

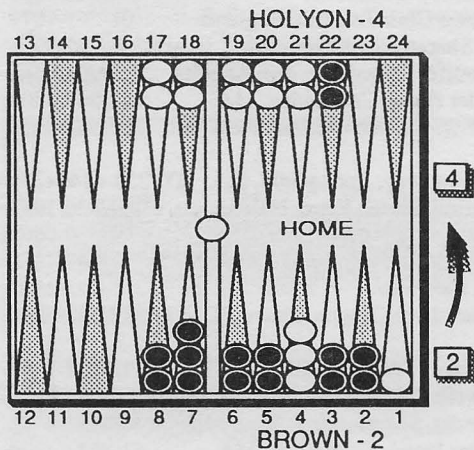
*indiana classic*

## QUESTIONABLE REDOUBLE WINS FOR BROWN IN INDY

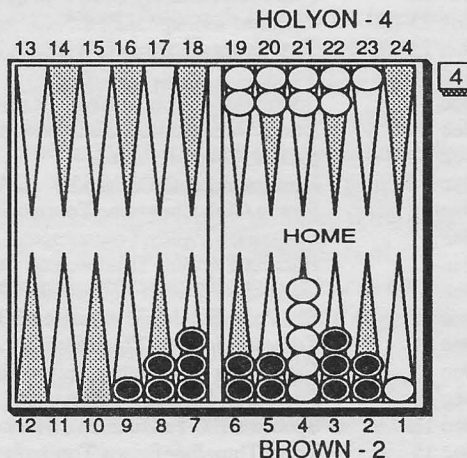
by Duane Jensen

Often a match is effectively determined by a single position or a single game. This was the case in the Indiana Classic championship finals between Steve Brown of Minneapolis and Milwaukee's Bob Holyon. The tournament ran October 7-9 at the beautiful Viscount Hotel in Indianapolis under the Hoosier Backgammon Club's direction.

In the 13 point final, Steve Brown (Black) trailed Bob Holyon (White) 4 to 2. Steve recubed to 4:



Bob took the redouble and Steve rolled 3-1, playing 7/3. Bob rolled 4-2 and entered with the 4, but was forced to break his prime. Steve hit the blot and eventually escaped both checkers. A couple of rolls later with Steve on shake, the following position developed:



Steve had a few bad shakes (like 6-3 and 5-5) which would leave a shot. Instead he rolled 6-6, pounding in Bob's last coffin nails. Three games later, Steve Brown had his second regional tournament victory of the year.

In the post-game analysis, Steve asked other experts if they concurred with his redouble. Most of those responding (including Holyon) thought it was a mistake. San Diego's Neil Kazaross said, "I wouldn't have recubed, but I don't think

it was that terrible."

Two fellow Minnesota experts, Bob Schachter and Fred Kalantari, also agreed that Steve's redouble was wrong. Fred went a step further, branding it "Awful." Steve felt that if he rolled a six and escaped a checker, or if Holyon entered and broke his prime, he would lose his market. He also said he figured to get a lot of play out of the game because Bob would be reluctant to recube to 8, virtually putting the match on the line. But Steve rated his gammon chances higher than most of the other experts who thought the prime vs. prime position too volatile to release possession of the cube. Δ

### 1988 INDIANA CLASSIC

- OPEN (44):** 1st Steve Brown (MN); 2nd Bob Holyon (WI); 1st Cons. Kathy Bauder (IL); 2nd Cons. John Carrico (MI); 3/4 Cons. Neil Kazaross (CA) and Linc Bedell (NH).  
**INTERMEDIATE (41):** 1st Dennis Hajewski (WI); 2nd Jim Airgood (MI); 1st Cons. Carol Falk (MI); 2nd Cons. Greg Tomlin (IL); 3/4 Cons. Peter Kalba (IL) and Woody Woodworth (IN).  
**NOVICE (21):** 1st Connie Price (OH); 2nd Louis Steiner (PA); 1st Cons. Brian Nelson (IN); 2nd Cons. Jay Ward (IL).  
**INDY \$500 (14):** 1st Frank Talbot (MI); 2nd Jack Kissane (NY).  
**DOUBLES (32):** 1st Dave Cramer & Jill Ferdinand; 2nd Bill Davis & Bob Green.  
**MICROBLITZ:** Open Winner: Jim Curtis (IN); Limited Winner: Cinda King (IL).

*caribbean backgammon championship*

## EXPERIENCE OVER YOUTH AT ST. MAARTEN

George Brandt of Hackensack, MN, a man with more than 30 years of backgammon experience, defeated a world-class field to win the Northern Nevada Backgammon Association's premiere Caribbean Backgammon Championship. The combination vacation/tournament was held Sept. 27 to Oct. 2 at the Treasure Island Resort & Casino In St. Maarten.

See "St. Maarten..." , page 4

## LICENSED TO THRILL

"Looking for some excitement?" asks Jim Wallace of Calgary. "Then take this for a spin." Jim adds that his car is "definitely not an automatic."



# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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## LETTERS

c/o Chicago POINT  
2726 W. Lunt Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60645

## GIVE NEW LOUISVILLE DIRECTORS A CHANCE

There is considerable effort under way around the Midwest to put pressure on the Louisville Backgammon Club to relinquish their long-standing Labor Day Weekend date. The concerns over past Louisville tournaments are many. They include (but are not limited to): declining attendance, inconvenient geographical location, lack of proper tourney organization and player equities not on par with other regional tournaments. Granted, these problems and others have existed in Louisville for a number of years and are reflected by the drop in attendance. However, a new direction is being taken by the Louisville group to correct these deficiencies. Rather than give new LBC directors Scott Arche and Larry Deckel a chance to implement their proposed positive changes, the discussions to hold an alternate tournament at another Midwestern location continue.

Surely, all backgammon directors have experienced some uneasy periods of concern and have appreciated the support given them by other backgammon groups and players around the country when they were just getting started or going through

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

coming attractions



by Carol Joy Cole  
313/232-9731

Nov 4-6	Bad Zwischenahn, Spiel-Casino, West Germany	040/270-1166
Nov 4-6	Crystal Cup Venezia, Casino Municipale, Italy	061-50-5816
Nov 4-6	Swedish Open, Stockholm, Sweden	0046-8-524099
Nov 5	Sangamon Valley Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	800/223-6146 x286
Nov 5-6	Jackpots O'Gold Tournaments, Loews Summit, New York, NY	305/527-4033
Nov 11	Cavendish North Mixed Doubles, Southfield, MI	313/642-9616
Nov 11-13	NY/NJ Co-op Fall Tourney, Rocking Horse Ranch, Highland, NY	516/334-4565
Nov 11-13	North Rhein-Westfalen Open, Novotel, Breitscheid, W. Germany	02151-503591
Nov 13	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario, Canada	416/267-2815
Nov 17	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Nov 17-20	European Championship, Bad Salzschlirf, West Germany	0 8341/12825
Nov 18-20	L.A. Invitational—CANCELLED	
Nov 20	Bi-monthly Sunday, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/490-6538
Nov 20	10th Flint Birthday Club Championship, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Nov 25-27	Children's Hospital Benefit, Sheraton Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Nov 25-27	IBA Tournament, Ocean Resort Hotel, Deerfield Beach, FL	305/527-4033
Dec 1-4	International Tournament, Casino Monte Picayo, Valencia, Spain	441-20-24
Dec 1-4	Davos International, Switzerland	08341-12825
Dec 2-4	Finnish Open, Helsinki	25-00251
Dec 2-5	Backgammon On Board III—CANCELLED	
Dec 3	Bayou Club Christmas Tournament, Houstonian, Houston, TX	713/681-9671
Dec 3	Sangamon Valley Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	800/223-6146x286
Dec 4	Hoosier Doubles Tournament, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Dec 7-10	Garrucha-Almeria Tournament, BG, Chess & Bridge Club, Spain	951-460080
Dec 11	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Dec 11	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario, Canada	416/267-2815
Dec 11	Celebrities Bi-monthly Tournament, Houston, TX	713/495-2240
Dec 11	Pittsburgh Monthly Tournament, Parkway Center, PA	412/241-1301
Dec 11	Special £100 Tournament, Stocks Town Club, London, England	01-261-1077
Dec 15	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Dec 16-18	Gammon Associates Invitational, Stouffer Concourse, Los Angeles	818/901-0464
Dec 18	NEBC Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Dec 30-Jan 2	Last Tourney of '88/First Tourney of '89, Loews Summit, New York	305/527-4033
Jan 7	Sangamon Valley Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	800/223-6146x286
Jan 11-15	Nevada State Championships, Peppermill Hotel, Reno, NV	702/826-1984
Jan 14	College Park Winter Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603
Jan 15	NEBC Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Jan 26-30	Paradise Island Pro-Am Invitational, Bahamas	301/942-4365
Jan 28	Hawthorne Backgammon Classic; Hawthorne Races; Cicero, IL	312/338-6380
Feb 3-5	11th Annual Charity Tournament, Airport Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	412/241-1301
Feb 12	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Feb 12	Fleet Underwood Memorial Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Feb 19	NEBC Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Feb 20-23	Cannes International Tournament, Palais des Festivals, France	061-50-5816

rough times. I strongly feel that the support of all backgammon players and club directors is warranted here before we bury the LBC Labor Day Weekend as a "once upon a time" event. The Louisville club deserves a chance to show that it can deliver what backgammon participants have come to expect from a well-run regional event.—David B. Cardwell, Atlanta Backgammon League

Looks like the involved Midwest promoters also see it your way, Dave. In late October, discussions for an alternate tournament site ended. Louisville will again host the Labor Day event in 1989.—Ed.

## STANDARDIZED RULES IN 1989?

Here's an update on my effort to standardize the rules of backgammon. My career requires that I study during September, October and November, so the rules have been lying dormant for about three months. I should be able to continue working on them in December. Look for a first draft in early 1989, but no promise.—Rick Barabino, Boston, MA

We sure hope so, Rick. Backgammon really needs a standardized set of rules.—Ed.

See "Letters..." , page 7



## BAR POINT CLUB ENDS THURSDAY PLAY

The Chicago Bar Point Club suspended their Thursday meeting date at Carmichael's on October 27. Director Peter Kalba cited poor attendance as the primary reason. "We were averaging only 10 players per week for the past two months. Perhaps the far out location was a factor."

For current Bar Point Club tournament information, check the schedule on page 5, or call (312) 338-6380. Δ

## TWO NATIONAL EVENTS CANCEL OUT

Low pre-registration caused cancellation of two national backgammon events last month. The **Autumn Harvest** tournament in Lake Tahoe (Oct. 26-30) proved that added prize money does not necessarily guarantee entrants. The Hyatt Lake Tahoe event promised \$20,000 added, yet by October 1, only about 30 players had pre-registered. The new promoters showed inexperience from the start—their invitation failed to mention any director or staff names. And their mailing list was certainly incomplete. For example, Flint Backgammon Club director Carol Joy Cole never received an invite.

**Backgammon On Board III** (Dec. 2-5) was dry docked October 8 with only 35 people signed for the cruise. In the two previous years, the vacation/tournament had drawn 100 participants with favorable reactions. Because this year's cruise price was the lowest ever, the drop in attendance was a mystery to the Chicago Bar Point Club. Perhaps the return to Nassau for a third straight year, or the later scheduling of the event (between Thanksgiving and Christmas) had a negative effect. Δ



## 1988 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU OCT. 31

TAK MORIOKA	25.84	Don Muellner	3.72	Larry Strommen	0.88
YAMIN YAMIN	22.28	Bob Zavoral	3.64	Jill Ferdinand	0.88
RICH SWEETMAN	21.56	Dean Muench	3.60	Carol Mennis	0.80
KATHY BAUDER	20.28	Peggy Fleming	3.44	Don Desmond	0.80
JOHN DEMIAN	18.44	Dave Cramer	3.32	Harry Hayward	0.72
DAVID LIBCHABER	15.12	Ron Garber	3.24	Marty Tatosian	0.72
DEEB SHALATI	13.72	Neil Banoff	2.96	Don Marek	0.64
STU KATZ	12.96	Gary Keyes	2.88	Miles Cohen	0.64
PETER KALBA	12.32	Don Pearson	2.84	Tom Walthes	0.64
IRA HOFFBERG	12.20	Barry Epstein	2.68	Mark King	0.64
ARNOLD ZOUSMER	10.80	Andy Suszczyk	2.16	Marcy Sloan	0.60
SARG SERGES	10.52	Jeff Kane	2.12	Arlene Levy	0.56
JOANN FEINSTEIN	10.08	George Panagakis	2.08	Mark Hicks	0.52
BILL DAVIS	9.84	Jeff Vaughn	2.04	Kevin Bryant	0.48
DON JAYHAN	8.52	Bill Hoeflich	2.00	Mark Anshus	0.48
RICH SIEBOLD	8.48	Jeff Henry	1.92	Paul Reiner	0.40
ANDY ARGY	8.40	Jim Rudig	1.92	Howard Markowitz	0.32
GREG SHORE	7.92	Kevin Muench	1.88	Duane Jensen	0.32
KEN BOND	7.24	Ralph Levy	1.84	Ida Zeman	0.24
PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI	6.48	Betsy Miller	1.80	Les Berg	0.24
Norma Shyer	6.44	Bob Holyon	1.76	Rudy Emmelot	0.24
Connie Sychowski	6.24	Gene Chait	1.68	Trudie Stern	0.24
Bobbie Shifrin	6.20	Jim Sargent	1.28	Chuck Eyers	0.20
Bill Keefe	5.44	Roland Dieter	1.28	Sharon Hegg	0.20
Ed Buerger	5.20	Ron Stur	1.20	Dave Lehrer	0.16
John Spatafora	4.68	Dean Morehouse	1.16	Chris Hegg	0.12
Joe Koucharian	4.64	Al Meinecke	1.16	Dave Shifman	0.12
Dan Judd	4.60	Elaine Kehm	0.96	David Hegg	0.12
Alyce Wallen	4.16	Larry Guzan	0.96	Ray Lanzillo	0.12
Ed Bauder	4.08	Dave Rockwell	0.88	Jay Bleiman	0.08
Chris Kenik	3.84	Doug Mayfield	0.88	Richard Stawowy	0.08

**GREG SHORE** returned to Chicago for one month (before returning to Italy) and showed Bar Point Club players he still knows his stuff. Greg compiled a 14-3 record (including two tourney wins) en route to winning October Player of the Month honors with 5.12 points. Deeb Shalati (3.40) and John Spatafora (3.16) placed 2nd and 3rd.

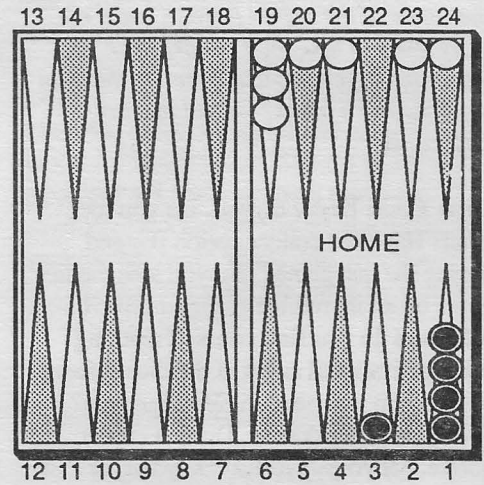
the home board

## WHEN BETTER IS WORSE

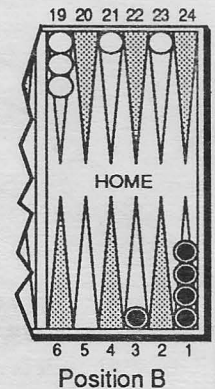
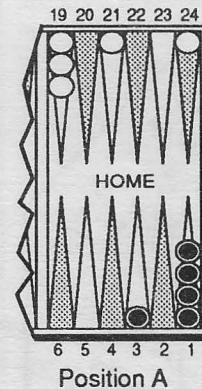


by Dean Muench

**Y**ou're Black with the score tied 22-22 in the 23 point finals of a major tournament. The entire match has come down to a bear-off. **WHITE ROLLS 5-1:**



You immediately notice that White has made an illegal move, bearing off a checker from the 5-point and the 2-point (Position A) instead of playing 5/Off, 1/Off (Position B). **SHOULD YOU REQUIRE WHITE TO PLAY CORRECTLY?**



While working with my bear-off program in Indianapolis, Larry Strommen discovered this paradoxical situation. Black should let the misplay stand! Black on shake in Position A will win exactly 91.74811385459532% of the time. In Position B, he wins 91.31944444444443%.

Black gains 0.43 winning percentage with Position A even though White is one pip better off in the racing count. I have a suspicion that if White next rolls 2-2 (which would let her set up for double 4's on her last shake in Position B), the reason for the paradox is explained. Δ

## ASK DANNY



by Danny Kleinman

## WHEN IS IT "BREAK TIME"?

**D**ear Danny: In most major tournaments, a player is entitled to one or two 5-minute breaks per match. It seems that some of the expert players know exactly when to take their breaks for a maximum psychological effect. Is there an art to taking a break?—Emil Mortuk, Oxford, MI

**Dear Emil:** Know thyself. Do you feel tired? Has your concentration flagged during the last game? Did you lose the last game on an incredible string of unfavorable rolls, and do you find yourself reacting with an irrational anger at the dice instead of the calm you need to play your best? Then take a break now. Drink a cup of coffee, eat your favorite candy bar, or just sit in the most comfortable chair you can find and relax. If you're religious and you believe it will help you, you may pray, meditate or recite your mantra. Walk around the block or flirt with a lady you find attractive. None of this has anything to

do with backgammon, of course. For what you seek is a 5-minute vacation from backgammon.

That, as far as I can tell, is the only "art" to taking breaks during matches, and the only "psychological effect" is on yourself. As a student of backgammon, I have nothing more to teach.

Unfortunately, there are some who teach the use of breaks for other purposes. Gaby Horowitz incorporated taking breaks in his strategy for frustrating opponents. During a weekly tournament which I directed some ten years ago at the Cavendish West in Los Angeles, Horowitz took his "5-minute break" and didn't return for 45 minutes. Because his opponent neglected to draw my attention to it at the time, I couldn't assess penalty points. But I did bar Gaby from future club tournaments, because of this and other flagrant rule violations. Within three months, however, Hugh Sconyers, then co-owner of the club, demanded Gaby's readmittance. My refusal to comply cost me my job.

Six years later, participants at Pat Gibson's tournaments in the San Fernando Valley reported another "creative" use of breaks by one of Gaby's protégés, Steve Goldman. Though not as good a backgammon player as Horowitz himself or Horowitz's other star "pupil" Ron Chronister, Goldman played well enough to have a reasonable shot at winning any given match with honest dice. According to my informants, Goldman would play legitimately until he fell substantially behind in a match. Then, on the verge of defeat, he would take his 5-minute break and go out

to his car. My informants didn't know what he did in his car—whether he fetched magnetic dice to be switched with fair dice previously in use and then controlled by Goldman's magnet, or retrieved the magnet to control magnetic dice already in play. At any rate, from that point in the match, Goldman's victim never won a game.

Do not condone any such illegitimate use of breaks by your opponent. Complain promptly to the tournament director. Then—because a tournament director may want to keep his job—complain vigorously to the tournament promoter.

This is not to say that you should demand strict and absolute compliance with the letter of the rules. If your opponent is temporarily unable to continue play during your match, and must (for example) run to the toilet, sportsmanship dictates that you graciously permit him to exceed his allotment of breaks.

Ending on a high note, let Frank Layden, coach of the NBA's Utah Jazz, be your mentor. Once, during the closing minutes of a basketball game, an opposing player fell injured. The opposing team had already used its allotted injury time-out. Coach Layden used his *own* team's. Though I root for the Los Angeles Lakers, I will always be a Frank Layden fan.—  
*Yours, Danny*

*Questions for Danny Kleinman should be addressed to: Ask Danny, c/o Chicago POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645. Danny will answer the most interesting questions bimonthly. Δ*

## ST. MAARTEN...

(Continued from page 1)

Brandt defeated Mike Senkiewicz and then crushed Dean Muench and Ed O'Laughlin to claim the \$10,000 prize money and a share of the \$13,200 Calcutta auction. His first tournament experience came over 20 years ago at a Prince Alexis Obolensky event in New York.

Chicago area player Dean Muench won the other major event, the \$7,500 Treasure Hunt with successive victories over master players Mike Svobodny and Bill Robertie.

Nearly 100 players expressed overall satisfaction with St. Maarten. The weather was hot and sunny. Unfortunately for the NNBA, hurricane Helene had been in the

area the week before the event which undoubtedly curtailed attendance. The complete results: Δ

## 1988 CARIBBEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

**CHAMPIONSHIP** (46): 1st George Brandt (MN); 2nd Ed O'Laughlin (VA); 3/4 Dean Muench (IL) and Mike Corbett (FL). 1st Cons. Mike Senkiewicz; 2nd Cons. Dennis Culpepper (VA).

**INTERMEDIATE** (37): 1st Ron Bruns; 2nd Herb Gurland; 1st Cons. Roger Williamson; 2nd Cons. Myrtle Brickman.

**BEGINNER** (8): 1st Peggy Culpepper; 2nd Rita Manlove.

**TREASURE HUNT** (16): 1st Dean Muench (IL); 2nd Bil Robertie (MA).

**DOUBLES** (32): 1st Joel Schiff & J.J.; 2nd Sid Schneider & Harriet Klein.

**CLOVERLEAF MILK**

**THIS GAMMON WAS LOST**  
SEPTEMBER 5, 1988

13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

HOME

12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

White rolled three sets of "boxes" to save the apparently certain gammon.

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D. JENSEN DAIRIES





## ILLINOIS ACTION



Tuesday, 7:15 PM at Pat's Pub, 4343 N. Harlem Ave., Norridge (457-1166).

Bill Davis  
312/338-6380  
Peter Kalba  
312/276-4144

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:30 at Bagwells, 4636 N. Cumberland, Chgo (625-1717).

**PUB CLUB:** Tournaments Monday, 7:30 PM at Fiddler's, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Ed Bauder (312/985-1568).

**SANGAMMON VALLEY BG ASS'N:** Tournaments Tuesday, 6:15 PM at On Broadway, 210 S. Broadway, Springfield. Greg Tomlin (800/223-6146 x286).

**WINNETKA BG CLUB:** Tournaments Weds., 7:00 PM at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (312/446-0537).

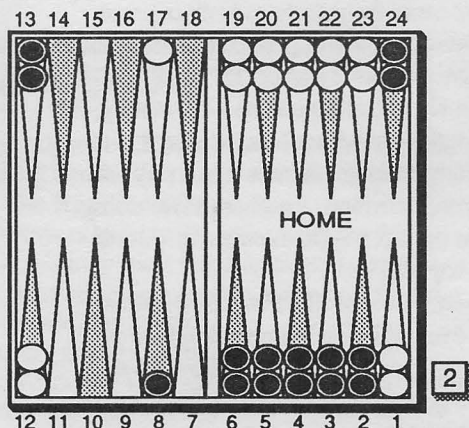
**CENT. ILL. BG CLUB:** Tour. Thurs., 6:30 PM at Peoria Pizza Wks, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Sue Will (309/692-6909).

**NORTH CLUB:** Daily side play at 4747 N. Peterson (Room 402), Chicago. Howard Markowitz (312/286-8417).

last month's position

## PROBLEM #140 SOLVED

Money Game. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-4.**



Here's an unusual "mirror image" position that challenges you to test your skill in solving prime-vs.-prime problems. Black is presented with four plausible choices:

- (a) 24/14
- (b) 24/18, 8/4
- (c) 13/3
- (d) 13/7, 13/9

Prime-vs.-prime positions are won or lost based on *timing*—the ability to maintain your prime longer than your opponent by using escape and entrapment techniques. This is why play (a) looks right. Whether he's hit or not, running 24/14 boosts Black's timing advantages. If White hits one of the three Black blots (except with 6-1 or 6-2), Black's tempo will have slowed and White will need a quick 6 to avoid dismantling her home board. If White misses Black's blots without rolling a 6, Black will still have the upper hand in timing. And when White escapes with 6-3 or 6-4, Black has two guards positioned to recapture the escapee.

Play (b) is interesting because it duplicates White's running and attacking 6 and brings a builder into Black's home board. However, a White hit lets her start a 6-prime and creates some potentially dangerous blot-leaving entries for Black (1-3, 1-4, 1-5).

Plays (c) and (d) are incorrect because they ignore the insurance value of springing a checker over White's 5-prime. An extra reinforcement in the outfield protects Black from potential board-crashing doubles like 4-4 and 5-5.

Remember also that Black owns the doubling cube. This is a huge advantage in prime-vs.-prime struggles and another reason for Black to run. Should White fail to roll at least one 6 within a few turns (even after she has hit Black), the threat of breaking her home board will give Black the opportunity to end the game by way of a recube. Δ

## AMALGAMATION

A backgammon tournament at the Hawthorne Race Course? The Chicago Bar Point Club is coordinating this fun event with former backgammon expert **Kathy Posner** of the **Martin Janis** public relations firm. More details on the January 28 "Hawthorne Backgammon Classic" next month.... Boston's **Sam Janjigian** informs us that **Marilyn McMaster** has named one of her race horses "Janjigian Sam." Perhaps a resemblance from the back?.... Chicago bids farewell to **Rich Sweetman** who has landed an actuarial job in New Hampshire. East Coast clubs beware. Rich is tough!.... Visiting the Bar Point Club October 6: *Chicago POINT* columnist **Duane Jensen** en route to the Indy Classic.... **Arnold Zousmer** said it's OK to let people know that his cousin is **Harry Reams**, "...but don't tell them how he became famous." If you know, shame on you.... **Gene Chait's** recent Western excursion more than paid for itself when he won the \$10,000 jackpot on Reno poker machine.... The traditional Bar Point Club Presidential straw vote was held October 25 at Pat's Pub in Norridge, IL with the following results: **Michael Dukakis-16, George Bush-10, Abstention-1.** Now it's *your* turn. VOTE NOVEMBER 8. Δ

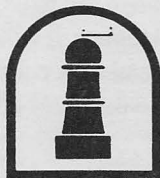


THE SIXTH ANNUAL

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# THINGS HAPPEN



by Duane Jensen

The four words used most often in the English language are “the,” “of,” “and,” and “a.” Backgammon players are a little off center of mainstream America. The four words used most often by backgammon players are “and,” “then,” “he,” “rolled.”

It seems that *things*, little mishaps, etc. happen more frequently to backgammon players than to others. Here are a few examples involving travel (I would never want to embarrass anyone, so I won't use full names). A Minneapolis player (let's call him Steve B.) boasts that he “cashed” in a tournament. He doesn't mean he won money. He means he didn't lose another airplane ticket—a blunder in which he specializes. Another player (call him Joe S.) has trouble catching a plane when he's in a city with more than one airport. He's on time, but at the wrong terminal. Another player doing poorly in a Tahoe tournament, takes his rented car out for a sight-seeing trip. A mile from the hotel, the car bursts into flames. *Things* happen.

Shortly after learning how to play backgammon, I flew to San Francisco with my girl friend for a week of intense vacationing. We eventually ended up at the Holiday Inn in Santa Cruz for two days of recovery from our vacation. At dawn, I put on my floppy sandals and walked to a nearby park where people were doing Tai Chi, the meditation exercise with the slow, sloth-like movements.

After an hour, I returned to my hotel and entered the elevator. Just as the doors were closing, a tall, hunched man slid between them. He barely had space to stand in the crowded elevator so I moved to give him room. As I stepped back, the heel of my right sandal caught the toenail of my left big toe, tearing the nail completely off. I gasped, trying not to scream in front of the stranger. The man peered down at my bloody toe and said in a deep voice, “My, I'll bet that smarts.” The voice sounded familiar. I looked up and there was the face of Vincent Price, smiling as if he was pleased to have had a role in mangling my toenail. The elevator doors opened and we went our separate ways.

*Things* just seem to happen to backgammon players. If you lose a tough match to a 17 to 1 shot and moan “That always happens to me,” you're probably right. Δ

math concepts

# RACES—WHAT IS AN “AVERAGE” ROLL?

by Larry Strommen

In racing positions, we need to know several things. One item is how to compare a position to our opponent's position. If the approach is to count average rolls, we need to be careful how many pips to allow for each roll. Ignoring the efficiency of bearing off and only looking at short versus long races, either to win or save a gammon, we can benefit by having some knowledge of the distribution of pip count per roll.

Most players always assume 8 pips per roll in both short and long races because the average roll for all 36 combinations is 8.17. By studying the statistics of the rolls, it is quickly learned that the standard deviation of the 36 rolls is 4.36—a highly skewed distribution. What makes the skewing so bad is 8.33% of the rolls. 4-4, 5-5, and 6-6 are the culprits. If we omit these rolls from the calculation, the mean becomes 7.09 and the standard deviation becomes 2.34. This is basically a normal distribution.

Thus 92% of the rolls will give an average of 7.09. So in short races, seriously consider an average roll to be 7. If you get one of the big doublets, it will swamp your edge, but you should not count on them when evaluating a cube turn in a short race. Δ



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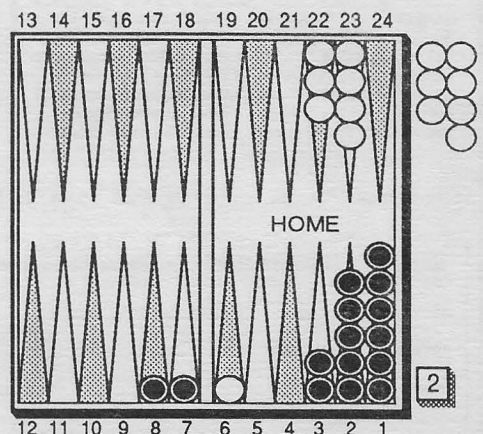
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## PROBLEM #141

Money Game. BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.





## LETTERS...

(Continued from page 2)

### UNHASTY PRAISE

Duane Jensen's "Hasty Plays" column continues to be excellent.—*Danny Kleinman, Los Angeles, CA*

### THE OCTOBER EDITORIAL: REACTION AND A CALL FOR ACTION

With regard to last month's editorial on my Intermediate tournament record: I do have a number of main flight and consolation wins, but some of them have been in small fields. The 1986 Indiana Classic had 36 players; the 1988 Louisville Labor Day Tourney had only 26.

The day backgammon directors make a separate division for the true professional players (those who make a living from the game) is the day I will enter the Open division. I don't like playing against people who write books.—*Ira Hoffberg, Lincolnwood, IL*

Your article concerning individuals playing below their level at major tournaments was right on the money. I agree 100% with

every word. Now it's time to write some objective standards for all clubs to follow. There are lots of things to factor in, so it won't be an easy job. Here are a few general thoughts for consideration.

A rating system, like Kent Goulding's, which covers all tournaments at all levels would be wonderful; but even with a computer, it would be a lot of work. Perhaps a portion of every regional tournament entry fee could be set aside for someone to keep these records. Without extensive records, whatever standards are adopted won't be as good as they might be, but the effort should be made. I think that the number of tournaments entered should play a part. Although experience improves ability, if someone rarely cashes, he's probably not playing at too low a level. It might even be reasonable to let a player like Ira Hoffberg back into the Intermediate division if he plays in a lot of Open tournaments and does nothing. If the only records you have are the winners of past events, recent results should count more than those several years old. Of course the level of finish is important, too.

What about it, directors? It's time for a national backgammon network.—*Pete Ryder, Xenia, OH*

### ROLLING RIGHT ALONG

Regarding Larry Strommen's proposed roll-out experiment to test the validity of precision vs. imprecision dice: I completed 2,400 rolls using the circular face "precision" dice and 2,400 rolls using the imperfectly rounded "imprecision" dice. The Strommen article (August 1988) claimed that the true precision dice are properly machined on all sides. The imprecision dice show more surface area on the 2's, 3's, 4's and 5's side. Therefore, a bias should exist against the 1's and 6's when the imprecision dice are rolled.

My findings showed a bias against the 1's and 6's with both dice types. I rolled 737 1's and/or 6's with the precision dice and 738 1's and/or 6's with the imprecisions. For 2400 rolls, 800 is the break-even number. My low figures are probably a result of the great drought: a shortage of aces and sixes in Minnesota.—*Duane Jensen, Minneapolis, MN*

### WHERE'S THE BACKGAMMON?

Is there a national listing of backgammon clubs? I am planning to travel next year and would be interested in nearby backgammon activities.—*Mark Kaye, Springfield, IL*

*Great idea! See below.—Ed. Δ*

Help us create a listing of...

# Backgammon Clubs In North America

You're in Cincinnati on business, visiting relatives in Miami Beach, or on vacation in Quebec. Where's the backgammon action? Unfortunately, the *POINT* can't answer that question. A complete listing of backgammon clubs in North America doesn't exist. Let's change that.

### Will You Help?

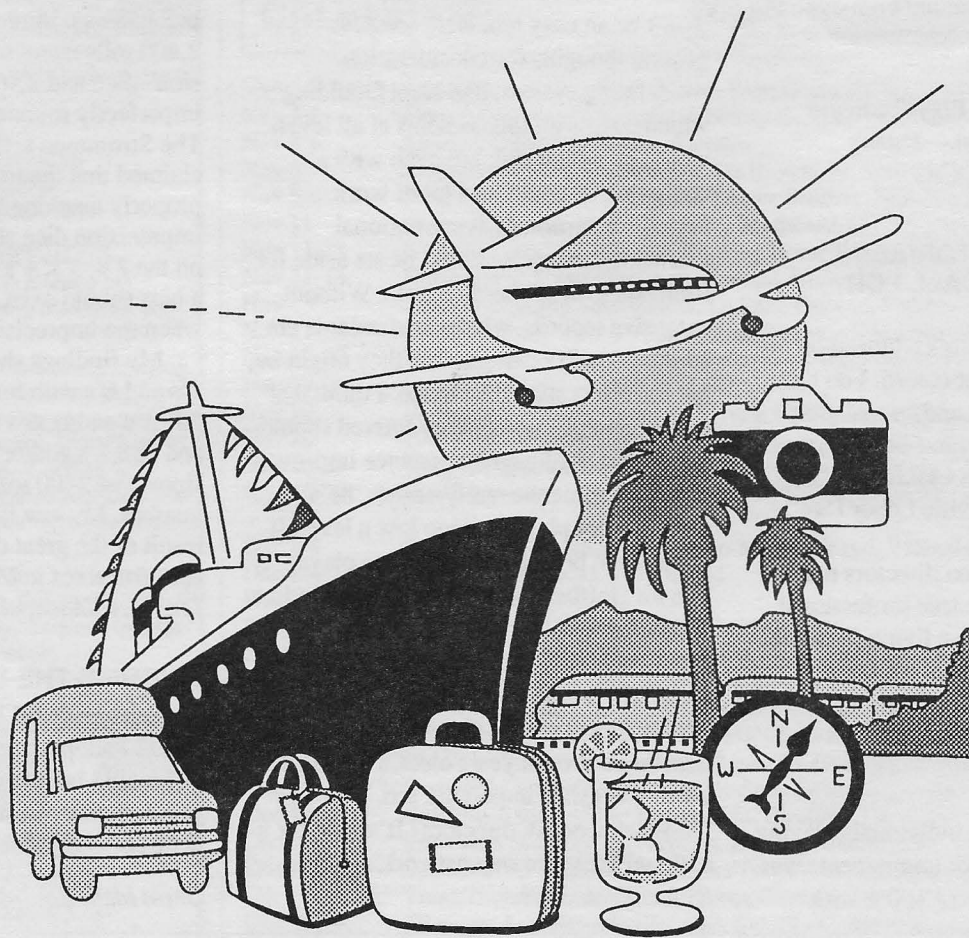
The *Chicago POINT* needs your assistance in compiling a list of active backgammon clubs in the United States and Canada. Will you supply the backgammon information for your state or province? Fill out the enclosed form (or facsimile) and mail it to:

**Backgammon Listings  
c/o Chicago POINT  
2726 W. Lunt Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60645**

Information received by December 15 will be compiled into a list and published in the January *POINT*. Incidentally, the *POINT* has subscribers in the states and provinces listed at right. If you know of active clubs in other areas, please advise. Δ

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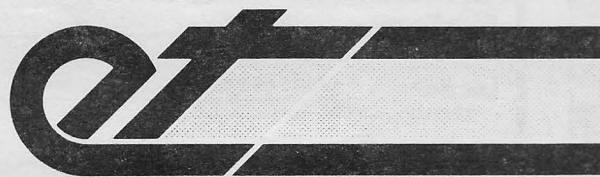
Club Name _____	Information submitted by: (Include name, addr., phone #) _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ <i>Attach add'l sheet if necessary.</i>
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