



BASEBALL-CAPPED "coach" contemplates his next move, even as he tosses dice in Strat-o-Matic.



WILL BILLY KILMER complete his pass against the Dolphins? Strat-o-matic contestants try to find out at recent national convention. Harold Richman of Port Washington is the creator of Strat-o-Matic football and baseball games.

Table tops their field of battle

For hundreds of table-game buffs, the Bobby Fisher-Boris Spassky chess confrontation was nothing but a minor league matchup compared to what they consider a true test of shrewdness, managing ability and patience.

More than 400 of those buffs, aged 12 through 40, tried to emulate Fisher's success over a table top at the recent National Strat-O-Matic Convention at A&S in Brooklyn. Instead of chess pieces, however, success or failure depended on ability of the "manager" to make the right decisions with cards which accurately portray a professional baseball or football player's real-life performance.

Created by Harold Richman of Port Washington, the Strat-O-Matic games have hundreds of thousands of fans all over the country, many of whom play with a zeal bordering on the fanatical. Richman's company is headquartered in his home community of Port Washington.

Four tournaments were conducted simultaneously, in basic football and baseball and advanced football and baseball, with TV sets going to the champs.

In each of the four games, play was activated by three dice, and moves were determined by the relationship between the dice and corresponding numbers on team and player cards. The players and teams that perform well in real-life will also perform well in Strat-O-Matic, Richman said, because the player cards are computerized to guarantee that.

Equipped with games, knapsacks, baseball caps

and varsity sweaters, gamesters came from as far away as Downey, Calif., to compete in the two-day marathon.

Winners of the competition included a 22-year-old high school teacher from Queens (Roy Daiell, basic baseball); a high school student from Roslyn (Jeff Guterman, whose teams allowed only 26 points on defense in four games, basic football); a Syracuse University junior (Joel Furst of Stamford, Conn., advanced baseball); and a biology student at the University of Chicago (Adam Lang, of Paramus, N.J., advanced football).

Lang, who won every game by the slimmest of margins, had to defeat a brother act to take away his color TV trophy, winning head-scratching duels with first Josh Garfield, 13, in the semifinals, and then brother Maurice, 15, in the championship tilt. The Garfield brothers, who are straight-A high school students in Great Neck, won the hearts of convention-goers by breezing through the early rounds, often clapping hands and delivering pep talks to one another as they went to battle.