

# 2nd Generation Backgammon Tournaments

## OR

# New Ideas In Tournament Backgammon

Can Backgammon be more challenging?

Can serious Backgammon be fun?

Can Backgammon as a game be improved from current state?

Can tournament directors be happy to run a tournament instead of being stressed?

Who is happy in backgammon tournaments when schedule is not met?

Who likes delays in tournament schedule?

Why tournament directors are pushing players to play rounds after rounds?

What is the point of running a backgammon tournament through like Usain Bolt?

Is that fun?

Is there a point using clocks in backgammon tournaments?

Can we go back to old school way with NO CLOCKS?

Why number of players participating backgammon tournaments is decreasing all the time?

Is there something what can be done?

Why is possible prize money so important to tournament players?

Maybe:

- 1) No clocks used = old school way
- 2) Non-existent scheduling/time pressure for tournament director
- 3) Director can go sleeping when she/he gets the tournament running
- 4) Flexible registration time for players (e.g. from Friday 18:00 - Saturday 11:30)
- 5) Tournament matches can be played already on Friday but joining on Saturday is OK
- 6) Minimum of e.g. nine (9) matches guaranteed for each player
- 7) No computers needed for tournament directors (pencils and paper are enough)
- 8) Players enjoying like little kids wanting more and more ...
- 9) Tournament ends earlier than planned

How?

# 2nd Generation Backgammon Tournament Format

## A. General

This tournament format is explained by using 24 participating players but it can be applied to any number of participants. I am using as an example a weekend tournament starting on Friday evening and ending on Sunday afternoon.

Modified round robin play system will be used as qualifying rounds on Friday and Saturday. After qualifying rounds all players will be seeded according to collected match point average from qualifying rounds to MAIN group and CONSOLATION group.

Matches in both groups (main & consolation) will be played by normal single elimination cup system. Last chance (included in entry fee) will be played on Sunday. Minimum amount of matches for one player is nine (9).

Players will be divided in registration phase to two (2) divisions with twelve (12) players in each division. The players within a division shall play round robin style 5-point matches at each players own pace. Minimum of seven (7) and maximum of eleven (11) matches shall be played by every player. It is players own decision to play more than minimum amount of matches.

One tournament with this format was run in Oulu, Finland on May 17th-19th 2013. The actual amount of players was 17. The feedback from players was super positive. There was not a single negative comments heard. I think the best feedback was the comment/question from a very experienced tournament player: "Mika, I have already played eleven (11) matches, can I play more?" (this happened after about 9 hours of playing and we still had lots of time to play). Please see Appendix 1 for tournament flier.

## B. Flexible registration = late participation OK

The player(s) who have no time restrictions can registrate immediately on Friday evening when registration opens. The real tournament matches can start when minimum of two (2) players in one division has registered. When players are coming they will be divided to the two divisions by pre-decided rule (e.g., A,B,A,B,A,B,...). The last point of registration is on Saturday at 11:30. The players joining on Saturday will have plenty of time to play their minimum amount of matches.

### **C. Example of the schedule**

#### **Friday 17.5.**

18:00 – 19:30 Registration and starting the Qualifying round robin matches

24:00 Venue closed

#### **Saturday 18.5.**

10:00 – 11:30 Registration & matches start/continue

→ 20:00 Player cards returned to TD

21:00 Main and consolation single elimination cup matches start

#### **Sunday 19.5.**

11:00 Semifinals start

11:00 Last Chance starts

14:00 Finals start

### **D. Tournament stages**

- 1) Qualifying rounds = Preliminary round robin (Fri evening to Sat evening)
- 2) Main & Consolation single elimination cup system (Sat evening to Sunday)
- 3) Separate traditional Last Chance tournament on Sunday

### **E. Points from each played backgammon match**

- 1) Clear win (5-0, 5-1, 5-2, 5-3) = 3 points
- 2) DMP win (5-4) = 2 points
- 3) DMP loss (4-5) = 1 point
- 4) Clear loss (0-5, 1-5, 2-5, 3-5) = 0 points

All the matches in preliminary round robin are played at own pace in own division without clocks. Minimum of seven (7) matches shall be played by Saturday 20:00 clock. Maximum amount of matches is eleven (11). Every player will be given one extra point/match after seven played matches (i.e. from 8 – 11 matches). This means maximum of four (4) extra points as a reward for working hard and playing so many matches.

All tournament matches shall be played at the tournament venue. There is a Captain in both division who will collect the results (player cards) from each own division players and then report them to Tournament Director on Saturday at 20:00 clock.

The players who have played less than seven matches are punished for being lazy. The punishment is -3 points/unplayed match. Additionally those players who have played less than seven matches can not join the Last Chance tournament on Sunday. This rule might sound cruel but it has a very important message for players. In reality there is so much

time (naturally planned in advance very carefully) that playing minimum of seven 5-pointers is a very easy task.

## **F. Player cards**

Every player shall keep a record of played tournament matches with scores clearly written to the player card. Every player has the freedom of using their favorite record keeping method (i.e. in registration players are given blank paper and a pencil/pen).

After player has finished playing matches the cumulative amount of match points shall be divided by number of matches played. The maximum amount of points in this example is  $11*3 + 4*1 = 33+4 = 37$  points. Which would mean eleven pure match wins plus four (4) additional bonus points. This would give the maximum points average of  $37/11 = 3,364$ . This is possible but naturally very rare ( $1/2048 = 0,05\%$ ).

The completed player record will be given to the captain in each division with two important information clearly visible:

- 1) players name
- 2) players point average either in decimal or fraction format

After captains verification the player records are delivered to the TD for final ranking of players.

## **G. Rank order**

Rank order (1. 2. 3. . . . 23. 24.) of players is determined by the best match points average (1st) to the lowest (24<sup>th</sup>). Match points average is calculated in following way: cumulative amount of points/number of matches played: e.g. 15 points in ten (10) matches =  $15/10 = 1,500$

1. Match points average
2. Match win - %
3. Pure match win -%
4. DMP win - %
5. A decisive DMP match is played (if enough time exists)
6. Players will decide their rank by rolling dice

When two or more players have exactly the same match point average (above point 1.) the rank is determined by rules in points 2., 3., ... 6.

Every player has a predetermined place according to the qualifying rank in stage two single cup charts. The best eight (8) players will continue in progressive MAIN chart having four (4) rounds. Players ranked 5.-8. will play first round. Players ranked 3.-4. will join in

second round. The best two qualifying players will have a place directly in semifinals (3rd round). The final will be the fourth round.

The players who have faced hard luck and nasty jokers will be placed to the 16-player CONSOLATION chart according to their rank. There is no progressive element in consolation. The same amount of rounds (4) shall be played as in MAIN chart.

If the amount of players is less than 24 the rule is to let about 1/3 of the players to progressive MAIN and rest 2/3 of the players to consolation. In this case the best ranked players in consolation will be given the possible byes in consolation chart.

## **H. Charts**

to be added in next version

## **I. Trophies**

to be added in next version

## **J. Money distribution**

to be added in next version

Please test freely this format in your local tournament(s) and also feel free to make the format even better.

I am sure when this format is understood by players and tournament directors it will revolutionize tournament backgammon to a new level.

Any clarifying questions of this tournament format should be directed to

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Appendix 1

# Welcome to 1<sup>st</sup> SUKHOTHAI OPEN BACKGAMMON CHAMPIONSHIPS on 17-19.05.2013 in OULU

Venue: Restaurant SUKHOTHAI, Uusikatu/Hallituskatu 19, 90100 Oulu,  
Finland



**FREE buffet** every day for registered players

**ADDED MONEY\* €700 - €1200**

Entry fee €50 + optional €50 side pool  
**NO REGISTRATION FEES !**

## LIMITED TO MAXIMUM 24 PLAYERS

LATE PARTICIPATION (SATURDAY REGISTRATION) IS POSSIBLE !

**Championship flight**, limited to max 24 players.

Modified round robin play system will be used as qualifying rounds on Friday & Saturday. After qualifying rounds all players will be seeded according to collected points in qualifying rounds to main group and consolation group. Matches in both groups (main & consolation) will be played by normal single elimination cup system. Last chance (included in entry fee) will be played on Sunday. Minimum amount of matches for one player is nine (9).

### Friday 17.5.

18:00 – 19:30 Registration

20:00 Qualifying round robin matches start

21:00-23:00 Late dinner buffet free for all registered players

### Saturday 18.5.

10:00 – 11:30 Registration

12:00 Games start/continue

17:00-20:00 Dinner buffet free for all registered players

21:00 Main and consolation single elimination cup matches start

### Sunday 19.5.

11:00 Semifinals start

12:00-15:00 Lunch buffet free for all registered players

13:00 Last Chance starts

14:00 Finals start

Price money distribution:

Main winner 35%, main finalist 20%, consolation winner 20%, consolation finalist 10% and last chance winner 15%. 100% of entry fees will be returned to players as prize money. Trophies for best four players in main and consolation and for best two players in last chance.

Tournament committee will be selected at the venue. The committee has all rights to manage the tournament, e.g. change the time schedule if needed, decide the match lengths in round robin and cup system (depends on number of players) etc. Clocks will NOT be used. Backgammon boards are provided, no need to bring your own board.

NOTE \*) If number of players is less than 14 (fourteen) there is NO added money.

The tournament will be held in center of Oulu city. Closest hotels (all within 5 min walking radius from venue):

- <http://www.omenahotels.com/>
- <http://www.hotelapollo.fi/>
- [http://www.cumulus.fi/hotellit/oulu/en\\_GB/oulu/](http://www.cumulus.fi/hotellit/oulu/en_GB/oulu/)
- <http://www.sokoshotels.fi/en/hotels/oulu/arina/>

From the Oulu Railway station to Restaurant Sukhothai 5 min by walking (500m). From the Oulu Bus station to Restaurant Sukhothai 10 min by walking (900m). From the Oulu airport to Restaurant Sukhothai 20 min by car (14 km). Taxi from airport to Restaurant Sukhothai will cost about €30. Bus #19 schedule from airport to center of city: <http://www.koskilinjat.fi/aikataulut/paikallisliikenne/15346-19-oulunsaalosta-keskustaan--linnanmaalle>



***RESERVE YOUR PLACE EARLY FOR THIS GREAT FUN & VALUE  
TOURNAMENT (LIMITED TO MAX 24 PLAYERS) !***

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