



## Summary of Changes from Public Comment – Proposed USBGF Rules for 2024

The following changes were made as a result of public comment, and review of the substance of those comments within the USBGF Rules Committee, as well as consultation with our international partners.

### Changes to Intent

#### VALID ROLLS

Add:

- A roll of the dice is rendered invalid if a player objects before either die begins to settle.

The goal is to short circuit dispute over a problem with the roll that is difficult or impossible to resolve. For example: one player may say that a die did not pass through the baffle box while the other says that it did. Without video or eyewitness evidence, the TD cannot determine the fact. With this rule, if the player who thought they saw a problem objects before any information is available about the likely roll, it is simply redone; agreement on the facts of the roll itself is unnecessary. If a dispute over objection timeliness occurs, we are no worse off than before; otherwise, the entire dispute is avoided. With players empowered to invalidate a roll by objecting, the failure to object on time creates the presumption that the roll was valid; the TD should so rule on that basis if no other evidence is available. To object verbally, a player may say “no good”, “no roll”, “stop” or similar. To object physically, a player may wave their hand over the board or dice, or similar. It is best that players do not object by grabbing or physically interfering with the dice, but that might happen and the TD may consider that (positively or negatively) if a dispute arises.

#### CHECKER AND DICE HANDLING

Remove:

- An explicitly hit checker that is not on the bar when the turn has been ended must be placed on the bar.
- A hit checker should either be covered by the hitting checker or moved to the tip of the point it is on, rather than to the bar.

This USBGF-only rule was missed in the first pass of the alignment effort and was not acceptable to our international partners due to the belief that it mandates alteration of a potentially legal move and is fundamentally incompatible with Responsible Moves. This rule was motivated by best practices we established to avoid losing track of where a hit checker originated while a move was not yet final by leaving a hit checker on its original point rather than moving it to the bar. Someone who followed the best practice and later forgot to move the hit checker to the bar would be punished for doing the right thing. This rule was intended to protect them. If two checkers of different colors end on the same point it must always be corrected – even with Responsible Moves. This rule change therefore only impacts pick and pass hits. Although this best practice has been recommended by the Rules since 2018, no players appear to follow it with any regularity. It therefore seems to not be worth fighting over to keep this rule given the strong feelings against it elsewhere. If we eliminate the requirement to correct, we should also eliminate mention of the hit checker best practices that necessitated it.

## Clarifications

### SPECTATORS

- In addition to agreement from both players, the TD must also consent before spectators may be permitted to point out illegal moves. The TD may consent via a general tournament policy, or case by case.
- Clarify that errors in score, setup and running clock may be pointed out unprompted.

### EQUIPMENT

- Change player right to require regulation sized board from “any time” to “before games” to align with WBGF.
- Preferred board size minimum changed from 35mm to 37mm due to error in conversion to Metric.

### ERRORS IN THE STARTING POSITION

- State that the last valid roll may be replayed. This handles the case where the turn was ended but the next valid roll has not yet occurred. Correction should be consistent with the handling of illegal moves.

### VALID ROLLS

- The requirement to roll dice “together” is replaced with “in a single action”. This aligns with a WBGF clarification; it is a more accurate and clearer statement of the actual intent.
- Explicitly states that to be valid, a die must “freely pass through” the baffle box.
- Rewords the invalidity criteria to better integrate the new player objection rule.
- Makes clear that both dice must be rerolled if either die is invalid.
- Clarifies that the “falling into the gap between checkers” test for invalidity applies to a die that is still on the checkers, rather than one that has fallen fully through and is on the playing surface.
- Makes explicit that there should be agreement that a die is invalid before rerolling.

### CHECKER HANDLING

- Rephrase. Offsetting of checkers should be done if a play is not final rather than when “testing a play”. The goal is to create the mindset that moving a checker up against the rail or other checkers on a point indicates finality.

### CLOCK MANAGEMENT

- Clarifies that in all cases where the clock was not hit or paused when it should have been, the player whose clock continued to run is entitled to restoration of lost time. This had been conveyed regarding the failure to end turns during a close-out, but has been moved to the general section on clock management to express the wider scope of the intent (for example, failure to hit the clock after a double, pause the clock at the end of the game, or an attempt to hit/pause the clock that failed to register).

### COMPLETION

- States that only the legal bear off of a checker saves a gammon. This covers both the error in setup and illegal move situations.

### REPORTING RESULTS

- Replaced sole use of active voice language with more consistent text.

### DISPUTES; APPEALS

- Changed the word “disinterested” to “impartial”.