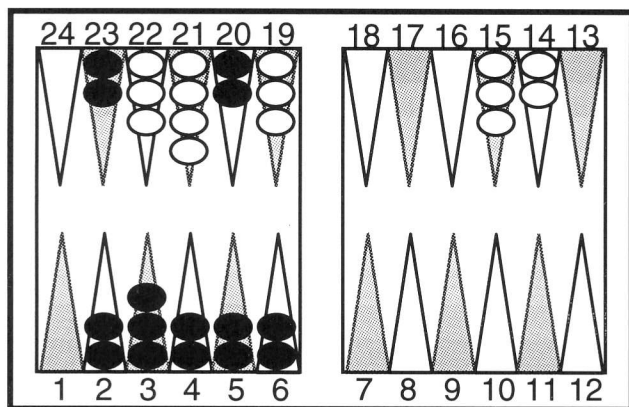




Putting All Your Eggs in One Basket

by Chuck Bower

7-Point Match Black - 0 White - 0
Black to play 6-3?



2

The illustrated position came up recently in a local match. How would you play 6-3? What are the candidate plays? If you resolve not to break your nice homeboard (a good idea), then there are three plays:

- 1) 20/11
- 2) 23/17, 23/20 or
- 3) 23/17, 20/17.

Play #3) (23/17, 20/17) just looks too dangerous. White can point on your head on the 20-point with combinations of 6's, 5's and 1's and

on the 23-point with 4's, 2's, and 1's. That looks like 17/36 numbers. And if you are missed this time, you need to clean up or be under the gun again next roll. Without an anchor, White's gammon chances look ominous. The real decision is between 20/11, which keeps the low anchor and a single checker on your 20-point to harass White's outfield checkers, and giving up the 23-point entirely with 23/17, 23/20.

A good axiom in backgammon and in life is **don't put all of your eggs in one basket**. By keeping the 23-point and a single checker on the 20-point (making the 20/11 play), you are giving yourself two ways to win: 1) hit White's outfield blot when s/he tries to clear the outside points or, if that plan fails, 2) play a deuce point game and hit a shot which White leaves while bearing off.

Clearing the 23-point (23/17, 23/20) gives you only one likely road to victory: hit White's outfield blot if you get the chance. If you follow the axiom, you would reject this play. But Jellyfish (level-6) rollouts indicate you are wrong in doing so. Not only does 23/17, 23/20 win more games (35% vs. 27%), it also loses fewer gammons.

If you try to visualize how this game will progress, then the flaw of 20/11 surfaces. White has 9/36 chances this roll to point on your head, plus 6-2 and 5-2 which pick and pass. Barring these numbers, White can play safely and wait you out. Black has only 12 spare pips to play on his/her side of the board, so in a couple of rolls the single on the 20-point will have to leave anyway. Then White's outfield checkers will have an easy time coming home. Essentially you're resigning yourself to a deuce point game by making this play.

Clearing the 23-point on the other hand leaves White's outfield checkers under pressure for the remainder of the game (or until they have been cleared). Black has plenty of spare pips to play from this position. It's going to take a lucky sequence of rolls for White to clear his/her 11- and 10-points, and multiple single shots aren't out of the question. The only real danger for Black is the single checker on the 17-point. However, s/he should move this checker to safety next roll, and even if hit, White has only a three point board.

The moral here is: **Axioms are nice, but there is no substitute for thinking.**

Backgammon Web Site of the Month:
Mark Your Calendar: Alive! maintained by **Carol Joy Cole**
<http://homepage.interaccess.com/~chipoint/calendar.html>

Hoosier Pips

Peter Kalba, J. A. Miller, Reggie Porter and Phil Barrett visited HBC during February. HBC welcomes new players **Jim Clunie, Rod Hali** and **Bruce Hugon**.

Gammon Points Reviewed

The winner receives 10 points for each match won. When a player wins first place, his match points win are multiplied by 2. When a player wins second place then the match points are multiplied by 1.6. No points are awarded for getting a bye.

Sample: If a player wins three matches and finishes first, then he would win 60 points for the event. If a player wins four matches and finishes first, then he would win 80 gammon points.

When there is more than one division, like the Indiana Open or a one-day tournament, the Open players receive 10 points for each match won, the Advanced 8 points, Intermediate 5 points and Novice 3 points. Gammon points won during the **Indiana Open** count towards **Player of the Year** but not towards **Player of the Month**.

1997 HBC Gammon Point Standings.

Player of the Month for January was **Chuck Stimming** with 134 gammon points.

Player of the Month for February was **Butch Meese** with 224 gammon points.

- 1) Butch Meese.....284
- 2) Chuck Stimming.....232
- 3) Larry Strommen.....226
- 4) Sean Garber.....204
- 5) Don Woods.....164
- 6) Dave Groner.....152
- 7) Mary Ann Meese.....150
- 8) Kevin McLeaster.....148
- 9) Jan Gurvitz.....140
- 10) Woody Woodworth.....128
- Gabe Stiasny.....96
- Jim Curtis.....80
- Alan Haas.....80
- J.A. Miller.....80
- Peter Kalba.....30
- Rick Reahard.....10
- Reggie Porter.....10
- Jim Clunie.....10
- Rod Hali.....10

Awards Tournament - February 9th

- 1st Don Woods
- 2nd Gabe Stiasny

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|-----|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | <u>January 2nd</u> | <u>January 9th</u> | <u>January 22nd</u> | <u>January 29th</u> |
| 1st | <i>Jim Curtis</i> | <i>Jan Gurvitz</i> | <i>Chuck Stimming</i> | <i>Sean Garber</i> |
| 2nd | <i>Dave Groner</i> | <i>Woody Woodworth</i> | <i>Larry Strommen</i> | <i>Chuck Stimming</i> |
| | <u>February 6th</u> | <u>February 13th</u> | <u>February 20th</u> | <u>February 27th</u> |
| 1st | <i>Butch Meese</i> | <i>J. A. Miller</i> | <i>Alan Haas</i> | <i>Larry Strommen</i> |
| 2nd | <i>Jim Curtis</i> | <i>Sean Garber</i> | <i>Kevin McLeaster</i> | <i>Dave Groner</i> |
| 2nd | <i>Larry Strommen</i> | <i>Chuck Stimming</i> | <i>Butch Meese</i> | <i>Kevin McLeaster</i> |

Backgammon Tournament Schedule

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|--------------|--|
| Mar 21-23.. | 1997 Midwest Championships , The Drake Oakbrook, Oak Brook IL..... (773) 583-6464 |
| Apr 4-6..... | 38th Gammon Associates Invitational , Holiday Inn, Woodland Hills CA.. (818) 901-0464 |
| Apr 22-27... | 4th Worldwide Twin Championships , Four Queen Hotel, Las Vegas NV... (702) 893-6025 |
| May 23-26.. | 18th Annual Chicago Open , Wyndham Hamilton Hotel, Itasca IL..... (847) 674-0120 |
| Jun 20-22... | 1997 Georgia Championships & Peach Cup , Atlanta Ga..... (770) 333-1876 |
| Jul 3-6..... | Michigan Summer Championships , Novi Hotel, Novi MI..... (810) 232-9731 |
| Au 29-Se 1. | 45th Indiana Open , Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis IN..... (317) 255-8902 |

Thursdays... 7:00 PM at **Wildcat Brewing Company** (872-3446) 92nd & North Michigan Road 255-8902