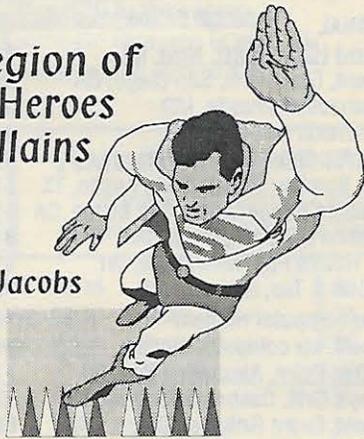


## The Legion of Super Heroes and Villains

by Jake Jacobs



Master backgammon player Jake Jacobs has been writing amusing, entertaining and enlightening columns for CHICAGO POINT since May 1990.

In this, our 100th anniversary issue, we publicly say, "Thanks, Jake."—Ed.

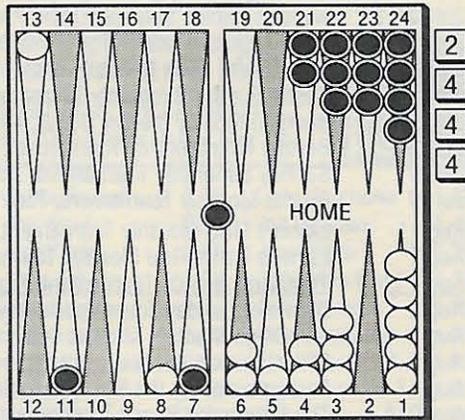
Scurrying through the gloom of canyons formed by glass, concrete, and steel, the citizens of this midwestern Gotham were unaware and unconcerned. Unaware that in a dark tower, far above the shadowy streets, a titanic battle raged. Yes, boys and girls, the forces of good and evil, a legion of super heroes and super villains, were at war. It was the CBOB—Crime Busters Of Backgammon—monthly tournament.

Everyone was there: AnNeilator, the Centaur (half man, half horseplayer), the Human Glacier, and his even slower rival, the Centurion. It took the Roman Empire 520 years to decline and fall; Centurion's positions had been known to do it in half the time.

In one corner, Harrycane was raining all over Colossal Man. They were playing gin. Colossal Man was confused. The deadliest weapon in his arsenal was rolling jokers, then snickering at his foes. He knit his mighty brow in puzzlement. How was he supposed to roll well, if he wasn't rolling at all?

A chouette had formed. Wonder Boy, so called because he wondered why he ever lost (weren't super heroes supposed to win every game?) was in the box. Facing him was the infamous Dr. Giggles.

Position 1. White, Dr. Giggles, is on roll. Wonder Boy, Black is in the Box.



Dr. Giggles had Wonder Boy reeling, and hit him with his best shot, which turned out to be double 6s! Everyone agreed the Doc had perhaps overextended himself a little bit with that roll.

"Serves you all right for betting on me! I knew I was going to roll 6-6. What else would I roll? I might just as well score myself 'minus 6' every game. Why bother to play them out? I'm just glad all your cubes are on 4, so you'll all lose twice as much!

[Continued on page 6]

## OUR 100TH ISSUE

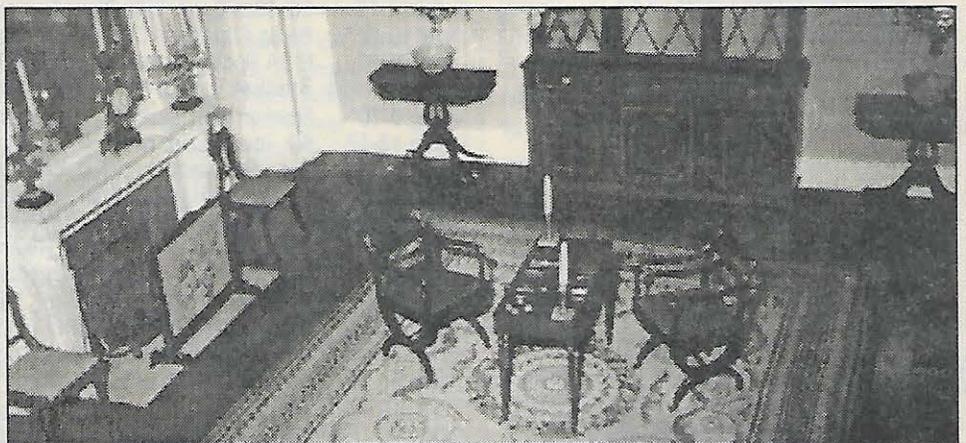
This marks the 100th issue of CHICAGO POINT. Since our premiere issue in June 1988, we have attempted to be "A Prime Source of Backgammon Information" for backgammon enthusiasts everywhere. Thanks to all our great contributing editors for their valuable contributions. In this issue, we have tried to spotlight as many of them as possible.

And thanks also to John Petergal of *Fast Track Printing* (2715 W. Touhy Ave., Chicago, Illinois) for expertly producing all of our issues with same-day service.

Although this is our 100th issue, July's Problem of the Month is #235. That's because we have edited four different monthly BG newsletters since March 1977 (*National Backgammon League*: #1-#33, *Gammon's of Chicago*: #34-#74, *Chicago-land Backgammon Newsletter*: #75-#135, *CHICAGO POINT*: #136-#235).

Back issues are available for all POINT newsletters (although the first few years are reprints). To order, send \$3/issue (\$2.50 for orders of 10 or more) to: CHICAGO POINT; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155. Air mail postage is included. Δ

## A 'LITTLE' BACKGAMMON



While viewing the Thorne Miniature Rooms Gallery at Chicago's Art Institute, Rick Bieniak discovered a backgammon board in the Pennsylvania Drawing Room, circa 1835 (Window A14). The actual board (measuring less than 1"x2") is set up correctly and cups are present . . . but no doubling cube! Candlesticks were used as the light source. And note the armchairs, inspired by furniture craftsman Duncan Phyfe originals.

# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

## EDITOR & PUBLISHER

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**Carol Joy Cole (MI)**   **Danny Kleinman (CA)**  
**Jake Jacobs (IL)**      **Walter Trice (MA)**  
**Duane Jensen (MN)**   **Kit Woolsey (CA)**

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## LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT  
3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504  
Chicago, IL 60659-3155

E-mail: [chipoint@interaccess.com](mailto:chipoint@interaccess.com)

## ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE ON LAS VEGAS TOURNAMENTS

Both as a member of the Nevada Backgammon Association staff and as a player, I'd like to comment briefly on two recent letters to the POINT, one from Jonathan Bennetts and the other from Joubert Malouf. I agree with the concept that promoters need to keep backgammon affordable for all. There should be events that are not expensive and keep the less affluent among us playing.

As Mr. Bennetts acknowledges, many regional tournaments do have such events. In Las Vegas, however, people do travel farther for a bigger payday. Losing three straight matches and many Blitz rounds, as Mr. Malouf suggests, is frustrating and expensive. I'd like to say it has never happened to me, but sadly, that is not the case. However, poor performance or bad luck does not translate into poor equity.

[Continued on page 3]

coming attractions

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole

810/232-9731

E-mail: [cjc@flint.org](mailto:cjc@flint.org)

International tournament director and Flint Area BackgammonNews editor Carol Joy Cole has compiled the world-acclaimed "Mark Your Calendar" since our first issue in June 1988. She also maintains "Mark Your Calendar—Alive" online at <http://homepage.interaccess.com/~chipoint/calendar.html>. In this, our 100th anniversary issue, we publicly say, "Thanks, Carol Joy."—Ed.

\* Denotes new or revised listing

### NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Jul 3-6	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton Hotel, Novi, MI</u>	810/232-9731
Jul 6	San Diego Monthly Masters Tournament, Grant Grill, San Diego, CA	619/457-2273
Jul 12-13	Nation's Capital Summer Open, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Jul 17	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Jul 17-18	25th Hawaii State Championships, Pacific Club, Honolulu, HI	808/735-5252
Jul 20	Austin Sunday Bimonthly Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/261-8518
Jul 20	Backgammon by the Bay Bonus, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA	510/838-7789
Jul 26	Beverly Hills Monthly Tournament, Clarine's, Beverly Hills, CA	310/273-1632
Jul 27	Sunday Bimonthly Tournament, John Hawks Pub, Milwaukee, WI	414/463-2498
Jul 27	Atlanta Monthly Tournament, Tony's Grill & Tap, Roswell, GA	770/333-1876
Aug 1*	Lainer's FIBS Monthly Tournament, via computer modem	<a href="mailto:lainer@cyberbeach.net">lainer@cyberbeach.net</a>
Aug 1*	Lainer's GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer modem	<a href="mailto:lainer@cyberbeach.net">lainer@cyberbeach.net</a>
Aug 1-3	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY</u>	716/442-8221
Aug 3	Bar Point Sunday Tournament, Anyway's Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	773/252-7755
Aug 3	San Diego Monthly Masters Tournament, Grant Grill, San Diego, CA	619/457-2273
Aug 8-10	39th Gammon Associates Invitational, Mirage Club, Los Angeles, CA	818/901-0464
Aug 17	Backgammon by the Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA	510/838-7789
Aug 21*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
Aug 23*	Atlanta Monthly Tournament, Tony's Grill & Tap, Roswell, GA	770/333-1876
Aug 29-Sep 1	<u>45th Indiana Open, Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis, IN</u>	317/255-8902
Aug 30*	Beverly Hills Monthly Tournament, Clarine's, Beverly Hills, CA	310/273-1632
Sep 18-21	Vermont State Championships, Stratton Mountain Inn, Stratton Mtn., VT	954/527-4033
Sep 19-21	<u>2nd Minnesota State Championships, Minneapolis Athletic Club, MN</u>	612/378-1536
Sep 26-28	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Towpath Inn, Turin, NY</u>	716/442-8221
Oct 1-Dec 31*	FIBS 1997 Fall Tournament, via computer modem < <a href="mailto:davide@sco.com">davide@sco.com</a> >	408/438-7947
Oct 2-5	<u>Illinois State Champs &amp; America Cup, Holiday Home, Rolling Meadows, IL</u>	847/945-7801
Oct 10-12	Nation's Capital Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD	301/530-0604
Oct 19-21*	<u>Florida State Championship, Ocean Manor Hotel, Ft. Lauderdale, FL</u>	954/785-1282
Oct 31-Nov 2	<u>Northeast Regional: 4th New England Championships, South Lee, MA</u>	603/863-4711
Nov 11-15*	NEW DATES: Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, NV	702/893-6025
Dec 5-7	40th Gammon Associates Invitational, Mirage Club, Los Angeles, CA	818/901-0464
Dec 20*	Atlanta Holiday Festival Tournament, Tony's Grill & Tap, Roswell, GA	770/333-1876
Dec 27-28	<u>Ace Point New York Holiday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY</u>	212/753-0842
Jan 9-12	Backgammon On Board IV, Miami to Bahamas cruise tourney on NCL	773/583-6464

### OUTSIDE USA

Jul 4-6	Warm-Up Weekend, Monte Carlo, Monaco	416/27-10137
Jul 7-13	Monte-Carlo World Championship, Loews Monte-Carlo Hotel, Monaco	954/527-4033
Jul 14-16	5th Nice Open, Lido Plage Restaurant, Nice, France	334-93879436
Jul 19-20*	Berlin Cup/Havel Cup '97, Medien-Café/Café Belmont, Berlin, Germany	4930-4619624
Jul 26-27	BIBA Bonus Tournament, Hilton National, Warwick, England	441522-546993
Jul 31-Aug 3	Brazilian Tournament, Leme Tennis Club, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521-2478594
Aug 8-10*	Franken ganz Open III, Hotel Schwarzer Adler, Uttenreuth, Germany	49911-737514
Aug 13-17	5th Tournament of the Americas, Cariari Hotel, San José, Costa Rica	773/583-6464
Aug 14-17	Summer Championships, Badrutt's Palace Hotel, St. Moritz, Switzerland	4161-2710137
Aug 16-17*	Berlin Cup/Havel Cup '97, Medien-Café/Café Belmont, Berlin, Germany	4930-4619624
Aug 18-24*	1st Annual Mind Sports Olympiad, Royal Festival Hall, London, England	44171-4859146
Aug 23-24	S.A.C. Trophy Tournament, Hilton Nat'l, East Midlands Airport, England	441522-546993
Aug 30-31*	DM Doubles 1997, Selskabslokalerne, Copenhagen, Denmark	4539-400607
Sep 5-7	7th Mitteleuropa Tournament, Casinò Park, Nova Gorica, Slovenia	392-29409743
Sep 11-14*	Brazilian Tournament, Leme Tennis Club, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521-2478594
Sep 19-21	Piggs Peak Bonanza, Protea Piggs Peak Hotel Casino, Swaziland	2711-4860780
Sep 27-28	Grand Torneo "Citta' di Bologna," Hotel Zola, Bologna, Italy	3933-87187324
Oct 2-7	4th German Open, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Oct 3-5	Asian Backgammon Championships, Ladies Recreation Club, Hong Kong	852-28461923
Oct 4-5*	5th Irish Open, Winns Hotel, Dublin, Ireland	3531-6689332
Oct 17-19	Swiss Championships '97, Kursaal, Bern, Switzerland	4179-3584825
Oct 18-19	Sandy Osborne Memorial Trophy, Hilton Nat'l, Milton Keynes, England	441522-546993
Oct 23-26	South American Tournament & 6th World Cup, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5521-2478594
Oct 29-Nov 2*	Grand Prix de Suisse, Hotel Splendide Royal, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-3374425
Nov 1-3*	3rd Japan Open 1997, Tokyo, Japan	813-33733814

# LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

Even though we have many events to get through in Las Vegas, I believe we have tried to get low cost events into play; historically, it has been like pulling teeth to get participants. It seems that if there is not a big payoff, most players would rather take their \$10 or \$20 to the casino.

Where I strongly disagree is with Mr. Bennetts' statement that Howard

Markowitz canceled the World Series of Backgammon because "the entry fee was prohibitive to the masses" and the rake was "scandalous." I personally felt that Mr. Markowitz's concept of a chance to win \$100,000 for a \$100 entry fee was creative and extremely equitable. Sadly, putting it together on a worldwide basis was more complex than originally thought. That is why the event was canceled.

Backgammon tournaments are an extremely good value. Rarely does any

rake exceed 20%, and many events have an even lower profit margin. From this small margin, staff must be paid, publicity generated, flyers printed, food purchased, mailings done, etc. This does not even account for the amount of time a promoter spends putting each tournament package together.

Players do not see all of these expenses, but are aware of the "profit margin." Anything else we purchase, from a car to clothes, operates on a much higher margin than any backgammon promoter, and yet we daily purchase goods with no idea of the profit margin.

I've been involved in backgammon for many years, and I don't see many promoters giving up their day jobs because of the wealth they accumulate running tournaments. As a player, I'm appreciative of their efforts; it's more work than I would like to do.—*John Carrico, Flint, MI*

## GOOD ADVICE

I have a suggestion for Joubert Malouf who last month complained about not getting enough play for his money, in particular at the Las Vegas tournaments. Play better, win more and you'll find tournaments much more equitable.—*Stu Katz, Skokie, IL*

## THAI DIAGRAM ERROR

What's the scoop with Positions 6 and 8 in last month's "Fit To Be THAIed" article. They appear to be identical.

My plans to move to Chicago within the next couple months seem to be moving forward. I hope you can help me

[Continued on page 5]



## AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1997

Compiled through 22 June 1997 after 7 tournaments  
Coming July/Aug.: Michigan Summer, 1000 Islands, Indy Labor Day



Doug Mayfield	35.36	Allen Levien	5.28	Bruce Russell	3.26	Gary Marchenia	1.40
Fred Kalantari	22.88	Abbas Zaltash	5.28	Jay Ward	3.20	Joe Davidson	1.40
John O'Hagan	22.69	Drew Giovanis	5.28	Neil Young	2.83	Janet Stam	1.39
Rob Maier	17.94	Alice Kay	5.23	Reza Zaltash	2.82	Randy Douthat	1.16
Jon Stephens	15.31	Hunter Jones	5.20	David Levine	2.64	George Parker	1.10
John Brussel	13.49	Lee Genud	5.08	Nayan Shah	2.64	Pete Townsend	1.06
Steve Klesker	11.44	Malcolm Davis	4.93	Luisa Sequeira	2.61	Steve Decter	1.03
David Wells	11.33	Terry Kayser	4.90	Ed King	2.46	Dave Hart	1.00
Harvey Huie	11.20	Hal Heinrich	4.80	Gary Stern	2.46	Simon Kennedy-Rose	0.98
Rich Catalano	10.56	Carlos Hamon	4.66	Paul Friedman	2.40	Carl Walker	0.98
Mike Friedman	10.56	David Haddad	4.52	N. Laaly	2.34	Sam Pottle	0.93
Nack Ballard	10.45	Ed Zell	4.38	Paul Stokes	2.34	Patrick Lewis	0.84
Steve Sax	9.82	Michael Rayner	4.36	Phyllis Smolinski	2.26	Eric Haber	0.84
Joann Feinstein	9.61	Frank Talbot	4.16	Bobbie Shifrin	2.19	Diane Cyrkiel	0.70
Jim McGirr	9.53	John Jennings	4.16	Curtis Lucas	2.19	Bill Versaw	0.63
Stuart Hosen	9.34	Jim Muirhead	4.00	Marty Storer	2.11	Tony Garcia	0.61
Eliot Bean	7.09	Elliott Winslow	3.97	Janice Newman	2.08	Fran Miller	0.60
Garo Tchalabian	7.09	Perry Gartner	3.97	Judy Field	2.08	Larry Hochman	0.60
Phil Simborg	6.61	Joe Freedman	3.78	Mike McGill	2.02	Sean Cowen	0.43
Mike Senkiewicz	6.58	Fred Badagnani	3.60	Mel Handelsman	1.96	Manuel Ugarte	0.43
Andy Palumbo	6.40	Bill Phipps	3.59	Jolie Rubin	1.76	Hans Gibson	0.36
Richard Del Furia	5.70	John Bryant	3.30	Jason Mucklow	1.62	Josh Korff	0.18
Ray Bills	5.60	Rick Bieniak	3.29	Brian Menkes	1.56		



## CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1997 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU 30 JUNE

Neil Kazaross	12.64	Tak Morioka	4.76	Amy Valerio	1.56	Barbara Levinson	0.56
Herb Roman	10.96	Ken Bond	4.56	Joe Wollick	1.28	Steve Klesker	0.56
Gary Kay	9.84	Tim Mabee	4.52	Wendy Kaplan	1.24	Femi Owiku	0.56
Alice Kay	9.28	Bob Zavoral	4.52	Mary Franks	1.12	Tom Meyer	0.56
Paul Franks	8.32	Bob Koca	4.32	Jerry Brooks	0.96	Todd Hengsteler	0.48
Harry Cohn	8.24	John Demian	4.16	Marty Tatosian	0.88	Ken Tyszko	0.48
Bill Keefe	7.68	Peter Kalba	3.96	Elliott Winslow	0.88	Roz Ferris	0.44
Bill Davis	7.36	Don Jayhan	3.60	Phil Barrett	0.80	Jolie Rubin	0.40
Rick Bieniak	6.64	Stu Katz	3.12	Larry Strommen	0.80	Jay Ward	0.28
Joann Feinstein	6.60	Arline Levy	2.88	Tim Helms	0.72	Sarg Serges	0.24
Phil Simborg	6.48	Fred Badagnani	2.80	John Brussel	0.68	Nan Feiber	0.24
Leslie Lockett	6.48	Bobbie Shifrin	2.80	V.W. Zimnicki	0.64	Todd Permut	0.24
Jake Jacobs	6.40	Richard Lloyd	2.56	Roland Dieter	0.64	Romeo Kap	0.24
Paul Klein	6.36	Ed Buerger	2.08	David Wells	0.64	Sam Pottle	0.24
Norma Shyer	6.04	Michael Wilhoyt	1.84	Mark Murray	0.64	Karen Meyer	0.12
Paul Friedman	5.16	Roger Hickman	1.60	Greg Tomlin	0.60	Scott Richardson	0.12
Phyllis Smolinski	4.88	John Jennings	1.60	Reggie Porter	0.60		

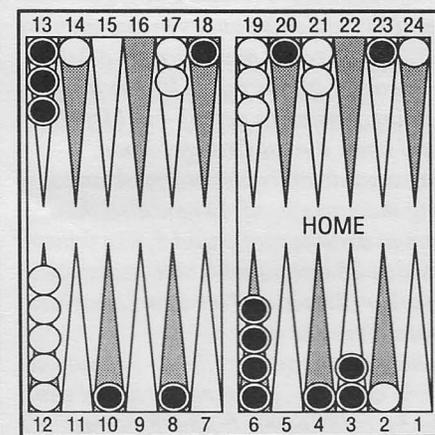
Credit **PAUL KLEIN** with June Player of the Month honors. Paul earned 3.68 points, enough to move into 14th place at the BPC halfway point. Rick Bieniak (2.88) and Harry Cohn (2.80) finished 2nd and 3rd respectively.

your move

## PROBLEM #235

to be analyzed by Walter Trice

Match to 7 points. White leads Black 5 to 3. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-1**



64

**DEAR MISS LONELYBLOTS**



© 1997 by Danny Kleinman

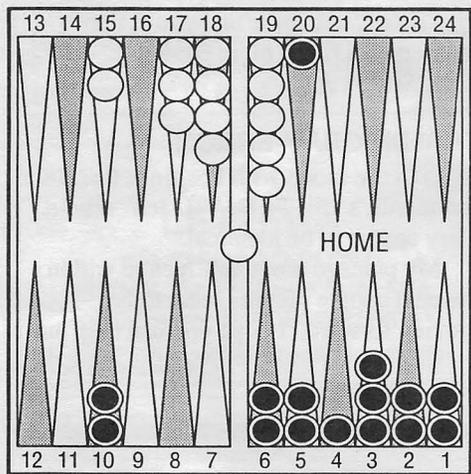
Author, analyst and respected backgammon theoretician Danny Kleinman has been contributing "Ask Danny," "Shades of Gray," and "Dear Miss Lonelyblots" columns to CHICAGO POINT since the premiere issue in June 1988.

In this, our 100th anniversary issue, we publicly say, "Thanks, Danny."—Ed.

**DON'T BELIEVE BIG EDDIE**

**D**ear Miss Lonelyblots: Trailing 1-6 in my 7-point match against Big Eddie, I already had two strikes on me. However, I got a chance to hit a home run in the Crawford Game, when this position arose:

7 point match. White leads Black 6 to 1 Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-1.**



I was hoping for "a fast one right down the middle," as my Uncle Johnny used to say. I could have belted any 6, direct or combination, right out of the park. Eddie's nine outfield men put him in grave gammon danger if I could close out even one man on the bar. Alas, I could manage only a 2-1.

A cowardly player might lift the blot on the 4-point, fearing to get hit, but I left it slotted. I knew that at Crawford-odd, winning a gammon is just as important as winning the game itself. I knew also that builders at distances of 6 and 3, like 6 and 5, provided 28 covers for a slot, more than at any other distances. To maximize covers, therefore, I moved 10/7.

Eddie danced and I rolled 6-5. I moved 10/4, 7/2, covering, but then I crashed with double-3s, clearing my 6- and 5-points.

Then Eddie rolled double-5s.

"I hear I roll a lot of these," said Eddie as he entered and pointed.

But all I could hear was the fat lady practicing her scales in the wings. Two rolls later, after Eddie had rolled a 3-2 and a 5-3, the opera was over.

I know Big Eddie is famous for his fives, Miss Lonelyblots, but should I really have cleared my 6- and 4-points with my double-3s?—Maxie Mize

**DEAR MAXIE:** Of course not: don't you believe big Eddie's propaganda. And don't you complain about not getting a fast one down the middle when the dice throw you a hanging curve. Your real trouble was not that you gave Eddie too many 5s, but that you gave yourself too few.

By moving 10/7 with your 2-1, you maximized covers (29 counting double 4s) but not useful rolls on both sides of the board. You could use 6s, 4s and 3s, but not 5s. You duplicated your own 6s instead of diversifying your good numbers.

By moving 10/8, 5/4, you could create good 5s and 3s on your side of the board while retaining good 6s and 4s on the other side. Never mind that this would "give Big Eddie fives." He's just as likely to roll 4s, else all our use of probabilities in backgammon is in vain.

With two strikes, you can't afford to wait for a fast one down the middle: you must guard both sides of the plate. Didn't Uncle Johnny ever tell you that? I hear Uncle Johnny could hit curve balls pretty well, too.—Miss Lonelyblots

*Do you have a backgammon-related question for Miss Lonelyblots involving people problems, game etiquette or the play itself? Write: Dear Miss Lonelyblots, c/o CHICAGOPOINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155.*



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## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

some with the local geography, or I may never find your Chicago Bar Point Club!—*Steve Mellen, Troy, MI*

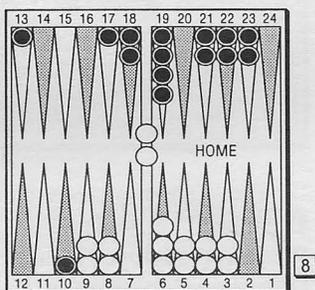
*Yikes! We apologize to author Jake Jacobs for mixing up the diagram. Shown below is the correct Position #8.*

*We look forward to seeing you Tuesdays in Chicago, Steve. Check "Illinois Action" on page 6 for Bar Point Club info.—Ed.*

### Corrected

#### Position #8.

13 pt. match. Jake (White) leads Gerhard 2 to 1. White on roll.



### BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Greetings from Mauritius. Thought you might like to know that I received my CHICAGO POINT today: Number 82, September 1995! Apart from the postmarks dated Sept. 1995 via Addis Ababa, there were no other signs to indicate the reasons for the delay.

I started reading it, thinking it was the current issue. I only realized something was strange when I saw the report that David Ben-Zion had just won the World Championship!—*Sanjit Teelock, Floréal, Mauritius*

### MORE THOUGHTS ON DUO-GAMMON

Driving back from the Midwest Championships, I was thinking about doubles and how most "teams" don't seem to be teams at all. One player dominates the decisions while the other just throws the dice (if that). I've never liked this.

I watched you and Carol Joy Cole play doubles in Pittsburgh. I really liked your "chemistry." Both seemed to respect the other's thoughts, and the decisions seemed to split about 50-50. That's the way doubles should be played! Unfortunately, you two seem to be a rare exception.

Then I saw Phil Simborg's letter in the June POINT. I remember your Duo-Gammon tournament in 1979. (Team partners alternate moves with no consultation.) Bill Gheen took second place in the Intermediate division.

I also remember a couple of things about the "flow" that night. Some players (unintentionally) did not follow the rules. They got into "consulting chouette" mode and would start to discuss things. We stopped them, but

prudence

## HASTY PLAYS



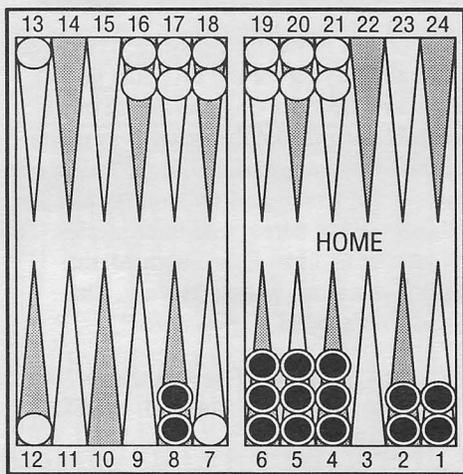
by Duane Jensen

*Duane Jensen has been entertaining and enlightening us with "Hasty Plays" and other creative/humorous articles since our first issue in June 1988. For more of Duane, check out CHICAGO POINT ONLINE at: <http://homepage.interaccess.com/~chipoint>.*

*In this, our 100th anniversary issue, we publicly say, "Thanks, Duane."—Ed.*

### GETTING HASTY AT CRAWFORD/3-AWAY

Match to 7 points. White leads Black, 6 to 4. Crawford game. **BLACK TO PLAY 1-1.**



**B**lack quickly hit the blot and made his 4-point. While this is the correct play in most situations, the gammon is of little value to Black at this score. If he gammons White, he ties the score giving himself a 50% chance to win the match. If he wins a regular game, he trails by 2 points, post-Crawford, putting himself at 49% to win the match. If Black hits the blot, he exposes

sometimes the damage had been done. There was no penalty for this ruling breakage.

Also, the person playing seemed to play unusually slow, either to make absolutely sure he didn't overlook the correct play, or maybe (subconsciously) to pick up body language from his "silent opponent."

If you're going to resurrect Duo-Gammon, I think these things should probably be addressed. One thing might be to make the non-playing (silent) partner stand behind the player, out of view. That would stop the body-language problem. Also, there should be a penalty when partnership consultation occurs.

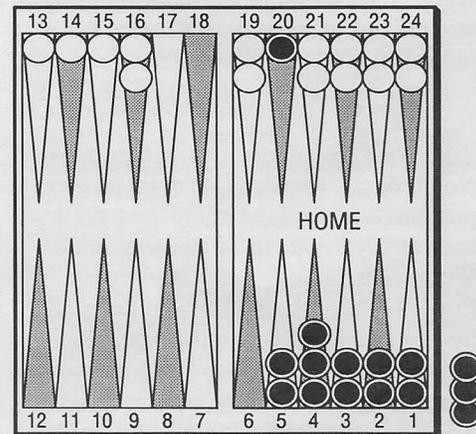
himself to a possible hit during the bearoff.

In fact Black will lose more than 5% of these games by getting hit. His racing lead is so great that he will win 99% of the games without hitting. Hitting is a risky trade-off just to go from 49% to 50%.

Black should quietly make his 4-point and play 6 to 5 with his double-1s.

**T**HE LEADER IN THE MATCH at Crawford/3-away can also make hasty checker plays:

Match to 7 points. White leads Black, 6 to 4. Crawford game. **WHITE TO PLAY 2-1.**



White played 13/15, 14/15, hoping that Black would fail to escape. The correct play of course is 19/20 (hitting) and 16/18. This play would be expensive in a money game, but it's easily the best play at this score. White risks about 3% of her match equity to gain an additional 15% wins. Sometimes she gets backgammoned and loses the whole match, but the small risk is worth aggressively going for the win.

If you're hunting for "hasty plays," scout out matches which have reached the score Crawford/3-away. I've seen many matches in which *both* players make a succession of hasty plays. The trailer takes great risks to capture a gammon of little value and the leader crawls into a secure shell trying to avoid the gammon.  $\Delta$

I'm looking forward to your Duo-Gammon "experiment" next year. Hope it works out.—*Chuck Bower, Bloomington, IN*

*It would be a good idea for the partner to be out of view when the player moves; however, there is no way players are going to stand up, then sit down after every move.*

*Duo-Gammon rules do have a penalty for conveying play suggestions to your partner. A warning or score adjustment against the offending team may be issued by the director. Repeated violations could lead to forfeiture of the match.—Ed.  $\Delta$*

## Super Heroes...

[Continued from page 1]

You deserve to, the way you all play . . ."

We'll leave the merry medico to his happy burbling while we digress. (That is a grownup word, boys and girls, that means to use two gresses.) Once, long ago, while your narrator was conducting an intense, albeit subjective study of the effects of psychotropic drugs on the human brain, a friend, in the middle of his own rival study, had told your narrator an amazing tale. It seems that thousands of years ago there was a monastery high in the Himalayas. It was the sort of monastery wherein the monks all meditated for hundreds of years until they began to levitate, and passed into Nirvana.

During their student days, they were required, as an exercise, to draw up comprehensive, what kind of dressing did I have on my salad eleven years ago last Wednesday, horoscopes. Of everyone. Everyone alive. Everyone who had ever lived. Everyone who would ever live. That's us, boys and girls. These horoscopes were written down in the student monks' practice books, and some tiny percent are probably still on the shelves of that monastery's lending library. You could go there and look up your whole life.

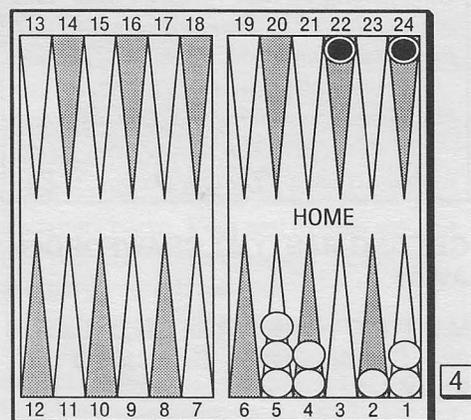
I bring this up, not because it is one more reason to just say no, but because it pertains to Dr. Giggles. The Doctor, whose hobby is mathematics, which makes him the modern equivalent of a levitating monk, claims to have figured out the equities associated with every one of his opponents' plays. Their misplays, as he would say. Unfortunately, selflessly devoting himself to correcting other's mistakes has left him no time to work on his own. Thus, he finds himself contributing not just his time, but his money to other's well-being.

Back at the tournament . . . the preliminary battles had been fought. The last meaningful struggle had commenced. It would be The Wanderer attempting to silence Mr. Echo. Away from the table, The Wanderer would have an easy time of it. Evildoers everywhere fled in terror as soon as they heard The Wanderer utter the most feared words in all Backgammon: "That reminds me of a story."

At the table, Mr. Echo more than held his own. Mr. Echo earned his name, not just because his last name was an echo of his first, but because his dice echoed. If he rolled 1-6 off the bar, after you return hit, more often than not, his dice would echo out *another* 1-6! Even more deadly was

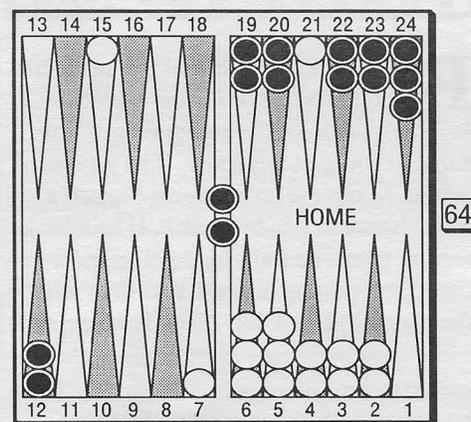
when the dice echoed each other. Just when the game seemed won, out would fly a 6, then another 6 would come echoing after. It was less than a week since Mr. Echo had stolen this race from Wonder Boy.

**Position 2.** White, Mr. Echo, is on roll. Spectators are about to confiscate Wonder Boy's belt and shoelaces.



Perhaps it was the pressure. They were, after all, playing for the BIG, BIG payoff, the secret decoder ring and all the other valuable prizes, but the match was much quieter than expected. Mr. Echo had hardly been heard from once, let alone twice. The Wanderer had barely told three stories. The Wanderer had Mr. Echo subdued, the match was over, when suddenly, The Wanderer's mind . . . wandered!

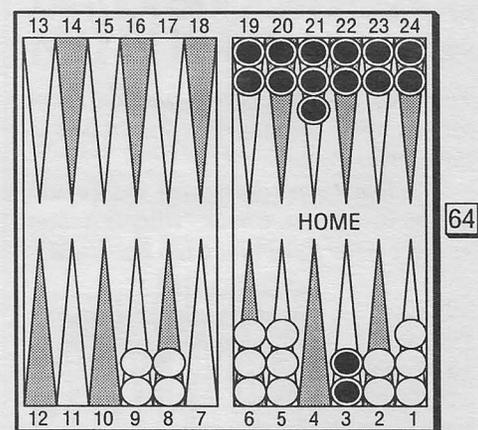
**Position 3.** White, The Wanderer, leads Mr. Echo 10 to 4, Crawford. **WHITE TO PLAY 4-2.**



The Wanderer, worried about rolling 3-3 next time, played 15/9. He was worried about the wrong echo. Mr. Echo's first die landed on '1' and then the other die echoed! At which point The Wanderer said something. And I am afraid, boys and girls, that something was not "Holy Guacamole!" In compliance with the Comic Book Code, we must delete the ensuing dialogue balloons, and with them the action: every biff, cracko, and kapow.

We rejoin our story much later, when things have again settled down.

**Position 4.** Double match-point. The Wanderer, **WHITE TO PLAY 6-4.**



The Wanderer cleared his 8-point. Then, Mr. Echo rolled 2-1. Quickly, The Wanderer employed his ultimate defense. Using techniques learned from Oriental Masters, he let his mind wander to a better place. No indignity could debase him; no torture, no matter how grisly, could hurt him. He floated in an equatorial pool, while slippery young undines removed every hair from his body by nibbling them off. He . . . but wait. Cackling, Mr. Echo flung forth his deadly dice, and they echoed his last roll, 2-1! Unfortunately, The Wanderer floated, unaware, in his pool full of undines. Meanwhile, Mr. Echo's dice had a mind of their own, and echoed . . .



## ILLINOIS ACTION



Bill Davis  
773/583-6464  
Peter Kalba  
773/252-7755

**Tuesday, 6:15 P.M.** at Golden Flame, 6417 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago; 773/792-0424.

**Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON** at Anyway's Chicago Grill & Bar, 5 E. Roosevelt Rd., Oakbrook Terrace; 630/932-9323.

**PUB CLUB:** Tourn. Monday, 7:30 P.M. at Harpo's, 290 S. Schmale, Carol Stream. V. W. Zimnicki (630/924-8632).

**GAMES PEOPLE PLAY:** Tourn. Monday, 6:30 P.M. at The Clique, 2347 S. Michigan, Chicago. Reggie Porter (773/471-5066).

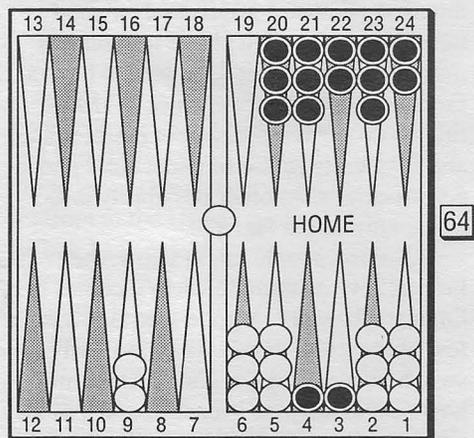
**BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BG CLUB:** Tournaments Monday, 6:30 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Gary Daniels (309/452-3034)

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

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

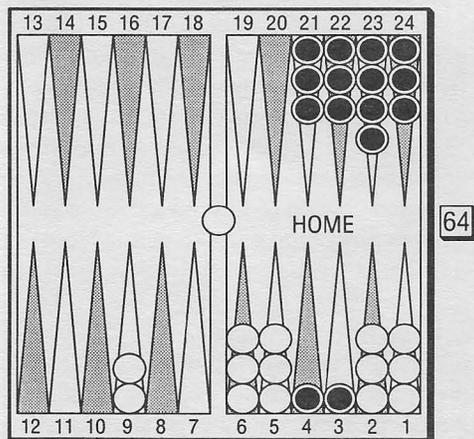
**CENTRAL ILL. BG CLUB:** Tournaments 1st Thursday monthly, 6:30 P.M. at Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Sue Will (309/699-6005).

**Position 5.** Double match-point. White, The Wanderer, floats in a pool, while Black, Mr. Echo must play 2-1.



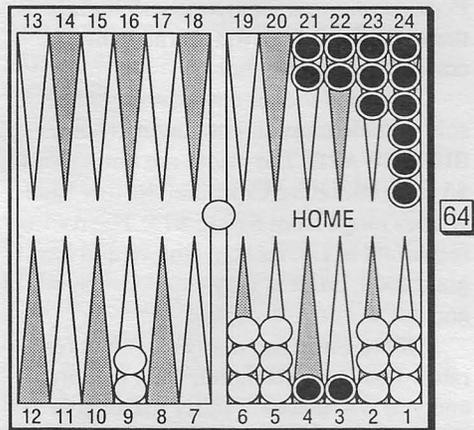
and echoed, and echoed . . .

**Position 6.** Double match-point. White, The Wanderer, floats in a pool, while Black, Mr. Echo must play 2-1.



and echoed and echoed . . .

**Position 7.** Double match-point. White, The Wanderer, floats in a pool, while Black, Mr. Echo must play 2-1.

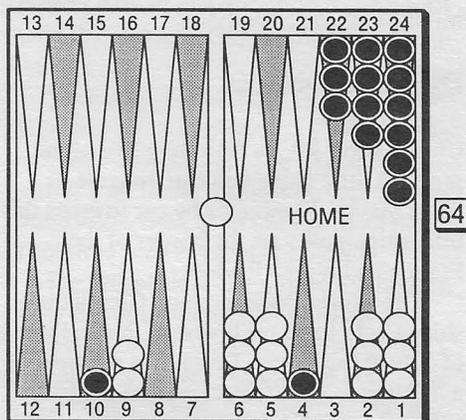


Finally after eight 2-1s, someone must have taken pity on Mr. Echo and slipped him a hacksaw. He made his break, bolting with 5-2.

who did what  
**WINNER'S CIRCLE**  
 May-June 1997

- 1997 Argentine Championship** (Buenos Aires, Argentina; Mondays in May)... CHAMP WINNERS: Marcelo Belaustegui, Rafael Dana, Daniel Priani. JR. WINNERS: Mónica Schmidt, Luis Rodrigo, Jimmy Fouguet. BEGINNER WINNERS: Patricio Borda.
- Hong Kong Monthly** (Hong Kong; 5 May)... OPEN: 1-Don Rae, 2-Nathalie Virag (SWZ); 1C-Pascal Paulson (SWZ), 2C-Melody Rae. CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Pearl Liu, 2-Jon Jonsson (ICEL); 1C-Charles Barguirdjian, 2C-Chris Roberts.
- NEBC Sunday Monthly** (Cambridge, MA; 18 May)... EXPERT (22): 1-Herb Gurland, 2-Marty Storer, 3/4-Jim Pascoe / John Mansey; 1C-Mark Damish, 2C-Alex Perry. A DIV. (16): 1-Marty Gross, 2-John Koupoloulos, 3/4-Fred Ferguson / John Lorenz; 1C-Roy Chatalbash, 2C-Kevin Flick.
- Clarine's Beverly Hills Monthly** (Beverly Hills,

**Position 8.** Double match-point. White, The Wanderer, floats in a pool, while Black, Mr. Echo makes a break with 5-2.



Is this how our adventure ends, with The Wanderer floating while Mr. Echo makes good his escape?

No! Our hero, turning the villain's own weapon against him, swooped down from the bar, "Uroot Too Doo Doo," and smote Mr. Echo with a 5-2 of his own. Mr. Echo's dice echoed helplessly with yet another 5-2, and soon the Wanderer had him locked away in a prison from which he would never escape. The last thing Mr. Echo was heard to say was, "I hate this game! Hate it! Hate it! Hate it!"

The Wanderer had nothing to say. He was in a hurry. He was off to see what those undines would swap for a secret decoder ring!

Have we seen the last of The Wanderer? I think not. Watch future issues, when we will bring you more thrilling adventures with *The Legion of Super Heroes and Villains!* Δ

CA; 31 May.)... OPEN: 1/2-Clarine / Gadi Carmeli.

•**Hong Kong Monthly** (Hong Kong; 2 Jun.)... OPEN: 1-John Simon, 2-Brian King; 1C-Avry Ben-Zeev, 2C-Steve Nelson. CHAMPIONSHIP: 1-Olivia Lee, 2-Karl Hurst; 1C-Asdis Gudmann, 2C-Nancy Wong.

•**New York State Championship-ABT** (New York, NY; 6-8 Jun.)... MASTERS (7): 1-Mike Senkiewicz (NY), 2-Rick Barabino (NY); CHAMPIONSHIP (19): 1-Stuart Hosen (TX), 2-Elliott Winslow (CA); 1C-Perry Gartner (NJ), 2C-Mike Senkiewicz (NY). ADV. (8): 1-Mel Handelsman, 2-Patrick Lewis; 1C-Eric Haber, 2C-Hans Gibson. NOVICE (8): 1-Carl Walker, 2-Sean Cowen; 1C-Manuel Ugarte, 2C-Josh Korff. DOUBLES (4): 1-Steve Manning & Seth Wolkoff (NY).

•**Beltway Club Monthly** (Bethesda, MD; 7 Jun.)... OPEN: 1-Chen-Fu Yu, 2-William Wilner.

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 8 Jun.)... OPEN (20): 1-John Jennings, 2-Larry Strommen (IN), 3/4-Tom Meyer / Neil Kazaross; 1C/2C-Greg Tomlin / Wendy Kaplan. INTERMEDIATE (12): 1-Mark Murray, 2-Sam Pottle (WI), 3/4-Mary Franks / Rick Bieniak; 1C-Roz Ferris, 2C-Karen Meyer.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (San Mateo, CA; 15 Jun.)... OPEN (17): 1-Julius High, 2-Steve Clark; 1C-Elliott Winslow, 2C-Kit Woolsey. INTERMEDIATE (16): 1-Roger Galbrielson, 2-Ron Dumong; 1C-Brian Farr. BEGINNER (8): 1-Claudia Imatt, 2-Bill Landry; 1C-Vesko Marinov.

•**9th City of Venice International** (Venice, Italy; 19-22 Jun.)... MASTERS (64): 1-Markus Eek (SWE), 2-Michael Higsberger (AUS), 3/4-Christian Lieb-Harkort (GER) / Salo Teppo (FIN); 1C-Nicola Pagano, 2C-Peter Heitmuller (GER); 1LC-Jan Clementsson (SWE), 2LC-Sandro Mazza. CHAMPION (59): 1-Vincenzo Riceputi, 2-Eduardo Mendia (POR), 3/4-Elena Grigore / Ivano Zanenghi; 1C-Heiner Haussleiter (GER), 2C-Rida Hassan (HOL); 1LC-Günther Holzinger (GER), 2LC-George Volejnic (SWZ). INTERMEDIATE (41): 1-Fabrizio Meli, 2-Andrea Marfori, 3/4-Fabio Farina / Enrico Colangiulo; 1C-Claudio Delvai, 2C-Gianni Pallotti; 1LC-Paolo Martin, 2LC-Maria Croce. WARM-UP (128): 1-Hendrik Muysers (GER), 2-Manfred Hamal (AUS). CONSULTATION DOUBLES (32): 1-PERSIA-Iran (Hadji Hussein & Feri Rassouli, 2-BIK CORP. -Germany (Rainer Altmann & Cordula Thiess). 1-POINT TOURNAMENT (256): 1-Daniel Bruni (SWZ), 2-Marcel Liechti (SWZ). DAL NEGRO BACKGAMMON CUP: *Masters*: 1-Dario De Toffoli, 2-Sandro Mazza; *Champion*: 1-Michele Muratori; *Intermediate*: 1-Giorgio Tomba... *Dario De Toffoli reports nearly 200 players from 20 countries attended.*

•**1997 Georgia Championships-ABT** (Atlanta, GA; 20-22 Jun.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (30): 1-John Brussel (IL), 2-Phil Simborg (IL), 3-Rick Bieniak (IL); 1C-Rob Maier (IN), 2C-Homer Hector (GA). ADVANCED (20): 1-David Haddad (AL), 2-Bobbie Shifrin (IL), 2-George Parker (TN); 1C-Curtis Lucas (TX), 2C-Art Grater (CA). LIMITED (12): 1-Mike McGill (GA), 2-Simon Kennedy-Rose (GA). PEACH CUP (4): 1-Ken Arnold. SUPERBLITZ (32): 1-John O'Hagan, 2-Anadette Almeida (BRZ). DOUBLES (16): 1-Paul Franks & Bobbie Shifrin (IL), 2-Rick Bieniak (IL) & Alan Epstein (GA). OVERFLOW DOUBLES (8): 1-Artie Kamien (MS) & Dave Williams (CA), 2-John Brussel & Peter Kalba (IL). LAST CHANCE JACKPOT (32): 1-Bob Wilensky (GA), 2-Ray Kershaw (ENG)... *A great 2nd year attendance jump for Dave Cardwell. Congrats to John Brussel who proved he can play as well as conduct Calcutta auctions.* Δ

# Tour(nament) Guide to Europe: A Blond's Eye View

by Laila Leonhardt

Although new to CHICAGO POINT, Denmark's Laila Leonhardt and her "Blond's Eye View" column have given us some entertaining first-person perspectives of the International Backgammon Scene.

In this, our 100th issue, we publicly say, "Thanks, Laila."—Ed.



lady@pip.  
dknet.dk

**E**ast, west, home is best. Even better when it is where you hang your hat! Here's my blond's-eye view of the European backgammon scene:

## DENMARK

The oldest kingdom in the world, and a treat for tourists. It is a safe and neat little country with a population of only 5 million. And *all* of us play backgammon (well almost).

The Nordic "Wide" Open, biggest tournament (and also one of the very best) in the world, is held every year over Easter weekend at the SAS Radisson in the heart of Copenhagen. I suggest staying there since there are no neighboring hotels within pleasant walking distance.

The action is non-stop for four days, with all-night "Stoppots," four major divisions, and many other events.

Denmark is a pleasant country for Americans to travel in. Nice polite people, all of whom have had a minimum five years of English in school. There is plenty of blond babble here.

The city of Copenhagen has many little cozy places; you really should make an effort to leave the hotel and wander about. Walking the streets is safe, and the quality of restaurants is quite decent. For the night-owls, or just those with a taste for a big steak and some homey atmosphere, the Restaurant Rio Bravo is very close to the tournament hotel and doesn't close until 4 A.M.

A taxi is no more than \$10. Tips in Denmark are included, but you should always give a bit more. Night life is multi-faceted as in all major European cities. The hotel concierge can provide you with a good brochure that you should acquire upon arrival. As with most of Europe, rooms at the hotel are small by American standards, but still very adequate.

The Casino at the hotel is tiny. It costs \$10 to enter and there is a dress code. My advice: stick to the BG action.

## SWEDEN:

The Malmö Open is a brilliant tourney that last year had \$10,000 added prize money. It is a 3-flight tournament played out in 2 ½ days. The field is normally very strong because this tourney attracts the European elite. The Swedish hotels are generally very good and also reasonable.

Swedish food can be extremely good, but sometimes also very disappointing. It is a good idea to ask the locals in the tournament committee for advice on restaurants and nightlife. Alcohol can be hard to get at night, and very expensive, even at the tournament.

Tipping is the same as in Denmark. 10 to 20 crowns for a dinner, 5% for taxis, and for drinks, and a couple of crowns here and there will suffice.

Malmö is a great city with excellent sightseeing. And in case you also want to visit Copenhagen, Denmark, it's only a 45 minute ride via hoverboat.

## FRANCE/MONACO:

### Monte Carlo:

Classy joint! MC is definitely one of the prettiest little cities you can imagine. It takes maybe 20 minutes by car to cross this little principality on the border of the French and Italian Riviera.

The World Backgammon Championship is held there each year in the 2nd week of July at the Loews Hotel. It is the treat of a lifetime to go. Style, class and total safety. Monte Carlo has no problems with petty crimes, and has a high modern service level. But it *is* expensive. At the Loews, a room with no view except to the rooms across is over \$220 a night.

The Loews Monte Carlo is a great hotel, and it has excellent 24-hour room service, but there are many hotels within walking distance, so it's easy to save a lot of money on accommodations. If you don't expect much more from a room than air-conditioning (always check for that in the south) and nice and clean, then you can get a convenient double close to the Loews for less than \$100.

On the east side of the small harbor, there are excellent little hotels with small balconies overlooking the sea. Hotels next to the station (up hill) are even cheaper, but the cost of a taxi back and forth every day annihilates any savings and shouldn't be considered.

If you plan to go sometime, you should phone the local French tourist office and

ask them to mail a list of hotels on the French Riviera. July is the big tourist season, and reserving a room one to two months in advance is definitely a good idea. Also, when you phone to reserve a room in a smaller hotel, be sure to have a French-speaking person close by. Most French do speak English, but prefer not to and frequently refuse to understand phone conversations. Another possibility is to communicate via fax.

As many people might know, the French have an attitude when it comes to linguistic barriers. A good idea is to learn a few phrases and words. They normally switch over to English after discovering how ridiculous your French sounds, as they are no longer afraid of showing off their generally poor English.

But no doubt about it, the French do have an attitude. Nose in the air and no ass-kissing is the French way. Whether you are waiter, taxi driver or croupier, you are still the better person, because you are French.

Loews Casino is one of the few places in Europe to offer the game of craps. The Grand Casino (nearby) doesn't, and also has an exclusive dress code and entry fee. The casino at Loews also has an evening dress code similar to the one in the backgammon playing rooms: no shorts and no sportswear. But like the Frenchmen that they are, women (especially blond ones) do get away with it.

You won't be impressed by the way the tournament is run in Monte Carlo. It's a pretty poor performance compared to American standards. In general, the playing rooms don't open until the match starting times, rendering no time for warming up.

The jackpot action is slow and confusing. Hoarse, raspy voices are heard constantly, from the people who shout out the names of missing jackpot opponents. Perhaps one year, someone will humor them and lend them the tournament committee's microphone.

Tiny sandwiches and beverages are sold outside tournament playing room. BUT BEWARE! The prices are outrageous. \$5 for a miniature Coke and the tiny sandwiches range from \$10 to \$15. The rooftop restaurant at Loews is exclusive and has good food, but it is very expensive as well and not worth it.

Monte Carlo has many excellent restaurants. Just leave the hotel, walk the city, and you will discover fairly reasonable French cooking at its best. And do enjoy the wine. There is an excellent choice of wines at very low prices, and wine is one thing the French *do* know how to make.

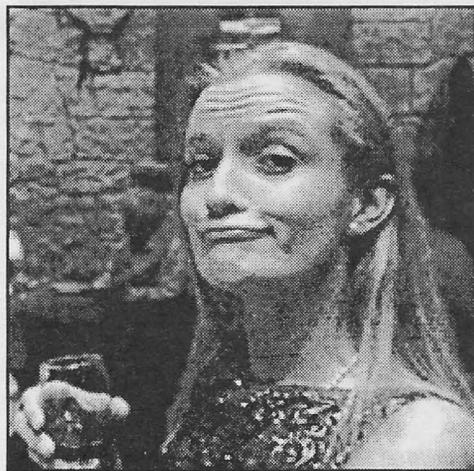
The tournament is one week long

which leaves plenty of time to play the tourist role. A small city between Nice and Monte Carlo called "Eze" is an absolute must for both shopping and scenery.

#### Nice:

A beach tourney. Small, cozy and at the very center of the Riviera. Nice is a big city and has all the things that comes with that. Some areas should be avoided, but the seafront to the station uptown is pretty safe. (When I say safe, I mean safe enough for a blond girl to be walking in the middle of the night.)

Nice is cheap compared to Monte Carlo, but quality-wise, you need to be careful with the food. I suggest you chose a restaurant that is at least semi-crowded. If it is empty, it is normally no good. And a basic rule for all countries in Europe south of the Alps: do *not* drink the tap water unless you want to spend your vacation studying the toilets of France.



You won't find many, if any, dangerous insects or reptiles in all of Europe; however the BG players are hungry predators and are dangerous enough. And remember when playing money games, be sure to see some cash up front, or suggest payouts every 5 to 10 points, depending on the action.

#### Cannes:

It ain't classy or charming like Monte Carlo, but it is snobbish. Cannes is a well-manicured city, and they sure know what to charge. Be careful if you stroll into a bar with live music at night, you could easy pay \$15 for a Coke in a side street bar.

The tournament is small, but very well run. And if you are touring the Riviera anyway, you shouldn't miss it. While you are there, give yourself a treat and visit the exotic city of St. Tropez. The beaches are great, and the little city glows with life and parties.

A word of advice: the road to St. Tropez is pretty packed, and it is not a very pleasant ride. Take the hoverboat from the small city of St. Maxime and arrive in the heart of St. Tropez after a short ride.

Tipping should depend on the service and quality. Remember to look for the "service compris" in the menu (which means tax/service included) or you might find your bill getting some 15% more expensive than it really is.

With smaller hotels, be sure to check out the room first, and don't be ashamed to ask what you are getting for your money. Normally breakfast is included in European hotels. Prices can vary from person to person, and you can get a pretty good deal if you are smart.

#### GERMANY:

"Ordnung muss sein" and it does. The German tournaments are always run precisely and reliably. The atmosphere is much different from American tournaments and seems a little too much on the serious side. At the tournament, there are many highly-skilled German players, and you will find many debates and propositions, and deep analysis.

Touristing in Germany—oh well! Some places are more charming than others. The small tournament, Franken Ganz Open is a treat. It's all in the beautiful south German countryside, held at an old inn. And plenty of room to play outdoors in the sun.

The Düsseldorf Open is on the bottom of my list of tournaments. It is held at a freeway motel in the far outskirts of the city, and if you step outside the hotel, you will be blessed with the sweet sound of huge German cars racing by. If you choose to play a tournament in Germany, you should make your trip a few days longer and take the time to see some of the truly beautiful cities that Germany has to offer.

Overall, the backgammon value in Germany is excellent. Food is good and plentiful and the prices reasonable. But Chinese or Asian foods should be avoided here; they are simply a huge disappointment, at least compared to American standards.

Tipping should be moderate, something like 5%. Hotels are like northern Europe, prices are fixed. Germans do not negotiate, so don't even give it a try.

**THERE ARE MANY MORE COUNTRIES**, and many more tournaments in Europe than those I have mentioned. They are all worth a visit. If you make the trip over here, try to combine two or three events and make a tour of it.

As the majority of Americans are non-

smokers, you might find our continent somewhat primitive. We smoke almost everywhere, but most events now offer non-smoking playing rooms, and the non-smoker has the right to choose where to play. Check out the invitation to determine the smoking policy.

As for diet food. SORRY! That still hasn't made it over here. We eat, drink, smoke and die with a smile on our faces. You might find an occasional *Coke Light*, (called *Diet Coke* in America) but I wouldn't get my hopes too high. So prepare yourselves. Europe is quite a trip, and you might need to do some serious working out when you get back home.

So enjoy! And do try out some of the excellent red wines that France and Italy have to offer. You might get it served in a ceramic jar—no vintage, no name—but a still a true treat for the taste buds.

See you wherever, whenever. Cheers!

Just a blond gal from across the puddle.

—Laila Δ

### Simborg's Laws of Backgammon #2

by Phil Simborg

- There is no more difference between playing for money and playing for fun than there is between a loaded gun and a water pistol.
- With computerized backgammon, it is now possible to feel angry, degraded, and depressed any time and any place in the world, 24 hours a day.
- Playing in too big a game is like reaching under a cow: you can get hurt bad if the steaks are over your head. (And you can get udderly creamed.)
- Back games are most likely won when your opponent is playing them.
- Duplication is highly highly overrated.
- You can judge a player by his hit and cover.
- The number of good roles is directly proportional to the number of good plays.
- Please forgive me if I don't remember playing you before—it's probably because you beat me.
- Remember: once in a while, people actually lose for reasons other than just bad rolling.
- If you stop to truly consider all the variables before every move, plan on at least spending the night.
- If you want to really bore someone, tell them all about your bad rolls.
- You can't win if your opponent has nothing to lose.
- I like opponent's who have courtesy and cash.
- If making others happy and being kind to others is important to you, then you should not play backgammon.

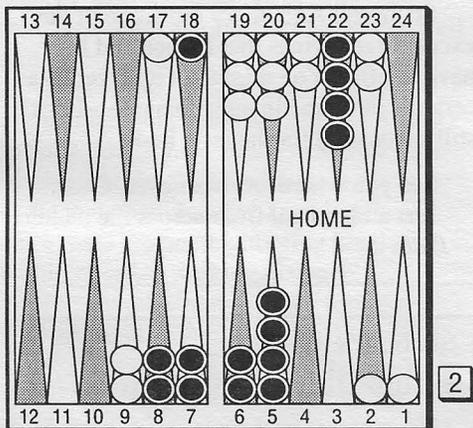
**PROBLEM #234  
ANALYZED**

by Kit Woolsey

Expert backgammon player, author, writer Kit Woolsey has been analyzing the even-numbered problems for CHICAGO POINT since March 1989 (Problem #144).

In this, our 100th anniversary issue, we publicly say, "Thanks, Kit."—Ed.

Match to 7 points. Black leads White, 5 to 3. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-6.**



"To blitz or not to blitz?" That is the question. If Black chooses to go for the blitz, he clearly must go all out with 8/2(2)\*, 6/1(2)\*. A half-hearted attempt such as 8/2(2)\*, 22/16(2) is likely to get Black the worst of both worlds.

If Black plays positionally, his choices are 22/10(2) and 22/16(2), 18/6. Making the 10-point can be of value, since the 4-point is open. However the blot left on White's bar point is a serious drawback, and the play leaves Black a bit strung out.

22/16(2), 18/6 is quite comfortable. The builder on the 6-point is a clear plus for future board-building, and the outpost in the outfield will make life easier for Black in the future. It looks like 22/16(2), 18/6 gets the nod between the positional plays. So, the choice is between this play and making the two inner board points.

With five men back and his only two builders stacked together on the 5-point, Black's pieces are not well placed to carry out a blitz. If White enters quickly, Black's game could fall apart. On the plus side, putting two checkers on the bar against a four-point board is pretty strong, and Black has another blot to shoot at which he will probably be able to hit before White can enter.

White's anchor on Black's 9-point will tend to make it more difficult for Black to bring his builders to ideal positions. Also,

**TAKGAMMON**

by Tak Morioka

Master player Tak Morioka is regarded by most to be the top backgammon board craftsman in the world. Through Dec. 1991, Tak gave POINT readers "Takgammon," a philosophical column geared towards softening the brutality of the game and promoting sportsmanship. In this, our 100th anniversary issue, we publicly say, "Thanks, Tak."—Ed.

**VISION**

The air in the park is still damp with dew on this refreshing new morning. The warm sun and cool western breezes provide pleasing contrasts upon my face. I feel totally awakened after a night of restful sleep.

I was blinded in a mishap countless dark nights ago. But without sight, my other senses have become intensified, especially on a beautiful day like today.

I am seated on a park bench and someone has sat down next to me. He just said "Hi!" in a friendly way. I respond in a like fashion. I feel happy. Another fellow human being is also here to enjoy the morning splendors.

He's obviously noticed my cane and sunglasses and is aware of my situation because my new friend is now describing the sights around us. What a kind gesture! The colorful cavalcade of people, places and things in motion is now vivid in my imagination.

Unfortunately my new friend is about to leave. As I extend my hand in fond farewell, I selfishly regret his departure for I am about to lose the great dimension of verbal sight.

Five minutes have passed. Another man has come by to talk with me. It's not a sociable conversation, however. I can tell by the tone of his voice. The man is offering me a warning. He says that this is a bad neighborhood and a blind person like myself must be very careful. There are muggers all around just waiting to find a soft mark like myself.

The man has just left. I am now in distress. What should I do? Five minutes ago, I had a different point of view. Now dangers lurk all around me. Before when I heard footsteps, I would offer the individual a greeting. Now the footsteps are a potential threat to my safety.

Somebody's coming. If it is a nice person, I will come to no harm. But it might be a mugger. I have to prepare for the worst. I must distance myself from whomever is approaching. "Prudence on the side of caution" seems to be the appropriate course of action.

"Nice day, isn't it?" the voice asks.

I don't reply. Now the man is walking away. I'm safe.

A woman who witnessed my last encounter has just sat down next to me. She's asked an enlightening question that I'm not sure how to answer: "Do all blind people acknowledge each other with such a shielded posture? A minute ago, why were you so evasive and untrusting towards one of your own?" Δ

**FORTUNE COOKIE**

*One man's cup of tea is another man's poison. How many cups have you served today?*

and very important, White has already built up a strong board. This makes it much more dangerous than usual for Black to hit loose in the inner board.

The pure play leaves Black with a pretty good position. White has two checkers to get over Black's solid blockade, and if White doesn't immediately roll a good number, things could get pretty awkward for her. Of course it will be difficult for Black to improve his position, since his men are awkwardly placed and he is short on ammunition.

As with many close plays, the match score must be the deciding factor. Black does not need a gammon to win the match. Blitzing plays tend to win more gammons at the

cost of losing more games, and this position with the blitz shaky does not figure to be an exception. If the match score were reversed with Black needing four points to win the match, the blitzing play would be clear. If the match score were even, it would not be clear which play is better. Under the actual conditions, 22/16(2), 18/6 is definitely superior to the blitzing play.

Cube decisions are not the only adjustments one must make when playing matches. Checker play decisions are often affected by the match score, particularly when potential gammons are involved. This problem is a perfect example of how one must modify one's checker play to take the match score into account. Δ

## THE STRANGER AMONG US

This year, a major backgammon tournament in the United States was robbed of over \$8,000. Following collection of the Calcutta money and late entry fees, the cash envelope was left unattended. In an impulsive move, the thief saw the envelope and snatched it. So the tournament organizer was forced to come "out of pocket" to make good on the Calcutta prize money. A heavy hit.

The organizer requested that CHICAGO POINT withhold this unfortunate incident from the backgammon community. Leaving the money unattended, even for a minute, is obviously careless. But perhaps due to a false sense of security, many tournaments have been guilty of careless money handling (including our own Midwest Championships). And unbeknownst to most, there has been at least one other case of four-figure thievery at a regional tournament within the last two years. For this reason, we feel obliged to inform everyone of the truth now so that precautionary measures may be taken in the future.

At a past Midwest Championship, an individual's deluxe board was stolen, an occurrence, according to Danish director Erik Gravgaard, that happens much too often at tournaments across the globe. Two years ago, a new \$700 board was swiped from the backgammon boutique at the Michigan Summer Championships. Carol Joy Cole's offer of a \$100 reward for recovery of the teal green ultrasuede set (as published in the July 1995 *Flint Area Backgammon News*) was never paid out. British Isles Backgammon Association director Michael Crane reports that precision dice and doubling cubes are pilfered from backgammon boards "on a regular basis."

Thievery at a backgammon tournament  
is effectively the death sentence.

The \$8,000 thievery is grand larceny—a felony offense punishable by jail time. But even those who steal small items are risking a huge penalty in our backgammon community. Thievery at a backgammon tournament is effectively the death sentence. If an individual is caught in the act, that individual would in most cases be permanently blackballed from our game. The word would get around. With his/her reputation destroyed, the thief would become a leper. A heavy fine, but who among us wants this kind of person at our tournaments?

One of the best methods to deter crime is with a community watch. If you happen to see something suspicious, immediately report it to a tournament staffer. Hundreds of eyes visually guarding the playing room makes the thief's task far more difficult.

This editorial is not meant to instill paranoia at backgammon tournaments. The overwhelming number of players are honest, honorable and friendly people. But the backgammon community is not utopia. A wake-up call is necessary so that all of us, both directors and players, can take the proper precautions to protect ourselves from the stranger among us. Δ

The practical solution to the Doubling Cube is an unbiased **cubeless roll out** followed by a **cube equity** adjustment which converts it to a **roll out with cube**.

When offered a **cubeless roll out**, one should ask:

Where's the **CUBE EQUITY**?



**DOUBLE . . . now?**  
THE GUARANTEED SOLUTION  
TO THE DOUBLING CUBE



\$20 in U.S.; \$26 overseas  
(Price includes shipping & handling)



James Lortz  
111 N. Church Street  
Salmon, ID 83467  
Tel.: 208/756-4010

## AMALGAMATION

"Games People Play" has a new director (**Reggie Porter**—773/471-5066) and a new Monday night playing location: The Clique, 2347 S. Michigan Ave. in Chicago... **Bob Hoey** and **Renée Rosenbloom** are looking to resurrect regular backgammon tournaments in Rochester, NY. For more info, e-mail Bob at <[bob\\_hoey@mlsonline.com](mailto:bob_hoey@mlsonline.com)> or call Renée at 716/442-8221... Visiting the Bar Point Club in June: **Dave Brotherton** (MI) and **Dave Groner** (IN)... JellyFish 3.0 is now available. New versions are better, faster, have no copy protection and no monthly confirming. Full information can be found at: <<http://www.effect.no/jelly.html>>. You can order the product through **Carol Joy Cole** at 810/232-9731 or **Larry Strommen** at 317/545-0224. Price: \$30 to \$250 and worth it... Check out your local bookstore for **Bill Robertie's** newest BG book: *Backgammon for Serious Players*. \$15. If you can't find it there, get it from Carol Joy Cole at 810/232-9731... An occasional tournament BG player won the recent \$1,000,000 World Series of Poker in Las Vegas: **Stuart Ungar** (NV)... **Peter Kalba**, on a tournament hot streak, was undefeated in the Open division Georgia Championships going into the Saturday dinner break. But following dinner, Peter failed to show for his match and was forfeited. What could have possessed him? On a more positive note, Peter caught a 40" muskie on his recent Canadian fishing trip... Yet another radio contest win for **Leslie Lockett**: two concert tickets and a year of free Internet service... Need info on the upcoming Indiana Open? Check out the new Hoosier Backgammon Club website at: <<http://home.att.net/~meese>>... If we have to guess a winner of the upcoming Monte Carlo World Championships (7–13 July), our guess is **Neil Kazaross**... Even though the dog days of summer are upon us, don't forget to make your 9–12 January Miami-to-Nassau Backgammon On Board cruise reservations by 1 Sept. The \$100 deposit is fully refundable until 15 Nov. This is serious fun. (800/478-0433)... And coming up fast: Costa Rica! Call us at 773/583-6464 for details... As a result of recent events in Las Vegas, Carol Joy Cole will adapted a new, get-tough policy at her Michigan Summer Championships (3–6 July in Novi, MI). "Effective this year, players who bite their opponent's ear off will be forfeited into the Last Chance—no exceptions." Just kidding, Carol! :- ) Δ

Let your hard luck BG story win you \$100.  
Details in August CHICAGO POINT.

The Worldwide Backgammon Federation is proud to present the

# 7th Mitteleuropa Backgammon and Black-jack Tournament 9th Backgammon European Championship



## Casino Park - Nova Gorica

### September 5-7, 1997

(Black-jack Tourney & Jackpots begin Sept. 1, 1997)

**OVER 50 MILLION**  
Lire Guaranteed  
Combined Prize Money

#### Entry Fees

Master (13-pt) ..... 750.000 Lire (\$450)  
Champion (11-pt) . 250.000 Lire (\$150)  
Intermediate (7-pt)... 100.000 Lire (\$60)  
Black-jack..... 300.000 Lire (\$175)

Quarter-entries offered in main tournament.

#### Registration Fees

1997 WBF members . 30.000 Lire (\$18)  
Non-members ..... 50.000 Lire (\$30)  
WBF Gold Card available at tournament.

#### Backgammon Tournament Committee

To be announced at the tournament under the Presidency of

**Alberto da Pra**

President of the

Worldwide Backgammon Federation

Supported by Tourism Secretary of Slovenia

Valid for: **EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP 1997**

Part of the **1997 Italian Championship**

(stemma aquila bicipite)

Web page: <http://users.iol.it/fornasir>



## PROGRAM

#### Accommodations

Park Hotel ★★★★★. Delpinova 5 -  
Nova Gorica (Tel. 386-65-28225)

	Single	Double
New Park	102.000	73.000 pp
Plus 2.000 Itl taxes per night.		
Breakfast is included each day.		

Fax Park Hotel your reservations by Aug.  
17 at 386-65-22381, Attn: Reception  
Hotel Park. Mention "Backgammon."

#### WBF-Recognized Tournament Director

**Marco Fornasir**

WBF, Box 47, CH-6850, Mendrisio, Switz.

Information: 39-2-40074658

Fax: 39-2-40073420

E-mail: [fornasir@iol.it](mailto:fornasir@iol.it)

#### Monday, September 1

19:30-20:00 Registration Backgammon  
Tournament at Park Hotel  
20:00 Black-jack Tournament at Casino  
22:30 Quarter Entries, Slovenian Blitz,  
Jackpots, Mini-Jackpots &  
Speedy Mini-Jackpots

#### Tuesday, September 2

10:30 Excursion  
19:30-20:00 Registration at Park Hotel  
20:00 Black-jack Tournament at Casino  
22:30 Quarter Entries, Slovenian Blitz,  
Jackpots, Mini-Jackpots &  
Speedy Mini-Jackpots

#### Wednesday, September 3

10:30 Excursion  
19:30-20:00 Registration at Park Hotel  
20:00 Black-jack Tournament at Casino  
22:30 Quarter Entries, Slovenian Blitz,  
Jackpots, Mini-Jackpots &  
Speedy Mini-Jackpots

#### Thursday, September 4

10:30 Casino Nova Gorica Tennis Cup  
17:00 Public draw for free Warm-up  
18:00 Warm-up begins. Quarter Entries,  
Slovenian Blitz, Jackpots, Mini-  
Jackpots & Speedy Mini-Jackpots  
20:00 Black-jack Tournament at Casino.  
Public draw for Sperti Trophy (free)  
20:00-22:30 Break for Dinner  
22:00 Start of Sperti Trophy

#### Friday, September 5

10:30 Casino Nova Gorica Tennis Cup  
17:00 Warm-up. Quarter Entries,  
Slovenian Blitz, Jackpots, Mini-  
Jackpots & Speedy Mini-Jackpots  
19:00-20:00 Registration at Park Hotel  
20:00 Welcoming cocktail: Park Hotel.  
Black-jack Tournament at Casino  
22:00 Registration closes  
22:30 Public draw  
23:00 Start of play. Slovenian Blitz,  
Jackpots, Mini-Jackpots and  
Speedy Mini-Jackpots

#### Saturday, September 6

10:30 Casino Nova Gorica Tennis Cup  
continues  
16:00 Main tournament continues.  
Start of Progressive Consolation  
tournament  
17:00 Slovenian Blitz, Jackpots, Mini-  
Jackpots & Speedy Mini-Jackpots  
18:00 Black-jack Tournament at Casino  
20:00-22:30 Break for Dinner  
21:30 Black-jack Finals at Casino  
22:30 Start of Franz Josef Super-Jack-  
pot. Tournament play continues

#### Sunday, September 7

15:00 Last Chance tournament. Finals.  
Slovenian Blitz, Jackpots, Mini-  
Jackpots & Speedy Mini-Jackpots  
20:30 Schönbrunn Dinner Party &  
Awards Ceremony at Park Hotel

The organization reserves the right to change the  
program in any of its parts. Changes will be an-  
nounced in advance and posted on the Notice Board.

The Park Hotel has agreed to offer two nights free of charge in the Hotel for players who stay one full week (arrival date Sept. 1, departure date Sept. 8, 1997) . . . 100% return of the entry fees . . . Trophies to be awarded in all three divisions, Blackjack and Tennis tournament . . . Nova Gorica is in the country renowned for good food and wine. Air temperature in Sept. is 15 to 23° C.