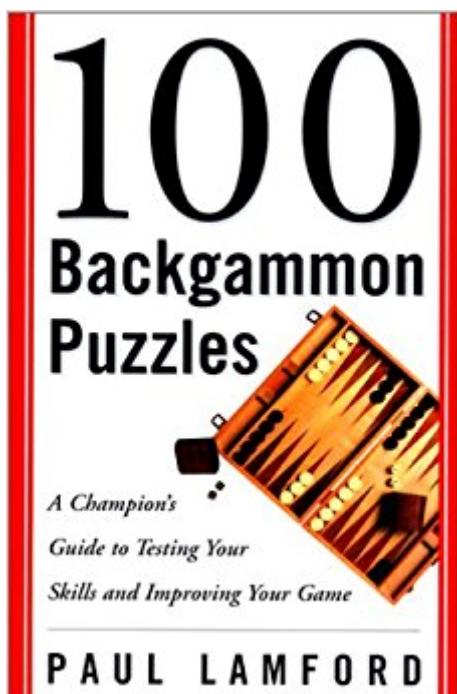


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100 Backgammon Puzzles: A Champion's Guide To Testing Your Skills And Improving Your Game



Synopsis

Offers challenging ways to improve your game.

Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Lyons Press; 1st edition (February 2001)

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

100 Backgammon Puzzles contains fascinating and challenging backgammon puzzles that can be enjoyed without ever setting up a board. The first half of the book presents decisions on checker plays, while the second half deals with decisions on whether to double and whether to accept an offered cube. The book begins with a brief, yet thorough, introduction to the basic strategy of the game, and below each illustrated puzzle are some valuable hints and tips to help guide both the experienced and casual player. Also included is a handy glossary of backgammon terms and a chart for converting scores to international rating. (5 1/2 X 8 1/4, 128 pages, illustrations, chart)

Paul Lamford was 1993 British Backgammon Champion and is currently the highest-ranked British player.

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.

I enjoy short and sweet formats in books. In particular, I like this kind of puzzle format. I like how the

puzzles make you think -- and learn specific parts of the game of backgammon. You can put the book down and pick it up, flipping to various puzzles to refresh your memory about the important aspects of the game. This reminds me of the old Barclay Cooke book I had as a youngster (LOL: several of Cooke's solutions have been proven wrong by today's neural net backgammon software programs) -- but it was "Good stuff" -- just like this book.

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 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).

I agree with the subtitle of the book about testing your skills.... but definately not on Improving your game. The answers and the tips at the end of each quiz are telegraphic ... nothing you would benefit from. Testing your skills? Yes maybe the results of the tables can give you an idea of your level.

This book has helped me considerably with my decisions for backgammon matches

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