accompanying my own foot that had become lodged in my mouth.

After another ten minutes of basic instruction, Ali folded up the board and announced, "Now that you have taught me backgammon, in six months' time I challenge you to a match and I will be the new World Champion." I said, "Ali, for our match, I'll put my title on the line." I might have known that Ali would have the last word, even at my own game. "You put your title on the line and your behind will be mine," said the great Muhammad Ali, and you know, I think he was only half-kidding. ★★

LETTERS FROM READERS

STOOL PIGEON

Gentlemen,

I have to take exception to Russell Sands' claim in the September issue that one should pass in a money game with a one-roll bearoff position against a weaker (<47% favorite in any given game) opponent who is doubling with two men on his two-point. It is true, as Sands says, that other considerations besides strict mathematics often should affect backgammon decision making, but Sands apparently bases his conclusion on mathematical considerations alone.

Let's assume I'm playing an opponent over whom I'm an averge 70% favorite. By Sands' argument, I should drop like a shot if he doubles with two men on his two-point. Right? Since I'm such a big favorite, I should probably drop if he has one man on his tour-point and one on his two-point. Right?

In the real world, I'll take more often tha not, even against this patsy who only has a 30% chance in a given game. Here are some conceivable situations in which I'd pass:

1. My opponent knows that the position is a mathematical take, but doesn't know I know this, too. By dropping, I arouse his contempt for my backgammon knowledge and/or ability to figure odds, thereby making him more willing to continue to play me and donate his money.
2. I cannot afford to pay if I take and lose.
3. I know that if I take and he wins, his confidence will be bolstered and he'll play much more strongly.
4. I know that he likes to quit while he's ahead. Being an average 70% favorite, I don't want to risk taking and losing, thus giving him extra inducement to quit.
5. Since I want to play this person as often as possible, year after year, I want to lose once in a while. We are even now. I want to lose ten points, go home, and come back tomorrow. If I take, I may win, so I drop.

Note that in each of these hypothetical cases (except the second) I increase my expected loss in this game to increase my expected gain in subsequent games. However, there are situations where increasing my expected loss in this game has NO effect on my expected gain (or loss) in subsequent games. In these situations, I will invariably take. The reason? I have a >25% chance to win, and so will lose less over time by accepting the cube than by declining. It is true that against the aforementioned pigeon I'll win 70% of all subsequent games (or of all subsequent points), but that fact does not change the mathematics that govern my decision, and decrease my expected loss in this game.

If Sands had demonstrated that "opponent factors," such as the ones listed above, generally compensate for the equity you give up by dropping against a weaker player, his argument would be perfectly valid. In the form he presents though, it just doesn't hold water.

Marty Storer
Buffalo, NY

WHAT DID I MISS?

I previously confessed that I am a weak intermediate-level player, often confused by various plays in expert circles and current BG literature. In fact, I must confess that I am also confused by the nature of some books and the "experts" themselves — for instance, Gaby Horowitz and his purported work, BACKGAMMON FOR WINNERS.

I first heard of this book in November of 1980 and sent Gaby a check for $25.00, dated 12/1/80, estimating that this would probably cover the cost of purchase and shipping. My check was cashed but I did not receive the book, or anything of equal value. Nothing! I guess this isn't too unusual, because Gaby indicated on the phone that three percent of all shipping seems to get sidetracked.

However, I am most perplexed because he also indicated that the work was not actually published. This is consistent with V.H. Yanko's COMPLETE BACKGAMMON BIBLIOGRAPHY which was recently published. I guess Yanko felt that a book doesn't exist if you can't get a copy! Most unreasonable, because Gaby just reviewed it again for BACKGAMMON GUIDE.

Moreover, another article recently printed in your magazine (pg. 34) on "The Double Cube — A Two-Edge Factor" by R. Kassem indicated one of the sources as BACKGAMMON FOR WINNERS, by Gaby Horowitz and Dr. Bruce Roman. Intriguing!!

Why did Horowitz and Roman have to review their own work? Is BACKGAMMON FOR WINNERS "Highly Recommended"? More to the point, does the book exist or doesn't it? Did Yanko miss it in his comprehensive Bibliography or did Kassem just list it as a source? Again . . . I am a little lost . . . what did I miss (besides $25.00)?

Robert F. Hickey
Upper Darby, PA

Editor's Note: We tried to locate the elusive BACKGAMMON FOR WINNERS. Although we were assured by the authors that it had been written, it has not been published nor is a manuscript available. We have heard that some typewritten copy has been circulating.

A BREAK IN THE SANDS OF TIME

Dear Editor,

The analysis by Russell Sands in his article in the September 1981 issue, was not correct ("Russell Wrestles with the Odds"). In problem 1, for money, with Black to play, Black doubles with two men on the two-point, while White has a man each on the one- and two-points. The author states that White should not accept if he is better than a 53% favorite in his games against this opponent.

Mr. Sands has used the wrong unit of measure, the GAME. The correct unit of measure is TIME. To put it more concretely, suppose you were given a chance to play one of two propositions for an afternoon. In proposition A, you play a game which lasts an average of ½ minute, in which your winning probability is .52. In proposition B, you play a game for the same stake which lasts an average of fifteen minutes, in which your probability of winning is .70. Proposition A is better. For the expected gain on each game is .52 - .48 = .04 every ½ minute, or (.04) (120) = 4.8 per hour. In proposition B, the expected gain is .7 - .3 = .4 every fifteen minutes, or 1.6 per hour.

Now apply this analysis to Mr. Sands' problem. Let us say that accepting the cube and letting the opponent take one roll adds at most one-half minute to the game. The expected loss per game is, after accepting, 2 x (26/36 - 10/36) times the cube, or 8/9 times the cube. Thus the expected gain by taking the double is 1/9 of the cube in 1/2 minute. Even if the cube is on 1, this amounts to 120/9 = 13.3 per hour. Now suppose, for the sake of argument, that the average game lasts ten minutes, the better player has the tremendous edge of 70% to 30%, and the average cube value at the end of a game is 2. Then the expected win per unit time is (.7 - .3) x 2 = .8 in ten minutes, or 4.8 per hour. Unless the figures were greatly different, the double becomes a take, even with the cube in the center.

Conversely, this same logic shows that it may be correct to drop a double with the same probability of win, if the position is such that accepting will prolong the game unduly. The theory here is one that is practiced regularly by the pros and can be stated succinctly: TIME IS MONEY.

Bill Horn
Arlington, VA

ALMOST PERFECT

Gentlemen,

Congratulations on your June, 1981 issue. It is super.

What I like about it are:

1. Lots of games and positional problems.
2. Less space devoted to the "beautiful" people and their activities.

One other comment — I couldn't make any sense out of the article "No Defense to the Back Game?", even allowing for the fact that the illustrated boards were numbered wrong. If there was some slip-up in printing the article, I would like to see it republished.

Henry Schwartz
Northbrook, IL

CALLING WESTERN UNION . . .

Dear Giant 32,

Nice to see a southern player mentioned. Wilensky, Si! Posner, No!

Kathy Posner? You're kidding , Wilensky. Larry Gould is more like it.

Kathy Posner? You must be smoking left-handed cigarettes.

Harry Pace
Atlanta, GA

LETTERS FROM READERS

Dear Backgammon Magazine,

I was astounded by David Fletcher's article in the March '81 issue ("Beaver Theory"). As was pointed out by Ernie Tuck (in a letter in the June '81 issue), the arguments in that article were shaky at best. Also, no example of a double and beaver was given where the player who doubled did not make a foolish mistake. Ernie also conjectured that there are no positions where a double followed by a beaver is the correct play.

The article "Double-Beaver Revisisted" by Arthur Ramer in the September '81 issue was more to the point. it gave what appears to be a correct example of a position in which white should double and black should beaver. The important point is that his analysis implicitly assumed that the "Jacoby Rule" was in effect. The Jacoby Rule is not yet a standard, so his conclusion is not relevant in general.

Burt Simon
Holmdel, N.J.

FANFARE FOR THE UNCOMMON MAN

Dear BACKGAMMON MAGAZINE,

I would like to relate a story concerning one of your listed Top 32 Players.

First, I have never played him, don't know him, and would give great odds that he doesn't know me or even remember me.

Two years ago, as an intermediate, I entered my first tournament, a regional D.C. contest featuring local experts and intermediates. The weeks prior, I called the coordinator, who also is the same Top 32 player. Each time, no matter how busy he was, he gave me any and all information (once he mentioned he just got back from Florida playing some of the people who, at that time, were part of my initial backgammon library. Each time I would relate all parts of the conversation with a friend and fellow backgammon addict). Well, off went two Intermediates to their version of MONTE CARLO and a chance to watch Mr. Top 32 in action. For me, at least, the tournament was a success, as I finished as runner-up in the last chance Intermediate Division, thus winning my entry fee.

Taking my winnings (breaking even was a major win), my ego, and my digs in the direction of my friend was bad enough; the final straw on this bitter cold day was that his car had died and needed a jump-start.

Knowing no one, minus cables and money (I had my winning check), we went back to the club where all that was left was the championship match, kibitzers, and your listed Top 32 Player. Who should volunteer to jump-start us — you guessed it! As he opened the trunk of his car I saw Lewis Deyongs' book (purchased the next day). After thanking Mr. Top 32, my friend and I were off.

My next contact with this gentleman was a venture my friend and I took to a D.C. backgammon "HOT SPOT," The Dupont Circle Club. Who should greet us but our man again. Since time had elapsed, no mentioned of his kind deed. Now here is where you made money, for he gave us both a test from your magazine and asked if we subscribed (the next day I did). Acting cool, we both took the test (guessing like the intermediates we were) and stayed just long enough to watch a few matches and go back to the drawing board.

Our last contact with him has come in the last few weeks through a publication of his called *Backgammon with the Champions*.

I am not writing this to promote his publication, although I find it to be refreshing, constructive and reflective. Rather, I am writing this to tell my impression of a "true champion" and to say "Thank You, KENT GOULDING, keep up the good work." Backgammon needs people like you.

Charlie Tompkey
Annadale, VA

TOURNAMENT TALK

Dear Max and Joel,

It was great talking to you, especially after just receiving your June issue. It was impossible to put down. Your efforts to cover the backgammon world, to keep all clubs and players informed, must not go unrecognized — most importantly your efforts to keep all harmonious.

Your editorial, "Grind Tournaments," was pertinent — the thoughts had to be expressed. Backgammon is now at the crossroads! Tournaments are a must, but not always for the obvious reasons. True, large purses are an attraction. True, the player likes a one hundred percent return, as well as a second and third chance — but what are the motives behind these features, and who benefits behind the scenes?

Backgammon is now at the crossroads! Tournaments are a must, and the players must be aware of the clubs to support. Clubs that have worked diligently for honorable reputations, clubs with volunteers, giving countless hours, with intermediates being encouraged, for they are the future champions, clubs with organizers and directors first thinking of what is best for backgammon and the player.

It is time — time for the player to help pay his way along with the organization that is laboring to bring the very best to tournament play. Part of this is the genial atmosphere projected by the club and the players that are selected to participate for their qualities — fair play and honesty, not just "filling a seat." Who can say that one does not enjoy a good dinner, the glass of wine, the opportunity to discuss a match while sitting next to a champion? Who is not proud of the trophy that is displayed — that is evidence of the achievement long after the money is spent.

These amenities must be shared, paid for by the club and the player. Backgammon must not be a puppet on a string — it must be self-supporting.

The player must be aware of how backgammon is thought of by many. The player who casually gambles without considering the hotel, its license, the club it jeopardizes, must be fined and the monies so collected should be used to fund the passing of laws that are beneficial to backgammon.

NEBC has been appreciative of its association with Lewis Deyong and Black & White. We will continue to have two benefits a year and will be having our Fifth Annual Boston Symphony Orchestra Benefit October 30 through November 1, 1981 at the Hyatt Regency, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Our tournament will start with an Auction Black Tie Dinner, and we pride ourselves on continuing the tradition of the champion being the winner from start to finish! Our "Tournament of Champions" will be having champions from every state of the Union and abroad.

By the way: NEBC Board voted to join your association.

Francesca Parkinson
North Falmouth, MA ☆☆



FUN FACTS

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

●Backgammon was played in Korea hundreds of years ago? The game there was called "ssangyuk," which translates into "double sixes." The Seaul Museum has on display a six-hundred-year-old backgammon board. Above the board is an antique painting of an old man and woman playing in a field.

●"Patolli" was the name of a game very similar to backgammon played by the Aztecs in Mexico in the fifteenth century?

●The first international backgammon tournament was in 1964? The director was Prince Alexis Obolensky.

●Both Philip of France and Richard the Lion-Hearted in the twelfth century forbade backgammon to those below the rank of knight?

●Most of the history of backgammon was compiled by British archaeologists in the 1920's? They became interested in the origins of the game because versions of it were found in many excavations of unrelated ancient cultures.

●It is estimated by experts that the player who wins the opening roll is a six-to-five favorite in that game?

QUIZ

by Dr. Jeff Ward

GAMMON-SAVING QUIZ-

I enjoyed Bill Robertie's Cube and Checker Play Quizzes so much that I just had to give the idea a try myself — so with apologies to Bill for the similarity of format, I present the following quiz.

IN EACH POSITION, BLACK OWNS THE CUBE AND IS ON ROLL IN A MONEY GAME. BLACK HAS FIFTEEN MEN ON THE BOARD; WHITE HAS LESS. SELECT THE BEST PLAY FOR BLACK'S ROLL.

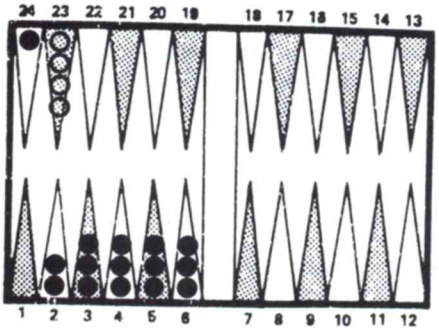


FIGURE 1 4-2

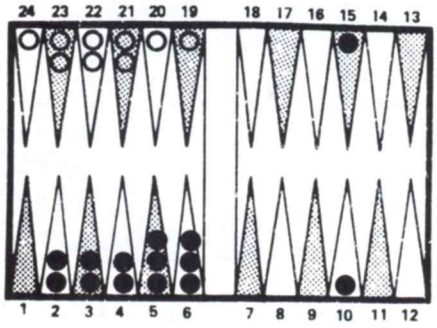


FIGURE 2 2-2

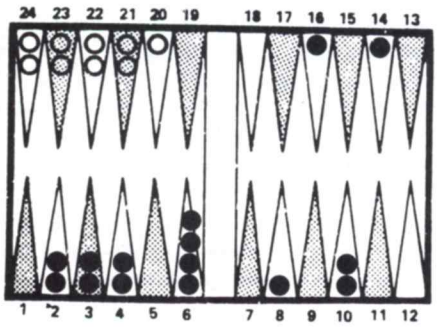


FIGURE 3 5-3

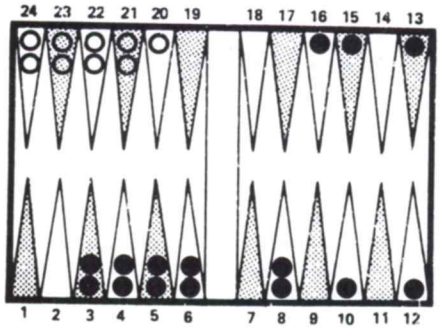


FIGURE 4 5-2

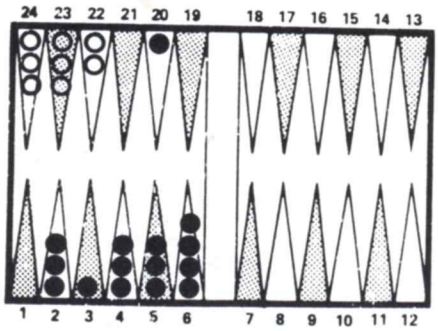


FIGURE 5 3-1

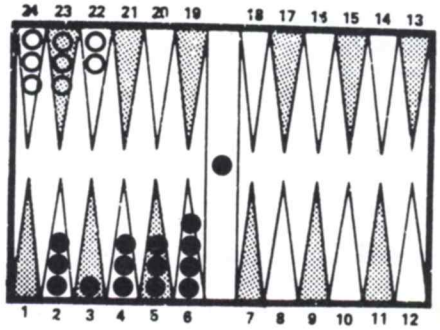


FIGURE 6 6-1

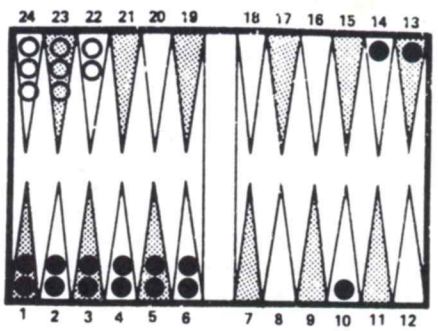


FIGURE 7 4-3

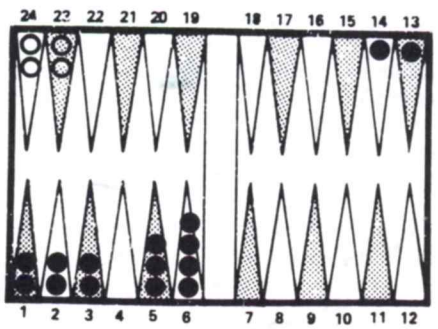


FIGURE 8 4-2

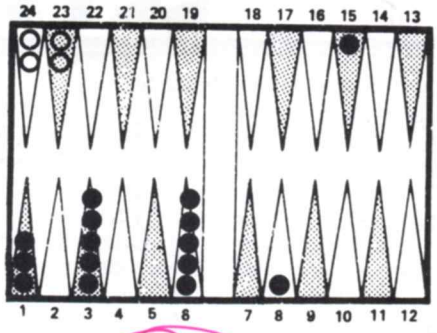


FIGURE 9 5-1

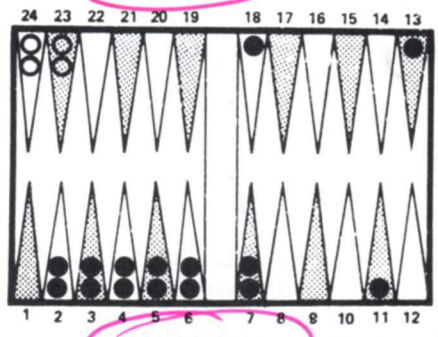


FIGURE 10 4-4

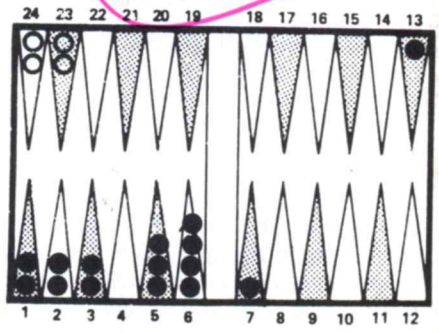


FIGURE 11 3-2

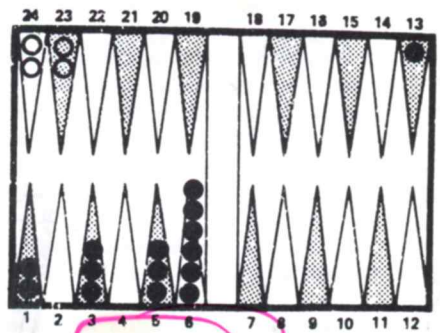


FIGURE 12 1-1

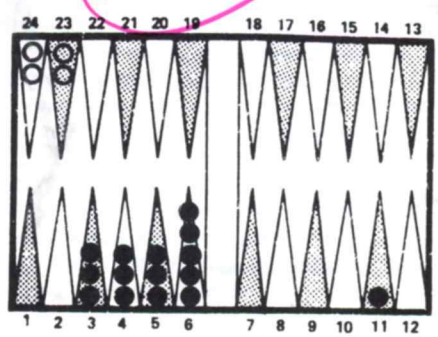


FIGURE 13 3-1

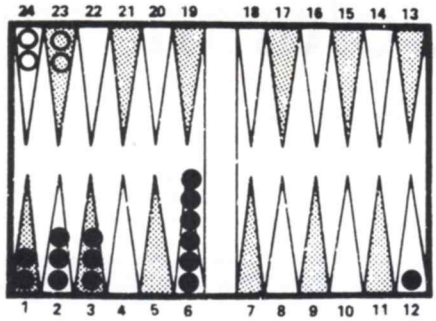


FIGURE 14 5-4

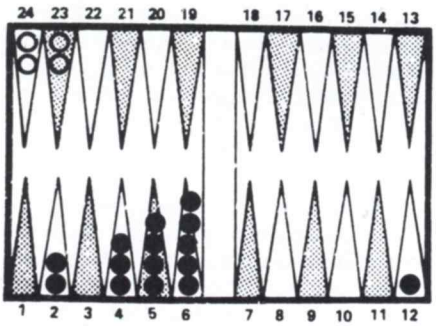


FIGURE 15 2-1

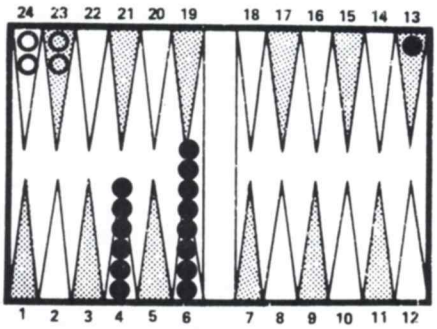


FIGURE 16 3-3

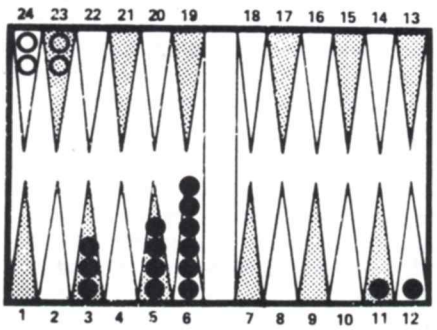


FIGURE 17 6-2

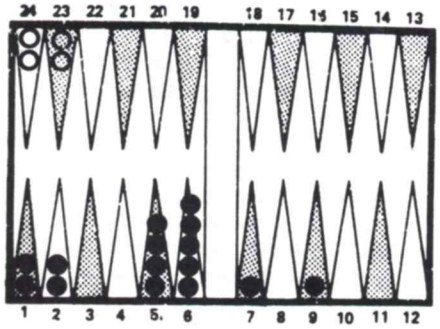


FIGURE 18 4-2

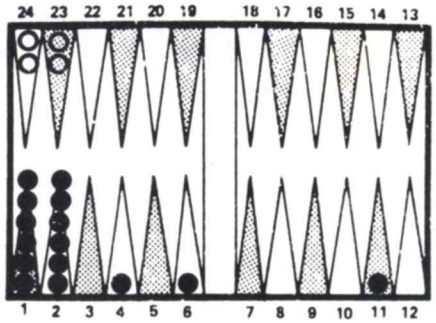


FIGURE 19 1-1

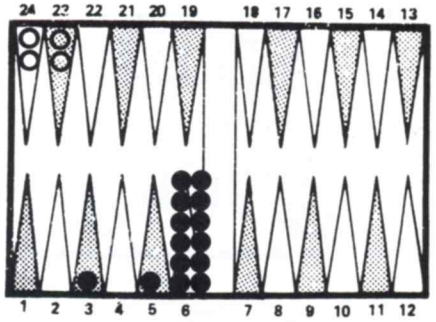


FIGURE 20 2-1

ANSWERS

1. 24/18
   The percentages dictate running to save the backgammon (but with three White checkers on the two-point, Black should stay). With some luck, Black might even save the gammon.

2. 10/6, 15/11
   Black stays back to force White to use his next roll to play safe. If White rolls a low number, he bears off only one man — and still needs four more rolls to finish.

3. 14/6
   Playing to the six-point is the most efficient bear-in because no pips are wasted within the home board. Avoiding waste and making cross-overs (quadrant crossings) are higher priorities than bringing men in. The gap on the five-point is unimportant.

4. 8/6, 15/11
   Black diversifies in his outer board to create an efficient 5.

5. 20/17, 2/1
   Using an ace to slot the one-point is usually correct.

6. Bar/19/18
   Crossing a quadrant is more valuable than slotting.

7. 10/6, 14/11
   The best spacing for two men in the outfield is usually two points apart, unless an additional crossover can be made with a different spacing.

8. 13/9, 14/12
   Don't settle for 4-4, 5-5, and 6-6 when you can get 3-3 as well.

9. 15/10, 3/2
   All doubles work except 1-1, Some plays leave Black with only three good doubles.

10. 13/5, 7/3(2)
    Black must make four crossovers now just to give himself one saving roll, 6-6, next turn.

11. 13/10, 7/5
    Slotting the four- or five-point to save the gammon is rarely correct. It is more important to make crossovers and to move the rear man as close as possible.

12. 13/10, 3/2
    It is usually best to move a lone straggler as close to home as possible, but here more saving rolls result from using the last ace to slot the two-point. A useful indicator of this kind of exception is the fact that it is bad to have a spacing of seven points between a home board gap and the outside man. I call this the "Rule of 7's." If Black moves 13/9, the Rule would apply with respect to the two-point. A spacing of 7 is bad because a specific number, 2 in this case, neither bears in nor bears off. Black thus creates good 2's by slotting.

13. 11/7
    The wrong time to slot. Slotting the two-point creates a spacing of 7, making future aces worthless.

14. 12/8, 6/1
    Black is helpless against a future 5-4 or 5-5, but can turn 4-4 into a good roll by landing on the eight-point and staying there.

15. 12/9
    Best not to slot. The Rule of 7's is a useful guide.

16. 13/7, 6/3, 4/1
    It's unusual for slotting with a 3 to be correct, but this position calls for an even rarer double slot. Only 5-5 won't save the gammon next turn. All other plays leave additional bad rolls.

17. 12/6, 4/2
    Ignore the open five-point and bring the **back** man in. Slotting the two-point to avoid a spacing of 7 is slightly better than slotting the 1 or 11/9.

18. 9/5, 6/4
    The right time to slot a high point. With nothing else to worry about, Black slots to destroy his last bad roll, 4-4. Other plays don't eliminate 4-4, 4-3, or 2-1.

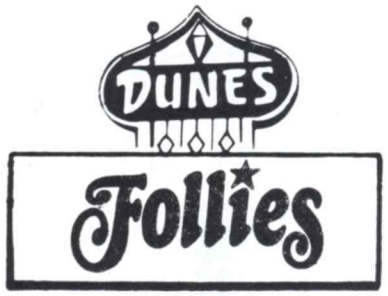
19. 11/8, 2/1
    Playing to the eight-point gets the low rolls, but Black must "burn" the last ace to maintain a delicate status quo containing no bad rolls. Other choices turn 5-3, 3-3, or 5-4 into gammon-makers.

20. 12/10, 5/4
    This has to be one of the most bizarre correct moves in all of backgammon. Advancing to the ten-point is mandatory, but continuing 10/9 is unusually ineffective (Rule of 7's), adding not a single good roll. shifting the gap from the four- to the five-point, however, adds 4-4 and 2-2 while retaining 5-5.

Scoring

19-20	How much do you charge for lessons?
17-18	Rather not play you for money
15-16	Good, but not great
13-14	So-So
9-12	Choose opponents with care
5-8	First cousin to Mr. Bye
0-4	Have I got a deal for you

☆☆













Rulings Column

by Candace Nyles Mayeron

The author is a practicing Los Angeles attorney, an experienced tournament player, and a tournament director. She has also been on several rulings committees. Questions on rules, procedure or etiquette may be sent to CANDACE NYLES MAYERON, in care of this magazine. Include your name, address and phone number with area code, in case we need more information. For a personal response include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

CHOUETTE PARTNER REFUSES TO GO ALONG WITH CAPTAIN'S DOUBLE.

Q: Recently five of us played a chouette, and I was in the box. The captain insisted on doubling. he partner informed me that as far as he was concerned, HIS cube was still in the center. I took the double, and to keep the peace agreed that one player's cube was undoubled. Later my position worsened, and this layer now doubled. I dropped. I then was gammoned. I paid four ponts to each of the other three players, and one point to the dissenting player whose cube I had dropped. Isn't there anything in the rules to cover this sort of impasse? The others said there is not.

P.S. I find your Ruling Column most informative and look forward to reading it each issue (S.K., Los Angeles, CA).

A: This is a good question, not because it is difficult or without precedence, but because this problem occurs so frequently. In your case I would rule that the money distribution remains as settled — **not** because what your group did was right, but because it is what you **did.**

There are certain areas of backgammon where the players are permitted to make settlements. Chouette play is one of them. Tournament play is **not** (a hedge is not a settlement). Since settlements are permitted in chouettes, since you agreed to let the dissenting layer hold a cube at a different value than his team members, and since there was no agreement to redistribute the money based on a later ruling, then the money stands as distributed.

But now let's talk about how the impasse would have been resolved, had a ruling been called for at the time of the problem. Before I begin, let me emphasize that you were playing in a chouette with no individual cubes. Some clubs have started experiementing with individual cube chouette play and if your chouette had been of this type, then the results your group reached would be compatible with the rules of "individual cube chouettes."

PURCHASING THE DISSENTER'S GAME

Under the standard rules of chouette play, (non-individual cubes), when the captain doubles the box, all partners are with the double. If one partner dissents, the captain (or any other partner) **may** offer to buy the dissenting partner's game. If this is agreed upon, the dissenting partner immediately receives from the captain or purchasing partner the value of the undoubled cube, and the purchasing player's score is lessened by that undoubled value. The purchasing player is then playing two games at the doubled value, (assuming the box takes the cube), but he or she has paid for that second game.

Here is an example. Suppose the captain holds the cube at 2, and wishes to redouble to 4. Partner strongly objects, but Captain is just as insistent that it is correct to double. Partner would rather get out of the game than redouble, and offers his game for sale. Captain is willing to buy partner's game. Partner's score is now +2 (the undoubled or unredoubled value), and Captain's score is –2 (the payment for Partner's game). Captain is now playing two games at the 4 level, assuming the box takes. If the Captain wins, but without gammon, the Captain will be scored +8, but his **net** for that game is +6 (two games at a 4 cube=8 points, minus the 2 points the Captain paid for the Partner's game). If the box takes and the Captain loses, the Captain's net is -10. Notice that this transaction does not affect the box in any way. He is still playing against the same number of games, just one less player.

If the transaction is completed and the box then drops, the captain (in the above example) would have a net of +2 (two games x 2 cube dropped = +4, minus the 2 he paid for Partner's game).

The captain does not have to purchase the dissenting player's game. Notice I said the captain "may" offer to purchase the dissenting partner's game. it is not mandatory, however, that he do so. Usually, however, where a captain insists on doubling in the face of vehement opposition by a partner, the captain probably feels his position is so strong that he will **want** to own a second game.

It is important to know that the dissenting partner may also offer his game to the box player. He should only do this after all his team partners have declined the offer to buy him out.

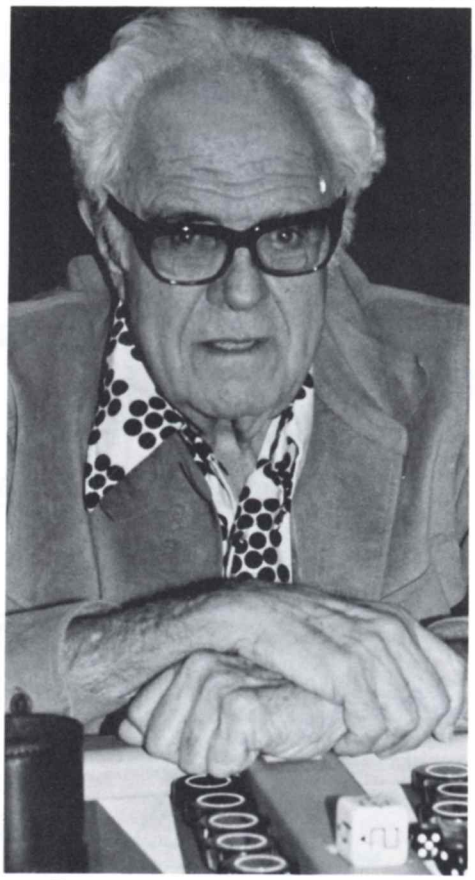
If the box refuses and push comes to shove, and the captain still insists on doubling, then the dissenting partner **must** go along with the cube. The captain has the final say, both as to checker play and cube handling; and, as previously stated, the captain does not have to purchase the dissenter's game (this sort of impasse will probably be the end of the game and the friendship).

Once a partner has been bought out, he may no longer consult. Where another partner has purchased the dissenting partner's game, that purchasing partner **retains** his position in the chouette lineup. He does not move up or down to the selling partner's place.

(Continued on page 28)

PROFILE PAGE

OSWALD JACOBY



"Take backgammon, bridge, and gin rummy and there is no one who can beat me at all three games."

But because he is seventy-eight and knows his limitatios, the master gamesman qualifies that claim: "Individually, they'd beat the hell out of me."

That's a hefty admission for a man, who for fifty years, has collected championship titles like flies.

Jacoby holds thirty-two national bridge titles and three international backgammon titles. His syndicated bridge column has run in newspapers for thirty years, and he has written primers on poker, bridge, backgammon, and canasta.

Nowadays, you'll find him at the Dallas Country Club, playing his current passion, gin, rummy. He usually wins, and that pleases him.

He plays for "moderate stakes" — nothing specific — an insists gambling is essential to a pleasurable game.

"There is no such thing as playing any game for mere joy," he says, racing through his words. "If you don't have something to lose, you tend not to care. It spoils the game."

Jacoby pocketed sixty cents in his first poker game. He was eight at the time. The stakes later climbed considerably — though he won't say how much — in matches with Long Island's wealthy and Texas oil people. He's been known to play above his means, but he's mysterious about that, too.

The quality of play at such tourneys is respectable, Jacoby allows. "There's no bad backgammon anymore. Everyone plays pretty well. There is enough luck in the tournament so that no one is favored to win."

White-haired and intense, Jacoby still lives up to his reputation for brisk manner and rapid speech. His eyes dart constantly around the meeting room of the Dallas Country Club. He's always thinking about his next move, his next project.

In an interview he acts tied down. There's no telling how he'll survive the sessions when he begins to work on his own life story with Roger Dionne, who wrote about Jacoby for Sports Illustrated.

Despite his natural impatience, Jacoby says he is slowing down. He tires easily and travels rarely. He restricts his projects to revising his 1941 standard poker text, **Oswald Jacoby on Poker**, and consulting with a British company for the game "Jacoby Coputer Bridge."

"I figured the name was still worth something," he quips.

In addition, he did manage to travel to Las Vegas last week to view, if not play, the poker tables.

"Decadence," Jacoby says, "People have no respect for money. It's easy to see people bet $100,000 in an hour."

"Maybe," he adds, "I'm just getting old."

While Jacoby mourns that "youth is wasted on the young," he admits the young are rough competition.

But Jacoby was considerably younger when he won the first Goldman Pairs competition (held in 1929), teamed up with a Manhattan businessman named George Reith.

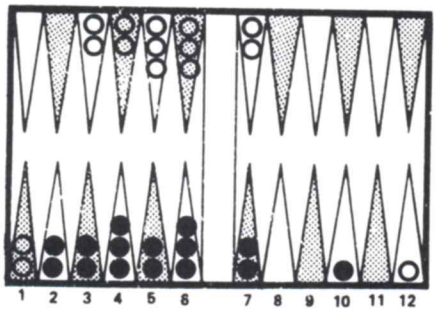
Three years later, the Brooklyn native came to Fort Worth to give a speech. He met a young woman the next day on a Dallas tennis court. She was Texas state tennis champion Mary Zita McHale. The two were married one week later, and have made their home in Dallas since 1937.

An insurance actuary for many years, Jacoby also did intelligence work for the Navy during World War II and in Korea.

Of his two sons — Jon, an investment banker in Little Rock, and James, a stock broker who lives in Richardson — only James shares Jacoby's fervor for games. Jacoby calls James one of the ten best bridge players in the world.
high? ☆☆

IS IT ALL LUCK?

by Arthur Dickman



White to Play 4—3

Knowing how and when to capitalize on luck is an important part of playing expert backgammon. It is essential to have a game plan that allows luck to play in one's favor.

In the following diagram, white has to play 4 – 3. To make the obvious two-point would be an ill-judged play. Projecting, if black stays out a few times (not so unlikely with five points closed), white's game would wind up in an impossible position. Once his men are forced into his inner board, black would probably wind up shooting at a blot and have a chance to win a gammon from white.

Here is the suggested play: blot the 3 to the two-point and bring the 4 down to the nine-point. Now, if black rolls a 2, putting white on the bar, and white manages to stay out a few times (not too unlikely in the face of black's five-point board), this is where we give luck a chance to play its part. If black does not roll a 6 for a few rolls, he will find himself in deep trouble.

Actually, this happened and after a few rolls not containing a 6, black's board crumbled. He lost his bar, six-point, and had a blot on his five-point. White, who hadn't rolled into into black's board was able to redouble. Black, facing the possible loss of a gammon, was forced to resign.

Ironically, white won this game without moving. Surely, white was very lucky, but he did stick to a game plan. In conclusion, I would like to point out that even if black had escaped with a 6 from white's board, by staying out, white would still have had a well-timed one-point game. With white's board intact, he would be bound to get many winning chances. ☆☆

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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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Les and **Sue Boyd** are a backgammon institution. The IBA was one of the first groups organized on an international level. It is also the only one that has survived.

While others failed because of high expectations, the Boyds trimmed the fat, and, with their heads below the clouds, went about the business of running tournaments. No one has operated more tournaments than the IBA. Even today the IBA has several prestigious affairs including: the US Open; the Western Open; New York State Championship; Florida State Championship, etc. They also publish the Backgammon Guide, a quarterly capsule of IBA events.

We particularly welcome the IBA because it completes the American Association of Backgammon Clubs circle. There is now no group of strength and repute that is not an Associate of the AABC. **Sue** and **Les Boyd, 1300 Citrus Isle, Ft. Lauderdale, FL (305) 527-4033.**



NEW ENGLAND BACKGAMMON CLUB

The NEBC is **Francesca Parkinson**. She is the hard-working, no-nonsense director of this world-famous Boston-based group. The NEBC is the model backgammon club. It is well-organized, complete with elected functioning officers and a board of governors. They hold regular business meetings as well as tournament gatherings. They have a good set of bylaws which are respected and enforced. NEBC raises thousands of dollars a year for charity, and is visibly active in community affairs. The well-known Boston Symphony Orchestra Backgammon Benefit is only one of their annual sold-out affairs.

The NEBC also publishes an informative newsletter on a regular basis. As a member one even gets a financial report at the end of the year.

This club takes backgammon seriously, and follows all of the proper ceremony of a good organization. The result is that members feel it is an honor to belong, and conduct themselves with proper dignity. If you haven't been to a NEBC black-tie affair, you haven't been.

We are glad to welcome Francesca and the NEBC to the American Association of Backgammon Clubs. Mrs. Parkinson can be reached at **(617) 563-5787.**

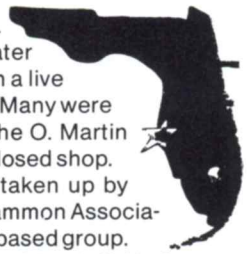
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MEMPHIS

Welcome to Backgammon Mid-America, Memphis, Tennessee. With interest high and a growing addiction to the game, Memphis has become the proving ground for a new group "Backgammon Associates, Inc." formulated to create more places to play, have regional tournaments, local weekly gatherings, and sho-nuff, a backgammon league?

The planning stages are under way with over 100 names in the kitty and growing daily. **Ms.Debi Neal** is heading up the new venture and will keep us all posted as it comes together. Good luck, Debi Neal. **(901) 795-4780.**

SUNCOAST BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION



The Tempa – St. Petersburg – Clearwater area has always been a live backgammon scene. Many were disappointed when the O. Martin backgammon show closed shop. The slack has been taken up by the Suncoast Backgammon Association, a Largo, Florida-based group. The group was started by Jeff Hodges (president) and Drew Giovanis (vice-president). Current activities include tournaments at the Caribbean Gulf (Clearwater Beach) and Beacon Point Pub (St. Petersburg). For information contact **Jeff Hodges** at: **(813) 581-1600.** ☆☆



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BRIDGECENTER BACKGAMMON

John and **Betty Puscas** own the Bridgecenter at 3131 East First Street in Tuscon. It has a large clubhouse, so it was decided to start a backgammon club as an added activity of interest. 143 players signed up immediately and the Thursday evening round-robin tournament became a huge success.

John designed a pretty nifty tournament format which we are going to feature in an upcoming issue. One of the interesting attractions of this tournament is a discount certificate to future events for early round winners. Welcome, Bridgecenter: **(602) 881-5691.**

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Nov. 21-22	Texas Backgammon Tournament	Jim Howe (713) 493-4968	Houston, TX	Ramada Inn West/ Texas Bg Assn
Nov. 21-22	Great Lakes Team Championships	Gary Jay (716) 473-8343	Rochester, NY	Bg Board of Rochester
Nov. 27-30	Chicago Cup Tournament	Valerie Valentine (312) 782-0142	Chicago, IL	Hyatt Regency/ Bg Club of Chicago
Nov. 27-29	29th Indiana Open	Ralph Roberts (317) 872-0892	Indianapolis, IN	Indianapolis Athletic Club Hoosier Bg Club
Nov. 27-29	Southern Open	Les Boyd (305) 527-4033	Palm Beach, FL	Breakers/IBA
Nov. 28-29	Escape Thanksgiving Tournament	Kevin Brandt (305) 563-3116	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Escape Bg Club
Dec. 4-6	Los Angeles Tournament	Todd Vander Pluym (213) 376-8843	Los Angeles, CA	Cavendish West
Dec. 5	3rd Annual Frankfort Backgammon Classic	Michael Goddard (502) 223-5817	Frankfort, KY	Frankfort Bg Club
Dec. 9-13	Holiday Tournament	Henry Wattson (212) 486-1489	Las Vegas, NV	Dunes Hotel
Jan. 25-31	Resorts International No.American Championships	Lewis Deyong 01 352 5400	Britagnia Beach Nausau	Resorts International
Jan. 25-31	Courvoiser World Team Championships	Lewis Deyong 01 352 5400	Britagnia Beach Nausau	Resorts International
March 5-7	Louisville Backgammon Tournament	Larry Strasberg (502) 451-3950	Louisville, KY	Lousisville Bg Club
April 15-18	4th Turnberry Isle Invitational Championship	Lewis Deyong 01 352 5400	Turnberry Isle, FL	Turnberry Corp.
June 22-27	World Amateur Championship	Henry Wattson (212) 486-1489	Las Vegas, NV	Dunes Hotel
July 5-11	Monte Carlo Tournament	Lewis Deyong 01 352 5400	Monte Carlo	Merit/SBM B & W Scotch

THE 7TH ANNUAL LVBC AWARDS BANQUET



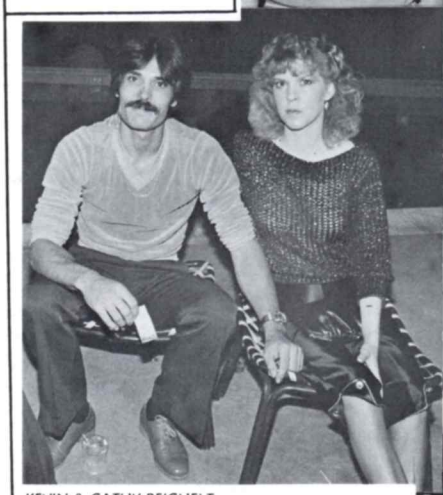
PYRROS, SIMEON MISHAIKOFF – CHAMPION



STUART UNGER, CHIP REESE, DR. CHUCK THOMAS

MABLE ENGLAND, ANDREA WALLER, DEE HICKS

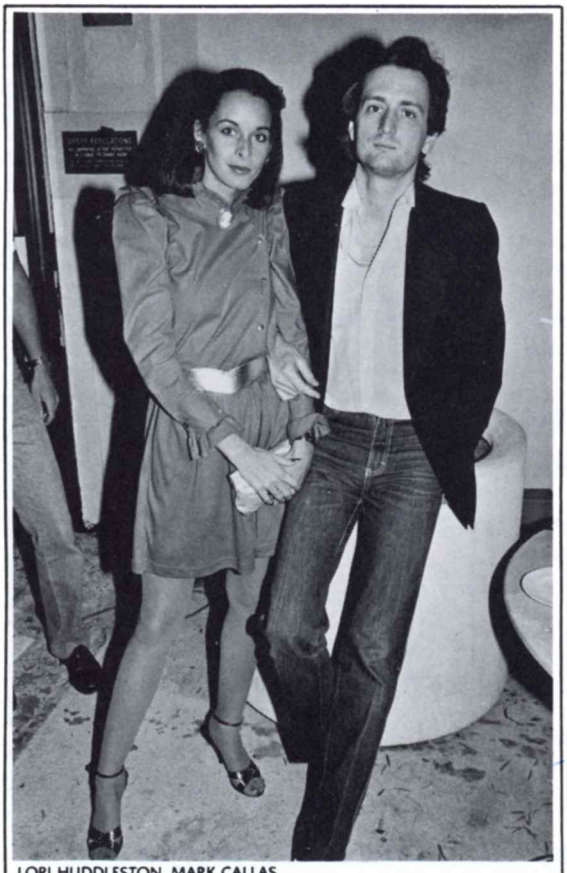




KEVIN & CATHY REICHELT



SAM ANSELMO & FRIENDS



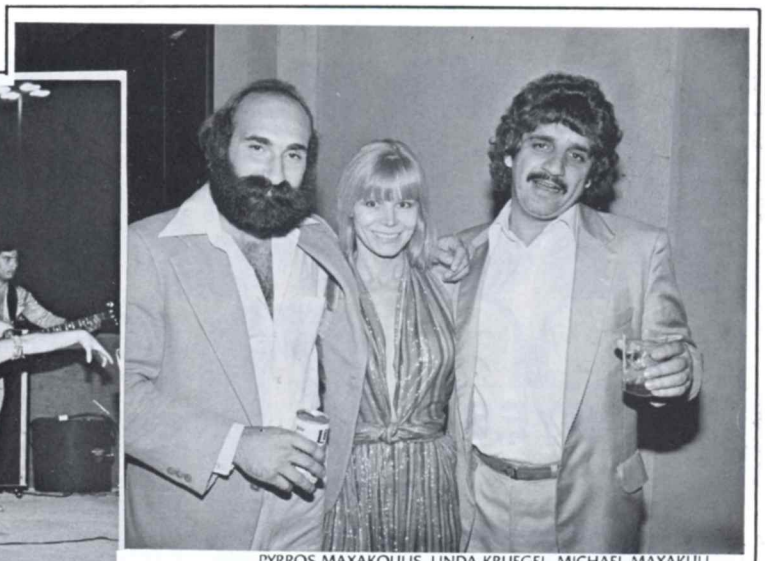
LORI HUDDLESTON, MARK CALLAS



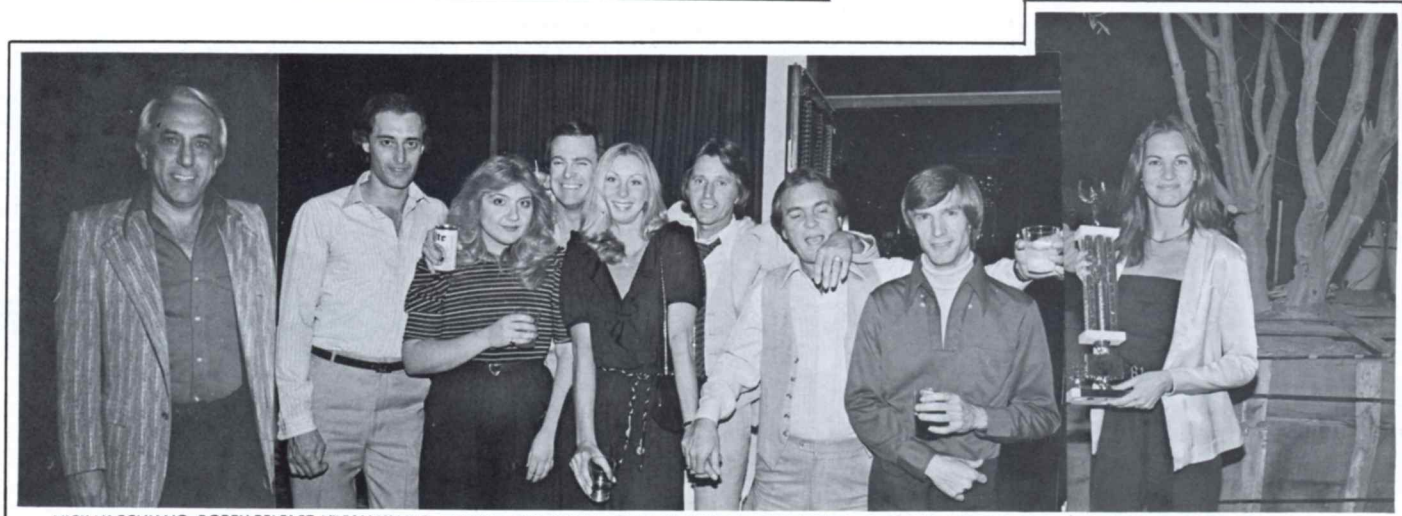
BEN STRAHAN, BARBARA MCNAIR



THE INTERNATIONAL FOX



PYRROS MAXAKOULIS, LINDA KRUEGEL, MICHAEL MAXAKULI



NICK VACCHIANO, BOBBY BELFAST, VIVIAN YANKO, LARRY WADSWORTH, DEBBIE FERGUSON, JOHN TAYLOR, R. CRABIS, J. GUEST, KAREN WOLFSON – WOMAN CHAMPIONSHIP



POINT RACE

FINALS
1980—81

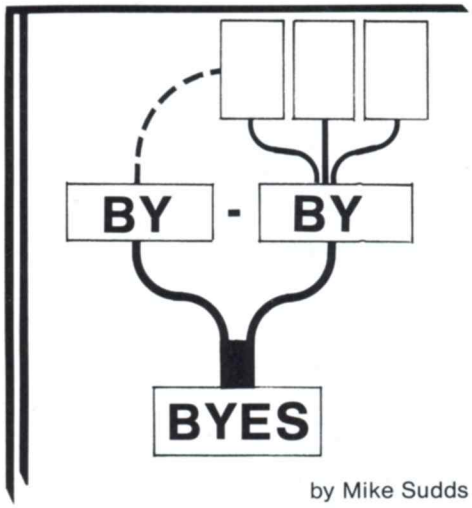
SIMEON MISHAIKOFF	93	GEORGE SNELLINGS	6	HARRY BROWN	3
DAVID SCHROEDER	75	KIT WOOLSEY	6	JIM ALLEN	3
KAREN WOLFSON	57	PAULETTE MURAY	6	SUSAN KEEHN	3
CRAIG CHELLSTORP	52	JAY MOSES	5	RICHARD KUHN	3
GARY BENGE	49	ELI BRUSH	5	ROBERT TEDONE	3
DAVE ASHLEY	41	DAVID HERSHLEDER	5	RANDY ANDREWS	3
LEE KABASE	27	MIKE BENENATI	5	JAY MISCH	3
RON JAMES	23	BOB GROMEK	4	LAVELLE CHARLES	3
RACHEL CHELLSTORP	20	RAINER STACHOWITZ	4	BILLY BARR	3
DAN CAMERON	19	BILL YOUNG	4	KENT JOHNSON	2
VARTAN SARKISSIAN	18	BILLY COLGAN	4	MARY DAVIS	2
TONY MANCARI	17	BUD ASHMORE	4	GLORIA GRANT	2
CHRIS CAMPBELL	16	GARY FORD	4	JACK ALLEN	2
MIKE ESHRAGH	15	NIKOLI DRIANOVSKY	4	JAY STONE	2
DIMITER RACHEV	15	STEVE HERMAN	4	JOHN LIAKOS	2
MUNCHKIN	13	PAUL SLUSARKIS	4	JERRY MOHAMMADALI	2
JACK REYNOLDS	13	BOB WILLIAMS	4	JAMES STAITE	1
TIM WISECARVER	12	GARY GANGNATH	4	LARRY MILLER	1
DEANE SCHROEDER	12	PUGGY PEARSON	4	DENNIS KRUM	1
MARK BELL	11	FRANKIE CITRO	4	BRENDA YOUNG	1
RICHARD KISKIS	11	ROGER OLSON	3	B.J. NASH	1
RADA RADOVICH	10	BILL SULLIVAN	3	JOHN MENDONCA	1
JAMIE LAMB	10	MIKE YANISH	3	NAN GRUBE	1
BOB HECK	8	KEN YILDIRIMER	3	STEVE KABLI	1
MARTY STEIN	8	LEONARD BERTONI	3	MIKE BROWN	1
KIVANC ORENGIL	8	JACK JONES	3	DAVID LEAN	1
MARY JO YANT	7	GERI FIELD	3	JACK CULLIGAN	1
DAVID EIG	7	HARRY FRITZ	3	MARGIE HAMILTON	1
PETE GINSBERG	6	MARK DETERS	3	RAY MISCH	1



RON & CINDY CANTAGALLO



LARRY & ELENA REYNOLDS, MARINA PAPPAS, NIKI & TERRY STAVROPOULOS



by Mike Sudds

Ah yes, the Bye family. The world's worst backgammon players. They seem to be everywhere. Their family tree shades almost every tournament event the world over. You see their name littering draw sheet after draw sheet. A Bye here, a Bye there, everywhere a Bye Bye . . .

The entire Bye clan is very eccentric indeed. With unbounded passion for the game, they enter every event, both big and small, then (for no good reason) fail to show up for their matches. They have an unblemished record of conspicuous nonattendance. Some say that they are shy, but harbor a secret desire to outdo each other's absenteeism. The Guiness people have been watching them for years, noting that the Byes have already established a record for nonparticipation (let alone tournament losses) that will never be eclipsed. Others contend that the Byes are so ashamed of their inept skills that they avoid embarrassment by inventing any excuse not to compete. It is whispered that unscrupulous rogues prey on the Byes by mailing them fictitious tournament entry forms, collecting the money (advance registration, of course), then entering themselves. These shady characters declare themselves winner of all prizes by default.

Tournament directors are plagued with Byes, and go to great lengths to eliminate them from tournaments. One director complained "They're the worst! They always lose. Waiting for them to arrive throws the whole tourney into chaos." Replacing them with players of more substance is not often easy ("Hey, you over there, the kid with the balloon, ya wanna play some backgammon?").

Directors even match up one Bye versus another Bye, knowing that he can get at least one of them out of his hair. In fact he often fills entire flights with the Byes who enter — guess who wins? Since our friends the Byes are such poor players, they are matched against the top seeds in large events, guaranteeing their early dismissal.

In weekly club tournaments, the Byes promote jealousy among players ("Hey, how come I never draw a Bye while sweet Sue always does?"). Anger at the director is also commonplace ("If you hadn't given me that Bye in the last round, I wouldn't have lost thirty-two points to Joe on the side!"). Good grief!

There are some obvious advantages to having a Bye or two around (Just ask Joe). Drawing one of these phantoms enhances your chances of winning. While others are locked in struggles, you are already one step closer to the top.

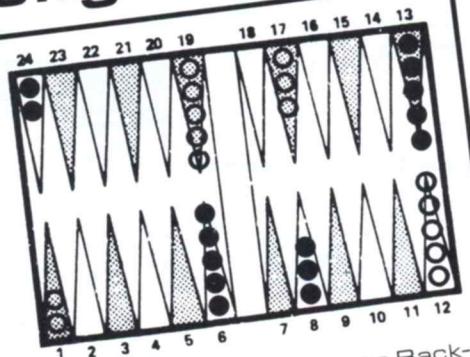
There are several strategies that may be employed when you draw a bye. You can get a bite, have a tall cool one, practice your psychokinetics (Have you bent your spoon today?), etc; but this time can be more profitably used in scouting out future opponents. Look for unusual lines of play, any weaknesses that you may wish to exploit later, cube play tendencies, and performance under pressure. This seemingly idle kibitzing may help in formulating your game plan. In later rounds, byes are beneficial in venting any steam accumulated in that galling defeat in the last round that advanced you to the consolation event. In a large tournament, where you may have many rounds to play during a session, a bye may prove to be your last respite for many hours.

As for the Bye family, we can all help squeeze them out of our tournaments. Play in your club's events. Bring a friend or two. Let's show 'em that they should find another game to infest. If enough of us play, perhaps they will take the hint and try Parcheesi or something. ★★

CONTEST RESULTS

The Ultimate Backgammon

1. W (6-1) 1/7, 19/20
2. B (3-3) 13/14 (4)
3. W (2-2) 12/14 (2), 19/21 (2)
4. B (5-5) 13/3, 10/5 (2)
5. W (1-1) 12/13, 14/15, 17/18, 21/22
6. B (3-3) 24/21x, 8/5 (3)
7. W (4-4) Bar/4, 12/16, 17/21x, 19/23
8. B (2-2) Bar/23x/21x/19x/17x
9. W (6-5) -0-
10. B (2-2) 24/22x/20x/18x/16x
11. W (6-5) -0-
12. B (2-2) 17/15x/13x, 16/14x/12x
13. W (6-5) -0-
14. B (6-6) 13/7x, 12/5, 10/4x (2)
15. W (5-4) -0-
16. B (6-6) 7/1x, 6/Off (3)
17. W (5-4) -0-
18. B (6-6) 6/Off (3), 5/Off
19. W (5-4) -0-
20. B (5-5) 5/Off (4)
21. W (4-4) -0-
22. B (4-4) 4/Off (2), 3/Off, 1/Off



EDITOR'S NOTE: "Ultimate Backgammon" puzzle creator Bill Davis is convinced that 22 moves is the ultimate solution. Be the first person to prove him wrong by solving it in 21 moves or less and he'll pay you $500. Write to Bill c/o *Backgammon Magazine.*

The challenge was to determine, from the opeing setup, the fewest number of legal moves necessary for Black to backgammon White in the ultimate fashion (fifteen checkers on the bar). *Backgammon Magazine* received the "ultimate" answer from Richard Packard of Gig Harbor, WA. The brilliance of Richard's 22 move (15 doubles) solution can only be appreciated by playing it through. He will receive a four-in-one leather Game Roll courtesy of *Backgammon Magazine.*

Honorable mention prizes of a Las Vegas Backgammon T-Shirt go to Jeff Ward of San Diego, CA and Kit Woolsey of Arlington VA with 23 moves (14 doubles), and to Brian Carlsson of Minneapolis, MN and Jack Kissane of Albany, NY randomly drawn from solutions with 24 moves (13 doubles).

by Bill Davis

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Introducing Mattel Electronics® Computer Backgammon, the relentless opponent you can take anywhere.

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Compact and lightweight. A challenging partner at your fingertips. Battery not included.

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BACKGAMMON
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backgammon across america



NEBC SPECIAL AWARDS

The New England Backgammon Club has announced its Champion of the Year, **Zaven Garabedian**, and runner-up, **Sidney J. Golub.**

Congratulations are also in order for Advanced winner **Bruce J. Barshefsky** (runner-up **John Gould**) and Intermediate winner **Bruce P. Robbins** (runner-up **William B. Hoey**).

Other Special Awards presented at the Annual Installation of Officers and Awards Tournament were:

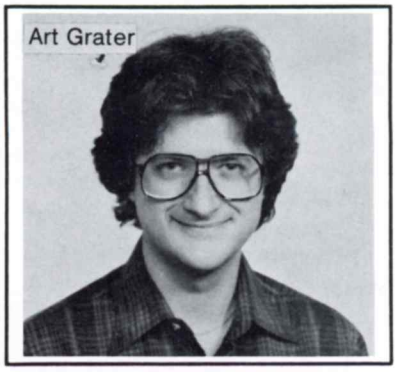
Woman of the Year	Nancy Hilton	236
CHMC Benefit Winner of the Jacoby Cup	Robert C. Magliozzo	109
CHMC Runner-up	Andrea R. Dedekam	178
CHMC Advanced Winner	Ronald C. Agel	123
CHMC Advanced Runner-up	Ernest E. Pittelli	139
CHMC Intermediate Winner	Mary Stafsholt	29
CHMC Intermediate Runner-up	Samuel Manian	94
Massachusetts Open Champion	Gregory Z. Thomajan	259
Massachusetts Advanced Winner	Eric Packer	64
Massachusetts Intermediates	J. Kelly McKenna	52
	William B. Hoey	126
	Denise Quatrale	80
Henry G. Nickerson Champion	Ohaness Zerdelian	229
Nickerson Advanced Winner	George N. Marinakas	49
Nickerson Intermediates	David P. Ryan	23
	Bruce P. Robbins	188
Robertie's Doubles Quiz Winner	Ici Hartman	115

A NEW CLUB FOR SAN FRANCISCO

A new backgammon club has been organized in "everyone's favorite city." The grand opening of the **Backgammon Club of San Francisco** was held on June 28th. The world's best (if not first) backgammon cake was prepared by Kalisa Fallon, showing a crucial position in the Las Vegas Open match between Paul Magriel and Nick Maffeo.

The club is directed by Nick along with Tim Behr and Beth Skillman, other well-known Bay Area players. They directed the club's Inaugural Tournament, won by C. Bill Jones in the finals match against Dennis Carlston. Other knock-outs were won by Lori Cooperman and Elliot Winslow.

Visitors to the Bay Area may contact the club at 777 Jones, San Francisco, CA 94109. **Phone (415) 474-7328.**



ART GRATER IS OUR NEW SAN FRANCISCO CORRESPONDENT. BORN IN MINNESOTA, HE IS BY PROFESSION A CIVIL/STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. BY AVOCATION — WELL, YOU GUESSED IT! HE IS 29 YEARS OLD, HAS ALSO LIVED IN HAWAII, NEVADA, AND MASSACHUSETTS. HE IS SINGLE WITH NO KNOWN CHILDREN. BEEN PLAYING FOR ABOUT 5 YEARS. WELCOME.

LES BART WINS CHICAGO OPEN

Bill Davis reports from Chicago — **Les Bart**, a quick thinking thirty-four year-old accountant from Potomac, Maryland waltzed past a strong field of nationally ranked players to win the 1981 Chicago Open Backgammon Championship. More than 150 individuals participated in Gammon's of Chicago's annual event, held at the Chicago Marriott O'Hare Hotel.

Bart, up and coming on the tournament scene, was awarded $3500 for winning seven matches in a row, including a 15-7 final victory over Milwaukee's **Bob Holyon**. Bart admitted that his dice behaved very well and that his only close match was against Chicagoan Dave Cramer. He felt fortunate to prevail over a field including Nack Ballard, Bill Bartholomay, Fred Chamanara, Art Dickman, Mike Giordano, Badei Khoury, Darrell Marcus, Michael Maxakuli, Joe Monro, Kathy Posner, Joel Rettew, Bill Robertie, Todd Vander Pluym, and Bob Wilensky.

In the Intermediate division, **Steve Cutler** of Southfield, Michigan came back from the Second Chance bracket to defeat **Bruce Endzel** of Chicago in two straight cliffhanger matches and earn nearly $2000. It was Endzel who eliminated the less experienced Cutler from the Main bracket. With a break between matches, Endzel graciously gave Cutler a one-hour lesson on tournament doubling cube strategy. Ironically, Cutler utilized what he learned to defeat his "teacher" in the finals.

The Beginner division saw **Ron** and **Janet Genter** of Pittsburgh, PA keep it "all in the family" by sweeping the Main and Consolation brackets, respectively. The Doubles title and $2200 went to **Arthur Dickman** of Miami and Chicagoan **Don Desmond**, who defeated a fifty-six team field.



HOOSIER



Photo Doug Roberts

DON'T DRINK THE DICE OR CAST THE ICE-

According to Hoosier Backgammon Club standards, a beginner is a player who has never dropped the dice in his drink; an intermediate is one who has taken a sip from his dice cup; an expert has cast the ice instead of the dice. Here Ralph Roberts, club president, demonstrates expert technique.

PORTLAND — BACKGAMMON ON CABLE TV



Rush Kolemaine is a backgammon entrepreneur in Portland. His main vehicle is an hour-long weekly cable TV game show called Pipmasters' Backgammon Challenge. The show is produced live, with in-studio guests and viewers calling in their plays while watching the action on the home screen.

Kolemaine calls it the world's largest chouette. During that hour he tries to get in three or four games on the prop backgammon board while juggling telephones, camera cues, and guests.

The "Tournament Chouette Rules" are a copyrighted concept of Kolamines'. The Backgammon Magazine featured these rules in the September issue. Inadvertantly Kolemaine's byline was left off. Be aware that Kolemaine has registered the Chouette rules as his concept.

CANADA



Canadians are breathing a sigh of relief now that the long postal strike is over. Any subscriber in Canada who missed an issue because of the strike can write to the Backgammon Magazine to have it remailed. Al Cooper of the Backgammon Place (Brantford, Ontario), faced the Backgammon Magazine withdrawal by re-reading Playboy's Book of Backgammon. Cooper reports that there are no naked female backgammon players in the Playboy book and he's checked twice.

BAYOU BACKGAMMON

The Spring Tournament of the Bayou Backgammon Club is a prestigious Texas event which draws international players; the invitations, however, are limited and exclusive. Committee member Phyllis Davidson was kind enough to report the results of the affair, which featured crystal trophies and a $24,000 calcutta.

For the past year the Bayou group has been meeting at a luxurious private club in Houston. Tournament participants stayed at the club and enjoyed the spa, tennis courts, raquetball, pools, and complete preventative medical center faclities.

The prize winners were as follows:

Championship — Main Event

1st Gus Michalopoulos – Houston, Texas
2nd Gary Welch – Houston, Texas
3rd Danny Mayfield – Dallas, Texas
4th Jack Fitzgerald – San Francisco, California
5th Erik Seidel – New York, New York
6th Gene Turboff – Houston, Texas
7th Frank Lichtenstein – Houston, Texas

Championship — Last Chance

1st Dan Morse
Houston, Texas
2nd Donna Darby
Dallas, Texas

Intermediate — Main Event

1st Ronn Waller – Dallas, Texas
2nd Marsha Bauman – Houston, Texas
3rd Mike Bearman – Houston, Texas
4th David Benjamin – Arlington, Texas
5th Lori Lubetkin – Houston, Texas

Intermediate — Last Chance

1st Anne Gust – Detroit, Michigan
2nd Jo Fletcher – Dallas, Texas

AND THE WORLD

MICHIGAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Cavendish North Backgammon Club has held its famous Summer Backgammon Championships. While globetrotters were knocking heads in Monte Carlo, the smart money boys were sunning themselves in upper Michigan. This is a traditional annual event held by Bob Ciaffone and it features a heathy calcutta. The winners were:

Open Division — 1. Stanley Steele, Chicago
2. Bob Ciaffone, Dallas
3. Frank Talbot, Detroit
4. Bob Wilensky, Atlanta

Intermediate — 1. Skip Armstrong, Detroit
2. Doug Amenda, Milwaukee
3. Elayne Feinstein, Baltimore
4. John Struss, Baltimore

AUSTRALIA

THE ROCKS BACKGAMMON CLUB

Anthony Ziegler of Edgecliff, Australia has announced the opening of a new club. The group is called **THE ROCKS BACKGAMMON CLUB** and meets at the Pancakes on the Rocks, 10 Hickson Road, phone 276371.

The NSW Australia Club is interested in exchanging interesting scorecards with other world clubs.

EUROPEAN FINALS



Californian Kyle Larsen (second from left), winner of the Italian Round of the European Backgammon Championship held at the Cavalieri Hilton International, Rome, is awarded the Merit Trophy.

WONDER WOMAN WINS

by Joel Rettew



Andre Rolfo-Fontana, Lee Genud, Walter Coratella, Joe Dwek, Prince Louis de Polignac

Who is the only woman to have won the Women's World Championship twice? Who is the only woman to have authored a modern-day backgammon book? Who is the only woman to have spent many hours in Hugh Heffner's bedroom (and kept her clothes on)? Who is the only woman to have won the male-dominated World Championship of Backgammon? The answer to all questions is: the incredible Lee Genud.

CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION

Main Event World Champion: **LEE GENUD (USA)**; Runner-up: **JOE DWECK (UK)**; Semi-Finalists: **P. SWART (UK)** and **M. CAMHI (FRANCE)**. Ladies Prize: **LEE GENUD (USA)**. First Consolation Winner: **M. GARDNER (USA)**; Finalist: **S. CAPRIO (ITALY)**; Semi-Finalists: **K. WRIGHT (USA)** and **A. GOODMAN (USA)**. Second Consolation Winner: **K. MOTAKHASSES (IRAN)**; Finalist: **T. HARRISON (USA)**; Semi-Finalists: **F. NARBONI (SWITZERLAND)** and **S. CLAPP (USA)**. Last Chance Winner: **E. COIRRE (FRANCE)**; finalist: **DR. BURRASCANO (USA)**.

INTERMEDIATE DIVISION

Main Event Winner: **M. ABITAN (FRANCE)**; Finalist: **M. ARTUS (FRANCE)**; Semi-Finalists: **P. SCHNEIDER (GERMANY)** and **S. NAIM (USA)**.

BEGINNERS DIVISION

Main Event Winner: **W. PETTY (UK)**; Finalist: **C. PERONI (ITALY)**; Semi-Finalists: **J. PHILLIPS (UK)** and **M. RODRIGUES (BRAZIL)**.

Lee Genud has become the first woman to capture the World Backgammon Championship, in a dazzling victory over international champion Joe Dwek.

Dwek, author of "Backgammon For Profit," and a former world champion, underestimated the ability of his opponent. The confident Genud maintained control over the match, while Dwek was slow to adjust to the novelty of a woman challenger.

The historic moment of her final victory was greeted with a ten-minute standing ovation from the crowd of six hundred spectators.

The game of backgammon is serious business to Lee Genud. Heretofore, she was continually underrated despite her tournament record, which includes the 1978 and 1979 Women's World Championship, and ten other finalist awards in major tournaments.

In 1974 she published "Lee Genud's Backgammon Book," which still enjoys brisk sales.

And what was she doing in Heffner's bedroom? Teaching him backgammon, of course. Ms. Genud taught not only Heffner but Diana Ross, James Caan, Jim Brown, Dionne Warwick, and Lucille Ball as well.

Genud attributes her success in Monte Carlo to "an extremely high level of emotional control." The control was important because she had to play more than seventy hours of backgammon in eight days, competing in more than 100 games and winning eight straight matches.

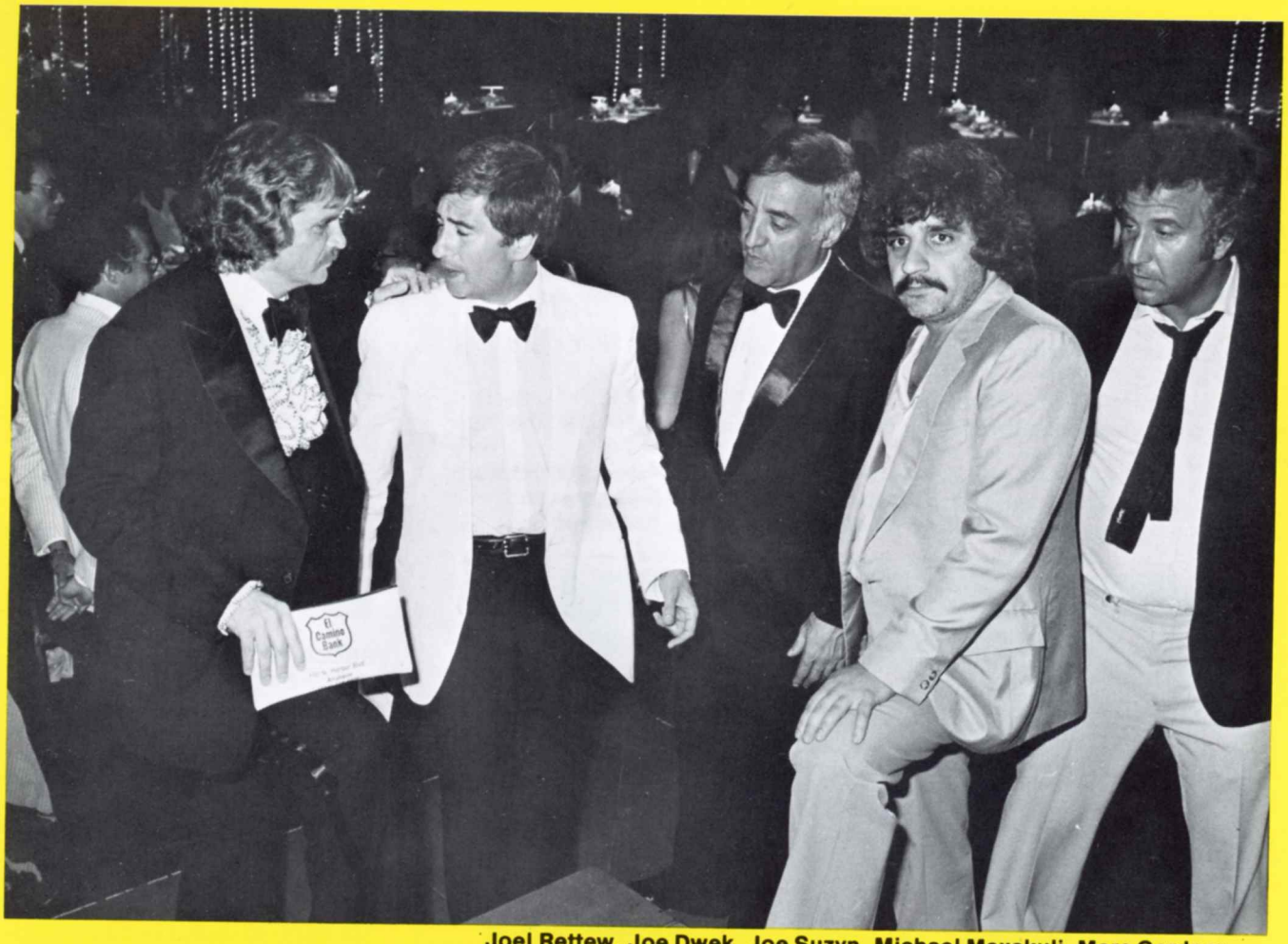
"I loved the game and the competition," she said, "and I love being the only woman to compete with the men at this level."

Two hundred and fifty players from forty-three countries vied for the championship in Monte Carlo.

The event is sponsored annually by La Societe des Bains de Mer of Monte Carlo and directed by Lewis Deyong. Participating sponsors this year included Merit and Black & White Scotch.

If anyone doubts that this is a premiere backgammon event in the world today, all they have to do is attend one of the gala black-tie calcutta dinners at the Sporting d'Hiver. Nowhere in the world is there a more spectacular room. Rarely is there a more elite group gathered in one place; and surely no calcutta of any kind takes in more money. Between the calcutta, the entry fees (including $1,000 jackpot special), and the official book operated by Peter Gold, there is more backgammon action than anywhere else in the world.

The winner in Monte Carlos is truly the World Champion — and this year the queen reigns.



Joel Rettew, Joe Dwek, Joe Suzyn, Michael Maxakuli, Marc Gardner



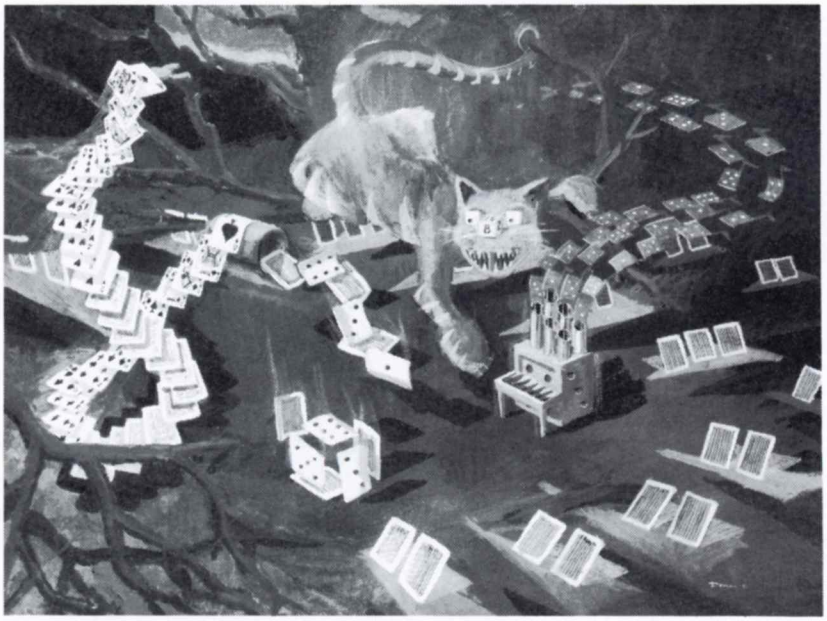
BACKGAMMON BIZ



DICE-GAMMON — is a unique variation of the popular backgammon that is played with thirty dice (fifteen per player) in place of the regular backgammon pieces. In addition to the dice which are called DICE-PIECES, the game comes also with a set of circular game pieces called DIE-CHIPS and a game board uniquely designed for the various new rules not found in ordinary backgammon. The major innovations are:

1. DICE-PIECES are moved either forward or backward and are changed in value according to the roll of the throwing dice.
2. Opponents may share a base as long as the values of their DICE-PIECE(S) and/or DIE-CHIP are equal.
3. A capture (a hit) results whenever a player moves a DICE-PIECE(S) that ends in a greater value on a base containing any number of an opponent's DICE-PIECES having a lesser value.
4. Borne off DICE-PIECES determine your final score; the first player to successfully bear off his DICE-PIECES, and having the greater total number of points, wins.

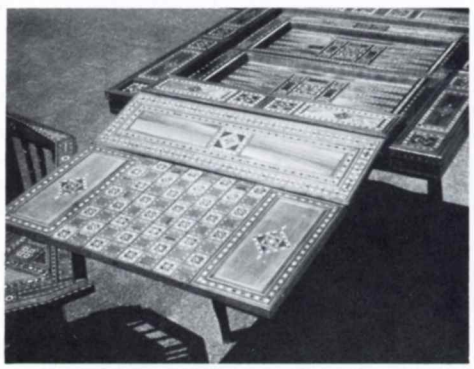
From: **Boardgame Mania Inc., 148 Zinnia Circle, Vallejo, CA 94590.**

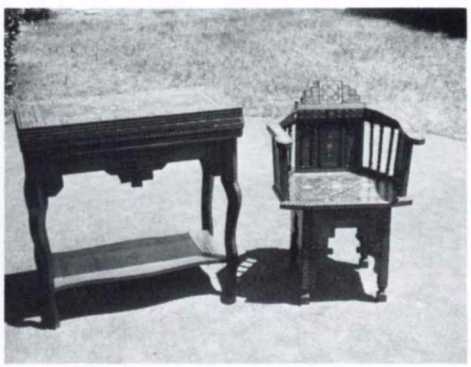


MODERN BACKGAMMON ART — Direct from the surrealistic mind of Gammon's member **John Demian** comes "Gambler's Fantasy." It's the Poker Snake against the Backgammon Cat on a swamp board with lilly pad pips.

The Snake rolls cards that form into dice cubes. The Cat plays a "dice tune" to get his numbers from the dice piano. The ever-sensing card pieces move by themselves.

The winner? Put your money on the Cat. He's got a keen sense of cube smell. You can tell by his nose.





ANCIENT BACKGAMMON ART — This ancient masterpiece (backgammon table and chairs) is almost too exquisite to play on. Buying this work of art is more of an investment in a collectible than a game. It can be viewed at: **Sid Emerson's Escondido Coin Shop, 11 N Broadway, Escondido, CA (714) 745-1613.** ☆☆

RULINGS COLUMN

(Continued from page 14)

PREEMPTING THE DEAL

The box has the right to preempt any such captain-partner or partner-partner deals. Suppose the cube is in the center and Captain wishes to double. partner is unwilling and Captain says, "I'll buy your game." Partner agrees (or, Captain refuses to buy Partner out, yet insists on doubling. Another partner offers to buy Partner's game and Partner agrees). The double is offered.

Say that the box wants to take the cube, but does not really like his position enough to want to risk all the games. He may, in this case, take the cube and **simultaneously** announce that he is taking over or preempting the purchasing partner's deal with the dissenting partner. The purchasing team player may **not** prevent the preemption. It is the box's right. The box will have then eliminated one opposing game at the undoubled value, because he bought the double himself.

Thus, where the box is played against four opponents, and the box preempts the captain's purchase of a centered cube, the box's score is immediately debited 1 (the purchase price), and the purchasing player is credited 1 — which puts him at a wash, since he paid 1 to the dissenting player.

RECAP

Thus, to recap, the rules of chouette play when the captain wants to double but a partner does not, are:

(1) The dissenting player may offer his game to, in order, the captain, any other teammate, or the box, for the value of the undoubled cube.

If the partner is bought out by other than the box:

(2) Where a partner is bought out, he may no longer consult.

(3) Regardless of which team member bought the dissenting player's game, the box has the right to preempt the deal for himself.

If the partner is not bought out:

(4) Where neither the captain, teammates, nor box is willing to buy out the dissenting partner, then the dissenting partner is **with** the double, like it or not. ☆☆

AUSLEY'S LAWS OF BACKGAMMON

by John Ausley

- ▶ The senior talent in backgammon is the ability to spot superiority in others.
- ▶ When someone tries to rush your play, say, "I've only got two speeds and the other one is slower."
- ▶ Compulsive gambling could be an inherited trait. It is a combination of getting the ability to spend from your mother and the ability to not make money from your father.
- ▶ When you're up, make nothing happen, very slowly.
- ▶ When you see a Snake, never mind where he came from.
- ▶ Always play til sun-up, no gonads – no cube, and never break a streak.
- ▶ Advertising is the art of making whole lies out of half truths.
- ▶ Broke players love to give advice; it compensates them for their inability to set a bad example.
- ▶ If you can tell the difference between good advice and bad advice, you don't need advice.
- ▶ Lessons are very often the product of the untalented, sold by the unprincipled to the utterly bewildered.
- ▶ Listen well to old masters — they are much more entertaining than old mistressses.
- ▶ Gamble and play within your own income bracket, even if you have to borrow to do so.
- ▶ If you can't bedazzle them with brilliance, then baffle them with bullshit.
- ▶ The Dice-Gods of Backgammon go by whim and favour. If they went by merit, most of us would never win.
- ▶ Bad losers are sometimes better players. "Good losers" can get in the habit of losing.
- ▶ In heavy pro-money play there are no winners, only survivors.
- ▶ Any player who has really begun to think has placed some portion of the backgammon world in jeopardy.
- ▶ Most of the time, beginners don't win — the rest of the time they lose.
- ▶ Never trust a player unless you've got his pecker in your pocket and not even then, if he's gay.
- ▶ Reading poor books on backgammon can make one weaker than not reading at all.
- ▶ There are two times in a person's life when they should not gamble above their means — when he can't afford it and when he can.
- ▶ The definition of an ethical backgammon player should include the fact that they must be at least fifteen points up.

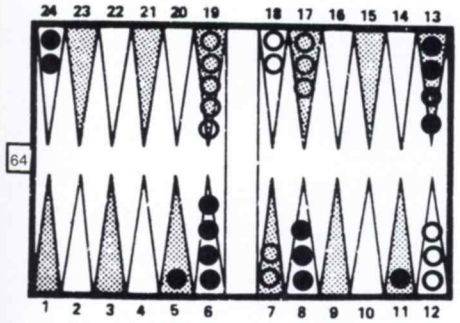
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AN EARLY GAME QUANDRY:

TO BLOCK, BUILD, TRAP OR COVER THE OUTFIELD?

by Ronald Weingard

Many positions arise during a game or match that do not lend themselves to simplistic, dogmatic solutions. Take, for example, the position below, which occurred during my eighth round match at the World Amateur Backgammon Championships held in Las Vegas from June 8 - 15, 1981. I was playing Nick Gura, a top New York amateur (who incidentally, finished runner-up to Bill Kennedy, a San Franciscan, for the $100,000 first prize). With the score 4 – 3 in Nick's favor in our eleven-point match I played my standard 2—1 opening move, dropping a checker from the mid-point to the eleven-point and a checker from the six-point to the five-point. Nick proceeded to roll 6 – 6, making both bars. My next roll was 4 – 2. This is the position as it existed at this time:



BLACK TO PLAY 4 – 2

Certain immediate choices came to mind. My first reaction was to block 4 – 4 by dropping another checker from the midpoint to the eleven-point and playing the 4 either inside my opponent's home board or from the eight-point. Another alternative was to take the lone checker on the eleven-point and cover my five-point. Another tact which I rejected quickly because it accomplished very little was to make my nine-point. Finally, I could play a trap move and make my four-point, hoping to bait Gura into hitting me with a 4 from my bar-point. In the absence of an immediate return hit, however, I would be hard pressed to take a cube so I similarly rejected this move. After much deliberation I proceeded to make my five-point. Subsequent to losing one point in this game and eventually losing the match, I was besieged by two Masters' Class players, Abbas Zaltash and David Schor (a former Pittsburgher) who both insisted that I played the move incorrectly, even though they admitted it had no bearing on the outcome of the game.

Although both felt my move was incorrect they had separate ideas on how the move should have been played.

Abbas was insistent that I should have made the eleven-point and step up to the twenty-point, thereby covering the outfield. Dave was equally insistent that the eleven-point should have been made, although for the 4, he would have slotted the four-point. Applying advanced concepts of backgammon, both Abbas' and Dave's moves prove to be incorrect.

In each instance Abbas and Dave felt it necessary to block 4 – 4. However, had I blocked double 4's by making the eleven-point, a cube position still develops should that number be rolled by Gura for he simply makes his five-point from his mid-point, forming an early but powerful prime position. Therefore, blocking double 4's is fairly irrelevant.

Additionally, Abbas' variation of stepping up to my opponent's five-point negates any advantage I might have due to my opponent's cramped position. Rolling 6 – 6 early tends to stifle good sixes later in the game. By splitting one's back anchor, numbers that would not normally play well can now be used to the opponent's advantage. 6 – 5 and 6 – 4 are just two examples which would play poorly against a one-point anchor but better after a split.

Dave's option is also weak because, with two blots in my inner board, it gives my opponent an immediate option of running. It is of primary importance in my position to make at least one or two board points as quickly as possible, thereby making it consequential for my opponent to try to run from my bar; however, by slotting two points, Gura would be given the advantage of immediately running should he be able to safety one checker with half of his roll. One blot in my board at this time may prove illusory but two blots would be an open invitation to run at this early juncture in the game.

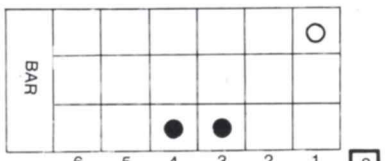
One final note: If Nick had rolled 6 – 1 instead of 6 – 6 and had made his bar, it would become imperative to step up from my twenty-four-point as soon after making my five-point as possible, because Nick would not then be squeezed for time, having two men on my one-point to play at will. One must step up as quickly as possible once the opponent makes his bar with a number other than 6 – 6 because of the likelihood of being primed. The same reasoning does not apply, however, in my opinion, where the opponent's opening roll is 6 – 6, because of the reasons noted above. ☆☆

THE JANUS CUBE

by Robert F. Hickey

ZERO TOOK WITH DISDAIN, EXCLAIMING, "I WISH I COULD BEAVER. DOUBLING ME WHEN I'M THE FAVORITE! HUMPF!!"

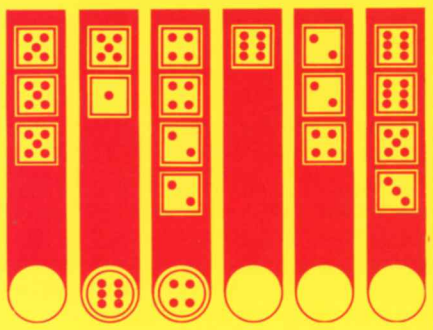
Black trailing 5-6; 9 point match



Should Black redouble?

In ancient Rome, the temple of Janus opened its doors in times of war. The Romans also played backgammon, a game oft as cruel as war, it seems. Therefore, could it not be that Janus is the two-faced god of the two-faced world of backgammon? In any case, a phenomenon which I refer to as the Janus Cube may have arisen in a match between two great Roman players, Seizure and Zero.

Cube-happy Seizure (Black) was on roll, down 5-6 in a nine-point match against the technically perfect Zero (White). He had only two men left, one man on his four-point and one on his three-point. Zero had only one man left — just one pip from victory.



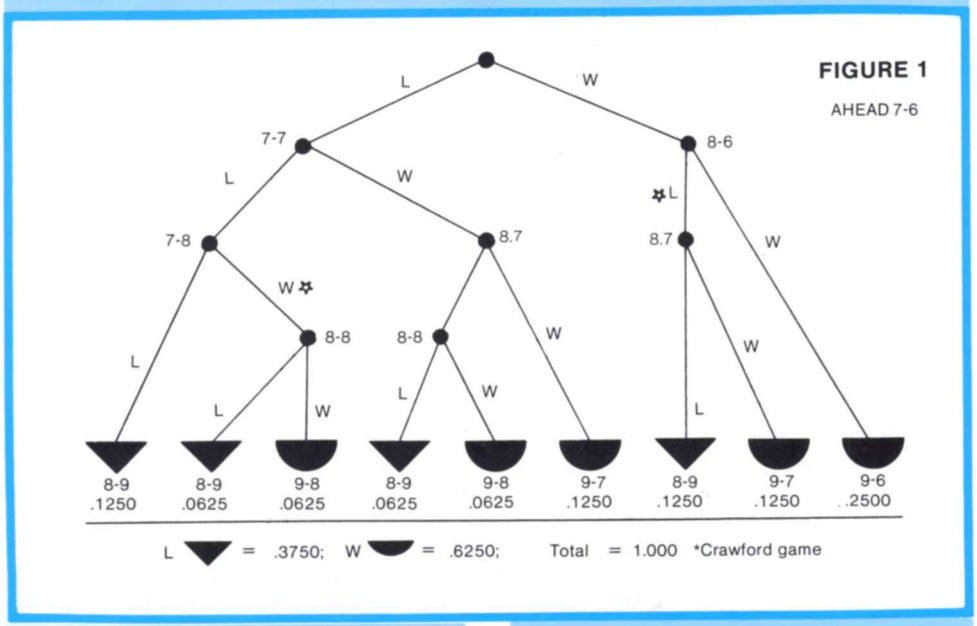
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Then, Seizure was possessed by the highly-valued cube which he gleefully gave Zero, as he did most days to his great regret.

Seizure did quiver and quake and finally shook the dice. He did sweat, swear, and dare the gods of fortune. He was hot, hotter than the Sands of Vegas, as one repossessed should be hot. Out spilled the worshiped bones — first a three, then a four. Economy! Off they came, game and match. Seizure the winner and Zero the whiner. But was it just?

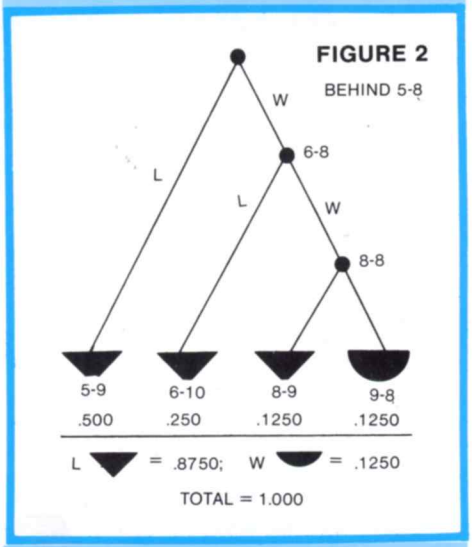
Counting shots we know the odds: seventeen for Seizure (Black) and nineteen win for Zero (White). Seizure doubled and won. "It wasn't right ... against the odds ... I feel for Zero, losing to such as ass," you might say — but look a little deeper. "Ah, of course, Seizure's altered state was 'Mind Control,' a victory of dynamic psychokinetics," you say, "on which the god Janus looked down favorably and regarded Seizure's faith and courage." Not THAT deep. Too many go down that deep never to return.

But try this analysis:

If Black doubles, he wins match .4722 and loses .5277. Simple!

If Black doesn't double, he will lead 7-6 (.4722) (figure 1) and trail 5-8 (.5277) (figure 2).

As indicated by the tree-if Black doesn't double, he wins match
.625 (.4722) + .1250 (.5277)
.2950 + .0600 = .3610
and he loses match
.3750 (.4722) + .8250 (.5277)
.1170 + .4617 = .6390
Therefore, Black improved his odds by 11.12% (.4722 vs. .3610) by doubling when the odds were against him. The JANUS CUBE struck again. It's good in a tournament but, poor elsewhere — a real two-faced double.



Danny Kleinman (8924 Harges Street; Los Angeles, CA 90034) and his excellent book VISION LAUGHS AT COUNTING ($30.00) and its supplement ($14.00) was the inspiration for this discussion. The tree gram just supports his calculation and satisfies my cynical acceptance of the reliability of most BG writers. Buy his books and you'll find the world of backgammon isn't completely two-faced anymore. Happy Cubes at ⚀.

The author is just a beginning player with no tournament experience. He seeks further Janus Cube awareness and hopes you'll share your knowledge by writing: Bob Hickey
40 Overhill Road
Upper Darby, PA 19082

GABY'S TEN COMMANDMENTS

by
GABY HOROWITZ and DR. BRUCE ROMAN

I THOU SHALT NOT PLAY WITHOUT PROOF OF SOLVENCY

Never play a game unless you are certain that you will be paid should you win. If you are playing an unfamiliar opponent, make an agreement to pay up every five to ten points. Avoid taking a check from an unfamiliar opponent.

II THOU SHALT NOT PLAY WHEN UNDER FINANCIAL STRESS

The vast majority of players do not perform to the maximum of their ability when they are playing for stakes at which they are not comfortable. This includes wagering too small an amount per point as well as the more frequent situation of betting too great an amount per point.

Adverse pressure can also be encountered when you wager money that you cannot **easily** afford to lose. This would obviously preclude borrowing money to play that you could not immediately repay. This should not be confused with securing backers which is consistent with proper money management principles.

III THOU SHALT NOT BELITTLE OR ATTENUATE THY STRENGTH OR POWER

There are many situations in which you can get involved to your disadvantage. These would include playing a far superior player or participating in a chouette in which you are the weakest player, engagine in propositions which you haven't thoroughly studied, and giving "spots" or handicaps.

The most flagrant violation of this rule would be participating in a consulting or non-consulting chouette in which there is a possibility of silent partners in collusion.

IV THOU SHALT NOT LET EMOTIONAL INFLUENCES AFFECT THY DECISIONS

There are three basic emotions you should be cognizant of and in control over throughout the game:

A) Steaming: When you are behind, do not attempt to get even quickly by doubling or redoubling prematurely or by taking bad doubles.

B) Fear: Do not let all previous unfortunate results or occurrences affect present decisions.

C) Greed: When you are doing well, never "get hungry" – avoid "cube fever" (doubling or redoubling too early).

V THOU SHALT NOT FEAR LOSING

One of the primary lessons to be learned about backgammon is that no one wins every game. While losing should be avoided whenever possible, realize that it happens to everyone, it statistically rate to occur and that it is a "built-in" ingredient of the game.

To their detriment, many players perceive their losses as a diminution of self-worth and feel greatly invalidated when losing. This type of response to losing is simply incorrect.

VI THOU SHALT NOT PLAY WHILST UNDER PHYSICAL OR MENTAL STRESS

It is most advisable to play when you are tired, have had a bad day at the office, or following an argument.

A factor in playing your best is feeling your best.

VII THOU SHALT NOT IGNORE THE "OPPONENT FACTOR"

Knowing your opponent's technical ability, emotional state, and financial situation, and **then** acting accordingly, move after move, game after game, is mandatory if one wishes consistent success.

VIII THOU SHALT NOT USE THE CUBE AS A GIFT, BUT AS A WEAPON

Do not double or redouble lightly and never redouble when your game is too good.

The cube should be used as an instrument of pressure against your opponent.

IX THOU SHALT NOT NEED COMPLIMENTS, COMMISERATION OR ADMIRATION

Never forget the basic purpose of playing backgammon — **to win points**. Playing for show to impress the spectators, or desperately trying to prove yourself "always right and never wrong," is a common foible of many backgammon players and the primary cause of substantial losses.

X THOU SHALT NOT RELY ON MIRACLES

Understand that the game of backgammon is not "all dice" or a "craps-shooting experience." It is a game that abounds with subtle tactical and strategical nuances.

Never base your prosperity on an "I'll get lucky" approach. Consistently playing against the odds, and hoping and begging for miracle rolls, not only eliminates your chances for financial success, but also your enjoyment of the game.

Refuse to remain a dilettante! Obtain information (from qualified sources) and demand improvement of yourself. This is the **only** avenue to success — there is no easy one. ☆☆



by Ronald C. Weingrad

Oftentimes backgammon professionals fail to practice what they preach. This most recently occurred on my last trip to Las Vegas for the World Amateur Backgammon Championships.

Playing in the Las Vegas Backgammon Association's Sunday Night Tournament, Linda paired me in the first round against one of backgammon's most dynamic individuals. An author or world renown on the dynamic handling of the cube and advanced cube strategy, this player had just dynamically saved himself from a backgammon on the last roll of the game to place me ahead in our nine-point match 8 – 6. Then, with equally dynamic fervor, he won one point at Crawford, narrowing the score to 8 – 7.

Now for the dynamic cube strategy that occurred in the following game: I had an opening 5 – 1 roll and I dropped a checker onto my five-point. Without hesitancy, this most dynamic of backgammon professionals shook and rolled, giving no thought to the cube. With the eyes of a snake, the double 1's fell to the table, and, as smooth as silk, our dynamic pro had made his five-point and bar. I proceeded to roll 6 – 4 and made my two-point. Then, with dynamic verve, our author smashed the cube to the board in my general direction. With quiet reserve, I contemplated the position and decided the dynamics of it called for me to pass, which I did by making some comment about not owning an all-night grocery store.

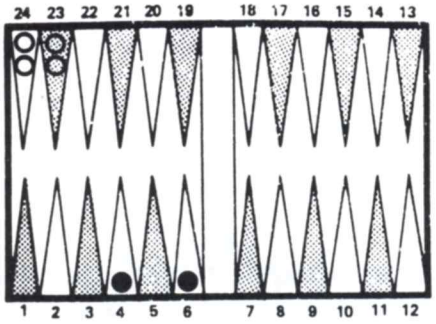
Justice, in my eyes, failed to prevail, for I got caught in a five-squeeze the following game (through no fault of my own) and lost the match 9 – 8.

Dynamic Strategy with the cube — it will snare victory from the jaw of defeat all the time! ☆☆

CUBE STRATEGY FOR MATCH PLAY

by Dennis Kaiser
© 1981

Is it ever correct to take a double if your probability of winning the game is less than 25%? Such a double can be a **take** as the following situation demonstrates.



In figure 1 with White to roll Black will have only one roll at best to win the game. Winning rolls for Black are 6—6, 5—5, 4—4, 3—3, 6—5 and 6—4 (a total of 8 ways.) White is correct to double here to deprive Black of a free chance at one of these winning shots if White does not throw a 6—6, 5—5, 4—4, 3—3 or 2—2. Black's probability of winning is (31/36) x (8/36)= .19. No one can fault Black for declining the double since .19 is less than the breakeven probability of .25. However, what if the score is 3—1 in White's favor in a 9-point match and White redoubles to 4? In this case, Black should **TAKE** the redouble. The following analysis will explain the apparent violation of basic cube strategy.

The primary objective in all matches is, of course, to win the **match**. Your manipulation of the pieces and the cube should be directed toward this single goal. It is therefore, useful for a player to know what the probability of his winning the match based on the current or any other score in the match. In a nine point match obviously at a score of 2–2 the probability for each player of winning the match is .50. At a Crawford game score of 7–8 the low score player's probability is .25. What about score of 1–7, 3–6, 2—8 or even 1—5 as is the question Black must resolve in figure 1. Due to the complexities of the rules and strategies of cube management such as the Crawford Rule, mandatory doubling by the low score player after the Crawford game and also employment of the free drop option, calculations of these probabilities are impossible using only classical probability theory. Such calculations are best handled by a computer simulation technique called the Monte Carlo Method. This is a brute force approach where a large number of matches are played on the computer from set starting scores such as 1—7, 3—6, 2—8 and 1—5. The current score is increased by the use of random number generator such that each player has an equal chance of improving his score until one player reaches the match point. The percentage of **matches** won by the low score player is then computed for this many trials.

This simulation was programmed and executed on an IBM 360 computer by the author under the following assumptions:

1. The match is nine points.
2. The players are of equal skill.
3. The Crawford Rule is in effect.
4. After the Crawford game the low score player automatically doubles.
5. The high score player employs the free drop option as required only 40% of the time, i.e. when the high score player has a 60-40 advantage.
6. Gammons and backgammons are ignored under the assumption that the final results would not differ and furthermore the subjective decisions required to mathematically model gammons and backgammons could adversely affect the results.
7. A single random number is chosen to determine the outcome of each game.

The computer played over 200,000 partial matches, generated over 2 million random numbers and produced table 1.

Table 1 is a matrix of probabilities that the low score player will win a match to nine points assuming players of equal skill. In the problem of figure 1 Black can use table 1 to resolve his dilemma. If Black declines the redouble to 4, the score will become 1—5 giving Black only a .17 probability of winning the match. This is less than his .19 chance of winning the game. If Black takes and then redoubles to 8 this game becomes match game for **both** players and Black therefore has improved his chance of winning to match from .17 to .19. Under these circumstances it is a "good" take even though Black has less than a .25 probability of victory on this game.

Now let's add another variable into this problem. What if the low score player (Black) is the more skilled player? A second computer simulation was performed under the assumption that the low score player is the stronger and enjoys a 60-40 edge in skill i.e. he wins 60% of the games on the average against this opponent. Table 2 is the results of this simulation. It is evident that the low score player has a .38 probability of winning a nine-point match froma score of 1—5. Since .38 is greater than .19 Black should decline the double, if he judges himself a more skilled player, and thus live to fight again.

In studying tables 1 and 2 some interesting points are evident.

1. A player's probability of winning the match is generally directly related to the **difference** between the scores rather than how close to match point the high score player is. With a difference of one point the probability is about .40, a two-point difference about .30, three points about .20, and four points about .15.
2. A more skilled player enjoys a greater probability of victory for a match than an individual game. Furthermore, the more points in the match the greater the edge to the skilled player in the match. At an even score of 1–1, the more skilled player has a .71 chance of match victory even though his single game odds are .60.

Every backgammon player who aspires to do well in tournament play should understand these probabilities.

TABLE 1

Losing Player's Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8								.50
7							.50	.25
6						.50	.36	.23
5					.50	.37	.25	.13
4				.50	.39	.28	.19	.11
3			.50	.40	.29	.21	.14	.06
2		.50	.41	.31	.23	.16	.11	.05
1	.50	.41	.32	.24	.17	.13	.08	.03

Leading Player's Score

TABLE 2

Losing Player's Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8								.60
7							.61	.36
6						.63	.51	.31
5					.66	.55	.41	.22
4				.66	.58	.46	.36	.18
3			.70	.61	.50	.39	.29	.13
2		.71	.63	.53	.44	.33	.25	.11
1	.71	.65	.57	.48	.38	.28	.20	.08

Leading Player's Score (60/40 Skill Ratio)

TABLE 1 — Probability of Low Score Player winning a Match to 9. (equal skilled players)

TABLE 2— Probability of a Skilled Player, who is behind, ultimately winning a Match to 9. (60/40 skill ratio) ☆☆

BACKGAMMON WITH THE CHAMPIONS

Author Kent Goulding

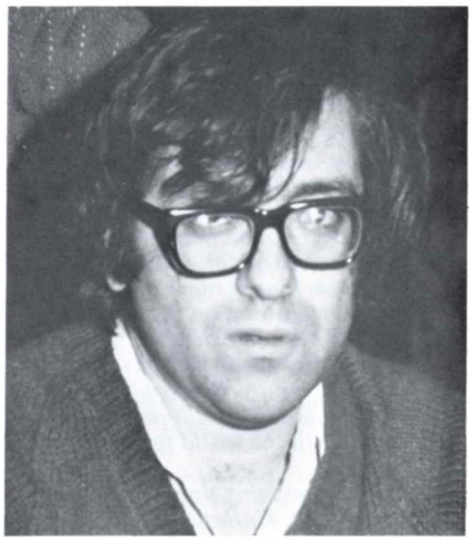
I have just finished reading the second issue of *Backgammon with the Champions*°, a new publication by Kent Goulding, one of America's top players and an excellent analyst. Each issue contains a full-annotated long match between two experts, usually a late round in an important tournament.

Reading this magazine is like kibitzing a backgammon match between experts, with the experts carefully explaining their reasons for each difficult move. I found that every time there was doubt in my mind as to the correct play or cube action, Goulding was there with an analysis of the possible choices and a lucid and accurate explanation of the reasoning which results in the proper action. If he disagrees with the player's move, Goulding does not hesitate in saying so and explaining why, giving further understanding to the position.

The magazine is virtually free of errors in dice rolls and moves, with frequent diagrams throughout each game at critical points. The casual player will enjoy the excitement of playing through the high-level matches with an expert commentator, while there is a wealth of information for the serious student of the game of great value to any player, regardless of skill. One issue of Backgammon with the Champions will teach a player more than a private lesson with an expert — so at the subscription price of $10 per issue it is a bargain. I am already looking forward to receiving my next copy.

°*Backgammon with the Champions*, by Kent Goulding, published bi-monthly, $15 per issue, 1-year subscription (6 issues) for $60. For inquiries and subscriptions write to:

Backgammon with the Champions
3504 Frederick Place
Kensington, Maryland 20795



Reviewer: Kit Woolsey

WONDERFUL WORLD OF BACKGAMMON

Available for $18 direct from the author. 8924 Hargis Street, Los Angeles, CA 90034

Author Danny Kleinman



Reviewer: Mary Hickey

Danny Kleinman's most recent book, *Wonderful World of Backgammon*, reveals secrets of advanced backgammon technique not contained in the author's earlier works. If your backgammon library already includes *Vision Laughs at Counting*, I strongly recommend that you acquire this new book as well.

Most of the book is written in the format of letters to Miss Lonelyblots, the ever-faithful counselor to the "Dice-Lorn." Though the letter-writers vary in ability, their typical attitude is one familiar to every player. They all feel that Lady Luck has done them wrong, since players obviously weaker than themselves beat them by, in their eyes, getting lucky. Miss Lonelyblots is usually able to show how, by making the correct plays in the situations they show, they could have won with the dice that followed.

Several technical articles on general subjects are interspersed with the letters on specific problems. These articles contain useful information, but many readers will either not learn it at all, or will fail to appreciate the limitations imposed by the methods of derivation used and so will apply it imperfectly to game situations. The reader whose eyes glaze over at the sight of mathematical formulae would be well advised to use the articles' conclusions with caution unless he has gone through and understood the calculations.

The book is not entirely technical. It also addresses the tricky subject of mental attitude — of how to approach the game. In addition, it details many cheating techniques in order to alert the unwary player to these pitfalls.

Kleinman's earlier book, *Vision Laughs at Counting*, included an article on the so-called Kauder Paradox — the positions where it is supposedly right for one side to double and the other to beaver. Readers of LVBGM will recall seeing this matter discussed *ad nauseum* there in the past year. In this book, Kleinman tempers his stand on the Kauder Paradox, saying it is permissible to double if your opponent won't beaver. Even Bill Robertie might agree with this more moderate view.

In the sequel to *VLC*, Danny presents some "quizzes" purportedly written by the more colorful personalities at his club. His introduction to that section of the book includes this statement: "I hope my fondness for these characters reflects itself in the warmth of my portrayal of them." His portrayals in that book are mildly satirical, but obviously all in fun.

Not so those of the *Wonderful World of Backgammon*. The first eight letters in this book display none of the former "fondness." The somewhat bitter overtones present may be due to improved observation on the author's part of some of the winning players' methods. Then again, it may be that hard times and backgammon inflation (too many hustlers chasing too few pigeons) have eroded those players' ethical standards. As one of the fictional letter-writers points out, circumstances alter character.

This book has its humorous moments, too. For instance, "Bean's Law" is discussed quite frequently in much detail. I rather like this new law, which states that every player is entitled to throw double fives at least once per game. But, as the inimitable Miss Lonelyblots points out, one doesn't always get everything to which one is entitled. ☆☆



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THE MAN IN THE BOX



by Dennis Stone

"For crying out loud," whined Baby Mason loudly.

"That's obscene," snarled Compulsive Kal.

"You've got a lot of nerve," complained Superstitious Paul.

"Hopeless! Your move is hopeless," accused the Mathematician.

Arthur the Expert would not have taken his move back even if the man in the box would have allowed it, which by all indications he would not, and did not appreciate these comments from his teammates. He was about to respond in kind when the man in the box interrupted. "Gentlemen, I was not aware we were playing a consulting couette. I can assure you I am in sympathy with your confusion; however, since the object of the game is for me to win, I don't feel I should allow you to sort out your differences while we are still playing. Further, I feel I have been damaged and suggest there should be some appropriate penalty."

"Like what?" said Kal, a certain elemental pugnacity surfacing.

"Yeah, like what?" Baby Mason echoed.

"Perhaps I should be allowed to hear all your suggestions and then take my choice," suggested the man in the box, pleased with the cleverness of this idea.

"Great," said Baby Mason immediately, "my suggestion is to hit on the ace-point. Take your choice!"

"I go along with that,' added Superstitious Paul, encouraged, thinking they might yet be saved by the spontaneous generation of a rule.

Kal put his hand on Arthur's shoulder, and in markedly measured tones, said, "Did you ever consider bringing both men in? It seems clear to me. Why be hit?"

Arthur did not like being touched, patronized... OR instructed. "Because," he intoned, calling forth his most pedantic elocution (the one he used in speaking to those he considered underlings) "the object here is to make the bar-point. Bringing both men in is hardly the solution to that."

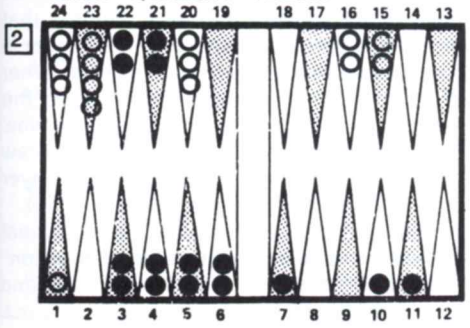
"Yes, but it is death to be hit," said the Mathematician, surprised by his own vehemence. This was not a kind of position he knew, and did not lend itself to his kind of computation.

"It is NOT death," responded Arthur, displeased by the Mathematician's hyperbola, "you are suffering from hypochondria."

The man in the box was amazed by the inconsistency with which top players reached accord in their selection of moves. "Frankly, I am in complete agreement with Arthur, and if you wish to reconsider your move, you may do so."

Arthur was not certain he was pleased by this endorsement and took the opportunity to look over his move one last time. This was the position:

BLACK TO PLAY A 5—1. WHITE OWNS THE CUBE.
ARTHUR 10—4, KAL 10—5.
PAUL 7—6, MASON 7—1 BLACK



Experience was telling Arthur to leave the man on the bar-point, bringing two men in seemed cowardly and not consistent with the objective; and hitting on the ace-point seemed ludicrous. He was not going to change his move. He sat back in his chair, legs together, arms crossed. The body language was clear.

Kal thought Arthur an obstinate ass and shook his head in disgust.

Baby Mason shook his head in imitation of Kal.

Superstitious Paul looked at a kibitzer whom he sensed was sympathetic with his position. The kibitzer, who in fact had never been in sympathy with anyone, but who knew what was required of him, followed suit.

Disgust and expressions of disgust were rampant.

The Mathematician was even disgusted, but with himself; because of his own uncertainty, wished with all his might that he could be more intuitive, and regretted for a moment that he had a slide rule for a brain. "Let's play it as a proposition," he said automatically, and regretted it the moment he said it.

Baby Mason brightened at once. It suddenly struck him. "A three-way proposition!" The curiosity of it, he thought, and tried to remember if there had ever been one. There must have been. How unusual could it be, he wondered. But for the life of him he could not remember a position that the players were sure enough of their own stance that they were willing to bet on three different moves.

"A three-way proposition," one kibitzer said to another kibitzer who passed this on to another kibitzer and so on down the eternal grapeline of kibitzers, and the table was suddenly surrounded.

The man in the box enjoyed being responsible for events, and thought of people as if they were puppets to be manipulated. "Gentlemen, might we finish the game first?"

"Are you in the proposition or out?" Compulsive Kal asked the man in the box.

The man in the box knew that a proposition is what the top players do when they are involved in working out the fine points of the game, in challenging each other at the highest level, in determining which move is qualitatively and quantitatively better — all this to eliminate the element of luck as best as possible. He also knew that luck was his major weapon.

"Of course I'm in," said the man in the box, unable to resist the challenge.

Baby Mason was like a baby duck racing around in circles in a pond. Propositions had a way of exciting him.

You're on Arthur's side, right?" Superstitious Paul asked the man in the box.

"I have indicated as much," answered the man in the box.

"That means we are evenly divided in our opinions," pointed out the Mathematician, offering information everyone was well aware of.

"How much?" asked Kal, bringing the reality of the bet into sharper focus.

"Shouldn't we finish the game first?" inquired Arthur.

"We can do that any time," responded the man in the box, suddenly getting into the swing of things.

"How much?" Kal was being insistent.

"Dimes," said the Mathematician first, indicating his uncertainty. Ten dollars a point seemed sufficient, he thought.

"Let us not be pikers, gentlemen," said the man in the box, "we are all sportsmen and certain of our position. Shall we make it an even hundred dollars a point?"

"Dimes are fine with me," seconded Baby Mason urgently, before things might get out of hand.

"Come, come, gentlemen," interjected the man in the box, "just a moment ago it seemed that you would be willing to wager your souls on your choices and now I note a certain reluctance on your part, if not even, I hesitate to suggest, a trace of cowardace."

"Hundreds are fine with me." Kal had decided to say something before he was included in this opinion. Besides, he thought bringing the two men in to the six- and five-points was correct, and was willing to stand behind this decision, going broke if necessary. It was a ritual he went through periodically.

"Why don't we compromise and make it for quarters," suggested Arthur. "Anyone can pull out at any point."

This seemed eminently fair, but had a catch. This was generally the case with Arthur, subtle though the catch might be. A proposition in which any of the parties could pull out at any time was weighted in Arthur's favor. The moment he saw it going against him, he would be the first one to throw in the towel, while he knew the others would, because of false pride or faulty temperament, or by a misperception of the laws of probability and the certainty that they were being victimized by bad luck, stay with the proposition much longer than justified. Thus, saying that anyone could quit at any time was very much in Arthur's best interests.

"That seems fair to me," said the man in the box, and no one contested this.

They were about to begin when the manager of the club announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, please make this your last game. The club is closing."

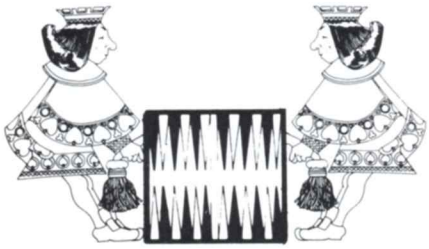
"Don't worry, gentlemen," said the man in the box, "we can all go over to my place. In expectation of a large windfall, I will even serve champagne. You would be surprised, backgammon and champagne go well together. I know just the year."

And so the players and even the kibitzers went over to the man in the box's place, which no one had been to before, but that all expected to be quite palatial.

That was two days ago, and no one has been heard from since. ★★

THE THIRD DEGREE

by Joel Rettew



What was the National Backgammon Association?

The NBA was one of many attempts in the seventies to organize backgammon on a worldwide level. There was the WBC, the WBA, the IBA, the NBL, and so on. Most of these organizations were New York-based. The NBA was probably one of the most sincere attempts during the 1974-75 period. This group was sperheaded by Vera Swift, and all of the officers, directors, and aides were women.

The NBA promoted several first-class tournaments, but is mostly remembered for the 1975 $30,000 added Jacqueline Susann Cancer Research Fund Tournament at the Riviera in Las Vegas. Ms. Swift had many high-society and show business friends, which made the NBA tournaments prestigious affairs.

The organization also published several issues of a newsletter called "Scorecard," which contain some rare writings by world champion Stan Tomchin. Some other names connected with this all woman operation were Candee Brody, Lee Genud, Polly Bergen, and Mila Minskoff. The group vanished suddenly in the late seventies.



What are Slave Points?

According to Ball's Alpha Backgammon, "a unit of value measured in time that a person may choose to gamble in lieu of money. The length of time and the task to be performed must be agreed upon before playing."

But, according to everyone we talked to, slave points translate into sex.

What happened to the Jacqueline Susann Cup?



Vera Swift

As long as we were on the subject of Vera Swift and the NBA we thought we'd try to locate the Jacqueline Susann Cup. This trophy was intended to be perpetual, and had to be won three years in a row in order to take possession.

Meanwhile, the cup was to be kept in residence at the Riviera Hotel. The tournament ran only one year. Stan Tomchin was the first-year winner. The Riviera knew nothing about the cup and Tomchin doesn't have it. It seems to have disappeared. The Jacqueline Susann trophy would be something to own since this was perhaps the most star-studded tournament ever held. Guests and participants included columnist Earl Wilson, Totie Fields, the Fifth Dimension, Phyllis Maguire, Polly Bergen, Linda Evans, Rocky Aaki, and every backgammon name from Holland to Deyong. ☆☆

THE ARITHMETIC OF LOSERS' BRACKETS

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In the June, 1981 *Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine*, Henry Wattson denounces Double Eliminations as "unfair" to players losing early. In illustration, he shows correctly that a loser in the round-of-four of the Main Draw must then win five matches to finish first. Extrapolating from this, he builds a chart for players in losers' brackets, increasing by two the number of matches a loser must win for every round earlier that he loses his Main Draw match. This is poor arithmetic, which makes it seem that a first-round loser in a sixty-four-player Double Elimination must then win thirteen matches to finish first, only a 1-in-8192 chance (which Henry misstates as "1 in 8196"). In truth, however, this first-round loser need only win ten matches, a 1-in-1024 chance.

To see this, let us examine the general conditions of elimination tournaments. Suppose we start with a field of perfect size, some power of 2, say the nth power of 2. We match winners against winners, losers in any given round against other who lose in the same round. After n rounds, one unbeaten player remains. There are also n once-beaten players in n "losers' brackets": one winner among the first-round losers, one winner among the second-round losers, . . ., one nth-round loser.

We can stop here. We can declare the unbeaten player first, the nth-round loser second, the winner between those losing in round n-1 third, the winner among the losers in round n-2 fourth, and so on. This "Michigan Movement' gives us n+1 prizewinners without lengthening the tournament. It is sound and fair. Losing only one match never knocks a player out, but does limit how high he can finish in the tournament.

Double Elimination attempts to retain a chance for any one-time loser to finish first. This requires two steps. First, the n one-time losers after n rounds must play a mini-knockout. For n from 5 to 8 (a field size from 32 to 256), this "playoff" requires another three rounds. If byes are needed, it seems natural to assign them to those lasting longest in the Main Draw. Thus in the layoff among one-time losers from an original sixty-four-player field, byes will be given to 5th and 6th round losers. These two survivors will have two playoff rounds; the other four will have three playoff rounds.

But after the playoff produces a winner from the combined losers' brackets, a second step is required: to match this playoff winner against the unbeaten layer. The playoff winner must then win two matches to finish first, a further lengthening of the tournament.

These two steps combine to add five rounds to the Double Elimination (only four if the unbeaten player wins the first of the two matches against the playoff winner). In a properly run Double Elimination, the loser in the round-of-two must win four more matches (not three, as Henry says) to finish first; a loser in the round-of-four, five more matches; and a loser in the round-of-eight, seven more matches. But beyond this, for each round earlier in which a player loses his Main Draw match, the number of matches he must then win increase by 1, not 2.

The relatively small chances of players in the loser's brackets to finish first make the Double Elimination mainly a waste of time. The playoffs, after all, determine only the order of finish among prizewinners, not which players win prizes. And they require the unbeaten player to wait while the others play three rounds, just to risk a one-in-four chance of finishing second instead of first. For this reason, I much prefer the Michigan Movement.

What about Henry's own "Second Chance" format used in the Plimpton Cup? It gives the once-beten player excellent chances, but it is unfair. Strange as it may seem, Henry's "Second Chance" entrants have every bit as good a chance as unbeaten Main Draw players; fairness requires that they have poorer chances. Lasting longer in the Main Draw before losing hurts rather than helps, for it may deprive a player of the chance to enter the Second Chance in time. It would be much fairer if each Main Draw match won counted just as much for a player as a match won later in a losers' bracket.

Henry Wattson's "Second Chance" format is unfair, and the usual "Double Elimination" is inconvenient. Only straight knockouts and the Michigan Movement are without defect.

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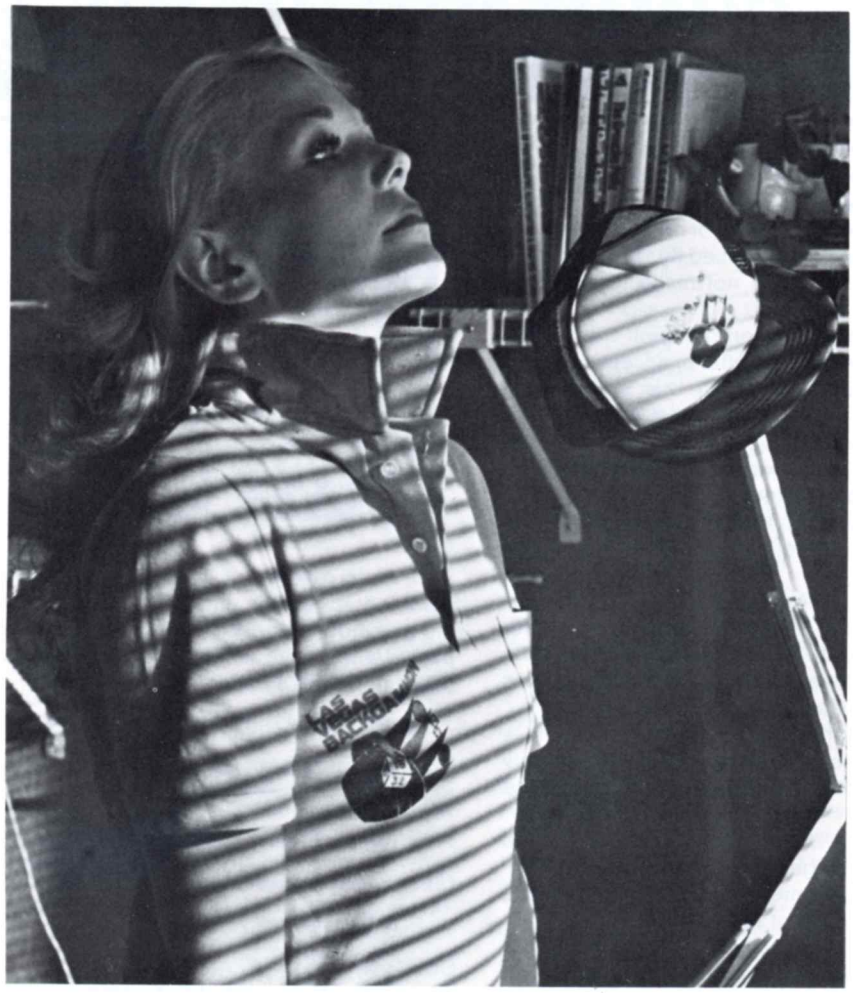
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COMMENTS ON THE "BEAVER" CONTROVERSY

by Burt Simon

In recent issues of your magazine there have been several articles and letters concerning the option of "beavering" a double. The question is whether or not the beavering option would ever be used by skillful players (i.e. players who do not make foolish mistakes).

Many people seem to think that it can never make sense to offer or accept a beaver. Their reasoning goes like this: a player will not beaver a double unless his/her expected value of the game is positive, in which case the other player would not have doubled. Other people claim (often with flimsy or faulty evidence) that there are positions where the correct play is to double and then beaver.

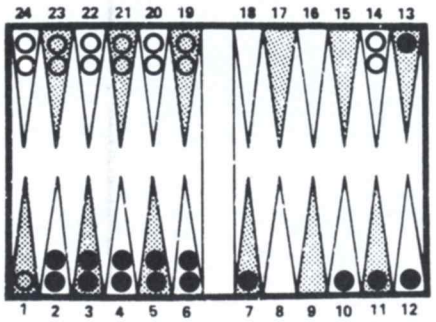
The fact is that in a sense both sides are correct. The confusion stems from the "Jacoby doubling rule," which states that a gammon does not count as double stakes unless the cube has been used.

Without the Jacoby rule, the first claim is correct since an accepted double merely doubles both player's expected value of the game.

With the Jacoby rule, the first double actually changes the scoring rules. An accepted double merely doubles both player's expected value of the game.

With the Jacoby rule, the first double actually changes the scoring rules. An accepted double does not exactly double both players expected values, and it turns out that (at least theoretically) there are positions where a beaver is the logical outcome. With the Jacoby rule, a player with a negative expected value may want to double, hoping to win extra for a gammon. In many cases the expected value will become less negative, or perhaps even positive, so the player should consider doubling. If the expected value is still negative after a double, the opponent should beaver. The following example illustrates the point.

White's turn



If white rolls a 6 it is almost certainly a gammon; if not it is almost certainly a loss (no gammon). Suppose the game was being played without the Jacoby rule. Then, without doubling, white's expected value is

$$E_1(W) = 2(11/36) - (25/36) = -3/36$$

If white doubles and black accepts but does not beaver, the expected value is

$$E_2(W) = -6/36$$

Clearly, black would beaver a double, so

$$E_b(W) = -12/36.$$

Obviously, white will not double.

On the other hand, if the game is being played with the Jacoby rule then

$$E_1(W) = 11/36 - 25/36 = -14/36,$$
$$E_2(W) = 4(11/36) - 2(25/36) = -6/36,$$
$$E_b(W) = 8(11/36) - 4(25/36) = -12/36.$$

Thus, white doubles and black beavers.

Some simple algebra shows what's going on. consider an arbitrary position in which (for simplicity) the probability that white will be gammoned is negligable. Let — — — —

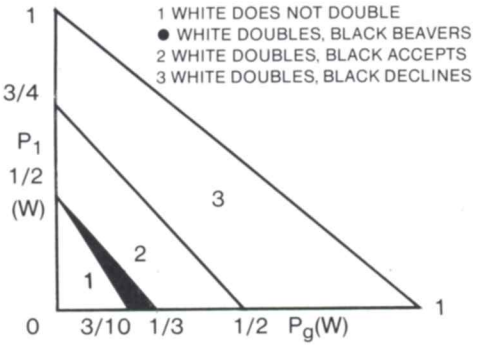
$P_g(W)$ = probability that white gammons black,
$P_1(W)$ = probability that white wins (no gammon),
$P_1(B) = 1 - P_g(W) - P_1(W)$ = probability that black wins.

Thus,

$$E_1(W) = P_g(W) + P_1(W) - P_1(B),$$
$$E_2(W) = 4P_g(W) + 2P_1(B),$$
$$E_b(W) = 8P_g(W) + 4P_1(W) - 4P_1(B).$$

If $E_2(W) > E_1(W)$ and $E_b(W) > E_1 1(W)$ (i.e. if $4P_g(W) + 2P_2(W) > 1$) then white will double. If $E_2(W) > 1$ (i.e. if $6P_g(W) + 4P_1(W) < 3$) then black will accept a white double. If $E_2(W) < 0$ (id. if $6P_g(W) + 4P_1(W) < 2$) then black will beaver a white double.

The following graph shows the correct decisions as functions of $P_g(W)$ and $P_1(W)$.



The Jacoby rule is not a standard backgammon rule. Thus, in tournaments and in private games where Jacoby rule is not being used, there can never be a position where a player would be tempted to beaver a double unless the double was a serious blunder. If the Jacoby rule is in effect though, positions in which a beaver is the logical outcome may occur surprisingly often. ☆☆

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THE BIGGIE IN LAS VEGAS

by Danny Kleinman

Regrettably, the pages of the *Backgammon Magazine* do not have room for the full investigtive report of about 9,000 words I submitted. But you may request the full report from the magazine. Here, omitting the detail from which they have been drawn, I shall present the main conclusions.

We are talking, of course, about the Fiftn Annual Plimpton Cup and the four other backgammon tournaments run concurrently in Las Vegas, June 9-14, 1981, at the Dunes Hotel, by American Backgammon Championships, Inc. ("ABC").

I must admire the initiative, energy, and organization of ABC's three principals: Henry and Kate Wattson, and Louise Goldsmith. Henry, the founder of ABC, had the vision to see what the Plimpton Cup could become — some four yers ago when he picked up the pieces of Jules Klar's "Million Dollar Tournament," which fell apart before it started. Henry also had the willingness to incur the "businessman's risk" of any new venture: the prospect of immediate losses, with profits following only after the couple of years it takes for the new enterprise to estblish itself, far from a sure thing.

Bigger is sometimes better, but also more cumbersome. Participants may have noticed occasional slip-ups and inconveniences; but, on the whole, the tournament was run remarkably smoothly. I regard it as a minor miracle that so huge a tournament could be administered successfully at all.

Inevitably, errors occurred: some simply from human fallibility, others, in part, because of Henry's sophisticated tournament and prize structures. One feature of the tournament, staggered starting times, though proclaimed as a virtue by ABC, was necessitated by the sheer numbers of entrants. Not until the final starting time for each event could ABC tell just how many entrants, rounds, and byes the tournaments would include.

What happened when something did go wrong? In all the instances I found, ABC bent over backwards to please the players, erring, if at all, on the side of generosity. Did a possibly mistaken ruling contribute to a player's loss in his match? Very well, then Henry offered the player a free entry into next year's Plimpton Cup. Did a player lose to an opponent subsequently found to be ineligible? All right, the loser could re-enter, free of charge, in the next available starting section. Was the wording of the brochure ambiguous as to what the prizes would be? Then ABC paid the largest prize possible under the most liberal interpretation of its own rules.

In short, ABC ran the tournament with integrity, delivering what it had promised. This isn't always true of backgammon tournaments, as readers of this magazine may recall from the editorial in the last issue. I would criticize ABC, though, for not making the features of its tournament and prize structures clearly visible to the participants.

For example, ABC's "Second Chance" represented a true bargain for losers in the Main Draw, especially in the Las Vegas Open (the "Pro" division). Yet ABC left the players to figure this out for themselves. Partly as a result of this, several losers failed to enter Second Chance, surrendering substantial "equity."

In other instances, there was no way for players to figure out what was happening. Was a player getting a bye who shouldn't? Was some other player who deserved a bye not getting one? I have no doubt that ABC was running things fairly, but it is also important to "show your work" sufficiently for players to **know** they are being treated well. Nobody should need to rely on ABC's assurances — or on my checking things out, as I did this time.

For many players, the "bottom line" of any tournament is the "players' equity" (defined as the percentage of the fees collected which is returned in prizes). A "money-added" tournament, such as the Las Vegas Open, offers "positive equity" (over 100%). In other tournaments, the organizers retain a percentage of the fees as their own profit.

	KICKOFF	DOUBLES	BEGINNER	AMATEUR	OPEN	COMBINED
winner	David ASHLEY	HUNTER-GHOVANLOU	Steve ELKIN	Bill KENNEDY	Nick MAFFEO	
runner-up	Charles PIPKIN	LIDOV-DUNNER	Lori LUBETKIN	Nick GURA	Chuck GIALLANZA	
entries	704	336	1216	976	136	
fee per entry	$25	$100	$60	$300	$500	
basic fees	$17,600	$33,600	$72,960	$292,800	$68,000	$484,960
late entries			202	127	39	
late-entry premium			$40	$50	$50	
total premium fees			$8,080	$6,350	$1,950	$16,380
no-shows			141	112	16	269
$25 deposits forfeited			$3,525	$2,800	$400	$6,725
Second Chance entries				752	112	
Second Chance fees @ $100 each				$75,200	$11,200	$86,400
gross fees	$17,600	$33,600	$84,565	$377,150	$81,550	$594,465
installment prizes			$25,000	$190,000	$72,100	$287,100
present value, installment prizes			$18,750	$142,500	$54,075	$215,325
fully-paid main prizes	$10,000	$26,920	$14,000	$20,000	$20,600	$91,520
bonuses			80	120	20	
size of bonuses			$100	$500	$500	
bonus-prize totals			$8,000	$60,000	$10,000	$78,000
special prizes			$3,000	$30,000	$10,300	$43,300
present value of prizes	$10,000	$26,920	$43,750	$252,500	$94,975	$428,145
ABC net profit	$7,600	$6,680	$40,815	$124,650	$13,425–	$166,320
ABC profit percentage	43%	20%	48%	33%	16%–	28%
player's return	57%	80%	52%	67%	116%	72%

Like the other events in Las Vegas (except the Las Vegas Open), the Plimpton Cup returned less than 100% of the entry fees in prizes. But it's not nearly so simple as that. As Henry Wattson pointed out to me, Plimpton Cup entrants who took advantage of all the different incentives — registration by the end of February, staying at the Dunes Hotel and booking through Karson Travel, starting play on Wednesday — obtained positive equity, just as if there had been money added to the prize pool.

Because the structures of prizes were so complicated, I would have to compute prohibitively many equities corresponding to every permutation of the incentives to paint the complete picture. Instead I will compute only "average" equities. While this understates the equity of the players who had the foresight to exploit the opportunities provided by Henry's clever incentives, it overstates the equity of the other entrants. Players who arrived on Friday without having pre-registered received less than 50% equity for their $350 entry fees in the Plimpton Cup, just as some others received more than 100% equity for their $300 entries reserved well in advance.

ABC's installment plan for the larger prizes affects my equity calculations. Paying out these prizes in five installments at yearly intervals may save taxes for the winners; but the winners receive dollars whose purchasing power has been weakened by inflation; while ABC keeps the interest on the deferred prizes, quite substantial at today's high rates. Therefore, I have estimated the "present value" of the larger prizes at 75% of their face value. I have also apportioned ABC's reported 269 "no-shows" among the three divisions in arriving at the following estimates:

You may think the 52% return for beginners very low — I agree — but I'm not sure this is bad. It gives the stronger players an incentive to enter the Plimpton Cup instead. Likewise the vast discrepancy between the amateur and pro returns provides an incentive to play in the higher division. Perhaps this will prod a few lesser-known experts into entering divisions more appropriate to their skills in the future, even if technically they do meet the eligibility criteria for a lower division. We may consider the beginner tournament more as a social event for weaker players than as an easy way for strong players to win money.

Part of the cause of the lower returns in the beginner and amateur divisions is that each additional entry, while diminishing the winning chances of every prior entrant, adds nothing to the prize pool. Though individual players may have wanted to enter, it was against the interests of the players as a group to encourage a larger field. Certainly the players as a group would have been better off if they'd made a compact not to re-enter once eliminated the first time.

Not all of the $166,320 I've computed is really profit. I imagine that almost all this money went to cover ABC's enormous expenses. Louise supplied me with a long list of the kinds of expenses ABC incurred, though not with the amounts. ABC paid salaries and wages, travel and lodging expenses, year-round office rent, telephone bills, printing, mailing, signs, photography, advertising, closed-circuit TV, forms, supplies, trophies, souvenirs, accounting, escrow, and legal fees. ABC also gave out unknown numbers of free entries and paid $15 commissions to clubs and go-getters who solicited registrants. Oh yes, ABC spent money to replace the many backgammon sets stolen during its tournaments.

I'll conjecture, though, that ABC did make a large profit from its big Las Vegas tournament this year — but only because ABC had other sources of income, mainly commissions from the Dunes Hotel on rooms rented by backgammon players during the tournament.

Let's not begrudge ABC a reasonable profit, however. Henry said he lost money the first couple of years — now he's recovering it. Under a capitalist system, like it or not, ABC must make profits to continue in business. That business is serving the backgammon public by running tournaments — in the case of the biggie in Las Vegas each year, really more like a convention than an ordinary tournament. On the basis of my observations, I conclude that ABC runs legitimate events, fairly and well. Henry, Kate, and Louise are capable people who have worked to improve their tournaments — I hope and trust they will continue to do so. ☆☆

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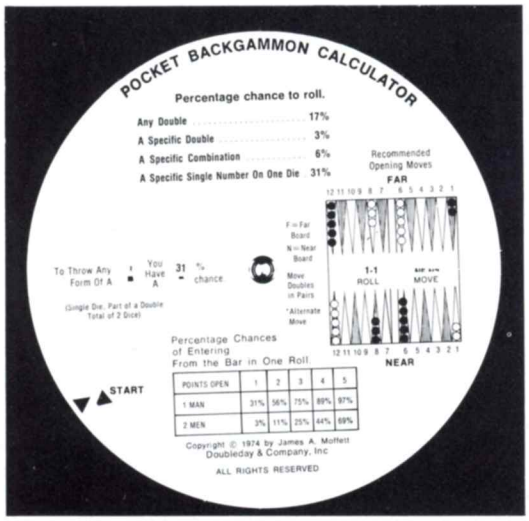
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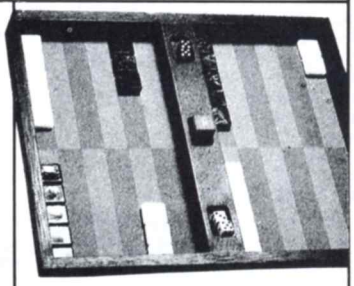
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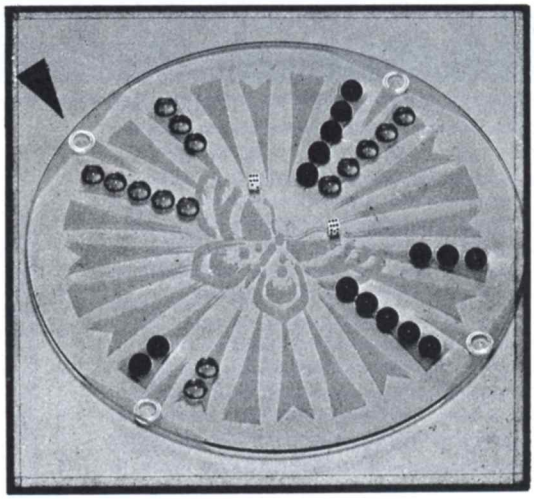
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BACKGAMMON HISTORY

by Oswald Jacoby

The invention of the doubling cube some time in the roaring twenties changed backgammon into an interesting game.

It had always been played at many of our leading mens' clubs, but with doubling it moved further into upper class society. I was taught the game by the late Worthington Davis in 1928 or 1929.

Play in those days was terrible. I remember Worthy taught that 5–2, 4–3, 4–1, and 3–2 should all be played safe. It didn't take me long to improve on those plays but I did follow him with 6–4 to make the two-point. Exposing an early blot in your home board was a last resort play.

There was an Egyptian speakeasy owner named George Mabardi who was considered the great authority of those early days. He was a trifle superior to my teacher, but still played as safe as possible at all times. He would point out the number of pips you lost when a blot was hit in your home board, etc.

There were no formal laws in those days and Wheaton Vaughan, secretary of the Racquet Club Backgammon and Card Committee, decided there should be some. He invited all interested clubs to form a committee and the New York Mens' Clubs, the Philadelphia Racquet, and the Longwood Cricket Club all sent representatives, while many out of ten clubs, such as the Pacific Union in San Francisco, wrote saying they would accept those new laws.

I got on the committee as representative of the Knickerbockerwhist Club, and the committee, largely due to indefatigable work by Wheaton Vaughan, did such a good job that current laws show practically no changes.

The big argument was whether or not in bearing off you could play 6–1 by moving a man from the six-point to the five-point and then bearing him off, or, if you had to bear him from the six-point and play the one with some other man.

Due to strong support by Vaughan, Walter Beinecke, Grosvenor Nicholas, and Phil Randolph the right decision was made. I was the youngest man on the committee, and while I was in total agreement, I was just one minor vote on the right side.

I was lucky enough to get married in April, 1932. Mary Zita (the boss) had to learn bridge and backgammon. She loved backgammon and we played a lot at home.

We had a teacher, the late Leon Medem, a Persian who had gone broke in the depression. He told us he was a great expert — he was (by 1932 standards), and soon had taught us things about the game we hadn't suspected. We quickly became better than anyone else, and even improved enough to beat him.

Incidentally, we got Medem pupils. He spent the rest of his life teching in New York in the spring and fall, Palm Beach in the winter, and various resorts in the summer.

As a result of this the Boss became the only woman in history ever able to gamble against men and win. Her greatest triumph was against a young Englishmen (related by marriage to the royal family) who had a racket. He would get hold of a rich woman and play her for five cents or maybe tuppence a point just for fun. They would lay unlimited optional doubles. You could keep taking your first roll over until satisfied with it. He would take a lot of rolls so games would start at such numbers as 4096 or maybe higher. Eventually he would tell his victim, too bad. You owe me so many thousand dollars or pounds. I would have paid if I had lost. Eventually the husband would pay up.

Introduced to the Regency Club by Fritz Gahagan, whose family owned half the tugs in New York Harbor he got hold of the Boss. She agreed to play at $5 with automatic doubles to eight and proceeded to win $10,000. He ran off to England without paying, but we told the story in the right circles and his racket was ruined.

By the time I went away to war in 1942 the game had improved. There were a lot of good players. I wil mention a few. Asterisks indicate that they are dead.

Archille Gourialli*, Fred McEvoy*, Stephen Raphael, Buddy Simonson*, Ogden Phipps, Earl E.T. Smith, Tommy Tailer, Walter Beineck*, Harold Richard*, Barclay Cooke. If I have forgotten anyone I ask his forgiveness.

I will get into more modern history with my next article.



"Let's tell 'em we're hardened criminals. Maybe that'll keep 'em from chasing us."

Police scrutiny is nothing new in backgammon. Backgammon and gambling first became an issue in the famous 1974 Hawaii State Championships with John Crawford. This cartoon appeared in the Honolulu Advertiser and satirized the backgammon and gambling issue (courtesy of Prince Kansil).

ELIMINATE EMOTIONAL INFLUENCE

by Gaby Horowitz & Dr. Bruce Roman

Anyone who has ever played a game of backgammon in a more sophisticated manner than aimlessly moving checkers about a board has experienced the magnitude and severity to which the game can affect one's emotions.

With this concluding principle we will cross the boundary between physical and mental backgammon to explore the various emotions we may encounter in ourselves as well as in our opponents.

The most common untoward emotion in backgammon is steaming. The World Book dictionary defines steaming as "showing anger or irritation." In backgammon, steaming occurs when a player has reached his "boiling point." Characterized by doubling without a sufficient advantage and accepting cubes that should be declined, the player's mental computations become irrational rather than prudent. Rather than deciding upon the cube as one would a business venture, it becomes an *affaire d'honneur.*

Steaming usually occurs when the player is losing and particularly if his opponent has turned around one or more big games. This tends to offend one's sense of JUSTICE. The player strikes out in reponse to this travesty of fairness. Ironically, this usually denotes the genesis rather than the denouement of his misfortunes.

Steamers, regardless of their skill level, are the most desirable opponents with whom one can engage in play. Assume that you, as an intermediate player, have a choice between two opponents, A and B. A is a weak player who is financially prosperous and indulges in the game purely as a distraction. Rarely becoming perturbed or affected by a series of misfortunes, he has a very high boiling point.

Opponent B is a fine technician who derives his sustenance solely from backgammon. Overly tense and nervous, he is known to have a very low boiling point, i.e., he steams with the best of them.

Regardless of the disparity in skill level between Opponent B and yourself, your opportunity for success is greater with him — providing you understand his weakness and exploit it.

Due to the unpredictability of the game, you need do nothing more than patiently wait for one or two games to go sour on him. Against your thoroughbred steamer, one or two unfortunate games if sufficient for him to begin doubling early and, most importantly, taking late.

Interestingly, steaming can occur when a player is not losing but becomes angry due to something said or done by an opponent or kibitzer.

A particular Los Angeles player is very superstitious and bars certain kibitzers whom he believes bring him bad luck. Most club members are aware of this person's problem and courteously attempt to not watch him play — especially when he's in the box.

One evening a new club member, uninformed as to this person's infirmity, was kibitzing *his* game. When asked to leave sans explanation, he regarded it as a personal affront and refused to depart. An altercation ensued, followed by a "ruling," and the new club member was told to leave. Unfamiliar with this brand of hospitality, he responded with a flurry of invective before exiting. visibly unnerved, Mr. Superstitious lost the subsequent game in the box and proceeded to become -26 on the score within the next several games. At this point, he barred everyone, obviously implying that they were the cause of his misfortunes. We will leave it to the reader to adjudicate the true source of this person's calamities.

Another character, whom we will call Mr. X, makes his apperance at the club approximately at midnight (two hours before closing time). Methodically noting everyone's score, he attempts to enter the chouette with the greatest number of "donators." Content to win several points and quickly leave, Mr. X is a hit-and-run artist.

One evening, as Mr. X was playing his first game in the box, he reached the position illustrated in Diagram 1. As Black, he was enjoying the position until White produced a key 6-2, hitting the blot on B9. He nervously rolled — and danced! The team immediately redoubled to 4 and Mr. X reflexively grabbed the cube, securing the dubious honoe of being its possessor. The last vestiges of his smile evaporated as he finally re-entered, rolling a 1-5 in Diagram 2. Losing a gammon and a substantial number of points, Mr. X paid top dollar for his steam take.

A steam take is frequently generated by a sudden and dramatic shift in positional advantage from one player to the other.

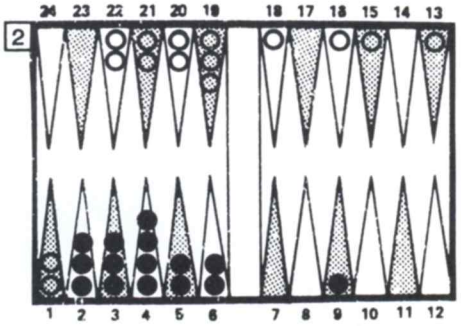


DIAGRAM 1
WHITE ROLLS 6-2

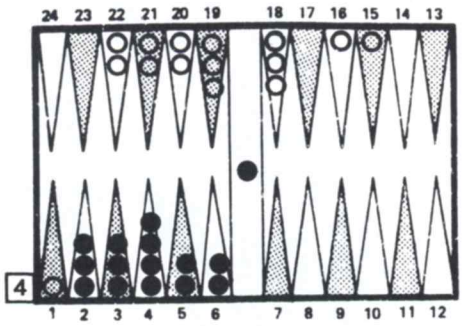


DIAGRAM 2
BLACK ROLLS 5-1

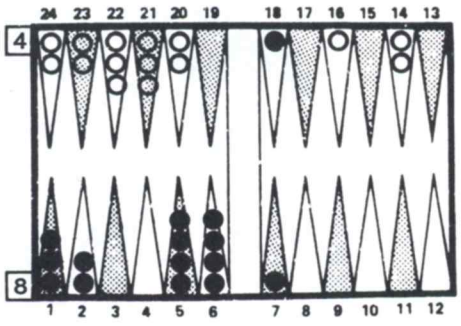


DIAGRAM 3
WHITE REDOUBLES
SHOULD BLACK TAKE?

EXCERPT FROM "DYNAMIC CUBE STRATEGY" BY GABY HOROWITZ AND DR. BRUCE ROMAN. COPYRIGHT © 1980. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

The span of time in which this shift occurs is too short to allow the change to be easily assimilated by the individual. This triggers an effort to stop (anger) and a denial of that which has just transpired. The steamer takes the redouble so that he may right the injustice which has occurred, and restore his equity in the game to "what it should be." This is almost as effective as selecting tomorrow's Daily Double from last week's Racing Form.

A more moderate expression of steaming can be seen among highly skilled players. At a 1976 tournament in Dallas, two top pros were playing heads-up for money between matches. Playing the last game of a previously agreed upon number of games, the position in Diagram 3 was reached.

Black is minus two on the score. After studying the position he realizes the following:

1. He is 8 pips behind *before* his opponent rolls in a fairly short race.
2. Only a 6-5 forces White to leave a direct shot on his next roll.
3. His inner board has gaps and men piled upon his 5 and 6 points.

He knows that the redouble should be declined. But he is also abundantly aware that this game marks his last opportunity to emerge plus for the session. The nominal 6-5 shot equity serves as a nucleus for sophistry which culminates in a justification for steaming.

It is not that the advanced player is immune to steaming but rather that his adroit justifications frequently camouflage the truth.

Note well that the time to evaluate a player's ability is when he is confronted with adversity, not when all is going his way. any dilettante can perform well with good dice.

A successful technique against the more skilled player that steams is to offer to play five games at high stakes. If you are plus after the five games, you may agree to an additional five games but always make it appear that these will be the *last* five games. Skilled players, of course, should not play short sessions against inferior opponents. You should not feel obliged to agree to terms that violate your best interests, as in the following conversation:

Intermediate: "Let's play three games at $100 a point."

Expert: "I'm sorry, I dislike short sessions. But I will play you a four-hour session."

In this way the more advanced player greatly increases the probability that his skill advantage will have sufficient time to be expressed. This is far superior to gambling for three games in which one or two lucky rolls may determine the winner.

Due to the nature of tournament play, measures inapplicable in money games are often quite appropriate in match play. This fact is often used to justify steaming in a tournament.

Diagram 4 illustrates a position that occurred in a match between two skilled players at the 1977 Bill Eisenberg Cup in Los Angeles.

In the previous game, Black, trailing 4-5 in a match to 11, backgammoned his opponent to obtain a 7-5 lead. Steaming, White doubled early in the next game, justifying his action with the fact that he was behind in the match. *In most instances emotional influence clouds one's mind only in the absence of knowledge.*

Compounding the mistake of the early double, White accepted the redouble in Diagram 4 and thus played for the match from that position.

If White had really understood that the match was not yet lost and that a comeback was certainly possible, he would have greatly increased his chances for success. Frequently, we have observed players applying emergency measures in situations in which no real emergency exists. Being behind 9-5 (or more probably 8-5 if he hadn't offered the early double) is a more

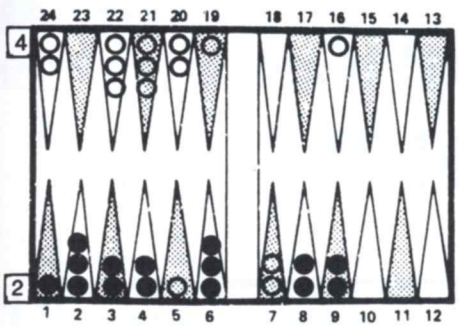


DIAGRAM 4
BLACK REDOUBLES
SHOULD WHITE TAKE?

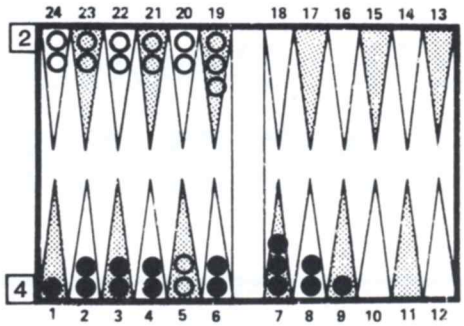


DIAGRAM 5
WHITE REDOUBLES
SHOULD BLACK TAKE?

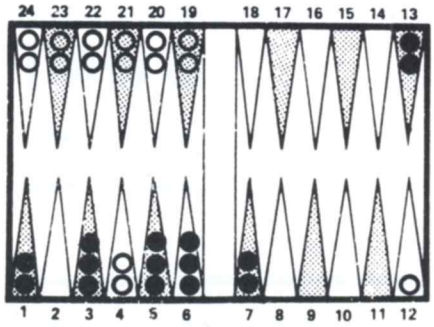


DIAGRAM 6
SHOULD BLACK TAKE?

advantageous position to be in than playing for the match from the position in Diagram 4.

Alan Martin, a former student of Gaby's, was playing a very weak opponent in one of the early rounds of the 1979 American Backgammon Championships in Las Vegas. Down 7-11 in a match to 15, Alan gammoned his opponent with the cube at 2 to tie the score at 11-11.

Remaining upset at being gammoned, his opponent redoubled Alan to 4 in Diagram 5. Ironically, the redouble is excellent. White is essentially gambling the entire match on this 5-shot and the existing racing equity — both non-skill confrontations. Due to the great skill disparity, this is the best chance to win the match. In reality, however, white was not evaluating the Opponent Factor but merely steaming (he probably would have offered the same redouble in a money game).

While many fine players would have taken the redouble, Alan wisely decided to decided to decline. He was unwilling to give his inferior opponent the opportunity to win the match in one roll.

Your best defense against the steamer is patience. Alan, now behind 11-13, continued on to win the match and the entire tournament to become the American Backgammon Champion.

Another emotion commonly exhibited in backgammon is fear. The player in fear doubles too late, losing his market, and passes most cubes offered to him. Protecting against 17-1 shots rather than observing true priorities, he is often found playing from very inflexible positions. This fear even extends to facing certain opponents to whom he has suffered a substantial loss or several losses.

White is in the box in Diagram 6. Black considered doubling but his two partners strongly objected. Acquiescing to their demands, he did not double and rolls rolled a 6-2. The teammates howled at his suggestion of breaking the midpoint (the correct play) but this time the captain insisted and made his play, leaving his opponent six numbers with which to hit him. As White rolled a 4-3, the first teammate groaned, "I'm sure glad I didn't let you double." The second teammate followed with the "astute" observation, "Especially with the way *you* played the position."

The teammates were, amongst other things, victims of fears, not only in their cube handling but in their checker movement. Do not judge results but do what you know to be correct. The above incident is not an isolated occurrence but a ubiquitous "ritual" performed daily wherever backgammon is played. ☆☆

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COMPLETE BACKGAMMON

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BY AUTHORS

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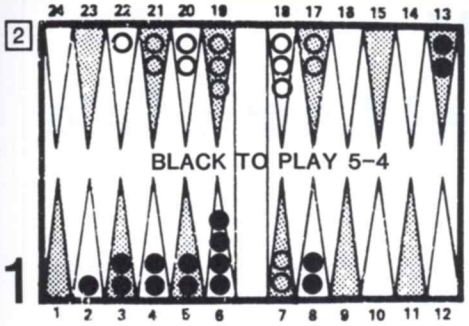
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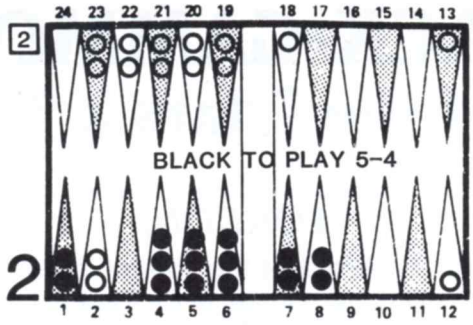
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PAY ME NOW OR . . . PAY ME LATER

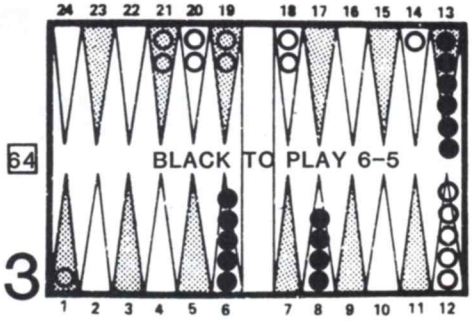
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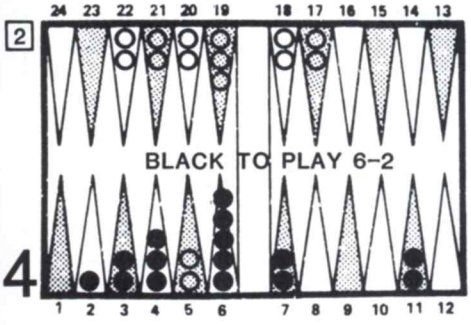
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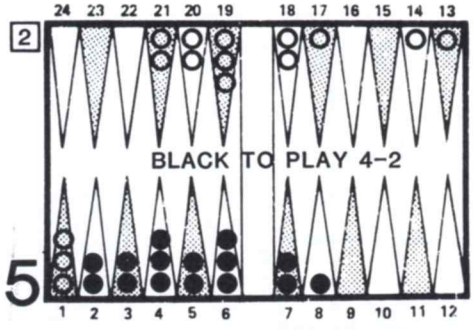
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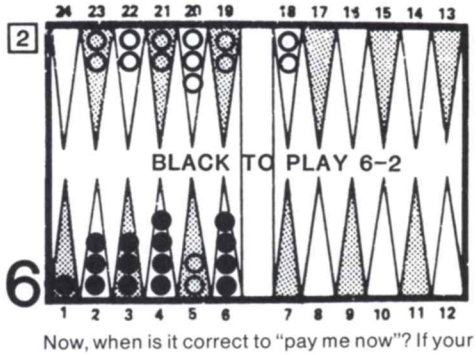
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Many readers will remember a television commercial for oil filters a few years ago. The punch line of the commercial was "You can pay me now, or pay me later," which meant that the consumer had a choice of paying a small amount for an oil filter now, or a large amount for a ruined engine later.

It would not be surprising if the writer of that commercial were a backgammon player. The problem of whether to pay now or pay later — that is, whether to take a chance now or play safe for the roll at the possible cost of taking a greater risk later — recurs constantly in backgammon. In the early stages of the game, when the opponent hasn't built up his board, the cost of being hit is small, so it is usually correct to "pay me now." For example: on an opening 2-1 roll most experts will slot the five-point, since the cost of being hit now is much smaller than the cost of not owning the five-point at a later stage of the game.

It is with bearing in positions, when getting hit will cost the game, that the most crucial pay-me-now or pay-me-later-decisions arise. A player must often decide whether to take a risk on the current roll, with relative safety remaining if he gets away with it, or to play safer for now but leave a more awkward position with likelihood of leaving later shots. Many good players mis-evaluate this type of position. They forget that the potential later shot still has to be hit to cost, so they tend to pay now when it is safer to pay later. If we assume that getting hit loses and escaping wins, we must calculate for a given play the probability of getting hit either now or later. This figure is: probability of being hit on this roll + probability of being missed on this roll x probability of leaving shot(s) on future rolls x probability of future shot(s) being hit.

Look at example 1. Many good players will clear the midpoint with 5-4, figuring that they would rather leave eleven shots now than seventeen shots later. However, a careful analysis shows that they are wrong. If we leave eleven shots now we will be hit with a probability of 11/36 or .306 (I assume, for simplicity, that surviving this roll is complete safety). Suppose we play safe, playing the number in our inner board. Let us assume we will have, on average, two rolls before the eight-point must be cleared (this assumption is on the low side), and during this time we might roll double 2, 3, 4, or 5 for safety (I realize that 2-2 and 3-3 are not completely safe, but I ignore 1-1, which is helpful as a compensating factor — I'm just trying to get an approximation, so I'm keeping the assumptions simple). So for each of the two rolls we have 8/9 probability of not safetying, or 64/81 chance of still being on the midpoint when the eight-point is cleared. Once the eight-point is cleared we have ten bad rolls and four good rolls, so the probability of leaving a shot is 10/14, and it is a seventeen-number shot, so the probability of it being hit is 17/36. Consequently if we "pay me later," the probability of being hit is approximately 64/81 x 10/14 x 17/36 = .267, so this is the safer play. I realize that there are several things I haven't taken into account, but I tried to make my simplifying assumptions equally favorable to both sides to make a rough calculation possible.

Example 2 comes from "Backgammon for Profit" by Joe Dwek. Dwek suggests paying now, clearing the eight-point and slotting the three-point, leaving a direct shot. The alternative is to move two checkers to the one-point, leaving an extremely awkward position to bear in from. Dwek suggests the reader roll it out a few times to convince himself. I did just that (100 times each play) and became quite convinced — paying later was much safer! Even though Dwek's play is considerably safer if he gets away with it, Black is far from home free and is still quite likely to leave one or more shots in the subsequent bear-in. Since the "pay me later" play has to average almost one **extra** future shot to compensate for the immediate shot left by "paying me now," it is better to lay safe for the roll.

The problem also occurs when there is a question of how many shots to leave. Consider example 3, which is from Magriel vs. Eisenberg in "Backgammon with the Champions" by Kent Goulding. Magriel played 13-7, 6-1x, getting Eisenberg off the one-point by leaving fifteen return shots, while 13-2 leaves only eleven shots. Since Eisenberg will probably have a game-winning double if he hits any shot, we can assume that a hit is a loss. Is it worth those four extra shots? I don't think so. Even if we assume that if Magriel doesn't ever get hit he will win, which is clearly not a valid assumption in this position, the safer play (for now) would have to leave a shot and have it hit at least 4/25 more often than Magriel's play to compensate for the immediate danger. This would involve leaving a direct shot almost 40% more often, which seems pretty high to me. Look at it as a proposition in the following form: Would you take Magriel's play and play it play vs. play twenty-five times each way on the asumption that the initial shot was missed, but spot your opponent four wins? This is essentially what Magriel's play does.

Now, when is it correct to "pay me now"? If your opponent hasn't built up his board, it may be correct in any of the previous positions. If his board is built up it is almost never correct to leave an unnecessary direct shot, unless doing so otherwise improves your winning or gammon chances (i.e. there is more involved than just safety). However, it may be correct to leave a few extra shots for future safety, if playing safer now is likely to lead to later problems.

Consider example 4: Black can either clear his eleven-point, leaving sixteen shots now but virtually no later problems, or clear his bar point leaving eleven shots now and the eleven-point to be reckoned with later. If he clears the eleven-point he gets hit 16/36 = .444. If he clears the bar-point he is immediately hit 11/36. Of the remaining 25/36 he will have five "good" numbers (double 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and eight "bad" numbers (6-1, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4). Therefore he will leave a shot 8/13 of the time, and it will be a seventeen-number shot (I realize that there are other variations possible, but this calculation takes the major factors into account). Therefore, his probability of being hit is: 11/36 + (25/36 x 8/13 x 17/36) = .507 so it is proper to "pay me now." Experts are familiar with this type of position, but they would probably be surprised that the decision is that close. In fact, if the opponent's board were about to crunch in a couple of rolls, it would be better to "pay me later."

Another "pay me later" position comes up in example 5. Black could play safe by bringing in the man on the eight-point, but this would probably lead to an awkward bear-in later on. It would be impossible to prove without a computer, but experience has taught us that it is better to clear the bar-point and pay off to the 17 to 1 shot to achieve the smoother position.

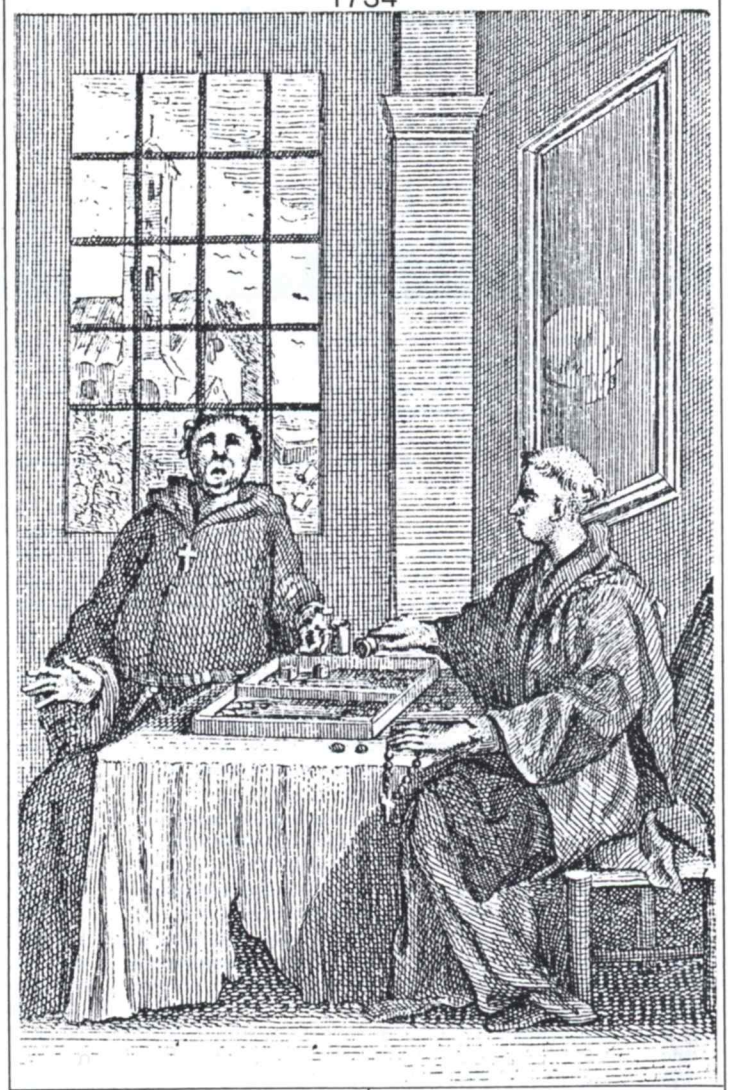
The concept may apply to potential shots as well as immediate shots. Here, it is often correct to pay now. Consider example 6. Black can take two men off, paying off only 6-5, or he can come down to two men on the six-point, leaving a shot on both 6-1 and 5-1. It is correct to "pay me now" by coming down to two men on the six-point. The reason is that, unless Black rolls doubles, he will eventually have to come down to two men on the six-point anyway. Consequently the "safer" play is likely to have to pay off to both 6-5 now and 6-1 and 5-1 later, so to avoid this double joeopardy Black should get it over with quickly.

☆☆

BACK-GAMMON
or, the Battle of the Friars a Tragi-Comic Tale

LONDON:

Printed for F. Wilford, at the Three Flower-de-luces, behind the Chapter-Houfe, in St. Paul's Churc-Yard. 1734



Of two Battalions set in Rank and File,
And of the various Plunder and Spoil
How each th' Approaches of the other dreads,
With two fagacious *Gen'rals* at their Heads;
How *Shot* the *Elephantine Tooth* becomes;
And *Boxes* rattle in the stead of *Drums;*
How Luck and Skill alternately advance;
(The Force of Judgment, and the Pow'r of Chance)
Of Passions overflowing in a Trice,
And all the dreadful Tyranny of Dice,
I sing: — Instruct me to recount the Fray;
And give me patience, — more than when I play!

A doughty Friar, *Fabris* was his Name,
Of sober Aspect, and of goodly Frame,
In *Table-Battles* many a Foe had slain;
And was become the Champion of the Plain.
Wiser in Art, he bolder grew in Arms,
And all the Country dreaded his Alarms.
The holy Brotherhood with Terror struck,
All the Lay-herd were Victims to his Luck:
The Males against him never could succeed,
And all the weaker Sex were weak indeed.
Fo rin this *Table-War* the Fair engage,
And make sometimes an *Amazonian* Age.
Nothing could Stop the Friar's warm Career;
Some fell for want of Fortune, some for Fear:
In num'rous Conflicts he had never fail'd;
When Art fell short, th' almightly *Dice* prevail'd.

Thus the great **Swede* triumphantly went on,
And Battles, without Number Battles won;
Vanquish'd his Enemies without Controul;
The hardy *Ruffian,* and the rugged *Pole.*

But let not this, my Friend, elate thy Mind;
Survey the dubious Casualties behind:
See the great *Charles* at last to Fortune yield!
At last view † *Peter* Master of the Field!
Hence Caution learn: O! learn to be afraid,
And keep secure the Conquests thou hast made;
The Friar's Fame, extended far and near,
Had reach'd at last a Brother Friar's Ear.
He too in *Table-Battles* early taught,
From *Alma Mater* had the Science brought:
Proposing wisely some Diversion hence,
If doom'd to toil in *Essex,* or the *Fens.*

Vituelo deem'd it but a pious Care,
Both to revenge the Holy, and the Fair;
And Expectation of the coming Sport,
Made along, sultry, tedious Journey short.
They met: And dauntless at the fatal Board
The Signal gave. — *Size Quator* was the Word.

Fabris, with Pleasure sparkling in his Eyes,
Braves his new Foe, and all his Art defies:
He then his Troops in martial Order plac'd;
Vituleo did the same, and boldly fac'd:
(His valiant Troops the *Olive* Colour boast,
And *Fabris* led the *Ethiopian* Host.)
The Battle moves: The wary Chiefs look round,
To see, and gain th' Advantage of the Ground.

For the first Onset *Fabris* did prepare,
And *Quator Size* began the mighty War.
(This was a Service he perform'd by Rote,
And got the **Point* that suited with his Coat)
Vituleo then, two *Sixes* by his Side,
Came rushing forward with a manly Stride.

Fabris as yet conceal'd his inward Pain,
Duce Ace oppos'd, but Oh! oppos'd in vain:

Homeward three Paces mov'd, he singly stood,
And stopt directly in *Vituleo's* Road.
This is my Pris'ner, Sir, *Vituleo* cries,
And if he meets me once again, he dies.

Fabris attempts to place him in the Field,
And *Sixes* were his *Buckler* and his *Shield.*
With those, alas! he no Admittance found:

The Enemy began to sieze the Ground.
With *Treys* into an empty Space he ran,
And got a Guard too for his *Naked Man.*

Trois Ace for *Fabris* did Admittance gain,

And he possess'd him of the homeward Plain.

Duce Ace stept forth, and took him on the *Pate;*
He falls a Victim to his adverse Fate:
And when he came again; he came too late.
No Room for his untimely *Quators* now;
Two *Treys* again pursu'd the fatal blow,
Filling a Space, and moving forwards too.

Fabris attempts the Trenches once again;
But *Cinque* and *Quator* made th' Attempt in vain.
Vituleo presses on with *Cinque* and *Duce,*
And made the future Blows of little Use.
This for a Rampart he design'd to keep,
Or'e which the nimblest Warrior could not leap.

In safety now the *Olive* Squadrons move;
In vain the *Ethiopian* Pris'ners strove,
In Number Three; they could no farther go;
Coop'd up within the Trenches of the Foe.
The Friar almost did his Faith renounce;
And lost a tripple Victory at once.

Another Battle *Fabris* then demands;
But found that Fortune had forsook his Hands:
Quite vanquish'd, he began to sue for Peace;
And still *Vituleo's* Triumphs did increase.
A little Truce concludes th' unequal Fight,
And this, like others, ended with the Night.

The Morn advanc'd, *Vituleo* was the fame;
And *Fabris* did the whole Creation blame:
The ruder Passions to Expression swell,
And the poor faultless *Dice* are wish'd at H-ll.

O! had the Devil on this Method hit,
To try the *Patient Man* in *Holy Writ;*

Satan had then succeeded in his Plot —
Back-Gammon would have done, what he could not!

Innumerable Battles then were fought;
Innumerable Victories were got.
Fabris was lavish of his former Gains,
And almost yielded up his whole *Domains*
Unable his ill Fortune to endure,
Pawn'd the contingent Profits of his *Cure;*
The growing *Copp'ces* now were scarcely safe,
The Pig, the Goose, the Turkey, and the Calf;
Made Stake of Things abroad, and Things at Home
And ransack'd ev'ry Corner of his *Dome.*

At last, despairing, he himself addrest
To one more pretious Corner than the rest:
Advancing sly, with undiscover'd Stealth,
He mounts a Chimney, concious of his Wealth;
Plays the Mechanick in the dusty Scene,
And with his *Cassock* sweeps the Chimney clean.

Now Crowns, and Guineas, and Pistoles were taken
— Forth from the gloomy *Treasury* of *Bacon;*

Stor'd in the dark Recesses of a Cleft,
Both from himself secure, and Midnight Theft.
The od'rous Place th' enfranchis'd Money shews,
And is an Information to the Nose.

Vituleo, still victorious, gains the Spoil;
The Chimney can do nothing now, but boil.
The shining Tenants to *Vituleo* fled,
The empty *Sachel* was in Triumph led;
And, to new Offices converted, strives

To clean his sullied Table, and his Knives.

So have I seen the nimble Eel disgrac'd,
And by a rude Barbarity uncas'd:
The Meat made ready for the hungry Lip,
And the tough Out-side, dwindled to a Whip,
Hung up, expos'd in mercenary Shops,
The Sport of Boys, and Punishment of Tops.

Now Heaps of antient Manuscripts were brought,
With which before the Parish had been taught.
Your *Doctrines* I refuse, *Vituleo* cry'd,
And to accept a *Pawn* from *Heav'n deny'd.*
The Victor deem'd them an improper Stake,
And spar'd the *Pastor* for the *People's* Sake;
Sav'd him the cruel Labour of his Skull,
And many a quaint *Epitome* from *Bull.*
Now slumbers *Tillotson* in Dust secure,
Destin'd no new Transcriptions to endure;
Now *Sanderson; shall with his Conscience sleep,*
And Nilson his own Holidays may keep.

Fabris now smiles, on second Thoughts, to find
That all his petty Volumes were behind;
Rejoices in his undiminish'd Stock,
And still retails 'em weekly to his Flock.

But guess the Torments which he felt at Night,
After the Shock of this disastrous Fight!
With Dreams of *Boxes* and of *Dice* opprest,
His Eyes knew none but interrupted Rest.
Duce Ace pursues him with repeated Spite,
And is the Vision of the tedious Night.

To bear ill Luck, was more than he could do,
And be tormented with the Shadow too.
From Side to Side he turn'd, and turn'd again:
Words can't express the Friar's anxious Pain.
The dreadful Apparition of a *Box*
His broken Slumbers ev'ry Moment mocks.

Provok'd at last with this continu'd Scoff,
He threw the Bed-clothes, and his Slumbers off:
Down Stairs he hies, with unimagin'd Speed,
Determin'd to perform a glorious Deed.
The *Tables,* the first Objects of his Ire,
Were headlong thrown directly in the Fire:

They crack'd, and fum'd, and spark'led as they fir'd,
And mock'd the Passions they had once inspir'd,
And next the *Dice,* the chief Offenders, went
In Vice Companions, and in Punishment:
By them to many a sinful Word betray'd,
He for Attonement a Burnt-Off'ring made.

As yet unsatisfy'd, the *Boxes* last
He on the Flames with Indignation cast;
"Go burn, go burn, ye Ministers of Vice,
"And rattle, if you can, the calcin'd *Dice!*
The One soon yielded to the pow'rful Flame,
And Dust and Ashes instantly became;
The other, of a harder Substance form'd,
Obey'd not, but instead of burning warm'd
Of Brass compos'd, no Alteration knew,
But as it hotter than his Passion grew.

This Box had waited oft on *Fabris'* self,
And many Years been Servant on the Shelf;
Contain'd a Spice immoderately warm,
Which often does some good, and often Harm.

Fabris, now recollecting what was best,
The antient Service of his *Box* confess'd;
Himself for his Precipitation blames,
And gravely takes it from the dying Flames.
Resplendent on the Cup-board now it shines,
And does the wonted Office when he dines:
Doom'd justly to th' eternal Want of *Dice,*
— Is now confin'd to Pepper, and to Spice.

Fabris, thus cur'd of his long Thirst of Game,
And by his adverse Fortune render'd tame,
The *Sunday* after his ill Fate bemoan'd,
And his bad Conduct in a *Lecture* own'd;
Put on *Forbearance* with his *Sable Robe,*
And preach'd on the most *patient Text* in Job. ✡✡

INSIDER'S BACKGAMMON

MONEY MANAGEMENT

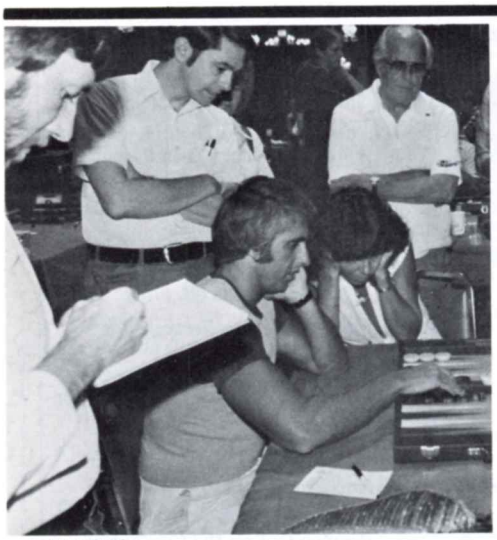
by Arnawood R.

A few years ago, upcountry in Maui — in Olinda, to be precise — we had a very secret backgammon meeting and party that went on all night long. It was meant to be a more social event rather than a gambling event. However, as some of these things do, this particular evening things got out of hand. We began the play at five dollars a point in a game for three people which we call Captain. In this game one person waits while the two play three games, with the person winning the most money or points staying on and playing until beaten. Captain is a little different than Chouette in that one of the three players is always out, so that there is competition not only for the money, but for who has the table.

As the evening went on, one of the three started losing very heavily. After going down five or six hundred dollars at five dollars a point, he then wanted to double the stake, and then double them again, until, some eight or ten hours of play later, this fellow was down about $10,000. The outcome of the story was that the debt was never paid. The stakes had gotten out of hand and beyond the limits which these people could pay off. Though there may be some highrolling players who could play at $100 a point or even $1,000 a point, in this game at $5 no one ever expected the stakes to get that high.

In a similar event some fellows I know started out playing for $2 a point and the same thing happened; they got up well over $3,000, and both players became intimidated because the stakes were out of hand. This is an area in backgammon that is called Money Management. Even if you win the game, you can be a loser if you don't pay proper attention to Money management. When you're playing for large amounts of money, particularly with someone you don't know, it is very advisable to play a game called Freeze-out, which is simply a matter of setting your limit in advance. For example, if you are playing for two or three dollars a point, you might set your Freeze-out at fifty or a hundred dollars. Once a player has won that much, you settle up, and then put up another limit. In this way the money level doesn't get out of hand, but the money changes hands at a certain limit and you don't loose track of reality.

Money Management is an important area to be considered, not only on the winning side but on the losing side as well. These two stories today are very important to ponder. It's not always a question of the stakes you start playing for, but also how crazy or carried away you may get during the actual game. I've seen this a lot. It's known as the syndrome of the Steaming Player — the guy who's losing and is ready to do anything, double or triple, to try to recoup his losses. This guy has lost track of reality, and if his debts get too great, he simply is not going to pay. So it's not only important to know when to stop when you are The Steamer, but also to know when to stop when you're playing against this fellow, unless you're sure he has the funds to back any losses. ☆☆



JIM PASKO



MICHELLE GENUD DANNY PASKO

LABOR DAY IN LOUISVILLE IS A BG HOLIDAY!

The Louisville Backgammon Club has just concluded the most successful tournament in this area, and the largest ever held in a non-metropoitan city. They had 189 participants, and distributed over $40,000 in prize money. The enthusiasm of the participants was fantastic, and the 90% losers had just as much fun as the 10% winners.

The Results:

CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION

Winner: **JIM PASKO,** Irving; Finalist: **DARRELL MARCUS,** Chicago; Semi-Finalists: **JERRY UNGAR,** Cincinnati and **BILL DAVIS,** Chicago.

INTERMEDIATE DIVISION

Winner: **DURB OLDHAM,** Louisville; Finalist: **JAMIE FEINSTEIN,** Skokie; Semi-Finalist: **MICHEELE MARCUS,** Chicago.

DOUBLES DIVISION

Winners: **CHRIS STANFORD/BILL DAVIS,** Chicago; Finalists: **JERRY UNGAR/BILL WRIGHT,** Cincinnati; Semi-Finalists: **VAN VANDIVER/DEEB SHALATI,** Indianapolis and **PHIL DUNLOP/JIM PAINTER,** St. Louis.

WOMEN'S EVENT

Winner: **BOBBIE SCHRIFFRIN,** Chicago; Finalist: **CAROL BOYD,** Louisville.

MIXED TEAMS

Winners: **STANLEY STEELE/JOANN FEINSTEIN,** Chicago; Finalists: **CAROL COLE,** Flint/**BILL DAVIS,** Chicago.

JUNIOR EVENT

Winner: **DANNY PASKO,** Irvington; Finalist: **MICHELLE GENUD,** Woodbury; Semi-Finalist: **SCOTT CRAMER,** Chicago.



HOWARD MARKOWITZ



PAUL STRASBERG PHOTOS JAN PHILLIPS

Nightly in Las Vegas.



BACKGAMMON

TOURNAMENTS

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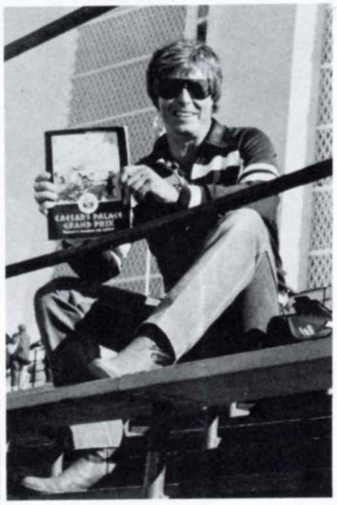
BACKGAMMON BITS

"Backgammon Rules & Rulings" by **Prince Alexis Obolensky** is a title appearing in the Complete Backgammon Bibliography. This book has been awaited eagerly; as a reference volume it would be invaluable. Unfortunately, though the manuscript has been in the hands of the Macmillan Publishing Co. for many years, they have an indefinite publication date. Would-be authors should note that there is a market for a rules and rulings book for backgammon . . .

The **Deaf Club** is a punk rock band which records on **Gammon Records**. The San Francisco record label has no backgammon related hit songs as of yet . . .



Pip's Restaurant home of the someday famous Pip's hamburger is located at 9584 Murray Drive in San Diego. The **Backgammon Club of San Diego** holds tournaments there .



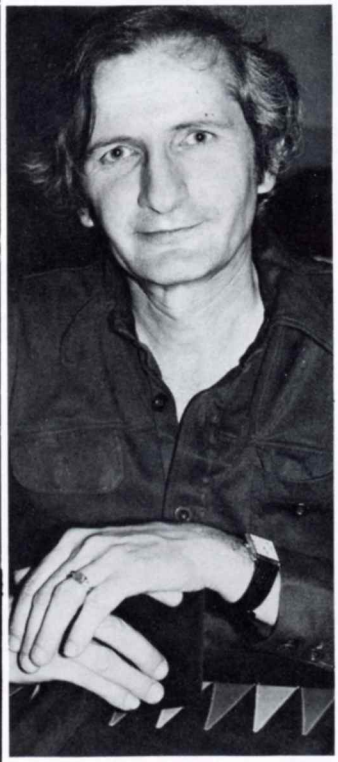
Alan Jones wins Grand Prix at Caesars Palace. It wasn't our **Alan Jones**, the former Vice-President of the Backgammon Club. But, it gave us an opportunity to run a handsome picture of Jones who also doubles as the Backgammon Magazine photographer.

The "Handy Guide for Playing Backgammon" a pamphlet by **Prince Joli Kansil** has been placed in over 300,000 backgammon sets to date . . .

Dr. Bruce Roman has introduced backgammon to his LA Scientology group. Engram clearing leads to better dice rolling . . .

Virginia Backgammon Society and the Richmond Backgammon Club has lost president **Rasim Kasim** and vice-president **Bob Riddle** to job-related moves. The new president is **Dennis Kaiser** and the interim vice-president is **Eric Kaplan** . . .

Gambit Magazine is the official publication of the Pittsburg Backgammon Assn. The new editor of this fine newsletter is **Fr. Walter G. Rydzon**. Correspondence should be addressed to: **St. Margaret Church, 310 Mansfield Ave., Pittsburg, PA 15220**



Now in Las Vegas — gambling author and correspondent for Millions Magazine, Oui, Sports Illustrated and Gambling Times and backgammon enthusiast — **Roger Dionne.** Former tournament promoter and director of the Honolulu Backgammon Club **Dennis Krum.** And in the might as well live here category, **Goble, Sands** and **Monro** . . .

Todd Vander Pluym who is mostly remembered for his famous quote "Even a pigeon can peck you to death," has just won the World Championship of Sand Castle Building held in Vancouver. He and his team of Castle builders were competing in the international event, having just won the US Open Sand Castle Championship in San Diego . . .



The first **Harold G. Zulalian Memorial Foundation Scholarship** has been awarded to **Donna Rathmell**, a junior at Boston University of Business Management. She was chosen from twenty-eight applicants. The late Zulalian was a popular backgammon enthusiast from Boston. After his death, a scholarship was established in his name by his many friends. Contributions can be made to the fund by writing the treasurer: **Mel Drapkin, 75 Pond Ave., Brookline, MA 02146. . .**



Jeff Ward has published his long awaited "Winning Is More Fun." The book sells for $17.95, plus $1.00 shipping. It contains seventy-five articles on backgammon, most of which are from his weekly syndicated backgammon column. The plays of top players such as **Winslow, Chellstorp, Posner, Seidel** and **Goulding** are discussed. Available from: **Aquarian, 3273 Via Bartolo, San Diego, CA** . . .

COMING NEXT ISSUE

Your International Backgammon Passport.

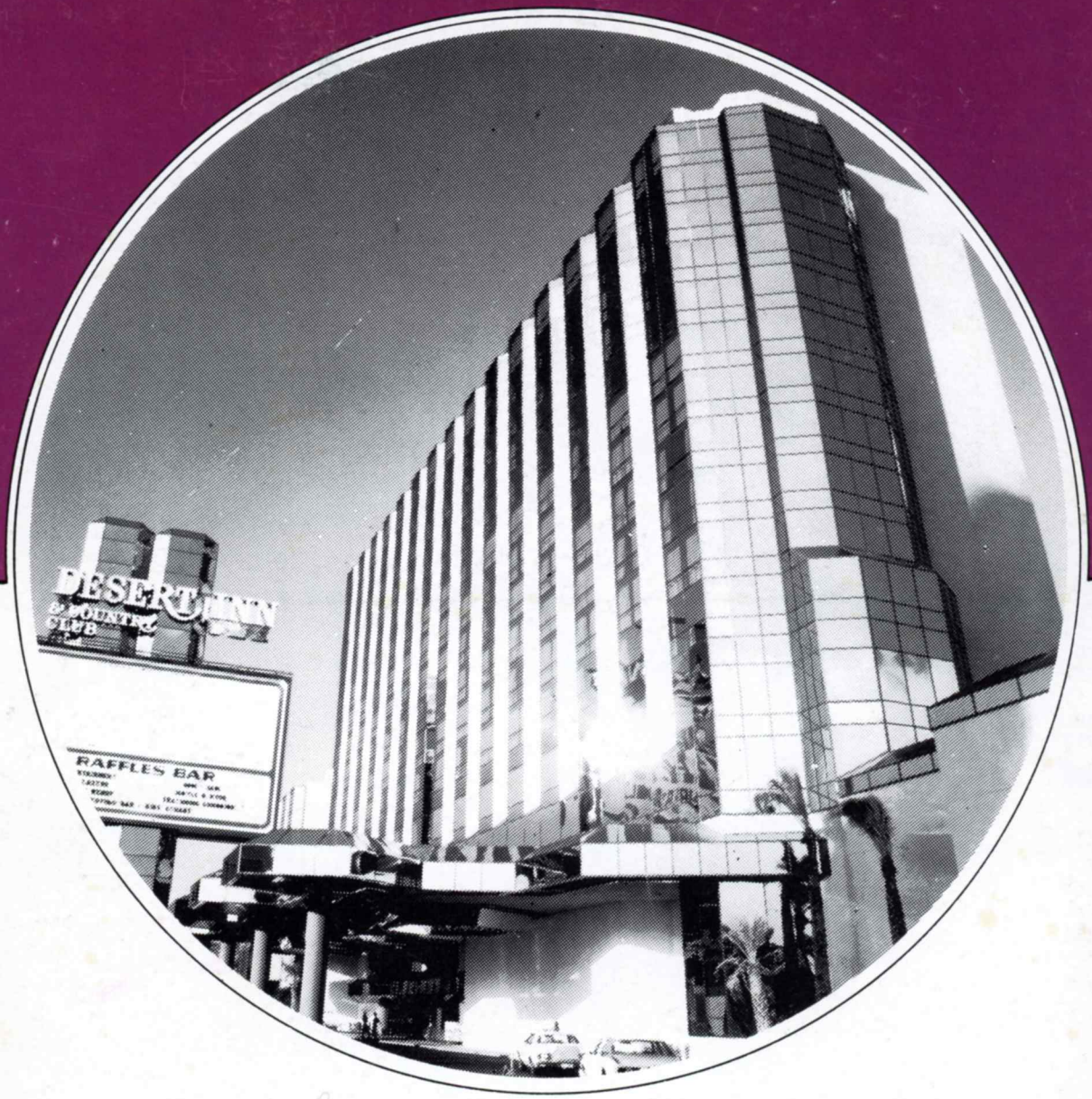
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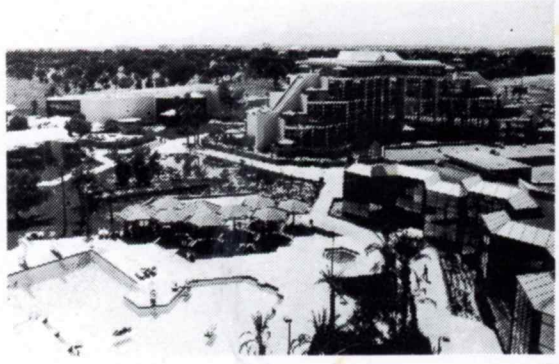
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