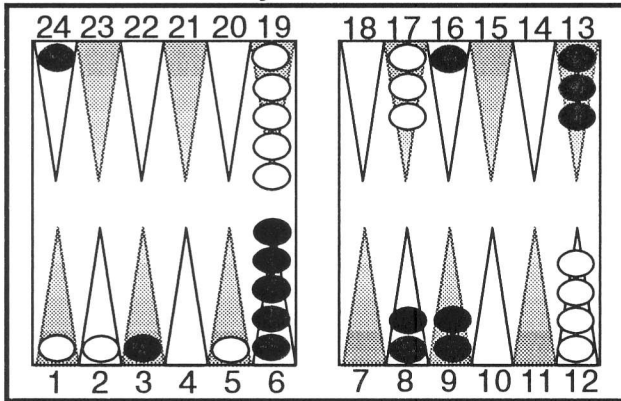


Hoosier
Backgammon
Club

April 2001



No!! You Cannot Reroll by The Meeses



7-Point Match. Black to play 5-4?

We made our annual trip to Chicago to attend the **Midwest Backgammon Championships**. Director, **Bill Davis**, creates a theme for each tournament and this year's theme was **Back to Attack**; a creative way to make the game last longer. He also donates 10% of the proceeds of the calcutta auction to the Anti-Cruelty Society of Chicago which now, through the years, totals over \$25,000.

As usual, we entered the Doubles. We had high hopes since we cashed 3 or 4 years ago. This year we met the Minnesota duo of Steve Brown and Ralph Stowell in the first round. In the first game we doubled with a good lead but rolled double 5s which created a gap and stranded checkers on the 10-point. We were forced to leave a shot which was hit and we surrendered the 4-cube.

Early in game two, we faced the above position. As we looked at the position, Steve said *this one is not easy*. We have three blots and there is no way to minimize that. We did not like breaking the 8- and 9-points. We are also stacked on the 6-point. We noted the position and we asked a panel of experts for their over-the-board play.

Jake Jacobs

Well, I don't like any play that breaks the 8 or 9. My inclination is to simply run 24/15. My second choice would be 24/20, 6/1x. I think moving the back checker with the 4 reestablishes communication, so that it is easier to put something together next roll, whether hit or not.

Malcolm Davis

In my view, a very difficult position. Without the benefit of any other information (i.e., Snowie), I guess I would play 24/20, 5/1x. I just can't find an alternate play that seems more palatable. I have reduced my proclivity to hit on the 1-point in recent years, but obviously have not eliminated it entirely.

Harold Johanni

Nice problem. I think everybody makes the same play. Attacking time: 8/3 6/2x. Its not nice to break the valuable 8-point, but there is no chance to play fives constructively. To make hits on the valuable 8-point blot (because it is a builder to rebuild the 8-point!) less likely you have to hit on the deuce-point with the four. Now only the threes, that also enter from the bar hit on the eight-point. Hitting from the 9-point with the four is hopeless. It leaves I don't know how many blots and there are no more points (and therefore no structure) in the outfield.

Kit Woolsey

Have to cover with the 5, can't seem much choice on that. For the 4, 6/2x looks best. Unstacks the heavy six point, puts White on the bar, and takes away White's return sixes. This gets Black something for his money maybe, and still keeps a semblance of a position. Breaking the 9-point to hit loose on the five simply leaves too many blots and shots.

Chuck Bower

Why doesn't Mary Ann ever roll this poorly against me?! I can't find a play which doesn't leave a triple shot (at least 27 returns). Safe seems to be out of the picture. Therefore I'm going to attack. 8/3 appears to be the logical 5, adding a homeboard point. Rather than break the 9-point (and leave FIVE blots), I prefer unstacking the heavy 6-point with 6/2x. I can see four white rolls that make this play turn out great, and when things go poorly black is left with some kind of defensible position.

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Doug Roberts

This is one of the worst positions that I have ever seen! It looks like someone may have just butchered a 4-4 roll rather badly. Repositioning checkers without hitting, as with 16-11/13-9 or with 8-3/8-4, seems much too passive. Other moves which hit just once and make the 3-pt, such as 8-3/9-5x or 8-3/6-2x, do start your board and take away half of the opponent's next roll, but still involve continuing positional awkwardness. There is also that little matter of leaving the opponent a bundle of diversified return shots at a plethora of blots, which could cost you the initiative if you are hit back twice. So, when in doubt, HIT, and not just once...HIT TWICE! Play 9-5x/6-1x, and leave three blots in your board! Damn the blots; Full Steam Ahead! You could end up with your own 5-point and some initiative if the gambit works. If it does not, being hit back might cost you your race lead but would not be an immediate disaster, since the opponent's board is undeveloped. At least you took away his entire roll, gave him a bad six, and slotted your golden point!

Paul Weaver

This was a very interesting and difficult problem. My play was 24/20, 6/1x.

Bots Report by Chuck Bower.

Jellyfish and Snowie agree with 8/3, 6/2x. These robot rivals don't always agree, but here they did. Both chose 8/3, 6/2x at all three levels of play (simple neural net, one roll lookahead, and two roll lookahead) although Jellyfish felt 13/9, 8/3 was equal at it's middle setting.

Snowie was set up to roll out 8 candidates at its highest ply (two roll lookahead) and Jellyfish ran its five favorite choices at level-6 (its smartest rollout setting). Again they agreed that 8/3, 6/2x was best by 0.03 cubeless equity units. In robot solidarity, both felt second best was a tie between 13/9, 8/3 and 24/20, 13/8. Behind 8/3, 6/2x by 0.04 in equity was 8/3, 8/4.

We did not recovery from this position. Steve and Ralph won the match and remained prefect to win the Doubles Event. Mary Ann placed second in one of the fun side events by bashing a pig (no it was not real). Our calcutta purchases were fruitful. Dave Groner placed 3/4th in the Open Division. Another trip to Chicago, another fine tournament. Thanks, Mr Davis. We hear that next year's theme is **Give-It-All-Back** with a 100% return in all events. We were going to donate the \$2000 we won on a lottery ticket to the Anti-Cruelty Society of Chicago, but found out the ticket was an April Fools joke by Bill Davis; just like the theme for next year!

2001 Hoosier Backgammon Club	
The Player of the Month for March	
was Jim Curtis with 232 gammon points.	
1	Sean Garber..... 512
2	Jim Curtis..... 496
3	Butch Meese..... 387
4	Mary Ann Meese..... 314
5	Larry Strommen..... 248
6	Gabe Stiasny..... 219
7	Woody Woodworth..... 199
8	Chuck Stimming..... 192
9	Scott Day..... 183
10	Terry Bateman..... 137
	Ron Black..... 122
	Rick Steele..... 108
	Al Gomez..... 84
	Dave Groner..... 57
	Frank Scott..... 48
	Jeff Flowers..... 28
	Robb Zeigler..... 20
	Luke Clippinger..... 18
	John Perkins..... 16

Groner Wins Club Championship

Dave Groner won a very close 13-point match against Jim Curtis to capture the **HBC Club Championship** for the first time. Players won their way into the event by winning **Player of the Month** or placing in the final **Top Ten** standings. Congrats Dave!!

	<u>March 1st</u>	<u>March 8th</u>	<u>March 14th</u>	<u>March 21st</u>	<u>March 29th</u>
1st	<i>Al Gomez</i>	<i>Jim Curtis</i>	<i>Rick Steele</i>	<i>Butch Meese</i>	<i>Butch Meese</i>
2nd	<i>Sean Garber</i>	<i>Frank Scott</i>	<i>Jim Curtis</i>	<i>Sean Garber</i>	<i>Sean Garber</i>
2nd	- - -	<i>Mary Ann Meese</i>	- - -	- - -	<i>Jim Curtis</i>

May 25-28.....	22nd Chicago Open , Wyndham NW Chicago Hotel, Itasca, IL.....	(702) 893-6025
Jun 28-Jul 1.....	Michigan Summer Championships , Novi Hiton, Novi, MI.....	(810) 232-9731
Aug 31-Sep 3...	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