# **Backgammon Pip Counting**

Determining your position in this race is achieved by calculating the difference between the number of pips (units of distance or spaces on the board your men travel) that you need to get all your checkers home and off the board, and the number our opponent needs. The result is the pip count and is calculated through the technique known as pip counting. The following is the pip count at the start of the game.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Games start with a pip count of 167 to 167. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Two checkers on the 24 point: | 2 × 24 = | 48 |
| Five checkers on the 13 point: | 5 × 13 = | 65 |
| Three checkers on the 8 point: | 3 × 8 = | 24 |
| Five checkers on the 6 point: | 5 × 6 = | 30 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  | 167 |

In the following example at the closing stage of a game, Red has two checkers on the 6 point and White has one checker on the 6 point and two checkers on the 2 point. Red requires 12 pips to completely bear off (6 × 2 = 12), while White requires 10 pips (6 × 1) + (2 × 2) = 10. Therefore the pip count informs us that Red is 2 pips behind in the race.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Red's pip count is 12. White's pip count is 10. |

Here's the breakdown calculation for the Example Position for Red:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Example position, numbered from Red's perspective. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Total crossovers plus the 6 point: | 9 × 6 = | 54 |
| Five point: | 2 × 5 = | 10 |
| Four point: | 0 × 4 = | 0 |
| Three point: | 3\* × 3 = | 9 |
| Two point: | 6\* × 2 = | 12 |
| One point: | 2\* × 1 = | 2 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  | 87 |

\* **Note:** The asterisks indicate points where outer board checkers have landed from the crossovers and have been added to the checkers already there.

Here's the breakdown calculation for the Example Position for White:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Same example position, numbered from White's perspective. |

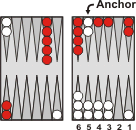
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Total crossovers plus the 6 point: | 11 × 6 = | 66 |
| Five point: | 2 × 5 = | 10 |
| Four point: | 2 × 4 = | 8 |
| Three point: | 2 × 3 = | 6 |
| Two point: | 2\* × 2 = | 4 |
| One point: | 4\* × 1 = | 4 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  | 98 |

\* **Note:** The asterisks indicate points where outer board checkers have landed from the crossovers and have been added to the checkers already there.

**From this full pip count we have verified that Red leads White by 11 pips, (98 − 87 = 11).**

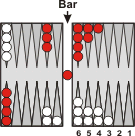
**Anchor**

A [point (1)](https://bkgm.com/glossary.html#point) occupied by two or more of your checkers in the opponent's [home board](https://bkgm.com/glossary.html#home_board).



**Bar** (Graveyard)

The raised ridge down the center of a [backgammon board](https://bkgm.com/glossary.html#backgammon_board) dividing the [home board](https://bkgm.com/glossary.html#home_board) from the [outer board](https://bkgm.com/glossary.html#outer_board). Checkers are placed on the bar after they have been [hit](https://bkgm.com/glossary.html#hit).



**Prime**

1. Six consecutive [made points](https://bkgm.com/glossary.html#make_a_point). An opposing [checker](https://bkgm.com/glossary.html#checker) trapped behind a prime cannot escape until the prime is [broken](https://bkgm.com/glossary.html#break_a_prime).
2. Several consecutive made points, such as a 4-prime or 5-prime.

