

CHICAGO POINT

NUMBER 46

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

MAY 1992

1992 midwest backgammon championships

COLIN CONTINUES HIS RUSH TO EXCELLENCE

Femi Owiku And Bill Cox Also Win
Bobbie Shifrin is Lady Luck

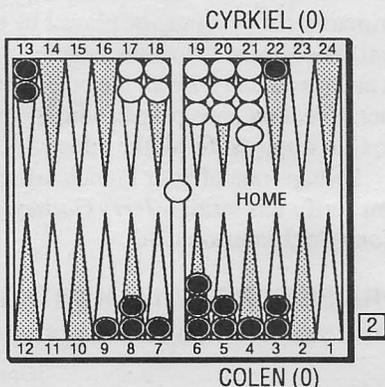
James Colen (Cambridge, MA) could be ticketed for going too fast. At May 1991 Chicago Open, he played in the Intermediate Division. This year at the Nevada State Championship, he won the \$15,000 Bonanza tournament. Now Colen joins the company of Sylvester, Heinrich, Talbot, Markowitz and other masters in winning the prestigious Midwest Backgammon Championships.

200 players (including every past Midwest Champion) took part in the Chicago Bar Point Club's 9th annual bash 20-22 March at the Marriott Hotel in Oak Brook, IL. Bill Davis directed the event with great assistance from Peter Kalba, Carol Joy Cole, Sue Will and John & Dru Heggen.

"I had great dice the whole weekend," claimed the 23-year-old Harvard biochemistry graduate. "I didn't even have a close match." Colen's final battle against Indiana's Mike Cyrkiel was a case in point. James jumped ahead 9-0, eventually winning 15-8. First prize, including Calcutta money yielded more than \$5,000.

"I believe the turning point of the entire match occurred in the first game," claimed Colen. "I was holding a 2-cube in the following position with my opponent on roll:

1992 Midwest Championship finals.
James Colen (Black) vs. Mike Cyrkiel (White). Game 1. **WHITE ON SHAKE.**



"Mike had 18 ways to send a second man back and place me in gammon jeopardy. He could also enter and hit me inside. Instead he rolled a 5-3 (dancing) and never saw daylight. After the match, Mike told me that the 5-3 roll 'mentally killed' him."

One would have to call James Colen America's newest backgammon phenom. The July 1991 KG rating book lists his match record at a meager 9-8. At last month's Tournament Of The Americas in Costa Rica, he garnered the third-highest bid in the \$32,000 El Cariari (eventually losing a heart breaker to Mike Svobodny in the semifinals). "I'm not afraid to play anyone in the world for money," Colen confidently states.

What's next for the Kid from Cambridge? "I'll certainly play Monte Carlo in July. I'm also looking for work as an options trader."

It's clear we haven't heard the last of James Colen.

In Other Events...

In the Advanced division, Chicago's Femi Owiku won a come-from-behind 13-11 thriller over GENIE computer tournament

[Continued on page 3]

1st tournament of the americas

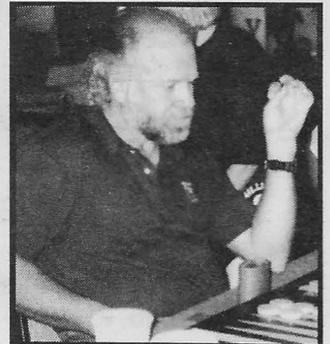
TINSLEY OVER KAZAROSS IN COSTA RICA

Svobodny Wins \$15,000 In El Cariari

Talmadge Tinsley of Dallas, TX has defeated Neil Kazaross (CA) in a tense double match-point battle 19-17 to win the premiere Tournament of the Americas.

San José, Costa Rica was the setting for the 8-12 April fiesta, held at the beautiful Cariari Hotel/Casino. The Costa Rican Backgammon hosted the event while Bill Davis, Peter Kalba and Carol Joy Cole directed.

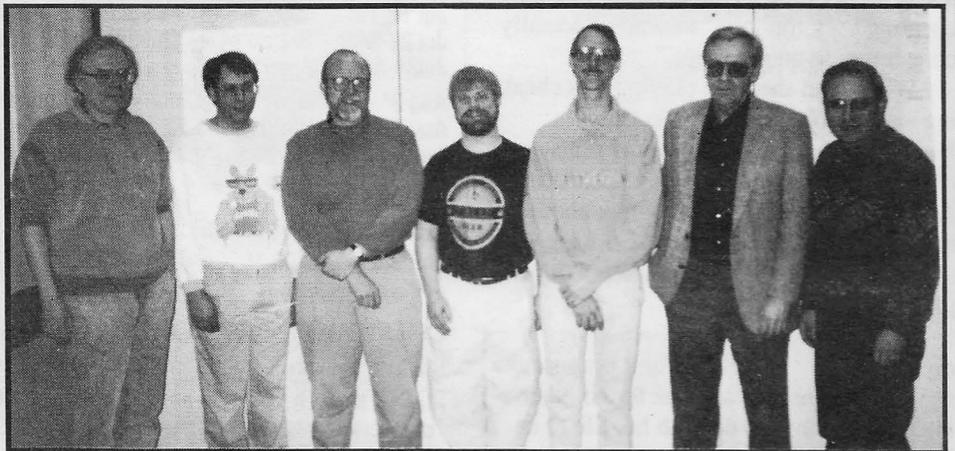
In the \$30,000 El Cariari, Mike Svobodny came from far behind against



Talmadge Tinsley ponders his next move in the finals.

[Continued on page 7]

PAST CHAMPIONS GATHER



Every past Midwest Backgammon champion was present for the 9th annual Championship 20-22 March 1992 in Oak Brook, IL. Pictured from left: Bob Holyon (1984), Joe Sylvester (1985), Duane Jensen (1986), Hal Heinrich (1987), Frank Talbot (1988 & 1991), Don Desmond (1989), Howard Markowitz (1990).

CHICAGO POINT

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT
2726 W. Lunt Avenue
Chicago, IL 60645-3039

KATHY, WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US SOONER?

It was news to me that Kathy Posner quit playing backgammon "...because the integrity of the players had sunk to such a low level that I did not want to have to spend all my time trying to figure out the cheating trick 'du jour,' instead of actually concentrating on my plays."

Where had she been playing that cheating was so commonplace? In Gaby Horowitz's basement? Certainly not at any of the reputable Midwestern tournaments. And why didn't she tell us sooner about the horror she was living through? If what she says is true, only suckers would continue to play backgammon.

Many Chicago players (including myself) believe that Kathy quit because the game passed her by, and she found other interesting things to do with her life (à la Tak Morioka).

Tim Holland is another fine player from the past who also quit playing tournament backgammon. I wonder if his reasons for quitting are the same as Kathy's.—*Yamin*

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BACKGAMMON
1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16 17 18 19 20
21 22 23 24 25 26 27
28 29 30 31

by Carol Joy Cole
313/232-9731

* Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

May 9*	1st Annual Mid-Illinois Doubles Tourney, Garcia's, Normal, IL	309/454-1947
May 9-10	San Diego Spring Gran Prix, Embassy Suites Hotel, La Jolla, CA	619/294-2007
May 15-17*	Boston Symphony Orch. Benefit, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/641-2091
May 17*	Plymouth Sunday Spring Special, Box Bar & Grill, Plymouth, MI	313/981-5706
May 17*	NY/NJ Co-op Regional Tournament, Ramada Inn, Woodbury, NY	516/334-4833
May 21*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
May 22-25	13th Chicago Open, Westin O'Hare Hotel, Rosemont, IL	708/674-0120
May 26*	Shadow Box Caffé Monthly Tournament, Hamtramck, MI	313/873-2233
Jun 7	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Jun 7*	San Francisco Monthly, Greeley's Restaurant, San Francisco, CA	415/387-0429
Jun 14	NEBC Yearend Tourney & Club Finals, Sheraton-Comm., Cambridge, MA	617/641-2091
Jun 17-21	1992 Las Vegas Open, Sands Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV	708/470-9491
Jun 28*	NY/NJ Co-op Regional Tourney, Best Western Oritani, Hackensack, NJ	201/833-2915
Jul 5*	Milwaukee Backgammon Bimonthly, John Hawks Pub, Milwaukee, WI	414/463-2498
Jul 11-12	College Park Summer Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Jul 15*	Rscards Summer Computer Modem Tournament, GEnie	800/638-9636
Jul 23*	Special Thursday Tournament, Holiday Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Jul 24-26	Michigan Summer Championships, Holiday Inn & Holidome, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Aug 3-9	World Cup III & U.S. Open, Harvey's Bristol Suites Hotel, Dallas, TX	301/299-8264
Aug 10-16*	Green Mountain Vacation Tournament, Stratton Mountain Inn, VT	305/527-4033
Aug 15-16*	Riverboat Gambling and CIBC Annual, Peoria/Sly Fox Pub, Lacon IL	309/692-6909
Aug 23*	Summer Cool Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755

OUTSIDE USA

May 9-10*	Copenhagen Championship Open, Copenhagen, Denmark	039/40 06 07
May 17-21	Vanuatu Tournament, Radisson Royal Palms, Port Vila, Australia	02/369-3620
May 20-24*	21st Byblos European Championship, St. Tropez, France	33/9497-0004
May 23-24	BIBA Trophy Tournament No. 2, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522/721630
May 25-29	4th Championship of Great Britain, Empress Hotel, Isle of Man	0624/626148
May 28-29	4th Bar Point Open, Hotel Fürstenhof-Esplanade, Wiesbaden, Germany	06122/16124
May 30*	German Merkur Championship 1992 #5, Novotel, Bonn, Germany	0521/64314
May 30-31	Weisbaden Cup 1992, Hotel Fürstenhof-Esplanade, Wiesbaden, Germany	06122/16124
May 30-31*	World Cup III National Qualifier Playoffs, Copenhagen, Denmark	039/40 06 07
Jun 1	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846-1923
Jun 5-8	Mats Jonasson Australian Nat'l Championship, Regent Hotel, Melbourne	03/822-3730
Jun 7*	German Merkur Championship 1992 #6, Curio Haus Hamburg, Germany	0521/64314
Jun 25-28	Brazilian Circuit, Le Méridien Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5511/843-8664
Jun 27*	1992 Kater Cup#4, Café Chantant De Kater, Enschede, Holland	31-53-353115
Jun30-Jul5	First Olympiad of Backgammon & 4th City of Venice Tournament, Italy	041/521-1029
Jul 6*	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846-1923
Jul 9-12	7th Federal International Tournament, Casino of San Remo, Italy	392/76003705
Jul 13*	Victoria Winter Tournament, Botanical Hotel, South Yarra, Australia	03/822-3730
Jul 13-19*	1992 World Championship, Hôtel Loews, Monte Carlo, Monaco	305/527-4033
Jul 22-26*	Riveria's Cup Championship, Hôtel Martinez, Cannes, France	142/88 66 45
Jul31-Aug3*	Australian Open Championships, NSW, Australia	02/369-3620
Aug 3*	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846-1923
Aug 8-9*	Weisbaden Cup 1992, Hotel Fürstenhof-Esplanade, Wiesbaden, Germany	06122/16124
Aug 13-16*	Palace Summer Championships, Badrutt's Hotel, St. Moritz, Switzerland	061/50 58 16

Yamin, director, Illinois State Championships, Deerfield, IL

CHOUETTES ARE FOR THE BIRDS

Rick Janowski's article in the March POINT gives a possible source for the term "chouette." I have found another.

In the 1930 *Backgammon Of Today*, author John Longacre gives this description on page 112: "This is a method of play, not confined to Backgammon—originally it was used at Piquet,—by which a game,

primarily for two, may be played by several. The French Chouette, or screech owl, is always attacked by all the other birds; therefore, here, one player, who is 'in the box,' is opposed by all the others."

Perhaps one of your French subscribers can verify this term.—*Jerry Godsey, Hong Kong Backgammon Club*

PRAISE FOR THE TALK WITH TAK

Great interview with Tak Morioka—one of

[Continues]

the game's good guys. Keep them coming.
—Roland Dieter, Deerfield, IL

I'm glad you did an interview with Tak Morioka. The first time I ever attended a tournament, Tak was not too busy to take the time to talk with a newcomer and offer some valuable advice. I'm going to miss his column.—Mark Hicks, Fond du Lac, WI

LOOKING FOR ACTION IN THE ORIENT

Greetings from Japan where backgammon is a centuries-old game that was played by priests and nuns in Buddhist temples. A copy of your publication has made its way to me through a friend back in the States. I want to stay in touch with the world of backgammon so sign me up for a subscription.

I was once a contributing editor of Michael Maxakuli's *Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine* and used to play in the weekly Vegas tournaments. Now I'm based in Tokyo as a TV reporter/producer.

I'm eager to network with other backgammon expatriates in Asia since I travel around the area quite a bit (especially to Manila and Hong Kong). Please print my address and Fax number.—Steve Herman, NHK Asia Project; Jinnan 2-chome;

Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-01; Japan. Fax:
(81) 03-3468-3176.

CURIOUS HANDOUT

At this year's Midwest Championships, why did you give away rabbit's foot souvenirs to all tournament participants even though the event was a benefit for the Anti-Cruelty Society? It seemed a bit incongruous.—Hal Heinrich, Calgary, AB, Canada

The theme of the event was "Lady Luck" and a rabbit's foot is another symbol of good luck (except for the rabbit, of course). Don't tell anyone, but the feet were all phony: fake fur attached to a rubber stub.

BACK TO A MONTHLY

My warmest compliments go to your fabulous newsletter and its outstanding contributing editors. I was saddened to learn that the POINT will become a bi-monthly publication even though I can understand how much work it requires.

Wishing you all the best for your newsletter and your professional life.—Alberto Diomede, Milano, Italy

Thanks, Alberto. See following story.—Ed. Δ

CHICAGO POINT RETURNS TO MONTHLY PUBLICATION

After two bimonthly issues in 1992, the CHICAGO POINT returns to monthly publication beginning with this issue.

Our new business life assignment (field engineering) is far more physically taxing and entails longer hours than previous office design work. Therefore, certain monthly issues *may* be delayed or even cancelled depending on a particular assignment.

However, every effort will be made to maintain a monthly flow of backgammon information to POINT readers across the globe. And remember that a one-year subscription means 12 issues . . . even if it takes 13 months to receive them!—Ed.

KENTUCKY SHOWS THE WAY IN 40TH INDIANA OPEN

Kentuckians Quint McTyeire and Terry Kuchenbrod placed 1-2 in The Hoosier Club's 24-26 April event. Director Butch Meese expressed overall satisfaction with the advertised four division format—a first in regional tournament competition. Results:

OPEN (32): 1-Quint McTyeire (KY), 2-Terry Kuchenbrod (KY); 1C-John O'Hagan (IN)

ADVANCED (32): 1-Milad Doueihy (IL), 2-Larry Deckel (IN); 1C-Jim Mieske (OH), 2C-Fred Gehlhoff (WI)

INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Reggie Porter (IL), 2-Holly Stowe (IN)

NOVICE (4): 1-Marjorie Kirchoff (VA)

MASTER'S JACKPOT (8): 1-Howard Markowitz (IL), Chris Kenik (IL)

DOUBLES (16): 1-Dave Cramer & Bobbie Shifrin

MICROBLITZ (64): 1-Yamin Yamin

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1992 BPC PLAYER OF THE YEAR COMPILED THRU 30 APR.

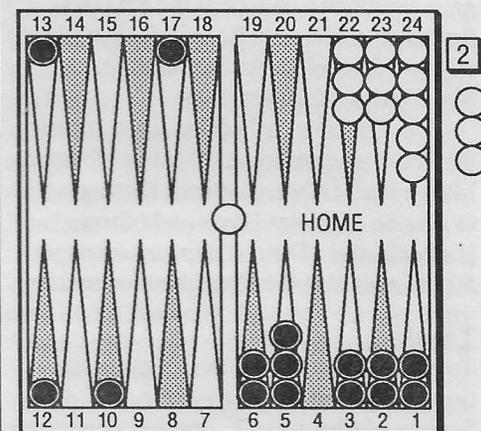
GARY KAY	9.92	René Wojtysiak	3.12	Leslie Lockett	0.96
DEEB SHALATI	9.60	Ralph Levy	2.80	Rich Galeba	0.96
MARY FRANKS	9.04	Bill Cox	2.80	John Stryker	0.88
DAVE CRAMER	8.00	Joann Feinstein	2.76	Kathy Rudnick	0.88
STU KATZ	7.84	Ed Buerger	2.72	Ron Stur	0.88
LUCKY NELSON	6.96	Devin Dallaire	2.56	Bill Davis	0.80
PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI	6.24	Judy Brown	2.56	Dan Judd	0.76
DAVID RUBIN	5.92	Paul Friedman	2.56	Patrick Desmond	0.76
DEAN MUENCH	5.68	V.W. Zimnicki	2.56	Stan Kucharz	0.64
PAUL FRANKS	5.60	Bob Zavoral	2.40	Barry Miller	0.64
CHRIS STANFORD	5.28	Bobbie Shifrin	2.36	Kurt Warning	0.64
HOWARD MARKOWITZ	5.28	Tim Mabee	2.28	Tak Morioka	0.64
HOWARD RING	5.20	Alex Itkin	2.16	Jeff Kane	0.56
YAMIN YAMIN	4.88	James Colen	1.92	Larry Lau	0.56
REGGIE PORTER	4.80	John Demian	1.92	Harold Grote	0.48
BOB EBBELER	4.72	Alice Kay	1.92	Amy Trudeau	0.48
PETER KALBA	4.16	Paul Klein	1.76	Scott Goode	0.40
DAVID ROCKWELL	4.08	Harold Seif	1.68	Karen Kertz	0.40
LENNY LODER	3.84	Steve Katz	1.60	Joe Koucharian	0.32
JOLIE LEWIS	3.72	Les Moshinsky	1.56	John Macaluso	0.32
Chris Kenik	3.68	Norma Shyer	1.28	Phil Simborg	0.32
Don Jayhan	3.60	Richard Stawowy	1.28	Ken Bond	0.24
John Brussel	3.44	Steve Sacher	1.28	Jill Ferd-Brussel	0.24
George Barr	3.20	Frankie Farjood	1.04	Betsy Miller	0.24
Sarg Serges	3.20	Georgina Flanagan	1.04	Fred Gehlhoff	0.24
Peter Berkman	3.20	Arline Levy	0.96	J.A. Miller	0.20

March's Best: Nevada Backgammon Association director **HOWARD MARKOWITZ** with 3.84 master points. Stu Katz (3.44) and Bob Ebbeler (2.80) were runners-up.

April's Best: **DAVID ROCKWELL** won his first monthly BPC honor ever with 4.08 points. George Barr (3.20) and Phyllis Smolinski (2.80) placed 2nd and 3rd respectively.

your move PROBLEM #181

Problem #3 from Backgammon Exam III. 11-point match. White leads Black, 10 to 8. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-3.**



ASK DANNY



by Danny Kleinman

MONEY IS THE MAGNET

Dear Danny: I have always enjoyed your books even though some of the material in them has given me second thoughts about playing with anyone other than a very close friend. Now I am about to play in my first organized backgammon tournament. Are there still a number of cheaters floating around the game like the ones you exposed in *The Other Side of Midnight* and *The Dice Conquer All*?

Also, must I worry about electro-magnetized backgammon boards like the one pictured in *How Little We Know About Backgammon*?—*Better Safe Than Sorry*

DEAR SAFE: Money is the magnet. So long as substantial sums are at stake in backgammon, cheaters will be attracted like Willie Sutton to a bank. So long as govern-

ments view playing backgammon for money as “gambling” and offer cheaters, unlike other thieves, immunity from prosecution, cheaters will get “free shots” and continue to make the attempt.

Eternal vigilance, such as New York’s Ace Point Backgammon Club director Michael Valentine exercised last year in barring David Adgishvili (aka David Agin) for using magnets, is the price of fair competition in backgammon. Rest assured that this is not the last attempt to cheat with magnets. Those who value money and winning more than sport will stay awake nights figuring out new cheating techniques and spend their mornings practicing. Rest assured also that neither you nor I will necessarily be capable of detecting them. Ask any professional illusionist, or visit a place like Hollywood’s “Magic Castle” to see for yourself the tricks that the skilled and practiced can play on your eyes.

Nonetheless, you can protect yourself and others in several ways:

- (1) Do not tolerate petty cheating in any form. Ostracize the petty cheaters before they “graduate” to big-time surreptitious cheating,
- (2) From time to time, do check the dice

and boards for magnets. An honest opponent won’t feel offended, and may even laugh at the thought that someone suspects him,

- (3) Scrutinize the play and rolling techniques of all who win in radical disproportion to their seeming abilities. Again, strong honest players won’t mind, and in fact, usually enjoy showing off their skills,
- (4) Beware of your own arrogance and greed. If you’ve just beaten an opponent in a first-round match of a local tournament with a \$15 entry fee, refuse his challenge to play another match for \$1500.

Yes, I know, you are confident you can beat him, for you’ve seen his play, and you can use the \$1500. But these are precisely the characteristics of those who have lost the most to cheaters and hustlers in the past.—*Yours, Danny Δ*

Questions for Danny Kleinman should be addressed to: Ask Danny, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Avenue, Chicago, IL 60645-3039.

COLEN WINS MIDWEST...

(Continued from page 1)

player Kurt Schurecht (Naperville, IL). Among the Limiteds, Bill Cox (another Chicagoan) also rallied against Kim McCollom (Bloomington, IL) for an 11–9 win in the first regional tournament he ever entered. The \$100 Open division saw Gary Fritzsche (MI) defeat Bob Zavoral (Chicago). And the 1992 Midwest Doubles Champs are Herb Gurland & Jack Kissane.

THE THEME OF THIS TOURNAMENT was Lady Luck and there was a free event for all ladies in attendance. One-point matches gave everyone a chance at the \$500 bill first prize. Chicago’s Bobbie Shifrin (the odds-on favorite?) was the luckiest, topping Debbie McKenna (MI).

Joe Sylvester (MI) defended his title in the Backgammon Exam defeating Heinrich, Markowitz, Talbot, Gurland, Kissane, O’Hagan, Malcolm Davis and others. *[Editor’s note: The test appears on page 5.]* Joe also won the Nackgammon tourney.

Thanks...

To all of the bidders in the Calcutta Auction who raised \$1700 for the Anti-Cruelty Society of Chicago. That pushes our cumu-

lative six year donation total over the \$10,000 figure. Thanks also to Mike Wainwright (Oak Brook Marriott), Jeff Henry (Jim Henry, Inc.), Danny Kleinman and Roy Friedman (BG Exam checking), John Petergal (Fast Track Printing), Itasca Wiggins (Chicago Tribune) and all of the friendly players whose attendance helped to make the 1992 Midwest Championships a success.

We’ll be back for our 10th anniversary Midwest BG Championships 19–21 March 1993 at the Oak Brook Marriott Hotel. Δ



Winner's montage: Bill Cox (Ltd.), Femi Owiku (Adv.), Bobbie Shifrin (Lady Luck).



Midwest Champion James Colen (right) with runner-up Mike Cyrkiel.

1992 MIDWEST BG CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-James Colen (MA), 2-Mike Cyrkiel (IN), 3/4-Terry Kuchenbrod (KY) / Yamin Yamin (IL); 1C-Howard Ring (IL), 2C-Ismet Demirel (AR); 1LC-Jeff Henry (IL)

ADVANCED (64): 1-Femi Owiku (IL), 2-Kurt Schurecht (IL), 3/4-Fred Gehlhoff (WI) / Marty Tatossian (IL); 1C-Carl Severino (IL), 2C-Bobbie Shifrin (IL); 1LC-Larry Deckel (IN)

LIMITED (32): 1-Bill Cox (IL), 2-Kim McCollom (IL); 1C-Glenn Swanson (IL), 2C-Beverly Loder (IL); 1LC-Mike Lawless (WI)

\$100 OPEN (14): 1-Gary Fritzsche (MI), 2-Bob Zavoral (IL)

LADY LUCK (29): 1-Bobbie Shifrin (IL)

MIDWEST DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP (32): 1-Herb Gurland (MA) & Jack Kissane (NY), 2-Ralph Levy (IL) & Norma Shyer (IL), 3/4-Bob Ebbeler (IL) & Phyllis Smolinski (IL) / Ken Bruck (IN) & B. Greg Varbanov (IN)

SATELLITE DBLS (8): 1-Ira Hoffberg (IL) & Les Witt (Can.)

BLITZ (128): 1-Frank Talbot (MI)

NACKGAMMON (32): 1-Joe Sylvester (MI), 2-Yamin Yamin (IL)

PIG-ROLLING: 1-Allen Levien (PA)

DICE JACKS: 1-John McCabe (IL) • **RUG DICE:** 1-AI Jones (Can.)

BG WHEEL OF FORTUNE: 1-Howard Ring (IL)

'92 PROFESSOR OF BACKGAMMON (11): 1-Joe Sylvester (MI)

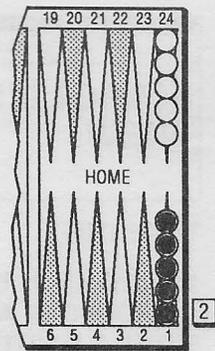
The Backgammon Exam III

Sharpen your pencil. It's time to take a test. For this year's exam at the recent Midwest Championships, 11 top players anted up \$20 each in an effort to claim the title "1992 Professor of Backgammon." When the smoke cleared, 1991 Professor Joe Sylvester and Hal Heinrich were tied with eight correct answers. However Joe did better on tiebreaker question 10 to retain his professorship for another year. How would *you* have fared? [Answers: page 7]

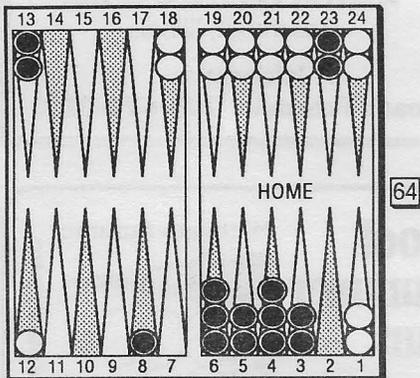


Instructions: You have 20 minutes to solve 10 problems. In money games, the Jacoby Rule is in effect. Assume championship level competition.

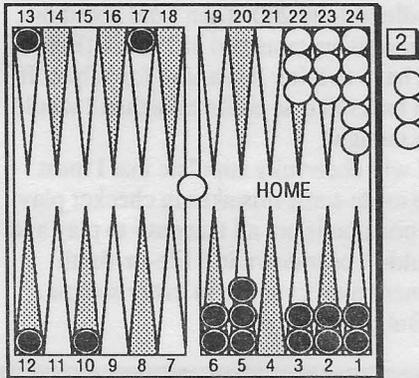
1. Money game. Black on roll. White (a steamer) has guaranteed Black that she will take his recube even in a 3-vs-3 checker position. Under these circumstances, circle the proper cube action for Black now.



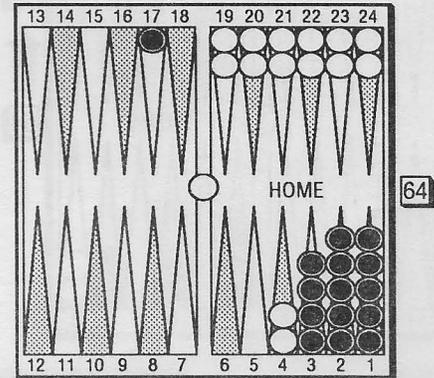
(a) No Double (b) Double



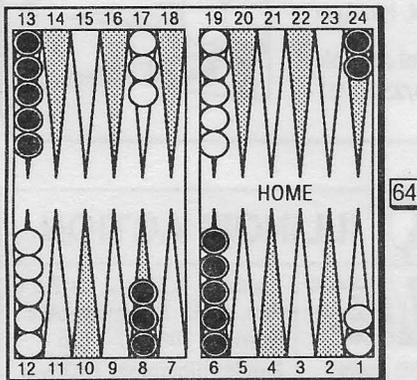
2. Money game. Black to play 1-1.



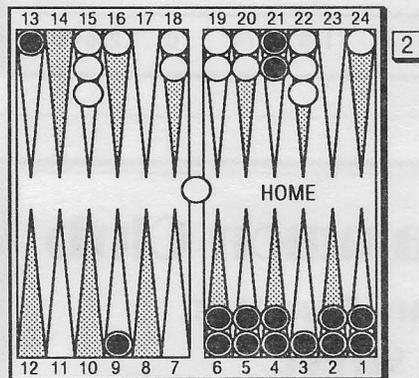
3. 11 point match. White leads Black, 10 to 8. Black to play 4-3.



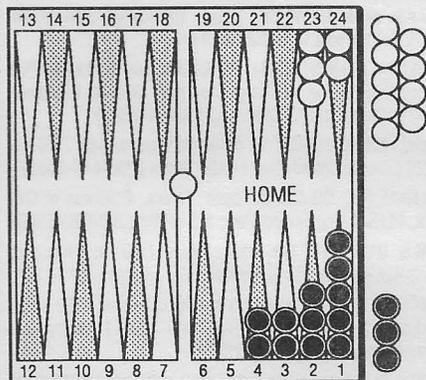
4. 7 point match tied at 5-5. Black on roll. Correct cube action for both sides?



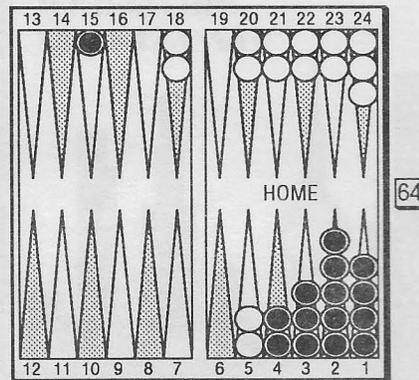
5. From the starting position, which of the 15 opening rolls can be played in the most possible legal ways?



6. 9-point match. White leads Black, 7 to 5. Black to play 1-1.



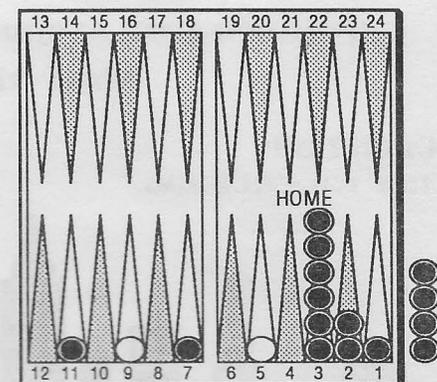
7. Double match point. Black to play 4-1.



8. Money game. Black to play 2-2.

9. You are about to play a game of backgammon without dice. Throughout the entire game, both players get to call the roll of their choice.

To determine the opening roll and see who plays first, you and your opponent will simultaneously call the number on one die. Which number should you call to give yourself the best chance to win?



10. Black rolls 2-1 and wants to minimize the number of shots he must leave White. Under this condition, what's best? Tiebreaker: List the next three best shot-minimizing plays.

HAROLD'S VIEW



by Harold Branch

TAKE THIS!

11-point match. Black leads White, 2 to 1. **SHOULD BLACK DOUBLE? SHOULD WHITE TAKE?**

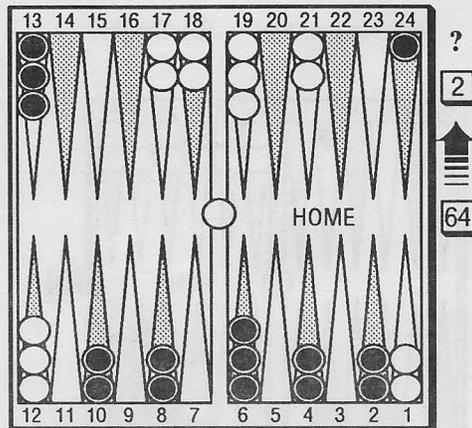


TABLE 1.

Tabulated findings for 400 rollouts of the doagrammed problem.

Rolls	Black Points Won			White Points Won			Net Pts. Black
	2	4	6	2	4	6	
1st 200	84	35	4	68	9	0	160 < 200
2nd 200	72	39	3	81	5	0	136 < 200
Total	156	74	7	149	14	0	296 < 400

The diagram at left is from page 160 of Danny Kleinman's... *But Only The Hogs Win Backgammons*. Both Danny and Neil Kazaross evaluate double for Black and drop for White.

That looks plausible. But I wondered... if it is a drop, by about how much? And does the rigidity, the stiffness of Black's position (possibly featuring too many points) tilt the equities enough for White to scratch up a take? What about all those odd number duplications? And I saw no White checkers out of play.

So I wondered—and rolled. It's nice these brutal contact positions are actually bloodless! I did 200. Then I did 200 more. The results are tabulated in Table 1 [Below].

I have to think it is a take for White. It even looks like an easier take than I would have thought.

I will cheerfully stipulate that I must have made some mistakes in checker play. The position is not all that easy to play and I couldn't bear down in a life-or-death manner on every move in every sample.

But... *Take!* Δ

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COSTA RICA...

[Continued from page 1]



Bob Wachtel (left) congratulates \$15,000 winner Mike Svobodny in the El Cariari.

Antonio Ortega in the quarterfinals and James Colen in the semi's to reach the finals and eventually defeat Bob Wachtel 21-12.

MARIO MADRIGAL AND MAX ESQUIVEL of the CRBA promise a bigger event in 1993. Δ

1ST TOURNAMENT OF THE AMÉRICAS

OPEN (63): 1-Talmadge Tinsley (TX), 2-Neil Kazaross (CA), 3/4-Steve Flam (FL) / Mike Senkiewicz (NY); 1C-Jason Lester (NY), 2C-Rick Barabino (MA); 1LC-Abraham Eitan (Holland)

INTERMEDIATE (27): 1-Reid Vogelman (NV), 2-Walter Montero (Costa Rica); 1C-Kalisa Maffeo (CA), 2C-Fernando Rocha (Arg.); 1LC-Neil Young (NY)

NOVICE (16): 1-William Charpentier (Costa Rica), 2-Bernadita Solano (Costa Rica); 1C-Leslie Bell (NY), 2C-Milton Gonzalez (Costa Rica); 1LC-Flory Zuñiga (Costa Rica)

EL CARIARI (16): 1-Mike Svobodny (NY), 2-Bob Wachtel (England), 3/4-James Colen (MA) / Christian Lestrade (Monaco)

DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Steve Flam (FL) & Neil Young (NY), 2-Leslie Bell & Jason Lester (NY), 3/4-Ron Bruns (CA) & George Photias (CA) / Hugo Ergueta (Brazil) & Fernando Rocha (Argentina)

BLITZ (128): 1-Max Esquivel (Costa Rica)

SUPER-PIÑATA/\$3000 CRUISE (16): 1-Neil Kazaross (CA)

TENNIS DOUBLES TOURNEY (7 teams): 1-Hugo Ergueta (Brazil) & Fernando Rocha (Argentina)

PIG-ROLLING: 1-Dieter Siegfried (Germany)

BG EXAM ANSWERS...

[From page 5]

1. (b) Double.
2. 13/12*, 8/5.
3. 10/6, 17/14.
4. Double and pass.
5. 4-2.
6. 6/3, 13/12.
7. Call an ACE.
8. 4/off, 1/off.
9. 15/13, 3/1 (3).
10. 11/8. (11/9*, 2/1); (7/5*, 2/1); and (7/5*, 11/10), all leave 22 shots. Δ

For Danny Kleinman's complete analysis of each problem, send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope or \$1 to: CHICAGO POINT, 2726 W. Lunt Ave., Chicago, IL 60645.

who did what

WINNER'S CORNER



Feb.-Apr. 1992

Torrequebrada Championship (Costa Del Sol, Spain; 10-16 Feb.)... Championship (28): 1-Emil Mortuk (US), 2-Matthias Pauen (GER); 1Cons.1-Peter Naguib (GER); 2Cons.1-Evert Van-Eyck (NETH); 1LC-Patrick Svensson (SWE). Intermediate: 1-Dieter Schreiber (GER), 2-Sandy DeBruin; 1Cons.1-Catherine Bladh (SP); 1Cons.1-Bambi DeBruin (ITA); 1LC-Ahmadi Nickzad (IRAN). Novice: 1-Francisco Garcia (SP), 2-Roger Ruf (GER).

Torneo Heineken en Cawi (San José, Costa Rica; 15 & 18 Feb.)... Open (32): 1-Antonio Ortega, 2-Milton Gonzáles. Novice (8): 1-Allan Porras.

French Open (Paris, France; 20-23 Feb.)... Open (72): 1-Richard Ciecioroko (FRA), 2-José Salema (PORT); 1C-Martin DeBruin (ITA).

Torneo de Cawi (San José, Costa Rica; 22 & 25 Feb.)... Open (25): 1-Mike Walker, 2-Mario Madrigal. Novice (16): 1-Ana Segreda.

NY/NJ Co-Op Regional (Woodbury, NY; 23 Feb.)... Open (16): 1-Jeff Acierno, 2-Ralph Goldberg; 1C-Harry Georgiou. Limited (16): 1-David Menkes, 2-David Ripka; 1C-Sally Marra.

Pittsburgh Charity Tournament (Pittsburgh, PA; 28 Feb.-1 Mar.)... Open (25): 1-Dennis Culpepper (VA), 2-Paul Weaver (MD); 1C-Ed Maslansky (MD), 2C-John Brussel (IL). Intermediate (25): 1-Ed King (OH), 2-Abdi Zaltash (TN); 1C-Ben Elliot (NC), 2C-Rich Catalano (PA). Novice (10): 1-Al Bringardner (OH); 1C-Jon Persky (PA). Doubles (16): 1-Paul Weaver & Walter Trice, 2-Ben Elliott & Herb Avram. Microblitz (64): 1-Bruce Hall (NC).

Milwaukee Club Bimonthly (Milwaukee, WI; 8 Mar.)... Open (13): 1-Bill Cary, 2-David Rubin (IL); 1C-Bob Holyon. Limited (11): 1-Jim Nielsen, 2-Fred Gehlhoff; 1C-Lenore Holyon.

San Francisco Monthly (San Francisco, CA; 8 Mar.)... Open (32): 1-Peter Panagotacos, 2-Neil Kazaross; 1C-Tom Johnson, 2C-Stan Weiss.

New England Club Monthly (Cambridge, MA; 15 Mar.)... Expert Div. (19): 1-Evan Diamond, 2-Roy Friedman; 1C-Garbis Zerdelian, 2C-Lincoln Bedell. A Div. (18): 1-Bob Mojahed, 2-Ray Mosher; 1C-John Koulopoulos, 2C-Fred Millman. B Div. (8): 1-Larry Liebster; 1C-Jim McKenna; 1LC-Michael Zehr.

Kater Cup 1992 No. 2 (Enschede, Netherlands; 21 Mar.)... Championship (24): 1-Marcel van Schriek (NL), 2-Volker Wenzlaff (GER); 1C-Mehrzad Jarral-Layegh (GER). Beginner (13): 1-Gert Sikkem (NL), 2-Alex Slegt (NL); 1C-Karrie Bos (NL). "Grote Kater" Shootout (39): 1-Cordula Thieß (GER)/Sikko.

Bar Point Sunday Tourney (Oak Brook, IL; 29 Mar.)... Open (19): 1-Stu Katz, 2-Yamin Yamin, 3/4-Jeff Kane / Deeb Shalati; 1C-Peter Kalba, 2C-Gary Kay. Intermediate (19): 1-Bobbie Shifrin, 2-Tim Mabee, 3/4-Fred Gehlhoff / Don Jayhan; 1C-Alice Kay, 2C-Reggie Porter.

NY/NJ Co-op Regional (Hackensack, NJ; 29 March)... Open (21): 1-Ed Pavilonis, 2-Sid Schneider; 1C/2C-Parry Gartner / Joe Paduch. Limited (22): 1-Aurel Tudrof, 2-James Mannheimer; 1C/2C-Al Bader / Arnold Goldstein.

CPBC Spring Open (Bethesda, MD; 18 Apr.)... Open (26): 1-Bruce Hall; 1C-Howard Shapiro; 1LC/2LC-Larry Keating / Ed Maslansky. Δ

AMALGAMATION

COSTA RICAN CHATTER: It seems that the tournament logo, with its two oversized letter Ts was a tip-off to

the eventual winner of the Backgammon Tour-

BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT of the Americas

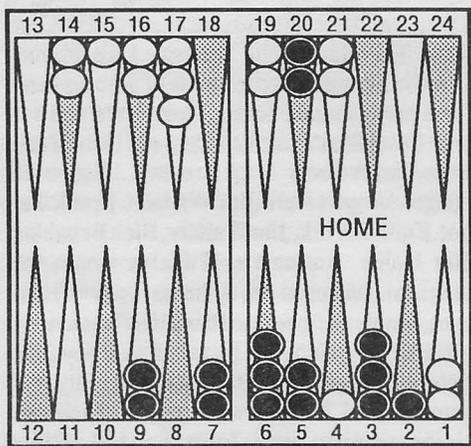
namment of the Americas: **Talmadge Tinsley...**

There was more than just backgammon in Costa Rica. The Ministry of Tourism, **Luis Manuel Chacon Jimenez**, invited some of us to his house for a backgammon cocktail party. We also met with Costa Rica's past President and Nobel Peace Prize winner **Oscar Arias Sanchez...** Successful bungee jumpers were **Jim Wallace, Frank Talbot, Emil Mortuk, Jim Wallace, Rick Bababino, Jim Colen. Antionette Williams** won a free jump but chickened out at the last second. However, Antoinette redeemed herself by breaking the piñata at the welcoming fiesta... **Carol Joy Cole, Peter Kalba** and **Herb Roman** successfully navigated a level 3 white water rapids. Their raft-riding companions—**John Brussel, Diane Dutertre** and this reporter—were all "thrown" for a loss..... "Dating Game" part 2: BPC player **Leslie Lockett's** path crossed with many celebrities when she worked in New York for the "Ed Sullivan Show." She's dated **Desi Arnez, Jr., Bill Medley (Righteous Brothers)**, race car driver **Stirling Moss, Bobby Vinton** and **Mason Williams**. And Pub Club director **Val Zimnicki** spent one wild night with **Jefferson Airplane's** lead singer **Gracie Slick** back in the late 60s... Congratulations to **Rich & Mary Siebold** (Milwaukee, WI) on the 8 Jan. birth of **Steven Edward Siebold**. Rich's nickname is "Ace," so they call Steven "Deuce."... **Merrill Schrag** informs us that the Milwaukee Club now meets Gas Lite North, 5930 W. North Ave. Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m., and Central Illinois Club director **Sue Will** moves her club to Chi-Chi's in Peoria, IL Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.... Chicago to New York: **Larry Lau**. Florida to Chicago: **George Barr**... Congrats to **Peter Berkman** and **Jodie Pearlman** on their announced engagement 18 March... Thanks to **Bloomington-Normal Backgammon** director **Lane O'Connor** for his wonderful write-up of the **Midwest Championships** in his *B-N Backgammon* newsletter... An incredible coincidence: While **Carol Joy Cole** was directing the Backgammon Tournament Of The Americas in Costa Rica, her son **Chris Cole** was playing—and winning the Racquetball Tournament Of The Americas in Honduras!... **Mary Ann Meese** was the correct caller in a recent WIBC radio contest and won a trip for herself and husband **Butch** to Las Vegas over Easter Weekend. And over the trip, **Mary Ann** joined the ranks of backgammon players who have quit smoking... Get-well wishes go out to BPC player **Joe Koucharian** who went into the hospital for knee surgery 24 April. Δ

PROBLEM #180 SOLVED

by Kit Woolsey

1992 Reno Masters Invitational Finals.
Joe Sylvester (Black) vs. Wilcox
Snellings (White). Double match point.
BLACK TO PLAY 4-2.



Black's position seems strong, but it is not as strong as it looks. White's structure is good, and Black will have a difficult time getting off White's 5-point conveniently. The four plausible plays appear to be:

- 1) 9/5, 6/4*
- 2) 9/5, 9/7
- 3) 9/7, 6/2
- 4) 20/18, 6/2

The fourth choice, 20/18, 6/2, can be eliminated quickly even though it leaves no blots in Black's inner or outer board. There are times to break an anchor, but this is definitely not one of them. White has four builders aimed at both the bar- and 5-points, and she will not hesitate to fire both guns if Black makes this play. If Black then fails to hit back immediately, he'll be in big trouble. Any of the other plays must be better.

We can also eliminate the third choice, 9/7, 6/2, simply because it is clear that 9/7, 9/5 is superior. Using the builder from the 6-point to make the ace-point is clearly inefficient and makes the spare on the 3-point completely worthless. In addition, now Black will have to play a 6 next roll, which could be costly in the priming battle. Finally, Black loses builders for the 4-point which is the point he really needs to make. The choice is definitely between 9/5, 6/4* and 9/5, 9/7.

Let's look at what is likely to happen after 9/5, 9/7. White might be able to hit the blot on the 2-point, but that is not very serious. Probably White will either make the anchor on Black's 4-point or more

likely, run the blot on Black's 4-point into the outfield, bringing the blot on White's 10-point to safety with the rest of the roll.

After this, what is going on? Despite Black's hold on both 5-points, he is really in quite a bit of trouble. White has control of the outfield, and Black will soon be squeezed off his anchor at a time when White will be well-positioned to pounce.

Even with those two men back on Black's ace-point, White still has the superior timing. If Black cannot make his 4-point, White will definitely be in good shape when Black is forced to make a run for it. And even if Black is fortunate enough to make the 4-point, he will immediately be squeezed while White has plenty of men to play with. If Black leaves his anchor with one man, White will be ready to pounce on the remaining blot, build her 5-point, and have sufficient timing to win a priming battle as well.

The key to the position is to see that Black's strength is not his prime or his timing; Black's strength is his advanced anchor and superior inner board. This indicates that Black should be playing aggressively to improve his attack while he still has the anchor to fall back on if White retaliates.

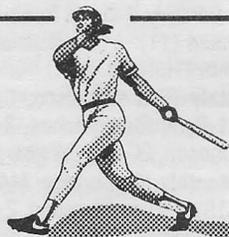
The aggressive 9/5, 6/4* just has to be the thematic play. If Black gets away with it and wins the fight for his 4-point, he will

have three of White's men trapped behind the prime. Now when Black runs with one man, White will not be in very good shape in the priming battle. Even if White makes the five point on Black's head, Black will remain a strong favorite.

On the other hand, suppose we have the more likely scenario of White hitting back and sending one or two of Black's men to the bar. How bad is that? Not very bad. Black retains his anchor and White's bar-point is still open. Therefore Black figures to be able to enter and escape with one man while holding his anchor. If he can do this, he will still retain his advantage, possibly now with superior timing to win an eventual priming battle. The loose hit looks to me like a "heads I win, tails I break even" play; even if the coin is weighted in favor of tails, it seems to be the best play.

Timing is a very deceptive issue here. One might think at first glance that Black has the superior timing with his advanced anchor and better board. That just isn't the case. Until Black can make his 4-point or force White to crunch her board, Black will be unable to maintain a lasting advantage.

The way to look at positions such as this one is to try to estimate what will be happening a few moves down the road. In this case it is quite clear that Black will soon be squeezed off his anchor. He must act now before this happens. Δ



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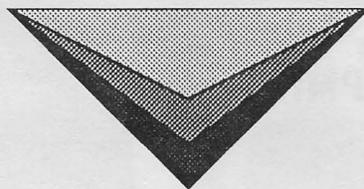
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