

# Backgammon Future – What Should Be Done?

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Last two big events in this month – World Backgammon Championship in Monte Carlo and World Series of Backgammon in Cannes – have show us once more that negative tendencies of Backgammon Tournament World are still staying: the number of participants in Monte Carlo decrease in comparison with last year again (173 players against 199 in 2008) and in WSOB in Cannes more than in two times (74 against 155 in 2008).

What should to be done to break these tendencies and make backgammon tournaments popular again?

I suppose that “It is impossible to change old tournament system we have!”

I have got examined all the problems in my book “Fair Backgammon Tournament Rules” and arrived at follow conclusion:

*“The existing tournament system is full of all sorts of inconsistencies and contradictions:*

*- we fix a number of points to be gained to win the match, while, on the other hand, we are indifferent how much time a match continues (as known, nowadays time limits are established practically for all large tournaments, but not everywhere);*

*- in the attempt to minimize the factor of luck we extend the length of a match, i.e. increase the number of points to be gained to win it, while, on the other hand, we remain quite insensible to the fact that a player gains his two and sometimes three points, without using the doubling cube but due to exclusively an unique series of his rolls;*

*- we introduce the “**Crawford Rule**” in order to reduce strong effect of the doubling cube in one last game (for the player, leading in the score), while, on the other hand, it is completely indifferent for us what happens with the doubling cube in all subsequent games;*

*- we organize Backgammon tournaments in which an equal amount of money is paid by each player as a participation fee, while, on the other hand, we accept and allow to draw a right for the first move in each game. And this action, from logical point of view, is incorrect to use in the tournament play both formally and essentially, since it is well known that situations frequently arise, when a player starts 20 times while his opponent only three. In fact, it means that one of the players will have minimum a six or seven-fold advantage in a match right at the start regardless of the possible values of these opening rolls.*

*Another question is: who is interested in it or will somebody accept to play a match, if his opponent will get the right to the opening move in each game?*

*We have probably touched on very sensitive aspects of the consensus existing today concerning the tournament rules. However, such a situation appears quite unfavorable, and it would be rather interesting to see how the future of this ancient game will be presented in the modern “package”, i.e. with the use of the balanced scoring system proposed for tournament play.*“

I know that it'll be not easy to change the structure of the backgammon tournaments we have today. In case of implementing of my balanced scoring system we should teach the players how to use it, how to make the match scoring and so on. Surely we need more special sensor

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boards like “BEZMA” in this case as well. But I know too that it’ll be definitive necessary for new generation of backgammon players and we should go this way simple because we have no alternative at all!

I suppose we should to promote CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILY BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENTS! Hope it’ll be next year World Backgammon Championship for Children, Youth and Family!

Possible decision of new forms and formats of backgammon tournaments before we teach new generation of backgammon players and produce necessary number of sensor boards I have found two month ago – it is **FPP-Tournament™** (**FPP-Tournament™** is a trademark of “Fair Backgammon”, Dr.-Ing. Jakob Garal, info@fairbg.com, Skype: FairBG).

Backgammon Fixed Play Parameters Tournament (Backgammon tournament with fixed play parameters) is promoted with fixed time and playing intervals, with known quantity of matches and games in each of matches.

**Weekly or small FPP-Tournament™** is offered to make under following conditions:

Pairing in the first round	- casual.
Pairing after the first round	- Swiss.
Time for one round	- 30 minutes.
Quantity of games in a round	- 4
Quantity of rounds (depends on number of participants)	- 3 - 5.

For **large FPP-Tournament™** it is proposed a tournament session by one day:

Pairing in the first round	- casual.
Pairing after the first round	- Swiss.
Time for one round	- 45-60 minutes.
Quantity of games in a round	- 8, 10, 12.
Quantity of rounds	- 5-7.

If **FPP-Tournament™** should take more than one day time, then TD can find the total winner and other prize winners of this event like his/her total sum of the best places of each (one day) tournament session.

### Backgammon FPP-Tournament™ rules are following:

1. Before the **FPP-Tournament™** begin each player buys the fixed amount of game chips (for example, 10 chips for 100€).

2. TD advertises the time interval given for one round and quantity of games which should be played in this time. If players finished the quantity of games fixed by TD for one round, and it remains more than 5 minutes till the official termination of this round they can under the arrangement play any additional quantity of games - as many as possible. If players had not finished the necessary quantity of games fixed by TD in the given time, they are obliged to finish last (current) game in this round and report their actual results after that.

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3. The first round begins: the starting stake in a game one chip. All games are played with a doubling cube, i.e. doubling acceptance increases the stake to the two chips and so on. It is a full analogue of money-game. After the first round finished players inform the TD about their results: quantity of chips they have won and quantity the games they have finished. According to these results new play pairs are formed (Swiss system) and the second round begins.
4. The starting stake in each game in the second and third rounds should be the same, as well as in the first - one chip. From the 4th round the starting stake could be doubled each next round (2 chips, 4 chips etc.) or it is fixed by the TD preliminary.
5. Quantity of chips during the game should be enough to pay for any double proposal. In case one of the players has not enough chips to double the stake he can't double his opponent or win more chips than he has. This player can buy some quantity of chips after any game, but never during the game. Buy-add can't be more than a starting set of chips: usually there is a starting set or half of it.
6. During the first three rounds there is a possibility for players, who have lost all their chips, but want to play in the **FPP-Tournament™** further, to re-buy a starting set (like in poker). Or players can re-buy it in any round after any game after which they have lost all their chips (TD option).
7. Player, who has lost all his chips and doesn't want to re-buy starting set, leaves the **FPP-Tournament™**.
8. The actual places for all participants of the **FPP-Tournament™** are defined after the last round is finished. The sum of the chips which a player has won after all matches is the quantitative characteristic considered at this ranking.
9. Rating of a player can be estimate by very simple method: the amount of chips with the account of quantity of games after all matches in the **FPP-Tournament™**.

### Commercial option

**10. Each player, who has some number of chips after FPP-Tournament™ finished, wins a prize equivalent to this sum of the chips recalculated into the money and minus the commission fee of the FPP-Tournament™ organizer.**

## **Main Advantages**

### **For Tournament Organizers**

1. Easy tournament management and promotion.
2. Exact calculation of the required time per each round and the entire tournament.
3. Easy pairing of players in each round. No problems with late arriving players.
4. Exact calculation of any side events.
5. As a result of clauses 1-4, the possibility to increase the sum of money the organizer can earn during the tournament and simultaneously to reduce the time to spend for it.

### **For Players**

1. Knowledge of the precise quantity of matches and games in each match.
2. Knowledge of playing time granted per match and the entire tournament.
3. Actual continuous control about his money bankroll during the tournament.
4. Possibility to continue play in the tournament after losing the starting set of chips.
5. Possibility to play more matches against more players in the tournament.
6. No registration fee if you lose all your chips - registration fees pay players which have some amount of chips after the tournament finished (they won money!).

I was very surprised that my talks with best players about the possibility to promote **FPP-Tournament™** during WSOB in Cannes received very positive reaction and provided me follow results:

Votes: 49

Pro: 41

Contra: 8 (with specific comments - *like side event, interesting, try to promote etc.*)

I have promoted small **FPP-Tournament™** 6 times in Kharkov (Ukraine) in May and one time in Aachen (Germany) in June. There are some results of these tournaments:

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### Restaurant “Aragvi”, Kharkov, 17. May 2009

Registration, Gr.	– 200
Number of chips	– 10
Number of rounds	– 4
Number of games in a round	– 4
Time for one round, minutes	– 30

Player	Number of Rounds/ Games Re-buy	Place	Final Number of Chips	Money (+/-)	Player Rating
Igor Mosin	3/12	1	34	480	1500
Vitalij Kuznezov	4/16	2	16	120	687
Alexandr Krasov	4/16	3	7	-60	406
Sergej Zhitnik	4/15 R	4	15	-100	333
Valerij Zavershinsky	3/11 0,5S	5	0	-100	273
Vasily Kavun	4/16 R	6	3	-340	125
SUM			Σ 75	Σ 0	Σ

### Cafe du Nord, Aachen, 12.06.09

Registration, €	– 100
Number of chips	– 10
Number of rounds	– 3
Number of games in a round	– 4
Time for one round, minutes	– 30

Player	Number of Rounds/ Games Re-buy	Place	Final Number of Chips	Money (+/-)	Player Rating
Manuela Tiller	3/11	1	17	70	818
Jakob Garal	3/12	2	17	70	791
Michael Roth	3/12	3	16	60	750
Johannes	3/10	4	12	20	600
Paul	3/11	5	11	10	509
Marc von Rey	3/10	6-7	6	-40	300
Ralf Woelk	3/10	6-7	6	-40	300
Uwe	3/10 +0,5R	8	0	-150	-250
SUM			Σ 85	Σ 0	Σ