

chicago backgammon

DÉJÀ VU FOR TAK

Wins BPC 1988 "Player Of The Year" Title On Last Day

It's December 27—the last Chicago Bar Point Club tourney date of the year. Less than a semifinal finish separates defending champion Tak Morioka and Yamin Yamin in their race for 1988 Player of the Year. Yamin falters. Morioka goes on to win the tournament and the title. Sound familiar? It should. The exact same thing happened in the 1987 Bar Point Club master point race!

Morioka had a battle on his hands throughout 1988. In August, he trailed Chicago newcomer Rich Sweetman by nearly five points. But Rich's move to New Hampshire in the fall ended his chance to unseat the "Tak-monster."

Then it was the perennial challenger Yamin's turn. A frantic sprint in November pulled him to within 0.64 of the top. Then in December, Morioka won two main flight victories while Yamin could manage only two consolation victories. The final point total: Morioka—30.64, Yamin—28.56.

Tak's third title in as many years earns him an engraved trophy and \$150 in cash. Yamin wins \$100. The battle for the \$50 third place bonus was decided among three players finishing 0.32 points apart. In the end, Kathy Bauder (21.76) nosed out Rich Sweetman (21.56) and John Demian, whose 21.44 point total was the highest of his life.

Rounding out the Challenge Cup invitees was David Libchaber (17.08). Dave edged a rising star, Stu Katz (15.40) who played his first Bar Point Club tournament just 19 months ago.

All presentations, including 1 troy oz. bars of silver and a \$200+ prize drawing for the Top 20, will be made on Awards Night January 17 at Pat's Pub. The 7:15 PM tournament carries a special \$15 entry fee, and the Bar Point Club will buy each participant a drink. Δ

new for 1989

UNIFIED RULES TAKE A GIANT STEP TO REALITY

Five organized backgammon groups have taken a giant step toward unifying tournament backgammon rules in the United States. "U.S. Backgammon Tournament Rules & Procedures, January 1989" has been approved for immediate use by the Chicago Bar Point Club, Flint Area Backgammon Club, Hoosier Backgammon Club, New England Backgammon Club and U.S. Backgammon Enterprises. Composed by the joint efforts of Bill Davis, Kent Goulding, Butch Meese and Bill Robertie, the U.S. Rules represent an important first step towards a united backgammon front.

Highlights of the new U.S. Rules include:

- The Holland Rule is discontinued. Following the Crawford game, the trailer will no longer have to wait four moves to double. This change affects a handful of clubs. (Note: The Northern Nevada Backgammon Association plans to continue using the Holland Rule through 1989 and will consider a change in 1990.)
- A legal roll will now consist of "shaking the

dice vigorously in a dice cup and then tossing them out at a discernible height above the playing surface." Sliding or dumping the dice will no longer be tolerated.

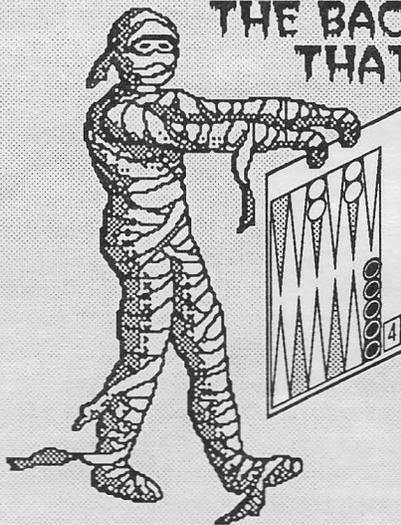
- Once posted, "an erroneous result may still be corrected in a timely manner, but not after either player has begun a succeeding match." Some rules had stated a result was final *once it had been posted*.
- The Rules contain a fairness clause. "No set of rules should deprive the Director of his freedom of judgment and prevent him from finding the solution dictated by fairness and compatible with the circumstances of a particular case."

The U.S. Rules will be sent to all clubs responding to the "Backgammon Clubs In North America" listing (page 5). Comments will be printed in future issues. Other backgammon directors, or individuals who would like a copy of the Rules should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: U.S. Rules; c/o Chicago POINT; 2726 W. Lunt Avenue; Chicago, IL 60645. Δ

It's Horrible! It's Frightening! Can Anyone Make It Go Away?
Can Anyone Kill It? What Is This Terrible Thing? It's...

THE BACKGAMMON POSITION THAT WOULD NOT DIE

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Months after it first appeared, this bear-off position keeps returning from the grave to haunt the pages of backgammon newsletters across the globe. Is there no backgammon expert who will step forward and give the last words about this position? Someone please drive a stake through its heart so it may rest in peace.

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o Chicago POINT
2726 W. Lunt Avenue
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CITIES IN SEARCH OF A CLUB

I've yet to hear of a Portland (Oregon) area club. But... I'm considering starting one in 1989. Portland has active chess and bridge clubs so there could be potential players hiding in the shadows. If not, I may be forced to move to the Midwest. Chouette withdrawal sucks!—*Gregory Daniel, Portland, OR (503/228-1684)*

Sorry to report that there are currently no clubs or backgammon functions in the St. Louis area. If visitors would like a few games, they can call me at 314/726-0449. I can arrange games with others as well. I know all of the active players in this area, including stakes, level of play, attitude, probability of payment, etc.—*Jim Painter, St. Louis, MO*

The Whitecourt Backgammon Club recently lost its playing location. Individuals visiting our part of Alberta should call me for backgammon information.—*Bud Ashmore, Whitecourt, ALB, Canada (403/778-2385)*

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole

313/232-9731

Jan 7	Sangamon Valley Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Jan 11-15	Nevada State Championships, Peppermill Hotel, Reno, NV	702/826-1984
Jan 14	College Park Winter Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603
Jan 15	NEBC Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Jan 15	Bimonthly Sunday Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/490-6538
Jan 17	Bar Point Club Awards Night, Pat's Pub, Norridge, IL	312/338-6380
Jan 19	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jan 20-22	BG-SKI Happening, Seefeld/Tirol, Austria	08341/12825
Jan 21	Sangamon Valley Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Jan 26	Flint Area Club Awards Night, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jan 26-29	European Championship, Le Byblos Des Neiges, Courchevel, France	061-50-5816
Jan 26-30	Paradise Island Pro-Am Invitational, Bahamas	301/942-4365
Jan 28	Hawthorne Backgammon Classic; Hawthorne Races; Cicero, IL	312/338-6380
Jan 29	Sandy Kaplan Sweet 16 Invitational, Cavendish North, Southfield, MI	313/232-9731
Feb 1-5	Australian Masters Tournament, Town House Int'l, Wagga Wagga	(02) 92 7726
Feb 3-5	11th Annual Charity Tournament, Airport Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	412/391-6363
Feb 4	Sangamon Valley Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Feb 10-12	7th Annual Valentine Tournament, Barton Creek Resort, Austin, TX	713/784-6622
Feb 12	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Feb 12	Fleet Underwood Memorial Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Feb 16	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Feb 18-19	German Championship, Stuttgart, West Germany	040-270 1166
Feb 18-20	International BG Ass'n Tournament, Palm Hotel, W. Palm Beach, FL	305/527-4033
Feb 19	Illinois State Challenge Cup, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Feb 19	NEBC Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Feb 20-23	Cannes International Tournament, Palais des Festivals, France	061-50-5816
Feb 24-26	13th Bluegrass Regional, Sheraton Lakeview Hotel, Clarksville, IN	502/458-5439
Mar 4	Sangamon Valley Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Mar 12	NEBC Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Mar 12-15	Ted Bassett & Gstaad Palace-Cup, Palace Hotel Gstaad, Switzerland	061 50 58 16
Mar 16-19	International Championships, Badrutt's Palace Hotel, St. Moritz	061 50 58 16
Mar 17-19	37th Indiana Open, Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Apr 14-16	1989 Midwest Championships, Holiday Inn, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	312/338-6380
Apr 15	College Park Spring Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	703/620-3239
Apr 16	NEBC Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Apr 20-23	Byblos European Championship, Hotel Byblos, Saint-Tropez, France	061 50 58 16
Apr 21-25	Australian Open Championship, Hyatt, Sydney, New South Wales	02/929-0273
Apr 28-May 1	North German Championship, Hamburg, W. Germany	040/270-1166
May 18-21	Championship of Great Britain, Palace Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man	0624/851-045

ON SECOND THOUGHT...

I rolled out 72 trials of Steve Brown's redouble vs. Bob Holyon in the Indiana Classic finals (see *Chicago POINT*, November 1988) and it's much worse than I thought. The setup looks like an even game with Holyon slightly ahead! Brown's gammon percentage is between 25 and 30%, but he loses too many games: 65% so far. Many are lost after one checker escapes and the other doesn't. Quite a few games are also lost to 1-4 backgames. Steve is simply not far enough behind in the match to offer a redouble.—*Neil Kazaross, San Diego, CA*

TAKGAMMON: INTENSE OR NONSENSE?

I'm still waiting to find something instructively pertinent to backgammon in Tak Morioka's regular column. Do you owe him this ego trip?—*John Ward, Englewood, FL*

One of the big reasons I subscribed to the POINT was for the "Takgammon" column. If it's only going to appear bimonthly, change my subscription accordingly.—*Alan Steffen, Chicago, IL*

(continued on page 6)

MORE BACKGAMMON BANNERS

There are many fine backgammon newsletters on the American scene today. Here are a few of the better ones. If you don't already subscribe to them, you may want to sample a complimentary copy. Send your name and address to the editors listed below.

FLINT AREA BACKGAMMONNEWS (\$6 per year, published monthly)

Beginning its 12th year, 6 page typewritten letter with 40% devoted to local news. Regular features: problem analyses and discussions by guest columnists, "Gambits" people column, a comprehensive international tournament schedule and thorough results. **Editor:** Carol Joy Cole; 3003 Ridgecliffe Drive; Flint, MI 48532.

HOOSIER BACKGAMMON CLUB (\$6 per year, published monthly)

2-4 pages, typeset. 50% deals with Indy backgammon. Includes a limited events

calendar, monthly problem, unannotated World Cup match and periodical Club Spotlight articles. **Editors:** Butch and Mary Ann Meese; 7620 Kilmer Lane; Indianapolis, IN 46256.

LOUISVILLE GAMMON GAZETTE (\$6 per year, published monthly)

January 1989 is the letter's 4th issue. 4 pages, typeset with 50% Louisville news. Columns include Harold's Views, a problem discussion by Harold Branch, and Flashpoint by "Flash Gammon". **Editor:** Larry Deckel; 2010 Buechel Bank Road; Louisville, KY 40218.

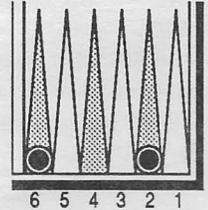
NEW ENGLAND BACKGAMMON CLUB (\$15 per year, published monthly)

4 pages, typeset with 50% local area coverage. In-depth problem analyses by editor Bill Robertie and guest columnists, plus detailed events calendar. **Editor:** Bill Robertie; Box 294; Arlington, MA 02174. Δ

from last month

"UNFORGETTABLE" SOLVED

Last month Duane Jensen asked us to calculate the percent of the time that Black will bear off both checkers within two rolls from the position at right. Jensen stated that "If you calculate the percentage and round off the answer to seven decimal places, you will see why I can never forget this nine digit number."



For Black to fail, he'll need two successive shakes totaling seven pips or less. Let's first determine all the two-roll combinations that fail to get Black off.

1-2 then 1-1	2-1 then 1-1	1-1 then 1-2
1-2 then 1-2	2-1 then 1-2	1-1 then 2-1
1-2 then 1-3	2-1 then 1-3	1-3 then 1-2
1-2 then 2-1	2-1 then 2-1	1-3 then 2-1
1-2 then 3-1	2-1 then 3-1	3-1 then 1-2
		3-1 then 2-1

16 combos out of 1296 fail the bear-off. Therefore 1280 rolls succeed. Solving yields:

$$1280/1296 = \boxed{98.7654321} \Delta$$

1988 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB

FINAL STANDINGS

COMPILED THRU DEC. 31

TAK MORIOKA	30.64	Dean Muench	3.60	Ida Zeman	0.88
YAMIN YAMIN	28.56	Peggy Fleming	3.44	Larry Strommen	0.88
KATHY BAUDER	21.76	Ron Garber	3.24	Carol Mennis	0.80
RICH SWEETMAN	21.56	Neil Banoff	2.96	Alice Kay	0.76
JOHN DEMIAN	21.44	Gary Keyes	2.88	Gary Kay	0.72
DAVID LIBCHABER	17.08	Don Pearson	2.84	Marcy Sloan	0.72
STU KATZ	15.40	Bob Holyon	2.72	Marty Tatosian	0.72
DEEB SHALATI	14.44	Barry Epstein	2.68	Gail Lorick	0.72
PETER KALBA	12.32	Betsy Miller	2.68	Don Marek	0.64
BILL DAVIS	12.20	Carl Sellars	2.32	Miles Cohen	0.64
IRA HOFFBERG	12.20	Andy Suszczyk	2.16	Arlene Levy	0.56
ARNOLD ZOUSMER	10.80	Jeff Kane	2.12	Bruce Endzel	0.56
JOANN FEINSTEIN	10.56	George Panagakis	2.08	Mark Hicks	0.52
SARG SERGES	10.52	Jeff Vaughn	2.04	John O'Hagan	0.48
CHRIS KENIK	9.76	Bill Hoeflich	2.00	Kevin Bryant	0.48
NORMA SHYER	9.44	Jeff Henry	1.92	Mark Anshus	0.48
DON JAYHAN	9.24	Jim Rudig	1.92	Paul Reiner	0.40
RICH SIEBOLD	8.48	Kevin Muench	1.88	Orris Solberg	0.36
ANDY ARGY	8.40	Ralph Levy	1.84	Duane Jensen	0.32
KEN BOND	8.04	Jill Ferdinand	1.72	Howard Markowitz	0.32
Greg Shore	7.92	Gene Chait	1.68	Les Berg	0.24
Phyllis Smolinski	7.92	Mike Razar	1.52	Rudy Emmelot	0.24
Dan Judd	6.52	Alan Steffen	1.52	Trudie Stern	0.24
Dave Cramer	6.44	Harry Hayward	1.44	Chuck Eyers	0.20
Connie Sychowski	6.24	Jim Sargent	1.28	Darcey Brady	0.20
Bobbie Shifrin	6.20	Roland Dieter	1.28	Sharon Hegg	0.20
Joe Koucharian	6.08	Don Desmond	1.20	Dave Lehrer	0.16
Bill Keefe	5.72	Tom Walthes	1.20	Marv Arnol	0.16
Ed Buerger	5.32	Al Meinecke	1.16	Nabeel Jeha	0.16
John Spatafora	4.68	Dean Morehouse	1.16	Chris Hegg	0.12
Alyce Wallen	4.16	Mark King	1.04	Dave Shifman	0.12
Ed Bauder	4.08	Elaine Kehm	0.96	David Hegg	0.12
Ron Stur	3.96	Larry Guzan	0.96	Ray Lanzillo	0.12
Don Muellner	3.72	Dave Rockwell	0.88	Jay Bleiman	0.08
Bob Zavoral	3.64	Doug Mayfield	0.88	Richard Stawowy	0.08



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 (457-1166).

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

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

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

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

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

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

ASK DANNY



by Danny Kleinman

Dear Danny: Has anyone ever applied the Kelly Criterion to backgammon? If an expert can make accurate estimates of his probability of winning along with the frequencies of gammons and backgammons, then he should be able to determine his optimal bet size as a fixed fraction of his bankroll.

Chouette play got me thinking about this. When an expert is in the box against a lot of players, perhaps he should turn the cube and take doubles in a more conservative fashion. By keeping the variance down, this could protect his bankroll and future earnings. What do you think?—David Montgomery, East Palo Alto, CA

Dear David: Michelin Chabot has written two books purporting to apply “Kelly Theory” to backgammon. The first I found worse than worthless. In the second, which I have not seen, Chabot offers “...the incredible Chabot Paradoxical Proposition” (lampooned on page 44 of my *How Can I Keep From Dancing?*). He professes to believe that you shouldn’t double with one each on your 5- and 2-points against your opponent’s lone man on his 1-point, and that by setting your “bet size” at 5% of your “capital,” you can turn this 19-to-17 losing proposition into a winner over a series of 360 trials. His hustle is based on a mathematical quirk whereby the **median** result of his side exceeds that of the right side although the **mean** result is much lower.

I don’t know the Kelly Criterion, but all “money management” systems for betting on chance events are limited by a simple mathematical truth: your expectation in any series of independent events (where no result affects any other) is the sum of your expectations in each. Therefore you do well to bet as much as you can afford when you are a favorite, nothing at all otherwise. How much can you afford? This depends partly on circumstances external to the betting: you can’t afford to bet your rent money, for example. But suppose you have wisely set aside part of your money as your **wagering capital**. Then—if you are the favorite in any one event—you should still not bet all your wagering capital at once. For if you lose, you are out of a profitable business. The Kelly Criterion, I suspect, gives a formula for determining wisely how much to bet as a function of two variables: (1) probability of winning, and (2) wagering capital available.

But you should not try to apply Kelly Theory to money backgammon, which has no “bet size,” only per-point stakes, even if you know the probabilities of winning plain games, gammons and backgammons. Here’s why:

- (A) You cannot adjust the stakes as your capital grows or shrinks. If you start a chouette for \$5 a point, you cannot play for \$6 after an early success or \$4 after an initial failure.
- (B) Your betting strategy affects your play. If you try to limit the amount you can lose in a single game, you may neglect to take a small risk of losing when it greatly increases your chances of winning a gammon. Conversely, you may abandon substantial game-winning prospects from fear of a

minuscule danger of losing a backgammon.

- (C) Crucially, your betting strategy affects your **cube actions**. If you are truly a favorite in a chouette, much of your edge lies in expert appraisal of positions. By passing takes, merely taking beavers, refraining from aggressive cube-turns, and accepting unfavorable settlements—that is, doing the things necessary to limit “bet size”—you relinquish most of the advantage you think you enjoy.

Instead, I suggest, you should pick a **comfortable stake**. As a rough guide, I’d say, you should set the stakes low enough to absorb a 200 point loss without emotional ruin. To define this another way, you should play for stakes low enough not to affect your cube action, so that you may contemplate all cubes as if they were 2-cubes at the start of a long match. I’ve seen players who violate this criterion **pass beavers** at high cubes, more than negating any skill advantages they may have had. Let your bankroll govern your stakes, not your **cubes**.

There is one sound application of the Kelly Criterion to backgammon, however. That is to matches, where you can bet a fixed sum on each match, and your play and cube decisions during the match are not constrained by what is at stake.—
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.

THE “NITCH”

by Duane Jensen

My most entertaining car was a 1970 Oldsmobile Cutlass 4-4-2. It had a 455 cubic inch, 365 horsepower V-8 engine that ran on leaded premium gasoline and testosterone, both required in copious quantities. Some Sunday mornings when the traffic was light, I’d drive it to work at 100-110 MPH. At 110, I always backed off the accelerator because the car would vibrate like a space capsule during reentry.

I smashed up the car only once—quite remarkable since the car begged to be run with the gas pedal to the floor.

In Minneapolis, one of our backgammon players reminds me of my old car. Jeff Nitschke always plays backgammon with his foot to the floor. He plays quickly and cubes aggressively. Ten minute matches with Jeff are common, as are huge point swings in chouettes. Not one to over-intellectualize a play, Jeff makes whatever move “feels right” to him. As Jeff would say, “Never let your brain interfere with making the correct play.”

In chouettes, Jeff will often take ridiculous cubes, just for the crowd appeal.

Sometimes he’ll give each team member a point so he can take on the box himself; a move so common, it’s known as the “Nitschke Buyout.”

Do not misunderstand. Jeff is more than just a “showboat” or colorful character. Two years ago, he was the Twin Cities Backgammon Club master point leader, beating Fred Kalantari, Steve Brown and other fine players. When he wants to, Jeff can play a tight, conservative game. But he rarely wants to. As Jeff puts it, “Where’s the fun?”

Most backgammon clubs have a “Nitschke-type” player. In Minnesota, we have the original. Δ

Backgammon Clubs In North America

Information for this listing has been obtained directly from the featured backgammon clubs. However, some changes are inevitable and we suggest that you always call before attending. As a service to our readers, *Chicago POINT* would like to maintain an accurate listing of Backgammon Clubs in North America. Please send information including updates, club closings and new clubs to: **Chicago POINT; 2726 W. Lunt Avenue; Chicago, IL 60645.**

WEST

CLUB NAME	MEETING ON	TIME	LOCATION	ADDRESS	CITY & STATE	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
Gammon Associates	Sunday	2:00 PM	Tommy's Chili-Burgers	4681 Long Beach Blvd.	Long Beach, CA	Patrick Gibson	818/901-0464
"	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Bambino's Pizza	12936 Sherman Way	N. Hollywood, CA	Patrick Gibson	818/901-0464
Backgammon Club of San Diego	Sunday	4:00 PM	Hindquarter Restaurant	7040 Miramar Road	San Diego, CA	Gary Oakes	619/274-4221
"	Tuesday	6:30 PM	Karinya Restaurant	4475 Mission Blvd.	San Diego, CA	Gary Oakes	619/274-4221
No. Nevada Backgammon Ass'n	Thursday	7:30 PM	Hacienda Del Sol Restaurant	2935 S. Virginia	Reno, NV	Mark Richardson	702/826-1984
Pacific NW Backgammon Ass'n	Monday	7:30 PM	Shakey's Pizza	105th & 2nd Ave. NE	Bellevue, WA	Chuck Breckenridge	206/778-8181

CENTRAL

Cavendish Club of Chicago	Daily	12:30 PM	Office Building	4747 N. Peterson (402)	Chicago, IL	Howard Markowitz	312/286-8417
Chicago Bar Point Club	Sunday bimonthly	12:30 PM	Bagwell's	4636 N. Cumberland Rd.	Chicago, IL	Peter Kalba	312/252-7755
"	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Pat's Pub	4343 N. Harlem Ave.	Norridge, IL	Bill Davis	312/338-6380
Central Illinois Backgammon Club	Thursday	6:30 PM	Peoria Pizza Works	3921 Prospect	Peoria, IL	Sue Will	309/692-6909
Sangamon Valley BG Ass'n	Tuesday	6:15 PM	On Broadway	210 S. Broadway	Springfield, IL	Randy Armstrong	217/528-0117
"	Occ. Sat. monthly	11:30 AM	On Broadway	210 S. Broadway	Springfield, IL	Randy Armstrong	217/525-2132
Pub Club	Monday	7:30 PM	Fiddler's	345 W. North Ave.	Villa Park, IL	Ed Bauder	312/985-1568
Winnetka Backgammon Club	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Winnetka Community House	620 Lincoln	Winnetka, IL	Trudie Stern	312/446-0537
Hoosier Backgammon Club	Thursday	7:00 PM	Dooley O'Toole's	5771 East 86th Street	Indianapolis, IN	Butch Meese	317/845-8435
Flint Area Backgammon Club	Thursday	7:00 PM	Flint Sheraton Inn	4300 W. Pierson at I-75	Flint, MI	Carol Joy Cole	313/232-9731
Livonia Backgammon Club	Sunday	2:30 PM	Fire Station Center	10800 Farmington Rd.	Livonia, MI	Jeane Eggenberger	313/453-0018
American BG Club of Plymouth	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Box Bar & Grill	777 W. Ann Arbor Trail	Plymouth, MI	Dean Adamian	313/981-5706
Cavendish North BG Club	Daily, Tour. Tues.	7:30 PM	Clubhouse	30065 Greenfield	Southfield, MI	Michael Giordano	313/642-9616
Twin Cities Backgammon Club	Thursday	7:00 PM	Winfield Potters	210 SE 2nd Street	Minneapolis, MN	Steve Brown	612/521-9532
Denison University Chess Club	Most Tuesdays	Evening	Denison University	Fellows Hall	Granville, OH	Roger Blaine	614/587-3607
Austin Backgammon Club	Monday	8:00 PM	Bombay Bicycle Club	5804 North I-35	Austin, TX	Randy Prater	512/490-6538
Dallas Backgammon League	Monday	7:30 PM	Mimi's Pub	5111 Greenville Ave.	Dallas, TX	Kati Pratt	214/987-1520
"	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Dave & Buster's	8021 E. Walnut Hill	Dallas, TX	Kati Pratt	214/987-1520
Bayou Backgammon Club	Friday monthly	6:30 PM	Houstonian	111 N. Post Oak Lane	Houston, TX	Rhoda Grushko	713/681-9671
Celebrities Backgammon	Sunday bimonthly	12:30 PM	Celebrities	3101 Fountainview	Houston, TX	George Morse	713/495-2240
Houston Backgammon Club	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Bombay Bicycle Club	9110 Southwest Freewy	Houston, TX	Jack Butler	713/774-9439
Milwaukee Backgammon	Friday	7:00 PM	Univ. of Wis.-Milwaukee	Student Union Center	Milwaukee, WI	Bob Holyon	414/383-8184

NORTHEAST

College Park Backgammon Club	2nd & 4th Sunday	1:00 PM	Promenade	5225 Pooks Hill Road	Bethesda, MD	Myrtle Brickman	703/620-3239
Cavendish Club of Boston	Sunday monthly	2:00 PM	Clubhouse	111 Cypress Street	Brookline, MA	Sam Hanna	508/734-2230
New England Backgammon Club	Sunday monthly	12:30 PM	Sheraton Commander Hotel	16 Garden Street	Cambridge, MA	Ed Guleserian	617/547-4800
"	Monday	7:00 PM	Sheraton Commander Hotel	16 Garden Street	Cambridge, MA	Ed Guleserian	617/547-4800
Granite St. Backgammon Club	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Woodbound Inn	Woodbound Road	Jaffrey, NH	Lincoln Bedell	603/863-4711
New Jersey Backgammon Ass'n	Tuesday	7:45 PM	Howard Johnson's	129 Pehle Ave.	Saddle Brook, NJ	Ron Whitney	201/833-2915
"	Friday	7:45 PM	Howard Johnson's	129 Pehle Ave.	Saddle Brook, NJ	Jay Rabinowitz	201/731-0996
Greater New York BG Club	Friday	8:00 PM	Vanderbilt Bridge Club	1362 Northern Blvd.	Manhasset, NY	Dr. Bob Hill	516/334-4833
Ace Point Backgammon Club	Daily	2:00 PM	Clubroom	144 E. 57th St.	New York, NY	Mike Valentine	201/839-1579
Coterie	Daily	1:00 PM	(Private Club: Telephone For Information)		New York, NY	Louise Goldsmith	212/371-5151
Backgammon Board of Rochester	Most Sundays	1:00 PM	Younger's Tavern	628 N. Winton Road	Rochester, NY	Bob Hoey	716/461-2619
Pittsburgh Backgammon Ass'n	Sunday bimonthly	1:00 PM	Parkway Center Inn	875 Greentree Rd.	Pittsburgh, PA	Richard Catalano	412/391-6363
"	Tuesday	8:30 PM	Doc's Place	5442 Walnut St.	Pittsburgh, PA	Richard Catalano	412/241-1301

SOUTH

Hallandale Bridge & BG Club	Daily	1:00 PM	Studio	780 E. Hallandale Beach	Hallandale, FL	Ed Silver	305/457-7328
Backgammon Society of Sarasota	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Sun-Fun RV Park Comm. Ctr	7125 Fruitville Road	Sarasota, FL	Cal Kendall	813/966-5357
Backgammon In Georgia, Inc.	Monday	8:00 PM	Copperfield's	215 Copeland Road NW	Atlanta, GA	Bob Clay	404/257-0567
Louisville Backgammon Club	Wednesday	8:00 PM	Holiday Inn	1465 Gardiner Lane	Louisville, KY	Larry Deckel	502/458-5439

CANADA

Calgary Backgammon	Monday	5:30 PM	Penguin Pub	606 1st Street SW	Calgary, ALB	Hal Heinrich	403/229-2024
Toronto Area Backgammon Club	2nd Sun. monthly	12:30 PM	Le Spot Billiards	4531 Sheppard Ave. E	Scarborough, ONT	Jack Ridout	416/267-2815
"	Thursday	Evening	Le Spot Billiards	4531 Sheppard Ave. E	Scarborough, ONT	Jack Rideout	416/298-2888
Toronto Backgammon	Unscheduled	Evening	Snooker Cda, Whiteshield Piz	2300 Lawrence Ave. E	Scarborough, ONT	Vladimir Dobrich	416/752-2800

LETTERS...

(continued from page 2)

BACKGAMMON IN ROCHESTER

I have completed your informational request and look forward to the listing of Backgammon Clubs in North America (*ed. note: see page 5*). I am writing this letter to give you a better feel for backgammon in Rochester, New York.

I learned backgammon eleven years ago while in Brazil on a school program. Upon returning, I was eager to find some opportunity to play and improve my game. I obtained the book *Backgammon For Blood* by some guy named Bruce Becker. Of course I now know that it is clearly the

worst book ever written on the subject, but I loved it for its title and the quotation on the back, "Luck is for losers." It also started me on the road to understanding more about backgammon by suggesting alternative modes of looking at the game. I learned that Becker's ways seemed wrong, primarily because they were wrong, but that there is a lot more to backgammon than just common sense. Maybe the book wasn't a total loss after all.

There was an organization here, The Backgammon Board of Rochester, which was holding weekly tournaments in a local bar. The Board also sponsored an annual Championship of Rochester tournament. On the Board at that time was Renee Rosenbloom. She is still a member today (along with myself). The Board was

formed by Mike Geissinger, Bill McGrath, Bob Cimino and Gary Jay, who one by one, left the organization. Gary Jay probably is the key person in the original group. He still plays, but has no role in organizing. I joined the board around 1983.

We played for almost ten years at the same bar on a weekly basis. In the early 80's, we were running two major events each year, the City Championship and the Great Lakes Championships. We drew many from Buffalo, Toronto, Ottawa and throughout the region. At times, our prize pools topped \$10,000. Eventually, however, the bloom was off the rose, attendance declined and we lost most of our organizational vigor. We also lost our home base and had to experiment with several new locations, none which were satisfactory. Early in 1988, attendance hit all time lows and I was alone, trying to keep backgammon alive in Rochester. It seemed futile. I simply discontinued the weekly events.

During that time from February to November, backgammon was virtually dead in Rochester. A few of us sponsored a couple of invitational events at our homes and I sensed an indication of renewed interest in reviving regular play. Renee and I had become the prime movers of the Thousand Islands tournament at the Pine Tree Resort in Alexandria Bay (this year's tourney is scheduled August 4-6). We also supported other events including the Towpath Inn tournament in Turin, NY, Mic Tomcic's event in Ottawa each spring, and in alternate years, Lincoln Bedell's Granite State tournament in New Hampshire.

Buffalo used to be very active in backgammon. Their leader, Jerry Nathan, unfortunately passed away last year. Buffalo still has weekly play with several good players there.

Syracuse has always been a dead zone for backgammon. When their one hot player, Mike Labins, left the area, that was all to be heard from Syracuse—until now. We have recently hosted a tournament there and hope it has fanned the coals to renew interest.

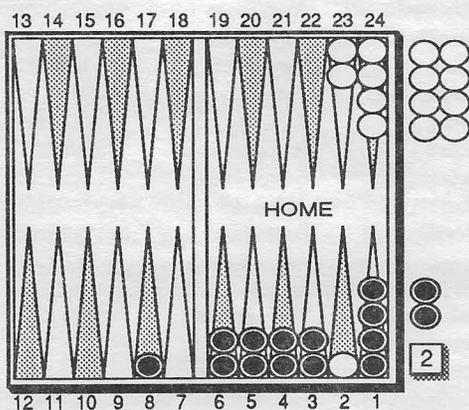
Finally, in November, we resumed our weekly tournaments in Rochester at a new place, Younger's. 16 players paid the \$10 entry fee. Not bad for starters. We would like to get at least that many on a regular basis. With advertising, if we can get our numbers up, we will consider hosting a major event sometime in 1989.—*Bob Hoey, Backgammon Board of Rochester, NY* Δ

last month's position

PROBLEM #142 SOLVED

by Kent Goulding

Match to 11 points. No score. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-1.**



The following plays merit at least some consideration:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1) 8/6, 1/Off | 4) 4/2*, 4/3 |
| 2) 8/5 | 5) 4/2*, 8/7 |
| 3) 8/6, 3/2* | 6) 5/2* |

I started to attack this problem by attempting to see just how Black stood in the race. To do this, I played 8/6, 1/Off for Black and then gave White an eight pip racing number (bringing her back checker out to her 15-point). Then I rolled out the position once for each of Black's 36 possible starting rolls. The results surprised me. Black won only two games, requiring more than double sixes in each case. In

fact, Black lost the game he started with 6-6. It was not at all uncommon for Black to be ginned out (i.e., left with zero winning chances prior to his last roll). Many times, Black was reduced to needing doubles on his final two rolls. With this information, analyzing the problem became somewhat easier.

We must assume that the vast majority of Black's wins will come when White fails to perform on her first roll. In other words, If White is on the bar, she stays there; if she is on Black's 2-point, she doesn't leap the blockade. What I did next was to look at the positions which result for each of the above plays assuming White doesn't move. I then picked the position I would most want for every possible roll.

The results were somewhat enlightening. Play (1) and play (6) were the best, with (1) holding a slight lead. Play (3) was easily last. Since judging the best resulting position was not always easy (for example, an extra man or two off in exchange for a four point board rather than a five point board), I decided to try to judge the top two candidate plays head-to-head, ignoring the other choices. Perhaps things would become clearer. In fact, play (6) scored a fairly impressive win on those positions where neither play was rated the best choice.

I am convinced that these two plays are better than any other. My choice is for play (6). The race is so bad for Black that it may even be better to be hit on the 20-point the times that White performs on her first roll, although my decision is based mainly on how much easier it is for Black to bring the game home assuming White rolls one of her 16 bad numbers. Δ



BACKGAMMON ZODIAC

by D. Jensen, Astrologist

*What kind of tournament player are you? Just find your "sign" and read the description.
If it's not you, it's probably someone you know.*

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) "THE OBSERVER": He gets genuine jollies from just watching chouettes and matches and recording interesting positions or games. Sometimes the OBSERVER will roll out "propositions," but usually he is content just to watch others play.

PISES (February 19-March 20) "THE CRITIC": He is in heaven at a backgammon tournament. What easier place to find the mistakes of others? The greater your mistake, the quicker the CRITIC will point it out to you. The more depression the CRITIC can give, the more joy he receives.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) "THE HEDGER": If the HEDGER wins his first match he becomes the tournament director's worst nightmare. He will pester the director with questions such as "How many matches till the money round?" or "Am I in the money yet?" The HEDGER isn't concerned with the skill of his next opponent. His worry is if that opponent will hedge with him. The HEDGER'S goal isn't to win the tournament, but just to win something.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) "THE CHOUETTE ADDICT": He couldn't care less if he's knocked out of the tournament. For the CHOUETTE ADDICT, the tournament is merely a gathering spot for chouette players. As long as he gets his fix, he's satisfied.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) "THE BROCHUREHEAD": Comes in two varieties—the "Collector" and the "Director." The "Collector" is preoccupied with collecting souvenir pencils, pads and tournament brochures. The "Director" is preoccupied with distributing gaudy brochures promoting his next tournament and with recruiting potential players. These distractions interfere with their play, so BROCHUREHEADS rarely do well in tournaments.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) "THE PERFECTIONIST": He insists on a tidy board with each checker perfectly aligned. Each dice roll requires prolonged study. This slow play is required because the PERFECTIONIST is emotionally crushed if he learns he made the wrong play. PERFECTIONISTS exist at all levels of play. Bad players make bad plays. Bad players who are PERFECTIONISTS make the same bad plays, but take longer to do so.

LEO (July 23-August 22) "THE EGO FEEDER": A backgammon tournament is an excellent feeding ground for this player. For a small entry fee and some lucky dice, he can get a trophy, master points, a rating and the glory of his name and photograph in a backgammon newsletter. The EGO FEEDER is not interested in the prize money. Money doesn't boost his ego; winning (and others knowing about it) does.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22) "THE SOCIAL BUTTERFLY": He doesn't care if he plays backgammon. The SOCIAL BUTTERFLY is at the tournament to visit friends, exchange photographs, and find out who's dating whom. His major concern is not how to play 5-2, but "Where are we eating tonight."

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) "THE SECOND INCOME PLAYER": This dry, humorless person has little interest in the social environment of a backgammon tournament. His concern is that his chance of winning money is greater than the cost of carfare, hotel, meals and entry fees. The SECOND INCOME PLAYER will try to play at a level below his ability. He's not interested in a challenge—tournament play is just another job.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) "THE GAMBLER": His interest and success is in the Calcutta, not in tournament play. He views a backgammon tournament as yet another opportunity to exercise his vice. The GAMBLER would be equally happy at the craps table, race track or sports book.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) "THE TOURNAMENT SPECIALIST": He's here to play in the tournament and nothing more. The Calcuttas, chouettes and meeting new people are of zero interest to the TOURNAMENT SPECIALIST. If eliminated from the tournament, he'll take the next car, plane or bus home.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19) "THE JEWEL": The most sought-after player by tournament directors. The JEWEL enjoys both chouette and tournament play, rarely complains, and comes back year after year even if he loses.

CONFUSING GAME AND MATCH EQUITY

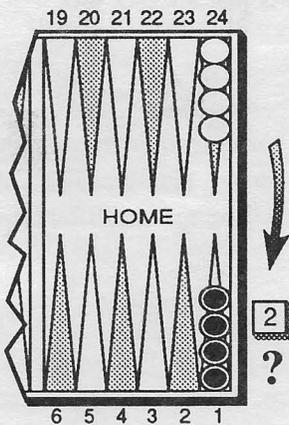


by Neil Kazaross

In virtually every match I watch, at least one of the players gives up match equity through a cube-handling error. The goal of this bimonthly series of articles is to expose some of the common match cube errors and show the reader how to minimize them in his own play. The concepts will generally get more sophisticated as the series continues. Bear-off positions will often, but not always be used as examples because their exact winning chances can be calculated.

One of the most common match cube errors occurs toward the end of a match when the trailer is offered a double. Oftentimes, the trailer takes improperly and redoubles because his chances to win the game exceed his chances to win the match if he passes. What the trailer forgets to calculate, or doesn't realize is that even if he wins the game, he can still lose the match. Example 1 illustrates this typical error:

Example 1: 7 point match. White leads Black 5 to 1. White doubles. SHOULD BLACK TAKE THE 2-CUBE?



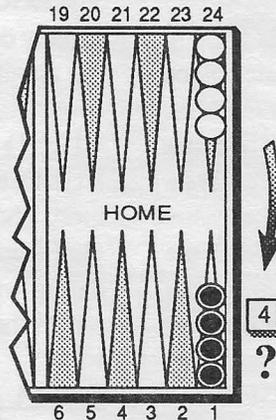
Black's typical mistaken thinking goes as follows: "If I pass this cube, I'm down 6-1 Crawford with about 10% match equity. I can take the cube, redouble and win the position about 14% which is greater than 10%. Therefore, I TAKE." Black has just given up 3% match equity. Do you see Black's error?

When Black wins this game, the cube will be on 4 and the score will be tied 5-5. Thus Black will only win one-half of the

matches after the 14% of the time he rolls a double to win this game. Hence Black's match equity if he takes is only 7% ($1/2 \times 14\%$). Black must pass.

Example 2 illustrates the situation when Black should take based solely upon a comparison of his match chances if he passes. This occurs only when White's double puts enough points at stake for her to win the match and Black's subsequent redouble also puts him at match point.

Example 2: 7 point match. White leads Black 4 to 1. White doubles to 4. SHOULD BLACK TAKE THE 4-CUBE?

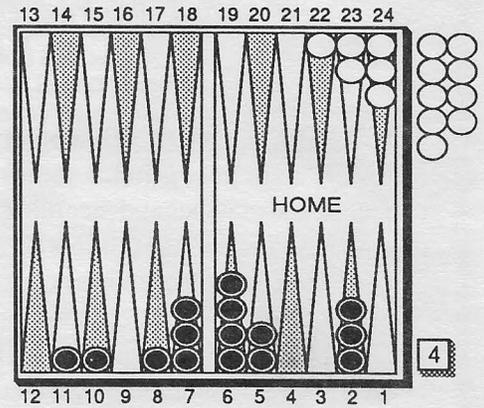


If Black passes, he's down 6-1 Crawford with 10% chances. Black can take, redouble to 8 and win the match on this game when he wins—a 14% possibility. Thus, Black must take and redouble.

Don't make the common mistake of confusing Example 1 with Example 2. Be sure to consider your match equity after taking and redoubling when considering your take point. I've seen several advanced players miss this concept, even in doubles tournaments where two heads were no better than one. Δ

PROBLEM #143

Money game. BLACK TO PLAY 4-4.



AMALGAMATION

Congratulations to other Illinois Players of the Year: **Marty Tatosian** (Winnetka BG Club), **Greg Tomlin** (Sangamon Valley BG Ass'n), **Ed Bauder** (Pub Club), and **Milad Doueihi** (Central Ill. BG Club). These clubs plus the Bar Point Club will be in Chicago February 19 for Illinois State Challenge Cup... Elsewhere, **Dann DeRoche** is Flint's Player of the Year, and **Larry Strommen** wins the Hoosier Club Award... **Carol Joy Cole** reports from Farmington Hills, Michigan that the **Joe Sylvester/Tami Moore** New Year's Eve wedding and reception was really special. Congratulations to the newlyweds... Incidentally, the *POINT* received three letters asking where to buy Sylvester book, *The Secrets Of Winning*, as "reviewed" by **Duane Jensen** in the December *POINT*. Unfortunately Duane's story was only a Christmas wish—no such book exists. The good news: Joe tells us that the dream may become a reality by 1990. Stay tuned... Special people. That's an apt description for **Alyce Wallen**, **Betsy Miller** and **Connie Sychowski** whose Christmas gifts brightened Bar Point Club players on December 20... "I hadn't seen my cheeks for 20 years. It was time for a change." That's BPC director **Peter Kalba's** reason for shaving off his muttonchops and moustache on December 21.... What do you get if you mix backgammon, race horses and Saturday night? Find out at the BPC Hawthorne Backgammon Classic January 28 at Hawthorne Race Course (Cicero, IL). Call 312/338-6380 for details... Visiting the Bar Point Club on December 27: Flint, Michigan player **Gail Lorick**... Finally, Ed Bauder offers this New Year's resolution to get into backgammon shape: "I plan to do a lot of '4-checker' curls on my bear-offs." Δ

101%

OPEN DIVISION ENTRY RETURN

The Louisville Backgammon Club

BLUEGRASS REGIONAL

Returns to Clarksville, IN

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February 24-26, 1989

For More Information:

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