

Klolan competed in the recent 1980 Black & White Chicago Classic Tournament. For the next couple of weeks, he will review moves which arose there.



backgammon
Michael Klolan
of the American Backgammon Club

TO HIT OR NOT TO HIT

During a quarter-final game in a 17-point match, this position popped up. The score is white 14, black 15. Two points will win the match for black and two points will give white the lead. White has ownership of the doubling cube at 2 and has a 4-2 roll to play. The game appears close, but black has a slight edge since he has a free running checker on the 12 point. The correct move for white could definitely turn the game around.

Black is in no immediate danger of losing, whether or not he is hit (unless, of course, white immediately rolls a double 4) since he has a free-running checker on the white 12 point. Also, black may freely move the two checkers on the 8 point (which is not part of the blocking prime).
It appears that black has good timing.

What is your suggested move for the 4-2?

THE MOVE
White hit black on the 2 point with a checker from the 6 and 4 points for a full six-point prime.
Black stayed on the bar one roll before re-entering on the 1 point. White was soon forced to break open his prime, since he did not roll a 4-2.
Black eventually won the game and match. What went wrong?
I felt white had misplayed the original 4-2 move. Although timing was not on white's side, the doubling cube was.

HOME TABLE	BLACK	OUTER TABLE
1 2 3 4 5 6	7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6	7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6
HOME TABLE	WHITE	OUTER TABLE
1 2 3 4 5 6	7 8 9 10 11 12	1 2 3 4 5 6

THE SUGGESTED PLAY
Instead of closing the 2 point with the 4-2, white should have slot hit black with the 2 roll, and moved a checker from the 1 to the 5 point with the 4 roll.
There is little danger in slotting the checker on the 2 point. The only numbers that work for black is any 2 or double 15. The advantage of this move allows white to escape from the backfield.
Even if white was hit on the 2 point, he could have returned from the bar with a 1 or 5 roll. Black would still be

stuck behind a 5-point prime while white easily escapes.
If black stayed on the bar just one roll (which he did), white would have been in a winning position and could have easily redoubled the cube to 4. With the score being 15-14, black may have accepted the cube and played the game out for the match.
With three points needed to win the match, white had nothing to lose. If black declined the cube, white would then take the lead, 16-15.

The American Backgammon Club will hold a tournament Saturday night in the quiet room of the Holiday Inn on Plymouth Road in Livonia. Registration is at 6 p.m.
For more information on the tournament or on the game, contact the club at 459-5776, or write to Box 599, Plymouth 48170.

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