

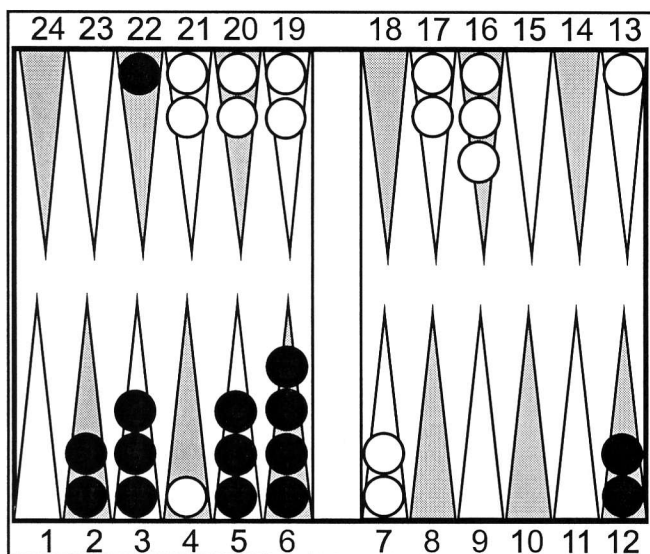


Hoosier Backgammon Club

March 2005

The Cube Matters

by Chuck Bower



Position A.

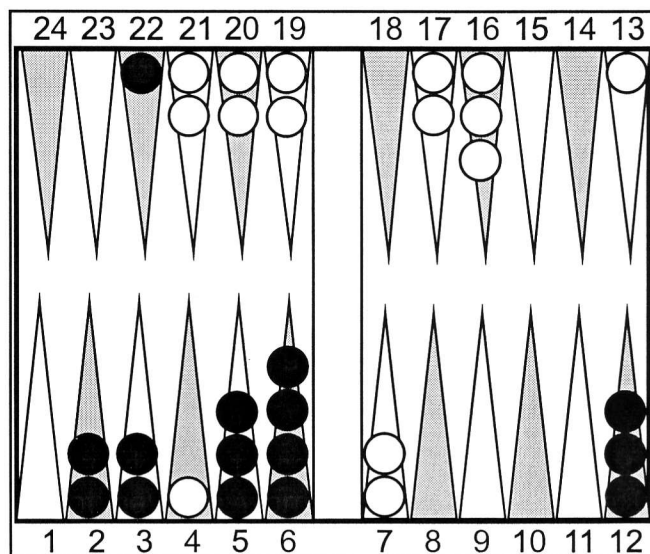
- 1) Score tied 6-6 in a 7-point match.
Black to play 3-2?
- 2) Black to play 3-2 in a money game with
 - a) centered cube,
 - b) Black owning 2-cube, and
 - c) White owning a 2-cube.

As always, the first step is to find the candidate plays. There is only one non-hitting play that makes sense: 6/3/1 which keeps the checkers diversified, both for future point making and for a decent bearoff. For the hitting option, after 6/4x Black can split the outfield checkers (12/9) to maximize builders or play the safer but less diverse 6/3 or 5/2.

In the December 2004 issue of this newsletter, Perry Gartner outlined several factors which are

relevant to the Double Match Point (DMP) score. Three of these were **stress pure play, consider bigger plays than at money play, and be more ready to risk getting hit...** All of these point towards the bold 6/4x, 12/9, yet that move is not best here. Although hitting is a must to keep White off balance, the very pure play gives White just too many checkers to sweep up.

Hopefully, many of you readers have already noticed that I missed a reasonable candidate. A GNU-bg rollout says the not so easy to find 6/4x/1 is best by 2% game (and match) winning chances over the other hitting candidates. This play not only has the advantage of fewer immediate shots than the other hitting alternatives, but also fewer repeat shots. With a semi-trapped back checker, Black would like to concentrate on that problem and not have to worry about covering the blot. Further, with such a big race lead Black doesn't mind if White's back checker escapes or at least camps high in Black's home board where it offers less long term threat.



Position B.

Score tied 6-6 in a 7-point match.
Black to play 3-2?

Before moving on to the second problem (money game situations) consider Position B where Black's inefficient builder on the 3-point

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from Position A has been moved back to the 12-point. Here creating another cover for the 4-point with 12/9 is worth the risk since it only leaves one more blot. Perry's principles now apply. The choice is close but a GNU-bg rollout has the pure play winning 0.8% more games (and matches).

With the cube AND gammons in play (as in a money game), the situation changes. With a centered cube playing the Jacoby rule, Black is less fearful of a gammon loss. White will have to double to activate the gammons but certainly won't be able to do that until hitting. Further, when things work out for Black, it is White who must fear the gammon loss when the cube comes flying across. Now the daring 6/4x, 12/9 comes out on top by 0.06 units of cubeful equity. But with the cube either in Black's hands or White's, the less gammonish and more winnable 6/4x/1 is back on top, by 0.05 and 0.03 equity units respectively.

Lastly, suppose the cube were centered but the Jacoby Rule were not in effect. (This is relevant for a match when both players are far from winning and have equal or nearly equal scores.) With gammon threats already real, even with a centered cube, the pendulum swings back to the middle. A 1700 trial GNU-bg rollout had 6/4x/1 and 6/4x, 12/9 a virtual tossup.

HBC Standings As of February 2005	
Sean Garber	334
Rick Steele	275
Chuck Stimming	266
Scott Johnston	221
Terry Bateman	212
Butch Meese	184
Larry Strommen	124
Paul Berg	96
Woody Woodworth	76
Jim Curtis	74
Scott Day	72
Josh Riddell	69
Merle Feldman	68
Dan Moore	34
Mark Swanson	32
Mary Ann Meese	18
Eric Luecking	18
Charlie Haley	12
Derrick Swanson	10

HBCs 2004 Awards Tournament
 Sunday - February 27th, 2005
 1st Paul Berg (MI), 2nd Josh Riddell & 2nd Butch Meese

53rd Indiana Open, Labor Day Weekend 2005
Free Lecture by Joe Sylvester

Player of the Month of February 2005 was Chuck Stimming with 214 gammon points.				
	February 2	February 9	February 16	February 23
1st	Chuck Stimming	Woody Woodworth	Chuck Stimming	Rick Steele
2nd	Jim Curtis	Scott Johnston	Butch Meese	Sean Garber
2nd	Sean Garber	...	Merle Feldman	Chuck Stimming

Tournament BG Schedule	
Mar 18-20	Midwest Championship , Wyndham Lisle, Lisle, IL 773.583.6464
Apr 8-10	Ohio State Championships , Marriott, Cleveland, OH..... 330.268.4610
Apr 27-May 1	Nevada State Tournament , Riviera, Las Vegas, Nevada.702.893.6025
May 27-30	26th Chicago Open , Oak Brook Hills, IL847.674.0120
Jul 1-4	Michigan Summer Championships , Sheraton, Novi, MI..... 810.232.9731
Wed 7 PM	Neon Johnny's (86th & Township Rd) (Cells) 317.442.4065 or 317.430.7862