

# How to play Backgammon

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

Want to know how to play backgammon? To understand this section, be sure to be familiar with the backgammon material and the board setup. If you want to play backgammon right away, go to play free backgammon.

OK, so this is how to play backgammon:

At the beginning of the game both players throw a die. The player with the highest number (most pips) will start. In case both players throw the same number, there will be a reroll.



For the first move the player uses the dice that are just used to determine the starting player. For example: Player A throws 6, player B throws 3. Player A will now start with a move consisting of the 6 and the 3.

Each turn, two dice will be thrown. The checkers can now be moved according to the pips on the dice. This could be done by moving one checker the total number of pips of the two dice, or two checkers each with the amount of pips of a different die.

For example: If you throw  and , then you can move one checker 7 steps, or one checker 5 steps and another checker 2 steps. Certain rules apply to the moving of checkers: A checker can be only moved to a point (triangle) that:

- is free
- is occupied by own checkers
- is occupied by only one checker of the opponent

If possible, checkers must always be moved according to the thrown number of pips. If only one die can be played then this must always be the die with the highest number of pips. That is, of course, if possible.

Whenever you throw a double, you have to make four moves. For example: When you throw  and , then you can choose to:

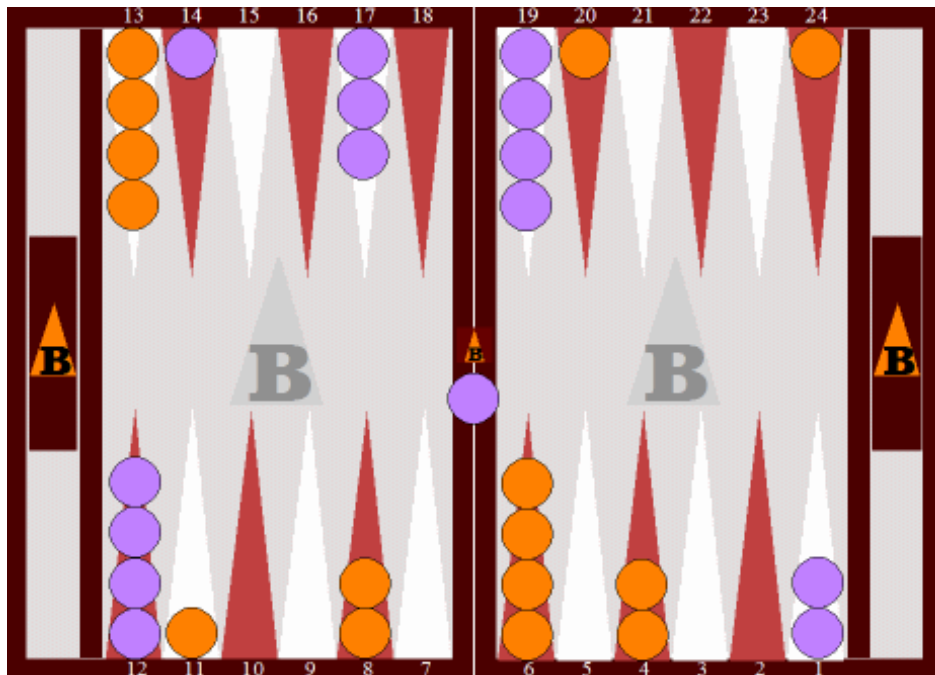
- Move one checker 12 steps
- Move one checker 3 steps and another checker 9 steps
- Move two checkers each 6 steps
- Move four checkers each 3 steps



**Important:** Movements must always be done by the number of pips of one die. If you throw double 3, and you want to move one checker 12 steps, then this is only possible if the points 3, 6, 9 and 12 steps away from the current point are free.



Points that are occupied by two or several checkers of a player become property of this player. The opponent cannot land its checkers on this point now, but can still jump across. If a player owns several points in a row, we call this a 'prime'. If you successfully make six points in a row, you got yourself a 'full prime' and now it is not possible for your opponent to come across (it's simply not possible to throw more than 6 with a die).



If a point is occupied by only one checker, we call this a 'blot'. At this moment the player doesn't own the point and is beaten when the opponent lands on the same point. The checker being hit is then put on top of the bar (the raised section in the middle of the board). If a player to the turn still has checkers on the bar (one or several checkers of him/her have been hit), he or she cannot make any other moves

before these checkers are put back on the board. This can be done by throwing the number of pips that corresponds to a point which is still free or is occupied by only one checker of the opponent (a blot). If this is not possible, the turn passes and the opponent may throw again. We look at the next situation:



The player with purple has a hidden checker on the bar. The player now throws  and . Because both point 4 and point 6 are owned by orange, it is impossible for purple to put the checker back on the board and his turn passes. Orange is to throw again now.

The moment a player gets all fifteen checkers in its home board, the 'Bear Off' starts. You remove the checkers from the points that are in conformity with the pips you throw. For example: When you throw  and , you remove a checker from point 5 and a checker from point 2. This is of course only possible if there are still checkers on these points present. In this example, if you only have checkers left at the first, the second and the sixth point, then you take away one checker from the 2nd point and you move one from the sixth to the first point. Instead of removing a piece from the point according to the pips of one die, it is also possible to make another move. To come back at the situation mentioned above (5/2), it is also possible to move one checker from point 6 to point 1 and one checker from point 6 to point 4. This can be very useful in case your opponents has some checkers left on the bar which will give him a possibility to hit you.

If you throw a higher number than the points in which you still have some checkers left, you have to remove a piece from the highest point at that moment. For example: You have 2 checkers left on point 1, one checker on point 2 and three checkers on point 3. Now you throw  and . In this case you will have to remove two checkers from point 3 because this is the highest point you have left.

**NB:** It is always obligatorily to make a move if possible. By removing two checkers from point 3 in the example just given you will leave a blot. This is not so nice if your opponent has a checker left on the bar, but you are still forced to remove two checkers from point 3 and therefore to leave a blot.

If you already started taking of checkers but then got hit by your opponent you will

first have to bring this checker back to your home board before you can bear of again.

Whenever a player feels he has good chances of winning the game, he can propose a double. If the opponent decides to pass the proposing player wins the game and gets the points/wages that were currently in stake. If the opponent decides to take the double the game will continue and the winner will get twice the current points/wages. The taking player now owns the doubling cube and is the only player to propose another double. This process can repeat itself many times but in practice it is very seldom to get a value of more than 8 on the cube.

When a player has successfully removed all his checkers from the board he will win the amount of points indicated by the cube. An exception from this is when the opponent hasn't removed a single piece from the board yet, we call this a *gammon*. The winning player will win twice the amount of points indicated by the cube now. If you succeed to remove all your pieces from the board while your opponent still has checkers in your home board, you will have a *backgammon* and you win three times the amount of points indicated by the cube.

You can play a game until one player has reached a certain score, we call this kind of game a 'serie' or 'match'. The one to make this score the first will win the fixed wage.

You can also decide to play a 'single game'. In this case you will only play one game and the winner gets the stake multiplied by the value of the doubling cube and in some cases also multiplied by 2 (a gammon) or 3 (a backgammon). You can always agree to a certain limit in order to keep things under control.

And that is how to play backgammon, the rules are not that hard. But remember: "It takes a minute to learn, but a lifetime to master".  
Like to try? Then check out play free backgammon.

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