

CHICAGO POINT

NUMBER 88

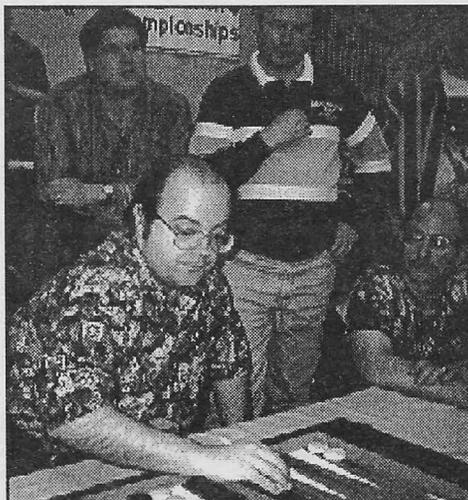
A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

APRIL 1996

1996 midwest backgammon championships

A GOOD TIME TO BE JAKE Jacobs tops Woolsey to take MBC Ingenoso, Maier & Flanagan Also Win

It's a good time to be Chicagoland's Jake Jacobs. He's a popular author for every major backgammon newsletter in the United States; his new book, *Can A Fish Taste Twice As Good?* is due out next month; in February, he won the Pattaya International Tournament in Thailand; and last month, Jake topped it all off with a come-from-behind victory over California master Kit Woolsey to become the 1996 Midwest Backgammon Champion.



The 13th Midwest Championships proved lucky for Jake Jacobs.

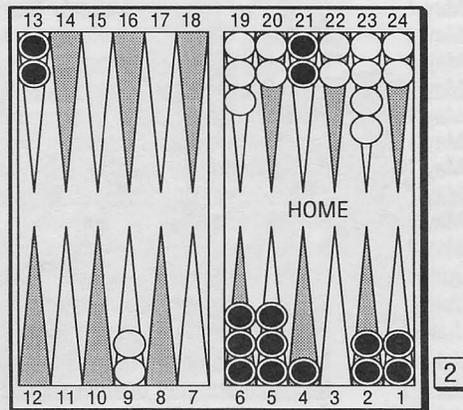
The Chicago Bar Point Club's 13th annual ("Black Cat Backgammon") was held 22-24 March at the Drake Hotel in Oak Brook, Illinois. Over 200 players attended including 184 in the main divisions.

Jacobs faced a tough road to his final match including early victories over seeds Harry Cohn and Howard Markowitz. And the end of the road was no easier with Kit Woolsey blocking the pavement. Kit jumped out to an early lead but saw it disappear when Jake turned a game around to knot the 15-point battle royal at 9-all. Following a short break, Jacobs took an 11-9 lead. The next tense game would

prove to be the last.

A proper doubling window opened for Kit and he took advantage of it. Later, Jacobs faced a tricky problem:

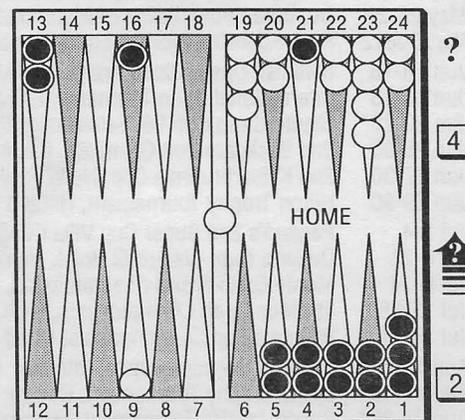
Finals to 15-points. Jacobs (Black) leads Woolsey (White), 11-9. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-2.**



In Jake's own words, "It is clear to play 21/16, 6/4 under most circumstances, but because of the match score, I rejected that play. The no-blot play is hideous, so some players liked 13/8, 6/4. I actually played 6/4, 6/1. JellyFish™ indicates that even at this score, breaking anchor is correct. My play is second best, and 13/8 is worst.

"Kit rolled 5-4 playing 16/11, 6/2. I rolled 3-2 and made my 3-point. Kit followed with 2-1 and duped 4s. I hit with 4-1 and Kit fanned. Should I play on?"

Finals to 15-points. Jacobs (Black) leads Woolsey (White), 11-9. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



"If I redouble, Kit need only consider his cubeless winning chances. He needs 19%. Meanwhile, a gammon puts me out. I opted to play on. Rollouts indicate that Kit's cubeless winning chances are under 17% (he would have passed), but with my open 6-point, I win a gammon just under 20%. Cashing was proper; however I played on and gammoned Kit to win the match."

IN THE OTHER EVENTS, Marc Ingenoso ended a valiant march by Elijah Miller to win the double elimination Open division in the all-Chicago finals. Rob Maier, very likely the best player in West Virginia, defeated a determined James Roston (NY). And Bar Point Club regular Georgina Flanagan, playing in just her second major event, outlasted Kandice Kane (WI) to win her first backgammon trophy.

[Continued on page 4]

1996 MIDWEST BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-Jake Jacobs (IL), 2-Kit Woolsey (CA), 3/4-Hersel Namdar (NY) / Jim Mieske (OH); 1C-Dave Cardwell (GA), 2C-Dean Adamian (MI); 1LC-Tim Mabee (IL)

OPEN (19): 1-Marc Ingenoso (IL), 2-Elijah Miller (IL)

ADVANCED (64): 1-Rob Maier (WV), 2-James Roston (NY), 3/4-Janice Newman (IN) / Frank Dickerson (IL); 1C-Jolie Rubin (IL), 2C-Russ Hoser (OH); 1LC-Paul Friedman (IL)

LIMITED (37): 1-Georgina Flanagan (IL), 2-Kandice Kane (WI), 3/4-Kwong Chan (IL) / Ron Weiner (IL); 1C-Lee Pflugrad (WI), 2C-Boris Mindich (IL); 1LC-Bruce Russell (WI)

CHAMPIONSHIP DOUBLES (32): 1-Malcolm Davis (TX) & Marta Hilworth (IN), 2-Stu Katz & Paul Klein (IL), 3/4-Jeff Acierno (NY) & Abbas Zaltash (PA) / Paul Franks & Bobbie Shifrin (IL)

INTERMEDIATE DOUBLES (16): 1-Marianna Sturm & George Barr (IL), 2-Greg Varbanov & Ken Bruck (IN).

BLITZ (104): 1-John Brussel (IL), 2-Fred Kalantari (MN)

BAZOOKI-GAMMON (32): 1-Mike Cyrkiel (IN), 2-Harry Cohn (IL), 3/4-Sean Garber (IN) / John Meyers (WI)

SPEED-GAMMON (32): 1-Lucky Nelson (IL), 2-Richard Lloyd (IL), 3/4-Ed Bauder (IL) / Neil Kazaross (IL)

BLACK CAT "PLAYING TO LOSE" TOURNEY (16): 1-David Rockwell (IL)

PIG-ROLLING: Vinton Knarr (IL)

DICE SIMON: John Meyers (WI)

BEAVER BOWLING: Dr. Bob Hill (NY)

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Bill Davis

3940 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue 504
Chicago, IL 60659-3128

Tel: 312/583-6464 ♦ Fax: 312/583-3264

E-mail: chipoint@interaccess.com

<http://homepage.interaccess.com/~chipoint/online.html>

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Carol Joy Cole (MI)

Danny Kleinman (CA)

Jake Jacobs (IL)

Walter Trice (MA)

Duane Jensen (MN)

Kit Woolsey (CA)

Neil Kazaross (IL)

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504
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E-mail: chipoint@interaccess.com

COSTA RICA 1994

Enclosed is our newest book *Costa Rica 1994*. Because of all the time that goes in to doing a thorough job, it's very unlikely that we will write a *Costa Rica 1995*. This is probably the last match we will ever annotate.

The book looks better than the previous one. Regarding content, we made some improvements including extensive use of JellyFish™, but of course the experts will have the last word in their reviews.—

Mario Madrigal and Antonio Ortega, San José, Costa Rica

Look for a review of Antonio and Mario's new book by Kit Woolsey in the May issue of CHICAGO POINT. Order your own copy from Carol Joy Cole at 810/232-9731.—Ed.

BACKGAMMON'S WORST ENEMY

Slow play continues to plague backgammon

[Continued on page 3]

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

810/232-9731

carlcole@alumni.sils.umich.edu

* Denotes new or revised listing

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

NATIONAL

Apr 13	Springfield Series #6, Parker's Sports Bar, Springfield, IL	217/483-4028
Apr 13-14*	Nation's Capital Spring Open, Promenade Cardroom, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Apr 14	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Apr 14	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/784-6114
Apr 17	RSCARDS Spring 1996 Computer Modern Tournament, GEnie	301/294-2212
Apr 18	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
<u>Apr 19-21</u>	<u>Spring Gran Prix, Embassy Suites Hotel, La Jolla, CA</u>	<u>619/294-2007</u>
Apr 21	Backgammon By The Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA	510/838-7789
Apr 23-28	3rd Worldwide Twin Championships, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025
Apr 27	Springfield Series Grand Finale, Parker's Sports Bar, Springfield, IL	217/483-4028
Apr 27*	Beverly Hills Monthly Tournament, Clarine's, Beverly Hills, CA	310/273-1632
Apr 28	Atlanta Monthly Tournament, Scores Sports Club, Atlanta, GA	770/441-2074
<u>May 3-5*</u>	<u>Backgammon in the Berkshires, Oak & Spruce Center, South Lee, MA</u>	<u>603/863-4711</u>
May 4	CBOB First Saturday Monthly Tournament, Clubroom, Chicago, IL	312/922-0404
May 4*	Midtown "Sweet 16" Invitational, Midtown Club, New York, NY	212/935-9800
May 5*	Milwaukee Sunday Bimonthly, John Hawks Pub, Milwaukee, WI	414/463-2498
<u>May 10-12</u>	<u>1996 Georgia Championships & Peach Cup, Harvey Hotel, Atlanta GA</u>	<u>770/441-2074</u>
May 16*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
May 19*	New England Bonus Tournament, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/784-6114
May 19*	Backgammon By The Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA	510/838-7789
<u>May 24-27</u>	<u>17th Chicago Open, Woodfield Hyatt Regency Hotel, Schaumburg, IL</u>	<u>847/674-0120</u>
May 25*	Beverly Hills Monthly Tournament, Clarine's, Beverly Hills, CA	310/273-1632
May 26*	Austin Bimonthly Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/261-8518
Jun 1*	CBOB First Saturday Monthly Tournament, Clubroom, Chicago, IL	312/922-0404
Jun 9	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Braxton Seafood Grill, Oak Brook, IL	312/252-7755
Jun 9*	New England Club Monthly, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	617/784-6114
Jul 3*	Michigan Summer Warm-up Tourney, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI	810/232-9731
<u>Jul 4-7</u>	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton Hotel, Novi, MI</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jul 13	Summer Open Tournament, Promenade Cardroom, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Jul 17	RSCARDS Summer 1996 Computer Modern Tournament, GEnie	301/294-2212
<u>Aug 2-4</u>	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY</u>	<u>716/442-8221</u>
Aug 11-18	World Cup V and U.S. Open, Harvey's Hotel Addison, Dallas, TX	301/299-8265
<u>Aug 30-Sep 2</u>	<u>44th Indiana Open, Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN</u>	<u>317/255-8902</u>
<u>Sep 20-22*</u>	<u>Minnesota State Champs, Minneapolis Athletic Club, Minneapolis, MN</u>	<u>612/378-1536</u>
<u>Sep 27-29</u>	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Towpath Inn, Turin, NY</u>	<u>716/442-8221</u>
<u>Oct 10-13*</u>	<u>Illinois State Championships & America Cup, Location TBA, IL</u>	<u>847/945-7801</u>
<u>Oct 11-13</u>	<u>Nation's Capital Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD</u>	<u>301/530-0604</u>
<u>Nov 29-Dec 1</u>	<u>2nd Thanksgiving Tournament, Best Western Hotel, Akron, OH</u>	<u>216/966-2811</u>
<u>Dec 6-8*</u>	<u>Gammon Associates Invitational, Holiday Inn, Woodland Hills, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>

OUTSIDE USA

Apr 13-14	British Open, George Hotel, Solihull, England	441522-546993
Apr 18-21*	Rio de Janeiro Tournament, Miramar Palace Hotel, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521-267 6033
May 2-5	Dusseldorf Open, Senator Hotel, Kaarst/Dusseldorf, Germany	4921-5150 1359
May 3-5*	Tampere GP II/Rosendahl Open, Hotel Rosendahl, Tampere, Finland	35831-252 5255
May 4-5	4th City of Rome Tournament, Bridge Club, Rome, Italy	396-320 8350
May 4-5	National BG's London Cup, Watermill Hotel, Hemel Hempstead, England	441619-45 3741
May 9-12	2nd EBN Tourney, Apartahotel Las Colinas, Almeria, Spain	34-50 460080
May 25-26	County Cups Trophy Tournament, George Hotel, Solihull, England	441522-546993
May 25-26*	De Åbne Københavnske Mesterskaber, Skjoldtgården, Ordrup, Denmark	4539-400607
May 30-Jun 2*	Rio de Janeiro Tournament, Miramar Palace Hotel, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521-267 6033
Jun 13-16	Swedish Open, Globe Arena, Stockholm, Sweden	468-652 4099
Jun 15-18*	International Open Tournament, Duni Black Sea Resort, Bulgaria	359-723612
Jun 22-23*	Monte-Carlo Cup 96, Selskabslokalerne, Copenhagen, Denmark	4539-400607
Jun 25-30	2nd Backgammon Olympiad, Casinò of Venice, Italy	394-1521 1029
Jun 27-30	2nd Kaiserbrunnen Cup, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	495 21-64314
Jun 29-30	Hilton Trophy Tournament, Hilton Hotel, East Midlands, England	441522-546993
Jul 2-4	Pagano's 2nd Super Cup Villa Condulmer, Venice, Italy	394-2296 9305
Jul 6-7*	Queen's Cup, Watermill Hotel, Hemel Hempstead, England	44161-9453741
Jul 8-14	Monte Carlo World Championship, Loews Monte Carlo Hotel, Monaco	3392-16 21 33
Jul 15-16	4th Nice Open Championship, Nice, France (tentative)	3393-879 436
Jul 18-21	Riviera's Cup Championship, Hotel Martinez, Cannes, France	331-4359 1080
Aug 1-4*	2nd Bad Segeberg Open, Intermar Kurhotel, Bad Segeberg, Germany	4930-461 9624
Aug 17-18*	S.A.C. Trophy Tournament, George Hotel, Solihull, England	441522-546993
Aug 22-25*	Rio de Janeiro Tournament, Miramar Palace Hotel, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521-267 6033

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

tournaments across the globe. I can tell you what we have done in Sweden to combat this. In the first round of play, we keep statistics of the last two matches to be completed (match length, elapsed time, players involved). Obviously, some matches take more time than others. But by registering the elapsed times of the two slowest matches for a set period of time, a pattern for certain individuals will develop.

Following a set amount of offenses within a certain number of tournaments, actions could be taken against the offending players ranging from starting a match with penalty points to being barred from future events. Our 64-player grids have finished almost two hours quicker since we have started keeping records.

The recording method is preferred over assigning a monitor to arbitrarily assess penalty points on slow matches. Chess clocks don't work for us either because the

trailer often falls into a deep backgame in an effort to gain a time advantage. The only clock that will work against some of these slow-play hypnotists and their victims is an alarm clock!—*Ulf Ring, Chairman, Swedish Backgammon Federation*

A great idea, Ulf! And we bet that the winner is very prompt in reporting his score to the director—another time-saving benefit. We intend to contact participating members of the American Backgammon Tour and suggest they immediately begin this practice for their Championship and Intermediate divisions.—Ed.

JELLYFISH™ PROBLEMS

I've had my copy of JellyFish 2.0 for well over a month now. Most impressive except for one problem: I'm having trouble printing from the program. It produces a double-length board with elliptical checkers. Another player from England, Roger Porter, has the same problem. If you hear of anyone else with similar difficulties,

please have them contact me via e-mail at <mlee@legend.co.uk> —*Martin Lee, West Yorkshire, England*

North American JellyFish distributor Larry Strommen writes: Printing positions in JF works well for most players, but problems are showing up with a few customers. If you have a problem, you could help sort out what is going on by detailing: type of computer, DOS version, memory size, Windows version, printer, print driver being used by computer to print the screen, default print driver for Windows, and any other information you think might help including a description of the problem being experienced. E-mail info to Larry at <diceman@indy.net>, or write me at 6866 Meadow View Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46226.—Larry Strommen, Indianapolis, IN

I went to run JellyFish 2.0 last night and it was time for the new month reconfirmation. It refused to reinstall. What do you recommend for those of us looking for cyber-Bactine on our JellyFish stings?—*Jake Jacobs, Des Plaines, IL*

For those of you are using JellyFish 2.0, a problem has shown up with the confirm file from Windows. If you are getting an error message, try confirming several times before you begin to panic. Or go to the DOS prompt and at the JF director, (not above it like before), type C:\JF>a:confirm. This should work.—L.S. Δ

ABT AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1996	AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1996	ABT AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1996
Compiled through 24 Mar. 1996 after 3 tournaments (Coming April 19–21: Spring Gran Prix)		

Jake Jacobs 22.88	Tim Mabee 6.40	Odis Chenault 3.79	Lee Pflugrad 1.61
David Jaffe 22.68	Elijah Miller 5.70	Georgina Flanagan 3.32	Gary Fries 1.57
Ernest Ho 15.21	Francois Margot 5.67	Paul Friedman 3.20	Wally Wolf 1.57
Marc Ingenoso 13.30	Reza Nowbar 5.67	Pete Ryder 3.15	Kandice Kane 1.50
Rob Maier 11.44	David Wells 5.67	Ray Baker 3.15	Bruce Ballance 1.19
Harry Cohn 11.34	Ray Glaeser 5.67	Jeff Kaiserman 2.84	Harold Roberson 1.19
Abdi Zaltash 11.34	Jolie Rubin 5.60	Ray Bills 2.84	Gary Gardner 0.94
Wally Watson 11.34	James Rosten 5.20	Russ Hoser 2.40	Walt Swan 0.94
Dave Cardwell 11.20	Dean Adamian 4.80	Keith Jackson 2.38	Bruce Russell 0.93
Kit Woolsey 10.40	Hersel Namdar 4.16	Janice Newman 2.08	Boris Mindich 0.70
Blake Sorem 7.60	Jim Mieske 4.16	Frank Dickerson 2.08	Ron Weiner 0.60
Steve Petersen 7.60	Gus Contos 3.79	Larry Deckel 1.88	Kwong Chan 0.60

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB	CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB	COMPILED THRU 31 MAR.
1996 PLAYER OF THE YEAR		

Neil Kazaross 10.20	Peter Kalba 3.32	Bill Davis 1.88	Sarg Serges 0.80
Paul Friedman 7.92	Bill Keefe 3.28	Dean Muench 1.88	John Stryker 0.72
Richard Lloyd 6.88	Norma Shyer 3.16	David Rubin 1.76	Wendy Kaplan 0.64
Reggie Porter 5.44	Phyllis Smolinski 3.04	Marty Tatosian 1.52	Ralph Levy 0.60
Andy Krenitz 5.28	Frankie Farjood 2.80	Bob Koca 1.44	Bobbie Shifrin 0.56
Herb Roman 4.32	Ed Buerger 2.76	Harold Seif 1.28	Tom Fahland 0.40
John Demian 4.16	Arline Levy 2.72	Russell Harris 1.28	Jerry Brooks 0.32
Jake Jacobs 4.12	Jeff Kane 2.72	Ken Bond 1.28	Elaine Kehm 0.32
Mary Franks 4.00	Amy Valerio 2.60	Georgina Flanagan 1.04	Roz Ferris 0.32
Tim Serges 3.60	Paul Franks 2.32	Harry Cohn 0.88	Bruce Pollack 0.32
Phil Simborg 3.44	Alice Kay 2.08	Don Jayhan 0.84	Richard Stawowy 0.24
Leslie Lockett 3.32	Tim Mabee 2.04		

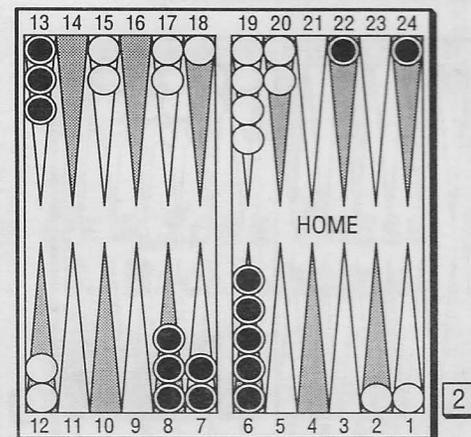
PAUL FRIEDMAN is the March Bar Point Club player of the month. Paul's 3.44 points was just enough to edge Jake Jacobs (3.16) and Herb Roman (2.72).

your move

PROBLEM #223

to be analyzed by Walter Trice

Match to 5 points. Black leads White, 3 to 2. BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.



SHADES OF GRAY

THE RULINGS CONTEST 3

WIN \$50.00

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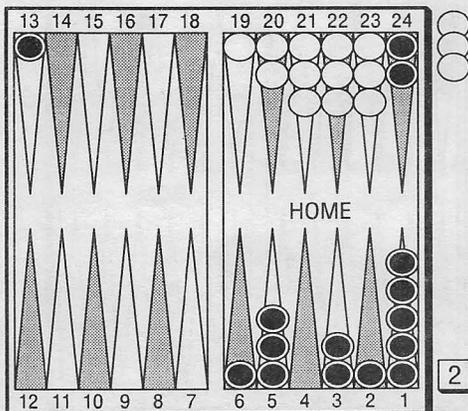
As a tournament director, how would you rule in the following six difficult situations, most of which actually occurred at U.S. Backgammon tournaments in the past year? Match your multiple choice answers with mine and you could win \$50.

INSTRUCTIONS: Send your solutions to: Backgammon Rulings; c/o CHICAGO POINT; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3128. Fax answers to 312/583-3264, or E-mail: chipoint@interaccess.com. One entry per person. Ties will be broken by random draw. Entries must be received by 2 May 1996.

1. You're playing in the finals of a major tournament in front of 16 spectators. It's double match-point and you are in a tough, game-deciding position where 2s hit you. Your opponent rolls 6-2, but reads 6-1 and plays other than hitting. As he touches his dice just prior to lifting them, his wife throws her hands in the air. Your opponent looks toward his wife, then toward the board, sees the hit and puts you on the bar. When the director is called, you ask for a fair ruling . . .

- a) The opponent may play the 6-2;
- b) The opponent's 6-1 play made prior to his wife's actions stands;
- c) The opponent must reroll;
- d) The director should take a majority vote among the 15 other spectators to determine whether Black must play a 6-1 or instead may play a 6-2, hitting.

2. You roll just as your opponent has lifted his dice in the following setup:



You think your dice have come to rest on 5-4, but literally a split-second after the 4 has apparently landed (it's very close), your opponent's die falls out of his hand and hits the 4, turning it into a 2. When you ask your opponent about his carelessness, he claims that your 4 had not quite settled when his die hit it. How should the director rule on Black's roll based on the above information?

- a) Roll both dice over;
- b) Keep the 5 and reroll the other die;
- c) Keep the 5 and flip a coin to see whether the other die is a 4 or 2;
- d) The roll is ruled to be 5-4;
- e) The roll stands as 5-2

3. You are shaking your dice when the oblong cup slips out of your hand and falls on the floor in front of you. Both dice legally land at the board to your right. You quickly pick up your dice and begin shaking again. Your opponent claims your roll of 6-2 was legal and should stand, but you picked up your dice and should lose your turn. In addition, you were going to double before your roll. What should happen?

- a) You lose your turn;
- b) You must play a 6-2;
- c) Your first cast is void. You may reroll, but you may not double;
- d) Your first cast is void. You may double before you reroll.

4. One match is delaying the flow of a major tournament. In an attempt to catch up with the other brackets, the director orders a clock to be placed on the match. Both players grudgingly accept the clock, but Jim requests a monitor to punch the clock for both players so as not to disturb their concentration.

When the director rejects this request, Jim asks for a 3-man ruling committee in hopes of overruling the director's decision. The director should:

- a) Assign a monitor to punch the clock;
- b) Convene a 3-man ruling committee to decide whether or not a monitor may be designated to punch the clock for both players;
- c) Disallow Jim's request for a 3-man committee and require both players to punch their own clocks.

5. Intermediate sandbagger Paul tells Steve, a beginner, that their match is to 11 points when in fact, the "playto" is 7. With the score 7-4 in favor of Steve, the players adjourn for a dinner break. Upon returning from dinner, Steve notices that Paul has

given him wrong information. Steve claims victory, but Paul wants to play on. This match is delaying the tournament. How should the director rule?

- a) Steve wins the match;
- b) The match should continue to 11 points;
- c) The match should continue to a compromise length of 9 points.

6. How should the director rule in the above situation if he is privately informed by a kibitzer that Steve is leading Paul 7-4 in a 7-point match, but that both players are playing to 11 points?

- a) Take no action unless one of the players lodges a complaint. When the 11-point match is completed, the result is official;
- b) Take no action unless one of the players lodges a complaint. If the 11-point match is completed, it becomes official only after it has been posted;
- c) Inform both players that the match was to 7 points and that Steve is the winner;
- d) Inform both players that the match will continue to 11 points. Δ

JAKE WINS MBC...

[Continued from page 1]

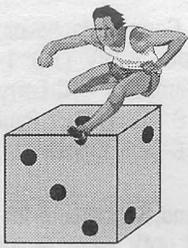


Limited champion Georgina Flanagan



Beaver Bowling champ Dr. Bob Hill

[Continued at right]



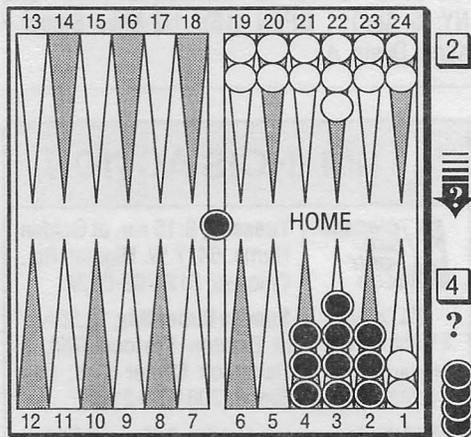
a quick match

by Jake Jacobs

Have you ever noticed that some players are more thoughtful than others? On this particular Tuesday evening at the Chicago Bar Point Club, I drew one of the thoughtful ones on my very first round. This player had gained renown for thinking . . . and thinking . . . and thinking. You can learn a lot playing a player like this. I once learned all about "Opposition Politics in 20th Century Korea" while this opponent contemplated an opening 5-2.

When one's opponent is constantly riding the brake, it's natural to build up quite a bit of torque. Could that have been the impetus that caused me to stomp recklessly on the accelerator in the position below?

Position 1. Match to 7 points. White leads Black, 2 to 1. White redoubles to 4. **SHOULD BLACK TAKE?**



This almost looks like a misprint. Where's the checker that hit me? The hit came several rolls earlier, and during the fight to contain me (that was one feisty blot

he picked on!), he had been unable to activate his last two checkers.

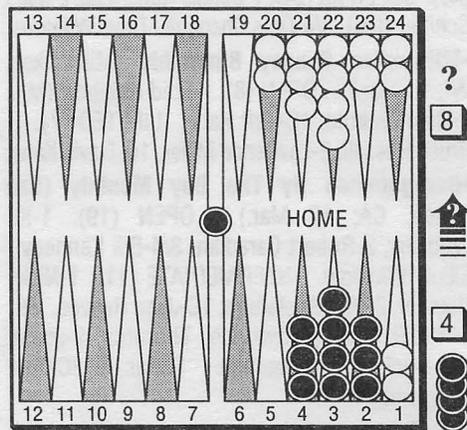
Closing the board on me at last, he redoubled, thinking to collect two hard-earned points. I was about to give them to him (there is something more than a little hypnotic about his pace) when I paused to do a little thinking myself. Then I crossed him up by taking. He was so startled he rolled a 3-2. I redoubled from the bar—*let's give him something to really think about*—and within 5 or 10 minutes, we were playing for the match.

Three rolls later, I entered with 6-6, hitting both his stragglers. His 6-5 response was more than sufficient to win him the Silver Medal in our match.

PUZZLED, HE ASKED how I could bring myself to take that 4-cube. I told him I was leaving for Thailand in two weeks and an 8-cube was the only way I could guarantee catching my plane.

Truthfully, this is a very easy take. I have two ways to win this position. One comes when my opponent cracks, and the other comes when I succeed in winning the race by dint of my already having born off four checkers. Neither is enough to justify a take by itself, and most players are aware of that. They go wrong by failing to compute how much the two together are worth.

Position 2. Match to 7 points. White leads Black, 2 to 1. Black redoubles to 8. **SHOULD WHITE TAKE?**

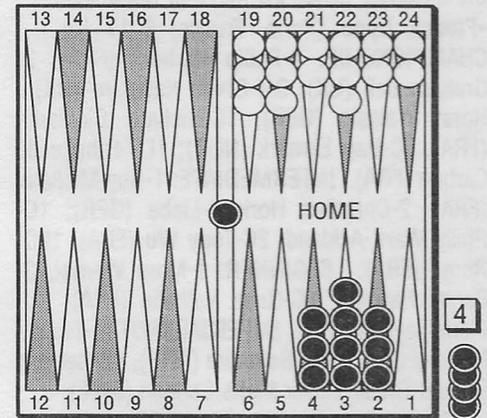


One of the highlights of the event was the Black Cat Backgammon tournament. 16 miniature black cats were hidden throughout the hotel. If you were lucky enough to find one, you received free entry into the \$513 Black Cat "Playing to Lose" tournament. Each player, in his first 12 moves, tried to destroy his position. Then the sides were reversed and the players tried to win with their opponent's checkers. Dave Rockwell (IL) mastered the madness.

White has nine numbers that, like 3-2, crack his board. How much are they worth to me? My opponent considered passing, but correctly took. JellyFish™ rollouts have me winning 73% cubeless. For money, White can win 32.5% with the cube, but 6% of his losses are gammons. Of course, if he cracks with 3-3, he cannot take and I would consider taking a shake before cashing.

What if White does not crack, and rolls his way to here?

Position 3. Match to 7 points. White leads Black, 2 to 1.



This is about as sour a lemon as we will be forced to suck on. If we had no checkers off, with a home board resembling our current one, we might still expect to win perhaps 2% of the time. With 7 checkers off, and the others on these same three points, we would be taking a money redouble. Four checkers off suggests that we are somewhere in the middle. We will win over 13% from here (and are probably more like 15% at the moment that White first frees a man from our home board). Together, we are near cashing 25%, plus we are winning 13% of the remaining 75% which puts us near 34% wins.

White does slightly better to wait and cash than to redouble when he did. In practice, he must redouble as the chance that Black will pass mitigates the small loss of equity that occurs when Black takes. Δ



Advanced champions are honored: 1st-Rob Maier (left), 2nd-James Roston.

Dr. Bob Hill (NY) won the Beaver Bowling, John Meyers (WI) captured Dice Simon and Vinton Knarr (IL) was crowned Pig-Rolling Champion for 1996.

Thanks to the Drake Oak Brook for the playing facilities. Also, Midwest director Bill Davis and staffers Peter Kalba, Carol Joy Cole, Amy Valerio and John & Dru Heggen wish to thank all the Calcutta Auction bidders and donors who raised over \$1300 for charity. Δ

WINNER'S CORNER



Feb.-Apr. 1996

•**Internet National Team Challenge** (FIBS, Feb. 1996)... Italy defeats Sweden 5-4. Winning Team Italy: R. Gobbo, A. da Pra, C. Delvai, S. Cagol. Team Sweden: B. Isberg, P. Valfridsson, F. Engels, S. Poms, P. Bengtsson.

•**Hong Kong Monthly** (Hong Kong; 5 Feb.)... OPEN: 1-Jonathan Barnes, 2-Don Jae; 1C-Gregg Westrick, 2C-Robin Swaffield. CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Peter Wong, 2-Lesley FcFarlane; 1C-Chris Gawan-Taylor, 2C-Mayumi Yamaguchi.

•**French Open** (Paris, France; 8-11 Feb.)... CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Philip Narboni (FRA), 2-Graham Bell (UK), 3/4-Shino Kazuhiro (UK) / Horst Weissig (GER); 1C-Richard Cieciorco (FRA), 2C-Dag Ekmark (NOR); 1LC-Fabrice de Carbon (FRA). INTERMEDIATE: 1-Guy Michael (FRA), 2-Christian Horkort-Liebe (GER); 1C-Philip Ward-Ackland, 2C-Tony Wu (FRA); 1LC-Romy (FRA). BEGINNER: 1-Marc Werner, 2-Benny Harman; 1C-Guez Nathalie (FRA), 2C-Pierre Sayegh (FRA). SUPERJACKPOT #1-Freddy Narboni over Mario Sequeira (POR), #2-Gerrard Duguet-Grasser over Matts Carlson (SWE)

•**NEBC Sunday Monthly** (Cambridge, MA; 11 Feb.)... EXPERT (23): 1-Albert Steg, 2-Linc Bedell, 3/4-Bob Mojahed / Marty Storer; 1C-Tom Costigan, 2C-Nora Luna. A DIV. (11): 1-Takis Sakkalis (GRE), 2-Ming Lee; 1C-Ken Newman, 2C-Jim Sullivan. B DIV. (11): 1-Paul Stark, 2-Al Mason; 1C-Paul Farrand, 2C-Jenny Reddock.

•**DM 1995 Finale** (Copenhagen, Denmark; 17-18 Feb.)... OPEN (128): 1-Lars Leth, 2-Sebastian Hartmann, 3/4-Jens Neregaard / Marcelo Zagal; 1C-Henrik Skjelmoose, 2C-Thomas Bræmer-Jensen, 3C/4C-Henrik Bodholdt / Thomas Jespersen.

•**Pattaya International Open Championship** (Pattaya, Thailand; 23-25 Feb.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (22): 1-Jake Jacobs (USA), 2-Lars Hammargren (SWE), 3/4-Billy Bloch (USA) / Thomas Robohn (SWE); 1C-Narcel Nabarro (NL), 2C-Michael Bachstuz (GB); 1LC-Goran Hasselquist (THAI). INTERMEDIATE (18): 1-Tiwa Thaiyasem (THAI), 2-Tom Swiss (THAI); 1C-Davis Pike (USA); 1LC-Ashok Pawa (THAI). SUPER JACKPOT (8): 1-David Brown (BALI). LIMITED JACKPOT (8): 1-Wolfgang Proi (GER)... *Director Goran Hasselquist garnered participation from 15 countries.*

•**Clarine's Beverly Hills Monthly** (Beverly Hills, CA; 24 Feb.)... OPEN (16): 1-Saul Meir, 2-Steve Sax.

•**Atlanta Backgammon Assoc. Monthly** (Atlanta, GA; 25 Feb.)... OPEN: 1-Dave Cardwell, 2-Homer Hector. NOVICE: 1-Jackie Greene, 2-Karel Dosedel.

•**Hoosier Club Awards Tournament** (Indianapolis, IN; 25 Feb.)... OPEN (14): 1-Butch Meese,

2/3-Bill Gheen / David Groner.

•**Rio de Janeiro Tournament** (Rio, Brazil; Feb.)... OPEN (125, reentries to 396): 1-Christian Toth, 2-Alfredo Unes, 3-Peoro Carvalho, 4-Ricardo Gubna; 1LC-Renato Balbi, 2LC-Armando Balbi. BEGINNER (175, reentries to 396): 1-Megaklis, 2-Alan Rozenberg, 3-Mendell Schumaccer.

•**1st Einladungsturnier** (Brakel, Germany; 1-3 Mar.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (51, reentries to 64): 1-Carsten Joh, 2-Andreas Förster, 3/4-Peter Van Rooy (NL) / Rainer Birkle; 1C-Hendrik Muysers, 2C-Alexander Maurer; 1LC-Stephan Sauer. INTERMEDIATE (16): 1-Jan Halfmann, 2-Theo Bruns; 1C-Norbert Lisiecki, 2C-Birgit Scheuerling; 1LC-Uwe Köller. SUPER JACKPOT: 1-Jochen Lücke, 2-Leonid Riskin. LADIES CUP: Anja Ewers.

•**Turku Grand Prix** (Turku, Finland; 1-3 Mar.)... OPEN (16): 1-Mika Inkinen, 2-Antti Tuomisto; 1C-Jorma Tattari, 2C-Janne Mäkipää; 1LC-Hannu Pajunen, 2LC-Teppo Salo.

•**Midtown "Sweet 16" Invitational** (New York, NY; 2 Mar.)... OPEN (16): 1-Perry Gartner (NJ), 2-Hersel Namdar. OVERFLOW (12): 1-Antoinette Williams, 2-Sam Wang.

•**Hong Kong Monthly** (Hong Kong; 4 Mar.)... OPEN: 1-John Simon, 2-Andre Hoffman; 1C-Robin Swaffield, 2C-Ed Cartledge. CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Samson Tang, 2-Nancy Wong; 1C-Browyn Farber, 2C-Scott Farber.

•**Gammon Assoc. 36th Invitational-ABT** (Los Angeles, CA; 8-10.)... OPEN (38): 1-Ernest Ho (TX), 2-Blake Sorem, 3-Gus Contos; 1C-Steve Peterson, 2C-Odis Chenault. LIMITED (15): 1-Larry Deckel, 2-Gary Gardner; 1C-Walt Swan (NJ). SUPER XX (24): 1-Dennis Rutkowski, 2-Mark Schiffer (OR), 3/4-Odis Chenault / Dave Williams.

•**Milwaukee Sunday Bimonthly** (Milwaukee, WI; 10 Mar.)... OPEN (8): 1-Fred Gehlhooff (MI), 2-Rich Siebold; 1C-Jeff Kane. LIMITED (7): 1-Bruce Russell, 2-Lawrence Miller; 1C-Travis Kane.

•**Backgammon By The Bay Monthly** (San Mateo, CA; 17 Mar.)... OPEN (19): 1-Kit Woolsey, 2-Robert Caradian, 3/4-Bill Kennedy / Elliott Winslow. INTERMEDIATE (11): 1-Nicky Niknam, 2-Phil Gustafson; 1C-Jean Reeves. BEGINNER (16): 1-Kristopher Thornton, 2-Jason Nordwick; 1C-Shamuel Sarkis, 2C-Tom Langland.

•**1st European Pro-Am** (Gstaad, Switzerland; 13-14 Mar.)... OPEN (12 teams): 1-Gustav Jacobsen & Tina Jacobsen (DEN), 2-Jörgen Granstedt & Johan Moazed (SWE), 3-Ralf Ludwig (SWIZ) & Paul Magriel (USA). LE TROPHÉE DES ALPES: Yannis Tomazos (GRE).

•**3rd Hong Kong Invitational** (Hong Kong; 15-16 Mar.)... OPEN (18): 1-John Simon, 2-José Karas; 1C-Thomas Kong, 2C-Marc Steyvers. CHAMPIONSHIP (11): 1-Max Modesti, 2-Pearly Liu; 1C-Peter Wong, 2C-Ronnie Nutzati.

•**NEBC Sunday Monthly** (Cambridge, MA; 17 Mar.)... EXPERT (23): 1-Alex Perry, 2-Marty

Storer, 3/4-Herb Gurland / Connie Machakos; 1C-Seth Towle, 2C-Andy Latto. A DIV. (16): 1-Ken Newman, 2-Zita Samuels; 1C-Larry Liebster, 2C-Ross Gordon. B DIV. (11): 1-Paul Farrand, 2-Lynn Marsella; 1C-Lara Kipperman, 2C-Helen Sonenberg.

•**Grand Prix de Lugano** (Lugano, Switzerland; 28-31 Mar.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (44): 1-Eric Guedj (FRA), 2-Peter Heitmüller (GER), 3/4-Pierre Zglav (SWIZ) / Willy Hartmann (SWIZ); 1C-Thomas Lumper (GER), 2C-Alberto Rusca (SWIZ); 1LC-Peter Bardehle (GER), 2LC-Guido Flamigni (ITA). INTERMEDIATE (20): 1-Giuseppe Ricciardi (ITA), 2-Olivier Egger (SWIZ); 1C-Ronald Reinhardt (GER), 2C-Valpiani (SWIZ); 1LC-Giulio Alessandri (ITA). BEGINNER (13): 1-Christian Meyer (SWIZ), 2-Hans R. Rechtsteiner (SWIZ); 1C-René Knoll (SWIZ), 2C-Laura Nobile (SWIZ); 1LC-Patrizia Gianotti (SWIZ). COUPE DES NATIONS (13 teams): 1-Ticino-Suisse (SWIZ) Rusca-Castro-Saladino, 2-Castra Regina (GER) Lumper-Braun-Busato. SUPERJACKPOT: 1-Eric Guedj (FRA), 2-Yannis Tomazos (GRE). FRANCO ROSSO TOURNEY: 1-Marco Maiwald (SWIZ), 2-Peter Heitmüller (GER). SWAROVSKY CRYSTAL TOURNEY: 1-Thomas Lumper (GER), 2-Xavier Braun (GER). RAYMOND WEIL TOURNEY: 1-Alberto Rusca (SWIZ), 2-Carsten Joh (GER).

•**CBOB First Saturday Monthly** (Chicago, IL; 6 Apr.)... OPEN: 1-Jake Jacobs, 2-Neil Kazaross.

•**Midtown "Sweet 16" Invitational** (New York, NY; 6 Apr.)... OPEN (16): 1/2-Mike Singer / Karen Davis. Δ



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SANGAMON VALLEY BG ASSN: Tourn. Wednesday, 6:00 P.M. at Brehmhaus, 617 E. Washington, Springfield. Ben Zemaitis (217/483-4028).

WINNETKA BG CLUB: Tournaments Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Stern (847/446-0537).

CENTRAL ILL. BG CLUB: Tournaments Thursday, 6:30 P.M. at River Station, 212 Constitution Ave., Peoria. Linda Woods (309/686-6662).

CHICAGO BOARD OF BACKGAMMON: Daily except Sun., 12:00 to 9:00 P.M. Tourn. 1st Sat., 12:00 at 175 W. Jackson (Suite 1103), Chicago. Dean Muench (312/922-0404).

NORTH CLUB: Daily except Sunday, 1:00 P.M. at 4747 W. Peterson (Suite 2), Chicago. Greg Defotis (312/286-6719).

AMALGAMATION

FIBS, the First Internet Backgammon Server shut down on 6 April and is still out as we go to press on 8 April. Dozens of frazzled readers expressed their frustrations on the BG news server Rec.Games.Backgammon. FIBS administrator **Andreas Schneider** explained what happened thusly: "I'm looking for a new home for FIBS. Too many people tried to be the administrators at [the old] site. And because they received too many abusive e-mails (I'm used to it by now), they asked me to move FIBS to another site. I can't say that I blame them for this decision. If I find a site that offers me a machine to run FIBS on, I can continue to offer free backgammon on the Internet." Schneider is seeking at a minimum, a Sun Sparc workstation with 32 MB (or more) of ram as well as the software to go with it. Stay tuned, FIBSters... Texas BG expert **Tom Wheeler** who won \$14,001 on the "Jeopardy" TV game show on 5 March, was defeated 6 March in a heartbreaker. Going into Final Jeopardy and leading \$8400 to \$4400 to \$5700, Wheeler faced the following Ancient History answer: "He started the third servile war in 73 B.C." Tom's opponents each new the correct question and bet it all. Tom's question (Who was **J. Caesar**?) was wrong. The correct question: "Who was **Spartacus**?" ... Condolences to **Walter Trice** (MA) and **Bruce Pollack** (IL) who both lost their fathers in March. And on 30 March, **Darl Brooks** (OH) died in a car

accident. Regards to the Brooks family... We received a fax from **John Lockwood** announcing the formation of the Five Prime Backgammon Club of Central New Jersey. For info call 908/335-9702... Las Vegas Tuesday club director **Michael Maxakuli** sent us the **Sharon Stone** profile from the March *Vanity Fair*. Page 196 says: "Dropping out of college, Stone waited tables and managed a backgammon store in Manhattan before establishing herself as a model in New York and Europe." Does any New Yorker remember Stone's involvement in BG?... A young **Marcia Clark** was pictured in a skimpy bikini with **Gaby Horowitz** in the 18 March *People* magazine follow-up on her career. In the article, Gaby was described as a flamboyant Israeli professional backgammon player who was "drop-dead gorgeous"... **Lara Kipperman** is selling backgammon shirts at Wellesley College. The backs of them read: "Watch Men Squirm As You Grab Their Pips," or "Roll With A Man All Day And Go Home Smiling." To order, you can e-mail Lara at <lkipperman@sallie.wellesley.edu>... **Danny Kleinman's** 2-volume masterpiece "Vision Laughs At Counting with Advice To The Dicerlorn" has received a makeover by **Larry Strommen**. Larry has retypeset the entire work and added easy-to-read diagrams. Price: \$80. Order from **Carol Joy Cole** at 313/232-9731... The Central Illinois BG Club has found a new home Thursdays at the River Station in Peoria. For more info, contact CIBC director **Linda Woods** at 309/686-6662. And Gammon Associates weekly

meetings are now Thursdays at the Acapulco Cantina in Burbank, CA. Call Patrick Gibson at 818/901-0464... Long-time Midwest BG Champs supporter **Arnold Zousmer** had good reason to miss this year's tournament—he was coaching his son **Max** to victory in the JCC 4th grade Championship game in San Diego, CA. But that didn't stop Arnold from sending in a \$250 donation to our MBC tourney beneficiary, the Anti-Cruelty Society of Chicago Δ

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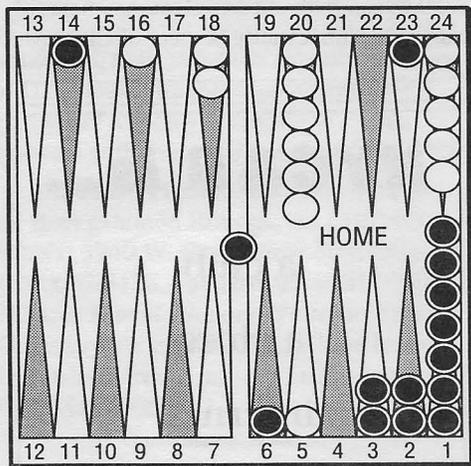
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last month's position

PROBLEM #222 SOLVED

by Kit Woolsey

Match to 7 points. White leads Black, 6 to 4 (Crawford). **BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.**



Kent Goulding once wrote that a good exercise for learning to play backgammon is to put all the checkers in a bag, shake them up, and throw them out randomly on the board; then start to play from the resulting position. Problem #222 looks like it might have come from the Goulding exercise: what a mess! No nice neat primes, boards, or timing considerations—just an out and out slugfest. Still, these types of degenerate games often decide matches, so we have to work out what to do.

This game is likely to turn into a race pretty quickly. There may be some blot-hitting, but both boards are so weak that a hit blot will not be contained very long. So, let's look at some of Black's priorities:

1) *Don't get hit!* This has to be number one on the list. Black is already behind in the race, and if he gets another checker sent back, it will probably be curtains. Thus, it must be right to get that blot on the 6-point out of direct shot range. The cost of being hit is far greater than the gain of possibly making the 6-point. Any play which doesn't move that checker goes to the bottom of the list.

2) *Hit one of White's blots.* Since Black is behind in the race, he will need to either hit a White checker or get lucky in the race. This seems to argue for Bar/21, 23/21, 6/4, which is the safest play while still attacking White's blots.

3) *Hang back for a late shot.* White is going to have a lot of trouble playing safe, so maybe it is right to stay back on the 23-

point with Bar/23, 14/12, 6/2. The main disadvantage of this play is that it doesn't put immediate pressure on White's 9-blot. Also, Black would rather hang back on the 14-point, leaving fewer shots and covering more of the important outfield. Going to the 2-point may involve cost in the race.

4) *Keep flexible.* Since hitting a shot has such a high priority, there is a lot to be said for spreading out the checkers. Bar/19, 6/2 covers the entire board. It leaves one checker back as a last resort, but brings the other checker up where it immediately attacks White's blot.

5) *Avoid an accident.* Making a defensive anchor guards against White rolling a lucky doubles or pointing number. However White is so short on builders that she doesn't have many of these, so playing safe with the back men is not a particularly high priority.

6) *Prepare for the race.* The blot on the 6-point must be moved, but it should remain on the 4-point. Moving it into the 2-point could easily cost a roll later on in what could be a close race. This is the main reason why Bar/19, 6/4 is better than Bar/21, 6/2.

The natural looking play is Bar/21, 23/21, 6/4, and it certainly isn't terrible. However the importance of flexibility, board coverage, and the low risk involved in spreading them out makes Bar/19, 6/4 appear to be a bit more attractive. It really is important for Black to hit a shot, and by diversifying his checkers, he can cover the entire board and maximize his shot-hitting potential. The risk of getting pointed on is not very great. Bar/19, 6/4 is my choice.

UNUSUAL POSITIONS often call for unusual plays. In this setup, the extreme weakness of White's board gives Black more latitude than usual. A defensive anchor is nice, but sometimes there are more important things at stake. Δ

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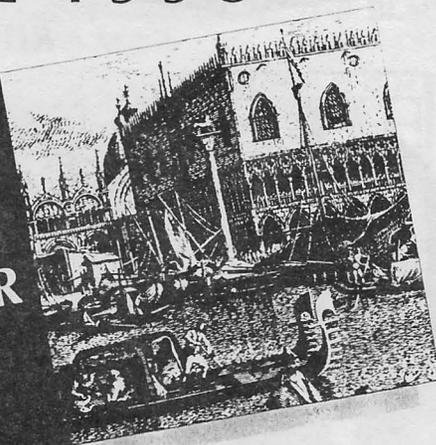
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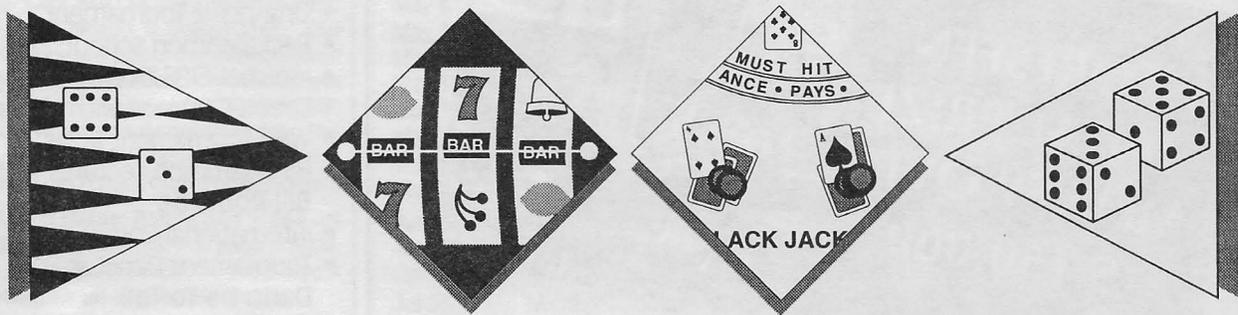
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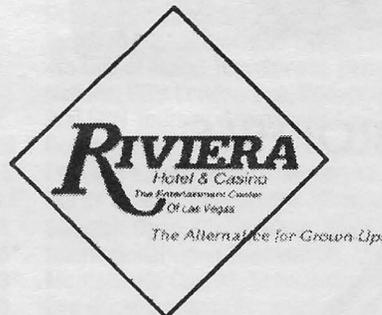


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