CHICAGO POINT 26

Volume 3, Number 7 | A Prime Source of Backgammon Information | July 1990

championship of great britain

BARABINO'S THE MAN

USA Wins Inter-Nation Trophy

Roy Friedman's book *World Class Backgammon—Move By Move* describes Rick Barabino as an "International Star." That description was reinforced 3–8 July following Barabino's big 25–13 victory over Jan Stellingwerff (Netherlands) in the finals of the 1990 Championship of Great Britain. The Palace Hotel and Casino on the Isle of Man was the setting as 180 players (50 from the U.S.) battled for over $100,000 in cash and prizes, including £16,000 added. The Baron and Baroness of Culcreuch presided over the well-run event, ably assisted by a fine staff.

Barabino, a 33-year-old actuary from Boston, MA and last year's Jackpot winner, reached the semifinals with an exciting 23–21 victory over M. Holenderer (Germany). It was the only time he led in the match. At the same time, Stellingwerff, runner-up to Alan Steffen in the '89 Deuseldorf tournament, was advancing over countryman Peter Van Rooy 23–16.

The Barabino-Stellingwerff battle commenced at 3:00 P.M., Sunday in a private room complete with a balcony overlooking the Irish Sea. Although the match was in direct conflict with the Becker-Edberg Wimbledon finals, an overflow crowd of 60 chose to hear Joe Sylvester and Bill Robertie do the BG closed circuit analysis.

The first game went to Barabino via double and drop. "That's one for you," affirmed Stellingwerff. Then Jan went on a five point run to take a 5–1 lead. Rick rallied to trim Jan's advantage to 7–6, but lost the next game and took his first break. It was a well-timed decision. Upon returning, Roy ran off nine straight points to make the score 15–8 before Jan took a time out.

A dice mix by Steffingwerff to begin game 18 did little to derail the "Barabino Express." In seven more games, it was over. Final score: 23–13.

Although there were numerous small errors by both players, Sylvester and Robertie both felt Barabino clearly outplayed his less-experienced opponent. "When he was trailing 6–4, I still made Rick the 6-to-5 match favorite," said Sylvester.

Barabino's fine performance helped the U.S.A. earn 25 points—enough for victory in the Inter-Nation Contest. Germany (21 points) placed second and The Netherlands finished third (17 points).

In other major results, Rassoul Shaffaf

[*Continued on page 8*]

TO THE VICTOR GO THE SPOILS...

The Baron and Baroness of Culcreuch look on as Fiona and Jillian McMahon (granddaughters of the Baroness) award Rick Barabino over £14,000, a trophy and kisses.

1990 michigan summer championships

DESMOND IN SWEEP

Wins Open & World Cup Qualifier

Rudnick & Lockett Also Win

Don Desmond of Chicago is no longer the "Rodney Dangerfield of Backgammon." From now on, he'll *have* to get respect. Don's double victory in the Open and World Cup events at the Michigan Summer Championships (29 June–1 July, Sheraton Inn Flint, MI), coupled with victories at the '89 Midwest Champs, '90 Hawthorn Classic and 2nd in the '90 Indiana Open make Desmond the hottest player in the Midwest. For the 11th time, Flint Club director/editor Carol Joy Cole's "fun affair" drew scores of players from across North America making it one of the best-attended (and best-run) tournaments in the world.

In the 13-point Open finals, Desmond won from 12–5 down vs. Ralph Schaffner (Canada). He enjoyed another comeback against Mike Giordano in the World Cup finals. Trailing 11–2, Don rallied for a 13–11 victory.Total payday: over $12,000.

"In both matches, everybody had me written off. I loved it!" exclaimed Desmond.

Chicago area players dominated Intermediate competition with Kathy Rudnick topping Pittsburgh director Rich Catalano in the Main Flight and Leslie Lockett besting Saad Ghiso (MI) in Consolation. Results:

1990 MICHIGAN SUMMER CHAMPIONSHIPS

OPEN (77): 1st Don Desmond (IL); 2nd Ralph Schaffner (CAN); 3rd Abbas Zaltash (PA); 4th/5th Dean Muench (IL), Mark Richardson. Cons. 1st Jeff Acierno (NY); Cons. 2nd Dick Nelson (MI)
INTERMEDIATE (64): 1st Kathy Rudnick (IL); 2nd Rich Catalano (PA); 3rd Denny Leatherman (PA). Cons. 1st Leslie Lockett (IL); Cons. 2nd Saad Ghiso (MI); Cons. 3rd/4th Dave Pink (MI), Marjean Streitmatter (IL)
INT. OVERFLOW (16): 1st Mark Hartley (MI); 2nd Gus Pappas (CAN). Cons. 1st Sandy Grassel (MI)
NOVICE (16): 1st Carrie Morris (MI); 2nd Josh Lantto (MI); Cons. 1st Gail Lorick (MI)
WORLD CUP I (16): 1st Don Desmond (IL)
WORLD CUP II (8): 1st Ali Zaltash (PA)
SUMMER FREEZE-OUT (32): 1st Herb Roman
BLITZ (128): 1st John O'Hagen (IN); 2nd V.Mooney (AZ)
FLINT $500 (8): 1st Joe Monro (MI)
OPEN DOUBLES (32): 1st B. Meese (IN) & J. Roderick (NV); 2nd D. Cramer & B. Shifrin (IL); 3rd/4th R. Genter (PA) & S. Lennon (KY); G. Kay (IL) & S. Mitchell (IL)
LTD DOUBLES (12): 1st J. Lantto & N. Monro (MI)

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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Chicago POINT is published monthly. The subscription rate is $15/year ($20/year overseas in U.S. funds).

Advertising Rates: 2 3/8" x 3 1/4" = $25. 1/4 page = $45. 1/2 page = $75. Full page = $130. If the ad is not "camera ready," request typesetting for an additional $15 charge.

LETTERS

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

CORRECTING PROBLEM #159

In Joe Sylvester's May problem analysis, following move (a), White hits *20* times, not 16 as stated. Also, the summary paragraph contains a typo. *Move (c)* = 22 1/2 wins, not move (b). I realize, however, that the methodology was the important lesson of this problem.—*Ed Maslansky, Silver Spring, MD*

We're to blame for the typo in the summary paragraph. Joe inadvertently reversed White's number of hits.—Ed.

HOW ABOUT A MAGAZINE?

My friend Ron Whitney, club director of the New Jersey Backgammon Assn., showed me a copy of the *Chicago POINT* and I'm quite impressed with it. That's why I'm sending you $15 to receive (I think) the best newsletter in the United States!

One question I must ask you and other editors throughout the country. I love reading about backgammon and seeing photos of the top players. Why is there no legitimate backgammon magazine like *Chess Life* or the American Contract Bridge League's *Bulletin?* We backgammoners are dying for one and wonder when you guys are going to get together and produce it.—*Andrew Liebenthal, New York, NY*

The problem is monetary. Every newsletter in the world (including the POINT) is either losing money, or barely breaking even. Hence, we publish as a "labor of love." Magazines are much more expensive and a lot more work to produce. Just ask Michael Maxakuli, past editor of Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine (1978–1982).

In order for a magazine to make it, mainstream advertising is needed. Potential advertisers like five-figure circulation. Unfortunately, as of now, combined monthly circulation of every BG magazine in the world doesn't reach this figure.—Ed.

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

Jul 13-15	5th Federal International Tournament, Casino of Sanremo, Italy	2 76 00 37 05
Jul 15	Plymouth Summer Picnic/Doubles Tourney, Plymouth Twp. Park, MI	313/453-7356
Jul 16-22	World Backgammon Championship, Loews Hotel Monte-Carlo, Monaco	305/527-4033
Jul 19	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 21-22	Nation's Capital Summer Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Aug 3-5	Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY	716/442-8221
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	301/299-8265
Aug 13-19	Green Mountain Festival, Ascutney 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 9	1990-1991 New England Kickoff Tourney, Sheraton, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
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 14	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
Oct 19-21	8th New Hampshire Fall Classic & New England Doubles	603/863-4711
Oct 19-20	De Åbne Jydske Championships, Århus, Denmark	31/22 46 00
Oct 20	College Park Fall Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Oct 24-28	Caesars Tahoe Tournament, South Lake Tahoe, NV	702/826-1984
Nov 5	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
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
Nov 23-25	Holland Casino Open Tournament, Nijmegen	080/564628
Nov 29-Dec 2	Teacher's European Open Championships, Casino Deauville, France	31 98 66 22
Dec 9	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
Dec 23	Double Door, Amsterdam, Netherlands	0031 324014734
Jan 10-13	Seefeld International, Seefeld, Austria	08341 12825
Jan 19	College Park Winter Open, Promenade Party Room, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Jan 30-Feb 3	8th Nevada State Championship, Nugget Hotel/Casino, Reno, NV	702/851-1452

SOME THOUGHTS FROM LARRY STROMMEN ON THE JUNE *POINT*

(1) A headline describing the passing of anyone you wish to memorialize should be "Memorial Corner" or something to that effect. I think a title with the word "DIES" is too gross.

(2) How about a quarterly or annual listing of Intermediate level winners? At first, I didn't object to spotlighting Ron Stur's 1990 record in last month's *POINT*, but after another individual brought it to my attention, I now feel it is wrong to single out

[*Continued on page 3*]

LETTERS...

[*Continued from page 2*]

an individual to "watch." If directors do not take a firm hand in restricting successful Intermediate players, the ranks may be significantly reduced. If this happens, it would be bad for backgammon.

On the other hand, if a player with good equity chooses not to move up to the Open division and instead stop playing, he is only denying himself the enjoyment of the challenge. To take a firm hand, directors need a summary of Intermediate results that includes *all* winning Intermediates.

(3) In his letter to Miss Lonelyblots, Sterling Morals is unsure whether or not it is "legal" to drop a beaver. If he had read Jeff Ward's *Winning Is More Fun* (2nd Edition), he would have discovered on page 125 that whenever the cube is advanced to double its value, the offended player has the right to decline that level and thus lose the prior accepted stake. This applies to Beavers as well as to a succession of automatic doubles.

(4) What about a column titled, "The Director's Corner" where difficult rulings made at various tournaments are discussed? This could cover not only the ruling made, but also the underlying principle of the ruling and perhaps comments from the involved players. I feel it would be a very instructive (and effective) method of improving the quality of rulings made by today's directors. —*Larry Strommen, Indianapolis, IN*

RATE INTERMEDIATE EVENTS

First it was Ira Hoffberg. Now, it's Ron Stur. The debate rages on! How do you settle the eternal question? "When is a player too good to play in the Intermediate division?"

This problem has befuddled directors for years. In backgammon's "days of old," it was simpler. Only a relative handful of individuals played very well, so the Intermediate division was mostly composed of true beginners and fish. But nowadays, the level of play has risen so much that the best intermediate players (sandbaggers) could compete very effectively with the world champions of 15 years ago! And because many regional tournaments don't even offer beginner events, newcomers are forced to "get beat up" in a division where they don't have a prayer. No wonder many of them lose interest.

On the other side of the coin, most Intermediate players don't want to be forced into the Open where they must compete with a bunch of "world class" players. So, some of them drop out or avoid the events where directors force them up.

Just think how much easier it would be for directors to decide what category a player belonged in if all players had reliable ratings. Aha! The solution: *Rate Intermediate events!* Kent Goulding's system only rates Open events. Including Intermediate events would impose a much greater work load on KG, so the solution is to have more than one person do the data entry and then mail the computer disks to him for processing. This would enable the ratings to be updated in a very timely manner. Of course, I publically volunteer to help with data entry for Intermediate events.

With Intermediates reliably rated, directors could then publish their rating ceiling for playing in Intermediate events (1550 max, e.g.). Gee, this seems like the way USCF decides player eligibility. Trust me, it is and it will make backgammon tournaments more enjoyable for more players.—Neil Kazaross, San Diego, CA

We continue to believe that past performance is the best criterion for requiring an individual to move "up in class."—Ed. Δ

1990 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB

COMPILED THRU JUNE 30

LUCKY NELSON	13.12	Joann Feinstein	3.04	Jerry Brooks	0.88
TAK MORIOKA	12.16	Bart Levin	2.80	Norma Shyer	0.88
DAVE CRAMER	11.56	Bill Hoeflich	2.80	Joe Wollick	0.88
MARK KING	10.96	Marcy Sloan	2.80	Harold Seif	0.72
GARY KAY	10.64	Ron Stur	2.60	Ed Bauder	0.72
YAMIN YAMIN	10.44	Kathy Rudnick	2.60	George Kirkby	0.72
STU KATZ	10.16	Ed Buerger	2.48	Bill Hargrave	0.72
BRUCE WITTERT	8.56	Peter Kalba	2.40	Mike Fengya	0.64
ARNOLD ZOUSMER	7.04	Dean Muench	2.40	Femi Owiku	0.64
JAKE JACOBS	5.44	Sarg Serges	2.16	Hal Heinrich	0.64
BILL DAVIS	5.40	Greg Shore	2.16	David Rubin	0.56
PAUL FRANKS	5.20	Frank Callea	2.00	Mary Franks	0.56
DEEB SHALATI	5.12	Jay Ward	1.96	Mike Siegel	0.56
BOBBIE SHIFRIN	5.12	George Barr	1.80	Arline Levy	0.52
JOHN DEMIAN	4.88	Jolie Lewis	1.60	Reggie Porter	0.52
BOB ZAVORAL	4.80	Bill Keefe	1.52	Terry Moskowitz	0.48
DON DESMOND	4.72	Mike Spiropoulos	1.44	Richard Stawowy	0.48
JUDY BROWN	4.44	John Spatafora	1.44	Barbara Levinson	0.44
RICH GALEBA	4.08	Walt Schafer	1.44	Betsy Miller	0.40
JOE KOUCHARIAN	4.00	Ken Bond	1.36	Alex Caraplis	0.32
Tim Serges	3.92	Howard Markowitz	1.36	Gabriel Kairouz	0.32
Ralph Levy	3.84	V.W. Zimnicki	1.28	Mike Sutton	0.32
Andy Argy	3.68	Walter Trice	1.28	Larry Knoll, Jr.	0.28
Phyllis Smolinski	3.68	Herb Roman	1.12	Bernie Smuda	0.24
Rudy Emmelot	3.64	Bob Holyon	1.04	Larry Knoll	0.24
Alice Kay	3.40	Harry Cohn	0.96	Jeff Ferguson	0.16
Leslie Lockett	3.28	Randall Witt	0.88	Jill Ferdinand	0.16
Don Jayhan	3.20	Sharon Lennon	0.88	Ted Mann	0.12

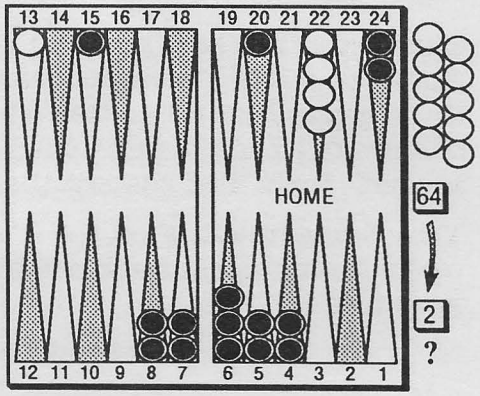
The Bar Point Club's June Player of the Month is **PAUL FRANKS**. Paul earned the honor with a 1st Cons. finish on June 5 and a Main Flight victory on June 12.

Stu Katz (3.52) and Lucky Nelson (3.20) were 2nd and 3rd respectively.

your move

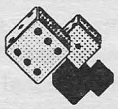
PROBLEM #161

Match to 9 points. White leads Black, 4 to 0. White doubles. **SHOULD BLACK ACCEPT?**



insight

ASK DANNY

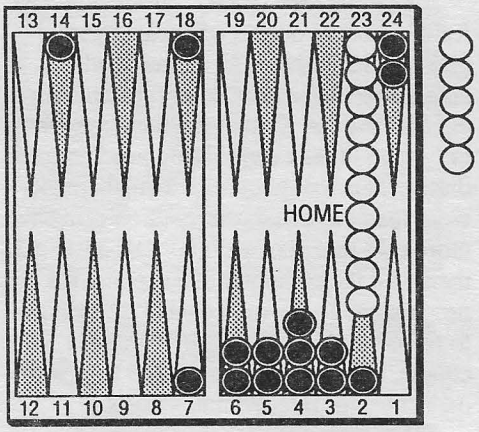


by Danny Kleinman

AN 'ODD' PLAY

Dear Danny: Many years ago, I watched Nack Ballard as Black play 4-3 in the following position:

TOURNAMENT DOUBLE MATCH POINT. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-3.**



Instead of running a back man, Nack brought a man to his bar-point (14/7).

After the game, I asked Nack about the logic of keeping two checkers on the 1-point and thus not giving White the opportunity to blot if she threw an ace. He told me that he in fact did want White to throw an immediate ace and thus get down to an odd number of checkers. Then he would run. This was in order to gain some equity from the chance of White eventually reaching a three-checker end position and rolling an ace to leave two blots.

When White has a large even number of checkers remaining on the deuce-point, does this logic seem valid? If so, when must Black forgo the strategy and simply run a back man?—Surprised by the Play

Dear Surprised: Let's examine what happens if White rolls an immediate (single) ace after each play. If Black has broken anchor, he gets hit. Then he has 11 chances in 36 to hit back (we'll ignore the times he dances with 2-2 and gets another shot), slightly better than 30% probability. Let's assume that not all of the hits are wins, only about 3/4 of them (since White has six men off). That's still a 22 1/2% chance of winning by an immediate hit.

If Black has retained the anchor, White has nine men left but leaves no immediate shot with her ace. Black still has chances of getting shots when White rolls a subsequent single ace (a 10-in-36 chance each time) but must then hit the shot (an 11-in-36 chance) and win from there (with a probability diminishing substantially for each extra man Black has borne off). I estimate that the chances of hitting a single shot add 6 1/2% winning chances when White has eight left, 2 1/2% when White has six left, 1% when White has four left, and 1/2% when White has one left.

What is the chance that White will come down to exactly three men before rolling a single ace? Less than 1-in-3. Sometimes White will roll her ace when she has nine, seven or five men left. Sometimes she will roll double-aces to remove Black's lone hitter. Sometimes she will roll a larger doublet when she has five men left. For Black to win in the way Nack suggests, therefore, requires a many-legged parlay. Let's call it 1-in-3 that White comes down to exactly three men, 10-in-36 that she then rolls a single ace, 20-in-36 that Black hits, 2-in-5 that Black wins from there. That's barely more than a 2% chance.

Adding up all Black's winning chances when he retains the anchor and White rolls an immediate single ace, I get about 12 1/2% —a reduction of 10% from the 22 1/2% chances obtained by breaking anchor.

Since the probability of a single ace is 10/36, breaking anchor costs about 1 winning chance in 36.

Now 1-in-36 is just the chance that White will roll an immediate *double*-ace. White's immediate double-ace crushes Black altogether when he has broken anchor, but preserves some winning chances when Black has kept the anchor. If these chances amount to as much as 20%, then the vigorish of double-aces reduces the cost of keeping anchor from 1 win in 36 to 1 win in 45.

Sorry to disagree with such a fine expert as Nack Ballard, for whom I have the utmost respect, but I estimate that his strategy of keeping anchor in the position you show reduces his winning chances slightly more than 2%. Thus his "logic" isn't "invalid": his play does create winning chances he'd otherwise forgo. But numerical estimates show that the winning chances he abandons exceed those he gains.—*Yours, Danny* Δ

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.

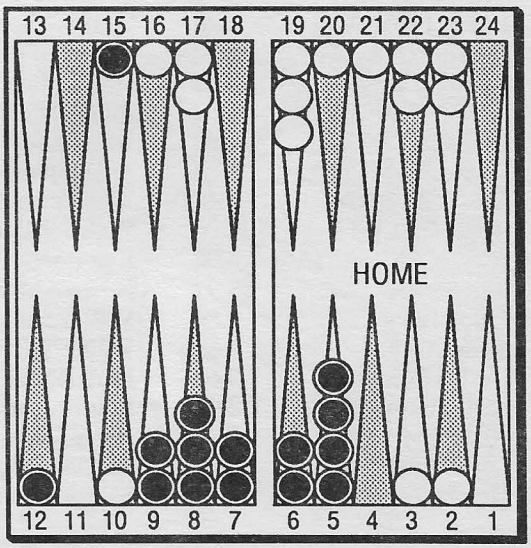
DICK TRACY PRIMESTOPPER PUZZLER

The Scene: You're White and it's your turn in the diagram shown at right. Your opponent Blackie has wagered you three grand that no matter what you roll, he'll have at least one of your back men trapped behind a full 6-prime after his next turn. You suspect that he's a dice mechanic.

Your Assignment: Find the only roll and play that will make it impossible for Blackie to complete a 6-prime on his next turn.

[*Case solved on page 7*]

You



Blackie

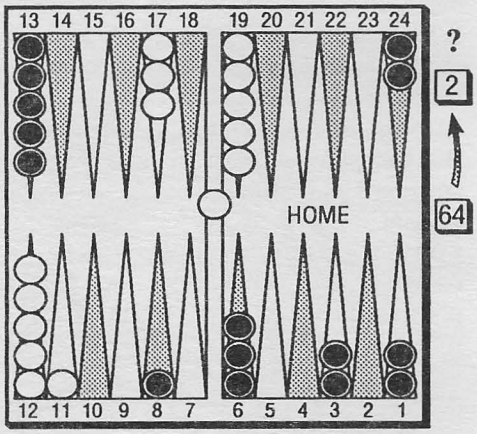
match/money cubes

THE PRICE OF GAMMONS

PART 1: MONEY PLAY

by Neil Kazaross

Money Game. Black doubles. **WHAT IS BLACK'S EQUITY IF WHITE TAKES?**



You may remember this blitz position [White rolls 6-4, Black rolls 5-5] from my March 1990 *Chicago POINT* column. At that time, I listed Black's probabilities based on 108 roll-outs:

Black won a single game (W_s) = 31.5%
Black won a gammon (W_g) = 25.0%
Black lost a single game (L_s) = 43.5%

Multiplying these percentages by the points Black lost or won and summing them yields Black an equity of +0.76. Hence White has a clear take and Black a clearly proper double.

In my opinion, there is an easier way to access White's proper cube decision and (if needed) determine her equity. It's called the "Gammon Price" method and it's the one I use at the table both in money and match play. This concept was most lucidly presented in Danny Kleinman's *Vision Laughs At Counting* (1980). Unfortunately, there has been precious little written about it since, anywhere in backgammon literature.

Assuming a win is worth one unit, the Gammon Price (GP) is simply the value added from winning a gammon divided by the value lost from losing the game. Let's compute the GP for money play = GP_m (assuming a 1-cube). Winning a gammon turns a 1 point win into a 2 point win for a gain of 1. Losing the game turns a 1 point win into a 1 point loss for a loss of 2. Thus in money play:

$$GP_m = \frac{\text{Value gained from winning a gammon}}{\text{Value lost from losing the game}} = 1/2.$$

So we see that in money play, winning the gammon is half as important as winning the game. Conversely, winning the game is twice as important as winning the gammon.

Let me now show you how to use the Gammon Price to evaluate the diagrammed cube position and equity. We'll use GP_m to determine Black's Gammon Adjusted Winning Probability (GAWP). Note: G = gammon and TW = total wins.

GAWP = TW + [GP_m x (G won – G lost)]
Black TW = 31.5% + 25.0% = 56.5%
Black G won – G lost = 25% – 0% = 25%
Money game Gammon Price = GP_m = 1/2

Therefore:
Black GAWP = 56.5% + 1/2 (25%) = 69%

Now for White: TW = 43.5%
G won – G lost = 0% – 25% = –25%
White GAWP = 43.5% + 1/2 (–25%) = 31%

69% + 31% = 100% so we can see that this method is valid.

Black's equity if White accepts the 2-cube is:

2 (69.0% – 31.0%) = +0.76

This is the same value that was determined in my last column using the long-hand method.

Do GAWP calculations seem like a lot of work? Assume you're White and you're doubled in a position where you assess your total winning chances (after you take) at 40%, but you lose 40% gammons and win 5% gammons. Do you take for money?

You can use the old method of multiplying four different percentages by the points won and lost for each outcome and them sum them in you head to determine an equity you don't even need to know, *or* you can use the GAWP method:

GAWP = TW + [GP_m x (G won – G lost)]
= 40% + 1/2 (5% – 40%)
= 40% + 1/2 (–35%) = 22 1/2%

Since a GAWP of 22 1/2% is less than the 25% needed for a proper take, White should pass. Trust me: using GAWP to evaluate this cube decision is much easier!

A final note about equities. What is White's equity if she makes a mistake and takes the 2-cube with a GAWP of 22 1/2%? The following formula is for Equity = E:

E = 2 x cube level x (GAWP – 50%)
= 2 x 2 x (22 1/2% – 50%)
= 4 x (–27 1/2%) = –1.10

Part 2 of "The Price of Gammons" will cover match play and how the GP and GAWP change with the score. I advise you to study this column carefully because it presents information necessary to understand my next column [Fall 1990]. Δ

Labor Day Tourney Returns to INDY

August 31st–Sept. 3rd, 1990

NLD

The National Labor Day Backgammon Tournament once again will be held in INDIANAPOLIS at the Holiday Inn–Union Station 123 W. Louisiana St., Indianapolis. For more information, call **Butch or Mary Ann Meese: (317) 845-8435.**

Green Mountain Festival of Backgammon

August 13–19, 1990
Ascutney Mountain Resort
Brownsville, Vermont
Les & Sue Boyd, Directors

Schedule
Mon–Tue .. Warm-up Tourney
Wed–Fri ..... Vermont State
Sat–Sun ... Ascutney Tourney

Apartment Rates

	Daily	Weekly
1 Bedroom	$90	$400
2 Bedroom	$160	$500
3 Bedroom	$210	$600

Entry Fees
Open–$300 Int–$150 Beg–$60

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ILLINOIS ACTION

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB

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).

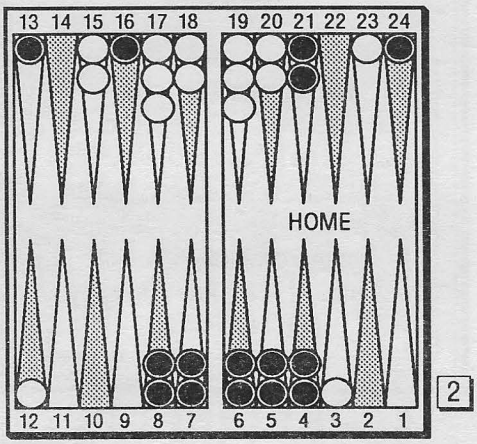
NORTH CLUB: Daily side play at 4747 W. Peterson (Room 402), Chicago. Howard Markowitz (312/286-8417).

last month's position

PROBLEM #160 SOLVED

by Kit Woolsey

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



In prime vs. prime positions, a player has two considerations. First of all, he must attempt to contain one or more opposing men behind his own prime. Secondly and equally important, he must avoid being trapped himself. The proper blend of offense and defense is often very difficult to find. This problem is a good example of such a position.

It is clear that two of the 5s must be used to hit and make the 3-point. 8/3* (2) advances the prime and puts an opposing man on the bar. More importantly however, it gets White's back man off of the "launching pad." Since White must reach the edge of the prime before she can escape, hitting is of highest priority. (Hitting loose on the 3-point [13/3] also gets White off the edge, but it leaves her a direct shot and has no other redeeming features.) The other two 5s are not so clear.

One obvious candidate is to further advance the 5-prime by building the 2-point. This has the advantage of making it more difficult for White to enter, thus increasing Black's chances of picking up another blot and buying more "escape time." However, there are several drawbacks. When White enters, it is always at the edge of the prime, and Black doesn't have the ammunition in place to drive her back or complete the closeout. Furthermore, even if White doesn't enter and Black hits a second blot, closing White out coupled with trying to escape a broken 5-prime will be a tall order.

13/8, 16/11 is the best way for Black to complete his prime. Unfortunately, Black will be forced to break it if he doesn't roll a 5 immediately. Since this play also makes it less likely to pick up a second blot, it appears to be clearly inferior.

Of the escaping plays, 21/16 (2) best insures that Black will not be forced to crunch for a while. However, this play has two weaknesses. First, Black makes no serious move toward completing his prime. Second, Black leaves the man on the 24-point stranded. While this may not immediately seem too serious, if White enters and gets to work on her own prime, Black may wish he was able to form an advanced anchor.

To me, 21/16, 13/8 appears to be the most constructive. The checker on the 8-point is very important, for not only is it the fastest start towards building a full prime, but it serves as a potential attacker should White enter on the 2-point. The loss of the shooter from the midpoint is illusionary because Black can hit with an ace from the 24-point. By establishing the 16-point, Black stops White from hitting with an entering 4 and assures himself a reasonable amount of pips to play before he has to worry about crunching. In addition, the remaining man on the 21-point serves as a potential advanced anchor should Black roll a 3 soon. Granted, this play won't look too good if White responds with 6-2 or double 2s, but those are the chances one must take.

In complex positions, if a play can be found which makes considerable progress on both sides of the board, than that play is usually better than one that concentrates only on offensive or only on defense. Leaving a few jokers for the opponent should not be much of a consideration if the play otherwise leads to the desired objectives. Δ

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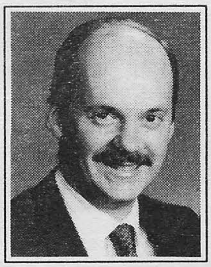

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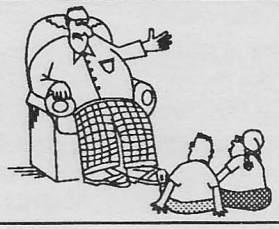
uncle jake

DROPPABLE BEAVER II– THE DAM THING'S BACK!



by Jake Jacobs

"Uncle Jake, do you know any stories about beavers?"

"Michael, is this the old one, 'Why is a hunter near a dam like a girl in a very short skirt?' Don't forget, I finished junior high school, so I've already heard all of these."

"No, Uncle. Christina and I were looking through your June 1990 *Chicago POINT* newsletter to see if our picture was in there again, and we saw this letter to Miss Lonely-blots from Sterling Morals that was all about beavers."

"Sterling Morals! The 'Metal Man' we used to call him—morals of sterling and head of lead. The guy wants to drop beavers. I hope he brings his gold card."

"So you think he can't drop a beaver, Uncle Jake?"

"Christina, of course he can. Look, all this stuff—beavers, raccoons, automatic doubles, the Jacoby Rule—they aren't rules, they're options. If you and I agree to them, that's our business. Rules come up when you run out of options:

> 'Mr. Director, I'd like to drop my opponent's beaver; we have no agreement about this.'
>
> 'The rule is that you may drop at any time your opponent doubles the value of the cube.'"

"But what about all this *Kauder Paradox* stuff? I'm only in the sixth grade. We don't study physics for six more years!"

"Don't hyperventilate, Michael. Physics is easy stuff. I can teach you all the basics like: If moving bodies collide, which one goes in the corner pocket? And, when you're at sea level, if your opponent is a real steamer, how much pressure do you have to put on him to make him explode?

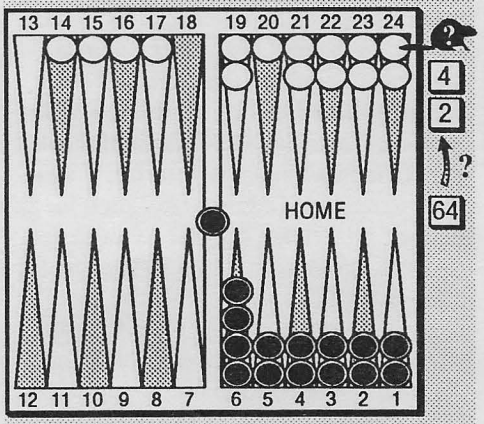
"Anyway, the *Kauder Paradox* doesn't have anything to do with that. It's like, the Jacoby Rule opens a window, the beaver accidently closes it, and the *Kauder Paradox* is the tiny little crack at the bottom. Dropping beavers doesn't have a thing to do with it. If you can line me up opponents who'll drop my beavers, I'll pay a finder's fee. I mean, whether their double was right or wrong, how can I bitch if they drop my beaver? From their side, they're just exercising their rights. The only way they can get hurt is if their keeper lets them play with sharp-cornered dice."

"So, are you going to tell people about this, or will they think you're trying to get the last word?"

"Christina, I don't care what people think, as long as they pay cash. Besides, generosity is my byword. I'm happy if the other guy has the last words, just so they're: 'Uncle Jake, you were right all along.'" Δ

What is the KAUDER PARADOX?

In the money game situation shown below, with the Jacoby Rule and Beavers in effect, let's assume that when Black doubles, he wins a gammon every time he hits. We'll further assume that if Black fails to enter, White will double and Black will pass.



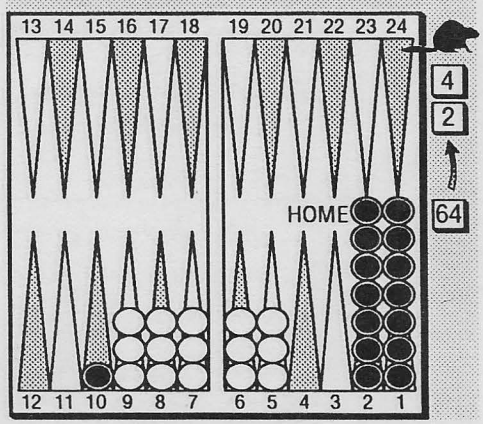
When Black doesn't double, in 36 games, he will win 11 single points and loses 25 for a net loss of –14 points.

When Black doubles and White doesn't Beaver, Black reduces his loss to (11 x 4 pts.) – (25 x 2 pts.) = –6 points. And when White Beavers Black's double, Black's net loss is (11 x 8 pts.) – (25 x 4 pts.) = –12 pts.

So we see that it's right for Black to double and also right for White to Beaver. This is the "Kauder Paradox," named for James Kauder and first referenced in Danny Kleinman's book *Vision Laughs At Counting.* [The position was also referenced between 1980–1982 in the *Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine,* and Bill Robertie analyzed it in his *Advanced Backgammon.*]

The fallacy of the above position is that Black doesn't win a gammon every time. Hence with Beavers in effect, Black's initial double is incorrect.

The following position demonstrates a true example of the Kauder Paradox (assuming Black cannot accept White's recube if he fails to roll a prime-leaping 6):



DICK TRACY PRIMESTOPPER PUZZLER

SOLVED

[*From page 4*]

The Solution: White must hit or Blackie will simply roll 5-2 and build his 10-point. If White hits two checkers with 2-3, Blackie will roll 1-1, enter both men and make his 4-point. When White hits the 12-blot with 1-1 or 2-2, he cannot both block Blackie's double ace and double 5 prime-making returns.

Only White's roll of 5-5 makes it impossible for Blackie to build an immediate prime. 10/15*, 19/24(2) and 16/21 immediately removes the double 5 threat and stops Blackie's good 1-1 and 4-4 rolls.

AMALGAMATION

Chicago POINT now has active subscribers in 35 states and 25 countries spanning five continents... In May 1985, former Canadian Open winner **Scotty Mitchell** (now living in Chicago) made a bet with his wife that he could go without playing backgammon for five years. Guess what? The five years are up and Scott's back to gammon! ... Within the past year, *Backgammon Magazin* (Germany) editor **Haio Forler** has interviewed **Danny Kleinman, Alan Steffen, Carol Joy Cole, Emil Mortuk, Roy Friedman** and **Bill Barron.** If you want to read the English translation for any of these interviews, mail $2 for each one to: Backgammon Magazin, Römerstr. 17, 5300 Bonn 1, Germany... Oops! We neglected to mention that **Nick Begakis** was elected Chairman of the Backgammon Assn. of South Australia in Spring 1990... ISLE OF MAN TIDBITS: Believe it or not, **Joe Sylvester** was actually trying to lose pounds in Great Britain (weight, not currency). Beginning his July European tour, Joe tipped the scales at 190... Former San Diego player **Trish Hegland** has been traveling throughout Europe playing backgammon since the spring. Travel is nothing new for Trish. She used to perform around the country as a showgirl for Circus Vargas... The registration form at the Championship of Great Britain asked each participant, "Do You Smoke?" The results were: Yes-33%, No-53%, No but it doesn't worry me-14%. Eliminating USA players' votes produced: Yes-41%, No-47%, No but it doesn't worry me-12%... When **Bridget Robinson** (Baroness of Culcreuch) was asked, "Where's **Bill Robertie**" on the opening day of the Viking Kickoff, she responded, "He's in Peel, looking at the ancient ruins." **Paul Smart,** a close friend quipped back, "I didn't know **Hercules** [the Baron of Culcreuch] lived in Peel!" Δ

EUROPEAN RANKINGS

Here is the Backgammon Players Club of Europe's Top 10 (through May 1990) along with the only two Americans to rank in the Top 50.

1.	Fred Hoffmann	Germany
2.	Gerd Schiesser	Germany
3.	Uli Koch	Germany
4.	Karl Laubmeier	Germany
5.	Evert Van-Eyck	Netherlands
6.	Matthias Pauen	Germany
7.	Norbert Stippler	Germany
8.	Manto Sequeira	Portugal
9.	Dieter Siegfried	Germany
10.	Friedel Brokmeier	Germany
23.	Perry Gartner	USA
49	Jim Baroff	USA

BARABINO...

[*Continued from page 1*]

Zomorodi (Germany) edged Mike Shadkin (US) in the Intermediate, P. Hoffer (Austria) claimed the Beginner title, this reporter won the Viking Kickoff, and Paul Magriel (U.S.) won the £1000 Colossus Jackpot. Results:

1990 CHAMPIONSHIP OF GREAT BRITAIN

CHAMPIONSHIP (92): 1st Rick Barabino (US); 2nd J. Stellingwerff (NETH); 3rd/4th M. Hollenderer (GER), P. Van Rooy (NETH); 5th/8th P. Sarzynski (GER), J. Schiff (ISR), Frank Talbot (US), Stan Tomchin (US). 1-Cons. 1st I. Shousha (EGY); 1-Cons. 2nd M. Sequeira (PORT); 1-Cons. 3rd/4th H. Johanni (GER), A. McLean (UK). 2-Cons. 1st P. Smart (IOM); 2-Cons 2nd C. Lestrade (MONC). LC 1st P. Marmorstein (GER); LC 2nd F. Kirschner (GER)

INTERMEDIATE (62): 1st R. S. Zomorodi (GER); 2nd Mike Shadkin (US); 3rd/4th R. Menger (GER), J. Johnson (UK). 1-Cons. 1st P. Money (UK); 1-Cons. 2nd J. Thompson-Schwarb (IRE). 2-Cons. 1st P. Tabberer (UK); 2-Cons. 2nd T. Connor (UK). LC 1st P. Bennet (UK); LC 2nd R. Gibney (UK)

BEGINNER (22): 1st P. Hoffer (AUS); 2nd A. Kay (UK); 3rd J. Rolland (UK); 4th G. Bray (UK)

ISLE OF MAN BREWERIES INTER-NATION CONTEST: 1st USA (Barabino, Talbot, Tomchin, Koonman, Contos, Shadkin); 2nd Germany; 3rd Netherlands

VIKING KICKOFF (512): 1st Bill Davis (US); 2nd Howard Ring (US); 3rd/4th R. Menger (GER), Emil Mortuk (US)

£1000 JACKPOT (8): 1st Paul Magriel (US); 2nd I. Shousha (EGY)

£400 JACKPOT (23): 1st T. Lechich (AUSL); 2nd Howard Ring (US)

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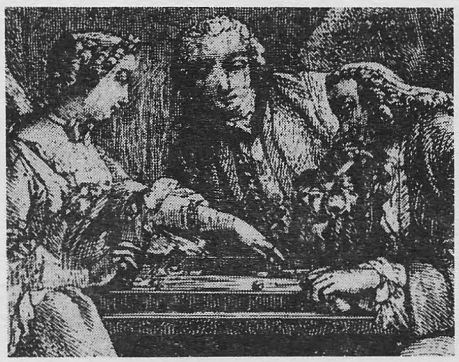

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