

1990 Nevada state championships

MY WIN IS A "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED"

by Bill Davis

It was a certainty that I'd be at the finals of the 1990 Nevada State Backgammon Championships (Peppermill Hotel; Reno, NV; 17-21 Jan.). As editor of the *Chicago POINT*, it's my responsibility to report on every major event I attend. But this tournament, the situation was a bit different. This tournament I was *in* the finals.

Since 1977, it's been my personal goal to win (at least) one regional backgammon tournament. Three times (1979 Indiana Open, 1983 Michigan Summer Championships, 1985 Michelob Michigan Weekend) I lost in the finals. Then last October, I lost the Open II finals of the Caesars Tahoe tournament to Antoinette Williams. Perhaps, I thought, a big win wasn't in the dice.

I entered this tournament with a different attitude. If the dice were with me, I'd run with them; otherwise, I'd report on the happenings for the *POINT*.

On 19 January the Open draw sheet was posted. There were 105 entrants and I was one of the 23 fortunate ones to draw a first round bye. Now to take advantage of it. In the second round, I faced the reigning European Open Champion Barry McAdam from England. 15-11, my way. Round three was against '89 April In Tahoe semifinalist Steve Flam (FL). Steve lost 15-4.

Saturday morning, *POINT* "Hasty Plays" columnist Duane Jensen fell 15-8 sending me to the round of 8. On Saturday evening at 7:30, I conducted a one hour seminar on "How To Form A Local Backgammon Club." My match with Joel Rettew (CA) began five minutes later. Trailing 12 to 9 in the 17 point quarterfinal, I won an 8-cube by hitting a last shot to exactly reach match point and advance to the "final four."

Elliott Winslow, a chess senior master and assistant editor to *Chess Life* magazine, was the toughest opponent I faced. Our 17 point match seesawed back and forth, eventually resulting in a 16-16 tie. The last game, I outrolled Elliott, pure and simple. In fact, my Calcutta auction owner Perry Gartner (NJ) commented, "Not your best

match." Nonetheless, I was in the finals vs. defending Nevada champion Doug Roberts!

Although nervous in the semifinals, I remained surprisingly calm in the finals. There was one big difference. In the semis, with dozens of people hovering over me, I felt that I was on display. In the closed room finals, with Hong Kong Club director Jerry Godsey as referee and a TV camera overhead, only my *game* was on display.

With the score 5-1 my way, Roberts requested a break. I used the 10 minutes to go to my room, wash my hands and face, brush my teeth and splash on some after shave. Returning to the board with a fresh feeling, I rolled to a big 14-5 lead on the strength of some timely doubles.

Never be overconfident with a huge lead in any match. Winning those last few points can be incredibly difficult. And did you ever notice that more incredible joker parlays from both sides seem to occur in the finals of big-money events? (First prize here was \$11,600.) Nobody reaches the finals of a major backgammon tourney on skill alone. You also need very good dice. Roberts' dice showed their stuff in the next wave of points as he trimmed my lead to 16-12.

To lose a match after building up a big lead is far more painful than being blown

out. At 16-12, I began to feel nervous. But this time was different. I remained aggressive and doubled Roberts out in the next game. And then at 17-12, Roberts cubed me. I accepted and survived a last shot to win the Champion's trophy and a carload of cash. What a thrill!

Congratulations to the NNBA's Mark Richardson on his huge Bonanza win and to fellow Chicagoans Howard Markowitz and Marcy Sloan on their fine finishes. Results:

7th NEVADA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

OPEN MAIN (105): 1st Bill Davis (IL); 2nd Doug Roberts (NY); 3/4 Norm Wiggins (CA), Elliott Winslow (NY). CONS.: 1st Joel Schiff (ISR); 2nd Bill Barron (TX). LAST CHANCE: 1st George Matthews (CA); 2nd Howard Markowitz (IL). INTERMEDIATE MAIN (109): 1st Philip Nutting (CA); 2nd Marcy Sloan; 3/4 Al Senter (CA), Dick Farran (CA). CONS.: 1st Tom Leslie (CA); 2nd Ted Boughton (CA). LAST CHAN: 1st Sirkka Stormborn (FIN); 2nd Rudy Citron (CA). NOVICE MAIN (46): 1st Robert Rossetti (CA); 2nd David D'Arcey (CA); 3/4 Frank Cusak (NV), Harry Metsola (FIN). CONS.: 1st Exxon Feyznia (TX); 2nd Carol Kent (TX). LAST CHAN: 1st Guy Thurber (WA); 2nd Lynette McCann (NV). \$500 BONANZA (56): 1st Mark Richardson (NV); 2nd Stu Hosen (TX); 3/4 Tom Hunt (CA), Joel Schiff (ISR). DOUBLES (64): 1st Ring & Ring; 2nd Farazan & Nissenson; 3/4 Stormborns 3/4 Heinrich & Richardson. KICKOFF (512): 1st Howard Robinson; 2nd Joe Sylvester; 3/4 Ron Coffin, Cliff Pappas. OPEN JACKPOT (64): 1st Salamon Zonana (MEX). INTERMEDIATE JACKPOT (64): 1st Jim Gibbs. NOVICE JACKPOT (32): 1st Colleen Holmes (WA).

THE "YEN" TO PLAY



After traveling to Tokyo on business for many years, Rudy Emmelot of Rolling Meadows, IL [third from left] finally had the yen to play some backgammon. Here he is with Backgammon Players Club of Tokyo members (from left to right) Seichi Nagai, Masaaki Hayashi (holding a copy of *Chicago POINT*), and Yukiko Kitani. For information about backgammon in Japan, call 03-5476-4303.

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o Chicago POINT
2726 W. Lunt Avenue
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5-2: ANOTHER VIEW

I was pleased to see Kit Woolsey question the standard opening move with a 5-2 roll [Problem #154, *Chicago POINT*, Jan. 1990] because it's good for backgammon when people challenge the "conventional wisdom." However, I don't agree with Kit's conclusion that 13/8, 6/4 is the best play. Of course, 13/8, 6/4 performs better than 13/8, 13/11 when the opponent responds with a non-hitting, point-making roll like 4-2 (as Kit's enumeration has shown). But I'm not convinced that this benefit outweighs the liability of 13/8, 6/4 when the opponent hits or counter-slots his 5-point with 5-1, 4-1 and 6-2, producing an annoying duplication of the opener's 4s.

Kit predicts that 13/8, 6/4 will become the routine expert play in ten years. How about a bet? My prediction is that in ten years, experts will do *less* slotting on the opening roll than they do today, and that 13/9, 24/23 will become the preferred opening play with a 4-1 roll.—*Roy Friedman, Editor, New England Backgammon Club Newsletter*

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

Feb 10-11	8th Annual Valentine Tournament, Stouffer Austin Hotel, Austin, TX	713/784-6622
Feb 11	10th Annual Illinois State Challenge Cup, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/338-6380
Feb 11	7th Annual Fleet Underwood Memorial & Benefit, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Feb 11	NY/NJ Backgammon Co-Op Regional, Ramada Inn, Woodbury, NJ	201/833-2915
Feb 15	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Feb 17	World Cup Qualifying Tourney, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/227-2205
Feb 18	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
Feb 18	Hoosier Club Awards Tournament, Grisanti's, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
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 24	Atlanta Backgammon Monthly, Copperfield's, Atlanta, GA	404/497-8505
Feb 25	1990 South Australian Open, Unley Citizens Centre, South Australia	08/373-2580
Feb 25	Cavendish North Monthly Tournament, Southfield, MI	313/642-9616
Feb 25	Pittsburgh Sunday Tournament & Qualifier, Squirrel Hill, PA	412/371-5844
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 3	IBA Tournament, The Palm Hotel, West Palm Beach, FL	305/527-4033
Mar 5	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Mar 6	Doubles Mini-Tournament, Champs Bar, Squirrel Hill, PA	412/371-5844
Mar 8-11	26th Ted Bassett & Gstaad Palace-Cup, Palace Hotel, Switzerland	061/50 58 16
Mar 11	Plymouth Sunday Tournament, Box Bar & Grill, Plymouth, MI	313/981-5706
Mar 15	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
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
Mar 31	Atlanta Monthly Tournament, Copperfields, Atlanta, GA	404/497-8505
Apr 1	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Apr 2	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	3-689918
Apr 6-8	38th Indiana Open, Omni Severin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN	317/845-8435
Apr 6-8	Düsseldorf Open, Hotel Novotel, Ratingen, W. Germany	40-270 11 66
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 Championships, Hall of Fame, 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, Tory Pines Golf Resort, Franconstown, NH	603/863-4711
May 25-28	10th Annual Chicago Open, Westin Hotel O'Hare, Rosemont, IL	708/674-0120
May 25-28	Boston Symphony Benefit, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
Jun 3	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Bagwells, Chicago, IL	312/252-7755
Jun 10	New England Bonus Tournament & Playoff Finals, Cambridge, MA	617/861-7340
Jun 29-Jul 1	Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 3-4	Viking Kick-off Tournament, Palace Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man	0624/851045
Jul 5-8	Championship of Great Britain, Palace Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man	0624/851045
Jul 13-15	San Remo International Tournament, Hotel Royal, San Remo, Italy	184-79 991
Jul 16-22	World Championship of Backgammon, Monte-Carlo, Monaco	301/299-8264
Jul 30-Aug 5	Green Mountain Festival, Ascutney Mtn. Resort, Brownsville, VT	305/527-4033

A THANKS AND A CLARIFICATION

Just a public note to thank all those who assisted both in the promotion and the organization of the Teacher's European Open Backgammon Championships [Deauville, France; Nov. 23-26]. Incidentally, the United States turnout of 16 players ranked fourth of the 13 countries represented (behind France-39, UK-33, and Germany-23). The 1990 European Championships has been scheduled from 29th Nov. to 2nd Dec., so mark your calendar.

Regarding the letters of Danny Kleinman and Kent Goulding in the December POINT discussing "truth in tournament

advertising," there is a simple reason why backgammon promoters in Europe follow the practice of advertising 100% entry fee return with a separate registration fee (watch out for the small print). In most of Europe, it is illegal *not* to return 100% of the entry unless you are a registered gaming body and the players are all members of your club. To guarantee the many benefits that backgammon players expect and deserve, a separate registration fee is appropriate. Not to mention the fact that it is much more straight forward.—*Julian Wilson, The United Kingdom Backgammon Federation*

[Continued on page 3]

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

A BARRY BY ANY OTHER NAME...

Dear Chicago PLONK [sic]: Please note a December "Winner's Corner" spelling correction of the European Open champion's name [Deauville, France; Nov. 23-26]. My name is Barry McAdam, not "Barry Macomber." Who is she?—*Barry McAdam, London, England*

Sorry about that, Mr. McAdam. But we were not the only ones to have trouble with your name. Denmark's Dec. Gammon newsletter labelled you "Barry McAdams." And check out your listing (#47) on the actual tournament draw sheet!—*Ed.*

42	BYE
43	SHEEHAN R
44	BYE
45	GUILBERT
46	BYE
47	MACADAM, B.
48	BYE
49	SEQUIRA
50	BYE
51	VAN-EIJCKE.
52	BYE

This number includes the empty board and impossible positions. It does not include the four states of the cube, which player is on move, and the match score.

This is the first time I've known my friend Dean to be inaccurate.—*Chuck Giallanza, Las Vegas, NV*

MORE "SLOW PLAY" DIALOGUE

I want to add something to the discussion of using chess clocks in tournament backgammon. There is one big difference between the two games. In chess, you must play a given number of moves in a set amount of time (perhaps 40 moves in two hours). And you play only *one* game.

In tournament backgammon you don't know how many games you have to play in a match. For example, a match to 7 points may last as many as 13 games, or as few as one. And some games end in a few rolls—others last 40 to 50 moves.

My suggestion: Use chess clocks without imposing any time limit. Players must punch their clock after completing their move. If a match is delaying the tournament, the director is able to see the amount of time used by each player and can issue a warning accordingly.—*Achim Müller, Rheine, West Germany*

Certainly another valid compromise in the war against extremely slow play. The Chicago Bar Point Club has had a chess

clock available for its Tuesday events since November and has found the clock to be a very effective tool in monitoring a match that is unduly delaying tournament progress. It should be noted that in three months of use, the clock has only been used for five matches. We agree that a chess clock is a nuisance in tournament backgammon, but feel that extremely slow play is even worse. Therefore, chess clocks will patrol the 1990 Midwest Championships March 23-25. We hope they won't be called into service.

For a copy of Backgammon Clock rules, write to Chicago POINT; 2726 W. Lunt; Chicago, IL 60645—Ed.

Thought you might like to see the table we adopted in January 1990 to control slow play at College Park Club tournaments:

Match Length	Time Allowed
3 points	0 hr. 35 minutes
5 points	1 hr. 00 minutes
7 points	1 hr. 25 minutes
9 points	1 hr. 50 minutes
11 points	2 hr. 15 minutes
13 points	2 hr. 40 minutes
15 points	3 hr. 05 minutes
17 points	3 hr. 30 minutes
19 points	3 hr. 55 minutes
21 points	4 hr. 20 minutes

When there is fifteen minutes left in any match based on the time playing schedule, the director and/or committee shall have the option to increase the number on the doubling cube so that the game in play will determine the winner of the match.—*Barry Steinberg, director, CPBC (Maryland)*

CALL FOR A RECOUNT

With regard to Dean Muench's "Little Known Backgammon Numbers" article appearing in the Dec. 1989 POINT, there are actually 18,528,584,051,601,162,496 = 1.85×10^{19} possible backgammon positions.



1990 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU JAN. 31

DAVE CRAMER	3.08	ARNOLD ZOUSER	1.68	Bill Hargrave	0.72
DEAN MUENCH	2.40	HOWARD MARKOWITZ	1.36	Ken Bond	0.64
MARK KING	2.32	JOANN FEINSTEIN	1.28	Jolie Lewis	0.64
JOHN DEMIAN	2.08	BOB HOLYON	1.04	Mike Siegel	0.56
DON DESMOND	2.08	JOE KOUCHEAN	0.96	Mike Sutton	0.32
GARY KAY	2.08	PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI	0.96	Reggie Porter	0.32
LUCKY NELSON	2.00	Deeb Shalati	0.88	Frank Callea	0.24
JAKE JACOBS	1.92	Don Jayhan	0.88	Mary Franks	0.24
RUDY EMMELT	1.88	Greg Shore	0.88	Larry Knoll	0.24
ALICE KAY	1.88	Leslie Lockett	0.88	Larry Knoll, Jr.	0.16
YAMIN YAMIN	1.88	Walter Schafer	0.80	Femi Owiku	0.16
BILL DAVIS	1.84	Jay Ward	0.80	Arline Levy	0.12
BOB ZAVORAL	1.68	Bobbie Shifrin	0.80	Ted Mann	0.12
ANDY ARGY	1.68	Paul Franks	0.72		

Chicago Bar Point Club Main Flight and Consolation victories boosted DAVE CRAMER to January Player of the Month honors with 3.08 points. Dean Muench (2.40) and Mark King (2.32) were runners-up. In all, 18 players earned more than one point—a record.

If you finish in the Top 20 for 1990 (capitalized names on list), you'll be entered in a drawing for over \$250 worth of valuable electronics merchandise. The higher you finish, the better your winning chances. Individual awards: 1st—Trophy + \$150; 2nd—\$100; 3rd—\$50. 1st thru 20th—engraved brass board tag. 1st thru 6th—Invitation to participate on the Chicago Bar Point Club team in the 1991 Illinois State Challenge Cup.

BACKGAMMON IN THAILAND

Here is some information on backgammon in Thailand to benefit any travellers who might come to this beautiful country. We will hold the Official Thailand Backgammon Championship 2-4 February 1990 in Bangkok. We also meet every Friday at 5:00 PM for chouettes and regular play at Vinothek Wine Cellar; 61/2 Soi Lang Suan (off Ploenchit Road), Bangkok. Telephone: 253-6170.—*Werner Kubesch, Backgammon Association of Thailand*

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

I really enjoyed Lewis Deyong's recounting of his experiences with slow play in backgammon's "Stone Age/Golden Age" [January 1990]. I'm sure many of you veteran players have some interesting stories about backgammon in the past. How about sharing them with us?—*Van Smith, Riverside, CA* Δ

DEAR MISS
LONELYBLOTS

A DEAL'S A DEAL

Dear Miss Lonelyblots: Just thought you might like to warn you readers about the sharks that invade backgammon clubs and prey upon the regular chouette players on tournament nights. Last Week, Barry Kuda (I'll call him) had an hour to kill after winning his first tournament match, so I graciously invited him to play 10 games head-to-head for \$10 a point until his next match was ready.

After 10 games, he was up 48 points—most of it on the strength of a lucky gammon he won at the 16-level in the 9th game. With normal rolls in just that one game, Miss Lonelyblots, I'd have won the gammon and been up 16.

His next match still wasn't ready, so I insisted we keep playing to give me the courtesy of a chance to get even, but the son-of-a-bitch refused.

"Your attitude is half-assed, so half is what you get. Take your lousy \$240," I said. "Accept it as full payment or you'll never see a dime."

Now you won't believe what Barry

Kuda did. He took my \$240 but claimed I still owed him another \$240. Last night, he returned for another tournament. Disturbing the peace of my regular \$5 chouette, he loudly demanded a \$240 payment.

"You settled for \$240. A deal's a deal," I said.

The others in my chouette agreed with me. And when I related how he never gave me a chance to get even, they said that if he were a gentleman, he'd return the first \$240. Naturally Barry refused. Instead he just kept bad-mouthing me between matches. I'm willing to forget the \$240, Miss Lonelyblots, but tell me—what can I do to get the bastard off my back?—A Deal's A Deal

Dear Deal: Who's the shark and who's the prey? You asked Barry to play, he didn't solicit you. And apparently you decided to play for twice your usual stake.

Your chouette-mates hardly constitute an impartial jury, and Barry didn't accept their jurisdiction, so their concurrence with your "a deal's a deal" carries no weight. In fact, a deal isn't a deal if made under threat or duress, or without "valuable consideration." Barry's acceptance of the first \$240 under a "take this or you'll get nothing" threat does not abrogate his right to the other \$240, and any acknowledgment of the \$240 as "full payment" is null and void.

Nor did Barry owe you a "chance to get even." Under that theory, a loser would have a right to force a winner to keep playing until no longer a winner—obviously unfair. Barry may have wanted a break before his next match.

What if the very first game had been a long back game lasting 45 minutes? Or if for any other reason Barry had not finished the 10 games? Then you'd still owe him for all games completed, for your equity in the games not played is presumably zero. An agreement to play a fixed number of games is just a courtesy, not a contract—unless you've given him "valuable consideration" by paying him a fee for playing with you.

If you really want to get Barry Kuda off your back, offer him the other \$240 along with an apology. But maybe you prefer the \$240 to an honorable reputation. In my town, I've seen players sell their reputations for \$4 and \$6—far less than the \$240 price-tag you've placed on yours.—Miss Lonelyblots Δ

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.

AMALGAMATION

Pre-Registration is brisk for the 1990 Midwest Championships (March 23–25 in Oakbrook Terrace, IL). To request a flyer, call Bill Davis at (312) 338-6380... 14-year-old Philip Nutting received four months of private lessons from Kit Woolsey prior to winning the Nevada State Championships Intermediate tournament. There was "no charge" because Kit is Philip's stepfather... Here's a surprising statistic from the Nevada State Championships. The 260 entrants were polled on their smoking preferences. 74 were "flexible," 152 picked "non-smoking," and only 34 players checked "smoking"... Visiting the Bar Point Club in January: Colorado Backgammon Assn. director Earl Earp, Rich Sweetman (New Hampshire) and Greg Shore, in from Rome, Italy to complete his doctorate at the University of Chicago. Incidentally, Greg and Anna Muscardin became the proud parents of Odessa Romana Shore on November 22... An-

other Autumn 1989 stork delivery went to Mike and Dianne Cyrkiel who welcomed 9 lb.-13 oz. Michael Frank Cyrkiel into the world October 8... Later this month, Gary Kay plans to start a new backgammon club in the Chicago area on Friday nights. See "Illinois Action" in the March POINT for details... Michigan's Joe Sylvester hopes to have backgammon lesson video tapes for sale before the end of the year... Get well wishes go to BPC and Winnetka Backgammon Club regular Stu Katz who suffered a heart attack on January 15... Congratulations to BPC player Larry Knoll who was promoted in the Streamwood Police Department to Deputy Chief... Nick Begakis reports that Andrew Peake is the Backgammon Assn. of So. Australia's '89 club champion. And closer to home, Mark Kaye informs us that Greg Tomlin is the Sangamon Valley Backgammon Assn's top player of 1989... On February 7, former Pub Club director Jeff Henry and Charlene Dulin will exchange marriage vows in a private ceremony on Turtle Island (Fiji). We wish them endless love. Δ

S. CHARLES "SIM" LEE
1899–1990

The backgammon community has lost a true friend with the passing of California architectural designer S. Charles Lee. "Sim" Lee died January 27 from a bout with influenza. He was 90.

Mr. Lee, a good friend of Lucille Ball, was an active backgammon player for 60 years. He participated in and helped to organize a number of charity backgammon events including a tournament for the blind.

Mr. Lee's last tournament was the 1990 Nevada State Championship one week prior to his death. At that event, he was interviewed by Reno television as the oldest tourney participant. Asked when he began playing, Mr. Lee answered with his usual sense of humor, "About 1930, but these last two years I found out that I don't know anything about the game!"

S. Charles Lee. Dead at age 90.

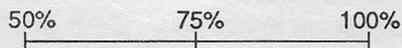
A LITTLE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION



by Dean Muench

In my recent article "Little Known Backgammon Numbers" [*Chicago POINT*, Dec. 1989], I proposed in item #7 that giving the cube away at 2 in an otherwise equal position lowers the doubler's expectancy from 0 to -0.67 and his probability of winning from 50% to 33.33%. This assertion has drawn considerable attention, including a letter of challenge in the Jan. 1990 *POINT* from Neil Kazaross of San Diego, CA. Since several players have asked, I am publishing the mathematical model used to estimate this answer.

My purpose for including this item in the article was to show how devastating the giving of an early cube can be. To this end, I used the probability line below, along with some assumptions needed to simplify the calculations:



- (1) Assume 75% is the most efficient doubling point.
- (2) Assume both "perfect" players are equally likely to reach 75%.
- (3) When the cube owner reaches 75% first (50% of the time), he cashes 2 points.
- (4) When the doubler reaches 75% first (other 50%), then he is equally likely to rise to 100% (25% of the time) or to fall back to 50% (the other 25%).
- (5) Once back at 50%, the same cycle is repeated infinitely—each time divid-

ing up one-fourth of the previous percentage.

- (6) Probability of cube owner (%) = $50 + 12.5 + 3.125 + 0.78125 + 0.1953125 \doteq 66.66\%$.
- (7) Expectancy of cube owner = $[(66.66 - 33.33) \times 2] / 100 = +0.67$.
- (8) Assume that on average, the cube owner will come within $\pm 4\%$ of his most efficient redouble point and that the resulting expectancy loss is balanced off by the expectancy gain from these areas:
 - (a) the player owning the cube has more latitude in making checker plays, with no fear of being doubled out in desperate situations, and,
 - (b) he has the option of playing on for the gammon or not. The other player does not have this option.

Although this result is fine for a rough estimate, we can get closer to the truth by using a more sophisticated model. This new model is the same as above except that each assumption is adjusted to reflect the results of using 78.57% as the most efficient redouble point instead of 75%. (78.57% is more accurate because it assumes that the cube retains an average amount of ownership value after an accepted redouble.) Space prohibits showing all the calculations, but I am including the probability increments (%) for the cube owner at each of the first seven levels: $50 + 10.715 + 2.2962245 + 0.4920809 + 0.1054529 + 0.0225985 + 0.0048428723 \doteq 63.64\%$. The expectancy for the cube owner = $[(63.64 - 36.36) \times 2] / 100 = +0.5456$.

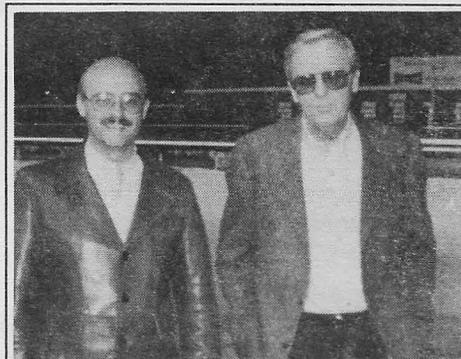
NOTE TO NEIL KAZAROSS: Consider your challenge accepted! Δ

DESMOND AND WARD RACE TO VICTORY

42 players from Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin converged on Hawthorne Race Course in Cicero, IL January 27 to participate in the 2nd Annual Hawthorne Backgammon Classic. Don Desmond (Chicago) and Jay Ward (Northfield) ended up in the Winner's Circle. The results:

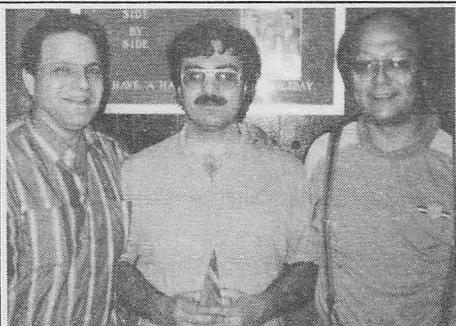
OPEN (26): 1st Don Desmond; 2nd Jake Jacobs; 3/4 Paul Franks, Bill Hargrave; 1st Cons. Bob Holyon; 2nd Cons. Howard Markowitz.
LIMITED (16): 1st Jay Ward; 2nd Reggie Porter; 3/4 Mary Franks, Frank Callea; 1st Cons. Joe Koucharian; 2nd Femi Owiku.

Thanks to Kathy Posner (Martin Janis) for publicity and Caryl Meadows (Hawthorne Director of Sales) for the unique tournament accommodations. Δ



1990 Hawthorne Backgammon Champs Jay Ward (Ltd.) and Don Desmond (Open).

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB BPC TOPS FOR 1989

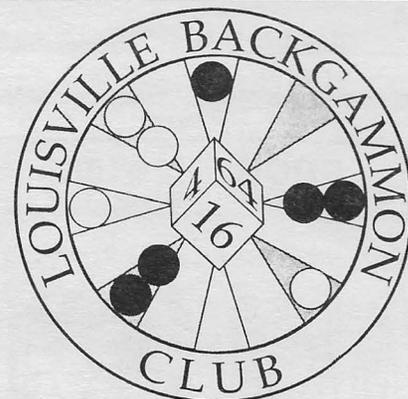


Chicago Bar Point Club 1989 Player of the Year Yamin Yamin is flanked by Gary Kay—2nd (left) and Tak Morioka—3rd (right).

QUITE A SPREAD



Winnetka Club director Trudie Stern shows us the proper way to host an "Award's Night," complete with a backgammon cake.



14th ANNUAL BLUEGRASS REGIONAL & WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

March 2-4, 1990

SEELBACH HOTEL
Louisville, Kentucky

Scott Arche (502) 429-0153

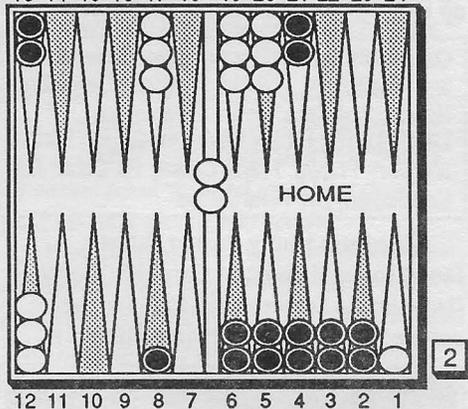
HASTY PLAYS



by Duane Jensen

Black is in the driver's seat, leading 10-4 in a tournament match to 11 points. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-1.**

13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24



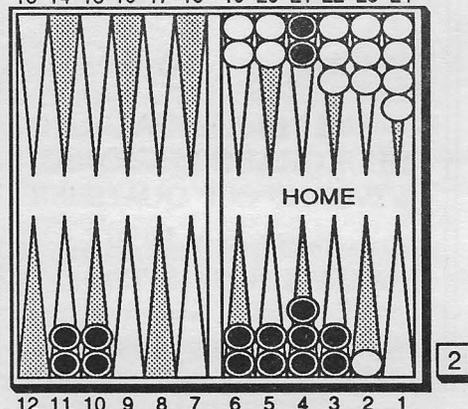
Quickly and confidently he plays 13/7, 8/7 to complete a 6-prime. By making the point, Black has actually missed the point. At one time, his goal may have been to build a 6-prime, but now his prime objective should be to *prevent White from anchoring* on the 1-point.

Black must hit loose on the ace with the 6-1, even though he has few covers. The danger from a well-timed ace-point game by White is so great that Black must forgo the 6-prime and hit loose. If White wants the 1-point, Black must make her fight for it. Δ

PROBLEM #156

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-2.**

13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24



WINNER'S CORNER



Dec.-Jan. 1990

- RSCARDS Fall Tournament** (North America via computer modem)... Open: 1st M. Miller; 2nd Rich Galeba; 3rd/4th Mike Murray, Jim Wilson; 5th-8th Paul Enriquez, Kathy Hendricks, Bill Jenkins, Will Morgan... Over \$400 and connect time prizes were awarded in this GENie computer service tournament. To get "on line," call GENie at 800/638-9636.
- Palace Trophy Tournament** (Isle of Man; Dec.)... Championship: 1st Peter Haslett; 1st First Cons. Paul Smart; 1st Second Cons. Harry Beere; 1st LC Jasper Salisbury-Jones.
- Finnish Open** (Helsinki, Finland; Dec. 1-3)... Championship (70): 1st Jörgen Granstedt (SWE); 2nd Robert Lindbom (SWE); 3rd/4th Matti Hynninen (FIN), Matti Antvuori (FIN); 1st Cons. Matti Karsikko (FIN); 2nd Cons. Wolfgang Griese (FIN); 3rd/4th Cons. Lena Lagergreen (SWE), Jarkko Suominen (FIN); 1st LC Krister Eriksson (SWE); 2nd LC Johan Aschan (SWE); 3rd/4th LC Petri Pietilä (FIN), Arno Stormbom (FIN). Team Challenge: Sweden defeats Finland, 4 to 1.
- Regency Club Benefit** (New York City; Dec. 2-4)... Championship (47): 1st Chuck Papazian; 2nd Wilcox Snellings; 3rd/4th Bill Robertie, Berj Abadjian; 1st Cons. Kent Goulding; 2nd Cons. Gary Kay; 1st LC Sandy Lubetkin; 2nd LC Perry Gartner... \$3,000 raised for NYC Boys Club.
- Bar Point Sunday** (Chicago, IL; Dec. 3)... Open (32): 1st Bob Holyon; 2nd Phil Barrett; 3rd/4th Marcy Sloan, Ken Bond; 1st Cons. Howard Markowitz; 2nd Cons. Harry Cohn. Limited (23): 1st/2nd (*Split*) Trudie Stern, Reggie Porter; 3rd/4th Sandy Grassel, Frank Callea; 1st Cons. Femi Owiku; 2nd Cons. Merrill Schrage.
- 1989 Connecticut St. Championship** (Southington, CT; Dec. 9)... Championship (25): *Main Flight*—1st Al Cantito; 2nd Dr. Joe Dinardo; *2nd Flight*—1st: Al Schutz; 2nd: Gerhard Roland; *3rd Flight*—1st: Rob Roy; 2nd: Al Theriault.
- Hoosier One-Day** (Indianapolis, IN; Dec. 10)... Open (14): 1st Larry Buckingham; 2nd Wendy Kaplan. Intermediate (10): 1st Glenn Theobald. Novice: 1st John Cinatl.
- New Year's Invitational** (Kenilworth, IL; Dec. 31-Jan. 1)... Open (9): 1st Gary Kay; 2nd Yamin Yamin; 1st Cons. Stu Katz... Leslie Lockett hosted this cozy holiday event where *everyone* won a trophy.
- Sangamon Valley Series** (Springfield, IL;

Jan. 6)... 1st Randy Armstrong; 2nd Mark Kaye; 1st Cons. Dave Wallace.

•**French Open** (Paris, France; Jan. 10-14)... Championship (128): 1st P. Narboni; 2nd A. Sormain; 3rd P. Huber; 4th Bill Robertie; 1st Cons. S. Akirov; 2nd Cons. C. Sabet; 3rd Cons. B. McAdam; 4th Cons. Gary Kay; 1st LC Van Ingen; 2nd LC Charalambos. 10,000 FF Super Jackpot 1st: Joe Sylvester... The premier French Open of what will be an annual event.

•**College Park Winter Open** (Bethesda, MD; Jan. 13)... Open (27): 1st Greg Lilley; 2nd Brad Paleg; 3rd Ed Maslansky; 4th Mel Leifer. Intermediate (16): 1st Lloyd Webber; 2nd Charles Kirkland.

•**Sandy Kaplan Invitational** (Southfield, MI; Jan. 14)... Open (16): 1st Lenny Loder; 2nd Frank Talbot; 3rd Chuck Burger; 4th John Carrico; 1st Cons. Steve Cutler; 2nd Cons. Carol Joy Cole... Sandy Kaplan hosts this annual BG party.

•**New England Monthly** (Cambridge, MA; Jan. 14)... A Division (29): 1st Mehran Shahidi; 2nd Linc Bedell; 1st Cons. Roy Friedman. B Division (19): 1st Russ Nahigian; 2nd Ernesto Adrianzen; 1st Cons. Ed Miller.

•**Sangamon Valley Series** (Springfield, IL; Jan. 20)... Open: 1st Gary Blair; 2nd Patrick Jaeggi; 1st Cons. Larry Whittenberg.

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Chicago, IL; Feb. 4) ... Open (30): 1st/2nd (*Split*) George Barr, Bill Davis; 3rd/4th Jerry Brooks, Bob Zavoral; 1st Cons. Mark King; 2nd Cons. Deeb Shalati. Limited (12): 1st Richard Stawowy; 2nd Don Jayhan; 3rd/4th Joe Koucharian, Bobbie Shifrin; 1st Cons. Arline Levy; 2nd Cons. Femi Owiku. 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 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).

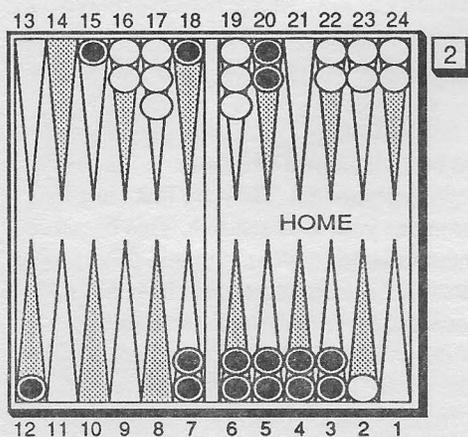
CENT. ILL. BG CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 PM at Denny's, 2522 W. Lake Ave., Peoria. Sue Will (309/692-6909).

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).

**PROBLEM #155
SOLVED**

by Neil Kazaross

5 point match. White leads Black 3 to 1.
BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.

The major decision with this interesting set of double 2s is whether to switch points, or maintain the 5-prime. Switching points places White on the bar which cuts down on her immediate jokers. However, it breaks the 5-prime. Black will have major containment problems if White's checker gets to the 4-point.

Maintaining the 5-prime gives White some escaping fly shots. It also leaves Black with no direct builders to hit White loose on the 2-point, and only a couple of shots to close the 8-point and prime her. However, the 5-prime offers good long-term containment possibilities—important because of White's big racing lead. It looks like a tough decision.

This game will be played to conclusion with no further cube turns due to the score. If Black loses a gammon rather than a single game, he doesn't care because the match will be over either way. Hence, Black can make aggressive plays on this and subsequent turns without the usual gammon fear.

But if Black wins a gammon, he wins the match. At this score, the gammon win gains Black as much match equity as winning the game, so the gammon price is 1 here vs. 1/2 for a money game. If a certain play leads to more gammons for Black, that's all the better.

If Black doesn't hit White, he must reduce his exposure by covering the 18-blot. The three nonhitting choices are:

- (A) 20/18(2), 15/11
- (B) 20/18(2), 15/13, 12/10
- (C) 20/18(2), 12/8

There are also three point-switching plays to consider:

- (D) 20/18(2), 4/2*(2)
- (E) 12/8, 4/2*(2)
- (F) 15/13, 12/10, 4/2*(2)

After making the 18-point, both (A) and (B) give Black three rolls to close the 8-point and make a prime next roll. However, (B) results in six more hits when White escapes. Play (B) also allows Black an extra number to hit loose on the 2-point (without breaking the bar-point). Since (B) seems to dominate (A), Trish Hegland and I rolled out 72 games with play (B). Results showed Black winning 36 single games, 6 gammons, and losing 30 games. Throughout the course of play, it became apparent that White's runner was a constant threat to escape because Black was short of builders. White often escaped a roll or two later with a six and was missed. White also won some games after hitting back following a loose hit on the 2-point. (Incidentally, I don't favor Black breaking the 5-prime to hit loose on the 2-point with a number like 4-1 when White doesn't escape right away.)

Let's analyze prime-slotting play (C) by considering a cross-section of 36 games. White is almost home if she escapes with a hitting six—I'd expect her to win at least 9 of these 11 games. In the other 25 games when White doesn't roll a six, Black has only 9 numbers to make the prime. 12 other numbers allow him to hit loose on the 2-point while maintaining the 5-prime. Also, 6-5 points on Black and 1-1 switches points. 14 other numbers aren't that useful, but still leave Black a favorite. Following play (C), I'd expect White to win at least 6 of the 25 games where she doesn't immediately escape, for at least 15 wins in 36 games. This is equivalent to the 30 wins White gets in 72 games after (B). Play (C) looks a bit more gammonish though, and may be slightly better for Black at the current score.

Now we'll consider the point-switching plays. Play (D) leaves White just one joker (4-4), but creates only one builder for the 4-point. This play safeties the blot on the 18-point and aims to spring the back men into the outfield in some variations.

(E) and (F) both add an extra builder for the 4-point at the cost of 7 entering hits at the blot on the 18-point. These hits expose additional White blot(s) which could lead to a gammon for Black. However, Black is not favored to hit back and even when hit, White can survive the closeout quite often due to lack of immediate Black fire power. Play (F) pays off to a 6-4, but gains on all other entering 4s. It's close between the two.

Among the three point-switching plays,

I have a slight preference for (D) which avoids the devastating (E) and (F) sequences of 4-1 or 4-2 followed by a dance. After (D), Black still has 20 rolls which enable him to attack White on the 4-point. With gammons irrelevant for Black, he won't mind the gammon risk of leaving builder-blots all over the outfield after a loose hit on the 4-point when White enters there.

I don't feel that the extra builders created by play (E) or (F) justify the seven retaliatory shots at the 18-point. In making play (D), Black does give up some slight chances of hitting White later as he bears in or off (after an escape). Still, I feel that this is balanced by the gains of freeing Black's back men to the 18-point to better help contain White's straggler. Also, all these point-switching plays send White to the bar, thus reducing her immediate escape rolls.

I felt that switching points would prove slightly better than maintaining a builderless 5-prime here, so Trish and I rolled out 72 games with play (D) to test this plan. The results showed Black winning 45 single games, 6 gammons, and losing only 21 games. This is 12.5% more wins compared to play (B), and just as many gammons. 72 games is a small sample, so this difference can't be construed as statistical proof. However, I'm convinced that switching points is the right idea. After (D), White was often nicely contained after dancing or entering on the 1-point. A real plus is that (D) leaves only one joker (4-4) vs. five jokers for (B) (6-2, 6-5, 6-6).

In conclusion, the builderless 5-prime after play (A) or (B) is not as strong as it looks. Play (C) loses too much on White's 6s and doesn't win often enough on his non-6s. I like safe play (D) slightly more than the wide open (E) and (F). It's my choice for this interesting double 2s. Δ

BACKGAMMON

THE MIDWEST
CHAMPIONSHIPS

1 9 9 0

March 23-25, 1990

Chicago-Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois

Information: Bill Davis 312/338-6380

KENT GOULDING'S TOP 50

Compiled thru Dec. '89

1. Mika Lidov	1806	26. Kit Woolsey	1734
2. Ed O'Laughlin	1802	27. Joe Sylvester	1733
3. Mika Inkinen	1791	28. Bob Bishop	1731
4. Joe Mirzoeff	1788	29. Bob Holyon	1729
5. Bill Robertie	1783	30. Ray Glaeser	1726
6. Kent Goulding	1783	31. Steve Moffitt	1721
7. Joe Russell	1782	32. Neil Kazaross	1720
8. Shimon Kagan	1777	33. Dennis Culpepper	1720
9. Paul Weaver	1775	34. Al Levine	1719
10. Phillip Marmorstein	1762	35. Harry Zilli	1719
11. Evert VanEyck	1761	36. Chuck Papazian	1716
12. Barry Pitt	1760	37. Jake Jacobs	1716
13. Shousha	1759	38. Jorma Haapanen	1715
14. Prager	1759	39. Ralph Stowell	1713
15. Lex V. Ravenzwaay	1749	40. David Sporn	1712
16. Frank Talbot	1747	41. Jack Kissane	1712
17. Scott McKenzie	1747	42. Malcolm Davis	1712
18. Tino Lechich	1747	43. Lee Genud	1711
19. Mats Carlson	1747	44. Howard Markowitz	1711
20. Mike Senkiewicz	1746	45. Mike Labins	1711
21. Kurt Oge	1743	46. Billy Horan	1710
22. Mike Carson	1740	47. Roger Low	1709
23. Uli Koch	1740	48. Richard White	1707
24. Jukka Nikonen	1735	49. Marcel Baquiche	1707
25. Paula Allan	1735	50. Kari Jokinen	1706

Contributions to the rating system should be made payable to "Backgammon with the Champions" and mailed to: Kent Goulding, 9201 Marseille Drive, Potomac, MD 20854. Every contribution of \$5 (\$10 overseas) or more will receive the complete rating list (80 pages). Contributions of \$10 (\$15 overseas) or more will be listed in the next rating list issue as an *Honorable Supporter*. Δ

TAKGAMMON



by Tak Morioka

BEST PLAY SYNDROME

In our search for excellence, we always try to find the best play for a given position. That practice may prove impractical based on the reality of how backgammon is played. I believe that the top players infrequently make the *best* (optimum) plays. It's logical, and totally in keeping with the philosophy that when one makes a series of *good* plays, the *best* play is usually unnecessary.

The "best play syndrome" has captured the fancy of many developing players. It is based on the assumption that if you make all the best plays, you will become the best player. This idealized quest is foolish. Plays are interdependent. They are links in a long chain of circumstances—and you are only as strong as your weakest link. This becomes obvious when the opponent attacks your weakness rather than your strength. (The proper evaluation of one's level of play is measured through his mean average. The peaks and valleys of plays have little to do with expectations and more to do with prejudice.)

From long observation, I've noticed a bit of irony: the best plays from given positions are most often made by the weaker players of the game. The major problem comes from their getting into those awful positions. It's not from the lack of ability, but rather from the misuse of it. They often develop brilliant, insightful moves to escape from their self-made traps. Their problem is that they are investing valuable time and effort in a negative equity cause.

I'm not knocking excellence or the rewards of that search. It just seems difficult to believe that anyone can function at nearly 100% over an extended period of time. I've learned that foolish expectation is the product of an over-inflated ego and skill is the knowledge of one's limitations in spite of the hopes he may have. Δ



Fortune Cookie

If you see the attack, you are too late. You must see the threat to do anything about it.

16th INTERNATIONAL WINTER BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIPS

ST. MORITZ, SWITZERLAND * 15th-18th MARCH 1990 * BADRUTT'S PALACE HOTEL



On the Worldwide Backgammon Federation's **GOLDEN CIRCUIT**
Tournament Director: James Ballié

PROGRAM

15th March	16-18.00	Registration
	20.00	Cocktail Party
	22.30	Start—First round
16th March	16.00	Play continues, Jackpots
17th March	16.00	Play continues, Consolation
18th March	14.30	Finals and Last Chance
	20.00	Prize-giving and Cocktail Party

ENTRY FEES

Championship—SF 700 * Intermediate—SF 200 * Jackpot—SF 1500
(100% of all entry fees in the Championships returned as prizes.)

RESERVATIONS

Badrutt's Hotel phone: 0041 82 21101
Minimum room rates: Single—SF 220,
Double—SF 400 including half board.
Rates valid 14th-19th March 1990.
Ask about our special 7- and 9-day SKI
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INFORMATION

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