

7th annual bpc fall trophy tourney

## HONEYMOON DOWN PAYMENT

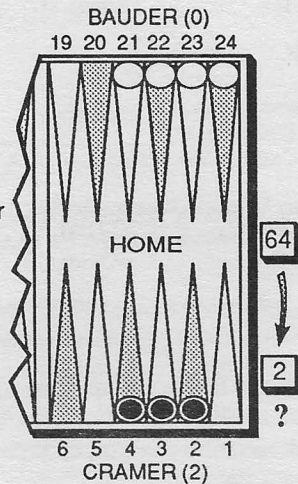
Dave Cramer is the Chicago Bar Point Club's Fall Champion

“F”or our upcoming honeymoon, Susan (Stodolsky) and I intend to take a whale-watching cruise down the Baja coast. These winnings will come in handy.” So said a happy Dave Cramer (Chicago) after collecting the top prize in the 1989 Fall Trophy Tourney. A record 59 players from four states jammed Pat’s Pub in Norridge, Illinois to partake in the Chicago Bar Point Club’s 7th annual Autumn affair November 7.

Cramer, last year’s Trophy runner-up, was unstoppable in his 7–0 finals white-washing of 1983 Fall Trophy champ Ed Bauder (Woodridge, IL). The following position demonstrates:

1989 Fall Trophy Tourney final match to 7 points. Dave Cramer (Black) leads Ed Bauder (White) 2 to 0.

WHITE DOUBLES. SHOULD BLACK TAKE?



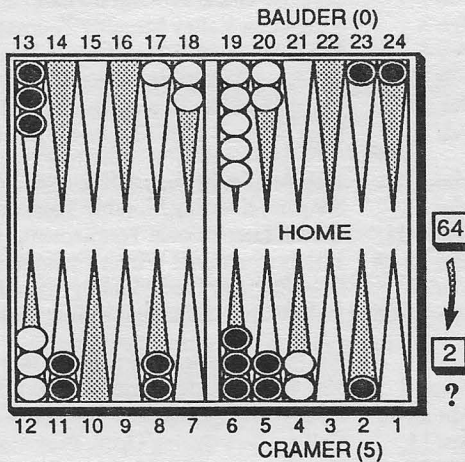
Using information from Dean Muench’s *Bearoff 1* computer program in conjunction with match equity chart analysis shows the correct action to be a double and a drop. But Cramer forced the Chicago area Pub Club director to play it to conclusion by taking. Bauder rolled 3-2, Cramer rolled 6-3 and Ed rolled snake-eyes to crap out.

After the match, Dave admitted he knew that accepting the cube was mathematically wrong, but felt at the time, psychological advantages gained by winning

(and grabbing a big 4–0 lead) were worth the small percentage of equity lost by taking. Perhaps Dave was right. Two moves into the next game, a dejected Ed lamented to his aggressive opponent, “I almost reached into my pocket to offer you 5 bucks to take that cube. Boy would I have felt stupid!”

Bauder was diced out of the next game in ten shakes. Trailing 5–0, Ed proclaimed, “Ever hear of the pre-Crawford push? It’s going to happen.” And to a degree, it did:

7 point finals. Dave Cramer (Black) leads Ed Bauder (White) 5 to 0. **WHITE DOUBLES. SHOULD BLACK TAKE?**



## 1989 BPC FALL TROPHY TOURNEY CHAMPS



Chicago’s Dave Cramer (left) shares the good feelings of his Open Championship victory with number one son Dan Cramer.

## Last Chance...

To list your area club in the *Chicago Point’s* 1990 register of “Backgammon Clubs in North America.”

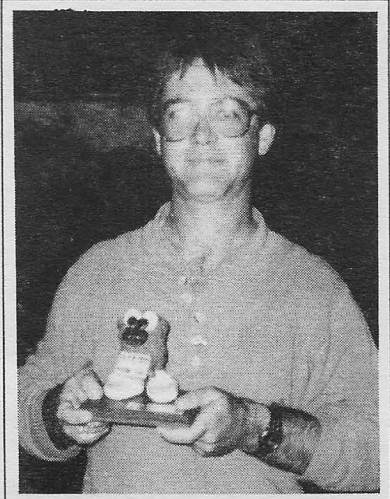
Dec. 16 deadline—See page 8

While Cramer pondered whether or not to try to win the match via this game, Bauder quipped, “He won’t take this.” When Dave eventually accepted, Ed howled, “Oh, no—he wants to skunk me!”

Following some fancy play by Dave, Ed did end up “skunked.” But to Dave’s nose, it was the sweet smell of success. The complete results: Δ

### 1989 CBPC FALL TROPHY TOURNEY

CHAMPIONSHIP (27): 1st Dave Cramer (IL); 2nd Ed Bauder (IL); 3/4 Stu Katz (IL) and Chris Kenik (IL); 1st Cons. Rich Siebold (WI); 2nd Cons. Bob Holyon (WI).  
LIMITED (32): 1st Don Marek (IL); 2nd John Demian (IL); 3/4 Frank Callea (IL) and René Wojtysiak (IL); 1/2 Cons. (split) Merrill Schragar (WI) and Phyllis Smolinski (IL).



Limited Champ Don Marek of Berwyn, IL proudly displays the first backgammon trophy he’s ever won.

# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

## EDITOR & PUBLISHER

**Bill Davis**  
2726 West Lunt Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60645  
Telephone: (312) 338-6380

## REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS

Carol Joy Cole (MI)     Dean Muench (IL)  
Duane Jensen (MN)     Larry Strommen (IN)  
Danny Kleinman (CA)     Kit Woolsey (CA)  
Tak Morioka (IL)

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## LETTERS

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

## NNBA ADVERTISING REACTIONS

Sorry to see a "Name withheld upon request" in your November Letters column; I'd have been happy to sign the letter asking for truth-in-advertising tournament equities if the author didn't want his own name to appear. Separating "entry fee" from "registration fee" is just an accounting gimmick. Backgammon players can judge airplane fares and hotel room rates on their own; not everyone wants a lapel pin or a bar and buffet. But backgammon players need a standard means of measuring equity, and this should be set as the total fee paid. Thus a tournament can charge \$200 entry fee and no registration fee and advertise 90% return if \$180 goes into the prize pool. This is the same as a \$180 entry fee and \$20 registration fee with "100% return."

But why not carry things to an extreme, as new-car dealers often do with their "destination charges," "dealer prep," and "documentation fees"? A tournament might put \$180 per player into the prize pool but advertise \$20 entry fee, \$40 registration fee, \$60 administration fee,

coming attractions

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole  
313/232-9731

|            |                                                                    |                |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Dec 1-3    | Regency Benefit Tournament, Regency Whist Club, New York, NY       | 313/232-9731   |
| Dec 2-4    | Finnish Open, Hotel Kalastajatorppa, Helsinki, Finland             | 31-22 46 00    |
| Dec 2      | Sangamon Valley Monthly Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL   | 217/528-0117   |
| Dec 3      | Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL                 | 312/252-7755   |
| Dec 4      | Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club          | 3-689918       |
| Dec 10     | HBC Fall One-Day, Dooley O'Tooles, Indianapolis, IN                | 317/845-8435   |
| Dec 10     | New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA        | 617/861-7340   |
| Dec 21     | Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn Flint, MI            | 313/232-9731   |
| Jan 6-7    | First Tournament of 1990, Loew's Hotel, New York, NY               | 305/527-4033   |
| Jan 6      | Sangamon Valley Monthly Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL   | 217/528-0117   |
| Jan 9      | Chicago Bar Point Club Awards Night, Pat's Pub, Chicago, IL        | 312/338-6380   |
| Jan 10-14  | French Open Backgammon Championship, Hôtel Meurice, Paris, France  | 1 42 60 38 60  |
| Jan 13     | World Cup Qualifier, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA             | 617/227-2205   |
| Jan 13     | College Park Winter Open Tourney, Promenade, Bethesda, MD          | 301/530-0604   |
| Jan 14     | New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA        | 617/861-7340   |
| Jan 17-21  | 7th Nevada State Championship, Peppermill Hotel/Casino, Reno, NV   | 702/851-1452   |
| Jan 18     | Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn Flint, MI            | 313/232-9731   |
| Jan 20     | Sangamon Valley Monthly Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL   | 217/528-0117   |
| Jan 25     | Flint Area Club Awards Party & Tournament, Sheraton Inn Flint, MI  | 313/232-9731   |
| Jan 27     | Hawthorne Backgammon Classic, Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL    | 312/338-6380   |
| Feb 1-4    | Paradise Island Pro-Am Invitational, Bahamas                       | 301/299-8264   |
| Feb 3      | Sangamon Valley Monthly Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL   | 217/528-0117   |
| Feb 4      | Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL                 | 312/252-7755   |
| Feb 11     | 7th Annual Fleet Underwood Memorial & Benefit, Sheraton Flint, MI  | 313/232-9731   |
| Feb 15     | Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn Flint, MI            | 313/232-9731   |
| Feb 18     | New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA        | 617/861-7340   |
| Mar 2-4    | 14th Annual Bluegrass Regional, Seelbach Hotel, Louisville, KY     | 502/429-0153   |
| Mar 3      | Sangamon Valley Monthly Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL   | 217/528-0117   |
| Mar 8-11   | Gstaad International Tournament, Hotel Palace, Gstaad, Switzerland | 061/50 58 16   |
| Mar 15-18  | 16th International Winter Championships, St. Moritz, Switzerland   | 061/50 58 16   |
| Mar 18     | New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA        | 617/861-7340   |
| Mar 23-25  | 1990 Midwest Championships, Holiday Inn, Oakbrook Terrace, IL      | 312/338-6380   |
| Apr 1      | Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL                 | 312/252-7755   |
| Apr 6-8    | 38th Indiana Open, Omni Severin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN            | 317/845-8435   |
| Apr 12-15  | Open Nordic Championships, Hotel Marina, Vedbæk, Denmark           | 45/31 22 46 00 |
| Apr 14     | College Park Spring Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD                  | 301/530-0604   |
| Apr 22     | New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA        | 617/861-7340   |
| May 4-6    | 12th Annual Charity Tournament, Airport Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA   | 412/391-6363   |
| May 25-28  | 10th Annual Chicago Open, Westin Hotel O'Hare, Rosemont, IL        | 708/674-0120   |
| May 25-28  | Boston Symph. Orch. Benefit, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA     | 617/861-7340   |
| June 20-24 | U.S. Open & Masters Invitational, Reno, NV                         | 702/851-1452   |

\$80 overhead surcharge and 900% return of entry fee as the equity, then boast that the return was "really" higher than 900% because the tournament winner was also awarded a "free," silver-plated *George Orwell Cup* trophy not counted in the prize money. Let's hear it for Doublethink and Newspeak! Mark Richardson's, Jim Roderick's and Dave Heffner's reply to "Name withheld upon request" is embarrassing.—*Danny Kleinman, Los Angeles, CA*

The anonymous writer who addressed the N.N.B.A.'s policy of advertising 100% return of the entry fees hit a nerve of mine.

Please let me add my two cents worth (not including registration fees, taxes, title, destination charges, changes in the prime rate, etc., etc.).

First, I want to state that I think Jim Roderick, Mark Richardson and Dave Heffner have done an outstanding job in promoting backgammon over the years and I strongly recommend their tournaments to everyone. I also believe that the N.N.B.A. tournaments provide great value for your backgammon dollar. However, I despise the policy of advertising 100% return of entry fees and then charging a separate registration fee (or reentry fee, or whatever

(Continued on page 2)

## LETTERS...

(Continued from page 2)

other gimmick is used). The N.N.B.A. is not the only organization using one of these misleading promotional techniques. Others have used them, and some continue to use them today. Tournaments have existed (and some still do) with true added money and 100% return of all entry/registration fees. It would be nice if we didn't have to read the invitation's fine print to differentiate between the two.

I spoke at length some time ago to Mark Richardson about this issue and was convinced that he meant no intentional deception. Mark saw nothing wrong with the wording and saw no reason to change it. It would appear, though, from the N.N.B.A.'s latest tournament flyer, that they are trying to make it clear just what is returned and

what is not. That's a step in the right direction. Perhaps next time, they'll take another step.—Kent Goulding, Potomac, MD

### GETTING THEIR HOUSE IN ORDER

Backgammon Zentrale went through a restructuring this year. In February, we moved to our present location: Backgammon Zentrale, Geibelstrasse 18, D-2000 Hamburg 60, West Germany. Please direct all mail to this new address.

On behalf of our company, I want to apologize to Mr. Jeff Ward of San Diego, California. We are aware of our indebtedness to him and are currently taking steps to rectify the situation.—Werner Waschke, Backgammon Zentrale, Hamburg, West Germany

*Jeff Ward claims that Backgammon Zentrale ordered a quantity of his book The Doubling Cube last year and that they still owe him \$223.53 in shipping charges.—Ed.*

### EVEN MASTERS MAKE MISTAKES

I enjoyed the *POINT's* front page report on the Colossus finals last month. Throughout the event both Ed O'Laughlin and Mike Carson played well and deserved to get there. However, in the diagrammed position, prior to rolling double 6's, Mike had a very strong redouble to 8. I feel that this position is a definite pass for money and a pass at the given match score as well. Match equity considerations do not favor loose 8-cube takes at the start of what was effectively a 10 point match.

In the actual game, Mike didn't redouble and both sides tossed double 6's to produce a pure race. Once again, Mike chose not to redouble a position that to me, looked like a pass. In fact, I had my computer race program play the position out and Mike's side won nearly 86%!

Why mention this? Certainly not to embarrass Mike, but only to point out how the tremendous stress of world class, big money backgammon will often strangle a player's ability to make proper decisions. I wonder if I would have turned the cube to 8, creating a near match decisive roll-off with a \$30,000 cash swing lying in the balance. Remember, backgammon is not a perfect game at any level. Perhaps that's what makes it so much fun.—Neil Kazaross, San Diego, CA

### BACKGAMMON CLOCK UPDATE

I read in your last issue that the Chicago Bar Point Club is now using chess clocks as a "last resort" weapon against slow play. With certain players, that sounds preferable to assigning a monitor. Please send me a copy of the Backgammon Clock Rules.—Ulf Ring, Chairman, Swedish Backgammon Federation

*The Bar Point Club's Backgammon Clock Rules went through a major revision prior to their November 28 club debut. Jeff Kane of Kenosha, Wisconsin suggested that if a player runs out of time, his opponent should have only one point added to his score. We agree. Loss of match was far too great a penalty and could lead to individuals who are way behind trying to win on time via ultra-massive backgames. Also, the clock will be removed from the match when either player reaches the Crawford game, or when a "double match point" situation arises.*

*To receive a copy of the Chicago Bar Point Club's Backgammon Clock Rules, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope (or \$1 if you're mailing from overseas) to: Clock Rules, c/o Chicago POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645.—Ed. Δ*



## 1989 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU NOV. 30

|                   |       |                  |      |                  |      |
|-------------------|-------|------------------|------|------------------|------|
| GARY KAY          | 25.60 | Kathy Rudnick    | 3.40 | Paul Travis      | 0.88 |
| YAMIN YAMIN       | 24.20 | Alan Steffen     | 3.36 | Joan Hegg        | 0.88 |
| TAK MORIOKA       | 21.64 | Joe Koucharian   | 3.00 | Jill Ferdinand   | 0.80 |
| CHRIS KENIK       | 19.80 | Paul Johnson     | 2.96 | Jim Pappas       | 0.80 |
| DEAN MUENCH       | 15.20 | Don Desmond      | 2.80 | Ron Stur         | 0.80 |
| JOHN DEMIAN       | 12.40 | Arline Levy      | 2.64 | Darcey Brady     | 0.80 |
| JOANN FEINSTEIN   | 11.76 | René Wojtysiak   | 2.48 | Leslie Lockett   | 0.76 |
| STU KATZ          | 11.60 | John O'Hagan     | 2.44 | Mike Cyrkiel     | 0.72 |
| MARK KING         | 10.88 | Howard Markowitz | 2.40 | Carl Severino    | 0.72 |
| DAVID LIBCHABER   | 10.84 | Bobbie Shifrin   | 2.40 | Bob Vining       | 0.64 |
| BOB ZAVORAL       | 9.96  | Richard Stawowy  | 2.28 | Trudie Stern     | 0.64 |
| DON JAYHAN        | 9.88  | Dan Judd         | 2.24 | Randall Witt     | 0.64 |
| DAVE CRAMER       | 9.72  | Judy Brown       | 2.12 | Howard Chow      | 0.64 |
| V.W. ZIMNICKI     | 9.52  | Jeff Kane        | 1.92 | Harry Hayward    | 0.56 |
| LUCKY NELSON      | 9.00  | Miles Cohen      | 1.92 | Ted Mann         | 0.56 |
| ARNOLD ZOUSMER    | 8.84  | Wilcox Snellings | 1.84 | Betsy Miller     | 0.52 |
| DEEB SHALATI      | 8.24  | Andy Argy        | 1.60 | Merrill Schrage  | 0.48 |
| BOB HOLYON        | 8.16  | Mark Anshus      | 1.52 | Joe Wollick      | 0.48 |
| NORMA SHYER       | 7.26  | Gary Keyes       | 1.52 | Steve Klegon     | 0.44 |
| ALICE KAY         | 6.60  | Bill Keefe       | 1.36 | David Rubin      | 0.44 |
| Ken Bond          | 6.32  | Frank Callea     | 1.36 | Mike Sutton      | 0.36 |
| Sarg Serges       | 6.28  | Don Marek        | 1.28 | Barbara Levinson | 0.32 |
| Rich Siebold      | 6.16  | Gene Chait       | 1.20 | Craig McCullough | 0.30 |
| Ed Buerger        | 5.84  | Fred Badagnani   | 1.20 | Elaine Kehm      | 0.28 |
| Bill Davis        | 5.68  | Mark Hicks       | 1.16 | Kurt Warning     | 0.20 |
| Phyllis Smolinski | 5.32  | Ed Bauder        | 1.12 | Dianne Cyrkiel   | 0.12 |
| Rich Galeba       | 4.72  | Rudy Emmelot     | 1.08 | Jay Ward         | 0.12 |
| Dave Rockwell     | 4.24  | Bill Hoeflich    | 0.96 | Nabeel Juha      | 0.12 |
| Dan Cramer        | 4.08  | Lenny Loder      | 0.96 | Walter Schafer   | 0.12 |
| Ralph Levy        | 3.90  | Tad Wilson       | 0.96 | Larry Knoll      | 0.12 |
| Peter Kalba       | 3.84  | Herb Roman       | 0.92 | John Brink       | 0.12 |
| John Spatafora    | 3.66  | Marv Arnol       | 0.92 | Ahmad Assadi     | 0.08 |

Player of the Month **CHRIS KENIK** had a balanced November, scoring points in all four tournaments. Chris's 4.60 total bested John Demian (3.32) and Dave Cramer (3.08).

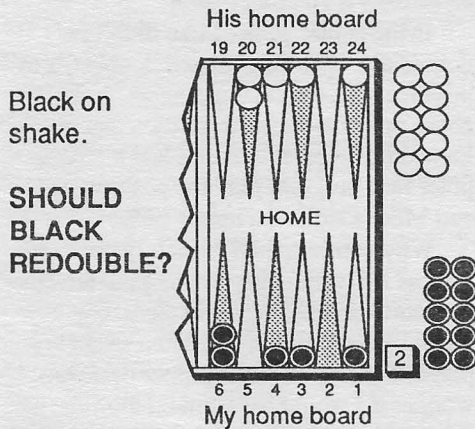
Gary Kay, Yamin Yamin and Tak Morioka are locked in a tense battle for the 1989 number one spot. Who will be Bar Point Club Player of the Year? Find out next month.

# DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS



## PIGEONS CAN BE MISLEADING

**D**ear Miss Lonelyblots: Last night, my pigeon doubled me prematurely in a running game. I snatched the cube and became the favorite a few rolls later:



I thought deeply for a second or two before redoubling. My pigeon took the cube at 4. When I rolled double-5's next and he rolled only singlets, I won handily. Later, my pigeon complained of his bad luck all night, and in this bear-off particularly. He said my redouble was wrong, that I wasn't even the favorite at the time.

*I offered to play the position as a "proposition;" in a few minutes, I was +80, partly because he mishandled the cube. For example, he neglected to double me when he had just two men left, one on his 5-point and the other on his 1-point.*

*Unswayed by his loss, my pigeon contracted for 50 more repetitions of the proposition in a few days. But after rolling it out a few times and consulting Thorpe's formula (which said **no double**), I've changed my mind. Now I think it may be an initial double but not a redouble.*

*Shall I back out of this proposition? Or shall I play it again, relying on my pigeon's cube mismanagement to obtain another large profit?—Alert Achim*

**Dear Alert:** By my rough estimates, you are about 60% to win cubeless, almost 70% if you keep the cube, but under 55% if you turn the cube. By almost any formula, Thorpe's or Kleinman's, this isn't even an initial double.

Your account, however, does not say exactly which "proposition" you tested. Was it redoubling versus keeping the cube? Was it doubling versus leaving the cube in the center? In either case, each repetition required rolling the position out **twice**: once with you playing Black and turning the cube, one with your opponent playing Black and not turning the cube. Did you do this? Or did you (as I suppose) play only

Black's side, with White owning the cube? Playing such a one-sided "proposition" would indeed account for your winning heavily, but would not settle whether Black has a proper redouble or double. Rather it would settle whether White should *beaver*. Clearly he should not, even if his judgment when to return the cube were perfect.

Depending on just how badly your pigeon handles the cube, you may or may not figure to win a *double* versus *don't double* proposition against him. But the position is far enough from a redouble to make you an underdog in a *redouble* versus *keep the cube* proposition.

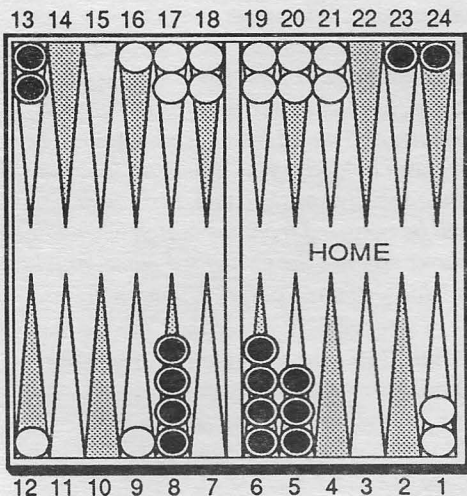
By the time you next see your pigeon, he may have learned how to handle the cube in small bear-offs. More significantly, he may have realized that he was playing a *take* versus *beaver* proposition instead of *redouble* versus *keep the cube*. If so, you won't have to back out of the proposition: he will, or he'll insist on playing it properly, getting an equal chance to play Black's side holding the cube.—Miss Lonelyblots Δ

*Do you have a backgammon-related question for Miss Lonelyblots involving people problems, game etiquette or the play itself? Write to: Dear Miss Lonelyblots, c/o Chicago POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645. The most stimulating query will be answered bimonthly.*

# PROBLEM #153 SOLVED

by Kent Goulding

11 point match. Black leads White 10 to 8, Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.**



**B**efore rolling double aces, Black was in pretty deep yogurt. Almost any constructive shot would have made him happy. Now, though, he has rolled what **must** be his best number. What should he do with it? There are many interesting choices. However, let's look at game plans instead of the specific plays.

Black is stuck behind a five and a one-half point blockade. He has two viable ways of approaching the problem of winning: he can try to build a prime of his own and then win the timing battle, or he can try to jump White's prime. He can work on either of these plans, but apparently, not on both simultaneously. There are more plays than I care to mention which deserve consideration. Some of these include making White's 3-point in an attempt to get up to the edge of her blockade. Many include building Black's 4-point or bar-point. Some include hitting White's blot on the 12-point along with one of the aforementioned ideas. In my opinion, however, **none** of the above are correct.

It is my strong belief that Black can best serve **both** goals by attempting to

achieve **neither** with this roll. Instead, he should hit both opposing blots with 13/12\*/9\*. Oddly, though Black's position by itself is little better after the play than before, White's position is so much worse that Black has made an enormous relative gain. By not committing himself to either plan, Black has left all of his options open. Notice that White now has no joker numbers and few even reasonable numbers. White's forces are now neatly divided. The likely outcome will be that once she enters with both checkers, there will be no easy way to move forward, resulting in the premature cracking of her blockade. The problem will be further compounded if Black leaps out and hits White's blot on the 16-point.

Black, meanwhile, need not fear stepping up to the edge of the board. No amount of juggling will allow White to build a full prime and only the most fortuitous of rolls will allow her to keep even a 5-prime. Finally, Black's checkers are extremely well positioned to build up his own fledgling blockade. After the double hit, I make Black the clear favorite. Δ

## AMALGAMATION

Sarg Serges and Fred Badagnani (NY) were the first players to use a backgammon clock in a Chicago Bar Point Club tournament November 28. Fred's first 7 point match started late and lasted nearly 75 minutes, bogging down the drawsheet. His 7-5 victory over Sarg (using the clock) took only 35 minutes... Look for a review of **Bill Barron's** new book *Cube Decisions—Volume 1* in the *POINT* next month. The book diagrams doubling positions from matches between Dallas backgammon expert **Malcolm Davis** and either **Bill Robertie** or **Neil Kazaross**. The reader can guess the masters' actions before reading their actual decisions. To order, send \$20 plus \$3 shipping (U.S.A.) in a check payable to: P.J. Company, P.O. Box 740306, Dallas, TX 75374-0306... **Rich Galeba** (IL) was lucky enough to draw current world backgammon champion **Joe Russell** (CA) in his *USA Today* computer service (modem) match. Quite an opportunity... Thanks to **Gary Kay** who phoned us from the Regency Benefit Tournament in New York with November "Winner's Corner" results from Boston and Deauville, France... *Backgammon Magazine*, a German language monthly, is now in publication. The November issue included an interview with **Alan Steffen** (WA); December features Michigan's **Emil Mortuk**. The editor, **Haio Foler**, offers *POINT* subscribers a special price: \$40 U.S. for 12 issues (24 pages). Send DM 144 or \$40 (U.S.D.) to *Backgammon Magazine*; Roemerstrasse 17; 5300 Bonn 1; West Germany... When the **Ulf Ring**, chairman of the Swedish Backgammon Federation sends backgammon correspondence, he even includes backgammon postage stamps on the envelope! The one at right is a sample... **Wilcox Snellings** (PA) and **Randy Pinckes** are officially engaged. Congratulations! A September wedding in Louisiana is planned... From the November NEBC newsletter: The Connecticut Backgammon Society is back in action. For more information, call **Rob Roy** at 203/755-9749... **Roy Friedman** will replace **Bill Robertie** as editor of the *New England Backgammon Club* newsletter early next year. Bill's expanded international back-



Stamping out backgammon?

## TAKGAMMON

inner game



by Tak Morioka

### PATHOS

*What is it like to be captured by the intensity of an important match? Is there anything that can help to relieve the pressure that comes from the uncertainty of a given play?*

I'm in a dark and gloomy medieval castle. Ahead of me lies the celebrated Hall of Champions, a grand auditorium with narrow stained glass windows crowning its walls. The stained glass artwork honors the glory of Backgammonhood and its past heroes. It conveys a religious tone making this a perfect place to practice the rites of passage. The Hall's darkness and foreboding appearance adds to the great mystery that has piqued my curiosity.

Today is my day of initiation. I am here alone—to face the challenges only I can face; to cast off the dominant shadow that hangs like a shroud; to confront my uncertainty; to overcome my fears.

The trumpet sounds! The banner unfurls. My test is about to begin. As the sunlight shines through the stained glass, I can see my position. I'm standing on top of a pillar in the center of the Hall. The platform that supports me rises 100 feet and is only 12 inches in diameter. In spite of this height, the ceiling extends far above my reach. As I look down into the deep, dark abyss, I grasp the enormity of my position. My knees start to buckle. My fear of falling freezes me like a statue.

I have to regain my composure. What's that? Unsettling ominous sounds from below intrude my ears. Bone-crunching snaps and reptilian roars. It is as if there are hundreds of crocodiles below fighting for position to get first taste of their next meal!

Looking up and across, I see a row of pillars running the length of the hall. Their tops protrude the darkness like small white islands on a sea of black. At the end of the row stands a doorway blazing with light. I must hop from one pillar to another in a straight line. It is my way out of this trap; my only hope.

But to get to the other side, I have to run the gauntlet. That gauntlet is made up of five free-swinging pendulums: gigantic battle-axes that can rip a man to shreds. The prospect of passage does not appear good.

Maintaining a footing over the pillars will be difficult, but the added jeopardy of trying to avoid the meat cleavers makes my endeavor nearly hopeless. I feel trapped. I need a miracle.

The back wall starts to move forward. Things are getting worse! The luxury of time to think is quickly abating. I am being pushed off my perch; I have to choose my fate...

**Fighting for existence**, I awaken from my nightmare drenched in a cold sweat. In the hazy transition between wake and sleep, I hear a distant voice echoing to me: "Act now or react later. That is the only choice you will get." Δ



Fortune Cookie

*If you always wait for the best option,  
the good ones will often be gone.*

gammon tournament commitments, as well as a new job have forced him to bow out... Also, good luck to **Dave Cardwell** who takes over as editor of the *Backgammon in Georgia* newsletter—and—to *POINT* "Hasty Plays" columnist **Duane Jensen** (Minnesota) who is now editing the *Twin Cities Backgammon Club* letter. Always with a flair for the bizarre, Jensen ranks his club's point standings by player height!... Holiday Greetings from *Chicago POINT*. Δ

Find out what you've missed.

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# WINNER'S CORNER



Aug.–Nov. 1989

•**4th Japan Backgammon Festival** (August 20; Tokyo)... Championship (60): 1st Kunio Kamimura; 2nd Masakatsu Shimada; 3rd Keiji Mori; 4th Akimitsu Saitoh. Novice (40): 1st Hironori Murogaki; 2nd Kazuko Numazawa. Doubles (16): 1st K. Ishii & M. Tonegawa; 2nd M. Nasu & T. Tanaka... Kamimura, a top-rated Igo player, came from behind to capture Gib's Sea Cup and ¥500,000 prize money.

•**GNYBC Regional** (Saddle Brook, NJ; Sept. 24)... Championship (19): 1st Antoinette Williams; 2nd Dr. Bob Hill; 3/4 Perry Gartner and Stan Littlefield; 1st Cons. Andy Palumbo; 2nd Cons. Fred Badagnani. Open (26): 1st Frank Cupo; 2nd Harriet Klein; 3/4 Diane Turkmany and Roni Zemsch; 1st Cons. Mike Held; 2nd Cons. Sam Neirenbeg.

•**8th All Georgia Championships** (Atlanta, GA; Sept. 29–30)... Open: 1st Phillip Burns (GA); 2nd Jim Pounds (GA); 3rd Rick Bieniak (FL). Class A: 1st Raymer Wilson (GA); 2nd Randall Witt (TN); 3rd Jerry Hartsman (GA). Doubles: 1st Jim & Tom Topping (GA); 2nd Larry Taylor (GA) & Rick Bieniak (FL). \$200 Guarantee winner: Dave Cardwell (GA). \$100 Guarantee winner: John Turney (GA)... Phillip Burns won a beautiful cut-glass trophy furnished by Larry Kalski. Raymer Wilson earned an exquisite Origami trophy created by tourney director Bob Clay.

•**Springfield Open** (Springfield, IL; Oct. 14)... Open: 1st Greg Tomlin; 2nd John McCabe; 1st Cons. Tony Siegel; 2nd Cons. Ben Zemaitis; 1st LC Larry Sweat.

•**College Park Fall Tournament** (Bethesda, MD; Oct. 14)... Open (37): 1st Dennis Culpepper; 2nd Brad Paleg; 3rd Jim Hickey; 4th Bob Eberlein... The Calcutta auction generated over \$2,500 in bids.

•**Swedish Open** (Stockholm, Sweden; Nov. 3–5)... Championship: 1st Frederic Wrang; 2nd Johan Moazed; 3/4 Mats Carlsson & Lars Degerman; 1st Cons. Jerry Grandell. Intermediate: Ulf Henkelstam; 2nd Dennis Claus; 3/4 Stefan Fox & Bo Pettersson; 1st Cons. Örjan Hillbom.

Super Jackpot: 1st Ove Friberg; 2nd Michael Löfblad; 3/4 Robert Lindbom & Chris Ternel. Team Challenge event: Denmark–3, Sweden–2... Wrang defeated Moazed 25–10 to win his second Swedish Open in a row. 104 players attended.

•**Springfield Series I** (Springfield, IL;

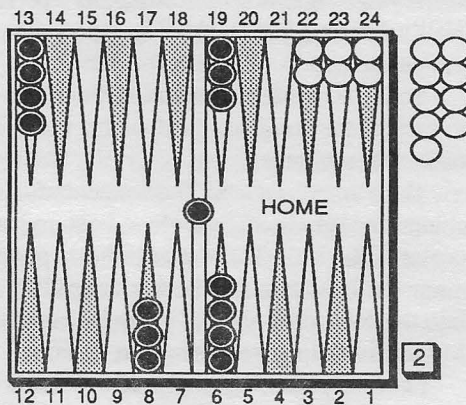
# HASTY PLAYS



by Duane Jensen

Sometimes a play looks, smells and feels so correct that no optional play is even considered. Below are two situations in which a player was lulled into making the “obvious” play—the wrong one.

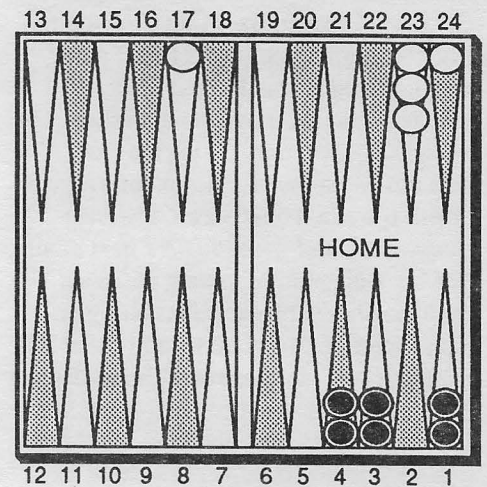
## Money game. BLACK TO PLAY 4-2.



The natural play seems Bar/21, 19/17. However, since Black's only objective is to escape the backgammon, if White rolls a double, Black gains 1-1 as a saving roll by playing the deuce from 21 to 19. The instinct to bolt from White's 6-point now is incorrect. (*Position taken from a Minneapolis chouette.*)

The next example is taken from a high stakes tournament match between two masters:

## Tournament. BLACK TO PLAY 6-2.



It may look clear to slot the 2-point, but the correct play is to stack a third checker on the ace-point (3/1). Double aces play better this way and all other rolls are equivalent with the slotting play. (*Position taken from Hal Heinrich vs. Kit Woolsey Master's match—Reno, 1989.*)

Difficult or unfamiliar positions usually don't lead to hasty plays. Hasty plays result when a position appears so simple or “obvious” that the player is lulled into mindless overconfidence—a mental state common to many backgammon players. Δ

Nov. 4)... Open: 1st John McCabe (Peoria); 2nd Dave Wallace (St. Louis); 1st Cons. Greg Tomlin (Springfield); 2nd Cons. Larry Wittenburg (Carbondale); 1st LC Ben Zemaitis (Springfield).

•**Northwest German Open** (Dusseldorf, W. Germany; Nov. 10–12)... Championship: 1st Alan Steffen (U.S.A.); 2nd John Stellingwerff (Netherlands).

•**10th Opre Invitational** (Downers Grove, IL; Nov. 11)... Open (8): 1st Tom Walthes; 2nd Bill Davis. Doubles (4): 1st Bill Davis & Joann Feinstein; 2nd Peter Kalba & Tom Walthes... Jim and Carmel Opre's annual tournament/dinner party was (as always) great food and fun.

•**G/A 20th Invitational** (Los Angeles, CA; Nov. 17–19)... Open (38): 1st Bob Glass; 2nd Dennis Rutkowski; 3/4 Ray Fogerland and Rick Huffman. Special 16: 1st Dennis Rutkowski; 2nd Bob Glass. Doubles (16): 1st Ron Coffin & Norm Wiggins.

•**Children's Hospital Benefit** (Cambridge, MA; Nov. 17–19)... A Division (30): 1st Herb Gurland; 2nd Jerry Kane; 3/4 Linc

Bedell and Howard Robinson; 1st Cons. Wilcox Snellings; 2nd Cons. Joe Sylvester. B Division (16): 1st Marie Barron; 2nd Surendur Gulati; 3/4 Rich Sweetman and Ed Miller; 1st Cons. Joe Singer; 1st LC Paul Sullivan. Blitz: 1st Gary Garabedian; 2nd Gary Kay. Boston 5 (16): 1st Mike Nelson; 2nd Hrant Isbenjian.

•**Flint Area Club Championships** (Flint, MI; Nov. 19)... Open (32): 1st Ralph Dietz, 2nd Ralph Schaffner, 3rd Agnes Tokatlian. Int (32): 1st Mark Gough, 2nd Saad Ghiso; 3/4 Ernie Denefeld and Doug Grey; 5/6 Miriam Bureson and Russ Osborn. Novice (7): 1st Nancy Campbell, 2nd Mike Charison, 3rd Josh Lantto... Despite snowy weather, Carol Joy Cole drew full Open and Intermediate fields for her 11th annual club championship.

•**Teacher's European Open Championships** (Deauville, France; Nov. 23–26)... Championship (86): 1st Barry Macomber (UK); 2nd Barry Pitt (UK). Super Jackpot (16): 1st/2nd (split) Joe Sylvester (USA) and Phillip Marmorstein (W. Ger). Δ

# LITTLE KNOWN BACKGAMMON NUMBERS

2,944,473,169  
-0.67  
78.57%  
2.66  
21.43%



by Dean Muench

The following are some unusual backgammon numbers that I've run across in the process of doing analyses and writing computer BG programs. Perhaps you might find some of them interesting, too.

1. Assuming the Jacoby Rule is in effect and no automatic doubles are allowed, the average number of points won in a money game between two individuals who play perfectly is approximately 2.66.
2. The probability (in %) that a specific point can be built on the next roll =  $[(a^2 - b + c) / 36] \times 100$ .  
Where: **a** = the number of direct builders bearing on the point  
**b** = the number of sets that don't work from the direct builders  
**c** = the number of sets that work from indirect points
3. Assuming no gammons or backgammons, the minimum game-winning percentages needed to **accept** a money double are:
  - (a) 18.75% when cube has maximum ownership value (i.e. one man on 6-point vs. one man on 6-point),
  - (b) 21.43% when cube has average ownership value (defined as 1/2 maximum ownership value),
  - (c) 25.00% when cube has no ownership value (i.e. one roll position).
4. Assuming no gammons or backgammons, the minimum game-winning percentages needed to give **initial** money double are:
  - (a) 70.00% when cube has maximum ownership value,
  - (b) 62.50% when cube has average ownership value,
  - (c) 50.00% when cube has no ownership value.
5. Assuming no gammons or backgammons, the minimum game-winning percentages needed to give a money **redouble** are:
  - (a) 75.00% when cube has maximum ownership value,
  - (b) 66.67% when cube has average ownership value,
  - (c) 50.00% when cube has no ownership

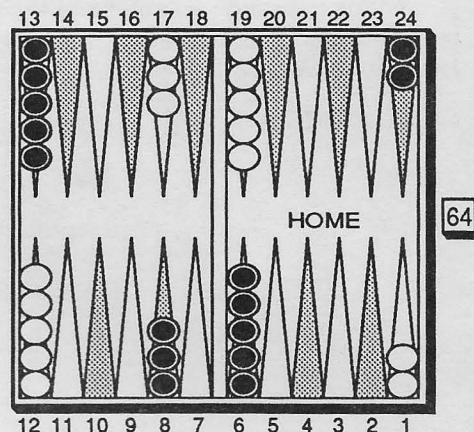
value.

Note: When you are above your give point (%) in numbers 4 or 5 above, you should double only when, on average, you will not achieve a more efficient double by waiting until next roll.

6. Assuming no gammons or backgammons, the game-winning percentages that yield your most efficient money doubling points are:
  - (a) 81.25% when cube has maximum ownership value,
  - (b) 78.57% when cube has average ownership value,
  - (c) 75.00% when cube has no ownership value.
7. When you double your opponent to 2 in an even position, you lower your game-winning percentage from 50.00% to 33.33% (and your expectancy goes from 0 to -0.67 points).
8. The **Occupancy Formula** used to calculate the number of possible positions **P** resulting from distributing **n** non-distinct checkers on to **x** points is:
 
$$P = \frac{(n+x-1)!}{(n!)(x-1)!}$$
9. Without considering cube location, there are 2,944,473,169 physical bear-off positions where each side has from 1 to 15 men remaining in their home board.
10. There are 40,225,345,055 physical positions possible resulting from distributing one side's 1-15 checkers over 24 points and the bar. To find the total number of possible backgammon positions (not including cube locations), we must square this number and then subtract out the illegal (two colors occupying the same point) and impossible positions. Squaring yields  $1.6180783 \times 10^{21}$ . After subtracting about 38%, we have approximately 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 legal and possible backgammon positions. Allowing for four possible cube locations, the final number is something around  $4 \times 10^{21}$ .  $\Delta$

## PROBLEM #154

Money game. Opening roll. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-2.**



**BACKGAMMON**

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**PUB CLUB:** Tournaments Monday, 7:30 PM at Fiddler's, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Ed Bauder (708/985-1568).

**SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASS'N:** Tournaments Tuesday, 6:15 PM at On Broadway, 210 S. Broadway, Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

**WINNETKA BG CLUB:** Tournaments Weds., 7:00 PM at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (708/446-0537).

**CENT. ILL. BG CLUB:** Toum. Thurs., 6:30 PM at The Julius, 5720 N. Knoxville, Peoria. Sue Will (309/692-6909).

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

Help us create the 1990 listing of...

## Backgammon Clubs In North America

It's almost that time of year. In January, we'll be updating the listing of Backgammon Clubs in North America, and WE NEED YOUR HELP! Please have your area backgammon representative send us information about backgammon in your vicinity. It might be an organized club, or perhaps just a weekly meeting place for side and/or chouette play. Here's what we need:

Club/Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organized? Yes No                      Were you listed in 1989? Yes No

Meeting on (include day(s) and starting time): \_\_\_\_\_

Location name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location City and State: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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For further information, or to be added to our mailing list, call or write to:

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P.O. Box 70101, Reno, NV 89570  
(702) 851-1452

## BACKGAMMON SEMINAR

10:00 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17  
**Bill Robertie - Match Analysis**

9:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17  
**Paul Magriel - Tips from a Master**

10:00 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 18  
**Kent Goulding - General Principals**

4:00 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 18  
**Kit Woolsey - When to Double**

9:45 a.m. Friday, Jan. 19  
**Joe Sylvester - Match Equities**

10:00 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 20  
**Mike Senkiewicz -  
How to Improve at Backgammon**

7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20  
**Bill Davis -  
How to Form a Local Club**

1:00 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 21  
**Backgammon Panel  
with Malcolm Davis**