

Cape Town Open 2026



EVENT GUIDE

With **R60 000** added money, and over **R200 000** in the prize-pool, we welcome backgammon players from around the country (and world) to come play in a fun weekend hosted by **Cape Town Backgammon!**

Flip through this guide for a **day-by-day description** of the **schedule of events** for the **Cape Town Open 2026**, taking place over the weekend of **Fri 20th - Sun 22nd February 2026** at the **Protea Fire and Ice! Hotel by Marriot**, in the Cape Town CBD.

Register now!



bit.ly/CTOpen2026

Grateful to our partners:



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Friday 20th February 2026:

17:30: Welcome drinks, Speedgammon player registration, draw!

18:00: **SHB Speedgammon!**

This event, sponsored by **SHB Financial Services** - a niche, boutique payment solutions company - puts fast twitch muscles to the test... You'll have just **10 seconds per move** and a measly **3 minutes in your timebank** so you better trust your instincts if you plan on winning this event. It's limited to just **32 entrants** with a **single elimination format**, **5pt matches** all the way from start to finish. **Entry is R1000 + R100 registration fee.**

19:00 **Calcutta Auction for Masters Main Event (+ canapes!)**

We take a pause in the action and turn attention to the stage where local legend auctioneer, Mayer Abdolaziz, will sell off the full stable of 32 players competing in the next morning's Masters Main Event - the 'championship' event of the weekend. You are not going to want to miss out on watching this master in action!

20:00: **SHB Speedgammon continues.**

SHB Speedgammon Prizes: 1st: R16 000 / 2nd: R9 000 / 3rd: R7 000

21:00: Play suspended for Day 1.



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Saturday 21th February 2026:

09:00: Welcome, Main Event player registration, draws

09:30: **Main Events** begin! There will be **THREE** Main Events taking place in 2026, each limited to **32** players, each with a **Double Chance** system meaning that if you lose your first match, you drop down to the 'Plate' competition for your specific division.

The **Pokerbet Masters Main Event** (R2500 buy-in, R250 reg. fee) plays to 11pts, with semi-finals and final to 13pts. Plate plays to 9pts. All matches must be played with a clock (12 seconds per move, 2 mins in timebank per match point - i.e. 22 minutes in Round 1).

The **SABGA Intermediate Main Event** (R500 buy-in, R50 reg. fee) plays to 5pts, with semi-finals and final to 7pts. Plate plays to 3pts. All matches must be played with a clock (12 seconds per move, 2 mins in timebank per match point - i.e. 10 minutes in Round 1).

The **Bambalam Novice Main Event** (R100 buy-in, no reg. fee) plays to 3pts, with semi-finals and final to 5pts, and Plate played to 1pt. No clock is required, but we encourage dice cups and good etiquette in the spirit of the big occasion!

10:00: **Saturday Jackpots begin** - these mini-tournaments will run in-between other rounds and will pop-up based on interest - come to the Tournament Director's desk to express your interest!

11:30: **Main Events (Round 2) and all Plates (Round 1) continue**

13:30: **Lunch (for own account) - At hotel restaurant or at eateries in the area**

14:30: **Main Events (Round 3) and all Plates (Round 2) continue.**

17:00: Play suspended for Day 2.

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Sunday 22nd February 2026: morning

09:30: Main Event and Plate semi-finals begin!

The **Pokerbet Masters Main Event** semi-finals, 3rd place play-off, and final are played to 13pts, with the **Plate** semi-finals, 3rd place play-off, and final to 11pts.

Main Prizes: 1st: R50 000 / 2nd: R24 000 / 3rd: R16 000

Plate Prizes: 1st: R24 000 / 2nd: R12 000 / 3rd: R8 000

The **SABGA Intermediate Main Event** semi-finals, 3rd place play-off, and final are played to 7pts, with the **Plate** semi-finals, 3rd place play-off, and final to 5pts.

Main Prizes: 1st: R6 000 / 2nd: R3 500 / 3rd: R2 500

Plate Prizes: 1st: R3 000 / 2nd: R1 800 / 3rd: R1 200

The **Bambalam Novice Main Event** semi-finals, 3rd place play-off, and final are played to 5pts, with the **Plate** semi-finals, 3rd place play-off and final to 3pts.

The Novice event will conclude on Saturday; the others will not.

Main Prizes: 1st: R1 500 / 2nd: R800 / 3rd: R500

Plate Prizes: 1st: R800 / 2nd: R400 / 3rd: R200

10:00: **Sunday Jackpots begin** - these mini-tournaments will run based on interest - come to the registration desk to enquire and express your interest!

11:30: **Main Event and Plate finals!**

...day continued overleaf.

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Sunday 22nd February 2026: afternoon

13:30: Auction + **Pip & Pivot Consultation Doubles - “Guardians” Charity Event**

This event is played as **pairs against pairs**; with a ‘Double Chance’ format, offering a Main and Plate, with all matches to 3pts and a clock set to 12s/10min.

Pairs will be made as follows: A prospective partner is nominated from the floor and bidding ensues! The highest bid snags that partner, and the next name is thrown out. **From the bids, the first R1000 goes to the prize pool, the rest goes to the Pip & Pivot “Guardians” Charity fund**, which puts backgammon boards into schools and underprivileged communities.

Main Prizes: 1st: R6 000 / 2nd: R3 000 / 3rd: R1 600

Plate Prizes: 1st: R3 000 / 2nd: R1 500 / 3rd: R900

14:30: **Juniors (Under-18) event begins (free entry)**

For the first time ever, Cape Town Backgammon will be hosting a juniors-only event, with **Mindsports South Africa** offering regional colours for backgammon to the event winner. The event format is tbc based on entry numbers, but likely to be played as a Swiss-format, with matches to 3pts, with the number of rounds dependent on the number of entries.

We have a Bambalam-sponsored roll up board on offer for the winner!

15:00: **Freeroll Consultation Doubles (free entry)**

This is an opportunity for those in the room to pair up and play a single elimination event, with a sponsored cash prize (tbc) for winners and runner-ups.

17:30: Prize-giving and event closing.

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Additional information:

RULES:

We will be using the latest version of the World Backgammon Federation Rules (dated August 2023), available here: https://www.sabga.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Tournament_Rules_WBGF_2025version.pdf

A hard-copy will be available at the Tournament Director's desk for perusal.

Mindsport South Africa (MSSA) Regional Colours:

MSSA have specified that regional colours are available in the categories of Open, Female, Youth (under-24) and Junior (under-18). These will be awarded for the best performing individual players in each category, as decided by the Cape Town Backgammon committee on completion of all events, in consultation with the MSSA director. To take up such colours, nominated players need to be members of MSSA-affiliated backgammon clubs. This can be arranged on the day.

PARTICIPATION:

Participation is a privilege, not a right. The Tournament Director reserves the right to exclude (with refund where appropriate) any player where deemed necessary, given poor behaviour or failure to heed warnings.

Media Usage:

There will be media captured at the event, with potential use on social media. If you would prefer to opt out of this, please notify the Tournament Director (TD).

For any enquiries, contact TD: Nick Groll - nick@sabga.co.za / +27 711 217 022