

UNITED STATES BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT

RULES & PROCEDURES

March 1990

1.0 PROPRIETIES

1.1 INTERPRETATION. The Tournament Rules and Procedures cannot, and should not, regulate all possible situations that may arise during a game. No set of rules should deprive the 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.

1.2 SCOPE. Except where otherwise specified, the commonly accepted rules of backgammon apply.

1.3 STAFF. A knowledgeable and disinterested Director or Directors, advised by a Tournament Committee, shall represent the Tournament.

1.4 ENTRIES. All entries are subject to the approval of the Tournament. Reasons for exclusion need not be stated. Where more than one Tournament division exists, an entrant may be restricted from playing in a lower division.

1.5 AIDS. Once a match is in progress, neither player may use mechanical or written aids except to keep score. Player may forbid his opponent from wearing headphones.

1.6 LANGUAGE. The official Tournament language is English. Speech in any other language will not be permitted between players and/or spectators while matches are in progress.

1.7 SPECTATORS. Spectators should remain silent while observing a match. Spectators have no right to draw attention to any misplays or comment on plays. Player may request Director to bar one or more spectators from viewing his match.

2.0 REGULATIONS

2.1 PLACE. Matches shall be played in designated Tournament areas.

2.2 TIME. Matches shall start promptly at the appointed times. Each player is entitled to one 5 minute recess (between games) in a match not exceeding 13 points in length. Longer matches, or those of significant importance may be allowed additional recess time.

2.3 PENALTY POINTS. Unless excused as necessary by Director, time and recess violations shall be penalized by points awarded to opponent. The first penalty point will be awarded 15 minutes after the appointed starting time and accrue thereafter at the rate of 1 point for each 5 minute delay. When the penalty points amount to more than half of the number needed to win the match, the absent player will have then forfeited. To avoid penalties, player should secure Director's consent when leaving Tournament site for more than 10 minutes.

2.4 SLOW PLAY. Players are expected to play at a reasonable pace. Director may warn an unduly slow player, and thereafter award penalty points to his opponent if unreasonable slowness persists. A time clock may be used to monitor slow matches.

2.5 MONITORS. Director may appoint a monitor to observe a match on his own initiative, or at the request of a player. Monitor shall have full powers to protect each player against opponent's irregularities.

3.0 PRELIMINARIES

3.1 EQUIPMENT. Either player may demand that both use, when available and approved by the Director: (a) precision dice (over any others) and/or (b) lipped dice cups (over unlined).

3.2 PREFERENCES. If necessary, the backgammon board, direction of play, choice of checker color and seat location shall be decided by roll of the dice prior to the commencement of play.

3.3 EQUIPMENT CHANGES. Director may replace defective equipment at any time. Otherwise the four dice initially selected shall be used throughout. Either player may demand a mixing of dice prior to the start of any game. In this case, the demanding player shakes the four dice together in one cup and rolls them out. Opponent selects a die-then roller-then opponent-with roller taking the last die.

4.0 PLAY OF THE GAME/IRREGULARITIES

4.1 RANDOM ROLLS. Dice are strictly a means of obtaining random numbers; any other use violates the rules and the spirit of backgammon. A legal roll consists of shaking the dice vigorously in a dice cup and then simultaneously tossing them out at a discernible height above the playing surface, allowing them to bounce and roll freely.

4.2 VALID ROLLS. Both dice must come to rest flat (not cocked) on the playing surface to the right of the bar; otherwise they must be rerolled.

4.3 MOVING. Player should move clearly, using only one hand to play the checkers. Player shall reenter any checker on the bar before moving any other checker. No player should move any checkers during an opponent's turn. Deviations from proper moving procedure may result in an adverse ruling in case of dispute.

4.4 CHECKER HANDLING. Checkers which have been hit must be kept on the bar pending reentry. Checkers which have been borne off must be kept off the entire playing surface for the rest of the game. Failure to observe these procedures may result in an adverse ruling in case of dispute, or redress to an opponent harmed thereby.

4.5 LIFTING DICE. Player concludes his turn by lifting either or both of his dice. But with notice to opponent, he may reposition the dice on the playing surface to facilitate moving the checkers. After lifting his dice, player may change his move only upon an opponent's demand to replay an illegal move.

4.6 PREMATURE ACTIONS. No player may roll or turn the cube until the opponent has picked up his dice. A premature roll must be rerolled. A premature double shall stand if otherwise valid. An opponent who has yet to complete his turn may then do so with foreknowledge of the premature double.

4.7 ERROR IN SETUP. An incorrect starting position must be corrected prior to the fifth roll of the game. Thereafter the existing setup becomes official. Players starting with less than 15 checkers in play may still be gammoned or backgammoned.

4.8 ILLEGAL MOVES. Upon drawing attention to an illegal move, player may condone it or demand that opponent legally replay the entire roll. Player condones a prior illegal move by rolling his own dice or turning the cube.

4.9 COMPLETION. Games must be rolled to completion, unless ended by a pass of a double or redouble, or conceded in no-contact positions as single game, gammon or backgammon losses. No game may be cancelled and replayed, or settled. Matches must be played to the appointed length.

4.10 REPORTING RESULTS. Final score shall be reported to Tournament Official by match winner. Official shall verify and post a correct result on draw sheet. Once posted, an erroneous result may still be corrected in a timely manner, but not after either player has begun a succeeding match.

5.0 SCORING/DOUBLING

5.1 KEEPING SCORE. Each player shall keep a running match score and compare his score with opponent's at the start of every game. In the event of a scoring dispute, a player not keeping score will be at a disadvantage.

5.2 CUBE SETUP. It is the responsibility of both players to see that the doubling cube begins each game centered with the "64" side face up. In the event of a dispute, the current position and level of the cube will strongly influence Director's ruling. Exception: the cube may be removed during the Crawford game (see Rule 5.5).

5.3 CUBE RULES. Gammons and backgammons will count at all times. It is not necessary to double an opponent in order to win a gammon or backgammon.

5.4 CUBE HANDLING. Player may double when it is his turn only before rolling the dice, but not after rolling cocked dice. To double or redouble, player moves the cube toward his opponent at the higher value while saying "double" or words to that effect. To take, one draws the cube toward himself while saying "take" or words to that effect. To reject the double, one says "pass" or words to that effect, enters the score and resets the board. The cube should not be handled capriciously; either verbal or physical acts may be interpreted as cube actions.

5.5 CRAWFORD RULE. The Crawford Rule will apply to all matches. When a player reaches match point (e.g., 8 points in a 9 point match), 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.

6.0 CONTENTIONS

6.1 DISPUTES. When a dispute arises, all players must leave dice, checkers, cube and score unchanged while Director is summoned. Violations by player in this area are most serious and create a presumption in favor of opponent.

6.2 TESTIMONY. Any player may argue issues of fact or rule. Spectators, except to report cheating, may testify only at Director's request.

6.3 APPEALS. Player may appeal Director's ruling, but he must do so promptly, while timely redress may still be obtained. To resolve an appeal, Director shall convene a committee of three knowledgeable and disinterested backgammon

players at once. Committee shall hear relevant testimony and arguments, and may overturn Director's ruling by majority decision. This exhausts player's right to appeal.

