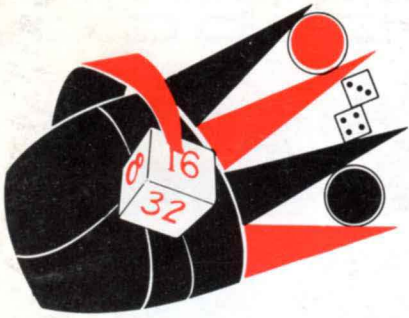


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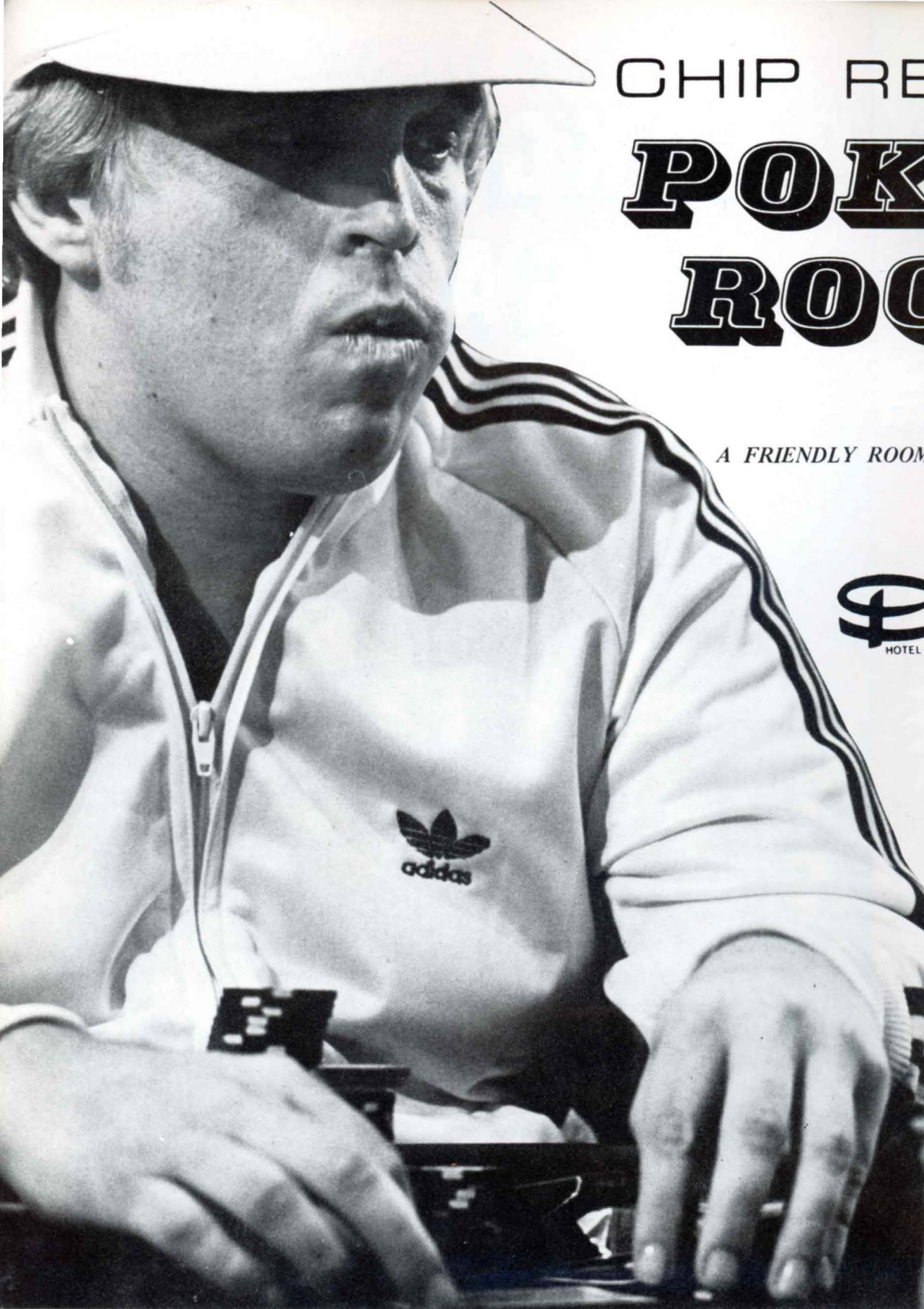
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# THE THIRD DEGREE

Why don't you publish a play-by-play account of championship matches between the world's top players? Chess publications routinely show matches between the masters, but I've never seen anything similar to this in backgammon.

We'd like to. Obviously we are limited on space. Nevertheless, we would consider a play-by-play article if someone would be willing to submit it. The staff is frantic with work and can't take the time to do it. Anyone that can help on this project write to the *LV Backgammon Magazine*, P.O. Box 19567, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119.

*What is Tyromaniac?*

The most feared creature that exists in backgammon. This is the novice or weak player who takes a ludicrous gammon cube and rolls his little butt off to win. It drives you crazy.

*What are New Traditionalists?*

A backgammon player, we guess. Some Madison Avenue pencil pusher decided that backgammon players should be baptized the New Traditionalists, whatever that innocuous phrase means. It is the hook line for a series of black and white ads by Black & White Scotch, which features photos of che-che backgammon players, many of them identified incorrectly. The ads have appeared widely in such publications as *New York Times*, *Texas Monthly*, *Sports Illustrated*, *New West*, *Los Angeles*, etc. The "New Traditionalists" phrase seems to be a continuation of the effort by the premier promoter to clean up the American Backgammon image. It seems that informally dressed, casual American players offend the delicate sensibilities of the orderly and proper European promoters who are now operating in America. To think that some idea man made a lot of money to redub backgammon players the "New Traditionalists" when they could have had our advice for free. For the

next series consider our suggestion: hire Frankie Avalon for a personality endorsement and call it Beach Blanket Backgammon.

*We've heard of commercial backgammon memberships. What of them?*

The brain child of Ed Brister of the Shreveport-Bossier Backgammon Assn. who explains: "In starting the Shreveport/Bossier Backgammon Assn., it was felt that money should be available for development of the association. I came up with the idea of a commercial charter membership. Memberships were sold to merchants in our area who wished to receive support from the ever growing backgammon community." Brister further stated that for a \$50 fee participants received advertising space in a composite newspaper ad and —

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MARCH 1980

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Photo by Linda Kruegel

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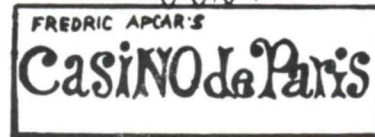
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- Or, it can roll for you and itself.

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## Backgammon—A National Organization?

Why should there be something instead of nothing at all? Many are saying backgammon ought to be formally organized on a national level like bridge. If so, who should do it? And what are the trade offs?

Backgammon now enjoys a freshness and vigor that could be jeopardized by a stuffy sovereign structure. But, players are feeling a need to belong and so conversation turns again and again to the co-ordination of backgammon.

There are several ways this can be done, but, none without a lot of money. This fact of life eliminates many of the independent small time promoters who have tried to establish player associations. It is this reality that doomed Prince Obolensky's W.B.C. organization. Hundreds of players in America have drawers full of worthless master point credit slips from this and other organizations.

Consequently, the tall order of structuring backgammon in America or the world falls on some corporate sponsor with lots of extra cash in the PR department. The likely candidates are those who have been kind to backgammon in the past like Black and White Scotch, Phillip Morris cigarettes or those, like Anheuser-Busch, who have found success organizing other unstructured special interest groups.

Anheuser-Busch has reaped untold good from uniting the countless pool leagues in small bars all over America. This organization is appropriately called the Busch League. The Busch League acts as a record keeper and sanctioning body for pool leagues. Participants pay a small yearly fee for which they receive a

periodic newsletter, tournament results and standings, promotional support and various other advantages. The benefits to Anheuser-Busch are obvious.

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### Why should there be something instead of nothing at all?

---

Backgammon could be dealt with in the same way. There isn't a city or town in America today that doesn't have more bars featuring backgammon than pool. The image problem of pool has been obviously overcome and the same can be done for backgammon, which certainly never has been so low in public opinion as the former seedy reputation of pool.

---

### Hundreds of players in America have drawers full of worthless master point credit slips.

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The possibilities are limitless. Who will be the sponsor is not an important question. Who should be the leader and organizer could be. It will probably be someone respected and rooted in America, but with enough international respect to insure future world wide expansion. He or she should be industrious, personable and a genius of organization. There are several who could fill the position but, alas, not many that would

accept it. Perhaps someone who is not in backgammon at all will be time, we'll continue to pose the question "Why should there be something instead of nothing at all?" and keep on enjoying the current pristine, energetic, fun phase of backgammon.

### More Notes

The Merit International Tournament Rules group claims to have 150 clubs that recognize their rules. They call this an affiliation. The benefits of the affiliation are that you recognize their rules. Many of the so called affiliations have been sweetly coerced by free team tournaments with huge purses, in which the teams can only play if their club accepts the Merit rules. We are sure these endorsements are then used by the promoters to show business associates omnipotence in backgammon.

Many players wishing to participate, but not having the commitment of their home club, just make-up one. Many clubs simply sign knowing that there is no force behind the agreement.

The list of clubs and associations recognizing the rules must be a real work of fiction. Case in point is the published report in November *Backgammon Review* that the first name on the eternal team trophy is that of the Southern California Backgammon Association, a club which has never endorsed the Merit rules. To continue the irony, the players on the team were from Northern California. Note that the rules are available in English, Spanish, French, Italian and German. ★★

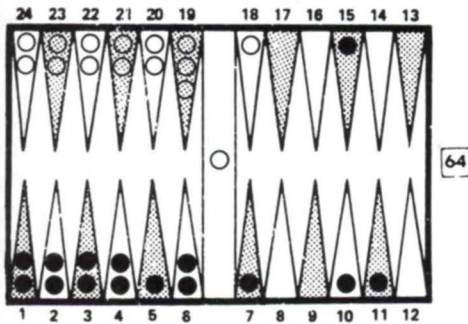


# It's So Nice To Have A Cube Around The House

by Mel Leifer

Astute backgammon players become aware of more and more of the myriad paradoxes underlying game strategy the longer they play. Eventually it gets to the point where one becomes reluctant to affirm any absolute rules when trying to teach a novice how to win, because certain situations will inevitably arise where it is more advantageous to disobey generally accepted rules.

For example, even experienced players may not know that positions exist where it is mathematically correct for one side to double and equally correct for the opponent to beaver. In such positions, the player who doubles knows that he is actually the underdog, but is trying to reduce his expected loss, while the opponent who would prefer not to be doubled even though he is the favorite, is nevertheless obliged to beaver in order to maximize his expected winnings. Confused? Well consider the following hypothetical situation which should it occur in real life is guaranteed to keep even normally well behaved kibitzers buzzing.



Assume the above position occurs in a non-tournament game where the players have previously agreed to use the conventions of the Jacoby rule and the beaver. The doubling cube is still in the center of the board and White is on roll with one man on the bar.

White's assessment of the position is that if he fails to roll a five on this turn he will lose the game because Black will then simply offer a double on his turn and White must decline. But if White is lucky enough to roll the five needed to enter the man from the bar and hit Black's blot, he will then become a big favorite to win a gammon by hitting a second or third blot. But the gammon will count only if he has the courage to double Black right now before this key roll. Should he?

Rather than let intuition or mystic psychic vibrations guide him, White, true to his reputation as the human pocket

calculator, decides to make his decision based on the mathematically correct course of action. If White does not double, he will either win or lose one point. He wins one point when he rolls a five, which has a probability of  $\frac{11}{36}$ , and loses a single point with the probability of  $\frac{25}{36}$ . So his expectation or average result is calculated to be  $\frac{11 \cdot 1 - 25 \cdot 1}{36}$  or  $-\frac{14}{36}$ , meaning that if this exact position were played out a large number of times, say as a proposition, White would expect to lose 14 points for every 36 games played. The number  $\frac{14}{36}$  may also be thought of as the fair settlement\* for this position, meaning the number of points which the favorite, Black, is entitled to win if the two players agree to end the game at this point, before White's roll and with the cube in the sole possession of neither player.

If White does double, he would then, because of the Jacoby rule, become eligible to win 4 points for the 11 times out of 36 when he rolls a five and proceeds to gammon Black but lose only 2 points for the other 25 times out of 36 when he does not roll the five and must then decline Black's redouble prior to the next roll. For this case, White's expectation is calculated to be  $\frac{11 \cdot 4 - 25 \cdot 2}{36}$  or  $-\frac{6}{36}$ . So it appears that it is correct for White to double, since by doing so he has decreased his losing expectation from  $-\frac{14}{36}$  to  $-\frac{6}{36}$ , a saving of  $\frac{2}{9}$  of a point.

Now from Black's point of view we have the strange case of the favorite who doesn't want to be doubled; when White doubles, he reduces Black's winning expectation by  $\frac{2}{9}$  of a point. But Black is no dummy either. Since he is the favorite after all, he clearly must take the double and then be left to ponder the classic dilemma: to beaver or not to beaver? That question is answered in the affirmative since Black's expectation upon beavering is calculated to be  $\frac{25 \cdot 4 - 11 \cdot 8}{36}$  or  $\frac{12}{36}$ , which is, as expected, twice as much as if he had merely taken.

Remember that if White does not double, his losing expectation was seen to be  $-\frac{14}{36}$ . But even after doubling and suffering the apparent indignity of the beaver, his overall losing expectation has actually been decreased to  $-\frac{12}{36}$  for a saving of  $\frac{1}{18}$  of a point, thereby attesting to the wisdom of

White's original double.

Thus a seemingly paradoxical situation has been shown to exist, where it is at once correct for a player to double and for the opponent to beaver. The underdog doubles to minimize his losses while the favorite, who although he would prefer not to be doubled, nevertheless beavers eagerly in order to maximize his plus expectation. Furthermore the underdog's double is proven correct even in spite of the beaver. What could be simpler?

Well, now that that's been cleared up, you should have no problem in confidently explaining the proper use of the doubling cube to that inquisitive novice friend of yours. ★★

\* For further information on settlement calculations the reader may wish to refer to *Settlement Factors* in the June '79 issue pg. 28. NOTE: The graph which accompanies that article does not take into account the Jacoby rule.



Backgammon



Journey

\*\*\*\*\*

There is no "Believe it or Not" section in this magazine so we had to give this item its own little column.

It seems that an entrepreneur named Lewis Gilbert from Nashville, has written a backgammon musical. It is a James Bond type screenplay which he calls "Backgammon Journey". The script has a voluptuous lady spy traveling and sleuthing around the world under the guise of a backgammon teacher. The movie being a musical has a planned record album, of course, complete with a free backgammon layout inside. Further spinoffs are planned in the way of a comic strip and "Backgammon Journey" tournaments. Warner's Communications is seriously looking at the project. Call the LVBC hotline for Mr. Gilbert's number and casting dates.





## Bill Boyd

WINNER	MARCH OF DIMES INVITATIONAL	1979
1st CONSOLATION	PEBBLE BEACH	1979
RUNNER-UP	U. S. OPEN DOUBLES	1979
SEMI-FINALIST	SAN FRANCISCO OPEN	1978
	LOS ANGELES OPEN	1979

Games have always held great interest for me since childhood but to this day I have never found any game that can come close to backgammon. Over fifteen years ago, while still a student in France, I became fascinated by the game of "Jacquet." It combined skill and luck and I consider backgammon in the same light. After graduating from Stanford, I really thought I could play backgammon. One day I wandered into the old Gambit Game Store in San Francisco and a month or two later, either my wallet or my head led me to the same conclusion, that backgammon just was not more skill than luck. Some of these players were just plain better than I was.

In recent years I have become actively involved in the overall running of certain backgammon tournaments and I have helped direct the annual Pebble Beach tournament for the past three years. Over the upcoming Memorial Day weekend (May

23 - 25, 1980), I am coordinating a major event for Black and White Scotch which is being held at the Stanford Court Hotel in San Francisco.

Backgammon not only is a great game, but it is also a great way to meet people. As a practicing attorney, I now represent five of the best known backgammon players in the world as well as the Pacific Backgammon Association.

Certain individuals involved in backgammon have now decided that backgammon should be an exclusive club. This trend is unfortunate at best. The spectacular growth of the game must be attributed to the idea that on any given day any given player can win any given game.

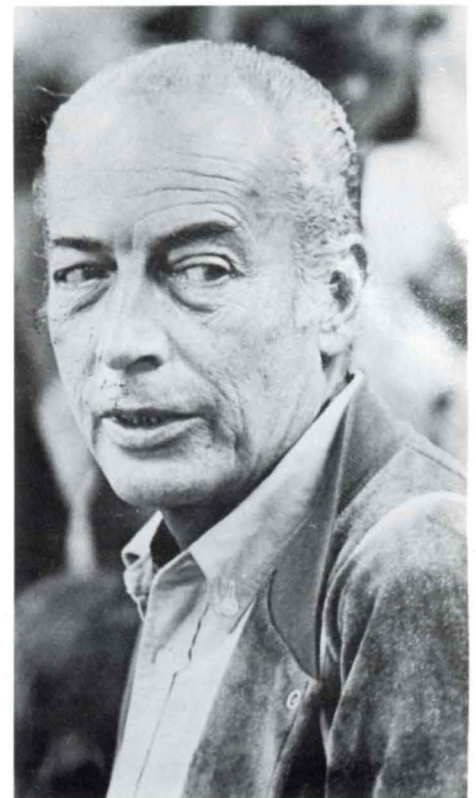
But the time has also come to take a stand at all tournament levels against those few people whose presence inevitably causes problems. I am referring to those who take three hours to play seven point matches, as well as those who can not play in a small local tournament without arguing with every opponent they play, as well as the tournament director.

Be it your small weekly tournament or any international event, the success of the event is directly related to the strength of the people running it. Tournaments should start on time and all the rules should be clearly set out in writing. Rule infractions should be dealt with promptly, and with an even hand. Friend and foe are words that certain tournament directors should perish from their vocabulary. Every player must be treated the same, or the whole concept of tournament play becomes a mockery.

I leave you with one last thought. At a major recent backgammon tournament a young lady arose during the middle of her match and told her opponent she was taking a break. One and one half hours later she reappeared. She had showered, taken a nap, and changed clothes. Not one word was said to her by the tournament director. I know what I would have done. Ask yourself what you would have done. ☆☆

## The Marquis Guy d' Arcangues

- Chairman of the French Backgammon Federation
- Captain of the French National Golf Team for five years (1960-65)
- Winner of the coveted 1977 poetry prize of the Academic Francaise
- Originator of the famed Biarritz Backgammon Tournament
- Widely acclaimed author. His most popular work, the novel *Le Silesien*
- A 20 year member and official of the Biarritz Tourism Committee
- Escaped from a German Prisoner of War camp, 1940
- The Marquis' principal residence is the famous 17th Century family castle, the Chateau d' Arcangues near Biarritz. He also maintains a home in Paris.
- World Champion calibre backgammon player
- Lewis DeYoung's friend ☆☆



Marquis Guy d' Arcangues

# THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

American Backgammon Club	Michigan	Michael Kolian	(313) 459-5776
Atlanta/Georgia Backgammon Society	Georgia	Craig Tyndall	(404) 266-8957
Backgammon Board of Rochester	New York	Renee Rosenbloom	(212) 473-8343
Barcelona Backgammon Club	Spain	Jordi Arque	211 46 15
Black Hills Backgammon Club	South Dakota	Rod Woodruff	(605) 892-4978
Beginner's Backgammon Association	Missouri	Frank Pettv Jr.	(314) 521-8544
Brantford Backgammon Club	Canada	Al Cooper	(519) 756-6760
Calgary Backgammon Club	Canada	Wayne Roberts	(403) 265-9400
Campbell Bridge & Backgammon Studio	California	Martin Miller	(408) 378-3711
Cavendish North	Michigan	Bob Ciaffone	(313) 642-9616
Cavendish of Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	Mae Block	(215) 878-5777
Chattanooga Backgammon Club	Tennessee	David Harris	(615) 267-6418
Connecticut Backgammon Society	Connecticut	Rob Roy	(203) 755-9749
Dueling Oaks Backgammon	Wisconsin	Merrill Schragger	(414) 271-0493
Duluth Backgammon Club	Minnesota	Ray Boisjoli	(218) 724-2435
Federal Hill Backgammon Association	Maryland	Michael Maguire	(301) 528-1157
Flint Backgammon Club	Michigan	Carol Cole	(313) 732-8594
Hamilton Squash Club	Canada	Ernie Geisel	(416) 527-1010
Hawaii Backgammon Players Assn.	Hawaii	Bernard Bergstein	(808) 533-2227
Iowa Backgammon Association	Iowa	Tom Owens	(319) 364-9236
Jacksonville Backgammon Club	Florida	Linda George	(904) 733-2217
Louisville Backgammon Club	Kentucky	Larry Strasberg	(502) 451-3950
New Mexico Backgammon Club	New Mexico	Steve Spellerberg	(505) 776-2282
New Orleans Backgammon Club	Louisiana	Joanne Ippolito	(504) 282-3210
Newport Backgammon Club	Rhode Island	Robert Howayeck	(617) 674-4905
Northern Nevada Backgammon Assn.	Nevada	Bill O'Brien	(702) 825-3280
Ohio Backgammon Association	Ohio	Donald Eagleton	(216) 457-7134
Omaha Backgammon Club	Nebraska	Carolyn Caniglia	(402) 330-3333
Oregon Backgammon Players	Oregon	Norman Hunter	(503) 238-6351
Pacific N.W. Backgammon Assn.	Washington	Ted Barr	(206) 285-6768
Phoenix Backgammon Club	Arizona	Backgammon Mike	(602) 264-2386
Richmond Backgammon Club	Virginia	Richard Murad	(804) 270-6234
Shreveport/Bossier	Louisiana	Alan Le Bendig	(318) 797-0560
Sioux Backgammon Association	South Dakota	Gerald Mortimer	(605) 332-4593
So. Illinois University Backgammon Club	Illinois	Jordan Gold	(618) 529-1667
St. Louis Backgammon Club	Missouri	Phil Dunlop	(314) 839-2365
St. Thomas Backgammon Club	Virgin Islands	Vernon Ball	(809) 774-1829
Studio 44 Backgammon Club	Arizona	Avi Yeshua	(602) 931-7491
Thunder Bay Backgammon Assn.	Canada	Rita Zandette	(807) 622-3045
Tuley Park Backgammon Club	Illinois	J. A. Miller	(312) 928-7119

The American Association of Backgammon is a group of grass roots backgammon clubs devoted to the love and promotion of backgammon.

The cost of belonging to this group is \$25 per year. For this small fee the associates have access to the club hotline, receive hospital-ity benefits for their members visiting Las Vegas, receive aid in setting up and operating their club and/or tournaments, receive free space to publish their ideas and schedules in the Backgammon Magazine (Cir. 10,000 worldwide), receive 25% discount off rate card if they wish to advertise in the magazine, receive complimentary copies of the Backgammon Magazine for club use, and have access to the most complete files on backgammon players, current information and backgammon history.

The Associates are bound together by the need to protect themselves from those looking to take advantage of the small clubs. Strength is derived from mutual support and free exchange of information.

The Associates agree to adhere to the Official Las Vegas Tournament Rules and the Common Rules of Etiquette. All in all, the associate members enjoy many shared benefits which a union of organizations can provide, including reciprocal visiting rights between clubs in the Association.

For details on the Association write the Las Vegas Backgammon Club or call (702) 361-3910.

# NEW ASSOCIATES

**TULLY PARK BACKGAMMON CLUB** – There is a growing trend towards regional clubs of which the Tully Park Club is one of them. It is a more convenient arrangement for the working man who can't travel long distances to the bigger clubs. The more developed clubs should follow the example of Gammon's of Chicago and host smaller clubs. The Tully Park Club provides free transportation to Gammon's for its members. We found the Tully Park newsletter fascinating because it had the first non-critical review of Bruce Becker's "Backgammon for Blood" that we have ever seen. Editor and chief tournament director is J. A. MILLER. (312) 928-7119.

**OHIO BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION** – DONALD EAGLETON is promoting backgammon in and around Ohio from headquarters in New Waterford. The fast growing club has many activities including the Columbiana Buick Backgammon Classic. This tournament consists of four weekly qualifying rounds at four different locations. The finals will be held at Southern Park Mall in Boardman. (216) 457-7134.

**SIOUX BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION** – One of the first associates to join the Backgammon America group was the Black Hills Backgammon Club. We didn't believe then that any club could survive in South Dakota and we are twice nonplussed that a second S. D. club has joined our group. Goes to prove that backgammon is everywhere. The SBA is located in Sioux Falls and is ably directed by the amiable GERALD MORTIMER. (605) 332-4593.



**BRANTFORD BACKGAMMON CLUB** – AL COOPER is the director of this unique club, which he calls The Backgammon Place. The Backgammon Place is inside Al's Place, which is a hair design salon inside a fantastic brown stone mansion complete with fireplace. Business goes on as usual everyday till it's time to play backgammon, then Al raises a large backgammon board flag outside the building to announce that the game is on. The action is incredible. Where is Brantford? It's in Canada, in Ontario, near Hamilton. (519) 756-6760.



## BACKGAMMON BOARD OF ROCHESTER

Backgammon Players in Rochester, New York are extremely fortunate. Greenstreets Restaurant has sponsored backgammon for the last four years with more than \$15,000 contributed to date. Over 350 players are registered and over 100 players are members of the Rochester Backgammon Association. Two weekly tournaments draw 50 players each week. Our Las Vegas Tournament, with calcutta, attracted 64 players and over \$3200. The Board consists of: RENEE ROSENBLOOM, Information Director, MIKE GEISSINGER, Publisher, BOB CIMINO, Treasurer, and GARY JAY, Coordinator, who work together in the interest of backgammon. (212) 473-8343.

**CONNECTICUT BACKGAMMON SOCIETY** – Membership in this organization is free. The Society publishes a bulletin. Statistics compiled from tournaments are used to award master points to all players. ROB ROY directs this club and writes a weekly backgammon column in the leisure section of the *Waterbury Republican*. Current membership is around fifty and growing fast. (203) 755-9749.



**STUDIO 44 BACKGAMMON CLUB** – AVI YESHUA has been bringing backgammon to the citizens of Glendale, Arizona for a long time. Finally, he has decided to organize under the Studio 44 banner. This is the third excellent club in Arizona. Currently, the club headquarters at 4477 W. Olive, Glendale. We welcome Avi and more Arizona players. (602) 931-7491.

# LETTERS FROM READERS



Dear Sirs,

Could you please tell me what has happened with Gammon Magazine? On May 25, 1979, I sent them a check for \$18.00 for a year's subscription and haven't received anything back more than my cancelled check. They have my money but haven't sent me one issue or haven't written anything. I understand it is a quarterly magazine, which I feel is expensive at \$18.00 per year, but if it is OK, then that's OK with me. I also did not expect an issue to arrive right away being it's a quarterly but it has been five months since I sent them my check. If they have quit business and have kept everyone's money, this may be a good thing for you to look into and let our fellow backgammon players know. If you can help me with them, I will appreciate it. If you can't do anything with them, can you please give me their address, as I don't have it now, and I'll write to them to see what the hold-up is.

Ray Boisjoli  
Duluth, Minnesota

EDITOR'S NOTE: Gammon Magazine - 8126 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048 (213) 653-4417.

Dear Sirs,

Just finished reading the Sept. issue of Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine. In the "Magazines in Review" section by V.H. Yanko he states the following in his comments on Gammon magazine:

"Instead, what was served was warmed-over articles, all of which

had appeared elsewhere." Our article "Use the Cube as a Weapon-Not as a Gift" appeared in that issue and had not previously been authorized for publication. If Mr. Yanko has seen this article in print, we would be very interested in knowing where and when. If not we respectfully suggest that he spend a bit more time on research before sitting down at his typewriter.

Enclosed is our next article, "The Prime Syndrome."

Looking forward to seeing you in Las Vegas and keep up the good work on your magazine!

Gaby Horowitz/Dr. Bruce Roman  
Manhattan Beach, California

Dear Las Vegas Backgammon Club,

American Backgammon Championship is proud to announce its new affiliation with Kate Wattson. On June 1, 1979, all assets, liabilities and interest of American Backgammon Championship were sold by R.A. Wattson Co. to Kate Wattson. Please be advised that as a result of this sale, R.A. Wattson Co. will have no further interest or affiliation with American Backgammon Championship or American Backgammon Championships, Inc., and they will not be responsible for any future liabilities or commitments.

Allen Wattson  
El Segundo, California

Dear Sirs,

Here is the double I could not take.

It was early in the first game of our 7-point match and she turned the cube on me! Even though she had one man on the bar, it was likely I would be gammoned if I lost. I am not the kind of person to jump at every double, but would rather save myself for the right double. If I lost the game, how could I be sure she would respect me the next game? She would take advantage of my vulnerable position. I wanted to have a meaningful match — something that would last longer than a couple of games.

Because she was the type of

person to boast about her conquests and how easily she scored, I had to decline the double since I had my reputation to live up to.

Loren Stark  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Sirs,

Here is my membership to the LVBC. I intend to use it only once a year — for the next LVBC Annual Awards Party. I can't believe my eyes. Even the famous Playboy mansion party pictures don't look as interesting as your party. Are you sure you are a backgammon club? Hurry with the next party.

Sammy Patters  
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Michael,

Congratulations on publishing an outstanding magazine. It covers everything that one would want to know about the game of backgammon.

Here's wishing you continued success for the future.

Att. James Jimmerson  
Las Vegas, Nevada

Dear Max,

Things are really going well in Phoenix. The club has grown to over a hundred members. Our tournaments are becoming more and more popular and more publicized. We've been giving away an average of \$600 cash each tournament and hope to start getting local businesses to start sponsoring our larger events. I'd like to thank you for your write-up in the last issue of the LV Backgammon Magazine. A lot of our members were impressed with the magazine and decided to subscribe to it. I'd also like to extend my invitation to all backgammon players across the country to stop in Phoenix the next time they are traveling to Las Vegas or Los Angeles. Once again, thank you for all you've done!

Backgammon Mike

P.S. The Phoenix Backgammon Club has moved to a bigger and much better place. The new home is at Valentino's, 2435 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix, Az.



# ELDORADO

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Northern Nevada: 702-851-3975

**MICHAEL MAXAKULI**

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**800/648-5966**

**1-786-5700** - For Nevada residents



## Helping "The Fonze" Help the Kids

HOLLYWOOD — You're sure to recognize Henry Winkler, of "Happy Days," yet the man with him, Michael Block, of Los Angeles, is the one we should thank for helping to build the public image of the backgammon player. Block is president of Loui Michel Cie, one of America's leading importers and distributors of quality backgammon games. Learning of an urgent need for games and toys to help the annual "Toys For Tots" campaign reach its 1979-80 goals, Michael Block unlocked his warehouse and donated more than \$10,000 worth of new backgammon games and other items. He did this generous deed "in the name of the backgammon-playing community."

Block was delighted to learn that a number of television's top stars are active players of backgammon, including the hostess for the nationally-televized telethon, Loni Anderson, star of the hit program "WKRP in Cincinnati," and co-hosts Robert Hays, of "Angie" and Gavin McLeod, skipper of "The Love Boat." Like many readers of *Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine*, the TV folks regularly have a set or two on hand to relax with during breaks in the work-a-day.

Loui Michel Cie is headquartered in Beverly Hills, California.

## TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS

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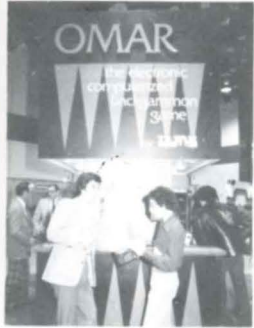
# Backgammon: The Machines

by Steve Herman

You encounter all kinds of people playing backgammon. Recently a new breed of player has emerged. He isn't much on conversation, his play won't worsen after a few drinks, and he isn't even very attractive.

He is the biggest revolution in backgammon since the invention of the doubling cube and as you may have guessed, is a computer.

Like his human counterparts, the computer player comes in a variety of shapes, sizes and skill. At the recent International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas we had a chance to review most of the varieties of the lifeless backgammon players that have invaded gammondome.



OMAR

Tryom Corporation's series of OMAR computerized backgammon games are the best known and best selling. The computer itself looks like nothing more than a hand held calculator. The OMAR I and OMAR IV are exactly the same

except OMAR I comes with a small magnetic backgammon board. The OMAR I/IV utilizes LED's (light emitting diodes) which display such phrases as "play 45" on the calculator size screen. The OMAR II (corduroy small backgammon board) and the OMAR V (without board) utilize LCD's (liquid crystal displays). These displays make electronic dice appear on the screen with larger numbers.

The first few games with OMAR will likely be frustrating. Programming your moves into the keyboard is a bit of a skill. You can't cheat or make mistakes with OMAR flashing "ILLE" on the screen informing you that your move is illegal. After a while you get the hang of it and playing backgammon with a computer becomes a thrill.

At first, you may think that OMAR has a cheat factor programmed into it since it seems to come up with a lot of super rolls that tend to ruin your strategies. But, basically the OMAR computers are no nonsense, conservative backgammon players. They are not afraid to offer you a double when they have an advantageous position. Here is one secret to beating OMAR — if you get to a position where you have a mathematical advantage, OMAR will refuse the double.

But just how good of a player is this pocketful of diodes and resistors? Tim Shane, the president of Tryom, is pretty confident of OMAR. He says OMAR is "a very good backgammon player and is considered to be better than the average (human) backgammon player."

Basically, OMAR is fun. The design has few drawbacks. It only hesitates when it rolls doubles. It normally executes a move

in 15 seconds or less. The OMAR line retails from \$50. to \$80.



FIDELITY CHALLENGER

The FIDELITY CHALLENGER is in the same price range, size, and skill as OMAR. It differs in that it lets you roll

with real dice. No one can bitch that it "cheats" by throwing its own good rolls. This important feature makes FIDELITY CHALLENGER the only machine that retains the flair of real backgammon. The FIDELITY CHALLENGER was designed by a long-time backgammon player and engineer from Chicago, Ron Nelson. FIDELITY CHALLENGER is the ultimate in electronic backgammon genius. Representative Deborah Cox claims FIDELITY CHALLENGER has improved her play "immensely" in just a short time.

FIDELITY CHALLENGER retails from \$85. to \$100. and comes with a built-in board in a simulated wood grained housing. The current FIDELITY CHALLENGER is selling so well that new advanced models are already being planned.



ARISTOTLE

This is the Rolls Royce of the backgammon circuit boards. It's the one Paul Magriel is endorsing. There's only a very

limited number of them being made and at a retail price of \$2500., they will not likely see mass production.

ARISTOTLE (Alias Gammanoid, Merit & Scottie) is a genius compared to its pocket sized counterparts. Kim Brand, the entrepreneur behind ARISTOTLE, told us at the CES show that it has seven times the number of bytes (memory capacity) as the

OMAR or FIDELITY models.

ARISTOTLE is mounted in a wooden oak frame. You play by touching the edge of the electronic "pieces" which glow beneath the clear glass top. You don't have to program the move into the computer after every roll thanks to "sensor touch." You can also get an instant pip count for both sides by touching a button.

The world's best backgammon players are taking ARISTOTLE seriously. This modern jumble of electronic parts made a respectable showing in Monte Carlo recently defeating the very respectable Luigi Villa by a score of 7 to 1. Ouch!

Like all backgammon players, ARISTOTLE does lose. Brand admits that moves the computer makes "are at most arguable." Brand also allays our fears by telling us ARISTOTLE is not the greatest backgammon player the world has ever seen. "It won't take away the world championship next year," he says. It won't likely get the chance. Some major tournament directors faced with a player of silicon chips, transistors, and wiring have refused to let ARISTOTLE play in recent months. Brand foresees a line of coin operated ARISTOTLES in bars and discos around the world. But some of the models don't hold up because of loose innerds. Surely, they'll have difficulty taking the punishment that a drinking crowd will give them.

All in all, ARISTOTLE is the top of the line. Brand says players like Magriel, Dwek, and DeYoung are using them to work out strategy problem, doubling decisions, and the like.



COMMODORE PET

Home and professional computers are taking the world by storm for fun and work. A number of these systems can play backgammon. Commodore Business Machines has a backgammon cassette for its system. The COMMODORE PET game is

(continued)

# New Great Lakes Backgammon Board Association

December 1, 1979 organizers of backgammon in the Great Lakes area formed an association which could be the beginning of some great benefits to all "backgammoners". Look forward to greatest return of entry fees, non-conflicting tournaments, universal master points and rules of play, complete information, and a clear establishment of the real heroes of backgammon through a league of the best players around. This will focus attention on the game in a way equal to other recreation, so that backgammon can emerge to a position limited only by our imagination! ★★



Front: GARY JAY (Rochester, NY), MICHAEL KLOIAN (Plymouth, MI)  
Back: ERNIE GEISEL (Hamilton, ONT), JERRY NATHAN (Buffalo, NY), RENEE ROSENBLOOM (Rochester, NY), BOB CIMINO (Rochester, NY), HELENE NEER (Rochester, NY), SCOTTIE FLORA (Plymouth, MI), TOM WROBLESWSKI (Plymouth, MI).

(Con't)

## BACKGAMMON/THE MACHINES

easy to play. You make moves by punching them in the keyboard. Your board is on a video screen directly above the keyboard. One COMMODORE PET salesman told us "I have a nine year old son who plays at home and he doesn't know BASIC worth a damn."

COMMODORE PET backgammon does have one drawback, it just freaks out if you put more than eight men on a point. But it admits this in the introduction that is flashed on the screen. It also informs you this shouldn't happen anyway since such a stacking of men is very poor strategy.

No one is going to buy a COMMODORE PET (or an APPLE computer) just to play backgammon. The price is nearly a \$1000 just for the hardware. But if you already have one, why not play backgammon too?



MATTEL

This company is big on games you hook up to your TV. Amidst the choices of space battle, horse racing, and poker is backgammon. The backgammon hook-up allows two people to play each other, or man to face machine at

two levels of play. Chuck Papazian says the MATTEL game has the skill of an advanced beginner to an intermediate player.

Alas, the MATTEL game lacks a doubling cube. The MATTEL game has a pip count

display but what sense is it without a cube? Papazian says he hopes MATTEL will put a doubling cube in future models.

The hardware for the MATTEL Intellivision will cost you over \$200. with the individual cartridges for each game (including backgammon) costing around \$20. each.



ATARI

ATARI's backgammon game has an advantage over the MATTEL game in that it has a doubling

cube. You can choose to play with or without the cube. You make your move by adjusting the circular knob on a paddle you hold in your hand. Unlike the MATTEL game which has an easy to read multi-colored board, the resolution on the ATARI screen is not very good.

The ATARI hardware system sells for under \$200. but the backgammon cartridge itself goes for \$40. If you play backgammon or acey-deucey on the ATARI system always make sure you're white. White always moves first on the ATARI board.

There you have it — a review of a number of the backgammon computers on the market. So the next time you roll the dice, you will know that man is not alone — at least in the world of backgammon. ★★

## SHOW GUIDE

<b>ALADDIN</b> Cocktail Show 8 p.m. & Midnight	<b>736-0240</b>
02/26-03/10 Gladys Knight and the Pips	
<b>CAESARS PALACE</b> Cocktail Show 9 p.m. & 12:30 a.m.	<b>731-3333</b>
02/21-02/27 Paul Anka	
02/28-03/05 Willie Nelson	
<b>DESERT INN</b> Dinner Show 8 p.m. & Late Show Midnight	<b>733-4444</b>
02/19-03/03 Debbie Reynolds, Doc Severinsen	
03-04-03/17 Dionne Warwick, Foster Brooks	
<b>DUNES</b> Dinner Show 8 p.m. & Late Show Midnight	<b>737-4110</b>
Thru Dec. Casino de Paris '80	
<b>FLAMINGO HILTON</b> Dinner Show 8 p.m. & Late Show Midnight	<b>733-3111</b>
Indefinite Razzle Dazzle	
<b>FRONTIER</b> Dinner Show 8 p.m. & Late Show Midnight	<b>734-0240</b>
02/07-03/05 Wayne Newton, Dave Barry	
03/04-03/19 Roy Clark	
<b>HACIENDA</b> Dinner Show 8 p.m. & Late Show Midnight	<b>739-8911</b>
Indefinite Ice Fantasy	
<b>LANDMARK</b> Show: Tues., Wed., Thurs., 12 Midnight; Fri. 9 p.m. & 12 Midnight; Sunday 11 p.m.	<b>733-1110</b>
Indefinite Redd Foxx	
<b>LAS VEGAS HILTON</b> Dinner Show 8 p.m. & Late Show Midnight	<b>732-7777</b>
02/19-03/03 Tony Orlando	
03/04-03/24 The Osmonds	
<b>MARINA</b> Cocktail Show: Fri. & Sat. 8 p.m., 10 p.m. & Midnight; Sun.-Thurs. 9 p.m. & Midnight	<b>739-1500</b>
Indefinite Bare Touch of Vegas	
<b>MAXIM</b> Cocktail Show: 8 p.m., 10 p.m., Midnight (Off Mondays)	<b>731-4300</b>
Indefinite Olde Tyme Burlesque	
<b>MGM GRAND</b> Dinner Show 8 p.m. & Late Show Midnight	<b>739-4111</b>
02/21-02/27 Captain & Tennille	
02/28-03/05 Engelbert Humperdinck	
<b>ZIEGFELD ROOM:</b> Indefinite Hallelujah Hollywood	
<b>RIVIERA</b> Dinner Show 8 p.m. & Late Show Midnight	<b>735-5110</b>
02/07-02/20 Anne Murray, Rodney Dangerfield	
02/21-03/05 Steve & Eydie, Corbett Monica	
<b>SAHARA</b> Dinner Show 8 p.m. & Late Show Midnight	<b>735-4242</b>
02/22-02/23 Johnny Carson, Sahara Girls	
02/24-03/05 Dinner—Tennessee Ernie Ford Midnight—Buddy Hackett	
03/06-03/12 Helen Reddy	
03/13-03/19 Buddy Hackett, Joey Heatherton	
<b>SANDS</b> 02/20-03/04 Alan King, Susan Anton	<b>733-5326</b>
03/05-03/11 Shecky Greene, Bernadette Peters	
03/12-03/29 Tony Bennett, David Brenner	
<b>SILVER SLIPPER</b> Show: 8:30 p.m., 10 p.m. & Midnight	<b>734-1212</b>
Indefinite Boy-les-que '79 starring Kenny Kerr	
<b>SILVERBIRD</b> Show: 9 p.m. & Midnight	<b>735-4111</b>
Indefinite "IPI-TOMBI"	
<b>STARDUST</b> Show: Sun.-Fri. 7 p.m. & 11 p.m.; Sat. only 6 p.m., 9:15 p.m., 12:15 a.m. (Food served after first show)	<b>732-6111</b>
Thru Dec. 13th Edition, Lido de Paris starring Siegfried & Roy	
<b>TROPICANA</b> Dinner Show 8 p.m., Late Show 11:45 p.m. Extra Show Sat. only 2:15 a.m.	<b>739-2411</b>
Thru Dec. Folies Bergere '80	

# When In Doubt—Double

by Kit Woolsey

Most backgammon players are far too slow in sending over the cube. They fear a quick turnaround or, worse, that their game might get good enough to double their opponent out, but now he can play on and possibly win. Consequently, they often wait that one more roll, and let their opponent off the hook.

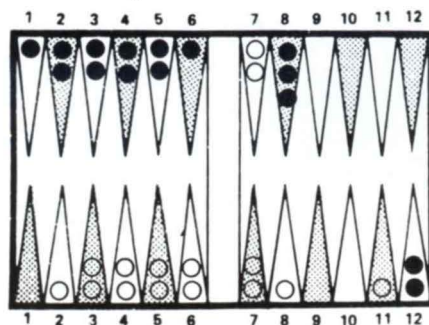
The fear of a turnaround is legitimate, but the fear of losing a good game because your opponent owns the cube and can play to the end is imaginary. If you fail to double and then reach a position where he does not have a take, you have lost your market (assuming, of course, that your opponent is competent enough to fold an untakable double), and you wish you had doubled earlier. Many opportunities to win 2 or 4 games have been passed by because a player waited too long to double, even though these games can turn sour.

A good rule of thumb is as follows: if it is more likely that you will lose your market on the next roll than you will be an underdog after the roll, send the cube over, particularly if the cube is in the middle. In other words, the cost of losing your market is greater than the cost of letting your opponent own the cube when you only have a slight advantage. If you fail to roll the killing number, so what? All it means is that you are playing for twice the stakes and that you can no longer double him out. You still have the better game, and if you reach a position where you could double him out, you will be glad you had doubled earlier.

Poker players will understand this analogous situation: Suppose you are playing 7-card stud, and after 5 cards you have made a straight and you know that your opponent is drawing to a four-flush. There is \$20 in the pot, and your opponent only has \$10 in front of him, so that's all you can bet. Should you bet now, while it is proper for him to call (since he is getting 3-1 pot odds), or wait until the next card, after which it would be right for him to fold if he didn't make his hand, you will make more money betting now. Even though it means you will occasionally lose a pot you would have otherwise won. If your opponent had only \$5 in front of him it would be proper to wait a round, since he now will have a proper call even if he doesn't make his hand on the next card, so why give away \$5 when he does?

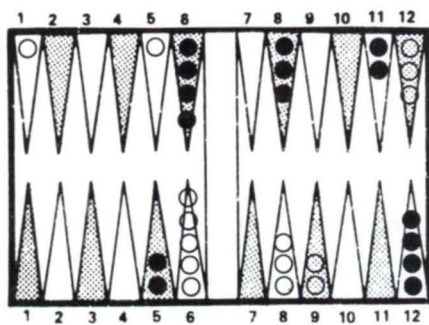
Back to backgammon. Let's examine a few positions to see if we should send the cube over. In each case, you are Black on the roll and the cube is in the middle.

POSITION #1



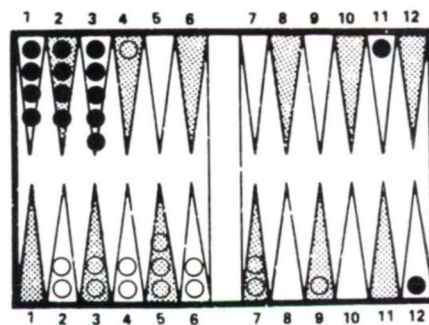
Position 1 is a common type of position. Most players will wait, but it is clearly correct to double now. Black is well ahead in the race, so White's primary chance is to hit a shot, which he is likely to get. Therefore Black is at worst a favorite, and will lose his market if he rolls a good set of doubles, so it is correct to double immediately.

POSITION #2



In position 2, Black will almost certainly have the better game after the next roll whatever happens, due to his advanced anchor, and it is not hard to imagine a few killer sequences after which Black will lose his market (e.g. Black makes the 5-point and White fans), so Black should double now.

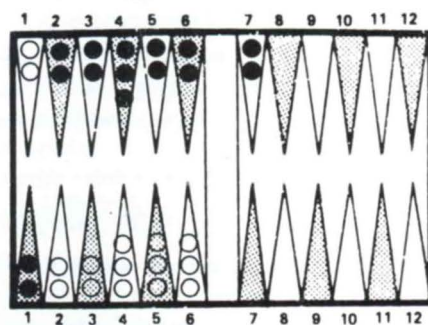
POSITION #3



Position 3 is the type of position you should wait a roll, even though Black is a clear favorite and he has a few winning or near winning numbers. The reason is that

if Black rolls an average number and White doesn't hit, White will still have a take, so Black has no fear of losing his market unless he rolls a big double (if Black rolls 6-5, clears his back man, and White misses, White should fold the double, but it's close, so not much is lost by waiting in this case). Consequently, there is no reason to lose an extra point in the variations when White hits on his next shot. In this position, the possibility of an immediate turnaround is greater than that of losing your market.

POSITION #4



Position 4 is a deceptive position. It came up one day, and I suggested that Black had a double. A couple of quite competent players told me to put my money where my mouth was, so we played out a double-no double proposition (this is done by playing each side an equal number of times, once with the cube turned and once with it in the middle — it is the proper test to see if a position is worth a double). It turned out that I won substantially. What happens is that if Black rolls the 6, he is suddenly a huge favorite and loses his market by a mile, while if he doesn't roll the 6 the game is up for grabs (unless he rolls a horror set). Consequently, there are more market-losing numbers than immediate turnaround numbers, so it is proper to double. ☆☆

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# BACKGAMMON BITS



No "Who's in Town" section this time because with the ABC and the electronic show in Las Vegas, every important name in backgammon was here. But, we'll give special mention to WOO WOO WATTSON who never fails to show us a good time whether he's in Las Vegas or we're in New York.

□ □ □

Much publicized B&W diplomats tournament in Washington D.C. was quickly downplayed after Iranian won the tournament at the height of the Crisis.

□ □ □

Eloped nee ELI BRUSH and PETE DUSTIN. We hope she teaches him to play the game so we don't lose the flair she brings to Sunday tournaments.

Did you know that 16 good players from L. A. signed up for the ABC tournament simultaneously so that they would command one bracket? The secret plan was to send the best of them on to the finals and split the winnings — the best laid plans of mice and men.

□ □ □

HANK KOVELL returned to Las Vegas and is now with SIG ROGICH ad agency. DAVID LEAN, formerly director of sales at channel 5, now with Ryan & Lean agency. DAVID COOPER's, Cooper, Burch, & Howe won nearly all the top Addy's at the annual advertising awards.

□ □ □



Married, finally,  
CHUCK PAPA ZIAN

□ □ □

RUDY SCHNEIDER original patron of the LVBC doing it right at the Beverly Hills Candy Store private club. He plans backgammon in the future.

□ □ □



BACKGAMMON BEAUTY for this issue is MARTEEN FISHER. A backgammon enthusiast and top level executive with FISHER PENS, makers of the famous space pen used by astronauts. Ms. Fisher plays racquetball and backgammon at the plush Las Vegas Sporting House, the only other club in LV that features permanent backgammon boards.



The new Thursday night Doubles Tournament director is RONDA STOLTZ — a natural for the job since she also is an official for girls high school basketball games.

□ □ □

GARY FORD back from odyssey. KATHY STRONG and CARLO ENRICH I at the Bridge of Sighs in Venice. IGNACIO GUEVARA new Mexican Disco King expects to have backgammon in his new Baja club. New Las Vegas Residents DAVID MARCUS, NORMAN LE PORE, NETTA ODER.

□ □ □

Backbreaking News — the new trend in clubs featuring backgammon is — to set up boards at bar height and use bar stools instead of chairs. It's uncomfortable for long sessions but it does integrate backgammon into the rest of the club.

□ □ □

Xmas '79 was the year of the backgammon design. Every designer used it on some product at least once. We saw pips and/or doubling cubes on glasses, ice buckets, place mats, bedsheets, pajamas, rugs and on and on — when you're a Jet you're a Jet all the way.

□ □ □

New President of Cavendish Club of Boston is SAM HANNA.

□ □ □

SUZY CREAMCHEESE, just returned from successful opening of new Houston store, to appear on "MERV GRIFFIN" and "P.M. MAGAZINE" show. LILLIAN CARTER, mother of the President, has been attracting a lot of attention dressed in CREAMCHEESE designed gowns.

□ □ □



# LAS VEGANS THAT PLAY

## The Return of Dr. K



"Why did I start playing again? I wasn't thinking logically. I got caught up in the excitement of the big Dunes tournament and joined the LVBC."

So spoke Dr. K., the legendary Dallas backgammon figure, who had in recent years disappeared from the game altogether.

Dr. K., an Honor Society student at the University of Illinois and Mayo Clinic Oral surgeon, discovered backgammon at the Oak Cliff Country Club in 1972. He spent the rest of that year and 1973 supporting Jake and Mary Zita Jacoby, Tony Goble and Malcolm Davis, the creme de la creme of Dallas backgammon at that time.

It was at Steve Thayer's Lone Star Chouette that Dr. K. realized his first tournament win. The combination of winning and hospitable comradery of this legendary Texas backgammon set hooked him for good. From then on it was lessons with Magriel, traveling the backgammon circuit (and supporting it heavily) and squaring off against all comers no matter how famous a name they carried.

Naturally, the next step was to jump into the business. This was done by partnering with Tony Goble and Malcolm Davis in the legendary

Pawnshop. The backgammon room at the Pawnshop opened with a black tie affair and the game flourished to the point where tournaments three nights a week drew 80 players each.

The next couple of years were 100% filled with backgammon. Dr. K. with his former wife ran the Pawnshop tournaments; founded the Dallas Backgammon Assn. with over 1,000 members; formed the Pawnshop Backgammon Team; designed equipment including the instantly recognizable Pawnshop doubling cube and the first backgammon collectable — the Pawnshop beach towel; co-founded the Texas Backgammon Assn. with Jim Howe (currently successfully operating the association) and Jim Scott (present owner of Diamond Jim's western disco formerly the Pawnshop); and most important of all, put on the Dallas Mid-America Invitational Tournament, which is remembered as one of the finest ever held in America.

Why did he quit? "I can't remember the exact series of rolls or the circumstances but it started with a 35 to 1 shot followed by the longest series of doubles on record in a game where I was 10,000 to one favorite. Afterwards, I sat limply with Lynn Goldsmith and she showed me three moves I had never seen or imagined. I knew then I would quit!"

Since then, the divorced Dr. K. has had tremendous success in business with Denture Centers of America and currently with International Reducing Services. The I.R.S., a bariatrics practice, has four offices in Las Vegas.

Why did Dr. K. start playing again? "I think backgammon is the most perfect game. I can remember when I liked it better than sex. It offers a great outlet for energy. I only wish that no one had to lose." ☆☆

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\_\_\_\_\_ King \_\_\_\_\_ Rust

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(Please add \$3.00 for tax, shipping and handling.)

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The 4th annual Plimpton Cup (June 10-15, 1980)

# World Amateur Backgammon Championship

**Dunes**  
HOTEL AND COUNTRY CLUB LAS VEGAS

## Blackjack Championships



Total Prizes  
Exceed:

**\$600,000.00**



Larry Arnold , winner of last year's Beginner Backgammon Tournament, Morris Shenker head of the Dunes Hotel and Wayne Araki , the winner of last year's Plimpton Cup. Araki is a truck driver from Vancouver Canada. He parlayed his \$500 entry fee into \$150,000.00. This year the entry fee into the Plimpton Cup has been reduced to \$250 and First prize will be \$100,000.00.

## BLACKJACK TOURNAMENT

All tournament rounds last three (3) hours with one scheduled break. The first round begins with all players buying \$500 in special Dunes tournament chips. No additional buy-ins are allowed. *All winnings during tournament play are retained by players.* The player at each table with the most amount of money at the end of the 3-hour time is declared the winner of that table and advances to the second round. Standard "Dunes" Blackjack rules will be used. The tournament will start with 70 tables of 7 players each starting at various times, either Tues., Wed. or Thurs.

**Round One: 490 PLAYERS** (70 tables of 7 players)

**70 WINNERS** (losers sign up for second chance)

**Round Two:** (10 tables of 7 players)

59 Losers win \$1,000.00 each.

**Round Three:** (2nd Chance and Main draw combined)

**11** (Main Draw - 10 Winners + Wild Card)

+**10** (2nd Chance-2 round winners)

**21** (3 Tables of 7), 14 Losers win \$2,500 each

**7** (winner from each table + 4 wild cards.)

1st Prize Winner **\$100,000.00**

2nd Prize Winner \$ 21,000.00

3-7th Prize Winners \$ 5,000.00 each

Detailed rules will be given to all players upon registration. If less than 490 players enter the prize pool will be \$10,000 + \$500.00 per player.

## Beginners Blackjack

Each session will be one (1) hour long and the players will start with \$250 in chips. Players may start Tues., Wed., Thurs. or Friday. Losers will be allowed to re-enter the tournament.

## ELIGIBILITY FOR THE PLIMPTON CUP AND RULES

**Amateurs only.** A detailed definition of Amateur and beginner will be mailed to all registrants. This year the amount of money previously won will not be the sole basis of determining amateur status. Any player who is not sure of his or her amateur status should apply to the eligibility committee prior to April 15. A player who enters under the pretext of meeting our qualification will be subject to disqualification at any point during the tournament. (Previously players have been disqualified as late as the fifth round.)

The Eligibility Committee reserves the right to refuse or allow entry, without explanation to anyone it deems detrimental or beneficial to the best interest of the tournament.

A special feature in the Open, Amateur, and Blackjack Tournaments will be the Second Chance flight. Thus those eliminated in the preliminary rounds will have a second chance at all prizes. There will be a \$100 fee for those choosing to sign up for a second chance. Time permitting re-entry will be allowed in the Amateur and Beginner Tournaments. Detailed rules will be given to all players at registration. All Prizes are to be paid on June 15, 1980 with the exception of the prizes exceeding \$40,000. Those prize winners will be paid 25% of their winnings on June 15, 1980 with the remaining prize money to be placed in escrow at the Valley Bank of Nevada and will be paid in three (3) equal annual installments beginning June 10, 1981.

## BACKGAMMON: STAGGERED STARTING TIMES

### Beginners

Wed., Thurs. or Fri. 5 Matches of 5 points,  
6th round Saturday at 10 A.M.

Byes given in the 6th round based upon order of entry.

FINALS 10 A.M. Sunday (11 points).

### Open

Wednesday at 2 P.M. — 3 Matches of 15 Points

Thurs. and Fri. play continues and Second Chance begins

Sat. at 2 P.M. Second Chance & Main Draw combined

FINALS: Sat. at 8 P.M. (21 Points).

## AMATEUR

### Main Draw

Wed. — 3 Matches of 11 Points ea. 4th round Thurs. at 11 A.M.

or Thurs. — 3 Matches of 11 Points ea. 4th Round Fri. at 11 A.M.

5th and 6th round matches Fri. at 8 P.M.

or Fri. - 4 Matches of 9 Points ea.

5th and 6th round matches Fri. at 11 P.M.

All Byes given in the 5th round to Wed. and Thurs. starters based upon order of entry.

*Main Draw (20 players) & Second Chance (12 players) Combined Saturday at 3 P.M.*

**Finals at 11 A.M. Sunday (19 Points)**

### Second Chance

Sign up after losing in Main Draw

Groups of 16 will play 4 matches of 7 points

5-7th round matches Sat. at 9 A.M.

## INCENTIVES TO REGISTER EARLY

1. All byes will be given based upon order of registration.
2. Early Bird Prize for the Early Birds (reg. before April 30th) that go the furthest but don't win one of the top prizes.
3. Register prior to May 19 and save \$50.00.
4. Championship Blackjack Tournament limited to 490 players.

## DOUBLES

Groups of 16 playing 7 Point matches

Tues. at 2 P.M. 2 rounds, 3-4th Wed. at 9 P.M.

or Wed. at 9 P.M. 2 rounds, 3-4th Thurs. at 9 P.M.

or Sat. at 1 P.M. 4 rounds

5th thru 8th rounds Saturday at 7 P.M.

Byes given based on order of entry.

# PRIZE STRUCTURE

## BACKGAMMON

	Open	Plimpton Cup	Beginner
1st	40%	\$100,000.00	\$10,000.00
2nd	20%	50,000.00	5,000.00
3rd	10%	25,000.00	2,500.00
4th	5%	15,000.00	1,500.00
5-8th	3% ea.	5,000.00 ea.	500.00 ea.

## BLACKJACK

	Championship Limited to 490 Players	Beginner
	\$100,000.00	\$21,000.00
	20,000.00	5,600.00
3-7th	5,000.00 ea.	1,000.00 ea.
8-21st	2,000.00 ea.	—
22-80th	1,000.00 ea.	—

### SPECIAL PRIZES first 8 finishers are ineligible for these prizes

Early Bird	5%	15,000.00	1,500.00
Hotel	5%	15,000.00	1,500.00
Women's	3%	5,000.00	500.00
Wed. Starters	—	5,000.00	500.00

<b>Total</b>	\$10,000.00 + 500.00 per player	\$250,000.00	\$25,000.00
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**\$ 250,000.00\*** **\$40,000.00**

\*If less than 490 players enter the Blackjack tournament, the prize pool will be \$10,000.00 + \$500 per player.

### PAYMENT ALTERNATIVES

	Open or Blackjack	Amateur	Beginner**
Registration fee, mail by May 19, Balance June 10-13, (Cash Only)	\$ 25 475	\$ 25 225	\$ 40 —
<b>OR</b>	\$500	\$250	\$40

Pay by cash when registering at the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas

Amateur registration closes at 7 p.m. Fri. June 13th

Open and Blackjack registration closes at 1 p.m. Wed. June 11th

Beginners (Blackjack or Backgammon) registration closes at 8 p.m. Fri. June 13th

### SPECIAL ROOM RATE

(When staying 5 nights)  
June 10-15, 1980 \$195.00 (plus 6% tax)  
6 DAYS, 5 NIGHTS (Tues.-Sun.)  
From N.Y. or Miami including Airfare  
\$390 per person double occupancy  
(single occupancy \$75 extra)  
**Rooms are limited.**

L.V.

## ENTRY FORM

Player \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

CITY STATE ZIP

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

Here is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to:

**American Backgammon Championships.**

Charge my Master Charge  Visa

Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your entry form with registration fees to:

**American Backgammon Championships, Inc.**  
**Suite 1006,**  
**575 Madison Avenue**  
**N.Y. N.Y. 10022 (212)486-1489**

**Check appropriate box or boxes:**

- Plimpton Cup (\$25 reg. fee)  Open (\$25 reg. fee)
- Beginner Backgammon (\$40 full payment)
- Blackjack Championship (\$25 reg. fee)
- Beginner/Blackjack (\$40 full payment)
- Room TUES.-SUN. (\$206.20)

Single or double occupancy

Name of 2nd person in room \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 cancellation charge.

Send full room payment with entry form.

### Fill in if you wish to have Casino Credit at the Dunes Hotel.

BUS. NAME \_\_\_\_\_ POSITION \_\_\_\_\_ No Yrs. \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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#### CHECKING ACCOUNTS

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CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ACCOUNT NO. \_\_\_\_\_

BANK # 2 \_\_\_\_\_ BRANCH \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ACCOUNT NO. \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT OF CREDIT REQUESTED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Master Ch. # \_\_\_\_\_

Diner's # \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's Lic. # \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

# Special Prizes

In the Blackjack tournament these prizes will be split among eligible players who finish 8th-21st. In the Backgammon tournament they will be split among eligible players who finish 9-32nd.

**EARLY Birds** Players who mail their entry form in by April 30.

**Women's** A female player.

**Hotel** Players who reserved their rooms through American Backgammon Championships.

**Wed. Starters** Player who starts Wed. In the Plimpton Cup a player who loses early Wednesday and starts second chance play Wed. will be eligible for this prize.

## Kick Off Backgammon Tournament

# \$10,000.00 WINNER TAKE ALL

**NO ENTRY FEE.** All players who book their hotel rooms through American Backgammon Championships will be eligible for this tournament. However players wishing to enter this tournament must go through Las Vegas registration by 7 P.M. Tuesday, June 10, 1980.

## WOMEN'S BLACKJACK TOURNAMENT

# \$5000.00

**WINNER TAKE ALL**

\$50 Entry Fee. Registration closes Tues. June 10 at 5:00 P.M.

**Hotel Rooms** All rooms at the Dunes should be reserved through American Backgammon Championships. The rate for 6 days and 5 nights is \$195 per room plus \$11.70 tax. If a player wishes to remain fewer days the price will remain the same. **Room payment should be included with your entry form.** Only players reserving their rooms through American Backgammon Championships will be eligible for the Prize.

Those players coming from either N.Y. or Miami should send \$390 for airfare and room (double occupancy), if they wish to book air through American Backgammon Championships.

**Each year we have run out of rooms so book early.** The Dunes will confirm all Hotel rooms.

**For additional information write or call:**

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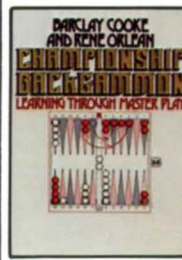
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# Spring Tournaments



DATE	TOURNAMENT	LOCATION	DIRECTOR
Feb. 29 - March 2	Eldorado Backgammon Classic	Reno, Nevada	Steve Lehman
March 7 - 9	Fourth Annual Bluegrass Regional	Clarksville, Indiana	Larry Strasberg
April 3 - 6	MGM Grand Reno Backgammon Tournament	Reno, Nevada	Les Boyd
April 11 - 13	Dude Ranch Weekend & Regional Tourney	Upstate N.Y., New York	Steve Kurzban
April 18 - 20	Third Annual BSO Benefit Tournament	Cambridge, Mass.	Francesca Parkinson
April 16 - 18	San Francisco Classic	S. F., California	Bill Boyd
April 18 - 22	Geneva Tournament	Switzerland	Roland Jakober
April 25 - 27	Indiana Open Tournament	Indianapolis, Indiana	Ralph Roberts
April 29 - 30	Great Lakes Backgammon Championships	Rochester, New York	Board of Rochester

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## BOOK REVIEW

by Ray Boisjoli  
(Duluth Backgammon Club)

I feel backgammon books are very important if we wish to spread the knowledge and enjoyment of the game. I personally have a backgammon library of 25 different books and magazines devoted to backgammon. I feel the two best books I've read so far are *Backgammon* by Paul Magriel and *Playboy's Book of Backgammon*.

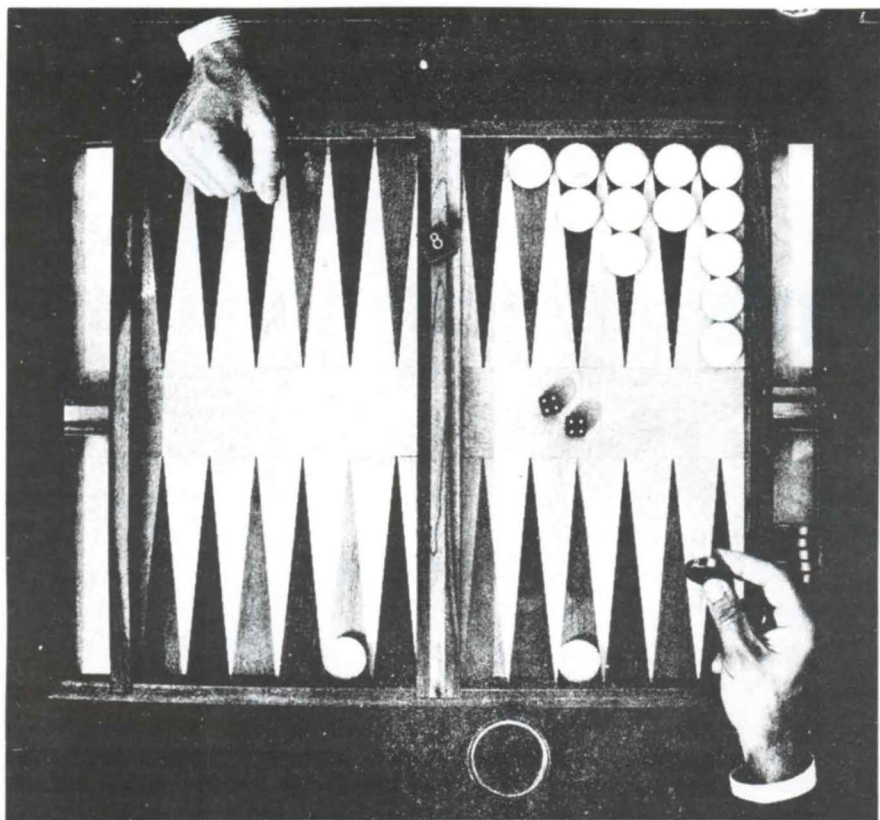
I would like to venture an opinion on the paperback book, *Backgammon, How to Play and Win* by Donald Carter. On pages 146 and 147, Black has a closed board and is now ready to bear off. White has one man on the bar. Black throws double four's. This author claims two men are removed from the 4 point and as stated on page 147, two men may then be moved off the board from the 3 point. He never mentioned the two men on the 6 point or the three men on the 5 point.

On page 180 he does the same thing again with White bearing off and throwing a 3-2. He instructs us to bear two men from the 2 point. Here we have 2 men on each of the 4-5-6 points.

I read every backgammon book I can and recommend them to people. Because of these bearing off ideas of Donald Carter, I can not recommend this book to anyone. This set of instructions in the hands of a beginning player would only create trouble as he sat down to play with a more experienced player. I taught myself backgammon through Tim Holland's *Auto Backgammon*, which I feel is the best teaching backgammon product on the market. From that I've taught many players and have had some championship quality backgammon players to my credit.

*Backgammon, How to Play and Win* is in paperback, sells for \$2.00, written by Donald Carter and published by Holloway House Publishing Co., 8060 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, California 90046. ☆☆

EDITOR'S NOTE: The LVBC Magazine needs information and/or a review on a book called *Clermont Book Of Backgammon* by David Dor-El-Winchester Press. Send information to LVBC, P. O. Box 19567, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119.



### Gammoned or Backgammoned?

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Backgammoned. The white piece on the black home board is the clue. Gammoned? Black's all off; whites all on, but out of black's home board. (A backgammon also triples the bet. Tough on egos. Tougher on pockets!)

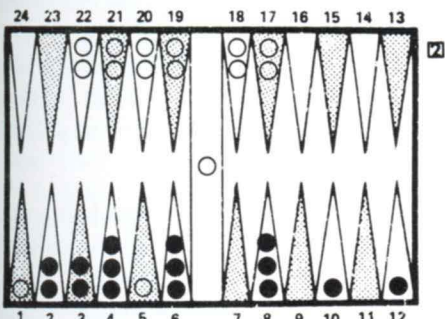


# The Prime Syndrome

© Copyright 1979 by Gaby Horowitz and Dr. Bruce Roman.

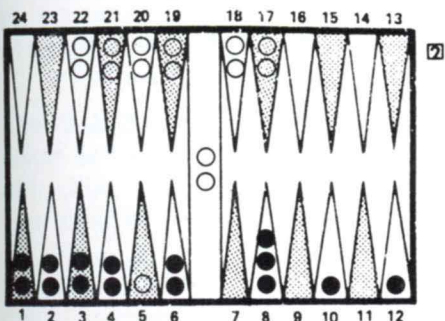
Students of the game of backgammon have long been taught and even conditioned to build and maintain primes. Backgammon is a game of escape and entrapment. Primes are very effective vehicles for entrapping your opponent. But as most of us have learned at some point in our lives too much of a good thing can be harmful. So it is with primes.

There seem to be two main reasons why a majority of players become obsessed with primes: 1) A feeling of security and 2) Aesthetics. It is true that primes are pleasing to the eye but pluses on the score sheet are even more so!



POSITION 1 BLACK TO PLAY 5-3

In Position 1 it seems correct to make the 5 point creating a solid 5 point prime. Black, however, does not need a 5 point prime to win the game or gammon White. It is much more important to stop White from making the 1 point which would allow him to stay in the game to the end and probably give him one or two winning shots at Black while Black is bearing off (Position 1A). White has one roll in which to establish an anchor with either move.

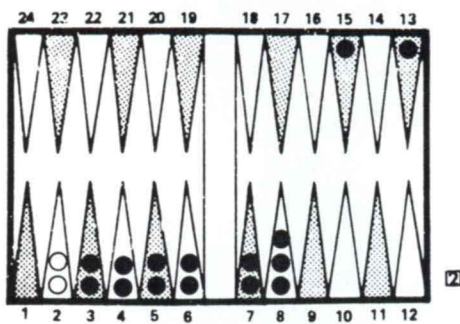


POSITION 1A

But an anchor on the 5 point will be much less effective for getting a shot because Black will only have to clear the 6 point by the time White re-enters his men.

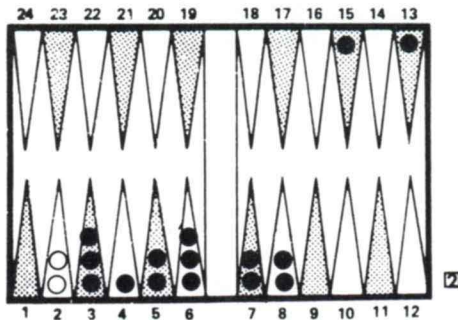
In Position 2 the only way Black can win the game is to get both of White's men on the bar against a closed board. Black must break his prime to allow White to split his remaining two men. Most players would break the prime by clearing the bar point, hoping White will throw a 5. This is

incorrect because 1) If White does not throw a 5 in the next few rolls, Black will



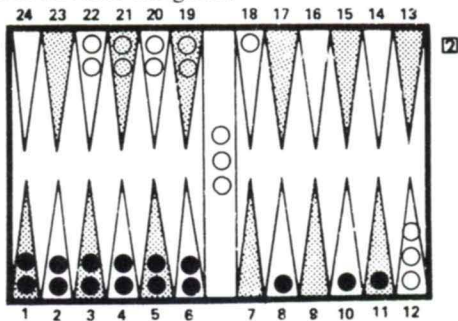
POSITION 2 BLACK TO PLAY 2-1

advance his hunters who are needed where they are to hit White as he escapes, 2) Black will pay off to 5-5 and 3) Since White is defenseless (has no board) Black does not need a perfect distribution of builders to hit him because even if White return hits, Black will come in immediately. The correct move is Black 8 - Black 6, Black 4 - Black 3 (Position 2A).



POSITION 2A

This move will force White to split his men with any 2 (the same 11 chances as he would have to throw a 5) but should he roll his very best number (2-2), Black still does not lose the game.



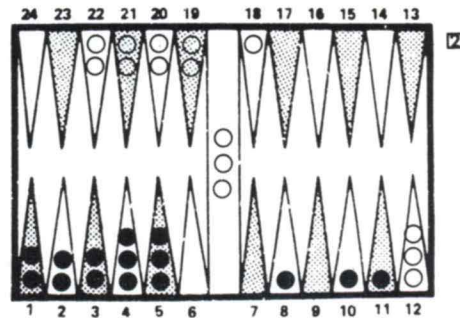
POSITION 3 BLACK TO PLAY 2-1

In Position 3 it looks as though Black is well on his way to the bank. When the position is this good we usually see two different extremes in play:

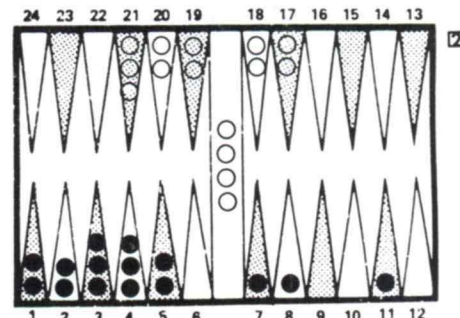
1) A tendency by experienced players to "overplay" the position by trying to anticipate future rolls further than they should in order to achieve a "perfect" bear off.

2) Carelessness by the inexperienced player in not protecting against large doubles.

The safest move is Black 6 - Black 4. Black 6 - Black 5 (Position 3A) breaking the prime now at your convenience and not being forced to break it later at the discretion of the dice. This also allows Black to smooth out his distribution by being able to play large and small numbers comfortably.

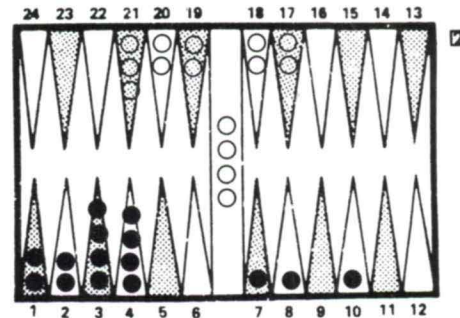


POSITION 3A



POSITION 4 BLACK TO PLAY 1-1

Has Black gotten too greedy by hitting too many blots? (Position 4) Not if he plays the 1-1 correctly. It would be incorrect to make the 6 point because this would prevent White from coming in and so increasing his chances of getting a shot. Black should want White to enter his men and so should play Black 5 - Black 4 (2), Black 4 - Black 3, Black 11 - Black 10 (Position 4A).



POSITION 4A

He can now peacefully bear his remaining men in creating a sound distribution from which to bear off safely. This considerably decreases White's chances of getting a winning shot.

☆☆



# Marrakesh—A New Game

by Prince Joli Kansil

**MARRAKESH™** combines the exciting elements of backgammon with many clever innovations, and the final product is a game with subtle strategy, luck—and even extrasensory perception!

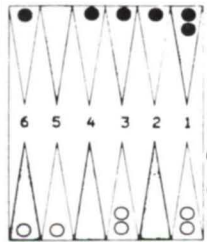
### *Five Years in the Making*

Prince Joli Kansil, inventor of many nationally marketed games and author of two books on backgammon, spent five years developing Marrakesh. The key breakthrough came on a torrid July day in 1978 while he was visiting Morocco. There, at the Mamounia Hotel in Marrakesh, he hit upon the key rules that govern the unique card play in the game. The scoring for Marrakesh took one more year to complete, and this was accomplished only through rigorous testing.

### *Marrakesh to Have Wide Appeal*

For inexperienced players, who know nothing about backgammon, Marrakesh will prove easy to learn as there is a special section in the rules booklet geared solely to beginners. For seasoned backgammon players, Marrakesh promises to add a stimulating new dimension: Instead of being dependent on cruel random dice, the two players move their pieces by using a special deck of playing cards, with each player always having control over what card is to be played.

**MARRAKESH IN BRIEF:** The object in Marrakesh is to score more points than one's opponent by the end of the 12th and final round of play. Points are awarded for removing ("bearing off") one's six men in three turns or less and for limiting the opponent to bearing off as few men as possible. In addition, extra points are scored for bearing off in a particular pattern—such as two men off at each turn.



To play, the two players throw six dice each to form their opening setups, as in the diagram. From a special pack of 104 playing cards, each player is dealt six cards and has his choice of which card to play at a particular turn. The rank of suits of the two cards played determines which player moves men on his playing board. At times, the winner is entitled to move additional men by drawing extra cards, and when the two cards played are of the same number, the winner plays "doubles" by moving the number four times; in addition, when the two cards played are of the same number and same suit, the winner plays "triples" by moving the number six times!

The card play in Marrakesh is very subtle as there is a delicate balance between offensive and defensive strategy, but the tactics that are needed for winning are easily grasped after only two or three sessions of play. Oswald Jacoby's article on strategy that appears in the rules booklet gives detailed advice on how to win at Marrakesh and this material will prove invaluable for all new players.

Marrakesh can be obtained through Backgammon Supply Company of Jeffersonville, Indiana (812) 944-6644

# Backgammon

## FUN FACTS

### DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- If a man is found off the board during the course of the game, before either player has reached the bear off, the man remains off the board and the game continues on with 14 men. The man with 14 men can still lose a gammon or a backgammon.
- That a robot has beaten the world backgammon champion, Luigi Villa, four out of five games in a seven-point match, (But Bobby Fischer can still destroy any computer at chess.)
- That a hotsy totsy limousine service in Beverly Hills offers 24 hour service and backgammon. Meanwhile, Gucci offers a backgammon board with ivory disks for \$850.
- That more backgammon sets were sold in the last two years than the past 20 years combined.
- That there are backgammon boards made of elephant hide and python skin.
- That anthropologists suggest the obsessive appeal of backgammon is due to the fact that such games are an emotional microcosm of life-death struggle, as once lived by our primitive ancestors.
- That the professional always beats the amateur player, not so much because of superior skill, but because the former has faith only in mathematical odds, while the latter believes in luck, systems, hunches and fate — none of which has anything to do with the table of probabilities.
- In Westminster, MD, Bob Hale and John Hines are soggily seeking to set a world's record — the longest game of backgammon played at the bottom of a filled swimming pool. The record will be set whenever they end the game — apparently no one has ever attempted the feat before. ☆☆

# Lumbago—Backgammon Back

by Harry Santrizos, M. D.

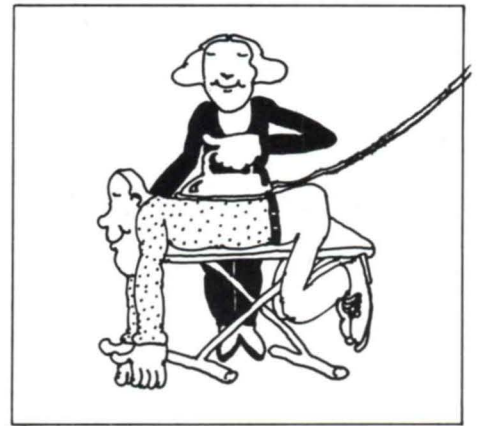
The human spine has not evolved sufficiently so that the upright posture can be readily tolerated for prolonged periods. Some large mammals, such as bears and big apes, have vertebral columns almost identical to humans, and although these animals are quite capable of sitting and standing, they do so only infrequently.

When a backgammon player is sitting in a straight-back chair with both feet flat on the floor, the lumbar area is supporting the major weight of the upper body. If this seated position is maintained for a protracted period, the muscles which are linked to and support the lumbar vertebrae eventually go into spasm and send their pain signals to the brain. The person then invariably starts squirming in the chair and sacrificing some powers of concentration. How, then, can one avoid

experiencing the discomfort and, as in the case of the waging backgammon devotee, the possible costly consequences of a lumbar strain?

As mentioned above, the muscles in the low back can go into spasm when they are made to bear more than their fair share of the body's weight. Therefore, anything which eases that burden will prove beneficial for those who tend to recurrently suffer from this condition.

For example, sitting in a chair with arms is preferable to one without, simply because by resting some of the body's weight on the supports of the former, you obviously can divert much of the stress otherwise imposed on the lumbar musculature. So too, by placing a firm, small pillow (or tightly rolled sweater) in the hollow of the lower back while seated, you can contribute direct support to the



lumbar spine and thus lessen the work requirement of the muscles.

In conclusion, one cannot help but surmise that it is the evolved wisdom of apes and bears, which has caused them to not only avoid excessive standing, but to also shun sitting games.

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PRESENTS

## MARRAKESH™

by Prince Joli Kansil

Wholesale & Retail — see review  
in another section of this issue

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# Araki Wins \$150,000 in Las Vegas

Wayne Araki, a 24 year old truck driver from Vancouver, Canada, defeated a global field of more than 500 players to win the Plimpton Cup and \$150,000 at the American Backgammon Championships last December in Las Vegas. Araki, having previously won eight straight matches, remained in relative control throughout his final match defeating Paul DiBiase, a 42 year old dentist from Steubenville, Ohio, 19 to 11. DiBiase won \$60,000.

The finals were telecast on closed circuit television with expert commentary by former World Champion, Paul Magriel. For a match that meant an extra \$90,000 to the winner, both participants played incredibly fast. Weak doubling strategies, combined with minor tactical errors in checker play and an overall attitude of nervous impatience, substantiated the calibre of both players as truly "amateur".

Fortunately, Araki's wife prevailed on him not to accept the \$10,000 challenge from last year's ABC winner, David Leibowitz.

Larry Arnold of Bellingham, Washington received a 1980 Monte Carlo for winning the beginner's division.

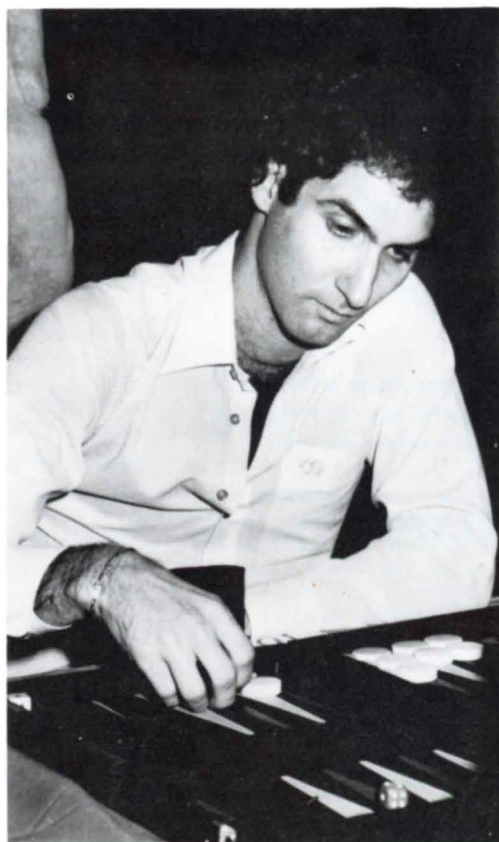
The unstoppable Alan Martin of Beverly Hills rolled easily over Milton Nathanson to win the Championship Division. We expect fame and fortune for this colorful player since this makes his 3rd major win this year.

The Doubles Division winners were Talmadge & Krueger.

The ABC group has been invited to return to the Dunes in June because of the enormous success of this latest tournament. A multi-faceted tournament is being planned, which will feature six divisions of backgammon and one of blackjack. The Wattson group is the most efficient and creative tournament promoters in America today.



PLIMPTON CUP – Wayne Araki



CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION – Alan Martin



BEGINNER – Larry Arnold



ARAKI WINS \$150,000  
(Continued)



# PRIVATE STOCK

There is a new breed of backgammon idea men who are privately publishing and selling their theories and philosophies. This material is an important supplement to anyone's backgammon library. Currently the best mail order advice can be obtained from the Dr. Roman/Horowitz team in Los Angeles (advanced backgammon), and Frank Petty Jr. on beginning backgammon in Missouri.

But, the most complete and in depth private publication we have found is by Danny Kleinman the L.A. analyst and developer of Jackgammon (the original backgammon computer). Below you will find an outline of his book. It is available for \$30. or 25¢ per page for separate chapters. Mail checks to Danny Kleinman 8924 Hargis Street, Los Angeles, CA 90034. Information on other private writings can be obtained by calling Backgammon America (702) 361-3910.

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# MORE ON THE SWISS SYSTEM

by J. A. Miller

I read with great interest the recent article that Mr. Roger Blaine wrote on Swiss System (Dec. '79 issue Vol. VII, pg. 4). It was very informative, but it was incomplete. I am a Senior Tournament Director of the US Chess Federation (USCF), and a former member of the Executive Board of the USO-ASPC Chess Club. I have been directing backgammon tournaments using the Swiss System for three years. Here are my comments on the points that I disagree on. The number correlates directly to the number on his article.

1. Since the Swiss System is a chess tool, I use chess pairing cards rather than 3 x 5 cards. They are available from the USCF at a very low cost. There is a specific way to pair players in each round and also rate players according to skill. Mr. Blaine's suggestion is a good idea. The number of master points an individual has could also be a guideline. The basic reference for chess tournament directors is the hardback *Official Chess Handbook* by Kenneth Harkness (1967-David McKay Publishers). I suggest that directors considering the Swiss System buy it - the money will be well spent.
2. I feel that the points in each round should be the same. The first round in a Swiss is just as important as the last, because the results in the earlier rounds determine who is in contention in the latter rounds.
3. A key point that Mr. Blaine overlooked is what happens when there is an odd number of players. Initially, a bye must be given to the weakest person in the field. In subsequent rounds, a bye is given to the weakest person with the lowest score. No person can receive more than one bye. Further assistance can be obtained from the *Official Chess Handbook*.
5. The Swiss System can also be used with the cumulative score format that is associated with the round robin. I have used this format with success in my intermediate sections.
6. Both players should report the game score to the tournament director.
11. I do not restrict smoking in my tournament. Additionally, a specific time control should be enforced on breaks to curtail abuses.
12. A key factor in reducing the number of perfect scores in the Swiss System is the number of rounds played in conjunction with the number of players. Here is a table of the number of rounds that ideally should be planned:

# OF PLAYERS	# OF ROUNDS
8	3
9 - 16	4
17 - 32	5
33 - 64	6
65 - 128	7
129 - 256	8

The Swiss System is a valuable tool if properly used. It gives backgammon players more games for the money. I'll be glad to answer any questions concerning the Swiss System. My address is P. O. Box 8630, Chicago, Ill. 60680, and my phone number is (312) 928-7119. ★★

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# Backgammon

## IN THE PUBLIC EYE



Largely through the efforts of the LVBC, a low-yield nuclear device detonated at the Nevada test site by the department of energy, was code-named Backgammon. The weapon, a 20 Kiloton bomb, was detonated at 7 a.m. on the first day of the American Backgammon Championships (Dec. 29).

TELEVISION: George Plimpton on the Johnny Carson "Tonight" show forgot the cup named after him. Wayne Araki a big hit on the "Merv Griffin" show as the winner of the Amateur Championships.

MOVIES: "Death of Ocean View Park" featured sailors playing backgammon in a bar. Buck Rogers playing 25th Century backgammon.

MAGAZINES: Pat Cuddell, polester-advisor to President Carter, interviewed in *Playboy* magazine told of playing backgammon at chic West Coast parties while others partied.

Former ABC winner Chico Felberbaum pictured in *Los Angeles* magazine as one of the happenings of the 70's.

*Popular Bridge* (Dec. issue) contained an excellent article on backgammon and a plug for the LVBC.

*California Good Life* magazine (Dec. issue) comprehensively covers backgammon in California. Author W.M. Hartney claims that those playing backgammon in California include Polly Bergen, Jill St. John, Diana Ross, Christina Onassis, Kausov, Huntington Hartford, O.J. Simpson, Hugh Hefner, Michael Caine, Warren Beatty, the Baron and Baroness Von Pantz, Truman Capote and Mick Jagger.

Best little backgammon magazine in the world - *The Prime*, of the Pacific Backgammon Assn. edited by Nick Maffeo with Ralph Powell.

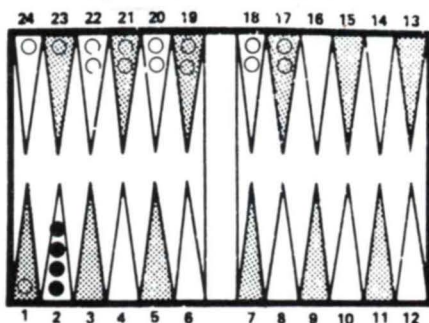
*Chips Magazine* is the first real competition for *Gambling Times*. For many years, there has been talk about the need for a sleek gaming magazine. *Chips* is aiming for the new life style market and is not heavy into technical data as is *Gambling Times*. George Plimpton is the consulting editor. There are many other celebrities who contribute to the magazine including Omar Sharif who supposedly writes the backgammon page. *Chips* is a New York based operation. You can subscribe by writing to Box 488, Pleasantville, New York 10570. ★★



... and so, J. B., after 30 years with the company, I said to myself, "Ralph screw profit sharing, to hell with the pension plan, quit work and play backgammon!"

# Pips Passing in the Night

by David H. Fletcher



White to play 6. 1. Should White play 1-7, 18-19 or 17-23, 18-19?  
White to play 2. 1. Should White play 1-4 or 17-18, 17-19?

The question here is whether White should run to avoid the backgammon or stay in order to hit Black, and thereby avert the gammon.

If the cube is in the middle or owned by Black, there can be no chance for White to actually win the game, even if hit Black can double White out of the game. If White owns the cube, White will win a very small percentage of games, which I will disregard.

The analysis below will be from the point of view that White stays on the 1 pt. The analysis considers what will happen on every possible roll by Black and the responses by White. From this we determine what the best play is mathematically. If White saves more gammons by staying than he loses backgammons by staying, then White should stay.

The analysis proceeds:

- I. Black rolls 6-6, 5-5, 4-4, 3-3, 2-2  
Black backgammons White:  $\frac{5}{36} = \frac{233280}{36^4}$
- II. Black rolls 6-5, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2, 5-4, 5-3, 5-2, 4-3, 4-2, 3-2  
Black backgammons White:  $\frac{20}{36} \times \frac{9}{36} \times \frac{26}{36} = \frac{4680}{363} = \frac{168480}{364}$   
 $\frac{20}{36} \times \frac{9}{36} \times \frac{10}{36} \times \frac{4}{36} = \frac{7200}{364}$   
White hits Black:  $\frac{20}{36} \times \frac{9}{36} \times \frac{10}{36} \times \frac{11}{36} = \frac{19800}{364}$
- III. Black rolls 6-1, 5-1, 4-1, 3-1, 2-1  
Black backgammons White:  $\frac{10}{36} \times \frac{4}{36} \times \frac{5}{36} = \frac{200}{363} = \frac{7200}{364}$  (White rolls 2-3, 2-4)  
 $(\frac{10}{36} \times \frac{1}{36} \times \frac{5}{36}) + (\frac{10}{36} \times \frac{1}{36} \times \frac{10}{36} \times \frac{13}{36}) + (\frac{10}{36} \times \frac{1}{36} \times \frac{21}{36} \times \frac{4}{36}) = \frac{3940}{364}$   
(White rolls 2-2)  
White hits Black:  $\frac{10}{36} \times \frac{11}{36} = \frac{110}{362} = \frac{142560}{364}$   
 $\frac{10}{36} \times \frac{1}{36} \times \frac{21}{36} \times \frac{11}{36} = \frac{2310}{364}$  (White rolls 2-2)
- IV. Black rolls 1-1  
Black backgammons White:  $\frac{1}{36} \times \frac{14}{36} \times \frac{26}{36} = \frac{364}{363} = \frac{13104}{364}$   
 $\frac{1}{36} \times \frac{10}{36} \times \frac{10}{36} \times \frac{4}{36} = \frac{400}{364}$   
White hits Black:  $\frac{1}{36} \times \frac{10}{36} \times \frac{10}{36} \times \frac{11}{36} = \frac{1100}{364}$

So, Black will backgammon White  $\frac{433604}{364}$ , while only  $\frac{165770}{364}$  times will White hit

Black to save the gammon. So White should run to save the backgammon, if White can immediately avoid the backgammon. If White cannot immediately avoid the backgammon, White should still run because White will lose only  $\frac{233280}{364}$ , instead of  $\frac{433604}{364} - \frac{165770}{364} =$

$\frac{267834}{364}$  assuming the cube is in the middle or Black owns the cube. If White owns the cube

then it may be reasonable to stay if the backgammon cannot be avoided immediately because White may actually win some games. If White wins  $\frac{34554}{364}$ , about 2%, then White should stay.

With 6, 1 to play, White should move 1-7, 18-19.

With 2, 1 to play, White should move 1-4 if the cube is in the middle or Black owns the cube. If White owns the cube then 17-18, 17-19 is not unreasonable.

## IT PAYS TO PLAY

### TOP 10 LAS VEGAS PLAYERS

1. Craig Chellstorp
2. Clarine
3. Harold Seif
4. Tony Mancari
5. Chris Campbell
6. Mike Van Dusen
7. Tim Wisecarver
8. Karen Wolfson
9. David Hershleder
10. David Levine



## TEN THINGS EVERY WINNING PLAYER MUST KNOW

1. Learn the rules so thoroughly that you can recall them instantly and correctly.
2. The best form of practice is to play alone. Many hours of enjoyment and heightened skill will be your reward.
3. Take your time and study each play thoroughly before making it.
4. Pay attention to your own game and try not to discuss your or your opponent's plays during the game.
5. Never touch a man (piece) until you are certain you are going to play it.
6. Don't take too great risks during the game, because a good sound game is generally a cautious one.
7. Try and play with better players, as this is one of the best means of improving your game.
8. Do not rattle the dice or draw on the table when it is your opponent's turn to play—instead use that time to analyze the men on the board.
9. When moving a man, don't play hunches—play the odds.
10. Lose with good grace and sportsmanship, and remember that the main purpose of the game is entertainment.

★★

## Late Results

### SAN DIEGO OPEN '79

#### Championship

Winner . . . . . Roy Springer  
 Finalist . . . . . Jay Whitehead

### REMY MARTIN/ST. THOMAS VI '79

#### Championship

Winner . . . . . Jim Pasko  
 Finalist . . . . . Lee Genud

#### Consolation

Winner . . . . . Curt Scott  
 Finalist . . . . . George Garami

#### Intermediate

Winner . . . . . Frank DeSandre  
 Finalist . . . . . Herb Lambrechts

#### Consolation

Winner . . . . . Richard Logan  
 Finalist . . . . . Lew Burger

#### Beginner

Winner . . . . . Kathy DeSandre  
 Finalist . . . . . Jeanne Pasko

#### Doubles

Winner . . . . . Pasko-Genud  
 Finalist . . . . . Vernon & Eva Ball

### MGM GRAND, RENO/U.S. OPEN '80

#### Championship

Winner . . . . . Badei Khoury  
 Finalist . . . . . Joe Monro

#### Consolation

Winner . . . . . Ken Duchamp  
 Finalist . . . . . Todd Vander Pluym

#### Intermediate

Winner . . . . . Dave Dekoker  
 Finalist . . . . . Joe Barberio

#### Consolation

Winner . . . . . Gary Carter  
 Finalist . . . . . Darrell Marcus

#### Beginners

Winner . . . . . Cathy O'Halpin  
 Finalist . . . . . Ann Kauder

#### Consolation

Winner . . . . . Robert Morris  
 Finalist . . . . . Richard Rounds

#### Doubles

Winner . . . Charles Giallanz/Steve Goldman  
 Finalist . . . Todd Vander Pluym/Joe Monro

### BLACK & WHITE TURNBERRY

### ISLE CLASSIC '80

#### Championship

Winner . . . . . Mike Valentine  
 Finalist . . . . . Joe Dwek

#### Team Championship

#### Gino Scalamandre

#### Mike Carson

#### Katie Wright

# More on Calcutta Auctions

by Ted Barr

I enjoyed Carol Cole's article on calcutta auctions (Dec. '79 issue Vol. VII, pg. 6). Hopefully, this type of explanation will put the fears of laymen to rest and encourage them to participate more freely in various backgammon events. However, I do feel she left out three important points in the mechanics of a calcutta. Those are:

1. That a player can only require the person that bought them to sell back a percentage of himself prior to the beginning of the tournament. Once the tournament begins, the mandatory sell provision of a calcutta is eliminated although the parties can at any time mutually agree to buy and sell a percentage of the player, or for that matter, any player of which either is a part or total owner.
2. That as the tournament progresses and certain players are eliminated, the ownership percentage in a player becomes much like stock. It may rise or fall in value and be traded or sold at variable and fluctuating rates. An owner might make money by not holding his percentage in a player until the final round if he bought a player at a certain rate and resold him later in the tournament at a higher rate when that player's chances of winning the tournament had improved by virtue of several early victories.
3. That the auctioneer, tournament organizer, or house usually takes a percentage of the auction pool before the final pool is announced. Knowledge of this and the percentage rake might affect the amount a potential owner is willing to bet on a player. Also, the amount of rake is not uniform from tournament to tournament.

I believe it is important for your readers to be aware of these points in addition to the ones that Carol mentioned. If a first time calcutta participant was not aware of these factors, he might find it confusing or embarrassing when they arose during his first event. Also, I am certain there are a number of readers who conduct tournaments but have never attempted a calcutta who after reading Carol's article may wish to do so and should be appraised of all the various aspects involved in a calcutta before attempting such an endeavor.

Do not take these remarks as criticism but rather only as the casual observations of a fellow tournament director. Thank you for your continuing association and support.

☆☆

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# Ball Retains Backgammon Title



CHAMPION Vernon Ball with some of his winnings.

Baron Vernon Ball successfully defended his title by winning the J&B sponsored Virgin Islands Backgammon Championship at the Virgin Isle Hotel. It was the second defense for Ball.

It was an all-St. Thomian final in both the Championship and Intermediate class. Ball defeated Frank Morse, number six seed Gary Klock of St. Croix and Dave Hinckley, San Juan Star bridge columnist to reach the finals.

David James, playing his first championship event, trounced number four seed Rick Hilton, number five seed Barret Jardine of Los Angeles and Stuart McGuire of New York before being stopped in the finals by Ball in his quest for the \$2,500 title first prize.

Randall Johns of St. Thomas won the \$1,000 intermediate prize by defeating Jesse Bethel, Elfi Vesper, the 1977 winner and Richard Logan in

the finals.

Butch Rambin toppled number three seed Ellie Heckert. George Orenstein reached the finals of the Buy Back Tourney and received a gallon of J&B. Leo Barbel, Rauna Stevenson, Fred Berkeley, Jim Armour, Ken Quarshie, Harry Harrigan and Mike Gaston all posted good wins before bowling out. Sheila Crane received the Gucci Prize for the worst luck in the tournament.

Ball, who organized the event said it was a tremendous success. "The Virgin Isle Hotel catered to the players' every whim and the tourney raised \$350 for the Boy Scouts. I predicted that the local backgammon players would make a good showing, but when they knocked over four of the six seeds in the first two rounds, I knew I would have to hang tough to keep the title," Ball commented after his win.

## BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT

\$10,000 ADDED



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## Puzzle Picture

- This is: a.) a bowling league from Milwaukee  
b.) Soldiers of Fortune  
c.) The Village People  
d.) The Bombay Bicycle Club  
e.) Sly & The Family Stone  
f.) Le Chic



(Answer - None of the above)

# LAS VEGAS TOURNAMENT RESULTS

DATE	OPEN CLASS	INTERMEDIATE
Nov. 1 (Doubles)	David Levine/Tony Mancari	
Nov. 4	Munchkin	Terry Spriggs
Nov. 11	Tim Wisecarver	Chris Romero
Nov. 15 (Doubles)	Lee Kabase	
Nov. 18	Paul Slusarski	Ron James
Nov. 25	Tim Wisecarver	Rada Radovich
Dec. 2	Bob Lerman	Tony Virginia
Dec. 6 (Doubles)	Craig Chellstorp/Tim Wisecarver	
Dec. 9	Bob C.	Christina Schroeder
Dec. 16	Clarine	Jean K.
Dec. 20 (Doubles)	Chris Romero/Craig Chellstorp	
Dec. 23	Chris Campbell	Robert Morris
Dec. 30	David Levine	Robert Morris
Jan. 3 (Doubles)	Mike Van Dusen/Max	
Jan. 6	Mike Van Dusen	Marty D'Alexander
Jan. 13	Craig Chellstorp	Steve Miller
Jan. 17 (Doubles)	Mike Van Dusen/Max	
Jan. 20	Mike Sherman	Gary Bengé
Jan. 27	Mike Sherman	Steve Herman

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# CAESARS PALACE



# Safety First in Bearing Off

## When not to clear the highest point

by "Dr. J." Jeff Ward, Ph.D.

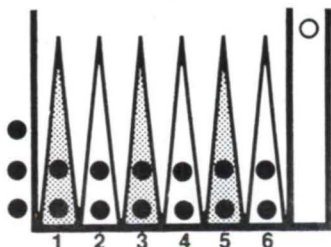
When your opponent has one or more checkers on the bar and you are in the process of bearing off, your primary consideration is usually safety. Each roll is played with the idea of minimizing the chances of leaving a blot which your opponent could hit as he comes in. A good tactic to use in such cases is to clear your points in order starting with the highest point.

An advantage of this procedure is that when your opponent comes in, he comes in behind you where he no longer constitutes a threat. There are some cases, however, in which it is actually safer to clear the second highest point. Often these involve playing a roll that contains a "1". By clearing the highest point, you leave three checkers on the new highest point — a configuration that can be very dangerous. Clearing the second highest point avoids this.

We will now look at a type of situation in which clearing the highest point is sometimes incorrect. You have just rolled, and one of the dice shows a "1". The other shows a number equal to the second highest occupied point in your board. You now have a choice of clearing either the highest point or the second highest point.

Case I — Your opponent has *only one checker on the bar*. There are no gaps in your board. You should clear the highest point if this leaves your two highest spare checkers *less than three points apart*. Otherwise, clear the second highest point.

In Figure 1 (which shows only Black's home board and the bar), if Black clears the 6-point, he will be left with spare checkers on the 1- and 5-points. Since the spare checkers are so far apart, many subsequent rolls cannot be handled safely. It is therefore safer to clear the 5-point



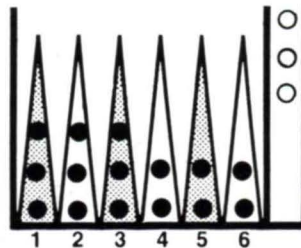
BLACK TO PLAY 5-1  
Figure 1

instead. If Figure 1 is changed so that Black has an extra checker on the 3-point, the situation changes completely. Now clearing the 6-point results in spare checkers on the 1-, 3-, and 5-points. Since the two highest (on the 3- and 5-points) are only two points apart, clearing the 6-point is the better play.

In Cases II and III your opponent has *two or more checkers on the bar*.

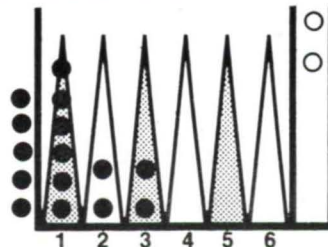
Case II — You have either a full board or a five point board with the 6-point open. You should clear the highest point if this leaves your two highest spare checkers *less than two points apart*. Otherwise, clear the second highest point.

In Figure 2 if Black clears the 6-point, the two highest spare checkers will be on the 3- and 5-points. Clearing the 6-point is therefore incorrect, and Black should clear the 5-point instead. If Figure 2 is changed so that the spare checker on the 3-point is moved to the 4-point, clearing the 6-point becomes the better play.

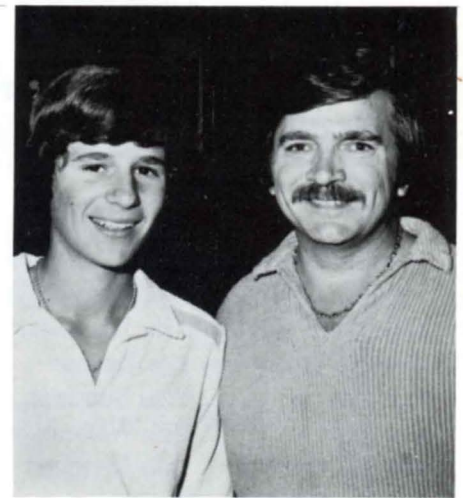


BLACK TO PLAY 5-1  
Figure 2

Case III — The 6- and 5-points and possibly the 4-point are empty. There are no gaps in your board. You should clear the highest point if this leaves your two highest spare checkers on the *highest remaining occupied point*. Otherwise, clear the second highest point. In Figure 3 clearing the 3-point puts the two highest spare checkers on the 1- and 2-points. Since they are on different points, this is not the correct play; and Black should instead clear the 2-point. However, if Figure 3 is modified by moving a spare checker from the 1-point to the 2-point, clearing the 3-point becomes correct.



BLACK TO PLAY 2-1  
Figure 3



## FACES & MORE

Joel Rettew is a winner. He has a winning family, a winning business and winning backgammon style. LVBC went to interview Joel at his business and had to stand in line outside of his Orange County Rare Coin Galleries. Business was that good. It reminded us of the days that we stood in line to play him backgammon. But, Joel learned fast and has become a threatening player. The last two times we saw him, he was in the semi-finals at Crockford's (England) and the finals in Puerto Rico not to mention that he usually owns a piece of every winner. You don't win easy against Joel anymore, especially since he has the best temperament and table presence of anyone that plays the game. In the meantime, Joel Jr. is turning into an excellent tennis player. Seems that one backgammon champion is enough for a family.

## 1980 Election Results

Elections for the 1980 LVBC officers were held on December 6th. The results were as follows:

President . . . . . Michael Maxakuli  
Vice-President . . . . . Mike Van Dusen  
Secretary . . . . . Linda Kruegel  
Treasurer . . . . . Vivian Yanko  
Special Events VP . . . . . Steve Lehman

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**PACIFIC BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION**



**Newport  
Backgammon Club**



**NEBC**



**cavendish  
west**

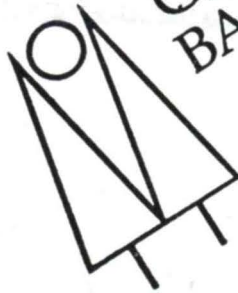


**AMERICAN  
BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION**

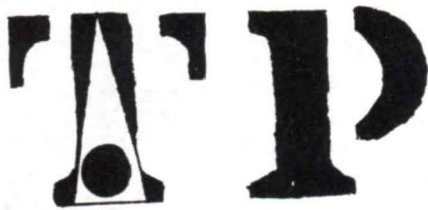


**TEXAS BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION**

**GRANITE STATE  
BACKGAMMON  
CLUB**



**INTERNATIONAL BACKGAMMON ASSN.**



**GAMMON'S  
OF CHICAGO**



**NEW ORLEANS**



**BACKGAMMON CLUB**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
BACKGAMMON**