



FASCINATING BACKGAMMON *Reviewed*

by Roy Friedman

Fascinating Backgammon by Antonio Ortega, San José, Costa Rica, 1993; soft cover; 150 pages; English. [Spanish language edition published in 1992.]

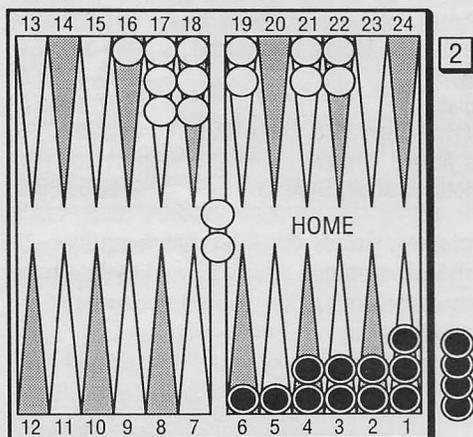
Fascinating Backgammon consists of 50 problems with approximately 100 analyzed positions including all of the variations. The problems cover various aspects of money and match play with emphasis on cube action in the endgame. The author, an experienced international player, has won the Costa Rican National Championship in four of the last five years.

The book is a fine tutorial for advanced beginner and intermediate players and a handy review for the expert. However do not expect to find any trailblazing insights here; most of the concepts and several of the positions have previously appeared in other backgammon publications.

Still, the book has many strengths, such as offering the reader convincing solutions supported by hard data. Many solutions include results from computer rollouts or bearoff programs, and there are exhaustive match-equity calculations to support the recommended cube actions in match play.

Here's a sample problem from the book that arises frequently in actual play:

Position 1. BLACK TO PLAY A 5.

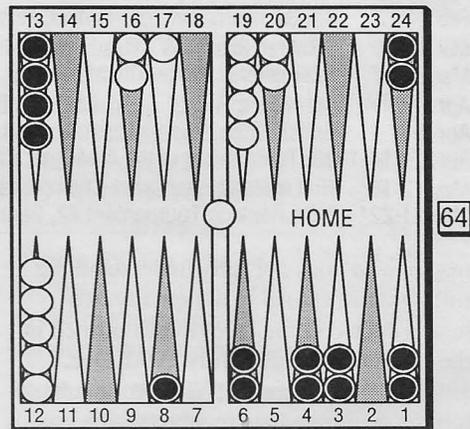


Position 1 is derived from Problem 29 in the book after Black has played three forced 5s of a 5-5 roll. With the last 5, Black can play (A) 5/Off, or (B) 6/1, leaving 11 shots in either case. The author lists the blot numbers next turn after each play [15 numbers after play (A), 22 numbers after play (B)], concludes that play (A) is safest and best, corroborates the conclusion with results from Hugh Sconyers' CD-ROM backgame program, and then presents the underlying principle:

"... the farther back your home-board blot is, the easier it is to clear next turn. ... With his blot on the 5-point, Black can play only aces to his highest occupied point, the 4-point, from where he can then play the other number on his dice. But with his blot on the 6-point, Black can play aces to the 5-point and deuces to the 4-point, then play his other number from whichever of these points to which he has moved his blot. You will notice that 6 of the 7 extra blotting rolls after play (B) include deuces."

WITH THE ENGLISH EDITION of the book edited by Danny Kleinman and reviewed by Neil Kazaross, technical accuracy is very high. I found only one significant error:

Position 2. BLACK ON ROLL. CUBE ACTION?



[Continued on page 7]

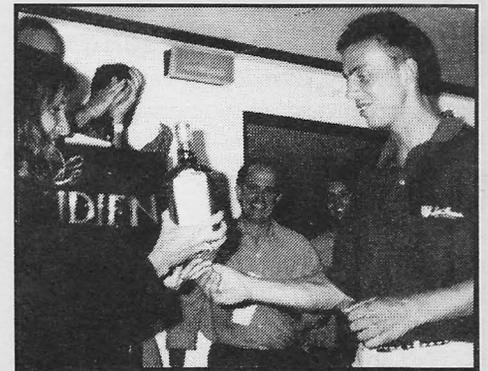
south american tournaments

THE U.S. SHINES IN SOUTH AMERICA

A small band of ten players from the United States made a big noise at two major South American tournaments last month. Both the Rio de Janeiro Open (21-24 Oct.) and the South American World Cup in Buenos Aires, Argentina (25-29 Oct.) received rave reviews from those attending.

Lots Of Action In Rio

Brazilian Backgammon Association Director Alvaro Savio reports participation of nearly 200 players from the Americas and Europe at the 3rd Rio de Janeiro Open. Holland master Evert Van Eyck survived his battle against Rageb Shadallah of New York in the Championship finals. Van Eyck also survived a robbery at knifepoint on the streets of Rio earlier in the week.



Rio de Janeiro Open champion Evert Van Eyck at the Awards Ceremony. [South American photos by Gayle Wolf.]

A Risky Move: Steffen Hits Two Men

Another New Yorker, Alan Steffen, also had some "tourist" problems. Steffen was jogging on the beach in the late afternoon when two knife-wielding men in their early 20s jumped him, pushing his face in the sand. That didn't deter the well-conditioned Steffen from simultaneously body-kicking one attacker while punching the other in the head, sending them fleeing.

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LETTERS

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DANNY, WATCH YOUR EQUITIES!

In last month's "Ask Danny" analysis of the 5-checker bear off submitted by Kati Pratt, Danny Kleinman does a good job discussing the concepts of pushpoint and takepoint. He is, however, incorrect in stating that Roy Friedman's chart makes the leader only 83% at 6-1 Crawford. Friedman gives the leader 87% at 6-1c and 83% at 6-2c. Since Friedman's chart is in the "points needed" format, Danny probably made a simple oversight.

Danny also states that his own estimates make the leader only a fraction of a percent better than 83% at 6-1 Crawford. However in his pioneering text "Vision Laughs At Counting," Danny gives equities of 90.3% at 6-1c and 85.4% at 6-2c. At 6-1 post-Crawford, he gives the leader 83.5%. Again, I think Danny has simply mis-read the equity charts and I'll quickly solve the problem using my own equities which tend to fall in between the Friedman and Kleinman values. [See POINT #64, p. 4]

At 6-1 Crawford, I give the leader 88.4%. At 4-3, the leader has 58%. The

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

coming attractions



by Carol Joy Cole
810/232-9731

* Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Dec 5	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Dec 5-10	First World-Wide Twin Championships, Treasure Island, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025
Dec 11*	Springfield Series #2, South Texas Pub & Steak House, Peoria, IL	217/528-0117
Dec 11*	Cleveland Area Tournament, Boulevard Sports Bar, Cuyahoga Falls, OH	216/663-7332
Dec 12	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Dec 16	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Dec 18	Holiday Tourney, Backgammon & Chess Express Club, New York, NY	212/587-8038
Jan 8	Springfield Series #3, Parker's Sports Bar, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Jan 9*	NY Chess & Games Winter Tournament, Clubroom, New York, NY	212/302-5989
Jan 11	Chicago Bar Point Club Awards Night, Golden Flame, Chicago, IL	312/338-6380
Jan 15	College Park Club Winter Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0603
Jan 16*	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Jan 19	RSCARDS Winter Computer Modem Tournament, GENie	800/638-9636
Jan 20*	Third Thursday Bonus Tourney and Awards Party, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Jan 23*	Austin BG Assoc. Sunday Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/280-5945
Jan 29	Hawthorne Backgammon Classic, Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL	312/338-6380
Feb 5	Springfield Series #4, Ride The Nine, Bloomington, IL	217/528-0117
Feb 13*	Bar Point Doubles Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Feb 13	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Feb 13	12th Fleet Underwood Memorial Tournament, Ramada Hotel, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Feb 17*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Feb 18-20	<u>16th Pittsburgh Winter Champs. Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA</u>	<u>412/823-7500</u>
Mar 2-2	<u>31st Gammon Associates Invitational, Bombay Bicycle Club, Burbank, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Mar 5*	Springfield Series #5, Parker's Sports Bar, Springfield, IL	217/528-0117
Mar 13*	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton Commander Hotel, Cambridge, MA	617/643-8154
Mar 18-20	<u>1994 Midwest Championships, Marriott Hotel, Oakbrook, IL</u>	<u>312/338-6380</u>
May 2-2*	<u>Spring Gran Prix, Embassy Suites Hotel, La Jolla, CA</u>	<u>619/294-2007</u>
May 27-30	<u>15th Chicago Open, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Elk Grove Village, IL</u>	<u>708/674-0120</u>
Jul 1-4	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jul 29-31*	<u>42nd Indiana Open, Indianapolis, IN</u>	<u>317/845-8435</u>
Jul 29-31	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY</u>	<u>716/442-8221</u>
Sep 30-Oct 2	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Turin, NY</u>	<u>716/442-8221</u>
Oct 5-9	<u>4th Illinois State Championships & America Cup, Woodfield Hilton, IL</u>	<u>708/945-7801</u>
Oct 7-9	<u>Nation's Capital Fall Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD</u>	<u>301/530-0603</u>
Nov 11-13*	<u>NY/NJ BG CO-OP Big Apple Series, Oritani Hotel, Hackensack, NJ</u>	<u>201/833-2915</u>

OUTSIDE USA

Dec 2-5*	CANCELLED—Brazilian BG Assoc. Tournament, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521-267 6033
Dec 6*	Hong Kong Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852-846 1923
Dec 18*	Christmas Jackpot and Party, Double Five Club, London, England	071-589 3812
Jan 10*	Hong Kong Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852-846 1923
Jan 14-16	Backgammon-Meisterschaft, Hotel Klosterbräu, Seefeld/Tirol, Austria	08341-12825
Jan 20-23	3rd Dutch Open Championship, Hilton Hotel, Amsterdam, Netherlands	3120-625 4775
Jan 29-30	BIBA Ranking Tournament No. 1, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522-53 68 36
Feb 3-6*	6th Annual Pro-Am Tournament, Paradise Island Resort, Bahamas	301/299-8264
Feb 7*	Hong Kong Monthly Tournament, Ladies Recreation Club	852-846 1923
Feb 10-13*	4th French Open Championship, Lutetia Hotel, Paris, France	331-4288 6645
Feb 11-13*	Rosendahl Open Tournament, Hotel Rosendahl, Tampere, Finland	358-3165 4400
Feb 24-27	8th Backgammon Tournament, Festival of Games, Cannes, France	061-331 5816
Mar 17-20	30th Ted Bassett & Gstaad Palace-Cup, Palace Hotel, Gstaad, Switzerland	061-331 5816
Mar 24-27	International Winter Championship, Badrutt's, St. Moritz, Switzerland	061-331 1516
Apr 1-4*	6th Nordic "Wide" Open, Elsingor, Denmark	4539-40 06 07
Apr 2-3*	British Open, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522-53 68 36
Apr 27-May 1	3rd Tournament of the Americas, Cariari Hotel, San José, Costa Rica	312/252-7755
May 12-15*	First International Greek Championships, Athens, Greece	Fax 01-800 1513
May 21-22*	BIBA Ranking Tournament #2, George Hotel, Solihull, England	0522/53 68 36

reader who does not fully understand the following is invited to review my two match cube columns previously printed in the CHICAGO POINT (July 1990, Dec. 1990). I'll state again, "When your cube turn or the immediate recube (which you must take) will be match decisive for both

players, simply consider match equity risked vs. match equity gained to determine the minimum game-winning chances at which you can turn the cube."

Here Black is risking 58% (should she lose the game) to gain 11.6% if she wins

[Continued on page 7]



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1993

Top 100—Final Standings after 19 tournaments
178 players earned points



Marty Storer	31.81	Maurice Barie	11.58	Ron Weingrad	7.20	Joe Sylvester	4.03
Art Benjamin	31.34	Dean Muench	11.33	Gabe Stiasny	7.18	John Rockwell	3.96
Howard Markowitz	26.66	Arnold Zousmer	10.85	Toni Wuersch	6.72	Norm Wiggins	3.96
Ben Lang	26.00	Perry Gartner	10.84	Don Bernstein	6.70	Harry Cohn	3.92
Malcolm Davis	25.20	Paul Strasberg	10.63	Alan Steffen	6.68	Michel Leveille	3.85
Frank Talbot	22.16	Felix Yen	10.44	Jim Lakdawala	6.50	Bill Bartholomay	3.79
Walter Trice	21.71	Mike Nelson	10.44	Mike Pettigrew	6.50	Carl Adamec	3.76
Paul Stebbing	21.44	Jeff Acierno	9.76	Ray Desforges	6.42	Sam Hanna	3.76
Woody Woodson	21.12	Ed Pavilonis	9.71	Ken Cohen	6.28	Belle Pronman	3.73
Joe Harris	20.83	Jorgen Granstedt	9.69	Peter Kalba	6.09	Rob Mathes	3.68
Bob Holyon	19.52	Paul Albert	9.60	Joseph Freedman	6.08	Carol Joy Cole	3.60
Jake Jacobs	18.47	Stuart Thomson	9.58	Karen Davis	6.08	Jerry Ungar	3.53
Doug Roberts	17.68	Carol Falk	9.26	Marty Kohler	5.85	Randall Witt	3.53
Ken Bond	16.16	Ami Tennenbaum	8.82	Frank Dickerson	5.70	Jerry Padova	3.50
Jeff Kane	16.06	Anthony Niakiani	8.74	Fred Gehlhoff	5.63	Mark Damish	3.36
Mike Friedman	15.72	Paul Ladanyi	8.74	Mike Shanas	5.60	Bob Wachtel	3.34
Jerry Kane	15.68	Dave Orandle	8.72	Lila Swan	5.21	Carl Sellars	3.34
Quint McTyeire	14.53	Ira Hoffberg	8.40	Rich Sweetman	5.21	Stu Hosen	3.34
David Hochron	14.40	Stu Katz	8.40	Larry Lau	5.20	Sharon Rochon	3.25
George Alessi	13.50	Bob Bishop	8.30	Neil Kazaross	4.94	John Lear	3.20
Al Jones	13.32	Steve Hast	8.06	Norma Shyer	4.92	Dave Pink	3.06
John Mansey	13.00	Herb Gurland	7.88	Mark Donaldson	4.82	Leo Tuin	3.06
Ralph Levy	12.87	Evan Diamond	7.70	Zev Vered	4.34	Alex Caraplis	3.04
Doug Huch	12.16	Yamin Yamin	7.34	Bob Lumbra	4.16	Angelo Larceri	3.04
Andy Palumbo	12.09	Frank Frigo	7.24	Dean Adamian	4.03	Jan Carlstrom	2.94

MARTY STORER IS 1993 ABT CHAMPION

Marty Storer of Nashua, NH is the American Backgammon Tour 1993 Player of the Year and it couldn't have been any closer. Storer's final point total of 31.81 placed him just 0.47 points ahead of Art Benjamin (Claremont, CA). 19 national tournaments combined to form the tour. Compared to 1992, 95% of ABT events substantially increased their attendance.

Benjamin coupled a 2nd Consolation finish at Gammon Associates 30th Invitational in August with a big win at the 54-player San Diego Autumn Gran Prix in the last ABT event of the year to collect his 31.34 points. Had one more player entered that event, Benjamin would have defeated Storer by 0.03 points.

The ABT's first year showed incredible parity among American players. Among 19 tournaments, there were no double winners and Storer was the only individual to cash in as many as four tournaments (including his Boston Open victory in March).

Marty Storer's 1993 ABT Record

Event	Result	Points
Boston Open	1st	21.48
Granite State Open	2nd Cons.	2.35
Towpath Inn	3rd	3.56
NH Fall Classic	1st Cons.	4.42

Storer, along with Benjamin and Nevada Backgammon Association Director Howard Markowitz (who finished 3rd) will each receive a specially-crafted trophy at the kick-off ABT tournament of 1994: the Pittsburgh Winter Championships 18-20 February.



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1993 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED THRU 30 NOV.

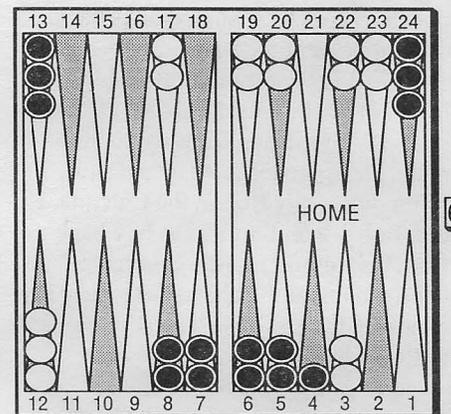
GARY KAY	24.28	Richard Stawowy	5.04	Tad Wilson	1.84	Mike Cohen	0.64
NEIL KAZAROSS	22.64	Alice Kay	5.00	Elaine Kehm	1.84	Greg Roland	0.60
JOHN DEMIAN	18.96	Dave Cramer	4.88	Tim Serges	1.76	Kurt Schurecht	0.60
JAKE JACOBS	18.96	Marcy Sloan	4.80	Lou Salzman	1.64	Richard Beagarie	0.56
TAK MORIOKA	18.16	Georgina Flanagan	4.64	Don Desmond	1.60	Don Marek	0.48
DON JAYHAN	17.96	Joann Feinstein	4.48	Steve Grubart	1.60	Graham Sievers	0.48
YAMIN YAMIN	17.48	Sarg Serges	4.40	Tony Schroeder	1.56	John Stryker	0.48
DAVID RUBIN	14.92	Danny DeRoche	4.08	Pim Van Haastert	1.32	Paul Reiner	0.48
TIM MABEE	14.80	Arline Levy	3.96	Betsy Miller	1.28	Frank Callea	0.44
PHYLLIS SMOLINSKI	12.72	Bill Keefe	3.80	Kevin McDonough	1.28	John Meyers	0.40
PAUL FRIEDMAN	11.28	Amy Trudeau	3.76	Steve Katz	1.24	Andy Bittman	0.36
ALLEN ZIMMERMAN	10.32	Peggy Fleming	3.72	Reggie Porter	1.22	Greg Try	0.32
STU KATZ	10.24	Femi Owiku	3.62	Jim Pappas	1.12	Harry Hayward	0.32
RALPH LEVY	10.00	Stan Kucharz	3.56	Frankie Farjood	1.04	Jay Ward	0.32
MARY FRANKS	9.56	Jeff Kane	3.20	Dave Rockwell	0.96	Katy Clark	0.32
BILL DAVIS	9.12	Andy Krenitz	3.20	George Barr	0.96	William Frierson	0.32
PAUL FRANKS	8.76	Marty Tatosian	3.16	Peter Bouman	0.96	Bill Cox	0.24
BOBBIE SHIFRIN	8.08	Bob Ebbeler	3.16	Roland Dieter	0.96	Art Clay	0.24
DEEB SHALATI	8.00	Scottie Mitchell	2.80	Ron Stur	0.96	John Macaluso	0.24
JOLIE RUBIN	7.96	Brigid O'Meara	2.56	J.A. Miller	0.96	Kevin Muench	0.24
John Brussel	7.80	Dick McCall	2.56	Barry Miller	0.88	Andy Argy	0.24
Ken Bond	7.36	Larry Strommen	2.56	Ray Kershaw	0.88	Barbara Levinson	0.24
Peter Kalba	7.12	Jill Ferdinand	2.44	Earl Risch	0.88	Bob Zavoral	0.24
V.W. Zimmnicki	6.96	Bruce Wittert	2.16	Larry Yakowenko	0.88	Dean Muench	0.24
Ed Buerger	6.72	Chuck Olson	1.92	Mary Vitale	0.84	Joe Mangine	0.24
Norma Shyer	6.64	Don Woods	1.92	Jerry Brooks	0.80	Mark Kay	0.24
Howard Ring	6.56	Jon Vietor	1.92	Joe Koucharian	0.80	Mark Murray	0.24
Leslie Lockett	6.44	Wilcox Snellings	1.92	Mike Spiropoulos	0.80	Greg Feller	0.20
Herb Roman	6.16	Howard Markowitz	1.84	Tom Shields	0.64	Jerry Strzeczewski	0.16
Paul Klein	5.84	Phil Simborg	1.84	Dan Judd	0.64	Barry Epstein	0.16
Alex Itkin	5.28						

Credit **TIM MABEE** with 4.08 points and November Player of the Month honors. Jake Jacobs, Jeff Kane, Leslie Lockett and newcomer Brigid O'Meara all tied for second with 2.56.

December will determine the BPC 1993 Player of the Year. Can Gary Kay hang on?

your move PROBLEM #200

Match to 9 points. Black leads White, 4 to 3. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-3.**



SHADES OF GRAY

THE RULINGS CONTEST

↔ WIN \$50.00 ↔

by Danny Kleinman

As a tournament director, how would you rule in the following six difficult situations that actually occurred at U.S. backgammon tournaments over the past two years? Match your multiple choice answers with mine and you could win \$50.

INSTRUCTIONS: Write your solutions to all six problems and mail to: Backgammon Rulings; c/o CHICAGO POINT; 2726 W. Lunt Ave.; Chicago, IL 60645-3039. Or you can fax your answers to 312/338-6384. One entry per person. Ties will be broken by random draw. Entries must be received by 27 December 1993.

1. Clint (Black) has summoned you to make a ruling. He says that when He offered Vanna (White) a 2-cube, she said "Take," lifting it off the board. Clint then rolled his dice, hitting a blot.

Vanna disagrees, claiming that she said "Take it," meaning "You take the game." She says she was in the act of returning the doubler to the center of the board when Clint rolled his dice.

You evaluate the position and agree that 9-out-of-10 players would likely drop the double. How do you rule?

- A. Vanna may drop the double
- B. Vanna must take the double and Clint's roll stands
- C. Vanna must take the double but Clint must reroll
- D. Both players roll high die to determine whether Vanna must take or drop

2. Alan buys five teams and three seeded players in the Calcutta. Bob, a seeded player, comes to Alan and buys back 50% of himself for \$200.

In reality, Carl bought Bob and learns of the buy-back mix-up after Bob has been eliminated from the tournament. He approaches Alan and says, "You didn't buy Bob in the Calcutta. I did. Bob's intention was to buy back from his rightful owner. You have deprived me of the chance to reduce my exposure by \$200. I believe I'm entitled to Bob's buy-back."

Alan says, "I agree that it was wrong, and careless of me to accept

Bob's buy-back, but it was an honest mistake. The \$200 is mine."

Although it's not a Director's responsibility to involve himself with Calcutta transactions, both parties have agreed to abide by your ruling. What do you suggest?

- A. Alan must pay Carl \$200
 - B. Alan must pay Carl \$200, but Alan must be given the opportunity of winning from Carl, one of the money prizes in the Calcutta pool based on an equitable odds determination
 - C. Alan may keep the \$200 and Carl receives nothing
 - D. Either B or C
3. A random draw is set up for a \$500 jackpot involving 30 players. Dave and Ed are drawn and announced over the microphone as the two players who will receive byes. Before the pairings are posted, the director discovers that he has left Frank's name out of the drawing. What to do?

Dave and Ed believe that only Frank should have a shot at winning a bye. They propose that the director include Frank's name in a 29 player drawing. If Frank is one of the two names drawn, then there must be a redraw for the two byes between Dave, Ed and Frank. Otherwise, the byes for Dave and Ed stand.

Another player whose name wasn't drawn says the correct thing to do is stage an official drawing involving all 30 players.

How will you proceed with the drawing?

- A. Void the previous draw and stage an official drawing involving all 30 players
- B. Give Frank a 2-in-29 chance of being selected. If Frank's name is drawn, then redraw between Dave, Ed and Frank for the two byes
- C. Give Frank a 1-in 15 chance of winning a bye. If Frank's name is selected, then redraw between Dave and Ed to see who loses his bye
- D. Either B or C

4. Jim rolls the dice with one man the bar against a 5-point board. One die lands flat on a '6' while the other continues to spin intensely. Jim picks up the landed die (because a '6' can't enter). A few seconds later, the spinning die lands legally on '2'—the number Jim needs to come in. Jim's opponent Sally calls the director. How do you rule?

- A. Jim's turn is over because he picked up a die
- B. Jim must play a 6-2
- C. Jim must reroll the prematurely-lifted die and play the new number plus a '2'
- D. Sally may choose which option (A, B or C) Jim must follow

5. Hugo (Black) wants to use 1/2" precision dice. Betty (White), who wears contact lenses and glasses, claims that she can't see the small dice faces. She wants to use the more standard 5/8" size. Hugo counters that three precision sizes—1/2", 3/16", and 5/8"—are sold by both Larry Strommen and Carol Joy Cole. Therefore, he contends, there is no "standard" size. As director, what is your ruling?

- A. Roll high die for player's choice
- B. Roll high die for player's choice, but in the case of any die-reading disputes, presume Betty's account to be correct
- C. Split the difference and authorize the use of the middle 3/16" die size
- D. Require Hugo to use the 5/8" die size

6. Dick and Jane are playing on a small table with no place to rest their dice cups. While thinking about doubling in a running game, Jane puts her cup down on a nearby table. After about two minutes, Jane pauses to look at the score. At this instant, Dick puts his dice cup down on the playing surface of the board. Jane decides not to double, picks up Dick's cup and dice, shakes them, and rolls an excellent double-6. Dick protests that Jane must use her own dice. You must rule.

- A. The roll is void and Jane must reroll using her own cup and dice
- B. The roll is valid
- C. The roll is valid, but Dick will be permitted to use Jane's dice and cup for his roll once during the remainder of the match
- D. Dick may choose which option (A, B or C) Jane must follow Δ

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SOUTH AMERICA...

[Continued from page 1]

But Michigan's Emil Mortuk (3rd-Championship), along with Gayle and Wally Wolf (5th-Intermediate) said these worldwide urban problems took nothing away from the friendly Brazilian people and the tournament ambience. They, along with Van Eyck and Steffen most definitely want to return to Rio. Results:

CHAMPIONSHIP (64 players generating 288 entries): 1-Evert Van Eyck (NL), 2-Rageb Shadallah (USA), 3-Emil Mortuk (USA), 4-Alvaro Savio (BRZ), 5-Gerhard Schiesser (GER), 6-Matthias Körner (GER), 7-Gianni Bizarro (ARG), 8-José Alves (BRZ). **INTERMEDIATE** (73 players generating 256 entries): 1-Ricardo Masset (BRZ), 2-Dario Fueks (ARG), 3-Roberto Vilella (BRZ), 4-Arthur Alves (BRZ), 5-Wally Wolf (USA), 6-Paula Estacolchic, 7-Ricardo Nogueira, 8-Dino Octavio. **BEGINNER** (48 players generating 120 entries): 1-Felipe Oliveira (BRZ), 2-André Mattar.

Davis Stays Hot In Buenos Aires

Claudio Salamone, Director of the Argentina Backgammon Association was all smiles as 35 foreign players representing 10 countries, along with 300 local players made the 2nd South American World Cup and XIV South American Tournament a huge success. A combination of backgammon and friendship remained the target for those attending.

The all-USA 21-point finals pitted Texan Malcolm Davis against the internationally-renowned Alan Steffen. Fresh off his Illinois State victory in October, Davis rolled to a quick 8-0 lead in two games (including a doubled backgammon). Trailing 9-2, Steffen was bearing off for a doubled gammon of his own only to leave a back door shot which Malcolm hit to gain two points and an 11-2 advantage.

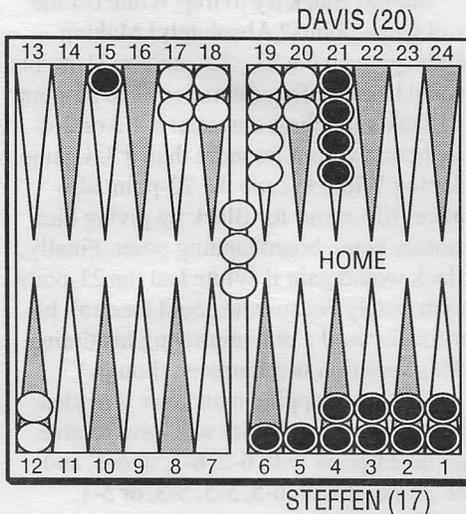
The Davis edge reached 19-3 before Steffen got into gear and won back-to-back doubled gammons. With the score now 19-11, Malcolm called for a break. It didn't help as Steffen won a doubled backgammon of his own. Malcolm's lead was down to 19-17.

Davis won the next point and with a 20-17 Crawford advantage, a wild game developed. In the following position, Alan thinks he might have erred in playing a '6.' [See diagram above.]

Alan chose to play 15/9, bringing a builder into direct cover range of his two blots. Although Davis obliged by dancing, Steffen rolled 5-2, unable to cover. He then got hit, but didn't have enough outfield ammunition to enter and hit back.

Steffen was forced into a massive 2-3 backgame with a five point board and an

1993 S.A. World Cup 21-point finals. Malcolm Davis (White) leads Alan Steffen (Black), 20-17c. **BLACK TO PLAY A 6.**



open 6-point. Although Alan hit a Davis blot on the bear-in, he could not contain it. Final score: 21-17. Malcolm Davis had won his second major title within three weeks.

CONGRATULATIONS ALSO to Paul Magriel (NY) for his S.A. World Cup Consolation victory, and to local player Horacio Anitua for winning the XIV S.A. Tourney. Results:

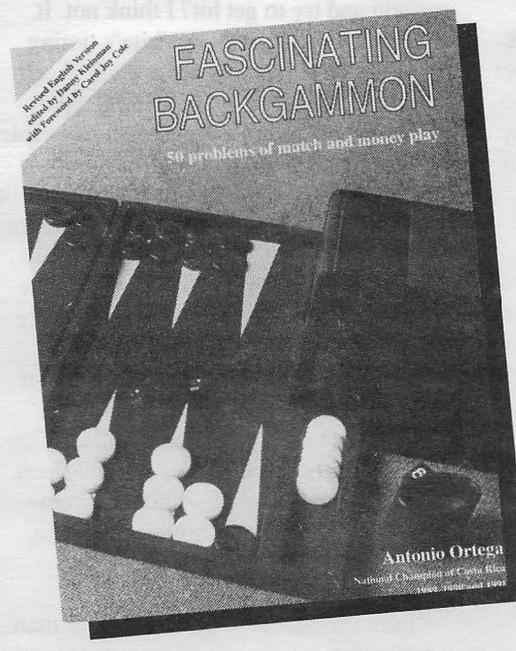
2ND S.A. WORLD CUP (55): 1-Malcolm Davis (USA), 2-Alan Steffen (USA), 3/4-Fernando Rocha (ARG) / Norman Ades (ARG); 1C-Paul Magriel (USA), 2C-Mario Sequeira (POR), 3C/4C-Jerry Grandell (SWE) / Ingo Sprogies (GER). **XIV S.A.**

TOURNAMENT—CHAMPIONSHIP (112 players generating 368 entries): 1-Horacio Anitua (ARG), 2-Thomas Lumper (GER), 3/4-Daniel Buzzella (ARG) / Ingo Sprogies (GER), 5/8-Rageb Shadallah (USA) / Fernando Iribarren (ARG) / Mariano Tarruella (ARG) / Alberto Fernández (ARG). **JUNIOR** (136 players generating 328 entries): 1-Leonardo Fernández (ARG), 2-Ariel Wicnudel (ARG), 3/4-Juan Carlos Kuperman (ARG) / Jorge Isso (ARG). **BEGINNER** (72 players generating 136 entries): 1-Ricardo Roller (ARG), 2-Alejandro Elbojm (ARG), 3/4-Marta Vara (ARG) / Daniel Medel Aceiro (ARG). **CONSOLATION CHAMPIONSHIP/JUNIOR**: Fernando Castro. **CONSOLATION BEGINNER**: Pablo Fontana. **LAST CHANCE**: Liliana Lowden. **DESPERATION**: Arturo Set. **SUPER-DESPERATION**: Patricia Mendive. **LADIES PRIZES-CHAMPIONSHIP/JUNIOR/BEGINNER**: Celia Mauas / Paula Estacolchic / Marta Vara. Δ



Malcolm Davis is all smiles after his big S.A. World Cup victory. That's AAB director Claudio Salamone at left.

Fascinating Reading.



Just in time for the holidays, 4-time Costa Rican Champion Antonio Ortega presents **FASCINATING BACKGAMMON**. Originally published in Spanish, Ortega has called upon the editing skills of world-renowned backgammon author **Danny Kleinman** to present this fully-revised English version of 50 challenging backgammon problems dealing both match and money play.

FASCINATING BACKGAMMON receives high praise from *Flint BackgammonNews* editor **Carol Joy Cole**, who authored the book's foreword, and international master **Neil Kazaross**, who carefully reviewed the first draft.

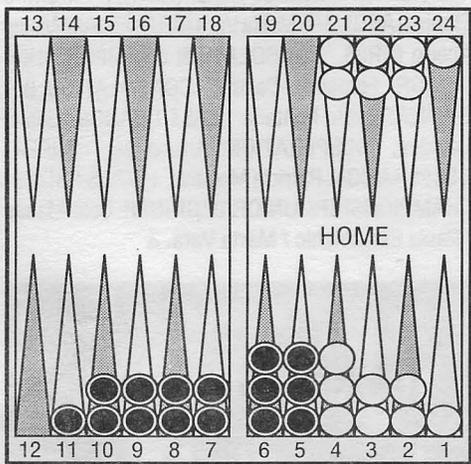
Price: \$25 plus p&h (\$4 in U.S., Canada & Mexico; \$8 elsewhere). Send a U.S. funds check made payable to Carol Joy Cole and mail to:

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PROBLEM #199 SOLVED

by Walter Trice

Illinois State Championship 15-point finals. Double match point. Jake Jacobs (Black) vs. Malcolm Davis (White). **BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.**



Defending against a backgame is often difficult, but only a small number of strategic motifs are involved. They are:

- A. Priming the opponent to make him put checkers out of play
- B. Trapping the opponent off back points
- C. Bearing in and off safely
- D. Timing adjustments including:
 1. Forcing the opponent to hit
 2. Hitting
 3. Not hitting
 4. Killing numbers

What's hard is to relate these objectives to a particular position and evaluate their relevance. Positions like Problem #199 are *not* well understood, and I would not expect to find expert opinion unanimous on this one.

Let's take the strategic elements one by one and ask how they apply to the problem. First of all, should Black attempt to keep White primed? It seems that there is little to be gained by doing so. For example, suppose Black plays 11/7, 10/8(2). Then White can escape with 6s, and most 5s and 4s don't play. White only gets hurt by rolling too many small numbers, and a 3-prime is enough to make these play badly. Black's 5-prime is beneficial only in the sequences in which White rolls too many 1s, 2s, and 3s *after* rolling a 5.

Note also that White is far from busted even if he has to play 24/21, 22/21 twice, and 4/1: eight pips worth of tiny numbers. Making the ace-point is not so bad, since White is already advanced in his home

board, and he will usually have to rely on *attacking* a hit checker rather than *priming* it whether the ace-point is made or not.

Should Black try to trap White off the backgame points? Absolutely! Making White give up the 23-, 22-, and/or 21-points would be cause for celebration. The 23-point is Black's toughest obstacle: a 2-3 or 2-4 backgame wins a lot more than a 3-4 game. Getting White to cede the 22-point also makes life easier for Black by giving him another home board landing point. Finally, Black would gain if White lost the 21-point prematurely because he could then roll his prime forward a pip, improving his timing. (This variation is infrequent, though.)

The best trapping maneuver is to clear the 8-point. Then White will have to give up the 23-point with 6-2, 6-3, or 6-6, and the 22-point with 6-5, 5-5, 5-3, or 5-1.

The third consideration is safety. A good maxim for bearing off against a single anchor is:

"Clear from the rear and don't ask questions."—Kit Woolsey, circa 1979.

Bearing in against a backgame is quite different, though, and it is often correct to clear the *most blocked* points first. In Problem #199, I would be most eager to clear the triply-blocked 8-point, then the doubly-blocked 9-point. (The 7-point is triply-blocked, but it is needed as a landing spot.)

When you clear a multiply-blocked point, you accomplish two things: first, you clear a point on which you might have been forced to leave a double or triple shot; second, by moving forward from multiply-blocked points, you tend to gain flexibility. (You will have more ways to play large numbers.)

Should Black leave a blot or two in the outfield and try to get hit? I think not. It will be difficult to wreck White's timing because White has four spare back checkers which can move more than 60 pips before they get home. The most reasonable play to get hit is 11/7, 10/6. Black hopes that White will immediately roll a 6 and hit while escaping. Having been hit, Black may be able to hold his 5-prime for a few rolls. Then if White does not roll another 6, the escapee may get buried, and if he does, he may be forced to give up the 21-point.

One problem with 11/7, 10/6 is that it doesn't clear points. Black's position is more likely to fall apart due to inflexibility, especially when White does not roll the 6. Other voluntary blot plays don't accomplish much. If White is not blocked by a solid 5-prime, it is too easy for him to activate the extra back men.

Furthermore, getting hit is riskier than it may appear. Suppose Black gets hit and

then comes in with 2-1 or 3-1? Another point cracks, a second blot is exposed, and White can get a winning position with surprising speed. The same sort of thing can happen when White makes a random outfield blocking point and Black trips over it coming around the board.

THE ATTENTIVE READER may already have guessed that I am going to recommend 11/7, 8/6(2). Giving up the 8-point and keeping the others is the only way to force White off the 23-point: a tremendous gain for Black. The play also clears one of the most troublesome points.

I rolled out six different plays, and one thing that quickly became obvious is that Black is extremely likely to get hit sometime if White holds the 23-point and either of the other two. The swing on White's 6-2, 6-3, and 6-6 is huge, and executing this trap is Black's best shot at a safe bearoff. Δ

PROBLEM #199 ROLLOUT RESULTS

Play	Black's Win Probability	Number of Trials
11/7, 10/8(2)	69%	108
11/7, 9/7, 10/8	68%	108
11/7, 8/6(2)	73%	108
10/8(2), 9/7(2)	65%	108
9/7(2), 8/6(2)	65%	108
11/7, 10/6	66%	108



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PUB CLUB: Tournaments Monday, 7:30 P.M. at Fiddler's, 345 W. North Ave., Villa Park. Chouette play most Sundays, 1:00 P.M. at Cricket's Pub & Grill, 602 W. North Ave., Glendale Hts. V. W. Zimnicki (708/924-8632.)

SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASSN: Tournaments Tuesday, 6:00 P.M. at Parker's Sports Bar, 2801 Peoria Road, 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. Ed Zell (309/673-7622).

PRIME BG CLUB OF CHICAGO: Tourn. Friday, 7:00 P.M. at TJ'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).

AMALGAMATION

Over the years, we have edited four different BG publications: *National Backgammon League* (Mar. 1977–Nov. 1979), *Gammon's of Chicago* (Dec. 1979–Apr. 1983), *Chicago-land Backgammon Newsletter* (May 1983–May 1988), and *CHICAGO POINT* (June 1988–present). The Dec. 1993 *POINT* is a milestone of sorts: our 200th issue.... **Bobbie Shifrin** is thrilled over the 29 October birth of a new grandchild from daughter **Linda: Haley Allison Bieber**.... Who's the mystery man who's buying **Leslie Lockett** a *Backgammon Exclusiv*® board for the holidays? Crafted in Germany by **Werner Dresen** (fax: 09151 22 71), the "Rolls Royce of backgammon sets" sells for around \$1,000 ... Illinois to Michigan: **Danny DeRoche**... 28 September marked the 15 year anniversary of Gammon Associates backgammon tournaments in southern California. Over 50 players showed up to surprise **Carla & Patrick Gibson** for all they have done to promote the game. [Photo by Art Benjamin.]



Patrick & Carla Gibson at their Gammon Assoc. 15th Anniversary surprise party.

... *Flint Backgammon* News editor **Carol Joy Cole** has a new telephone number: 810/232-9731... Congratulations to *Fascinating Backgammon* author Antonio Ortega on winning his fourth Costa Rican National Championship over the past five years.... The current *Hoosier Backgammon Club Newsletter* notes that former Louisville BG Club director **Larry Strasberg** and his lovely wife **Sylvia** celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on 5 Dec. Best wishes.... Speaking of the Hoosier Club, **Butch & Mary Ann Meese** inform us that due to the World Cup commencing on Labor Day next year (5-11 Sept. in Dallas), there will be no 1994 Indianapolis Labor Day tourney. Butch promises that Labor Day in Indy will return in 1995. Now ... who will fill the Labor Day Weekend void in 1994?... Next year, **Gayle Wolf** (MI) heads south of the border for a month. Through her college, Gayle will be living with a Mexican family in order to improve her Spanish. Δ

FASCINATING...

[Continued from page 1]

Position 2, which is Problem 18 in the book, is borrowed from a *LeadingEdge Backgammon* article [Feb. 1991, p. 6]. The book states that in a money game or at the start of a long match, the correct cube action is double/pass. In fact, the position is a clear money take as is stated in the cited article.

THE PRODUCTION QUALITY of the book is excellent. The text and board diagrams are easy to read and the binding construction should last for many years. There are even some lighthearted moments such as the

following passage from the introduction:

"The ACB's [Costa Rican Backgammon Association] efforts to recruit new players have produced a few surprises. Once, responding to an advertisement in a local newspaper for a novice tournament, a new player called to congratulate us on organizing the exciting tournaments he'd been attending. He asked us to sign him up, and then inquired if he should bring his own racquet to the tournament, or if the ACB would supply one."

In summary, I recommend *Fascinating Backgammon* as a worthwhile purchase or holiday gift for any player from advanced beginner to expert. Δ

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

this bearoff. Let's see . . . 58 to 11.6. That factors down to 5-to-1 odds, meaning that Kati needs to be a 5-to-1, or an 83.3% favorite in this game to recube. Clearly her chances aren't that good here.

Larry Strommen's BPA and Hugh Sconyer's BEAREQT9 both give Kati a 78% CPW (cubeless probability of winning) in the diagrammed position. Therefore, you doubled too early, Kati!—Neil Kazaross, Northbrook, IL

WE'RE DOING THE BEST WE CAN

No good gossip these days, Bill . . . but just in case, here's my renewal.—Wendy Kaplan, Indianapolis, IN

'PAUL' IS AVAILABLE

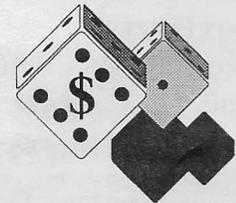
Some time ago, you published a request for copies of Paul Magriel's *Backgammon*. I have two books, one of which is signed by the author and inscribed to a local player. If any of your readers are interested in purchasing this master work, they may fax me at 212/889-9136.—Norm Geibar, New York, NY

'VALENTINE' GREETINGS

Thanks so very much for acknowledging the passing of [former Backgammon Club of Chicago board member] Brad Eben in your newsletter. He was a wonderful person and friend. When Paul Magriel was known as "The Computer," Brad nicknamed himself "The Abacus"! I'll send a copy to his family.

Hope all is well. Happy Holidays.—Valerie Valentine, Chicago, IL Δ

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WINNER'S CORNER



Oct.-Nov. 1993

Campeonato Argentino 1993 (Buenos Aires, Argentina; Mondays in Oct.)... CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS: Juan Rosa, Hugo Ergueta, María Rosa Jodara. JUNIOR WINNERS: Nieves Macchiavelli, Ricardo Wainstein, Miguel Chakerian. BEGINNER WINNERS: Raúl Barcesat, Marta Vara, Juan Carlos Fros Gómez... Current AAB master point leaders through 31 Oct: Juan Rosa (Champ) and Osvaldo Tundis (Junior).

Rscards Fall 1993 Tournament: (GEnie computer service, Oct-Nov.)... OPEN (20): 1-Richard Jacobson (HI), 2-Glenn Daily (NY), 3/4-Dan Shirley (NY) / Nelson Jones (IL), 5/8-Jim Allen (NV) / Michael Tooher (ME) / Albert Lee (CA) / Kurt Schurecht (IL).

Hong Kong Championships (Hong Kong; 29-31 Oct.)... OPEN (28): 1-Jerry Godsey (HK), 2-David Brown (BALI), 3-Johathan Barnes (HK), 4-Vichai Kwatro (THAI); 1C-John Simon (HK), 2C-Steve Nelson (HK); 1LC-Avi Cohen (HK), 2LC-John Fowler (HK). CHAMPIONSHIP (18): 1-Jose Hassan (HK), 2-Chris

Gawan-Taylor (HK); 1C-Denesh Pawa (THAI), 2C-Richard Goss (HK); 1LC-John Bailey (HK), 2LC-Roger Choi (HK)... Hong Kong director Jerry Godsey coasted to victory against David Brown 19-3 after two very close wins in the quarter- and semifinals. The total prize pool exceeded \$30,000 USD—an event record.

Louisville Club Tournament (Louisville, KY; 6-7 Nov.)... OPEN (20): 1-Chuck Stemming (IN), 2-Quint McTyiere (KY); 1C/2C-Terry Kuchenbrod (KY) / Larry Strommen (IN). INTERMEDIATE (3): 1-Ed Mueller (KY).

Sheridan's Irish Open Championship (Dublin, Ireland; 6-7 Nov.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (65): 1-Michael Ellerby (ENG), 2-James Thompson (IRL), 3-Jim Moore (N. IRL), Eugene Mallon (IRL). SENIOR CONSOLATION (Walter Beare (IRL), Paul Smart (IOM). SUNDAY TRIBUNE CUP: 1-Roger Porter (ENG), 2-Peter Ozanne. LAST CHANCE: 1-Paul O'Kelly (IRL)... Results reported by Brendan Burgess, President of the Irish Backgammon Federation.

Mencap Charity Tournament (London, England; 13 Nov.)... OPEN (51): 1-Barry McAdam, 2-David Sasson, 3/4-Mike Heard / William Lean; 1C-Brendan McInerney, 2C-Mike Grabsky, 3C/4C-Graham Sievers / Simon Carey... Results reported by Hercules of Culcreuch, the tournament director.

Big Apple Tournament—ABT (Hackensack, NJ; 19-21 Nov.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (32): 1-Jerry Kane (NJ), 2-Mike Friedman (ONT, CAN); 1C-Toni Wuersch (MA), 2C-Rageb Shadallah (NY). ADVANCED (15): 1-Rob Mathes (NY), 2-Maurice Barie (MI); 1C-Stan Littlefield (FL), 2C-Bob Bieder (NY). INTERMEDIATE (11): 1-Roni Zemsch (NY), 2-Phil Franklin (NJ); 1C-Dave Schatz (NY), 2C-Anton Rusin (NY). BIG APPLE 500 (12): 1-Paul Weaver (MD), 2-James Colen (NY). JOHNNY APPLESEED KICKOFF (32): 1-Rick Cutler (PA), 2-Steve Jacobson (NJ). WORM IN THE APPLE (32): 1-Bob Bieder (NY), 2-Jeff Acierno (NY). DOUBLES I (16): 1-Jack Kissane (NY) & Bob Hill (NY). DOUBLES II (8): 1/2-Mike Nelson (NY) & Stan Littlefield (FL) / Rick Cutler (PA) & Frank Cupo (NJ).

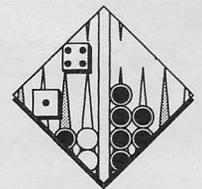
Autumn Gran Prix—ABT (La Jolla, CA; 20-21 Nov.)... OPEN (54): 1-Art Benjamin, 2-George Alessi, 3-Paul Albert, 4-Don Bernstein... Art Benjamin's big win was enough to earn him 2nd place in the ABT final standings for 1993.

Flint Area Club Championships (Flint, MI; 21 Nov.)... OPEN (26): 1-John Quinn, 2-Joe Sylvester, 3-Dean Adamian. INTERMEDIATE (30): 1/2-Dan Shedlov / Josh Smyth, 3/4-Troy Longman / Fred Ishac, 5/6-Andy Coulouris /

[Continued on page 9]



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WINNER'S...

[Continued from page 8]

Lois Davenport. **NOVICE (11):** 1-Janice Newman, 2-Michael Langwald, 3-Kelly Danton... A very special day for Flint director/editor Carol Joy Cole as she was honored with balloons, banners, cake and presents on her golden birthday.

Corobici Torneo No. 76 (San José, Costa Rica; 22-23 Nov.)... **OPEN (24):** 1-Antonio Ortega, 2-Walter Montero, 3-Mario Lizano. **INTERMEDIATE (16):** 1-German Vargas, 2-Harold Bach.

Corobici Torneo No. 76 (San José, Costa Rica; 22-23 Nov.)... **OPEN (24):** 1-Antonio Ortega, 2-Walter Montero, 3-Mario Lizano. **INTERMEDIATE (16):** 1-German Vargas, 2-Harold Bach... Antonio Ortega wins the 1993 National Championship of Costa Rica with 278 points. Runner's-up were: 2-Jorge Tsao-223 points, 3-Mario Madrigal-215 points, 4-Mario Lizano-194 points.

Metropolitan Open (New York, NY; 27 Nov.)... **OPEN (32):** 1-Mike Nelson (NY), 2-Karen Davis (NY), 3/4-Jack Kanovsky / Tim Mabee (IL)... Nick Rabchenok and Bruce Meltzer report a very successful grand opening sellout highlighted by a Bill Robertie seminar. Δ

FALL TROPHY TOURNEY TO KANE AND TATOSIAN

Effective immediately, Jeff Kane should be permanently barred from *all* Intermediate events." So said Neil Kazaross, a second-round victim to Kane who went on to win the Open division Chicago Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney. Record participation including two sold-out fields spotlighted the 11th annual one-night Chicago tournament held at the Golden Flame 16 Nov.

Kane, who lives in Kenosha and is rated the second best player in Wisconsin, also defeated reigning America Cup champion Dean Muench en route to his final match-up vs. Tak Morioka. Like Kazaross, Tak lost 7-0.

Congratulations also to Marty Tatosian who bested Bobbie Shifrin 7-1 to win Intermediate honors. Thanks to the Leberis Family for providing our club with outstanding playing facilities. And thanks also to our hostess Rose who always provides service with a smile. Results:

CBPC Fall Trophy Tourney (Chicago, IL; 16 Nov.)... **OPEN (32):** 1-Jeff Kane (WI), 2-Tak Morioka, 3/4-Dick McCall / Scottie Mitchell; 1C-

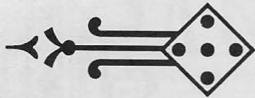
Tim Mabee, 2C-Peter Kalba. **INTERMEDIATE (32):** 1-Marty Tatosian, 2-Bobbie Shifrin, 3/4-Peggy Fleming / Mary Franks; 1C-Mary Vitale, 2C-Phyllis Smolinski. **OPEN OVERFLOW (8):** 1/2-Don Marek / Femi Owiku; 1C-Tom Shields.



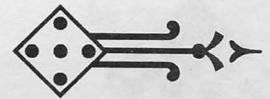
Tak Morioka [right] is in good spirits despite his 7-0 finals loss to Champ Jeff Kane.



Intermediate Champ Marty Tatosian.



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Abraham Eitan, Director

Rob Zurel, Honorary Chairman

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21.00 Public Draw
21.30 Start of Tournament

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(hfl. 300,- per team)
20.00 Award Ceremony & Farewell cocktail

A Ladies Tournament will be held with an added prize of hfl. 2.000,-