

USBGF Standards of Ethical Practice (usbgf.org/standards-of-ethical-practice/)

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The USBGF has formed a Rules and Ethics Committee dedicated to helping the backgammon community achieve the highest possible levels of fair play, good sportsmanship, and appropriate behavior.

We have two goals in seeking to maintain these higher ideals:

- 1) to assure that participation in organized backgammon play at all levels will be a fair and enjoyable experience;
- 2) to promote the game of backgammon in the most positive manner.

Members of the USBGF and tournaments, clubs, playing sites, and all events which are governed, sanctioned or supported by the USBGF must adhere to these Standards. Note that these Standards are intended to help tournament directors and players establish guidelines for play and conduct. Application and interpretation of the rules of play and conduct at individual tournaments is solely the responsibility of the tournament director and designated tournament staff or ruling committees.

FAIR PLAY

The overriding principle that applies to any backgammon competition is that to the best of the organizer's ability, everyone participating shall have a fair and equal chance to win any prizes, rating points, or recognition that may be offered. While organizers are free to use their judgment in many areas not specifically covered by the USBGF Rules or Standards, they are expected to demonstrate to all that providing a level playing field and ensuring fair play are the most important considerations in all decisions. Application of the rules and decisions relative to the draw, seeding, format, assignment to divisions, and awarding of prizes must all be done in the most transparent fashion possible to ensure that all may see and know the process by which these decisions are made. Special accommodations for handicapped or disabled people should be provided if possible; participants are expected to be supportive of such accommodations.

ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

The USBGF requires all members and supported programs to maintain high standards of ethics and good sportsmanship. Backgammon is a skill game open to the general public and to people of all kinds. Inappropriate language, attire, or offensive behavior will not be tolerated.

Illegal activities are, of course, specifically banned including but not limited to such things as cheating, fraud, violence or the threat of violence, slander and libel, and general disruptive behavior. Cheating shall be presumed from the mere possession of equipment designed or configured to provide the capability for cheating, regardless of whether that equipment was observed to be used.

Good sportsmanship and friendly competition are required to be maintained by all USBGF members and supported programs and events. Because backgammon is generally played without an official or referee, the players, themselves, are required to be fair and demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times. This includes calling attention to and correcting any irregularities

(other than as specifically permitted by the rules), even if doing so is not in the player's self-interest.

False or misleading statements and actions specifically designed to cause rule infractions by opponents, or to mislead directors or opponents with regard to facts (including identity masking or withholding information about previous experience), are in violation of these Standards.

Tournament Directors and event organizers have a responsibility to encourage, monitor, and enforce principles of fair play and good sportsmanship and are empowered and expected to take action as necessary to maintain these principles.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

USBGF members and the organizers of supported programs and events are expected to act in a manner that promotes a positive image and atmosphere for the game of backgammon, both in the actual events and outside of the events. Players who have grievances or complaints are free to express their views in a polite, appropriate manner, bringing any questions or complaints directly and privately to the attention of the event organizer or the USBGF Rules and Ethics Committee. Public berating or harassment of tournament directors, players, or officials is not conducive to promoting a positive image for the game of backgammon or the USBGF, nor is it the best approach to influence positive change, and therefore is not in keeping with these Standards.

RECOURSE FOR VIOLATIONS:

Any USBGF member who believes their rights to fair play and appropriate behavior as defined above have been violated is encouraged to first discuss said issues with the tournament or event organizer to see if appropriate action or satisfaction can be achieved in that manner. USBGF members and tournament directors are also free to contact the Rules and Ethics Committee via email (rules@usbfgf.org) and request an investigation into alleged violations of these Standards.

The Rules and Ethics Committee will use its best judgment to determine how to handle complaints.

Note that in the event of a dispute, the primary goal of the Rules and Ethics Committee is NOT to punish, ban, or embarrass any individual, but to help the people involved resolve differences of opinion and misunderstandings, to help ensure that any violations of these Standards are not repeated, and to maintain the good name and image of the game of backgammon and the USBGF.

Any questions relative to these Standards may be addressed to the Rules and Ethics Committee by email (rules@usbfgf.org).

TOURNAMENT INQUIRIES, RULINGS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

A tournament director who conducts an inquiry into an alleged serious violation of these Standards should ensure that another director, staff member or neutral player is present to witness the proceedings.

Tournament directors must immediately report to the USBGF Executive Director any instance in which a player was forfeited from a match, disqualified from the tournament or banned from

participation in future tournaments because of a violation of the Standards of Ethical Practice. The USBGF will conduct a review of all such reports. The USBGF may disseminate the facts, may provide guidance to tournament directors and may impose broader sanctions upon the offending player.

All rulings made at tournaments are final and are not eligible for further appeal to the USBGF. The proper time for a player subject to an inquiry to provide evidence and argument is at the tournament, while the inquiry is being conducted. However, a player who is the subject of a ruling for which the above reporting requirements are applicable is entitled to submit a written statement to the USBGF Executive Director and/or the USBGF Rules and Ethics Committee (rules@usbfgf.org), ideally within 7 days following the incident, to be considered as part of the USBGF review. In particular, any mitigating factors should be presented. Some examples of mitigating factors are a belief that the adverse ruling was the result of a failure by the director to follow the Rules or reasonable procedures, or due to alleged bias, malice or other breach of the Standards of Ethical Practice by the director(s) or any other parties involved. New evidence that has come to light that could not have been presented during the inquiry at the tournament may also be presented. The USBGF will attempt to contact any player who is the subject of such a director's report, to inform them of that fact and to solicit such a statement. The USBGF's obligation to contact the player shall be exhausted with the contact information provided by the player to the USBGF with their member registration, or with their registration for the tournament in question. Players are responsible for providing and maintaining accurate and current contact information in their user profile page at usbfgf.org.