



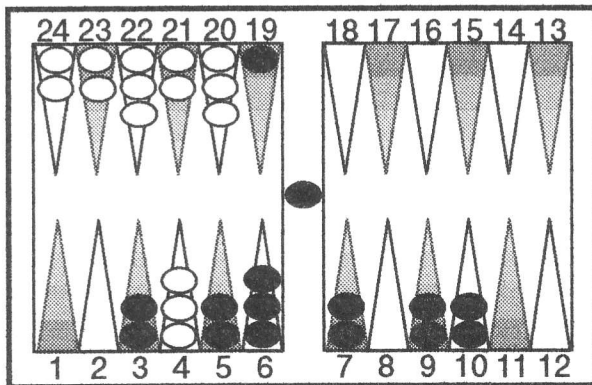
Hoosier  
Backgammon  
Club

July 1998



## Blind Spots by Chuck Bower

Money game. Black on roll.  
Cube action, both sides.



Most backgammon players have **blind spots** in their backgammon vision. These are situations where a player makes a **huge** mistake (play or cube) not by overlooking anything, but just through a weakness in ability to evaluate. The position above was one of my **blind spots**.

Black is on the bar against a five point board, but has a nice broken prime blocking three White checkers. White's timing looks quite shaky. Yes, each player needs a specific die (6 for Black and 4 for White), but if **neither** player gets the number s/he needs, White's position will deteriorate while Black's remains solid. How would you judge this position? Does Black have a double? Does White have a take?

In the actual game, my opponent (Black) doubled and I passed. Imagine my surprise when both Jellyfish and Snowie agreed that, technically, Black does not yet have a double! I played both robots a few games, taking the White checkers, just to find out where White's strength comes from.

It turns out that White gets a bit of equity from several options. Clearly, if White can escape while Black remains on the bar, White can win a gammon. That doesn't happen very often (Snowie 3-play rollouts say 7.5% of games end in gammon

wins for White), but it's a juicy result. If White can get one back checker free before Black enters, s/he should hit the loose checker, even if that means leaving a direct shot. Keeping Black on the rail is White's strongest defense.

When Black enters, White should try and hang onto the anchor. The extra back checker helps here. White has a 29 pip lead and keeps race equity for quite a few rolls. Sometimes after Black breaks the prime, White runs for a win--not very often, but all of White's winning chances add up.

If White can keep the five point board, or just salvage a four point board, then Black must be careful leaving blots, even behind White's anchor (in Black's home board). Hitting is obviously good for White, but just the threat of hits may cause Black's caution, allowing White to run to victory.

Rollouts by both Jellyfish v3.0 (at level-6) and Snowie Beta (3-ply, equivalent to JF level-7) found that Black wins 65% total games and 11% of all games are gammon wins for Black. Almost ANY improvement for Black is a double, according to JellyFish. If White gives up his/her 5-point and Black enters before White escapes any checkers, Black has a maximally efficient double (meaning it doesn't matter whether White takes or passes). Once White's home board is reduced to three points or less, s/he must pass, regardless of the location of Black's back checkers.

### Humorous Email - Enjoy!!

The internet has make it much easier to communicate. Over the last year, backgammon friends have been emailing us jokes. Since we have a little space this month, we thought we would share some of the better ones with you.

Bumper sticker: *"Not tonight, dear. I have a modem."*

I work in a busy office where a computer going down causes quite an inconvenience. Recently one of our computers not only crashed, it made a noise that sounded like a heart monitor. *"This computer has flat-lined,"* a co-worker called out with mock horror. *"Does anyone here know how to do mouse-to-mouse?"*

*"Hey, I just heard you can download the entire Tyson-Holyfield fight from the Internet,"* one boxing fan mentioned to another. *"Really?"* said the other man. *"How much memory does it take up?"* *"Very little,"* replied the first man. *"Just two bytes."*

Hoosier Backgammon Club  
Home Page: <http://home.att.net/~meese>  
E-Mail: [meese@worldnet.att.net](mailto:meese@worldnet.att.net)

Butch & Mary Ann Meese  
1008 Tuckahoe, Indianapolis, IN 46260-2215  
(317) 255-8902

**More...Humorous Email**

**AHHHH Communication . . . . .**

A helicopter was flying around above Seattle yesterday when an electrical malfunction disabled all of the aircraft's electronic navigation and communication equipment. Due to the clouds and haze the pilot could not determine his position or course to steer to the airport. The pilot saw a tall building, flew toward it, circled, drew a handwritten sign and held it in the helicopter's window. The sign said "WHERE AM I?" in large letters.

People in the tall building quickly responded to the aircraft, drew a large sign and held it in a building window. Their sign said, "YOU ARE IN A HELICOPTER." The pilot smiled, waved, looked at his map and determine the course to steer to SEATAC (Seattle/Tacoma) airport and landed safely.

After they were on the ground, the co-pilot asked the pilot how the "YOU ARE IN A HELICOPTER" sign helped determine their position. The pilot responded, "I knew that had to be the MICROSOFT building because they gave me a technically correct but completely useless answer."

**Is it a he or she?**

As you are aware, ships have long been characterized as being female (e.g., "Steady as she goes" or "She's listing to starboard, Captain!"). Recently, a group of computer scientists (all males) announced that computers should also be referred to as being female. Their reasons for this conclusion follow:

Five reasons to believe computers are female:

1. No one but the Creator understands their internal logic.
2. The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else.
3. The message "Bad command or file name" is about as informative as, "If you don't know why I'm mad at you, then I'm certainly not going to tell you."
4. Even your smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for later retrieval.
5. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your paycheck on accessories for it.

However, another group of computer scientists (all female) think that computers should be referred to as if

they were male. Their reasons follow:

Five reasons to believe computers are male:

1. They have a lot of data, but are still clueless.
2. They are supposed to help you solve problems, but half the time they ARE the problem.
3. As soon as you commit to one you realize that, if you had waited a little longer, you could have obtained a better model.
4. In order to get their attention, you have to turn them on.
5. Big power surges knock them out for the rest of the day.

**1998 Hoosier Backgammon Club**  
 Gammon Point Standings as of June 30, 1998.  
 The HBC **Player of the Month for June**  
 was **Larry Strommen** with 170 gammon points.

- 1) Don Woods..... 942
- 2) Chuck Stimming..... 754
- 3) Butch Meese..... 726
- 4) Jim Curtis..... 676
- 5) Larry Strommen..... 628
- 6) Sean Garber..... 596
- 7) Al Gomez..... 538
- 8) Mary Ann Meese..... 436
- 9) Dave Groner..... 302
- 10) Chuck Bower..... 276
- Luke Clippinger..... 196
- Jan Gurvitz..... 140
- Jim Mieske..... 140
- Reggie Porter..... 128
- Kevin McLeaster..... 100
- Gino Agresti..... 90
- Peter Kalba..... 60
- Woody Woodworth..... 60
- Richard Heinz..... 48
- Femi Owiku..... 40
- Neil Ezell..... 40
- Larry Buckingham..... 20
- Frank Scott..... 20
- Dave Fey..... 10
- Bill Julian..... 10

**Hoosier Pips...HBC welcomed out-of-town visitor Larry Buckingham on June 11th.**

	<u>June 4th</u>	<u>June 11th</u>	<u>June 18th</u>	<u>June 25th</u>
1st	Woody Woodworth	Butch Meese	Gino Agresti	Chuck Stimming
2nd	Larry Strommen	Larry Strommen	Don Woods	Larry Strommen
2nd	Chuck Stimming	Don Woods	. . .	. . .

**Tournament Schedule**

Jul 2-5.....	<b>Michigan Summer Backgammon Championships</b> , Novi Hilton, Novi, MI.....	(810) 232-9731
Aug 1-9.....	<b>World Cup VI/Texas Open/US Open</b> , Harvey's Hotel Addison, Dallas, TX.....	(301) 299-8265
Sep 4-7.....	<b>46th INDIANA Open</b> , Raddison Hotel, Indianapolis, IN.....	(317) 255-8902
Thursdays.....	7:00 PM at <b>Wildcat Brewing Company</b> (872-3446) 92nd & North Michigan Road .....	255-8902