

8x8 Ratings**The British 8x8 Rating List** *maintained by David Haigh*

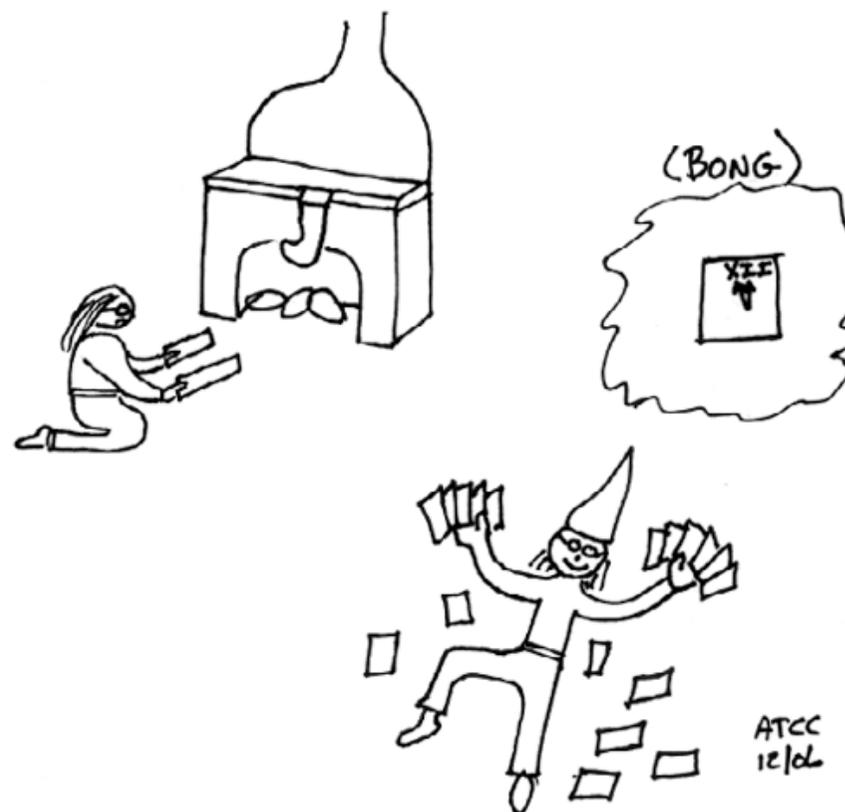
Current British players' ratings after the 2006 Cambridge Christmas Friendly Tournament

	games	rating		games	rating
1 Graham Brightwell	926	1853	20 Roy Arnold	1014	1366
2 Michael Handel	534	1775	21 Andrew Aspden	54	1313
3 Imre Leader	709	1752	22 Aidan Robison	49	1285
4 Joel Feinstein	454	1678	23 David Tuddenham	9	1283
5 David Hand	9	1657	24 Stephen Rowe	206	1261
6 David Beck	7	1591	25 Julian Richens	120	1256
7 Geoff Hubbard	459	1578	26 Robert Stanton	174	1239
8 Guy Plowman	419	1575	27 Yvette Campbell	69	1160
9 Elisabetta Vecchi	86	1557	28 David Haigh	552	1066
10 Iain Barrass	592	1539	29 Adelaide Carpenter	230	986
11 Phil Marson	898	1517	30 Angela Richens	7	819
12 Joel Blackmur	82	1510	31 Robert Calladine	12	769
13 Ian Turner	573	1497	32 Francesco Privitera	15	765
14 Steve MacGuire	23	1472	33 Fran Allsop	4	739
15 Jeremy Dyer	202	1437	34 James Watson	6	666
16 Ben Pridmore	264	1413	35 Janice Low	6	664
17 George Ortiz	54	1405	36 Kali Turner	35	520
18 Aubrey de Grey	708	1385	37 Stephen Low	6	325
19 Biagio Privitera	16	1378	38 Old and New Stitches	4	21

All's Well that Ends Well

The Newsletter of the British Othello Federation

January 2007



INFORMATION

The British Othello Federation is an independent body. With paper version of the Newsletter, an annual subscription for a British resident costs £6 (with the first year's membership including a copy of the instructional book *Othello: Brief and Basic*) or ten years for £55; an overseas subscription costs £8 per year or £75 for ten years. If you would prefer to receive *only* electronic copies of the Newsletter the cost is £5/£45 for national/international. Cheques or postal orders payable to the *British Othello Federation* should be sent to Adelaide Carpenter (address below) or you can pay by credit card at <http://www.britishothello.org.uk/> the BOF web site. The price of *Othello: Brief and Basic* on its own is £6. Second players living in the same household can become members for only £1 per year (with only one copy of the Newsletter).

	pages
Contents: Upcoming tournaments	12, 23
Tournament results	6, 21
Game analyses	3-6
Commentary	7-8, 12, 14-17
Puzzles	9-11, 13
Answers	18-22
Rating list	24

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2007 Regionals*compiled by Roy Arnold*

March 10th - Leicester (Oadby)

Venue: Oadby Baptist Church, Leicester Road, Oadby, Leicester

Start time 1000

Contact: Stephen Rowe (email: srowe@zaurak.org.uk)

May 5th - Cambridge

Venue: Netherhall School and Sixth Form College, Queen Ediths Way, Cambridge

Start time 1000

Contact: Aubrey de Grey (email: aubrey@sens.org)

April 14th - Ashford (Kent)

Venue: Ashford Centrepiece, Bank Street Church, Bank Street, Ashford

Start time 0930

Contact: Jeremy Dyer (email: jeremyatcb@hotmail.com)

The following tournament is planned but full details were not available by press time.

May 19th - Mansfield

Venue: TBA

Start time 0930 (TBC)

Contact: Phil Marson (pilonor@aol.com)

June 16th - London

Venue: Bath House, 96 Dean Street, London W1

Start time 1000

Contact Roy Arnold (email: royarnold@bulldoghome.com)

Tel 0114-263 1804 (h)

Details of all the above tournaments can be found on the BOF's tournament calendar: <http://www.britishothello.org.uk/tournaments.html>

Answers to the puzzles on page 13

by Steve Rowe

Puzzle 1: 52b7 53a8 54b8. I was expecting to play h1 next; I had not seen that Yvette's next move turned b7.

55g7 56h8 57g8 58h1 59b2 60a1

Puzzle 2: 53h1. I took the wrong corner; I had not seen that after a1 I can get both g1 and h1. 54g1 55a1 56a2 57g7. This is my only move, but it turns g2 allowing Iain the last three moves. 58h8 Pass 59a8 Pass 60b8.

Puzzle 3: A simple count. a1 is a draw and b1 wins 35-29. Why I went for a1 I have no idea!

Puzzle 4: 43h2. This must be the most stupid mistake ever made. I was concerned that after a8 Roy would get a wedge at g7. I thought that I could take the corner later! I had overlooked the simple g8!

44g8 45f2. f1 is much better, but I am still wining at this point.

46f1 47a3 48b2 49g2 50h1 51g1 52h8 53g7 54e1.

		○		○	○	●	○
	○	○	○	○	○	●	○
●	○	○	●	●	○	○	○
●	○	○	○	○	○	●	○
●	○	●	○	○	○	●	○
●	●	○	●	○	○	●	○
●		○	●	●	●	●	○
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

After move 54

I chose 55d1. This move cost me the game. I saw that I could take all the North edge, but I had not considered parity. 56b1 57a1 58a2 59b7 60a8.

Too Nice to Throw Away

by Graham Brightwell

Do you ever hang on to items that are too nice to throw away, even though you know there is no chance at all you'll ever use them again? Perhaps you have a cupboard where you keep things like that?

I'm that way with Othello games. Not so much real games, with two human players busily making human errors, but computer or computer-aided games, where the outrageous and ridiculous moves are actually correct.

Before I semi-retired, I used to spend time analysing Othello openings with WZebra. One way I found to extract some fun out of this activity was to look at an opening line and, rather than just trust the evaluations, let the game play out, either playing against WZebra (going back and correcting my blunders) or letting it play itself. Usually, at the end of the session, I'd just exit the program. But sometimes I'd stumble across something that was simply too nice to throw away.

Here's an example of the kind of thing that's cluttering up my electronic cupboard.

41	56	16	17	19	15	20	57
40	27	30	11	10	14	58	38
45	26	3	4	7	8	13	31
43	42	5	○	●	6	9	36
39	28	24	●	○	1	34	18
55	29	44	2	22	21	12	51
46	48	47	25	23	37	49	52
60	59	54	35	32	33	53	50

Black 31 - 33 White

			●	○			
		●	●	●	○		
		●	●	○	●	●	
			○	○	●		
			○				

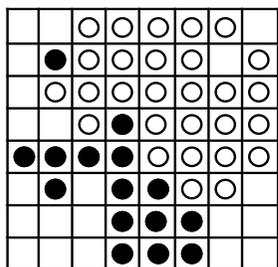
After 11d2

This opening (7e3) is named after me. It's not especially good, but it's not terminally bad either, so every now and again I've thought about playing it seriously, and/or wondered how I should react when someone thinks it'd be fun to wheel it out against me. The line shown here is the one that humans actually play, more often than not, and the one that persuaded me to give the opening up as Black. The computer tells me that White should prefer 10f6, or even 12f6 in the position above. In practice, whenever I've had this position as White, I've ended up choosing between 12g6 and 12g5: if the game goes 12g6/g5 13g3 14f2, then you want to have played g5, but if

it goes 12g6/g5 13f1 14e1 15g3 16g1, then you want to have played g6. You decide.

After that, the moves shown are all either WZebra's choice or a close second, depending on how long you let the machine think. 27b2 is a clear winner: Black wants to play that move anyway, sacrificing against the five and poisoning White's moves in that region, so why not go there immediately, poisoning c2 as well? The midgame is all very tight; White's edge is a weakness, but Black is a little short of moves and never has a particularly good way to play to the East.

Every move from 30 onwards is certified correct, except for a pair of one-disc errors at 36 and 37. White should play 36c7, winning 33-31 (since White is a computer); 36h4 is a blunder, allowing Black to draw with the relatively boring 37h6. However, if Black takes the natural quiet move 37f7 instead, then White is forced into taking the East edge, sealing herself off from g2 and h1, but grabbing a large mass of discs and running Black very short of moves; in particular, Black can never get a piece on the b1-h7 diagonal for access to h7. Here's the position a few moves later. The real fun is about to start.



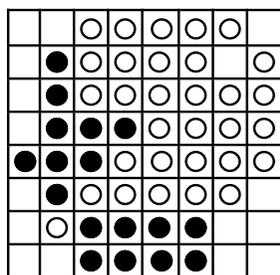
After 39a5

It's White to play, and the move that catches the eye is 40c6, leaving Black with very few even half-way plausible moves. Play is likely to continue (40c6) 41b4 42c7 43c8 44b7 (see next diagram).

Black has to start sacrificing now, and it's time to have a look at a thematic resource he has in this ending. He can play 45g7,

threatening to follow with h6 and h1, to which the only defence is 46h8; now he continues with 47h6, again threatening to take h1, and White has to reply with 48h7, turning horizontally. This sequence is liable to come up any time White puts a piece on the 7th rank. Does it win here? Surely now Black plays 49a8,

with two free moves to come on the South edge and a comfortable win ... except that White has some dramatic counterplay: 50a6 (taking away Black's access to b8) 51a4 52b1! (52a1-b1-a2 gets enough discs too) 53g2

After
40c6-b4-c7-c8-b7

a 26-38 or a 28-36 outcome probable. So we are left with 51a1 or 51h7. Which one is the draw? After 51h7, 52g2-53f3-54g8-55a8-56a7-57a1-58b7-59b1-60c1 30-34 is the best Black can do, with other 30-34s on the cards. 51a1 is the draw with many 32-32 vs. 33-31 possibilities. If you managed to count those out give yourself a pat on the back and walk around with your head held high. If you got it right by guesswork, just pretend you counted it and walk around with your head held high and a slight twinge in your conscience.

11 points -- White to play: OK, White is nearly dead, not a lot is on but it is just possible to hold out for the draw. 50a7 doesn't work because 51a2-52a3-53a8-54g8-55b8-56c8 with Black sweeping around the South is countable as a 8 disc loss. Actually, 53g8 is perfect play for Black and a 38-26 loss for White. 50h7 is obviously awful. 50h8 isn't as bad as it looks but White cannot do anything about the obvious 51h7-52b7-53a8-54a7-55a3-56a2-57b8-58c8-59g8-60f8 35-29. For the other three moves available, 50g8, 50f8 and 50b7, it's beyond my ability to count which is best, but I included the puzzle anyway because I feel that calculated guesswork counts for something. 50g8 is a draw, with 51c8-52b8-53b7-54a7-55h8-56h7-57a2-58a3-59a8-pass-60f8 one of the perfect sequences. If you answered 50b7 I'd be tempted to call it correct because 51a8 is a draw and the unlikely 51h7 is a 2 disc loss.

12 points -- Black to play: Did you spot the drawing move? It's a nice little corner sacrifice. In the quality perfect play Black manages to get the last four moves: g8-h8-b7-a8-a7-a1-b1-g7-h7-pass-h1-pass-h2-pass-g2.

Cambridge Christmas Tournament Results -- 2nd December 2006

compiled by Geoff Hubbard

Standings after 7 rounds:

- 7.0 [544] BRIGHTWELL Graham,
- 5.0 [546] LEADER Imre,
- 4.0 [521] PLOWMAN Guy, 4.0 [508] HUBBARD Geoff,
4.0 [474] PRIDMORE Ben, 4.0 [469] BECK David, 4.0 [442] MARSON Phil
- 3.0 [422] ARNOLD Roy, 3.0 [369] ROBISON Aidan
- 2.0 [398] DYER Jeremy, 2.0 [314] CAMPBELL Yvette
- 0.0 [327] CARPENTER Adelaide

6 points - - White to play: This is the endgame of my first ever over-the-board game. As Black I wrongly choose 55h2 (29-35), did you do better? 55a3 is a draw because although it gives you access to h1 after 59a1, Black's b2 and a2 simply take too many discs. Perfect play is 55a2-56a3-57h2-58a1-59b2-60h1. Black's best plays flip only one disc each. a2 results in a 31-33 win.

7 points -- White to play: This endgame is as simple as it looks. The idea is to play into the odd-numbered area where you both have access, leaving yourself with the last move in every area of the board. There are many endgame exceptions to this 'rule' but here it works sweetly. 54g7-55h8-56g8-57b8-58a7 or 58g1-59a7-60b1. g7 is the only draw.

8 points -- Black to play: This is a game of 'find the swindle.' Did you find it? Only one of the possibilities gives you the all important swindle, although perfect play after 53b2 does leave White with no access to a8.

53e7-54e8 is obviously awful so no need to consider that.

53b7 just gives White the last move in each area, *i.e.* 54b2-55a8-56a7-57e7-58e8-59a3-60a1, 31-33.

53a8 is the same, with White playing exactly the same moves.

53b2 doesn't work because White gets both edges. 54a1-55a3-56e8-57e7-58a7-59b7 29-35 (the empty space goes to the winner).

55a3 is the winning move, complete with swindle. If White plays 54a7, Black can play 55a8 and clean up, ditto for 54b2 and 54e7, so White must go to 54e8. 55e7 looks good but 56b2-57a1-58b7-59a7 leaves Black with nothing on the a1-h8 diagonal and no disc on a8. It is important for Black to play e7 but first to play 55b7 then 57e7 and finally 59a8-pass-60a1, no matter where White goes. a3 results in a 35-29 win.

9 points -- Black to play: Sorry Leon but this game is Brightwell *vs.* Kamphuis from the 2004 WOCs. 64-0 is on the cards here. Wherever you move in the North, one or all of the white discs on b7, b5 and b4 are problematic. With 64-0's you need to build from an area picking off your opponent's discs. So where is the 64-0? 52d8 enables you to play 53c2, after 54b2-55b1 you get the SW swindle and the pleasure of a wipe-out.

10 points -- Black to play: This one's tricky. We can rule out 51b1 and 51c1, because giving White both of the other NW squares is lethal. 51g8 doesn't look good because it gives White control, the sequence 52h7-53a8-54a7-55b7-56a1-57b1-58c1-59f3-60g2 is obvious and at a push the 27-37 result is countable, if 53a1 were played instead White would play 54b7 with

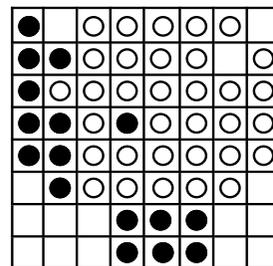
54a7 55a3 56h1, and White gets 35 discs.

No, the winning move in the last diagram is 45b8! White has nothing better than to accept the sacrifice with 46a8, and now 47g7-(a7-a6)-h8-h6-h7-g8 is just good enough to win. As you'll see, there is merit in playing the whole South-East region out and finishing with a wedge on the South; Black is still getting the swindle in the North-East eventually, so the sequence doesn't have to do anything more than gain a tempo to keep Black alive.

So 40c6 is cute, but losing. One way to think about this is that White's plan of leaving the b2 disc alone and running Black out of moves is doomed to narrow failure. But there is a radical alternative.

The winning move is 40a2!! Once you've seen it, you might think you understand how it works: Black will take a1 but have no access to b1, so this will be some sort of tempo gain? Well, in a way: one option for Black is 41b4, met by 42a4 43h6 44h7 45a1 and now 46b7!! (the only win) and Black can't get access to a8, so he has to resort to 47a7-c6-g7-c8-c7-a8-b8-a6-a3 (or some other line leading to a similar position) 56b1-h1-h8-g2-g8, and White's swindle beats Black's. So, yes, some sort of tempo gain.

On the other hand, if Black takes the corner now, so that he doesn't have to use up h6-h7, then he has 41a1 42b4 43a4 44c6 45a3, and has White actually gained any tempo?

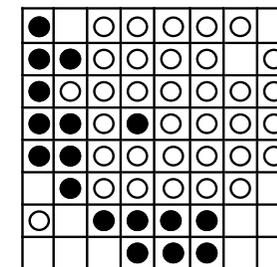


After 45a3

Aha, the point was to fill in the North-West region, and finish off with 46a7!, leaving Black no access to a6. He has to play 47c7, and the coup de grâce is 48b8, since Black has no access to c8 either? Stunning, yes?

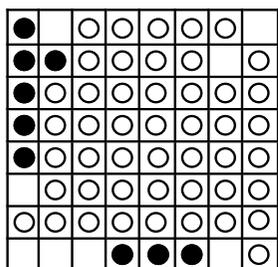
No. Remember: any time Black puts a disc on the 7th rank he is vulnerable to (48b8)-49g7-h8-h6-h7, and it's Black who gets the last coup de grâce with 53g2!!-a6-b7.

Instead White has to play 48b7!!, again taking advantage of Black's lack of access to a6, or a8 for that matter. Well and good, but can't Black still play his trademark 49g7-h8-h6-h7? Yes, he can and should, but he still has no access to a6 or a8, and he doesn't



After 47c7

have the option of controlling the b7-g2 diagonal. Indeed he doesn't have many options (or discs) at all.



After 52h7

the delete key awaits.

It has to be 53g8, resolving the access problems, but now White consolidates discs with 54c8 55a6 56b1, and Black can only clamber up to 31.

There is one other way for Black to get 31 discs, namely 43g2, followed by the obvious sequence 44a6-a7-c7-g7-b7-c8-h8-g8-b8-a3-a4-b1-a8-h1-c6-h6-h7. That game and the main game are the only two perfect-play sequences starting from the position after 39a5.

If there is any demand, I'll haul out another specimen from my cupboardful of rescued games next time. If not,

Results of the National Championship Tournament 2-3 September 2006 *communicated by Michael Handel*

Full Standings after 9 rounds of Swiss + one game final:

1. Graham Brightwell	6.5	1-0	41-23
2. Michael Handel	9	0-1	
3. David Hand	6		
4. Iain Barrass	5.5		
5. Imre Leader	5	BQ 624.5	
6. Ian Turner	5	BQ 604.5	
7. Geoff Hubbard	5	BQ 600	
8. Jeremy Dyer	5	BQ 584	
9. Roy Arnold	5	BQ 534	
10. Ben Pridmore	4		
11. Robert Stanton	3		
12= George Ortiz	2		
12= Yvette Campbell	2		
14. David Haigh	0		

Next up a5. Remember that there is loads of time on the clock and that b1 draws, so we'll count a5 even though at first glance it doesn't look good because I'd like to rule it out. a5 would turn a6, b5 and b4 (32), leaving White a4 (25). a1 is obviously worse than b1 so no need to count that. b1 turns 8 leaving 33, with White a1 turning b2 and c3 leaving 31. So a5 results in a 31-33 loss. We can rule it out.

Next, a1. It turns b2 (30) with White b1 turning it back (29). a5 is obviously much worse than a4 so we needn't count that. a4 turns 7 (37) with White a5 turning back 4 (33). So a1 is a 33-31 win. After double and maybe triple-checking it, some people would just play there, guaranteed with the win, but disc count and BQ does count as a tie-breaker in most tournaments so it is worth trying our last choice:

a4. It turns 5 discs (34) and leaves White with two choices, b1 or a5. If White chooses b1 we can get that swindle (b1-a5-pass-a1) we talked about earlier resulting in a big win (40-24), so White has to play a5 (29). b1 would flip b2 with White a1 flipping it back (29) but play to a1 flips a2-a6 and b2 and c3. White flips back b2 and b3 resulting in a 34-30 win. So a4 is the best move.

5 points -- White to play: A quick explanation before we begin solving this puzzle. 56b7 simply means that move 56 is to square b7. It is White's turn and wherever White played would be move 56, *i.e.* if White played b7, Black a7 White a2 Black b2 White a1 it would be written 56b7-57a7-58a2-59b2-60a1. I will write so the last square is always move 60 and passes will not count as a move.

So what are White's plausible possibilities? It's tricky; at first I wouldn't be able to rule out any of the four moves. I think you would have to count many different sequences. At first glance playing into the odd-numbered North-Western area looks best to me. 56b2 would leave 57a1 57a2 or 57b7. It is best to try to rule out as many possibilities as you can; the ones I would have to count are 57a1-58a2-59b7-60a7, 57a2-58a1-59b7-60a7, 57b7-58a7-59a1-60a2 and 57b7-58a7-59a2-60a1. What that should show me is that 56b2 results in a 33-31 loss.

With 56a2 Black's best play would be 57a1, leaving 58b2-59b7-60a7 resulting in a 35-29 loss.

56b7 would force 57a7, leaving 58b2-59a1-60a2, 58b2-59a2-60a1 and 58a2-59b2-60a1 to count, perfect play leaving a 33-31 loss

This leaves 56a7 as the only hope of a draw or win. 57b7 is forced. 58a2-59b2-60a1 is a 33-31 loss, perfect play is in fact a draw with 58b2 and a1 and a2 in either order. So a7 is the only draw.

Answers to puzzles on pages 9-11*by Joel Blackmur*

2 points -- White to play: Here a simple count is sufficient. Play to a1 gains 3 (a1, b2 and c3) and loses 2 (b2 and b3) when Black plays b1, totalling +1. b1 gains 6 and when Black plays a1 loses 7 (all the ones you turned over, b2 itself and g1), totalling -1.

Alternatively, you could count all the white pieces before you play, 33. a1 (34) turns b2 (35) and c3 (36), then Black plays b1 turning b2 (35) and b3 (34). If you choose b1 (34) it would turn b2 (35) and c1-f1 (36-39), then Black playing a1 turns b1-g1 (38-33) and b2 (32). So b1 draws and a1 wins 34-30.

3 points -- White to play: Here you are presented with two choices with a total of three possibilities: b1 a1 g1, g1 a1 b1, or g1 b1 a1. When considering an opponent's moves, obviously you should always expect her to move to the best place. First, count all of your pieces, 27. Then figure out how many discs you will have after each possibility.

b1-a1-g1: b1 turns c1 and b2-g6 (34), Black can only play a1 and would turn b1-e1 and b2-d4 (27) leaving g2 (28) turning f2, g2 and g3 (31). g1 (28) would turn f1, f2, g2 and g3 (32). Black then has two choices, a1 turns b2-d4 (29) with b1 (30) turning c1, b2 and c2-g6 resulting in a 27-37 win for yourself. A Black play to b1 turns b2-b5 (28) with White a1 (29) turning b1, c1 and b2 (32). So g1 is the only move that draws.

4 points -- Black to play: With this puzzle we start getting a bit more complicated. You have 4 moves (a1, b1, a4 and a5) to consider with multiple possibilities. If you are short on time, a quick check to see if there is a way to make your opponent pass so that you get an extra move yourself is recommended. For example, if d2 were black and c4 white, play to b1 would leave your opponent with a choice of a4 or a5. Whichever move they chose would leave you with the other AND also to a1 because your opponent wouldn't be able to break the a1-h8 diagonal and gain access to a1. But here a swindle isn't possible and we are pretending in all these puzzles that you have plenty of time left on your clock. Count your pieces (28) and try one move at a time:

Let's start with b1. It turns 7 discs, leaving you with 36. c3-h8 are black so White cannot play a1. White a5 turns 4 discs (b4, c3, b5 and c5) leaving you with 32. Playing a4 yourself turns 5 (38) and finally White a1 turns b2 leaving a 37-27 win. If White plays a4 instead of a5 it would turn b5 and b4-f4 (30). That leaves you a5, turning 3 (34) and White a1 turns b2 and c3 leaving a 32-32 draw. So b1 draws 32-32.

Tips for Play*compiled by Joel Blackmur*

I was going to write an article on strategy for beginners and intermediates but I found myself just summarising Brian Rose's book all the time so, for strategy hints and tips, I will instead just refer everyone to <http://othellogateway.strategicviewpoints.com/rose/book.pdf>. I asked a few other, more experienced players to write three tips or interesting comments on Othello. Ben Seeley's comments below are certainly worth reading:

"1. The endgame is the most important phase of the game. Nobody ever won a world championship who didn't have an endgame that was one of the very best in the world. It is possible to have openings and a midgame that are inferior to dozens of other players, and still win any tournament in the world, but this is not true with the endgame. However, for a beginner or intermediate player it may make more sense to focus on the openings and midgame, since surviving till the endgame is obviously an important goal, and accomplishing a strong opening and midgame phase is much more easily accomplished than being able to master the immense variety of endgame tricks and all their permutations.

2. The primary thing stopping players from achieving their potential in Othello is that they stop playing. Most of the players who could be world-class no longer play. Outside pressures (work, children, relationships) can affect playing time, but it's not enough to make a player quit. Players who can still immensely enjoy the game, like Murakami, have no problem continuing to play. So, knacks for maximising enjoyment of the game and preventing staleness are extremely vital for making the most of the Othello experience. Towards this end, variety is quite important -- varying openings, styles, opponents, timers, and playing Othello variations -- can all help a lot. Avoiding overdoing it can also help. Nevertheless, intense bouts of playing can also earn new levels of appreciation for Othello -- Murakami has run dozens of Othello boot camps, and he may love Othello the most. But the trick is, he doesn't live this way all the time; nobody could without burning out.

Fun also has a high correlation with becoming a better player; learning is fun, successfully accomplishing something never before accomplished, experiencing a greater integration of existing knowledge -- these are all fun and all are linked with the movement towards greater Othello proficiency. The player who enjoys Othello the most has the best chance of making the most of their own Othello talent.

3. The player is ultimately his own greatest variable. His health, his concentration, his desire, his tournament pacing, the development of his understanding of how he learns best, are all vitally important. People have

varying talents regarding their ability to pick up visual patterns unconsciously, but the player is the instrument; the more the player understands himself, the greater his chance of making the most of his relationship with Othello in every regard. For example, I've always found my level of play jumps over 100 points in the hours after I've had an intense exercise session. Sleep, eating habits, psychological resilience, situational visualisation, camaraderie, minimising external stress and distractions, *etc.*, can also all have a large impact on performance.

And I have generally found that learning improves the most when my performance ratio is the highest. This does not equate to greater wins and losses, necessarily; for example, I might actually be performing better in a 31-33 loss from a bad opening than in a 33-31 win from my strongest opening. But it is the ratio that is important, not the absolute performance level -- or else I would always be learning better than most players, but this isn't so. It is rather a matter of how closely I am hewing to my absolute maximum in effort and skilful application of knowledge. The closer this ratio is to 100%, generally the more strongly the experience is impressed within me, and the more seriously my subconscious works at figuring things out during the hours when I am not playing (mainly while I am sleeping). Players who play within their comfort zones at all times will not learn much. And since my motivation and effort have dwindled a bit over the past few years, too, I found it was just as true for me as for anyone else, even though I may have more ideas and tricks for learning, than the average. So I have had to put in bouts of fully concentrated effort, too, in order to buck up my game during the past year. This is why I applauded Tamenori for how much concentration he maintained in 2005, even in his offline games, since I was sure that was a large factor in his success. But it is up to the player to determine when they are and aren't pushing their comfort boundaries.

Returning to the topic at hand; aspects of the person's inner makeup, and their way of playing, can't be completely separated. I feel I can usually determine my opponents' psychology, or repressed psychology, from the way they play Othello, long before I ever meet them -- and often better than their words reveal. As the Go saying goes, playing Go is "the hand talking". Players with an aggressive, risk-taking personality tend to play that style of Othello. Subversives play tricky, deceptive Othello. Conservative people play cautious, defensive Othello. Occasionally, I meet people as they wish they could be. Murakami is perhaps the nicest man I've ever met in real life, but OTB he plays like a ruthless tyrant; a manner of playing he would never permit himself in real life, but which he relishes within the appropriate arena.

So, I would suggest that the potential benefits of mastering Othello can

enough to accommodate any new players. Clocks are a bit tougher; although a lot of players do own their own, probably not enough of the Regionals players do. Could I encourage some of you to buy your own chess clock? And if whoever walked off with one of the BOF clocks a couple of years ago is a BOF member, putting that one back into circulation would be a help!

Of course, this suggestion would leave the organiser in a state of terminal panic -- unless potential attendees communicate to him/her when they say that they are coming also say what they are bringing. Nowadays with email this should be easy.

Most players expect the venue to supply not only transcript sheets but also something to write on them with, so having a few spare pens is helpful.

Pairings: At the last AGM it was decided to encourage Regionals that do not have a non-playing referee to use a pairings program rather than have a player try to do the pairings manually. (Back when Regionals had higher attendance a non-playing referee was required; that was dropped when attendance fell off.) The organiser should try to identify a player with a program and a portable computer to handle this if the relevant expertise isn't already in the organiser's capabilities.

Rules: Regionals should be run in accordance with the Rules of the British Othello Federation -- indeed, in those Rules it is required that a copy of them be physically present during the event! However, it isn't always easy to find a current copy. Imre Leader, the current Secretary, is charged with maintaining and updating the Rules; he should have provided Roy Arnold, Web Site Keeper, with the current version for posting, but he's new at this job. Something for me to chase once the holidays are over. If we haven't uploaded the current version by the time you need to read it yourself, I can supply the next-most-recent version plus the one Regionally-important addition on request.

Editorial: Regional Tournament Conventions*by Adelaide Carpenter*

It has been brought to my attention that we have very little written about how to organise a Regional Tournament. Well, traditionally we didn't need to, because all Regionals were organised by people who already knew the conventions; however, increasingly our newer members are shouldering this responsibility, so I thought having at least some of the conventions written down might be helpful. We do have a few rules, *e.g.* how many rounds, maximum charge *etc.*, see the Rules of the BOF. The present document is intended to be a guide, not an additional set of rules.

Venue: Traditionally, each Regional Tournament is expected at least to break even. Given that we have a Rule saying that the maximum charge per player is £5, if a venue is to be hired it should not cost more than 5 x the anticipated attendance; the ideal venue is free. It needs to be conducive to good Othello playing, to wit quiet, reasonably well lit, and have a place for the obligatory kettle (this is the down side of venues in pubs); attractiveness of location is *not* a concern (the attendees will be concentrating on their games, not admiring the view). Accessibility by public transport should be considered, but cost is a more important consideration. For Regionals with low expected attendance, consider holding it in your own living room! There is precedent for this.

For the first Regional in a given region, expected attendance is a guess, but apart from London and Cambridge we seem to have had a maximum of seven players last year, so anticipating 7 or 8 is reasonable. If you book a room for £50 and only five players turn up, the BOF will reimburse you for the excess, but you should not build BOF support into your original calculation. Continuing Regionals in a region should expect roughly the same attendance as past years and budget accordingly.

It is helpful but not vital for the venue to be within walking distance of a source of lunch.

Equipment: Sets, clocks, transcript sheets, kettle and coffee and tea and cups and milk and sugar (and a spoon!). In the distant past, Regionals locations were more or less permanent, so each had a resident set of sets and clocks; locations are now much more variable so this isn't practical. The past several years some of the Cambridge sets and all our clocks have been transported to Regionals, often at someone's inconvenience; I would like to suggest a different solution. Most if not all of us own at least one set; if each player in a Regional brought his/her own set, there would surely be

extend beyond mere mastery of a game, and offer insight into self and other fields of life. For example, I know about myself that I am obsessed with shortcuts and efficiency, which has its perks, but when it precludes a willingness to put in the hard work of calculating and whatever other great effort is required, then I get myself in trouble when I have no shortcut solutions for my challenge. I also learned that I can only consciously do one thing well at a time, but if I do enough things well over time, they can integrate unconsciously and then I can use my intuition as my primary weapon, with some conscious effort thrown in on top of it to guide the ship. You may learn something different, and certainly some things could be true for others that isn't true for me, and vice versa.

The reason why this is relevant to becoming an expert player is that insight can come from anywhere and the practice of insight in each area of life offers benefits in every other area. Most of my best Othello training ideas came from my experience with training for competitive running, using both the conventional training ideas and my own ideas. My practice in school of being lazy and a showoff and refusing ever to do math problems on paper, along with my habits of daydreaming, gave me a better "working memory". Potentially Othello can benefit the rest of your life, and your understanding of the rest of your life can benefit your Othello."

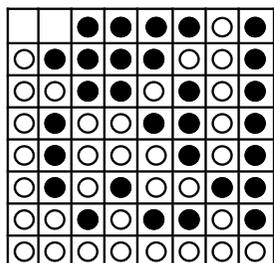
Finally I leave you with the wise words of Graham Brightwell:

" The three most important things are:

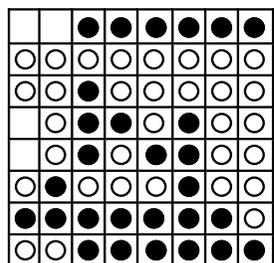
- (1) Not losing on time,
- (2) Having more discs than your opponent at the end,
- (3) Failing (2), not having fewer discs than your opponent at the end."

A Range of Endgame Puzzles*by Joel Blackmur*

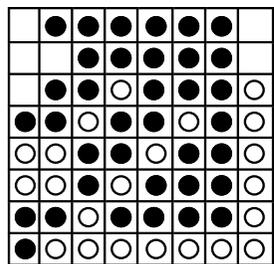
In point 1 of the preceding article Ben explains that the endgame is vitally important so I have constructed these endgame puzzles. Your task is to figure out the best move in each position. You may find it easier to concentrate on the position on a real board rather than these small diagrams. Count carefully! Your final score equals the number of spaces in the highest puzzle you get right, but you only get one extra life, so as soon as you get 2 answers wrong your score is fixed. (*I.e.*, if you get the puzzles with 2, 3 and 4 spaces right, get 5 wrong, 6 right and 7 wrong you will get 6 points no matter what further puzzles you get right.) So the lowest possible score is 0 and the highest is 12. The answers and a few explanations begin on page 18. (*Hint: more of the puzzles are draws than Joel indicated -- Ed.*)



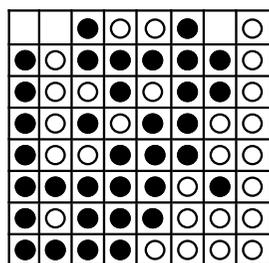
2 points: White to play



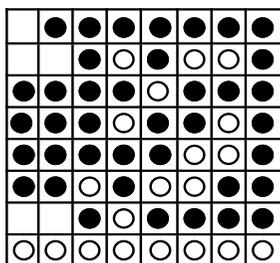
4 points: Black to play



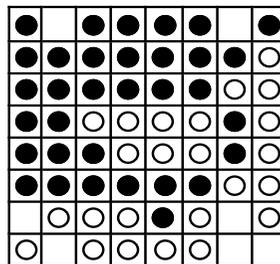
6 points: White to play



3 points: White to play



5 points: White to play



7 points: White to play

1242. Of course, these tournaments are run on the Swiss system, meaning that if you win, you end up against the players who are also winning, and I get another couple of kickings at the hands (or should that be feet? Or mouses/mice?) of Slow_Food and Rodzynekwesti. All these silly names. People should stick to sensible nicknames like mine, Zoom_Zoom.

My rating's back to 1217, but I'm in sixth place on three points as I face Tranquillo_m. I normally aim to finish in the top half of these things, and to win more half the games, so I'm more or less on track for that. And I win that one, despite my opponent being Japanese. It's a kind of Othello prejudice -- you see the little 'ja' in brackets after a nickname and automatically assume you're in for an impossible game. But if online playing teaches you one thing, it's that there are players of all ability ranges from all nationalities out there.

Another loss at the hands of '203', and I'm down to eighth place, low enough to get the bye in round nine. Then, with the fourth Simpsons episode of the night coming to an end, it's another loss to tournament leader Switchfoot, and finally my last opponent, Jojo_De, doesn't turn up for the game. So I end up with technically six points out of eleven, and seventh place out of seventeen, but actually only four wins out of nine, and a rating down to 1208. Ah well, better luck next time.

So what are the advantages and disadvantages of online tournaments? They're free, they don't take up so much of your valuable time, you don't have to leave your home, and you generally get a larger turnout than the average British regional. On the other hand, you don't get a lunch break in the local pub.

Online Othello Tournaments: a guide for the uninitiated*by Ben Pridmore*

In this day and age, there probably aren't many readers of the BOF newsletter who haven't experienced online Othello of some kind. But for the benefit of those few remaining cavemen, let me talk about the wonders of Othello competitions in the world of virtual reality. I like to spend my Saturday nights from 10:15 onwards watching Match Of The Day on BBC1 while playing in an Othello tournament on the internet. And tonight is no exception, except that it's Thursday, and 7:15, and the Simpsons on Sky. But despite that, I'm about to take part in the snappily-named 'tournament 1127165' on the popular games website Kurnik.

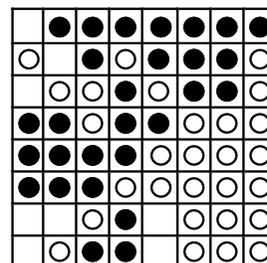
If you haven't done it before, playing Othello online is easy. Almost as easy as playing it in the twentieth-century way -- easier, in fact, if you don't own a board. There are a lot of online games sites, but the one where all the cool kids hang out these days is www.kurnik.org, a Polish site where as well as Othello you can play chess, draughts, Chinese chess, Connect Four, and lots of other exciting games. To get to the Othello, click on 'reversi'.

Then you just have to create yourself a nickname and join the fun. There's an official tournament every day except Tuesday, probably for a good reason, with game lengths varying between one and five minutes. Tonight's is a five-minute one, which allows for quite leisurely games -- five minutes is a lot more time when you just have to click once and all the appropriate discs are flipped for you.

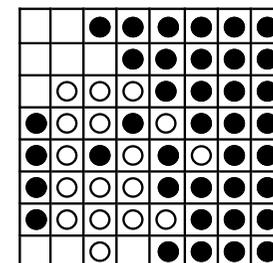
Just like in real life, when you play on Kurnik you get an official rating. In fact, you get two -- one for friendly games and another one for tournaments. My tournament rating going into '1127165' (I don't know how it works the numbers out -- yesterday's was number 1127158, and the one before that was 1127117) is 1215, and my aim is to bump it up above 1250. If you've got a rating above 1250, you can play in the exclusive 1250+ tournament on Wednesdays, and get your rating knocked down again by all the really good players. It's great.

There are 17 players registered and eleven rounds. This means that these tournaments last a few hours from start to finish. My first opponent is Watson, who's Polish, with a rating of 1094. I should have lost, but he/she/it (you occasionally get computers playing in these tournaments, although it's not allowed) makes a mess of it at the end, and I win 35-29. With the aid of modern computer technology, everyone's ratings jump up or down instantly, based on the results.

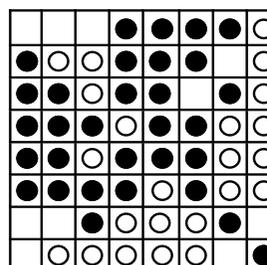
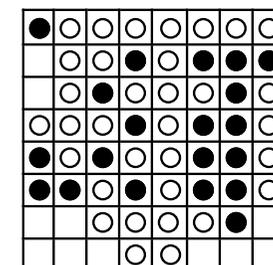
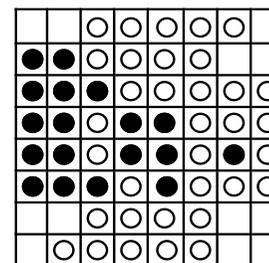
Following that, I get well and truly thrashed by Tukasa, but then beat Oktawek and Hozoin to send my rating skyrocketing to the great heights of



8 points: Black to play



9 points: Black to play

10 points: Black to play
(Clue: 1 move draws, the rest lose)11 points: White to play
(Clue: again, find the one drawing move)

12 points: Black to play

(I love one of the perfect play endgames on this one, one move draws again here.)

My Trip to Japan by *Yvette Campbell*

On Wednesday 4th October 2006 I flew out to Japan to take part in the 30th World Othello Championships. Having become the British Women's Champion in September, I was looking forward to representing my country once again (last year I was in Iceland), playing Othello with the other top 70 players in the world.

After a 12 hour flight I landed at noon on Thursday 5th October and milled around the airport for four hours, waiting for a bus to make the two- hour onward journey to Mito, 120 km north of Tokyo.

Barely having time to unpack, I then had to go into the town centre to the Arts Tower for the Welcome Ceremony. We were greeted by ladies in traditional Japanese dress (kimonos) and the draw for the first round of the competition took place.

Imagine my shock and horror when I was drawn to play on table 1 against Takuji Kashiwabara, ranked 4th in the world! Needless to say I lost my first game, but I did almost make him run out of time.

The rest of the games passed quickly. On Friday and Saturday we played continuously, except for an hour lunch break, from 0900 to 1930 and each evening I was mentally exhausted. The standard of play was extremely high this year and I was up against people who spend hours on the Internet, playing others of a similar standard. (Needless to say, no other teachers were there; we just don't have the time to practise as much as we should!)

From Table 1 to Table 42 in 6 games!

Sunday morning came all too soon and sadly I had to return home, thus missing the final and semi-final playoffs and the Victory Dinner.

Upcoming EGPs

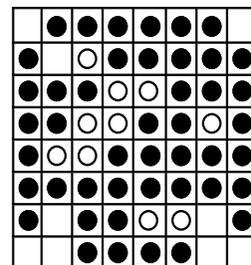
Jan 13-14, Rome; Feb 17-18, Cambridge; Mar 24-25, Amsterdam; Apr 21-22, Copenhagen; June 2-3, Stockholm; June 30-Jul 1, Gdansk; Jul 28-29, Brussels; Aug 25-26 or Sept 1-2, Paris; Sept 29-30, Prague. See the BOF website for details for the foreign ones.

The Cambridge International Tournament will be held February 17-18 in the Lubbock Room, Peterhouse, Trumpington Street; start time both days is 9:30 AM. Please contact Aubrey de Grey (aubrey@sens.org) if you plan to come so that enough sets and clocks can be made available.

A Comedy Of Errors by *Steve Rowe*

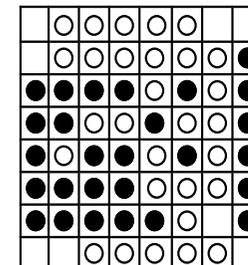
I have a habit of losing games from a clearly winning position. Just for fun here are four positions from my games presented as puzzles. In each case winning is easy. Your task is to find my losing move. Answers on page 22.

Puzzle 1
Yvette Campbell - Steve Rowe
Cambridge 26.11.02



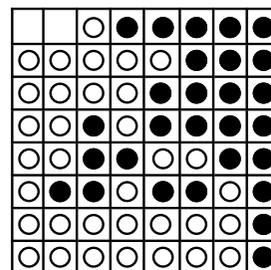
White to play and lose

Puzzle 2
Steve Rowe - Iain Barras
Cambridge 30.11.02



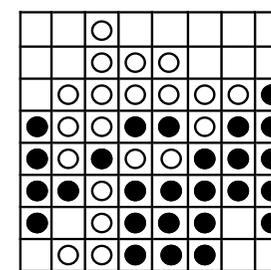
Black to play and lose

Puzzle 3
Steve Rowe - Mark Wormley
Cambridge 4.5.02



Black to play and draw

Puzzle 4
Steve Rowe - Roy Arnold
Wellingborough 23.2.02



Black to play and lose