

City of Venice

International Backgammon Tournament

Rules and procedures

The tournament rules and procedures cannot, and should not, regulate all possible situations that may arise during a game or a match. No set rules should deprive the tournament director of his freedom of judgment or prevent him from finding the solution dictated by fairness and compatible with the circumstances of a particular case.

Committee

The tournament director shall be assisted by a ruling committee set at the beginning of the tournament with 3 to 5 players of the Championship acknowledged for their expertise of tournament. The names of players in the ruling committee shall be displayed in the playing rooms. If one player of the committee is involved in a dispute he shall be substituted.

Languages

The official tournament languages are **English and Italian**. No speech in other language is permitted between players and spectators when a match is in progress.

Matches

All matches shall be played in official tournament rooms except by agreement or decision of the tournament director. Players must observe their seat assignment on the draw sheet. Matches of the Championship and Intermediate take precedence.

Byes

Byes of the Main will be drawn randomly. Byes of the Consolation will be drawn first among players without a bye in the Main. Byes of the Last Chance will be drawn first among players without a bye in the Main and the Consolation.

Punctuality.

It is the responsibility of each player to be punctual. He must check that the program have not been modified. Ignorance is no defense against penalty points incurred through late arrival. For any unjustified late arrival penalty points will be awarded as follows:

1 point added to opponent's score for every **5mn** of lateness, **20mn** after of the scheduled starting time. As soon as penalty points amount to more than half of the needed number of points to win the match, the missing player will be disqualified.

An hour delay could be granted by the tournament director's decision and in case of absolute necessity. After an hour, the player will be awarded of **3** penalty points for every **5mn**. If clock is in use, the waiting player is allowed to ask the tournament director to start the clock.

To prevent penalties, a player should secure tournament director's consent when leaving the playing rooms.

Breaks

In all 13 point matches or more, each player is allowed to take two breaks of **10mn** duration. For shorter matches each player has a break of **10mn** duration. The authorized breaks must be taken between games. If the duration of the pauses are not respected penalties shall be awarded.

Dressing

Proper dress at all time is required, failing which access will be refused.

Spectators

Spectators must observe complete silence while observing matches.

To draw attention to any misplays or make general comments on plays is forbidden. So any comments will be considered as null and void. In case of intervention of a spectator the offended player can request the tournament director to sanction.

If a spectator wants to address a player, he must ask the permission of the opponent. In case of agreement, he must use a language understood by both players.

The tournament director can request at any time, on his own initiative or on a player demand, without the necessity to give reasons, that a spectator leaves the table.

Any indubitable signals between player and spectator will result in the player's immediate disqualification and forfeiture of any prize. The spectator will suffer the same penalty if he plays in the same event.

Except flagrant cheating, a spectator may testify only on tournament director's request.

Preliminaries

A player can request, any time, to play with dice, cups, and a board which are approved by the tournament director.

Direction of play, choice of checkers' colors and seats shall be decided randomly at the start of the match. Once decided, direction and color shall remain the same for the whole match.

Tournament director can replace at any time defective or invalid equipment.

Either player can request to remove disturbing and unnecessary objects from the table surface.

Any recorded programs or wearing headsets are prohibited. Cellular phone must be turned off.

Any help is prohibited. It is forbidden to write anything but the score.

Score

All matches will be played to the stated number of points.

If a match is played in a number of points not valid the tournament director can penalize both players on their next round. If a match is played to a different number of points than stated the loser cannot request reparation.

Each player shall keep a running score of the match, with the match length marked at the top of the score sheet. Both players shall check their score with the opponent's score at the start of each game. Match cards of the tournaments must be used.

Failure to keep score creates presumption in favor of an opponent in case of dispute.

If both players have a missing match length, the match will be played by default to the stated match length.

If both players realize that they do not play to the number of points stated, the score sheet shall be rectified and they shall play to the stated match length.

The result of a match shall be reported to the tournament director by the loser or by the winner with the score sheet signed by the opponent. An erroneous result may be corrected in a timely manner but not after either player has begun a succeeding match.

If a player inadvertently concedes a match, even though his opponent has not reached the requisite number of points, such concession shall be deemed valid once the name of the winner is entered in the official draw sheet by the tournament director.

Irregularities

Noise, act or attitude which hinder opponent's thought and concentration is prohibited.

Player should move the checkers clearly, using only one hand. Particularly, he should avoid exceeding in tentative back and forth moves. A checker from the bar should be played before moving any other checker. A move shall be performed smoothly and unequivocally.

If legally possible both numbers on dice must be played. If only one dice or the other can be played legally, but not both, then the highest dice must be played.

A hit checker must be placed on the bar. It is insufficient simply to tap the checker or indicate by movement of the hand that a hit is intended. If a checker or checkers must be hit legally but not placed on the bar the move may be considered as illegal.

Checkers born off must be out of the board and must always be kept in full view of both players. Any checker should not be held in player's hands.

Any moves not performed properly may result in an adverse ruling in case of dispute.

Reiteration of illegal moves shall be sanctioned (after 3 times if mentioned to the Tournament directors) with time penalty or one point.

Player concludes his turn by lifting both dice. With notice to opponent, he may reposition the dice on the right board to facilitate thought and moving the checkers, but only flowing the dice on the playing surface. After lifting dice, player may change his move only upon an opponent's demand to replay an illegal move.

If a player notices a wrong starting position, he may correct it before the fourth roll of the game.

A player with 14 or 16 checkers can lose gammon and backgammon.

Players must play at a reasonable pace. A player may lodge a protestation with the tournament director, if his opponent contravene generally accepted time standards. The tournament director may on his own initiative, introduce a clock to finish a game or a match.

Settlements

Any settlement or convention between players are prohibited. No game may be replayed, canceled or settled.

Cube

Automatic double and beavers are not legal.

When it is the player's turn to throw dice, he may double against a close board with a man or more on the bar.

The Jacoby rule does not apply. (gammon and backgammon will count at all times. So, a cube turn is not necessary to win gammon or backgammon)

The Crawford rule (no cube) applies. (When a player reaches match point, the doubling cube will be out of play for one game. In subsequent games following the «Crawford game», the cube may be turned at first legal opportunity).

A centered cube shall be considered with the value of **1** point.

The cube must always be kept in full view of both players.

A player can double only when the opponent concludes his turn by lifting both his dice.

A premature double stands and the opponent can move accordingly.

A player who doubles must state clear and in audible way «I double» and place the cube with appropriate value uppermost on opponent's right board. He must wait before rolling the dice his opponent's verbal acceptance.

A player who accepts a double must state clear and in audible way «I accept» and place the cube with appropriate value uppermost on his side.

Once a player is doubled and accepts this double will be deemed valid.

A player who refuses a double must state clearly and in audible way «I refuse» and place the cube in the center of the board.

Only legal procedures shall be valid to double and to accept a double, any other shall be deemed null and void.

If a player is doubled during the Crawford game, he has the right to invalidate it if the leader realizes the violation until the end of the game. The doubling cube may be removed from the board during the Crawford game.

Dice

Only dice approved by the tournament director must be in use.

At the beginning of the match players choose a set of four dice, generally with 2 different colors.

Once a match is in progress dice may not be changed except at tournament director's decision.

The tournament director reserves the right any time to introduce new dice.

At the beginning of the match each player choose a die alternately. A random draw shall be made for the one who choose first. A player must have two dice.

Cups and dice must be kept in full view of both players.

Dice must be rolled on the right side of a player's board. In case of dispute dice on the left board will be not deemed as valid.

Cocked dice must be re-rolled. Dice are deemed cocked if they do not come to rest flat on the right board.

At any starting game a player may request a dice mixage, with the same procedure of the beginning of the match.

None or nothing must interfere the movement of dice in order to stop or control them.

Before rolling both dice must be in the cup. The cup must be shaken vigorously (not less than 3 times) just before rolling. Both dice must come out simultaneously from a discernible height, without touching hands, in order that dice roll and bounce freely on the right board.

A player concludes his move by lifting both dice. Premature roll stands. A player may complete or act with foreknowledge of the premature roll. A premature roller cannot use the cube and must play the premature dice when the opponent concludes his turn.

All violations of aforesaid rules shall be sanctioned.

Disputes

Any infringement by a player of the accepted standard of tournament behavior can result in immediate disqualification and exclusion from the tournament.

When a dispute arises the tournament director must be summoned.

In case of dispute players must leave unchanged dice, cube (the position which it lies will be deemed valid), checkers and score. Any modification by a player create presumption in opponent's favor.

The tournament director on his own initiative or at request of a player may appoint a neutral referee to observe a match. **The referee shall have full powers to protect each player against opponent's irregularities (illegal moves included).**

The tournament director reserve the right to gather together the committee to adjudicate a dispute, a claim or a protestation.

A player may appeal a director tournament's ruling. He must appeal just after the ruling. To resolve an appeal the committee shall be convene with the tournament director. The committee shall hear relevant testimony and arguments of both players involved. A ruling will be taken by majority decision.

A match may be videotaped on tournament director's decision. A player cannot refuse it, if he does he will be forfeited. If a camera is in use, it may be use in case of dispute.

CLOCK RULES

Generalities

On his own initiative or at the justified request of any participant of the tournament, the tournament director may require two players to use a clock, to play or finish a match.

The clock can be introduced at the beginning of a game or during a game in progress at the discretion of the tournament director.

The clock must be approved by the tournament director.

A player can request any time the checking of the working of clock. In case of an observed flaw the clock should be changed and reparation to the injured player might be arranged.

Time

At the beginning of a match director shall place **6 minutes per point** on each player's clock (for example in 11 point match each player will have 66 minutes). If the clock is issued in the middle of a game the average needed points will be calculated (for example if black needs 5 and white needs 4 the average will be $(5+4)/2=4,5$ and the time will be $4,5 \times 6=27$).

The clock should be set in a way that time expiration comes at **6 o'clock**.

If the tournament director notices that two players play without a clock when one is required or they play with the wrong setting of time, penalties can be awarded to both of them.

Procedures

Players share one pair of dice coming from a set of four.

At the start of a match players choose one die each.

Either player may demand a mixing of dice prior to the start of any game, according the same procedure of the beginning of the match.

A random draw can be done for the sense of play. The clock shall be placed on the side of the bear-off. For match in three sets, players may alternate the sense of play and make a draw in case they have to play 3 matches.

At the start of each game both clock buttons are centered, each player roll at the same time a die. The player rolling the lower die push the clock button nearest him/her, starting opponent's clock. Then the player rolling the higher die moves.

A player signals the end of his turn by pushing the clock. Dice should be left on the board. Then the turn passes to the opponent.

Dice cannot be touched before opponent's move completion.

If a player press the clock without playing his checkers, the move will be considered as illegal.

A player who has no legal checker moves (e.g. closed out on the bar) is not required to roll the dice but still must continue hitting the clock to signify completion of turn; if the opponent owns the cube he can go on moving without hitting the clock till the other could have a legal move.

Doubling

A player who wants to double should clearly present to the opponent the cube in the middle of the board and announce «I double» then pushes the clock.

A player who wants to accept a double should clearly take the cube on his side and announce «I take» then pushes the clock.

A player who wants to refuse a double should clearly put the cube on the center of the board and announce «I pass» then centers the buttons of the clock.

Conceding a game

A player may offer to concede a plain game, gammon or backgammon only after completing his turn and then centering both clock buttons. To accept a concession 'opponent says "accept", to reject says "reject". No player may refuse an opponent's concession for the maximum possible number of points.

Claiming a game

After completing his turn, a player may claim the game when the outcome is certain. The player claiming the game centers both buttons and says «I win the game» (or «a gammon» or «a backgammon»). If the opponent disagrees the tournament director must be called to adjudicate. If the claim is found to be an error, play continues.

Centering buttons

A player can center buttons of the clock for the following reasons :

- make a proposal of concession of the game
- to retrieve a fallen die or checker
- to contest an opponent's action. For example, after an illegal move the player has the right to validate or to demand the rectification without his/her clock running. So, he/she can center the buttons of the clock.
- To summon the tournament director
- To announce his/her intention to take an authorized break in the match. When taking a break, it is counseled to both players to write down on their score sheets their time until expiration of the match.

Penalties

When a player's time expires the tournament director shall be summoned, and the clock shall be centered.

Spectators may not inform or act in a way to draw either player's attention that a flag has dropped. If any spectator intervene a ruling committee shall take sanction.

Except whether the offending player has a certain win of the match on the position on the board, then the offending player wins the match and there is no time penalty, otherwise the tournament director add:

2 points to the score of the opponent of the player whom time has expired for the first time, 1 point for each repeat offense.

If the match is not ended with the penalty, **both players' clock are then reset for an additional 6 minutes** and the game in progress continues.

If penalty points bring a player's score to within one point of winning the match, the cube, regardless of its current location and value; shall be frozen for the duration of the game in progress. If the match is not over at the end of this game, the next game will be the «Crawford game».