

Feinstein-A-Gain-Gain

The Newsletter of the British Othello Federation

January 1994

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Black to play

Joel Feinstein to play and win the British
Championship yet again

(see page 36)

INFORMATION

Othello is manufactured and marketed by Peter Pan Playthings, Merthyr Tydfil. The British Othello Federation is an independent body. Annual subscription for British residents costs £5 for the first year's membership (including a copy of the instructional book *Othello: Brief & Basic*) and £3 thereafter. Ten years membership is available for £25. An overseas subscription costs £5 per year, or £45 for ten years. Cheques or postal orders payable to the *British Othello Federation* should be sent to David Haigh. The price of *Othello: Brief & Basic* for existing members is £5.

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Chairman's Address *delivered by Graham Brightwell.*

What is the aim of the Federation? Is it to get people playing? To get them playing “well”? To get them playing at “world-class” level? I’d hope that the answer is “yes, all of these”. I think it’s broadly agreed that we do a decent job at the second and third, but very little to get people started off on the game. How can we do better?

At the recent World Championships in London, and subsequently, Federation officers spoke at some length with representatives of Peter Pan Playthings, the licence holder in this country. These discussions are still continuing, but it is likely that some publicity for the Federation will soon appear in the packaging for Othello sets. This has been an aim of the Federation’s for some time, as it gives us far and away our best source of new members. In return, we have to do more for this relatively large influx of novices into the Federation. What?

For many members, all they get from the Federation is this newsletter. I’ve been told many times that it’s rather forbidding, and that there’s not enough in it for novices. However, people seem less anxious to write beginners’ articles than to complain about their absence! Starting from this issue, we are having a “Beginners Section” in the newsletter, with its own Editor, Joel Feinstein. Besides being National Champion most years, Joel is a very successful teacher of novices – witness the successes of Mike Handel and Aiden O’Reilly, to name but two. Comments on the new section would be appreciated even more than usual. Comments are also welcome on the slight redesign.

We are also publishing once more the list of members willing to be contacted. Most people are short of someone to play against, so please don’t hesitate to get in touch with someone in your area, no matter what your standard. If you want to be put on, or taken off, this list, please tell David Haigh, perhaps at the same time as you renew your membership.

At present, I know of active clubs in London (contact me), Doncaster (contact Eileen Forsyth) and Nottingham (contact Joel Feinstein). Shouldn’t there be a club in your area? If you start one up, let us know. We’ll publish reports of your activities in the newsletter, and provide any expert assistance you might need. We might be able to provide a few sets, for instance. Or an expert might come over and give some hints, or do a simultaneous exhibition, whatever you want.

What else can we do? To be honest, I don’t know. What we can’t do is anything involving spending large amounts of money, or large amounts of members’ time. The latter is in particularly short supply!

Finally, on a different note altogether, Phil Marson has taken over as Treasurer from Peter Bhagat. Peter has given up this job to spend more time with his family (wife Jane and new young daughter Katie). I’m sure we all wish him well, and thank him for the very many years he has spent as a Federation officer.

Contactable current members

Avon:

John Whitehead, 356 Whitehall Road, St George, Bristol, BS5 7BW.

Bedfordshire:

Nicholas McBride, 17 West Hill, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 3PN.

Berkshire:

Terry Bean, 68 Keldholme, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 7RR.

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Humberside:

Paulette Atkin, The Flat, 808 Beverley High Road, Hull, HU6 7HD.

Leicestershire:

Jeremy Das, 214A Forest Road, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3HU.

London:

Nigel Barthorpe, 15 Wayside Grove, Mottingham, London, SE9 4ND.

John Bass, 10 Arlington Park Mansions, Sutton Lane, Chiswick, London, W4 4HE.

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North Yorkshire:

Graham Blackmore, 27 Candler Street, Scarborough, YO12 7DF.

Mark Wormley, Flat 45, Rowntree Wharf, Navigation Road, York, YO1 2XA.

Northamptonshire:

Guy Plowman, 137 Torrington Crescent, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 3ET.

Nottinghamshire:

Roy Arnold, 181 Carlton Road, Worksop, Notts, S81 7AD.

Joel Feinstein, 324 Queens Road West, Beeston, Nottingham, NG9 1GS.

South Yorkshire:

Iain Barrass, 17 Newhall Road, Kirk Sandall, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN3 1QQ.

Iain Forsyth, 49 Balmoral Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN2 5BZ.

Robert Stanton, 135 Meersbrook Park Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S8 9FP.

Staffordshire:

Dan Hendriksen, 7 Claymills Road, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, DE13 0JG.

Suffolk:

Keith Ringrose, "The Shambles", Hall Lane, Troston, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 1EU.

Surrey:

Jeremy Benjamin, Ground Floor Flat, 47 Bynes Road, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 0PY.

Tim Williamson, 80 Inglewood Avenue, Heatherside, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 1RS.

Sussex:

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David Rockwell, 8514 Trumbull Avenue, Skokie, Illinois 60076-2440, U S A.

Marc Tastet, "Bordenave", St-Pandelon, 40180 Dax, FRANCE.

Forthcoming Events

The 1994 Regionals *compiled by Imre Leader.*

The 1994 regional tournaments are spread from March until July. They are very relaxed, friendly events – there are experts, medium players, novices, and everyone ends up meeting everyone else and generally having a good time. If you have never taken part in a tournament before, there are always plenty of people there who will explain to you how things work. Please come along!

To take part, just contact the organiser, who will give you details on how to get to the venue. The tournaments are on Saturdays, starting (except for Nottingham!) at 9.30am.

There is no limit to the number of regionals you can enter. As well as being exciting tournaments in their own right, the regionals also serve as the qualifiers to the National Championship (date and venue still to be fixed): at each regional, the top three players who have not already qualified qualify.

As always, the Federation would like to thank all those who give up their time and energy to run a regional.

LONDON. March 5. **Organiser:** Guy Plowman, 56 Charlevill Rd., London W14 9JG, phone 071-610-2718. **Venue:** Room 342, Huxley Building, Imperial College, Queensgate, London SW7.

EASTBOURNE. April 9. **Organiser:** Rodney Hammond, 70 Percival Rd., Hampden Park, Eastbourne, phone 0323-502-167. **Venue:** Scout Hut, Elms Ave., Hampden Park, Eastbourne, E. Sussex.

WELLINGBOROUGH. April 16. **Organiser:** Margaret Plowman, 137 Torrington Crescent, Wellingborough, phone 0933-678-886 (work 0933-278-000). **Venue:** Victoria Centre, Palk Rd., Wellingborough.

WORKSOP. April 23. **Organiser:** Roy Arnold, 181 Carlton Rd., Worksop, Notts. S81 7AD, phone 0909-473-831. **Venue:** Bassetlaw Community and Voluntary Services, St. Mary's School, Park St., Worksop.

NOTTINGHAM. May 7 (**10am start**). **Organisers:** Joel Feinstein and Phil Marson. Contact Joel Feinstein, 324 Queens Rd. West, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 1GS, phone 0602-251-120. **Venue:** Dining Room, University Staff Club, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD.

MANCHESTER. May 14. **Organiser:** John Lysons, 5 Ashlands Drive, Audenshaw, Manchester M34 5EF, phone 061-320-8467. **Venue:** Festival Hall (Penine Suite), Peel St., Denton, Manchester.

OFFICIAL BEGINNER'S SECTION

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Black to play. Who wins?

Welcome to the first ever Official Beginner's Section of the British Othello Federation's newsletter. In this Section we shall present you with puzzles and articles to amuse and inform you. This issue we have a Puzzles Page by Aubrey de Grey, a Find the Othello Player puzzle by Mark Wormley. Then there is a beginner's article by your OBS Editor Joel Feinstein, and an intermediate level article by David Haigh.

Puzzles, articles, letters, cartoons etc. should be sent to the Section editor: Joel Feinstein, 324 Queens Road West, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 1GS.

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Black wins!

Notation.

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			●	○			

The start position

a1	b1	c1	d1	e1	f1	g1	h1
a2	b2	c2	d2	e2	f2	g2	h2
a3	b3	c3	d3	e3	f3	g3	h3
a4	b4	c4	d4	e4	f4	g4	h4
a5	b5	c5	d5	e5	f5	g5	h5
a6	b6	c6	d6	e6	f6	g6	h6
a7	b7	c7	d7	e7	f7	g7	h7
a8	b8	c8	d8	e8	f8	g8	h8

The names of squares

a1	C						C	h1
C	X						X	C
C	X						X	C
a8	C						C	h8

Special squares

The board is split into eight columns and eight rows. We label each column with a letter, from ‘a’ for the left-hand column to ‘h’ for the right-hand column. We number the rows from ‘1’ for the top row to ‘8’ for the bottom. This is the opposite convention to that used in chess. So, as shown above, the top left corner is called ‘a1’, and the bottom right is ‘h8’. The pieces used in the game are called ‘discs’.

Some of the squares on the board are especially important. The four corner squares (a1, h1, a8 and h8) are very useful to have, since they can never be taken away from you. As a consequence, it can be dangerous to play to a square next to an empty corner too early in the game (your opponent might be able to use your disc to play a move in the corner). The squares b2, g2, b7 and g7 (one diagonally in from a corner) are known as ‘X-squares’. The other squares one away from a corner are called ‘C-squares’. These are shown in the third diagram above.

We sometimes use compass directions when describing regions of the board, so for instance the area of the board near to h1 is called the North-East corner.

Othello Clubs

If you know of any clubs, schools or other organisations who play Othello, Mark Wormley would very much like to hear about it. We will publish a full list at a later date. Also, if you want to set up a club yourself you can get advice from Mark Wormley. His address is:

Flat 45, Rowntree Wharf, Navigation Road, York YO1 2XA. Telephone: 0904-656205.

Puzzles Page by Aubrey de Grey

Here is the first of what we hope to make a regular feature of the novices' section: a batch of puzzles, varying in difficulty from very easy (testing no more than your understanding of the rules of Othello) to moderate (may take experienced players a few minutes; novices longer). Answers on p.14.

If you've got this newsletter, then you've probably also got a copy of 'Othello: Brief and Basic' by Ted Landau, which is sent to all new members of the Federation. We encourage you to make use of the relevant parts of the book as an aid to improving your understanding of the topics addressed by the puzzles that follow.

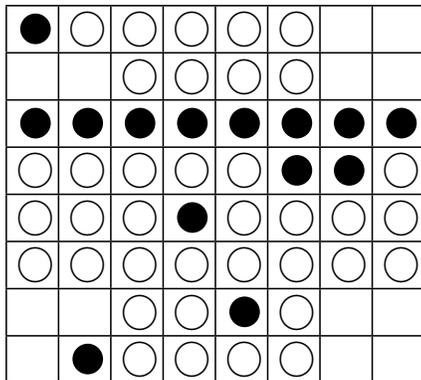


Diagram 1

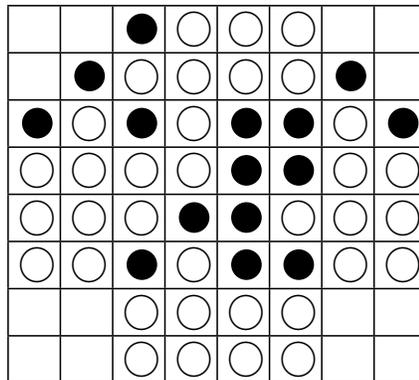


Diagram 2

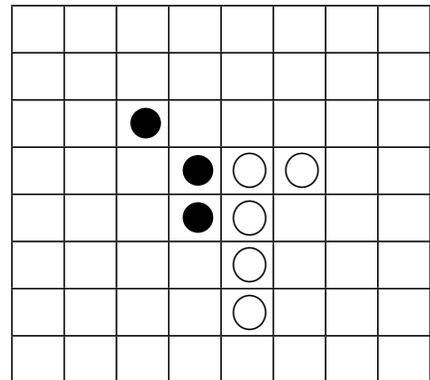


Diagram 3

1. List the legal moves for each player in the position shown in diagram 1.
2. It is Black to play in diagram 1. Which move turns the most pieces?
3. Black to play in diagram 2. How can he stop White from taking a corner with his next move?
4. Find the moves which lead to the position shown in diagram 3.

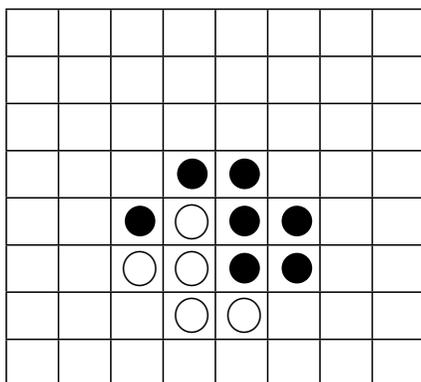


Diagram 4

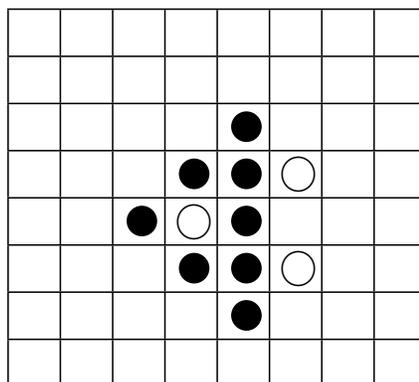


Diagram 5

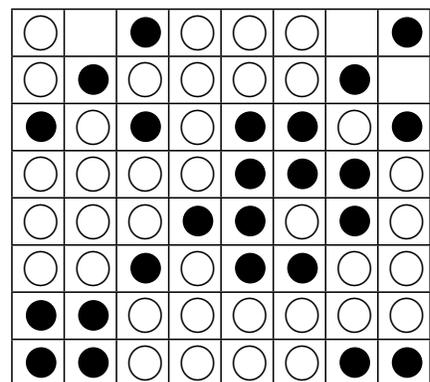


Diagram 6

5. Why could the position shown in diagram 4 never occur in actual play?
6. White to play in diagram 5. What is the worst move here?
7. White to play in diagram 6. What sequence is perfect play from here on?

Find the Othello Player! *by Mark Wormley.*

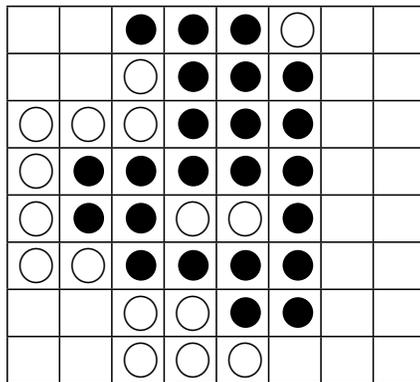
The names of 21 Othello players are concealed in the following table. Can you find them? You may trace the names out forwards or backwards, horizontally, vertically or diagonally, but you may not change direction in the middle of a name.

E	F	E	I	N	S	T	E	I	N	A	J
S	N	O	S	Y	L	Y	B	L	E	S	O
S	K	B	E	S	D	R	H	E	P	S	H
S	E	S	R	L	A	D	A	A	E	F	N
A	N	A	O	I	R	B	G	D	Z	O	R
R	T	N	S	A	G	N	A	E	Y	R	E
R	R	U	K	S	A	H	T	R	E	S	N
A	Q	C	D	M	M	I	T	Y	R	Y	R
B	I	N	W	S	A	D	A	W	G	T	U
R	A	O	B	R	E	W	E	R	E	H	T
H	L	Y	E	L	M	R	O	W	D	L	O
P	N	O	S	N	E	H	P	E	T	S	L

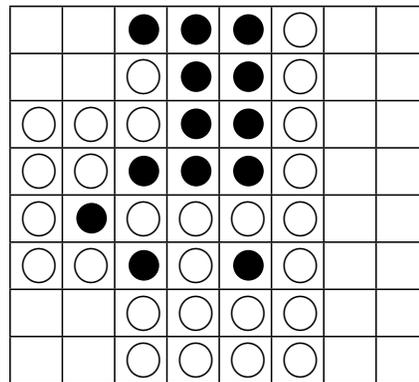
A list of the concealed names appears on p.14.

Too many pieces can be bad for you! *by Joel Feinstein*

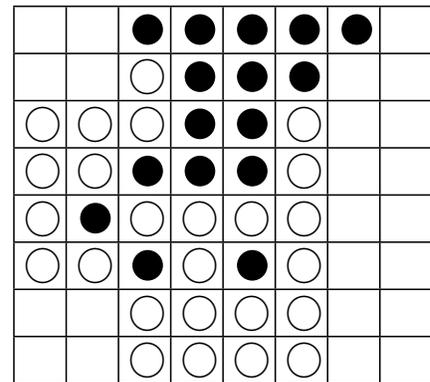
Let us assume that you have played a few games of Othello, and that you have decided that you like to have discs in the corners, since they can never be taken from you. In this case you have probably decided that you prefer not to play next to empty corners (you don't want your opponent to get the corners instead of you), and so you try to avoid playing on X-squares and C-squares (see the Notation section). When you are playing beginners who have not yet realised that corners are important, you may well win easily just by waiting for them to give you the corners. But if your opponent is also trying to avoid playing next to corners, you will need a new plan!



White to play



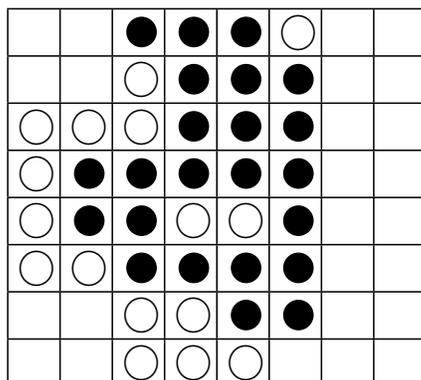
After White plays f8



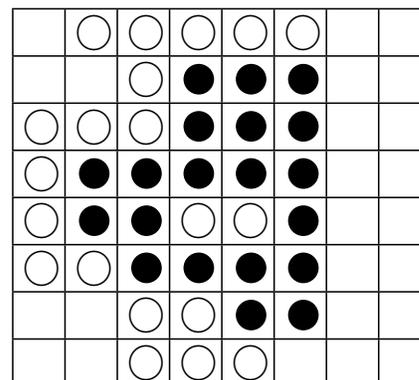
After Black plays g1

Look at the position in the diagram on the left above. You are White, and it's your move. So far everything is going to plan: you have kept away from the C-squares and X-squares. Unfortunately so has your opponent, and you are a bit worried because he has more discs than you. Suddenly, you spot a really huge move at f8, turning 10 discs at once. You play it and arrive at the middle position above. Surely your opponent can not recover from this? But to your amazement, your opponent plays to g1, a C-square! Strangely enough, you can not see any way to exploit this dangerous looking move. In fact you now realise to your horror that your only moves are to the awful X-squares at b7 and g2, either of which will immediately give your opponent a corner. Disaster! So what has gone wrong?

Let's look again at the initial position. At the moment you have a lot of choices. Why have you got so much choice? Because your opponent has a lot of discs available to be flipped. Almost all your choices disappeared when you greedily turned all those discs over by playing f8. So perhaps something less greedy would be better?



Original position



After White plays b1

If you look more closely at the original position, you will see that it is in fact Black who has very few safe moves at the moment. In fact, g1 is the only move

which does not give away a corner immediately. You can stop Black from playing g1 if you wish by playing b1. Is this a good idea? After all it is a C-square! But, as shown above, after you play b1, Black has no safe moves at all. Whatever Black does next, you will be able to take a corner immediately.

What is the moral? Well, don't be too greedy in the middle of the game: save your greed until it is needed at the end! Also, it is a good idea to keep track of where your available moves are, and where the opponent's are. That way you can avoid disasters like the one above when you tried f8. Of course, if neither of you takes too many pieces, then you will need a new plan ...

Things to remember: POISON! *by David Haigh*

This is a position from one of the games I refereed in this year's World Championship. White has just played h4.

			●	●	○		
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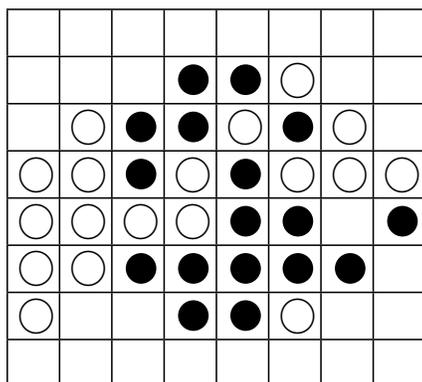
Black to move

Black had quite a long think at this point, so I did too. Putting myself in Black's shoes, I am worried about White going to h6 on his next move. Why am I worried? Well, I am a bit worried about my position anyway, as I haven't got many good moves, thanks to all those black discs on the periphery. Let's go round the board and see what there is. a2 is a C square, and anyway going there neutralises White's weak west edge with its disc on a7. a3 would be answered by Black's semi-forced move a2, and also removes his weak edge.

f8 flips the four discs above it and takes away my moves in the lower part of the g column. g8 is another C square. g7 or g2 would immediately give White a corner. What about g5 or g6? Either of these gives White access to the other move of this pair, an area where he currently has no moves. They also make the black periphery even more extensive. h2 is another C square and a particularly bad one as White would be able to wedge at h3 and then get the h1 corner. Going to f1 is worth considering, but makes my position worse in the North. Also I am worried about a possible White move to h6: what would I do next? My last available move h3 stops White going to h6, but it flips g4 and f5 and thereby allows White access to g5 and g6, giving him yet more moves. Also it establishes me on an edge, and maybe I don't want to take any edges yet.

However, if I don't go to h3 but go somewhere else instead White will go to h6 and then I will have to find another move in an even worse position than I am in now. If only there was another way of stopping White going to h6!

Well, there isn't, however hard you look. But what Black *can* do is make White's h6 move rather less attractive for him.



After g6

I hope this has illustrated a tactic you should always try to bear in mind: if you can't stop your opponent making a move you don't want him/her to make, don't give up and resign yourself to your fate; instead, look for some way of making the move unpleasant for him/her. This is called *poisoning* a move. Quite often the poison is much more deadly than that used in this game.

Puzzles page solutions

1. Black has moves at g1, a7, b7, g7, h7 and g8. White has moves at a2, b2, g2, h2 and a8. You should note in particular that Black can not play at either b2 or g2, since these would not flip any of Whites discs.
2. All of them! They all turn six pieces.
3. Black can save the corner by playing to a7, flipping Whites disc at d4. This has the added benefit of forcing White to give Black a corner on his next move.
4. From the start position, you reach diagram 3 by playing e6 for Black, f4 for White, c3 for Black and finally e7 for White.
5. d4 and e4 are both black, so one of them must have been flipped. But they both have neighbours on only one side, so they can't have been flipped.
6. f5 is worst, because then Black can go to g5 taking all White's discs and thus winning instantly. This is actually a possible position, reachable from the start with e6 f4 e3 d6 c5 f6 e7.
7. If both players play correctly, the game should finish: b1 g1 h2, and White wins 43-21.

Find the player: name list

Here are the names you are looking for.

Brightwell	Turner	Degrey	John	Stephenson	Forsyth
Rickard	Barrass	Feinstein	Hands	Das	Arnold
Bhagat	Brewer	Leader	Lysons	Plowman	Wormley
Selby	Bass	Kent			

The move that Black found to do this was g6. Notice that this links the h6 square with the rest of the board, so if White goes there the five discs on c6 through g6 will be flipped back to white, giving Black access to c7. So Black ends up with an extra move which he didn't have before (Black might play g5 first), and one extra move is sometimes all you need to survive.

TECHNICAL ARTICLE

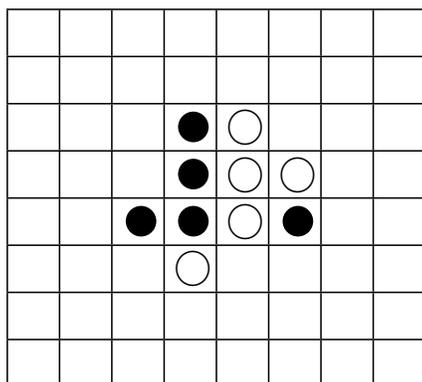
Test (Improve?) Your Othello *with Graham Brightwell.*

Here is a game. Black is Dorothea Knauer, the Irish number 2; White is Daniel Bennelid, a last-minute Swedish substitute at the World Championships. These two ended up tied for 34th of the 36 players at the tournament. If you want to test your Othello, try the following. For each move between 7 and 58 (inclusive), write down the move you would have played in that position. If you play the move they did, carry on. If not, go back and play their move instead. You may prefer to cover up the moves, so as not to be influenced by the players' choices. Then read the rest of the article, which contains comments and marks.

1.f5	11.c4	21.b6	31.h3	41.b3	51.g8
2.d6	12.b5	22.a6	32.g3	42.e1	52.g2
3.c5	13.d7	23.a5	33.h7	43.d1	53.a2
4.f4	14.e7	24.a4	34.f8	44.c1	54.b7
5.d3	15.f2	25.d8	35.h2	45.d2	55.a8
6.e3	16.c7	26.c8	36.f1	46.c2	56.a7
7.f6	17.f3	27.g5	37.e2	47.b2	57.h1
8.e6	18.g6	28.h4	38.c3	48.a1	58.g7
9.f7	19.h5	29.b8	39.b4	49.b1	59.g1
10.c6	20.h6	30.g4	40.a3	50.e8	60.h8

I gave this quiz to a panel of humans and computers (and took it myself); I'll comment on our answers below. Our panel consisted of three programs – THOR (by Sylvain Quin), MODOT (Joel Feinstein), FLIP-IT (Adrian Millett), all set to play on about a minute or two per move on a 486DX – and two other humans – Adelaide Carpenter, and a near-beginner, who hasn't played in tournaments, going by the code-name of Sarah. Thanks to the human panellists for donating their time.

All three programs are highly recommended by me. THOR and MODOT are of much the same playing standard, but THOR has a vastly better user interface, and its database is invaluable. FLIP-IT has the interesting option of changing the size and shape of the board: I find it a very tricky opponent, and as a practice opponent it has the advantage that its low levels are not too daunting! THOR (for the PC) is available free of charge via David Haigh: send a 3½" diskette and a SAE to David Haigh. MODOT (for a PC or Amiga) can be obtained free of charge from Joel Feinstein – again, send him a diskette and a SAE. To obtain FLIP-IT, send £9 to: PC Solutions, Dept OTH, PO Box 954, Bournemouth BH7 6YJ.

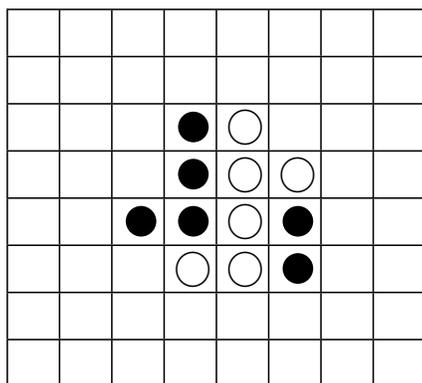


Black to play at move 7.

7. THOR and I are in book and play g4, as do MODOT and FLIP-IT after some thought. Sarah goes along with Knauer's move to f6, while Adelaide plays f3. The point of both f3 and g4 is to stop White going to c6; while I have nothing much against f3, I'd say that g4, leaving one White disc at e3 to be flipped later, is likely to be better. In general, a move like f3 just turns too much, although here it turns out to be not so bad – a bit like the “chimney” opening (1f5-f6-e6-d6-c5-f4). I don't like f6; it gives White another nice move at

e6, as well as the one to c6. f6-e6 looks to me like a good example of a pair which is to White's advantage (he plays the central move). *Marks: g4 2pts, f3 1pt.*

8. THOR, FLIP-IT, Sarah and Adelaide all agree with e6, MODOT and I prefer c6. I don't think there's much in it, and there's nothing much wrong with c4 either. Note that all of these are central moves, and they're all “quiet”, i.e., they turn very few discs (here, just one each), and those discs that are turned are all central. This choice between so many attractive moves is very pleasant, exposing the problem with 7.f6. *Marks: e6,c6 2pts, c4 1pt.*



Black to play at move 9.

9. MODOT, FLIP-IT and I agree with f7, THOR plays f2 from its book(!), Adelaide plays f3 and Sarah g4. On first glance, I liked the look of g4, but what are you going to play after 9g4 10c4? Sarah's comments make it clear that she hadn't looked at White's likely replies at all; she was just finding somewhere to play that didn't give easy “access to the edges”. That's a mistaken principle: in general, one shouldn't want to play to the edges while there are quiet central moves available, and if you should want to, then there's

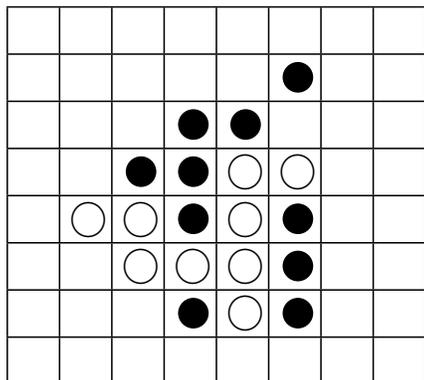
unlikely to be any trouble finding access. 9f3 just strikes me as too loud: after any of 10g5, g6 or c4, White has a low disc-count, and Black is having trouble finding good moves. THOR is apparently following a game where one of the world's top players, Paul Ralle, loses horribly as Black to Fred Lelieveld. Its intended line is 9f2 10c6 11g5, but I'm sure White is ahead then – White is nice and compact, while Black is spread out all over. f7 still seems to me the best of a bad bunch: the idea behind the move is 9f7 10e7 11f2 12c6 and now Black has 13c4 (an example of playing off the pair f7-e7 for a reason). *Marks: f7 2pts, f2,f3,g4 1pt.*

10. THOR is still in book and plays Bennelid's c6, MODOT plays c4, while the rest of us go with the routine e7, although Adelaide prefers c6 in retrospect, after seeing

Bennelid’s neat sequence c6-c4-b5. If you are going to play c6, you ought to have an answer prepared for the “obvious reply” c4 (roughly speaking, an obvious reply is one that turns back exactly the disc(s) you’ve just flipped). *Marks: c6,c4,e7 2pts, g5 1pt.*

11. However, you also should be aware that the opponent might not make the obvious reply. Adelaide and MODOT play c4, THOR and I play e7, FLIP-IT rather curiously prefers e2, while Sarah wants f2. My argument was that e7 is a square where White is going to play soon, unless I do something about it, while c4 can wait. I’m not so sure now: 11e7 12g5 13c4 14d7 looks good for White. But then, so does what happened. Sarah was choosing between f2 and c7, both of which are straggly moves putting discs on the outside; the players should be looking to stay compact. *Marks: c4,e7 2pts.*
12. Well, I thought b5 (taking away Black’s access to e7, saving that move for later) was good, and so did THOR and Adelaide, but the rest of the panel preferred e7. And why not? Both moves leave White well ahead. *Marks: b5,e7 2pts.*
13. Adelaide and MODOT approved of d7, THOR and I felt it was time for f2, MODOT also toyed with c7 (which I hadn’t considered) until its deepest level, FLIP-IT chose a5 and Sarah a6 (likewise). None of these moves are very appealing really. I didn’t see a lot of point in d7-c7, but I guess it does detract from White’s tempo at e7, and remove White’s access from b3. There must be some merit in c7, but I can’t see what it is. As for a6, I think it’s just bad. For one thing, if 13a6 14a4, Black has all the same problems, so has merely delayed the decision. Moreover, White can leave a4 and play, say, 14e7, after which Black has no convenient moves, and White can deal with the left edge either by playing a4 at some point, or by waiting until there’s a black disc at, e.g., d7, then playing a5, when the a4 reply turns diagonally as well. In conclusion, a6 is a prelude to taking a lot of edge with no great gain. If you are going to play to that edge, I prefer FLIP-IT’s a5, but not by much. *Marks: d7 2pts, f2 1pt.*
14. Sarah played e8, which suffers from exactly the same problems as a6 on the previous move. In general, one should prefer the non-edge move to the edge move in this kind of position, where neither side has yet jumped on to the edges. More particularly, White wants to (and easily can) deal with Black’s threat of playing to b4. Adelaide plays e7 along with Bennelid, while all the programs and I go with c7. I’m reasonably sure c7 is better, just because it leaves the e6 disc to be turned later: White can contemplate playing all of c7, e8 and e7, whilst after e7 there is at most one more move to be had. *Marks: c7 2pts, e7 1pt.*
15. Adelaide’s f3 is surely not as good as Knauer’s f2. Why take one move in a region when you can take two? (Sometimes that question has a perfectly good answer, but you should always ask it.) MODOT and Sarah like d8, while THOR, FLIP-IT and I are seduced by b6. I think it’s right to keep playing in the South-West,

since White still has a move down there. I didn't like 15d8 16g5, so was quite pleased to find b6. Black is worse, and this move "shakes the position up". It takes quite a lot of centre, splits White's position in pieces, and leaves no obvious response. *Marks: b6 2pts, d8,f2 1pt.*



White to play at move 16.

16. g4, as played by Adelaide and MODOT, is tempting. (One should try to play moves in regions where the opponent is likely to try to gain tempo.) I rejected this because I didn't like 16g4 17g5, but in fact White can play 18h5 then. The general principle is, if White is going to play over here, then when he next moves elsewhere, he doesn't want to leave Black still having moves in the region: the point is that otherwise one might as well not bother, and let Black play two moves in the region if she wants. One just has to look ahead

to see what will happen. Sarah plays c2, which is bad. The c2 move opens up three sensible new options for Black in c3, d2 and e2, and basically just gets play going in a region where there is currently a black wall. For instance, what has White gained after 16c2 17c3? The position has only changed by the addition of a black piece on the inside and a white disc on the outside: a bad trade. The rest of us all decide to leave f3 (or g5) to Black, meanwhile flipping the d7 disc on one move and playing b3 on the other. Then it will be Black's move, and she'll have to break through. We differ as to how to execute this plan, with FLIP-IT going to e8, me to c8, and THOR to d8 (or b3 at lower levels). I think all of these are slightly better than Bennelid's c7. *Marks: c8,d8,e8,g4 2pts, b3,c7 1pt.*

17. Adelaide votes for f3 one last time, and Knauer puts her out of her misery by actually playing the move. MODOT (at high levels), THOR (ditto) and Sarah all go for g5, with similar intent. Indeed g5 looks like a better move as it leaves f3 for later. However, after 17g5 18b3, Black has no access to f3 for a while, and there is a lot of scope for White to play around the g5 disc. Experience tells us that it is more comfortable to break through a "jagged" wall than through a flat one, so g5 is not so great. The deciding factor between f3 and g5 is that f3 permits a very nice response to g6. FLIP-IT and I wanted b6 last time, and are certainly doing it again now. Again, it stops White's move out to b3, while turning mostly central discs. THOR rejects the move because of a g4 response, playing into the region where Black wants to move and regaining access to b3. *Marks: b6,g5 2pts, f3,e8 1pt.*

18. THOR, MODOT and I agree with g6. FLIP-IT and Sarah prefer b3, while Adelaide plays g4. I don't like g4; in general, it seems to be breaking your position into two (e.g., 18g4 19g5 20g3 21e8), whereas g6 leaves Black no response on that

side. I thought b3 was not so good, because of the e8 response, taking away White’s c3 move and planning to meet 20g6 with 21g5. But actually White can play either 20g5 (for access to c3) or the neat trick 20f8 21g8 (or 21c8) 22g6. *Marks: g6 2pts, b3 1pt.*

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Black to play at move 19.

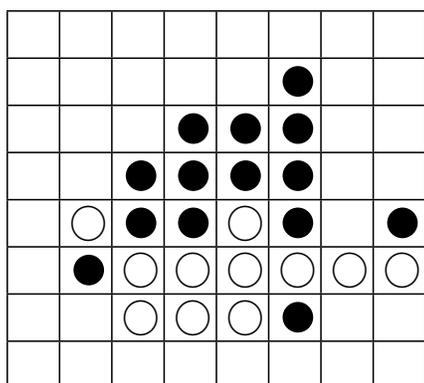
19. Sarah agrees with Knauer’s h5. I would say this only makes sense if you’re planning 19h5 20h6 21h7, which here leaves you with a bad edge for no real gain. If you’re not prepared to play h7, then h5-h6 gains you nothing, and leaves White the option of taking the edge himself (h4) now or later, which is just what happens. Furthermore, there’s no hurry for White to play h6. Adelaide plays b6, while the rest of us preferred to break through to the South and try to organise access to b4. The problem with b6 is that (i) if White

replies with a5, Black is not going to gain any tempo on the West edge, (ii) White is liable to play f8, and Black might well lose a tempo on the South edge. To explain a little further, Black is beginning to be in danger of running out of moves. One can anticipate the Southern half of the board being played out, without White having to break through the wall to the North. If it is Black’s move after all the safe moves have gone, she’ll die. If it is White’s move, he’ll have to break through to the North and the game will go on. So Black should be very wary of things like 19b6 20a5 – still her move. The programs and I all plump for d8, with thoughts of getting access to b4, and also to g5 (or g4 if White goes to g5). 19e8 is much less good, since White simply replies 20d8, and Black has gained access nowhere. The marks start to go up now, as it becomes more important to make the right decisions rather than just choosing the best of several plausible moves. *Marks: d8 3pts, b6 1pt.*

20. FLIP-IT and Adelaide are happy with h6, THOR and MODOT like f8, I want b3, and Sarah prefers c3. Firstly b3, planning to follow with c3, is better than c3 at once, which only ekes out one of the two moves. I didn’t see what to do after 20f8 21d8, but THOR and MODOT reckon that 22h6 is pretty good. Adelaide is looking to play g5, and correctly fills h6 first (if 20g5, then 21h6). All sensible plans. *Marks: b3,f8,h6 2pts.*

21. THOR and I went to d8, for all the same reasons as last time, whereas Adelaide, FLIP-IT and MODOT felt obliged to take h7. Knauer’s b6 and Sarah’s a5 are not as good. We’ll see about b6 below – see also the comment to move 19. Sarah doesn’t like h7, so plays on the other side. But what are you going to do after 21a5 22h4? Presumably 23d8, but then you’ll have to take the South edge, and the position is going to look very black. It’s much better to try to organise access

to b4, and then to a5, and then perhaps to b6 as well. *Marks: d8 3pts, h7 2pts.*

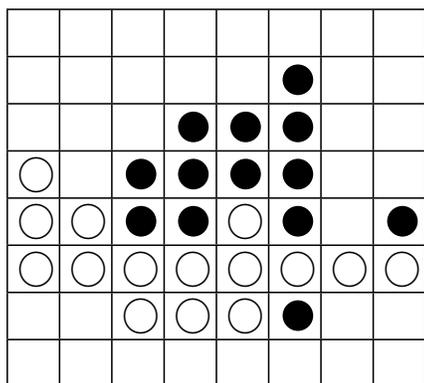


White to play at move 22.

22. Sarah and Adelaide both choose b4, which is a natural response to b6. However, Black might well then play a5, when the remaining white disc at b4 is not helping. If you're going to play to the West, then you should play 22a5, leaving Black no good continuation over there. 22a6 is less good because Black might organise a move to a4, gaining one tempo. FLIP-IT plays f8, MODOT e8, while THOR and I prefer h4. The b6 disc is poisoning a Black move to d8, so leave it there. *Marks: f8,h4 3pts, a5,g5,e8 2pts, b4,a6 1pt.*

23. Everyone but Knauer plays to the South. Sarah and MODOT play f8 and the rest of us e8. It doesn't seem to matter much, as f8-d8-e8 and e8-d8-f8 transpose. Black needs access to g5 and a4. Knauer's a5 is not sensible, as it just removes her option of later going to a4. MODOT was about to prefer h7 when it ran out of time. *Marks: e8,f8 3pts, h7 2pts, d8 1pt.*

24. Adelaide is content with the natural a4, Sarah chooses b4, FLIP-IT and I like f8, THOR and MODOT prefer h4, with g5 their second choice. All of these moves are perfectly good ways to preserve White's huge advantage. White can either take edges (a4, h4 or f8) to try to run Black out of moves, or take quiet moves (g5, b4) to force Black to take edges to stay alive. The marks reflect the fact that I'd go for it. *Marks: a4,h4,f8 3pts, g5 2pts, b4 1pt.*



Black to play at move 25.

25. Sarah plays g7 here, which surprised me. She explains that she doesn't want to play to the bottom row, or to give away corners, but that maybe this isn't too bad. It looks like a resignation to me: for sure it will take White a few moves to organise easy access to h8, but of course it's not a real problem. What's worse, when White does get to h8, Black won't be able to wedge on either edge, so White will be able to work up a mass of stable discs, while still maintaining control. THOR chose h7 just before its time ran out, while the

other panellists all play e8, but with different expectations. THOR, on low levels, is anticipating White squandering most of his advantage with 25e8 26d8 27f8 28h4 29c8, which is really quite close, since White's edges poison all the play to the North. I am expecting 25e8 26f8, after which Black will have to play 27g8, and now 28g5 or 28h4 put the pressure back on Black. On its high level, THOR seemed to think it might have a chance with 25h7 26b4 27d8, but after 28c8

neither I nor it can see anything hopeful. *Marks: e8,f8 3pts, d8,h7 1pt.*

26. If you don't play on the bottom row, Black can continue with e8, so it's between f8 and c8. Sarah and I are the only ones to prefer f8, and we're right. 26c8 27e8 28f8 is asking for trouble – see the comments to the next move. THOR thinks the reply to 26f8 is 27e8 28c8, which is obviously much better for White than its preferred sequence of c8-e8-f8! After 26f8, I'm sure that 27h7, which was MODOT's worry, is the better try, and then probably best is 28b4 29g5 30g3 (this gains a tempo on the East edge after Black has played h7 – the idea being g3-g4-h3), after which Black will either run out of moves or take all the edges with a lost position. This seems to be a position where THOR plays badly: I wasn't impressed by the quality of its analysis here. *Marks: f8 4pts, c8 2pts.*

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Black to play at move 27.

27. Black's position has become critical, and it's vital to get the right move this time. Not Knauer's g5, as we'll see. Not b8, which is met by e8-f8-h4, very similar to the game. Not Sarah's f8, which loses to 28g5 29h7 30g4. (27f8 is a very natural response if you view the edge in isolation, but it can be ruled out as soon as you look at the reply to g5.) Maybe FLIP-IT and Adelaide's h7, although White has a choice of a number of promising ways forward. THOR, MODOT and I all prefer 27e8, with the idea of 28f8 29g5: now White can hardly

avoid flipping the e7 disc, after which Black has an ideal sacrifice with b7, flipping only diagonally and ensuring three of the four moves in the region. I'm sure Black is still losing, but it's far from over. Alternatively, White can play 27e8 28h4 29b8 and then maybe 30g5 31b4. I'd be even happier about this: the unbalanced South edge isn't too terrible a weakness, since Black will be perfectly happy to play both b7 and g7 at the appropriate moments. *Marks: e8 4pts, h7 2pts.*

28. At last, a unanimous panel! Everbody plays 28h4, which is going to be a putaway, although Sarah for one hasn't checked this. *Marks: h4 3pts, g4,e8 1pt.*
29. Everything but b8 gives away a corner, but that isn't necessarily the right move. Sarah's b7 is not so good, if only because b7-g4-b8 is less good than b8-g4-b7. THOR eventually comes to the conclusion that a7-a8-b4 is better than what happens in the game. This amounts to saying that it's worth throwing away a corner to poison the g4 move! I didn't see this at the time, and nor did anyone else, but I now think it's right: the plan is for Black to play e8 and then g7, which will force White to open things up a bit in the North. Of course it's desperation: the time to get it right was last move. *Marks: a7 2pts, b8 1pt.*
30. g4 will win; no problem. If, like MODOT and Adelaide, you want to play 30e8 31f8 32g4 rather than 30g4 immediately, then fine – I don't think it makes any

difference. Sarah’s move to c3 isn’t so bad in itself – play is likely to go 30c3 31b4 32b3 33c2 34f8, and this is also a clear win – but one should always prefer the immediate kill. *Marks: g4,e8 3pts, c3 1pt.*

Add up your marks when you’ve finished; I estimate that your rating is about 30 times your score. If your score is over 50 – out of a maximum of 60 – then I’ll just say that your rating is over 1500, as the test is not supposed to be too discriminating at that level. This estimate is obviously going to be wildly inaccurate, but please let me know if you have evidence that it’s way off!

OK, well here we are at half-way and the game is over. Black is quite dead. Next time, we’ll see how she manages to win it. Can you do better than Bennelid from here? Send your proposed moves 31 to 58 to me, with comments if possible, and your answers may feature in the next article. The “best” set of solutions, in some sense to be decided arbitrarily by me, wins a year’s subscription.

GAME ANALYSES

Handel v. Feinstein *by Joel Feinstein.*

When things seem to be going wrong in a game of Othello, how do you create practical chances? In the following game, Handel-Feinstein from the 1993 Nottingham regional, Mike looked to be in terrible trouble coming out of the opening, with too many pieces and a bad edge. But he managed to “solidify” on the East and South edges, and in the end I ran out of moves disastrously.

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

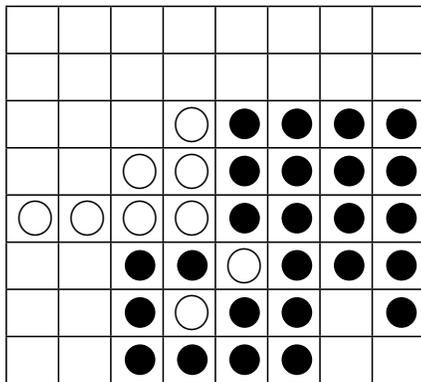
Handel v. Feinstein

The opening was relatively normal for a Handel-Feinstein game. Move 6 is the Heath chimney. Play followed a fairly standard line up to move 16, in as much as any lines of the Heath chimney are standard. I believe that c4 is an alternative at move 17. Mike’s initiation of the South edge at move 19 was surprising. Perhaps 20.f8 would have been better than f7. I was expecting 21.f8. Perhaps Mike was worried about the possibility of a sacrifice at g7. Again, at move 23, I was expecting d8, when I probably *would* have been tempted into the sacrifice at g7. I asked Mike afterwards, and he *was* worried about this (for some reason). So that explains his choice of 23.c6. But now, after 24.c5, d8 could be met by f8, and things were looking a bit grim for Black.

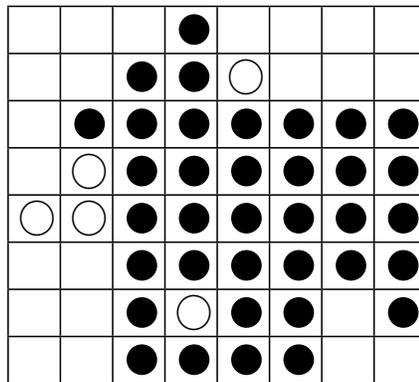
Mike took his “free move” at h7, leaving him with a “bad five” on the East edge (a sacrifice at g2 is likely to be good for White at some point in the future).

After 26.d8 my position was almost ideal: my opponent had a bad edge, and was running short of moves. So, what went wrong? Mike’s move 27 set a subtle trap. When I played my “natural” move 28.c4, Mike’s reply 29.f8 created problems for me. At this point, I had lost access to b4, I was unlikely ever to be able to sacrifice safely at g7, and I really needed to be *very* careful. But I wasn’t. My move 30.a5 (intending 32.b6 next, or to reply to 31.b6 with 32.a6) was a disaster! See Figure 1. After Mike’s excellent 31.b3, I had lost access to a few more places, including g2. It did not look as if my access was ever coming back.

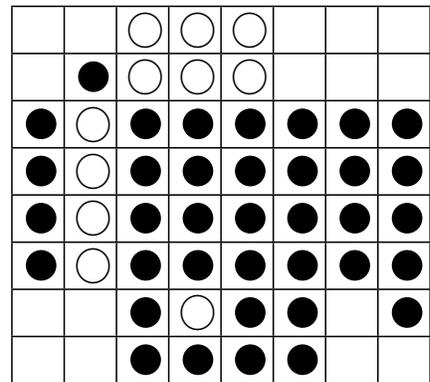
My move 30 may well be a game loser. (There’s a challenge for Othello software! My program MODOT does not understand this sort of position well).



1. After 30a5



2. After 37c3



3. After 44b6

After 31.b3, both players were very short of moves, and it was not at all clear what would happen. I tried not to panic, but Mike continued to play strong moves. Note that Mike’s sequence 35.d1 e2 c3 (see Figure 2) was much stronger than 35.c3 e2! when I believe things would have been looking good for me again.

At this point, Mike was amused to see me working my way around the board with a piece in my hand desperately looking for a non-fatal move. There was quite a lot of this! At 38, there was only e1. I still thought I was going to win, but Mike’s brave move 39.b2 was decisive. There was nothing except 40.c1. At this point 41.a4 would have lost to 42.a6, but Mike correctly chose 41.a3. Moves 42 and 43 are optimal, but at move 44 I missed a really good try, namely 44.b1! If I had tried that, Mike would have had to avoid both a2 and a1 (losing) and play f1. (The optimal line is then g8 h8 g7 a1 a2 pass f2 g1 h2 h1 g2 pass b8 b6 b7 a8 a7, and Black wins 35-29). But I thought I was winning and played 44.b6 instead – see Figure 3.

Perhaps you have already spotted 45.b7! I wish I had. I might have tried b1 instead. After 45.b7 I was certain to be swindled horribly in at least one corner region. I managed to scramble to a few discs in the end. Play was not perfect by either side, but was fairly sensible, and Mike won 41-23.

Takizawa v. Brightwell*by Graham Brightwell.*

Here is a game – from the Paris Open – where I beat 1985 World Champion Masaki Takizawa, like I do every other Wednesday.

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

Takizawa 26 Brightwell 38

be right if Black ever had to reply to g8 immediately, but otherwise it must be better to leave it. I was surprised by 27c2: surely 27f3 is better. With 32f1, White *is* finally threatening to play to f7, since Black would have no easy way to organise access to g8, so Black plays there himself. My feeling is still that Black is ahead here, but by 41 computer analysis reveals he is lost (perfect play from there is 41a4 42h5 43a5 44h2 45e1 46c1 47g2 48g7 . . . , leading to 30–34).

As the game goes, Black sacrifices the h1 corner, and is then forced to stake everything on the control of the c3-h8 diagonal.

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

White to play at 52.

to reconstruct my thoughts. First, I saw that after 52a2 53a4 54h8, I was getting swindled in the a1-b1 pair. I hadn't seen this in advance, so I was a little rocked. But things still seemed basically OK, since I was due to get both of h8 and g8 in exchange, and then sweep the bottom two rows, with parity. That felt like a comfortable White win, but I was a little concerned, so I had another look. Suddenly something struck me. Was I going to have access to g8 at move 56? If not, then that would be a total disaster. It seemed that I wouldn't, since a black

This article is really about the weird things that happened in the last nine moves, but here are a few random comments on the first 51.

Move 9 is a little unusual; one can look on it as an attempt to play the Heath Bat like a regular Bat. White can't keep this up, since after 14d7 15c7 White can hardly play to b7! I suspect Black is a little ahead at 21. 22g6 is designed to provide access to c8 at 24, but it does make c2 quiet.

After Black takes the edge at 25, White always has the option of playing to f7. This might

After move 51, a large crowd had gathered to watch the game. They witnessed a remarkable pair of blunders, as we'll see. The rest of the game probably doesn't appear to make much sense on a play-through. The problem was partly time-pressure, but more that the players made poor use of the time they did have.

At 52, everybody expected a2, which is very obvious, and is also the correct, winning move. I certainly saw it, indeed I'd planned it for several moves. So why didn't I play it? Well, let me try

move to a4 flips b3 and c4, and then 55a1 flips a2. So what else is there? The only other option that made any sense was 52b1, so I played it.

I hope the end of that makes as little sense to you as it does to me now. There are two major flaws in the reasoning. First of all, after 52a2, 53a4 does *not* flip b3. (Did I think that my move to g8 came after his move to b1? I don't recall.) Secondly, I did have a few seconds to look at 52b1 and see whether the same problems exist with that. That would have been enough.

So 52b1, and over to him. Now, he'd doubtless been spending the last minute or so looking at what to do after 52a2, so he was suddenly confronted by a whole new set of problems, and he didn't have all that much time. The distinguished audience were in the same position. From what happened, and the after-game comments, I can make a reasonable stab at reconstructing their thoughts. Of course, this is partly guesswork, and I apologise if I've misrepresented anyone.

Here's Takizawa: I can still get the swindle with a1 and a2. The line is 53a4 54h8 55a1 56g8 and now I suppose I play into the three with 57b7 58a8 59a7 (P) 60a2. That seems to be OK, let's count that line. [Counts the line.] 31 discs. Really? [Counts it again.] 31 discs. OK, so I need to do something else. How about 53a1. [Plays it. White responds immediately with 54a2.] Oh, yes, I can take him off the diagonal with 55b7, and he can't cut back on. [Plays it. Now White plays 56a8, and Black errs again with 57a4 (57a7 keeps White off the diagonal) 58a7 (P) 59g8 (P) 60h8.]

At least that's as I see it. Certainly he thought for a while at 53, then played a1 with an air of irritation, and followed up with b7 very quickly.

Takeshi Murakami's after-game comment was that 53b7 wins 34-30. Quite correct. The lines you have to count are (a) 54a8 55a4 56g8 57a7 58h8 59a1 (P) 60a2 34-30 and (b) 54h8 55a1 56g8 57a2 58a8 and 38-26 either way. This wins, and if you can count as accurately, quickly and confidently as Murakami (i.e., if you *are* Murakami) then I wouldn't fault that line.

But I would like to propose this position as an advert for *not* counting endings. Of course, a key factor is the time pressure: here there was time to count or think, but not comfortably enough to do both. I'd always go for thinking.

Back to 53a1 54a2. Now 55a4 does take White off access to g8, and it makes a big difference. White can play 56h8, but then Black has 57a7 and White is forced into 58b7 59a8 60g8 39-25. Without doing any counting, that's a sequence where almost everything goes Black's way. If you see that line at move 53, you don't have to count to be confident that it's winning. And if you spend the available minute looking at various sequences, you'll spot that one (I hope). If you've still got a minute, then by all means count it out. As far as I know, David Shaman was the only one to spot this line at the time, so I suppose it's tough.

An embarrassing finish? Oh yes. Still, one point to me.

Feinstein v. Marson *by Phil Marson.*

This is a friendly game between Joel Feinstein and myself. I include it, partly because it has some interesting positions (particularly after move 40), but mainly because I won. Having beaten Graham Brightwell at the Cambridge Regional, this leaves only David Shaman, Imre Leader, Mike Handel and Peter Bhagat to beat, at which point I shall probably retire from the game. (However, considering the way I've been playing recently, I can't see myself living that long.) Anyway, on with the game.

This is the first game I've attempted to comment on, so apologies if my ideas of what's going on are utter rubbish.

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

Feinstein 25 Marson 39

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

White to play at 24.

a6 looks no good as a Black reply to a5 leaves a4 uncomfortable for White. b6 is ridiculous so what about a5? It has the advantage of being fairly quiet, and Black's only reply on the edge, namely a4, gives White a3 followed by a6 (and then possibly b6 as well). So a5 it is.

27.-28. Joel now took his move to f7 and I reassessed the position. I still didn't like c1; b6 and c7 don't seem to lead anywhere, so maybe it's time to play to the East. I glanced at f8 on the way. I have to admit I hadn't planned this move; but the more I looked at it, the better it became. It adds more pieces to the (too)

5. Nearly all my games against Joel have gone c5-f3, then c6 (if I'm Black) or c4-f6-f5-g4.

12. Gaining access to c3 and g4.

13. g4-g3 achieves little, so Joel plays near c3.

14.-16. g4 is a nice move for Black, so I decided to play off g4/g6 before going to c3. In retrospect, f7 may be better at move 16.

19.-23. I'm not sure about this sequence. e8 seems the obvious reply to d8, and now 21f8 seems bad. Joel played d7 instead and I happily took the edge. Joel finished with c6, gaining access to g3.

24.-26. I don't want to disturb the Eastern edge just yet, so b4 seems the only move. c1 is another possibility, but I wasn't impressed by that. b4 also has the advantage of taking away Joel's access to g3. After the quiet move at b5, I had a difficult decision to make – I still don't want to play to the East, so a move to the SW seems forced. But which one? After the game, Joel said he had expected c7, taking away his access to f7, and it certainly seems playable. However, I didn't even see this as I was too busy looking at the West

many I already have, but it leaves Black very spread out and, more importantly, Black has no access to any nice squares (b6, c7, g3).

30. I don't want the West edge (I don't think Joel does either).

31.-34. d2 looks quite brutal but now I have to break through somewhere. Perhaps one or other of us ought to have taken the quiet move to c7 earlier.

35. Why didn't I play g3 when I had the chance?

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

White to play at 40.

38.-42. I declined the West edge, which may have been a mistake. Joel took it with a7, and now it's either the East edge or g1. I still don't like any of the moves on the h-file (this is beginning to seem paranoid) so what about g1? I played exactly this kind of move against Imre Leader at Winchester and lost horribly. It obviously gives up the h1 corner at some point, but a reply at d1 turns a lot of discs and gives me some play in the NE. Joel played d1 immediately and I assessed the corner. f2 would probably be followed by g3. g3

gives me access to b8, so Joel could either play h2 followed by f2, or allow me b8 then sacrifice at g7. I decided to play neither of these. Since Joel could play h1 sometime in the near future, I tried to spoil it with g2.

43.-48. Joel now exchanged f2/g3, then sacrificed at g7. Black's only moves are in the NW and NE corners. I decided to make use of this by sacrificing in the NW. b2 is out of the question, so that leaves b1. Joel continued with the X-square, and I took my free move at b8.

With no computer to analyse the ending, I can't comment on the accuracy of play. But winning against the perennial British Champion makes up for any inaccurate play at the end.

Editor's note. I, on the other hand, have just bought myself a computer. So, Phil's choice of 40g1!! seems to be the only winning move. Indeed, Phil is winning for the rest of the game. Joel's 43 is correct, but 44 is inaccurate: why play g3 before the excellent, but urgent, b1 move? Indeed, there is a neat trick with 44b1 45a1 46h6, after which Black is reduced to 47g8 48h8 49h7, leading to 24-40. Joel can take advantage of White's omission by playing 45h1 46h2 47b1, giving good chances. The perfect line is 48a2 49a1 50b2 51g7 52h8 53g8 54h7 55h4 56b7 57h6 58h5 59a8 60b8 29-35. Other improvements for Joel are 47a1, leading to 28-36; or 51h1 52h8 53h7 54h6 55g8 56a8 57b7 58h2 59h4 60h5 25-39; or 55h1 56g8 57h7 58h6 59h4 60h5 24-40. Phil, meanwhile, hit the right moves between 46 and 54, but missed 56h6 57h1 58g8 59h4 60h5 23-41. Finally Joel would doubtless have held it to 26-38 by getting move 59 right, had he any inkling that the game was going to be published.

TOURNAMENT REPORTS

From Sweat to Overevaporation by Aubrey de Grey.

Avid readers of our international tournament reports may recall the sultry conditions in which the second Brussels Open took place last year. Though hugely enjoyable in every other way, it was held in a sports hall with a greenhouse-effect roof (in both senses) and minimal compensatory ventilation, with sartorial consequences that don't bear repeating.

This time, our excellent organiser Serge Alard secured a venue which was ideal not only in that respect but also in location, being a room in the same building where most of the players were staying. (By the way, if any of you out there are tempted to travel to a foreign Grand Prix tournament but find the expense to be your main disincentive, I can recommend Brussels as one where the accommodation is very cheap and convenient. As usual, the best way to make arrangements is to contact one of the regular British travellers.)

The tournament was smaller than last year, comprising only twelve players, but that made Serge's job easier because (like all Grand Prix tournaments) there were eleven rounds, so an all-play-all draw for the whole thing was possible before play began. Four of the competitors were clear favourites: David Shaman and Imre Leader from Britain (well, sort of) and Marc Tastet and Dominique Penloup from France. I'll spare your suspense by revealing that they did indeed finish in the top four places; but they had some setbacks on the way. All except Marc had tough games against me, for example. True to form, however, I only converted one of these into a result: 33-31 against Dominique.

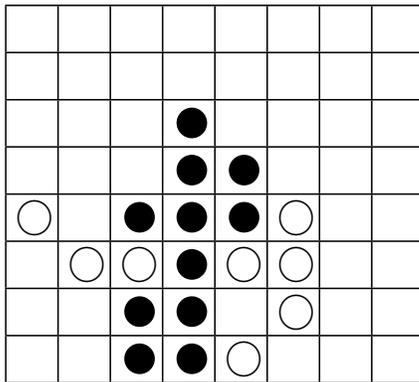
Final Results: 1.Leader 9 (2-0), 2.Tastet 8, 3.Shaman 8 ($1\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$), 4.Penloup 7, 5.Andriani $6\frac{1}{2}$, 6.Collay, Cagley 6, 8.Turner $5\frac{1}{2}$, 9.Johnson, de Grey 4, 11.Bétin, Daix 1.

The two I didn't convert, against Imre and David, form the main subject of this report. I'm not normally so egotistical (he lied), but they shared a relatively rare feature, which is worth knowing about because it can allow someone to beat a much stronger player. There is a name for the mistake by the strong player that leads to this sort of game: overevaporation.

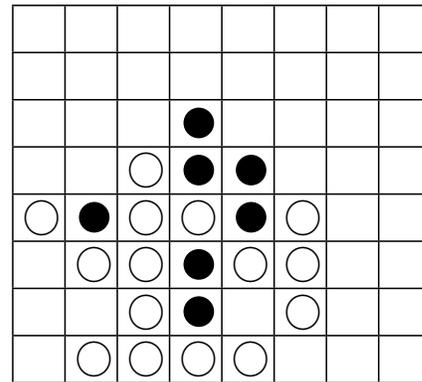
Overevaporation means having too few pieces. As anyone who has read *Brief & Basic* knows, it is basically a good idea to have not many pieces during most of the game so that one has more manoeuvrability: thus, overevaporation means taking this so far that it becomes a liability. This is only rarely a danger, but rare positions do occur in which, having happily secured a winning position out of the opening, one false move introduces the risk of one's being wiped out in a

few moves. Slightly less rarely, one can get to a position where no such wipeout is possible but the person with few pieces can never work his way into positions that allow him to take lots of discs at the end, which is of course the whole point of minimisation in the first place.

So to my game against Imre. It was an opening that we've played a few times before, and Imre deviated at move 15: 1d3 2c5 3e6 4f5 5f6 6f7 7c6 8c7 9b6 10a5 11c8 12d6 13d7 14e8 15d8 – see Diagram 1.



1. After 15 d8.

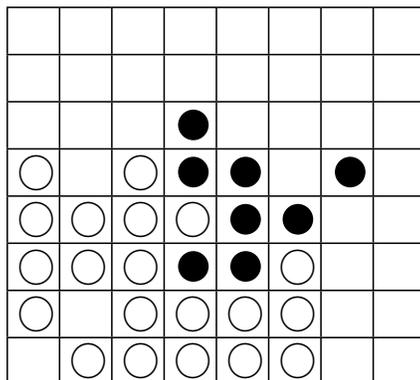


2. After 18c4

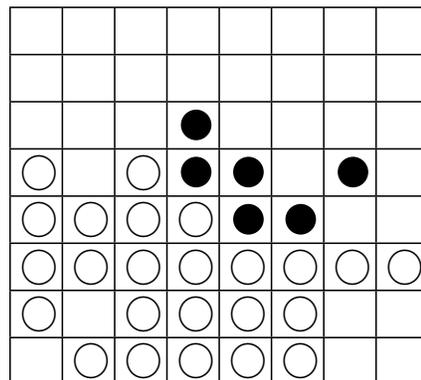
The main problem with his move to d8 is that he is already devoid of moves to the North, and will probably have trouble playing out the East in a tempo-gaining way, so to offer me the South edge is to risk running out of moves quite badly if anything unforeseen happens. Sure enough the game continued 16b8 17b5 18c4, leading to the position in Diagram 2.

Ostensibly I have let him off the hook by breaking through to the North. But I have gained more than I've lost, because I now have an unpoisonable spare move at a4 (or a6), and also a response to e7 of f8.

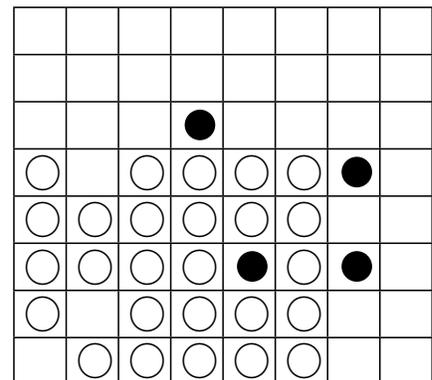
We now played 19e7 20f8 21a6 22a7 23g4 24a4 – see Diagram 3.



3. After 24a4



4. After 25g6 26h6



5. After 25g6 26f4

If Imre can survive till the endgame, he now has the chance of a very big win because of my lack of access to a8 or b7, which he can expect to get both

of, along with their surroundings. But that's a big if ... At this point, he has: a move at g6 which looks harmless, one at b3 which unpoisons f4 so is probably losing, and one at b4 which allows me to a3 and b3 – running him out of moves quickly. So he chose g6. Here I missed the fairly obvious kill. I must go to h6! See Diagram 4.

Crucially, I'd have extracted him from access to b3, which might have allowed him to survive despite my quiet f4. Now, how might he avoid giving me most of the board? The following is obviously far more than I could have worked out over the board, but each individual move is pretty natural once you're in the evaporating frame of mind.

27h7 h8 b4 f4! with a wipeout in three moves

27b4 f4 h7 h8 f3 h5 b7 e3 g8 a8

b7 e3 f3 h4 g8 a8

27g7 g5 b4 a3 h7 b3 h5 c3 b2 c2 b1 d1 d2 e2 f2 f1

h7 e3 c3 h8

f3 g8 h5 f2 f1 c3 b3 b2 b1 a1

c2 b1 b3 b2 d1 a3 a2 a1

h5 c3 c2 f3 b3 e2 g3 h3 d1 f1 e1 f2 g1 d2

e1 f2 f1 d2

f1 f2 e2 d2

g3 e2 b3 h3 d1 f1 e1 f2 g1 d2

e1 f2 f1 d2

f1 f2 e2 d2

d1 f1 b3 h3 e1 f2 g1 d2

e2 f1 d1 g3

b3 f2 d1 e1 g1 d2

Well, that's the fictional version. In fact I went 26f4, as in Diagram 5, which is the same idea but didn't quite work. I battled for a while, eventually taking g2 and g7 and winning the South edge, but it was in vain. MOAN ...

So to the game against David: different opening, same story. The game started as a standard Cat, with an unusual move 11 and probably a wrong move 12, allowing David some nice quiet moves.

1c4 2e3 3f5 4e6 5f4 6c5 7d6 8c6 9f7 10g5 11g6 12e7 13f3 14c3 15h6 16g4 17f6 18h4 19h3 20h2 – see Diagram 6.

At this stage it looks as though Black is just plain winning. His discs are nicely embedded in mine, in contrast to the previous game. But now he decided that it would be nice to get a move on the South edge, and in so doing he made his life a lot harder. After 21h5 22h7 23d8, I played 24g3!, reaching Diagram 7.

Suddenly it becomes hard for David to avoid taking all my block of discs in the centre. The next few moves make this clear.

The National Finals *by Dylan Boggler.*

The 1993 National Finals were held in August (earlier than usual) in Sheffield. There were 24 competitors. The tournament was to be a 9-round Swiss system, with 3 rounds played on the Saturday, after the hectic AGM, and 6 rounds on the Sunday. The top two players would then play a 1-game Grand Final, while if there was a tie for 3rd then there would also be a 1-game play-off for 3rd place – important because the team for the World Championships consists of the top 3 players from the Nationals!

The first excitement came in Round 1, when Matthew Selby beat Joel Feinstein (Transcript 1). Feinstein tried to checkerboard Selby early on, but this did not really work, and he was forced to take a strange-looking edge to survive. This edge eventually killed him.

Round 2 saw another surprise, as Ian Turner drew with Graham Brightwell (Transcript 2). Brightwell, as Black, gave White two tempos, in return for White taking an edge. Throughout the midgame, it looked if though the poisoning effect of this edge would doom White, but Turner just managed to avoid collapsing, and skilfully used parity to get 32 discs!

Things started to hot up in Round 3. Imre Leader beat Guy Plowman, and Mike Handel beat Aubrey de Grey. Meanwhile, Brightwell lost to Garry Edmead in an amazing game (Transcript 3). Edmead, as Black, pulled hard to the edge, putting tremendous pressure on White. White was repeatedly removed from various key diagonals. However, Brightwell managed to hang on until the end, when parity would help him. But it was not quite enough, and Edmead won 33-31.

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

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

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

1. Selby 36 Feinstein 28 2. Brightwell 32 Turner 32 3. Edmead 33 Brightwell 31

The only players now on 3/3 were Edmead, Handel and Leader. Leader beat Edmead in Round 4, and Handel beat Plowman. Ken Stephenson scored a notable success this round, beating Brightwell – who had now scored only half a point from his last 3 games!

So Handel played Leader in Round 5 (Transcript 4). Handel gradually took

control in the midgame, and did not give up his grip on the game, winning comfortably at the end. Of particular interest is Handel's excellent board awareness in this game: he switches his play around between the different regions of the board to great effect. Thus Handel was now the only player on 5/5. Leader was on 4 points, as was Feinstein, who beat de Grey this round: Feinstein ran de Grey out of moves in the midgame, but still had to work quite hard to convert this into a win. Also on 4 points was Jeremy Das, who had just underlined his form by beating Edmead!

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

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

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

4. Handel 41 Leader 23 5. Feinstein 42 Handel 22 6. Brightwell 28 Plowman 36

Round 6 saw Leader beating Das. Meanwhile, in the 'battle of the clones', Feinstein beat Handel in a very exciting game (Transcript 5). Handel seemed to be ahead, but things did not work out for him at the end, and, although White and having control, he could not find a win. At the same time, Brightwell lost to Plowman (Transcript 6), completing his treatment at the hands of the Edmead-Plowman brat-pack. This was almost the opposite of the Edmead-Brightwell game – Brightwell pulled very hard to the edge, and ran Plowman fairly short of moves. But Plowman was never really in trouble, and played carefully to win. There was now no unbeaten player: Feinstein, Handel and Leader all had 5/6.

Since Handel had played both Feinstein and Leader, those two met in Round 7 (Transcript 7). The game swung up and down. After the opening, Feinstein was well ahead, but he let Leader get back into the game. Then, as the late midgame arrived, Leader began to move ahead, and seemed far ahead by the endgame: he had all the control. But he was unable to find a win, and Joel pulled through. Meanwhile, Handel beat Edmead. So Feinstein and Handel were on 6/7. On 5 points were Leader, Plowman and Das. It was beginning to look like a Feinstein-Handel Final, a repeat of 1992.

Feinstein beat Plowman in Round 8 in another very exciting game (Transcript 8). It seemed that Joel was dead, as he had sacrificed a huge amount in the midgame, but in fact the position was extremely complex. Joel played very well indeed to squeeze through 34-30. Meanwhile, Handel was playing John Lysons

(Transcript 9). Handel, playing Black, got well ahead: he had control, and had created an odd region where Lysons could not play. He did some clever things to try to keep this parity, but nothing seemed to work out for him, and Lysons found a way to get parity back. Lysons won, thanks to his regaining parity! Also in this round, Das lost to de Grey.

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

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

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

7. Leader 28 Feinstein 36 8. Feinstein 34 Plowman 30 9. Handel 26 Lysons 38

So, with one round to go, Feinstein was in the lead with 7/8, followed by Handel, Leader and Lysons on 6. Of these four, Leader and Handel had played all the other three (Leader having beaten Lysons in Round 2), but Feinstein and Lysons had not met. So it was Feinstein against Lysons in Round 9. Leader was down-floated to play de Grey (who was on 5 points), and Handel received the cruellest down-float of all: he had to play Brightwell (who was on 4 1/2 points).

Feinstein beat Lysons, and Leader beat de Grey: de Grey was ahead in the early 20s, but let Leader get back in the midgame. Handel played very well against Brightwell, and obtained complete control. But the position was full of hidden complications, and Handel could not find a way to make his control work. Graham ended up winning in a very exciting endgame (Transcript 10).

So the scores at the end of the Swiss part of the tournament were: Feinstein on 8 (he had thus won 8 in a row, after his first-round loss), Leader on 7, and four players on 6: Edmead, Handel, Lysons and Plowman. The remaining players finished: 7. Brightwell 5½, 8. Barrass, Das, de Grey, Selby 5, 12. I.Turner 4½, 13. Atkinson, P.Brewer, Forsyth, Marson, Stanton, Stephenson, Wormley 4, 20. Haigh, Hands 3, 22. Arnold, J.Brewer 2, 24. A.Turner 1.

It turned out that Handel and Lysons had the best tie-breakers (just!) of those on 6, so these two played the 3rd/4th play-off game (Transcript 11). Lysons, playing Black, played nicely in the early midgame to build up a lead, and he did not relax, carrying on carefully to win and thus qualify for the World Championships.

In the Final (Transcript 12), Feinstein was Black. He was well ahead after the opening (which lasted until about move 25), but could not quite put Leader

away. He did manage to create an odd region where Leader could not play, but there was one swindle he had to watch out for – there was a region of two squares where Leader was threatening to take both moves. Around move 50, it became clear to both players that there was only one possible way for FeinsteIn to avoid the swindle. They counted out the line, and realised at almost the same instant that it was a draw! FeinsteIn said ‘Ah, a draw is good enough’, and played his move. The players had indeed not miscounted: the game ended 32-32, which gave FeinsteIn the Championship, since he had done better than Leader in the Swiss.

FeinsteIn thus becomes the first player ever to win the Nationals 4 times. Also, not content with becoming in 1992 the first player ever to win the Nationals two years running, he is now the only player ever to win the Nationals *three* years running! He also won in 1989, making 4 of the last 5 years. Even more impressive is the end of another trend: it had been the case, until this year, that FeinsteIn peaked exactly for the Nationals, and nothing else. However, this year he also won the Copenhagen Open, so putting to rest his ‘Nationals-only’ teasing!

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

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

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

10. Brightwell 40 Handel 24 11. Lyons 42 Handel 22 12. FeinsteIn 32 Leader 32

The organiser, Robert Stanton, did an excellent job, arranging a very nice venue in a quiet hotel. Adelaide Carpenter refereed, and coped calmly with the usual crowd of players jostling her while she made the pairings!

The other tournament taking place on the Sunday was, of course, the Challengers’ tournament – the prize at stake being direct qualification for next year’s National Finals. There were four players, so a six-round all-play-all-twice tournament was held. The winner was an interloper, Sophie Collay, who was visiting from France! She scored a perfect 6/6, and was followed by Myles Harvey on 4, Eileen Forsyth on 2, and Joan Stephenson, very kindly playing to keep the numbers even, on 0. Because Sophie cannot play in the Nationals (being from a rival country), the qualification place went instead to Myles Harvey.

The author wishes to point out that the large number of FeinsteIn wins in the following transcripts is not a coincidence. He also wishes to point out that the large number of losses by Brightwell, Handel and Leader in the games selected *is*

a coincidence.

Here are some more comments on the British Championships Final Game from 1993 (transcript 12 above), by Champion Joel Feinstein.

Moves 1 to 14 follow the usual Rose opening. Move 15.b3 begins the line called the ‘rotating Rose’ which I have played with some success recently, but has now lost its surprise value. This opening is similar in nature to the rotating flat, but note that Black tries to gain one extra tempo with move 19.h4. In this opening, Black always takes a lot of edges, and White ends up with a big wall to the South. As in the rotating flat, if Black is forced to break this wall it often disappears very quickly indeed, giving White an easy victory.

In the game, 22.e2 is not good (22.f1 is most common here). However 24.c2 might be better than 24.c1. As the game went, Imre gave me the North edge, and we arrived at a typical position for this opening: if Black does not run White out of moves soon, he will be in big trouble.

After 29.b6 a6 a5 it is clear that White is going to be sacrificing the h1 corner very soon. Imre chose 32.h2, since 32.g2 would eventually be swindled (with Black playing both h1 and g1 in one order or another).

Move 33.c7 takes advantage of White’s flipping of the Black piece at g3. White can now try 34.d7, but then 35.d8 is very frightening, so Imre played 34.c8 for safety. I now continued my search for a real kill, and failed to find one. By move 38 white is one move from disaster, but where is the finish? Move 39 leads to all of Black’s endgame problems: once Black takes the h1 corner, White will have the terrible threat of playing b2 followed by a1. However, after 40.a7, 41.g6 is quiet, and White is cut off from an odd region in the South-West. Note that Black dare not play the sequence 43.h1 g1 h3 because of 46.b2! as mentioned above. However, it was suggested after the game that 43.h3 might be possible, since if White plays 44.h1 he will have no access to g1 afterwards, and will have thus lost access to another odd region. Of course, White need not take the corner.

We are well into computer territory now. My move 45 to g7, which was intended to defuse the swindle threat in the North-West, did not really help. (45.d7 is the best move). I was still winning, though until I grabbed the corner with 47.h1 (47.g8 leads to a 37-27 win). After this I was fortunate to escape with a draw.

Play from move 48 on is perfect, with me just avoiding all the swindles. Note how close to disaster I am at move 53. After 53.d8, 54.b2 strikes again! If I can not find a way on to the a1-h8 diagonal, I will have to play b2, which is hopeless. Fortunately 53.g8 h7 e8 works because I avoid flipping e5.

The 10th Paris International Tournament *by Joel Feinstein.*

There were six of us on the boat-train from Victoria station: Matthew Selby, Iain Barrass, Guy Plowman, Graham Brightwell, Sophie Collay (a rising French star) and myself. Our destination: one of the largest and strongest Othello tournaments ever held outside Japan. Indeed there were seven Japanese players among the 47 competitors, as well as a score of French players, and the usual assortment of Danes, Swedes, Americans, Belgians, Swiss and, of course, us. Not all of the strong players expected could make it in the end, but we had more than enough to keep us busy!

Sophie Collay, of course, attempted to demoralise us before we even arrived in France by playing strange openings (and getting good positions). However she did pass on to us some useful endgame tips from Didier Piau. In the end, of the boat-train contingent, it was Graham who struck form (fortunately for me this was too late for the British Nationals – usually the Paris tournament is good practice for the British Championships, but this year due to a change in the usual schedule it was the other way round).

At the beginning of the tournament, the Japanese contingent announced a competition. Everyone wrote down their guess for the top four places at the end of the tournament, with prizes on offer for the most correct guesses. Of course, since Marc Tastet had come second in the preceding five European Grand Prix tournaments (always losing 2-0 in the final) it seemed obvious that he would be second again. But it was not to be!

The tournament venue this year was a big success, and so were the snacks laid on at the side throughout. The organization of the event was faultless.

On to the tournament. Murakami lost to Nils Berner in round 1, but then went through the rest of the event beating people right left and centre, as expected. Meanwhile, Fabrice di Meglio made a dramatic return to the Othello scene, being up with the leaders most of the way through the tournament, drawing with Graham and beating David Shaman along the way. By the way, David Shaman is now a USA player again, after some brief practice at being a French player showed him how to win the World Championships (or at least that's what the French are saying).

There were lots of daft draws, of course. I had two: one with Stéphane Nicolet, and another with Masaki Takizawa (who was left with, perhaps, an overly high impression of my ability).

The only thing that was not up to the usual standards of the event was the meal at the end of the first day. Every year we have tried to ask for our 'table for 24 please', usually with great success. But a table for 34 turned out to be beyond the serving capabilities of the restaurant we visited. They did try, but with only one waitress trying to take everyone's order, everything went wrong.

After well over three hours, Iain still hadn't received any food at all (I got some food, but not the right food: some Dane managed to eat my duck thinking it was steak (!)). In the end, when it was getting on for midnight, we gave up and left, leaving Emmanuel 'chief referee' Lazard to argue with the owners over the bill. I'm sure that this will never happen again. This meal is almost always one of the high points of the weekend.

The British contingent returned to Marc's house (where we were staying, as usual – thanks Marc!) and played Othello against each other and assorted French until we dropped (and afterwards!).

The next day we returned to the fray: Graham produced a powerful performance to make it to the final against Murakami. Takizawa and Karsten Feldborg were in the play-off for third place. Karsten was unlucky to lose a very tight first game in the play-off, but was well beaten in the second game, giving Takizawa third place. Meanwhile the final was getting exciting. Murakami had won the first game, and Graham, playing well, had won the second. For the deciding game, Murakami chose White (even though Graham had won his game as Black), but unfortunately for Graham this game was rather one-sided in the end. Takeshi Murakami has again shown that he is almost invincible in Europe. He is now also (on the international Othello ratings list run by the French) rated above even the top computer programs, which is quite an achievement.

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

Nicolet 38 Ralle 26

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

Feinstein 32 Takizawa 32

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

Shaman 30 di Meglio 34

Now the top four places were decided, so we moved on to the more important contest: who had guessed the most correct places. I had two right, but Sophie Collay and Alexandre Cordy had the most right (three I think). Since they were also tied in the main tournament, they had a blitz play-off game to decide this crucial event, which Alexandre won. So he won the prize of a giant Othello board. Marc Tastet also won a board for securing the Grand Prix (David Shaman needed to win his last round game by several discs to make the final and win the Grand Prix, but Graham beat him). Marc, however, already has a giant board or two, so he kindly donated his prize to Sophie.

Here are the full results, with all players French except where stated. T. Murakami (J) scored 10/11 and beat G. Brightwell (GB, $8\frac{1}{2}$) 2-1 in the Final. M. Takizawa (J) and K. Feldborg (DK) scored 8, with Takizawa winning 2-0 in the play-off for third place. Equal fifth were P. Ralle and D. Penloup with $7\frac{1}{2}$ points. Equal 7th with 7 points were D. Shaman (US/GB/F), E. Caspard, N. Berner (S), J. Feinstein (GB) and H. Kitajima (J). In equal 12th place with $6\frac{1}{2}$ were F. di Meglio, G. Plowman (GB), E. Cali and F. Coulon. Equal 16th with 6 came E. Jensen (DK), M. Tastet, P. Juhem, S. Nicolet, K. Horiuchi (J) and H. Vallund (DK). Equal 22nd with $5\frac{1}{2}$ were S. Collay, A. Cordy, K. Takeda (J), B. Andriani, Y. Liang and B. Daunus. Equal 28th with 5 were S. Andriani, G. Johnson (USA/D), T. Vallund (DK), I. Barrass (GB), A. Daix (B), and A. Le Saout (F). 34th with $4\frac{1}{2}$ were S. Alard (B) and H. Takeda (J). 36th with 4 points came I. Syrén (S), S. Waser (CH), B. de la Boisserie, F. Robin, J. Persson (S) and A. Bourrachot. Tied for 42nd with $3\frac{1}{2}$ came L. Cagley (USA/D) and M. Selby (GB). H. Imoto (J) and H. de la Roussiere scored 3; D. Bétin 2 and E. Guillen 1.

Graham Brightwell comments. Below are three of my games against Murakami. The first and best is our game from the Swiss. 15h6 is a wonderful idea from Imre Leader, which surprised Murakami: perhaps 16h4 is better, although 17g3 is then very awkward for White. I thought my sequence 31-35 was killing, but he had seen further; the key point is that I have no access to g2 at move 43. After 44, I thought I was lost, but, for no particularly obvious reason, 45b5 wins. After that, I collapsed.

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

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

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

Brightwell 24 Murakami 40 Murakami 36 Brightwell 28 Brightwell 34 Murakami 30

+ + +

A slight error crept in to our version of the final Grand Prix table in the Bulletin. Dominique Penloup and David Shaman tied in the play-off for third in the Brussels Open, so each was awarded 75 Grand Prix points, though Shaman was officially placed third. So Shaman had a total of 365 points (still 2nd) and Penloup should have 175, putting him level with Brightwell in 8th place.

The World Championships – London 1993

by Graham Brightwell.

The most important Othello event ever held in Britain was the 1980 World Championship. What secures its place in Othello history is that this was the first year that a non-Japanese player won the title, with the USA's Jonathan Cerf beating Mimura of Japan in the final.

Since then, the USA had gone 13 years without providing an individual champion, and Britain had gone 13 years without hosting the tournament. Both of these overlong sequences came to an end last year, with David Shaman winning this year's championship at the Kensington Palace Hotel. Emmanuel Caspard of France was second, having beaten the favourite, Japan's Nobuyuki Takizawa, in the semi-final. Philippe Juhem of France was third, and the USA (Shaman, Brian Rose and David Parsons) won the team championship by half a point from Japan, with France a further half-point behind.

I was greatly honoured to be asked to be tournament director, although I would rather have played! The amount of work this involved was not too onerous, as most of the brunt fell on the staff of Heather Tillbury Associates, a PR firm employed by Peter Pan Playthings, the hosts and principal sponsors of the event. A particular thank you to Catriona Rydell, who did most of the vital preliminary work.

While we're at it, I was delighted to have such a good turnout of Federation members and others to act as table referees. We usually had all but one of the games covered, and sometimes all of them. Thanks in particular to: Iain Barrass, Leslie Cagley, Elie Cali, Adelaide Carpenter, Aubrey de Grey, Colin Graham, David Haigh, Mike Handel, Clarence Hewlett, Tom Landry, Phil Marson, Eileen Piercy, Guy Plowman, Yuko Rose, Liam Stephens, Ian Turner and Mark Wormley, as well as those others who filled in for a game or two. Not to mention Emmanuel "Chief Referee" Lazard, my right-hand man.

All through the tournament, someone from Heather Tillbury was on the phone to newspapers, trying to attract some interest. Some papers sent photographers, a picture of 12-year old Jon Inge Holm playing bodybuilder Oleg Stepanov being particularly popular. But the overwhelming response was "Get back to us if there's a British player in the semi-finals." Both Imre Leader and Joel Feinstein had prospects of making it through, but towards the end of the second day it was clear that Leader was well below his best (especially in endgames) and wasn't going to make it. Feinstein, however, spent most of the tournament in second or third position. Which brings us to the tournament's great British might-have-been.

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

Feinstein 31 Juhem 33

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

Black to play and win.

This last-round game was effectively a quarter-final, with the winner certainly through and the loser almost certainly not. The opening is Joel Feinstein's version of the Rotating Rose, and it's all planned up to and including the X-square at 31. So the game progressed, until Joel found himself staring at this position with ten empty squares and an eternity on his clock. Time pressure, no: pressure, yes. Can you work it out? One move wins 34-30, one wins 33-31, one draws (not good), three lose 31-33 and one loses 30-34. It is of course essentially impossible, but for all that Joel managed to err in an instructive manner.

Joel played 51a1 52a2, and then tried again. After that, play was perfect, and he lost 31-33. So what's wrong with 51a1? To see that, let's have a look at the two winning lines. First off, there is 51h6 52g6 53f8 54g8 55g7 56h8 57f7 58h7 59a1 60a2, 33-31. Delaying a1 until move 59 in this line means that it turns all the pieces on the diagonal black, for good. The other side of the coin is shown by the second win, which starts 51f7. The main point here is the continuation 52g8 53f8 54g7, after which Black wins relatively comfortably with 55h8 followed by 57h7 and 59a1, sweeping the diagonal again. But if a1-a2 is played off first, then Black's move to h8 turns the diagonal at just the wrong moment. The perfect play line here is 51f7 52g6 53g8 54f8 55a1 56a2 57h7 58h6 59g7 60h8 30-34. (If you play h7 before a1 in this line, you'll lose the c2 disc.)

Apart from this point about the c2 disc, when *could* a1 be right? Well, Black always will want to play a1-a2 rather than a2-a1, so he has to worry about losing the diagonal to a white move to g7 at some point. So, is that likely? Well, it's not inconceivable: have a look at 51f7 52g7 53g6 54h6. 55f8 cuts the diagonal but only draws: after 56g8 57a1 58a2 59h7, 60h8 sweeps the diagonal again. But 55g8 56f8 57h7 58h8 59a2 60a1 wins 35-29. That's a line you have to see if you're going to play 51f7 with any confidence. But if your first move into the big region is going to be 51h6 or 51f8 (that's the draw), then there's nothing to be gained by playing a1, and there might be lots to lose.

For my money, the 51h6 win is a bit easier to spot. 51h6 52g6 53f8 is the nearest you have to a forcing line, so you have to consider 54g8 and 54f7 in reply.

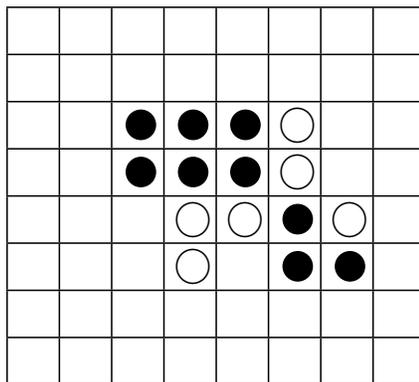
After 54f7, you in fact need to play 55g7 56g8 (if 56h8, then 56h7 gets on the diagonal) 57a1 58a2 (P) 59h8 60h7 35-29. As I said, it's essentially impossible.

For the record, 44h6 wins 33-31 for White, but play is otherwise perfect from 43 to 50 inclusive.

Our next game is another “nothing to be gained: lots to lose” error. David Parsons outplays his illustrious team-mate in the early midgame, and is winning in the last diagrammed position.

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

Shaman 37 Parsons 27



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

Juhem 40 O'Reilly 24

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

White to play at 52.

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

White to play at 56.

A massively complicated game, with the win changing hands several times in the endgame. I claim 52h1 is poor technique, although the position is not the greatest illustration of my point, to be honest. The alternative is to play to b2. Surely h1, securing the North edge, is far better than b2, sacrificing it? Well, I would be willing to agree *if* Black had to reply to 52h1 with 53h2. But as it is, Black can leave h2, and instead secure two of the three moves in the NW, and (if he chooses) get the last move in the SW. The move 52h1 “gives up parity” and that is usually more important than a few discs. Looking at this position, my reaction is “play parity, then get Black to play h2-h1 at the end.” A perfect play line is 52b2 53a1 54a2 55h2 56h1 (P) – sneaky, Black wants to pass so he’ll get the last move in the SW – 57c8 58a8 59b7 60a7 30-34.

As it happens, 52h1 does also win. After a couple of minor errors, White finally loses it at 56. 56b7, for the discs, looks tempting, but the game continuation reveals the problem with it. The power of the h2 square for Black is not just that he can play it last, but that he can play it, effectively, whenever he would like to pass on the rest of the board. 56c8 is the win, after which it turns out that Black should give up parity to get the discs on the diagonal: 57h2 58b7 59a8 60a7 30-34.

For the record, 47h8 48h7 49c8 50b7 51e8 (or c8-b7-h8-h7-e8) wins 34-30. 46c8 wins 33-31. Black has two drawing lines at 45; either take 45h8 and march along the southern edge, or play 45b1, after which White has to find 46b7! 47c7 48b2. 43e8 wins 37-27. This seems to me to be a very tricky ending, and it might not all be due to time trouble.

The top ten finishers in the tournament were remarkably dominant, beating the rest of the field 51-1. The one loss was Juhem to Johnson. As we’ve seen, there were a few other narrow escapes. Feinstein appears to have been saved by a flipping error against John Lysons, who had a very solid debut.

For that matter, the top one finisher in the Swiss was pretty dominant, although Takizawa did benefit several times from endgame errors by his opponents.

Here is Imre Leader's contribution.

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

Takizawa 41 Leader 23

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

White to play at 46.

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

Black to play at 49.

Leader seems to be behind for much of the game, but hangs on in well, and now would seem to have chances. But can 46d8 47f1 48g8 really have seemed the way to go? At first sight, it looked to me to be tantamount to resignation, allowing Black both h8 and g7. Strangely, it's not quite so easy, and Black only has one winning move in the right hand position. We can soon narrow it down to 49b7 or 49a7, but which is better? In both cases, White will pause (i) play off h1-g1 at some point, to keep the East edge, (ii) take a8, allowing Black to wedge with b8, then (iii) take the remaining move in the SW. The significant difference is that, if you start with 49b7, the b5 disc stays black, whereas on 49a7 the b-column becomes all white, so that a move to b2 secures the column and also puts a piece on the second row ready for 60g7. Of course, you're going to get this right if your rating is (temporarily) over 2000!

After 46d8 47f1, 48g7 is correct, and looks to me like a clearly better try. This seems like a big sacrifice, but parity is the key again. Play should go 48g7 49h8 50h1 (again, leaving the pair h1-g1 until the last possible moment – working out *why* 48h1 49g1 50g7 is worse is a complicated but fortunately unnecessary exercise!) 51g1 52g8 53b8 54b7 55a8 56a7 57a2 58a1 59b1 60b2, 32-32.

But White can do better yet. 46d8 seems designed to cut the diagonal at all cost, but this is fairly irrelevant, as Black is going to play f1, into the odd region, in any case. The move that leaps out at you is 46g7, and it's correct. It costs Black far too much to cut the diagonal, so it has to be 47f1, and now 48b8 (48d8 draws) 49d8 50g8 (this doesn't give up parity, as Black can only access the SW via h8; 50b7 is a 33-31 win, if you'd rather), and now Black has only 51b2 52a1 53a2 54b1 55h8 56b7 57h1 58g1 (another good reason for White delaying h1: he might be better off not playing there at all!) 59a8 60a7 27-37.

After 13 rounds, Takizawa had 12 points, Shaman and Juhem $9\frac{1}{2}$, Rose and Caspard 9. Accordingly, Rose and Caspard played off for the fourth semi-final spot. By all accounts, this was one of the most exciting games of the weekend.

Here it is, along with the best games from the Sunday.

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

Caspard 36 Rose 28

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

Juhem 27 Shaman 37

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

Caspard 38 Takizawa 26

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

Juhem 36 Takizawa 28

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

Caspard 29 Shaman 35

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

Shaman 36 Caspard 28

The full individual results are on our special insert, format courtesy of Karsten Feldborg. In the team championship, the full results were: USA $25\frac{1}{2}$, Japan 25, France $24\frac{1}{2}$, Denmark, Britain $22\frac{1}{2}$, Italy 19, Norway, Russia 18, Belgium 16, Sweden 14, Madagascar 13, Ireland 9, Germany 7. The USA owes a debt to Imre Leader and Jon Inge Holm, whose last-round wins over Ohyanagi and Takahashi respectively were vital.

+ + +

Joel Feinstein won the Cambridge Xmas tournament, with 6/7. Imre Leader had scored 4/4, but family illness forced him to leave at lunchtime. Guy Plowman and Aubrey de Grey scored 5, Iain Barrass and Matthew Selby scored 4, along with Imre, then came Phil Marson with $3\frac{1}{2}$, Colin Hands and Roy Arnold with 3, Chris Wakelin with $2\frac{1}{2}$ on an impressive debut, and finally Mark Wormley and Bruce Kyte with 1. Leader finds a new way not to win in December ...

MISCELLANY – Club News

The Nottingham Othello Group *by Joel Feinstein.*

The Nottingham Othello Group is growing! We meet at either Phil Marson's house or Joel Feinstein's house about once a week. Jeremy Das sometimes comes over from Loughborough. We also have local newcomers Bruce Kyte and Chris Wakelin. Several local beginners have just started coming.

If you want to drop in on us, let either Phil or me know and we'll tell you when and where our next meeting will be.

Phil Marson: Tel. 0602-606234

Joel Feinstein: Tel. 0602-251120

(For full addresses, see elsewhere in the newsletter).

Doncaster Othello Get-together

The Autumn season started well for Iain Forsyth, who unexpectedly became the winner of the October gathering.

The November get-together gave Roy Arnold the chance to do the pairings, with Iain Barrass being the champion of the evening. Credit, however, must be given to John Beacock for drawing with him in Round 2. Phil Marson and Mark Wormley were close behind with two wins out of three. The talk of the evening was the London international Othello tournament – the excellent venue, brilliant playing and delicious food.

The December gathering had a festive air, and lasted from early afternoon to late in the evening. We enjoyed playing a multiplicity of skill-demanding games, with Mark Wormley scoring the maximum number of points. Colin Hands showed considerable dexterity at deciphering anagrams. At teatime the table was spread with tempting party food. We were torn between a brandy trifle, kindly given by Sue Barrass, and a sherry trifle. Also between a gateau provided by Mark and a fruit cake baked by Phil's mother – we ended up having some of each!

We were very pleased to welcome Bruce Kyte, who came from Nottingham with Phil to our January meeting. Iain Barrass excelled himself by winning all his games, with Roy Arnold, John Beacock and Phil Marson all scoring two out of three.

We are holding a mini-tournament on Saturday January 29th at 49, Balmoral Rd., Doncaster. For details of our future events, please get in touch with me on 0302-364626.

Syncopated Cerebrations by Sid Cox.

About a year ago I received the following treatise from Phil Marson, which he entitled “An Othello Curiosity”. In the absence of any rivals I have elevated it to the status of a theorem, and Phil has thereby won a year’s membership of the BOF.

*In the August 1992 newsletter there appeared a (light-hearted) article by BYE extolling the virtues of applying certain football-oriented tie-breaking systems to the game of Othello. In the section concerning the “away rule” it was suggested that one method of resolving ties would be for a player to count double any of his discs in his opponent’s half of the board. BYE states, however, that a tie might not be resolved by this method. I should like to go further and state that, in a position with no empty squares, the above method would **never** resolve a tie.*

Place 32 black discs on one half of a board and 32 white discs on the other. Obviously Black has the same number of discs on White’s half as White has on Black’s. Now move a random number of Black discs from one side to the other and, to maintain the tied position, exchange them with an equal number of White discs. Naturally Black still has the same number of discs on White’s half as White has on Black’s.

We can go further. Exchanging a random number of discs in this way is exactly the same as leaving the discs where they were and selecting 32 squares at random. This therefore gives rise to the First Law of Othellibrium:-

“In a drawn position, with no empty squares, any group of 32 squares contains the same number of black discs as the remaining 32 squares contain white discs (and vice versa)”.

There can be no tie with an odd number of empty squares. However, with an even number of empty squares, the above holds true if there are the same number of empty squares in each group of 32.

*Now consider a position with 32 black discs and 32 white discs. Take a random number of white discs and flip them over. Obviously Black has won and the total number of black discs will be 32 **plus** the number of discs you just flipped. The Second Law of Othellibrium states that:-*

“In a position with no empty squares a player has won if any group of 32 squares contains more of his own discs than the remaining 32 contain his opponents’.”

Moreover, the exact result can be calculated by taking the difference between the two numbers and adding 32. Let’s look at an example.

In one group of 32 squares Black has 11 discs. In the remaining 32 squares white has 7 discs. According to the Second Law, Black has won; the difference between the two numbers is $11 - 7 = 4$. Black therefore has $32 + 4 = 36$ discs and White the remainder, i.e. 28.

Phil regrets that the laws of Othellibrium probably have no practical uses (hence my delay in publishing them) but if anyone does find a use for them he would be very glad to hear from them.

+ + +

The counter-example that disproves my First Conjecture is that a Reversi game can end after only seven moves; a minimum of nine are required for the shortest Othello game. There are just four different shortest Reversi games; starting with black on d4 and e4, these are:-

e6, f5; g4, e3; e2, d3; c4.

e6, f5; g4, d3; c4, e3; e2.

e6, f5; g6, e3; e2, d3; c4.

e6, f5; g6, d3; c4, e3; e2.

+ + +

How soon did *you* get a Reversi game and an Othello game to converge? Our prolific puzzler Aubrey de Grey managed to get this to happen in only five moves, a surprisingly low number. One word of warning, though! Now you know it can be done in five moves, don't be tempted to try to find the solution in your head. It may consume more brain cycles than you would care to dedicate to this exercise, as two players of much greater ability than most of you found out. The solution is available from Aubrey.

+ + +

Did any of you wonder why our Editor assigned a rating of 639 to Packet of Biscuits in the rating list in "Nodes"? It's not a random number; there's a very good reason for it to be 639, and there's a prize of half a year's membership (times are hard) for the first person to tell me this correct reason (i.e., the reason *I* have thought of). Only those who would have been eligible to play in the Beginners/Junior tournaments that were attempted last year are eligible for this prize.

+ + +

Mr. de Grey also poses the following problem. Find a configuration of discs on an (arbitrarily large, if necessary) board with as large as possible a ratio between the number of legal moves and the number of discs on the board. For instance, the initial position has 4 moves and 4 pieces, so a ratio of 1. It's not hard to improve on that, but Aubrey conjectures you can't get as high as 3/2.

Ratings

More on ratings! *by David Haigh.*

The pun in the title is intentional, because I'm about to reveal something else about the ratings that might again be controversial.

First of all, thanks for not sending me or Graham any objections to my policy of not rating certain dubious games. I'm still prepared to be convinced that I have no right to do this, but I *am* reassured by the lack of objections.

The second skeleton in the rating cupboard is that I treat each day of a multi-day tournament as a separate tournament. In other words, say for the Cambridge International, I rate the first day on its own and then use the resulting ratings as initial ratings for the second day, which is also rated on its own.

When I first attempted to rate a Cambridge International I intended to rate it as one big tournament, but I could not! With so many rounds and so many players my computer (a BBC) ran out of memory! So I had no choice but to split it into two tournaments.

Now that I have a computer with much more memory it would be possible to avoid splitting tournaments in this way, but I have continued to do so for the following reasons.

- (1) Consistency with the past.
- (2) There is a sizable gap between the end of the first day's play and the start of the second, during which a player's ability could be altered significantly, e.g. by studying the games played that day, or by eating and drinking too much, or by getting a good or a bad night's rest, etc. The rating process assumes that a player's rating is reasonably constant during the group of games being rated (which is why we have feedback if this turns out not to be the case). This assumption may not be true if the group of games extends over several days.
- (3) Originally the USOA calculated the ratings round by round (i.e. as a series of one-round tournaments) so there must be something to be said for doing the ratings with such fine granularity, although they now do the ratings a tournament at a time. Rating day by day would seem to be a good compromise.
- (4) Suppose there was a tournament in North London on a Saturday, and on the following Sunday there was one in South London, and the same players played in each tournament! I don't think anyone would suggest that these be lumped together as one tournament. The fact that the pairings would have

been different if they had been the same tournament does not matter, as the rating process is the same whether the tournament is a Swiss, a modified Swiss, a double round-robin or whatever.

To be devil's advocate, there is a minor and (these days) rare situation where rating several days together would be better. If an unrated player wins or loses all his/her games in a group of games being rated together, the resulting rating is really only a "best guess", as we don't know how much the rating should differ from the average of the opponents' ratings, and a default difference is used. The more games are being rated together the more likely it is that all that player's games won't have the same outcome. In the recent World Championship in London, Nobuyuki Takizawa won seven out of seven games on the first day, so unfortunately his resulting magnificent rating of 2092 was not very accurate. He obligingly lost one game out of six on the second day which reduced his rating to 2052 and also made it more accurate. It would have been even more accurate if his rating had been calculated on the basis of his winning twelve games out of thirteen.

*[Editor's Note. Sorry, I want to argue with this! On what basis are you claiming that Takizawa's "real" rating (whatever that means) is closer to 2052 than 2092? For another practical case, consider Sophie Collay's rating of 1084, based on six wins against two unrated and one very low-rated player. Take it from me: her "true" rating is several hundred points higher than that – losing games on a hypothetical second day of that tournament would not improve the accuracy of her rating! Losing such a game might reasonably increase your **confidence** in the accuracy of her rating, but that's a completely different thing.]*

Anyway all this doesn't matter very much in the long run. Any such inaccuracies are short-lived, because the rating process inherently tends to correct any errors that creep in. *[The Editor takes a more pessimistic view, namely that any inaccuracies due to this kind of thing are swamped by the grosser inaccuracies inherent in any rating system.]*

Finally, you will have gathered that I have rated the World Championship tournament. One of the benefits of this for us is that 22 points were injected into the British rating pool. My thanks to our Foreign competitors for this, and as a small token of appreciation we are here publishing the BOF foreigners' ratings for the first time.

[Editor's Note. The British rating list is published on the back page, as usual. The keen Bhagat fans among us will wonder what has happened to their man: his rating has dropped by a whole point since the list published in the last newsletter, even though he hasn't played any games! The explanation is that the previous list was a lie! It did not include the Manchester Regional, but did include the subse-

quent Cambridge Regional. After the Manchester results were in, our enthusiastic ratings *supremo* correctly took the **pre-Cambridge** ratings, calculated the ratings after Manchester, then, using these new ratings, recalculated the effects of Cambridge. Bhagat's Cambridge performance was deemed less impressive in the light of the post-Manchester ratings, hence his downward move.

Iain Barrass played in Manchester, where he did poorly, and Cambridge, where he did well. The list we published put him above 1400 for the first time, but in the revised history he never made it, contrary to our reports. Fortunately he went back over after the Nationals.

If you want an explanation of why Guy Plowman's rating would be one point higher if the Steven Verhaegen who played in the London Regional was a different person from the Stephen Verhaegen who played in the Worlds, ask either the Secretary or the Editor!]

1	David Shaman	US	129	1964	24	Daniel Rignell	S	13	1458
2	Nobuyuki Takizawa	J	16	1934	25	Mauro Perotti	I	24	1448
3	Philippe Juhem	F	30	1902	26	Sandry Andriani	MA	13	1445
4	Karsten Feldborg	DK	26	1858	27	Bintsa Andriani	MA	44	1429
5	Masaki Ohyanagi	J	13	1841	28	Stefan Waser	CH	32	1426
6	Stéphane Nicolet	F	13	1830	29	Pi. Pietruszkiewicz	PL	22	1400
7	Brian Rose	US	14	1828	30	Vidar Aas	N	13	1397
8	Marc Tastet	F	83	1794	31	Johan Berner	S	13	1353
9	Emmanuel Caspard	F	53	1785	32	Tadao Takahashi	J	13	1318
10	Dmitri Svirskiy	R	24	1753	33	Serge Alard	B	52	1299
11	David Parsons	US	13	1641	34	Aiden O'Reilly	IR	25	1281
12	Torben Vallund	DK	13	1637	35	Patrick Choisnard	F	11	1255
13	Dominique Penloup	F	73	1619	36	Torstein Vehusheia	N	13	1252
14	Donato Barnaba	I	13	1610	37	Jon Inge Holm	N	13	1233
15	Erik Jensen	DK	24	1578	38	Bernard Nelis	B	13	1231
16	Pa. Pietruszkiewicz	PL	22	1560	39	Witold Postrach	PL	10	1189
17	Greg Johnson	D	24	1559	40	Daniel Olivares	AR	6	1185
18	Emmanuel Lazard	F	42	1535	41	Leslie Cagley	D	10	1157
19	Alexandre Cordy	F	11	1503	42	Alain Daix	B	23	1118
20	B. de la Boisserie	F	11	1490	43	Alexandr Chigorev	R	13	1114
21	Henrik Vallund	DK	11	1484	44	Sophie Collay	F	6	1084
22	Stefano Antonelli	I	13	1483	45	Dorothea Knauer	IR	13	1004
23	Oleg Stepanov	R	24	1468	46	Daniel Bennelid	S	13	969
					47	Stephen Verhaegen	IR	12	870

The Rating List *maintained by David Haigh.*

Joel Feinstein makes his seasonal leap up, to previously untravelled heights. Matthew Selby also moves up, and Chris Wakelin is the highest new entry. Myles Harvey's rating is just as much a complete guess as Sophie Collay's. With 13 extra games from the Worlds, the ever-ambitious Imre Leader is dominating the number-of-rated-games category as well as the main one.

1	Imre Leader	329	1852	33	David Haigh	307	1183
2	Joel Feinstein	287	1793	34	Martin Mulvaney	6	1176
3	Neil Stephenson	110	1770	35	John Bass	77	1163
4	Graham Brightwell	305	1716	36	Hamilton Abreu	6	1152
5	Michael Handel	198	1705	37	Roy Arnold	301	1137
6	Garry Edmead	114	1675	38	Annemarie Moore	37	1127
7	Peter Bhagat	288	1650		Jonathan Simpson	12	1127
8	Guy Plowman	171	1649	40	Margaret Plowman	19	1117
9	Aubrey de Grey	311	1588	41	Colin Hands	59	1108
10	John Lysons	171	1569	42	Simon Nickson	17	1079
11	David Stephenson	126	1541	43	Iain Gray	15	1077
12	Ian Turner	153	1492	44	Graham Chappell	24	1074
	Michael Trent	6	1492	45	Gareth Thomas	18	1066
14	Jeremy Das	176	1490	46	Maurice Kent	30	1064
15	Marcus Moore	85	1487	47	Jim Brewer	71	1058
16	Jeremy Rickard	68	1430	48	Richard Hemingway	5	1051
17	Ken Stephenson	169	1422	49	Neil Cuthbertson	54	1033
18	Iain Barrass	188	1417	50	Rodney Hammond	46	1017
19	William Hunter	82	1414	51	Adelaide Carpenter	81	1016
20	Jeremy Benjamin	109	1383	52	Richard Brend	7	1011
21	Matthew Selby	142	1375	53	Ali Turner	90	997
22	Mark Atkinson	84	1349	54	Finton Stephens	7	955
23	Phil Brewer	85	1327	55	Bruce Kyte	6	936
24	Phil Marson	181	1319	56	Liam Stephens	13	894
25	John Beacock	71	1289	57	Myles Harvey	6	874
26	Simon John	6	1280	58	Ashley Hammond	26	849
27	Martin Fancy	18	1260	59	Tom Landry	19	832
28	Chris Wakelin	7	1236	60	Nigel Barforth	6	813
29	Lee Evans	32	1235	61	Gareth Taplin	7	733
30	Robert Stanton	132	1233	62	Eileen Forsyth	137	691
31	Mark Wormley	253	1230	63	Joan Stephenson	6	484
32	Iain Forsyth	237	1226	64	Packet of Biscuits	2	362