

**Hoosier
Backgammon
Club**

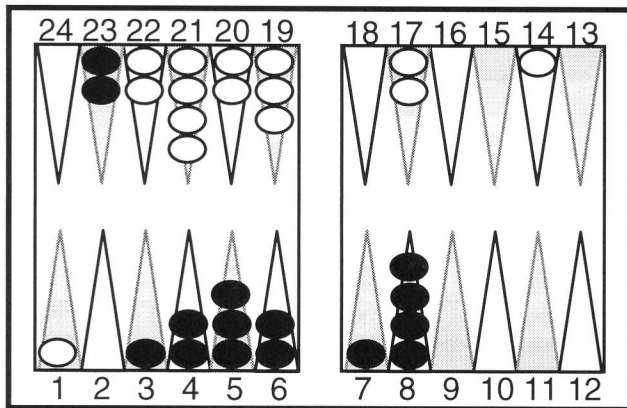
May
1997



To Risk or Not To Risk
by Butch Meese

7-Point Match Black-2 White-2
Black to play 5-4?

64



In some positions, there is not necessarily a choice between the right and wrong play, but the choice between a risky play and less risky play. The risk can be evaluated. The risky play is 23/14x. This position was shown to a couple of players and both picked the hit on the 14-point.

In a money game without the cube turned, you can take the risk and go all out. The most you can lose is one point, right? Some players would double after being hit on the 14-point.

But this is a match with gammons and backgammons in play even though the cube has not been turned. Is it still the correct play? Maybe! If your type of game is maximum risk-maximum gain, yes this play is right up your alley. Let's look at the risk. If White dances (9/36 numbers 25%), you can double White out or play on for the gammon.

Four numbers (4-3, 6-3) hit Black twice on this side of the board. Double-2s double hits and makes a five-point board (gammon city). Out of the other 22 numbers, only 5-1 does not hit.

One of the less risky plays is 8/3 5/1x. White now has 16 dancing numbers. White hits with only one or 5-2. If Black does not get hit, Black must play both sides of the board by containing White on this side and get out safely with fives on the other.

The other totally safe play is 8/3 7/3 which leaves no blots. White gets away with most sixes and it means double/drop. Black does not have the time to play a single-point backgame.

All the things above can be summarized over the board. Picking the play depends on the amount of risk. We can get a better picture looking at JellyFish roll-outs (four plays were run)

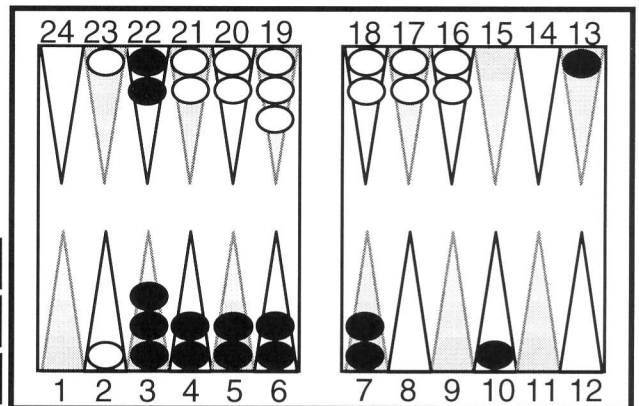
Play	23/14x	8/3 5/1x	8/3 7/3	8/3 8/4
White's Equity	-0.447	-0.162	-0.284	-0.345
Black's Wins/Gs/BG	42.2%	46.7%	38.0%	37.6%
Black's Gs	9.5%	9.2%	5.6%	4.2%
Black's BGs	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.1%
White's BGs	3.4%	0.9%	0.0%	0.5%
White's Gs	35.5%	18.4%	10.8%	13.5%
White's Wins/Gs/BG	57.8%	53.3%	62.0%	62.4%

JellyFish roll-outs tell us that the big risky play may be too risky...twice as many gammons as all the other plays. The 8/3 5/1x play gives you the best chances to win. But some players knowing that the cube has not been turned, would rather risk it all right now by hitting on the 14-point.

Recurring Theme
Prime versus Prime

Money Game (Chouette) White (Box)
Black to Play 2-1?

2
2
2



White has the upper hand in this prime versus prime position by having a 6-point prime. Usually the side which has to break their prime first loses. Black has an advantage of having the anchor on the 22-point. If White does not escape pretty soon, he will have to break his prime since his extra checkers are on the 2- and 6-point.

Backgammon Web Site of the Month: Stephen Turner's WWW BG Page
<http://www.statslab.cam.ac.uk/~sret1/backgammon>
Maintained by **Stephen Turner**

Hoosier Backgammon Club's Newsletter

Butch & Mary Ann Meese 1008 Tuckahoe Street Indianapolis, IN 46260-2215
(317) 255-8902 E-Mail: NEW...meese@worldnet.att.net

Black rolls 2-1 and can hit without breaking his prime. But is hitting the right thing to do here? When Black hits, White has 16 numbers that dance and I've seen players dance their way to victory from here. Out of all the 2 rolls, only 2-2, 3-2 and 5-2 break the prime and 2-2 and 5-2 cover the blot on the 2-point. Out of all the 1 rolls, only 3-1, 5-1 and 6-1 break the prime with 5-1 and 6-1 covering the blot. So only 11 rolls break the prime by hitting. For Black, getting hit does provide the small chance to hit the blot on White's side.

Now let's look at not hitting. All sixes escape. Of the 25 non-escaping rolls, 16 rolls force White to break his prime and 5-5 breaks and provides a direct shot. If White does not break this turn but does not escape next turn, he will possibly have more breaking numbers next roll.

If Black does not hit, what move does he make? Moving 10/7 keeps the checker back on the 13-point available to hit Black if he does escape with anything besides 6-5 and 6-6.

Play	10/8 3/2x	13/11 3/2x	10/7
White's Equity	-0.184	-0.190	-0.146
Black's Wins/Gs/BG	43.9%	42.2%	41.6%
Black's Gs	7.1%	9.6%	8.6%
Black's BGs	0.8%	0.0%	1.3%
White's BGs	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%
White's Gs	13.8%	12.9%	7.6%
White's Wins/Gs/BG	56.1%	57.8%	58.4%

JellyFish tells us that only three plays (two plays that hit on the 2-point and one non-hitting play) are worth consideration. The hitting play (10/8 3/2x) wins most games but is not the best overall because it produces the most gammons. The best play by equity goes to the non-hitting play (10/7) because it produces the least gammons.

Hoosier Pips...Ellis Bray has moved to smalltown Missouri to be closer to his family...Good Luck Ellis...**Butch Meese** competed with over 19,000 in the Indy 500 Mini-Marathon. In his first time in a mini, he walked the 13.1 miles in three hours and 15 minutes. More amazing is he met up with **Vinton Knarr** (Lexington, IL) half way through. Vinton played and cashed in the 1996 Indiana Open...HBC welcomes new players, **Luke Clippinger** (Hamilton on FIBS), **Ron Hali** and **Jim Clunie** and welcomes back **Frank Scott** (scotty on FIBS) after a four year absence...HBC has a new email address: meese@worldnet.att.net



45th
INDIANA
Open
Backgammon
Tournament

Labor Day Weekend
Radisson Hotel • Indianapolis

1997 HBC Gammon Point Standings.

Player of the Month
for April was **Don Woods**
with 240 gammon points.

- 1) Butch Meese..... 538
- 2) Chuck Stimming.....466
- 3) Don Woods.....434
- 4) Larry Strommen..... 374
- 5) Sean Garber.....336
- 6) Dave Groner.....280
- T7) Mary Ann Meese.....254
- T7) Jim Curtis.....254
- 9) Kevin McLeaster.....216
- 10) Jan Gurvitz.....200
- Woody Woodworth..... 198
- Alan Haas.....170
- Gabe Stiasny.....146
- J.A. Miller.....80
- Frank Scott.....32
- Peter Kalba.....30
- Chuck Bower.....30
- Brian Nelson.....20
- Rod Hali.....10
- Rick Reahard.....10
- Bill Julian.....10
- Reggie Porter.....10
- Luke Clippinger.....10
- Jim Clunie.....10

	April 3rd	April 10th	April 17th	April 24th
1st	Don Woods	Don Woods	Jim Curtis	Butch Meese
2nd	Larry Strommen	Mary Ann Meese	Don Woods	Frank Scott
2nd	...	Sean Garber	...	Don Woods

Backgammon Tournament Schedule

May 23-26.....	18th Annual Chicago Open , Wyndham Hamilton Hotel, Itasca IL.....	(847) 674-0120
Jun 20-22.....	1997 Georgia Championships & Peach Cup , Holiday Inn Select, Atlanta, Ga.....	(770) 333-1876
Jul 3-6.....	Michigan Summer Championships , Novi Hotel, Novi MI.....	(810) 232-9731
Aug 29-Sep 1...	45th Indiana Open , Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis IN.....	(317) 255-8902

Thursdays..... 7:00 PM at **Wildcat Brewing Company** (872-3446) 92nd & North Michigan Road255-8902