

CHICAGO POINT

NUMBER 90

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

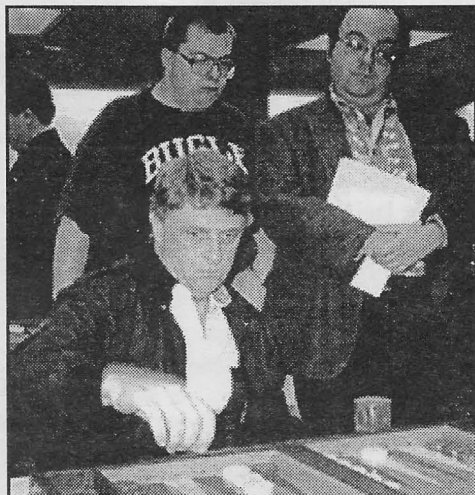
JUNE 1996

17th Chicago Open

O'HAGAN ACCOMPLISHES 'MISSION IMPOSSIBLE'

Defeats KG Twice To Win Title

You're trailing Kent Goulding 11-7 in a match to 13-points. Even if you win this match, you'll have to beat him again. A tall order, but not "impossible," certainly not for John O'Hagan who accomplished the feat at this year's Chicago Open.



John O'Hagan battles the legendary Kent Goulding in the Chicago Open finals.

The 17th annual Memorial Day tournament, held 24-27 May at the Woodfield Hyatt Regency in Schaumburg, Illinois, drew over 120 players from across America. Joann Feinstein and Howard Markowitz codirected.

Although ranked 36th in KG's International Rating List, O'Hagan, a cable TV sales manager from Valparaiso, Indiana, had never won a major tournament. But his stellar performance at the Chicago Open would change that. John lost to Goulding (Maryland) in the second round of the double elimination event, then caught fire to win seven straight matches in a row en route to the finals and a rematch with the undefeated KG.

The first 13-point finals was a beauty. Trailing 11-7, O'Hagan won two doubled games in a row to knot the battle at 11-all.

The next and deciding game, recorded by Walter Trice (MA) is full of reversals. We suggest you get out your backgammon board and fasten your seat belt.

Goulding (White)

1. 21: 13/11 6/5
2. 41: B/21 6/5*
3. 61: B/24 11/5*
4. KG accepts
5. 61: B/18
6. 64: 24/18 13/9
7. 65: 9/3 8/3
8. 63: 13/7 8/5
9. 63: 13/10 13/7
10. 21: 24/23* 10/8
11. 62: 24/16
12. 21: 16/13
13. 41: B/24 8/4*
14. 66: 24/18 8/2* 7/1(2)
15. 51: B/24 13/8*
16. 63: 24/18 8/5
17. 62: B/23*/17
18. 62: 18/10*

O'Hagan (Black)

- 43: 24/20* 13/10
- 43: B/22 24/20*
- JO doubles
- 63: B/22 10/4*
- 44: 22/18(2) 13/9 8/4
- 65: 9/3 8/3
- 55: 18/8(2)
- 62: 13/5
- 65: 8/3 8/2
- 31: B/24 8/5
- 66: ----
- 43: 24/21 6/2*
- 32: B/23 6/3
- 62: B/23*/17
- 31: --
- 64: B/21*/15
- 51: --
- 54: B/21 --

[Continued on page 6]

TOO Careful

by Jake Jacobs

Although it is never mentioned in beginner texts, one of the most important tournament techniques the advanced player acquires is remembering to root for the player who defeated him. That way, while explaining to everyone that the only reason you lost was because the idiot took a hopeless double, then he (fill in here) [rolled four sets of doubles /hit four consecutive 35-to-1 shots/was missed by four consecutive 35-to-1 shots], you may point out the corollary: it would have been you up there if the wretch hadn't gotten lucky.

Most of the time your opponents rubs salt in the wound by losing before they get to the finals. But over the recent Memorial Day weekend at the Chicago Open, I was pretty sure my opponent was going to be in the money. There were a

[Continued on page 5]

JOLIE 'LABORS' OVER A MOVE



What better way to pass the time during nine hours of labor than by playing backgammon. That's just what Jolie Rubin did against husband David on 30 April. When Mason Paul Rubin arrived later that evening, the game became a chouette!

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Bill Davis

3940 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue 504
Chicago, IL 60659-3155

Tel: 312/583-6464 ♦ Fax: 312/583-3264

E-mail: chipoint@interaccess.com

<http://homepage.interaccess.com/~chipoint/>

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Carol Joy Cole (MI)

Danny Kleinman (CA)

Jake Jacobs (IL)

Walter Trice (MA)

Duane Jensen (MN)

Kit Woolsey (CA)

Neil Kazaross (IL)

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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THE DICEMAN'S SPECS FOR QUALITY BACKGAMMON DICE

The source for the currently available low cost (\$7.95/pair) "precision" dice has been located and discussions have led me to believe the intent of the manufacturer is to produce a high-quality die for the backgammon community. However the manufacturer has no set of standards and/or requirements to go by.

Thus the dice are ball-cornered by cutting only two faces which on these low cost dice, is quite good. On the other hand, the drilling depth for the flush filled spots is not good in my opinion. To correct this problem, I have written a set of specifications including a discussion on each spec. As far as I know, this is a first for backgammon dice and should help those manufacturers who wish to produce high quality dice with an interest to protect

[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

carcole@alummi.sils.umich.edu

* Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

| | | |
|--------------|--|---------------------|
| Jun 9 | Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL | 312/252-7755 |
| Jun 9 | New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA | 617/784-6114 |
| Jun 9 | Northern Ohio Monthly Tournament, Andrew's Brews, Akron, OH | 330/966-2811 |
| Jun 16 | Backgammon By The Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA | 510/838-7789 |
| Jun 20* | Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI | 810/232-9731 |
| Jun 23 | Atlanta Monthly Tournament, Scores Sports Club, Atlanta, GA | 770/441-2074 |
| Jun 29* | Beverly Hills Monthly Tournament, Clarine's, Beverly Hills, CA | 310/273-1632 |
| Jul 3 | Michigan Summer Warm-up Tourney, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI | 810/232-9731 |
| Jul 4-7 | <u>Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton Hotel, Novi, MI</u> | <u>810/232-9731</u> |
| Jul 13* | Midtown "Sweet 16" Invitational, Midtown Club, New York, NY | 212/935-9800 |
| Jul 13 | Summer Open Tournament, Promenade Cardroom, Bethesda, MD | 301/530-0604 |
| Jul 14* | Northern Ohio Monthly Tournament, Andrew's Brews, Akron, OH | 330/966-2811 |
| Jul 17 | RSCARDS Summer 1996 Computer Modern Tournament, GEnie | 301/294-2212 |
| Jul 18* | Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI | 810/232-9731 |
| Jul 21* | Backgammon By The Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA | 510/838-7789 |
| Jul 21* | Milwaukee Sunday Bimonthly, John Hawks Pub, Milwaukee, WI | 414/463-2498 |
| Jul 27* | Beverly Hills Monthly Tournament, Clarine's, Beverly Hills, CA | 310/273-1632 |
| Jul 28* | Austin Bimonthly Sunday tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin TX | 512/261-8518 |
| Aug 2-4 | <u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY</u> | <u>716/442-8221</u> |
| Aug 3* | Midtown "Sweet 16" Invitational, Midtown Club, New York, NY | 212/935-9800 |
| Aug 3* | CBOB First Saturday Monthly Tournament, Clubroom, Chicago, IL | 312/922-0404 |
| Aug 11 | Summer Cool Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL | 312/252-7755 |
| Aug 11-18 | World Cup V and U.S. Open, Harvey's Hotel Addison, Dallas, TX | 301/299-8265 |
| Aug 18* | CIBC Summer Sizzler, Location TBA, Peoria, IL | 309/686-6662 |
| Aug 18* | Backgammon By The Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA | 510/838-7789 |
| Aug 30-Sep 2 | <u>44th Indiana Open, Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN</u> | <u>317/255-8902</u> |
| Sep 20-22 | <u>Minnesota State Champs, Minneapolis Athletic Club, Minneapolis, MN</u> | <u>612/378-1536</u> |
| Sep 27-29 | <u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Towpath Inn, Turin, NY</u> | <u>716/442-8221</u> |
| Oct 3-6 | <u>Illinois State Champs & America Cup, Holiday Inn, Rolling Meadows, IL</u> | <u>847/945-7801</u> |
| Oct 11-13 | <u>Nation's Capital Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD</u> | <u>301/530-0604</u> |
| Oct 18-20* | <u>Big Apple Series, Location TBA</u> | <u>201/833-2915</u> |
| Oct 25-27* | <u>Backgammon in the Berkshires, Oak & Spruce Center, South Lee, MA</u> | <u>603/863-4711</u> |
| Nov 6-10 | Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV | 702/893-6025 |
| Nov 29-Dec 1 | <u>2nd Thanksgiving Tournament, Best Western Hotel, Akron, OH</u> | <u>216/966-2811</u> |
| Dec 6-8 | <u>Gammon Assoc. Invitational, Holiday Inn, Woodland Hills, CA</u> | <u>818/901-0464</u> |

OUTSIDE USA

| | | |
|---------------|---|----------------|
| Jun 13-16 | Swedish Open, Bistro Event, Gate 9, Globe Arena, Stockholm, Sweden | 468-652 4099 |
| Jun 15-18* | Balkan International Open Tournament, Duni Black Sea Resort, Bulgaria | 359-2 723612 |
| Jun 22-23 | Monte-Carlo Cup 96, Selskabslokalerne, Copenhagen, Denmark | 4539-400607 |
| Jun 25-30 | 2nd Backgammon Olympiad, Casinò of Venice, Italy | 394-1521 1029 |
| Jun 27-30 | 2nd Kaiserbrunnen Cup, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany | 495 21-64314 |
| Jun 29-30 | 5th DM Mixed Doubles, Selskabslokalerne, Copenhagen, Denmark | 4539-400607 |
| Jun 29-30 | Hilton Trophy Tournament, Hilton Hotel, East Midlands, England | 441522-546993 |
| Jul 2-4 | Pagano's 2nd Super Cup Villa Condulmer, Venice, Italy | 394-2296 9305 |
| Jul 5-7* | Monte-Carlo Warm-up Weekend, Salon Grand Prix, Loews Hotel, Monaco | 3392-16 21 33 |
| Jul 6-7 | Queen's Cup, Watermill Hotel, Hemel Hempstead, England | 44161-9453741 |
| Jul 8-14 | Monte Carlo World Championship, Loews Monte Carlo Hotel, Monaco | 3392-16 21 33 |
| Jul 15-16 | 4th Nice Open Championship, Nice, France | 3393-879 436 |
| Jul 16-19* | <i>New Date:</i> Riviera's Cup Championship, Hotel Martinez, Cannes, France | 331-4359 1080 |
| Jul 26-28* | Hanko Tournament, Hanko Casino, Hanko, Finland | 3580-676 258 |
| Aug 1-4 | 2nd Bad Segeberg Open, Intermar Kurhotel, Bad Segeberg, Germany | 4930-461 9624 |
| Aug 15-18* | Palace Summer Champs, Badrut's Palace Hotel, St. Moritz, Switzerland | 4161-2710137 |
| Aug 16-18 | Franken Ganz Open 1996, Hotel Schwarzer Adler, Uttenreuth, Germany | 49911-669 9678 |
| Aug 17-18 | S.A.C. Trophy Tournament, George Hotel, Solihull, England | 441522-546993 |
| Aug 22-25 | Rio de Janeiro Tournament, Miramar Palace Hotel, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil | 5521-267 6033 |
| Aug 30-Sep 1* | Bass British Festival, Watermill Hotel, Hemel Hempstead, UK | 44161-945 3741 |
| Aug 31-Sep 1 | De Jydske Mesterkaber, Århus Backgammon Club, Århus, Denmark | 4586-134963 |
| Sep 6-8 | 6th Mitteleuropa Tournament, Casinò Park, Nova Gorica, Slovenia | 392-4007 4658 |
| Sep 7-8 | DM Doubles, Selskabslokalerne, Copenhagen, Denmark | 4539-400607 |
| Sep 14-18* | Balkan International Open Tournament, Duni Black Sea Resort, Bulgaria | 359-2 723612 |
| Sep 29-Oct 4 | 3rd German Open, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany | 495 21-64314 |
| Oct 4-6 | Asian Championships, Ladies Recreation Club, Hong Kong | 852-846 1923 |
| Oct 5-6 | Sandy Osborne Memorial Tournament, George Hotel, Solihull, England | 441522-546993 |
| Oct 25-27* | Two Nations Cup, Watermill Hotel, Hemel Hempstead, UK | 44161-945 3741 |
| Oct 25-28 | Rio de Janeiro Internat'l Tournament, Hotel Intercontinental, Rio, Brazil | 5521-267 6033 |
| Oct 31-Nov 1 | First São Paulo Open, Club Homs, São Paulo, Brazil | 5521-267 6033 |
| Nov 2-4* | 2nd Japan Open, Nakano Sun Plaza, Tokyo, Japan | 813-3373 3814 |

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

the integrity of an honest game.

This protection will only happen if all directors, resellers, and players support the set of requirements that in turn will make it difficult to inconspicuously load (unbalance) transparent dice to gain an unfair edge in the game.

Some might say the specifications go overboard to an extreme; others may applaud what has been done. The specs are what I consider the minimum necessary to protect the naive player from the unscrupu-

lous, to the extent that such protection is possible.

Those who would like to review a copy of my precision dice specifications should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope or e-mail to me.—*Lawrence Strommen, 6866 Meadow View Drive; Indianapolis, IN 46226. Tel.: 317/545-0224 (voice mail after 6 rings). E-mail: <diceman@indy.net>*

HARRY REEVALUATES THE POSITION

In doing some further analysis of my last game cube decision against Blake Sorem, I discovered that there was a problem with my JellyFish™ installation that was caus-

ing JF to play far below its usual capabilities. I don't know what caused the problem, but was able to resolve it simply by reinstalling JF. Once this was done, I found that JF (level 5) played the position reasonably well. Although it may not extract maximum equity from the position, I now believe that its results are accurate to within 2-3%. It turns out that the equity lost by lack of timing outweighs the equity gained by flyshots; therefore clear drop. My apologies to Fredrik Dahl and JF fans everywhere.—*Harry Cohn, Buffalo Grove, IL*

THE DANGERS OF DRINKING TOO MUCH WATER

I took the latest issue of CHICAGO POINT to the card casino last night. Upon my return from a bathroom break, the POINT was gone—and I hadn't even opened it yet!

Here's a small donation for another issue. I keep them all and enjoy reviewing the problems.—*Dr. Dave Williams, Pasadena, CA*

A DISAGREEMENT OVER TIME

We find some of Kit Woolsey's remarks in his "Quick Review" of our book Backgammon: *Costa Rica 1994* encouraging. That we have "once again combined efforts to produce an excellent annotation" and "supplied valuable information on doubling and market losers in critical positions, an excellent type of innovative analysis."

We disagree with Woolsey, however, when he disparages our mention of the time taken by the players as "not very educational" and says that a player may have been distracted and spent time on

[Continued on page 4]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1996

Compiled through 27 May 1996 after 7 tournaments

(Coming 4-7 July: Michigan Summer Championships)



| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|------------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------------|------|
| John O'Hagan | 23.03 | Kevin Muench | 5.86 | Gus Contos | 3.79 | Jeff Acierno | 2.16 |
| Jake Jacobs | 22.88 | Elijah Miller | 5.70 | Odis Chenault | 3.79 | Janice Newman | 2.08 |
| David Jaffe | 22.68 | Francois Margot | 5.67 | Jerry Ungar | 3.43 | Larry Deckel | 1.88 |
| Art Benjamin | 16.50 | Reza Nowbar | 5.67 | Frank Dickerson | 3.33 | Lee Pflugrad | 1.61 |
| Ernest Ho | 15.21 | David Wells | 5.67 | Georgina Flanagan | 3.32 | Gary Fries | 1.57 |
| Marc Ingenoso | 13.30 | Ray Glaeser | 5.67 | Paul Friedman | 3.20 | Wally Wolf | 1.57 |
| Bruce Pollack | 12.93 | Jolie Rubin | 5.60 | Pete Ryder | 3.15 | Jill Ferdinand | 1.56 |
| Kent Goulding | 11.53 | Judy Collins | 5.58 | Ray Baker | 3.15 | Kandice Kane | 1.50 |
| Rob Maier | 11.44 | Bob Koca | 5.38 | Ron Weiner | 2.89 | George Foster | 1.38 |
| Harry Cohn | 11.34 | James Rosten | 5.20 | Jeff Kaiserman | 2.84 | Adam Tyson | 1.33 |
| Abdi Zaltash | 11.34 | Dean Adamian | 4.80 | Ray Bills | 2.84 | Bruce Ballance | 1.19 |
| Wally Watson | 11.34 | Jack Kissane | 4.44 | Alkis Pappas | 2.78 | Harold Roberson | 1.19 |
| Dave Cardwell | 11.20 | Bob Bishop | 4.44 | George Photias | 2.76 | Greg Bradfield | 1.00 |
| Carl Adamec | 10.96 | Hersel Namdar | 4.16 | John Brooks | 2.75 | Peaches Stewart | 0.96 |
| Kit Woolsey | 10.40 | Jim Mieske | 4.16 | Bob Lumbra | 2.56 | Gary Gardner | 0.94 |
| Greg Lilley | 8.35 | Clarine | 4.13 | Ed Johnson | 2.56 | Walt Swan | 0.94 |
| Mario Sequeira | 8.25 | Ron Bruns | 4.12 | Russ Hoser | 2.40 | Bruce Russell | 0.93 |
| Tak Morioka | 7.72 | Drew Giovanis | 3.87 | Keith Jackson | 2.38 | Boris Mindich | 0.70 |
| Blake Sorem | 7.60 | Doug Roberts | 3.85 | Reggie Porter | 2.36 | Al Goyburu | 0.67 |
| Steve Petersen | 7.60 | Mike Ungerleider | 3.82 | Ali Haddad | 2.36 | Kwong Chan | 0.60 |
| Tim Mabee | 6.40 | Ray Gronek | 3.82 | | | | |



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1996 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 MAY

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|------|-----------------|------|------------------|------|
| Neil Kazaross | 13.56 | Wendy Kaplan | 3.92 | Paul Franks | 2.72 | Don Jayhan | 0.84 |
| Richard Lloyd | 13.20 | Ed Buerger | 3.88 | Amy Valerio | 2.60 | Tak Morioka | 0.80 |
| Paul Friedman | 9.44 | Jeff Kane | 3.68 | John Stryker | 2.56 | Sarg Serges | 0.80 |
| Reggie Porter | 9.20 | Joann Feinstein | 3.64 | David Rubin | 2.16 | Ralph Levy | 0.60 |
| Peter Kalba | 7.80 | Arline Levy | 3.52 | Jerry Brooks | 2.00 | Nora Luna | 0.56 |
| Andy Krenitz | 6.96 | Phil Simborg | 3.44 | Dean Muench | 1.88 | Elaine Kehm | 0.48 |
| Tim Mabee | 6.12 | Ken Bond | 3.36 | Stu Katz | 1.76 | Jolie Rubin | 0.46 |
| Jake Jacobs | 6.00 | Leslie Lockett | 3.32 | Henry Gray | 1.60 | Richard Stawowy | 0.44 |
| Herb Roman | 5.84 | Bill Keefe | 3.28 | Marty Tatossian | 1.52 | Tom Fahland | 0.40 |
| Phyllis Smolinski | 5.42 | Bob Koca | 3.20 | Harold Seif | 1.28 | Peaches Stewart | 0.32 |
| Harry Cohn | 4.88 | Norma Shyer | 3.16 | Russell Harris | 1.28 | Bruce Pollack | 0.32 |
| John Demian | 4.16 | Bobbie Shifrin | 3.12 | Paul Klein | 1.20 | Roz Ferris | 0.32 |
| Tim Serges | 4.08 | Georgina Flanagan | 2.96 | Wally Wolf | 0.96 | Scott Richardson | 0.20 |
| Mary Franks | 4.00 | Alice Kay | 2.96 | Darryl Purpose | 0.88 | Scott Kaplan | 0.16 |
| Bill Davis | 3.96 | Frankie Farjood | 2.80 | Jon Vietor | 0.88 | | |

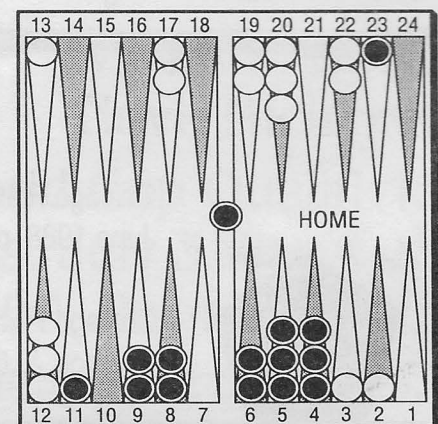
REGGIE PORTER won a first and first consolation outright in May to earn monthly honors. Richard Lloyd was second with 2.48. Harry Cohn, Bill Davis and Neil Kazaross tied for the third spot with 2.08 each.

your move

PROBLEM #225

to be analyzed by Neil Kazaross

Match to 11 points. Black leads White, 8 to 3. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.**



DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS

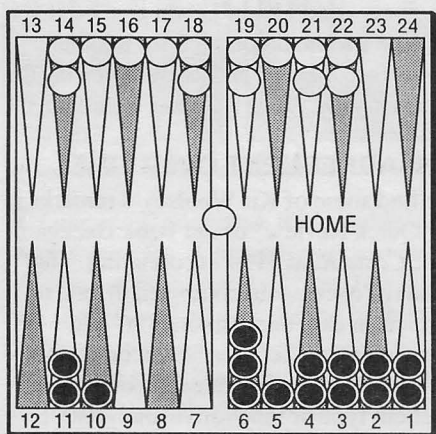


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ROLL CALL

Dear Miss Lonelyblots: When Boom-Boom Byron entered promptly on my five point board the other night, I prayed silently to the Lord for the 6, 5 or double-aces that would hit the blot. The Lord obliged with a 5-4, and I sent Byron back to the bar where he belonged, producing:

Match to 7-points. Black leads White, 3 to 1. White on shake.



Byron shook his dice rhythmically for about 20 seconds, took a deep breath, and intoned, "Nice Dicies, gentle Dicies! Give me the double-5s to which I am entitled. Ooohmmm."

Finally, he rolled: sure enough, double-5s.

"Boom!" said Byron as he bit Bar/20* and put my blot on the bar. "Boom!" said Byron again as he hit 20/15*. Then he moved 15/5. Fondling the checker on his 5-point, he grinned and said, "I think I'll keep this one here."

Instead of winning two points and taking a commanding lead in the match, I

lost a gammon. One game later, I was knocked out of the tournament.

I wonder, Miss Lonelyblots: is it legal for Byron to call his rolls? Is it ethical? At the very least, I find it irritating; and as a Christian, I think it idolatrous to beg favors from the dice.—Michigan Methodist

DEAR MICHIGANDER: From your account, I gather you moved 10/5*, 10/6 with your 5-4. If you'd devoted less energy to prayer and more to the game, you might have moved 10/5*/1. Yes, burying a man is antipositional, but that need not concern you with a huge lead in the race and a cube begging to be turned. 11 shots are 11 too many when picking and passing lets you cash even after Byron's double-5s.

Suppose for a moment that the dice had ears and could deliver requested rolls. Then it would be no less wrong to influence them with chants and brain waves than with fingers and magnets. Backgammon is a test of skill in playing *random* rolls. Rules and strategies alike presume equal chances for all 36 rolls.

It is precisely because the dice have no ears that the rules do not forbid antics like Byron's.

If Byron chants merely to amuse himself, he is hardly unethical. Paradoxically, if sincere, Byron is trying to cheat by seeking not-random rolls. Regardless, shaking the dice for 20 seconds instead of five steals valuable time from the tournament and should be forbidden for that reason.

If you condemn Byron's annoying but ineffectual pleas to idols, ask yourself: is not your silent prayer to a God you credit with the power to heed even more unethical?—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 CHICAGOPOINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155.

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

choices not felt to be difficult. In this book, as in our judgments about the time taken on direct observation as well as videotape. None of these highly focused experts battling for a large purse appeared distracted.

We find it instructive that they chose about 95% of their plays within three or four seconds, and believe their few slow plays (half-a-minute or more) reflect serious consideration of alternatives.

Woolsey rates CR94 less highly than *Costa Rica 1993*. This is understandable because in reviewing CR93, he called its match analysis "the most accurate and thorough . . . I have ever seen in print." Perhaps slight over-praise of CR93 made it hard to assess CR94 as its equal. We consider the two books equally good.—Antonio Ortega & Mario Madrigal, San José, Costa Rica

SUPPORT FOR ROLL CANCELING

Needless to say, after having made a push for "Nackgammon" a couple of years ago, I am extremely taken with Phil Simborg's suggestion for taking some of the luck out of the game. I'm referring of course to his letter "Cancel That Roll" in the May 1996 CHICAGO POINT. To further remove the luck element, I would even entertain the idea of allowing *two* cancels of your opponent's rolls per game instead of just the one that Phil suggests.

The ongoing complaint about backgammon has long been, "There's too much luck in the game." *Cancel-gammon* begins to address this issue in a fairly significant manner. After successfully trying it at our backgammon club, I predict that it will eventually become part of the official rules of backgammon.—Bruce Russell, Director, Madison (WI) Backgammon Club

PARENT/CHILD BACKGAMMON

It's really great to see parents playing backgammon with their sons and daughters. Why not hold a parent and child backgammon event at one of the larger regional events? Something to think about for the future.—Merrill Schrager, Director, Milwaukee Backgammon Club

THE JOY OF 'ONLINE'

Great Job on the CHICAGO POINT ONLINE Internet site! <<http://homepage.interaccess.com/~chipoint/>> Anxiously awaiting your posting of "Topless Backgammon In Monte Carlo"—Mel Leifer, Germantown, MD Δ

Chicago Point Back Issues For Sale

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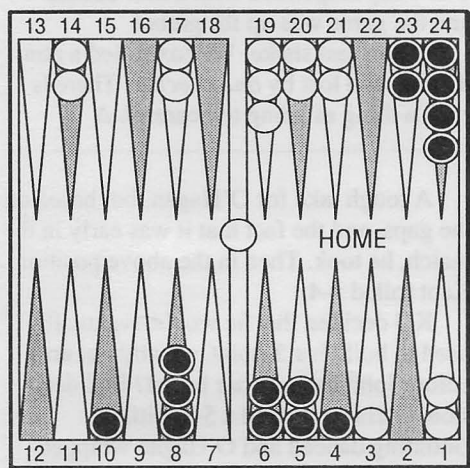
Chicago Point; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr 504
Chicago, IL 60659-3155

couple of reasons for my confidence. One was that the knave who beat me was Wilcox Snellings. The other was that my loss came in the semifinals of the Master's tournament. *Come on, Wil. One round to go!*

Actually, I couldn't find any fault with Wil's play during our match. In fact, he may have played better than I did; however, we backgammon writers have taken a sworn oath never to say things like that in print or we forfeit our union cards—so I won't.

I had an interesting number tumble from my cup in the Crawford game.

Position 1. 11-point match. Snellings (White) leads Jacobs (Black), 10 to 9. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-5.**



Over the board I chose 10/4, 8/3*. It seemed so automatic that I didn't spend much time weighing the other two plays that occurred to me: 24/18, 23/18 and 10/4, 23/18.

10/4, 8/3* has certain obvious merits. Winning a gammon is good. My play caters to that. Owning my 4-point is good. Mine makes it. Cutting down the shots at my inner board blot is helpful. My play wins again. Putting a second enemy blot up. Once again my play is the winner.

Making Wilcox's bar point does none of those things, but it does do two others. It creates a sure exit in the middle of Wil's prime, and it gets one of my four men off of his ace point.

The third play does a little of each. In general, I don't like mixed plays. I prefer sticking to one game plan at a time. There are exceptions, and I might be more impressed with the third play if it activated one of the men on the 24-point instead of breaking the 23-point. Which brings us to a

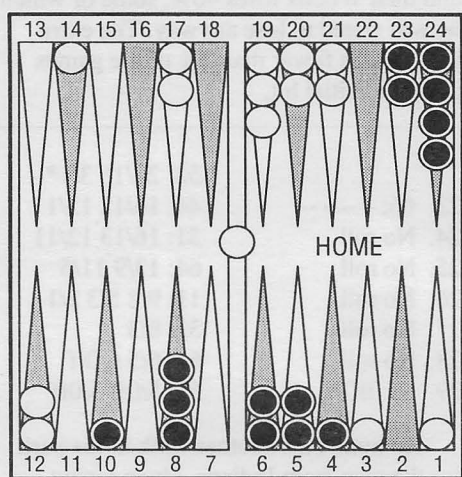
fourth play.

There is a player on our planet that I will call Mr. X. When I showed him the position, he said: "Here is a play I bet you never saw: 24/18, 8/3*."

Zounds! How could I have missed that one? While I have chosen to cloak his identity in a shroud of secrecy, I will say a few things about Mr. X. I have written about this player in the past. His motto is: "The bigger the player, the bigger the play." If any players are willing to fly to Chicago and play him for hundreds of dollars a point, he promises to show them lots more advanced moves like this one.

I ran all four plays past JellyFish™ and the results were surprising. The first set of rollouts was done on the following slightly altered position:

Position 2. 11-point match. Snellings (White) leads Jacobs (Black), 10 to 9. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-5.**



I was working from memory, and misplaced a few of Wil's checkers. JellyFish preferred making the bar, followed by my play, followed by making the 4-point and splitting. Jelly was entirely too simple an organism to appreciate the esoteric beauty of Mr. X's play: among the four plays, it ranked fifth. When taking the match score into account, my play was the winner as it won more gammons than the others.

Later, Walter Trice sent me a copy of the match, and I reran the rollouts using the exact position [Pos. 1]. I didn't expect that the changes would effect the ranking of plays, but I was wrong. My play, while winning fewer games than 24/18, 23/18, wins several more gammons, and is still better at this score.

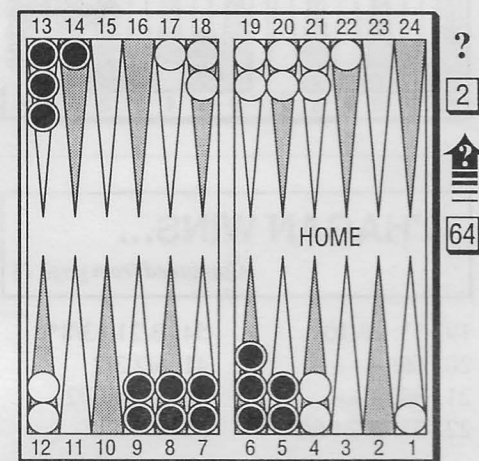
Amazingly, 10/4, 23/18 is now the best play. It wins as many games as making the bar, and as many gammons as my play. I can only surmise that the reduction of

White's firepower trained on his bar point is responsible for the fine showing of this play. When last heard from, Mr. X was still willing to prop his move against the alternatives. This offer not good with any other coupons.

Sadly, my choice proved inadequate over the board. Wilcox advanced to the championship match.

WILCOX'S FINALS OPPONENT was the legendary Tony Goble, one of the champions from backgammon's glittering past. The 13-point match was played quickly and played well. Halfway through, Wilcox took an 11-6 lead. Then Tony battled back to within one point: 11-10. In the next game, Wilcox doubled the position below:

Position 3. 13-point match. Snellings (Black) leads Goble (White), 11 to 10. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



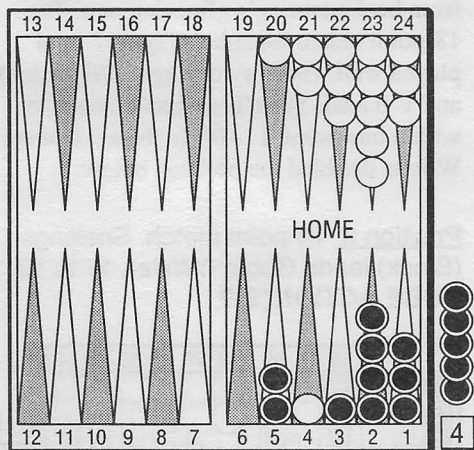
That Tony's takepoint at this score is approximately 25% is universally understood. What is almost universally *misunderstood* is that this is not the same as having a money take. For money, this is barely a pass. Despite being down a few too many pips, and getting too few shots, White can win just over 26%. However, White loses some gammons. These double losses push his net down too low to take for money.

Losing gammons doesn't matter at this score. White will redouble rendering gammons irrelevant. What does matter is that after redoubling, White can never use the cube to cash the game. Played to completion, White wins this game only about 22%. Tony should have passed, but he took and redoubled for the match. The stage was set, the drama played out. Dead checkers began to pile up on Tony's side faster than fresh ghosts in *Hamlet*. Tenaciously, he

[Continued On page 6]

clung to his post in Wil's board. At the very last moment . . . a shot rang out!

Position 4. 13-point match. Snellings (Black) leads Goble (White), 11 to 10. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**

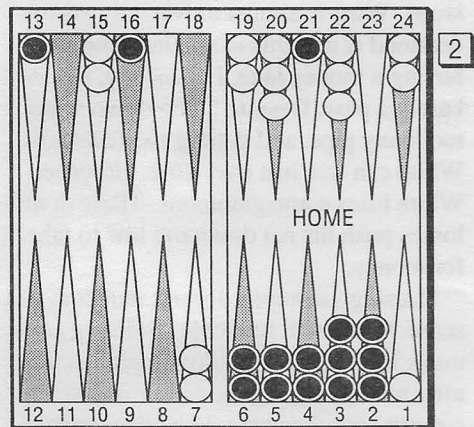


O'HAGAN WINS...

[Continued from page 1]

19. 53: 18/10 54: B/21 13/8*
20. 66: ----- 41: 6/2 3/2
21. 33: ----- 65: 21/16 8/2
22. 31: B/24 6/3 52:

13-point match #1. John O'Hagan (Black) vs. Kent Goulding (White). **BLACK TO PLAY 5-2.**



John pondered this move for nearly 5 minutes before deciding on the right play: 21/16, 3/1*. His other option (16/11, 13/11) allows Goulding to attack and turn the game around in one roll. Note how KG's upcoming 6-6 would have played if John had made the 11-point.

After bearing a man off the 5-point, how should the ace be played? It doesn't make too much difference if we are not hit. What if we are hit? Wilcox realized that if hit, he would still be a big favorite to win the race whether he had borne off seven checkers, or only six. On the other hand, if Tony hit a second blot, he would have substantial winning chances. After due consideration, Wilcox lifted the blot from the 3-point. Was he right?

A few of the more interesting numbers I learned were these. If Tony misses with 6-6 Wilcox wins 99.2% after his play, and 99.9% after bearing off from the ace. If Tony rolls any less, his racing chances are nil no matter what Wilcox does. Alternatively, if Tony hits with 1-4, then Wil throws a 5-4, and then Tony throws a 3-2, Wilcox is still a 54% favorite in the game. So the downside of leaving the blot (Tony's hit assumed) is that Wilcox enters with 5-3, 5-4 or 5-5, then Tony rolls a 3, and then Wilcox loses 46%, some of which he was slated to lose anyway. The extra blot swings fewer than 2% of the games after the initial hit.

Intuitively we suspect that he can gain more than that in racing chances with one more man off, and so it proves. After tens of thousands of rollouts we find lifting the blot winning 94.2%, and bearing off an extra man winning 94.5% in one trial, and 94.3% in another. Bearing off is better, but the difference is insignificant . . . unless you are at the table actually slugging it out!

Tony hit with 1-6. Wilcox entered with 3-6. Tony rolled 5-6 and picked Wil up along the way. Wilcox entered immediately with 1-6. Tony bore off two men with 6-5. Wil raced for home with 3-1. Tony ripped checkers off with 4-4 like Calvin Klein tearing out a hem!

Wil continued his mad dash with 3-1! Tony bore off two men with his next shake. Wilcox entered his home board with the 5 of 5-3, and finding no men on his 3-point, had to move 5/2. Both players bore off two men on their next turn. Then Wilcox rolled 6-6. Tony responded with a non-double and the game was up for grabs!

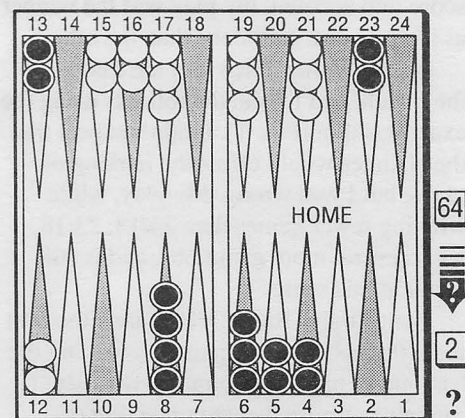
On his last shake, Wilcox rolled a non-double, and lost by *one checker*. There is such a thing as being too careful. Δ

23. 66: ----- 52: 21/16 3/1*
24. No roll 44: 16/12 13/1
25. No roll 31: 16/13 12/11
26. No roll 64: 13/9 11/5
27. No roll 11: 9/8 5/3 2/1
28. No roll 32: 8/3
29. 62: B/17 61: 6/5 6/Off
53: 5/Off 3/Off

Ho hum. Just another walk in the park for the man from Indiana. Upon losing, Kent said, "See you in the finals," and left the table.

IN THE DECIDING 13-point match, competitors traded points. With the score tied at 2, Goulding offered an initial double:

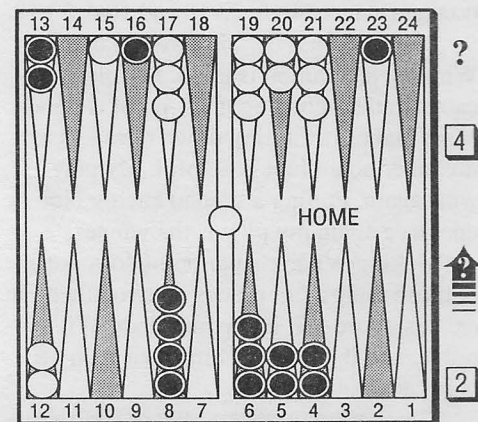
13-point match #2 tied at 2-all. Kent Goulding (White) doubles John O'Hagan (Black) to 2. **TAKE?**



A tough take for O'Hagan, but based on the gaps, and the fact that it was early in the match, he took. Then in the above position, Kent rolled 5-4.

KG decided that he would eventually need to build his 5-point, so why not now before John had a better board? Bad decision. O'Hagan tossed a 5-2, hitting, Goulding danced and O'Hagan whipped over a 4-cube:

13-point match #2 tied at 2-all. John O'Hagan (Black) redoubles Kent Goulding (White) to 4. **TAKE?**



Goulding took. O'Hagan rolled 5-3, hitting another man. KG was eventually able to anchor on John's 3-point, but he still lost a fluke gammon and trailed 10-2.

[Continued on page 8]

WINNER'S CORNER



Mar.-May 1996

•**South Australian Open** (Adelaide, S. Australia; 31 Mar.)... OPEN (32): 1-Terry Efthimiou, 2-Justin Pengelley.

•**Nation's Capital Spring Open** (Bethesda, MD; 13-14 Apr.): OPEN (20): 1-Joe Friedman, 2-Barry Steinberg, 1C-Brad Paleg, 4-Sam Orandle, 5-Andy Palumbo, 6-Ed Maslansky.

•**Northern Ohio Club Monthly** (Akron, OH; 14 Apr.)... OPEN (11): 1-Joe Miller, 2/3-Mike Rezai / Bob Wilk.

•**NEBC Sunday Monthly** (Cambridge, MA; 14 Apr.)... EXPERT (22): 1-Andy Latto, 2-John Mansey, 3/4-Bill Robertie / Herb Gurland; 1C-Linc Bedell, 2C-Garbis Zerdalian. A DIV. (13): 1-Ernesto Adrienzen, 2-Jim McKenna, 3/4-Ming Lee / Jim Glover; 1C-Ming Lee, 2C-Joe Moore. B DIV. (3): 1-Sam Falkoff.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (San Mateo, CA; 21 Apr.)... OPEN (21): 1-Robert Caradien, 2-Kim Schienberg, 3/4-Ron Karr / Phil Laak; 1C-Elliott Winslow, 2C-Jay Whitehead. INTERMEDIATE (15): 1-Stan Weiss, 2-Tom Henson; 1C-Duane Boeck, 2C-Mark King. BEGINNER (12): 1-Glenn Lipska, 2-Ron Dumont; 1C-Barbara Liston, 2C-Valerie Lea.

•**Tampere GP Open** (Tampere, Finland; 3-5 May)... OPEN (24): 1-Arto Tiainen, 2-Tapio Palmroth; 1C-Risto Ponnio, 2C-Jorma Tattari. SUPER JACKPOT (8): 1-Mika Johnsson. BATTLE OF CITIES: 1-"Periferia" (M.

Laukkanen, H. Lyyjynen, H. Salompaa)

•**3rd New England Backgammon Championships—ABT** (South Lee, MA; 3-5 May)... CHAMPIONSHIP (22): 1-Carl Adamec, 2-Jack Kissane; 1C-Bob Bishop, 2C-Jeff Acierno. INTERMEDIATE (21): 1-Bob Koca, 2-Bob Lumbrá; 1C-Ed Johnson. BEGINNER (8): 1-Adam Tyson, 2-Al Goyburu. DOUBLES (8): 1-Walter Trice (MA) & Larry Liebster (NJ).

•**Northern Ohio Club Monthly** (Akron, OH; 5 May)... OPEN (10): 1-Don Sloan, 2/3-Mary Hickey / Marty Kohler.

•**Milwaukee Sunday Bimonthly** (Milwaukee, WI; 5 May)... OPEN (6): 1-Bob Holyon, 2-Larry Strommen (IN); 1C-Merrill Schrager. LIMITED (8): 1-Marv Arnol, 2-Travis Kane

•**Hong Kong Monthly** (Hong Kong; 6 May) ... OPEN: 1/2-Andre Hoffman / Bai Ling; 1C-Marc Mostacci, 2C-Don Rae. CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Olivia Lee, 2-Nancy Wong; 1C-Max Modesti, 2C-Charles Barguirdjian.

•**Georgia Backgammon Championships—ABT** (Atlanta, GA; 10-12 May)... CHAMPIONSHIP (16): 1-Greg Lilley (VA), 2-Mike Ungerleider (CA); 1C-Ray Gronek, 2C-Larry Taylor. ADVANCED (8): 1-John Brooks (OK), 2-Frank Dickerson (IL), 3-James Roston (NY). LIMITED (4): 1-Greg Bradfield. PEACH CUP: 1-Greg Lilley (VA), 2-Mike Ungerleider (CA). DOUBLES: 1-Homer Hector & Larry Taylor, 2-Randall Witt (TN) & Artie Kamien (MS). BLITZ: 1-Jim Pascoe (CT), 2-Gerry Daniel. GAMMON TRIATHALON: 1-Mike Ungerleider (CA). BOARD GAME TRIATHALON: 1-Dave Cardwell. DICE CUP THROW: 1-Jon Vietor (CA). BLOT PUT: 1-Alan Epstein. RINGS: 1-Frank Dickerson (IL)... *Director Dave Cardwell's Olympic*

theme was appropriate for Atlanta this year.

•**Midtown "Sweet 16" Invitational** (New York, NY; 11 May)... OPEN (16): 1-Gene Gold (NY), 2-Perry Gartner (NJ).

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (San Mateo, CA; 19 May)... OPEN (26): 1-Kim Scheinberg, 2-Tom Henson, 3/4-George Matthews / Larry Mohr; 1C-Odis Chenault, 2C-Gary Friedman. INTERMEDIATE (16): 1-Richard McIntosh, 2-David Feinberg; 1C-Marv Porten, 2C-Duane Fuller. BEGINNER (12): 1-David Nordlinger, 2-Ted Chee; 1C-Shamuel Sharkis, 2C-Kris Thornton.

•**County Cups Trophy Tournament** (Solihull, England; 25-26 May)... OPEN (126): 1-Mardi Ohannessian, 2-Stefan Paliwoda, 3-Paul Lamford, 4-Charlie Hetherington. TOP LADY: Helen Clarke. BETTER-LUCK: Sue Ashton. FRIDAY KNOCKOUT (25): 1-Geoff Oliver, 2-Save Pickard. DOUBLES: 1/2-Jeff Ellis & Jim Moore (Fingers & Thumbs) / Steve Hallett & Alan Greenwood (Old Bolton Bastards)... *BIBA director Michael Crane reports a record crowd.*

•**First Istrian Open** (Parenzo, Croatia; 25-26 May)... MASTER (18): 1-Evert Van Eijck (HOL), 2-Rolf Schreuder (HOL), 3/4-Udo Geif (GER) / Roberto Gobbo (ITA); 1C-Gian Michele D'Onofrio (ITA), 2C-Gianfranco Franceschetti (ITA). INTERMEDIATE (11): 1-Damian Plesec (SLO), 2-Sergio Cagol (ITA); 1C-Andreas Marfori (ITA), 2-Vinko Resnik (SLO). WBF PRESIDENT'S TOURNAMENT (32): 1-Angelo Arena (ITA)... *WBF President Alberto da Pra tells us that the 2nd Istrian Open is planned for Parenzo Croatia 16-18 May 1997.*

•**CBOB First Saturday Monthly** (Chicago, IL 1 Jun.)... OPEN: 1/2-Jake Jacobs / Richard Lloyd. Δ

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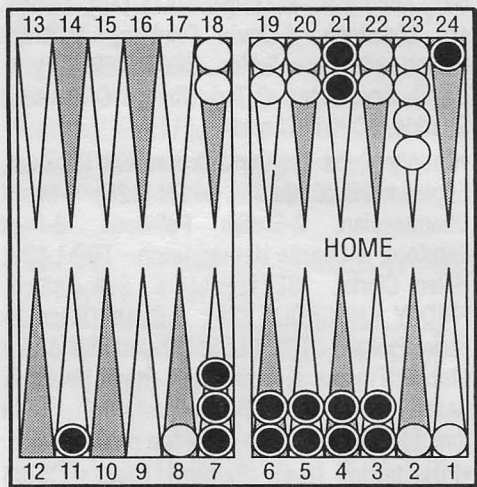
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PROBLEM #224 ANALYZED

by Kit Woolsey

Match to 11-points. Black leads White, 10 to 6, Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-6.**



If gammons mattered, this wouldn't be a problem. Black would quickly make the ace point with two of the sixes. The other two sixes would best be played by bringing both back men out. This play bears down on White's other blot, and at the same time, keeps a foothold in the outfield in case

White rolls a joker from the bar. Going for the blitz with 21/15, 11/5, 7/1(2)* leaves Black more vulnerable to jokers, and for that reason, is wrong.

Since gammons don't matter, there are arguments for holding the five-prime and watching White crumble. If Black is going to try this, there are two approaches. One is to play 21/15(2), 11/5, 7/1*. This puts White on the bar and keeps blitzing possibilities open, while getting most of Black's blots safe.

The other option is the fancy 21/15, 21/9, 11/5. The idea behind this play is that White's aces are very duplicated. Even if White hits, she will have a lot of difficulty bringing everybody up and over the prime. If White doesn't hit, Black will be in excellent shape to win the priming battle.

Is there much danger in the fancy play? Yes there is. White does have a four point board, and that is his main asset. White would like nothing better than to put a couple of Black's checkers on the bar, make a fifth inner board point, and scramble out. White doesn't have much time, but that outfield checker on Black's 8-point may give him enough time to do what has to be done. It isn't worth the risk.

The loose hit with 21/15(2), 11/5, 7/1* suffers some of the same defects. White has good 2s and aces. If White rolls a 2, he has his anchor, and if he rolls an ace he has

the same potential to scramble everybody out while Black is stuck on the bar. Even if White flunks, Black's checkers are too far away to complete the blitz.

The key to this position is to see that White's lifeline is his outfield checker. If Black can pick that checker up, White's army will be split in two, and even if White gets an anchor, her board will crumble immediately if she is unable to get out into the outfield.

In addition, if Black can prevent White from making an anchor and complete the closeout, his winning chances go up considerably. A badly timed ace-point or 2-point game doesn't win very often, but it wins a lot more than a well-timed zero-point game. Black doesn't have to worry much about escaping his last checker. He has enough men in the outfield so he will have plenty of time to roll the necessary three. The obvious blitzing play of 21/15(2), 7/1(2)* is best.

It is often easy to outthink oneself in strong positions such as this one which seem easy to win whatever happens. In most cases, the natural looking play is the best one. Granted the value of blitzing goes way down when gammons don't matter, but if you win a gammon you still win the game. This is an attacking position, and Black should play it that way. Δ

O'HAGAN WINS...

[Continued from page 6]

Although Kent battled back to make a game of it, he eventually lost 13-9.

"I won the close races. I got the joker rolls when I had to have them." So said Chicago Open Champ John O'Hagan while celebrating his victory. John attributed an improvement in his game to the many hours he spends playing JellyFish™ 2.01 at level 7. "It's quite a program. After months of play, I'm only ahead 239-238."

Where will John O'Hagan be playing next? "I'm going to the Michigan Summer Championships." Now that I've won my first tournament, I think the second will be a lot easier."

THE 32-PLAYER Masters Knockout event saw Tony Goble edge 1995 Masters champ Wilcox Snellings (Nevada) in the closest of matches [Ed. note: See "Too Careful" by Jake Jacobs on page 1].

In the all-Illinois Intermediate finals, Bruce Pollack improved on last year's 2nd place finish by defeating Kevin Muench 9-6. Bruce went through the weekend undefeated, garnering a 9-0 record.

The Beginner division saw local newcomer Ron Weiner defeat another Chicagoan Peaches Stewart. And Linda Woods made it a great birthday by teaming with Paul Klein to defeat Abbas Zaltash & Rob Maier in the Doubles.



Bruce Pollack

17TH CHICAGO OPEN

CHAMPIONSHIP (50): 1-John O'Hagan (IN), 2-Kent Goulding (MD), 3-Doug Roberts (MA); 1C-Tak Morioka (IL), 2-Drew Giovanis (FL).

INTERMEDIATE (57): 1-Bruce Pollack (IL), 2-Kevin Muench (IL), 3/4-Reggie Porter (IL) / Ali Haddad (PA); 1C-Jerry Ungar (OH), 2C-Jill Ferdinand (IL).

BEGINNER (13): 1-Ron Weiner (IL), 2-Peaches Stewart (IL).

MASTERS (32): 1-Tony Goble, 2-Wilcox Snellings (NV), 3/4-Jake Jacobs (IL) / Ernest Ho (HK).

DOUBLES (16): 1-Paul Klein & Linda Woods (IL), 2-Abbas Zaltash (PA) & Rob Maier (WV).

BLITZ (64): 1-Bob Glass (CA).

MINI-MATCH (128): 1-John O'Hagan.



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GAMES PEOPLE PLAY: Tourn. Monday, 6:30 P.M. at Alexander's, 3101 E. 79th St., Chicago. J.A. Miller (312/734-9430).

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

SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASSN: Tourn. Wednesday, 6:00 P.M. at Brewhaus, 617 E. Washington, Springfield. Ben Zemaitis (217/483-4028).

WINNETKA BG CLUB: Tournaments Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (847/446-0537).

CENTRAL ILL. BG CLUB: Tournaments Thursday, 6:30 P.M. at River Station, 212 Constitution Ave., Peoria. Linda Woods (309/686-6662).

CHICAGO BOARD OF BACKGAMMON: Daily except Sun., 12:00 to 9:00 P.M. Tourn. 1st Sat., 12:00 at 175 W. Jackson (Suite 1103), Chicago. Dean Muench (312/922-0404).

NORTH CLUB: Daily except Sunday, 1:00 P.M. at 4747 W. Peterson (Suite 2), Chicago. Greg Defotis (312/286-6719).

HEDGING IS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS

by Linda Woods

Earlier this year, I reached the finals of the Captain's Tourney at the Backgammon On Board cruise tournament (19–22 Jan.). I lost the 1-point match to Kati Pratt of Dallas, Texas for a winner-take-all first prize of a \$500 bill. I didn't hedge a penny, so I walked away with nothing.

I caught a lot of flak because of my no-hedge position—everything from being accused of wanting to lead an austere life, to being unsociable, impolite, and just plain stupid. The fact is that I've *never* hedged. I think most people look at hedging from a fiscal perspective; but to me, the money is not my primary motivation for trying to win (though I must admit I've never been in a situation where more than \$1,000 was on the line).

My dictionary defines hedging as:

- "An act or means of preventing complete loss of a bet . . . with a partially counterbalancing or qualifying one,"
- "To protect with qualifications that allow for unstated contingencies or for withdrawal from commitment,"
- "To avoid a rigid commitment by qualifying or modifying a position so as to permit withdrawal," and finally
- "To hide, as in a hedge; skulk."

Well, I'm not into skulking! To me, hedging is a sign that you're considering the possibility of losing—you're allowing self-doubt to creep in. Of course I know in this crazy game of backgammon, losing is always a possibility: the dice are beyond our control. But I think when you've openly acknowledged that defeat is an option, you have psychologically weakened yourself. As the definition says, you're "allowing for withdrawal from commitment."

I refuse not to believe in myself. If I have played my best and lost, then congratulations to my opponent. I take satisfaction in having done all I could do, and in earning the prize I deserve.

When you hedge, you never completely lose, but you never completely win, either. Imagine this exchange in your office the morning after a big tournament:

"I won the tournament and first prize was \$2,000."

"Wow! You won \$2,000!"

"Well, not exactly . . ."

I think half of any battle is to prove your honor to yourself. The other half is to prove your honor to your opponent. And without both, there is no real victory.—Linda Woods

Last month, Central Illinois Club director Linda Woods (with partner Paul Klein) won the Chicago Open Doubles Championship and she didn't hedge a penny.—Ed.



Linda Woods and Paul Klein battle it out in the Chicago Open Doubles Championship.

AMALGAMATION

The Summer Backgammon Tournament in Denmark runs from 2 June to 18 August and is cosponsored by Café Nemo-land. The ad prominently displays Nemo-land "High Life" Marijuana



which should make for some wild cube play... Attention Michigan Summer Championships (4–7 July) players who will be arriving at Detroit Metro Airport and plan to take the shuttle to the Novi Hilton. Change the shuttle phone number in the brochure to 800/488-7433. Also due to a recent price hike, the fare is \$21 one way or \$39 round trip... **Andy Krenitz** (IL) can't stop raving about the movie "Flipper." Go figure... **Alan Steffen** (NY) replaces **Bill Robertie** (MA) as guest lecturer at the big Backgammon Olympiad Venice 1996 (25–30 June). Alan will also be doing closed circuit commentary of the finals . . . unless he's a participant, which is always a good possibility. And our congratulations to Alan and **Lourdes Steffen** who were married in New York on 15 May... Visiting the Chicago Bar Point Club in May: **Gayle & Wally Wolf** (MI), **Jon Vietor** (CA), **Ernest Ho** (Hong Kong), **Bob Koca** (PA), **Walt Swan** (NJ), **Nora Luna** (MA)... Add **Wilcox Snellings** (NV) to the list of master players who have purchased a **Tak Morioka** (IL) (312/465-0675) backgammon board... Once again, **Nick Begakis** was elected President of the Backgammon Association of South Australia... Those of you who played backgammon, chess or poker in Boston or Philadelphia in the 70s and 80s may remember **Dan Harrington**. Dan appears on the 20 May *Forbes* magazine cover and story inside ("Getting Rich Outside Corporate America") about his very successful 1995 where he reported \$1,400,000 in poker earnings to the IRS. Dan is now considered the reigning World Poker Champion. For a copy of his story, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: CHICAGO POINT; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155. Thanks to **Mel Leifer** (MD) who sent us the article... **Bruce Russell** (WI) has heard that Chicago Bulls megastar **Michael Jordan** also plays backgammon. Who's getting his action? Anyone we know? Δ

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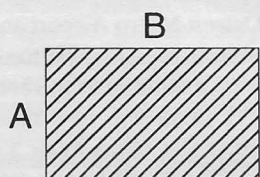
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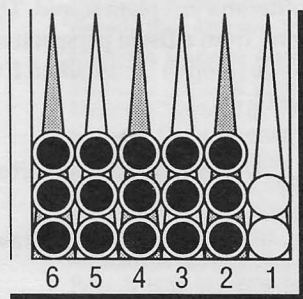
by Duane Jensen

The "golden rectangle" is found in the art and architecture of ancient Egypt and Greece. Artists such as Da Vinci, Dürer, and Seurat, the pointillist, have used this harmonious shape in their drawings and paintings. The golden rectangle is felt by many to be a shape most pleasing to the eye. The golden rectangle is special because its dimensions satisfy this unique ratio:

$$\frac{\text{side A}}{\text{side B}} = \frac{\text{side B}}{\text{side A} + \text{side B}}$$



The closest approximation of the golden rectangle on a backgammon board can be found in the bearoff position shown below:



This 3/5 arrangement of Black's checkers is pleasing and popular because regardless of his next roll, Black will not have to leave a shot. There are hundreds of different bearoff positions which allow Black to

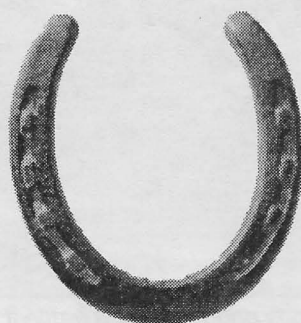
roll once without being forced to leave a shot. Our contest question is:

HOW MANY DIFFERENT BEAROFF POSITIONS CAN YOU CREATE WHICH ALLOW BLACK TO ROLL TWICE WITHOUT BEING FORCED TO LEAVE A SHOT?

You must follow these parameters:

1. Position Black's 15 checkers any way you want in your home board 2 through 6 points.
2. Assume White owns Black's ace point for both of Black's rolls.

Send your submissions by 27 June 1996 to: CHICAGO POINT; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155. You can also fax (312/583-3264) or e-mail chipoint@interaccess.com your results. Ties will be broken by random draw among those sending in the most correct positions. Δ



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