INTERNATIONAL
BACKGAMMON
FEDERATION

APPROVED
by the decision of the Presidium
of the International Association
"International Backgammon Federation"
Protocol No. _____
dated __ 2026

INTERNATIONAL BACKGAMMON FEDERATION (IBF)
GAME RULES

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Article 1. Basic Concepts and Purpose of the Game

1.1. Backgammon is an intellectual game between two players, played with checkers and 2 dice on a special board.
1.2. The objective of the game is to move all of one's own checkers from their starting position to the final position in accordance with the rules of movement (game rules) and to remove them from the playing board before one's opponent, which results in winning the game.
The conditions for achieving this objective may differ across various disciplines and are described in the corresponding sections of these Rules.
1.3. The game of backgammon can be played either in person in a playing hall or remotely using the "Internet".

Article 2. Terms and Definitions

2.1. **"Backgammon"** – the outcome of a game in which the loser has failed to bear off any checkers and, additionally, has one or more checkers remaining on the bar or in the opponent's home board (applicable only to the following disciplines: "Backgammon", "Backgammon Blitz", "Backgammon Doubles", " Sprintgammon ").
2.2. **"Crawford Rule"** – the removal of the doubling cube from a game when one of the players reaches the match point. The doubling cube is removed for only one game (a "cube-less" game).
2.3. **"Baffle-box"** – a device used for shaking and rolling the dice during the game.
2.4. **"Bar"** – a raised strip on the playing board that separates the "home board" from the "outer board".
2.5. **"Bearing Off"** – the act of moving checkers off the playing board.
2.6. **"Dice"** – six-sided cubes with equal faces and pip numbering from one to six (the sum of the numbers on opposite faces equals seven), ensuring an equiprobable outcome for each face.
2.7. **"Double"** – equal values on both dice after a roll.
2.8. **"Doubling"** – the act of potentially multiplying the number of points won in a given game.
2.9. **"Game"** – an individual contest within a match.
2.10. **"Gammon"** – the outcome of a game in which the loser has failed to bear off any checkers.
2.11. **"Head"** – the initial arrangement of checkers in Longgammon.
2.12. **"Home Board"** – the quarter of the board to which a player must bring all their checkers in order to begin bearing them off.

2.13. **"Match Point"** – the score in a match where a player is only one point away from victory.
2.14. **"Match"** – a contest within a specific competition where a player must score a number of points defined by the regulations to win. "Timed Match" – a contest within a specific competition where the goal is to score more points than the opponent within a set time limit.
2.15. **"Notation"** – the recording of game moves by players on a special scoresheet according to approved rules.
2.16. **"Outer Board"** – the quarter of the board adjacent to the home board.
2.17. **"Player Rating"** – a numerical indicator of a player's skill level, which changes based on their results in competitions. Backgammon uses the Elo and Glyko rating systems.
2.18. **"Playing Area"** – a territory that includes the playing hall, rest rooms, toilet facilities, and other locations designated by the Chief Arbiter.
2.19. **"Playing Hall"** – the venue where the competition is held.
2.20. **"Turn"** – an action consisting of rolling two dice and moving checkers according to the rolled values, or an action with the doubling cube. A turn is considered completed after pressing the clock button.

Article 3. General Description of the Backgammon Game Process

3.1. The game is played on a special board consisting of 24 narrow triangles called points. The triangles alternate in color (specific color requirements do not exist, but they must be contrasting) and are grouped into 4 sections of 6 triangles each.

The points are numbered separately for each player, starting from that player's home board. These sections are called: "home board", "outer board", "opponent's outer board", "opponent's home board".
3.2. Each player has their own set of 15 checkers, black or white in color (or other contrasting colors).
3.3. A special cup or baffle-box is used for shaking and rolling the dice. The baffle-box takes priority over the cup. When rolling the dice in the baffle-box, the hand must not enter the inner space of the baffle-box or touch it. The use of a special cup (or other devices) for rolling dice into the baffle-box is not permitted.
3.4. Players take turns making moves, moving their checkers a full circle around the board and then bearing them off the playing board.
The turn is passed to the opponent by pressing the tournament clock button. Only after the turn is passed may the opponent take the dice and make a roll.
All actions during a "turn" (rolling the dice, moving checkers, pressing the clock, handling the doubling cube) must be performed by the player with one hand.

During the game, players sit opposite each other at the playing board, unless otherwise specified by the regulations.
3.5. In case of disagreement between players regarding checker color or board side (direction of checker movement), these may be determined before the match begins by a dice roll. The right to choose is granted to the player who rolls the higher number.
3.6. The game of backgammon is played using dice provided by the competition organizers, unless otherwise specified by the competition regulations.
3.7. The competition regulations may give each player the right to replace the set of dice. To do so, the player must request the Chief Arbiter of the competition. Replacement is only permitted between games and only once per match for each player. If a player's request results in a dice replacement, the next replacement (following a request by the other player) may only be carried out after the completion of the subsequent game.
3.8. Dice may be replaced based on a justified decision by the Chief Arbiter or Deputy Chief Arbiter, which must be recorded in the match protocol. If the replacement procedure occurs during a game, the Chief Arbiter shall temporarily stop the clocks and give the command to restart the clocks after the dice have been replaced.
3.9. The Chief Arbiter must award one penalty point to a player who has replaced a die/dice during a match without requesting the Chief Arbiter, and may initiate further disciplinary actions as provided for by the Rules.
3.10. The regulations may establish breaks during a match.
In matches up to 7 or 9 points – 1 break each; in matches up to 11 or 13 points – 2 breaks each; in matches up to 15 points or more – 3 breaks per player. In matches up to 5 points or less and in matches of the disciplines "Backgammon Blitz", "Longgammon Blitz", " Sprintgammon ", breaks are not permitted. The duration of a break must not exceed 5 minutes. A break is only permitted between games of a match. If a break is not established by the Regulations, the player receives additional time added to the main time.
3.11. If a player takes a break during a match at a time not stipulated by the regulations, their opponent must summon the match arbiter. Upon the opponent's request, or upon independently detecting the violation, the arbiter shall start the clocks and issue a warning to the player. In case of a repeated violation, the player shall be forfeited.
3.12. Stopping the clocks during a match for no more than 30 seconds is permitted only in the following cases:

1) during the interval between games to set up the starting position;
2) if the dice have fallen outside the playing table;

3) in case of a disputed situation, to resolve it independently or to call the arbiter.

In the event of an incorrect roll (for example, a die lands on a checker, comes to rest on its edge or corner or gets stuck in the baffle-box), the player has the right to press the clock twice to restore the time for the move and repeat the roll. The opponent is not permitted to obstruct the restoration of time for the move.

3.13. To ensure clear recognition of the checkers' positions, it is recommended to arrange no more than 5 checkers in a single point in a row, starting from the 6th checker, they should be stacked on top of each other.

3.14. After the match ends, courteous players must arrange the checkers in the starting position.

Article 4. Specifics of the Game Process for "Longgammon" and "Longgammon Blitz"

4.1. Each player has 15 checkers of one color, which in the starting position are placed on points 12 and 24 (Figure No. 1).

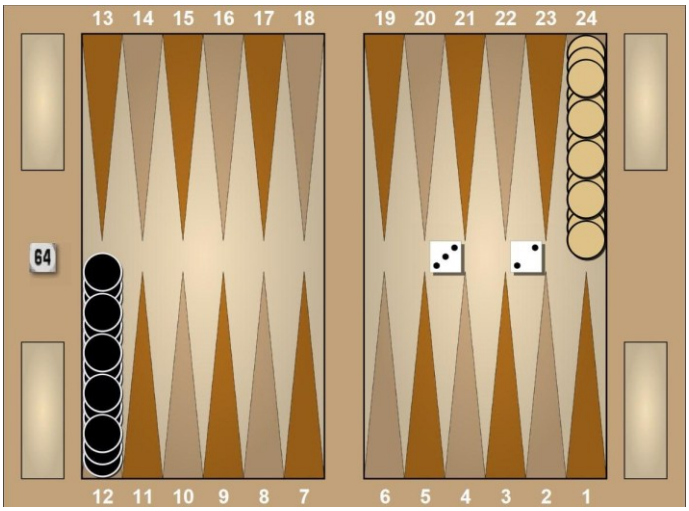

Figure No. 1. Longgammon. View of the starting position of the checkers.

4.2. The initial arrangement of checkers on the board is called the "head". A move made from this position is called a "move from the head". Only one checker can be taken from the "head" per move. An exception is the first move of the second player if they roll a double 3-3, 4-4, or 6-6. In this case, they have the right to remove two checkers from the "head".

4.3. A checker may only be placed on an open point not occupied by an opponent's checker. Any number of a player's own checkers is permitted on a single point of the playing board.
4.4. It is permitted to build blocks of 6 checkers, but blocking all 15 of the opponent's checkers is not allowed. It is also forbidden to create a temporary block through intermediate checker movements during a single turn (i.e., placing a checker on a free point and then moving it further, if this forms a block that disintegrates upon completion of the turn).
4.5. A player must move the checkers according to the numbers rolled on the two dice, meaning the full possible move must be made, even if it is disadvantageous. If a checker can only be moved using one of the rolled numbers (either the first or the second), that checker must be moved using the larger number.

Article 5. Specifics of the Game Process for "Backgammon" and "Backgammon Blitz"

5.1. Each player has 15 checkers of one color. The possible starting position of the checkers is shown in Figure No. 2.

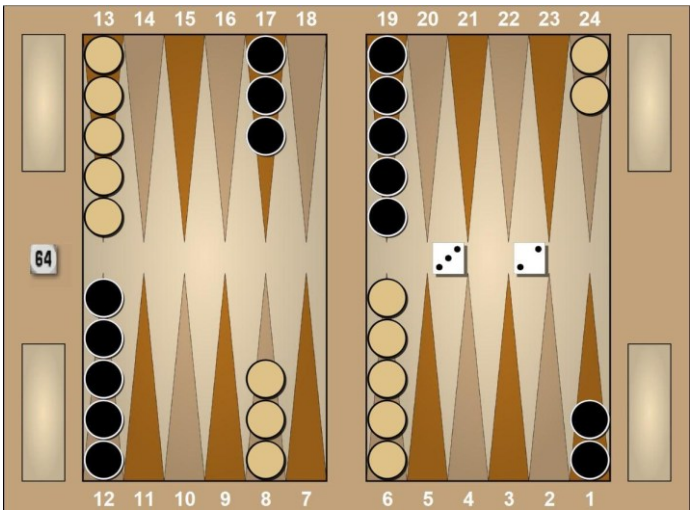

Figure No. 2. Backgammon. View of the starting position of the checkers.

5.2. The farthest point is the 24-point, which is also the 1-point for the opponent. For White, points are numbered in ascending order clockwise, and moves are made counterclockwise from the 24-point to the 1-point. Black checkers move in the opposite direction.
5.3. During a turn, a player may move a checker to an open point (i.e., not occupied by two or more opponent checkers), to a point occupied by the player's own checkers, or to a blot (i.e., a point occupied by only one opponent checker).

When a checker is moved to a blot, the opponent's checker is removed and placed on the bar (i.e., it is considered hit).
5.4. During a turn, a player must first enter all hit checkers from the «bar» into the opponent's «home board» according to the numbers rolled on the two dice. Only after this may the player move other checkers.
If the required points in the opponent's «home board» are occupied, the player with checkers on the «bar» loses the turn.
5.5. A player must move the checkers according to the numbers rolled on the two dice, meaning the full possible move must be made, even if it is disadvantageous.

Article 6. Specifics of the Game Process for "Backgammon Doubles"

6.1. The game follows the rules of "Backgammon", but with two players on each side who are permitted to consult with each other.
During an individual game, only one player in a pair is entitled to roll the dice, move the checkers, and operate the doubling cube. Between games, players within a pair may switch places.

Article 7. Specifics of the Game Process for "Sprintgammon"

7.1. Each player has 3 checkers. In the starting position, the checkers are located in the opponent's home board on the 3 farthest points of the board: 24, 23, and 22.
The starting arrangement of checkers is shown in Figure No. 3.

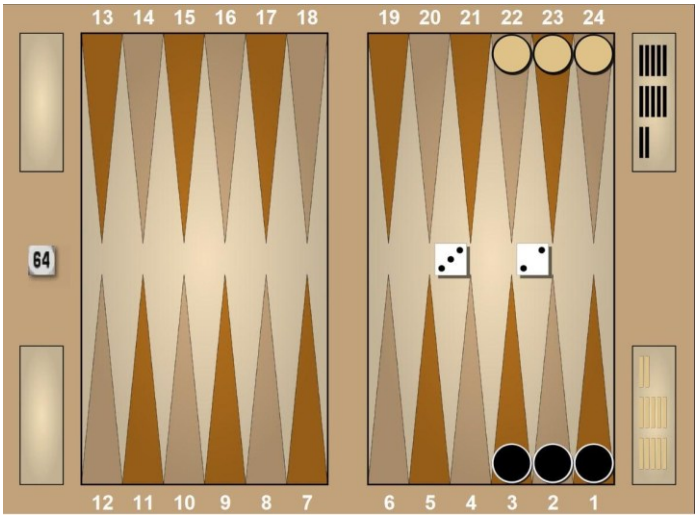

Figure No. 3. Sprintgammon. View of the starting position of the checkers.
7.2. Sprintgammon follows the same rules as Backgammon.

Article 8. Tournament Clocks

8.1. Players must complete a match within a specific time set by the competition regulations. For this purpose, tournament clocks with two dials are used. For all disciplines, before the start of each round, the Chief Arbiter determines the arrangement of checkers, clocks and other equipment.
8.2. In the disciplines "Longgammon" and "Longgammon Blitz," tournament clocks are positioned by the Chief Arbiter parallel to the board, typically on the left side of the player using the white checkers. The baffle-box is placed on the opposite side of the board.
8.3. In the disciplines "Backgammon," "Backgammon Blitz," "Backgammon Doubles," and "Sprintgammon," tournament clocks are positioned by the Chief Arbiter parallel to the board on the side where the opponents' «home boards» are located. The baffle-box is placed on the opposite side of the board.
8.4. After making a move, the player must press the opponent's clock with the same hand used to make the move. The player must not interfere with the opponent's ability to press the clock (i.e., cannot keep hands on or over the clock button). A player who has not completed their move has no right to press the clock.
8.5. No one is permitted to intervene if a player has forgotten to press the clock. Only the opponent may remind them.
8.6. If a clock malfunction and/or incorrectly set time is discovered during a match, the player must call the arbiter, who shall replace the tournament clock with a functioning one and/or adjust the time.
8.7. The expiration of the time control means defeat in the match. The opponent is awarded the winning number of match points.
8.8. The expiration of game time may be declared by the player himself or his opponent. If the arbiter sees that the time has expired, he must declare it. No one else may point out the expiration of game time.
8.9. All claims regarding clock operation must be made before the game time expires.
8.10. If players discover an incorrectly set time control during the game and interrupt play, the game may be resumed only by the arbiter's decision.
8.11. A player stopping the clock is considered to have conceded defeat, except in cases provided for by the Rules.
However, if the arbiter determines the clock was stopped accidentally, only a warning to the player shall be given.
8.12. The player who lost the game must stop the clocks.

Article 9. The Doubling Cube and Doubling Rules

9.1. The doubling cube (cube, center cube) with the numbers 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and 64 printed on its faces allows players to potentially multiply the points in a game according to the rules of cube usage.
9.2. The doubling cube is used in all backgammon disciplines.
9.3. Both players are responsible for placing the cube in the center at the beginning of each game. A cube placed in the center has a value of 1 point.
In case of a dispute, the current position and value of the cube are decisive for resolving the issue.
9.4. During a game, a player may offer the opponent to take the doubling cube, thereby multiplicatively increasing the number of points the winner of the game will receive. The player may accompany this action by saying "I double."
The first use of the doubling cube doubles the number of points: to do this, the player offers the cube with the number 2 facing up. Subsequent uses of the cube increase the number of points by 4, 8, 16, 32, and 64 times, and the cube is turned with the corresponding side facing up.
9.5. If a player picks up the cube (touches the cube), he must execute the double, meaning the player cannot put the cube back.
9.6. A double is permitted during a player's turn, but only before rolling the dice. Any action with the doubling cube is prohibited during the turn after the dice have been rolled.
9.7. If a player who is offered to double the points refuses ("drops"), the game ends, and the player who refused the double loses the game, with their opponent receiving one point (if the double was offered for the first time in the game). If the player accepts the double, the game continues, and the winner of the game receives the doubled number of points.
9.8. The player who accepts the double becomes the owner of the cube, places it on his side of the board, and only he may then increase the stake to 4.
In the same manner, players may take turns increasing the value of the doubling cube to 8, 16, 32, and 64. In this case, the player who wins the game receives a number of points multiplied by the cube's value.
There are no restrictions on the number of redoubles.
9.9. When accepting the cube, the player places it with the proposed value facing up on his side of the board in a designated area and may clarify his action by saying "take" or "accept."
9.10. Any cube that is revealed prematurely must remain on the board, and the opponent may complete his move with that cube value.

9.11. If an incorrect move has been made (but not completed) and the opponent doubles, the double remains valid, while the incorrect move may be corrected.
9.12. It is forbidden to remove the cube from the board, as the cube is an integral part of the position.
An exception is when a player first reaches match point and, according to the Crawford Rule, the cube is removed from the board for one game (a cube-less game).

Article 10. Dice Rolling Rules

10.1. The dice are used to generate random numbers.
Dice must be rolled using a baffle-box or a special cup.
10.2. Both dice must be rolled simultaneously onto the flat surface of the board or onto a flat, plain surface in a separate area.
A player must reroll the dice if one or both dice fall outside the board or the separate area, land on checkers, or do not rest flat.
10.3. A move is considered completed when the player has pressed his clock.
If the move is then found to be incomplete or illegal, the opponent may choose to accept the move as it was made or require the player to make a legal move.
A move is considered made once the opponent has rolled his dice or begun his move (including offering a double).
10.4. If a player rolls the dice before his opponent has completed his turn, the roll may be accepted or not accepted at the opponent's discretion.
10.5. After a player has picked up the dice from the board for rolling, he must execute the roll. A player who has picked up the dice during his turn may offer the doubling cube before making his roll.
The following actions are prohibited as they lead to altering the properties of the dice:
– rubbing the dice on the surface of the game board, table, clothing, or other objects;
– rolling the dice onto the board from the hand and then picking them up again;
– hiding or temporarily concealing the dice from the view of the opponent, arbiter, or video camera;
– touching the dice with any part of the body other than the hand (e.g., with two hands);
– dirtying the dice.
It is prohibited to preset the values on the faces of the dice before rolling.

Article 11. Interference with an Opponent's Roll

11.1. Players must not interfere with an opponent's roll of the dice.
Any contact with the dice, baffle-box, or special cup before the roll is completed shall be considered interference. Actions constituting interference begin from the moment both dice enter the baffle-box or special cup. In case of interference by the opponent with a dice roll, the player may make any legal move of his choice.
11.2. It is forbidden to pick up the dice from the board or to execute one's own roll before the turn has been passed. If a player lifts the dice before his opponent has completed his turn, he shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Upon the opponent's request or upon independently detecting the violation, the arbiter shall issue a warning to the player. In case of a repeated violation by the player, the opponent has the right to play any legal move of his choice.

Article 12. Movement of Checkers

12.1. Each player has the right to move only his own checkers.
12.2. The right to make the first move is determined as follows: each player rolls one die. The player using the white (lighter) checkers rolls first, followed by the player using the black (darker) checkers. The player who rolls the higher number moves first and moves his checkers according to the numbers rolled on both dice.
12.3. The player who rolls the first die must place it on the bar or on the other half of the board to prevent it from being disturbed by the second die being rolled.
12.4. The first move in each game of a match is determined anew.
Article 12. Movement of Checkers
12.5. The number on each die indicates how many points a player may move his checkers. Checkers always move in one direction only (toward his home board). The following rules apply:
12.5.1. The numbers on both dice constitute separate moves.
12.5.2. A player who rolls a double plays the rolled number four times.
12.5.3. A player must use both numbers he rolled, or all four numbers if he rolled a double. If only one number can be played, he must play that number. If each number can be played separately but not both together, the player must play the larger number. If a player cannot make a move, he passes his turn. In case a double is rolled but he cannot use all four numbers, he must play as many moves as possible.
12.5.4. A player must make each move clearly, using only one hand to pick up and move each checker.

12.5.5. A player must not move (touch) any checkers during his opponent's turn.
12.5.6. A player must not touch the backgammon board to facilitate thinking during his opponent's turn.
12.5.7. Checkers that have been borne off must remain outside the playing surface (next to the board or in a special compartment of the board for storing checkers) until the end of the game.
12.5.8. A player may slide the dice along the playing surface to facilitate making a move, provided they are not flipped over.
12.5.9. When rolling the dice, it is not permitted to lower the dice below the level of the table.
12.5.10. If at least one of the dice comes to a stop and remains inside the baffle-box for more than 3 seconds, the roll is considered invalid. The delay is counted by loudly pronouncing the words: "one hundred twenty-one, one hundred twenty-two, one hundred twenty-three". If, after the dice land on the board, one of them remains resting on its edge or corner for more than 3 seconds, the roll is considered invalid. The delay is counted in the manner described above. If a dice has stopped moving inside the baffle-box or resting on its edge or corner, and one of the players has started the three-second count, any movements that may cause the dice to vibrate are prohibited (e.g., shaking the table, blowing on the dice, stomping feet, etc.).

Article 13. Bearing Off

13.1. A player may begin bearing off his checkers once all fifteen checkers have been moved into his home board.
13.2. A player bears off checkers from points corresponding to the numbers rolled on the dice.
13.3. If there is no checker on the point corresponding to the number rolled, the player may either move a checker according to the rolled number (if possible) or bear off a checker from a point with a lower number than the one rolled, but only if there are no checkers on points with higher numbers.
If the player can make any moves, he is not obliged to bear off a checker.
13.4. In the disciplines "Backgammon," "Backgammon Blitz," "Backgammon Doubles," and " Sprintgammon," if a checker is hit during the bearing-off process, the player must bring that checker back to his home board before continuing to bear off checkers.
13.5. The player who first removes all his checkers from the board wins the game.

13.6. Checkers that have been borne off must be placed in a free area of the playing table or in a specially designated area on the backgammon board for discarded checkers.
13.7. In a disputed situation where a checker is on the board and its true status (borne off or in play) cannot be determined by the arbiter, the checker shall be considered in play upon the opponent's request.
13.8. If the arbiter has no doubt that a checker belongs to the borne-off ones, it shall not be considered in play. The player shall receive a warning for the violation.

Article 14. Incorrect Checker Setup and Illegal Moves

14.1. In the disciplines "Backgammon," "Backgammon Blitz," "Backgammon Doubles," and "Sprintgammon," if an incorrect setup or wrong number of checkers is discovered after both opponents have made 2 moves each, the game must continue.

A player with an incorrect number of checkers may lose the game by "gammon" or "backgammon." If at least one player has made fewer than 2 moves, the checkers are restored to the correct starting position.
14.2. In the disciplines "Longgammon" and "Longgammon Blitz," if an incorrect starting position with the correct number of checkers is discovered during the game, the match must continue if both players have made more than 2 moves.

If at least one player has made fewer than 2 moves, the checkers are restored to the correct starting position and the game restarts from the beginning.

If an insufficient number of checkers is discovered on the board during a game, the arbiter must add checkers to the "head," provided there is at least one checker on it. If there are no checkers left on the "head," the game continues.

If an excess number of checkers is discovered on the board during a game, the arbiter must remove the extra checkers from the "head." If there are no checkers left on the "head," the game continues.
14.3. Players receive a warning for errors in checker setup. In case of repeated violation, the arbiter may apply other sanctions provided for by the Rules.
14.4. A move is considered accepted once a player has rolled the dice or offered the doubling cube. After the game ends, no claims regarding illegal moves are accepted, and its result is considered valid.
14.5. If a player makes an illegal move, for example:

- makes an incorrect checker move,
- makes an extra move,
- moves the opponent's checker,

- removes the opponent's checkers or his own checkers without reason,

the opponent may either accept the move or demand that the error be corrected. If an Arbiter notices an illegal move, he must require the player to correct the mistake.
14.6. If the opponent has made a responding move, he forfeits the right to demand a correction.
14.7. If a player makes an illegal move and presses his clock, his opponent may press the clock back and require him to correct the error using his own main time (i.e., after the move time has expired).
14.8. Making illegal moves followed by starting the opponent's clock to gain additional thinking time is a serious violation and shall be penalized with sanctions according to the Rules.

14.9. If illegal moves or an incorrect position on the board are detected, the Arbiter may stop the match and require the error to be corrected. An illegal move (or a series of illegal moves) must be changed at the Arbiter's discretion.

If video recording of the game is available, at the Arbiter's discretion, all illegal moves not noticed by the opponents may be corrected.

Article 15. Completion of a Game and Matches

15.1. A game must be played to its conclusion unless ended by a "drop," "gammon," or "backgammon" in an unopposed position.
15.2. If a player believes that the opponent will win regardless of the dice outcome, he may resign without waiting for all checkers to be borne off.
15.3. A game cannot be canceled, replayed, or concluded by agreement (except for the aforementioned resignation in an unopposed position).
15.4. A match shall be played until a predetermined number of points, as specified in the regulations, is reached. These points are accumulated over one or more games.
15.5. If a match is played to a lower number of points than specified in the competition regulations, the match shall be resumed from the score recorded in the match protocol, taking the "Crawford Rule" into account.
15.6. If a match is played to a higher number of points than specified in the competition regulations, the points shall be recalculated based on the match protocol, taking the "Crawford Rule" into account.

15.7. If a match is played and completed in an online format with a time control different from the established one, the result shall not be revised, and complaints regarding the match result shall not be considered.

Article 16. Notation

16.1. A special scoresheet is used for recording moves in backgammon competitions.
The specific instructions for completing the scoresheet and the symbols used are provided in Appendix 1 to these Rules.

Article 17. Types of Sanctions

17.1. For any violation of the Rules, competition regulations, and/or for unsportsmanlike conduct by a player that discredits the game of backgammon, the arbiter may apply the following disciplinary sanctions:
1) warning;
2) reduction of time bank time
3) adding time to the opponent's time bank
4) penalty point deduction (deduction of one point);
5) forfeit of a game (a situation where both players may be forfeited is possible);
6) exclusion from the competition (decision made by the Chief Arbiter).
17.2. The arbiter shall select the disciplinary sanction at his discretion, depending on the nature of the violation.
17.3. For intentionally dishonest play, including deliberately losing a game, the player shall be excluded from the competition and may be disqualified.

Article 18. Use of Video Recording

18.1. During competitions, video recording of games may be conducted using technical equipment provided by the organizers.
The organizer determines which tables are subject to video recording and which are broadcast live.
18.2. At the discretion of the organizers, live broadcasts of players' games may be conducted with a delay.
The Chief Arbiter of the competition may prohibit or stop the recording of games.
18.3. To resolve a disputed situation on the board, an Arbiter may invite a technical specialist and use the video recording of the game.

At the Arbiter's discretion, a player who summoned a technical specialist without valid grounds may have his remaining time reduced by up to half.
18.4. With the agreement of the organizers, players are permitted to use their own technical equipment to record games.

Appendix No. 1

Symbols Used for Game Recording

1. Move: /
2. Hit: *
3. Win: +
4. Loss: -
5. Gammon: +2
6. Backgammon: +3
7. Doubling: x2, x4, x8, etc.

Sample Game Record (first three moves by White and Black):

Event Title and Name: _____
Date: "___" _____ 202_
Round No. _____ Game No. ___

White: Player's Full Name	Black: Player's Full Name
1) 42: 24/20 20/18	16: 24/23 23/17
2) 33: 24/21 18/15 21/18 18/15	55: 24/19 19/14 14/9 9/4
3) 44: 24/20 15/11 15/11 11/7	23: 17/15 24/21