

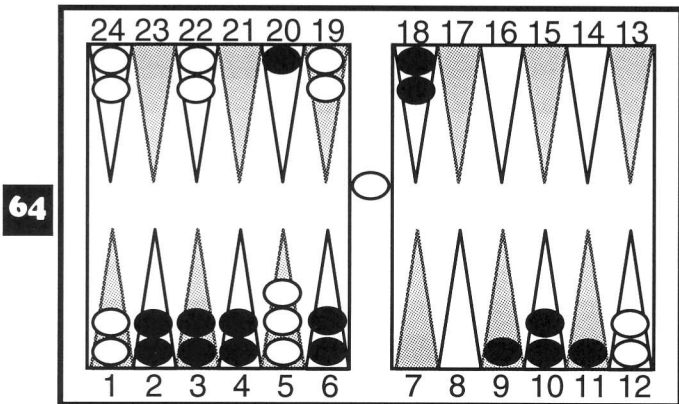


Hoosier Backgammon Club

August 1997

HORSEMANSHIP by Chuck Bower

7-Point Match Black-3 White-6 (Crawford)
Black to play 2-1?



A good habit to get into is always having a game plan. Often the choice between plays will jump out at you if you have the right intention. The illustrated position came up in a FIBS match. Unfortunately, my thinking was murky. Having been on a long losing streak, I saw goblins hiding in every dark corner.

White's game plan is simple. Get Black on the rail and keep him/her there long enough to get around and win the race. Realistically White needs to make some more inner board points before this plan is viable.

Thwarting White's game plan should lead Black into the win column. Get home before White's board is strengthened. Most players when seeing this position would immediately play 11/9 with the two and quickly realize there is no convenient one. They would then settle for temporizing plays like 11/9, 10/9 or 11/10, 20/18 (my choice at the table).

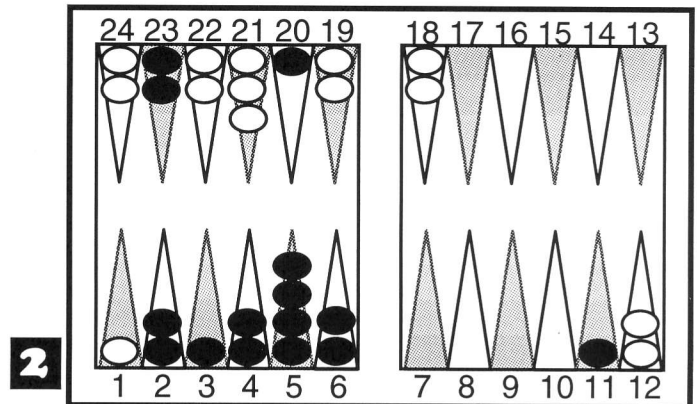
With White on the bar, s/he is the least threatening RIGHT NOW. The 18-point, a good defensive point in a holding game, can be a liability when the player possessing it has a considerable race lead and is trying to get around for the bearoff.

Black's correct move according to Jellyfish rollouts is 11/9, 18/17. It wins 3% more games than either 11/9, 10/9 or 11/10, 20/18. (Joint standard deviation is 0.8%) GET ON YOUR HORSE AND RIDE while your opponent is occupied. The two outfield points serve the double purpose of blocking White's checkers on your 5-point and providing safe landing points for the three back checkers. Note how the instinct to make the 9-point (and keeping the 10-point) was correct. In this position the fear of having three vulnerable blots and no anchor is unsubstantiated. White must first enter, then hit and contain, all the while having a weaker board than Black.

One other thing is worth noting. At this match score, gammons are especially valuable for Black. Compared to typical money game and early match situations (where a player must win two gammons for every loss in order to make playing for gammon worthwhile), it's worth risking a loss if it gains a gammon even up. Playing a long volley gives White more chances to slide around and save the gammon. By making a move for home now, Black maximizes his/her gammon chances. JellyFish rollouts say that 11/9 18/17 wins 5% more gammons than the other alternatives.

Double Match Point by Butch Meese Shortest Path To Victory

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



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 in match. The score, cube value and cube position determine the risk we must take in making your plays. I know!! This is how I started the article I did last month. But this

July 10th	July 17th	July 24th	July 31st
1st Chuck Stimming	Jan Gurvitz	Mary Ann Meese	Don Woods
2nd Jim Curtis	Don Woods	Jim Curtis	Larry Strommen
2nd ...	David Schwind	...	Jim Curtis

Hoosier Backgammon Club's Newsletter

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situation also has the score tied at five all and the cube on two in a 7-point match. The important point here is that there is a lot of contact left in this position. Both sides will take the necessary risk to turn the game in their favor.

Art Benjamin and I were Black in the second round in the Doubles event at the Michigan Summer Championships. A couple of plays we looked at were 11/8 5/4 and 5/2 5/4. After the match, a kibitzer suggested 23/20 5/4. It must have been the heat of the battle that make us overlook the correct play; we were down one to five earlier.

Playing 11/8 5/4 provides the most covers if #1 White does not roll a two to hit, #2 White does not roll a six to escape or #3 White does not roll something to hit on the 5-point (5-3, double 1s and double 4s).

Playing 5/2 5/4 is not much better. It only gives White a few less bad rolls (single returns shots on 6-1 and 6-3).

We rejected any moves that included 23/20 because the 23-point is great to have if all else fails. Since White's 5-point is not made, White should have problems bearing in. Besides, if we can closed White out, escaping should not be a problem.

So what play did we overlook? The hitting play 5/1x! The play was clear among players asked after the match. Yes, it gives White 20 hitting number and 16 dancing numbers plus 2 numbers that hit twice. Why is this the correct play? First, if White does dance, Black has a great chance to make a 5-point board, and if things work out, a closed board. If White hits, you just recycle and go at it again. JellyFish rollouts agree with the hitting play.

Readers usually like to know what really happened: we played 11/8 5/4. White rolled 4-2 hitting and escaping. We danced and they rolled double 4s making the 5-point. We did get a shot which we missed. Although we lost the match, Art finished the weekend on a high note by winning the Open Division.

Update: I played my FIBS tournament match (consolation flight finals) against "pix" from the United Kingdom. I won the first game and found myself down 1-6 four games later. I took the lead at 7-6 but lost the next game to go down 7-8 Crawford. I was able to win the next two games to win the match. The next FIBS tournament starts the first of October.

Hoosier PIPS...HBC will hold Thursday evening backgammon at the Radisson Hotel, Suite 16, August 28th...HBC welcomed Jim Mieske who visited during July.

**1997 HBC Gammon Point Standings.
Player of the Month for July was
Jim Curtis with 238 gammon points.**

1)	Don Woods.....	950
2)	Butch Meese.....	910
3)	Chuck Stimming.....	888
4)	Jim Curtis.....	652
5)	Larry Strommen.....	606
6)	Sean Garber.....	588
7)	Dave Groner.....	480
8)	Mary Ann Meese.....	444
9)	Jan Gurvitz.....	410
10)	Woody Woodworth.....	296
	Kevin McLeaster.....	296
	Gabe Stiasny.....	250
	Alan Haas.....	170
	Brett Robey.....	96
	Chuck Bower.....	88
	J.A. Miller.....	80
	David Schwind.....	48
	Frank Scott.....	32
	Peter Kalba.....	30
	Jim Painter.....	30
	Richard Heinz.....	20
	Brian Nelson.....	20
	Luke Clippinger.....	10
	Jim Clunie.....	10
	Jana Miller.....	10
	Rod Hall.....	10
	Lance Jenkins.....	10
	Rick Reahard.....	10
	Bud Robey.....	10
	Bill Julian.....	10
	Alan Tavel.....	10
	Reggie Porter.....	10

45th Indiana Open
August 29-September 1, 1997



Backgammon Tournament Schedule

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