A BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT IN MATHEMATICS PUNS

WIN EMMONS
Waco, Texas

I'm from the wide open SPACES near L-paso, and they call me TEx. One Sunday several years ago Emma, Dee, Polly, Cal and I were TURING Kentucky in our CHEVALLEY when I suggested that we attend a backgammon tournament in LOUVILLE. Em was DERIVING, and even though she was not in KLEINed to be BOTTLED up for several days, sheer LOGIC told her that it beat squeezing into a GÖDEL to go to CHURCH, so she agreed to the plan. We were lucky that Jim JACOBIAN his GROUP were not there, so we had a FEITing chance.

I asked a LISPing Catholic CARDINAL for advice about entering. "My thon, I don't ORDINALLY give advice, but I'll th a 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, "CONSTANCE, I REID you. You never change."

Then I spotted my buddy Ed Wright across the room. WRIGHT ANGLEd over to see me with his date, ACUTE young thing. I asked who she was, but he wouldn't tell me. "Don't be OBTUSE," I COUNTERed.

Pete Axthelm of Newsweek magazine was supposed to cover the event, but didn't show up. "I don't know y-AXIS not here at the tournament COMPLEX," the director said. "Perhaps he was delayed by those 18 wheelers on the interstate. CHARACTERISTICaLIE, those drivers forget to EULER up before they leave, and the trucks break down, delaying many of the COMMUTATORS headed to Fxl. That SEMI-GROUP has been HÖLDERing 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. "EM, TEA SET's a NOTHING prize," I said.

So we decided to enter the professional DIVISION of the tournament, and I hailed a friend, RAY who made a beeline from where we were toward the entry table. RATIOed me the PRO PORTION of the event where the better prizes were, and I MEAN VALUE.

We registered and got our contestant numbers. I talked to fellow competitor Eulah about who the favorite would be. She said it would PROBABILITY be contestant # 159. "Who's that?" I said.

"Oh, that's Taylor Simpson. He's the TANGENT handing out CIRCULARS," she replied.

"Is he in top FORMULA?" I wondered. There were SUM really good players in attendance, I might ADD.

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

"RADICAL, man," the brute said. He reminded me of a former Vice President of the United States. He played well, but had a SORT of mechanical, pre-programmed way about him - a kind of AL GORE 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 EIGHT lunch. "Well, EMMA, I hope our CHOICEs COHENcide. WAVE at me when you're ready. Give me a SINE, and be sure to let POLYNOMIAL time, too. Why don't you and HERMITE e back at the condo at noon?"
Wouldn't you know it, in the first round I had to play my $e^x$ wife. She got the upper hand and began **DOUBLING** me over and over. Yes, my $x^3$ 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 **DIAGONAL**ly 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 two opponents were real **SQUARES** and they were getting **ZERO** in every match. “**TD, 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, 17 and 31, all of whom were **PRIME**d 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**s, 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 **LOG$_a$(N)** to the **BRIGGS** with **DEDE’s KIND** on a naval **CUT**ter patrolling **ALMOST EVERYWHERE** in the harbor.

“**VENN DIAGRAM, SCHMIDT**, of coke?” Em asked him, **GAME**ly 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 **PRINCIPAL**ly 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 **GROUP**ies 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.

“**MATA**, **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, you 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 HADAMARD down, 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 SIZED 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 HUYSGENS 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."