



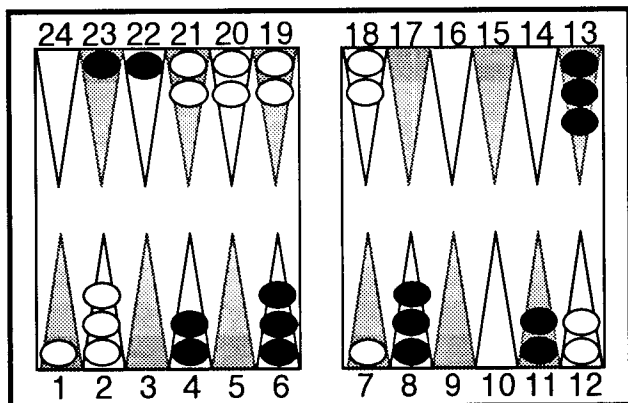
Hoosier
Backgammon
Club

July 1999



Four Level View

by Chuck Bower



Money Game

Black to play 5-2?

Recently, a reader, having seen a detailed expert analysis of a position on the newsgroup rec.games.backgammon asked: *Do experts really go through all THAT?* In the heat of battle, often a move comes much more quickly than when presented as an isolated problem. This is true for players of all levels.

A blot hitting contest has led to this position. White is well behind in the race but is about even overall, due primarily the strong four prime holding back two of Black's checkers.

Black should have a game plan. Based on the race lead, Black should attempt to get the two stragglers past the prime. Some novices, especially those who just read one of Barclay Cooke's books, may stay back in hopes of making the 22-point for safety. The problem with this plan is two-fold. First is timing: Black's huge race lead will require him/her to run those back checkers soon, or get other checkers hit, giving up the race lead asset. The other problem with this idea is that keeping those checkers behind the prime plays into White's hands because White wants to have those checkers trapped.

Most players see how to move the five: 22/17. Now Black has two reasonable choices with the two: 17/15 or 13/11. The intermediate player, possibly having recently learned about the principle of

duplication, will see that leaving the checker on the 17-point gives White fewer good numbers, since the same number (a five) that hits also makes the strong defensive 18-point. But if Black plays 17/15, both 3's and 5's are good for White--3's hit and 5's make the 18-point. By leaving the checker on the 17-point, White will have fewer good numbers. The intermediate plays 13/11 because of duplication.

The advanced player has a different view. S/he realizes White would most like to make is his/her 8-point (Black's 17-point) since that extends the prime. White's slotting that point would be dangerous, but hitting and slotting is quite efficient and relatively safe. The advanced player recognizes that leaving a lone Black checker under fire on the opponent's most desired point is generally a bad idea. The advanced Black moves 17/15, getting out of the way of White's doubly good 5-roll.

The open player sees something entirely different. Leaving the checker on the 17-point allows the two back checkers to *communicate*. Since Black's two back checkers would then be separated by six pips or less, a single die can now join them as a solid point. If, on the other hand, White is fortunate enough to hit Black's loose checker on the 17-point, Black will have some extra returns shots from the bar. The Open player moves 13/11 so as to keep the remaining two checkers connected.

The wise master recognizes that no single principle governs this position. The intermediate player's reasoning is spurious, since if White's three checkers on Black's 2-point were actually on the 3-point, there would be no duplication, yet leaving the checker on the 17-point would still be Black's best play by far, even though it duplicates nothing.

The master also sees a fallacy in the advanced player's logic. In order for White to hit the checker on Black's 17-point s/he must give up the valuable midpoint which currently link White's outside and inside checkers. If White had THREE checkers on his/her midpoint then the difference between Black's two plays would be almost nil and the advanced player's reasoning would be valid.

The open player is close in his/her reasoning. But it is actually the combination of all THREE principles which really determines the correct play. If Black leaves the checker on the 17-point and plays 13/11 then s/he keeps communication between the last two checkers. It also forces White to give up the valuable midpoint to hit. If White chooses to hit s/he cannot in most cases make Black's bar-point this turn. The master robots, Snowie and Jellyfish, conclude that 22/17, 13/11 is better than 22/15 by almost 0.1 cubeless equity units. Clearly 22/17 was the critical part of the move, but also easy to find. The seemingly inconsequential play of the two, and most importantly the reasoning behind that choice truly separates the master player from the challengers to the throne.

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**1999 Hoosier Backgammon Club
Gammon Point Standings.
The HBC Player of the Month
for June was Butch Meese
with 180 gammon points.**

- 1) Jim Curtis (1)..... 752
- 2) Butch Meese (2)..... 662
- 3) Don Woods (1)..... 654
- 4) Sean Garber..... 644
- 5) Larry Strommen..... 598
- 6) Dave Groner (2)..... 562
- 7) Chuck Stimming..... 510
- 8) Mary Ann Meese..... 488
- 9) Al Gomez..... 270
- 10) Gino Agresti..... 260
- Alan Tavel..... 128
- Peter Kalba..... 128
- Cathie Benneth..... 70
- Woody Woodworth..... 70
- David Smith..... 60
- Gabe Stiasny..... 60
- Bill Julian..... 60
- David Schwind..... 48
- Jan Gurvitz..... 40
- Terry Haffner..... 40
- Randy Foster..... 30
- Luke Clippinger..... 20
- John Peek..... 20
- Michael O'Cain..... 20
- Roman Karbiak..... 20
- Kevin Ward..... 20
- Julia Boyle..... 20
- John Henn..... 10
- Terry Bateman..... 10
- Bill Yancey..... 10
- Brian Nelson..... 10
- Rick Reahard..... 10
- Jon Sinder..... 10

Note (#): # = Times Player of the Month

Free Lecture added to Schedule



*Jake Jacobs
will lecture
at 4PM on Friday
afternoon.
More details later....*

**47th INDIANA Open
Backgammon Tournament**



**Labor Day Weekend
September 3-6, 1999**
featuring **Indy Swiss Format,**
\$300 Master Jackpot,
\$100 Amateur Jackpot,
Labor Day Jackpots,
Directors' Cup, On-Line, Open and
Limited MicroBlitz Events and
Free See You In September JP

	<u>June 3rd</u>	<u>June 10th</u>	<u>June 17th</u>	<u>June 24th</u>
1st	Larry Strommen	Woody Woodworth	Butch Meese	Butch Meese
2nd	Al Gomez	Mary Ann Meese	Jim Curtis	Dave Groner
2nd	Chuck Stimming	Sean Garber	- - -	Jim Curtis

Aug 13-15.....	Minnesota State Championships , Thunderbird Hotel, Bloomington, MN.....	(612) 378-1536
Sep 3-6.....	47th Indiana Open , Sheraton-Westin Hotel, Indianapolis.....	(317) 255-8902
Sep 24-26.....	1st Ohio State Championship , Comfort Inn, Canton, OH.....	(330) 498-9801
Oct 8-10.....	Nation's Capital Championship , Promenada, Bethesda, MD.....	(301) 530-0504
Oct 15-17.....	1999 Florida State Championship , Days Inn, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.....	(954) 938-4304
Oct 27-31.....	1999 Las Vegas Open , Harrah's Casino & Hotel, Las Vegas, NV.....	(702) 893-6025
Nov 12-14..	1999 Illinois State Backgammon Championship , Springfield Hilton, Springfield, IL..	(217) 528-0117
Nov 26-28.....	5th Thanksgiving Weekend , Belden Village Holiday Inn, Canton, OH.....	(330)-966-2811

Thursdays..... 7:00 PM at **Wildcat Brewing Company** (872-3446) 92nd & North Michigan Road 255-8902