

worldwide twin championships

PETRILLO ELECTRIFIES MACFARLANE IN NEVADA STATE SHOCKER

**Malcolm Davis Wins International Cup
Nick Ballard is Masters Champ**

Brazilian expert Ian Macfarlane felt very confident with his 14-1 lead against Floridian Ed Petrillo in the 19-point Nevada State Championships. When director Howard Markowitz came over to inform Ian that his doubles partner Danilo Sahione would have to play alone in the quarterfinals due to time constraints, Ian pointed at the score and said, "Very quick."

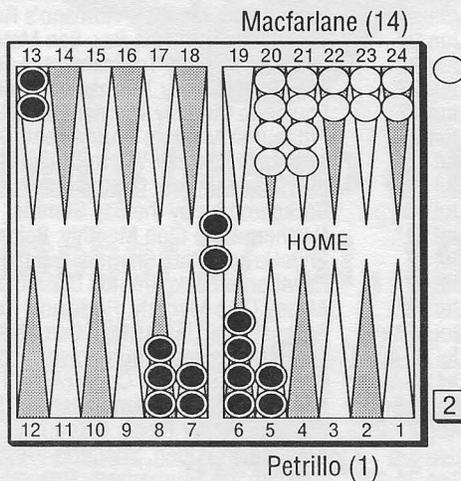
"Maybe not," Howard replied. Howard was right. Ian Macfarlane was in for the match of his life.

THIS, THE 16TH Nevada State event, along with the International Cup and Master's Invitational make up the Worldwide Twin Championships. This year's \$18,000-added festival was held at the Four Queens Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada 20-25 April. Director Markowitz was again backed up by a stellar staff: Bauder, Brussel, Carrico, Cole, Feinstein, George, Meese and Woods.

THE MOST EXCITING MATCH I've ever seen started out as a romp. Macfarlane took four games to win eight unanswered points. In game 5, Petrillo actually hit a lucky pair of aces to earn his first point. But Macfarlane quickly returned to his winning form and zoomed to what seemed to be an overwhelming 14-1 lead.

Things began to change in game 10, pretty much right after Macfarlane's "Very quick" comment. [In Chicago, we refer to this type of remark as a "pre-machortle."] Petrillo won a doubled game, then a single game. But it was at 14-4 where the tide really turned:

19-point Nevada State finals. Ed Petrillo (Black) trails Ian Macfarlane (White), 14-1. **WHITE TO PLAY 1-1.**



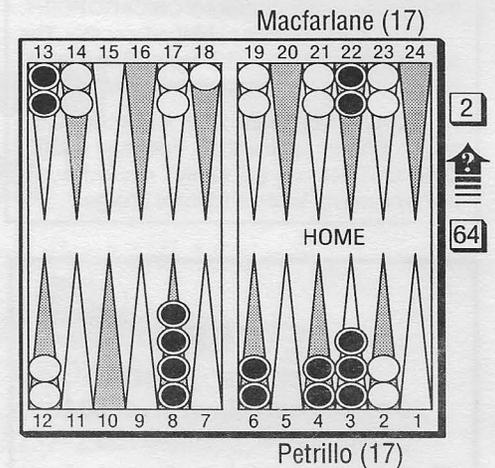
Rolling home for an apparent gammon and insurmountable 18-4 Crawford lead, Ian got sloppy. Rather than play 5/4(4), he

ripped a checker off the 5-point. Three rolls later, a shot developed. Ed missed, but hit the repeating shot when Ian had 8 men off. For once, the dice gods punished a careless oversight and Petrillo went on to win the game.

It was rock 'em-sock 'em backgammon for the next 10 games. When the dust settled, Macfarlane and Petrillo were tied at 17-all.

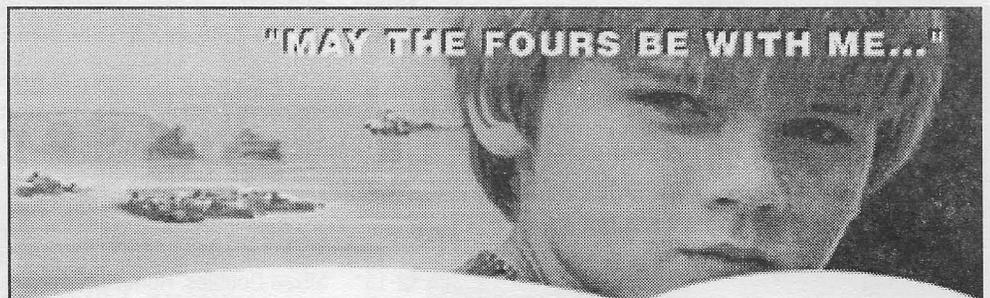
Following seven moves, Ed doubled to put the match on the line in this position:

19-point match. Ed Petrillo (Black) trails Ian Macfarlane (White)are tied at 17-all. **SHOULD BLACK DOUBLE?**



[Continued on page 4]

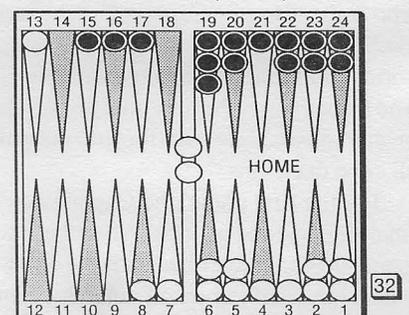
Grand Prix de Lugano
1999 August 18-22
LUGANO-SWITZERLAND
Grand Prix de Suisse
1999 October 26-31



STAR ROLLS EPISODE I THE FANNING MENACE

Opening May 14
at a
Backgammon Club near you.

Anakin Skywalker (White) to roll.



CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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CHICAGO POINT is published monthly. The subscription rate is \$30/12 issues (\$40 international airmail in USD check drawn on U.S. bank).

Advertising Rates: 2 3/8" x 3 1/4" = \$40. 1/4 page = \$70. 1/2 page = \$115. Full page = \$200. If the ad is not "camera ready," request layout and typesetting for an additional charge.

LETTERS

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3-WAY BACKGAMMON

For those who enjoy chouette play, I've come up with a new format that could be used for tournament play. It's called 3-Way Backgammon. Three players compete against each other to determine one champion. Basically, the first player to reach a set number of points—11 for example—wins. And any player who gets to -11 is eliminated.

The three players roll high die to see who is the "Box," "Captain," and "Partner." They play a normal game, with normal doubling cube rules, and *one* cube. The Captain and Partner may *not* consult on any moves; however they do consult on all cube decisions.

For the first game, the Captain has the final say on cube actions. After the first game, the team member with the most points has final say on all cube decisions,

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole
810/232-9731
New e-mail: cjc@tir.com

* Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

May 16	Albany Club Monthly, Romano's Restaurant, Half Moon, NY	518/382-1098
May 16	Austin Bimonthly Tournament, Bombay Bicycle Club, Austin, TX	512/261-8518
May 16	Backgammon by the Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA	831/688-9722
May 16	New England Club Bonus Tourney, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	781/983-7852
May 16*	Hoosier Sunday Tournament, Wildcat Brewing Company, Indianapolis, IN	317/255-8902
May 20	Third Thursday Bonus (Georgia State), Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	810/232-9731
May 22*	2nd Spring Fling Tournament, Ride the Nine, Bloomington, IL	309/828-9308
May 23*	Pittsburgh Monthly Tournament, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	412/823-7500
May 28-31	<u>20th Chicago Open, Wyndham NW Chicago Hotel, Itasca, IL</u>	<u>847/674-0120</u>
May 29	Clarine's Monthly Tournament, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA	213/822-9745
May 30	Ace Point Sunday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	212/753-0842
May 30	Louisville Monthly Tournament, Oldenberg Grill, Louisville, KY	502/458-9660
Jun 1*	Official GamesGrid Monthly Tournament, via computer <i>tournaments@cyberarts.com</i>	781/983-7852
Jun 5-6*	New England Club Championships, Sheraton-Commander, Cambridge, MA	831/688-9722
Jun 6	Backgammon by the Bay, The Whole Shabang, Alameda, CA	330/966-2811
Jun 6*	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Belden Commons Restaurant, Canton OH	770/333-1876
Jun 10-13*	<u>1999 Georgia State Championships & Peach Cup, Holiday Inn, Atlanta, GA</u>	<u>773/583-6464</u>
Jun 13*	<u>NEW DATE:</u> Bar Point Sunday, Anyway's Grill, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	<u>781/983-7852</u>
Jun 13*	<u>NEW VENUE:</u> New England Club Tourney, Holiday Inn, Somerville, MA	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jun 17*	Third Thursday Bonus Tournament, Ramada Inn, Flint, MI	518/382-1098
Jun 20	Albany Club Monthly, Romano's Restaurant, Half Moon, NY	831/688-9722
Jun 20	Backgammon by the Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA	213/822-9745
Jun 26	Clarine's Monthly Tournament, A.R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA	212/753-0842
Jun 27	Ace Point Sunday Tournament, Ace Point Club, New York, NY	502/458-9660
Jun 27	Louisville Monthly Tournament, Oldenberg Grill, Louisville, KY	412/823-7500
Jun 27*	Pittsburgh Monthly Tournament, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	810/232-9731
Jul 1	Michigan Summer Warm-Up Tourney, Novi Hilton Hotel, Novi, MI	810/232-9731
Jul 2-5	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton Hotel, Novi, MI</u>	<u>831/688-9722</u>
Jul 10*	Backgammon by the Bay Summer Sizzle, Britannia Arms, San José, CA	330/966-2811
Jul 11*	Northern Ohio Club Monthly, Belden Commons Restaurant, Canton OH	808/735-5252
Jul 17	27th Hawaii State Championships, Pacific Club, Honolulu, HI	773/583-6464
Jul 17	Hawthorne Backgammon Classic, Hawthorne Race Course, Cicero, IL	518/382-1098
Jul 18*	Albany Club Monthly, Romano's Restaurant, Half Moon, NY	831/688-9722
Jul 18*	Backgammon by the Bay, San Mateo Bridge Center, San Mateo, CA	716/442-8221
Jul 30-Aug 1	<u>Thousand Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, NY</u>	<u>412/823-7500</u>
Jul 31-Aug 1*	<u>6th Annual Summer Cooker/Pool Party, Hast residence, Pittsburgh, PA</u>	<u>612/378-1536</u>
Aug 13-15	<u>Minnesota State Championships, Thunderbird Hotel, Bloomington, MN</u>	<u>309/674-0557</u>
Aug 21-22*	Summer Sizzler Picnic & Tourney, Zell's (W. Peoria) & Sly Fox, Lacon, IL	317/255-8902
Sep 3-6	<u>47th Indiana Open, Sheraton-Westin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN</u>	<u>716/442-8221</u>
Sep 24-26	<u>Towpath Inn Tournament, Towpath Inn, Turin, NY</u>	<u>330/498-9801</u>
Sep 24-26	<u>1999 Ohio State Championships, Comfort Inn, Canton, OH</u>	<u>301/530-0604</u>
Oct 8-10	<u>Nation's Capital Championships, Promenade, Bethesda, MD</u>	<u>954/938-4304</u>
Oct 15-17	<u>1999 Florida State Championships, Days Inn, Ft. Lauderdale, FL</u>	<u>702/893-6025</u>
Oct 27-31*	<u>1999 Las Vegas Open, Harrah's Casino & Hotel, Las Vegas, NV</u>	<u>702/893-6025</u>
Nov 7-14*	Classic Games Cruise, Houston/Cancun/Cozumel/Roatan, Norwegian Line	847/945-7801
Nov 12-14*	<u>NEW DATES & VENUE:</u> Illinois State Champs, Hilton Hotel, Springfield, IL	<u>330/966-2811</u>
Nov 26-28	<u>5th Thanksgiving Weekend, Belden Village Holiday Inn, Canton, OH</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Dec 3-5*	<u>44th Gammon Associates Invitational, Los Angeles, CA</u>	

OUTSIDE USA

May 14-16	Carlsberg Helsinki Open, Helsinki Sporting Club, Finland	35850-68061
May 15-16	Italian Championship Series, Verona, Italy	3933-87187324
May 22-23	bb99 Tournament #2, Great Barr Hotel, Birmingham, England	441522-888676
May 29-30	Italian Championship Series: 8th Torneo della Riviera Adriatica, Italy	3933-8187324
May 29-30*	Jydske Open, Århus Backgammon Klub, Århus, Denmark	4586-154458
Jun 2-6	6th German Open, Hotel am Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49521-64314
Jun 12-13*	<u>NEW DATES:</u> Hilton Trophy Tournament, Stakis Hotel, England	441522-888676
Jun 12-13*	Mixed Doubles, Humlebæk Backgammon Klub, Humlebæk, Denmark	4549-222821
Jun 13*	Toronto Sunday Monthly, Doghouse Riley's Toronto, ON, Canada	416/722-9709
Jul 3-4	Bonus Tournament #1, Stakis Nottingham Hotel, England	441522-888676
Jul 8-11	City of Venice Tournament, Casinò Municipale, Lido, Venice, Italy	3941-5900769
Jul 10-11	Monte Carlo Warm-Up Weekend, Loews Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	954/527-4033
Jul 12-18	World Championship, Loews Monte Carlo, Monaco	USA contact: 954/527-4033
Jul 17-18*	bb99 Tournament #3, Great Barr Hotel, Birmingham, England	441522-888676
Jul 19-20*	8th Nice Open, 7 Pd des Anglais, Nice, France	33393-843679
Jul 22-25	1st Czech Open, Casino Bellevue, Marienbad, Czech Republic	49911-409505
Jul 24-25*	Danish Doubles, Solrød/Dansk BG Forbund, Denmark	4533-363601
Aug 5-8*	<u>CANCELLED:</u> Franken ganz Open V, Uttenreuth, Germany	49711-486190
Aug 7-8*	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy (Swiss #3), Stakis Nottingham, England	441522-888676
Aug 18-22*	Grand Prix de Lugano, Hotel Grand Eden, Lugano, Switzerland	4179-3374425
Aug 21-22*	Studentenbar cup, Studentenbaren, Århus, Denmark	4586-154458
Aug 21-29	3rd Mind Sports Olympiad, London, England	E-mail: mso@dickson.demon.co.uk
Sep 3-5	European Championship/Mitteuropa Tourney, Nova Gorica, Slovenia	3902-40074658
Dec 8-12*	6th Tournament of the Americas, Cancun, Mexico	USA contact: 773/583-6464

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

regardless which player is Captain. If both players have the same score, the Captain has final say.

Since this is match play, gammons and backgammons can be won without the cube being turned.

If the Box wins 2 points, he goes +2 and each of the opponents goes -2. If the Box loses 2 points, he goes -2 and each of the others go +2. If the Box wins, he stays Box and the other two players rotate. If the Captain wins, he becomes Box, the Partner becomes Captain, and the Box becomes Partner of the new Captain.

The player who first reaches +11 points is the winner. If someone goes -11, he is out and the other two keep playing until one of them is plus or minus 11. Finally, if two players reach or exceed +11 simultaneously, they play a single cubeless game to determine the champion.—*Phil Simborg, Chicago, IL*

BACKGAMMON IN ST. LOUIS

Thanks very much for sending the photo of my dad and me from the Midwest tournament. I really enjoyed the weekend and am already eager for next year. Look for an Achtenberg in the "winner's circle" next time.

What do we need to do to get you to organize a "traveling" tournament in St. Louis sometime?—*Joel Achtenberg, St. Louis, MO*

Your backgammon prayers are answered, Joel! Phyllis Shapiro and Mike Shanas are starting up a backgammon club in St. Louis. The first of weekly Sunday club meetings will be 16 May at 7:00 p.m. at Riddles Cafe & Wine Bar. For more info, e-mail Phyllis at phs@math.wustl.edu.—Ed.

LUCY LOVED BACKGAMMON

At the Midwest Championships ("Backgammon in the 20th Century"), I seem to remember one of the pictures on the wall showed Lucille Ball and her sponsoring an annual backgammon tournament. My

father teaches a course in Old Time Radio at the University of Cincinnati. One of his classes is devoted to Lucille Ball. He didn't know that she ever sponsored a tournament and was interested when I mentioned the photo to him.

Do you have any details concerning the tournament? Also, would it be possible for me to get a copy of the photo?—*Janice Newman, Kokomo, IN*

We have sent you the photo (from the Dec. 1980 Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine) and the tourney results of Lucy's event 10-11 Jan., 1981:

1. Gaby Horowitz
2. Elliott Winslow
3. Alan Martin
4. Bob Glass

We attended Lucy's 7th and final event at the 20th Century Fox studios 17-19 Dec. 1982. It was truly memorable. Jackie Cooper, Jan Murray, Rose Marie, Robert Alda, Gladys Knight and Alex Trebek attended.—Ed.

BACKGAMMON DOCUMENTARY

I am currently working on a documentary photography project with Backgammon as my theme at the University of Illinois in Chicago. I will be taking black & white photos of games and also including documents on the history of the game and current events related to Backgammon. Any information that you can send me would be much appreciated.—*Eric Kieffer, Chicago, IL*

Come by the Bar Point Club any Tuesday night and we'll be happy to help you.—Ed. Δ



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 1999

Compiled through 21 March 1999 after 3 tournaments
(Upcoming: Chicago Open, Georgia State Championships)



Neil Kazaross	43.17	John Brussel	5.88	Paul Klein	4.06	Sean Garber	2.08
Jeff Burdsall	13.74	Niel Borden	5.77	Roz Ferris	3.20	Rudy Langenbach	2.08
Mike Shanas	11.44	Alice Kay	5.60	James Roston	3.13	Paul Mangone	1.45
Matt Reklaitis	11.20	Gary Marchenia	5.25	Aram Kouleyan	3.05	Ramez Abi-Akar	1.44
Carol Falk	11.03	Joann Feinstein	5.20	Glenn Swanson	2.95	Dirk Hogan	1.34
Clarine	10.40	Roger Nellist	5.06	Jobey Calitri	2.89	A.J. Fronce	1.05
Paul Friedman	9.82	Steve McCormick	4.80	Dean Kaloudis	2.89	Irv Taylor	1.05
Drew Giovanis	9.65	Howard Markowitz	4.76	Gary Fries	2.59	Glenn Martells	0.82
Charlie Russell	9.29	Leslie Lockett	4.18	Ralph Levy	2.40	Ron Weiner	0.62
Steve Hast	6.40	Steve Mellen	4.16	Jerry Kruth	2.22	Bill Chibnik	0.53
Art Benjamin	6.11	Stuart Hosen	4.16	Ed King	2.22	Boris Mindich	0.53
Rudy Citrom	6.11	Mike Rezaei	4.06	Kerim Urkun	2.14		



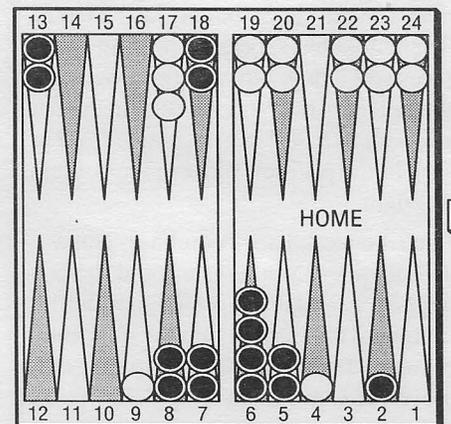
CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 1999 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 30 APRIL

Steve Mellen	9.04	Phyllis Smolinski	3.68	Gary Kay	1.28	Marty Tatosian	0.48
Bob Zavoral	7.44	Carter Mattig	3.52	Mark Ryan	1.28	Sarg Serges	0.48
Neil Kazaross	7.12	Brian Kozin	3.44	Ralph Byrns	1.28	Mark Murray	0.48
Harold Elgazar	6.24	Jerry Brooks	3.04	Norma Shyer	1.20	Sam Pottle	0.44
Marc Rosset	6.08	Ken Bond	3.04	Georgina Flanagan	1.12	Tim Mabee	0.40
Tim Carroll	5.36	John Jennings	2.88	Laila Leonhardt	0.88	Harry Cohn	0.32
Arline Levy	5.36	Don Jayhan	2.64	Glenn Martells	0.88	Richard Stawowy	0.28
Ed Buerger	5.20	Steve Klesker	2.56	Richard Lloyd	0.88	Amy Valerio	0.24
Tak Morioka	5.16	David Araiza	2.48	Jolie Rubin	0.88	Frank Callea	0.24
Phil Simborg	5.12	Herb Roman	2.16	Peter Kalba	0.72	Sonja Peacock	0.16
Paul Franks	5.04	Alice Kay	2.08	Mark Dalton	0.64	Ken Tyszko	0.16
Joe Wollick	4.96	Bill Davis	1.80	Daniel Lillian	0.64	Stan Kucharz	0.16
Bob Steen	4.72	Bill Keefe	1.76	Joann Feinstein	0.64	Elaine Kehm	0.12
Sam Yoyen	3.76	Jake Jacobs	1.68	Bill Bartholomay	0.64		

April's Player of the Month is **BOB STEEN**. Bob's 3.44 master point total was enough to edge out Ken Bond (3.04) and Marc Rosset (2.64).

1999 Nevada State Championships 19-point finals. Ed Petrillo (Black) leads Ian MacFarlane (White) 17 to 16. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-4.**



ASK DANNY

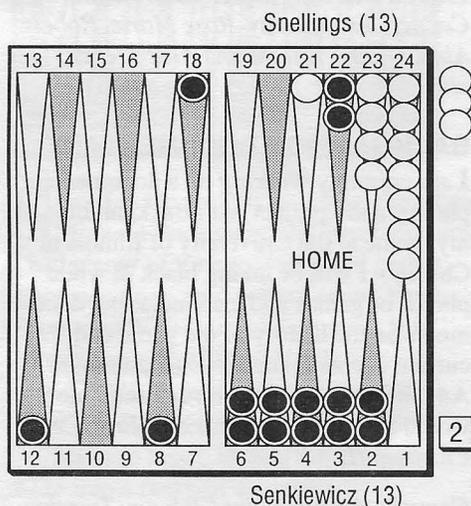


© 1999 by Danny Kleinman

AN OVERSIGHT BY MIKE?

Dear Danny: I know that Mike Senkiewicz is an outstanding player. It's obvious from his very successful results. But I'm still trying to figure out a play he made against Wilcox Snellings a couple of years ago in a Las Vegas Master's finals.

Match to 19 points. Mike Senkiewicz (Black) and Wilcox Snellings (White) are tied at 13-all. **BLACK TO PLAY 4-4.**



Mike thought for about a minute, then played 22/6. Why expose himself to pick-and-pass numbers that could slow his chance to get off the gammon? I just don't understand this play. Do you think it was an oversight?—Mystified

DEAR MYSTIFIED: Mike Senkiewicz saw something about the position that you didn't: White has an *even* number of men.

If White had an *odd* number of men left, Mike's play, (a) 22/6, would be wrong, for it would give White 6-1, 5-1, 4-1 and 3-1 to put Black on the bar (three pips lost with a 1/9 chance of dancing, worth about half a roll) *without costing White a roll*. Because White has an *even* number of men, however, only 3-1 does so; 3-1 is a bad roll for White anyway, bearing only one man off. With 6-1, 5-1 or 4-1, White won't hit: he'll simply bear *two* men off.

Let's compare (a) with the plausible alternative (b) 22/10, 22/18, which gives Black no "pick-and-pass" rolls at all. (a) forces White to *lose a full roll* on four small rolls:

- 2-1: move 4/3*/1 instead of 2/off, 1/off;
- 2-2: move 4/off, 2/off(2) instead of 2/off(4); and
- 1-1: move 4/3*/2, 1/off(2) instead of 1/off(4).

(a) not only does better than (b) on these four rolls, but also bears a man in to the 6-point with perfect efficiency, making

it slightly better than (b) on White's other thirty-two rolls.

The real alternative to (a) is *leaving both men back*. This gains when White rolls double-aces and Black counters with an ace of his own, a parlay that occurs only about 0.85% of the time. The hit not only saves the gammon, but gives Black substantial winning chances, since White will still have eight men to bear off.

To leave both men back, Black plays either (c) 18/6, 8/4 or (d) 18/6, 12/8. (c) wastes two pips moving beyond the 6-point, while (d) may lead to pip wastage later if Black must use numbers higher than 2 to bear his two men in from the 8-point. Except when White rolls double-aces and Black doesn't roll an ace, or White rolls 3-1, (a) gives Black slightly greater gammon-saving chances than either (c) or (d).

If Mike's play was wrong at all, it was not because it exposed him to the illusory danger of a White pick-and-pass, but because it abandoned his slim hitting chances. Though I would play (d) 18/6, 12/8, I rate the choice between keeping the one man and two men back on the trey-point *two close to call*.—Yours, Danny Δ

Questions for Danny Kleinman should be addressed to: Ask Danny, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155.
Ore-mail: chipoint@interaccess.com.

PETRILLO...

[Continued from page 1]

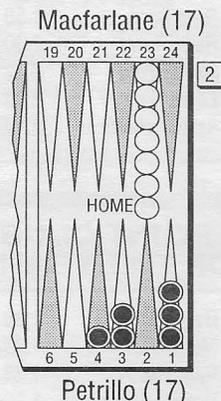
Ed maintained control most of the game, forcing Ian into a busted-board 2-point holding game. As Ed began bearing off, the only thing that could even make the game interesting was double 6. Boom! Macfarlane rolled it and now was only a good double from striking distance.

Four shakes later, boom! Ian rolled an efficient double 1s, bearing off four men. He was still a dog, but now this dog was beginning to bark. With the title on the line, along with \$15,000 in prize money, Ed is on roll in the position show in the column to the right.

Petrillo tossed a wasteful 3-2. Not a killer roll unless Macfarlane could shake 2-2 or bigger . . . and that's what Ian rolled!

Now Ed had turned into the dog. But fortunately for Ed, he had become a golden retriever. He "retrieved" a "golden" pair of 5s to bear off all but one man on his ace-

19-point finals. Ed Petrillo (Black) and Ian Macfarlane (White) are tied at 17-all. Double match-point. **BLACK IS ON ROLL.**



point. Ian now needed 2s or better to claim the title, but instead rolled 4-1.

The crowd broke out in applause as Petrillo received congratulations from many supporters. It was a truly emotional match that Ed rated as the highlight of his backgammon career.

IN THE TWO other big matches, Malcolm Davis (TX) prevailed over Denmark's Mads Andersen 15-6 in the International Cup, and Nick Ballard (CA) stopped Jake



The last roll of the Nevada State finals. Ed Petrillo can do nothing but hope Ian Macfarlane fails to roll 2-2 or bigger.

Jacobs (IL) at double match-point and then Mike Corbett 21-13 to claim the \$36,000 Masters prize.

HOWARD MARKOWITZ HAS ANNOUNCED a new venue for the upcoming Las Vegas Open 27-31 October: Harrah's Casino/Hotel. Expect a huge turnout with \$10,000 added money and a venue right on the heart

[Continued on page 7]

Deadly Fours

by Jake Jacobs

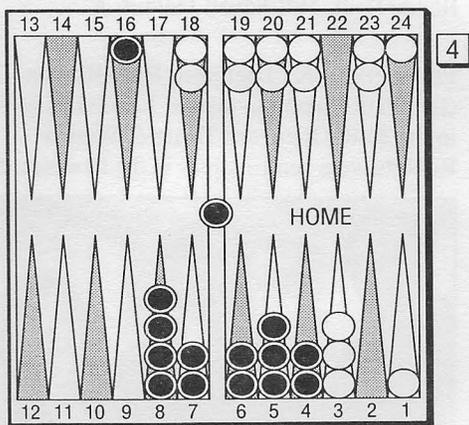


In Hong Kong, the number 8 is considered lucky. The Cantonese word for 8 is a homonym for wealth. (This homonymity continues throughout the Sinicized world, so that, though the pronunciation assigned the respective Chinese characters would be different in Beijing, or Seoul, or Tokyo, the different pronunciations would still have the two terms sounding like each other.)

On August 8, 1988, wedding chapels couldn't keep up with the business, and maternity wards were flooded with the output of induced labor. People post 8-sided mirrors on their doors, to reflect away bad *feng shui*. The auto license plate "8" was auctioned off for over a million dollars to a gentleman who just had to have it adorning his Rolls.

Other numbers are less favored. The number 4 is considered worst of all. Understandable, really, since the word is a homonym here for death. I write these lines in an office building which has no 4th, 14th, or 24th floors. (Seems to me it lacks a 13th as well, out of respect for the sensibilities of Western visitors. Or perhaps it just makes the building seem taller.) With this in mind, it is no surprise that in each of the following my roll was . . . a '4.'

Money game. White owns a 4-cube.
JAKE (BLACK) TO PLAY 3-1.



I played bar/24*, 16/13. White started with a 6-1, and within a few turns offered me the choice of dying on 4, or making

him wealthy on 8. I was ready to complain about my bad luck, except it wasn't my turn. There are so many players here claiming to be the world's unluckiest that we have to take numbers and get in line. Worse still, some of the others have pulled strings to get extra numbers: a local lawyer demanded his, plus a third of everyone else's; one physician wrote himself a prescription for a triple dose. It is a measure of how unlucky I am that, with all the false claimants, I can't get my own legitimate complaints aired.

At least there was sympathy from the kibitzers: "It was your own fault. That terrible 3-1 you played! Just come in on the 3-point, and his prime cracks."

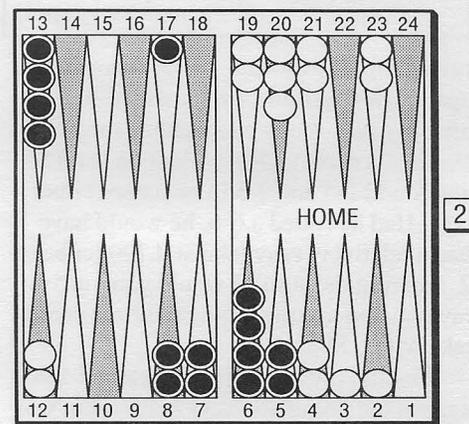
I took the criticism well, and offered to play a four million game contract, play-vs.-play, or to bet every penny I might ever earn (I did not mention any dollars I might earn, having learned something from playing with lawyers) on a JellyFish™ rollout.

Fortunately, we didn't bet on the rollout, as, according to Jelly, when, and only when, White owns the cube, hitting is wrong. I find this result mystifying. (A friend, told the results, found it outrageous, and wanted to prop Jelly until I explained that, as a neural net, it doesn't actually have any money.)

Obviously Black wins more gammons after hitting, but it turns out that he wins fewer games. Since the ratio of men back after the hit is 5-to-1, and since Black has a couple of rolls worth of timing, while White is completely stripped, I actually expected the hit to win more as well. The cubeless results, while favoring the hit, are close enough that Jelly's cubeful result is possible, and not merely an aberration.

	<u>CUBELESS</u>	<u>WIN</u>	<u>GAMMON</u>	<u>BG</u>	<u>EV</u>
Hit Black	41.4	33.6	2.2	+0.892	
White	19.6	3.1	0.1		
Non Black	60.6	22.0	0.9	+0.881	
White	13.9	2.5	0.1		
<u>CUBEFUL</u>					
Hit Black	37.3	33.4	1.7	+0.811	
White	27.2	0.3	0.1		
Non Black	57.9	22.1	0.7	+0.842	
White	18.6	0.7	0		

Money game. Cube centered on 2.
JAKE (BLACK) TO PLAY 2-2.



The expert Sinologist will realize that this roll is not so bad as it looks. True, it is a 4, but we actually get 8 pips. It seemed to me that the strongest play was to make the 5-prime. But, with the cube in the middle, it might be better to leave no blots. I played 17/11, 13/11, hoping that White would roll an ace, or possibly 5-5, and then make a bad take.

Bingo! White rolled 5-5, we cubed, and after White took, I reassured my complaining teammate: "See, he took! All part of my evil plan." We went on to gammon him, the 8 points making us each a little wealthier.

Rolling it out at home, I found Jelly evaluated 13/9(2) as better, but in the rollout slightly preferred my play with the cube available. So far, so good, except, I did an evaluation after 5-5, and Jelly thought it was a take either way. Hmm?

I next went through, and looked at all possible responses by White to either play. As anticipated, most of the time White had to pass either way. If he had already been cubed, making the prime was almost always better, but given a pass, the two plays became exactly equal. The swing rolls were: 1-5, which Jelly evaluated as a bare take against the prime, but a pass after my safe play; 2-5, with a similar evaluation, except my play was better by an even bigger margin; 5-5, evaluated as a take either way, though mine was slightly

[Continued on page 6]

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Deadly Fours...

[Continued from page 5]

better; 5-6, also takeable both ways, but again favoring mine; and finally 6-6, a take after my play, but a pass against the prime.

I did a short (1296) rollout on level 5, and found 1-5 and 2-5 to be passes either way. Had he rolled a 6-6, he would have had a relatively easy take at 0.790 (cube on 2, ignoring the auto). I would gain on 5-6: my play led to a pass, but the prime could take with 0.896.

Finally, my cherished 5-5 earned 1.000 against the prime, the very border, but was 1.158 after my play. These rollouts are hardly long enough, but assuming we trust Jelly's figures, and further assuming that we face a perfect opponent, my play gave up a 500th of a point on a 2-cube, or \$0.40 actual theoretical Hong Kong dollars apiece.

Theorists may adjourn to debate the merits of the plays in terms of their respective potential to Weaver the opponent into a bad take. A definitive answer, I fear, must of necessity be tailored to the individual Weavee. Each frog jumps after his own fly. It was only after I had realized all of this, that I realized the most important fact of all: we were supposed to double before the roll.

To this I can say two things. First, my teammate was John Simon, who doubles once his EV (Expectancy Value) is greater than -0.100. If the alarm malfunctions, can I be blamed for oversleeping?

Second, I ain't giving the money back. Δ



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. Mon., 7:30 P.M. at Tortilla Flats Cancun, 290 S. Schmale, Carol Stream. Joe Wollfick (847/755-0887).

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY: Tourn. Monday, 7:00 P.M. at The Clique, 2347 S. Michigan, Chicago. Reginald 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, 6:30 P.M. at Brewhaus, 617 E. Washington, Springfield. Ben Zemaitis (217/483-4028).

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

PEORIA BACKGAMMON CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Ed Zell (309/674-0557).

who did what

WINNER'S CIRCLE



Mar.-May 1999

•**Backgammon by the Bay Special** (Alameda, CA; 7 Mar.)... OPEN (13): 1-David Marona, 2-Jonathan Weinstein.

•**South Australian Open** (Adelaide, So. Australia; 14 Mar.)... OPEN (20 + 12 buy-backs): 1-Chris Benham, 2-John McLean, 3/4-Angelo Ali / Claudie Vasseur.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (San Mateo, CA; 21 Mar.)... OPEN (13): 1-Mark Andrus, 2-Ernest Ho; 1C-Richard McIntosh, 2C-Paul Tanenbaum. INTERMEDIATE (12): 1-Leo Schools, 2-Glenn Nunez; 1C-Richard Gibson, 2C-Christian Stoddard. BEGINNER (5): 1-Frank Berkenkotter, 2-Marilyn Stettler.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (Alameda, CA; 4 Apr.)... OPEN (8): 1-Jonathan Weinstein, 2-Lorien Armstrong.

•**Springfield Series #6** (Springfield, IL; 10 Apr.)... OPEN (13): 1-Jim Zimmerman, 2-Randy Armstrong; 1C-William Hutchison, 2C-Dan Eatherington; 1LC-Ed Zell... *Ben Zemaitis reports that these 16 players qualify for the 1 May \$1,000 finals: G. Tomlin, B. Zemaitis, L. Woods, R. Reiff, M. Jennings, M. Doueihy, W. Hutchison, J. Zimmerman, R. Armstrong, D. Schiller, S. Will, C. Mayoh, E. Zell, M. Plog, F. Malouf, D. Eatherington.*

•**British Open** (Nottingham, England; 10-11 Apr.)... OPEN (114): 1-Neil Kazaross (USA), 2-Jerry Smith, 3/4-Dave Coyne / Emmanuel DiBona; 1C-Richard Granville, 2C-Dod Davies; 1LC-Stefan Paliwoda. SUICIDE! (64): 1-Bill Pope, 2-Mike Waxman. FRIDAY KO (30): 1-David Nathan, 2-Walter Jarc (Spain). SUPER JACKPOT (8): 1-Julian Fetterlein, 2-Murray Henderson. DOUBLES (15): 1-Christmas Crackers, 2-Dod Willing.

MIDWEST CHAMPS RESULTS ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS

The following are corrections and additions to the 1999 Midwest Backgammon Championships results: In Blitz Tourney,



BLITZ Champion Frank Frigo



Neil Kazaross is all smiles following his thrilling victory at the 1999 British Open 10-11 April. [Photo by Michael Crane]

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Oakbrook Terrace, IL; 11 Apr.)... OPEN (15): 1/2-Bill Davis / Tak Morioka, 3/4-Jake Jacobs / Tim Mabee; 1C/2C-Ken Bond / Jerry Brooks. INTERMEDIATE (12): 1-Marc Rosset, 2-Mark Murray, 3/4-Stan Kucharz / Richard Stawowy; 1C-Ed Buerger, 2C-Elaine Kehm.

•**NEBC Sunday Monthly** (Cambridge, MA; 11 Apr.)... EXPERT (16): 1-Jim Pascoe, 2-Ivan Birn, 3/4-Walter Trice / Nora Luna; 1C-Ed Abou-Zeid, 2C-Herb Gurland. A DIV. (14): 1-Marty Gross, 2-Tom Meyer, 3/4-Tom Girnius / Jim McKenna; 1C-Marianne Bromley, 2C-Dave Ferron.

•**Backgammon by the Bay Monthly** (San Mateo, CA; 18 Apr.)... OPEN (15): 1-Nicky Nicknam, 2-Johathan Weinstein; 1C-Odis Chenault, 2C-Timothy Jaxon. INTERMEDIATE (14): 1-Lorien Armstrong, 2-Bill Landry; 1C/2C-David Feinberg / Gloria Lee. BEGINNER (4): 1-Avo Sadakian, 2-Carol Stone.

•**29th Annual Willowbank Invitational** (Shelburne, VT; 25 April)... OPEN (24): 1-Gilles Blais (Canada), 2-Paul Beland (Canada); 1C-Fred Bement (VT), 2C-Ian Van Blarcom (ME); 1LC-Gary Garmunchian (MA), 2LC-Dan Kimbell (VT).

•**Albany Club Monthly** (Halfmoon, NY; 25 April)... OPEN (8): 1-Lincoln Bedell, 2-Marc Gray. INTERMEDIATE (4): 1-Joe Shapiro, 2-Chris Krystallis.

•**Springfield Series Grand Finale** (Springfield, IL; 1 May)... OPEN (16): 1-Don Schiller, 2-Ed Zell; 1C/2C-Jim Zimmerman / Randy Reiff; 1LC-Fouad Malouf. Δ

Frank Frigo (KY) defeated Herb Roman (IL). Paul Friedman topped Leslie Lockett in the \$140 Open, and Doug & Wanda Roberts were semifinalists in the Doubles. Δ



MBC \$140 Open winner Paul Friedman (left) with runner-up Leslie Lockett.

PETRILLO...

[Continued from page 4]

of the strip. (Adjacent to the new Venetian and across the street from the Mirage.)



Master's winner Nick Ballard (at left) with International Cup victor Malcolm Davis.

Complete Twin Championship results below: Δ

VEGAS WORLDWIDE TWIN CHAMPIONSHIPS

NEVADA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP (98): 1-Ed Petrillo (FL), 2-Ian MacFarlane (Brazil), 3/4-Phil Laak (NY) / Doug Mayfield (CA); 1C-Richard White (CA), 2C-Hugh Sconyers (TX), 3C/4C-Aram Kouleyan (CA) / Mario Sequeira (Portugal); 1LC-Nick Ballard (CA), 2LC-Christian Liebe-Harkort (Germany). **INTERMEDIATE (112):** 1-Art Grater (CA), 2-Richard Munitz (NY), 3/4-Fred Dardashti (CA) / Leo Liberal (Brazil); 1C-Mario Lizano (Costa Rica), 2C-Mike Shadkin (FL), 3C/4C-Bill Papa (CA) / Hugo Spangenberg (Argentina); 1LC-John Mansey (NH), 2LC-Mary Franks (IL). **BEGINNER (34):** 1-Betty Coppic (GA), 2-Richard You (CA), 3/4-Casey Forrest (OR) / Sally Winter (GA); 1C-Garry Boltjes (HI), 2C-Stanley Stavinski (NV), 3C/4C-Gary Oliver (AZ) / Kalman Weiss (CA); 1LC-Donna West (CA) / 2LC-Bob Fleck (NV).

INTERNATIONAL CUP CHAMPIONSHIP (84): 1-Malcolm Davis (TX), 2-Mads Andersen (Denmark), 3/4-Armando Balbi (Brazil) / Gary Bauer (NJ). **INTERMEDIATE (98):** 1-Harold Seif (NV), 2-Richard McIntosh (CA), 3/4-Veronica Dabul (Argentina) / Richard Munitz (NY). **BEGINNER (21):** 1-Casey Forrest (OR), 2-Larry Burkhart (CA), 3/4-Marcia Karen (CA) / Jim Mason (CA).

MASTERS JACKPOT (24): 1-Nick Ballard (CA), 2-Mike Corbett (FL), 3-Jake Jacobs (IL). **LIMITED JACKPOT "A" (16):** 1-Ary Nogueira (Brazil), 2-Antonio Ortega (Costa Rica). "B" (16): 1-Jes Bondo (Denmark), 2-Hugo Spangenberg (Argentina). **BLITZ (256):** 1-Larry Cooper (NY), 2-Bob Wilensky (GA). **SENIORS (64):** 1-Ron Bruns (CA), 2-Fred Kalantari (MN). **DOUBLES (32):** 1-Sandy Kaplan (MI) & Mike Shadkin (FL), 2-Ian MacFarlane & Danilo Sahione (Brazil). **MINI-MATCH (256):** 1-Doug Amenda (AZ), 2-Arsalan Najafi (TX). **AFTER TOURNAMENT TOURNAMENT \$50 (32):** 1-Ray Fogerlund (CA), 2-Mark Ferrin (OR). **\$20 (29):** 1-Toshikatsu Ejiri (Japan), 2-Richard Gibson (CA).

AMALGAMATION

If you have questions regarding the upcoming Michigan Summer Championships (2-5 July in Novi), contact **Carol Joy Cole** (MI) at her new e-mail address:

cjc@tir.com... Former San Francisco 49er quarterback **John Brodie** won the NFL's **Jim Thorpe Trophy** in 1970. His participation in the recent Las Vegas Worldwide Twin Championships yielded no trophies... Ho hum. **Bobbie Shifrin** (now officially moved from Chicago to Las Vegas) hit yet another Royal Flush on the poker machines between matches at the Worldwide Twin Championships... Effective with their 13 June tournament, the New England Backgammon Club is moving from their 15 year home, the Sheraton-Commander in Cambridge, to the Holiday Inn in Somerville... He ran the Illinois State Championship for 7 years (1991-1997). Now job responsibilities and his new marriage are keeping **Yamin Yamin** (IL) too busy. Never fear. The 8th Illinois State Championships will be held this year in Springfield 12-14 November at the Hilton Hotel (with \$55 room rates). The Chicago Bar Point Club and Sangamon Valley Club will co-direct. Look for invitations this summer... **David Rockwell** (IL) and **Linda Woods** (IL) announced their engagement last month. The wedding is



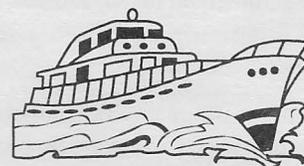
Newly engaged couple: Linda Woods and David Rockwell.

scheduled for the fall. Congratulations!... What Chicago Bar Point Club player visited the Playboy Club in London during the 1970s and was invited to become a Playboy Bunny by management?... Good luck to **Tom Machaj** (WI) who becomes the new Madison (WI) Backgammon News editor replacing **Bruce Russell**. "Uncle" Bruce began the letter in Sept. 1996... Best

wishes to **Ben Zemaitis** who retired from his State of Illinois job in April... "Very Impressive" Department: **Steve Brown** (MN) won every Twin Cities Backgammon Club tournament in April—18 match victories in a row!... Apparently **Wilcox Snellings** (NV), who made an appearance at the recent Vegas event, has given up tournament backgammon. Hopefully it's not permanent state... Congratulations to **Harold & Laura Elgazar** on the birth of **Jacob Elgazar** on 6 April 1999... Visiting the Bar Point Club in April: **Laurie Kimball** (WI) and **Andrea Bettoni** (Italy)... **Roland Dieter** (IL) found an article by **Jack Lakey** on craps in the *Toronto Star* that explained why major backgammon tournaments are not allowed in England or Canada. It seems that betting on dice has always been outlawed in Canada, due to the roots their Criminal Code in British common law. In 1388, **King Richard II** of England had an army of archers who spent too much time rolling dice to play backgammon and insufficient time honing their archery skills. Their idling angered Richard, who declared all dice games illegal for anybody but him to play. Rolling dice subsequently became "the divine right of kings" and was never a part of British culture. Δ

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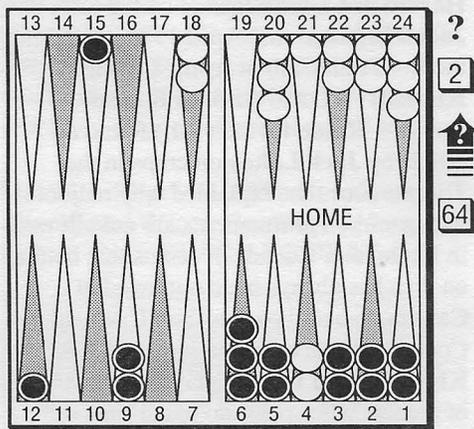
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**PROBLEM #253
ANALYZED**

by Alex Caraplis

1999 Midwest Championships match to 11-points. Hugh Sconyers (White) leads Steve McCormick (Black), 9 to 8. Black on shake. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Since I made an early exit from the recent Midwest Backgammon Championships, I had plenty of time to watch and gather some positions. In the main event, Hugh Sconyers (White) faced defending MBC champ Steve McCormick (Black) in the round-of-32. It rated to be a competitive match, so I got out my pencil and paper.

To learn more, let's break Problem #253 into a two part question:

- 1) What is the correct cube action for both sides at the given match score?
- 2) What is the correct cube action for money?

The successful player in competitive backgammon needs a systematic problem-solving approach. He must be able to look at a position and visualize the likely paths the game will take. Then he must determine the most likely result given an average sequence of rolls and estimate winning chances and gammons in order to determine proper cube actions.

Know your give- and take-points at the end stages of a match before even moving a checker on the opening roll. Then play your checkers according to the type of game that best suits your needs at that particular score. Normal takes can become clear passes at the end stages of a match, and positions that may not even be doubles at other scores become strong doubles and drops.

Let's begin by examining Black's advantages and then comparing structures.

Black is up a measly three pips and the shake. His position rates to clear rather easily due to its relative compactness. And nearly 50% of the time, Black's two blots disappear after his next roll giving White no immediate shots.

Black's three pip lead would not normally be enough to offer an initial cube at this score or for money. But here, Black has control of the outfield and White is a bit short on time and building material. A likely scenario is that Black will cover a blot or two, White will play a checker or two from the bar point leaving him strapped for sixes. Black then might leave a 3- or 4-number combination shot giving White roughly a 10% chance to hit it.

If White manages to close his 4-point and hit the blot, then he has an excellent chance of winning. If White hits a blot, but hasn't closed his 4- or 6-point, his chances are not as great. And even when Black is hit, his numbers are nicely diversified with 4s and 6s entering and 2s and 5s hitting the lone checker in his inner board.

Assuming he takes, White's weaknesses include his dead cube ownership (White can never redouble) and two gaps in his inner board. It is difficult to contain Black if he hits a shot without closing some more points. White's aces are duplicated as he would like to close the 4-point first and maybe slot the 6-point. This is not all that significant, but rather another small negative to be aware of.

Now let's check out another common sequence. Black safeties his two blots, White closes his 4-point while holding the 21-point, and Black must bring his two men home from the 9-point. From there, White wins only about 18% of the time.

This is extremely significant because White's recubes are potent for money but mean nothing at this score and allow Black extra "slime vig" as he gets to play the game out to full conclusion with basically no risk.

An extra plus for Black is that White may roll large numbers twice in a row and be forced off the 4-anchor with one man. Black then has pointing and pick-and-pass numbers, as well as numbers that hit loose adding to his winning chances. This variation causes large swings such that White may even get gammoned and lose the match.

At the given score, White's take point is between 28.5% and 29% according to the charts of Woolsey and Kleinman. All of the above factors make the correct decision to be a strong double and close pass. In

**STOPPING BY
BACKGAMMON CLUB
ON A BALMY EVENING**

By Gayle Wolf

With apologies and thanks to Robert Frost

Whose dice these are I think I know.
His home board is pointless, you know.
He will not see my strategy,
And watch my points fill up and grow.

My little beaver might think it queer,
Doubling without a good prime near.
But I have plans and points to make—
'Tis sure a gammon that he'll soon fear.

He gives his dice cup a hearty shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of all his blots, those pips I take!

And now it's come, the dreaded time
When he observes my 6-point prime.
He sighs, and knows that all is lost,
And watches my advantage climb.

BG boards are lovely, dark and deep,
And I have tournaments to keep,
And matches to go before I sleep,
And matches to go before I sleep. Δ

money play, this looks like an easy double and clear take due to the relative closeness of the race, volatility, and White's ability to recube.

Several championship level players were shown the above position at the Midwest Championships with the majority being takers. What was your decision? JellyFish™ version 3.0, level 7 and Snowie™ 3-ply evaluations rate this a double and drop. Rollouts by both programs yield 73% winning chances with 4% gammons for Black. Δ

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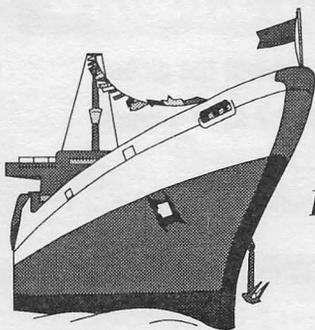
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