

1989 midwest backgammon championships

“EVERY DINOSAUR HAS HIS DAY”

Desmond first Chicagoan to win MBC

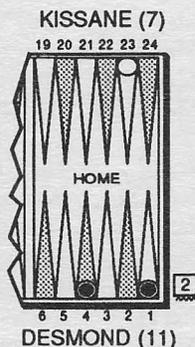
Don Desmond, an investment banker from Chicago, IL, overpowered New York master Jack Kissane 15-8 to win the 1989 Midwest Backgammon Championships. The Chicago Bar Point Club's sixth annual event drew a record crowd of 141 players to the Holiday Inn in Oakbrook Terrace, IL April 14-16. Gammoners from 13 states and Canada were represented.

Desmond's comparison of himself to a dinosaur (used in the headline) is not completely valid. Dinosaurs roamed the earth for perhaps 200 million years. Desmond has only been playing tournament backgammon for 15. The former Indiana Open champion becomes the first player from Illinois to win the Chicagoland-based event.

“After my win against Tak Morioka in the first round, I play very tight,” noted Desmond. “Nobody got me for four points

all weekend.” In fact, Desmond's cautious play accounted for a doubling error in his final match against Jack Kissane:

1989 Midwest Backgammon Championships. 15 point finals. Don Desmond (Black) leads Jack Kissane (White) 11 to 7. **SHOULD BLACK REDOUBLE?**



The position offers no recube prospect for White. Match equity charts show this to be a double and a drop. By not doubling, Desmond is projected to win the match 83.63%. By recubing to 4, he would better his odds to 88.00% if Kissane dropped, or 90.28% if Kissane mistakenly took. Don felt he was in command of the match and didn't want the possibility of a big cube wiping him out. The strategy worked. Don went on to win breezing.

(Continued on page 6)

LUCILLE BALL DIES

Star was avid backgammon fan

Lucille Ball, legendary star of stage, screen and television, died in Los Angeles on April 26, 1989 from complications after a heart attack. She was 77.

Miss Ball developed a passion for backgammon in the early 70's. She often played with her husband Gary Morton, and used to hold round robin tournaments with a dozen friends at her home each month. She also played in national events including the 1982 World Amateur Championship in Las Vegas.

Miss Ball was introduced to backgammon by Prince Obolensky and began with six lessons. “The lessons just reached my sinuses,” she would joke, “they never made it to my brain.” She also studied with Paul Magriel.

Until the mid 80's, Miss Ball sponsored a major annual charity tournament in Los Angeles benefiting the Children's Hospital. This is the best way to remember “Lucy” in the backgammon world. Δ

1989 MIDWEST CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (49): 1st Don Desmond (IL); 2nd Jack Kissane (NY); 3/4 Emil Mortuk (MI) and Cliff Pappas (AZ); 1st Cons. Sandy Glassman (MI); 2nd Cons. Gary Keyes (IL); 1st LC Joe Sylvester (MI).

ADVANCED (60): 1st Mark King (IL); 2nd Greg Varbanov (IN); 3/4 Sue Will (IL) and Arnold Zousmer (IL); 1st Cons. Stu Katz (IL); 2nd Con. Arnold Zousmer (IL); 1st LC Ed Buerger (IL).

LIMITED (32): 1st John Kelsey (IL); 2nd C.B. Sauer (IL); 1st Cons. Marc Schoenecker (IL); 2nd Cons. Bill Kelley (IL); 1st/2nd LC Fred American (NY) and G.B. Lunday (IL).

DOUBLES (32 teams): 1st Dan Judd (IL) & Dave Rockwell (IL); 2nd Linc Bedell (NH) & Joan Ross (MI); 3/4 Jim Opre (IL) & Tom Walthes (IL); 3/4 Deeb Shalati & Ron Stur (IL).

SATELLITE DOUBLES (8 teams): 1st Ralph Dietz (MI) and Cinda King (IL).

BLITZ (136): 1st Mark King (IL); 2nd Fouad Malouf (IL).

NACKGAMMON (3 tournaments): #1 (16) 1st Yamin Yamin (IL); #2 (16) 1st Ron Stur (IL); #3 (8) 1st Deeb Shalati (IL).

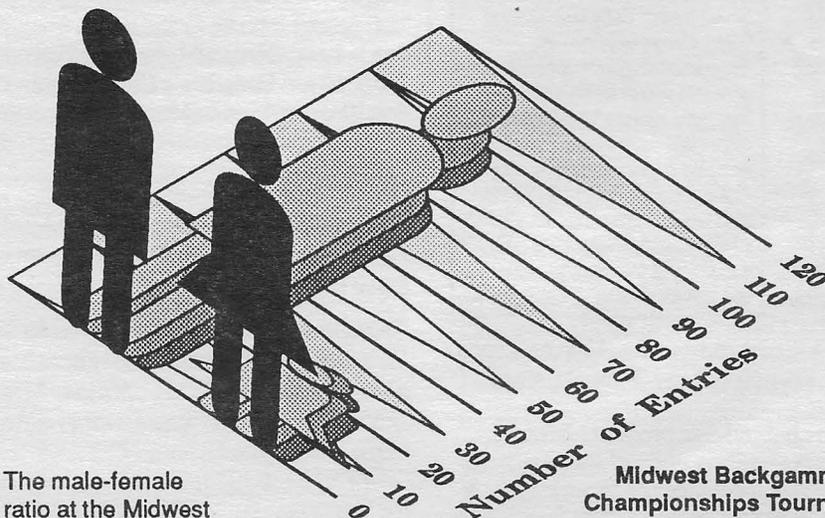
PIG-ROLLING CHAMP: Matt Anshus (WI).

LIAR'S DICE CHAMP: Greg Varbanov (IN).

BG PINBALL WIZARD: David Libchaber (IL).

BG “RAINMAN”: Woody Woodworth (IN).

CASTING THE LONGER SHADOW



The male-female ratio at the Midwest Backgammon Championships widened from less than 4 to 1 in 1988 to nearly 9 to 2 in 1989.

Midwest Backgammon Championships Tournament Attendance MEN vs. WOMEN

Year	Men	Women
1987	110	40
1988	115	45
1989	120	50

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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

PROGRAM SCAM?

I came across the ad to the right in a recent issue of PC Magazine and couldn't resist the temptation to find out about "A.I. Backgammon." It looks like curiosity killed another cat—I haven't seen either the program or my 20 bucks since ordering.

Who is behind this product? Is he a known backgammon player? Does anyone out there have a copy of the program? Any information would be appreciated.

I don't care as much about the money as I do about being ripped off. I would recommend that anyone else planning to order, wait until this ad can be investigated.—Jim Wallace, Calgary, Alberta

A.I. BACKGAMMON—FINALLY

Not Amateur Shareware—No bugs or bad moves. But a sophisticated Backgammon environment. Graphically window to computer's algorithmic search for best move. Optionally displays hit probabilities & other stats. Simulated 3D graphics. Autoplay & take back option. Any IBM or Compat. Only \$19.77 PPD. Paradise Programming
47-605 Puapoo Place
Kaneohe, HI 96744
808-239-2200

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

May 5-7	Rochester Backgammon Association Tournament, Rochester, NY	716/442-8221
May 5-7	Granite State Open & NE Team Champs, Woodbound Inn, Jaffrey, NH	603/924-3844
May 6-7	International Tournament, Casino Municipale, Venice, Italy	041-52 11029
May 7	Central Illinois BG Club Tournament, Sly Fox Pub, Lacon, IL	309/692-6909
May 14	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario	416/267-2815
May 18	"Third Thursday" Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
May 18-21	Championship of Great Britain, Palace Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man	0624/851-045
May 19-21	Austrian Tournament, Casino Bregenz, Austria—CANCELLED	
May 20	1989 Virginia Cup, Executive Motor Inn, Richmond, VA	804/786-5568
May 21	Pittsburgh Sunday Tournament, Parkway Center Inn, Pittsburgh, PA	412/241-1301
May 26-29	10th Annual Chicago Open, Westin Hotel O'Hare, Rosemont, IL	312/674-0120
May 26-29	Boston Symph. Orch. Benefit, Sheraton Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Jun 5	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Jun 9-11	Austrian Tournament, Casino Velden, Austria	08341-12-825
Jun 10-12	Australian National Championships, Hilton Int'l, Melbourne	03-566 8041
Jun 11	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Jun 11	New England Club Finals & Year-end Tournament, Cambridge, MA	617/547-4800
Jun 11	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario	416/267-2815
Jun 15	"Third Thursday" Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jun 21-25	U.S. Open & Master's Invitational, Nugget Hotel/Casino, Reno, NV	702/826-1984
Jun 25	Pittsburgh Sunday Tournament, Parkway Center Inn, Pittsburgh, PA	412/241-1301
Jul 3	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Jul 7-9	San Remo Backgammon Tournament, Hotel Royal, San Remo, Italy	0184/7-99-91
Jul 9	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario	416/267-2815
Jul 10-16	World Championship of Backgammon, Monte-Carlo, Monaco	301/299-8264
Jul 15-16	College Park Summer Championship, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603
Jul 27	"Third Thursday" Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 28-30	Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 28-30	European Championship, Casino de Spa, Belgium	0841-12 825
Aug 6	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Aug 7	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Aug 7-13	Green Mountain Festival, Ascutney Mtn. Resort, Brownsville, VT	305/527-4033
Aug 13	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario	416/267-2815
Aug 20	1989 Japan Backgammon Championship, Yaesu Fujiya Hotel, Tokyo	03-5476-4303
Sep 1-4	National Labor Day Tournament & Club Challenge, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Sep 4	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Sep 10	Toronto Monthly Tournament, Le Spot, Ontario	416/267-2815

HOW TO BUILD "THE WALL"

Will you please tell me what the April "Takgammon" column was all about.—
Dave Cramer, Chicago, IL

"Takgammon" author Tak Morioka likes his readers to draw their own conclusions about his column. In my opinion, "The Wall" parallels the way certain individuals learn to play backgammon.

In "The Wall," the townspeople want to build a 20 foot wall to keep invaders out of their town. Unfortunately, they only have enough bricks to build the wall half way around the town. A debate then ensues as to where the half-wall would offer the best defense. Tak concludes his article by

asking us, "...how would you go about building the wall?"

The best strategy is to reduce the wall height to 10 feet and build the wall all the way around the city. This offers a gapless defense that will stop the town from being overrun from any angle.

In backgammon, the same is true: the best way to improve one's game is to spend equal time studying all facets of the game. For example, consider the individual who spends hour after hour mastering bear-off techniques without studying middle game strategy. In actual play, he'll often be cubed out before the bear-off ever begins!—Ed.

(Continued on page 7)

SMALL FIELD ENJOYS ADDED \$\$\$ IN TAHOE

With a 17-1 lead, David Eig of Reno, Nevada felt fairly confident of victory in the 21 point finals of "April In Tahoe" at the Hyatt Lake Tahoe April 12-16. However, Chicago's Dean Muench did not feel confident of defeat. Muench clawed back for 14 straight points before losing the match on a doubled gammon 21-15. Eig, known as "Captain Cube" when he wrote for *Las Vegas Backgammon* magazine, survived the scare to rake in much of the \$10,000 added Championship prize money. Terrific money for a small 48 player field.

This year's total attendance of 126 lagged far behind the premiere 1986 event when Louise Goldsmith drew 340 players and in 1988 when she managed 258 players. Part of the reason was the result of Goldsmith's departure from the event last year and bad press received when the Hyatt cancelled their "Autumn Harvest Tournament" last October.

In general however, words were favorable for this year's director Art Caplan. Hyatt Lake Tahoe spokesman Bill Dickson is serious about rebuilding this tournament and has already announced April 25-29, 1990 as next year's date for "April In Tahoe."

APRIL IN TAHOE

CHAMPIONSHIP (48): 1st David Eig (NV); 2nd Dean Muench (IL); 3/4 Joe Russell (CA) and Steve Flam (FL). INTERMEDIATE (48): 1st Doug Wilson (CA); 2nd Duane Eshima (CO). BEGINNER (28): 1st Freg King (TX); 2nd Glen Miller (WA). DOUBLES: 1st Art Dickman (FL) & Sim Lee (CA); 2nd Ira Hoffberg (IL) and Rick Huffman (CA). WARM-UP: 1st Malcolm Davis (TX); 2nd Ron Bruns (CA).

CLUB TEAM CHALLENGE SET FOR LABOR DAY

The National Labor Day tournament in Indianapolis, Indiana (September 1-4) will include a "National Club Team Challenge," according to Hoosier Club director Butch Meese. All organized backgammon clubs in the U.S. will receive an invitation to participate in this new event by the third week in May.

Although the format is not firm, clubs will be represented by three members who will play a minimum of three matches each. The entry fee will be \$225/team with 90% return.

Groups who live in areas without organized backgammon should check with Meese (317/845-8435) about eligibility to enter as a team.

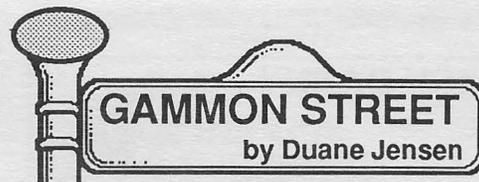


1989 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU Apr. 30

TAK MORIOKA	10.48	MARK KING	2.56	Joe Koucharian	0.88
CHRIS KENIK	9.92	PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI	2.32	Paul Travis	0.88
DAVID LIBCHABER	8.44	Ken Bond	2.08	Jim Pappas	0.80
GARY KAY	7.76	Jeff Kane	1.92	Ron Stur	0.80
DEAN MUENCH	6.92	Don Desmond	1.92	Jill Ferdinand	0.80
DEEB SHALATI	5.36	Don Jayhan	1.64	Mike Cyrkiel	0.72
YAMIN YAMIN	5.32	Kathy Rudnick	1.64	René Wojtysiak	0.64
BOB ZAVORAL	5.20	Dave Rockwell	1.60	Bob Holyon	0.64
ARNOLD ZOUSMER	4.32	Dave Cramer	1.60	VW Zimnicki	0.64
SARG SERGES	4.16	Arlene Levy	1.56	Harry Hayward	0.56
NORMA SHYER	4.00	Mark Anshur	1.52	Rich Siebold	0.56
ALICE KAY	3.56	Gary Keyes	1.52	Craig McCullough	0.30
STU KATZ	3.52	Lenny Loder	1.28	Mark Hicks	0.28
RALPH LEVY	3.48	Gene Chait	1.20	Richard Stawowy	0.28
ALAN STEFFEN	3.36	Ed Buerger	1.12	Joan Hegg	0.24
JOANN FEINSTEIN	3.24	Bill Keefe	1.04	Trudie Stern	0.16
BILL DAVIS	2.76	Dan Judd	0.96	Leslie Lockett	0.16
JOHN DEMIAN	2.72	Bill Hoeflich	0.96	Dianne Cyrkiel	0.12
		John Spatafora	0.94		

A 1st and 1st Consolation finish for YAMIN YAMIN in April earned him Player of the Month kudos with 3.84 points. Gary Kay and Tak Morioka tied for 2nd with 2.80 each.



Harmon Killebrew, the home run slugger of the Minnesota Twins, was a consistent performer and well liked by fans and teammates. In his honor, a street near the old baseball stadium was renamed *Killebrew Drive*. Years later, some fans wanted to honor batting champ Rod Carew in the same fashion. Carew, however, hadn't radiated the warm personality Killebrew had shown. Some people found Carew to be distant and antagonistic. One local writer suggested a street be named for Carew, but that it be called *Psycho Path*.

If backgammon players ever reach such celebrated status, think of the street signs we might see:

15-23 JOE SYLVESTER TRAILS
WORLD CUP, MA 01988

111010 DEAN MUENCH HARD DRIVE
SILICON VALLEY, CA

36-24-36 WENDY KAPLAN CURVE
ROLLING HILLS, VA

Y
A
I
N
2222 YAMIN CROSSROADS, CHGO, IL

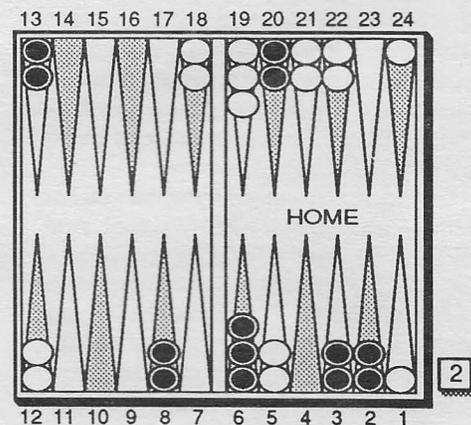
7234 MIKE CYRKIEL CIRCLE
ELLIPSE, OH

624 SUE WILL WAY, PEORIA, IL
(Remember, where there's a "Will," there's a "Way")

your move

PROBLEM #147

Money game. BLACK TO PLAY 6-3.



ASK DANNY



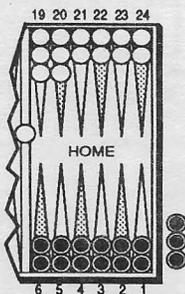
by Danny Kleinman

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

Dear Danny: Sometimes I've hit a shot during my opponent's bear-off and succeeded in closing her out only to face a dilemma during my own bear-off. Shall I break my board from the rear or leave a gap on a lower point? Which features of the position and my roll should induce me to do one or the other?—David Rockwell, Skokie, IL

Dear David: The merit claimed for breaking from the rear is safety. Other things being equal, the gapless position creates less danger of leaving a blot than the gapped. But other things are seldom equal, and blotting is seldom the only danger.

Gappage, for example, results in less blotting than oddage. Suppose you roll a 3-1 in the setup shown at right. Then moving 6/3, 6/5 risks blotting on nine rolls next (all combinations of 6's, 5's and 4's); moving 5/2, 5/4 risks blotting on seven rolls (6-1, 5-1, 6-6, 5-5 and 4-4); moving 4/1, 4/3 risks blotting on only two rolls (6-2) as does moving 3/off, 3/2 (6-3).



Sometimes you can lose the game even if you don't get hit: your opponent may reenter and win the race. In that case, breaking the lowest possible point instead of a higher one can help you in two ways. One is in your own speed of bearing off. 3/off, 3/2 gets a man off. Any higher point that you break in playing a 3-1 doesn't. The second is in constraining the enemy man. If you break your 6-point, you activate 11 6's for your opponent and they total 114 pips (10+ on the average). If you break your 3-point, and your opponent cannot move constructively in her own home board, then the 11 3's you activate for her total only 63 pips (6- on the average).

In general, go for *safety* when you lead in the race and *speed* when you trail. And don't overlook the effect on cube ownership. If you are on the verge of a powerful cube-turn, all shot danger may be illusory. What good will potential future shots do your opponent if she can't afford to take your redouble next turn? Sometimes the only thing that can keep your opponent in

the game is a large number. If you break your 6-point, you may let her turn the game around again with double-6's. But if you break your 3-point, her double-3's can't hurt you. Similarly, there may be times when 6-5 from the bar will give her just enough racing chances to take your redouble but 3-5 from the bar won't. Clearly, these are the times to break your 3-point rather than your 6-point.

Your opponent's board may also affect your strategy. If she's been able to keep a respectable board, you should seek greater safety. But a strong board and a fast board are antithetical, so you'll probably already be seeking safety to protect a lead in the race. Conversely, when your opponent has home board blots not easily lifted or covered, your prospect of return shots gives you less to fear from blotting.

As so often happens in backgammon, there is no mechanistic rule to resolve your dilemma. You must examine each position in detail. For each alternative, ask yourself:

- How great is the extra risk of getting hit?
- How much speed do I gain in bearing off?
- How important is it to keep my opponent from leaping out from my home board if she reenters?
- Which is the greater danger: getting hit or losing the race?

Then, integrating your answers to these questions—and taking the cube into account—compare your overall winning chances in the positions resulting from each play.—Yours, Danny Δ

Questions for Danny Kleinman should be addressed to: Ask Danny, c/o Chicago POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645. Danny will answer the most interesting questions bimonthly.

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AMALGAMATION

Describing the *POINT* as "a nicely compiled eight-page monthly" may not seem a great compliment, but consider the source: David Doty, editor of *The Page*, an international Macintosh desktop publishing magazine... The BPC welcomes back Andy Argy who is recovering from February hip socket surgery... According to *All You Can Do Is All You Can Do* author A. L. Williams: "Winning isn't a trick, it's an attitude. And there are three rules critical to success—1) Always be positive. 2) Always be positive. 3) Always be positive."... April visitors to the Chicago Bar Point Club: Joe Sylvester (MI) on April 11 prior to the Midwest Championships. Pro pool player Lenny Loder (MI) joined us April 18. His best run is over 160 balls. And on the 25th, Kathy Posner with distributor Ken Pavichevich singing the praises of Baderbrau Beer... 500 pounds joined at the lips—that describes East coast backgammon player Bob Paris kissing Angie Larco in the April 18 *National Enquirer*. The two met through "Cuddles," a dating service for chubby people... Best wishes to Jerry Godsey who was recently elected president of the Hong Kong Backgammon Club... No more "catgammon" for Judy Field and her Manx cat Missy. The vet has instructed Judy to see that Missy avoids stressful situations and takes her daily dose of Valium!... Congratulations to Jeff and Renée Kane, married April 8 in a Milwaukee suburb... And finally from Duane Jensen: "An *oxymoron* is a combination of contradictory words such as 'cruel kindness.' At the recent Midwest Championships, the Calcutta auction proceeds went to the Anti-Cruelty Society of Chicago as a charitable donation. Putting 'backgammon' and 'Anti-Cruelty' side-by-side creates a textbook example of an oxymoron." Δ

In a recent debate, Lloyd Bentsenseofhumor said to Danny Kleinman,

"I knew Art Buchwald. I worked at the same typewriter as Art Buchwald. Art Buchwald was my friend. And Dan, You're no Art Buchwald."

But what does Lloyd Bentsenseofhumor know? Sample Danny Kleinman's mind with:

- Take It Out And Play With It (\$30)
- Living In A Dream World (\$24)
- Say A Few Words In Oldspeak (\$23)
- I Sing the Poet Acoustic (\$12)

To order any of the above, or for a listing of Danny's bridge and backgammon books, write: Danny Kleinman, 8924 Hargis, Los Angeles, CA 90034

MATCH EQUITY CHARTS ARE NOT CHISELED IN STONE

by Duane Jensen

Exodus 32

15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other *were* they written.

16 And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

WINNING CHANCES in a 9-PT. M

Your Score	Opponent's Score	
	8	Cr 7
8	50%	51%
Crawford		70%
7	49%	30%
6	30%	25%

Chart #1
Both players equal.

WINNING CHANCES in a 9-PT. M

Your Score (45%)	Opponent's Score (55%)	
	8	Cr 7
8	45%	46%
Crawford		65%
7	44%	25%
6	25%	20%

Chart #2
You're a 45-55 underdog in each game.

God made it clear that His commandments, written on stone tablets, were not to be revised or amended. These commandments were permanent, to be revered and obeyed forever. Unlike the commandments, match equity charts are not chiseled in stone. A match equity chart cannot reflect perfection because it's based upon assumptions which are not exact. A chart usually assumes both opponents are of equal ability, that both players gammon each other with the same frequency and that a specific percentage (say 20%) of a player's wins are gammons. None of these assumptions are correct; they are merely approximations. A match equity chart changes when these assumptions change.

Compare the two charts above. The first shows match percentages for opponents of equal ability. The second shows the percentages when one player wins 45% of the games and his opponent wins 55%.

If you're trailing 6 to 7 in a 9-point match and you're doubled, what is your *take point*? If you and your opponent are of equal ability, your take point is 25%*. If you're a much weaker player (who only wins 45% of the games), your take point is 20%.

The revised chart shows that different doubling and take points emerge when the opponents have different skill levels. Don't be awed by match equity charts. They are not religious icons demanding reverence or worship. The charts are just flexible tools you can use to improve your play. Δ

*If you drop, you would trail 6 to 8 (Crawford) with a 25% chance to win the match. Therefore, if you have better than a 25% chance to win the current game, you should accept your opponent's double and immediately recube him, thus putting the match on the line.

intermediate tips

CONSIDER THE SCORE BEFORE USING THE CUBE

by Larry Strommen

Several years ago, I was watching Nack Ballard play a match for money against Karen Wolfson when Kathy Posner walked up. After seeing only a few moves, she seemed intent on something. When the game was over, Kathy interrupted the players and asked, "Are you playing a match?"

"Yes," came their reply.

"Now I understand," she said and walked away.

Kathy had seen something that I as a novice had not. That something was the leader's slow action with the doubling cube. There is a need to study and understand the impact that the score has on the use of the cube even if you don't utilize match equity or other mathematical formulas over the board. Consider the following questions:

- Should I double earlier or later when I'm in the lead? ... when I'm behind?
- Should I take the cube in riskier or safer positions when I'm leading?... when I'm behind?

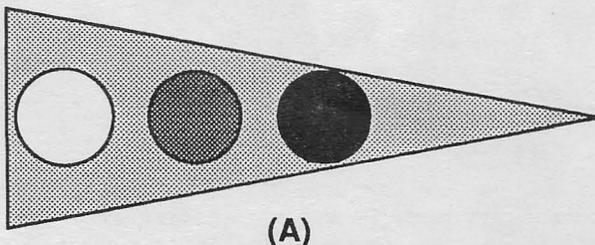
While answers to these questions are readily available, my suggestion to any serious intermediate player is to first think out the answers by yourself and then ask a good open player for his opinions. Most open players are happy to discuss what they know about backgammon with individuals who are making a sincere effort to improve their game.

And if the first player you question is "too busy to be bothered," ask another. What you can learn from such discussions is worth the effort.—Happy Doubling. Δ

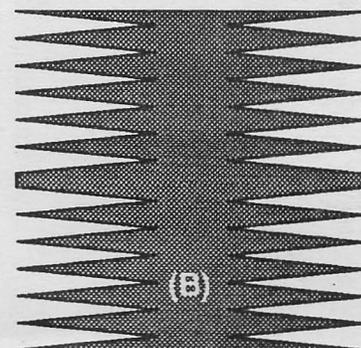
OPTICALLY ILLUSIVE

Here are two backgammon-related diagrams to test your powers of observation. Check your guesses with a ruler. You might be surprised with the answers!

- (A) Which checker (white, gray or black) is the widest?
- (B) Is the backgammon board taller or wider? Δ



(A)



(B)

EVERY DINOSAUR...

(Continued from page 1)

After the match, Desmond, the #5 all-time master point achiever in Chicago backgammon history commented, "Kissane is a great player, but it was my turn. The win seemed easy. I didn't feel any pressure. I felt great." Jack Kissane didn't feel too bad, either. He owned Don in the Calcutta!

In other results, Chicagoan Mark King had a weekend he'll never forget winning the Advanced division over Greg Varbanov (IN) and then grabbing over \$1300+ in the 136 player *Blitz*. John Kelsey enjoyed his first tourney winning the Limited finals over C.B. Sauer (IL). And Dan Judd & David Rockwell made it a Chicagoland clean sweep by defeating Linc Bedell (NH) & Joan Ross (MI) in the Doubles.

This year, Auctioneer Peter Kalba helped to raise \$1200 for the Anti-Cruelty

Society. Add to that *Chicago POINT* coffee mug sales and \$200 from the "Jokerz" pinball game for a total donation of \$1500.

Special thanks to Tom Walthes (All Star Amusements) for providing the pinball game, Jeff Henry (Jim Henry, Inc.) for supplying the special lucite trophies and Itasca Wiggins (Chicago Tribune) for publicity. Be prepared for more fun and adventure at the 1990 Midwest Backgammon Championships March 23-25 at the Holiday Inn Oakbrook Terrace. Here's what happened...



Don Desmond ponders a cube decision vs. Jack Kissane in the Championship finals.



"Starting Them Young, Part 1." Nicole and Mark Cook.



"Starting Them Young, Part 2." Dawn and Gerry Vangsness



Dan Judd and David Rockwell receive their Lucite spherical trophies while runners-up Joan Ross and Linc Bedell look on.



"Little" Peter Kalba sandwiched between Rex Martin and Limited champ John Kelsey.



Finalist Wendy Kaplan hopelessly watches David Libchaber roll to victory in the BG Pinball competition.



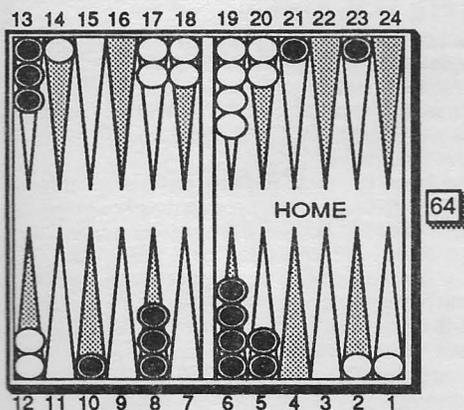
A couple of busy men: Mark King accepts the Advanced champion's trophy. He also won the Blitz tourney. Greg Varbanov finished 2nd in the Advanced but won the Liar's Dice tournament and a Sony stereo.



Matt Anshus is entered into the "Hog of Fame" for winning the Pig-Rolling event. That's Dru Heggen awarding Matt his Sony TV.

**PROBLEM #146
SOLVED**

by Kit Woolsey

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-2.**

Many backgammon problems have several possible answers, each of which has to be weighed. For this problem, however, one answer simply stands head and shoulders above all others: make the 4-point. It is a most valuable point for Black and leaves him with smooth distribution, no blots on his side of the board and a strong three point board from which to continue the attack.

Running to the midpoint is clearly inferior. Black would be stranding one man, leaving a blot in the outfield, and doing nothing to improve his board in a situation where a strong board has the highest priority. Black need not fear leaving the blot on the enemy 4-point. White has only three builders, two of which involve releasing important points. If White doesn't roll a joker, she will find it difficult to make progress.

Making the enemy 4-point would be a possibility if Black could combine it with a decent six. However, all of Black's sixes are so terrible that this approach must also be dismissed.

Oftentimes the natural, obvious play is by far the strongest. The solution to this problem is a case in point. Δ

**Chicago POINT
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Chicago POINT
2726 W. Lunt Avenue
Chicago, IL 60645**LETTERS...***(Continued from page 2)***THE BEST CAN STILL GET BETTER**

The Highland Park Cafeteria, a family-owned institution in Dallas for 65 years, is the finest cafeteria I've ever seen. The food and variety is nothing less than excellent.

However, the chocolate pie is mildly inconsistent. The establishment's policy is to rotate preparers so that quality is not dependent on any one person. On days when Ruth makes the chocolate pie, it is simply superb. On other days, it is good, but not up to Ruth's magnificent standards.

To recognize this small inconsistency is not to insult the cafeteria's management, which steadfastly claims there is no difference. If anything, they may insult themselves by claiming that their cooks make indistinguishable products, in the face of a certain chocolate pie connoisseur's so-far infallible analyses.

Now there are no finer backgammon tournaments anywhere than those conducted by the Northern Nevada Backgammon Association. All backgammon players owe the NNBA and their host casinos a real debt of gratitude. That is not to say however, that they, and all of us, should not strive to do even better—for "perfection," if you will.

In the April "Letters" column, Doug Amenda criticized the way I described a January NNBA ruling decision in the March *POINT*. I concede that I might have made the same ruling myself under the same circumstances, although I hope not. I still maintain that the ruling process was flawed, and think that the late Oswald Jacoby, given all the facts, would have ruled differently.

There's no reason to blindly ignore the possibility that an imperfect decision may have been rendered—certainly not as idle criticism, but with an eye to improving our ruling processes. To maintain that all judgments are just, by virtue of their existence, guarantees an excess of bad judgments.—Malcolm Davis, Dallas, TX

CLEARING THE AIR

When are the rights of non-smoking backgammon players finally going to be recognized? At national events such as the NNBA's Reno tournaments, why can't at least one playing room be designated non-smoking? (I do realize this would be very difficult for smaller tournaments to accomplish.) If two non-smokers want to play in a breathable environment, or should a non-smoker and an obliging smoker agree to these conditions, then they should at least have that option.

The health risks involved in second-

hand smoke inhalation are now clearly documented, not to mention the obvious discomfort. Simply put, I am tired of leaving the tournament room at the end of a long day feeling as though I just crawled out of a burning building (Yes, I know bad dice can have the same effect).

If there are any others out there who share these feelings, please make your tournament directors and newsletter editors aware. Perhaps if directors realize just how many unhappy non-smokers patronize their tournaments, something can finally be done.—Frank Frigo, Calabasas, CA

Looks like the NNBA is reading your mind. The invitation for their U.S. Open (June 21-25 in Reno) requests information about your smoking preferences.—Ed.

TROUBLE IN GERMANY

The North German Open has unfortunately been cancelled because of tax uncertainties in our country. At the present time, it's unknown whether or not there will be any major tournaments in Germany any more. The reason is that future entry fees (not just registration fees) will probably be subject to VAT. Players are used to 100% return which will no longer be possible. I'll keep you informed.—Werner Waschke, Backgammon Zentrale, Hamburg, W. Germany

ALL ANTOINETTES ARE NOT ALIKE

Why must my name be used in the "Miss Lonelyblots" columns? To quote from April: "Perhaps you suffer from performance anxiety... (take that Antoinette—how many columns have you turned out lately?)"

I mean, doesn't the author know there's only one ANTOINETTE in the backgammon circles? Why confuse your readers? Why slander my name? For all I care, name the character "Zelda Ding-A-Ling" ... anything but "Antoinette."—Antoinette Williams, New York, NY

Miss Lonelyblots responds... *Dear Antoinette: The "Antoinette" of my reply to "Lacking Confidence" is obviously my sister, "Dr." Antoinette G. Lonelyhearts, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist. Fortunately, another of my sisters, Portia Lonelytorts, is an attorney and informs me that names and titles may not be protected by copyright. so you can't sue my sister Toni, nor can I sue Emily Fisher, who has unfairly appropriated my name. But go ahead and file your slander suit if you dare. Portia will cheerfully defend me, and hit you with a "frivolous lawsuit" countersuit in return.*

People who live in Glass (pardon me, Bob) houses shouldn't throw Stones (pardon me, Dennis, Tobias and Jan) anyway. What if Ted, or God forbid, the heirs of Tennessee Williams decided to sue you?—Miss Lonelyblots Δ



\$12,500 ADDED

June 21-25, 1989

Featuring The Fourth Annual **MASTERS INVITATIONAL**
John Ascuaga's NUGGET: Reno Area's Favorite Hotel/Casino



\$200,000 in Cash Payouts

are anticipated to be reached at this tournament.

\$12,500 Added Prize Money

Open	\$8000
Intermediate	\$4000
Novice	\$500

100% Return of Entry Fees to the Prize Pool
Gala Welcome Reception
Calcutta Auction

ENTRY FEE

Open ... \$300	Intermediate ... \$150	Novice ... \$50
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FORMAT

Single elimination with losers getting a free entry to Consolation.

	Early Rounds	Semi-Finals	Finals
Open	15	17	19
Intermediate	11	13	15
Novice (No doubling cube) ...	5	5	7

PRIZE DISTRIBUTION

100% of all entry fees plus \$12,500 in added money will be paid out in cash at the tournament. Twelve places will be paid in the Open and Intermediate divisions. Six places will be paid in the Novice division and Calcutta Auction.

RULES

Standard tournament rules will be in use, and the Holland Rule will be in effect. Match pairings will be made and byes given by random draw. Rulings will be made by the tournament directors.

ELIGIBILITY

Players will compete at their appropriate skill level. Players whose status may be in question should consult a director for determination. All entries are subject to approval by the tournament directors.

THE U.S. OPEN

This is backgammon's annual national championship. Drawing players from throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia; this is the big event to play in for 1989. An array of exciting side events will make this year's tournament extra special. You will receive five action packed days and nights with the high value for your backgammon buck our tournaments are famous for.

THE MEGABLITZ: Combines the most popular features of other events into an ultimate warm up tournament to reward early arrivers. Multiple reentries as time permits, declining entry fees, five point matches, rewards for qualifiers, high equity and large prize pool.

AMATEUR SHOOT OUT: A new event! By player request we are offering a high roller event for the amateurs. Name players, those with high ratings and players deemed to be Open class are not eligible; but entry in the Open division will not necessarily preclude your participation. Consult the directors for determination. \$500 entry fee, nine point matches and 95% return.

HIGH NOON SHOOT OUT: Rounds of eight open to all. \$500 entry fee, nine point matches and 95% return.

THE MASTERS INVITATIONAL: Sixteen of the world's foremost backgammon experts play for \$32,000 in cash prizes. Competition at its highest level, providing an excellent chance for spectators to sharpen their game.

JACKPOTS: Two separate preliminary events. Open-\$100 and nine pt. matches. Intermediate-\$50 and seven pt. matches. 85% return.

INTERNATIONAL TEAM CHALLENGE: Participating countries may pool their resources to form three-man teams. A battle for national pride as well as dollars. \$600 per team, 11 point matches and 90% return.

ROUNDS OF EIGHT: Our usual \$25, \$50 and \$100 knockouts will be available throughout the week.

THE LAST HOPE: A last chance to come home a winner. Three divisions and 90% return.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Direct questions regarding this event to Mark Richardson at 702/826-1984 weekday afternoons or 702/851-1221 evenings or weekends.

Or write:

No. Nevada Backgammon Ass'n; Box 70101; Reno, NV 89570-0101.

The Hotel Royal (★★★★L) in San Remo on the Italian Riviera is just 20 minutes by car from Monte-Carlo. To secure a special room rate, telephone: 0039 184 79991. Tournament entry fees: Championship-\$500, Intermediate-\$150.

San Remo
Backgammon Tournament

July 7-9, 1989

(The weekend prior to the Monte-Carlo World Championship)

To request a personal invitation, send your name and address without delay to:

Alberto da Pra, President
World-Wide Backgammon Federation
 P.O. Box 47
 CH-6850 Mendrisio Station
 SWITZERLAND

