

backgammon

Michael Kioian

of the American Backgammon Club

HIT AND SPLIT

In the example, white needs to play a 4-2. What is your suggested move?

The obvious move would be to hit black on the 2 point with a checker from the 4 and 6 points. Another option which looks interesting (but may be dangerous) would be hitting black on the 9 point with a 12 point checker and slot-hitting black on the 2 point with a 4

point checker.

However, with this move, white can't protect the 2 point blot. Thus, if black were to hit, white would find himself in grave danger if he doesn't come off the bar immediately.

Another option which plays well and is more effective would be to hit black on the 9 point with the 4 roll and split the back runners on the black 1 point to the 3 point. This move accomplishes

much. With black on the bar, he may not re-enter for at least one roll. In the event black is unable to safety his 8 point checker immediately, while may succeed in hitting this one also.

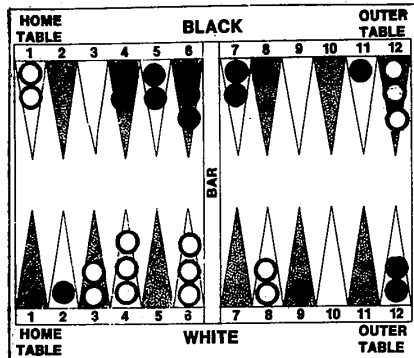
White's open blot on the 9 point may be used on the next roll to close the 5 point or the 7 point to form a prime. Also, having split the 1 point checkers, white may be able to roll another two and capture black's 3 point; he will eventually be able to run much easier from 3 point instead of the 1 point.

The hit-and-split play can be extremely effective, but there is one final thing that players should notice with this move. By hitting the 9 point blot and splitting to the 3 point, black is unable to close the 5 point on his next roll because he will be spending a half-roll to re-enter from the bar. If black wants to hit white on the next roll, he will be forced to slot-hit white on the 1 or 3 point or hope for a long shot to hit the 9 point blot.

Before this move, I would have pegged black as the favorite to win, but now the tables may easily turn.

A final word: In the event black doesn't re-enter, white may easily redouble the cube and force black out of the game. Black would be hard-pressed to accept the double because of his two outer board blots.

For more information on backgammon, contact the American Backgammon Club at 455-7798, or write to Box 599, Plymouth, MI 48170.



second runs

Tom Panzenhagen

"Then Came Brunson" (1969), noon today on Ch. 9. Originally 100 minutes.

Cast in the mold of Dennis Hopper's "Easy Rider," with a lot of Marlon Brando's "The Wild One" thrown in, mumbly Michael Parks stars in this TV movie of a humiliated journalist who adopts the open road as his home and a motorcycle as his best friend. Bonnie Bedelia provides a secondary love interest. Also, "Brunson" has more in common with either "Mr. Novak" or "The Fugitive" than Hopper or Brando. Parks' wanderlust always results in tearfully good deeds rather than anti-establishment statements. Perhaps that's why "Brunson" made it as a TV show and not as a film. Rating: \$2.60.

"La Dolce Vita" (1961), 11:35 p.m. Friday on Ch. 9. Originally 175 minutes.

Even Channel 9, which consistently

shows more movie and fewer ads than any Detroit station, is not the place to see Fellini's "La Dolce Vita" for the first time. But Fellini fanatics will want to withstand the commercial interruptions to see Marcello Mastroianni as a Fellini-like gossip columnist who sickens of decadent Roman society. Anita Ekberg and Anouk Aimee also star; music, as always, by the incompable Nino Rota. Rating: \$2.95.

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A ratings guide to the movies

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