

**Hoosier
Backgammon
Club**

January 1997



NOTHING IS SACRED
Money Game, *Black* to play 5-4?
by Chuck Bower

**HBC's 1996
Player of the Year: *Don Woods***

At the beginning of December, any one of five players had a chance to win **Player of the Year**. Butch Meese led most of year until November when Don took the lead. Sean Garber had the best chance to overtake Don on the final night of 1996, but could not muster the wins. In his second year playing with the club, Sean Garber finished second in the standings. This is the third time Don Woods was won **Player of the Year**. He also won in 1990 and 1993. The final standings are on Page 2. *Jim Curtis* returns to the **Top Ten** after being absent one year and *Chuck Bower* (Bloomington, IN) is new to the **Top Ten**.

On the Road Again....

On February 6th, HBC will start playing at **Wildcat Brewing Company** (formerly **Bombay Bicycle Club**), 9111 North Michigan Road. Although, we were treated well at **Bench Warmers**, the smoke and loud noise at times were too much and we were losing players.

Come One, Come All!

HBC's Awards Tournament
The Annual Awarding of the Cubes
February 9th

at Wildcat Brewing Company (872-3446)

Registration 12:00 Noon

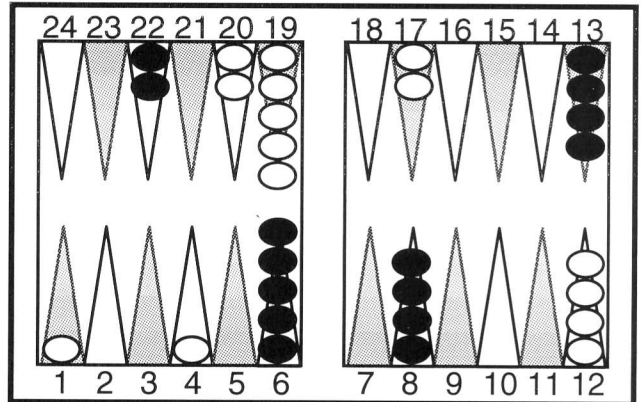
Awards 12:15 PM

Master of Ceremonies: *Chuck Stimming*

Play Begins 12:30 PM

Open Division \$20 (optional sidepool \$10)
Limited Division \$5

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A couple months ago, a new book was published by The Gammon Press: **New Ideas in Backgammon** by Kit Woolsey. This is a book of unique problems which were chosen because, in the view of the author (with the help of Hal Heinrich and the robot Jellyfish), they were misplayed by expert players in real matches. Kit's book has a lot in common with Bill Robertie's excellent two volume text **Advanced Backgammon**. If you enjoyed Robertie's books, you'll like **New Ideas**.

The above position is NOT from this new book, but it certainly could have been. In money play with a centered cube, how should Black play 5-4? If you've read any of my previous play articles, you will already be a step ahead. What are the candidate plays? Moving 13/8, 13/9 doesn't look too good, since it strips the midpoint AND leaves White with his/her full roll.

Moving 13/4x takes away half of White's roll and starts a good inner board point. On the downside, it leaves White 21 shots, which if hit, puts Black well behind in the race. Moving 6/1x, 8/4x is another candidate -- putting TWO of White's checkers on the bar -- but leaving two home board blots with 21 return shots.

A warning light should be flashing in your head reminding you that it is usually NOT a good idea to get into a blot hitting contest with an opponent who has a better board than you! In addition, the race was tied (158-158) before you rolled. That is a further caution to look for a better play.

When this problem came up in a *money* game against Jellyfish level-7, the above three choices were all that I saw. Imagine my surprise when Jellyfish told me that none of my candidates was correct! Jellyfish prefers 22/13. You've only made one point (and a valuable one at that) up to now, and Jellyfish says to break it! Barclay Cooke would be horrified!

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Backgammon Web Site of the Month: **Chicago Point Backgammon OnLine**
<http://homepage.interaccess.com/~chipoint>

Hoosier Backgammon Club's Newsletter

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1996 Final HBC Gammon Point Standings.

Player of the Month for December was Dave Groner with 182 points.

1) Don Woods..... 1473	Neil Ezell..... 144	Martha Ghio..... 20
2) Sean Garber..... 1426	Mary Franks..... 130	Oules Martene..... 20
3) Larry Strommen..... 1389	Jon Stephens..... 120	Artie Kamien..... 20
4) Butch Meese..... 1362	Janice Newman..... 110	Bob Cassell..... 20
5) Jim Curtis..... 1360	Kevin Bastian..... 110	Brian Nelson..... 20
6) Dave Groner..... 1244	Bill Gheen..... 109	Rob Maier..... 20
7) Chuck Stimming..... 1008	Alan Haas..... 108	Stan Gurvitz..... 10
8) Mary Ann Meese..... 705	Jamie Curtis..... 90	Randall Witt..... 10
9) Jan Gurvitz..... 692	Paul Franks..... 64	Mike Graham..... 10
10) Chuck Bower..... 548	Bill Julian..... 60	Pam Sadlo..... 10
Woody Woodworth..... 438	Jon Viotor..... 40	John Nelson..... 10
Paul Magriel..... 400	Shimi Dadon..... 30	Edwin Jones..... 10
Kevin McLeaster..... 372	Jeff Acierno..... 30	Howard Shirey..... 10
Gabe Stiasny..... 312	Julie Overbeck..... 30	Chester Warzel..... 10
Ellis Bray..... 298	Alan Tavel..... 30	
Jim Painter..... 207	Keith Jackson..... 20	

1996 Players of the Month ReCap

January..... Woody Woodworth
 February..... Larry Strommen
 March..... Butch Meese
 April..... Dave Groner
 May..... Jim Curtis
 June..... Don Woods
 July..... Sean Garber
 August..... Larry Strommen
 September..... Butch Meese
 October..... Sean Garber/Butch Meese
 November..... Don Woods
 December..... Dave Groner

December 5th

1st Dave Groner
 2nd Larry Strommen
 2nd Chuck Stimming

December 12th

1st Kevin McLeaster
 2nd Sean Garber
 2nd Dave Groner

December 19th

1st Jim Curtis
 2nd Dave Groner
 2nd Larry Strommen

December 26th

1st Chuck Bower
 2nd Chuck Stimming
 2nd Jan Gurvitz

Hoosier Pips

Chester Warzel, Rob Maier, Edwin Jones (Ohio) and Alan Tavel visited HBC during December.

NOTHING IS SACRED by Chuck Bower

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One valuable lesson I've learned from the **New Ideas** book (and from playing against Jellyfish) is that **NOTHING IS SACRED**. This problem reduces to a **least of evils** choice. Leave lots of shots, risking falling behind in the race, or stack your checkers and count on some good pointmaking rolls in the future. Jellyfish level-6 rollouts say 22/13 results in a cubeless equity of -0.17 for Black, compared to -0.21 for hitting one blot and -0.31 for hitting two. (Sufficient rollouts were performed to be 95% confident that 22/15 is better than 13/4x, from a statistical standpoint.) Note that I did not ask Jellyfish to roll out 13/8, 13/9 since level-7 evaluation indicated that this was 0.17 worse than 22/13.

The biggest downside of playing 22/13 is the threat to your remaining checker. White can hit with 3's and 5's (and a few combo shots as well). Note that White's 3's are duplicated (24/21 being an alternative) and hitting with a 5 breaks the valuable 8-point and leaves extra shots with 6-2 and 4-4. You obviously shouldn't be thrilled with this move, but you must play the dice that you've thrown.

Backgammon Tournament Schedule

Feb 14-16.... **19th Pittsburgh Championships**, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA..... (412) 823-7500
 Mar 21-23.... **1997 Midwest Championships**, The Drake Oakbrook, Oak Brook, IL..... (773) 583-6464
 Apr 22-27.... **4th Worldwide Twin Championships**, Four Queen Hotel, Las Vegas, NV..... (702) 893-6025
 Thursdays..... 7:00 PM at **Holiday Inn North** (872-9790) 92nd & North Michigan Road 255-8902