A BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT IN MATHEMATICS PUNS

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I'm from the wide open SPACES near L-paso, and they call me T\textsc{e}X. One Sunday several years ago Emma, Dee, Polly, Cal and I were \textsc{turing} Kentucky in our \textsc{chevalley} when I suggested that we attend a backgammon tournament in \textsc{liouville}. Em was \textsc{deriving}, and even though she was not in\textsc{klein}ed to be \textsc{bottled} up for several days, sheer \textsc{logic} told her that it beat squeezing into a \textsc{gödel} to go to \textsc{church}, so she agreed to the plan. We were lucky that Jim \textsc{jacobian} his \textsc{group} were not there, so we had a \textsc{feit}ing chance.

I asked a \textsc{lisp}ing Catholic \textsc{cardinal} for advice about entering. ”My thon, I don’t \textsc{ordinally} give advice, but I'll \textsc{0} a \textsc{math} for you,” he said.

When we arrived the next day, I saw an old girlfriend, pretty as ever, and sending out signals that she wanted us to get together again and I greeted her, “\textsc{constance}, I \textsc{reid} you. You never change.”

Then I spotted my buddy Ed Wright across the room. \textsc{wright\ angle}ed over to see me with his date, \textsc{acute\ young thing}. I asked who she was, but he wouldn't tell me. “Don't be \textsc{obtuse},” I \textsc{countered}.

Pete Axthelm of Newsweek magazine was supposed to cover the event, but didn't show up. “I don't know \textsc{y-axis} not here at the tournament \textsc{complex},” the director said. “Perhaps he was delayed by those 18 wheelers on the interstate. \textsc{characteristic}al, those drivers forget to \textsc{euler} up before they leave, and the trucks break down, delaying many of the \textsc{commutators} headed to \textsc{f.x.d.} That \textsc{semi-group} has been \textsc{hölder}ing everyone up.”

Emma and I went to inspect the prizes for us amateurs, and we weren't impressed. They looked as if they were for little children playing house. “\textsc{em}, \textsc{tea set}’s a \textsc{nothing} prize,” I said.

So we decided to enter the professional \textsc{division} of the tournament, and I hailed a friend, \textsc{ray} who made a beeline from where we were toward the entry table. \textsc{ratio}ed me the \textsc{proportion} of the event where the better prizes were, and I \textsc{mean} \textsc{value}.

We registered and got our contestant numbers. I talked to fellow competitor Eulah about who the favorite would be. She said it would \textsc{probability} be contestant # 159. “Who's that?” I said.

“Oh, that’s Taylor Simpson. He's the \textsc{tangent} handing out \textsc{circul}ars,” she replied.

“Is he in top \textsc{formula}? I wondered. There were \textsc{sum} really good players in attendance, I might \textsc{add}.

Physical preparation for a tournament is as important as being mentally fit. In fact, \textsc{abs}cissa big plus, like the extra\textsc{ordinate}! pack on that big, muscular, angry looking man we saw across the room. I noticed it was time for him to start his match. “$\sqrt{3}$ that he's on,” I said to Em.

“\textsc{radical}, man,” the brute said. He reminded me of a former Vice President of the United States. He played well, but had a \textsc{sort} of mechanical, pre-programmed way about him – a kind of \textsc{al gore} \textsc{rhythm}.

As Emma and I left for our matches in round one, I told her to let me know when she wanted to go to \textsc{eight} lunch. “\textsc{well}, \textsc{emma}, I hope our \textsc{choice}s \textsc{cohen}side. \textsc{wave} at me when you’re ready. Give me a \textsc{sin}e, and be sure to let \textsc{polynomial} time, too. Why don’t you and \textsc{hermite} be back at the condo at noon?”
Wouldn’t you know it, in the first round I had to play my e³ wife. She got the upper hand and began DOUBLING me over and over. Yes, my X⁴ me at every turn. Finally I became desensitized to it and got EVEN NUMBER than I already was. It was making me sick, and I needed to get to a restroom. I hailed a tournament official and asked him, “Is THY POT IN USE?” He pointed DIAGONALly across the room. I went and soon wished I hadn’t. One FACTOR was that the hotel was not using MULTIPLY tissue (as to why, I have never heard any LEHMER excuses than those I heard this time), and another was that the faucets wouldn’t FUNCTION. So I asked the director for some spring water, hoping it would not make him CROSS to provide some ARTESIAN PRODUCT.

I got back to my TABLE for the rest of the morning round. My next few opponents were real SQUARES and they were getting ZERO in every match. “Pd, EM, POTENT be if I kept up this kind of play,” I said. My practice was paying major DIVIDENDs for me to achieve such AFFINE result. I wanted to β on myself, but needed a loan. I had befriended an entomologist kibitzer next to me earlier when he wanted to SECANTS to study, and in RECIPROCAL fashion he offered to COSINE a note. I continued to play well against contestants numbered 2, 5, i7 and 31, all of whom were PRIMEd for combat.

At noon we went back to our condo to have lunch. It was nice, except for its weird GRID like wallpaper. It had been owned by the Women’s Tennis Tour, and I hear that Steffi GRAF PAPeRed it. One PLUS was that it was near a L’HOSPITAL, so that care would be nearby if any of us had a COROLLARY or was POISSONed. Emma had promised me Mexican food, but she changed her mind, which prompted me to ask, “FIB ON NACHOS, will you?” I had to settle for a sandwich. She asked what CATEGORY I wanted, and I told her, “HAMEL BASIS be for mine.” But we were out of ham, so I had to settle for an FLT, a frankfurter (i.e., a WIENER MIT mustard), LATTICE and THOMato, quite a HARDY meal which took all of Em’s WILES to create, but which ended in a CATASTRÔPHE. It turned out that only a LITTLEWOOD have been enough because I really wasn’t that hungry.

While we were there, a security guard named Schmidt burst in holding a HYPERBOLIC needle and accused Dee and Emma and the already arrested Dede of selling drugs. Using his NAPIER-like wit he threatened to LOG₄(N) to the BRIGGS with DEDE’s KIND on a naval CUTter patrolling ALMOST EVERYWHERE in the harbor.

“VENN DIAGRAM, SCHMIDT, of coke?” Em asked him, GARMELY trying with EULER WINNING WAYS to CON her WAY out of the mess with the GUY. He told me they had been fingered by a Nicaraguan freedom fighter.

“Is the CONTRA POSITIVE?” I demanded. Ultimately realizing he had NIL in terms of POTENT evidence for an arrest, he realized his POWER was ZERO, so he LEFT IN VERSE, reciting PRINCIPALy from the RING trilogy, which was IDEAL for us.

Resuming, we played on into the late afternoon, when the POWER went out. “Is the ROUND OFF?” I asked the director. He nodded. Then a tottering old gentleman tapped me on the shoulder. “SLOPE-oke, y-INTERCEPT me?” I asked. He told me that I was wanted by one of the Australian backgammon GROUPies who were decked out in their SIXY COSETS and BOAS. They were so NUMEROUS that they were lined up in several rows, 5 or 6 deep.

“MATE….., TRICKS?” they had CAYLEY yelled at a guard from the LOCAL MINIMUM security prison, as he passed by them earlier. He was scared and DETERMINANT to flee without a TRACE instead of COLUMN them over, which would have created quite a ROW. I would have gone, but remembered the warning Emma had given me if an attractive woman tried to pick me up: avoid any fERDÔS and SIN no more.
We resumed the next morning, and my play was mediocre. I was unable to CONCENTRIC because of health concerns. The hotel had done nothing about its exposure to inert gas decaying from radium beneath the hotel, and my opponent, a Frenchman, was smoking a GALOIS. The hotel refused to even try to MEASURE its RADON-NICOTINE problem. Several of the players demanded that something be done about it, but the director refused, saying, “That’s an ODD ORDER. Are you looking for a FEIT? You assume this problem is SOLVABLE, GROUP. That’s not SIMPLE.” So nothing really happened, which infuriated Dee.

“DEE, WHY, DEE, EXPECT any help from them? There is a LIMIT to what they can do, so, y PRIME their anger?” I asked, INSTANTANEOUSLY CHANGING the subject and going off on a TANGENT.

I was ABEL to PASCAL in the standings, but had trouble with an opponent from CALCutta, Ramesh Amar. I HADAMARDed, but, being MOORE METHODical than I, he came back to win in a close match. Contestant number 159 was just awesome, really on a ROLLE. He was DERIVING ZEROES, leaving us flat. He was shutting people out, tossing goose eggs, doughnuts - he really TORUS up. It was about time, from his point of view, as he had played poorly earlier, and this SERGE was a LANG time coming. As he secured the CRITICAL three POINT in a late round game, SOLIDifying his position, a waiter interrupted to ask if we wanted a piece of pie. “PI?” I yelled.

THREE POINT’s WON FOR ONE FIVE NINE!”

Soon it was all over. Emma made a POINTed effort to PYRAMID the results. She came over and told the rest of us, “In all CANTOR you finished in the MIDDLE THIRD of the FIELD.”

I couldn’t believe it and said, “Are you giving it to me STRAIGHT? Are you LINE? What do you MEAN? We ‘AVE RAGE! We’re mad!”

And, of course, #159, Taylor Simpson, was on the winners list more often than anyone. He had MODE us down. Everyone else crowded around to congratulate him, but the director yelled, “Give the VICTOR SPACE.”

It turned out that his wife had finished second, and once she realized they had SINHed the top two places, she hugged HERMANN WEYL they crowed “OMICOSH! SIMPSONS RULE!”

“Is TAYLOR SERIOUS? Can’t he be MORDELLicate?” I asked, incredulous at his ego. After HUYGENS each other they drove off in the first prize, a new FERRARI with FOUR POWER speeds. As McGarrett might have said, “Nice CAR, DANO.”

And knowing his wife’s love of cheap champagne, he told her,” We’ll have some ANDRE WEIL we ride!”

Emma consoled me with the PLANE truth and let me know that she still loved me as she gave me a love tap under the chin.

“It’s oVERTx. That’s the POINT. But I RIEMANN convinced that you can win this thing. I GAUSS there’s always next year. Here’s looking at EU-CLID.”