


**Hoosier  
Backgammon  
Club**

May-June 1995  
Volume XII, No. 3

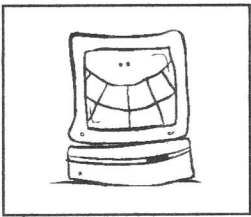


**Peeking  
into the  
Future of  
Backgammon  
Tournaments**



It may not happen for some time, but it will happen. Computers are becoming more prevalent daily. At backgammon tournaments today they are used in a limited capacity, for example, registration, but in the future they will do much more.

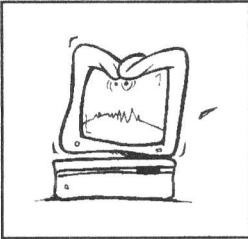
We can now play matches by computers on the First International Backgammon Server or FIBS.



In the future, instead of playing on a backgammon board, we'll play on a computer connected to another computer called a server or network. The server will be the controller and provides all the functions needed to play tournament backgammon and

keep track of all events. No more draw sheets pasted up on the walls; the information is available at everyone's computer and as each match is completed, the draw sheet would be updated automatically.

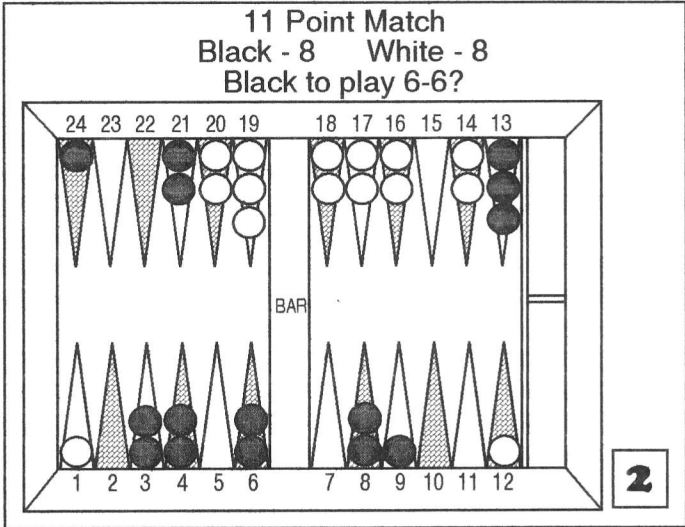
Features available when playing matches would include legal moves only and a built-in automatic timer. Matches should be played at a faster pace than playing with a backgammon board therefore, longer matches may be in order.



Players would be able to get a printed copy of all matches played. Anyone would be able to watch any match in progress. Player's rating would be adjusted after each match.

There are a lot more features that could be available such as giving the odds of winning at any point in the tournament. Whether or not you like the idea, it will be quite sometime before this becomes a reality.

**One Problem-Three Views**



**View One:**

When I first looked at this problem, I was trying to find some combination of building and/or blocking using the 3 checkers on the 13-point and the 2 pieces on the 9-point. Do I hit on the one point? If I hit, do I cover? What play will give Black the most room to break his/her prime before escaping the lone checker? 13/7(2), 8/2(2) looked best, and if I were sitting at the table, I suspect this is the play I would have made.

A few days later, I came back to this problem and decided to do a pip count. I was somewhat surprised to find that after playing this 66, the race will be about even (Black's 132 to White's 134). I then realized that 21/15(2) was an option. Actually, I should have thought of this even if I hadn't done a pip count, but I was trying to satisfy one of backgammon's greatest obstacles--fear. This move would strand the poor loner on the 24-point, in effect tossing it to the wolves.

If this game is a prime vs. prime battle, then escaping two of my three blocked checkers could be my best chance of success. My loner is offset by Black's loner. So how do I play the last two sixes? 13/7(2) builds a decent broken prime, but leaves a direct shot on my 13 point. 8/2(2) builds an inner board point and leaves a safer position, but it looks as though White's loner will have a better chance to hop, skip, and jump to freedom. I had **Expert Backgammon 2.1** roll out four plays, and making the 7-point with 21/15(2) came out best. The rollout results were:

candidate play	resulting cubeless equity for black	cubeless equity 95% confidence interval
21/15(2),13/7(2)	-0.18	(-0.25,-0.11)
21/15(2),8/2(2)	-0.28	(-0.34,-0.21)
13/1(2)*	-0.41	(-0.47,-0.35)
13/7(2),8/2(2)	-0.50	(-0.56,-0.43)

Chuck Bower, Bloomington, IN

...continues on page 3...

**1995 HOOSIER BACKGAMMON CLUB Gammon Point Standings.**

**HBC Player of the Month for March was Chuck Stimming with 276 gammon points.**

**HBC Player of the Month for April was a tie Chuck Stimming & Larry Strommen with 160 gammon points.**

1) Chuck Stimming.....580	Mick Dobratz.....200	Reggie Porter.....32
2) Don Woods.....574	Sean Garber.....160	Peter Kalba.....20
3) Ellis Bray.....528	Kevin McLeaster.....150	Bob Cassell.....20
4) Gabe Stiasny.....524	Neil Ezell.....146	David Smith.....20
5) Dave Groner.....508	Rick Reahard.....110	Elijah Miller.....16
6) Butch Meese.....466	J.A. Miller.....80	Richard Heinz.....16
7) Larry Strommen.....410	Wendy Kaplan.....60	Lance Jenkins.....16
8) Woody Woodworth.....372	Scott Richardson.....48	Tom Helt.....10
9) Jan Gurvitz.....318	Brian Nelson.....48	Dave Fey.....10
10) Mary Ann Meese.....230	Bill Hodes.....40	Paul Ruterma.....10
Chuck Bower.....228	Stan Gurvitz.....36	

**Mailbox**

I liked Chuck Bower's article on the 4-3 opening. Chess has so many giant books on the opening - why can't BG have just one? Maybe you will write it.

For Table 1A, you show only one 5-2 response, 13/8, 24/22. I prefer 13/8, 6/4 because of the duplication of 3's and because I really hate the 24/22 split generally. Could you run that by EXBG?

Thanks,  
Mary Hickey, Kirkersville, OH

**Top Ten Reasons**  
to attend the  
**43rd Indiana Open**  
Labor Day Weekend  
Indianapolis

10. Home Grown Backgammon
9. Swiss Movement Format
8. Directors' Cup (new)
7. All Divisions: 85% Return
6. \$300 Masters Jackpot
5. \$100 Amateur Jackpot
4. 3 letters: ABT
3. MicroBlitzes
2. more later...

**Catch the fireworks in Michigan!**



Michigan Summer



Backgammon Championships



**100% return of Open entry fees**

**June 30 – July 3, 1995**



Novi Hilton Hotel  
Novi, Michigan  
810/349-4000  
*(near Detroit Metro Airport)*

**Carol Joy Cole**  
810/232-9731

KG

**ABT**  
AMERICAN  
BACKGAMMON  
TOUR ★ 1995

	<u>March 2nd</u>	<u>March 9th</u>	<u>March 16th</u>	<u>March 23rd</u>	<u>March 30th</u>
1st	Dave Groner	Butch Meese	Woody Woodworth	Chuck Stimming	Ellis Bray
2nd	Gabe Stiasny	Ellis Bray	Chuck Stimming	Don Woods	Chuck Stimming
2nd	Chuck Stimming	Woody Woodworth	...	...	Gabe Stiasny
	<u>April 6th</u>	<u>April 13th</u>	<u>April 20th</u>	<u>April 27th</u>	
1st	Ellis Bray	Don Woods	Chuck Stimming	Chuck Stimming	
2nd	Don Woods	Larry Strommen	Larry Strommen	Larry Strommen	
2nd	---	Woody Woodworth	Woody Woodworth	Chuck Bower	

**Backgammon Tournament Schedule**

May 26-29.....	<b>16th Chicago Open</b> , Woodfield Hyatt Regency Hotel, Schaumburg, Illinois.....	(708) 674-0120
Jun30-Jul03..	<b>Michigan Summer Championships</b> , Novi Hilton, Novi, MI.....	(810) 232-9731
Sep 01-04.....	<b>43rd INDIANA OPEN</b> , Ramada Inn East, Indianapolis.....	(317) 845-8435
Thursdays.....	7:00 PM at <b>SPATS</b> (842-3465) Castleton Square (between J.C.Penney's & L.S.Ayres)...	845-8435

**One Problem-Three Views**

...continues from page 1...

**View Two:**

My play is 21/15(2), 13/7(2).

Not escaping the back checkers seems wrong because it leaves BLACK on the losing side of the priming battle. The safe play of 13/7(3), 9/3 leaves an awkward hard-to-improve position, while the blitzing attack of 13/1(2)\* leaves BLACK the difficult task of blitzing and escaping the back checkers simultaneously. So 21/15(2) is clear. For the remaining two sixes, 8/2(2), 13/7(2), and 13/1\* are the candidates. 8/2(2) can be rejected because it allows White to develop his front game while waiting for a convenient exit number for his back checker. Note that the fly-shots BLACK rates to leave after 8/2(2) are very costly. 13/1\*, and 13/7(2) both seem reasonable. They both leave about the same number of shots. Hitting gives BLACK a chance to pick up a second checker in favorable variations. However, cleaning up the blot on the ace point is a problem because BLACK is short of wood and doesn't really want to go as deep as the ace point. 13/7(2) makes the key bar point putting real pressure on White's back checker. And now, BLACK's positions flows smoothly -- the outfield is under control and BLACK's checkers have good landing spots. Getting hit is costly, but BLACK will still have a good shot at winning the resulting position.

A Jellyfish rollout will shed some light on this position, but I haven't done that.

Hal Heinrich, Canada

**View Three:**

There are MANY possible plays here, but only a few are worth considering.

- (1) (13-1x) twice.... making ace is hopeless here
- (2) 13-1x, (13-7) twice...hopeless
- (3) 13-1x, (8-2) twice...hopeless
- (4) (21-15) twice, 13-1x.... weak

Those above are all terrible.

- (5) 21-15, 15-9, (13-7) twice... makes decent block, but TOO MANY defenseless blots... discard this one too.

Any serious play has to jump two checkers (21-15) twice...

- (6) (21-15) twice, (8-2) twice
- (7) (21-15) twice, (15-9) twice
- (8) (21-15) twice, (13-7) twice.

These are the top three plays that leap two

checkers.

Play (6) only leaves 3 shots at one new blot on the 9-point (with 2 blots overall), and makes {3-3, 3-1, 1-1} worse for the opponent by keeping an outer anchor on the 15-point. The 4-point board is good, but that broken 4-prime is just a wee bit deep, and makes it hard to maintain control over an open 5-point.

Play (7) leaves zero shots, only one blot on the 24-point, and makes a couple of broken 4-primes. But having points six apart is an awkward builder distribution, and may be hard to develop further.

Play (8) leaves 12 shots at two new blots on the 13-point and 9-point (with 3 blots overall), and makes 3-3 worse for the opponent by keeping the outer anchor on the 15-point. But its major advantage is that it makes a rather good broken 5-prime, with decent chances for an adjacent 5-prime on later rolls.

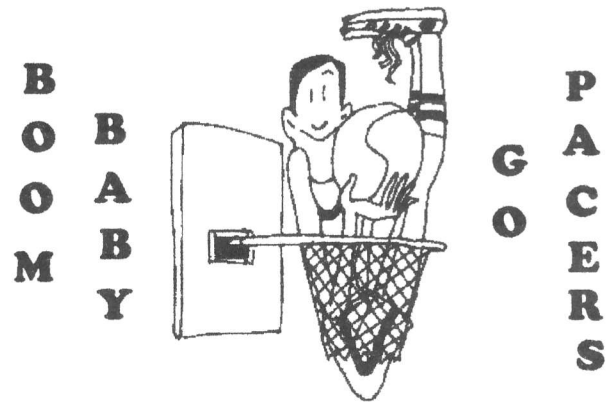
There is risk from being hit with play (8) but I think it is worth it. Leaving shots is dangerous, but I believe in 5-primes. And making an adjacent 5-prime on the next roll might equalize the game. So I rank the plays in the reverse ordinal order as listed, with 8 > 7 > 6 > 5, etc...I think plays (8) and (7) are close, however...and play (6) is not hopeless either.

Number (8) was my first play upon looking at the position, but there was more here than met the eye at first.

Doug Roberts, NY

**Editor Input: JellyFish Evaluation**

Play	Wins	Gm/Bg	Bg	Equity
1	30.6%	11.2%	0.2%	-0.408
2	27.6%	6.4%	0.1%	-0.530
3	29.7%	9.3%	0.2%	-0.477
4	37.6%	12.0%	0.3%	-0.300
5	31.4%	9.5%	0.3%	-0.454
6	40.9%	11.3%	0.2%	-0.220
7	37.5%	8.4%	0.2%	-0.307
8	42.4%	10.3%	0.2%	-0.203



**Annotated match  
Kit Woolsey vs Jeremy Bagai  
FIBS - 9 Point Match**

In February 1994, Kit Woolsey and Jeremy Bagai played a match and then annotated it for FIBS\* players so they could see the thought process of the more experienced players. They played a fairly interesting match, logged it, and then annotated it independently. You will see reasons for their plays and cube decisions, as well as their second thoughts upon later analysis which often came to a different conclusion than their original choices.

Gerry Tesauro also volunteered TD-Gammon's valuable help. TD analyzed the whole match and listed its top 3 choices for each play along with its estimated equities. These equities are always assuming a 1-cube and they do not take into account cube ownership. Thus on a pass-take decision an equity of -0.50 would be a break-even decision (not taking cube ownership into account -- that would probably make it a little higher), since that would translate to an equity of -0.100 on a 2-cube. TD was also nice enough to comment on the game, giving its reasons behind its choices as well as getting in a few snide remarks about their mistakes. Mark Damish (MA), first formatted the commentary for the Internet.

\*FIBS (First Internet Backgammon Server).

**Game 4 Continues...**

White (Jeremy) to play 53?

8/5 6/1

**Kit:** This is better than 13/8, 13/10 even though dumping a checker on the ace point is not what Jeremy wants to do. Bringing the checkers down loses the midpoint and leaves me a few indirect shots which are very strong.

**Jeremy:** This looks better than 13/10, 13/8 which leaves six shots.

**TD-Gammon:** I can do no more than echo these sentiments.

8/5, 6/1.....	+0.150
13/10, 13/8.....	+0.124
13/5.....	+0.104

Black (Kit) to play 53?

23/15

**Kit:** I was concerned about Jeremy rolling some numbers which pointed on me or hit and made the ace point, so I decided to get out now rather than play 13/5. This way he has fewer rolls which hit and make a fourth inner board point, and he will have to lose his midpoint in order to hit.

**Jeremy:** I think this is better than 13/5. My outfield points are stripped and I have a blot on my ace point so Kit provokes contact. Good play.

**TD-Gammon:** Actually, 13/5 is not even in the ballpark. All the decent candidates involved moving the back man, and running all the way was the small winner.

23/15.....	-0.111
23/18, 8/5.....	-0.117
23/18, 13/10.....	-0.152

White (Jeremy) to play 63?

22/13

**Kit:** Jeremy has three main choices. He could play completely safe with 8/5, 8/2, but this is very awkward and will just lead to problems next turn. He could hit with 13/10x/4. This puts me on the bar and duplicates my aces, but he would still be scrambling for safety next turn and the back checkers would remain stranded. I think his play is best. He is well ahead in the race, so it is thematic for him to just try to bring the checkers around and win. His inner

board is stronger than mine and I am short on attackers, so he isn't in great danger of being blitzed. He may not get another opportunity as good as this to get the back checkers moving.

**Jeremy:** 13/10x/4 duplicates aces, but leaves two blots and isolates my rear checkers. Though we all know that it's often wrong to raise anchor early, I think this is one of those times. I'm 39 pips up -- I can't afford to play a waiting game.

**TD-Gammon:** Jeremy is unerringly accurate. This is not the time to be hitting -- it is time to be running.

22/13.....	+0.203
22/16, 13/10x.....	+0.134
13/10x/4.....	+0.102

Black (Kit) to play 42?

8/4 6/4

**Kit:** The four point is big, and Jeremy still has the blot on his ace point to worry about if he hits. My play looks better than the safer 15/11, 13/11.

**TD-Gammon:** This time it is Kit who is right on the money in weighing the priorities.

8/4, 6/4.....	-0.194
15/11, 13/11.....	-0.238
15/11, 8/6.....	-0.271

White (Jeremy) to play 53?

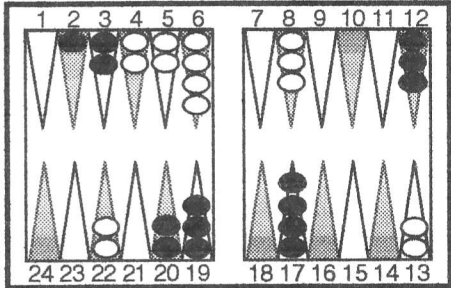
13/10x 6/1

**Jeremy:** Leaves another blot, but may make it easier for me to escape.

**TD-Gammon:** Nothing else is even close.

13/10x, 6/1.....	+0.346
13/10x/5.....	+0.145
13/10x, 13/8.....	+0.071

White (Jeremy) to play 53?



8/5 6/1

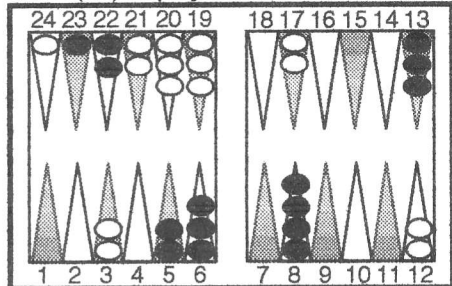
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23/15

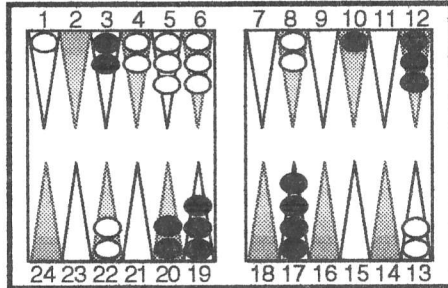
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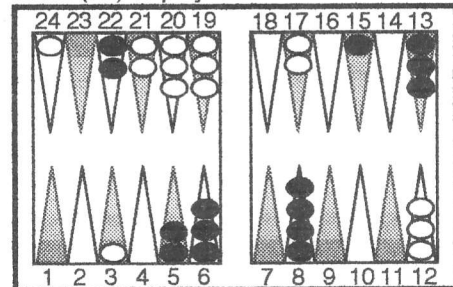
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Black (Kit) to play 42?



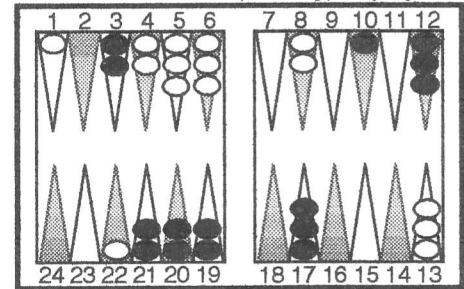
8/4 6/4

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15/11, 8/6.....	-0.271

White (Jeremy) to play 53?



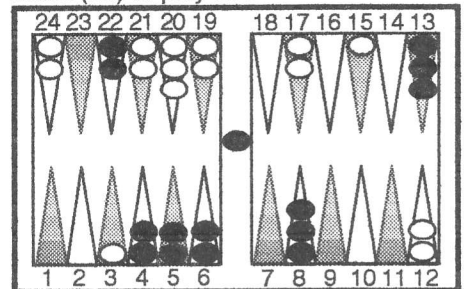
13/10x 6/1

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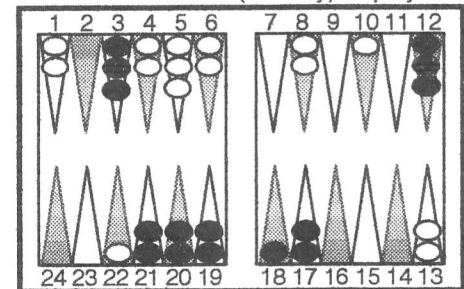
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13/10x/5.....	+0.145
13/10x, 13/8.....	+0.071

Black (Kit) to play 31?



B/22 8/7

White (Jeremy) to play 52?

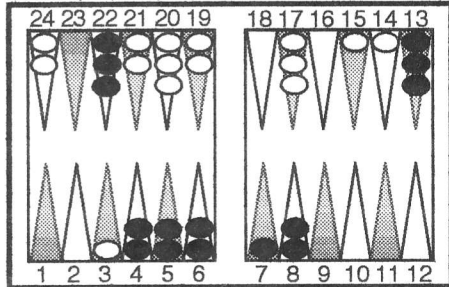


13/11 13/8

Jeremy has a clear advantage and a threat of hitting, so turning the cube is a serious consideration. If he hits and I can't immediately hit back he will lose his market, but he won't lose it by all that much since I will always have plenty of play from the defensive three point. If he doesn't hit, I am in pretty decent shape. Once again I agree with waiting.

**TD-Gammon:** Equity of 0.315, but very high volatility. Not quite good enough in my book, but very close.

Black (Kit) to play 11?



13/12 8/7 4/3x(2)

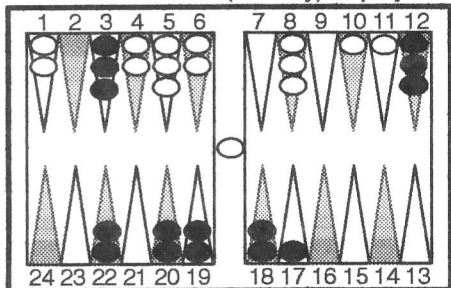
**Kit:** Clearly best. I trade the four point for the three point, but I gain putting him on the bar, making my bar point, and having a very threatening position. Now I may be the one with the cube turn shortly.

**Jeremy:** Kit must hit to prevent me from consolidating. 7/3x keeps the four point, but switching is better because it's safer and it allows Kit to make the bar point and diversify.

**TD-Gammon:** Kit's play is ok, but I don't like the idea of leaving that stray blot on the eight point when Jeremy has such a strong board. I prefer 13/12, 7/6, 4/3(2)x. The difference between the bar point and the eight point isn't worth it.

13/12, 7/6, 4/3(2)x.....	-0.066
13/12, 8/7, 4/3(2)x.....	-0.075
8/7(2), 4/3(2)x.....	-0.116

White (Jeremy) to play 11?



B/24 11/9 10/9

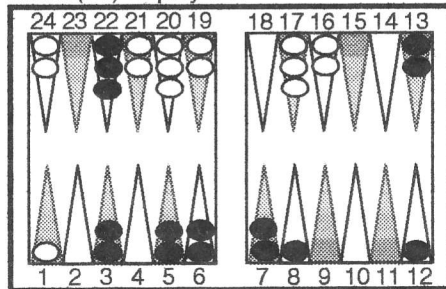
**Kit:** This play may seem obvious, making the blocking nine point. However, I don't think it is correct. The problem is that I have such a great timing advantage with the many checkers in the outfield that Jeremy isn't going to win a priming battle. If he can't escape his back checker immediately he will be forced to give up the nine point he has just made, and that may prove to be awkward. His entire goal should be concentrated on escaping his back checker. For this reason, I think he should play B/23, 11/10, 5/4. This forces me to make my eight point next turn, and I might not be able to do so. Assuming I do, at least Jeremy will be able to play comfortably with the checkers on the ten point. Making the nine point is more likely to cause him problems later on, since if he can't escape he will have to clear the point and that could prove to be inconvenient. If my outfield checkers were more advanced then his play would be correct, since by hemming in my back checkers he would have a chance to force me to crack my blockade. In the actual position I figure to have so much time that not escaping one of my back checkers isn't too important. This is a very tricky position and I would expect almost every backgammon player (including the best players in the world) to make Jeremy's play since it looks so natural, but I do believe that it is an error.

**Jeremy:** The alternative is B/23, 11/10, 5/4. This gets me off the 24 point which would be very nice if Kit can't cover his eight point, but doesn't make my nine point, blocking sixes. But is making the nine point such a good thing? It might become a liability when it comes time to clear. I think I should worry about that later and be happy with my five-prime now.

**TD-Gammon:** Imaginative thinking, Kit, but it just ain't right. Making the blocking nine point is big. Jeremy will have a couple of rolls to play with, and keeping you hemmed in on sixes can make a huge difference.

B/24, 11/9, 10/9.....	+0.074
B/23, 11/10, 5/4.....	+0.037
B/24, 11/10, 8/6.....	+0.010

Black (Kit) to play 54?



13/9 13/8

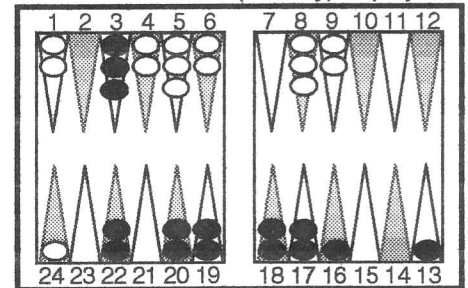
**Kit:** My play here is a natural followup to my previous comments. I have the opportunity to spring one of the back checkers with 22/13, yet I choose to make the eight point instead. The reason, as I suggested, is that I have all the timing in the world. Right now my entire goal is to contain his back man; if I can do that I should have no trouble escaping since he will be forced to break his blockade. I still have two outfield checkers to play with; that should be sufficient.

**Jeremy:** Kit pays off to 5-3 in order to bring another builder in for the four point. I think this is correct.

**TD-Gammon:** Working on the offense is definitely correct. Leaving the nine point slotted is right, but just barely.

13/9, 13/8.....	-0.010
13/8, 12/8.....	-0.012
22/18, 13/8.....	-0.032

White (Jeremy) to play 32?



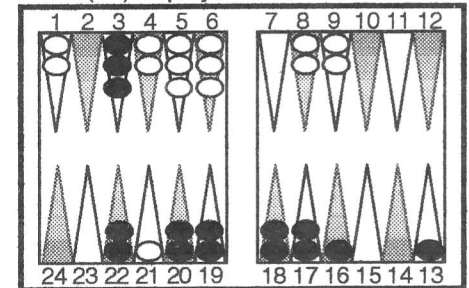
24/21 8/6

**Jeremy:** I don't think I can afford to stay back with 8/6, 5/2. If I didn't roll a three immediately my outfield points would have to go. Instead, I provoke an exchange of hits now while my board is stronger and I still have a five-prime.

**TD-Gammon:** Not moving up would be a huge blunder.

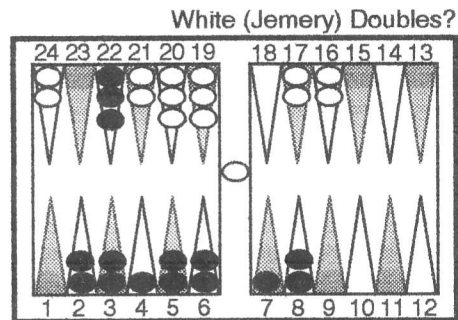
24/21, 8/6.....	+0.243
8/6, 5/2.....	+0.004
24/21, 6/4.....	-0.133

Black (Kit) to play 55?



9/4x 12/2 7/2

**Kit:** That roll changed everything. Suddenly my timing is no longer there; I am forced into attack mode. However my attack could be pretty strong.



**Kit:** With a lot riding on the next roll, Jeremy shoots it out. If he hits he will almost certainly lose his market, although I will retain a fair amount of play. If he misses he could be in trouble, but I will be faced with the problem of covering the blot on the four point and escaping my back checkers at the same time. I think this is a fine double.

**Jeremy:** I have 15 market losing hitters, 16 dancers, and no crashers. Kit has three checkers behind a five-prime and could crash next roll. His fours are very duplicated. I think this is a strong double, although it certainly looks scary.

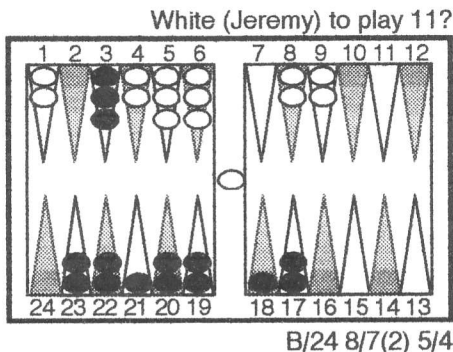
**TD-Gammon:** Equity of 0.473 with obviously large volatility. Clear double.

Black Takes.

**Kit:** The take is pretty clear. I can easily win this game frontwards if I win the fight for my four point and escape one of the back men, and that is not asking too much. Even if he hits I still have my defensive chances from his three point, and the gammon danger isn't huge.

**Jeremy:** I guess so. TD-Gammon?

**TD-Gammon:** You better believe it. Equity of -0.473. Good double, good take, good cube action. I'm impressed. I would have expected to see more and greater cube blunders than I have seen so far this match.

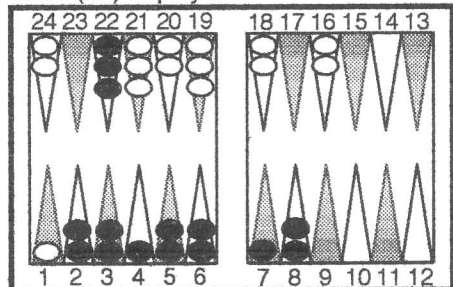


**Jeremy:** The alternative is B/24, 6/4, 5/4 which preserves the duplication but is very ugly. I think my play is better but could be very wrong.

**TD-Gammon:** What does duplication have to do with anything? Put the checkers where they belong. Jeremy's play is correct.

B/24, 8/7(2), 5/4.....	+0.274
B/24, 8/7(2), 6/5.....	+0.251
B/24, 6/4, 5/4.....	+0.246

Black (Kit) to play 64?



8/4 7/1x

**Kit:** Hitting is clear. This way he needs to roll a one and a six to escape, while if I don't hit he needs only a six. I don't figure to bust his board in time; I must win this on power.

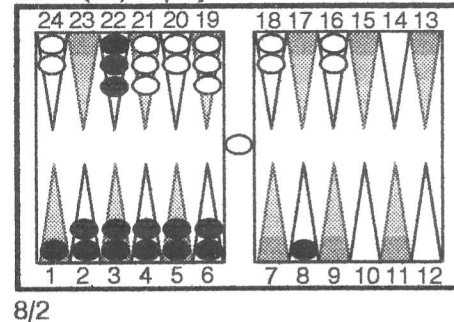
**Jeremy:** Kit should certainly look at 8/4, 8/2 which has the benefit of allowing me to crash on 5-5, 5-4, 5-1, 4-4, 3-3, and 2-2. However, hitting has the benefit of letting me escape with two numbers rather than 11, so it looks best.

**TD-Gammon:** Kit's play is best. Don't let your opponent escape in one roll. The priming approach isn't as good.

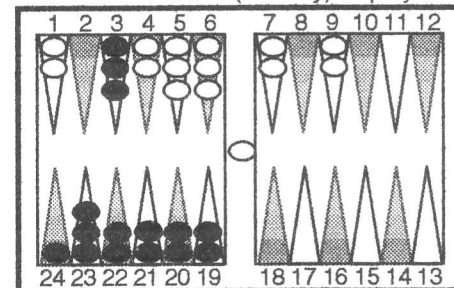
8/4, 7/1x.....	-0.283
8/4, 8/2.....	-0.323
8/2, 7/3.....	-0.656

White (Jeremy) dances with 64.

Black (Kit) to play 42?



White (Jeremy) to play 41?



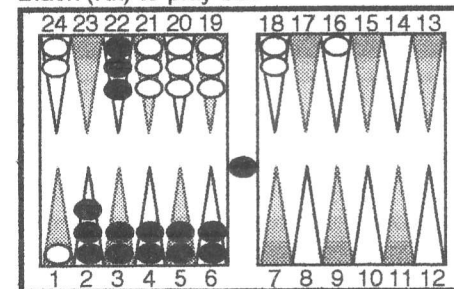
B/24x 9/5

**Kit:** Jeremy would like to hold the nine point, but he can't afford to give me a direct shot with B/24x, 6/2. The nine point which I thought he shouldn't have made has done its duty; but now it may become a liability.

**TD-Gammon:** Slotting the two point not only isn't all that bad, it is the best play! Holding the blocking nine point is very big. Jeremy's play gives Kit four killers, 6-3 and 6-2, while the 11 shot numbers which slotting the two point leaves are not nearly as crushing and some of them force Kit to crunch his board. Not an obvious play at all, but a little thought should show its merits.

B/24, 6/2.....	+0.395
B/24, 9/5.....	+0.371
B/24, 5/1.....	-0.073

Black (Kit) to play 63?

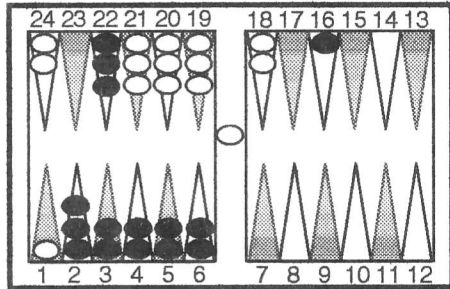


B/16x

Jeremy: Nice shot.

White (Jeremy) dances with 43.

Black Doubles?



**Kit:** It suddenly all went my way. Now I have a crushing redblend. The real question is, should I be playing for the gammon? Possibly, but I think cashing is correct. First of all I have the immediate worry of rolling 4-4. The three checkers stuck on his three point could present problems if I am unable to liberate one of them soon, and even if I do get them out there is always the danger of being attacked when I escape two of them and leave one behind. Also if Jeremy rolls 6-1 when he enters I would probably lose my ability to claim with the cube. These risks could be tolerated if I had good gammon chances, but in this position my gammon chances aren't all that great. Even if I succeed in closing both of his checkers out I would still be only about 50% to win a gammon, and this closeout is a long way away. I believe cashing is correct. As an added bonus who knows; he might even take.

**Jeremy:** Nowhere near good enough to play on for the gammon.

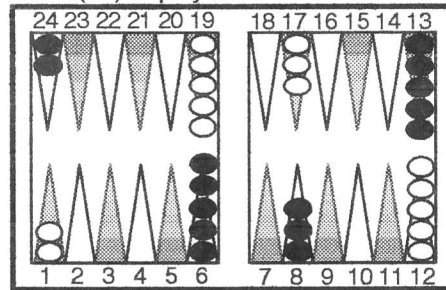
White (Jeremy) drops.

**Kit:** The pass is pretty clear. Jeremy is stuck on the bar, will be behind a five prime with two checkers if he enters, and I have sufficient outfield control. His four-prime represents some threat, but not enough.

Kit wins 2 points.

**Game 5**  
Kit (Black) - 4    Jeremy (White) - 4

Black (Kit) to play 62?

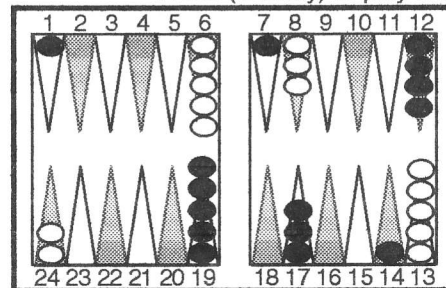


24/18 13/11

**TD-Gammon:** Still my favorite, but running is pretty close.

24/18, 13/11.....	+0.005
24/16.....	-0.007
13/5.....	-0.029

White (Jeremy) to play 62?



13/11 13/7\*

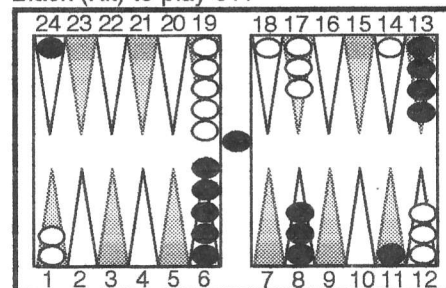
**Kit:** 24/22, 13/7\* is also reasonable. The safe split of the back checkers can be very valuable, but the builder on the 11 point is also important. The two plays are probably about equal -- I slightly prefer the split.

**Jeremy:** 24/22 might be just as good for the two, but most players seem to play 13/11 here.

**TD-Gammon:** I'm with Kit on this one, although admittedly it is close.

24/22, 13/7*.....	-0.022
13/11, 13/7*.....	-0.031
13/7*/5.....	-0.064

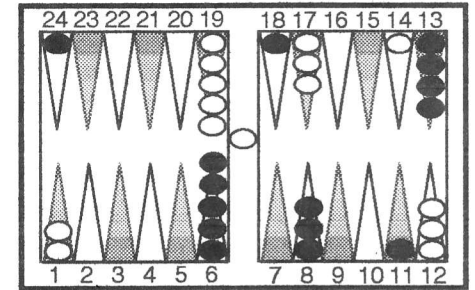
Black (Kit) to play 61?



B/18\*

White (Jeremy) dances with 66.

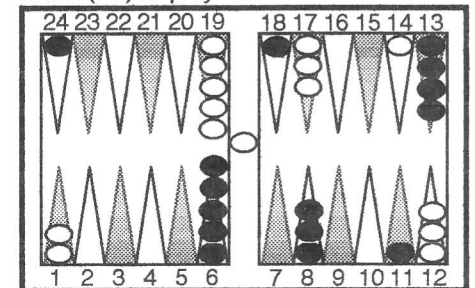
Cube Action?



**Kit:** This is very close to a double. The problem is that I don't have any inner board points, so even if I hit the other blot Jeremy will probably be able to enter and establish a decent defense. I need one more improvement.

**TD-Gammon:** Equity of +0.348, and not all that volatile. I also agree with holding off.

Black (Kit) to play 43?



18/14\* 13/10

**Kit:** My play gives me the best distribution with which to continue the attack. The downside is that I am leaving a lot of blots dangling, and I may not be able to cover them all in time. The play is reasonable, but I now prefer the more solid 18/14\*/11, which locks up everything and leaves me free to attack at will.

**Jeremy:** It is a fundamental principle of the game to maximize builders when your opponent has two in the air. 18/14\*/11 is much weaker.

**TD-Gammon:** When are you humans going to learn to lock up your assets instead of strewing blots all over the board? The problem with Kit's play is that most of the time Jeremy will get both checkers in, and then Kit will be scrambling. Kit is quite right in his analysis of why 18/14\*/11 is superior.

18/4*/11.....	+0.397
18/14*, 13/10.....	+0.362
24/21, 18/14*.....	+0.328

**Game 5**  
...continues next issue...