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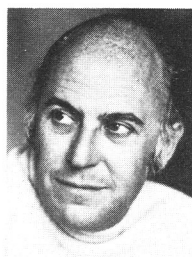
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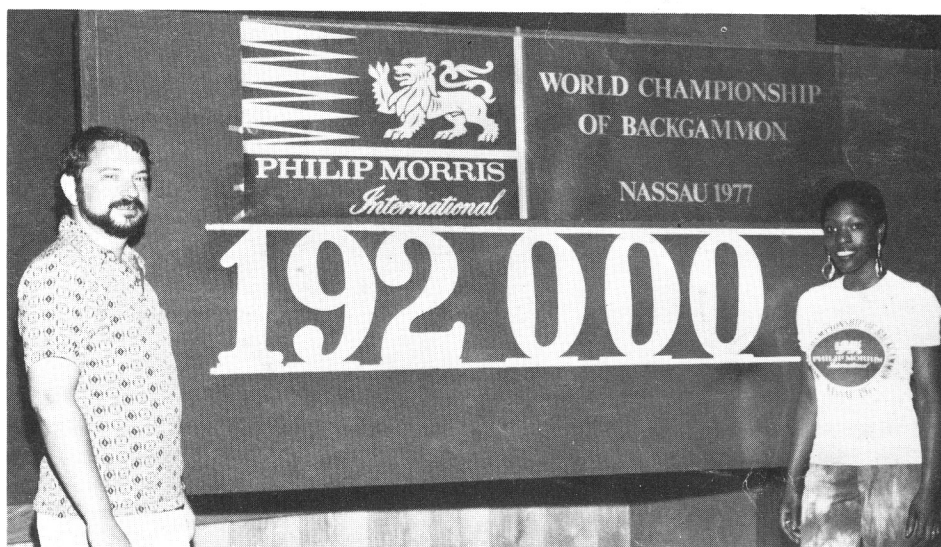
by
**Lewis
Deyong**



During the spring and summer of 1976, Philip Morris International established their position as the leading sponsor of the game of backgammon. Two supported events stood out in particular. The British Amateur Championships (restricted to winners of less than £200 in open competition) held in conjunction with *The Daily Mail*, and the European Open held at the Monte Carlo Casino — July 10th–14th.

Each in its way set new backgammon records. The British Amateur attracted over 2,000 enthusiasts to its qualifying venues throughout Britain (Edinburgh, Dublin, Oxford, Cambridge, Birmingham, etc.), and an entry of such a size was never before approached by any competition. The finals were played on June 21st with two World Champions, James Hunt and Jimmy Connors giving away the prizes. Three weeks later came the feverish atmosphere of Monte Carlo.

Over three hundred players (another record) entered the European Open, the bulk playing in the Championship Flight and paying an entrance fee of \$250. In that tournament \$150,000 stood to be won. Press, Radio and TV coverage saturated the tournament, and when an incredibly exhausting week ended the members of Philip Morris International staff were left asking themselves that eternal question "What do we do for an encore?"



David Zerkowicz, Marketing Director, Philip Morris Europe at the World's most valuable Backgammon Tournament.

Happily the solution soon arrived in the form of a letter from The Bahamas Tourist Board.

"We are familiar with the success your Company has achieved in backgammon. Early in 1976 the World Championships were held in Nassau. Would Philip Morris International be interested in sponsoring this event in 1977?"

That letter provided the answer to our problem, a major competition to fill the void in our calendar between November 1976 (The German Championships at Baden-Baden) and February 1977 (The Swiss Championships held simultaneously at the Kulm and the Palace Hotels, St. Moritz).

By late August we had co-ordinated dates and venues with the Tourist Board, and I flew to New York to meet Jack Davis, President of Resorts International, a company on the American Stock Exchange which virtually controls Paradise Island.

For those unfamiliar with the recent development of Nassau, Paradise Island (formerly Hogg Island) is a four-square mile dot bordered by perfect white sandy beaches. Ten years ago it was connected to New Providence (Nassau) by a hump-backed bridge, and in the ensuing decade the island has been slowly filled with leisure facilities. A golf course, riding stables, a skin diving station, dozens of tennis courts, first class hotels and naturally a gambling casino, the Paradise Island, successor to the famous Bahamian Club.

"We have held backgammon tournaments before, plenty of them, including the World Championships, many times. In fact Tournaments originated in the Bahamas"—this fact I certainly remembered having played in Prince Alexis Obolensky's first venture at the old Lucayan Beach Hotel in Freeport way back in 1964.

"We like the game very much in Nassau and the Tourist Board has put

us together with your group. Now, are you capable of organizing The World Championships from a base 4,000 miles away, and if so, what can you do for us that we are not doing already?" I gathered that Jack Davis did not head up a giant American Corporation by being an easy mark.

I decided to lead my aces immediately. Out came proof sheets of the forthcoming issue of the Philip Morris International Backgammon Newsletter. I explained that our circulation far exceeded any similar publication. I inundated his desk with the European press stories about Monte Carlo. An impressive list of the players who competed in Monaco (names and addresses attached) followed, accompanied by a sample invitation printed on the finest high gloss paper. Finally came the letter from the Tourist Board, confirming their offer of a final prize giving party open to all the players.

"I see the added prize money in the European Championships was \$12,000 (\$6,000 from the S.B.M. and \$6,000 from Philip Morris International). "I think the World Championship pool should be higher. Will your Company add \$7,500 if we add \$7,500?"

Davis may be a cool customer but he doesn't take long to make up his mind, and the Philip Morris International World Backgammon Championship, co-sponsored by the Paradise Island Casino was set for January 4th-January 9th 1977.

We had learnt from experience that 75% of the success of a backgammon tournament lies in its preparation.

The next four months were a frenzy of printing invitations, organizing regional agents and co-ordinating mailing lists of players. With help from as far afield as Prince Djoli Kansil in Honolulu and Peter Bader in Cape-town, Matti Karsikko in Helsinki and

Faramarz Elghanayan in Tehran (plus a dozen others in between) we saturated the backgammon map.

Telephones buzzed across the Atlantic, and by December 20th the major tournament hotels (The Britannia Beach and The Ocean Club) were filled. "No, we cannot accept another four bookings at the Ocean Club . . . I'm sorry . . . I don't care if he does claim to be the biggest crap shooter in Boise, Idaho, he'll have to go to The Holiday Inn" . . . "but you'll love The Holiday Inn, everyone from Edmonton is there this year . . .", Florence Mickle, our New York co-ordinator, was going slowly bananas. "We just had to refuse a two bedroom suite to a Vice President of Philip Morris. What makes you think I've got one for the 8th Avenue Klabbiash and Bagel Club?"

London contributed more of the same. The resonant tones of Stephen Raphael, Chairman of the European Committee boomed across the continent (generally without need of a telephone), "I'm sorry Walter (Krader) but we've just put Nick Coral" (chairman of London's giant Coral Leisure Group) "in a double room at The Britannia, if he can stand it so can James Hunt's second mechanic."

As it happened James Hunt (backgammon fanatic) and his party, originally booked on the special London-Nassau flight, never flew in at all. The on again — off again Argentine Grand Prix finally landed in an "on" slot and Hunt duly appeared in Buenos Aires. He might have done better in Nassau. His Marlboro McLaren crashed through a wall and finished out of the money.

Confused as we were over numbers thanks to many unexpected arrivals and departure delays of others due to snowstorms covering Northern America it must be recorded that the hotel staff (who had completed the decoration of

the new ballroom literally six hours before the kick-off) retained their composure perfectly, and indeed their courtesy and co-operation throughout could serve as a model for certain other Hotels where tournaments have been staged in the past.

By 9 p.m. on January 4th the auction dinner, hosted by Philip Morris International was under way as planned in the new ballroom of the Britannia Beach. Further entries had been pouring in all day (including some via frantic phone calls from the Backgammon Club of Chicago, explaining that planes out of O'Hare were grounded but they would definitely be there in time for play on the 5th).

The final totals exceeded all our expectations. 216 players in the Championship flight, 84 Intermediates and 50 Beginners. 350 players, an incontrovertible all time high. If the sheer number of players was a record, we were dumbfounded by the auction: Robert Perry passed over a final slip reading \$140,000, another world record. Taken in conjunction with the \$15,000 added by the sponsors and the entry fees, the total money at stake amounted to over \$190,000. The winner and his buyers would pick up almost \$66,000 (the rest of the money going to the Runner-up, Semi-finalists and high finishers of various consolation flights and their auction purchasers). To put the sum in perspective, the winner of the 1977 Wimbledon singles will receive \$25,000 the winner at Forest Hills \$40,000.

Nassau 1977 offered the biggest prizes ever seen in backgammon. Even the Last Chance event, a one-day 5-point knock-out would be worth over \$12,000 to its eventual winner (Joe Dwek).

The best known players, Dwek (European Champion 1975 and 1976),



The new ballroom Britannia Beach Hotel: Scene at 1977 World Backgammon Championships (Jan 4-Jan 9)



Left to right: Nicholas Coral, David Zerkowicz, Marquis d'Arcangues, Robert Perry, Jack Davis



Some Elganayans!



Ken Goodman (left) being congratulated by Jim Crosby



The final game is coming up



The final in progress

Paul Magriel (author of the new book "Backgammon"), Tony Goble (winner of the 1976 US Masters) brought in around \$4,000 apiece in the auction. There were 20 such "seeded" players sold individually. To speed up the proceedings the other competitors were sold, in lots ("fields"), eight at a time.

By the round of 16 purchasers of those individual seeds were on very poor terms with themselves. In contrast to Monte Carlo, where seeds Nos. 1 and 4 met in the final, in Nassau only one of the original 20 survived the first four rounds! Still alive amongst the outsiders were Jim Crosby, New York based Chairman of the Board of Resorts International, the youngest competitor 19-year-old Cornell University student Jason Lester of Montreal, the two brothers Lorenz from London and one of the late arrivals, 35-year-old Ken Goodman 5 handicap golfer, president of a Chicago-based equipment leasing company and player of backgammon for exactly 15 months.

For the Chicagoans as a whole, Nassau proved an eventful week. Two of their players had arrived by private plane. They decided to fly to Eleuthera, on the morning of the third

day, for lunch. When next sighted 44 hours later — according to a *Daily Mail* reporter — they were playing backgammon on a life raft! During her rescue, Mrs. Pamela Witz remarked laconically, "I needed to go on a crash diet".

Meanwhile the seeds and their buyers had been consoling themselves with a few typically Nassavian diversions. The Pina Colada, that colonial standby the Rum Punch, and a local favourite called the Goombay Smash. Goombay is one of many native Bahamian beats, played on a goat skin drum and maracas. In island patois the word goombay means happy. As more and more equity disappeared (even in a field of 216 there will still be only one winner), Manager Richard Green confirmed that the existing Ocean Club Bar Goombay Smash record was another indisputable landmark to fall, Charles Benson (the Scout of the *Daily Express* racing page) and Stephen Raphael doing much of the damage.

The Outsiders were scattering all before them. Ken Goodman knocked off Jason Lester in the semi-finals by an unheard of margin, 42-1, winning a 32

point game to end the match. "I came here to gamble, let's gamble" was his uncompromising attitude when turning the double die to 16.

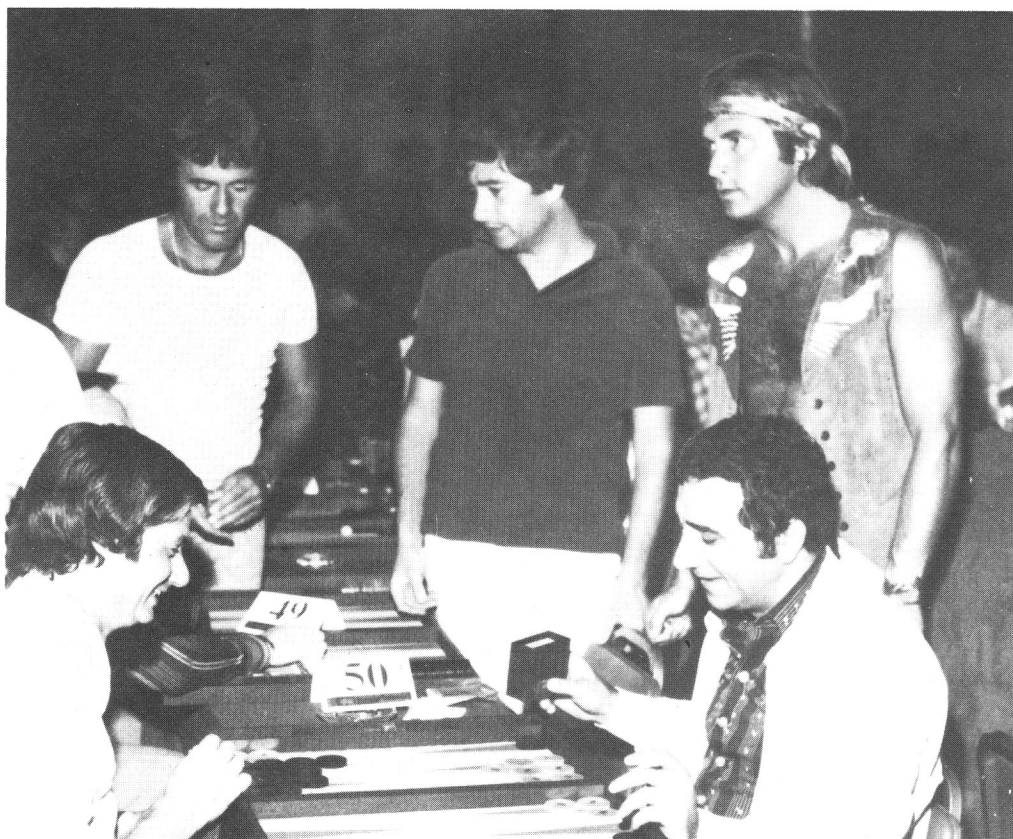
Jim Crosby, looking acutely embarrassed in the inadvertent role of the host who sees his guests paying for the party, had advanced past the other two remaining heavyweights (Mirzoeff and Lorenz) to clinch the second finalist spot. It was to be New York v. Chicago in a 25 point match.

A tournament "hard luck story competition" was being held to be won by the gentleman and lady players with the unluckiest explanations for losing a match. Two identical entries inscribed: "I missed my match completely because I was in a plane crash" were considered unbeatable. It was Chicago's week.

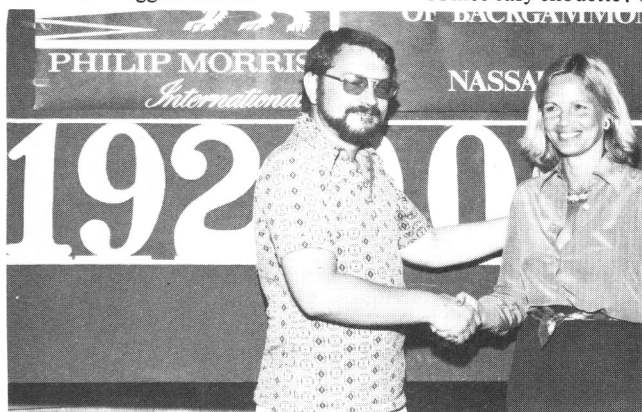
With the score at 24-24 Crosby elected to play a 3-1 (in most views correctly) by making his 10 point and Ken Goodman promptly hit with a 5-4. Game set and match to the man loyally dressed in a Philip Morris International Tee-Shirt, 25-24. I've played in a few finals myself in the past, and I can assure you that the emotional gap of that one point margin is a staggering



Sir William Piggott-Brown



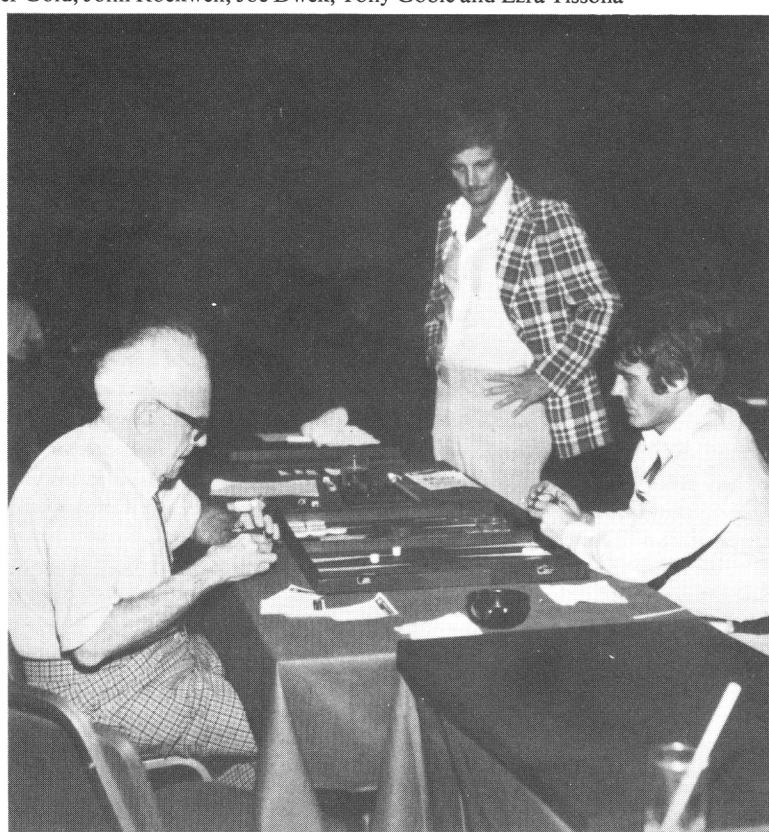
A nice easy chouette! Peter Gold, John Rockwell, Joe Dwek, Tony Goble and Ezra Tissona



David Zelkowitz congratulates Ladies' Prize Winner, Betty Wacht



Jeanie Williams, Susan Dellal and Lewis Deyong



Steve Norton watches another "easy" game to join Claude Beer (former world champion) and Oswald Jacoby (former champion of everything)

one. To win is easy and exhaustion falls away as the knowledge that you have actually won turns from hope into euphoric reality. To lose at all is hard.

To lose a World title by a difference of *one point* in eight matches is more than hard. Ken Goodman and Jim Crosby may not be on everyone's list of the world's five best backgammon players, but they are certainly on mine as competitors and as sportsmen in the best sense of the word. 'This ego

trip will probably cost me at least \$100,000 to prove it was no fluke', said Goodman. Crosby replied quickly "No, no, no you deserved it. I lost because I made the wrong play at the end". No excuses, no complaints, he accepted the result with a smile. Many players with big backgammon reputations could learn a lot about the game from Jim Crosby.

This summer the whole cast re-assembles in Europe. First at Crock-

for the London Championships and then at Monte Carlo for the Philip Morris International European Championships July 5-10. Chicago, prepare to defend your laurels.

Lewis Deyong, Tournament Director
Nassau, January 1977
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BADEN-BADEN 1976



by
**Dr Walter
Krader**



November 19–21, 1976

Deutschlands einziges Internationales Backgammonturnier brachte erneut viele Spieler aus dem In- und Ausland nach Baden-Baden. Brenner's Park und die Leitung des Casinos haben sich diesmal schon wesentlich besser auf die speziellen Eigenarten der Backgammonspieler eingestellt. Die im Casino zur Verfügung gestellten Säle waren wunderschön und für das Turnier perfekt eingerichtet worden. Das Personal von Brenner's Park hatte sich fast mühelos mit den besonderen Ess- und Schlafgewohnheiten der Backgammon-enthusiasten zurechtgefunden. Ihre Mühe und Geduld sind sicherlich zu loben und werden dazu beitragen, dass der Grand Prix 1977 im November einen noch grösseren Zulauf haben wird. Besonders zahlreiche Teilnehmer werden aus Italien erwartet, zumal Backgammon dort derzeit einen beachtlichen Boom erlebt. Auch wird in diesem Jahr die Tiefgarage im Stadtzentrum von Baden-Baden fertig sein, sodass die Backgammonspieler einen diplomierten Bergführer nicht mehr benötigen, den man im letzten Jahr noch zur Überquerung der zahlreichen

Baustellen brauchte. Falls Petrus mit dem Sonnenschein diesmal weniger geizt, werden vermehrt Spieler die Gelegenheit benutzen sich in der Altstadt oder in den wundervollen Parkanlagen die Beine ein wenig zu vertreten. Zum Turnierablauf:

Nach einem spannenden Finale gewann Nihad Erdeniz den Grand Prix Baden-Baden gegen Raoul Rosenzweig. Der Sieger hatte sich gegen Marcel Baquiche, den letztjährigen Gewinner, gegen Marc Israel und Maika Perez de Cobas durchzusetzen. Maika kam bis zum Halbfinal, und gewann damit den Ladies Prize. Beinahe hätte in der Players Division eine Frau den Sieg

errungen, doch John Rubinow konnte das Finale gegen Ursula Salava für sich entscheiden. Die sympatischen, vom weiten Finnland und Spanien herge-
eisten Spieler, sollten für ihren sportlichen Einsatz erwähnt werden. Aufwiedersehen, Au revoir, Arrivederci, Good bye until we meet again in Baden-Baden.

Dr. Walter Krader
Baden-Baden November 1976



Resultate

Championship

Main Winner: Nihad Erdeniz (Zürich)
Finalist: Raoul Rosenzweig (Hamburg)
Semi-finalist: Lewis Deyong (London)
Semi-finalist: Maika Perez de Cobas (Madrid)

Consolation

Winner: Olaf Kleman (Paris)
Finalist: Wolfgang Strümpell (München)

Last Chance

Winner: Marcel Baquiche (Paris)
Ladies Prize: Maika Perez de Cobas (Madrid)

Players

Main Winner: John Robinow (München)
Finalist: Ursula Salava (München)

Consolation

Winner: Guy Meulnart (Paris)
Finalist: Hurbertus von Medinger (München)

Last Chance

Winner: Edith Jiricek (Wien)



Angelo Ferretti and friends

MONTE CARLO 1977



by
**Dr Walter
Krader**



The standard of play at the 1977 Philip Morris European Championships promises to be higher than at any Tournament yet held. In the field will be the World Champion and the

winners of nearly all the major titles of the last twelve months, such as: The St. Moritz Tournament; St. Tropez Tournament; The British Amateur Champion (*The Daily Mail*/Philip Morris International Series). Also the winners of the monthly series at the Grand Cercle (Paris) and at L'Hermilage, Monte Carlo, also the winner of the new amateur Championship to be held in Turkey; the defending European Champion and the 1976 Runner-up; the winner of the 1977 Iranian Championships and the current holders of the Clermont Autumn Cup and the Bassett Cup. The Captains of the British and

the American International Teams; the 1976 World Champion; the winner of Crockfords Summer Tournament 1977, and the current U.S. Masters Champion. Also the winners of the Philip Morris International Championships at Baden Baden, Zurich and Helsinki. The author of that new Encyclopedia called 'Backgammon' and the winner of the I.B.N. Monster Quiz Competition. Together with all these experts overseas entries have so far been received from as far afield as Capetown, Tokyo, Tehran and Hawaii.

Is anyone offering 16–1 the field?
Dr. Walter Krader Zurich, April 1977