



BACKYARD RULES

AMERICAN WASHERS ASSOCIATION · OFFICIAL RULES

BOARDS	2	WASHERS	6	DISTANCE	10 ft	SCORING	1 · 3 · 5	TARGET	21
--------	---	---------	---	----------	-------	---------	-----------	--------	----

PLAY

- Each player throws all 3 washers, then the other player throws all 3. That completes a round.
- Throw from anywhere on top of the opposite board.
- Underhand only.
- Only washers that land in a hole score.

CANCELLATION SCORING

Washers in the **same hole** cancel each other out one-for-one. Only the leftover washers score. Because cancellation is per-hole, both players can score in the same round.

EXAMPLE 1 — SAME HOLES CANCEL

Player A: one 3-pointer, one 5-pointer

Player B: two 3-pointers, one 5-pointer

The 5s cancel. One of B's 3s cancels A's 3.

→ **Player B nets 3. Player A scores 0.**

EXAMPLE 2 — DIFFERENT HOLES, NOTHING CANCELS

Player A: one 1-pointer, one 3-pointer

Player B: one 5-pointer

Nothing landed in the same hole.

→ **Player A scores 4. Player B scores 5.**

WINNING

First to exactly **21** after a completed round.

GOING OVER

Scoring settles once, at the end of the round, after cancellation. Throw all 3 washers regardless of your running total. If your net total exceeds 21, your score resets to **0 plus the amount you went over**.

At	Throws	Total	Over By	Resets To
17	5	22	1	1
18	5	23	2	2
19	3	22	1	1
19	5	24	3	3
20	3	23	2	2
20	5	25	4	4

Because cancellation runs first, the overage is calculated on your net for the round, not your gross.

REACHING 21 MID-ROUND

Hitting 21 does not end the round. Your opponent always gets the chance to cancel it while they still have washers in hand.

If you reach exactly 21 with washers still in hand, step off the board. Your opponent then throws, trying to cancel the washer that put you at 21.

- **They fail to cancel it** — your 21 stands. You win.
- **They cancel it** — your 21 is dead, your score drops back, and they throw out their remaining washers. You then step back on and throw whatever you have left.

This works both ways. If your opponent reaches 21 while throwing, they step off and you have to cancel with your remaining washers.

If you reach 21 on your final washer and your opponent has already thrown all three, you win — nothing is left to answer with.

WORKED EXAMPLE — PLAYER A IS AT 16, THROWING FIRST

1. A's first washer lands in the 5-hole. A is at 21 with 2 in hand. **A steps off.**
 2. B throws all 3. B's second washer lands in the 5-hole, cancelling A's. A drops back to 16. B finishes.
 3. A steps back on with 2 washers, trying for 21 again.
- **A gets there, A wins. A doesn't, the round settles normally.**

THROW ORDER

- **First round** — decided by the players. Rock paper scissors, a diddle, or any method both agree on.
- **Every round after** — whoever scored the most points in the previous round throws first.
- **Scoreless round** — throw order carries over unchanged.

Throwing first is a real advantage — reach 21 and your opponent has to cancel it before they can win. Score well and you earn the better position.

TIES AT 21

Whoever reaches 21 first wins. Because the first thrower gets there first, the second player cannot win by simply matching 21 — they have to erase it first.

The only path for the second player: cancel the washer that put their opponent at 21, then reach 21 themselves.

EXAMPLE — A IS AT 16, B IS AT 18. A THROWS FIRST.

A throws a 5 — A is at 21. A steps off.

B throws a 3 — B is at 21, but A got there first.

→ **A wins. B's 3 did nothing to A's 5.**

NOW THE VERSION WHERE B WINS

A throws a 5 — A is at 21. A steps off.

B throws into the 5-hole — cancels A's washer. A drops back to 16.

B throws a 3 — B is at 21. B steps off.

A steps back on and must cancel B's 3 with their remaining washers.

→ **If A cannot cancel it, B wins.**

The order is strict: **cancel first, then score.** A washer that puts you at 21 does nothing about the 21 already sitting on the board.

The rarest case: a single throw can put both players at 21 at once. If B's washer knocks one of A's resting washers into a hole — putting A at 21 — and B's own washer then settles into a hole for B's 21, A got there first. **A wins.**

The tiebreak is strictly sequential: whichever washer settled first.