

1998 midwest backgammon championships

## MCCORMICK WINS A NAIL-BITER OVER FRIEDMAN

Holyon, Farjood & Haubert Also Win

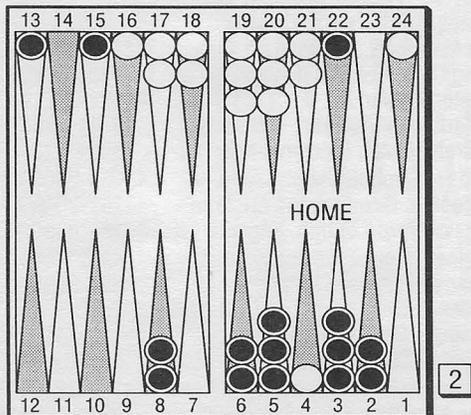
Talk about a close Midwest Championships final match. It took 24 games for Steve McCormick, a 48-year-old pharmacist from Mission, Kansas to defeat Canadian Mike Friedman in a double match-point thriller, 15-14.

This year, the Chicago Bar Point Club's annual extravaganza was held 20-22 March at the Radisson Hotel in Lisle, Illinois. 167 players participated in the main events, including sellout 64-player fields in the Championship and Advanced divisions.

Superstars didn't shine at the MBC this year. Of the individually-auctioned players (Mike Senkiewicz, Doug Roberts, Kent Goulding, Frank Talbot, Nick Ballard, Art Benjamin, Neil Kazaross and Malcolm Davis), only Malcolm Davis managed two wins before elimination. This opened the drawsheet for McCormick and Friedman: two fine players in their own right.

Sunday's 15-point showdown began at 3:00 P.M. The match was tied at 2-2, 3-3, and 5-5 before Steve slowly built up a 12-9 lead. Ahead 12-10, the following potential swing position arose:

15-point MBC finals. Steve McCormick (Black) leads Mike Friedman (White), 12 to 10. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-4**



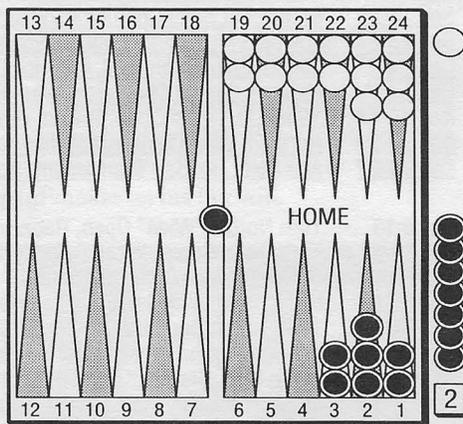
Steve played 22/16\*, 15/11, rejecting



1998 Midwest Champ Steve McCormick (left) with runner-up Mike Friedman (right).

the double hit. Mike rolled a dancing number, but was eventually able to anchor on the 4-point. After McCormick had borne off seven men, Friedman hit a final shot and ended up winning the game, but not before some nifty play:

15-point MBC finals. Steve McCormick (Black) leads Mike Friedman (White), 12 to 10. **WHITE TO PLAY 1-1.**

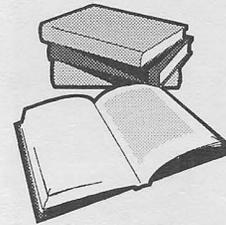


Here, Mike correctly took off three men and played 23/24. Steve hit with 5-1 and Mike responded with 5-5. What's your move here?

After much deliberation, Friedman opted for B/5/10, 19/24 (2)\*—a very fine choice. Mike reasoned that if he simply played the checker around to the 20-point, Steve would be out and running with any 6. By shifting, Mike would have direct shots back at Steve if he entered with 6-3, 6-4 or 6-5 (and combos following 6-1 and 6-2).

With the score tied at 13-13, Mike had the best of it and was bearing off for an

[Continued on page 9]



## Winning with the Doubling Cube

Reviewed by Jeremy Bagai

*Backgammon: Winning with the Doubling Cube* by Peter Bell, 196 pages, softbound. Copyright © 1997 by the Gammon Press. Price: \$30.

The ad on the back of *Inside Backgammon* reads, "...Peter Bell explains the secrets behind the doubling strategy of the masters," and, "*Winning with the Doubling Cube* is a groundbreaking book that should be part of every player's library."

More accurate would be, "Peter Bell's new book summarizes the rudiments of doubling theory for money play only."

In its favor, there isn't any other single book that does this. None of the popular books for beginners (Magriel's *Backgammon*, Jacoby and Crawford's *The Backgammon Book*, Heyken and Fischer's *The Backgammon Handbook*) cover cube topics on the order of big-vs.-small market losers, or playing on for an unlikely gammon when you have no market regaining sequences.

These are important concepts that should be mastered by all aspiring players. I learned them by reading and rereading the more advanced books by Kleinman, Robertie, Woolsey, and, more recently, the excellent works of Ortega. There is no question that these books will take you much farther than will Bell's—but they will also require a much greater investment of time, effort, and money. If you are a beginner (or are teaching one), *Backgammon: Winning with the Doubling Cube* may be the right book for you.

The table of contents is less than wonderfully descriptive, so here is a rundown of topics covered in the first five chapters:

- Rules of the cube, including the Jacoby Rule and beavers
- Basic probabilities and counting shots

[Continued on page 5]

# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

## EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Bill Davis

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

Tel: 773/583-6464 ♦ Fax: 773/583-3264

E-mail: [chipoint@interaccess.com](mailto:chipoint@interaccess.com)

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

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

**Harry Cohn (IL)**      **Danny Kleinman (CA)**  
**Carol Joy Cole (MI)**    **Laila Leonhardt (DEN)**  
**Jake Jacobs (IL)**      **Walter Trice (MA)**  
**Duane Jensen (MN)**    **Kit Woolsey (CA)**

All rights reserved. You may copy any of this for noncommercial purposes as long as you give full credit to "CHICAGO POINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504, Chicago, IL 60659-3155." You may not reproduce any part of this publication on the internet or via other electronic media without the express-written consent of CHICAGO POINT.

CHICAGO POINT is published monthly. The subscription rate is \$30/12 issues (\$40 international airmail in USD check drawn on U.S. bank).

**Advertising Rates:** 2 3/8" x 3 1/4" = \$40. 1/4 page = \$70. 1/2 page = \$115. Full page = \$200. If the ad is not "camera ready," request layout and typesetting for an additional charge.

## LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT  
3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504  
Chicago, IL 60659-3155

E-mail: [chipoint@interaccess.com](mailto:chipoint@interaccess.com)

## REACTION TO THE CONTROVERSY

The intents-trial Danny Kleinman gave "Black" (H. Johanni) was nonsensical speculation and completely inappropriate. What Johanni did in the Turkish Superjackpot [See issue 106—Ed.] was inadmissible and indefensible. But one thing it wasn't for sure: cheating (dishonest practice in DK's euphemistic vocabulary).

"The kibitzer (Paul Magriel) was blameless," Danny writes. I was speechless, as I read that, not believing my eyes. Any spectator interference in the game is inadmissible (and prohibited), and there is no excuse and no justification for it—not even DK's nebulous speculations.

If there is something to speculate about, it is "White's" (M. Svobodny's) behavior:

1. He is a professional. He knew (at least he is supposed to know) that by rolling the dice, he condones Johanni's play.
2. The "joke" was brought to his attention

[Continued on page 3]

## 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

E-mail: [cjc@flint.org](mailto:cjc@flint.org)

\* Denotes new or revised listing

## NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Apr 11	Nation's Capital Spring Day Tourney, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Apr 11*	NetGammon Easter Tournament, via computer	<a href="mailto:hn@goto.fr">hn@goto.fr</a>
Apr 14-19	Worldwide Twin Championships, Four Queens Hotel, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025
Apr 16	Connecticut Monthly Tourney, Stromberg Technologies, Southington, CT	203/592-9207
Apr 18	Springfield Series Grand Finale, Parkers Sports Bar, Springfield, IL	217/483-4028
Apr 19	Backgammon by the Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA	408/688-9722
Apr 19	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	508/829-3283
Apr 23*	Special Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Apr 25	Atlanta Club Monthly Tournament, Tony's Grille, Roswell, GA	770/333-1876
Apr 26	Ace Point Sunday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
Apr 26	28th Annual Willowbank Tournament, Soules' Home, Shelburne, VT	802/985-3932
Apr 29	Dr. Bob's "Sweet 16" Invitational, New York Chess & BG, New York, NY	800/520-1809
May 1*	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer	<a href="mailto:tournaments@cyberarts.com">tournaments@cyberarts.com</a>
May 3	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Belden Commons Tavern, Canton, OH	330/966-2811
May 3	Sunday Bimonthly Tournament, John Hawks Pub, Milwaukee, WI	414/463-2498
May 15-17	<u>41st Gammon Associates Invitational, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
May 17*	Backgammon by the Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA	408/688-9722
May 17*	New England Bonus Tournament, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	508/829-3283
May 21*	Connecticut Monthly Tourney, Stromberg Technologies, Southington, CT	203/592-9207
May 21*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
May 22-25	<u>19th Chicago Open, Wyndham Hamilton Hotel, Itasca, IL</u>	<u>847/674-0120</u>
May 30*	Dr. Bob's "Sweet 16" Invitational, New York Chess & BG, New York, NY	800/520-1809
May 31*	Ace Point Sunday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
May 31*	Atlanta Club Monthly Tournament, Tony's Grille, Roswell, GA	770/333-1876
Jun 5-7*	<u>Empire State Championship, Red Men's Party House, Rochester, NY</u>	<u>716/663-7447</u>
Jun 7*	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyway's Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/583-6464
Jun 12-14	<u>1998 Georgia Championships &amp; Peach Cup, Atlanta, GA</u>	<u>770/333-1876</u>
Jul 1*	Michigan Summer Warm-Up Tourney, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI	810/232-9731
Jul 2-5	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jul 11-12	Nation's Capital Summer Open, Promenade Cardroom, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Jul 18*	Hawthorne Backgammon Classic, Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL	773/583-6464
Jul 31-Aug 2	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY</u>	<u>716/442-8221</u>
Jul 31-Aug 9	World Cup VI & U.S. Open, Harvey's Hotel Addison, Dallas, TX	301/299-8265
Sep 4-7	<u>46th Indiana Open, Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN</u>	<u>317/255-8902</u>
Sep 18-20	<u>Minnesota State Championships, Minneapolis Athletic Club, MN</u>	<u>612/378-1536</u>
Sep 25-27*	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Towpath Inn, Turin, NY</u>	<u>716/442-8221</u>
Oct 2-4*	<u>Illinois State Champs &amp; America Cup, Holiday Home, Rolling Meadows, IL</u>	<u>847/945-7801</u>
Oct 9-11*	<u>Nation's Capital Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD</u>	<u>301/530-0604</u>
Nov 10-14	1998 Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025
Nov 27-29	<u>Northern Ohio Thanksgiving Tournament, Belden Holiday Inn, Canton, OH</u>	<u>330/966-2811</u>
Dec 26-27	<u>Ace Point Holiday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY</u>	<u>212/753-0842</u>

## OUTSIDE USA

Apr 9-13	10th Nordic "Wide" Open, Radisson SAS Hotel, Copenhagen, Denmark	4539-400607
Apr 11-12	High Class Competition, Café Florianihof, Vienna, Austria	43664-2303940
Apr 18-19	Grand Torneo "Citta' di Bologna," Hotel Zola, Bologna, Italy	39338-7187324
Apr 18-19	Hong Kong Invitational, Ladies Recreation Club, Hong Kong	852-28461923
Apr 24-25	The London Cup, Jarvis International Hotel, Watford/London, England	44161-4380966
Apr 25-26	Tampere Grand Prix I, Hotel Rosendahl, Tampere, Finland	35850-5930139
Apr 25-26*	Berlin Cup, Uferlos & Café Belmont, Berlin, Germany	49302-832916
Apr 27-May 3	4th EBN Mayday Tournament, San Juan los Terreros, Almeria, Spain	3450-1330009
May 3*	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Scallywags, Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
May 9-10	County Cups Trophy, Stakis Birmingham Metropole, Birmingham, England	44152-2546993
May 28-31*	Freixenet Tournament, Helsinki Sporting Club, Helsinki, Finland	35850-68061
May 29-31*	The Staines Trophy, Grand Hotel Leicester, England	44152-2721630
May 30-31*	Schwaben-Cup Turnier, Comfort Inn, Gerlingen/Stuttgart, Germany	49711-486190
May 30-31*	7th Torneo della Riviera Adriatica, Le Grand Hotel, Riccione, Italy	39543-28453
Jun 6-7	7th Vienna Meisterschaften Finale, Café Florianihof, Vienna, Austria	43664-2303940
Jun 13-14*	Hilton Trophy, Stakis Birmingham Metropole, Birmingham, England	44152-2546993
Jun 27-28*	British Open, Jarvis International Hotel, Watford/London, England	44161-4380966
Jul 3-8	5th German Open, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Jul 9-12	10th City of Venice International Tournament, Venice, Italy	3941-5900769
Jul 10-12*	M-C Warm-Up Tourney, Loews Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco <i>USA contact:</i> 954/527-4033	
Jul 11-12*	Bonus No. 1, Stakis Birmingham Metropole, Birmingham, England	44152-2546993
Jul 13-19	World Championship, Loews Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco <i>USA contact:</i> 954/527-4033	
Aug 8-9*	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Stakis Birmingham Metropole, England	44152-2546993
Aug 14-16*	Franken ganz Open IV, Hotel Schwarzer Adler, Uttenreuth, Germany	49911-737514
Aug 22-24*	Jarvis Trophy, Jarvis International Hotel, Watford/London, England	44161-4380966
Aug 24-30*	2nd Mind Sports Olympiad, Royal Festival Hall, London, England	44171-4859146

# LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

three times: Johanni's own declaration, the kibitzer's intervention, and Johanni's correction of the kibitzer's actions. The only correct action of "White" would have been to continue the game.

In fact, Johanni offered Svobodny 10% of his future winnings as a settlement, but MS refused, insisting on 3-man committee arbitration.

The committee's decision was correct and wise, and even mild (here, maybe less wise) for the kibitzer.—*Dan Frank, publisher of Essential Backgammon, Stuttgart, Germany*

In regards to the Johanni incident, I agree that a fine (perhaps smaller?) was appropriate, but feel it should be paid to the offended party (Svobodny, in this case) rather than randomly distributed to winners of a future tournament. And although Harald was probably just attempting to lighten a stressful situation, his actions forced Svobodny to waste valuable clock

time to evaluate a deliberate misplay, which is where the real offense lies. With no clock in use, I would tend to rule, "no harm, no foul," since Mike could then evaluate the misplay with no penalty.

I also think that Magriel's actions were worthy of a similar fine—again, to be paid to the offended party (Johanni, in this case). Whatever happened to the rules about spectator silence and nonintervention? Paul knows better.

The obvious solution to both problems (clock excluded) is to adopt the "legal plays" rule—now commonly used in money games—requiring the notification and correction of all cube and checker misplays, regardless of intent or favor.—*Dave Cardwell, director, Atlanta Backgammon Association*

I'm pretty disturbed over the affair in Turkey. The ruling was outrageous and Magriel was hardly blameless. I imagine you've received a lot of feedback on this issue.—*Jim Painter, St. Louis, MO*

## LAILA RESPONDS

Dear Pierre: Thanks for not being scared of

the editor's warning about the mathematical analysis used to solve Problem 239. Your letter in last month's POINT disputes my figure for backgammon's lost. You conclude that there are not 5.2%, but only 2.5% BGs lost. Let's just take a look at that.

There are multiple things that can happen. Your conclusion (Black rolls a double except 1-1, White fails to leave Black's home board, and Black bears off two checkers) correctly accounts for 2.5%.

But here is the rest of the story: Black bears off two checkers, White fails to leave, and Black rolls a double except 1-1. This accounts for another 2.5%.

Finally, all the odd situations (like when Black does roll a 1-1 and White fails to enter), account for the remaining 0.2%. So approximately 5.2% backgammons is correct.—*Laila Leonhardt, Chicago, IL*

## TOURNEY THANKS

Thanks for yet another enjoyable Midwest Championships. Everything went very smoothly and having "mathemagician" Art Benjamin perform before the Calcutta set the base for a truly remarkable weekend. I know it takes a lot of work on the part of you and your staff, and just wanted to let you know that it is appreciated.—*Mike Flohr, Bloomington, IL*

## HOW LONG?

I think I started subscribing to the "Bar Point" Newsletter (was that the old name?) in about 1982. As I recall, you were the Editor at that time, also. How long have you been publishing this periodical? Was there a previous editor? Just curious.

[Continued on page 7]



**AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1998**

**AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1998**

**AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1998**

Compiled through 22 March 1998 after 2 tournaments  
(Coming in May: 41st Gammon Assoc.; 19th Chicago Open)

Steve McCormick 22.88	Mike Cyrkiel 5.60	Paul Dibiasse 3.99	Mark Larios 2.15
Bob Glass 17.42	Bill Keefe 5.20	Merrill Schragger 3.20	Bruce Russell 2.08
Frankie Farjood 11.44	Jeff Acierno 5.19	Kim Haubert 3.15	Lenny Loder 2.08
David Wells 11.20	Joe Freedman 4.80	Butch Meese 3.00	Rob Keast 1.55
Mike Friedman 10.40	Denny Leatherman 4.80	John Mazur 2.81	Ken Lazar 1.40
Mike Rezaei 9.59	Mike Hendrikson 4.72	Walt Swan 2.40	Tom Machaj 1.35
Art Benjamin 8.71	Dave Orandle 4.36	Linda Resnicoff 2.39	Ray Bills 1.08
Mike Fujita 7.97	Rob Maier 4.36	Matt Reklaitis 2.39	Boris Mindich 0.70
Bob Holyon 7.00	Chuck Bower 4.16	Hunter Jones 2.36	Jennifer Waller 0.63
Howard Markowitz 6.40	John Brussel 4.16	James Roston 2.16	



**CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB**

**CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB**

**1998 PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**COMPILED**

**THRU 31 MAR.**

Steve Mellen 10.56	Paul Klein 2.64	Paul Baraz 1.76	Roland Dieter 0.64
Laila Leonhardt 8.44	Don Jayhan 2.52	Paul Franks 1.76	Reginald Porter 0.56
Tak Morioka 7.08	Ed Buerger 2.48	Phil Simborg 1.68	Steve Rota 0.56
Joe Wollick 5.24	Richard Stawowy 2.40	Alice Kay 1.36	Sam Pottle 0.48
Gary Kay 4.08	Tim Carroll 2.40	Jerry Brooks 0.96	Rich Gast 0.32
Paul Friedman 4.04	Norma Shyer 2.24	Barry Miller 0.96	Sonia Peacock 0.32
Mary Franks 3.68	Marty Tatosian 2.16	Ed Zell 0.96	Barbara Levinson 0.24
Neil Kazaross 3.68	Bill Davis 1.92	Tim Mabee 0.96	Georgina Flanagan 0.24
Herb Roman 3.40	Joseph Esfahani 1.92	Andy Krenitz 0.88	Arline Levy 0.18
Bill Keefe 3.28	Phyllis Smolinski 1.88	Steve Klesker 0.88	Joann Feinstein 0.18
Rick Bieniak 3.24	Jake Jacobs 1.88	Wendy Kaplan 0.84	Frankie Farjood 0.16
Harry Cohn 3.20			

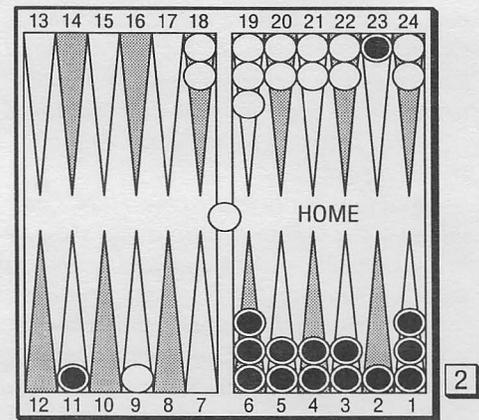
**TAK MORIOKA** came out sizzling in March, winning three tournaments in a row and earning 6.20 points in the process (including a semifinal finish on 31 March). Runner's-up to Tak's Player of the Month title were Mary Franks (3.68) and Neil Kazaross (2.88). Δ

*your move*

**PROBLEM #242**

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

7-point match. Black leads White, 6-3 (post-Crawford). **BLACK TO PLAY 3-2.**



# DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS



© 1998 by Danny Kleinman

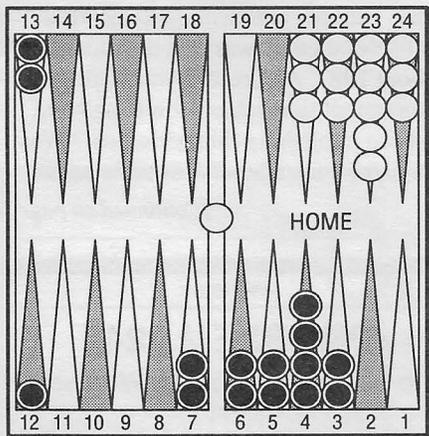
*Editor's note: Last month, Chicago Point corrected an error in the "Frosted Flake" board diagram but neglected to update Danny Kleinman's analysis of the new position. In fairness to Danny, we are re-printing the entire article. Chicago Point regrets the error and any confusion it may have caused.*

## FROSTED FLAKE

**D**ear Miss Lonelyblots: Did anyone ever tell you that backgammon is a cruel and frustrating game?

I was in the finals of my regular club tournament. My opponent proposed that we split the prize money, but because he is only an intermediate and I am championship calibre, I refused. I had nothing but bad luck in the 9-point match but was still tied at 6-6 going into the following game (which I was fortunate enough to turn around via a back-door shot):

Match to 9 points. Black and White are tied 6 to 6. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-3.**



After careful thought, I slotted the 8-point with 13/8 and played 12/9 with the 3. Of course the luckbox rolled 6-2 (hitting), I danced and he picked up another checker to win a fluke gammon and steal the match.

"Why did you give me that voluntary shot?" he asked.

Well that really frosted me. Here's an intermediate asking questions that show he had no concept of the game, and he ends up winning. What a joke!

He obviously had no clue that when he was on the bar, his only rolls that could cause me problems were those containing a 2 or 1-1. And on every one of those 12

shakes (except 6-2), I was clearly better off with a checker on the 8-point. In fact, if he had rolled anything other than 6-2, I could have won with the cube on my next turn.

Getting joked by a rookie really frosts me, Miss Lonelyblots. What relaxation techniques do you use to "dry off" your feelings when the game showers you with unfairness?—Frosted in Frisco

**DEAR SNOWMAN:** Barclay Cooke told us all more than 20 years ago that backgammon is the cruelest game. I've heard tales far more frustrating than yours. Parlays with odds more than 5000-to-1 ("He rolled two double-5s and a double-6s to beat me in the race I thought I couldn't lose!") abound. The odds against "2-6 from the bar" are only 17-to-1, so losses like yours are commonplace. What no whiner seems to realize is that to reach the position from which his opponent "joked him out," he needed some good luck of his own. It's not "unfair" when an opponent also has good luck. If that "frosts" you, switch to chess or checkers.

To avoid feeling "frosted," you need not "relaxation techniques" but a new attitude. Here's how I might "dry off" in the circumstances you describe.

First I'd compliment my opponent. Even if I couldn't find any of his moves or cubes to praise, I could say (sincerely), "Congratulations!" or "Nice match."

Second, I'd feel flattered that the player who had just beaten me respected me enough to inquire about my thinking. At the minimum, I'd answer his question with "I thought I needed to make the 8-point quickly to win."

Third, I'd acknowledge my own fallibility. I might say:

"As I see it now, I shouldn't have left the fly shot. Though you're five times as likely to enter on my 2-point without leaping out to my 8-point, it's much more damaging when you enter and escape.

"I left myself only 6-5, 6-1, 5-5 and 5-1 (seven rolls) to counter your possible 2-6 from the bar. In contrast, 13/5 gives me direct and indirect 5s and 4s (26 rolls) to hit you if you escape. If you enter on my 2-point without escaping, I'll have a powerful redouble. Six rolls (5-4, 3-2, 2-2 and 1-1) complete a 6-prime; another five rolls (5-5, 5-3, and 5-2) make the 2-point; 17 more rolls let me hit loose without breaking my 5-prime. The remaining eight rolls put pressure on you to roll a 6 lest I can pounce on you next turn, and 6-small may still leave you exposed to hit in the outfield. Would you have taken such a redouble? I think not.

"I guess I overlooked the strength of my position. Otherwise I would have redoubled before rolling. For I had better rolls than 5-3: double-5s, 2s or aces, and 5-4. These rolls wouldn't even let you think of taking."

Finally, I'd confess, "Perhaps I was overconfident and overestimated my chances in the match. Why, oh why, didn't I accept your offer to split the prize money?"

Last time I looked, backgammon was still a game. Nobody gets the warm fuzzies from losing. However, a gracious attitude and gracious behavior may bring warm relationships. After all, the others at your club are not only your opponents, they are also your playmates.—Miss Lonelyblots

*Do you have a backgammon-related question for Miss Lonelyblots involving people problems, game etiquette or the play itself? Write: Dear Miss Lonelyblots, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155.*

## CHICAGOLAND BACKGAMMON ALL-TIME TOP 30

Feb. 1975–Dec. 31, 1997

(1764 players have earned points)

Players who would like their individual rating may call Bill Davis at 773/583-6464

1. Tak Morioka .....	520.42
2. Howard Markowitz .....	467.01
3. Bill Davis .....	395.23
4. Yamin Yamin .....	362.40
5. Bobbie Shifrin .....	282.55
6. Don Desmond .....	260.97
7. Joann Feinstein .....	250.23
8. Chris Stanford .....	244.88
9. Jake Jacobs .....	243.36
10. Harry Cohn .....	232.18
11. Sarg Serges .....	227.49
12. Ed Bauder .....	220.22
13. John Demian .....	202.09
14. Dave Cramer .....	201.83
15. Randy Cone .....	199.94
16. Gary Kay .....	199.60
17. Stu Katz .....	197.78
18. Phyllis Smolinski .....	191.37
19. Deeb Shalati .....	190.82
20. Earl Risch .....	187.64
21. Peter Kalba .....	185.58
22. Kent Maynard .....	177.97
23. Don Jayhan .....	176.38
24. Gene Chait .....	170.14
25. Barry Epstein .....	169.74
26. Ed Buerger .....	166.80
27. Phil Martorelli .....	163.47
28. Kathy Rudnick .....	160.28
29. Neil Kazaross .....	159.01
30. Ron Garber .....	158.98

## 'WINNING' REVIEWED...

[Continued from page 1]

- Pip counting
- The doubling window on the last roll
- The Jacoby Paradox
- Types of games
- The gammon/plain game tradeoff
- Recube equity
- Market losers (big and small)
- The doubling window in the midgame
- Playing on for the gammon

These topics are covered in detail. The diagrams are clear and accurate and the main points are highlighted in large boxes. If you aren't crystal clear on these topics now, Bell's book will help you.

My biggest complaint with this part of the book merely concerns Bell's prose style. Apparently he feels the best way to communicate enthusiasm and excitement is by way of the exclamation point, eschewing techniques of understatement or irony. It's not hard to find pages which contain six or more emphatic sentences! I got tired of this quickly! But I digress!

Unfortunately, the book goes downhill from there. Chapter 6, "The Doubling Cube in an Imperfect World," examines the psychology behind the cube. Bell notes that some players will be consistently too conservative in taking cubes while others will be consistently too aggressive:

"When playing such opponents, you can earn some extra money by taking advantage of these tendencies. Simply use a figure other than 75% for your opponent's take point! If he is a conservative taker, you might use 71% or 72%. If he is an aggressive taker, you might use 80% or higher. Once you have a new take point in mind, apply all the doubling theory you know, but with the new take point in place of the 75% figure."

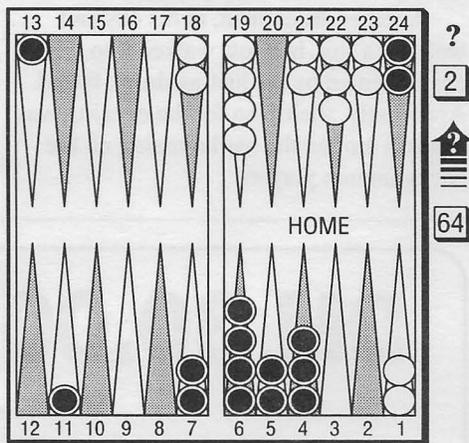
This is very wrong. Consider the extreme examples. Suppose your opponent will pass any race in which he's an underdog. Would you ever want to double him in, giving him the cube in a position where he's winning? Much better to double him out at 51%, taking maximum advantage of his timidity.

Conversely, suppose your opponent will take with 10% winning chances, and presently has 15% in a position of low volatility. Are you really going to risk losing your market (which will gain you only one point), when doubling now nets you an expected 1.4? Losing your market here is a catastrophe. (Bell also horribly misuses the term "Game Theory" in this chapter, confusing it with gamesmanship.)

Chapter 7, "Common Types of Games," outlines the cube strategy appropriate to races, n-roll positions, holding games, blitzes, priming games, and backgames. The first three categories pose no problems for Bell. Races and holding games are simple positions, and simple doubling guidelines such as "Pass races when your pipcount is 12% or more in excess of your opponent's," work fine. They've been around for years. Here they are in one place. (They're all covered in much more detail in Robertie's *Advanced Backgammon*.)

Blitzes, primes and backgames are different, however. There are no truly simple rules about when to double and when to take. This makes the game interesting. Bell attempts to simplify things for the beginner with mixed results. His "blitz count" and "priming count" are reasonable guides for directing the beginner's attention to relevant aspects of a position, but are not really useful for actually making cube decisions. Bell understands this and cautions the reader that they are just guidelines. However, he sometimes forgets his own caveats. Here is Diagram 88, perhaps the biggest mistake in the book:

### Money game. CUBE ACTION(S)?



Bell notes a 25 pip "timing count" advantage to Black and then recommends playing on for the gammon. This is what comes of relying on formulas in priming games. In fact, Black has only a speculative double and White an easy take, losing around 0.8 points per game when holding a 2-cube. With unknowing irony Bell writes, "In the game itself, Black (Robertie) correctly played on."

Bell's *Backgammon: Winning With The Doubling Cube* does what it does well enough. The basics are all here, in one place, and nicely typeset. The book has a clear place in the backgammon library, unlike other recent offerings on the subject which are more often wrong than right.

However, it will disappoint anyone looking for more.

To the advanced player looking for a more meaty review of current thinking in a single volume, I heartily recommend Antonio Ortega's *Fascinating Backgammon*—a wonderfully concise resource covering both cube and checker play for money games and matches.—*Jeremy Bagai* Δ

## Chicago Bar Point Club 1000-to-1 Club

Name	Wins in a Row	Date Completed
David Rubin	11	1 Feb 94
Neil Kazaross	10	8 Feb 94
Phil Simborg	11	5 Apr 94
Frankie Farjood	11	25 Apr 95
Harry Cohn	11	9 May 95
Neil Kazaross	10	19 Sep 95
Neil Kazaross	11	12 Dec 95
Herb Roman	10	11 Aug 96
Andy Krenitz	12	5 Nov 96
Neil Kazaross	10	23 Dec 96
Wendy Kaplan	10	7 Jan 97
Phil Simborg	12	6 May 97
Phyllis Smolinski	10	6 Jan 98
Laila Leonhardt	10	27 Jan 98
Steve Mellen	12	1 Feb 98
Tak Morioka	12	17 Mar 98

Players listed above have won at least 10 matches in a row in Chicago Bar Point Club competition and have earned an engraved doubling cube (courtesy of Larry Strommen) to honor their achievement.



## ILLINOIS ACTION



Bill Davis  
773/583-6464  
Peter Kalba  
773/252-7755

**Tuesday, 6:15 P.M.** at Golden Flame, 6417 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago; 773/792-0424.

**Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON** at Anyway's Chicago Grill & Bar, 5 E. Roosevelt Rd., Oakbrook Terrace; 630/932-9323.

**PUB CLUB:** Tourn. Monday, 7:30 P.M. at The Old Main Inn, 2330 N. Main St., Wheaton. V. W. Zimnicki (630/924-8632).

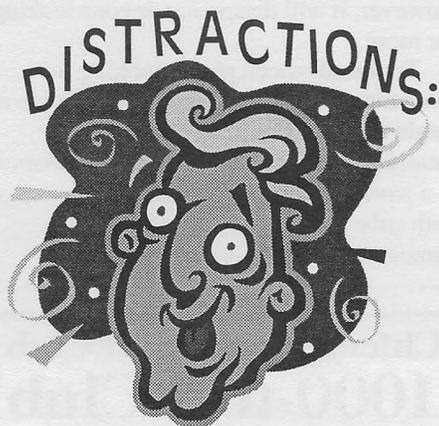
**GAMES PEOPLE PLAY:** Tourn. Monday, 6:30 P.M. at The Clique, 2347 S. Michigan, Chicago. Reginald Porter (773/471-5066).

**BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB:** Tournaments Monday, 6:30 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Gary Daniels (309/452-3034)

**SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASSN:** Tournaments 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 Chibnik (847/446-0537).

**PEORIA BACKGAMMON CLUB:** Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Ed Zell (309/673-7622).



## A Blonde's-Eye View

by Laila Leonhardt

We all know what it feels like to be distracted while playing a tournament match. Little things like your opponent pausing to pick his nose, people standing nearby telling jokes, or your backgammon idol watching your match can affect your concentration.

Different things distract different people. Sometimes a glittering finger ring, whispering kibitzers, or an announcement on the loudspeaker is all that it takes.

As the years pass, we get used to most of these sights and sounds. We start to feel that only an earthquake or fire can distract us. But it is still possible to distract a veteran player.

Many years ago, right after the World Championship in Monte Carlo, a large group of players ventured to St. Tropez to spend a backgammon-playing week in the sun. Here I saw my first example of real distraction. A well-endowed American woman (nope, I will not tell her name) was playing a money-game for decent stakes—topless! Shaking her dice slowly and rhythmically, she totally mesmerized her opponent with the twin dance. (To which I might add, this A-sized blonde followed suit, taking off her T-shirt . . . and losing all her money. So much for distractions!)

I proudly consider myself to belong to the group of players who cannot be easily distracted. But one dark, rainy autumn night in the year of our Lord 1994, I must admit that I totally lost my concentration.

In Denmark's large annual team tournament, each team chooses a pub or restaurant as their "home field." My team had chosen a cozy little bar in the midst of Copenhagen. Before starting my 17-point match, I walked up to the bar to get my usual cappuccino. While waiting for it, a wandering drunk guy looked at me and

loudly said, "Hey!"

I gave him the "get off my case" look, but still politely said "Hi." Then I grabbed the cappuccino, returned to the table and started to play my match.

With the jukebox blaring in the background, the drunk started dancing around the floor between our table and the bar. I didn't pay much attention to him, but when I did glance up to take a peek, he was rubbing his groin and playing with his belt buckle. No, I was not distracted, and continued to play my match.

Suddenly the drunk slammed his bare butt down on our table next to the board. He began sliding it back and forth creating the same sounds as when polishing a window. I sent an SOS to the bartender, who appeared to be enjoying the drunk's show too much to stop him. I pleadingly looked at my opponent, who with a huge smile just shrugged his shoulders. For what seemed like forever, I played my match with one hand, and shielded my view with the other. Talk about a serious distraction!

Two years later at the same pub, I faced another serious distraction—very serious. On that fateful evening, 30 backgammon players, making up three home teams and three guest teams, were present.

Another drunk man, in his 40s and wearing a suit, had just walked into the bar accompanied by his just-as-drunk friend. Apparently, their plan for the evening was to stroll around the bar harassing all the backgammon players.

I had finished my match and was playing a friendly money-game with a teammate on a table in the middle of the room. This drunk guy kept walking up behind me, leaning over my shoulder and making comments about the game. I started out by politely asking him to step away and stop disturbing us, but he kept coming back.

At some point, he let his hand run over my neck and through my hair. I immediately responded, jumping out of my chair and yelling at him. The guy left and the game continued. After about 10 minutes, it seemed clear to me that he was gone, so I was able to become totally absorbed in the game.

While pondering a tough recube, I heard a sound to my left. I turn my head and "SLAM!"—the same drunk guy whacked me across the face. This forced my already-turned head further to the left causing a crunching sound in my neck. 30 backgammon players immediately jumped the guy and held him down until the police arrived. An ambulance arrived shortly thereafter to take me to the hospital.

Five weeks in a neck-collar from lower lip to the chest with a metal bar down the neck; that was the result of this "distraction." I am a tough cookie but now when I play in a bar, I generally choose to sit with my back to a wall!

Still, what bothers me the most about that evening was not knowing whether that tough recube was a take or a drop! Δ



**DM 30.000,- ADDED**

**5th German Open**

**3-8 July 1998**

**Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen  
Brakel, Germany**

**Infobox for brochure:  
Germany (49) 521-64314**

## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

I must have over a decade of issues saved in the garage. I still read them religiously every month as they come. —  
*Martin Brown, Austin, TX*

*Thanks for the compliments, Marty. We have written a Chicago-based newsletter (NBL, Gammon's of Chicago, Chicagoland BG Newsletter, CHICAGO POINT) since 1977. The number of this month's problem is the same as the number of issues we have edited: 242.*

*But we still need to improve our proofreading and vow to do a better job. Last month, we printed the wrong roll to Kit Woolsey's analysis (should have been "Black leading White, 6 to 5, Crawford. Black to play 6-1"), and mixed up a diagram in the "Dear Miss Lonelyblots" column (reprinted correctly this issue).*

*In fact, better proofreading is our resolution for 1998 effective immediately! We know mistakes will happen. We just want to drastically reduce them!—Ed.*

### CHOUETTE QUESTION

Last month, we happened into a ruling dispute regarding a 4-player chouette. We realize that there are no hard and fast international rules for chouette and everyone can make their own rules. But we didn't foresee this situation and now we would like to know how most clubs and groups of national tournament players rule on the following situation:

- Player B is in the Box
- Crew player C1 is captain of the crew
- Crew players C2 and C3 are next in line respectively when the captain either moves up to the box with a win or falls to the bottom of the list with a loss
- In mid-game, the box doubles
- Captain C1 drops and so does crew player C2
- Crew player C3 takes, and defeats the box

The question is that of succession.

1. Who moves up to the box? Does player B stay in the box because he was not defeated by captain C1?
2. If player B retains the box (even though he has just been defeated), who does he play—C3 who has just defeated him, or C2 who is next in line in the crew list?
3. If player B must leave the box, doesn't C3 take the box position and play C2?

I would also like to know the rational of the answers. Many thanks.—*John Ward, Sarasota FL* Δ

who did what

## WINNER'S CIRCLE



Feb.—Apr. 1998

•**1997 Argentine Championship** (Buenos Aires, Argentina)... CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS: 1-Daniel Priani, 2-Carlos Szechet. JUNIOR FINALS: 1-Pablo Brandwein, 2-Alberto Kamerian... *This year, the Argentina BG Association plays every Monday at Pueblo Chico and every Wednesday at Pitágoras, both in Buenos Aires.*

•**NIBC Sunday Monthly** (Cambridge, MA; 8 Feb.)... EXPERT (20): 1-Marty Storer, 2-Jim Kasarjian, 3/4-Evan Diamond / Peter DeWolf; 1C-Seth Towle, 2C-Herb Gurland. A DIV. (21): 1-Roy Chatalbash, 2-Paul Sciaraffa, 3/4-Paul Chatalbash / Doreen Johnson; 1C-John Lorenz, 2C-Joe Moore.

•**Hong Kong Monthly** (Hong Kong; 9 Feb.)... OPEN: 1-Gregg Westrick, 2-Patrice Hattu; 1C-Sunil Balani, 2C-Ernest Ho. CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Charles Barguidjian, 2-Asdis Gudmann; 1C-Nancy Wong, 2C-Olivia Lee.

•**2nd Warsteiner Cup** (Brakel, Germany; 27 Feb.-1 Mar.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (64 incl. reentries): 1-Peter Heitmüller, 2-Peter Van Rooy (NL), 3-Gordon Cross, 4-Wolfgang Griese; 1C-Andreas Märtens, 2C-Albert Frommherz; 1LC-Torsten Haase. INTERMEDIATE (32): 1-Konstantin Bondar, 2-Thomas Meyer (SWIS); 1C-Achim Müller, Georg Minicki; 1LC-Bright Scheuerling. BEGINNER (15): 1-Volker Reichberg, 2-Rikke Bodholdt (DK); 1C-Irina Riskin; 1LC-Anja Lünnermann. SUPER JACKPOT: 1-Mario Kühl, 2-Gordon Cross. GO KART: 1-Peter Van Rooy (NL), 2-Oliver Werthmüller (SWIS), 3-Jochen Lücke.

•**Clarine's Beverly Hills Monthly** (Beverly Hills, CA; 28 Feb.)... OPEN (12): 1-John Rockwell, 2-Joseph Bina.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Special** (San Francisco, CA; 28 Feb.)... OPEN (19): 1-Rawlin Pullen, 2-Ron Kaar, 3/4-Mike Colgan / Kit Woolsey; 1C/2C-Karen Colgan / Doug Wilson. INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Mo Wasley, 2-Rob Fulop; 1C-Joan Clark. BEGINNER (5): 1/2-Dave Hurley / Sherry Dumont.

•**Atlanta Backgammon Assoc. Monthly** (Roswell, GA; 28 Feb.)... OPEN: 1-Bob Wilensky, 2-Randy Sloan, 3-Kelly Williams... *The ABA Club Championship results for 1997 were: 1-Dave Cardwell, 2-Bob Wilensky, 3/4-Homer Hector / Stuart Thomson.*

•**Scottish Open 1998** (Dunblane, Scotland; 28 Feb.-1 Mar.)... OPEN (38): 1-Neil Webb, 2-David Hale, 3/4-Corinne Sellens / Ed Perry; 1C-Uldis Lapikens, 2C-John Slattery; 1LC-Lynne Sim, 2LC-Bob Parmley. HAGGIS (26): 1-Richard Granville, 2-Jeff Barber. FRIDAY KO (28): 1-Richard Granville, 2-Simon K. Jones. SUNDAY WIND-DOWN (9): 1-Jens Neregaard, 2-Dod Davies.

•**Hong Kong Monthly** (Hong Kong; 2 Mar.)... OPEN: 1-Steve Nelson, 2-Jerry Godsey; 1C-Pierre Zakia (FRA), 2C-Jake Jacobs (US).

CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Jon Johnsson, 2-Chris Roberts; 1C-Jean Richard, 2C-Nancy Wong.

•**Grand Prix de Lugano** (Lugano, Switzerland; 4-8 Mar.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (30): 1-Giammichele D'Onofrio (ITA), 2-Mario Sequeira (POR), 3/4-Guido Flamigni (ITA) / Christian Liebe-Harkort (GER); 1C-Heindrik Muysers (GER), 2C-Carlo Facchetti (ITA); 1LC-Claus Weissbarth, 2LC-Raffaello Gatti (SWIS). INTERMEDIATE (18): 1-Roland Michel (SWIS), 2-Walter Stein (USA), 3/4-Reto Grüter (SWIS) / Sergio Corrias; 1C-Herbert Bornand (SWIS), 2C-Roberto Gobbo (ITA); 1LC-Lucas Curtis (USA), 2LC-Bambi De Bruin (SPA/USA). AMATEUR (12): 1-Carlo Melzi (ITA), 2-Felix Wirth (Swis); 1C-Roberto Biagiotti (ITA); 1LC-Fabiano Ceresa (SWIS). SUPERJACKPOT: Nino Di Bella (ITA), Dag Ekmark (Norway). DOUBLES (Raymond Weil). 1-Michael Jordan (USA/SWIS) N.Kazaross/R.Gatti, 2-Tübingen (GER) H.Muysers/C.Liebe-Harkort. TEAM EVENT (Splendide Royal): 1-Time To Lose (Switz./Italy/Italy) O. Egger / R. Gobbo / C.Melzi, 2-Cherry Casino (Ger./Port. / Russia) N. Sallamzy / M. Sequeira / Y. Akopov. SWAROVSKY (18): 1-Christian Liebe-Harkort (GER), 2-Andrea Sacha Togni (SWIS). WARM-UP Grand Hotel Eden 1st: Ronald Reinhardt (Germany).

•**Inner Table Inaugural Tournament** (Leicester, England; 6-8 Mar.)... OPEN (32): 1-Paul Barwick, 2-Jim Johnson; 1C-Thomas Connor, 2C-Uldis Lapikins. SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT (24): 1-Roger Porter, 2-Kate Porter; 1C-Geoff Oliver, 2C-Mardi Ohannessian.

•**Second Mountain Open** (Kranjska Gora, Slovenia; 6-8 Mar.)... MASTER (19): 1-Gordan Markotic (CRO), 2-Stefan Parlow (AUS); 1C-Walter Jarc (CAN); 1LC-Alfredo Sperti (ITA). CHAMPION (8): 1-Damjan Plesec (SLO), 2-Ingeborg Wais (AUS); 1C-Johann Thalwitzer (AUS); Ladies Prize: Ingeborg Wais (AUS). INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Maria Croce (ITA), 2-Gisela Nowak (AUS); 1C-Gay Roberts (UK); 1LC-Luis Andrada (ARG); Ladies Prize: Maria Croce (ITA). WARM-UP (19): 1-Gordan Markotic (CRO). 1-POINT: 1-Mirco Zurla (ITA). DOUBLES: 1-Etmayer/Higatsberger (AUS).

•**Springfield Series #5** (Springfield, IL; 7 Mar.)... OPEN (12): 1-Jeff Anderson, 2-Greg Tomlin; 1C-Larry Whittenburg, 2C-Ben Zemaitis; 1LC-John Jennings.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (San Mateo, CA; 15 Mar.)... OPEN (19): 1-Kit Woolsey, 2-Mike Fujita, 3/4-Julius High / Larry Mohr; 1C/2C-Nick Ballard / Beth Skillman. INTERMEDIATE (12): 1-Danilo Dacosta, 2-Brian Farr; 1C-Claudia Imatt, 2C-Jim Mason. BEGINNER (4): 1-Brad Vogt, 2-Kathy May.

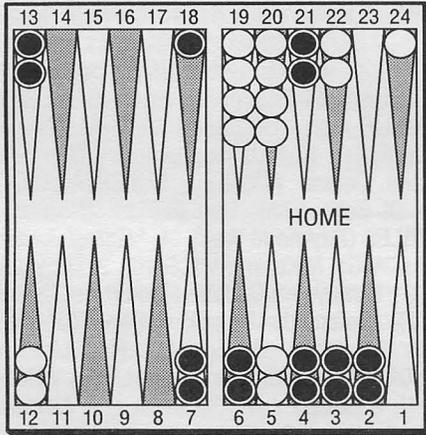
•**Clarine's Beverly Hills Monthly** (Beverly Hills, CA; 28 Mar.)... OPEN (14): 1-Mike Fujita, 2-Joe Russell.

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 5 Apr.)... OPEN (19): 1/2-Jake Jacobs / Val Zimmnicki, 3/4-Tak Morioka / Ken Bond; 1C/2C-Mary Franks / Steve Mellen. INTERMEDIATE (15): 1-Phyllis Smolinski, 2-Jannica Tornqvist (Sweden), 3/4-Tim Carroll / Alice Kay; 1C/2C-Marc Rosset / Sam Pottle (WI). Δ

## PROBLEM #240 ANALYZED

by Walter Trice

13-point match. Black trails White, 11 to 9. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-2.**



The key to Problem #241 is that White won't always hit. Suppose Black plays 18/16, 13/11 with his 4-2 and White rolls a 4-2 of her own. Then White should pass up the hit and quietly build her home board with 5/1, 5/3. Hitting with 13/9\*, 5/3, leaving a direct return, three blots, and an inferior home board is too risky. White may get a better opportunity to hit later on. Furthermore she is winning the race (117 to 130 in the diagram) and she rates to win the game without hitting.

Since White will (or should!) ignore

many of the possible hits, Black can play boldly, preserving his positional assets and putting maximum pressure on White. He has no reason to consider plays that trash his home board or break anchor. Black would also like to keep the 7-point, which has long term value as pressure point and landing point. By default, the midpoint has to go.

Thus there are three plays to consider:

- (A) 13/7
- (B) 13/9, 18/16
- (C) 13/9, 13/11

As we have seen, White will prefer a safe play to a risky hit. Since 6 is the only number White cannot play safely in her home board, 6 is the number Black should *not* allow her to hit with. Therefore the correct play is (B) 18/16, 13/9.

If this reasoning does not yet make the superiority of play (B) evident, check out White's numbers after plays (A) and (C). They consist of rolls without a 6, all of which could be played safely, and rolls with a 6, all of which *hit* and 5 of which *hit and cover*.

Now consider White's numbers after play (B). The rolls without a 6 still play well. Some even hit in the outfield and cover the ace point. The 6s, though, except for 6-6, are all bad for White. None of them let her hit and cover. 6-3 is especially wretched: White can't even hit. With 6-2 and 6-5, White can hit, but she must break anchor to do so. After any of the 10 weak 6s, Black has a double at the given match score. When White breaks anchor to hit, her take is rather close. Δ

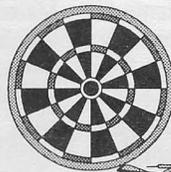
## AMALGAMATION

Apologies to POINT readers who were puzzled by the incorrect posting of the roll for **Kit Woolsey's** solution to Problem #240. It should have been: Match to 7 pts. Black leads White, 6 to 5, Crawford. Black to play 6-1. Apologies also to Kit!... Everybody gets a fair shake at New York Chess & Backgammon, thanks to their new "Baffle Boards." Director **Steve Manning** says his new non-folding board baffles the dice without the use of a mechanical box. The secret is in the bouncy playing surface—the dice bounce and roll, yet the checkers slide beautifully. Price: \$375. For info, call Steve at 212/302-5874... Get-well wishes to **Michael Plog** (IL), recovering from a heart attack that kept him from attending the Midwest Champs. Also recovering: Winnetka Club director **Trudie Chibnik** who sliced her thumb with a boning knife while cutting flowers. Yikes!... Did you find a brown backgammon set at the Midwest Champs? If so, contact the POINT. It belongs to **Jim Opre** (IL)... **Tony Foster**, Secretary of the Southport BG Club in the UK would like POINT readers to check out: [www.user.globalnet.co.uk/~sbclub](http://www.user.globalnet.co.uk/~sbclub)—the club's new website... Following her Pig-mistress duties at the Midwest Champs, **Dru Heggen** (IL) ran in the Los Angeles Marathon 29 March (her birthday) and placed 27th out of 500 entrants in her age category. She covered the 26.2 miles in 4:03... Any designers out there? The Twin Cities Backgammon Club is looking for a new logo. Their old logo showed double-2 dice (representing Minneapolis/St. Paul). Now director **Steve Maas** is offering a \$25 first prize (and immortality!) for the best redesign. Mail to Steve at 841 20th Ave. SE; Minneapolis, MN 55414 or e-mail CHICAGO POINT... Condolences on the passing of Games People Play founder **J.A. Miller's** mother and Peoria Club director **Ed Zell's** father. Also on the tragic death of **Don Parker, Sr.**, a well-known player in New York and Vermont who was trapped in his business when it burned to the ground... **Patrick Gibson** has made arrangements with the Ramada Inn of L.A. to accommodate G/A 41st invitational players (15-17 May) at \$50/night. Call him at 818/901-0464... **Marta Hilworth** (IN) is a fine backgammon player, but her real talent is in Bingo. She can play 140 boards at one time!... Former Ace Point (NY) owner **Michael Valentine** invites everyone to The Oasis of Las Vegas, his new game club in Nevada. He offers a haven for all types of gamers. Games include chess, bridge, scrabble, dominoes, backgammon and table tennis. Drop in at 2214 S. Rainbow Blvd. or call 702/362-0606... Thanks to **Burt Hochberg** for his nice mention of CHICAGO POINT in the June *Games Magazine*... We'll have lots of new clubs to tell you about next issue... "And Pipcelot saw the checkers were lonely; so he created a raised area whereupon they could dance."—**Danny Kleinman** Δ

## The Oasis of Las Vegas

The non-gambling club for non-casino games.

Chess Tournament  
Every 2nd & 4th Saturday  
7:00 pm  
\$20 entry fee • 80%



Backgammon Tournament  
Every 1st & 3rd Friday  
7:00 pm  
\$20 entry fee • 80%

**Michael Valentine, Proprietor**

2214 South Rainbow Blvd. • (Corner of Rainbow & Sahara)  
Las Vegas, NV 89102 • 702-362-0606

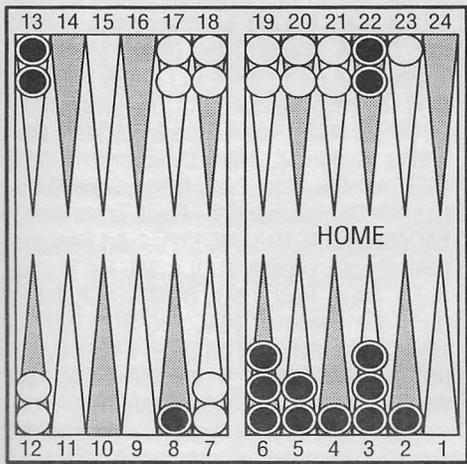
## MCCORMICK WINS MBC...

[Continued from page 1]

undoubled gammon and the match. But Steve managed to save the game with a timely 6-6.

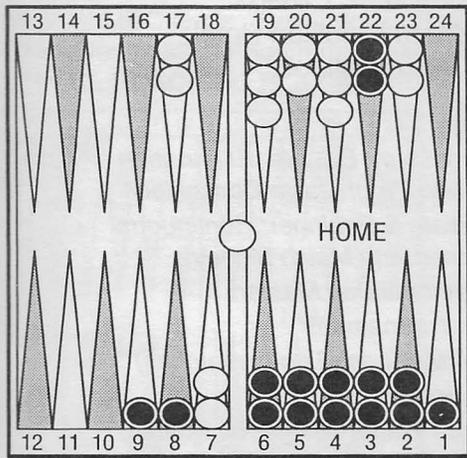
Steve won the next game to set up a double match-point confrontation. 18 rolls into the game, it looked like Mike would prevail... but of course this is backgammon:

15-point MBC finals. Steve McCormick (Black) vs. Mike Friedman (White). Tournament double match-point.  
**WHITE TO PLAY 4-3. THEN BLACK ROLLS 1-1.**



Mike had little choice with the 4-3, playing 12/19. Steve's 1-1 was golden, allowing him to hit and built an instant 5-point board. But there was still play remaining. Three rolls later:

15-point MBC finals. Steve McCormick (Black) vs. Mike Friedman (White). Tournament double match-point.  
**BLACK TO PLAY 4-1.**



Steve opted for (22/18, 2/1). In post-tourney analysis by McCormick, he said that the JellyFish position analyzer didn't

even list his play. But in trial runs, JF says 22/18, 2/1 is best by a clear margin!

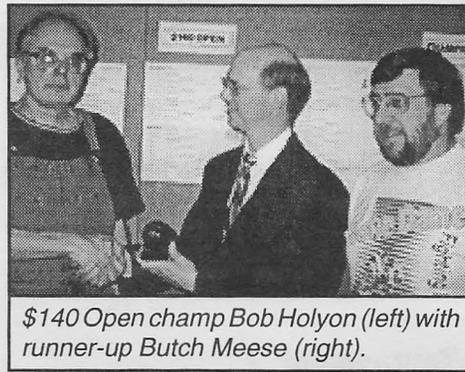
Mike danced, Steve then closed his board and was home free.

Steve claims to have put himself through college playing backgammon, yet following graduation, his focus switched to chess. He won the Missouri State Chess Championship in 1980. McCormick is now back to backgammon and acknowledges FIBS and JellyFish as valuable tools for improving one's game.

"Winning the Midwest Championships was a tremendous thrill," said Steve. "But I know you have to have some luck to win these things."

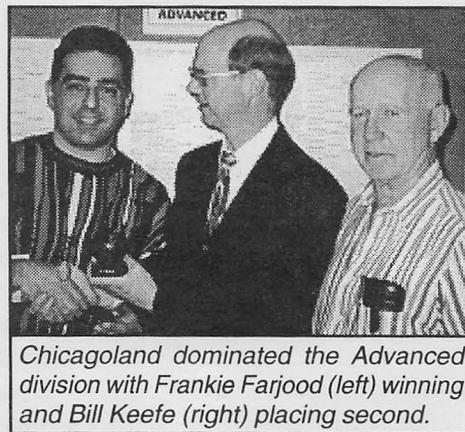
You also have to play well. Congratulations to our newest champion.

Kudos also to Milwaukee's Bob Holyon who went through the \$140 Open division double elimination bracket without a hitch, besting Hoosier Club director Butch Meese for the trophy.



*\$140 Open champ Bob Holyon (left) with runner-up Butch Meese (right).*

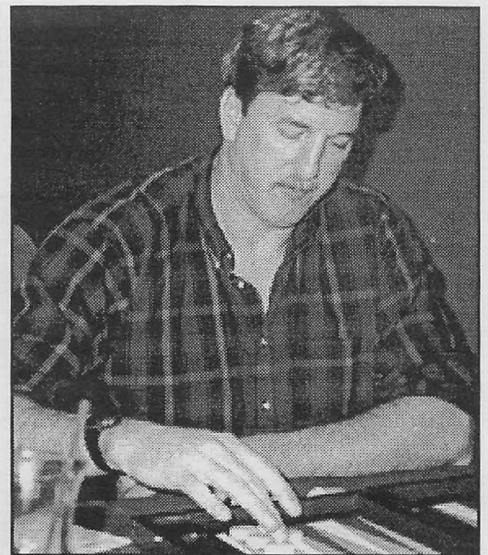
The all-Chicagoland Advanced finals was between two Bar Point Club regulars, Frankie Farjood and Bill Keefe. Congrats to Frankie on his big win.



*Chicagoland dominated the Advanced division with Frankie Farjood (left) winning and Bill Keefe (right) placing second.*

And in the Limited division, Internet player Kim Haubert (Fremont, OH) defeated Tom Machaj (Fitchburg, WI) 11-10 to capture his first-ever regional tourney.

In the Championship Doubles, it was Paul Klein (IL) and Laila Leonhardt (Den-



*Limited champion Kim Haubert.*

mark) over Alice Kay (IL) and Walter Trice (MA). The Intermediate Doubles title went to Jay Ward and Mark Ryan (IL) ahead of Mike Cyrkiel and Mike Cyrkiel, Jr. (IN).



*Championship Doubles victors Laila Leonhardt and Paul Klein.*

MBC side events were particular interesting this year. Lucky Nelson (IL) won the 3-Dice Gammon event with a set of triple-5s on the last shake. Larry Leibster (NJ) took the Blitz tourney. The Backgammon-to-Lose event was won by Art Benjamin (CA). Art also grabbed a \$500 bonus prize in the Domino-Gammon tournament where memory played a key role.

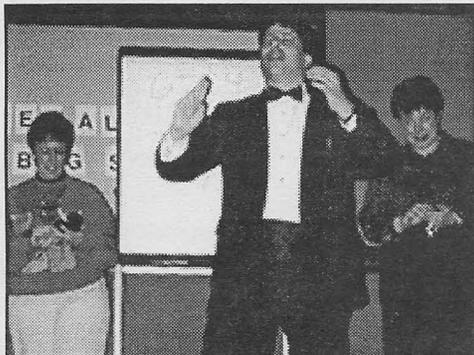
After his performance at the Calcutta Auction, it was obvious that Art had the advantage in the memory department. Art amazed us by doing multiplication problems in his head faster than those using a calculator on stage. The highlight of Art's performance was his mental multiplication

[Continued on page 10]

## MCCORMICK WINS MBC...

[Continued from page 9]

of two random 5-digit numbers. The answer was over one billion. Incredible!

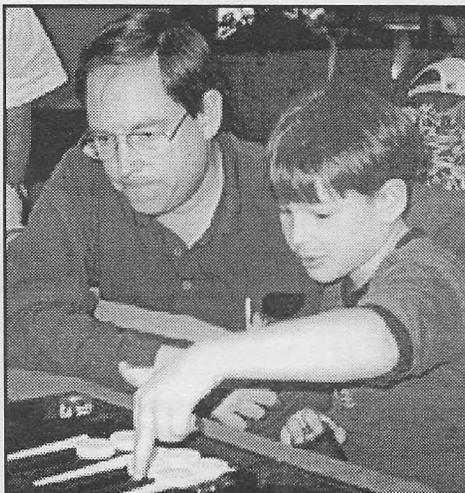


Mathemagician Art Benjamin beats the calculators in multiplication at the Calcutta auction. In the tourney, Art won "Backgammon-To-Lose" and "Domino-Gammon."

Once again, Peter Kalba, our charity auctioneer raised lots of money for the Anti-Cruelty Society. This year, the \$1400 collected brought our all-time ACS total over \$20,000. That's a lot of dog food! Thanks to all who bid and made donations.

In the fun side events, Linc Bedell (NH) captured \$100 in the Ring-toss. And Mike Cyrkiel swept the electronic prizes (900 MHz

phone, Watchman Color TV) by rolling alligators and pigs to victory. Mike also won the Advanced Consolation and cashed in the Intermediate Doubles. Well done!



Mike Cyrkiel (IN) had an outstanding weekend winning the Advanced Consolation, Gator Dice, Pig-rolling, and placing with son Mike, Jr. in the Intermediate Doubles.

Thanks to all those who made our 15th MBC possible including staffers Peter Kalba, Carol Joy Cole, Pig-mistress Dru Heggen, and newcomers Elaine Kehm and Greg Tomlin. Also to Sheri Buchette at the

Radisson Hotel. See you next year at the Radisson 19-21 March for the 1999 Midwest Championships: *Backgammon In The 20th Century*. Complete results: Δ

### 1998 midwest championships

CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-Steve McCormick (KS), 2-Mike Friedman (Canada), 3/4-Chuck Bower (IN) / John Brussel (IL); 1C-David Wells (IL), 2C-Joe Freedman (VA); 1LC-Howard Markowitz (NV). \$140 OPEN (10): 1-Bob Holyon (WI), 2-Butch Meese (IN). ADVANCED (64): 1-Frankie Farjood (IL), 2-Bill Keefe (IL), 3/4-Lenny Loder (IL) / Bruce Russell (WI); 1C-Mike Cyrkiel (IN), 2C-Walt Swan (NJ); 1LC-Merrill Schrager (WI). LIMITED (30): 1-Kim Haubert (OH), 2-Tom Machaj (WI); 1C-Rob Keast (WI), 2C-Boris Mindich (IL); 1LC-Mark Larios (IN). CHAMPIONSHIP DOUBLES (30): 1-Paul Klein & Laila Leonhardt (IL), 2-Alice Kay (IL) & Walter Trice (MA), 3/4-Sakura Sugawara & David Wells (IL) / Andy Palumbo (NY) & Herb Roman (IL). INTERMEDIATE DOUBLES (14): 1-Mark Ryan & Jay Ward (IL), 2-Mike Cyrkiel & Mike Cyrkiel, Jr. 3-DICE BACKGAMMON (32): 1-Lucky Nelson, 2-Joe Wollick (IL), 3/4-Sean Garber (IN) / Frank Talbot (MI). BACKGAMMON-TO-LOSE (32): 1-Art Benjamin (CA), 2-Laila Leonhardt (IL), 3/4-Joe Wollick (IL) / Steve Hast (PA). DOMINO-GAMMON (8): 1-Art Benjamin (CA). PIG-ROLLING: 1-Mike Cyrkiel (IN). GATOR DICE: 1-Mike Cyrkiel (IN). BG RING TOSS: 1-Linc Bedell (NH). BG WHEEL OF FORTUNE: 1-Paul Berg (MI).

studiogiochi proudly presents the:

## 10th International Backgammon Tournament CITY OF VENICE



**CASINO' MUNICIPALE-LIDO OF VENICE**  
9-12 July 1998

**ADDED PRIZE: Lit. 10,000,000 or more.**

**First prize minimum guaranteed: Lit. 20,000,000.**

### Entry Fees (Registration)

Master: Lit. 750,000 (80,000). Championship: Lit. 250,000 (50,000).

Intermediate: Lit. 70,000 (30,000). Team: Lit. 300,000 (60,000).

FIBS Cup: Lit. 50,000 (10,000).

Director: Dario De Toffoli • Assistant: Alfonso Sara • Jackpots: Dario Zaccariotto.

Warm up • Super-Jackpot • FIBS Party/FIBS Cup • Team Tournament

Football on wide screen • Jackpots • Progressive Consolation

Public Draw • Prize-giving Cocktail Party • 40+ Trophies

DAL NEGRO official supplier.

To receive a brochure, contact:

studiogiochi; S. Polo 3083; 30125 Venezia, Italy

Tel.: 3941-5211029 • Fax: 3941-5240881 • Mobile: 0335-53311733

<dariodet@tin.it> www.backgammon.thex.it/venice

PRIZE  
BACKGAMMON  
CLUB OF CHICAGO

The 19th Annual  
**Chicago**  
OPEN

May 22-25, 1998

Wyndham Hamilton Hotel  
Itasca, Illinois

### Featuring:

- Δ Championship: Double Elimination Format with Progressive Consolation
- Δ Intermediate & Beginner: Continuous Play Format with Match Money.
- Δ \$350 Memorial Day Masters
- Δ Doubles Tournament
- Δ \$10 Mini-Matches (2 point matches)
- Δ Blitz Tournament
- Δ \$78 Room Rates (Single or Double)  
(800) 996-3426 or (630) 773-4000



For more information:

**Joann Feinstein**

**847/674-0120**