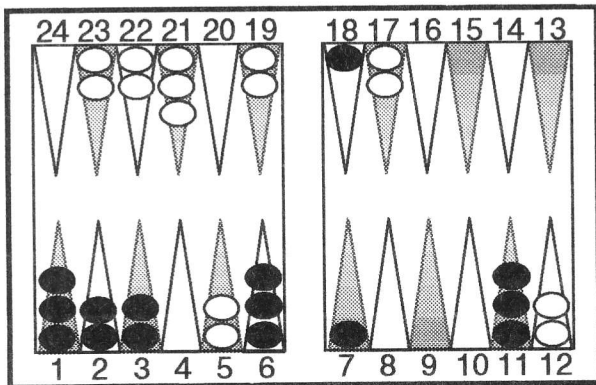


**Four Cube is a Weapon,
Two Cube a Gift**
by Chuck Bower

7-Point Match Black on roll?



- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|
| 1) Centered Cube. | Black-2 | White-4 |
| 2) Black owns 2-Cube. | Black-2 | White-4 |
| 3) Centered Cube. | Black-2 | White-5 |

The strategy of many players when behind in a match is: *double loosely*. If you lose this game (doubled or not), you're probably going to lose the match, anyway. There certainly are situations where this plan is correct. There are also a lot where it is wrong.

Take a look at this position. I list three situations to ponder. In all three cases, the match is well along, and Black must consider whether doubling is correct.

Black can use four points in all three situations. White can't. Thus White must be careful in turning the cube, AND also be careful when taking the 2-cube if gammons are in the air. With gammon threats, the trailer has good leverage in these match scores. Often turning the cube at these scores will strike fear in the hearts of even the wisest of leaders (and with good reason). Four points is a huge chunk.

In the illustrated position, Black has virtually no gammon threats. With a centered cube, it will be hard to squeeze out a four-point win. This should cause black to exercise caution in Situation 1: centered cube and trailing -5, -3 (meaning Black needs 5 points to win and white only 3). White can use the two points to get to Crawford game--the catbird seat!

Many of today's experts would view this position QUANTITATIVELY: they would determine White's drop point, and possibly Black's *last roll doubling point* for this particular match score. I have done that (but with pencil and paper, not allowed in the heat of the battle). If Black could not use the cube later in this game (which is coined *last roll*), then s/he should have at least 50% game winning chances in order to double. White needs to win about 26% in order to take.

Black should answer the following questions: 1) Is this a drop? Here the answer is a clear **NO**. 2) Even if it's a take, are there reasonable chances that White will drop? Against most opponents, the answer will again be a clear **NO**. 3) If I choose to hold off cubing, what are the chances that White won't be able to take when I get my next turn? (This situation is termed *losing one's market*). Black's best roll looks like 4-4, but even then, no matter what White rolls, it looks like Black will either have a take, or be very close to a take.

Jellyfish v3.0 level-6 cubeless rollouts say Black is 5::4 favorite in the above position. (*Cubeless* means that these are Black's winning chances when ALL games are played to completion.) With a centered cube the doubling window is $0.50 < W < 0.74$ (lower number is *last roll doubling point*, upper value is White's drop/take line, from Black's point of view). 5::4 means Black wins 56%. Black is in the window, BUT White will still have a take next time. The prudent choice at -5, -3 is to hold off doubling.

Case 2 is the same position and same score, BUT now Black owns the 2-cube. At money, this would make Black more inclined to hang on (that is, not redouble) since the cube is a powerful tool and one shouldn't surrender its possession so easily. Here, however, four points is the huge chunk that Black is looking for! And White must be more conservative, because s/he can't use all four points, but Black can.

Again I calculated Black's doubling window: $0.34 < W < 0.65$. (Yes, this means that it could be right for Black to redouble, even when an underdog in the game.) Now 56% winning chances means that Black is much closer to losing his/her market. And White is close enough to a technical pass that SOME opponents would actually pass. In addition, there are several market losing sequences. At this score, Black should redouble (but white has a clear take).

...continues page 2 (second column)...

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| <u>August 7th</u> | <u>August 14th</u> | <u>August 21st</u> | <u>August 28th</u> |
| 1st <i>Chuck Stimming</i> | 1st <i>Don Woods</i> | 1st <i>Dave Schwind</i> | 1st <i>Mary Ann Meese</i> |
| 2nd <i>Sean Garber</i> | 2nd <i>Mary Ann Meese</i> | 2nd <i>Jim Curtis</i> | 2nd <i>Luke Clippinger</i> |
| 2nd ... | 2nd <i>Butch Meese</i> | 2nd <i>Butch Meese</i> | 2nd <i>John Ritchie</i> |
| 2nd ... | ... | ... | 2nd <i>Mary Ritchie</i> |

1997 HOOSIER BACKGAMMON CLUB Gammon Point Standings.
HBC Player of the Month for August is Jim Curtis with 154 gammon points.

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Don Woods.....1050 | Brett Robey..... 96 | Bud Robey.....10 |
| 2) Butch Meese.....1046 | Chuck Bower..... 88 | Reggie Porter..... 10 |
| 3) Chuck Stimming..... 928 | J.A. Miller.....80 | Alan Tavel..... 10 |
| 4) Jim Curtis..... 806 | John Ritchie.....64 | Jim Clunie..... 10 |
| 5) Sean Garber.....652 | Peter Kalba.....60 | Rod Hali.....10 |
| 6) Larry Strommen..... 616 | Luke Clippinger.....58 | Jana Miller.....10 |
| 7) Mary Ann Meese.....582 | Herb Gurland.....47 | Rick Reahard..... 10 |
| 8) Dave Groner.....500 | Mary Ritchie..... 47 | Rudy Citrom..... 10 |
| 9) Jan Gurvitz..... 480 | Jim Mieske..... 40 | Phil Barrett.....10 |
| T10) Woody Woodworth.....296 | Frank Scott.....32 | Lance Jenkins..... 10 |
| T10) Kevin McLeaster.....296 | Jim Painter..... 30 | Jon Stephens.....10 |
| Gabe Stiasny.....250 | Brian Nelson.....20 | Bill Julian.....10 |
| Alan Haas.....170 | Richard Heinz.....20 | |
| David Schwind..... 118 | Al Gomez.....20 | |



Check out the Pictures on the HBC Website!!

Championship Division (56)

- 1st..... Doug Roberts (MA)
- 2nd..... Peter Kalba (IL)
- 3/4..... Tim Mabee (IL)
- 3/4..... John O'Hagan (IN)
- C1st..... Steve Hast (PA)
- C2nd..... Frank Frigo (KY)

Advanced Division (43)

- 1st..... Wally Kuester (IL)
- 2nd..... Richard Heinz (IN)
- C1st..... Chester Warzel (IN)
- C2nd..... Denny Leatherman (PA)

Intermediate Division (14)

- 1st..... Wanda de la Barre (MA)
- C1st..... Mark Larios (IN)
- C2nd..... Bob Hubby (IN)

Novice Division (6)

- 1st..... Rudy Langenbach (MI)
- 2nd..... Sonja Peacock (IN)

Masters Jackpot #1 (16)

- 1st..... Frank Frigo (KY)
- 2nd..... Jon Stephens (OH)

Masters Jackpot #2 (10)

- 1st..... Dave Williams (CA)

Doubles (16)

- 1st..... Hersel Namdar/Dr. Bob Hill (NY)
- 2nd..... Steve Hast/Abbas Zaltash (PA)

Amateur Jackpot #1 (16)

- 1st..... Peter Kalba (IL)
- 2nd..... Randall Witt (TN)

Amateur Jackpot #2 (8)

- 1st..... John Ritchie (KS)

\$80 Kick-Off (8): Bob Glass (CA)

\$40 Kick-Off (8): Larry Liebster (NJ)

\$10 Kick-Off (8): Wanda de la Barre (MA)

MicroBlitz Events #1 (16x4): Mike Rezaei (OH)

Quickie Event #1 (64): Denny Leatherman (PA)

Quickie Event #2 (32): Mark Murray (IL)

Four Cube is a Weapon...

In case 3, the match score has Black even deeper in the soup. Does this mean that s/he is desperate and should cube as soon as a favorite? Not at all. At 2-away, White can use a doubled game very efficiently (capturing the match exactly by winning 2 points). If Black had gammon threats, White would be concerned. Here a take is extremely easy. Black's doubling window for this score (and a centered cube, and few gammons) is $0.61 < W < 0.78$. Even if this were the *last roll* of the game, being a 5:4 favorite does not give Black a correct double. Black has not reached the minimum doubling point (61% chances) and turning the cube would be a huge blunder.

Backgammon Tournament Schedule

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 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 |