



Equipment:

The game of Backgammon is played on a specially designed board consisting of four tables of six triangles or points on each table. The points start from the edges of the board nearest the players and are directed inwards to form two rows of 12 points opposite each other. A centre bar bisects the board and the two tables to one side are designated the "home tables", the others being referred to as the "outer tables". Each table comprises six points. Each player has fifteen playing pieces called stones and two dice of the same colour (black or white) and a dice shaker. There is also a doubling cube, being a die with the numbers 2, 4, 8, 16, 32 and 64 on its six faces.

Basic play

Each turn consists of the opportunity to move your stones towards your home table according to the roll of the two dice. Unless a double is thrown, two moves are allowed, one for each number on the dice; e.g., a 5 and 4 is not one move of 9, but rather two separate moves of a 5 and a 4 in any order. All moves are separate, meaning that after the first move of 5 or 4 has been made, the remaining move of 4 or 5 may be with a different stone altogether.

When a double is thrown, four moves of the number showing on the dice are allowed; e.g., double 2 means a player has four distinct moves of their stones by points. Players are not allowed to pass on their moves - as many moves as possible must be made each turn. A point with two or more stones of the same colour on it is safe and the opponent's stones cannot end a single move of a stone on that point. This is true even if the opponent still has more moves to use on their turn. i.e. if a 5 and 4 has been rolled and the points that are both 4 and 5 points along are blocked by the opponent's stones, your stone cannot move at all (even if the point that is 9 along is clear).

A point hosting two or more of the opponent's stones is said to be "blocked". If six points in a row are blocked, the opponent is said to have formed a wall called a "prime". This is a highly advantageous achievement because a prime cannot be traversed by an opponent but is completely free to be traversed by the player who created it.

A point hosting only one stone is called a "blot". Such a stone is vulnerable - if the opponent lands on this point the stone is captured and is moved to the bar (this means physically placed on the middle bar dividing the board). A player with captured stones must bring them back onto the board at the furthest point from their own home table; e.g., a throw of 1 allows the stone to move from the bar to the first point of the opponent's home table. In addition, where a player has any stones on the bar, they may not move any stones that are in play until all stones are back on the board; e.g.; if you have a stone on the bar and your opponent has points 1, 3 and 6 blocked in their home table, and a 3 and 6 is rolled, the player cannot use either of those rolls and forfeits their turn and play passes back to the opponent.

About us:

Planet Finska is Australia's leading designer of properly-crafted traditional games. We believe in craftsmanship that is true to the origins of these timeless classics. We are not about inferior or disposable and only use quality sustainable materials because we know things should be built to last. Our premium games make for memorable gifts and are catalysts for us all to socialise, connect, laugh and celebrate.

Bearing off

Once all stones are present in a player's home table, that player can start "bearing off" or removing their stones off the board. A throw of 1 allows a player to bear off a stone from point 1 of his home table, a throw of 2 allows a player to bear off a stone from point 2 and so on.

Players do not have to bear off - if available, they can choose to move a stone within their home table instead. This is often done to pair up blots in order to prevent stones from capture. When a player rolls a number that is higher than the highest point of the home table upon which that player has stones, the player is allowed to bear off the next highest piece. For example, with a roll of double 5, if the player has a stone on point 5, two stones on point 3, one stone on point 2 and one stone on point 1, the player would bear off the four highest placed stones and be left with just one stone on point 1. If after starting to bear off, a player's stone is captured, that stone must re-enter at the other side of the board and bearing off cannot re-start until all stones are once again residing in the home table.

Finishing

The first player to bear off all stones wins the game. If the opponent has borne off at least one stone, a single game is won and the current stake is forfeited. If the opponent has not borne off any stones, this is a "gammon" and worth double the current stake. If the opponent has a stone left on the bar or within the opponent's home table, this is a "backgammon" and worth triple the current stake.

Stakes & doubling

Although it is not necessary to do so, it is traditional in Backgammon to play for a stake. A stake is an agreed value of money or an agreed number of points, beans or tokens. If playing for a stake, this is where the doubling cube is used and the stake must be agreed up front before the game begins. At the start of the game the doubling dice remains off the board and the stake value is 1x the agreed stake. At any time after the first turn, either player can offer to double the stake prior to rolling their dice. Upon being presented with such an ultimatum, the other player must choose either to forfeit the game and lose the current stake or accept the offer. If the offer is accepted, then the doubling dice is turned to display the value representing the multiple of the original stake now being played for; e.g. after a first double offer has been accepted, the number 2 is displayed to signify that the game is now being played for double the originally agreed stake.

Furthermore, the doubling dice must be positioned on the bar on the side of the player who accepted the offer to double the stake. From here on, the only player who can offer to double the stake again is the player who accepted the most recent doubling offer and who has the doubling cube on their side of the bar. In this way, a player can never offer to double the stake two times in a row.