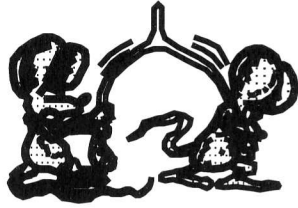




**Hoosier  
Backgammon  
Club**

**November 1998**

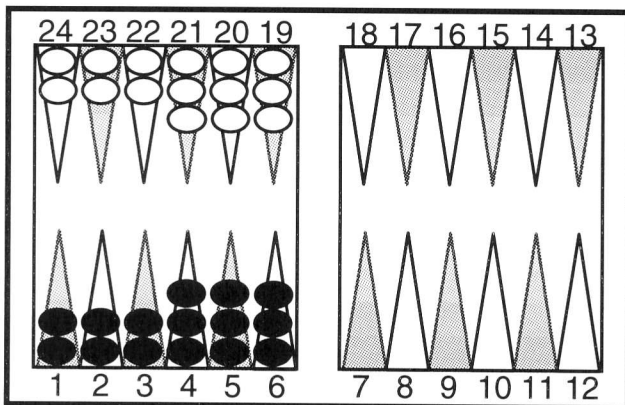


## *That'll Teach 'Ya!*

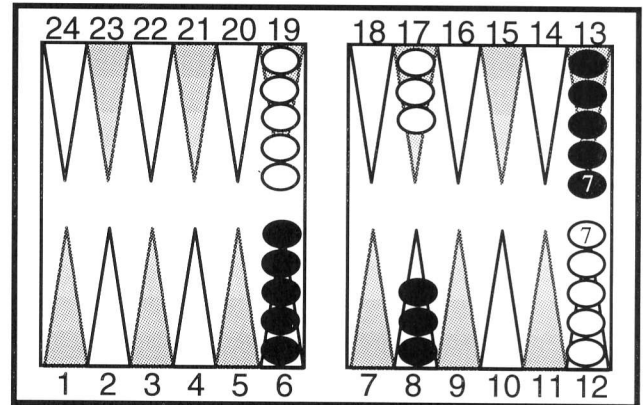
by Jake Jacobs

It was raining in sunny Thailand. It does that every year, for a couple of months. I picked one of those months for my last visit, so instead of splashing around the pool of the Diana Inn, I was sitting in my room listening to motorbikes splashing through the mud puddles that comprised Soi Diana, the street running (flowing) beneath my window. My entertainment options were severely narrowed. I hadn't grasped the threads of any of the Thai soap operas, and had already solved the Scrabble™ column in the morning's Bangkok Post. Fortunately, I had a backgammon board. Less fortunately, the other occupant of the room, my friend Tha, knew nothing about the game. Nada! Zip! Mai ru! On the other hand, she was lucky enough to have a professional backgammon teacher right there in the room with her. Little did she suspect that she was going to learn a new game, whether she liked it or not.

I have a method for teaching beginners. The standard method sounds something like this. *Three-one? That's good! Make your five-point. No, your five-point. This is your five-point. See? One, two, three, four, five. No! Count from here. Right, your five-point. Make it. No! Make. It means, one from here, and...okay, notice how these two are two apart? You get the idea. No wonder the dropout rate is so high. My method is different. I tell them nothing. Just try to get information out of me. Actually, I'm kidding. Here's how I do it. Game one. I set up the two home boards like this.*



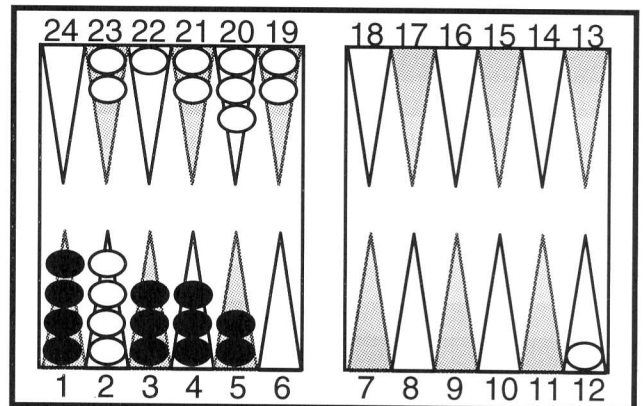
**64**



This lesson was all about bringing the checkers home, then bearing off. We looked at crossing quadrants, and not bearing in too deeply. These were offered as recommendations, not commands. Tha saw that the game was a race, and with the aid of more doubles, won the next two games as well.

Moving on to stage three, I set up my half of the board in the normal starting configuration. I trust you all know it? Tha followed my lead, and set hers up to match. I warned her that now she would see real backgammon. Other than showing her how to play a blitzing 5-5, and a key set of sixes that cropped up later, I left her alone to make her own choices. The idea is that as she grew comfortable with the mechanics of the game, she would see for herself that there were strategies that permitted me to thwart her race, almost at will. To some extent this method is reliant on my thwarting her. Here, you can see how well my plan was working.

**64**



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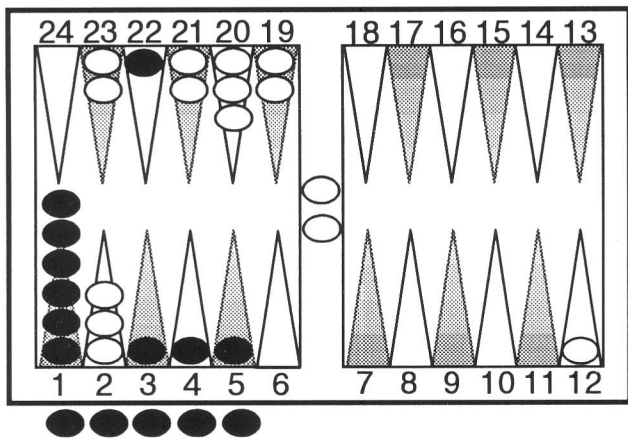
We each rolled a die, as in normal backgammon, and the winner started bearing off. I showed Tha how to count back to find the spot from which she could bear off each number. I didn't worry much about the fine points such as moving inside the board rather than bearing a checker off. Once gaps appear, that lesson teaches itself. She quickly

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1008 Tuckahoe, Indianapolis, IN 46260-2215  
(317) 255-8902

All according to plan, except, those white checkers were mine. Gadzooks this girl rolls well! I mentioned that I was not helping her move, so I gave her no aid with the play of 3-3. Safety versus caution? Here Tha proved that the middle ground was no ground at all. She played 3/off(2), 4/1(2). I rolled a 3-1 and Tha responded with 3-2. The board now looked like this:

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As I prepared to roll I felt quite pleased. What an unforgettable lesson this would be! And unforgettable it was. As I write this, I can still see those double ones tumbling from my cup.

**1998 Hoosier Backgammon Club**  
**Gammon Point Standings as of Oct 31, 1998.**  
**The HBC Player of the Month for October**  
**was Sean Garber with 262 gammon points.**

(# times *Player of the Month*)

- 1) Don Woods (2)..... 1438
- 2) Butch Meese (2)..... 1248
- 3) Jim Curtis (1)..... 1218
- 4) Sean Garber (2)..... 1172
- 5) Chuck Stimming..... 1034
- 6) Al Gomez (1)..... 726
- 7) Larry Strommen (2)..... 716
- 8) Mary Ann Meese..... 684
- 9) Dave Groner..... 574
- 10) Gino Agresti..... 340
- Chuck Bower..... 306
- Woody Woodworth..... 230
- Luke Clippinger..... 196
- Jan Gurvitz..... 170
- Jim Mieske..... 140
- Reggie Porter..... 128
- Kevin McLeaster..... 100
- Jon Stephens..... 80
- Richard Heinz..... 68
- Joe Miller..... 64
- Bill Julian..... 62
- Peter Kalba..... 60
- David Britten..... 50
- Neil Ezell..... 40
- Femi Owiku..... 40
- Paul Franks..... 30
- Rob Maier..... 30
- Alan Haas..... 30
- Wendy Kaplan..... 20
- Frank Scott..... 20
- Larry Buckingham..... 20
- John Jennings..... 20
- Kay Beck..... 20
- John Brussel..... 20
- Bobbie Shifrin..... 10
- Alan Gartner..... 10
- Mary Franks..... 10
- Lou Ramer..... 10
- Scott Richardson..... 10
- Art Overbay..... 10
- Dave Fey..... 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 1st	October 8th	October 15th	October 22th	October 29th
1st	Butch Meese	Gino Agresti	Mary Ann Meese	Don Woods	Butch Meese
2nd	Don Woods	Sean Garber	Dave Groner	Dave Groner	Sean Garber
2nd	---	---	---	Jim Curtis	Chuck Stimming

**Tournament Schedule**

- Nov 27-29..... **Northern Ohio Thanksgiving BG Tournament**, Belden Holiday Inn, Canton, OH.. (330)-966-2811
- Feb 12-14..... **21st Pittsburgh Championships**, Greentree Marriott, Pittsburgh, PA ..... (412) 823-7500
- Mar 19-21..... **1999 Midwest Championships**, Radisson Hotel, Lisle, IL..... (773) 583-6464
- Thursdays..... 7:00 PM at **Wildcat Brewing Company** (872-3446) 92nd & North Michigan Road ..... 255-8902