



Hoosier Backgammon Club

May 2004

Friendly Neighbors

by Chuck Bower

Putting the words *backgammon* and *Illinois* together naturally leads one to think *Chicago* with its many clubs and annual tournaments. But Central Illinois is a hub of backgammon activity with three active clubs within an hour of each other: Springfield, Peoria and Bloomington-Normal. An annual wintertime competition is coordinated by the **Sangammon Backgammon Club** (Springfield). An open qualifying event with Calcutta Auction is held the first Saturday of each month from November to April. The venue rotates twice through each of the local club's hometowns. Five places are paid in each qualifier, and series points are awarded for cashing or for individual match wins (the latter only for those not cashing). A 16-bracket playoff is held in late April for the top finishers in series points, providing they played in at least three of the six qualifiers.

This year's series was directed by Sue Oliver and John Jennings with help from others including Randy Armstrong, Ed Zell and auctioneer Mike Plogue. The field contained at least 16 players on each occasion with a zenith of 32 in Bloomington right after New Years. Having attended many local clubs throughout the US, occasionally feeling a bit resented for 'invading', I was quite appreciative of the warm welcome I received from all participants. I'm already anticipating next year's competition.

HBC's Sean Garber has been a regular at these events for several years, receiving attendance compliments for 24 consecutive appear-

Beat The Pro...

Beat the Pro and win a drink. Starting at 6 PM any Wednesday. Come in and challenge **Jim Curtis** (Club Champion) or **Sean Garber** (2003 Player of the Year) to a game. If you win, you win a drink. This is open to all takers. Good luck!!!

Come Sunday, Let's Play

HBC Sunday Tournament May 23rd 2004

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

Registration: 12 Noon

Play Begins: 12:30 PM

Open Division: \$20 with \$10 Op Spool

Limited Division: \$8

Format: Main-Consolation

ances. More than simply showing up, Sean has performed quite well and is an annual contender. In recent years, Sean has coerced other HBC members to join in the fun and this year no less than five of us made the 3 plus hour drive for a majority of the events: Josh Riddell, Scott Day, Merle Feldman, and myself. Josh, Sean, and I qualified for the playoffs, although none of us cashed in that. B-N's Randy Reiff made the finals but then fell short in his attempt to win for the third consecutive year. Peoria's Faddoul Khoury triumphed in the main and Springfield's John Jennings ground his way to the top in the Consolation.

Detouring from my standard checker play commentary, here are a couple cube decisions I faced in the Springfield Series.

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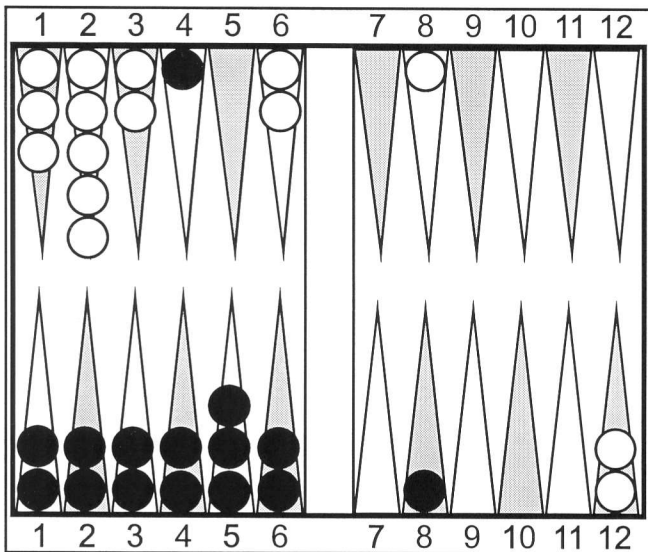
Butch & Mary Ann Meese

1008 Tuckahoe, Indianapolis, In 46260-2215

Home Page: <http://www.hoosierbgclub.org>

Email: indybg@comcast.net

Phone: 317.255.8902



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Position One. Black on Roll.

Score 0 to 0, 11 pts. Cube decision for both sides?

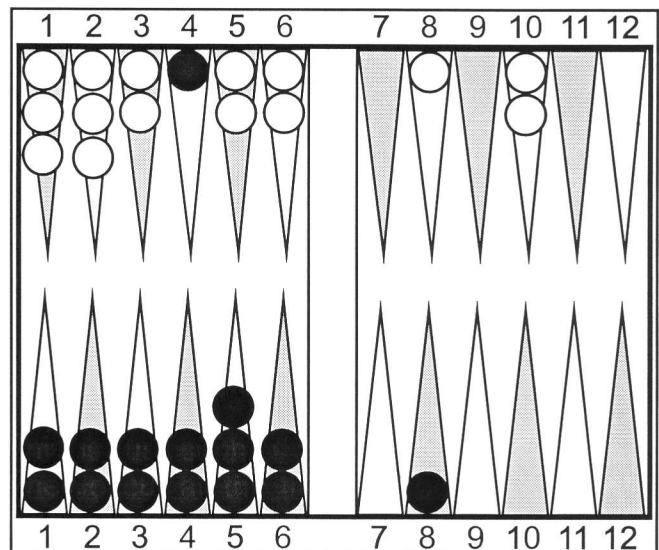
Sean was playing the White checkers. First question: does White have a Take? Black hits with any 4 plus 3-1, a total of 13/36. That means 23/36 misses. White is reasonably placed for the race with an 11-pip lead. If Black misses White will be on the attack. It looks like White has a fairly easy take. Does that mean it's not a double?

The 13 hits aren't Black's only good rolls. 6-4, 6-5, 5-5, and 6-6 escape completely and put White no worse than in the thick of a race. If Black misses with a small roll, he simply sits tight and lets White try to safety. More shots may become available next roll and White can't bear in efficiently with Black's marksman waiting.

If Black doesn't double and then hits, he'll blow way past White's takepoint and then should play on for the gammon, at least for a few rolls. Not doubling and then finding your opponent with a huge pass is known as "missing your market". If the possibility of this is moderate or higher (and 13/36 fits that condition), then as long as a player is actually a **cubeless favorite**, he should double at most scores. Note: **cubeless favorite** means favorite to win the game even given the fact that the opponent, owning the cube, can force an end to the game prematurely when initial doubler still has winning chances. Typically, 58% or more

cubeless wins make a player the **cubeless favorite**.

When the doubling cube was introduced in the mid 1920's, it took players a while to understand it's use. There is at least one book written which said that there cannot be found a position which is both a correct double and a correct take! Well, this is just such a position, and today we know they occur all the time. Snowie 3.2 rollouts say that not doubling is a 0.34 equity error and passing is a 0.17 error. I found the double and Sean correctly took. I don't remember the result of this game, but Sean eventually won the match.



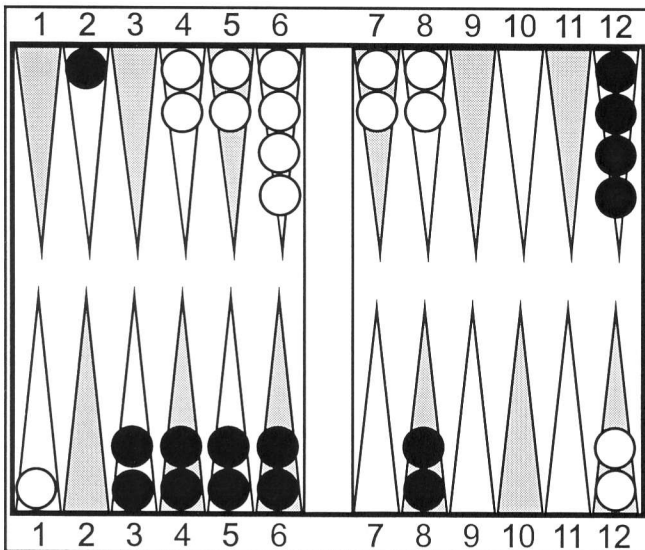
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Position 2. Black on roll.

Score 0-0/11.

Cube decision for both sides?

White's Position 1 must be modified considerably in order to prevent Black from having a double. In Position 2, White has a better bearoff structure and a good attacking position if Black misses and stays behind. Even here, Black's double is only an 0.05 equity error, with 57% cubeless wins just not enough to make him the **cubeless favorite**.



Position 3. White on roll.
White leads 4-3 in a 7-point match.
Cube decision both sides?

There should be no question that White has the edge in Position 3: five points in a row with an opponent checker needing first a one and then a six to get out, compared to Black's broken prime where most White 6's escape. Still, Black isn't so far behind here. A non-6 by White followed by Black's ace leaves Black nearly even at \$-play and a favorite at this score when holding a 4-cube.

Another big issue is the match score. White can only use three points of an upcoming 4-cube. In Black's hands, a 2-cube at this score is a big weapon. If White's game winning chances fall below 40%, White should pass a 4-cube. Roll-outs by both GNU-bg and Snowie 3.2 indicate that White doesn't even have a double at \$-play, let alone at this match score. White wins 60% total games and 17% gammons while Black wins 11% gammons according to the bot rollouts.

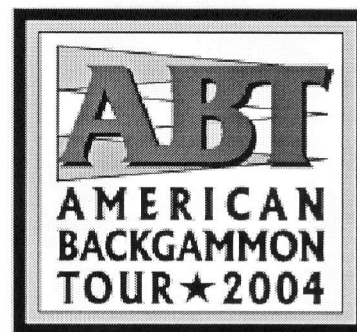
If the score were reversed, however, White would have a close double and Black an easy take. If Black were leading 4-3, he would not have much leverage owning a 2-cube. White would have a take on the 4-cube with as few as 17% game winning chances, a big difference compared to the 40% drop point with White leading 4-3.

Indiana open

Backgammon Tournament

**52nd Indiana Open
Backgammon Tournament
September 3-9 2004
*See You In September***

Indy Swiss Format,
JB Memorial Jackpot,
Indy300 Jackpot,
Amateur Jackpot,
Labor Day Jackpots,
Directors' Cup and
Blitz Events.



Play in both the Jackpot
and the Doubles With Ease!!!!
Early Starting Times for the
Indy300 Jackpot,
The Amateur Jackpot and
The Doubles: Friday 2 PM.

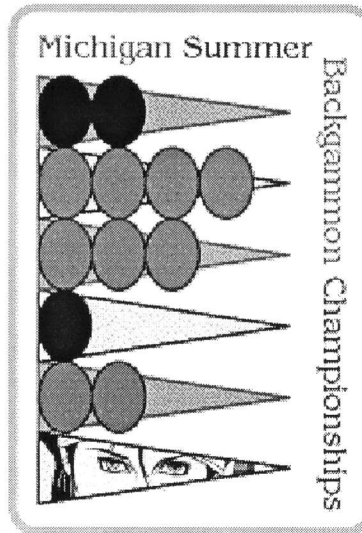
2004 Michigan Summer Backgammon Championships

100% Return of Open Entry Fees

**July 1-July 4, 2004
(Thursday-Sunday)**

Wednesday Warm-Up - June 30

**Michigan Masters
Thursday, July 1
First Prize - \$10,000**
(based on 32 Master players)



Over 200 players expected in all events!

**GAMESGRID BONUS BLITZ
\$1000 in Added Prizes + Special Trophy**

**SHERATON DETROIT-NOVI HOTEL
Novi, Michigan
800-325-3535**

HBC Standings As of April 2004	
Butch Meese	558
Jim Curtis	453
Sean Garber	418
Larry Strommen	295
Woody Woodworth	289
Chuck Stimming	277
Scott Day	276
Rick Steele	270
Mary Ann Meese	199
Terry Bateman	195
Frank Scott	109
Josh Riddell	94
Dan Moore	89
Mark King	54
Gabe Stiasny	46
Al Gomez	36
Mark Swanson	30
Randy Foster	20
Derrick Swanson	12
Jeff Flowers	10
Merle Feldman	10

Player of the Month of April was Larry Strommen with 149 gammon points.

	April 7	April 14	April 21	April 28
1st	Scott Day	Larry Strommen	Jim Curtis	Butch Meese
2nd	Mary Ann Meese	Sean Garber	Terry Bateman	Woody Woodworth
2nd	Josh Riddell	...	Sean Garber	Larry Strommen

Regional Tournament Schedule

May 28-31	25th Annual Chicago Open Oak Brook Hills, IL	Joann Feinstein 847.674.0120
July 1-4	Michigan Summer Championships Novi, MI	Carol Joy Cole 810.232.9731
Jul 30-Aug 1	Wisconsin State Championships Madison, WI	Tom Machaj 608.516.9109
Aug 12-15	Georgia Championships Atlanta, GA	Dave Cardwell 770.333.1876
Sep 3-6	52nd Indiana Open Indianapolis, IN	Butch & Mary Ann Meese 317.255.8902