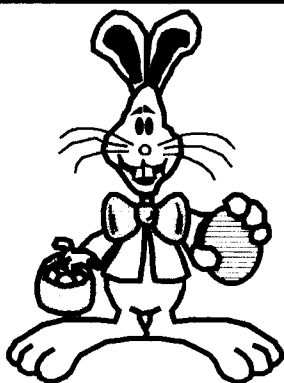
 Hoosier
Backgammon
Club

March-April 1994
Volume XI, No. 2



1993 Club Champion: *Larry Strommen*

HBC's best of the previous year competed in the **Club Championship** by winning **Player of the Month** honors or finishing in the **TOP TEN**. The final had repeat competitors from last years championship: Don Woods and Larry Strommen. Don reached the final by defeating Butch Meese 13-9 in 16 games and Larry bested Ellis Bray in a marathon match 13-12 in 17 games. The final was another marathon match with Larry surviving 13-12 in 18 games. Larry joins Chuck Stimming ('91 winner) and Don Woods ('92 winner) as Club Champion. Congratulations.

Awards Tournament Honors the Best of '93 Sunday, February 6th at SPATS.

Chuck Stimming started the day as the colorful M.C. handing out engraved doubling cubes along with over \$250 in cash prizes and gift certificates to the **1993 Top Ten**. Chuck Stimming ended the day by grabbing the top prize by defeating Don Woods in the Open Division. Neil Ezell topped Scott Richardson in the Advanced Division.

Open Division
1st *Chuck Stimming*
2nd *Don Woods*

Advanced Division
1st *Neil Ezell*
2nd *Scott Richardson*

The Mathematics of Backgammon **Opening Rolls** by Chuck Bower

Typically the first thing a backgammon player learns after the basics (setting up the board, moving checkers, making points, and hitting blots) is how to move the checkers for the 15 opening rolls. Every backgammon book that I am familiar with which contains a section on learning the game has at least a table (and usually a chapter) on how to play the opening rolls. Often the author states that one of the possible plays is clearly better than all others. As is human nature, authors sometimes disagree as to how to best play certain rolls. For example, 53 has proponents for at least four plays: running 24-16, slotting 13-5, building 8-3, 6-3, and bringing builders down from the midpoint 13-8, 13-10. Splitting 24-21, 13-8, is also reasonable. Certainly this collection hasn't exhausted all legal moves, although it's

hard to believe that plays like 8-5, 8-3 would have serious backers.

..what reasons do experts have for choosing one play over another...

You may have wondered (as I have) what reasons these experts have for choosing one play over another. I can fathom at least four possible sources:

- 1) personal experience,
- 2) the experience and/or opinions of others,
- 3) careful (though possibly flawed) analysis of each possible play (for example, counting all shots which the play leaves, and counting the number of good returns for the opening roller--like how many rolls will cover the blot just left open), and
- 4) personal prejudice.

Recently a new source of information has become available--computer rollouts. This involves setting up the game immediately after the opening roll candidate and having the computer play out this position many (thousands of) times. Then change to a different candidate play, have the computer roll it out, and compare the two results. This method falls under category 2) above--*the experience...of others*. The computer has the advantage of lightening speed. I have used a 486/50 PC and Expert Backgammon (EXBG) for the PC (written by Tom Johnson and Tom Weaver) to obtain the results listed below. The fewest rollouts for any listed position is 6800, and the total games rolled out for this study is over 1.6 million. By comparison, a human who averaged 5 minutes per game, 4 hours of backgammon per day, 6 days of play per week (he takes off for Monday Night Football), 52 weeks per year since 1973 has played 300,000 games.

Figure 1 (page 4) is a compilation of 50 candidate opening plays. (Note: the letter *n* after a proposed move indicates that EXBG Expert Edition version 2.1 was used for the rollout. Otherwise version 1.61 was used.) I have tried to include all plays which I have ever observed in real life or seen recommended in print, but it is likely that I have missed some. These plays range from the ultra safe 32 (13-8) to the risky 61 (13-7, 6-5). Each candidate has an associated bar with a tick mark. The tick mark is the result of the rollout in **unit cube equity** (defined by the expression: $Eu = S+2G+3B-s-2g-3b$ where *S*, *G*, *B* stand for Simple wins, Gammon wins and Backgammon wins respectively while the lower case variables represent losses. Each variable has units of fraction of all games. Thus $S+G+B+s+g+b = 1$). You can think of unit cube equity as a *fractional edge*. For example, building the bar with 61 gives the opener approximately an 11% edge over his/her opponent (unit cube equity = +0.11). A minus sign means that the responder has the edge. The bar represents the *95% confidence level interval*. This is a statistical term which gives a measure of how reliable results are from a random standpoint. It is a consequence of the number of times the position was rolled out--more rollouts lead to a shorter bar.

...continues page 4...

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

Expert Backgammon & Copy Protection

The Expert Backgammon program has been hailed as the best available. In late 1993, Version 2.1 was released and that was when players found out about Expert Backgammon copy protection. Copy protection in the PC world runs the gambit of reactions from PC users. In the past, some copy protection techniques have caused big headaches. To get true reactions of how owners and potential buyers feel, the question of copy protection was submitted to the Internet, but first the reason and policy for copy protection of Expert Backgammon...

Reason and Policy by Tom Weaver, Author of the PC Version of Expert Backgammon .

The reason for copy protection is simple: to stop the pirating that goes with all very successful programs. If you have purchased the program and do not run a program with copy protection, contact me and I will refund your money in full.

Users are allowed to install the program to two hard disks, as well as allowing you to run the program from the floppy. You can uninstall the program from the hard disk for installation on another machine if needed. It is recommended to uninstall the program before using backup programs, or reformatting your hard disk/partition, as you may lose your installation.

Since it is impossible to test with all the possible PC configurations (hardware and software), user may encounter problems. If you have any problems, contact me with your specific problem and I will be glad to help. A problem with SCANDISK and DOS 6.2 has been solved and as of Monday, February 14, all copy protection will be invisible to the user at

startup and beyond.

Early versions of 1.61 used a different scheme. It stopped running after a certain date. I will supply free updates to those with the early protection scheme.

So far I see no problem with the copy protection in the new 2.1 version. The installation process is trivial, and you can install it to two computers. It is unlikely that most users will need more than that. If you want to move it from one computer to another you can uninstall it using the original disk, and then re-install it to another site. I imagine that if you need to use it for more than two computers you can talk to Tom and make arrangements. The need for copy protection is self-evident -- without it, users can easily make copies for their friends and screw the producer.

However, I think you may be referring to another problem. It has been brought to my attention that there was a time bomb on the 1.61 version -- if it is run in 1994 it self-destructs. I talked to Tom about this at length, and he said that the reason he did this was because when he first issued 1.61 he didn't have any copy protections, so he wanted to have some handle on things to prevent mass duplication of the program. Probably a pretty foolish idea, but it was done and that is that. Tom says that a user can send him the papers regarding purchase or the old disk and he will send them a replacement. The 2.1 version does play better than the old 1.61 version from what I have seen, and I would recommend it to anyone who uses EXBG seriously.

Kit Woolsey, CA

...continues on page 3...

1994 HOOSIER BACKGAMMON CLUB Gammon Point Standings.

HBC Player of the Month for January is **Chuck Strimming** with 170 gammon points.

HBC Player of the Month for February is **Chuck Strimming** with 378 gammon points.

1) Chuck Strimming..... 558	9) Kevin McLeaster..... 122	Frank Scott..... 32
2) Butch Meese..... 442	10) Dragan Stevanovic..... 117	Alan Haas..... 30
3) Don Woods..... 386	Scott Richardson..... 77	Wendy Kaplan..... 30
4) Larry Strommen..... 294	Cyrus Mobed..... 50	Dave Cardwell..... 20
5) Ellis Bray..... 278	Bill Julian..... 48	Craig Hampton..... 20
6) Mary Ann Meese..... 170	Mick Dobratz..... 47	Jeff Baker..... 20
7) Neil Ezell..... 158	Chuck Bower..... 40	Stu Sherman..... 10
8) Jan Gurvitz..... 136	Jim Curtis..... 40	Krystal Shaffer..... 10

	<u>January 6th</u>	<u>January 13th</u>	<u>January 20th</u>	<u>January 27th</u>
Open 1st	<i>Butch Meese</i>	<i>Chuck Strimming</i>	<i>Chuck Strimming</i>	<i>Neil Ezell</i>
2nd	<i>Don Woods</i>	<i>Kevin McLeaster</i>	<i>Bill Julian</i>	<i>Don Woods</i>
2nd	<i>Mary Ann Meese</i>	<i>Ellis Bray</i>	<i>Kevin McLeaster</i>	<i>Butch Meese</i>
	<u>February 3rd</u>	<u>February 10th</u>	<u>February 17th</u>	<u>February 24th</u>
Open 1st	<i>Chuck Strimming</i>	<i>Ellis Bray</i>	<i>Butch Meese</i>	<i>Butch Meese</i>
2nd	<i>Jan Gurvitz</i>	<i>Jan Gurvitz</i>	<i>Chuck Strimming</i>	<i>Dragan Stevanovic</i>
2nd	<i>Butch Meese</i>	<i>Chuck Strimming</i>	<i>Larry Strommen</i>	<i>Ellis Bray</i>

BACKGAMMON Tournament Schedule

Mar 18-20.....	1994 Midwest Championships, Marriott Hotel, Oak Brook, IL.....	(312) 338-6380
Apr 22-24.....	15th Annual Granite State Open & NE Team, Woodbound Inn, NH.....	(603) 863-4711
Apr 27-May 1.....	3rd Tournament of the Americas, Cariari Hotel, San José, Costa Rica.....	(312) 252-7755
May 27-30.....	15th Chicago Open, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Elk Grove Village, IL.....	(708) 674-0120
July 1-4.....	Michigan Summer Championships, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI.....	(810) 232-9731
July 29-31.....	42nd INDIANA Open , Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis.....	(317) 845-8435
Sep 5-10.....	World Cup IV, Harvey's Addison Hotel, Dallas.....	(301) 299-8264
Thursdays... 7:00 PM at SPATS (842-3465) Castleton Square between J.C.Penneys & L.S.Ayres.....		845-8435

Expert Backgammon and Copy Protection

...continues from page 2...

Copy protection has been abandoned by all the big players in the software business. It complicates use of the product by legitimate purchasers. This in turn complicates support of the product by the author.

Legitimate purchasers of non-copy-protected software get documentation, support, upgrades. Users of pirated copies often end up buying full price upgrades to receive documentation and support.

When a software producer introduces add-on products, the more users out there (legitimate and pirate), the larger the market.

Bill Tallmadge, NY

Entirely negative. There is no excuse for copy protection these days. I won't go into the philosophy of copy protection vs none, but the concept has been entirely discredited. It merely creates an entire industry of programmers who make it their life goals to break protection. Checked some FTP sites lately, I can pick up cracks for hundreds of programs in a second. 'Nuff said on that.

I was very interested in the Expert Backgammon Program when I first heard about it and actively sought out more information on the program in order to make an educated purchasing decision. First, the price is way out of line (as in too high). I don't give a damn how much time a programmer puts into a program, or whether it works out to \$.045 per hour for what the program costs, or any other of the standard (and tedious) arguments from those wishing to get rich quick. A program must be priced for entry into the market for which it is intended. This program is overpriced!

However, I digress, but price/value were major influences in my decision. To the point (aren't you glad), while debating the price/value issue, the fact that the program was copy protected immediately killed any consideration of my parting with money for this program. It is my personal policy that I will never buy software that has copy protection. PERIOD! (This does not include the annoying manual lookup/code entry type you find on some games).

Peter Nickless, Canada

I don't have the new EXBG yet, but I wrote to Tom Weaver to ask him to replace my "expired" version 1.61. Bob Paris told me about the copy protection.

Ordinarily my policy is to not buy copy-protected software. If necessary, I can handle software that requires a key disk (like Matchqiz), but I don't like it. I will NOT install on my computer software that creates hidden copy protection files, as I understand the recent version of EXBG does. It looks like the only solution is to try to hack my version of 1.61 to remove the expiration. I certainly will not upgrade to copy protected software.

Durf Freund, CA



As regards the copy protection on Expert Backgammon, it allows you 2 loads, so I used 1 for my work machine and 1 for my home machine - No problem.

Alan Cornish

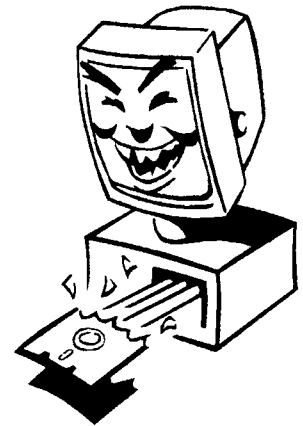
I won't buy anything that's copy protected these days, no matter how much I want the program. Unfortunately, that includes Expert Backgammon.

Copy protection frustrates legitimate users and provides a challenge for hackers, but serves as only a minimal deterrent to a determined pirate. If a program is reasonably priced, is useful, and is easy to use, people will pay for it. This is why the shareware concept works so well.

Patti Beadles, OR

I have Expert Backgammon, and I have not been bothered by the copy protection. I believe wholeheartedly in the intellectual property rights of the software developer (which happens to be my business), and copy protection is the simplest means of safeguarding those rights. Of course, some schemes of copy protection are better than others. Since I haven't tried to move the program from one hard disk to another, I don't know how good (or bad) is the method used here.

Phil Franklin, NJ



Although I am not an owner of Expert BG, I am fundamentally opposed to buying any software that incorporates copy protection. It is a checkoff-item when I consider purchasing software: "Is it copy protected? If yes, go to next product." I absolutely refuse to use any software that employs disk-based copy protection (i.e. puts "hidden" files on the hard disk, or limits the number of installations to two installs). I also dislike copy protection that uses code-word lookups or fancy code-wheels everytime the program is run ("enter the third word on p. 72 of the user guide"). These programs I usually hack to remove the obnoxious code.

One scheme that has become increasingly popular is to tie a registration number to the product. The first time it is launched, the program prompts the user for a registration number, which it stores (often it stores your name as well). Some programs refuse to run without a valid number, which is usually supplied with the product's documentation or registration info. This scheme strikes me as a reasonable imposition that helps limit widespread dissemination or outright theft. It makes the giving of a copy to a friend a conscious act, because you also have to provide him/her with the registration number, and your name will appear on their copy.

In my opinion there is no legitimate rationale for employing intrusive copy protection. If you make a good product, ask a fair price for it, and provide your users with technical support and upgrades, people will buy it rather than bootleg it.

Paul Ferguson, CA

The Opening Moves
...continues from Page 1...

One way to look at this is: if the position were rolled out an extremely large number of times (let's say one trillion times) the likelihood that the result of this new rollout would fall inside the old bar is 95%, and therefore the chance that it falls outside the bar is 5%. Qualitatively we can say that if two candidates for the same roll (for example 64: 24-14 compared to 24-18, 13-9) have tick marks which fall inside each other's bars, then those plays are roughly equivalent. If a tick mark for one play falls outside the bar for a competing candidate (for example making the 2 point with 64 compared to either of the above two options) then we can say that the play with the smaller unit cube equity (making the two point in our example) is worst in the opinion of Expert Backgammon. (Note that *smaller* in this context is defined to mean any negative number is worse than any positive number. For example, -0.2 is smaller than -0.1 which is smaller than +0.1 which is smaller than +0.2.)

**How trustworthy is this
Expert Backgammon, anyway!**

Hopefully you have by now asked yourself the question: *How trustworthy is this Expert Backgammon, anyway!* There is clearly no easy answer, but let's take a comparative look at these results and the *consensus opinion* of backgammon authors and players. If you were to poll backgammon players as to the single best opening roll, I suspect that virtually everyone would choose 31. So does EXBG, quantitatively giving the lucky opener a whopping 18% edge!

Also, EXBG ranks 42 and 61 (making the bar) as a tossup for the second best opening. I doubt that too many players would argue vehemently against these results, although 6-1 has taken some abuse in print. Very conservative plays like playing 4-1 and 3-2 to the 8-point are unpopular among humans and EXBG alike.

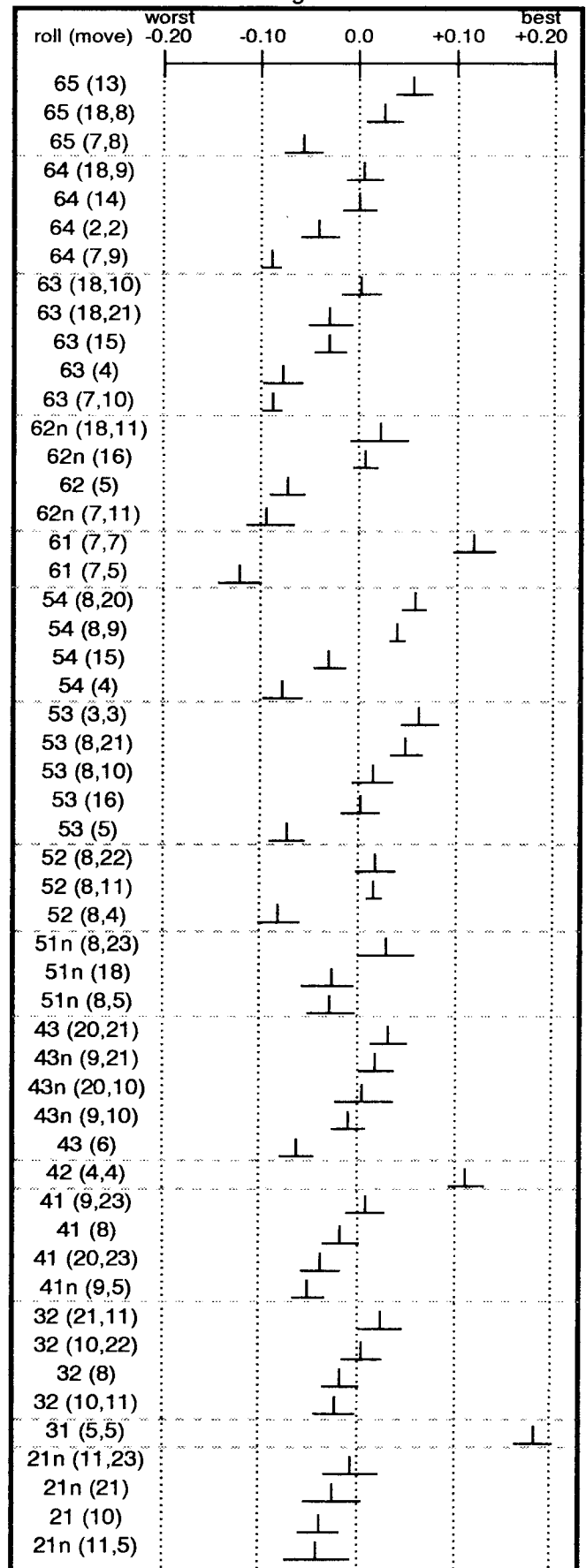
Now let's look at some places where EXBG differs with the experts. For years, anyone who split 24-23 with an opening 21; 41; or 51 was either a novice or a wimp. Every educated person with any semblance of guts slotted the 5-point. All the great authors of the late seventies and eighties (for example, Cooke, Magriel, Dwek, Robertie) advocated the slot. There were some exceptions in the early seventies (John Crawford and the Jacobys) and Magriel did point out that 24-23 may well have been as good, but did you ever see any of these people or anyone else, for that matter, do anything but start the 5-point?

And yet EXBG says that the slot forfeits 4-8% equity as compared to splitting! Who are you going to believe, a hundred expert humans or one computer (programmed by two humans)? The jury is still out. However, it is worth noting that over the past year, many players including some considered *world class* have begun splitting, quite likely based on the rollouts of none other than EXBG. Another silicon player, TD-GAMMON (written by Gerry Tesauro and considered by some to be capable of holding its own against the best humans in the world), surely has an opinion, though I haven't seen it. If it does side with EXBG in splitting over slotting, I suspect the avalanche of defectors will grow.

The computer can be asked to solve replies to opening rolls also, and I have begun a study of these. Here is a problem to ponder. Your opponent plays the 43 opening 24-20, 13-10 and you then roll 41. Rank the following four candidates: a) 24-23, 13-9 (the best way to play an opening 4,1 according to EXBG); b) 6-5*, 13-9; c) 6-5*, 24-20; and d) 6-5*-1*.

EXBG says that the best of these, though considerably better than its three competitors, still puts the responder at a 7.5% disadvantage. The remaining plays have unit cube equities of -12.5%, -13.5%, and -9.5%. See if you can figure out which equities go with which plays. The answer will be printed in my next article.

Figure 1



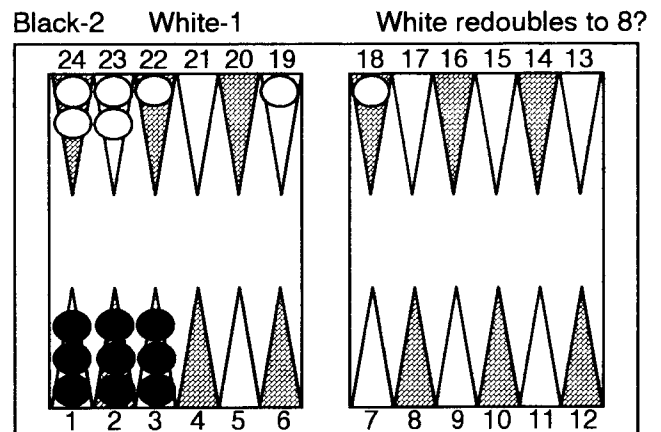
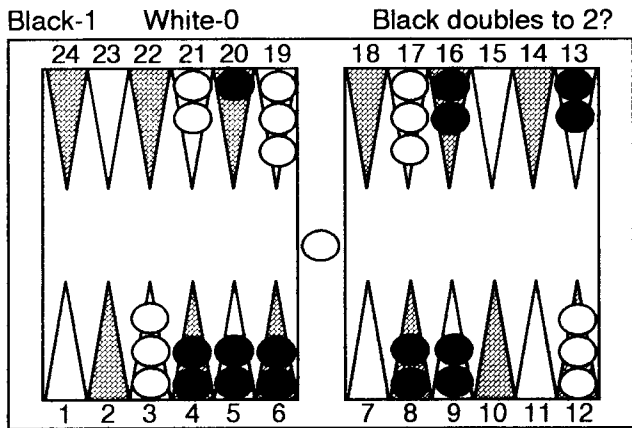
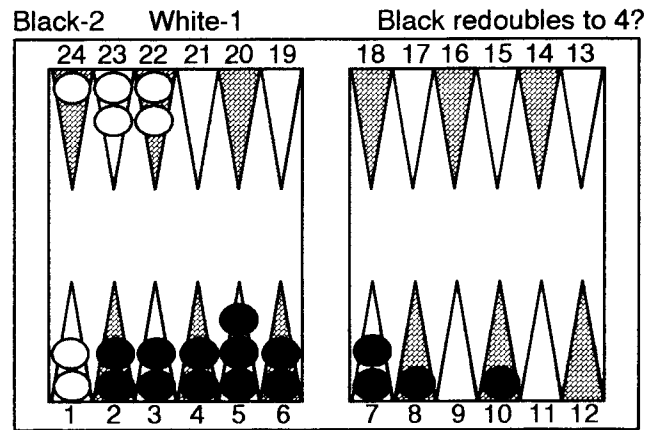
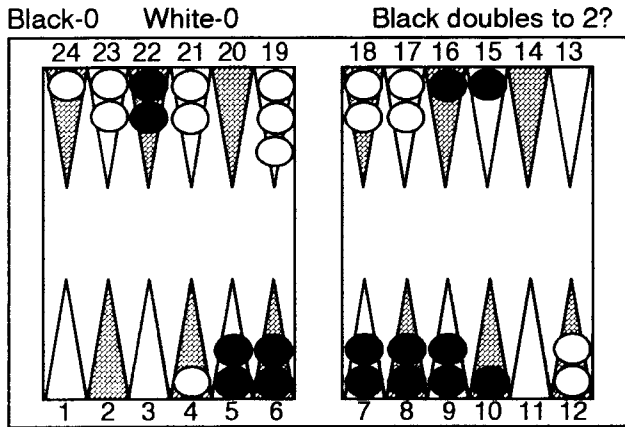
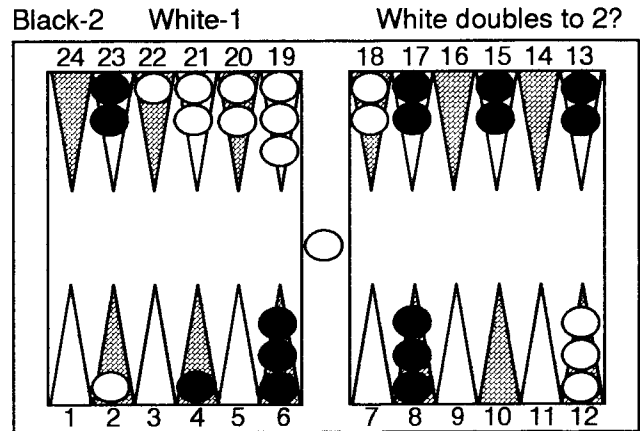
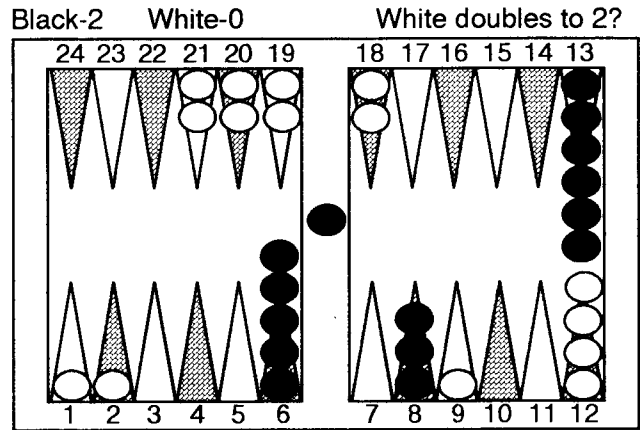
1993 Michigan Summer Championships
Perry Gartner vs Bob Wachtel
9 Point Match

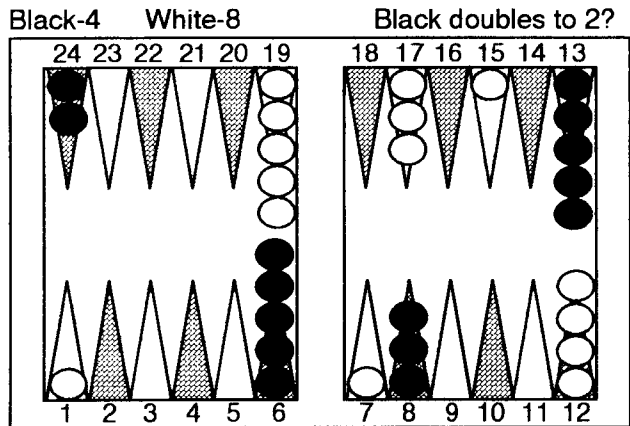
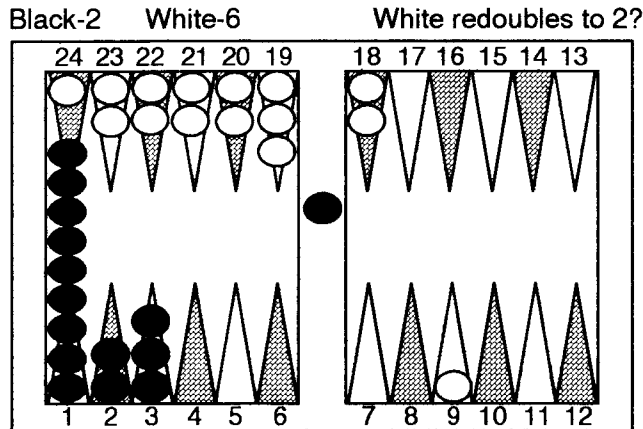
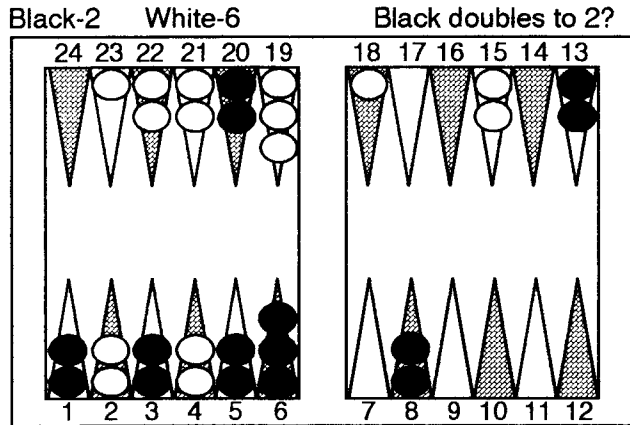
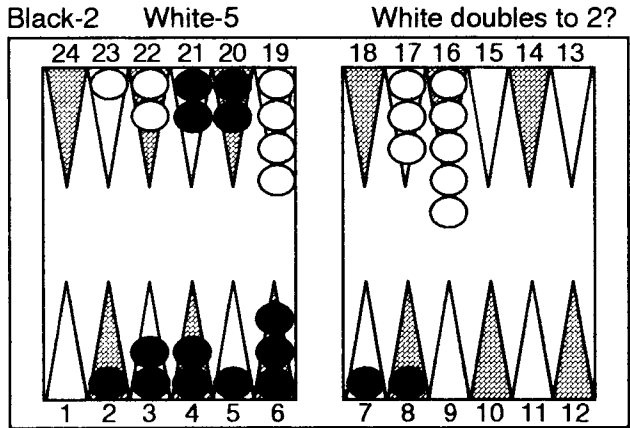
The HBC Newsletter presents a match between Perry Gartner and Bob Wachtel from the 1993 Michigan Summer Championships.

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(5²) denotes 2 or more pieces moving to a point; this example has 2 pieces moving to the 5 point.

In the doubling positions, Perry is the dark checkers and Bob the light. The positions are shown from Perry's point of view; study them first before going through the games.





Game 1

Perry Gartner - 0			Bob Wachtel - 0		
	roll	played	roll	played	
1)	21	11 23	41	2x-1x	
2)	31	22 24x	52	18	
3)	64	7x ²	51	20 23	
4)	43	2x 5x	31	22 24	
5)	65	11	61	7 23x	
6)	54	20 ²	53	8 20x	
7)	43	18x	54	20 ²	
8)	62	10	65	14x 15x	
9)	41	21 24	41	16 14	
10)	63	15 3x	62	23 10x	
11)	61	18	42	4 ²	
12)	41	13	61	22x-16	
13)	22	23 22 5 ²	54	11 6	
14)	31	10 22	64	7 ²	
15)	31	7 ²	63	8 11	
16)	64	14x 16	62	17x	
17)	53	22 8x	41	21 7	
18)	62	8 4x	31	21x	
19)	54	16	42	2 ^{FB}	
20)	62	14 ^{FB22}	52	2 11x	
21)	63	16	62	13	
22)	42	14x-10	65	EF	
23)	41	9 ²	64	15	
24)	31	10x 15	54	21 1	
25)		double to 2?		pass	

Game 2

Perry Gartner - 1			Bob Wachtel - 0		
	roll	played	roll	played	
1)	21	11 23	43	20 10	
2)	64	5x 9	51	20x 9	
3)	53	20 ²	52	4 ²	
4)	31	5x ²	32	22 ²	
5)	42	9 22	21	3x ^{FB}	
6)	63	22x-16	64	21 7	
7)	22	18x-16 4x ²	53	22 EF	
8)		double to 2?		pass	

Game 3

Perry Gartner - 2			Bob Wachtel - 0		
	roll	played	roll	played	
1)	42	4 ²	
2)	65	13	61	7 ²	
3)	61	17x	11	23 5 ²	
4)	53	9	62	16x	
5)	54	EF		double to 2?	
6)		pass			

Leather Dice Cups
by Dragan Stevanovic

Made of durable belting leather.
\$40.00 per set.

CUBE
Products Company

(317) 894-8496
FAX (317) 891-8577

Game 4

Perry Gartner - 2		Bob Wachtel - 1		
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	62	18 11	41	20 7x
2)	32	23 5x	64	21 7
3)	54	4x ^{F13}	53	20x 21x
4)	55	15 ²	65	14x-9
5)	52	20 4x	43	21x 5x
6)	21	23 24	62	5 ^{F13}
7)	43	17x	62	23 3
8)	43	17	11	4 ²
9)	52	8 4x		double to 2?
10)		take	64	21x 7
11)	65	EF	66	3 1
12)	63	EF	51	18 5
13)	51	24x 10	31	24 15x
14)	62	23 9	52	10 22
15)	64	17 9	51	12x-7
16)	64	EF	22	1x ^{F7} 20
17)	31	24x EF	51	24 15
18)	54	EF	21	10
19)	63	EF	32	21 3
20)	61	24 11	54	6 ^{F15}
21)	53	12 14	31	7 9
22)	65	5 7	62	13
23)	22	12x-10 5 4	41	24 5
24)	32	7 ²	33	21x 4 ³
25)	11	23 6 ^{F8}	21	3 ²
26)	63	14	65	15-10
27)	61	7 ^{F14}	63	4 3
28)	44	4 ² 3 ²	63	0 3
29)	54	2 ²	43	0 ²
30)	31	5	55	0 ⁴
31)	32	18	62	0 2x
32)	11	23x ² 17	62	EF
33)	43	13 20 ^{F23}	..	EF
34)	32	15	61	18
35)	32	20 13	21	15
36)	41	9 12	64	5x
37)	52	20x 7	32	EF
38)	43	13	41	24 NP
39)	64	7 8	32	1x NP
40)	31	24x-21	11	24 2 ³
41)	65	10	61	1 NP
42)		double to 4?		take
43)	65	4 3	63	NP
44)	32	2 ^{F7}	32	1 NP
45)	43	0	64	14
46)	41	1x ²	..	CB
47)	52	0 3	31	EF
48)	54	1 2	64	19 10
49)	65	0 ²	44	7 6
50)	64	0 ²		double to 8?
51)		pass		

Game 5

Perry Gartner - 2		Bob Wachtel - 5		
	roll	played	roll	played
1)	51	18
2)	65	7x 8	52	18x
3)	21	23 7x	43	18x
4)	54	20 ²	53	3 ²
5)	32	21 ²	65	18 8
6)	42	4 ²	44	14 ² 9 ²
7)	42	7	22	9 ²
8)	53	3 ²	54	9 2
9)	65	2 ^{F13}	53	6 ^{F14}
10)	53	5 ^{F13}		double to 2?
11)		pass		

Take-Points in Money Games
Part 3 of 3 - Other Cube Action Decisions
 by Rick Janowski

So far, only take-points have been considered. There are many other doubling decisions to consider - when to redouble, when to beaver, etc. Correct cube-action can be established by comparing the resultant equities from the alternative cube positions; owned (E_o), unavailable (E_u), and centered (E_c):

$$E_o = C_v [p(W+L+0.5x)-L] \dots \text{equation (5)}$$

$$E_u = C_v [p(W+L+0.5x)-L-0.5x] \dots \text{equation (6)}$$

$$E_c = \frac{4C_v}{4-x} [p(W+L+0.5x)-L-0.25] \dots \text{equation (7)}$$

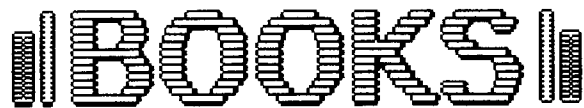
where C_v = cube value, i.e. stake-level
 p = cubeless winning probability

Note that equation (7) is not applicable if the *Jacoby Rule* is in operation.

From manipulation of the above equations, the following table of formulae, covering the full range of cube actions in money games, has been derived:

1. In the *live-cube model*, when gammons and backgammons are active, it is never correct to double, as positions strong enough to double are also *too good* to double! This is understandable because the complete lack of volatility protects the *double-out*.
2. Assuming the *Jacoby Rule* is not in operation, then initial double-points are always lower than redouble-points. When the cube is *dead* or *live*, they coincide, but diverge for intermediate values of cube-life. Maximum divergence occurs when x is about 0.57, and typically ranges between 2.00% ($W=1, L=1$) and 3.75% ($W=2, L=2$).

...see **Table of Formulae** on Page 9...



Hunting for a **MAGRIEL** book?
 Call HBC...we can help!

Rick Janowski (Rochdale, England) is a bridge design engineer. He is currently working on the refurbishment/strengthening of the widest bridge in the world, located in his home town. A 15 year veteran of backgammon, he is one of the top ten players in Britain and has the reputation as a theoretical analyst.

Expert Backgammon and Copy Protection

...continues from page 3...

I don't have a copy of expert backgammon (but would love to order one, if I knew how. Any info here would be appreciated!).

I vote a strong NO! to copy protection. This stuff is usually put in by amateur programmers or managers who don't understand the computer biz (IMHO); and personally, I don't usually buy stuff with copy protection built-in, unless the program is extremely useful.

Any copy-protection scheme can be defeated - period. There is no reason why it should even be put in. It won't stop a serious cracker.

And in fact, history has shown that it's actually beneficial to have your stuff duplicated, illegally. If the program is of any use, it's the best advertising there is (I speak from experience). Most people are honest and will pay for the service and upgrades and you can't stop the ones who aren't honest.

Please inform the author to quit pissing off his customers. This is extremely bad publicity. If I were a technical novice, I'd hold off ordering a copy until this issue was resolved.

Anonymous



One of my hot spots lately. I got my Expert BG upgrade at Las Vegas. I overheard Kit talking to Tom Weaver and a few others about the new ExBG protection, but didn't think much of it at the time. I assumed it was probably similar to the hidden file stuff I've seen Kit use. When I got home and looked at ExBG I was quite concerned when reading the installation instructions. Don't reformat your disk without uninstalling the game?? I'm sure you can imagine the horror if all of my programs wanted this done. It would take me many hours just to get ready to reformat. I also assume that tape backups and restores won't work. Another strike against it. I do a fair amount of playing with my system, installing different OSs etc and playing with them for a while. I haven't done it lately, but can I trust my memory to uninstall before I reformat for a new OS. I must say that so far I haven't had too many problems. Initially I had to install, uninstall and install again to get the thing to work, but it seems fine now.

One more comment about Tom copy protection though. I'm pretty knowledgeable and can figure out most of what the copy protection is doing and which files belong to it. I'm finding more and more novices with computers that would have no idea that those files put in the root directory were from ExBG and one day would just delete them. Just because they are hidden is no guarantee that they aren't seen.

Kurt Schurecht, IL

I have no problem with the copy protection as long as the producers of the product are responsive to any problems. For example, not long after I purchased Expert Backgammon (1.61) I had a problem because of some other software I installed. Sorry, I don't remember what it was -- I think DoubleDisk (disk compression software). Afterwards, I wasn't able to access Expert Backgammon.

Luckily, I had one installation remaining, which I was able to install and then figure out the copy protection scheme. Having figured it out, I can now install as many copies as I want (although it would be a hassle). I only have 2 PCs, so I haven't actually violated their desired limit of 2.

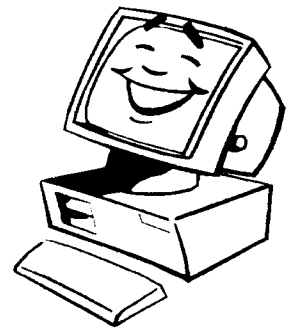
Anyway, if I hadn't been able to fix this, then I would expect the company to promptly respond by sending me another copy (with a single installation available). I can't say whether or not they would have, but to my mind, this is the main issue. As long as the copy protection typically causes no problems, and they are prompt and courteous in response to problems which do occur, fine.

Anonymous.

I am a registered owner of Expert Backgammon. I do not have an objection to a copy protection routine as long as it does not prevent me from using the product.

I have had some problems with the copy protect routine used by Expert Backgammon. I have already lost one (of the two) copies due to a disk defrag (where I forgot to unload the program). I am also annoyed at the fact that I will lose a copy if I ever have to restore a bad hard drive.

John Graas, CA



Tom Weaver planted an intentional bug in EXBG program. The program "expired" on 1-1-94! Upon calling him in Texas, he explained it was done to stop bogus copies of his program from being in use without his being paid! Weak argument, anyone using a pirated copy wouldn't mind changing computer's clock back a year to continue using it! Truth is, I'm sure, he wants to get Robertie's mailing list of buyers!

End result, I had to mail the disk back to Texas, after incurring the expense of a phone call, not have use of a program I paid \$105.00 for, wait for it's return, and upon re-installing get an additional very strange subdirectory holding two hidden files!

As long as I live, I could not allow myself to invest one additional dollar in a Tom Weaver **Expert Backgammon** product! I now will look upon ANY backgammon related computer program with a jaundiced eye.

I will also be advising others to steer clear of this cretin and any future tricks of his.

Oh yeah, one additional piece of business he pulls; he's installed ANOTHER BUG in the revised edition! Configured to allow only 5 or 6 installations!

Warn all you come in contact with to avoid this guy and his product.

Bob Paris, FL

Cube Action Formulae

Cube Parameter	Dead Cube (x = 0.0)	Live Cube (x = 1.0)	General Cube (x varies)
Take-Point, <i>TP</i>	$= \frac{(L-0.5)}{(W+L)}$	$= \frac{(L-0.5)}{(W+L+0.5)}$	$= \frac{(L-0.5)}{(W+L+0.5x)}$
Beaver-Point, <i>BP</i>	$= \frac{L}{(W+L)}$	$= \frac{L}{(W+L+0.5)}$	$= \frac{L}{(W+L+0.5x)}$
Raccoon-Point, <i>RP</i>	$= \frac{L}{(W+L)}$	$= \frac{(L+0.5)}{(W+L+0.5)}$	$= \frac{(L+0.5x)}{(W+L+0.5x)}$
Initial Double-Point, <i>ID</i> (no Jacoby)	$= \frac{L}{(W+L)}$	$= \frac{(L+1)}{(W+L+0.5)}$	$= \frac{(L+(\frac{3-x}{2-x})\frac{x}{2})}{(W+L+0.5x)}$
Initial Double-Point, <i>ID₁</i> (Jacoby with no beavers)	$= \frac{(L-0.5)}{(W+L-1)}$	$= \frac{(L+1)}{(W+L+0.5)}$	where $k_1 = \frac{(W+L)(L-0.5(1-x))}{L(W+L-(1-x))}$ $= \frac{k_1(L+(\frac{3-x}{2-x})\frac{x}{2})}{(W+L+0.5x)}$
Initial Double-Point, <i>ID₂</i> (Jacoby with beavers)	$= \frac{(L-0.25)}{(W+L-0.5)}$ $\neq \frac{(L-0.5)}{(W+L-1)}$	$= \frac{(L+1)}{(W+L+0.5)}$	where $k_2 = \frac{(W+L)(L-0.25(1-x))}{L(W+L-0.5(1-x))} \neq k_1$ $= \frac{k_2(L+(\frac{3-x}{2-x})\frac{x}{2})}{(W+L+0.5x)}$
Redouble-Point, <i>RD</i>	$= \frac{L}{(W+L)}$	$= \frac{(L+1)}{(W+L+0.5)}$	$= \frac{(L+x)}{(W+L+0.5x)}$
Cash-Point, <i>CP</i>	$= \frac{(L+0.5)}{(W+L)}$	$= \frac{(L+1)}{(W+L+0.5)}$	$= \frac{(L+0.5+0.5x)}{(W+L+0.5x)}$
Too Good Point, <i>TG</i>	$= \frac{(L+1)}{(W+L)}$	$= \frac{(L+1)}{(W+L+0.5)}$	$= \frac{(L+1)}{(W+L+0.5x)}$

where

- W* = average cubeless value of games ultimately won
- L* = average cubeless value of games ultimately lost
- x* = cube life index (0.0 for dead cube and 1.0 for live cube)
- k₁* = Jacoby factor (no beavers)
- k₂* = Jacoby factor (with beavers)

Game 6

Perry Gartner - 2		Bob Wachtel - 6	
roll	played	roll	played
1)	..	32	21 11
2)	51 8 23	32	21 11
3)	51 3 22	21	10 ^{F13}
4)	42 20 ²	41	7 ^{F11} 10
5)	52 3 18x	62	23 7x
6)	21 24 18x	21	23 7x
7)	55 20 8 1 ²	64	7 2
8)	64 7 20	42	4 ²
9)	32 5 ²	54	3 ²
10)	double to 2?		take
11)	42 18x-14	62	23 4
12)	53 15x-12	43	18
13)	53 7x 11	53	EF
14)	51 7	55	EF
15)	63 5 ²	41	21 5
16)	64 3 ^{F13}	63	17x 2
17)	32 EF	22	21 ² 13
18)	21 24 3	53	13
19)	51 1 2	51	15
20)	32 2 1	32	12 2
21)	33 3 ² 2 ²	21	19 11
22)	41 20 1	52	6 17
23)	32 17 1	64	7
24)	61 11 1	43	14x
25)	52 18x	21	EF
26)	42 14 1	31	EF
27)	11 4x-3	65	19 20
28)	63 1 11x	54	21 14x
29)	43 EF	63	11 ^{F20}
30)	41 20	66	8 7 ² 5x
31)	61 24 NP	51	16 5
32)	64 NP	21	6 ^{F8} 1x
33)	43 EF		double to 4?
34)	pass		

Game 8

Perry Gartner - 4		Bob Wachtel - 8	
roll	played	roll	played
1)	..	63	18 10
2)	double to 2?		take
3)	53 1x 21	63	22 4x
4)	53 20 21x	52	20 4x
5)	21 23 7x	51	24x 8
6)	44 21x 5x 9	21	23 24
7)	52 8 5	53	16x
8)	65 20 2x	51	24 11
9)	41 2 20	31	21 ²
10)	65 14x 1x	54	21 EF
11)	21 11 ^{F14}	64	15
12)	51 10x-5	53	22 16
13)	55 15 ² 3x ²	21	24x 14
14)	22 23 11x 1x ²	42	21 EF
15)	65 7 18	61	EF
16)	64 9 7	32	22 6
17)	41 3x 6	21	EF
18)	51 3	63	EF
19)	42 14 21	54	21 8
20)	62 15 3	55	11x ²
21)	32 20	54	3 2
22)	33 3 ³ 2	63	2 3
23)	64 5	53	10x-5x
24)	63 EF	65	5 16
25)	53 EF	65	7 16
26)	65 EF	42	4 ²
27)	43 EF	64	5 4
28)	21 24 EF	51	1x
29)	61 24x EF	61	19 15
30)	32 EF	64	9 1x
31)	52 EF	32	1 17
32)	.. CB	61	11 8
33)	.. CB	54	6 12
34)	.. CB	62	4 ^{F12}
35)	.. CB	64	4 0
36)	.. CB	43	2 3
37)	54 EF	22	1 ^{F5} 3 0
38)	65 19 20	64	0 ²
39)	62 12	43	0 ²
40)	44 7 8	55	game

Game 7 - Grawford Game

Perry Gartner - 2		Bob Wachtel - 8	
roll	played	roll	played
1)	62 18 11	44	20 ² 9 ²
2)	42 18	41	9 5
3)	54 6 4	61	3 5
4)	31 3 ²	52	3 4
5)	33 10 ⁴	21	4 ^{F6} 2 ^{F3}
6)	62 4 ²	65	2 3
7)	33 15 ² 4	42	5 7
8)	64 4 6	32	1
9)	65 4	22	18 ² 1
10)	33 3 ² 1 ²	43	10x-6
11)	55 EF	53	13 15
12)	61 19x-18x	65	20 EF
13)	52 11	64	EF
14)	11 5x-4 2 ²	31	EF
15)	33 5 ³	..	CB
16)	32 0 ^{F5}	..	CB
17)	65 0 1	11	EF
18)	65 0 ²	62	19 EF
19)	22 0 ²	61	18
20)	52 0 ²	54	6
21)	61 0 ²	32	16 ^{F10} 11
22)	65 0 ²	52	gammon

Special thanks to **Walter Trice, MA** for providing this match.

Hoosier Pips: HBC welcomes new player, *Krystal Shaffer*, and *Neil Ezell* after a 10-year absence...It did not take *Neil* long to reach the Winners' Circle by capturing first on January 27th...Best wishes to *Chuck Stimming* on his up-coming wedding to *Maggie*, Labor Day Weekend...The following players improved in 1993 according to the Rating System maintained by *Don Woods*. *Cyrus Mobed* +160 (1439 to 1589), *Ellis Bray* +146 (1521 to 1667), *Woody Woodworth* +144 (1566 to 1710), *Larry Strommen* +109 (1569 to 1678), *Butch Meese* +109 (1682 to 1791) and *Gabe Stiasny* +103 (1493 to 1596).