

nevada state backgammon championships

ROBERTS HANGS ON
**Mooney's Near Miracle Finish
In Reno Comes Up Short**

If Doug Roberts of Mahopac, New York keeps a "My Toughest Matches" list, his 19-17 victory over Mike Mooney (Phoenix) in the 1989 Nevada State Championship finals will certainly rank near the top. Roberts weathered a seesaw match and wild last game to win the largest tournament in North America. Once again, the beautiful Peppermill Hotel In Reno, Nevada hosted the N.N.B.A.'s mega-event January 11-15. Worldwide participation topped 300.

Roberts and Mooney surprised the odds makers by landing atop a 111 player field that included (among others) Sylvester, Goulding, Corbett and Senkiewicz. Yet both are excellent players in their own right. Roberts won Vermont in 1986, a 1988 Backgammon Co-op event and the '84-'85 New England Club championship. Mooney was last year's Nevada State Consolation champ.

A marked difference in the player's styles and mannerisms was evident during the first game. Mooney appeared calm and collected while Roberts, who couldn't stop fidgeting in his chair, chain-smoked Marlboros down to the filter.

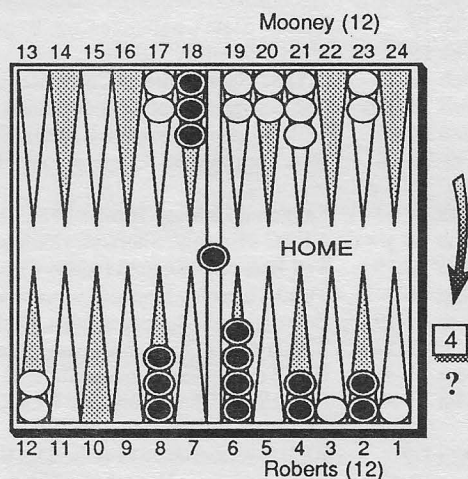
After three games, Doug's intensity had gained him a 5-0 lead. He moved with great power, releasing tension through violent dice shaking. Finally, in game four, Mike won his first point quipping, "That's one for the weak side."

Through 17 games with the score tied at 12-12, the lead had changed hands four times. In game 18, Mike offered Doug a 4-cube (see Position 1 above). Doug lit a cigarette and puffed through half of it before passing into a 12-14 deficit.

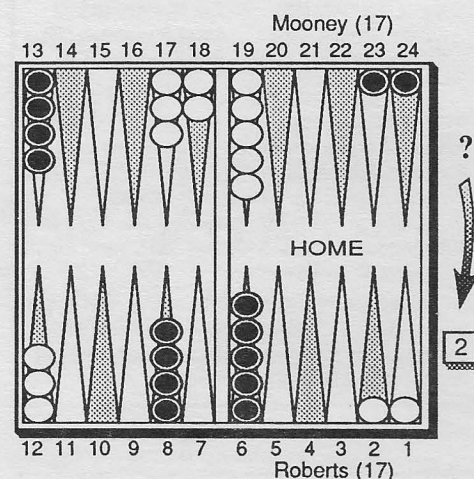
Game 19 was a four cigarette affair for Roberts. On his 20th turn, Doug offered a premature 2-cube. Mooney grabbed it and quickly evened the battle through control of Doug's 3- and 5-anchors. At this point, one of the spectators made a *box run* for Doug: to the drugstore for a fresh box of Marlboros.

A holding game developed and when

POSITION 1. 19 point finals tied at 12-all. Mooney cubes to 4. Should Roberts take?



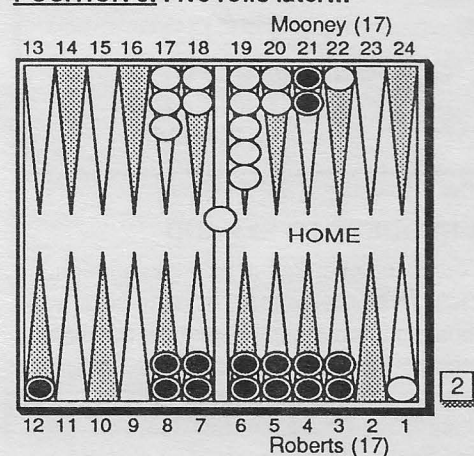
POSITION 2. 19 point finals tied at 17-all. Should Mooney cube to 2?



Doug finally left a shot on his 38th move, Mike connected. With the chance to win a gammon and be within one point of victory, Mooney began to feel the pressure. At one point, he started to move his pieces *before* he had even rolled the dice! Eventually Mike's gammon chances faded and he doubled Roberts out to take a 16-12 advantage into game 20. But Roberts would win five of the next six points in the following three games to tie the score at 17.

With both players needing only two points to claim the \$10,000 first prize, Mooney cubed with a small advantage after only two rolls (Position 2). Roberts took, and with five super shakes, transformed the setup into Position 3.

POSITION 3. Five rolls later...



(continued on page 3)

STUDY IN CONTRAST


With the score tied at 12-all, Mike Mooney (left) offers a "relaxed" 4-cube to his intense opponent, Doug Roberts in game 18 of the Nevada State Championship finals.

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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

A REQUEST TO EXPAND

Your December listing of Backgammon Clubs In North America is great. Now how about an international listing for the many people who travel overseas? Here's the information from my part of the world: The Hong Kong Backgammon Club; Mr. Avry Ben Zeeve; P.O. Box 95695; T.S.T.; Hong Kong. Telephone: (03) 689-918.—*Jerry Godsey, Macao*

We'll consider your suggestion for the 1990 listings.—*Ed.*

MISSED THE LIST

I've just opened the Plaza Club in the Ft. Lauderdale, Florida area and would like to be listed in your register. We have daily chouettes, weekly tournaments and other board and card games. The phone number is (305) 776-5323.—*Al Tesoro, Oakland Park, FL*

Sorry to say that you're too late for the 1989 listing, Al. Perhaps your letter will help spread the word.—*Ed.*

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

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 4-5	IBA Tournament, Palm Hotel, W. Palm Beach, FL	305/527-4033
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	Baden-Wuerttemberg Champs, Hotel Europe, Stuttgart, W. Germany	08341-128 25
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 19	NY/NJ Backgammon Co-op Regional Tournament, Long Island, NY	516/334-4833
Feb 20-23	Cannes International Tournament, Palais des Festivals, France	061-50-5816
Feb 24-26	13th Bluegrass Regional, Louisville, KY	502/429-0153
Feb 25-26	IBA Tournament, Ocean Resort Hotel, Deerfield Beach, FL	305/527-4033
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	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Mar 16-19	International Championships, Badrut's Palace Hotel, St. Moritz	061 50 58 16
Mar 17-19	37th Indiana Open, Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Mar 24-26	IBA Tournament, Loews Summit Hotel, New York, NY	305/527-4033
Mar 31-Apr 2	Dusseldorf Championship, West Germany	02151-5035
Apr 1-2	BIGI Tournament of Fools, The Beef Cellar, Atlanta, GA	404/257-0567
Apr 12-17	April In Tahoe, Hyatt Lake Tahoe, NV	800/327-3910
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 23-26	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
May 19-21	Austrian Tournament, Casino Bregenz, Austria	08341-12 825
May 26-29	10th Annual Chicago Open, Westin Hotel O'Hare, Rosemont, IL	312/674-0120
May 26-29	Boston Symph. Orch. Benefit, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
June 21-25	U.S. Open & Master's Invitational, Nugget Hotel/Casino, Reno, NV	702/826-1984
July 10-16	World Championship of Backgammon, Monte-Carlo, Monaco	301/299-8264
July 28-30	Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731

CAPITAL DISPUTE

Last month, Danny Kleinman gave the sound advice that one should play for stakes low enough not to affect one's cube action. But I'm astonished that he interprets this as requiring a capital of 200 pts. \$2000 in readies to be able to play in the \$10 chouette? It's nothing like as much!

Obviously Danny can't be referring to the capital for a single game. Rather the question is relevant for a session since it's a waste of one's time and often also bad manners to have to quit a session early.

Here's my rough estimate of the capital required. In four or five hours of head-to-head play, I'd reckon to get through about 40 games. With one automatic double and reasonably sane play, the average game is

settled for about three points at most. So my maximum loss is 120 points. In fact I feel very comfortable with a capital of 50 points. This would cover a 28:12 game split against me in which I'd pay out approximately $16 \times 3 = 48$ points.

Assuming equal ability, I calculate from the binomial distribution that it's 310 to 1 against my doing worse than that. And if I did lose 50 points, I'd want to stop, whatever my capital since I'd either be tired, drunk, steaming, or playing Bill Robertie.

I don't think chouettes are much different. I might have a long winning run in the box, but if I lose in the box I rejoin the crew.—*Ray Kershaw, London, England*

(continued on page 6)

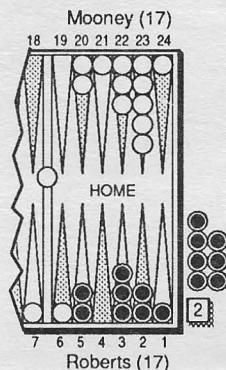
RENO...

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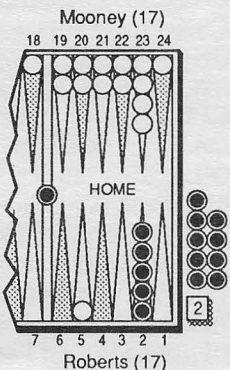
Doug eventually reached Position 4 (below) and when Mooney missed Roberts ace-blot, Roberts lit up cigarette number 25—an apparent “victory smoke.” But there was still a ways to go. Doug cast 5-1, bearing two off, and when Mooney rolled 6-5 (hitting), the impossible dream began.

Through skilled checker recirculation and good fortune, Mooney attained Position 5. He rolled 4-2 and rather than close his board, played to trap a second checker with 5/11.

POSITION 4. Double match point. Roberts rolls 5-1.



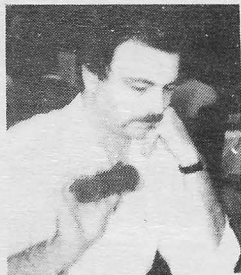
POSITION 5. Mooney to play 4-2. Should he close his board?



Roberts shook double 1's (24*, 1(3)), Mooney replied with 6-1 (Bar/6, 23/24*), and Doug's 6-1 (Bar/24*/18*) extinguished the miracle. Mike failed to enter and couldn't recover.

In other results, Kent Goulding won the Open Consolation, Kit Woolsey, Ray

Glaeser and Joel Schiff split the Bonanza, Canada's Bud Ashmore captured the Kickoff, and Bob Faucon & Henry Kimble won the Doubles title. In the Intermediate



division, Stan Weiss topped Ken Bame in an all-California finals, and Chicago's Stu Katz (pictured at left) swept both the Main and Last Chance Novice tournaments.

The U.S. Open is the NNBA's next event, June 21-25 at the Reno Nugget. Δ

NEVADA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

OPEN (111): 1st Doug Roberts (NY); 2nd Mike Mooney (AZ); 3/4 Scott McKenzie (CA) and Florrie Snyder (PA). 1st Cons. Kent Goulding (MD); 2nd Cons. Jack Singer (NY). 1st LC Bernard Bergstein (CA), 2nd LC Al Jones (CAN).

OPEN JACKPOT (64): 1st Ray Glaeser (NJ); 2nd Joel Schiff (ISR)

INTERMEDIATE (125): 1st Stan Weiss (CA); 2nd Ken Bame (CA); 3/4 Paul Pavlides (NC) and Linc Bedell (NH). 1st Cons. Kalisa Maffeo (CA); 2nd Jim Ellen (NV). 1st LC Wally Wolf (MI); 2nd Jim Wark (CA).

INTERMEDIATE JACKPOT (64): 1st Howard Shapiro (NJ); 2nd Ted Boughton (CA).

NOVICE (55): 1st Stu Katz (IL); 2nd Russ Hoag (AZ); 3/4 Pete Gorns (NV) and Emil Sepasy (WA). 1st Cons. George Foster (CA); 2nd Cons. David Cutler (CA). 1st LC Stu Katz (IL); 2nd Anita Paul (CA).

KICKOFF (512): 1st Bud Ashmore (CAN); 2nd Tom Leslie (CA).

BONANZA (48): 1st/2nd/3rd Ray Glaeser (NJ), Joel Schiff (ISR) and Kit Woolsey (CA).

DOUBLES (64 teams): 1st Robert Falcon & Henry Kimble (VA); 2nd Mike Derooge & Dann DeRouche (MI).

hawthorne backgammon classic

A "PERFECTA" TOURNAMENT

Dean Muench (1st-Open) and Jill Ferdinand (1st-Limited) made up the backgammon *Daily Double* at the Hawthorne Backgammon Classic. The Bar Point Club event was held January 28 at Hawthorne Race Course in Cicero, Illinois. Over 40 players enjoyed a unique variety of action.



Bob Zavoral, Peter Kalba, George Barr, Leslie Lockett, Bob Maurer and Ray Lanzillo follow the 5th race stretch drive on an overhead monitor at Hawthorne.

There were also a number of track winners. Bob Zavoral (a rookie at the races) had four winners, Bill Davis hit a 13 to 1 long shot, Tak Morioka and Howard Chow picked Perfectas and Peter Kalba selected the Perfecta and Trifecta on our own Hawthorne Backgammon Classic race.

Thanks to Tom and Sue Carey (Hawthorne Race Course) for their hospitality, Chicago Tribune "Odds & Ins" columnists Linda Kay and Mike Conklin for the blurb and Kathy Posner (Martin Janis & Co.) for promotional efforts. We'll be back! Δ



1989 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU JAN. 31

ALAN STEFFEN	3.36	KATHY BAUDER	1.64	Jill Ferdinand	0.80
TAK MORIOKA	3.32	SARG SERGES	1.56	Dave Rockwell	0.72
BILL DAVIS	2.76	DEAN MUENCH	1.52	Arlene Levy	0.72
DEEB SHALATI	2.64	BILL KEEFE	1.04	Yamin Yamin	0.60
BOB ZAVORAL	2.08	DAN JUDD	0.96	Rich Siebold	0.56
JOHN DEMIAN	1.84	STU KATZ	0.96	Mark King	0.40
CHRIS KENIK	1.84	DAVID LIBCHABER	0.84	John Spatafora	0.30
JOANN FEINSTEIN	1.72	KEN BOND	0.80	Norma Shyer	0.30
ARNOLD ZOUSER	1.68	RON STUR	0.80	Mark Hicks	0.28
RALPH LEVY	1.68	Gary Kay	0.80	Richard Stawowy	0.28
DON JAYHAN	1.64				

If you finish in the Top 20 for 1989 (capitalized names on list), you'll be entered in a drawing for over \$200 worth of valuable merchandise including a Sony cordless telephone. The higher you finish, the better your winning chances. Individual awards: 1st—Trophy + \$150; 2nd—\$100; 3rd—\$50. 1st thru 20th—cherrywood die box. 1st thru 6th—Invitation to participate on the Chicago Bar Point Club team in the 1990 Illinois State Challenge Cup.

HAWTHORNE BACKGAMMON CLASSIC

OPEN (19): 1st Dean Muench; 2nd Gary Kay; 1st/2nd Cons. Sarg Serges and Yamin Yamin. LIMITED (20): 1st Jill Ferdinand; 2nd Mark King; 1st/2nd Cons. Norma Shyer and John Spatafora.

Largest In Europe...

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ZENTRALE**

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Gertigstrasse 33; D-2000 Hamburg 60; W. Germany
Phone: 040-270 11 66

DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS



EXPECT GOSSIP IF YOU HAVE A BACKGAMMON AFFAIR

Dear Miss Lonelyblots: I've been intimately involved with a well-known Open backgammon player for the past eight months. We have both agreed to keep our affair a secret for fear of becoming the topic of conversation among the gossip-mongers. When attending out-of-town tournaments, we always register in separate rooms. We are also careful never to be seen dining alone together.

Now he's beginning to fall deeply in love with me and wants to "go public" with our involvement: play doubles together, even share the same hotel room at upcoming spring tournaments. The problem is that I've been through this before and have felt the pain when the affair seems to end just ahead of the rumors in the playing room. I really like this guy but am hesitant to end our discretionary relationship. What do you suggest?—Once Bitten

Dear Bitten: Yes, I know how it is. I don't even live in your town and already I've heard six different prominent backgammon names (five male, one female) whispered as "for sure" being your lover. Take my advice: don't mix backgammon with sex. Choose a lover who doesn't play the game. Then nobody will see, nobody will know, and—crucially—nobody will talk. Believe me, honey. There are plenty of pretty boys outside of backgammon.—Miss Lonelyblots

Dear Bitten: I was horrified to hear my sister Emily's reply to you when she read it to me over the phone, but I couldn't dissuade her from sending it off. That woman is a disgrace to the whole family, even worse than Xaviera. Why, Emily never bothered to take an undergraduate course in clinical psychology, much less professional training! What business has she advising you on matters of the heart? So I've taken it upon myself to give you a more educated opinion.

It was the great Dr. Sigmund Freud himself who said that life's vital passions are for work and love. How much happier you can be integrating the two by loving a man who shares your consuming interest in backgammon than fragmenting your life into separate spheres!

You say your man is "beginning to fall deeply in love" with you. What tentative language this is! Has he given you his

heart? After eight months, surely you know. You say you "really like this guy." Is that all you feel for him?

Do you love this man? Do you want to share a common fate with him in a backgammon doubles match as well as the analytic interplay of your consultations together? Do you enjoy his company and conversation at dinner? Do you crave his touch and cherish his body not just "during sex" but afterward, snuggling through a night of sleep?

If your answer is no, then your problem is the discrepancy between your feelings and his—not the unkind gossip of acquaintances with minds devoid of significant thoughts and lives devoid of love.

But if your answer is yes, then you should summon that small measure of courage necessary to ignore the ignorant-hearted gossipers. What you feel when you hear (accurate) rumors about yourself isn't pain but "smart" (an old-fashioned word—look it up in your dictionary some time). Though it may feel like shame, it is merely embarrassment. Robert Solomon distinguishes these two emotions in his book *The Passions*. One who feels **shame** deems himself **blameworthy**; but "One is embarrassed by the opinions of others or what he takes to be the opinions of others, whether or not they coincide with his own sense of values."

Now I am not trying to impose my sense of values (which favor long-term commitment) on you. Who am I or anyone else to dictate for you and your man that your love should lead to marriage or the not-quite-equivalent modern substitutes for marriage? No, it is perfectly all right for you to choose to "sing in the sunshine" with your man for a limited duration, a la Gale Garnett or Susan Sarandon.

For however long you both love, therefore, go for a whole man-whole woman relationship. View gossip as my sister Emily keeps telling me (fruitlessly) to view the blots I am still afraid to leave on my 4- and 5-points early in a backgammon game, before my opponent has made any inside points: as undesirable, certainly, but worth risking when there is a valuable goal to be gained.—Dr. Antoinette G.

Lonelyhearts, Ph.D. Δ

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

WINNER'S CORNER



Dec.-Jan. 1989

Sangamon Valley Saturday (Springfield, IL; Dec. 3)... Open: 1st Dan Eatherington; 2nd Dick Nelson; 1st Cons. Ben Zemaitis.
Bar Point Sunday (Chicago, IL; Dec. 11)... Open (18): 1st Stu Katz; 2nd Gary Kay; 3rd/4th Dan Judd and John O'Hagan; 1st Cons. Yamin Yamin; 2nd Cons. Don Desmond. Limited (9): 1st Orris Solberg; 2nd Mark King; 1st Cons. Darcey Brady.
G/A 18th Invitational (Los Angeles, CA; Dec. 16-18)... Open (32): 1st Rageb Shadallah; 2nd Farzan Garmroodi; 3/4 David Dekoker and Jerry Hays. Special 16: 1st Ron Bruns; 2nd David Wight. Doubles (8): 1st Scott Sevell & Alan Weiss.
Christmas Tournament (Weisbaden, W. Germany; Dec. 27-28)... Open: 1st Carsten Joh; 2nd Jean van Ingen.
CPBC Winter Open (College Park, MD; Jan. 14)... Open (24): 1st/2nd Ed O'Laughlin and Jim Baroff; 3rd/4th Carl Miller and Ben Elliott. Intermediate: 1st Peggy Culpepper; 2nd Joanne Schatz.
NEBC Monthly (Cambridge, MA; Jan. 15)... A Division (26): 1st Tom Costigan; 2nd Evan Diamond; 1st Cons. Ed Igoo. B Division (14): 1st Jim McKenna; 2nd Jamil Elhindi; 1st Cons. Ed Miller. Δ

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB

1989 MIDWEST BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIPS

APRIL 14-16, 1989
 HOLIDAY INN
 OAKBROOK TERRACE, ILLINOIS
 INFORMATION: (312) 338-6380

HASTY PLAYS



by Duane Jensen

Max McGee, the wide receiver of the Green Bay Packers, was the hero of Super Bowl I against the Kansas City Chiefs. Max was also a celebrity in Minneapolis in the late 70's and early 80's. He owned *Maximillian's*, a restaurant-nightclub just south of Minneapolis which was the most entertaining place I've ever played backgammon. Each Monday, Max held a tournament with volatile chouettes before and after. Backgammon egos are large under normal conditions, but when they soak up alcohol, they swell to enormous sizes. After several consecutive bad weeks at the table, some players were forced to make "career changes."

The tournament matches were often played on tables up against the dance floor. You rolled your dice with Donna Summer belting out "Last Dance" at 100 decibels while dancers and strobe lights flashed around you. It was great fun in a crazy sort of way.

One of the regular players at Maximillian's was Fred Kalantari. When I first met Freddy, he told me he came to America from Iran years ago for his own health and

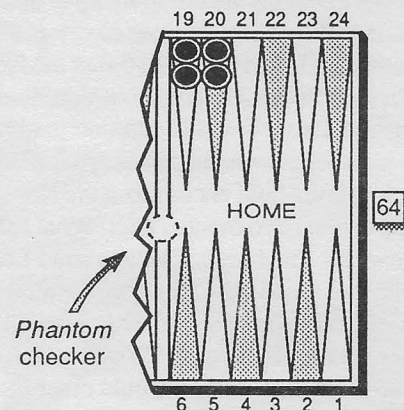
well-being. Now when Fred is questioned about his accent, he says, "I come from Persia where they breed those cats." I used to call him "Disco Fred," not because of his dancing skills, but because of Fred's own caricature of his accent. Looking at a backgammon roll, Fred would say, "I tink I zee zumting. Dis checker co here and dis co here."

Fred's niche in the backgammon ecosphere is that of predator. He is a chouette shark. Fred likes to circle the table looking for little "fishies" to devour. He is also a fine tournament player, especially when paired with Bob Schachter, his frequent doubles partner. Kalantari and Schachter, the yin and yang of Minnesota backgammon, have cashed in tournaments all over the country. I remember one time when the pair was challenged in a doubles match by Bob Levine and Shel Segal. Bob Levine is an excellent backgammon player and Shel Segal is an excellent physician. With Kalantari-Schachter leading Levine-Segal in the match and winning the game, Fred (on shake) has only one fear... "Can I come in off the bar?"

Levine-Segal have only a two point board, the 5- and 6-points. It would be very unlucky to fan here. Fred shakes and rolls. He's cursed: it's a 6-5. Fred scoops up the dice in disgust and shakes his head towards his partner. Schachter is also shaking his head because they were **not** on the bar.

Fred has experienced what I call a "backgammon hallucination."

WHITE ROLLS 6-5 and picks up his dice. He mistakenly thought he was on the bar.



Fred says, "Sorry Bobby." Schachter just shrugs his shoulders—what's done is done. Their opponents wait awhile before rolling. Freddy has just speared a windmill and they want him to twist in the wind for a few minutes. Several rolls later, Kalantari-Schachter are doubled out. Soon after, they lose the match as well.

Everyone experiences backgammon hallucinations of varying magnitude and frequency. Even big name players make big mistakes. I have no panacea for stopping hallucinations. The important lesson is that it happens to everyone. Don't dwell on a careless error to the extent that it affects your play in the future. Δ

THE CHICAGOLAND ALL-TIME TOP 50

The players listed below represent the Top 50 master point achievers in the 14 year recorded history of Chicagoland Backgammon. The Bar Point Club, Pub Club and Winnetka Backgammon Club currently use the master point system developed by the National Backgammon League in 1974. The NBL (1974-1979), House of Backgammon (1976-1979), Pub Club West (1980-1981), Gammon's of Chicago (1979-1984) and Cubicle Backgammon club (1984-1985) records are also included in the all time roster.

Anyone interested in obtaining his Chicagoland all-time master point record (over 1500 names compiled through December 1988) can check with Bill Davis at 312/338-6380. Δ

1 Howard Markowitz 422.37	18 Harry Cohn 138.88	35 Sam Hakimi 74.66
2 Tak Morioka 337.58	19 Ira Hoffberg 130.80	36 Charles Peres 69.87
3 Bill Davis 325.83	20 Joann Feinstein 130.63	37 Marlene Weinstein 68.53
4 Chris Stanford 232.24	21 Ida Zeman 130.56	38 Lenore Steelman 68.43
5 Don Desmond 209.45	22 Deeb Shalati 127.54	39 Paul Larson 67.73
6 Yamin Yamin 203.14	23 Dave Cramer 126.31	40 Mike Siegel 66.62
7 Randy Cone 199.94	24 Sarg Serges 123.77	41 Ollie Mullenbach 65.13
8 Bobbie Shifrin 192.73	25 Peter Kalba 113.90	42 Greg Shore 64.92
9 Kent Maynard 177.97	26 Lucky Nelson 112.70	43 John Aprahamian 58.96
10 Ed Bauder 175.60	27 Brooks Robinson 96.82	44 Eileen Cohen 58.80
11 Barry Epstein 169.58	28 Jeff Henry 93.12	45 Mike Cohen 56.16
12 Gene Chait 168.94	29 Jim Gibbs 92.13	46 Dave Libchaber 55.52
13 Phil Martorelli 163.47	30 Steve Tennant 88.70	47 Joe Cara 53.77
14 Ron Garber 158.98	31 Phyllis Smolinski 87.35	48 Kathy Posner 53.20
15 Dean Morehouse 153.92	32 John Demian 82.35	49 Craig Chellstorp 52.67
16 Earl Risch 150.64	33 Fred Grand 80.00	50 Fred Leinweber 52.14
17 Kathy Bauder 147.06	34 Dale Barker 75.56	

JUNIOR MASTER-3 MASTER-10 ADVANCED MASTER-25 SENIOR MASTER-50
ADVANCED SENIOR MASTER-100 GRAND MASTER-200 CHICAGOLAND LIFE MASTER-300

BACKGAMMON and NUMEROLOGY

7
30 ? 12
24

by Larry Strommen

Many players feel that backgammon is a microcosm of life. If this is true, then how should we view the backgammon board? According to information accompanying a backgammon computer program by Odesta, a ninth century author claimed that from a numerological viewpoint, the board and playing pieces represent our concepts of time.

Each player has two dice representing AM and PM; the 24 points on the board represent the hours in a day. And if you total the opposing faces on any die, you'll get 7, the number of days in a week.

Each game comes with 30 pieces—the average number of days in a month. And the four quadrants of the board stand for our four seasons. Finally, the 12 points on each side of the board represent the months of the year. Δ

DON'T OVERDO HIGH ENTRY SIDE EVENTS

\$500 side events are cropping up at more and more backgammon tournaments across the nation. Why have so many directors added these events to their weekend regionals?

Louisville Labor Day—1986 was the first Midwestern tourney to advertise a \$500 "Invitational" (Got 500 bucks?—You're invited). Past LBC director Larry Strasberg ran the knockout-style event in addition to his main tournament. The purpose was to lure some of the high rollers who had attended the World Cup and Eastern Open three weeks prior.

A 16-player field encouraged the Hoosier Club to schedule an "Indy \$500" at their Indiana Classic two months later. What followed were big money side events in Boston, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Flint.

Giving a specific group of backgammon players what they want, and attempting to boost attendance are the two main reasons given for running high entry events. Hoosier director Butch Meese says, "We have to look at what the players want. I think the \$500's bring in some entrants that would otherwise not show up." Minneapolis director Steve Brown agrees.

But there are down sides to the expensive events. \$500's have conflicted with the main tournament at two of the last three Indiana Classics. In 1986, Dean Muench reached the finals in both the \$500 and Championship. Dean's ninth victory of the weekend won him the Indy \$500. Unfortunately, he was allowed only a short recess before his Championship finals against Joe Sylvester. Dean remembers, "I wasn't up for playing the match. It was too much backgammon in two days. I was exhausted and had a terrible headache." Dean quickly lost two straight.

At the 1988 Classic, a \$500 finalist talked of "dumping" a Championship match so he could "rest up" for his big money finals. "Tomorrow, I'm playing for eight grand in prize money. Why should I drag through six matches in the main event to try and win \$2,000?" It's doubtful his Calcutta owner would have felt the same way.

And what about last year's Pittsburgh Easter Seal's Benefit? When two high rollers lost

Calcutta auction pools are diminishing in size, and the \$500's are part of the reason.

in the Friday \$500, they pulled out of the main event, diminishing the charity auction and dropping the final field size to 30. Where did they go? Straight to New York to play in the high stakes chouette.

Calcutta auction pools are diminishing in size, and the \$500's are part of the reason. When 16 potential bidders outlay a total of \$8,000 before the auction even begins, cash flow is undoubtedly affected.

Prior to the days of Friday night \$500's, the tournament would participate as a group in a sociable \$100 Doubles event. This provided an excellent (and comparatively reasonable) learning experience for the intermediates. Now we see the "big guns" skipping Doubles participation and an unfortunate broadening of the money "caste system" among players.

What are the real benefits of running a high entry side event? To give a few players who need to gamble large sums of money on backgammon their "fix"? If that's the case, then entry fees will become like drugs for some players: once the \$500 excitement wears off, they'll need larger and larger entry fees to get the same thrill. In fact, the Cavendish Club of Chicago has already upped the ante on high stakes knockouts with a "Special \$1,000" at their 1988 Chicago Open. What's next? The "Extra Special \$2,000"?

Obviously national tournaments attracting over 200 players are large enough to field high roller events. But for the smaller regionals, too many \$500's can do more harm than good. As one player put it, "When the money finally becomes prohibitive and a saturation point is reached, you'll see a drop-off in high entry side events (and perhaps tournament attendance)." The question is, do we really want to reach that point?

Yes, it's important for directors to give the players what they want; but they should also consider some of the long term consequences in doing so. Do high rollers love the game, or do they just love to *gamble big money* on the game. We know high stakes backgammon wagering is a reality, but how does it benefit backgammon for organizers to excessively promote it? Δ

LETTERS...

(continued from page 2)

BRINGING THE POINT ACROSS

I've recently moved overseas to Israel. It looks like my best way to keep in touch with the World of Backgammon is through the *Chicago POINT*. Sign me up for a subscription.—Joel Schiff, Ramat-Gan, Israel

REOPENING PROBLEM #142

I enjoy the variety of articles in the *POINT* and hope to be challenged and entertained by future installments. "Problem #142 Solved" by Kent Goulding left me somewhat perplexed, however. I felt what might be Black's best chance to win the game was overlooked. I like the move 3/2*, 2/Off.

Essentially I agree with Kent's analysis. Black (on roll) is well behind in the race. He needs to put White on the bar to hamper her escape. 3/2*, 2/Off maintains a four point board and gets a third checker off besides. In fact, I'd even prefer 4/2*, 3/2 to the suggested 5/2*. This play also holds four points and fills in the gapped 2-pt.—valuable for a smooth bear-off later on. If White dances, Black has more good rolls to remake his 3- and/or 4-point compared to 5/2* which duplicates a 3-cover.

I'd be interested about what other readers think.—Stan Weiss, San Francisco, CA

THE POINT IS IN THE MAIL

Last month, I received the *POINT* on December 8th. In November, I got it on the 3rd. Is there any pattern to the mailing?—Mark Harlan, Campbell, CA

Generally, the *POINT* is mailed out on the first Tuesday of the month.—Ed. Δ

BAR POINT CLUB'S TOP 3 FOR 1988



1988 runner-up Yamin Yamin and 3rd place finisher Kathy Bauder flank Chicago Bar Point Club Player of the Year Tak Morioka. The three were honored on Awards Night January 17 at Pat's Pub.

AMALGAMATION

Who are Dick Newcombe and Greg Peterson of Rockford, Illinois? According to the 1989 *Guinness Book of World Records*, they hold the world backgammon endurance record of 151 hours-11 minutes (June 30 to July 6, 1978)... **Craig Chellstorp** reports his "Backgammon" computer program (IBM/128K from Spinnaker Software) is now available in major computer stores (including Egghead Software). **Paul Magriel** says of the program, "Far superior to any other commercial backgammon game.. Invaluable.. Highly recommended." ... Each entrant at the Nevada State Championships received the "Official NNBA T.S. Card." Players with picky complaints were to take their card to an official who would stamp it and say "Tough Sh--." And congratulations to **Mark Mortuk** and **Ann Fallone** who were married following the tournament at Bally's on January 15... "I figure it cost me at least 50 gray hairs." That's **Jill Ferdinand's** assessment of what picking 5 out of 6 numbers in the Illinois State Lottery did to her. It's the *third time* she's missed the \$10 million jackpot by one number... Bar Point Club January 17 Awards Night prize winners were **Sarg Serges** (Sony MegaWatchman), **Joann Feinstein** (Nikon Binoculars) and **Rich Sweetman** (Sony FM Cassette Walkman)... Attention *Pinball Wizards*: **Tom Walthes** will be rolling in a real pinball machine for a Friday night prize tourney at the Midwest Backgammon Championships April 14-16 in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois. Call 312/338-6380 for more information. Δ



Mutual of Omaha's WILD KINGDOM

by Marlin Perkins with Jim Fowler



The most satisfying work Jim and I do is studying endangered species. The last creature we investigated was the "backgammon player." This animal once thrived in America, living in small groups called "chouettes" and occasionally massing in larger colonies called "tournaments." We wanted to investigate the reasons for their population decline.

One Thursday night in Minneapolis, Jim and I found a small group of backgammon players in Anthony's Wharf Restaurant. We approached cautiously, not wanting to spook them. Jim and I crouched behind the bar, shielded by the ferns and philodendrons. I chose as my target, a player the others called *Duane*. I raised my tranquilizer gun and fired, "darting" the creature in his soft hindquarters. *Duane* let out a "yip!" and dashed toward the main dining room. Jim and I pursued the drugged creature who slowed to a trot while passing the dessert cart. Jim wrestled him to the floor beneath the salad bar. I administered another tranquilizing shot right below the croutons.

Checking his teeth, we estimated the age of the *Duane* creature to be about forty. He seemed to be in poor physical shape with a

body fat content around 50%. We attached a radio transmitter collar around his neck and waited for the tranquilizers to wear off. As *Duane* awoke, he mumbled, "Is it my turn to roll? Am I up?," and shuffled passively back to his chouette.

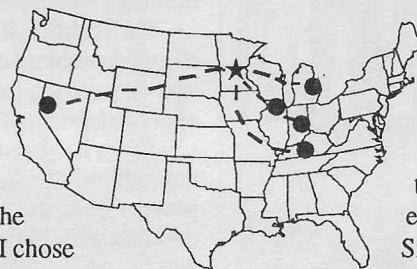
We tracked the creature for six months. He made several forays to other parts of the country, but usually returned to his home chouette empty-handed.

Duane's diet is mainly brightly colored food: orange Chee-tos, red licorice, yellow lemon drops and anything from a vending machine. At no time did we observe him eating anything healthful. Since the creature's home chouette in Minneapolis was

mostly male, we witnessed few mating attempts. If fact, this individual's mating success nationwide must be classified a failure.

In summary, if *Duane* is representative of backgammon players, their population decline is caused by poor diet, a lack of exercise and failure to mate and breed successfully. These factors naturally lead to instability.

If you want stability for your family, call Mutual of Omaha agent D. Jensen who will help you with all your insurance needs. Our work in the Wild Kingdom never ceases. Δ

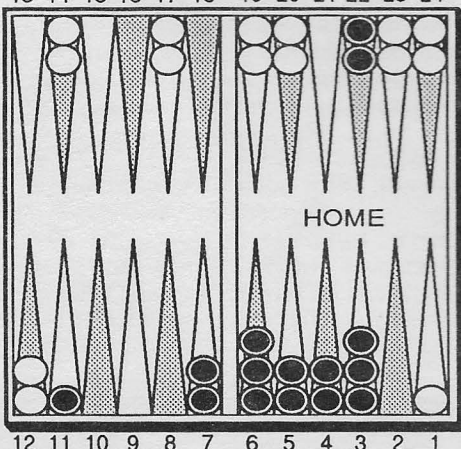


your move

PROBLEM #144

Tournament double match point.
BLACK TO PLAY 5-4.

13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24



12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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Tuesday, 7:15 PM at Pat's
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berland, Chgo (625-1717).

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

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

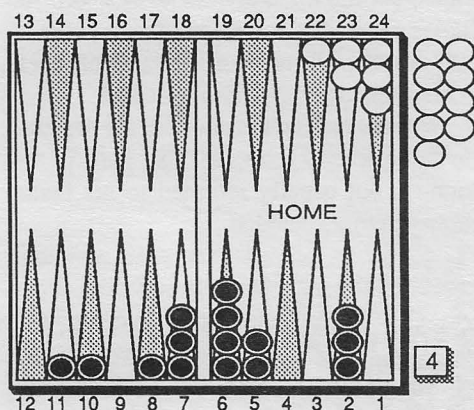
WINNETKA BG CLUB: Tournaments Weds., 7:00 PM at
620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (312/446-0537).

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).

PROBLEM #143 SOLVED

by Neil Kazaross

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-4.**

This double-4 roll came up in a local chouette. Black, a good player who was in the box, played 10/6, 8/4, 7/3(2) as fast as the eye could see. Black smiled at us because he was now virtually certain to save the gammon unless White rolled doubles. Black's next roll was 3-1, forcing 11/8, 7/6. This left a position in which all non-double 1's miss. Black's dice punished him with an ace on his last roll as he lost an expensive and unnecessary gammon.

The proper play is 10/6, 8/4, 7/3, 11/7! In this situation, wasting a cross-over guarantees Black's bear off in two rolls, thus preventing potential misses after 2-1 and 3-1. This play also picks up 2-2 that instantly saves the gammon next roll.

I've seen this position mishandled several times. The key concept to remember is that in gammon-threatening situations, it is not always necessary to take the final cross-over (if that cross-over wastes pips) when you come down to three men in the outer board. Three checkers on the 7-point, or two on the 7-point and one on the 8-point save the gammon in two rolls when the ace-point is the only open point in your home board. Δ

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TAKGAMMON



by Tak Morioka

THE TRANSITION

Backgammon is tougher these days. The game has evolved from a social pastime into a mentally energetic sport. The influx of clear mathematical reasoning has transformed average players into efficient competitors. It's not like ten years ago when a handful of players dominated the tournament circuit and established a hierarchy within our community. Today, tournament seeds regularly fall to the onslaught of the unnamed opponent.

Level of experience is now the major difference between players. The inexperienced players sometimes falter under pressure. They will either continue to make risky plays even after becoming a favorite or else avoid taking the calculated necessary risk. This problem varies and is dependant on the confidence these players have attained.

I can see the difficulties of change as advancement takes hold. The nostalgia of the "good old days" is dead and buried. It is replaced by the sobering effect of cold, hard numbers where *performance* is the reality and *impression* is the dream.

The identification of quality players requires constant updating. This brings me to the nagging problem of player evaluation and placement. The growth of the Open division may require the transition of players from the Intermediate. Most top Intermediates are now mislabeled. Today's Intermediates play better than the Open players of yesteryear.

There has been turmoil with transition because mandatory advancement standards don't exist. The question of transition itself may be debated. Does elevating a quality player diminish the Intermediate level of play? Does this player victimize the lower division or aid in its development? Should players be forced up in class even against their will? Is an independent Intermediate division with optional transition feasible?

These questions and others create problems for directors who must decide if maintaining a restricted development division is practical. Has the overall caliber of play improved to where the title of "Intermediate" is misleading? What about the beginning Intermediate? Does he stand a fighting chance? Perhaps the Intermediate level should be transformed into a second performance division. What I mean by a performance division is that anyone can reach their potential without the fear of removal. But if the restrictions are lifted, how do you keep the sharks out? Is it fair to let only the "home-grown" Intermediate sharks feed freely while little Open sharks are starving? Is a sense of pride enough to keep them out?

The players who take advantage of this situation are only motivated by self interest. They are like hungry bears finding a pond full of fish. Their main concern is that another bear will come and steal their catches. It's possible that the current crop of Intermediates can handle the additional competition. I'm not worried about them as much as the future Intermediates who might have to face this type of carnage.

In fairness to players who are caught in the spotlight, I would like to present another point of view. It's not your fault that you have become too good. It's more a credit to you for your accomplishments. If I were you, I might write this letter of appeal:

Dear Director: Considering that there is no great advantage for me to move up in class, why should I leave my current divisional competition? It would be foolish—even "unback-gammon-like"—to take a higher risk without a reasonable prospect of return.

If you consider me to be a good player, perhaps it's because I've discovered some truths about the game. I might have learned the "predator and prey" relationship: I prefer to survive as a predator among Intermediates rather than risk becoming prey in the Open division. The idea of fair competition and developing one's potential is great, but the necessity for self-preservation appears greater. I was taught to reject bad propositions.

I believe I've paid my dues. It's my money on the line and if I don't look after it, who will? It took a lot of work to become proficient in the Intermediate division. And I've earned my position; nobody handed it to me. Why do you want to take it away? Besides, someone is always going to be called the "best" Intermediate; why can't that someone keep his status? Why put a penalty on improvement?

If I move up to the Open, I'll lose more than the additional entry fee. All of my friends are Intermediates. The side action that I feel comfortable with will be gone. They won't want to play with an Open player and I don't blame them. Besides, I feel good when they look to me for advice. The Open players will treat me like a comparative novice. I'm beyond that stage.

I've invested too much time and effort in the Intermediate division. I've made too many friends, faced too many battles and I don't want to trade this for "who knows what." I've learned how to survive there and I don't want to start all over. Can you understand my position?—*Placed On The Edge.* Δ



Fortune Cookie

Sometimes making a choice must be settling for the lesser of two evils—an easy practice to fall into, but a hard habit to break.