

the monte-carlo tournament

GERMAN PLAYERS DOMINATE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Phillip Marmorstein of West Germany led a parade of German victors at the World Backgammon Championships in Monte-Carlo July 11-17. Over 200 players from around the world paid the \$750 Open entry fee for a shot at instant BG stardom.

The young Marmorstein defeated Wall Street options wizard Ron Rubin 25-14 in the finals. Rubin, an excellent New York player (runner-up in 1978 World Amateur Championships, winner in 1983 Las Vegas Open) was the only American to place in the elite event.

West German players captured two other major titles. Mr. Dirk defeated Eric Seidel (1988 World Series of Poker finalist) in the Super Jackpot, and J. Tonzer won the Intermediate tournament.

Americans fared better in the 3-Player Team tournament. The *Eagle Beavers*: Joe Sylvester and Ed O'Laughlin (U.S.) and Hal Heinrich (Canada) took 1st prize over Antoinette Williams and Alex Barsel (New York) and Matti Karsicko (Finland).

Team champion Joe Sylvester had high praise for the West German backgammon contingency. "As a nation, they're clearly second in the world (behind the United States and ahead of Israel)—a real solid-state group. This is very impressive considering the relatively short time they've studied the game. I understand they're translating all of America's best backgammon books into German." Δ

WHO'S IN CHARGE THERE?

Backgammon great Joe Sylvester had some harsh words for the recent Monte-Carlo World Championship tournament. Joe's comments:

"I was very disappointed with the tournament directors. Time and time again, they showed lack of expertise and in some cases, lack of class at what is supposed to be the world's premier backgammon event.

"Throughout the event, the director James Baillie was tough to find. In many instances, his staff was incapable of giving a ruling. For example:

1. The Last Chance was supposed to start Saturday at 2:00 PM. At 2:30, only 2 out of 16 players in my section were seated. No penalty points were awarded.
2. A 21 point match took 7 hours to play, delaying the entire tournament.
3. In a side game, Rhonda Monro was on the bar closed out, but still wanted to double on her turn. The director that was summoned incorrectly ruled that she couldn't. Rhonda requested another director. The first director was over-ruled.
4. In at least four cases, Patti Doner allowed individuals (by mutual agreement) to extend their match length. This was in direct violation of the rules.

"Finally, although the tournament rules specified a dress code (after all, this is Monte-Carlo), none was enforced. In fact, director James Baillie was seen in the playing room wearing a T-shirt and blue jeans! Perhaps it's time for a return to the classier, more capable direction of Lewis Deyong and company." Δ

the michigan summer championships

RED-HOT KAZAROSS WINS TWICE IN FLINT

"Luck runs in streaks, plus I'm playing well." That's San Diego expert Neil Kazaross' explanation for his double victory at the Michigan Summer championships. Kazaross topped an 80 player field in the Open and teamed with Larry Strommen (Indianapolis) to take the Summer Doubles title. Carol Cole and a superstar staff kept over 200 backgammoners happy over the July 22-24 weekend in Flint, Michigan. Prize money awarded exceeded \$60,000—a record for the event.

Neil's 13-8 victory over Ohio's Walter Trice in the finals brought his 1988 major tournament record to an incredible 39-8. "The trick is not to panic over the board, even in the worst situations. I trailed Walter 8 to 5 before rallying to win 8 straight points. My match against Kathy Bauder was even tougher. She had me dead in the water three or four times. But I hung in and when the dice evened out, I was mentally set to make the right moves." Δ

1988 MICHIGAN SUMMER BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIPS

OPEN (80): 1st Neil Kazaross (CA); 2nd Walter Trice (OH); 3rd Duane Jensen (MN); 4/5 Dean Adamian (MI) and Ralph Stowell (MN). 1st Cons. Dean Muench (IL); 2nd Cons. Rick Barabino (MA).

INTERMEDIATE (64): 1st Oscar Schon; 2nd Ed Bauder; 3rd Dick Hunt. 1st Cons. Ira Hoffberg; 2nd Cons. Gary Dunn.

INTERMEDIATE OVERFLOW (16): 1st Bob Neumann; 2nd Dan Smith. 1st Cons. Sandy Grassel.

NOVICE (22): 1st George Doucette; 2nd George Farah. 1st Cons. Rick Presley; 2nd Cons. Donna Fisher.

OPEN DOUBLES (32): 1st Neil Kazaross & Larry Strommen; 2nd Dean Adamian & Rick Cutler; 3/4 Robbie Roberts & Mike Shadkin; 3/4 Rick Zyber & Bill Kane.

OVERFLOW OPEN DOUBLES (8): 1st Basil Farah & Rick Todd.

LIMITED DOUBLES (16): 1st Bob Gladfelter & Dennis Cupp; 2nd Denny & Carol Leatherman.

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS: Howard Markowitz, Ami Tennenbaum.

SUMMER FREEZE-OUT (16): 1st Tom Walthes.

BLITZ TOURNEY (128): 1st Bill Kane.

"THE GIRL" TALKS



The best female backgammon player in the world interviewed. See page 4.

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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Chicago POINT is published monthly. The subscription rate is \$10/year (\$16/year overseas in U.S. funds).

Advertising rates: 2 3/8 x 3 1/4 = \$15. 1/4 page = \$30. 1/2 page = \$50. Full page = \$90. If the ad is not "camera ready," request typesetting for an additional \$10 charge.



LETTERS

c/o Chicago POINT
2726 W. Lunt Avenue
Chicago, IL 60645

"Understanding Equity" Correction

There was an error in July's "Understanding Equity" column. The key point of author Ed Bauder's argument for White's cube decision was: "If White takes on 4, her 7 victories are not all match-winners. She'll lead 6-4 Crawford and be a 70% match favorite." However, the assumed match equity figure is wrong.

According to Danny Kleinman's match equity cards, leading 8-6 Crawford in a 9 point match (the equivalent of a 6-4 Crawford lead to 7) yields winning equity of 75% rather than 70%. This figure is double-checked by Bill Robertie's chart for a 15 point match where a 14-12 Crawford lead also shows 75% winning equity.

When recomputing White's chances with 75%, we get: $(7 \times 75\%) + (29 \times 0\%) = 525$. Dividing that by $36 = 14.58\%$. Thus White is still 0.42% away from a take. However, because White's equity is so close to her take point, other reasons for accepting the redouble must be explored.

For example, a weaker White should scoop the recube without a doubt—it's probably her best chance to win 4 points.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

coming attractions



by Carol Joy Cole

Aug 3-7	World Cup & Eastern Open, Sheraton Hotel, Cambridge, MA	301/942-4365
Aug 5-7	Gammon Associates Invitational, Hotel Tokyo, Los Angeles, CA	818/901-0464
Aug 8-14	Vermont Festival, Ascutney Mt. Resort, Brownsville, VT	305/527-4033
Aug 11-14	Palace Summer Champs, Badrutt's Hotel, St. Moritz, Switzerland	061/50-5816
Aug 12-14	Hessische Championship, Massa-Hotel, Weisbaden, W. Germany	040/270-1166
Aug 14	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Aug 14	Michigan Challenge Cup, McMasters, Southfield, MI	313/642-9616
Aug 14	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario, Canada	416/267-2815
Aug 18	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Aug 19-20	All Georgia Championship, Beef Cellar, Atlanta, GA	404/257-0567
Aug 21	Cavendish North Monthly Open, Southfield, MI	313/642-9616
Aug 21	10th Annual Bob Hill Classic, Long Island, NY	516/334-4833
Aug 21	3rd Japan Championship Tournament, Yaesu Fujiya Hotel, Tokyo	03-434-5390
Aug 25	Bar Point Club Summer Knockout, Carmichael's, Schiller Park, IL	312/252-7755
Aug 26	Bayou Club Monthly Tournament, Houstonian, Houston, TX	713/681-9671
Sep 2-5	Labor Day Weekend Tourney, Ramada Inn East, Louisville, KY	502/451-3950
Sep 2-5	Labor Day Festival, Stouffer Concourse Hotel, Los Angeles, CA	818/905-6937
Sep 10-11	Baden Württemberg Championship, Stuttgart, W. Germany	040/270-1166
Sep 11	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario, Canada	416/267-2815
Sep 15	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Sep 18	Bi-monthly Sunday, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/928-1321
Sep 18	NEBC Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Sep 23	Bayou Club Monthly Tournament, Houstonian, Houston, TX	713/681-9671
Sep 25	Jim Flora Memorial, Mayflower Hotel, Plymouth, MI	313/349-1953
Sep 27-Oct 2	Caribbean Championship, Treasure Island Resort, St. Maarten	702/826-1984
Sep 29-Oct 2	International Casino Cup, Schloss Seefeld, Pörschach, Austria	0032/26489349
Sep 30-Oct 2	Victorian Open, Melbourne, Australia (Tentative)	03/578-7983
Oct 2	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Oct 7-9	5th Indiana Classic & Indy \$500, Viscount Hotel, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Oct 8	CPBC Fall Open Tourney, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-9786
Oct 14-16	European BG/Golf Combo Championship, Zell am See, Austria	0 8341/12825
Oct 16	NEBC Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Oct 21-23	North-German Open, Hannover, West Germany	040/270-1166
Oct 26-30	International Backgammon Tournament, Hyatt-Lake Tahoe, NV	702/831-1111
Oct 28	Bayou Club Monthly Tournament, Houstonian, Houston, TX	713/681-9671
Nov 1	Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney, Pat's Pub, Norridge, IL	312/338-6380
Nov 4-6	Bad Zwischenahn, Spiel-Casino, West Germany	040/270-1166
Nov 4-6	Crystal Cup Venezia, Casino Municipale, Italy	061-50-5816
Nov 5-6	Gammon Associates Invitational, Los Angeles, CA	818/901-0464
Nov 11-13	North Rhein-Westfalen Open, Novotel, Breitscheid, W. Germany	02151-503591
Nov 17-20	European Championship, Bad Salzschlirf, West Germany	0 8341/12825
Nov 20	Bi-monthly Sunday, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/928-1321
Nov 24-26	Children's Hospital Benefit, Sheraton Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Dec 2-5	Backgammon On Board III, Tropical Cruise: Miami to Nassau	312/338-6380
Dec 11	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Dec 18	NEBC Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Jan 11-15	Nevada State Championships, Peppermill Hotel, Reno, NV	702/826-1984

Also, if White knows that her opponent will be demoralized if she takes and wins, perhaps White's potential psychological gains are enough to offset the 0.42% equity deficit.

Bauder's problem is a borderline situation where including extra factors can make the redouble a reasonable take.—
David Libchaber, Chicago, IL

Cat Photography Made Simple

I loved John Demian's "Monte Carlo Cats" photo. How did he get both cats to sit over the board at the same time?—
Mary Ann Meese, Hoosier Backgammon Club, Indianapolis, IN

John staged the shot in his bathtub, immobilizing the cats to some degree. Then he lured them into posing with cheese.—Ed. Δ

TAKGAMMON



by Tak Morioka

SAND CASTLES

It was a new dawn in the days of trial for the veteran backgammon player. He had gone to many tournaments all over the world and successfully faced the competition they had to offer. This tournament was being held at a resort in the Bahamas. The matches would start in the late afternoon and continue through the evening. It would be a shame to miss the beauty of the white sands and blue waters of this tropical paradise, so he decided to go down to the beach.

It was calm and relaxing by the tides—a peaceful retreat to unwind before the onset of the competition. To pass the time, he started to build castles with the wet sand. During his labor, he thought about his upcoming matches and the competitors he would face. He knew the abilities of the old guard, but felt somewhat uncomfortable in dealing with the emerging new players. “They are the unknown factor. How good are they? Perhaps they are the start of a new era—the changing of the guard.”

The possibility of change brought back memories of his early backgammon days. It was a time when excitement was in the air and he was totally entranced by the beauty of the game. He wanted to be the best he could be and see how far he could go. He valued the knowledge achieved more than the victory awarded.

As he finished his towering fortress, he realized how much he had changed. He had established a certain presence through time and effort and wanted to receive his dues. Each tournament challenge appeared to be an assault to his stamina; each defeat took a toll on his pride. How did the seeker of truth become the defender of the faith?

It was getting late. The tournament would be starting shortly. While walking back to the hotel, he noticed the rising of the tide. He sadly knew that his sand castle would soon be washed away. He wondered if all his backgammon efforts might suffer a similar fate. Δ



Fortune Cookie

*You can steer a match toward victory,
but you can't make it win.*



1988 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU JULY 31

RICH SWEETMAN	22.24	Ken Bond	2.88	Carol Mennis	0.80
TAK MORIOKA	17.44	Greg Shore	2.80	Harry Hayward	0.72
KATHY BAUDER	15.40	Bob Zavoral	2.76	Marty Tatosian	0.72
YAMIN YAMIN	14.16	Dave Cramer	2.76	Don Marek	0.64
JOHN DEMIAN	14.04	Dan Judd	2.20	Tom Walthes	0.64
IRA HOFFBERG	9.84	Andy Suszczyk	2.16	Arlene Levy	0.56
PETER KALBA	9.36	George Panagakis	2.08	Mark Hicks	0.52
DEEB SHALATI	8.64	Joe Koucharian	2.04	Mark Anshus	0.48
STU KATZ	8.64	Jeff Henry	1.92	Paul Reiner	0.40
ANDY ARGY	7.68	Kevin Muench	1.88	Roland Dieter	0.40
JOANN FEINSTEIN	7.40	Ralph Levy	1.84	Ron Stur	0.40
ARNOLD ZOUSMER	6.92	Rich Siebold	1.72	Al Meinecke	0.32
DAVID LIBCHABER	6.72	Gene Chait	1.68	Howard Markowitz	0.32
SARG SERGES	6.52	Chris Kenik	1.64	Kevin Bryant	0.32
BOBBIE SHIFRIN	6.20	Jeff Kane	1.32	Marcy Sloan	0.28
DON JAYHAN	5.56	Ed Bauder	1.28	Bill Hoeflich	0.24
NORMA SHYER	4.60	Jim Sargent	1.28	Don Pearson	0.24
PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI	4.40	Dean Morehouse	1.16	Ida Zeman	0.24
BILL KEEFE	4.24	Jeff Vaughn	1.16	Les Berg	0.24
ED BUERGER	4.00	John Spatafora	0.96	Rudy Emmelot	0.24
Connie Sychowski	3.76	Larry Guzan	0.96	Chuck Eyers	0.20
Bill Davis	3.64	Barry Epstein	0.92	Sharon Hegg	0.20
Peggy Fleming	3.44	Alyce Wallen	0.88	Dave Lehrer	0.16
Dean Muench	3.28	Betsy Miller	0.88	Chris Hegg	0.12
Don Muellner	3.28	Bob Holyon	0.88	Dave Shifman	0.12
Ron Garber	3.24	Dave Rockwell	0.88	David Hegg	0.12
Neil Banoff	2.96	Larry Strommen	0.88	Jay Bleiman	0.08
Gary Keyes	2.88				

IMPRECISION

DICE

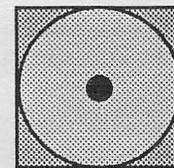
by Larry Strommen

Recently, questions have been raised about the “precision dice” that are being used throughout the country. The reason is simple. Everyone wants to play a fair game and if dice are used that are not the best, a feeling of possible bias can exist. This article seeks to be informative—not critical of precision dice being sold today.

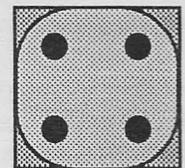
There are many manufacturers of precision dice, but only two produce the round-cornered, or “Barbouth” dice used in backgammon. One is on the East coast and one is on the West coast. Both makers start with a precise plastic cube, drill out the pips, fill the holes with a material similar to the plastic body, and then cut the corners, polish and distribute. However, one is a bit more interested in precision than the other.

The manufacturer on the West coast takes care to produce a Barbouth die which has all faces of equal area. By starting with a precise cube and using a cutter to make rounded corners, a round face results on the face perpendicular to the cutter’s axis. These are always the 1 and 6 faces. If done precisely, the faces on the 2, 3, 4 and 5 will also be round. The West coast manufacturer seeks that degree of perfection.

On the product made on the East coast, one can readily see a surface similar to the cross-section of a ball squeezed into a box. The corners are round, blending into a flattened four sides. The result is a slight increase in area on the 2, 3, 4 and 5 sides.



Precision die with circular face. Look for this on each side.



Precision die with imperfectly rounded facial corners.

The area difference calculates to an average 10% deviation, so the expected bias in favor of 2s, 3s, 4s and 5s is about 1.6% over 1s and 6s. This is obtained by comparing the area for the face of one number with the total face area of the die.

Can this be proved in a single game, or even a match? No! The distribution in a short random sample swamps the results. But the informed player will consider it.

It must be noted that even with the face distortions of some precision dice, they still provide a much fairer roll than dice with the pips drilled out. But if you have a choice among precision dice, pick the ones with the circular faces on all six sides.

INTERVIEWING "THE GIRL"



A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH WENDY KAPLAN: THE BEST FEMALE BACKGAMMON PLAYER IN THE WORLD

Wendy Kaplan earns her living working in the dental management field. She has a house in Mahopac, New York and lives with her seven-year-old son Scott. She is regarded to be the best female backgammon player in the world.

Wendy was the only woman to participate in the 16 player "Masters Invitational" at the Reno U.S. Open in June. And she is currently the only woman signed up to risk \$3500 in the World Cup tournament (August 3-7 in Cambridge, Massachusetts).

Ms. Kaplan was interviewed over the telephone by the Chicago POINT on July 14, 1988. Here's what she had to say:

POINT: Why does the name "Wendy Kaplan" strike fear in the hearts of so many male backgammon players across this land?

KAPLAN: I didn't know that it did.

POINT: Well, in tournaments you hear men say, "Oh, no. I drew Wendy."

KAPLAN: I don't think they like to lose to me. It does something to them.

POINT: Why is that?

KAPLAN: I'm a girl.

POINT: Who is the best female backgammon player in the world?

KAPLAN: I don't know. About three years ago, somebody suggested a competition between me and Lee Genuid in order to attract betting action on the match, but it never came off.

POINT: Who are some of the other great female players?

KAPLAN: Frannie Goldfarb (New York). She doesn't play a lot of tournaments, but she's a good player. Katie Wright is also very good. I've never played Kathy Posner so I can't comment on her game.

POINT: Aside from a handful of female experts, why do you think men dominate this game?

KAPLAN: Because it doesn't seem to hold a woman's attention for very long. It's very competitive, and it's a war game. I don't think a lot of women are really interested in sitting down and playing "marathon" backgammon.

POINT: How were you introduced to the game?

KAPLAN: My mother taught me how to play it when I was ten years old. I liked games as a child: Scrabble, gin rummy, canasta.

POINT: Was backgammon "love at first shake"?

KAPLAN: No. I didn't really know anything about money backgammon until about 1975.

POINT: Money backgammon?

KAPLAN: Well, I mean, playing with my mother was like playing Parcheesi. Then I found out about a very small round robin tournament at a duplicate bridge club in Hartsdale which was near where I lived. The place is called the Bridge Deck, and it's still there. I saw an ad in the newspaper and went over to see what it was all about. There was an old man running the club and he asked me, "Do you know how to play

this game?"

I said "I think so."

He said, "Do you see that guy over there? That's Kenny Arnold. Go over and play a couple of games with him and he'll see if you really know how to play."

So I did and Kenny said, "Yeah, she can play." So I played in the tournament and I won it. That was the start of things.

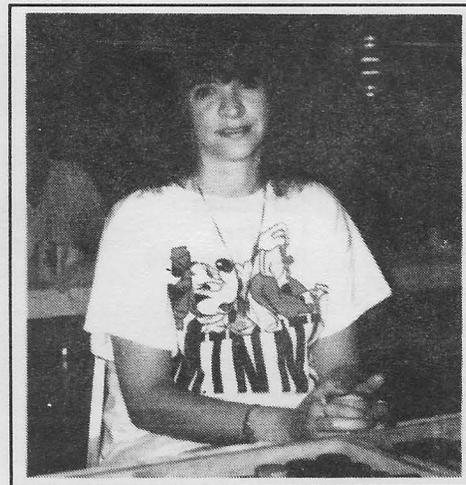
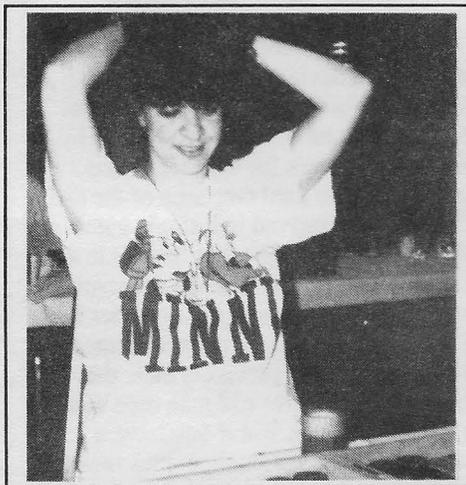
POINT: When did you first begin travelling around the country to play the bigger tournaments?

KAPLAN: Um, 1981. I went to a tournament in neighboring Vermont that year. Lee Genuid and I were paired in a 9 point match which she won 9 to 8. After the match, she took me aside and told me that she really thought I had potential and that I should definitely go to some of the bigger tournaments.

POINT: Lee knew what she was talking about! Here's a list of your tournament successes since 1986:

Feb. 1986 ... North American Champs-Bahamas	2nd
Apr. 1986 ... Boston Symphony Orch. Benefit	1st
Aug. 1986 ... Eastern Open	2nd
May 1987 ... Granite State Open	1st Cons., 1st Doubles
May 1987 ... Boston Symphony Orch. Benefit ..	2nd, 2nd \$500
Aug. 1987 ... Green Mountain Festival	1st Doubles
Sept. 1987 ... Louisville Labor Day	2nd Bluegrass \$500
Nov. 1987 ... New Hampshire Fall Classic	1st Cons.
Dec. 1987 ... Indiana Classic	1st Indy \$500
Feb. 1988 ... Louisville Bluegrass Regional	1st Doubles
Mar. 1988 ... Indiana Open	World Cup Qualifier
May 1988 ... Chicago Open	1st Special \$1000 Tourney
June 1988 ... Reno U.S. Open	3rd Chouette Tournament

POINT: A pretty impressive listing you have there.



KAPLAN: Yeah. I never really wrote it down and looked at it like that, but it is.

POINT: Which result is your most satisfying?

KAPLAN: I think the 1986 North American Championships in the Bahamas. I came in second (to Kent Goulding). It was more satisfying than the BSO win, for example, because that tournament was in my backyard against New England players.

POINT: Who is the toughest backgammon player that you've ever faced?

KAPLAN: (Pauses) The person that I can never beat in a tournament is Mike Svobodny. He intimidates me completely. He's a great player.

Also, I'm never happy to play Mike Corbett. I know him and like him, so there isn't the intimidation factor, but he's a terrific tournament player.

POINT: All things being equal, do you play a tougher game against men or woman?

KAPLAN: Men. (Pauses) Well, it depends which woman. If I sit down against Katie (Wright), I take her very seriously. But there are not a lot of other woman players that I think are really intimidating.

POINT: What do you enjoy most about backgammon?

KAPLAN: It's great competition. I like the competition.

POINT: And the worst thing?

KAPLAN: (Pauses) I hate losing 6%ers—those games where I look like a sure winner only to lose in the end to my opponent's 17-to-1 shot.

POINT: You've been playing for about 13 years now. Is there still room for improvement in your game?

KAPLAN: Absolutely. My checker play is pretty good, but I know that my cube play is not nearly what it should be. One way that I learn is by studying matches.

POINT: What about book reading?

KAPLAN: I do occasionally, but I like reviewing matches better.

POINT: Do you ever actually sit down and watch a match?

KAPLAN: Oh, yeah.

POINT: Who do you enjoy watching?

KAPLAN: (Laughs) I can't tell you that. (Laughs)

POINT: Wendy, there's something other than backgammon going on here. Something on a personal level. Let's dig it out!

KAPLAN: No! (Laughs)

POINT: O.K., We'll change the subject. What's the best advice you've been given about this game?

KAPLAN: Set a quitting point in chouette play. Decide how much you're willing to lose and then walk away.

POINT: What advice can you give female players with the desire to be great?

KAPLAN: Keep playing! You have to take it seriously. If you're interested enough, you can do it. You have to learn to stay level-headed when you're losing. I think that's hard to do.

POINT: Will success spoil Wendy Kaplan if she wins \$100,000 in the World Cup August 3-7?

KAPLAN: No. (Laughs)

POINT: Seriously, how do you feel about your chances?

KAPLAN: Slim. I haven't been playing much lately. I've been working harder in July than I have for years. I'm really slaving. I get off my "prison duty" on the Friday before the Wednesday that I go to Boston. My head is in a very bad place. I hate working this hard. So, I don't know. I don't think my chances are terrific.

POINT: Now, Wendy, that was the last question of the interview. When Barbara Walters asks her last question, she always gets a nice answer to finish things off on a positive note. I ask you about your chances in Boston and you answer, "Slim, I haven't been playing much lately." Now what kind of a way is that to finish an interview??

KAPLAN: (Laughs) I wasn't aware that was the end of it.

POINT: Well that's *kinda* the end of it...

KAPLAN: I'm honest, you know. Take me or leave me! Δ

WENDY KAPLAN

PERSONALITY

SNAPSHOT



Nickname: "The Girl." I think Butch Meese first started it.

Age: 35

High School Honor: National Merit Scholar.

Hobbies: Reading, knitting beautiful sweaters.

Perfect Man: Doesn't exist.

Favorite Movies: The Big Chill, Fatal Attraction, Terms of Endearment.

Favorite Restaurant: Maxime's in Granite Springs, New York. It's in an old house with a fireplace. They serve a seven course meal.

Favorite Performers: Elton John, Tom Paxton.

Behind My Back, People Say: All sorts of things!

I Still Like It When: A man opens a door for me.

People I Like Most: Have a great sense of humor.

People I Like Least: Are selfish.

I Hope I Never Have To: Grow old alone.

If I Were An Animal I Would Be: A snake. I like their personalities.

(Laughs)

Number One Fantasy: Never mind! (Laughs)

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DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS



Dear Miss Lonelyblots: In the second round of the local tournament (I finally got a bye!), I wanted to use my precision dice, but my opponent said we should use the cheap club dice. I suggested that we roll for choice. He agreed, but wanted to use the club dice for the roll, while I still wanted to use my "prissies." So he suggested that we should roll to see which dice we should roll to see which dice to use for the match. A perpetual problem developed as neither of us would give way. When the argument got heated, we were both slung out of the tournament.

It's not just choosing the dice to play with that causes the problem. There are also the questions of seats, colors, bearing off to the left or right and who mixes the dice before the start.

I've noticed that the good players seem to be able to settle these important points without too much fuss. I wish you'd let me in on their secret.—Rookie Ray, London, England.

Dear Rookie Ray and all you Jinxed Sophomores out there: Children, children! Most of the petty issues about which you quarrel matter little or not at all. Any lady or gentleman would yield graciously

to his opponent. If the director evicted you from his tournament, I don't blame him. You should have called him long before it came to yelling and screaming.

How might a good director settle such trivial disputes? I can think of nothing better than the procedures the boys tell me professional football teams use. They start with a coin flip. Winner of the toss decides one issue—say whether to kick off or receive. The other decides the next issue, e.g. whether to start the first quarter moving from west to east or east to west.

So at the start of your backgammon match, you might call a coin the director tosses in the air. If you "win," you get your way on one of these absurd issues. Perhaps you decide to sit on the side nearest the wall. Then your opponent decides something else, say to bear off to his left. Then you choose whether to play the red pieces or the white. And so forth.

Equipment choices should not be left to a coin flip, however. Thus demonstrably superior dice must be chosen over inferior ones. Biased or loaded dice of any sort, of course, must be discarded. But then the director should insist you use more finely balanced dice over cruder; dice with more rolling "action" over stodgier; easily readable pips over hard-to-distinguish.

In this one matter, therefore, I support you against your opponent. But in case your opponent is honestly worried that your personal precision dice are loaded, you should accede to any request that they be subjected to tests. Or to swap them, for

the duration of the match, with some other player who like you has brought his own personal precision dice to the tournament.

Now go back to the tournament director who ejected you, apologize, and start playing the game instead of engaging in what is (generally) called "gamesmanship."—Miss Lonelyblots

Do you have a backgammon-related question for Miss Lonelyblots involving people problems, game etiquette or the play itself? Write to: Dear Miss Lonelyblots, c/o Chicago POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645. The most stimulating query will be answered bimonthly. Δ

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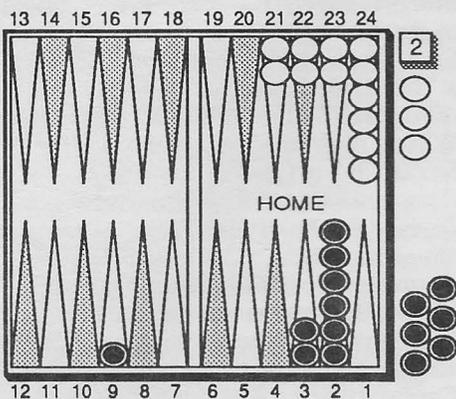
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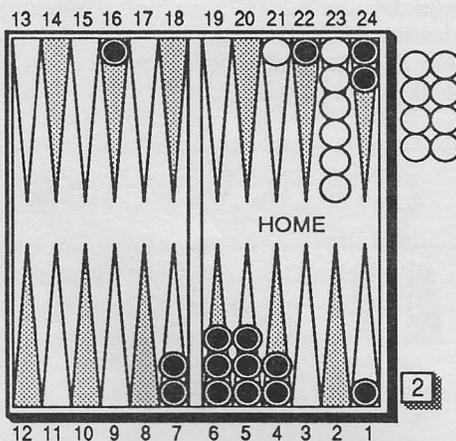
PROBLEM #138

Money game. X TO PLAY 1-1.

HASTY
PLAYS

by Duane Jensen

I've experienced the following situation in both tournament play and money games. Black is near the end of his rope in a backgame. Finally, he gets a double shot, but misses with 4-2:



Many players run from their opponent's 3-point in this position. In fact, Black should make White's 3-point with the deuce, forcing all aces except 3-1 to leave a shot. If Black doesn't make the 3-point, all of White's rolls except 3-3 and 2-1 play safely. By making the 3-point, Black transforms his impotent 4-2 roll into a potential shot generator.

I've always been "Black" in these positions. White has never left a shot. I've always been gammoned. Δ

SEEDED DRAWS ADD PERSONALITY TO OUR GAME

Last month's Michigan Summer Backgammon Championships were directed by experts, and therefore, very few problems developed. The only serious complaint concerned the method by which the expert players were initially entered onto the Championship draw sheet.

Director Carol Joy Cole utilized a practice common to many tournaments. Prior to the Calcutta auction, 16 of the best players were designated "seeds" based on skill, tourney results and regional considerations. Although byes were random, the seeded players were spaced throughout the draw sheet; thus no five-player group contained more than one seed.

Rick Barabino, a young expert from Boston, was very upset when he learned of this seeding (it was not stated on any handouts). He immediately lodged a strong protest with Ms. Cole, arguing that the modified random draw was clearly biased against the unseeded players. Bruce Hall of North Carolina took his protest one step further, vowing "I'll never come to this tournament again unless the draw is totally random."

Both players were technically correct. Ms. Cole's method of seeding was slightly biased in favor of the seeds. With a completely random draw, four experts (for example) could end up in a group of four. From a weaker player's standpoint, this would be great. Three experts would be losers after two rounds. With seed spacing, only one expert could be eliminated, providing the seeds a better chance to blossom in the later rounds.

Given this inequity, why would the Flint Backgammon Club, the Chicago Bar Point Club and others continue using a modified random draw? Perhaps for tourney excitement.

Seeding the best players is not unusual in tournament play. All major tennis tournaments are seeded based on past performance. And the NCAA has seeded their basketball tournament for 50 years. Organizers do this to ensure relative balance in their events and provide the best chance for a high caliber finals.

Still, why give the experts even the smallest advantage? For one thing, seeding them adds personality to our game. It rewards past performance and gives the average player something to strive for. Also, spacing the seeds protects the average player from being stuck in a bracket of "heavy hitters."

Perhaps Mr. Barabino and Mr. Hall were also a bit upset that they weren't seeded at the Michigan tournament. Maybe they *should* have been rated ahead of borderline seeds like 1986 Summer Champ Jim Wilson of Michigan. But this was a Michigan tournament. In Boston, Mr. Barabino would undoubtedly be seeded ahead of Mr. Wilson. Likewise for Mr. Hall in North Carolina.

Seeding is not as important for high entry fee tournaments such as the World Cup. In most cases, the mammoth prize money ensures spectator interest no matter who reaches the finals. And invitational events should not be seeded because all invitees are supposedly experts. But for regional tournaments, seeding is a good idea. Personality recognition and the potential for excitement gained is worth the non-seeded player's minimal equity lost.

WINNER'S CORNER



June-July, 1988

Bar Point Sunday (Chicago, IL; June 5)... Open (16): 1st Stu Katz and Peter Kalba (split); 3/4 Gene Chait and Tak Morioka; 1st Cons. Chris Kenik and Joann Feinstein (split). Limited (8): 1st Kevin Bryant; 2nd Peggy Fleming; 1st Cons. Kave Lehrer.

Plymouth Sunday Special (Plymouth, MI; June 5)... Open (12): 1st Carol Joy Cole; 2nd Jim Wilson. Intermediate (12): 1st Phil Goldman; 2nd Sandy Grassel.

Australian National Championships (Melbourne; June 10-13)... Championship: 1st Derek Tomsett (Victoria); 2nd Courtney Foster (N.S.W.).

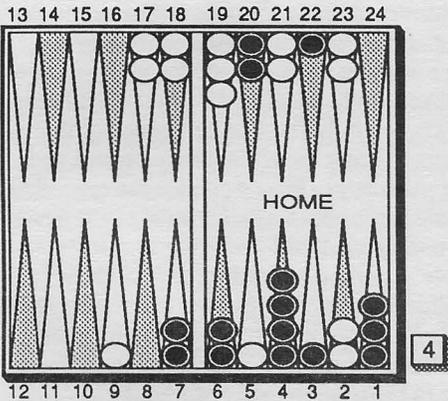
New England Club Championships (Cambridge, MA; June 12)... A Division: 1st Bill Robertie; 2nd Roy Friedman. B Division: 1st Seth Towle.

5th German Open (Berlin; June 24-26)... Championship (71): 1st Kurt Oge (Krefeld); 2nd Uli Koch (Monte-Carlo); 1st Cons. Jurgen Seybold (Stuttg.); 1st L.C. Michael Greiner (Berlin). Beginner: 1st Richard Menger (Berlin); 2nd Khaled El-Kadi (Nurnberg); 1st Cons. Peter Biewaldt (Feldkirchen); 1st L.C. Bernhard Hage (Munich)... Oge edged Koch 23-20 in the Championship finals.

Nation's Capital Summer Championships (Bethesda, MD; July 16-17)... Championship (23): 1st Ed Maslansky; 2nd Greg Lilley. Doubles (11): 1st Jeff Stewart & Joe Robinson. Δ

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION

11 point match. Black leads White, 6 to 3.
BLACK TO PLAY 5-4.



In the future, when you speak of “sick rolls,” remember Problem #137. Following his 5-4 move, Black is in serious jeopardy of losing an 8 point gammon and the match. He should play to avoid the “G” and still give himself a slim angle to win the game.

If Black further destroys his board by moving 6/1 with the 5, he pretty much concedes all game-winning chances.

Therefore, Black should break his 5-anchor with 20/15—scary to say the least.

The three choices for the 4 are: (a) 7/3, making the 3-point; (b) 15/11, leaving a blot on the 20-point; and (c) 20/16, bringing two back men into the outfield. All choices are plausible.

Play (a) builds the 3-point, but Black would rather make it with an ace. Covering now puts another checker somewhat out of play and destroys a good blocking point.

With both (a) and (b), Black leaves a man on White’s 5-point. True, if hit, Black might have the chance to enter and resecure it. But another threat is that White will hit two checkers—an outer blot and the blot on her own 5-point. If Black is unable to immediately hit back, he’ll likely end up with 4 checkers trapped behind a 5-prime.

Play (c) gives Black his best chance to avoid the double hit. On the down side, if Black completely abandon’s the 5-anchor, he will probably never remake it. The 5-anchor is Black’s best insurance against being gammoned.

Make your guess at what backgammon’s finest players would do. I’ll pick play (c)—bringing two men out. Next month, I’ll survey the experts at the World Cup in Boston and print the results in the September *POINT*.—Ed. Δ

ANOTHER TYPE OF “RACING GAME”

On July 29, the second race at Hawthorne Race Course in Cicero, Illinois was named in honor of the Chicago Bar Point Club (and a Marilyn Monroe celebrity look-alike). The winning horse was “Measure Of Time.” Bar Point Club director Bill Davis had his picture taken with the winning jockey Earlie Fires. Later, Bill met with track announcer Phil Georgeff and watched him call a race. Great fun! Thanks to Kathy Posner for the publicity.

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Track Record: SATAN'S POPPY (4), 120 lbs.—1:08 1/4 (10-21-78)		Tracy E. Carone	\$6,160
Daniel E. Kowalski & Stan Holland		1988 10 1 0 2	\$7,533
BLACK, purple diamond frame and sleeves		1987 15 M 1 3	
Last Race: 19 Jul 88 Haw			
Class, Dist.: Alw 18700, 170			
L.Sts.: 923 1/4 34 1/2 813 1/2			

1 Red **20-1** **CHARACTER ONE** (IB) (L) **117**

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AMALGAMATION

Backgammon On Board sails December 2-5. Don't be left ashore. Need an invitation? Phone 800/234-0887..... Good luck to **Emil Mortuk, Joe Sylvester** and **Frank Talbot** on the opening of the *Detroit Backgammon Club*. The sociable group meets Mondays at “Our Dad's Place” (7:00 PM)..... Visiting the Bar Point Club on July 28: **Julian Wilson**, director of backgammon at the Stocks Club in London, England..... Congratulations to **Rich Sweetman**, Chicago Bar Point Club *Player of the Month* for July..... Michigan Summer Championship tidbits: **Carol Joy Cole's No Smoking** section was greeted with mixed reviews. Where would a smoker vs. non-smoker sit? Assistant director **John Carrico** came up with this tongue-in-cheek solution at the Calcutta: “No smoking until the cube is turned.”... **Yamin Yamin** has been known to enjoy a little shuteye en route to the BG tournaments. This time he drove up from Chicago in **Betsy Miller's** van along with **Alyce Wallen, Connie Sychowski** and **Bobbie Shifrin**. At the pre-tourney party, **Betsy told Tom Walthes**: “Yamin was asleep before I drove out of the driveway and didn't show signs of life until we pulled into the hotel parking lot.” Tom had just one question: “Did he end up positive or negative on the chouette sheet?”... Before he went to bed at 2:30 AM Sunday morning, **Dean Muench** wanted to know who is morning opponent would be. Nearing the end of a 15 hour workday, assistant director **Butch Meese** checked the scoresheet. “Let's see. You play the winner of match K, er K9. Dean, I think you're playing a dog!” Δ



ILLINOIS ACTION



Bill Davis
312/338-6380
Peter Kalba
312/276-4144

Tuesday, 7:15 PM at Pat's Pub, 4343 N. Harlem Ave., Norridge (457-1166).

Thursday, 7:15 PM at Charmichael's, 4255 River Rd., Schiller Pk (678-5040).

PUB CLUB: Tournaments Monday, 7:30 PM at Fiddler's, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Ed Bauder (312/985-1568).

SANGAMMON VALLEY BG ASS'N: Tournaments Tuesday, 6:15 PM at On Broadway, 210 S. Broadway, Springfield. Greg Tomlin (800/223-6146 x286).

WINNETKA BG CLUB: Tournaments Weds., 7:00 PM at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (312/446-0537).

CENT. ILL. BG CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 PM at Peoria Pizza Wks, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Sue Will (309/692-6909).

NORTH CLUB: Daily side play at 4747 N. Peterson (Room 402), Chicago. Howard Markowitz (312/286-8417).