

## 8x8 Ratings

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

Current British players' ratings after the 2002 Doncaster Regional Tournament  
(rating order)

	games	rating		games	rating
1 Imre Leader	542	1932	34 Margaret Plowman	36	1114
2 Graham Brightwell	725	1851	35 Stephen Rowe	81	1100
3 Garry Edmead	283	1843	36 Michael Zabaida	5	1109
4 Michael Handel	405	1752	37 Alexander Baron	30	1108
5 Joel Feinstein	447	1693	38 Mac Bannister	37	1087
6 Geoff Hubbard	192	1618	39 David Pearce	6	1071
7 Guy Plowman	401	1614	40 John Horton	18	1062
8 Iain Barrass	492	1539	41 Mark Stretch	14	1060
9 Phil Marson	723	1529	42 Adelaide Carpenter	194	1022
10 Ian Turner	516	1513	43 Peter Horlock	12	992
11 Louis Mitchell	37	1507	44 Rajit Gholap	28	981
12 Aubrey de Grey	640	1503	45 Elaine Rutherford	3	968
13 Jeremy Das	273	1390	46 George Lane	12	954
14 Mark Worsley	523	1389	47 Robert Lloyd	6	929
15 Matthew Selby	246	1376	48 Gareth Morinan	2	907
16 Ken Stephenson	217	1369	49 Jonathan Zabaida	6	904
17 Chris Welty	24	1365	50 Nigel Wedgeburrow	7	903
18 Mark Richards	12	1293	51 Roger Peck	6	880
19 Beng Tan	13	1279	52 Nathalie Lecordier	5	874
20 Roy Arnold	832	1265	53 Andrew Havery	11	867
21 Julian Richens	55	1255	54 Lyndon Gurr	6	861
22 Martin Fancy	23	1250	55 Harold Lee	5	848
Anthony Lees	10	1250	56 Dale Gantry	7	810
24 Darren Bartlett	12	1242	57 Leanne Lysons	20	796
25 Iain Forsyth	465	1225	58 Justin Millette	7	787
26 David Kotin	33	1223	59 Tony Boyle	3	759
27 Ben Pridmore	55	1216	60 Bharat	5	697
Andy Aspden	6	1216	61 Eileen Forsyth	263	663
29 Josiah Lutton	35	1206	62 Adam Gul	5	616
30 Simon Turner	102	1176	63 Paul Davies	3	578
31 David Haigh	494	1156	64 Ben Player	8	479
32 Carolyn Lysons	38	1134	65 Kali Turner	13	368
33 Richard Brand	30	1132	66 Wordy Splodge	24	200

## Splodgy Words

The Newsletter of the British Othello Federation

July 2002





fight for mobility/tempi. I have tried the same idea in at least two other games but could not find them in time to include them.

Neither of us played a perfect endgame, which was a little trickier for White, and I ended up winning.

**Game 8: Elf Bot v Das (2002-07-17) [analysed to a depth of 20 ply only]**

When I should have been sleeping or writing this article, I was busy on-line, losing game after game to Elf Bot. But it seems quite fitting that I had one of my rare wins on the day I was supposed to be writing an article about such things.

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

I have just checked the analysis, and apart from a -10 mistake it is probably the best game I have played in my entire life. Considering how much worse I play most of the time, this is really miraculous! Up to move 37 Zebra's choice is almost identical to Elf's (this is unusual), while an evaluation of some of my moves as being slightly poorer did not stop the game being identified as a 32-32 draw when the endgame search depth of 22-ply was reached. I made my -10 blunder at 38 and

then Elf obligingly blundered away its advantage, giving me a nice win.

Now if only I could learn to play this well in the 99% of my games that aren't like this ----

Answers to questions:

1. 41g1 (leading to a 33-31 win for Black).
2. 44g2 (leading to a 33-31 win for Black).
3. 53h8

**In Another Universe, Not Too Far From Ours by Graham Brightwell**

As everyone now knows, I won the British Othello Championship in 2000. I thought you'd like to hear a little about what I was doing during my reign.

Probably you think that the most tedious part of being the champion is the endless round of TV and radio shows, but that got better once I learnt that no-one cared exactly what my opinion was about, say, the civil war in the Sudan; they just needed to be sure that I had one.

No, the worst of it was the regular early-morning visits from guys in very dark suits, who would whisk me off to a secret installation to combat an evil genius whose masterplan could only be foiled by solving some Othello problem or other. This sort of thing happens much more often than you might imagine: why do you think the top chess players never enter the British Championship? Anyway, the puzzles were usually pretty easy, and none of the megalomaniacs ever did take over the world. (Except the once, of course, and that wasn't my fault: I was out Feeling the Sportsman when they came for me.)

I confess that I eventually persuaded them to use a computer, and so I guess you can blame me for the current state of the railways: the software wasn't expensive, but the performance they got initially wasn't quite what they were hoping for, so they had to make some hardware upgrades. (It is a draw, by the way.)

I thought that would be the end of it, at least until I could contrive to be an ex-champion (and that isn't so straightforward either: there are only three of us with a high enough security clearance). But there was one last time they came for me. Actually, for once I was glad to see them: If I'd known they really do maroon you on a desert island, I'd have chosen some music I actually like.

This time they'd had a signal from outer space, from some aliens who were trying to detect intelligent life by setting it Othello puzzles. They'd sent us part of a position from an Othello game (strangely enough, the whole of the galaxy plays exactly the same rules that we do).

The ?s could be White discs, Black discs, or empty squares. The aliens wanted to know the exact order in which the moves d1, e1, f1, g1 and h1 were played. As you can imagine, my friends in the supersuits weren't having much success with their supercomputer.

?	?		○	●	●	○	●
?	?			○		?	
?	?		?	?	●	?	
?	?		?	?	?	?	?
?	?	?	?	?	?	?	
?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
?		?	?	?	?	?	?
?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

It wasn't so hard, actually, but to convince them I had to construct a game reaching a position that fitted the fragment and prove that this was the only way the North edge could have played out. Anyway, we sent off the signal, but I'm afraid I can't tell you what happened after that because I was whisked off to give my opinion on the new Spielberg film. I suspect that the sudden outbreak of World Peace and Global Prosperity is indirectly down to me, but maybe I'll never know.

Some Hints:

- (1) What can you say about the order of the moves d1, e1, f1, g1, h1, just by looking at the North edge?
- (2) In which directions did those moves flip?
- (3) Just after the last of those moves, e2 is black; how can it now be white? Reconstruct the history of the e2 disc.
- (4) The g3 disc might conceivably be black now, but why must it have been white while the North edge was being played?
- (5) What directions did the moves to g2 and h1 flip in?
- (6) Reconstruct the history of the f3 disc.
- (7) When was d1 played?

Answers later on (to inhibit peeking)

**Covers:**

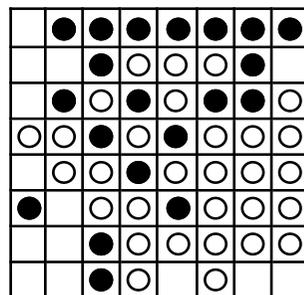
David Haigh wrote on January 14: Happy New Year, Adelaide!

Given the dubious etymology of blodgy, here's a suggestion for the title of the next newsletter: SPODGY WORDS

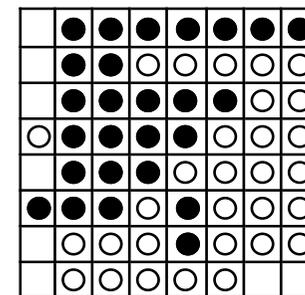
I was amused by the thought of the British library having to redesign their entire catalogue system to cope with the unanticipated concept of varying names for different issues of a publication.

*As you can see, I took David's suggestion for title but had to think up a drawing myself; in case you are wondering, the tea-stain is deliberate, to justify "Splodgy."*

„ ɹɹɹɹ ɹɹɹɹ „ = „ ɹɹɹɹ ɹɹɹɹ „



After 46a4



After 52b8

At move 47, I made my first error of more than two discs, reducing my lead from 8 discs to 4 discs.

Every move except g8 leads to a Black win. But which one leads to a +8 win? I wasn't spending 10 minutes per move by this point but I'm not sure I'd have been able to work it out even if I had --

Finally, at move 53, I threw away my 4 point advantage with an avoidable mistake, and the game ended in a draw.

**Question 3: Black to play and win at 53. There is only one winning move -- what is it? (You can make it easier by eliminating the drawing move that I actually played).** (Answer at the end.)

**Game 7: Das v Wong (untimed, 2002) [analysed to a depth of 20 ply only]**

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

In this game with Alexis Wong, I played the Murakami variation of the rotating flat. We both played a few inaccurate moves, and by move 20 our mistakes had cancelled out, resulting in an even position (Zebra says +2 to Alexis).

We both played well up to move 38 - this game really needed 24+-ply analysis to get a good idea of how well -- but according to 20-ply analysis almost all our moves were within 2 discs of Zebra's evaluation.

What is interesting about this game, however, is that Black's 25a7 (which was not Zebra's favoured move) was part of my plan to use a Stoner trap trap [sic], i.e., deliberately setting up a Stoner trap for the opponent to spring in order to gain an advantage. The idea is that the edge and corner taken by the trap setter will backfire by poisoning future moves. It wouldn't work in a game where there was no real

**Question 2: What is the best move 44 (White)?** (Answer at the end.)

In fact, the move Andreas played (which both of us thought was best) turns out to be 14 discs worse.

From here on we both made a few minor mistakes but not enough to affect my advantage.

**Game 5. Das v Elf Bot (a very long time over several days, 1999)**  
**[Analysed to a depth of 20-ply only]**

Elf Bot is a program that plays on-line, and it is quite a formidable opponent. There are some who like to find the flaws in programs and therefore learn how to beat them regularly and easily. I prefer not to do this, because it makes it more difficult

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

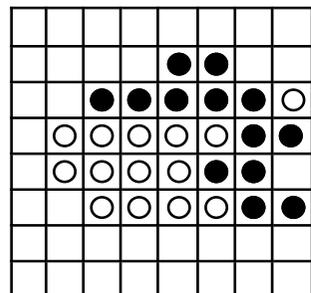
to learn anything from the games and makes them less enjoyable. Consequently, I have won or drawn only about one percent of my games against it. One reason why I like playing Elf is that it is more like a strong human than some programs. It plays extremely well but also gets confused at times and makes blunders. This helps keep me alert to the possibility that my opponent may have made a weak move that can be exploited.

I spent a lot of time on this game -- 10 to 20 minutes on some moves!

According to Zebra, Black's 7c3 loses 6 discs but, of course, such evaluations are not particularly accurate this early in the game.

Between moves 7 and 45, 15 of my moves are thought best by 20-ply Zebra and not one is thought by Zebra to be more than two discs worse than Zebra's choice! I thought I had played well but was rather flabbergasted to find that I played quite that well: I only analysed this game yesterday and first looked at the analysis while writing this section.

Elf's biggest mistake of the game was on move 24. White played 24e1, whereas 20-ply Zebra's choice is 24c2.



After 23f2

**Septimus and the Dwarves** by Octavia X Trolleybus

I hope you will allow me some space in your newsletter for a few words about my brother Septimus. He was last mentioned in the February 1992 newsletter, after which he went a-wandering in the Middle Earth. He was befriended by a group of dwarves, whom he introduced to Othello. One of them told me what I am about to relate.

Apparently, the dwarves became very keen on Othello, so that they spent all their time playing it instead of delving for gold. When the troll who held them in thrall discovered the reason for their failing to meet their quotas he was very wrath.

"You miserable manikins! I'll teach you to waste your time on this game! I'm going to lock you in this dungeon, then tomorrow morning I will stick an Othello disc on each of your foreheads. I'll then line you up and ask you one at a time what colour your disc is, and if you guess wrongly I will eat you. If you guess correctly I will release you.

"You will only be allowed to speak when I ask you what colour your disc is, and then you can only answer "Black" or "White". If you disobey this rule I will eat you anyway. If I suspect that you are trying to convey additional information to the others, whether by tone of voice or any kind of gesture, I will also eat you. All you are allowed to do is to guess the colour of your own disc.

"Since he taught you to play this game, the human will be subjected to the same ordeal."

Septimus was very sad that he had brought this upon his new friends. "Cheer up!" said one of them. "About half of us are going to survive." "Wait!" said another. "I have a cunning plan. We'll be able to see each other's discs, so each of us should say the colour of the next person to be asked! Then they'll know what colour theirs is." "You fool!" said a third. "If each one of us says the colour of someone else's disc, we'll still be wrong about our own disc half of the time." "Actually, that does allow us an improvement," said a more mathematically-minded dwarf. "If the first says the colour of the second's disc he has a 50% chance of being correct about his own disc. The second can then correctly say his own colour. The third then says the colour of the fourth's, and so on. That way three-quarters of us should survive."

This was the best plan the dwarves could come up with. Septimus had the nagging feeling that somehow there ought to be a way of saving nearly all of them, but couldn't think of it, and eventually he dozed off. His brain couldn't stop thinking about Othello, and various articles from back-issues of the BOF newsletter floated through his mind. One of them must have triggered the correct thought process, for he suddenly woke up and shouted

"I have it! There is a way to ensure that the troll eats no more than one of us."

For the hint that helped Septimus, turn to page 12.

**Upcoming Tournaments:**

For the **Mind Sports Olympiad**, see page 15

**Paris Grand Prix:** Aug 31 and Sept 1  
 contact Stéphane Nicolet <stephane.nicolet@ens.fr>

**Nationals:** 14-15 September 2002, North Lecture Room, St. John's College, Oxford.

**Note change of dates!**

Iain says, "It would be appreciated if people could let me know in advance if they intend to come (yes, quite optimistic)." Iain Barrass <iain.barrass@st-johns.oxford.ac.uk>

**Christmas Friendly** is November 30, in the Trinity College Junior Parlour (same as last year), Cambridge.  
 Contact Aubrey de Grey <ag24@gen.cam.ac.uk>

Tournament Results: see pages 16 and 22-23. I am reliably informed that the rest of the Regional Tournaments did occur at the times and places advertized in *Blodgy Swords* but, other than Cambridge and the British Grand Prix, I have received no detailed reports. Apparently no one cares.

**Web pages**

The Othello WAP page has moved and can now be found at  
<http://homepages.shu.ac.uk/~rcarnold/othello.html>

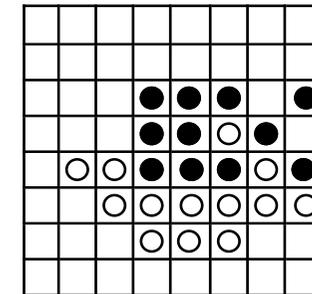
<http://www.ugateways.com/bofmain.html>  
<http://www.maths.nott.ac.uk/othello/othello.html>  
<http://www.msoworld.com/>

manage to play very weak endgame moves quite often -- even in untimed games.  
 It was perfect play from 50 onwards, apart from a 2 disc blunder at the end.

**Game 4. Das v Hoehne (15 minutes per player, tournament, early 2002)**

I prepared one opening line for this tournament -- a line I had recently seen Andreas playing -- so I was rather pleased when he chose it!

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

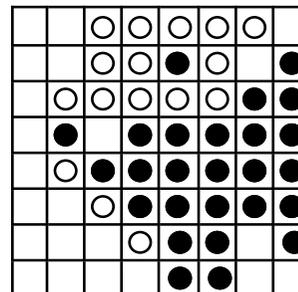


After 20h6

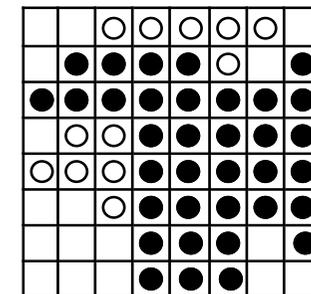
The first deviation from my prepared line was 20h6, after which Black has what Zebra thinks is a 6 disc advant-age. However, from my hu-man perspec-tive, the advant-age is much greater because White is forced to play very precisely while Black is not.

Thereafter, I made relatively smaller mistakes until move 39 when I made a huge mistake:

I played 39d8 which was 26 discs worse than



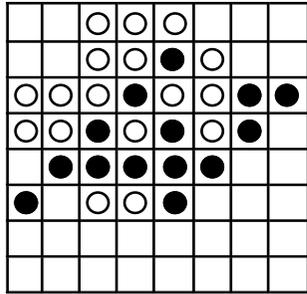
After 38c3



After 43b2

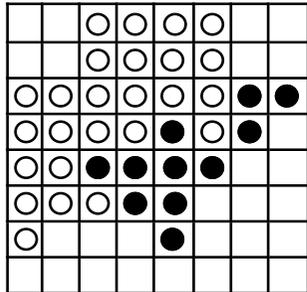
the best move, c4! In retrospect it is clear that c4 is better but I don't really see why one move is so much better than the other!

After a few moves Black's advantage was down to just two discs but White still

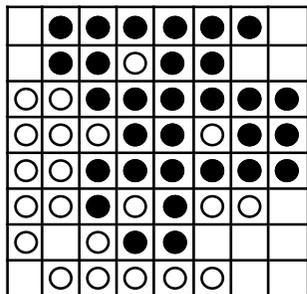


After 27a6

tempo if White took the a1 corner by giving Black both b1 and a2.



After 32f1



After 47h5

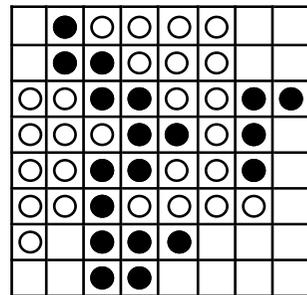
best move.

While it may be far from obvious that 48h6 is bad, what may well be obvious to some is that there is an alternative move that leads to a fairly straightforward win. It may be too trivial for experts to bother with, but beginners might like to find the move for themselves.

Luckily for White, Black replied with an even larger blunder, 49h7, which

Black's reply, a5, seems reasonable since it gives White a choice between taking an unbalanced edge or giving Black two tempi (by playing a2 and a7). However, Zebra thinks 29f1 is 7 discs better, and it is not at all obvious to me why.

Neither player made any significant errors for a while although White's 32f1 looks much worse than it is -- being (according to Zebra) only two discs worse than the best move, c7. The weakness of 32f1 is that it allows Black to play a corner sacrifice at b2, which would gain a



After 41c8

Moves 37 to 40 were perfect play: on course to a draw. However, Black's 41c8 gives White the diagonalising b7.

I remember thinking about playing b7. It looked appealing but, although the position is not a tremendously complicated one, the consequences needed to be checked to a depth of several ply to verify that b7 is safe, so I chickened out and played 42f8, which seemed less likely to

cause disaster in the event of miscalculation. Neither of us played the next few moves perfectly, and then White made a huge blunder with 48h6, which was 24 discs worse than the

was 30 discs worse than the best move. Such moves are normal in blitz games, but I still

### Computer Othello by Chris Welty

There have been a number of open Othello tournaments lately on the GGS Othello server; "Open" on GGS means open to humans, programs, and cyborgs -- computer-aided humans. My program (Ntest) has participated in three, so I'll give tournament reports on those emphasizing information interesting to human Othello players. Complete results for all tournaments are available at <http://www.btinternet.com/~chris.welty>.

Also of interest is a new and improved version of "Happy End," the endgame solitaire program. It is as entertaining as the earlier versions and has some nice new features: a faster solver based on WZebra's and a competition solitaire mode where you can compare your scores to Othello players around the world. The current top scorer is someone named "Graham."

### GGG Open Tournament 19th January

The first GGS tournament in several years was held 19th January 2002. There were 18 participants including 2 humans. This tournament was held in the synchro-rand format. For each match a random opening position is generated; each player plays 2 simultaneous games, one with each colour. The winner of the match is the player with the most discs in both games combined. The purpose of this is to render books useless, so the games are more interesting.

The tournament finish was a tournament director's dream. With one round to go the tournament was wide open with Edax (French champion), Ntest (my program), Logistello (a legendary program by Michael Buro), and Zebra (the full version of WZebra) all having four wins and one loss. Logistello had lost to Edax on time, Ntest and Zebra lost to Logistello, and Edax lost to Ntest. In the final round Logistello drew against Lynx to put it out of contention while Ntest beat Zebra. Ntest beat Edax in the final, pleasing your author.

Before the tournament many people expected the top programs to play perfectly, leading to lots of draws. As it turned out, there were only 2 draws in the entire tournament. Conclusion: computers do not play Othello perfectly, at least when they are without a book.

#### Results:

Ntest and Edax volunteered for a 1/2 playoff, which Ntest won by 2 (+8/-4 = average of 2).

#### Results after 6 rounds:

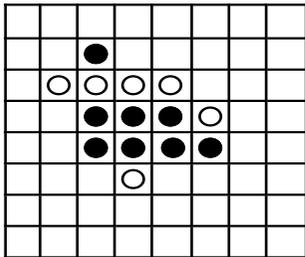
5.0 (5 0 1)	Ntest [0.6185]
5.0 (5 0 1)	Edax [0.5412]

4.5 (4 1 1)	Piglet [0.5974] (Logistello)
4.0 (4 0 2)	Reindeer [0.5614] (Zebra)
4.0 (4 0 2)	Caesar [0.5087]
4.0 (4 0 2)	Charly+ [0.4640]
3.5 (3 1 2)	Lynx [0.5575]
3.0 (3 0 3)	Kitty [0.5901]
3.0 (3 0 3)	Fox [0.5137]
3.0 (3 0 3)	Booby [0.5106]
3.0 (3 0 3)	Vo [0.4989]
2.5 (2 1 3)	Unicorn [0.5352]
2.5 (2 1 3)	Hawk [0.4855]
2.0 (2 0 4)	Snapper [0.5380]
2.0 (2 0 4)	Nemtest [0.5193]
2.0 (2 0 4)	Ant [0.3713]
1.0 (1 0 5)	Fangr [0.3943]
0.0 (0 0 6)	System [0.1944]

**Fixed Opening Tournament 7th April 2002**

This tournament was played simultaneously on GGS and in Paris; matches where both participants were in Paris were played on boards, other games were played on GGS. In this tournament 2 games were played in each match, one after the other, giving participants a chance to play both colours against each opponent.

The opening chosen was the "Triangle Nicolet." French opening names are currently trendy; for those of you not *au fait*, "Triangle" is French for Rose-Bill, and the Triangle Nicolet is F5 d6 C3 d3 C4 f4 C5 b3 C2 e3.



6 players turned up in Paris and 7 on GGS.

In Paris there were two human players (assisted by stacks of notes on openings) and a cyborg (Marc Tastet assisted by WZebra and Cassio). All the top programs are quite confident that the opening is a draw, so before the tournament there was a lot of worry that all the games would be draws. In an awesome display of power the French program Spock put this theory to rest by winning 4 of its 5 matches and 7 of its 10 games (each match being 2 games). It was able to do

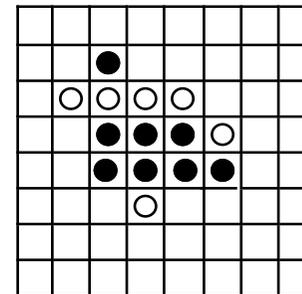
this because all the programs were taking risks in order to get wins rather than sticking with well-known draws. My program Ntest was the only program to draw Spock in both games of a match; Ntest came second with wins over Marc Tastet and Edax.

**Game 3. xxg v Das (2 or 3 minutes per player, tournament, 1999 or 2000)**

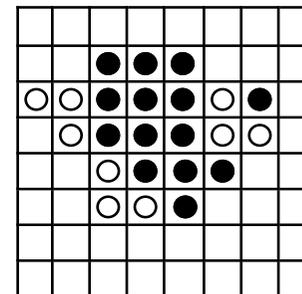
58	37	24	21	20	32	45	53
57	33	9	11	19	22	52	54
14	8	3	4	10	16	15	23
26	13	5	○	●	6	18	46
29	25	7	●	○	1	35	47
27	28	12	2	17	38	34	48
30	59	40	36	31	50	51	49
60	44	41	39	43	42	55	56

Unfortunately, I have forgotten xxg's real name -- all I remember is that he is Japanese.

When I started playing on-line the Rose-Bill was probably the most popular opening. I had barely seen it before and decided to improve my chances as White by playing what was then a little-used variant, 10e3, which I call the "rabbit." I think someone referred to it as the "Nicolet" recently, so perhaps that is its recognised name.



After 10e3



After 19e2

The moves up to 17e6 were familiar to me, but White's 18g4 was not my usual move, and I'm surprised to see that we were still in Zebra's opening book.

The first relatively poor move of the game (according to Zebra) was White's 20e1, which Zebra thinks is six discs worse than the more natural looking quiet move, 20f2.

What 20e1 has in its favour is that the correct reply (according to Zebra), c1, is difficult to find. Black played 21d1, making the position level again.

White gained a slight advantage over the next few moves, mainly by doing moves to which good replies are difficult to find in a short time. While this sort of play is certainly a goal of mine [inspired by Garry Edmead, some of whose favourite openings seem to be chosen on the basis of how difficult it is to find the right replies rather than on how good they are against an opponent who does find the right replies], I was probably thinking more in terms of trying to make unpredictable moves rather than moves difficult to analyse. White's 28b6 is particularly

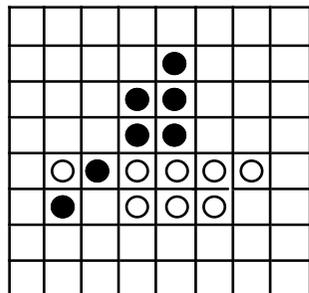
bad according to Zebra; g6 is 10 discs better.

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

past couple of months had come together in this game, which is probably why I remember it so well.

Strangely, as with many of my best games, I was unusually tired at the time I played it and expected to play very badly. In fact, I think I came close to falling asleep at times. [In a recent on-line blitz tournament, with about 10 seconds left on my clock I actually fell asleep for perhaps thirty seconds. I woke up to find I had accidentally clicked on the best move, and my opponent had resigned!]

I played the diagonal in this game, and my lack of opening knowledge meant that by move 11 of this sailboat [I thought this was the aeroplane?] I was already out of my book.



After 11b6

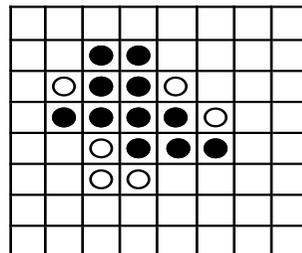
All our moves up to 17 are in Zebra's current opening book and barely deviate from an even score so presumably they are reasonably good moves. They certainly seem good to me.

Black played 19a5, which Zebra rates as 7 discs worse than f3. White replied with 20f7, denying Black access to f3. We both played fairly well until White's 30g2 where Zebra's preference for g4 is not immediately obvious to me. Zebra also judges Black's 31g4 as being 7 discs worse than g3. Again, it isn't immediately obvious to me why this is -- readers might enjoy trying to work out the reasons for themselves.

We both played a little inaccurately up to move 38, after which Ian made no mistakes at all, and I made two, losing ten discs but winning the game by ten discs.

Spock's wins were mostly over-the-board in Paris and I don't yet have transcripts. On GGS there were only 3 wins against top players: Spock vs Zebra 33-31; Ntest vs Tastet 33-31; and Ntest vs Edax 47-17. The Spock vs Zebra had only one mistake, in which Zebra missed a draw at move 30. Ntest used the same opening in its two wins, and as it's quite unusual to win by more than 4 against a top program I will present you with the game against Edax:

11. D2 c6 B4



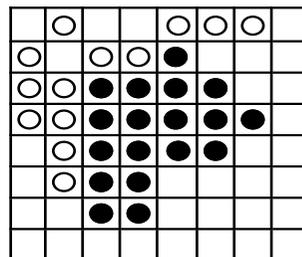
This is almost a unanimous continuation of the Nicolet opening. At move 14 Edax varies from the solid draw line (a3) described by Graham Brightwell in the last BOF newsletter. Edax's choice (a4) is also listed as a draw in WZebra but is not as solid. Several other moves are playable from this position in human/human games -- Raphael Schreiber plays f6 -- but are probably best avoided against top programs.

14. a4 B5 b6 G4: Edax and WZebra were surprised by Ntest's choice of 17. G4. WZebra expects 17. D7, listed as a draw; I assume Edax expected the same.

18. e2 A3 e1 D7: D7 is the surprise move that drives Edax (and WZebra) out of its opening book.

22. b1 F3 a2: In postgame analysis Edax was not happy with 24. a2. It obviously gives white a yucky west edge, although it wasn't obvious (to me) quite how yucky until a few moves later. In Ntest's game vs Marc Tastet, Marc played 24. f2 and lost by only 2.

25. F1 g1 C7



I have a rule of thumb in edge-creeping games. If the edge-creeper leaves his opponent with one reasonable move, the edge creeper should win. If he leaves his opponent with two reasonable moves, the opponent wins. For counting purposes I ignore pairs such as c1/d1 in the above figure, since playing out the pair doesn't give Black a tempo.

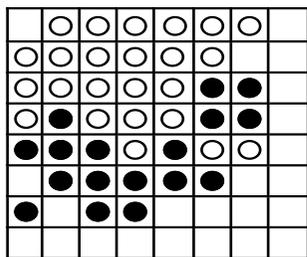
At this point Edax thought it was well ahead, and your author was quite nervous, foreseeing 28. f2 A6 g3. Then Black has only one reasonable move, H3, after which Black will die before he can attack the West edge. Ntest found a better continuation giving two reasonable

moves (and therefore the win).

28. f2 C1 d1 A7: Black should only play out the pair c1/d1 when it suits him and gives him a big advantage. In this case it flips E3 giving access to A7. White temporarily has no access to a5 or a6, so Black will get the needed two moves.

In postgame analysis, Edax felt that 28. c8 was possibly preferable, since the f2 continuation doesn't work.

32. e6 F6 g5 A5 b2 G3



With perfect play Ntest wins 37-27 from this point. Edax was in time trouble and misplayed its next three moves (h4, h3, and d8). Can you guess the correct moves?

38. h4 H2 h3 H5 d8 E8 h6 H7 f8 E7 g6 A1 f7 H1 a6 B7 b8 C8 a8 G2 pass G7 g8 H8

Results:

1:	4.5 pts	[8.5]	SPOCK (Delteil)	{FR-PG}
2:	3.5 pts	[6]	NTEST (Welty)	{GB-PG}
3:	3.0 pts	[6.5]	TASTET Marc	{FR-Cyborg}
			ZEBRA (Andersson)	{SE-PG}
		[6]	BTEST (bosco)	{CN-PG}
		[5.5]	MAMAJU (Pinta)	{FR-PG}
7:	2.5 pts	[5.5]	EDAX (Delorme)	{FR-PG}
		[5]	BOOBY (run by Joël Eymard)	{JP-PG}
9:	1.0 pt	[2.5]	UNICORN (Hansson)	{SE-PG}
		[2]	KASHIWABARA Takuji	{FR}
			MICHEL Stéphane	{FR}
12:	0.5 pt	[1]	RUNOTH	{PG}
			TRICKS	{PG}

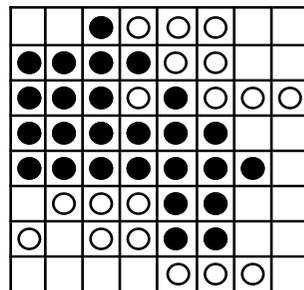
Runoth and Tricks played only one match. Stéphane Michel left before the final round. The standings were calculated by matches (2 games/match) while the tiebreak, in brackets, was computed by games. So Spock won 4 matches and drew 1, and of its 10 games it won 7 and drew only 3.

White 32h3 was just as bad -- Zebra's choice being h4. This is not immediately obvious to me, by any means.

The game proceeded fairly evenly until Black's 37e1, which turned an absolute +2 lead for Black into -2. Zebra's choice of move here, 37d1, shows why 32h4 (see above) might have been better for White. As things stand, Black 37d1 would not have given White access to e1. All else being equal, after 32h4, 37d1 would have been poisoned by the black disc at f3, giving White access to e1.

41a6 was an exciting move that is really in the spirit of blitz Othello -- a daring corner sacrifice that sets up 43b8 and (if White doesn't play 44d8) 45d8 -- winning the h8 corner. Unfortunately, it is an objectively bad move, scoring -28.

**Question 1: After White 40g8, what move should Black play to win? (Answer at the end.)**



After 40g8

Looking at the game now it's clear that 44d8 would have been better than the move I played, 44b1, but I liked b1 because it seemed to lead to a safer win -- it grabs permanent discs now and restricts Black's choice of moves.

From here on, both of us made some errors but I remained in the lead, and we finished a typically dramatic blitz game with perfect play for the last ten moves.

By Kenta's standards it was an unremarkable, perhaps below average, blitz game, but for me it was one of the best games of any

kind that I had ever played. Few of my 25 minute real life games up to then could have stood comparison! Even now, having played in countless 2 minute games over the past three years, I rarely play this well either in two minute games, 25 minute games, or untimed games.

**Game 2. Turner v Das (10 minutes per player, late 1999)**

After playing on line for a few months with people I had never met in real life -- most of whom were fairly anonymous to me -- it was great to meet Ian Turner, Mark Wormley, Phil Marson and Garry Edmead (as well as a few others whom I ran into less often) on-line for the occasional game. At the time I played this game with Ian, I'd been playing a lot of three minute games (because that's what most people preferred) so ten minutes seemed quite a luxury. Afterwards I realised that all the new ideas I had learnt in the

since learnt that such a state is known as a "flow state" and the ability to reach it is one of the skills that sports psychologists teach.

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

The opening up to move 16 was one that I had recently played as Black, suffering a severe defeat. It subsequently became the first opening I ever studied with the help of a program (Zebra) and, in fact, one of

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

After 16b5

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

After 29f7

the first openings I ever studied at all, so I was unusually well prepared to play this line.

The line I had prepared was from 17g5 but Kenta play-ed 17a5, which took me into new territory as White. However, knowing that Zebra preferred 17g5 gave me a confidence boost. Zebra still prefers 17g5 but the difference in the scores it assigns the two moves is only about 2 discs, which I don't consider to be significant at this stage of the game. From my current perspective, without the benefits of having studied the line recently, 17g5 is the move I would play because I see it as a positional move -- *i.e.*, fairly accurate evaluation seems possible by looking ahead only one or two ply. It denies White access to c2, prepares for Black f7, and is perhaps best done before White can play f3 or g4. A5 is an altogether more difficult move to evaluate (for me, at least) without looking several moves deep, for it potentially poisons Black moves at c3, e7 and f7.

For the next few moves, neither of us made any major errors until move 30 when my choice was 5 discs worse than the best, according to Zebra, which made the game roughly even.

The quiet move that I played, 30f2, seems very natural, and I'm sure that the correct move, 30e7, would have seemed counter-intuitive to me in 1999 since it is not only loud but deprives White of the f2 square. However, now it seems fairly obvious, so I must have learnt something in the last three years!

This tournament was open only to programs. The tournament featured a number of well-prepared programs, and the competition was fierce. Most top programs were avoiding Rose-Bill on the grounds that it's too well known; Chimney proved to be the popular choice.

I thought nobody would play Chimney as White since there are so many Black variations to know so Ntest did not prepare Chimney very well. Since lots of Chimney games were played, this was clearly a bad idea. I've presented Ntest's two Chimney games below. After the game against Snapper I realized Ntest was in serious trouble against the Chimney so I forced Ntest to play the line in the Yohoho/Zebra game, which Yohoho won. Soon afterwards Ntest played Zebra; Zebra had not yet studied the Yohoho/Zebra game so Ntest got a cheap win.

I've included a few of the more interesting games. These (and all the tournament games) are available from GGS or at [http://www.btinternet.com/~chris.welty/Tournaments/2002\\_05\\_18\\_games.zip](http://www.btinternet.com/~chris.welty/Tournaments/2002_05_18_games.zip) Use "Import as text" to get them into Wzebra.

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

Yohoho 33-31 Zebra (and Ntest 33-31 Zebra). Chimney. White is forced to give up a lot in order to keep parity Snapper

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

Ntest 33-31 Snapper Chimney. According to Ntest's probable solver, the game was 30-34 until

blundered late in the game (move 29 I believe). I don't really understand any of the moves in the opening and early midgame; if anyone can explain what's going on I'd be interested. In the endgame Black gives up a lot of position and stable discs in exchange for 2 odd white regions, which are used to devastating effect.

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

Snapper 31-33 Zebra. Chimney. Just to prove White can win in the Chimney. This is a more common continuation of the Chimney than the previous two games, at least on GGS. Compared with the previous game Black gets much better position, except that the two White regions are even. This proves decisive as Black loses parity in both.

And finally, from the Fox vs Ant game, an opening that put me out of book at move 4: d3 c5 e6 f7. Ntest tells me that this is a perfectly reasonable line.

Results:

6.5	( 6 1 0)	Ntest [0.5376]
5.5	( 5 1 1)	Yohoho [0.5254]
5.0	( 3 4 0)	Bosco [0.5297]
4.0	( 4 0 3)	Snapper [0.4681]
3.5	( 2 3 2)	Zebra [0.5517]
3.0	( 2 2 3)	Hawk [0.5542]
3.0	( 3 0 4)	Mouse [0.5026]
2.0	( 2 0 5)	Fox [0.5238]
1.5	( 1 1 5)	Mamaju [0.4837]
1.0	( 1 0 6)	Ant [0.3233]

### Septimus and the Dwarves, part 2

The article that was to be their salvation was by Michael Handel, in the somewhat appropriately-named issue "Wanted dead or alive" (August 1990). The words that woke Septimus were: "Strong stuff this parity. Strong enough to win me the game from a losing position."

Does that give you a clue? For the complete solution, turn to page 35

### Apes and Word Processors (a look some of my more memorable on-line games) by Jeremy Das

My motivation for writing this article was to make amends for having failed to write the articles on *Advanced Parity* and *How to Improve Your Othello* that I promised for the last newsletter and this one and to take up plenty of the unused space available in the newsletter with something that people might find at least vaguely interesting. To the latter end, this entirely redundant paragraph has been inserted!

Since I started writing this at about 15:00 on 17th July, and worked all afternoon and night, it is highly likely that there are some Othello errors here and there -- not to mention bizarre syntax zones and possibly (although I hope not) diagrams in the wrong place. (*This is one of my jobs -- Ed*) I hope this will all be seen as being part of the fun.

Since I began playing Othello on-line in 1999 I have played thousands of games so it is hardly surprising that I remember few of them well, if at all. However, there are some that stick in the mind to such an extent that on replaying them I remember much of what I was thinking at the time. It seems I remember these games mostly because I either played exceptionally well (by my standards), had a fluky win against a better player, played an inexplicably bad move, or because of some unusual feature of the game, e.g. deliberately allowing my opponent to set up a Stoner trap because it seemed to be the best line! For some reason, I have chosen only to include here wins or draws against better players.

Unless otherwise stated, all Zebra analysis referred to is at 24-ply -- thanks to Alexis Wong for this -- my own PC would have been unfeasibly slow.

### Game 1. Tominaga v Das (2 minutes per player, tournament, late 1999)

This was the first of about six games I played with Kenta Tominaga in 1999 and 2000, all in blitz tournaments with time limits typically of two or three minutes per player. For those who do not know, Kenta is a potential world champion, so it is hardly surprising that in all but one of the games that we played after this one he beat me quite effortlessly.

This game was unusual for me in that I went into a mental state in which, for most of the game, time seemed to slow down and I maintained concentration on the task at hand without being aware of extraneous thoughts or sensory input. I used to experience such a state routinely as a child when reading or watching TV, and later occasionally in exams or while studying, but not usually when playing board games. Almost all my best games involve somehow going into such a state for some of the time. I have

**Answer to puzzle on page 4**

The last move among d1, e1, f1, g1, and h1 must have been e1: if it was one of the others, the move would have flipped along the edge. Similarly, g1 was played after both f1 and h1.

The e2 disc was flipped by all of the moves to d1, e1 and f1. After the last of these moves (e1), it is black. The only way it could subsequently have turned white is for a later move at g4 to have flipped it. So the e2 disc was flipped exactly twice from black to white, and at least twice from white to black. So it must have started white, then been flipped black by a move to f1, then white by a move to d1, black by a move to e1, and finally white by a move to g4. So the move to g4 came after all the edge moves, and also after all of e2, g2, d3, e3, f3 and g3, since these need to have been in place for the edge moves to have been played.

When White played g1, the g2 disc was flipped. Note that g4 was empty then, so g3 (which could not have been flipped up to this point) was white. Before that, the move to h1 flipped the g2 disc from white to black. So it must have been White who played g2, flipping the f3 disc from black to white.

Now let's work out what must have happened to the f3 disc. It was flipped at least twice from black to white, by the moves to g2 and g4. It could not have been flipped horizontally from white to black, since the g3 disc was white at least until g4 was played, at which point all of d3, e3 and f3 were in place. So the only moves that could possibly have flipped f3 from white to black were the moves to h1 and c6 (d5 and e4 were in place at the start of the game). In order for the f3 disc to be black now, it must have started black, been flipped white by a move to g2, black by a move to h1, white by a move to g4, and finally black by a move to c6.

White played d1 during a period when f3 was white, and this certainly happened well before the g4 move, so it must have come between the White move to g2 and the Black move to h1. In particular, d1 came before h1, and we have already seen that f1 came before d1. Thus the exact sequence of moves on the North edge must have been: f1, d1, h1, g1, e1.

In case you don't believe it can all be made to happen, here is a possible sequence.

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

**Amsterdam 2002 by Graham Brightwell**

It seemed like a good plan. Watch England win the World Cup, on a big screen, surrounded by friends, many of them French. Then, in the afternoon, tack on the Amsterdam Open. Unfortunately David Seaman didn't quite cover the far post, and England finished in the top 8, but not the top 4. How could I be expected to win after that?

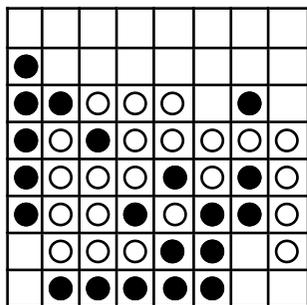
I was part of a four-pronged British assault on the title, together with Roy Arnold, David Summers (or rather, David John Summers, as he was announced before each round), and the inevitable Geoff Hubbard. That might sound like a large cohort, until you learn that there were 60 players in the tournament, which is a record for a European Grand Prix event. Besides the strong foreign presence there was a good busload of Dutch players, the best of whom are getting to be very dangerous.

However, no Dutch player has taken the step beyond dangerous (excluding, of course, David Shaman, who is about as Dutch as Geoff is British). It's tough to get near the top of a strong tournament like this: roughly speaking you have to score 100% against the mid-ranking players you come up against, while stringing together several wins against other contenders. Two players who have taken this extra step in recent years are Takuji Kashiwabara (who is about as French as ... you get the idea) and Matthias Berg of Germany, who rose to prominence with his fine 4th place in the last World Championships. These two finished ahead of all the established old guard, such as Tastet, Caspard, Nicolet, Shaman and, well, me.

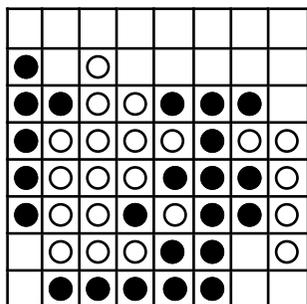
For my part, I was able to stomp on any Dutchman put in front of me (this was a high priority: the Dutch seem to hold me in excessively high regard, which ought to be worth a few extra points at some future events, but this license will rapidly expire once I start to act beatable), but lost three games to the French and drew with Berg. That was good enough to finish in the top 8 but not the top 4. As for the other prongs, Geoff scored 6/11, David John had 5.5, and Roy finished on 5.

So, come Sunday lunchtime, Matthias was in position to win the cherished double. Oliver Kahn let the ball slip away, but Berg provided his nation with some reason for joy by beating Kashiwabara 2-0 to capture his first Grand Prix title. The games may have been good for all I know; I had chosen to referee episode 553 of Tastet v. Shaman, which Shaman won 2-0 to take 3rd place. I could show you one of those games, but here's me demolishing a Dutchman instead.

I am Black against Roel Hobo. I have taken edges and failed to run him out of moves, but all is not yet lost. Since g7 is out for him, he might one day have to play g8-h8-g7 for a tempo or for parity, and that might be too



Black to play at 39



Black to play at 41

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

Brightwell 55 Hobo 9

much for him to sacrifice. Meanwhile, as is to be expected when Black has taken edges, all of the available moves for Black in the North are poisoned. The position is ripe for (fanfare please) Leader flat-wall theory. The principle is that, when you are going to have to break through a wall in fairly violent fashion, it is often best to turn the entire wall to create a new "flat wall" of your own, which your opponent will immediately have to break in fairly violent fashion. So here the indicated move is 39f3.

This will be in all the textbooks, just as soon as those kinds of textbooks get written, but good opportunities to apply the theory don't actually come up all that often in real games (or rather, if they do, I keep missing them). Yes, I played f3, and yes, it turns out to be the only winning move. Who cares about the World Cup anyway? After 39f3, Roel played the least unattractive move to the North, namely 40c2.

Now normal moves like 41d2 and 41e2 aren't good enough, but in fact White has fallen into a trap. (Hmm, am I allowed to call it a trap even if I didn't see in advance why this doesn't work?) I played 41h3 42h2, and now the discs at c7 and d7 are exposed, so I played 43c1 and he couldn't prevent me following up with 45d2 (or 44d2 45d1). The point is that, with the c7 and d7 discs black, I am threatening a swindle with a8, and the only way to prevent it is for White to play out g8-h8-g7, giving up the whole farm. (If White had spotted this in time, he should have played (41h3) 42g8 43h8 44g7, leaving me some work to do.) The rest of the game is carnage, and the final score is not a fair reflection.

Thanks are due to tireless organiser Jan de Graaf, the prime mover behind the astonishing rise of Dutch Othello. Just don't mention his pairing programme.

Result: 1 Roy Arnold (5/6); 2 Geoff Hubbard (4); 3= Phil Marson, Stephen Rowe (3); 5 Julian Richens (2).

May in Cambridge and the MSO rolled into town. Graham Brightwell proved to be the form player; he won all his games and gained some small revenge for losing the British Championships last year. Making his debut was Andy Aspden.

Result: 1 Graham Brightwell (7/7); 2 Imre Leader (6); 3 Geoff Hubbard (5); 4 Ben Pridmore (4); 5= Roy Arnold, Andy Aspden, Mac Bannister (3); 8 Mark Wormley (2.5); 9 Stephen Rowe (1.5).

June and a welcome return to Othello action in London. Once again Brightwell shone brightest but Hubbard edged ever closer to the title. Gareth Morinan, so impressive in the beginner's tourney in Cambridge, left after the second round.

Result: 1 Graham Brightwell (6/6); 2= Michael Handel, Guy Plowman (4.5); 4 Geoff Hubbard (4); 5= Roy Arnold, Martin Fancy, Julian Richens, Matthew Selby, Chris Welty (3); 10 Richard Brand (2.5); 11= Ben Pridmore, Mac Bannister (2); 13 Stephen Rowe (1.5); 14 Gareth Morinan (0/2).

Finally, on to Donny, and Geoff Hubbard, who in the previous outing had all but booked his seat on the plane to the Worlds, like Vanessa Williams saved the best for last and convincingly won the event.

Result: 1 Geoff Hubbard (6/6); 2 Iain Barrass (4); 3 Phil Marson (3.5); 4 Mark Wormley (2); 5 Iain Forsyth (1.5); 6 Roy Arnold (1).

Final British Grand Prix Standings:

1	Geoff Hubbard	740	13	Ben Pridmore	129
2	Roy Arnold	442	14	Iain Forsyth	80
3	Graham Brightwell	400	15	Mac Bannister	65
4	Guy Plowman	300	16	Andy Aspden	60
5	Phil Marson	230	17	Martin Fancy	42
6	Stephen Rowe	210	=	Matthew Selby	42
7	Julian Richens	182	=	Chris Welty	42
8	Iain Barrass	160	20	Adelaide Carpenter	24
=	Garry Edmead	160	=	Margaret Plowman	24
=	Imre Leader	160	22	Richard Brand	5
11	Mark Wormley	20	=	Dale Gautrey	5
12	Michael Handel	140	=	Gareth Morinan	5

**Attempted Justification**

Question: If a player who finished on 9 points got paired against someone who ended on 6 points, how many discs *should* they have gotten?

Suggested Answer: They ought to get  $32 + (9-6) \times C$  discs.

Application: The number of discs achieved by a player, minus the above target value, is an indicator of how far their performance in that game was above the expected performance of a 9-point finisher. Adding these indicators together allows us to compare different 9-point finishers.

If you believe the Answer to the Question, you ought to accept that this is an improvement on the simple use of disc count as a tie-breaker. On the other hand, a player drawn (through no fault of their own) against a very weak opponent has the opportunity to make up for the damage to their SOS by racking up a large disc-count.

The "proper" answer to the Question doubtless involves a complicated function of the two scores, but using the linear "approximation" above makes the system practical and transparent.

There is a pseudo-justification for the heuristic  $C=64/R$ , based on the observation that this makes the average contribution of the two terms equal (the average value of D is  $32 \times R$ ; the average of S is  $R^2/2$ ). But this melts away on inspection, and the real justification is (a) it is widely accepted, (b) it produces results that seem sensible. If you plug in a few values to the Answer above, you are likely to come to the conclusion that  $C=64/R$  is too high!

**The British Grand Prix Report by Roy Arnold**

February and the start of the season saw the traditional gathering at the Vicky Centre in Wellingborough (wherever that is - old BOF joke). One time local double act Garry Edmead and Guy Plowman shared top honours with Aussie ex-pat Geoff Hubbard. Also putting in good performances were the ever improving Stephen Rowe and World Championship player Roy Arnold (on his least favourite patch) – the latter showed a distinct lack of ruth by wiping out both newcomer Dale Gautrey and Julian Richens.

Result: 1= Garry Edmead, Geoff Hubbard, Guy Plowman (all 6/7); 4= Roy Arnold, Stephen Rowe (4); 6 Julian Richens (3); 7= Adelaide Carpenter, Margaret Plowman, Ben Pridmore (2); 10 Dale Gautrey (0).

March and the next stop was Swindon and the South West Regional, which was last held in 1997. Roy Arnold was defending his title and he did it in some style (after an early scare by Richens) by beating both Geoff Hubbard and Phil Marson.

**The 6th Mind Sports Olympiad by Aubrey de Grey**

The 6th Mind Sports Olympiad will take place from Wednesday August 14th to Sunday August 18th. The venue is Loughborough University. This is really easy to get to -- it's only about six miles from East Midlands Airport, to which there are direct flights from Paris, Brussels, Prague and Amsterdam. Also, there are direct trains from London (St. Pancras station) that take under 1.5 hours, and accommodation nearby is a great deal cheaper than in London. We will have the following Othello events:

Wednesday 14th, 2pm-6pm: Beginners' tournament and teaching  
 Thursday 15th, 2pm-6pm: World Blitz Championship  
 Friday 16th, 9am-6pm: World 10x10 Championship  
 Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th, 9am-6pm: European 8x8 Championship  
 Sunday 18th, 1:30pm-5:30pm: Beginners' tournament and teaching

All tournaments will be the same format as last year, except that the European 8x8 Championship will be reduced to 11 rounds Swiss, *i.e.*, it will be the same format as European Grand Prix events. For those of you who weren't there last year, this means:

Beginners: 15 min/player, 6 rounds  
 Blitz World Championship: 5 min/player, 9 rounds  
 10x10 World Championship: 50 min/player, 6 rounds  
 European Championship: 25 min/player, 11 rounds + best-of-3 playoffs

Note that the MSO web site <http://www.msoworld.com/Olympiad/index.html> has been updated with this information. Please check that site for information about nearby accommodation, tournament fees, directions to the venue, etc.

## The 2002 Cambridge Regional and Cambridge Mind Sports Olympiad *by Aubrey de Grey*

The 2002 Cambridge Regional took place on May 4th. Like last year, we held it as part of the Cambridge Mind Sports Olympiad, a smaller version of the well-known (you have heard of it, haven't you?) Mind Sports Olympiad that has been held for the past five Augusts in London. (See page 15 for details about the 6th MSO, which will be in Loughborough.) This year the main difference was that the Cambridge MSO wasn't exactly small. We organised it in a school near the centre of town, and the total number of participants in all events was well over 400, as against only 110 last year. Half of these were children playing in the Anglia Megafinal, part of a nationwide hierarchy of chess tournaments. There were over a dozen other different games played over the three days, including an Othello junior event played on the Monday. The junior tournament attracted five players, with one newcomer (Gareth Morinan) totally outclassing the opposition in short enough order to have time to play three games against me between rounds. Gareth is a highly promising player, whom I very much hope to see at "proper" tournaments in the future!

The Othello Regional attracted nine players, including a newcomer (Andy Aspden) who did very well, winning three of his games. Many thanks to Adelaide for running the tournament while I was helping to run the Cambridge MSO more generally. Thanks also to all the players for observing an unusually strict noise abatement requirement, since an important Go tournament was happening in the same room.

*Adelaide's report (as tournament director): This year the Cambridge Regional was held on Saturday May 4 as one of the many events comprising the three day regional Mind Sports Olympiad (q.v.), which also incorporated the Junior Chess Megafinal, all at Parkside Community College. The Othello shared a room with a championship Go Tournament during the morning, plus a Czech draughts challenge tournament during the afternoon, so we all had to be even more quiet than normal: and the Othello contestants really did a good job of this. Unfortunately there never seemed to be a time when there weren't a couple dozen of the Junior Chess participants running screaming down the hall outside, and with 30+ people in the room hardly a minute passed when someone or other wasn't passing through the perforce opened door, so the impact of all our quiet was rather less than it otherwise would have been!*

*Results: Graham Brightwell 7/7, Imre Leader 6, Geoff Hubbard 5, Ben Pridmore 4, Roy Arnold, Mac Bannister, and Andy Aspden 3, Mark Wormley 2 1/2, Stephen Rowe 1 1/2. Graham took home the princely prize of £8!*

I don't want to be too prescriptive: my position is that the definitive version of BQ is whatever is implemented in Thierry Bousch's program PAPP. There is also a full description in Appendix A to the World Championship Rules, available on the web in a number of places, for instance:

<http://www.panix.com/userdirs/parsons/woc2001/woc2001rules.htm>

### History

When we were young, we all cared deeply about tie-breaking systems.

In the early/mid 80s, there was a full and frank exchange of views between passionate believers in Disc Count as a tie-breaker (notably Bernard Daunas, a prime mover in the French Federation at the time -- he was good at passionate belief), and equally passionate believers in SOS/Buchholz (notably a bunch of young hot-heads from Cambridge). Of course, both sides had no difficulty in finding scenarios where their system was clearly superior.

The "Brightwell Quotient" was what is called an "old-fashioned British compromise" which all sides ended up agreeing on. However, that is all it is, and it is not claimed as perfect; tie-breaking is an unfortunate necessity, not a virtue -- ties should be regarded as ties where possible!

Of course, "Brightwell Quotient" was not my name for it, but I plead guilty to inventing it. (Though if I hadn't, someone else surely would have.) As for "Quotient", the following discussion stopped at the wrong place: "It's not a quotient." "Nor is the 'Intelligence Quotient.'" "Actually yes it is." I prefer the alternative but less catchy name "Mixed Brightwell System," but I'm not fighting this battle.

The 1987 World Championship (in Milan) was the first where there were 3 players per country. The system used then was widely derided. Before the 1988 World Championships, the French organisers wanted to come up with a set of rules that had some legitimacy, so a group was set up to write a definitive set. Never mind that 3 of the 5 people on it were French ... Clearly the compromise BQ tie-breaker was the only one that had a chance of being agreed by a group of 5 people, but there was a lot of haggling about the constant, which is why it has a non-standard setting.

(The group consisted of Bernard Daunas, Karsten Feldborg, Emmanuel Lazard, Marc Tastet and me. As the native English speaker, the majority of the words are mine. The Rules have held up surprisingly well, although there have been a few amendments over the years, and there is a tendency for portions to be ignored whenever the tournament goes outside Europe.)

### The BQ/MBS Tie-Breaking System *by Graham Brightwell*

It is a mark of success when something is named after you, be it a mathematical theorem, a species of *Drosophila*, an opening variation, an edge configuration, or just a flat wall. The concept that most consistently bears my name, and therefore is most likely to bring me eternal fame, is a tie-breaking system for the game of Othello. Bearing in my mind that my professional life is devoted to proving mathematical theorems, it is unclear how much of a mark of success this really is. Another downside is that people tend to assume (not unreasonably, or necessarily wrongly) that questions about the system should be addressed to me. Recently, I thought it would be useful to prepare a FAQ file, and your editor thought it would be useful to publish it. So here it is: if you want to know more, please ask. Really.

#### The Tie-Breaker

When two or more players finish a Swiss-style Othello tournament with the same number of points, the tie is to be broken as follows. For each player, calculate the sum *S* of her opponents' scores (counting one point for a win and half for a draw) and the total number *D* of discs obtained by the player in all her games. The BQ tie-breaker is calculated as  $D + C \times S$ , where *C* is a constant. Higher is better. The constant *C* is usually taken to be the integer nearest to  $64/R$ , where *R* is the number of rounds in the tournament. (The World Championship Rules don't conform to this rule of thumb.)

#### Wrinkles

The rule as stated above makes more sense when empty squares go to the winner, which is not the USOA rule, for instance. One way to accommodate the US rule is to use disk difference *DD* instead of disc count. Then you need to double the constant *C* -- e.g., use 12 instead of 6 -- since under normal circumstances  $DD = 2 \times D - 64$ , so  $2C \times S + DD = 2 \times (C \times S + D) - 64$ , so it's equivalent.

A bye should be treated as if the player receiving the bye had drawn against themselves. A game against a player who subsequently withdrew from the tournament should also be treated in this way. This last point is sometimes ignored; it's probably not the best approach, but it has the merit of clarity.

Not strictly part of this tie-breaker, but for the sake of completeness I recommend the following: in case of a tie in BQ, the player with the higher value of *D* wins; if this doesn't resolve the tie, flip a disc.

### "The Great Escape:" A Tourney game from Wellingborough *by Julian Richens*

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

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

Black to play at 43

After getting myself into a very weak position by move 29 where the only safe move was a C square, I thought I was in trouble and only an impossible Houdini act would get me out of the mess I found myself in.

At move 43 to H5 I worked out that I had parity in this region, and that Ben would have to move outside of this region first. I looked ahead to make sure that I could make the fifth and final move in this region.

When I put this game into Zebra, it did not like the idea of breaking up Black's wall in the F and G columns by going to the edge at move 42. Moreover, when I followed Zebra's plan White wins (using a search of about 3 or 4 moves ahead).

Ben went into G3 and Oh dear, neither H4, G6, or H6 were available to me. I had been so busy looking ahead to the fifth move in the region that I overlooked the third move. I thought that I had thrown away any chance of creating an escape. I quickly responded with the G2 X square and took the main diagonal without really giving it much thought, apart from "Let's do this and see what happens."

Then I made a really silly lapse in reasoning during the end sequence at move 57 which nearly cost me the game. I noticed that B8 was unavailable to White, and at first I thought that I should leave it for the end. So I looked into H8. I followed this through, and realised that White's move to H1 flipped B7; for some strange reason I thought this gave White access to B8!, which would stop me from claiming the bottom edge. In fact I would have had G1, and White would have to pass and I get B8 as well, and I would have won much more comfortably.

All in all I felt that I was extremely fortunate to come away with the 33-31 win.

**The 19th (honest!) Cambridge International by Aubrey de Grey**

Back to February, and back to a fairly respectable number of players in the Cambridge International. David Shaman uncharacteristically announced his participation a full three days before the event, but Stéphane Nicolet characteristically announced his participation by emailing me from an Internet cafe in London on the Friday evening. As in all recent years the tournament was held in the perturbing, poignantly pink room (as Steph described it in 1997 or so), the Lubbock Room of Peterhouse.

Standings after 11 rounds:

1.	Imre Leader (GB)	10.0
2.	Marc Tastet (F)	9.0
3.	Stéphane Nicolet (F)	8.5
4.	Michael Handel (GB)	7.0
=.	Emmanuel Lazard (F)	7.0
6.	Graham Brightwell (GB)	6.0
=.	Alexandre Cordy (F)	6.0
8.	Phil Marson (GB)	5.5
=.	David Shaman (citizen of the universe)	5.5
10.	Aubrey de Grey (GB)	5.0
==.	Geoff Hubbard (AUS)	5.0
==.	Julian Richens (GB)	5.0
13.	Jeroen Diepenmaat (NL)	4.5
14.	Jens Aagaard-Hansen (DK)	4.0
==.	Roy Arnold (GB)	3.0
==.	Ben Pridmore (GB)	3.0
17.	Stephen Rowe (GB)	2.0 (retired after round 7)

Final: Leader 2-1 Tastet

3rd/4th: Nicolet 2-0 Handel

Thus, Imre won his first Grand Prix event for nine years! This is even longer ago than the last time a Dane played in Cambridge -- welcome to Jens, who assured us he would sing the event's praises back home in an effort to get more of his compatriots over. It's also even longer ago than Tastet last played here. In honour of this return to tradition, here are the three games of the final.

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

Tastet 24-40 Leader

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

Leader 34-30 Tastet

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

Leader 20-44 Tastet

Next year's Cambridge International will be the 20th, so with any luck we will think of a way to make it a bit special, such as giving Guy Plowman a prize for coming fifth. See you there!