



Hoosier
Backgammon
Club

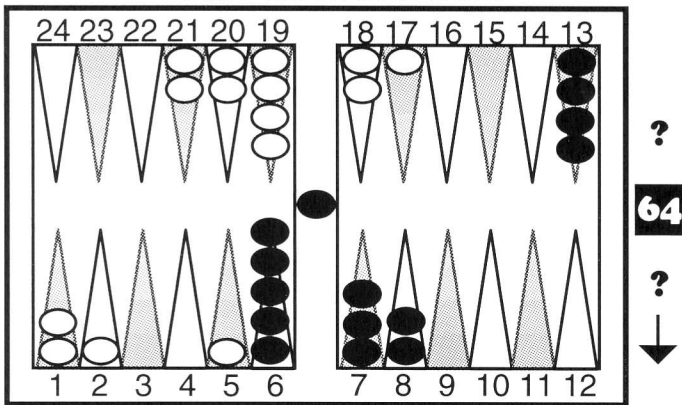
September 1998



Accept a Small Loss or Risk a Big One?

by Chuck Bower

9-Point Money. Black-6 White-1.
White is on roll. Centered cube.
Cube action both sides.



This position is the results of a blot hitting contest. While White built a strong board, Black was able to escape one back checker and now has the other dancing on the bar. Black is ahead by four pips with White on roll.

For money, this is not a proper double for White according to Jellyfish rollouts. However, this is a match and the match score definitely enters into the player's decision. Black is 3 away and White needs 8 points. When facing a big deficit in a short match, the trailer should take advantage opportunity to win points in big chunks. Collecting one or two points per game usually doesn't cut it. Four point gains really help the trailer. These come in two varieties: wins with the cube on 4 or wins with a doubled gammon. To get the cube to 4, the trailer wants the leader to double, turn the game around (often just getting to where the trailer is a mere game favorite) and reshipping to 4. The other route is for the trailer to double with in gammonish positions. Leader's plan is just the opposite; be careful offering the cube and steer away from gammonish positions.

White, the trailer, has found the second path--a gammonish position. The double here is perfectly timed. Even if Black turns this game around s/he won't be able to use the cube until a prohibitive favorite since

redoubling will effectively make this the last game of the match. That adds one further reason for White to double NOW.

The tough question here is *can Black take?* It definitely helps to be able to calculate the take point which means, among other things, having memorized a match equity table. Passing leaves Black leading 6-2/9 (equivalent to 4-0/7) or about 76% Match Winning Chances (MWC). Taking and winning leaves Black 8-0/9 with about 93% MWC. Losing a simple game means White will lead 6-3/9 (same as 4-1 to 7) and in the 71% MWC range. A gammon loss and Black will still be up 6-5/9 (=4-3/7) with 59% MWC.

What do we do with all these numbers?! First you need to estimate White's gammon win fraction (ratio of gammon wins to total wins). For a typical game, a player has a gammon fraction of about 25%. In a typical blitz, the blitzer will have a gammon fraction of about 50%. With only one Black checker on the bar, no extra blots to shoot at, and Black's extra blocking point, White is not as strong in the gammon threat as a typical blitz. Let's say the gammon fraction is more like 40%.

When Black (the leader) loses, 40% of the time will be gammons (resulting in 59% MWC) and 60% will be simple losses (and thus 71% MWC). Prorating means $0.40 \times 59\% + 0.60 \times 71\% = 66\%$ MWC if Black takes and loses. Now we are down to three numbers: passing means 76% MWC; taking and winning for 93% MWC; taking and losing results in 66% MWC. Taking RISKS $10\% = 76\% - 66\%$ out of a total possible $27\% = 93\% - 66\%$. Black must win ten games out of 27 in order to take. $10/27 = 9/27 + 1/27 = 33\% + 4\% = 37\%$, or about three games out of every eight. Can Black really win this many?

Note that White has only 11 checkers to build a prime (and/or a closed board). White will need to make the fifth point in the prime AND get at least one more checker around to try and build the full prime. Black will probably enter fairly easily and then try and build extra points while not leaving blots. White has a lot of work to do in order to bury Black. One or two bad breaks for White like getting a couple sent back or small doublets by Black and Black will be the favorite. Jellyfish rollouts say Black will win 42% or about 5% more games than we calculated were required. Black has a clear take.

White's biggest asset here is what Danny Kleinman calls *gammon phobia*. Black has a very nice match lead, and his/her biggest fear is to see it disappear in one game by losing a doubled gammon. Passing, thought wrong, is the easy way out. Many players (including some experts) will choose the small loss of a point and not risk losing the big lead. White can take advantage of this by cubing and putting maximum pressure on Black. Once again, this is an example of the axiom *your opponent cannot make a mistake unless presented with the opportunity*.

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1998 Hoosier Backgammon Club
 Gammon Point Standings as of August 31, 1998.
 The HBC **Player of the Month** for August
 was **Don Woods** with 188 gammon points.

- 1) Don Woods..... 1190
- 2) Butch Meese..... 936
- 3) Jim Curtis..... 864
- 4) Sean Garber..... 840
- 5) Chuck Stimming..... 804
- 6) Larry Strommen..... 716
- 7) Al Gomez..... 676
- 8) Mary Ann Meese..... 524
- 9) Dave Groner..... 302
- 10) Chuck Bower..... 276
- Gino Agresti..... 200
- Luke Clippinger..... 196
- Jan Gurvitz..... 150
- Jim Mieske..... 140
- Woody Woodworth.... 130
- Reggie Porter..... 128
- Kevin McLeaster..... 100
- Bill Julian..... 62
- Peter Kalba..... 60
- Richard Heinz..... 48
- Femi Owiku..... 40
- Neil Ezell..... 40
- Larry Buckingham..... 20
- Frank Scott..... 20
- Dave Fey..... 10

HBC Backgammon Sunday
 October 4th & December 13th

Wildcat Brewing Company
 92nd & North Michigan Road
Open Div \$20...\$10 Optional Sidepool
Limited Division \$10
 Double Gammon Points
 Format: Main (9pts) Consolation (7pts)

Pre-register and save the \$5 Late Fee
 255-8902 or meese@worldnet.att.net

46th Indiana Open Results
See You In September

Championship Division (46)

1st Perry Gartner (NJ) 2nd Alex Caraplis (NJ)
 C1st Doug Roberts (MA) C1st David Simpson (NC)

Advanced Division (36)

1st Steve Herman (NC) 2nd Gary Payne (MI)
 C1st Gayle Wolf (MI) C2nd Ed King (OH)

Intermediate Division (8)

1st Jana Miller (MO) 2nd Al Gomez (IN)

Novice Division (6)

1st Barbara Sutton (PA) 2nd Fran Miller (OH)

Masters Jackpot (16)

1st Doug Roberts (MA) 2nd Ray Foglerlund (CA)

Open Jackpot (8): Paul Franks (IL)

Amateur Jackpot (16)

1st Mary Franks (IL) 2nd Chuck Stimming(IN)

Doubles Event (16): Chuck Bower & Rob Maier (IN)

MicroBlitz (128)

1st Jim Pascoe (CT) 2nd D. Leatherman (PA)

See You In September Jackpot (48)

1st Bob Glass (CA) 2nd Jim Pascoe (CT)

\$200 Labor Day Jackpot (8)

T1st Doug Roberts (MA) T1st Ray Foglerlund (CA)

\$100 Labor Day Jackpot (8)

1st Paul Berg (MI) 2nd Gary Payne (MI)

Indy Quickie #1 (64): Alan Haas (IN)

Indy Quickie #2 (32): Carol Joy Cole (MI)

	<u>August 6th</u>	<u>August 13th</u>	<u>August 20th</u>	<u>August 27th</u>
1st	Don Woods	Don Woods	Gino Agresti	Woody Woodworth
2nd	Sean Garber	Jim Curtis	Al Gomez	Don Woods

Tournament Schedule

Sep 25-27.....	Towpath Inn Tournament , Towpath Inn, Turin, TX.....	(716) 442-8221
Oct 9-11.....	Nation's Capital Championships , Promensda, MD.....	(301) 530-0604
Oc 30-No 1....	Northeast Regional , Best Western Airport Hotel, Albany, NY.....	(603) 863-4711
Nov 27-29.....	Northern Ohio Thanksgiving BG Tournament , Belden Holiday Inn, Canton, OH..	(330)-966-2811
Thursdays.....	7:00 PM at Wildcat Brewing Company (872-3446) 92nd & North Michigan Road	255-8902