

chicago backgammon

## THREE'S THE CHARM

**YAMIN YAMIN "FINALLY" IS  
CBPC'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

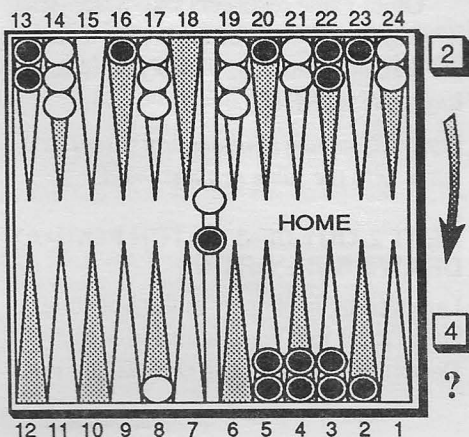
**H**e knocked on the door with 2nd place finishes in 1987 and 1988. This time, he broke it down. Steady play throughout the year provided Yamin Yamin (Deerfield, IL) with just enough points to edge Gary Kay (Chicago) and become Chicago Bar Point Club's 1989 Player Of The Year.

Yamin didn't lead the CBPC's 7th annual race until December 12 when he came back from a 6-0 deficit vs. Dave Cramer in the quarterfinals and went on to defeat Kay 7-6 in the finals. That victory gave Yamin a razor-thin 27.88-27.60 lead.

Both Yamin and Kay were defeated in the Dec. 19 tournament which made the following week pivotal. Yamin moved into the Consolation by losing his first match. On the other side of the draw sheet, Kay advanced to the quarterfinals—one win away from master point pay dirt.

In that round, Kay faced Jeff Kane (Kenosha, WI). Obviously, the two aren't "best buddies." Before the opening roll, the competitors traded demands to roll for (1) board, (2) location, (3) direction and (4) color of men. Leading 1-0, Kane doubled Kay. Gary took and was able to turn the game around to the following setup:

7 point match. Jeff Kane (Black) leads Gary Kay (White), 1 to 0. White redoubles. **SHOULD BLACK TAKE?**



Visiting pro Wilcox Snellings claimed the position was a redouble and drop. Kay did redouble, but Jeff felt there was enough play to take. A timely 5-5 helped Jeff win an 8 point gammon and end Kay's chance for BPC #1 status. Yamin went on to win the Consolation to make the final point total: Yamin-28.92, Kay 27.60.

Join us for Awards Night Tuesday, January 9 at Pat's Pub when we honor our Top 20 for 1989. Over \$600 in cash and prizes will be awarded. Special entry fees: Open-\$15, Limited-\$10, and the Bar Point Club will buy each participant a drink. Δ

## OTHER PLAYER'S OF THE YEAR

### GEORGIA

*Backgammon In Georgia:* Dave Cardwell

### ILLINOIS

*Central Illinois Backgammon Club:* Sue Will

*Pub Club:* Ed Bauder

*Winnetka Backgammon Club:* Stuart Katz

### INDIANA

*Hoosier Backgammon Club:* Butch Meese

### MICHIGAN

*Flint Area Backgammon Club:* John Carrico

## Kick off the '90's with Backgammon.

Here's what's happening in Illinois:



## 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 708/457-1166.

**Sunday Bimonthly, 12:30** at Bagwells, 4636 N. Cumberland, Chgo 312/625-1717.

**PUB CLUB:** Tournaments Monday, 7:30 PM at Fiddler's, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Ed Bauder (708/985-1568).

**SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASS'N:** Tournaments Tuesday, 6:15 PM at On Broadway, 210 S. Broadway, Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

**WINNETKA BG CLUB:** Tournaments Weds., 7:00 PM at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (708/446-0537).

**CENT. ILL. BG CLUB:** Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 PM at Denny's, 2522 W. Lake Ave., Peoria. Sue Will (309/692-6909).

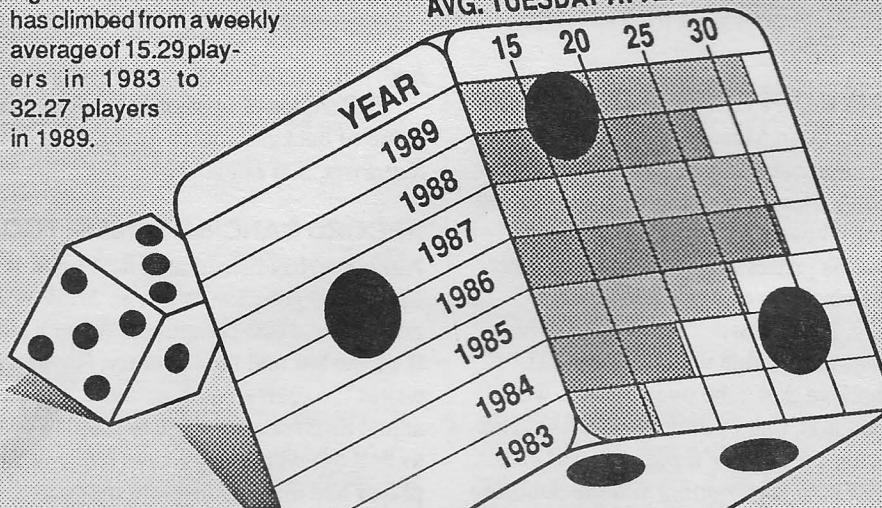
**TULEY PK. BG CLUB:** Tourn. alt. Sat., 12:00 at Tuley Park Fieldhouse, 90th & King, Chgo. J.A. Miller (219/883-6127).

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

## ROLLING UP THE ATTENDANCE

Chicago Bar Point Club Tuesday night tournament attendance has climbed from a weekly average of 15.29 players in 1983 to 32.27 players in 1989.

### CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB AVG. TUESDAY ATTENDANCE





# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

## EDITOR & PUBLISHER

**Bill Davis**  
2726 West Lunt Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60645  
Telephone: (312) 338-6380

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Carol Joy Cole (MI) Tak Morioka (IL)  
Duane Jensen (MN) Dean Muench (IL)  
Neil Kazaross (CA) Kit Woolsey (CA)  
Danny Kleinman (CA)

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## LETTERS

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

## CHICAGO'S ON A ROLL

Thank you for the pair of precision backgammon dice you sent me. It was very thoughtful of you. Best wishes for a happy and healthy Holiday Season.—*Richard M. Daley, Mayor of Chicago*

*Our small good-luck offering is meant to wish the Daley administration and the City of Chicago continued success into the 1990's.—Ed.*

## A LITTLE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION

I enjoyed Dean Muench's article on "Little Known Backgammon Numbers" [December 1989]. However, I don't agree with one of them. I have a hard time believing #7 that claims possession of the cube at 2 is worth two-thirds of a point in an even position. I'd like to see Dean publish his model of cube value which shows this.

I believe that cube ownership is worth so much less, that I publicly offer Dean the following proposal: *I'll play several long sessions with you spotting you the doubling cube at 2 and you only need to spot me one-*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

coming attractions



by Carol Joy Cole  
313/232-9731

Jan 6-7	First Tournament of 1990, Loew's Hotel, New York, NY	305/527-4033
Jan 6	Sangamon Valley Monthly Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Jan 9	Chicago Bar Point Club Awards Night, Pat's Pub, Chicago, IL	312/338-6380
Jan 10-14	French Open Backgammon Championship, Hôtel Meurice, Paris, France	1 42 60 38 60
Jan 12-14	BG-Ski Happening, Seefeld/Tirol, Austria	08341/12825
Jan 13	World Cup Qualifying Tourney, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/227-2205
Jan 13	College Park Winter Open, Promenade Party Room, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Jan 14	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
Jan 14	Sandy Kaplan Invitational, Cavendish North, Southfield, MI	313/642-9616
Jan 17-21	7th Nevada State Championship, Peppermill Hotel/Casino, Reno, NV	702/851-1452
Jan 18	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jan 20	Sangamon Valley Monthly Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Jan 25	Flint Area Club Awards Party & Tournament, Sheraton Inn Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jan 27	Atlanta Backgammon Monthly, Copperfield's, Atlanta, GA	404/497-8505
Jan 27	World Cup Qualifier I, Bob Hill's, Old Westbury, NY	516/334-4833
Jan 27	Hawthorne Backgammon Classic, Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL	312/338-6380
Feb 1-4	Paradise Island Pro-Am Invitational, Bahamas	301/299-8264
Feb 3	Sangamon Valley Monthly Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Feb 4	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Feb 4	20th Annual Willowbank Invitational, Shelburne, VT	802/985-3932
Feb 11	Illinois State Challenge Cup, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/338-6380
Feb 11	7th Annual Fleet Underwood Memorial & Benefit, Sheraton Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Feb 15	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Feb 18	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
Feb 22-25	Cannes International Tournament, Palais des Festivals, France	061/50 58 16
Feb 24	World Cup Qualifier II, Bob Hill's, Old Westbury, NY	516/334-4833
Feb 25	South Australian Open Championships, Adelaide, South Australia	08/373-2580
Mar 2-4	14th Annual Bluegrass Regional, Seelbach Hotel, Louisville, KY	502/429-0153
Mar 3	Sangamon Valley Monthly Tournament, On Broadway, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Mar 8-11	26th Ted Bassett & Gstaad Palace-Cup, Palace Hotel, Switzerland	061/50 58 16
Mar 15-18	16th International Winter Championships, St. Moritz, Switzerland	061/50 58 16
Mar 18	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
Mar 23-25	1990 Midwest Championships, Holiday Inn, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	312/338-6380
April 1	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Apr 6-8	38th Indiana Open, Omni Severin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Apr 12-15	Open Nordic Championships, Hotel Marina, Vedbæk, Denmark	45/31 22 46 00
Apr 14	College Park Spring Open, Promenade Party Room, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Apr 21	1990 Connecticut State Champ., Hall of Fame Lounge, Southington, CT	203/755-9749
Apr 22	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
May 3-6	16th Byblos European Championship, Saint-Tropez, France	061/50 58 16
May 4-6	12th Annual Charity Tournament, Airport Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	412/371-5844
May 4-6	Granite State Open, Woodbound Inn, Jaffrey, NH	603/863-4711
May 25-28	10th Annual Chicago Open, Westin Hotel O'Hare, Rosemont, IL	708/674-0120
May 25-28	Boston Symph. Orch. Benefit, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340

*half, not two thirds of a point per game.*

Difference of opinion is what makes the game of backgammon a game!—*Neil Kazaross, San Diego, CA*

## RECORD DANCING ROLLS, TOO

Although Roy Friedman's new book *World Class Backgammon, Move by Move* is very good, I have one complaint. When a player is on the bar and fails to enter, Roy only writes "No entry" without including the actual dice roll. Sometimes I replay games to find out what would have happened if a player had made a different move in a given situation. Without knowing every

roll, this is impossible.

Other game recorders take note: "what if" players need **all** the dice rolls, including the dancing numbers.—*Lucky Nelson, Arlington Heights, IL*

*Larry Strommen (Indianapolis) sent us a letter with the same request.—Ed.*

## BEST 2-OUT-OF-3 MATCH FORMAT DRAWS SUPPORT

I am writing in support of the Malcolm Davis letter that was published in the December issues of *The Double* and *Flint*

(Continued on page 3)

## LETTERS...

(Continued from page 2)

*Area BackgammonNews.* First let me state that I have high regard for Malcolm Davis and his knowledge of backgammon. Mr. Davis's letter favored continued use of the Crawford Rule and the abolishment of the Holland Rule.

Mr. Davis also proposed a best 2-out-of-3 or 3-out-of-5 match format using 5 or 7 point matches as an alternative to one long, drawn out match. This is the first time I've heard any public discussion on this topic. I have talked to directors about using the "best X-out-of-Y" format in Chicago for years. Hopefully, one of the many 1990

tournaments will utilize this format. You can be sure that if at all possible, Mr. Davis and I will be there.—*Yamin Yamin, Deerfield, IL*

*We agree that the X-out-of-Y short match format adds skill to tournament play because most difficult match cube decisions happen near the end of the match. It's an interesting idea.—Ed.*

### DON'T FORGET TO FLUSH

Just wanted to tell you how much I enjoy every issue of *Chicago POINT*. It makes for great bathroom reading.—*Steve Klegon, Aurora, IL*

*Perhaps we should print the POINT on softer paper so that it could serve a dual purpose.—Ed. Δ*

tradition

## YES FOLKS, IT'S OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY!

20

by Gardner Soule

The Willowbank Invitational, the longest continuous-running backgammon tournament in New England and perhaps the entire United States celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Once again, my wife Sallie and I will host the friendly competition at our home in Shelburne, Vermont on February 4, 1990.

I learned backgammon in the Marine Corp during World War II while stationed at Guadalcanal in 1943. It was Acey-Deucey then: the old Navy game. When I came home to Rochester, New York after the war, I found my University Club members playing regular backgammon and adjusted accordingly.

What a group of guys! They all loved the game and the chatter was unbelievable, all of which was a great source of pleasure. To this day, my remarks, en route to a win or loss, reflect those wonderful days at the "U Club" in Rochester.

Sallie and I started the Willowbank Invitational in 1971, a few years after my family had moved to Shelburne, Vermont. Looking for backgammon competition, we gathered 12 friends to Shelburne Point one very cold February Sunday for a Round Robin tournament. I used my "home court advantage" and won!

Word of the tournament spread around Vermont. The Willowbank Invitational became an annual event when one of our charter members, University of Vermont Professor Willard Pope suggested that it always be held on the first Sunday in February, a date he could easily remember because it was just before he left for warmer climates. That's the way it has been ever since.

We look forward to another fun event for all of the 32 invited participants. (This includes three generations of the Kimbell family.) 11 of the 32 are original charter members. The twelfth, Willard Pope, passed away this year; however Professor Pope will be with us in memory. He donated his custom made inlaid backgammon table to us and it will be used for the final championship match.

We eagerly anticipate the Willowbank Invitational's 20th annual. Does anyone know of a longer running backgammon event, held in the same location with the same hosts? Δ



### 1989 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU DEC. 31

#### FINAL STANDINGS

YAMIN YAMIN	28.92	Joe Koucharian	3.56	Joan Hegg	0.88
GARY KAY	27.60	Alan Steffen	3.36	Leslie Lockett	0.84
TAK MORIOKA	23.80	Bobbie Shifrin	3.12	Jill Ferdinand	0.80
CHRIS KENIK	19.80	Jeff Kane	2.96	Jim Pappas	0.80
DEAN MUENCH	15.20	Paul Johnson	2.96	Ron Stur	0.80
JOHN DEMIAN	13.84	Don Desmond	2.80	Darcey Brady	0.80
STU KATZ	12.24	Arlene Levy	2.64	David Rubin	0.76
BOB ZAVORAL	12.04	René Wojtysiak	2.48	Mike Cyrkiel	0.72
JOANN FEINSTEIN	11.76	John O'Hagan	2.44	Carl Severino	0.72
MARK KING	11.60	Richard Stawowy	2.28	Merrill Schrager	0.72
DAVID LIBCHABER	10.84	Dan Judd	2.24	Reggie Porter	0.70
V.W. ZIMNICKI	10.80	Judy Brown	2.12	Betsy Miller	0.68
BOB HOLYON	10.72	Miles Cohen	1.92	Bob Vining	0.64
DAVE CRAMER	10.28	Wilcox Snellings	1.84	Randall Witt	0.64
ARNOLD ZOUSER	10.12	Andy Argy	1.60	Howard Chow	0.64
DON JAYHAN	9.88	Mark Anshus	1.52	Harry Cohn	0.64
LUCKY NELSON	9.72	Gary Keyes	1.52	Harry Hayward	0.56
DEEB SHALATI	8.24	Bill Keefe	1.36	Ted Mann	0.56
ED BUERGER	8.00	Trudie Stern	1.34	Joe Wollick	0.48
KEN BOND	7.84	Don Marek	1.28	Femi Owiku	0.48
Norma Shyer	7.26	Phil Barrett	1.28	Steve Klegon	0.44
Alice Kay	6.60	Gene Chait	1.20	Mike Sutton	0.36
Sarg Serges	6.28	Fred Badagnani	1.20	Barbara Levinson	0.32
Rich Siebold	6.16	Mark Hicks	1.16	Sandy Grassel	0.32
Bill Davis	5.68	Ed Bauder	1.12	Craig McCullough	0.30
Phyllis Smolinski	5.48	Rudy Emmelot	1.08	Larry Knoll	0.28
Dan Cramer	5.20	Walter Schafer	1.00	Elaine Kehm	0.28
Rich Galeba	4.72	Bill Hoeflich	0.96	Kurt Warning	0.20
Frank Callea	4.44	Lenny Loder	0.96	Larry Knoll, Jr.	0.16
Kathy Rudnick	4.28	Tad Wilson	0.96	Dianne Cyrkiel	0.12
Dave Rockwell	4.24	Herb Roman	0.92	Jay Ward	0.12
Ralph Levy	3.90	Marv Arnol	0.92	Nabeel Juha	0.12
Peter Kalba	3.84	Paul Travis	0.88	John Brink	0.12
Howard Markowitz	3.68	Marcy Sloan	0.88	Ahmad Assadi	0.08
John Spatafora	3.66				

Yamin Yamin finished 1989 as December Player of the Month and locked up Player of the Year honors in the process. Yamin's 4.72 points were gained on the strength of 1st, 2nd and 1st Consolation results. BPC rookie Frank Callea (3.08) and Milwaukee's Bob Holyon (2.56) were runner's-up.



# ASK DANNY



by Danny Kleinman

## COMPUTER RACE DATA: HANDLE WITH CARE

**D**ear Danny: I seek to understand cube actions in bear-offs and races. Various authorities recommend different criteria for taking. They differ in their pip-count adjustments to account for such things as: being on shake, number of men left, number of men still in the outfield, gaps, and stackage. What adjustments do you recommend? They also differ in the formulae designed to dictate cube actions as a function of the adjusted pips of the two players.

I decided to tackle the simplest issue, pass-or-take, by programming my computer to simulate a race by assigning each player one man embodying his adjusted pip-count, using random dice rolls and 50,000 trials for each evaluation. I did not contemplate any redoubles by the original trailer, so I compensated by setting the pass-or-take threshold at 22.5% winning chances instead of 25%. Table A (below) shows a sampling of my results.

These results suggest that the trailer's pass-or-take point lies about 2 pips beyond 110% of the leader's adjusted pip-count.

How useful is my computer model? Would it be more accurate to use a faster

computer for 1,000,000 trials instead of 50,000? And how close to the trailer's pass-or-take point should the leader be to double or redouble?—Ray Kershaw, London, England

**Dear Ray:** The issues you raise would fill a book, not a column, if addressed thoroughly. I'll gladly discuss them in depth in future columns if my readers desire. But in this column, I'll limit my comments to your computer model.

Embodying all pips in a single man introduces a systematic error which inflates the trailer's winning chances artificially. Significantly often, the trailer catches up by rolling large doublets during the bear-off. But even—or rather, especially—with smooth distribution, some of these pips are wasted. Suppose the trailer has two men each on his 6- and 5-points. If he rolls double-6's, he moves 22 pips, not 24, "wasting" 2 pips. If he rolls double-5's, he moves all 20 pips, but creates stackage on his 1-point; you may consider this as producing future wastage or as rolling far fewer than the adjusted pips represented by, e.g., bearing off one man each from the 6-, 5-, 4-, 3- and 2-points.

Therefore your results suggest a slightly too liberal taking policy. My statistical intuition tells me that the significance of a given increment of pips is inversely proportional, roughly, to the square root of the length on the race. Any linear formula for race cubes, therefore,

must be inaccurate. In "Normal Race Takes" [Vision Laughs At Counting with Advice To The Dicelorn] and "The Racer's Edge" [Double-Sixes From The Bar], I suggest cube formulae reflecting this relationship.

By the same token, "what a difference a pip makes" at the trailer's pass-or-take point should also vary in inverse proportion to the square root of the race length. We can chart that difference by subtracting the 5th row of your chart from the 3rd. (See Table B.)

This is truly startling. It proves that your results are inaccurate. Perhaps 50,000 trials aren't enough, but again my statistical intuition thinks they should be. More likely, the random-number generator you used in obtaining your dice rolls isn't truly random, or you've made some other error in your computer program. For the derived chart deviates too far for comfort from the gently but monotonically declining string of differences anticipated.—Yours, Danny

**P.S.:** My statistical intuition that 50,000 trials are enough is correct if all you need is accuracy to the nearest whole percent. Using confidence intervals determined by the usual three standard deviations, your 50,000 trial runs are accurate to  $\pm 0.58\%$ . But for runs accurate  $\pm 0.05\%$ , you need 6,375,600 trials. Remember, the formula for standard deviation is the square root of  $npq$ , where  $n$  is the number of trials,  $p$  is probability of a win (e.g. 23%) and  $q$  is the probability of a loss (e.g. 77%). To determine the number of trials needed for accuracy  $\pm r$ , you must solve  $9pq = r^2n$  for  $n$ . With  $r = 0.0005$ , the equation yields:  $n = 36,000,000pq$ .—D.K. Δ

TABLE A — Computer Racing Simulation: 50,000 Trials

Leader's Pips	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140
Weakest Take	57	68	79	90	101	112	123	133	144	155
Trailer's Chances	24.0%	23.6%	23.7%	23.6%	23.8%	22.9%	22.6%	23.9%	23.5%	22.9%
Strongest Pass	58	69	80	91	102	113	124	134	145	156
Trailer's Chances	21.7%	22.1%	22.1%	22.0%	22.0%	21.2%	21.6%	22.3%	22.0%	21.8%

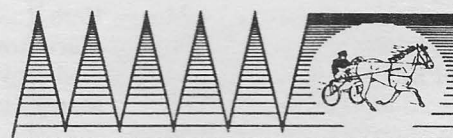
TABLE B — "Weakest Take" Trailer's Chances minus "Strongest Pass" Trailer's Chances

Difference A Pip Makes	2.3%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.8%	1.7%	1.0%	1.6%	1.5%	1.1%
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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.

## HAWTHORNE BACKGAMMON CLASSIC

Hawthorne Race Course • Cicero, IL • January 27, 1990



Gold Cup Room, 5:30 PM ♦ Entry Fees: OPEN \$40, LIMITED \$20 ♦ CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB ♦ For More Information: 312/338-6380



Chicago POINT's 1990 Listing of...

# Backgammon Clubs In North America

Information for this listing has been obtained directly from the featured backgammon clubs. However, some changes are inevitable and we suggest that you always call before attending. As a service to our readers, *Chicago POINT* would like to maintain an accurate listing of Backgammon Clubs in North America. Please send information including updates, club closings and new clubs to: **Chicago POINT; 2726 W. Lunt Avenue; Chicago, IL 60645.**

## WEST

CLUB NAME	LOCATION	CITY & STATE	MEETING ON	TIME	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	MAIL INQUIRES TO:
Campbell Bridge & BG Club	Clubroom	Campbell, CA	Friday monthly	7:30 PM	Jeffrey Hu	408/378-3711	175 E. Campbell Avenue; Campbell, CA 95008
Gammon Associates	Cavendish West Hollywood	W. Hollywood, CA	Sunday	2:00 PM	Patrick Gibson	818/901-0464	7641 Orion Avenue; Van Nuys, CA 91406
"	Sir George's	Van Nuys, CA	Tuesday	7:00 PM	"	"	"
Antelope Valley BG Club	Carrow's Restaurant	Palmdale, CA	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Norm Wiggins	805/943-5371	5125 W. Avenue (M-8); Quartz Hill, CA 93536
Backgammon Club of San Diego	Hindquarter Restaurant	San Diego, CA	Sunday	4:00 PM	Gary Oakes	619/274-4221	3324 Lloyd Street; San Diego, CA 92117
"	Alley Oops Restaurant	San Diego, CA	Tuesday	6:30 PM	"	"	"
San Francisco Backgammon	Golden Gate Bar & Grill	San Francisco, CA	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Cheryl Silvers	415/552-6592	5 Divisadero Street; San Francisco, CA 94117
San Francisco Bridge & BG Club	Clubroom	San Francisco, CA	Mon., Wed., Fri.	9:00 PM	Cora Lee	415/776-6949	777 Jones Street; San Francisco, CA 94109
No. Nevada Backgammon Ass'n	Hacienda Del Sol Restaurant	Reno, NV	Thursday	7:30 PM	Dave Heffner	702/826-9275	Box 70101; Reno, NV 89570
Pacific NW Backgammon Ass'n	Shakey's Pizza	Bellevue, WA	Monday	7:15 PM	Chuck Breckenridge	206/778-8181	18204 Olympic View Drive; Edmonds, WA 98020

## CENTRAL

Cavendish Club of Chicago	Office Building	Chicago, IL	Daily	12:30 PM	Howard Markowitz	312/286-8417	4747 W. Peterson (402); Chicago, IL 60646
Chicago Bar Point Club	Bagwells Food & Spirits	Chicago, IL	Sunday bimonthly	12:30 PM	Peter Kalba	312/252-7755	2510 W. Iowa; Chicago, IL 60622
"	Pat's Pub	Norridge, IL	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Bill Davis	312/338-6380	2726 W. Lunt Avenue; Chicago, IL 60645
Tuley Park Backgammon Club	Tuley Park Fieldhouse	Chicago, IL	Alt. Saturdays	12:00 PM	J.A. Miller	219/883-6127	P.O. Box 8630; Chicago, IL 60680
Central Illinois Backgammon Club	The Julius	Peoria, IL	Thursday	6:30 PM	Sue Will	309/692-6909	6129 Jayar Drive; Peoria, IL 61614
Sangamon Valley BG Ass'n	On Broadway	Springfield, IL	Tuesday	6:30 PM	Mark Kaye	217/789-6275	2602 Peoria Road; Springfield, IL 62702
"	On Broadway	Springfield, IL	Occ. Sat. monthly	11:30 AM	"	"	"
Pub Club	Fiddler's Restaurant	Villa Park, IL	Monday	7:30 PM	Ed Bauder	708/985-1568	2151 Country Club Drive (2); Woodridge, IL 60517
Winnetka Backgammon Club	Winnetka Community House	Winnetka, IL	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Trudie Stern	708/446-0537	4200 W. Lake (302C); Glenview, IL 60025
Hoosier Backgammon Club	Dooley O'Toole's	Indianapolis, IN	Thursday	7:00 PM	Butch Meese	317/845-8435	7620 Kilmer Lane; Indianapolis, IN 46256
Flint Area Backgammon Club	Sheraton Inn Flint	Flint, MI	Thursday	7:00 PM	Carol Joy Cole	313/232-9731	3003 Ridgecliffe Drive; Flint, MI 48532
Plymouth Backgammon Club	Box Bar & Grill	Plymouth, MI	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Dean Adamian	313/981-5706	42954 Barchester; Canton, MI 48187
Plymouth II Backgammon Club	Mayflower Hotel	Plymouth, MI	Sunday	3:00 PM	Jeane Eggenberger	313/453-0018	49850 Joy Road; Plymouth, MI 48170
Cavendish North BG Club	Clubhouse	Southfield, MI	Daily, Tour. Tues.	7:30 PM	Michael Giordano	313/642-9616	30065 Greenfield; Southfield, MI 48076
Twin Cities Backgammon Club	El Torito Restaurant	Minneapolis, MN	Thursday	7:00 PM	Steve Brown	612/521-9532	4122 Dupont Avenue N.; Minneapolis, MN 55412
Grand Forks Backgammon Club	Red Ray Bowling Lanes	Grand Forks, ND	Tuesday	8:00 PM	Jim Schothorst	701/772-4721	P.O. Box 393; Grand Forks, ND 58206
Austin Backgammon Club	Bombay Bicycle Club	Austin, TX	Monday	8:00 PM	Randy Prater	512/490-6538	1735 Alice Hill; San Antonio, TX 78232
Backgammon at Mimi's	Mimi's Pub	Dallas, TX	Monday	8:00 PM	Nancy Williams	214/960-1118	109 Spanish Village; Box 574; Dallas, TX 75248
Dallas Backgammon League	Don Carter Bowling Lanes	Dallas, TX	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Bill Barron	214/361-6191	P.O. Box 740306; Dallas, TX 75374
Bayou Backgammon Club	Houstonian	Houston, TX	Saturday monthly	6:30 PM	George Morse	713/498-4141	11534 Bellaire Blvd.; Houston, TX 77072
Celebrities Backgammon	Bombay Bicycle Club	Houston, TX	Sunday bimonthly	12:30 PM	"	"	"

(Continued on opposite side)

**CENTRAL (continued)**

CLUB NAME	LOCATION	CITY & STATE	MEETING ON	TIME	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	MAIL INQUIRES TO:
Houston Backgammon Club	Bombay Bicycle Club	Houston, TX	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Jack Butler	713/774-9439	5931 Reamer Street; Houston, TX 77074
San Antonio Backgammon Club	Martini Club	San Antonio, TX	Mon. thru Fri.	8:00 PM	J.D. Strickel	512/344-4747	8507 McCullough; San Antonio, TX 78216
Fond du Lac Backgammon Club	Holiday Inn -or- Mr. Nicks	Fond du Lac, WI	Monday	8:00 PM	Mark Hicks	414/922-8235	366 East 10th Street; Fond du Lac, WI 54935
Milwaukee Backgammon	Univ. of Wis.-Milwaukee	Milwaukee, WI	Friday	7:00 PM	Bob Holyon	414/383-8184	911 So. 11th Street; Milwaukee, WI 53204

**NORTHEAST**

College Park Backgammon Club	Promenade Cardroom	Bethesda, MD	2nd & 4th Sunday	12:30 PM	Barry Steinberg	301/530-0603	6100 Westchester Pk. Dr. (T2); College Park, MD 20740
Cavendish Club of Boston	Clubroom	Brookline, MA	Daily	12:00 PM	Carl Saldinger	617/734-2230	111 Cypress Street; Brookline, MA 02146
New England Backgammon Club	Sheraton-Commander Hotel	Cambridge, MA	Sunday monthly	12:30 PM	Roy Friedman	617/861-7340	18 Potter Pond; Lexington, MA 02173
"	Sheraton-Commander Hotel	Cambridge, MA	Monday	7:00 PM	"	"	"
Cape Cod Backgammon Club	Burger King	W. Barnstable, MA	1st Sun. monthly	11:00 AM	Mark Shaevel	508/759-3900	P.O. Box 4; Monument Beach, MA 02553
Granite State Backgammon Club	The Bench	Keene, NH	Tuesday	7:00 PM	Lincoln Bedell	603/863-4711	South Road; East Lempster, NH 03605
New Jersey Backgammon Ass'n	Howard Johnson's Hotel	Saddle Brook, NJ	Tues. & Fri.	7:45 PM	Ron Whitney	201/833-2915	279 Glen Court; Teaneck, NJ 07666
Bridge Deck Backgammon	Bridge Deck	Hartsdale, NY	Tuesday	6:00 PM	Alan Boutchman	914/949-5853	333 N. Central Avenue; Hartsdale, NY 10530
"	Bridge Deck	Hartsdale, NY	Fri. & Sat.	12:00 PM	"	"	"
Greater New York BG Club	Vanderbilt Bridge Club	Manhasset, NY	Friday	8:00 PM	Dr. Bob Hill	516/334-4833	P.O. Box 410; Commack, NY 11725
Ace Point Backgammon Club	Clubroom	New York, NY	Wednesday	7:30 PM	Mike Valentine	212/753-0842	78 Tower Road; Wayne, NJ 07470
Coterie	Clubroom	New York, NY	Daily	1:00 PM	Louise Goldsmith	212/371-5151	Private club. Telephone for information.
Pittsburgh Backgammon Ass'n	Champs Bar	Pittsburgh, PA	Sunday bimonthly	1:00 PM	Richard Catalano	412/391-6363	630 Grant Building; Pittsburgh, PA 15219
"	Doc's Place	Pittsburgh, PA	Tuesday	8:30 PM	Steve Hast	412/371-5844	5 Barton Drive; Pittsburgh, PA 15221

**SOUTH**

Suncoast Backgammon Ass'n	Bennigan's	Clearwater, FL	Monday	7:30 PM	Drew Giovanis	813/726-1398	2220 U.S. 19th N. (67); Clearwater, FL 34623
Hallandale Bridge & BG Club	Studio	Hallandale, FL	Daily	1:00 PM	Ed Silver	305/457-7328	780 E. Hallandale Beach; Hallandale, FL 33009
Palace Bridge Emporium	Clubroom	N. Miami Beach, FL	Daily except Mon.	24 hours	Lois Goodman	305/931-1500	2834 NE 187th Street; N. Miami Beach, FL 33180
Backgammon Society of Sarasota	Sun & Fun RV Park	Sarasota, FL	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Cal Kendall	813/966-5357	2260 Lakewood Lane; Nokomis, FL 34275
Atlanta Backgammon Ass'n	Copperfield's	Atlanta, GA	Monday	7:00 PM	Dave Cardwell	404/497-8505	2527 Club Place; Duluth, GA 30136
Louisville Backgammon Club	Louisville Bridge Center	St. Matthews, KY	Tuesday	8:00 PM	Scott Arche	502/429-0153	1513 Moonstone Way (7); Louisville, KY 40222
Greater Nashville BG Club	Hooters Restaurant	Nashville, TN	Tuesday	1:00 PM	Will Morgan	615/353-1131	509 Neilwood Drive; Nashville, TN 37205

**CANADA**

Calgary Backgammon	Bottlescrew Bill's	Calgary, AB	Occ. Mondays	6:00 PM	Hal Heinrich	403/229-2024	402-1122 15th Ave. SW; Calgary, AB T2R 1K5; CANADA
Toronto Backgammon	Le Spot	Scarborough, ON	Thursday	8:00 PM	Carl Sellars	416/534-0117	314 Grace Street; Toronto, ON M6G 3A6; CANADA
Pips Backgammon Club	Clubroom	Montreal, QB	Daily except Sat.	4:00 PM	Michel Gagnon	514/284-0613	3774 St. Denis (200); Montreal, QB H2W 2M1; CANADA

**MEXICO**

Backgammon at Kycho's	Kycho's Cantina	Acapulco, GRO	Wed. & Fri.	9:00 PM	Mauricio Chavez	01152 748 48918	Horacio Nelson/Costa Azul; Acapulco, GRO; MEXICO
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## AMALGAMATION

Chicago *POINT* and its contributing editors (see page 2) received two humbling compliments from international sources last month. Petri Pietilä, editor of the new *Suomen Backgammon Uutiset* (Finnish Backgammon News) referred to the *POINT* as "...currently the world's best backgammon magazine." And Worldwide Backgammon Federation president Alberto da Pra, in his *Official Worldwide Backgammon Gazette* premiere issue, labeled us "Number one of the international newsletters about backgammon around the world." Thank you, gentlemen... Sunday tournaments in California move to the Cavendish West Hollywood Club beginning January 7. Gammon Associates director Pat Gibson tells us the move was necessary because the club's old location (Tommy's Chili-Burgers) caught fire. Must have been the chili-peppers... Good luck to retiring Backgammon In Georgia, Inc. director Bob Clay whose nine year tenure ended last month. Dave Cardwell takes over with a new club name: Atlanta Backgammon Association. We wish him well... Visiting the Bar Point Club in December: Sandy Grassel (Center Line, MI), John Stryker (Columbus, OH), David Libchaber (Los Angeles, CA), Wilcox Snellings & Randi Pinckes (Philadelphia, PA), Munchkin (Los Angeles, CA) and Jake Jacobs (Planet Earth)... Jerry Godsey (club president) informs us that Avry Ben-Zeev and Christine Cheung were the Hong Kong Backgammon Club's respective Championship and Intermediate Players Of The Year... Best wishes to Maria and Mark Richardson (N.N.B.A.) on the December 6 birth of Warren Matthew Richardson... Chicago Park Board chief Bill Bartholomay may soon run out of time for backgammon. Besides being chairman of the Atlanta Braves, Bill was recently elected to the executive council of Major League Baseball... Judy Brown had good reason to miss BPC backgammon on December 5. She was at Chicago's Vic Theater working as a crew member for the HBO Comedy Special to air in February... The Chicago Bar Point Club's long-time Pat's Pub waitress Rose Getch and her sister Janet Daniels were robbed Dec. 3 while working at the Laramie/Addison gas station in Chicago. The robber entered the station at 9:00 PM, tossed a paper bag at Janet, and yelled, "Fill it up." Unaware of his intentions, Janet barked back, "Are you nuts? You can't put gas in a paper bag!" At that point, the robber pulled a gun and made off with the cash. The girls were unharmed. Δ

book review

## CUBE DECISIONS—VOLUME 1



reviewed by Neil Kazaross

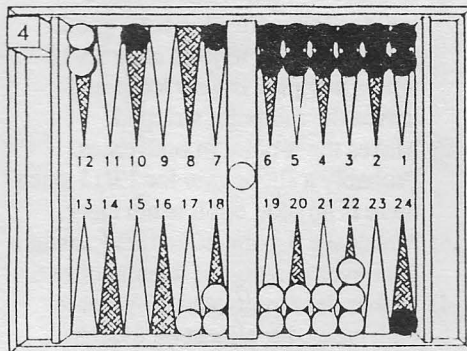
*CUBE DECISIONS—VOLUME I* (Matches of Malcolm Davis vs. Bill Robertie and Neil Kazaross), by Bill Barron. Published by P.J. Company, P.O. Box 740306, Dallas, TX 75374-0306. \$20.00. Soft cover. Available Feb. 1990.

It is difficult for me to objectively review a book containing many positions from one of my actual matches, so I'll simply describe what this book is about and add a few comments.

The author, Bill Barron directs the Dallas Backgammon League and publishes their newsletter, *The Double*. This book, Barron's first, is about doubling cube decisions from two of fellow Texan Malcolm Davis's matches. The first is a 25 point consolation match from the 1988 World Cup vs. Bill Robertie. The second is a 17 point semifinal from the 1988 U.S. Open vs. myself. The book contains all of the positions in which the doubling cube was actually used and many where the players may have considered doubling. In total, the reader is presented with 63 positions. Many of them are quite interesting, some will be controversial, and a few may lead to propositions. The following is an actual example involving my match with Malcolm Davis:

**Game 4, Position 9. 17 point match. Davis leads Kazaross 3 to 1.**

Should NEIL KAZAROSS Double?  
If No, Why Not?  
Too Good? \_\_\_\_ Too Bad? \_\_\_\_



Should MALCOLM DAVIS Take?

The author comments on each of the 63 positions. In some, he merely agrees or disagrees with the players' decisions; other positions are discussed in more detail. In his introduction, Barron warns the reader

that he is really not qualified to criticize these world class players' decisions. (Positions he feels are questionable are discussed in a manner to allow the reader to make his own assessment.) Barron then says that many of his decisions labelled as "questionable" may actually be right. Finally, Barron states, "Regardless, whether these experts are right or wrong, the reader should have his/her knowledge of backgammon enhanced and, hopefully, be entertained in the process." I agree. However, I feel that this book, now in the advanced draft stage (because of many delays caused by the graphic artist and typesetter), could have used more analysis.

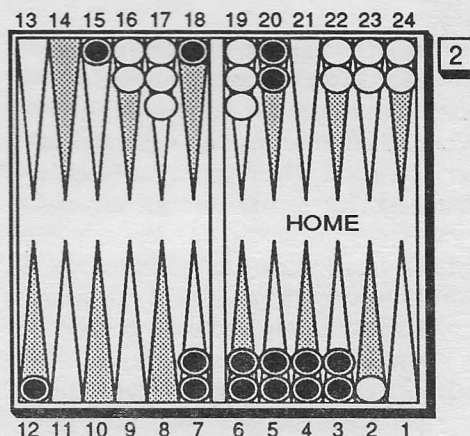
After reading the draft, I called Malcolm Davis and Bill Barron. They both agreed with my idea to include some thoughts from the actual players. As a result, I'll be sending Bill comments and analyses about some match cube decisions. Mr. Davis will be doing the same for his matches, and I look forward to reading what he has to say. Obviously, at this late date, extensive text changes won't be possible, but whatever comments can be included will be of value.

I feel that commentary from the three actual players involved in the cube decisions could have made this an outstanding textbook. I like the idea of a book discussing actual match cube decisions and would like to see more such match analysis books containing expert player's thoughts. Nonetheless, at a price of \$20, *Cube Decisions—Volume I* still has enough interesting positions to make it a worthwhile addition to any player's backgammon library. Δ

your move

## PROBLEM #155

1989 Chicago Open. 5 point match. Steve Tennant (White) leads Wendy Kaplan (Black), 3 to 1. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.**

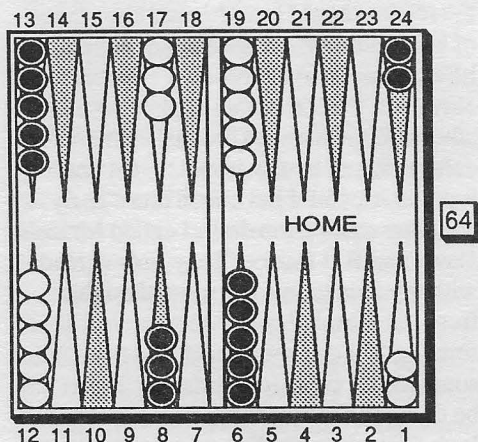




# PROBLEM #154 SOLVED

by Kit Woolsey

Money game. Opening roll. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-2.**



Several years ago, Joe Dwek in his book "Backgammon For Profit," recommended playing an opening 5-2 by slotting the 4-point with the two, rather than bringing another man off the midpoint. This suggestion was not taken seriously by most experts, and the play fell into disfavor. Recently, I had noticed that I was getting bad positions from the standard 5-2 opening, so I decided to take a closer look at Dwek's recommendation.

Certainly slotting the 4-point is the more natural looking play. Instead of stripping the midpoint to start a point you don't want that badly, you are unheaping the biggest stack and starting a very valuable point. You lose ground when you get hit, but we all know that this is not the end of the world. In fact, slotting the 5-point with 2-1, 4-1 and 5-1 has now become pretty standard. In addition, several of the hitting numbers such as 1-1, 3-1 and 5-3 can be used to make good progress offensively, so there is some element of duplication.

Now let's suppose you don't get hit. How great is the gain of slotting the 4-point? To analyze this, I supposed that White rolled some good non-hitting number such as 4-2. Then I looked at Black's follow-ups, roll by roll. Here are the results:

- 1-1: Obviously strong in both cases. However, after 6/4, Black can make both the 5-point and the 4-point, which is slightly better.
- 1-2: After 6/4, Black happily makes the 4-point and starts the 5-point. After 13/11,

this roll is no bargain—probably 6/5, 11/9 is best since making the 11-point involves completely stripping the midpoint.

- 1-3: Makes the 5-point after 13/11, but this does take the man on the 11-point out of play. After 6/4, Black can either just make the 4-point or make the 5-point and keep the 4-point slotted.
- 1-4: Makes the bar-point after 13/11, a pretty good position. After 6/4, Black makes the 4-point and starts the 5-point: also strong.
- 1-5: After 6/4, Black can make the 3-point, which is decent enough. This is really terrible after 13/11. Probably the simple 11/5 is best, but it is not good.
- 1-6: A gain for 13/11 since Black can make his 5-point. However, making the bar point after 6/4 is not terrible.
- 2-2: This will lead to the same position regardless of the opening move.
- 2-3: After 6/4, it makes the 4-point and brings a man down for a good position. There is no good way to play this roll after 13/11.
- 2-4: Leads to identical positions regardless of the opening move.
- 2-5: After 6/4, Black makes the 4-point and starts the 3-point (better than heaping a fifth man on the 8-point) for a very reasonable position. This is another nightmare after 13/11, where there is nothing resembling a decent way to play the roll.
- 2-6: It makes the 4-point after 6/4 and slots one of the bar-points for a reasonable position. Not so good after 13/11. (Probably 13/11, 24/18 is best, but this leaves the midpoint stripped.)
- 3-3: Makes the 5- and 3-points after 13/11, for a very strong position. Probably the same play after 6-4: also a good position.
- 3-4: Makes the 4-point and brings a builder down after 6-4 for a good position. Pretty terrible after 13/11 where any play is very loose and leaves the midpoint stripped.
- 3-5: Makes the 3-point in both cases. Probably a slight gain for 13/11 since there is no blot, but it is not clear.
- 3-6: Makes the 5-point after 13/11, a slight gain over making the 4-point after 6/4.
- 4-4: Makes the 4-point and 20-point in both cases, for almost equivalent positions.
- 4-5: Simply makes the 4-point after 6/4. After 13/11, nothing is great. (Probably running is the lesser of all evils.)
- 4-6: Makes the bar-point after 13/11, while it makes the 4-point and starts one of the bar-points after 6/4: also good.

- 5-5: Makes the 3-point in both cases. However, after 6/4, Black's position is still flexible. After 13/11, the last "5" turns it into a nightmare.
- 6-5: Runs a back man in both cases, with the edge to 13/11 since it is better not to have the blot with one man home.
- 6-6: Makes both bar-points in both cases. After 13/11, the midpoint is lost, which makes it slightly weaker.

Upon examining these, we find that no roll plays particularly badly after 6/4, and when 13/11 has an edge, it is marginal. On the other hand, the rolls 1-2, 1-5, 2-3, 2-5, 2-6, 3-4, 4-5 and 5-5 all play from bad to worse after 13/11. This is 15 rolls out of 36 which is a substantial percentage.

It would be quite tedious to roll this position out (and probably inconclusive over the short run). However, much of the work has already been done! Canada's Hal Heinrich has amassed a data base of over 1,000 matches which involve more than 10,000 games. I suggested several studies on these games, one of which involved analyzing the opening rolls. I would have expected every opening roll to show an advantage, but this was not the case. The opening roll of 5-2 (13/8, 13/11) turned out to be a loser. The other losers were 3-2 (13/11, 13/10) and 6-2 (13/11, 24/18) which indicates that we have been vastly overrating the value of starting the 11-point. Since there were over 600 games for each opening roll and these were all games between competent players, these results are not a fluke—they are quite significant!

Thirty years ago, it was considered standard to split the runners with the 5-1, 4-1 and 2-1 opening rolls, while slotting the 5-point was considered quite radical. Today, slotting the 5-point with these rolls is routine for almost all experts. I predict that after experts take a closer look at the 5-2 opening roll, they will come to the same conclusions that I have, and that ten years from now, slotting with the 5-2 will also be the routine expert play. Δ

Find out what you've missed.

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Some  
Personal  
Thoughts  
On

# SLOW PLAY

by Lewis Deyong

Lewis Deyong of London, England, author of *Playboy's Book of Backgammon*, has directed many prestigious events in his backgammon career including the Monte-Carlo World Championship. Last month, Mr. Deyong wrote to congratulate us on "...finally pointing a finger in the direction of tournament backgammon's biggest problem: slow play." Here are some of his personal observations on the subject.

During the game's Stone Age/Golden Age (one's choice of adjective is usually dictated by one's own age), I actually played in backgammon events. In 1972, I faced the late Carol Stolkin (at one time Mrs. John Crawford) in the World Championship final, then held in Las Vegas. Carol was a good friend, but quick play was not one of her greatest virtues.

Carol's first play dictated the mood of the match. I do not think 3-1 would stump many beginners, but she took nearly two minutes to execute it. A little later, a game evolved in which I never made a point and had three men on the bar. Carol had a closed board with three blots in my outer table. She rolled 5-5 and it took her seven minutes to bear them in.

The referee, Oakley Thorne, had long since taken refuge in the arms of Morpheus and in desperation, I reached for the *New York Times* crossword. The final was played on a Sunday so it was the jumbo puzzle. Very fortunate, because I might have completed the daily crossword before the 5-5 had been played!

During a break at the four hour mark with the score at 9-8, Prince Alexis Obolensky made a personal plea for me to put away the newspaper. "The press are here and it looks very bad," he explained. In those days, the novelty of backgammon attracted national attention, so for "the good of the game," I acquiesced.

The match lasted nearly ten hours, but the real irony was that with a lead of 23-19 (in a match to 27 points), my opponent became so nervous that I managed to develop a situation where I was able to give a redouble to 8. This cube, which should have been considered carefully, was snatched out of my hand the way a strong safety strips the football from a running back just before the two-minute warning. P.S. I got three direct shots for match in an appallingly played bear-off, missed them all, and could not even complete the last few clues of the crossword—definitely not my day. Subsequently, penalty points for slow play were announced, but alas, never enforced.

Still later, when I directed tournaments, I made a determined effort to do something. Three particular individuals stick in my mind. One very famous player (with a modest opinion of himself), was the last match finished in each of the first three rounds of the Nassau tournament. When I protested about his slow pace, he replied, "But I have so much more to think about than anyone else."

Another player almost as famous asked me in all seriousness, "Don't you punish your opponent by lingering once he has taken a bad double?" I wonder, in his case, if his creditors punished him by "lingering" over a market bankruptcy, the size of which puts the National Deficit to shame.

A third backgammon guru of great insight (according to him) was pausing ad nauseam, and I was called to his table. I pointed out the director's prerogative, accompanied by a nasty glare, and pulled my watch into a prominent position. He then made a very obvious move, got hit with an 8-shot and lost the game.

Later he told his friends that I cost him the match. When it was pointed out that in fact he had not been penalized, he replied, "Yes, but I read minds; he was going to penalize me." Since he could foretell the future, perhaps he would have better employed his time blocking that 8-shot.

The time problem has always been a serious one. Brilliant gamesmen have, over the years, won themselves, at best, only a few Pyrrhic victories. More well-to-do aficionados have quit tournament backgammon because of slow play then for all other reasons put together. How much equity has this cost that precious trio (and others like them) in the last ten years? Δ

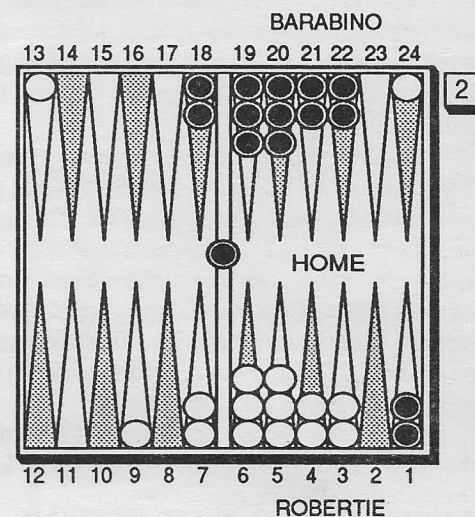
a better play

## THANKS, WALTER

by Danny Kleinman

Match to 9 points. White (Bill Robertie) leads Black (Rick Barabino), 5 to 2.

WHITE TO PLAY A 3.



Walter Trice of Holden, Massachusetts corrects the oversight in my book review of Roy Friedman's *World Class Backgammon, Move By Move* [Chicago POINT, September 1989] where in "Curses, Foiled Again!", I weighed Roy Friedman's 1st choice, 6/3 against his 2nd, 9/6, and found the latter superior. Thanks, Walter, for pointing out why Roy's 3rd choice, 13/10, is the best of all:

- (a) Every roll next turn either kills 6's (if not a 1) or moves up to the enemy 2-point (if a 1) so that 6's may be used constructively to escape.
- (b) More rolls next turn (all 2's and 3's but double-3's, 19 rolls in all) permit a spare to be kept most flexibly on the bar-point while killing or liberating 6's. In contrast, 9/6 puts a spare on the bar-point only on 6-2, 6-3, 6-6, 4-2 and 2-2 (eight rolls in all): four more 6-killing rolls are better used elsewhere (5-1 to move up, 6-1 to move up and leap).
- (c) 6-5 may be played without blotting.

That's a substantial gain for only a small cost, the 6-pips of timing when White rolls 6-6 next.

I wonder why both Roy and I failed to see this earlier, and why Roy didn't enlist Walter's help in analyzing contact positions as well as bear-offs. Δ

# Sven and Ole



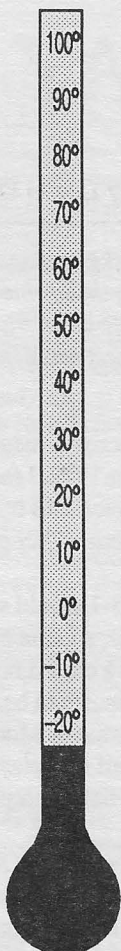
by Duane Jensen

When the weather turns cold, my thoughts turn to International Falls, Minnesota, a town of 5,000 people on the Canadian border. International Falls is known as "The Icebox of the Nation," a nickname the residents cultivate and exploit. Many national manufacturers send their products there for testing and advertising. A car battery or snow-blower that can survive a winter in "The Falls" gets a strong endorsement.

Most area residents enjoy winter activities such as skating, skiing and ice fishing. But there is one group of rural residents who can't stand the winter. The sight of the first snowflake triggers a "homing instinct" in the area's Norwegian bachelor farmers. They migrate into town to await the arrival of spring. The town's most popular meeting place is Koski's Kozy Korner Kafe. This small restaurant isn't even on a corner; it's tightly sandwiched between the Flame Bar and Bronko Nagurski's Gas Station.

Paul Koski, the owner, chose the name because he thought the alliteration of all those K's was "kind of trendy" for northern Minnesota.

Every Saturday morning you'll find two of the Norwegian bachelor farmers, Sven and Ole, playing backgammon in the K<sup>4</sup> restaurant. During one memorable game, the two boys had reached an uncubed bear-off position.



Ole leaned across the board and asked, "Yust how many checkers you got off, Sven?"

"Lots of 'em," Sven replied.

"Open your hand so I can count dem," Ole demanded.

As Sven's fist opened, Ole finger-counted each checker: "One, two, tree, four, five, six, seven, eight. We both have eight men off, Sven, and all the remaining checkers are piled on the ace and deuce points. I double you, Sven!"

Sven looked at Ole, at the floor, and again at Ole. "I take and beaver," Sven replied.

"You dummy, Sven. I'll have to teach you a lesson. I raccoon you to eight!" Ole was giggling as he rolled and took off two more men. Before Sven rolled, he flipped the cube to 16. Ole seemed irritated as he beavered to 32, and was downright confused when Sven raccooned him to 64.

At this point, Sven said, "Ole, let's make a settlement." After a brief but heated discussion, a settlement was reached.

Ole said, "I will give you 35 points, Sven. Guess I was the one who learned a lesson!"

What lesson did Ole learn?

## Solution

The lesson Ole learned was to count the checkers on the board, not the checkers off the board. Counting the men in Sven's hand misled Ole. Sven actually had taken off nine men, but one checker had fallen on the floor. So when Ole doubled, he was the underdog in a four roll vs. three roll position. It's silly (and potentially costly) to take a head count of the men your opponent has taken off. The number of men remaining in play is what counts.

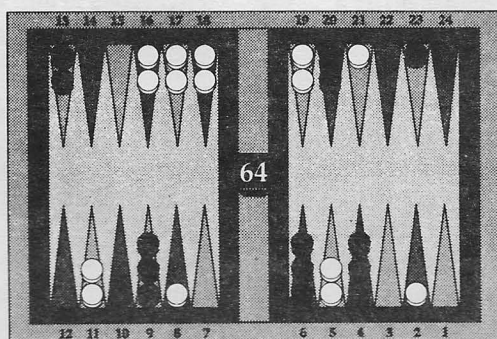
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by Roy Friedman

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○ Robertie



One of the 200 board diagrams in the book.

Barabino to play 33.



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