

MAGNETIC GO SET

A magnetic travelling go set at a bargain price -

- * board measures 30x29 cms when open
- * 160 magnetic pieces of each colour are in slim boxes that fit inside the board
- * sturdy brown plastic carrying case has internal pocket for scoresheets

Price: £5 (+£1 p&p)

Available from the BRITISH GO ASSOCIATION Book Distributor, The Cottage,
Church Lane, Sproughton, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3BA.

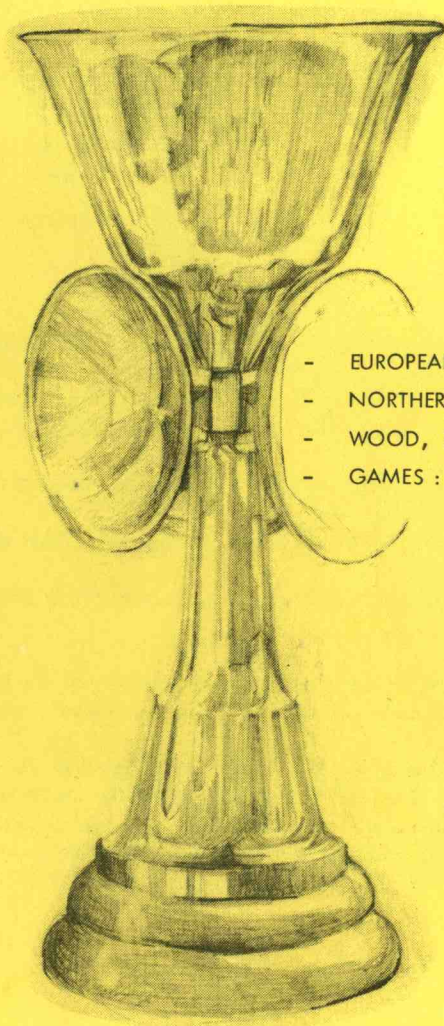
The British Go Association

Affiliated to the European Go Federation

BRITISH
GO
JOURNAL

碁 NO. **50**

NOVEMBER 1980 50p



- EUROPEAN CONGRESS
- NORTHERN CONGRESS
- WOOD, SHELL AND STONE
- GAMES : NEWS : PROBLEMS

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

CONTENTS

European Congress	5
Luck of the Bold	10
The Great Northern	12
Robbery	14
Ipswich Tournament	15
Letters	16
News	18
Revelations	19
Wood, Shell and Stone	20
Answers to problems	23

THE BRITISH GO ASSOCIATION

Membership Secretary: Derek Hunter, 60 Wantage Road, Reading. Tel: 0734 581001
Secretary: Matthew Macfadyen, 46 Stanhope Road, Reading. Tel: 0734 867684
President: Toby Manning, 110 Moselle Ave, London N22. Tel: 01-889 5247
Treasurer: Brian Philp, 130 Woodacombe Lodge Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham.
Tel: 021 472 1890

Book Distributor: Brian Bolton, The Cottage, Church Lane, Sproughton,
Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3BA Tel: 0473 47999

Tournament Coordinator: David Goto, 11 Buxton Gardens, London W3 9LF
Tel: 01-992 2000

Publicity Officer: Stuart Dowsey, 6 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5AB. Tel: 01-794 9881

THE BRITISH GO JOURNAL is distributed free to members of the BGA or costs 50p retail within the UK. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the BGA.

This issue was produced by Jim Barty, Alison Cross and Matthew Macfadyen.
Copy date for the next issue (No. 52) is 25th November for publication in December.
All contributions are welcome and should preferably be typed or written double spaced on one side of the paper only and sent to the British Go Journal, c/o Alison Cross, 25 North Villas, Camden Square, London NW1 9BL.
Tel: 01-267 5711.

ADVERTISING RATES are £40 per page and pro rata. Technical and series discount details available on request.

PUBLISHED by the British Go Association. © Copyright and translation rights reserved.

GLOSSARY of technical terms

used in this issue

AJI KESHI: Unnecessary 'cashing -in' of one's own latent threats.

AJI: Latent threats.

ATARI: An immediate threat to capture.

GOTE: Not having, or losing, the initiative.

MIAI: Two moves of equivalent value and therefore not urgent.

TENUKI: Ignore the last move and play elsewhere.

TENGEN: The point in the centre of the board.

EDITORIAL

There has been another change in the Journal as you have probably already noticed - this time you don't need a magnifying glass to read the text. If you think things are looking up bear in mind . . . (for instance) the Ministry of Defence estimate that the total arsenal of nuclear weapons aimed at the UK this minute amounts to 200 megatons, and that, if you think about it, works out at something in excess of three tons of TNT equivalent for each and every one of us.

BGJ No. 51 will follow closely on this one (we hope to publish before Christmas) and will cover British Go Week events and the games of the British Championship. Please can we have your news and any articles as soon as possible, how about one of your own games with an interesting or amusing position in it? - We can provide commentary . . .

BGA SUBSCRIPTIONS 1981

Please note that subscriptions are now payable for 1981. It would help greatly if you renewed as soon as possible; do not expect a further reminder.

Subscriptions should be sent at the rates below to:
BGA Hon. Membership Secretary, 60 Wantage Road, Reading Berks RG3 2SF.

Student unattached member (in full time education)	£1.20
Unattached member	£3.00
Overseas member	£4.00
Student club member	80p
Club member	£1.80

The special concession for school clubs continues: a bona fide school club may be registered providing at least one member pays the full club rate (£1.80).

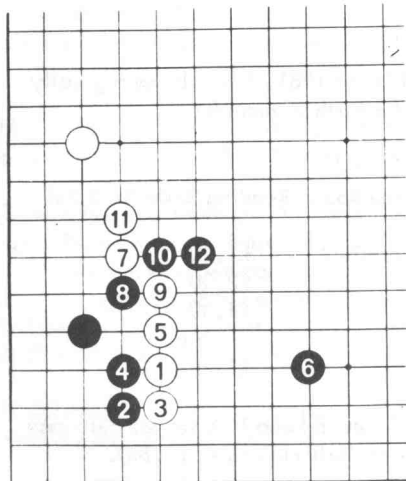
STOP PRESS REPORT.

There was a good turnout at Marlborough this year with 90 entrants in all including several up and coming under-sixteens in the lower sections. The tournament was played in eight divisions and the results were as follows:

- Division I (2-dan and above) Matthew Macfadyen, 5-dan (yawn ...) who won a 4-way tie which involved Frank Pratt, Terry Stacey and Toby Manning.
- Division II (1-dan and 1-kyu) Jim Clare, 1-dan, with 4 wins.
- Division III (2-kyu to 5-kyu), S. Hughes, Coventry.
- Division IV (6-kyu to 8-kyu) S. Barthrop, Hammersmith.
- Division V (9-kyu to 12-kyu) Dave Buckle, Reading.
- Division VI (13-kyu and 14-kyu) R. Tier, Roger Huyshe School.
- Division VII (15-kyu to 19-kyu) A. Stephens, King's Norton.
- Division VIII (20-kyu and below) I. Rocke, Malvern.

Thanks to the organisers for an enjoyable day.

VULGARITY



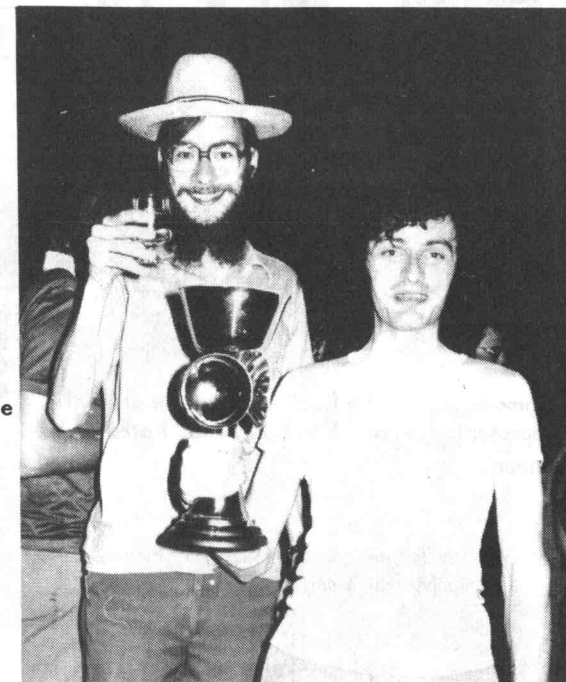
Suppose you are White and playing out a standard joseki when Black suddenly deprives you of your extension at 6. So you play the reasonable 7 and Black brutishly hacks his way through with 8 to 12. Now you may feel that this is clearly not cricket and bad shape in the corner to boot. OK, this is the problem: resist the temptation to run away with the four stone wall as fast as you can jump, and prove to Black that he has horrible shape in the corner. Remember that the issue from Black's point of view is that he must preserve the cutting stone 8 at all costs, in order to give 10 and 12 any meaning at all.

The key word is "mincemeat", and the hint (as it's a hard problem) is that if a group has only two liberties it is in pre-atari.

Answer inside back cover

EUROPEAN CONGRESS

1980

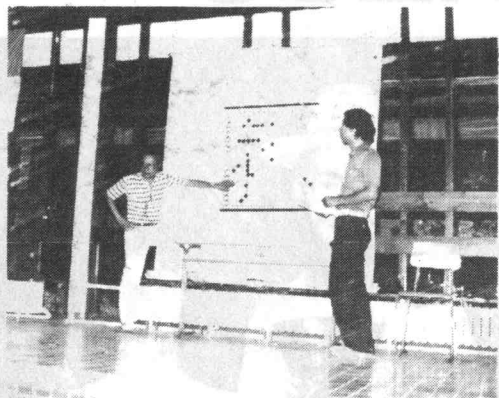


The beginning of the celebrations - David Goto has the glass with the wine in it - the radar doesn't work

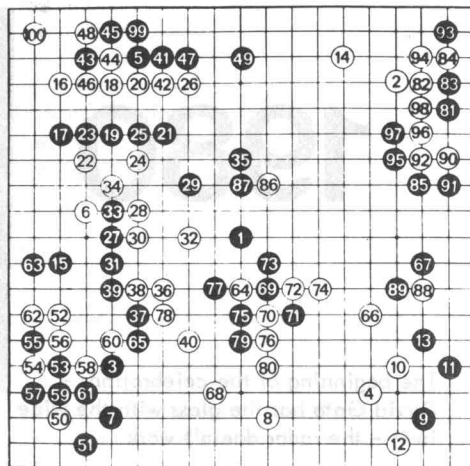
by MATTHEW MACFADYEN

This year was Yugoslavia's turn to host the European Congress, and the Rijeka club took on the job of organisation, selecting the island resort of Mali Lošinj as venue. Rijeka has a long maritime tradition and the principal organiser was at sea (literally) during the tournament. Unfortunately, the other organisers followed his lead in this respect and valiant efforts by Anton Steininger, the EGF Secretary, were required to get the tournament under way. By about the third day there were no major obstacles apart from the weather - even outside the five hour lunch break the heat was pretty desperate - however, "Though the English are effete they're quite impervious to heat" - Coward was right, the 23 English players recorded positive scores against all nationalities except the Dutch (and the Pole, but 0/2 hardly counts) and brought the European Championship to Britain for the first time.

The European Championship is distinct from the European Congress Main Tournament. This year it was open to all players of 4-dan and above. There were 24 players, including five past winners of the tournament among whom Jurgen Mattern was clearly the man to beat - he had played in nine of the last fifteen European Championships and won them all, losing only two games in the last ten years. I managed to beat him in the fifth round, but lost to André Moussa in the sixth (André finished third overall - a very impressive result for a 4-dan). Jurgen and I both won all our remaining games and so a play-off was necessary to determine the winner. That game is given below. Comments are mainly by me, but draw on a commentary by Mr Doi, professional 4-dan, the Nihon Kiin's representative at Mali Lošinj.



Commentary on the final game by the official representatives of (L to R) China, Korea and Japan.



1 - 100

White: Jurgen Mattern, 6-dan, Berlin
Black: Matthew Macfadyen, 5-dan, UK

Black 1, 3, 5 will be familiar by now to regular BGJ readers; I had tried something less orthodox in my previous game with Jurgen when I had white.

Up to 26 the game went entirely according to plan. White had territory in several places but none of it was secure (actually 26 should have been at 41 to complete his corner), and White's weak group on the left prevented any invasion of my large corner.

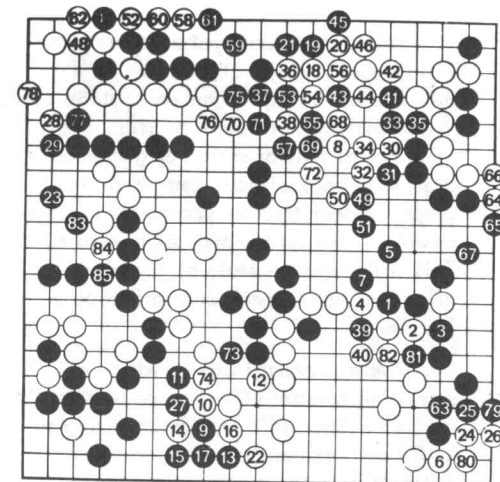
The sequence to 40 kept the White group safe for the moment, but my corner had almost completed itself, and I had sente with which to live on the upper side.

After 49, Jurgen became somewhat desperate and tried to live in my corner. The problem here is not that he has no chance - he very nearly succeeded - but that there is a good chance of dying unconditionally, and if that happens the corner will become completely secure and the game will be almost over. It is generally bad to embark on a risky enterprise in which you cannot afford to fail; but if there is no choice it's better than resigning.

The spectators felt that White 64 was cowardly and should have been a cut above 60, but Jurgen decided that this would be unreasonable while his centre group was still insecure, and switched to 64 so as to build territory on the lower side.

According to Mr Doi, Black 71 was an overplay (73 would be enough to win) and offered White his last chance - to play 73 and connect, separating Black's stones and looking for complications. Black 119 was the last move before lunch. I was expecting Jurgen to try to kill my group as a final fling - when he played 120, in order to take sente at 122, the major issues were decided and it remained only for me to hang on.

As the yose continued it became progressively clearer that I was at least 10 points ahead, and at 185 Jurgen resigned.



101 - 185

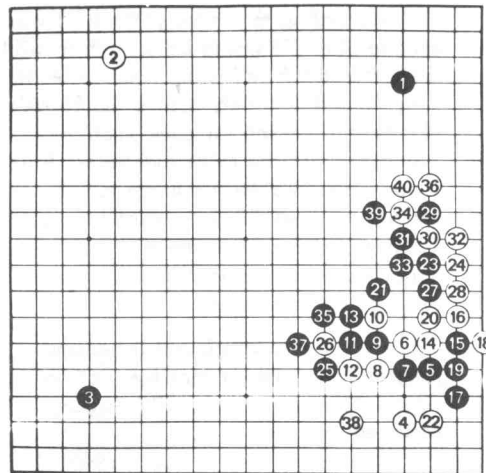


Englishmen in the midday sun (L to R, Chris Whitehouse, Terry Stacey and John Dawson; a view from the playing room; a reveller at the final party.

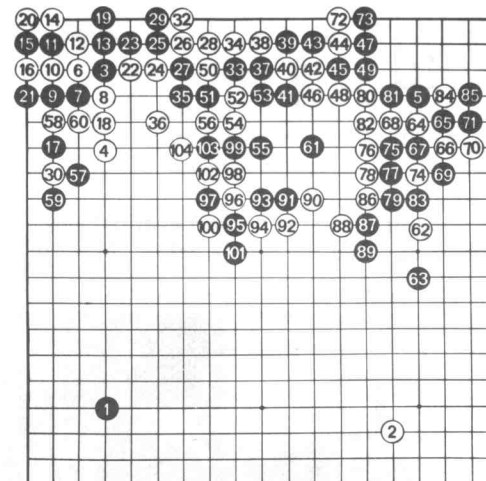


The playoff was typical of many I played at Lošinj in that I gained a decisive advantage at an early stage by the use of rather unorthodox tactics. The openings of four of my other games are presented here without commentary. It may appear that my opponents made many mistakes, but that is typical of amateurs. This is the current state of European go - all these players rank among Europe's Top Ten.

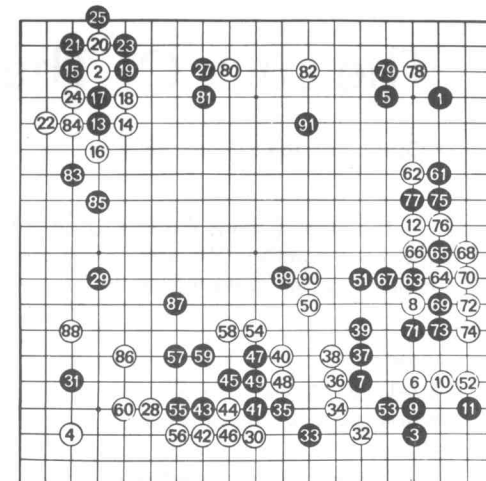
There is an attitude to which a surprising number of British go players subscribe, according to which trying to kill your opponent's stones somehow detracts from the purity of the game. I hope I have shown that it is possible to get stronger and to win games without adopting this attitude, and I would like to suggest that it's more fun.



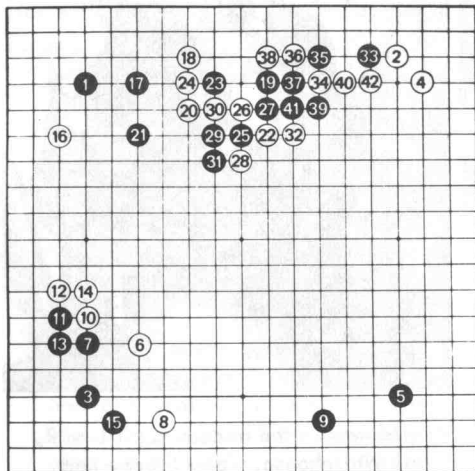
Round 3; White vs. Robert Rehm (Dutch 5 Dan), moves 1 - 40



Round 8; White vs. Rob van Zeijst (Dutch 4 Dan) moves 1 - 104



Round 9; Black vs. Wolfgang Isele (German 5 Dan) moves 1 - 91



Round 5; White vs. Jurgen Mattern moves 1 - 42



Rob van Zeijst - promoted to 5 Dan after coming 4th. in the Championship.

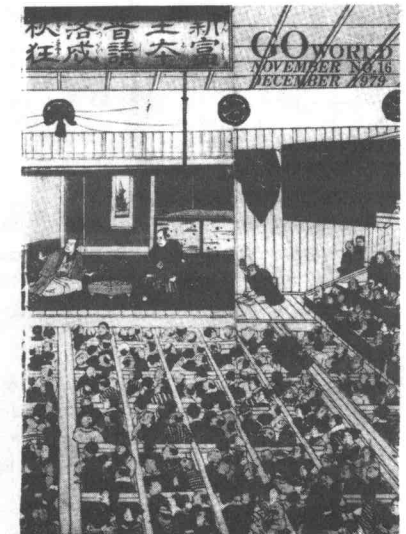
Advertisement

Go World

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION
(six issues, includes p&p)

£9:90

Dowsey Games



6 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5AB
Telephone: 01-794 9881

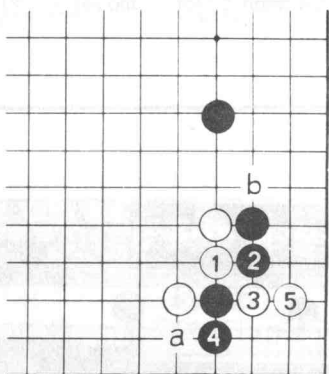
The Luck Of The Bold

Continuing the Yugoslavia saga . . .

The picture shows the last round of the tournament - those with good eyesight may discern Sue Barnes in the bottom left corner, others can read the article below, in which Jim Barty comments on that game.

Black: Sue Barnes, 2-kyu, GB
White: Frans Veltkamp, 1-kyu, NL

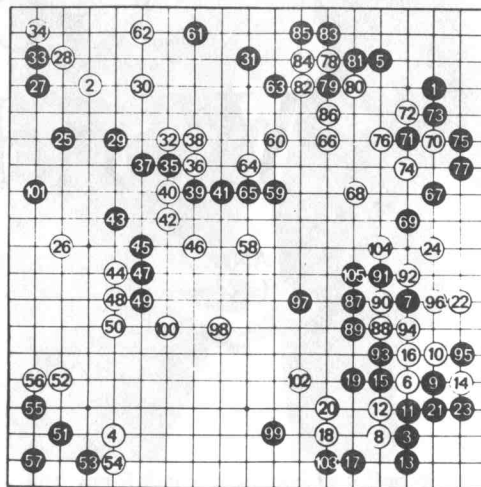
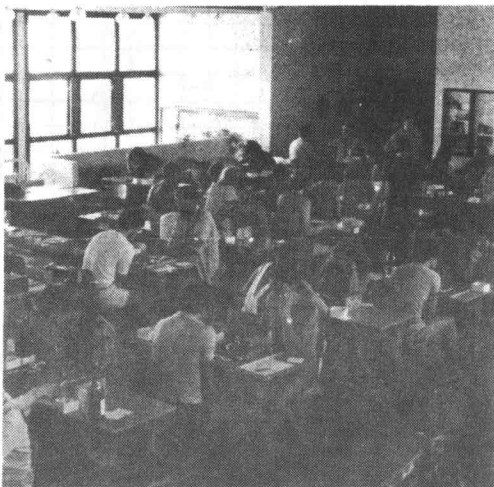
B9: This move is not standard and can be cut apart by White if he plays as in the following diagram.



After the sequence to 5 White has miai of 'a' and 'b' which is a disaster for Black, so when White plays 1 Black should probably play 3.

W10-24: The key issue in this sequence is whether White will get separated into two groups. If he does and he can't kill the corner then White has a bad position.

B17 and W18: These moves should both be at 19, the point is the same as above.



1 - 105

B25: This tenuki is a bit rash, Black should strengthen the cutting stones.

W40: This cut is a bit risky, the ladder at 42 doesn't work but Black may still be able to capture 40.

B45-57: This is a very good sequence by Black. 51 is exactly the right point because letting White take territory on the side means that plays around 101 become Black's privilege and add to the security of the Black group.

B61: This is not very efficient locally.

W62: And White really shouldn't answer, by the time he has finished attacking the three Black stones in the middle he will not be short of eyes.

B67: Bad move. The idea is clearly to take territory while attacking White's weakish group, but doing so leaves Black's four pivotal cutting stones a sitting duck for any attack White may care to mount. Strengthening weak groups is always more urgent than taking territory.

W70: Before White plays this move there are two places where White might break through and cut off some Black stones; White might also live in the corner. By attacking at 70, playing out the sequence to 77 and then playing at 78, White fails at all three of his options. If White had probed at the three-three point first he might have been able to pull something off here.

W84: Must be at 86.

W86: Big but not urgent, taking gote here is awful for White.

B93: At least half the time atari is aji keshi, this one is certainly. Black should play atari above 92 first, then White would have to struggle even to live.

W98: Good move, stabilises the position from White's point of view.

B99: A bold venture, Black stakes everything on being able to save all her weak groups.

B101: One line further is better.

B105: Regrettably the score ends here. Looking at the position we are left with, White really ought to be able to win by capturing the line of four stones on a big scale and making the rest of the central Black stones grovel to live in gote. However, history records that all the Black stones in the centre managed to connect up and live. Consequently, Black won by 18 points. Such is the luck of the bold.



THE GREAT NORTHERN

Another stirring saga of games won and lost, terrible defeats and handsome victories. This year's Northern Congress, the sixth, was organised mainly by Andy Benyon and John Pindar. It took place at Ashburne Hall in Manchester. The Red Rose Shield was won by Matthew Macfadyen for the nth time, he won 5 out of 6. Other prize winners as follows:

T. Stacey, 4-dan (Hammersmith); P. Robinson, 1-kyu (Cheltenham);
W. Brakes, 6-kyu (Baldock); S.P. Smith, 6-kyu (Tyne and Wear);
C. Henderson, 8-kyu (Bolton); G. Bailey, 13-kyu (Knut).

This game was played in the tournament. The commentary was compiled by Jim Barty during a discussion of the game with Matthew Macfadyen.

White: Clive Henderson, 8-kyu, Bolton
Black: Geoff Kaniuk, 6-kyu, London

B13: This move does not attack effectively as White can link up as he does in the game. 13 at 17 would make things more difficult for White.

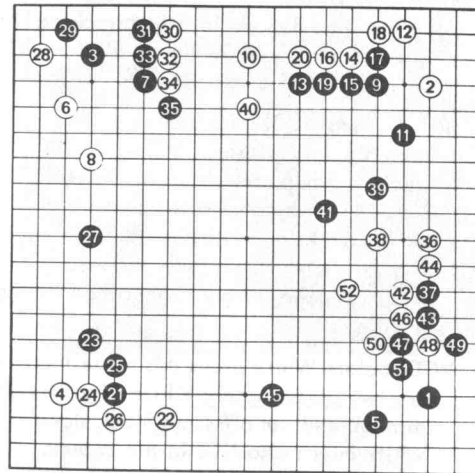
B19: Because of the two strong stones 3 and 7, Black should start a fight here and block at 20. If you are only going to play 19 you shouldn't play anything.

B23: This is a useless move, it makes it easy for White to connect along the side by playing at 26.

B25, 27: The Black stones on the outside are not sufficient compensation for White's corner.

W28: Very good.

B29: Black should not be trying to make eyes with this group, he should be running into the middle with it. Black has the thickness in this game, he should not be grovelling to make eyes as he does in the sequence to 35.



1 - 52

W36: White has no business playing on the third line because the black wall is open-skirted. If White is going to play in this area at all he should play closer to the black corner and on the fourth line.

B37: Natural response, White has only helped Black here.

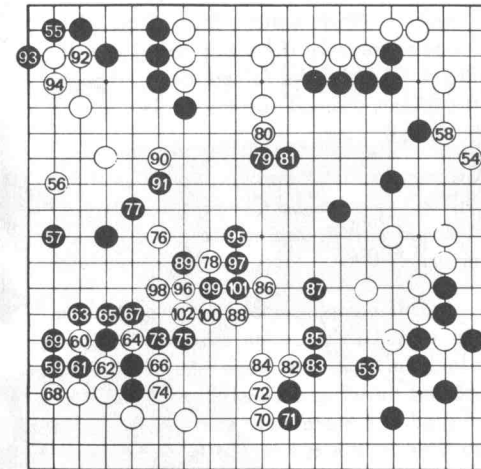
B39: Black should make a one point jump on the other side, following White up. 39 as played is not urgent.

W40: Awful, not because it is bad locally, but White has become committed to the two stones 36 and 38 and must make them into a stray group. Presumably White is trying to attack the black wall but the person with the weakest group is White and he must defend first. We suggest a one point jump either into the centre or towards Black's corner.

B41: Good.

B45: Black should carry on attacking, the vital point is 52 and he should play it immediately.

W52: Very good.



53 - 102

W54: Don't bother. The white group is already alive for all practical purposes. This is almost a waste of a move.

W66: Should just extend to 73, this still captures the black stones and gives more influence in the centre, it also avoids offering Black the large atari at 67.

W70: Absolutely must connect at 73, it's not so much the territory - about 10 points - as the influence in the centre which White loses.

B75: One point jump is better.

W76 and 78: This is not the proper thing to do, these stones become a liability for White. We recommend a one point jump at 79 preparing to attack what was once Black's wall.

W80: Helps Black build power in the centre.

W86 and 88: Nice shape. It is important to be sure of the connection.

B89: Cannot be big enough, we recommend 94 which leaves White the most problems.

W90: Good.

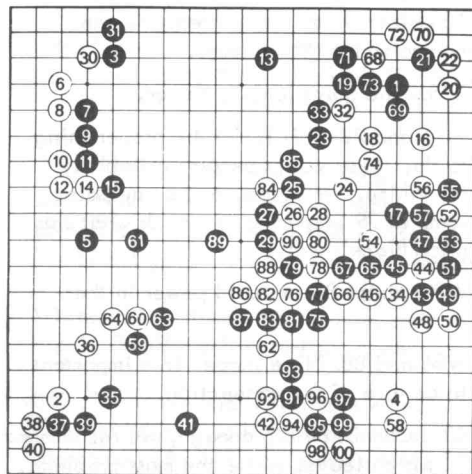
W102: No more moves recorded. Black seems to be slightly ahead on the board, but what actually happened is that Black ran into time trouble and let White cut off the five stones 9, 13, etc. White won by about 20 points.

Clive Henderson won a prize for 5 out of 6 and was recommended for promotion.

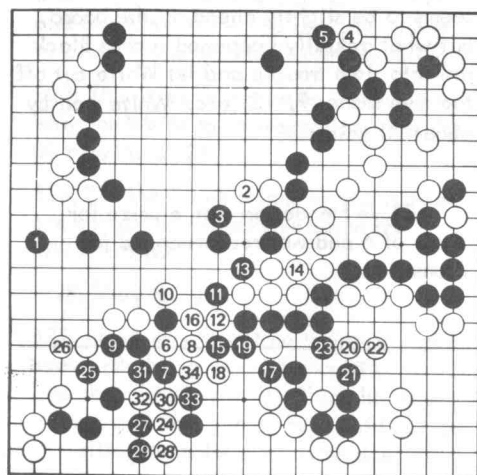
Robbery?

Black: L. Bremner, 1-kyu
White: J. Welch, 1-kyu

134 moves



1 - 100



101 - 134

By MATTHEW MACFADYEN

This game from the Northern Congress was recorded by Louise Bremner, who had the black stones, and who offered the general comment that she had played well in the beginning but blundered later and threw away a group - a common enough tale of woe but not, I hope to show, a proper description of what happened or of why.

Certainly the game started well for Black - White's plays from 22 to 28 made sense only if he was going to kill Black 17 which he failed to do, though his efforts showed commendable vigour.

White 76 was another vigorous attempt to kill something large, which failed in its immediate objective but succeeded in inducing the game losing error.

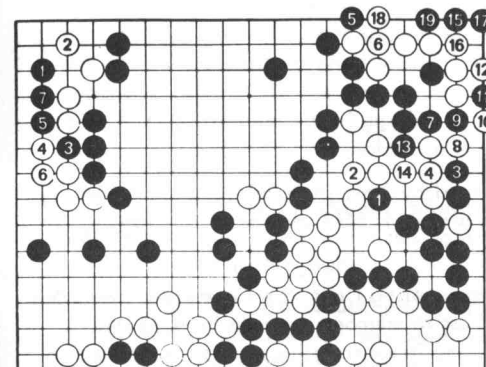
This error was not in any particular move, but in a sudden switch of attitude; Black felt that the game was over and started thinking defensively. When White played 124 there were still plenty of ways to live - the cut at 134 is probably best - but Black was not thinking in that sort of way, she scrambled for eyes and when that failed, was so deeply immersed in the defensive frame of mind that she resigned immediately.

Actually, Black's position is no worse than White's had been since the Black group lived with 47 - she needed to kill something to win. This is not an uncommon position or a particularly worrying one. There are still plenty of chances, the best of which seem to be Dias. 1 and 2, or something like them.

See opposite page ...

Dia. 1

Dia. 2



I am not claiming that White's groups can be killed if he finds the best possible defensive plays - merely that there are some good chances left - the correct responses are left as an exercise for the reader.

The important point is that you only find effective moves if you look for them, and the maintenance of a sufficiently aggressive attitude is necessary to keep you looking. In this game White tried three times before he succeeded, while Black gave up at the first obstacle - Bruce's spider had the right idea.

Ipswich Tournament



REPORT FROM BRIAN BOLTON

The second East Anglian Go Congress was held at Ipswich Town Hall on Sunday 28th September. This was a three round McMahon tournament ably run by our new Ipswich protegee, Verrill Baldwin (8-kyu).

Mighty Francis Roads (3-dan on a good day) won overall first prize with three straight wins. Second prize went to J. Hobson (1-kyu) who beat both yours truly and no less than our 2-dan BGA chairman who shall remain nameless. Third and fourth prizes went to P. Shepperson (5-kyu) and D. Bryans for splendid wins against noble opponents.

Sincere thanks to our two hardworking wives for the refreshments, to Stuart Dowsey for bringing his bookshop and to all who turned out in such excellent spirits and good fighting form.

LETTERS

Dear Sir

David Mitchell should know better than to indulge in the ancient sport of sniping at the Committee for anything wrong with the Association.

As David rightly says, Go is in quite a healthy state in Britain at the moment, judging by the quantity of Go activity taking place. If BGA membership is falling, it may not necessarily be the Committee's fault.

A few years back a BGA Annual General meeting (not the Committee) decided on a new financial policy whereby BGA services to members were to be paid for entirely out of subscriptions. This entailed a jump in subscriptions, and the decline in membership dates from about that time. What I suspect is happening is that some club secretaries are being less than scrupulous in affiliating all their regular members, as required by our constitution. Perhaps we should not put too much pressure on such club secretaries, for fear of losing whole clubs, rather than individual members. We have to rely, as we have always had to, on the consciences and good sense of our secretaries.

Another factor influencing falling membership is the loss of members originally recruited by the London Go Centre. Could the Committee have prevented the Go Centre from closing?

What saddens me most about David's letter is that nowhere does it contain a positive suggestion as to what the Committee ought to be doing to improve the situation. It is true that there is a shortage of volunteers to undertake Committee work. 1980 was the first time for six years that the Committee elections were uncontested. Committee work is tedious and time-consuming. Because there are people willing to write books, organise leagues, etc., it does not follow that there are people willing to undertake the less rewarding administrative tasks of Committee members.

The only valid complaint I can find in David's letter is about the standard of book-keeping prior to the election of the present treasurer. But this only serves to show how wrong he is about the availability of efficient volunteers to do BGA work. The Treasurer's job is probably the most tedious of all. How grateful we should all feel now to Bob Hitchens for his many years of accurate book-keeping.

The error underlying much of what David has written is that he confuses "The BGA Committee" with "The BGA". A Committee is only as strong as the members who elect it. The degree of success of British Go Week will be a good indicator of how much grass-roots support the Committee is able to draw upon.

On one point I heartily agree with David. The formation of any rival Go Association would only worsen the situation. The golden rule for members of an organisation such as ours run by an elected committee is, "support your committee - or replace it."

Yours sincerely Francis Roads (BGA Committee member 1968 - 1976)

Sir

It seems my last letter to your journal was either not read properly or entirely misunderstood by all I have spoken to. My intention was simply to show that the last ten years were only marginally better than disaster, and that we need to make some change so as to avoid the same in the next ten years.

I feel the major cause is lack of long- and medium-term planning leading to a confused sense of purpose and no progress.

If the BGA had outlined a plan for the next 30 years in 1970 I have no doubt that membership would have risen continuously and the aim, whatever that was, would have been well within sight.

I think the BGA should aim to be an organisation similar to the Nihon Kiin within thirty years. Such a dream may seem impossible right now, but I have outlined one long term plan to get us there. I am certain the BGA committee could find one if it desired such a goal.

So can we forget the last ten years and plan for the next thirty so that I can see an improvement in go playing in the UK before I die.

Yours faithfully David Mitchell

advertisement

GO PROVERBS

a book for every go player

This is a concise and readable account of the basic principles of go, set out under headings of various go proverbs with lots of amusing examples showing how they work and when they don't. It is written by David Mitchell and produced by the Go Press.

The Go Press is an all British venture, founded to fill the gap between beginners' books and the advanced material available from Japan at a price every go player can afford.

64 pages; Price: £1.25 + 20p p&p

Available from The Go Press, 39 Lutot Gardens, London N19 5TR

NEWS

POSTAL GO

There is an increasing amount of international postal go being played between Britain and Japan. Rumour has it that John Welch is playing 30 simultaneous postal games. If you want to get in on the act then now is the ideal time as there is a move to set up an Anglo-Japanese Postal Go Team Match. The man to contact for this or any other postal go with Japan is Jim Metcalf, Timbers, 2 Blunts Wood Road, Haywards Heath, Sussex. He has an extensive list of keen Japanese opponents ranging in strength from 6-dan to 4-kyu.

THE MISSING CHEQUE

Readers who were disturbed at the news that the BGA managed to lose trace of Harold Lee's donation of £200 can rest assured. The BGA Treasurer informs us that he has established that the cheque was paid into the BGA's account.

FIRST MIDLAND GO LEAGUE

Result table: each row shows games won by that club.

	B	C	K	N	N	Total
Birmingham	1	1	2	3	1	7
Coventry	3		4	3	2	12
Kings Norton	2	0		2	2	6
Northampton	1	1	2		3	7
Nottingham	3	2	2	1		8

PROMOTIONS

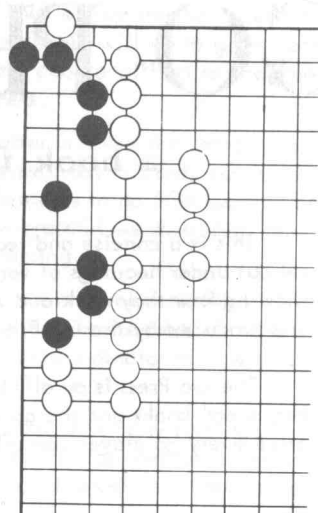
Congratulations go to Michael Culver of Hammersmith Club who was promoted to shodan at the last subcommittee meeting.

NEW BOOK DISTRIBUTOR

The new BGA Book Distributor, the man who sells you 'cheap at the price' books and equipment, is Brian Bolton, The Cottage, Church Lane, Sproughton, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3BA. Tel: 0473 47999

BAD AJI PROBLEM

This is a yose problem. If Black's position looks a little thin to you then you're not wrong. The problem is White to play and do some damage to the Black position.



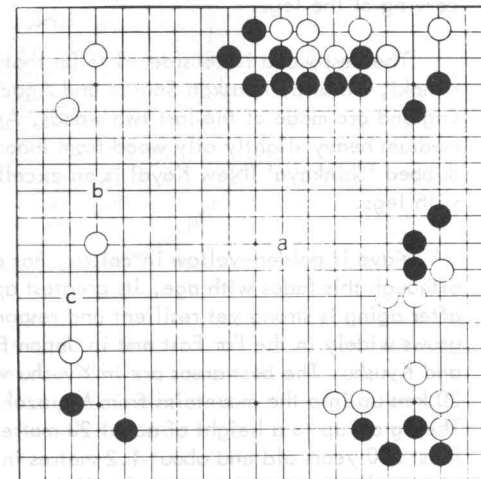
Answer inside back cover.

REVELATIONS

By FRANCIS ROADS

This problem from the November 1964 edition of Go Review was my revelation. I had been playing go for a few months, and bought the aforementioned back number from John Barrs on my first visit to the London Go Club in April 1965. (It used to meet in the Pontefract Castle in Wigmore Street.)

"Where on earth is Black's best play to make the most of his great influence in the northeast sector?" was the question, in Go Review's quaint English. Being quite an advanced beginner, I had realised that the object of the game of go is to surround territory. The answer was obvious: a play in the centre was required to make all that influence into secure territory. The tengen point was attractive, as it had a little dot on it, but I settled for 'a' as the answer.



Having conscientiously avoided looking at the solution (which Go Review used to print on the same page) I was amazed to see 'b' and 'c' discussed as the only worthwhile alternatives, with 'c', the deeper and more severe invasion, being preferred because of the strong black influence.

Suddenly I realised what influence is for. Even a professional player could not analyse all the possible variations, but the influence was bound to favour a deep invasion, either because of favourable ladders, rescuing any weak black groups or threatening white ones, or neutralising any white influence that might appear. Furthermore, I suddenly realised how every stone played affects and is affected by every other stone already played, however remote.

I think I probably advanced by five kyu in as many seconds. This too was probably the moment when I turned from a chess player who played go into a go player who used to play chess.

WOOD, SHELL AND STONE

BY STUART DOWSEY

It is the dream of every go player to possess his own traditional go board with legs and play with shell and slate stones in beautifully turned wooden bowls. This series of articles serves as an introduction to fine go equipment although it is admittedly no substitute for the real thing.

Go boards are judged on the wood type, appearance and consistency. The work that goes into them includes the cutting and shaping, lining of the playing surface and carving of the legs.

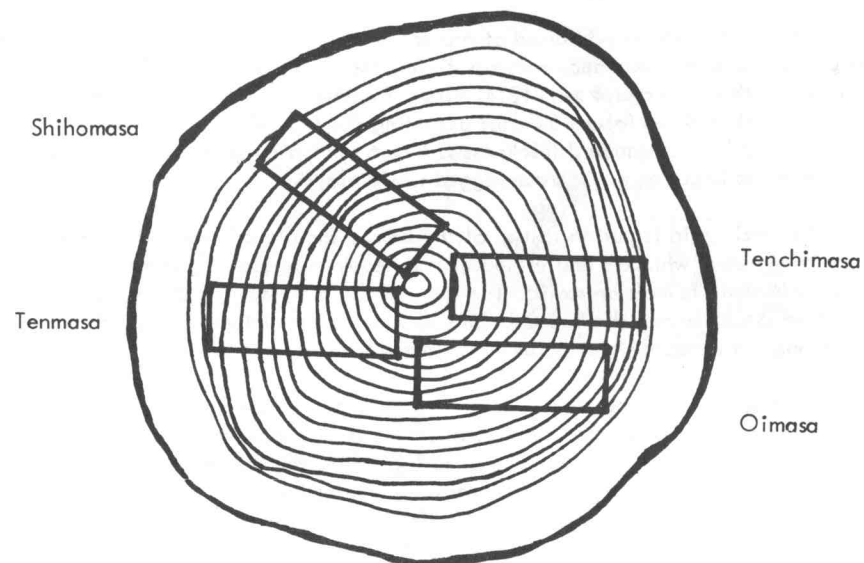
The best wood is considered to be that of the Kaya tree followed by Icho, Taiwan Hinoki, Katsura, Alaskan Spruce and Agachis. The bulk of go boards available in England are made of the last two woods. Agachis, used mainly for folding boards, is a medium heavy slightly oily wood from Indonesia while Alaskan Spruce which has been dubbed 'Shinkaya' (New Kaya) is an excellent cheaper wood for making thick go boards with legs.

Kaya is golden-yellow in colour, has a straight regular grain and a pleasant smell although this fades with age. Its greatest appeal lies in the texture of the wood which after aging is strong yet resilient and responsive to the click of stones. The Kaya tree grows widely in the Far East and in Japan from Central Honshu southwards to Shikoku and Kyushu. The best areas are in Kyushu with Shikoku next. The best trees are found 20 kms up into the mountains from Miyazaki City in Kyushu at Ayamachi in Higashimoro. They grow up to a height of about 20 metres. Trees for making go boards should be at least 500 years old and about 1.2 metres in diameter. Really old trees like this are almost all gone but there are plentiful supplies of younger trees. The difference in the wood varies from area to area. Kaya from north of Tokyo is much paler and lighter in weight and somehow the overall effect is not quite as good. However, boards from Shikoku and Shizuoka Prefecture are making an increased appearance.

The trees are felled between November and February when the sap is at its lowest ebb. Trees cut from National Forests are auctioned off to the go board makers and have been known to fetch nearly 10 million yen (£20,000). They are then cut into blocks and put into warehouses for aging. This process used to take 10 years but 6 or 7 years is more usual. At the end of this period, split or diseased boards are weeded out and you are left with a very tough piece of wood highly resistant to water. In fact, two of the other major uses of kaya are in boat building and bath tubs.

The Kaya trunk has a wide band of featureless wood just under the bark. If the tree is too small, this band will become part of the go board and affect the appearance. When the tree is large enough for the entire board to be cut from the grain along the radius of the trunk then this is called 'Masame' (True Grain) while smaller trees only produce boards cut from either half of the trunk which are then termed 'Itame' (Flat Grain). The first illustration shows how the four Masame cuts are obtained.

MASAME BOARDS



The best is Tenchimesa, so called because the grain runs straight from heaven (Ten) to earth (Chi). In a perfect board, the grain lines on top and bottom are virtually identical and either can be used as the board surface. Next in quality is Tenmasa. The other two cuts, Shihomasa and Oimasa, both have spreading grain with uneven spacing and these forms of cutting have almost completely disappeared.

ITAME BOARDS



Ki Omote Omote



Ki Ura Omote

The second drawing shows Itame boards. The most popular of these is the Ki Omote Omote (Facing Surface) in which the outer part of the trunk forms the playing surface. The other is Ki Ura Omote (Reverse Surface).

Dimensions were standardised at the end of the Tokugawa Era. Nowadays a small margin is added to these measurements giving the length as 1 shaku 5 sun (45.45 cms) and the width as 1 shaku 4 sun (42.42 cms). Thickness of the board varies from 3 sun (about 9 cms) to 8 sun (about 24 cms) excluding the legs which measure 3 sun 8 fun (about 11 cms). The standard thickness is 5 or 6 sun which gives a comfortable height for players to kneel or to sit cross-legged while playing.

The 19x19 grid is put on last of all by brush, spatula or sword. The brush used is made from mouse whiskers and the paint is a heavy duty black lacquer. The spatula or sword technique is most dramatic. The edge of the instrument is dipped in the black paint and then rocked across the board surface to leave a perfect even line. Handicap points are dabbed in by brush later. Nowadays many grids are put on by the silk screen method.

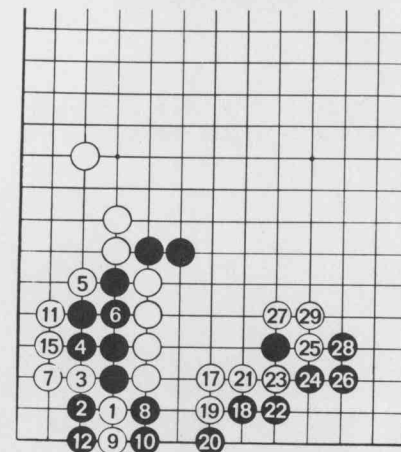
The traditional shape of the legs is modelled on the seed of the Kuchinashi, a persimmon plant, though the Kuchimashi seed has only 6 sides while go board legs have 8. Top quality boards will have hand-carved legs while the cheapest variety are turned on a machine. The name Kuchinashi contains an interesting pun in which 'Kuchi' meaning 'mouth' and 'Nashi' meaning 'nothing' tells both players and onlookers the correct approach to the game.

Finally, the underside of the board has a curious indented pyramid called the 'Heso' (Belly-button). Legend has it that this was used by irate samurai to catch the blood after the beheading of annoying bystanders. The truth is slightly less gory. The Heso allows the go board to expand and contract without splitting during changes of temperature or humidity. In addition, it helps to produce that clear distinctive note when a stone hits the board.

Top quality Kaya go boards understandably cost quite a healthy sum. Few are less than 1 million yen (£2,000). The most expensive ever made was used for the first game of the 1st Kisei Title Match and cost 10 million yen (£20,000). Fortunately, Shinkaya gives a satisfactory alternative and British players can enjoy the traditional beauty of a Japanese hand-made board for less than £200.

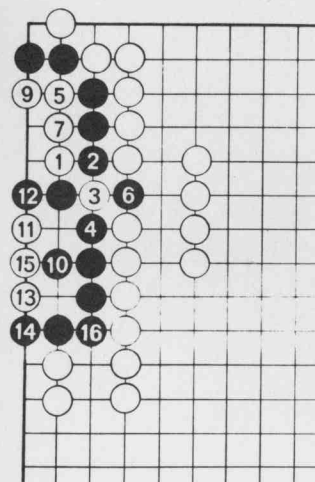
VULGARITY Answer

This was a hard one, as you've not only to think of 1 and 3 in the first place but you have to get 5 and 7 in the right order. The sequence from 8 to 16 is the famous two stone edge squeeze which should be part of your repertoire. After that it all flows. 1 and 3 almost require lateral thinking but once you've seen them in action they're hard to forget. So if you go down to the club tonight and that Bloggs tries to hack your bits apart you know how to turn the tables - Eh?

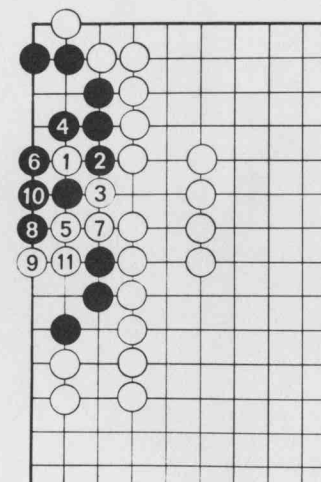


BAD AJI Answer

White starts with 1 and 3, after which Black may choose Dia. 'a' or Dia. 'b'. Dia. 'a' is several points better for Black but it is gote, so Dia. 'b' may turn out to be appropriate depending on what else remains on the board.



Dia. a



Dia. b