

CHICAGO POINT

NUMBER 61

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

AUGUST 1993

monte carlo world championships

PETER JES THOMSEN WINS WORLD TITLE IN ALL DENMARK FINALS

Peter Jes Thomsen, a 21-year-old professional player from Denmark, has defeated fellow countryman, John Sjølin 23–21 to win the 1993 World Championship of Backgammon. A lower-than-expected 350 players attended the annual Monte Carlo bash held at the beautiful Loews Hotel 19–25 July. A 20% attendance drop could be attributed to the organizers' unexplainable failure to mail out invitations.

In his round-of-16 match, Thomsen defeated Super Jackpot runner-up Neville Eber (South Africa) to advance to the quarterfinals. *Backgammon Magazin* editor Harald Johanni of Germany was Peter's next victim, falling 21–10.

In the semifinals, Peter faced the last American hope, Rageb Shadallah (NY). Rageb, who had upset America's Wilcox Snellings in the quarterfinals, fell to the Danish star 23–16.

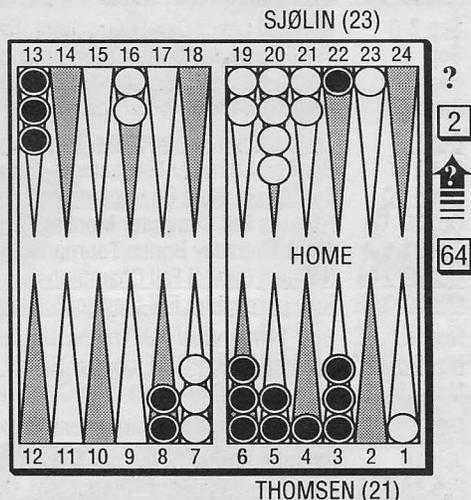
The Finals

The televised finals commenced on Sunday the 25th at 3:30 P.M. Alan Steffen, assisted by Wilcox Snellings supplied commentary.

As fate would have it, Peter's opponent was fellow Dane John Sjølin. Thomsen, with only three years of playing experience, began an extensive study of the game with the 26-year-old Sjølin about one year ago following Thomsen's round-of-16 finish at the 1992 World Championship. For the two, meeting in the finals was a dream-come-true.

Thomsen and Sjølin bobbed and weaved through the first 36 points of their 25-point finals with neither competitor able to deliver a knockout blow. The match was tied at 10, then 14, 15, and 17. At 18-all, Sjølin ran off five key points to take a "commanding" 23–18 lead. But Thomsen refused to roll over and play dead. Cutting the deficit to 23–21, Thomsen offered a very tricky double [shown above]:

25-point World Championship. John Sjølin (White) leads Peter Jes Thomsen (Black) 23–21. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Sjølin's take resulted in a Thomsen gammon and a 25–23 victory for the youngest player ever to hold the World title.

Harald Johanni used *Expert Backgammon*® to run the position 1296 times. His findings showed the proper cube action to be a pass by 1.5%. It's certain that we have not seen the end of this one.

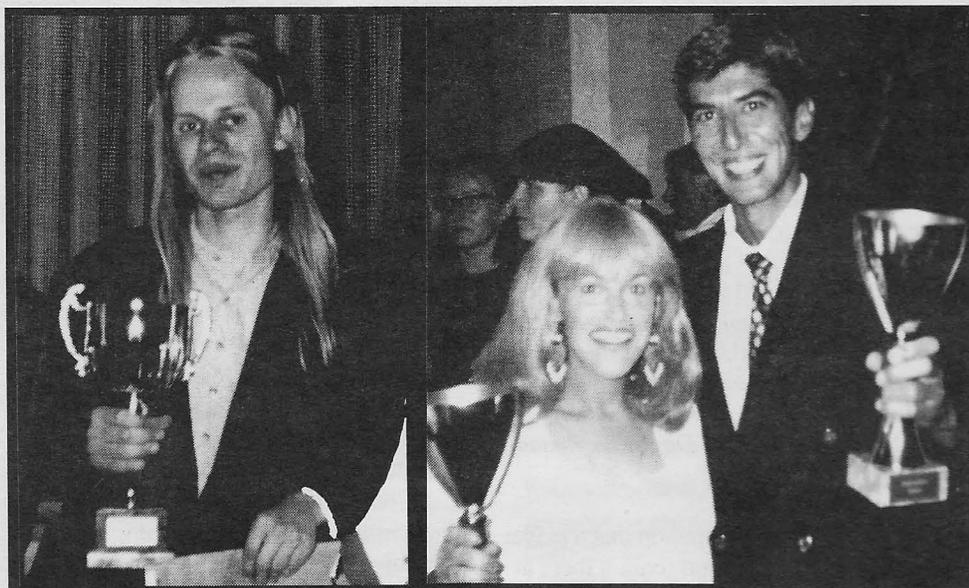
WHAT IS HAPPENING to the "big guns" of the game? Is USA backgammon dominance over? For the last three years, relative unknown European players (Meyburg, Ressu, Thomsen) have ended up on top.

Johanni believes youth and stamina now play a bigger role in determining a champion. "The differences in skill are not as big any more. Winning also depends if you are in good shape, both physical and psychological. My quarterfinal match against Thomsen didn't end until 3:30 A.M. The Ressu vs. Steffen round-of-32 match finished at 7:00 A.M. I have a regular job and am not used to those hours."

Why are Denmark players improving so rapidly? There's no question that the Danish Backgammon Federation is largely responsible. Johanni says, "They claim to have 11,000 players, 2000 that are registered, in a country that is one-fifth the size of Germany. We have only about 1000 players. They can get a game of backgammon every day. It makes a big difference."

In other events, Martin Menzer of Germany battled back from a 20–7 deficit to defeat Vazgen Matevosian (Armenia) in

[Continued on page 5]



21-year-old Peter Jes Thomsen of Denmark proudly displays his World Championship trophy. Intermediate champ Martin Menzer (Germany) and semifinalist Marcy Sloan (Long Grove, Illinois) are shown at right. [Photos by Marcy Sloan and Yamin Yamin.]

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LETTERS

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BEARING OFF ONTO THE BAR

I disagree strongly with Jake Jacobs and the committee who ruled that a checker borne off and mistakenly put on the bar is still considered borne off [See "Letters," issue 60]. Though I believe backgammon should involve mental skills to the exclusion of manual, to place a man on the bar is *not* to make an "error of the hand." An "error of the hand" would occur if after hitting an enemy blot, you tried to put it on the bar but it tumbled off and fell onto somebody's bar point. That should be disregarded: the act of attempting to put the man on the bar speaks clearly to the intention of the clumsy player. Even an "error of the mind" may be corrected—in a *timely* manner, before lifting one's dice.—*Danny Kleinman, Los Angeles, CA*

I agree 100% with your opinion that a player borne off on the bar should remain there at the discretion of the opponent. This belief has nothing to do with being a "good sport" or in "keeping with the spirit of the game." It is simply common sense that if you are

coming attractions

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

NATIONAL

Aug 8	Summer Cool Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/338-6380
Aug 8*	Pittsburgh Club Sunday Tournament, Steve Hast's Home, Pittsburgh, PA	412/823-7500
Aug 9-15	<u>15th Green Mountain Festival of Backgammon, Stratton Mountain Inn, VT</u>	<u>305/527-4033</u>
Aug 19	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Aug 22	Central Illinois Club Summer Sizzler Tournament, Sly Fox Pub, Lacon, IL	309/673-7622
Aug 22	South Florida Summer Tournament, London Pub, Pompano Beach, FL	305/785-1282
Aug 22*	NY/NJ BG Co-Op Regional Tournament, Ramada Inn, Woodbury, NY	718/341-3779
Aug 27-29*	<u>30th Gammon Associates Invitational, Bombay Bicycle Club, Burbank, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Sep 3-6	<u>National Labor Day Tournament, Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN</u>	<u>317/845-8435</u>
Sep 16	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Sep 19*	Austin BG Assn. Sunday Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/280-5945
Sep 26*	New York Chess & Backgammon Tournament, New York, NY	212/302-5989
Oct 1-3	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Turin, NY</u>	<u>716/442-8221</u>
Oct 3	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Oct 6-10	<u>3rd Illinois State Championships & America Cup, Woodfield Hilton, IL</u>	<u>708/945-7801</u>
Oct 20	Rscards Fall Computer Modern Tournament, GEnie	800/638-9636
Oct 21	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Oct 22-24	<u>Nation's Capitol Fall Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD</u>	<u>301/530-0603</u>
Oct 29-31	<u>New Hampshire Fall Classic, Sheraton Tara Wayfarer, Bedford, NH</u>	<u>603/863-4711</u>
Nov 9	BPC 11th Annual Fall Trophy Tourney, Golden Flame, Chicago, IL	312/338-6380
Nov 20-21	<u>Autumn Gran Prix, Embassy Suites Hotel, La Jolla, CA</u>	<u>619/294-2007</u>
Nov 21	15th Annual Flint Area Club Championships, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	313/232-9731
Dec 5	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Jan 19	Rscards Winter Computer Modern Tournament, GEnie	800/638-9636
Feb 18-20*	<u>16th Annual Charity Tournament, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA</u>	<u>412/823-7500</u>
Mar 18-20*	<u>1994 Midwest Championships, Marriott Hotel, Oakbrook, IL</u>	<u>312/338-6380</u>

OUTSIDE USA

Aug 7-8*	Annual Sjælland Open 1993, Skibsted, Bygaden, Veksø, Denmark	039/40 06 07
Aug 12-15	Palace Summer Championships, Badrutt's Palace, St. Moritz, Switz.	061/331 5816
Aug 28-29	BIBA Trophy Tournament No. 3, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522/53 68 36
Sep 2-5	Brazilian BG Assoc. Tournament, Hotel Meridien, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521/267 6033
Sep 6	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846 1923
Sep 16-19*	Byblos Challenge Cup, Hotel Byblos, Saint-Tropez, France	331/4288 6645
Sep 23-26	12th Internat'l Austrian Open, Hotel Schloß Seefelds, Pörtlach, Austria	08341/12825
Oct 2-4*	Australian Open Backgammon Championship	02/369 3620
Oct 4	Hong Kong Club Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846 1923
Oct 14-17	1st Israeli Open Championship, Moriah Plaza Hotel, Tel Aviv, Israel	3120/625 4775
Oct 16-17	Sandy Osborne Memorial Trophy, Hilton Hotel, E. Midlands Airport, England	0522/53 68 36
Oct 21-24	3rd Rio de Janeiro Open Tournament, Hotel Meridien, Rio, Brazil	5521/267 6033
Oct 26-29*	2nd S.A. World Cup & XIV Tournament, Las Naciones, Buenos Aires, Arg.	541/790 4769
Nov 5-7*	NRW-Meisterschaft 1993, Hotel Antana/Kaarst, Düsseldorf, Germany	02151/503 591
Nov 5-7*	Annual Hong Kong Championships, Ladies Recreation Club	852/846-1923
Nov 11-14*	1st International Impérial Palace Trophy Tournament, Anecy, France	061/331 58 16
Nov 13	Mencap Charity Tournament, Meridien Hotel, Piccadilly London, England	0624/851 045
Nov 24-28	2nd International Turkish Championship, Hotel Penta, Istanbul, Turkey	3120/625 4775
Nov 27-28	BIBA Trophy Tournament No. 4, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522/53 68 36
Dec 2-5	Brazilian BG Assoc. Tournament, Hotel Meridien, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521/267 6033
Feb 17-20*	4th French Open Championship, Lutetia Hotel, Paris, France	331/4288 6645

going to play tournament backgammon, you must abide by the rules. If you make a mistake, you must suffer the consequences.

What bothers me the most is not that the committee made their ruling, but that your opponent accepted it and that he even allowed the committee to be convened in the first place. He should have simply admitted he made a mistake and gotten on with the match. All backgammon players

know that once the dice are picked up, a move cannot be changed. It applied to Jake's opponent in Position #1 and it should apply here. The checker should have been left on the bar.—*Jerry Godsey, President, Hong Kong Backgammon Club*

High stakes tournament backgammon is not a kid's game where a careless error can

[Continued on page 3]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1993

Top 100 through 1 August 1993 after 10 tournaments
(Includes Thousand Islands tournament)



Howard Markowitz	26.66	Herb Gurland	7.88	John Rockwell	3.96	George Barr	2.08
Ben Lang	26.00	Yamin Yamin	7.34	Norm Wiggins	3.96	Larry Strommen	2.08
Marty Storer	23.83	Frank Frigo	7.24	Bill Bartholomay	3.79	Miriam Bureson	2.00
Frank Talbot	22.16	Dave Orandle	7.20	Carl Adamec	3.76	Javad Farjood	1.92
Woody Woodson	21.12	Ron Weingrad	7.20	Sam Hanna	3.76	Arkady Kuperman	1.87
Bob Holyon	19.52	Gabe Stiasny	7.18	Belle Pronman	3.73	Jerry Padova	1.87
Ken Bond	16.16	Alan Steffen	6.68	Carol Joy Cole	3.60	Jill Ferdinand	1.76
Paul Stebbing	16.00	Jim Lakdawala	6.50	Jerry Ungar	3.53	Mark Damish	1.73
Quint McTyeire	14.53	Mike Pettigrew	6.50	Randall Witt	3.53	David Rubin	1.65
David Hochron	14.40	Ray Desforges	6.42	Bob Wachtel	3.34	Kurt Schurecht	1.65
Al Jones	13.32	Ken Cohen	6.28	Stu Hosen	3.34	Bob Howington	1.61
John Mansey	13.00	Peter Kalba	6.09	Carl Sellars	3.34	Mike Lawless	1.50
Ralph Levy	11.44	Jeff Kane	6.09	John Lear	3.20	Allen Levien	1.35
Dean Muench	11.33	Marty Kohler	5.85	Dave Pink	3.06	David MacBryde	1.32
Arnold Zousmer	10.85	Fred Gehlhoff	5.63	Leo Tuin	3.06	Farzan Garmroodi	1.32
Perry Gartner	10.84	Mike Shanas	5.60	Jan Carlstrom	2.94	Peter Zacks	1.32
Paul Strasberg	10.63	Ed Pavilonis	5.21	Denny Leatherman	2.90	Ray Foglerlund	1.32
Felix Yen	10.44	Lila Swan	5.21	Nayan Shah	2.90	Lance Jenkins	1.29
Mike Nelson	10.44	Rich Sweetman	5.21	Michael Sharp	2.50	Johnnie Roberts	1.25
Jake Jacobs	10.07	Larry Lau	5.20	Holly Stowe	2.41	Gurbachan Khosa	1.25
Jorgen Granstedt	9.69	Carol Falk	4.95	Ed Zell	2.40	Noah Monro	1.25
Stuart Thompson	9.58	Norma Shyer	4.92	Ed Buerger	2.13	Gardner Soule	1.00
Andy Palumbo	9.05	Mark Donaldson	4.82	Dale Haukenfreres	2.13	George Photias	1.00
Ami Tennenbaum	8.82	Dean Adamian	4.03	Wally Watson	2.12	Randy Peterson	0.93
Ira Hoffberg	8.40	Joe Sylvester	4.03	Walter Trice	2.12	Four tied with	0.88

Ottawa's Paul Stebbing moved into 8th place following his 16.00 point win in the Thousand Islands Tournament at Alexandria Bay, New York (30 July–1 August). With eight 1993 tournaments remaining, this year's ABT race remains up for grabs.

Coming up in August: Green Mt. Festival of Backgammon and 30th G/A Invitational.



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1993 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 JULY

Neil Kazaross	16.40	Richard Stawowy	3.52	Steve Grubart	1.60	Greg Roland	0.60
Gary Kay	16.04	Alice Kay	3.48	Tony Schroeder	1.56	Kurt Schurecht	0.60
Yamin Yamin	13.28	Dave Cramer	3.44	Paul Klein	1.52	Mike Spiropoulos	0.56
Tak Morioka	13.12	Ed Buerger	3.36	Amy Trudeau	1.44	Dick McCall	0.56
David Rubin	12.20	Stan Kucharz	3.32	Andy Krenitz	1.36	Richard Beagarie	0.56
Jake Jacobs	11.76	Georgina Flanagan	3.28	Lou Salzman	1.32	John Stryker	0.48
John Demian	11.04	Joann Feinstein	3.20	Jill Ferdinand	1.28	Joe Koucharian	0.48
Don Jayhan	9.40	Bob Ebbeler	3.16	Betsy Miller	1.28	Graham Sievers	0.48
Phyllis Smolinski	9.28	Sarg Serges	3.12	Peggy Fleming	1.12	Jerry Brooks	0.48
Paul Friedman	8.48	Alex Itkin	3.04	Jim Pappas	1.12	Frank Callea	0.44
Deeb Shalati	8.00	Marcy Sloan	3.04	Larry Strommen	1.12	John Meyers	0.40
Jolie Rubin	6.64	Stu Katz	2.80	Marty Tatosian	1.00	William Frierson	0.32
Paul Franks	6.20	Femi Owiku	2.72	George Barr	0.96	Harry Hayward	0.32
Herb Roman	6.16	Bill Keefe	2.36	Ron Stur	0.96	Jay Ward	0.32
John Brussel	5.68	V.W. Zimnicki	2.24	Roland Dieter	0.96	Katy Clark	0.32
Bobbie Shifrin	5.60	Bruce Wittert	2.16	Dave Rockwell	0.96	Greg Try	0.32
Bill Davis	5.56	Leslie Lockett	1.96	Tad Wilson	0.96	Barbara Levinson	0.24
Mary Franks	5.44	Chuck Olson	1.92	J.A. Miller	0.96	Andy Argy	0.24
Ralph Levy	5.28	Wilcox Snellings	1.92	Steve Katz	0.92	Joe Mangine	0.24
Norma Shyer	5.04	Phil Simborg	1.84	Barry Miller	0.88	Mark Kay	0.24
Allen Zimmerman	4.88	Howard Markowitz	1.84	Ray Kershaw	0.88	Mark Murphy	0.24
Ken Bond	4.72	Elaine Kehm	1.84	Reggie Porter	0.80	Mary Vitale	0.20
Tim Mabee	4.72	Arline Levy	1.76	Dan Judd	0.64	Paul Reiner	0.16
Danny DeRoche	4.08	Tim Serges	1.76	Larry Yakowenko	0.64	Andy Bittman	0.16
Howard Ring	3.76	Don Desmond	1.60	Jeff Kane	0.64	Barry Epstein	0.16
Peter Kalba	3.68						

Perennial challenger **TAK MORIOKA** grabbed two wins in July to collect 3.84 master points and Player of the Month recognition. There was a three way tie for second between Gary Kay, David Rubin and Jolie Rubin (2.80 each).

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

be forgiven. A director's ruling will always be *for* one player and *against* another. The quality director will take the ruling process as part of his responsibility and make the tough rulings necessary for a well-run event.

A tough ruling in a given situation will not be well-received by at least one player, but in a way, the penalized player will benefit from it. Severely hurt once, it is unlikely that he will ever make the same mistake again!—*Larry Strommen, Indianapolis, IN*

A VOTE FOR HASTY PLAYS

My favorite column in the POINT is "Hasty Plays" by Duane Jensen. All of them are clear, concise and to the point.—*David Rubin, Chicago, IL*

ANTOINETTE A HIT

I sure like those CHICAGO POINT interviews. Your most recent one with Antoinette Williams and a previous one with Jack Kissane were very enjoyable. A splendid feature!—*Harold Branch, Louisville, KY*

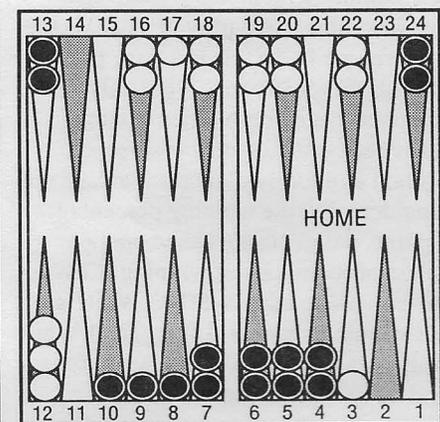
I enjoyed the Antoinette interview very much. On another topic, who was the absent-minded player who put his man on the bar during the bear-off? I would have ruled that the man must stay on the bar. This is like when somebody is forced to hit you, but forgets to put you on the bar and picks up his dice. Tough luck for him.—*Mario Madrigal, President, Costa Rican Backgammon Association.*

[Continued on page 5]

your move

PROBLEM #196

Match to 11 points. White leads Black, 7 to 1. **BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.**



64

How Many Men To Hit?

by Jerry Godsey

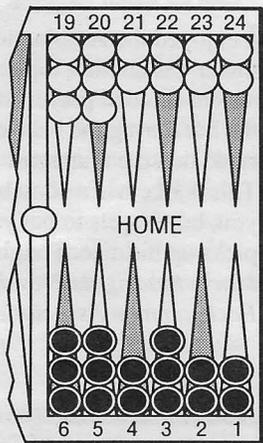
In a recent chouette, I put a fourth man on the bar against a closed board. Eventually I was hit by that fourth man and recubed out. One of the players criticized me for being too greedy. "It was neither necessary nor prudent to hit that extra man," he claimed. I felt certain that hitting the fourth man was correct and decided to use *Expert Backgammon*® to verify my belief.

White was given a position where if she hit, she would probably win. One to four White men were placed on the bar vs. Black's strong closed board. I had the computer roll the position out either 1296 times (36 x 36) or 2592 times (36 x 36 x 2) to minimize statistical variances. The results were very educational.

Of particular interest was the consistently low game-winning rate for White. In other words, as Black, no matter how many men you hit in these situations, your chances of losing are very minimal.

POSITION #1

Money game. Black has closed out one White man.

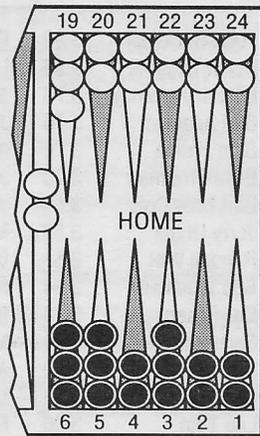


With one man closed out on the bar, White won only 1.8% of the games. I rolled this out a total of 2592 times because I was surprised by the low winning rate. Black's equity with no cube was +0.99 points per game. An equity of +0.50 is the break-even point, so this is a huge pass. Black's gammon chances were only 2.0%. Remember this gammon figure. It and Black's backgammon chances become important as additional men are closed out.

Incidentally, the winning percentages and points per game are based on the cubeless probabilities of winning (CPW). Cube ownership adds 3-5% to White's game-winning chances. Likewise, if White already owns a 2-cube, Black's equity would be twice that shown.

POSITION #2

Money game. Black has closed out two White men.

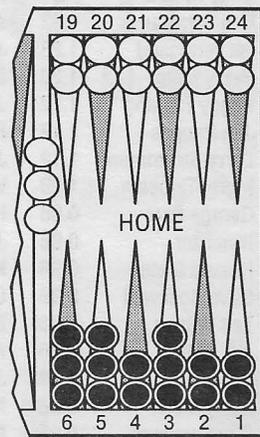


With two men closed out on the bar, White's game-winning chances increase from 1.8% to 2.3%—an increase of only 0.5%. However, Black's gammon and backgammon chances greatly increase from 2.0% to 31.6%.

I rolled this position out 2592 times because I thought the gammon/backgammon chances seemed low. I still think they are low and while in the United States, I called Tom Weaver, one of the two individuals involved in programming *Expert Backgammon*®. He said the actual rate should be about 38%, so it seems the program might be playing too conservatively in these positions. I'm told this will be improved in future revisions. However, Black's equity still increased from +0.99 points per game to +1.28 points per game. Obviously, it's correct to hit the second man.

POSITION #3

Money game. Black has closed out three White men.

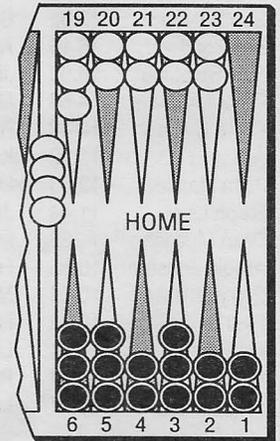


With three men closed out on the bar, White's winning chances increase from 2.3% to 3.6%. Note that hitting the third man increase White's chances by only 1.3%—not much of a change. However, the gammon/backgammon rate changes

dramatically. With three men closed out, Black wins 73.2% gammons and 3.6% backgammons. Black's equity increases from +1.28 points per game to +1.73 points per game. White wins just slightly over 1% more games, but Black wins an additional +0.45 points per game. It is clear that hitting the additional, or third man, is correct by a wide margin.

POSITION #4

Money game. Black has closed out four White men.



Now we arrive at a position with four men closed out on the bar. White's winning percentage actually decreases from 3.6% to 3.2%—almost no change. With four men closed out, Black wins 75.5% gammons. This is just a slight increase from the 73.2% he won with three men on the bar. However, his backgammon chances rise nearly fourfold from 3.6% to 15.0%. This change increases Black's equity from +1.73 points per game to +1.99 points per game. Once again, it's definitely correct to hit the additional man.

OUT OF CURIOSITY I decided to put five men on the bar to see if Black's equity would again increase. In this case, White's winning rate of 3.3% was virtually the same as with four men at 3.2%. However, there was an extremely large increase in Black's backgammon rate. Black's gammon rate decreased from 75.5% to 58.0%, but his BG rate increased from 15.0% to 34.3%. This resulted in an increase of Black's equity from +1.99 points per game to +2.20 points per game.

IN SUMMARY, if you have a closed board and you can hit additional men, then the strategy is clear—*pound away*. But if you are in a match situation where a gammon victory is meaningless, the correct approach is to hit just one checker. Δ

The preceding article was reprinted from the Hong Kong Backgammon Club newsletter with the permission of Jerry Godsey, newsletter editor and club president.

MONTE CARLO...

[Continued from page 1]

21-20 in the wild Intermediate finals. Achim Müller gave Germany her second first place trophy in the Beginner division by defeating Gitte Dalgaard (DEN). S. Havlik (CZH) captured the Super Jackpot. And Hong Kong's team of André Hoffman, John Simon and Patrice Hattu upset USA masters Nack Ballard, Bill Robertie and Mike Senkiewicz in the Fred Team Championship.

Congratulations to our two Chicago representatives who made a good showing on the Riviera. Yamin Yamin reached the Championship final 32 and Marcy Sloan advanced to the Intermediate semifinals before falling to Martin Menzer. Marcy also collected the Intermediate Ladies Prize. Complete results: Δ

MONTE CARLO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPIONSHIP (196): 1-Peter Jes Thomsen (DEN), 2-John Sjølin (DEN), 3/4-Irfan Mizrakci (TUR) / Rageb Shadallah (USA); FirstCon1-Benjamin Lund (DEN), FirstCon2-Kazuhiro Shino (GB), FirstCon3/4-Michael Lofblad (GER) / Rassoul Zomorodi (GER); SecondCon1-Gerhard Schiesser (GER), SecondCon2-Nack Ballard (USA), SecondCon3/4-Sebastian Taylor (GB) / Yannis Tomazos (GRE); LC1-Shimon Kagan (ISR), LC2-Salvador Treves (FRA).

INTERMEDIATE (88): 1-Martin Menzer (GER), 2-Vazgen Matevosian (ARM), 3/4-Udo Geib (GER) / Marcy Sloan (USA); FirstCon1-Richard Mayer (GER), FirstCon2-Fernando Durao (POR), FirstCon3/4-Brian Lever (GB) / René Mortensen (DEN); SecondCon1-Bernard Chetrit (MARTQ), SecondCon2-Molt Thies (GER), SecondCon3/4-Parker Gilbert Carualho (SPN) / Juan Kipiani (GEOR); LC1-Nicole Taboury (FRA), LC2-Teun Ruardy (DEN).

BEGINNER: 1-Achim Müller (GER), 2-Gitte Dalgaard (DEN), 3/4-Nicky Niknam (USA) / Paul Van Rooijen (NETH); FirstCon1-Peter Ruppel (GER), FirstCon2-M. Batic (GER), FirstCon3/4-A. Kaunert (GER) / Volker Sonnabend (GER); SecondCon1-Marco Doettlaff (GER), SecondCon2-Peter Berhrendt (GER), SecondCon3/4-Trine Binderkrantz (DEN) / Lucas Pagane (ITA); LC1-Bernd Hoff (GER), LC2-Giammichele D'onofrio (ITA).

SUPER JACKPOT 1-S. Havlik (CZH), 2-Neville Eber (S AFR), 3/4-Perry Gartner (USA) / Fred Salomon (USA).

LADIES PRIZES: Championship: Antoinette Williams (USA), Intermediate: Marcy Sloan (USA).

WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Hong Kong: Andre Hoffman, John Simon, Patrice Hattu, 2-USA: Nack Ballard, Bill Robertie, Mike Senkiewicz.

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

BACKGAMMON AND ART IN NEW YORK

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, in the section "Still Life 1910-1940," there is a most interesting painting (about 6' x 3') by Charles Sheeler (1883-1965) entitled "Americana." It is of a backgammon bear-off (with no cube, apparently) and illustrates modernity at the time—1931, the year when the Racquet and Tennis Club of New York formulated the rules of backgammon.

Unfortunately I could not get a reproduction. Perhaps one of your New York readers might be able to supply you with a photo.—Ray Kershaw, London, England

SOUNDS LIKE A REAL PROBLEM

The Miss Lonelyblots article on vigorous shaking was well-written, but failed to cover one important point. The director *must* be the one who believes in a vigorous shake for the article to have meaning. In other words, what does a player do when the *director* is the one who frequently and intentionally fails to shake his dice?—Name withheld upon request Δ

ROOM RATES IN SOUTH AMERICA

We look forward to seeing you and Yamin Yamin in Rio and Buenos Aires this year. Please inform your readers that hotel rates are about \$70 per night. This information was not included on the brochures.—Álvaro Savio, Brazilian Backgammon Association Δ



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Peter Kalba
312/276-4144

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PUB CLUB: Tournaments Monday, 7:30 P.M. at Fiddler's, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. V.W. Zimnicki (708/924-8632).

SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASSN: Tournaments Tuesday, 6:00 P.M. at On Broadway, 210 S. Broadway, Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB: Tourn. 1st/3rd/5th Tuesday, 6:15 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Lane O'Connor (309/454-1947).

WINNETKA BG CLUB: Tournaments Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (708/446-0537).

CENTRAL ILL. BG CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Chi-Chi's, 4415 N. Rockwood, Peoria. Sue Will (309/699-6005).

PRIME BG CLUB OF CHICAGO: Tourn. Friday, 7:00 P.M. at T.J.'s Lounge, Radisson Hotel, 4500 W. Touhy, Lincolnwood. Joann Feinstein (708/674-0120).

NORTH CLUB: Daily side play except Sunday at 4747 W. Peterson (402), Chicago. Greg Defotis (312/286-6719).

who did what

WINNER'S CORNER



May-July 1993

BIBA Trophy Tournament No. 2 (Solihull, England; 29-30 May)... OPEN (80): 1-Jim Johnson, 2-Harvey Barnstien, 3-Dave Raynsford, 4-Mike Grabsky, 5-Steve Bland, 6-Paul Lamford, 7-Simon Morris, 8-Dale Taylor. TOP LADY: Monica Beckerson. BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME: Rachel Davies.

Double Five Summer Jackpot (London, England; 19 June)... OPEN (26) 1-Mark Adkins... Double Five Club directors George & Diana Suliminski inform us that the winner of their six monthly league for the first half of 1993 is Richard Whitehouse.

College Park Summer Open (Bethesda, MD; 10 July)... OPEN (29): 1-Harry Zilli, 2-Blake Sorem; 1C-Ali Rebatchi; 1LC-Barry Steinberg.

Hilton National Trophy Tournament (East Midlands, GB; 10-11 July)... OPEN: 1-Brendan Burgess, 2-Paul Lamford, 3/4-John Broomfield / Catherine Winter; 1C-Rick Janowski, 2C-Mike Grabsky; 1LC-Jeff Ellis, 2LC-John Azraq. SUICIDE! (3-checker): 1-Paul Barwick, 2-Jim Johnson.

European Backgammon Championship (Menton, France; 15-18 July)... MASTERS (29): 1-Matthias Körner (GER), 2-Ricardo Spinola (BRZ), 3/4-Tino Lechich (AUSTL) / Joel Schiff (ISR). CHAMPIONSHIP (85): 1-Rino Mathis (SWIT), 2-Matthias Körner (GER), 3/4-Tino Lechich (AUSTL) / Manfred Hollenderer (GER); 1C-Joel Schiff (ISR), 2C-John Sjølin (DEN), 3C/4C-Gerard Duguët-Grasser (FRA) / Roger Staiger (SWIT); 1LC-Rageb Shadallah (USA), 2LC-Cyrus Vafa (SWE); Ladies Prize-Antoinette Williams (USA). INTERMEDIATE (30): 1-Alan Herskind (DEN), 2-Claus Weissbarth (GER), 3/4-Christian Zenkner (GER) / Carlo Facchetti (ITA); 1C-Luisa Sequeira (POR), 2C-Peter Bardehle (GER); 1LC-Frank Gillar (GER), 2LC-Udo Geib (GER); Ladies Prize-Ling Nelson (HK). BEGINNER (10): 1-Jeffrey Ansari (USA), 2-Mihai Raducanu (RUM); 1C-Mario D'Ossualdo (ITA), 2C-Marcello Corpi (ITA); 1LC-Mike Hüskes (GER), 2LC-Ellen Schläfke (GER); Ladies Prize-Zoe Giakopoulou (GRE). SUPER-JACKPOT: 1-Cyrus Vafa (SWE), 2-Stuart Dunkin (USA)... Worldwide Backgammon Federation president Alberto da Pra reports that 24 countries participated under the direction of Marco Fornasir. Over \$100,000 in prize money was distributed.

Thousand Islands Tournament—ABT (Alexandria Bay, NY; 30 July-1 Aug.)... OPEN (32): 1-Paul Stebbing (CDA), 2-Stuart Thompson (CDA), 3-Ray Desforges (CDA). DOUBLES #1 (7): 1-George & Fran Photias (ME). Δ

Old Hudson and THE KID

by Harold Branch

Old Hudson and the Kid enjoyed their weekly backgammon get-togethers. Their diverse styles produced a number of interesting games often resulting in volatile money swings.

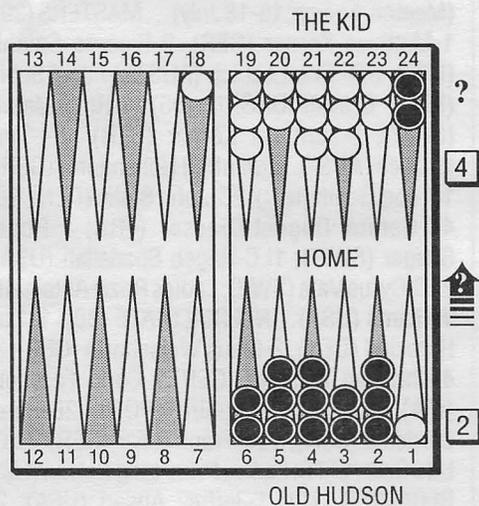
Old Hudson was impulsive and played with a flair for action. He went for big decisions, sometimes unsoundly. He would occasionally err mechanically and was known to commit errors of "enthusiasm."

The Kid was accurate. He was relentlessly thorough in considering moves and was not known to make mechanical mistakes. His overall style would be rated as "conservative."

Both competitors were thought to be roughly equal, but The Kid was probably a little *more* equal.

The first game had gone to Hudson: one point. He was now absorbed with a very tricky cube decision:

Money game. CUBE ACTION(S)?



Could it possible be right to redouble? He eyeballed the two vulnerable blots. He argued himself into it . . . *No 5s, please!*

"I think I'll double," Hudson said, firmly pushing the doubler towards his younger opponent.

"Take," The Kid replied, grabbing the cube and shepherding it to his side of the board.

And the optimistic Hudson proceeded to blow his opponent's house down! 6-1 played 24/18*/17. Fan. To quote Cubs baseball announcer Harry Caray, "Uh-ONE!"

Then 3-1. Inside point-out. "Uh-TWO!" Then another immediate 6, scrambling. "Uh-THREE!"

As he was bearing in smoothly, and then off in handfuls, Hudson thought he heard a low sound from The Kid. It sounded like, "Short evening." The gammon was duly registered.

The Kid had had enough fun for one night. He silently rose, dropped a few bills on the table, and walked out the door. Two games. Nine points. "Short evening!"

Hudson's thinking drifted back to the critical position. He was pleased with himself. He had foreseen and optimized his opportunities, had he not? He had taken a sporting shot and won big. Still . . . what was The Truth in the position?

Thoughtful, if a bit muzzy-minded, he decided to roll it out. And, since the first shot was so touchy, he would use the structural method, covering every roll

As he worked along, he started noticing some astonishing realities. He sure was looking at a lot of crumbling and escaping.

The Truth dawned. Forcefully. He saw that Black (on roll) did *not* have a positive expectation—most especially, if he handed the cube over to White. White had the edge—not Black. (You knew that all along, didn't you?)

The numbers for 144 structured rollouts (36 x 4) with the cube on 4:

Black: 41 plain game wins and 18 gammon wins = 308 points.

White: 73 plain wins (!), 11 gammons and 1 backgammon = 392 points.

That's 84 net points to White, or an average net-per-game of 0.583 points to White with the cube on 4.

Looking over his figures, he started talking to himself as old men sometimes do: "You see, Speedbump, it's like this. Those inside point-outs mean nothing. You have *nothing* until you throw that first 6! That will be time enough to think about the cube. Now try not to get arrested for vancancy, you big hamburger!" Δ

When he's not contributing articles to CHICAGO POINT or Flint Area BackgammonNews, Harold Branch is busy editing the monthly Louisville Gammon Gazette.

AMALGAMATION

Yes, that was BPC player **Harold Seif** in the recent Howard Orloff Jaguar television ad... **Martin de Bruin** of Spain premiered his *European Backgammon News* at last month's Monte Carlo World Championship. The English-language 10-page monthly costs \$30 to Europeans and \$40 elsewhere. For subscription info, Fax Mr. de Bruin in Spain at 34 (9) 51 132 577... **Barbra Streisand's** new rendition of "Luck Be A Lady" is fantastic—well worth the entire price of her new "Back To Broadway" album... Danish Backgammon Federation directors **Erik Gravgaard** and **Chris Ternel** are exploring the possibility of forming a democratic European Backgammon Association. An international director's meeting is planned at their Nordic Wide Open in April 1994... Visiting Chicago in July: **Dan Cramer** (Washington, DC), and **Tim Wisecarver** (West Virginia)... From **Harold Branch's Louisville Gammon Gazette**: Another Louisville League tournament is about to commence. For details, contact **Quint McTyeire** at 502/578-3672. Also, there's talk about a two-day weekend event in Louisville in October. More to follow... **Paul Weaver** (MD) remains on top of the new 1993 *Kent Goulding International Rating List*. Chicago Bar Point Players fare well with four in the top 30: **Gary Kay** (11), **Neil Kazaross** (15), **Don Desmond** (20) and **Tak Morioka** (28). To order, send a minimum \$10 donation + \$1 p&h (\$6 overseas air) in U.S. funds to: Kent Goulding, U.S. Backgammon Enterprises, 9201 Marseille Drive, Potomac, MD 20854... Thanks to the British Isles Backgammon Association (BIBA) and **Donald Hatt**, UK players can now order CHICAGO POINT and *Flint Area BackgammonNews* in pounds. For a one year subscription, send £25 for the POINT, £18 for *BackgammonNews*, or £42 for both to: Donald Hatt; 5 The Beeches, Hilperton Rd.; Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 7HG; England... **Butch & Mary Ann Meese** suggest that you make your Radisson Plaza Suite Hotel reservations today for the National Labor Day Tournament (3-6 Sept. In Indianapolis). Call 317/846-2700 and mention "Backgammon" for the \$64 rate... Finally, we recall the words of **Stephen Leacock** who said: "I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it." Δ

CORRECTION

Last month's report on the Las Vegas Open erroneously stated that the June tournament was held at the Mirage Hotel. In fact, the event was held at the Maxim Hotel. CHICAGO POINT regrets the error.

First Israeli Open BACKGAMMON Championship



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With pleasure and best regards, looking forward to seeing you in Tel Aviv,

Abraham Eitan, Tournament Director

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*F*or more information

**Abraham Eitan
2^e Weteringdwarsstraat 43^{II}
1017 St. Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel.: 31-20-6254775**

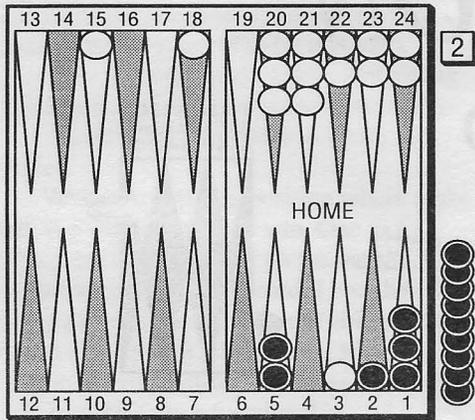


Expected Weather Conditions: October, Sunny, 20°c

PROBLEM #195 SOLVED

by Danny Kleinman

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**



In Problem #195, Black has a forced 5 (5/Off) and a choice of three aces: (A) 1/Off, (B) 2/1, (C) 5/4. I see an obvious advantage for each play.

(A) bears an extra man off, enhancing Black's chances of winning when he gets hit and closed out.

(B) lifts the blot, eliminating forever, the danger that White may pick up *two* men.

(C) reduces White's shots from 12 to 11.

Imagine, for a moment, that Black were to face this problem tied at 7 in a 9-point match, or in some other situation where gammons were irrelevant. Then I would make a strong case for Play (C), based on a subtle advantage.

Ordinarily, you'll do well to leave *one* extra shot if you can thereby bear off an extra man. Here, however, Black maximizes his game-winning chances by moving 5/4. To see why, consider *White's* strategy for winning *after* a hit. With a partly-crumbled board and the vital 6-point open, White should *slot* her 6-point. If Black dances, White may be able to close Black out. If Black reenters, he must hit, giving White a shot at the blot on Black's 2-point—except after Play (B), of course.

Plays (A) and (B) not only give White 12 shots instead of 11, they also give White *six* hit-and-slot rolls (4-2, 2-1, 2-2 and 1-1) instead of *three* (4-1 and 1-1). That's why Play (C) is best for *winning the game*.

Mightn't lifting the second blot make Play (B) superior? I think not. Consider the sequence White needs to pick up *two* men. (1) White must hit (11 or 12 rolls). (2) Black must reenter with a 6 other than the blot-lifting 6-1 (9 rolls). (3) Black must reenter hitting (all 9 rolls if White rolls a

slotting number, else only 2 or 3 rolls). (4) White must roll a 2 (11 rolls). After Play (A), this sequence occurs about 1 time in 64; after Play (C), about 1 time in 94. Then White must win the game from there, not easy with an open 6-point and two buried men when Black has already borne off 10 or 11 men.

Because White has so much to do to win the game even after hitting, the differences in game-winning chances among the

three plays are relatively small. The availability of *gammons*, however, produces a relatively large difference. White will miss the shot 24 or 25 times in 36, and when she does, she will have 5 crossovers to make, touch-and-go for saving the gammon in three rolls. Play (A) often lets Black get off in *two* rolls instead of three.

Therefore in *money play*, or at any match score where gammons count, I favor Play (A), 1/Off. Δ

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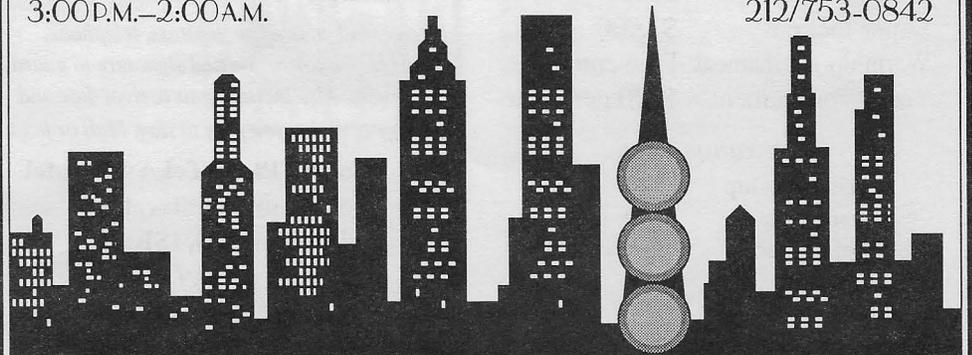
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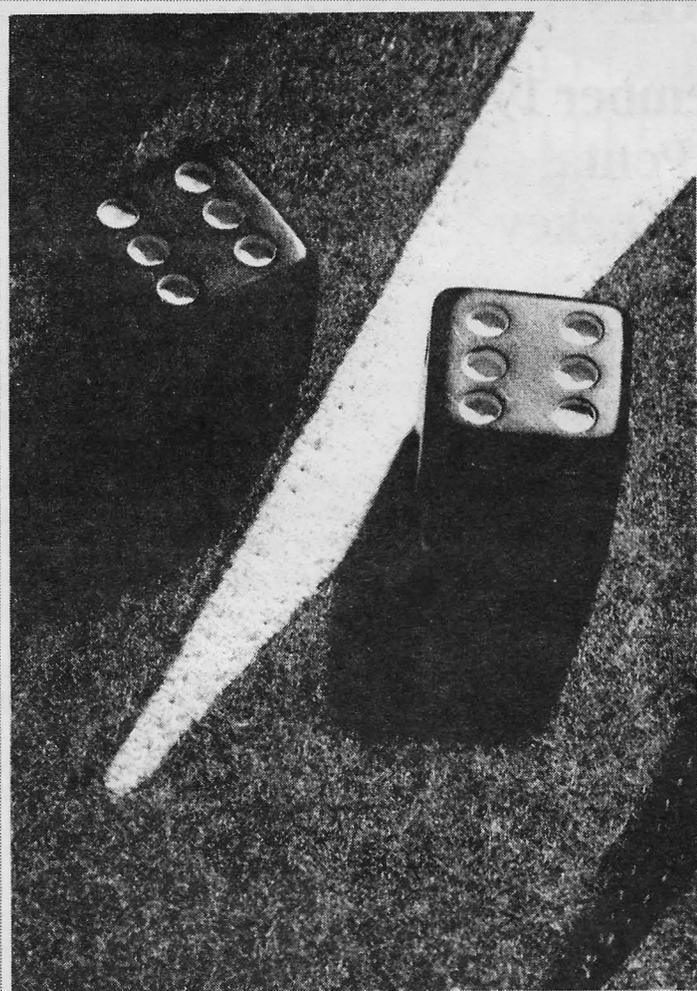
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