

1991 midwest backgammon championships

TWO FOR TALBOT
MICHIGAN MASTER GRABS HIS
SECOND MIDWEST CHAMP TITLE
A "LUCKY" WIN IN THE ADVANCED

Call Michigan's Frank Talbot a "two-timer" these days and he'll thank you for the compliment. The internationally-known backgammon champion became the first individual to win the Midwest Backgammon Championships twice. Chicago Bar Point Club sponsored the event for the eighth consecutive year 22-24 March at the Oak Brook Marriott Hotel. A record 170 players from 18 states and three foreign countries (Canada, Costa Rica, Germany) entered the Main tournaments.

Except for his double-match point win over Chicago's Steve Tennant in the quarterfinals, Frank didn't have a close match. He rolled past Mark Richardson (NV) and then staged a "Texas Massacre" against Nathan Jones, Harvey Huie and finally Malcolm Davis who Frank shut out 13-0 in the semifinals.

Talbot's opponent in the 15 point finals was Lenny Loder, a computer systems analyst now residing in the Chicago area. "I used to play Lenny in Detroit and felt I was a favorite against him when we sat down," commented Talbot after the match. "But in Jan. 1990, we met in the finals of Sandy Kaplan's Michigan Invitational and he beat me, so I wasn't taking anything for granted."

Loder's path to the finals included victories over CBPC "Player of the Ages" Tak Morioka, and "1991 Professor of Backgammon" Joe Sylvester (Joe won that title at the tournament in the *Backgammon Exam*). An expert pocket billiards player, Lenny snookered division newcomer David Harth (WI) 13-6 to reach the finals.

The 15-point Championship match began at 3:00 P.M. with Larry Strommen's video camera recording all the action. Lenny jumped off to a 2-0 lead, but three games and two gammons later, Frank commanded an 8-3 advantage. In the next

[Continued on page 6]

**MARKOWITZ BUYS THE NNBA
TAKES CONTROL OF BACKGAMMON IN NEVADA**

Chicago's Howard Markowitz, 50-year-old player/promoter of backgammon for nearly 15 years, has purchased the Northern Nevada Backgammon Association. According to NNBA director Mark Richardson, the five-figure deal gives Markowitz the club's international mailing list, tournament backgammon boards and equipment, and a no-competition clause restricting Richardson and partner Jim Roderick from directing a backgammon tournament with more than 32 players anywhere in the world until 1995.

In an interview conducted at the recent Midwest Championships, Richardson discussed his reasons for the decision: "Following the Caesars Tahoe tournament in October, Jim and I were both totally exhausted. Jim is an instructor at the University of Nevada and the tourney work load was beginning to cause conflicts with his career.

"My life is going in a lot of directions as well. I have a printing business; I'm an art dealer; and I'm involved in a lot of community activities. Also, Maria and I have two children, ages one and two, so with backgammon, I was spreading myself real thin.

"At the February Reno tournament, Jim asked a few individuals including Howard Markowitz if they might be interested in taking over. Howard called us the next week with serious intentions. He flew out to Reno and we spent two days discussing the deal.

"Eventually, a letter of agreement was drawn up and mailed to Howard. He accepted the terms and we completed the transaction at the Midwest Championships."

There is little doubt that the increased work load Richardson mentions was due in part to the death of the NNBA's third partner, Devid Heffner, who according to Jim Roderick, had picked up a lot of the tournament operational duties and was beginning to computerize much of the paperwork prior to his passing in May 1990.

Markowitz, the former Gammon's of Chicago (1979-1984) director, staged many successful tournaments throughout Chicagoland in the 1980s. Following a brief retirement from the promotional part of the game in May 1989, he reteamed with Joann Feinstein earlier this year and will co-direct the upcoming Chicago Open (24-27 May) and Fall Classic (25-27 Oct.). A schedule of upcoming Nevada tournaments has not been finalized, but Markowitz intends to make an aggressive effort to bring gammon back to Las Vegas.

For that reason, Markowitz has renamed his new organization the Nevada Backgammon Association (dropping the "Northern"). He discusses his aspirations for the NBA in the prepared statement shown below. Δ



New Nevada Backgammon Assn. owner Howard Markowitz at the Midwest Championships.

“The first subject to be commented on is that I consider it a privilege to have the opportunity to continue directing and promoting backgammon tournaments in the fine tradition of the Northern Nevada Backgammon Association. Dave Heffner, Mark Richardson and Jim Roderick have given the backgammon community some of its very finest moments and I pledge to give my best to equal that quality. It is my intention to have tournaments not only in Reno, but also in Las Vegas and anywhere else that is an appealing location for the players. We're in the process of assembling a staff comprised of some of the best current tournament directors in the United States. I hope to earn the same support given the Reno tournaments in the past.”—Howard Markowitz

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT
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THANKS FROM MARK RICHARDSON

It has been very rewarding personally to have been able to provide the backgammon community with large, enjoyable, high-equity tournaments over the past eight years. I will always cherish the many friendships and memories that have developed as a result. However, time demands on Jim Roderick and myself have been great and we do have other things of great importance that would sometimes be neglected if we were to continue running 300+ player tournaments in a proper manner.

When someone with the integrity and proven ability of Howard Markowitz showed an interest in taking over this massive work load, it made our decision to step aside much easier. I feel Howard has a commitment to continue hosting first-class events in Nevada. I wish him the best and will remain available to help.

I also wish to thank the many special people who have supported the Northern Nevada Backgammon Association tournaments and added so much meaning to my life and to backgammon in general for

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BACKGAMMON						
1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

* Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

Apr 5-7	12th Annual Granite State Open, Woodbound Inn, Jaffrey, NH	603/863-4711
Apr 6	Springfield Spring Open Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/789-6275
Apr 7	Cavendish North Monthly Tournament, Southfield, MI	313/642-9616
Apr 13	Connecticut State Championships, Hall of Fame, Southington, CT	203/755-9749
Apr 14	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Fields, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Apr 14*	Minuteman BG Club Tournament, Sit'n Bull Pub, Maynard, MA	617/863-0012
Apr 18	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Apr 19	1991 Greater New York Club Championship, Long Island, NY	516/334-4833
Apr 20	College Park Spring Open, Promenade Party Room, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Apr 20	Atlanta Backgammon Association Monthly, Taco-Mac, Atlanta, GA	404/921-0672
Apr 21	Central Illinois BG Club Spring Annual, Sly Fox Pub, Lacon, IL	309/692-6909
Apr 21	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/641-2091
Apr 27*	Bayou Club Bimonthly Tournament, Houstonian, Houston, TX	713/498-4141
Apr 27	Garage Door Bimonthly Tournament, Rochester, NY	716/442-8221
May 3-5	39th Indiana Open, Wyndham Garden Hotel, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
May 16*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
May 19*	Milwaukee Sunday Bimonthly, John Hawks Pub, Milwaukee, WI	414/463-2498
May 24-27	12th Chicago Open, Westin O'Hare Hotel, Rosemont, IL	708/674-0120
May 24-27	Boston Symphony Orch. Benefit, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/641-2091
May30-Jun2	Sertoma Spring Invitational Tournament, Winn Ranch, Leander, TX	512/267-3968
Jun 9*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Fields, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Jun 9*	Year-End Tournament & NEBC Finals, Sheraton Com., Cambridge, MA	617/641-2091
Jul 4*	Special Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 5-7	Michigan Summer Championships, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 13-14	College Park Summer Championship, The Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Aug 2-4	Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY	716/442-8221
Aug 12-18	Vermont Festival, Stratton Mountain Inn, Stratton Mountain, VT	305/527-4033
Aug30-Sep2	National Labor Day Tournament, Raddison Hotel, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Sep 14*	Connecticut Open, Hall of Fame, Southington, CT	203/755-9749

OUTSIDE USA

Apr 1	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/3 689918
Apr 18-21	18th Byblos European Championship, St. Tropez, France	33/9497 0004
Apr 24-28	Australian Open Championship, Hyatt Kingsgate, Sydney, Australia	02/955 7726
May 6	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/3 689918
May 6-12	Championship of Great Britain, Torrequebrada, Costa del Sol, Spain	44624/851045
May 25-26	BIBA Trophy Tournament, Post House Hotel, Crick near Rugby, England	0522/721630
Jun 3	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/3 689918
Jun 7-10*	Australian National Championship, Melbourne, Victoria	03/266-4209
Jun 14-16	3rd International Tournament, Casinò Municipale di Veniza, Italy	041/521 1029
Jul 1	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/3 689918
Jul 11-14	San Remo International Tournament, San Remo, Italy	39/2 76003705
Jul 15-21	1991 World Championship, Hôtel Loews, Monte-Carlo, Monaco	305/527-4033
Aug 5*	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/3 689918
Aug31-Sep1*	BIBA Trophy Tournament, Post House Hotel, Crick near Rugby, England	0522/721630

nearly a decade.—Mark Richardson,
NNBA, Reno, NV

WANTS A WORLD CLUB LISTING

Several years ago, I wrote asking if you could publish a list of International clubs and their tournament information. I still believe this is a viable idea. I would think that between your subscribers and Alberto da Pra, at least a preliminary listing could be compiled. As people travel, they want to play. For example, we have had players from a number of countries attend our monthly tournaments as a direct result of

your listing our monthly events in "Mark Your Calendar."

Every year, at least five of our members ask me for a copy of your annual North American club listings. I'm sure that many or our European members would appreciate a similar listing of their clubs in Europe, especially those who travel extensively throughout their continent.

I realize that preparing such a list may require a great deal of extra work on your part, but this is one of the prices you pay for doing such an outstanding job for the

[Continues]

backgammon community.—*Jerry Godsey, president, Hong Kong Backgammon Club*

Sorry Jerry. You can't flatter us into compiling a Worldwide club listing. Keeping the North American listing is enough work in its own right. Perhaps an individual in Europe (or . . . Hong Kong!) would be willing to coordinate this mammoth task.

By the way, for a free copy of the 1991 listing of "Backgammon Clubs In North America," send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: CHICAGO POINT; 2726 W. Lunt Ave.; Chicago, IL 60645-3039.—Ed.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM JERRY, AND THIS ONE COMPUTES

I've been reading with great interest the reviews of Expert Backgammon™ by Thomas Johnson. Do you have any idea when it will be available for IBM compatible computers? It certainly would be good to have an opponent here in Macau.—*Jerry Godsey, president, Hong Kong Backgammon Club*

Tom Johnson has recently obtained an IBM compatible and is committed to doing the program conversion. No date of completion has been set. For more information on Expert Backgammon™ for the Macintosh, write to: Komodo Software; 346 Costello Court; Los Altos, CA 94024.—Ed.

NO NUKE CUBES

Danny Kleinman's "insight" into how to fight the Persian Gulf war marred an otherwise excellent Feb. 1991 issue of the CHICAGO POINT. To use his own rhetoric against him, "I find *Danny's article* to be of dubious value for backgammon, and . . . for modern war as well."

Mr. Kleinman obviously has no concept of modern military strategy, nor does he understand the political, social, economic and environmental ramifications of his so-called "nuke-cube."

If Mr. Kleinman continues to abandon backgammon analysis for soap-boxing, I urge the POINT to seek out a new columnist.—*Gregory Daniel, St. Charles, MO*

Mr. Kleinman was not "soap-boxing" as you suggest. He was answering a backgammon-related question asked of him by another reader.—Ed.

'FRIENDLY FIRE' WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER

I'm honored to have my old classmate Dr. David Cramer respond to my February column where I advocated the threat of strategic nuclear weapons as a viable option in the Persian Gulf conflict. But I certainly don't feel "UNDER ATTACK" as your heading read. I haven't been assaulted, injured, insulted or silenced. Dave simply disagreed with *one* opinion I expressed in reply to a specific question put to me by another reader, and argued vigorously for a contrary opinion.

Even though he has not (yet) changed my opinion, nor I his, I thank him for his thoughtful and civil arguments. Sometimes I'm wrong. How will I ever find out without people like Dave to help me?—*Danny Kleinman, Los Angeles, CA*

ROY WOULDN'T DOUBLE

I disagree with Kit Woolsey's analysis in the solution to Problem #168 (CHICAGO POINT, March 1991). I believe that Black's expected profit after a double/take is less than one-half of a point, so that there is *no* question at all about the position being a take.

Should Black double? Almost certainly not as Black has hardly any sequences that lose his market by a significant margin.—*Roy Friedman, LeadingEdge Backgammon, Lexington, MA*

[Continued on page 9]

1991 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED THRU MAR. 31

TAK MORIOKA	12.88	Paul Franks	2.32	Mark King	0.80
BRUCE WITTERT	7.36	Alex Itkin	2.24	Kathy Rudnick	0.80
DAVE CRAMER	6.32	Ed Bauder	1.92	David Rockwell	0.72
GARY KAY	6.16	René Wojtysiak	1.84	Bobbie Shifrin	0.68
DON DESMOND	6.08	Betsy Miller	1.52	Harold Seif	0.64
RALPH LEVY	5.72	Marcy Sloan	1.52	Dean Muench	0.56
YAMIN YAMIN	5.36	Harold Grote	1.44	Barbara Levinson	0.56
DEEB SHALATI	5.32	Alex Caraplis	1.44	Howard Ring	0.56
DON JAYHAN	4.40	David Lynn	1.28	Dan Judd	0.56
JOE KOUCHEARIAN	4.40	Joann Feinstein	1.28	Ken Bond	0.48
GEORGE BARR	4.32	Leslie Lockett	1.28	Norma Shyer	0.48
MARY FRANKS	4.16	Frank Callea	1.12	George Kirkby	0.44
LUCKY NELSON	3.92	Tim Serges	1.12	V.W. Zimmnicki	0.40
STU KATZ	3.36	Ed Buerger	1.12	Mike Cohen	0.40
STEVE POTASHNICK	3.36	Peter Berkman	1.12	Barry Miller	0.40
SARG SERGES	3.36	Jolie Lewis	1.08	Kurt Warning	0.40
JAKE JACOBS	3.20	Phyllis Smolinski	0.96	Dean Muench	0.40
HOWARD MARKOWITZ	3.04	Bill Davis	0.96	Jeff Vaughn	0.32
ALICE KAY	2.88	Herb Roman	0.96	Larry Knoll	0.24
FEMI OWIKU	2.80	Greg Try	0.92	Richard Stawowy	0.20
Beverly Klene	2.48	Mike Landau	0.88	Don Marek	0.20
Lenny Loder	2.48	Peter Naguib	0.88	Mickey Kaplan	0.16
David Rubin	2.40				

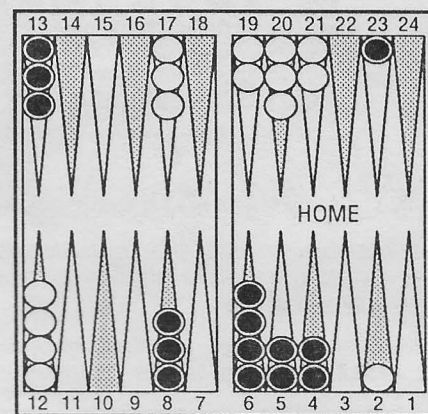
Checking our records, we note that **DON DESMOND's** last Chicagoland Player of the Month honor was at Gammon's of Chicago in May 1981. Now nearly ten years later, Don again earns P.O.M. recognition, this time at the Chicago Bar Point Club. Don's 4.40 March total out paced runners-up Bruce Wittert (3.52) and Femi Owiku (2.80).

If you finish in the Top 20 for 1991 (capitalized names on list), you'll be entered in a drawing for over \$300 worth of valuable electronic merchandise. The higher you finish, the better your winning chances. Individual awards: 1st—Trophy + \$200, 2nd—\$125, 3rd—\$75. 1st through 20th—engraved marble paperweight. 1st through 6th—Invitation to participate on the Chicago Bar Point Club team in the 1992 Illinois State Challenge Cup.

your move

PROBLEM #170

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.**



ASK DANNY

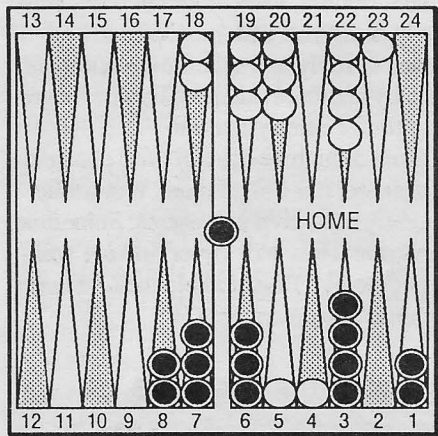


by Danny Kleinman

DOUBLE-ACES FROM THE BAR

Dear Danny: The following position came up in a club match at double-match point:

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



The three possible alternatives that make sense to me are:

- (a) Bar/23*, 3/2 (2)
- (b) Bar/24, 6/5*, 7/5
- (c) Bar/23*, 6/5*/4*

Each seems reasonable to me. Could you please provide me with an analysis of the possibilities?—Ed Maslansky, Silver Spring, MD

DEAR ED: I share some of your puzzlement over this position, but will try to resolve it.

With play (b), you make a useful point, the 5-point, but strip your higher points. You keep your straggler back on the ace-point, where he can't escape with any 6. Indeed, several of your 6s will play badly. Your opponent can anchor, hit or escape, while you retain the possibility of crashing. I would reject (b), and any other play which stays on the ace-point, in favor of almost any play which hits on the deuce-point and prepares to escape on 6s next.

(a) is certainly appealing. It makes another inside point with exactly the men you'd most like to make it with—those otherwise useless spares on the 3-point. It keeps active builders for making the 5- and 4-points. It is subject, however, not only to White's return loose hits on the deuce-point, but also to White's entering and escaping or simply entering and anchoring. You can still fail to escape and get hit or pointed on in White's home board later.

(c) appeals to me more than (a) because it keeps White off balance. She's unlikely to be able either to anchor or hit loose immediately. This will give you time for

escape as well as for making more inside points.

A fourth play appeals to me slightly more than the three you list:

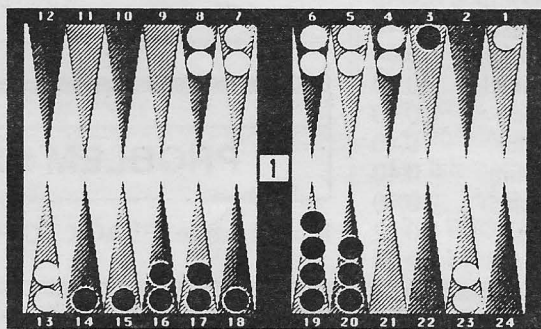
(d) Bar/23*, 7/5*. Two on the bar will keep White almost as off-balance as three. You'll be slotting a slightly more valuable point, and keeping a spare on the point you're less willing to break, the 6-point rather than the 7-point. Your blot on the 5-point will be a more useful builder for the 2-point than a blot on the 4-point would be. If White enters with a 2, you can attack on the 2-point with a 3 from the 5-point; but a 2 from the 4-point duplicates the 2 you need to advance in White's home board. The only real drawback to (d) in comparison with (c) is that it lets White anchor on a single 4 from the bar.

Likewise, (c) and (d) have a common drawback in comparison with (a): the hit they risk sends a *second* man back. Still I want to keep White on the bar so much, and especially to keep him from making the 5-anchor, that I accept that risk.

All in all, I like (d) by a hair over (c), (c) by a nose over (a), and (a) by a neck over (b).—Yours, Danny

Questions for Danny Kleinman should be addressed to: Ask Danny, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645-3039.

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White to play 21
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Correct move: 4/6*, 3/1



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

Tuesday, 7:00 P.M. at Pat's Pub, 4343 N. Harlem Ave., Norridge 708/457-1166.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:30 P.M. at Fields, 4636 N. Cumberland, Chicago 312/625-1717.

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

SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASSN: Tournaments Tuesday, 6:15 P.M. at On Broadway, 210 S. Broadway, Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB: Tourn. 1st/3rd/5th Tuesday, 6:30 P.M. at Bennigan's, 115 Veteran's Parkway, Normal. Lane O'Connor (309/454-1947).

WINNETKA BG CLUB: Tournaments Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (708/446-0537).

CENTRAL ILL. BG CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Pizze Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Sue Will (309/692-6909).

PAIR O' DICE BG CLUB: Tourn. Fri., 7:30 P.M. at Boardwalk, 6600 Gunnison, Harwood Hts. Gary Kay (312/819-1122).

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

WHO KILLED MAGGIE MISPLAY?

There are several pertinent clues to consider:

- (1) On the Viscount's (White's) last turn, we know that he danced and that he missed a 4-shot.
- (2) With this information, assuming Maggie (Black) played legally on her last turn, only rolls 1-1, 1-3, 2-3, 3-3, 3-4, 4-4, and 4-5 could yield the final setup.
- (3) Roberta swears that Maggie's last roll was larger than a 4. This eliminates the 1-1 and 1-3 roll from contention.
- (4) No other blots were mentioned, thus prior to Maggie's roll, she must have

had zero or two checkers on her 1-point and two checkers on her 2-point (because with an open 2-point, the Viscount would have had 12 ways to hit the 4-blot, not 11 as Larry claimed). This eliminates 3-3, 3-4 and 4-4.

- (5) The others claim that when Debbie saw Maggie's roll as 2-2, she was reading the *sides* of the dice. This would eliminate the 2-3 and 4-5 rolls.

Therefore, Maggie could not have played legally. Her play must have been illegal and she must have grabbed up her dice before anyone could correct her harebrained error. This contradicts Larry Logleplay's testimony claiming she played legally.

But was Maggie's play really "hare-brained"? Not at all. She was merely following her new lover Harry Hottemper's

wishes. Remember, Harry stood to collect \$20,000 in past wagers from Viscount Miscout if the Viscount could win big.

Driven over the brink by both his penchant for despising Maggie's misplays and by his emptying wallet, Larry reached for the pastry knife in the opportune dark and did her in (although we may imagine him brushing away a few other groping hands!).

Epilogue: Larry Logleplay was convicted of justifiable homicide and is now serving 5-10 in the California State Penitentiary. He spends his free time whiling away the hours in endless chouettes . . . playing with full consultation rules on both legal and illegal moves!

WINNER BY RANDOM DRAW:
Dr. William Hass, Chesaning, MI

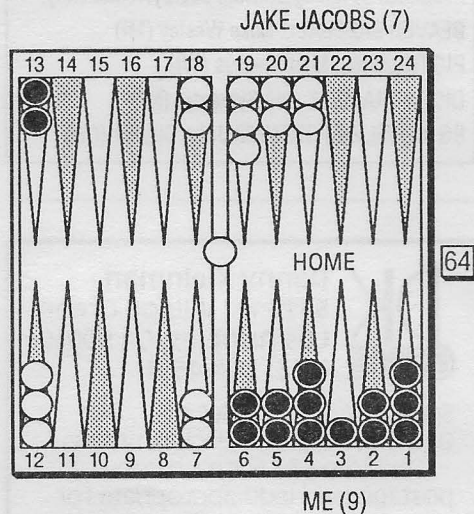
HASTY PLAYS



by Duane Jensen

Another type of "Hasty Play" can be made by misjudging your opponent's alertness and backgammon knowledge. The following position is from a match between Jake Jacobs and myself:

11 point match. Duane Jensen (Black) leads Jake Jacobs (White), 9 to 7.
BLACK TO PLAY 4-3.



I was playing for an undoubled gammon which would give me the match. The four best play options are:

- (a) 6/2, 6/3 (no blots)
- (b) 13/6 (two blots)
- (c) 6/3, 13/9 (three blots)
- (d) 13/9, 13/10 (three blots).

I chose (d) because it was the play that gave me the most numbers to cover the 3-point and capture my undoubled gammon. Unfortunately playing 13/9, 13/10 left three blots and the danger of being gammoned myself. Here was my dilemma. If I knew for sure that Jake would double, I'd prefer making play (a) 6/2, 6/3 with no blots. If I knew for sure that Jake would *not* double me on his next roll, I would play 13/4, 13/10.

Whether or not Jake doubles me is influenced by three factors:

- (1) How I play my 4-3
- (2) How long I take deciding how to play my 4-3
- (3) Jake's backgammon knowledge and alertness.

If I play 6/2, 6/3, Jake should not double. If I play 13/9, 13/10, he should double because a hit can win for him. If Jake fails to hit, he is usually gammoned anyway, so he has little to lose. The more *time* I take to choose my play gives my opponent more *time* to think about his predicament. If I take too long to select a play, even a slumbering novice opponent may awaken and realize that he *must* double after (d).

Aside from our match, I hadn't watched Jake play before. I did not have a complete picture of Jake's backgammon skills. I knew that Jake wrote backgammon articles appearing in the POINT, but in my mind, being a contributing editor for the POINT casts a cloud of suspicion over one's playing skills.

I took a chance that Jake was snoozing

or would forget to double. I played 13/9, 13/10 and quickly picked up my dice in hopes that Jake might roll. Fat chance. Jake doubled. He wasn't asleep. I accepted the double. Jake rolled an excellent 3-3, hitting two blots. He later hit my third blot but I rolled perfectly and won the game.

I selected play (a) on the expectation or hope that my opponent would not make the proper play. My play may have been correct anyway, but it's not satisfying to make the right play for the wrong reasons. Δ



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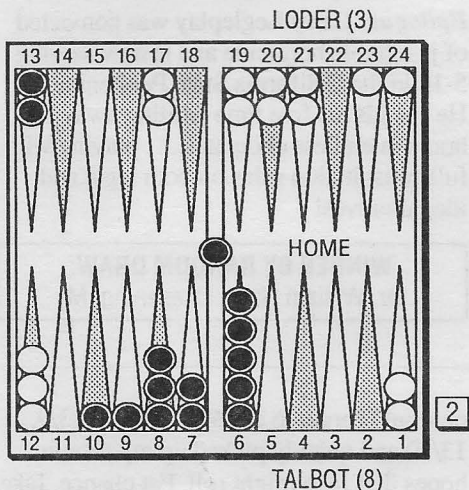
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TALBOT...

[Continued from page 1]

game, Frank faced an interesting play:

15 point Midwest Championship finals. Frank Talbot (Black) leads Lenny Loder (White), 8 to 3. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.**



Talbot moved Bar/22, 10/9. "I made my 9-point for a few reasons," he explained. "First, it gets me a 4-prime. Second, if I do hit him and play to my bar, he can enter and possibly make an advanced anchor. So with my one-point board, why do I want to bring his checker on the ace-point back into the game?"

"Finally, With my play, how does he hit me? Sure, he has 5-1, 5-2 and double 5s; but even with these, I'll always have at least a single shot and I'll always have four points in a row."

The strategy worked. Talbot went on to win a doubled gammon and take a commanding 12-3 lead en route to a 15-4 victory and another Midwest Championship trophy to go with his 1988 model.

There were plenty of other winners over the weekend. In the sold-out Advanced division, Lucky Nelson (IL) topped 1988 divisional champ Milad Doueichi (IL) 13-6. The Limited trophy went to René Wojtysiak (IL) who rolled over Dan Wesley (11-1). And the Open division winner was Brian Vance who also paired with Dean Adamian to win the Satellite Doubles.

The 1991 Midwest Doubles Champions are Illinoisans Tak Morioka and Cinda King. Tak and Cinda edged Paul and Mary Franks (IL) 7-6 for the title.

Two-time Costa Rican national champion Antonio Ortega parlayed a \$25 entry into over \$1200 in the 128 player Blitz tourney. And in Bazooki-Gammon, players got to call their roll once per game. This format agreed with winner Gary Kay (Chicago) who lost only one game (to runner-up Larry Lau) the entire tournament.

IN THE EVENTS that some label "crazy," Milwaukee's Matt Anshus "hogged" another Sony Watchman by winning his second Pig-Rolling title. Joe Sylvester proved more dexterous than Neil Kazaross in the Dice Scramble. Mike Wesley pounded a beaver out of the park to defeat Herb Roman in the extra-inning finals of Beaver Baseball. And at the auction, John Stryker won 1/4 oz. of gold in Backgammon Wheel of Fortune.

For the sixth consecutive year, the Anti-Cruelty Society was the tournament beneficiary. When all proceeds were counted, Ward Howland (in his last year as executive director) was presented with \$1600 including a special \$500 check from Arnold Zousmer of Rancho Santa Fe, CA.

THANKS TO THOSE who made the Eighth Midwest Championships possible: tourney administrators Peter Kalba, Carol Joy Cole, Sue Will, and Dru & John Heggen. Thanks

also to Malcolm Davis (Chateau Texas), John Drexler (Oak Brook Marriott), Jeff Henry (Jim Henry, Inc.), Danny Kleinman (Backgammon Exam), John Petergal (Fast Track Printing), Itasca Wiggins (Chicago Tribune) and all of you who attended.

See you at the Oak Brook Marriott Hotel for the 9th Midwest Championships 20-22 March 1992. The complete results: Δ

1991 MIDWEST BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (61)

MAIN: 1-Frank Talbot (MI), 2-Lenny Loder (IL), 3/4-Malcolm Davis (TX)/David Harth (WI). CONSOLATION: 1-Frank Frigo (CA), 2-Joe Russell (CA). LAST CHANCE: 1-Hugh McNeil (CANADA).

ADVANCED (64)

MAIN: 1-Lucky Nelson (IL), 2-Milad Doueichi (IL), 3/4-Mary Ann Meese (IN)/Marcy Sloan (IL). CONSOLATION: 1-Tim Serges (IL), 2-Gary Schechter (IL). LAST CHANCE: 1-Ed Simms (CAN).

LIMITED (34)

MAIN: 1-René Wojtysiak (IL), 2-Dan Wesley (MI), 3/4-Fred Gehlhoff (WI)/Mike Wesley (MI). CONSOLATION: 1-Pete Gehlhoff (WI), 2-Cliff Mayoh (IL). LAST CHANCE: 1-Sylvia Huddleston (MI).

OPEN (11)

1-Brian Vance (MI), 2-Steve Guevara (IL).

DOUBLES (32 Teams)

1-Cinda King & Tak Morioka (IL), 2-Paul & Mary Franks (IL), 3/4-Beverly Klene & Lenny Loder (IL)/Hal Heinrich (CANADA) & David Winn (TX).

SATELLITE DOUBLES (6 Teams)

1-Dean Adamian & Brian Vance (MI).

BLITZ TOURNEY (128)

1-Antonio Ortega (COSTA RICA).

BAZOOKI-GAMMON (32)

1-Gary Kay (IL), 2-Larry Lau (IL).

BACKGAMMON EXAM (11)

Professor of Backgammon: Joe Sylvester (MI).

BEAVER BASEBALL: Mike Wesley (MI)

PIG ROLLING: Matt Anshus (WI)

DICE SCRAMBLE: Joe Sylvester (MI)

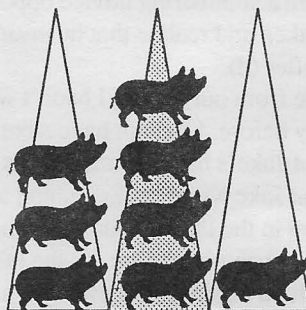
BG WHEEL OF FORTUNE: John Stryker (OH)

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244 pages of amusing, entertaining and enlightening backgammon material from one of backgammon's foremost theoreticians. \$37.

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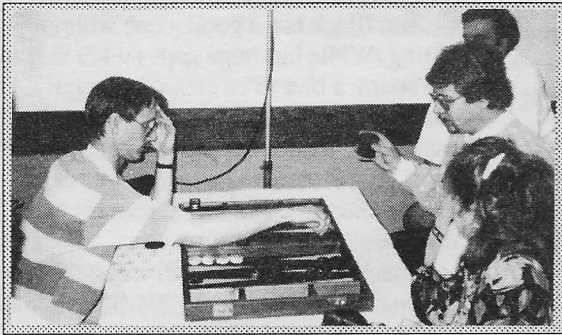
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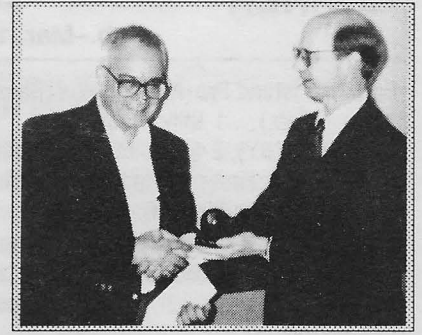
1991 Midwest Backgammon Championships *Photo Gallery*



A video camera records the action as Frank Talbot (MI) defeats Lenny Loder (IL) 15-4 to win his second Midwest Championship title.



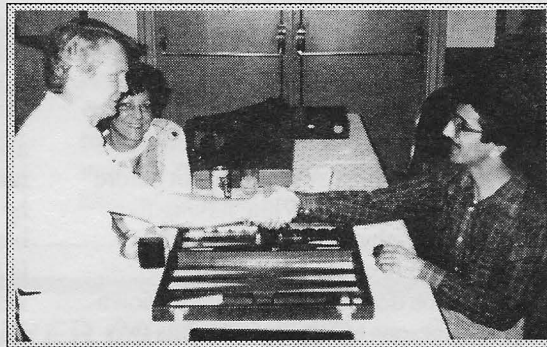
Clue: "When both your subscriptions to CHICAGO POINT and Robertie's Inside Backgammon need renewing." John Stryker (OH) solved the BG Wheel of Fortune puzzle (inset) to win 1/4 oz. of gold.



Costa Rican expert Antonio Ortega showed Midwesterners his skill by capturing the BLITZ tourney.



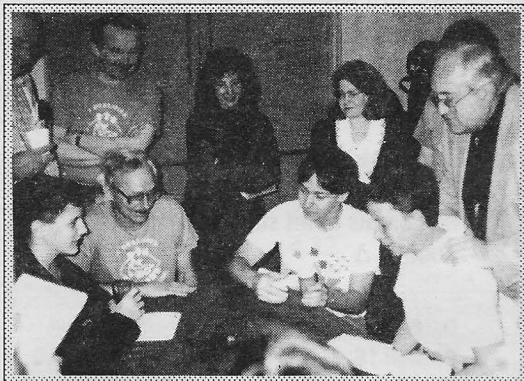
Peter Naguib from Berlin, Germany seemed right at home in Chicago.



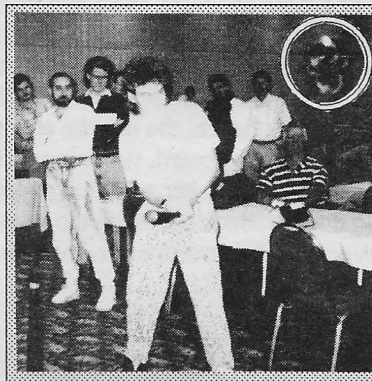
Lucky Nelson (IL) accepts a congratulatory handshake from Milad Doueichi (IL) after winning the Advanced division tournament.



Gary Kay (IL) calls his roll against Larry Lau (IL) in the Bazooki-Gammon finals. Gary's cigarette is unlit. This was a "no smoking" event.



(Left to right) Matt Anshus and his dad Mark (WI) along with Howard Ring (IL) accept a ruling from Dru Heggen in the Pig-Rolling finals.



Mike Wesley (MI) pounds a beaver (circled) for a home run to win the Beaver Baseball finals.



Illinoisans dominate the Doubles Championship with Tak Morioka & Cinda King besting Mary & Paul Franks in a thrilling double-match point finish.



Eight year MBC veterans Carol Joy Cole, Peter Kalba and Bill Davis are joined by "rookie" Sue Will who did a wonderful job.



Dice Scramble finals: Joe Sylvester (MI) over Neil Kazaross (CA). Joe also won the title "Professor of Backgammon-1991" in the Backgammon Exam.



René Wojysiak (IL) topped Dan Wesley (MI) in the Limited finals. It was René's first-ever weekend event.

WINNER'S CORNER



Feb.-Mar. 1991

•**Paradise Island Pro-Am Doubles** (Bahamas; 31 Jan.-3 Feb.)... 1-Billy Horan/Katie Salamandre (NY), 2-Malcolm Davis/Talmadge Tinsley (TX)... First prize in this 3rd annual event paid a huge \$90,000.

•**Fiorelli's North Queensland Championship** (Port Douglas, Australia; 7-10 Feb.)... Championship: 1-Tino Lechich, 2-John Phillips; 1C-Tony Hutton.

•**Spring Connecticut Open** (Southington, CT; 9 Feb.)... A Division: 1-Art Langlais, 2-Mark Deniham, 3/4-Andy Palumbo/Brian Cyr. B Division: 1-Doug Krantz, 2-Mike Klein... Rob Roy reports 26 total players with nearly \$1500 in prizes.

•**Hoosier Club 1990 Awards Tourney** (Indianapolis, IN; 10 Feb.)... Open (13): 1-Don Desmond (IL), 2/3-Butch Meese/Mick Dobratz (IN). Intermediate (12): 1-Dave Sandler (KY). Novice (4): 1-Lara Simsic... Don Woods was honored as the Hoosier BG Club's 1990 Player of the Year.

•**New England Club Monthly** (Cambridge, MA; 10 Feb.)... A Division (32): 1-Mike Nelson (MA), 2-Charlie Stathis; 1C-Herb Gurland. B Division (14): 1-Andres Corredor, 2-Vlad Glikberg; 1C-Mark Siebert; 1LC-Andy Latto.

•**NY/NJ Co-op Regional** (Long Island, NY; 10 Feb.)... Open (28): 1-Lincoln Bedell (NH), 2-Ray McLaughlin, 3/4-Rob Mathes/Doug Roberts (NY); 1C-Jack Kissane (NY), 2C-Wally Watson. Limited (21): Roni Zemsch, 2-Adam Osman; 1C-Harry Levy. Novice (7): 1-Laura Grossman, 2-Cheryl Rosenthal; 1C-Tom Fitzsimmons.

•**Genie On-Line Computer Winter National** (10 Feb.)... Open (30): 1-Ron Lewis (TX), 2-Rich Galeba (IL)... Ron successfully defended his 1990 Fall National title in a tourney where everyone plays across the U.S. and Canada via General Electric's computer service.

•**Garage Door Tournament** (Rochester, NY; 16 Feb.)... Open (20): 1-Don Sloan, 2-Alec Forrester, 3-Steve Fazio, 4-Bob Hoey.

•**Bar Point Mixed Doubles** (Oak Brook, IL; 17 Feb.)... Championship (14 teams): 1-Peter Berkman & Alice Kay, 2-Stu Katz & Barbara Levinson; 1C-Howard Markowitz & Marcy Sloan, 2C-Tak Morioka & Phyllis Smolinski.

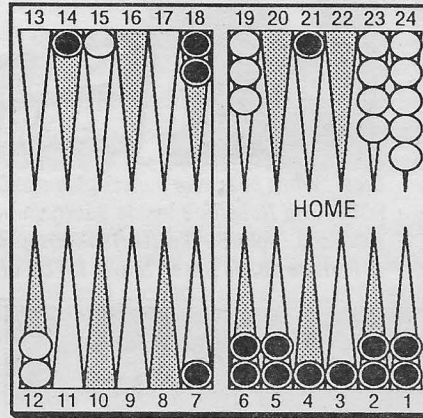
•**8th Fleet Underwood Memorial** (Flint, MI; 17 Feb.)... Open (29): 1-Sandy Glassman, 2-Carol Joy Cole, 3-Emil Mortuk. Intermediate (30): 1-Jim Roland, 2-Wally Wolf, 3/4-Mary Ann Meese/Abdul Alchalabi. Beginner (11): 1-Jim Kennedy, 2-Mike Wesley... \$700 was raised for the American Lung Association.

•**South Australian Open** (Unley, So. Australia; 17 Feb.)... Championship (48): 1-Chris

PROBLEM #169 SOLVED

by Danny Kleinman

Match to 9 points tied at 5-all. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-2.**



With 27 shots at White's blot before the shake and White having five men buried, why didn't Black double?

Answer: Because hitting a shot wouldn't be decisive, and might be downright dangerous to Black, for he has two open points, each with a blot.

Now Black has rolled a 3 and can hit 18/15*. But what shall he do with his 2 if he hits? Leave the two blots, and 20 return shots, some of them hitting two men? Lift a blot, say with 4-2? That still gives White returns on all 3s, 4-6 and 4-2: 15 shots in all. When White doesn't dance, she may be able to prance around the board, stomping on blots as she goes—or use her gammon possibilities to double Black out along the way.

Were Black in a desperate position

otherwise, I would recommend the hit, perhaps in conjunction with a point-shifting 6-4 to assure Black of making a fifth point (if unhit) next shake on all rolls but 5-2.

But Black has a good game without hitting. White has huge gaps on her side of the board, a blot to be cleared promptly, and a midpoint that is already stripped and figures to produce another double shot soon. Black should play to turn his next double shot into a strong cube-turn: by making a five point board now.

Black can do this in two ways: 6/3, 6/4, leaving no inside blots; or 7/4, 5/3, leaving his 5-point slotted. I see little to choose between these two plays, but mildly prefer 7/4, 5/3. The slot on the 5-point may be covered to build a closed board (9s work immediately). If the slot remains when Black gets another shot, he'll often be able to lift it later (high slots lift on more numbers than low).

Black's next double shot will give him a strong double. He should wait for it, rather than put the game up for grabs now by leaving 15 to 20 shots and six or seven blots when he has only a 4-to-3 advantage in home board points. Just as I think it would be overaggressive to hit, so also I think it would be overcautious for Black to use his 3 to lift one of the blots on White's side. The blot on White's 4-point, though vulnerable to a few pointing rolls, is valuable as a potential hitter. The blot in White's outer court, though less valuable as a hitter, is partly protected by the danger White incurs if she breaks her midpoint to hit it.

Black's priority is to strengthen his board so that his hits will be decisive and his threats to hit sufficient to let him double. Δ

Benham, 2-Justin Pengelly, 3/4-Justin Freytag/Emmanuel Sideridis.

•**5th International Tournament** (Cannes, France; 28 Feb.-3 Mar.)... Championship (46): 1-Bob Wachtel (USA), 2-André Hoffmann (Hong Kong), 3/4-Bouchaud (FRA)/Guedj (FRA); 1C-Zurel (HOL), 2C-Mario Sequeira (POR); 1LC-Schiesser (GER). Intermediate (32): 1-Oules Martine (FRA), 2-Chomicki (FRA); 1C-Ingeborg Haussleiter (GER); 1LC-Andy Bugl (GER). Warm-Up Tourney: 1-Mike Svobodny (USA), 2-Mario Sequeira (POR)... Directed by Italy's Marco Fornasir, this was a WBF Golden Circuit event.

•**Minuteman Monthly** (Boston, MA; 3 Mar.)... Open (11): 1-Mark Denihan (CT), 2-James Colen (MA); 1C-Lincoln Bedell (NH). Intermediate (5): 1-Chung Ng (MA).

•**G/A 24th Invitational** (W. Hollywood, CA; 8-10 Mar.)... Open (42): 1-Ebby Mossanen, 2-

Dante Baines, 3/4-Rick Alpern/Elli Nache. Special 16: 1-Otis Chenault, 2-Joe Russell. Overflow 8: 1-Zev Vered. Doubles I (8): 1-Thomas Lumper & Joanne Hagan. Doubles II (6): 1-Paul Gedigian & David Sheehan.

•**Milwaukee Sunday Bimonthly** (Milwaukee, WI; 10 Mar.)... Open (10): 1-Yamin Yamin, 2-Barry Miller, 1C/2C-Gary Kay/Don Desmond. Limited (8): 1-Lowell Barkan, 2-Marv Arno; 1C-Larry Deckel.

•**Hoosier Doubles Tournament** (Indianapolis, IN; 10 Mar.)... Open (11 teams): 1-Bill Proscia & Greg Varbanov (IN), 2-Terry Kuchenbrod (KY) & Woody Woodworth (IN).

•**Springfield Series Final Four** (Springfield, IL; 30 Mar.)... Playoff results: 1-Ed Bauder (IL), 2-Dick Nelson (IL), 3-Dave Wallace (MO), 4-Larry Wittenberg (IL)... Bauder is the '90-'91 Sangamon Valley BG Assn. regular season champ. Δ

LETTERS...

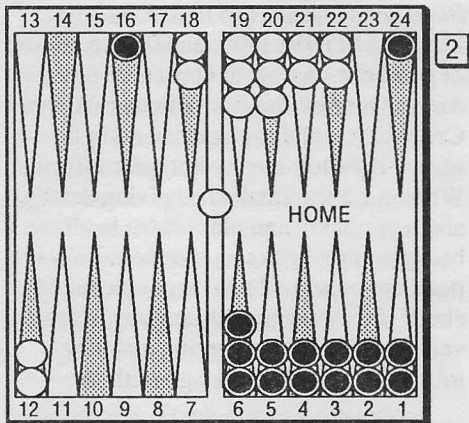
[Continued from page 3]

STILL SHADED GRAY

Danny Kleinman's proposed "simplification" of the rules forcing premature actions to stand ["Shades Of Gray," Mar. 1991 POINT] would certainly slow down many of the fast-rollers I've played. However, there would still exist a "gray" situation that occurs fairly often.

When a player is closed out with a man on the bar, the completion of his "turn" is not clearly defined. In the example below, Black has just rolled 5-5 and must send

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-5.**



both spare men to his ace-point. After playing his roll, how long must Black wait to see if White wants to redouble? Black wouldn't want to ask White "Do you want to redouble?" White may have dozed off or forgot that she owned the cube. What if Black rolls poorly and White says that she "had intended to redouble, but Black rolled too quickly" for her to make a declaration?

A player who is closed out can not designate the completion of his turn by picking up his dice. Perhaps we should "simplify" this problem by creating a rule stating that:

"Each player must roll the dice when it is his turn *even* when such player has no possible play."

I get closed out frequently. It would give me something to do while I was waiting for my opponent's board to open.—*Duane Jensen, St. Paul, MN*

REACTIONS TO KATHY'S LETTER

I want to respond to Kathy Posner's letter in the March POINT. Ms. Posner writes that "Personality has been banished from the playing fields" and that "Humanity has left backgammon."

Since the beginning of the 1970s, almost

inner game

TAKGAMMON



by Tak Morioka

THE PINNACLE

In last month's CHICAGO POINT, Kathy Posner wrote a letter to the editor objecting to my February *Fortune Cookie*—"The most effective players are rarely involved in flamboyant plays." I agree with Kathy's observation that the dehumanizing nature of mathematical thinking takes away the charm of battle and that flamboyant plays lend style and mystery to what others might view as a sometimes-dreary endeavor.

Not all of us are gifted with the ability to instantaneously analyze a position. To become competitive with that type of player, some of us must utilize certain tools. Equations and mathematical models yield the experience of numbers. These resources give us the ability to create a database representing hundreds of lifetimes of trials.

It may seem unfair to neutralize the God-given talent of an exceptional player through the science of statistics. However, there is no law against that exceptional player utilizing these aids to propel himself beyond his own capabilities.

What about the time when the limitation of expanding knowledge causes competitive parity? Could all of our games reach an equally high level of proficiency reducing our incentive to improve? The required dedication necessary to attain this goal is a possibility. But in reality, staying at the pinnacle of achievement is just too much work except for a small group of players on the lunatic fringe. Δ



FORTUNE COOKIE

The certainty of hindsight will never replace a good pair of glasses.

every single "real" game including major sports (tennis, golf, baseball, etc.) has been taken over by an influx of computer games and study aids. I agree that computers (for the most part) lack flamboyant style or exciting plays. But fill the void when a live opponent is not available and can definitely be used to improve one's game.

But individuals who *only* play backgammon via computer should know: you have no idea of the "aliveness" you are missing by not playing at your local club or at regional tournaments.

Computers and computer thinking won't automatize backgammon. The real-life game has been around for 5000 years and it will be around 5000 years hence.—*Andrew Liebenthal, New York, NY*

In response to Kathy Posner's letter, I have two words to say: AMEN, AMEN!—*Rick Reahard, Indianapolis, IN*

Tak Morioka offers another opinion on Kathy's letter (see above).—Ed.

DR. JAKENSTEIN, I PRESUME

Jake Jacobs' "Experiment In Terror" was an entertaining piece of fiction, probably because the events of the chouette actually happened two months ago at the Chicago Bar Point Club. I'm not sure who Igor and Renfield were, but Dr. Frankenstein was

none other than Jake himself!—*Yamin Yamin, Deerfield, IL*

GENIE PLAYER GETS THE POINT

I play backgammon on GENie, the computer modem service, and have been told of your publication by some of the GENie players. I live in Charlotte, NC and haven't been playing "live" backgammon for several years, so I don't know of any tournaments in my area. We have several players in town, but no club.

Sign me up for one year of the POINT. I look forward to reading about backgammon in the real world.—*Douglas Johnson, Charlotte, NC*

ELLIOTT'S BACK TO GAMMON

Here is a check for a year of CHICAGO POINT. I haven't played much since last summer in Washington Square Park. I now live in New York City, so I'll be getting back into the game as soon as my work settles down. I'm a programmer, but it's a learning curve situation. I want to get good enough at it so that I can (1) get paid a lot, (2) write chess- and backgammon-related programs, and (3) withstand the ups and downs of the \$50 chouettes! But seriously, I'm not the gladiator that I used to be. It's nice to earn a regular living.—*Elliott Winslow, Jackson Hts., NY Δ*

AMALGAMATION

Talk about dedication. Last month, **Paul & Mary Franks** planned their Disneyworld vacation around Bar Point Club Tuesday night backgammon. They left on a Wednesday morning and returned the following Monday night!... **Dave Cramer** is back from a sight-seeing trip to the rain forests of Costa Rica. A proposed "Tournament of the Americas" in October could bring more North Americans to this beautiful country... You could win a one year subscription to CHICAGO POINT and the Backgammon Watch. Just solve the "Six Stack Distraction" in the April *Flint Area Backgammon News*. For a sample issue, send \$2 to **Carol Joy Cole**; April BG News; 3003 Ridgecliffe Drive; Flint, MI 48532... **Chris Ternel** of the Danish Backgammon Federation informs us of a massive tournament being held in his country. The 1991 Carlsberg Cup drew 3700 backgammoners to 200 cafés throughout Denmark. Play ran for five Wednesday nights in Feb. and March and produced 200 qualifiers who will compete in the 26 April grand finals. Prizes include all-expense paid trips to the 1991 Monte-Carlo World Championships... Visiting the Bar Point Club in

March: **Mike Landau** (CT)... **Alberto da Pra** reports that after Golden Circuit tournaments in Seefeld, Paris, Cannes and Gstaad, Americans **Mike Svobodny** and **Bob Wachtel** are 1-2 on the European rating list, followed by Germany's **Ingeborg Haussleiter**... The March *Hoosier Backgammon Club* newsletter is a particularly good issue featuring a five page interview of **Kent Goulding** by **Wendy Kaplan** and a tribute to Indy's **Ralph Roberts**. To receive a copy, send \$2 to: Hoosier March Issue; 7620 Kilmer Lane; Indianapolis, IN 46256-1634. Incidentally, the Hoosier Club has moved and now meets on Thursdays (7:00 P.M.) at Spats, on 82nd Street in Castleton Square Mall, Indianapolis. 317/845-8435... Gammon Associates director **Patrick Gibson** informs us that **Arthur Benjamin** was his Los Angeles area club's 1990 Player of the Year... Following the Midwest Championships, the **Serges** family showed **Peter Naguib** (Berlin, Germany) some true Chicago hospitality. **Tim** took him (along with **Mark Richardson**) to the Kingston Mines blues bar and **Sarg** walked with Peter through an open door onto the outfield grass of a closed-to-the-public Wrigley Field!... The **Neiman Marcus** store in Dallas, Texas reports that **Malcolm Davis's Chateau Texas** outsells all other

wines they offer... Overheard at the Midwest Championships: **Kandice Kane**, who has recently been assisting in the direction of Milwaukee Backgammon, previously sang with the Metropolitan Opera in New York... The Michigan Summer Championships roll off 5-7 July and Indy Labor Day Tourney is set for 30 Aug.-2 Sept. What does **Yamin Yamin** do without Midwest backgammon for two months? Simple. He runs his own event. Yamin is planning the Illinois State Championship 2-4 Aug. in a northern Chicago suburb. Details to follow... British Isles Backgammon Assn. members mourn the loss of **Sandy Osborne**. An avid BIBA supporter since its inception in Dec. 1989, Sandy was the first individual from outside the Lincoln club to join... Speaking of BIBA, their Feb. 1991 *Bibafax* newsletter (36 Redwood Drive; Lincoln LN5 9BL; England) lists a number of good tips on how to boost club attendance. Our favorite from director **Michael Crane**: "[One] thing you can do in the library is a little sneaky but quite effective. Write out some small slips giving details about your club and place them in all the backgammon books on the shelf. I always put them on page 21 so that I can quickly check if they've gone. Mind you, it can be very depressing discovering just how infrequently these books go out!" Δ

1991 Championship of Great Britain

Costa del Sol, Spain † 6th-12th May 1991

**£10,000
ADDED**

EVENTS

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- Intermediate Div. £120
- Novice Division £60

Tournaments include 1st & 2nd Consolations and a Last Chance (100% to Winners).

REGISTRATION

Player £60
Guest £50 also...

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- Mini-Jackpots
- Super-Jackpots
- Calcutta Auction
- WBF Golden Circuit event

Registration includes Seminars by **Bill Robertie** and **Joe Sylvester**, Welcoming Cocktail Party, Gala International and Spanish Cabaret and Prize-giving Cocktail Party.

Isle of Man goes Mediterranean



The 1991 Isle of Man Championship of Great Britain will be held on the Mediterranean coast at the new Hotel Torrequebrada. The Torrequebrada has a fine casino, luxury rooms, many restaurants, private beach on the Mediterranean Sea, tennis and a health club.

This new luxury resort on the Costa del Sol is only about 7 miles from Málaga International Airport, with very easy direct access from most major cities or via Madrid. Join us!

Hercules, Baron of Culereuch
DIRECTOR

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