



Hoosier  
Backgammon  
Club

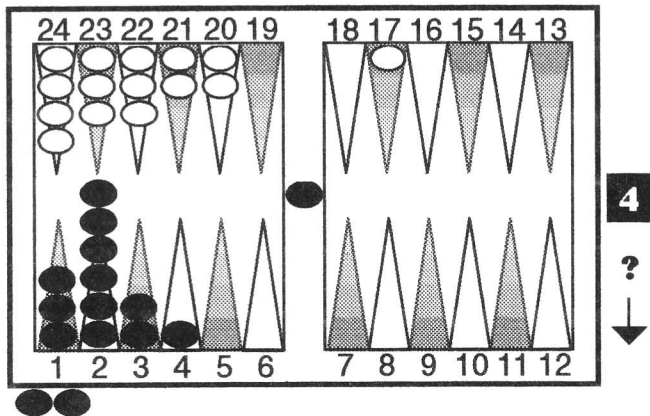
August 1998



## Adventures in *Playing Doubles*

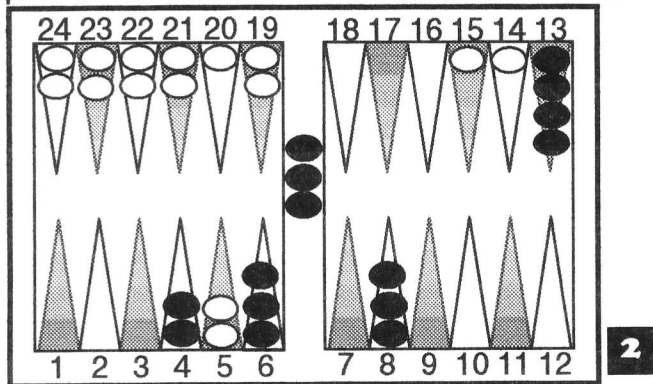
by *Butch Meese and Chuck Bower*

7-Point Money. Black-0 White-2.  
White Doubles to 4?



I met Chuck Bower, who is from Bloomington IN, in Dallas at World Cup III in 1992 and we have come to be great friends. In July, we tested the friendship by playing in the Doubles event at the **Michigan Summer Championships**. One of us felt that there might be problems with this new partnership but was assured by the other that it would be fun.

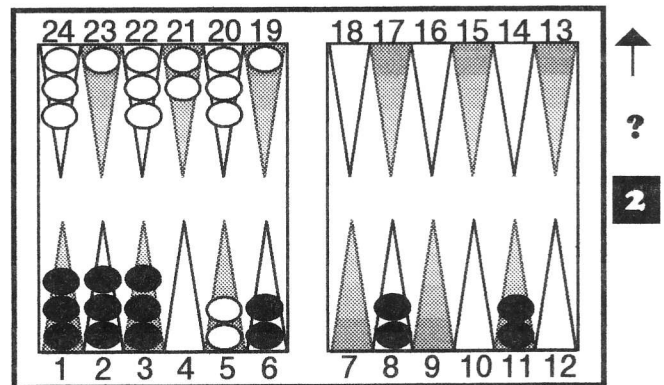
In Round One, we met our friends from Chicago, **Peter Kalba** and **John Brussel**. The 7-point match was tied at 5-5 and we were doomed.



We had three checkers in the air against their 5 1/2-point home board. They need any 5 or 6's to close us out, but rolled 3-1 not covering or lifting. We rolled 5-2 hitting. They re-hit but we answered with double 5's. The game was far from over since we only had two points made in our home board. But step by step we improved our position and moved on to Round Two.

In Round Two, we played the Michigan team of **Maurice Barie** and **Jack Takala**. The match started out close until we turned a game on them and won 7-2. **Maurice** and **Jack** still had a great weekend: **Maurice** won the Championship Division while **Jack** finished tied 4th/5th.

Next we moved to the money round against the Southern California powerhouse pair: **Bob Glass** and **Steve Sax**. They won two points on the first game. In the next game, we doubled in the following position and they took.



We were able to get all four checkers in without getting hit. But we had one last hurdle: clear the 6-point. We did not: we rolled 6-1 and they hit. We danced as they brought around the last checker to the key position to the left. They made a strong decision by redoubling to 4. The pressure in these positions is almost always on the receiving side. It's hard for Black to err if not presented with the opportunity! If we pass, we must win the next four games (or maybe three out of four with a well-timed gammon). Between equal players, you need between 8% and 9% cubeless game winning chances to accept this. Can you scratch out that many wins? (*Don't forget that if we take, the recube to 8 is MANDATORY.*)

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How many of White rolls give Black a shot next time? Note that the checker on White's 8-point bears off with exactly 8, and safeties with any number less than this. Combinations of 4's, 5's and 6's could be a problem. There are nine of these, but 4-4 plays safely. So 8/36 rolls give Black a single shot which is hit 11/36 of these. That's a little worse than 1/4 x 1/3 or around 7%.

BUT, after you hit, you still must win! That will happen more than half of the time, but maybe not much more. Let's say if you get a total of 4-5% wins from these sequences. That's not enough... yet.

Just because White doesn't leave a shot this time doesn't mean s/he won't leave one later. For this to be a problem Black must stay on the bar. If we assume that the chances of White leaving a shot later is about the same as the chances of leaving one THIS turn, then we must multiply by the chances of Black staying on the bar (about 2/3), subtract the hits we already counted (when White leaves a shot this turn) and note that Black will be even further behind in the race by then (meaning fewer wins after hitting). 7% x 2/3 x 1/2. This looks like about 2% more wins. Now we are up to 6-7%. We're getting close.

What happens if White rolls an average number (say about 2/3 of the time) and Black then rolls 6-6 (about 3% of the time). The game will be almost even in that case. 2/3 x 3% x 1/2. That's another 1%. We have now reached 7-8%. Have we made it to a take? Not quite.

Can we think of any other ways to win? It's tough, but there surely are some. A good rule of thumb is: if you can almost get to a take with all the ways you can see (and count), you probably have a take since there are going to be a few winning parlays that you haven't thought of. After a long discussion over the board, we took, recubed, and LOST. The wrong Meese was

rolling. Making the right decision isn't always rewarded. JellyFish rollouts say Black wins 12% of the time which indicates a clear take at this match score.

By the way, the team of Meese and Bower agreed they would try it again someday.

**1998 Hoosier Backgammon Club**  
 Gammon Point Standings as of July 31, 1998.  
 The HBC **Player of the Month** for July  
 was **Butch Meese** with 190 gammon points.

- 1) Don Woods..... 1002
- 2) Butch Meese..... 916
- 3) Chuck Stimming..... 784
- 4) Jim Curtis..... 780
- 5) Sean Garber..... 756
- 6) Larry Strommen..... 696
- 7) Al Gomez..... 578
- 8) Mary Ann Meese..... 514
- 9) Dave Groner..... 302
- 10) Chuck Bower..... 276
- Luke Clippinger..... 196
- Jan Gurvitz..... 150
- Jim Mieske..... 140
- Reggie Porter..... 128
- Gino Agresti..... 110
- Kevin McLeaster..... 100
- Woody Woodworth..... 70
- Peter Kalba..... 60
- Richard Heinz..... 48
- Bill Julian..... 42
- Femi Owiku..... 40
- Neil Ezell..... 40
- Larry Buckingham..... 20
- Frank Scott..... 20
- Dave Fey..... 10

	<u>July 9th</u>	<u>July 16th</u>	<u>July 23rd</u>	<u>July 30th</u>
1st	Sean Garber	Butch Meese	Butch Meese	Butch Meese
2nd	Jim Curtis	Larry Strommen	Mary Ann Meese	Sean Garber
2nd	. . .	. . .	Sean Garber	Bill Julian

**Tournament Schedule**

Sep 4-7.....	<b>46th INDIANA Open</b> , Sheraton/Westin Hotel, Indianapolis, IN.....	(317) 255-8902
Sep 18-20.....	<b>Minnesota State Championships</b> , Minnesota Athletic Club, MN.....	(612) 378-1536
Sep 25-27.....	<b>Towpath Inn Tournament</b> , Towpath Inn, Turin, TX.....	(716) 442-8221
Oct 9-11.....	<b>Nation's Capital Championships</b> , Promensda, MD.....	(301) 530-0604
Oc 30-No 1....	<b>Northeast Regional</b> , Best Western Airport Hotel, Albany, NY.....	(603) 863-4711
Nov 27-29.....	<b>Northern Ohio Thanksgiving BG Tournament</b> , Belden Holiday Inn, Canton, OH..	(330)-966-2811
Thursdays.....	7:00 PM at <b>Wildcat Brewing Company</b> (872-3446) 92nd & North Michigan Road .....	255-8902