**[St Albans Backgammon](https://www.freewebs.com/stalbansbg/)**

**St Albans Chouette Rules**

**1. Basics**

1. Play and conduct are generally in accordance with [UKBGF rules](http://http/ukbgf.com/backgammon-resources/#rules); in case of conflict, these rules take precedence.
2. Each player (but not kibbitzers) has a responsibility for ensuring only legal moves are played; this responsibility continues even when cube action means a player is out of the current game.
3. One person, ***Box***, plays against a ***Team*** of normally no more than four players.
4. The ***Captain*** of the Team rolls the dice and moves the checkers for the Team.
5. If a Team of five or greater is agreed, Box may choose whether to take a ***Partner***.
6. The initial determination of Box, Captain and Team ***Order*** is decided by each player rolling four dice.  The highest simple total becomes Box, the next Captain, and rest determine the Order of the Team.  If two players roll the same total, they roll again; the re-roll is merely to separate them within the order established by the first set of rolls. If Box has elected to take a Partner the lowest roll takes that role.
7. Only if Box and all Team members agree, may Team exceed four players. In all other cases, additional players are accommodated through ***Splitting***.
8. Splitting occurs at the end of the game in progress. Player(s) who are currently bottom of the Team order, move to form a new chouette with the newcomer(s). Where the resulting chouettes will be of different sizes, the new chouette becomes the smaller - e.g. if 2 new players arrive at a 5-player chouette, then just the bottom player from the existing chouette moves to join them. If new player(s) arrive after a game has finished, but before the next commences, the split is per the rotation list before the game ended. Following the split, the rotation list of the original chouette continues, that of the new chouette is determined by each player rolling four dice.

4.       A chouette may expand to greater than 5 players (inclusive of Box) only if Box and all team members agree.

**2. Consultation**

6.       Consulting is defined as any comment or action, made before or after a play, that may sway another player’s judgment regarding a checker play, the current position or a doubling cube decision

7.       For checker play, and regardless of the Captain’s cube status, Captain may seek advice from any player whose cube is in the game.  However, he may not give his own opinion unless his own cube is in the game. Those without a cube in the game may not consult.

8.       Players may not consult on cube decisions, nor may they announce their reasons for doubling, taking or dropping.

9.       The Captain makes the final decision on all checker plays.  Only the Captain may handle the checkers.  Team members may handle their own cubes, or may instruct the Captain to handle them on their behalf

10.   If a player consults without his cube in play, Box has the option of taking ownership of that player’s cube (at its starting value).  If a player who is already out of the current game consults, the aggrieved player (Box or Captain) can demand and automatically receive a penalty from the offending player, of the original starting cube value.

11.   A player in the Team who leaves the scene temporarily may appoint a proxy to handle his cube.  The proxy can be any other participant in the chouette, whether still in the game or not.  The proxy may appoint another proxy, and so on.  If no specific proxy is appointed, the Captain acts as the proxy for the missing player(s).  The proxy may make all cube decisions on behalf of the missing player, but has no consulting rights on behalf of that player – they may only consult if they are entitled to do so by virtue of their being in the game themselves.

12.  The pip-count is considered common knowledge.  If one team member, or Box, does a pip-count, it is recommended to announce it.

**3. Scoring and Settlements**

13.   A ***basic stake***, frequently £1, is determined by agreement at the outset and is recorded on the score sheet.  A player who prefers not to play for cash may not participate in a chouette, but different players may elect to play for different stakes, provided each is a power-of-two times the basic stake.  In this case, each player's stake is individually recorded on the score-sheet, and  the maximum stake for each game will be limited to that of Box.

14. Once a player has declared their stake, they may subsequently change that stake only if/when another player joins/leaves the chouette.  For the avoidance of doubt, leaving the chouette themselves (in order to re-join later, on a different stake) is not permitted.

15.   Even when a chouette starts with all players’ stakes the same – e.g. £2 per point – the score-sheet should be maintained in units of £1, thus permitting easy accommodation of players joining subsequently on a different stake.  Similarly, players' cubes should at all times display monetary value (not points) - e.g. if there are players on stakes of £1, £2 and £4, then their cubes will commence each game displaying 1, 2, and 4.

16.   Jacoby Rule applies: i.e. gammons and backgammons count only if the cube in question is in the game.

17.   Settlements are permitted only in “one-roll” situations and where the relevant cube is already at eight or more.  Settlements must be for a whole number of points.

18.   The score-sheet must be available to any player to review at any time.  Dropped cubes should be recorded as they occur.  The scorekeeper should then announce the value of each player's gain/loss as each score is recorded at the end of the game, then verify that the total of all scores adds to zero.

19.   When “extra” cubes are accepted (see below), the scorer is recommended to make three line-entries on the score sheet: the first records the initial drops; the second the extras; and the third the final outcome of the game.

20.   To facilitate rotation, the scorekeeper  maintains a list of team initials, in Team order, and with a box drawn around Box's initials.

21.   Players must be ready to settle the score-sheet promptly at the end of the chouette or when any player chooses to leave.  If a player's score is positive when they leave, the player who is most negative is responsible for making the first payment to that person, then the second most negative, and so on.  If a player's score is negative on leaving, they should favour paying evenly to each player who is positive.

**4. Doubling**

22.   Automatic doubles, beavers, racoons, etc. are not permitted.

23.   A player offers a double by placing, or requesting the Captain to place on his behalf, his cube on the board with the doubled value showing.

24.   When a double is offered, a player responds with a clearly announced “drop” or “take”, and takes possession of the cube.  Cube disputes are resolved by the actual value and position of the cube.

25.   If Box offers the initial double (i.e. from the centre), he must offer the entire Team.  If two or more of the Team offer initial doubles simultaneously, Box must either take or drop all offered cubes.  Subsequent simultaneous initial doubles, from other team members, must also all be taken or all dropped by Box.  Box may make different take/drop decisions on initial doubles offered at different times.  For subsequent, non-initial cube action, Box may offer/accept redoubles selectively.

26.   If Box offers an initial double and a lone player accepts, that player may, without penalty, reverse his decision and drop.  If the lone player persists in accepting the double, then he must also accept any “extra” cube(s) offered to him by other members of the Team.  For each such extra, the lone taker is paid, by each cube-owner, the lower of his own or the original owner's stake.  The lone taker then holds the cube of that player at the doubled level.  The player(s) who offered the extras are then effectively on the side of the Box, but with no consulting permitted; however, they retain independent cube action.  Under all circumstances (including if Box subsequently drops a re-cube), Box plays out the game to a conclusion and without consultation.

27.   Team make offers to double, and take/pass decisions, in order of rotation.

28.   At Captain’s turn, any player in the Team may offer Box a double.  When a Team member may wish to double, he must tell the Captain, in good time, to “hold your roll” or words to that effect.  Captain should take particular care not to roll prematurely (so as to deny other Team members the opportunity to double), nor to appear to be about to roll himself when he in fact intends to double (to avoid accusations of Captain’s own doubling decision being influenced by other Team members’ requests to “hold your roll”).  .

**5. Rotation**

29.   If Captain defeats Box, either in the game or with the cube, then he becomes Box for the next game.  If Box defeats Captain **and** makes an overall profit against the Team, then he remains Box for the next game.  If Box defeats Captain but does not make an overall profit, then the next-in-line team members become new Box and new Captain respectively, with old Box moving to the bottom of the order and old Captain immediately above him.

30.   If Box defeats Captain with the cube but other players in the Team remain in the game, then the game continues with the next player in line becoming ***Acting Captain***. The losing Captain goes to the end of the current Team for the next game.  This first Acting Captain is also scheduled to be Captain for the following game, regardless of the current game’s outcome.  If an Acting Captain also loses while other players are still in the game, the next player in the rotation becomes Acting Captain.  A player becoming Acting Captain has no effect on the rotation of players.

31.   If Captain defeats Box with a double, Captain then sits out the rest of the game, but will become Box for the next game.  If other players are still in the game, the next player in line becomes Acting Captain (and remains scheduled to be Captain in the following game).

32.   Any player may decline their turn to be Box at any time.  Box may not take a partner.

33.   A player wishing to join the chouette does so at the discretion of Box and/or any of the Team members, and subject to the maximum number of players allowed.  Each new player joins at the end of the Team, but if there is a game in progress, then the losing Captain and/or losing Box, go behind the joining player(s).  If two or more players join at the same time, their order at the end of the Team is settled by rolling four dice,

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