



USBGF Tournament Rules - Summary of Changes for 2024

These USBGF Rules are a complete, though concise rendition of the new WBGF Tournament Rules, having the identical intent and interpretation.

This summarizes the rule changes adopted by the USBGF, effective 2024. These are the substantive changes to intent or meaning only – in other words, changes that affect the way tournaments are conducted. It does not include clarifications, or additions that explicitly state what was generally assumed previously. The new WBGF Rules introduce a different set of rule changes that render it identical in meaning to these USBGF Rules. This document does not itemize the WBGF rule changes.

EQUIPMENT

- Each player may independently choose to use either a cup or baffle box for their own dice rolls.
- A baffle box must be placed on the non-home board side. The clock must be placed on the home board side.
- At any time during a match, even mid-game, if available for use, a player may require that any non-lipped dice cup be replaced with a lipped dice cup; that any non-precision dice be replaced with precision dice, or that a non-regulation sized board be replaced with a regulation sized board: one designed with checkers of diameter 35-50mm (1.5-2.0”).

AIDS

- Scheduled or allowed breaks in play are no longer considered to be “during a match” as far as the prohibition on use of aids during a match is concerned.

STARTING TIMES, BREAKS AND LATENESS

- Return to fixed rather than flexible break schedule. One 5-minute break allowed for each full 6 points of match length.
- Players must be present and ready to play their next match within 10 minutes of completing their previous match (5-minute break plus 5-minute grace period before penalties), unless otherwise arranged with the TD.
- The TD is given discretion to assess allowed penalties for lateness rather than being required do so, and may generally allow more time or more breaks if circumstances permit.
- Penalties may start after 5 minutes of lateness instead of 10. The TD may no longer impose a stricter policy.
- The TD is now allowed to start the clock of a late player instead of assessing penalty points.

DICE ROLLING

- When using a baffle box, each player may independently choose whether to drop their dice into the baffle box using their hand or a cup. This changes from use of cups with baffle box being Preferred.
- A player may roll from a dice cup on the left side of the bar if they first obtain consent from their opponent. Such consent is revoked when the opponent explicitly revokes it, when the player rolls again on the right side, or when the game ends.

PREMATURE ACTION

- When playing with a clock, if the opponent prematurely lifts the dice before their opponent has ended their turn by hitting the clock, the player on turn may pause the clock to complete their move and may require

that the opponent forfeit their delay time when it is their turn. A premature lift of the dice previously had no penalty specified. If the opponent proceeds to roll after prematurely lifting the dice, then the normal penalty for a premature roll applies in lieu of the forfeiture of delay time.

END OF TURN

- When using four dice, players end their turn by lifting one or both dice. Previously, if a legal move had been made, merely touching one die would end the turn.

CHECKER HANDLING

- A few of the previous “best practices” are changing to requirements. Players will be expected to comply and to point out lapses by their opponents. Specifically: A player must move checkers clearly to a specific location, using one and the same hand throughout their turn (including hitting the clock) and keep borne off checkers away from the playing surface. A player must not touch any checkers during the opponent’s turn.
- Removed the rule requiring that: an explicitly hit checker that is not on the bar when the turn has been ended must be placed on the bar.

ILLEGAL CHECKER MOVES

- When Legal Moves is in effect, the new rule eliminates the special category of illegal moves (such as placing your own checker on the bar) for which there was a longer mandatory correction period than typical illegal moves.
- Both players may agree to allow spectators to point out illegal checker moves during their match. If such agreement is reached, the players must display a sign clearly visible near the board that states that this is allowed, or some other form of flag to be defined. In the absence of such a sign, spectators are prohibited from commenting. Previously, spectators were never permitted to freely point out illegal plays.

ERRORS IN SETUP

- A checker setup error must be corrected if noticed before the third valid roll of the game. Previously, it was the fifth valid roll.

INVALID ROLLS

- A roll is invalidated if either player objects to the roll before either die begins to settle.
- When an invalid roll occurs, the clock’s delay time may be reset. Previously, the rules did not authorize this.

SCORING ERRORS

- If both players have a different written score and there is no evidence to support any particular ruling, then the trailer’s scorecard will prevail. Previously, the rules left the TD with no guidance and a coin flip was likely.

INCORRECT MATCH LENGTH

- After any game in progress is completed, the match length used is changed to the posted value only if no player has reached either the initially used or the posted length. Previously, the match could be declared over immediately due to changing the match length.

APPEALS

- An appeal is decided by majority vote of a ruling committee of 3 or 5 members. Previously, the TD had the option to add their own vote to the total.
- A ruling to disqualify or expel a player is generally eligible for appeal; previously those situations were excluded.