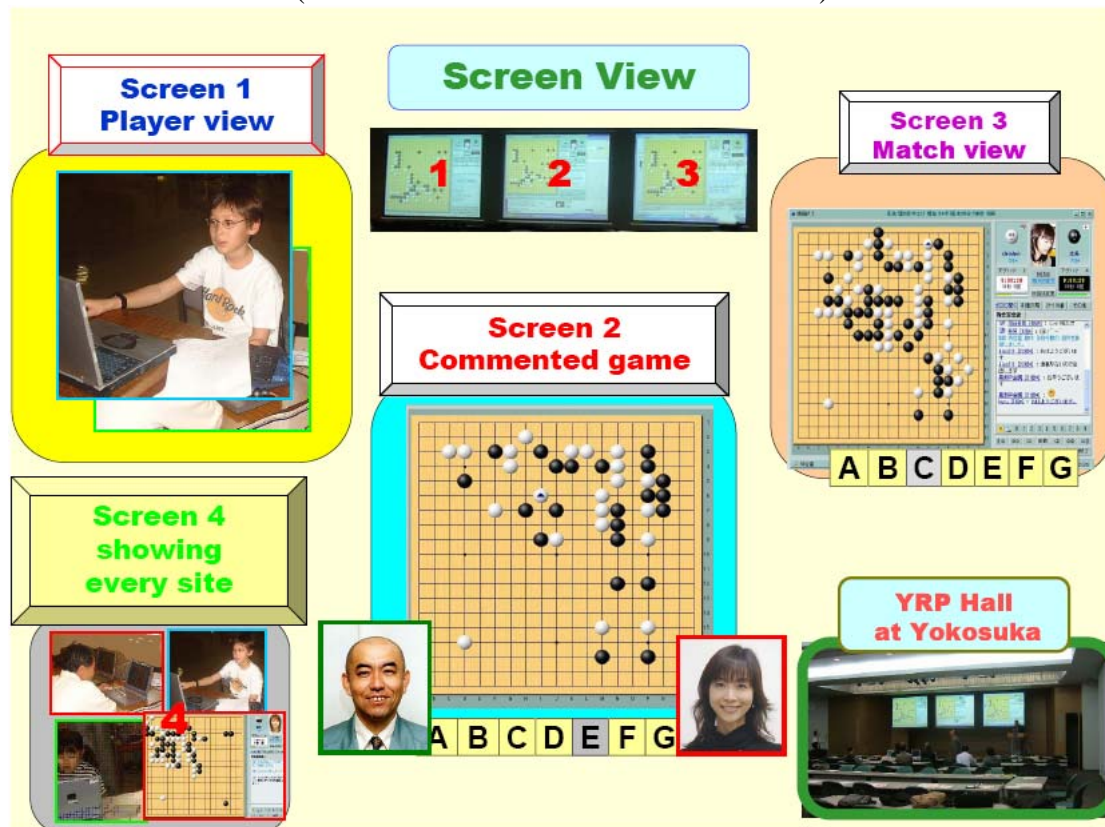


Sydney Go Journal

Issue Date – March 2007

Australia to be part of the Yokosuka Web Go Convention with Japan, China & Korea in 2007

(see below for features of the convention)



For more information see page 3

Up coming events

11th NEC Cup

Saturday and Sunday April 21, 22 in Melbourne.

Contact: Brad Melki, 03-9528-1149, email bmelki@hotmail.net.au

Venue: Novotel Glen Waverley, 285-287 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley

Format: 3 divisions (3-7dan, 3kyu-2dan, 15-4kyu), all handicap games, prizes in all divisions. Entry fee \$40. Please register by April 6, supplying a phone or email contact and your rank (AGA or internet).

Contributions, comments and suggestions for the SGJ to:

DavidGMitchell@optusnet.com.au

Special thanks to Geoffrey Gray and Tony Oxenham for proof reading this edition and correcting my mistakes.

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The Sydney Go Club

Meets Friday nights at :-

At Philas House
17 Brisbane St
Surry Hills

From 5.00pm

Entrance fee - \$5 per head; Concession \$3; Children free - includes tea and coffee.

For further information from Robert ravadas@yahoo.com

News

Queensland Go Championship Report

By John Hardy

The Queensland Go Championship was held at the Brisbane Bridge Centre on 17 - 18 February 2007. Twelve dan players contested the Open, while seven kyu players from 1 to 8 kyu and seven from 12 to 22 kyu played separate handicap divisions. It was pleasing to note the youth representation with seven people under eighteen.

There were many exciting games, and moments of triumph and despair - no different from other go tournaments. "I was twenty points ahead, then played a few no value endgame moves to lose by half a point." "I fought a one point ko and lost sixty points in the process." At the same time, everyone seemed to be having fun, and friendly games between rounds were the norm.

The lower kyu division was won by Jeremy Wen 12 kyu, a lad of 13, after a three game play-off with Peter Hexel 18 kyu, a lad of sixty (give or take a few). The match went down to the wire where Jeremy won Game 3 after a slip by Peter cost him a group of stones. Yanis Pache, age 7 and 14 kyu, got a creditable third for his first ever tournament.

The upper kyu division was won by Amelia Gray 4 kyu, who has come a long way since starting in my classes in 2004. "It's really nice to have a trophy", said Amelia. At 17 she has plenty of time to win more of them. Second was Horatio Davis 7 kyu, and third was Chris Cheung 8 kyu.

The Open was hotly contested but when the dust had settled Akira Tamura 4 dan got the winner's trophy and an envelope stuffed with cash (well, very lightly stuffed). Akira doesn't play often as he lives a couple of hours north of Brisbane, but he has been a regular and tough competitor in any special events. He pipped KaiLe Su 6 dan by one SOS tiebreaker point as both had five wins, while third place (4 wins) went to Markus Pache 4 dan, again on SOS.

The prize list was modest, with trophies for divisional winners, cash prizes for the open division, book prizes for the kyu division, plus a few minor prizes and promotional items donated by Haymans Electrical and John Hardy. There were two three - month KGS Plus subscriptions up for grabs, generously donated by our favourite friendly go server.

For a mere \$25, participants had lunches provided plus a ton of fun, and don't forget those AGA Credit Points for the Open players. The venue is very comfortable and is perfect for holding go events. Who knows, maybe we will see YOU there next year.

Upcoming events

11th NEC Cup

Saturday and Sunday April 21st & 22nd

in Melbourne

Contact: Brad Melki, 03-9528-1149, email
bmelki@hotmail.net.au

Venue: Novotel Glen Waverley, 285-287 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley

Format: 3 divisions (3-7dan, 3kyu-2dan, 15-4kyu), all handicap games, prizes in all divisions. Entry fee \$40. Please register by April 6, supplying a phone or email contact and your rank (AGA or internet).

It should be noted that this tournament is a selection event for the Yokosuka Web Go tournament in July.

The Yokosuka tournament is an international event between some of the top Go playing nations on Earth – Japan, China, Korea and Australia¹. Being selected to play in this tournament is a great honour and opportunity for any Go player.

Brad Melki will release more information as it becomes available but the convention includes Internet views of all games; comments on games from top Japanese professionals and heaps more.

¹ It must be said that Australia does not have the same depth of players, participation rate or strength as the other three countries – but we are working on that.

Mingren (名人) Title

The Mingren tournament is the Chinese equivalent to the Japanese Meijin. It is sponsored by The People's Daily newspaper, the Chinese Go Association.

A total of 64 players, all strong professionals compete for 16 places in the preliminary selection, these 16 players together with 16 seeded players enter Challenger selection event. The first several rounds use a simple knockout format, the challenger final is best-of-3.

The title match is over five games and takes place in the autumn. To promote the tournament and interest in Go some final games are played in different cities around China.

This years Mingren Title winner is Gu Li 9p winning taking the series 3-0 against Zhou Ruiyang 4p.

Previous winners of this tournament are:

1988	Liu XiaoGuang
1989	Ma Xiaochun
1990	Ma Xiaochun
1991	Ma Xiaochun
1992	Ma Xiaochun
1993	Ma Xiaochun
1994	Ma Xiaochun
1995	Ma Xiaochun
1996	Ma Xiaochun
1997	Ma Xiaochun
1998	Ma Xiaochun
1999	Ma Xiaochun
2000	Ma Xiaochun
2001	Ma Xiaochun
2002	Zhou Heyang
2003	Qiu Jun
2004	Gu Li
2005	Gu Li
2006	Gu Li

Gu LI Profile

Gu Li was Born on February 3rd 1983 and started playing Go in 1989 at the age of 6. He was promoted to professional 1 dan (1p) in 1994 and progress quickly through the ranks to reach 9p in 2006.

The follow are a list of achievements since 2001.

2001 - won China 8th New Pro Wang champion; became challenger in the final of 8th Qiwang title; finished in the final four of 14th Mingren title.

2002 - won champion of 2nd Liguang Cup; won 2nd National Sports Mass Meeting; winner of China-Korea New Pro Wang tournament; second place of 1st Bawang title; finished in the final four of 7th NEC Cup.

2003 - won 17th Tianyuan Title; winner of 7th China-Korea Tengen tournament; 5th Ahan Tongshan Cup champion.

2004 - won the champion of 9th NEC Cup; defended his Tianyuan title; won 16th CCTV Cup champion; defeated Kato Masao in the 5th China-Japan Agon Cup; winner of 8th China-Korea Tengen; won 17th Mingren title by 3:0.

2005 won the champion of the 12th Xinren Wang; defended his Tianyuan title; won 7th Ahan Tongshan Cup

2006 won 11th NEC Cup champion; defended his Mingren title by defeating Yu Bin 9p; won 10th LG Cup champion;

The three final games are featured in the following pages.

First Game - 19th Mingren Final

Played in China on 4th Jan 2007

Black - Zhou Ruiyang (4p)

White Gu Li (9p) wins by resignation

Komi 7.5 points

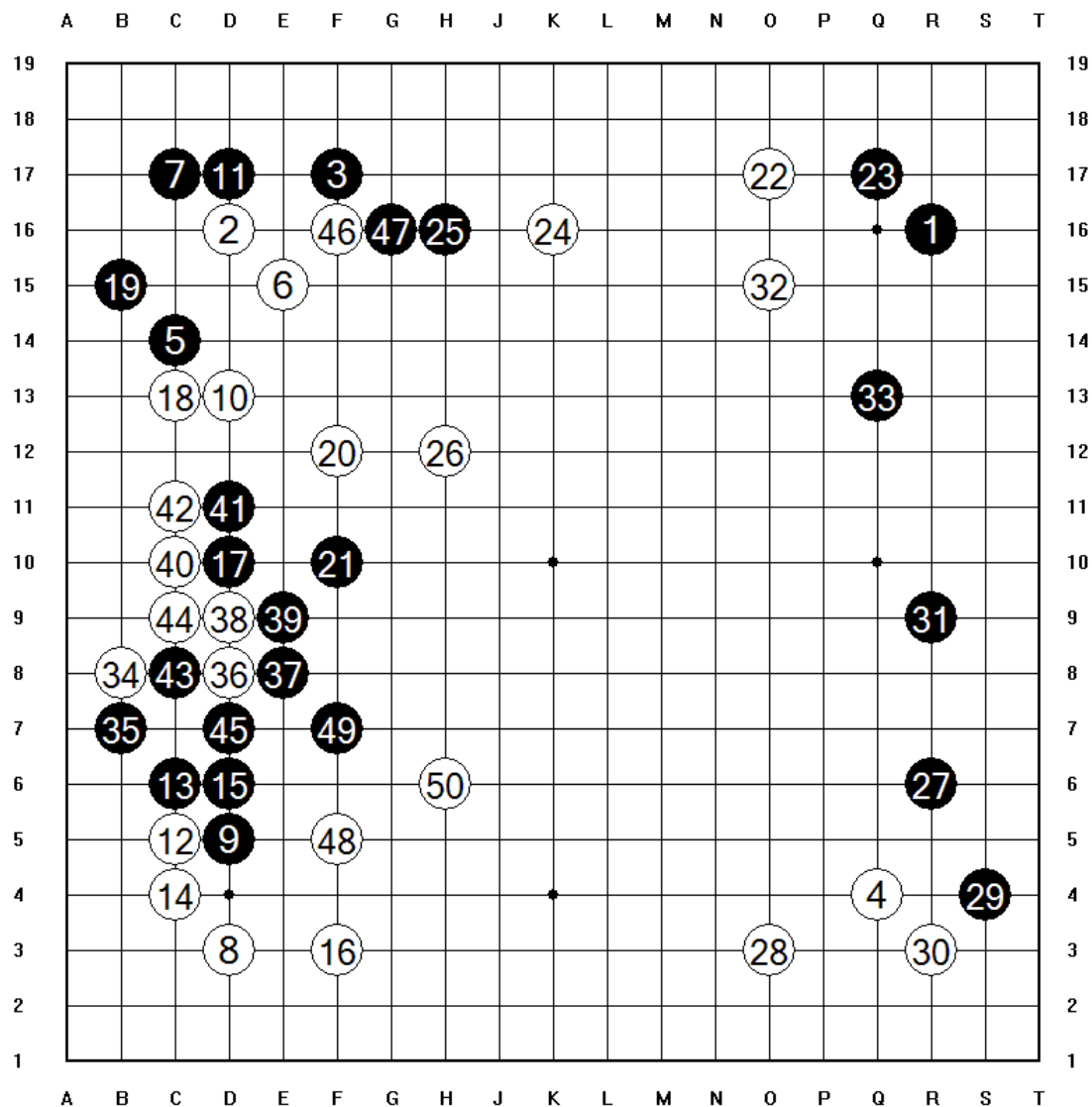


Figure 1

Moves 1 to 50

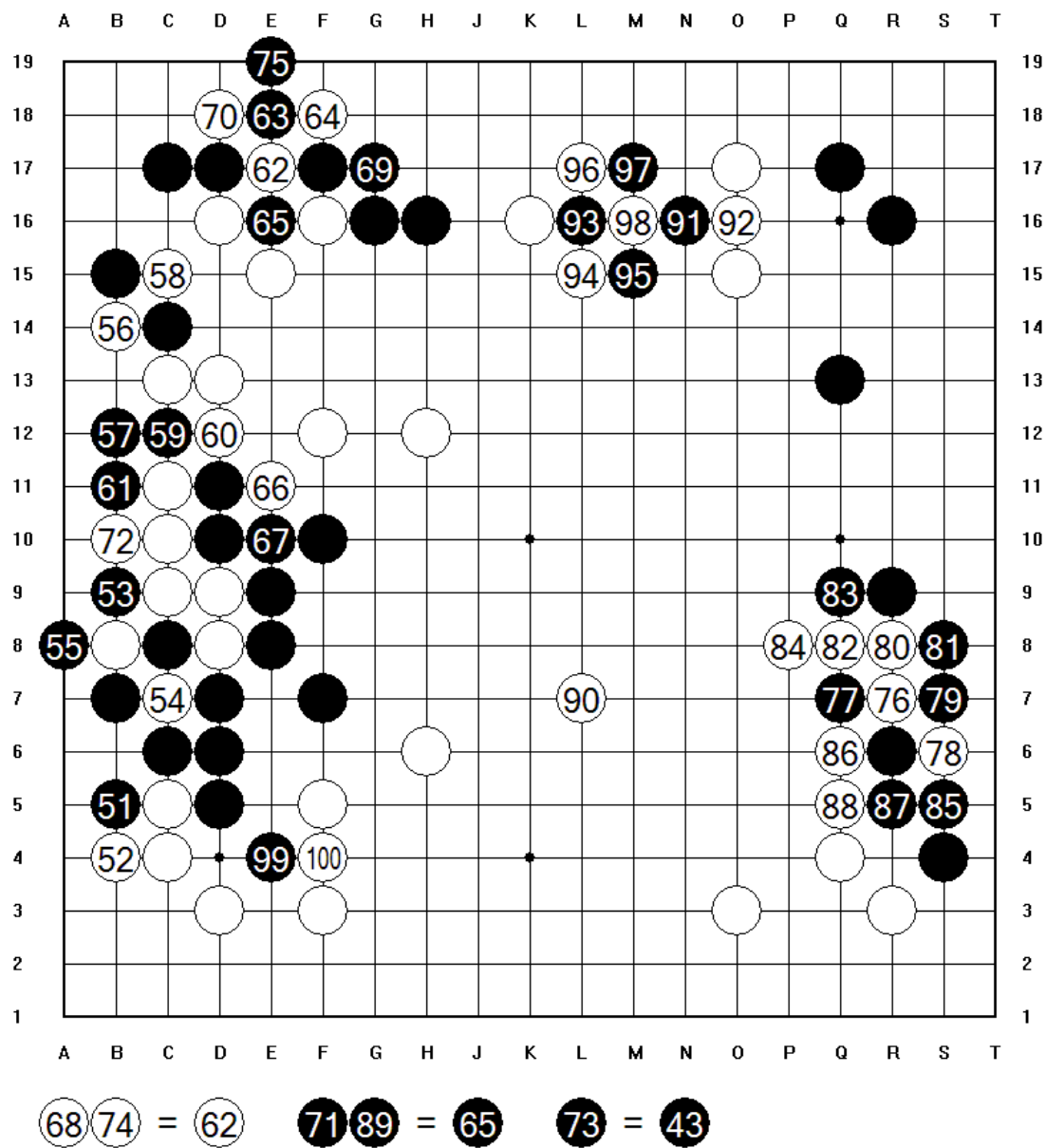


Figure 2

Moves 51 to 100

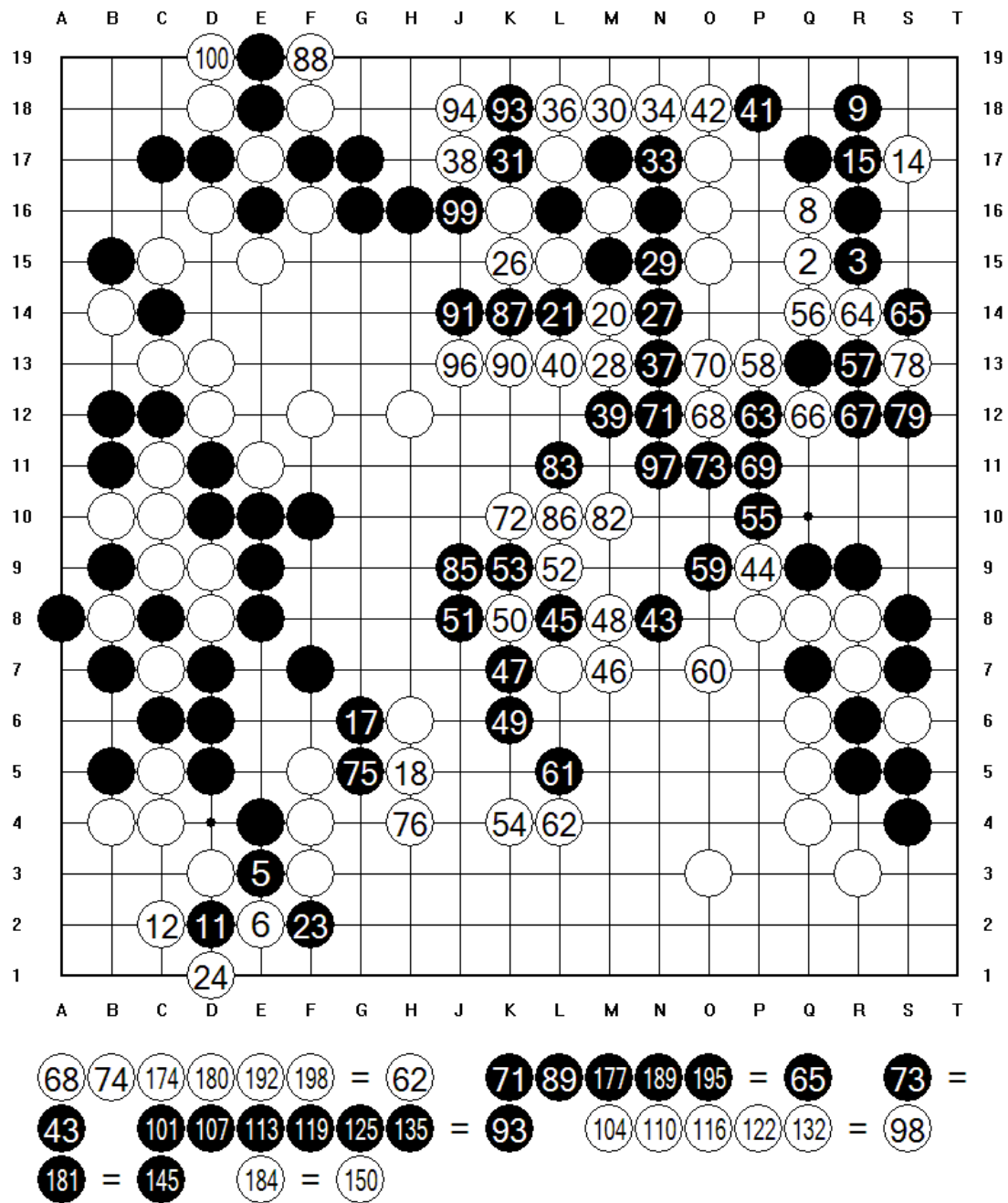


Figure 3

Moves 100 to 200

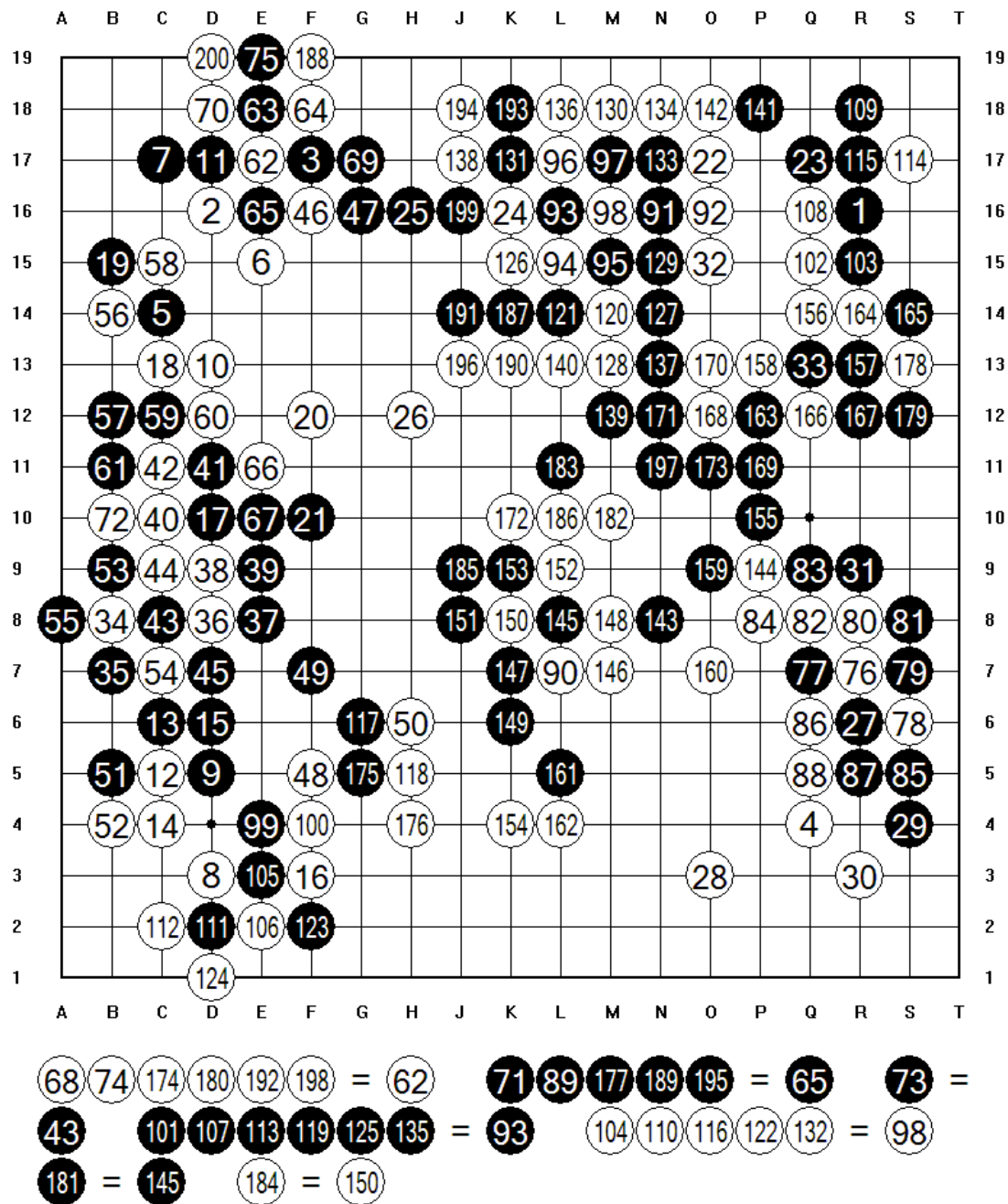


Figure 4

The complete score of the first final game (moves 1 to 200).

Note this diagram is here to resolve any issue with the Go printing software I am using which sometimes has problems representing Ko fights properly.

Second Game - 19th Mingren Final

Played in China on 6th Jan 2007

Black - Gu Li (9p) wins by resignation

White Zhou Ruiyang (4p)

Komi 7.5 points

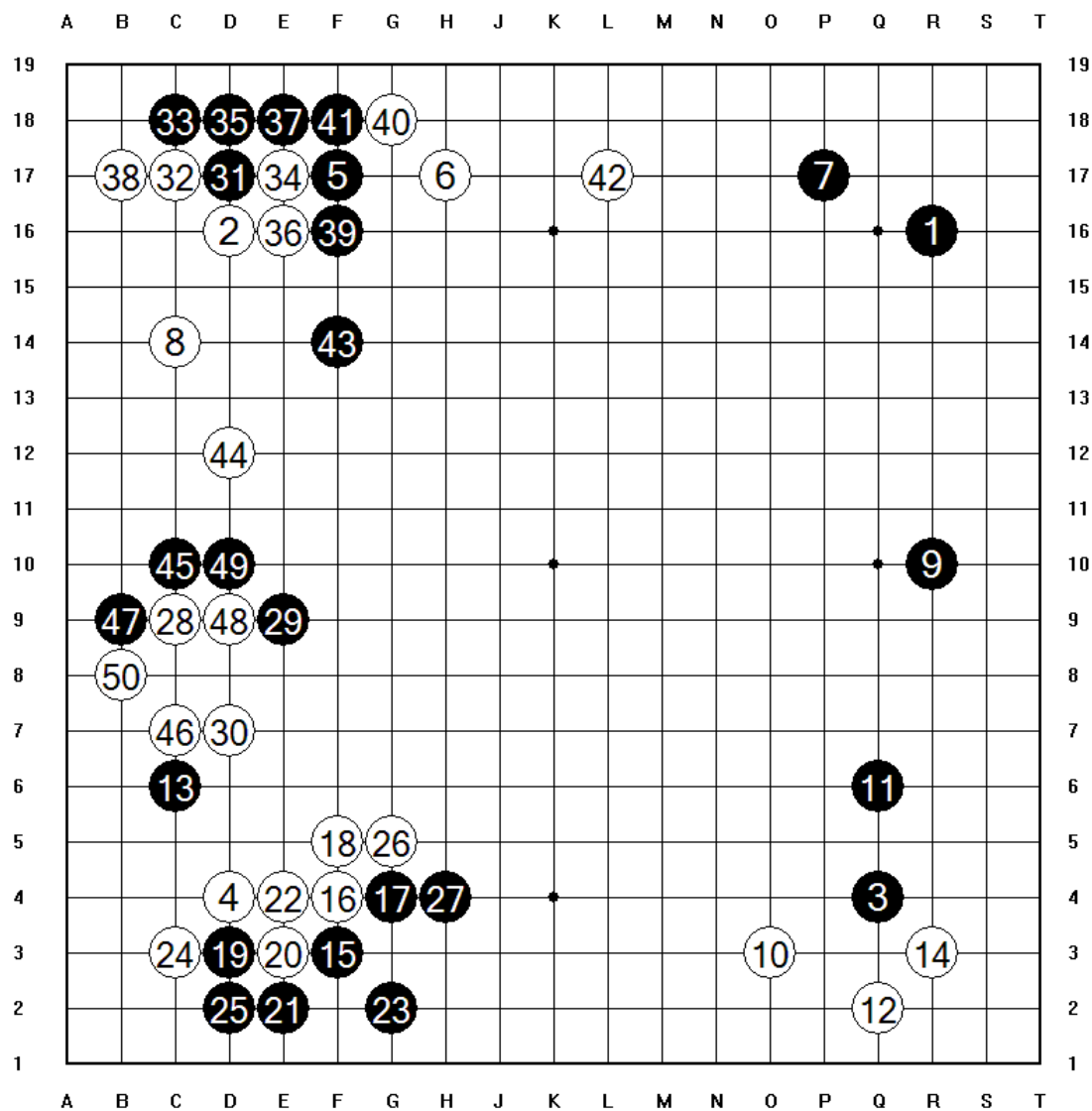


Figure 5

Moves 1 to 50

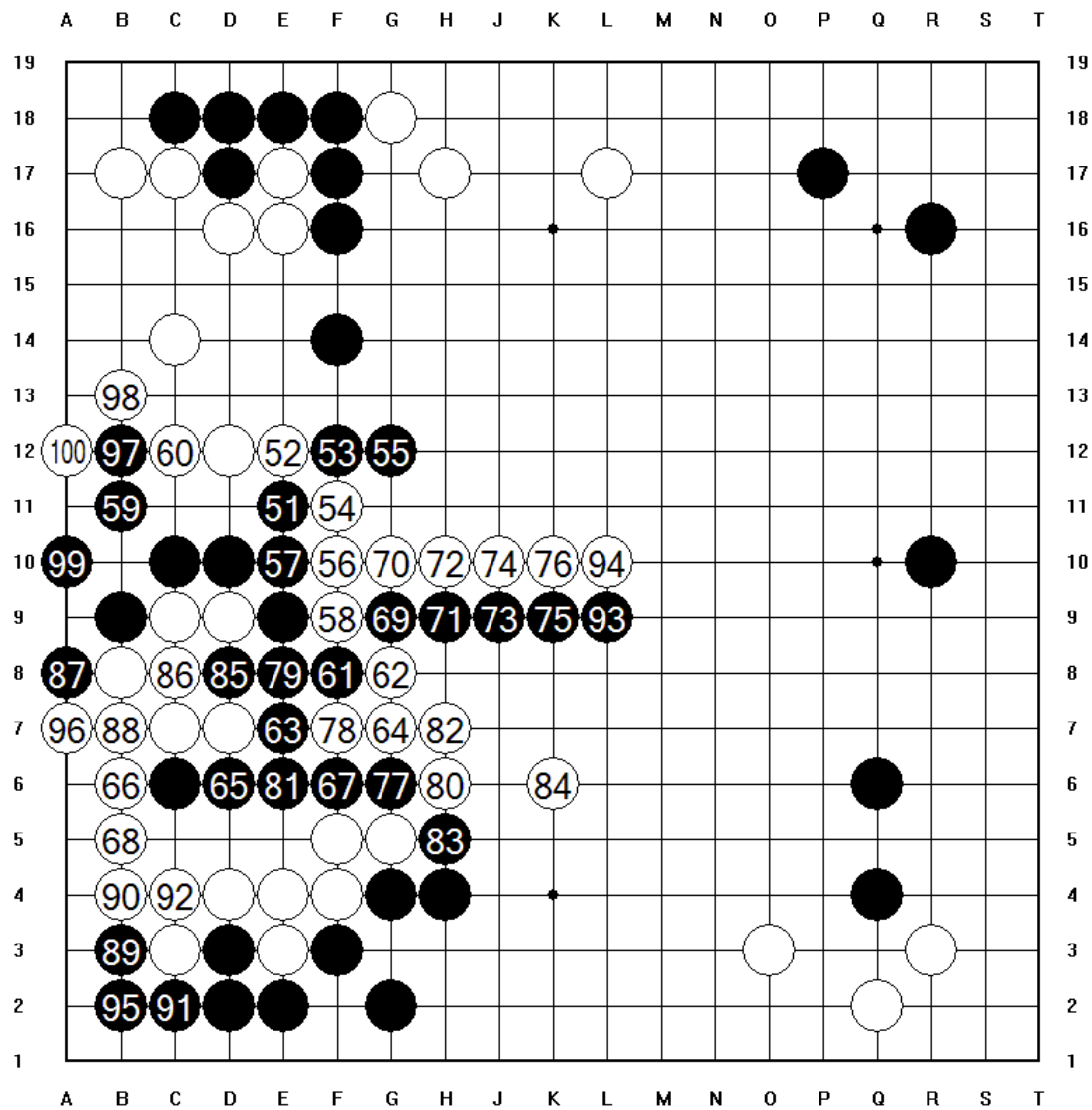
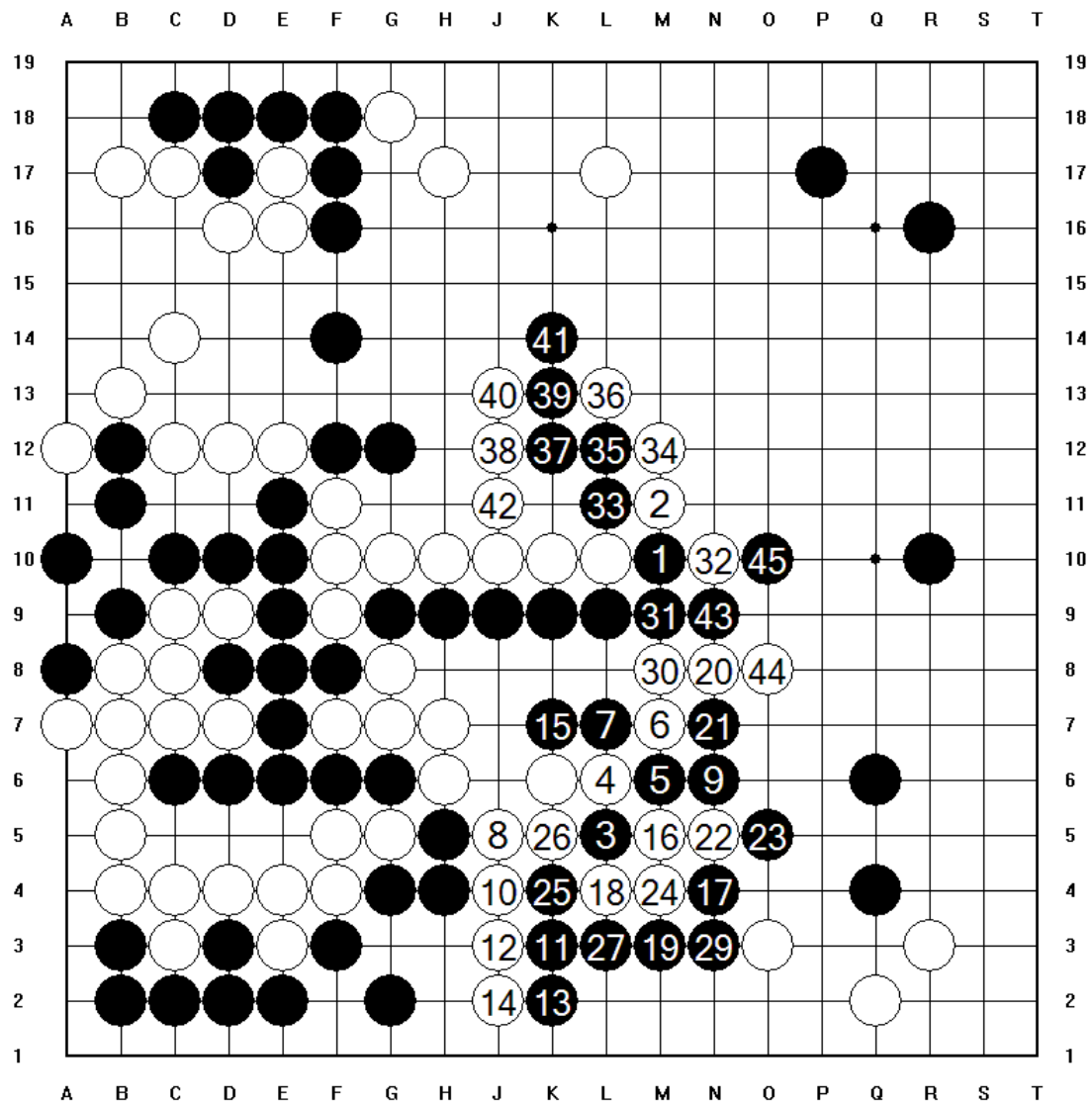


Figure 6

Moves 51 to 100



$$\textcircled{128} = \textcircled{103}$$

Figure 7

Moves 101 to 145

Third Mingren

Played in China on 8th Jan 2007

Black - Zhou Ruiyang (4p)

White Gu Li (9p) wins by resignation

Komi 7.5 points

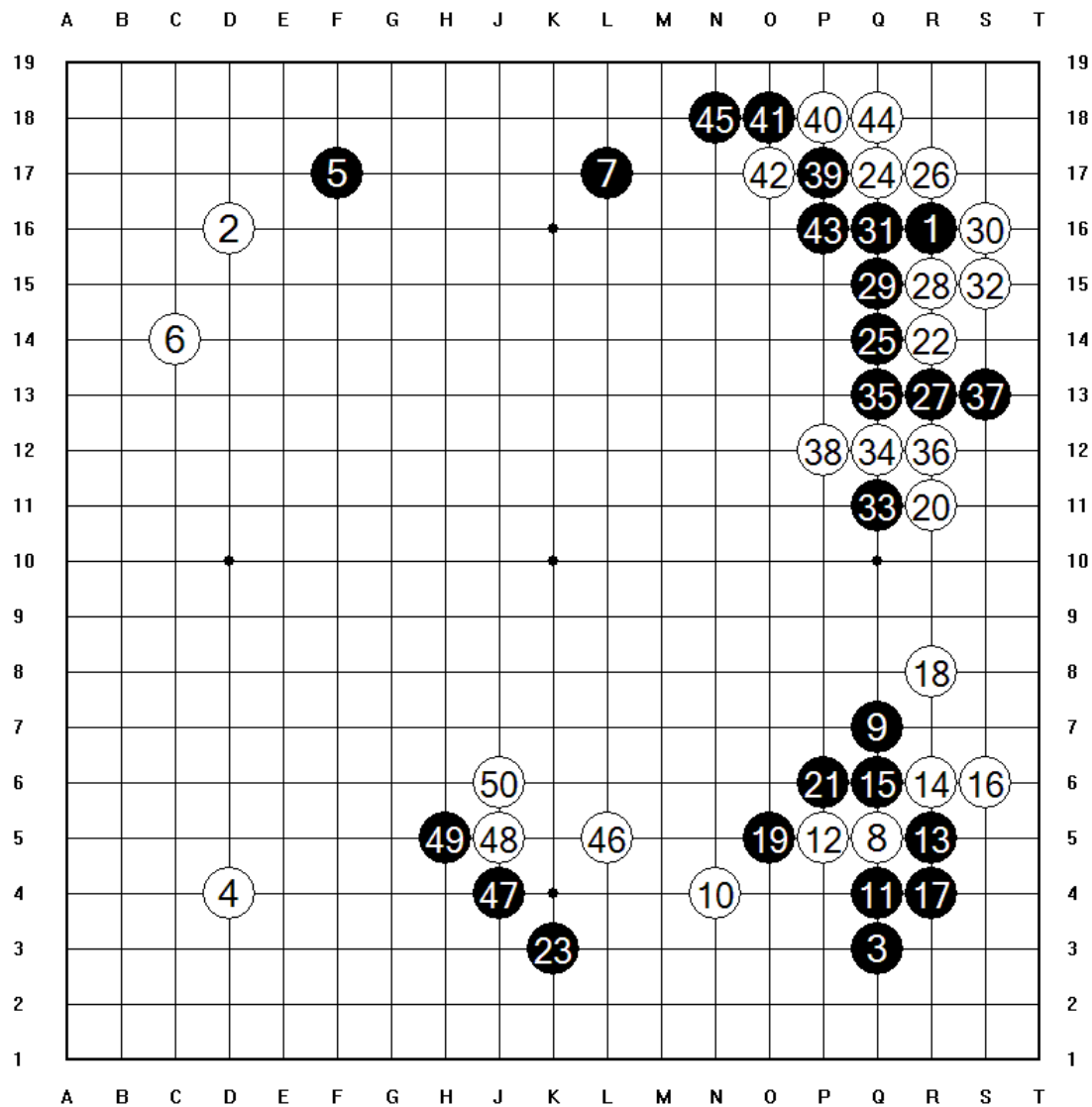


Figure 8

Moves 1 to 50

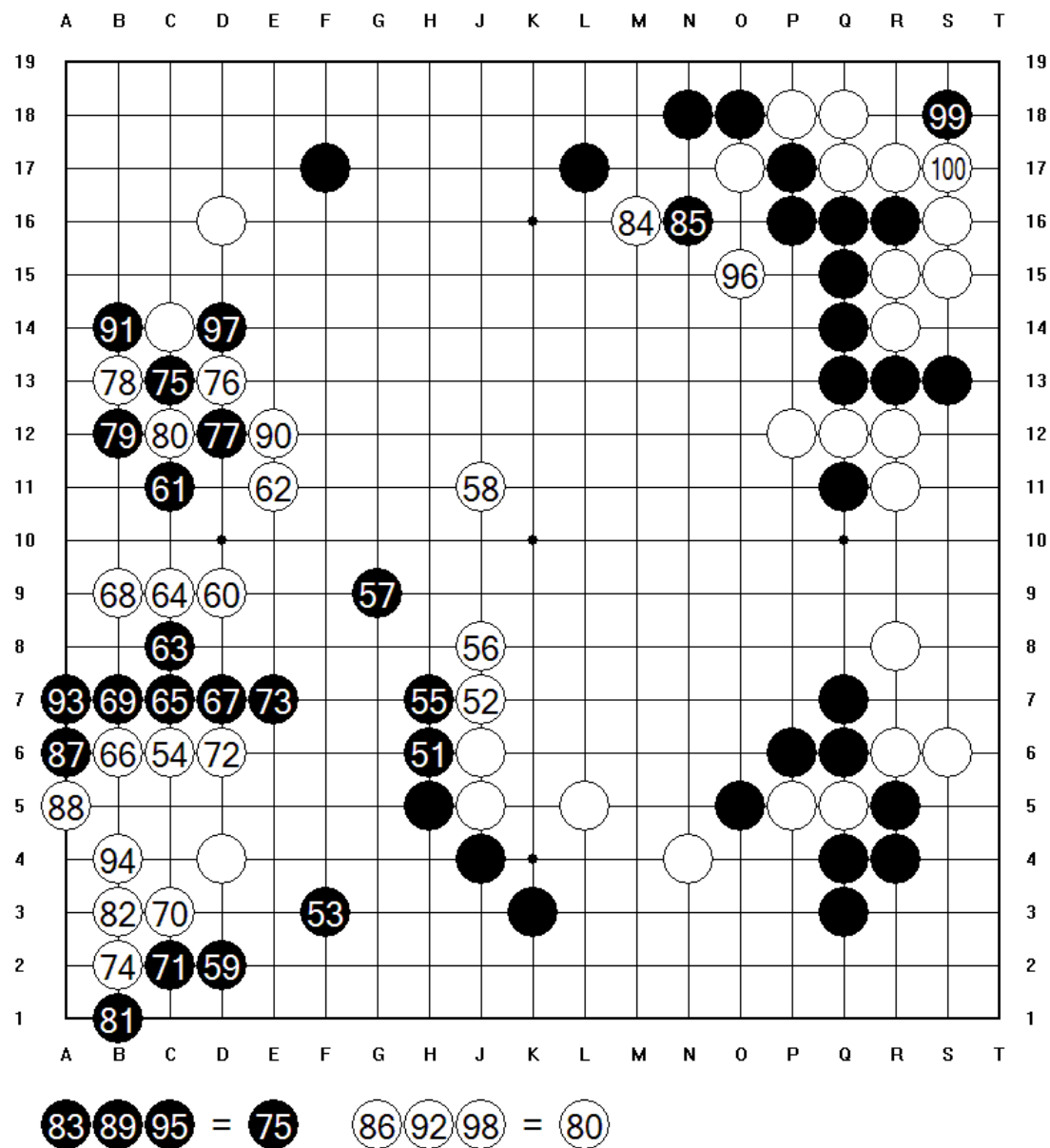


Figure 9

Moves 51 to 100

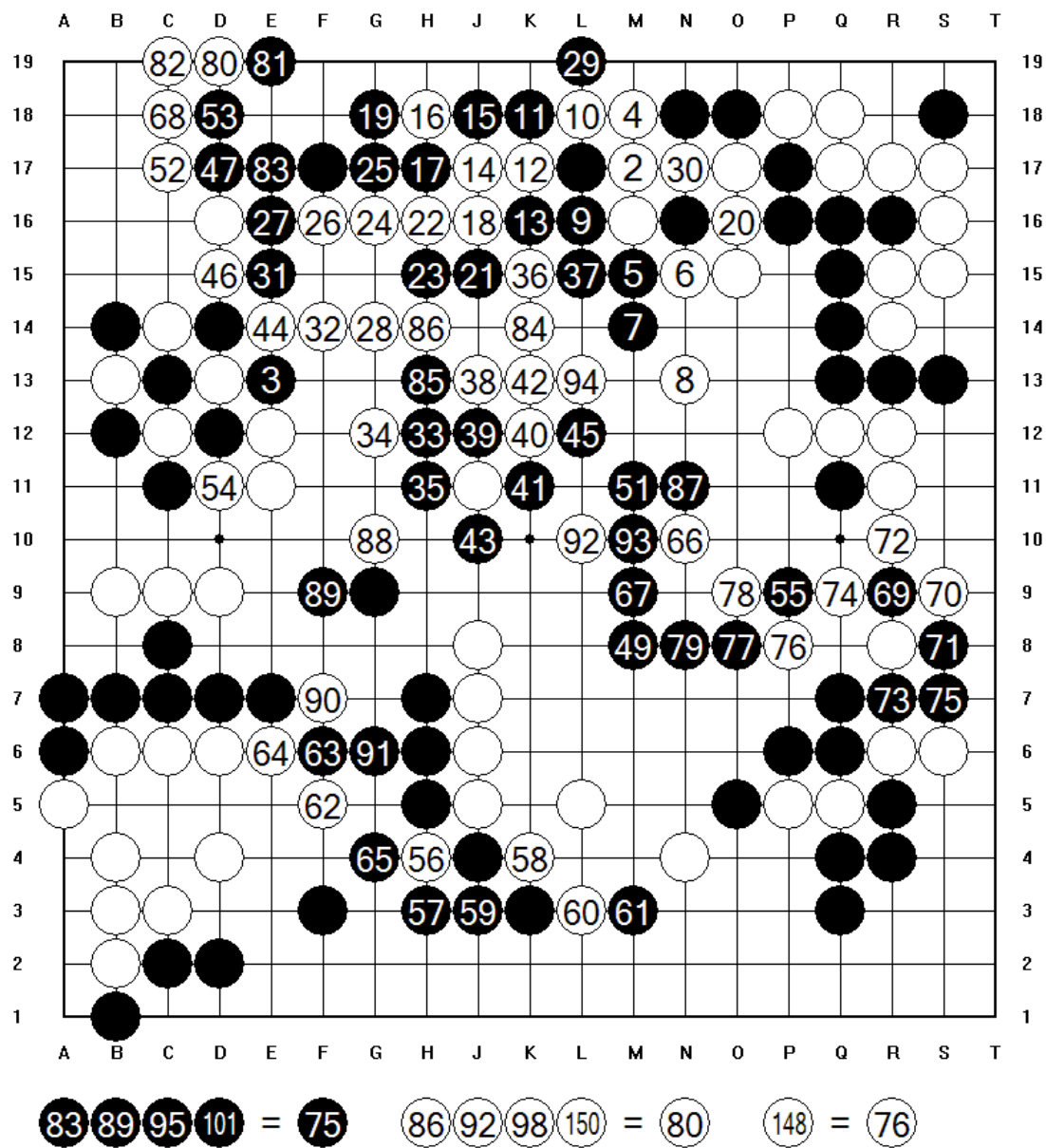


Figure 10

Moves 101 to 194

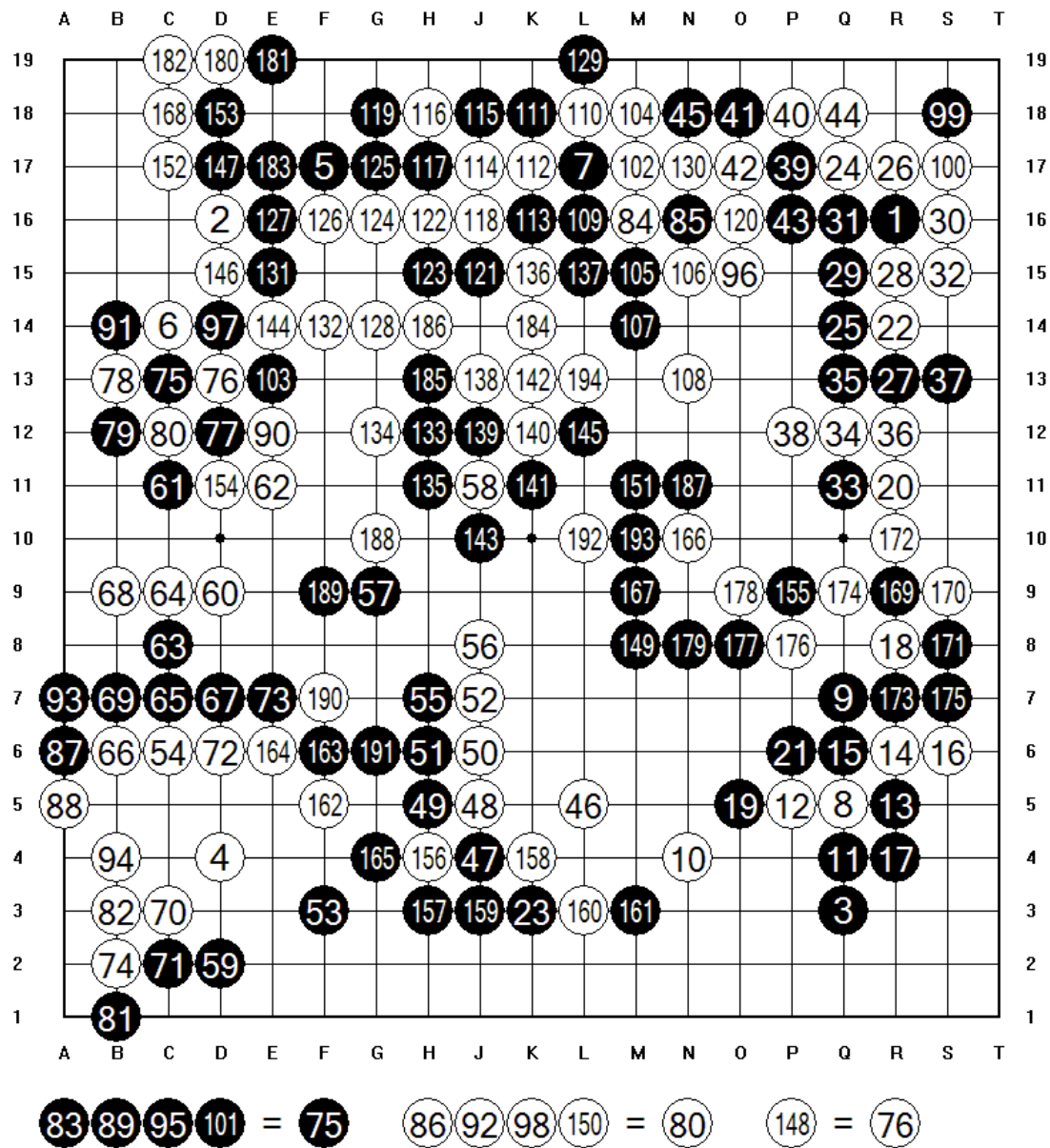


Figure 11

The complete score of the first final game (moves 1 to 194).

Note this diagram is here to resolve any issue with the Go printing software I am using which sometimes has problems representing Ko fights properly.

Amateur Handicap Game

This is a handicap game played by two amateur dan players in December 2006.

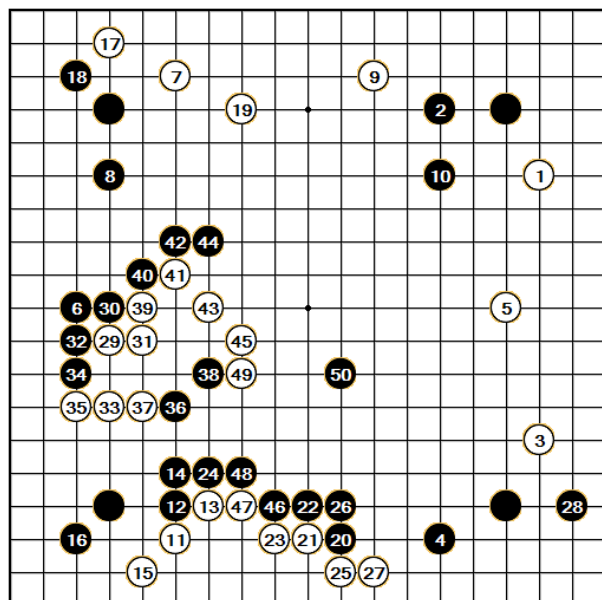


Figure 1

Moves 1 to 50. Black played a very solid game at the beginning and White could do little to reduce the handicap.

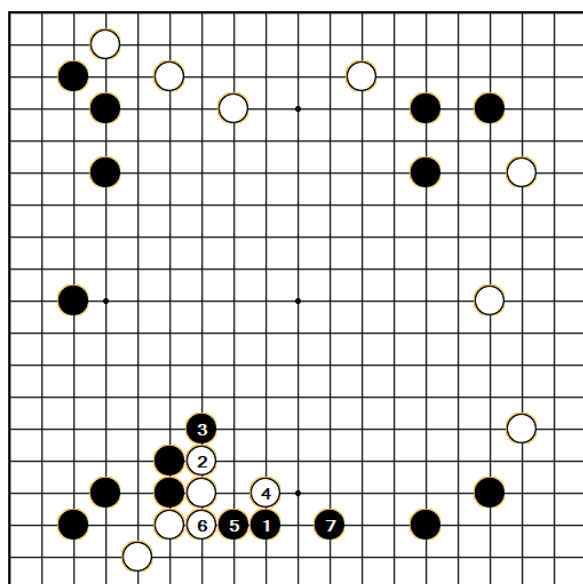


Diagram 1

The first move that warrants any comment is Black 20; Black has strong positions everywhere and should attack White's weak group.

Black 20 is too loose and allows White to secure his stones. Black 1 in Diagram 1 is a bold attack that strikes at White's vital point. White now has difficulty making eye-shape or a base for his stones.

To attack effectively first take away your opponent's base then chase his group. Half-hearted attacks make your opponent stronger at your expense.

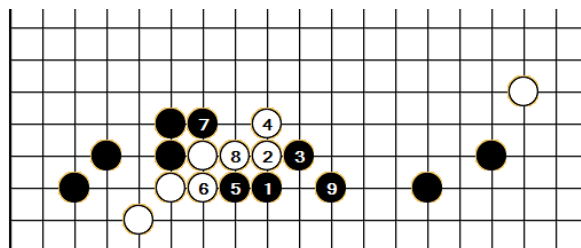


Diagram 2

White has a few options when Black attacks with 1, but none of them very palatable. White may try leaning on Black's stone with 2 in Diagram 2 but Black can play the sequence to 9 securing territory while White has a floating group.

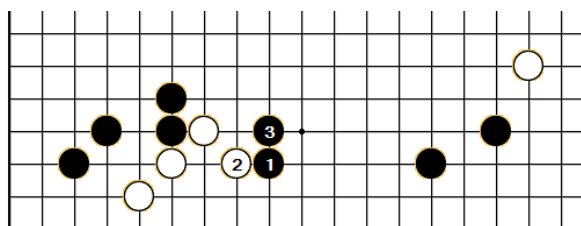


Diagram 3

White can try playing 2 in Diagram 3, but he achieves little while strengthening Black.

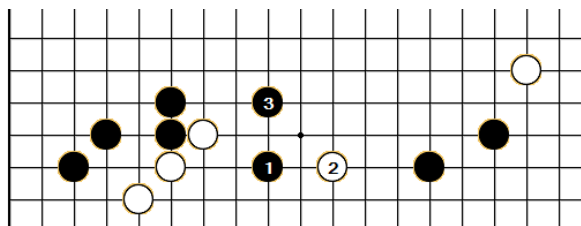


Diagram 4

Sometimes White tries nasty things in handicap games like cutting off and killing threatening stones. As you can see White 2 in Diagram 4 is proven feeble by the simple one point jump of 3.

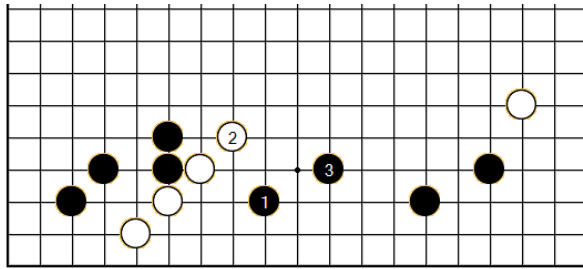


Diagram 5

Another technique is to continue into the centre with 2, but black 3 is painful for White.

All in all, White has no good response when Black plays 1 in Diagram 1, so by playing 20 and giving White room for a base Black failed to take full advantage of the situation.

Even with this missed opportunity Black's position is not bad – he has solid positions and territory. Black should not feel unhappy he has retained the vast majority of his handicap advantage and has good potential in the centre and secure territory on the left.

White 29 through 33 in Figure 1 is a standard moyo reduction technique, but White goes too far with 35 - Black must punish this move.

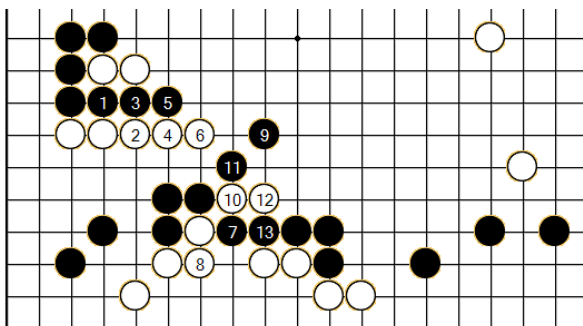


Diagram 6

The most obvious way is to push through with 1 in Diagram 6. White has little choice but to keep on running out. Black can then play 7 in sente before continuing the attack with 9.

Black has a cutting point, but there is no danger. If White cuts at 10 Black can play 11 and 13 leaving White with more problems.

Black 36 in Figure 1 forces White to connect. This is bad because it forces White to play a move he desperately needs.

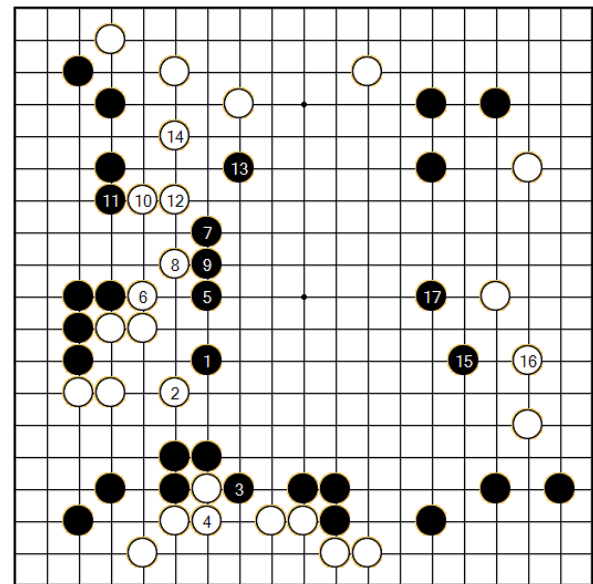


Diagram 7

If Black is not going to cut he is much better off playing the two point jump of 1 in Diagram 7. White connects in 'good shape' with 2, but Black 5 asks serious questions about the number of eyes in White's group.

Black can continue to chase White until he escapes with 14 in Diagram 7. The wall Black has built can now be used with moves like 15 and 17 to make profit in the centre. In contrast White has a string of stones making zero points.

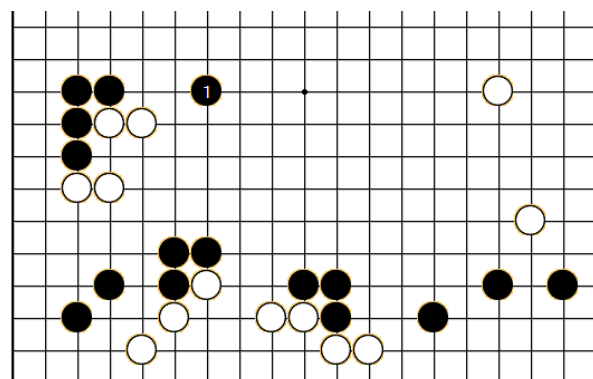


Diagram 8

Strategically there is another option. Black could chase White towards the right side with 1 in Diagram 8, but you need a plan that will make profit and I cannot see one here.

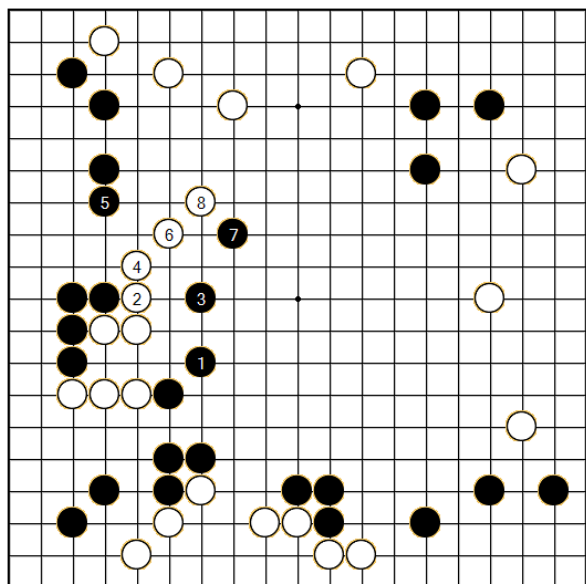


Diagram 9

In the game Black played 1 in Diagram 9 forcing White to run along the side. Black should continue attacking in this direction. Black's centre will not be as good as in Diagram 7 but it will be substantial.

In the game Black played in the wrong direction. He defended the left side, with 42, 44 and 46 which is just too small.

Black eventually picks the right direction with 50, but by this stage is it very difficult to make profit from the attack.

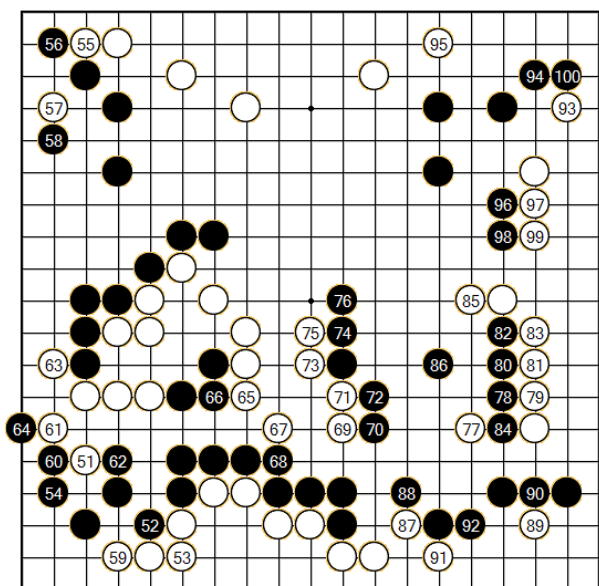


Figure 2

Moves 51 to 100.

White starts to defend his group but tenukis with 55 in Figure 2 to take a big yose. Black now has another chance to put pressure on White's central group, but it is not easy.

Black has two general options. He can attack on the right side and build a position there that will assist attacking in the centre or he can enclose White's group forcing it to live then attack the right side using his strength in the centre.

Realistically Black cannot kill the White group, nor should that be his primary aim.

Killing large groups rarely works, but chasing weak stones and building walls in sympathy with a strategic plan always deliver profit.

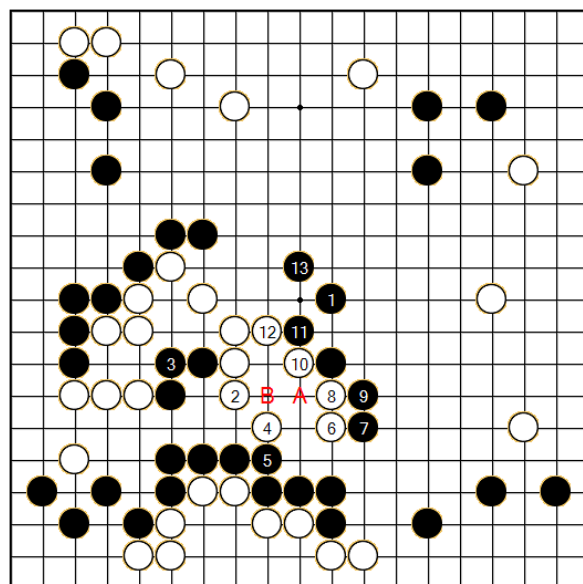


Diagram 10

Diagram 10 - Black 1 is a good attacking move. White cannot turn this into a tactical battle by playing in contact with the stone so he is forced to live inside, this helps Black build strength in the centre ahead of an attack against the right side.

If White follows a similar sequence to the game Black can put a lot more pressure on White's stones.

Black 13 keeps the pressure on White and White will probably live with 'B' - if he does not White will cut at 'A' and force a ko.

Playing this way Black does enclose White but he has some weakness with his stones in the middle and sente to attack the right side.

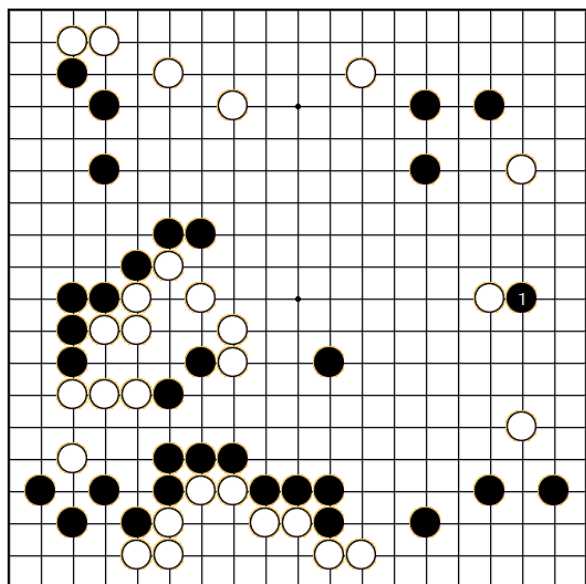


Diagram 11

My personal preference is to attack on the right immediately with 1 in Diagram 11. This will lead to a fight and depending on the result Black will then be able to choose the right way to attack White's centre group.

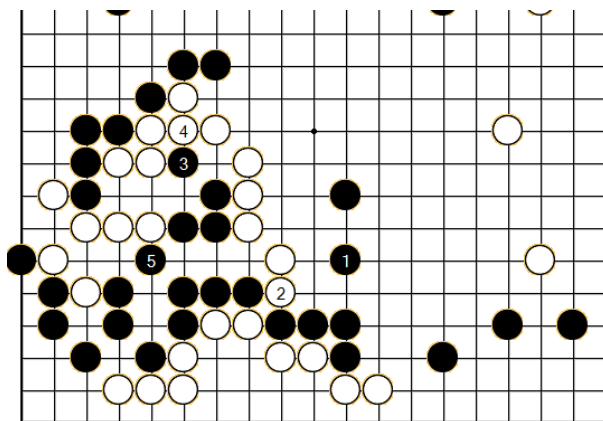


Diagram 12

Black did not choose this option, he defended the yose and allowed White to come back and defend his weak centre group.

It should be noted that connecting at 68 in Figure 2 is unnecessary. Black 1 in Diagram 12 is better. Connecting fills a dame (it makes no points); Black 1 influences the right side, restricts White's eye space and will assist an attack against the right side. If White cuts with 2 Black will live by playing 5. This means White's cutting stone has little value and he will have played the dame move, not Black.

In the game Black connects and White is able to get two eyes and defend the right side with 77; this is a poor result for Black because White gets sente.

When attacking you should end in sente.

Figure 2 - Black 78 through 86 make a few points in the centre but this is a poor outcome given the potential shown in Diagram 7.

Game assessment after move 86

White has no weak groups. He has territory on the top and right sides plus a small area on the bottom. There is good yose in all four corners, particularly the top right and top left.

Black has no weak groups. He has territory on the left, lower right corner and middle. There are yose opportunities against the upper side if Black can get there first.

Figure 2 - White plays a nice probe with 89 Black has to connect and White then pushes towards the stone. White then switches his attention towards the upper right corner and takes the big moves of 93 and 95. White is probably quite happy with this result.

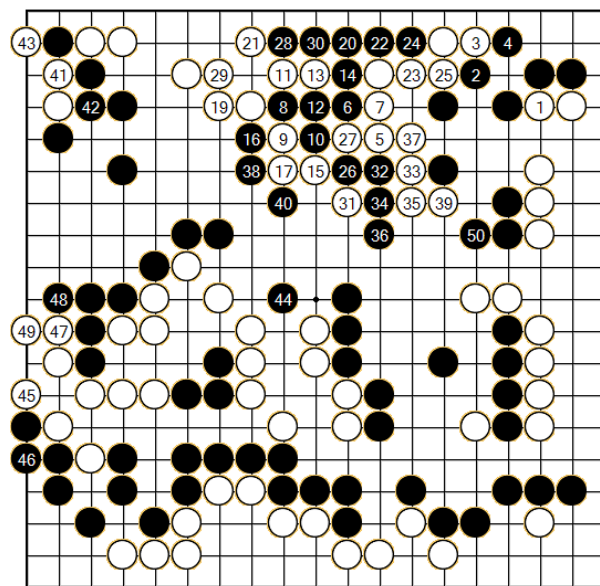


Figure 3

Moves 100 to 150.

Black 106 in Figure 3 is an excellent tactical move that White must deal with cautiously.

In the game White connects, this is a mistake because Black is able to jump back with 8 and form a ko with the sequence to 13 in Diagram 13.

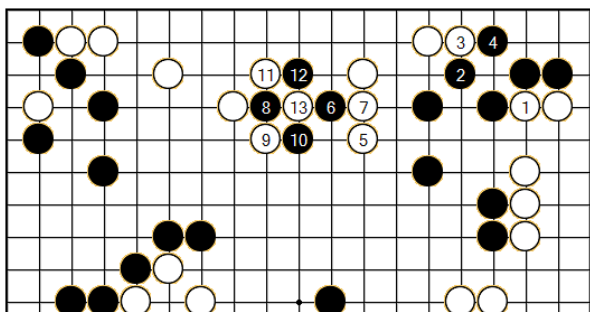


Diagram 13

Black has a large number of ko threats and White almost none, so this is a lottery like many amateur ko fights.

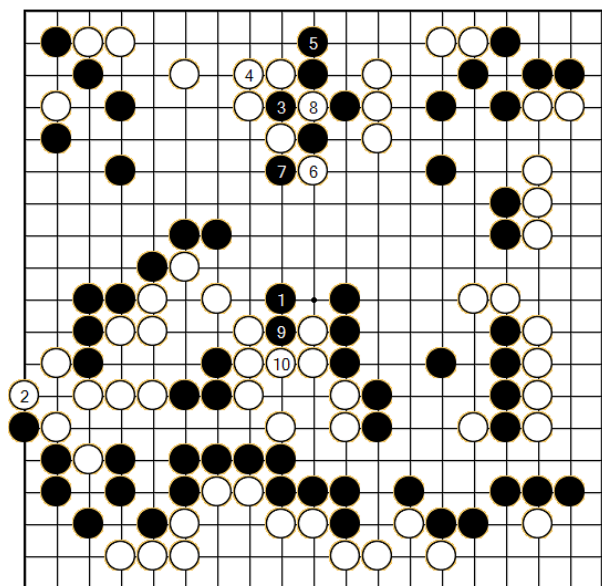


Diagram 14

Diagram 14 shows the likely continuation of the fight - Black makes ko threats against White's central group while decimating White's upper side and possibly killing the stones on the right.

Black 112 is terrible because it throws away this chance.

White 117 (Figure 3) is equally terrible because it gives Black another opportunity.

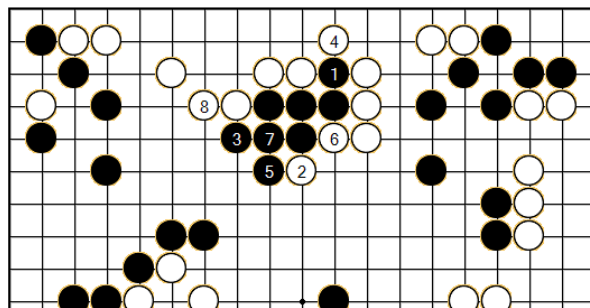


Diagram 15

White must play 4 in Diagram 15 connecting his stones and forcing Black into a dango (dumpling shape). By saving 117 Black has another opportunity to win the game.

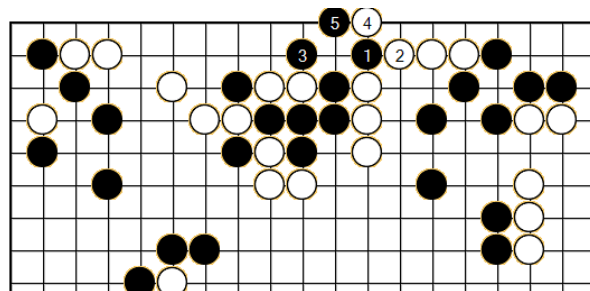


Diagram 16

Black must play 1 in Diagram 16; this threatens to cut the two White stones and if White resists Black will resort to ko. Given the disproportionate number of ko threats Black is certain to win the ko and will either cut off the three White stones or make two eyes (perhaps both).

As it is Black plays sagari with 120. The fight to 139 in Figure 3 leads to the death of Black's big group in the top right corner.

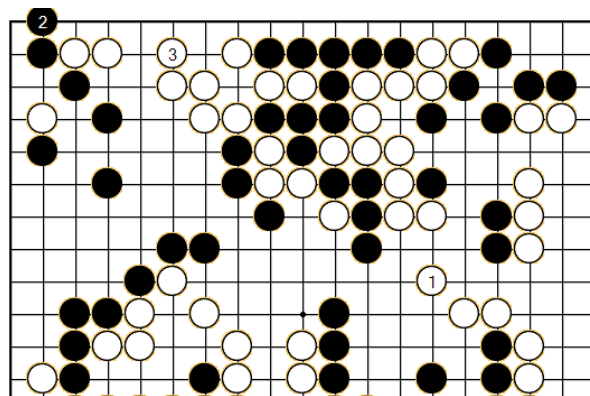


Diagram 17

White has clearly won at this point and should have played 1 in Diagram 17 to eliminate the last of the aji.

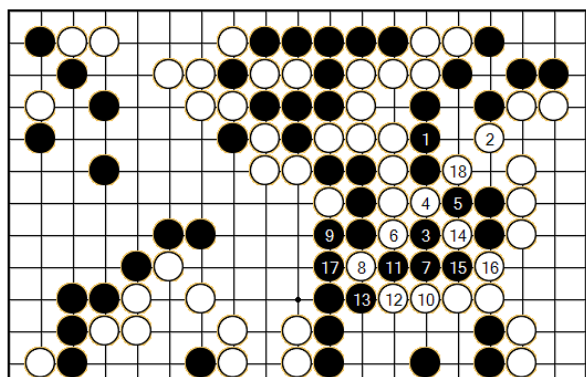


Diagram 18

By omitting this move White gives Black a chance to live with his stones starting with 1 in Diagram 18. It is a bit of a thrash, but Black can escape starting with the sequence in Diagram 18 and continuing with Diagram 19. Not pretty but the majority of Black's stone live.

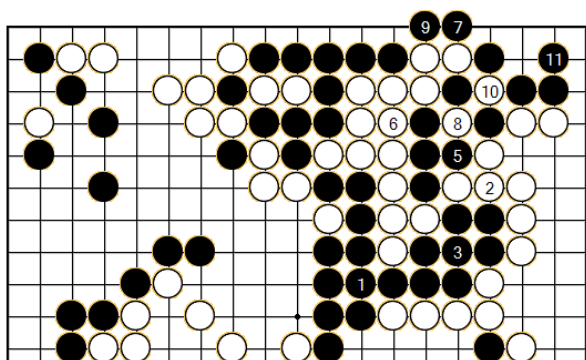


Diagram 19

The complete game is shown on the next page.

Lessons from this game

1. Always formulate a plan for the use of influence and walls. If you have no plan or your plan is inconsistent you will not gain an advantage.
2. When attacking always finish in sente. When an attack is successful you dictate what occurs and make a profit. If you have to defend you have done something wrong.
3. Always be aware of the number of ko threats for each player. If you have plenty be prepared to play aggressively and take ko options when they occur.

Australian Go Clubs

(From the AGA website)

Adelaide Go Club

Contact: Kazuya Miki, 08 8357 3328; email miki38@tpg.com.au

Meets: contact Miki for details

Brisbane Go Club

Contact: John Hardy, 0409-786050; email J.Hardy@uq.net.au

Meets: Pancake Manor, 18 Charlotte St., Brisbane; Tuesday evenings from 6.00pm

Canberra Go Club

Contact: Neville Smythe, 02 6232 7277 (H); email Neville.Smythe@anu.edu.au

Meets: Mathematics Department, ANU Campus; Wednesday evenings from 6.30pm
also: King O'Malleys Tavern, City Walk, Canberra; Saturday afternoons from about 1.30pm

Melbourne Go Club

Contact: Brad Melki, 03 9528 1149 (W); email bmelki@hotmail.net.au

Meets: Phone or email for details

Melbourne Japanese Go Club

Contact: Yoshi Nagami, 03 9727 3388; email nagami@optusnet.com.au

Meets: Thursday evening from 7.00pm; phone or email for details.

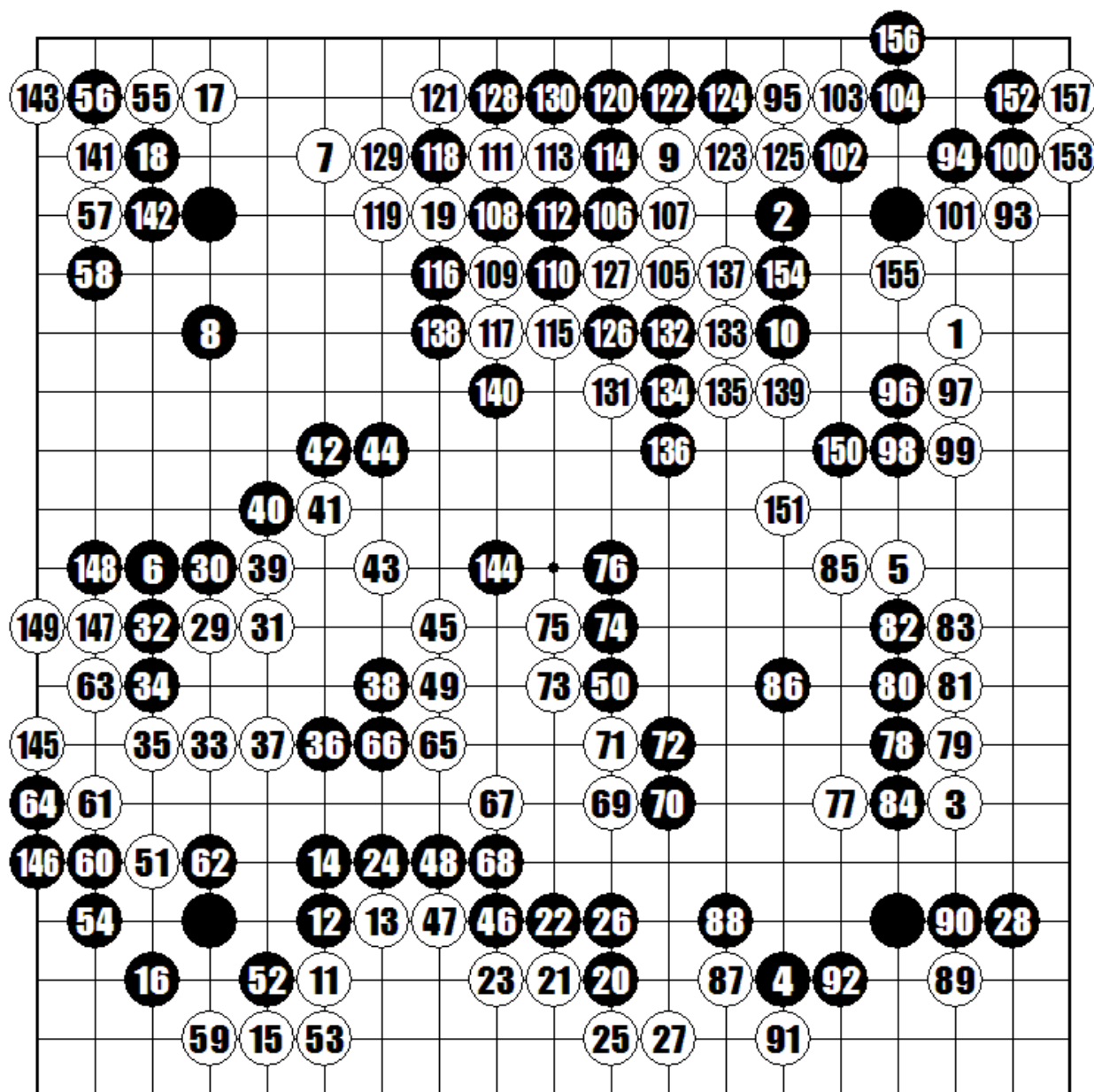
Melbourne Students Playing Go

Contact: Dilshan Angampitiya; email mail@sngo.org.au

Meets: See website or email for details.

Continued on page 39

Amateur Game - Complete score



Moves 1 to 157

White wins by resignation

Middle Game Errors

Players make mistakes. This should not be surprising but when the mistake is yours it always comes as a shock. When a player realises he has made a mistake there are a number of reactions and feelings. Normally they start with self-disgust, followed by wild plans to recover the loss and finally panic.

Whatever you do **DON'T PANIC**, this leads to more and greater errors.

In this amateur game White realises that he made a mistake and panicked, this led to another mistake which eventually led to defeat.

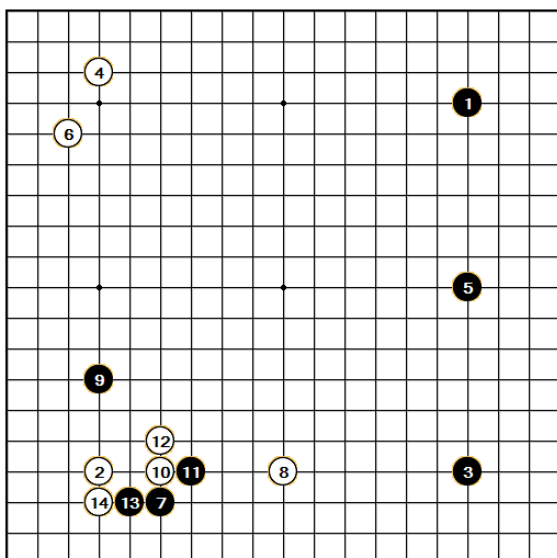


Diagram 1

The game starts with the sequence to 14 in Diagram 1.

It is clear by the 5th move this is going to be a moyo game. Black's three stones on the right are a classic moyo formation.

Black 7 is not in the most valuable area. The territory in front of White's shimari on the top side is the most valuable, so Black should have played in the centre of the upper side.

The focus of this commentary is the fight in the lower left corner. The game continues in Diagram 2 with Black's hane at 15; a smart tactical move aimed at taking White's base.

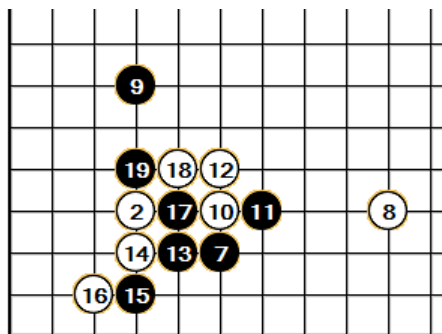


Diagram 2

In the game White blocks with 16 and Black cuts through with the sequence to 20 in Diagram 3 and Black connects at 25.

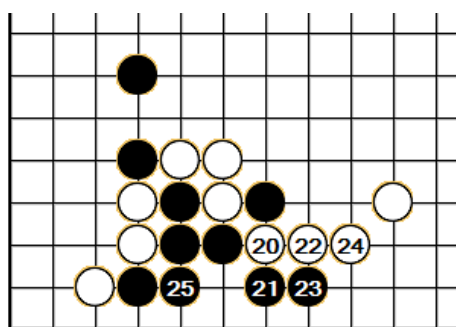


Diagram 3

White does not have an easy move in the corner and decides to counter attack with White 26 (Diagram 4). The problem is White's stones are disconnected and weak.

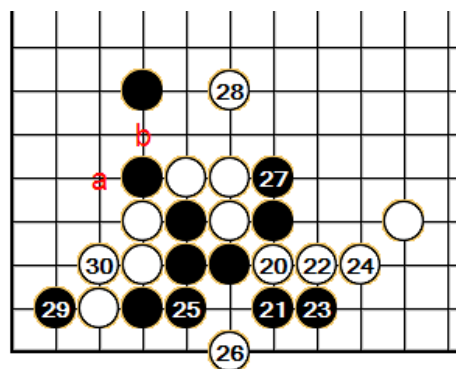


Diagram 4

Black strengthens his outside stone with 27, then plays the tesuji of 29 punishing White severely.

White can make two eyes in the corner by exchanging 'a' for 'b' but this kills the three White stones on the outside – if that happens White has no chance and should resign.

Continuing to thrash about White connects at 30 but Black 31 in Diagram 5 ensures the capture of White's stones in the corner.

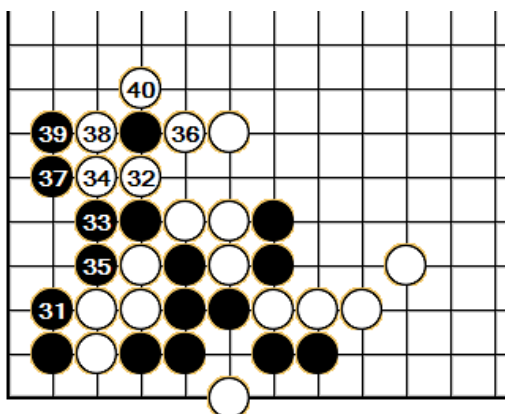


Diagram 5

The game continues in Diagram 5. White realises there is nothing to do and sacrifices the stones (they cannot be saved anyway), but White is still suffering shock and panic when he plays 36.

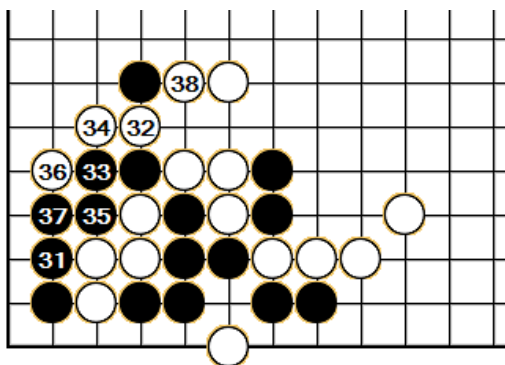


Diagram 6

If White had played 36 in Diagram 6 he would still have a reasonable game. The loss of the stones in the corner is a mistake, but omitting 36 in Diagram 6 really loses the game.

Taking an unemotional view of the position we can see that White's influence works well to restrict Black's moyo strategy on the right and while Black has 25 points, they are completely surrounded by White stones and cannot impact the rest of the game – not too bad at all.

Mistakes happen – keep your mind working and you can often find ways around them. The key is reading and reviewing your own games.

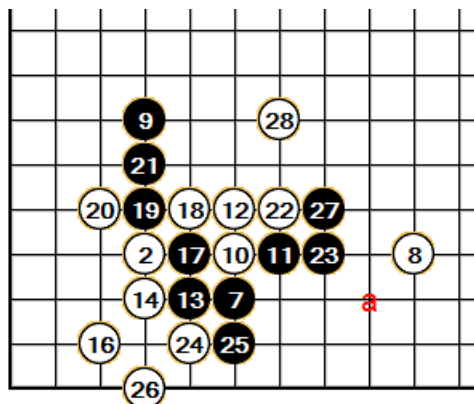


Diagram 7

Just a quick note on this fight – An alternative is for White to play 20 and 22 in Diagram 7. This secures the corner sets the scene for a running fight between the groups on the outside.

There is a lot of aji for both players in this position but I will mention one – White 'a' not only helps White 8, it takes the base from Black's stones, it is just a question of timing.

Summary

Recognise that mistakes happen and you must deal with them. Take to heart the advice of Douglas Adams' book and DON'T PANIC.

If you do make a mistake, take several deep breaths and count to 10 and then count the game. With any luck this will settle your mind and you will be able to make a rational decision.

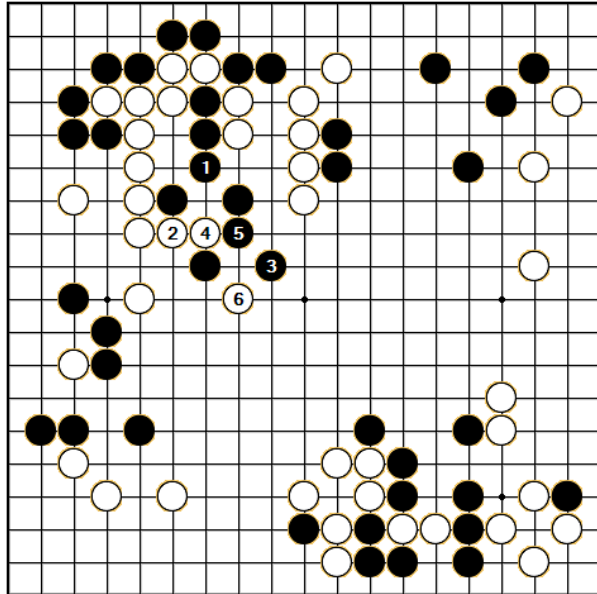
In this example White lost a battle in the lower left corner but he lost the war when he panicked.

The surest way to improve your skill in the vital part of the game is to play, review your games and practice by solving problems.

The next couple of pages have 8 middle game problems with answers later in the journal. Please work out your solutions in your head not on the board.

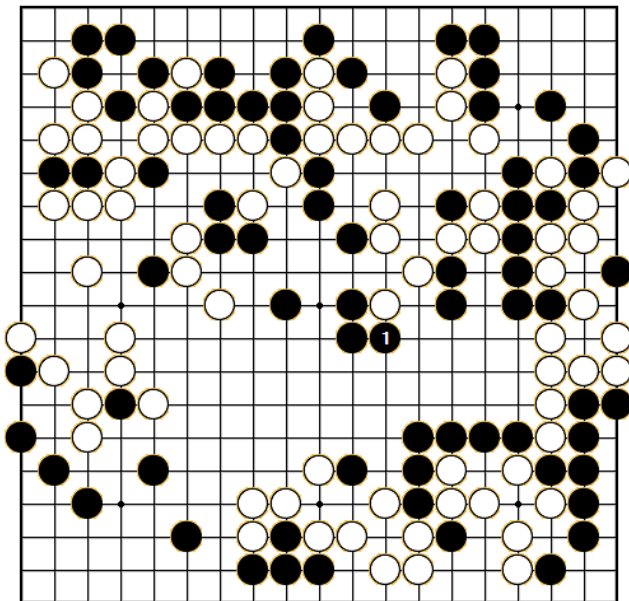
Middle game problems

The following situations all occurred in real games played on the KGS, the players KGS rankings range from 3 kyu to 7 dan.



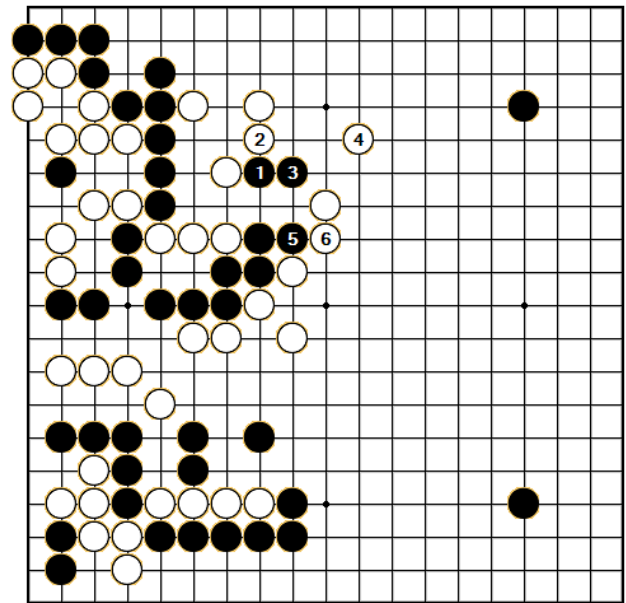
Problem 1

Black has brought his upper side group into the centre with 3, Black pushed with 4 and peeps the tiger mouth connection with 6 – What should Black do?



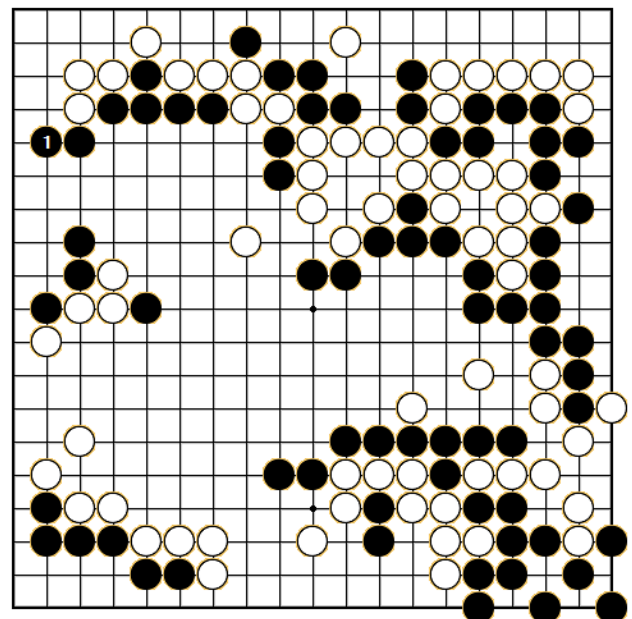
Problem 2

Black has just played 1 trying to make some territory in the centre, does White have to defend his central group or can he play elsewhere?



Problem 3

Black is in a good position in this game, except for his left side group that is running into the centre. He tries to escape with 1, 3 and 5 but Black dodges back with 4 trying a loose capture – What should Black do?



Problem 4

White has been harassing the Black stone on the upper left side, Black defends with 1 – how should White respond?



Problem 6

Problem 7

Problem 8

26

Ko for beginners

Introduction

Go is a beautiful and logical game, with one small exception – the ko rule.

Ko is a situation that repeats a board position and without some sort of specific rule games with ko would never end.

In keeping with the simplicity of the other Go rules I teach the rule ‘no move may repeat a whole board position’. There is no shape specified and no timeframe.

The most common form of Ko is that in Diagram 1. White can obviously take the single Black stone by playing ‘a’.

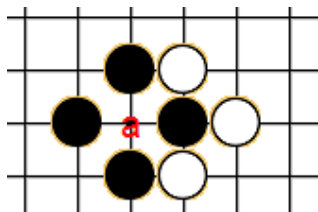


Diagram 1

The situation in Diagram 2 shows the result of White's capture; Black can now take the White stone by playing 'b'. The shape then returns to the position in Diagram 1, Black takes etc and the game would never end. It is for that reason that the rule exists.

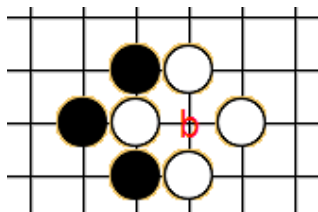


Diagram 2

The Ko rule breaks the cycle, it prevents Black from retaking at 'b' (Diagram 2) until something else has occurred on the board.

Black plays somewhere else and assuming White answers Black's move, Black is then allowed to play 'b' taking the ko.

The same restriction applies to both players, so White must make a move elsewhere.

In this example there is nothing great about capturing and connecting a single stone, but sometimes that single stone has great tactical importance. The situation in Diagram 3 is a big ko.

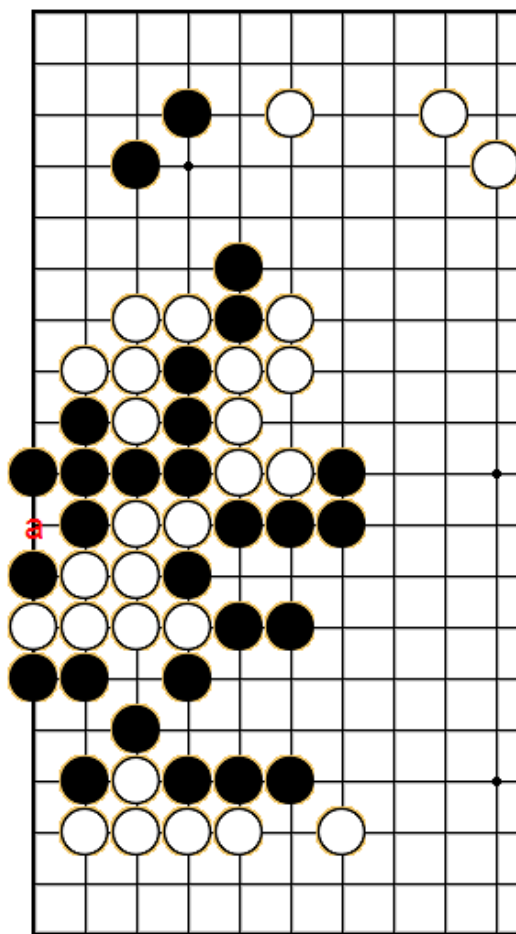


Diagram 3

White stones on the left side of the Board can be taken so White takes at 'a' placing Black's stones in atari. Whoever wins this ko will settle the destiny of 17 stones and that is significant.

When the ko is important the move elsewhere is something that must grab your opponents attention – it must threaten something that is important and will stop him from ending the ko. It is for that reason that the move elsewhere is known as a ko threat.

In this game White took the ko and ignored Black's ko threat taking 8 Black stones and connecting the White groups.

A ko can occur in any phase of the game, at the beginning during Joseki (corner fights) or in the

middle and end game where there are close tactical fights.

Ko in Joseki

Creating a ko in a local fight is not too difficult, but you must be aware of the number of ko threats. There is no point in making a ko when you have no threats – you will lose it.

Diagram 4 is an example of ko in Joseki; the sequence to 9 is a common pattern, White 1 starts the complex taisha joseki.

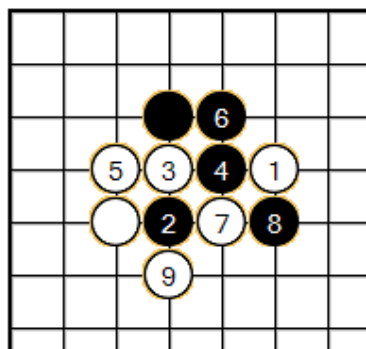


Diagram 4

Black resists but takes a simpler line with 8, but still has to do something about White 1 which cuts Black's position.

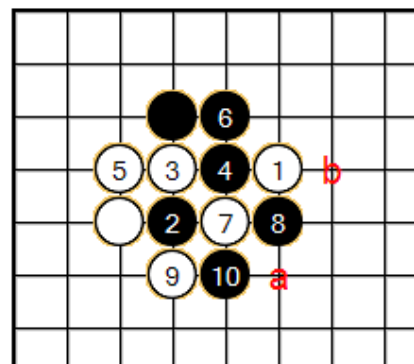


Diagram 5

Black can capture White 1 by playing 'b' but White gets 'a' in sente. Instead Black can play atari (check) at 10 - this looks dangerous because of the double atari of 'a', on the other hand White 7 can be captured in ko to relieve the pressure. If White foolishly plays 11 in Diagram 6 then Black will take the ko with 12. White must then find a ko threat, but early in the game there are normally no threats – the game has not developed enough. No matter what White does, Black will connect – a very poor result for White.

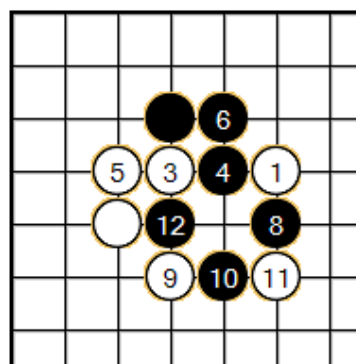


Diagram 6

Black has a solid position in Diagram 7, all his stones are connected and White is chopped to pieces. White 1 and 11 are useless and there is a cutting point at 'a'. Should White carry out his ko threat the stones in the corner are going to be subject to severe attack.

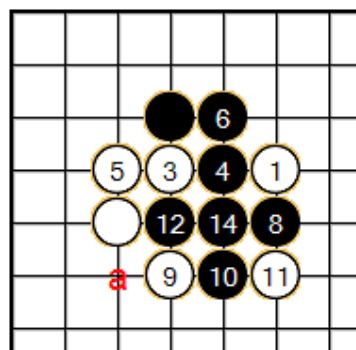


Diagram 7

White must be a little more circumspect – he cannot play 'a' in Diagram 5 without a good supply of big ko threats.

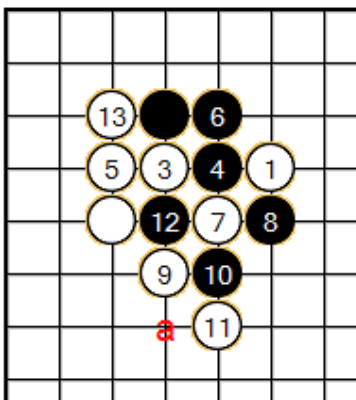


Diagram 8

Instead of the aggressive cut, White can play 11 in Diagram 8.

Black will still take with 12 but now White's stones are not so disjointed and he can claim the corner territory with 13.

Black may think of cutting at 'a' in Diagram 8, but White will take the ko. The problem with fighting a ko in the Fuseki is that there are little or no ko threats, so ko fights tend to be short.

With no ko threats it is best not to escalate the fight, but simply settle the situation.

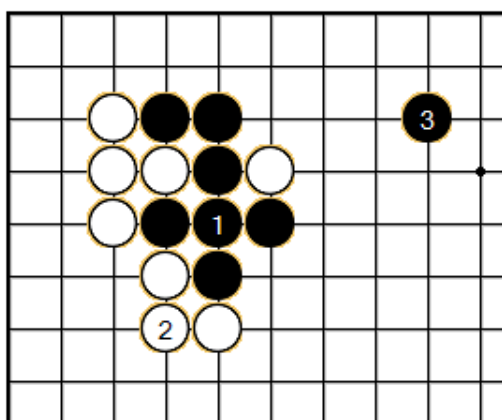


Diagram 9

In this situation Black's only rational option is to connect at 1 in Diagram 9, White defends his two cutting points with 2 and the game goes on. Black may extend to 3 or perhaps some other point depending on the situation on rest of the board.

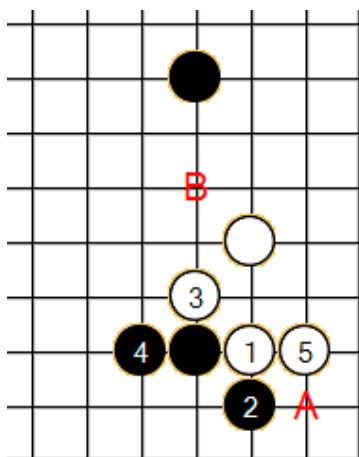


Diagram 10

In Diagram 10, White is looking to settle his stones with the classic sequence of 1, 3 and 5.

Black is able to extend from 4 along the lower side but White's stones are now quite stable.

If Black plays 'A' then White can play 'B'; and if the group is attacked from the outside White can play 'A' to secure eye space. (Note – this balance between two moves is referred to as miai).

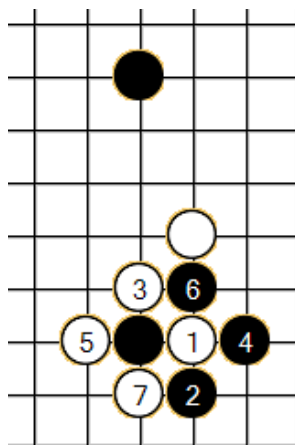


Diagram 11

If Black does not like this outcome he can play 4 in the corner and follow the normal sequence to 7.

White's position after 7 seems precarious, his stones separated and there are some nasty looking cuts. Fortunately Black cannot take advantage of this situation because of the ko. If White is able to take Black by playing 1 then Black's entire position falls to pieces.

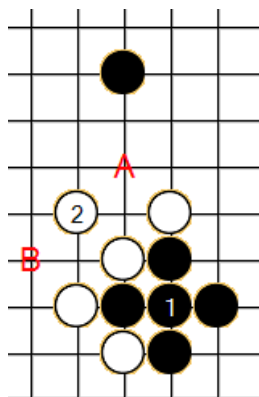


Diagram 12

Once Black connects at 1 White is able to repair his position with 2. Black is alive in the corner and has the peeps of 'A' and 'B' for later one. Also Black has sente, so he can pick the next area of play.

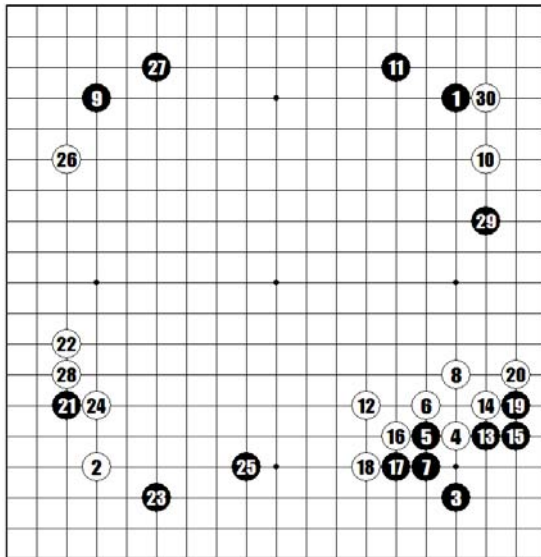


Diagram 13 (moves 1 to 30)

The game in Diagram 13 is from round 1 game of the 8th Fujitsu Cup, between Ma Xiaochun (Black) and Ishii Kunio (White).

Black plays 29, a severe squeeze play against the sole White stone in the upper right corner.

Tactically White 10 is outnumbered three to one and is therefore in a lot of trouble. However, White cannot just run because Black will extend down the right side making a base and severely limiting the profit White can make from his wall.

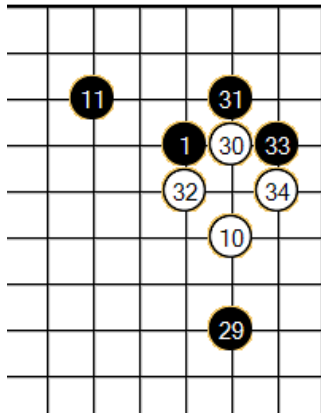
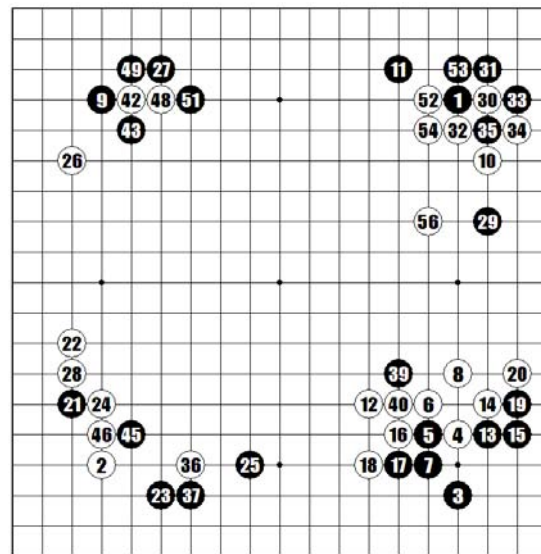


Diagram 14

So, White plays 30 through 34 in Diagram 14. By playing the ko White threatens the corner and denies Black time to extend from 29.



$$38 \ 44 \ 50 = 30 \quad 41 \ 47 \ 55 = 35$$

Diagram 15 (moves 31 to 56)

Diagram 15 - Because it is the later stages of Fuseki there are some ko threats. In the game the ko is exchanged a number of times before White is able to escalate it with 52. Black does not want to compromise his corner so he defends with 53.

White succeeds in building a wall and can turn to attack Black 29 with 56. Black has gained strength in the upper left corner

Achieving this goal was costly for White and by no means clear cut. In the end Black prevailed and White resigned.

Ko tactics

As has been shown in the previous pages Ko is a fighting technique. Sometimes it is born of desperation other times because the alternative is not palatable.

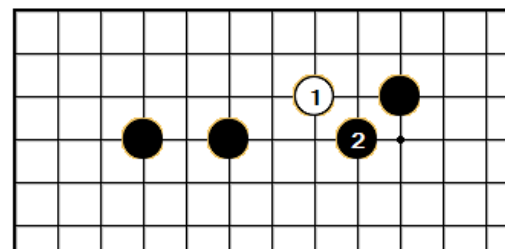


Diagram 16

Black 2 in Diagram 16 is a strong reply to White's invasion of 1.

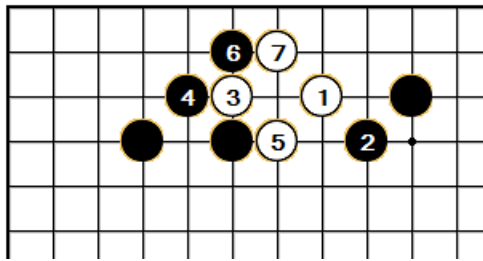


Diagram 17

White 3 sets up the ko – Black really has no option but to block and White pushes out with 5. When Black plays 7 the ko is formed.

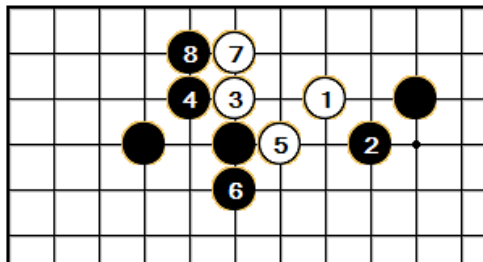


Diagram 18

Black may decide to back off and allow White to descend at 7 (Diagram 18), expecting to play 8, but this is a false hope.

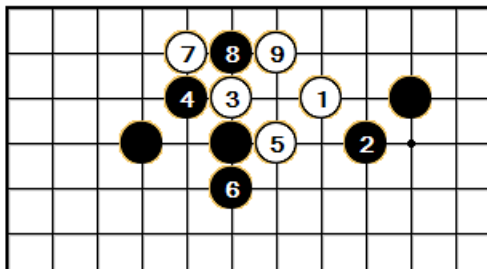


Diagram 19

White will push with 7 Black cannot continue to back off so he cuts at 8 and the ko reappears.

The outcome of the ko is in the lap of the Go Gods but the risk for Black is high, this was his sphere of influence and likely territory before White invaded, if he loses the ko he not only loses his framework his stones are weakened and could be potential targets.

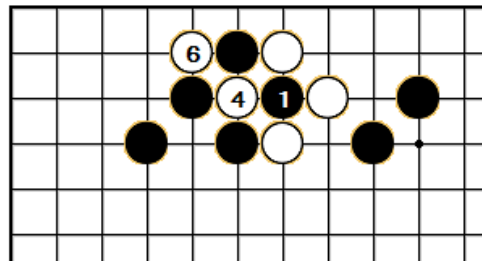


Diagram 20

Note the missing moves are - White 2 a ko threat elsewhere; Black 3 replies to the threat; Black 5 is a ko threat elsewhere)

You can see the situation in Diagram 20 is the similar to Diagram 19, except that White has ignored a ko threat. Black will retake the ko at 1 and White will continue fighting the ko. The differences are that Black has something somewhere else to reduce his loss should he lose the ko (the unanswered ko threat) and White has one less ko threat.

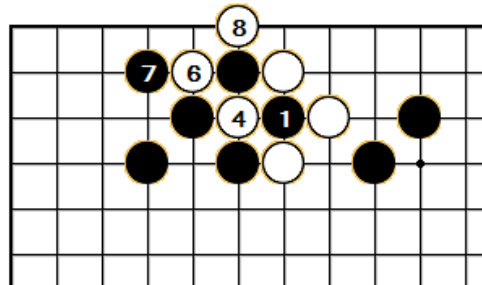


Diagram 21

The other thing that Black can do is ignore the ko and bolt for the corner – White lives and destroys the upper side, but Black can take sente and the profit from his unanswered ko threat.

White's use of ko is only possible if he has more ko threats than Black, but we will come to ko threats later.

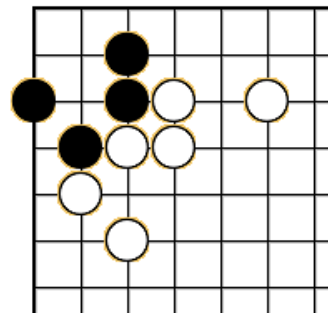


Diagram 22

Ko is most common on the edge and in the corner and can be as tame as a yose move or as profitable as killing a group.

The situation in Diagram 22 is not uncommon – Black is alive in the corner.

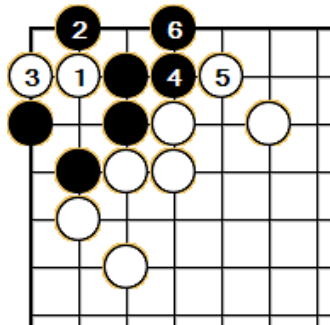


Diagram 23

If White tries to kill with 1, Black lives with the sequence to 6 in Diagram 23.

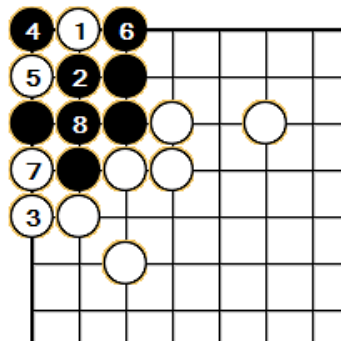


Diagram 24

White could try attacking at 1 in Diagram 24 but Black is able to take advantage of White's damezumari (lack of liberties) and makes two eyes. But towards the end of the game there is a mistake that Black must avoid.

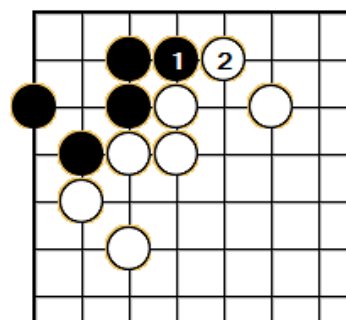


Diagram 25

The exchange of Black 1 and 2 in Diagram 25 changes the status of the corner to ko. It works like this....

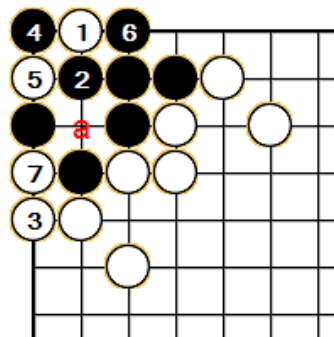


Diagram 26

White 1 (Diagram 26) strikes at the vital point of the position, if Black tries to follow the same defence as Diagram 24 he will find that he runs out of liberties. Black can no longer connect at 'a'. He must take the two White stones in the corner and there is a ko for his group.

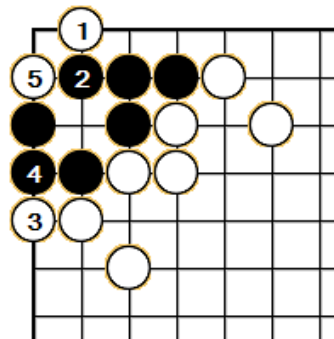


Diagram 27

The only other option is for Black to connect at 4 in Diagram 27, but again it turns to ko.

Ko is not just about invasion and making eyes. Ko can be used to extend liberties in fights.

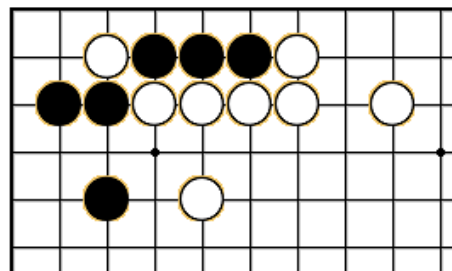


Diagram 28

For example in Diagram 28 White's stone has just two liberties and looks lost.

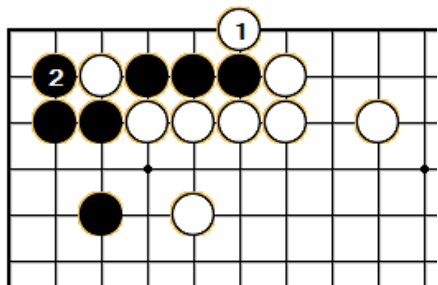


Diagram 29

Simply playing the hane of 1 in Diagram 29 does not gain White much, and he is not protecting against a great threat either. Black 2 finishes the position. However White can turn a profit using a ko fighting technique.

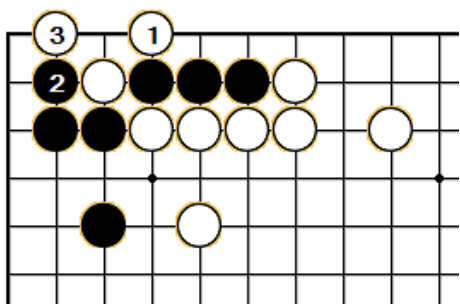


Diagram 30

White 1 is the right move; Black can certainly play atari at 2 but White 3 creates the ko. Black will obviously take the ko but White will gain something somewhere else during the course of this ko fight.

The ko fight technique is very powerful, but like electricity it can kill you – so be careful.

Ko Threats

The key to ko fights are ko threats. Without sufficient ko threats there can be no successful ko fight.

The first piece of advice for any game is to read. This is particularly important when you have ko as part of your repertoire. Finding and maximizing ko threats requires thoughtful and accurate reading.

Knowing the status of stones is a vital part of the game and if you have a group that will die you should know the result sooner rather than later. Once you are sure there is nothing then stop fighting and play elsewhere.

The reason for this is ko threats – the most fertile source of ko threats are dying stones. Every move

you make trying to save a group that is dead is one less ko threat. This is not a recommendation to let groups die, but when you are sure a group is clearly beyond help don't play out the position.

The second piece of advice is to beware of giving your opponent unnecessary ko threats.

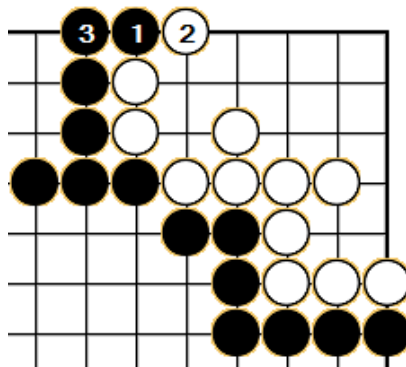


Diagram 31

The yose on the upper side is large and Black has connected at 3. White has a number of ways to defend but only one is right move...

And the hanging connection of 4 in Diagram 32 is not it. By playing this way White gives Black two ko threats, 'a' and 'b'.

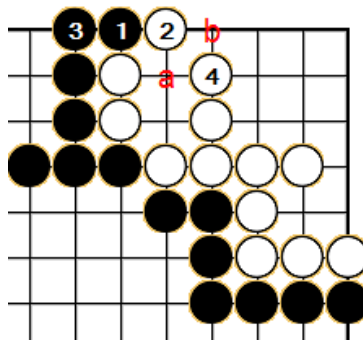


Diagram 32

The correct answer way to play is 1 in Diagram 33 – White gets no ko threats.

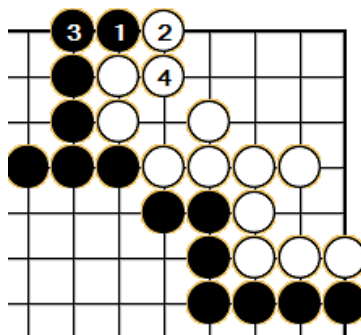


Diagram 33

Ko problems

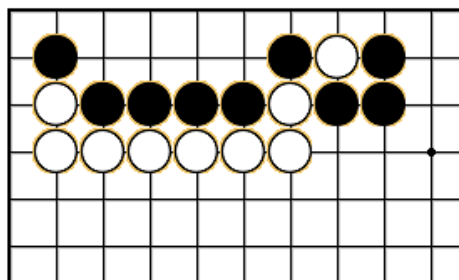


Diagram 34
White to play

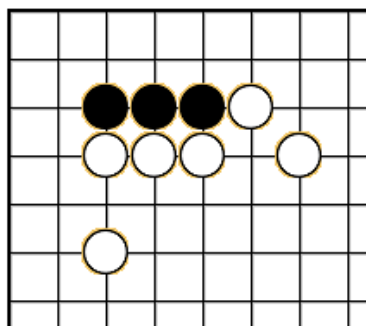


Diagram 37
White to play

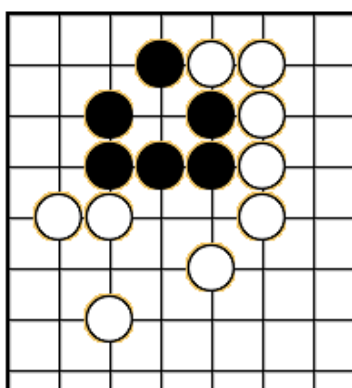


Diagram 35
White to play

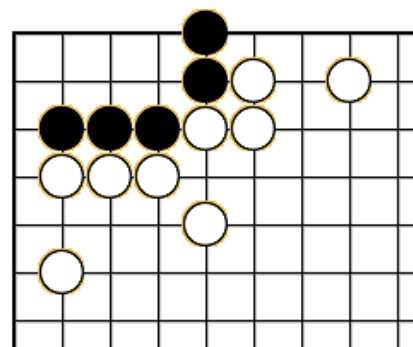


Diagram 38
White to play

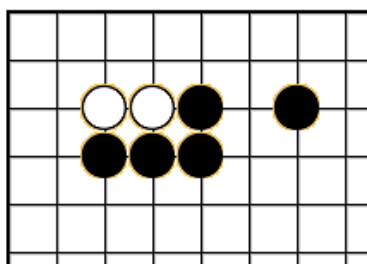


Diagram 36
White to play

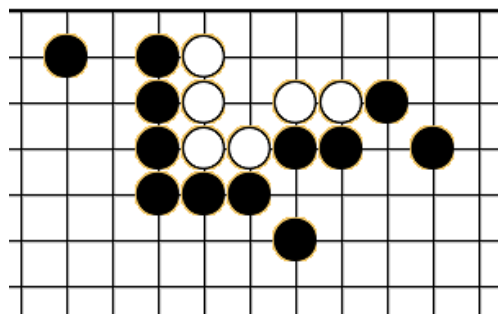


Diagram 39
White to play

Answers at end of this edition

Four Corners

Corner 1

The situation in Diagram 1 will look very familiar to weaker players who take high handicaps. White invades and Black jumps along to upper side.

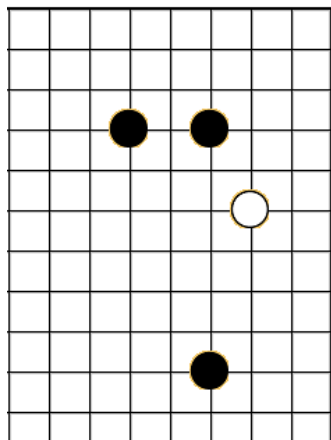


Diagram 1

In a high handicap game White leaves the stone and plays elsewhere – this is necessary because Black has a huge advantage and White cannot afford to defend every weakness. But in a low handicap or even games the story is different. In this case White does want to defend.

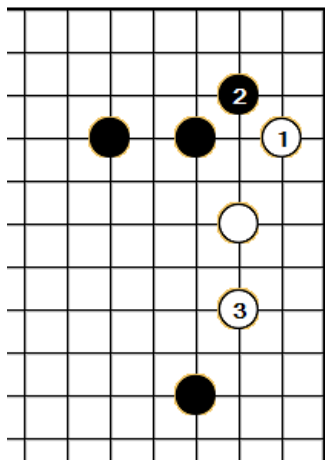


Diagram 2

Sliding into the corner with 1 and extending to 3 in Diagram 2 is always possible but is normally only played in desperate circumstances. This is because White's shape is cramped.

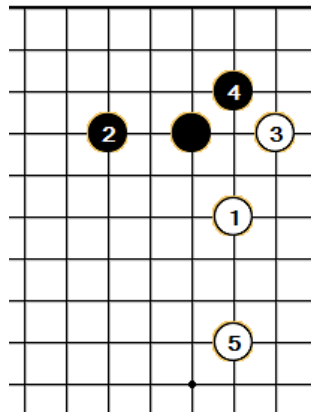


Diagram 3

The normal Joseki (Diagram 3) allows White to play the two point jump; Black normally plays a move along the top side and the game goes on.

Playing a one point jump towards an existing stone is overcrowded and invites further attack so it's not comfortable for White.

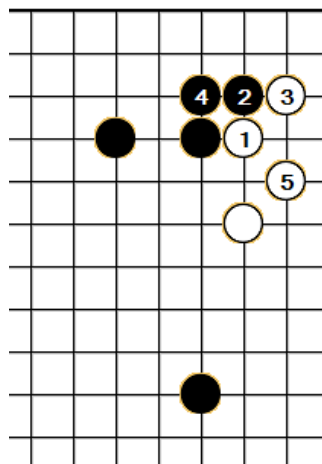


Diagram 4

White has an alternative tactic; he can play directly in contact with the 4x4 stone in the corner as in Diagram 4.

Black 2 is to be expected but Black is faced with a dilemma when White plays 3.

Defending at 4 is the simple solid way to play and gives Black sente. However, Black often feels he can be more aggressive and gives atari with 1 in Diagram 5.

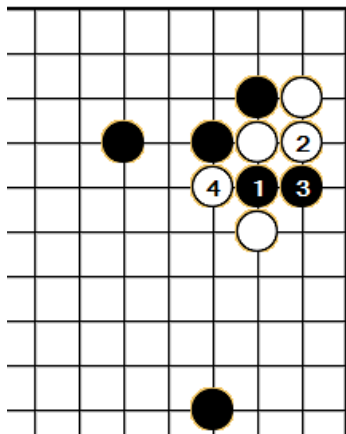


Diagram 5

Playing the atari at 1 then splitting White's stones with 3 is an aggressive tactic, but it does leave behind one or two weaknesses. White 4 exposes those weaknesses and poses Black a few questions.

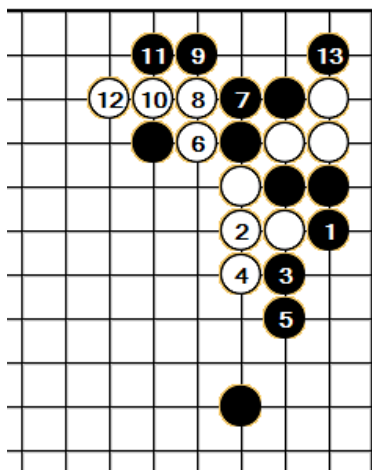


Diagram 6

One variation is for Black to play 1 in Diagram 6; White sacrifices three stones in sente to build a strong outside position. When you consider that Black had a 3 to 1 advantage at the beginning of this battle, then the outcome is good for White.

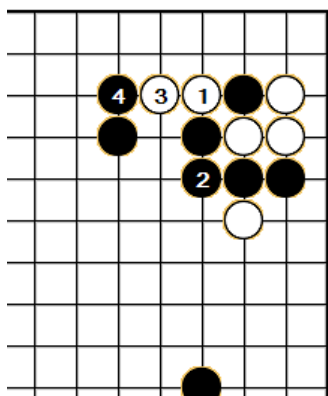


Diagram 7

White has another variation if he is interested in territory - he can play 1 in Diagram 7. Black has little choice but to defend on the outside and White can then take the corner with 3.

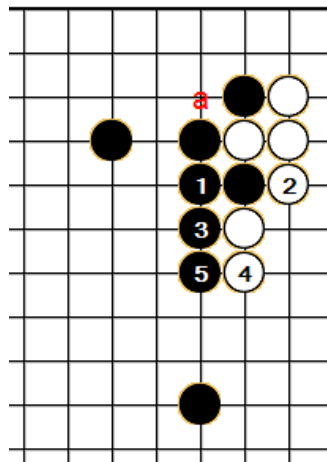


Diagram 8

Black may decide this is not to his liking and connect at 1 in Diagram 8 but by then it is too late. White secure himself on the side in sente and leaves behind the cutting point at 'a'.

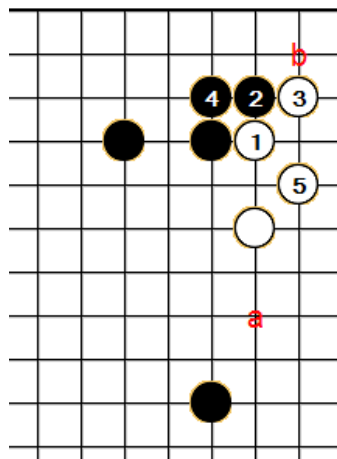


Diagram 9

Black needs to be very careful when defending against the White 1 in Diagram 9. Connecting at 4 may be simple and solid but Black contains White's group and gets sente. Later in the game Black may choose to squeeze White with 'a' or claim most of the corner with 'b'.

Corner 2

As with the previous example, the situation in Diagram 10 will be familiar to players who take a handicap.

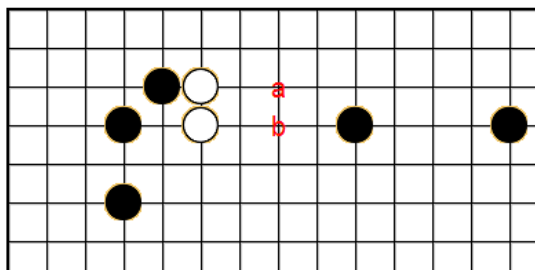


Diagram 10

White needs to prevent Black taking his eyes space through squeeze plays at 'a' or 'b', but equally he does not want to make a tight move.

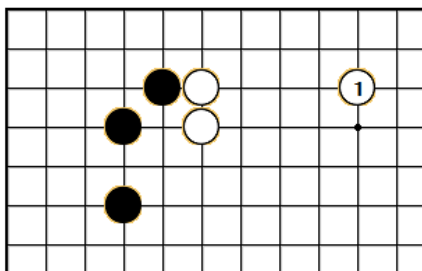


Diagram 11

The normal extension in this shape is 1 in Diagram 11; unfortunately Black has a stone in the way.

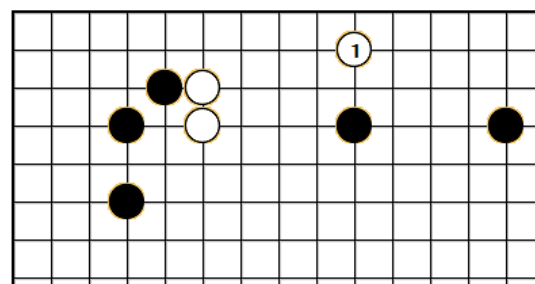


Diagram 12

White 1 in Diagram 12 is a tricky move, if Black is not careful he can get into trouble.

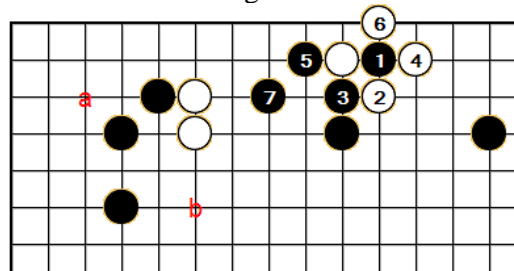


Diagram 13

One way for Black is to play 1 in Diagram 13. But at the end of the sequence White has an (almost) alive group on the upper right side and his two stones have still not been captured. White can run at 'b' and Black's the corner is still open at 'a'.

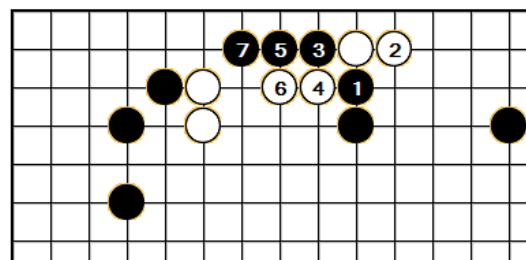


Diagram 14

If Black wants to defend to upper right side he should play 1 in Diagram 14. At first it looks like White can extend with 2, but White gets cut. Attempts to capture the cutting stone by playing 4 are fruitless if Black simply extends with 5 and 7.

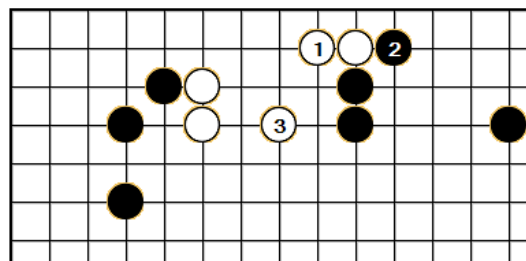
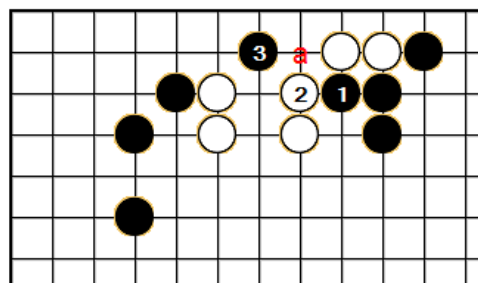


Diagram 15

White has no option, he must pull back with 1 in Diagram 15, and Black can then defend the side with 2. White then makes the best of the position by playing 3.



White is not the only one who can play 'odd' moves. Black 1 in Diagram 17 is an interesting way to deal with White's long slide.

White must play 2 and Black can then connect along the edge with 3 taking territory and White's eye space.

Obviously there will be a fight but Black has more stones than White in the area and should be able to profit from the attack.

Corner 3

During high handicap games and sometimes during even games a player will play a two point approach to a hoshi (4x4) stone. The problem is how to continue.

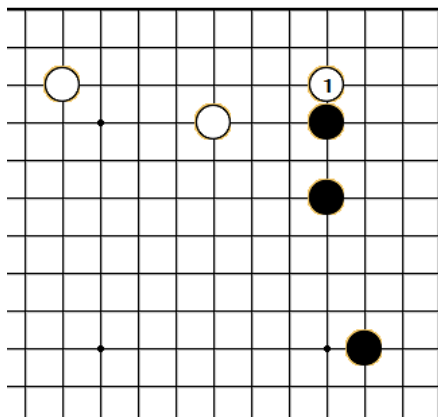


Diagram 18

White 1 in Diagram 18 is the normal continuation. Black now has a choice, the corner can be protected or the White stones split.

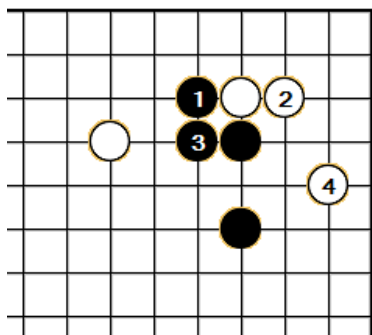


Diagram 19

In an open position, my preference is to split White with 1 in Diagram 19; the sequence to 4 is quite natural and is Black's sente.

Normally Black wants to keep the corner so he will play 1 in Diagram 20 protecting the corner. White 2 does not appear normal but it can lead to

complications so a connection at 3 is prudent – and the sequence to 5 ends the joseki.

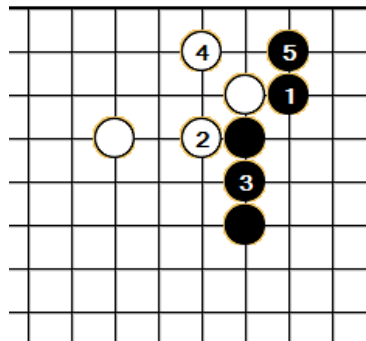


Diagram 20

First instincts suggest that Black should play the atari at 1 in Diagram 21 and then connects at 3. This exchange is wrong.

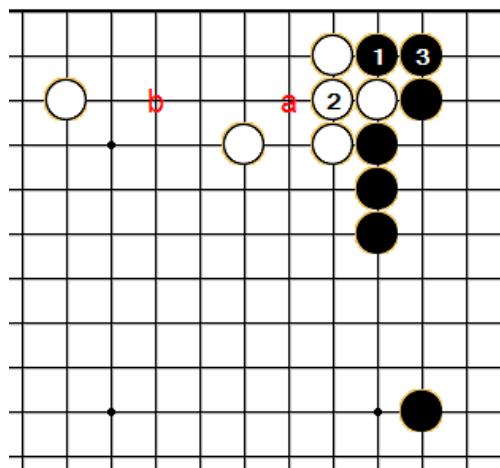


Diagram 21

The exchange of 1 and 2 in can occur at any time after Black 5 but that may not be the best exploitation of White's weakness.

In Diagram 20 Black can peep the tiger's mouth. If Black plays 1 immediately he destroys those options. Black 'a' is useless, as is the aji of 'b'.

If Black plays 1 in Diagram 20 those options remain, for that matter so does the atari of 1 in Diagram 21.

Two points before we leave this position.

First, White might try cutting at 1 in Diagram 22 instead of taking the corner as shown in Diagram 19, and if Black plays properly he does not lose anything. But be honest, how many players would have found Black 2 unless they had studied this joseki intently – not many is my answer.

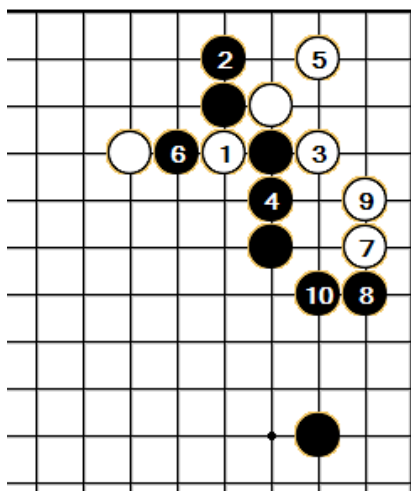


Diagram 22

Second, there is a lot more to this corner fight than I have commented here – this position is complex and worthy of further study.

Corner 4

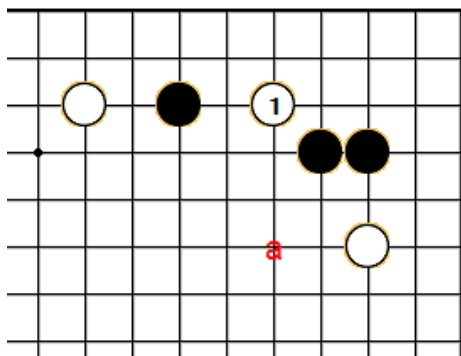


Diagram 23

Black normally thinks he has a safe and large corner once he has played the marked stone in Diagram 23, but if White approaches on the top side, then there are a number of opportunities.

White 1 is one of the options; it is a far more powerful option is there is a White stone at 'a' but White can take the corner or build influence without that assistance.

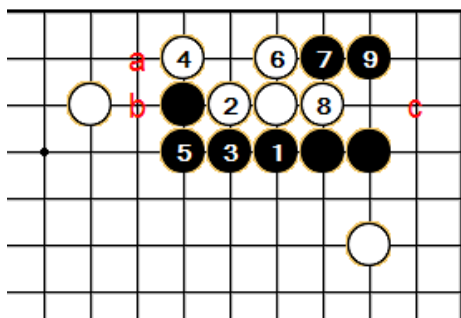


Diagram 24

Black 1 in Diagram 24 looks right – it stops White from escaping into the centre, but following Black 3 White is able to connect underneath. Black is able to secure the corner with 7 and 9. The apparent weaknesses around 'c' mean nothing because of the weakness at 'a', but if Black permits a move at 'a' or 'b' then watch out.

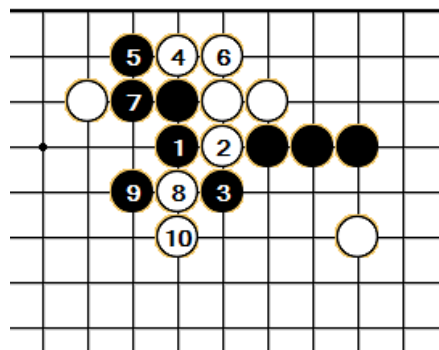


Diagram 25

The problem for White occurs if Black stands up at 1 in Diagram 25, pushing at 4 and cutting at 8 seems to do nothing but the Black position is beginning to show weaknesses.

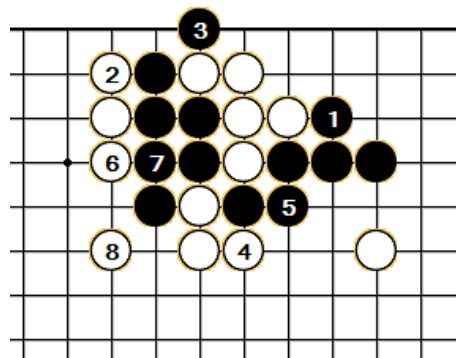


Diagram 26

If Black tries to subdue White with 1 in Diagram 26 then White will sacrifice the stones in the corner to enclose Black and take some nice influence.

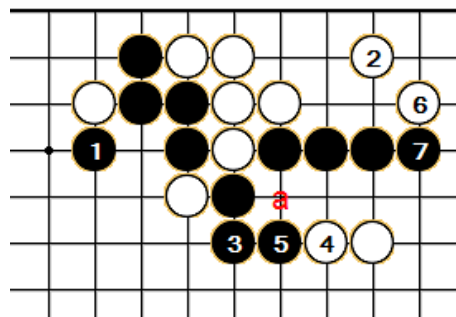


Diagram 27

Black 1 in Diagram 27 prevents the enclosure but White can then slide to 2 and can live. It should be noted that Black cannot dispute White 2 too strongly because of the atari at 'a', consequently White lives in the corner.

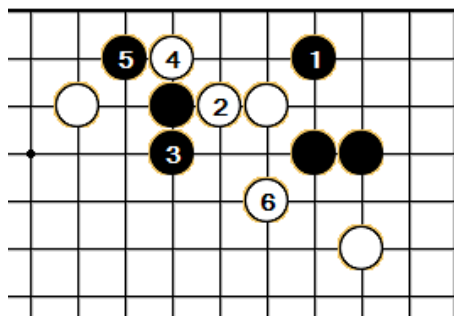


Diagram 28

Black may decide to defend the corner in the belief that White cannot get out, but White 2 and 4 followed by 6 in Diagram 28 ensures White escapes or lives.

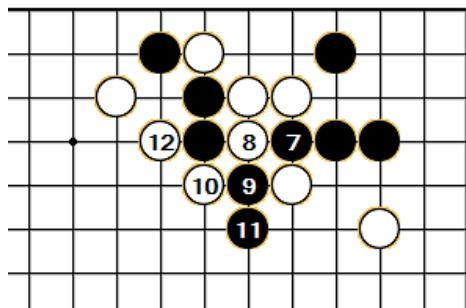


Diagram 29

The crude cut at 7 in Diagram 29 fails with a series of atari.

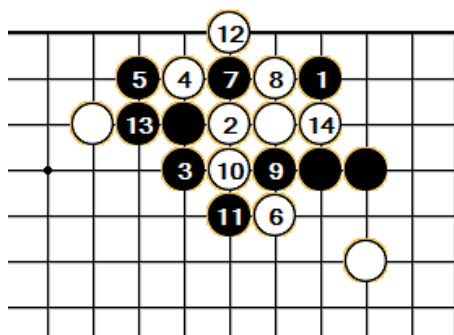


Diagram 30

If Black tries to connect underneath at 7 hoping to take advantage of a White's tenuous connections and lack of liberties then he will be disappointed. White has the time to play 8 and either live as shown in Diagram 30, or escape into the centre.

Australian Go clubs (continued)

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Meets: 143 Forest Road, Hurstville; Friday 9:30am til 1:00pm.

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Middle Game Answers

Problem 1

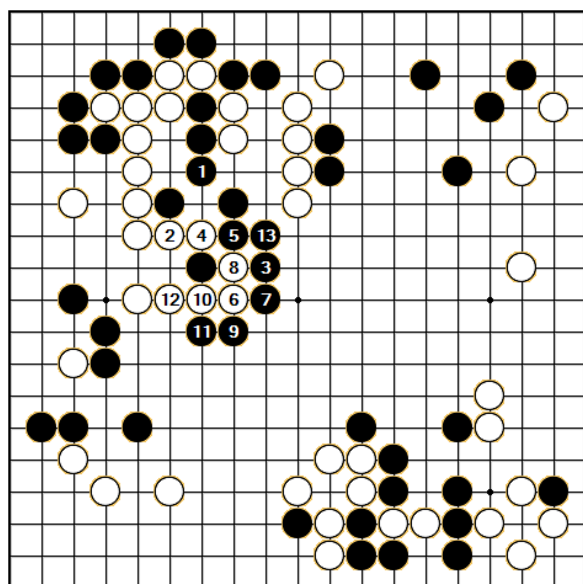


Figure 1

Playing 7 in Figure 1 gives Black a strong position to attack White's group on the upper side, but it does give White two eyes on the right.

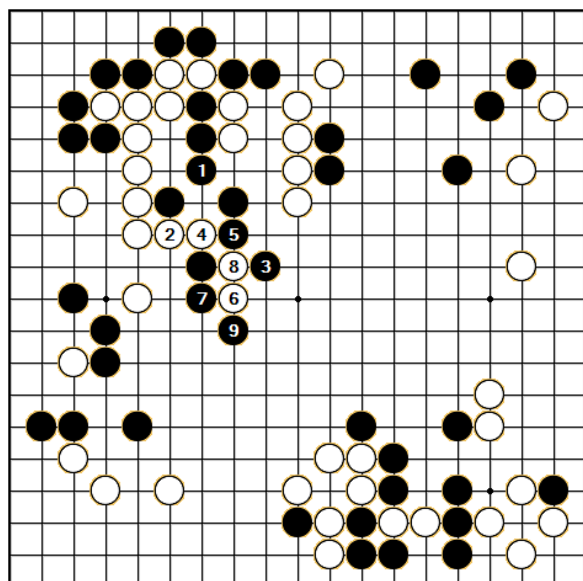


Figure 2

The best move is to play 7 in Figure 2. White is unable to cut because the ladder favours Black and there is a severe attack on both Black groups. In the game White did not see the ladder and lost.

The other move is to make the empty triangle by connect directly at 8 – this is not good shape and should have been your last consideration.

Problem 2

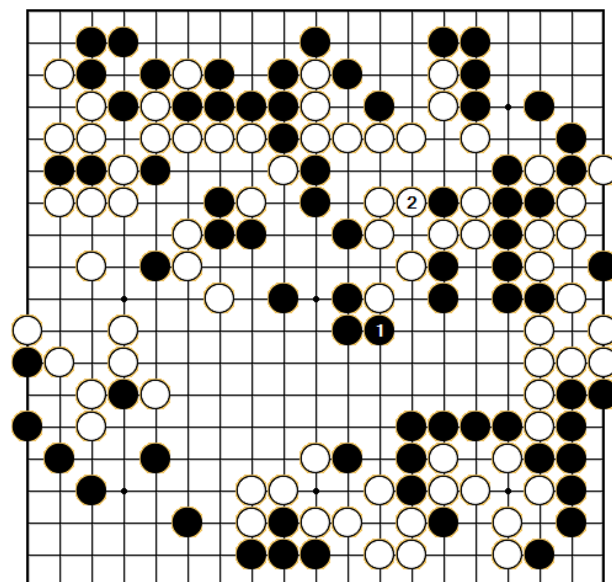


Figure 3

In the second problem White has just enough time to play elsewhere, he does not need to play 2 in Figure 3

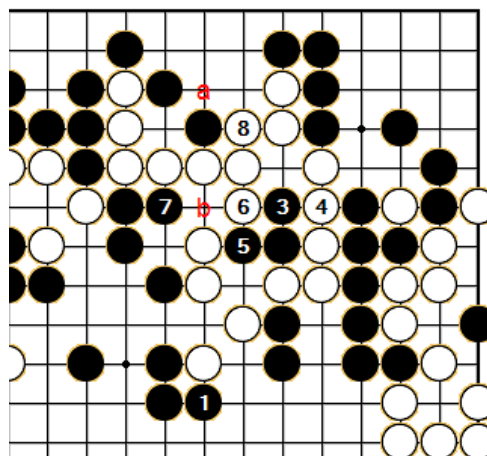


Figure 4

If Black tries to kill the group White can live in seki. The sequence to 8 in Figure 4 makes 'a' and 'b' miai.

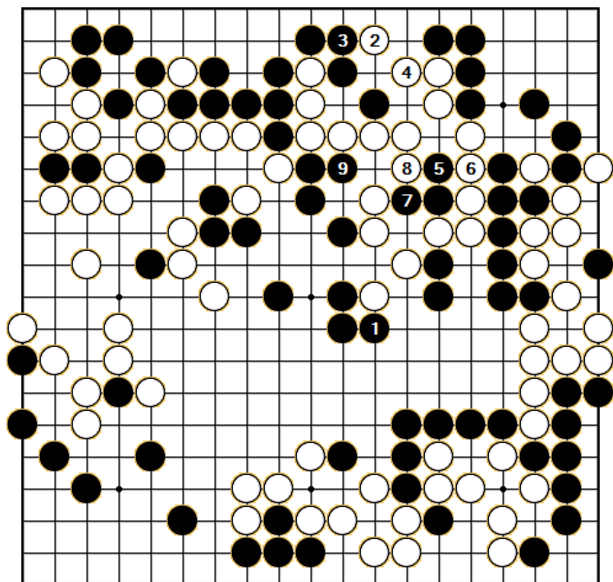


Figure 5

In the game White did not realise how fragile his upper side group was and played 2 and 4 in Figure 5 killing his group.

Problem 3

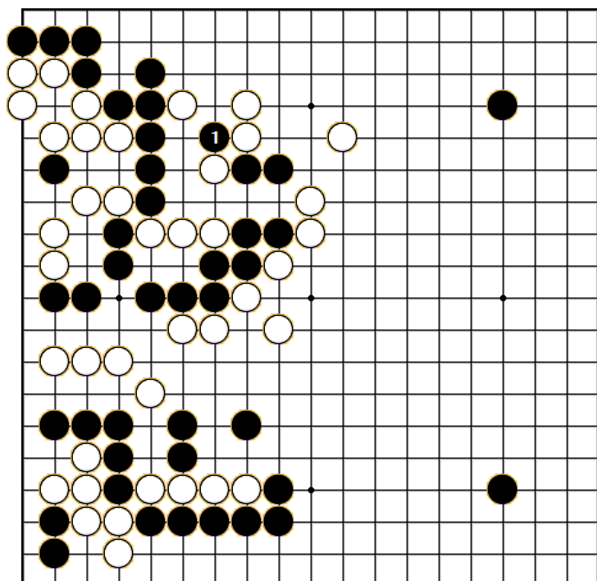


Figure 6

The cut of Black 1 in Figure 6 is the right answer, there is nothing White can do about this.

Problem 4

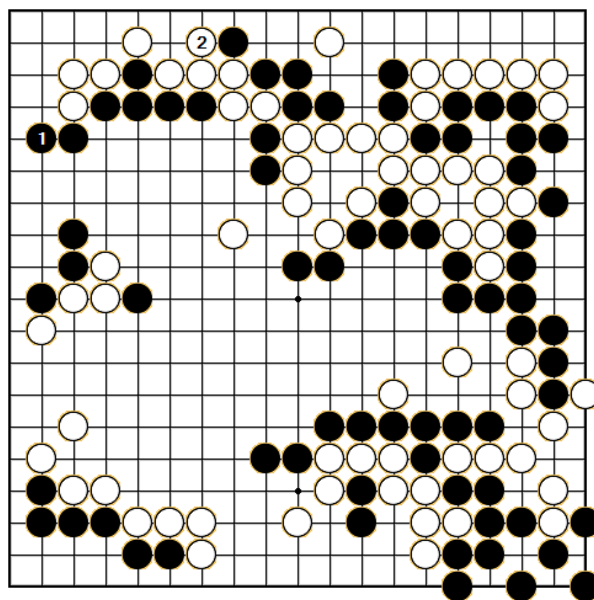


Figure 7

The correct move is 2 in Figure 7. This eliminates Black's chances to live on the upper side and connects the cutting point.

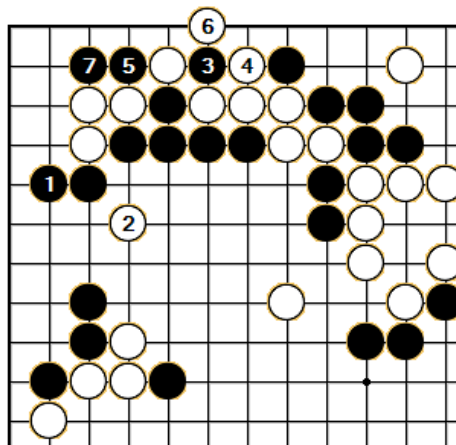


Figure 8

In the game White peeped at 2 (Figure 8) and Black cut at 3 taking a big corner with 5 and 7.

Problem 5

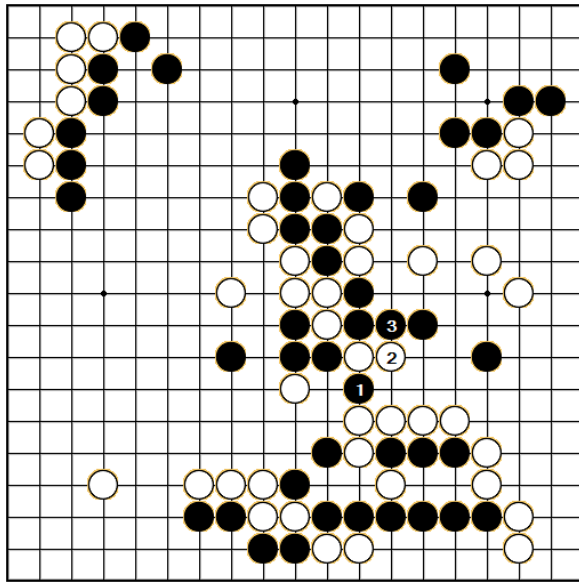


Figure 9

The correct answer is 3 in Figure 9. This leaves Black with two options...

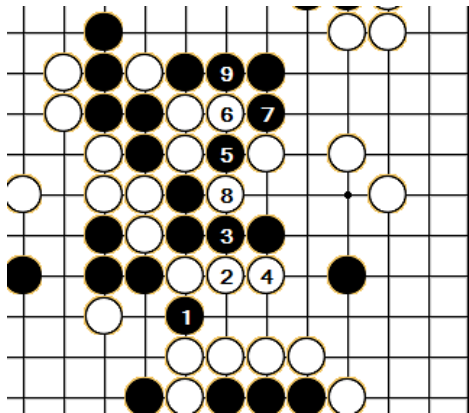


Figure 10

If White defends with 4 in Figure 10 making a bamboo joint then Black will play the sacrifice move of 5 forcing White into a dumpling shape. If White persists then Black will follow the sequence to 9 and White cannot connect.

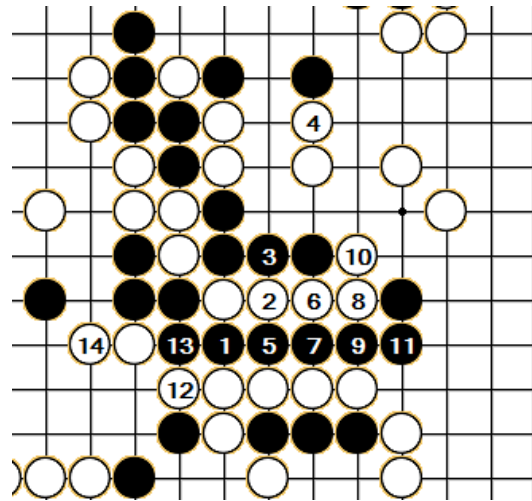


Figure 11

If connects on the other side with 4 in Figure 11, Black is able to sacrifice the centre stones and significantly reduce the right side.

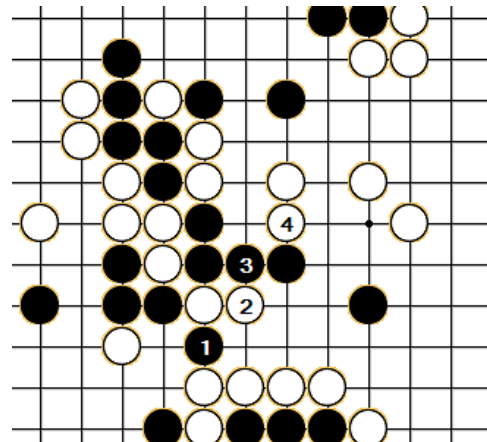


Figure 12

In the game White played 4 in Figure 12,

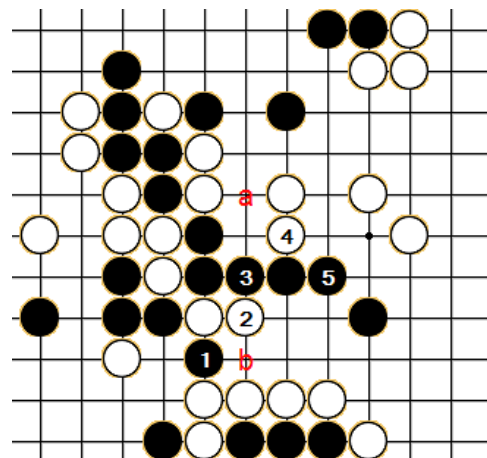


Figure 13

but Black can easily refute this by playing 5 in Figure 13, this makes 'a' and 'b' miai.

Problem 6

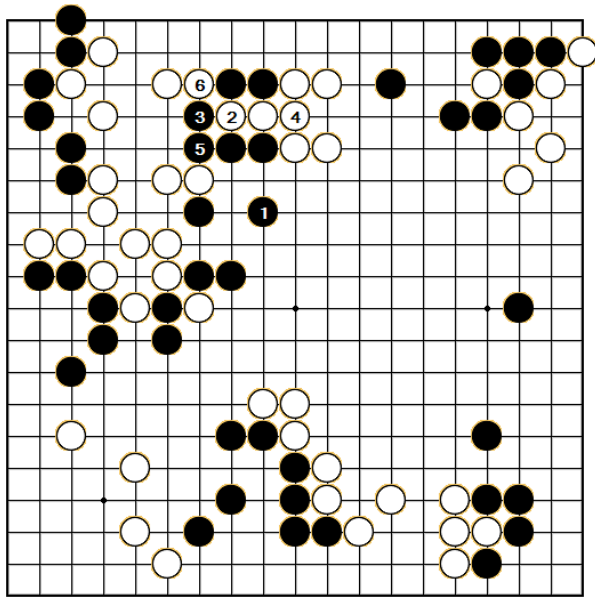


Figure 14

A simple answer – connect the two White groups. The push at 2 and connection at 4 in Figure 14 expose the fundamental weakness of Black's position and White is able to capture 2 stones, connect and make a reasonable territory on the upper side.

Problem 7

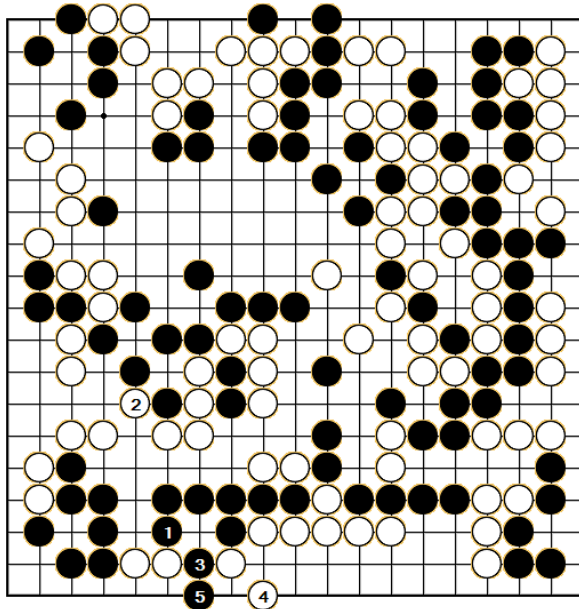


Figure 15

The correct answer is to atari at 2 (Figure 15), this prevents White's one eyed group being cut off. In the game White (7 dan) connected and the centre group died. Incidentally White won the game (he did not panic).

Problem 8

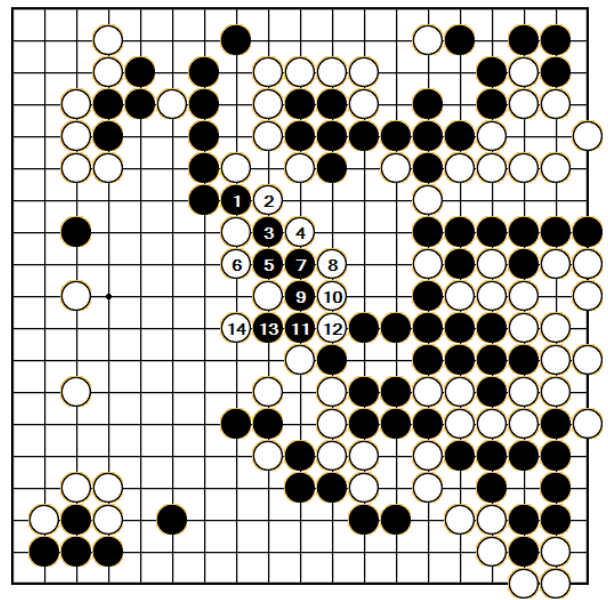


Figure 16

The sequence to 14 in Figure 16 captures the Black ladder stones. This is a difficult sequence to read in a game, but White did.

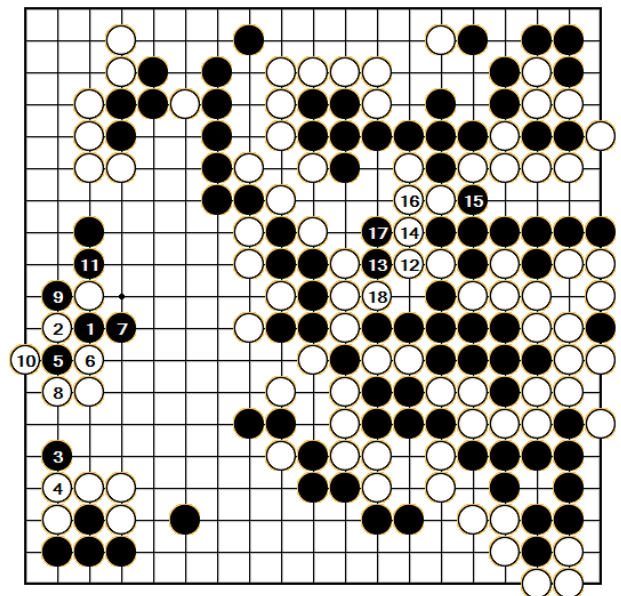
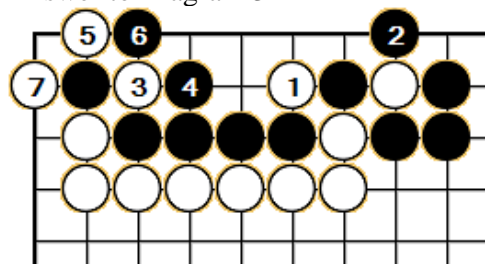


Figure 17

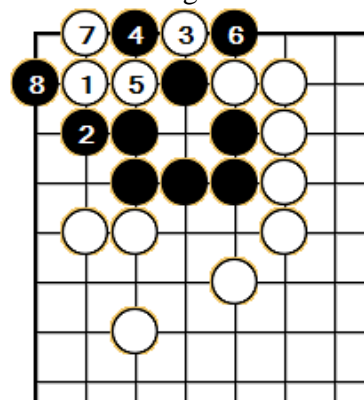
Just a final postscript to this game - Black made a mistake when he misread a ladder but he had not lost. He chose to play 1 in Figure 17 on the left side allowing White to save his cutting stone with 12 – this really lost the game.

Ko answers

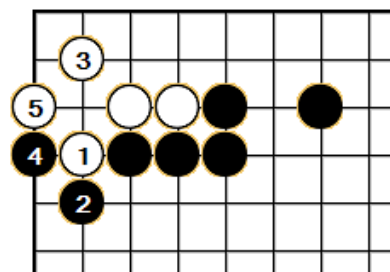
Answer to Diagram 34



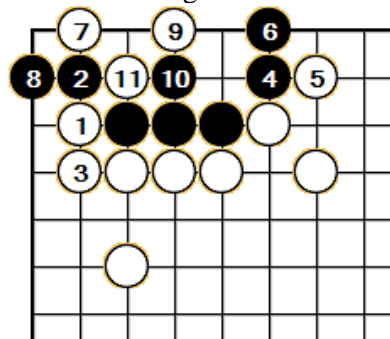
Answer to Diagram 35



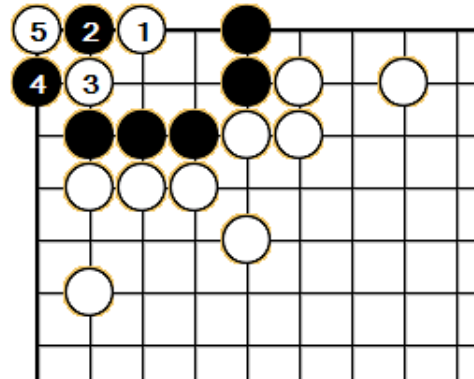
Answer to Diagram 36



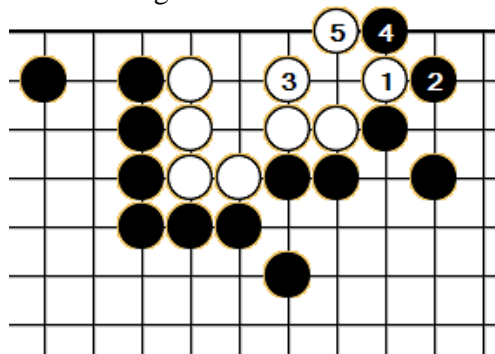
Answer to Diagram 37



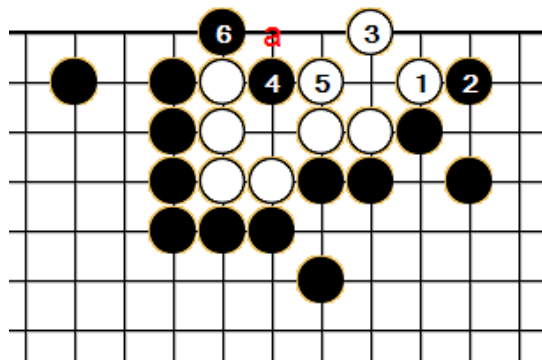
Answer Diagram 38



Answer Diagram 39



Note – White cannot play 3 in the next diagram because of Black 4 kills. If White plays 'a' instead of 5 then Black will play 5 and kill.



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