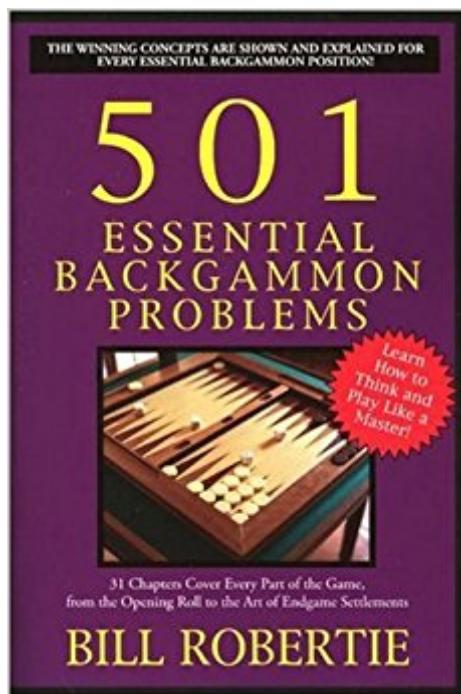


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501 Essential Backgammon Problems: 2nd Edition



Synopsis

This comprehensive backgammon book challenges the reader with 501 essential problems to transform him into a thinking, aggressive pro-level player. Strategies and situation cover every aspect of the game, from playing positions to doubling maneuvers. Everything is carefully explained and illustrated so that the reader understands all the concepts.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Edit - 11/29/11 I can't say enough about this book, I have read A LOT of backgammon books, but this one had the most immediate impact on my game. I really like Robertie's books. Robertie teaches and explains, he doesn't pontificate. I have heard the neural nets (and let us not anger them) have found some "errors" in Robertie's analysis, but I have used eXtreme Gammon on many problems, and have never found an error, and only a few cases where there were equal plays. Keep in mind Robertie's examples are chosen to illustrate the particular concept in question. In a few instances there may be other acceptable plays, but his purpose is to teach the pertinent concept, and he succeeds impressively. Your game will improve dramatically by understanding what Robertie is teaching. Robertie's method in 501 allows you to learn the concepts quicker and it is much more fun and interesting than slogging through page after page of some author's wearisome written "analysis". After you work through a few examples, you begin to see the concept in the remaining examples. This makes this book fun to read and review. This is the one backgammon book that I go back to occasionally when I get a little rusty. I had the same experience when I studied chess years ago. Pages of theory and analysis put me to sleep, while plenty of good examples of the same concept were like turning the light on for me, and I began to see it in my own games. Very

few of us have the computer-like brains to perform complex calculations in our head, but we can analyze the position strategically for it's strengths and weaknesses, what we need to accomplish, what potential dangers may exist, etc. and 501 excels in that area. Robertie teaches you how to play and how to think DURING the game, when it counts. With this information, you will outplay 95% of all backgammon players in head to head competition.

One has to assume Robertie knows what he's talking about given his track record at the World Championships. And if so, the examples (problems) he gives certainly do point out weaknesses in one's game. I'm a very experienced player and am learning quite a bit. So that's good. But this book was not proofread by anyone who knows what they're doing. I believe it was hastily put together (a "pot boiler") to generate revenue. Without much concern for the quality of the product. Having said all that, if you're a serious player this book can help you.

Want to save a couple dollars? Buy a copy of the 1st edition. Except for the cover, the problems are the same, with the same answers (that's according to the author). The fad today is to compare 'human' choices against those generated by a computer program. How right you are then depends on the computer program you are being compared to. This book has been put to the test against 'rollouts' performed by the GNUGB program, which although very good (and free) is not considered to be the best computer program. In those cases where that program considers a move 'better' than Robertie's, the difference is very small. You can see the GNUGB rollout results at [...] In any event, a 'bot' just gives you a number, but it doesn't tell you why it ranked a particular move higher. This book, on the other hand, is based on human thought analysis. Take the time to pick a move and identify your reasoning, then compare your choice to the author's move and reasoning. That will sharpen your game.

The value of this book isn't in learning what to do in these particular positions, but rather in learning the thought process that goes into making correct decisions. The second problem in the book asks what to do with an opening 62, and the author's answer is likely to surprise you. You'll improve your results (on average) when you make his suggested play with this roll, but improve them even more when you internalize his explanation and apply it to other situations. The content deserves five stars but I took off one for the awkward page-flipping required by the design that puts solutions at the end of each chapter.

Had to reread several times-but then it turned my game into a Winner! (my friends all hate me)

Thanks for sharing!

a great book to improve your game

I was an above average player when I ordered this book, looking to improve my game. This book is even better than I imagined, and continues giving; I go back and work on specific parts of my game weekly to continue learning the lessons it gives.

If you ever really want to learn how to play backgammon, this is a must book for even the most casual player. It sent my game right rocketing.

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