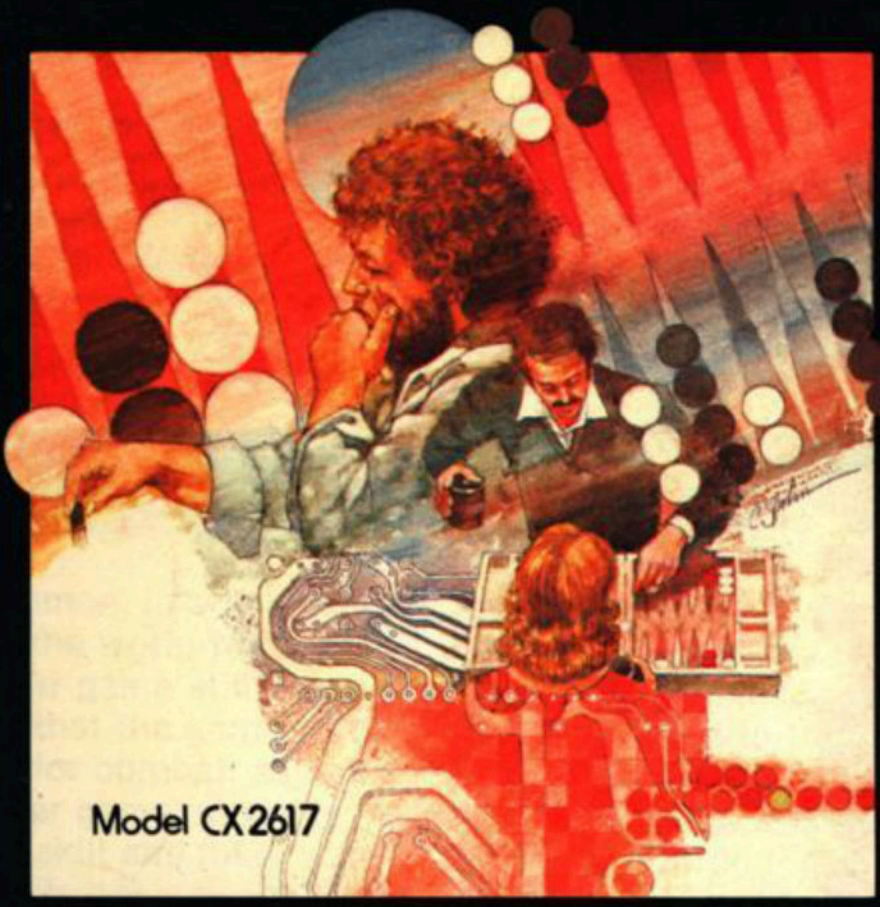
BACKGAMMON

GAME PROGRAM™ INSTRUCTIONS



ATARI®

A Warner Communications Company

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BACKGAMMON

Use one set of Standard Paddle Controllers with this Game Program™. Plug the controller cable firmly into the jack labeled LEFT CONTROLLER at the rear of your Video Computer System™. Hold the controller with the red button to your upper left toward the television screen. *See Section 3 of your owners manual for further details.*



NOTE: Turn the console **off** when inserting or removing a Game Program. This will protect the electronic components and prolong the life of your Atari® Video Computer System.

BACKGAMMON

Backgammon, in some version, has been played in various parts of the world for over 5,000 years. It is possibly the oldest war game still being played. It is suggested in early writings that the game was originally designed to train soldiers for combat, as backgammon has all the intricacies of any war game: strategy, position, and timing. It is both a game of skill and luck, which probably accounts for its longevity.

The most ancient possible ancestor to be found so far dates back to the ancient civilization of Sumer. The Egyptian Pharoahs played a similar game. Game boards were found during the excavations of King Tut's tomb that are akin to backgammon. The ancient Greeks and Romans played different forms of the game that were mentioned in many of their writings. A form of backgammon was played in the Middle East long before the Crusades. In fact, it is believed that the Crusaders brought the game back to Britain with them, where it flourished in the eighth and ninth centuries.

The earliest written mention of the name "backgammon" was made in 1645, in a description of a game that is very much like backgammon as it is played today. The rules of today's game were set down by Edmond Hoyle in 1743.

The object of all the variations of the game, from its beginnings to now, is to move your game pieces around the board and **bear them off** before your opponent does.

USING THE CONTROLLER

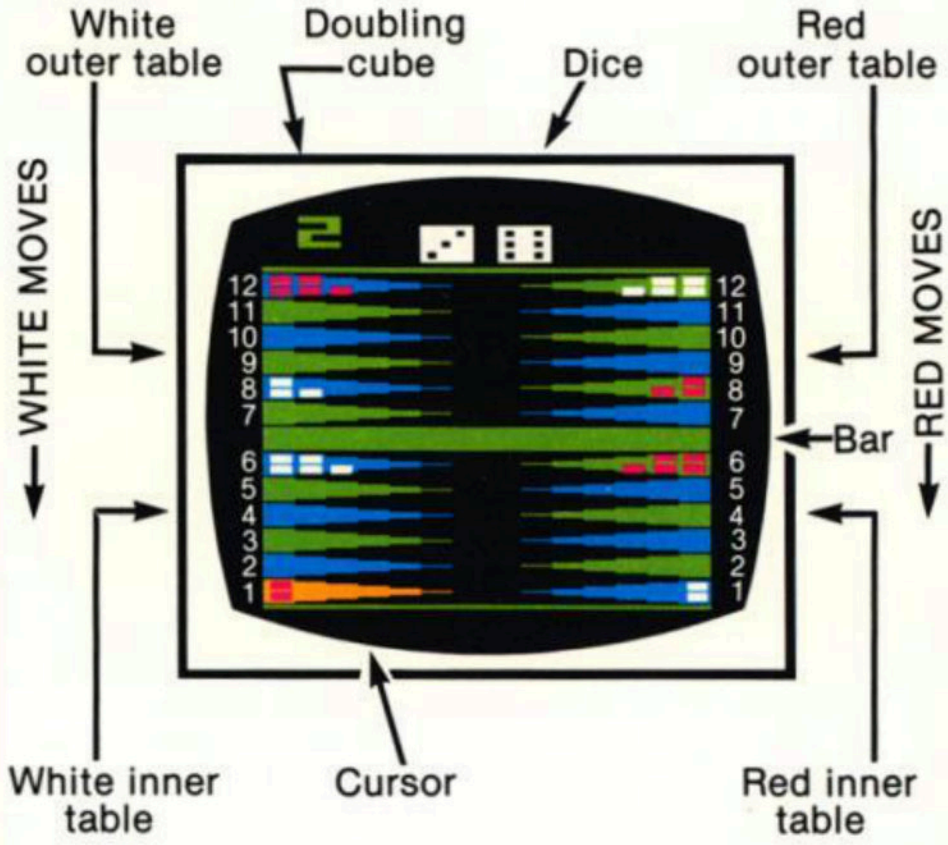
When it is your turn to move your game pieces, a yellow **cursor** will appear. Turn the knob on the controller until the cursor is on the point from which you wish to move your piece. Press the red controller button; this will "pick up" the piece and you can move it around the board by turning the controller knob. To deposit the piece, press the red controller button again. The computer will not allow you to place a piece on a point that does not correspond to the numbers shown on the dice.

If, after your dice have been rolled, you find that there are no moves open to you, press the red controller button. The dice will roll again for your opponent.

HOW TO PLAY

Cycle through the BACKGAMMON Game Program variations by depressing the **game select** switch on your Video Computer System console. (See the back page for descriptions of each variation.) For "normal play," the **left** and **right difficulty** switches must be in the **a** position. To begin play, depress the **game reset** switch.

NOTE: Other functions of the **difficulty** switches are explained further on in the text.



The Board

The backgammon "board" is divided into two halves or **tables**. The divider is called the **bar**. The **inner table** is the portion at the bottom of the playfield; the **outer table** is the portion at the top of the playfield.

Each table is also divided into halves. The red player's home or **inner table** is on the lower right side of the playfield; the white player's home or **inner table** is on the lower left side of the playfield. The red player's **outer table** is on the upper right side of the playfield; the white player's **outer table** is on the upper left side of the playfield.

Each player's inner and outer table has six **points**. The point is the area on which you rest your pieces as you move around the board. Each point is numbered for reference starting in each player's inner table. The white side is numbered 1 to 12 starting at the bottom left of the board; the red side is numbered 1 to 12 starting at the bottom right side of the board.

The Moves

The moves are governed by "casting the dice." When beginning, the players each cast one die (done automatically by the computer). The player with the highest number begins first, using the number count on both dice. On the playfield, the die on the left represents the white player, the die on the right represents the red player for the beginning roll. The color of the dice corresponds to which player won the roll and will begin the game. After the initial move, each player rolls and moves alternately.

When the **right difficulty** switch is in the **a** position, the computer will roll the dice for you. When the switch is in the **b** position, you can use your own dice and "dial in" the numbers to the computer. Turn the controller knob and the number on the left die will change. When you have the number you want to enter, push the red controller button. Then dial in the second number on the right die and push the red controller button. The computer will accept the roll and your moves may be made accordingly.

In one-player games, the computer will play red.

The white player must move his or her pieces counterclockwise around the board, casting off or **bearing off** (removing the pieces from the board) from the white inner table. The red player must move his or her pieces clockwise around the board, bearing off from the red player's inner table.

The pieces are moved across the points according to the numbers on the dice. Each die must be considered individually, but they can be applied to one piece or two pieces. (For example, a roll of **5-3** would allow a player to move one piece five points and another piece three points, or the player can move one piece five points and then three points.)

When there is only one piece occupying a point it is called a **blot**. A point with no pieces or a blot is said to be **open**. A point with two or more pieces is said to be made or **closed**. Opposing player's pieces may never occupy the same point at the same time.

If a point is closed, an opposing piece cannot move to that point. However, a player may move past a closed point if there is sufficient count on the dice. (If a player has rolled a **5-3** and the five-count point is closed, moving five points and then three points is not allowed. However, moving three points and then five points is permissible.)

Players must use the count on both dice whenever possible. If only one die can be used, it must be the die with the higher count.

If you close six consecutive points anywhere on the board, you have established a **prime**. Your opponent cannot move past the prime until you break it by moving pieces and creating an open point. The explanation contained in "The Bar" will show you why it is good strategy to build a prime on your inner table.

The Bar

If a player lands on a blot belonging to the opponent, the opponent's blot is **hit**, meaning the piece that occupied that point is removed to the **bar**. Whenever a piece has been hit and placed on the bar, it must reenter the board on the opponent's inner table. (The white player enters on the lower right inner table; the red player enters on the lower left inner table.)

A piece must enter the board only on an open point whose number has been cast on one die. If there is an opposing blot on an entry point, the piece entering hits it and it is removed to the bar. The sum of the dice cannot be used to enter a piece.

Until all pieces on the bar have been entered, a player cannot move any other pieces on the board. If a roll does not permit entry, the turn passes. Pieces may not enter on closed points. If a roll does permit entry, and there are no other pieces on the bar, the remainder of the roll may be used to move other pieces on the board.

A player is said to be **shutout** if all six entry points are occupied, which is why it is good strategy to build a prime on your inner table. Then, if you hit one of your opponent's blots, the piece cannot be entered from the bar until the prime is broken. This allows time to move pieces onto your inner table and to begin bearing them off while your opponent remains stuck on the bar.

Doublets

Doublets occur when you roll double numbers (**3-3**, for example). When this occurs a player must move the number shown on one die **four** times. You may move one piece all four moves, or any other combination of pieces that you choose. If you cannot use all combinations, the dice pass to your opponent.

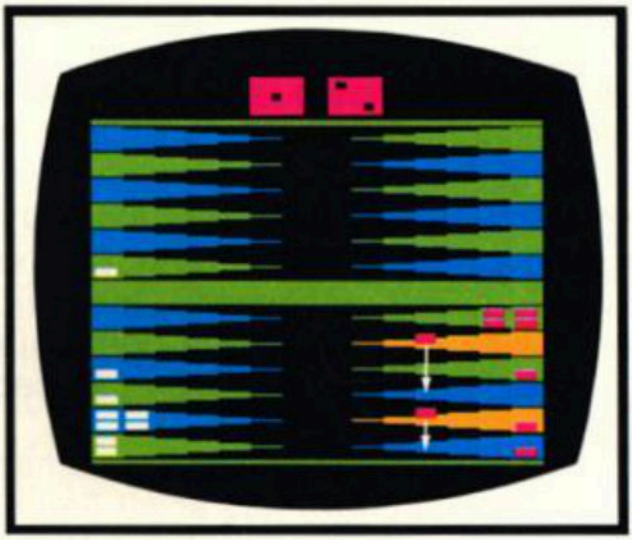
Bearing off

As soon as a player has all fifteen pieces on the inner table, **bearing off** begins. This is the object of the game. Once borne off the board, a piece never returns to play. The first player to bear off all pieces is the winner.

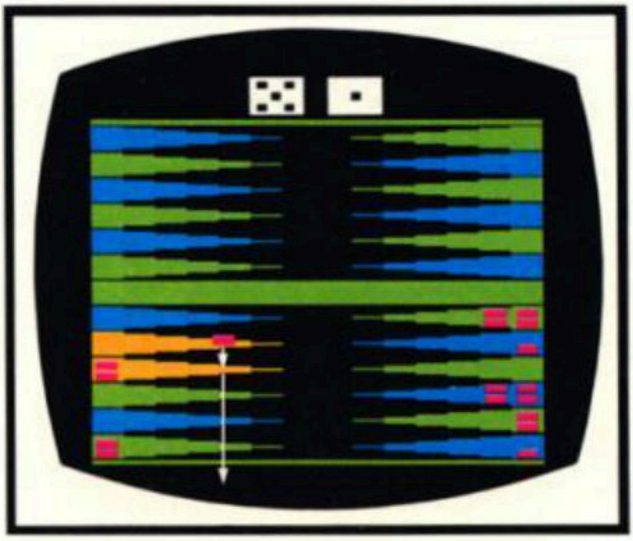
A piece may be borne off when the number of points remaining is the same as the number on the dice. (For example: a roll of **5-3** will bear off a piece from the five-point and the three-point.) If the roll is higher than any occupied points, pieces may be borne off from the highest occupied point. (If a player has 2 pieces each on the three and two-points and a roll of **5-3** is made, both pieces from the three-point may be borne off.)



A player may use all or part of the roll to move pieces within the inner table instead of bearing them off. (With a roll of **1-2**, a player may move a piece from the five-point to the three-point, and a piece from the two-point to the one-point.) Doublets may also be used in this manner.



If your opponent has pieces on your inner table or the bar and you have begun bearing off, it is to your advantage to leave as few blots as possible. Remember that if you take **both** counts on the dice, it does not matter in which order they are taken.



In this diagram you have a blot on your five-point and you roll a **5-1**. If you bear off from the five-point with the higher number, you will still be leaving blots on the three-point and four-point since you must use both numbers of the roll (which means your second move will move a piece from the four-point to the three-point). Instead, your best play is to take the piece from the five-point for the 1-count (putting it on the four-point with your other two pieces), and then bear off using the higher number. This way you have not left any blots on your inner table. The point again is that you may play the dice in either order, according to your best moves.

Doubling Cube

Backgammon has enjoyed various degrees of success throughout its history. The game was in a decline in the United States during the early 1900's until the introduction of the **doubling cube** in 1920. Until this innovation, the outcome of a game could be decided in the first few rolls of the dice. Play would continue anyway, since with any dice game, there was always the chance of something unusual occuring. But... most of the time, the games became boring.

Backgammon is one of the few gambling games in which one can see what the opponent has at all times. The doubling cube introduced the strategies of "bluffing" and psychological play that are similar to other gambling games. The "game of chance" factor is always present because of the use of dice. A skillful player can lose to a less skillful player because of the luck of the dice, but with the doubling cube added, the more skillful player will not lose as much.

As a gambling game, backgammon is played for a base "stake" which is agreed upon before beginning play. The doubling cube (represented by the number at the upper left of the playfield) starts at **1**. This means the players are competing for the original stake. Each time the stakes are doubled, this number changes (2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64) — 64 times the original stake is the largest amount possible to wager.

After the player winning the first move has completed his or her turn, the computer will ask the opponent **YESdbl** or **NOdbl**. By turning the controller knob to **YESdbl** and pushing the red controller button, the opponent has offered to double the stakes and the doubling cube will now show **2**.

The first player now has the option of accepting or not accepting the double.

To accept the double, turn the controller knob to **YESacc** and push the red controller button. The dice will then roll for your opponent's turn.

To reject the double, turn the controller knob to **NOacc** and push the red controller button. The game will end at that point. To start a new game, depress the **game reset** button.

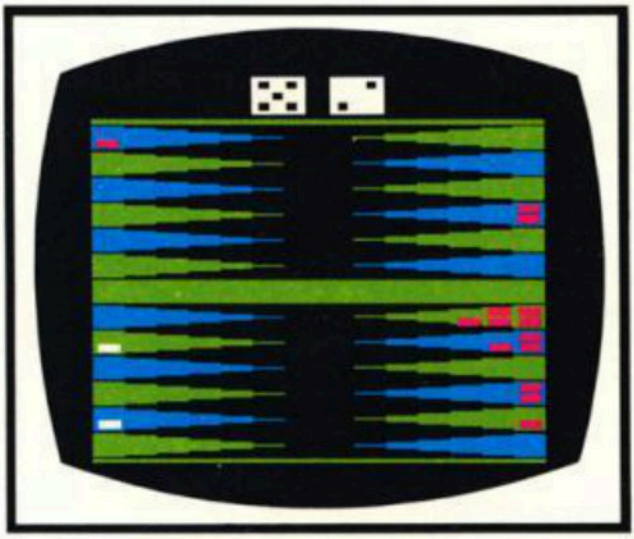
When you offer to double the stakes and your opponent accepts the double, he or she then "owns" the doubling cube. It will be up to your opponent to redouble at a time when it is advantageous to do so.

If your opponent offers to redouble the stakes and you accept, then you "own" the doubling cube and you can again offer to redouble when you think it is to your advantage. The player who "owns" the doubling cube is shown by the color of the number (representing the doubling cube) at the top of the playfield. (If it is red, it belongs to the red player; if it is white, it belongs to the white player.)

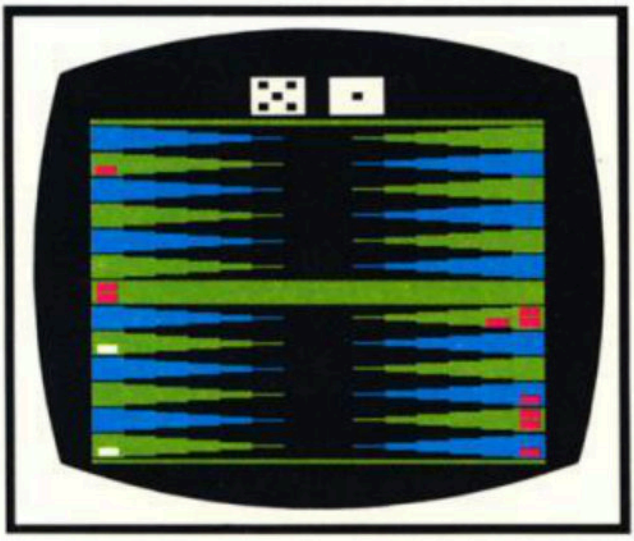
In one-player games, if the computer decides to offer a double, it asks only **YESacc** or **NOacc**. If you own the doubling cube and want to double the stakes against the computer, enter **YESdbl** when it appears on the screen. The computer will continue to play if it accepts the double, or quit if it refuses the double.

In both one-player and two-player games, if neither player doubles during the game, the doubling cube will remain green and a **1** will show on the screen. In two-player games, the computer will continue to ask each player in turn if they wish to offer a double.

Gammon and Backgammon



If a player has borne off all of his or her pieces and the opponent has not borne off **any**, the game is called a **gammon**. The opponent loses twice the stakes (times whatever is showing on the doubling cube).



If a player has borne off all of his or her pieces and the opponent still has pieces on the bar or in the player's inner table, the game is called a **backgammon**. The opponent loses three times the stakes (times whatever is showing on the doubling cube). A backgammon among skilled players is rare.

It is advisable, if it appears that you are going to be gammoned or backgammoned, to refuse your opponent's double and retire from the game.

Set Up Mode

It has been mentioned that the **left** and **right difficulty** switches must both be in the **a** position for normal game play. To create a "set up mode" in which you can pick up pieces one by one and place them in various positions around the board, slide the **left difficulty** switch to the **b** position.

Use the controller that corresponds to the color of the dice on the screen when operating in the set up mode. This mode allows you to work out specific problems or strategies. As in regular play, the computer will not allow opposing colors to occupy the same point when you are moving pieces around the board.

Slide the **left difficulty** switch back to the **a** position to start or continue normal game play. When the game is returned to normal play, the pieces which correspond to the color and count showing on the dice must be moved, before the computer rolls the dice again.

Illegal Move

Normally, the computer will not allow you to make an illegal move. There is a specific situation, however, in which the computer will illegally allow you to move a piece using the count on one die, even though there are no open points that correspond to the count remaining on the other die.

When this situation occurs, the game goes into a temporary state of suspension.



Notice how the white pieces are arranged in the diagram. For the sake of this example, a **3-5** roll occurs for the white player. If the player's first action is to use the three-count by moving a piece from the white twelve-point to the white nine-point, the computer will accept the move even though it was illegal.

Now there are no open points on which the player can move, using the remaining five-count. The computer allowed the first move, and is waiting for a second move, which is not possible.

In this situation, the correct move for the white player would have been to advance a piece from the red twelve-point to the white ten-point (using the three-count), and then from the white ten-point to the white five-point (using the five-count).

If an illegal move such as this one happens during a game, there are two possible solutions. One is to use the set up mode (**left difficulty** switch in **b** position), return the white pieces to their previous position, and execute the correct move. The other is to depress the **game reset** switch and start a new game.

ACEY DEUCEY



This variation was developed by members of the U.S. Navy. It is similar to some of the game versions played in the Mediterranean area, which suggests that it started in that region. The rules of Acey Deucey may vary from ship to ship and even from player to player. They are not standardized, as are the rules for backgammon.

In the Atari version, all the pieces start out on the bar and can be entered at any time with the roll of the dice. A piece need not be entered from the bar before another piece can be moved, even if that piece was hit and sent to the bar.

The other rules of backgammon apply in terms of moving the pieces around the board, open and closed points, hitting a blot, bearing off, and using the doubling cube.

A roll of **1-2** (acey deucey) allows a player to choose whichever doublets are advantageous, after making the **1-2** move. After moving the doublets, the player is further rewarded with another roll of the dice.

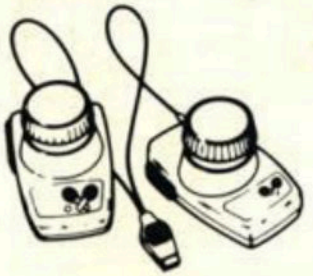
After rolling acey-deucey, turn the controller knob, and "dial in" the number on the left die, then push the red controller button.

The die on the right will change to match the number on the left die. Push the red controller button again and play your doublets. After the last move on your doublet, the computer will roll the dice again for you and you may make another move.

If, after moving your doublet, you roll another acey-deucey, you can again move the **1-2** and choose another doublet.

The **left difficulty** switch should be in the **a** position when playing acey-deucey.

BACKGAMMON



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	BACKGAMMON				ACEY DEUCEY			
Game no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Number of players	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Doubling cube								

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