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100 Backgammon Puzzles



Synopsis

The reader can take on this compilation of backgammon puzzles without setting up a board. Half of the conundrums involve making decisions about how to play the next dice roll, the rest on whether to double or accept the offered cube instead.'

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have about a dozen backgammon books and this is one of the better ones. The positions included cover a huge range of situations and teach a lot of useful key positions. I find his tips and various rules of thumb highly educational. Personally, I much prefer Lamford's writing style to Robertie's. It's clear, helpful and straightforward (not sensationalist). His PRAT (position, race & threats) advice on doubling is something I've seen no where else, and it's a very useful tool indeed. It's good for beginners keen to get into the more complex aspects of the game and intermediates working to improve, but experts may find the limited amount of deep analysis disappointing (I'm rated about 1800 on FIBS).

Except for some brief introductory material, this book consists almost entirely of 50 checker-play problems and 50 doubling-cube problems. Most are money-game problems but some are match-play problems. Each problem has a hint below the diagram. The solution to the problem appears on the next page, along with a general tip about backgammon strategy. At the end of the book there is a chart that estimates your rating based on how many of the problems in the book you got right. I personally like backgammon books like this one with lots of concrete problems in them. A casual or intermediate player can easily dip in and learn something immediately, without having to

slog through a long, complicated discussion. Lamford's solutions and tips are brief and to the point. If you are an advanced/open player, then this book is still valuable, but you will have to work harder to extract the value from it. First, you will need to cover up the hint, which often gives away the answer. Next, in most cases you will want to put the position into GNU Backgammon or eXtreme Gammon, because Lamford used an early version of Snowie and some of the verdicts have been overturned since then. Finally, you will have to take Lamford's solutions and tips with a grain of salt because they tend to oversimplify (for example, he never does any match-equity calculations). In spite of all this, the book is valuable because at least half the problems are challenging ones, and unless you are a world-class player you will certainly get a sizable percentage of them wrong. This will help you identify holes in your game that you need to work on. Since the book is inexpensive, you get considerable bang for your buck.

I've always considered myself an above average backgammon player with little idea how to get better. I usually play subpar opponents over the internet or friends at home, but never learned new techniques or skills and would often win flat out. After reading this book, I learned dozens of new strategies and small techniques. One complaint I have with the book is that I rarely play with the doubling cube, so half the book is not entirely useful for me. But if you do, I'm sure it will be handy.

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