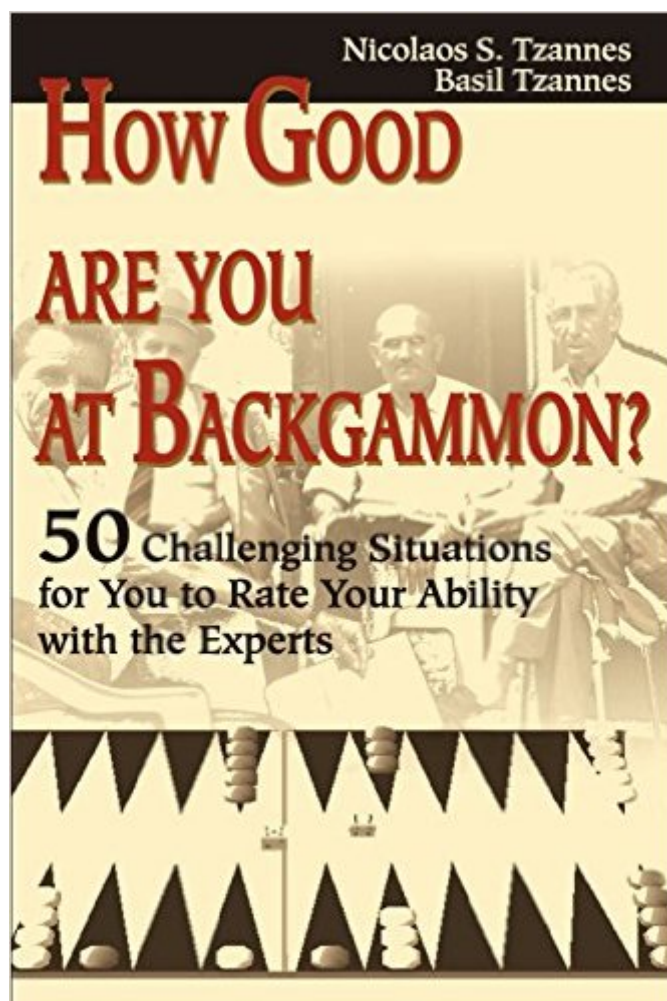


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How Good Are You At Backgammon?: 50 Challenging Situations For You To Rate Your Ability With The Experts



Synopsis

If you already play backgammon, don't you sometimes wonder how good you really are? Well, this book is your chance to really find out. The 50 situations presented here, cover most of the aspects of the game, from initial moves to bearing off strategies. Each problem is graded on the basis of 5 points for the optimum play and some partial credit for sub-optimum but adequate ones, if such exist. If you rack up a score of 225-250, you rank right up there with the experts you should think seriously of competing in Backgammon Tournaments. If you score 200-224, you are not an expert yet, but you are rapidly approaching this point. A score of 135-199 indicates that you are a good, sound player, probably the best in your neighborhood. If you score less than 135 points, there is no need for despair. Study this book carefully. It can serve as a case studies tool for improving your game. Besides, the problems presented are not only mind-taxing, they are also entertaining. And the justifications for the optimum play are clearly explained, often culminating in various useful rules of thumb (the closer-closest rule, the rule of even, etc.) for difficult, but commonly occurring situations. Good luck!

Book Information

Paperback: 124 pages

Publisher: iUniverse (April 3, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0595176429

ISBN-13: 978-0595176427

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.3 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,951,539 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #55 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Puzzles & Games > Board Games > Backgammon](#) #522512 in [Books > Textbooks](#)

Customer Reviews

The authors describe themselves as world champion backgammon players. I have no reason to doubt this claim. However as expositors of backgammon, they fall fairly far from championship status. The book presents a series of backgammon positions. Given a board position, a roll, and the cube, the reader is asked to find the best move. The authors then assign from one to five points to the reader's selection (assuming that the reader decided upon one of the authors' preselected

moves, of course.) Most of the introductory positions are uncontroversial. The authors quickly move on to more complicated board positions however, and here is where the trouble begins. In many positions, they tend to favor the safe play. Certainly a recognized style, but stating that the safe play is the best play, without a discussion of the cube, the score, or any alternatives seems like hubris. In one problem, the authors state that "black is far enough ahead to run in this position", but they make no attempt to quantify what they mean by "far enough ahead", nor is there even any discussion of how to determine when one player is ahead. In another position, where they also advocate a safe play, they make no mention of the possibility of playing for a gammon, and the pro's and con's of that decision. The book doesn't present enough basic principles to be of use to the novice: There are no discussions of pip counts, very little of bearing off, and only a muddled mention of hitting probabilities. The experienced player will find himself disagreeing with the authors without gaining any insight from them.

I read many of the 'how good is your ..' books for poker and I liked the format which lets you keep a score so you end up with an idea how good you really are. And I also love to play backgammon, so when I saw this book I didn't hesitate and bought it. However, the book has a major flaw: the authors don't seem terribly good at backgammon themselves. The explanations of the problems sometimes miss important features of the position, such as the position of the cube or the match score. And sometimes the answer is just plain wrong. For instance in situation 6, the authors choose for the play that seems to win the most games, but miss the play that wins not only a lot more gammons, but even a few extra games as well. The answer which the authors present is actually a blunder. There are a couple of excellent backgammon programs on the market which let you analyse positions such as this, and when the authors would have checked this position, they would have noticed their mistake themselves.

This is a good book if you have been playing a while. It will reinforce some things that you should be aware of. You do have to know how to play to get the most out of this book. I did learn a few new things that I can now put into my games.

It's OK... but I don't like having to turn to another page to read the answer and explanation...and going back and forth between the 2 pages. The sample download had both problem and answer on the same page.

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