

monte-carlo world championship

JOE RUSSELL'S ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Mika Lidov 2nd In All-USA Finals Team Title to "Chicago Connection"

A record 248 Championship level backgammoners from across the globe converged on Monte-Carlo last month. Their mission was to capture the title that West Germany's Philip Marmorstein has held for the past 12 months: Backgammon Champion of the World.

Joe Russell, a 37 year old expert from Los Angeles was in the field. It was his third trip to the French Riviera's annual "Battle Royal." Three was the charm. Eight victories in a row, including the final 25-19 defeat of New York's Mika Lidov put Russell in the record books as Monte-Carlo's 14th World Champion.

Although his tournament prize money was a healthy \$63,000, Russell, who won six regional tournaments in 1988 claimed, "I wasn't concerned with the money during play; I just wanted to win. Winning this tournament is every backgammon player's dream. It's something I'll have for the rest of my life."

Russell's path to the finals was not unobstructed. His round-of-8 match against

Joe Russell's "World Tour"

Round of:	Opponent	Score
256	Bodewig (W. GER)	17-9
128	David Hershleder (USA)	17-4
64	Billy Horan (USA)	19-13
32	Cellini (ITA)	19-11
16	R. Rosenzweig (W. GER)	21-12
8	Barry Pitt (UK)	21-20
4	Jim Jacoby (USA)	23-10
2	Mika Lidov (USA)	25-19

Barry Pitt (UK) was almost a brick wall. Russell related: "We began play Friday evening. At 9-9, the match was interrupted by a curfew. Saturday morning, Pitt jumped out to a 20-14 lead (playing to 21 points), but I managed to tie it at 20-all.

(Continued on page 4)

1989 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPIONSHIP MAIN (248): 1st Joe Russell (USA); 2nd Mika Lidov (USA); 3/4 Jim Jacoby (USA) and Van Eyck (HOL).
 CHAMP CONSOL. I: 1st Dennis Carlston (USA); 2nd Tino Lechich (AUSTRALIA); 3/4 Tardieu (FRA) and Grenier (FRA).
 CHAMP CONSOL. II: 1st Avramides (GREECE); 2nd Sarzynski; 3/4 Greg Shore (USA/ITA) and Bob Ciaffone (USA).
 CHAMP LAST CHANCE: 1st Crespi (ITA); 2nd Jim Baroff (USA).
 \$1000 SUPER JACKPOT (64): 1st Bodewig (W.GER); 2nd Shousha; 3/4 Tino Lechich (AUSTRALIA) and Joel Schiff (USA/ISR).
 CARTIER WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP: 1st "Chicago Connection": Howard Markowitz (USA), Greg Shore (USA/ITA), Alan Steffen (USA).

michigan summer championships

GARY KAY-O'S HEAVY-WEIGHTS IN FLINT

Muench, Monro, Sylvester, Barabino, Kazaross, Snellings. The Michigan Summer Championships July 28-30 at the Flint Sheraton Inn was definitely a knock-out performance by Chicago's Gary Kay. This year's Indiana Open champ capped off the Flint Area Club's 10th annual \$60,000+ event by defeating his future son-in-law Wilcox Snellings (PA) 15-14. "The three matches against Detroit Joe, Joe Sylvester and Rick Barabino felt like being on center court at Wimbledon—a big crowd and lots of electricity," claimed Kay. "Sometimes you have good energy. I think

(Continued on page 5)

A WILD "CHOUETTE"



Here's recent Chicago School of the Art Institute graduate Jon Schnapp's impressionistic view of a chouette: Two fish battling it out with beaver, raccoon, rhinoceros and elephant at the ready.

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o Chicago POINT
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COMMENTS FROM INDY

We would like to comment on a couple of issues brought up in your July 1989 issue. The first is on the entry fee rakes discussed in the "Letters" column. We are proud to announce that at all Indianapolis tournaments, the rake is the same for all three divisions: 15%. The reason it is set this way is because we like to treat all players equally. We also understand why other tournaments may rake more in the lower divisions. It is more obvious in the novice or beginner division where a 15% rake will not even cover the cost of the trophies. Because of this, a larger rake is often taken to cover expenses. We do not mind breaking even on the novice division—they are the future of backgammon.

The smoking/no smoking problem is becoming more and more of an issue. Directors are scrambling for a solution. Tournaments are hard enough to direct without adding another variable. More importantly, we do not want to see backgammon losing players over this issue, but

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

coming attractions



by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

Aug 4-6	1000 Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY	716/442-8221
Aug 6	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Aug 6	12th Annual Bob Hill Classic, Long Island, NY	516/334-4565
Aug 7	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Aug 7-13	Green Mountain Festival, Ascutney Mtn. Resort, Brownsville, VT	305/527-4033
Aug 10-13	Palace Summer Championships, St. Moritz, Switzerland	061 50 58 16
Aug 13	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario	416/267-2815
Aug 17	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Aug 20	Stroh Backgammon Fest, Strohaus, Detroit, MI	313/354-5566
Aug 20	1989 Japan Backgammon Championship, Yaesu Fujiya Hotel, Tokyo	03-5476-4303
Aug 26	Bayou Club Monthly Tournament, Houstonian, Houston, TX	713/495-2240
Aug 27	Celebrities Bimonthly Sunday Tournament, Houston, TX	713/495-2240
Sep 1-4	National Labor Day Tournament & Club Challenge, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Sep 4	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Sep 4	College Park Jackpot Tournament, The Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603
Sep 10	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario	416/267-2815
Sep 17	Austin Bimonthly Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/490-6538
Sep 17	New England Season Opener, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Sep 21	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Sep 22-24	5th German Open Championship, Hotel Palace, Berlin, W. Germany	08341-128 25
Sep 23	Bayou Club Monthly Tournament, Houstonian, Houston, TX	713/495-2240
Sep 29-Oct 1	Towpath Lodge Tournament, Turin, NY	315/348-8122
Oct 1	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Oct 2	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Oct 4-8	Caesars Tahoe Tournament (\$20,000 added), South Lake Tahoe, NV	702/826-1984
Oct 14	College Park Fall Open Tourney, The Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603
Oct 15	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Oct 15	2nd Annual Jim Flora Memorial Tournament & Benefit, Plymouth, MI	313/981-5706
Oct 19	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Oct 21	The Pewter Mug, Watertown, NY	315/788-5114
Oct 27-29	New Hampshire Intern'l Fall Classic, Woodbound Inn, Jaffrey, NH	603/924-3844
Oct 28	Bayou Club Monthly Tournament, Houstonian, Houston, TX	713/495-2240
Oct 29	Celebrities Bimonthly Sunday Tournament, Houston, TX	713/495-2240
Nov 6	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Nov 7	Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney, Pat's Pub, Norridge, IL	312/338-6380
Nov 10-12	NY/NJ Co-op Fall Tourney, Rocking Horse Ranch, Highland, NY	516/334-4565
Nov 17-19	Children's Hospital Benefit, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Nov 19	Austin Bimonthly Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/490-6538
Nov 23-26	European Backgammon Championships, Casino de Deauville, France	01-376 3033
Dec 3	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Dec 4	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Dec 10	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800

already we have.

So what's the answer? Directors can try to find hotels with a playing room that has good ventilation or high ceilings so it will not be a problem. Some directors have tried to solve the problem by dividing the playing room or making the playing room "no smoking." You may gain nonsmokers, but at the same time, you lose smokers. Does this solve anything?

A few players provide feedback and

some players passively respond by staying away. Backgammon players are intelligent people and should be part of the solution.

Players, do not let the directors solve this and other problems alone; provide suggestions and feedback. With proper communication, problems like this will find a working solution in a timely manner.—Mary Ann and Butch Meese, Hoosier Backgammon Club

(Continued on page 6)

RULING CONTROVERSY IN MONTE-CARLO

A major scandal nearly came to pass at last month's Monte-Carlo World Championship. "It was exactly the sort of thing that Kent Goulding and Nack Ballard were afraid of when they discontinued running their tournament book last year," reports one reputable American source.

"Two Dutchman in the round of 32, Van Eyck and Schreuder who were buddies, made a deal that Schreuder would throw his match to Van Eyck in return for a piece of Van Eyck's action (Van Eyck was the better player and had more money bet on himself in the auction and book). Had they done this surreptitiously or subtly, nobody would have known. But instead, they claimed that 'we do it all the time' and effectively bragged about it.

"Van Eyck's name was posted on the drawsheet without anyone witnessing the match. When New Yorker Gino Scalamandre (who owned a portion of Schreuder in the Calcutta) objected, the two claimed to have played 'the day before on the beach.' Scalamandre further objected.

Eventually, the Committee ruled that Van Eyck and Schreuder would have to play the match, but shortened it from 19 to 7 points in length so as not to delay the next round.

"To make matters worse, Schreuder (who was supposed to lose) got excellent dice at the beginning of the match and then had to really contrive to lose games at the end by making absurd plays. This was done in full view of 50 spectators and two members of the Tournament Committee—André Rolfo-Fontana and Luigi Villa. After the match was over, instead of throwing both players out, the Committee did absolutely nothing.

"Van Eyck then won in the rounds of 16 and 8 to reach the semifinals. At that point, a petition was circulated by Scalamandre. About 150 players signed the petition, demanding that the Ruling Committee take some action. A majority of the Committee voted to throw Schreuder out and (apparently) bar him from future tournaments. However, no action was taken against Van Eyck.

"Only Lewis Deyong (UK), the Honorary Tournament Chairman, strongly objected. Because of the Committee's stance,

he refused to participate in the prize-giving ceremony. Deyong also expressed serious doubts about involving himself with the tournament next year.

"Mika Lidov beat Van Eyck in the semifinals to save the Committee from the further embarrassment of an individual winning the World Backgammon Championship by way of collusion."

HOROWITZ OUT OF COMA—REMAINS EXTREMELY DISABLED

Gammon Associates director Patrick Gibson reports from Los Angeles on the condition of Gaby Horowitz. The flamboyant backgammon player/author of the '70s and early '80s was accidentally shot in the head in April by his writing partner of many years, Bruce Roman. Horowitz is out of the coma but is still unable to speak and except for small movement in his left arm and hand, remains paralyzed. Recently, he was moved from UCLA Medical Center into an L.A. hospital specializing in severely brain-damaged patients.

In one positive incident last month, Gibson relates, "A friend of the family brought over a backgammon board for therapy purposes. The friend would roll the dice, make a move and then look at Gaby as if to request an opinion. In most cases there was no response, but a couple times when the friend made a very bad move and then corrected it, Gaby was able to signal his approval. So there apparently is some sign of life in the brain, but very little in the nervous system."

SCONYERS IN RECORD COIN BUY

Beverly Hills backgammon expert Hugh Sconyers made numismatic history last month in Chicago at a national coin auction when he purchased the 1804 "Dexter Specimen" silver dollar for \$990,000. In 1973, he also set a record as the first to pay \$100,000 for a single U.S. coin.

Acting on behalf of the American Rare Coin Fund, Sconyers, 40, called his purchase "...the Mona Lisa of numismatics. It's the greatest coin. We believe it represents a great long-term value." He said the coin, which has been tinted purple with age, is considered valuable for its blend of beauty, rarity and secretive history.

Sconyers has been a coin dealer since he was 10, which probably helped to steady his emotions when the bidding exceeded 3/4 million dollars. The coin has changed hands only six times since 1885.



1989 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU JULY 31

TAK MORIOKA	16.52	Ralph Levy	3.48	Dan Judd	0.96
YAMIN YAMIN	13.24	Bill Davis	3.40	Bill Hoeflich	0.96
DEAN MUENCH	13.08	Alan Steffen	3.36	Lenny Loder	0.96
CHRIS KENIK	13.04	Bob Holyon	3.28	Rich Galeba	0.96
GARY KAY	12.64	Ken Bond	3.04	Richard Stawowy	0.92
DAVID LIBCHABER	9.96	Paul Johnson	2.96	Paul Travis	0.88
BOB ZAVORAL	9.96	Rich Siebold	2.72	Andy Argy	0.88
DEEB SHALATI	7.04	John Spatafora	2.70	Jim Pappas	0.80
ARNOLD ZOUSMER	6.28	Kathy Rudnick	2.52	Ron Stur	0.80
SARG SERGES	6.04	Dave Rockwell	2.48	Jill Ferdinand	0.80
JOANN FEINSTEIN	5.48	Jeff Kane	1.92	Darcey Brady	0.80
STU KATZ	5.36	Don Desmond	1.92	Marv Arnol	0.76
ALICE KAY	5.32	Miles Cohen	1.92	Mike Cyrkiel	0.72
NORMA SHYER	5.28	Judy Brown	1.88	Carl Severino	0.72
JOHN DEMIAN	5.12	Wilcox Snellings	1.84	René Wojtysiak	0.64
VW ZIMNICKI	5.04	Joe Koucharian	1.72	Harry Hayward	0.56
MARK KING	4.40	Arlene Levy	1.68	Joan Hegg	0.56
DON JAYHAN	4.12	Bobbie Shifrin	1.68	Trudie Stern	0.32
PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI	4.00	Mark Anshus	1.52	Leslie Lockett	0.32
DAVE CRAMER	3.84	Gary Keyes	1.52	Craig McCullough	0.30
Peter Kalba	3.84	Gene Chait	1.20	Mark Hicks	0.28
Ed Buerger	3.52	Bill Keefe	1.04	Dianne Cyrkiel	0.12

YAMIN YAMIN (2.80) and Dean Muench (2.48) supplied the 1-2 punch in July to catapult themselves past Gary Kay and Chris Kenik, thus earning a place on the Chicago Bar Point Club team at the National Club Team Challenge event in Indianapolis September 1-4.

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.

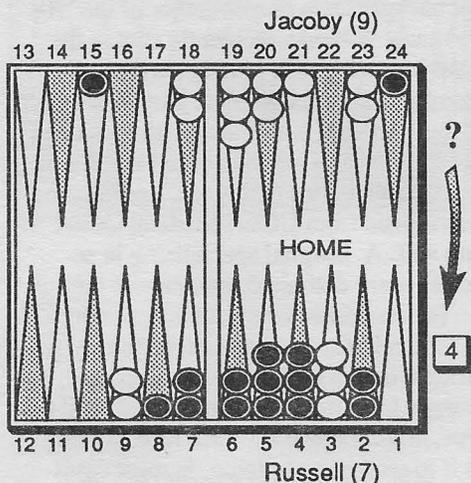
JOE RUSSELL'S ON TOP...

(Continued from page 1)

"It came down to the situation where if he rolled any double on his last roll, I would lose. I asked for insurance against a pair, but rejected the \$4,500 to \$1000 offer (the true odds were 5 to 1 against). He rolled and missed."

Joe's semifinal match against Texas bridge master Jim Jacoby was probably decided on the following game:

1989 Monte-Carlo Championship 23 point semifinals. Jim Jacoby (White) leads Joe Russell (Black) 9 to 7. **WHITE DOUBLES.**



The son of legendary gamesman Oswald Jacoby redoubled to 4. Russell took. Jacoby rolled 5-4 (3/8*/12). Russell replied with 3-3 (Bar/22, 24/21*, 15/12*, 5/2) and went on to collect an eight point gammon. Joe then converted his 15-9 lead into a 23-10 win.

Female phenom Mika Lidov reached the finals with a comfortable win over Van Eyck of Holland (See related controversy, page 2—Ed.). The 1976 Harvard graduate earns her living as a NeuroRadiologist, although some of her chouette partners at New York's exclusive Coterie club might disagree. Two-time world champion Bill Robertie calls Mika, "...far and away the best woman player in the world. I don't think there's anyone that even comes close."

For the Sunday finals, *Overseas Betting* from London made Russell the 6-to-5 favorite. Closed circuit TV of the all-American finals was shown in the Sporting d'Hiver. A number of USA players including Wilcox Snellings and Steve Sax assisted in the commentary.

Down 23-17 in the 25 point finals, Mika doubled aggressively and Joe took. Later in the game, Russell faced his "...toughest checker play of the entire tournament.":

advice to the dicelorn

DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS



LOOKING AT THE WRONG PIPS

Dear Miss Lonelyblots: Although I can't prove it, I think one of the more attractive women at our club is using sex as a weapon against me. There's no problem when we meet in the early rounds. But before we begin any money round matches, she always unfastens the top three buttons of her blouse. Since she never wears a bra, whenever she reaches over the board, you can see all the way to Grand Teton National Park.

I'm not a prude, but this girl is definitely affecting my ability to calculate match equities. If I call the director, what can I complain about? I'll just be labeled a pervert for looking down a woman's blouse. What are my options?—Only Human

Dear Only: You sign yourself "Only Human" without mentioning whether you're male or female. If you're male, who could possibly label you a "pervert" for looking down a woman's blouse, especially when she deliberately exposes herself to you? If you're female, of course, your distractibility may arouse some tittering among the spectators, but again, few educated people today consider lesbian attraction a "perversion." In any case, the onus and opprobrium will rest entirely on your opponent.

But why call the director? Simply ask your opponent, privately if possible, to

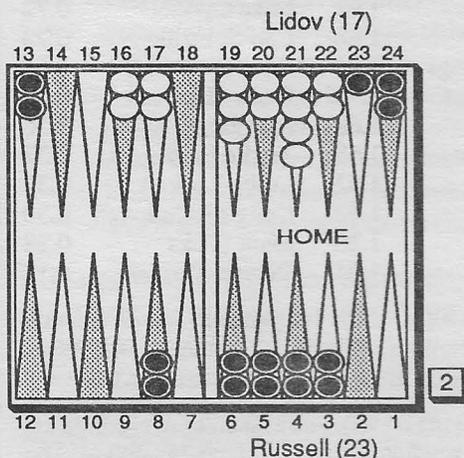
please button her blouse while playing you. She'll probably take your request as a compliment and oblige. Only if she refuses should you approach a director—again, privately, if possible, to avoid embarrassment to anyone. Any director worth her salt will enforce your request, for poor sportswomanship should not be tolerated in backgammon. Of course, if the director is a man, he may have his own perverse (though hardly perverted) motives for condoning your opponent's provocations.

You do have another alternative, however, which relies neither on the good sportswomanship of your opponent nor the fairness of a director. That is to relax and enjoy the view. While your opponent is displaying her glory, gaze lasciviously, paying no attention to the backgammon board. Wait until she has removed her breasts from your line of vision before moving, rolling contemplating a cube, or thinking about anything at all.

Then if anyone calls the director, it will be your opponent, complaining of your slowness. When the director arrives, smile and apologize, explaining that you were having too much fun looking at the sights to proceed with the game. I'm sure that even the most lecherous (male) director will uphold your position.—Miss Lonelyblots Δ

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

1989 Monte-Carlo Championship 25 point finals. Joe Russell (Black) leads Mika Lidov (White) 23-17. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**



Russell moved 23/18, 8/7. "First of all, 16 numbers wouldn't hit me at all. And when

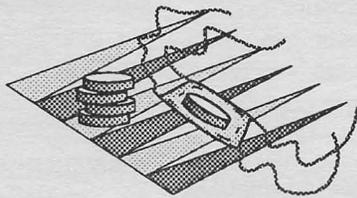
she made the deuce-point with some of her 6's, I'd get an immediate direct shot. That was one reason I'm not so sure that 13/12 isn't superior to my 8/7 play.

"As it turned out, Mika hit me with a 2-3, stacking another checker on her 4-point. She never made her deuce-point which created an extremely awkward bear-off. She left a shot with nine men off. I hit and closed her out but lost the race."

At 23-19, Lidov again doubled aggressively. She ended up in a holding game which turned into another race. This time Joe bore off first for the title.

Isle of Man champ Alan Steffen and Reno Masters champ Howard Markowitz teamed with former Chicagoan Greg Shore (now residing in Italy) to form the "Chicago Connection" and win the World Team Championship along with \$3500 Cartier watches. Δ

DAVID AND GOLIATH



by Duane Jensen

We all know the Bible story of David slaying Goliath. David's chances against Goliath were improved because he had God in his corner. When a weaker backgammon player faces a much stronger opponent, what can he do to improve his winning chances?

In the September, 1987 *Chicagoland Backgammon Newsletter*, Bill Davis interviewed world backgammon champion Bill Robertie. Robertie stated that if you're a 55%-45% underdog in each game, you're probably a 70%-30% underdog in a long match. He added that "If you're a weaker player and want to improve your chances, the best thing to do is to try to improve your game *before* the match starts. Once play begins, just try to do the best you can."

Fortunately, the situation is not as hopeless as it sounds. First off, weak players rarely play experts in long matches. Their meetings usually occur in kickoff or doubles events which are relatively short: from 5 to 9 points. Here are some preparations and/or adjustments weaker players can make to improve their winning chances:

(A) **Mental Attitude.** Your opponent may be a famous "expert," perhaps even a backgammon author. He may have an entourage assembled to witness your dissection. All this activity around the board should be ignored. Concentrate on the dice and the checkers. If the commotion is a serious problem for you, ask the spectators to leave. It's your right—use it if you must.

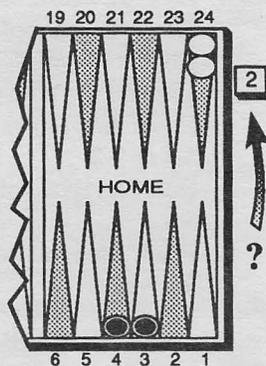
Don't become "Macho Man." I've watched players take terrible cubes against experts displaying the attitude that "you can't push me around. I'll take anything." Don't try to *impress* your opponent with daring takes. Try to *defeat* him.

Conversely, don't become "Whimp Man" and drop a succession of easy takes. Players who drop everything have lost the goal of trying to win and are simply trying to prolong the grand confrontation against the celebrated expert. Your attitude should be that you're in the match to win and nothing will break your concentration.

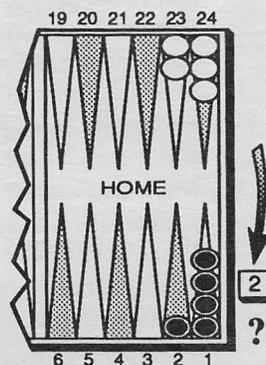
(B) **The Doubling Cube.** Your cube play should change if your opponent is an expert. If you're playing a 5 point match and scent any gammon chance, jump on

that cube. In general, be more aggressive than usual. Even in positions in where gammons are not a factor, you should cube *earlier* than if your opponent was of equal ability. The disparity in your playing skills allows you to double sooner and take deeper. If you were the weaker player (a 55%-45% underdog) in the following positions, your cube decisions would be different than if you and your opponent were of equal abilities:

POSITION #1:
5 point match tied at 3-all. If WHITE is the "weaker" player, this is a **double** (47% win chances). It's **not a double** if both players are equal in ability.



POSITION #2:
5 point match. BLACK, leading 3 to 2, doubles to 2. If WHITE is the "weaker" player, it's a **take**. If the players are equal in ability, it's a **drop**.



Although you may be a much weaker player, by properly exploiting your mediocrity, you will find yourself doubling sooner than usual, not out of desperation, not to shorten the match, but because it's the mathematically appropriate thing to do.

(C) **Strategy and Checker Play.** A profitable strategy would be to set a hidden gammon trap to snare your expert opponent, giving you a quick four points. Dream on. He's the expert, not you. It's unrealistic to focus on gammons as your path to glory. Your gammons will come from serendipity, not from a secret gammon plan.

The only game which can mitigate the expert's skill is a race. In a straight race, you can wipe out nearly all of the expert's advantage, for doubling and take points based on pip counts are relatively easy to calculate. A racing game avoids complicated positions in which the expert excels. Try to race from your opening roll. Run a back man with openers of 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 and 5-4. Do not initially slot your opponent's bar-point or your 5-point. Your dice may lead you into a much different game, but give the race a try.

If this advice seems paper thin, that's because it is. There is no miracle strategy for weaker players against experts. Miracles are confined to the Bible. By the way, did I ever tell you the story of "David and Goliath"? Δ

GARY KAY-O'S...

(Continued from page 1)

playing with my son Adam last week helped both of us." Adam won the Thursday Novice warm-up—Dad won the Open.

Kay's toughest cube decision came at 2:30 on Sunday morning vs. Rick Barabino. Holding a 2-cube and trailing 5-6 in the 11 point semi, Kay, with two checkers on his ace-point and two on his 4-point redoubled Barabino with one checker each on his 3- and 5-point. Barabino took and lost to go down 9-6. He couldn't recover.

Congratulations to all the Michigan Summer Champion winners. You were part of a record Midwest crowd of 212 registered players. And congratulations to Carol Joy Cole and staff who made it work. Δ

1989 MICHIGAN SUMMER CHAMPIONSHIPS

OPEN (87): 1st Gary Kay (IL); 2nd Wilcox Snellings (PA); 3rd David Pettypiece (MI); 4/5 Basil Farah (MI) and Jim Mieske (OH); 1st Cons. David Libchaber (IL); 2nd Cons. Joanie Floss (MI); 3/4 Cons. Don Desmond (IL) and Rick Todd (MI).

INTERMEDIATE (63): 1st Pete Ryder (OH); 2nd VW Zimnicki (IL); 3rd Stu Katz (IL); 1st Cons. Steve Hast (PA); 2nd Cons. Alice Kay (IL); 3/4 Cons. Sharron Lannon (KY) and Ed Simms (CAN).

INTERMEDIATE OVERFLOW (30): 1st Trish Hegland (CA); 2nd Jonathan Bennetts (CAN); 1st Cons. Scott Arche (KY); 2nd Cons. Ralph Schaffner (CAN).

NOVICE (32): 1st Mark Gough (CAN); 2nd Mike Fisher (OH); 1st Con. Gail Lorick (MI); 2nd Con. Cary Morris (MI).
DOUBLES (32): 1st Vito D'Alessandro & Ralph Schaffner; 2nd Kathy Rudnick & Ron Stur (IL); 3/4 Al Demirjian (CA) & Jim Roderick (NV); 3/4 Neil Kazaross (CA) & Larry Strommen (IN).

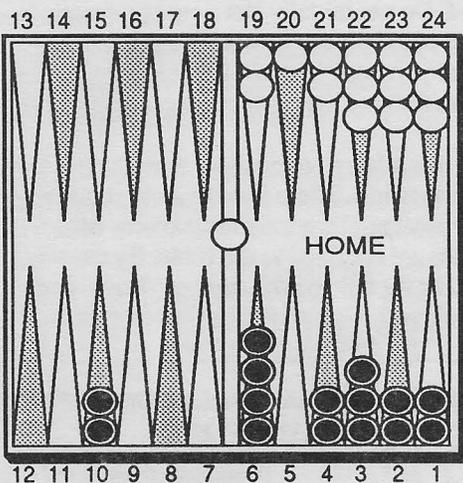
DOUBLES OVERFLOW (16): 1st Duane Jensen & Shel Segal (MN); 2nd Badei Khoury & George Farah (MI).

FLINT \$500 (16): 1st Ray Glaeser (NJ); 2nd Ed Petrillo (FL)

BLITZ (128): 1st Stu Thomson (CAN).
SUMMER FREEZEOUT (16): 1st Marilyn McMaster (MI); 2nd Kati Pratt (TX).

**PROBLEM #149
SOLVED**

by Dean Muench

Tournament double match point.
BLACK TO PLAY 6-2.

After Black's 6-2 is played, the actual pip counts are: Black = 59 and White = 68. For comparison purposes, we can calculate adjusted pip counts to see who would be the favorite if a *no-contact race* developed.

Black's count needs upward adjustment of at least 10 pips to account for the wastage resulting from his empty 5-point. White needs to come in within two rolls to have reasonable racing chances (a 51.77% occurrence). She is in on the first shake 30.55% with an average roll of 9.27 pips. This is 1.10 pips more than the normal average 8.17 pip roll. Therefore, White's count must be adjusted downwards by this difference (1.10) plus 4.08 pips (half of Black's next normal roll) for being "on shake." This would make White about a 55/45 favorite with adjusted counts: Black = 69.00 and White = 62.82.

White is in on the second shake 21.22%. Subtracting 8.17 pips for Black's last roll gives us: Black = 60.83 and White = 62.82. So when White enters within two rolls, Black either trails the race, or is just a small favorite. Therefore, a strategy of containment is indicated.

After the *six* is played from 10 to 4, there are four legal plays for the *two*:

(A) 10/8, (B) 6/4, (C) 4/2, (D) 3/1.

Play (D) is clearly better than (C) because of the bear-off advantage gained by an extra checker on the 4-point. Both plays are

inferior to (B) due to (B)'s superior 4-point and fewer men above the 5-point gap. (In terms of gaps, the empty 5-point is second only to the 4-point in causing wasted pips in a bear-off.)

Let's compare remaining plays (A) and (B):

PLAY (A)

- PRO: -When White dances, an extra number (1-1) closes Black's board.
-Does not leave super-joker number 5-5 for White.
-Outer checker can enter the home board (and bear off) faster.
-Black's 5-5 roll leaves White only an indirect shot.
-After White hits with 5-3, Black gets a direct 5-shot.
- CON: -An extra man is left on the 6-point (above the gapped 5-point).
-Double 5's and 5-3 are great numbers for White.
-Fewer direct shots after White rolls 5-1 or 5-2.
-No direct shots following White's 5-4.
-Black's 6-6 roll leaves a direct shot for White.

PLAY (B)

- PRO: -Takes an extra man off the 6-point (above the gapped 5-point).
-Puts an extra man on the 4-point, thus aiding distribution.
-Is half as likely to be hit with an indirect fly shot on White's next roll.
-More containment when White rolls 5-1, 5-2, 5-3 and 5-4.
-When White enters and Black is unable to hit, he can effectively use his *five's* to slot the 5-point.
- CON: -Double 6's is a good number.
-Super-joker 5-5 leaves Black only a 5% winning chance.
-After White dances, Black's 3-2 and 2-1 leave fly shots.
-After White dances, fewer numbers bear off a Black checker next roll.
-Black's 5-5 roll leaves a direct shot.

It's a close call, but I give the edge to play (B). All things being equal, it would be a good idea to get off the 5-5 super-joker; however, all things are not equal. Better distribution and more containment outweigh a checker that is two pips closer to bearing in and off. And 5-5 is still a "Great White Shake" (leaving her a 60/40 favorite) when Black makes play (A) anyway. Δ

LETTERS...*(continued from page 2)***A SMOKESCREEN?**

I read with great interest your editorial, "It's Time For A No Smoking Backgammon Tournament," and especially the problems smoke created for you at the Isle of Man event. Please correct me if I'm wrong, but Alan Steffen doesn't smoke, does he?—*Stuart Katz, Chicago, IL*

BUT HOW DO YOU REALLY FEEL?

I appreciate your decision to prohibit smoking in the main playing room at the next Midwest Championships. With the wealth of information available on the ill effects of this deplorable addiction, no one except an idiot or a weak-willed person would continue to smoke. Why should society cater to these spineless dolts who do not care for themselves, much less the welfare of us nonsmokers? If tournament attendance should decline (and I don't feel that it will) as the result of nonsmoking policies, then we have succeeded in weeding out a few undesirables.—*Bill Barron; Editor, The Double; Dallas, TX*

Those are certainly not our feelings, but if you want to read more of Bill's, send \$10 (\$15 overseas) for a one year subscription to The Double; P.O. Box 740306; Dallas, TX 75374-0306. The 10 page+ newsletter has BG coverage of Texas and the national scene, diagrammed positions, and sometimes-controversial commentary.—Ed.

BAT-SATURATED

Let me berate the *POINT* for crass commercialism in exploiting the "Bat Signal" on last month's front page. Haven't we been inundated with enough "Batman" material?—*Bob Zavoral, Chicago, IL*

Did you ever dance with the Devil in the pale moonlight?—The Joker

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who did what

WINNER'S CORNER



June-July 1989

New England BG Club Championship (Cambridge, MA; June 3-4, 11)... A Division: 1st Bill Robertie; 2nd Elaine Colokathis; 3/4 Rick Barabino and Herb Gurland. B Division: 1st Mike Rogosin; 2nd Peter DeWolf; 3/4 Ed Miller and Jamil Elhindl... Bill Robertie's, third NEBC seasonal championship title in a row.

Austrian Championships (Salzburg; June 9-11)... Championship: 1st Robert Schavemaker; 2nd Dieter Gieseowski; 1st Cons. Peter Naguib; 2nd Cons. Andreas Fischer; 1st L.C. Michael Greiner. Beginner: 1st Hermann Lodes; 2nd Magnus Höfer; 1st Cons. Ronald Reinhardt; 2nd Cons. Ingo Pohle; 1st L.C. Louis Zanga.

Bar Point Sunday (Chicago, IL; June 11)... Open (27): 1st Rich Siebold (WI); 2nd John Spatafora (IL); 3/4 Bob Holyon (WI) and Carl Severino (IL); 1st Cons. Gary Kay (IL); 2nd Cons. Mark King (IL). Limited (8) 1st Joan Hegg (IL); 2nd Trudie Stern

(IL); 3/4 Marv Arnol (WI) and Arlene Levy (IL); 1st Cons. Leslie Lockett; 2nd Cons. Ed Buerger.

New York/New Jersey Regional (Saddle Brook, NJ; June 11)... Open: 1st Ray Glaeser; 2nd Jack Kissane; 1st Cons. "Fast Eddie" Pavilonis; 2nd Cons. Dr. Bob Hill. Intermediate: 1st Gladys Cohen; 2nd David McKenzie; 1st Cons. Pat Somers; 2nd Cons. Mike Held.

San Remo International Tournament (Italy; July 7-9)... Championship (63): 1st Michael Grainer (W. GER); 2nd Michel Cordier (BEL); 3/4 Pierpaolo Porcu' (ITA) and George Sulimirski (UK); 1st Cons. Antoinette Williams (USA); 2nd Cons. Luigi Villa (ITA); 1st LC Rick Barabino (USA); 2nd LC Joel Schiff (USA/ISR). Intermediate (33): 1st Luisa Sequeira (PORT); 2nd Diana Sulimirski (UK); 3/4 R. Cruyff (AUSTRIA) and A. Lehmusvirta (FIN); 1st Cons. Daniel Sahione (BRAZ); 2nd Cons. Henry Willett (USA); 1st LC Wally Wolf (USA); 2nd LC U. Kauffmann (DEN)... WBF president Alberto da Pra reports that this year's tournament drew twice as many players as 1988, including 26 Americans. Prize money exceeded \$30,000 USD. Next year's San Remo International will be held July 13-15, 1990—the weekend prior to the Monte-Carlo World Championship.

Nation's Capital Summer Tournament (Bethesda, MD; July 15-16)... Championship (21): 1st Mark Davis; 2nd Samuel Orandle; 3/4 Barry Steinberg and Chen-Fu Yu. Doubles (8 Teams): 1st Greg Lilley & Mark Creery; 2nd Karen Davis & Herbert Avram. Δ



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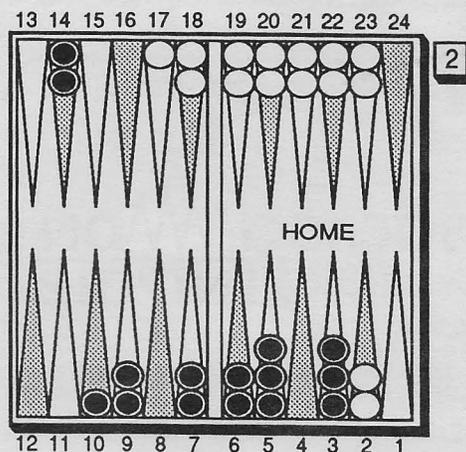
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PROBLEM #150

Money game. BLACK TO PLAY 4-2.

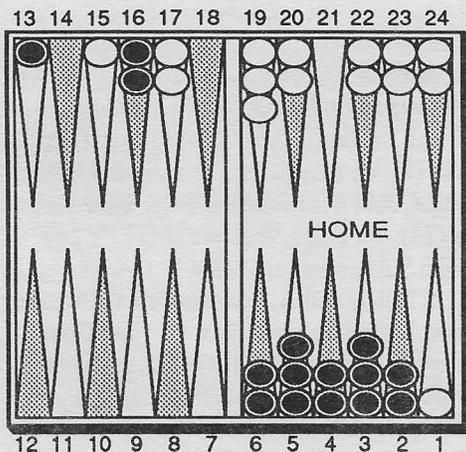


HASTY PLAYS



by Duane Jensen

On the final day of the tournament, I'm Black, playing in the "Last Chance" phase. Leading 4 to 2 Crawford, in a five point match, **HOW SHOULD BLACK PLAY 4-3?**



I studied the position for a couple of minutes when my opponent said impatiently, "You know, I have a plane to catch!"

I've been in that position myself. In two tournaments I've had to double when I was an underdog just to try to finish the match and still make my airplane flight. I certainly didn't want to be responsible for my opponent missing a flight, so I quickly broke from the 16-point with the 4-3. Later, my opponent rolled 6-6, hitting and winning the game.

Don't make a hasty play that you're unsatisfied with just to be a "nice guy." Offer your opponent sympathy about his scheduling problems but don't let them affect your game. After all, if your opponent wins, he'll still have scheduling problems. Do him a favor. Take enough time to make your best play so you can defeat him and send him packing. It's a cruel world sometimes. Δ

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TAKGAMMON



by Tak Morioka

TIMING

Backgammon is a vast ocean of challenge and experience. You are about to embark on a fragile craft into the great unknown. There are currents and eddies in a backgammon game that can send your vessel off course. Treacherous reefs and stormy gales await to claim the unwary. Your survival depends on learning to navigate within that turbulent swirl. Timing is a skill you must acquire to stay afloat.

Timing is the positional speed of a backgammon game. It determines which positions are playable and which ones are not. The "swing position" is the main concern for choosing one game over another. At that critical point, a dice roll or a twist of the cube can decide the winner.

To be able to predict the evolution of a position, you must create a mental model. By extending this position into the future with average rolls, you will come to appreciate the possibilities. The question then becomes, "Is the jeopardy worth taking, or is another course of action more prudent?"

The ability to form this type of visualization is essential for backgammon studies. Testing theory through models and probable forces establishes the cause-and-effect relationship. Your only drawback in dealing with this mentality is the dogma you tend to adopt. You become an absolutist with respect to uncertainty, leaving no room for doubt. You learn to rationalize *all* effects with whatever cause that is convenient. Sometimes the truth is served, but more often it is yourself. Δ



Fortune Cookie

*Fairness is often sacrificed on
the altar of purpose.*

AMALGAMATION

Visiting the Bar Point Club July 5: Philadelphia's **Wilcox Snellings** en route to the World Championships in Monte-Carlo... Thanks to Japan Backgammon Players Clubpresident **Ikkoh Tanaka** who sent us a beautiful color poster advertising the upcoming 1989 Japan Championship August 20 in Tokyo... Backgammon is alive and well in Argentina, thanks in part to *Buenos Aries Backgammon Now*. The Argentina Backgammon Association publishes this eight page Spanish language newspaper about 6 times per year. For a sample copy and subscription information, send \$1 U.S. to: **Claudio Salamone**; Alte Brown 1131, 6°, 18/19; (1159) Buenos Aries, Argentina... The *Louisville Gammon Gazette* (\$6/year) has a new editor. **Donald Guss** (1606 Vivian Lane; Louisville, KY 40205) takes over for **Larry Deckel** who has departed Louisville to take the job of resident director at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater. **Butch Meese** informs us that **Chuck Winters** will replace **Larry** on the staff of the National Labor Day tournament

in Indianapolis September 1-4 (Information: 317/845-8435)... Things Change Department: For the first time in the 14 year history of the Monte-Carlo World Backgammon Championships, **Paul Magriel** was not auctioned off as a seeded player... And from Monte-Carlo, **Bill Robertie** reports that "Backgammon is booming in Europe. There are many big events coming up with lots of added money. A few months ago, I had an order from a bookstore over in Paris for 200 of my books."... Here's another source for computer-modern backgammon with a live opponent. The *USA Today Sports Center* also provides chess, poker and blackjack. The on-line cost is \$4.95 per hour after 6:00 PM. Call 1-800-722-2846 to order... BPC top player **Tak Morioka** hasn't had a cigarette since July 9 (Getting ready for the 1990 Midwest Championships?)... Milwaukee player **Jeff Kane**'s rock climbing hobby landed his family on page one of the July 26 *Chicago Tribune* sports section. Even 4-year-old **Travis Kane** is an avid climber... Now it's all right for New York expert **Jack Kissane** to "horse around." Michigan breeder **Marilyn McMaster** has named her newest thoroughbred after him: *Outback Jack*. Δ