

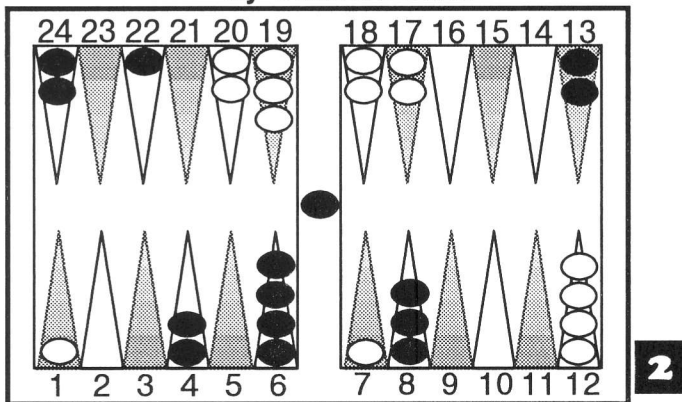


Hoosier
Backgammon
Club



March 2001

Gains Versus Losers by Chuck Bower



Money game. Black to play 6-2?
Black is on the bar.

An old backgammon saying which has survived for decades is: **when in doubt, hit!** I have a problem with that kind of advice. Since I'm always in doubt, does that mean I should ALWAYS hit? There must be better ways to decide when to hit and when not to.

The above position is a typical example. Black enters from the bar and then has a choice of 6's to play. 8/2 isn't worth much. That checker should be used to build more important points, like the 7-, 5-, and 3-points. The real choice is between 22/16 and 13/7x.

I've developed a list of indicators for the no-hit/hit decision. Let's go through them with the above position in mind:

- 1) Is there a reasonable possibility that this is your LAST chance to hit? If **yes**, then hitting is indicated. In the above position there is a lot of game remaining. There will be many more chances to hit.
- 2) If you don't hit, will your position be in such disarray that your opponent will have free reign to do whatever s/he wishes? If so,

then you should hit. This kind of situation comes up when you have lots of blots spread all over the board and the opponent is in position to *sweep the ice* (pick up all of them). After 22/16 in the above position, only one Black blot is under attack (White doesn't want to hit loose on his/her 2-point here), so the answer to this rule is **no**.

- 3) If you hit, are there good chances that the game will turn around quickly allowing you to transform from underdog to favorite? Here, again, the answer is **no**. Even if White fails to enter, Black is still well behind in the game with four checkers in White's homeboard.
- 4) By hitting, are you giving up a valuable asset for marginal gain? As just mentioned, even if White fans (which is quite unlikely), and Black then makes the valuable barpoint, s/he will still have considerable work remaining. Meanwhile the midpoint has been sacrificed with little chance of ever being remade. Black's army has been split into two parts and there is now a very large minefield which the back four checkers must negotiate. Rule #4 also goes in favor of not hitting.

These rules don't always provide the correct answer. No backgammon rule ever does. And there is still a lot of judgement (based upon experience) which must be applied. In the illustrated position, the difficult rule was number 4: is the loss of the 13-point worth it? When the above position occurred in the GammOnLine match between Kit Woolsey and the magazine's subscribers, a majority of participants (including myself) chose to hit. Even Kit concurred in his daily analysis. Snowie rollouts, however, indicated that hitting costs Black between 0.06 and 0.09 cubeless equity units. That's not a huge error, but it is significant. The gain of putting White on the bar wasn't worth the loss of the midpoint.

Backgammon Before Basketball Backgammon Wednesdays March 14 & 21, 2001

Because the NCAA March Madness occurs on Thursdays, March 15th and March 22nd, Backgammon will be held a day early on Wednesdays, March 14th & March 21st.

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2001 Hoosier Backgammon Club

The **Player of the Month** for **February** was **Sean Garber** with **244** gammon points.

- 1 Sean Garber.....366
- 2 Jim Curtis..... 264
- 3 Mary Ann Meese.....235
- 4 Larry Strommen.....222
- 5 Butch Meese..... 221
- 6 Gabe Stiasny.....203
- 7 Scott Day.....155
- 8 Chuck Stimming..... 152
- 9 Woody Woodworth..... 141
- 10 Terry Bateman..... 129
- Ron Black.....92
- Dave Groner..... 39
- Rick Steele.....20
- Robb Zeigler..... 20
- John Perkins..... 16
- Jeff Flowers.....8

Backgammon
Website of the Month
RedTop's Backgammon Page

<http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Realm/1534>

This site was built by Hank Youngerman from Alabama. The material is primarily targeted to lower level players. It contains Glossary, Key Concepts of Backgammon, How To Play a Chouette, Improving Your Game (for novice, beginners, intermediates and advanced), Essays and Books. It also includes three on-line matches. Definitely worth a look.

Hoosier Pips

HBC would like to welcome new player Rick Steele. The Magriel Book is still available for \$49.

HBCs Awards Tournament Results

- 1st) Mary Ann Meese**
- 2nd) Scott Day**
- 2nd) Butch Meese**

49th



Labor Day Weekend
Sheraton Hotel & Suite

See You In September

	<u>February 1st</u>	<u>February 8th</u>	<u>February 15th</u>	<u>February 22nd</u>
1st	Chuck Stimming	Sean Garber	Larry Strommen	Sean Garber
2nd	Butch Meese	Terry Bateman	Sean Garber	Larry Strommen
2nd	Woody Woodworth	Jim Curtis	- - -	Butch Meese

Mar 23-25.....	2001 Midwest Championships , Radisson, Lisle, IL.....	(773) 583-6464
May 25-28.....	22nd Chicago Open , Wyndham NW Chicago Hotel, Itasca, IL.....	(702) 893-6025
Jun28-Jul1.....	Michigan Summer Championships , Novi Hiton, Novi, MI.....	(810) 232-9731
Aug31-Sep3.....	49th Indiana Open , Sheraton Hotel & Suite, Indianapolis, IN.....	(317) 255-8902

Thursdays..... 7:00 PM at **Neon Johnny's**, 86th & Township Line Rd (Cellular 442-4065)..... HBC 255-8902