

Backgammon First and Second Moves
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A few months ago, I became convinced that my first and second move proficiency needed improvement. My first moves were already very good. Tom Keith's site <http://www.bkgm.com/articles/page4.html#openingrolls> and Lamford's "Starting Out in Backgammon" had already sharpen those skills. Nevertheless, there were some surprises when I began studying all of the pages at Stick's site <http://www.bgonline.org/>. For instance, I was misplaying 52. Also, I was unaware that 41, 43, and 32 best two moves were so close. I never played two down or slotted those throws.

My second moves were infested with serious errors. For instance, I was shocked to learn the proper 54 response to 6-X split. I needed a chart to learn the first and second moves. This chart is intended to be a basic learning tool to master the first and second moves. Also, the chart is designed for people like me whose memorization skills are limited. Thus, many nuances and potential helpful facts were intentionally omitted. For example at most match scores, the best opening move for 21 is to slot with 13/11 6/5. My chart simply states that it is best to split 21 with 24/23 13/11 if the opponent has made an inner point. Well, that is not exactly true. It is best to split if the opponent has made his 5 or 4 point. However, it is equally as good to slot if your opponent has made his 3 point with an opening 53. With limited memorization skills, I find it easier to remember to split if my opponent has made an inner point. Most omissions are listed in a separate chart entitled "Intentional Omissions."

Also, this chart is not intended to explain any of the moves. Explanations take time and space. I wanted to summarize the opening and reply moves in three charts that can be studied and memorized. Remember, there are 1296 combinations. Only, non-obvious second moves are listed.


Backgammon 1st and 2nd Moves





1. The first move listed is what I use for the first and second move, unless the red second move states otherwise.
2. I do not list detail W, G, BG, L, LG, LBG, and equity information. This would create a more complex, difficult chart to read. This chart simply is to show the best move under various conditions. Anyway, Keith's and Stick's site are great sources for these details.
3. I only list first move candidates which are with .02 equity of the best option. I usually list only the best second move.
4. When Stick's GNU and Snowie rollouts disagree, I make a determination as to which to use.
5. If two moves are within .005, I have decided to simply list them as equal.
6. I only list a move as DMP, GG, or GS if they possess a .5% improvement than another candidate.
7. I am too stubborn to change my best move for 43. I believe that two down is slightly better. But, I will maintain 24/21 13/9 as my standard.
8. There is a fourth sheet of Intentional Omissions. Usually, these are second move options that I have decided not to memorize. Much of these charts can be memorized by adjusting your second move if your opponent has brought two down, made an interior point, slotted, or left a blot which can be hit. The Intentional Omissions are adjustments which are not as easy to memorize. Or the adjustments are not much or any better and thus I have decided not to memorize. For instance, 11 can be used to hit after a 4-1 slot. However, it is practically equal to the normal 11. My memory is not one of my greatest assets. I could never play chess. Thus, I am attempting to develop an easily remembered chart. I am willing to make some small sacrifices to simplify the chart.

Backgammon 1st and 2nd Moves

<u>First Moves</u>	<u>First Moves</u>	<u>First Moves</u>	<u>First Moves</u>	<u>First Moves</u>
13/7(2) 24/18(2)	24/13	24/18 13/9	24/18 13/10	24/18 13/11
<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>
Response to 6-1 13/7(2) 8/2(2)	Response to 7 Blot 13/7* 6/1*	Response to Opp. Made 4, 5, or bar pt, or 5-4 two down 24/14	Response to 20 Blot, 6-1, 5-4 Two Down, and 3 Blot 24/15 Response to 6-2 or 6-4 Split 24/21 13/7*	Response to 5-1 Split 24/16 Response to 3-2 Split 24/18 6/4*
<u>First Moves</u>		<u>Second Moves</u>		
13/7 8/7		Response to made 2 or 3 pt 8/2 6/2 Response to 4 or 5 Blot 8/2 6/2 Response to 3 Blot 13/3*		
<u>Second Moves</u>				
Response to 4-3 split to 5 24/18 6/5*				
<u>First Moves</u>	<u>First Moves</u>	<u>First Moves</u>	<u>First Moves</u>	<u>First Moves</u>
13/3(2)	24/20 13/8 DMP, GS 13/8 13/9 (-.0142) GG	8/3 5/3	24/22 13/8 DMP, GS 13/11 13/8 (-.010) GG	24/23 13/8 13/8 6/5 (-.012)
<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>
Response to 1 Blot 8/3(2) 6/1*(2)	Response to 6-X Split 24/20 6/1* Response to 6-4 Two Point 13/8 13/9 Response to Two Down 13/8 13/9 Response to 4-1 Split 24/20 6/1*	Response to 5 Blot 13/5*	Response to 5-2, two down 13/11 13/8 Response to 5-4, two down 13/11 13/8 Response to 6-X Split 24/22 6/1*	Response to 4 or 5-1 slot 13/8 6/5* Response to Two Down 13/8 6/5 Response to 6-4 Run 13/8 6/5 Response to 6-5 13/8 6/5

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<u><i>First Moves</i></u>	<u><i>First Moves</i></u>	<u><i>First Moves</i></u>	<u><i>First Moves</i></u>
24/20(2) 13/9(2)	24/21 13/9 13/10 13/9 (+.006) GG	8/4 6/4	24/23 13/9 GS 13/9 6/5 (-.009)
<u><i>Second Moves</i></u>	<u><i>Second Moves</i></u>	<u><i>Second Moves</i></u>	<u><i>Second Moves</i></u>
Response to 5 or 2-1 Split 24/20(2) 13/9(2) 6/2*(2) 8/4(2) (-.043) GG	Response to 3, 4 or 5 Blot 13/X 8/X* or 13/9 6/3*	Response to 20 Blot 24/20* 13/11	Response to Two Down 13/9 6/5
Response to 4-1 Slot 24/20*/16* 8/4(2)	Response to 6-4 Run 24/20 13/10	Response to 6-X Split 13/7*	Response to 6-X, Split 13/9 8/7*
Response to 6-4 Split 24/16*(2)	Response to 20 Blot 24/20* 13/10	8/4 6/4 (-.012) GS	Response to 5-4, Split 13/9 6/5*
Response to 4-3 Two Down 24/20(2) 13/9(2)	Response to Made Inner Pt 13/10 13/9		Response to 6-4, 2 Point 13/9 6/5
	Response to Two Down 13/10 13/9		Response to 6-5 13/9 6/5

			
<u><i>First Moves</i></u>		<u><i>First Moves</i></u>	<u><i>First Moves</i></u>
24/21(2) 13/10(2)		24/21 13/11 GS 13/11 13/10 (-.006) GG	8/5 6/5
<u><i>Second Moves</i></u>	<u><i>Second Moves</i></u>	<u><i>Second Moves</i></u>	<u><i>Second Moves</i></u>
Response to 20 Blot 24/21(2) 8/5(2)	Response to 5-2 two down 8/5(2) 6/3(2)	Response to 3 or 4 Blot 13/X 6/X*	Response to 20 Blot 24/20*
Response to 4-2 8/5(2) 6/3(2)	Resp to 4-3 or 3-2 two down 24/21(2) 8/5(2)	Response to 10 or 11 Blot 24/X 13/X*	Response to 6-2 Run 13/9* = 8/5 6/5
Response to 6-4 Run 8/5(2) 6/3(2)		Response to two down 13/11 13/10	Response to 6-3 Run 13/10* 24/23

Backgammon 1st and 2nd Moves



First Moves

13/11(2) 6/4(2)

Second Moves

Response to 64 Split

24/16*

Response to Made Inner Pt

24/22(2) 6/4(2)

Response to Two Down

24/22(2) 6/4(2)

Response to 41 Split

24/22(2) 6/4(2)

First Moves

13/11 6/5 GG, DMP
24/23 13/11 (-.016) GS

Second Moves

Response to Made Inner Pt

24/23 13/11

Response to Back men split

24/23 13/11 (usually *)

* Response to 5-1 split

13/11 6/5

Response to 6-X Split

13/11 8/7*

If 2 or 3 away and winning

24/23 13/11

First Moves

8/7(2) 6/5(2)

Second Moves









Response to 5-4 split

24/22 6/5(2)

If direct shot against 8 point

24/22 6/5(2)

Intentional Omissions

				
<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>First Moves</u>
Response to made 4 point 24/14 8/2 6/2 (equal) GG	Response to 6-1 24/20 13/8 GG, GS 24/15 (equal) Response to 5-4 Two Down 24/15 DMP 13/8 13/9 (-.010) GG	Response to 2-1 Slot 24/20* 24/21 24/20 13/10 (equal)	Response to 5-4 Two Down 24/21(2) 6/3(2) 24/21(2) 13/10(2) (equal)	24/21 13/11 GS 13/11 13/10 (-.006) GG 24/22 13/10 (-.012)
				<u>Second Moves</u>
<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>	<u>Second Moves</u>		Response to 3-2 Two Down 24/22 13/10 = 13/11 13/10
Response to 31 24/22(2) 6/4(2) Response to 32 Two Down 24/22(2) 6/4(2) equals 13/11(2) 6/4(2)	Response to 5-1 split 13/11 6/5 24/21 (-.006) Response to 5-3 13/11 6/5 = 24/23 13/11	Response to 3-1 24/22 6/5(2) = 8/7(2) 6/5(2) Response to 4-1 slot 24/20* = 8/7(2) 6/5(2)		