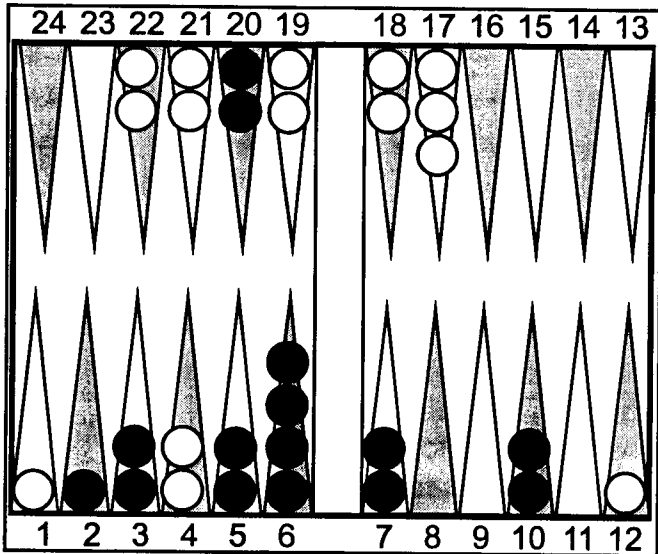




# Hoosier Backgammon Club

May 2005

## Both Sides Now by Chuck Bower



Position One.

Score tied 4-4 in a 7-point match.

Black to play 4-2?

There are many different ways we can learn from backgammon positions. Sometimes we memorize a tactic of a particular position. Sometimes a rule or axiom which applies in general (but not 100% of the time) is the result. In the illustrated position, an even more general lesson can be found. As Black what would be your play, and why?

When this position came up in one of my matches, I concentrated on my strategy (long term plan) as follows: I have a big race lead. This means I prefer running at the first convenient opportunity. It also means that my opponent has better timing so if we each sit tight on our anchors for several rolls, my home board will likely crunch first. In the meantime, I don't really want to get hit because although that improves my timing, it hurts my racing chances. In general improving

one's timing takes a back seat to protecting a big race lead.

My play was 7/3, 7/5. This was in line with my plan of minimizing White's hitting chances to maintain my race lead. Unfortunately my strategy got in the way of finding the right play. In fact, I had concentrated too much on my situation and ignored my opponent's. Go back to Position One and imagine you are White. What are you thinking before Black rolls?

White should notice several things about his position. The blot on the midpoint is both an asset and a liability. It does protect the outfield but Black gets 5/36 shots every time he rolls. The spare on the 8-point is safe, but poorly placed. Better if it were one or preferably two points advanced. The anchor on Black's 4-point provides excellent security against getting closed out and gammoned. The blot on the Black's ace point is fast running out of time. If Black covers his 2-point it is going to then become a prime target. Hopefully the dice will allow it to advance soon.

And now as Black we see the problem with 7/3, 7/5. White's back checker hits with an ace, safeties with a trey and hops into the outfield with a six. That's 27/36 good things that can be done just with the back checker, the one White wants to get moving. A GNU-backgammon rollout says 7/5, 7/3 is an error of 0.18 Equivalent Money Game (EMG) units.

Second best is 6/2, 10/8. This play blocks White's back checker but at the expense of TWO blots and 22 shots. If White can hit one she's in decent shape picking off both might win the game in short order. Combine this with 3's that advance the back checker to the safety of the anchor and White gets a lot of good rolls. This play wins 2% more gammons than the top play but at the cost of losing 2% more games. Worse, at this 3-away. 3-away score, the person who can turn the cube first is at a bigger advantage than normal (for example, than at money play) since dropping and being behind 3-away, 2-away is not so bad due to the extra good cube leverage held by the match trailer at that score. Since the game trailer at 3-away, 3-away is more inclined to drop than typically, the value of simple wins are amplified.

Hoosier Backgammon Club

Butch & Mary Ann Meese

1008 Tuckahoe, Indianapolis, In 46260-2215

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

Email: [indybg@comcast.net](mailto:indybg@comcast.net)

Phone: 317.255.8902

**HBCs Sunday Tournament**  
**Sunday - June 5th, 2005**  
**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 Optional Sidepool  
 Limited Div: \$8      Format: Main-Consolation

HBC Standings As of April 2005	
Sean Garber	671
Butch Meese	501
Scott Johnston	438
Rick Steele	359
Larry Strommen	297
Chuck Stimming	284
Terry Bateman	254
Scott Day	136
Merle Feldman	123
Mary Ann Meese	99
Paul Berg	96
Jim Curtis	90
Woody Woodworth	76
Josh Riddell	69
Dave Groner	36
Dan Moore	34
Mark Swanson	32
Mark Mikolon	20
Eric Luecking	18
Charlie Haley	12
Derrick Swanson	10

Teaser Problem from April will appear in June's Newsletter.

Rollouts say 6/2, 10/8 is worse by 0.08 EMG units in Position One.

The top play according to the rollouts is 6/2, 7/5, despite the 20 shots it leaves White. With this choice only White's 20 hits are good numbers for him. While the alternative plays give White hitting numbers and escaping numbers (all good rolls), after 6/2, 7/5 White's 3's are duplicated as hitting 21/18x or saving the anchor 24/21. White can't do both. Thus only 6's and 3's (20 numbers in total) are good for White. A double shot seems like a lot to offer, but even if hit, Black still has a decent game. The plus-side of this play is that White's 16 misses now leave Black with a four point home board and 6's, 5's, and 4's to hone in on White's helpless back checker.

For me, the lesson here is to look at both sides of the table. Besides seeing the good things I'd like to accomplish and setting up for those, I need to anticipate my opponent's misfortunes and maximize the chances that these occur.

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

Player of the Month of April 2005 was Sean Garber with 182 gammon points.				
	April 6	April 13	April 20	April 27
<b>1st</b>	Scott Johnston	Sean Garber	Sean Garber	Butch Meese
<b>2nd</b>	Sean Garber	Mary Ann Meese	Scott Johnston	Sean Garber
<b>2nd</b>	...	...	...	Scott Johnston

Tournament BG Schedule	
May 27-30	26th Chicago Open, Oak Brook Hills, IL ..... 847.674.0120
Jun 17-19	Los Angeles Open, Airtel Plaza Hotel, Van Nuys, California..... 818.901.0464
Jul 1-4	Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton, Novi, MI..... 810.232.9731
Jul 29-31	Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin..... 608.516.9109
Sept 2-5	53rd Indiana Open, Sheraton, Indianapolis ..... 317.255.8902
Wed 7 PM	Neon Johnny's, 86th & Township Line Rd ..... (Cells) 317.442.4065 or 317.430.7862