



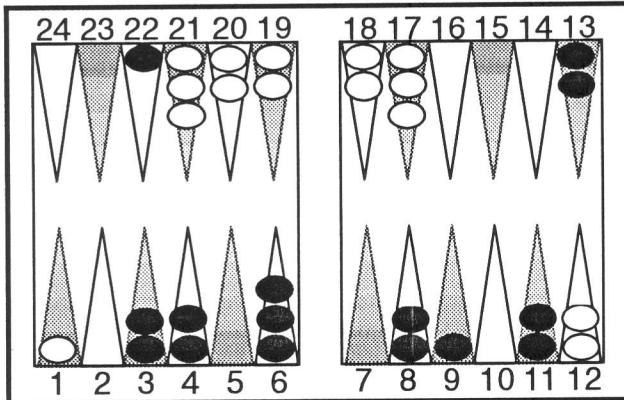
Hoosier  
Backgammon  
Club



January 2000

## Some Points Are More Valuable Than Gold!

by Chuck Bower



Money Game, Black to play 6-6?

What a great roll! But before letting the euphoria get the best of you, note that your opponent already owns the cube, so you are going to have to play this game to completion. Relax and put on your thinking cap. Can you find the four best candidate moves? After doing that, decide which play you would actually make at the table.

Six point primes are to backgammon what the figure-four is to wrestling. As long as you can keep your opponent trapped, s/he is helpless. 13/7(2), 11/5(2) closes the prime. How can that be wrong? Actually, here it is very wrong. The problem is that Black is behind a 5-prime, and White has some closing numbers AND better timing. Black may have to break the his/her newly made 6-prime before escaping and that would nearly  
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## On Any Given Thursday

by Sawdust

Hats off, attaboy and kudos again to **Don Woods** for garnering yet another **Player of the Year** for 1999 (finals standings on Page 2). A fine performance in December, highlighted by a second place in the December Sunday tourney propelled Don past both Butch Meese and Chuck Stimming and allowed him to capture the honors in the closest three-player race for the title in club history.

Because the race for the honor turned out so close this year, I was invited to audit the year's tournament sheets (actually, Butch got tired of trying to come up with another 20 points for himself) to verify the accuracy of the result. To add a little spice to what would otherwise be a tiresome drill and to satisfy my statistical curiosity, I decided to compile a performance table for the top ten players in the club. The results confirmed what I have personally experienced during the last several years of play in the club. You won't get rich or score high in the club points race if you have to play Don Woods every week. But, if you really want a tough row to hoe, try taking on Chuck Stimming on a regular basis. For the past decade or so that I have been keeping track of club results, Chucky has been so lucky as to consistently win 60% or more of his matches on an annual basis. Such an amazing run of luck makes me consider that some other force may be impacting on the sample space. I wonder if skill could be a consideration. Naaaaaah!!!

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## Happy 2000

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**1999 Hoosier Backgammon Club Final Gammon Point Standings.**

**HBC Player of the Month for December was Don Woods with 298 gammon points.**

1) Don Woods.....	1424	Per Sorensen.....	90	Jim Roston.....	20
2) Butch Meese.....	1412	Fred Kalantari.....	80	Carla Johnson.....	20
3) Chuck Stimming.....	1382	Mogens Knudsen....	80	Paul Franks.....	20
4) Jim Curtis.....	1096	Butch Bates.....	74	Julian Haley.....	20
5) Sean Garber.....	1032	Cathie Benneth.....	70	John Peek.....	20
6) Mary Ann Meese.....	984	Chuck Bower.....	60	Roman Karbiak.....	20
7) Larry Strommen.....	948	David Smith.....	60	Mike Pratt.....	10
8) Dave Groner.....	672	David Schwind.....	48	Reggie Porter.....	10
9) Gino Agresti.....	644	Terry Haffner.....	40	Bob Neumann.....	10
10) Woody Woodworth.....	398	Paul Spens.....	40	Andy Liebenthal.....	10
Al Gomez.....	380	Philip Degen.....	40	John Henn.....	10
Terry Bateman.....	170	Jon Vietor.....	40	Brian Nelson.....	10
Luke Clippinger.....	150	Joe Miller.....	30	Jack Kissane.....	10
Bill Julian.....	140	Jake Jacobs.....	30	Bill Yancey.....	10
Peter Kalba.....	128	Mary Franks.....	30	Jon Sinder.....	10
Alan Tavel.....	128	Randy Foster.....	30	Rick Reahard.....	10
Gabe Stiasny.....	120	Kevin Ward.....	20	Stan Gurvitz.....	10
John Brussel.....	100	Michael O'Cain.....	20		
Jan Gurvitz.....	98	Julia Boyle.....	20		

**HBC Sunday Tournament  
December 5 1999**

1st....Luke Clippinger  
2nd...Don Woods

**HBC Awards Tournament  
Sunday - February 13<sup>th</sup> 2000  
Wildcat Brewing Co.  
9111 North Michigan Road 872-3446  
(Just south of I465 & Mich Road)**

**1999 Players of the Month**

January.... Don Woods  
February.... Dave Groner  
March.... Butch Meese  
April.... Dave Groner  
May.... Jim Curtis  
June.... Butch Meese  
July.... Al Gomez  
August.... Butch Meese  
September.... Woody Woodworth  
October.... Chuck Stimming  
November.... Don Woods  
December.... Don Woods

**Open \$20 (Optional \$10 SP)  
Main (9-pts) Consolation (7-pts)  
Limited \$8 (If There Is Interest)**

**12:00-12:45PM...Registration  
12:45PM...Award Celebration  
1:00PM...Play Begins  
Email: meese@worldnet.att.net or  
call 255-8902 to pre-register.**

	<u>December 2nd</u>	<u>December 9th</u>	<u>December 16th</u>	<u>December 23rd</u>	<u>December 30th</u>
1st	Chuck Stimming	Don Woods	Larry Strommen	Don Woods	Gino Agresti
2nd	Butch Meese	Chuck Stimming	Butch Meese	Chuck Stimming	Chuck Stimming

Feb 18-20... **22nd Pittsburgh Championship/ABT Awards**, Greentree Radisson, Pittsburgh, PA. (412) 823-7500  
Mar 17-19... **2000 Midwest Backgammon Championships**, Radisson Hotel, Lisle, IL..... (773) 583-6464  
May 26-29.. **21st Chicago Open**, Wyndham NW Chicago Hotel, Itasca, IL..... (847) 674-0120  
Jun30-Jul3. **Michigan Summer Championships**, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI..... (810) 232-9731

Thursdays..... 7:00 PM at **Bench Warmers (Holiday Inn North)** (871-5655) ..... 255-8902

## Some Points Are More Valuable Than Gold!

by Chuck Bower

even the game. Snowie rollouts say this play gives up 0.28 in cubeless equity units. That's a huge concession.

Playing 22/4, 9/3 is 100% safe. That move leaves no blots for White to shoot at. If the cube were available, particularly if centered with Jacoby rule, this might be the best move. No matter what White rolls, Black would be able to send the cube next turn. However, with the cube inaccessible to Black, this play is inferior, conceding 0.16 cubeless equity units according to Snowie rollouts.

Playing 22/10 seems like half the roll, leaving no direct shots. Now that Black has reduced the risk of being hit, s/he can look for a blocking improvement. 11/5(2) builds the best remaining offensive point. However, after this action White will have four excellent hitting rolls (6-2 and 6-3) and a good running number (6-5). If instead black makes the barpoint by playing 13/7(2), only three of White's numbers hit (4-4 and 5-4) and none run to safety.

Snowie rollouts say that building the barpoint is better by 0.11 cubeless equity units than making the 5-point.

This is not an anomalous position. It is often preferable to make the barpoint over the 5-point if you have only one opponent checker to contain. The reason is that it will take your opponent at least two rolls to escape with your barpoint blocked. In general the goldpoint (5-point) is more valuable than the barpoint since it not only blocks but can help keep the opponent on the bar. But the axiom *every rule has its exception* was never more true than in backgammon. In the illustrated position, securing the barpoint is more valuable than golden point.

## On Any Given Thursday

by Sawdust

The table below presents the year's performance in a shorthand version of won/lost records of the top ten players as ranked by UP and API. Apologies to all HBC members not included by name in this analysis. Some members who are included as *Rest of Club* would certainly be competitive if they competed on a more

HBC 1999 Performance	G	J	S	D	B	M	C	L	D	W	R	Won/Lost Against Top 10			Won/Lost Against Rest of Club			Won/Lost Against All Players		
	I	I	E	A	U	A	H	A	O	O	E	W	L	%	W	L	%	W	L	%
	N	M	A	V	T	M	U	R	N	O	S	W	L	%	W	L	%	W	L	%
Gino Agresti	X	6	6	3	3	8	6	2	1	0	18	35	43	44.9	18	6	75.0	53	49	52.0
Jim Curtis	2	X	13	1	5	10	7	6	10	1	16	55	53	50.9	16	10	61.5	71	63	53.0
Sean Garber	5	8	X	8	10	6	7	6	4	2	20	56	79	41.5	20	13	60.6	76	92	45.2
Dave Groner	4	3	4	X	3	7	4	5	4	4	11	38	35	52.0	11	10	52.4	49	45	52.1
Butch Meese	6	10	16	2	X	8	4	5	7	2	36	60	68	47.6	36	14	72.0	96	82	53.9
Mary Ann Meese	5	9	10	4	8	X	3	9	9	2	11	58	65	47.2	11	11	50.0	69	76	47.6
Chuck Stimming	7	2	12	5	14	12	X	14	9	1	14	76	47	61.8	14	11	56.0	90	58	60.8
Larry Strommen	2	6	9	6	9	5	6	X	6	1	18	50	55	47.6	18	11	62.1	68	66	50.7
Don Woods	7	8	6	3	14	6	8	8	X	3	22	63	52	54.8	22	8	73.3	85	60	58.7
Woody Woodworth	5	1	3	3	2	3	2	0	3	X	2	22	16	57.9	2	2	50.0	24	18	57.1
Rest of Club	6	10	13	10	14	11	11	11	8	2	X	96	168	36.4	39	39	50.0	135	207	39.5
	49	63	92	45	82	76	58	66	60	18	168	609	681		207	135		816	816	

regular basis. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with this tabular format, rows represent victories and columns represent losses; therefore, as examples, in the table below for the year 1999, Gino Agresti had a 6-win 5-loss record over Sean Garber and Jim Curtis was 10-8 over Don woods.

It should be emphasized that even a year's sample or matches is way too small to be statistically significant other than to indicate possible trends or for some of us to have temporary bragging rights or psychological advantage over another player. Consider the circular comparative performance that many people use to predict the outcome of future competitions: Gino was +4 over Jim who was +5 over Chuck who was +9 over Mary Ann who was +2 over Don who was +2 over Larry who was +4 over Butch who was +6 over Sean who was +4 over Dave who was +1 over Woody. Gino is therefore +37 over Woody for the year. Didn't work out that way. In fact, if you add in Woody +5 over Gino, you wind up with the inescapable prediction that Gino would beat himself mercilessly every time he sat down at the backgammon table. Hmmm, maybe that isn't so farfetched if you listen carefully to his play-by-play.

Relax, Gino, I'm kidding. In fact, the foregoing logic indicates that each of the players named would beat themselves by 42 matches in a given time span of ten years. There are a few statistics from the table that are eye-catching. Despite all efforts to recruit new players to the club, el presidente (Butch) brings them in and beats them like a drum and then turns them over to Don and Gino who do likewise to the tune of nearly 75% combined. No wonder it's tough to increase membership. Y'all ought to be hospitable like Mary Ann or even Chuck who are more

developmentally inclined. Chuck only wakes up when he spies a serious threat across the table and then becomes an equal opportunity terminator, racking up an impressive record against top-tenners except for Jim, who apparently only gets his game seriously in gear against Chuck. The Meeses are kind hosts to Chuck to the tune of a combined 7-26 record against him. They are also considerate to each other, splitting their season at 8-8. But, Mary Ann had to bail the Meese name out in battles against Don and Larry. Sean made Dave groan 8-4, but otherwise saved his wins for the chouette. Larry had a relatively even year, but did set a club record that doesn't show up in the table. He managed to play 134 matches in 792 minutes, breaking his previous record of 6.17 minutes per match in 1997. No sense wasting time en route to the chou, eh Larry? Gino may be a maestro at music, but not at woodworking. He was zero for the year against the 'Wood'men until a win over Don in the season finale upped his record to 1-12.

This has all been in fun, and it should be pointed out that next year's collection of results will likely be markedly different. No top-ten member of our club is likely to maintain any kind of continuing dominance over another above their normal winning percentage. For all of our up-and-coming players, and I hope we have many more of them, note that you will likely win at least one-third of your matches during your learning phase. With experience comes potential arrival into the top ten and the possibility of being publicly embarrassed as in the above comparisons. Just remember not to wake Chuck up, and hope that Don is preoccupied with his day job. Otherwise, *On Any Given Thursday....*