

How To Set the Clocks*by Geoff Hubbard*

RED DIGITAL CLOCK (DGT): other clocks will be covered next issue.

1) Choosing the correct mode: Lift the clock up and find the round button on the bottom. This is the on/off switch for the clock. If the clock is already on from a previous game, turn it off so we can reset the timers.

Press the round button on the bottom to turn the clock on. The front left screen should show a flashing number. If this number is 0*5* press OK. Otherwise, press the +1 button on the front of the clock until it is 0*5*, then press OK. It cycles back to 01 after it gets to 32. There is no -1 button!

2) Setting the time: General Instructions. A single digit will be flashing (indicated here by *0*) which can be modified by pressing the +1 button and accepted by pressing the OK button. If this is *0*:25 0:25 already, hit OK and check (by looking and pressing OK if correct) that the previous setter got each digit right, see below; the clock remembers! For a while, anyway. There is no way to short-circuit all that pressing of OK even if the clocks are already set correctly. If you hit +1 too many times, don't panic, just keep pressing it until you get back around to the digit you wanted, but if you press 'OK' too many times and set something to the wrong value you'll have to turn the clock off and start again. Most tournaments are 25 minutes per player, so I'll show how to set the clock for those.

Specific Instructions for 25 minutes per player:

We are now on the left screen and it starts off with hours, so just press OK: *0*:00 OK. Now we are on tens of minutes, set this to 2: 0:*0*0 +1 => 0:*2*0 OK. Now set the minutes to 5: 0:2*0* +1 +1 +1 +1 => 0:2*5* OK. We don't need to set any number of seconds, so press OK twice: .*0*0 OK .0*0* OK => 0:25.

The input now switches to the right screen, for setting the other player's time, so do the same thing again through to .0*0* OK.

Now the display is ready to set the 2 minutes extra time. The left screen will say 2 (for additional mode). Although in theory one can set different main times for the two players, these clocks only allow the same extra time for both, so it is set only once, on the right screen. It starts off with hours, so just press OK: *0*:00 OK. Now we are on tens of minutes, set this to 0: 0:*0*0 OK. Now set the minutes to 2: 0:0*0* +1 +1 => 0:0*2* OK. We don't need to set any number of seconds, so press OK twice more: *0*0 OK .0*0* OK.

The screen should now say 0:25 0:25 and nothing should be flashing.

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A Quote from the Chairman*by Geoff Hubbard*

"In my stars I am above thee; but be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."
-- William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, Act II, Scene V

I definitely fall into the third category. It was during lunch at the 2007 Christmas tournament that Aubrey announced that he was stepping down as chairman and that I would make a good replacement. My feeble excuses about not technically being a British National were brushed aside, and I was appointed to general acclaim, and thus I found the greatness of the BOF chairmanship thrust upon me from one side, and the greatness of a chicken wrap and chips thrust upon me from the other.

My first duty as Chairman is to thank Aubrey de Grey for all his time and hard work over the last eleven years as Chairman. His no-nonsense attitude and executive decision-making over the years have ensured that the things that needed to happen have happened with the minimum of fuss. Over the last few years he has been increasingly busy trying to make sure we will be able to live forever and has still been happy to run things despite being unable to find the time to actually play in tournaments. So, Thank You, Aubrey! I encourage you all to buy him a beer the next time you see him.

I have a lot of ideas about Othello and how things can be improved, both in Britain and around the world. I'm not going to try to list them all here now, but I have a few things that I'm going to be working on in the next six months. I plan to continue my work with the World Othello Federation, to help develop a governing body for world Othello. I plan to work with the European Federation to make sure that Othello in Europe remains vibrant and the EGP remains relevant. I plan to work with Roy (the BOF webmaster) to set up an online tournament attendance system, so people can see who is planning to attend a tournament and get emailed reminders of upcoming tournaments if they so desire.

There are also some things I don't plan on doing in the next six months. I don't plan on relinquishing my Australian ties; I remain as interested in the success of Othello there as ever. I still intend to participate in the WOC as an Australian wherever possible, although it is my ultimate goal not to qualify for either country because both are fielding full teams of players stronger than I am. I don't plan on being held responsible for the tournament performance of any particular British player(s). The job of BOF Chairman is not like being the manager of the England football team, unless there is a two million pound payout waiting for me if I were to fail horribly

and get fired within 6 months that I don't know about.

Feel free to get in touch with me about any ideas or concerns you might have. You can post your ideas to the BOF mailing list British_Othello@yahoo.com or if you want to discuss things in a less public manner, talk to me at a tournament, I'm usually there, or email me at geoff@instihost.com.

Let's achieve greatness.

*(The Editor notes: Aubrey was already Chairman when I took over the BOF Newsletter Editorship in 2000; indeed, he was acting Membership Secretary as well -- David Haigh had relinquished that post some time earlier and Aubrey just got on with that job rather than taking the time to appoint someone else. Since the main purpose of the Membership List was to provide mailing labels for the Newsletter, he maintained the list *as* mailing labels; and since neither of us needed our copies to arrive via the post, neither of us was on that list. So, when I needed the labels for posting the NL, he would print them out for me. However, as he got busier getting the labels out of him got harder -- eventually I realised it would be less work for me to take over the Membership Secretary role and print the labels myself, so I did.*

But since neither of us was on the label list, that list contained no record of when our memberships would expire! I was able to work mine out from when I joined, and I duly renewed on time, but at that point Aubrey was certain his had years yet to run. Subsequently, I reckoned that he was paying enough dues just by being Chairman so didn't hassle him, though I have now; he has agreed to renew his membership soon, but he also pointed out that when George Greaves resigned the Chair to Graham Brightwell, the BOF voted George a lifetime subscription in appreciation for his efforts, a gesture that seems to have been forgotten by the time Graham turned the gavel over to Aubrey.

Also, Aubrey is about to fall off the rating list from lack of playing; I thought it would look ungood to have the Chairman not be on the published rating list, so I warned David Haigh that I would insert him in his proper order even if David dropped him. Since Aubrey's last tournament was the 2005 Christmas Friendly and the rule is "two years" I expected him to be off the present list, but a) this doesn't matter now and b) David isn't that strict. David says, "(Aubrey) last played 1 year and 353 days before the date of the last tournament in the rating list (that's what I use, not the current date). Also my threshold is slightly more generous than 2 years: the exact time span is 2 years and 1 month and 0 days, the intention being to cover small variations in the date of annual events."

Unfortunately, it wasn't an endgame he was ever likely to win.

Thus the last European World Champion remains David Shaman, who won in 2002 (and 1999) when representing the Netherlands. If you should want to exclude him for some reason, then you'd have to go all the way back to Marc Tastet's win in 1992.

The roll-call of Japanese World Champions goes on. The latest is Kenta Tominaga, who was quite clearly the best player at this tournament. He actually qualified for the Worlds as Japanese Champion in 1999 but wasn't able to attend, and he's been one of the best players in the world ever since then, so a world title was probably overdue. Congratulations to him.

Congratulations also to the Japanese on their third successive team title (the last British win was in 1997: the last European win was by France in 1998). Congratulations also to Yukiko Tatsumi, who beat Caroline Sandberg Odsell to win the Women's title.

Under time pressure, I seem to have written the easy article: the one where I, aided by computer analysis, point out where the world's top players went horribly wrong, glossing over almost all the good moves they played. It's not fair, of course: the standard of the top players is continuing to improve, and the games at the business end of this tournament were of an extremely high quality.

The Worlds have always been a cut above any other event I've ever played in, and the allure of this classy tournament is one reason why playing Othello competitively has been -- indeed, still is -- so much fun. Many people deserve thanks for making the Worlds happen, but the one person who really must be praised is Jim Becker, founder of the Anjar Corporation, who had the vision to see that support of this tournament, on both a financial and a personal level, was the right way to go about cementing a partnership between those selling the game and those playing it, to the lasting benefit of both.

As for me, I think that really was the last World Championships I'll play in. Even if I do earn a spot ever again, I'll let some hungrier player have it. I've had the pleasure of competing in some marvellous tournaments and witnessed some astounding feats. I've been agonisingly close to winning, but those times are now far in the past. Time to let go.

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

White to play

Nicolet has plenty of time on his clock at this point and goes for a walk to clear his head. He eventually comes up with the best shot: 36g7-c1-b2. Black does cut the diagonal with 39a5 before White gets access to h6, but White still has parity, and some of the regions will play quite well for him. Tominaga plays it well for a while, then blunders with 49g2, giving Nicolet a chance to steal a draw.

Obviously, I can't tell you what is going through the players' minds, but maybe Black is under the impression that White will follow him into the North-East region, with a sequence such as: (49g2)-h2-h1-g1-a2-a4-h7-h6-(P), and now White has to open up the final four-square region. What White wants to do in that South-West region is feed Black, starting with a move to b8 -- then Black will play both a8 and b7, leaving White a grand final move to a7. But, in the sequence above, White never gets a chance to play the feed move. So how about 50b8 right now? One lovely feature is that Black can't reply 51h2, because 52h1 is a swindle with the diagonal all black. Ah, but! After 50b8, Black has 51a2 52a4 (flipping e4) and now 53h2. Ah, but! What Nicolet plays is 50a7, which is a less desirable feed but does have the effect of covering the e4 disc, so Black can't plan on getting the h2 move in, and instead has to "accept" the feed and let White get two of the three moves in the North-East.

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

White to move

Another time, that would be brilliant. This time, it's simply wrong; the feature I've been emphasising to you is not especially crucial. After 50a7, the game finishes as expected, and White simply doesn't get enough discs. The right move is 50b8 after all. If Black then plays 51a2-a4-h2, White has 54b7 and now almost all lines lead to a 33-31 White win. Instead, Black must accept the feed and play into the South-West region at 51 or 53. One of many perfect sequences is 51a8-h2-h6-h7-h1-g1-a2-a4-b7-a7 32-32. Compare with the line starting (49g2)-h2 to see the effectiveness of the feed.

By the way, at 49, Tominaga should play the simpler line 49a2-a4-h6-h7-h2, getting enough discs with no fuss. His move 49g2 is the wrong way to approach that region.

So, on to Game 3. Unfortunately, Nicolet fell behind out of the opening, and needed all his skill just to make it through to an endgame.

Imre on Record by *Graham Brightwell*

Indeed, congratulations to Imre on his triumph (*Winning the 2007 EGP, Ed.*).

Here are some of the EGP records Imre has set or equalled in the course of the year.

- * Most EGPs won, career (tie) [4]
- * Most EGP tournaments won, career (tie) [12]
- * Longest gap between EGP wins [16 years]
- * Oldest player to win the EGP [43 years, about 11 months]
- * Oldest player to win an EGP tournament [43 years, about 7 months]
- * Highest score in EGP, single season [830pts (best 5 scores)]

Some information may be wrong: if so, please tell me. Some information was taken from http://othello.dk/book/index.php/European_Grand_Prix

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Put the clock down on the agreed side (if lack of agreement, Black's preference rules unless the Tournament Director has made an edict on side). White should hit her clock so the flap is UP on the Black side. Press the start/stop button to begin Black's clock and the game. You will know it is working because, after one second, Black's time will switch to 0:24 and the : (colon) will flash to indicate that Black's time is running.

2007 National Tournament *by Ben Pridmore*

The British Othello Championship came to my home town of Derby for the first time in 2007. Specifically, it came to the Bramblebrook Community Centre, a very nice venue not far from the city centre, where even when there isn't an Othello tournament going on you can admire the décor and furnishings that have remained unchanged since the seventies and enjoy a live singer every other Saturday night. The AGM of the British Othello Federation was much more groovy than usual, thanks to the spinning glitterball lights on the ceiling, but we turned it off when we got down to the serious business of the Championship.

Eighteen competitors took part, which is the most for many years unless you count the eighteen who took part in 2005 (but there were three Italians and two Australians among the British contenders that year, so I think there are good grounds for claiming that this year was a record). Two of this year's competitors are named David, two are Jeremy, two more are Robert and another two are Ian and Iain, so talking about who beat whom would have needed more clarification than usual even if it hadn't been the kind of tournament where there were three or four surprise results in every round.

So, once I'd cycled home to get another board so that we could play all nine games at the same time, we got started with a first round in which all nine highest-rated players comfortably beat the bottom nine. It wasn't until the second round that we got into the swing of giant-killing, when Graham Brightwell lost to Geoff Hubbard and Imre Leader lost to Iain Barrass. Aha, we all thought, could this be an end to the Brightwell-Leader domination of the Nationals for the last umpteen years?

The two of them ended up paired against each other in round three, and Graham won. Third seed Michael Handel also slipped up in the third round with a loss against me, while the fourth-highest rated player, internet wunderkid David Hand, drew with Iain. That left the other internet-wunderkid-called-David (Beck), who beat Geoff, clear in the lead after day one. Also of note in round three: Tanith Turner recorded her first ever win at an Othello competition, beating Robert Calladine. And Tanith's mother Ali, recently returned to Othello after many years' absence, beat Yvette Campbell in a crucial game for the nowadays much more significant best-female-competitor title.

So then it was time to vacate the community centre to make way for the singer, check into hotels and somehow arrange to meet up for a meal, a process which I made all the more entertaining by not owning a mobile phone, knowing the names of any streets in Derby or being able to give reliable directions from one place to another. But we managed to gather in a

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

Tominaga 37 Nicolet 27

I know nothing about this opening, but WZebra tells me it's all decent stuff. The first move it really doesn't like is Tominaga's 25f7, preferring 25b4-h3-c8-b6-e8-b8-g7. That's close and interesting, whereas after Black takes the South edge he does seem to be behind.

Here's the position after 31b4.

Nicolet's chosen move 3 2 a 3 is attractive at first glance, since it

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

White to play

forces Black into the South-West region. The problem is that it does poison play to the North, while Black can accomplish things in the South-West by starting with 33a6 (or indeed with 33b6). Now both 34a4 and 34a5 run into the annoying tactical feature that Black can reply at b6 (possibly after playing off h6-h7), leaving White no access to either b8 or c8, so saving c8 for a later tempo. Instead, Nicolet tries 34b6, but now 35c8 is strong: White has to open up the North now, and Black has the possibility of a7 later if necessary. As ever, it's far more complicated than I've indicated, but 32a3 loses; I must say I still find this counterintuitive.

From the diagrammed position, it works out better for White to break through to the North now. The quiet move 32d2, gaining access to a number of squares, is probably the easiest, but White can also play the loud but equally effective 32e2. Perfect play sequences are:

- (a) 32d2-c2-a5-b6-c8-b8-h6-g3-e2-e1-d1-g7-h8-h7-a8-b7-g2-h1-h2-g1-a7-b2-a1-c1-b1-a3-a2-a4-a6 29-35,
- (b) 32e2-h6-h7-a5-g3-c8-c2-g2-a6-a4-b6-a7-h1-h2-d2-e1-g7-a3-b2-h8-g1-a1-a2-b1-a8-b7-d1-c1-b8 29-35.

Back in the game, after 35d1 it is clear that White's advantage has ebbed away.

43a6-a5-h8-h4 (if 46b7, then 47a4 and White has no access to b6 -- however either that or 46h7 is a crucial one disc better) and now 47b7.

There is now only one tempo left for White in the East, and he will have to use it up soon. One perfect-play line here is 48a4-b6-h7-g2-h1-b2-a1-a2-a7 and it's a draw. White's choice of 48b6 is another one-disc error, and this one is fatal. Black plays 49a4, and after 50a8 he has the choice between 51a7 and 51a2. He chooses the latter: here it makes no difference but generally this looks much more flexible. Now White could postpone h7 until the very end, but Black's moves would be obvious: 52g2-g1-h1-h2-b2-a1-b1-a7-h7 is 33-31. Instead White plays out 52h7, and Black has a choice to make.

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

Black to play

53g2 is tempting, but that's not the best way to play out that region: 53g2-h1-b1-h2-g1-a1-a7-b2 loses 31-33. However, Nicolet chooses correctly, and plays 53b1-g2-g1-h1-h2-a1-a7-b2 (other sequences are equivalent or worse for White) with a 33-31 win.

It is clear that Nakajima missed his chance here but equally clear that Nicolet seized his, playing perfectly from move 41 onwards and reaching his second World Championship Final (he lost to Murakami in 1996).

In the other semi-final, Tominaga won the first game 37-27. In the second, Berg played down a book-draw line and was disappointed to find that Tominaga knew it almost all the way. Right at the end, the Japanese player had to find a few moves for himself, but he was up to the challenge, and the game was indeed a (perfectly, but not interestingly, played) draw. Berg appeared surprised to be told that the match was not over, and that all he had to do was get 38 discs against the tournament's dominant player to advance to the final. He never looked like doing it, and ended up losing the third game. He did however round off what was a fine tournament overall by beating a dispirited Nakajima for third.

Once again, pundits predicted a Japanese success in the Final. Once again, Stéphane Nicolet won the first game. Here's the second game.

Thai restaurant for an enjoyable evening repast and all got back to where we were going for the night without too much difficulty. Geoff and Michael stayed at my flat, where I proved an impeccable host unless my guests wanted tea or coffee: I'd taken all my supplies to the community centre so we'd have drinks available during the day and hadn't thought to bring them back!

Back to Bramblebrook on the Sunday and it was a cracking day's entertainment. Overnight leader David drew with his namesake in round four, leaving Beck and Barrass jointly in the lead on three and a half points. Iain beat David in round five to move into the outright lead, but then in the next round he lost to Michael, who was now on top with five wins out of six. David Beck then beat Michael to lead the tournament after seven rounds, but then he lost to Imre in round eight and gave away the top spot to the triumvirate of Imre, Graham and Geoff. In the ninth round Graham beat David Beck and Imre beat Geoff to book their places in the grand final.

So yes, after the most competitive Nationals in living memory, great performances by new and old players, and all that drama of the lead changing hands every single round, we ended up with the final consisting of Graham Brightwell *versus* Imre Leader as usual, for the sixth time in the last ten years. The world of Othello, or at least the portion of it that posts on the internet newsgroup, was appalled. Imre won his ninth British championship with some style. No doubt analysis of the game will appear elsewhere in the Newsletter (*page 15*). I don't have a transcript of that, so here's my win against Michael, just because I've never come close to beating him before and I'm still feeling pleased with myself. Well, it was this or my 63-1 drubbing at the hands of Graham.

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

Michael Handel 19-45 Ben Pridmore

Final results:

1. 7.0 [675] LEADER Imre + 1/1
2. 7.0 [730] BRIGHTWELL Graham + 0/1
3. 6.5 [684] BECK David
4. 6.0 [652] HANDEL Michael
6.0 [643] HUBBARD Geoff
6. 5.0 [650] HAND David
5.0 [614] DYER Jeremy
5.0 [583] PRIDMORE Ben
5.0 [522] TURNER Alison
10. 4.5 [645] BARRASS Iain
11. 4.0 [590] ARNOLD Roy
4.0 [580] TURNER Ian
4.0 [569] CAMPBELL Yvette
4.0 [536] DAS Jeremy
4.0 [502] STANTON Robert
16. 2.0 [368] TURNER Kali
2.0 [363] TURNER Tanith
18. 0.0 [377] CALLADINE Robert

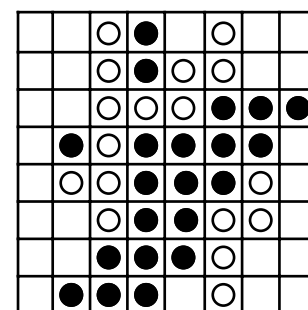
This completes a run of twenty years in which the only winners of the Nationals have been Imre, Graham, Joel Feinstein or Garry Edmead. Is there nobody who can put an end to this domination? Is everybody worried that something bad will happen to anyone who dares challenge the reigns of Imre and Graham, just because Joel hasn't been seen for years and Garry disappeared mysteriously and permanently from Othello competitions two-thirds of the way through the 2004 British championship when he was on his way to doing what Imre and Graham never have, winning three in a row?

Incidentally, the ten years before that had nine different winners. Clearly we need to return to the good old days when qualification for the Nats was by being the first names drawn out of a hat.

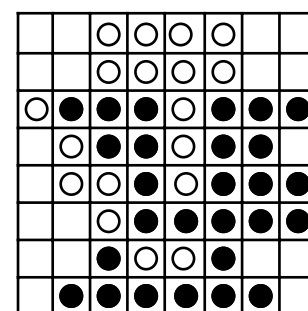
(Germany) and Ben Seeley (USA). Unfortunately, Leader had yet to play Nakajima, and their final-round encounter was one-sided in favour of the Japanese player. Berg and Seeley both won their games, so there were a tense few minutes until it was announced that Leader and Berg had the best tie-breaks and would play each other again for the last semi-final spot, with Seeley just missing out.

In the play-off, Leader again fell behind out of the opening and again came back into the game later, but this time he didn't come back far enough; Berg won to end the UK challenge for yet another year. 2002 remains the last year there was a UK semi-finalist (Leader lost to David Shaman); 1997 was the last year there was a UK finalist (see above).

The semi-finals were both Europe *versus* Japan, and pundits were backing the Japanese to win both matches. Stéphane Nicolet showed that it wasn't going to be so simple, beating Tetsuya Nakajima in the first game. Nakajima won the second. The third game was, well, a third game. We join it with Black (Nicolet) to play at 35.



Black (Nicolet) to play



White (Nakajima) to play

White has just played f1, offering the usual choice between wedging (35e1) and accepting the weak edge structure (35b1). Here 35b1-e1-g1-h4 is quite hopeless. The problem with 35e1 is that, after 36h4 (or 36b3 first, with h4 to follow), White has several potential ways to gain tempo in the East (h2 followed by g2, or e8-g8-g7), while if Black takes the edge at h5, then White is likely to have e8-g8-g7, controlling the diagonal, with h6 to follow. Nicolet must have looked for a long time at 35e1, and effectively ruled it out. Unfortunately, the alternative he talked himself into, 35h5, is no better.

The next few moves, 36e1-37b3-38a3-39h6-40e8-41g8 are OK, and now White is in complete control.

The South-East region (or indeed the Eastern side of the board) is worth two tempi to White. The right approach is to leave this region for a while, and play to the West: 42a4-a6-a5-a2, and now 46g7 is decisive. However, Nakajima is under severe stress, and he is not thinking clearly at this stage. He plays 42g7 immediately, and now Black has some extra tempi:

is to play off the pairs b2-a1 and g2-h1, in either order, and then continue with 53c8-b8-f8: this guarantees Black the East edge, and that's enough to win.

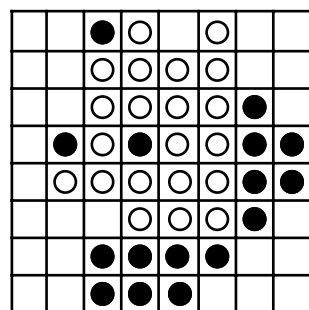
Beck finished on 7/13 and Hubbard on 6, after a strong start. Ali Turner, Britain's female player, didn't finish last.

Imre Leader was the home player in the best form; here he is beating Matthias Berg in a key game in Round 12.

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

Leader 37 Berg 27

This opening, with 9e3 and 11g6, is something that Leader knows very well; on the other hand, Berg is a player who seems to know absolutely everything very well. 23c1 seems misguided, with d1, c2 or b4 all being preferable; the problem with the sequence Leader chooses is that the natural 23c2 allows 24b4 with a White move to b3 in reserve. Leader's preferred choice of 23b4 is no better and leaves him behind.



After 33e8

The sequence where Black is forced into taking the South edge is very sensible, but Berg overcomplicates things with 34h7 -- flipping the b4 disc in any way leaves White with a comfortable position and a win. Leader reveals the problem with 34h7: after 35e1, White can hardly afford to leave the North edge alone, but after 36b1-37g2, it is White who is under pressure, forced to take weak edges and eventually collapse. In fact, White does better to take h1 as soon as possible, surrendering the North edge but gaining discs in the North-East. As played, Black is well ahead. Leader rejects the complicated 41h6, though in fact that works out well because White can't arrange to play g1 followed by h1. The line he prefers is very convincing: after 41c6 42b6 (42b3 43h6 is clear-cut) 43a4, the control of the diagonal proves decisive.

After 12 rounds, the leading scores were: Kenta Tominaga (Japan) 11, Stéphane Nicolet (France) 9.5, Imre Leader (UK) and Tetsuya Nakajima (Japan) 9, and then a whole bunch on 8, headed by Matthias Berg

Endgame Statistics from the Nationals by Geoff Hubbard

A) Clarence Hewlett Prize

Early in 2007, David Parsons announced the "Clarence Hewlett Prize" -- a prize for the person with the "best endgame" at the US Nationals.

The prize was judged by the following criteria:

- (1) Only winners were considered.
- (2) The winning disc differential had to be 20 or fewer.
- (3) Errors in the last twenty moves (ten moves for each side) of the game were calculated as the number of discs the error costs *versus* perfect play according to WZebra. Only the winning player's errors were counted.

The winner(s) is(are) the person(s) with the fewest discs given up in the last twenty moves due to errors.

In the US Nationals the prize was shared between Eddie Williams and Yohanes Chitra, who tied for the best endgame having each made only one mistake costing two discs. (Both games were against Randy Fang.)

I thought it would be interesting to see who would have won an equivalent prize at the 2007 British National Championships. Since I had the transcripts and WZebra and a little bit of computing know-how I did some analysis and found that there were thirteen games that met the specified criteria:

Error (discs)	Player	Round	Game
2	BARRASS Iain	4	TURNER Ian 25 - 39
6	LEADER Imre	1	PRIDMORE Ben 29 - 35
8	BECK David	9	40 - 24 ARNOLD Roy
8	LEADER Imre	8	BECK David 28 - 36
8	HUBBARD Geoff	6	STANTON Robert 24 - 40
10	LEADER Imre	FINAL	39 - 25 BRIGHTWELL Graham
12	HUBBARD Geoff	7	37 - 27 HAND David
16	HANDEL Michael	6	BARRASS Iain 29 - 35
18	HUBBARD Geoff	8	BARRASS Iain 31 - 33
20	DYER Jeremy	8	35 - 29 DAS Jeremy
20	HANDEL Michael	2	DAS Jeremy 30 - 34
24	DAS Jeremy	9	36 - 28 BARRASS Iain
28	BRIGHTWELL Graham	4	ARNOLD Roy 24 - 40

So the UK Winner is Iain Barrass, who made one mistake costing two discs in his round 4 game against Ian Turner.

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

Move sequence:
 c4e3f4c5d6f3e6c3d3e2b5f5b4f6g5e7d7h6g
 4g6h5a4f8f7f2h3h4d2g3f1e8c7c6c8d8a5b6
 g8g2b8b7g1g7a8e1d1c1b1c2b2a2a3h1h2a1
 b3a6a7h7h8 25 -- 39

Congratulations Iain!

(In 2006 it would have been a tie between Michael Handel and Graham Brightwell who lost 2 discs each *versus* David Hand and Imre Leader respectively.)

B) Perfect Endgames

The first two criteria of the Clarence Hewlett prize mean that winning endgames are rewarded and only the "closest" games are included, but someone who has good endgame skills but is always behind in the midgame is never going to win the prize. I wondered what would happen if you removed those criteria and just looked at number of discs lost during the endgame. During the 2007 British National Championship, there were 9 people who had played games with no endgame errors:

ARNOLD Roy, BECK David (2 games), BRIGHTWELL Graham (2 games), CALLADINE Robert, DYER Jeremy, LEADER Imre, TURNER Alison, TURNER Kali, and STANTON Robert.

Some were winning, some were losing, but all had played perfect endgames, which is quite an achievement!

C) Average discs lost per move

What about a way to measure "endgame skill" over all the games played in the tournament? I calculated average number of discs lost per move during the last 20 moves of the game. This seems to give a good single number that correlates with endgame skill.

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 0.82 BECK David | 2.20 TURNER Ian |
| 0.99 BRIGHTWELL Graham | 2.28 HUBBARD Geoff |
| 1.42 LEADER Imre | 2.39 HANDEL Michael |
| 1.50 CAMPBELL Yvette | 2.42 TURNER Alison |
| 1.69 ARNOLD Roy | 2.43 STANTON Robert |
| 1.78 BARRASS Iain | 2.47 PRIDMORE Ben |
| 1.83 HAND David | 2.58 DYER Jeremy |
| 1.89 CALLADINE Robert | 3.00 TURNER Tanith |
| 1.89 DAS Jeremy | 3.67 TURNER Kali |

apparent is that the extra discs on the g-file amount to just two: those at g4 and g5 -- I'll get the others anyway. The crucial feature is that I want the move at h7 to flip diagonally, so that I'll get the three discs at d3, e4 and f5: for that, of course, I need to play g7 when it doesn't flip g6.

Enough of my own misadventures. Here's a nice win by David Beck, in his first ever World Championship game.

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

Beck 35 Tomei 29

This is the notorious Dead Draw, which has been analysed to, well, death, by human-aided computers. WZebra certifies that the first inaccuracy

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

Black to play at 49

final inaccuracy of the game), then White replies 52g7, with diagonal control. The only way this feature can be avoided is if c3 is black at the point where Black plays f8. It looks very strange, but what Black has to do

And here is the new BOF Chairman disposing of Denmark's Jonas Lindholt Gregersen (the 2005 Australian Champion).

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

Lindholt 28 Hubbard 36

is Hubbard's 34h4 and the second is Hubbard's 36h7. Black demonstrates his advantage immaculately; it seems as though Hubbard's sequence 44-48 is pure desperation, sacrificing an entire edge just to gain access to a free move. Black's move 45 takes it from +6 to +4, but here is the position a few moves later, where he is about to make the game's decisive error.

In order to understand what Black needs to accomplish to win this, it may help to play through the real game first. A key feature is that, if Black plays (49b8 50c8) 51f8 (this is -4, whereas the move chosen, 51g7, is the fifth and

Some Games from the 2007 World Championships

by Graham Brightwell

I couldn't resist. It was in Athens, in 1997, that I had blown two won endgames against Makoto Suekuni and lost the World Championship final: ten years on, the tournament was going back to Athens, and it was sure to be an even bigger and better event. These days I assert, when asked and sometimes even when not asked, that I'm semi-retired: this means that I am putting no work into opening development or looking at past games (or writing intensive analytical Othello articles), but I'm still turning up at the occasional tournament and doing my best to win. I know full well that I'm not currently playing to a competitive standard at the highest level, and, really, there was no great purpose behind my going to Athens. In the end, I made no impact whatsoever on the tournament. I played none of the top players, my name never appeared towards the top of the leaderboard, and my contribution never seriously put the UK in range of the team title. My apparently respectable score of 8/13 is a reflection of the fact that I spent most of the second day beating fellow mid-table players.

Here's me throwing away half a point at move 57. My opponent was Chew Ching Wuen of Singapore, one of a large number of good players to emerge from Asia since my semi-retirement.

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

Black (GB) to move

As the reader may be able to discern from the position, I have been under pressure for most of the game. Chew took on the odd region in the South-East and forced me to sacrifice an awful lot just to stay in the game. Finally, he has taken what was there and played 56h1, leaving me with not many discs on the board but the prospect of a good few more by the end of the game. At this point, I have a choice between 57g7-58h8-59h7-(P)-60h2 and 57h2-(P)-58g7-59h8-60h7. I have a little time on the clock, but not enough to count carefully, and no great hope that I am getting

enough discs. Anyway, it seems pretty obvious to me. The point, I reckon, is surely that I need to secure the discs on the g-file as well as the h-file, so I should start with 57h2. I play that with little thought, and I am surprised to find later that this is a decisive blunder, converting a lucky draw to a 31-33 loss.

If you look more deeply, you'll see that there are several differences between the discs I get at the end of the two lines. One thing that should be

For comparison, here are the results from 2006:

0.81	HANDEL Michael	1.80	HUBBARD Geoff
0.88	TURNER Ian	1.88	HAND David
1.07	BRIGHTWELL Graham	2.13	PRIDMORE Ben
1.07	CAMPBELL Yvette	2.37	DYER Jeremy
1.17	STANTON Robert	2.57	HAIGH David
1.49	LEADER Imre	3.19	ARNOLD Roy
1.50	BARRASS Iain	3.66	ORTIZ George

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Three Amazing Moves from the Nationals

by Imre Leader

Here are three moves from the Nationals that made me gasp: they are quite stunning, amazing moves that I did not expect at all.

The first was played by Iain Barrass against me, in Round 2.

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

Leader 21 Barrass 43

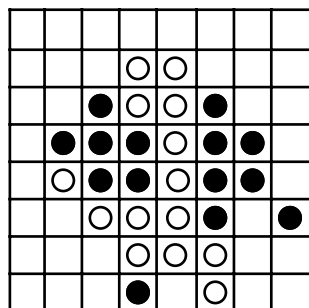
played 25c7, allowing 26b6, then I could follow up with 27e8 (with c8 now poisoned). And if White did not reply with 26b6 then I could play to b6 myself. That would leave me with a great position, since if White put a disc on the c column I could then follow up with 29e8, while if he didn't then I had the utterly devastating 29c8, with e8 to come as my next move!

Of course, I'd need access to the relevant squares. But the only way for White to take away my access to e8 (via the e5 disc) or c8 (via the f5 and g4 discs) would be to play some incredibly loud moves to the East like h5 or h4, which would be catastrophic for White.

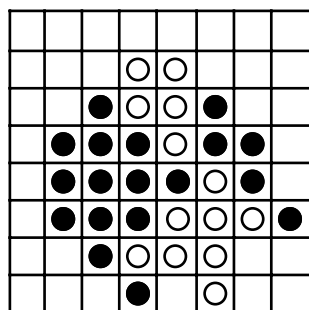
So I got on with 25c7, and after 26g6 proceeded with 27b6, as planned. I checked through again that I would have access to c8, since to deny me access White would have to play h5 (ludicrous) or h3 h4 h5 (ditto) or h4 (met by h5) or g3 (met by anything). I sat back very contented: with c8 and then e8, the tide would decisively swing in my favour.

And then Iain played h5! As his hands moved to the square, it crossed my mind that he had not seen he would have to flip diagonally, but

After move 24, the usual kind of reply would be to play something like 25f2, to take White's access to b6 away -- it is true that White can reply with 26g3, but that pair has made Black's position to the East considerably less ugly. However, I hit upon a different plan. I realised that if I



Before move 25



Before move 28

Easily Decoding Single-line Transcripts with WZebra

by Geoff Hubbard

After every tournament, I collect all the transcripts and enter them into the computer so they can be added to the world-wide database of games. When I am done, I also post them to the mailing list in a format that looks something like this:

line 1: f5d6 *etc.* ... long string of moves ...
 line 2: Round - BLACK Player black score - white score WHITE Player

For example:

```
c4e3f6e6f5c5c3c6b5b6d3g6e7d8c7d6d7f4g5h6f8a5f3b4a4a6a3f7h5h4b3c8
a7g4g3d2e2d1c1e8b8h3e1c2g2f2h2h1b1a2a1b2g8g7h8h7f1g1b7
09 - VAN DEN BIGGELAAR Nicky 31 - 33 HUBBARD Geoff
```

Which is a nice efficient way to represent transcripts if you are a computer but not so good if you are a human and want to play through games the crazy, old-fashioned way using a "board" and "pieces"!

So it is lucky we have WZebra, which can do the job of converting for us easily. (If you don't have WZebra, see the "Downloads" section of the BOF website.)

In your Email program: Select and copy (ctrl-c -- *command c on a Mac, Ed.*) one of the long strings to the clipboard.

In WZebra: Select Menu: File -> Enter game as text... A box will appear for you to put in the text of the game. Paste (ctrl-p -- *command v on a Mac, Ed.*) in the long string. Click OK.

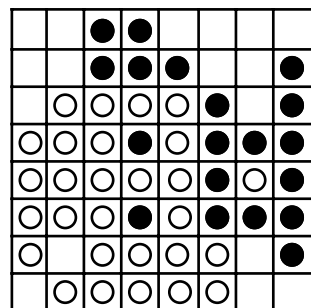
The final position of the game should appear on the board.

Select Menu: Game -> Replay Game. The board will change to the starting position and you can then use the little blue arrows in the top bar to move forward and backward through the game.

To look at another game, Select menu: Game -> New Game. Then cut and paste a new game as before.

diagonal was going to be uncuttable. There was nothing White could do, and Black won the game.

But after the game, Geoff Hubbard said, 'At move 44, what about a White move to g2?' This is a very bizarre idea, since that diagonal has not featured in any plans or ideas up until now. Neither Graham nor I had even considered that move for White. But it is completely killing: quite remarkably so. Note that the only Black move in that region, namely f2, flips g2. Note also that 45a3 does not even gain access anywhere. Well, except b2, and if 45a3 46a2 47b2 then just 48g3, winning easily.



Before move 44

So 44g2 is an instant and obvious win. If Graham had even thought to consider it, it would have taken him about 5 seconds to see that it was crushing. If I had thought about it as a possible reply to 43d1, I would certainly have played 43b2 pretty much immediately, as the only way to avoid it. And no spectator other than Geoff saw it either!

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no, he flipped the diagonal discs first. And it gradually began to dawn on me what an excellent move this was.

First of all, the move, although it changes the entire East of the board from Black to White, does not really give me any nice new moves. I have f2, but I had that anyway. I have h4, but that is horrible because it flips the e7 disc (which would allow White to play to e8). I still do not have access to c2. And, worst of all, I am permanently deprived of access to c8 (unless I play the awful h4)!

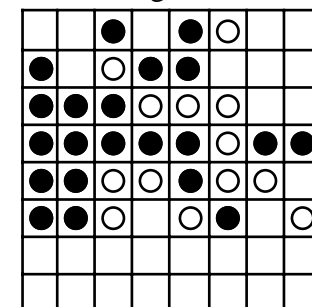
This was a completely game-changing move. I have almost never gone so far, from elation to despair, in one move. Especially when it is a not a move that I have seen coming a few moves in advance, and indeed have not seen coming until the instant it is played.

My next gasp-making move came in the very next round, against Graham

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

Brightwell 51 Leader 13

Brightwell. This was an F.A.T. opening, where the key issue is always White's access to the d6 square. I was happy with my move 28 to g4, since I thought that either I would get access



After 30h6

to d6 or else Black would have to destroy his position to prevent this. Indeed, what can Black reply? To play 29f2 or 29g3 is terrible, which leaves only 29h4, and then (and this is the bit I was pleased about) I would have the elegant h6, flipping the f4 disc. At that point Black could try to take my access away, with 31f2 or 31g3, but again these would be quite horrible -- for example, 31g3 could be met by d1 g1 f2, while 31f2 could be met by h3, with g3 to follow.

Given that Black would be unable to take my access away, he would have to play to d6 himself (since to allow me d6 would mean a key tempo and a perfectly quiet move, which would lead to a Black collapse). Now, in some F.A.T. positions Black can indeed play to d6, but here he has already played to b6, so that d6 would flip far too many perimeter discs.

As I'd predicted, Black replied to my 28g4 with 29h4, and I followed up with 30h6: it was time for Black to collapse. Of course, I'd have to be

constantly vigilant about his free move to b1, but it looked like the battle had been won.

And then Graham played 31h5! In other words, he neither took away my access to d6 nor played there himself! It had just not occurred to me at all that this could be viable. Surely I could just reply 32d6. Indeed, what can he do after d6? His only feeble attempt at a tempo gain would be 33h7, and then I would have several moves, like 34f7 or better still 34g6, poisoning him completely and with g3 to come the following move.

I was still amazed by his move. I thought he must have decided that to deny me access to d6 was too costly, as was playing there himself, and had therefore decided to let me have d6. But I just could not see how this could not be as bad or worse than those other two options. Gratefully, I played 32d6.

And Graham instantly played 33h7. As I looked at my moves, I began to get a sinking feeling. First of all, my main plan of 34g6 was rubbish: he would have the devastating 35b1! in reply, denying me access to g3 and leading to instant and spectacular death. And what about my backup plan of 34f7? Well, that would make the f column all White, so he could reply 35f2. I would then, again, be quite dead -- if 36h3 37h2 38g6 then simply 39g3. I could try 36g1 (after 34f7 25f2), but after 37h1 38d1 he will later on get access to b2 (via for example 39c7 40b7 41g2) and stabilise too many discs. And my final option, 34h3 35h2 36f7, is very similar to 34f7, with Black playing 37f2.

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

After 33h7

I eventually decided to go for a 'try to complicate things' nuclear option, with 34f2 (to stop Black ever playing there) 35g1 36a7 (to gain access to b2) 37a8 38b2 -- the point being that if Black ever plays to a1 then White will have b1 and hence the h1 corner. But I did not really think I had any hope of winning it, and indeed I never had a chance.

Although it was only after move 33 that I realised the mess I was in, it was move 31 that made me gasp. It is quite brilliant that Graham realised that he could allow me to play to d6, and also, very importantly, how devastating 33h7 was going to be. Indeed, if I'd realised all that myself then, after 31h5, I would have taken back with 32h3, keeping d6 for later. That would have given me quite a good position -- but I was in such shock after move 31 that I think I had no chance of finding that.

The third of my 'gasp' moves is a move that was not, strictly speaking, a 'move from the Nationals'. The reason is that it was found by Geoff Hubbard, but he could not play the move because he was the table judge, not a player! However, I would certainly have gasped if it had been played. The move is from the Final, between Graham and myself. At move 43, both

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

Final:

Leader 39 Brightwell 25

Graham and I know what the key line is. I will play 43d1, he will reply 44f1, and then I must not play 45f2, because then 46g3 is killing. So instead I will have to sacrifice at b7, trying for a diagonal control.

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

Before move 43

I will want the North-East filled in as much as possible first, so I will play 45a3 (to gain access to e1) 46a2 47e1 48b1 and then 49b7. And the question is then: Will White be able to play to f2 or g3 in a manner that gains undeniable access to a8? Indeed, both players had been aware of this line from about the late 30s. And now, around move 43, it is still very hard to work out what is happening.

At move 43, I noticed a curious feature. I could play to b2. Now, this is not a Stoner trap, because White can just reply with 44a1. But then I have 45a3 46a2, which flips all of the discs on row 2. I thought, 'How amusing, but so what?' What I had not seen was that the move to a3 flipped the d3 disc, giving me a key move to f1. Indeed, White now runs out of moves, with for example 48e1 49d1 50g3 51f2. I wish I had seen that: b2 would have been such a beautiful move to have played!

Instead, I rejected b2 (having not seen the f1 finish) and went with what I had been thinking was the 'unique line' anyway, namely 43d1. I really could not tell if my eventual b7 would work or would be a disaster, so I was trembling as I played move 43.

Now it was Graham's move. He was also looking at the 'unique line.' He thought that after my eventual b7 he would be able to cut the diagonal, which of course would definitely give him victory. He checked carefully that I had no real alternatives at move 45 or 47 or 49, and then played 44f1. But, as move 49 approached, it gradually became clear to both players that the