



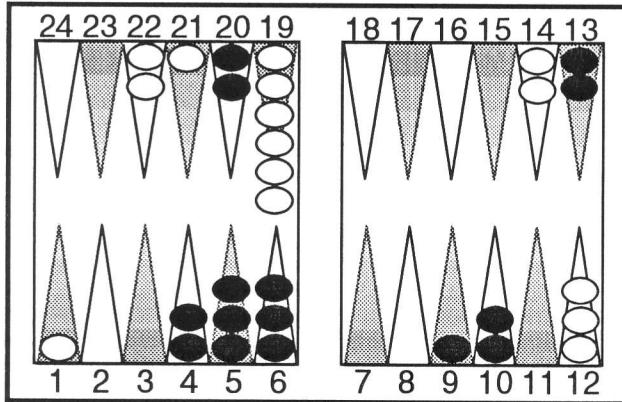
Hoosier  
Backgammon  
Club

March 2000



## Heads I Win and Tails You (Might) Lose

by Chuck Bower



64

Money game. Black to play 6-5.

This seems to be a garden-variety position. Find your candidate of plays and make your top choice before continuing.

Black is down a few pips (you did count, right?) and owns a great defensive anchor. White has poor structure but has only one checker back and would love to turn this into a race. This 6-5 roll presents a **lot** of options.

I can find four reasonable plays with this roll and there easily could be even more. There is the safe but efficient 10/4, 10/5. How about going all out at blocking the back checker: 13/7, 13/8? Moving 20/9 has the dual advantage of making a strong blocking point and advancing a back checker. The aggressive play 6/1x, 10/4 goes for a knockout. If you feel particularly enthusiastic, I recommend you rank these four plays before reading on.

I ran both Jellyfish and Snowie rollouts, and the robots once again reach the same conclusion. One of the four is clearly best, two are in the middle, and one lags far behind. With this hint would you like to again try and decide which plays match which results?

When this play came up early in a match

(equivalent to money play), I had trouble sorting out the candidates. I chose the safe play: 10/4, 10/5. The bots informed me that I found one of the two middle-of-the-road plays. With White's weak board and Black's solid anchor, safety should not be Black's primary concern. According to our silicon friends, the other mediocre play is the aggressive try for the prime: 13/7, 13/8. This move gives White too much freedom to either attack or build.

Before rolling, Black was down only 5 pips, so the above average racing roll actually leads to a small pipcount lead. For that reason 20/9 wouldn't seem to be a bad choice, yet it is far behind the other three plays. This move costs 0.17 units of cubeless equity: an error Kent Goulding coins *a whopper*. No confirmation of the rumor KG has signed on with Burger King. Giving up an anchor is one of the tougher decisions in backgammon. Kit Woolsey wrote an excellent article, **Anchors Aweigh** which was published in the Jan-Feb 1992 issue of Inside Backgammon, but even Kit has had trouble teaching me the subtleties of solving this dilemma. With a marginal race advantage, apparently other options should be seriously explored before making such a one-sided move.

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### Free Lectures at Indiana Open...

The **48th Indiana Open** will feature free lectures by backgammon pros **Jake Jacobs**, **Ray Fogerlund** and **Jack Kissane**. The lectures are scheduled from 2-5 PM on Friday, September 1st. Do not miss out on this great opportunity to learn from the best.

### Free Lessons...

HBC will provide free lessons once a month. The next date will be Thursday, April 6th starting at 6:00PM just before weekly play.

### Welcome Back Night...

Once a month, HBC will have **Welcome Back Night**. Any player who has not played with HBC in the past year, will receive a \$20 bonus if they cash. The next date will be April 13th, play begins at 7PM.

Hoosier Backgammon Club  
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## Heads I Win and Tails You (Might) Lose

...continues...

Best by far, according to Snowie3.0 and it's older cousin, Jellyfish3.0 is to knock White against the ropes with 6/1x, 10/4. There appears to be a recurring theme here. When your opponent is vulnerable (without an anchor), has a loose blot(s) which can be hit, **and** has a blot in his/her home board, attacking is a double edged weapon. If it works and the opponent fails to hit back, hopefully fanning, you can forge ahead for a closeout. When it fails, most of the time you get a second shot at opponent's blots--the one that is loose in his/her home board and the one which just re-entered. This kind of play: hitting loose when opponent has other blots around the board, has a large upside with limited risk.

Snowie says 10/4, 6/1x gives Black 0.46 units of cubeless equity, compared to 0.38 with either 13/7, 13/8 or 10/4, 10/5. Pulling up the anchor trails at 0.29 cubeless equity units. In more tangible terms, hitting loose wins 63% total games and 26% gammons. The mediocre plays win 61% total and 21% gammons. Running off the anchor also wins 61%, but sacrifices a lot of gammons, winning only 16% of these bonus double games. Anyone can make advances when the opponent rolls poorly (**Heads I win**). The champion player gives him/herself a chance (**Tails you might still lose**) even when the opponent has good dice.

The HBC Player of the Month for January was **Larry Strommen** with 173 gammon points.

The HBC Player of the Month for February was **Sean Garber** with 200 gammon points.

### 2000 Hoosier Backgammon Club Gammon Point Standings.

- 1) Larry Strommen..... 329
- 2) Sean Garber..... 260
- 3) Butch Meese..... 214
- 4) Gino Agresti..... 159
- 5) Mary Ann Meese..... 151
- 6) Don Woods..... 116
- 7) Chuck Stimming..... 96
- T8) Jim Curtis..... 57
- T8) Woody Woodworth..... 57
- 10) Terry Bateman..... 56
- David Smith..... 45
- Dave Groner..... 39
- Philip Degen..... 38
- Gabe Stiasny..... 36
- David Schwind..... 26
- Al Gomez..... 18
- Ross Ratzov..... 16
- Jan Gurvitz..... 10
- Richard Lester..... 8

### Hoosier Pips...

Check out the colors for the new Saturn's interior fabric. You can choose from Backgammon grey, black or tan. **Gino Agresti** wins the 2000 version of the **Ralph Robert Award** for using is drink as a dice cup.

	<u>January 6th</u>	<u>January 13th</u>	<u>January 20th</u>	<u>January 27th</u>
1st	<i>Gino Agresti</i>	<i>Butch Meese</i>	<i>Gino Agresti</i>	<i>Larry Strommen</i>
2nd	<i>Larry Strommen</i>	<i>Sean Garber</i>	<i>Larry Strommen</i>	<i>Butch Meese</i>
	<u>February 3rd</u>	<u>February 10th</u>	<u>February 17th</u>	<u>February 24th</u>
1st	<i>Sean Garber</i>	<i>Larry Strommen</i>	<i>Larry Strommen</i>	<i>Don Woods</i>
2nd	<i>Chuck Stimming</i>	<i>Don Woods</i>	<i>Dave Groner</i>	<i>Gino Agresti</i>
2ns	---	<i>Jim Curtis</i>	---	<i>Mary Ann Meese</i>

Mar 17-19... <b>2000 Midwest Backgammon Championships</b> , Radisson Hotel, Lisle, IL.....	(773) 583-6464
May 26-29.. <b>21st Chicago Open</b> , Wyndham NW Chicago Hotel, Itasca, IL.....	(847) 674-0120
Jun30-Jul3. <b>Michigan Summer Championships</b> , Novi Hilton, Novi, MI.....	(810) 232-9731
Sep1-4..... <b>48th Indiana Open</b> , Sharaton-Westin Hotel-Suite, Indianapolis, IN.....	(317) 255-8902

Thursdays..... 7:00 PM at **Wildcat Brewing Company** (872-3446) ..... HBC 255-8902