

11th annual chicago open

AREA PLAYERS LEAD THE WAY IN CHICAGO

Except for the Intermediate division, Chicago area players dominated the 11th Chicago Open 25–28 May at the Westin Hotel in Rosemont, Illinois. Nearly 100 players enjoyed the annual holiday affair, now ably directed by Joann Feinstein.

Past Chicago Open champions Harry Cohn (1985) and Steve Tennant (1986) battled for top honors in the double elimination Open event with Cohn prevailing 13–6 in a 45 minute finals.

“Quite reasonable play and deadly rolling—you can’t beat the combination,” claimed 2300-rated chess master Tennant about Cohn’s performance. Steve should know. Harry also beat him in the semifinals of the undefeated bracket 13–10.

Chicago’s Stuart Katz moved “down in class” to try his hand at Intermediate competition and lost at double match point to Michigan’s Mike Charison. It was a big win for Mike, who only started playing backgammon about 1 1/2 years ago.

The old-time Chicago area team of Peter Kalba and Tom Walthes topped Midwest Doubles champions Mark King (IL) and Randall Witt (TN) in the Doubles.

Yamin Yamin qualified for the World Cup by winning a 4-player knockout on Friday night. And Howard Ring made his

trip from California worthwhile by winning the Jackpot tournament. Complete results:

11th ANNUAL CHICAGO OPEN

CHAMPIONSHIP (32): 1st Harry Cohn (IL); 2nd Steve Tennant (IL); 1st Cons. Ali Zaltash (PA); 2nd Cons. Tak Morioka (IL)
 INTERMEDIATE (62): 1st Mike Charison (MI); 2nd Stuart Katz (IL); 3/4 John McCabe (IL), John Bashian (OH); 1st Cons. Lucky Nelson (IL); 2nd Cons. Peter Kalba (IL)
 DOUBLES (32): 1st Peter Kalba & Tom Walthes (IL); 2nd Mark King (IL) & Randall Witt (TN); 3/4 Don Desmond & Kathy Posner (IL), Emil Mortuk & Linda Ross (MI)
 WORLD CUP QUALIFIER (4): 1st Yamin Yamin (IL)
 JACKPOT TOURNAMENT (32): 1st Howard Ring (CA); 2nd John O’Hagan (IN)

OTHER MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS

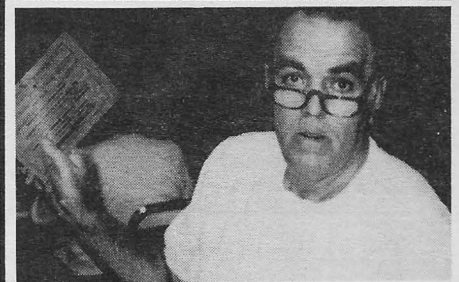
Here’s a summary of what happened elsewhere over the Memorial Day weekend:

- **Boston Symphony Orch. Benefit** (Cambridge, MA)
 A DIV. (26): 1st Walter Trice; 2nd Chris Hughes; 3/4 Tom Costigan, Mike Nelson; 1st Cons. Roy Friedman; 2nd Cons. Steven Keats
 B DIV. (12): 1st Gil Evans; 2nd John Koulopoulos; 1st Cons. Connie Machakos
 DOUBLES (12): 1st Bill Robertie & Mehran Shahidi; 2nd Roy Friedman & Mike Nelson
 BOSTON 5 (8): 1st Al Hodis; 2nd Herb Gurland
 WORLD CUP QUALIFIER (7): 1st Tom Costigan
 OPEN JACKPOT: 1st Rich Sweetman
- **G/A 22nd Invitational** (W. Hollywood, CA)
 OPEN (37): 1st Steve Sax; 2nd Norm Wiggins; 3/4 Dennis Rutkowski, Mehdi Faraji
 SPECIAL 16: 1st Joe Russell; 2nd Gus Contos
 DOUBLES (16): 1st Joe Russell & Dave Fletcher; 2nd Scott Mackenzie & Lee Linson
- **IBA Memorial Day Tourney** (W. Palm Beach, FL)
 OPEN (16): 1st Ed Seidner
 INTERMEDIATE (16): 1st Harriet Durham A

DAVID HEFFNER DIES

David Heffner, co-director of the Northern Nevada Backgammon Association, died of a massive heart attack 29 May at his home in Reno, Nevada. He was 56.

Mr. Heffner began his association with the NNBA in 1979. In 1984, Heffner



Heffner at his last tourney appearance: the April 1990 Midwest Championships.

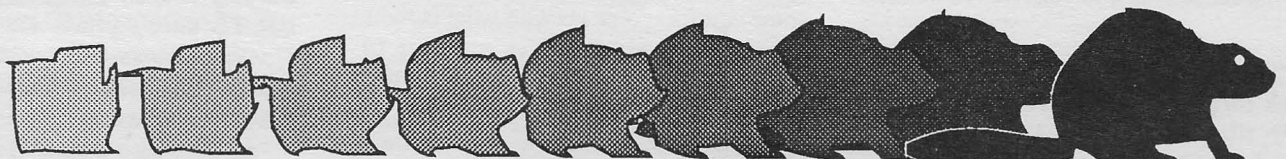
and partners Jim Roderick and Mark Richardson staged their first major tournament, the Nevada State Championship. That event, and the NNBA’s Caesars Tahoe spectacular, are now the two largest tournaments in North America.

A fine player in his own right, Heffner cashed for \$10,000 in 1985 by reaching the semifinals of the Las Vegas World Amateur Championship. Recently he had gone into video production, marketing the “Reno 1990” tournament tapes.

In 1982, Heffner suffered his first heart attack and had been living on one artery ever since. He is survived by his wife Glenda and her son Richard.

SUCCESSFULLY “BEAVERING” A 2-CUBE

2



In backgammon, when your opponent doubles you, if you think the double is premature, “beaver” him. That means you can immediately redouble the stakes and still maintain possession of the doubling cube. Be warned that not all cubes are successfully beavered. Some of them end up as “turkeys.”

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Bill Davis
2726 West Lunt Avenue
Chicago, IL 60645-3039
Telephone: (312) 338-6380

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Carol Joy Cole (MI) Tak Morioka (IL)
Duane Jensen (MN) Dean Muench (IL)
Neil Kazaross (CA) Kit Woolsey (CA)
Danny Kleinman (CA)

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LETTERS

c/o Chicago POINT
2726 W. Lunt Avenue
Chicago, IL 60645-3039

TOUGH TEST

The "Backgammon Exam" was terrific. I scored 2! Ah, the eternal intermediate player. Could you find time to discuss in detail some of the answers? Or could you and Danny Kleinman do a complete analysis? It would really help some of us less-than-expert players.—Richard Armbruster, Los Angeles, CA

We could probably find the time to analyze the problems, but we don't have the space. However... if you have a question about one or two of the problems, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the POINT and we'll mail you the analysis. Read on.—Ed.

In "Backgammon Exam" problem #8, I think 14/2, 8/2, 8/2 leaves less shots than 14/2, 10/4, 10/4.—Dean Adaminan, Plymouth Backgammon Club, Canton, MI

A lot of players missed this problem that first appeared in *Games* magazine (June 1985). The blot 7 pips away leaves six shots. This particular direct ace leaves only five

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

| | | |
|--------------|---|---------------|
| Jun 3 | Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL | 312/252-7755 |
| Jun 4 | Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club | 3-689918 |
| Jun 8-11 | Mats Jonasson Australian National Championship, Hilton Melbourne | 03/266 4209 |
| Jun 10 | Cavendish North Monthly Tournament, Southfield, MI | 313/642-9616 |
| Jun 10 | New England Bonus Tournament & Play-off Finals, Cambridge, MA | 617/861-7340 |
| Jun 17 | Father's Day Regional, Pickwick Motor Inn, Long Island, NY | 516/334-4833 |
| Jun 28 | Special Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI | 313/232-9731 |
| Jun 29-Jul 1 | Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI | 313/232-9731 |
| Jul 1-8 | International Amateur Open Cup, Hotel Hélotel, Ile du Levant, France | 01/302 77 45 |
| Jul 2 | Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club | 3-689918 |
| Jul 3-4 | Viking Kick-off Tournament, Palace Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man | 0624/851045 |
| Jul 5-8 | Championship of Great Britain, Palace Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man | 0624/851045 |
| Jul 19 | Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI | 313/232-9731 |
| Jul 13-15 | 5th Federal International Tournament, Casino of Sanremo, Italy | 2 76 00 37 05 |
| Jul 16-22 | World Backgammon Championship, Loews Hotel Monte-Carlo, Monaco | 305/527-4033 |
| Jul 21-22 | College Park Summer Open, Promenade Party Room, Bethesda, MD | 301/530-0604 |
| Aug 5 | Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL | 312/252-7755 |
| Aug 5 | 13th Annual Bob Hill Summer Classic, Long Island, NY | 516/334-4833 |
| Aug 6 | Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club | 3-689918 |
| Aug 7-12 | World Cup II and Eastern Open, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA | 301/299-8264 |
| Aug 13-19 | Green Mountain Festival, Ascutey Mtn. Resort, Brownsville, VT | 305/527-4033 |
| Aug 16 | Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI | 313/232-9731 |
| Aug 16-19 | Palace Summer Championships, St. Moritz, Switzerland | 061/50 58 16 |
| Aug 19 | 5th Japan Backgammon Championship, Yaesu Fujiya Hotel, Tokyo | 03-5476-4303 |
| Aug 31-Sep 3 | Nat'l Labor Day Tournament, Holiday Inn Union Station, Indianapolis, IN | 317/845-8435 |
| Sep 3 | Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club | 3-689918 |
| Sep 8 | Fall 1990 Connecticut Championship, Hall of Fame, Southington, CT | 203/755-9749 |
| Sep 21-23 | Minnesota Open, Minneapolis Athletic Club, Minneapolis, MN | 612/521-9532 |
| Oct 1 | Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club | 3-689918 |
| Oct 7 | Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL | 312/252-7755 |
| Oct 19-21 | 8th New Hampshire Fall Classic & New England Doubles | 603/863-4711 |
| Oct 20 | College Park Fall Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD | 301/530-0604 |
| Oct 23-28 | Caesars Tahoe Tournament, South Lake Tahoe, NV | 702/851-1452 |
| Nov 6 | 8th Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney, Pat's Pub, Norridge, IL | 312/338-6380 |
| Nov 9-11 | Children's Hospital Benefit, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA | 617/861-7340 |
| Nov 17 | Winter 1990 Connecticut Championship, Hall of Fame, Southington, CT | 203/755-9749 |
| Jan30-Feb 3 | 8th Nevada State Championship, Nugget Hotel/Casino, Reno, NV | 702/851-1452 |

shots! You must play the full roll if possible, so you can't hit with 6-1, 4-1 or 2-1.—Ed.

I enjoyed taking the "Backgammon Exam" (even though I didn't fair too well). However, I find some of the answers somewhat suspect. In some positions, the "correct" play or cube action can be mathematically found. In others, although, we can't mathematically derive the solution we can with some comfort come up with what is right through logic, experience or whatever. In many positions, however, no one can truly "know" what is right (in my opinion, problems #6 and #10 are a couple of these).

That's one of the things that make backgammon the great game that it is. By the way, who in their right mind would play 9/4, 24/21 in exam problem #10?—Richard Siebold, Milwaukee, WI

Nack Ballard, Billy Horan, Paul Magriel, Jim Pasko, Kathy Posner, Gino Scalamandre, Eric Seidel and Mike Senkiewicz among others. 9/4, 24/21 was chosen by the vast majority of experts who were surveyed at the 1981 Chicago Cup tournament for November 1981 *Gammon's of Chicago* newsletter Problem #57.

Exam problem #6 was #102 from Barclay Cooke's *Paradoxes and Probabilities*. The cube position was changed by Danny Kleinman to strengthen Barclay's solution, but both Davis and Kleinman still admit that the solution is not absolute.

By the way, we stated in last month's exam solutions that only problems #6 and #10 were at all debatable. Roy Friedman, *Anchor's* newsletter editor prefers taking

[Continued on page 7]

NATIONAL LABOR DAY TOURNAMENT MOVES TO INDY

Hoosier Backgammon Club director Butch Meese has announced a change in location for the upcoming National Labor Day Tournament (31 August–3 September). The event will be shifted from Louisville, Kentucky to the Holiday Inn Union Station in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Louisville's Scott Arche, a co-organizer of the event, agreed to the relocation in order to accommodate more Midwesterners who travel to the tournament by car.

JOE RUSSELL'S AUSTRALIAN OPEN REPORT: "NEAR-HORRIBLE END TO A GREAT TOURNAMENT"

Although he didn't win in Sydney 20–25 April, World Backgammon Champion Joe Russell still considers the Australian Open Championship a "tournament to remember." Here's his account.

"Director Steve Roberts treated me like a celebrity. He scheduled five minute inter-

views on the Australian versions of the *Today* and *Tonight* shows. For the latter, I followed Julia Roberts star of the motion picture 'Pretty Woman'—and she is! Steve also set up three radio interviews and a few newspaper stories. It was great fun.

"I reached the final 16 in the main event (along with fellow Americans Emil and Wanda Mortuk). And they had a "World Challenge" where six international players faced an Australian all-star squad. I captained the World team and we won 19–17.

"The last day I was there, my trip almost came to a horrible end. My return flight left at 2:00 P.M. on April 26—my wife Cathy's birthday. But with the time change, I would arrive in Los Angeles the same day. I wanted to get her a gift, so that morning, I took a 10 minute train ride from my hotel to the shopping district. I shopped about 2 1/2 hours and got back to the train station at 11:30 A.M. At 11:45 they announced that there had been a train wreck and that all trains would be delayed 2 hours.

"I started to get a little nervous about making my flight, so I went over to catch a taxi, but there were 15 people ahead of me.

So I boarded a bus with the intention of getting off when I saw an available cab. There was one at the first stop, so I grabbed all my packages and jumped off the bus.

"Just then, the taxi, that was across the street, started to pull off. I yelled 'Taxi! Taxi!' and dashed off to stop it. Australians drive on the left side like in England. I was kind of panicking because of the time and looked the wrong way. I ran full speed smack into the side of another taxi going about 40 miles an hour. It knocked me forward about 15 feet. The onlookers screamed. I suffered big bruises on my elbow and hip and strained ligaments in my hand. If I had been one step quicker, the taxi would have run me over and killed me.

"They tried to take me to the hospital but I didn't want to go. I wanted to make my plane. In fact, the original taxi that I was hailing waited and took me to my hotel. Bill Marczek, one of the top Australian players kindly drove me to the airport and I just barely made the flight.

"Quantas was real nice. They arranged for me to have three seats across so I could lay out. They gave me pain medication and ice for my hand. I was in a lot of pain. When I got home I went to a doctor for X-rays.

"I probably should have gone to the hospital in Australia, but I didn't want my wife to worry—not on her birthday."

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1990 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR COMPILED THRU MAY 31

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|------------------|------|------------------|------|
| TAK MORIOKA | 11.68 | Ron Stur | 2.60 | Sharon Lennon | 0.88 |
| DAVE CRAMER | 11.56 | Don Jayhan | 2.48 | Jerry Brooks | 0.88 |
| MARK KING | 10.96 | Dean Muench | 2.40 | Norma Shyer | 0.88 |
| LUCKY NELSON | 9.92 | Greg Shore | 2.16 | Joe Wollick | 0.88 |
| GARY KAY | 9.76 | Joann Feinstein | 2.16 | Harold Seif | 0.72 |
| BRUCE WITTERT | 8.56 | Tim Serges | 2.00 | Ed Bauder | 0.72 |
| YAMIN YAMIN | 8.12 | Jay Ward | 1.96 | George Kirkby | 0.72 |
| ARNOLD ZOUSMER | 7.04 | Bart Levin | 1.92 | Bill Hargrave | 0.72 |
| STU KATZ | 6.64 | George Barr | 1.80 | Femi Owiku | 0.64 |
| JAKE JACOBS | 5.12 | Sarg Serges | 1.68 | Hal Heinrich | 0.64 |
| DEEB SHALATI | 4.64 | Bill Keefe | 1.52 | Mike Siegel | 0.56 |
| BILL DAVIS | 4.52 | John Spatafora | 1.44 | Reggie Porter | 0.52 |
| JUDY BROWN | 4.44 | Walt Schafer | 1.44 | Terry Moskowitz | 0.48 |
| RICH GALEBA | 4.08 | Paul Franks | 1.36 | Richard Stawowy | 0.48 |
| JOHN DEMIAN | 4.00 | Howard Markowitz | 1.36 | Betsy Miller | 0.40 |
| RALPH LEVY | 3.84 | V.W. Zimnicki | 1.28 | Arline Levy | 0.36 |
| BOBBIE SHIFRIN | 3.84 | Walter Trice | 1.28 | Mary Franks | 0.32 |
| JOE KOUGHARIAN | 3.84 | Jolie Lewis | 1.24 | Mike Sutton | 0.32 |
| PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI | 3.68 | Ed Buerger | 1.20 | Alex Caraplis | 0.32 |
| RUDY EMMELT | 3.64 | Ken Bond | 1.20 | Gabriel Kairouz | 0.32 |
| Bob Zavoral | 3.44 | Frank Callea | 1.12 | Larry Knoll, Jr. | 0.28 |
| Alice Kay | 3.40 | Herb Roman | 1.12 | Bernie Smuda | 0.24 |
| Leslie Lockett | 3.28 | Mike Spiropoulos | 1.04 | Larry Knoll | 0.24 |
| Andy Argy | 3.24 | Bob Holyon | 1.04 | Jill Ferdinand | 0.16 |
| Don Desmond | 3.12 | Harry Cohn | 0.96 | Jeff Ferguson | 0.16 |
| Marcy Sloan | 2.80 | Randall Witt | 0.88 | Barbara Levinson | 0.12 |
| Bill Hoeflich | 2.80 | Peter Kalba | 0.88 | Ted Mann | 0.12 |
| Kathy Rudnick | 2.60 | | | | |

BRUCE WITTERT earned his first Bar Point Club Player of the Month honor with wins on 8 May and 22 May for a total of 4.48 points. Last month, Bruce racked up 3.44 points, so he's on a roll.

Gary Kay (3.52) and Yamin Yamin (3.44) were May runners-up.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

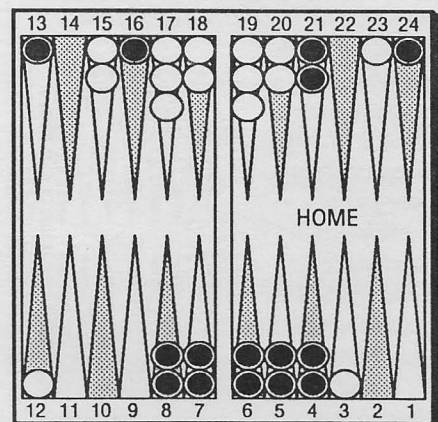
CHAMPIONSHIP: 1st Vince Turner (Queensland); 2nd Ivor Bitel (Sydney); 3/4 Cemal Betkas, Ross Hancock (Sydney).

WORLD CHALLENGE: 1st Joe Russell (US), Emil Mortuk (US), Wanda Mortuk (US), R. Mercer (NZ), Alan Weinstien (NZ), Tino Lechich (AUS).

your move

PROBLEM #160

9 point match. Black leads White 7 to 5.
BLACK TO PLAY 5-5.



DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS



MORALLY, IF YOU CAN'T COVER A "BEAVER," SHOULD YOU DROP?

Dear Miss Lonelyblots: Once upon a time, when I was living in Munchkinland (at that time located in Las Vegas), I had a roommate who told me this story.

My roommate, who I will call "Beef Jerky" for obscure reasons, was playing at a club in California, and was bearing off against an ace-deuce backgame. Six or seven men into the bearoff, he was forced to leave a simple double shot. His opponent, in the jargon of that far off country, was "stuck and steaming." With a fast and deadly hand, he whipped over the doubling cube. Beef, taking care to make no jerky moves, thoughtfully considered the double.

While his opponent was a 5-4 favorite to hit, Beef realized two very important things about the position:

1. Due to his opponent's Swiss cheese board, checkers buried on the 1-point, completely divided forces, and his own possession of the doubling cube, it would be nearly impossible for him to lose the game, even if hit.
2. Because his opponent still had half a dozen men on the 1- and 2-points, even if hit, but especially if not hit, he had very substantial chances of winning a gammon or backgammon.

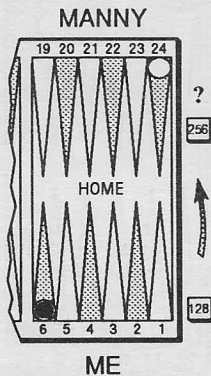
Because of this, Beef calculated his equity at substantially more than 1.0 times the value of the cube. Fearful that his opponent would drop a beaver, Beef simply took and went on to win 12 points.

This story came to mind fairly recently. While my residence these days is Planet Earth, I was visiting Chicago and playing an old adversary, Manny Ack. Manny and I were playing for \$1 per point, and I owned the cube at 128. In bearing off, I found myself on roll with

one checker remaining on my 6-point while Manny had one left on his own ace-point.

I reshipped at 256, and since I knew Manny to be both rich and fearless, I fully expected a take.

Much to my



surprise, Manny beavered! It seems that Manny was stuck 511 points. While five hundred or one thousand dollars was meaningless to him, pride dictated that he make an attempt to finish the evening on the plus side.

Well, I counted my money and discovered that I had only \$500. Now if I lost this beavered cube, I would lose \$512—more than I possessed. So in good conscience, I felt that I was compelled to drop Manny's beaver. When I tried to do so, Manny called the director of the club and they showed me the June 1989 Chicago POINT newsletter that contained a letter to you from "Beaver Retriever." In your response, you stated emphatically that "only doubles and redoubles can be passed."

Miss Lonelyblots, your ethical bark is as well known as your analytical byte; on the basis of your statement, I was informed that I could not pass Manny's beaver.

Now I am faced with a terrible dilemma. I try always to play as ethically as possible, but this time, I was trapped by my own foolish double. Now, if I had been lucky enough to lose, I would have known what to do! I could have run out and sold a pint of blood and paid my debt, but the dice cursed me with a 4-3. I'm afraid I don't know what to do with my ill-gotten gains. Since I couldn't cover the bet, I don't truly deserve the \$512 that I won. Perhaps I should donate the money to charity, but the question is, how much? Should I give up the whole \$512, or only \$12 (since I could have faded the first \$500)? Or perhaps \$256, the overage on beaver?

Miss Lonelyblots, I honestly believed that a beaver was a form of double or redouble, and as such, dropable, else I never would have doubled so irresponsibly. Please straighten me out on this as my conscience is tortured. Yours guiltily—Sterling Morals

Dear Sterling: How absurd to call "foolish" a redouble to 256 in the position you describe. By your logic, a redouble to 256 with one on the 4-point versus four on the 6-point would be equally "foolish"—if made by a player bankrolled only to \$500. But the only truly foolish redouble would be one made in contemplation of "passing" an opponent's beaver.

As a practical solution for the undercapitalized redoubler, I suggest offering 12 points of "action" to a knowledgeable kibitzer free of charge. The line of eager takers of such an offer would go halfway round the block.

I sense, however, a facetious tone to your letter. Perhaps you mean to question

the rules regarding beavers. Since no set of backgammon rules is universally accepted yet, any group may adopt its own rules by mutual agreement—just as any two players may increase the stakes between themselves by mutual consent. Were beavers not permitted, for example, you could still take a 2-cube and propose at once, "Let's play this game with the cube at 20!" Of course your opponent would be free to decline.

That is roughly what I suggest for "doubles-in-place." These have a role (albeit peripheral) in backgammon: to let players back with their money opinions of themselves (with "automatics") or their positions (with beavers). To prevent an uncomfortable escalation of stakes, a player should have a right to decline. But to decline isn't to pass. A player who declines an "automatic" continues the game with his cube in the center at 1. Similarly, a player who declines a beaver continues the game with his cube on his opponent's side at the level to which he has turned it.

The only exception—the only "double-in-place" a player should have no right to decline—is a beaver of an initial double when using the Jacoby Rule. Letting the doubled player take at quadrupled stakes averts the dubious "Kauder Paradox" and deters underdog doubles prompted only by a desire to activate gammons.—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.



ILLINOIS ACTION



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

Tuesday, 7:15 PM at Pat's Pub, 4343 N. Harlem Ave., Norridge 708/457-1166.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:30 at Bagwells, 4636 N. Cumberland, Chgo 312/625-1717.

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 Wed., 7:00 PM at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (708/446-0537).

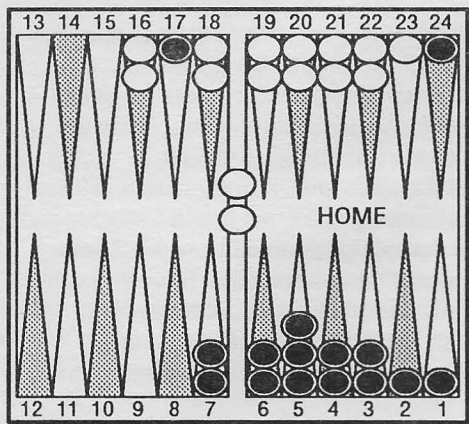
CENT. ILL. BG CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 PM at Denny's, 2522 W. Lake Ave., Peoria. Sue Will (309/692-6909).

TULEY PK. BG CLUB: Tourn. alt. Sat., 12:00 at Tuley Park Fieldhouse, 90th & King, Chgo. J.A. Miller (219/883-6127).

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

**PROBLEM #159
SOLVED**

by Joe Sylvester

Tournament double match point.
BLACK TO PLAY 2-1.

The most important thing to learn from this extremely difficult problem is a methodology for solving close multi-choice positions. We will use a three-step analysis:

•STEP 1. List all plausible moves

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| (a) 24/23*, 17/15 | (d) 3/2, 3/1 |
| (b) 24/23*, 3/1 | (e) 5/2 |
| (c) 17/15, 2/1 | |

•STEP 2. Narrow the list by categorizing the moves and then selecting the best move from each group

Moves (a) and (b) are similar in that each hits White's third blot and advances to the edge of the prime. Both moves leave two blots for White to shoot at. Move (b) allows a slightly better distribution for covering the blots, while move (a) maintains a 5-prime with poor 2s. Since with these moves, most of the time we will be hit (20/36), long-term positional values seem to be the better choice. I'll opt for (a) here.

Moves (c) and (d) are similar as they leave no blots, but do nothing to advance to the edge of White's prime or hit a third blot. With either play, we have a five point board and with either play, we don't duplicate our much needed ace (i.e. aces to come up and either 2s and 4s or 3s and 5s to attack the open point). So here again, I opt for move (c) and the long-term 5-prime.

Move (e) is in a category of its own and must be evaluated separately.

•STEP 3. Compare and assess values for each of the finalists

One of the best methods of assessing positional value is to estimate the number of games in 36 that you think a particular position will win. This is how our three

finalists rate.

Move (a): Of the 16 times White hits, the game is fairly even. Black has only two checkers back now, but it's hard to say whether this is good or not from a timing standpoint. If Black gets a third checker back, things look pretty even. So my guesstimate is an 8-8 split in games won.

Of the 20 games White fans, Black is a huge favorite with many covers and switches and lots of time to roll a 6. Here the guesstimate is 16 1/2 wins in 20 games. *Grand total for (a):* 24 1/2 wins in 36.

Move (c): Of the 11 rolls that White enters immediately, Black will probably initiate contact on the 2-point. When the close-out works, valuable time is lost for escaping the back checker. When Black is hit, White has the better prime. So I would guesstimate that Black is a slight dog, winning 5 of these 11 games.

When White doesn't enter (25 rolls), Black has approximately 28 pips to play with before his board starts breaking down. Since it takes about 4 1/2 rolls on average to shake an ace and then a 6, Black only has about 3 1/2 rolls (28 pips divided by the average 8-pip roll), Black rates to crack his board. However, White will still have to bring in two, or probably three checkers. Thus Black will have several additional rolls to escape. My guesstimate is for Black to win 17 1/2 of these 25 games. *Grand total for (c):* 22 1/2 wins in 36.

Move (e): Of the 11 times White hits, Black is involved in a similar timing battle as with move (a). However, this time Black has a full 6-prime. If White brings both checkers in too quickly, she could crash her board. But if Black comes in on White's ace point, Black could crash. Still, Black can come in and out whereas White can't. That's a slight advantage to Black of about 6 games in 11.

Of the 25 fans, Black will get hit in about 7 games later on with similar results and win around 4 out of the 7.

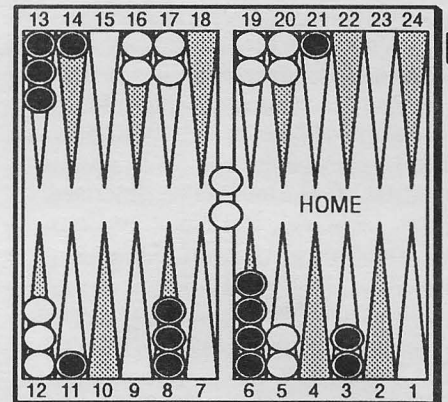
As for the remaining 18 games, I'll guesstimate 13 1/2 wins, as I did in move (c) when we need to blast out in "x" number of rolls. *Grand total for (e):* 23 1/2 wins in 36.

In summary, the results are all very close: move (a) = 24 1/2 wins, move (b) = 22 1/2 wins and move (e) = 23 1/2 wins. Limited roll-outs performed with assistance from Joe Monro and Frank Talbot confirmed these results with moves (a) and (c) winning 68% and move (e) winning 66%.

Either way, what's important here is learning a methodology for evaluating difficult positions, *not* an actual answer. Δ

**HASTY
PLAYS**

by Duane Jensen

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-2.**

In the above setup, Black plays 11/9, 13/7 creating builders for the 4-point. He mistakenly imagines he is "blitzing" his opponent. Although White is partially disabled with two men on the bar, she faces Black's weak two point board and is anchored on Black's 5-point. In addition, White poses a threat of her own with a Black checker trapped behind her broken 4-prime.

With four blots scattered about the board, an overconfident Black is playing too loosely. He should use the 6 to escape White's broken prime. The 2 can be played to the 9-point, not so much as a builder for the 4-point, but to start the 9-point. The 9-point should be the focal point for Black's next roll. All his blots and the spare builder on the midpoint communicate with this valuable point. The 8- and 9-point are landing spots for Black as he abandons the midpoint. They also serve as blocking points in hampering White's departure.

Although Black probably won't "blitz" his opponent, making the 9-point should help him to blow past White's 5-anchor and capitalize on his large lead in the race. Δ

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WINNER'S CORNER



Mar.–May 1990

- Baleares March Monthly** (San José, Costa Rica)... Open (32): 1st Shahriar Nassiri; 2nd H. Mehrpour; 3rd José Uribe.
- 16th Winter Championships** (St. Moritz; 15-18 March)... Championship (65): 1st Hollederer; 2nd Caprio; 3rd/4th Bigler, Aisch; 1st Cons. Schiesser; 2nd Cons. Crespi; 1st LC H. Haussleiter. Intermediate (42): 1st Schutt; 2nd Walti; 1st Cons. Stormbom Sirkka; 1st LC F. Balsamo. Ladies Prize: Lila Swan (US).
- Double Door** (Amsterdam, Netherlands; 25 March)... Open: 1st Jan Stellingwerf; 2nd H. J. Koldwey.
- Nordic Open** (Vedbæk, Denmark, 12–15 April)... Championship (52): 1st Gerhard Schiesser; 2nd Jerry Grandell; 1st Cons. Harald Johani. Intermediate (55): 1st Clemens Oelker; 2nd Morten Meyling; 1st Cons. Michael Fardan. Beginner (81): 1st Steen Ørnvig; 2nd Jeppe Juhl; 1st Cons. Cristel Abrahamsen.
- College Park Spring Open** (Bethesda, MD; 14 April)... Open (32): 1st Greg Lilley; 2nd Harry Zilli; 3rd Paul Riedel; 4th Ali Rebatchi. Intermediate (8): 1st Lloyd Webber; 2nd Gerald Steinberg.
- Greater NY Club Championship Invitational** (Manhasset, NY; 20 April)... 1st James Mannheimer; 2nd Sally Mara. Mini-BLITZ (64): 1st Steven Keats; 2nd Brian Menkes.
- Connecticut State Championship** (Southington, CT; 21 April)... Open (24): 1st Mike Nelson (MA); 2nd Jim Pascoe (CT); 3rd/4th Greg Gust (CT), Bob Mi-lardo (CT). Amateur (8): 1st Kick Clukey (CT); 2nd Fred Townsend (CT).
- New England Club Monthly** (Cambridge, MA; 22 April)... A Division (31): 1st Rich Sweetman; 2nd Seth Towle; 1st Cons. Mike Nelson. B Division (16): 1st Paul Sullivan; 2nd Ernesto Adrianzen; 1st Cons. Ed Miller.
- Indy Spring Fling** (Indianapolis, IN; 29 April)... Open (14): 1st Chuck Stimming; 2nd/3rd Jeff Baker, Larry Strommen. Intermediate (7): 1st Philip Degan; 2nd Frank Scott. Novice (7): 1st Peg Simsic.
- 17th Byblos European Championship** (St.-Tropez, France, 3–6 May)... Championship (60): 1st Luigi Villa (ITA), 2nd Michael Greiner (GER).
- CIBC Spring Tournament** (Lacon, IL; 6 May)... Open (18): 1st Tak Morioka; 2nd John O'Hagan; 1st Cons. Milad Doueihy; 2nd Cons. Dave Wallace. Intermediate (27): 1st Lane O'Conner; 2nd Dan Eatherington; 1st Cons. Ron Stur; 2nd Cons. Leslie

A MORE REPUTABLE SOURCE

by Danny Kleinman

It was my pleasure during April to entertain my friend Angelo Fichera from Amsterdam and his travelling companion Rolf. As I was playing a match with Angelo at the Cavendish West in Los Angeles, David Libchaber came running up to me and said, "Van Eyck is here!"

I had forgotten who Van Eyck was, but David reminded me, "He's the guy to whom Schreuder dumped a match at Monte-Carlo last year," pointing to Rolf.

But the man was Rolf *Schreuder*: the dumper, not the dumpee. This was but one of several minor details which David and the "reputable American source" quoted in the August 1989 *Chicago POINT* got wrong, as I learned upon speaking to Rolf.

He and Van Eyck had been gambling partners for some time, sharing wins and losses equally. They played a 5 point match in their hotel room, not "on the beach." Neither had bet with the book nor bought any of his "field" in the auction. Rolf dumped the 7 point match played in public because he felt bound to accept the result of their private match. Contrary to the *POINT's* source and to David, who claims to have heard Rolf acknowledge Van Eyck as the better player, Rolf considered Van Eyck no more than his equal.

Despite the absence of any direct incentive for dumping, what Van Eyck and Schreuder did was wrong for three reasons:

- (1) It violated the letter (no settlements) and spirit (play fair but hard) of the rules;
- (2) It affected others (e.g. anybody betting on Rolf with the book or buying his field in the auction) adversely;
- (3) It gave Van Eyck an unfair advantage in his next match to be fresh while his opponent may have been wearied by a tough 19 point match.

I was able to convey this last point to Rolf emphatically because he is also a fine chess player. I alluded to the alleged "grandmaster draws" arranged early in games between Soviet grandmasters in international tournaments in years past. Presumably, this offered no direct gain (the "half-point" awarded for a draw doesn't conduce to the better-than-50% score needed to win a prize). But it did give both contestants a breather—the ability to rest up for the next day's match—and thus increased the chances of both to get subsequent wins.

Rolf indicated that he understood why dumping was wrong, though he hadn't grasped this at the time, and apologized for his Monte-Carlo performance.

Do I believe him? Yes. I observed Rolf's backgammon, and discussed a few positions with him. I was impressed not only by his understanding of the game, but also by his general brightness and quickness. Few play better than Rolf, and then not by much. He reported that the American experts he played invariably complimented him on his skill. He has a good tournament record, including a first in the European championship at Saint-Tropez in April 1989, less than three months prior to Monte-Carlo.

Though I know I'm not the best assessor of other people's motives and character, Rolf struck me as an honorable man. I'm confident he has learned from his error and will not repeat it, and I think we should offer him forgiveness and acceptance, especially since at the age of about 27, he's still maturing. Δ

Editor's note: As a result of their actions at the 1989 Monte-Carlo tournament, the World-wide Backgammon Federation suspended Evert Van Eyck until 31 December 1989 and Rolf Schreuder until 30 June 1990.

Lockett. Beginner (5): 1st Barbara Zeman; 2nd Ray Gozzi... Trailing 12–3, Tak Morioka won 10 straight points including a 6 point backgammon to steal the Champion's trophy from John O'Hagan. As usual, Sue Will and Cinda King (with help from Dru Heggen) were congenial hosts providing free brownies and cookies at the Sly Fox Pub.

•**Hof Backgammon Cup** (Copenhagen, Denmark, 11 May)... Main (77): 1st Brian Rosenberg; 2nd Geert Geertsen; 1st Cons. Hans Chr. Petersen. Δ

A n c h o r s

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AMALGAMATION

In order for us to include results from the Championship of Great Britain (5–8 July), look for next month's *POINT* about 15 July ... On 7 May, PSC Publications, the parent company of *Games* magazine, filed for bankruptcy. *Games* is encumbered by a large debt, but according to editor **Will Shortz**, "...we have a very good chance of being sold." ... A reputable American source informs us of a practice which has become commonplace at many European tournaments. When a contestant who values winning a tournament more than the money involved gets behind, he will bribe a money-hungry opponent to dump the match. Obviously, the bribe must be greater than the opponent's equity to succeed. One gets the glory, the other the cash... **Carol Joy Cole** had the international honor of being issued Worldwide Backgammon Federation membership card #1 by president **Alberto da Pra**. Speaking of Carol, her 29 June–1 July Michigan Summer Championships are filling fast. Don't miss this festive event. Call CJC at 313/232-9731... Backgammon is alive and growing in Costa Rica according to the bimonthly *Costa Rican Backgammon Bulletin*. There are games in San José at the Quorum Club, Tequila Willy's, and Baleares. For more information, write: Asocacion Costarricense de Backgammon, Apartado 355-2050, San José, Costa Rica... For their help in translating German and Spanish language backgammon material, we thank City of Chicago engineer **Albert Szabat** and *WordPrep* consultant **Gina Stegich**... **Jerry Godsey** was recently re-elected Hong Kong Backgammon Club president for good reason: club membership is up over 50% since 1988... **New Clubs:** The Sit 'n Bull Pub in Maynard, MA hosts a kickoff tourney 17 June at 1:00 P.M. Phone **Roy Friedman** (617/861-7340) for info. And backgammon returns to Milwaukee at the Y-Not-2 on 2nd and 4th Wed. monthly. Contact **Merrill Schrag** at 414/463-2498... Visiting the Bar Point Club in May: **Betty Kelly** (TX), **Randall Witt** (TN) and **Sharon Lennon** (KY)... Moved Louisville to Chicago: **Gabriel Kairouz**; Chicago to San Diego: **Arnold Zousmer**... Chicago Open director **Joann Feinstein** wants to thank all the many backgammon players for sending their get-well wishes to her husband **Jerry** following his heart surgery. They worked!... When asked to report his tournament result vs. **Norma Shyer** at a recent BPC tourney, **Jake Jacobs** was very descriptive: "I feel like a potato—I've been diced." Δ

inner game

TAKGAMMON



by Tak Morioka

WHY ME?

How could this happen! I lost! Is there no justice left in the game? I made all of the proper plays, but where did it get me?

At one point, I felt a mastery over both the game and my opponent. He may have created his trouble, but I capitalized on it by boxing him into the corner. He was mine for the taking—a great trophy rewarding the hunt. As I dispassionately looked at what probably would occur, I got bored with the effort. The challenge of my opponent had been more interesting. Seeking a thread to unravel the mystery, I found the only combination that would unlock everything. In the excitement to strut my mathematical prowess, I had obviously invoked the potential for a five-roll parlay.

The lights dimmed, the thunder roared, and the winds whipped up to seize me in mid-sentence. Startled and fearful, I realized that I, a mere mortal had dared to impugn the power of the dice gods. Exploding out of the dark cavernous dice cup came forth the messengers of doom.

My opponent's roll of aces had eyes, capturing two key points. In an accommodating gesture, I followed with boxes, destroying my timing. His next roll was double 3s, instantly preparing a prime. And then I threw double nickels, leaving a dreaded fly shot. It might have been 17-to-1 against getting hit, but in my sinking heart, I felt he couldn't miss. With clenched teeth, I waited for the other shoe to fall. You know the outcome.

Demoralized and in shock, my arrogant posture slumped from that long "hour" of torture that in reality, took only two minutes. Why me? Δ



Fortune Cookie

Backgammon is a game of changing percentages and perceptions. Absolutes enter only at the end of the conflict.

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

two checkers off in problem #9. Because of the value of backgammons and the position of the cube, he is correct. The proper situation for #9 should have been "double match point." Then our answer (2/Off, 2/1, 2/1) is right. Please make that correction if you give the exam to others.—Ed.

MORE READING MATERIAL

Last month, I read that you don't know about the German language magazine I edit, *das Backgammon Magazin*. We publish about four times per year and each issue is between 50 and 60 pages. Thank you in the name of the German readers for your excellent newsletter.—*Harald Johanni, das Backgammon Magazin, Hochstr. 7, 8500 Nürnberg 80, W. Germany.*

We were also sent the May 1990 8-page Spanish language newspaper titled Buenos Aires Backgammon Now [C. Daniel Salaya, Acassuso 2602, Olivos (1636),

Buenos Aires, Argentina]. They publish one or two issues per year.—Ed.

A BETTER RATING SYSTEM?

I'm a chess player, but try my hand in all games. I read Perry Gartner's letter in your April issue on the problems of rating backgammon players. Here's a suggestion.

A math professor named Arpad Elo spent years developing a "formula" for rating and ranking chess players that works in any contest where two players do battle. Professor Elo's book is called: *The Rating of Chess Players Past and Present*.

The book costs \$9.45 + \$2.95 s&h. To order a copy, write: Chess Digest; P.O. Box 741088; Dallas, TX 75374-1088 or telephone 800/462-3548.—*Keith Czarny, Winnipeg, MAN, Canada Δ*

RON STUR WATCH

1990 Intermediate division results to date:
•Midwest Championships (Mar.)—1st Cons.
•Indiana Open (Apr.)—1st Main Flight
•Central Ill. Spring Open (May)—1st Cons.

Mr. Stur's next regional appearance as an "Intermediate": Michigan Summer Champs.

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| Flint Area BackgammonNews 1 yr. subscription (USA/overseas) .. | \$10/\$15 |
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