

1992 las vegas open

ANOTHER BIG NEVADA WIN FOR GIOVANIS

Ami Tennenbaum Hits Sands Super Jackpot

What is it about Drew Giovanis and Nevada? In October 1990, he won the Caesars Lake Tahoe extravaganza. Now add the 1992 Las Vegas Open to Drew's victory column. 271 total main event entries were enticed by \$15,000 in added prize money to make a desert pilgrimage to the Sands Hotel 17-21 June. Their reward was intense BG action provided by Nevada Backgammon Association director Howard Markowitz and an all-star staff.

"Just lucky, I guess," claimed Giovanis when asked to explain his second \$17,000+ prize money victory in Nevada over the past 20 months. "Both times I was on vacation just looking to have a good time and things just worked out. I never expected to win the tournament even when I got into the later rounds. I just kept winning."

Some Nail-Biting Early Rounds

Giovanis, a 36-year-old financial consultant from Clearwater, Florida faced Indiana expert John O'Hagan in the first round. "Playing to 15 points, John was ahead 6-0 and 12-8. Then he was up 12-11, holding a 2-cube, and ahead 30 pips in a fairly short race. I rolled two sets of double 6s and wound up winning the game by one roll. After that, he didn't score another point."

Drew's next opponent was the internationally renowned Alan Steffen. Although Steffen held leads of 10-1 and 12-3, Drew came back to win 15-12. Texas expert Nathan Jones was Giovanis's next victim. With a tie score in mid-match, an 8-cube went Drew's way sending him into the round-of-16.

After besting New York master Jack Kissane 15-5 to reach the quarterfinals ("I just outrolled him."), Drew entered into his most difficult match against Tom Zarrinam (CA). "I still don't know how I won that

[Continued on page 5]

1st backgammon olympiad

WACHTEL BRINGS HOME OLYMPIC GOLD FOR USA

by Dario De Toffoli

Bob Wachtel, a top-rated player/analyst from the United States [Pittsburgh, PA] has won the Individual event at the 1st Backgammon Olympiad. Nearly 300 players representing 35 countries attended the largest-ever backgammon tournament to be held in Italy at the Casinò Municipale of Venice, 30 June-5 July.

Wachtel won the individual title of Olympiad Champion in a thrilling double match-point victory over Japanese master Kazuhiro Shino 25-24. Excellent live closed circuit TV commentary provided by Alan Steffen (USA) enhanced the interest and level of excitement among the 100+ bystanders who were fortunate enough to witness the outstanding match. Semifinalists were Michel Cordier (Belgium) and Gottal (Germany).

The 4th International "City of Venice" tournament was captured by André

Hoffman. Hoffman, one of Hong Kong's finest, topped successful German player Jürgen Schartt.

The Team Tournament proved to be very successful. Nearly 60 teams battled through (a) round robin and then (b) knock-out formats. In the end, the German team prevailed with good performances from the American and Italian teams.

By country rating, based on the matches of the Individual and Team tournaments, the USA was the championship country, just ahead of Germany. Japan, Italy and Denmark rounded out the top five. The former Soviet Republics of Armenia and Georgia also turned in fine showings.

Two-time World Champ Bill Robertie's instructive seminars were followed by more than 50 players. And to round out a very successful week, a flashy prize-giving ceremony was conducted by Hercules and Bridget, the Baron and Baroness of Culcreuch. All in all, a great show. Δ

Dario De Toffoli, author of *Giocare A Backgammon*, directed the *1st Backgammon Olympiad* which was organized by SD2 *studiogiocchi* under license from the *Worldwide Backgammon Federation*.

GOING AFTER THE 'BAKGAM'



While speaking long distance with John O'Hagan on 3 July about the upcoming Monte Carlo tournament, your editor heard the sound of a car crash outside his front window. I immediately hung up with John and ran downstairs to see damaged cars strewn all down my street with the guilty driver's vehicle smashed into the side of another unlucky car one block away. My three-week-old "BAKGAM" truck (total damage: \$3,000+) was the driver's "opening roll." He has to be a chess player! Δ

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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COMPLIMENTS TO JAKE

"Hong Kong," like previous articles by Jake Jacobs is nonpareil. He is genuinely gifted.—*Jim Painter, St. Louis, MO*

A CHANGE OF VENUE IN CANADA

For those visiting Calgary, Hal Heinrich and I have moved our occasional Monday night backgammon sessions from Bottle-screw Bill's to Buckingham Pub (basement, 9th Avenue & 9th Street SW). Please make this correction in your "Backgammon Clubs In North America" listing.

Additionally, thanks to you, Carol, Peter, and the Costa Rican Backgammon Association for doing such a good job on the recent Tournament of the Americas. You, the Cariari Hotel and all our new Costa Rican friends made it a great holiday for us. I hope we can get together again in San José next year.—*Jim and Adele Wallace, Calgary, Alberta, Canada*

A TIP FROM LARRY

With all the competition among hotels to

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

* Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

Jul 11-12	College Park Summer Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Jul 12*	Monthly 16 Tournament, Greeley's Restaurant, San Francisco, CA	415/387-0429
Jul 12*	Austin BG Association Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/280-5945
Jul 15	Rscards Summer Computer Modern Tournament, GEnie	800/638-9636
Jul 23	Special Thursday Tournament, Holiday Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 24-26	Michigan Summer Championships, Holiday Inn & Holidome, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 26*	Cavendish Club of Boston Tournament, Brookline, MA	617/734-2230
Jul 31-Aug 2*	Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY	716/442-8221
Aug 2	15th Annual Bob Hill Summer Classic, Hill Estate, Old Westbury, NY	516/334-4833
Aug 9*	Monthly 16 Tournament, Greeley's Restaurant, San Francisco, CA	415/387-0429
Aug 3-9	World Cup III & U.S. Open, Harvey's Bristol Suites Hotel, Dallas, TX	301/299-8264
Aug 10-16	Green Mountain Festival of Backgammon, Stratton Mountain Inn, VT	305/527-4033
Aug 15-16	Riverboat Gambling and CIBC Summer Sizzler, Sly Fox Pub, Lacon IL	309/692-6909
Aug 20	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Aug 23	Summer Cool Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Aug 23*	Cavendish Club of Boston Tournament, Brookline, MA	617/734-2230
Sep 4-7	National Labor Day Tournament, Raddison Hotel, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Sep 13*	Monthly 16 Tournament, Greeley's Restaurant, San Francisco, CA	415/387-0429
Sep 17	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Sep 30-Oct 4	2nd Illinois State Championships and America Cup, Hyatt Deerfield, IL	708/945-7801
Oct 15*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Oct 17-18*	College Park Fall Open & Jackpot Tourney, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Oct 21*	Rscards Fall Computer Modern Tournament, GEnie	800/638-9636
Oct 30-Nov 1*	10th New Hampshire Fall Classic, Highlander, Manchester, NH	603/863-4711
Oct 31-Nov 7*	Backgammon In Paradise, Kea Lani Hotel, Wailea, Maui, Hawaii	702/852-1221
Nov 10*	BPC 10th Annual Fall Trophy Tourney, Pat's Pub, Norridge, IL	312/338-6380

OUTSIDE USA

Jul 9-12	7th Federal International Tournament, Hotel Royal, San Remo, Italy	392/76003705
Jul 13	Victoria Winter Tournament, Botanical Hotel, South Yarra, Australia	03/822-3730
Jul 13-19	1992 World Championship, Loews Monte Carlo Hotel, Monaco	305/527-4033
Jul 23-26*	Riveria's Cup Championship, Hôtel Martinez, Cannes, France	142/88 66 45
Jul 31-Aug 3	Australian Open Championships, NSW, Australia	02/369-3620
Aug 3	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846-1923
Aug 8-9	Weisbaden Cup 1992, Hotel Fürstenhof-Esplanade, Wiesbaden, Germany	06122/16124
Aug 13-16	Palace Summer Championships, Badrutt's Hotel, St. Moritz, Switzerland	061/331 5816
Aug 15-16	Sjaelland Open, Frederikssund, Denmark	039/40 06 07
Aug 27-30	2nd Mitteleuropa Tournament, Casino Nova Gorica, Slovenia	392/48019343
Sep 7	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846-1923
Sep 7	Victoria Monthly Tournament, Botanical Hotel, South Yarra, Australia	03/822-3730
Sep 12-13	BIBA Trophy Tournament No. 3, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522/721630
Sep 26	Weisbaden Cup 1992, Hotel Fürstenhof-Esplanade, Wiesbaden, Germany	06122/16124
Oct 1-4*	11th International Austrian Open, Pörtschach/Wörthersee, Austria	08341/12825
Oct 2-4*	Victorian Open Championship, Botanical Hotel, South Yarra, Australia	03/822-3730
Oct 17-18*	1st British Isles Open Trophy, Forte Crest Hotel, Eastgate, Lincoln, UK	0522/53 68 36
Oct 31-Nov 1*	Weisbaden Cup 1992, Hotel Fürstenhof-Esplanade, Wiesbaden, Germany	06122/16124
Nov 21-22*	BIBA Trophy Tournament No. 4, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522/721630
Nov 28*	Weisbaden Cup 1992, Hotel Fürstenhof-Esplanade, Wiesbaden, Germany	06122/16124

capture the tourist dollar, tourney participants would be wise to call tournament hotels directly to check local rates. Weekend package deals, senior citizen discounts, corporate rates, etc. can frequently beat the backgammon organizer's "special" rates.—*Larry Strommen, Indianapolis, IN*

MORE ON BACKGAMMON EXAM III

I completely agree with Malcolm Davis's analysis of Problem 3 from Backgammon

Exam III [last month's Problem 181]. The value of making the point six away from the point your opponent must enter on is vastly underestimated in this type of position. I call it the "backstop point"—it acts as a backstop in helping to catch anything your opponent enters with. This was the only problem in the exam where I seriously disagreed with the official answer.—*Kit Woolsey, Kensington, CA*

[Continues]

Last month's analysis of Problem 3 by Malcolm Davis, along with an elaborate quantitative analysis sent to me by Bob Wachtel has convinced me that 13/10, 12/8 is superior to the 10/6, 17/14 I favored previously. You obtain some benefit from having your last-chance hitter back on the 17-point rather than the 14-point when White enters and you *don't* hit immediately. But the main reason for moving 13/10, 12/8 is to give yourself a significantly better chance to close White out by making the 4-point.

I had thought previously that so long as White didn't escape unharmed, you could bring builders for the 4-point later. While this is true, each time you do this, you give White an additional chance to escape unharmed, including occasional fly shots at your builders. The margin of advantage for

13/10, 12/8 is small but clear.

In Problem 7, the "call your roll" game, David Rubin is correct that 6-1 can always win for the player calling the 6. Your best strategy is what game theorists call a "mixed" strategy. Call a 1, 2 or 6 with equal probability (1/3). Your opponent would be foolish to call a 3, 4 or 5 (he'd lose against your 1 or 2, win only against your 6). If he calls 1, he'll beat your 2 but lose to your 6. If he calls 2, he'll beat your 6 but lose to your 1. If he calls 6, he'll beat your 1 but lose to your 2. This "minimax" strategy guarantees you an equity of at least 0 no matter what strategy your opponent chooses.

Regarding Larry Strommen's questions about the answer to Problem 6, the comparison of White's jokers after 13/12, 6/3 and 13/11, 5/3 should be between the *three* double-hitters (6-3, 6-6) and the *four*

double-hitters (5-6, 5-4). Though the devastation is worse than Larry says on 6-6 (*no* return fly shots, not *four*), the total number of times in 1296 that Black gets hit and does not hit back is only 86 after 13/12, 6/3 but 98 after 13/11, 5/3. Meanwhile, the recommended play gives Black a closed board 50 more times in 1296.—*Danny Kleinman, Los Angeles, CA*

THE TENTH IS SET

Just a quick note to say hello! I hope the spring has been enjoyable for you.

We are looking forward to hosting the 10th anniversary Midwest Backgammon Championships March 19–21, 1993. On behalf of the staff, I wish you an enjoyable summer.—*Mike Wainwright, Sales Manager, Chicago Marriott Oak Brook Hotel, IL*

COOL READING

My timing in last year's relocation was a lot better. Summer down in sunny southwest Florida is not to be believed. What I really need is a backgammon fix. Soooo... enclosed is a check for a POINT subscription.—*George Barr, Tampa, FL Δ*

CHEAPER BY THE BAG

At last year's Monte Carlo tournament, Alvaro Savio, president of the Brazilian Backgammon Federation told me about his method of running an auction in Brazil. An attempt is made to auction off each player individually. The names of those players who don't receive a set minimum bid are then placed into a bag. At the end of the auction, the bag is sold to the highest bidder.—*Alberto da Pra, president, Worldwide Backgammon Fed., Mendrisio, Switzerland Δ*

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1992 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR COMPILED THRU 30 JUNE

GARY KAY	12.40	George Barr	3.20	Georgina Flanagan	1.20
DEEB SHALATI	11.16	Herb Roman	3.20	Leslie Lockett	0.96
MARY FRANKS	10.96	Peter Berkman	3.20	Stan Kucharz	0.96
STU KATZ	10.88	René Wojtysiak	3.12	Kathy Rudnick	0.88
DAVID RUBIN	10.24	Joann Feinstein	3.00	Ron Stur	0.88
DAVE CRAMER	9.92	John Stryker	2.92	Jeff Gottesman	0.88
DAVID ROCKWELL	9.76	Bill Cox	2.80	Amy Trudeau	0.88
PAUL FRANKS	7.36	Ralph Levy	2.80	Ken Bond	0.88
LENNY LODER	7.20	Bobbie Shifrin	2.64	Gary Hines	0.80
LUCKY NELSON	6.96	Barry Miller	2.56	Dan Judd	0.76
JOHN BRUSSEL	6.88	Devin Dallaire	2.56	Patrick Desmond	0.76
YAMIN YAMIN	6.64	V.W. Zimnicki	2.56	Kurt Warning	0.64
SARG SERGES	6.64	Roland Dieter	2.32	Tak Morioka	0.64
PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI	6.24	Tim Mabee	2.28	Tim Serges	0.60
BOB ZAVORAL	6.20	Norma Shyer	2.16	Don Desmond	0.56
HOWARD MARKOWITZ	6.16	Frankie Farjood	2.16	Jeff Kane	0.56
DON JAYHAN	6.16	Femi Owiku	2.08	Larry Lau	0.56
HOWARD RING	6.00	James Colen	1.92	Marv Arnol	0.52
DEAN MUENCH	5.68	Alice Kay	1.92	Harold Grote	0.48
ALEX ITKIN	5.52	Bill Davis	1.92	Elaine Kehm	0.40
Chris Stanford	5.28	Joe Koucharian	1.80	Karen Kertz	0.40
Reggie Porter	4.80	Paul Klein	1.76	John Macaluso	0.32
Peter Kalba	4.72	Harold Seif	1.68	Phil Simborg	0.32
Bob Ebbeler	4.72	Steve Katz	1.60	Joan Hegg	0.28
John Demian	4.64	Les Moshinsky	1.56	Betsy Miller	0.24
Chris Kenik	4.32	Jake Jacobs	1.52	Fred Gehlhoff	0.24
Arline Levy	4.16	Ray Baker	1.28	Jill Ferdinand-Brus	0.24
Jolie Lewis	3.72	Rich Galeba	1.28	Bruce Russell	0.20
Paul Friedman	3.52	Richard Stawowy	1.28	J.A. Miller	0.20
Judy Brown	3.44	Scott Goode	1.28	Jeff Peck	0.20
Ed Buerger	3.36	Steve Sacher	1.28	Larry Yakowenko	0.16

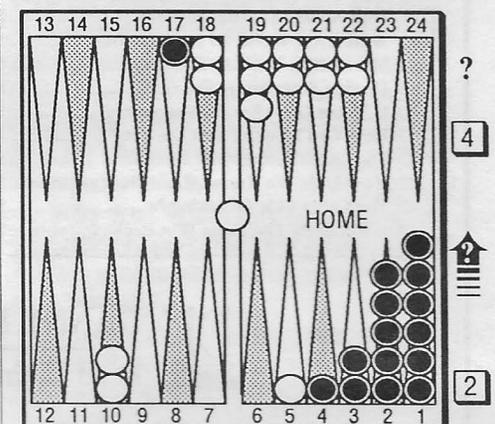
SARG SERGES won a June tournament and placed in two others to become Player of the Month with 3.44 points. Arline Levy (3.20) and Bob Zavoral (2.92) followed closely behind.

If you finish in the Top 20 for 1992 (capitalized names on list), you'll be entered in a drawing for over \$300 worth of valuable merchandise. The higher you finish, the better your winning chances. Individual awards: 1st—Trophy + \$200, 2nd—\$125, 3rd—\$75. 1st through 20th—engraved board tag. 1st through 6th—Invitation to participate on the Chicago Bar Point Club team in the 1993 Illinois State Challenge Cup.

your move

PROBLEM #183

Money game. Black (holding a 2-cube) on shake. **CUBE ACTION?**



ASK DANNY

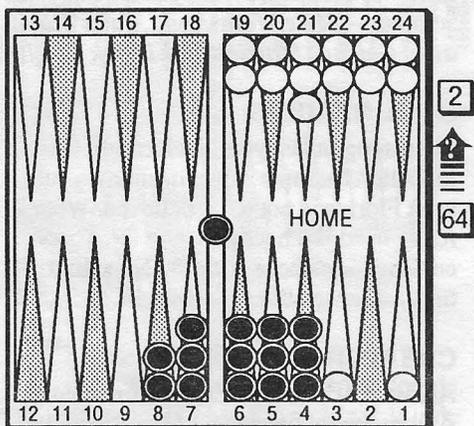


by Danny Kleinman

DOUBLING VOLATILE POSITIONS

Dear Danny: In a tournament match, I doubled my opponent from the bar in this position:

Match to 7 points. Black leads White, 4 to 3. Black (on the bar) is on shake. **SHOULD BLACK DOUBLE?**



He snatched, rolled 6-6 followed by 6-2, and gammoned me to win the match. A kibitzer offered to play White's side as a proposition for money, beavering my double. What's your opinion?—Bruce Newberg, Los Angeles, CA

DEAR BRUCE: This position is very volatile, with the equities subject to drastic change on the next roll. Though you are a marked favorite, you can be doubled out if White rolls 6-2 next, whether for money or leading 4-3 in a 7-point match (no, White should not play for a gammon unless he suddenly finds himself with both back men free). But White is under pressure to roll a 6 or a 2 immediately, else (if you haven't already doubled) he's far too weak to take your cube. And unless he rolls a 6, you remain a favorite.

Your double is certainly proper for money, and minimally proper even at this match score. Perhaps the kibitzer who offered to beaver didn't appreciate the difficulty of rolling a 6 and a 2 and then another 6.

You should double highly volatile positions more readily because you can lose your market by a clear margin very often if you don't.

Incidentally, White's redoubling deci-

sions at this score are extremely interesting, even paradoxical. If he rolls 6-5, 6-4, 6-3 or 6-1, he becomes a favorite and should force you to eat the cube at 4. But if he rolls 3-2, 2-1 or 1-1, and anchors without breaking his board, he should also redouble—even though he's still an underdog. For if he's destined to lose the game, he'll trail 3-6 entering the Crawford Game and have very slim chances anyhow; while if he's destined to win the game, a 5-4 lead won't be nearly as good as winning the match outright.—Yours, Danny

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

MAY CONTEST RESULTS

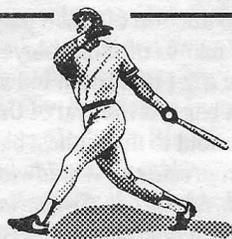
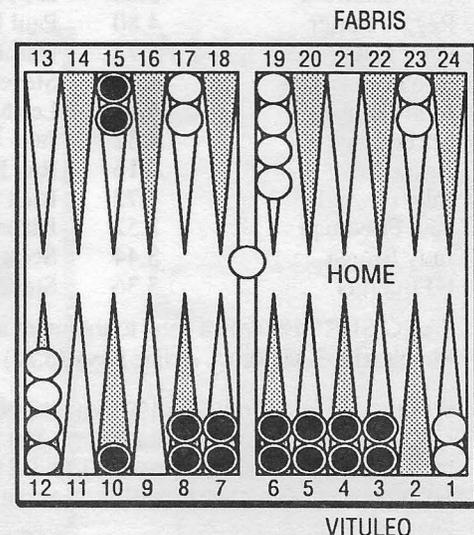
A CLASSIC RECORDING SOLVED

Last month's contest asked you to diagram the final position of the earliest recorded backgammon game in history. The winner is **FRED GEHLHOFF** of Racine, Wisconsin. Fred wins \$25 and a Lady Luck wristwatch. The rolls and plays follow:

FABRIS	VITULEO
1. 6-4: 8/2, 6/2	6-6: 24/18(2), 13/7(2)
2. 2-1: 13/10	2-1: 18/15*
3. 6-6: Dance	3-3: 18/15, 8/5(3)
4. 3-1: Bar 22/21	2-1: 6/4, 5/4
5. 4-4: Dance	3-3: 13/10(2), 6/3(2)
6. 5-4: Dance	5-2: 13/8, 10/8

Vituleo wins a backgammon.

The following is the final board setup following Vituleo's 5-2 move:



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BIG NEVADA WIN FOR GIOVANIS...

[Continued from page 1]

one," Drew recalls. "It was like a nightmare. I was down 8-0 and 10-3 later. Tom also had a 12-8 lead. Plus I had these horrible positions and somehow sleazed all of them out for a win."

Semi's and Finals: A Fortunate Draw

Considering the outstanding Las Vegas field—Sylvester, Snellings, Svobodny, Woolsey, Russell, Senkiewicz, Heinrich et. al.—Giovanis had a fortunate draw facing two relative unknowns in his semifinal and final round matches. He disposed of Mike Horri (WA) in the semi's and completely rolled over tourney newcomer Saeed Karimi (TX) in the finals 17-3 giving closed circuit TV commentator Kit Woolsey little to talk about.

Karimi, who had previously beaten Farzan Garmroodi and Wilcox Snellings to reach the finals, scored his three points on passes by Giovanis. "What can I say?" explained Drew almost apologetically. "It was kind of ridiculous: one-sided great dice for me all the way."

Tournament Impressions

What's next for Giovanis? "When I got home, Kent [Goulding] called me and asked me if I wanted to play in the \$3500

World Cup in August. I had planned to attend and only play in the Open and I'm going to stay with my plan. I actually would like to play the tougher competition and longer matches, but it's very difficult for me to take an entire week off because of my work. My business is service oriented. My clients want me to be there when they have a question.

"I'm really impressed with the sportsmanship these days. I quit backgammon for a while. I didn't travel outside the state of Florida for about four years because I got really sick of the 'backgammon ego' thing. Everyone thought they were an expert.

"When I came back in 1988 and played in a few tournaments, things had changed a lot. So now I play three or four big U.S. events each year. I go to Nevada and also to the Midwest tournaments because there are some nice people there.

"I would say that this [the Las Vegas Open] was run very smoothly. They had an open bar at the Awards ceremony with complimentary hors d'oeuvres. And I was presented with an engraved onyx pyramid trophy—one of the nicest I've ever won.

"The Sands treated the players very well and I think they were happy with the action. If you ask ten people who were there, I believe they'd say the same thing."

There Were Other Winners...

Congratulations to Sands Super Jackpot winner Ami Tennenbaum (NJ) whose victory over 1986 World Champion

Clément Palacci earned him \$22,000+.

In the Intermediate division, it was Michael Ginat (CO) besting Richard Armbruster (CA). Among the Beginners, John Brooks (OK) topped Jim Mason (CA), and the Doubles first placetrophies went to Ray Fogelrund & Patrick Gibson over Trish Hegland (CA) and Al Levine (FL) The complete results: Δ

1992 LAS VEGAS OPEN

CHAMPIONSHIP (113): 1-Drew Giovanis (FL), 2-Saeed Karimi (TX), 3/4-Jim Hickey (GA) / Mike Horri (WA), 5/8-Farzan Garmroodi (CA) / Eduardo Robles Gil (MEX) / Joe Russell (CA) / Tom Zarrinam (CA); 1C-Yamin Yamin (IL), 2C-Doug Mayfield, 3C/4C-Kenneth Frey (MEX) / Kit Woolsey (CA); 1LC-Danny Mayfield (TX), 2LC-Chuck Giallanza (NV).

INTERMEDIATE (126): 1-Michael Ginat (CO), 2-Richard Armbruster (CA), 3/4-Paul Albert (CA) / Emil Speasy (WA), 5/8-Herb Avram (MD) / Ron Bruns (CA) / Virginia Kouleyan (CA) / Phil Laak (CA); 1C-Scott Cole (CA), 2C-Veronica Mooney (AZ), 3C/4C-Fred Dardashti (CA) / Bryan Wiz (NV); 1LC-Jim Wark (WA), 2LC-Kati Pratt (TX).

BEGINNER (32): 1-John Brooks (OK), 2-Jim Mason (CA), 3/4-Marleen Michaels (NV) / Katherine Willoughby (FL); 1C-Les Newcomb (CA), 2C-Ralph Rubalcava (AZ); 1LC-John Michael Rohr (NV), 2LC-Alkis Pappas (CA).

SANDS SUPER JACKPOT: 1-Ami Tennenbaum (NJ), 2-Clément Palacci (NY), 3/4-Harvey Huie (TX) / Wilcox Snellings (CA).

\$40 BLITZ (256): 1-Al Demirjian (CA), 2-Hal Heinrich (CAN).

\$20 BLITZ (256): 1-George Photias (CA), 2-Dan Caverly (NV).

DOUBLES (64): 1-Ray Fogelrund & Patrick Gibson (CA), 2-Trish Hegland (CA) & Al Levine (FL), 3/4-Ray Baker & Clarine (CA) / James Colen (NJ) & Walter Trice (MA).

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WINNER'S CORNER



Apr.—Jun. 1991

Sandy Osborne Memorial (Lincoln, England; 4-5 Apr.)... Open (32): 1-Derek Matheson, 2-Alan Beckerson, 3/4-Rosalie Money / Michael Crane; 1C-Joseph Saab, 2C-Dale Taylor; 1LC-Rick Janowski, 2LC-Jim Moore. Suicide Tournament: 1-Ray Tannen, 2-Paul Edwards, 3/4-Laura Crane / Keith Hancock... The auction raised money for cancer research in the memory of BIBA member Sandy Osborne.

San Francisco Monthly (San Francisco, CA; 12 Apr.)... Open (21): 1-Odis Chenault, 2-Marv Porten; 1C-Beth Skillman, 2C-J. Bazigos.

Torneo de Cariari (San José, Costa Rica; 25-27 Apr.)... Open: 1-Mario Madrigal, 2-Guillermo Santiago. Heineken Jackpot: 1-Antonio Ortega. Novice: 1-Ronald Infante, 2-Kevin O'Brien.

Argentina Association of Backgammon Weeklys (Buenos Aires, Argentina; Mondays in May)... Championship Winners: Hugo Ergueta, Joaquin Viejobueno, Santiago Hynes, Mauricio Cattán. Junior Winners: Sandra Cirimelo, Ricardö Tade Williams, Pedro Ragaglia, Walter Katz. Novice Winners: Martin Katz, Cristina Etmekjian, Jorge Saladino, Fabian Dominguez... Tournaments are held each Monday at the "Club de las Naciones" with an average attendance of 200 players.

Torneo de Baleares (San José, Costa Rica; 4, 6, 11 May)... Open: 1-Milton González, 2-Allan LaFuente. Heineken Jackpot: 1-Mario Madrigal.

Novice: 1-Ronald Infante, 2-Ignacio Leytón.

San Diego Spring Gran Prix (La Jolla, CA; 9-10 May)... Open (29): 1-Mike Fujita, 2-Mike Mooney, 3/4-Azzam Masarani / Jon Vietor. Novice (4): 1-Don Bernstein. Doubles (4): 1-Art Benjamin & Ray Fogerland.

NY/NJ Co-Op Regional (Long Island, NY; 17 May)... Championship (16): 1-Allen Steffens, 2-Al Tesoro; 1C-Antoinette Williams. Limited (12): 1-Denise Berkowitz, 2-Drew Liebenthal; 1C-James Roston.

BIBA Trophy Tournament No. 2 (Solihull, England; 23-24 May)... Open (70): 1-Roger Porter, 2-Ray Tannen, 3-Dale Taylor, 4-Adrian Chambers. Top Lady: Melanie Brown. Better-Luck-Next-Time: Tina Davis.

Mats Jonasson Australian Nat'l Championship (Melbourne, Australia; 5-8 June)... Championship: Jerry Fitt.

Bar Point Sunday Tournament (Oak Brook, IL; 7 June)... Open (19): 1-Jake Jacobs, 2-Bill Davis, 3/4-Don Desmond / Peter Kalba; 1C-Gary Hines, 2C-Stu Katz. Intermediate (13): 1-Marv Arnol, 2-Joan Hegg, 3/4-Bruce Russell / Jeff Peck; 1C-Bobbie Shifrin, 2C-John Stryker.

San Francisco Monthly (San Francisco, CA; 7 June)... 1st Tourney (12): 1-J. Bazigos. 2nd Tourney (8): 1-Odis Chenault.

NIBC Yearend & Club Finals (Cambridge, MA; 14 June)... Expert Club Championship (7): 1-Evan Diamond, 2-Roy Friedman. The seven highest-rated club players for the '91-'92 season qualified for the event.

PBA Bimonthly Sunday Tournament (Pittsburgh, PA; 14 June)... Open (10): 1-Ron Weingrad, 2-Marilyn Faller.

HASTY PLAYS



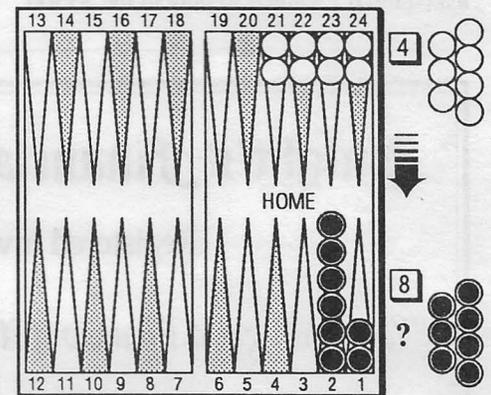
by Duane Jensen

Have you ever walked away from a chouette being the big loser? Your misfortune was probably a result of losing a "big" game or two. We've all been there. You hold three 8-cubes, miss your shot, and are gammoned.

Big cubes also have a dramatic effect in match play as well. The winner of a 4-cube in a seven point match or an 8-cube in an eleven point match usually reigns as champion. In addition, big cubes in match play promote "match equities" as the determinant in making cube decisions.

For most of the games in a match, a good chouette player will find success by treating doubling situations as "money" takes or drops. If it's a double for money, it's probably a double in the match. However, when a player gets close to match point or when a large cube is involved, "match equities" often determine if it's a double, take, or drop. Take the following example:

Match to 11 points. Black leads White, 5 to 3. White recubes to 8. **SHOULD BLACK ACCEPT?**

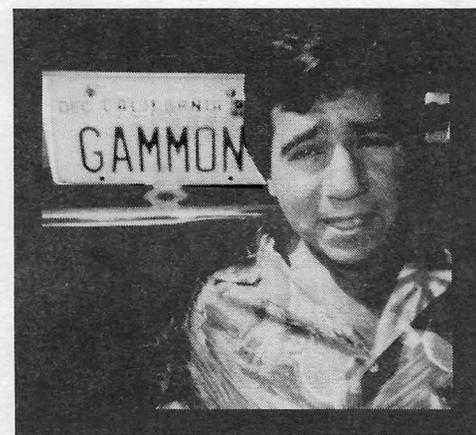


In money play, this is an easy take. Ignoring Black's opportunities to redouble, Black still wins 33% of the games. However, if Black takes the 8-cube in match play, his winning chances are only 33%. If he drops the cube, Black will trail 5-7 but still have match equity of 37%.

Although the cube is easy to take for "money" at 8 or 128, the match equities make the large cube a drop in match play.

Under tournament conditions, when the cube is large, take a second look at the match equities. Δ

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Mill Valley, California

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PRIME BG CLUB OF CHICAGO: Tourn. Friday, 7:00 P.M. at TJ's Lounge, Radisson Hotel, 4500 W. Touhy, Lincolnwood. Joann Feinstein (708/674-0120).
NORTH CLUB: Daily side play except Sunday at 4747 W. Peterson (402), Chgo. Howard Markowitz (312/286-8417).

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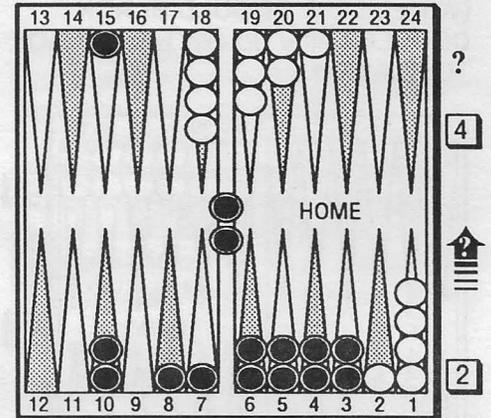
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PROBLEM #177

Revisited

by Danny Kleinman

Match to 9 points. No score. Black on shake. DETERMINE CUBE ACTIONS.



In CHICAGO POINT Problem #177, Neil Kazaross, worked from a match-equity chart equating a 2-0 lead to 0.605 winning chances, 4-0 to 0.720, and 8-0 (Crawford) to 0.940. Neil used controlled rollouts that showed White winning 62 plain games, but Black winning 33 plain games, 42 gammons and 7 BG's. He concluded that Black has a clear double and White an optional take.

Neil's calculations assume that White owns a 4-cube. He computes White's equity as in money play, for at this match score, the effect of gammons is as in money play. He gets -2.12, "a close pass for money." But if we discount Black's backgammons, this becomes -1.97, a close take for money.

In a letter to the POINT, Chuck Giallanza points out that White's take is clear. By taking *and redoubling next turn*, White achieves 0.418 chances, better than the 0.395 chances she gets from passing or the 0.392 chances she gets from simply taking the cube at 4.

I believe White can do better still. The appropriate strategy for her is to take, then keep the cube until she reaches a position of potential market loss, where sequences exist which will make her better than a 3-to-1 favorite next turn. If White winds up redoubling Black "in" about half the time, then her chances using this strategy figure to be about 0.431.

Why does White gain by redoubling immediately (as Chuck suggests) or at the first scent of market-losing sequence (as I recommend)?

Because the gammon threat is one-way: Black threatening to gammon White. By redoubling to 8, White creates monstrous "overkill" whenever Black wins a gammon. Δ

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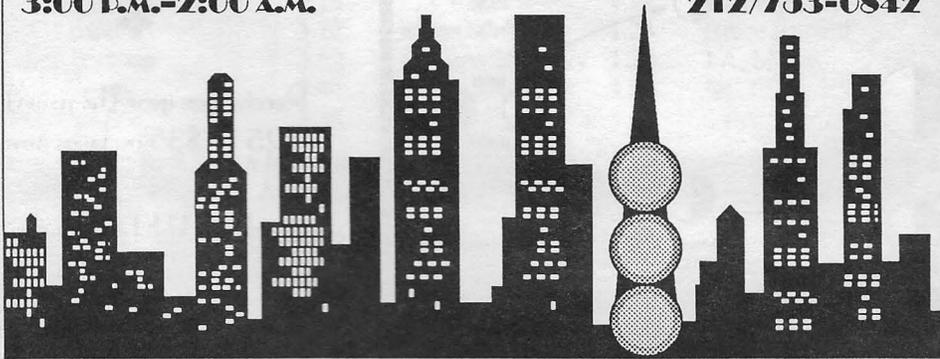
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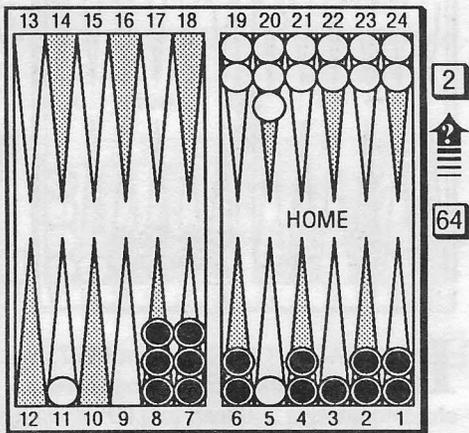
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PROBLEM #182 SOLVED

by Kit Woolsey

1992 Chicago Open 13 pt. finals. Ralph Schaffner (Black) leads Don Desmond (White), 8 to 5. **SHOULD BLACK DOUBLE? After Double/Take, BLACK TO PLAY 2-1.**



The answer to the cube question is easy: Black has a very strong double. The pip count is 74 to 81, so Black is only a pip or two away from a double on a straight race alone. Black has five hit-and-cover numbers (1-1, 2-2, 3-3, and 3-2). If Black rolls one of these numbers and White fails to enter immediately, Black will lose his market by a ton. This possibility coupled with Black's already substantial lead in the race makes the double 100%.

Actually the take is a much closer issue than the double, but it does look like a take. Black has only the five killers. Since White clearly has a big take on the race alone, those five killers don't appear to be enough

to frighten her away.

The second part of the problem is more difficult. The key to the position is to realize that even if he doesn't hit following this bad roll, Black is still a substantial favorite. Black will have a ten pip lead with White on roll. This translates into having about a 1.7 pip lead with Black on roll. Cubeless, this will win about 60% of the time; slightly less since White has access to the cube while Black does not.

If it was a situation where if White hits back, White wins, while otherwise Black wins, it would be clear to hit loose with $7/5 \times 1/4$. Then Black would win 70% of the time. However, it is not that simple.

First of all, if White hits back, White does have some real gammon chances since Black is on the bar against a closed board with five men in his outer board. Secondly, Black doesn't necessarily win if White fails to hit. If White enters without hitting, White will have merely lost five pips in the race: important, but not overwhelming. Even if White fans, the game will not be over since she will have some residual hitting and racing equity (although not too much). On the other side of the coin, Black has a small (admittedly unlikely) chance to pull off a lucky gammon.

So, LET'S PUT ALL THIS TOGETHER with some estimates and see what comes out. Taking the cube vig into account, I would say that Black's winning chances are about 58% if he doesn't hit; therefore his equity over 100 trials would be:

$$(0.58 \times 2) - (0.42 \times 2) = 0.32$$

If Black hits, it is a little more complex. White will hit back about 30% of the time, and let's estimate that $1/3$ of the time she hits, she will get a gammon, since she can always claim with the cube). Of the 70% of

the time that White fails to hit, my rough estimates are:

- Black wins a gammon 5%
- Black wins a single game 50%
- White wins a single game 15%

Note that these are just guesses. I don't consider the possibility that White still might win a gammon—the probability of that is so low that it is just lumped into White's single games. Putting all this together, we have Black's equity:

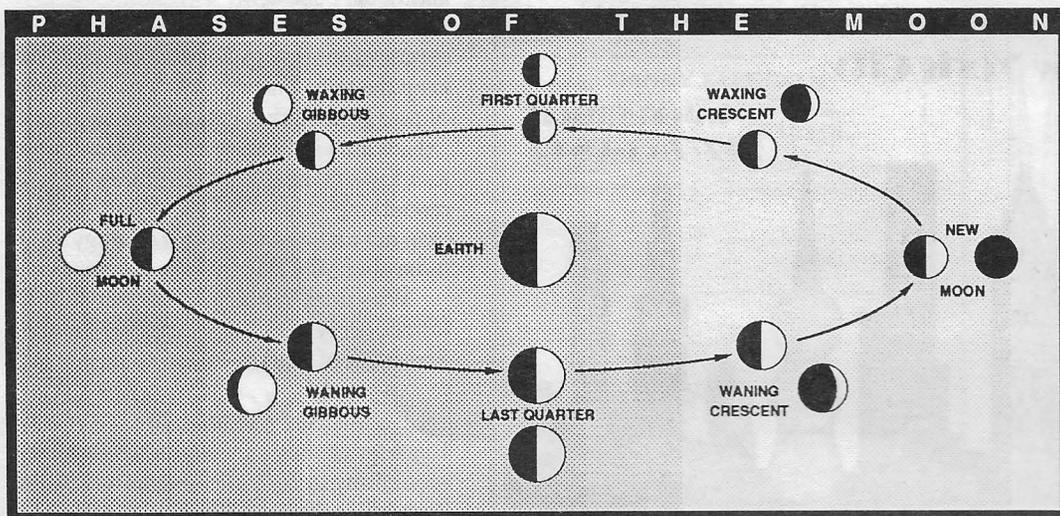
$$[(0.05 \times 4) + (0.50 \times 2)] - [(0.15 \times 2) + (0.24 \times 2) + (0.06 \times 4)] = 0.18$$

Therefore, if my estimates are accurate, Black should not be hitting, but simply be playing 8/6, 7/6. Fortunately these results go along with my initial gut instinct, so I definitely vote for not hitting.

This is a particularly difficult problem, because you can't trust your instincts with it. The only way to get an accurate result is to calculate it out. The calculations are not easy to do in your head at the table, and even if you can get the arithmetic correct, you still have to accurately assess all the various probabilities involved.

THE PERCENTAGES I CAME UP WITH look reasonable to me, but they are really nothing more than educated guesses based on experience playing out similar looking positions many times. If a few of these numbers are changed, the hitting play will come out a winner.

If the day comes when we have a computer program which plays well enough to trust its rollouts, we can plug in prototype positions from which these guesses are based and have a much better idea about the relevant percentages. Until that day arrives, we humans simply have to muddle along following our instincts and our educated guesses. Δ



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GEROLAMO CARDANO: A 16TH CENTURY VIEW OF BACKGAMMON

by Duane Jensen

Gerolamo Cardano of Italy (1501–1576) was typical of many Renaissance scholars. He held interests and talents in many subjects including medicine, astrology, mathematics and gambling.

Cardano was primarily a physician (second only to Vesalius in talent and fame), but his enduring reputation is that of being the greatest mathematician of his time. His discussion of the probabilities of dice rolls was the first extensive written record on this subject.

One of his books, *Liber De Ludo Aleae* (The Book of Games of Chance) included a chapter on backgammon. Cardano impresses upon the reader the difficulty of teaching and playing backgammon.

"Backgammon has multiple aims which must be evaluated continually.

Should you just try to race your men or should you lie in ambush waiting for your opponent? Should you hinder your opponent by *blocking* his escape or by *hitting* him? If you've advanced your men but are still losing, should you think about returning them and blocking some point? Should your tactics be open and aggressive or deceptive and sly?"

In the final paragraph, Cardano advises that . . .

" . . . one must keep one's eyes open in this sort of business and especially consider whether one ought to act or not; and if so, then whether openly or not. This judgment and counsel, this providence, both in details and in general, is deeper than human nature. It is like the prospect of the sky and of infinity."

In another chapter of *Liber De Ludo Aleae*, Cardano offers his opinions on who should play games of chance.

"Lawyers, doctors and the like play at a disadvantage: for one thing, they appear to have too much leisure; for another, if they win, they seem to be gamblers, and if they lose, perhaps they may be taken to be as unskilful in their own art as in gaming."

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE play in your chouette? I like to play with people who are humorous or entertaining, people who rarely throw tantrums, people who play at a moderate pace, people who pay when they lose. Whether they are players of average or expert skill is far down my list of requirements. Cardano has illuminating insight into the nature of an opponent in Chapter 29 called, "On The Character Of Players."

"Certain people are so contentious that they provoke others to such anger that they forget everything . . . There are those who crack jokes to their adversaries; others are silent, which would be best if they did not demand the same from their adversaries.

"There is a golden mean in everything; let a man play such that first of all he does not forget the opening moves and those plays which contribute toward victory, that he is not angry, that he does not provoke anger, that he is not afraid, that he does not talk nonsense, that he does not vex a partner, especially when one is losing. Let him remember himself, his adversary, the bystanders, the place.

"If the adversary is not of this type, it is better not to play. For as a little bile in a great deal of honey and a little bit of rottenness in a large mixture of pleasant things can do far more to produce vomiting than all the rest can do to produce delight, so a blameworthy adversary can, like a brandished sling, drive far away all the pleasure of the game and all the peculiar delights derived from it." Δ

[Most information in this article was culled from Cardano, *The Gambling Scholar by Oystein Ore* (The Book On Games Of Chance translated from the Latin by Sydney Henry Gould); Princeton University Press: 1953.]

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AMALGAMATION

When asked to predict a winner in the upcoming 1992 Monte Carlo World Championship (13-19 July), newly-crowned Las Vegas Open champ **Drew Giovanis** said: "I'll stick my neck out and go with **Wilcox Snellings** because he's due."... Bar Point players helped **Jolie Lewis** celebrate her birthday at the 7 June Sunday bimonthly with a 31 Flavors ice cream cake courtesy of **David Rubin**. David gets a tip of the hat for creative symbolism in his desert choice ... Visiting the BPC in June: **Ray Baker** (Westminster, CA), **Kim McCollom** (Bloomington, IL), **Tom Casaletto** (Santa Clara, NM) and **Jeff Gottesman** (Denver, CO)... **Rick Barabino** has recently succeeded **Bill Robertie** as president of the New England Backgammon Club... POINT subscriber **Larry Deckel** has been a true test of the modificational capabilities of our computer data base. In the past year, Larry's job of directing and teaching theater arts has taken him to: Milwaukee, WI; Charleston, SC; Miami, FL; Hot Springs, AR; Albuquerque, NM; Richmond IN and now, San Deigo, CA!... *Louisville Gammon Gazette* editor **Harold Branch** reports that

the Louisville Backgammon Club has postponed their Wednesday night meetings at the Wilson Inn until the fall due to poor attendance. However, they will continue to meet during the summer months on the second and fourth Tuesday nights at the Delta Lounge on Market Street... The best of luck to long time Chicagoan **Judy Brown** who has relocated to Geneva, NY. Also "on the move," 1992 Midwest Champ **James Colen** (MA to NJ) and **Richard Love** (NV to CA)... The transition period is over for the **Kent Goulding** rating system [see Nov. 1991 POINT]. Effective 1 July 1992, directors are required to notify entrants in advance as to exactly which of the events will be rated. Outlining the rated events in the invitation is preferred, but posting notice at the tournament is also acceptable. A new KG Rating List should be available within a few months. The pre-established cutoff date for the next listing was 30 June... CHICAGO POINT contributing editor **Kit Woolsey** was featured in the **Omar Sharif/Tannah Hirsch** nationally syndicated bridge column 20 June. His expert defense from a hand at the Cavendish Invitational Pairs is spotlighted... Bar Point Club players' non-gammon successes in June: **Leslie Lockett** won \$1000 on US-99 radio station, **Amy**

Trudeau cashed for \$500 playing bingo, and **John Stryker** found 25¢ in a pay phone ... If you haven't played in a regional Indianapolis tournament over the past five years, you can get 10% off your National Labor Day entry fee (4-7 Sept). Call **Butch & Mary Ann Meese** for the particulars. 317/845-8435... A tip of the hat to **Pat Gibson** (Gammon Associates, Los Angeles, CA) and **Paul McMillan** (*Bay Area GammoNotes*) who have recently started publishing newsletters for their club members. And check out the *Bloomington-Normal (IL) Backgammon* letter. The four page 30 June issue includes two positional analyses. For a sample issue and subscription information, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: **Lane O'Connor**; 108 Riss Drive; Normal, IL 61761... Free lance writer **Dan Cox** had an article about the 1991 Monte Carlo World Championship, "Big Backgammon Binge," in the 22 June *Sports Illustrated*. **John Koonman** (NY), **Billy Horan** (NY), **Kent Goulding** (MD), **Georges Vadiakis** (Greece) and **Harald Johanni** (Germany) were all quoted. And even **Ernest Hemingway's** ideas are paraphrased: "The rich are dull and they drink too much, or they play too much backgammon." Δ

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