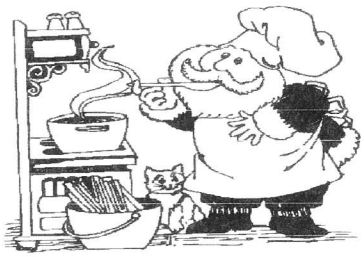
Hoosier Backgammon Club

Volume X, No. 6



1994 World Cup & HBC Tournament Schedule

World Cup IV has been moved to early September only for 1994 because of **World Cup Soccer** in Dallas early August. **World Cup IV** will start on Labor Day and run through September 10th. And because of the busy spring schedule, **HBC** will only run one tournament in 1994. The **42nd Indiana Open** will be held the weekend of July 29-31. The **National Labor Day Tournament** will return in 1995.

The Illinois State Backgammon Tournament

One hundred and fifty players showed up for Yamin's annual party that run for 5 days in early October. The 8 Europeans received a **Columbus Path Plaque** for crossing the ocean. Players were treated to two elaborate receptions and a dinner. Complete results are below.

Championship Division (56)
1st.. Malcolm Davis (TX)
2nd.. Jake Jacobs (IL)
3/4.. Doug Roberts (NY)
3/4.. Abbas Zaltash (PA)
C1st.. Stu Katz (IL)
C2nd.. Paul Albert (CA)
LC1st.. Harry Cohn (IL)
LC2nd.. John O'Hagan (CA)

Advanced Division (57)
1st.. Jeff Kane (WI)
2nd.. Frank Dickerson (IL)
3/4.. Allen Zimmerman (IL)
3/4.. Ralph Levy (IL)
C1st.. Maurice Barie (MI)
C2nd.. Marv Arnol (IL)
LC1st.. Ray Bills (MN)
LC2nd.. Tim Mabee (IL)

Limited Division (16)
1st.. Tom Masterson (IL)
2nd.. Bruce Russell (WI)
C1st.. Larry Taylor (IL)
C2nd.. Darrell Costello (MN)

America Cup (21)
1st.. Dean Muench (IL)
2nd.. Mike Senkiewicz (NY)
3/4.. Matthias Korer (Germany)
3/4.. Howard Ring (IL)

High Performance Awards
Champ. Woman: Leslie Lockett (IL)
Advanced Woman: Marcy Sloan (IL)
Champ.: Hossein Zafaranian (TX)
Advanced: Mark Murray (IL)

Parlay From Hell (32)
1st.. Jake Jacobs (IL)
2nd.. John Stryker (IL)

Doubles (32)
1st...Jill Ferdinand & Neil Kazaross (IL)
2nd...Jim Hickey (GA)
3/4...Gitt Dalgaard & John Sjolin (Den)
3/4...Abbas Zaltash/Jeff Acierno

Battle of the States
1st...Bill Robertie & Toni Wuersch (MA)

Masters (32)
1st.. Mike Mooney (AZ)
2nd.. Jeff Acierno (NY)
3/4.. Ed Petrillo (FA)
3/4.. Paul Magriel (NY)

Kick-Off (32)
1st.. Howard Ring (IL)
2nd.. Pim Haastert (Neth)

MicroBlitz (64)
1st.. Jim Hickey (GA)
2nd.. John Sjolin (Denmark)

MiniBlitz (64)
1st.. Kevin McDonough (AZ)
2nd.. Ingo Sprogies (Germary)

Louisville Backgammon Club Fall Tourmament
Two HBC Members Cash!

Six HBC members travelled 100 miles south to partake in some southern hospitality provided by the **LBC** with 100% return and free lunch buffet. Nice tournament for first time directors Quint McTyeire and Frank Frigo. Chuck Stimming gained momentum by coming from behind 0-8 to 11 in the first round against Butch Meese to win the tournament.

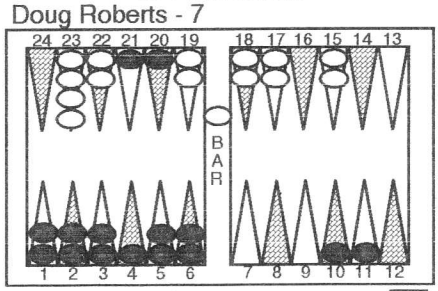
$50 Event (20)
1st...Chuck Stimming
2nd...Quint MyTyeire
C1st...Terry Kuchenbrod
C1st...Larry Strommen

$25 Event (3)
1st...Ed Mueller

To the Editor:

First Item: On Page 1 of your last issue from the match between Doug Roberts and myself, the question is whether or not the position is TOO GOOD to double.

13-Point Match
Doug Roberts - 7



Walter Trice - 9 2

It is not even close to a take for Doug. Black has 24 numbers to close his board immediately, and will rarely crash if he does so. White gets to shoot at the 4-point blot 12/36 times, and hits about 4/36 times. This is only 11%, and White's position is so poor that these hits are far from winning. My guess is that over all White only 13% of the time. The too good/cash decision is indeed very close.

...continues Page 10...

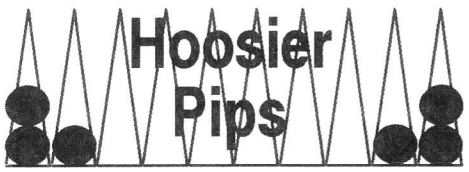
Hoosier Backgammon Club's Newsletter for HBC members and subscribers.
Subscription rate: $10/year (Canada $12 and oversea $14). Let us know if your address changes.
Butch & Mary Ann Meese: (317) 845-8435. 7620 Kilmer Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46256-1634

1993 **HOOSIER BACKGAMMON CLUB** Gammon Point Standings as of October 31st.
HBC **Player of the Month** for **September** is **Dave Cardwell** with 208 gammon points.
HBC **Player of the Month** for **October** is **Woody Woodworth** with 180 gammon points.

1)	Don Woods 1446	Wendy Kaplan 184	Rick Bieniak 64	Tom Hendryx 20
2)	Butch Meese 1220	Holly Stowe 180	Ray Fogerlund 64	Sharon Baker 15
3)	Ellis Bray 1130	Stu Sherman 178	Scott Richardson 60	Jon Stephens 10
4)	Chuck Stimming 1020	Richard Heinz 170	Bobbie Shifrin 60	Paul Franks 10
5)	Larry Strommen 932	Bill Julian 164	Peter Kalba 40	John Brussel 10
6)	Cyrus Mobed 869	Craig Hampton 130	Len Carmine 40	Randall Witt 10
7)	Woody Woodworth 868	Tom Masterson 128	Marge Lewandowski 40	Mary Franks 10
8)	Kevin McLeaster 850	John O'Hagan 120	Dennis Schulte 40	Dean Adamian 10
9)	Mary Ann Meese 838	Jeff Baker 118	Chuck Bower 36	Stu Whitcomb 10
10)	Gabe Stiasny 793	Brian Nelson 110	Diana Pianko 36	Kay Beck 10
	Jim Curtis 602	Mick Dobratz 108	Eileen Perlman 30	Joann Feinstein 10
	Steve Perlman 390	Drew Giovanis 100	Stan Gurvitz 30	Eric George 10
	Alan Haas 346	Homer Hargrave 100	Jamie Curtis 30	Ed Wright 10
	Bill Gheen 312	Jim Painter 90	Ali Shahin 30	Carol Falk 10
	Jan Gurvitz 311	Mike Marr 90	Joe Miller 26	Donna Susens 10
	Dragan Stevanovic 262	Jim Woods 84	Jay Ward 24	Art Overbay 10
	Judy McHale 261	Dan Robertson 80	Jim Hickey 20	Nancy Ishac 6
	Dave Cardwell 248	Marta Hilworth 70	Matthias Kehder 20	Arlene Levy 6
	Ken Bruck 222	Tom Helt 65	Frank Alexander 20	Jeane Eggenberger 6
	David Smith 216	Julius High 64	Jon Vietor 20	Scott Kaplan 5
	Gino Agresti 200	Ed Petrillo 64	Dann DeRoche 20	Ellen Schremp 5

	September 2nd	September 9th	September 16th	September 23rd	September 29th
Open 1st	*Drew Giovanis (FL)*	*Don Woods*	*Dragan Stevanovic*	*Jim Curtis*	*Dave Cardwell*
2nd	*Bobbie Shifrin (IL)*	*Dave Cardwell*	*Woody Woodworth*	*Cyrus Mobed*	*Jim Curtis*
2nd	*Ed Petrillo (FL)*	*Mary Ann Meese*	*Dave Cardwell*	*Butch Meese*	*Bill Gheen*
2nd	*Don Woods*	...	...	...	...
Interm. 1st	*Diana Pianko (MI)*	...	...	...	...
2nd	*Marge Lewandowski (MI)*	...	...	...	...
2nd	*Tom Masterson*	...	...	...	...

	October 5th	October 12th	October 19th	October 26th
Open 1st	*Woody Woodworth*	*Mary Ann Meese*	*Dan Robertson*	*Woody Woodworth*
2nd	*Jim Woods*	*Larry Strommen*	*Chuck Stimming*	*Kevin McLeaster*
2nd	*Gabe Stiasny*	*Ellis Bray*	*Dragan Stevanovic*	*Chuck Stimming*
Special 4	*Don Woods*	*Wendy Kaplan*	...	...



Holly Stowe celebrated the BIG 4-0 on October 11th...Congratulations to Larry and Sylvia Strasburg on their 50th wedding anniversary December 5th...Best wishes for the future to Frank and Susie Baldwin on their September 18th wedding...Dan Robertson reached the Winners' Circle for the first time on October 21st, but who is Dan? He experienced Beginner's Luck winning the first time playing with HBC...Jim Woods also grabbed the Winner's Circle for the first time on October 5th...HBC welcomes new players Caroline Stephen and welcomes back after a long absence Jay Mershon, Ed Wright and Donna Susens...Someone from Michigan will be full of **Joy** as she reaches the half century mark in late November...Next time you play on Thursday evening, check out the home made boards of Stan Gurvitz and Dragan Stevanovic.

BACKGAMMON Tournament Schedule

Nov 19-21.. NY/NJ Co-Op Big Apple Series, Best Western Oritani Hotel, Hackensack, NJ	(201) 833-2915
Nov 20-21.. San Diego Club's Autumn Gran Prix, Embassy Suits Hotel, La Jolla, CA	(619) 294-2007
Dec 05-10.. 1st World-Wide Twin Backgammon Championships, Las Vegas, NV	(702) 893-6025
Feb 18-20...16th Annual Winter Championships, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA	(412) 823-7500
Mar 18-20...1994 Midwest Championships, Marriott Hotel, Oak Brook, IL	(312) 338-6380
Ap27-Ma1.. 3rd Tournament of the Americas, Cariari Hotel, San Jose, Costa Rica	(312) 252-7755
July 29-31.. **43rd Indiana Open**, Indianapolis	(317) 845-8435
Sep 05-10.. World Cup IV, Dallas	(301) 299-8264

Thursdays... 7:00 PM at **SPATS** (842-3465) Castleton Square between J.C.Penneys & L.S.Ayres 845-8435

Take-Points in Money Games, Part 1 of 3

by Rick Janowski

Guidance on doubling strategy in backgammon is provided by the following two theoretical models:

1. **Dead-Cube Model** - the classical model which makes no allowance for cube ownership.

2. **Live-Cube Model** - the continuous model which assumes maximum possible cube ownership value.

The former generally overestimates take-points and underestimates doubling-points (25% and 50% respectively assuming no gammons). Conversely, the latter model underestimates take-points and overestimates doubling-points (20% and 80% respectively assuming no gammons). They do, however, when considered together, provide an envelope in which correct cube action decisions are to be found.

Dead-Cube Model

The owner of the cube is not afforded any additional benefits by it - he can't double out his opponent or raise the stakes at an opportune time. Effectively, the game is played out to its conclusion cubeless (but at the stake raised by the previous double). Consequently, take-points can be readily established from the risk-reward ratio.

Assume a double occurs in a game where, if played to conclusion, both players will win a mixture of single-games, gammons and backgammons. The effects of gammons and backgammons can be dealt with by introducing the following two variables for the player making the cube action decision (in this case, the player doubled):

W = Average cubeless value of games ultimately won
L = Average cubeless value of games ultimately lost

Consequently, a take would risk **2*L*-1** points to gain **2*W*+1** points. The minimum cubeless probability for a correct take (***TP***) is therefore:

$$TP = \frac{(2L\text{-}1)}{(2W\text{+}2L)} = \frac{(L\text{-}0.5)}{(W\text{+}L)} \qquad \text{...equation (1)}$$

This formula is also applicable when the data considered represents *effective* game winning chances.

Live-Cube Model

The owner of the cube is guaranteed to use the cube with optimal efficiency, at which point his opponent will have an optional pass/take. All subsequent redoubles by either of the two players are similarly optimal. There are in fact an infinite number of different live cube models dependent on the following two variable factors:

1. The number of possible subsequent optimal redoubles. This can vary between unity and infinity. The infinite model is a good approximation to any of the finite models - all odd-numbered finite models give slightly higher cube-ownership values, whilst the even-numbered models give slightly lower ones. The discrepancy reduces progressively towards infinity. The relationship can be imagined as a dampened-sinusoidal curve with the infinite model as its axis. The man on the six-point versus man on the six-point position is an example of the *single-subsequent redouble live model* (take-point = 18.75%). In fact, this live-cube model is the only one that exists in practice.

2. The change in gammon (and backgammon) rates throughout the life of the game. In most *real* backgammon positions, a player's rate of winning gammons will decrease when his opponent redoubles. A typical example is when a shot is hit in an ace-point game, which subsequently gives your opponent little, if any, gammon risk. The same general reduction in gammon rate will normally occur in the live cube models, as the greater the number of subsequent optimal redoubles, the higher the chance that one or both players will, at some point, take men off. The rate of gammon loss could be linear (e.g., % loss per opponent's redouble) or otherwise.

Assuming an infinite possible number of subsequent optimal redoubles, and a constant gammon rate (***W*** and ***L*** are constant) for the sake of simplicity, the following formula yielded itself, after some detailed mathematical analysis:

$$TP = \frac{(L\text{-}0.5)}{(W\text{+}L\text{+}0.5)} \qquad \text{...equation (2)}$$

Amazingly, the equation has a *simple* form. But what about the reduction in gammon rate, so far ignored? I investigated several different *reducing* models hoping to find that the above formula would still provide a reasonable estimate. What I found was much better; the formula is correct regardless of the gammon reduction rate considered, provided the ***W*** and ***L*** values used are *average* as opposed to *initial* ones! I wondered about this surprising result for some time and developed the following argument to support it:

What is the difference, in terms of risk and reward, between the live and dead-cube models? There are additional benefits from holding the cube which **add** to the basic dead-cube reward **(2*W* + 1)**. What are they and when do they occur? They occur on the point of redoubling when the redoubler's equity jumps from 1.0 ppg (dead) to 2.0 ppg (owning a 2-cube), a bonus of 1.0 ppg . (This is not strictly true, as the *dead* equity is a little higher than 1.0, but this effect is balanced out by the equity jump occurring in more games than the cubeless take-point.) Consequently, if we add this bonus to the reward used in equation (1) for the dead-cube model, we arrive at equation (2) for the live cube model. As this argument, is independent of any considerations of reducing gammon-rates, they would indeed appear to be irrelevant.

General Cube Model

Equations (1) and (2) above represent the take-point envelope in which correct take-points are to be found (the one known exception being the man on the six-point versus man versus the man on the six-point position). In any given position, the true take-point could be assessed by interpolating between the dead and live values, based on some intermediate value of cube-life, calculated, estimated, or just plain guessed at. The general form of these equations, given below again for clarity, allows a more elegant solution:

$$TP_{dead} = \frac{(L\text{-}0.5)}{(W+L)} \quad \text{...equation (1)}$$

$$TP_{live} = \frac{(L\text{-}0.5)}{(W+L+0.5)} \quad \text{...equation (2)}$$

Notice that the only difference is in the equations' denominators, with the *live* value having the additional *bonus* from cube-ownership, explained before. As this bonus represents the expected equity jump, it is proportional to the degree of cube-life of the position (and inversely proportional to its long-term volatility). Intermediate models can therefore be represented by a cube-life index, x, which varies between 0.0 (dead cube, maximum volatility) and 1.0 (live-cube, zero volatility). The general form of equations (1) and (2) above is therefore:

$$TP_{general} = \frac{(L\text{-}0.5)}{(W+L+0.5x)} \quad \text{...equation (3)}$$

Clearly the value of x varies from position to position, and will commonly be different for both sides. Some of the important factors which determine its value include:

1. The distance from the target - the further away from the optimal doubling point you are, the less likely you are to hit the *bull's-eye*.
2. The size of the target - the size of the doubling window governs the size of the *bull's-eye*.
3. The relative movement between the shooter and the target - the volatility of the position governs the likelihood of hitting the *bull's-eye*, or even finding it for that matter.

Finding accurate values for x is a difficult, almost impossible task. However, we can make estimates of *typical* values for *typical* situations. In my opinion, for the majority of *typical* positions, x will commonly be between about 1/2 and 3/4, with 2/3 being a *normal* value.

Next Issue: **Part 2 of 3: Cube Action Tables**

Puzzle Contest

Won $20.00

		Players					Years					City				
		Ms. Potts	Mr. Olson	Mr. Lemon	Ms. Scott	Mr. Green	1986	1987	1989	1990	1992	Pittsburgh	Miami	Memphis	Detroit	Minneapolis
Rank	First															
	Second															
	Third															
	Fourth															
	Fifth															
City	Pittsburgh															
	Miami															
	Memphis															
	Detroit															
	Minneapolis															
Year	1986															
	1987															
	1989															
	1990															
	1992															

Ranking	Player	Year	City

It's up to you with the necessary clues given below, to rank the players and determine which year they won and where they are from. The winner of $20.00 will be determined by a random draw of all correct entries. Contest deadline is December 15th, 1993.

Thanks to Brian Nelson for this contest.

The residents of Indianapolis were ecstatic when it was announced that they would be the hosts of this year's coveted **National Backgammon Championship**. Several hundred people will participate in the round-the-clock competition before capacity crowds.

The top-five ranked competitors each have won the championship in a different previous year (1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, or 1992). Each of those in the top five will travel to the competition from a different city. From the information provided, determine the ranking of each of the top five players (one is Mr. Olson), the year in which each won the competition previously, and the city (one is Minneapolis) from which each will travel. (Note: First is the highest ranking, and fifth is lowest.)

1. The one arriving from Memphis is ranked exactly three places lower than Ms. Scott, who won the championship exactly three years earlier than the one who is ranked fourth.
2. Mr. Green won exactly two years after the one arriving from Miami and exactly three years after the one who is ranked third.
3. The one who won in 1990 is ranked immediately below Ms. Potts and immediately above the 1986 champion.
4. The one from Detroit, who is ranked exactly one place lower than the one traveling from Pittsburgh, won exactly one year after Mr. Lemon.
5. The 1992 champion and the one arriving from Memphis are ranked first and fifth, in some order.

(Note: Feel free to copy this page as needed.)

WORLD CUP III
Tino Lechich vs Ed O'Laughlin
Best 3 of 5 - 11 Point Matches
Match #1 Tino won 11-2 in 6 games.
Match #2 Ed won 11-2 in 7 games.
Match #3 Tino won 11-2 in 6 games.

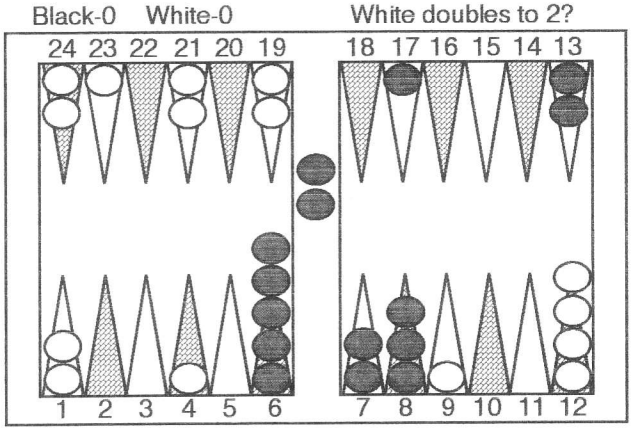
The **HBC Newsletter** presents a match between **Tino Lechich** and **Ed O'Laughlin** from the **WORLD CUP III, August 1992**.

Instructions: You will need a backgammon board to follow along. The board is numbered 1 to 24 based on the view of the player on roll. Each player will always be moving from a higher to lower point with only the point(s) moved to used. The home portion of the board is numbered 1 thru 6. Bearing off is noted as moving to the zero (0) point. To make it easier to follow, the larger number rolled is noted first. In some situations where the smaller number rolled is forced, it will be presented first. An example: being on the BAR with a roll of 5-2 with the 5-point made and the 2-point open.

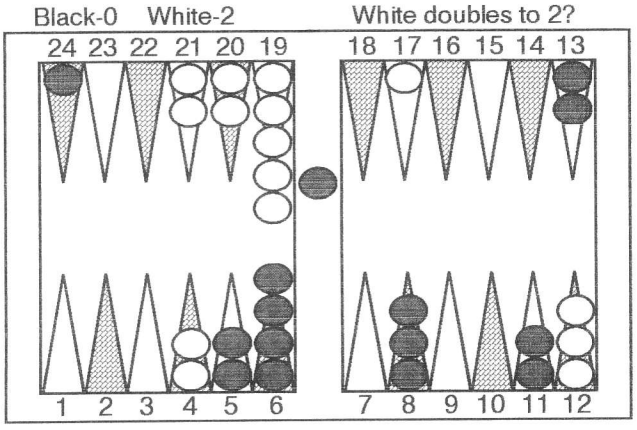
Abbreviations used: Closed Board**(CB)**, Entry Failure**(EF)**, Misplay**(MP)**, No Play Possible**(NP)**, opponent's piece was hit **(x)**, superscript**(5^2)** denotes 2 or more pieces moving to a point; this example has 2 pieces moving to the 5 point.

In the doubling positions, **Tino** is the dark checkers and **Ed** the light. The positions are shown from Tino's point of veiw; study them first before going through the games.

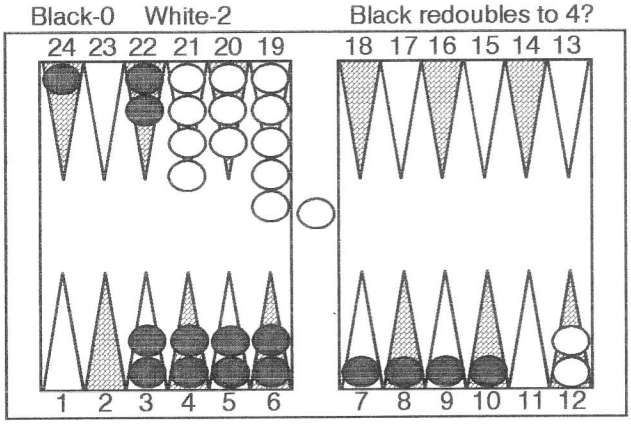
Black-0 White-0 White doubles to 2?



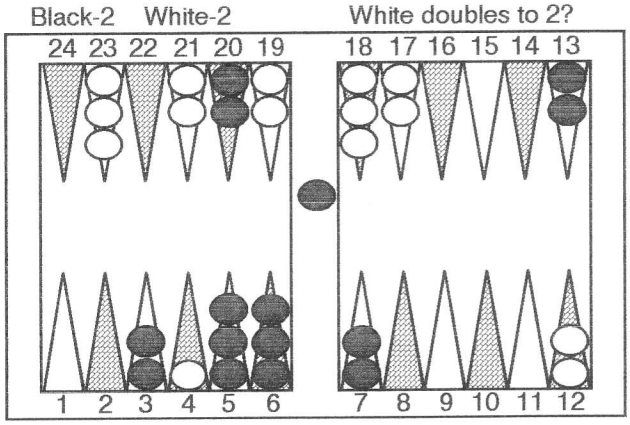
Black-0 White-2 White doubles to 2?



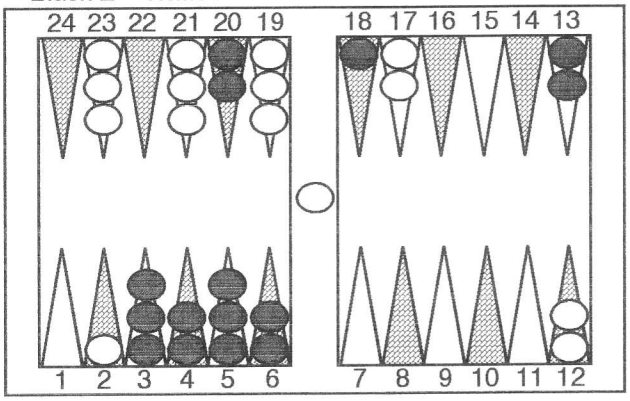
Black-0 White-2 Black redoubles to 4?



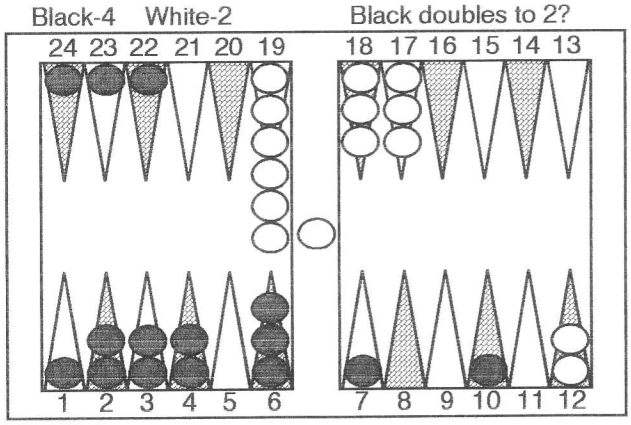
Black-2 White-2 White doubles to 2?



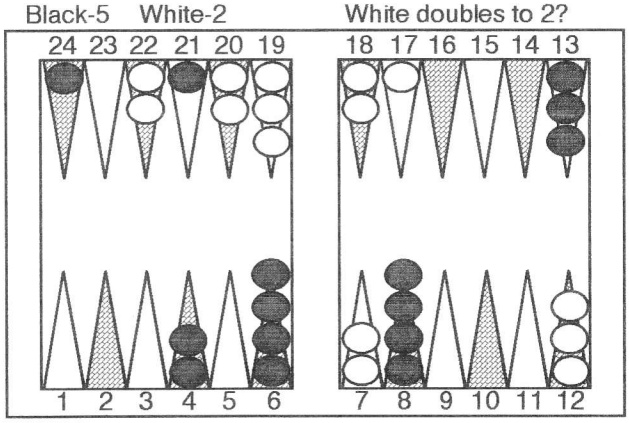
Black-2 White-2 Black redoubles to 4?



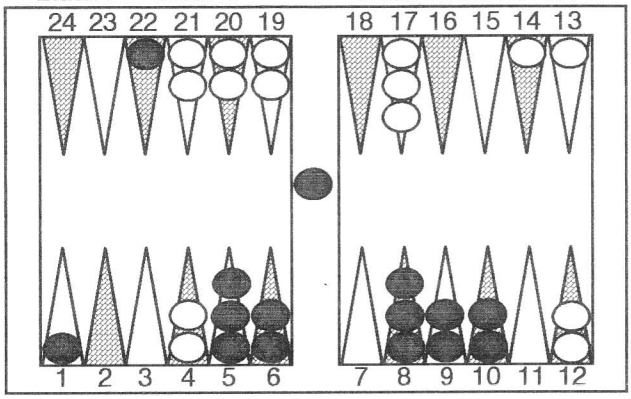
Black-4 White-2 Black doubles to 2?



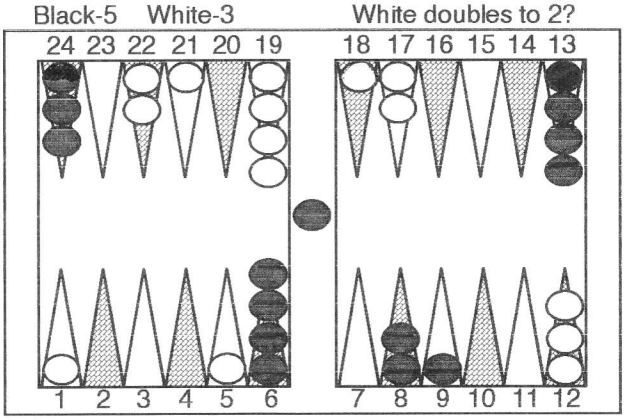
Black-5 White-2 White doubles to 2?



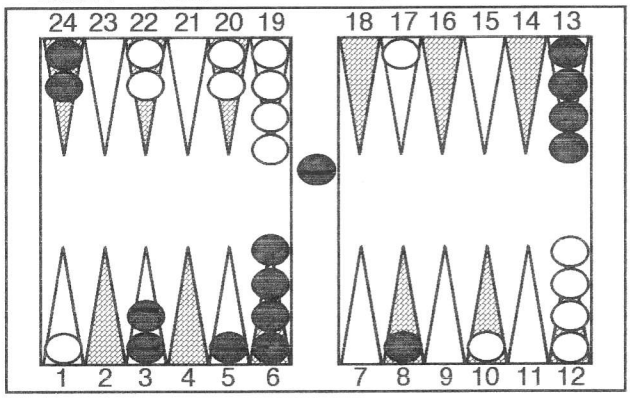
Black-7 White-4 White redoubles to 2?



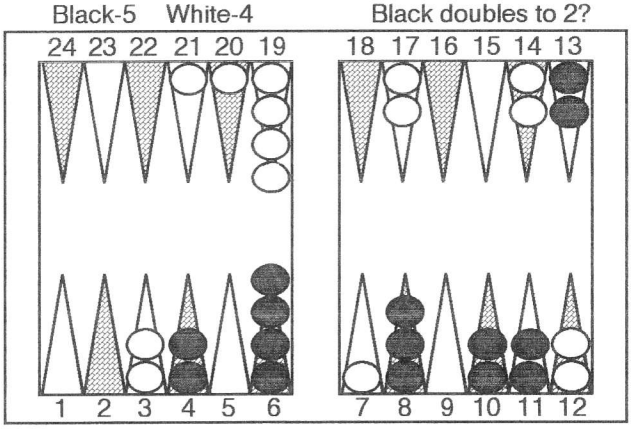
Black-5 White-3 White doubles to 2?



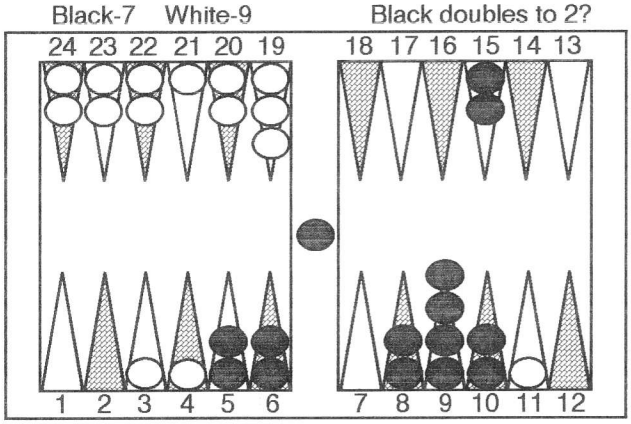
Black-7 White-8 White doubles to 2?



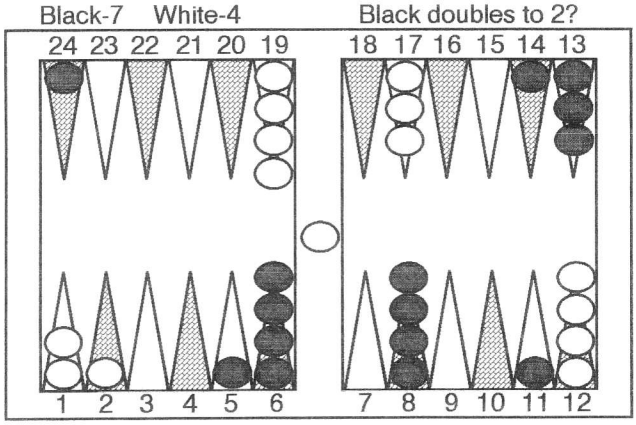
Black-5 White-4 Black doubles to 2?



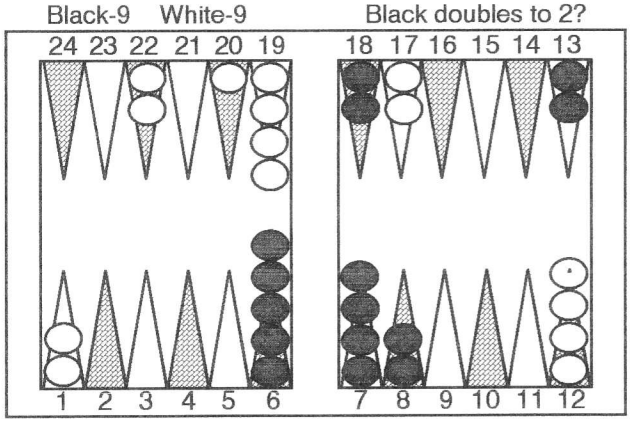
Black-7 White-9 Black doubles to 2?



Black-7 White-4 Black doubles to 2?



Black-9 White-9 Black doubles to 2?



Game 1

	Tino Lechich - 0		Ed O'Laughlin - 0	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	..	...	21	11 23
2)	43	9 10	31	5^2
3)	64	14x	41	21 5
4)	32	7^2	54	$1x^2$
5)	32	23 11	52	14x
6)	32	22 11x	64	21 2x
7)	53	17x	63	16
8)	21	9x 21	11	24 $4x^2$ 22
9)	11	EF	42	16x
10)	41	EF		double to 2?
11)		take	62	8x
12)	11	EF	41	9 23
13)	33	22^3 3	63	2 21
14)	64	$2x^2$	54	20 9
15)	63	7 3	32	10 11
16)	43	15x	51	20 10x
17)	54	20 9	64	16x-10
18)	42	EF	62	13
19)	65	20 1	31	10 20
20)	62	14^{F22}	52	3x
21)	61	EF	31	6 3
22)	55	20 4 2	52	4 18x
23)	64	EF	31	14
24)	42	EF	33	7^2 8
25)	53	20 1	65	14 3
26)	64	10	53	6
27)	43	6 17	65	1 2
28)	43	10	54	1 0
29)	42	14	65	0 1
30)	44	16 6^2	61	0^2
31)	31	5 15	43	0^2
32)	62	9 6	54	0^2
33)	52	4 0	55	game

Game 2

	Tino Lechich - 0		Ed O'Laughlin - 2	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	..	...	54	8 20
2)	21	11 5x	33	22 5^2 10
3)	53	5^{F13}	31	21^2
4)	32	21 11	64	$4x^2$
5)	54	EF		double to 2?
6)		take	31	10 5
7)	31	24 3	41	4^{F8} 9
8)	22	22^2 9^2	65	15 4
9)	31	3 7	54	6
10)	51	4x 7	64	21x-15
11)	31	24 10x	63	EF
12)	33	$4^{2\ F7,13}$	66	EF
13)		double to 4?		pass

We wish all our friends the best this up-coming holiday season and beyong.
Hoosier Backgammob Club

Game 3

	Tino Lechich - 2		Ed O'Laughlin - 2	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	..	...	64	14
2)	43	20 10	22	11^2 4^2
3)	41	20 9	42	8
4)	53	3^2	22	7^2
5)	41	5^2	66	18 7 2^2
6)	63	7x 10	33	EF
7)	31	7^{F10} 5	42	21 4
8)	42	$4x^{F8}$ 6	42	21x 2
9)	42	EF		double to 2?
10)		take	31	4 6
11)	33	22 $4x^2$ 3	42	23 3x
12)	43	22x-18	44	EF
13)		double to 4?		pass

Game 4

	Tino Lechich - 4		Ed O'Laughlin - 2	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	..	...	54	8 20
2)	42	4^2	66	8 7^2
3)	66	7^2 2^2	21	22 7
4)	63	7 3x	21	22x
5)	22	23 22 3x	66	EF
6)	42	3 11	21	24 6
7)	32	1x	63	EF
8)	53	6 10	43	EF
9)		double to 2?		pass

Game 5

	Tino Lechich - 5		Ed O'Laughlin - 2	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	52	8 11	66	18^2 7^2
2)	54	6 20	33	$5x^2$ 3^2
3)	22	21 4^2		double to 2?
4)		pass		

Game 6

	Tino Lechich - 5		Ed O'Laughlin - 3	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	41	9 5	31	20x
2)	43	21 5x	55	20x 8 3^2
3)	33	EF	62	7 4x
4)	31	24 EF		double to 2?
5)		pass		

Game 7

	Tino Lechich - 5		Ed O'Laughlin - 4	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	42	4^{2}	21	11 23
2)	52	8 11	21	22^{2}
3)	65	13	32	10 11
4)	33	15x 10	61	18
5)	52	10 11	32	5 4
6)		double to 2?		take
7)	41	$7x^{2}$	52	20 4
8)	62	$5x^{2}$	32	23 5
9)	32	7 8	63	5^{F11} 8
10)	33	7^{2}	32	3^{2}
11)	63	1 5	33	7^{2}
12)	11	5^{F8} 7	11	5^{F8} 6
13)	42	1 4	31	2 22
14)	54	2^{F7} 1	51	16
15)	61	1 5	53	8
16)	63	1 4	66	4 2
17)	52	1 4	41	3^{F8}
18)	51	0^{2}	52	1^{2}
19)	54	0 1	53	14
20)	32	1 0	54	5
21)	41	0^{2}	54	3 0
22)	52	0 2	53	0^{2}
23)	22	0^{3}	54	game

Software Review: **BG-SCRIBE**

A Program By Walter Trice.

by Mark Damish
(E-mail: damish@ll.mit.edu)

BG-Scribe: A system for editing, replaying, and printing backgammon matches for the IBM-PC by Walter Trice. I consider this program essential for myself, it will:

- Allow one to enter matches from books and magazines, or from those personally recorded, to be played back and studied later. Entry is done using the numeric keypad. After a while, you end up being able to enter a match very quickly, and become quite proficient at touch-typing the keypad to boot. An **AT** style keyboard is preferable for entering matches.

- Play back matches purchased from Walter. Watching great matches between the masters is definitely enlightening. My favorite matches are the ones from annotated books. It shouldn't be hard to write a program to convert a match from one format to another, if you already have a collection of matches in another format. I've converted matches posted to Internet by Butch Meese using nothing more than simple editor macros. The matches are currently stored as plain ASCII files---one directory per match, and one file per game.

- Print out matches to disk or printer. I like to: print out to disk, annotate my comments using a simple editor, then print the resulting file to a printer. The program will also embed diagrams of positions to the printout, but it uses IBM graphics characters, which might have to be changed if your printer doesn't support them. The diagram feature is especially useful for diagramming doubling decisions.

The program is run from one of two screens. The first is a textscreen with options for creating a new match, loading, saving, etc.

The second screen displays the backgammon board using a CGA 4 color, 40 column text mode. Trust me here---this mode, with its X's and O's, looks a lot better than backgammon boards I've seen drawn using the CGA 2 color graphics mode. Why CGA text mode? Probably because it will run on any portable or palmtop machine, and likely on most PC emulators on other platforms. It also runs fine in a window under MS Windows, without having to mess around with a *.pif file.

The second screen is where matches are entered or played back. When playing back a match, you may see the dice, then the players choice, and then see the move when the screen is updated. It is possible to go forwards or backwards in a game. Although you may have entered your rolls in *landing spot* format, the program can optionally display them in *from/to* format. It only prints in the format which it was entered though. You may also mark positions which you would like to have diagrammed.

As stated above, the user interface consists of two screens. Unlike modern X/Windows/Mac programs which do a lot for you, this program assumes that what you tell, or don't tell the program is exactly what you want. i.e.: You can enter data, then quit the program. If you didn't save, the program won't prompt you. It is like driving a standard after getting used to cruise control. The program does a lot, you have to remember to tell it what to do though! The learning curve has a slight incline, but the program is well worth the time it takes to become familiar with it. I found the instructions clear.

I want to start bringing pen and steno paper to local events to record some *master games* for later entry/playback. I also want to review some of my *bad games*, searching for weakness. There is a lot to be learned!

The price of the program is $50, including 11 matches. [Thirty] additional matches are available from Walter [for $20].

I am not affiliated with **BG-SCRIBE** in any way, except for being a very satisfied customer. Please mention where you saw this article if you should contact Walter. I did mention to him that I was going to write a review---Last spring!...Mark Damish

Contact: Walter G. Trice (508) 829-3283
549 Wachusett St.
Holden, MA 01520

Game 8

	Tino Lechich - 7		Ed O'Laughlin - 4	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	54	8 20	21	11 5x
2)	65	20x-14x	65	20 EF
3)	21	11 5x	62	23 EF
4)		double to 2?		take
5)	51	9 5	64	21 7
6)	43	$4x^{F8}$ 5	43	$21x^2$
7)	21	24 9	53	15
8)	32	10x 22	64	21 7
9)	65	11	53	13
10)	51	1x 10	52	18
11)	21	21	22	$4x^2$ 5^2
12)	53	22 8	62	12x 11
13)	64	EF		double to 4?
14)		take	53	3x 9
15)	64	EF	44	3 5 9
16)	61	24 EF	41	1x 7
17)	31	24x EF	64	21 7
18)	42	23 1	52	$2x^{F9}$
19)	11	$23x^2$ 7	54	21 3
20)	63	17 7	21	5^{F7} 2x
21)	33	EF	21	2^{F5}
22)	44	EF	54	1 3
23)	42	EF	63	15x-12
24)	44	EF	42	8x-6
25)	42	EF	51	1 5
26)	43	EF	62	13
27)	53	EF	33	1
28)	21	EF	42	1^2
29)	52	EF	31	2 4
30)	52	20 EF	53	1 NP
31)	31	EF	64	11
32)	41	EF	53	3
33)	42	EF	52	1 NP
34)	52	20 EF	21	2 3
35)	55	15 $4x^2$	53	22 NP
36)	62	14 18	42	1 NP
37)	66	3x 6	21	22x
38)	21	EF	61	15
39)	21	EF	65	4
40)	11	EF	51	0^2
41)	61	19 6	64	0^2
42)	55	4^{F19} 9	32	0^2
43)	42	5 6	52	0^2
44)	31	game		

Game 9

	Tino Lechich - 7		Ed O'Laughlin - 8	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	53	3^2	54	8 20
2)	32	5x 11	55	20x 3^2 15
3)	65	20 5	31	$5x^2$
4)	53	EF		double to 2?
5)		pass		

To the Editor: Response to Bower Article:

Despite three spare 6's in the outfield, Position 1 from page 3 of the Sept-Oct/93 HBC newsletter is not what I would call a **well-timed** ace-point game. Unless White blots on the 6-point, Black figures to be waiting for several rolls to get a shot. By that time, Black will probably have to begin crunching his board or abandon his anchor; either action reduces Black's winning chances substantially. Because Black can often run off the gammon, his winning chances are reduced even further because he won't stay for late shots.

Clearly, many ace-point games provide winning chances much higher than the 13.5% you found in Position 1. A useful reference is Joe Sylvester's article in the May 1991 issue of *LeadingEdge Backgammon*. In this article, a **benchmark** ace-point game was found to win about 22% of the time (with a live cube). However, this result was obtained by a **one-sided** roll-out in which the side playing the ace-point game was assumed to have a closed board and did not move his checkers during the roll-out.

Now that programs such as *Expert Backgammon* are available to do roll-outs, it would be interesting to test Joe's data. One could empirically construct ace-point positions that are optimal for the side playing the ace-point game in the following cases:

i) money play;

ii) match score where the side playing the ace-point game can lose a gammon but not a backgammon [e.g. leading by 1 point in Crawford game];

iii) match score where he can lose a backgammon but losing a gammon is inmaterial [e.g. leading by 2 points in Crawford game -- losing a gammon affects only the potential free drop];

iv) match score where he cannot lose a gammon or backgammon [e.g. double match point].

Unfortunately, programs such as *Expert Backgammon* may not yet be trustworthy with the difficult run-vs-stay decisions that one encounters in many ace-point games. Consequently, obtaining meaningful data might require some fudging and tweaking of the roll-out results. Any volunteers for such a project?
Roy Friedman, MA

Chuck Bower replies...*Roy, I think all ace point players' prayers have been answered! In the September issue of* ***Flint Area Backgammon News****, a new book (103 pages) by Bob Wachtel titled* ***In the Game Until the End: Winning in Ace-Point Endgames*** *was announced. Available from Carol Cole (313) 232-9731 or from Gammon Press (the book's publisher) (617) 641-2091 for $25 plus shipping. I'll race you to the book counter!*

Expert Backgammon Ver 2.1 is Ready!

Tom Weaver reports it has a few new features but most improvements are in it's play. The new version sells for $150 or you can upgrade for $60 if you have an earlier version.

Contact: Tom Weaver by mail at 8063 Meadow, #108, Dallas, TX 75231, phone (214) 692-1234 or FAX (214) 692-5010

Game 10

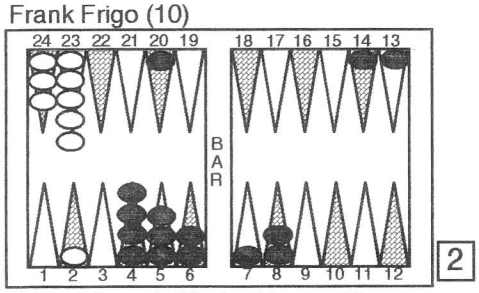
	Tino Lechich - 7		Ed O'Laughlin - 9	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	21	11 5	21	11 23
2)	61	18 5	33	$7x^2$
3)	41	21 10	54	14
4)	54	1x 20	51	24x 6
5)	66	EF	33	$5x^2$ 3^2
6)	64	21 EF	43	10^{F14} 21
7)	64	15x	32	23 5
8)	42	4x 13	21	24 21x
9)	31	24 10	32	21 3
10)	44	9^4	65	$1x^2$
11)	55	EF	41	2^2
12)	43	18x	64	21 7x
13)	62	EF	31	18 6
14)	55	EF	54	8 14
15)	61	EF	52	9 6
16)	64	15	43	14
17)	51	16x-15	32	22 4x
18)		double to 2?		take
19)	44	21x $4x^2$ 11x	64	EF
20)	54	16 7	32	22 23
21)	42	12 7	55	EF
22)	32	6 13	61	24 17
23)	55	8x 5^2 7	31	22 5
24)	43	4^2	31	3^{F6} 4
25)	63	$1x^2$	11	EF
26)	51	4 6	52	18
27)	64	5 0	54	17 14
28)	54	0^2	61	10
29)	21	2 0	53	6
30)	43	2^2	53	14
31)	41	0^{F5}	52	9 8
32)	65	0 1	52	4 6
33)	32	1 2	21	4^{F6} 2
34)	42	1 3x	66	19-1
35)	33	game		

Continues From Page 1 (To the Editor)...

In the match situation (I own a 2-cube and am leading 9 to 7 in a 13-point match) I would almost NEVER redouble in a takeable position. I would almost automatically wait until the position was a clear drop and then think about whether to cash or play on.

Second Item: From the Muench/Frigo 15-point match:

Frank Frigo (10)



Dean Muench (9) doubles to 4?

I believe the redouble was guite premature and that Frigo was taking much later. His take-point at the match score is only about 27%, and he would be extrememly close to a money take even if: I) he was closed out already, 2) he had borne off one fewer man or 3) his opponent's distribution for the bearoff was prefect.

Game 11

	Tino Lechich - 9		Ed O'Laughlin - 9	
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	61	7^2	53	3^2
2)	66	18^2 7^2	62	5
3)		double to 2?		take
4)	61	6	52	8 22
5)	54	$3x^2$	21	23 12x
6)	64	21 2x	32	23x 5
7)	55	EF	32	9 4x
8)	21	23 24	42	5 4
9)	31	3 23	65	12
10)	41	2^2	55	$3^{2\ F13(2)}$
11)	42	14 16	51	11x-6
12)	42	23 12	21	1 4
13)	53	15	55	3^2 1^2
14)	65	$1x^2$	55	10x 1
15)	64	15x	65	14
16)	51	10 11x	65	14x
17)	41	EF	53	9 1
18)	53	EF	62	1
19)	52	23 5	33	1^2 0^2
20)	65	12	53	0^2
21)	11	4^{F7} 5	64	0^2
22)	55	2^2 1	11	0^4
23)	54	1^2	41	game

Third Item: A question for Chuck Bowers about his **Drop/Take Line, Part II**. Why assumption (2) on page 8?

Assumption 2 reprinted here:

2) I assumed that by the time the trailer reaches his opponents drop/take line, that his gammon fraction is only half what it was when he took the cube. This assumption determines the location of the leader's drop/take line. (Recall that the drop/take line corresponds to a point in the game where the trailer (not owning the cube) neither gains nor loses equity by dropping. Both dropping and taking will lead to the same average result in the long run.)

It seems to me that if I take a double when 100% of my wins are gammon, then no matter what happens in the game my gammon fraction will remain at 100%. You are evidently assuming that if and when I get to a double (under continuous model assumptions) my gammon fraction will have dropped to 50%.

I have a similar problem with other gammon fractions at the time I take, although whenever the number is not 0% or 100%, any number between the extremes is POSSIBLE later. It seems to me that my best estmate of what the gammon fraction will be in the future is always the same as what itis now.

Could you possibly clarify this?
Walter Trice, MA

Chuck Bower replies:

An astute observation, Walter. I agree with what you say. Fortunately, my error was in the explanation of assumption 2), and not in the calculations which went into the table. What I meant to say was "I assumed that by the time the trailer reaches his opponent's drop/take line, his OPPONENT'S gammon fraction is only half what it was when the he took the cube." The table was based on this (now corrected) assumption. Thanks for pointing this out.