



U.S. Backgammon Federation



## American Backgammon Tour (ABT)

ABT Policy and Points System

Effective 4/1/2020

### OVERVIEW

The purpose of the American Backgammon Tour is to promote unified live national tournament backgammon competition in order to advance the participation, education and enjoyment of the skill-based game of backgammon for players served by the US Backgammon Federation.

The ABT point race is conducted on a calendar year basis and recognizes those players achieving the highest overall level of success on the Tour each year. ABT points are earned by players who place in a tournament by reaching a designated top position. Once earned, they can never be taken away. The ABT points system is designed to recognize a pattern of high achievement. The ABT winner will likely be an individual who has attended and placed in a good number of tournaments during the calendar year.

The ABT Points System is distinct from and complementary to the USBGF Master Points System, which also awards points for the major jackpots and USBGF National Championships and includes points for matches won rather than focusing exclusively on players achieving the top results in each event. For more information see: <http://usbgf.org/docs/USBGF-Master-Points-System.pdf>

The ABT was first organized in 1993 by Bill Davis and patterned after the American Contract Bridge League's annual master points race. The US Backgammon Federation acquired ownership and assumed governance of the ABT beginning in 2017. The USBGF Board of Directors has the exclusive responsibility to establish policy and standards governing the American Backgammon Tour.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR TOURNAMENT INCLUSION IN THE ABT

To be eligible for inclusion in the ABT, the following requirements must be met:

- A tournament must be at least two days in length (preferably three) and held in a public establishment (preferably one with sleeping accommodations).
- A main event format must be chosen such that after each player's final entry, they can contend for ABT points until they have lost at least three times.
- The number of placing positions in an ABT main event must be at least 10% of the number of unique players attending (rounded).
- An ABT main event must restrict each player to a single skill division, must not allow any player to have concurrent live entries nor allow direct buy-ins to later rounds, must draw all initial match-ups and byes randomly, and must be designed to prevent any player from placing more than once in the same event.

- ABT main events must be based on conventional head-to-head match play, and only the win or loss of matches shall be relevant to a player's advancement or final place in the event (allowing for byes, forfeits, etc.) All planned matches must have a victor (splits are prohibited), though the Tournament Director may change posted match lengths in exceptional circumstances.
- Tournament directors must be USBGF members.
- A specific backgammon club and/or director is permitted to conduct a maximum of two ABT tournaments per calendar year unless the events are in different states.
- Directors should publicly announce their ABT events a minimum of three months in advance so that this information may be posted in newsletters and online at [usbgf.org](http://usbgf.org). Directors should coordinate their likely schedule with the USBGF as far in advance as possible in order to avoid scheduling conflicts.
- An ABT event must maintain a minimum of 40 unique entries in the main event, totaled across all skill divisions. Tournaments that fail to meet this threshold shall be dropped from the ABT in the next calendar year.
- Tournament organizers wishing to add a new tournament to the ABT must submit an application to the Executive Director of the USBGF. Approval shall be subject to a vetting process to establish confidence that the proposed tournament will be well run and meet ABT standards.

## USBGF TOURNAMENT RULES

All tournaments participating in the ABT are required to use the USBGF Tournament Rules.

The USBGF Tournament Rules, as initially ratified in 2017 by referendum of the USBGF membership, and as may be amended or restated from time to time, shall apply to the ABT and all tournaments affiliated with the USBGF. No rules other than these Rules may be used except as may be expressly promulgated by the Tournament Director in advance, in accordance with the USBGF Tournament Rules Options.

Tournament Rules: <http://usbgf.org/docs/rules.pdf>

Tournament Rules Options: <http://usbgf.org/docs/rules-options.pdf>

Standards of Ethical Practice: <http://usbgf.org/standards-of-ethical-practice>

As a companion document to the Tournament Rules, directors and players are encouraged to consult the Ruling Guide, which provides guidance related to these Rules, as well as to the general rules of the game of backgammon, provides additional detail, clarifies intent for the Rules and advises how the Rules should be applied in various situations.

Ruling Guide: <http://usbgf.org/docs/ruling-guide.pdf>

## DUE PROCESS

### Reporting Duties of the Tournament Director

A Tournament Director should promptly notify the Executive Director of the USBGF of any rulings, along with details of the surrounding circumstances, that will or could have significant consequences for the affected player(s) beyond the scope of the specific tournament in question.

### Discretionary Right but Not Duty of USBGF

An aggrieved player shall have the right to report any significant decision of the Tournament Director or the Ruling Committee to the Executive Director of the USBGF. The USBGF shall have the right but not the duty to consider the matter further, to request information from the Tournament Director, and/or to take any other action that the USBGF in its sole discretion deems just and appropriate.

In exceptional circumstances, in response to particularly serious violations, the USBGF Board of Directors may impose sanctions on a player or spectator from participation in future Tournaments and/or revoke membership.

A Tournament Director or Tournament staff member in breach of the Standards of Ethical Practice, or who is unable or unwilling to meet the standards for inclusion on the ABT as defined herein may be suspended or banned from acting as a USBGF-approved Tournament Director.

## WHICH TOURNAMENT EVENTS AWARD ABT POINTS?

ABT points are awarded only for the main event in a qualifying tournament. Tournament side events (Masters, Jackpots, Knockouts, Blitz, Doubles, etc.) are not included.

## HANDLING 3-WAY TIES

Some tournament formats may play down to a 3-way tie. That tie must be broken to determine a tournament winner, as well as second and third places. A round-robin playoff is undesirable because it requires 4 matches on average. A standard elimination playoff is undesirable because the late bye awards a very large equity bump to one player at the expense of the others.

The following “contingent bye” playoff format requires only two matches, but drastically reduces the equity swing produced by the late random draw to a level of only 1.3% for the ~5:3:2 payouts typical of Swiss, or 2.4% for the 4:2:1 payouts typical of Elimination.

All 3-way ties that occur at ABT tournaments must be resolved using the following playoff format:

- Label the three tied players A, B, C.
- A contingent bye is awarded to one player randomly chosen from among those who received the fewest byes previously in the event. Suppose A is chosen.
- B plays C. Suppose B wins.
- B plays A.
- If A wins, then A has earned the bye. Player A places first; B places second and C places third.
- However, if A loses, then the bye is given to player C instead of player A. The A vs. B match is recorded as the semi-final, and the B vs. C match is recorded as the final. B places first; C places second and A places third.
- In summary, the player getting the bye is awarded first place when winning, but only third place instead of the usual second place when losing. This compensates the non-bye players because the loser amongst them finishes in second place instead of the usual third place.
- Prizes are made fully equitable under this format by awarding them to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places in ratios 3:2:1 respectively (any allocation in which 2<sup>nd</sup> place receives exactly 1/3 is fully equitable).

## HOW ARE THE ABT POINTS CALCULATED?

Only players who place in an ABT event receive ABT points. To place, a player must achieve a position or rank in the event specifically designated for recognition by the director. Players entering ABT main events are generally segregated into skill divisions, with each division having an independent competition. ABT points are awarded independently for each such skill division within the main event.

If the USBGF Ratings and Stats Committee considers the ABT point quantity or distribution awarded for any ABT tournament to be inappropriately skewed compared to other ABT tournaments based on unusual features of that event, then the Committee may recommend a modification to the ABT points formula to be applied retroactively. Alternatively, the Committee may recommend a one-time adjustment to the quantity or distribution of points for that specific event (including the number of

positions awarded points). The USBGF Board of Directors shall have final authority regarding any such variance from the designated formulas set forth below.

In case of a dispute on how to award ABT points for a particular event, the USBGF Ratings and Stats Committee will review the facts and make the final interpretation on how the points are to be distributed in accordance with established ABT policy.

#### Skill Division Factor (DV)

For purposes of calculating ABT points, Skill Divisional Factors shall be assigned as follows:

- a) Highest Division: (Championship, Open, Championship/Open Overflow, or A Division) DV = 1
- b) Second Division: (Advanced, Intermediate or B Division) DV = 0.50
- c) All remaining Lower Divisions: (Limited, Beginner, Novice and/or C Division) DV = 0.25

#### Attendance Factor

The number of unique players in attendance in a particular skill division is the only variable factor that determines the total number of ABT points to be awarded for a particular event. Reentries into a sanctioned ABT division are not included when determining the divisional attendance factor. To protect against one large tournament dominating the ABT points race, the total number of players in any division for points calculation purposes shall be capped at a maximum of 96.

Attendance Factor = Smaller of (Number of unique players entered into this skill division, 96)

#### Total ABT Points Per Divisional Event

The total number of points to be awarded for an entire ABT skill division is the product of the attendance and the skill division factor:

**Total Points = Attendance Factor \* Skill Division Factor**

#### Flight Factor (FL)

Typical ABT events contain multiple flights of play, wherein a player who is eliminated from play in a higher flight may continue to compete in order to win or place in a lower flight. The Flight Factor is determined by the distance from the Main flight in an event, with each lower flight having a flight factor that is half that of the preceding flight. For example:

- a) Main Flight: FL = 1
- b) Consolation Flight: FL = 0.5
- c) Last Chance Flight: FL = 0.25

#### Standardized Flight Shares (FS)

Standardized flight shares are awarded to all players who place in any flight and reflect the share of points awarded to a particular place within the flight relative to all other places in that flight. The method for assigning standardized flight shares depends upon the competition format used to rank the subset of players designated to place in that flight. There are two methods: one used for a conventional elimination bracket format, and the other used for all other formats.

### *Elimination Bracket Format In Events Having At Least Two Flights*

With an elimination bracket format, a 1st place win is always worth exactly double that of a 2nd place win. A 2nd place win is worth exactly double that of a semifinal finish, and so on for lower-ranking positions. Standardized flight shares are awarded to players placing within a flight as follows:

- a) Winner: FS = 32
- b) Finalist: FS = 16
- c) Semi-finalist: FS = 8
- d) For each subsequent round: FS = FS(previous round) / 2.

### *Other Formats (non-elimination) , and Elimination Formats Having Exactly One Flight*

The placing players within a flight may be ranked by means of a competition format other than a conventional elimination bracket, such as Swiss and Round Robin formats. In such flights, or for any event that has exactly one flight, the players ranked 1 through 8 (to the extent applicable) shall be awarded standardized flight shares as follows:

FS = 32, 20, 13, 9, 7, 6, 5, 4

If more than eight places are ranked in the flight, their shares shall be calculated as  $32/N$  where N is the place number. Thus, the ninth place would be  $32/9$ , the tenth place would be  $32/10$ , etc.

If the final ranking within a flight results in a tie among two or more players, the standardized flight shares for the tied places are added together and then divided by the number of players tied (the average FS). For example, with a three-way tie for second through fourth place, each tying player's FS factor would be  $(20+13+9)/3 = 14$ .

### *Point Shares*

Each player placing in an event receives a standardized share of the ABT points to be awarded.

**Point Shares = Standardized Flight Shares \* Flight Factor**

### *ABT Points Awarded*

The number of ABT points awarded to each player that places in the tournament is a percentage of the fixed number of points to be awarded in the event. That percentage is calculated by considering the proportion of point shares earned by that player relative to the total number of point shares earned by all players. The number of points awarded to each placing player in an event shall be as follows:

**ABT Points = Total Points \* Point Shares / Total Point Shares**