



BGFed.be Handbook

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This document contains essential information about BGFed.be, the Belgian backgammon federation, and its procedures. Its content is revised on a regular basis. The most recent version is always available on the website: <https://bgfed.be/handbook>. For comments, please write to bgfed.be@gmail.com. Contributors (ordered alphabetically): Sonja Custers, Alf Martijn, Johan Segers, Hubert Verstraeten.

Who Are We and What Do We Do?

BGFed.be is a federation that connects backgammon players and clubs with backgammon initiatives in (and around) Belgium. Members of the federation are backgammon players from Belgium or abroad.

The federation supports organizers of (Belgian) initiatives by providing administrative and/or logistical assistance and offering financial support.

We are passionate about facilitating backgammon activities:

- for the players;
- for the organizers.

We help, support, and offer our services without imposing anything. We are a means to an end, not the end itself. Players, organizers, clubs, and communities in (and around) Belgium can take advantage of our services.

BGFed.be represents the Belgian backgammon community internationally, for example, through membership of international organizations and by sending players and teams to international tournaments.

We see backgammon as a mind game, not as a gambling game. Therefore, BGFed.be dissociates itself from formats where money or other material possessions are at stake.

We communicate clearly about what we offer and what we don't offer, as well as under which conditions we do so.

Organization

Until further notice, BGFed.be is a *de facto* association. The transition to a formal non-profit organization can be explored should the need arise.



BGFed.be is a non-commercial organization. It receives and spends money without profit motives, solely to achieve its mission.

Pilot Team

The core tasks of the federation are handled by an executive committee also called pilot team, consisting of a variable number of individuals, all of whom are federation members. Given the size of the organization and the tasks to be done, a team of four or five people should be appropriate.

The team determines its own methods of decision-making, meeting (online or in person), task division, roles, etc. The composition of the team and the role or roles of each member are communicated publicly on the webpage of the federation.

Pilot team members serve until they choose to step down, in renewable terms of, for example, two years, but potentially even after one year.

The pilot team organizes its own full or partial succession through a general call or personal contacts. The proposed composition is submitted for approval at the annual general meeting.

Members of the pilot team are unpaid. Their voluntary contributions are highly appreciated but not compensated monetarily.

Tasks Outside the Pilot Team

The board team may outsource certain specific tasks by mutual agreement to freelancers, preferably federation members. Their identity and roles are communicated on the website of the federation.

Finances

BGFed.be maintains its own bank account: BE83 3632 5199 3815, in the form of a *de facto* association. Two to three individuals have signing authority, one of whom acts as treasurer.

Decisions on income and expenses are made collectively within the board team. For expenses not exceeding €50, the treasurer and another authorized individual may act autonomously.

Treasurer's Responsibilities:

- Perform banking transactions and necessary payments for ongoing matters after approval at monthly meetings.
- Provide monthly status reports.
- Present an annual financial report.
- Draft an annual budget (required for decisions on membership fees, financial support for initiatives, etc.).

In the event of federation dissolution, the general assembly decides upon the destination of any remaining funds based on board team proposals.

Membership

Membership Requirements and Registration

- Payment of membership fees.
- Submission of personal data with consent (GDPR compliance).
- Endorsement of the handbook (in progress).

Players are members of the federation directly, not via their clubs. Each year, they are invited to renew their membership by verifying or providing their personal information and paying the membership fee directly to the federation. The membership fees are decided by the pilot team and are communicated on the website.

Upon initial registration, players receive a lifelong membership number. Players who skip membership renewal retain their membership number and their rating but are considered inactive and temporarily lose associated membership benefits, until they pay the membership fee. Membership fees are to be paid before January 31 of the current year. Members of last year get a reminder. Past the deadline, members who have not paid the fee are considered as inactive until the fee is paid.

During registration, players may affiliate with a Belgian club. Members can participate in any club's initiatives under BGFed.be, even without affiliation, provided the club's internal regulations allow so. In particular, this includes foreign players participating in tournaments in Belgium.

Membership Benefits

- Results of matches between members are recorded in the rating list.
- Members have access to activities reserved for BGFed.be members: Belgian Individual Championship, 4 Cubes, WBIF Belgian Online Championship, eligibility for the BGFed.be team in the World Team Championship, Red Beaver League, ...
- For BGFed.be-sponsored tournaments and events, the number of members that participate determines the financial support that the event receives from BGFed.be.

General Assembly

A general assembly of all members is organized annually. The pilot team designates the person to chair the meeting. This person can but does not need to be a member of the pilot team.

Standard Agenda Items:

- Welcome, attendance.
- Designation of a minute-taker.
- Approval of the previous meeting's minutes (if applicable).
- Report of the past year's activities:
 - Event planner: activities.
 - Treasurer: finances.

- Membership administrator: members.
- Others: rating list, website, ...
- Plans for the coming year:
 - Event planner: activity planning.
 - Treasurer: budget.
 - Determination of the following year's membership fee.
- Handbook amendments (proposed changes to be shared in advance).
- Presentation and approval of the board team for the coming year.
- Miscellaneous.

Invitations are sent at least two weeks in advance and include the agenda and supplementary materials, such as proposed handbook amendments and new membership fees.

Members can request a special general meeting by sending a joint request signed by at least ten members to the pilot team.

Clubs

A club is a group of people—preferably with a contact person—who meet regularly at a fixed venue. Belgian clubs that open their events to federation members (considering capacity) receive support through membership administration, announcements on the website for recognized initiatives and events, and display of club names beside players on the rating list.

New clubs active in Belgium may join the federation through a simple request to the pilot team. Beyond the points mentioned in the previous paragraph, there are no specific obligations.

Support for Initiatives by Members and Clubs

BGFed.be supports initiatives by members and clubs, including tournaments, competitions, and training sessions, live or online. Federation-recognized initiatives need not be club-organized. Support includes publicity and information and, upon request, financial assistance (see below).

Within the pilot team, one person, aka 'event planner', takes up the following responsibilities:

- To advise organizers on initiative planning for a balanced backgammon calendar.
- To present financial support requests to the pilot team.
- To provide practical advice (software, equipment, etc.) to event organizers.
- To prospect new initiatives.

Federation initiatives are promoted via the website and social media. While the webmaster and social media manager actively seek information, members are encouraged to share details about their initiatives directly.

Event organizers are free to structure their tournaments and competitions as they see fit. However, BGFed.be explicitly disassociates itself from any organizational choices that involve

playing for money or other materially valuable stakes, as we view backgammon as a game of skill and intellect, not gambling.

Financial Support

Organizers may request financial support for their events from BGFed.be well in advance.

Suitable initiatives occur no more than once annually (e.g., not monthly tournaments). Most initiatives will be tournaments or competitions, but training activities are also eligible. In line with the principle to stay away from playing formats where material gain based on match result is at stake, we do not support tournaments where money or material gains financed totally or in part from entry fees by players are at stake.

Requests should be emailed to the event planner or the general BGFed.be email address, detailing the type of activity, when and where it will take place, and the expected number of participants. Justifications for how the financial support will be used is *not* required.

The event planner transmits requests to the pilot team for discussion and decision-making. It is expected that the big majority of these decisions will be quick and easy.

Approved support amounts to € 5 per participating BGFed.be member, capped at € 150 in total. Supported initiatives are not necessarily exclusive to BGFed.be members, but the financial support itself only covers member participation. More precisely, a tournament can be open to players who are not BGFed.be members, but the amount of the financial support is calculated solely based on the number of participants who are also members of the federation.

Exceptional requests for higher amounts than those mentioned in the above paragraph must be well-justified.

Payments are made post-event, with organizers providing a participant list and a brief report (including photos) destined for publication on the website. The report is published, and financial support is based on the actual number of participating members.

BGFed.be Organized Initiatives

The following services, tournaments, and competitions are organized by BGFed.be and are open to members only. The people organizing these activities need not belong to the pilot team. At the time of writing, the following activities are foreseen:

- Rating list.
- Belgian Individual Championship.
- Red Beaver League.
- Team competition (4 Cubes successor).
- Belgian Online Championship (WBIF).
- Belgian team participation in the WBGF World Teams Championship.
- Belgian team participation in the WBIF Online World Teams Championship.

Backgammon Etiquette and Rules of Conduct

We play backgammon in the spirit of friendliness, sportsmanship, fair play, equality, tolerance, diversity, and respect.

All members of the federation must behave appropriately towards other players and organizers. This applies not only during activities but for the entire time they are present in the club or at an event.

Members must refrain from remarks or actions that could cause irritation, discomfort, confusion, embarrassment, or an unpleasant atmosphere such as those mentioned in but not limited to the following list:

- Using aids during matches is prohibited, e.g., notebooks, pencils, calculators, computers, smartphone apps, friends' advice (even during breaks or via phone).
- Refrain from invoking favorable dice rolls for yourself or bad rolls for your opponent.
- Refrain from excessive complaints during play.
- Practice good sportsmanship as backgammon involves significant amounts of luck. While emotional reactions are natural, common sense should guide behavior.
- Behave respectfully towards opponents and the community before, during, and after games.
- Avoid eating over the board or spilling drinks. Any damage to other players' equipment should be amicably resolved. BGFed.be is not liable for loss or damage to game equipment used during events.

Ethics Committee

Despite the best of intentions, it is possible that conflicts and disputes arise. If the situation cannot be resolved amicably among the people involved, and if the organizer of the tournament or the responsible person of the club where the situation arises cannot resolve the situation either, an *ad hoc* ethics committee is convened by the pilot team.

The committee consists of three members that are not involved in the conflict or situation themselves and that are not a member of the pilot team either. They investigate the situation, speak with and listen to all people involved, and then make a decision, which is binding and to which no appeal is possible within the federation. The ethics committee seeks a constructive and fair solution, but if necessary, they can pronounce a sanction too, in the form of temporary exclusion from certain events, clubs, or even the federation itself.

Communication

Clear communication is essential regarding the values and mission that BGFed.be stands for, what it has to offer, under which conditions and in which way.

The standard language to be used is English, while some flexibility for other languages is tolerated too, guided by common sense. At all times, politically inspired discussions about language are to be banned from all BGFed.be matters.



Communication channels:

- Central email address: bgfed.be@gmail.com, which is managed collectively by all members of the pilot team.
- Website: <https://bgfed.be>, which is managed by the federation's webmaster, who may or may not be a member of the pilot team..
- Posts on social media, such as the Belgian Backgammon Community on WhatsApp (which is itself *not* an official BGFed.be channel).