



# Hoosier Backgammon Club

February 2004

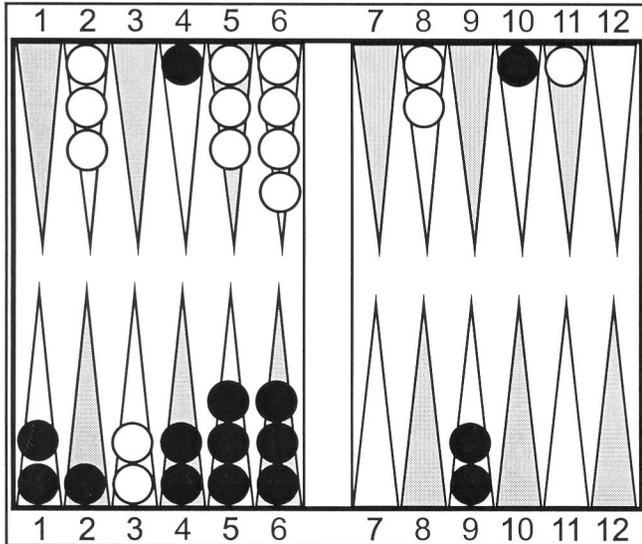
## HBCs 2003 Awards Tournament

Feb 08, 2004

1st Sean Garber 2nd Mary Ann Meese  
2nd Rick Steele

Jim Curtis presented the **Top 10** personalized doubling cubes and prizes. He also presented **Mary Ann Meese a Life Time Achievement Award.**

Don't Forget What You're Playing For  
By Chuck Bower



Position 1.

Black leads 5-1 in a 7-point match.  
Black to play 6-1?

Note that the cube is still centered, which would be a nearly impossible occurrence if this were a money game. Here Black has three good reasons for leaving the cube centered up until now:

1. With the cube on 2 (or 4), he gets no value from winning a gammon. With contact remaining, a big race lead, and White hanging back to try and hit, Black has some moderate gammon chances. Those are worthless if the cube gets turned.
2. White will not hold a 2-cube. Losing the game on a 2-cube is the same as losing a game on a 4-cube. The match is over; chalk up the lost. The relevance of cube value is much different if White ends up winning the game. White has nothing to lose by turning an accepted 2-cube to 4 but a lot to gain.
3. Winning just a single point for Black is big. He then arrives at the 6-1 score and Crawford game. White will not be able to turn the cube the upcoming game, and Black's win in any game from there on will win him the match. So although the rewards of winning more than one point are high, winning just one is very good as well. This takes some of the leverage out of being able to offer a centered cube.

Making the transition between money play and match play is a major step in a backgammon player's development. Even for the experienced tournament player, there are many subtleties to contend with. In Position 1, Black is a mere two points from victory. Obviously he would prefer to close out the match by winning two here, and that can be accomplished by either winning a gammon with a centered cube or a simple game with the cube on 2 (or higher).

White, on the other hand, is after a bigger chunk. Here he would gladly settle for one point, being so far behind in this game. However, when this game began White was looking for a chance to garner four points, either from a doubled gammon win or by getting the cube elevated to four.

Not only does the score and cube location affect cube handling decisions in a match, it also has a role in checker play. Black's 6 here is nearly automatic. He wants that back checker past White's block so he begins with 21/15. If Black didn't have the home board blot on the 2-point, hitting on the 14-point would be right at any score. In that case, there would be little risk in hitting whereas the race would become nearly a lock (assuming no future hits by White) and Black might even get all his checkers home before White even enters.



## Happy Valentine's Day



Hoosier Backgammon Club

Butch & Mary Ann Meese

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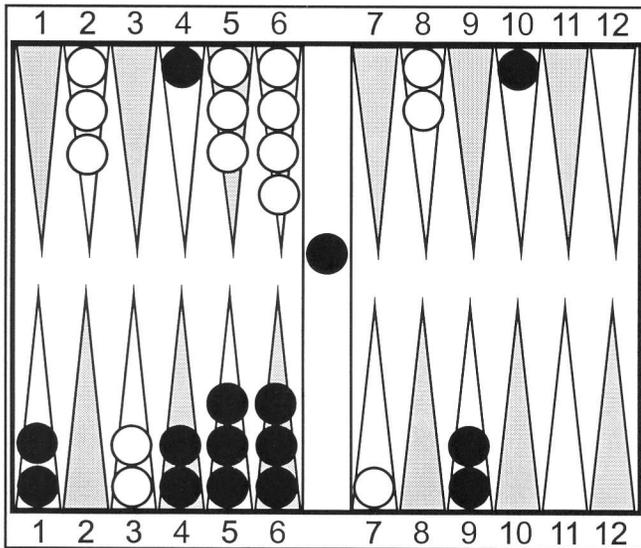
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If this were a money game (and with White holding a 2-cube), the hit by Black would be right. Although risking getting his home board blot sent back, hitting (on average) leads to many more gammon wins for Black. A GNU-bg rollout says failing to hit in a money game costs Black 0.06 units of equity.

At this match score, GNU-bg rollouts indicate that hitting would be a big mistake, costing 0.07 units of equity. If all games were to be played to the end on a centered cube, the two plays win about the same number of games with the non-hit extracting 0.4% more wins. Black wins 12% more gammons by hitting, while losing only 3% more gammons after the hit. Based upon these numbers, why isn't hitting the correct play, even at this match score?

This is where the match score subtly enters. Note that in the last paragraph, I qualified the results by saying *if all games were played to the end on a centered cube*. That won't necessarily be the case. Take a look at Position 2. This would occur if Black chooses to hit in Position 1, White hits upon entering with 2-5 (25/23x/18) and Black fans.

HBC Standings As End of January 2004	
Jim Curtis	144
Butch Meese	126
Scott Day	98
Terry Bateman	95
Chuck Stimming	90
Rick Steele	76
Mary Ann Meese	74
Woody	52
Frank Scott	65
Sean Garber	44
Larry Strommen	44
Randy Foster	10
Dan Moore	8



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Position 2.

White trails 5-1 in a 7-point match.

White on roll. Cube decisions.

### ABT Backgammon Tournament Schedule

Feb 13-15	<b>Pittsburgh Championships</b> Pittsburgh, PA Steve Hast 412.823.7500
Feb 26-29	<b>2004 Southern Open</b> St. Simons Island, GA Dave Cardwell 770.333.1876
Mar 19-21	<b>2004 Midwest Championships</b> Lisle, IL Bill Davis 773.583.6464
Apr 16-18	<b>Ohio State Championships</b> Cleveland, OH Joe Miller 330.966.2811
May 28-31	<b>25th Annual Chicago Open</b> Oak Brook Hills, IL Joann Feinstein 847.674.0120
July 1-4	<b>Michigan Summer Championships</b> Novi, MI Carol Joy Cole 810.232.9731

In a money game, Position 2 is not close to a double (although not quite a beaver for Black). At the match score, White has a solid double and Black an equally solid take. White's failure to doubles costs 1.2% match winning chances (MWC) whereas Black's pass would be even more costly - surrendering a bit over 2.4% MWC.

The bottom line is that if Black hits in Position 1, he costs himself 0.07 equity units, even though he will win way more gammons (which he would like very much) and only risks a few gammon losses. Black should go for the safer, simple win, keep the cube out of White's hand, and try to enter the Crawford game as a 9:1 favorite in the match.

### Winning Streak Again: *Butch Meese*

Between December 3rd and January 7th, **Butch Meese** won 10 matches in a row and joins the **Special K Club** for the fourth time. This is the 15th time someone has been added to the **Special K Club** since 1988. The complete list is on the HBC website.