



Brass City **BACKGAMMON**

Sportsmanlike Conduct

by Phil Simborg

Dos

- ✓ Always greet your opponent in some friendly manner. You can just say hi, shake hands, wish them luck, wish them a good match, tell them where you are from, or whatever...but don't just sit down and start rolling the dice.
- ✓ When a match is over, always say goodbye, thanks for playing, or whatever you are comfortable with. You don't have to say "good match" if you don't believe it was, but if you are the loser, congratulations and best wishes in the rest of the tournament is a reasonable goodbye.
- ✓ When you double, place the cube gently in the center and say "double." If you take, put it on your side and say "take." If you drop, be sure to put the cube in its proper place and say "drop" or "pass" clearly.
- ✓ Both parties should keep score, and you should announce the score (or acknowledge your opponent's announcement of the score) after each game. If it is a Crawford game, announce that at the start and take the cube off the board.
- ✓ Always shake your dice at least three times and roll them out. Do not shake while your opponent is playing or thinking about a play.
- ✓ Be quiet and still while your opponent is thinking or playing.

Don'ts

- ✓ Do not point out your opponent's luck, or lucky rolls, either during or after a match. Whether you mean to or not, pointing out your opponent's luck suggests that he is winning or has won due to that luck and not due to his skill. Even if he was unbelievably lucky, it's poor form and bad sportsmanship. And, most players fail to see their own good luck as well as the many bad rolls the opponent probably got, too.
- ✓ Most players also forget that the better you play, the luckier you seem to be, because you are set up for more good rolls and protected against more of the bad rolls.

- ✓ Do not call your opponent's bad rolls, or your own good ones.
- ✓ Do not handle the doubling cube unless you mean to double.
- ✓ Do not roll until your opponent has clearly picked up his dice. Rolling too soon, or just as he's picking up his dice, can only create conflict as to whether or not the roll counted, or whether or not the player had truly finished thinking about his play. And, quick rolling unfairly rushes the opponent into playing.
- ✓ Do not laugh, chortle, or giggle when your opponent gets a really bad roll, and do not rejoice when you get a really good one.
- ✓ Don't play like a turtle. It's fine to sit and think about a really tough play or cube decision. Even the top experts need time to consider all the variables. But, if you have a simple choice between two plays early in the game, taking more than a few seconds to make the choice is really inconsiderate. We all agree that longer matches are fairer (the better player is more likely to win), but we are often discouraged from having longer matches because some people just take too long. It ruins the fun, as well as the fairness, of the game.
- ✓ Do not engage in conversations with kibbitzers or people at the next table. Don't talk on your cellphone, listen to headphones, or anything else but give your full, polite attention to the match.
- ✓ If you wish to stop and photograph a board position for later analysis, ask your opponent if they mind first. Do it quickly and don't do it too often.
- ✓ Do not say "nice roll" or "good game" after every good roll and after every game. Complimenting your opponent's rolls is just another way of telling him he's lucky. If you want to compliment him on a play, or cube decision, or well-played game on exceptional occasions, or after the match is over, that's fine.