

If You Give Them Enough Rope, Maybe They'll Hang Themselves

by Chuck Bower

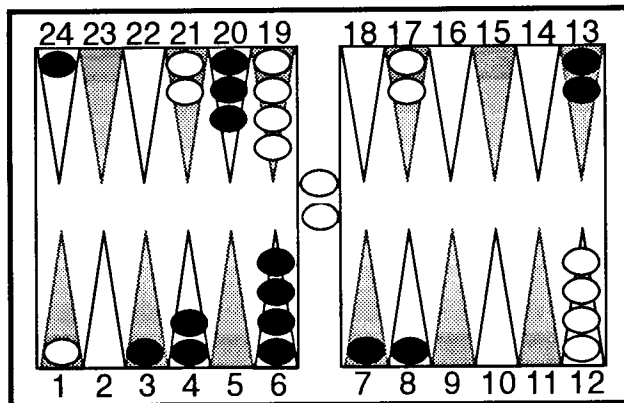
Early this year, subscribers were saddened to hear of the demise of the quarterly publication, **INSIDE BACKGAMMON**. During its eight years many cutting edge ideas were introduced there, as well as challenging quizzes and instructive articles.

Not being one to get bogged down in disappointment, **Kit Woolsey**, one of the most prolific contributors to **INSIDE BACKGAMMON**, decided to create a new publication: **GammOnLine**. Instead of relying on expensive printed matter, this monthly publication is located on the World Wide Web. An annual subscription costs \$36 or only \$3 per issue. A sample issue is available. The URL of this online magazine is <http://www.gammonline.com>.

The features of this publication take advantage of the negligible storage costs of today's computers and networks. Besides informative articles, each month there is a complete annotated match. A monthly quiz of eight problems is presented and the high finisher receives a prize. Detailed comments on the quiz problems by a panel of top analysts are included in the following issue. Back issues will be kept available until space needs increase. Kit anticipates several issues will be available at any given time.

I've found the most enjoyable part of this publication to be the interactive, ongoing match between Woolsey and the subscribers. Each day the subscribers have a decision (cube or checker play) to vote on. The option with the most votes becomes the *crew's* play for that day. Kit then comments upon our play and the other candidates before rolling for himself. Kit's wife, Sally, rolls the dice for the crew. He includes comments on the thought process that goes into his play as well. If plays for the crew are automatic the game continues that night without subscriber intervention until a decision needs to be made. That problem becomes the next day's vote.

11 Point Match
Black-0 (Kit) White-1 (Subscriber)
Cube decision both sides?



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The illustrated position was one I found particularly informative. Kit is playing the Black checkers. Does he have a double? Does White have a take? Make your decision before continuing.

The vote on this decision was as close as any that has yet come up. Twenty-eight said **take** and 21 voted for **pass**. Kit used this as an illustration of **Woolsey's Doubling Law: If there is any doubt as to whether your opponent has a take, you MUST double!** He was in doubt so he fired over the cube. The 57%-43% vote of the crew is a good indication that there is some doubt in a lot of minds!

Interestingly, JellyFish evaluates the position as **no double, take**. But even if JellyFish is correct, that technically the double is premature, in reality it was an excellent decision. Imagine if this were a large chouette. Black made a technically incorrect double and got almost half the crew to incorrectly pass. If a double is a bit premature and thus a small error, then a pass of a premature double is a **HUGE** error. The premature doubler comes out way ahead in the exchange.

Continues next page...

Big Changes Coming...

We will continue to play at **WildCat Brewing Co** every Thursday in August.

Thursday, September 2nd
We will play at **Sheraton-Westin**.

Starting Thursday, September 9th we will move to **Bench Warmers at Holiday Inn North** (just across the street from Wildcat).

100% Return the first 4 weeks at BW.

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You can look at the possibilities to see the power of **Woolsey's Doubling Law**:

- a) the position is technically a double/take and White takes. Here Black made the right move (as did White).
- b) the position is technically a double/take and White passes. Black comes out ahead because of White's error.
- c) the position is technically a double/pass and White takes. Black made a good technical decision and was doubly rewarded by White's erroneous take.
- d) the position is technically a double/pass and White passes. Again Black did the right thing.
- e) the position is technically a NO double/take but White passes. Now the reward for doubling is huge.
- f) the position is technically a NO double/take and White correctly takes. In this case Black's error was picked up by White and Black suffers loss in equity.

Of the six possible scenarios, Black only loses in Case F. In three of the scenarios Black makes a big gain because of White's error. Unless you are playing an opponent who seldom mis-evaluates a drop/take decision then in practice a double is called for IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT that it is a take.

This rule also applies when a cash/play-on-for-gammon decision comes up. If there is any doubt, turn the cube. Maybe your opponent will take!

Don't forget, there needs to be **doubt**. If you get in the habit of doubling way too early when there is no doubt; the resulting take will cost you equity. And players of different skill level have varying abilities of judging doubt. But there are pages of recorded positions where champion players have blundered and passed takeable doubles. If you are not sure whether it's a take or a pass, send it over. They can't hang themselves if they don't have any rope.

1999 Hoosier Backgammon Club

Gammon Point Standings.

The HBC **Player of the Month for July** was **Al Gomez** with 110 gammon points.

- 1) Jim Curtis..... 800
- 2) Butch Meese..... 750
- 3) Sean Garber..... 694
- 4) Don Woods..... 654
- 5) Larry Strommen..... 638
- 6) Chuck Stimming..... 590
- 7) Mary Ann Meese..... 578
- 8) Dave Groner..... 562
- 9) Al Gomez..... 380
- 10) Gino Agresti..... 350
- Alan Tavel..... 128
- Peter Kalba..... 128
- Jan Gurvitz..... 88
- Terry Bateman..... 80
- Cathie Benneth..... 70
- Woody Woodworth..... 70
- Bill Julian..... 60
- Gabe Stiasny..... 60
- David Smith..... 60
- Chuck Bower..... 60
- David Schwind..... 48
- Terry Haffner..... 40
- Luke Clippinger..... 30
- Randy Foster..... 30
- Michael O'Cain..... 20
- Julia Boyle..... 20
- John Peek..... 20
- Roman Karbiak..... 20
- Kevin Ward..... 20
- John Henn..... 10
- Brian Nelson..... 10
- Bill Yancey..... 10
- Jon Sinder..... 10
- Rick Reahard..... 10

**47th Indiana Open
See You In September!!!!**

	<u>July 8th</u>	<u>July 15th</u>	<u>July 22nd</u>	<u>July 29th</u>
1st	Mary Ann Meese	Chuck Bower	Al Gomez	Chuck Stimming
2nd	Jan Gurvitz	Butch Meese	Gino Agresti	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 26-28.....	5th Thanksgiving Weekend	, Belden Village Holiday Inn, Canton, OH.....	(330)-966-2811

Thursdays in August..... 7:00 PM at **Wildcat Brewing Company** (872-3446) 255-8902
 Starting Thurs Sept 9th..... 7:00 PM at **Bench Warmers (Holiday Inn North)** (871-5655) 255-8902