

38th indiana open

ZALTASH LEAVES HIS MARK IN INDY

"I haven't been playing very much tournament backgammon recently. My restaurant business has been keeping me extremely busy. That's why this win is very satisfying." So said Pittsburgh's Ali Zaltash after cooking up a tasty come-from-behind victory over Chicago's Don Desmond in the 38th Indiana Open. The Hoosier Backgammon Club's annual was held 6-8 April at the beautifully renovated Omni Severin Hotel in downtown Indianapolis. Over 120 gammoners from across North America participated.

Zaltash and Desmond were the last two undefeated names on the Open draw sheet when they met at 9:30 A.M. Sunday morning. Desmond triumphed 11-9 sending Zaltash to the loser's bracket. Ali then proceeded to defeat Mike Keener and Paul Franks to earn another shot at Don in this true double elimination event.

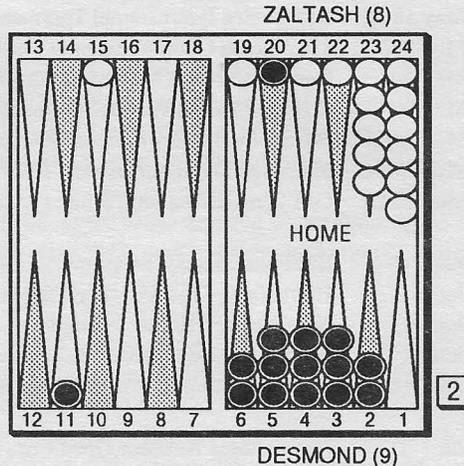
Desmond, the '79 Indiana Open champ and '83 runner-up, jumped off to a quick 7-0 lead in the first 11 pointer. But Zaltash remained patient. "I was just taking my time, passing his cubes until I felt my luck change. Then, as soon as I got a small advantage, I began sending right away." The strategy was successful. Ali pulled out the first match 11-9 to force a final showdown.

The deciding 11 points were hard-fought all the way. But Desmond would later admit that his mind was not totally on the match. A late position (shown above) demonstrates this. Don describes it this way:

"Having missed the double shot that would have meant game and match, I simply slammed the checker out (20/11). Of course I should have stayed back a roll hoping for another shot." Ali went on win 11-9 and claim his first regional title since the 1983 Chicago Cup.

In an interview following the match, the usually rock-solid Desmond felt he made a huge mistake in match strategy. "Following my morning victory, instead of going up to my room and relaxing, I hung

Indiana Open 11 point finals. Don Desmond (Black) leads Ali Zaltash (White) 9-8. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-3.**



around the playing room and did nothing—like a dope. When our first match began around 4:00 P.M., Ali's mind was sharp from two wins while my mind had been on a five hour vacation.

"After gaining a 7-0 lead in match #1, I simply lost it: my ability to concentrate, my rhythm, everything. And I didn't even take a break before starting the second match.

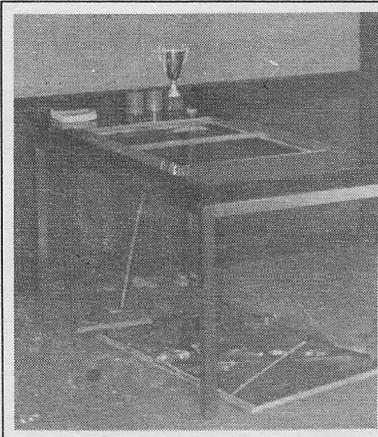
What a jerk! It wasn't a pleasant ride back to Chicago, I can tell you that. If anyone had cut me off, they would have been in real trouble."

In the Intermediate division finals, Chicago area player Ron Stur lost to Terry Kuchenbrod (Louisville) 9-4, but came back to win the rubber match 9-3 to add another feather to his spring "victory bonnet." In March, Stur won the Advanced Consolation of the Midwest Championships. Δ

38TH INDIANA OPEN

- OPEN (52): 1st Ali Zaltash (PA); 2nd Don Desmond (IL); 3rd Paul Franks (IL); 1st Cons. Frank Talbot (MI); 2nd Cons. Karen Davis (DC).
- INTERMEDIATE (49): 1st Ron Stur (IL); 2nd Terry Kuchenbrod (KY); 3rd Don Woods (IN); 1st Cons. Ron Genter (PA); 2nd Cons. Peter Kalba (IL).
- NOVICE (16): 1st G.B. Lunday (IL); 2nd Fred Brooks (IN); 1st Cons. Carol Levine (MI); 2nd Joshua Lantto (MI).
- WORLD CUP QUALIFIER (8): Neil Kazaross (CA).
- DOUBLES (32): 1st Mark Anshus & Bob Holyon (WI); 2nd Cassie, Jamie & Jim Curtis (IN); 3rd/4th Quint McTyeire & Rich Emmett (KY), Jeane Eggenberger (MI) & Tom Weaver (TX).
- OPEN MicroBLITZ (64): 1st Yamin Yamin (IL)

TEMPER, TEMPER



Was this just an accident, or has former Chicagoan Sammy Hakimi actually returned to the game of backgammon? In fact, Tom Brizendine of Greenville, KY sent this photo in claiming that a wooden plaque fell off the ledge smashing his inlaid backgammon board clean through the table. That's not what we heard, Tom. Your opponent tells us that this was the result of him backgammoning you on a 32-cube!

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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

WE SUGGEST MORE "LIVELY" READING

As one of your subscribers, I would appreciate it if you could send me information on how to subscribe to *Gammon Magazine*, the *Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine* and *Backgammon Times*. Thanks very much.—
Michael Goren, Los Angeles, CA

R.I.P.

Gammon Magazine
(1979-1980)

Las Vegas Backgammon
Magazine (1978-1982)

Backgammon Times
(1981-1984)

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

May 3-6	17th Byblos European Championship, Saint-Tropez, France	061/50 58 16
May 4-6	12th Annual Charity Tournament, Airport Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	412/371-5844
May 4-6	11th Granite State Open, Tory Pines Golf Resort, Frankestown, NH	603/863-4711
May 6	Central Illinois BG Club Spring Tourney; Sly Fox Pub; Lacon, IL	309/692-6909
May 7	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
May 12	D.B.L. World Cup Qualifier & Tournament, Dallas, TX	214/361-9033
May 17	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
May 18-20	2nd Venice International Tournament, Casinò Municipale di Venezia, Italy	041/5211029
May 19-20	15th Bayou Club Invitational Tournament, Houstonian, Houston, TX	713/681-9671
May 20	Cavendish North Monthly Tournament, Southfield, MI	313/642-9616
May 25-28	Chicago Open & World Cup Qualifier, Westin O'Hare, Rosemont, IL	708/674-0120
May 25-28	Boston Symphony Benefit, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
May 27-28	Memorial Day Tournament, The Palm Hotel, West Palm Beach, FL	305/527-4033
May 25-27	G/A 22nd Invitational Tournament, Cavendish West Hollywood, CA	818/901-0464
Jun 3	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Jun 4	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Jun 10	New England Bonus Tournament & Play-off Finals, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
Jun 28	Special Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jun 29-Jul 1	Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 1-8	International Amateur Open Cup, Hotel Hélotel, Ile du Levant, France	01/302 77 45
Jul 2	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Jul 3-4	Viking Kick-off Tournament, Palace Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man	0624/851045
Jul 5-8	Championship of Great Britain, Palace Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man	0624/851045
Jul 13-15	San Remo International Tournament, Hotel Royal, San Remo, Italy	184-79 991
Jul 16-22	World Championship of Backgammon, Monte-Carlo, Monaco	305/527-4033
Jul 21	College Park Summer Championship, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Aug 5	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Aug 6	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Aug 7-12	World Cup II and Eastern Open, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	301/299-8264
Aug 13-19	Green Mountain Festival, Ascutney Mtn. Resort, Brownsville, VT	305/527-4033
Aug 16-19	Palace Summer Championships, St. Moritz, Switzerland	061/50 58 16
Aug 31-Sep 3	National Labor Day Weekend Tournament, Louisville, KY	317/845-8435
Oct 23-28	Caesars Tahoe Tournament, South Lake Tahoe, NV	702/851-1452

Happily, many newsletter/magazines are still alive and well, covering local, national and international news...

United States:

Flint Area Backgammon News: Carol Joy Cole, Editor. 3003 Ridgecliffe Drive, Flint, MI 48532-3730. \$10/year (\$15 overseas).

New England Newsletter: Roy Friedman, Editor. 18 Potter Pond, Lexington, MA 02173. \$15/year (\$25 overseas).

Hoosier Backgammon Club Newsletter: Butch & Mary Ann Meese, Editors. 7620 Kilmer Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46256-1634. \$7/year (\$12 overseas).

The Double: Bill Barron, Editor. Box 740306, Dallas, TX 75374-0306. \$15/year (\$20 overseas).

Overseas:

Backgammon Magazin (German language): Haio Forler & Iris Romagna, Eds. Römerstr. 17, 5300 Bonn 1, Germany

Backgammon Zentrale Info-Service (German language): Werner Waschke, Ed. Geibelstr. 18, 2000 Hamburg 60, Germany.
Official Worldwide Backgammon Gazette (English language): Alberto da Pra, Coordination. Box 47, CH-6850 Mendrisio, Switzerland.

Gammon (Danish language): Chris Ternel & Eric Gravgaard, Editors. Harsdorffsvej 8, 1874 Frederiksberg C, Denmark.

Did we leave out any general interest publications? Send info to the POINT.—Ed.

[Continued on page 3]

LETTERS...

(Continued from page 2)

APRIL FOOLER

Has Tak Morioka gone mad? I'm referring to the April Takgammon column where he rambles on about some Sri Lankan gammon guru named Sivad Llib who taught him to perceive backgammon like a hand.

To quote from the column, "Who among us can grasp future concepts of our game plan with filthy fingernails?" To quote from me, "Who among us can grasp what Mr. Morioka and Mr. Llib are babbling about?"—*David Libchaber, Los Angeles, CA*

Tak Morioka was kind enough to allow us to parody last month's column as an April Fool. A real "Takgammon" column will return next month. As for SIVAD LLIB, the guy sounds a little "backwards" to us.—Ed.

WHEN SHOULD A GOOD INTERMEDIATE PLAYER MOVE UP?

This letter is in regards to tourney divisions labelled "Intermediate" and "Open," and the U.S. Tournament Rule that states "... an entrant may be restricted from playing in a lower division." I believe that everyone should be free to play in whichever of these two divisions they choose.

Establishing some arbitrary guidelines would be unfair to weak Open players who, though perhaps stronger than the best Intermediates, could have significantly lower expectancies in the Open division than their Intermediate counterparts. Why should the stronger player be thus penalized?

However, I find it reasonable that if a player has won some arbitrary amount of prize money (say \$2,000), he would be required to move up to the Open division for that reason. However, such a criterion should be established in advance and adhered to.

Playing in "a division beneath one's

ability," as stated on many tournament invitations, is too vague and obviously can not be fairly enforced. It's absurdly subjective and therefore meaningless. Directors should establish exacting criteria so players know precisely what they mean and which divisions they will be permitted to enter.—*Jim Painter, St. Louis, MO*

This is a continuing problem for directors because there will always be "strongest Intermediate" and "weakest Open" players, and a question as to which division these borderline players should compete.

When youngsters first turn 12, nearly all of them try to sneak into the movies for the "Under 12" children's price. Eventually, they grow too big, or their voices change and they begin paying the adult price on their own, or via peer pressure. But there are those who completely ignore reality and continue the sham regardless of their size. They get away with it until the movie manager finally lays down the law: "Pay the adult price or go to another show."

The situation is similar today at regional backgammon tournaments across the United States. When should the director require an Intermediate to move up? As stated in previous issues, the Chicago Bar Point Club uses recent major event results to gauge a player's proper level of play.

For example, Chicago area player Ron Stur won the Advanced Consolation at the March 1990 Midwest Championships and the Intermediate Main Flight at the April 1990 Indiana Open. The CBPC believes Mr. Stur should move to the Open division at the regional level, at least for a while. His success proves he has the skill to be competitive, and the additional entry fee can come out of his winnings. But right or wrong, the Flint Area Backgammon Club has a different way of rating Mr. Stur's level of play and will accept his entry as an Intermediate at the upcoming Michigan Summer Championships.

Yes something should be done to standardize the criteria for determining which division a player can or can't enter. Backgammon clubs have, for the most part, come together on standardized rules. Now it's time to come together on player eligibility.—Ed.

PUSH-BUTTON BACKGAMMON

Help! I am trying to find computer dice. You know, the kind were you push a button and two dice numbers are generated. Do you know where I can get them?—*John Pasko, Brooklyn, NY*

Perhaps one of our readers can help—Ed. Δ



1990 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU APR. 30

TAK MORIOKA	10.72	John Demian	2.08	Jolie Lewis	0.76
MARK KING	9.20	Tim Serges	2.00	Harold Seif	0.72
LUCKY NELSON	9.04	Ron Stur	1.96	Ed Bauder	0.72
DAVE CRAMER	8.44	Jay Ward	1.96	George Kirkby	0.72
ARNOLD ZOUSMER	7.04	Bart Levin	1.92	Paul Franks	0.72
STU KATZ	6.64	Andy Argy	1.88	Bill Hargrave	0.72
GARY KAY	6.24	George Barr	1.80	Ed Buerger	0.64
YAMIN YAMIN	4.68	Phyllis Smolinski	1.76	Femi Owiku	0.64
DEEB SHALATI	4.64	Don Jayhan	1.52	Hal Heinrich	0.64
BILL DAVIS	4.52	John Spatafora	1.44	Ken Bond	0.64
BRUCE WITTERT	4.08	Walt Schafer	1.44	Mike Siegel	0.56
RICH GALEBA	4.08	Bill Keefe	1.36	Reggie Porter	0.52
RALPH LEVY	3.84	Howard Markowitz	1.36	Terry Moskowitz	0.48
RUDY EMMELT	3.64	V.W. Zimnicki	1.28	Richard Stawowy	0.48
LESLIE LOCKETT	3.28	Walter Trice	1.28	Betsy Miller	0.40
JOE KOUCHARIAN	3.28	Joann Feinstein	1.28	Sarg Serges	0.40
JAKE JACOBS	3.20	Frank Callea	1.12	Arline Levy	0.36
DON DESMOND	3.12	Herb Roman	1.12	Mary Franks	0.32
BOBBIE SHIFRIN	2.88	Mike Spiropoulos	1.04	Mike Sutton	0.32
MARCY SLOAN	2.80	Bob Holyon	1.04	Larry Knoll, Jr.	0.28
Kathy Rudnick	2.60	Randall Witt	0.88	Bernie Smuda	0.24
Bob Zavoral	2.56	Peter Kalba	0.88	Bill Hoeflich	0.24
Alice Kay	2.52	Sharon Lennon	0.88	Larry Knoll	0.24
Dean Muench	2.40	Jerry Brooks	0.88	Jill Ferdinand	0.16
Judy Brown	2.28	Norma Shyer	0.88	Barbara Levinson	0.12
Greg Shore	2.16	Joe Wollick	0.88	Ted Mann	0.12

STU KATZ placed in the last three tournaments of April, including a win on the 24th to become Player of the Month. His 4.08 points vaulted him from 13th to 6th in the standings.

Bruce Wittert (3.44) and Gary Kay (3.20) followed closely behind.

If you finish in the Top 20 for 1990 (capitalized names on list), you'll be entered in a drawing for over \$250 worth of valuable electronics merchandise. The higher you finish, the better your winning chances. Individual awards: 1st—Trophy + \$150; 2nd—\$100; 3rd—\$50. 1st thru 20th—engraved brass board tag. 1st thru 6th—Invitation to participate on the Chicago Bar Point Club team in the 1991 Illinois State Challenge Cup.

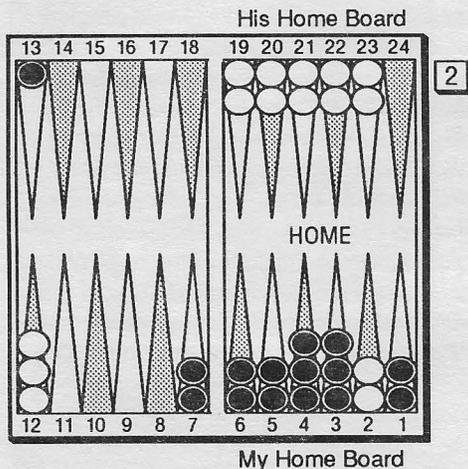
ASK DANNY



by Danny Kleinman

WHEN IN DOUBT, PLAY IT OUT

Dear Danny: In a recent game, my opponent (White) had direct aces and a 6-5 combination to hit. **WHITE ON SHAKE:**



Before rolling however, he proposed to settle by paying me one point if he hit, or calling the game a wash if he missed. I agreed, and collected one point when he rolled double aces.

To confirm my judgment, I rolled the game out 20 times subsequently, but the results were indecisive. Do you think I was right to accept this settlement?—Rob Mathes, New York, NY

Dear Rob: You're never right to accept a settlement if you're in doubt afterwards whether you got the worst of it. Whatever equity you have in the position, you can obtain by continuing the game. If (as so often happens) there is any play or cube judgment left, you may reap an extra benefit from your skill. Why settle games at all? Didn't you come to the club to play backgammon?

Settlements make little sense on 2-cubes. They make better sense in no- or little-skill positions with large cubes, when the players may not want to risk large sums on a winning doublet or a losing ace at the very end. Even then, if a fair settlement can't be calculated precisely and easily, or would require you to score in cumbersome fractions, a method pioneered by Vladimir Dobrich is clearly superior. Instead of finishing the game with the cube at 16, for example, play it eight times with the cube at 2. Vladimir's procedure is obviously fair, and minimizes the exposure to a particular roll or rolls.

But perhaps you want to know whether your settlement was favorable to you. I think it was. Here's how to assess it.

First convert the "hit-no hit" settlement to a fraction. In effect, White offered you 13/36 points. With the doubling cube at 2, that's the equivalent of winning 6 1/2 more games in 36 than you lose: 21 1/4 wins to 14 3/4 losses.

How will you fare, by comparison, if you continue the game? As a rough estimate, count every hit as a loss (even though you'll sometimes recover). That's 13 losses at once. If White misses, you still have five

rolls (6-5, 4-1, 1-1) which force direct repeat shots and six rolls (3-2, 3-1, 2-1) which force indirect shots. That adds, conservatively, one more hit to the 13 immediate hits already counted, 14+ losses. If White misses and you bring your blot to safety, White remains with a well-timed deuce-point game: substantial shot equity and small gammon danger. Will the games in 22 he salvages with later hits exceed the games in 14 you salvage after getting hit promptly? I think so, and by a margin much greater than the extra 3/4 games he needs for his actual equity to match his settlement offer. Though you're the favorite in this game, I'd guess your equity to be 1/4 point or less—clearly below the 13/36 offered.

Now I don't doubt that you or somebody else might perform truly extensive roll-outs or truly intricate calculations to come up with an estimate better than mine. Perhaps the game should be washed. Perhaps White should pay you 1/2 point. For I, roughing it out on my typewriter, and you, eyeballing the position at the table, cannot be confident we are right. That is why I advise you to *reject any settlement offer unless:*

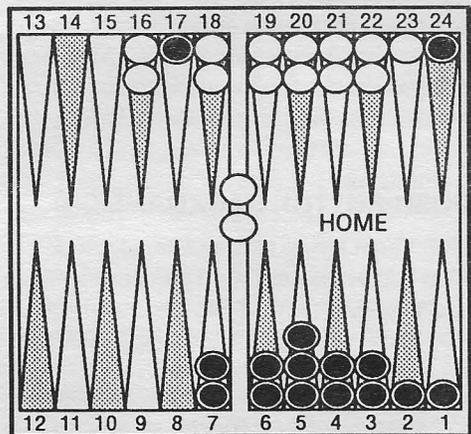
- (1) you can appraise the position quickly, surely and easily; and
- (2) the offer is at least as favorable as your appraisal.—Yours, Danny Δ

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.

your move

PROBLEM #159

1990 Indiana Open. Double match point. Joe Sylvester (Black) vs. Carol Joy Cole (White). **BLACK TO PLAY 2-1.**



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 708/457-1166.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:30 at Bagwells, 4636 N. Cumberland, Chgo 312/625-1717.

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

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

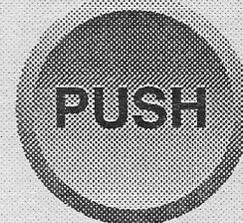
WINNETKA BG CLUB: Tournaments Weds., 7:00 PM at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (708/446-0537).

CENT. ILL. BG CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 PM at Denny's, 2522 W. Lake Ave., Peoria. Sue Will (309/692-6909).

TULEY PK. BG CLUB: Tourn. alt. Sat., 12:00 at Tuley Park Fieldhouse, 90th & King, Chgo. J.A. Miller (219/883-6127).

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

The Final



Is On

11th Annual Chicago Open & World Cup Qualifier

May 25-28, 1990

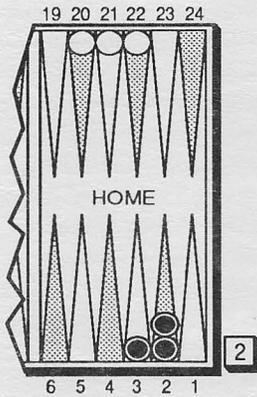
Westin Hotel O'Hare
Rosemont, Illinois

Last minute information:
Joann Feinstein 708/674-0120

Here's the actual *Backgammon Exam* compiled by Bill Davis and Danny Kleinman and given at the 1990 Midwest Championships for a \$25 entry fee. "Professor" Jake Jacobs (Illinois) defeated (among others) Joe Sylvester, Walter Trice and Dean Muench by managing 6 out of 10 correct. Can you do better?

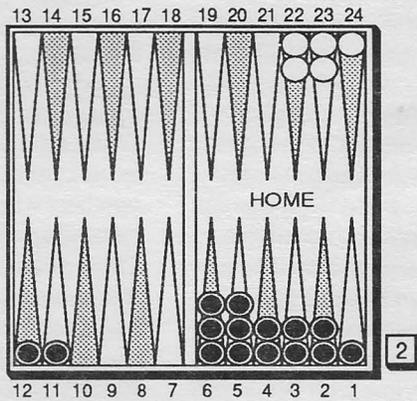
INSTRUCTIONS: You have 20 minutes to solve all 10 problems. In all cases, assume equal Open level competition. Solutions on page 7.

The Backgammon Exam

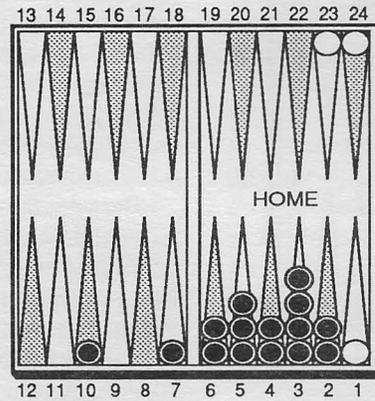


1 9 pt. match. Black leads White, 6 to 2. Black to throw. Circle the correct cube action.

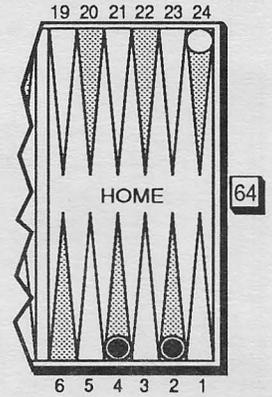
- A. No Redouble
- B. Redouble and Take
- C. Redouble and Pass



2 Money game. Black to play 3-1.

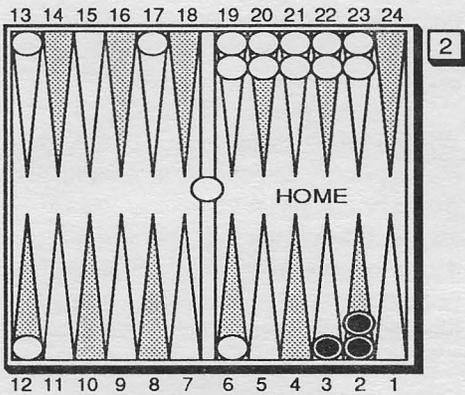


3 Double match point. Black to play 1-1.

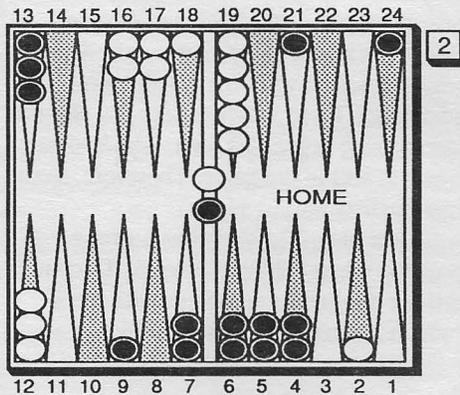


4 7 pt. match. White leads Black, 5 to 2. Black to throw. Circle the correct cube action.

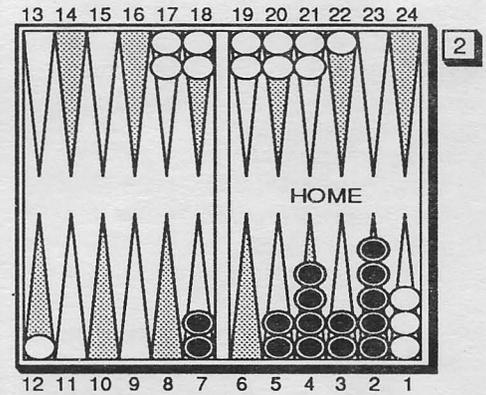
- A. No Redouble
- B. Redouble and Take
- C. Redouble and Pass



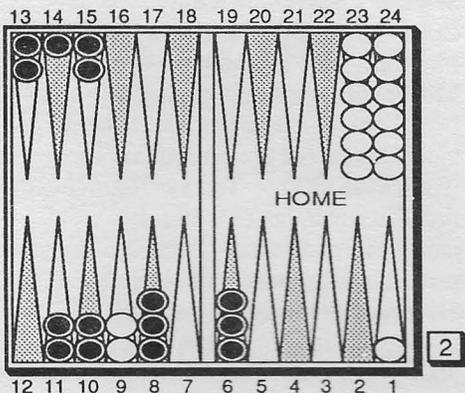
5 Money game. Black to play 1-1.



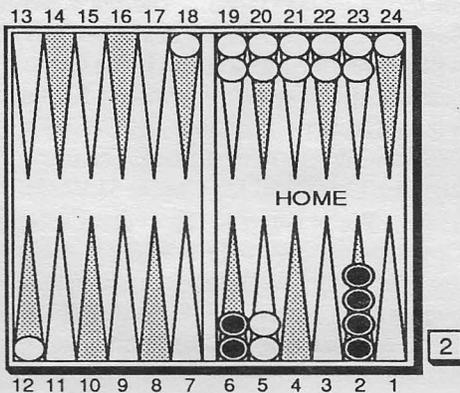
6 Money game. Black to play 3-3.



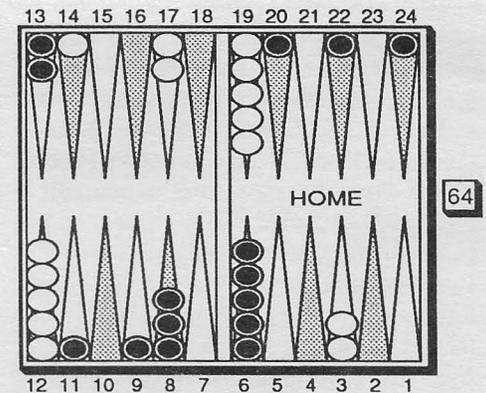
7 Money game. Black to play 5-1.



8 Black rolls 6-6. Make the play that leaves White the *minimum* number of shots.



9 Money game. Black to play 1-1.

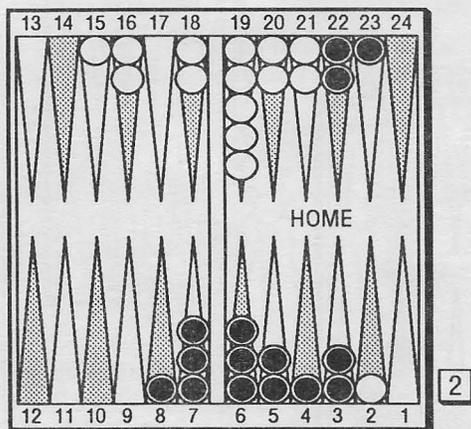


10 Money game. Black to play 5-3.

PROBLEM #158 SOLVED

by Kit Woolsey

Match to 7 points. Black leads White, 3 to 2. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-2.**



This is a very typical prime vs. prime position where Black has the dual problem of escaping his own men, while at the same time containing one or more of White's checkers. Cube ownership may be relevant, but it's only a minor factor here because a takeable redouble by Black would put the match on the line in this two-way gammonish position. Black must simply determine the best play. The four obvious candidates are:

- (a) 8/2*, 4/2;
- (b) 8/2*, 6/4;
- (c) 23/15*;
- (d) 23/17, 6/4.

Since the two running plays are much

different in character from the two non-running plays, the simplest approach is to find the best running and the best non-running play and then compare the finalists.

Between the non-running plays, (b) seems considerably better than (a). If Black makes play (a), he is left with a gap on the 4-point that will be difficult to fill for several rolls. This means that even if White stays on the bar for a few shakes, she is always threatening to escape with one good roll, while Black still has the job of extricating three men. Thus it will be some time before Black can demonstrate a clear advantage. Play (b) gives Black the threat of completing a prime and/or escaping immediately, and he will still have a solid position should things go poorly.

Between the running plays, (d) accomplishes Black's two primary objectives: make the 4-point and escape a checker. Unfortunately, it is then White's turn. If White rolls a six, she becomes a big favorite, and hitting with an ace or a deuce puts Black back behind a prime with White still poised on the 2-point ready to escape. Only if White rolls one of the nine misses does this play look strong, and even then, White is on the edge of the prime and Black still has two men back. Play (c) looks better, despite being looser. White has 20 return hits, but if she fails to roll one of them, Black is a big favorite to make the 4-point, which would give him a considerable advantage. Even if White does hit, she still has to bring home two men, which means Black is still in the game. Therefore, the two finalists are (b) and (c).

After play (b), Black has a strong position when White fails to hit. Despite a serious duplication problem with fives (which means that Black is unlikely to

complete the prime next roll), Black is likely to be able to escape one man before his prime crumbles. Following the breakout, if White hasn't hit by then, Black is a big favorite to win the priming battle and may well have a cubing advantage. White only hits with 12 numbers. Even if White does hit, Black maintains a strong board, a 5-prime, and an advanced anchor. With fives and sixes to escape, Black is still a favorite to free one man before he crunches, which means White will still have to roll a six reasonably soon or lose the priming battle.

After play (c), Black is very strong (quite possibly a doubling advantage) if White rolls one of her 16 numbers which miss. Unfortunately, White does have 20 numbers which hit, and any of these numbers swing the advantage in her direction. The 4-point is gone (probably forever), Black has yet another man to bring in and move over the White prime, and White should have little difficulty escaping Black's broken board with her remaining man. This is just too much for Black to give up. While it is nice to have a near claim on 16 numbers, the cost is just too great. Since Black will have a definite advantage on 24 numbers with play (b) and a reasonably strong position even if White hits without escaping, making the 4-point and hitting loose on the 2-point, the strongest offensive play, gets the nod.

If Black had only one number to leap White's prime, escape would be a much higher priority and one of the running plays would be correct. With two numbers to escape, Black is not in nearly as much danger of crunching, so he can devote his primary energies to building up his own blockade in the most efficient manner. Δ

AMALGAMATION

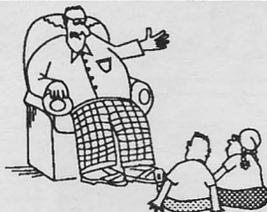
Monte-Carlo World Backgammon Championship Chairman **André Rolfo-Fontana** has announced that due to renovation work at the Sporting d'Hiver, this year's event (16-22 July) will be held at Loews Hotel Monte-Carlo. For more information, call Les Boyd at 305/527-4033... Our condolences on the March passing of **Warren Corbett**, owner/operator of the Doubling Cube, backgammon and game supply store (NYC)... Visiting the Bar Point Club in April: **Lt. Col. David Sheets** (OH), in Chicago for Air Force duty, and **Ben Zemaitis** (Springfield, IL) on business working for the Illinois Department of Internal

Revenue... For the first time in Indianapolis, a chess-type clock was used to pick up the pace of an extremely slow bracket at the recent Indiana Open... The Michigan Summer Championships (29 June-1 July) will again offer 100% return in the Championship division thanks to **Sandy Kaplan**, **Victor George Oldsmobile**, and **Modern Engineering**. Hurry to register. The event fills fast. Call Carol Joy Cole at 313/232-9731... We're happy to report that Chicago Open director **Joann Feinstein's** husband **Jerry** is doing well following quintuple (5) bypass heart surgery on 18 April. Get well, Jerry. And keeping it in the family, we also wish the best to **Jamie** (Feinstein) & **Larry Irgang** on their 29 April marriage at the Fireside Restaurant in Morton Grove, IL... We hear **Barbara Levinson** is doing a

"blow-up" job in Illinois politics. She owns **Barbara's Balloons** and has designed balloon backdrops for the speeches of **Senator Paul Simon** and Democratic Cook County Board nominee **Richard Phelan**... New BPC player **Terry Moskowitz** has an interesting collection—over 3700 miniature bottles. His most valuable one is a pre-prohibition beer bottle worth over \$200... The San Remo International Tournament (13-15 July) has increased its guaranteed Championship first prize to the equivalent of nearly \$20,000. To secure an invitation, write to **Luigi Villa**; via Bigli 19; Milan, Italy or call 7600 3705... Overheard from **Jake Jacobs** at the Bar Point Club: "Some players would do a lot better to play certain propositions under an assumed bank account." Δ

uncle jake

THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE



by Jake Jacobs

“Uncle Jake, can you tell us a story about Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles?”
“Seems to me I dated one of them; but I say, when you wake up in the morning and can’t remember what you did the night before, it’s just nature’s way of telling you: *You don’t really want to know.*”

“Anyway, I do remember this one story about a friend of mine named Dory. They called her ‘Dory Tease’ because she was such a noted cultural dancer. She and her cousin Harriet were always arguing about their backgammon games. You see, Dory was always kinda thick-skinned, so she’d snap up some pretty gory looking doubles; then just try to pry her loose! Harriet, on the other hand, was kind of a scared rabbit—used to pass those cubes like they were greased kidney stones.

“So, one evening they’re hanging out in this all-night joint, arguing about their doubling habits. Eventually they ask the Greeks that owned the place if they had any opinions about backgammon.”

“Did they, Uncle Jake?”

“Michael, we are talking Greeks! The first guy, Hermes, kinda liked Harriet, and sided with her: ‘Fast-passing is good strategy. Why give your opponent the satisfaction of winning a big game, or give yourself the aggravation of losing one?’

“Meanwhile, his cousin Achilles always grabbed cubes like he was invulnerable, so he said: ‘I think Dory’s right to take loose doubles. Turn a big game around and the other guy goes crazy.’

“They weren’t getting anywhere, so they asked their dad Zeus what he thought about it. He answered, ‘Seems like both of you are making the same size error—Dory gives up 5% on her takes, and Harriet loses 5% on her passes. So what we’re gonna do is let the two of you play. We’ll cancel out the result and only keep track of the equity you give up. Thing is, I have to get up early tomorrow; I’ve got jury duty on the Hephaestus forgery case, so you can’t play all night. Two hours and then I’m outta here like a thunderbolt!’”

“Could he do that, Uncle Jake?”

“Sure, Christina. It was his restaurant. Two hours later they come to find out that Dory’s slow takes took three times as long to play as Harriet’s fast passes, so Dory won the shirt off Harriet’s back, which was a switch.”

“So that means it’s better to be a slow tortoise than a speedy hare?”

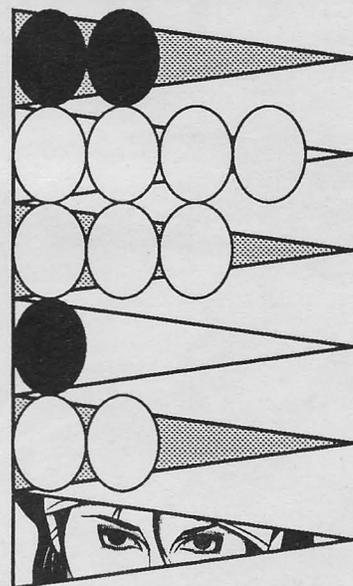
“Bite your tongue, Michael. Snap up every double and you’ll wind up in the soup! [Note to the reader: If you expected me to say something about *shelling out*, you have a warped mind.—J. J.] No, it’s better to hunt for rabbits: they’re harder to catch but there’s more meat for the stew. Now, let’s go catch a matinee.”

“Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles?”

“Naw. With all this talk of food, I’m thinking more along the lines of ‘The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover.’ Who knows? Maybe you’ll learn some recipes that’ll surprise your mommy!” Δ

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“BACKGAMMON EXAM” SOLUTIONS

[From page 5]

1. C
2. 12/9, 11/10
3. 2/1*, 10/8, 5/4
4. A
5. 3/1, 2/1, 2/1
6. B/22, 5/2*, 5/2, 13/10
7. 7/2, 7/6
8. 14/2, 10/4, 10/4
9. 2/Off, 2/1, 2/1
10. 9/4, 24/21

Only #6 and #10
are in any way
debatable.

BACKGAMMON IN ANCIENT GREECE

by Duane Jensen

Since backgammon has been around for centuries, I wonder if it was played in ancient Greece. The typical backgammon player back then was probably a young man, one who wasn’t bright enough to be a great thinker or athletic enough to excel at sports. He may have been the first “nerd” in

the civilized world, shunned by his peers.

His backgammon board was a marble surface with an outer covering of goatskin. Inscribed on the surface were Greek characters or “glyphs” which acknowledged the player’s skill and accomplishments.

This vision of backgammon in ancient Greece may have some truth to it. Centuries ago, the Roman poet Virgil wrote “...timeo nerdicus et glyphicus ferentis...”

The translation warns us: “Beware of geeks bearing glyphs.” Δ

Sample the new

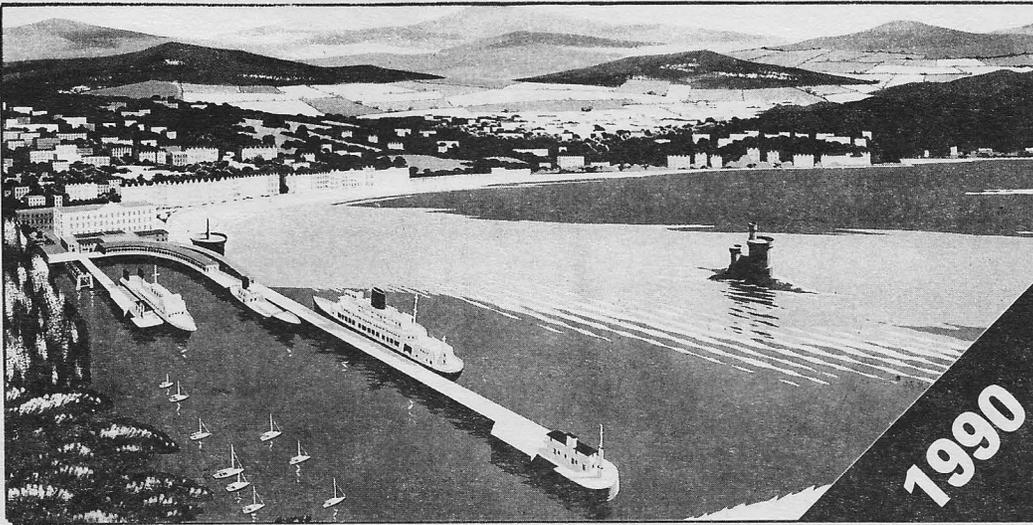
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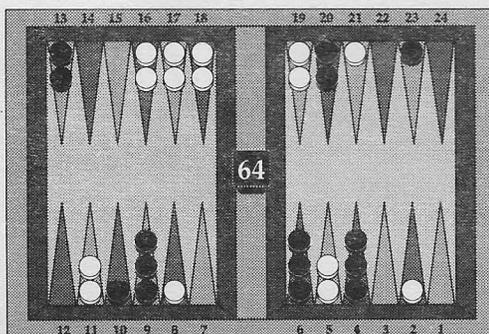
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