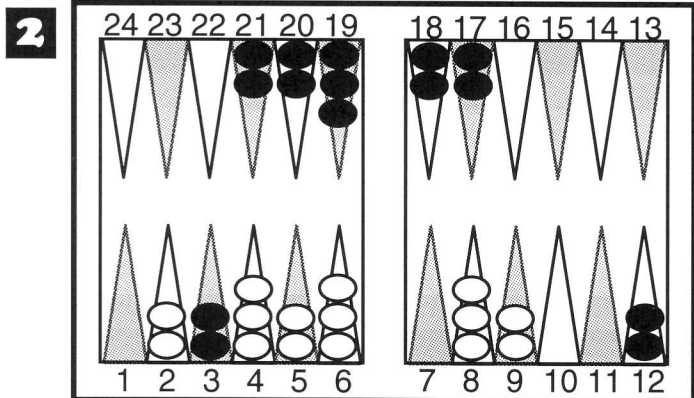


Answers to Atlanta Quiz.

Chuck Bower attended the **Georgia Backgammon Championships** held in Atlanta back in June. He is also a true student of the game. Below are nine positions he encountered during the tournament.

Position 1

Money Game. White to play 2-2?



Intermediate Pointer by Butch Meese

This type of position occurs frequently. White needs only to bear in the five remaining checkers in the outfield so the bearoff process can begin. Black has great timing to maintain both the 3-point anchor and the 5-point prime so any hit would probably result in a victory.

Black's hope is that the anchor will force a shot. White's checkers on the 9-point can't move safely with a six because of the anchor and the checkers on the 8-point can't move a five safely. Other bad numbers for White may come because of gaps (empty points between your back checkers and safety). So in this position, White has two hurdles to cross before s/he can bearoff.

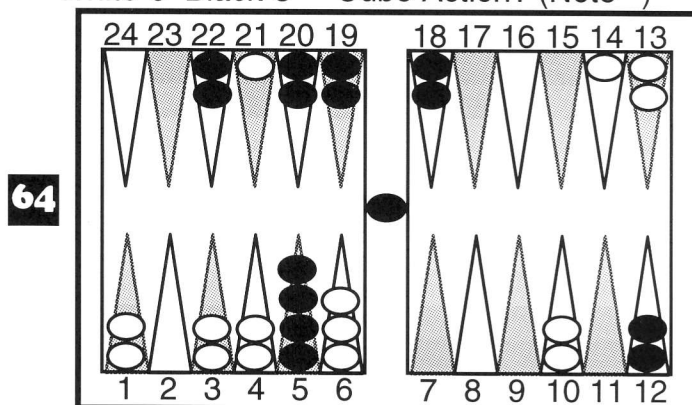
In general, you can't control the anchor, but you can play to avoid gaps. That is also why you see experienced players clearing the back checkers to

prevent the creation of gaps and subsequent bad numbers they might produce.

Double 2's is a great roll. Playing 9/7(2) gets rid of the gap and 8/4 seem correct with the other two 2's. JF also suggests 9/5(2) as an equally good alternative because it provides flexibility. The flexibility comes from the extra checkers on the 4-, 5- and 6-points that can be played while waiting on a good roll to clear the 8-point.

Position 2

7-Point Match White is on-roll.
White-0 Black-3 Cube Action? (Note**)



Easy double. As Black, having the advanced anchor (his 20-point) and a decent home board, many would be tempted into taking. BIG mistake! The problem here is the large number of gammon losses. Black will win almost 30%, but lose 34% gammons. If one of the checkers on his 20-point were on his 6-point instead, then Black would still win the same 30%, but lose only about 18% gammons. That would be an easy take but still a reasonable double.

Note**

Cube Action means: Should the side on roll double? And if the other side is doubled, is it a take or drop?

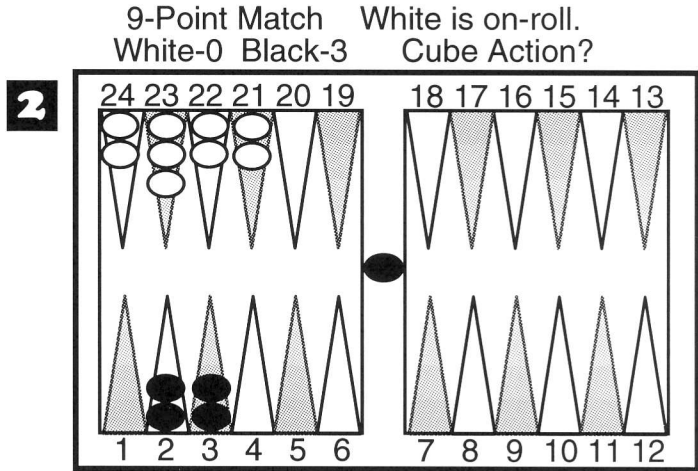
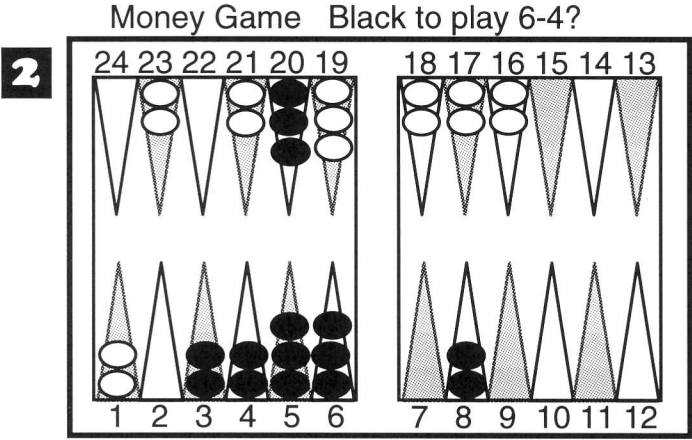
1997 HOOSIER BACKGAMMON CLUB Gammon Point Standings.
HBC Player of the Month for October was **Don Woods** with 208 gammon points.

1) Don Woods..... 1396	Luke Clippinger..... 138	John Brussel..... 20
2) Butch Meese..... 1262	David Schwind..... 118	Reggie Porter..... 10
3) Chuck Stimming..... 1198	Al Gomez..... 110	Alan Tavel..... 10
4) Jim Curtis..... 970	Brett Robey..... 96	Jim Clunie..... 10
5) Sean Garber..... 830	Chuck Bower..... 88	Rod Hali..... 10
6) Larry Strommen..... 754	J.A. Miller..... 80	Jana Miller..... 10
7) Mary Ann Meese..... 682	John Ritchie..... 64	Rick Reahard..... 10
8) Dave Groner..... 584	Peter Kalba..... 60	Rudy Citrom..... 10
9) Jan Gurvitz..... 530	Herb Gurland..... 47	Phil Barrett..... 10
10) Kevin McLeaster..... 326	Mary Ritchie..... 47	Lance Jenkins..... 10
Woody Woodworth..... 296	Frank Scott..... 32	Jon Stephens..... 10
Gabe Stiasny..... 250	Jim Painter..... 30	Bill Julian..... 10
Alan Haas..... 170	Brian Nelson..... 20	Bud Robey..... 10
Jim Mieske..... 160	Richard Heinz..... 20	Diana Dialidonis..... 10

October 9th 1st Chuck Stimming 2nd Dave Groner 2nd Mary Ann Meese	October 16th Don Woods Butch Meese ...	October 23rd Don Woods Larry Strommen Sean Garber	October 30th Chuck Stimming Jim Curtis Don Woods
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Position 3

Position 4



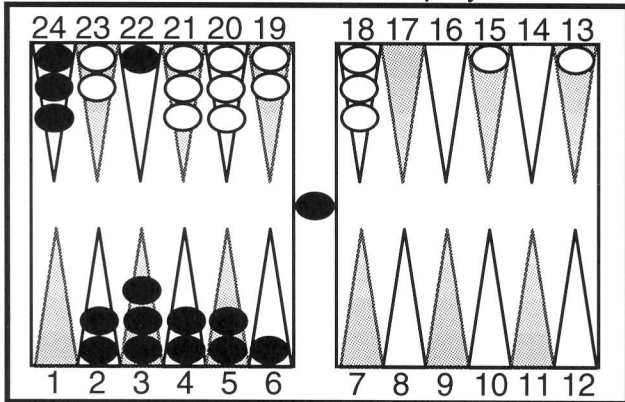
An old backgammon saw goes like: *If you're way behind, look for the few things that can go right, and steer towards them. If you are way AHEAD, look for the things that can go wrong, and steer AWAY from them.* Here Black is sitting pretty well. Strong board with two White checkers buried deep, and a great anchor. Go for blood by making the 2-point? Well, what happens next turn with 3-3 or 4-4? Or what about two turns with rolls like 3-2, 4-3, 2-2? That pretty board can go bad quickly. By making the simple running play (20/10), Black avoids many of these disasters. As a bonus, s/he gets another builder for the 7-point. And in this position the 7-point is quite a bit more valuable than the 2-point. JF rollouts say that three plays (20/10, 8/2, 6/2, and 20/14, 6/2) give Black about 23% gammons. 20/10 has the advantage of winning more games.

White has a substantial race lead of 22-35. Counting crossovers, we see that each side needs 9 (but obviously white being on roll gives him/her the lead on this count, too). The contact (which might help black) is unfortunately almost nil. Given that black could even fail to enter next turn, s/he is just too far behind. Jf says that white wins 85%. A clear double and pass.

Hoosier Pips...HBC welcomes new players Al Gomez and Diana Dialidonis...Out-of-town visitors are two old HBC friends: Jim Mieske (OH) who has been in town for a few months on temporary assignment and John Brussel (IL).

Position 5

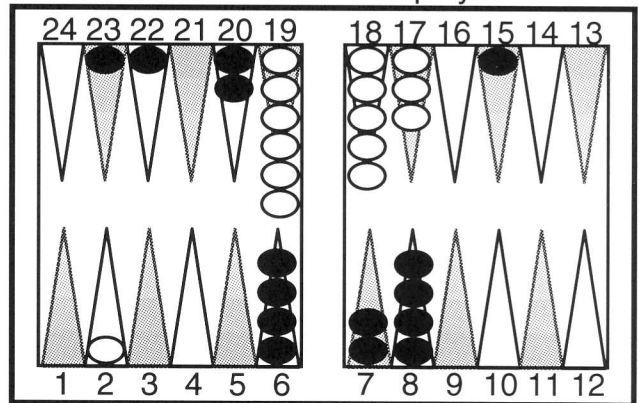
9-Point Match
Black-3 White-2 Black to play 5-3?



Many players would pass this at money, but figure the match deficit would dictate a take. This is still early in the match. White can use the 2 (or 4!) points quite nicely, here. And if Black were to take and turn things around, white should not be any more timid than at money when facing a 4-cube. A take would not be a big mistake either here or for money, but a pass is likely to be the prudent choice.

Position 7

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

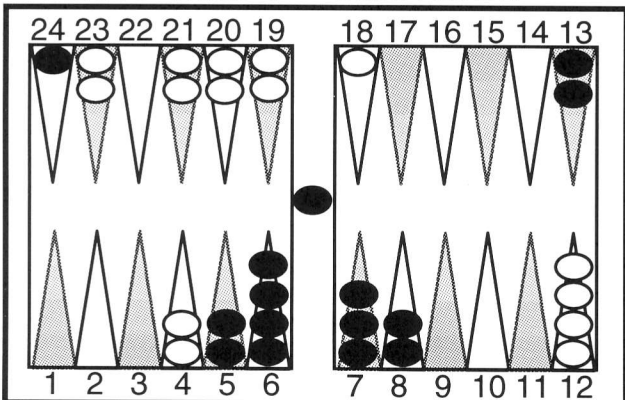


Black is in an unenviable position. There are only two legal plays. After entering Bar/22, Black can either hold the two anchors and play 6/1, possibly leading to a crunched board next turn, or going for **timing** by continuing 22/17. The 1970's style was to play purely and go for the timing. If you get hit, maybe you'll stay on the bar and keep your board until white leaves a blot. BANG. Hit, contain, and win! In the 1990's, that's just too optimistic. By hanging on to the two anchors, you give yourself some slim chances for joker rolls (5-2 and 6-2 next time). In addition, you minimize gammon losses. Although digging in and trying to avoid gammons is often a mistake, here it is **wise**. JF says Black will win 16-17% with either play, but holding the defensive fort (and playing 6/1) loses 41% gammons instead of 51% with the **timing** play.

Doublets typically offer MANY more choices than non-doublets. You must be extra careful in finding all the reasonable candidates. And nothing says you must play the dice in pairs! JF says that three plays are quite close (a tossup). All involve making the 4-point. POINTING on the 2-point is NOT one of the best plays. 15/7 looks natural and is one of the three best. Giving up the 20-point would NOT be given serious consideration by most players, but the other two **equal** candidates are 20/16(2) and 20/16, 6/2x. Apparently outfield control is as important as the **best** anchor in this position.

Position 6

11-Point Match White is on-roll.
Black-0 White-4 Cube Action?



No *backgammon* on
November 27th...Happy Thanksgiving
December 25th...Merry Christmas
January 1st...Happy New Year

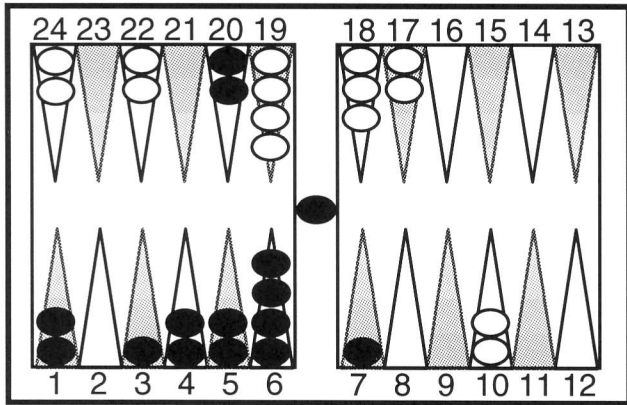
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Position 8

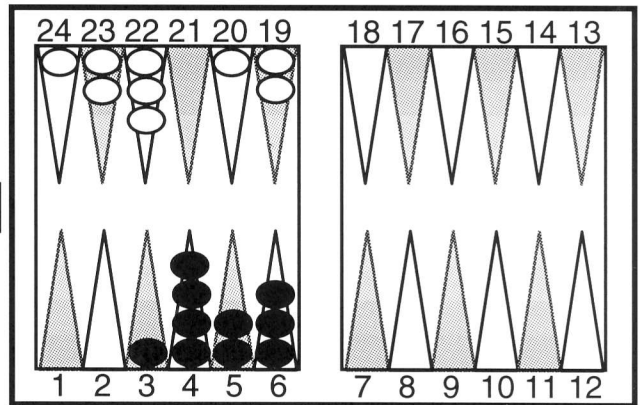
11-Point Match White is on-roll.
White-6 Black-0 Cube Action?



64

Position 9

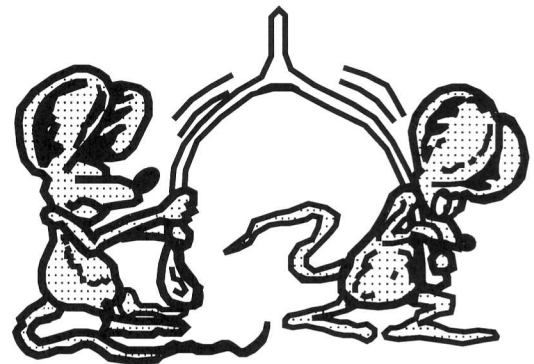
11-Point Match White is on-roll.
Black-0 White-9 Cube Action?



64

Here Black is in even more of a panic than Position 6. Down 6-0, s/he must be getting desperate. Can this be a take? A pass leaves White 4 points away from victory. This is a very nice place to sit, because winning a 4-point game (either with a 4-cube or a gammon on a 2-cube) gives White the EXACT score needed to win the match. If Black were to take and lose (but NOT get gammoned!) then White would need three--not particularly efficient because a 4 point game now wastes a point, whereas a 4-point win for Black carries full weight. There has even been speculation in the internet newsgroup (rec.games.backgammon) that a player might be BETTER off at 4-away instead of 3-away! And so far NO ONE has even tried to prove this wrong. JF says that Black wins between 22% and 23% cubeless. This would be a money pass, but the match score makes this a close take.

And you thought Position 8 was desperate! A pass leaves White needing to win six straight games (or maybe less with some timely gammons). The Woolsey-Heinrich match equity table gives black only 3% chance at the 0-10/11 score. SURELY this is a take. WRONG! Black's take point is a surprisingly high 20% cubeless game winning chances. Not only is this WAY FAR from that, but White has surely lost his/her market a while back against such an astute match player as yourself!



Backgammon Tournament Schedule

Nov 28-30.....	Northern Ohio Thanksgiving Tournament , Holiday Inn, Canton, OH.....	(330) 966-2811
Dec 05-07.....	40th Gammon Associates Invitational , A. R. Private Club, Los Angeles, CA.....	(818) 901-0464
Dec 26-28.....	Ace Point New York Holiday Tournament , Ace Point Club, New York, NY.....	(212) 753-0842
Jan 9-12.....	Backgammon on Board IV , Miami to Bahamas.....	(773) 583-6464
Feb 13-15.....	20th Annual Pittsburgh Backgammon Championships , Pittsburgh, PA.....	(412) 823-7500
Thursdays.....	7:00 PM at Wildcat Brewing Company (872-3446) 92nd & North Michigan Road	255-8902