

Problem with the Light

The Newsletter of the British Othello Federation

February 1996

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White to play and lose

From the Final of the 1995 British Championships.

Black (Imre Leader) has just played 41g2.

What is your choice now?

(There is only one losing move.)

P.S. White (Graham Brightwell) didn't play it, ...

...but we couldn't think of anything better for the cover.

See p.20.

INFORMATION

Othello is manufactured and marketed by Peter Pan Playthings, Swindon.

The British Othello Federation is an independent body. Annual subscription for British residents costs £6 (with the first year's membership including a copy of the instructional book *Othello: Brief & Basic*). Ten years membership is available for £55. An overseas subscription costs £8 per year, or £75 for ten years. Cheques or postal orders payable to the *British Othello Federation* should be sent to David Haigh. The price of *Othello: Brief & Basic* for existing members is £6.

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Editorial: The Federation's continuing financial difficulties have forced us into a reduction in the size of the newsletter. We shall probably go to a schedule with three newsletters per year of about this size, and discontinue the Bulletins. We can only offer our apologies, along with this leaner, meaner newsletter. Comments and suggestions are welcome.

Forthcoming Events

The 1996 Regionals *compiled by Roy Arnold.*

To take part in any Regional, just contact the organiser, who will tell you how to get to the venue. Tournaments all start at 9.30am, with the exception of Nottingham.

NOTTINGHAM. March 23 (**10am start**). **Organiser:** Joel Feinstein, 324 Queens Rd. West, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 1GS, phone 0115-9251120 (home), 0115-9514968 (work), email jff@maths.nott.ac.uk. **Venue:** Delta Suite, University Staff Club, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD. **Note:** Please contact Joel in advance so he can send you a map.

SHEFFIELD. April 6. **Organiser:** Roy Arnold, c/o DIAL Sheffield, 100 Park Grange Road, Norfolk Park, Sheffield S2 3RA, phone 01909-473831 (home), 0114-2727996 (work). **Venue:** The Shop Community Project, 283 Prince of Wales Road, Sheffield S2 1FH.

WELLINGBOROUGH. April 13. **Organiser:** Margaret Plowman, 137 Torrington Crescent, Wellingborough, phone 01933-678886 (home), 01933-278000 (work). **Venue:** Victoria Centre, Palk Rd., Wellingborough.

EASTBOURNE. April 20. **Organiser:** Rodney Hammond, 70 Percival Rd., Hampden Park, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 9JN, phone 01323-502167. **Venue:** Scout Hut, Elms Ave., Hampden Park, Eastbourne, E. Sussex.

PORTSMOUTH. May 18. **Organiser:** Ian Turner, 41 Jessie Rd., Southsea, Portsmouth, Hants., phone 01705-789435 (work). **Venue:** Havelock Community Centre, Fawcett Rd., Southsea, Portsmouth, Hants.

OXFORD. May 25. **Organiser:** Matthew Selby, New College, Oxford OX1 3BN, phone 01865-240716 (home), 01865-273549 (work). **Venue:** Lecture Room 4 (probably), New College, Oxford.

CAMBRIDGE. June 8. **Organiser:** Aubrey de Grey, 1 Beaconsfield Terrace, Victoria Road, Cambridge CB4 3BP, phone 01223-366197 (home), 01223-333963 (work). **Venue:** Upper Hall, Peterhouse, Cambridge.

MANSFIELD. June 22. **Organiser:** Phil Marson, 107 Fourth Avenue, Edwinstow, Mansfield, Notts NG1 9PH, phone 01623-823970 (home). Further details will be available from Phil nearer the time.

DONCASTER. July 6. **Organisers:** Sue Barrass (01302-882476) and Eileen Forsyth, 49 Balmoral Rd., Doncaster DN2 5BZ, phone 01302-364626. **Venue:** St. John Ambulance Brigade Headquarters, St. Sepulchre Gate West, Doncaster.

Other events

There will be a 4-round mini-tournament in York on February 17th, starting at 1:00. Contact Mark Wormley (address on p.2) for more details.

This year's National Final will be held in Doncaster, almost certainly on the weekend of August 17-18. Contact Eileen Forsyth or Sue Barrass (see Doncaster Regional) for more information.

This year's European Grand Prix tournaments are scheduled as follows.

Cambridge: February 10-11. Copenhagen: April 27-28. Florence: May 25-26. Brussels: July??. Paris: August 31 - September 1.

Contactable current members – U.K.

Avon:

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

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David Haigh, 62 Romsey Road, Winchester, Hants, SO22 5PH.

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South Yorkshire:

Roy Arnold, c/o DIAL Sheffield, 100 Park Grange Road, Sheffield, S2 3RA.

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

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

Staffordshire:

Philip Brewer, 91 Lyneside Road, Knypersley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST8 6SD.

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

Suffolk:

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

Surrey:

Raymond Francis, 9 Wood Court, Worplesdon Road, Guildford, GU2 6RN.

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

Sussex:

Rodney Hammond, 70 Percival Road, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, BN22 9JN.

Warwickshire:

Mike Handel, 59 Tanyard Close, Tanyard Farm, Coventry, CV4 9TP.

West Yorkshire:

Colin Hands, 18 Springfield Avenue, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 5QZ.

TOURNAMENT REPORTS

The 1995 Paris Open *by Graham Brightwell.*

The Anglo-Japanese domination of this event continued, with Takeshi Murakami beating me 2-0 in the Final. In fact, a British or Japanese player has won this tournament every year since 1988 (and in five of these eight years the losing finalist has been British or Japanese). This is despite the fact that, as a rule, only a few of the top players from the elite nations attend, whereas the event is always packed with French so-called superstars.

[Author's Note. It has come to my attention that certain French players are beginning to take some of my remarks in this newsletter seriously! I should therefore point out that it is not, and never has been, my intention to cause offence. I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal view that many of the French players are genuinely of top international class.]

I said in the Bulletin that this was the best I've played for some years. In fact, through the 11 rounds of the Swiss, I suspect this was the best I've ever played. The secret, so it seems, is to spend the previous two weeks away from home without an Othello set, spend the day before the tournament travelling from Prague to Heathrow to Waterloo to Paris (not stopping at home on the way), and arrive at Marc Tastet's flat around midnight (thank you for your forbearance, Marc). I'm afraid that this idyllic preparation is probably not easy for everyone to reproduce.

I was delighted with my score of 10/11, but Murakami managed 10½, after a few escapades, and he beat me comprehensively in the Final. The full results are in the last Bulletin.

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Letter from Hugo Calendar

There is a definite need for a good-sized book on Othello, and so I am working on a collection of articles, puzzles, analyses, etc., which should be at least a couple of hundred pages long. I have permission from the USOA and the Nordic federations to use any material they've published, and also from the BOF to use a small amount of newsletter material. Hopefully I can present the best of all the material available to me, and produce a single piece of work that beginners can use on their way to becoming advanced.

I welcome all thoughts and suggestions on material that you consider especially helpful in developing your game. Please send mail to me at:

Hugo Calendar, Ostermalmsgatan 14A, 722 14 Vasterås, Sweden, or
hugo@csd.uu.se.

Many thanks are as ever due to everyone involved with running the event, particularly Emmanuel Lazard (both for refereeing the tournament, and for providing a Saturday-night pizza party venue that has to be experienced to be believed) and Marc Tastet (for allowing an extremely assorted bunch of British players to more or less take over his flat for the weekend).

On to some games, mostly mine, with brief notes.

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

Penloup 27 Brightwell 37

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

Black to move at 41.

I've never been sure what to do against this move 9. Experts had told me that 10c4 is best, so I try it, and this is apparently the most common line until my 18, which seems to be an innovation. The usual move is 18b4, followed by 19c3 20c2. My line isn't obviously worse, although 23h5 might work out a little better for him. At 31, he has an awkward choice; 31a2 is met by the Stoner trap 32b7, and he can't quite afford to let me play both a5 and a2, so probably his move is right, even though it allows the very pretty X-square in response. His 33 is again almost certainly right; if he just breaks through routinely in the North and East then he'll be losing. At 36, maybe the other C-square is better, to avoid the swindle situation that occurred. (Other people are in computer range at this point, and I'm not, so I'm being careful not to express a firm opinion.)

Once more, I agree with his choice at 37 – he is threatening to play b8, and it is difficult for me to prevent this. My moves at 38 and 40 both stop the threat momentarily, but now (see Diagram) he has the option of playing 41e1. What should I do about that? What I was planning was 42g2, but that turns out to sacrifice too much, and loses to 43b1. Another possibility is 42b1, which draws. Bizarrely, the only way to win after 41e1 is 42b8!, getting rid of the threat for good and all, but at what seems to be a tremendous cost. Back in the real game, Penloup chooses 41b1, which is also very close. I'm always going to meet a move to h3 with g2, which is fairly painless once he has a four on the east edge. The ending is perfect until 51: I thought I was winning comfortably by now, but the computer holds me to a 33-31 win by playing 51g1 of all things. 53g1 would also save a couple of discs for him.

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

Tastet 30 Brightwell 34

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

White to play at 38.

This one came at the end of the first day. Going into the game, we were tied for second place on 5/6, so this had the makings of a critical game.

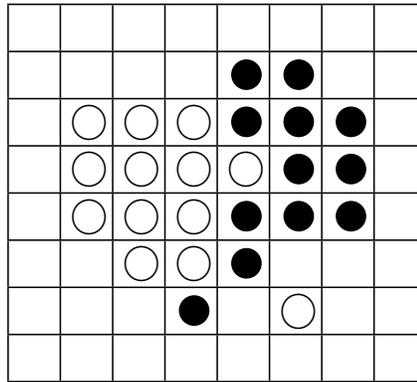
Again I'm out of my opening book early – this time after move 13. At move 16, I think it's fair to say I fall into an opening trap – 16d1 is surely better. 17g1 is very nice, effectively gaining a tempo on the North edge, and from now on I'm in trouble. My sequence in the early 20s isn't too clever either, and by move 25 it's already obvious I'm going to be very short of moves soon. The sequence 26-30 is close to being forced; I squeeze out moves at c2 and g6, but leave him with two free moves coming at b1 and h7, whereas I have just one at h3. He gets access to his moves and plays them, and now I would appear to be dead (see Diagram above).

If, for instance, the e5 disc were black, things wouldn't be bad at all, since then I could play 38h4 39h2 40g7, a perfectly sound sacrifice, and he'd have to break through horribly. However, as things stand the g-file ends up all white in that sequence, so he can play 41a5, and then both g8 and h8. So, there's nothing for it but 38b2. This is certainly not tantamount to resignation; he has three poisoning edges, no quiet way on to the diagonal, and soon my h4-h2-g7 sequence will be possible, and I'll have a spare tempo plus parity.

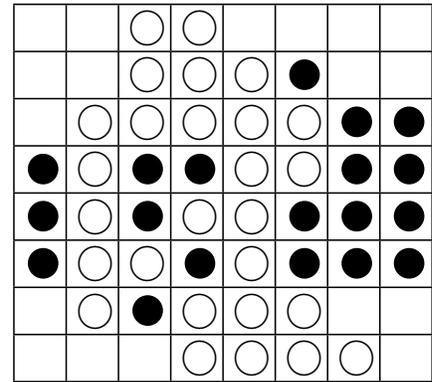
The next few moves are frighteningly complex, and the ending is very close. Actually, we had a pretty decent stab at it, and the only errors were tough ones. It turns out that 39b4 wins, whereas his choice of 39a5 loses – one principle at work here is that he should prefer not to put a piece on the a-file before taking the corner; the point being that if he does, then I can essentially guarantee to organise a wedge on the west edge, which limits the value of the corner he is winning. The computer reveals that I am winning at 40, but only drawing after I fail to play 42h4 the moment it becomes available. His 45h4, stopping me gaining that tempo, is well-intentioned, but turns out to be the decisive game-losing move. The simple 45b6 draws, and forces me to find 46g2 h1 g7 a1 d8 a3 a2 h8 b8 h2 h4 b7 g8 h8 h7 to avoid defeat. In fact, that's one of the more comprehensible lines the computer throws up. Play is perfect from 49 onwards.

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

Murakami 42 Brightwell 22



After 21d7.



Black to play and win.

This is the first game of the Final, which was the harder-fought game. My play in the opening is a consequence of a working lunch just prior to the match; David Shaman showed me how Murakami had played against both him and Kitajima. I don't think I'd've chosen this move 14 for myself, and in retrospect I doubt it's right. Maybe simply 14a5, or 14a3, works out better. Shaman chose 16f1; I followed Kitajima for a bit longer, but played to the south at 20 rather than his 20e1. My move is probably fair enough in itself, but after 21d7 (see Diagram) I'm sure I ought to play 22d8; I think I'd missed the fact that his reply to 22f6 is 23e7 – if the best I have then is 24d8 (which maybe it isn't) then I should clearly omit the pair so that he doesn't have a response in the south-east.

Once we've played out the sequence through 27, he has a very thematic idea of playing to c8 without giving me access to c7, offering me the usual choice of a bad edge (b8), or a wedge move turning too much for comfort (e8). I decided I couldn't afford 28a6 c8 e8 c7 – I do have h5 at that point, but the south-east region will then surely kill me in the ending. The main point of my 28h4 is just to prevent c8 for the moment, but it also has the nice feature that he won't be able to get to h3 soon.

I can't remember why I played 32a5 rather than 32a3; several people criticised this afterwards, and I think they're probably right. After 32a5 33a6 as played, I'm under pressure not to make the third rank all white and give him a quiet move to a3. As the game sequence shows, that pressure becomes surprisingly strong. After 32a3 he has several ways to continue on that edge, but none of them seem particularly strong.

At 38, I could play g1, but it looked like I'd need another tempo anyway after a reply to h4 (if 40h7, then h3-h2-a3), so I went straight for the X-square at b7. This comes fairly close to working, as I get several more tempi in the south while he takes all the moves to the east.

After 42, I thought I was going to win. I have a free move at g7 to come, after which fundamentally I am going to lose the south edge in exchange for wedges on both the sides and parity everywhere. But he had seen 43c8! This has many

lovely features, the prettiest of which I missed completely. (It is also the only winning move.) For a start, 44a8 45h8 is horrible: 46f1 or 46g1 is met by 47b2, while after 46b8 the one-square odd region at a7 kills me. So, can't I just get back to the previous plan with 44b8 and 46g7? Not when the move in the middle is 45e1, no! I got as far as reaching out my hand to play 46g7 before I realised my access had vanished. The game wasn't quite over; If I had managed to keep parity, then I could have kept the score respectable (48b2 would hold it to 37-27).

After 43c8, I do have a better try with 44g7. I rejected this at the time because of 45a7, but in fact after 46a8 b8 a3 e1 f1 I have a firm grip on parity, and I win 33-31 by making obvious responses. After c8-g7, the right move is 45g2. Now I have nothing better than 46b8, but he can eke out a win with 47h8 h7 e1 (this seems to be crucial; Black seals himself off from an even region) f1 g1 h1 h2 b2 a8 a7 a3 a2 a1 b1 34-30.

To end with, here are a couple of neat finishes from other British players.

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

Feinstein 39 Kikuchi 25

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

Black to play at 47

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

Arnold 36 Calendar 28

Joel Feinstein claims that this pretty four-corner sacrifice win is all he remembers from the tournament. You might care to amuse yourself by trying some other lines from the diagram position – there are plenty of ways to win in style.

Roy Arnold had an excellent tournament, beating several well-known players. Here he is beating Swedish-based American Hugo Calendar with what *Othello Brief & Basic* dubs an “American style of play”, as exemplified by the up-and-at-'em edge moves at 23, 31, 39, Play is perfect from 44 on. Hugo's 50g7 looks decisive at first glance, but Roy finds one more devastating tempo with b1-a1-a2.

The Hard-working Wedge *by Aubrey de Grey.*

Not being one to blow my own trumpet or anything (*Come off it. Ed.*) OK OK, this article will indeed contain the occasional brief and oblique reference to the fact that at the eleventh attempt I finally succeeded in finishing in the top three in a Nationals, thus qualifying for the UK team for the Worlds. But first things first.

Someone who has been trying even longer than me, Ian Turner, organised this year's tournament in Portsmouth, and made an excellent job of it. The venue was an ideal room in the University which didn't cost too much, had good lighting, floor didn't squeak, etc; its only drawback was the unavailability of a photocopier, which meant I had to prevail on everyone to give me their originals for typing in – except for Iain Forsyth, who copied his out by hand in what seemed like about three minutes flat.

Round 1, surprise 1; Mike Handel lost to Mark Wormley. This despite Mike being allowed to play a Cat, which is one of his specialities, and Mark playing a move 10 that is “well known not to work”.

Imre played me in round 3 and, to play at move 3, had a problem with the light that prompted us to change tables. Thus flustered he played the Tiger move 3, which no alert British player who actually cares about winning has played against me for about a decade, because none of them can be bothered to learn how to escape from my daft move 6. After much rolling on the floor I pulled myself together and coasted to a won endgame, which I of course threw away at move 50.

Pub, sleep, round 4, round 5, round 6, pub, lunch, round 7, round 8 ...

Final round! Imre had been out of sight since lunch and the other place in the final was almost certain to go to Graham unless he lost to Iain Barrass (which he didn't). It was getting tight just behind, though; Phil and Mark had been playing particularly well and were on 6 and 5 respectively, and no one else was on 6. I was drawn as White against Phil, who astonished me by also playing a Tiger at move 3, and I duly crunched him up so securely that even I couldn't throw it away at the end. End of the Swiss, and these were the positions:

1.	Graham Brightwell	7	9.	Ian Turner	4
2.	Imre Leader	9	10.	John Lysons	4
3.	Aubrey de Grey	6	11.	Iain Forsyth	4
4.	Phil Marson	6	12.	Bruce Kyte	4
5.	Mike Handel	6	13.	Matthew Selby	3
6.	Mark Wormley	5	14.	Chris Wakelin	2
7.	Iain Barrass	5	15.	Colin Hands	2
8.	Roy Arnold	5	16.	Eileen Forsyth	0

So it was Imre against Graham in the final, and Imre failed for the fourth time to retain his title, Graham winning 39-25 after a splendidly quixotic extraction-based attempt by Imre to redeem an utterly dire opening that he said he played because of being genuinely scared of Graham's lines against his preferred openings.

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

Leader 25 Brightwell 39

Some notes by Graham Brightwell, who by the way didn't insert the "Ed" comment above – cf. his report on Paris.

13e7 is more usual, but 13h4 has been tried fairly often, notably by many programs including LOGISTELLO. The line through 20 is fairly typical. Imre's 21 is bad; he'd be much better off playing 21e8 with the aim of following with e7 and d7. After 24, Imre is clearly in trouble unless he can run me out of moves, and the sequence 30-34 leaves him one tempo short. Over the next few moves, my wall caves in and he seems to be dying horribly. So 41g2 is well worth trying, just out of desperation. I thought that I couldn't afford to play 42a6, because of 43b2, but I can then play 44f8 (in fact, there are several wins) 45g8 46b7!, and I will be able to get to h1, h8 and g7 eventually, which is bound to get enough discs. In fact, the only move that doesn't win at 42 is 42f8, because of 43g8 and now: (a) 44a6 45c5 (P) 46a4 end of game (or play a few more moves and score a wipeout), (b) 44b7 45a7 and White doesn't get on the diagonal any time soon. My choice of line at 42 would have been a clear win if I could just follow up with g8 and gain another tempo in the South-East, but his 43 prevents that, and after 45 it's not clear I'm going to get enough discs. In fact, there's not much going on after that, and most sensible sequences get me something like 35 discs. The relatively decisive final score is almost entirely due to Imre choosing the wrong move 57.

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

de Grey 42 Marson 22

Of the three people on 6/9, tie-break put me and Phil against each other for the third place playoff. Here is the game. It may be noted that, at move 26, Phil offered me a wedge which I took. I have had many wedges in my life. Never, however, never even in my wildest imaginings, have I seen one reap such dividends as this one did. I suppose I was doing OK anyway, but the game seemed to me to be heading for a close ending; in the event, purely on account of the exploitation of that wedge, Phil had no chance whatever.

Further comment is pointless – just play it through.

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

Brightwell 30 Marson 34

To be fair to Phil he had also had his best Nationals ever, including a win against Graham. Here it is.

PS: As reported in the Bulletin, I forewent my chance to bring ignominy on my country, as did everyone else. I guess I'll have to do it again; and perhaps next year (Japan) is not the best choice ... But I'll try anyway ...

PPS: A Mr. A. de Grey has received (on a transcript) the following cryptic message: "01705-664488". I do hope it's still useful!

The Challengers *based on information supplied by David Haigh.*

Three is not the ideal number of players for a tournament. Still, this was a 50% increase on last year!

The tournament began with a big shock, as novice Vincent Milner beat the ultra-experienced David Haigh. Both players then beat Spencer Barriball in close games. In the afternoon, David won the return with Vincent, and then beat Spencer again. The tournament seemed to be heading for a playoff but, much to David's relief, Spencer finally lived up to expectations and beat Vincent.

Congratulations to David, who became the first qualifier for next year's Nationals.

The Cambridge Xmas Tournament *by Magnus Maestro.*

I hesitate to mention this, but I think this tournament was actually stronger than the Nationals. The top three from Portsmouth were supplemented by World Championship runner-up David Shaman, top-rated Norwegian Jan Haugland (currently a student at Oxford), and Nationals absentee Guy Plowman. There were twelve players in all.

Half of the first round games produced upsets: Ian Turner beat Imre Leader, Adelaide Carpenter beat Aubrey de Grey, and Jan Haugland beat David Shaman. After that, things settled down a bit. Haugland was very impressive, losing only to Brightwell and Leader. Shaman (post-Worlds hangover?) and Leader (the December Effect – see report of any previous year's event) were both below their best. Graham Brightwell somehow managed to negotiate the field successfully, and won with a round to spare.

Final results: Graham Brightwell 7/7, Jan Haugland 5, Guy Plowman 4½, Imre Leader, David Shaman, and Ian Turner 4, Iain Barrass 3½, Matthew Selby 3, Roy Arnold, Adelaide Carpenter and Aubrey de Grey 2, David Haigh 1.

The Melbourne World Championships *by David Shaman.*

The 19th World Championship was held in Melbourne on 16-18 November. Australia is a wonderful place to visit and, as winter approaches here in Europe, it offers a refreshing respite of warmer, longer days. Unfortunately it is very far away from everywhere else. It's a full 24 hours flying time from London as a matter of fact. As a result, participation at this year's World Championship was significantly off and Britain did not field any representatives. In attendance were full teams from Australia, France, Japan and the United States, with a Dane and a Swede rounding out the field of 14. If it is necessary for Britain to lay claim on anyone, I suppose I came closest to representing local interests, having several years of residence in the country and previously being an official team member in 1992. In fact, 1995 seems to have been the year of Othello expatriates and world travellers. In addition to myself, Tatsuya Mine of Japan played for the US by virtue of residency in California, Hugo Calendar represented Sweden and is half-American, and George Ortiz played for Australia and is half-French.

In any event, the tournament was superb. The presence of 14 players meant a round robin format for the first two days instead of the usual Swiss. In typical years, players get to learn the identities of their first round opponents at the welcoming dinner the night before play starts. In this case we all received advance notice of the full thirteen rounds of pairings. One peculiarity of this format is that almost everyone plays the field in precisely the same order. A single player serves as a "pivot"; each other player faces him in the round when otherwise slated to play against himself. Perhaps fittingly, Hideshi Tamenori, Japan's four-time former world champion, had his name drawn first and got to fill this role. The French had to be considered the heavy pre-tournament favourites for the team championship, and the nastiest bit of the schedule for everyone was certainly the gauntlet of Emmanuel Caspard, Marc Tastet, Tatsuya Mine, and Stéphane Nicolet. Not too many folks managed even 50% in four rounds in a row against l'équipe française and Mine.

Marc Tastet faced this gauntlet in rounds 1-4. In his case this, of course, meant playing Tamenori in round two. It was probably as difficult a start to the world championship as anyone has ever faced. Still, there was a fair bit of surprise when, after four rounds, Marc had yet to score any points. Otherwise the first few rounds were mostly uneventful with only a few major surprises. Round 1 presented a US versus Australia match-up that the Americans won handily; the home team of Ortiz, Simon Jones, and Geoff Hubbard managed a mere 18 discs in total. In Round 2 Ortiz beat Nicolet and Mine beat Caspard and in round four Calendar beat Danish 1994 world finalist Karsten Feldborg. By the end of these four rounds the US had started to build a commanding lead in the team standings with 10 points, against five points apiece for France and Japan. That

said, the French had already dispensed with all three internal team match-ups while the US had not played any.

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

Tamenori 33 Shaman 31

Going into round five, Tamenori and I were the only undefeated players and, by luck of the draw a “swiss-approved” pairing between us was scheduled. He beat me 33-31 in a very exciting game. At the same time Ortiz was pulling off another upset, this time knocking off Feldborg and dropping him to 2-3 overall. Tamenori continued his unbeaten streak until round 7 when American David Parsons, playing wonderfully, finally figured out a way for someone to beat him. Thus, at the end of the first day, Tamenori and I had six wins apiece. Mine and Nicolet trailed with five points. The US also lead the team event with 15 points, while France had 12 and Japan 10. Because of the round robin format, it was difficult to tell who was truly leading. I, for example, certainly had a difficult schedule the next day; my turn to face “the gauntlet” would come in rounds 9-12. However, one thing was starting to become clear. It appeared that the pre-tournament favorites – the French team, Feldborg, myself, and even Tamenori – were not on fantastic form. At the same time, a set of the less remarked upon players – Mine, Parsons, Calendar, Ortiz, and Japan’s Yamanaka – were all in practice and playing better than might be expected. This would certainly not be a year like 1990 or 1993 when the top of the field dominated all the players below.

In round 9, Parsons was yet another victim for Ortiz, while Tastet fell to Yamanaka. Also in the morning, I lost badly to Caspard and by the score of 33-31 to Tastet . (I’m happy to say that, unlike me, both my American teammates managed to beat two of the three French players.) By lunch time on the second day the French had begun to crawl their way back into contention, drawing level with the US after ten rounds on 20 points apiece.

The afternoon proved decisive for both the individual and team results. In round 11 Nicolet, on 8 wins and looking like a sure-fire semi-finalist, lost to Yamanaka. Parsons also beat Tastet, effectively eliminating the former world

champion's last remaining chances. Finally, I played Mine. Despite the fact that each of us needed a win and the pressure was intense, our endgame was rather sloppy and the score finally ended in a draw.

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

Shaman 39 Nicolet 25

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

White to play at 54

The crucial match in round 12 was my game against Nicolet (above). The winner would almost certainly make the semi-finals, the loser probably would not. At move 53 I was winning and made a game losing error (53g7 is a parity win). I was not aware of this until long after the game ended. However, at move 54, Nicolet had close to 15 minutes remaining on his clock and began to count the position. It soon became clear to me that I was losing and that perfect play would lead to a 33-31 win for Stéphane. This was incredibly disheartening, but I kept my poker face: Stéphane was taking an awfully long time to count the position. After about 8-10 minutes I had mentally calculated the position in just about every manner and with every counting method possible. If he played the correct move, 31 discs was definitely the best I could manage. If he played the only other plausible move there was a swindle and I would win easily. This left me wondering why Stéphane was using so much time. I concluded that he had not seen the swindle. If he had seen it, he could have made the correct choice by process of elimination. So, with time on my hands, I started counting a line that involved me making subsequent errors by failing to exploit the swindle, just to see if this was what Stéphane was comparing with the perfect line. All I can say is that sometimes you do funny things in situations where everything is at stake and you have no control over your destiny. Basically, I'd figured Stéphane had seen the win but was looking for an extra disc or two and, as it happened, was risking everything to miscalculation (I've done this before once or twice myself, but never with so much at stake). I also began to feel I deserved to lose. The game had been good and it was a very elegant sequence that led to Stéphane's win. My mistake at move 53 had not been because I'd failed to find a better move, but rather because I'd assumed the move I played was winning – it was the sitting and counting that had revealed otherwise. Stéphane finally played move

54 into the swindle – he'd been miscounting and thought the correct move (54g7) lost 33-31 for him. Instead of relief or joy, my overriding emotional response to this move was actually frustration and anger. It was almost as if, during 10 minutes of waiting, I had become a partisan of my opponent. In what is perhaps a breach of etiquette, I blurted out my annoyance, demanding of Stéphane how it is that he could do such a thing. I don't know what he thought of all this – an opponent seemingly upset that you've just handed him the game.

Anyhow, the US managed 3-0 in round 13 and easily took the team championship with a total score of 27. Congratulations Tatsuya and David! Tamenori was perfect on the second day and finished 12-1. The other semi-finalists were Mine on $10\frac{1}{2}$, myself on $9\frac{1}{2}$, and Caspard on 9. (Full results appear in the last Bulletin.) In the semi-finals Tamenori beat Caspard 2-0. Mine won the first game off me, but I came back to win two in a row. In the 3rd place play-off Mine beat Caspard.

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

Shaman 21 Tamenori 43

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

Tamenori 38 Shaman 26

The finals (above) were truly a delight. Although computer analysis shows Tamenori ahead throughout the endgame of the first game, this was not apparent on the board and the game was very tense. Despite the allocation of forty minutes apiece, Tamenori finished with just 17 seconds while I ended the game with a mere four seconds. The second game was even better than the first. You'll please forgive me if I don't feel like talking about it much just yet. Marc Tastet, who witnessed the game as table referee, has written an excellent article about it in issue 39 of Fforum.

So, there it is. Tamenori wins another final 2-0 and becomes world champion for a record fifth time. Congratulations! Perhaps we'll all be seeing him again next year in Tokyo.

MISCELLANY

Syncopated Cerebration *by Sid Cox.*

Over Christmas I learnt that David Haigh, goaded by Royal (to coin an adjective) pestering, had written a program to calculate all the tie-breakers that might be needed to decide the result of a tournament. These are: the sum of opponents' scores (SOS), disc totals (DT), Sonneborn-Berger, and two flavours of the Brightwell Quotient (BQ). This fact, together with the FFO, provided the inspiration for this article.

The BQ tie-breaking score is a player's disc total plus his/her SOS multiplied by a constant. This constant is equal to 64 divided by the number of rounds (R) in the tournament. In practice, to make life easier, the nearest whole number is used, so that at the nine-round British National Final the constant was 7 instead of 7.11. Hence the two flavours in David's program.

Why should the constant be $64/R$? In the same FFO article mentioned in my previous article, Philippe Juhem suggests that this value is chosen by our mathematician friends so as to give SOS and disc total equal weight, but that there is no justification for the weights being equal. Philippe goes further and states that there is no rational way of assigning the weights.

At first this seems a reasonable objection; how can one possibly add game points and disc counts together and come up with a meaningful figure? With some trepidation, not being a mathematician, I here present a justification of the BQ methodology. At least I am mathematician enough to recognise and admit that there is a fair amount of hand-waving in my argument.

I would be surprised if anyone has ever objected to the use of the number of games won to decide the placings of a tournament. However, in a Swiss tournament this is not an utterly fair indicator because, in a sense, the players have been playing in different tournaments. Someone who has won say four games against seven weak players does not deserve to have the same placing as someone who has won four games against seven strong players. Of course the pairing system attempts to stop this happening, but there is no doubt that players on the same number of wins can have rather different SOS's.

SOS is therefore generally reckoned to be a very reasonable tie-breaker, because it attempts to compensate for the intrinsic inaccuracies in the game points. But it in turn is not without its faults. Its worst is that it penalises those who, through no fault of their own, happen to have been paired against someone who has won a very small number of games, or even none. This is a penalty because the player could have just as easily beaten a slightly stronger opponent who accumulated more game points.

This is a serious objection for those who have done well in the tournament, the very people for whom we most need an accurate tie-breaker. An improved SOS-based tie-breaker would incorporate some way of compensating for this. My view of the BQ tie-breaker is that it is this improved SOS tie-breaker.

If a good player is paired against someone who will win 0 games we need a way of boosting their SOS to compensate for this unfortunate pairing. A player can have no complaint when paired against someone who will win $R/2$ games in the tournament, because this is the average number of games won by each player. The amount of boost should not be more than that which raises their opponent's contribution to their SOS from 0 to $R/2$, which is of course $R/2$. They should only get this maximum amount of boost when they beat that opponent as thoroughly as possible, i.e. they win 64-0. If they draw against that opponent then their SOS should receive no boost.

The rule should therefore be to add $R(d - 32)/64$ for each game to the player's SOS (d is the number of discs won by the player in each game). For a wipeout this becomes $R/2$; for a draw it is 0; both of these are what we want. If the player loses the game the effect of this formula will be to reduce their SOS instead of boosting it, but is there anything wrong with this? In any case this cannot happen if the opponent has an SOS of 0!

Summing this boost over all the games of the tournament, this formula becomes $RD/64 - R^2/2$, D being the total number of discs won by the player. Since $R^2/2$ is the same for every player it can be ignored; there is no point in subtracting $R^2/2$ from every player's SOS. The formula for a player's compensated SOS is therefore $\text{SOS} + D/(64/R)$.

Now, to make life easier for the tournament director, instead of dividing the disc total by $64/R$ we can achieve the same relative weighting between SOS and disc total by multiplying SOS by $64/R$, so that the tie-breaker to use in practice is $\text{SOS} \times (64/R) + \text{disc total}$ which is, of course, exactly what the BQ tie-breaker is. Q.E.D? *Er, I agree with Philippe Juhem! – Ed.*

News from Doncaster *by Eileen Forsyth.*

With Iain Barrass's exams over for 1995 (with excellent results), he did the pairings for both July and August. Iain won all his games in July, but came third in August, apparently suffering in silence from a chest condition.

September saw Colin Hands emerging as the winner, with Roy Arnold doing the pairings – Colin also did well in his exams, going on to Portsmouth University to read Business Studies. We miss Colin, as he has been a regular attender at our gatherings. In October, Bruce Kyte won all his three games, with Iain Barrass, Roy and Phil Marson all having two wins.

At the November and December meetings, there was a sadness over the gathering as we thought of Phil and the tragedy that had befallen his family –

happily Phil's sister and niece are now out of danger, and his sister should be out of hospital now. In November, Iain Barrass won all his games, to finish ahead of Iain Forsyth, Roy, and Mark Wormley. During this month, Iain reached his maturity, and we celebrated with an Othello cake with one of Iain's final positions on it (which he recognised).

Our Christmas party in December featured Monopoly, Scrabble, Chinese Checkers, and an excellent quiz which Maurice Kent had devised – John Beacock was the winner. We wish Iain, Colin and Maurice success in their future studies.

Ratings

The Rating List *maintained by David Haigh.*

1	Graham Brightwell	388	1899		26 Robert Stanton	137	1193
2	Imre Leader	402	1848		27 Chris Wakelin	45	1184
3	Joel Feinstein	366	1787		28 Martin Mulvany	8	1176
4	Guy Plowman	257	1776		29 David Haigh	337	1160
5	Jan Haugland	7	1766		John Bass	89	1160
6	Garry Edmead	168	1751		31 Simon Turner	90	1154
7	Michael Handel	293	1689		32 Richard Brand	24	1117
8	Peter Bhagat	295	1674		33 Maurice Kent	37	1116
9	Paul Smith	123	1543		34 Graham Chappell	41	1087
10	Iain Barrass	282	1541		35 Colin Hands	139	1084
11	Ian Turner	225	1502		36 Adelaide Carpenter	100	1044
12	Aubrey de Grey	389	1479		37 Neil Cuthbertson	59	1022
13	John Lysons	202	1467		Vincent Milner	4	1022
14	Jeremy Das	202	1461		39 Simon Nickson	22	1018
15	Phil Marson	332	1449		40 Jim Brewer	86	1017
16	Terry Bean	50	1423		41 Rodney Hammond	52	1004
17	Ken Stephenson	210	1379		42 Ali Turner	92	997
18	Mark Wormley	324	1344		43 Myles Harvey	71	994
19	Phil Brewer	101	1339		44 Charles McEwan	6	969
	Trevor Fenton	4	1339		45 Spencer Barriball	10	881
21	Michael Trent	11	1333		46 James Preen	2	848
22	Matthew Selby	199	1307		47 Ashley Hammond	32	836
23	Bruce Kyte	88	1257		48 Wayne Lay	7	817
24	Iain Forsyth	313	1231		49 Anne Onymous	2	776
25	Roy Arnold	441	1226		50 Eileen Forsyth	201	687