

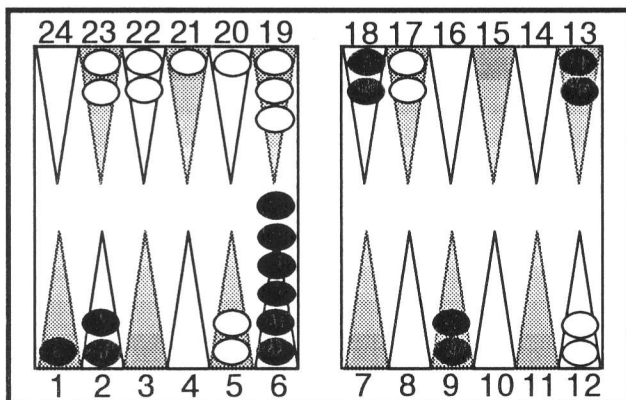


**Hoosier  
Backgammon  
Club**

June 2002



## Anticipation by Chuck Bower



**Position 1:** Black leads 5-3/7. Black to play 6-3.

If memorizing a cookbook were all it took to play top level backgammon the game wouldn't be nearly as much fun. In Position 1, Black has tiptoed around up to this point. 6-3 was not his/her desired roll. How would you play this?

The first thing to keep in mind is the score, followed immediately by the cube location. At this score, trailer has huge gammon equity. With anything approaching a lead in the game and even moderate gammon chances, the cube must be turned. Black should realize that after playing this roll, the cube is coming. How does that impact the decision?

After White doubles (and Black takes), White's gammons will win the match while Black's gammons are totally worthless. The only other possible outcome is a simple Black loss, leading to a tie score. Black's gammon losses trade evenly with wins and are thus much more penal than at money play. Black should play so as to avoid losing a gammon, while at the same time attempting to achieve a victory. Simple, right? Not really.

There are four candidate plays which come to mind: safe with 9/3, 9/6; build the homeboard with 9/3, 6/3; start the next best homeboard point with 13/4; and make a move to get home, clearing from the rear with 18/9.

Anticipating the cube location next turn is relatively easy compared to anticipating how the game will progress. But that is the third consideration in this position. Black's board is pretty anemic, especially compared to White's. In addition, White's board will improve immediately while Black's strength will usually progress more slowly. Black wants to avoid getting hit, but not only for this turn. Black has to keep in mind the increased risk of getting hit after White's board improves and Black's defense disappears. Short of avoiding getting hit, Black needs to brace him/herself for a setback.

Of the four candidates, 18/9 is by far the worst, according to Snowie. This play wins only 54% of matches, 7% worse than the best play. For starters, the race is even

so trying to run is not clearcut. Worse, Black's remaining back checker is a sitting duck. White will hit even if s/he can't cover either homeboard blot. Black's blot on the acepoint and otherwise wimpy board combined with White's advanced anchor make the light green. Even when the blot survives Black will have a minefield to cross before making it home with his/her many outside checkers and all of that without the safety of an anchor.

Next worst is clearing the 9-point. White's board will likely improve and Black's safe position will be short-lived. This move best illustrates the value of anticipation. Black needs a better homeboard to be able to duke it out with White, and adding a seventh checker to the 6-point isn't going to make that easy. Black's outer points are again stripped and a 6 die next turn is almost surely a blot. The safe play costs Black 3% match winning chances.

The top two plays here are so close in equity that Snowie rollouts were unable to separate them. Plays 9/3, 6/3 and 13/4 have some things in common but also have contrasting advantages. After Black makes the 3-point, White won't hesitate to give up the anchor to hit, but Black's improving board may pay off in the long run. Black keeps the 18-point safety valve, although one of the last two points will probably break soon, regardless of whether or not White hits. Playing 9/3, 6/3 immediately improves Black's strength.

Playing 13/4 starts Black's best available homeboard point. White's aces are duplicated (hitting and covering), which is a factor. In addition, most of White's hits are from the midpoint, breaking the communication with the back checkers after taking a race lead. Black's play also breaks communication, but the timing implications are less severe in that case since Black will either be even or behind in the race depending upon White's roll. If Black survives White's next throw, his/her timing is also better after 13/4 than the plays which break the 9-point since more pips can be played from the 13-point than the 9-point.

...continues next page...

## HBCs Summer Sunday Tournament

Sunday - June 23rd, 2002

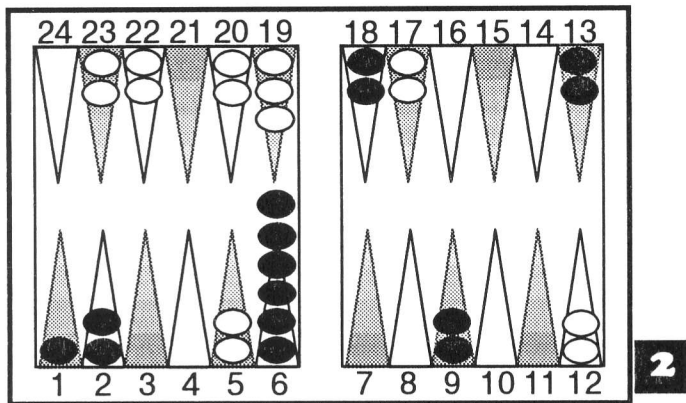
**Arni's Restaurant (875-7034)**  
3443 West 86th Street (west of Walmart)

Registration: 12:00 Noon  
Play Begins: 12:30 PM  
Open Division: \$20 with \$10 Op SPool  
Limited Div: \$8  
Format: Main-Consolation

**Hoosier Pips:** Big 7-0, Chuck Stimming celebrated a milestone birthday June 1st...Jim Curtis, Chuck Stimming, Grover Bengé and George Crawford have qualified for the **The Tournament of Champions** to be held during the **50th Indiana Open** along with all other winners and finalists of Indiana Tournaments. So far, 24 players including Jim and Chuck have confirmed they will attend...NO local backgammon July 3rd, vacation to the **Michigan Summer Backgammon Championship**.

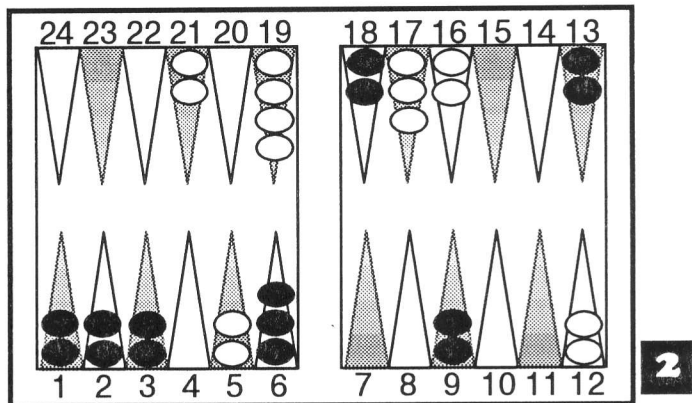
**Hoosier Backgammon Club**  
Home Page: <http://www.hoosierbgclub.org>  
E-Mail: [meese@worldnet.att.net](mailto:meese@worldnet.att.net)

**Butch & Mary Ann Meese**  
1008 Tuckahoe, Indianapolis, IN 46260-2215  
(317) 255-8902



**Position 2:** Black leads 5-3/7. Black to play 6-3.

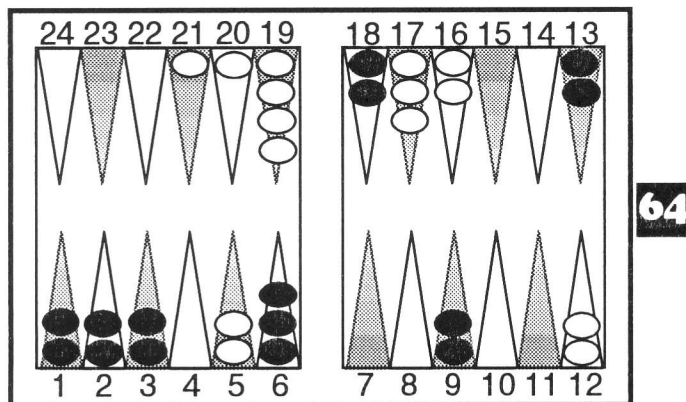
Position 2 is slightly different in that White's two homeboard blots have become the 5-point. Now Black's priorities change. Leaving direct shots is considerably more dangerous and the safe 9/3, 9/6 becomes the prudent choice. Playing 13/4 edges making the 3-point for second place, partly because of the above mentioned timing considerations and partly because Black's improved board is less valuable with no White blots to shoot at from the bar, if hit. The three plays are a bit closer than in Position 1, winning 61%, 60%, and 59% of matches respectively.



**Position 4:** Black leads 5-3/7. Black to play 6-3.

As was the difference between Positions 1 and 2, converting two homeboard blots into a point makes Black's situation more precarious. Now 13/4 is again the best move, beating out 18/9 by 1% match winning chances. Similar to Position 1, a hit on the 13-point is survivable and if White misses, he needs to be concerned about leaving shots.

Nearly every backgammon position presents a new challenge and a player should weigh the location of all 30 checkers before finalizing his move. Anticipating the future conditions goes a long way in making the correct choice.



**Position 3:** Black leads 5-3/7. Black to play 6-3.

It takes a rather large change of Position 1 to make 18/9 the correct move. In Position 3, Black's much improved board, huge race lead (and associated timing deficit) and White's weak board all combine to make running a back checker the best play. Playing 18/9 wins 2% more matches than 13/4.

**HBC 2002 Standings**  
**The Player of the Month for May was**  
**Jim Curtis with 138 gammon points.**

1	Jim Curtis.....	681
2	Butch Meese.....	622
3	Rick Steele.....	549
4	Sean Garber.....	456
T5	Woody Woodworth.....	443
T5	Mary Ann Meese.....	443
7	Larry Strommen.....	424
8	Chuck Stimming.....	309
9	Gabe Stiasny.....	281
10	Scott Day.....	194
	Terry Bateman.....	179
	Al Gomez.....	133
	Frank Scott.....	104
	Luke Clippinger.....	80
	Peter Kalba.....	69
	Jeff Flowers.....	60
	Kevin Heacox.....	40
	Alan Tavel.....	39
	David Schwind.....	36
	Stan Denski.....	26
	Jeff Baker.....	22
	Charley Haley.....	12
	Mark Swanson.....	10
	Roger Blaine.....	10

<u>May 1st</u>	<u>May 8th</u>	<u>May 15th</u>	<u>May 22nd</u>	<u>May 29th</u>
1st <i>Mary Ann Meese</i>	<i>Chuck Stimming</i>	<i>Jim Curtis</i>	<i>Luke Clippinger</i>	<i>Chuck Stimming</i>
2nd <i>Sean Garber</i>	<i>Jim Curtis</i>	<i>Gabe Stiany</i>	<i>Rick Steele</i>	<i>Butch Meese</i>
3rd ...	<i>Rick Steele</i>	...	<i>Jim Curtis</i>	...

Jun 11-16..... **9th Worldwide Twin Backgammon Championships**, Las Vegas, NV..... (702) 893-6025  
 July 4-7..... **Michigan Summer Championship**, Novi Hilton, Novi, MI..... (810) 232-9731  
 Aug31-Sep3.. **50th Indiana Open**, Sheraton Hotel and Suites, Indianapolis, IN..... (317) 255-8902  
 Wednesdays.. 7:00 PM at **Neon Johnny's**, 86th & Township Line Rd (Cellular 442-4065)..... HBC 255-8902