



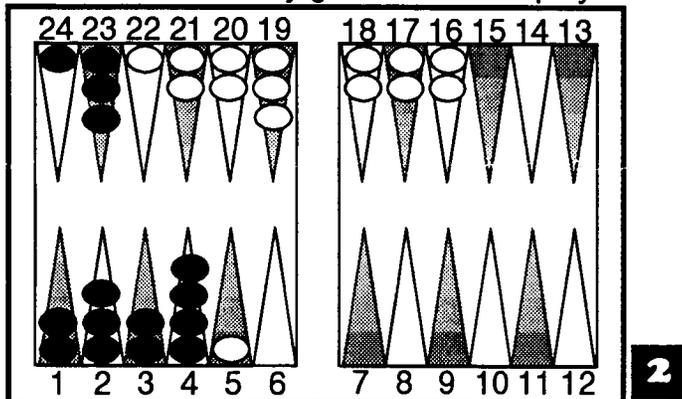
Hoosier  
Backgammon  
Club

August 2003



## David's Anchor & Goliath's Prime by Chuck Bower

Position #1: Money game. Black to play 5-1?



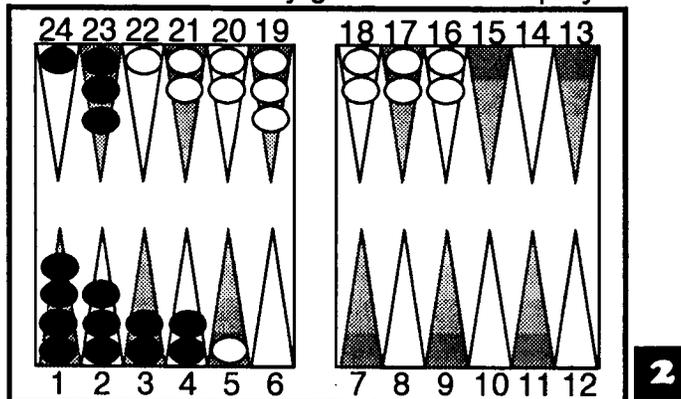
Black is in a very uncomfortable and awkward situation. He has four checkers behind a solid 6-prime and his board has been crunched down to the lowest four points. This roll can be played in three ways. If Black were preparing for a bearoff, 4/3 would be better than 2/1. Here timing is very valuable so saving 3's is better and 4/3 can be eliminated right away. With 2/1 Black intentionally keeps his back checkers split, just in case White rolls a couple big sets and his position gets awkward.

Moving 24/23 attempts to put the back checkers to sleep until the prime is broken. Black's plan is first to survive, escape the gammon (with luck), and maybe even win a fluke game (with a lotta luck).

Moving 23/22x hitting is anti-timing. White would like to be sent back allowing Black more time to crunch his board even further. Normally you don't want to make this kind of play when behind a 6-prime. As it turns out, this is an exception. GNU-bg rollouts say 23/22x is better than any other play by at 0.09 cubeful equity units. Not only does the hit win more games (between 2% and 2.5%) but loses fewer gammons (2% fewer).

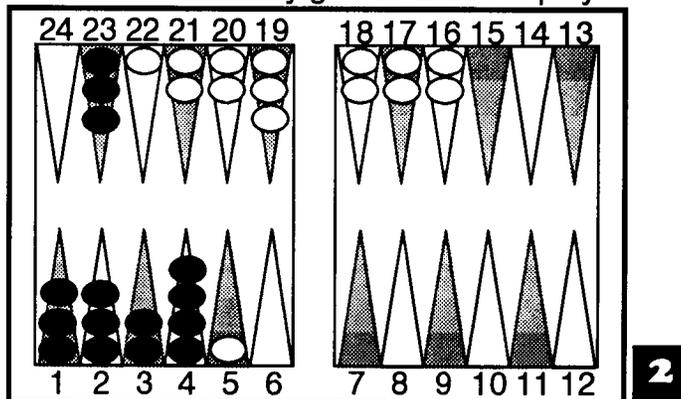
The reasons can be discovered by changing the position around.

Position #2: Money game. Black to play 5-1?



Now Black's timing is considerably worse than in Position 1. Any three will further crunch the homeboard. GNU-bg rollouts say 24/23 is now better than 23/22x by about 0.05. What if we keep the homeboard timing the same as Position 1 but put only three checkers back?

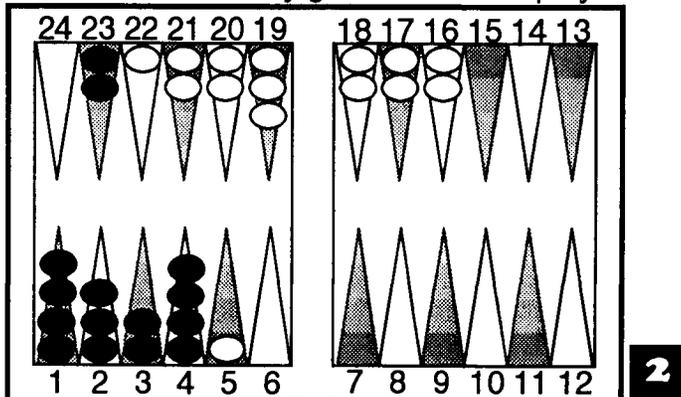
Position #3: Money game. Black to play 5-1?



This time 2/1 loses fewer gammons, but 23/22x is still the better play by about 0.04 in equity, due to winning 2.5% more games.

What if Black has only two checkers back?

Position #4: Money game. Black to play 5-1?

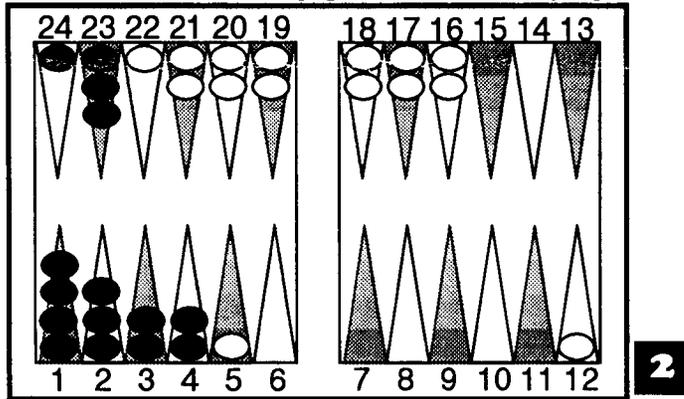


**Please note:** Weekly meeting for the next two weeks will be on Thursday. On August 22nd, it will be at **Neon Johnny's**. On August 29th (the night before the start of the **51st Indiana Open**), we will play at the **Sheraton Hotel** main ballroom.

Now 23/22x is suicidal, giving White a green light to go for the closeout. This play is wrong by a 0.12, winning about the same number of games as 2/1, but losing 12% more gammons.

Finally, how important is White's spare on the 6-point?

Position #5: Money game. Black to play 5-1?



This is Position 2 (Black with no spares on the 4-point) except White's spare on the 6-point has been moved back to his midpoint. Instead of hitting being worse by 0.05 as was the case in position 2, 23/22x is now better off by 0.07 than 24/23.

We can now summarize our findings. Black should not hit with only two checkers back (Position 4), due to the threat of being closed out. He also should not hit without spares on the 4-point (Position 2), unless White has no attackers in the zone (Position 5). In other cases he should hit. With four or more checkers back, Black is very likely to get gammoned without attacking, and the chance to make two anchors in White's homeboard is his best chance to cause White problems. With three checkers back, White can get off the gammon by simply waiting, but now has a chance to win by shifting the anchor forward, then escaping

while hitting, or even rolling a couple big sets and getting back in the race by escaping without hitting.

It is worth noting that White is a huge favorite in all these positions, regardless of what Black does. Only in Position 4 (only two checkers back) does Black have more than 10% chance of winning (~13% in that case). Some players would be so discouraged with their **bad luck** which landed them in such a hole that they would be resigned to losing, even getting gammoned, independent of how they played. The successful player knows to keep clawing and **thinking** to give him/herself the best chance at turning this game around. Many thought David didn't have a chance against Goliath, either.

HBC 2003 Gammon Standing	
The July <i>Player of the Month</i>	
was <b>Scott Day</b> with <b>141</b> points.	
1	Sean Garber..... 823
2	Jim Curtis..... 790
3	Chuck Stimming..... 674
4	Rick Steele..... 649
5	Larry Strommen..... 586
6	Butch Meese..... 552
7	Terry Bateman..... 523
8	Scott Day..... 454
9	Woody Woodworth..... 436
10	Mary Ann Meese..... 420
	Josh Riddell..... 310
	Gabe Stiasny..... 306
	Dan Moore..... 146
	Al Gomez..... 89
	Jon Vietor..... 76
	Katya Beshparova..... 58
	Kevin Heacox..... 58
	Mark Swanson..... 34
	Kirk Holmes..... 26
	Peter Kalba..... 24
	Jack Scofield..... 22
	Dave Groner..... 20
	Brian Nelson..... 18
	Sam Shade..... 16
	Bill Gheen..... 12
	Alan Tavel..... 12
	Charlie Haley..... 10
	Larry Buckingham..... 10
	Debra Rosenblum..... 8

	July 9th	June 16th	June 23rd	June 30th
1st	Sean Garber	Larry Strommen	Woody Woodworth	Butch Meese
2nd	Scott Day	Chuck Stimming	Chuck Stimming	Terry Bateman
2nd	Josh Riddell	Al Gomez	Scott Day	Scott Day

Aug29-Sep1.. **51st Indiana Open Backgammon Tournament**, Sheraton Hotel, Indianapolis, IN... (317) 255-8902  
 Sept 19-21.... **Florida State Championships**, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Ft Lauderdale, FL..... (945) 564-0430  
 Oct 10-12..... **Illinois State Championships**, Springfield Hilton, Springfield, IL..... (217) 528-0117  
 Wednesdays.. 7:00 PM at **Neon Johnny's**, 86th & Township Line Rd (Cellular 442-4065)..... HBC 255-8902