



INTERNATIONAL
BACKGAMMON
FEDERATION

International Backgammon Federation

Pairing Rules

Article 1. Competition Systems

The following competition systems exist:

- 1.1. Round-Robin, in which each competition player (or pair) meets every other player (or pair) in one or more rounds. The order of matches for players in a round-robin system is determined by the tables "Order of Player Meetings in Round-Robin Competitions" (Appendix No. 1).
- 1.2. Round-Robin with division into subgroups.
- 1.3. Swiss System ("selective draw system"), in which a set number of rounds is established based on the number of players (pairs).
- 1.4. Swiss System with elimination from the competition after a certain number of losses (N).
- 1.5. Single-Elimination system (knockout after the first loss).
- 1.6. Double-Elimination system (with upper and lower brackets).
- 1.7. Re-entry Elimination system.
- 1.8. Mixed System, in which different competition systems are applied at different stages.
- 1.9. "Storm" System, in which players start with the same initial rating, as established by the competition rules (regulations), and the goal is to achieve the highest possible rating by the end of the competition.

Article 2. General Requirements for the Pairing Process and Determination of Match Order

- 2.1. Two players should not meet more than once for as many rounds as possible. If it is impossible to form pairings for the next round, repeated matches between players may be allowed, in accordance with the Rules.
- 2.2. The competition rules (regulations) may stipulate a forced pairing in the initial rounds, grouping of players for pairings, or a prohibition on pairing certain opponents together.

Article 3. General Requirements for Pairing and Determining the Order of Matches in the Single-Elimination System.

- 3.1. Single-Elimination system (knockout after the first loss).
 - 3.1.1. The number of players in a single-elimination bracket must be a power of two (2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and so on). If a smaller number of players is participating, the competition bracket is filled with virtual players up to the nearest power of two. A player who is paired against a virtual opponent in the first round advances to the second round and is awarded 1 point without playing.
 - 3.1.2. The pairing of players is conducted once before the first round, after which the tournament bracket for all subsequent rounds becomes fixed. The pairing may be conducted using specialized software or manually.
 - 3.1.3. The binary logarithm of the number of players determines the number of match rounds: for two players - one round, for four - two, for eight - three, for sixteen - four, and so on. The

rounds of the bracket are named according to the number of player pairs: for one pair - the "Final" (determines the champion), for two pairs - the "Semi-finals", for four pairs - the "Quarter-finals", for eight pairs - the "Round of 16", for sixteen pairs - the "Round of 32", and so on.

- 1) In each round, players are paired to compete against each other.
- 2) From each pair, the winner advances to the next round, while the loser is eliminated from the competition.
- 3) The player who wins the final round becomes the champion of the competition, and their last opponent receives second place. If the competition rules (regulations) require the determination of third place, an additional match is held between the two players who lost in the two semi-finals.

3.2. Double-Elimination System (with Upper and Lower Brackets)

The number of participants in a double-elimination pairing must be a power of two (2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and so on). If the number of players is different, the competition bracket is filled with virtual opponents until the nearest power of two is reached. A player who draws a virtual opponent in the 1st round advances to the 2nd round, receiving 1 point without playing.

3.2.1. The competition is divided into two brackets - an upper and a lower bracket (a winners' bracket and a losers' bracket). All players begin the competition in the upper bracket.

3.2.2. The pairing for players is conducted once before the 1st round of the upper bracket, after which the tournament bracket for subsequent rounds becomes fixed. The pairing may be conducted manually or using specialized software.

3.2.3. Winners of the first round advance to the second round of the upper bracket. Losers move to the lower bracket.

3.2.4. Competition in the lower bracket begins from the second round. The pairing for the second and subsequent rounds is determined by the tournament bracket.

3.2.5. Starting from the second round, matches are played simultaneously in both brackets.

- 1) A winner in the upper bracket advances to the next round within the same bracket.
- 2) A loser in the upper bracket moves to the next round in the lower bracket.
- 3) A winner in the lower bracket advances to the next round within the same bracket.
- 4) A loser in the lower bracket is eliminated from the competition.

3.2.6. Re-entry into the competition is not permitted.

3.2.7. A final round, which may also be called a "superfinal" (in which case the last matches in each bracket are called the "finals"), is held between the winners of both brackets. If the winner of the upper bracket loses in the final, an additional match between the finalists is permitted. The condition for holding an additional match is determined by the competition regulations.

3.3. Re-entry Olympic System

3.3.1. In the case of an incomplete bracket in the Olympic system, if provided for by the competition regulations, a player who has lost a match may re-enter the competition.

3.3.2. The Re-entry Olympic System differs from the Double-Elimination System in that a player re-enters the same bracket where they lost their match and fills an available slot in the round. The placement in the tournament bracket upon re-entry is determined by either a manual or computer pairing. The number of players who can re-enter the competition depends on the number of slots that need to be filled in the bracket.

3.3.3. A player who is paired to a virtual opponent in the first round as a result of the pairing does not automatically advance to the second round but instead waits for a player who will re-enter the competition.

3.3.4. The number of re-entries permitted for a single player is governed by the competition regulations.

Article 4. General Requirements for the Pairing Process and Determining Match Order in the Swiss System

4.1. A player who has already received a walkover victory (e.g., due to an opponent's no-show or late arrival) must not be granted another one.

4.2. Players eliminated from the competition must be excluded from subsequent pairings. Players known in advance to be unable to participate in the next round must be excluded from the pairing process and will be recorded as having lost that round.

4.3. A player who fails to appear for a round without a valid reason or without notifying the Chief Arbiter of the reason for their absence shall, by decision of the Chief Arbiter, be excluded from the pairing in subsequent rounds.

4.4. If an odd number of players participate in the competition, the player ranked last in the standings or determined by the pairing process receives a "plus" (bye).

4.5. The pairing must be conducted using specialized software. In the absence of a computer or software, manual pairing is permitted.

"Blind draw" or "random number" software. The software does not consider player rankings, even if players have individual ratings. A draw is conducted before the competition begins. In the first round, Player #1 plays against Player #2, Player #3 against Player #4, and so on. In subsequent rounds, pairings are determined by a draw between players having the same number of points, or if none exist, the closest number of points. The pairing process begins with the players having the highest number of points.

4.6. Pairing System Using Only Individual Player Coefficients

Before the first round, all players are ranked. Ranking may be done with or without considering ratings. Players with ratings are placed in descending order of their rating. Players with identical ratings are ranked by draw. Following them, players without ratings are placed and are also ranked by draw. The assigned ranking number from the first round remains with the player for the entire competition.

Players ranked in this manner are divided into two groups. In the first round, the first player from the top group plays against the first player from the second group, the second player from the first group plays against the second player from the second group, and so on.

Before the second round, players are divided into score groups, and within these score groups, they are arranged based on their ranking numbers from the first round. In all odd-numbered rounds, players are ranked in ascending order of their ranking numbers (i.e., the player with the lower ranking number is placed higher), while in even-numbered rounds, they are ranked in descending order.

The pairing process begins with the top score group. If the number of players in a group is odd, the last player in the group is moved down to the next score group and plays against the first player in that group. If these players have already played each other, the opponent for the player from the upper score group becomes the second player from the lower group, then the third, and so on. If the last player from the upper group has already played against all players in the lower group, the second-to-last player from the upper group is moved down to the lower group, and so on.

For a group with an even number of players, the pairing is conducted as follows. The group is divided into two equal halves. The first player from the top half plays against the first player from the bottom half. If they have already played each other, then the first player from the top half plays against the second player from the bottom half, and so on. If the first player from the top half has already played against all players in the bottom half, they must play against the last player in the top half; if they have already played, then against the second-to-last player, and so on.

Once an opponent for the first player in the score group is found, these two players are removed from the group list, and the procedure for finding an opponent is repeated in the same order for the first remaining player in the score group. If at any point it turns out that there is no opponent in the group for the first remaining player, the last formed pair is split, its players are returned to the group, and another opponent is selected for the first player. If necessary, not just one but several already formed pairs may be split, but efforts should be made to ensure the number of split pairs is minimized.

In all subsequent rounds, starting from the third round, player ranking and pair formation are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Rules.

When conducting the pairing, a match against a virtual opponent counts as a win but is not considered a victory for final placement in the competition.

The pairing is considered completed and takes effect after it has been fully conducted across all score groups without contradicting the listed principles. A re-pairing (if necessary) should affect the minimum number of players.

4.7. For manual pairing:

If a player in a Swiss-system tournament, for whom a tiebreak coefficient is calculated after the competition, receives a "plus" due to an odd number of players, then for this "plus," they are credited with the smallest number of points scored by any player in the given competition.

If an opponent turns out to be a player who has withdrawn from the competition, it is considered that in the remaining games, they would have scored a number of points equal to the average result of those players with whom they were in the same score group at the time of withdrawal.

3.8. For computer-aided pairing:

Before each round, the software generates pairs of competing players, which are generally final. Exceptions to this rule may be made if an error is identified (for example, if the result of a played match was incorrectly entered into the software). Additionally, opponent pairings may be changed (including by conducting a repeat computer-aided pairing) based on a justified decision by the Chief Arbiter of the competition or their designated substitute.

When using additional tie-break criteria to determine participant rankings in the competition, these additional criteria are calculated by the same software used for the computer-aided pairing.

4.9. A player who has incurred N losses is eliminated from the competition and is not included in the pairing for the subsequent round. The permissible number of losses is determined by the competition regulations.

The last remaining player is declared the winner.

4.10. The remaining placements are determined by the following criteria in order of priority:

- The later round in which the player was eliminated from the competition;
- The number of wins (a win against a virtual opponent does not count).

In case of tied results, the players share the respective placements.

Appendix 1

Match Schedule for Competitions Using the Round-Robin System

These tables are used to determine the match schedule for competitions conducted using the round-robin system.

First, all players in the competition are assigned numbers from one to the total number of participants by drawing lots. The corresponding table is then selected, showing which numbers are paired against each other in each round. In cases where there is an odd number of players, the highest number is considered to have a bye.

3 - 4 players

Round No.	Player Numbers	
1	1:4	2:3
2	4:3	1:2
3	2:4	3:1

5 - 6 players

Round No.	Player Numbers		
1	1:6	2:5	3:4
2	6:4	5:3	1:2
3	2:6	3:1	4:5
4	6:5	1:4	2:3
5	3:6	4:2	5:1

7 - 8 players

Round No.	Player Numbers			
1	1:8	2:7	3:6	4:5
2	8:5	6:4	7:3	1:2
3	2:8	3:1	4:7	5:6
4	8:6	7:5	1:4	2:3

9 - 10 players

Round No.	Player Numbers				
1	1:10	2:9	3:8	4:7	5:6
2	10:6	7:5	8:4	9:3	1:2
3	2:10	3:1	4:9	5:8	6:7
4	10:7	8:6	9:5	1:4	2:3

5	3:8	4:2	5:1	6:7
6	8:7	1:6	2:5	3:4
7	4:8	5:3	6:2	7:1

5	3:10	4:2	5:1	6:9	7:8
6	10:8	9:7	1:6	2:5	3:4
7	4:10	5:3	6:2	7:1	8:9
8	10:9	1:8	2:7	3:6	4:5
9	5:10	6:4	7:3	8:2	9:1

11 - 12 players

Round No.	Player Numbers					
1	1:12	2:11	3:10	4:9	5:8	6:7
2	12:7	8:6	9:5	10:4	11:3	1:2
3	2:12	3:1	4:11	5:10	6:9	7:8
4	12:8	9:7	10:6	11:5	1:4	2:3
5	3:12	4:2	5:1	6:11	7:10	8:9
6	12:9	10:8	11:7	1:6	2:5	3:4
7	4:12	5:3	6:2	7:1	8:11	9:10
8	12:10	11:9	1:8	2:7	3:6	4:5
9	5:12	6:4	7:3	8:2	9:1	10:11
10	12:11	1:10	2:9	3:8	4:7	5:6
11	6:12	7:5	8:4	9:3	10:2	11:1

13 - 14 players

Round No.	Player Numbers						
1	1:14	2:13	3:12	4:11	5:10	6:9	7:8
2	14:8	9:7	10:6	11:5	12:4	13:3	1:2
3	2:14	3:1	4:13	5:12	6:11	7:10	8:9
4	14:9	10:8	11:7	12:6	13:5	1:4	2:3
5	3:14	4:2	5:1	6:13	7:12	8:11	9:10
6	14:10	11:9	12:8	13:7	1:6	2:5	3:4
7	4:14	5:3	6:2	7:1	8:13	9:12	10:11
8	14:11	12:10	13:9	1:8	2:7	3:6	4:5
9	5:14	6:4	7:3	8:2	9:1	10:13	11:12
10	14:12	13:11	1:10	2:9	3:8	4:7	5:6
11	6:14	7:5	8:4	9:3	10:2	11:1	12:13

12	14:13	1:12	2:11	3:10	4:9	5:8	6:7
13	7:14	8:6	9:5	10:4	11:3	12:2	13:1

15 - 16 players

Round No.	Player Numbers							
1	1:16	2:15	3:14	4:13	5:12	6:11	7:10	8:9
2	16:9	10:8	11:7	12:6	13:5	14:4	15:3	1:2
3	2:16	3:1	4:15	5:14	6:13	7:12	8:11	9:10
4	16:10	11:9	12:8	13:7	14:6	15:5	1:4	2:3
5	3:16	4:2	5:1	6:15	7:14	8:13	9:12	10:11
6	16:11	12:10	13:9	14:8	15:7	1:6	2:5	3:4
7	4:16	5:3	6:2	7:1	8:15	9:14	10:13	11:12
8	16:12	13:11	14:10	15:9	1:8	2:7	3:6	4:5
9	5:16	6:4	7:3	8:2	9:1	10:15	11:14	12:13
10	16:13	14:12	15:11	1:10	2:9	3:8	4:7	5:6
11	6:16	7:5	8:4	9:3	10:2	11:1	12:15	13:14
12	16:14	15:13	1:12	2:11	3:10	4:9	5:8	6:7
13	7:16	8:6	9:5	10:4	11:3	12:2	13:1	14:15
14	16:15	1:14	2:13	3:12	4:11	5:10	6:9	7:8
15	8:16	9:7	10:6	11:5	12:4	13:3	14:2	15:1

17 - 18 players

Round No.	Player Numbers								
1	1:18	2:17	3:16	4:15	5:14	6:13	7:12	8:11	9:10
2	18:10	11:9	12:8	13:7	14:6	15:5	16:4	17:3	1:2
3	2:18	3:1	4:17	5:16	6:15	7:14	8:13	9:12	10:11
4	18:11	12:10	13:9	14:8	15:7	16:6	17:5	1:4	2:3
5	3:18	4:2	5:1	6:17	7:16	8:15	9:14	10:13	11:12
6	18:12	13:11	14:10	15:9	16:8	17:7	1:6	2:5	3:4
7	4:18	5:3	6:2	7:1	8:17	9:16	10:15	11:14	12:13
8	18:13	14:12	15:11	16:10	17:9	1:8	2:7	3:6	4:5
9	5:18	6:4	7:3	8:2	9:1	10:17	11:16	12:15	13:14
10	18:14	15:13	16:12	17:11	1:10	2:9	3:8	4:7	5:6
11	6:18	7:5	8:4	9:3	10:2	11:1	12:17	13:16	14:15
12	18:15	16:14	17:13	1:12	2:11	3:10	4:9	5:8	6:7
13	7:18	8:6	9:5	10:4	11:3	12:2	13:1	14:17	15:16

14	18:16	17:15	1:14	2:13	3:12	4:11	5:10	6:9	7:8
15	8:18	9:7	10:6	11:5	12:4	13:3	14:2	15:1	16:17
16	18:17	1:16	2:15	3:14	4:13	5:12	6:11	7:10	8:9
17	9:18	10:8	11:7	12:6	13:5	14:4	15:3	16:2	17:1

19 - 20 players

Round No.	Player Numbers									
1	1:20	2:19	3:18	4:17	5:16	6:15	7:14	8:13	9:12	10:11
2	20:11	12:10	13:9	14:8	15:7	16:6	17:5	18:4	19:3	1:2
3	2:20	3:1	4:19	5:18	6:17	7:16	8:15	9:14	10:13	11:12
4	20:12	13:11	14:10	15:9	16:8	17:7	18:6	19:5	1:4	2:3
5	3:20	4:2	5:1	6:19	7:18	8:17	9:16	10:15	11:14	12:13
6	20:13	14:12	15:11	16:10	17:9	18:8	19:7	1:6	2:5	3:4
7	4:20	5:3	6:2	7:1	8:19	9:18	10:17	11:16	12:15	13:14
8	20:14	15:13	16:12	17:11	18:10	19:9	1:8	2:7	3:6	4:5
9	5:20	6:4	7:3	8:2	9:1	10:19	11:18	12:17	13:16	14:15
10	20:15	16:14	17:13	18:12	19:11	1:10	2:9	3:8	4:7	5:6
11	6:20	7:5	8:4	9:3	10:2	11:1	12:19	13:18	14:17	15:16
12	20:16	17:15	18:14	19:13	1:12	2:11	3:10	4:9	5:8	6:7
13	7:20	8:6	9:5	10:4	11:3	12:2	13:1	14:19	15:18	16:17
14	20:17	18:16	19:15	1:14	2:13	3:12	4:11	5:10	6:9	7:8
15	8:20	9:7	10:6	11:5	12:4	13:3	14:2	15:1	16:19	17:18
16	20:18	19:17	1:16	2:15	3:14	4:13	5:12	6:11	7:10	8:9
17	9:20	10:8	11:7	12:6	13:5	14:4	15:3	16:2	17:1	18:19
18	20:19	1:18	2:17	3:16	4:15	5:14	6:13	7:12	8:11	9:10
19	10:20	11:9	12:8	13:7	14:6	15:5	16:4	17:3	18:2	19:1

21 - 22 players

Round No.	Player Numbers										
1	1:22	2:21	3:20	4:19	5:18	6:17	7:16	8:15	9:14	10:1	11:1
2	22:12	13:11	14:1	0	15:9	16:8	17:7	18:6	19:5	20:4	21:3
3	2:22	3:1	4:21	5:20	6:19	7:18	8:17	9:16	10:1	11:1	12:1
									5	4	3

4	22:13	14:12	15:1 1	16:1 0	17:9	18:8	19:7	20:6	21:5	1:4	2:3
5	3:22	4:2	5:1	6:21	7:20	8:19	9:18	10:1 7	11:1 6	12:1 5	13:1 4
6	22:14	15:13	16:1 2	17:1 1	18:1 0	19:9	20:8	21:7	1:6	2:5	3:4
7	4:22	5:3	6:2	7:1	8:21	9:20	10:1 9	11:1 8	12:1 7	13:1 6	14:1 5
8	22:15	16:14	17:1 3	18:1 2	19:1 1	20:1 0	21:9	1:8	2:7	3:6	4:5
9	5:22	6:4	7:3	8:2	9:1	10:2 1	11:2 0	12:1 9	13:1 8	14:1 7	15:1 6
10	22:16	17:15	18:1 4	19:1 3	20:1 2	21:1 1	1:10	2:9	3:8	4:7	5:6
11	6:22	7:5	8:4	9:3	10:2	11:1	12:2 1	13:2 0	14:1 9	15:1 8	16:1 7
12	22:17	18:16	19:1 5	20:1 4	21:1 3	1:12	2:11	3:10	4:9	5:8	6:7
13	7:22	8:6	9:5	10:4	11:3	12:2	13:1	14:2 1	15:2 0	16:1 9	17:1 8
14	22:18	19:17	20:1 6	21:1 5	1:14	2:13	3:12	4:11	5:10	6:9	7:8
15	8:22	9:7	10:6	11:5	12:4	13:3	14:2	15:1	16:2 1	17:2 0	18:1 9
16	22:19	20:18	21:1 7	1:16	2:15	3:14	4:13	5:12	6:11	7:10	8:9
17	9:22	10:8	11:7	12:6	13:5	14:4	15:3	16:2	17:1	18:2 1	19:2 0
18	22:20	21:19	1:18	2:17	3:16	4:15	5:14	6:13	7:12	8:11	9:10
19	10:22	11:9	12:8	13:7	14:6	15:5	16:4	17:3	18:2	19:1	20:2 1
20	22:21	1:20	2:19	3:18	4:17	5:16	6:15	7:14	8:13	9:12	10:1 1
21	11:22	12:10	13:9	14:8	15:7	16:6	17:5	18:4	19:3	20:2	21:1