



U.S. Backgammon Federation



Tournament Rules Options (Effective 1/2019)

Tournament directors have options by which they may deviate from the standard USBGF Tournament Rules (see: <http://usbgf.org/docs/rules.pdf>), provided that notice of each such rule variance to be employed is provided as follows:

- On the tournament's annual application for ABT participation filed with the USBGF;
- In the tournament brochure as well as on the tournament website;
- Announced prior to the start of play for the main event and also prior to the start of play for any major side event scheduled to begin play prior to the main event;
- A "Rule Variances" sheet is posted near the draw sheets, stating applicable options in effect. However, options specific to a single event may instead be written on that event's draw sheet (e.g. clock setting).

Due to space constraints in brochures, Directors having a tournament website may alternatively place the following statement in their brochure, referring to the correct URL on their website as an alternative to enumerating all rule variances:

"USBGF Rules variations are in effect. See details at: {tournament website URL}"

Rules for which options are available to Tournament Directors are listed below along with the alternatives that may be chosen and the language that should be used (or similar) when providing notice. If a rule is not explicitly listed below with an option, that rule must be used and enforced as written.

There are three categories for which options apply: Rules, Preferences and Parameters.

Rules state what is right and what is wrong.

Preferences are the choices or lack of choices that might be available to players for different aspects of equipment, and manner of play. The preference mode determines the way in which differences in preference between players is resolved.

Parameters are specific numbers that appear within the rules. Parameter options will indicate what alternative values or ranges of values may be used.

Rule Options

Dice Landing on Checkers

Rule: Dice that land on top of checkers are generally valid rolls.

Option 1: “No dice on checkers: A die landing on top of a checker is not a valid roll.”

Option 2: “Dice on checkers If Agreed: dice landing on checkers are valid only if both players agree.”

Legal Moves

Rule: Any illegal play must be corrected if noticed by either player.

Option: “Responsible moves: The non-offending player may choose to condone an illegal move or require its correction”.

Overtime

Rule: A player automatically loses the match when it is noticed that their reserve time has expired.

Option 1: “Overtime: A player receives 1 minute after an initial clock expiration”.

Option 2: “Overtime: A player receives 2 minutes after an initial clock expiration”.

Tournament Directors are encouraged to experiment with this variation, perhaps in combination with any considered strengthening of clock policy. As a means of protecting against unnoticed clock expirations, particularly for players who are inexperienced with clock play, a player does not lose the match upon an initial clock expiration. Instead, the Tournament Director must be called, and the affected player’s clock shall be reset to reflect the specified overtime reserve of 1 or 2 minutes. A second expiration for that player will lose the match, and the Tournament Director should warn the player accordingly. The total of reserve time plus overtime must not exceed the maximum reserve time allowed for the event type (see Parameter Options - Clock Settings below).

Preference Resolution Options

The following terms define how certain equipment preferences are resolved:

Required: use is required, no player choice;

Preferred: either player may insist on use;

By Roll: use is settled by the roll of high dice;

If Agreed: use only if both players agree;

Per Player: each player may make their own choice.

The Rules establish the standard method for resolving preference differences that will apply if no other option is selected and publicized by the Tournament Director.

The table below lists the various aspects for which a preference is applicable, the standard preference resolution method term as defined by the Rules, and the alternative method option(s) that may be adopted, if any. To exercise a preference option, please state the aspect and the method, for example: "Use two dice over four dice: Required". The relevant preference resolution method definitions may also be specified if space permits. Where a generic skill division or event type is listed, please use the name that actually applies for your event or convey the relevant option within any section of text specific to that event.

Aspect	Standard	Optional Method
Clocks – Skill #1 (Open, Masters, etc.)	Preferred	Required
Clocks – Skill #2 (Advanced, Int., Limited, etc.)	If Agreed	By Roll, Preferred, Required
Clocks – Doubles	Required	(None)
Clocks – All other	If Agreed	By Roll, Preferred, Required
Use two dice over four dice	Preferred	Required
Use untimed clock over tapping to end turn	Preferred	Required
Use baffle box over rolling from cups	If Agreed	Per Player, By Roll, Preferred
Use cups with baffle box over hands	Preferred	Per Player

Parameter Options

Start Times, Breaks and Penalties

Rule: A player shall be assessed one penalty point after causing a cumulative match delay of 10 minutes, and one additional penalty point for every 5 minutes delay thereafter. A player shall be forfeited when the total penalty points assessed exceeds half the posted match length.

In order to ensure the smooth flow of a tournament event, a Director may impose tighter restrictions on allowable delays in starting or resuming the match or due to excessive break time, the frequency at which penalties are assessed, or the penalties imposed. The Director has complete discretion to tighten these parameters, however players must always have at least 5 minutes grace time after a scheduled match start or resume time before any penalty may be assessed. A director altering the standard parameters governing penalties for match delay must clearly describe any such change.

Clock Settings

Options on clock settings should be announced by specifying the reserve time in minutes and the per-move delay time in seconds.

When specifying the reserve time as minutes per point of match length:

"{Event}: Clocks @ {Reserve}/{Delay}" - for example: "Open Main: Clocks @ 2.5/12"

When specifying the reserve time as total minutes for the entire match:

"{Event}: Clocks @ {Reserve} total/{Delay}" - for example: "Doubles: Clocks @ 18 total/18"

When specifying the reserve time as minutes per point of match length plus some additional fixed time:

"{Event}: Clocks @ {Reserve}/{Delay} + {Extra}min" - for example: "Open Main: Clocks @ 2/12+1min"

If Overtime is applicable, add "OT" – for example: "Open Main: Clocks @ 2/12+1min OT"

The table below lists the standard clock settings that apply as well as the minimum and maximum values that may be established by directors as alternative options. Note that clock settings in side events other than the major standard divisional jackpots (e.g. Masters and Limited Jackpots) are entirely at director discretion. If altering standard clock settings in Doubles, it is recommended that if the delay time is increased, that the reserve time be reduced, and vice versa. A director wishing to express reserve time as total minutes per match should round total time up or down to the nearest minute to simplify clock programming. Be aware when changing from standard settings that increasing reserve time caps the additional time that a match can consume, whereas increasing delay time does not cap the additional time that a match can consume. This is the reason for a 3/15 standard in Doubles instead of 2.5/18.

Event	Standard	Reserve time	Delay time
Clocks – Skill #1 (Open, etc.)	2/12	2 – 2.5	12
Clocks – Other Skill (Advanced, Novice, etc.)	2/15	2 - 3	12 - 15
Clocks – Doubles	3/15	2.5 – 3.5	18 - 15
Clocks – All other	Option	(any)	(any)