

TECHNICAL ARTICLES – Openings

Long ago a sage did come to a distant land¹ and tell a tale of the Heath². He did tell of the fearsome Heath Chimney, of the dreadful Heath Bat, and of the mysterious Iwasaki³. Then did he hold his readers spellbound with his sagas of adventures in the Central Heath⁴. Many battles, lost and won, did he describe. Then did the sage recount that recent travellers had encountered even more terrible monsters lurking at the Heath Edge⁵. So the sage did then leave the land, bound for more adventure. The citizens did pray daily for his safe return⁶, but the sage came not again to the land, and no more was reported of the terrible Heath Edge⁷.

The Heath *by Graham Brightwell.*

So, no messing around. 8h5 it is: now what? See Figure 1.

			2	3			
			○	○	○	1	
			●	○	○	○	○
				●	●		
				○	●		
				4			

1. The Heath, after 8h5.

The four most common moves are shown in the Figure. Let's start with some statistics, produced from the THOR database, as of immediately after the 1994 Worlds. The columns represent the move chosen, the number of games in the base with that move, the percentage of games won by Black in reality, the percentage that Black was winning after move 44, and the average number of discs gained by Black in reality.

Looking just at the total scores, all the three main options at move 9 look much of a muchness, but the comparison of the 1980s against the 1990s reveals rather more. In the 80s, 9d3 was much the most popular, and also the most successful move: in the 90s, it is the least popular and least successful, with g4 becoming increasingly the main line. Note also that the Heath as a whole is scoring better for Black than

¹ The author means: "Takeshi Murakami wrote a couple of articles in OQ."

² 1f5 2f6 3e6 4f4 5g5.

³ Chimney – 6d6. Heath Bat – 6e7 7e3. Iwasaki – 6e7 7d7.

⁴ Presumably the author means the line 6e7 7f7 8c5.

⁵ 8h5 instead of 8c5; actually he wrote "Recently 8h5 is used more frequently."

⁶ Actually the Editor wrote "We hope to have a study of the variations of 8h5 in a future issue of OQ."

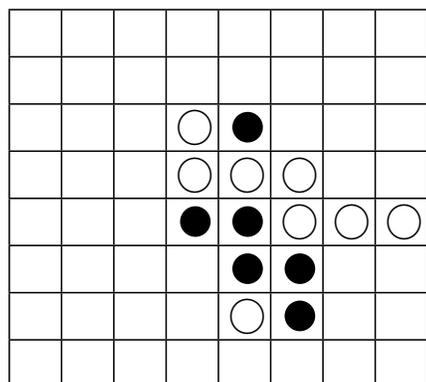
⁷ Although see Brian Rose's game analyses in Fall 1988

it used to. (Looking at the position after move 8, in the 426 games up to 1989, Black scores 42.4% in reality, and 46.3% in theory. In the 452 games from 1990, Black scores 48.8% in reality, and a massive 52.9% in theory.)

An aside: why does Black, here and elsewhere do better in the “Theoretical” scores than in the “Real” ones? One fact which is certainly at least part of the explanation is that the Theoretical scores are calculated with Black to move, so he has the first (and, usually, last) chance to blunder. I think there may also be a contributory factor that that the endgame tends to be harder for Black to play than for White, but others doubt this.

	Move	Games	Real	Theor.	Score
Up to 1989	g4	85	41.7	49.4	30.0
	d3	174	49.1	51.1	31.5
	e3	119	41.5	46.2	31.0
	e8	42	22.6	26.1	29.4
From 1990	g4	195	50.0	55.8	32.3
	d3	90	46.6	53.3	30.7
	e3	141	50.7	50.0	33.8
	e8	21	30.9	38.0	26.6
Total	g4	280	47.5	53.9	31.6
	d3	264	48.2	51.8	31.2
	e3	260	46.5	48.2	32.5
	e8	63	25.3	30.1	25.1

In this article, we’ll concentrate just on the two currently most popular moves: 9e3 and 9g4 (shown as (3) and (1) in Figure 1). It makes sense to treat these together, as they tend to transpose into each other. Typically Black plays e3 and g4 at moves 9 and 11, with e3 being met by d3, and g4 by either h4 or g6. The idea of Black playing 9d3 leads to completely different positions. 9e8 is simply not very good.

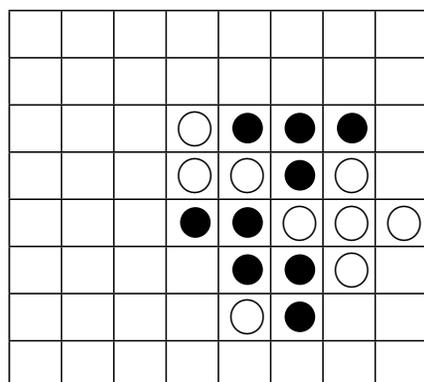


2. After 9e3 10d3.

It’s convenient to start with 9e3. White almost invariably plays 10d3 – see Figure 2.

As mentioned above, 11g4 is the most common, with the main line being g4-h4-f3, but there are a couple of other important possibilities here. Black can play 11f3 immediately without inserting the pair g4-h4, and it’s not immediately clear that this is worse. Expert opinion, dating back to 1987, is that 11f3 should be met by 12d6, with the idea of playing g6 without letting Black reply to g4. Thus something like 13c5 14g6 is very un-

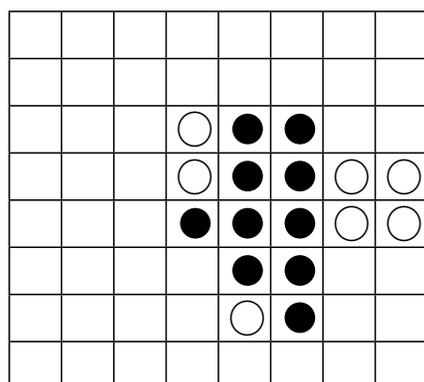
comfortable for Black. The same expert opinion reckons that Black’s best try is 13c7, but all of 14d7, 14c5 and 14g4 work pretty well now. Another legal move is 11g3, which should probably be met by 12c6. Against both these moves, White has the option of reaching the position in Figure 3 by either 11f3 12g4 13g3 14g6 or 11g3 12g4 13f3 14g6. Indeed, these are the most common continuations.



3. Critical position.

the delayed move 11g4 with 12h4. Indeed, after 11g4 12g6 13f3, White doesn’t have anything much better than 14h4, which is blatantly worse than 12h4 13f3 14g6.

After 12h4, Black doesn’t have anything other than 13f3, reaching Figure 4.



4. After 11g4 12h4 13f3.

reach the same position, but this is perhaps the most accurate order, since the h3 move takes away White’s option of playing f8 rather than e8). White’s best move here seems to be 20g3, and I don’t know who’s winning. If Black plays 21c2, then White will have a quiet move to d6, but this can be met with d7. Maybe this is the thing to do, but 21f8 or 21d8, giving a little more edge, come into consideration, and it may even be possible to play 21g8. This position will bear more study, I think.

The expert move from Figure 4 is 14f2. One idea is that, if Black completes the pair with 15e2, then Black’s move to c4 is poisoned, so White can get on with 16g6 and be just a little better than in the 14g6 line. Another, more common,

This is an important position; we’ll see it again later. I think it’s quite close; Black can play either 15h4 16c6 17h6 18f8 19d8 (or 16f8-d8-c6-h6) 20d6 21c2, which I don’t like for Black, or 15c4 16f2 17h3 18f8 19h7, which looks a bit better to me. All this is almost completely unexplored, partly because White always has an alternative, which should probably be taken.

Now to 11g4. The ancient wisdom, which again seems to be correct, is that White should meet the immediate move 9g4 with 10g6, but the

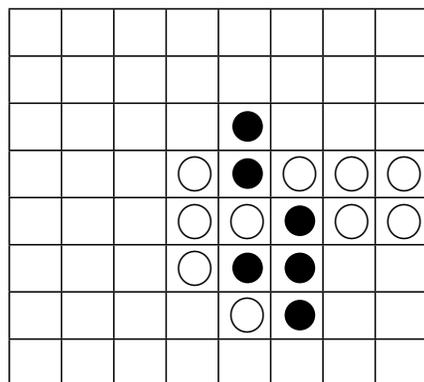
The White structure on the East edge is far from desirable; Black will be able to give White an unbalanced four essentially whenever he wants, without losing a tempo. For instance 14d6 15h6 16h7 (if White doesn’t take the edge, Black will probably take back himself, with great pressure) 17g3 is great for Black.

There’s not a great deal wrong with the natural move 14g6 here; the most common continuation is 15h3 16h2 17c4 (preventing both f2 and c6) 18e8 19h7 (most other orderings of these moves

plan is 14f2-e2-g3, which is probably quite strong. Black's more usual line is 15h6 16h7 17g3 18e2 19g2 20h3 (the only way to prevent the Stoner trap). White may well be ahead here, but there are lots of things for Black to try (THOR likes 15c3!), and it's not clear to me that 14f2 is really better than 14g6.

Conclusion? There isn't any good way for Black to avoid the position in Figure 4, so the lines discussed in the last two paragraphs are crucial. The current consensus, as I understand it, is that 14f2 works, and therefore that 9e3 is not a good move. There may be life in it yet, but now let's see if I can convince you that 9g4 is better.

As we've already mentioned, 10g6 is the recommended response to 9g4, but what's wrong with 10h4? We've already seen that the configuration of two white discs in the middle of the edge is often a weak one, but here there is also a tactical problem in that Black plays 11e3, and White has no access to either d3 or f3, so he has nothing much other than 12d6, which at least threatens f3. Black is visibly doing well. See Figure 5.

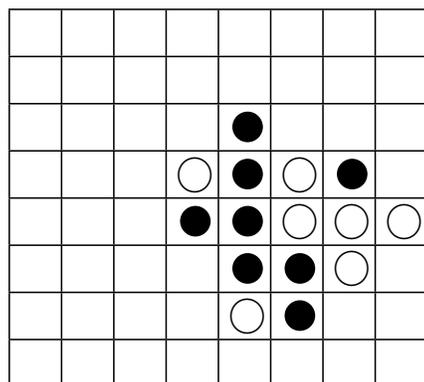


5. g4-h4 line, after 12d6.

Most people follow the “expert recommendation” of 13c3 now, and in fact it probably is best. A more natural move is 13f3, usually met with 14g6, when Black can play 15h3 16h2 17h7 18g3, transposing to 10g6 11e3 12f3 13g3 14d6 15h4 16h3 17h7 18h2, a line we'll have a lot to say about in just a minute, although we won't be reaching any firm conclusions. Another alternative is the plan of 13h3 14h2 15g6, poisoning f3 a little.

The idea of the main line 13c3 is to meet f3 with d3, which seems to work out very well for Black. In fact, White probably shouldn't play this pair at all, but should prefer to try to gain moves in the South-East, and put Black under pressure. So something like 14d7 15g6 16h6 is indicated, forcing Black to find one move now, with another to follow after f8. Probably White's plan doesn't work, as Black can always give White the five on the East and sacrifice against it.

So probably the world is right and 10g6 is correct. (By the way, this position can be reached from 8g6 9g4 10h5, or from 6g6 7g4 8e7 9f7 10h5, and White's moves after g6-g4 in both lines are the normal choices, so if you like this for Black you don't have to worry about preparing something against 6g6 or 8g6.) One plan now is for Black to give White the five, e.g., 11h6 12h7 13h4 14h3 15e8 16c5 – besides all the other transpositions, this can be reached starting from 9e8 10c5 11g4 12g6 – but White is probably ahead here. After 10g6, 11e3 is the choice of the vast majority. See Figure 6.

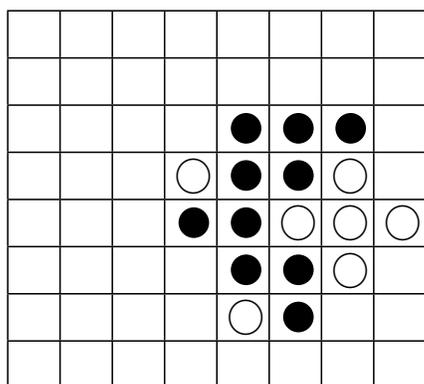


6. 9g4 10g6 11e3.

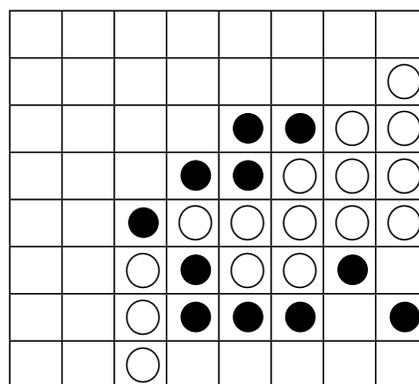
There are plenty of things for White to try here. 12d3 transposes straight into 9e3 10d3 11g4 12g6, which we've already seen is not good. 12h4 usually leads to 13f3 14d3, transposing into 9e3 10d3 11g4 12h4 13f3 14g6, which we've declared to be unclear. Alternatively, White can try 14e8 15d3 16d6, when Black must avoid 17d7 18c8, but both 17c7 and 17f8 seem to be fine. Black doesn't have much in the way of alternatives at move 13, so maybe this is how White should combat the opening.

The really aggressive move from Figure 6 is 12f8. Experience suggests that 13g3, possibly preceded by e8-d8, works for Black. Probably best for Black is 13e8 14d8 15g3 16d7 17d3 18f3 19h4 20h3 (some prefer 18h3-h4-f3, leaving Black wedged) 21g7 22d6 23h7. Black has to watch out for traps in the corner region; if Black is not wedged, then White can threaten to play h8 without allowing an h6 reply, whereas if Black is wedged, the even more evil possibility is h6 without allowing an h8 reply. Omitting the e8-d8 pair seems only to cause Black extra problems in the corner.

But far and away the most popular move from Figure 6 is 12f3. This is eminently logical, preventing Black going to f3 himself. The most common response is 13g3: see Figure 7.



7. After 12f3 13g3.

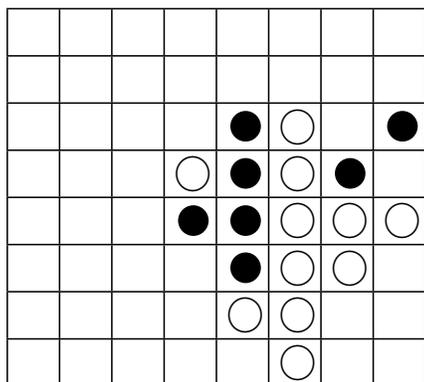


8. After 23c5.

One option is 14d3, cunningly reaching Figure 3! As discussed there, that position seems quite close, and maybe it's the thing to go for. White's usual move is 14d6, leading inexorably down the line 14d6 15h4 16h3 17h7 18h2 (see note after Figure 5 for another way to reach here) 19d7 20c8 21c7 22c6 23c5. See Figure 8; this position occurs 20 times in the THOR database. See also Brian Rose's article in OQ Fall 1988. I must admit that not too many of the moves here are what could be called natural, and I'd hate to play this for either side.

The usual move from Figure 8 is 24f8, leading to 25g7 (25e8 26d8 27c4 28f2 29g7 30e2 (threat: h8) seems good for White) 26f2 27c4 28d2 29e2 30d3; it seems to me that Black is just about losing this – he’ll probably have to take a tempo with h6-h8-g8 at some point, but that will be a large sacrifice, with no parity to come. But I could be wrong, and Black seems to do well in practice. Whatever, maybe 24c3 is better?

If not 13g3, then what? Most of the legal moves have been tried at some point, but the ones that seem to have some merit are 13d3 (intending 14f8 15h3) and 13h3. The idea is the same; if White replies to h3 with the natural h4, then Black will take the edge and pile on the pressure. If not, then one of Black’s options is to play h7 and gain another tempo at the expense of a weak edge. Probably 13d3 14f8 15h3 16d6 17g3 18c5 isn’t very good really, and there’s also 14d6 to consider, so let’s concentrate on 13h3. Now 14h4 15h6 is really not recommended for White, although it may not be completely dead. On 14c5, probably 15h4 is best, intending 16h6 17h7. My guess is that Black is ahead here. But the critical move is 14f8; see Figure 9.



9. After 13h3 14f8

This is a very logical move, taking away Black’s access to h4. Now 15d3 16d6 almost transposes into the line 13d3 14f8 15h3 16d6 (the f5 disc is different, which doesn’t look too critical), which is not recommended. 15h7 is possible, with a likely continuation 16c5 17c6, but White is fine here. The right move is almost certainly the fairly spectacular 15h6! Now White can choose between 16h4 17g3, when White has to struggle on with something like 18d7 19d6 20c6, or 16h7, when Black has a choice between 17g3 18d3 19c5 (or

19c4), and 17d3, when White may be obliged to play 18g3. Probably both lines are just about OK for White, but I’d rather be Black. So does 13h3 work? Well, I think so; I’ve been playing this as my main anti-diagonal weapon for some years now, but I haven’t actually had all that much experience with it, as people are doing whatever is necessary to avoid the line.

Of course, another reason I haven’t tried all the variations of this yet is that the Diagonal is a little out of fashion at the moment. When it comes back in, the lines we’ve been discussing here will get played, and some of the assessments will become clearer. But for now, I think 9g4 is better than 9e3, and that the 13h3 line is a very dangerous weapon, which White should probably evade with, for instance, 12h4. On the other hand, the sage doubtless knows many things that I don’t, and he, where possible, still plays the diagonal.

Our illustrative games feature vast amounts of Tastet and Brightwell. The end of the game between these two was featured in *Marriage of the Eel*; the Brightwell-Ralle ending is covered in *New York, New York*; the Brightwell-Murakami game appears with brief comments in *Feinstein A Gain-Gain*.

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

Tastet-Shaman
Paris 1990

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

Tastet-Brightwell
Correspondence 1989

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

Tastet-Daix
Brussels 1993

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

Komagata-Taniguchi
B.Rose Marriage 1992

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

Brightwell-Jensen
Paris 1992

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

Tastet-Leader
Cambridge 1992

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

Brightwell-Ralle
Worlds 1990

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

Brightwell-Murakami
Paris 1993

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

N.Takizawa-Svirskiy
Worlds 1993

Finally, many thanks to Marc Tastet and Didier Piau for their very useful comments on an early draft of this article, many of which have been incorporated into the final version.

TOURNAMENT REPORTS

Paris International Tournament – August 1994 *by Iain Barrass.*

This year six Britons arrived in Paris. Five of them, Roy Arnold, Iain Barrass, Joel Feinstein, Aubrey de Grey and Ian Turner, ready to show their Othello skills to the world, with Adelaide Carpenter offering her moral support. To join the British were the usual selection of French, Danes, Swedes and twelve Japanese - it was set to be a strong tournament.

The first evening was again a well organised invasion of a local restaurant. Also following in previous traditions was the Othello playing in Marc Tastet's front room. The first day's play on the Saturday got off to an exciting start, with no British player losing. This non-losing streak however did not last as other players moved ahead of us.

By the end of the first day there was no sign of the Japanese domination which was to follow. The traditional Saturday night meal in a restaurant did not occur. Instead all of the forty six players and followers were invited round to Emmanuel Lazard's parents' apartment near to the Seine for pizza. For this we all are grateful.

Little exciting happened on the second day except for an impressive sequence by Roy, who ended the day on four points, level with Ian. The 'best' British performance was by Joel Feinstein, finishing level seventh with seven points. At the top Tetsuya Nakajima and Makoto Suekuni ended the tournament with nine points apiece. The final was won by Nakajima 37-27 and 34-30, a very impressive first attempt in Paris!

Graham Brightwell, aided by the THOR database and endgame analyser, writes: Here are some of the best games from Paris, starting with half a scalp for our correspondent, and some de Grey action.

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

Barrass 32 Juhem 32

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

N.Takizawa 34 de Grey 30 de Grey 32 Tastet 32

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

In the first game above, Iain plays perfectly from at least 41 onwards. Philippe Juhem could have squeezed out a win by taking the c1 tempo earlier, either at 42, or at 46, where it just collects one more disc.

The early part of the de Grey-Tastet ending is also on the theme of “take the tempo earlier”. Aubrey is, reasonably enough, trying to leave the three squares in the SW as long as possible. But all the moves in the early 40s that he plays elsewhere are damaging the position a little, and he has to play the region eventually. Meanwhile, Marc should, the computer tells us, be looking to start the NE region with g2, so as to gain a tempo there while the diagonal is temporarily grabbed. Another reason for Black to play a8 is simply to prevent this. To be more precise, the following are perfect moves the players missed: 42g2 (+2), 43a8 (+8), 44g2 (=), 45a8 (+8), 47a8 (+4). When Aubrey finally does play the SW at 51 (see cover), he plays the natural move 51a8, and in fact play is perfect thereafter. However, there is a wonderful tactical shot in 51a7! 52a8 53b8. The point is that White has no access to h2, and after 54a2 55h8, White in fact has no legal moves(!) and 56b2 puts Black in total control. At 50, White can and should prevent this by playing 50h2, dropping into a more normal line and winning 33-31.

Now two Franco-Japanese games. Nobuyuki Takizawa gains a small measure of revenge for last year’s World semi-final defeat, while Stéphane Nicolet finds a striking X-square to beat the eventual winner.

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

Caspar 31 N.Takizawa 33

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

Nicolet 37 Nakajima 27

The slightly weird-looking 55a2 draws for Caspard; this seems to be a common way to play that region correctly – White usually (as here) finds that 56a3 is the way to go, and now Black is going to get the last move in the region. In any particular case, it’s a matter of counting, of course, and here it just turns out one disc better than the other plausible line. There are a couple of missed wins a bit earlier (48e1 is +2 and 43a2 is +4, with 43h6 being +2), but these are just “one of the other plausible lines being a few discs better” as well.

Results of the tournament appear in the last Bulletin.

A Great Weekend for Clocks *by Aubrey de Grey.*

The British National Finals were held in Cambridge for the first time since, er, the last time it was held in Cambridge. The venue was completely new though – Imre Leader had secured the Lubbock Room, a hall at the rear of Peterhouse. It's an ideal tournament room: well lit, well carpeted to reduce noise, and with a very high ceiling to reduce noise even more.

The schedule was as in recent years. The Federation's annual general meeting began at 1pm on the Saturday, and the tournament itself began at 3:30 with three rounds on Saturday and six more on Sunday. The AGM was unremarkable for the most part, with Graham Brightwell keeping firm control despite various rowdy elements in the crowd; the good humour of all was helped by the presence of a kettle, which has been sadly missed in the past. (It was also helped by the pub lunch, naturally.)

The most noteworthy feature of the meeting was the discussion of a proposal from Adelaide Carpenter (who was to referee the tournament, as for the previous three years) concerning refereeing of time defaults. The purpose of her idea was to minimise the incidence of unsatisfactory time losses, such as where both flags fall and neither player knows whose was first, or where one flag falls but the opponent overlooks this until after the game is over. She noted that the referee is the only individual allowed to point out to the players when a flag falls, and that when she is refereeing and sees one fall she does so. But the tightest games are most often the last ones to finish, so the crucial moments occur when the referee is busiest, pairing the next round. Her suggestion to overcome this was that she be authorised to appoint, just for the remainder of a particular game, a deputy who would be allowed to point out a time loss at that game. She would do this when she saw that a player was getting short on time; this would typically happen a little while before she had got submerged in doing the next round's pairings. Her proposal was enthusiastically endorsed.

So to the tournament. There were 22 players in the main event and just two in the Challengers (they played two games, and Martin Mulvaney came out on top to qualify for next year's Nationals). A recent change to the rules for qualification had been applied, but ineffectively: Guy Plowman had written to David Haigh saying that he would be unable to play, and David had written to Richard Brand, offering him the vacant slot as the highest non-qualifier in the Regional where Guy qualified. Unfortunately Richard declined this offer, with the result that we would have had an odd number of players if Eileen Forsyth had not been so kind as to step in.

A similar baptism was soon to befall Adelaide's new rule. In round three, Imre was playing Joel Feinstein, the reigning champion, and Joel became short of time (he lost on time in the end). Everyone who had finished was standing

around that game, and so was Adelaide, so no one noticed that Matthew Selby was also getting short. He was playing me and, at the point that I noticed he was only a few seconds from death, I had something like five minutes, and a strong position too. Various people passed by the game briefly, but no one got round to getting Adelaide to appoint a deputy to watch our game. A few minutes later we completed our last few moves, looked at the clocks and found that both flags had fallen! I was incredulous, but I must confess I have done exactly that (fallen asleep in a won position) before, against Pavel the Pole whose surname I am not brave enough to spell, in the Cambridge Open. That was when the fun started. It turned out that both Roy Arnold and Colin Hands had been nearby during this, and they were both quite sure whose flag had fallen first. Incredibly, they disagreed! Both were adamant, so Adelaide had no choice but to award half a point to each of us, and I have no idea what David chose to do about rating the game.

Sigh. At least it was the last round of the day so I could have a few pints at once to help forget about it. And they do say that a draw in an early round is advantageous for later pairings. Anyway, most of us decamped to the usual pub followed by the usual restaurant, where they know us so well we have a code word (the obvious, of course) to get a table quickly.

The first day had had its share of clock-related incidents, we thought, but compared to the Sunday it paled into total insignificance. I'm fairly sure that Imre's flag fell against Mike Handel and no one at all noticed until too late; something daft happened in the game between Mark Wormley and Colin Hands, which I think changed the result; even better was the incident when Joel played John Lysons. Joel had a won endgame and John had to pass twice. The first time, John handed Joel a disc; the second time, Joel needed another disc but John didn't have one. It took some time for Joel to understand this, and then a while longer for him to get a disc from another set; the result was that his flag fell while he was still flipping that last move. Three cheers to John, who flatly refused to accept the win.

Finally round 9 was over and we had a result. Imre, who had been a spy in Cheltenham for the previous two months (with no Othello whatever) and only got back home only the day before the tournament, had played as he used to in his invincible days and won seven of his nine games. Garry Edmead, who had also played very little recently (one Regional and the Cambridge Open, following a couple of years of retirement) had done even better, winning seven and drawing one, against Iain Barrass. Iain had also done better than ever until the last round: he lost to Ian Turner, when a win would have left him alone on 6.5 in third place and thus sent him to the Worlds in Paris. Since he lost, the third place was tied between four players: Joel, Graham, Mike and John, who had beaten Imre in

the last round. Joel and Graham were the top pair, so they went forward to the playoff for the final Worlds place.

Imre and Garry also played off for the title of champion, and Imre won quickly, essentially out of the opening. This allowed the maximum audience for the 3/4 playoff, in which Joel played a rather eccentric Perpendicular as White and Graham punished him, but Joel hung on with some characteristic absurdity until the endgame. At move 52 his flag fell. He noticed this. Graham didn't. There was a table referee (Mike), so Joel felt it was fair to play on. Everyone watching the game saw that the flag had fallen, except for those on the clock side of the board, who happened to include Adelaide: she'd reasoned that, since Mike was refereeing, she didn't need to be watching it. With supreme brilliance, however, Mike had somehow got it into his head that he was not allowed to point out the time loss! Graham played a move, and (most uncharacteristically) didn't see that Joel's flag had fallen. Joel played another. Finally, when pressing the clock after his next move, Graham saw the flag and it was all over. PS Graham won 33-31 on the board anyway.

We went our separate ways, exhausted and elated as usual. Somehow I took my office kettle to the pub (without the lead). Garry absolutely must have missed his coach home (or more precisely, to Peterborough where his fiancée was picking him up in the car). At least we found a pub that was serving food on Sunday nights. I slept well, despite having accidentally volunteered to write this report. *Various games from the event appear in the "Game analyses" section – Ed.*

Cambridge Xmas tournament *by Graham Brightwell.*

This event took place in December, so the main interest was in how Imre Leader would manage to avoid winning. Inventively, he turned up at the start, made sure that the room he had booked was all in order, then pleaded illness and left. This still left a rather strong field of ten, and we got in six rounds with plenty of time for lunch, drinks, dinner, and more drinks. We were particularly pleased to welcome two novices, Charlie McEwan and Spencer Barriball; they both knew what they were doing, but somehow only managed to win one game between them. I did say it was a strong tournament.

Anyway, I won with 6/6, Joel Feinstein scored 5 and Iain Barrass 4. Ian Turner, Adelaide Carpenter, Phil Marson and Aubrey de Grey all finished with 3, in something like that tie-break order. Roy Arnold had 2, and Charlie scored one point more than Spencer. The shock results were Phil beating Aubrey and Adelaide beating Roy. But the real shock was the legibility of Joel's transcripts; he was suggesting that this was entirely due to his using a new fountain pen, but can that really be all there is to it?

World Championships 1994 *by Fido Custard.*

This year's World Championship was held in a top class hotel situated in Paris, somewhere. The British team consisted of the team leader, Imre Leader, the team Edmead, Garry Edmead and finally the world famous mathematician, 100m swimmer, scuba diver and hairdresser, Graham Brightwell.

On the evening prior to the tournament we were all invited to a cocktail party where we all drank orange juice while a French singer talked in French about France, probably. The evening rounded off with the first round pairings, carried out to the accompaniment of dramatic music.

The first round saw all three Brits win 33-31 from losing positions. After the first day's play Feldborg, Tastet and Takizawa looked the favourites to reach the semifinals, with Graham close on their heels.

The second day's play saw Graham beat the mighty Takizawa. Unfortunately this victory was closely followed by defeats from his two team mates which put him out of the running. Garry had a late run but this was far too late. The four semifinalists were well ahead of the rest by the end of play.

After many good games Takizawa beat Feldborg for the championship and Tastet beat Leader for third place. Britain came second in the team Championship by only half a point, so congratulations go to France for winning. Congratulations must also go to Takizawa for an excellent performance and also his victory dinner speech, which was amazingly cool.

For the full results, and the best games from the third day, see the Bulletin. Well, actually the best game of all on the third day was probably the third Tastet-Feldborg game, which is written up at some length by Marc Tastet in the latest Fforum. Here, instead, are a few of the games featuring British players, with notes by a scuba diver and hairdresser.

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

Tastet 29 Edmead 35

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

Black to play at 49

Garry Edmead had an outstanding debut, finishing equal fifth. Here he is taking his biggest scalp. Garry claimed that this game was entirely opening

preparation, which is very impressive indeed. Quite how he knew in advance that Tastet was going to blunder away the game at 49 beats me! Actually, “blunder” is perhaps too strong a word: this isn’t so obvious. The way to win, fairly comfortably at that, is to play out the 3-square region h5-h6-h7, any way you like. Then White can either (a) play c1-e1 and g1-h1, leaving Black to play out the last five squares, or (b) play e1-c1-b2, which keeps parity but loses far too many discs to a1 followed by a7. After 49h1 50g1, White is getting an extra move to a1, keeping parity, unless Black goes for 51a8, when 52c1! takes away access to a7 and wins easily (52a7 just about wins as well; it’s not all due to this swindle).

Next come my two best games.

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

Rose 24 Brightwell 40

thing immediately in the North. It was important for me to play 32a6-a5 before going to c1, so as not to leave c7 as a free move. There must be a better way for him to play out the North; as it is, I got to finish with 40h7, taking him off access to g2. The diagonalisation I played led to a long, seemingly forced sequence, which ended up in clockwork fashion with me just beating him to both the a1 and the h8 corners. Apart from a totally irrelevant error from him at 57 (57a2 is –12), the computer confirms that our play is perfect from 38 onwards, at least. Can anyone push this back further?

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

Brightwell 34 Takizawa 30

The opening, to move 17, was one that David Shaman, Brian Rose and I had been looking at earlier. My 18d2 was pre-planned, but maybe not right. I thought the sequence 28-30 was very interesting: I played 28 thinking he would take back, which would leave his play in the North very poisoned. But Brian played 29f7 very quickly – probably he’s seen this theme before – and now I had to take back or lose a tempo on my intended line. What I gained was a free move at h7, but really I was a bit lucky that he couldn’t do any-

thing immediately in the North. It was important for me to play 32a6-a5 before going to c1, so as not to leave c7 as a free move. There must be a better way for him to play out the North; as it is, I got to finish with 40h7, taking him off access to g2. The diagonalisation I played led to a long, seemingly forced sequence, which ended up in clockwork fashion with me just beating him to both the a1 and the h8 corners. Apart from a totally irrelevant error from him at 57 (57a2 is –12), the computer confirms that our play is perfect from 38 onwards, at least. Can anyone push this back further?

It is probably no coincidence that the two games Takizawa lost were right at the end of the first day, when the time in Japan was something like five in the morning. Nevertheless, this is the first game he’s ever lost in the Worlds. (He won in 1985 without losing a game.)

I spent the latter half of the year using this as my main anti-perpendicular opening. I haven’t come to any significant conclusions about it; there are a few plausible lines that White has to avoid, but there are just as many plausible lines that

seem to be fine. This is one of the latter. As far as I'm concerned, 22g3 is a new move, but there's nothing spectacularly good or bad about it. After the game, Takizawa said he thought 30e1 was wrong, and that he'd missed 31f2. But I think he's (still?) winning after that, although I did get to work up some tactical play in the SE.

I had assumed he was going to play 46g7, as indeed he did, but in fact it's a game-loser, with 46g2 winning. After that, I can't play 47h1 because I don't have access to h2 afterwards, so I'd be forced into 47g7. Then we'd each grab our diagonal, and it turns out that I'd be losing. As it is, his chosen line forced me to cut the diagonal with a5, the game blew up, and it turns out that I was winning thereafter. The idea of 53a7 is that after 54b7 55b2, I get the discs on the b-file. 56f1 would have got him 31 discs, but as played I had to be careful not to play 57g2 – getting lots of discs, but allowing a swindle and only drawing.

After these wins in Rounds 5 and 6, I found myself jointly in the lead. Sadly my form rather disintegrated after that; here is my team-mate taking advantage.

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

Edmead 38 Brightwell 26

move, turning the entire wall and forcing the opponent to break your wall instead, often works out well. The underlying point is that it's very hard to gain a tempo breaking through a flat wall. Whether it's right here is another matter. There certainly are errors in the endgame, and I made the last serious one at 48. Looking at what happens in the game, it's clear(ish) that I suffered because he gets to play at a7 without turning horizontally, so I lost parity. The only way to avoid this or similar fates is to be wedged on the a-file, and the only move that does that is 48a2! Perfect play after that is 49a4 50a3 51b5 52b7 53b8 54c8 55d8 56e8 57g7 58g8 (P) 59a7 60a8 28–36.

Unfortunately, I remember having plenty of time, and generally seeing the sort of thing that was going to happen to me, but somehow I didn't get very close to seeing how to avoid it!

This turns out to be opening theory that Garry knew and I didn't, but I managed to play a standard line through 24; I think it worked about evenly. My decision to grab the h1 corner immediately is a bit dubious, but the alternative of 36c2 37c6 doesn't seem to leave me much. On the other hand it doesn't seem any better after the exchange of corners, although I do at least secure the discs on the second rank to work with.

My move 42c7 is “Leader flat wall theory”: if you have to break through a wall, this kind of

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

Leader 32 Tastet 32

lose a tempo, and then Black can play b7, which is quite crushing.

After going for the wedge, the two four-square regions in the West ought to be setting off alarm bells (see diagram below): if Black doesn't get something to happen, he may well find himself losing on parity. The sequence played in the game is a good illustration. 45f8 is actually still winning; it turns out to be just a disc or two better to go for a2 rather than a7, but Black shouldn't need to work this out.

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

Black to play at 45.

the three remaining moves in the SW, and plenty of discs. The even better plan is to play 45b1 now, essentially just to take the g1 tempo away, while leaving open the option of f8 later; how can this be worse than 45f8 immediately? After 45b1, 46g2 47b2 is gaining parity whatever, while 46b2 47a1 48a2 49b7 is getting plenty of discs, besides anything else.

Apologies to Imre for pulling this passage of play apart. Overall he did extremely well to make the semi-final (quite comfortably at that) in a field that was (on paper at least) strong even by the standards of the World Championships, with three past winners, four other ex-finalists, and one about-to-be-ex-finalist.

Publishable Leader wins are a bit thin on the ground, so here's the next best thing. Actually this isn't a particularly good game either, as it follows the typical Leader pattern for this tournament of getting well ahead, letting it slip in the ending, and just scraping home. Imre starts by trying out my opening, and it works in that 18h4 is a particularly bad innovation. It all goes well for Imre until the 40s, when a succession of inaccurate moves lets Tastet back into it. First, 43a7 is clearly better: White has to respond at b6 or

lose a tempo, and then Black can play b7, which is quite crushing. Imre's choice of 45f8, leaving no reply in the region, is very tempting at first sight, but strategically it's a very bad idea. The SE is an odd region where White would much rather not have to play, so it makes sense to leave it alone, at least for the moment. There are two decent plans here: one is to play 45b7, after which (a) 46g1 is met by 47a2, with the idea of getting a wedge at b1 and then stealing both g2 and h1, (b) 46b8 (the best move – this is the standard way not to lose a tempo in a region like this) is met by 47f8, getting two of

MISCELLANY

Syncopated Cerebrations *by Sid Cox.*

I am amazed and flattered that our Editor should have thought me capable of reproducing even one of his thoughts, let alone the sequence of them required to arrive at P O Biscuit’s new rating. However, his arithmetic is more easily imagined; viz: $(639 + 484 - 400)/2$ which rounds up to the published 362.

As for his thoughts, I offer the following. “Hmm. An odd number of rated players. Better stick Packet of Biscuits at the end again to even up the numbers. Moink! Its rating’s not the lowest. Oh well, let’s pretend it played a game with the lowest rated player, and lost. That should do the trick nicely.” [*Spot on, apart from the “Moink”, which is passé now – Ed.*]

The utterance “moink” was taken from the article “A Glossary of Useful Terms” in “New York, New York”, essential reading for real Othello players. Those familiar with the article might think that I have used “moink” out of context, but the article is four years old now, so it could well be that our Editor’s vocabulary has evolved since then.

I, and no doubt you also, have become exceedingly bored with the endless trivia about ratings in this column recently, so I have decided that enough is far too much and I won’t write about them again for a long time.

+ + +

No prizes for guessing who would need the biggest board for playing Edgeless Othello, aka Hornstein Othello. However, he was helped by Matthew Selby so I have decided to award the runner-up prize to Matthew.

			○	●			
			●	○			
				1	2	3	
						4	
						5	6

A speed of $c/2$.

Clearly it is impossible to move away from the centre faster than one square per move. Let’s represent this speed by the symbol c , by analogy with the speed of light. If expansion at c could be sustained for all 60 pieces then a 122×122 board would be needed. However, the need to set up flippable pieces means that the maximum possible average speed is less than this.

A straightforward scheme is to zig-zag away from the centre as shown opposite: e6 f6; g6 g7; g8 h8; etc.

Here every second piece is on the main diagonal, so expansion is at $\frac{1}{2}c$ and the board size needed is 62×62 . Note that all the action takes place at the moving end with this scheme.

Matthew's scheme is radically different. He "wastes" moves at the end near the centre, laying down a series of alternations on the main diagonal, and can then place successive pieces at the moving end and temporarily achieve c . e6 f6; f5 f4; g7 h8.

			○	●	4		
			●	○	3		
				1	2		
						5	
							6

Still $c/2$.

1: c2 c3; c4 d4; e4 e5;

7: b3 a3; f6 g7;

11: e6 d5; h8 i9; b4 c0; j10 k11; l12 m13;

21: d3 f5; n14 o15; e3 a4; p16 q17; r18 s19;

31: g6 f7; t20 u21; d6 e2; v22 w23; x24 y25;

41: g8 h7; z26 A27; g5 c6; B28 C29; D30 E31;

51: i8 h9; F32 G33; f8 g4; H34 I35; J36 K37;

The zig-zag system is used for the first six moves. Moves 15, 25, 35, 45 and 55 are especially powerful as they each cut the diagonal in two places, creating four alternations and allowing four moves in succession at the moving end. After a preamble this system settles down to expanding by six squares every ten moves, which is a steady-state average speed of $0.6c$.

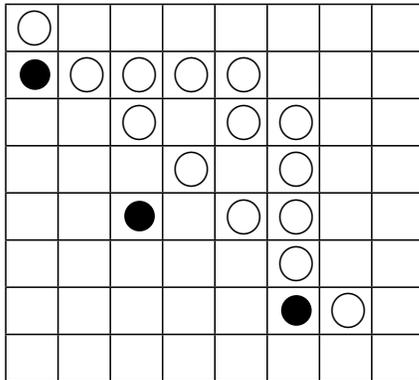
Cutting the diagonal in two places with one move is very effective, but it is not the maximum number of cuts possible. Black to f2 in the left-hand diagram below achieves the three-cut maximum and creates six alternations on the diagonal, enabling six moves in succession at the moving end. I call these triple cutting moves "blue touch-paper" moves. Assuming (and it's a very big assumption) that one could then make another blue touch-paper move, one could conjecture that a steady-state average speed of $\frac{6}{7}c = 0.857c$ could be reached.

Of course the problem is the overhead needed to place the ten extra pieces needed to make the blue touch-paper move work. Things are a bit better if we work horizontally rather than diagonally, as shown on the right below. Here the blue touch-paper move to d1 cuts the active row 3 in three places, and only six extra pieces are required to make this happen. Some of these could conceivably be used as pieces in setting up the next blue touch-paper move, so that maybe

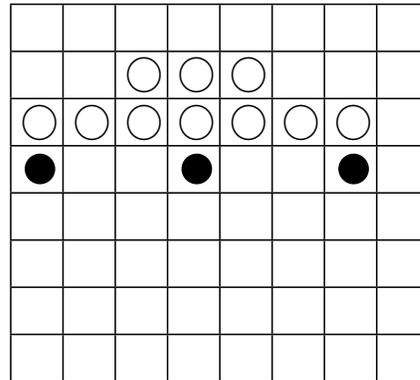
However, his average speed is the same as the zig-zag method. With the flexibility provided by Matthew's method, and by combining it with the zig-zag method, Aubrey managed to expand the required board size to 72×72 . Here is how he did it, achieving an overall average speed of $\frac{35}{60}c = 0.583c$.

His notation shifts the centre pieces to a1, b1, a2, b2, and uses upper case letters when the lower case letters have been used up. There is also a row 0.

fewer than six set-up moves would be required once things are under way. Also, as with Aubrey’s scheme, some of the set-up moves themselves could cut the active row so they needn’t all be wasted. Do these ideas allow us to go faster?



f2: Bang!



d1: Crash!

I’d be interested to hear from anyone who can beat Aubrey’s 0.6c. My prize fund is now exhausted, so your only reward is fun and fame. Sorry!

Letter to Another Editor — *a reply from Salvador Rockinghorse.*

The Editor has asked me to respond to a snivelling letter in the last *Othello Quarterly*. David Parsons, who we are led to believe is one of the less pitiful U.S. players, wrote to the Editor, one Mr. Clarence Hewlett, daring to criticise the use of pseudonyms in *OQ* and even in this august journal. His main complaint, extracted skillfully by myself from the attendant flummery, is that the identity of the author may make a difference to the reader’s appreciation of the article. Mr. Hewlett replied cringingly that, when a good article is submitted under a pseudonym, he certainly can’t “run the risk of offending any contributor to *OQ*”. Well, pah! Surely a true editor should not hesitate to offend and indeed to discipline contributors who fail to meet the required standards.

The point, let me inform you, is this. When an author – at least one, such as I, whose article will be of a standard to merit Mr. Parsons’ attention – chooses to use a pseudonym, he is perfectly well aware that the supremely ignorant “average reader” will not penetrate the disguise. If I, the author, choose not to present my own prestigious name as part of my superlative article, then what right has Mr. Parsons, a mere reader, to object?

I do not endorse Count Rockinghorse’s views, of course! Indeed, I wholeheartedly agree with Clarence’s point. Imre Leader explains that his alter ego writes objective articles (especially game analyses), while articles by “Imre Leader” express more personal views. Another explanation for pseudonyms is that the editors don’t want you to realise how many of the articles are written by how few people!
 – Ed.

A Plug for the Back Issues *from David Haigh.*

Here's a way you can help our finances, improve your Othello, have a good read, understand the "in" jokes and have a good chuckle. Buy all the back issues of our newsletter you don't have already! They really are all very good, there's not a duff one among them. Age cannot wither them, nor custom stale their infinite variety, to misquote someone who knew a lot about Othello.

To be honest, their variety may not be quite infinite, but it is still pretty large. Nearly all issues contain articles on advanced strategy, game analyses, tournament reports and puzzles. The following list of other topics, perhaps biased towards the less expert player, may help you to choose which issues to order, if you don't want them all.

Elementary strategy and game analyses: Dec 87, Jan 89, Jan 90, Aug 90, Aug 92, Jan 94, Aug 94.

Rating system: Jul 88, Aug 90, Jul 93.

Variations on Othello: Jan 89, Aug 89, Jul 93.

History of Othello: Aug 89, Jan 93.

Glossary: Aug 90, Jan 91.

Brilliant, humorous, real-life articles: Aug 91, Jan 93.

Othello computer programs: Aug 89, Feb 92, Jul 93, Aug 94.

The names of the newsletters are interesting in themselves:

Dec 87.	Nine Hot Spleens
Jul 88.	Much Ado About Wipeouts
Jan 89.	Liberté, Egalité, Parité
Aug 89.	Marriage of the Eel
Jan 90.	Feinstein A-Go-Go
Aug 90.	WANTED Dead or Alive
Jan 91.	New York, New York
Aug 91.	York, New York
Feb 92	The Cloning of Joella Feinstein
Aug 92.	The Rucksack of Damocles
Jan 93.	The Killer Bees
Jul 93.	Forty Billion Nodes Under The Tree
Jan 94.	Feinstein-A-Gain-Gain
Aug 94.	The Streets of Askelon

The prices have had to increase in line with the membership fees. Including post & packing, they are £4 each for UK members and £5 for overseas members. There is a discount for quantity: every tenth copy is free.

A Doctor Writes

Due to my unique dual role as psychiatrist and Othello player, I am frequently asked about the various mental diseases that may afflict the otherwise well-balanced player in the stressful atmosphere of an important game of Othello. To save many of you a consultancy fee that may, I fear, prove beyond the means of most, I would like to set out below a few of the more common illnesses, their causes and, where possible, their cures.

Superiority Complex This often occurs when in a slightly advantageous position against a markedly inferior player. The typical thought running through the afflicted player’s brain runs as follows. “If I play there, then White, Black, White, and, although he’s had to take two horrible edges, he’s still alive. So there must be something better. . . . Why didn’t I think a bit longer two moves ago. . . . Oh my god, I might lose. . . .” The cure is to just play the obvious crushing move, and try to pretend your opponent is Paul Ralle, against whom you’d pay a fair fraction of my fee to reach this position.

Junioritis This can strike when well ahead against a veteran player, looking for a kill. “If I play there, then White, Black, White, and, although he’s had to take another horrible edge, he’s still alive, and maybe he’ll find something. There must be something better, surely. . . . I wonder what he’s thinking. I bet he’s seen a complete kill for me. He probably thinks I’ve played like a total novice for the last few moves, getting this far ahead and then blowing it. I know I’m going to blow it. Probably I’ve got to find something spectacular here, before it’s too late. What about that X-square?” Don’t play it! The veteran’s thoughts are more like: “if he plays the obvious line, I’ve had it. On the other hand, if I’m lucky he’ll go for the X-square; people tend to do that sort of thing against me, for some reason.”

Diarrhoea “I need to go to the loo. Maybe after this move. Oh no, if I do that, then he’ll probably take back almost immediately, so I’ll have to think again. So that’s out. What else is there?” Go between rounds. Advanced sufferers follow this advice, and still have to go at least once during each game; maybe they should take up Go.

Time Trouble Panic (I) “Oh god, he’s threatening that. No time, quick, maybe the X-square works. Play it!” Three seconds thought would reveal that the X-square doesn’t work. The solution is to play the boring move instead. Better still, leave more time for the endgame.

Time Trouble Panic (II) “The obvious move is to take back the edge, otherwise I’ll give up the corner, lose two tempi and run out of moves horribly. But I haven’t used much time yet, so perhaps this is a good opportunity to stop, take stock, and think a bit harder. What happens after I take back? . . .” See above.

Scenariosis “I seem to be a little behind here, and my opponent sometimes plays well, so probably I’ll lose. But maybe that’s not too bad, since Leader will surely beat Feinstein, and Plowman will probably win too. So then I’ll be paired against Plowman in the last round, no, wait, who has Leader left to play?! Maybe he has to play Plowman, and I’ll get, oh heck, Edmead. Or maybe de Grey; how many’s he on? Is he winning that?” (Leans over to glance at next table but two. Sees all but the nearest two columns.) “Oh no, looks like he’s losing. What’s my tiebreak like?” This is better left to the end of the round (see also *Diarrhoea*), when you can find a fellow sufferer (or, failing that, anybody else) to listen to you.

News from Doncaster *by Eileen Forsyth.*

In the warmth of a July evening, the Doncaster group enjoyed the garden setting for their games. The fresh air and singing of the birds must have inspired Iain Forsyth, as he emerged the winner of the evening.

With reduced numbers in August (Phil Marson being involved in a close encounter on a roundabout), Colin Hands won all his games, including a 37–27 win against Iain Barrass.

September had a grand turnout of ten players – it was good to see Phil fully recovered, bringing Joel Feinstein and Bruce Kyte along to the event. Joel naturally was 1st, with Mark Wormley 2nd, Iain Barrass 3rd and Maurice Kent 4th, all on two wins.

There was no play in October, due to holidays. November saw Bruce, for the first time, winning all his games, beating Iain Barrass 34–30. The two Iains and Mark finished on two wins.

In December we had our usual Christmas get-together, starting at 2p.m. Mah-jong proved very enjoyable under Phil’s excellent guidance. Other games played included Scrabble, Chinese Checkers (dominated by Bruce) and an entertaining game called ‘Pop Groups’ brought along by Mark. Everyone relished the variety of Christmas fare, and the evening finished with us all taking part in an exciting game of Taxi.

We had a phone call from a newly arrived classics teacher, full of enthusiasm for the Othello group. Unfortunately we had to tell her that this was a boardgames club rather than Shakespeare!

We are holding a mini-tournament on Saturday February 18th, 2p.m., at 49, Balmoral Rd., Doncaster. There are four rounds, and tea. All are welcome. Please note that the March and April get-togethers will take place on the third Thursday of the month rather than the second.

Finally, congratulations to Iain Barrass, who was voted player of the year by an overwhelming majority.

Ratings

The Rating List *maintained by David Haigh.*

Not a lot of action at the top, with a few players swapping places, but no huge jumps. Iain Barrass was one of those gaining a place, cementing his position in the top nine now. Phil Marson is the one player really making a move, but it is the off season, so a lot of players haven't played at all since last time. Mark Wormley's good Nationals is reflected in a jump back up the charts. Britain's Number 51 is a real player, who has requested anonymity. Britain's Number 3 has never won a tournament, and has never requested anonymity either.

1	Graham Brightwell	353	1831	28	Martin Mulvany	8	1176
2	Imre Leader	364	1815	29	David Haigh	314	1169
3	Garry Edmead	144	1754	30	Colin Hands	102	1166
4	Michael Handel	270	1723	31	Roy Arnold	381	1165
5	Guy Plowman	216	1708	32	John Bass	82	1164
6	Joel Feinstein	339	1690	33	Jonathan Simpson	12	1127
7	Peter Bhagat	295	1674	34	Margaret Plowman	19	1117
8	John Lysons	186	1590	35	Graham Chappell	41	1087
9	Iain Barrass	238	1528	36	Gareth Thomas	18	1066
10	Aubrey de Grey	349	1512	37	Adelaide Carpenter	87	1044
11	Ian Turner	194	1468	38	Richard Brand	18	1034
12	Jeremy Das	202	1461	39	Neil Cuthbertson	59	1022
13	Jeremy Rickard	68	1430	40	Simon Nickson	22	1018
14	Ken Stephenson	197	1416	41	Jim Brewer	86	1017
15	Phil Marson	266	1354	42	Rodney Hammond	52	1004
16	Mark Atkinson	84	1349	43	Ali Turner	90	997
17	Phil Brewer	101	1339	44	Charles McEwan	6	969
	Trevor Fenton	4	1339	45	Myles Harvey	53	952
19	Michael Trent	11	1333	46	Liam Stephens	13	894
20	Matthew Selby	177	1317	47	Spencer Barriball	6	860
21	Mark Wormley	292	1284	48	James Preen	2	848
22	Martin Fancy	18	1260	49	Ashley Hammond	32	836
23	Chris Wakelin	30	1251	50	Nigel Barforth	6	813
24	Iain Forsyth	275	1210	51	Anne Onymous	2	776
25	Simon Turner	83	1196	52	Gareth Taplin	7	733
26	Robert Stanton	137	1193	53	Eileen Forsyth	170	653
27	Bruce Kyte	43	1185	54	Joan Stephenson	6	484