

Madison Backgammon News



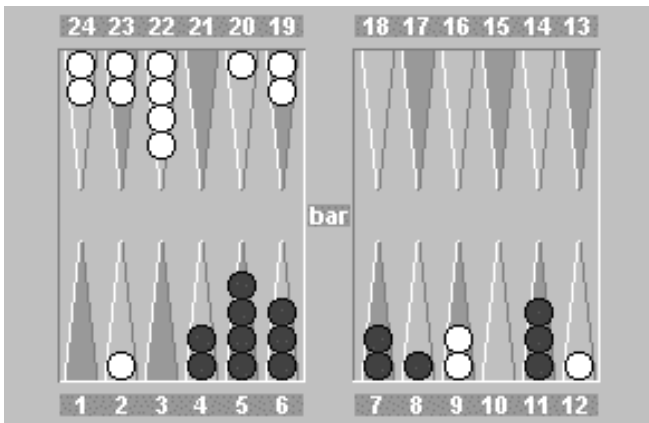
Number 39

January 2001

Answers to Quiz Problems

By Sam Pottle

Problem 17



Black to play 53.

(a) Money game, White owns the cube. (2 points)

(b) Double match point. (2 points)

Black has several useful ways to play this roll: he can make the eight point (11/8 11/6 or 11/8 6/1), make the three point (8/3 6/3), or attack White's blot (7/2* 5/2).

The eight point is much more useful than the three point in this position. Making either point forms a 5-prime, but after 8/3 6/3, White's back checker is at the edge of the prime, while the 11/8 plays leave that man blocked. The race is fairly close: Black lead is only 101 pips to 103 before the play, so it's important to keep White from just leaping out and racing. Let's eliminate 8/3 6/3.

If we play 11/8, how should we play our 5? Dumping a checker to the ace point with 6/1 is immediately safe, but otherwise doesn't have much to recommend it. Dumping a man

behind White's trailer makes it more difficult for Black to roll home his prime, and also makes it more awkward for him to attack White's blot. In addition, the play leaves Black's position stacked and stripped, with both of his spare men on the same point. Many of Black's rolls will keep him from clearing the 11 point cleanly next turn, forcing him to leave a shot anyway. What about 11/6? This play leaves Black a much better structure; the only drawback is the immediate shot it leaves. But how bad is that shot? White's board is a shambles -- she has two checkers out of play plus a blot with no direct covers. If Black is hit, White will have to somehow keep him on the bar long enough to escape her back checker, which requires a 1 followed by a 6. This is a lot of work to do. Therefore Black can afford to leave the shot in order to get a better attacking structure. We can discard 11/8 6/1.

What about the attacking play? This looks like a forceful attack: 12 checkers bearing down on the defenseless White blot, and already a four point board. The only downside is the immediate 6 shots (61, 43, 53) at Black's blots on the seven and eight points. These hits are mostly winners.

So, which is better, prime or attack? It turns out that priming wins slightly more games, so it's a little better at double match point. The attacking play wins a lot more gammons, so it's much better for money.

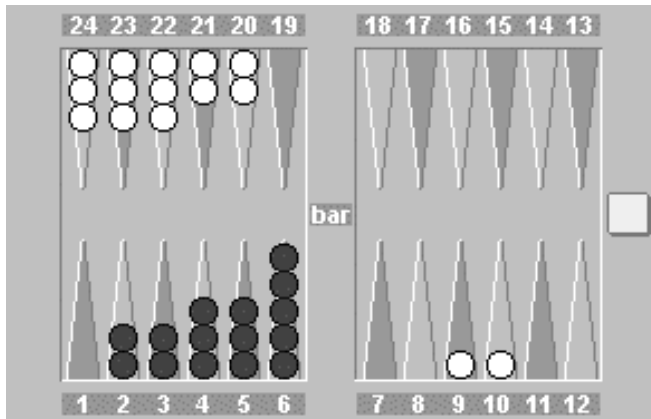
In part (a), score two points for 7/2* 5/2. In part (b), score two points for 11/8 11/6.

(continued on page 2)

Answers

(continued from page 1)

Problem 18



Money game, center cube, Black on roll.

(a) Should Black double? (2 points)

(b) If doubled, should White take? (2 points)

This is the only racing problem in the quiz. How should you adjust the pip count in a longish race to account for inferior distribution?

Here the pip count is exactly even, 67-67. Black has the advantage of being on roll, but she also has her checkers better distributed. In fact, Black's position is better than any other arrangement of 15 checkers that totals 67 pips. The reason is that once White's bearoff begins, he will waste at least one pip every time he rolls a six -- because his six point is empty, he won't be able to play more than five pips. Because he has so many men on the lower points in his board, he is likely to end up with men on his low points after all his higher points are empty, which will cause him to waste several more pips.

How should we account for these effects? Bill Robertie recommends the following system: starting with the raw pip count, add 1 for each checker on the ace point, and add 1 for each extra outfield crossover. Why penalize extra crossovers? Our position is a case in point. White's four outfield crossovers mean that his other 13 men must be lower in his board, leading to pip wastage later on.

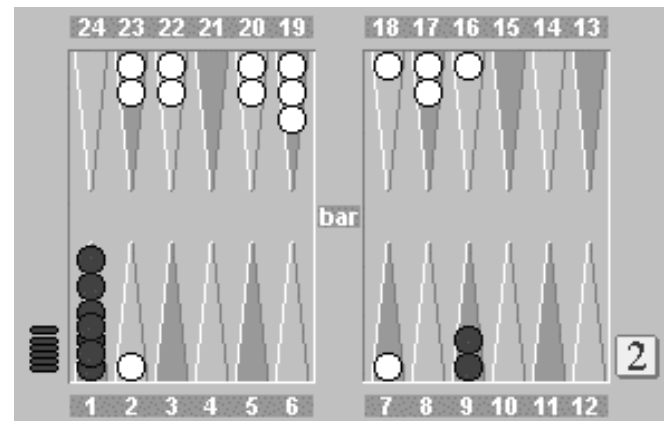
How does our race look with these adjustments? Black has no checkers on the

one point and none in the outfield, so her count remains at 67. White gets charged +3 for his men on the ace point and +4 for his outfield men, for a total of 74. Now we can apply Robertie's standard racing cube advice: the player on roll can give an initial double with an 8% lead, or redouble with a 9% lead. The other player can take if he trails by at most 12%.

Here the adjusted pip count (67-74) has Black leading by a bit more than ten percent but definitely less than twelve. Score two points for "double" and two points for "take".

New Quiz Problems

Problem 19

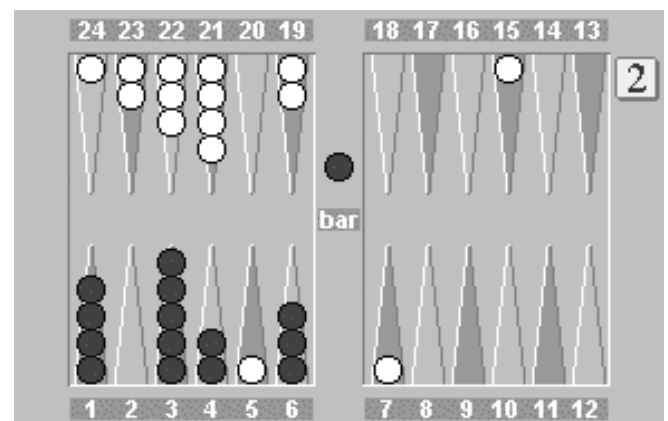


Money game, Black owns the cube, Black on roll.

(a) Should Black redouble? (2 points)

(b) If doubled, should White take? (2 points)

Problem 20



Money game, White owns the cube.

Black to play 51. (4 points)

2000 Year-end Club Standings

Mark Tremayne	33.05
Stan Livingston	30.35
Tom Machaj	28.40
Sam Pottle	25.50
Bill Minser	24.40
Charlie Walter	23.35
Lee Pflugrad	16.75
Gary Hines	14.10
Iliia Guzei	13.00
George Steele	12.35
Carl Jespersen	12.05
Gary Fries	3.70
Stephen Turner	1.95
Mark Kremer	1.65
Jerry Neviasser	1.00
Sonja Peacock	0.80

Tournament Stats for 2000

Here's this year's rundown of the stories that the club standings don't tell...

Points per tournament—Our club standings system rewards regular attendance. But another measure of performance is to use club standings **points per tournament** (or ppt). Among players who played in more than a couple of events, George Steele led this category with 2.06 ppt by virtue of his excellent performance in the six tournaments he played in last year. Next were Charlie Walter (1.80 ppt) and Stan Livingston (1.78 ppt).

1000 to 1 Club—Nobody came close to winning ten matches in a row this year. Stan, Charlie, and Sam each had streaks of seven consecutive match wins. Charlie also had a separate streak of six in a row.

Who's winning?—Stan Livingston and Charlie Walter each won four tournaments this year, followed by Mark Tremayne and Tom Machaj with three apiece. **Who's cashing?** Stan cashed an impressive 11 times in just 17 tries, while Mark and Sam each finished in the money eight times.

Ironman—Tom Machaj gets the attendance honors once again, with a perfect attendance record (24 out of 24 tournaments). Mark Tremayne showed up 23 times, and Bill Minser made 21 tournament appearances.

Congratulations, Sam!

for your 2nd place finish in the American Backgammon Tour in 2000.

How Tournament Points Are Awarded

In the column to the left, we see who ended up with the most tournament points for the year, who came in second, and so forth. In the article below the year-end club standings we learn who had the most points earned per tournament played (ppt), but the question that remains to be answered is how are the points awarded.

Our club standings are a “master point” system. Points are awarded for good performance based on match wins and cashing in tournaments, but points are never deducted. This method is similar to the system used to rank bridge players, but dissimilar to a chess rating. We use this type of rating to encourage attendance. The more often you play, the higher your total can go.

There are two basic parts used to calculate the number of points that you are awarded after each tournament.

First, count the number of match wins in the main flight. Byes do not count as wins. Second, count the number of match wins in the consolation bracket. Again, byes do not count as wins. Multiple these wins in the consolation bracket by 0.8. Add this product to the number of match wins in the main flight. This sum is where most of the tournament points are given.

Next, multiple the number of tournament players by 0.2. This product represents the points awarded to the participants who cash in the tournament. One-half of these points goes to 1st place, one-quarter of these points goes to 2nd place, and the last quarter to the consolation winner.

Add the points for the match wins to the points for cashing to arrive at the total number of points awarded to you for a given tournament.

Of course, there are exceptions to the above stated process. If the tournament has six or fewer players, 1st place gets 2/3 of the cashing points and 2nd place gets 1/3 of the points. There is no consolation prize.

Also, the points awarded for match wins are adjusted downward because of the increased number of matches played in the alternate tournament formats, such as a round robin. The points awarded in five or six player tournament is proportionally less than those given in a seven or more player tournament.

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Recent Club Tournament Results

Dec. 19 – (7 players) 1st Charlie Walter,
2nd Mark Tremayne, Cons. Stan Livingston.

Jan. 2 – (5 players) 1st Charlie Walter,
2nd (3-way tie) Stan Livingston, Bill Minser and
Tom Machaj.

Jan. 16 – (9 players) 1st Tim Helms,
2nd Sam Pottle, Cons. Charlie Walter.

Club Standings As Of 1/16/01

Charlie Walter	5.02
Tim Helms	3.90
Sam Pottle	2.45
Bill Minser	2.11
Stan Livingston	1.91
Tom Machaj	1.11
Lee Pflugrad	1.00
Mark Tremayne	1.00
Iliia Guzei	0.50

Upcoming Events

Feb. 6–Club Tournament. JT Whitney's Pub & Brewery,
674 S Whitney Way, Madison, WI. (608) 274-1776. 6:30
p.m. Registration. 7:00 p.m. Play begins. \$6/Entry, \$4/1st
Side pool, \$5/2nd Side pool.

Feb. 11 – Chicago Bar Point Sunday Tournament.
Anyway's Chicago Grill & Bar, 5 E Roosevelt Rd,
Oakbrook Terrace, IL (630) 932-9323. 11:30 a.m.
Registration. 12 Noon Play begins. \$40/Open,
\$20/Intermediate. Entry includes \$5 food & drink coupon.

Feb. 16-18 – The 23rd Annual Pittsburgh Backgammon
Championships. Greentree Radisson. Pittsburgh, PA.
(800) 333-3333. 1:00 p.m. Friday registration opens.
9:00-10:00 a.m. Saturday final registration. 12:30 p.m.

Play begins. \$225/Championship - \$100/Side, \$110/Ad-
vanced - \$50/Side, \$35/novice. Several other events.

Feb. 20 – Club Tournament. JT Whitney's Pub & Brewery,
674 S Whitney Way, Madison, WI. (608) 274-1776. 6:30
p.m. Registration. 7:00 p.m. Play begins. \$6/Entry, \$4/1st
Side pool, \$5/2nd Side pool.

Feb. 25 – Milwaukee BG Club, Sunday Monthly
Tournament. John Hawks Pub, 100 E Wisconsin Ave,
Milwaukee, WI. (414) 272-3199. 12:00 p.m. Registration.
1:00 p.m. Play begins. \$40 Entry with \$10 side pool.
Free parking in ramp, Water St. entrance.

Mar. 6 – Club Tournament. JT Whitney's Pub & Brewery,
674 S Whitney Way, Madison, WI. (608) 274-1776. 6:30
p.m. Registration. 7:00 p.m. Play begins. \$6/Entry, \$4/1st
Side pool, \$5/2nd Side pool.

Mar. 20 – Club Tournament. JT Whitney's Pub & Brewery,
674 S Whitney Way, Madison, WI. (608) 274-1776. 6:30
p.m. Registration. 7:00 p.m. Play begins. \$6/Entry, \$4/1st
Side pool, \$5/2nd Side pool.

Mar. 23-25 –2001 Midwest Backgammon Championships.
Radisson Hotel Lisle-Naperville. Lisle, IL. (800) 333-3333.
3:00 p.m. Friday registration opens. 9:30-10:30 a.m.
Saturday final registration. 11:00 a.m. Play begins
following the charity calcutta auction and public draw.
\$300/Championship, \$140/Advanced, \$30/limited.
Several other events.

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Madison Backgammon News is published every month or
so to promote the fine art of backgammon in south central
Wisconsin. Madison Backgammon Club meets every
Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m. at J.T. Whitney's Pub &
Brewery. Club tournaments are held on the 1st and 3rd
Tuesdays of every month. Chouettes and one-on-one
play are conducted on all other Tuesdays and after
players have completed their tournament matches. For
further information, contact Tom Machaj at (608) 276-8144
or by e-mail at machaj@charter.net