



Backgammon User Guide

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Table of Contents

Introduction..... 1

Welcome to Backgammon	1
About this document.....	1
Game overview	1
Moving pieces.....	2
Bearing off	2
Doubling.....	3
Winning.....	3
Abandoning and resigning games.....	4

Using Backgammon 5

Running Backgammon.....	5
Selecting views	6
The Current player.....	6
Rolling the dice	6
Doubling.....	6
Making moves.....	6
Reviewing a game	7
Beaming.....	7
Managing Players	8
Managing games.....	8

Introduction

Welcome to Backgammon

Backgammon is compatible with devices that use version 3 or later of the Palm™ Operating System, including the Palm III™ and Palm V™ organizers.

This User Guide covers all platforms and rather than referring to any specific device, will simply refer to ‘your handheld computer’. Readers should note that, unless otherwise stated, the same functionality is supported by all handheld computers available at the time of writing.

About this document

The Backgammon User Guide explains how to use the Backgammon application. In so doing, the Guide assumes that the reader is familiar with the standard features of their organizer / handheld computer.

The Guide is also supplied in electronic form as a Portable Document Format (.pdf) file. Software to display .pdf files is freely available from Adobe Systems Incorporated and can be acquired from their World Wide Web site at <http://www.adobe.com/acrobat/>.

Game overview

The objective of the game of Backgammon is to be the first player to remove all one’s pieces from the board. Before you can remove any pieces, you need to move them all into your ‘Inner table’.

The Backgammon board is divided into four quadrants, an ‘Inner table’ and ‘Outer table’ for each player. If you are playing black, the lower right hand quadrant of the board is your Inner table, the lower left quadrant is your Outer table.

Introduction

If you are playing black you need to move all your pieces in a anti-clockwise direction around the board towards the lower right hand quadrant then remove them from the board. White plays in the opposite direction.

The Backgammon board consists of twenty four triangular ‘points’ coloured alternately in two contrasting colours. The pieces move from one point to another according to the numbers rolled on the dice. Pieces must always move in the forwards direction, in the case of black this is anti-clockwise. The strip down the centre of the board that divides the Inner and Outer tables is called the ‘bar’.

Moving pieces

Players take turns to roll the dice and move their pieces according to the numbers shown.. The numbers are always considered individually and not as the sum of the two. A player may move the same piece twice, once for each throw, or two different pieces. If a player rolls a double (both dice showing the same value), up to four pieces may be moved.

You may move a piece to any point that is unoccupied, is already occupied by one or more of your own pieces or occupied by a single piece belonging to your opponent. Should you move to a point occupied by a single piece belonging to your opponent, the opponent’s piece is moved to the bar. Such a move is called a ‘hit’. A piece on the bar must re-enter the game from the opponent’s Inner table and is required to move around the whole board again. You may not move a piece to a point occupied by two or more of your opponents pieces. Such a point is said to ‘have been made’ and the pieces there are safe from attack.

A player is compelled to make a complete move if there is any possible way to do so, regardless of how disadvantages such a move may be. If pieces cannot be legally moved, all or the remaining part of the turn is forfeit.

If a player has any pieces on the bar, all of these pieces must be entered before any other pieces can be moved. If the pieces on the bar cannot be entered, the player forfeits the remainder of the turn.

Bearing off

Once you have moved all of your pieces to your Inner table, you may begin to remove the pieces according to the dice you throw. The removal of pieces from the board is described as ‘bearing off’. To bear off a piece, move that piece the number of points required to take it off the board. You must use the whole of the dice values thrown, or if this is not possible, as much of the dice values as you can.

If your opponent hits one of your pieces whilst you are bearing off, you must re-enter that piece from the bar and move that piece around the board to your Inner table before you can continue to bear off further pieces.

Doubling

The game of Backgammon incorporates a gambling element called doubling. Doubling is undertaken using the doubling dice. Unlike normal dice, the doubling dice has the values 2,4,8,16,32 and 64 on its six faces. As each double is accepted, so the doubling dice increments to the next numeric value.

At the start of a game neither player 'owns' the doubling dice and either player is free to double the opponent. Should a player wish to double their opponent, they must do so at the start of their turn before they roll the dice. Once a player has doubled an opponent, the ownership of the doubling dice is with the player that has just been doubled. From that point forward, you may only double your opponent if you own the doubling dice. Initially the doubling dice is not shown indicating that neither player owns the doubling dice. Once a double has been accepted the doubling dice will change to display its value.

There is no requirement for either side to accept a double when it is made. If you refuse to accept a double, the game is immediately concluded with a win by a single to the player requesting the double.

Winning

There are three degrees of winning in Backgammon:

- A normal victory is when the loser has been able to bear off at least one piece. The winner scores the amount at stake. This is often called winning by 'a single'
- A 'gammon' is when the loser has not been able to bear off any pieces. Here the winner scores twice the stake.
- A 'backgammon' is when the loser has not been able to bear off any pieces and still has pieces in the winners Inner table or on the bar. The winner scores three times the stake.

The doubling dice further multiples the score by the value shown on the doubling dice. For example, winning by a gammon has a basic score of two points, with the doubling dice having a value of four, the winner gains eight points. As can be seen, the doubling dice can dramatically affect the overall score. In this

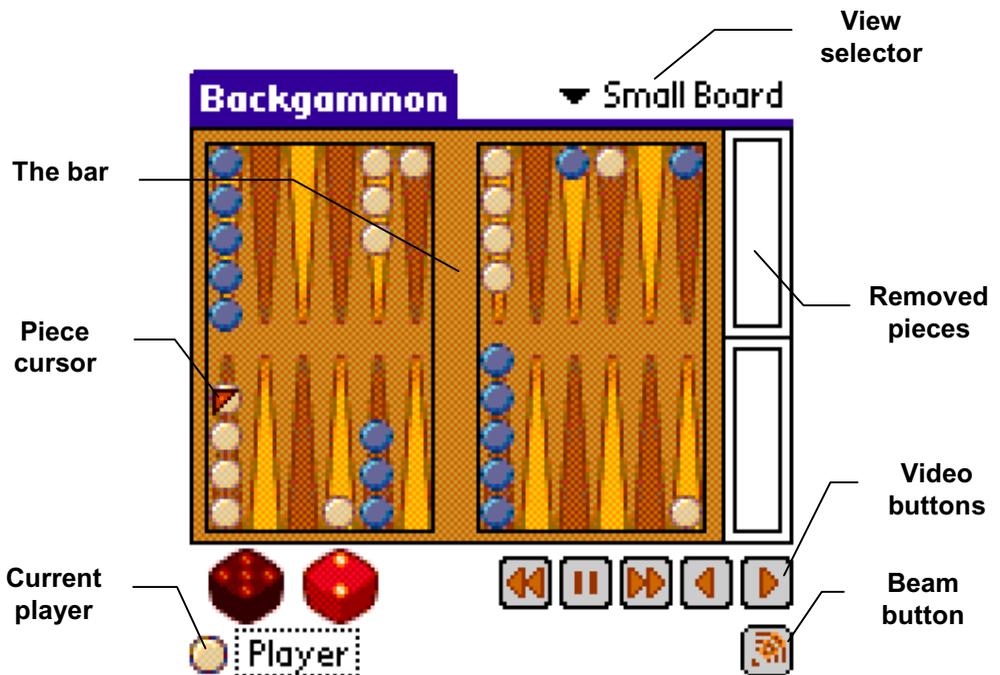
Abandoning and resigning games

The rules of Backgammon do not require a game to be completed. Should you decide that the game you are playing is a lost cause, you can choose to resign the game before it is completed. For the purposes of scoring, a resigned game counts as a win by a single to the opposition.

Using Backgammon

Running Backgammon

When you first run Backgammon, application information is briefly displayed and a new game is started. The game starts with you as the "Player" using the white pieces against a relatively unskilled computer opponent playing the black pieces.



Using Backgammon

Backgammon offers a variety of views of the board and by default the "Medium board" is presented. The various views make use of a variety of standard components. These are described below.

Selecting views

Tap the View selector to present a popup list from which you can select any of the available views of the board. Note that you can also select any view from the **Show** menu.

The Current player

This shows the name of the player whose turn it is to move. Some views show both players and in these cases, in addition to the clock being updated, the current player is indicated by an arrow.

Tapping the player name presents the **Player Details** dialog which allows you to change the name of the player, whether they are a human or computer player and for computer players, the skill level.

Backgammon maintains a list of available players. Facilities to create, amend or delete players are described later in this document.

Rolling the dice

When it is the turn of a computer player to play, the dice will be automatically rolled. Otherwise, tapping the dice will cause them to be rolled. Once a piece has been moved by the number shown on a dice, the dice will be dimmed. If both dice have the same value four moves can be made of the value shown. Once both dice are dimmed, the turn is over and the dice must be rolled again.

Doubling

To double your opponent, select the **Double** command from the **Move** menu. If you do not wish to play games involving doubling, you may disable this option by selecting the **Preferences** command from the **Options** menu. Doing so enables the computer to automatically roll the dice for your turn since there is no longer the option to double your opponent *before* you roll the dice.

Making moves

The Piece cursor indicates the currently selected piece. Tap a piece to select it. To move the selected piece, you can either tap one of the dice to indicate to number of places to move or drag the piece to the desired square.

When a move is made, the piece is animated and moves to the new location. You can control the speed of animation by selecting the **Preferences** dialog from the **Options** menu.

If you try to make an illegal move, Backgammon will display an appropriate error message.

Note that Backgammon also supports selecting and moving pieces using a keyboard. Use the cursor keys to move the cursor and the Enter or Space keys to select or place a piece. You can also use the Esc key to return a piece to its original square.

Backgammon offers a range of features that can help with making moves:

- If you want to see the legal moves that are available for the currently selected piece, select the **Legal Moves** item from the **Move** menu. You can permanently enable this feature by selecting the **Preferences** dialog from the **Options** menu.
- If you would like a hint as to the best move to play, select the **Hint** item from the **Move** menu.

Reviewing a game

The Video buttons allow you to review the current game. Tap the desired button to undo or redo a single move or to undo or redo a series of moves. Note that when a series of moves is being undone or replayed, you can tap the Stop button to cancel the operation.

You can also undo and redo a single move by selecting the appropriate item from the **Move** menu which additionally provides options to undo or redo all moves.

Beaming

You can share games with or play against other people by beaming games between infrared enabled PalmOS devices running the Backgammon application.

Backgammon maintains a list of games stored on your device. Facilities to create, amend or delete games are described later in this document.

To beam the current game, simply tap the Beam button or select the Beam game option from the **Game** menu.

When you elect to receive a beamed game, if the received game matches one already stored on your device *and* offers a valid next move from an opponent,

the move is made and the new game state presented. Otherwise, the received game is added as a new entry to the list of games available.

Managing Players

Backgammon maintains a list of players involved in any of the games stored on your device. You can add new players, delete players or amend their details by selecting the **Players** item from the **Game** menu. The list of players will then be presented.

- To create a new player, tap the **New** button. The player details dialog will then be presented with default values. If you confirm the dialog, the new player will be added to the list.
- To amend the details of an existing player, highlight the player in the list and tap the **Details** button to present the player details dialog. When you confirm the dialog, any changes will be applied.
- To delete a player, highlight the player in the list and tap the **Delete** button.

Note that when you receive a beamed game that involves a player who is not already recorded on the receiving device, the player will automatically be added to the list of players.

Managing games

Backgammon allows you to store multiple games on your device. When you launch Backgammon, the most recent game is presented as the current game.

You can create new games, delete games or amend their details by picking the **Select** item from the **Game** menu. The list of games will then be presented.

- To make any game in the list the current game, simply highlight the desired game and tap the **Done** button.
- To create a new game, highlight a game in the list on which you would like to base the new game and tap the **Copy** button. The game details dialog will then be presented. Amend the game details as desired and confirm the dialog to add the game to the list. You can initialise or manually set up a board position for the newly created game using the **New Game** or **Game Setup** functions described below.

- To amend the details of an existing game, highlight the game in the list and tap the **Details** button to present the game details dialog. When you confirm the dialog, any changes will be applied.
- To delete a game, highlight the game in the list and tap the **Delete** button.

Note that when you receive a beamed game that does not match any game already recorded on the receiving device, the game will automatically be added to the list.

At any time, you can reset the current game to its initial position by selecting **New Game** from the **Game** menu. Note that when you do this the move list is cleared so that it is no longer possible to redo moves that may have previously been made. If you want to retain the move list, use the **Undo all** function described above.

You can also edit the game position directly by selecting the **Game Setup** view. In this view, you can:

- Change the position of any piece by dragging it to a new location.
- Remove a piece by dragging off the board to the left or right.
- Add a new piece by dragging one of the piece types shown to the left of the board to the desired location.
- Select the players for this game.

If you confirm the Game Setup by tapping the **OK** button, any changes will be applied to the current game and any move list information will be cleared. To return to the current game, preserving the original position and any move list, tap the **Cancel** button.