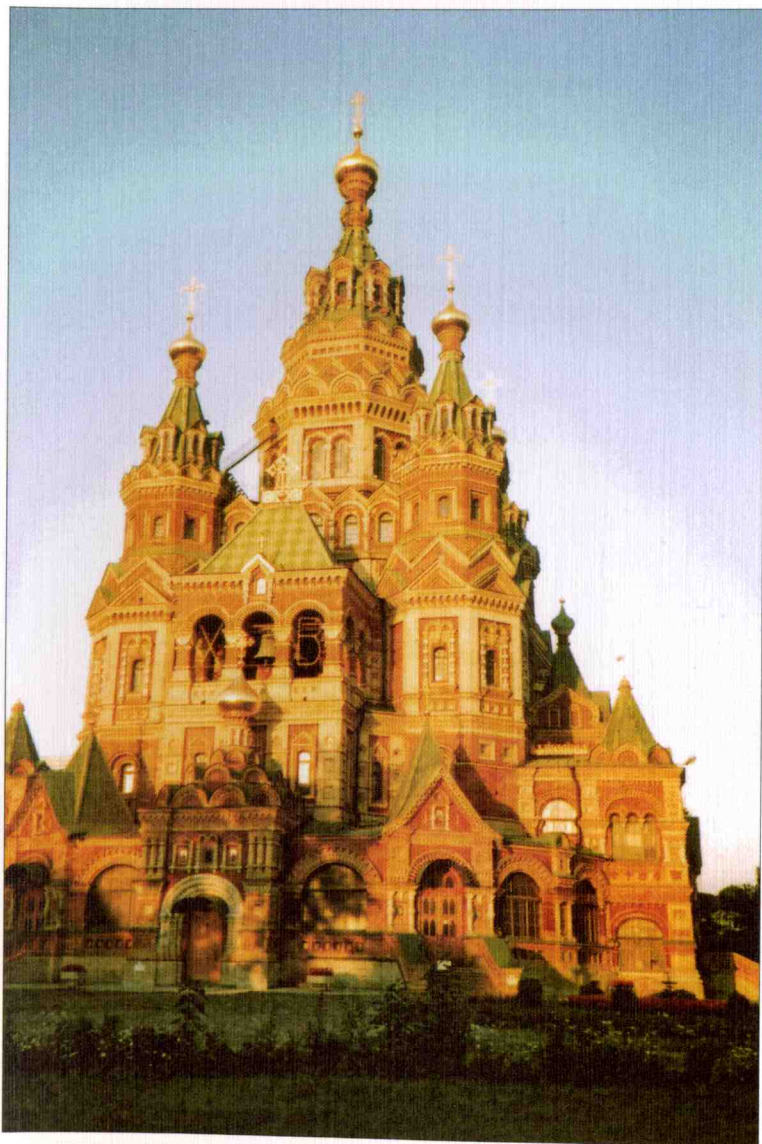


BRITISH **Go** JOURNAL



Number 132

Autumn 2003

Price £2.50

BRITISH GO JOURNAL NO 132 AUTUMN 2003 ~ CONTENTS

UK News and Tournaments ~ Tony Atkins	2
Go Tutor	5
Francis in the USA ~ Francis Roads	8
Council House ~ How dan certificates are awarded ~ Tim Hunt	11
Gozone ~ Tony Atkins	14
Nakade & Ishi-no-Shita ~ Part Thirteen ~ Richard Hunter	15
Thrilling Semeai Revisited ~ Alex Selby	20
Scaling the Heights of the MSO ~ Tim Hunt	22
Houston We Have A Problem ~ Francis Roads	24
The Go Rating System of Igor Goliney ~ Franco Pratesi	26
Unbounded Thoughts ~ Richard Court	29
Fireworks ~ Simon Goss	30
Diary of a Go Plonker ~ Ian Marsh.	33
Review of Go++ ~ Nick Wedd.	35
Not Really an Ethical Problem ~ Nick Wedd	36
The 1st Incheon World Amateur Baduk Championship ~ Simon Goss	38
Thrilling Semeai Games ~ Part Two ~ Richard Hunter	43
Ten Years Ago ~ Tony Atkins	46
EGC 2003 St Petersburg ~ Steve Bailey	47
Scaling the Heights of the MSO ~ Answers ~ Tim Hunt	51
World Go News ~ Tony Atkins	53
BGA Officials ~ Postal, e-mail and Web Addresses	56
UK Club Lists	57
Notices	59
Glossary of Go Terms	60

UK NEWS AND TOURNAMENTS

Tony Atkins

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Leicester Square

58 players entered the Leiciester Tournament on 14th June held in the usual church hall venue. Additionally this year 8 school children from Aston School and Loughborough Grammar School played in a 13x13 beginners' tournament. First prize in that went to Vishal Dhutia with 8 wins and joint second to Ben Horsley and Simon Hiou with 6. In the main tournament Simon Shiu (4 dan Bristol) was again the tournament winner. He last won in 2001, being squeezed in a tie-break in 2002. Winning prizes for 3/3 were Gerry Mills (1 dan Monmouth), Clive Wright (1 dan Nottingham), Mike Lynn (2 kyu Leamington), Alec Edgington (5 kyu Wanstead), Mike Pickles (6 kyu York), Andy Price (15 kyu Leamington), Thomas Hawley (18 kyu Nottingham), Duncan Forsyth (21 kyu Unattached) and Richard Meddings (25 kyu Aston). In the continuous 13x13 handicap prizes went to Nayan Dhutia (25 kyu Loughborough) for most wins (with 8) and Alex Beman (23 kyu Leamington) for most games (with 10).

Welsh Dragon

The 11th Welsh Open at Barmouth was held on the sunny weekend of 28th and 29th June. It was won as always by Matthew Macfadyen (6 dan Leamington) being awarded the bottle of Glenmorangie; he now has 53 games unbeaten there. Second was Tatsushi Akiya (4 dan) who traveled from Tokyo for a holiday including the event and was rewarded with a Welsh dragon. Winning a two-book prize for 5 out of 5 was Alistair Brooks (20 kyu Swindon). On 4/5 were Tom Widdecombe (2 kyu Devon), Gary Beman (6 kyu Leamington) and Jonathan Englefield (12 kyu High Wycombe). Organiser Philip Ward-Ackland (6 kyu Barmouth) awarded himself a strong drink for winning 4 out of 4, able to compete thanks to the help of the

Harveys, Pitchfords and Stephen Bashforth. The Continuous 9x9 winner was Shawn Hearn (6 kyu Sleaford). Wayne Walters and Philip Ward-Ackland jointly won the first Backgammon tournament, going on into the small hours of Saturday evening.

Edinburgh Festival

Last year the Scottish Open was missed because of hosting the British Open. However it was back on 5th and 6th of July. Again it was held in Lee House at the Pollock Halls of Edinburgh University. The site also provided accommodation for those of the 26 players who needed it. Players came from Scotland, England, Isle of Man and Japan, and were able to explore the nearby Arthur's Seat, city centre and local restaurants. On the Sunday Tony Atkins and Professor Iwashita ran a Go stand at the Japanese Festival, held at Lauriston Castle in the Edinburgh suburbs. In the tournament three 4 dan players beat each other to end on 5 wins at the top. Split by sos, winner for the third time was Wanstead's Francis Roads, second was Tokyo's Tatsushi Akiya and third was Wanstead's Quentin Mills. Winning prizes for 4/6 were Reading's Ron Bell (4 kyu) and local player Allan Crossman (3 kyu). Shinpei Tanaka (2 kyu Edinburgh) won 3.5.

Letchworth Garden

To celebrate its centenary, Letchworth added Garden City to its name and renewed its central gardens. The second tournament was held on 19th July and attracted 39 players to the new venue of the 1907 Meeting House. The galleried hall held most boards, but the top two played in the gallery itself. There was no need to place anyone in the hall's sheep pen, as the weather was nice so the babes and partners were able to stay outside in the gardens. Tournament winner was

Alistair Wall (4 dan Wanstead), who beat Kim, Selby and Shepperson to win. Organiser Simon Bexfield was again a prize winner with 2 out of 2. The players on 3 wins were Erwin Bonsma (5 kyu Ipswich) and Azan Mahwah (19 kyu LSE). Tony Pitchford (7 kyu Chester) won 2.5, as did local Syd Noah (6 kyu). The Junior Prize went to Jonathan Englefield (11 kyu High Wycombe) and Chris Goldsmith (7 kyu Cambridge) won the Continuous 9x9.

Epsom Derby

The second Epsom Tournament on the hottest of days, 9th August, attracted 56 players to the air conditioned Ebbisham Centre. The top group was very strong putting the bar at 5 dan. Also the first British Championship game was held in the upstairs room. Matthew Macfadyen beat Matthew Cocks, watched by game recorder Natasha Regan, the tournament players and by many players on the internet thanks to a webcast by Nick Wedd (until technical problems intervened). Epsom winner was Hirsohi Takamiya (5 dan Central London). All players on two and three wins got prizes thanks to sponsor Forbidden Technologies Plc, including large umbrellas, and everyone went away with a Go puzzle mouse mat. Those with three were: Li Shen (4 dan Central London), Hyo Sik Cho (1 kyu London) and Jil Segerman (8 kyu Brighton). 12-year old Li Shen beat three 5 dans, enough to earn promotion to that grade in September. The best team was the Eading team (mostly from Reading). Jenny Radcliffe (15 kyu Durham) won the 9x9 and Andrew Jones (3 dan Wanstead) the 13x13. A group of players including the organisers and sponsor enjoyed a Chinese buffet afterwards. The following Saturday a Go match took place at the Korean Festival at Fairfield Recreation Ground in Kingston Upon Thames. After one round the scores were tied, but after three the Korean team lead by Mr S.Y. Park were well ahead to take the cup, whilst England had to settle for the plate.

Northern Soul

The Northern this year moved back from September to the 16th and 17th August. The usual team of John Smith and Chris Kirkham ran the event, but the event was now part of the Mind Sports Olympiad. This meant competing for medals and top place prize money, not the normal prizes, and a change of venue to the Renold Building, UMIST, in Manchester. 28 players took part. All the medals went to young Chinese players. Gold medal winner with 6/6 was Li Haiou (6 dan) a former professional who has been studying in Liverpool. Second was Chen Lei from London with 5/6 and third was Han Zhongwei with 4/6. Paul Taylor (1 kyu Cambridge) took a creditable fourth with 4/6 and fifth was Tim Hunt (3 dan Open Uni) and sixth Dan Gilder (3 dan Manchester) on 3/6. On four wins were: Martin Harvey (3 kyu Manchester), Bill Streeten (4 kyu Wanstead) and Mihoko Isoda (15 kyu Oxford). In another room Matthew Macfadyen won games two and three of the British Championship, beating Matthew Cocks to keep the title. Again it was webcast and various strong players made comments remotely, or on the demo board in the corridor.

Mind Games

The 7th Mind Sports Olympiad moved to a new five year venue of UMIST in Manchester, over ten days from 16th to 25th August. Go events were held on both weekends. The first had the Northern and Championship Games and no less than four events took place over the holiday weekend. Go Rapidplay on Saturday 23rd was won by Li Haiou (6 dan China) with 6/6. Silver was Dan Gilder (3 dan Manchester) and Bronze was Masashi Sugiyama (2 dan Japan). Jonathan Englefield (11 kyu) won 4/6; 15 players took part. On the Sunday morning the 7 player Lightning was won by Piers Shepperson (5 dan London) with 5/6, second was Masashi Sugiyama with 4/6 and third

Natasha Regan (1 dan Epsom) with 3/6. On holiday from Japan, Mihoko Isoda (15 kyu) also won 4/6. That afternoon the 8-player 13x13 was won by Tim Hunt (3 dan Open University) with 4.5/6. Masashi Sugiyama took another silver with 4/6 and Simon Goss (2 dan Bracknell) took the bronze. Mihoko Isoda won 4.5/6 and Jonathan Englefield 4/6. On the Monday the Pair Go was won by Natasha Regan and Tim Hunt, paired for the first time. Second were Helen and Martin Harvey (Manchester) and third were Anna Griffiths and Tony Atkins (Berks). Fourth were Mihoko Isoda and Masashi Sugiyama. Medals for this were presented by memory champion Ben Pridmore. Go players of course played in some of the other 120 events as well. Winning non-Go medals were Paul Smith who took gold at Oware, Nick Wedd gold at Skat and Piers Shepperson at Peurto Rico. Tim Hunt attended the first meeting of the UK Mind Sports Council during the event, which aims to get mind games recognised as sports.

Cornish Cream

The second Go weekend in Penzance this year was the regular Cornwall event on 6th and 7th September. The Go returned to the Yacht Inn after the British was held at the larger Queens Hotel. The Cornish Handicap starts after midday on the Saturday to allow traveling or make the most of the fine weather to visit attractions such as St Michael's Mount or the Gweek Seal Sanctuary. 12 players took part. Winner of the Go Bowls trophy on 4.5/5 was Hennie Groot Lipman (2 dan) on holiday from the Netherlands. Several players scored 3/5 to be second, of whom the prize winner was junior player Jonathan Englefield (11 kyu High Wycombe). 20 players took part in the Cornwall Tournament on the somewhat showery Sunday. Winner of the Devon Go Stone for the first time was Simon Goss (2 dan) who beat fellow Bracknell player Ian Marsh (1 dan) in the final. Last year's

winner was third, Alistair Wall (4 dan Wanstead). The player winning a wooden stone for three wins was local lad Jake Finnis (16 kyu).

Mulberry Bush

67 players attended the Open University for the 15th Milton Keynes Tournament. The weather was fair and often players were seen inspecting the mulberries, though nobody was caught red-handed. In the tournament, unbeaten winner was Lei Chen (5 dan GLGC); he beat Young Kim (5 dan London) and then Alistair Wall (4 dan Wanstead) in the last round. Second with 3/3 was Toby Manning (3 dan Leicester), with Dave Ward (4 dan Cambridge) in third. On 3/3 in fourth was Alison Bexfield (2 dan Letchworth). Also on 3/3 were Niall Cardin (1 dan Oxford), Matt Piatkus (2 kyu Oxford), Craig Young (9 kyu North London), Paul Blockley (14 kyu Worcester) and Zachary Tsai (17 kyu Warwick). The Sandbaggers won Oxford the team prize for a second year running. Alex Beman (19 kyu Leamington) and Ian Davis (7 kyu Cambridge) won prizes for 7/15 and 6.5/8 on the MK Map Go Board, now a regular feature of this event for those who don't like square grids.

IN THE LIGHT

Ing Clocks

www.usgo.org/aga/clocks.asp

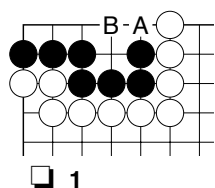
This page from the useful American Go Association site tells you how to set up time on the Ing Clocks. These electronic timers are famed for their ability to talk to the players, supposedly in English and Chinese, but are unobvious to set up unless you have been shown how.

Tony Atkins

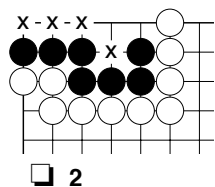
GO TUTOR ~ ENDGAME COUNTING

This article deals with endgame counting. Together with what was said earlier about sente and gote relationships that covers the basic knowledge of the endgame which does not come down to special tactics (endgame tesujis).

A point which will readily be understood by someone who has tried the counting technique of the previous article in this series is that you have to deal somehow with the four types of endgame plays identified earlier. For example in Diagram 1 Black's territory is complete, except that White A will be a sente play against it some day.

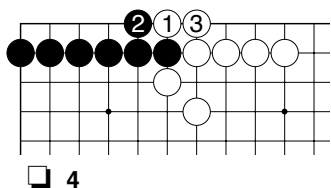
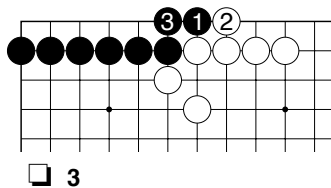


Black will have to answer at B under almost all circumstances. So count the points there as marked in Diagram 2.

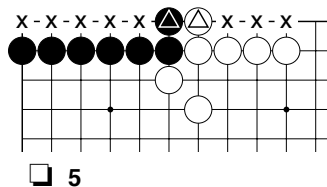


That gives us a first rule: count sente plays as if played out. What about double gote plays?

The classic double gote formation of Diagrams 3 and 4 can be counted as if the



marked stones of Diagram 5 were in place, and the respective territories were the 'x' points. This is the average of the two results.



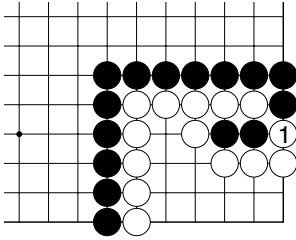
That can stand as a second rule: to a first approximation, either side has a 50% chance of playing out a double gote area.

There are no such comfortable ways to look at double sente moves and reverse sente moves. Both players will rush to the double sente plays if (a) they will really be answered as expected and (b) there are no undesirable side effects. The reverse sente move is always a little unexpected. Why has the player with sente not played it long ago? Well, it might be that the endgame has just started. There are other reasons (retaining some ko threats, for example – a move that gains one point in sente by threatening to gain 30 more doesn't need playing until quite late on).

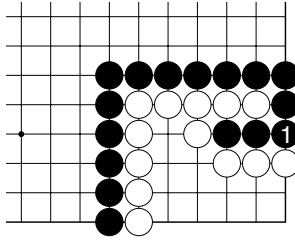
Summary of approximate counting

- Count sente moves as played out but watch for reverse sente.
- Count double gote moves as averaged to a middle result.
- Treat double sente plays as separate issues.

Now onto endgame counting as a technique in its own right. If you want to know which endgame point to play, all you have to do is look round all the possible plays, count the game after each of them, and pick the best one. But life is too short for that counsel of perfection, of course. What everyone relies on, for almost all of the time, is local assessment of gain and loss, as in the following examples.

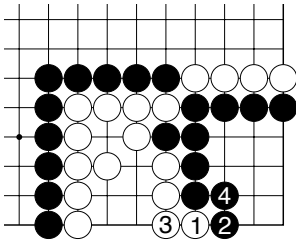


□ 6

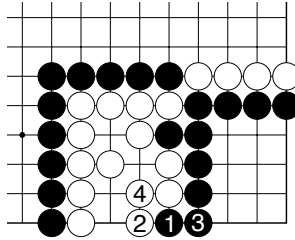


□ 7

Diagrams 6 and 7:
a double gote play worth
4 points.

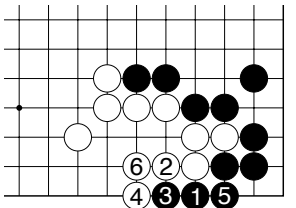


□ 8

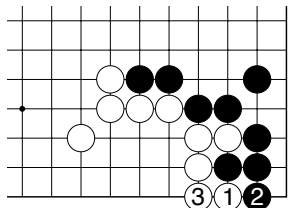


□ 9

Diagrams 8 and 9:
a double sente play worth
4 points.

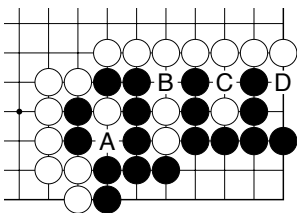


□ 10



□ 11

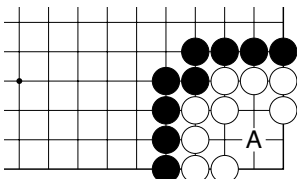
Diagrams 10 and 11:
a sente play worth 5 points,
and the corresponding reverse
sente play. Note that White 2
at 3 in Diagram 10 leads to a
disaster when Black cuts at 2.



□ 12

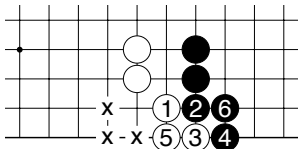
Diagram 12:
count the values of the double gote plays at
A, B, C, D.

Answers:
A is worth 6 points, B 4 points, C 2 points,
D 1 point.

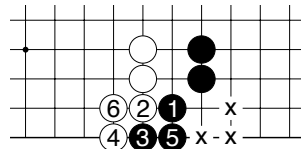


□ 13

Diagram 13:
Please confirm that this is a double gote
situation worth 28 points.



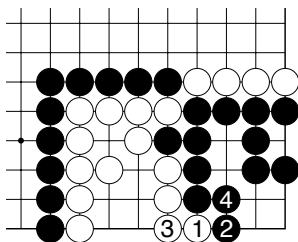
□ 14



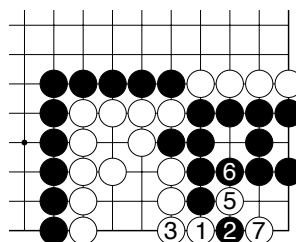
□ 15

Diagrams 14 and 15: explanation of the value 6 points awarded to the double sente play shown once before in the chapter. The changeover in points is shown by the 'x' markings. Note that the

question of whether the answers given will actually be seen on the board is much more important as a practical matter than the exact number: both sides definitely will want to play here earliest.



□ 16



□ 17

Diagrams 16 and 17: allowing for the follow-up. Compared with Diagrams 8 and 9 Black has more eye shape, and could resist White by not connecting with 4 in Diagram 16. White gains 6 points

in Diagram 17, but in gote once more. Definitely 4 points for White, and half a chance of 6 more, makes the White play at 1 here 7 points in reverse sente.

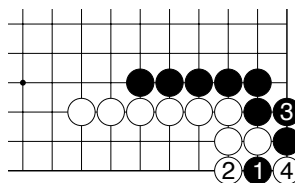
One more topic deserves a mention.

Count one third for a ko

Each of a move threatening a ko, a move capturing a ko, and a move finishing a ko, should be evaluated at one third of the total gain from winning that ko.

The logic is that three moves are required to garner the profit. Another way to look at it is that with three such kos on the board, all of them with you to capture, you take one, you opponent connects another, you connect, opponent connects the last. You have taken the profit once from three chances.

This second bit of reasoning can be seen often enough in action at the very end of the game. The ko in Diagram 18 is typical.



□ 18

Black at 1 there, rather than at 4, might gain or lose a point depending on the final outcome of the ko. You do frequently see three such 'half-point' kos on the board at the close of games. The result will justify the idea that the chance of capturing in one is, on average, worth only a slim one third of a point.

FRANCIS IN THE USA

Francis Roads

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Here's a conversation which took place about eight times, in various words, during my recent trip to the States for the US Go Congress (August 2nd – 10th):

American Go player: "Francis! Good to see you! It's been a long time!"

Francis: "Since '99 actually, when I came to the San Francisco Congress."

AGP: "You should come more often."

F: "When did you last come to a European Congress?"

AGP: "Europe? Ah, now, that's a long way."

F: "Yes, it's much closer in the other direction."

AGP "!!!"

I do my best to push our tournaments whenever I visit the States. Usually I mention the Isle of Man, the London Open, and the European Congress, in that order. There's interest, but the poor dears take so little vacation that my hopes are not too high.

This year the US Congress was in Houston, Texas. I started my visit about a fortnight beforehand with a visit to friends in Manhattan. They leave me alone during the daytime to recover from jetlag, but in the evenings there were dinner parties and a well attended meeting of the Brooklyn Go Club. The venue for this rotates around members' homes. This one, hosted by my own hosts, Roy and Mary Laird, attracted over 20 players, and lasted until 1.30 am.

The weather was pleasantly mild for New York, so I spent most of my time outside, exploring the waterfront and nearby Staten Island. This boasts a substantial nature reserve, with waymarked tracks. I followed one of these through the trees for an hour or so, bird and flower books in hand. No doubt an insect book would have been of interest

too, but the insects were showing too much interest in me, so I retreated to Snug Harbour. This is not particularly snug, nor was any harbour visible, but it does boast an attractive Chinese Garden. This was well worth a visit, and very different in style from Japanese.

Beware of E-tickets. I presented myself at La Guardia Airport for my flight to Boston. My travel agent had booked the flight with an e-ticket. E-tickets have no physical existence; they consist simply of data on a computer. You provide evidence of identity, and they let you onto the flight. Except these people didn't.

"Yes, we can see your name on the list, but you should have a paper ticket as well."

"But my travel agent said I didn't need one for this flight."

"No, for flights booked from overseas you need a paper ticket."

"But ..."

I ended up paying another \$120 for my flight. At the time of writing I have still to get in touch with my travel agent, to whom I intend to address an adverse comment.

My hosts in Boston were Go players Marvin and Katherine Wolfthal. Marvin is a trained classical pianist who now works in computing. So when we weren't playing Go we had a fine old time discussing the music of Beethoven and Elliott Carter, who is still composing major works at 95.

In the hospitable manner of US hosts they had arranged a barbecue in my honour, where I met several more of the Boston Go community.

The Wolfthals live out in the sticks, so I moved on to another billet with musical friends closer to the centre. I had several evening musical commitments, and on two

other evenings I was able to visit the local Go club. This meets in the basement of a Social Security Office (don't ask). The weather was still kind, so I explored the city, concentrating once again on the waterfront and the islands in the extensive harbour.

Boston is an old city of some charm. It's older, for example, than St. Petersburg. The Bostonians are very conscious of living in the birthplace of the Revolution. There's even a monument to the battle of Bunker Hill, which the rebels actually lost. Boston has managed to escape the soulless gridplan-and-concrete style of town planning which robs so many US cities of any character.

On to George Bush airport, Houston. From a distance, the city centre is an impressive sight. The cluster of skyscrapers rises from an otherwise flat landscape, and for once some thought seems to have gone into their design and relative position. Unfortunately I never had the opportunity to visit the downtown area itself.

The University of Houston is some distance from the city. I had been warned to expect hot weather, and we did indeed have outside temperatures in the 100's. As public transport isn't the strongest point of the state of Texas, I found myself more or less confined to the air-conditioned buildings of the university. This was the main drawback of an otherwise largely well-organised and enjoyable congress.

The other drawback was the lack of a suitable cafe or pub-like place to sit and drink beer and play liar dice in the evenings. The best option was the bar of the on-campus Hilton Hotel. Why did the university have a Hilton? Because you can do degrees in hospitality or whatever there, and the hotel provides for those students what laboratories do for scientists.

The congress opened with the usual ceremony, followed by a pianoforte performance of Bach's Goldberg Variations by Go player Haskell Small. It was encouraging to

see how many players stayed on to listen to a performance of one of the greatest of all keyboard works, which can hardly be described as easy listening. For me, this memorable performance compensated for some of the drawbacks mentioned above.

There were about 260 participants in the main tournament, plus a goodly attendance of young players who had their own tournament in a separate room. That's one thing the Americans are really good at, involving youngsters in Go. They have a head start, as so many of the young faces are oriental, and come from backgrounds in which Go is as well-known as chess is in Europe. Still, we may have lessons to learn from them.

There was a team of Chinese and Japanese professionals in attendance, including our friends Guo Juan, Feng Yun, and senseis Nakayama and Saijo. Amongst the amateur participants there was a contingent of Japanese visitors, a Canadian or two, a handful of Germans, and T Mark Hall and myself from Britain. So, hardly a very international event, but that has its advantages. The common language, and, perhaps more importantly, the common culture, leads to a very relaxed and friendly event with few disputes or misunderstandings.

There used to be a generally held idea that US grades were a stone weaker than European. I think that the US grades are firming up now, and probably the difference is nearer half a stone. At any rate, being one of the weaker British 4 dans, I entered at that strength, and ended with 4/6, which was good enough for third place in my section. T Mark entered at 5 dan and didn't do so well, though I think that not being able to leave himself time to overcome jetlag had something to do with that. He did well in another respect though; Americans were queuing up to buy his Gogod programme.

The side events included the usual self-paired handicap tournament, and for the evenings 9x9, 13x13, lightning and pair Go.

I have my doubts about pair Go as an evening event. While I'm all in favour of pair Go as a strategy to achieve some sort of gender balance, the fact remains that as things are at the moment such a tournament excludes a large proportion of the participants.

As I expect you've guessed already, the Wednesday excursion was to the Johnson Space Centre. When you enter the visitors' building, you are confronted by a 10 foot model of a spider. Apparently a high school student suggested an experiment to see how a spider would construct a web in zero gravity. A suitably intelligent spider was selected, and the experiment performed. After a period of disorientation, the spider managed to make her web, tensing the support strands appropriately for the new conditions. This experiment led to advances in space structural engineering.

Interesting, I'm sure you will agree, but a pretty thin excuse for the animated model. The whole building was presented on theme park lines, and clearly aimed at the younger generation. Which I'm all in favour of, as there is a shortage of youngsters reading science and engineering at university these days. Nonetheless, you had to seek out the adult interest sections (now don't misunderstand me).

These turned out to include a display of moon rocks, and tram rides to the working parts of the centre, where you could see such things as the astronauts' training area, a Saturn rocket in sections on its side, and the famed Mission Control, preserved as it was used from 1965-96. "Any questions?" asked our guide. I asked why the rockets are launched from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, but then controlled from hundreds of miles away in Houston. "Because that's what President Johnson ordered," came the reply.

The AGA has been considering what powers its president should have of late. Some members felt that under their old constitution the president had too much power, so the new one has policy determined by a board of eight governors, some regionally elected, and then carried out by the president and other officers. So now while the president may advise, he doesn't actually have a say in decisions.

It's my opinion that they've now swung too far in the other direction. Managing unpaid volunteers is a very different business from managing paid employees. It is far easier for volunteers to cause difficulties by resigning with immediate effect. I think we've got it about right in Britain; we likewise have a council of eight, but the president and other senior officers have a vote each, when votes are needed.

This wasn't my favourite US Congress, for reasons I've already mentioned. But that's not to say that I didn't enjoy it; just that the other five that I've been to were even better.

Now to poetry. The Bob High Memorial competition invites entries of Go songs and poems. These are judged by a panel who don't know the names of the entrants. I won the song division in '98 and '99, so I decided to put in a poem this year. It came second. I present here both first and second placed entries. As you will see, it is not easy to determine just what the judges were looking for. Here is the first prize entry, from my near namesake Kris Rhodes, a Texan Go player:

A final stone
the rain falling outside
and inside, the thunder.

Francis' own entry appears on page 24.

COUNCIL HOUSE ~ HOW DAN CERTIFICATES ARE AWARDED

Tim Hunt

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As announced at the 2003 AGM and on the BGA Policy List¹, Council and the Grading Committees have reviewed our method of managing dan grades. We have reached some decisions already and we plan some further work. This article describes where we have got to, and what we plan to do next. We have tried to take account of the views of as many members as possible in this review. With this issue, as with everything to do with the running of the BGA, you are most welcome to discuss your views with any member of council.

The factors we took account of

- 1 Dan certificates are valued and respected by BGA members as recognition of attainments and as targets to aim at. No one proposes we get rid of them.
- 2 We know, from the evidence of the ratings graphs² that some players have quite large medium-term ups and downs in their tournament performances, while others have a pattern of slow but steady improvement. On some occasions promotion is felt to be premature, but not promoting players who have reached the next level in a timely manner means that they will not meet the most suitable opponents, which may delay their progress.
- 3 The BGA rating list, and the policy of encouraging kyu players to enter tournaments at a grade derived from their European rating has been successful, in most people's opinion.
- 4 For some time one of the aims of our grading policy was to bring our grades more into line with the European average. While we understand that there are other reasonable views as to what we should align with, we believe that there is a clear

majority view in favour of EGF alignment, so this policy should continue.

- 5 Until now, there has been a policy that stronger players had to play in tournaments involving strong players from other countries before they could be promoted to the higher grades. The European Ratings system now provides another way to keep British grades aligned with overseas grades, so this requirement is no longer necessary.

What we have decided so far

We will continue to award dan certificates to players who have earned them. Dan certificates remain the statement of a dan player's official grade. They recognise achievements, not current playing strength, and are for life. Existing dan certificates will remain valid.

Because of the variability in people's playing strength over time, we want to take a more relaxed approach to people's tournament entry grades:

- We will continue with the existing policy that dan players who are playing below their official grade are encouraged to enter tournaments at a suitably reduced grade. This has worked well over the last 18 months.
- We will also encourage those players who are playing above their official grade, but who have not yet met the criteria for official promotion, to enter tournaments at a suitably enhanced grade.

That is, with immediate effect, dan players are encouraged to enter tournaments at a grade equal to the 'strength' listed on the current version of the BGA ratings page, rounded to the nearest whole number. This includes cases where the player's rounded 'strength' is higher than their official grade. It is permission, not obligation. Dan players

are welcome to continue to enter tournaments at their official grade. Anyone wanting to enter tournaments outside the range from their official grade to their rounded strength should seek approval from the dan grading officer before doing so. This may be justified, for example on the basis of Go Server ratings.

Thus the system that has been working well for kyū players will be extended to dan players. This should lead to more evenly matched games in tournaments which makes it more interesting for both players. Also, it may help to fix one slight problem with the current system. At the moment, a strong 1 dan will enter a tournament as a 1 dan, and end up playing a lot of other 1 dans, and will probably win a lot, but is that enough to be sure that they have reached 2 dan yet? If they try entering a few tournaments at 2 dan, then they will have to play more other 2 dans, and we will rapidly see whether they can manage at the new level, or whether they get beaten up.

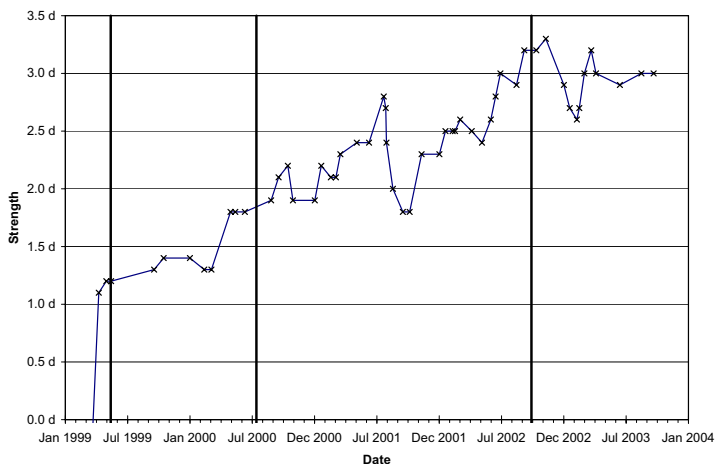
Three round McMahon tournaments work significantly better at the top with exactly eight players above the McMahon bar. The usual way to set the bar is to say that all players graded 4 dan (say) or stronger start above the bar. Some tournament organisers have experimented with an alternative system where the eight players with the highest European ratings start above the bar. In our opinion, both approaches are good, and like all details of BGA-supported tournaments the choice of which system to use is up to the tournament organiser.

Future work

We will change the system for awarding official dan grades. Tournament results on the web site and the BGA rating list means that there is now a lot of publicly available information about how well a particular player is performing. By comparison, the workings of the grading committee sometimes appear somewhat mysterious. Also, the numbers generated by the European rating system are a bit more reliable than the old promotion points system.

So we want to define criteria that are objective, transparent and based on the publicly available rating data. However we have not yet worked out the details. We hope to have them worked out in time to use them for the first time at the Council meeting at the end of November.

The easiest way to explain the issues involved is with an example. Below is a graph of how my European rating had changed with time, and the thick vertical lines are the dates when I got my 1 dan, 2 dan and 3 dan certificates. This is an example of the grading committee getting it right. I got promoted to 1 dan shortly after my rating went up over the 0.5d mark, and I



got promoted to 2 dan shortly after my rating went up over the 1.5d mark. (Since promotions happen at Council meetings, which happen every two months or so, that is the sort of timescale we mean by 'shortly after'). In July 2001 I had a short blip above the 2.5d line, but I was not promoted, and that turned out to be right, because it was only a blip, and my rating crashed back down to 2.0d. It was not until the end of September 2002 that I made it to 3 dan for real.

In the preceding paragraph, we had the benefit of hind-sight. When it comes to deciding whether to promote someone, that luxury is not available. The problem is to come up with a rule that quickly promotes people who have reached the next level, but which does not promote people when they have a blip. I am the person responsible for coming up with the new system, and I would be delighted to hear from anyone with helpful suggestions.

One risk that might arise from a promotion system based on the European ratings is that players who do not compete in many tournaments may find it unduly difficult to get promoted (the current promotion point system, which includes some human judgement can allow for this to a certain extent, but has not always done so successfully). We are aware of this risk, and so any new system will be carefully monitored.

We plan to work out the correlation between grades derived from European ratings (the 'strength' column on the BGA rating list) and the ranks assigned by the Go servers IGS and KGS. This will let us give better advice to people playing in a tournament for the first time who do not have a reliable European rating, but who have played on the Internet.

Geoff Kaniuk will make it possible to set the McMahon bar at an EGF rating level, rather than at a grade, in a future version of GoDraw.

Footnotes:

- 1 To find out more about the policy list, go to:
two.pairlist.net/mailman/listinfo/bga-policy.
- 2 You can see a graph of any player's rating by clicking on their name in the BGA rating list:

www.britgo.org/rating/list.html.

The BGA rating list is based on the European Go Ratings:

www.european-go.org/rating/gor.html

which are the product of much hard work by L Dvorak and A Cieply. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their efforts.

IN THE LIGHT

Tournament Results

www.britgo.org/results

How well did I do at the Cheshire Tournament in 2002? That is the kind of question you can answer at the BGA results pages. Each BGA tournament is indexed in date order for the last 5 years or so. The final position table is shown, so you can see what position you actually came. You can look at players' grades and where they were from. Sometimes they are shown as being from No_club or Unattached, say. This means they did not tell the organiser where they were from; it is preferred to record the nearest town when a player had no club.

Tony Atkins

GOZONE

Tony Atkins

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The Gozone outreach programme was launched earlier in the year. Teachers are active in several different parts of the country. For example Matthew Holton is developing a programme in the North-East. The Southern programme has grown out of the Hampshire Go Project being run by Peter Wendes. Peter is acting as a full time semi-professional Go teacher, and has been attending a wide variety of groups and venues, as well as schools and colleges. He is often assisted by his wife Sheila and sometimes by volunteers such as Simon Goss and Tony Atkins. Occasionally when Peter cannot fulfill a request then the volunteers take over, often with help from the local club too. Here is a review of the highlights of the Southern Gozone programme this summer.

On 19th June, several Portsmouth junior schools gathered their best pupils for an afternoon of teaching. This was filmed for Portsmouth Television, but luckily they left before Peter's Go flag escaped up the flag pole. On 28th June Go was taught to children at a conference for parents of able and gifted at Warwick University. At one point the parents were wheeled in to be taught by their children and the room was simply full of folk keen to learn Go. A popular part of this day was the showing of the first part of the Hikaru no Go animations. Yuki Shigeno came to stay with Peter for a week

ending 12th July, so she could swap teaching experiences with him. They visited several southern locations including Hastings, though a plan to involve the *Blue Peter* television programme failed due to it being summer. Also on the 12th July Simon and Tony, aided by David and Elinor from Swindon, attended the Wiltshire branch meeting of the National Association for Gifted Children, as part of a Japanese morning in West Lavington.

On 10th September Peter was invited to give two Go seminars at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Quite a large group of quite bright people were keen to learn about the game there. On 20th September, Peter and Simon taught 90 kids and a dozen adults at a day seminar in Horsham.

Peter's most exciting future event, as well as more sessions with gifted children, is his first residential course at Wimbourne during the last weekend in October, and we wish him and all those involved in Gozone many happy beginners!

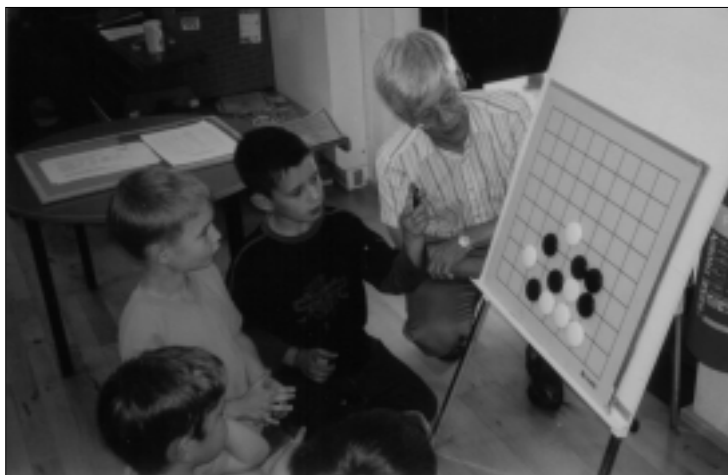


Photo: Tony Atkins

Simon Goss teaching Wiltshire kids at a Gozone event

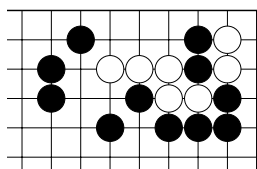
NAKADE AND ISHI-NO-SHITA

PART THIRTEEN ~ UNDER THREE STONES

Richard Hunter

hunter@gol.com

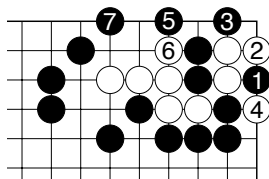
In the last part we looked at small-scale sacrifices. As a link to this part, consider Diagram 1, which shows a standard life and death position. Black to play and



□ 1 Black to play

kill the corner. It seems clear that Black can't save his two stones, but he has a clever way to sacrifice them that prevents White from making two eyes.

Black must start with 1 in Diagram 1a. White blocks



□ 1a White dies

at 2 because Black 2 would reduce his eye-space too much. Next, Black 3 is atari, so White captures with 4. Black 5 is the key move in this technique. White can't cut this stone off. He plays 6, but Black connects out with 7. Next, if White captures the two

black stones, Black retakes (right of 6) and his stones 3, 5, and 7 are all connected out, leaving White eyeless. The key to this technique is the fact that White cannot atari from the rear (right of 3), which would prevent Black from retaking. Simply playing 1 at 5 is no good, but please check for yourself.

The same technique can work with a three-stone sacrifice, as shown in Diagram 2 where it is Black to play. The white stones on the left have three liberties while the black ones have two, so Black is losing the capturing race. Nevertheless, he can kill the whole white group by making a clever sacrifice.

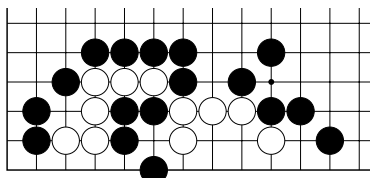
Black 1 in Diagram 2a is the vital point for this technique, but it's too hasty.

White blocks at 2 and the result is ko. Playing 1 at 3 is even worse. Black loses the capturing race and can't produce anything clever in the way of a sacrifice.

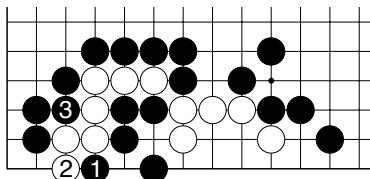
Black 1 in Diagram 2b is the way to start. If White plays atari

with 2, Black sets up his sacrificial shape with 3. This is atari, so there's no time for White to play atari from the right and capture the black stones in a 'connect and die' situation. White must capture the three stones, but Black retakes one white stone and the two marked stones form an eye-stealing combination.

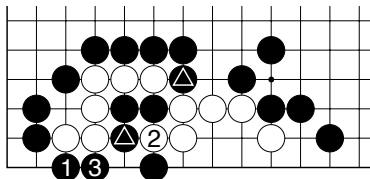
So why doesn't White play 2 at 3, the vital point? Because the B1 - W3 exchange would reduce White's liberties. Black



□ 2 Black to play

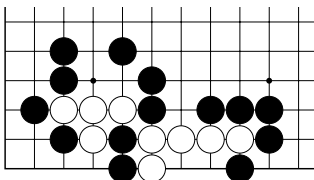


□ 2a Hasty



□ 2b Be patient

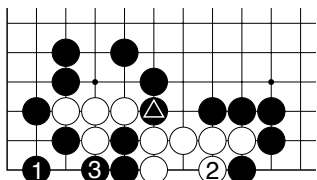
simply plays atari from the right (right of 3) and he still has two liberties himself. Black 3 certainly is a vital point, but rushing to take the vital point immediately is not always best. In this case, Black 1 makes it suicidal for White to take the vital point, so Black can take it with his next move. Diagram 3. Black to play.



□ 3 Black to play

White seems to have lots of eye-making potential. He has captured two stones, is threatening to capture one stone on the left, and has an eye in gote on the right. If Black connects at the 2-2 point, White makes an eye on the right and lives. If Black pushes on the right to break this eye, White captures the stone on the left and lives. What can Black do?

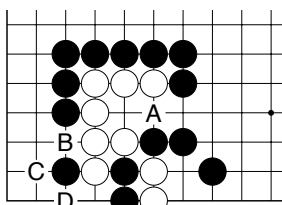
Black 1 in Diagram 3a is a clever dual-purpose move. It not only saves the single stone on the left, it also



□ 3a Tesuji

threatens to break White's eye here. If White makes an eye on the right with 2, Black 3 is a superb follow-up to 1. Increasing the sacrifice from two stones to three kills White in the same manner we saw in the last journal. I'm sure you can read out the continuation. White captures three black stones, but Black retakes at 3, which combines with the marked stone to give White a false eye here. Isn't that beautiful?

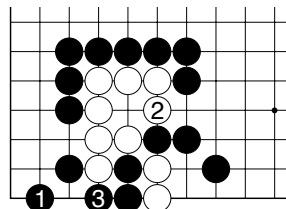
Once you've mastered this technique, you can see it cropping up even when some stones are missing. In Diagram 4, White can make an eye in gote with A, while Black has a defect at B that



□ 4 Black to play

urgently needs defending. If Black plays 1 at A, White B lives easily. The obvious defence, connecting at B, lets White play A and live; White has a second eye on the side. Black 1 at C also protects the weakness, but is no more effective at killing White. Black 1 at D is temporarily forcing, but Black will still have to defend his weakness in

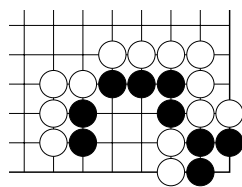
gote, so that doesn't work either. What's the answer? Well, looking back at Diagram 3a should give you a strong clue. The key move is Black 1 in Diagram 4a.



□ 4a Blindspot

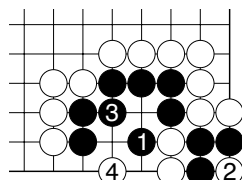
White can push in at the 3-3 point at any time, but not playing it can be psychologically effective, because Black is more likely to overlook the diagonal move of 1.

Diagram 5: Black to play and live.



□ 5 Black to play

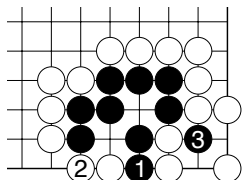
Black 1 in Diagram 5a is the only move that looks likely to have a chance. A white stone here would break Black's only eye. Black 1 is atari, so White



□ 5a 3 is the key move

captures the three black stones. Next, Black 3 is a good move. This forces White 4, which appears to have miai to connect either side, but ...

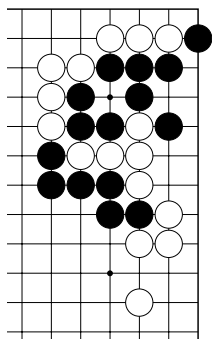
when Black blocks on the right with 1 in Diagram 5b,



□ 5b Under the stones

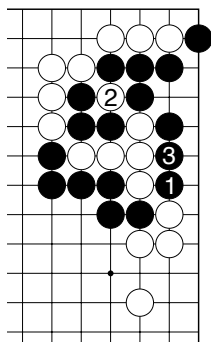
forcing White to connect on the left with 2, Black 3 hits a defect in White's position. This cut under the captured three black stones may be hard to see in advance. Note that if Black plays 3 in Diagram 5a below 1, White can cut at 3 in sente before defending at the 2-2 point, so Black dies.

Here's another example of seeing under three stones. Diagram 6: Black to play and live. Black has three stones in atari, but if he



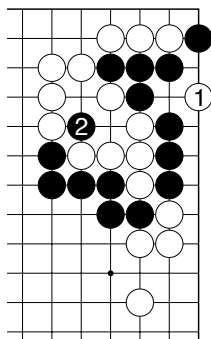
□ 6 Black to play

connects to save them, White connects solidly at his own cutting point and Black cannot make two eyes. Black needs a little more finesse. Ignoring his stones in atari, Black should cut with 1 in Diagram 6a and expand his position on the second line.



□ 6a Ignore the atari

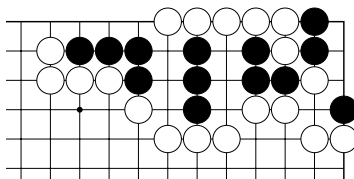
White's placement at 1 in Diagram 6b prevents Black from making two eyes on the side, but White is overlooking his own weakness. Black 2, played under the stones, catches White in a "connect



□ 6b Surprise

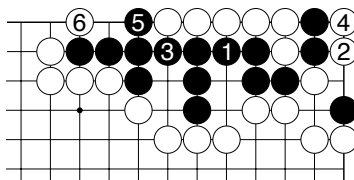
and die" situation. 1 and 2 are miai. If White defends at 2, Black plays 1 and lives. Beware of danger lurking under three stones.

Diagram 7: Black to play and live.



□ 7 Black to play

Black 1 in Diagram 7a is too straightforward. White captures the two stones in the corner and Black ends up with two half-eyes. (A half-eye is an eye in gote).

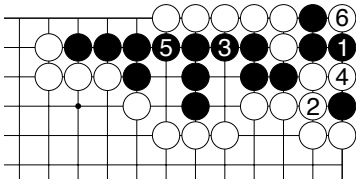


□ 7a Too slow

Black can complete either one in gote, but White breaks the other one.

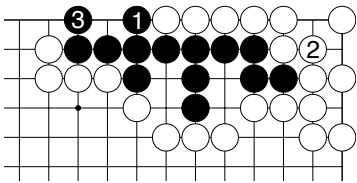
Instead of 1, playing atari below 2 is no good either; White throws in at 2 and the result is just the same.

The trick here is to construct an effective shape to sacrifice. Turning at 1 in Diagram 7b gains a move for Black. White plays 2 and 4 while Black 3 and 5 make half eyes. White captures the three black stones with 6, but as you



7b Technique should be able to see, there's an *ishi-no-shita* coming up.

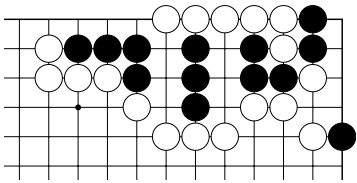
When Black plays 1 in Diagram 7c, White needs to



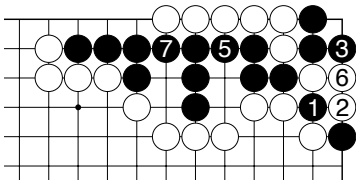
7c Black lives

add a move in the corner, which leaves Black time to make an eye with 3. Black is now alive because he has one full eye and two half-eyes.

Diagram 8: Black to play. This position is very similar to Diagram 7, but there's a



8 Black to play



8a Katte yomi 4 at 1

subtle difference that calls for a difference approach.

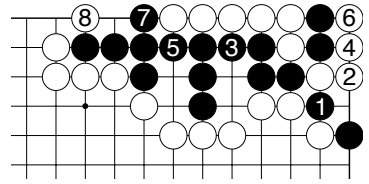
The throw-in and turn of Black 1 and 3 in Diagram 8a look good. White connects with 4 at 1 and the result is the same as in Diagrams 7b and 7c. The trouble with this is that it's 'katte yomi'. You are assuming that White will capture at 2.

There's nothing to stop White from descending at 2 in Diagram 8b. This is effectively the same as Diagram 7a. Black dies. What about skipping the throw-in of 1 in Diagram 8a and playing 1 directly at 3? Doesn't this threaten a snapback? No, White 6 is atari.

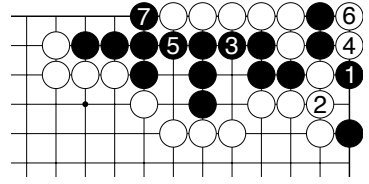
Black must atari at 1 in Diagram 8c and then play 3 and 5. This looks like Diagram 7a, where Black dies, but there's a difference. After Black 7 in Diagram 8c, ...

White needs to add a move in the corner. If he breaks one of Black's potential eyes, Black 2 catches him in a snapback. This snapback configuration may be unfamiliar to some readers, but it's an important shape to study. In Diagram 8d, 1 and 2 are miai. If White defends at 2, Black has three half-eyes, so he makes two eyes even if White breaks one.

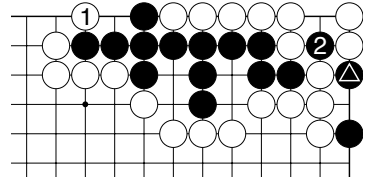
Diagram 9. Black to play. Black's eye-space is rather



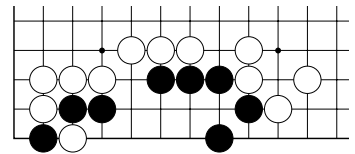
8b Black dies



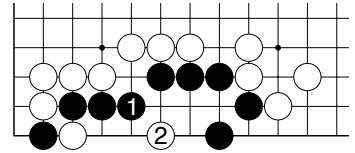
8c Correct



8d Snapback



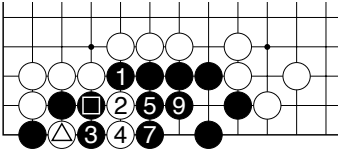
9 Black to play



9a Nakade

small. It looks like ending up as a five-point nakade, as in Diagram 9a for example.

Black must maximise his eye-space with 1 in Diagram 9b. White can cut at 2 and capture the black

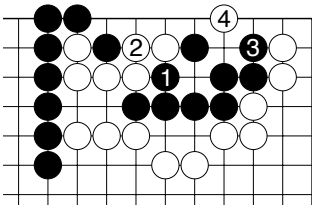


❑ **9b** Technique
6 at Δ , 8 at
stones on the left, but Black
3 is the key move. This
creates a by-now-familiar
three-stone sacrifice shape
that gives Black enough
time to play 5 to 9 and
make two eyes.

The previous article in this
series ended with two
problems.

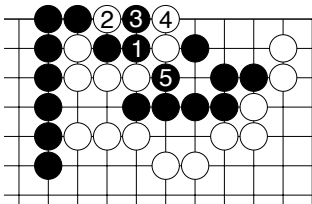
Answer to problem 1

Diagram 10 shows the basic
problem facing Black. If he
makes an eye with 1, White



❑ **10** Too simple

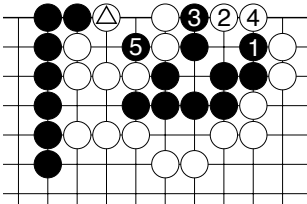
connects at 2. Then, if
Black widens his eye-space
with 3, White 4 stops him
getting an eye here. White
can connect out either side.



❑ **10a** 6 at 2
Increase the Sacrifice

The trick here, once again,
is for Black to increase his
sacrifice in order to create a
more effective shape. Black
1 in Diagram 10a threatens
to connect underneath at 4
or cut at 5. The throw-in of
2 gives White a nice atari at
4, but instead of connecting
at 2, Black cuts at 5 leaving
his three stones in atari.

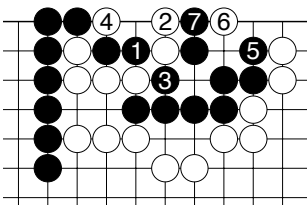
White captures them with 6
at 2. Next, Black widens his
eye-space with 1 in
Diagram 10b just as in
Diagram 10. But there's an



❑ **10b** Black lives

important difference this
time. Black 3 is sente against
the left. It makes miai of 4
and 5. If White connects out
with 4 to break the eye,
Black 5 captures two white
stones in an ishi-no-shita.

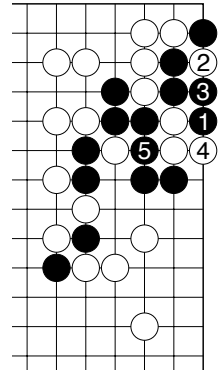
White can play 2 in
Diagram 10c, but the result
is even easier to read out.
Black 7 is a straightforward
atari.



❑ **10c** White 2 is no good

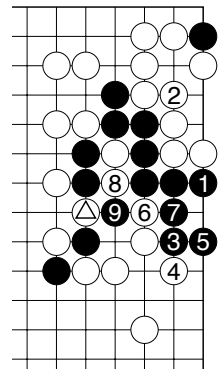
Answer to problem 2

The hane of Black 1 in
Diagram 11 is the key
move. White throws in at 2,



❑ **11** Correct 6 at 2

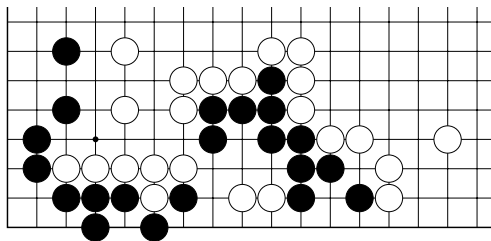
but Black makes a dogleg
with 3. Black 5 is atari, so
White captures with 6 at 2.
Next, Black 1 in Diagram
11a is sente, so White must
connect at 2. This leaves



❑ **11a** Black lives

Black enough time to make
an eye on the side with 3
and 5. White 8 attempts to
make the eye in the center
false, but there is a problem

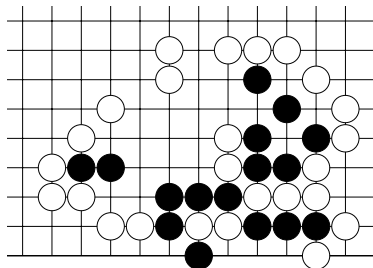
in this position. Black 9 is atari. If White throws in with 10 at 8, Black captures the marked stone. White cannot break the eye here, so Black lives. Study the variations by yourself.



□ **Problem 2**

Black to play

I leave you with two challenging problems to study. Both are Black to play.



□ **Problem 1**

Black to play



THRILLING SEMEAI REVISITED

Alex Selby

This is a comment on Richard Hunter's interesting article *Thrilling Semeai Games – Part One*, which appeared in BGY 131.

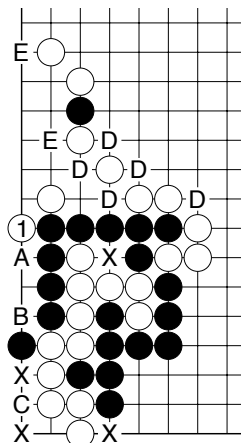
As far as I can tell, there was a mistake in the professional play and the commentary which went with it, in that the player played a wrong move which was predicted by the commentator, and no-one noticed this in the post-mortem. (Although Richard points out that the post-mortems are usually more directed at finding improvements for the losing side, which was Black here.) I have discussed this with Richard, and I think he provisionally agrees.

The wrong move is White 8 in figure 3, which should be at 12 (possibly white 8 at 10 works too – I haven't looked at this properly) and then White has an unconditional kill.

If this is true then it wouldn't affect the conclusion that from Figure 2 Black should go for the gote seki of Diagram 8, but it would mean that white made a mistake in the game not noticed by the commentator, and it would also mean that White 4 in Figure 3 is probably not a "terrible mistake" after all, as he still can expect an unconditional kill just as if he had descended on the other side.

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Diagram 1 shows the position after Black 7 in Figure 3 (which in the game continued White 8 at A3, 9 at A1...



□ **1**

Actually the above excerpt probably doesn't include enough of the surrounding position as there are potential weaknesses in the white wall.

The point of White 8 in the diagram is that White is denying Black an eye and then will usually prefer the shape resulting from a white stone at C rather than a point above as in the game. This sets up an eye vs no-eye situation with Black being forced to fill A3 and A5 himself, which in turn means that White needn't make an approach move at A9 because he can leave Black's A7 liberty to last.

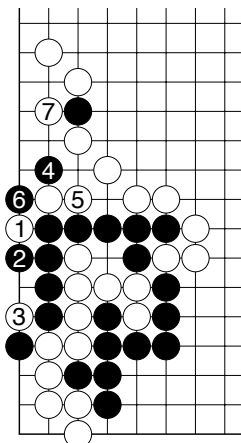
There is a case when White wants to play A3, but that's only after Black commits himself to a no-ko variation. So White A3 to begin with (as played) seems aji-keshi.

Imagine you are White and have just played move 8 as in the diagram. This is your method of killing Black unconditionally:

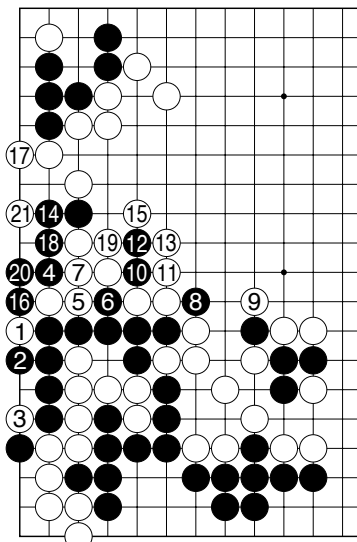
- 1) Don't let Black get an eye. So answer A at B and vice-versa (miai).
- 2) Play C as soon as Black plays any of the points marked X.

- 3) If Black plays C when D1, D7, A1 and A5 are unoccupied then you can throw-in at A1 and if Black B1, you can go A3 and get two eyes.
- 4) The only time you can't get the A2 shape is if Black plays B. Answer at A and prepare to play an ordinary no-ko variation, blocking at A3. You should be one liberty ahead.

Black can make a mini-breakout and threaten White's centre groups, aiming at cuts/ataris at the points marked D and various linking threats involving the points marked E. But I think this is OK (though it is not easy to be certain) because then Black will only have false-eye connections which he will have to fill himself in the attempt to gain liberties from the outside. White will then be at least two liberties ahead in the race, so can afford to spend a move making a thick shape. For examples see Diagrams 2 and 3.



□ 2



□ 3

SCALING THE HEIGHTS OF THE MSO

Tim Hunt

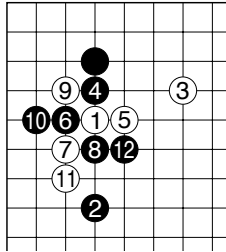
Milton Keynes does not really go in for tall buildings, so one of the first things I noticed about the MSO at UMIST was the number of trips I was taking up and down in lifts. The Go was on the 3rd or 4th floor above ground level and my accommodation was on about the 6th. However, everything was very close together, starting with the three minute stroll from Manchester Piccadilly station to the main playing area, the Reynolds building, which was right next door to the accommodation block and the building containing the student union bar.

While the heights of the buildings were most unlike Milton Keynes, I did not feel homesick. Common to both MK and UMIST is the large number of pieces of sculpture dotted about. So, walking back from the restaurant (and there are many good ones within 10 minutes walk of UMIST) to your accommodation, you get surprised by pieces such as ‘a Tribute to Vimto’.

But I was talking about lifts. Of course, on the Go board, there are no lifts, there are only ladders, and most of us know from painful experience how tricky they can be. During the various Go events I competed in or watched I noticed three relatively interesting ladders, and I thought they would make a nice collection of problems for the Journal.

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Problem 1

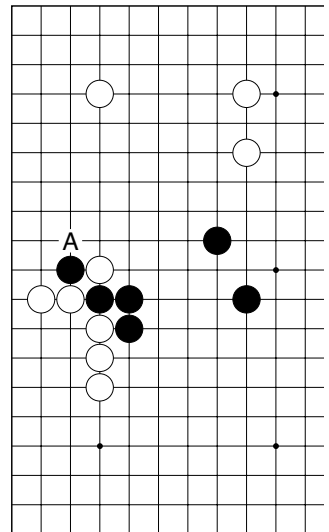


□ Problem 1

This is very painful. It is from my game in Round 6 of the Northern Go Tournament against Li Haiou, the Chinese 6 dan who went on to win the gold medal. The question is, what have I (White) overlooked in my reading up to this point? For bonus marks, what should White do next?

Problem 2

This comes from the Rapid Play Tournament on the second Saturday. I was running the event, not playing in it, and so I could watch a number of the games. One game reached a position like this (it was a rapid play event, so I did not have time to note down the full board position). Black played A. Can you find a better move?



□ Problem 2

played which move, you need to know that the order of play in Pair Go is woman, woman, man, man and you can work it out from there.

Mihoko and Masashi, knowing that they were the weakest pair in the tournament, chose to play mirror Go in all their games. This is a reasonable strategy because then the 15 kyu player makes dan strength opening moves. However, that let us create a game of two large moyos, so that when we played the tengen at move 15 it was clearly an excellent move that puts black a bit ahead.

Both 25 and 26 should be at 27.

36 is a good move, the plan is to attack the weak black group and, as it runs away, to break into the black moyo. This is what happens in the game.

42 would be better as a bamboo joint at 54.

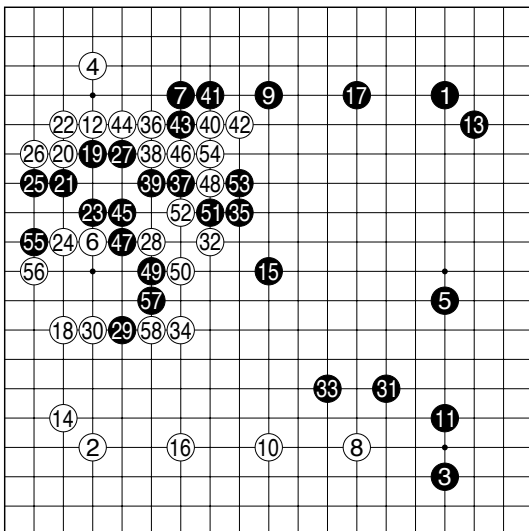
I would play 45 as the solid connection at 46 to keep the black moyo intact, and not worry about letting White capture a few stones on the edge, however Natasha has a different style of play. This is one of the fun things about Pair Go. You get taken into positions that you would never get into on your own, which seems like a good

way to learn new things.

Black 51 is a really bad mistake by me. If I play at 52 instead, the black group easily lives or connects out. When Natasha pointed this out to me afterwards I said "Doh!"

58 is the last mistake in the game, and brings us to the problem position. Black to play and get out of trouble.

The answers are discussed on page 51.



□ Problem 3

IN THE LIGHT

Interview with a Go Princess

jin.jcic.or.jp/nipponia/nipponia14/cover.html

Yukari Umezawa is a professional player (5 dan) who some of the readers will have met. She has two web sites in Japanese language that can only be read with a Japanese-supported browser (and knowledge of Japanese). For an interview in English visit this page from the on-line version of Nipponia magazine. The magazine contains lots of features on Japanese life and culture, so the other editions might be of interest too.

Tony Atkins

HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM.

Four brave Americans blast into space
All risking their lives as they reach for the stars.
They know that if all goes well, they'll win the race
To establish the first human contact with Mars.

Before they had lift-off, the orders were clear:
"We've checked every system; on that please depend.
But if you've a problem; when danger you fear
Then this is the call for our help you must send:
Mission Control! Mission Control!
We have a problem here, Mission Control!"

Three months into space, and a problem arises.
There's nothing to do, and the men are quite bored.
No music, no TV, no books; it surprises
That their recreational needs were ignored.

They tried playing checkers, but that was no fun,
And bridge led to nothing but partnership strife.
At chess it was always the captain that won.
He declared that he'd not been so bored in his life.

So: "Mission Control! Mission Control!
We have a problem here, Mission Control!"

"We thought that might happen," the answer soon came,
"For the interest of games like chess soon fades away.
In a secret compartment we've hidden a game
Which will fascinate, however often you play.

They soon learnt to play with the stones and the ban,
But the folks back at Houston forgot that in space,
Where the gravity's nil, there's a flaw in their plan,
As the stones just kept floating all over the place.

So: "Mission Control! Mission Control!
We have a problem here, Mission Control!"

The answer came back on the inter-space phone:
"Floating stones should not baffle the astronaut mind.
Fix a small piece of chewing gum under each stone."
So at sticky Go soon they left kyu grades behind.

Came the time for Mars landing, and soon they were grounded,
And for the first time our brave heroes felt scared.
By green bug-eyed monsters their craft was surrounded.
For this situation they'd not been prepared,

So: "Mission Control! Mission Control!
We have a problem here, Mission Control!"

"To make friends with these Martians, please, how do we try,
For we cannot speak any more Martian than Greek!"

"Use American English," soon came the reply,
"That's what extra-terrestrials usually speak."

To an underground city our heroes were led.
Were they captives? What now did these Martians intend?
And the inter-space phone of the captain went dead
Underground; so this time he could no longer send:

"Mission Control! Mission Control!
We have a problem here, Mission Control!"

Said the King of the Martians: "I'm longing to learn
If you Earthlings are cultured; do you all play Go?"
The captain said quickly: "Please let us return
To our craft, and our goban and stones there we'll show."

When the king saw the ban, he exclaimed with a sneer:
"Those 19-line boards we just use for beginners.
The standard is 61 lines for us here.
Let us play, and see if Earth or Mars are the winners"

So:"Mission Control! Mission Control!
We have a problem here, Mission Control!"

Came the answer: "You'll lose, and they'll think we're inferior.
Abort; or the US of A will lose face.
We must keep up the image that we are superior.
Shut hatches; blast off; and come straight back to base."

To the king said the captain: "We have to leave now.
We've remembered a dinner date back home on earth.
But I'm sure that our Mission Control will allow
Us to come back to Mars and show just what we're worth."

So:"Mission Control! Mission Control!
We have no problem now, Mission Control!"

So what can we learn from this heroic story?
Two precepts all astronauts now need to know.
If you hope to return from your mission with glory,
Speak American English, and LEARN TO PLAY GO!

Francis Roads

THE GO RATING SYSTEM OF IGOR GOLINEY

Franco Pratesi

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Usually the playing strength of a Go player is determined by his rank or his rating or both of them. Ranks correspond to rather coarse sections, whereas ratings allow for finer measurements. If a suitable rating scale is available, it will then be possible to establish accurate ranks for selected intervals of it.

In principle, the best possible kind of rating uses a ratio scale, as the Kelvin scale is for temperature. At least two such scales have been suggested for Go (*BGJ 124*, 2001, pp. 42-43), but major basic problems remain for their application. Before a satisfactory ratio scale is applied to Go players, it may be reasonable to search for partial solutions.

The system discussed here is a recent one and is shortly described, together with its results, at:

holigor.fcpages.com/baduk.htm.

It does not deal with the whole range of playing strength; in particular, weak players are not considered at all, even if there is no theoretical lower limit of strength to be observed.

The author of this rating system is Dr. Igor Goliney. He was born in 1960 in Ukraine and graduated there at Kiev State University; in 1989 obtaining his Ph.D. as a theoretical physicist. After working in the Kiev Institute for Nuclear research, he is now active at the National University of Singapore.

Igor Goliney has been kind enough to discuss with me several points of his system and even to perform a few tests, inserting in his system simulated games against players at the theoretical limits of strengths, such as a perfect winner and a perfect loser. Among the following paragraphs, a few are extracted or verbatim copied from his pages, others derive from our private correspondence, including the results of the simulation mentioned.

One of the starting points for this original

rating system has been the need for a more reliable comparison of the relative strength of Go champions. Everybody knows, for instance, that the number of Japanese professional players in the 9th rank has greatly increased in recent times – even if they belong to the same and highest rank, they certainly do not have exactly the same strength. A connected question is how to compare the strongest professionals of different countries, in the absence of a significant number of international competitions.

Another starting point has been Goliney's mathematical knowledge, indicating that the usual way for finding exploitable physical laws consists in the minimisation of suitable functions or functionals.

With respect to the various ranking systems proposed, Igor Goliney approaches a connected but different problem: how to rate the strongest players in a completely objective way, simply on the basis of the games that they are playing among each other, without assuming for any player a preliminary value of strength, to be adjusted later on.

The rating table of this system is built by the minimization of the function,

$$F = \sum a_k (x_i - x_j - r_k)^2$$

where

x_i and x_j are unknown ratings of the players.

r_k is the result of the match, 1 or -1 depending on the win or loss of the first player.

a_k is a coefficient that describes the importance of the match; for the moment, the only contribution comes from aging of the results, which consists in the decrease of the coefficients a_k in the function and is performed on the tournament basis.

The formula is $a_k = 1 - \exp(-y)$
where y is the number of years from the tournament.

Summation is performed over all games in the database, which includes all results found at

www.kyoto.zaq.ne.jp/momoyama/news/news.html.

These are international tournaments and the major domestic tournaments in Japan, Korea and China.

Handicap games are not present in the database, and the presence of various conventional values for komi is not taken into account; at the moment, it is only a matter of win or loss. It is useful that the strength of the players selected is not too different – otherwise, the evaluation function itself would be bad, punishing the stronger player.

Moreover, for providing a ‘correct’ order for weaker players, it would be necessary to have games among everybody, whereas weaker players seldom find an opportunity to play with the champions. The actual situation is thus such that only the strongest players can be ordered in a reliable way with this system.

After minimization, the least rating is found and the whole set is shifted to make it zero; thus all ratings are made positive, and then are multiplied by 1000 before the final presentation.

To avoid unreliable situations, a devaluation of the rating of players with few games is implemented. This has a damping effect on fluctuations of their ratings up to approximately 20 games. Then, in the region 20-40 games, fluctuations are yet big enough, but the damping does not work anymore. For a larger number of games the statistics takes over and the rating becomes more firmly established.

The situation as of beginning August 2003 (when the database used as source has been interrupted, planning only to continue when the Japanese masters again achieve world

leadership) is shown in the Table (overleaf) for the first 60 entries.

The order of strength established by Goliney’s system is rather different from any ordering expected for the best players. Goliney’s rating system indeed makes the emphasis on the level of player’s opponents – this factor is almost as important as the ratio of wins and losses.

We usually feel a notable respect for the strongest players, who have established their value in the course of years. Often, however, a player becomes universally known, and at the same time approaches the descending part of his playing career.

On the contrary, this system tends to overestimate young players with few games but high percentage of wins. The system is thus useful to indicate future champions, young players – in several cases yet unknown among Go fans – who win a few games against the champions. It thus occurred that the high strength of players as Cho U, Song T’ae-kon, Yamashita Keigo, and Takao Shinji were clearly indicated by the system, before their following greatest successes.

A possible use of these ratings for correctly determining players’ ranks is not immediate. However, if we select a kind of Elo ranks with 75% winning probability for distinguishing rank partitions, this would correspond to a 721-point difference; that is, about the distance between Yi Ch’ang-ho and Rin Kaiho.

There are further aspects that we would like to have available, however, and in particular how to rate all the players, possibly including such ‘theoretical’ players as the perfect winner and loser – namely players who always win or lose against anybody else. This system was not built with this purpose, but its response may be checked with input data from simulated games with such nominal players.

After introducing both a perfect loser and a perfect winner in the existing set of players, the rating difference between perfect winner

No	Player	rating	M-W:L	No	Player	rating	M-W:L
1.	Yi Ch'ang-ho	4220.01	238:177-61	31.	O Meien	3741.04	172:99-73
2.	Yi Se-tol	4105.46	211:144-67	32.	Ding Wei	3728.57	88:50-38
3.	Kong Jie	4076.01	113:78-35	33.	Kobayashi Koichi	3714.1	150:80-70
4.	Wang Lei	4055.25	98:66-32	34.	Rui Naiwei	3699.28	124:81-43
5.	Cho Hun-hyeon	4013.84	231:152-79	35.	Ch'oe Myeong-hun	3683.23	90:46-44
6.	Gu Li	4001.18	105:73-32	36.	O Rissei	3673.51	187:99-88
7.	Song T'ae-kon	3998.29	66:45-21	37.	Shao Weigang	3664.31	93:48-45
8.	Kim Chu-ho	3992.11	33:22-11	38.	Ma Xiaochun	3660.17	101:51-50
9.	Yamashita Keigo	3961.55	155:107-48	39.	Ch'oe Ch'eol-han	3650.62	63:33-30
10.	Yu Ch'ang-hyeok	3957.99	206:132-74	40.	Kato Masao	3639.83	136:77-59
11.	Cho U	3950.75	143:95-48	41.	Yun Seong-hyeon	3627.16	46:18-28
12.	Mok Chin-seok	3945.23	137:88-49	42.	Peng Quan	3626.83	73:41-32
13.	Yu Bin	3923.51	120:72-48	43.	Yi Sang-hun	3606.44	44:24-20
14.	Yoda Norimoto	3923.08	128:81-47	44.	Kim Myeong-wan	3601.78	32:19-13
15.	Liu Xing	3908.98	55:35-20	45.	Yuki Satoshi	3596.67	77:44-33
16.	Takao Shinji	3906.64	83:54-29	46.	Paek Tae-hyeon	3590.19	42:21-21
17.	Chang Hao	3902.97	166:98-68	47.	An Tal-hun	3583.14	41:20-21
18.	Cho Han-seung	3896.92	107:61-46	48.	Dong Yan	3583.06	69:37-32
19.	Kobayashi Satoru	3890.07	67:41-26	49.	Liu Jing	3582.17	73:36-37
20.	Zhou Heyang	3874.94	125:82-43	50.	Kiyonari Tetsuya	3581.98	25:13-12
21.	Pak Yeong-hun	3842.8	99:60-39	51.	Rin Kaiho	3579.82	117:61-56
22.	Hu Yaoyu	3836.67	89:52-37	52.	Nie Weiping	3579.66	62:31-31
23.	Xie He	3836.39	63:39-24	53.	Pak Pyeong-kyu	3577.39	25:13-12
24.	An Cho-yeong	3825.23	75:38-37	54.	Huang Yizhong	3571.58	83:44-39
25.	Mimura Tomoyasu	3825.2	50:31-19	55.	Komatsu Hideki	3564.75	36:18-18
26.	Cho Chikun	3812.56	214:130-84	56.	Luo Xihe	3564.7	99:51-48
27.	Akiyama Jiro	3810.49	53:32-21	57.	Yun Hyeon-seok	3547.82	42:18-24
28.	Hane Naoki	3795.66	162:97-65	58.	Kim Shujun	3546.44	41:25-16
29.	Yamashiro Hiroshi	3785.42	41:25-16	59.	Wang Yuhui	3533.28	55:24-31
30.	Wang Xi	3780.25	45:28-17	60.	Yun Chun-sang	3521.5	21:11-10

and loser converges to 1000 points, if the number of games between them is larger than the number of any other games in the database. However, the convergence is slow, as the square root of the game number.

If the number of games between the perfect players is not large enough, two pools are formed. With respect to the average player, the perfect loser is 1000 points below in the database (because of constant losses), whereas the perfect winner is 1000 points above. The difference between the perfect players themselves is about 2000 points.

If instead we try and extend the system to include all existing Go players, in actual conditions, the range of all the ratings from a beginner to the strongest player can only be roughly estimated to correspond to about 50,000. The reason of the increasing interval

has to be searched in the missing games between players of greatly different strength – these games are not present in the database used, but even in actual practice are far from frequent.

In conclusion, Goliney's system appears to be a valid tool, which fulfils its proposed goal of ordering the playing strength of the strongest active players. Clearly, the system is based on a mathematical treatment of existing data that cannot be adjusted to favour one or another player. It thus provides a completely impartial way to order the strongest players of the world, independent of their career, age, or country.

At the same time, our search for a ratio scale, suitable for correctly representing the strength of all Go players, down to the weakest ones, must go on.

UNBOUNDED THOUGHTS

Richard Court

Firstly, I must apologise to Matthew James for replying to his article *Thoughts on Reading the Spring Journal* through this Journal without contacting him first, however I am not on the net.

I have talked about unbounded Go with Antonio Moreno and, perhaps separately, with Pete Langely at the Bristol club so some of these ideas may well be theirs, though obviously, since I propound them here, all the errors are mine.

There are two concepts that I feel have been confused in Matthew's contribution, infinity, and lack of boundaries, the surface of a sphere is finite (you can determine its area if you know its radius), but unbounded (there's no edge to fall off). The two are significantly different, because on an infinite board you would never reach an edge, and would never come around behind stones 'from the other side', while the latter condition would be usual on a useably small (eg 19x19) unbounded board.

So far as I can tell, there's no need to change any of the rules of play (rules about the size and shape of the board would seem to have to change, unless they assume a rectangular shape without specifying it) to play on infinite or unbounded areas, but the effects of the sides and corners, which generally make establishing a live group easier, are obviously lost.

In the realm of Topology, into which we have drifted, spheres and lenses are identical, and I'm going to assume from here on that anything said about a sphere applies equally to a lens.

Mapping a Go board, or any rectangular mesh, onto a sphere is non-trivial, notice that the lines of longitude all converge at the poles, which would make playing second on any of the intersections at or next to the

pole impossible with physical stones (though on empty intersections it would be a legal move). However you may notice that this makes a cylindrical board quite playable (supposing you can get the stones to stick). By extension, if you visualise the cylinder bending around, so that the north pole joins up with the south pole, and the lines of longitude join up with themselves to become circles, you have a fat ring (technically called a torus), which has all the required properties; it is finite in area, it has no boundaries, and all the intersections are near right angles.

Even better, it's relatively easy (compared to the sphere) to make a representation of a toroidal playing surface on a computer screen, since it's the normal playing surface with the borders removed. Obviously, you need to be able to scroll the screen to see whether the the group at the top is attacking the group near the bottom, and equally left to right.

It's also possible, though probably less obvious and much more difficult to play on, to make a toroidal board where one line of longitude joins up with another, making the lines one or more spirals depending upon how many lines the lines of longitude are offset from their own other end at the joint. I presume you can also make spirals of the lines of latitude, but I can't visualise that.

If someone insists on playing on a sphere, I think the easiest way is probably to make it out of pentagons and hexagons like a soccer ball, these can be sectioned into triangles, and these can be further divided into smaller triangles, except at the exact centre of the pentagon the intersections would have 6 lines coming in, the centre of the pentagon would have 5 lines. This would be equivalent to playing on a flat board divided into triangles, with the added problem of it being unbounded.

FIREWORKS

Simon Goss

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Some people feel that there's little point looking at professional games until you're at least dan strength. But some games are worth it for everyone just because they are fun. You don't need a PhD in chemistry to enjoy fireworks.

Here's a fighting game that can be enjoyed by everyone, with a little narrative to help kyu-level readers. It's the first game of the 5-game final of the 2002 LG Refined Oils Cup. Black is Lee Se-tol 3-dan, the newest teenaged Korean superstar, aged 19 when the game was played on 4/10/2002. Commentaries on his games in Go World emphasise his enormous fighting strength. White is Ch'oe Myeong-hun 8-dan. Komi is 6.5.

Figure 1 (1-38): Apparently Ch'oe was in an innovative mood in this game. According to the GoGoD database, this is the first game in which White 8 has been played in this fuseki, White 14 is a new move in the joseki in the lower left, and White 30 is a new move in the joseki in the upper right.

Figure 2 (39-64): Black attacks the weak white group in the upper right, keeping it separate from the white stones at the top. White only defends when he feels he really has to, preferring to take territory as often as he can. He even takes some more with 56, allowing Black to make the attack even more severe with 57. White is making a huge amount of territory and Black has almost nothing definitive yet. Will Black be able to get enough out of the attack on the white group?

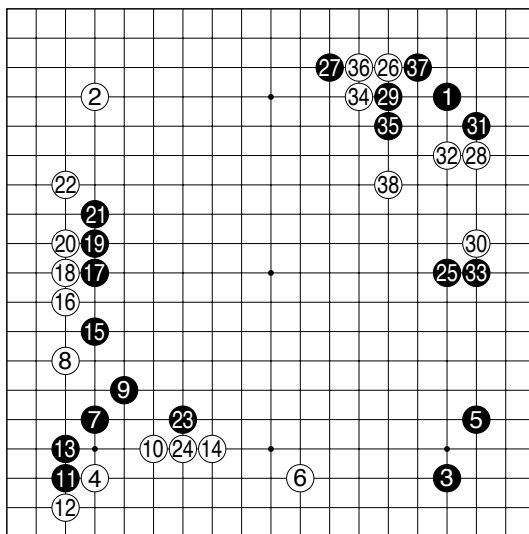


Figure 1 1 – 38

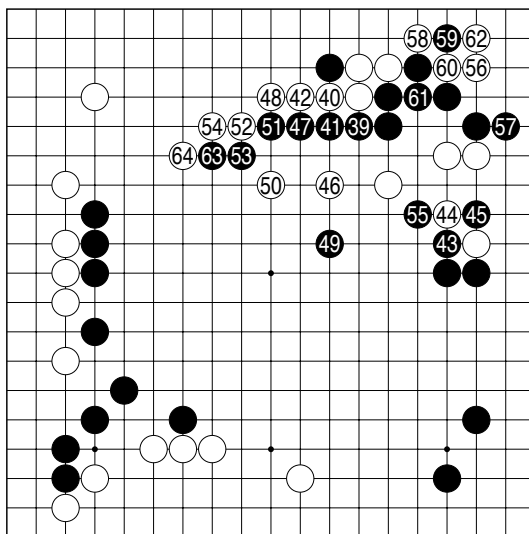


Figure 2 39 – 64

Figure 3 (65-100): Black cross-cuts at 65 and lives in the upper right, but White still has around 40 points of territory on the upper side. An interesting feature of this sequence is that another white group has become quite weak (what happens if Black peeps at A?). There's going to be violence soon! At the end of the figure, White returns to looking after his weakest group.

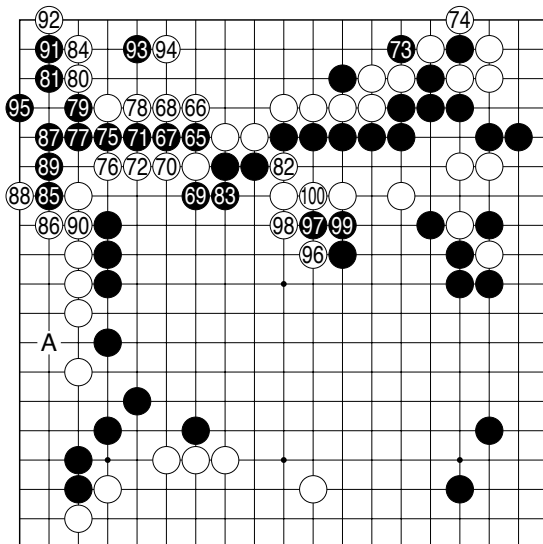


Figure 3 65 – 100

Figure 4 (101-128): Notice how Black doesn't use cuts to pursue his attack when he could have (Black 1 and Black 15). Instead, he plays in a way that makes his own group between White's two weak ones very strong. The peep at A is looking even more interesting now.

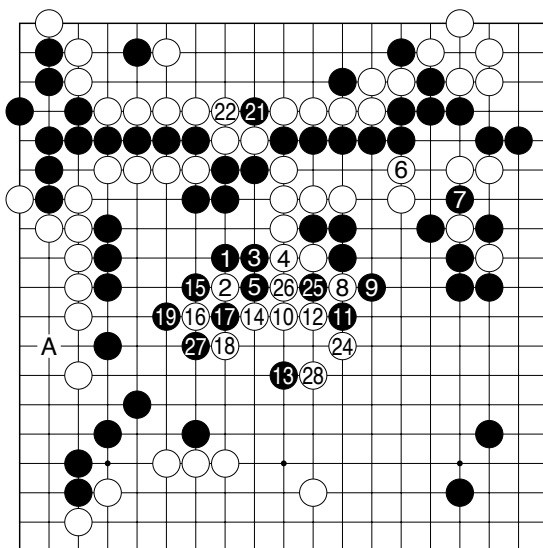


Figure 4 101 – 128

20 at 2; 23 at 17

Figure 5 (129-163): Black makes the peep and gets a ko. For me, the most interesting thing about this game is that Black answers White's ko threat at 152 not by answering the threat, but by making a ko threat of his own elsewhere!

Black's internal ko threat at 155 makes the ko bigger, because if Black wins it now, he undermines White's territory on the lower side. So now White goes ahead and wins the ko. But, while he does, Black gets two moves in a row attacking the central white group (159 and 161). White has about 90 points of secure territory and prisoners – Black must kill!

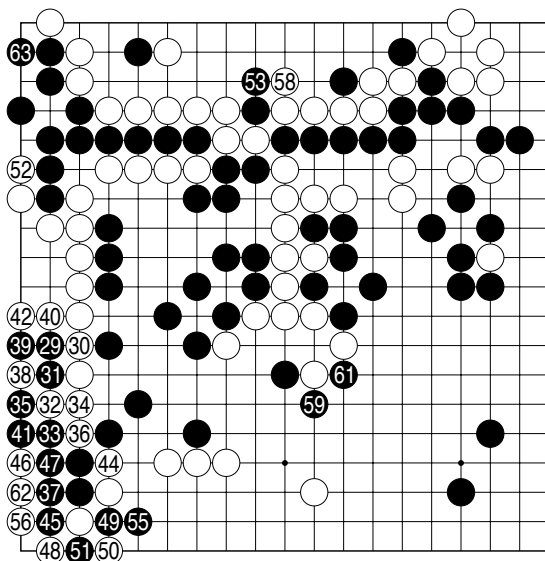


Figure 5 129 – 163

43 at 38; ko (at 51): 54, 57, 60

Figure 6 (164-207): Here's how he does it. White resigns after Black 207.

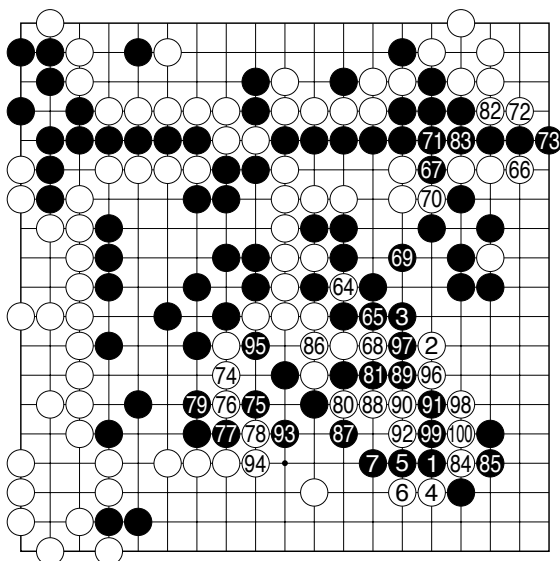


Figure 6 164 – 207

DIARY OF A GO PLONKER

Ian Marsh

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Fruit flies like bananas...

I remember the tournament when someone first showed me a digital Go Clock. It was one of those clocks that had an amazing number of features. You know the type. Press the right button twice and then the left button eight times quickly for such and such a feature. It was such a pity that come the first round the owner had to rush off and find the manual in order to set the time limit.

Not that you can't go wrong with the old fashion mechanical clocks¹. In a recent twenty minutes time limit lightning tournament both my opponent and I sat down and noticed the previous user had kindly set the clocks at twenty past for us. We were just about to start when we twigged something wasn't quite right.

Everyone gets the clock usage wrong occasionally. In the same tournament a game was declared a draw as neither player spotted whose clock's flag had dropped first. Even professional players can lose track of a game. On one famous occasion a player was deep in thought about ko threats, and eventually on asking the time-keeper whose play it was got a wrong answer, so he played the ko out of turn and lost. The responsibility is for the player not the timekeeper to know whose move it is.

It is not unknown for both players to be sitting there waiting for the opponent to play, because one player has missed the last move made. Of course the opponent might be spending the time thinking. It is worth checking whose clock is ticking in these circumstances.

Getting to grips with clock usage can be a little daunting to first time tournament entrants, especially if they have never played with a clock before. It is of course simple. Go Etiquette says White decides which side

the clock is placed, but before that be sure to wind the clocks up, and set the hands correctly². Theoretically, the placing of the handicap stones is the first move. Strictly it should be White who starts the clocks when both players are ready, but this rule is often ignored and who cares if Black starts the clock. It is also a good idea to check both clocks are ticking. They say time stands still when one is really concentrating hard, but not that still.

If the clock is not working then get a working one from the tournament organiser. Do not be tempted to try and play the game out without a clock. It only takes something complicated to happen on the board (such as a typical game of Go) and the natural tendency is to slow down. You will not win any popularity stakes if you end up delaying the next round³.

If your opponent does not turn up soon after the start time for that round then inform the tournament director (in case the lack of opponent is some oversight in the draw). The tournament director will then tell you when to start your opponent's clock, or will start the clock himself or herself.

I wasn't at the tournament where the organizer went round starting the clocks for all those late back from lunch, only for someone to then point out that setting the clocks first would have been a good idea.

If you turn up late for a round, do apologise to your opponent. If you are a bit flustered through hurrying, then take a few deep breaths and calm down before starting to play.

At first it can be hard to remember to press your clock after each play. It is polite to remind your opponent if they play and forget to press the clock, but it is each player who has responsibility for pressing their own

clock. Eventually pressing the clock becomes automatic. You will often see players replaying through games seeming to have a nervous tic as they continue pressing a clock that is no longer there.

At least the dreaded curse of ‘tournament byoyomi’⁴ no longer affects us. This is one of the few things known to clear a game of kibitzers. In ‘tournament byoyomi’ a player in overtime had to play a stone within so many seconds (typically twenty) and the organiser needed to find volunteers to count down the seconds for each player.

Nowadays Canadian Overtime prevails where a player in overtime must play so many stones in so many minutes. A player in overtime counts out the required number of stones and resets their own clock. Typically when the last overtime stone is played the overtime procedure is repeated, but in some tournaments the procedure repeats when the clock runs out again.

In sudden death games (normally lightning rules), and also when in Canadian Overtime with overtime stones left to play, if the flag drops on a player’s clock then the player loses.

IN THE LIGHT

Go on Stamps

www.goban.demon.co.uk/go/go_stamps.html

Harry Fearnley has collected many things on his web site including his famous bestiary of strange positions. This particular page features pictures of some postage stamps from Japan, China and Taiwan, collected from a defunct page, all of which feature Go. The amount of Go varies from a full depiction of a board to a game only part of a larger scene.

Tony Atkins

About the same time as my first encounter with a digital Go clock our Club had enough players working in the same building that I could run a lunchtime ‘lightning games with sudden death’ league. On one occasion I was surprised to receive a half finished game for adjudication.

Both players had managed to get into time difficulties, and fearful that their time limit was about to expire had both passed! All I will say is that the adjudication wasn’t favourable for either player.

The hardest thing to do when playing against the clock is to use your time well. For most high DFK this is usually no problem as typically games are over quite swiftly. Indeed the general advice for high DFK is to play lots of games to get a feel for situations, not to sit there trying to read out situations that are beyond you. Play at your speed. There is no point sitting there twiddling your thumbs just because there is time on the clock⁵. You will know when you have thought about your next move to your capability.

Eventually a player will find that they are naturally using up all their time allowance. Now you should be trying to use your time productively. Do you use your opponent’s time to think in? Even if you are waiting for your opponents move in the local fight to read your response, there must be other situations (or whole board strategy) to consider. Are you playing at a rate that uses the time well, so that you don’t get hassled at the end of the game?

Everyone develops their own time usage strategy, but most people leave a time cushion, so when that crucial point (that seems to occur in nearly every game) happens then you have some time on hand.

One lesson most people have to learn is not to speed up when your opponent is in time trouble. You are just putting yourself in time trouble as well. Better to think things through. Though your opponent may be

thinking in your time their weakness is whether they are thinking about the sequence you are going to play; if not then they will have limited time to read that line themselves.

Obviously in lightning games your use of time is important. One thing that varies among lightning rules is whether you can stop the clock when taking off large numbers of prisoners. During the BGA Congress lightning this is for three or more stones. It is a good idea to establish what the rules are before you start playing, rather than running into the problem once the game has started.

And Oh, In case you are wondering about the title of this piece, the full quotation is 'Fruit flies like bananas, but time flies like anything'.

(1) Go Clocks and Chess Clocks are interchangeable terms, and consist of two adjacent timers such that stopping one clock starts the other, and visa versa. Typically, as the minute hands pass twelve they raise and drop a flag to indicate the end of the time limit.

(2) For some reason such clocks end up losing one of their winders or adjustment handles, which results in having to move the remaining handles from side to side.

(3) Just as likely the tournament director will curtail your game with both players losing.

(4) In professional games byoyomi is different, and anyway professional games have an official timekeeper.

(5) Most tournaments run an on-going 13x13 play-if-you-want-to side-tournament, for players who finish early.



REVIEW OF GO++

Nick Wedd

Previous issues of this Journal have carried reviews of Go Professional, Go Professional II, and Go Professional III. These programs used the Go-playing engine written by Dr. Michael Reiss, which competed in international Computer Go tournaments under the name Go4++. Dr. Reiss was under contract to Oxford Softworks, which later became part of Purple Software, and received a salary from them and small royalties for each copy of his program that they sold. They embellished it with a decorative user interface and marketed it as Go Professional, and in other ways.

However Purple Software recently went into liquidation and was unable to meet its debts. Dr Reiss was able to retrieve full rights to the Go-playing engine he had written, and is now marketing it himself as Go++.

Go++ is a program for Windows. It plays Go, and plays it as well as any program;

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it does not do anything else. It is notoriously difficult to assess the strength of Go-playing programs, because humans soon become accustomed to their weaknesses, and learn to take advantage of them. Dr. Reiss claims that Go++ is about 7-kyu, and supports this claim by giving its results against some members of North London Go Club. These were, I assume, people who had never played against it before. I tested it myself by giving it nine handicap stones on a full board, with it set to its maximum playing strength, and I beat it comfortably (I am 2 kyu on the European Rating List). I had never played Go++ before, but I have played its predecessor Go4++ in its various incarnations, and therefore know something of its weaknesses. I also tested it by playing it on KGS, against a KGS 3-kyu. He gave it only two handicap stones, and only narrowly beat it. It was interesting for me to see how he treated it with respect, in

positions where I, knowing its weaknesses, would have bullied it mercilessly.

I will not describe Go++'s weaknesses here, as to do so would reduce its value to purchasers who are looking for a challenging program to play.

It has options of 19 by 19, 13 by 13, and 9 by 9 boards; You can get it to play as Black or as White, but not as both, and you can set the handicap and the komi. You can set it to any of five playing strengths, each about 1 grade apart. At its fastest setting, it takes less than a second a move. At its slowest setting, on my 1 GHz system, it averages under half a minute a move.

It only uses Japanese rules, with their fixed placement of handicap stones. The user interface is clean, simple, and easy to use. It does not use a clock – its human opponent can play as slowly as they like. It can record partly-played games for re-loading later, but it does so in 'Ishi' format, rather than the more widely used SGF format.

Go++ (formerly known as Go4++) has entered many international Computer Go

Tournaments, and in the last five years has never been placed below third in one. Its main rivals have been Many Faces of Go, and GoeMate. The latest versions of these three programs all have good chances of beating one another, but it is only Go++ whose latest version is available to purchasers. The 2002 version of Many Faces of Go offers many more features than Go++, and costs US \$89.95. GoeMate is not available to purchasers, but its ancestor program HandTalk is available at US \$60, or US \$50 for a DOS version. So Go++ is not only the strongest-playing program that is available to the public, it is the least expensive of the strong programs.

Go++ is available from the web site

www.goplusplus.com

for US \$35, which at the time of writing is £21.66. EU residents have to add VAT to this. You can pay on-line by credit card in dollars or sterling, and download it immediately, or receive it on CD for an additional £4.94. It runs only on Windows.

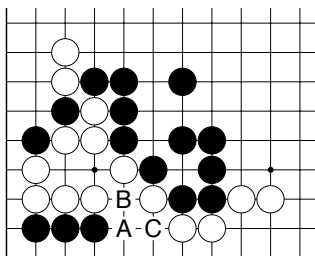


NOT REALLY AN ETHICAL PROBLEM

Nick Wedd

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In an article titled *An Ethical Problem* that appeared in the last issue of this Journal, Ian Marsh discussed this position.



□ 1

The first thing he discussed was whether Black can kill the white group by playing at A. He concluded that he can't, the white stones are all alive. He then discussed whether, knowing this, it is ethical for Black to play at A anyway.

I disagree that there is any issue of ethics, or of honesty, involved here.

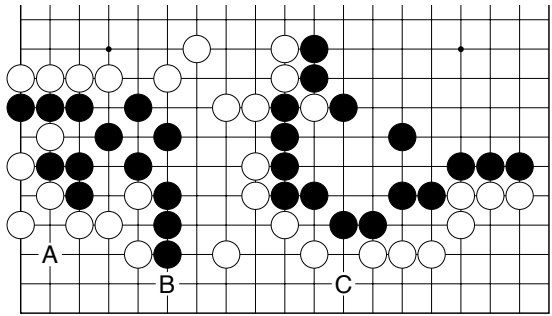
Let us consider the various beliefs Black may have about this position.

- 1) Black is unsure whether he can kill anything. In this case, he can't be blamed for having a try.
- 2) Black believes (falsely, as it happens) that

he can kill something. In this case, he certainly ought to try to do so.

- 3) Black knows that he can't kill anything if White answers correctly, but thinks there is a chance that she will make a mistake. For instance, he may think it is possible that she will answer A at C instead of at B. In this case again, he ought to have a try. Some people claim that you ought to play as if you believe that your opponent's play will be perfect – but they don't mean it. If they did, they would resign at move 1 whenever they were White in a handicap game.
- 4.) Black knows that he can't kill anything, because he knows that White will answer all his moves correctly. In this case, he ought not to play at A. The reason has nothing to do with ethics, only with wasted ko threats.

So, I conclude, whether Black plays at A should be governed by his evaluation of the



□ 2

position, and by his view of White's likely responses. Ethics, and honesty, do not come into it.

Diagram 2, on the other hand, is a position in which honesty is an issue.

Black is to play. He counts (the rest of the board is not shown), and concludes that he needs to kill the whole White left corner to win. A looks like a promising start. However after that, W b4 B d2, W e2 threatens both to connect out, and to help achieve life in the corner.

So Black considers starting with B. If White ignores this, or blocks it to the right, then Black A will kill the corner. But this won't work – White will surely answer B by blocking to the left and securing her corner.

A better plan is to start by peeping at C. White will of course connect. Then Black can play B, and there is a good chance that White will assume that this threatens to rescue the stone at C somehow (it doesn't, and even if it did saving the corner would be bigger) and will block to the right. Black has achieved his objective of drawing her eyes away from the weak corner. Now he can play A and set about killing the corner.

Now, this is definitely dishonest. Black's objective in starting with C has nothing to do with playing good moves, it is solely concerned with misleading his opponent. Whether it is also unethical depends on one's personal ethics.

IN THE LIGHT

European Go Politics

[www.european-go.org
/executive/news.htm](http://www.european-go.org/executive/news.htm)

What do they talk about for so long at the European Go Federation AGM? Well the answer can be found by visiting the Executive news pages on the EGF site. Recent meeting minutes and reports can be found there, along with things like a list of useful ideas for promoting Go in a country (based on BGA practice) and a description of the major tournaments that a country can host for the EGF.

Tony Atkins

THE 1ST INCHEON WORLD AMATEUR BADUK CHAMPIONSHIP

Simon Goss

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One of the first things you notice if you visit Seoul are various eccentricities of exterior plumbing and wiring, and the call of the brown-eared bulbul. At least, you do if you're Matthew Macfadyen. Being one of those who only distinguish three kinds of bird call – caw, tweet and quack – I wouldn't have known that this particular tweet came from a brown-eared bulbul. But Matthew was quite sure of it, and indeed the creature we eventually spotted in a tree in a park was brown, had wings and a beak, and said tweet. I didn't notice ears, but Matthew knows a lot about these things, and I'm sure he's right.

Early this Summer, the International Go Federation announced that this year's World Amateur Go Championship, due to be played in Japan, was cancelled because of the risk of SARS, but that the Korean Baduk Association was planning an alternative world championship event. The 1st Incheon World Amateur Baduk Championship was it. Matthew was the UK's playing representative, and I was there as a guest official.

If you have heard of Incheon at all, it may be because it's the name of Seoul's airport. In fact, though, Incheon is a city of 2.6 million people and growing. Its mayor and council intend to develop it to be an international free-trade area comparable with Hong Kong and Singapore, and it became clear very quickly that one of the reasons for holding the event there was to place Incheon on people's mental map. The Incheon City Council was one of the main sponsors of the event. Dinners were given by the mayor of Incheon, the City Council and the Incheon Chamber of Commerce.

Incheon has one of the stadiums where the 2002 football World Cup was played, and

the championship was played at this stadium in reception rooms overlooking the pitch. (While we were there, we watched the first half of a match between Oman and Nepal in a qualifying group for the 2003 Asian Cup.)

The tournament system was different from that of the World Amateur Go Championship (WAGC). There was a 6 round Swiss tournament for all participants, followed by a 2 round knockout for those winning the top four places in the Swiss. The first round of the Swiss was seeded according to the placings of the countries in last year's world amateur, and the draw after the first round was random. As a result, the first round consisted largely of foregone conclusions for the strongest players, and at the end of round 6, there was one player on 6/6, and nine on 5/6, so three of those nine found their way into the final by virtue of SOS and SOSOS tiebreaks.

Four players were clear favourites to reach the final. Japan was represented by one of the very few amateur 8 dans. Korea was represented by a very strong 20-year-old who had been through the professional training but not quite made it. He was now too old to become professional by the normal route, but would be allowed to if he won this championship – a final lifeline that put him under enormous pressure. China sent a past WAGC winner and Taiwan fielded a 7 dan.

It didn't go quite as expected. The random draw matched China against Japan in round 3. Japan won and this damaged the Chinese player's SOS so badly that he couldn't recover, though he won all his other games. He ended up in 5th place. In round 4, Taiwan was drawn against Korea. It appeared that Taiwan was winning, but

Korean rules oblige you to fill in the dame before passing, and while doing that, the Taiwanese put one of his own groups into atari. Both players were greatly upset by this, but that was how it was played, and so the Taiwanese lost. He lost to China in round 6 too, and ended up in 8th place.

So the field was open for some mere 6 dans to get into the final four, and these places were taken by 23-year-old Emil Nijhuis from the Netherlands and Dmytro Bogatsky from the Ukraine. Neither could beat their Asian opponents in the semi-finals, so the expected Japan-Korea final happened. To me, it seemed a rather staid game, with nothing very dramatic on the surface and all the issues based on the unplayed sequences that a mere 2 dan can't see. But it was exciting, partly because of the importance of this game to the Korean's future career, and partly because, late in the game, the professional giving the live commentary had a completely different view of who was ahead from the one giving the Internet commentary. Their counts differed by about 10 points.

In the end, Japan won the game by half a point. So the Korean, Junghwan Kim, will not become professional. Life can be very harsh for a young Go player at such exalted levels.

Matthew Macfadyen took 19th place with 4/6 – a respectable result for the UK, but Matthew will be disappointed. He did the necessary against weaker players, beating Uruguay (1 dan), Italy (3 dan), Serbia and Montenegro (5 dan) and

Thailand (4 dan). But something went wrong on Tuesday. Against Brazil (5 dan) Matthew had a clearly won game but neglected to make two eyes for a very large group. Then, in a very close, exciting game against Czechia (Vladimir Danek, 6 dan), he ripped himself off in the late endgame and lost.

What does a guest official do at events like this? The official invitation says that they 'act as supervisors and counsellors for the players'. Well, Matthew doesn't actually need any supervision or counselling, though an early morning alarm call seemed to us to be a useful precaution. The best description of our duty is to network. This was clearly important to the organisers, who invited an unusually high number of guest officials. The UK, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA sent their presidents, and it was especially valuable for me to get to know them and exchange ideas about where western Go is going. Japan sent Okada Shinichiro, professional 7 dan. China and



Matthew Macfadyen playing Vladimir Danek (Czechia, 6 dan) in round 4. The game got into an early fight. Matthew has already lost a few stones near his left elbow, and there's now a ko semeai on his side. Matthew has just taken the ko.

Russia sent officials, and the tournament booklet also lists officials from Hong Kong and the Philippines, though I saw neither.

The reason for inviting so many guest officials, I think, is to do with the history of the International Go Federation, which organises the World Amateur Go Championship. This has been held in Japan almost every year, and an offer to host it in Korea one year was declined. Clearly, and in my view justifiably, Korea wants to play a part in the organisation of international Go that is more in proportion to its significance in the Go world. Another major sponsor of the event was the Hankuk Kiwon (Korean Baduk Association), which hosted another very lavish dinner, gave us a guided tour on the free day, and gave everyone copies of the 2003 Baduk Yearbook and of a book called *Speed Baduk for Beginners*, about which I shall say more in a minute.

So I think the reason to invite so many guest officials was to show us how committed Korea is to international amateur Go and what a grand job they can do of organising an event like this. They certainly can. The

venue was superb – comfortable, well-lit and high-status – and the hospitality generous to the point of extravagance. They warned us to expect some glitches in this first year, and there were one or two minor ones, but nothing major, and they asked for suggestions for improvements and took whatever was said seriously.

You may have noticed that this event was not called the 25th World Amateur Go

Championship, even though it could have been. The 25th WAGC was cancelled, and this was the 1st Incheon World Amateur Baduk Championship. We were told that there will be a second one next year, even though the 26th WAGC is already scheduled for Japan. Finances have already been found for the second Incheon WABC, and the intention is to continue in future years. What's going on?

The professional circuit already has several events that are called world championships, and none of these over-arches the others. What I hope is going on is that the same kind of thing is now coming to the amateur world, and that both the World Amateur Go Championship (usually, perhaps always, in Japan) and the World Amateur Baduk Championship (in Korea) will both run annually, with equal status, cooperation regarding dates, and IGF encouragement and publicity for both. Whether this will happen remains to be seen, and it was too soon to ask for definitive positions just yet. But such feelers as I could put out got rather positive responses and I think it's feasible. It is



Simon playing a 9-year-old 1 kyu

encouraging that Japan sent a top-notch player and a professional guest official.

There were opportunities while there to see a little of Korean youth baduk. On the first day, while the players were playing a friendship match I was introduced to three people to play friendly games with. One was a 3 dan of about my own age, one an 11-year-old 2 dan and one a 9-year-old 1 kyu.

What first struck me about the children was their calm demeanour, good manners and the even pace at which they played. Each move took somewhere around 10-15 seconds. There was no instant, careless banging down of stones, but neither were there any long, strenuous efforts. It seemed to me that in general they knew where they thought the game was going, knew the shapes, and weren't trying to look for things that might be beyond their field of vision or not be there at all. Two or three times, in each of these games, the boys stopped and took a little longer over a move, perhaps a minute or so. The times when they did this were when a fight had been played out and it was time for a strategy review. Someone I mentioned this to afterwards thought they might have been counting. I don't know whether this guess is correct, but it makes sense.

Korean baduk players have a reputation for a style that is very aggressive and violent. I didn't see that in these games. The 11-year-old played nothing that I could recognise as unreasonable. His play seemed to me to be as natural as breathing. I felt that he was a little stronger than me. Just before the yose



Baduk school. The children are from 1 to 3 dan. Sitting on the floor is Okada Shinichiro, pro 7-dan from Japan.

began, I blundered, but I thought he was going to win by a few points anyway. The 9-year-old was more focussed on killing than on territory, but his attempts at killing were perfectly realistic. What he went for, he got. If anything, I'd say he wasn't quite aggressive enough; he left me too much time to turn my moyo into territory, reducing it too cautiously and never invading.

One afternoon, while round 4 of the tournament was being played, the guest officials were taken to visit the largest of Korea's baduk schools. This one has around 300 pupils from as young as six years old. They go to the school every weekday, starting at 3 in the afternoon, after their mainstream school finishes, and continuing till 9 in the evening. Some pupils who are considered to have special talent have dispensation to leave their mainstream schools at midday and go early to the baduk school. Pupils who come from outside Incheon can attend as weekly boarders; this also starts from age six. The school willingly enrolls beginners, and has several 25 kyus. It has already created several professionals.

We were shown round the school and saw several activities going on. In one room, four children who had already become professionals (aged about 15, I guessed) were studying together. In a second, some 13-year-olds were sitting by themselves playing through professional games. They were placing the moves about as quickly as they could find them in the book, but would occasionally put the book down and examine the position for a while. In a third room, some children of mixed ages between about 9 and 13, all of them between 1 dan and 3 dan, were playing games in their monthly league. In a fourth, some very young children were working through a workbook full of life-and-death problems. I sneaked a look at a copy that wasn't being used, and the level seemed to be about the same as *Graded Go Problems for Beginners* volume 2 or 3 – in other words, not beginner problems. The children mark their answer to each problem on the diagram, and the book is handed in to the teacher for correction.

Our old friend Seong-June Kim was one of the volunteers helping to run the championship, and I had several opportunities to spend time with him. On the free day, he extracted me from the excursion and took me to another baduk school, where he will also teach English. His idea was that I would have a session with both children and parents, but it was morning and no children were there. However, I had a session with several mothers and the school's baduk teacher (amateur 5-dan), who played a game with me afterwards and completely thrashed me.

One of the mothers asked me whether it would be possible to arrange visits for children. Seong-June later explained to me that many Koreans like to send their children for short visits abroad as part of their education, and that she was asking whether we could manage something like that.

It might perhaps be organised as exchange visits, or in some other way. I promised to look into it, and would be grateful for suggestions about how we might go about arranging such a thing.

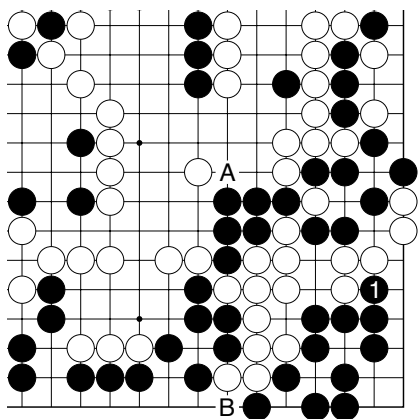
The school that Seong-June took me to has the same series of workbooks that we saw in the big school, and I asked Seong-June about them. There are 20 or so volumes, from a first introduction for complete beginners upwards. Seong-June now works for the publisher, Oro Media, and is translating them into English. The *Speed Baduk for Beginners* book that everyone received from the Hankuk Kiwon is the first of these translations, which I understand will eventually cover the whole series. When I asked to buy the first few volumes for evaluation, there were no English copies available, but Seong-June very generously gave me the first four volumes in Korean.

The books are organised into chapters, each of which has an introductory explanation of some technique, typically using four diagrams with short explanatory text, followed by about 20 problems that illustrate that technique. The learning curve is extremely gentle; if you've grasped what was in all the previous chapters, the next chapter will be very easy. The philosophy seems to be that, if it's worth learning something, it's worth learning it thoroughly, and there's no need to rush things. I have the feeling that the consistency, naturalness of style and even pace of my two young opponents may have come from this. And I also think it significant that the country that is using this gently-paced, systematic learning approach is producing teenagers that can take on 9 dans on even terms (today's crop of newly-qualified professional shodans can do that, we were told). I shall buy and read the remaining volumes with very great interest.

THRILLING SEMEAI GAMES ~ PART TWO

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Problem 1 White to play

There's capturing race in the bottom right corner. White actually played A, but resigned next move after Black replied at B. First, what is the continuation after White A, Black B? Second, can you find a better move for White? The answer is discussed later in this article.

Figure 1 shows the game a little earlier, at move 140. It's from the 28th Shin'ei tournament (1997) between Yamada Noriyoshi 7 dan (Black) and Kenmochi Jo 5 dan (White). Broadcast on TV Tokyo, the commentary was by Kiyonari Tetsuya 9 dan with assistance from Okada Yumiko 4 dan.

The 'New Stars' tournament features lesser-known, but up-and-coming players. Okada is supporting Kenmochi, who is a fellow disciple of her father Abe Yoshiteru. Kiyonari is relatively neutral, but he's from Osaka like Yamada.

If the bottom right all becomes black territory, White is clearly behind, so just playing simple endgame moves is not going to be enough. He has to try and make complications. White attaches with 1 to stir up trouble.

Black resists with 2 in Figure 2. Black cannot just defend passively and give way: the game will become close if he does that. With the moves up to 14, White succeeds in separating Black into

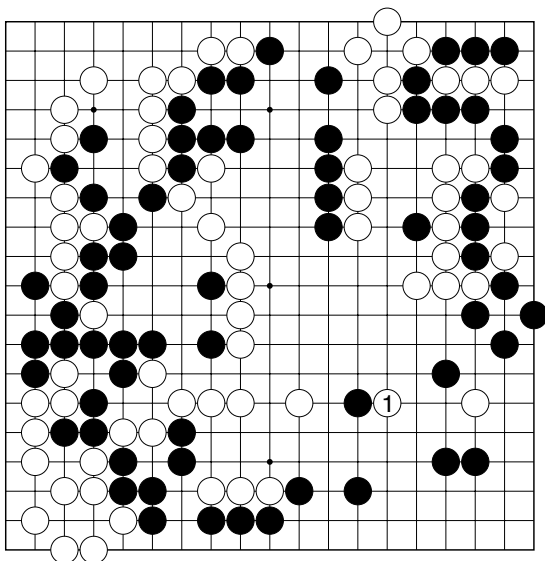


Figure 1 Move 140 of the game

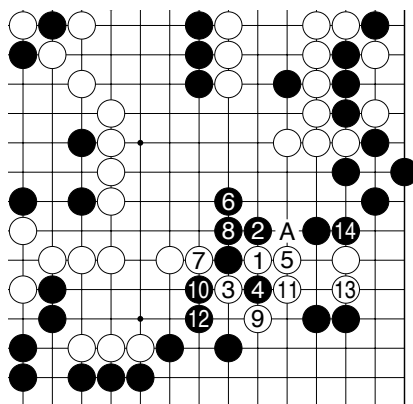


Figure 2 1 – 14 (140 – 153)

several groups, but they all look stronger than the white group.

It's difficult to see how White can make two eyes, so he must attack something: the corner? the right side?

Black 2 in Figure 3 is a good move. Playing 2 at 3 would leave Black without eyes in the corner.

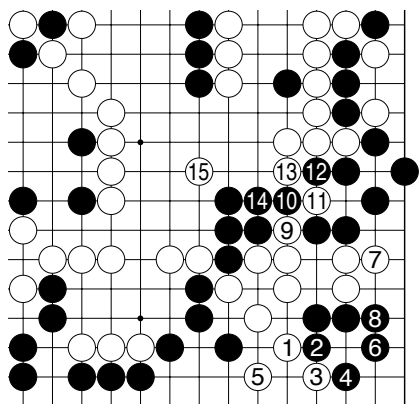


Figure 3 1 – 15 (154 – 168)

With 8, Black lives safely in the corner, but 8 is not the best move: it's better to fill a liberty by playing one line above. White pushes through with 9 and shuts Black in with 15. The black stones on the right do not have two eyes, so this is now a capturing race. What is the status?

When Black plays atari with 1 in Figure 4, White cannot connect. If White 2 at 3, White loses the capturing race. Please check this for yourself. White 2 looks like it might turn into a useful diagonal move tesuji. White plays a ko threat with 4 and Black answers at 5. The bottom right corner was potential black territory anyway, so if White can get compensation in the form of an unanswered ko threat, he can afford to lose his stones in the bottom right. Black 7 is another mistake. It's better to play 7 at 14 (see Diagram 1). White gains liberties by connecting at 14. White finally connects the ko with 20 to ensure that the black stones are cut off. White answers Black 25 (B1 in Problem 1) with 26, but resigns after Black 27. Actually, Black 27 is not the best move, but it's good enough. It's actually better to push through the bamboo joint first.

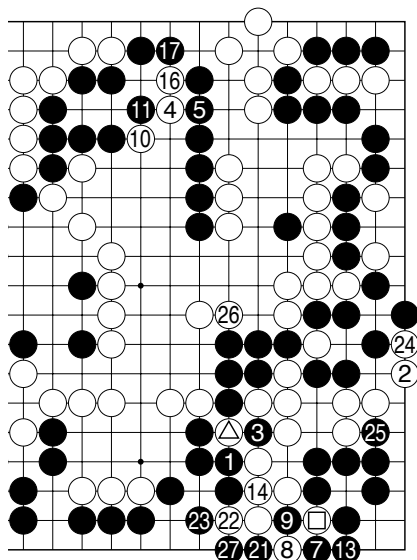
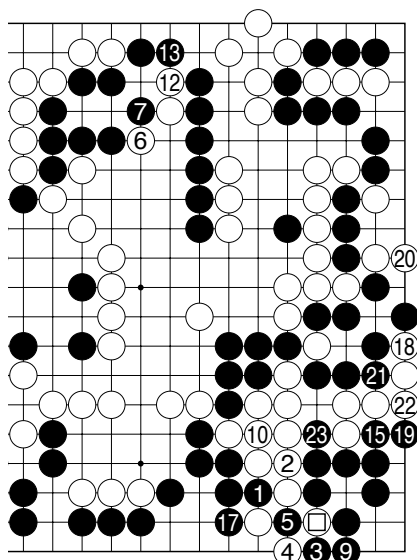


Figure 4 1 – 27 (169 to 195)
6, 15, 18: ko at 3
12, 19: ko right of 9
20: connects at 3

Diagram 1: Instead of 7 in Figure 4, Black should play 1 here. White must connect at 2

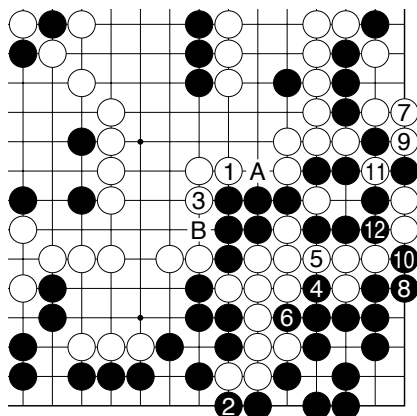


Black wins 8, 11 ko

or he'll lose all his potential liberties at the bottom if Black cuts at 2. The Black 1 – White 2 exchange reduces White's liberties. With the moves up to 23, Black wins.

Answer to Problem 1.

Diagram 2 shows the moves that Kiyonari gave as the likely continuation if the game had not ended. White loses the race.

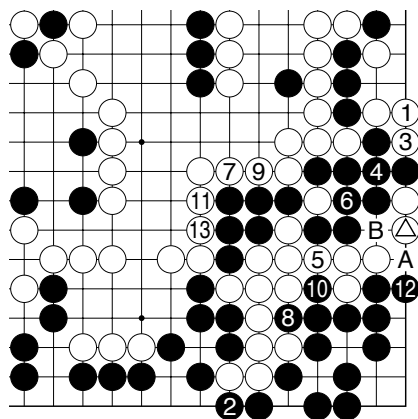


2 White loses

Instead of 7 and 9, White could fill liberties in the center with A and B, but White cannot

play from the inside at 12 because of his shortage of liberties. It should be clear that White attacked the wrong end of the group.

Instead, he should have started from the other side with 1 in Diagram 3.



3 White wins

White wins this according to Kiyonari. Poor Kenmochi: he finally had a winning position for a while at the end, right up until his final move. Although the whole fight was unreasonable for White from the beginning, Black made several mistakes that lost liberties and they eventually accumulated into an advantage for White, who then made the final error.

Well, you may know the feeling. In Go, it doesn't matter who makes the first mistake. What matters is who makes the last mistake. White 3 forces Black 4. Next, White 5 is good. If Black fails to capture with 6, he'll get caught in a snapback. Next, White plays 7 in the center. White must not play 7 (or 5) at B. Although a string of ataris looks forcing, White is filling his own liberties. After 11, we see that the marked white stone is indeed a classic diagonal tesuji, forcing Black to make an approach move at 12. Next, White 13 is atari and Black is caught in a 'connect and die' situation. The best Black can do is play A. This saves some

IN THE LIGHT

My Italian Diary

www.nihonkiin.or.jp/kishihp/shigeno/index-e.htm

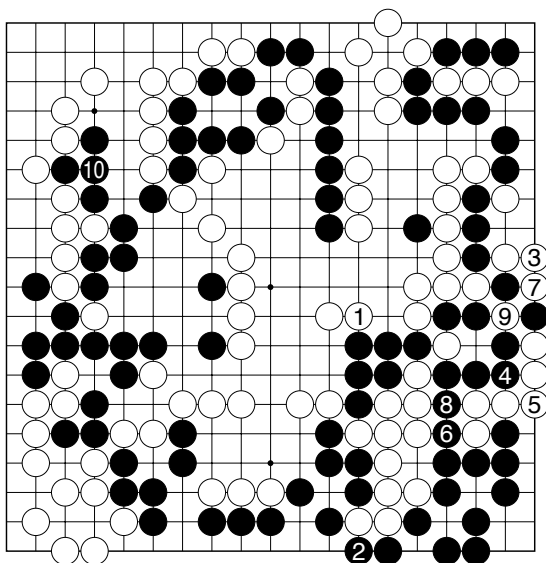
Yuki Shigeno will be a familiar professional to many, as she lives in Italy and has visited the UK several times. This site contains 30 or so translations of reports she wrote for a Japanese Go magazine. They tell of many aspects of her life as a Go professional living in the west, and how she has coped with Western Go players and Western life.

Tony Atkins

black stones on the side because White cannot connect at B. But White captures the six black cutting stones in the middle, so he gets his own stones out of trouble. This would put White ahead.

After White 1 in Diagram 2, White can switch to 3 in Diagram 4 and save some stones, but it's too late to help White win the game. Black sacrifices two stones on the side to avoid losing liberties by connecting. Instead he pushes through the bamboo joint with 6. White cannot connect at 8 because of this shortage of liberties, so Black connects out with 8, capturing the stones on the left. After 9 we can see that both White 1 and Black 2 have been played on pretty unimportant points.

This was an exciting game to watch. Play out the moves and study the various options during the capturing race. You will



□ 4

Black wins the game

find a wealth of interesting examples in this game. An sgf file can be downloaded from the BGA web site.

TEN YEARS AGO

Tony Atkins

The Northern was the British tournament in the Fujitsu European Grand Prix. Attendance was up at 68, but there were few from overseas due to a clash with the Obayashi Cup in Amsterdam. Surprise winner was a Korean student called Ju, who beat Matthew Macfadyen before leaving early to catch a flight. Macfadyen and Cocke were the next best placed, but Macfadyen did win the impromptu lightning tournament on the Saturday. Andrew and Alison Jones won the Pair Go qualifier beating Matthew Macfadyen and Kirsty Healey, to earn a trip to Japan.

Milton Keynes was a four-way tie between Young Kim, Des Cann, Harold Lee and Francis Roads. Matthew Macfadyen won the Go ban trophy at Shrewsbury and also the 110 player Wessex. On 29th October Harold

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Lee was interviewed on BBC's Tomorrow's World, whilst playing a Go program.

Mrs. Suguyami and Miss Inoue, two professionals from Japan, visited London and commented on a Zhang-Macfadyen title game, played simultaneous and were interviewed for the BGJ. The ladies were on their way to D,sseldorf, where during a Japanese week the final of the Women's Kakusei title was played; Kobayashi Chizu beat Yoshida Mika. In the associated tournament Shutai Zhang was second behind Park Sang-Nam.

In Japan Kobayashi Koichi won the Meijin for the sixth time, beating Otake, and Kato took the Oza title from Fujisawa Shuko. Yoda Norimoto won the TV Asia Cup beating Lee Chang-Ho of Korea, Nie Wei-Ping of China and Seo Bong-Soo of Korea in the final.

EGC 2003, ST PETERSBURG

Steve Bailey

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Having decided that my mother, Pauline, and I would go to the EGC this year, St. Petersburg's 300th anniversary, the first task was to work out how to get there. One of the cheapest routes appeared to be to fly to Finland and get the train from Helsinki. This meant we could fit in an extra couple of days seeing something of Finland. To make things better, the Finns organised a mass train booking which we were able to join.

When we discussed our plans with friends Matti and Sinikka Siivola (5d & 8k) they offered us not only accommodation but also a guided tour so all was looking good.

Getting the visas was tedious but straightforward. We had to register with the Congress, pay the deposit and then email travel agency Monomax in St. Petersburg details for them to fax me a "visa invitation". Unfortunately the visa invitation is in Russian (Cyrillic letters) and when they arrived on my work fax they were thrown away as junk faxes! On the third attempt, a cover sheet with "FOR STEVE BAILEY" in two inch high letters did the trick and the invites were received. Now the visa regulations for Russia specify one photo, your passport, lots of travel details, the invitations and £30 but not as a cheque. In the end I sent real £10 notes and wrote the serial numbers on the application forms. They turned up a week later, in time for me to go to Glastonbury, where I saw a stall selling wooden games including Go sets, without any worries.

The flight to Helsinki was more interesting than usual as they had a camera in the nose and underbelly of the plane so you could watch the runway as you took off and landed and look straight down as you flew – a nice idea. Matti and Sinikka met us at the airport and on the first day showed us the Sibelius monument; all the official buildings in

Helsinki (city population 500,000); the beautiful underground church made as a granite and copper structure; St Mark's Cathedral and the church where they were married, St. Laurence. On the second day we took a boat trip from the harbour (and market) to an large island fort where we saw the sights and swam in the sea.

The train trip to St Petersburg (StP in future) lasted 5 hours, 1 hour being stationary at the border. For most of the journey the view was of fir trees and yet more fir trees. The first game of pits of the congress was played in the restaurant car to get us in the right mood for the fortnight. At the border the Go party managed to pick up two more Go players, Frank and Marilyn from the US who had got the date on their visas wrong and been denied entry to Russia on the previous day. At midday we arrived at StP, the most northerly city with a population over 1,000,000 (I believe it to be about 5,000,000), where we were met by the university mini bus. Whilst they worked out that there were too many of us to fit, and procured a taxi for the excess players Pauline got tired of standing in the heat and got into the mini bus to sit down. Suddenly there is a shout of "Should that old lady be getting into the bus?", but yes, she plays Go. A hot journey through StP gave us a brief taste for the wonders of the city centre and the drabness of the southern suburbs. Then we were on the main coastal highway heading to Peterhof, 25 km to the west of StP, looking at pleasant buildings and pretty parks with multitudes sun bathing and swimming in lakes. After 90 minutes we reach the Congress site.

Some EGC's have registration marvellously organised, some do not and unfortunately this was a 'do not'. But after 4 hours we had registered our passports, paid the fees and

obtained our room key. We were too fatigued to get our photos taken for the congress name badges and in the end we never bothered to get them at all.

Now the standard answer to the classic question “How was your holiday?” has now been determined as “Outstanding!”. Some of it, the palaces, tourism, public transport and food were outstandingly good. Some of it, telephones, buying postcards and stamps, English language newspapers and in particular the accommodation were outstandingly bad – “Dire” is a polite way of describing it. We were housed in a high rise block of flats with pot holes in the corridors inside. Fortunately the kitchen light bulb was broken so we didn’t have to use the room. The bathroom was “interesting” but that at least made the bedroom with its small beds with horsehair mattresses and sheets that were too small seem OK. The water from the taps ran brown with rust for the first five minutes every morning and we might well have tried to change to better accommodation if there had been any and if we weren’t “saved” by the flat being a very rare one with a fridge and a washing machine. We survived it.

That first hot evening we managed to miss the opening ceremony due to the time it had taken to register but were in time for the buffet.

There was a limited supply of ‘normal beverages’ yet an almost limitless supply of vodka – reputed to act as a good mosquito repellent. Later many congregated at an outdoor cafe (a marquee in a car park on the outskirts of the site with a BBQ doing ‘meat’) for drinks and pits and congenial conversation.

The accommodation was B&B, so the Sunday

morning introduced us to the delights of a Russian breakfast in the university canteen. A typical breakfast was a plate of coleslaw with sugar on, a cup of tepid water with a tea bag, a lady shouting “Ticket”, a slice of brown bread laced with vinegar and a plate of cold rice with a schnitzel. It seemed more like lunch. In the adjacent building was the ‘Bankomat’ – a nice name – which gave Roubles using a British bank card from 8 til 7 with no difficulty at all.

The Russians planned that the first round would start two hours later than all the other rounds at 12:00. Unfortunately even that wasn’t enough and we started playing at 13:00 only to be told to stop at move 15 at 13:10. The super group was wrong so the entire draw was being redone and a new draw appeared for 15:00. That second evening six of us (2 Swedes, 2 Brits, a Norwegian and a German) braved the public transport to go into Peterhof town to a proper restaurant with nice decor and silver service. A delicious meal including wine for only £10 a head. Public transport is good, even if occasionally frightening. At a bus stop you rarely have to wait longer than 5 minutes for a bus or mini-bus to come along. All appear to be owner-operated vehicles



Photo: Steve Bailey

Samson Fountain at the Summer Palace in Peterhof

(some used to be Austrian Post-buses) presumably doing the route with a licence from the council. The fares are fixed and in the minibus you get on, sit down and as it speeds along people pass money forward to the driver who sorts the change out and passes it back whilst driving. Some passengers gather the money as it passes by and take the opportunity to split a large note into many small ones and it seems chaotic – yet it works well. After our meal we strolled round the lake and viewed the local cathedral (later nicknamed the gingerbread church due to its style). When we returned to site it was late (23:30) but we flagged a passing bus down as it was going home and asked if he went to the university. He said no but then said “How many”. We said “Six” and he said “Yes” and we had our own hijacked bus all the way back to the Congress.

This review is mostly about the people and the tourism. From my point of view the Go was a minor part of the holiday. In the end I managed 4 out of 10 as did Pauline. Being the 300th anniversary of the founding of StP they have done up many of the palaces (though there are many more left to renovate). During the fortnight we were impressed by the magnificence of Peterhof: the formal gardens and fountains; the informal wooded parks, the Grand palace; the Cottage palace; the small ‘palaces’ such as Marly and the Peterhof Hermitage. In StP we were impressed by the many palace exteriors; the incredible magnificence of the Winter palaces including Catherine the Great’s Hermitage with its vast art collections and so over the top gilt rooms; the churches and cathedrals – amazing outside and doubly so inside. Generally the locals had worked out most ways of persuading you to part with your cash including horse rides along Nevsky Prospekt (Oxford Street). But for some reason they hadn’t got to grips with postcards. Only very rarely could you buy one card, mostly you had to buy a pack

of 16 and nowhere sold stamps. In the end we gave our postcards to Wayne Walters who only came for the first week and asked him to post them from the UK!

Being good tourists we dutifully found and adopted a nice jazz cafe in StP which did good food and had shaded tables on the pavement. We tried the hydrofoil boat from Peterhof to StP – smooth and comfortable once we had coped with the bureaucracy of getting a ticket and finding a boat that wasn’t reserved for a tour group. We indulged in the StP Metro – very cheap, 15p per ride – just buy a token and the trains come every two or three minutes. The stations are deep and airy with magnificent decor including granite pillars.

It turns out that Russian isn’t that different from other European languages, it is just written using Cyrillic. A fine hobby was converting letters to their phonetic form and then often the word made sense (“pyb” sound like “roob”, short for Roubles). We did have problems with lunches in the cafe in building 16 at the campus. Initially all was fine as the food was displayed in chiller cabinets and you could point to what you wanted cooked. Eventually we got a little more adventurous and tried to order things we had seen other Russians eat. We thought we had asked for pasta and meat stew, we got macaroni cheese. Then next day we brought our pocket Russian phrase book in and showed the staff the chapter on “food”. As we pointed to an item they would shake their heads and say “Nyet”. Then they started flicking through the chapter and started smiling before they burst into fits of laughter. I’ve no idea what the phrase book said but I wonder if it could have been “My hovercraft is full of eels”?

There were very few Brits at the congress. We were disappointed when Wayne Walters failed to arrive at the start of the first week. But he did arrive on the Monday having suffered a cancellation due to the Heathrow

baggage handlers strike on the Saturday. He had booked a single room but was forced to share with a strong Asian player. Towards the end of Wayne's week, he lost his glasses and amazingly he found his co-habiter had been wearing them for two days!

The European Go federation AGM is held at the end of the first week of the congress and I was the British representative. This year was much better organised than in some previous years and the meeting only lasted six hours, finishing at 24:15 on Friday night. The most interesting vote was for the location of the 2007 congress which went to the town of Villach in Austria. One point raised during the meeting was that folk were unsure what the professionals were doing at the congress – apparently there were simultaneous games on offer along with a game commentary service – but from my kyū perspective I sadly didn't even know they were there.

We had already determined not to enter the evening side events to aid our touristic plans. We decided to drop out of the weekend tournament as well for the same reasons. As a result we happened to be passing the Mariensky Theatre at 19:00 on the Saturday evening when a performance of Swan lake (by the Covent Garden ballet company!) was about to start. The Kirov company were in London at the time. As we queued to see if we could get cheap tickets in the gods, a Dane living in StP approached us with two tickets for sale in the front row of the centre of the Dress circle. A bargain, great seats, a wonderful ballet and pleasant company from the Danish couple.

The third organised excursion we went on was to Tsarskoe Selo. More palaces about 25km south of StP. After a four hour queue we were again presented with magnificent and ostentatious decor – it doesn't surprise me that they had a revolution in the light of this opulence. We arranged to get off the bus at the palace and do the palace grounds and

local town in more detail. We returned to StP by train – wooden seats but only 25p for a 25km journey. The station after Tsarkoe Selo had a novel name it was called “21km” from StP.

Towards the end of the last week we managed to prise our passports and exit visas back out of the system. Unsurprisingly there was far too much bureaucracy: we even filled in forms that nobody even looked at; and whilst tearing an entrance ticket to show it has been used makes sense, I never understood why shops tore till receipts when you bought something to show that they had also been used.

At the end we arranged a farewell meal at Restaurant Alexander in Peterhof after the closing ceremony. Unfortunately the time in the programme, 17:00 – 19:00 actually meant 7pm to 9pm and we felt obliged to meet at the restaurant at 7:30pm as arranged. Thus we missed the closing ceremony where a prize was awarded to a 72 year old German gentleman for being the eldest player in the Congress. Thank you to the Finns who spoke up to say that this was incorrect and Pauline Bailey was older by a few years! The organisers resolved this by awarding both players a Congress watch and T-shirt, a worthy contrast to the transport manager's first day mini-bus comments :-)

On the last morning an early start and a mini bus got us to the train station for the 07:50 train to Helsinki. Even though I had only spent two days in Finland, a real sense of being home flooded through me as we crossed the border out of Russia. We spent two hours strolling around Helsinki harbour before dashing to the airport and a real BA plane back to Heathrow. The pleasure of this fascinating holiday thus came to a crescendo when we reached home and the delights of a decent shower and a real bed. Overall the fortnight was hard work rather than relaxing but well worthwhile and definitely outstanding.

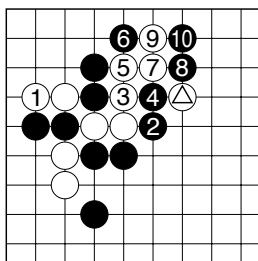
SCALING THE HEIGHTS OF THE MSO ~ ANSWERS

Tim Hunt

tim@timhunt.me.uk

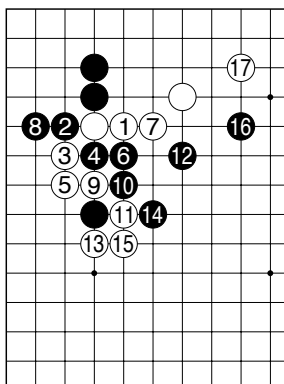
Problem 1

I wanted to capture the two black stones on the edge by playing 1. What I had overlooked was that the ladder at 2 works. How on earth can the marked white stone not break this ladder? This is so unfair!



□ 1a

For reference, the correct joseki following black's head-butting move is shown in Diagram 1b. Of course, I could still have got almost this result in the game, but I



□ 1b

didn't. I panicked and made another mistake straight away.

Problem 2

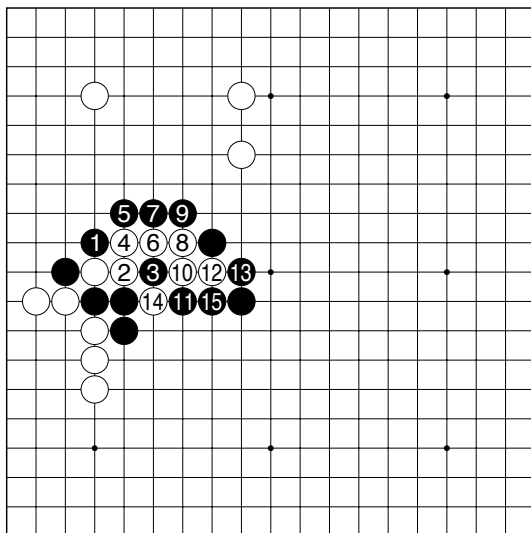
Neither of the straight ladders (7 at 8, or 9 at 10) work, but going round the bend does. Never assume that the ladder is broken, just because one of the laddering stones gets put in atari.

Problem 3

Black can capture the cutting stones in a ladder. Mihoko and Masashi resigned after seeing 63 in Diagram 3 overleaf. The rest of the ladder is shown in Diagram 3b.

If White had played 58 at 61 it would have been very difficult for us to find a second eye for a group. We were lucky.

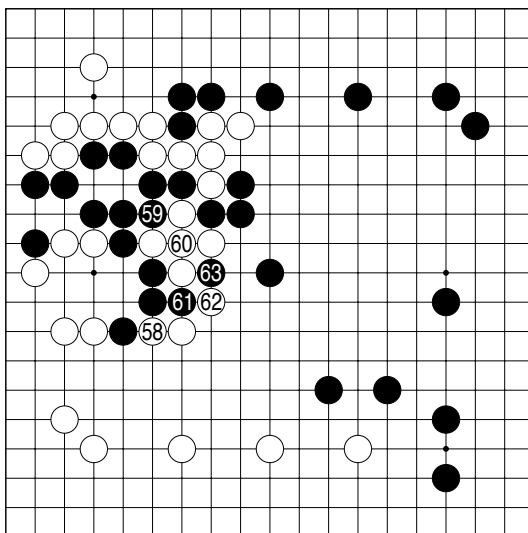
Overall, I had a great time during the 6 days I was at the MSO. As well as playing, organising and watching a lot of Go, and winning two gold medals, I learned to play Snatch and Boku, which are fun, and Pacru, which was not to my taste. It is quite a pretty and original game (the first ever Pacru tournament was part of the MSO) it just did not suit me. However, both Simon Goss and Jonathan Englefield were hooked.



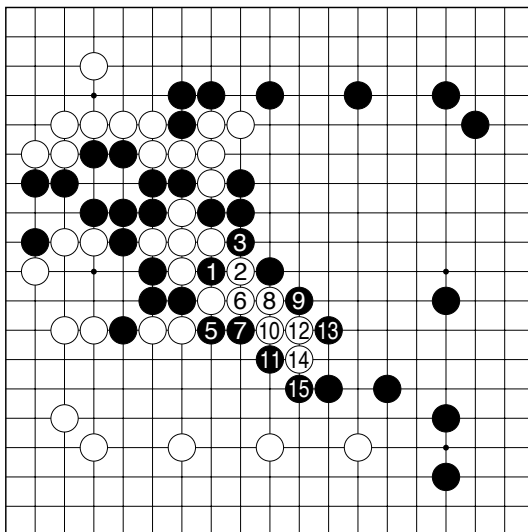
□ 2

There were a few problems. The main one being that the room used for the Northern Tournament on the first weekend was too small because the British Championship title match was being broadcast over the Internet, and only the larger of the two rooms allocated to Go that weekend had a network socket. There were not prizes for everyone who won 4/6 in the Northern, but only the people who came in the top few places. That was probably my fault. And we had cleverly scheduled an early finish for Round 6 of the Northern, so that people could travel home more easily, but then we had to wait until 6:30pm anyway for the big prize-giving ceremony. We will, of course, do better next year. If you have any comments about how the Go events were run at the MSO, please talk to a member of Council.

As I was leaving, Tony Corfe (who, with David Levy, is the driving force behind the MSO) told me that the combined entry for the Go events had been 66. His challenge to the BGA was to double that in 2004. I will certainly be back. In fact, my summer holiday for next year is already planned. A week on the Isle of Man, playing Go in the IoM Go Congress, back-to-back with a week in Manchester playing Go in the MSO.



3a



3b

WORLD GO NEWS

Tony Atkins

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Budapest Tournament

62 players attended the first tournament of the new Toyota-PandaNet European Go Tour in Budapest in early May. As well of lots of local Hungarians, a group of Croatians and Yugoslavs attended. Winner, unbeaten, was local student Diana Koszegi (5 dan). Second on four wins was Radek Nechanicky (6 dan) from Czechia and third was the best of the three-win players, Tibor Pocsai (6 dan) from Hungary.

Amsterdam Tournament

The 32nd Amsterdam attracted 128 players to the European Go Centre over the Ascension holiday and it was a Toyota-PandaNet Tour event. Winner on 6/6 was Du Jingyu (7 dan) from Germany. Emil Nijhuis (6 dan) from the Netherlands only lost to Du; fellow Dutchman Geert Groenen (6 dan) only lost to Emil. Pie Zhao (6 dan), Frank Janssen (6 dan), Robert Rehm (5 dan), Guo Juan (7 dan), David Wu (5 dan) and Carsten Liebold (5 dan) ended on 4/6. There were also children's and pair's events, a lightning and a one day rapid play for those not playing in the main event.

Hamburg Tournament

The German Toyota-PandaNet Tour event starting on 7th June was won by a Japanese resident, Asai Hideki (6 dan). Second on 5/6 was Chinese resident Du Jingyu (7 dan). Czech player Radek Nechanicky (6 dan) was top of the group on 4/6, followed by fellow Czech Vladimir Danek (6 dan) and Germany's Bernd Schuetze (4 dan). 136 took part.

LG Cup

Two westerners won in the first round of this professional world event held in Korea. Strangely both beat Taiwanese players called O. American Michael Redmond (9 dan Japan) beat O Meien (9 dan Japan) and Russian Alexandr Dinerchtein (1 dan Korea) beat O Rissei (9 dan Japan). Both then lost to Korean 5 dans in round 2; Michael to Won Seongjin and Alex to Cho Hanseung. Six Koreans and two Chinese players survived to the quarter-finals.

Warsaw Tournament

63 players, mostly local, took part in the Polish Toyota-PandaNet Tour event starting 21st June. The top three beat each other to win 4/5: Mykhailo Galchenko (5 dan) from the Ukraine, Tibor Pocsai (6 dan) from Hungary and Ion Florescu (6 dan) from Romania. On 3/5 was top local Leszek Soldan (6 dan) and Czechia's Radek Nechanicky and Vladimir Danek.

European Go Congress St Petersburg

This has held at the university campus at Peterhof, just out of St Petersburg from 18th July to 2nd August. The Congress seems to have been well run, the food was cheap and the great Russian city was only a short ride away. However some aspects of Russian life were a bit primitive. A group of strong visiting Koreans dominated and of course Russian players also featured among the winners. In the European Championship the Open Champion with 9/10 was Hong Seul Ki (7 dan Korea) who only lost to another

Korean. Second equal were Jang Bi and Park Sung Kyun and 4th was Li Ki Bong, all from Korea and on 8/10. Fifth and European Champion was Russian professional Alexandr Dinerchtein. Just behind by 1 SOS point was Russian Alexei Lazarev (6 dan). Placed 9th and 10th were two 5 dans, Romania's Colnel Burzo and Russia's Mikhail Galchenko. From the UK, Wenbo Mao scored 3/5, Steve Bailey 4/10 and Pauline Bailey 4/10 having finished the first week on 4/5 before meeting a lot of under-

graded Belo-Russians. 310 took part. The 161 player Weekend Tournament was won by Alexandr Dinerchtein with 5/5. The top group on 4/5 were Frank Janssen (6 dan Netherlands), Ohmori Hirobumi (5 dan Japan), Lee Hyuk (7 dan Korea), Andrei Kulkov (6 dan Russia) and Dina Burdakova (4 dan Russia). The usual selection of other competitions were held such as 9x9, 13x13, Lightning, Ladies, Under-18, Pairs, Rengo and Team, but no UK players were prize winners.

Photo: Steve Bailey



Players at the 2003 EGC in St Petersburg

US Go Congress

The 19th US Go Congress was held at University of Houston, Texas, from 2nd to 8th August. Some 300 Go fans attended including Francis Roads and T.Mark Hall. Jie Li, the 22-year old politics student in California, won the US Open with 6 straight wins. He lost the Amateur Ing to his Go student Joey Hung. In the Professional Ing the winner was Feng Yun (9 dan). She beat Mingjiu Jiang (7 dan) in the final. Third was



Huiren Yang (1 dan) who beat Yilun Yang (7 dan) by 1 point. Best at Pair Go were young Gina Shi (4 dan) and Mozheng Guan (7 dan). The Die Hard's winner was Bill Hewett (3 dan). The self-paired was dominated by Martin Lebl (1 kyu), Horst Sudhoff from Germany and former UK resident Dan Micsa (3 dan) who won Kyu Killer and Hurricane awards; Champion was Christopher Vu. Dan also came third in the 3-dan section of the Open. Best of the British Team was Wanstead's Francis Roads taking third in the 4-dan section of the Open. Day-off trips were to the Houston Space Center, Museums and Galveston's Moody Gardens.

Leksand Open

A new summer event held between 6th and 10th August by Leksand Lake in Sweden was attended by 106 players, including many Germans and Dutch. Winner was Willemkoen Pomstra (5 dan NL) with 5/5. Second were German 4 dans Stefan Budig and Thomas Jipp.

Brno Tournament

For the second year running the Toyota-PandaNet Tour major Czech event was held in Brno not Praha. 159 players attended the tournament which started on 6th September. Winner was Romania's Dragos Bajenaru (6 dan). Second was Ukraine's Dmitrij Bogackij and third was local Vladimir Danek, both on 5/6. The top ten places were all strong players, yet it was a surprise to see Guo Juan at 8th, having lost to a lucky 3 dan (Ivan Kostka from Czechia).

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GLOSSARY OF GO TERMS

- AJI:** latent possibilities left in a position
- AJI KESHI:** a move which destroys one's own aji (and is therefore bad)
- ATARI:** having only one liberty left; stones are said to be 'in atari' when liable to capture on the next move
- BYO YOMI:** shortage of time; having to make a move in a given time. Overtime is now more widely used in tournament play
- DAME:** a neutral point; a point of no value to either player
- DAME ZUMARI:** shortage of liberties
- DANGO:** a solid, inefficient mass of stones
- FURIKAWARI:** a trade of territory or groups
- FUSEKI:** the opening phase of the game
- GETA:** a technique that captures one or more stones in a 'net', leaving them with two or more liberties but unable to escape
- GOTE:** losing the initiative
- HANE:** a move that 'bends round' an enemy stone, leaving a cutting point behind
- Hamete:** a move that complicates the situation but is basically unsound
- HASAMI:** pincer attack
- HOSHI:** one of the nine marked points on the Go board
- IKKEN TOBI:** a one-space jump
- ISHI NO SHITA:** playing in the space left after some stones have been captured
- JIGO:** a drawn game
- JOSEKI:** a standardised sequence of moves, usually in a corner
- KAKARI:** a move made against a single enemy stone in a corner
- KATTE YOMI:** self-centred play; expecting uninspired answers to 'good' moves
- KEIMA:** a knight's move jump
- KIKASHI:** a move which creates aji while forcing a submissive reply
- KOMI:** a points allowance given to compensate White for playing second
- KOSUMI:** a diagonal play
- MIAI:** two points related such that if one player takes one of them, the opponent will take the other one
- MOYO:** a potential territory, a framework
- NAKADE:** a move played inside an enemy group at the vital point of the principal eye-space to prevent it from making two eyes
- OVERTIME:** in tournament play, having to play a number of stones in a certain time e.g. 20 stones in five minutes
- OIOTOSHI:** 'connect and die', capturing by a cascade of ataris, often involving throw-ins. If the stones connect up to escape, they all get caught.
- PONNUKI:** the diamond shape left behind after a single stone has been captured
- SABAKI:** a sequence that produces a light, resilient shape
- SAGARI:** a descent – extending towards the edge of the board
- SAN REN SEI:** an opening which consists of playing on the three hoshi points along one side of the board
- SEKI:** a local stalemate between two or more groups dependent on the same liberties for survival
- SEMEAI:** a race to capture between two adjacent groups that cannot both live
- SENTE:** gaining the initiative; a move that requires a reply
- SHICHO:** a capturing sequence shaped like a ladder
- SHIMARI:** a corner enclosure of two stones
- SHODAN:** one dan level
- TENGEN:** centre point of the board
- TENUKI:** to abandon the local position and play elsewhere
- TESUJI:** a skillful and efficient move in a local fight
- TSUKE:** a contact play
- YOSE:** the endgame