

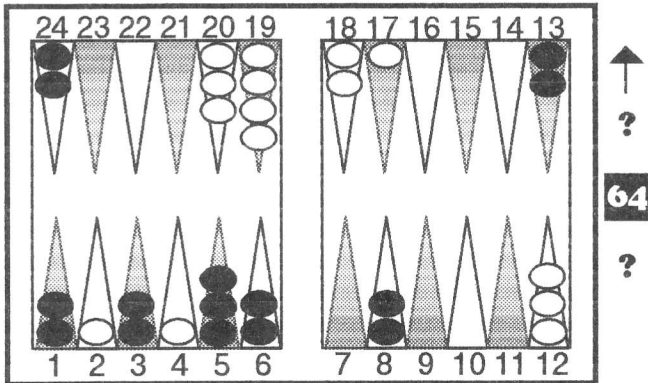


Hoosier  
Backgammon  
Club



October 1998

**YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY...  
BACKGAMMON by Chuck Bower**



**Money game. Centered cube. Black on roll.  
Cube decision for both sides?**

Backgammon has enjoyed three prosperous periods over the last 75 years. The first surge in popularity occurred during the 1920's and coincided with the first major change in the game in centuries: the invention of the doubling cube. A one-two punch from The Great Depression and World War II sent the game back to the Middle Ages.

In the mid-seventies, the game saw its biggest boom of the century. Everyone seemed to be playing: in schools, in bars, and in homes. Unfortunately the game's popularity waned in the early eighties, but was soon revived by the affordable home computer. The internet servers and the strong computer players like Jellyfish and Snowie accompanied and spurred this third period of growth.

All three boom periods saw considerable publication of books on the subject. Here, though, the quality of writing clearly grew in leaps and bounds with each popularity surge. As an example of some less than sound advice sold during the Roaring Twenties, here is a quote from *Vanity Fair's Backgammon To Win* by Georges Mabardi: *...if two absolutely perfect players*

*engaged in a match, there would never be an accepted double.* The game has come a long way in 75 years.

The above position is a common example of why Mabardi was wrong. Black is on the attack, and each roll could produce a huge swing in either direction. All doublets (except 5-5) and 6-4, 4-2 point on White's head in the home board. All sevens (6-1, 5-2, and 4-3) hit the blot on White's 8-point. EVERY roll (except 5-5) hits at least one checker. A subsequent fan by white and black's eyes light up with gammons. From black's view, the current position looks like a double.

From white's standpoint, a lot of good things can happen as well. S/he can return hit, anchor up, or close the 8-point, making a nice four prime to hamper black's two back checkers. It doesn't take much imagination to see that in a roll or two White could be the favorite.

Even though Mabardi's misconception seems elementary in 1998, often players fall into the trap of thinking *I'm sure my opponent will take this, therefore I should wait a roll.* In positions that aren't expected to change much before the next roll (that is, the next chance to double) this is often correct thinking. But when big swings are likely, sometimes referred to as **volatile** positions, waiting is a mistake.

Jellyfish and Snowie agree that in the above position, Black has a cubeless equity of between 0.39 and 0.40. With the cube on 2, even if White promised never to use it, losing  $2 \times 0.40 = 0.80$  is better than conceding one point by dropping. Still, the robots also agree that NOW is the time to double. A Snowie rollout with the cube indicates that Black wins 0.49 points per game by doubling and only 0.39 by delaying the decision until next turn. Clearly Black should double now. Wouldn't Mabardi have been surprised!

*Happy Halloween*



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**1998 Hoosier Backgammon Club**  
 Gammon Point Standings as of Sept 30, 1998.  
 The HBC **Player of the Month** for **September**  
 was **Jim Curtis** with 140 gammon points.

- 1) Don Woods (2)..... 1274
- 2) Butch Meese (2)..... 1068
- 3) Jim Curtis (1)..... 1004
- 4) Chuck Stimming..... 916
- 5) Sean Garber (1)..... 910
- 6) Larry Strommen (2).... 716
- 7) Al Gomez (1)..... 706
- 8) Mary Ann Meese..... 554
- 9) Dave Groner..... 372
- 10) Chuck Bower..... 306
- Gino Agresti..... 270
- Woody Woodworth.... 230
- Luke Clippinger..... 196
- Jan Gurvitz..... 160
- Jim Mieske..... 140
- Reggie Porter..... 128
- Kevin McLeaster..... 100
- Jon Stephens..... 80
- Richard Heinz..... 68
- Joe Miller..... 64
- Bill Julian..... 62
- Peter Kalba..... 60
- Femi Owiku..... 40
- Neil Ezell..... 40
- Alan Haas..... 30
- Paul Franks..... 30
- Rob Maier..... 30
- John Brussel..... 20
- Wendy Kaplan..... 20
- Frank Scott..... 20
- Larry Buckingham..... 20
- Mary Franks..... 10
- Scott Richardson..... 10
- Dave Fey..... 10
- Bobbie Shifrin..... 10
- Alan Gartner..... 10

# HBC Backgammon Sunday

December 13th

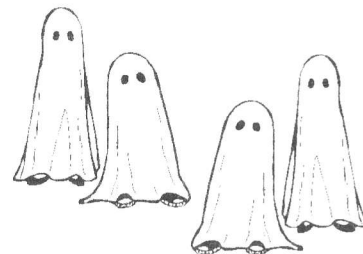
**Wildcat Brewing Company**  
 92nd & North Michigan Road  
 Sunday Brunch 11AM-4PM

**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

## October 4th Results

- 1st Sean Garber
- 2nd Jim Curtis



	<u>September 3rd</u>	<u>September 10th</u>	<u>September 17th</u>	<u>September 24th</u>
1st	Jon Stephens	Gino Agresti	Jim Curtis	Jim Curtis
2nd	Chuck Stimming	Chuck Stimming	Butch Meese	Butch Meese
2nd	Woody Woodworth	Don Woods	---	---
2nd	Joe Miller	---	---	---

### Tournament Schedule

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