

Chouette Scorer

The Chouette Scorer by David Levy © 2006-8 is designed to allow easy scoring of backgammon chouettes with many features:

- **Interlocking Chouettes:** The software will support two tables with all players involved on both tables and a single rotation. The software will also support a single table or two separate tables.
- **Rotation:** The program manages the rotation of players, keeping track of who are the boxes and captains and how the crew rotates into play.
- **Individual Cubes:** Each player has control of his own cube.
- **Preferred Stakes:** Each player indicates the maximum stake he is willing to play for. When two players are playing against each other, the value of the game is the minimum of the two preferred stakes.
- **Players:** The program remembers players and preferred stakes from one session to the next.
- **Extras:** A player may offer an extra at any time, paying one unit for another player to hold a cube at two units.
- **Transfers:** The program allows for transfers among players to correct (human) scoring errors, to record cash outs or to record other transfers of money among players.
- **Robustness:** After each scoring item, the score is written to a comma separated variable file, easy to import into a program such as Excel. No scoring data will be lost if the computer crashes.

There are several rules that vary from chouette to chouette. Some of these rules are dictated by the program. For example:

- **Jacoby rule:** The Chouette Scorer enforces the Jacoby rule.
- **Box takes a Partner.** The Chouette Scorer does not allow the box to take a partner.
- **Automatic Doubles:** The Chouette Scorer allows up to one automatic double.
- **Retaining the Box:** The Chouette Scorer follows the rule that a player retains the box by defeating the captain, regardless of what happens with other players. If your chouette uses a different rule, you can follow your rule as described in the sections "Cancel a Game in Progress" and "Manage the Rotation," below.
- **New Player Joining Chouette:** A new player is immediately added to the rotation but does not participate in games in progress. If your chouette uses a different rule, you can follow your rule as described in the sections "Cancel a Game in Progress" and "Manage the Rotation," below.

Other rules are not impacted by the program at all. Your chouette is free to choose how to handle them:

- **Consulting:** You can choose whether and when to allow consulting among crew members.
- **Illegal Moves:** You can choose whether you allow illegal moves to stand or require any play to point out the illegal move.

- **Sole Taker:** In a large chouette, having a sole taker slows down the chouette. Some chouettes don't permit a sole taker; others require the taker to accept all offered extras. The program will support whatever option you prefer.

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Licensing

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Beginning the Chouette

Add Tables

Use the “Chouette-Tables...” menu pick to give names and descriptions to each of the two tables. For example, you can call them “Andy’s Board” and “Bill’s Board” and use the description field to say that Andy’s Board is near the “Window” and Bill’s is near the “Door.” The names and descriptions are optional.

Add Players

Use the “Chouette-Players...” to add and maintain players.

Each player has a **name**, a **preferred starting cube** and what **roles** the player is willing to take on at each table.

The **name** is best limited to eight characters.

The **preferred starting cube** is best expressed in dollars.

The **roles** are as follows:

- **Inactive:** The player is not involved at the table.
- **Cube Only:** The player has an active cube at the table. The player will not become captain or box but will maintain position in the rotation. This is useful, for example, when a player is taking a break for a meal and wishes to go with the majority on cube actions.
- **Pass Box:** The player has an active cube at the table and will become captain in turn but will not take the box. This is useful for a new player in a large chouette who is unwilling to play with many active cubes.
- **Active:** The player has an active cube at the table and is willing to play as captain or box. This is the default role for a player.

To add a new player: Type in the name, preferred starting cube, change the roles from the default of "Active" if necessary and click save. If accepting all defaults, you need to tab out of the Preferred Starting Cube text box before the "Save" button is enabled. Click the "Save" button.

To a player who played in a previous session: Click on the name in the list of inactive players on the left. Review the Preferred Starting Cube and Roles and Click the "Save" button.

To change a player currently in the chouette: Click on the name in the list of active players on the right. Change the Preferred Starting Cube or roles. Click the "Save" button.

To remove a player from the rotation, click on the name in the list of active players on the right. Then click the "Remove" button. Do not do this if the player is involved in current games or has yet to cash out.

Notes:

- You can add players at any time. They will be instantly added to the rotation but will not be involved in games in progress.
- When you change the Preferred Starting Cube, it will affect future games only. This is useful for a player who wants to play for one stake until the chouette gets too large, and then wishes to reduce the stake.
- When a player leaves the chouette, change the player to "Inactive" at both tables. The player will continue to be involved in games in progress but will not be involved in new games. When the games in progress are complete, use the menu pick "Transfer" to cash out the player (see below). Then use the "Remove" button to remove the player from the rotation.
- You can choose to have two separate, non-interlocking, chouettes by having each player active at only one table.

Manage the Rotation

The list of active players will appear on the left side of the main screen. Initially, they will appear in the order that they were added to the Chouette. The top player will become the box; the second player will become the captain. The remaining names will be the crew in order.

If the rotation is not correct, you can change it. Click on a player's name in the rotation and click the "Move Up" or "Move Down" button to move that player up or down in the rotation.

You can change the rotation at any time during a game, but this would be exceptional.

Open a Table

Once players have been added, you can begin play by opening tables. Use the "Table-Open" menu pick to open the first table. If you wish to open a second table, use the "Table-Open" menu pick again.

Six is a reasonable minimum number for a two-table interlocking chouette. With less than six, open a single table. You can open the second table at any time as more players arrive and are added.

During the Chouette

After you have opened one or two tables, you can begin the chouette. The mechanics of the Chouette scorer are as follows:

- Begin the game.
- Record cube actions during the game as described below. Cube actions include pass, take and beaver. Other actions include automatic doubles, settlements and extras.
- Record the outcome of the game. The outcome will automatically be recorded if all active cubes are passed or settled. When the game ends and there are still active cubes, record the outcome by indicating whether the box or crew won a single game, a gammon or a backgammon.
- Review the score. This is the last easy moment to correct any errors such as failing to record a cube action.
- Post the score.
- Repeat.

Begin the game:

Click the "New Game" button on the Table Window. If this is the first game, the top player in the rotation becomes box and the second becomes captain. If this is a later game, the winner of the game between box and captain will become the new box (regardless of the box's overall score) and the next player will become captain. The loser, box or captain, will drop to the bottom of the rotation.

The table window will show the name of the box and the captain at the top. Each individual cube will have a separate line in rotation order: first the cube between the box and captain, then the box and the second in rotation, etc. The cubes will initially be centered and will show the amount that each pair of players is playing for.

Record cube actions:

Automatic doubles:

If there is an automatic double, click the "Auto" button. The software only supports one automatic double.

Normal Cube Actions

The Chouette Scorer does not record decision to double. It only records decisions to pass, take or beaver. These are recorded with the small buttons labeled "P", "T" or "B."

You can record decisions player by player. If the box acts on one player's cube, click the appropriate button to the left of the cube. If a crew member acts on the box's cube, click the appropriate button to the right of the cube.

If the cube is passed, the cube disappears, and the outcome of the game is displayed.

If the cube is taken, the cube moves to the appropriate side of the board and the amount is doubled.

If the cube is beavered, the cube moves to the appropriate side of the board and the amount is quadrupled.

If the box or crew acts on all cubes the same way, you can record the action in the "All" box by clicking the appropriate button. Clicking a button in the "All" box will not produce impossible outcomes. For example, clicking "crew passes all" will not affect crew members who already own a cube.

Settlements

You can record a settlement of a cube, by clicking the "S" button to the left of the appropriate cube. In the popup window, click on the winner and enter the settlement amount (whole dollars only).

Extras

At any time, a player can offer another an extra. The player offering the extra is willing to pay a stake to another player to hold a new cube at twice the stakes. The normal scenario is when one of the crew drops a double and another takes. The dropper offers an extra and the taker accepts the extra.

Record the extra by clicking the "Extra" button. In the popup window, select the player who is betting on the box side and the player betting on the crew side. The stake will default to the minimum stake the two are playing for. If the players agree, they can change this amount. Click the "Save" button. A new cube will appear on the table window reflecting the extra.

Note: If you settle an extra, the settlement only reflects a settlement of the cube and does not reflect that payment for the extra. So, for example, if Andy pays 2 for Bill to hold a 4 cube and the game is settled for 0, Andy is total -2 and Bill +2.

Errors in recording cube action

At any time before the score is posted, you can correct errors in recording the cube action by resetting the cube with the "R" button to the right of the cube. This will reset the cube to its initial value. You can reset all cubes by clicking the "R" button in the "All" box in the upper right.

Hint: If all but one or two players take the same cube action, say passing a double, it can be fastest to record “crew passes all” and use the “reset” function for the players who take. Then you can use “crew takes all” to record the takes.

Record Game Outcome

If all active cubes are passed or settled, the game is over. The cubes disappear and the scores are displayed.

If there are active cubes when the game ends, record whether the winner was the box or crew and whether it was a single game, gammon or backgammon. If the box wins, click the “S,” “G” or “B” button in the “box wins” area for single games, gammons, or backgammons. If the crew wins, use the corresponding buttons in the “crew wins” area. The cubes disappear and the scores are displayed.

Note: The program follows the Jacoby rule. There is no bonus for gammons or backgammons when the cubes are still centered.

Note: In case of extras, the displayed score includes both the payment for extra and the game outcome.

Review the Score

This is the last easy moment to correct any scoring errors. This is not to say that the Chouette Scorer will make any arithmetic errors, it won't. But if you fail to record a cube action, record an incorrect cube action or incorrectly record the game outcome, the Chouette Scorer will believe you. It is all too easy to post an incorrect score and it is disruptive to correct it later.

Whatever process your chouette normally uses to verify scores should be observed here.

Post the Score

Click the “Post Score” button to post the score to the top portion of the main window. Under each player's name will be a running total from both boards. Below that will be the game-by-game detail, labeled with the table name and game number.

Note: The game detail differs from what people are used to when scoring on paper. On paper, players generally keep a cumulative score. The Chouette Scorer keeps all individual game scores with a total at the top. Also, when scoring two tables, players generally keep separate score sheets for each table. Here the games are displayed in the same window with a total for both tables at the top.

Close the Table

After a game is complete, it may be that no more games will be played on that table. Click the “Close” button to close the table. The players will be returned appropriate to the rotation.

Cancel a Game in Progress

On occasion, you will start a game and see that the rotation is incorrect. This may happen if the player who should become the captain has stepped away without changing his role in the player window.

To correct the rotation, you must use the “Cancel” button to cancel the game in progress. Then press the “Close” button to close the table. Manipulate the rotation as described in the section “Manage the Rotation” above so that the box appears at the top, the captain second and the rest of the rotation is correct. Use the “Table-Open” menu pick to resume the chouette.

Canceling a game in progress will also permit you to use different rules about retaining the box or adding a new player to the rotation.

Transfers

Use the “Transfer” menu pick to record cash transfers between players. You can record transfers for any purpose, typically correcting human scoring errors and cash outs.

Select the “Transfer” menu item to bring up the transfer window.

Enter a description for the transfer that will appear on the score sheet.

Each player will be listed with a text box to the right where you will enter the transfer amount. Positive numbers will add to a player’s total; negative numbers will reduce it.

Press the “Save” button to record the transfer on the score sheet. The “Save” option will be available only if the transfer sums to zero. You may need to tab out of the most recently entered amount to update the total and activate the “Save” button.

Enter more transfers if needed.

Press the “Close” button when you have completed all transfers.

Example: If Andy is leaving the game with a score of -10 and cashes out by paying Bill \$10, Enter 10 next to Andy’s name and -10 next to Bill’s.

Example: Andy orders pizza for the chouette and pays the driver \$24. Bill and Charlie pay their one-third share through the score sheet. In the transfer window, Enter 16 next to Andy and -8 next to Bill and Charlie.

Robustness

If the computer crashes during the chouette, all posted scores and transfers are recorded in a file in the same directory as the scoring program. The file is named “Score- YYYYMMDD-HHMMSS.csv” where YYYYMMDD and HHMMSS are the date and time that the Chouette Scorer was started. The file is easily opened in a spreadsheet program such as Excel or a program that can read text, such as Word or Notepad.

To resume the chouette, start the program, add players and use the Transfer function to restore the old scores. The program does not remember cube history of games in progress, so you will have to remember that.

Contact

For any questions, contact David Levy at public@booksongaming.com.