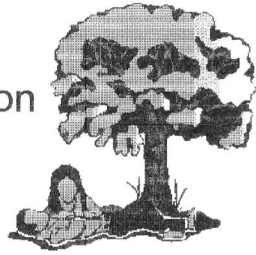


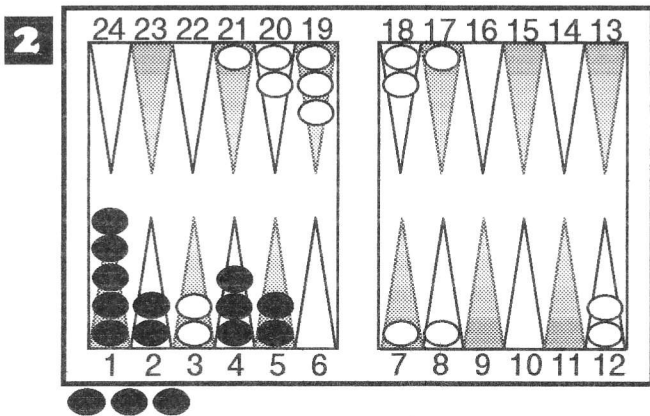
Hoosier  
Backgammon  
Club

July 1997



**Intermediate Pointer by Butch Meese  
Avoid Double Trouble**

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



What is the score in the match and what is the value of the cube? Those are the questions you must always be asking yourself as you play a match. The score, cube value and cube position all determine the risk you must take in making your plays. In this position with the score tied at five all and the cube on two in a 7-point match, White must minimize his risk. And since winning the game also wins the match, there is no need to take any extra risk as he would if he needed a gammon.

I was White in this position and as I was watching Black move, I was thinking *move 4/2(3) and one off (2/0)*. I was a little surprised to see Black moved three checkers off 4/2/0, 2/0(2). Yes, it is important to get the extra checkers off but not at the extra risk of the potential double shot produced by rolling 5-2 or 6-2 on the next roll.

There is a huge difference between providing your opponent a single shot versus a double shot. A single

shot will produce 13-14 return shots in this position while a double shot will produce 20 return shots. If a double shot is produced and missed, Black may not be able to safety both checkers, resulting in another single shot on the next roll.

And in this position, if White hits one of the blots, there is a good chance that he will get a second checker.

White has all the time in the world to construct a prime and close Black out. And it is easier for White to do that with two of Black's checkers back.

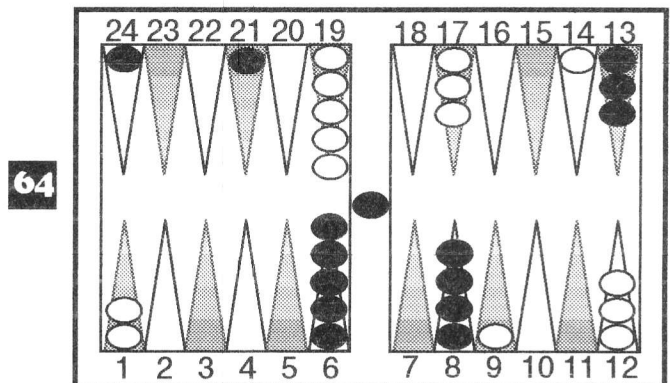
Since readers usually like to know what really happened, I can report that disaster did strike Black as he rolled 6-2. I did hit one of the blots and was able to get all three checkers in the air and win the game and the match easily.

It was my second win in the consolation flight of the FIBS tournament after losing in the first round of the main. I won four more matches to reach the finals and at the time of this write-up I'm awaiting the other semifinal match to be completed.

**HBC is now on the  
World Wide Web.**  
Hoosier Backgammon Club now has  
a home page on the World Wide Web.  
It can be reached at  
<http://home.att.net/~meese>

**Offense or Defense?**  
by Chuck Bower

**Money Game. Black to play 5-4?**



Answer on Page 2...

<u>May 1st</u> 1st Jan Gurvitz 2nd Butch Meese 2nd ...	<u>May 8th</u> Larry Strommen Brett Robey Chuck Stimming	<u>May 15th</u> Jim Curtis Woody Woodworth Sean Garber	<u>May 22nd</u> Butch Meese Don Woods Chuck Stimming
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**Hoosier Backgammon Club's Newsletter**  
Butch & Mary Ann Meese 1008 Tuckahoe Street Indianapolis, IN 46260-2215  
(317) 255-8902 E-Mail: [meese@worldnet.att.net](mailto:meese@worldnet.att.net) Home Page: <http://home.att.net/~meese>

**Offense or Defense?**  
by Chuck Bower

This type of position seems to appear quite often. Early in the game both players are jostling for position. You have a simple choice here: send White's checker on your 9-point to the rail (and add a builder for your inner board) or grab a strong defensive anchor on the 20-point. Which play do you choose?

Historically (that is, in the 70's and early 80's) most experts would berate anyone who would ask about the pipcount so early in the game. Racing is for wimps. Pipcount relates to races. Ergo Pipcounts are for wimps! Backgammon has evolved since then.

Often when a decision looks close, the pipcount (race equity) can be used to break the tie. Building the 20-point leaves Black ahead by 5. Hitting increases Black's lead to 13. In either case White does not have the race lead.

Another important factor which was not well appreciated in the 70's is the strength of the midpoint. Although many players then saw the value of holding it, they often stripped it (got down to only two checkers there) and then gave themselves a later dilemma when hitting the opponent's outfield blot became an option. Now players go out of their way to keep one or two extra checkers on the 13-point. Here we see a weakness of the hit play. It strips the midpoint.

The new Jellyfish (v3.0) prefers building here (at level-7 evaluation), and rollouts (level-6 cubeless) confirm this. Building is better by 0.06 units of cubeless equity, and 2% in cubeless winning chances. (Statistical significance are 3.0 and 2.5 standard deviations respectively.)

Changing the position slightly by placing one of Black's spares on his/her 8-point back on the 13-point now leads to a much closer decision--a virtual coin toss to determine which play to make. I conclude that the combination of black losing five pips in the race AND now having a spare on the midpoint after hitting make this play stronger than before.

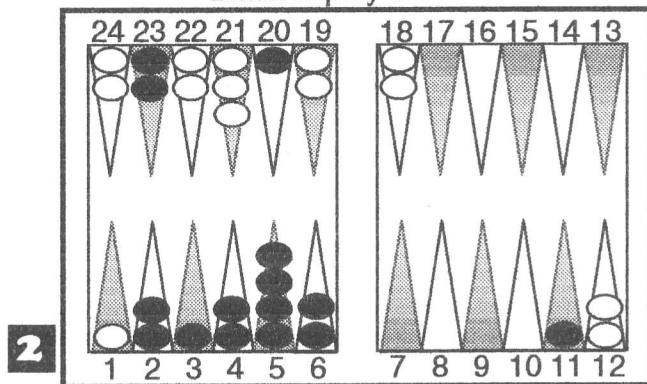
Finally, suppose it is post-Crawford with White owning the cube AND Black being able to use a gammon (that is, trailing by 3 or more). Now, even in the illustrated position, the hit is correct. Hitting leads to more gammons by both sides, but only Black can use them. The 2% difference in losses is offset by 2.5% wins. In this last situation, (post-Crawford, Black can use a gammon), Black is laying even money (risking a loss is exactly compensated by gaining a gammon) and thus the extra gammons make the hitting play slightly superior.

**1997 HBC Gammon Point Standings.**  
**Player of the Month for June was**  
**Don Woods with 164 gammon points.**

- 1) Butch Meese..... 840
- 2) Don Woods.....822
- 3) Chuck Stimming..... 788
- 4) Sean Garber.....578
- 5) Larry Strommen..... 512
- 6) Dave Groner.....480
- 7) Jim Curtis..... 414
- 8) Mary Ann Meese.....354
- 9) Jan Gurvitz..... 330
- 10) Kevin McLeaster.....276
- Woody Woodworth.....256
- Gabe Stiasny.....250
- Alan Haas.....170
- Brett Robey..... 96
- Chuck Bower..... 88
- J.A. Miller.....80
- Frank Scott..... 32
- Jim Painter..... 30
- Peter Kalba.....30
- Brian Nelson.....20
- Richard Heinz.....20
- Reggie Porter..... 10
- Luke Clippingier.....10
- Jim Clunie..... 10
- Jana Miller..... 10
- Rod Hali..... 10
- Lance Jenkins..... 10
- Rick Reahard..... 10
- Bud Robey..... 10
- Bill Julian..... 10

**Hoosier PIPS...**HBC welcomes new players, David Schwind and Al Gomez.

**7-Point Match Black-5 White-5**  
**Black to play 3-1?**



Answer Next Issue...

**Backgammon Tournament Schedule**

Aug 29-Sep 1...	<b>45th Indiana Open</b> , Radisson Hotel, Indianapolis IN.....	(317) 255-8902
Aug 8-10.....	<b>39th Gammon Associates Invitational</b> , Los Angeles, CA.....	(818) 901-0464
Sep 19-21.....	<b>2nd Minnesota State Championships</b> , Minnesota Athletic Club, MN.....	(612) 378-1536
Oct 02-05.....	<b>Illinois State Champs and American Cup</b> , Holidome, Rolling Meadows, IL.....	(847) 945-7801
Oct 31-Nov 2....	<b>NorthEast Regional: 4th New England Championships</b> , South Lee, MA.....	(603) 863-4711
Nov 11-15.....	<b>Las Vegas Open</b> , Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, NV.....	(702) 893-6025
Thursdays.....	7:00 PM at <b>Wildcat Brewing Company</b> (872-3446) 92nd & North Michigan Road .....	255-8902