



backgammon

Michael Kloián

of the American Backgammon Club

● BACK GAME STRATEGY

In the example, black rolls 1-6. Black has the doubling cube at 2. What is black's move?

Black must enter white's home board on the 1 point. For the 6 move, there are only two options — to hit or play safe. It is tempting for black to hit the

white blot on the 10 point with a checker from the 4 point. However, if black hits white, he will have to abandon the 4 point — leaving a blot and giving up a strong holding point, which later could prove fatal.

If you are contemplating hitting white on the 10 point, you must first consider the advantages and disadvantages. With white holding a five-point broken prime and black having a weak home board, hitting white would not exactly benefit black at this time. So the natural play would be for black to move any one of the outer board checkers, preferably from the 9 to the 3 point.

One important key to winning backgammon is to recognize when it is proper to hit and when you should pass up a chance to hit.

To the average player, passing up an opportunity to hit may not make sense, but consider this: By hitting white, black would actually be helping white's timing. By slowing white's forward progress, white would be able to maintain his five-point prime until he brings home the hit checker.

In the interim, white may close the newly opened 4 point or the open 1 point for a strong home board. Black

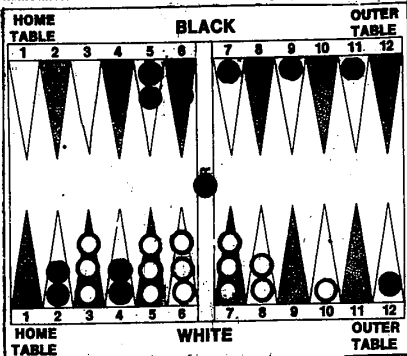
then would lose his second anchor in white's home board, which is key for the back game strategy. Black would do best to wait for another opportunity to hit after he has fortified his home board.

You may be asking what will happen if white does not leave another shot. With black owning the 2 and 4 points, the odds dictate that white should leave another shot while bearing in. But the pressure is still on black to hit and contain white.

As long as black can hold the 2 and 4 points, while could also leave a shot while bearing off; this is possible because black has a fifth checker back to help black preserve his timing. Since black owns the doubling cube, once he hits white he could be in position to redouble white out of the game with a strong home board.

Black's back game position is not infallible, by any means. If white leaves a shot, black may still make the hit. But that's what makes backgammon exciting to play.

For more information, contact the American Backgammon Club at 455-7799 or write to Box 599, Plymouth MI 48170.



second runs

Tom Panzenhagen

"Gentlemen Prefer Blonds" (1963), 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday at the Redford Theatre, 17360 Lahser at Grand River, phone 557-1133, \$2. Running time 91 minutes. (Organ overture begins at 7:30.)

Howard Hawks' capable direction. Rating: \$2.75.

"A Touch of Class" (1973), 8 p.m. today on Ch. 9. Originally 105 minutes.

It's hard to tell what this would-be comedy of manners and mores first set out to accomplish. At times it's reminiscent of the screwball comedies that typically starred Cary Grant and Irene Dunne ("The Awful Truth," 1937). At

other times, it resembles the mindless, James Garner-Doris Day sex farces of the '50s.

It's often plodding, seldom funny and ultimately a bore. Stars George Segal and Glenda Jackson seem to enjoy themselves, but the humor does not find its way to the viewer. Incredibly, Jackson won an Oscar for best actress for her role, and the film was nominated for best picture. Rating: \$2.20.

"Beach Party" (1963), 2:30 Friday

night on Ch. 4. Originally 101 minutes.

Here's the granddaddy of the "Beach" pictures that would spawn such sequels as "Bikini Beach" and "Beach Blanket Bingo." Starring such headlines as Dorothy Malone, Bob Cummings, Mervyn Anderson, Harvey Lembeck, Don Rickles, Paul Lynde and even Buster Keaton. Of course Frankie and Annette (that's Avalon and Funiello for you non-suffers) got sand between their toes in all the pictures. Imagine the societal frame of mind that made such films popular less than 20 years ago. Rating: \$2.50.

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