

# CHICAGO POINT

NUMBER 73

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

OCTOBER 1994

world cup IV & u.s. open

## BILLY DOES IT AGAIN O'Laughlin Wins U.S. Open

first person account by Joe Sylvester

World Cup IV, the Kent Goulding/Bill Robertie biennial extravaganza, was truly an exciting week of backgammon. The September 5-11 event drew 52 of the world's best players to Dallas, Texas. But before I review the tournament and how Billy Horan gave me my fourth runner-up finish of the year, a few words about the extra-curricular activities.



Having a terrific year: two-time World Cup champion Billy Horan.

Director Kent Goulding stayed on top of everything, keeping over 130 total backgammon players satisfied. And he was greatly assisted by his wife Joann, Carol Joy Cole and Butch & Mary Ann Meese. Everything that I participated in ran smoothly—like clockwork.

Speaking of clocks, one was used for every World Cup match (3-out-of-5 matches to 11 points). I love the clock. It's the wave of the future. I think one day we will be looked upon as being in the backgammon dark ages for not having clocks as standard tournament equipment. The clock eliminates so many problems and causes none.

The auction dinner was sensational. For entertainment, they had a rock-a-billy band that was fabulous. Kent was at his all-time best as the auctioneer. He raised over \$21,000 in the Championship and \$18,000 for the final-8 in the World Cup.

Harvey's Addison Hotel accommodations were wonderful. The playing room had high ceilings. And the food was great. I especially enjoyed their 50s-style diner.

### World Cup Play

In the first round, I defeated Gerd Schiesser who had beat me in the Costa Rican finals. It was sweat revenge.

After defeating Tino Lechich in the round-of-8, I faced Paul Weaver in the semifinals. I had expected a tough match, but I swept him 3-0. Paul's an excellent player, but in this match, I felt that he failed to pressure me with his checker and cube play.

On the other hand, 1990 World Cup victor Billy Horan had a strenuous semifinal match against Evert Van Eijck. Trailing 2-1, Billy came back to win 3 matches to 2.

### The Sunday Finals

One of us was going to be a two-time World Cup victor (I won in 1988). Billy jumped out to an 8-4 lead in the first match. I tied it at 8-all. In the next game, Billy gave me a good double in a volatile position and I made the key dances to get gammoned and lose the first match 11-8.

I got blown away 11-6 in the second match, dancing my life away. It was really uneventful.

In what would be the last match, I was up 6-2 when the action position shown above right occurred [see diagram].

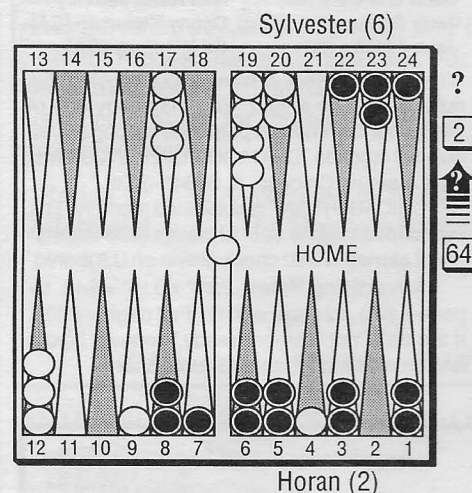
I hit, but he entered and hit back. I spent the next 12 rolls on the bar on my way to losing a gammon.

With the score 6-6, we took a break. As I was walking out of the room, three good players asked me, "Why did you take that? It was so scary."

I said, "Excuse me? Yeah, I got gammoned, but it's a take."

Later on when I asked players like Bill Robertie and Wilcox Snellings, they concurred that it was a double and take at the score. But some experts wouldn't have

World Cup Finals. Best 3-out-of-5, 11-point match format. Billy Horan leads 2 matches to 0. Match #3. Sylvester leads Horan 6-0. **CUBE DECISION(S)?**



doubled it for money.

The next game was a total walkover. I got doubled, fell into an ace-point game and got backgammoned for the match.

Afterwards, Kent came up to me and joked, "You idiot! Here I have one of the most marketable pairings on record and all you could do was dance. I won't be able to give this tape away."

Actually, there were some exciting games. And because it was so short, it will probably be available at a reasonable price.

Billy Horan plays very solid, very New York style backgammon. It's a little more static than the rest of the country. Very pure. Billy has managed to blend all the concepts together. That's why he's so successful. He had one of the three best temperaments I've ever seen in backgammon. He's an absolute pleasure to play against and a terrific champion.

This marks the fourth event of 1994 where I've finished second. My next tournament will be the Illinois State Championships. I hope Yamin has nice runner-up trophies.

### The U.S. Open

Ed O'Laughlin defeated Paul Magriel to win the U.S. Open. O'Laughlin credited much of his success to his studies with

[Continued on page 6]

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## EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Bill Davis  
2726 West Lunt Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60645-3039  
Telephone: 312/338-6380  
FAX: 312/338-6384

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Harold Branch (KY) Duane Jensen (MN)  
Carol Joy Cole (MI) Neil Kazaross (IL)  
Jerry Godsey (Hong Kong) Danny Kleinman (CA)  
Jake Jacobs (IL) Kit Woolsey (CA)

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## LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT  
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## THE KAZAROSS INTERVIEW

The Neil Kazaross interview was one of your better ones. He had quite a few interesting things to say.—*Steve Hast, Pittsburgh Backgammon Club*

I enjoyed your September issue, especially the interview with Neil Kazaross. I don't know Neil more than just in passing, as he came along a couple of years after I "retired," but he certainly did not come off as rude or abrasive in the interview.

I think that a regular interview feature would enhance the value of the newsletter, as I (personally) am more interested in the human and social aspects of the game (because I'm slow at math and don't get along with computers).—*Russell Sands, North Miami, FL*

We try to have one interview per year. Thus far, we've spoken with: Wendy Kaplan (Aug. 1988), Jack Kissane (June 1989), Phillip Marmorstein (Aug. 1990), Wilcox Snellings (Sept. 1991), Tak Morioka (Mar./Apr. 1992),

[Continued on page 3]

coming attractions

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BACKGAMMON											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31					

by Carol Joy Cole  
810/232-9731

\* Denotes new or revised listing

## NATIONAL

*American Backgammon Tour events underlined.*

Oct 5-9	4th Illinois Champs/America Cup, Indiana Lakes Resort, Bloomington, IL	708/945-7801
Oct 7-9	Nation's Capital Fall Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603
Oct 14-16	32nd G/A Invitational, Grand Slam Bridge Club, Woodland Hills, CA	818/901-0464
Oct 16*	New England Monthly, Sheraton-Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Oct 16*	Pittsburgh Sunday Tournament, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	412/823-7500
Oct 19	RSCARDS Fall Computer Modern Tournament, Genie	313/243-3996
Oct 20	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Oct 23	NY/NJ Co-op Regional Tournament, Ramada Inn, Woodbury, NY	718/341-3779
Oct 23	Atlanta Backgammon Association Monthly, Caffeinds, Atlanta, GA	404/682-1969
Oct 28-30	Berkshire Championships, Oak & Spruce Resort, South Lee, MA	603/863-4711
Nov 11-13	NY/NJ BG CO-OP Big Apple Series, Oritani Hotel, Hackensack, NJ	201/833-2915
Nov 13*	Austin Sunday Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/280-5945
Nov 13*	New England Monthly, Sheraton-Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Nov 15	BPC 12th Annual Fall Trophy Tourney, Golden Flame, Chicago, IL	312/338-6380
Nov 15-16*	22nd Annual Hawaii Championships, Honolulu Club, Hawaii	808/955-7565
Nov 17	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Nov 19*	Mayfair One Thousand Tournament, Mayfair Club, New York, NY	212/779-1750
Nov 19-20*	South Florida Fall tournament, Big Apple Sports Pub, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	305/785-1282
Nov 20	Beltway Club Jackpot Tournament, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603
Nov 20	16th Annual Flint Area Club Championships, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Nov 20	Atlanta Backgammon Association Monthly, Caffeinds, Atlanta, GA	404/682-1969
Nov 27	Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Dec 3-4	Autumn Gran Prix, Embassy Suites Hotel, La Jolla, CA	619/294-2007
Dec 4*	New York City Open, New York Chess & BG Club, New York City	212/302-5874
Dec 11*	New England Monthly, Sheraton-Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Dec 11-14	2nd Eldorado BG & Blackjack Invitational, Eldorado Hotel, Reno, NV	702/893-6025
Dec 18	Atlanta Backgammon Association Monthly, Caffeinds, Atlanta, GA	404/682-1969
Dec 18	NY/NJ Co-op Regional Tournament, Ramada Inn, Woodbury, NY	718/341-3779
Jan 18	RSCARDS Winter Computer Modern Tournament, GENIE	313/243-3996
Jan 28	Hawthorne Backgammon Classic, Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL	312/338-6380
Feb 7-12	2nd World-Wide Twin Championships, Eldorado Hotel, Reno, NV	702/893-6025
Feb 17-19	17th Pittsburgh Winter Champs, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	412/823-7500
Mar 24-26	1995 Midwest Championships, Marriott Hotel, Oak Brook, IL	312/338-6380
Apr 28-30	16th Granite State Open, Woodbound Inn, Jaffrey, NH	603/863-4711
Jun 30-Jul 3*	Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI	810/232-9731
Sep 1-4*	43rd Indiana Open, Ramada Inn, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435

## OUTSIDE USA

Oct 13-16	Grand Prix du Casino de Biarritz, Biarritz Hotel du Palais, France	331-41 050259
Oct 15-16	Sandy Osborne Memorial Trophy, George Hotel, Solihull, England	44522-536836
Oct 15-16	De Åbne Fyns Championship, Bridge Unionens, Odense C, Denmark	4566-140712
Oct 20-23	4th Rio de Janeiro Open Tournament, Hotel Rio Palace, Rio, Brazil	5521-267 6033
Oct 24-28	3rd SA World Cup & 1994 Buenos Aires Open, Hotel Regente, Argentina	541-794 7000
Oct 28-30*	2nd Malmö "New Hair Clinic" Open, Savoy Hotel, Malmö, Sweden	4640-300340
Nov 3-6*	1994 Swedish Open, Foresta Hotel, Lidingö Island, Stockholm, Sweden	468-652 4009
Nov 4-6*	Asian Backgammon Championships, Ladies Recreation Club	852-846 1923
Nov 10-13	NRW Championship 1994, Hotel Antana, Kaarst (Dusseldorf), Germany	2151-501359
Nov 12*	Mencap BG/Chess/Bridge Tournament, Meridian Hotel, London, England	4481-943 0493
Nov 18-20	Swiss Open, Hotel Nova Park, Zürich, Switzerland	41-1381 3177
Nov 19-20	Solihull Trophy Tournament #4, George Hotel, Solihull, England	44522-536836
Nov 23-27	1st Kenyan Open, Malindi Casino, Malindi, Kenya, Africa	972-3 544 5347
Dec 2-4	8th British Festival of Backgammon, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, England	4461-946 0828
Dec 5	Hong Kong Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852-846 1923
Dec 13-18	3rd International Turkish Championship, Conrad Hotel Istanbul, Turkey	972-3 544 5347
Jan 6-8	BIBA's Interesting Birthday Adventure, Hilton International, England	44522-536836
Jan 7-8	Danish Mixed Doubles, Prime BG Klub, København Ø, Denmark	4535-261587
Feb 2-6*	Paradise Island Pro-Am Invitational, Ocean Club, Nassau, Bahamas	301/299-8264
Feb 11-12	Jarvis Trophy Tournament #1, George Hotel, Solihull, England	44522-536836
Apr 19-23*	4th Tournament of the Américas, Herradura Hotel, San José, Costa Rica	312/252-7755





## AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1994

Top 100 through 2 Oct. 1994 after 11 tournaments  
(This month: Illinois State, Nation's Capital, G/A Invitational, Berkshires)



Neil Kazaross	46.87	Peter Zacks	7.25	Marc Gray	3.74	Tim Kirby	1.63
Dean Muench	28.75	Richard Armbruster	7.25	David Rubin	3.72	Bill Slater	1.59
Arnold Zousmer	26.50	Todd Doucet	7.21	Ed Pavilonis	3.60	Michelle Colpo	1.59
Abbas Zaltash	26.48	Ralph Schaffner	7.18	Jerry Hays	3.59	Paul Farah	1.59
Mike Friedman	23.35	Durb Oldham	7.11	Mariano Rocca	3.59	Wally Wolf	1.59
Kit Woolsey	20.16	Roy Springer	6.69	Bruce King	3.58	Marilyn Faller	1.53
Charlie Morrison	18.86	Odis Chenault	6.56	Bill Gheen	3.55	Mark Damish	1.38
David Williams	17.31	Andy Palumbo	6.44	Kevin Muench	3.55	Taylor Sage	1.38
Steve McCormick	16.82	Darl Brooks	6.44	Paul Klein	3.36	Irving Achtenberg	1.18
Ed Johnson	15.00	Kent Goulding	6.40	Jim Muirhead	3.22	Sakura Sugawara	1.04
Lincoln Bedell	14.96	John Rather	6.30	Nancy Takala	3.22	Lara Simsic	1.00
Mike Darooge	14.35	J.A. Miller	6.29	Frank Dickerson	3.20	Nicole Masarani	0.90
Art Benjamin	13.25	Ray Bills	5.60	Bob Lumbra	3.12	Bob Neumann	0.89
Bill Szirtes	12.81	Kurt Schurecht	5.26	Bob Bishop	2.82	Casey Jones	0.83
John Stryker	11.56	Mary Franks	5.20	Lou Florio	2.75	Irv Taylor	0.83
Judy Brown	11.50	David Wells	5.18	Joann Feinstein	2.40	Chris Larsen	0.83
Mary Ann Meese	11.44	Nack Ballard	4.80	Carol Falk	2.09	Mark Kaplan	0.83
Ami Tennenbaum	10.35	John Brussel	4.78	Ali Rebatchi	2.08	Hunter Jones	0.83
Rick Bieniak	10.07	Richie Adams	4.78	Julie Crandall	2.05	Bret Handson	0.81
Judy Field	9.61	Howard Ring	4.33	Lois Richards	1.91	Paul Mangone	0.81
Paul DiBiase	9.61	Jon Stephens	4.24	Ken Truman	1.88	Jerry Wlosinski	0.77
Paul Stebbing	9.00	Leteris Moskos	4.19	Walter Trice	1.88	Kelly Danton	0.77
Tak Morioka	8.47	Bob Holyon	4.16	Richard Heinz	1.79	Brian Nelson	0.76
Marty Storer	7.83	Doug Mayfield	4.16	Tony Pow	1.67	Sean Garber	0.76
Sig Skolnick	7.54	Carl Adamec	3.76	Greg Shoults	1.67	Wanda delaBarre	0.52

With four ABT October tournaments scheduled in Illinois, Maryland, California and Massachusetts, expect changes in the top three.

## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

and Antoinette Williams (July 1993). Back issues are available from CHICAGO POINT at \$3 each.—Ed.

I really got the "flavor" of Neil Kazaross from his interview last month. He comes across as an original. To underscore what Neil said about needing to win two-thirds of his matches to maintain his number one KG ranking, I've made a table. The table assumes all matches are to 11 points and gives the rating differential between Neil's current 1786 and that of his opponent. For longer matches, he would have to win a higher percentage; for shorter matches, a smaller percentage.

Rating Differential	Winning % Needed To Maintain Rating
50	58.3%
100	66.6%
150	75.2%

—Ed Maslansky, Silver Spring, MD

## AN UNUSUAL REQUEST FROM ITALY

Compliments and best wishes for your wonderful publication.

A small request. I've been tracking Chicago Bar Point Club individual results during Illinois State Challenge Cups since 1988. In issue #68, it was disappointed to find only the final club standings of this year's event. Could you help me complete my records by printing the individual results?—Alberto Diomede, Milano, Italy

[Continued from page 6]



## CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1994 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU 30 SEPT.

Neil Kazaross	22.48	Jolie Rubin	5.08	Tom Fahland	2.32	Scottie Mitchell	0.88
Tak Morioka	18.68	V.W. Zimnicki	5.04	Ed Bauder	2.24	Andy Bittman	0.88
Jake Jacobs	16.84	Georgina Flanagan	5.04	Amy Trudeau	2.20	Frankie Farjood	0.88
Herb Roman	15.60	Bill Davis	4.84	Jeff Kane	2.16	Paul Weaver	0.88
Paul Franks	12.08	Gary Kay	4.72	Don Desmond	2.00	Glen Garber	0.80
Tim Mabee	11.84	Phil Simborg	4.64	Marc Ingenoso	1.92	Peggy Fleming	0.72
Peter Kalba	10.24	Bobbie Shifrin	4.48	Mick Nowak	1.88	Jerry Brooks	0.64
Phyllis Smolinski	10.20	Ralph Levy	4.48	Harry Cohn	1.88	Igor Sheyn	0.64
David Rubin	10.16	Alex Itkin	3.92	Ed Buerger	1.76	Jill Ferdinand	0.64
Sarg Serges	9.76	Dean Muench	3.80	Bill Keefe	1.76	Mike Kaczmarek	0.64
Norma Shyer	9.60	Paul Klein	3.72	Betsy Miller	1.76	Mary Vitale	0.60
Allen Zimmerman	9.44	Marcy Sloan	3.44	Kevin Muench	1.60	David Rockwell	0.48
Paul Friedman	9.16	John Stryker	3.20	Barry Miller	1.60	Earl Risch	0.48
Leslie Lockett	8.96	Rob Silway	3.20	Marty Tatosian	1.52	Tom Walthes	0.48
Alice Kay	7.88	Richard Stawowy	3.16	John Meyers	1.40	Brigid O'Meara	0.44
Ken Bond	7.64	Dan Braden	2.96	Wilcox Snellings	1.28	Tom Shields	0.40
Joann Feinstein	6.96	John Brussel	2.88	Gregg Westrick	1.28	Tim Serges	0.32
Stu Katz	6.64	Yamin Yamin	2.72	Dave Cramer	1.12	Barbara Levinson	0.28
Don Jayhan	6.56	George Barr	2.56	Roland Dieter	0.96	Mike Siegel	0.24
Mary Franks	6.28	Arlene Levy	2.56	Frank Dickerson	0.88	Mike Budz	0.12
Bob Zavoral	5.12	Andy Krenitz	2.48				

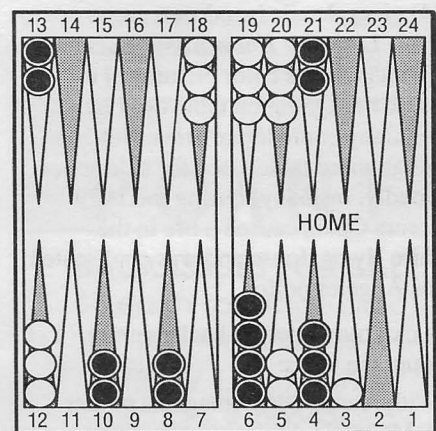
**SARG SERGES** won the last tournament of the month to eke out September honors with 2.72 points. Tim Mabee (2.48) and Phyllis Smolinski (2.44) placed second and third respectively.

If you finish in the Top 20 for 1994 (bold-faced 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—one ounce silver coin. 1st through 6th—Invitation to participate in the 1995 Illinois State Challenge Cup as a member of the Chicago Bar Point Club team.

your move

## PROBLEM #208

Match to 7 points. White leads Black, 6 to 1. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-4.**



# ASK DANNY



© 1994 by Danny Kleinman

## THE WILLIE SUTTON MOTIVE

**D**ear Danny: I read with interest, the article about Gaby Horowitz in the August CHICAGO POINT and your comments to the 2 August National Enquirer. I would like to know how Gaby cheated at backgammon and in general, how it is possible to cheat in a high stakes game.—Henry Schwartz, Pompano Beach, FL

**DEAR HENRY:** First, let me take this opportunity to clarify a couple of things that the Enquirer omitted after talking with me.

When I saw Gaby in the hospital a few weeks after the shooting, I asked his mother how it happened. In hysterical tones, she insisted repeatedly that it was an "accident;" and only reluctantly, seemingly fearfully, revealed that Bruce Roman was the perpetrator. Both Roman and Gaby were experienced gun collectors and enthusiasts. Reportedly, Roman was showing off one of his guns to Gaby when it discharged accidentally, and a ricochet shot bounced off the ceiling and into Gaby's head. Draw your own conclusions.

I did not "validate" Gaby's reputation as a cheater. I established and proclaimed it after seeing him break the rules. A few years later (1978), I was hired to run backgammon tournaments at the Cavendish West and told to let bygones be bygones. Within a month, I saw Gaby break the rules again. At my insistence, club owner Hugh Sconyers barred him. A couple of months later, however, Sconyers ordered me to readmit Gaby. I objected futilely, and it cost me my job.

How did Gaby, his "students" and his confederates cheat? *The Dice Conquer All* (1984) gives details in a dozen pages or so, and *How Little We Know About Backgammon* (1985) shows color pictures of a magnetic backgammon table used by former Gaby confederate Steve Goldman. A similar wired table, used for side action (reportedly, by Gaby) during the 1979 California Open, caused a fire in the Wilshire Hyatt House and was confiscated by Los Angeles police.

**HOW CAN ONE CHEAT** at backgammon? Let me count the ways:

(1) With loaded DICE (magnets or mercury). Magnetic dice require magnets

elsewhere—built into the board itself (Ron Chronister, a Gaby protégé), in an electro-magnetic table (Goldman, Chronister), or strapped beneath trousers (reportedly one of Gaby's methods).

(2) With illegal ROLLS. *Holdouts:* One die in the cup, the other curled in the pinky finger (Gaby, witnessed by Mike Svobodny); or one die through the baffle-box, the other gently placed on the board (Alan Martin, a Gaby confederate, witnessed by me).

*Dumps:* Looking inside the cup to see the faces showing, then sliding the dice out if a favorable number appears but shaking again if not (Gaby, witnessed by me). *Two-timing:* Taking two turns in a row (mobster John DeMattio, playing against me, with Bill Granoff and small-time mob bookie Lou Bondi watching; Cavendish West director Bobbi Layne accepted Bondi's testimony and barred Granoff).

(3) With deliberate illegal CHECKER PLAYS (Gaby, witnessed by me). A *variation:* Moving an opponent's checkers to alter the position during one's own turn (the late George Sagarin, witnessed by me). This requires that an opponent fail to observe, so the cheater either moves too quickly to be caught or delays moving until his opponent is distracted.

(4) With ADVICE to a confederate (Gaby, to Alan Martin, witnessed by me). A *common variation:* Indicating disapproval of a (non-consulting chouette) partner's play by facial expression, mannerism or (false) cry of "illegal!" An *unusual variation:* Signaling a bad play to the supposed (not real) "partner" in a Gabby Shuffle.

(5) By HINDERING an opponent during his turn (Gaby, witnessed by me). *Marginal:* Drawing an opponent's attention to a bad play, for example, by crying "Oh, no, you can hit my blot!" when you want him to hit. *Clear:* Holding a checker in your hand after

it's been hit, so your opponent will move without realizing you are on the bar. *Blatant:* Putting your elbow over a blot to hide it when you don't want your opponent to hit.

(6) With the CUBE (when owned). If you're ready to redouble, secretly flip a 2-cube to 4 and turn it to your opponent at 8. Or if you're about to lose, flip the 4-cube back to 2. About 15 years ago, when my opponent in a "Plimpton Cup" match tried this, the director ruled, "Current setting of the cube governs."

(7) With the SCORE. It's easy to score a gammon as a plain loss, or omit scoring a loss entirely.

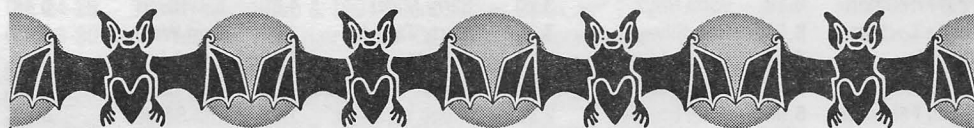
**YOU ASK WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE** to cheat in a "high stakes" game. High stakes do not in any way prevent cheating. Rather they provide a greater incentive to cheat. When Sconyers owned the Cavendish West, hustler Jerry Becker regularly invited me to watch him play for low stakes, but barred me as soon as his opponents for a high-stake chouette arrived. Does that tell you anything?

**ONCE A REPORTER** asked Willie Sutton, a notorious criminal of an earlier era, why he robbed banks.

"Because that's where the money is," answered Sutton.—*Yours, Danny Δ*

*The preceding article was accepted without knowledgeable bias and does not necessarily represent the opinions of CHICAGO POINT or any of its other regular contributing editors.*

Danny Kleinman's book prices have remained constant for over a decade: *The Dice Conquer All* \$25 + \$3 p&h. *How Little We Know About Backgammon* \$33 + \$3 p&h. Add \$15 for overseas airmail. Mail to: Danny Kleinman; 5312 1/2 Village Green; Los Angeles, CA 90016.



Granite State Backgammon Club presents

3rd Halloween Costume Contest

&amp;

Berkshire Backgammon  
Tournament

&amp;

9th New England Doubles Championship



October 28–30, 1994



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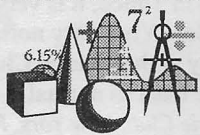
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# The Best Laid Plans...

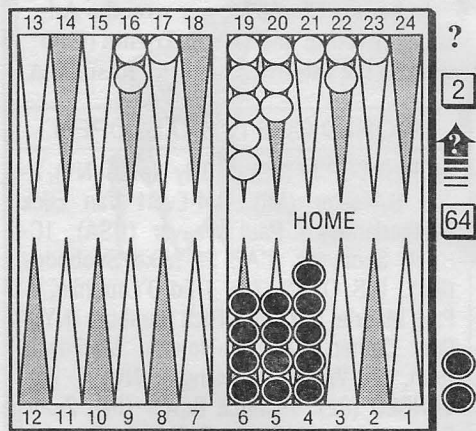
by Jake Jacobs

I play at the Chicago Bar Point Club on Tuesday nights. It's a tough club. I took a random survey asking a dozen of our players if I could get away with saying: "The best player in the world plays at our club." Half replied, "Don't you think I'm a little better than he is?" And the other half said, "Don't print that! People will think I've got a big ego."

With such formidable competition, it seems as though extraordinary measures are necessary to win. Why, several of our stars would much rather make a move that is brilliant than one that is intelligent. The other night, I tried my own dazzling maneuver.

Playing to seven, the score was 0-0. I rolled 6-6 and after a poor response by my opponent, found myself well up in the race.

**Position 1.** Match to 7 points. No score. I'm playing the Black pieces.  
**CUBE DECISION(S)?**



Dropping is automatic here. In fact, many people drop after their opponent's 6-6 even if the race is still even. Perhaps they think the dice know something. Anyway, I decided not to double, trying for a coup. The possibilities are:

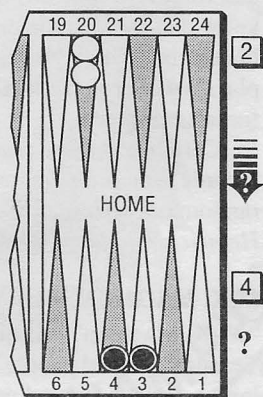
- My opponent rolls poorly, and I double him out anyway
- He rolls very well, and has a take (Oops!)
- He rolls a little better than I do, then improperly takes

Even if A is the most likely, it is not relevant. The question is: is C really more likely than B?

No matter. Fortune favors the bold. I rolled 3-1 and was answered by my opponent's 3-3. Now I doubled and my opponent took. Unfortunately, 3-1 was a

harbinger of what was to come. Soon my opponent was on roll here:

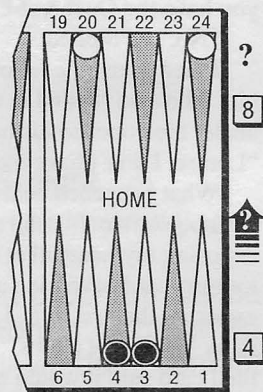
**Position 2.** Match to 7 points. No score. I'm playing the Black pieces.  
**CUBE DECISION(S)?**



I had slipped into a gloomy reverie, wondering why my dice had come up lame, and if I should shoot them, when the doubling cube was thrust impudently under my nose. My opponent believed a 4-cube worked better than smelling salts at waking me up. It did. But, should he be redoubling? It turns out that this position is a redouble for money. White will win 56.4% and Black has very little recube vig. So it's a redouble?

No. After a series of tedious calculations (which I will spare you since I can't decipher my notes), it appears that if White holds the cube, he wins the match about 53%; and if he redoubles, he wins about 52%. (To all you real masochists who want to read through my calculations . . . I'm a real sadist: calculate them yourselves!) Part of the problem (for White) became apparent with White's roll: 1-1.

**Position 3.** Match to 7 points. No score. I'm playing the Black pieces.  
**CUBE DECISION(S)?**



Should Black redouble? Yes indeedly! He wins 66.3%, so this is a fine redouble for match or money. However . . .

[Continued on page 10]

## THE O.J./BACKGAMMON CONNECTION: SEPTEMBER UPDATE

Last month on "A Current Affair" television show, New York ad executive and former Pips backgammon instructor Alan Martin claimed that Marcia Clark, the prosecuting attorney in the O.J. Simpson murder case, actually spoke with O.J. 17 years ago at Pips Backgammon Club in Los Angeles. Martin said that Gaby Horowitz with wife Marcia at his side, played O.J. Simpson with Nicole Brown seated next to him at Pips in 1977. At \$25 a point, Gaby ended up winning \$250 by "mysteriously rolling an ace." It appeared to Martin that, based on "small talk" between the two during the game, O.J. was attracted to Marcia.

When contacted, Clark admitted that she knew who Alan Martin was, but she denied being present at the game.

Also in September, International Backgammon Club directors Les and Sue Boyd appeared on "Hard Copy." The show had originally planned to interview Emily Fisher in Los Angeles, but she reportedly wanted \$2500.

Sue stated that she played backgammon against Marcia Clark in Las Vegas in 1973. Les commented about Gaby that, "If he didn't have larceny in his soul, he would have been a movie star." Gaby Horowitz's mother was also interviewed on the piece.

It also came out that in 1989, O.J. defense attorney Robert Shapiro actually represented Gaby's writing partner Bruce Roman in his attempt to regain his gun collection. The collection had been confiscated by the police as evidence after Roman accidentally shot Horowitz in the head.

Look for a *New Yorker* article reporting on the Marcia Clark/Gaby Horowitz connection by Jeff Tubin in an upcoming issue. Also, reporter Alexis George is working on a piece for CBS television. And our friend Jeremy Louwerse at King World Productions tells us that "American Journal" is still pursuing the story. Δ

CHICAGO  
POINT

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## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

Thanks for bringing the oversight to our attention, Alberto. We're sure that Illinois players appreciate your interest.—Ed.

**1st-Bloomington-Normal** 23-13 (William Hutchison 5-1, Lane O'Connor 5-1, Jim Zimmerman 2-4, Gary Daniels 3-3, Randy Reiff 5-1, Randy Peterson 3-3); **2nd/3rd-Prime Club of Chicago** 21-15 (Paul Friedman 3-3, Tak Morioka 5-1, Stu Katz 2-4, Yamin Yamin 2-4, Marcy Sloan 4-2, Andy Krenitz 5-1)/**Pub Club** 21-15 (Kurt Schurecht 3-3, V.W. Zimmnicki 5-1, Lou Salzman 5-1, Steve Tennant 3-3, Mark Murray 2-4, Mary Vitale 3-3); **4th-Bar Point Club** 18-18 (Jake Jacobs 4-2, Don Jayhan 2-4, Tim Mabee 4-2, David Rubin 4-2, Phyllis Smolinski 3-3, Allen Zimmerman 1-5); **5th-Winnetka Club** 16-20 (Marty Tatosian 2-4, Ed Buerger 2-4, David Rockwell 3-3, Trudie Stern 4-2, Jolie Rubin 3-3, Leslie Lockett 2-4); **6th-Sagamont Valley** 12-24 (Greg Tomlin 2-4, Ben Zemaitis 3-3, Laurel Patkes 2-4, John Jennings 1-5, Randy Armstrong 2-4, Dan Eatherington 2-4).

### A VALID TABLE OR SHEER RANDOMNESS?

With reference to Jerry Godsey's opening rollouts (July 1994 POINT), what is most interesting is the unresolved question of the role of sheer randomness in Backgammon. I used Expert Backgammon 2.1 to test the various 4-1 and 4-3 plays. I rolled only 2592, but I used duplicated dice. My results did not confirm Godsey's:

Roll	Play	Pts/Game
4-1	9, 5	-0.060
	20, 23	-0.033
	9, 23	-0.019
4-3	10, 20	+0.055
	9, 21	+0.034
	20, 21	+0.040

Comparison of the diverse results raises the question: *At what decimal place is the point of significant difference between plays?*

The major tip-off, however, is right in Godsey's table, which puts an opening 6-3 running play at +0.014, while 6-4 running rates only -0.002. Sorry. A runner on the 15-point is not better than one on the 14-point. If not too obvious to mention, it is more vulnerable, and has fewer point-making follow-ups (all of these, duplicated).

Some mathematician out there must be able to calculate a measure of dispersion for the system (analogous to the standard deviation of opinion surveys). These data would then be much more useful.—Donald Kahn, London, England

### A VOTE AGAINST ROUND-ROBINS

I'm not that big a fan of round-robin tournaments. [Neil Kazaross strongly advocated them in his interview last month.—Ed.] My preference is some kind of a strict knockout. If you've read any of the history of the way chess tournaments ran right after World War II, you'll learn that round-robin collusion was a problem. I know that the vast majority of players are honest, but if a player with a bad record plays a player in contention, the possibility for trouble exists.

Certainly pairing players with like records is an improvement to any "totally random draw" round-robin system.—Hal Heinrich, Calgary, AB, Canada

### M.K. MAGNUM 'PLAYS IN PEORIA'

"M.K. Magnum" is probably not Gerry Tesaro. Several people have been working on various "neural network" projects in recent years. Evidently, one of them has succeeded.—Walter Trice, Arlington, MA

All right. If you must know, my address is: 1828 W. Glen Avenue, Peoria, IL 61614. Please make a note of it.—M.K. Magnum

### LOUISE HITS IT BIG

I read in last month's "Amalgamation" column where Ami Tennenbaum (NJ) hit a Caribbean Poker Jackpot of \$8,500 while attending the Las Vegas Open and wanted to share with your readers my own Caribbean Poker story.

On vacation 15 July at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Lake Tahoe, I was playing Caribbean with a friend of mine. I never open my hand fully, preferring to pinch open the cards one at a time. I looked at the King of Clubs, Ten of Clubs, Jack of Clubs and Ace of Clubs. Then I put my hand down, never looking at the fifth card.

After betting, I asked my friend, "Do you have the Queen of Clubs?"

"No," he replied.

I then asked the fellow sitting next to him who also replied in the negative. The dealer then opened his hand and said, "Louise, I don't have the Queen, either."

What happened next was not the usual casino practice. Instead of the dealer exposing my hand all at once, I was able to turn my cards over one at a time. After exposing the first four, I asked everyone to think "Queen of Clubs." I flipped over the final card sure it would be a three of hearts or seven of spades, but instead, the Queen of Clubs landed face up on the table.

It was almost surrealistic. Everyone began cheering, but I just sat there amazed. The Jackpot was more than \$77,000.

After three months in Tahoe, it is very hard returning to the New York City noise. But we are getting busy at the Coterie Club and within days, I'll be back to normal.—Louise Goldsmith, Coterie Club, New York, NY

### THE 45-MINUTE CUBE DECISION REVISITED

Thanks to Kit Woolsey and the miracle of modern computer networking, the doubling position on page one of the September POINT was already familiar to me.

I was a little surprised you didn't discuss the cube handling more in your tournament report. I have done a rather lengthy analysis suggesting that Black (Steve Sax) had a fairly clear take due to being able to cash if missed [Sax thought 45 minutes before taking.—Ed.], but that White (Hal Heinrich) actually lost a percent or two by doubling before hitting. The double appears to be correct only to the degree that White thinks Black might pass.—Michael Zehr, Cambridge, MA Δ

## BILLY AGAIN...

[Continued from page 1]

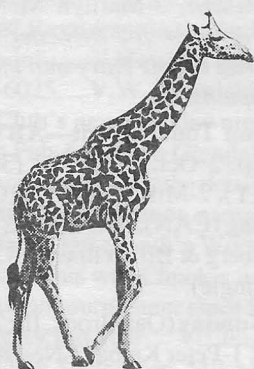
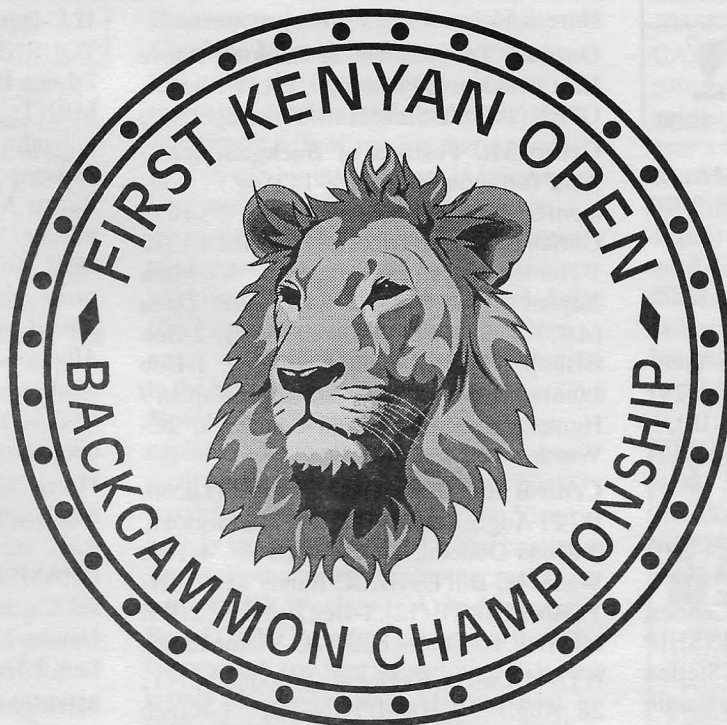
M.K. Magnum. [See "Letters," p. 6—Ed.]

Indiana's Chuck Bower won the Advanced division and Orhan Tozum (CA) captured the Intermediate title. Results: Δ

### WORLD CUP IV & U.S. OPEN

WORLD CUP IV (52): 1-Billy Horan (NY), 2-Joe Sylvester (MI), 3/4-Evert Van Eijck (Netherlands) / Paul Weaver (USA); 1C-Hugh Sconyers (CA), 2C-Mike Svobodny (NY). U.S. OPEN (76): 1-Ed O'Laughlin, 2-Paul Magriel (NY), 3/4-Rick Barabino (NY) / Dick Cather (TX); 1C-Howard Markowitz (NV), 2C-Wilcox Snellings (NV). ADVANCED (32): 1-Chuck Bower (IN), 2-Jim Bowman (FL); 1C-Jim Stripling (TX), 2C-Dante Bains (CA). INTERMEDIATE (19): 1-Orhan Tozum (CA), 2-Curtis Lucas (TX); 1C-Michael Rohland (TX), 2C-Kevin Cline (TX). RIFLEMAN'S SHOOTOUT (32): 1-Howard Markowitz (NV), 2-Malcolm Davis (TX). GOLD RUSH (64): 1-Kit Woolsey (CA), 2-Paul Magriel. ARMADILLO CHASE (129): 1-Wilcox Snellings (NV), 2-Nathan Jones (TX). CHIPMUNK CHASE (64): 1-Butch Meese (IN), 2-Kati Pratt (TX). OPEN MICRO-BLITZ (64): 1-Carmen Tomlinson (TX). LIMITED MICRO-BLITZ (32): Kevin McDonough (AZ). SPEED-GAMMON (32): 1-Jeff Acierno (NY), 2-Joe Sylvester (MI). LAST ROUND-UP (113): 1-Roy Williams (TX), 2-Harry Cohn (IL), 3/4-Ian Macfarlane (Brazil) / Kevin McDonough (AZ). AMATEUR JACKPOT (8): 1-Kurt Schurecht (IL), 2-Joe Harris (CA).

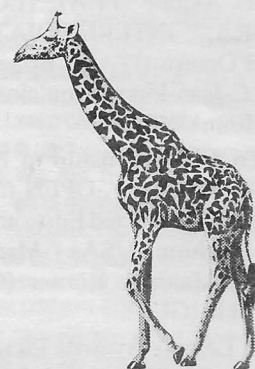




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Tel./Fax: 972-3-544 5347  
Mobile: 972-50-297207

# WINNER'S CORNER



July-Oct. 1994

**NEBC Monthly** (Cambridge, MA; 12 June)... **EXPERT** (21): 1-Linc Bedell, 2-Bill Robertie; 1C-David Wells. **A DIV.** (13): 1-Dan Judd, 2-Larry Liebster; 1C-Jimm Sullivan. **B DIV.** (10): 1-Nora Luna, 2-Zita Samuels; 1C-Ari Meadow.

**RSCARDS Summer Backgammon Tournament** (Genie, July-Aug.)... **OPEN** (24): 1-Jim Allen (NV), 2-Kurt Schurecht (IL), 3/4-Stephen Price (CA)/Lynn Kern (GA), 5/8-David Hamilton (WA) / Sam Tate (SC) / Richard Jacobson (HI) / John Wood (OH)... *For information on the next RSCARDS tournament, phone J. Weaver at 313/243-3996.*

**Riviera's Cup Championship** (Cannes, France; 7-10 July)... **CHAMPIONSHIP** (22): 1-Evert Van Eijck (NL), 2-Alan Steffen (USA), 3/4-Patrice Hattu (HK) / Benjamin Lund (DEN); 1C-Ian MacFarlane (BRA), 2C-Robert Aknine (FRA); 1LC-Armando Balbi (BRA). **INTERMEDIATE**: 1-Gian Michele d'Onofrio (ITA), 2-Brian McDonald (AUS); 1C-Jean-Pierre Moulain (FR); 1LC-Morten Holm (DEN).

**2nd Open Championship of Nice** (Nice, France; 18-19 July)... **OPEN** (50): 1-John Bazigos (UK), 2-Roland Edström (SWZ), 3/4-David Hochron (USA) / Martine Oules (FRA); 1C-Matthias Körner (GER), 2C-Rainer Birkle (GER).

**Michigan League Awards Picnic** (Fenton, MI; 24 July)... **OPEN** (31): 1-Joe Monro, 2-Marilyn McMaster, 3/4-Lois Davenport / Joe Sylvester... *Held at the ranch of Rolland & Marilyn McMaster.*

**Thousand Islands Tournament—ABT** (Alexandria Bay, NY; 29-31 July)... **OPEN** (38): 1-Charlie Morrison (CAN), 2-Judy Brown (NY), 3-Sig Skolnick (FL). **DOUBLES** (8): 1-Bob Hoey & Carol Masley (NY).

**1994 Argentine Championship** (Buenos Aires, Argentina; Mondays in Aug.)... **CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS**: Jorge Stokiner, Raúl Timerman, Sergio Gelabert, Fernando Rocha, Hugo Ergueta. **JUNIOR WINNERS**: Fernando Suaya, Oscar Portolán, Fernando Suaya, Carlos Carbonell, Karina Patlis. **BEGINNER WINNERS**: Juan Colombet, Luis Aldini, Judith Ohana, Adolfo Galimidi, Nelly Marchese.

**Hong Kong Monthly** (Hong Kong; 1 Aug.)... **OPEN**: 1-Robin Swaffield, 2-Bai Ling; 1C-John Simon, 2C-Jerry Godsey. **CHAMPIONSHIP**: 1-Ed Cartledge, 2-Ching Hopeman; 1C-Adam Lemesurie, 2C-Peter Wong. **INTERMEDIATE**: 1-David Mendes,

2-Lesley McFarlane; 1C-Olivia Lee, 2C-Nuresh Melwani.

**Outdoor Tournament & Cookout** (Steve Hast Residence, Pittsburgh, PA; 7 Aug.)... **OPEN** (14): 1/2-Steve Hast/Rob Napolitano

**Green Mt. Festival of Backgammon—ABT** (Stratton Mt., VT; 8-14 Aug.)... *Vermont Open*—**OPEN**: 1-Bob Bishop, 2/3-Herb Gurland / Walter Trice. **INTERMEDIATE**: 1-Hunter Jones, 2-Eli Turgell, 3/4-Mark Kaplan / Fred Bement. *Canadian Open (ABT)*—**OPEN** (8): 1-David Wells, 2-Bob Bishop. **INTERMEDIATE** (16): 1-Bob Lumbra, 2-Marc Gray, 3/4-Mark Kaplan / Hunter Jones; 1C-Sakura Sugawara, 2C-Wanda delaBarre

**Central Illinois Summer Sizzler** (Lacon, IL; 21 Aug.)... **OPEN** (23): 1-Tak Morioka, 2-Milad Doueihy, 3-Neil Kazaross, 4-Tom Wade; 1C-Bill Davis, 2C-Randy Reiff. **INTERMEDIATE** (12): 1-Ben Zemaitis, 2-Bill Meyrick, 1C-Don Schiller, 2C-Vinton Knarr.

**NY/NJ Co-Op Regional** (Woodbury, NY; 28 Aug.)... **CHAMPIONSHIP**: 1-Rageb Shadallah, 2-Irwin Zamore; 1C-Danny Fogel. **INTERMEDIATE**: 1-Jens Krummel, 2-Sally Marra; 1C-Marc Simon.

**4th Mitteleuropa Tournament** (Nova Gorica, Slovenia; 2-4 Sept.)... **CHAMPIONSHIP** (40): 1-Cathrin Bladh Risselin (SWE), 2-Alfonso Sara (ITA), 3/4-Matthias Körner (GER) / Andrea Sirch (ITA); 1C-Guido Flamigni (ITA), 2C-Enrico Ferrucci (ITA); 1LC-Sergio Fragiaco (ITA). **INTERMEDIATE** (27): 1-Peter Huber (GER), 2-Franco Perinelli (ITA), 3/4-Antonio Rocca (ITA) / Sandro Fiorentini (ITA); 1C-Giorgio Caldera (ITA), 2C-Hendrik Muysers (GER); 1LC-Peter Winkler (AUS). **BEGINNER** (23): 1-Axel Fenske (GER), 2-Angelo Genovese (ITA), 3/4-Maria Croce (ITA) / Denise Pantarotto (ITA); 1C-Luca

Marchesan (ITA), 2C-Nicola Spiro (ITA); 1LC-Doris Brachvogel (GER). **WARM-UP TOURNEY**: 1-Enrico Colangiuolo (ITA), 2-Luca Pagano (ITA). **TEAM TOURNAMENT**: 1-Backgammon Club of Rome (Claudio Borgnino, Enrico Colangiuolo, Giuseppe Ricciardi). **BLACKJACK**: 1-Renzo Margherit (ITA)... *Championship winner Cathrin Risselin also won the event in 1992. Director Marco Fornasir reports a successful event with 10 countries represented. At the tournament, WBF president Alberto da Pra recognized Federal Italian Backgammon Champions for 1993-1994: F1-Guido Flamigni, F3-Mario Viceconte, F3-Gianmarco Maggolini.*

**Hong Kong Monthly** (Hong Kong; 5 Sept.)... **OPEN**: 1-Robin Swaffield, 2-Don Rae; 1C-John Simon, 2C-Tim Thorsby. **CHAMPIONSHIP**: 1-John Schneeberger, 2-Ed Cartledge; 1C-Nancy Wong, 2C-Chris Gawan-Taylor. **INTERMEDIATE**: 1-Olivia Lee, 2-Henry Donne.

**Michigan League Kickoff** (Southfield, MI; 25 Sept.)... **OPEN** (26): 1-Mike Giordano, 2-Gary Fritzsche, 3-Marilyn McMaster... *Cavendish director Joe Sylvester included an added prize of free entry into the Illinois State Championships.*

**Towpath Inn Tournament—ABT** (Turin, NY; 30 Sep.-2 Oct.)... **OPEN** (30): 1-Ed Johnson (NY), 2-Mike Friedman (CAN), 3-Paul Stebbing (CAN). **DOUBLES** (8): 1/2-Barry Steinberg & Bill Wilner (MD) / Andy Palumbo (single).

**Bar Point Sunday** (Oak Brook, IL; 2 Oct.)... **OPEN** (22): 1-Peter Kalba, 2-Neil Kazaross, 3/4-Yamin Yamin / Paul Franks; 1C/2C-Mick Dobratz (IN) / Jeff Kane (WI). **ADVANCED** (10): 1/2-Jolie Rubin / Lou Salzman, 3/4-Judy Feinstein / Barb Levinson; 1C/2C-Mary Franks / Bobbie Shifrin. Δ

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# BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT of the Americas

April 19-23, 1995

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San José, Costa Rica

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Peter Kalba (312/252-7755, or Carol Joy Cole (810/232-9731)





## AMALGAMATION

**Bill Bartholomay** (IL) was one of the 26 major league baseball owner representatives (Atlanta Braves) who voted to cancel the 1994 season. Knowing how much Bill enjoys baseball, it must have been a difficult decision... USA to Rio de Janeiro: **Paul Weaver**. Chicago to Hawaii: **Brigid O'Meara**... If you don't see the movie "Fresh" in the theaters, be sure to rent it. The story involves a young boy who is trapped as a drug runner for a gang in New York's inner city. Using concepts of chess that his father has taught him, he plays the roll of a pawn to go after the drug king. New York Chess & Backgammon Club members are featured including "Poe," who in real life, taught "Searching For Bobbie Fischer" character **Josh Waitzkin** how to play. The chess scenes were filmed in Washington Square... The Prime Backgammon Club of Las Vegas is open again. Effective 4 October, the club will meet for tournament and chouette action every Tuesday at 7:00 P.M. at the Turf Restaurant in the Jockey Club. For more info, call **Howard Markowitz** at 702/893-6025... **V.W. Zimmnicki** announces the Pub Club's new Monday night location: Cricket's Pub & Grill in Glendale Hts, IL. See "Illinois Action" for the details... **Chuck Papazian**, a backgammon name from the past, surfaced last month's World Cup in Dallas, TX. This was Chuck's first major backgammon tournament since his open heart surgery last year... Visiting the Bar Point Club in September: **Mike Nowak**

(MI)... "A Current Affair" spoke to former *Gammon* magazine executive editor **Candace Mayeron** last month. It seems that a man she was involved with was murdered gangland style in the late 1980s. "A Current Affair" implies that a possible motive was his involvement in bringing a rival male strip club to Los Angeles to compete with Chippendale's... We were glad to see that *Sports Illustrated* gave new world backgammon champion **Frank Frigo** (KY) some coverage last month... Once again, we strongly suggest that you subscribe to the improved *Hoosier Backgammon Club Newsletter*. The recent Sept./Oct. issue explains how to play international tournament backgammon (FIBS) on your home computer, offers "Two Points From Victory," a study by **Jake Jacobs** (IL), and continues an excellent annotated computer match between **Kit Woolsey** (CA) and **Jeremy Bagai** (MA), including comments by TD-Gammon. A one year subscription (6 issues) is only \$10 (\$12 Canada, \$14 overseas). Write **Butch & Mary Ann Meese**, 7620 Kilmer Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46256. Also, in addition to Thursday play at Spats, the Hoosier Club announces the start of backgammon at McGreevy's Hop the first Monday of every month. Call 317/845-8435 for more info... Gammon Associates has two new club locations as well: Tuesdays at Grand Slam Bridge & BG Club (Woodland Hills, CA) and Sundays at Clancy's Crab Broiler (Glendale, CA). Call **Patrick Gibson** at 818/901-0464 for the details... Finally, **Peter Zacks** invites you to attend the new Grand Slam Backgammon

Club meeting Thursdays and Saturdays at 20855 Ventura Blvd. in Woodland Hills, CA. 818/725-7876... Costa Rican Backgammon Assoc. president **Mario Madrigal** has again invited us to direct next year's \$10,000 Added Tournament of the Americas in Costa Rica (19-23 April 1995). The fun-filled event has a new venue: the Herradura Hotel, just up the road from the Cariari Hotel. In many ways, the Herradura (which means "horseshoe" in Spanish) is a cut above the Cariari; however, last year's \$89 room rate (single or double) will remain. Δ



## ILLINOIS ACTION



**CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB**  
Bill Davis  
312/338-6380  
Peter Kalba  
312/631-8350

**Tuesday, 6:30 P.M.** at Golden Flame, 6417 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago; 312/792-0424.

**Sunday Bimonthly, 12:30 P.M.** at Braxton Seafood Grill, 3 Oakbrook Center Mall, Oak Brook; 708/574-2155.

**PUB CLUB:** Tournaments Monday, 7:30 P.M. at Cricket's Pub & Grill, 602 W. North Ave., Glendale Hts. V. W. Zimmnicki (708/924-8632.)

**BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB:** Tourn. 1st/3rd/5th Tuesday, 6:15 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Lane O'Connor (309/454-1947).

**WINNETKA BG CLUB:** Tournaments Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (708/446-0537).

**CENTRAL ILL. BG CLUB:** Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Chi-Chi's, 4415 N. Rockwood, Peoria. Ed Zell (309/673-7622).

**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), Chicago. Greg Defotis (312/286-6719).

# New York City Open Backgammon Championship Sunday, December 4, 1994

### Schedule & Fees

Entry fee .....\$260 (100% return)  
Registration fee ...\$25 (\$33 after Nov. 28)  
Optional pool .....\$100 (100% return)  
Registration ..... 12:00 NOON  
Tournament begins ..... 1:30 P.M.

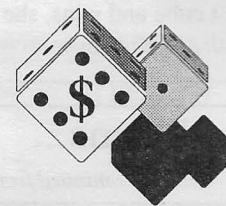
- Format: Main flight (15 point matches) with Consolation
- Points race in effect
- Standard U.S. Tournament Rules

To register, send \$25 (\$33 after Nov. 28) with your name & address to:

# NYC&B

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## 17th Annual Pittsburgh Backgammon Championships

February 17-19, 1995

Pittsburgh Greentree Marriott Hotel

Featuring 1994 ABT Awards Ceremony



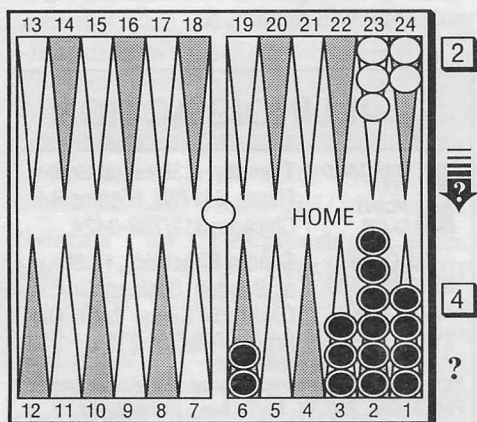
To receive an invitation, call:

**Steve Hast**  
(412) 823-7500

## PROBLEM #207 SOLVED

by Joe Sylvester

1994 Michigan Summer Championship 7-point Doubles semifinals. Howard Markowitz & Joann Feinstein (White) lead Tak Morioka & Bill Davis (Black), 4-1. White owns a 2-cube and is on shake. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



**P**roblem #207 offers us a fairly straightforward solution process. First, we must determine the “doubling window”—that is, the percentage point when White first has a cube and the percentage point when Black last has a take. The “window” is the margin in between where a position is both a double and take. Next, we must evaluate the position at hand, assess a value to it, and then compare it to our window.

### Determining The Window

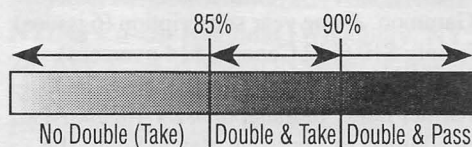
To find the doubling point, we must calculate White's reward and risk by cubing. If White doesn't cube and wins, she leads 6-1 Crawford with a 90% chance to win the

match. If she cubes and wins, she wins the match and is therefore 100%. Her gain for winning, or “reward” is 10% (from 90% to 100%).

If White does not double and loses, she is up 4-3 and is approximately 60% (actually, 59% by most charts). When she doubles and loses, she loses the match since when Black takes, he immediately reshapes an 8-cube. So White's reduction for losing, or “risk” is 60% (from 60% to 0%).

This risk:reward ratio determines our doubling point (60:10), or (6:1). Hence White must win the diagrammed position at least 6 out of 7 times, or approximately 85%, to justify doubling.

Since Black can pass, trail 1-6 Crawford, and retain 10% match-winning chances; or take, reshapes and play double match point; his minimum take point is 10%. Therefore, the doubling window is between 85% and 90%.



### Evaluating The Position

This is the tough part. This type of position is easily handled today by various computer programs. Also, I believe Walter Trice has an elaborate formula for “hyperpips.”

Unfortunately, we can't bring our computer to the table, and many of us can't memorize complex formulas. So over the board, I would evaluate this position in the following fashion:

Of the 20 rolls (55.6%) where White enters immediately, Black needs 7 1/2 rolls to bear off and White needs about 4 1/2 rolls to bear off. With Black on roll now, down three turns, he'll need a couple of sets combined with some stumbling by White

coming around the board. My “guesstimate” is that Black has about 4% match-winning chances when White enters immediately.

The more interesting parlay is when White dances (16 rolls = 44.4%). There are various pros and cons to this position with Black on roll. Black is going to have a three point board for a while, and it's a speed board as well. Most players tend to underestimate these positions. Note that eight numbers (1-1, 2-1, 2-2, 3-1, 3-2) still leave Black with a four point board. Generally speaking, seven fewer men off is a “pick'em” game. White is only a dance or two from this.

Conversely, Black will have to be aggressive in bearing off numbers like (4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 5-1, 5-2, 5-3). By bearing a man off, Black renders himself a 7-roll position. That is, if he can avoid any misses, and if he doesn't get hit.

(As a side note, I would not be surprised to find that Black's winning percentage is higher by moving a checker from his 3-point to his 6-point, or that 3-2 is a better initial bearoff roll here than 6-6. A strange and curious position.)

Nonetheless, I'll guesstimate Black at about 25% after an initial dance by White.

### The Verdict

So what is Black's equity in this game?

$$55.6\% \times 0.04 = 2.2\%$$

$$44.4\% \times 0.25 = 11.1\%$$

$$13.3\%$$

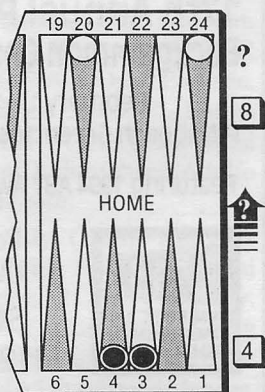
The evaluation falls neatly into our window and suggests a proper redouble and take.  $\Delta$

*Michigan's Joe Sylvester is one of the finest backgammon players in the world. His tournament seminars are always rated ★★★★★, and his match commentary is superb. Don't you wish he'd write a book?*

## Best Laid Plans...

[Continued from page 5]

**Position 4.** Match to 7 points. No score. Hypothetical position. **CUBE DECISION(S)?**



This would be a money beaver, but is a nice redouble at this score. If you miss, White has no recube! By redoubling, Black's match wins increase from a mere 649.04 in 1296 to a whopping 649.78 in 1296—almost a tenth of 1% match equity.

On the other hand, maybe you shouldn't redouble. If you don't, you probably won't find a co-signer for your auto loan; Hopeless Harry and Martha the Mullet will stop listening to your plays in the chouette; and the girl next door won't accompany you to the Junior Prom. But you're only giving up 0.06% match equity, so go ahead, hold the cube!

I redoubled (Position 3), and rolled 2-1, a pesky number. Let's suppose for a moment that this were a 17-point match. Then,

Position 2 would have been an appropriate redouble (because Position 4 was not). Now, White could redouble to 16; and, if he missed, I could whip it to 32 for the match without any of us having done a thing to be ashamed of (if you ignore our feeble rolling). Of course, it was not a 17-point match, and my opponent rolled 5-1.

**So, I LOST THE MATCH**, but my opponent made two cubes errors, one of them rather egregious. I gained tons of match equity, and as soon as I find the pocket I put it in, I will have it framed as some sort of reminder... or as some sort of warning.  $\Delta$

*Jake Jacobs is on the Advisory Council of this month's Illinois State Championships.*



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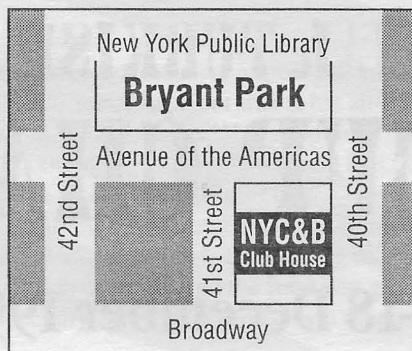
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