

1993 midwest backgammon championships

TALBOT WINS THIRD MIDWEST TITLE

Ralph Levy Is Advanced Champ

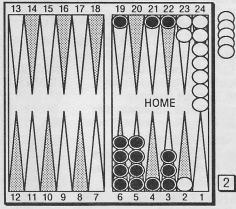
How can you improve upon winning Midwest Championship titles in 1988 and 1991? By winning for a third time in 1993, of course. And that's just what Frank Talbot did. The internationally-renowned backgammon master from Troy, Michigan, bested a tough 62-player field to win the 10th anniversary Chicago Bar Point Club extravaganza.

200 players (including an all-time record 175 playing in the main events) converged on the Marriott Hotel in Oak Brook, IL March 19–21. Your editor directed the ABT event, ably assisted by Peter Kalba, Carol Joy Cole, Sue Will and John & Dru Heggen.

Road To The Finals

After a nail-biting victory over Marcy Sloan in the round-of-32, Talbot took apart Chicago masters Tak Morioka and Yamin Yamin. Frank's 13–8 victory vs. fellow Michiganian Dean Adamian sent him to the finals.

Position #1. Midwest Championships 13-point semifinals. Joe Sylvester (Black) trails Jake Jacobs (White) 9 to 7. BLACK TO PLAY 5-4.



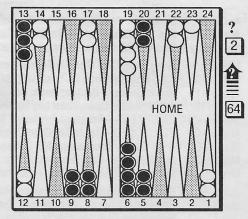
Jake Jacobs' path to the big match was no "stroll in the park," either. After putting away Harry Cohn (IL), Lenny Loder (IL) and Ami Tennenbaum (NJ) in early rounds, Jake faced Michigan Wizard Joe Sylvester in the semifinals. With Jake ahead 9 to 7 in the 13-point battle and bearing off for a match-ending gammon, he got hit. Joe's problem was straight-forward: How best to contain and close out Jacobs? [See position #1 below left.]

Sylvester almost doubled before his shake. Now he had a tough 5-4 to play. Joe moved 22/17 and hit with 6/2*. Jake danced and Sly flipped over a 4-cube. An easy take for Jake who managed to scramble past Sylvester for the game and match.

Talbot In Command

The Talbot-Jacobs 15-point finals was somewhat anti-climactic. Jake jumped off to a 3–0 lead only to lose 10 of the next 11 points. With Talbot ahead 12–6, Jake faced his final cube decision:

Position #2. Midwest Championships 15-point finals. Frank Talbot (Black) leads Jake Jacobs (White) 12 to 6. CUBE ACTION(S)?



For money, match recorder Paul Weaver rated the cube action as double and close take. However, at this match score, it was a strong double and easy take. Jake took the 2-cube and ended up losing a gammon and the match. Final score: 15–6.

One week prior to the tournament, Talbot predicted victory to yours truly. "Make sure your engrave my name on the championship trophy this year," he blustered. At the tournament, after every victory, he continued to badger me with, "Did you have it engraved, yet?" Frank's confidence level was incredible.



Frank Talbot (left) and Jake Jacobs do battle in the Midwest Championship finals.

Other Results

The 64-player Advanced division saw Ralph Levy of Highland Park, IL top former Chicagoan Larry Lau (CT) 13–5. Easy tournament win, Ralph? No way. In the quarterfinals, Paul Klein (IL), leading Levy 8-5 Crawford, missed a double shot for the match. Ralph went on to backgammon his unlucky opponent and eek out a 9–8 victory.

In the semifinals vs. George Barr (IL), Ralph led the 11-point match 10–8. But holding a 2-cube, Levy needed either double 4s, 5s or 6s to avoid being gammoned for the match. He tossed 5-5, then went on to edge Barr at double matchpoint. It's never easy.



Advanced division champion Ralph Levy.

It was Minnesota's Mark Donaldson 11–0 over Mike Lawless (WI) in a record [Continued on page 7]

coming attractions



MARK YOUR

CALENDAR

by Carol Joy Cole 313/232-9731

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

CHICAGO

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FROM COSTA RICA

I received the March POINT. Please give my best to Jolie Lewis and David Rubin on their engagement and ask Jake Jacobs to save some "Dong Dong Ju" for me. His article was very funny.

We're looking forward to another outstanding Tournament of the Américas April 28 to May 2. Bill Robertie, Kent Goulding, Paul Magriel, Wilcox Snellings and many other master players will be with us. See you in a few weeks.—*Mario Madrigal, President, Costa Rican Backgammon Association*

MORE ROLLOUT THOUGHTS

Danny Kleinman's insights in "Maximizing Your Rollouts" (Ask Danny, March 1993) are both constructive and timely in what most certainly is a new era of rollout research.

Danny makes the point that in complex positions, invisible computer rollouts are not adequate to the task of learning what the "keys" to a position are.

[Continued on page 3]

2

* Denotes new	or revised listing 1993 American BG Tour	events underlined
	NATIONAL	
Apr 15	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Apr 16-18	41st Indiana Open. Omni North Hotel. Indianapolis. IN	317/845-8435
Apr 17*	Springfield Series \$1000 Bonus Tourney, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/789-6275
Apr 17	College Park Spring Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603 617/262-0173
Apr 18 Apr 21	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA Rscards Spring Computer Modem Tournament, GEnie	800/638-9636
Apr 23	Greater NY Club Awards Night V, Woodbury Ramada Inn, Woodbury, NY	516/334-4833
Apr 25	Austin BG Assn. Quarterly Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/280-5945
Apr 25*	NY/NJ Co-op Regional Tournament, Woodbury Ramada, Long Island, NY	718/341-3779
	14th Granite State Open & Team Tourney, Woodbound Inn. Jaffrey, NH	603/863-4711
May 2	Crestmoor Club Monthly Tourney, Crestmoor Downs Apts., Denver, CO	303/388-8849
May 2	Pittsburgh Club Sunday Tournament, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	412/823-7500
May 15-16	Spring Gran Prix, Embassy Suites Hotel, La Jolla, CA	619/294-2007
May 16	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/262-0173
May 20*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
May 23*	South Florida Spring Tournament, London Pub, Pompano Beach, FL	305/785-1282
<u>May 28-31</u>	14th Chicago Open, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Elk Grove Village, IL	708/674-0120
Jun 13	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Jun 13	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/262-0173
Jun 16-20*	1993 Las Vegas Open Tournament, Maxim Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV	708/470-9491
Jul 1*	Flint Club's Special Thursday Tournament, Novi Hilton, Novi MI	313/232-9731
Jul 2-4	Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI College Park Summer Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	313/232-9731
<u>Jul 9-11</u> Jul 30-Aug1	Pine Tree Point Tournament, Alexandria Bay, NY	<u>301/530-0603</u> 716/442-8221
and a substance and the second	Summer Cool Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	Contraction of the second s
Aug 8* Aug 9-15	Green Mountain Festival of Backgammon. Stratton Mountain Inn. VT	312/338-6380 305/527-4033
Aug 27-29	<u>30th Gammon Associates Invitational. Cavendish West Hollywood. CA</u>	818/901-0464
Sep 3-6	National Labor Day Tournament, Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
<u>Oct 1-3</u>	Towpath Inn Tournament, Turin, NY	716/442-8221
<u>Oct 6-10</u> Oct 29-31	<u>3rd Illinois State Championships & America Cup. Hyatt Deerfield. IL</u> New Hampshire Fall Classic. Sheraton Tara Wayfarer. Bedford. NH	<u>708/945-7801</u> 603/863-4711
Nov ?	Autumn Gran Prix. Embassy Suites Hotel. La Jolla. CA	619/294-2007
Her.	OUTSIDE USA	VIOLOTEVOL
Apr 9-12	5th Nordic Open Championships, Hotel Marinelyst, Elsinor, Denmark	039/40 06 07
Apr 28-May 2		312/252-7755
Apr 29-May 2	Brazilian BG Assoc. Tournament, Hotel Meridien, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521/267 6033
May 3	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846 1923
May 5-10	1993 Backgammon In Paradise, Plantation Club Hotel, Mahé, Seychelles	212/687-9766
May 5-11	World Series of Backgammon, Carnival's Crystal Palace, Nassau	800/822-2946
May 7-10*	7th Argentine Open, Hotel Las Naciones, Buenos Aires, Argentina	541/790 4769
May 20-23	CANCELLED—Acapulco Festival of BG, Acapulco Sheraton Hotel, Mexico	818/901-0464
May 26-29	POSTPONED—1st Israeli Open Championship 1993, Tel Aviv, Israel	3120/625477
May 29-30 May 29-30*	BIBA Trophy Tournament No. 2, George Hotel, Solihull, England 8th Schwaben-Cup, Bürgerhaus Botnang, Stuttgart, Germany	0522/53 68 36 0711/486 190
and the second second second second	International Balearen-Cup, Hotel Palm Beach Fiesta, Ibiza, Spain	411/381 3117
Jun 1-6	British Invitational Championships, Rock Hotel/Internationl Casino, Gibraltar	52/818926
Jun 3-6	Brazilian BG Assoc. Tournament, Hotel Meridien, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521/267 6033
Jun 7*	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846 1923
Jun 9-13*	Second Turkish Open Championship, Hotel Akgün Istanbul, Turkey	3120/6254775
Jun 19*	9th Schwaben-Cup, Bürgerhaus Botnang, Stuttgart, Germany	0711/486 190
Jun 25-27	5th International City of Venice Tournament, Casinò Municipale, Italy	041/5211029
Jun 30-Jul 4	Mitteleuropa BJ & Backgammon Tourney, Casino Nova Gorica, Slovenia	392/48019343
Jul 10-11	The Hilton National, Hilton Hotel, East Midlands Airport, England	0522/53 68 36
Jul 15-18	European Championships, Hotel des Ambassadeurs, Menton, France	392/48019343
Jul 19-25	18th World Backgammon Championship, Hotel Loews, Monte Carlo	33/9330 9931
Jul 29-Aug 1	Riviera's Cup Championship, Hotel Martinez, Cannes, France	331/4288 6645
Aug 28-29*	BIBA Trophy Tournament No. 3, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522/53 68 36
Sep 2-5*	Brazilian BG Assoc. Tournament, Hotel Meridien, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521/267 6033
Oct. 16-17*	Sandy Osborne Memorial Trophy, Hilton National Hotel, England	0522/53 68 36
Oct 21-24*	3rd Rio de Janeiro Open Tournament, Hotel Meridien, Brazil	5521/267 6033
Oct 25-29*	2nd S.A. World Cup & XIII Tournament, Hotel Las Naciones, Buenos Aires	541/790 4769
	2	

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

However, "Expert Backgammon" rollouts can be visible by using an option that permits viewing rollout moves as the program is running. Moves are viewed at a controllable pace by altering running speed.

In this mode, the capability exists for the student to accept only the rollouts he feels the program is playing out correctly. The program as presently constituted doesn't make it as simple as it could be to combine such data. Perhaps Messrs. Weaver and Johnson would consider such a modification in their next upgrade.-Perry Gartner, Englewood, NJ

STICK TO ACTING, ALAN

On page 1 of the 3 April TV Guide, "Ask TV Guide" has the following question and answer:

O: I've heard that Alan Rosenberg of Civil Wars is a master bridge player. Any truth to the rumor?-E.P., Reno.

A: Would you believe backgammon? The actor, who is married to Marg Helgenberger of China Beach, reigned as New York State's backgammon champion in 1982. Rosenberg, 42, also made ends meet in his lean years by playing poker.

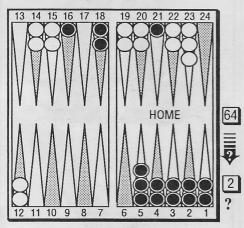
My question is: Has anyone in the backgammon world ever heard of Alan Rosenberg?-John Heggen, Varna, IL

Brenda Cohen has. You see, Rosenberg beat her in finals of a \$60 Novice tournament at the IBA New York State Championships in January 1983. When Alan claims the state title after a novice win, we think he's guilty of overacting.-Ed.

ANOTHER VIEW

There may be an error in the "Harold's View" Feb. 1993 backgammon study by Harold Branch. Harold did a lot of work, rolling out the following match position.

Match to 7 points. Black leads White, 3 to 0. White doubles. SHOULD BLACK TAKE?



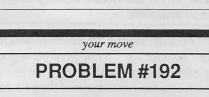
After 400 rollouts, his conclusion is "...an average Black loss of 1.26 points per

[Continued on page 7]

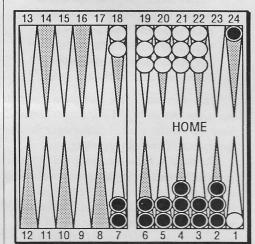
POINT CLUB	1			BAR POINT		IB COMPI Thru 31 Mar	
NEIL KAZAROSS	10.56	BILL KEEFE	2.36	Alice Kay	1.56	Amy Trudeau	0.64
JAKE JACOBS	7.92	ALLEN ZIMMERMAN	2.32	Jill Ferdinand	1.28	Reggie Porter	0.64
YAMIN YAMIN	7.80	FEMI OWIKU	2.24	Richard Stawowy	1.28	Greg Roland	0.60
DAVID RUBIN	7.32	GEORGINA FLANAGAN	2.24	Marcy Sloan	1.12	Mike Spiropoulos	0.56
GARY KAY	7.12	Jolie Lewis	2.20	Paul Franks	1.12	Richard Beagarie	0.56
DEEB SHALATI	5.12	Norma Shyer	2.16	Larry Strommen	1.12	Joe Koucharian	0.48
BOBBIE SHIFRIN	4.32	Sarg Serges	2.16	Marty Tatosian	1.00	Ken Bond	0.48
PHYLLIS SMOLINSK	1 4.28	Alex Itkin	2.16	Dave Rockwell	0.96	Graham Sievers	0.48
TAK MORIOKA	3.92	Chuck Olson	1.92	Howard Markowitz	0.96	Frank Callea	0.44
PAUL FRIEDMAN	3.84	Phil Simborg	1.84	Tad Wilson	0.96	Steve Katz	0.36
DANNY DEROCHE	3.84	Arline Levy	1.76	J.A. Miller	0.96	Harry Hayward	0.32
DON JAYHAN	3.44	Ed Buerger	1.76	John Demian	0.88	Andy Argy	0.24
TIM MABEE	3.44	Tim Serges	1.76	Dave Cramer	0.88	Dick McCall	0.24
STAN KUCHARZ	2.60	Bill Davis	1.68	Howard Ring	0.88	Joe Mangine	0.24
HERB ROMAN	2.56	Don Desmond	1.60	Lou Salzman	0.88	Peter Kalba	0.24
STU KATZ	2.56	Steve Grubart	1.60	Ralph Levy	0.88	John Meyers	0.20
MARY FRANKS	2.40	Tony Schroeder	1.56	Andy Krenitz	0.80		

DAVID RUBIN joined the elite company of Howard Markowitz (Dec. 1986) and Tak Morioka (Mar. 1990) by winning 13 Bar Point Club matches in a row en route to 4.24 points and March Player of the Month honors. Gary Kay and Bobbie Shifrin tied as monthly runners-up with 3.44 points.

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Tournament double match-point. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-1.**

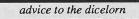


TOUR + 1993

American Backgammon Tour ★ 1993 Standings through 21 March 1993 4 tournaments recorded TOUR + 1993

FRANK TALBOT	22.16	Ed Pavilonis	5.21	Denny Leatherman	2.90	Peter Zacks	1.32
MARTY STORER	21.48	Lila Swan	5.21	Nayan Shah	2.90	Johnnie Roberts	1.25
WOODY WOODSON	21.12	Rich Sweetman	5.21	Michael Sharp	2.50	Randy Peterson	0.93
David Hochron	14.40	Larry Lau	5.20	Ed Zell	2.40	Ed Nyitray	0.88
Ralph Levy	11.44	Carol Falk	4.95	George Barr	2.08	Tony Pascuzzi	0.88
Arnold Zousmer	10.85	Dean Muench	4.65	Larry Strommen	2.08	Alex Perry	0.88
Mike Nelson	10.44	Dean Adamian	4.03	Arkady Kuperman	1.87	Marc Poe	0.88
Felix Yen	10.44	Joe Sylvester	4.03	Jerry Padova	1.87	John Mirando	0.70
Jake Jacobs	10.07	John Rockwell	3.96	Bob Howington	1.61	Zita Samuels	0.70
Jorgen Granstedt	9.69	Norm Wiggins	3.96	Mike Lawless	1.50	Lance Weesner	0.70
Ira Hoffberg	8.40	Belle Pronman	3.73	Mark Damish	1.40	Dan Bloch	0.65
Dave Orandle	7.20	Carol Joy Cole	3.60	Allen Levien	1.35	Josh Schwartz	0.61
Ron Weingrad	7.20	Perry Gartner	3.60	Ray Fogerlund	1.32	Amy Trudeau	0.61
Bob Holyon	6.20	Mark Donaldson	3.29	Farzan Garmroodi	1.32	Ed Baker	0.35
Marty Kohler	5.85	John Lear	3.20	David MacBryde	1.32	Margot Jacqz	0.35
Mike Shanas	5.60						

EIL KAZAROSS	10.56	BILL KEEFE	2.36	Alice Kay	1.56	Amy Trudeau	0.64
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M MABEE	3.44	Tim Serges	1.76	Dave Cramer	0.88	Dick McCall	0.24



DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS

THE NORDIC "WIDE" OPEN

Dear Miss Lonelyblots: I still can't believe the invitation to the 5th Nordic Open [9-12 April in Denmark]. It is the most obscene attempt by a backgammon promoter to subsidize printing costs that I have ever seen.



Graphic used to advertise the "Wonder Bar" in the 5th Nordic Open Backgammon Invitation

First off, there's the advertisement for the "Wonder Bar" featuring a photograph of a lewd naked woman. One of my friends reads Danish and translated the ad's copy for me:

> "After an exciting tournament, it will make you feel good to spend an evening in Denmark's only nightclub that features elegant international strip tease with beautiful girls: 'without a stitch.'"

The other side of the invitation trumpets the "Copenhagen High Class Escort Service." Note the phallic symbol champagne bottle incorporated into the graphics.

Personally, I find the invitation obscene, especially considering the tournament falls over Easter weekend. And I can't believe the Worldwide Backgammon Federation would sanction an event like this. What's your opinion?—Disgusted in Chicago DEAR DISGUSTED: Your friend's translation from the Danish exposes a bit of false advertising: it wouldn't make *me* feel good to visit the "Wonder Bar" nor (if, as I presume from the tone of your letter, you are a heterosexual woman) would it do anything for *you*. Obviously, the targets of the ad are heterosexual men (and possibly lesbians) whose orientation is more visual than tactile. Likewise, the ad for the escort service, perhaps a thinly-veiled solicitation for prostitution, appeals only to a limited audience of lonely and horny men.

I don't know how most Danes react, but in our American culture, such ads appear unusual and inappropriate. I solicited reactions from several people in my own community. A married man in the prime of life was merely uninterested. An elderly widower was slightly bemused. A middleaged unmarried mother proclaimed the "Wonder Bar" ad pornographic and offensive, but didn't look or sound offended. Her 8-year-old daughter echoed those sentiments, but likewise without apparent emotion. Perhaps the child was not shocked by the picture of a woman's breasts, because just a few years earlier, she had nursed at her own mother's breasts.

Nobody noticed the phallic symbolism of the escort service ad, by the way, which would have escaped me entirely had you not pointed it out.



Phallic champagne bottle promoting the "Copenhagen High Class Escort Service."

Many are offended by such ads, I suspect, but none are harmed. I pity the lonely men at whom the ads are aimed, and deplore the social conditions which make it necessary for some men to pay for sexual acts or for viewing naked women. But personally, I'm indifferent to those ads. The ads which truly offend me are those I see even in such high class American magazines as *Harper's* and *Atlantic:* for cigarettes and whiskey, two highly addictive drugs which do a great deal of harm to a great many people.

Come to think of it, the Danish tournament brochure *does* contain an ad which offends me: the one urging you to "try your luck" in a casino where undoubtedly the odds are stacked against you.

I don't believe, however, that advertisements should be rejected or prohibited merely because they offend some people. Not even ads which offend a vast majority. Not even ads which offend *me*. I'm not even sure that ads for demonstrably harmful products should be prohibited. We are not automatons who respond unthinkingly to what we see, but human beings with brains. We can resist any advertisements and educate our children to do the same. Ultimately, if the advertisers find no market for their goods, the ads will disappear along with the businesses themselves.

As for the poor souls who may patronize the "Wonder Bar" and the escort service: until you and I are ready to bare our skins and give succor to their genitals, let them find peaceful comfort where they may.—*Miss Lonelyblots* Δ

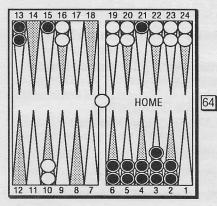
Do you have a backgammon-related question for Miss Lonelyblots involving people problems, game etiquette or the play itself? Write: Dear Miss Lonelyblots, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645-3039.



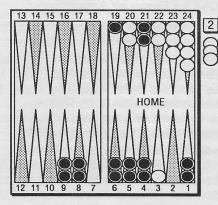
The Backgammon Exam IV

Here's the actual test given at the 1993 Midwest Backgammon Championships. For the third year in a row, Joe Sylvester turned in the best score (7 correct plus perfect tiebreaker), but this year he was tied by John Meyers (WI) and Paul Weaver (MD). Let's see what you can do . . .

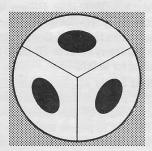
Instructions: You have 20 minutes to solve 10 backgammonrelated problems. In all cases, assume Championship level competition. Problem 10 will be used to break ties. ANSWERS: page 10.



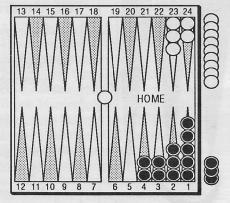
2. 25-point match. Black leads White, 13 to 12. Black to play 6-1.



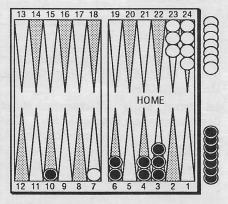
5. 13-pt. match. White leads Black, 12 to 9. Black to play 6-2.



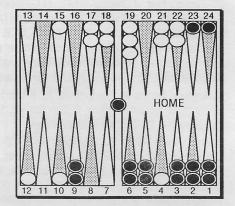
&. Looking through a very small peephole, we can see one corner of an ordinary die. It's impossible to say what numbers are on the three sides we can see, but we *can* be sure that one of these three sides is a . . . *what*?



3. Double match-point. Black to play 4-1.



 \mathbb{G} . Double match-point. Black to play 3-2.

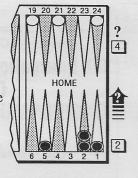


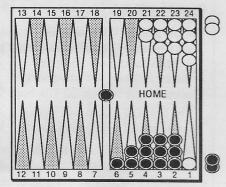
 $\ensuremath{\mathfrak{D}}$. Double match-point. Black to play 5-1.

5

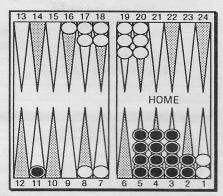
1. 9-point match tied at 5-all. Circle the correct cube action:

- (a) No redouble
- (b) Redouble and take
- (c) Redouble and drop

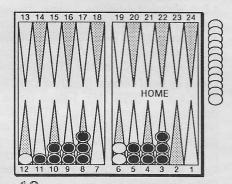




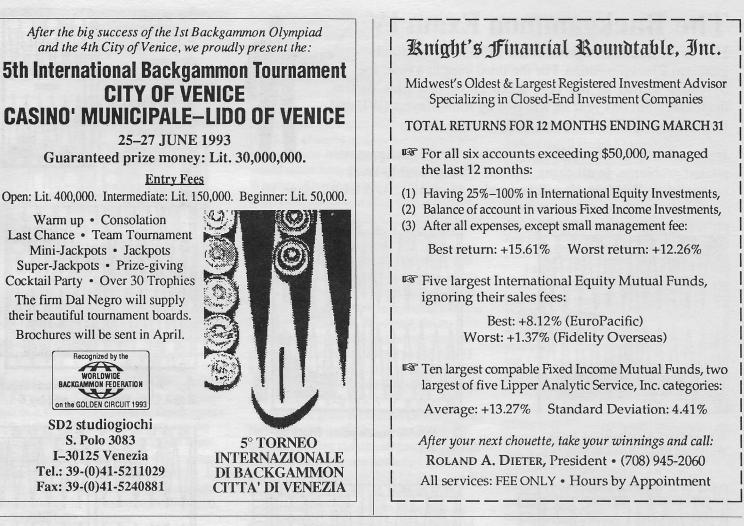
4. 9-pt. match. White leads Black, 8 to 4 Crawford. Black to play 6-1.

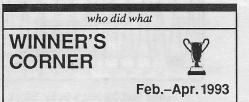


7. White had 25 ways to hit Black in this position, but instead rolled 5-1 (and made her 4-point). Each of Black's next three rolls was terrible. Playing correctly, he was forced to leave at least 15 shots three times in a row... and White missed every time! What were Black's next three rolls?



 $\mathbb{10}$. TIEBREAKER. Black to roll. Assuming White played her last shake legally, list all of the rolls that she might have had.





Torneo de Colegio de Ingenieros y Arq. (San José, Costa Rica; 4-5 Feb.)... OPEN (16): 1-Max Esquivel, 2-Rolando Coto, 3-Antonio Ortega. INTERMEDI-ATE (8): 1-Javier Aguilar. NOVICE (16): 1-Esteban Oreamuno, 2-Carlos Brenes. BLITZ: 1-Milton Gonzalez.

NEBC Sunday Monthly (Cambridge, MA; 21 Feb.)... EXPERT (17): 1-Ed Guleserian, 2-Jim Kasarjian, 3/ 4-Bob Mohahed / George Sackley; 1C-James Pascoe, 2C-Ed Ahola. A DIV. (19): 1-Alex Perry, 2-Jerry Padova, 3/4-Ed Baker / Greg West; 1C-Albert Steg, 2C-Charles Stathis. BDIV. (11): 1-Zita Samuels, 2-Susan Peisner; 1C-Ron Mak, 2C-Ron Picardo.

Torneo de Hotel Corobici (San José, Costa Rica; 22-23 Feb.)... OPEN (16): 1-Mario Lizano, 2-Roberto Salas, 3-Antonio Ortega. INTERMEDIATE (16): 1-Ignacio Leiton, 2-Oscar Charpentier. NOV-ICE (16): 1-Ignacio Leiton, 2-Ana Laura Vargas. BEGINNER (8): 1-Eduardo Estrada, 2-Alexander Kahle. NOVICE JACKPOT (8): 1-Anna Herndon, 2-Gladys Trukowski.

Torneo de Passport Scotch, Baleares (San José, Costa Rica; 1, 3, 8 Mar.)... OPEN (26): 1-Berna Solano, 2-Antonio Ortega, 3-Jorge Tsao. INTER-MEDIATE (16): 1-Oscar Charpentier, 2-José Claudio Solano. NOVICE (32): 1-Harold Back, 2-Cynthia Beloso. BEGINNER (16): 1-Alberto Gonzalez, 2-Maria Amalia Chasi.

1st Internat'l Blackjack/Backgammon Mountain Open (Kranjska Gora, Slovenia; 3-7 Mar.)... CHAM-PIONSHIP (34): 1-Michelangelo Piovesan (ITA), 2-Claudio Pagano (ITA), 3/4-Markus Nowack (GER) / Ronald Reinhardt (GER); 1C-Mario Sequeira (POR), 2C-Stefano Boni (ITA); 1LC-Andreas Sauseng (AUS), 2LC-Mario Viceconte (ITA). LA-DIES PRIZE: Luisa Sequeira (POR). WARM-UP: 1-Mario Segueira (POR), 2-Matthias Körner (GER). ADVANCED (17): 1-Federica Zar (ITA), 2-Franco Perinelli (ITA); 1C-Pier Giovanni Barbaglia (ITA), 2C-Gianmichele d'Onofrio (ITA); 1LC-Roberto Felluga (ITA), 2LC-Andreas Marfori (USA/ITA). LADIES PRIZE: Federica Zar (ITA). BLACKJACK: 1-Ray Tannen (UK)... Director Marco Fornasir reports that a total of 51 players from Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy, Portugal and the U.K. participated.

Springfield Series #5 (Springfield, IL; 6 Mar.)... OPEN (15): 1-Laurel Patkes, 2-Don Garner; 1C-Carl Severino, 2C-Ed Zell; 1LC-Mark Kaye.

Boston Open—ABT (Cambridge, MA; 12-14 Mar.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (58): 1-Marty Storer, 2-Felix Yen, 3/4-Rich Sweetman / Ed Pavilonis; 1C-Mike Nelson, 2C-Lila Swan. INTERMEDIATE (22): 1-Bell Pronman, 2-Arkady Kuperman, 3/4-Marc Poe / Alex Perry; 1C-Jerry Padova, 2C-Ed Nyitray; 1LC-Tony Pascuzzi. NOVICE (14): 1-Mark Damish, 2-John Mirando; 1C-Zita Samuels, 2C-Ed Baker; 1LC-Margot Jacqz. SUPER JACKPOT (14): 1-Neil Kazaross, 2-Mehran Shahidi. DOUBLES (16): 1-Doug Roberts & Walter Trice, 2-Jay Giuttari & Andres Corredor. BEANPOT (32): 1-Jack Kissane... Seth Towle reports a very successful premiere tournament despite the "Storm of the Century."

Rosendahl Open (Tampere, Finland; 12-14 Mar.)... OPEN (20): 1-Petri Pietilä, 2-Mika Inkinen, 3/4-Mika Johnsson / Luis Rico-Ruiz; 1C-Rolf Strömsholm, 2C-Jorma Haapanen. WARM-UP (8): 1-Jorma Haapanen. BEGINNER (5): 1-Toni Kero. BATTLE OF THE CITIES: 1-Helsinki, 2-Tampere.

M.D.A. Backgammon Tournament(Solvang, CA; 13-14 Mar.)... OPEN (19): 1-Norm Wiggins, 2-Dean Kaloudis; 1C-David MacBryde, 2-Ray Fogerlund. LIMITED (7): 1-Donald Feerer, 2-Lisa Seeman; 1C-Henry Pelletier, 2C-David Shermet... \$640 raised for M.D.A.

Springfield Series #6 (Springfield, IL; 3 Apr.)... OPEN (20): 1-Linda Woods, 2-John Jennings; 1C-Jim Zimmerman, 2C-Dan Eatherington; 1LC-Ed Zell... The Top 16 players are now set for the 17 April \$1000 Bonus Tourney season finale at On Broadway.

Bar Point Sunday (Oak Brook, IL; 4 Apr.)... OPEN (18): 1/2-Leslie Lockett / Paul Franks, 3/4-Gary Kay / Jerry Brooks; 1C/2C-Andy Krenitz / Ken Bond. INTERMEDIATE (15): 1-Kurt Schurecht, 2-Jay Ward, 3/4-John Meyers / Mary Vitale; 1C-John Stryker, 2C-Reggie Porter. Δ



MIDWEST CHAMPS...

[Continued from page 1]

Limited division field. 37 players participated. And Ira Hoffberg (IL) topped Carol Falk (MI) in the \$100 Open tournament.

Tak Morioka and Cinda King (IL) won their second Midwest Doubles Championship in three years slipping past Judy Field and Joe Sylvester (MI). It looked like an easy victory for Tak and Cinda as they jumped out to a 6–0 lead in the 7-point finals. But Judy and Joe would go on to tie the score at 6–all. Then they would miss a single shot followed by a double shot to lose a heart-breaker.

Congratulations to 3-Checker Gammon champion David "I'm awesome" Rubin (Chicago) and Blitz champ Marv Arnol (WI).

Other Happenings

To make sure everyone always had something to do, jigsaw puzzle pieces were handed out at registration. Each player received one piece and could only enter the \$500 Jigsaw Doubles Challenge if they found an interlocking match by midnight on Saturday. Gayle Wolf reports that "...you should have eavesdropped on a few conversations going on when people were trying to match their puzzle pieces. Conversations ranged from slightly risqué to downright raunchy, but always funny!"

24 people found their match by midnight. On Sunday, the odd-couple team of Steve Tennant (IL) and Carol Falk (MI) bickered their way to first place and \$500.

J.A. Miller proved his prowess at pitching pigs, Marjean Streitmatter won the Hong Kong Dice, and Yamin Yamin utilized his soccer skills to block Joe Sylvester slap shots in the wild Beaver Hockey finals.

Yamin also teamed with Katy Clark to win the Satellite Doubles event. And Joe Sylvester remains the Professor of Backgammon by winning Backgammon Exam IV (see page 5). However, this year, Joe was tied by John Meyers (WI) and Paul Weaver (MD), so he'll have to share the title.

The Calcutta Auction

Prior to the auction, a BG Wheel of Fortune contest was held. Four contestants were obtained by means of trivia backgammon questions (e.g. What was the new name Gaby Horowitz took in the mid-1980s?).

This year's Wheel of Fortune clue was "Dropping a double in Seattle." Lenny Loder won a ¼ oz. of gold for solving the puzzle: Northwest Passage.

Your editor finished his speaking portion of the Calcutta saying: "Finally, I'd

to thank the staff of the Midwest Championships. I'd... I'd like to thank them, but how can I when I've done everything!"

The tirade continued: "It's time for you Peter Kalba, and you Miss Carol Joy Cole to give me my just desserts." Seconds later, Carol and Peter sent cream pies flying into my face.

Peter Kalba followed the slapstick with an excellent \$10,000+ auction. At the conclusion of the tournament, Jane Stern, executive director of the Anti-Cruelty Society of Chicago, was presented with a check for \$1550.

A Big Thanks...

To everyone who helped make the Midwest Championships a success: Itasca Wiggins and Lisa Todorovich of the *Chicago Tribune*, Mike Wainwright (Oak Brook Marriott), Jeff Henry (Jim Henry, Inc.), John Petergal (Fast Track Printing), Danny Kleinman, Kit Woolsey and Roy Friedman (Backgammon Exam IV checking), an outstanding administrative staff and all the fun-loving players responsible for making this event grow in attendance ten straight years.—*B.D.*

1993 MIDWEST BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIPS

```
CHAMPIONSHIP (62): 1-Frank Talbot (MI), 2-
Jake Jacobs (IL), 3/4-Dean Adamian (MI) /
Joe Sylvester (MI); 1C-Arnold Zousmer (CA),
2C-Dean Muench (IL); 1LC-Bob Holyon (WI)
OPEN (12): 1-Ira Hoffberg (IL), 2-Carol Falk (MI)
ADVANCED (64): 1-Ralph Levy (IL), 2-Larry
Lau (CT), 3/4-George Barr (IL) / Larry
Strommen (IN); 1C-Mike Shanas (MO), 2C-
Ed Zell (IL); 1LC-John Lear (CA)
LIMITED (37): 1-Mark Donaldson (MN), 2-
Mike Lawless (WI), 3/4-Josh Schwartz (IL) /
Amy Trudeau (IL); 1C-Bob Howington (IL), 2C-
Lance Weesner (IL); 1LC-Randy Peterson (IL)
MIDWEST DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP (32):
1-Cinda King & Tak Morioka (IL), 2-Judy Field
& Joe Sylvester (MI), 3/4-Malcolm Davis &
Harvey Huie (TX) / John Bashian (OH) & Larry
Strommen (IN)
SATELLITE DOUBLES (8): 1-Katy Clark & Yamin
Yamin (IL), 2-Carlos Frum & Paul Klein (IL)
BLITZ (128): 1-Marv Arnol (WI)
3-Checker Gammon (32): 1-David Rubin (IL).
2-Frank Frigo (KY), 3/4-Don Desmond (IL) /
Joe Russell (CA)
$500 JIGSAW GAMMON CHALLENGE (12):
1-Carol Falk (MI) & Steve Tennant (IL)
PIG-ROLLING: J.A. Miller (IL)
HONG KONG DICE: Marjean Streitmatter (IL)
BEAVER HOCKEY: Yamin Yamin (IL)
BG WHEEL OF FORTUNE: 1-Lenny Loder (IL)
PROFESSOR OF BACKGAMMON-1993: (3-
way tie) Joe Sylvester (MI) / John Meyers (WI)
/ Paul Weaver (MD)
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LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

game after a take. Too much."

Why use money equities when match equity is so easy to calculate? Let us use Kit Woolsey's charts:

After a drop, Black's match-winning chances are <u>64%</u>.

By taking, Black has: (168/400 x 58%) + (110/400 x 41%) + (2/ 400 x 17%) + (97/400 x 85%) + (23/400 x 100%) = <u>62.08%</u>

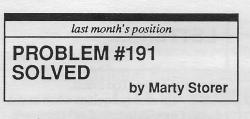
So after 400 rollouts, Black is 1-2% better by passing this double.

"Too much to make allowances for variance or error" as Harold Branch says? What about the cube? Did Mr. Branch (who calculated is findings using money game equities) handle the cube using match play strategies? To employ the cube in a money-oriented fashion would make the results very untrustworthy. So I hope Harold did use a dead cube in his rollouts.

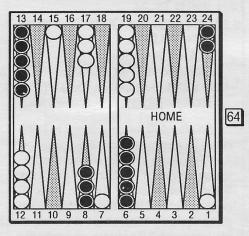
The cube is not completely dead for Black, however. This raises his equity and it easily could be a take. I'd like to see another 400 rollouts.—Jean Van Ingen, Nÿmegen, Holland Δ

AMALGAMATION

Rick Janowski called to say that Phil Churton was correct (See CHICAGO POINT, Feb. 1993 "Letters"). He did finish 2nd in BIBA Tourney #4... Neil Kazaross gave an outstanding lecture at the exclusive Racquet Club 27 March in Chicago. About 20 members attended. The discussion was organized by Chuck Olson and Jeff Durkes... Congratulations to Nicole and Danny Kleinman on their 26 March marriage in Los Angeles, CA... Jake Jacobs has another of his super-tricky gimmick road rallyes coming up August 28: "Debbie Does Rallyes" in Woodfield, IL. For more road rallye info, call Jake at 708/824-2466... Boston to New York: Rick Barabino... Chicago to Las Vegas: Howard Markowitz... Kudos to Greg Defotis, new owner of the North Club (See "Illinois Action" listing) who has completed club remodeling. Tak Morioka reports that it looks great... It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who said, "Shallow men believe in luck, believe in circumstances: it was somebody's name, or he happened to be there at the time, or it was so then, and another day it would have been otherwise. Strong men believe in cause and effect." Δ



Money game. BLACK TO PLAY 3-2.



In the January CHICAGO POINT, Bill Davis reviews the new book *Backgammon in a Week*. In his review, Davis agrees with author Robin Clay's 3-2 play in the position shown above (Diagram 22 from the book). Clay recommends duplicating White's good 3s by playing 13/10, 6/4. I strongly believe that Clay's recommendation is wrong. In my opinion, both (13/10, 24/22) and 6/1* are better.

White has three kinds of threats—build, escape and anchor—and Black's 3-2 is a bad roll with which to counter. 13/10 is a reasonable 3 that duplicates many of White's building numbers and puts some pressure on White's back man; however 24/22 is a better 2 than 6/4 in nearly every variation.

After Black plays 13/10 and White rolls a single-hitting 3, White hits on Black's 10-point and keeps going, probably into her outfield to create more builders. Enhanced building power is especially valuable here, where White will have a oneman-back-to-three advantage. In these hitting variations, Black clearly would rather have played 24/22 than 6/4. That's because his top priorities will now be hitting a fly shot and making an advanced anchor: goals that 24/22 facilitates and 6/4 inhibits. If Black is going to be hit, he wants to mobilize his back men without having to worry about direct shots on his side of the board.

If White doesn't hit, she can anchor on her 18-point, escape from the 18-point, or make a new point on her side of the board. When she escapes, Black would rather have his back men split than his 4-point slotted. Rather than build with 3s, White hits; with other rolls she has a choice between building and anchoring.

After Black splits 24/22, the choice is more difficult for White because of Black's vast increase in coverage. White would rather anchor and play against a pair of back men on her 24-point than build against split back men and concede some attacking chances against her 18-point blot. Hence in non-hitting variations, Black would rather have split than slotted with 6/4. Whether White's proper choice is to anchor, build, or clear a back man, mobility of Black's back men achieves more for him than the increased chance to make the previously-slotted 4-point.

If White incorrectly hits on Black's 4point instead of on the 10-point, then 13/10, 6/4 looks better in the single hit variations. But the main drawback of splitting 24/22 is White's 5-5 crusher. However, the increased coverage and anchoring chances given by the split seem well worth this 35to-1 risk. And besides, following 13/10, 6/4, Black will still be in bad shape when White hits two men with 6-3.

6/1* is a good alternative creating many bad 6s for White. It also keeps White off balance, putting maximum pressure on her 18-point blot. The ace point blot is a longterm positional and tactical liability, but the short-term benefits of the hit do a lot to compensate. There's much to be said for denying White complete freedom to build, escape, or anchor.

I played 6/1* until 1984. Then for one year, I switched to 13/10, 6/4. Now I lean toward 13/10, 24/22. My rollouts show that the ace point blot is a bigger liability than I'd originally thought.

For the sake of completeness, other alternative plays should be considered:

8

(1) 13/8,
 (2) 24/21, 13/11

(3) 13/11, 8/5

(4) 24/21, 24/22

Of these four, (2) and (3) can be rejected out of hand. Choice (2) is eliminated because it trades a major split for stepping under the gun. I'd make this move after an opening 6-2 major split, but not in this position. Choice (3) is like 13/10, 6/4 except that it trades a better slot for stripping the 8-point and refusing to unstack the 6-point: again a bad deal.

Choice (1), 13/8, is the passive play recommended by Jacoby and Crawford in *The Backgammon Book* (1970). Although this play avoides direct shots, it accomplishes very little.

I advocate a 13/8 response with 4-1 after an initial major split with 3-2 (see the March 1993 issue of *Anchors Newsletter*). However, in this position, Black can ill afford passivity: White's threats are too powerful. Right or wrong, I stopped playing 13/8 even before I'd read Magriel's *Backgammon*.

Choice (4), 24/21, 24/22, really feels wrong. Black avoids getting hit on his side of the board, but invites attack by bringing both back men to points White wouldn't mind making. White has 13 numbers to point on one of the blots and a bunch more to double-hit loose with whopping potential gains vs. low downside risk. This play is a much better alternative after a 6-2 major split, but it doesn't look very good here.

I believe that 13/10, 24/22 is the best play, although I'm open to arguments favoring other plays. I'd also be eager to learn of rollout results, especially from TD-Gammon or top human players, as my own are currently incomplete. Δ

Marty Storer is an excellent player/analyst from Nashua, NH who recently won the 1993 Boston Open.



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Backgammon Exam IV Answers [From page 3]

Solutions by Danny Kleinman and Kit Woolsey. Roy Friedman also reviewed the answers.—Ed.

1. (c) Redouble and pass. To get a rough feel for White's chances, I estimated that Black's ten misses (4-3, 4-2, 4-1, 3-2 and 3-1) produce about seven wins for White. At other match scores or for money, this would give White a strong redouble, but here the cube is dead after Black turns it to 4. On another 24 shakes (all but the ten misses and the two largest doublets), White can win with double-4s or better (a 1-in-12 chance), bringing White's wins total to about nine. To this we must add White's extra chances when Black rolls an ace on the first shake, then misses on the second. Perhaps White can expect close to 11 wins in 36 games, a big take for money or at other match scores. But at this score, White's approximately 30% chances do not justify a take of a 4-cube. If she passes, White trails 5-7 in a 9-point match and has significantly more than 30% winning chances, ranging from about 32% (my charts) to 36% (Roy Friedman's charts). It's a cash .- Danny Kleinman

2. 15/9, 3/2. At first I thought Black, on the verge of cashing, should therefore play safe, 21/15, 3/2. Why leave White saving double-aces and 1-5 from the bar? But suppose Black moves 21/15, 3/2 and White enters with any ace. Both sides have stripped positions, seven points made. After entering with an ace, White will be free to play her other numbers from her 9point, and Black is likely to crack next turn. White will be left with two men on the 15-point holding four of Black's men on the 13- and 15-points. Not good. I wouldn't even double as Black. So I prefer 15/9 with the 6, giving White shots on 1-1 and 1-5, but pinning White's 9-point on other aces. Between 9/8 and 3/2, I give the nod to 3/2, which yields extra rolls to make the bar-point (2-2) and 1-point (4-4) next turn.-Danny Kleinman

3. Black should play 4/off, 1/off. The extra man off virtually guarantees that Black will be off in five rolls or less. This is very important since White will normally take six rolls to get off if she enters next turn. Black won't like it if he is hit, but this happens only 11/36 of the time and Black still has some residual chances (although they are pretty small). After the safe play, 1296 very dependable rollouts on *Expert Backgammon* showed Black winning 49.92% of the time. When Black peeled off two checkers, *Expert BG* made him the 55.32% favorite. Problem 3 first appeared as part of Backgammon Exam III. This year's *Expert BG* verification removes any doubt as to the correctness of the suggested answer.—*Kit Woolsey*

4. Bar/19, 6/5 looks best. The alternative, Bar/19, 2/1*, creates chances to pick up a second blot if White reenters with a 1-3. But why should Black risk the substantial setback he'll suffer if hit (especially on his 6-point) when he can win without hitting, not only when White fails to leap (and Black gets a chance to point on the blot), but also when White does roll a 5 or a 6 and Black outraces her?—Danny Kleinman

5. 21/15, 19/17. Breaking the prime with 9/ 3*, 19/17 is not necessary. Black has White well contained now, and if White is left alone, she may have to leave another blot which would be great for Black. The best outfield coverage play is 21/15, 19/17. This leaves no shots except for the always devastating 4-4, and double covers if White rolls 5-4 or 6-4 (which are White's next best rolls). Covering the bar-point with 21/ 13 is not as good—the swing on 6-4 is huge. Blocking 4-4 with 21/19, 21/15 clearly isn't worth it since it gives up on the chance to pick up another checker.—*Kit Woolsey*

6. 10/7*, 3/1. Black should hit to gain in this close race. After 10/7*, Black is forced to leave a blot with either 7/5 or 3/1. A blot on the 5-point can be hit by 15 rolls: direct 5s plus 4-1 and 3-2. True, 3/1 leaves a second blot on the bar-point, which can be hit by a 5-2. But the blot on the 1-point is hittable by only seven numbers: 1-6, 1-4, 1-3 and 1-1 (5-1 and 2-1 miss!). I suspect that 3/1 leaves more danger of a later shot than 7/5, but I don't think the difference in later jeopardy can outweigh the 15-to-9 discrepancy in immediate shots. Never mind that $10/7^*$, 3/1 risks a double hit on White's 1-6: it is the first hit which already does most of the damage. Moreover, Black gets more return shots by far if hit on the 1point than if hit on the 5-point, and White still has a tougher time escaping from the ace-point even when he's not hit back .---Danny Kleinman

7. **5-5:** 11/6, 5/Off(3); **4-4:** 4/off (3), 6/2; and **3-3:** 3-off(3), 5/2.—*B.D.*

10

8. One of the faces is a 6. This is an Argentine puzzler created by Jaime Poniachik. There is only one die side that cannot possibly be showing through the peephole: an ace. Since opposite sides of the dice add up to seven, one of the three faces *must* be a 6.—*B.D.*

9. Bar/24, 9/4*. Black's distribution and timing are good enough so that if he is not hit, he figures to be able to scramble one of the back men out in time. If he is hit, his game is still in one piece so he will retain some winning chances. If Black goes crazy with Bar/20, 5/4*, he is dead meat if White hits (and that likelihood immediately increases from 11 to 20 shots). And if White doesn't hit, Black will still find it very difficult to put it all together. Obviously playing passive with Bar/20, 24/23 is just asking to lose. Incidentally, Bar/24, 9/ 4* and Bar 20, 5/4* were each rolled out 1296 times on Expert Backgammon to further substantiate my answer.-Kit Woolsey

10. White's 14 possible rolls are: 4-1, 4-2, 5-1, 5-4, 5-5, 6-4, 6-5 and 6-6.—*B.D.*



GRIZZLY ANSWERS Last month's contest solved by Dean Muench

We're sorry. Last month's contest was the sickest thing we've ever printed. Dean Muench spent months finding these diabolical positions which he knew no other computer backgammon junkie could solve.

When the smoke cleared on April Fool's Day, a total of four people had entered. The winner of \$50 is Larry Strommen of Indianapolis, IN with six correct answers. Second place and a oneyear subscription to CHICAGO POINT goes to Lee E. Harvey of Excelsior, MN who managed a score of 4 ½. The solutions:

- 1. (C) +0.697.
- 2. (C) Both equal.
- 3. (D) None of these. Half credit for (b) or (c) as they are equal.
- 4. (B) Second. Note: (B) is correct even though it is lower in expectancy!
- 5. (A) 21,188. Note: If this figure holds true in general, more than 95% are also redoubles!
- 6. (A)+0.601.Note: If Black fails to redouble here, his probability of win-

ning jumps to +0.698 buthis expectancy drops.

- 7. (C) Both equal.
- 8. (A) First, which is correct even though it is lower in expectancy!
- 9. (D) None of these.
- 10.(C)+0.709 Note: If Black doubles, his winning probability is +0.657.
- 11.(B) +0.788453.
- 12.021111, 102111, 012120, 110211, 111021, 012201, 003210, 011310.

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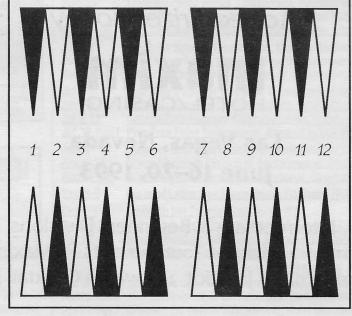
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