

In a mutual holding game, the player with the lead in the race usually has the advantage, but they are often at a timing disadvantage. To deal with this, the race leader often considers jumping out from their anchor.

If they succeed and avoid being hit, their advantage increases significantly because they'll be playing a holding game with a race lead, which is a favorable position. However, jumping out isn't risk-free. To decide if the risk/reward ratio is in your favor, consider these key factors:

1. Strength of Your Home Board

- Why it's important: The main risk of jumping out is being hit and blitzed. A strong home board makes it harder for your opponent to keep attacking effectively because they can't hit loosely in their own board without leaving themselves vulnerable.
- How strong should it be? You need at least three points made in your home board to consider jumping out. The stronger your board, the better your chances.

2. Your Opponent's Home Board

- Why it's important: If your opponent has a strong home board (e.g., they've made two or more points), getting hit becomes much riskier. In such cases, you generally shouldn't jump unless your alternatives are very unattractive.
- Rule of thumb: Jumping is too risky if they have two or more points made in their home board.

3. Does Your Opponent Have a Blot in Their Home Board?

- Why it's important: If your opponent has a blot (a single exposed checker) in their home board, jumping out becomes less risky. Their blot gives you tactical opportunities, like hitting and regaining control if things go wrong.
- Advantage: This improves the risk/reward ratio in your favor.

4. How High is Your Race Lead?

- Why it's important: If your race lead is significant, the timing disadvantage you face is more severe, so jumping out becomes more appealing. If your race lead isn't that big, your timing disadvantage isn't as critical, and there's less need to make such a committal move.

5. Do You Have Good Alternatives?

- Why it's important: If you have good alternative moves that don't involve jumping out, you should probably take them. Jumping out is usually the right play only when other options are clearly weaker.
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(OTB) Thinking

When deciding whether to jump out, ask yourself these questions in order of importance:

1. Is my home board strong enough, and is their home board weak?
o If yes, jumping out becomes more viable.
2. Is my race lead high enough?
o If yes, you're likely facing a severe timing disadvantage, making jumping out more urgent.
3. Are my alternatives too weak?
o If yes, jumping out might be the best option.
4. Does my opponent have a blot in their home board?
o If yes, the risk is reduced, and jumping out becomes more attractive.

Summary

If the answers to all four questions are yes, jumping out is very likely the correct move. If the answers to the first three questions are yes, jumping out is probably right. While no move is ever guaranteed in backgammon, following these guidelines will help you make better decisions and guess correctly more often.

This structured approach makes the decision-making process easier and improves your judgment during mutual holding games! re you have 5 different holding positions. And the question is:

Have a good look at the details of the position. Do you jump (your answer = A) or do you stay (your answer = B)? **Note the answers for yourself.** Ex BBABA. In the next file you will find the answers and explanations.

Position 1



Position 2



Position 3



Position 4



Position 5



Conclusion:

Recap of the thinking process:

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Position 1



You only have a 2 point board, a nice alternative, too little race lead and sufficient timing. The best move is maybe a bit surprising.

Cube	Move	Summary
	13/8 13/7	+0,279
	P: 57,6 9,0 0,2 O: 42,4 5,4 0,1	
	13/2	+0,244
	P: 56,9 7,9 0,2 O: 43,1 5,6 0,2	-0,036
	13/7 6/1	+0,210
	P: 55,2 10,6 0,2 O: 44,8 6,4 0,2	-0,069
	20/9	+0,206
	P: 55,4 12,3 0,5 O: 44,6 9,5 0,3	-0,073
	20/15 20/14	+0,191
	P: 56,4 8,3 0,3 O: 43,6 8,4 0,2	-0,088
	20/10 20/10	-0,107

So the Answer is B: Stay

Position 2



You meet all the conditions. strong board vs weak board with blot, no good alternative and very large lead in the race.

Here too, the second best move is surprising.

Cube	move	Summary
	20/15 20/14	+0,401
	P: 61,7 9,2 0,3 O: 38,3 6,7 0,2	
	20/9	+0,384
	P: 60,2 11,8 0,3 O: 39,8 7,1 0,2	-0,017
	20/14 13/8	+0,338
	P: 59,4 10,5 0,3 O: 40,6 7,7 0,2	-0,063
	13/2	+0,317
	P: 59,0 9,4 0,2 O: 41,0 5,9 0,2	-0,084
	13/7 8/3	+0,294
	P: 50,0 0,0 0,0 O: 49,9 0,0 0,0	-0,407

So the answer is A: Jump

Position 3



The problem here is that you do not meet the first condition of strong board vs weak board because opponent has two points in his home board. The other problem is that the alternative is not immediately inviting either. So you have a conflict.

But the order of decision making was according to importance and what makes jumping even worse here is the fact that you have a blot in your home board which reduces your potential return hits in value.

Cube	Move	Summary
13/2		+0,336
	P: 59,5 10,4 0,2 O: 40,5 5,7 0,2	
8/2 6/1		+0,310
	P: 58,3 12,3 0,2 O: 41,7 7,2 0,3	-0,025
13/8 13/7		+0,303
	P: 58,3 11,6 0,2 O: 41,7 5,7 0,2	-0,033
20/15 8/2		+0,290
	P: 58,6 11,0 0,3 O: 41,4 8,4 0,2	-0,046
8/3 8/2		+0,276
	P: 57,6 11,8 0,2 O: 42,4 7,1 0,2	-0,059
20/15 20/14		+0,251
	P: 57,7 11,2 0,3 O: 42,3 9,9 0,3	-0,085

So the answer is B: Stay

Position 4



You have a strong board vs weak board, you have a very large race lead and no good alternative. So you meet the first three conditions. this is enough for jumping.

Cube	Move	Summary
	20/15 20/14	+0,343 ^
	P: 58,9 12,2 0,3 O: 41,1 7,5 0,3	
	20/15 8/2	+0,285
	P: 57,4 12,6 0,2 O: 42,6 7,4 0,3	-0,059
	13/2	+0,267
	P: 57,2 11,1 0,2 O: 42,8 6,3 0,2	-0,076
	13/8 13/7	+0,265
	P: 57,3 11,6 0,2 O: 42,7 6,2 0,2	-0,079
	8/2 6/1	+0.262

So the correct Answer is A: Jump

Position 5:



In this position, you do not meet any of the first 2 conditions. Black's board is stronger than yours. It's no surprise that jumping here is a mega blunder.

Cube	Move	Summary
	13/2	-0,223 ^
	P: 43,9 6,6 0,1 O: 56,1 9,2 0,3	
	13/8 13/7	-0,307
	P: 40,8 7,7 0,2 O: 59,2 9,4 0,3	-0,084
	13/7 8/3	-0,352
	P: 40,0 7,4 0,2 O: 60,0 10,5 0,4	-0,129
	21/16 21/15	-0,536
	P: 38,5 6,0 0,1 O: 61,5 22,1 0,5	-0,314
	8/2 6/1	-0,447
	P: 37,6 5,5 0,1 O: 62,4 11,1 0,4	-0,224

So the correct Answer is B: Stay

So if you had noted: BABAB you did very well in analysing every situation.

Congratulations!!

Thank you Marc Van Damme for this lesson.

Much appreciated.

Marc Van Damme wins PR prize in Aachen

Posted on [October 23, 2024](#) by [Johan](#)

Twenty ambitious players showed up in Aachen to compete in a BMAB tournament. In these kinds of tournaments, all matches are recorded and transcribed by the organization and the players' performance ratings (PRs) are tabulated to designate a specific title, such as Grandmaster (GM), Master, Expert, etc.

Belgium's most proficient player and top Red Beaver, **Marc Van Damme**, stunned the global backgammon community with a stellar overall performance rating (OPR) of 3,51 (nine 9-point matches). This won him the PR prize, leaving a couple of certified GM's slightly bemused. Marc is now edging closer and closer to a GM title.



Edited by Alf