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## 1 GENERAL

### 1.1 INTERPRETATION AND SCOPE

These tournament rules (the “**Rules**”), as approved by the U.S. Backgammon Federation (“USBGF”) and as may be amended or restated from time to time, shall apply to all tournaments affiliated with the USBGF (each a “**Tournament**” and together or generally “**Tournaments**”) and no rules other than these Rules may be used except as may be expressly promulgated by the Tournament Director in advance.

The Rules are a statement of generally accepted principles of best practice for the enjoyment of tournament backgammon in the United States of America by all participants. However, the Rules are not intended to cover every possible situation that might arise in the course of a Tournament and, in any event, should not be considered a substitute for the Tournament Director’s judgment and discretion to determine the most appropriate course of action in any particular set of circumstances that are not expressly addressed in these Rules.

Any reference to the male gender in these Rules shall be deemed a generic gender reference.

### 1.2 ETIQUETTE

#### 1.2.1 General.

The Tournament Director as defined in section 1.3.1, below, Tournament staff, and players are expected at all times to behave in the spirit of the game, to show generous sportsmanship and considerate behavior, and otherwise to comport with the USBGF Standards of Ethical Practice attached to these Rules as Appendix A.

#### 1.2.2 Handling of Equipment

Players must at all times treat the playing equipment and their fellow players in a non-abusive manner.

#### 1.2.3 Penalties

A player in breach of section 1.2, subsections 1 to 2, above, may be sanctioned in any manner considered just and appropriate by the Tournament Director including, but not limited to, disqualification and exclusion from the Tournament playing area. In exceptional circumstances, the USBGF Board of Directors may ban the player from participation in future Tournaments and/or revoke membership. A Tournament Director or Tournament staff member in breach of section 1.2.1 may additionally be suspended or banned from acting as a USBGF-approved Tournament Director.

#### 1.2.4 Report

If a Tournament Director disqualifies a player in accordance with section 1.2.3, above, and if the Tournament Director’s ruling will or may have consequences for the player beyond that immediate Tournament, then the Tournament Director shall report that disqualification and its surrounding circumstances to the USBGF Executive Director for review by the Board of Directors as soon as reasonably possible after the completion of the Tournament.

### 1.3 STAFF

#### 1.3.1 Tournament Directors

Tournaments must be supervised by one or more skilled and impartial tournament directors (each a “Tournament Director”).

#### 1.3.2 Ruling Committee

Except as provided in sections 5.1 and 6, below, a dispute ruling committee (the “Ruling Committee”) shall be formed as necessary pursuant to section 5.2, below. The Ruling Committee shall consist of either three or five knowledgeable and impartial persons who are readily available at the Tournament and shall be selected by the Tournament Director in his sole discretion. Neither a Tournament Director assigned to the Tournament nor a member of Tournament staff can be a member of a Ruling Committee formed pursuant to section 5.1 or 5.2, below.

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## 1.3.3 Monitors

The Tournament Director may, on his own initiative or at the request of a player, appoint a monitor for any match. The monitor will have responsibility to draw attention to illegal actions, including but not limited to illegal moves, and otherwise to ensure that play proceeds in a fair and respectful manner.

## 1.4 REGISTRATION

### 1.4.1 Approval

All players who enter a Tournament must be approved by the Tournament Director. A player may be excluded at the Tournament Director's sole discretion with or without explanation, and without any right of the player to appeal.

### 1.4.2 Assignment to Higher Skill Divisions

In Tournaments with more than one skill division, a player may be barred from a lower skill division and be placed in a higher skill division at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director, and without any right of the player to appeal.

## 1.5 OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

The official language for all Tournaments shall be English. While a match is in progress, players and spectators shall not be permitted to speak in any language other than English.

Notwithstanding the above, it shall not be considered a violation of this section for players on a doubles team to speak with one another in a language other than English.

## 1.6 SPECTATORS, SIGNALING, AND OTHER FORMS OF UNAUTHORIZED ASSISTANCE

### 1.6.1 Spectators

Spectators should generally observe Tournament backgammon as quietly and unobtrusively as reasonably possible. Spectators shall neither call attention to mistakes or illegal actions, nor ask questions or comment during a match except to point out if a player's game clock reserve time has expired. In cases of perceived improprieties or other errors in game clock handling, spectators should immediately and privately alert the Tournament Director or another Tournament staff member. However, spectators will not be subject to sanctions under section 1.6.3, below, simply for failing to report suspected improprieties or errors in game clock handling.

### 1.6.2 Signaling and Other Forms of Outside Help

While a match is in progress, spectators may not signal or otherwise lend assistance to the players in any way.

### 1.6.3 Penalties

Violation of section 1.6, subsections 1 or 2 may result in any sanctions that the Tournament Director considers just and appropriate including, but not limited to, disqualification of the spectator(s) involved as well as the player (if the player knowingly sought or received outside assistance to gain an advantage) and expulsion from the Tournament playing area. In exceptional circumstances, the USBGF Board of Directors may ban the involved spectator and/or players from participating in future Tournaments and/or revoke USBGF membership.

### 1.6.4 Requests

A player may at any time during a match ask one or more spectators to stop watching the match. If any spectator refuses, the Tournament Director shall have discretion to consent to the player's request, and such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.

### 1.6.5 Reports

If a Tournament Director has disqualified and/or expelled a spectator or player in accordance with section 1.6.3, above, and such disqualification will or may have consequences for the affected individual(s) beyond that immediate Tournament, then the Tournament Director shall report that action and its surrounding circumstances to the USBGF Executive Director as soon as reasonably possible after the completion of the Tournament.

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## 1.7 RECORDING AIDS AND LISTENING DEVICES

### 1.7.1 General

Except as noted in this section, while a match is in progress and including breaks, players shall not use or consult books, articles, computer software programs, mobile phone applications, or any other electronic, mechanical, or written aid relating to backgammon, other than those necessary to keep score.

### 1.7.2 Position or Match Recording

While a match is in progress and in order to record individual positions or an entire match, a player shall have the right to use position cards, a camera (in any form), a video camera, or any similar recording aids unless the player's opponent expresses a reasonable objection to the player doing so. The Tournament Director shall adjudicate all such disputes, and additionally shall have discretion to prohibit the use of such recording aids at any time. In matches played without use of a game clock, a position may be recorded only after the completion of the recording player's turn. In matches played with a game clock, a position may be recorded only during the player's own time or in between games. The players may not stop the clock for purposes of recording a position. No such recorded positions may be computer-analyzed or discussed with other players until after the match has concluded.

### 1.7.3 Headphone, Earbuds, Etc.

While a match is in progress, a player shall have the right to use headphones, earbuds, or similar noise cancellation or music listening devices unless the player's opponent expresses a reasonable objection to the player doing so. The Tournament Director shall adjudicate all such disputes, and additionally shall have the right to prohibit a player from using headphones or earbuds at any time.

### 1.7.4 Mobile Phones

While a match is in progress, a player may not use a mobile phone except for purposes of listening to music unless the opponent consents in each instance to the player using the mobile phone for another purpose. Notwithstanding such consent, the Tournament Director shall have discretion to prohibit the player from using a mobile phone at any time.

### 1.7.5 USBGF Video Recording and Streaming

By their participation in Tournaments, all players impliedly agree that the USBGF shall have the right, at its sole cost and discretion, to video-record, live stream, and/or otherwise broadcast any or all of their Tournament matches across the internet or other form of media. The USBGF's right to do so should be clearly stated in the Tournament brochure, but a failure to do so shall not impair or otherwise alter the USBGF's rights under this section.

## 2 REGULATIONS

### 2.1 PLACE

All matches must be played in the tournament area designated by the Tournament Director unless the Tournament Director consents in advance. A player may insist that a match be played in a non-smoking area.

### 2.2 STARTING TIMES AND BREAKS

#### 2.2.1 Starting Times

All matches must begin at the scheduled times or as otherwise specified by the Tournament Director.

#### 2.2.2 Breaks

Each player is entitled to the following number of five-minute breaks during the course of a match:

In matches of 9 points or less: one break

In matches of 11-13 points: two breaks

In matches of 15-19 points: three breaks

In matches longer than 19 points: four breaks

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Breaks should generally only be taken in between games but, in exceptional circumstances, may be taken during a game. Both players are required to indicate on their scoresheet both the wall clock time and any game clock times, and the player(s) requesting the break, at the start of any break. Breaks may be taken consecutively at one or both players' request provided that the players announce the intention to do so before the break begins. This may be done either by one player combining two or more of his permitted breaks or by both players combining their breaks. Any situation where 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 seven (7) points or less, breaks may only be taken in between matches.

## 2.2.3 Exceptions

The Tournament Director shall have discretion to make an exception to section 2.2, subsections 1 and 2, above, if particular concerns to one or both players warrant doing so or if the match is of special significance.

## 2.2.4 Penalties

Any breach of the rules for starting times and breaks may result in penalty points assessed by the Tournament Director. If a player is not present and has not started the match fifteen (15) minutes after the starting time or after the end of the permitted break, then one penalty point will be assessed, after which an additional penalty point will be assessed for each subsequent five-minute delay. When a player fails to appear for the start of a match and is thereafter assessed penalty points equal to more than half of the entire match length, automatic match forfeiture will result. When a player has played a portion of a match but is then assessed penalty points for failing timely to return following a break, that player shall be assessed one penalty point for each five-minute delay with no automatic match forfeiture occurring until his opponent's remaining match length has been reached. Players not involved in a match who leave the tournament area for more than 10 minutes must first post their name and contact information on a sign-out sheet or, if a sign-out sheet is not in use, obtain the permission of the Tournament Director.

## 2.3 SLOW PLAY

### 2.3.1 Penalties

At any time, if the Tournament Director considers that a match not using a game clock is being played at an unreasonably slow pace, he may order that the remainder of the match be played using a game clock, in which case delay time and each player's respective reserve time will be set based on the current match score in accordance with the provisions of section 3.5.6, below.

### 2.3.2 Requests

In the event of an opponent's slow play, either player may request that the Tournament Director order that the remainder of the match be played using a game clock. If the Tournament Director grants the player's request, the delay time and each player's respective reserve time for the remainder of the match shall be set based on current match score in accordance with the provisions of section 3.5.6, below.

## 3 PREPARATION

### 3.1 PLAYING BOARD

Subject to availability, a player may insist that the playing board, when opened, be a minimum of 44 centimeters (17.3 inches) by 55 centimeters (21.7 inches) and a maximum of 66 centimeters (26 inches) by 88 centimeters (34.6 inches). If such a regulation-sized board is only available after a match has started, a player may insist that the non-regulation sized board be replaced at that time. The board may only be replaced between games. All dice and doubling cubes not in use should be removed from the board area before the start of the match.

### 3.2 CUPS

Subject to availability, a player may insist that cups with an interior lip be used in preference to those without an interior lip. If cups with an interior lip are not available at the start of a match, a player may insist that the cups in use be replaced as soon as lipped cups become available, even if that occurs during a game. A player

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may also request the use of a baffle box at the start of a match, or other dice randomizing device that may be available and allowed by the Tournament Director, pursuant to section 3.4, below.

## **3.3 DICE**

### **3.3.1 In General**

Subject to availability, a player may insist that precision dice be used instead of other dice. For purposes of these Rules, "precision dice" are defined as dice that are manufactured as precise cubes with rounded corners, and equally weighted on all sides so as to maximize the randomness of rolls. If precision dice are not available at the start of a match, a player may insist that the dice in use be replaced as soon as precision dice become available even if that occurs during a game.

### **3.3.2 Selection and Use**

At the start of every match, the players shall select four dice for use during the match, except for situations described in section 3.3.1, above, and section 3.7.1, below. If two dice are to be shared by the players, each player will select one die from among the four. If each player will have two of their own dice, then the players shall take turns selecting the dice, one at a time. If only two of the four dice are in use during a game, the remaining two dice must still be present at the board in case either player demands to mix and re-select dice pursuant to section 4.1.3, below.

## **3.4 BAFFLE BOXES AND OTHER DICE RANDOMIZING DEVICES**

### **3.4.1 Situations**

A baffle box is a device, typically wood or plastic, through which dice are dropped from a player's cup in order to randomize a roll. The dice are deflected repeatedly and thereby randomized as they fall through the baffle box onto the playing surface. The use of a baffle box may occur as an option, preference, obligation, or imposition:

#### **3.4.1.1 Option**

At any time, two players can agree to play their match with the use of an available baffle box. The players can agree to do so even if their match has already started. Neither player may rescind their decision unless the other player likewise agrees to stop using a baffle box;

#### **3.4.1.2 Preference**

A player may insist before starting a match that the match be played using a baffle box, provided that it is announced in the Tournament brochure or webpage that the Tournament, or any part thereof, is to be held with a preference for baffle boxes. Once a match has started, a baffle box may be used only by mutual agreement of the players, or as otherwise ordered by the Tournament Director pursuant to section 2.4.1, above;

#### **3.4.1.3 Obligation**

Players must play their match using a baffle box if it is announced in the Tournament brochure or webpage that the Tournament, or any part thereof, is held with an obligation to use baffle boxes; or

#### **3.4.1.4 Imposition**

Two players must complete a match in progress using a baffle box if the Tournament Director makes such a ruling in accordance with section 2.4.1, above.

### **3.4.2 Construction and Approval**

The baffle box must be properly constructed. If a player requests that the baffle box be approved by the Tournament Director, it must be approved before the match may be started or continued.

### **3.4.3 Placement**

When a baffle box is in use, it shall be positioned off the playing surface on the opposite side of the players' home boards.

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## 3.4.4 Scope

The foregoing provisions of this section 3.4 shall likewise apply, to the extent practicable, to the use of other reliable forms of dice randomizing devices approved for Tournament play by the Tournament Director whether such devices are currently in use or are developed in the future.

## 3.5 GAME CLOCKS

### 3.5.1 Endorsement of Game Clocks and Usage on Only Two Dice

The USBGF officially endorses the mandatory use of game clocks with only two dice in play for all Open and other unlimited division Tournament events. Tournament Directors should also require players in Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and other limited division Tournament events to play with two dice only and to use game clocks, if only to signify the end of turns. If insufficient game clocks are available to signify the end of turns, then the Tournament Director should instruct players in those matches not using game clocks how to end their respective turns, typically either by tapping the bar with their right hand or the top of any baffle box or other dice-randomizing device that may be in use.

### 3.5.2 Situations

A “game clock” consists of a single device containing two adjacent clocks with buttons to stop one clock while starting the other, so that the two clocks never run simultaneously. The game clock’s purpose is to keep track of the total time each player takes for his own moves, and to ensure that neither player overly delays the game. The use of a game clock may occur as an option, preference, obligation, or imposition:

#### 3.5.2.1 Option

At any time before or during a match, two players can agree to play their match using a game clock. In that case, if the players for any reason agree not to end the match if a player’s reserve time expires (see section 4.3.3, below), the players must either reflect that agreement on their score sheets at the beginning of their match or notify the Tournament Director in advance;

#### 3.5.2.2 Preference

A player may insist that a match be played using a game clock if it is announced in the Tournament brochure or webpage that the Tournament, or part thereof, is to be held with a preference for game clocks;

#### 3.5.2.3 Obligation

Players must play their match using a game clock if it is announced in the Tournament brochure or webpage that the Tournament, or any part thereof, is held with an obligation to use game clocks;

#### 3.5.2.4 Imposition

- (a) Two players must complete a match in progress using a game clock if the Tournament Director makes such a ruling in accordance with section 2.3, above; and
- (b) The Tournament Director may at any time order that a match be played or completed using a game clock.

### 3.5.3 Construction and Approval

The game clock must be properly constructed. If a player requests that the game clock be approved by the Tournament Director, it must be approved before the match starts or resumes. Otherwise, play of the match will continue using the game clock in question subject only to a possible change of equipment pursuant to section 3.7, below.

### 3.5.4 Placement

When a game clock is in use, it shall be positioned on the same side as the players’ home boards.

### 3.5.5 Setting the Game Clock

All matches played using game clocks must use the time delay method known as ‘Simple Delay’ which operates as follows: each player is allotted a certain amount of reserve time for each point of the match (“match time”). Each player is additionally permitted a certain amount of time per move before the player’s remaining match time will start to decrease (“delay time”). The delay time cannot be accumulated. In singles

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matches, each player's starting amount of match time will be equal to two (2) minutes per point (for example, each player will receive eighteen (18) minutes of match time at the start of a 9-point match) and each player's delay time per move shall be an amount between twelve (12) and fifteen (15) seconds set at the Tournament Director's discretion, with twelve (12) seconds being the default delay time if not otherwise specified. In doubles matches and so-called "speed gammon" events, the Tournament Director has discretion to determine the appropriate amount of match time and delay time consistent with the best interests of the event and the Tournament as a whole.

## 3.5.6 Time Control

If a match already in progress is played to completion using a game clock pursuant to section 3.5.1, above, the amount of remaining match time in whole minutes will be the same for both players initially and will be equal to  $RA+RB$ , where RA is the number of points remaining for player A to win the match and RB is the number of points remaining for player B to win the match.

## 3.6 PREFERENCES

All other unresolved player disputes regarding preferences, including but not limited to seating, direction of play, choice of board, choice of checkers, choice of dice, and/or use of a baffle box or other dice randomizing device allowed by the Tournament Director shall be identified by the players before the start of any match and shall be determined by a single roll of two dice by each player. The player who rolls the highest total dice roll (doublets not counting extra) shall be given their choice as to all such identified disputes.

## 3.7 CHANGE OF EQUIPMENT

### 3.7.1 General

The Tournament Director may change the equipment used at any time. The players are only permitted to change equipment while a match is in progress (a) if the equipment is defective; (b) if the players are in mutual agreement; or (c) pursuant to the provisions of section 3.1, section 3.2, or section 3.3.1, above.

### 3.7.2 Game Clocks

Notwithstanding section 3.7.1, above, a game clock that is clearly operating improperly must be replaced immediately. The Tournament Director shall set the remaining times on the substitute game clock for each player based on all available information or, if such information does not permit individual remaining times, in accordance with the provisions of section 3.5.6, above.

## 3.8 NOTATION AND VIDEO-RECORDING

The Tournament Director may on his own initiative, or at the request of a player, appoint a third person to record a match by means of written notation, video-recording, or both. Any such decision shall not be subject to appeal.

## 4 THE GAME

### 4.1 DICE AND ROLLS

#### 4.1.1 Random Dice

Dice are to be used solely for purposes of generating uniform random numbers ranging from 1 to 6. Any other use of the dice is a violation of these Rules and the spirit of the game.

#### 4.1.2 Handling of Dice

Touching the dice while they are live is discouraged. For purposes of these Rules, the dice are considered "live" when the turn in progress has yet to be completed. When necessary, however, a player may slide his own dice across the surface of the board to make room for moving the checkers. A player must notify his opponent before doing so. Otherwise, in matches not using a game clock, the player's roll will be deemed complete if he has already made a legal move (see section 4.1.8.1, below).

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## 4.1.3 Change of Dice

A player may require that all four dice be mixed before any game of the match. In that case, the player who has made the demand should shake all four dice simultaneously in a single cup and roll them. The players will then take turns selecting dice, starting with the player who did not demand the mixing of dice. Once a change of dice has occurred, neither player may require another change of dice until that game is completed.

## 4.1.4 Valid Rolls

All rolls must be made on the right-hand side of the bar.

### 4.1.4.1 No Baffle Box

In matches played without a baffle box, a valid roll consists of the dice being shaken vigorously in a cup and then rolled simultaneously out of the cup onto the playing surface of the board. During this process, the dice shall not touch the roller's hand and the cup shall not touch the board. The dice must roll freely out of the cup at or about the same time, and come to rest on the roller's right hand side of the bar, with each die lying flat either on the playing surface (not on the bar itself) or on top of one or more checkers. A die coming to rest on top of dimpled checkers will be considered "flat" so long as its top-facing number is clearly identifiable even if the die comes to rest at an angle. In cases of uncertainty, a die has "come to rest" once it has stopped moving for at least two (2) seconds. If any of the foregoing does not occur, the roll shall be deemed invalid and retaken.

### 4.1.4.2 Using Baffle Box

In matches played using a baffle box, a valid roll consists of the dice being tossed simultaneously from a cup into the baffle box. During this process the dice should not touch the player's hand. The other requirements for a valid roll set forth in section 4.1.4.1 shall apply except that the dice must come to rest on that side of the board adjacent to the baffle box.

## 4.1.5 Penalties

In addition to other sanctions, if the Tournament Director suspects a player to be in violation of subsections (.1) or (.4.1) of section 4.1, above, he may order that the remainder of the match and/or subsequent matches involving the player(s) be completed using a baffle box or other alternative dice randomizing device. No inference of player misconduct should be drawn from the Tournament Director ordering the player(s) to do so.

## 4.1.6 Requests

If a player suspects a violation of subsections (.1) or (.4.1) of section 4.1, above, the player may request that the Tournament Director (a) order that the remainder of the match be played using a baffle box or other alternative dice randomizing device (see section 3.4, above) provided that one is available, or (b) appoint a match monitor if neither a baffle box nor any other alternative dice randomizing device is available. Subject to the Tournament Director's duty to investigate the allegation and impose sanctions if appropriate, the Tournament Director should undertake to accommodate the player's request for a baffle box regardless of whether the Tournament Director believes that a violation of these Rules has actually occurred. No inference of player misconduct should be drawn under such circumstances.

## 4.1.7 Premature Actions; Fast Roll Rule

### 4.1.7.1 Not Using Game Clock

A player may not roll until his opponent has completed his turn. If a player rolls prematurely, his opponent has the option of allowing the player's roll to stand, and may revise or complete his move based on the player's premature roll. Alternatively, his opponent may refuse to accept the player's premature roll and instead require the player to roll again once he has completed his move ("the Fast Roll Rule"). If one player repeatedly allows the other to roll prematurely and move without making any comment, warning, or objection about the infraction, then, absent reasonable justification for the prior failure to object, that player may be deemed by the Tournament Director to have waived his right to invoke the Fast Roll Rule with respect to a later challenged premature roll. The Fast Roll Rule applies in all circumstances including, for example, if the initial roller's play is forced, if the initial roller rolls a number that prevents a checker on the bar from re-entering his opponent's home board, or if both players are bearing off checkers with no possibility of contact.

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## 4.1.7.2 Using Game Clock

In matches using a game clock, an opponent may not pick up the dice before the initial roller has completed his turn and activated the opponent's time on the game clock. If this section is violated, the Tournament Director should be called for purposes of issuing a warning to the offending player. The Tournament Director should thereafter impose a reserve time penalty of thirty (30) seconds for each subsequent violation committed by the player. If the offending player has less than thirty (30) seconds of reserve time remaining, the player's reserve time should be reduced to one (1) second. If the player then commits another violation of this section, the player will be deemed to have forfeited the match based on time expiration (see section 4.3.3).

## 4.1.8 End of Turn

### 4.1.8.1 Using Game Clock

When a game clock is in use either for time-limitation purposes or solely to identify the end of each player's turn, a player ends his turn by activating his opponent's time. If his opponent can neither make a valid move nor double, the player must still end his turn by activating his opponent's time and waiting for the opponent to re-activate the player's time in order to ensure that the player receives his full delay time for each move. If a player fails to activate his opponent's time, all subsequent purported rolls and moves shall be nullified, and the affected player's lost reserve time shall be fully restored, upon detection of the clock error (because the original player never validly ended his turn by activating his opponent's clock). If a player both activates his opponent's time to end his turn and picks up the dice, the game clock shall be stopped, the dice shall be handed to the player on roll, and any reserve time lost by the player on roll shall be restored, before reactivating the time of the player on roll. For further information regarding errors in game clock management, see section 4.3.4, below.

### 4.1.8.2 Not Using Game Clock / Two Dice

When a game clock is not in use with two dice in play, a player ends his turn by tapping the bar, the top of any dice-randomizing device in use, or another mutually agreed-upon location if not otherwise instructed by the Tournament Director. If a player's opponent cannot make a valid move but has access to the doubling cube, the player should not roll again until the opponent has either doubled or tapped the agreed-upon location for ending turns in order to signify that he does not intend to double.

### 4.1.8.3 Not Using Game Clock / Four Dice

When a game clock is not in use with four dice in play, a player's turn is completed when the player picks up one or both of his dice. If a player makes a legal move and then touches his dice without announcing that he is merely repositioning them, then that also ends the player's turn (see section 4.1.2, above). To avoid confusion during repositioning of the dice, a player should hold the dice by their side faces, taking care that the top die face remains in plain view at all times.

## 4.2 CHECKERS AND MOVES

### 4.2.1 Moves

A player must move checkers clearly to a specific location, and must use only one and the same hand to move checkers until his turn is completed. Checkers on the bar must be re-entered into play before any other checker may be moved. Repeated violations of this section shall result first in a warning from the Tournament Director, and subsequently in any sanctions that the Tournament Director deems just and appropriate.

### 4.2.2 Handling of Checkers

A player should not touch either his own checkers or his opponent's checkers during his opponent's turn. If there is any dispute as to a checker's position either before or after a move, or regarding the legality of a move itself, the Tournament Director should be called. In no event should a player reposition an opponent's checkers himself. Checkers that have been hit must remain on the bar until they are able to be re-entered into the game in a legal manner. Checkers borne off must be kept away from the playing surface of the board until the end of the game.

### 4.2.3 Illegal Moves

- (a) Players are obligated to immediately point out any play made by themselves or their opponent that does not conform to the rules of backgammon. Except as noted in section 4.2.3(d), below, such

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“illegal moves” must be corrected before the offending player’s opponent has completed a valid roll for his next turn. Otherwise, the illegal move will stand and the game will continue without correction.

- (b) Only the players, the Tournament Director, or another Tournament staff member may point out an illegal move. Pursuant to section 1.6.1, spectators are required to remain silent unless asked to assist on a specific move by both players or by a Tournament official. If both players agree prior to the beginning of their match, a third-party transcriber or match monitor may point out illegal moves. Ethical play should be presumed, but players and spectators can and should privately bring suspected irregularities and other concerns to the attention of the Tournament Director or, if the Tournament Director is unavailable, a Tournament staff member.
- (c) If the Players agree on the facts concerning an illegal move detected in time for correction, then the illegal move and all subsequent game actions shall be undone. The checkers, dice, doubling cube, and match score will revert to their positions when the illegal move took place, and the player shall then make a legal play. The Tournament Director shall also have discretion to restore the players’ remaining reserve time if a game clock is in use.
- (d) Notwithstanding section 4.2.3(a), above, when an illegal play results in an impossible position that prevents game completion (such as both players’ checkers on the same point or both players having a checker on the bar against mutually closed boards), the Tournament Director shall take appropriate corrective action regardless of when the illegal play causing the impossible position is subsequently detected.
- (e) Notwithstanding section 4.2.3(a), above, when a player makes an illegal checker play that is unrelated to the dice rolled or the number of pips moved (such as, for example, moving an opponent’s checker to a location other than the bar, or a player placing his own checker on the bar, or a player bearing off a checker before all checkers have reached his home board), such improper checker movements and subsequent game actions can and must be undone at any time before the offending player validly rolls to start his next turn.
- (f) With the Tournament Director’s approval, the players may agree to allow correction of an illegal play after the time limits set forth in section 4.2.3(a) and (e) have passed. However, neither player is under any obligation to do so, and the Tournament Director should so inform them before approving any proposed agreement by them to correct the illegal play in question.
- (g) Repeated violations of this section 4.2.3 shall result first in a warning from the Tournament Director, and subsequently in any sanctions that the Tournament Director deems just and appropriate.

### 4.2.4 Errors in the Starting Position

Tournament players are presumed to be familiar with the starting position and basic rules of play for backgammon as described in several print and online publications including, for example, a webpage (<http://www.bkgm.com/rules.html>) from the website “Backgammon Galore!” attached to these Rules as Appendix B. If an error in the starting position is noticed after the player who did not start the game has completed his second turn, the starting position will be considered valid in spite of the error and the game will continue to completion. In such a circumstance, a player starting with fewer than 15 checkers may still lose a gammon or backgammon. An error in starting position noticed before the player not starting the game has completed his second turn must be corrected in accordance with the correct starting position and the dice rolls that have occurred to that point if neither players’ moves were affected by the original error. If, however, either player’s moves were affected by the original error, then the game must be replayed from the original starting position with new dice rolls.

### 4.2.5 Checker Shuffling

If a player during his turn shuffles his checkers back and forth across the board in order to test possible plays, the player shall place the checkers being moved at least 1 centimeter (1/2 inch) above checkers that are

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already on the intended point or an equal distance from the base of the intended point if the intended point is empty. If a contemplated move involves hitting an opponent's checker, the player shall place his checker on top of the hit checker(s) without placing any checker on the bar. The player shall test possible plays slowly and otherwise in a manner that minimizes difficulty for his opponent to understand what is taking place. If a player wishes to look at more than one alternative play, he shall return all checkers to their original location each time before looking at an alternative play. If a dispute arises as to the original checker location due to checker handling inconsistent with the above requirements, then, absent additional information, Tournament Director should resolve any uncertainty against the player who moved the checkers.

## 4.2.6 Settlement Agreements Prohibited

Except as provided in these Rules, all games and matches must be played to completion. Players may neither agree to end a game or match, nor alter an existing checker and cube position, based on a negotiated settlement agreement. It is also prohibited, for one player to be given his "best play" of a specific roll where said "best play" would only be determined and made after the other player's next roll and move. Any such agreements shall be considered invalid and unenforceable.

## 4.3 GAME CLOCKS

### 4.3.1 Handling of the Game Clock

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

### 4.3.2 Stopping the Game Clock

Stopping the game clock is only permitted in the following eight circumstances:

- (a) When a game ends;
- (b) During breaks. If one or both players are leaving the game table, both players must write down the times on the game clock on their scorecards. If both players fail to write down the times and the game clock has been activated during the break, the Tournament Director must be called immediately. The Tournament Director shall then re-set the times on the game clock according to his best estimate based on available information from recording devices, the players, and any witnesses;
- (c) When a die falls on the floor;
- (d) When there is a dispute, or the Tournament Director is called;
- (e) When a player has picked up the dice before the opponent has ended his turn in accordance with section 4.1.7.2, above;
- (f) When a player has picked up the dice and started his opponent's time in accordance with section 4.1.8.2, above;
- (g) When a player notifies his opponent of an alleged illegal move that has taken place in accordance with the provisions of section 4.2.3, above; and
- (h) When a player believes that the game's outcome is no longer in doubt even though additional rolls are technically needed to complete the game. If the other player disagrees, the game clock is restarted and the game is played to its conclusion.

### 4.3.3 Forfeiting Match if Reserve Time Expires

Time is deemed to have run out when one of the players, a spectator, or a member of the Tournament staff correctly announces that a player's reserve time has expired. A player whose reserve time has expired automatically forfeits the match. If both players' reserve time has expired before anyone announces the expiration of time and it is not possible to determine which of the players' time ran out first, the remainder of the match shall be played with a nominal amount of reserve time reinstated on both players' clocks to be

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determined by the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director may also impose time or penalty point sanctions against one or both players concerning their next match in the Tournament.

## **4.3.4 Errors in Clock Management**

Both players are responsible for properly setting and managing the game clock throughout their match to ensure that it is assessing time against the appropriate player and not operating during any of the circumstances listed in sections 4.1.8 or 4.3.2, above. A player is obligated to immediately announce any instance where he notices that the game clock has been set with an inaccurate amount of reserve time, or is not running against his opponent or himself when it should be. Game clocks are intended primarily to ensure that matches proceed at a suitable pace, not as opportunities for one player to take advantage of another player's faulty clock management. The Tournament Director should sanction any player who intentionally causes or fails to announce any such irregularity.

## **4.4 DOUBLING CUBE**

### **4.4.1 Initial Position of the Doubling Cube**

At the start of every game, a single doubling cube shall be positioned with the '1' or '64' facing up and centered either to the left side or right side of the board, off the playing surface. If the doubling cube has not been placed in one of those locations between the players, then it must be placed in one of those locations as soon as one or both players notice the error. During the "Crawford" game (see section 4.4.6, below), the doubling cube is removed entirely from the board area to clarify that it is not in play. No other doubling cubes should be in plain view within the playing area during a match.

### **4.4.2 Time for Doubling and Redoubling**

Either player may elect to offer an initial double of the stakes by offering his opponent the doubling cube when it is his turn and prior to rolling. A player may not offer the doubling cube after having made an invalid roll. Once a player accepts a proffered double, he takes possession of the doubling cube by placing it on his side of the board, off the playing surface, but otherwise in plain view with the upper face showing the accepted current cube value. Only the player in possession of the cube may redouble and only then when it is his turn and prior to rolling.

### **4.4.3 Offering the Cube; Gestures and Statements Binding**

A player should indicate his intention to double/redouble by placing the doubling cube on the playing surface to his right-hand side so that the cube shows the doubled value being offered (the physical act) and by simultaneously saying the words "I double" or similar language (the verbal act). Although it is best practice for a player to perform both the physical act and the verbal act when doubling, either the physical act or the verbal act alone is sufficient to constitute a valid double to which the player is bound. Any subsequent redoubles should be handled in the same manner. In each case, the cube value will be increased by a factor of two.

If a player states either that he doubles, or that he is going to double, then he must double at his first legal opportunity to do so. If a player touches the cube, or makes any other statement or gesture that reasonably implies an intention to double, then the player must double at that time. Absent accompanying evidence of intent, merely reaching for the cube, without touching it, is insufficient evidence to constitute a double. If a player wishes to move or reposition the cube without the intention of doubling, then the player must first state that he is "repositioning the cube" (or words to that effect) prior to handling the cube. In matches using a game clock, the player after doubling should immediately activate his opponent's time so that the opponent is "on the clock" while considering whether to accept or reject the offered cube.

### **4.4.4 Accepting / Rejecting the Cube; Gestures and Statements Binding**

A player should indicate his acceptance of a double by moving the doubling cube to his side of the board, off the playing surface with the new cube value showing face-up (the physical act) and saying "I take" (the verbal act). A player should indicate his rejection of a double by returning the cube to its original position (the physical act) and saying "I pass" (the verbal act). Although it is best practice for a player to perform both the physical act and verbal act when accepting or passing, either one alone is sufficient to constitute a valid take or pass to which the player is bound. Any subsequent takes or passes should be handled in the same manner. If the double is passed, the cube is returned to the standard starting position for the next game. If the player states

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his intention to drop the cube if doubled, then he will be bound by that statement if the opposing player elects to double at that player's next legal opportunity to do so (but not on subsequent turns).

If a player who is considering accepting or rejecting a double performs the physical act of accepting the cube, or makes any other statement or gesture that reasonably implies an intention to accept the cube, then the player shall be deemed to have accepted the cube. Absent accompanying evidence of intent, merely reaching for the cube, without touching it, is insufficient evidence to constitute acceptance. If the player wishes to move or reposition the cube while considering whether to accept or reject the double, then the player must first state that he is "repositioning the cube" (or words to that effect) prior to handling the cube. In matches played using a game clock, the player after accepting a double should immediately re-activate his opponent's time so that the opponent is once again "on the clock" for purposes of the game continuing. If the player passes the double, the game clock should immediately be paused until the start of the next game.

### **4.4.5 Ambiguous Cube Actions**

If there is any ambiguity in the manner in which a player offers or accepts a double, then the Tournament Director should resolve any dispute caused by that uncertainty against the player who created it.

### **4.4.6 Crawford Rule**

The so-called "Crawford Rule" shall apply to all tournament matches, meaning that the doubling cube will be out of play for the first game after either player is exactly one point away from winning the match ("the Crawford Game"). During the Crawford Game, neither player will have access to the doubling cube although gammons and backgammons will continue to count as two and three points, respectively. If the Tournament Director concludes that either player has offered or accepted a double with intent to violate its prohibited use during the Crawford Game, then the Tournament Director should sanction the offending player in the form of penalty points, match forfeiture, and/or Tournament disqualification.

#### **4.4.6.1 Erroneous Acceptance of Crawford Game Double**

If a player doubles during the Crawford game, and the other player accepts, then the double shall be declared invalid, and the score adjusted as if the cube had never been turned during the Crawford game, provided that the irregularity is detected prior to the end of the match. When a trailing player wins the match by winning the Crawford Game by virtue of some or all of the added value on the doubled cube, and provided that neither player has begun their next match, then the match will resume with the adjusted Crawford Game result logged on the players' score sheets as if the cube had never been turned.

#### **4.4.6.2 Erroneous Pass of Crawford Game Double**

If a Crawford game double is passed by the player leading in the match, then the pass will be nullified if detected at any time prior to the start of the next game. If a Crawford game double is passed by the player trailing in the match, thereby resulting in the match ending, then the pass will be nullified if detected at any time prior to either player starting their next match. In both instances, the Crawford game will resume based on the checker position and game clock reserve times that existed when the improper double was made, with any doubts resolved against the player who made the double.

### **4.4.7 Premature Cube Action**

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

### **4.4.8 Doubles to Incorrect Level**

If a player doubles to an incorrect level (*i.e.*, to a level other than twice the previous level), or if his opponent accepts or rejects a double at an incorrect level, then the cube action will be deemed valid but the cube value will be adjusted to the appropriate level and any resulting scoring error will be adjusted.

### **4.4.9 Doubling When the Cube is Dead**

A player may not offer a cube when its current value is sufficient to guarantee that he will win the match at its current value simply by winning the game. In the case of such a "dead" cube, any further cube action shall be deemed invalid and dealt with in the same manner as an improperly-turned cube during the Crawford Game

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(see section 4.4.6, above), with the prior (dead) cube value determining the number of points scored for the prevailing player.

## **4.4.10 Automatic Doubles, Beavers, and the Jacoby Rule**

Additional doubling rules that sometimes apply in the context of social backgammon play (including but not limited to “automatic doubles,” “beavers,” and the so-called “Jacoby Rule”) are not permitted in tournament backgammon and shall be declared invalid and remedied within the same allowable time limits and within the same manner as doubling during the Crawford Game (see section 4.4.6).

## **4.5 COMPLETION**

All moves, games and matches must be played to completion unless brought to an end either by the pass of a valid double, the expiration of a player’s game clock reserve time, or in non-contact positions the concession of a single game, gammon, or backgammon. A player may accept a player’s proffered concession even if possible dice rolls could result in a more favorable outcome for the conceding player. Otherwise, the players are not permitted to agree on the outcome of a move (see section 4.2.6, above), a game, or a match. Except as provided in section 4.8, below, all matches must be played to their designated match length. Furthermore, subject to the time limits set forth in sections 4.4.6, .9, and .10, above, a match may not end on a dropped cube.

## **4.6 REPORTING RESULTS**

Both players are responsible for promptly reporting the result of their match to the Tournament Director or another designated member of Tournament staff, and verifying that the correct result has been posted by the Tournament staff member on the Tournament draw sheet. If an incorrect result is posted, it may be corrected within a reasonable amount of time even if one or both players have started their next match in the Tournament provided that, in the Tournament Director’s judgment, the balance of equities for all concerned parties still favors correcting the erroneously-posted result.

## **4.7 4.7 SCOREKEEPING**

Both players are required to keep their own running, written score of the match. The players must update their individual score sheets after each game and verbally agree on the score before starting a new game. Before the start of the Crawford Game, the players should announce that fact to one another. Scoreboards may also be used in addition to written score sheets at the option of the players or at the request of the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director shall resolve all scoring disputes with the proviso that if only one player has maintained an individual score sheet, then the information on that player’s score sheet should take precedence absent uncontroverted evidence to the contrary.

## **4.8 4.8 INCORRECT MATCH LENGTH**

### **4.8.1 Designated Match Length**

Match lengths shall be designated in writing within the Tournament rules, or posted by Tournament staff on the relevant draw sheet, potentially varying between rounds. Players are responsible for verifying the correct match length from those official sources. Absent an express directive by the Tournament Director changing the designated match length based on the needs of the Tournament, the designated written match length shall take precedence over any other instructions given by Tournament staff or other players.

### **4.8.2 Player Agreements Prohibited**

Players may not intentionally agree to play to a score that is different from the designated match length. If the Tournament Director concludes that the players have done so, then the Tournament Director may impose appropriate sanctions against one or both players.

### **4.8.3 Completed Matches**

If a completed match has been played to the wrong score based on a mutual mistake of the players, then the match result shall stand regardless of whether the match was played to a longer or shorter score than was specified in the Tournament rules. In addition, if the match is concluded to the players’ agreed-upon match

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length as a result of any game in progress when the match length error is detected, then the match result shall also stand.

## 4.8.4 Correcting Longer Match Length

If the players' mistake is detected while the match is still in progress, then the match length will be changed to the correct length specified in the Tournament rules starting with the next game, *provided* that the correct match length is longer than the players' agreed-upon match length.

## 4.8.5 Correcting Shorter Match Length

If the correct match length is shorter than the players' agreed-upon match length, then the match length will be changed to the correct match length starting with the next game subject to the following conditions:

- (a) the Crawford rule set forth in section 4.4.6 shall apply if a player is one point away from the correct match length after completing any game in progress when the match score error was detected;
- (b) if one and only one player's score has reached or exceeded the correct match length upon completion of any game then in progress, then that player will be declared the match winner;
- (c) if both players' scores have reached or exceeded the correct match length upon completion of any game then in progress, then the player with the higher score will be declared the match winner; and
- (d) if the players are tied with scores equal to or exceeding the correct match length upon completion of any game then in progress, then whoever wins the next game will be declared the match winner (with the doubling cube out of play).

## 4.8.6 Adjusted Game Clock Settings.

In all instances of match length errors, before play continues the Tournament Director shall have discretion to set or adjust the players' game clock settings to best serve the needs of the tournament.

## 5 DISPUTES

### 5.1 COMPLAINTS

If a dispute arises between players, they must leave dice, checkers, doubling cube, scorecards and all other relevant items in place while waiting for the Tournament Director to arrive. If one of the players is also a Tournament Director assigned to the Tournament, then the dispute must be settled by a different Tournament Director assigned to the Tournament. If no other Tournament Director is assigned to the Tournament, then the dispute must be resolved as soon as reasonably possible by a ruling committee consisting of three USBGF members jointly selected by the players involved.

### 5.2 RIGHT TO APPEAL TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR RULING; LIMITED AUTHORITY OF RULING COMMITTEE

Except for online tournaments governed by section 6, below, an aggrieved player may appeal any ruling by the Tournament Director concerning an alleged violation of these Rules, as well as any corrective action that the Tournament Director intends to take, to a Ruling Committee formed as provided in section 1.3.2, above. The Ruling Committee shall hear the appeal as soon as possible and, if possible, before the Tournament Director has imposed any sanctions on affected players for alleged violations of these Rules.

Such appeal must be requested by the aggrieved player(s) as soon as reasonably possible. The Ruling Committee may uphold, reverse, or modify the Tournament Director's rulings. However, the Ruling Committee shall have no power to review or modify any decision that the Tournament Director may make regarding player disqualification or expulsion from the Tournament area. The decision of the Ruling Committee shall be binding on the Tournament Director.

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## 5.3 EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND ARGUMENT

Before resolving any factual dispute, both the Tournament Director and, if formed, the Ruling Committee may wish to question players and witnesses as to their recollection of relevant events, and should allow both players a reasonable opportunity to be heard. The Ruling Committee may also wish to question the Tournament Director to understand the basis for his ruling.

## 5.4 DISCRETIONARY RIGHT BUT NOT DUTY OF USBGF

An aggrieved player shall have the right to report any significant decision of the Tournament Director or the Ruling Committee to the Executive Director of the USBGF. The USBGF shall have the right but not the duty to consider the matter further, to request information from the Tournament Director, and/or to take any other action that the USBGF in its sole discretion deems just and appropriate.

## 5.5 REPORTING DUTIES OF THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

A Tournament Director should promptly notify the Executive Director of the USBGF of any rulings that will or could have significant consequences for the affected player(s) beyond the scope of the specific tournament in question.

## 6 SPECIAL RULES FOR “ONLINE” TOURNAMENTS

### 6.1 SCOPE

The following rules shall apply solely to online Tournament events organized by the USBGF, as may be supplemented by any additional regulations for online events that the USBGF may wish to promulgate for specific events. To the extent a conflict exists between other sections of these Rules or online Tournament regulations, on the one hand, and this section 6, on the other hand, the rules contained in this section shall take precedence and govern.

### 6.2 MATCH SCHEDULING

Tournament staff will notify players by email of their next opponent, the website location for their match, and the deadline for match completion. Tournament staff shall also post a match scheduling form on the USBGF website that the two players should use to communicate with one another regarding match scheduling. Both players are responsible for contacting one another to schedule their match at a mutually convenient time and date.

### 6.3 RATED SETTINGS

All online matches are to be played with rated settings on the designated website unless both players agree to play their match on unrated settings.

### 6.4 FAILURE TO APPEAR FOR A MATCH

Players are expected to arrive on time for their online match to start, and to set aside sufficient time for their match to be completed in one sitting. If an opponent fails to appear for a match, a player should immediately attempt to contact the opponent using the match scheduling form on the USBGF website and should otherwise wait a minimum of thirty (30) minutes past the agreed-upon match starting time for the opponent to arrive. The affected players should promptly inform Tournament staff via email (copied to the opponent) regarding the opponent's failure to appear.

Nonetheless, a player should never report a match win, or assume a forfeiture, based on an opponent's failure to appear or failure to complete a match. Conversely, a player failing to appear or failing to complete a match should not expect there to be no consequences for such an irregularity, especially in the case of repeated failures to appear over the course of one or more Tournaments. In all circumstances, and without waiting to receive a response from Tournament staff, both players should make every reasonable effort to reschedule and complete their match before the deadline for match completion. A pattern of repeated failures to appear for

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or complete online Tournament matches may result in a player's suspension from further participation in USBGF online events.

### **6.5 REPORTING RESULTS/PRESERVING MATCH FILES**

Both players shall record their match and shall promptly provide a copy of the match file to the USBGF upon request. The winning player shall be responsible for reporting the match result promptly by means of completing a match result form posted on the USBGF website.

### **6.6 FORFEITURE DECISION**

If two players fail to finish by the deadline for match completion, the Tournament Director shall be immediately informed by the players and shall decide which of the two players should be declared the winner and advance to the next round. A player's failure to appear for a match will be treated as one factor for the Tournament Director to consider in making that decision, as will the reasonableness of both players' subsequent attempts to reschedule their match, and any other surrounding circumstances that the Tournament Director deems relevant. Upon a player's written request, the Tournament Director will, to the extent feasible, provide an explanation for a forfeiture decision that has been made.

### **6.7 NO RIGHT OF APPEAL**

Notwithstanding the appellate procedures for live Tournament play set forth in section 5, above, all decisions of the Tournament Director in online events shall be final and binding, with no right to request reconsideration, no right to formation of a Ruling Committee, and no other right to appeal.

## **7 APPENDIX A - Standards of Ethical Practice ([usbgf.org/standards-of-ethical-practice/](http://usbgf.org/standards-of-ethical-practice/))**

Last update: 3/8/2011 The USBGF has formed a Rules and Ethics Committee dedicated to helping the backgammon community achieve the highest possible levels of fair play, good sportsmanship, and appropriate behavior.

We have two goals in seeking to maintain these higher ideals:

- 1) to assure that participation in organized backgammon play at all levels will be a fair and enjoyable experience;
- 2) to promote the game of backgammon in the most positive manner.

Members of the USBGF and tournaments, clubs, playing sites, and all events which are sanctioned or supported by the USBGF are expected to adhere to these Standards. Note that these Standards are intended to help tournament directors and players establish guidelines for play and conduct. Application and interpretation of the rules of play and conduct at individual tournaments is solely the responsibility of the tournament director and his appointed representatives.

### **Section 1. FAIR PLAY**

The overriding principle that applies to any backgammon competition is that to the best of the organizer's ability, everyone participating shall have a fair and equal chance to win any prizes, rating points, or recognition that may be offered. While organizers are free to use their judgment in many areas not specifically covered by the USBGF Rules or Standards, they are expected to demonstrate to all that providing a level playing field and ensuring fair play are the most important considerations in all decisions. Application of the rules and decisions relative to the draw, seeding, format, assignment to divisions, and awarding of prizes must all be done in the most transparent fashion possible to ensure that all may see and know the process by which these decisions are made. Special accommodations for handicapped or disabled people should be provided if possible; participants are expected to be supportive of such accommodations.

# United States Backgammon Federation Rules October 2016 (Reformatted)

Sanctioned or supported clubs, tournaments and events shall apply the USBGF Rules of Play. Any departure or deviation from the said Rules shall be clearly stated in advance prior to entry.

## Section 2. ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

The USBGF requires all members and supported programs to maintain high standards of ethics and good sportsmanship. Backgammon is a skill game open to the entire public and to people of all kinds. Inappropriate language, attire, or offensive behavior will not be tolerated.

Illegal activities are, of course, specifically banned including but not limited to such things as cheating, fraud, violence or the threat of violence, slander and libel, and general disruptive behavior.

Good sportsmanship and friendly competition are required to be maintained by all USBGF members and supported programs and events. Because backgammon is generally played without an official or referee, the players, themselves, are required to be fair and demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times. This includes calling attention to and correcting any irregularities (other than as specifically permitted by the rules), even if doing so is not in the player's self-interest.

False or misleading statements and actions specifically designed to cause rule infractions by opponents, or to mislead directors or opponents with regard to facts (including identity masking or withholding information about previous experience), are in violation of these Standards.

Tournament Directors and event organizers have a responsibility to encourage, monitor, and enforce principles of fair play and good sportsmanship and are empowered and expected to take action as necessary to maintain these principles.

## Section 3. POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

USBGF members and the organizers of supported programs and events are expected to act in a manner that promotes a positive image and atmosphere for the game of backgammon, both in the actual events and outside of the events. Players who have grievances or complaints are free to express their views in a polite, appropriate manner, bringing any questions or complaints directly and privately to the attention of the event organizer or the USBGF Rules and Ethics Committee. Public berating or harassment of tournament directors, players, or officials is not conducive to promoting a positive image for the game of backgammon or the USBGF, nor is it the best approach to influence positive change, and therefore is not in keeping with these Standards.

## Section 4. RECOURSE FOR VIOLATIONS:

Any USBGF member who believes their rights to fair play and appropriate behavior as defined above have been violated is encouraged to first discuss said issues with the tournament or event organizer to see if appropriate action or satisfaction can be achieved in that manner. USBGF members and tournament directors are also free to contact the Rules and Ethics Committee via email as shown on the USBGF Web Site and request an investigation into alleged violations of these Standards.

The Rules and Ethics Committee will use its best judgment to determine how to handle complaints.

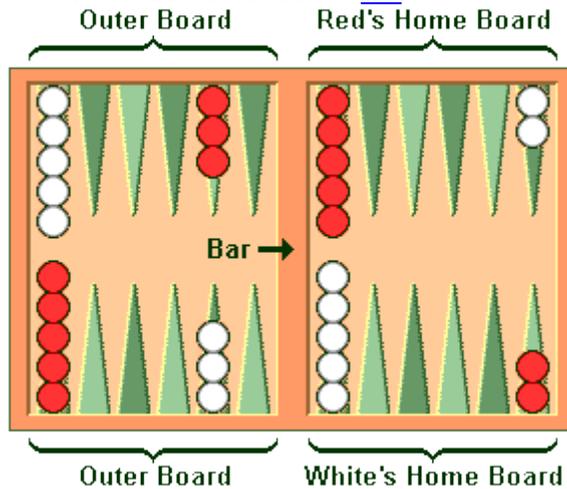
Note that in the event of a dispute, the primary goal of the Rules and Ethics Committee is NOT to punish, ban, or embarrass any individual, but to help the people involved resolve differences of opinion and misunderstandings, to help ensure that any violations of these Standards are not repeated, and to maintain the good name and image of the game of backgammon and the USBGF.

Any questions relative to these Standards may be addressed to the Rules and Ethics Committee through the USBGF web site.

## Rules of Backgammon

### Setup

Backgammon is a game for two players, played on a board consisting of twenty-four narrow triangles called [points](#). The triangles alternate in color and are grouped into four quadrants of six triangles each. The quadrants are referred to as a player's [home board](#) and outer board, and the opponent's home board and outer board. The home and outer boards are separated from each other by a ridge down the center of the board called the [bar](#).



**Figure 1.** A board with the checkers in their initial position. An alternate arrangement is the reverse of the one shown here, with the home board on the left and the outer board on the right.

The points are numbered for either player starting in that player's home board. The outermost point is the twenty-four point, which is also the opponent's one point. Each player has fifteen checkers of his own color. The initial arrangement of checkers is: two on each player's twenty-four point, five on each player's thirteen point, three on each player's eight point, and five on each player's six point.

Both players have their own pair of dice and a dice cup used for shaking. A [doubling cube](#), with the numerals 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and 64 on its faces, is used to keep track of the current stake of the game.



More pages follow at the [LINK address \(above\)](#).