



backgammon

Mike Giordano

of the Cavendish North Backgammon club

The position diagrammed above occurred at the weekly novice tournament held at the Cavendish North Backgammon Club. White is on play and had rolled a 3-2.

There are a number of alternatives open to white but only three need be examined. They are, one, covering the loose man on white's 7 point by moving all the way from the 6 point; two, playing the 3 from his 6 point and the 2 from his 5 point, thereby making white's 3 point; and, three, playing 7 to 4 and 5 to 6 points. Let us consider each of these choices in turn.

First of all, by making his 1 point, white builds a 5-point board and doesn't leave any loose men. This dubious quest for safety is the trademark of most beginners.

In this situation it is the least desirable alternative. Since white is unlikely to get a shot on his next roll (only double 5s by black leave a shot), he should be more concerned about how he will play his next couple of rolls.

BY BUILDING the 1 point now, white creates a position that is destined to deteriorate. Whenever white rolls a number with a 6 or 5 before he is able to move his back man, he will be forced to play additional men to the 1 or 2 point and be faced with the prospect of having to break his 6 or 5 point in short order.

Clearly better is the second option.

By making his 3 point, white now has 6-point prime of his own in case of the double 5 miracle by black.

However, most of the timing problems that go along with the previous play remain. It is unlikely that white will be able to play for 2 rolls without breaking his board. Should this happen his chances of winning after getting a shot and hitting it are exceedingly slim.

Bringing both men in from his outer board serves a vital function for white. If black retains his blocking position for a couple of rolls, white will no longer have any 6s to play. By killing his own 6s, white has the best chance of keeping his board intact.

After bringing one man to his 6 and one to his 4 point, white would welcome the roll of a 6, as it would slow his forward progress. Notice that after the recommended play white will make his 1 or 3 point with any number that doesn't include a 6 and that all his best numbers start with 6.

White's winning prospects from this position are exceedingly slim as he must first get a shot at black and then must hit it while he still has a good home board. But while he retains his board through adroit play, and so long as he keeps his board integrity, his meager hopes stay alive.

Questions about backgammon can be directed to Mike Giordano, c/o The Observer & Eccentric, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, Mich., 48150.

HOME TABLE						BLACK						OUTER TABLE					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●



Brecht comedy

Urish Shelley (David P. Drobot, right) coaxes Galy Gay (Michael Kumor) to change from a peaceable civilian to a ferocious warrior in Bertolt Brecht's comedy with song, "A Man's a Man." The Studio Theatre production opens at 8 p.m. Jan. 13 at Wayne State.

Deck the halls with... "The Greatest Story Ever Told" (1965), in two parts at 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday on Ch. 50. Originally 141 minutes.

They made the story of Jesus as only Hollywood could (or would) — with a star-studded cast of silver screen kings and queens doling the epic venture. Look for Van Heflin, Ed Wynn, Claude Rains, Jose Ferrer, Sidney Poitier, Ava Gardner, Shelley Winters and even John Wayne in period dress alongside a cast of regulars that includes Max Von Sydow (as Himself), Charlton Heston, Carroll Baker and Dorothy McGuire. Even though the stars are distracting, the film has its epic, awe-inspiring moments. But generally it's a reflection of its director, George Stevens, who's responsible for such plodding efforts as "Shane" and "Giant." Incidentally, the lengths of different prints of the film vary from 141 to 225 minutes.

Second runs

Tom Panzenhagen

WHAT'S IT WORTH?
A ratings guide to the movies

Bad.....	\$1
Fair.....	\$2
Good.....	\$3
Excellent.....	\$4

Ch. 50 will take four hours to show the picture, but that's no real indication of which print they have in store.

Rating: \$2.60.

"The Bells of St. Mary's" (1945), noon Friday on Ch. 9. Originally 126 minutes.

The sequel to "Going My Way" is at its best when sparks of forbidden romance fly between priest Bing Crosby and nun Ingrid Bergman. Director Leo McCarey never exploits the relation-

ship, but the chemistry is there. Henry Travers and Ruth Donnelly also star. Rating: \$2.95.

"Boys Town" (1938), 1 p.m. Friday on Ch. 50. Originally 96 minutes.

When Spencer Tracy won an Oscar for his portrayal of Father Flanagan, the founder of Boys Town in eastern Nebraska, he took the award, inscribed it with the following, and sent it to the man who coined the phrase "There are no bad boys": "To Father Edward J. Flanagan, whose great human qualities, timely simplicity, and inspiring courage were strong enough to shine through my humble effort." Mickey Rooney and Henry Hull also star. Rating: \$3.

"Scrooge" (1970), 9:30 a.m. Saturday on Ch. 20. Originally 115 minutes.

Versatile Albert Finney gives this musical adaptation of the Charles

Dickens story his best shot, but uninspired songs, music and direction mar the effort. Still, it's a pity that Ch. 20 is squeezing the film into a 59-minute time slot. Rating: \$2.25.

"It's a Wonderful Life" (1947), 11:15 p.m. Saturday on Ch. 9. Originally 129 minutes.

Perhaps the key to Frank Capra's success is his pacing. "Wonderful Life," like many Capra films, is foolishly sentimental and terribly overacted, but it's so quickly paced that the viewer can't think twice about what he's witnessed before another lavish sequence strikes and dulls the senses. Before you know it, you're sucked in by this diabolical schematic, and you're thoroughly enjoying the movie. James Stewart, Lionel Barrymore, Thomas Mitchell and an incredibly young and beautiful Donna Reed star. Rating: \$3.30.

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