

**BACKGAMMON  
TOURNAMENT  
RULES**

# 1. PROPRIETIES

- **Interpretation**

These tournament rules cannot and are not meant to cover every possible situation that might arise during the course of a game. They are not a substitute for the tournament director's judgement and right to find a fair solution, suitable for the specific circumstances.

- **Scope**

- ✓ **TOURNAMENT RULES**

The current tournament rules apply to all tournaments approved by the tournament directors and players must not use rules other than these.

- ✓ **ETIQUETTE**

- *In general:* Tournament directors and players are expected to behave in the spirit of the game exhibiting good sportsmanship and considerate behavior at all times.
- *Handling of equipment:* Players must handle the equipment in a suitable manner. Inappropriate handling may result in disqualification.

- ✓ **Penalties**

A player may be disqualified and excluded from the tournament. In special cases the player may be temporarily barred from future tournaments.

- **Staff**

- ✓ **TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS**

The tournament must be supervised by one or more skilled and impartial tournament directors.

- ✓ **RULING COMMITTEE**

A tournament committee can be formed as needed. The committee should comprise either three or five persons.

- **Observers**

The tournament director can, on his or her own initiative, or at the request of a player, appoint someone to monitor a match. The monitor has the authority to protect the player from irregularities. Observers monitor the match without commenting or correcting a mistake. When the director is called by a player to solve a problem, an observer's duty is to be the witness.

- **Registration**

- ✓ **APPROVAL**

All players who sign up for a tournament must be approved by the tournament director. A player may be excluded without explanation.

- **Language**

The official language in international tournaments is English.

- **Spectators**

- ✓ **IN GENERAL**

Spectators must observe the match in silence. Spectators may not direct attention to mistakes in the game nor comment on the game. In cases of cheating, spectators may alert the tournament director.

- ✓ **SIGNALLING AND OTHER FORMS OF OUTSIDE HELP**

When a match is in progress, spectators are not allowed to signal or help the players in any way.

- ✓ **PENALTIES**

Violation may result in expulsion of the spectators involved. In special cases, the spectators may be temporarily barred from participating in and/or watching future tournaments.

- **Aids, signaling and other forms of outside help**

- ✓ **IN GENERAL**

When a match is in progress, a player is not permitted to use electronic, mechanical, written or other aids other than those necessary to keep score. A player may use position cards, headphones, a cell phone, camera or the like, if the opponent accepts it in each instance. The tournament director can revoke this permission at any time. In matches played without the use of a game clock, position cards must be used after the end of the player's turn.

In matches played with game clock, the position must be written down in the player's own time.

When the writing of the position has commenced, the move may not be changed.

✓ **SIGNALLING AND OTHER FORMS OF OUTSIDE HELP**

When a match is in progress, players are not allowed to receive signals or help in any other way from the spectators.

✓ **PENALTIES**

Violation may result in disqualification and expulsion of the player. In special cases, the player may be temporarily barred from participation in future tournaments.

✓ **REPORTS**

When a tournament director has disqualified and/or expelled a player in accordance to violations, the fact must be reported to a log. The report must explain the reasons for the ruling.

## 2. REGULATIONS

- **Starting times and breaks**

- ✓ **STARTING TIMES**

All matches must begin at the scheduled times.

- ✓ **BREAKS**

A player is entitled to a number of 5 minute breaks. In matches up to 9 points: one break each. In matches of 11-13 points: two breaks each. In matches of 15-19 points: three breaks each. In matches of more than 19 points: four breaks each. Breaks are held between games. Breaks can be held back to back. This may be done either by one player combining several of his or her permitted breaks or by both players combining their breaks. Any situation when a player leaves the board is considered to be a break unless doing so is a necessary part of the game. When playing best of three matches to 3-7 points, breaks are only allowed between the matches.

- **PENALTIES**

Violation of the rules for starting times and breaks will result in penalty points. If a player is not present and has not started the match 20 minutes after the starting time, one penalty point is awarded. Subsequently a further penalty point is awarded for each subsequent 5 minutes delay. When a player has been awarded penalty points corresponding to more than half of the length of the match, the late player loses the match. Players leaving the tournament area for more than 10 minutes must make sure they have permission from the tournament director before doing so to avoid sanctions. If a player is awarded penalty points and the match is played with a game clock, the game is considered to be in progress and the time is calculated.

- **Slow play**

- ✓ **PENALTIES**

If the tournament director considers that a match is being played at an unreasonably slow pace, the following sanctions may be used:

1. The remainder of the match is played using a game clock.
2. A warning. If the slow pace persists, penalty points may be awarded.

- ✓ **REQUESTS**

A player may make a request to the tournament director, that the remainder of the match is played using a game clock or that an observer is appointed to monitor the match.

### 3. PREPARATION

- **The dice**

- ✓ **IN GENERAL**

If they are available, a player can demand that precision dice are used in preference to other dice. If precision dice are only available after the match is started, the player can demand that the dice are replaced at that time.

- ✓ **IN MATCHES PLAYED WITH THE USE OF A GAME CLOCK**

Only two dice are in use in each game.

- **Baffle box**

- ✓ **SITUATIONS**

Backgammon matches involving the use of a baffle box may occur as an option, preference, obligation or penalty.

- ✓ *Obligation:* Players are obligated to play the match using baffle box, if it is announced in the tournament invitation that the tournament, or parts thereof, is held with an obligation to use baffle boxes.

- ✓ *Penalty:* In any tournament, the players are obligated to play the match using a baffle box, if the tournament director requests it.

- ✓ **PLACING**

If a baffle box is in use, it must be placed opposite the home boards of the players.

- **Game Clocks**

- ✓ **SITUATIONS**

Backgammon matches with the use of a game clock may occur as an option, preference, obligation or penalty.

- ✓ *Obligation:* Players are obligated to play the match using game clocks, if it is announced in the tournament invitation, that the tournament, or parts thereof, is held with an obligation for game clocks.

- ✓ *Penalty:* In any tournament, the players are obligated to play the remainder of a match in progress using a game clock, if the tournament director makes such a ruling.

- **PLACING**

If a game clock is in use, it must by default be placed on the same side as the home boards of the players. If both players agree to put it on the other side this is acceptable.

- **SETTING THE GAME CLOCK**

All matches played using game clocks must use Bronstein time. Each player is allotted 2 minutes per point of the match (match time). In addition to this, each player is allowed 12 seconds delay before the match time commences (delay time). The 12 seconds of delay time cannot be accumulated.

- **TIME CONTROL**

In a match played using game clocks, each player is allotted a certain number of minutes according to the length of the match. The number of minutes allotted is calculated as  $(RA+RB)/2$ , where RA is the number of points lacking for player A to win the match and RB is the number of points lacking for player B to win the match.

- **Preferences**

Preferences such as seating, direction of play, choice of board, checkers, dice, baffle box or game clock are determined by the throw of the dice before the start of the match if this proves to be necessary.

- **Change of Equipment**

- ✓ **IN GENERAL**

The tournament director can change the equipment being used at any time.

- ✓ **PARTICULARLY FOR GAME CLOCKS**

A game clock with obvious errors must be replaced immediately. The tournament director must set the time on the substitute game clock according to his or her best estimate.

- **Notation and Filming**

The tournament director can, on his or her own initiative, or at the request of a player, appoint a third party to record the match subject to customer consent.

- **Streaming**

The operator reserves the right to live stream and/or record any match of any activity for non-commercial purposes.

## 4. THE GAME

- **Dice and Throws**

- ✓ **RANDOM DICE**

The dice are a means to obtain random numbers ranging from 1 to 6. Any other use of the dice is a violation of the rules and the spirit of backgammon.

- ✓ **HANDLING OF THE DICE**

Touching the dice while they are on the board is prohibited.

However, a player may move his or her own dice to make room for moving the checkers after notifying the opponent of this.

- **VALID ROLLS**

- ✓ In matches played using baffle box, a valid roll consists of the dice being shaken in a cup, and then rolled out of the cup and into the baffle box not touching the player's hand. After the roll, both dice must be lying flat on the board to the right of the bar, otherwise the roll must be redone.

- **PREMATURE ACTION**

- ✓ In general. If a player rolls the dice before the opponent has finished his or her turn, the roll may only be rerolled if the opponent demands so.
  - ✓ In matches using a game clock. If player B picks up the dice before player A has ended his or her turn, player B is given a warning. If the premature action is repeated, the player is assigned a time penalty of 30 seconds. Player A makes his or her claim of the time penalty by finishing his or her turn, then stopping the game clock and presenting the fact to player B. When player B has accepted the fact, the penalty is executed by player A starting the game clock in player B's time. After the countdown of the delay time and the assigned 30 seconds of game time, player B presses the game clock, and then Player A presses the game clock. Now player B is ready to commence his or her turn. If Player A has less than 30 seconds on the clock, the clock is set to 1 second. If the premature action is repeated after the clock is set to 1 second, the match is lost.

- **END OF TURN**

- ✓ In matches played using a game clock. The player ends his or her turn by pressing the button on his or her side of the game clock. If the opponent will not be able to make a valid move or turn the cube, the player must still end his or her turn by pressing the button. The dice may not be picked up, because the opponent will have to use them. If the dice have been picked up anyway and the player has activated the opponent's time on the game clock, the game clock may be stopped and the opponent may roll the dice and move or consider doubling without the clock being started.

- **Checkers and Moves**

- ✓ **MOVES**

The players must move clearly and use only one hand to move the checkers.

Checkers on the bar must be re-entered into play before any other checker may be moved.

Players may not, in an uncontrolled manner, move their checkers back and forth across the board in order to test new positions. Players are recommended to place the checkers at least 2 centimeters above the checker/checkers that are already in the intended point or on the edge of the board if the intended point is empty.

- ✓ **HANDLING OF CHECKERS**

A player may not touch his or her own checkers or the opponent's checkers during the opponent's turn. Checkers that have been hit must remain on the bar until they can be re-entered into the game in a regular manner. Checkers borne off must be kept away from the board until the end of the game.

- ✓ **IRREGULAR MOVES**

1. If an irregular move is noticed after the opponent has finished his move (by lifting his dice back or hitting the clock), before rolling his own dice, a player have the right to ask for correction or to keep the move as it is made. In other words, the rule of "regular moves" is NOT valid in any category of the championship.
2. Undoing of irregular moves in matches played without the use of game clock. Demands for undoing are made by presenting the opponent with the fact. Once the opponent has accepted the fact, the dice must be replaced on the board showing the correct value and the move must be remade.
3. Undoing of irregular moves in matches played with a game clock. Demands for undoing are made by stopping the game clock and presenting the opponent with the fact. Once the opponent has accepted the fact, the opponent's time must be restarted on the game clock. When the delay time has run out, the opponent may make a regular move.
4. Repeated irregular moves may result in a warning. If the player continues to make irregular moves, penalty points may be awarded.

- **ERRORS IN THE STARTING POSITION**

If an error in the starting position is noticed after the player starting the game has commenced his third turn, the starting position is valid in spite of the error. Therefore a player starting with less than 15 checkers can still lose a gammon or backgammon. An error noticed before the player starting the game has commenced his second turn must be corrected in accordance with the correct starting position, if possible.

- **Game Clocks**

- ✓ **HANDLING OF THE GAME CLOCK**

Players must stop and start the game clock with the same hand used for moving the checkers.

- ✓ **STOPPING THE GAME CLOCK**

Stopping the game clock is only allowed in the following eight situations:

1. When a game has been played to the end.
2. During breaks. If one or both players are leaving the game table, both players must note down the time on the game clock on their scorecards. If the players have not noted the time on the game clock and the game clock has been activated during the break, the tournament director must be called immediately. The tournament director then sets the game clock according to his best estimate.
3. When a die falls to the floor.
4. When the tournament director is called.
5. When a player has picked up the dice before the opponent has ended his turn.
6. When a player has picked up the dice and started his opponent's time.
7. When a player demands that an irregular move or presumed irregular move is remade.
8. When player A thinks that the game is settled. If player B concurs, the players note down the result of the game and the next game can be started. If player B disagrees, the tournament director is called to settle the disagreement. If player B is right he or she is awarded 2 minutes of extra time, the game clock is restarted and the game is played to conclusion.

- ✓ **TIME HAS RUN OUT**

The time is considered to have run out when one of the players or the tournament director realizes that it has run out. If the time of one of the players has run out, the game clock is stopped and the tournament director is called. The player whose time has run out has lost the match. If the time has run out for both players and it is not possible to determine which of the players first ran out of time, the remainder of the match must be played to its end without the use of the game clock. An exception to this is the "gin" situation. If the player whose time has run out is certain to win the match, no matter what is rolled in the remainder of the game, including an already rolled regular throw, the player is still declared the winner of the match.

- **Doubling cube**

- ✓ **PLACING OF THE DOUBLING CUBE**

It is the responsibility of both players that at the start of each game the doubling cube is placed in the center between the two players with the '1' or '64' facing up. If the doubling cube has not been placed

in the center, it must be placed in the center as soon as the players notice the error. An exception to this is the Crawford game, when the doubling cube must be removed from the board entirely.

#### ✓ **DOUBLING**

The players may use the doubling cube on their turn. It must be used before any throw of the dice though, and therefore cannot be used after an invalid roll. A player doubles by turning the doubling cube and placing it on the board, so that the cube is showing the doubling level directly above the previous level and saying the words "I double" or the like. In matches played using a game clock, the player must also press the button on his or her side of the game clock, so that the opponent is considering the double on his or her own time. The doubling cube must be considered with care, since both verbal and physical acts can be interpreted as doubling, even if a player has not touched the cube.

#### ✓ **ACCEPTING/PASSING A DOUBLE**

Players accept a double by moving the doubling cube to their side of the board and saying "I take" or the like and hit the clock if used. The doubling cube must then be placed within the limits of the board, visible to both players, on the side of the player being doubled. The double is passed by saying "I pass" or the like. In matches played using a game clock, the player who is passing must also stop the game clock. After a pass the scoreboard is updated and the next game is started. The doubling cube must be considered with care, since both verbal and physical acts can be interpreted as an acceptance or pass of the double.

#### ✓ **CRAWFORD RULE**

The Crawford rule applies to all matches. In the first game in which one of the players is exactly one point away from winning the match, neither of the players can use the doubling cube. If a player doubles in the Crawford game, the double is annulled in the following situations.

1. If the game is in progress; When a double is annulled in a game in progress, the game is continued without the use of the doubling cube.
2. If the game has ended, but the next game has not yet started. When a double is annulled between games the scorecards of the players are corrected so that the point totals equal the number of points that would have been correct without the use of the doubling cube.
3. If the game in which the double was made was the last game of the match. When a double is annulled after the end of the match, the scorecards of the players are corrected so that the point totals equals the number of points that would have been correct without the use of the doubling cube and the match is resumed. The tournament director is obligated to intervene if he is informed that a Crawford game has been doubled so that the double can be annulled.

#### ✓ **PREMATURE ACTION**

If a player doubles before the end of the opponent's turn, the double stands in effect if it is otherwise valid. The opponent is then entitled to finish his turn knowing that the opponent will be doubling.

## ✓ **DOUBLES TO WRONG LEVELS**

If a player doubles or accepts/passes a double at a wrong level, the double or acceptance/pass is still valid, but the level of the doubling cube must be corrected, so that it is consistent with what would have been a correct double.

### • **Completion**

All games and matches must be played to the end, unless brought to an end by the pass of a double or a player running out of time, if the match is played using a game clock. A player with no contact can accept the loss of a single point, a gammon or backgammon, though. Except for this situation the players are not allowed to agree on the outcome of points, of a game or a match. All matches must be played to the appointed number of points. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification of one or both players. In special cases the players involved may be temporarily barred from future tournaments.

### • **Reporting of the results**

The winner must report the results of the match to the tournament director immediately after the end of the match. The tournament director verifies the result and announces it on the tournament board. If a faulty result has been announced it can be corrected as long as the correction is made within a reasonable time, and neither of the players has started a subsequent match in the tournament.

### • **Scorekeeping**

Both players must keep an ongoing record of the score of the match and announce to each other the score of the match before each game. Before the start of the Crawford game, the players must announce the fact that it is the Crawford game to each other. If the players agree to do so it is permitted to use a scoreboard that shows the length of the match, the score, the status of Crawford and such. Scoreboards must be used if the tournament director demands it. The players are still obligated to keep the score on individual scorecards when a scoreboard is in use. It is the duty of both players to double-check both score-sheets before start and after completion of each game. In case of non-resolvable dispute about the score, the score-sheet of the trailing player in the match will be valid.

## 5. DISPUTES

- **Complaints**

If a dispute arises between two players, they must leave dice, checkers, doubling cube, scorecards and other things untouched, while calling for the tournament director to settle the dispute.

- **Non-compliance with the tournament rules**

Non-compliance with the current tournament rules will put the party who failed to follow the rules at a disadvantage in the case of a dispute.

- **Testimonies**

The tournament director as well as the tournament committee is obligated to collect relevant testimonies and statements.

- **Decision**

The tournament director's decision is final.