

8x8 Ratings

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

Current British players' ratings after the 2004 Christmas Friendly

	games	rating		games	rating
1 Garry Edmead	324	1907	17 Jeremy Dyer	97	1299
2 Imre Leader	637	1860	18 Roy Arnold	914	1295
3 Graham Brightwell	865	1832	19 Tony Wilkinson	8	1261
4 Michael Handel	484	1777	20 Julian Richens	90	1259
5 Joel Feinstein	454	1678	21 Stephen Rowe	145	1241
6 Ian Turner	531	1599	Andy Aspden	34	1241
7 Guy Plowman	412	1577	23 Yvette Campbell	37	1142
8 Geoff Hubbard	348	1553	24 Alexander Baron	38	1109
9 Joel Blackmur	7	1530	25 Len Waite	4	1083
10 Iain Barrass	549	1528	26 Neil Jerzynek	8	1074
11 Jeremy Das	301	1521	27 Maurice Kent	48	1073
12 Phil Marson	743	1445	28 George Lane	22	1060
13 Mark Wormley	537	1439	29 David Haigh	519	1053
14 Ben Pridmore	168	1431	30 Adelaide Carpenter	217	1040
15 Aubrey de Grey	701	1400	31 Gareth Morinan	5	1000
16 Martin Hamer	8	1379	32 Alex Wilkinson	8	945

10x10 Ratings: The British 10x10 Rating List *maintained by David*

Haigh (with thanks to Jeremy Dyer for 2004 MSO data)

Current British players' ratings after the 2004 MSO

	games	rating		games	rating
1 Graham Brightwell	10	1752	12 Ankush Khandelwal	6	1213
2 Michael Handel	9	1737	Tony Wilkinson	6	1213
3 Ian Turner	15	1612	14 Paul Smith	3	1174
4 Jeremy Dyer	15	1451	15 Ronnie Cohen	7	1139
5 Jeremy Das	13	1407	16 Ben Pridmore	12	1134
6 Dennis Owen	7	1368	17 David Kotin	7	1099
7 Geoff Hubbard	23	1362	18 Ezra Lutton	5	1064
8 John Horton	12	1326	19 Chin Le Lim	5	1014
9 Josiah Lutton	6	1245	20 Rajit Gholap	5	944
10 Alexander Baron	16	1242	21 Julian Bache	5	882
11 Kali Turner	4	1237	22 Alex Wilkinson	6	870

Sounds of the Worlds

The Newsletter of the British Othello Federation

January 2005



INFORMATION

Aubrey says: The new distributor of Othello in the UK, Character Games, is proving to be every bit as much of an improvement over Mattel as we had hoped. Sets are now available in Toys 'R' Us and a number of other stores and I am working with Character to get them into specialist games shops soon. Also, as a result of Character's good work and enthusiasm, the 2004 World Othello Championship was in London -- the largest and strongest ever.

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

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8x8 Ratings

The Foreign 8x8 Rating List *maintained by David Haigh*

Current foreign players' ratings after the 2004 World Championship Tournament

	games	rating		games	rating
1 Ben Seeley (USA)	17	2092	31 Kwan Soo Kim (ROK)	46	1613
2 Makoto Suekuni (J)	112	2006	32 Goran Andersson (S)	33	1610
3 Brian Rose (USA)	30	1936	33 Alexandre Cordy (F)	95	1607
4 Hideshi Tamenori (J)	13	1931	34 Roman Kraczyk (PL)	13	1600
5 Marc Tastet (F)	260	1895	35 Holger Braun (D)	13	1570
6 Matthias Berg (D)	13	1879	36 Robert Berg (N)	13	1566
7 Emmanuel Caspard (F)	154	1877	37 Pierluigi Stanzione (I)	31	1561
8 Stéphane Nicolet (F)	166	1856	38 Eddie Williams (USA)	13	1553
9 Emmanuel Lazard (F)	184	1850	39 Frederic Auzende (F)	22	1550
10 Karsten Feldborg (DK)	53	1842	40 Stéphane Dousse (CH)	13	1548
11 Jacky Fu (HK)	13	1830	41 Jussi Koppinen (FIN)	13	1547
12 Roberto Sperandio (I)	13	1810	42 Bintsa Andriani (MDG)	190	1533
13 Andreas Höhne (D)	38	1790	43 Tom Schotte (B)	13	1527
14 Lari Pihlajapuro (FIN)	13	1783	44 Henrik Vallund (DK)	24	1507
15 Mario Madrona (E)	13	1761	45 Jonas Lindholt Gregersen (DK)	13	1499
16 Martin Eng (S)	24	1747	46 Marcel Peperkamp (B)	13	1490
17 Donato Barnaba (I)	26	1743	47 Joung-Mok Oh (ROK)	13	1459
18 David Shaman (USA)	287	1741	48 Jan de Graaf (NL)	21	1458
19 Nicky van den Biggelaar (NL)	13	1715	49 Jan Stastna (CZ)	44	1450
20 Leon Kamphuis (NL)	13	1712	50 Marc Corio (CDN)	54	1447
21 Benyamin Shifman (IL)	83	1704	51 George Ortiz (AUS)	13	1429
22 Arkadiusz Ziêba (PL)	13	1698	52 Alexander Bøe (N)	42	1415
23 Sebastien Barre (F)	11	1686	53 Liya Ye (CN)	13	1371
24 Pawel Pêczkowski (PL)	13	1676	54 Miguel Ángel Serrano (E)	13	1356
25 Velma Fu (HK)	13	1661	55 Tomas Douda (CZ)	13	1353
26 Riku Huhtamäki (FIN)	13	1653	56 Leonid Shifman (IL)	98	1330
27 Jan Kristian Haugland (N)	120	1650	57 Ricardo Budiño (E)	13	1324
28 Miroslav Voracek (CZ)	28	1648	58 Pavel Radzivilovsky (IL)	13	1306
29 Hisako Kinoshita (J)	13	1632	59 Lisa Boardman (AUS)	13	1236
30 Joel Fransson-Johnsson (S)	13	1622	60 Jihoon Chung (ROK)	13	1155
			61 Daniel Dantas (BR)	13	1000

2005 Regionals *compiled by Roy Arnold*

LEICESTER (OADBY) -- 12th March (Start time 0930)

Venue: Oadby Baptist Church, Leicester Road, Oadby, Leicester. Contact: Steve Rowe, 66 Briar Meads, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5WD Tel. 0116-256 8517 (1400-2200 M-F). email srowe@zaurak.org.uk

In addition to the Grand Prix tournament there will be a tournament specifically for intermediate players. If you have always wanted to play in a tournament, but thought the standard would be too high, this is your chance!

SHEFFIELD -- 23rd April (Start time 1000)

Venue: Rutland Arms PH, 86 Brown St, Sheffield. Contact: Roy Arnold, Flat 3, 28 Spring Hill, Sheffield S10 1ET Tel: 0114-263 1804 (h) 07900 985 244 (m) email othello@addicks56.freemove.co.uk

CAMBRIDGE -- 7th May (Start time 1000)

Venue: Netherhall School and Sixth Form College, Queen Ediths Way, Cambridge. Contact: Adelaide Carpenter, 1 Beaconsfield Terrace, Victoria Road, Cambridge CB4 3BP Tel: 01223-366197 (h), 01223-333961 (w) email atc12@mole.bio.cam.ac.uk This event is part of the Mind Sports Olympiad Cambridge 2005 event -- full information can be found at <http://www.msocambridge.org.uk>

ASHFORD (KENT) -- 11th June (Start time 0930)

Venue: Ashford Centrepiece, Bank Street Church, Bank Street, Ashford Contact: Jeremy Dyer Tel: 01233 660 563 (h), 07950 858 391 (m) email jeremyatcb@hotmail.com

SALISBURY To be arranged

Further information (including maps and travel directions) about UK tournaments can be found on <http://www.britishothello.org.uk/tournaments.html>

There are also a number of European Grand Prix tournaments taking place, see page 30.

The Other Universe, Re-Revisited *by Graham Brightwell*

Some good news at last. Mr. Enormous announced that he was taking a career break and would spend the next three years studying for a PhD in Supercriminology. At least I think that's good news, on balance.

But that didn't mean I had time to get back to writing my book, since I recently had to solve another puzzle posed by vastly superior alien lifeforms. Apparently humanity had been narrowly defeated in the quarter-final of the galactic intelligent species championships by a promising amphibian from the Pleiades, so now we had to solve this retro-problem to avoid relegation to the Vego-Sirian zonal group for the next Galactic Year.

The aliens wanted to know the colour of the d8 disc and also the exact order in which the moves on the South edge had been played.

	x						
		x					
		x			x	x	
	x				●		
	x		x	x	●	x	x
○			?				●

This position represents partial information about an Othello position in the middle of a game. The game began from the standard starting position, and both players have played legal moves throughout. The xs represent squares that are known to be empty; blank squares could be occupied or unoccupied. (The observant reader will note that the aliens have only recently signed up to the Greve convention.)

Could you have avoided relegation?

Hints are available on page 34 and the answers are on page 42.

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Worlds 2004: Principia Othello -- Elucidation of Theory by Ben Seeley

This is an article that will explain and demonstrate some of the concepts I use heavily during games. The positions are from the 2004 World Othello Championship Tournament and are mainly cases where a player could have feasibly avoided a fair-sized mistake if they had applied the given principle. The title is in honour of Isaac Newton's original copy of the Principia Mathematica, which I got to see during my visit to Cambridge, courtesy of Dr. Imre Leader. I doubt anything here will be as groundbreaking or important as what Newton wrote, but I think it's fun to have a grandiose title.

During the past three WOC's I have always made sure to write out fundamental principles on a scrap of paper and use them as guidance, in an attempt to keep myself from missing opportunities or making crucial errors.

The first fundamental principle is plausibility. I find that, of the perfect moves that I miss, a fair proportion I didn't consider at all. So, during tournament games I take time to ask myself "what are my options...". If I don't do this, then I will already be playing semi-blind, since my instincts will never catch everything.

I don't need to illustrate plausibility, but it leads into the next principle, mutual plausibility. After plausibility has been established, I essentially ask myself, "If it were my opponent's turn right now, what would be his best moves?" This is usually not hard to determine. Some examples:

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

In Corio-Budiño, White's only good moves are in the West. Given that Black has plausible moves in that region (moves that stand a decent chance of being the best move, by virtue of obvious strengths, such as centrality, solidity, or quietness, and having no deadly weaknesses), Black should play in that region. Now, it's only mutually plausible if it addresses the imminently plausible moves of the opponent -- and by "addresses", I mean it is a move that pre-emptively takes an

opponent's move, is in the same region, or effectively removes the opponent's access to his most plausible move(s). White's plausible moves are a6 and b3; Black a6 directly takes away his a6, and a5 is in the same region. a6 pre-emptively makes an a7 move for White unfeasible, and after a6 a5, Black again takes the mutually plausible move at b3, and White is utterly dead. In this position Marc played b8 instead -- which is a big mistake, because b8 could be saved indefinitely; squirreling

July 2003 list has the highest-rated ever Number Two (1893), Number Three (1872) and Number Four (1813), although it's tied for the lowest-rated ever Number Five (1599).

The obvious big challenge is for someone to get a rating over 2000. Of course, it's really difficult, because once your rating gets near that level the only way to gain any points is to beat other very highly rated players, and even then if a player rated 1900 beats a player rated 1800, they would only gain a handful of rating points. Ratings over 2000 for foreign players have been seen, because World Championships and Grand Prix tournaments held in the UK are rated (see page 51). Noboyuki Takizawa fleetingly had a rating of 2092 at the 1993 Worlds (see page 50 of the January 1994 newsletter "Feinstein-A-Gain-Gain", available on the web via <http://britishothello.org.uk/newsletters.html>, for an explanation), and this has just been equalled by Ben Seeley. Impressively, Makoto Suekuni has an established rating over 2000. But surely any halfway competent player ought to be able to get to 1900 following a decent run of form. Mutter.

Answers to puzzles on pages 45-46:

- {1} The e3 and e4 discs are flipped (6 marks) and no others (9 marks)
- {2} The best sequence is 1.a1, 2.h2, 3.a8 (10 marks), getting 37 discs (10 marks). Note: this is the only winning sequence. Anyone nominating either 1.a1 2.a8 3.h2 or 1.a8 2.a1 3.h2 and correctly claiming that it earns 32 discs should be entitled to 8 marks.
- {3} b2 (13 marks).
- {4.} The drawing sequences are:
 - A) 1.h7 (7 marks) 2.h8 3.g8 (6 marks) (P) 4.g7;
 - B) 1.g8 (7 marks) 2.g7 3.h7 (6 marks) 4.h8;
 - C) 1.h7 (7 marks) 2.h8 3.g7 (6 marks) (P) 4.g8;
 - D) 1.g7 (7 marks) 2.h7 3.h8 (6 marks) (P) 4.g8.
 In each case the White move 2 is forced.

Name	Rating	Date	Position
14. John Parker	(1696)	Dec. 1986	4
15. Alex Selby	1682	July 1990	5
16. David Stephenson	1674	Dec. 1986	6
17. Jan Haugland	1671	Jan. 1998	6
18. John Ball	(1652)	Dec. 1986	8
19. Geoff Hubbard	1618	July 2002	6
20. Ken Stephenson	1607	Dec. 1986	10
21. Aubrey de Grey	1605	Jan. 1989	7
22. Phil Marson	1601	Jan. 2002	6
23. Helena Verrill	1600	July 1991	10
Iain Barrass	1600	Feb. 2000	7

Imre Leader was in the top two continuously until he fell to Number Three in January 1998. The July 2004 list was indeed his first appearance outside the British top three. His rating has never dropped below 1784, and he has had seven published ratings above 1900, dating from July 1988 to July 2002.

Garry Edmead's rise has been inexorable. He was first rated over 1600 in July 1991 and has never dropped below 1600 since. He was first rated over 1700 in August 1994 and has never dropped below 1700 since. He was first rated over 1800 in July 1997 and has never dropped below 1800 since. He was first rated over 1900 in January 2003 and has never dropped below 1900 since.

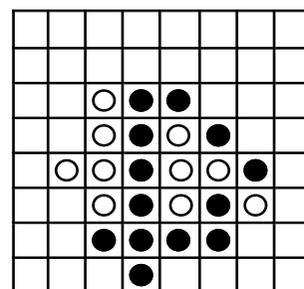
Leader has been ranked first in 16 published lists, Edmead in 12 (including the unpublished "published" list), Brightwell in 4, Bhagat and Shaman in 2 each.

Aubrey de Grey's peak rating of 1605 was achieved in January 1989, when he was the British Number Nine. His peak ranking, seventh, was achieved in July 2001.

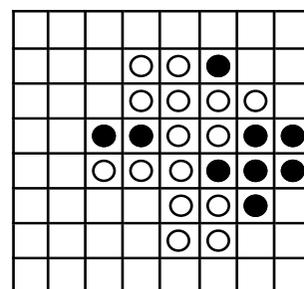
In December 1987, Joel Feinstein (1608) was ranked eleventh. For the three lists starting from July 2003, there have been only four active players rated 1600+. The best list for 1700+ players was July 1988, with seven; there were just three in December 1986, in August 1992, and again in January 2001. By contrast, the lists with the most 1800+ players are recent ones: in July 2003 and July 2004, all four 1600+ players were over 1800. There has been just one 1800+ player on several occasions.

The only record I can lay claim to in this area is the lowest ever Number One rating: 1829 in August 1994. The lowest ever Number Two (1750) and Number Three (1719) ratings were in the inaugural list of December 1986, while the lowest Number Four (1688) is from August 1992. That

away mobility from his opponent is what is called for, and while b8 still leaves Marc in the lead, it isn't nearly as direct a path to a win.

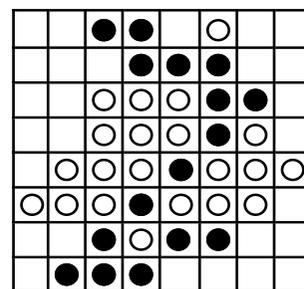


play moves in the West for a while, when he couldn't do anything there before.

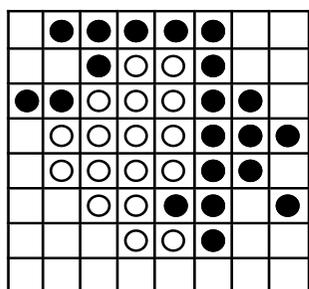


In Brightwell-Barnaba, Barnaba should have recognized that Black has no moves in the South but does have two great moves in the East. So he should play to the East and address them both simultaneously with g3 (some people call this poison, I usually think of it as a version of mutual plausibility). Perhaps he thought that b6 was a strong response -- but if so, he wasn't respecting that it isn't very mutually plausible for Brightwell -

In Oh-Bøe, Oh did d6, but what he should have done was play into the North. White has no moves in the South, so it is folly to play into that region and give Bøe more mobility. By playing c1, Black can address White's imminent c3 and his h3 since c1 gains access to both of them simultaneously. That's a good deal.



Later on in Brightwell-Barnaba, Barnaba here played e8, even though Black has no imminent access to e8. I would say that Black's most attractive and imminent move is b7, so by White's moving to h3 the diagonal is controlled; and this is in a region where Black does have moves. And any response Black makes in the East has a counter response for White.



In Rose-Suekuni, Suekuni gives a beautiful illustration of mutual plausibility adherence -- beautiful because it demonstrates that plausibility stretches further than might otherwise be thought, when it is mutual. In the position, Black imminently has a quiet move to e8. Suekuni played g8, which is very effective because it is in the same region where Black would have gone, and it saves every possible move or scheme

White could have utilised in the East instead of g8. g6 rather than g8 should also be considered a mutually plausible move since it is in the same region as e8, but with the h5 response it definitely begins to reduce the various potentials White could use later. After g8 e8, g7 is again a mutually plausible move; f8 or g6 are the moves Black would make if it were his turn (the moves that White can do something about), and g7 is the move that does the most to address them, poisoning them both (playing either f8 or g6 directly doesn't do anything to address the other so Black would have been left with one great move, instead of two very mediocre ones that each give White an excellent follow-up).

The basic philosophy of mutual plausibility is that if you have a valuable move or region, and you can save it or preserve it from your opponent's clutches, while playing some decent move elsewhere, almost always you should do that decent move elsewhere. If it can be saved, it should be saved. Make it a mantra. The only exception is when taking one of those nice moves you've been saving is going to force your opponent to have to make a really ugly move out of what flippable discs he has left; typically playing those saved up moves is only a good idea when it is a lead in to force play (but even then most of the moves on the way to force play will be mutually plausible; taking the tempo just jump-starts the process). Most people conceptually understand this, but they don't appreciate how far mutual plausibility stretches. Most of the time, if someone rejects a reasonably classic mutually plausible move, it's because they just aren't seeing it right, within their theory or within their calculation and sequencing of moves.

The next concept on the list is line control. It is a fact of Othello that you have to flip discs and have discs, so it is important to have those discs be maximally useless for your opponent. Line control is achieved when a line of discs, whether horizontal, vertical, or diagonal, is completely occupied by discs of your colour so that the potentially important moves for your opponent at the endpoints are unachievable. Thus it is possible to have a lot of discs and have it be disadvantageous to your opponent. The last part of the former sentence is important -- if your opponent still has a move at the

Othellists Number 25: All-Time Top-Rated British Players
by Graham Brightwell

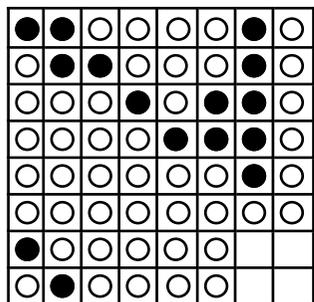
A few months ago, I noticed that Imre Leader had dropped to Number Four in the rating list; I asked whether this was the first time he'd been that low -- he thought (correctly, as it turns out) that it was. David Haigh, who has maintained the rating list since its inception, wasn't able to help, saying that he isn't a trivia buff, not even a ratings trivia buff. Another role for me!

The rating list has been going a little longer than the "modern era" newsletter. The first list was published in the last of the newsletters produced by Peter Pan, in December 1986: Imre Leader was Number One. Further lists have been published at the end of each newsletter every six months since December 1987. (The February 2000 list was omitted from the newsletter after an objection from the Rosicrucians, but David Haigh has kindly allowed me to consult this important document in preparing this list *and it will be reproduced next issue for completeness of the records, Ed.*) In early 1988, 400 points were added to everyone's rating to avoid the possibility of someone going negative; I've treated the first few lists in the obvious way to make them comparable.

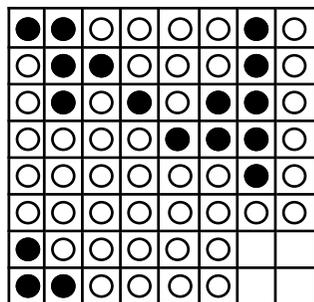
So, here are all the players who have ever made it to 1600, with their peak published rating, the date they (first) attained that rating, and the highest position they ever achieved in the list. Jan Kristian Haugland had a provisional rating of 1776 in February 1996, based on his first 7 UK rated games: that doesn't count. John Parker and John Ball had just about retired when the first rating list appeared, so their ratings are still provisional to this day, based on 12 and 19 rated games respectively.

Name	Rating	Date	Position
1. Imre Leader	1960	July 1989	1
2. Garry Edmead	1937	July 2003	1
3. David Shaman	1930	July 1993	1
4. Peter Bhagat	1902	Dec. 1987	1
5. Graham Brightwell	1899	Feb. 1996	1
6. Michael Handel	1836	July 2004	2
7. Joel Feinstein	1827	July 1996	2
8. Neil Stephenson	1778	July 1988	2
9. Guy Plowman	1776	Feb. 1996	3
10. John Lysons	1719	Dec. 1986	3
11. Paul Smith	1716	July 1988	5
12. Ian Turner	1705	July 1998	5
13. David Sharman	1700	July 1988	5

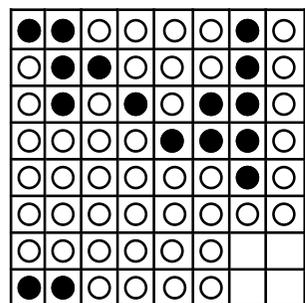
{4.} In each of the following four positions, which sequence draws for Black? (You need to give Black's first move, the best White response, and the second Black move.) (13pts each)



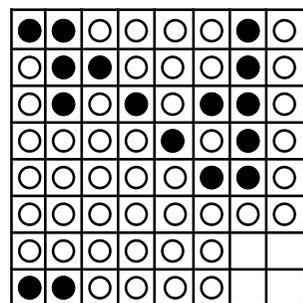
A) Black to play and draw



B) Black to play and draw



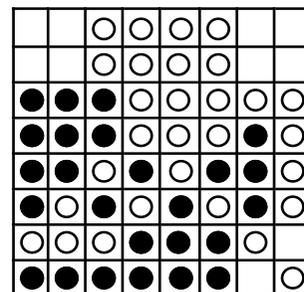
C) Black to play and draw



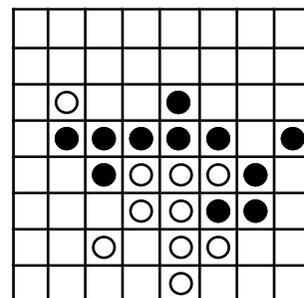
D) Black to play and draw

Answers on page 49.

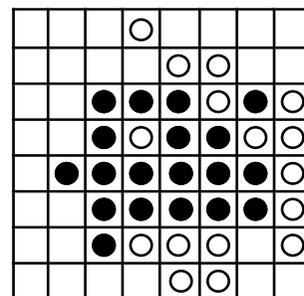
crucial endpoint or endpoints via an adjacent disc, having the line is generally a bad thing since it usually means that your opponent can get two adjoining moves at that endpoint, which is worse for you than him. This isn't line control, but sometimes it works out anyway if your discs are solid and you can match your opponent tit for tat as he flips external discs.



In Boardman-Ye, Boardman played h7. If instead she had played h2, after h1 Black plays h7 and White lacks access to g8, leading to a +10 win for Black, since White is forced to give up a ton of discs before regaining access to g8, which due to the control of Black discs diagonally leading to g8, means White will only flip in one direction upon playing there (thus the control pays off twice).



In Haugland-Braun, Braun played h6. c3 instead is correct, since it effectively controls the line of discs between d3 and d7, the two moves Black would most want to have in response. h6 is therefore another example of a non-mutually plausible move being a definite mistake. c3 is not a move into a region where Black has moves, but it does address Black's d7, so it is mutually plausible.

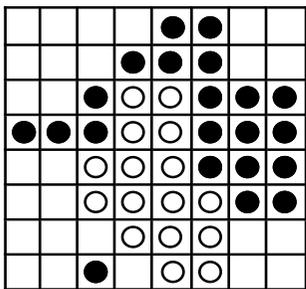


In Rose-Zieba, Zieba missed a great opportunity to get Rose on the ropes, probably because he wasn't aware that after d2 g2 (d2 directly accessing h2, g2 to make h2 moot) he could respond with a5 and control the line of discs leading to g1; after this, Rose must play f1, whereupon Zieba will never have to worry about Black moving to the North because it would give White a swindle at h2, and White will have all kinds of choices about how to wield parity. Seeing the control of the line of discs leading to g1 is an example of line awareness -- prior to d2

there are alternate black and white discs on that line, but Zieba needed to be aware that it was possible to control access to g1, which is an important feature in a position like this -- if Black has g1, Black is effectively parsing his available mobility and has strong parity and wedge threats. Even after c2 d2 (what was played instead), Zieba and Rose alternately kept missing the fact that access to g1 (Rose) and prevention of access to g1 (Zieba) were crucial and possible.

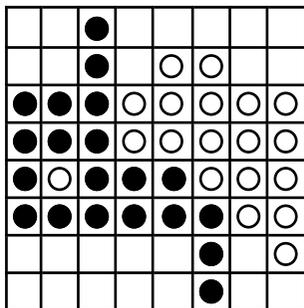
Line awareness embraces line control, but it also embraces line access and line avoidance. Line access is the policy of trying to manage your mobility effectively by always making sure to maintain access to particular crucial moves and by always retaining at least one other disc on the line (aside from the end disc on the line).

A practical, stylistic differentiation is that some players (*e.g.*, Murakami) usually try to control the entire diagonal (aiming for superior mobility and swindle threats), while others (*e.g.*, Suekuni) make less effort to control the diagonal -- probably because gaining control of a diagonal sometimes has too much cost elsewhere or is dangerous because of the times when it leads to being swindled (the opponent can play to a corner without flipping anything on the diagonal). But accessors definitely make sure to maintain at least one disc on the diagonals (which thus retains access to all corners after x-squares have been played [so long as they still have a disc on the diagonal...]) and to at least one x-square of their own to play, per diagonal).

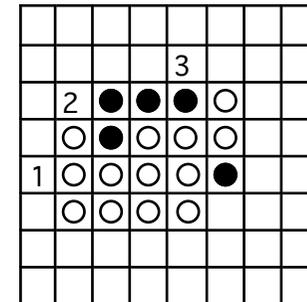


In Braun-Andersson (left), Andersson played c1, but this is a blunder since he doesn't have access to d1 and will never be able to gain access. I'm sure he was trying to do something to address c2, but in this case it just can't be done effectively. And White doesn't really want to have another point of access to g2 in this case; that ruins a tempo.

And now for a line avoidance example -- in Pihlajapuro-Caspard (right), Caspard must break through the South, but his c7 isn't the way to do it. After c7 e7 d7 c8, White is unable to get rid of his white discs on row 7 in a way that permits a move to b7 that doesn't cost him parity (and thus a tempo as well). To do b7 immediately after c8 flips c7

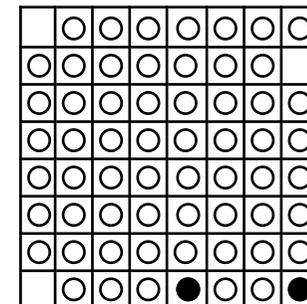


Decamentathlon Puzzles, MSO 2004 by Graham Brightwell



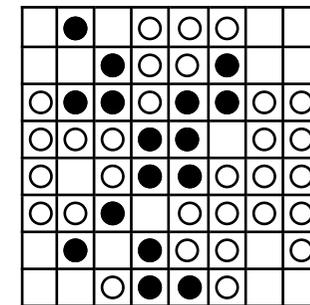
{1.} Black plays to a5, White to b3, and Black to e2 (as shown); list all the discs flipped by the move to e2. (15pts)

Black to play



{2.} Black will play all the last three moves. What is the best sequence for Black (10pts), and how many discs does he end up with after this sequence? (10pts)

Black to play



{3.} Which move for White guarantees that she will be able to play to a corner on her next move? (13pts)

White to play

This year's Nationals by Adelaide Carpenter

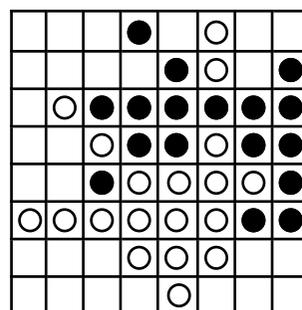
The BOF National Championship Tournament took place in the Junior Parlour of Trinity College, Cambridge, the now-traditional comfortable playing space, September 18-19. With nine rounds for only 12 players, getting the pairings to work was a bit of a challenge toward the end; I retired to the peace of Great Saint Mary's for the over-lunch second-day pairings -- the pairings for round seven are usually the most difficult, and getting them right can make the subsequent rounds easier. I already knew that David Haigh was withdrawing after round 7; that left a Bye I'd have to work in. However, when we reconvened after lunch, no Garry; he'd given every indication of expecting to come back and indeed was doing quite well up to that point, so I assumed he was just running a tad late and set his clock running for round seven. And then again when he *still* hadn't returned by the beginning of round 8, I was sure he'd pop in any minute. By the time of pairings for round nine, however, I was locked into this as the strategy and completely failed to consider the option of just dropping him from the tournament -- and as a consequence made the pairings for round nine much harder on myself than they needed to be. Final results: 1. Graham Brightwell 8/9 + 0/1; 2. Imre Leader 7 + 1; 3. Michael Handel 6 + 1; 4. Ben Pridmore 6 + 0; 5. Iain Barrass, Garry Edmead, Geoff Hubbard 5; 8. Jeremy Dyer 4; 9. Yvette Campbell, Jeremy Das 3; 11. Roy Arnold 2; 12. David Haigh 0/7

So Imre is again British Champion; for a change everyone who qualified to play in the Worlds actually expected to (and did). And we eventually found out that Garry had planned to meet his family at a designated car park for lunch, but it was full and there was a mobile phone failure, Garry had spent 2 hours scouring Cambridge not knowing whether his family was still alive! but all was well in the end. Oh, and Imre was supposed to write up the Nats for the NL, but I'm about to start setting pages and still no Imre and *something* has to go in. Memo to those who crave games analysis: strong hint!

(Note added in proof: analysis of the Leader-Brightwell Final Playoff will appear in the next issue.)

because the d7 disc is white, so Black gets parity in that region; to play d8 after c8 doesn't work either, since after e8, instead of the d7 disc, the e7 disc is now white (since the E column is solid white after d8 is played), and White is in the same dilemma. If instead of c7 Caspard had played e7, with a reply of d7 c7 c8, Black again has an empty four in the South, but this time row 7 is all black, White having successfully avoided having a disc on that row; and now b7 can be played without losing parity in the Southwest.

Line awareness is about being aware of potentials for lines of discs to change states unfavourably or favourably. Sometimes it's good to control a line of discs, sometimes not. The same applies to having access on a line of discs or avoiding having a disc on a line. Essentially I check for the potential for a line to be controlled, accessed, or avoided, when the state of a particular line of discs is important in the current position or could soon become important.



An example of my positive usage of this is to the left, Seeley-Suekuni. I had already noted the possibility for a move to g7, at some point in the future, as long as control of the diagonal was achieved and could be maintained; since a move such as that is often the killer finale to a mobility crunch (which seemed possible in the given game), I was keeping my eye open for the possibility. After Suekuni played b3, I was preliminarily most attracted to b4, among the choices I thought were plausible. After working out for myself what I thought were sure winning replies to b4 e1, I worked on b4 a4. After b5 a5 in reply, I saw that row 3 was all black except for the b3 disc, which I could flip black with a2. Aha, a possible line control there. Since this is clearly a case where line control is something worth having -- there's absolutely no reason for me to want Suekuni to have access to a3 after my a2 tempo -- I immediately saw the sequence of e1 d2 c1 in reply to a2, not bothering with any other sequence since that was the only way for me to keep control of that line of discs. Once I saw that, I combined it with the other potential controlling move I had been tracking -- g7. Whereupon White lacked access to a3 which meant he lacked direct access to the diagonal leading to a8, and stuff like c2 b2 a3 a1 b1 g2 proved there were only extremely costly means of achieving it. So I knew I could play b4 and it was definitely still winning, and if I was lucky, Suekuni might miss that combination of controlling lines of discs and I would get an easy win. However, I am certain that Suekuni did see it on his next move and moved to avoid it. On a

couple of other occasions he also saw some very tricky stuff that I had planned, and moved to avoid it, instead of taking the risk of hoping I would miss it. I appreciated that he respected my skill enough to expect I would see those lines just as he had.

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

Here is a case of line awareness and some mutual plausibility in combination in the Suekuni-Seeley game. Here, Suekuni has just played h4, which was unexpected, as was the prior a3. I was first attracted to h6 in reply, since it allowed me to avoid playing to the North for the time being, and in contrast to the h5 alternative, this left Black with more poison from the h4 disc, and if Black ever played to h5, I knew I would have the quiet, central g4 in reply.

I also saw that since control of Black's access to e2 was an important thing to achieve (at the very least, so I could save my move to e2 for as long as possible at his expense elsewhere); if Black took g4 (achieved with the imminent b6 c7 pair), I could reply with h5, controlling the line of discs to e2 while simultaneously forcing him to take an unbalanced edge that also gave him lots of poison in the South (since he wouldn't have access to h3 to try to make me take the unbalanced edge instead). Poison being "too much access".

After he took h7, of course he would have access to e2, so by mutual plausibility I knew I should play there myself; next he would play the mutually plausible f1; next I would play h2 which would force him to the South -- and also I noted that I could potentially play e1 at some point and threaten to flip g4 which gives me the potential to wedge at h3 later on, possibly very important; his quietest move after h2 was d7, but ever since he had given me the wedge in the West I knew I needed to keep the diagonal to b7 in mind, and that his a6 disc would poison him if he wanted to play c8 before he took a8. After b7 I expected he would try to gain access to the diagonal by playing e7, also threatening to take the newly quiet g6; thus the mutually plausible thing to do was play g6 myself. After his g7 (which is only to be expected since his lone remaining threat at that point was to try to get a wedge at h3, and g7 is very quiet and parses his available mobility in the South), the mutually plausible thing to do is again to take f7 instead of letting him take it, and let all the poison coming in from the East do its work. After that, I saw that a8 a7 b8 c8 d8 e8 f8 would force me to move North (since the state of the diagonal to h8 was vital, I made sure that f7 gained me access to the diagonal, but also that a move to d8 would retake that disc).

There are two slightly different ways that the flips of f7 can have happened. We know that Black plays f7, then either: (a) White plays e8, Black plays f8 and then d8, White plays g8, and Black plays both h8 and h5, or (b) White plays g8, Black plays f8, Black plays h8, White plays e8, Black plays d8, and finally Black plays h5.

Next we'll rule out (a). The move to g6 flips f6, and the two discs remain the same colour until Black's move to h5 at the end of the sequence, as the only other possible flips of either disc are horizontal. g6 is white when e8 is played, and therefore so is f6. But f6 is black for the (later) move to f8, so there must have been a horizontal flip of f6 and g6 to black. This must involve a black disc at h6, but then there is no way that the g6 disc can turn back to white for the move at h5 to flip f7.

So we have sequence (b). It's still true that g6 and f6 are the same colour until h5 is played. After h5 is played, the only way that f6 can be flipped black is away from the now black g6 disc. So this means that a Black move to c6 or d6 (e6 is occupied much earlier for access to g8) comes after the move to h5.

Now c6 is never flipped and must be white for access to c8. So it is d6 that is left empty until after the South-East section is fully played out. Access to c7 is only possible after d6 is played, and this is the first move that can flip d6 (a White move to h6 would flip f6). So it is White who plays c7, then Black plays b8 before White plays to c8, and finally White plays a8.

In conclusion, d8 is black, and the South edge is played out in the order g8-f8-h8-e8-d8-b8-c8-a8.

You should insist on seeing a game in which all this happens, since there's no other way to be sure that there's no equally valid argument ruling out all but some other sequence. Here's one way.

						16	
			23	14	7		
			1	2	20		
			○	●	19		
			●	○			15
		6	17	4	3	10	
		18			5		
24	21	22	13	12	9	8	11

A note for anyone having trouble with the construction. d5 is black to provide access to f7, but then must be flipped to white to provide access to g8. So the White move to c6 comes before any moves to the South edge. It's crucial that the d5 disc starts black, which of course it does ... but if you reflect the puzzle horizontally or vertically then the position is impossible.

I would like to thank Aubrey de Grey and Adelaide Carpenter for testing out the puzzle and for assuring me that somebody does appreciate these things.

Answers to puzzle on page 3:

First the lemma. We'll prove by induction that if a "colour segment" contains k discs that flipped along the edge, then the segment has at least $2k+1$ discs. This is obviously true for $k=1$. Suppose it's true for segments with fewer than k edge-flips, and look at a segment incorporating k edge-flips. Consider the last move in the segment that flipped along the edge. Before this move, there were at least two segments, and $k-1$ edge flips inside the segments, so by induction the total length of these segments is at least $2(k-1) + 2 = 2k$. Including the final disc played makes $2k+1$, which is as claimed. The result follows by induction.

Let's apply this to the West edge. If a8 flips along that edge, then a6 and a7 are also occupied, and neither of these can flip discs except along the edge. So by the lemma these discs belong to a colour segment of size at least 7. So a2 is occupied, but this disc also can only be played along the edge. So now the segment has to contain 9 discs, which is impossible. The conclusion is that a8 does not flip vertically, so it must flip horizontally.

Now we can apply our lemma to the South edge. All of a8, d8 and h8 are occupied, and all must flip along the edge. There are at least two colour segments, so their total length is at least 8, and both segments are odd. There are two possibilities. Either a8-e8 are white and f8-h8 are black, or a8-c8 are white and d8-h8 are black.

In the first case, it must be that Black plays b8 and White plays c8, and then Black plays d8. Meanwhile, White plays e8 and finally a8. To the right, Black plays f8 and White g8, with Black ending at h8. A key thing to note about this case is that e8 is never black.

In the second case, Black plays to b8 and White to c8, then White goes to a8. On the other side, Black plays to f8, White puts discs at e8 and g8, and Black flips them to d8 and h8: the first of the two white discs is flipped before the second is placed.

In either case, White plays both e8 and g8, flipping the f7 disc from black to white. The move to f8 flips the f7 disc from white to black. But the disc is now black, so it must have been flipped from white to black at least as often as it has been flipped from black to white. Where can that extra flip come from? Not at d5, since that square is occupied from the start. Not at e6, f6 or g6, since those discs are in place when the corresponding moves on the 8th rank are played. So it must be a Black move to h5 that flips f7. This is only possible if e8 is black at some stage, so we have the second of the two possible constructions for the 8th rank.

But I felt that after c1 (which I verified I would have loud access to), parity was going to work out for me, since I was sure Black could not control either diagonal effectively (I made sure to check the h1 diagonal and verify that after c8 I would have definite access upon it), and every region favoured me for parity, I didn't see any good swindle threats or reason to believe Black could gain a lot of discs (that's why I trusted but verified the state of the diagonals).

I looked at that sequence up to b7 before I ever took h6, and while I was waiting for him to play h7 I saw the sequence up to c1. It didn't occur to me until recently that I had actually looked ahead 18 moves before he played h7, the only thing I really noticed at the time was that the game seemed easy and fairly boring, since nothing new happened for 18 moves other than that Makoto transposed the sequence by playing a8 before playing g7.

However, it should be noted that I didn't look ahead 18 moves with perfect accuracy or without technical error, but since I knew that g6 was mutually plausible, a6 poisoned his c8, f7 was mutually plausible, Black would be forced to give me the expanded wedge in the West thanks to all his mobility having been limited to the South, I would have loud access to c1 and effective access to h8 in the final position, and parity favoured me, it was a very efficient and worthwhile lookahead, and fairly accurate where it counted.

I did miss the fact that Black would have that many discs in the final position, and that whenever Black moved to h3 it was going to flip a helluva lot more discs. The other thing I missed was the reason why b7 was not a correct move -- I saw that Makoto could have played g6 (although I immediately doubted it could possibly be correct since it eliminated his access to g7, his one decent threat in my mind), but then I assumed that I could play b2, he does b8, I play b1, and it's game over since I have just too much parity and mobility and access to absolutely anything I want. I didn't see that after g6 my sequence doesn't give me access to b1, and that force play was just a pipe dream.

But the reason I missed the faulty b1 was not because I lacked the capacity to visualise it correctly, or that my attempt to visualise it was incorrect, it's because I never tried to completely visualise that part to begin with. Since it didn't occur to me that Makoto would ever end up controlling the line of discs to b1 when I needed access to it, I didn't think to bother visualising it precisely. Which basically reveals in a nutshell how my visualisation works -- I don't try to visualise everything, I just try to be aware of and latch on to the important features of a position (control/access/avoidance of the important lines of discs, important squares, centrality, solidity, the diagonals, parity, stuff like this), and then I just track

those and move those around in my memory. This allows me to narrow my search drastically, since its assumptions, to wit that my mutually plausible move will be met by his mutually plausible move, and that if I control something he will want to access it, *etc.*, are generally correct assumptions to make. Thus I can just shuffle the important features around in my head, letting each feature dictate responses and counter-responses, and if I verify that those important features are as I want and expect them to be, then I expect the rest of the position will work out all right.

I suspect that most people visualise similarly, but perhaps they have been less successful at identifying what features are generally important and what strategies best help them to latch on to those features; or they have a weaker sense of how to practice those strategies so that during games they become automatic. Or they lack the talent to be able to hold that much in their head and move it around with accuracy, or never develop their talent.

Well, I hope this has been educational and even a little fun...Happy Flipping!

(This article is appearing in several other fora; editorial tidying may differ, Ed.)

Answer to puzzle number 3, page 31 of the July, 2004 issue

by Geoff Hubbard

d1! = -12; a8 =0. Beware the diagonal!

Black has just played to c1 and the instinctive response is to play d1, to prevent Black taking the a1 corner. But this is an endgame puzzle and the instinctive move is usually wrong! The problem is that, after White d1, Black just plays g2 and takes control of the b7-g2 diagonal leaving things not looking good for White at all.

To stop this, White needs to take a8 straight away, which solves the diagonal access problem by gaining the a8 corner.

It is worth noting that if Black responds to a8 by wedging in b8 (another instinctive response), White can win the game by now playing d1 and retaining parity in the North. Black needs to take the a1 corner and give up the b8 move to gain parity and draw.

(Geoff promises to solve the remaining puzzles in the next issue! -- Ed.)

Arnold and got off to a great start. On move 39 I decided to sacrifice a corner; I could choose the X-square (+24!) or c8 (+20) but I chose a7 which was -6, oops! The ending of this game was sooo hard though, both I and Roy made lots of mistakes. I had to rush loads at the end and finished with just 12 seconds while Roy still had 10 min 8 sec. Result: Blackmur 34-30 Arnold and so to my last game, Game Seven against Iain Barrass. I thought my last game was good but this one was 10 times more exciting. If there is anyone reading this who hasn't played over the board yet and is wondering whether it's worth all the hassle, believe me it is. This game was such a buzz. The clock was ticking, it was the last game so everyone was crowding round and the game was really tight. Iain's time went down first and then it was my turn to take ages to make my mind up where to go. We had to really rush our last few moves, Iain ended with 8 secs and I had 14 secs. I played my last 14 moves nigh on perfect (which I don't think I have ever done before) to win a great game 26-38.

Imagine my surprise when as we got outside Graham told me that this was a rated event and I'd just beat the person 9th best in the country and that I would have a very flattering ranking when the results got processed. Apart from two trips to the pub, at lunchtime and afterwards, that was that, my first OTB tourney, a thoroughly enjoyable and I fear a highly addictive experience. Many thanks to Aubrey, Adelaide and everyone else who helped put it on and congratulations to Graham for winning. :)

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

Blackmur 34-30 Arnold

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

Barrass 26-38 Blackmur

My first tournament *by Joel Blackmur*

Well this was it, my first tourney, the Cambridge Christmas Friendly. I had a slight advantage over other people when they go to play in their first over-the-board tournament because I had table judged at the highly successful World Championships in London recently, so I had some idea what happened and how to work the clocks *etc.* This came in handy because when I arrived I was thrown in the deep end. I'd set my alarm clock incorrectly so I bombed down the A11 from my home near Norwich, finally arrived at Cambridge Park&Ride, rushed to the Tournament room and amazingly (thanks entirely to a friendly local) I made it without getting lost. I was about 5 minutes late and the games had already started; as I walked in, no doubt looking like a dazed rabbit in a car's headlights, not knowing what to expect, Aubrey says, "Ahhh Joel, glad you could make it, you're playing Geoff, you know Geoff? Good, please start immediately." So there I am, having never played over the board before, playing an Othello expert who played in the WOCs, in my first game. I'm afraid that this report is going to be very self-oriented because I never really got out of the daze, I was told where to sit, what to do and to remember to eat and drink and as a result I didn't really get a chance to pay much attention to anybody else's games. So, back to game one: it was midgame and I was doing much better than I'd expected. At one point I had total parity but didn't do enough with it. Zebra says that on move 48 I went +10 instead of +28, then on move 50 +2 instead of +10, move 56 -6 instead of +2 and Geoff ended his last 6 moves perfectly to win 35-29. I vaguely remember Imre trying to speak to me at this point before he went off on his travels but, as I've already said, it's all a daze!

Game Two: Between games Graham Brightwell said, "Hmm that was your first game, now what you want is your first win, yes?" and yes that's what I wanted. Up next was Yvette. I got off to a good start and managed to keep my advantage to win my first ever OTB game, yay.

Game Three: This one was against my namesake Joel Feinstein, who I'm told had just come out of retirement. The confidence I'd gained from my last game didn't have any bearing on this game because Joel was simply too good and I was behind for the whole game.

Game Four: My fourth game was against Stephen Rowe. Stephen got off to a cracking start and I was definitely playing catch-up. But everything seemed to change at move 42, I got the advantage and my second win.

Game Five I have erased from memory! Graham Brightwell was like a machine and definitely a class apart. It's going to be a few years before I can seriously challenge this man.

Game Six was a fantastic game to be involved in. I was against Roy

Worlds 2004: At the other end of the room *by Ben Pridmore*

Having qualified for the World Othello Championship through a couple of lucky wins and the lucky withdrawal of Garry from the Nationals just as I was due to play him, I felt a tiny bit guilty about being there, mingling with the world's best players. Not quite guilty enough to drop out of the tournament and give the 'reserve' spot to someone more deserving, though.

Anyway, this gives me the opportunity to write an article about what happened down at the other end of the room, away from the tables where the top players were fighting for the title, and down in the dark depths of the bottom half of the draw. There were, after all, a heck of a lot of really good players at the WOC this year, and even the games on the higher-numbered tables could boast some exceptionally skilful play from some amazingly good players. Not from me, though -- I was complete rubbish in almost every game, so rather than go into details about my tournament, I thought I'd write a bit about the thirteen people I ended up playing.

Round 1: Lost 41-23, White *vs.* Velma Fu (Hong Kong). Velma was also playing in her first World Championship, and she had a very good one. She followed up an easy win over me with a draw against Donato Barnaba, and then went on to finish 29th with 6.5 points including wins over David Shaman, Mario Madrona and Nicky van den Biggelaar. I would have been overjoyed to get that kind of result against the quality of opposition she was playing, so I'm sure she was happy with it too.

Round 2: Lost 39-25, Black *vs.* George Ortiz (Australia). Having been on the last table for the first game, I was promoted by the pairing software to the second-last, meaning I got to look down on Imre Leader and Eddie Williams, who ended up on table 31. George is a regular contributor to the British Othello mailing list, but I'd never played him or met him in real life before this. We ended up playing a lot of the same people, and getting the same kind of results, but I ended up four Brightwell-quotient points ahead in the final ranking despite losing very badly here.

Round 3: Won 45-19, White *vs.* Leonid Shifman (Israel). Leonid was one of several people at this year's WOC whom I last saw at the MSO back in 1999, the first time I ventured into the scary world of over-the-board Othello competitions. I've obviously progressed a bit from the hatless, beardless, clueless youth I was then, because I got my revenge for losing to Leonid five years ago. He beat me in the overall ranking, though, ending up in 46th place with 5.5 points and scalps including Stéphane Dousse, who had a very impressive tournament.

Round 4: Won 40-24, White *vs.* Bintsia Andriani (Madagascar). This probably counts as my best result of the tournament. I'm sort of more

familiar with playing Bintsa, having done so at least two or three times before at MSOs and Cambridge EGPs. He finished in 43rd place overall, on six points, including a win against Geoff Hubbard in round 12.

Round 5: Lost 60-4, Black vs. Henrik Vallund (Denmark). Elevated to the dizzy heights of table 18, I responded by playing even worse than ever. I suppose I could try to blame my bad result on the fire alarm that went off half way through this game, but I was already well and truly dead by that point, so I spent the enforced break hoping that Henrik would be so rattled by the interruption that he'd somehow manage to let me back into the game. He didn't and went on to finish 35th with six points.

Round 6: Won 37-27, White vs. Jan Stastna (Czech Republic). I know Jan well from the MSO, where he's another all-rounder who plays in as many different events as possible. We've managed to avoid playing each other at Othello before, though, so this was a new experience. He went on to beat Holger Braun and Marc Corio, among others, and finished on five points in 48th place.

Round 7: Lost 40-24, Black vs. Riku Huhtamäki (Finland). Back to playing people I've never met before and back to losing horribly. Riku had a good tournament, starting with a win over Jan Kristian Haugland which set him up for a game against Makoto Suekuni in the second round which he only narrowly lost. He finished with 6.5 points and 30th place.

Round 8: Lost 40-24, Black vs. Goran Andersson (Sweden). Goran's another person I haven't met in real life since 1999, although we've played online quite a lot in the meantime. Actually, he was the first person to introduce me to the idea of corner sacrifices and wedges back at my first MSO Othello competition, for which I'm very grateful even if I still make a mess of using them a lot of the time. He also has a very entertaining blog, which you should check out if you haven't already. Judging by the blog, he wasn't happy with his play in this tournament, but he did convincingly beat Imre in the first round on his way to 36th place and six points. I wouldn't be too disappointed with that.

Round 9: Lost 36-28, White vs. Robert Berg (Norway). After avoiding playing Europeans for the first four rounds, I seem to have concentrated on Scandinavia thereafter. I don't honestly remember anything about this game, or Robert, at all, but I don't seem to have played too badly. Robert got off to a slow start in the tournament but finished strongly with a win in the last round against Hisako Kinoshita, who had taken down some first-rate players on the first day. That win took Robert to 6.5 points and 33rd place.

Round 10: Lost 36-28, Black vs. Miguel Angel Serrano (Spain). The Spanish team were really impressive this year, considering that they haven't really had much of a presence on the international Othello circuit before.

over-optimistic counting on my part) it was never going to be enough.

What does WZebra's perfect play analysis have to say about the ending? There were two four-disc errors at moves 31 and 36, after which it should have been 33-31 again. (In fact Geoff should have played 36 d2 after all: there was no reason to be frightened of 37 d1.) 37 f8 did not work, and White had a 37-27 win available with 38 c7. My move 41 f2 was wrong and was refuted correctly by 42 f1, thus showing that I still don't understand Othello. My moves to c1 and b2 were also wrong: at move 44 White could have won 44-20 by playing c8 instead of a8. In that line Black doesn't even have parity.

The rest of the endgame was correct. Disappointing for me, but well played Geoff!

Graham's approach was, instead, to get me out of book early, outplay me and win. Again, as we will see, I was over-optimistic throughout.

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

Feinstein 23 Brightwell 41

I half-remember Aubrey writing an article about plausible openings which could be refuted by playing out some appropriate pairs. Possibly Graham's 8 b5 was one of these, but if so I could not remember the refutation. I decided to play some "interesting" moves at 11 and 13, and my risky looking 15 was intended to leave Graham with a poisoning edge that would hurt him later. Graham wasn't worried.

I thought that things looked promising after 29 a4, but Graham was (I presume) confident that an appropriately-timed sequence a3-a2-b7 (if required) would always get him out of difficulties, and this was his reply to my sequence h3-h2-f2. Now he was threatening to follow up with d8, and my optimism began to evaporate. A further late irritant was that I had thought that I could get some compensation by meeting 50 h5 with 51 c1, after which 52 c2 was supposed to flip the g2 X-square. This was nonsense, of course, which is why I exclaimed "doh!" after Graham's move 50.

Does WZebra have anything interesting to say about the endgame in perfect-play mode? Only that it is reasonably accurate. There are minor disc-losses at moves 31, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 53 and 58, but otherwise play is correct from move 32 onwards. Well played Graham! The main question now is: in which year will I play my next tournament?

My visit to the Cambridge Christmas Tournament, December 2004

by Joel Feinstein

Some readers may vaguely remember the name of the author. In fact, this was my first tournament for four years. (I propose that all future Othello tournaments should be held on February 29th.)

I do not have full details of the players or the results, but I remember that Graham won with 7/7, with Geoff Hubbard and myself equal second on 5/7. My losses were to Graham and Geoff (see below), while Geoff lost to Graham and to your favourite Newsletter Editor, Adelaide Carpenter. (Adelaide used parity to devastating effect to achieve this excellent result.)

My plan in this tournament was to pretend I had never been away and use the same openings that had worked so well for me in Tokyo in the distant past. Let us see how Geoff and Graham countered my rotating flat plans.

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

Feinstein 29 Hubbard 35

Geoff was happy to follow one of my long rotating flat lines. I always thought that Geoff's move 24 was a losing move, but we were still in WZebra's book and I can reveal that White was winning 33-31 after 29 h6 (which was correct). White had to be very careful not to run out of moves, and even if Black was forced to break or chip away at the wall in the North it still looked to me that White was in trouble. Before reporting further computer analysis, let me tell you what I thought was happening.

My plan was to play b3 followed by c2 and meet a move to d2 with d1. (This was not a particularly good plan.) Geoff preferred 36 d8, after which I had to do something else in the North. However, the sequence 37 f8 g8 d2 gave White few choices, and I thought I was clearly winning after White played 42 f1: surely the North-East region would give me parity, and I would end up getting both moves in the South-East corner. Unfortunately the obvious move to c1 could be met by b1, after which I would have to sacrifice a bit to maintain parity. Nevertheless I expected this to be a parity win, but I became less sure after Geoff's annoyingly strong move 46 c7. My hopes for the South-East were beginning to fade: after 47 b7 a8 I could not play a7 because Geoff would get both c8 and b8. I could still make some use of parity, but (in spite of

Miguel started off by beating Matthias Berg in the first round, which is quite a feat. Winning your first game in a tournament like this is always a bit of a mixed blessing, and Miguel's reward was a game against Ben Seeley in round two, and then Roberto Sperandio in the third, so by the time he got down to me he was probably relieved to escape the frighteningly good players. He finished just above me in the overall ranking, in 52nd with 5 points.

Round 11: Lost 50-14, White vs. Joung-Mok Oh (Korea). The picture of me that ended up in the Independent was taken during this game. The press photographers, apparently not knowing who the good players were, fixed their attention firmly on the one with the silly hat, but unfortunately they chose to do so during my worst game of the whole tournament. The caption for the picture doesn't mention that I'm being thrashed, but you can work it out from the board position if you look carefully. As for Joung-Mok, he beat Roberto Sperandio and Leon Kamphuis in consecutive rounds early on, before finishing on 5 points plus a very high BQ, in 47th place.

Round 12: Won 55-9, Black vs. Daniel Dantas (Brazil). Daniel, who ended up at the foot of the table, still shouldn't feel bad about his performance here. He played a lot better in our game than the score suggests, and he had a great time over the weekend, which no doubt he'll go back to Brazil and tell everyone about. Othello continues to reach to the furthest corners of the Earth!

Round 13: Won 34-30, White vs. Pavel Radzivilovsky (Israel). By this time my brain was well and truly fried, and I have no idea how I managed to win this thirteenth high-pressure game in two days. Still, those two late wins got me up to a fairly respectable 5 points and 53rd place, marginally better than I was expecting to do, while Pavel remained on 4 and 59th.

In the all-important team competition, by the way, Team GB2 (me) finished equal on points with Team Canada (Marc Corio) and Team China (Liya Ye), and ahead of Team Brazil (Daniel), preserving important national pride for the nation of Other British Player in its debut appearance in the World Othello Championship!

The FAT Draw by *Graham Brightwell and Chris Welty*

This is the second in our series of articles on (supposedly) perfectly played games of Othello. We're still in the Comp'Oth opening, and this time we're looking at what we now know to be a solid drawing line. It was only discovered well after the first confident assertions that Othello was a draw; up until a few years ago, it was thought that the Comp'Oth was a win for White, but then this line -- the FAT draw -- was uncovered, and that changed the assessment.

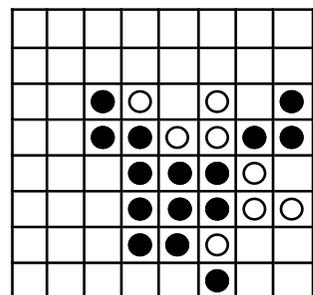
Extensive research has revealed that the FAT draw is named after foompy_katt, adsfadsfhs, and timid_orchid: foompy_katt is Ben Seeley, adsfadsfhs is Edmund Yiu, and timid_orchid is Wai Yin Loh (but he says everyone knows him as timid anyway). Ben thought it was a draw and mentioned it to Edmund and Timid who were also unable to refute it. They played it enough that other people started to think it might be a draw too;

so they eventually sent an email to Gunnar Andersson and Chris, announcing its existence and requesting that it be called the "FAT draw".

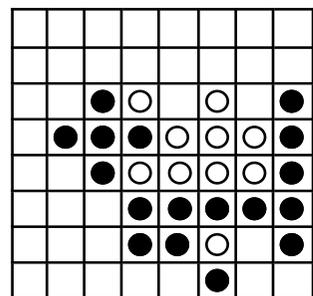
Here's the position after 1f5 2d6 3c3 4d3 5c4 6f4 7f6 8f3 (the Comp'Oth) 9e6 10e7 11d7 12g6 13f8 14f7 15g5 16h6 17h4 18g4 (we looked at 18e8 last time; 18b5 is also a solid draw) 19h3. Marc Tastet has done a very long computer run with WZebra; he tells us that he has proved that 18g4 is a draw and 19h3 is the only drawing move in response.

Now White has a number of options, but the line that defines the FAT draw is the forcing plan of 20h5 21h7. Then White comes through with 22c5, threatening to play into the hole at e3. So Black flips the c5 disc, and for no particular reason 23c6 is 31-33 whereas 23b4 is the draw. It's this move 23b4 that was the key discovery made by Ben Seeley: it overturned the analysis in WZebra's book at the time and changed the assessment all the way back to move 7.

There are three drawing moves here: 24b3, 24c8 and 24e8. We're only going to analyse



After 19h3



After 23b4

24e8 in this article; our aim is partly to show some of the fantastic perfectly-played games and partly to try to find out why Black is doing so much better than computers' midgame-crunchers

I drew with both Imre and Ben and got 33 disks against Marc, but I lost on time. I expect Marc only lost to Imre, and Imre only lost to Marc. I'm not sure who George won against, but I'm sure either Ben or Jeremy could tell you.

OTHELLO - 8x8 BLITZ WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Marc Tastet	11/12	Gold
Imre Leader	10.5/12	Silver
Geoff Hubbard	8/12	Bronze
Jeremy Dyer	6/12	
Ben Pridmore	4.5/12	
Alexander Baron	2/7	
George Lane	1/12	

There was also a 10x10 Tournament with 7 or 8 players; this one I was unable to stay to play in (or watch).

Results:

OTHELLO - 10x10 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Gold	Marc Tastet (France)	6/6
Silver	Jeremy Dyer (England)	5/6
Bronze	Alexander Baron (England)	3/6

OTHELLO - 10x10 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP Junior

Gold	Ankush Khandelwal (England)	3/6
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You should consider coming along to the next MSO which will be held again in Manchester sometime around the August bank holiday (2005). It's a good venue, really close to the train station, and there are lots of other games to learn and play as well. You might even win a rather impressive-looking medal!

MSO 2004 Report by Geoff Hubbard 'the Bronzed Aussie'

The Mind Sports Olympiad (MSO) was held in Manchester again in August this year. The turnouts for the main Othello tournaments were a little smaller than previous years.

The main Othello tournament of the MSO is the 'European Championship' (EC) (an event which is completely unrelated to the European Grand Prix). This year it had been moved to the first weekend so it would not clash with the Paris EGP tournament. This was good for Marc Tastet and me, the only people who played in both.

Results:

OTHELLO - 8x8 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Imre Leader	9/10 + 2/2	Gold
Marc Tastet	8/10 + 0/2	Silver
Geoff Hubbard	6/10	Bronze
Ben Pridmore	4/10	
Jeremy Dyer	3/10	
George Lane	0/10	

Since there were only 6 players, the tournament was a double round robin (each player played every other player twice, once as Black and once as White). Most of the games went according to the final rankings, *i.e.* everybody won against all the people below them; the exceptions were 2 of Ben Pridmore's games. Ben did splendidly to defeat Imre in round 2 and Jeremy Dyer managed 47 disks against Ben in round 6.

The other victory of note was Imre's win against Marc in round 5 which ended Marc's 2-year-long undefeated streak in Manchester.

The best-of-three final, held on the Monday morning, was won by Imre in 2 games. As well as receiving the Gold Medal he now gets to put his name on the perpetual trophy. Marc got silver and I got bronze (no playoff for 3rd was required).

The other weekend tournament was the 'Blitz World Championship.' 5-minute games are considered "long" online; they are much more frantic over the board where you actually have to flip your own discs.

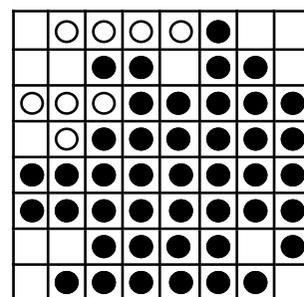
We had 7 players for this tournament, the six from the EC plus Alexander Baron who unfortunately pulled out of the tournament after 7 rounds. The tournament was held on the Sunday afternoon, after the main 10 rounds of the EC but before the final.

My notes for this tournament are less comprehensive but I do know that:

suggest.

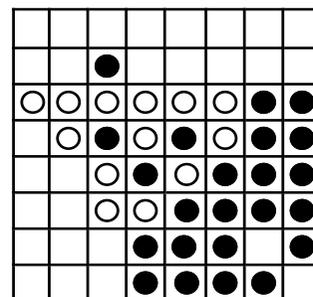
24e8 d8 c6: Black is obliged to take back with 25d8. Now the free move at g8 is available, and Black has real chances of grabbing edges, taking White off key lines, and running her out of moves. For instance, let's have a look at the sort of thing that can happen to White after the perfectly natural, but losing, move 26c6.

Black's plan involves playing g8, and he can time it as he wants, since White is never (well, almost never) going to have the opportunity to play g7 without being swindled. The temptation is to leave it as long as possible, but in this line the right time to play g8 is now, because White loses access to c7 and is immediately short of moves. White is now one step from total disaster. Here's what happens if she plays 28b5.



After 47f1

This is one of a few perfect play lines after 28b5. If White plays 48g1 in the diagrammed position, then Black plays 49a4, and now White has to play g7 either now or after 50a7-e2: either way she is swindled in the h1-h2 region and won't get very many discs.



Black to play and thrill on the next page is typical.

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

Not what White had in mind

And here's what happens if she plays 28a3 (correct) 29g3 30e3 (tempting, don't you think?).

The absolutely spectacular sequence 33c7! 34b5 35g2! is the only way for Black to win. The key point is that White has no way onto the b8-h2 diagonal ever, so Black can joyfully surrender h1 in return for discs and control. There are some alternative routes to 35-29 from 41 onwards, but the denouement (53-57) shown

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

After 28a3 29g3, the right move is 30b5. Now again the theme is for Black to extract discs, especially the f5 disc which gives access to c8. This time the right idea is for Black to play f2, which looks strategically bad because that opens up sacrifices for White at g2 and g1. And indeed this is much closer; one way it can go is shown below.

Only in Black's wildest dreams

There are plenty of other sequences leading to 33-31, most of them very strange. The strangeness is because the position is so delicately poised: White can afford almost anything to gain control.

Is it reasonable to conclude that playing 26c6 is visibly a strategic error? The argument goes: after that, Black is able to extract absolutely all of White's key discs and win due to his total domination of the South-East half of the board. Maybe, but for us that's a bit too much to heap on a move that's one disc off being optimal!

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

White comes up just short

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

After 27g3

24e8 d8 b5 g3: Instead 26b5 is the right move, threatening e3 again, and now Black can play either 27g3 or 27e3. Let's start with g3.

This is an aggressive action from Black (as is e3, for that matter). He is accepting that he will play the game with many more discs than his opponent and is starting to extract various key discs from the East and South. The move to g8 will be available, although ideally Black would avoid it because he would then have no access to the remaining two squares. At some stage, not

Paris 2004 by Graham Brightwell

The traditional final event of the European Grand Prix took place in Paris in September. The drama of the Grand Prix was missing because Andreas Höhne had wrapped up the title earlier. It was his first win, Germany's first win, and the first win by a non-Frenchman since 1996. Right now, he's Europe's top player. But this wasn't his weekend.

No, the surprise winner of this year's Paris Open was Stéphane Nicolet. Hardly a surprise that he was good enough to win, of course, but it was a surprise that he turned up for the tournament: as of the previous evening, he had been reported to be sailing somewhere off the coast of Brittany.

Nicolet beat Emmanuel Caspard 2-0 in the Final, while Albert Kortendijk beat Marc Tastet 2-1 for third. As for me, I lost all four games on the second day and fell from among the leaders into the middle of the field.

Last year, I showed you Marc Tastet doing something very silly against me. This year, to redress the balance, here is Marc Tastet doing something very clever against me.

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

Black (Tastet) to move

to a2!

I was White, and I was expecting to win. I couldn't see what Marc could do other than break through to the East, and I couldn't see how that would work for him. Marc showed me what I'd missed. Although there were a few different possible move orders leading to wins, he had to spot the key idea in the position shown.

Marc played 45f1 46a1 47a8 48b8 49a7 and only now did I see what was about to happen to me. If I took my move at 50a6, then I would be swindled because 51b2 would leave me no access

Hints for the puzzle on page 3:

Let's start with a useful "lemma" about Othello positions. Suppose you have a segment of discs of the same colour along an edge. Then fewer than half of those discs, when played, flipped discs along the edge. For instance, if there are just four white discs in the segment, then at most one flip along the edge has occurred. Anyone with mathematical pretensions might like to prove this by induction on the number of edge-flips within a segment.

What does this lemma tell you about the West edge? About the South edge?

Once you have this, you should know a lot about what happened on the South edge, including who played which move, although curiously you won't yet know the colour of d8.

Now, which moves to the South edge flipped f7? What other moves might have flipped f7? How come f7 is now black? That should be enough to figure out what colour d8 is.

Now it is time to think about f6 and g6. What can happen with these discs so that f6 ends up black? You should end up concluding that certain squares are empty until late in the action, and that ought to be enough to complete the puzzle.

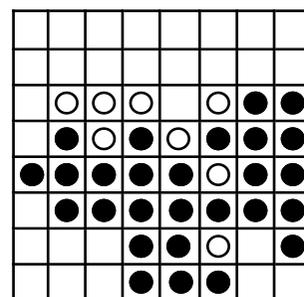
10x10 Ratings

The Foreign 10x10 Rating List *maintained by David Haigh*

Current Foreign players' ratings after the 2004 MSO

	games	rating		games	rating
1 Makoto Suekuni	6	1861	8 Marc Tastet	17	1527
2 Stéphane Nicolet	13	1806	9 Kim Kwan Soo	13	1492
3 Tim Krzywonos	12	1686	10 Jakub Tesinsky	6	1426
4 Jan K. Haugland	9	1682	11 Benjamin Koenig	6	1356
5 Goran Andersson	7	1588	12 Marc Corio	10	1290
6 Osamu Omedera	5	1556	13 Werner Dupont	3	1139
7 Solrun Stokke	7	1551	14 Csabas Bogнар	7	1062
			15 Jinwoo Song	6	974

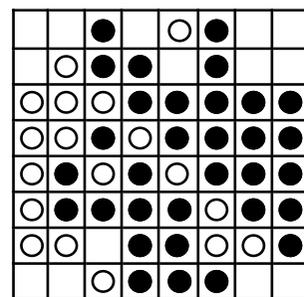
immediately but soon, White will come under pressure, and she will have to choose carefully how and when to sacrifice to stay alive. It would be lovely for White to get to g2, so normally Black will want to leave the f3 disc alone and play further over to the West. These are the strategic ideas, but sometimes, as we have already seen, tactical considerations dictate some very strange approaches.



After 28c6-a5-b3-b6

24e8 d8 b5 g3 c6: Again 28c6 isn't right (the drawing moves are 28e3 and 28c2), but this time there's nothing strategically wrong with it, it just falls a disc short. We'll still have a good look at this line, even though it's off the draw-tree, because we think it's crucial to understanding why the FAT draw is elusive. Black removes access from e3 by playing 29a5; now there are a number of things White can try, but the most promising shot is 30b3, after which Black has to find 31b6.

White seems to be on the verge of a crushing win; Black has several weak edges, and all White needs to do is get access to e3 and/or gain a tempo. She has to be aware that Black has a free move at g8, of course, but on the other hand if Black has to resort to that then White can afford to sacrifice a lot to gain the two moves at h8 and g7. What to do? Here's one try.



After 46c8: have faith!

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

Narrow loss for White

33a7 instead is a thrilling draw. After 37f1, White is still strategically winning but unfortunately has no access to anywhere desirable, so 38g7 is the only try. The drawback is of course that,

if Black gets on the diagonal, then he threatens to get both h8 and g8. (That actually happens after 39c2, but it's only a draw.) Black plays 39d2; White can maintain control of the diagonal, but 43c1 poses more problems since White has to keep finding a move to hold the diagonal. She can try 44e2 45d1 46a7 47b1 48g1 49h1 50h2 51g2 52h8 53g8 54c8 55a1 56a2 57a8 58b7 59b8 60c7 33-31. Or she can play the line shown above; the point of 46c8 (46g1 is also -) is that 47a8 48b8 is a swindle. However, 47b8 guarantees two of the three moves in the region: this is obscured by the perfect-play line, since 53c7 is only a draw, but Black has one more idea. 53a1 threatens b1, removing access to a2, so White has to play out the North in an awkward fashion to make sure she gets the moves she is due, and the result is that there aren't quite enough discs. In this line, all of Black's moves are forced (*i.e.*, the only win).

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

White to play but not to win

So, in the line starting with 32a6, White is very close to success but just falls short down a very tactical line. That's just the warm-up.

Let's try 32c8 33b8 34c7, which gains access to e3. All Black can do is play a2 and g8 while White takes e3, reaching the position to the right, which looks completely appalling for Black.

All four of White's moves on the a-file are plausible, but three lose 31-33 and the other is 29-35. Here are perfect-play sequences starting with each of the three best moves.

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

All Black's moves are forced

These lines are all tremendous fun, but at least the first and third look like very narrow escapes for Black. In the first line, 42c1 poses another almost impossible solitaire to Black. Maybe it's not too surprising that WZebra gives White some large plusses in the midgame.

etc. -- and of course all these things need to come ahead of time to be certain that they have indeed arrived. Anjar's clocks came first, we took that box home so we could check the clocks, replace batteries as necessary *etc.* Two problems with that set, however. Firstly, they really are *chess* clocks; it's possible to do all sorts of fancy chess timings but impossible to program two-minute overtime on them. Well, I figured out how to set + two minutes manually if needed, and was prepared to run around the room doing so (not all that many games actually run over time, after all), but not an ideal plan. Secondly, there are only 18 of them; by this time we already had over 40 players confirmed with many countries not yet committed, so we needed more clocks anyway, might as well try for ones that can be programmed for overtime. Aubrey originally negotiated with Jan to borrow the Dutch set, which would also have to be shipped ahead, but he did finally manage to get into contact with the local multi-clock owner (who had inconveniently been on holiday until the very last minute), Tony Corfe, who not only agreed to loan us thirty clocks but also to bring them to the tournament venue. This did mean that I wouldn't have much time to check them over, so I went well prepared for clock repair (lots of batteries, jeweller's screwdrivers, pliers): and we fetched our own two digital clocks as well. They were needed: we ended up with 62 players and one of Tony's clocks didn't work. And Anna competently made running repairs, we never had a clockless game. But it was close!

But back to the boxes. One large carton of Anjar's clocks: could be used during the tournament if needed and anyway we had to get them back to Jonathan. Six large cartons of sets. Various cartons of gifts from various sponsors. The large and heavy carton of the permanent trophy, *etc.* Total of 18 cartons to get from Cambridge to London -- somehow. By car? I do have one, but, in addition to not wanting to drive back to Cambridge after the Victory Dinner, that many cartons wouldn't fit inside her. By train? With just two of us to carry all those boxes through stations and load onto the train in the two minutes it's stopped at Cambridge? The solution was to recruit the assistance of the rest of the Cambridge contingent, Geoff Hubbard and Imre Leader, and in the end Kath was able to come with us; with five of us moving and loading cartons (including the large ones containing trophies that Imre had brought) the transport was *just* doable, with taxis at both ends for the road segments. I have no idea how previous iterations have coped with this logistical challenge, but living in the same city as the venue rather than 60 miles away probably helps. At least we didn't have to bring any of those cartons back with us!

Four day of constant terror -- it took me a week to calm back down. Most sincere thanks to everyone who made the 2004 Worlds possible!

do all the entering and pairings himself -- when he had expected to enjoy the tournament as a Table Judge. (He did manage to judge a few games along the way.)

We had hoped to emulate Jan's scheme of having the Table Judges enter their own transcripts after each round but this totally did not work -- we didn't have enough computers (or, for that matter, Table Judges). Kath Maguire and Anna Ekman did noble duty -- they double-handedly typed all the transcripts in, coping with the wide variety of ways of writing numbers and typographical errors with aplomb.

We had expected to have the Semi-Final and Final games live on the net -- finding that the room where those games would be played had no net access worried us, but we were assured that the last day's play would be covered by a special team (and I failed to pick up on that team's being described as "acoustical engineers" as a concern). The team duly arrived Monday morning; yes, they could have provided live Net coverage but hadn't been asked to, and the relevant equipment was in their shop in Croydon or wherever. However, they could and did provide the usual fixed-camera coverage of the two concurrent Semi-Finals games for the rest of the players elsewhere, and they even managed to pipe a copy to Roy's computer station -- move-by-move Web coverage was entered manually and seemed to suffice (Aubrey assisted Roy in this, they each transcribed a game). Ditto for the first round of the Final. However, without any of us having had any warning, they proceeded to move their cameras around before the second Final round; it took some consultation with Aubrey to get a setup that satisfied them and wasn't in the way of the players, but I still didn't understand what they were trying to accomplish -- until they actually began filming. Not just the board but also the player's expressions! And indeed they *had* come prepared to transmit the sounds of the game as well (see the cover, the large fuzzy object is a microphone), though they -- or someone -- did in the event realize the uselessness of that. The players took this extra exposure completely in their stride: congratulations, Makoto and Ben, for being such professionals, and my belated apologies for the lack of warning! (The table judge, Emmanuel Lazard, later confessed that he was petrified, even though he wasn't the direct focus of the roving camera.)

The water carafes at each table were greatly appreciated, so much so that they kept running dry; initial attempts by hotel staff to replenish them between rounds didn't work -- not enough time -- so I took that task over, I could move quietly around the room during the rounds, filling jugs as necessary.

Ah yes, the boxes! Quite a lot of the equipment for the Worlds is shipped from abroad -- Anjar keeps a set of clocks, Palbox supplies the sets,

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

Black's 39, 41, 43 are forced

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

All Black's moves are forced

24e8 d8 b5 g3 e3: It's high time we showed you some games that actually do end in draws. We'll start our tour of this part of the draw-tree with one of its thinner branches, stemming from 28e3. Here's one complete, apparently perfect, game.

The caption to this game could be the caption to the entire article; Black grabs and grabs, White has nowhere to go, she uses up her final tempo at 44b7, but Black has 45b2. Now White is half-dead, but also half-alive, since 46h2 gives up one farm to gain another. After the dust has settled, we're left with a very intricate finish to negotiate.

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

White just about runs out of moves

First of all, does White have to play 50a8? The reason she'd rather not is that it seems to lose parity: after the North has been played out, it will be White's move and only g7 will be legal. So, what about 50d1, aiming to play out the North, and force Black to play first to the South with a8, leaving White the last three moves? This plan works like clockwork: 50d1 51e1 52f1 53e2 54g2 55g1 56f2 57a8, and White gets the last three moves, but only 29 discs.

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

After 49b1

White just couldn't afford to play the North out like this, getting so few discs in the region and spurning the a-file.

So White does have to venture 50a8, but she does so with a plan, namely to arrange to play g7 as a diagonalisation so Black will have to finish 59b8 60h8. The rest of the ending accordingly revolves around Black's struggle to stop g7 taking the whole diagonal. Black's first line of defence is the b2 disc, and he can't afford to relinquish that too soon, so none of: 51d1 52e2 53g2 54e1 55f2 56g1, 51e2 52f2, or 51g2 52d1 53e2 54f2 get close. There is 51g2 52d1 53f2, when the b2 disc will scupper the diagonalisation ... but after 54e2 Black is swindled in the e1-f1-g1 region. There remains only 51f2, flipping d4 to make the diagonal as complicated as possible: now 52d1 would be met by 53e2, when White wouldn't be able to get both the b2 and d4 discs. So it has to be 52e2 and now 53d1 is the only way to avoid swindles. The diagonalisation looks out of the question now, but watch what happens to the diagonal in the sequence 54f1 55e1 56g2 57g1. Success: White plays g7 triumphantly, but only gets a draw for her pains. What did Black do to deserve that? Well, he managed to keep the North edge, which looked pretty unlikely in the diagram, and also the g-file and a fair share of centre discs. Also 59b8 is quite a lucrative move. Even so, it feels like Black had the luck.

Neither side has all that much choice after 28e3. Black can play 41 and 43 in the other order. Or he can play 39c7, along these lines.

It's also a draw if Black plays 45e1 rather than 45d1, and this leads to a variety of possible sequences. Fundamentally, they all involve Black getting almost all the discs in the North and West, and White almost all the discs in the South and East. Apart from those sequences (which, trust us, is just a handful compared with other lines we looked at last time and this), we've now seen all the perfect-play draws stemming from 28e3.

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

Another day at the perfect-play office

24e8 d8 b5 g3 c2: But 28c2 also works, and actually there are rather more perfect games down that branch. There's only so much time and space in the universe, so we'll confine ourselves to two rather amusing games.

World's 2004: Housekeeping by *Adelaide Carpenter*

Although in the end (nearly) everything worked, in one way or another, there were a lot of near misses; here I'll share some of these behind-the-scenes incidents with you. That this year's Worlds was such a (nearly) smooth event was largely due to the excellent efforts of all the sponsors, of course; many thanks to Deneice Clark and Sara Milne of Clareville, Alexis Allison of Character Games, Jonathan Becker of Anjar Co., and Yoshiaki Kurokawa of Palbox, and all the rest behind the scenes. We surely did not make communications with us easy, there being so many of us handling the various aspects of our responsibilities, but reciprocally we often couldn't get vital information because we didn't know whom to ask!

Case in point: Jan de Graaf needed to know what kind of projector (to display the pairings) was being supplied so he could bring a computer prepared to interface with it. In the end, lacking any information, he came prepared for several: and he did get one to work, albeit only after some jiggling.

We also wanted to pre-test the internet connections -- getting the results up on the Web immediately has become *de rigueur*. We couldn't, however, because a fast connection was being laid on especially for us only at the last minute. So we travelled to London and hoped. And found that there was *no* access from the Judges' Room, not even mobile phone: but there was, right outside. So Roy Arnold set up his computer there in the corridor and did a wonderful job of getting each round on the Web promptly. (See later for the Finals kerfluffle.)

Early on we had been specific about refreshments: coffee and tea to be constantly available, though preferably not in the tournament room itself. I did remember to check at the last minute that this was happening, only to learn that the plan instead was to have two coffee/tea breaks of 45 minutes (one morning, one afternoon). *That* clearly would not work, so I cancelled it and hoped that the table-available water plus bar outside would be sufficient (I did offer to pay for constant supplies myself at this point). In the end, constant supplies were provided (many thanks to whoever worked that out), though it did take a while for the level of the demand to be accommodated!

Jan brought a computer prepared to run Papp, the pairing program, which I was to use to enter results and run pairings. However, he failed to appreciate that I've never used any pairing program, and the verbal instructions after Round One had begun were too complex for me to accept responsibility in such an important circumstance; I deferred to Aubrey, who has not only run Papp but is computer literate; but he in turn bailed out -- Jan's computer only speaks Dutch and Aubrey doesn't. So poor Jan had to

2005 European Grand Prix Tournaments *compiled by Roy Arnold and Aubrey de Grey*

ROME: January 29-30. Contacts: Alessandro Tucci & Roberto Sperandio
Email: fngo.lazio@libero.it

CAMBRIDGE: February 19-20. Venue: Leslie Stephen Room, Trinity Hall (This is NOT Trinity College), Trinity Lane, Cambridge. Contact: Aubrey de Grey, 1 Beaconsfield Terrace, Victoria Road, Cambridge CB4 3BP Phone: 01223-366197 (h), Email ag24@gen.cam.ac.uk

AMSTERDAM: March 26-27 Contact: Jan de Graaf Email: jan.de.graaf@othello.nl

COPENHAGEN: April 9-10 Contact: Henrik Vallund Email: info@othello.dk

STOCKHOLM: May 21-22 Contact: Benkt Steentoft Email: benkt.steentoft@tiscali.se

GDANSK: June 25-26 Contact: Krzysztof (Kris) Szyszko Email: krsz@othello.pl

BRUSSELS: July 30-31

PARIS: August 27-28

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

After 41b2

41b2 threatens a Stoner trap with 43g7, and White has to cut the diagonal now to prevent it. But this gives Black time to play 43b1, and now (this is the amusing bit) he can continually deny White access to a4. This is only useful if the pair c8-g8 is timed perfectly, so that the region from which White is cut off is odd. All in all, a strategic triumph for Black. However, the pairs White plays first into in the East are hardly disastrous for her, and the odd region in the West doesn't play especially well for Black, so it's only a draw.

Alternative draws: 41g7, 38e1, 38d1, 35d2, 30e3, and 30c6, as shown below.

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

After 49b2

49b2 looks like a winning idea. Black seems to have parity, since apparently White cannot play into the odd region in the South-East without being swindled. But wait: what's this button here? White plays 50g7! right now, allowing the "swindle" 51g8. The plan is obviously to keep Black out of h8, but how is this possible, because the

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

Be amused, be very amused

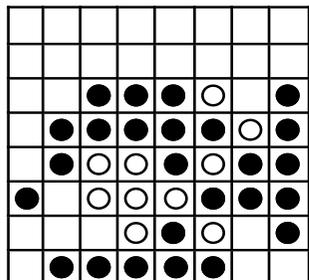
59	54	44	43	35	42	40	57
53	49	28	39	34	29	38	58
52	47	3	4	31	8	27	19
46	23	5	○	●	6	18	17
32	26	22	●	○	1	15	20
45	41	30	2	9	7	12	16
48	56	33	11	10	14	50	21
55	37	36	25	24	13	51	60

Smile, or else

North-West region is even, so the final move will be Black's and he'll be on the diagonal? The secret is to blank out a1 and treat what's left as an odd region: White plays 52a3!, meeting either of a2/b1 with the other. This only works because White owns both the North and the West edges. Here 53b1 loses, but 53a2 leads to a very forced sequence, with 32 discs each at the end.

Alternative draws: 42c1, 32f1.

24e8 d8 b5 e3 c8: Let's turn to 27e3. This is another big move, grabbing the centre and a mass of discs, and it's another line where WZebra's midgame analyser gives White a huge advantage. Although she is temporarily deprived of access to g3 and c6, that hardly seems to matter, because she has the convincing sequence 28c8 29b8 30c6. Ridiculously, 31a6 now wins 34-30 for Black! (Also 31c7 is 33-31.)



An extraction is on the way

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

As good as it gets for White

The line shown is typical: Black plays g8, and c7 (which in some sense gains a tempo in that region), and then h2 once White has played g3. That leaves Black with two unattackable sixes and White with a large wall and very few internal discs. White simply has no way to make progress and eventually (17 ply after the position in the diagram) has to start sacrificing corners for no real compensation. She can just about take control, but she has had to give up too much. Care is still needed: 55a3 loses, but 55g2 ensures that Black keeps most of the 2nd rank. You'd think White must have had something better, but the computer says not.

Just in case you've lost track, here is what we confidently believe to be the full set of branches of the draw-tree after 24e8, expanded out to the first branching after move 34. If you find a mistake, please let us know!

The next two moves 25d8 26b5 are forced, and then:

```

27g3 e3 c6 a4 a3 c2 a5 a6 a7 b3 c1 b6 a2/c7
      c2 f2 g2 e3 c6 c7 a3 b6/d2
      e3 c6 a5 e2 b6 d2/c7
      b6 e2 a5 d2/c7
      c6 e3 a5 c7 e2 e1 c8 b8 g2 d2 g1 b6 c1/f1
      f1 e2 g2 c7 d1 a5/b3/e1/a4
27e3 d2 f2 c8 b8 c6 g3 e2 e1 a3 b3 g2 g8/c7
      e2 g3 c8 b8 c6 a5 b3/g2
      c6 b6 a5 a4 a6 b3 g3 c8 b8 c7 d1 g2 a3 e2 g7 c1 b1 c2 b2 h2 h1
      a1/h8
      g3 a6 b3 a3/c2
      b3 a6 c8 b8 c7 d1 g2 a3 e2 g7 c1 b1 c2 b2 h2 h1
      a1/h8
      a6 b3 a4 a3/f2
      f2 c2 a4 a6 e2 a3/g3
      f2 c2 a5 b3 e2 a3/c1
      b6 a5 a4 a6 e2 a3/g3
    
```

This series will continue. There are the other possibilities at 24, which we plan for next time. And if you think some of these games are strange, wait until you see what we found down the 20g3 line.

Our thanks to those who have commented on drafts of this article, in particular to Marc Tastet for a very thorough reading and some helpful comments.

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

After 45g8

The diagonalisation with 43b7 is going to stick: 44e2 is met by 45c2, but after 44c2 Black has to play 45g8, which seems to leave White a swindle at a7. However,

if White plays that, either at 46 or 48, then Black plays f1 and b1 and can meet a White move to g2 by going to g1, keeping the diagonal forever. This looks to be good enough, but White can leave out a7 and grab the other diagonal with a well-timed 48g7. The only way for Black to get on the diagonal is to play 49b2 immediately, and after 50a1 51b1 it is White's turn to face a problem. 52g2 doesn't work, since 53e1 cuts and narrowly wins, so she has to allow Black access to h8. That looks like plenty of discs, but White has a few tricks left. First she gets 52a7 in before the g7 disc goes. Now Black has to play 53a8, because 53h8 54d1 gives up too many central discs. Next White plays 54e1, so that if Black responds 55d1 then 56g2 keeps the a1-h8 diagonal and wins. Black's only chance is to leave d1 alone and grab 55h8, but finally White has a strong sequence in the North to get 32 discs.

Alternative draws: 42e2, 41e2, 38a2, 35f2.

And finally here's a treat for those who have stayed with us to the end. The deviation with 38a2 leads to a line which can only be described as grand opera. Both sides launch swindle after swindle, the plot is complex and bizarre, and the slightest misstep at any stage leads to defeat. Yet, strangely, no erudite commentary would add anything of note, and the audience is advised to sit back and enjoy the spectacle. Take your seats please!

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

Sparkler

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

Otello, the opera

24e8 d8 b5 e3 d2 f2: Indeed 28c8 is losing, as is everything but 28d2, after which it's a draw with either 29f2 or 29c6. There are various perfect play sequences; let's just watch some of the fireworks.

At 20 ply, WZebra assesses 31g3 as -9.72. What does it not understand? A critical point comes at move 38: if play goes (say) 38a4 39c7 40a6 41e1, then White is not getting on the b7-g2 diagonal any time soon, since g2 is typically met by f1. There are some devastating lines where Black grabs the b2-g7 diagonal as well.

But White avoids these problems by getting in 38g2, and the game seems to continue very smoothly for White; by 46 it looks over.

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

After 46a7

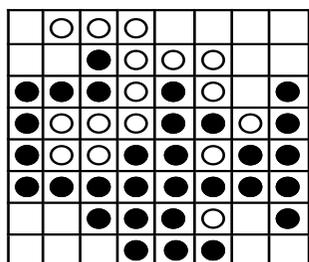
White is threatening to gain one more tempo with b7, and Black can't afford that. Not that it's obvious he can afford 47a6-a1 either, but he can stay alive with the remarkable 49g1!. The idea is that White has no access to h2; she can take the corner, but then after the Northern region is played out Black will have parity! Indeed 50h1 loses to a line similar to the game, and 50f1 is all there is. Another key point is that, after 51e1 52b2?, Black gets both c1 and b1, so White does have to play 52h1 and give up parity. After 53b2, it looks as though Black should even be winning, but White arranges for her moves to g7 and b1 to be massive enough to salvage a draw.

Alternative draws after 29f2: 30c8, 36g2, 45g1, 47g1 (transposing) and 52b7 (transposing).

24e8 d8 b5 e3 d2 c6 f2: Now for 29c6. One possibility for White is to get 30f2 in now; after 31c2, 32b6 does work, but our game features the less natural 32a5.

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

Catherine wheel

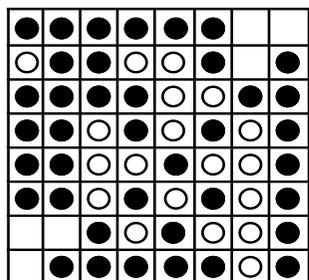


After 42d1

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

Rocket

After 39c7, 40c1 loses to 41b2, but the C-square 40b1 looks like a winning idea for White, intending to keep the X-square for herself for later. But Black finds a resource in 43f1!, leaving White no access to g3 or e1. Indeed there is very little that White can do: 44c8-b8-e1-a1 at least gets her to g3, but perhaps she is lucky to find that 50a2 seizes control of the diagonal. And so we come to this 6-square ending; how hard can it be?



After 54g8

There are some alluring sequences here. White will spot 55g1-h1-g2-b7, and now she has a swindle ... and 31 discs. Allowing Black the diagonal is too much. White needs to sit on her hands and find something better.

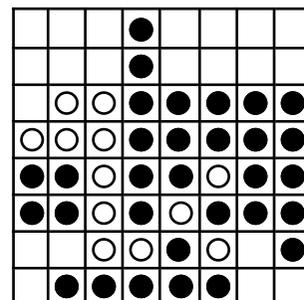
So the right answer must be the enticing 55g2-g1-b7-a7-a8? No, keep those hands away from the board: that is 32-31.

Is it better to play 55b7-a7-a8 first? Then 58g2-g1 is as before, and 58g1-g2-h1 is 33-31 to Black. Hands off.

In these sequences, the only thing Black achieves in the South-West is to turn along the 7th rank. What happens if White plays 55a8-(P)-a7-b7 instead? Compared with 55b7-a7-a8, White keeps the d7 disc, but now Black has a disc at b7, which looks very valuable since he has access to g2. But it's not his move, and after 58g1-g2-h1, the entire diagonal returns to White and it's one key disc (the d7 disc) better for her than 55b7-a7-a8-g1-g2-h1. White can get those hands into action now.

Alternative draws: the final 23 moves of this game are forced, but there are variations with 37c1, 35c1, 32b6, and 30b6. It's 30b6 we'll focus on for the rest of the article.

24e8 d8 b5 e3 d2 c6 b6: White plays to the West, one aim being to get a disc on the c-file in order to play c8-b8-c7, but in the position shown she



After 39d1

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

Roman candle

has some difficulties for the usual reason: she is in danger of being removed from some key lines. For instance 40c2 41a3 42g2 43b7! 44a8 45g7 and White is practically dead. Or 40a7 41c2 and both diagonals are problematic for White. In positions like this, where the sacrifice at g2 against the five is sure to be part of the plan, it often pays to go to the X-square straight away: this prevents Black from grabbing the diagonal and also poisons some of the moves for Black as the region gets played out. Here, for instance, 40g2 poisons f1, so White is threatening to play e1. 41a3 takes away access from e1, and also from b7, and then after 43g7 White has no way to cut the diagonal other than at h2. White gets Black to sacrifice at b2 before committing to the semi-ruinous h2, and then the ending plays out with each side grabbing exactly their fair share of the discs.

There are some alternative ways to play out the final moves, starting with 56e1, 56b7, 54e1, 53f1, 50h8. But the previous deviation is not until back at 33g3. Then there are 32f2 and 32a6; let's have a look at the latter.