

# LEARN backgammon

... IN 5 MINUTES A DAY ...

(EDITOR'S NOTE—Backgammon, which promises to be this winter's most popular parlor diversion, is learned easily. This article is the first of six which will teach you the game. Start now and follow them daily in the Corsicana Daily Sun.)

By J. VAN CLEFT COOPER  
Starting Out.

Backgammon was one of the principal diversions of our grandparents, but in recent years has fallen into disuse.

The modern feature of doubling and its adaptation to the use of more than two players have given it the "kick" required in present day amusements, and it now seems on the way to its old time popularity.

It is played on a board having raised sides and divided by a partition called "the bar."

On each side of the bar are two "tables," each consisting of six "points" of alternate color. Fifteen white and 15 black checkers and a set or two of dice complete the equipment for this alluring game.

The table to White's right is known as White's Inner Table, that to his left as White's Outer Table. Opposite are Black's Inner table and Black's Outer Table. At the start the board is set up as shown in Diagram 1.

The object is to move all one's men into one's own inner or home table and then throw or "bar" them off the board.

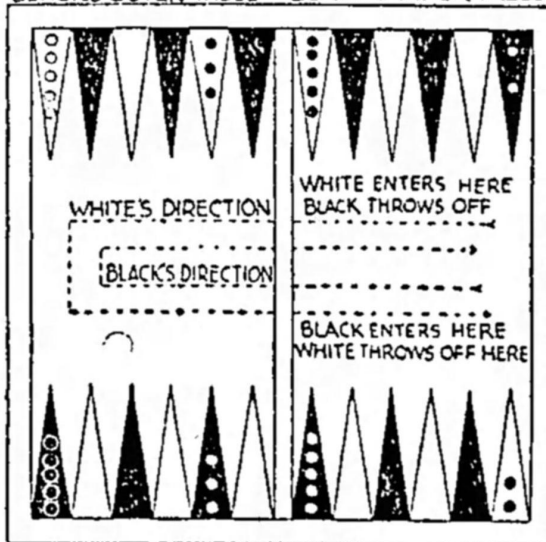
Each player throws one dice to determine which shall move first. High wins—in case of a tie they throw again—and takes his own and his opponent's throw for his first move. Some permit the leader to cast again for his first move. The turn then alternates throughout the game.

The winner has the first throw

for the next game except in the case of "gammon" or "backgamman"—these terms will be explained later—when both players throw again.

The men move on the points and progress from opponent's inner table through his outer table, then through player's outer table into

DIAGRAM 1  
BLACK'S OUTER TABLE BLACK'S INNER TABLE



WHITE'S OUTER TABLE WHITE'S INNER TABLE

player's inner table, moves being governed by the numbers thrown. Men already part way home continue from where they are.

In making a move one man may be moved twice, first the number shown on one dice and then that on the other, or two men may be moved, one for each dice. The two numbers thrown may not be totaled and one man moved the entire distance without stopping. Each number thrown must be played separately.

If doublets are thrown, double the number of moves are made. A throw of double five would allow one man to move four fives, two men two fives each, four men five points each, or any other combination,

provided each move of five points is made individually.

Tomorrow—Moving and Bearing Off.

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(It's easy to learn Backgammon with these brief articles. This is the second of a series of six which teach the game. Yesterday's article told how to start out.)

**By J. VAN CLEFT COOPER  
MOVING AND BEARING OFF.**

A player may put any number of men on any point not occupied by two or more of his opponent's men.

Two or more such men on a point constitute a "block" and no opponent may play a man to that point. He may jump over a block to a free point, however. (See Diagram 2, Note A).

If he cannot move without hitting blocked points he cannot play and loses that move.

A player must play both numbers thrown if possible and if playing the smaller number enables him to use the higher one also he must play them in order. (See Diagram 2, Note B.)

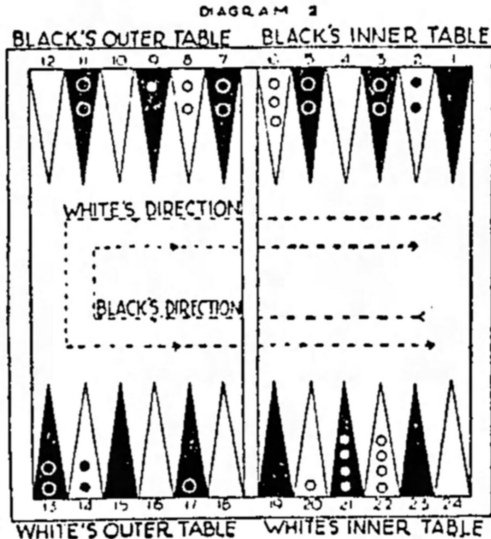
A single man on a point is called a "blot." If the opponent's throw carries him to that point he may "hit the blot" and take up the man. (See Diagram 2, Note C.) No point can be occupied by both players.

A man taken up is placed on the bar and must be re-entered in opponent's inner table before player can move any other man. If both numbers cast are blocked he cannot enter and loses his throw. If one of the numbers cast is free he must enter on that one and if both are free he may enter on either. If there is a blot on his entering point he may take it up. After entering, player may take his other number with any man on the board. (See Diagram 2, Note D.)

After a player has all his men home, or in his own inner table, he begins to "bear off," that is, to remove men from the board. This he does according to the numbers thrown, bearing off two for each throw except in the case of doubles when he may bear off four. Thus, a throw of six and three would allow him to throw off one man from point 6 and one from point 3, while double fives would take off four men from point five.

If he prefers he may move a man to a lower point in the table rather than to bear off but he must do one or the other if he can.

If a player throws a higher number than any occupied point in his table he may throw off for that



(A) White cannot move his man from point 9 either four or five but can move it six.

(B) White cannot move his man from point 9 five or three but he can move it three and five. Since this is the only possible way to play the five White must move this man.

(C) By moving the man on point 9 three and then five White takes up Black's blot on point 17.

(D) Black cannot enter the man taken up in (C) on a throw of four and three, since these points are both blocked. He can enter on a five and three and take up White's blot on point 20. Then he can move the same man three and hit the one white has just left on point 17.

number from the highest point on which he has a man. If his 6 point is vacant he and he throws a six he may throw off a man from his 5 point. If that point is vacant he may throw off from his 4 point and so on.

But he cannot do this if he has a man on any point higher than the number thrown. Thus, if his 4 point is vacant and he has men on points 5 and 3, he cannot bear off from point 3 for the throw of four.

If the loser has borne off any men it is a "single game." If he has not borne off any men it is a "gammon" or double game and the score is doubled. If he has not thrown off any men and still has a man in the winner's inner table or on the bar it is a "backgammon" or triple game and the score is tripled.

Tomorrow—Doubles and Chouette.

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Want to play Backgammon? It's easy as these articles show. This is the third of a daily series of six appearing in the Daily Sun. Yesterday's article told how to move.

By J. VAN CLEFT COOPER  
Doubles

The doubling feature of Bridge has been adapted to modern Backgammon. In Backgammon the first double raises the value of a game from 1 to 2, the second makes it 4, the third 8, and so on.

Doubles are either automatic or optional.

The automatic double occurs in casting for the lead. If the players throw a tie the score for that game automatically doubles.

Successive ties continue to double the score and since ties may be thrown repeatedly, automatic doubles are usually limited to three in one game. Some prefer to omit them entirely.

The optional double occurs during play. Either player may propose the first double at any time by saying, before casting the dice, "I double." If his opponent accepts, the game proceeds with the score doubles.

If he declines, the game is immediately forfeited to the doubles and scored as it stands.

The player who doubled first may not double again until after a double by his opponent. The privilege of doubling alternates thus throughout the game. Doubles may be proposed at any point, but always just before casting.

Any number of doubles may be

made. They mount up rapidly, the fifth double making the game worth 32 and the tenth, 1,024. More than four or five in a game are rare.

A gammon automatically doubles and a backgammon triples the final score.

## Chouette

When three persons play, each throws one dice at the start.

On a tie they throw again but automatic doubles do not begin until actual play starts.

The one throwing the highest number plays "in the box" or la chouette against the other two and either wins the amount of the game from each of the others or loses it to each.

The one throwing second high plays against him at the board as "active partner" and low becomes "inactive partner."

The inactive partner takes no physical part, but may advise the active partner freely as to playing, doubling, accepting or declining doubles, and so on. The active partner must himself make, or decline doubles, however. In case of disagreement as to either double or play, the active partner's decision is final.

The inactive partner may decline a double even though the active partner accepts it. In such case he forfeits to the active partner the score at the moment and retires. The active partner continues the game, winning or losing the retired player's full share at the finish.

The man in the box remains there as long as he wins, the oth-

ers alternating as active and inactive partners. When he loses his winning opponent takes his place and he becomes the inactive partner.

Inactive partners rank according to their throws. Newcomers start at the bottom of the list of inactive partners.



## HOW TO PLAY

# Backgammon

BY J. VAN CLEFT COOPER

This is the third of a series of articles on how to play backgammon, the game that promises to be the winter's most popular parlor diversion.

### Scoring.

**S**CORING backgammon is very simple.

A bowl of ordinary matches may be set near the players and one match placed on the bar at the beginning of a game, since a "single game" counts 1.

At the first double, another match is placed on the bar, the game now being worth 2. A third double puts four matches on the bar, a fourth, eight, and so on.

The number of matches on the bar at any time thus shows the value of the game at that moment. At the finish of the game the winner takes all the matches on the bar.

Some prefer to keep only the net score.

Here, in case a player holds matches previously won and then loses a game, the winner's score for that game is deducted from the matches held by the loser.

Thus, if White has won 16 matches and Black then wins 4, the four on the bar are returned to the bowl plus four from White's holding, leaving him with 12, his net score.

Another way of using matches is to place one on the bar for every double. Taking one as the unit of play, the score for a "single game"

would be 1 doubled as many times as there are matches on the bar. A gammon doubles and a backgammon triples this score.

Assuming no doubles, if White wins he scores 1. If he gammons Black he scores 2 and if he backgammons him he scores 3.

Doubles are applied before considering gammons and backgammons. If White wins a single game with three matches on the bar, indicating three doubles either automatic or optional, he scores 1 doubled three times, or 8. If he gammons Black with three doubles he scores 16 and if he backgammons him he scores 24.

In Chouette if White in the box wins from Black and Red with a score of 24, the score sheet would show, "White 48+, Black 24-, Red 24-." If he loses the score would be, "White 48-, Black 24+, Red 24+."

An entirely different method of scoring omits games, gammons and backgammons and scores:

1 point for each man in loser's inner table.

2 points for each man in loser's outer table.

3 points for each man in winner's outer table.

4 points for each man in winner's inner table or on the bar.

This score is doubled according to the number of matches on the bar.

Tomorrow—Principles of Play.



# HOW TO PLAY Backgammon

BY J. VAN CLEFT COOPER

Backgammon keeps the mind alert, and anyone can learn from this daily series in the Post-Dispatch. This is the fourth article. Yesterday's article told how to score.

## PRINCIPLES OF PLAY.

Backgammon is so largely a game of chance and quick changes in advantage that no fixed rules of play can be given.

Certain principles, however, govern most moves. In general:

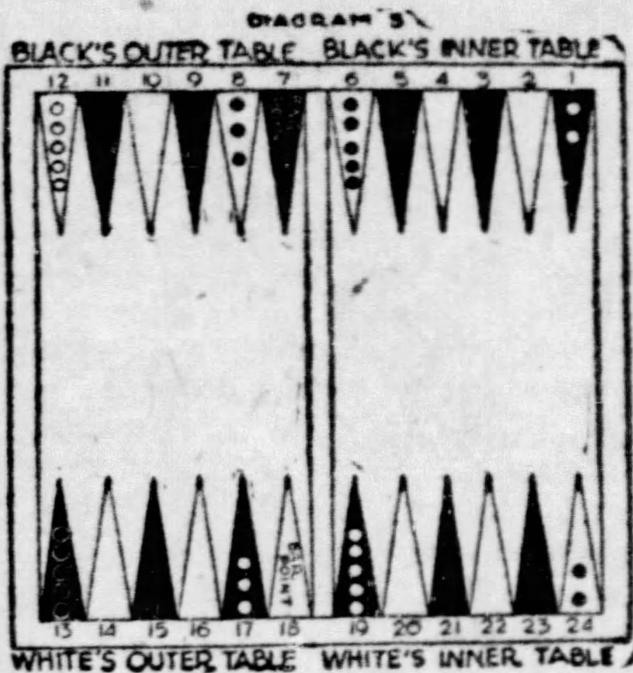
Cover or block a point whenever possible. This gives you more points of safety and allows your opponent fewer free points.

Leave necessary blots on points you hope to cover. Leave them either near to or far from your opponent's men; they are less likely to be hit.

Leave them as near as possible to your opponent's inner table; they will have less distance to re-travel if taken up.

Cover your "bar point" — the one next the bar in your outer table—and your 5 point as quickly as possible. Covering your bar point forces opponent to use both numbers thrown to escape from your inner table. Covering your 5 point gives him one less point on which to re-enter and gives you one more from which to throw off.

Certain moves for the first cast of the dice were long ago discovered to offer the greatest advantage. Following is a table showing the usual moves on opening



## INITIAL MOVES.

1-1	2 men 17 to 18; 2 men 19 to 20
2-1	1 man 12 to 14; 1 man 19 to 20
2-2	2 men 12 to 14; 2 men 19 to 21. or 2 men 1 to 5
3-1	1 man 17 to 20; 1 man 19 to 20
3-2	1 man 12 to 15; (or 17 to 20); 1 man 12 to 14
3-3	2 men 12 to 18; or 2 men 17 to 20 and 2 men 19 to 22
4-1	1 man 12 to 16; 1 man 19 to 20
4-2	1 man 17 to 21; 1 man 19 to 21
4-3	1 man 12 to 16; 1 man 12 to 15
4-4	2 men 12 to 20
5-1	1 man 12 to 17; 1 man 19 to 20
5-2	1 man 12 to 17; 1 man 12 to 14
5-3	1 man 17 to 22; 1 man 19 to 22
5-4	1 man 12 to 17; 1 man 12 to 16. or 1 man 1 to 10
5-5	2 men 12 to 22
6-1	1 man 12 to 18; 1 man 17 to 18
6-2	1 man 12 to 20 or 1 to 9
6-3	1 man 1 to 10
6-4	1 man 1 to 11, or 1 man 17 to 23; 1 man 19 to 23
6-5	1 man 1 to 12 (Lover's Leap);
6-6	2 men 1 to 7; 2 men 12 to 18

throws. The board has been numbered for convenience and it is White's move.

Tomorrow—Tactics.

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... IN 5 MINUTES A DAY ...

Anyone can learn the newest fad—Backgammon—and in no time at all. This is the last of six daily articles in The Daily which have presented the game in brief, simple fashion.

BY J. VAN CLEFT COOPER  
Tactics

Backgammon is a race for the home table. The natural thing to do is rush men along as rapidly as possible.

This "running game" is attempted when you have escaped quickly from opponent's inner table and gained the advantage through good throws.

Avoid picking up blots. Bring each man home with as few throws as possible.

Unless your first throws are very favorable, try to pin opponent's two men in your inner table by a blockade of six consecutive points, known as a "side prime." This is the "blocking game."

Considerable risk in creating the blockade is justifiable, since once established he cannot escape until you are forced to break it. Use direction in hitting blots. More than three enemies on the bar may prove troublesome.

If you establish this blockade in your inner table your opponent cannot enter, consequently cannot play, while you may play as you like. This is the "shut-out game" and is very powerful.

These three methods of play are

known as "forward games" and one of them is usually adopted when the opening throws are favorable.

The "back game" offers a means of utilizing poor throws to good advantage against favorable casts by your opponent.

Its object is to take up as many hostile men as you can and hamper opponents' progress. To do this, keep your men in front of his line of march. Retard your men and expose them to every possible danger, hoping they will be sent home to re-enter. The farther past the enemy they go, the less useful they are.

Keep men on as many different points as possible to increase your chances of catching opponent's blots and establish and retain the low points in his inner table to pick off unprotected homecomers.

Gradually shift into a forward game and progress to your home table. With this game it is difficult if not impossible for an opponent to bring a lone man home even though he may have thrown off every other man.

To combat the back game do nothing that your opponent wishes. Refuse to take up his blots. Establish the points just beyond your bar point and by pinning his men in your inner table force him to advance his other men to the point where they are powerless.

You may even adopt a back game yourself and beat him at his own game.