



Backgammon Magic: 20 Lessons for the Developing Player

R. Dobias

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Lessons for Intermediate Players

Please note this book is not for complete beginners who only know the rules of backgammon.

Backgammon affords deep intellectual gratification, attainable through careful analytic thinking and a personal commitment to constant improvement. In those regards, mistakes are the most fruitful field to explore. The subtler facets of the game that we either do not understand or only partially grasp are what keeps backgammon from ever becoming boring or trite.

Chances are you feel the same. I suspect you have a strong passion for the game, otherwise you would not be reading this book. You may be a beginner, an intermediate player, or an expert. It doesn't matter, as all players can get something out of it.

If you are an **intermediate player**, you will get the most out of this book. That's because the concepts and examples contained herein challenge the play of typical intermediate players and help them to think along new lines.

If you are an **expert**, the book will afford you the pleasure of studying various positions, as well as testing yourself to see if your backgammon skills indeed match reality.

Among the lessons, expect to find:

Lesson #1: Small Edges

Lesson #2: Know When to Break the Rules

Lesson #3: Context is King

Lesson #4: Never Play on Automatic

Lesson #5: How to Play in Tricky Positions

Lesson #6: Never Forget It's a Race

Lesson #7: Connect!

Lesson #8: The Best Backgammon Advice I Ever Received

Lesson #9: Be a Troublemaker

Lesson #10: Shortcut

Lesson #11: Have Balls

Lesson #12: Possibility Isn't Correctness

Lesson #13: 'Good Numbers'

Lesson #14: Consider Flexibility

Lesson #15: Maximize

Lesson #16: Use Elimination

Lesson #17: The Most Important Thing

Lesson #18: There Is More to Checker Play Than Meets the Eye

Lesson #19: Watch the Doubles

Lesson #20: Take What You Can

About the Author

After playing chess, go, hex, othello, mahjong, and poker for many years, I discovered backgammon. I instantly fell in love with it, and started playing seriously. I climbed from an absolute beginner to an expert (1900+ rating) in a matter of only 3 months by playing against strong AI (Artificial Intelligence software) for several hours every day.

I am not alone in achieving such a feat. Nack Ballard is famous for becoming one of the best in the world in the same way (not that I would claim to be one of the best :), but I do play at the expert level). In fact, such training has become the new orthodoxy among backgammon players worldwide. AI is better than humans, and has been for a long time. It is the ultimate opponent and tutor.

However, merely playing against the computer is not sufficient. There is a need to be able to understand the software's evaluations using dynamic principles. There are good, rational reasons why certain moves are better than others.

Discover them for yourself with *Backgammon Magic*.

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