

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

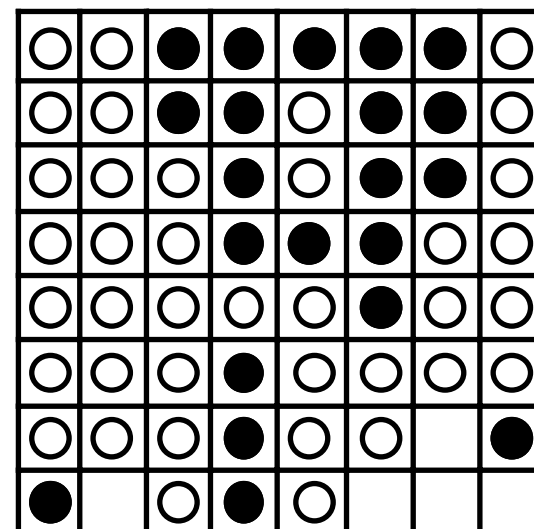
Current ratings after the 2009 Cambridge Christmas Friendly

| | games | rating | | games | rating |
|----|--------------------|--------|------|-------|---------------------|
| 1 | Imre Leader | 817 | 1863 | | |
| 2 | Michael Handel | 569 | 1828 | | |
| 3 | Graham Brightwell | 963 | 1823 | | |
| 4 | David Hand | 69 | 1719 | | |
| 5 | David Beck | 155 | 1710 | | |
| 6 | Joel Feinstein | 465 | 1680 | | |
| 7 | Geoff Hubbard | 628 | 1607 | | |
| 8 | Paul Cook | 7 | 1600 | | |
| 9 | Guy Plowman | 428 | 1575 | | |
| | Steven Robinson | 10 | 1575 | | |
| 11 | Iain Barrass | 670 | 1544 | | |
| 12 | Ian Turner | 658 | 1530 | | |
| 13 | Ben Pridmore | 416 | 1472 | | |
| 14 | Jeremy Dyer | 284 | 1443 | | |
| 15 | Steve MacGuire | 36 | 1410 | | |
| 16 | Phil Marson | 952 | 1401 | | |
| 17 | Stephen Spencer | 22 | 1391 | | |
| 18 | Roy Arnold | 1157 | 1388 | | |
| 19 | Crichton Ramsay | 66 | 1371 | | |
| 20 | Aidan Robison | 116 | 1365 | | |
| 21 | Julian Richens | 143 | 1344 | | |
| 22 | Stephen Rowe | 292 | 1252 | | |
| 23 | Robert Stanton | 191 | 1242 | | |
| 24 | Andrew Burgess | 88 | 1212 | | |
| 25 | Wai-Mond Kong | 7 | 1195 | | |
| 26 | Helen Starkey | 15 | 1157 | | |
| 27 | Dan Jacobs | 7 | 1137 | | |
| 28 | Martainn Ramsay | 13 | 1129 | | |
| 29 | Yvette Campbell | 102 | 1089 | | |
| 30 | David Haigh | 568 | 1061 | | |
| 31 | Alison Turner | 165 | 951 | | |
| 32 | Adelaide Carpenter | 250 | 949 | | |
| 33 | Phil Wallis | 6 | 920 | | |
| 34 | Marie Lightman | 15 | 879 | 38 | Kali Turner 102 601 |
| 35 | Jon Woolfson | 7 | 777 | 39 | Tani Turner 67 509 |
| 36 | Richard Ratcliffe | 7 | 766 | 40 | Hayley James 9 325 |
| 37 | Robert Calladine | 35 | 678 | | Paul Robinson 9 325 |

Whose Move?

The Newsletter of the British Othello Federation

January 2010



INFORMATION

The British Othello Federation is an independent body. With paper version of the Newsletter, an annual subscription for a British resident costs £6 (with the first year's membership including a copy of the instructional book *Othello: Brief and Basic*) or ten years for £55; an overseas subscription costs £8 per year or £75 for ten years. If you would prefer to receive *only* electronic copies of the Newsletter the cost is £5/£45 for national/international. Cheques or postal orders payable to the *British Othello Federation* should be sent to Adelaide Carpenter (address below) or you can pay by credit card at <http://www.britishothello.org.uk/> the BOF web site. The price of *Othello: Brief and Basic* on its own is £6. Additional players living in the same household can become members for only £1 per year (with only one copy of the Newsletter).

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Contents: | | pages |
| Cover puzzle | | 30 |
| Constitution (reprint) | | 16-19 |
| Puzzle | | 4-5 |
| Upcoming tournaments | | 31 |
| Tournament results | | 26-27 |
| Game analyses | 6-10, 14-15, 22-26 | |
| Commentary | 3, 11-13, 20-21 | |
| Humour | 28-29 | |
| Rating list | 32 | |

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2010 Regional Tournaments *compiled by Roy Arnold*

March 13th 1000. Leicester (Oadby)

Venue: Oadby Baptist Church, Leicester Road, Oadby, Leicester

Contact: Stephen Rowe srowe@zaurak.org.uk

Info: <http://www.britishothello.org.uk/oadbyregional.html>

May 1st 0930. Cambridge

Venue: Trinity College, Cambridge: Whewell's Court

Contact: Adelaide Carpenter atc12@mole.bio.cam.ac.uk

Info: <http://www.britishothello.org.uk/cambridgeregional.html>

May 22nd 0930. Sheffield

Venue: Hillsborough Hotel, 54-58 Langsett Road, Sheffield

Contact: Roy Arnold cheekybandit@talktalk.net

Info: <http://www.britishothello.org.uk/sheffieldregional.html>

June 19th 0930. Farnborough (Hants)

Venue: Elles House, 4b Invincible Road, Farnborough

Contact: Ian Turner ian.turner@romseyassoc.com

Info: <http://www.britishothello.org.uk/farnboroughregional.html>

Two additional tournaments were being planned at the time going to press.

Details will be available on the BOF website:

<http://www.britishothello.org.uk/tournaments.html> and will be announced on the British Othello Yahoo Newsgroup as well as British Othello-related groups on Facebook and Othello Club.

July 10th Newcastle upon Tyne

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4-by-infinity Othello -- or, The Guru Returnsby *Aubrey de Grey*

Hello everyone, long time no see. It's been almost as long since I wrote anything for the newsletter as it has been since I played a rated game, but I have been stirred into action by Graham Brightwell's outrageous attempt to assume the mantle of Guru of Absurd Constructed Games (which I have of course held for nigh on a quarter of a century) with his analysis of 3-by-infinity Othello. Herewith something that trumps it.

Placing the usual starting position in the middle of an infinite 4-row-wide grid gives a game that is far too hard to analyse exhaustively, but you don't need to define 4-by-infinity Othello that way: you can have only one side of the board be open-ended, rather than two opposite sides. cursory analysis reveals that placing the starting position at the extreme end of this grid is uninteresting; however, placing it one square away from the end is a different matter entirely. Accordingly, in this article I offer an analysis (with puzzles!) of 4-by-infinity Othello defined in that way. For reasons that will be revealed at the end of this article, I will orient the board with the top edge being the open one. See the figure.

| | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| ... | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 3 | | ○ | ● | |
| 2 | | ● | ○ | |
| 1 | | | | |
| | a | b | c | d |

Right, what goes on in this game? Well, it's pretty easy to see that if Black plays 1c1 or 1d2, White holds a big advantage by virtue of access to a corner. Puzzle #1, therefore, is a nice gentle one, as follows:

Puzzle 1: How many moves can Black make a game last, after starting 1c1 or 1d2? (Note, by the way, that I've done all the analysis for this article by hand, so there are probably mistakes. It all adds to the fun, eh?!) *Answer on page 10*

OK, what about 1a3 or 1b4? Well, it turns out that those moves lead to much tighter games. I'm sure (but see above!) that Black can always win, but here are two puzzles worth looking at:

Puzzle 2: To what row can White make the game reach, after 1a3 or 1b4? *Answer on page 10*

Puzzle 3: What's the smallest margin of loss that White can achieve, after 1a3 or 1b4? (Define this without counting empty squares to the winner!) *Answer on page 13*

Now let's get back to 1c1 and 1d2 for a moment. OK, it's very easy for White to win, but here's an altogether more challenging puzzle:

19. :: taught another person to play Othello?
20. :: jeopardised employment or study as a result of playing Othello?
21. :: stacked your pieces into three identical pyramids before playing?
22. :: played Othello after 3 a.m.? (No, 10 a.m. doesn't count, unless you played all night, when it counts double.)
23. :: made a flipping error in a tournament?
24. :: caught your opponent making a flipping error?
25. :: been able to explain how the Brightwell tiebreak works?
26. :: assumed that everyone else will bring the chess clocks?
27. :: invented a name for an opening?
28. :: had an Othello concept named after you?
29. :: found romance through Othello?
30. :: knowingly carried out a Stoner Trap?
31. :: stood up to get a better view of the board?
32. :: been asked to sit back down by your opponent?
33. :: beaten Imre Leader?
35. :: struggled to translate Benktlish?
36. :: Score a bonus point if you happen to *be* Imre Leader, Benkt Steensoft or a member of Duran Duran.
37. :: Score a consolation point if you happen to be a World Memory Champion.
38. :: been able to recall the on-line aliases of at least 5 former world champions?
39. :: failed to attend a tournament because you slept through your alarm clock?
40. :: Are you intending to increase your score on this test?

Answer to the puzzle on page 21

Yes: 1c1 2d3 3c4 4d5 5c5 6b5 7c6 8d7 ... 1525c766 1526d1 1527a7 [delete row 7] 1528b1 1529a5 [delete row 5] 1530c765.

The Parity Test by *BYE's* older brother *HELLO* who always manages to get the first word in.

The beauty about having a newsletter is that there is already a wealth of material out there that can be repackaged and brought bang up to date. Here we have a modification on the original Parity Test that was brought to you way back in 1990.

So are you an Othello addict? Well, presumably you are, or you wouldn't be reading this article. But just how much of an Othello addict are you? The test below is designed to help you find out. Just count 1 point for each "yes" answer, except where otherwise stated.

You may call yourself an Othello Player if you scored 15 or above, but you need 25 to qualify as an Addict. 35 points or more makes you an International Grandaddict.

Have you ever :::

1. :: : played Othello? (If the answer to this one is no, then score 10 points now, because you're unlikely to score any others.)
2. :: : played a game of Othello using a chess clock?
3. :: : played in a tournament?
4. :: : written an article for the BOF newsletter?
5. :: : played in a train? (Score double for the London Underground, but only if the train was moving.)
6. :: : travelled abroad specifically to play Othello?
7. :: : lost on time? (Games played to a time limit of 5 minutes or less do not count for this.)
8. :: : seen the play Othello? Score double if you have read the play and triple if you own it (Guilty).
9. :: : taken advice from the book 'How to Win at Othello'? (Lose 10 points if yes.)
10. :: : completed a game with a 1-minute time-limit (internet games not included)?
11. :: : found you own your own page on the Othello Wiki?
12. :: : typed your name + 'othello' into google and got more than 5 relevant hits on the first page?
13. :: : watched a live game on live othello?
14. :: : studied transcripts of any of your games? (Lose 5 points for no: this is essential for Addiction.)
15. :: : studied transcripts of games other than your own?
16. :: : used a computer to analyse a game?
17. :: : written a computer program to analyse an ending?
18. :: : managed to access the THOR database?

Puzzle 4a: Can White always achieve a wipeout after 1c1 or 1d2?

Puzzle 4b: Can Black always achieve a stable disc (or force the game to end as a non-wipeout) after 1c1 or 1d2?

(Those of you who remember Graham's article will see why there are three, not two, possible pairs of answers to these questions.) *Answers on page 15*

And finally... The orientation I've chosen for the board is so irresistibly reminiscent of Tetris that I now propose a Tetris variant of 4-by-infinity Othello, in which after a move is played to the last vacant square on a given row (and the consequent flipping has occurred) the row is removed and the ones above it are shifted down. Which leads me to the final puzzle of the day:

Puzzle 5: In the Tetris variant, can a game end with no discs on the board? *Answer on page 15*

Continued from page 21 (OOPS! -- Ed.)

| Points flows | British change | Foreign change |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| FB+LL -> British est. | +136 | |
| British est. -> British non-est. | -11 | |
| British est. -> Foreign est. | -161 | |
| Total British est. change | -36 | |
| FB+LL -> Foreign est. | | +22 |
| Foreign non-est. -> Foreign est. | | +75 |
| British est. -> Foreign est. | | +161 |
| Total foreign est. change | | +258 |

(Abbreviation: est. = established ratings)

At least the drop of 36 is consistent with deflation (albeit very small) of British established ratings, which is some vindication of my original concern. However, taken together with the foreign established ratings, the entire established ratings pool has gained 222 points. This is spread over 27 players, being about 8 points per player. I feel that this amount of inflation is acceptable; players on the whole tend to improve rather than deteriorate, so one would expect there to be a little inflation.

It looks, therefore, that I will have to dream up another way of measuring flation which incorporates the foreigners' ratings after all. And until I've done that, I don't know whether any more adjustments need to be made to the FB & LL thresholds. At this point I too follow the advice in the Spaceman's Manual: "When you don't know what to do, *do nothing*."

(Note: I would hope that the Spaceman's Manual stresses that this only applies when doing nothing is a reasonable thing to do. If I were in the habit of applying it during Othello games I would have lost many more on time!)

Takizawa v. Takanashiby *Graham Brightwell*

The game below is the first game of the 2009 World Championship semi-final between Masaki Takizawa and Yusuke Takanashi.

What are your reactions to it?

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

Takizawa 25 Takanashi 39

For those of you without a computer to hand, let me start by explaining comments (2) and (3) above. The opening is a known book draw, and it's well mapped territory. The sequence in the 20s might look plain wrong, but this is all well-known theory: yes, White can win the h1 corner with 28f1, but that turns out to be a game-losing error. Just for illustration, here are a couple of perfect-play sequences after that. It's close (33-31), but hopefully you'll see that White can't make much progress around the h1 corner in a hurry, while Black is in charge of the timing.

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

Reasonable reactions might include:

- (1) Wow, amazing! According to my computer, Takanashi made no mistakes in the entire game!
- (2) Boring! Another victory for the player who knows more book.
- (3) Strange. Why did Takizawa play down a book draw for 46 moves, only to reach a position where he blunders?
- (4) This is the kind of game you need to win in order to become World Champion these days.
- (5) This is the kind of game you need to avoid losing in order to become World Champion these days.

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

In the semi-final contest, play remains perfect up to and including move 46.

British National Othello Championship, 19th September 2009: Frimley Green. Standings after 9 rounds + 1 game final:

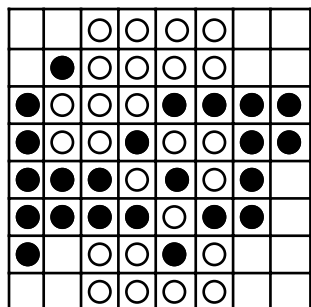
1. 8.0 [699.0] HANDEL Michael +1/1
2. 8.0 [732.0] LEADER Imre +0/1
3. 6.0 [691.5] HAND David +1/1
4. 6.0 [684.5] ROBINSON Steven +0/1
5. 5.5 [553.0] SPENCER Stephen
6. 5.0 [699.5] TURNER Ian
- 5.0 [681.0] BECK David
- 5.0 [651.5] PRIDMORE Ben
- 5.0 [648.5] HUBBARD Geoff
- 5.0 [645.0] BARRASS Iain
- 5.0 [581.0] BURGESS Andrew
- 5.0 [498.5] STARKEY Helen
13. 4.5 [546.0] DYER Jeremy
14. 4.0 [595.5] ARNOLD Roy
- 4.0 [561.0] HAIGH David
- 4.0 [559.5] RICHENS Julian
- 4.0 [556.5] TURNER Alison
- 4.0 [459.0] LIGHTMAN Marie
19. 3.0 [398.5] TURNER Kali
20. 1.0 [404.0] TURNER Tanith
- 1.0 [386.5] JAMES Hayley
- 1.0 [341.5] ROBINSON Paul

The World Championship also happened; we sent Michael Handel, David Hand, Steven Robinson and Helen Starkey. Apparently neither the Nats nor the Worlds had any games worth writing up for this NL!

Answers to the puzzles 4 on page 15

Puzzle 4 supplement 1: I think the only forcing line after 11a3 a4 a5 d5 c6 is 16c7 c8 b8 a8 a9 a10 b7, after which 23a6 a7 d7 d8 or 23d7 d8 c9 d9 soon force Black to control the b-file by playing a2 (which would also be fatal earlier, of course).

Puzzle 4 supplement 2: I think the only forcing line after 11a3 a4 a5 d5 b6 b7 c7 is 18a7 c6 a6 a8 d7 [pass] c8, after which Black never gets to a2 and eventually controls the b-file with b9, b10 or b11. The longest hold-out is 24c9 d8 [pass] c10 c11 b9, followed by 29a9 a10 a11 b10 d9 b8 b11 or 29d9 d10 a9 a10 a11 b8 b10.



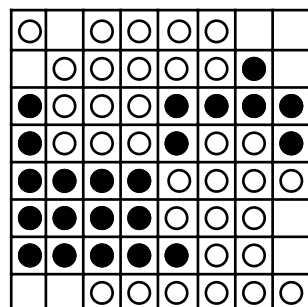
After 45a7

I will then be able to play to g2, controlling the c6-g2 diagonal, but this is not responding to White's move into the even Southeast region, so that White will play h8. And then I will have b7, still controlling that diagonal, and parity but not many discs. I imagined that this would be a narrow loss for me.

Meanwhile, since that sequence involved me taking the b7 move, I wondered if White could prevent that, by playing to b7 himself. And indeed a White move of 46g7 (which of course stops Black playing g7 for access to a2) leads to 47h8

(if 47b1 then 48a1, with 49b7 met by 50a8) and then 48b7, which is a parity win for White -- if 49a8 50b8 51b1 then simply 52h7).

So I felt that I was facing either a clear loss or a narrow loss, and so was mildly relieved when Geoff chose 46a1. After 47g7 48h5 49g2 50h8 51b7 I counted up and discovered to my joy that the position was a win for me. Somehow despite having to sacrifice the West edge and only getting one move out of four in the Southeast my top edge and great move 59 get me enough discs. Although when I look at the position after move 54 it is still amazing to me that Black gets enough discs to win.



After 51b7

Cambridge Christmas Tournament, 28 November 2009; Standings after 7 rounds:

1. 7.0 [522] LEADER Imre
2. 5.0 [527] HANDEL Michael
3. 4.0 [514] HUBBARD Geoff
- 4.0 [505] PRIDMORE Ben
- 4.0 [498] HAND David
- 4.0 [489] ROBISON Aidan
- 4.0 [488] ARNOLD Roy
- 4.0 [413] STARKEY Helen
9. 3.0 [493] BECK David
- 3.0 [439] CAMPBELL Yvette
- 3.0 [394] ROWE Stephen
12. 2.0 [371] CARPENTER Adelaide
- 2.0 [346] LIGHTMAN Marie

Then Takizawa errs with 47b8: the drawing move is 47f8. After that, Takanashi is clinical, while Takizawa makes a few more imperfect moves. The tempo of the game, at least as transmitted via Liveothello (<http://www.liveothello.com>), suggests that both players were in book at least through 44. At first glance, it seems odd that a player would know that 43b7 is correct but not know what to do at 47. Of course, human memory space is limited, but if he didn't know this line then Black shouldn't have been playing it. Right?

Except ... what should he have played instead? This article is an attempt to expose the problems Black has in this opening, where by 'this opening' I mean, by extension, the central Tiger (7c5).

Suppose that Black is one of the legion of players who is unwilling knowingly to play a game-losing move. How can such a player avoid the game Takizawa played without knowing less? Of course, he can make the correct move 47. He can play moves 3 and 5 in the opposite order, or he can play 7f6, but what else? Now, I'm not up-to-date on the latest beliefs about the assessments of openings, and there is always the possibility that these beliefs are wrong anyway, but I haven't come across *any* deviations for Black between move 7 and move 47 that don't lose!

On the other hand, there are plenty of alternatives for White. He can play 10b4, or 10e6, or 14a4, or 16e6, or 22b6, or (this one is courtesy of exact analysis using WZebra) 24g5, or 30a5.

Let's explore the different perfect-play sequences for White starting at move 32. Over the next few moves, there are some non-critical variations in the move order, since White can give Black one or both of the edges at different points, but even ignoring these, White has plenty of choice. Here is the portion of the draw-tree starting at move 32, expanded until Black next gets a choice of perfect-play (*i.e.*, drawing) moves.

```

32e1 b1 d7 h6 a5 a2* h5 d8 c7 h3 e7 b7 a8 f7 e8 f8 b6 b2 g7 a7/g2/h8
                                     g7 h8 g8 h7 b6 b2/g2
                                     g2 h1/b8
                                     c8 e7 h3 h2 g7 b6/e8/h7
                                     h3 c7 g2 h1/b6
                                     h7 b6 b7 e7 b8 g2 f8 e8 c8 f7 h1 b2/h2
                                     f7 h6 a5+ a2/f8
32d7 h6 a5 a2 e1 b1 - see *
                                     e1 b1 a5 a2 - see *
32f7 h6 a5 a2 e1 b1 h5 f8 g7 h3 g8 h8 h7 g2 h1 h2 a1 b2 a7 e7 d7 b7/c8/e8
                                     d8 b7/e8
                                     e7 e8 d8 c8 a7 b6/b7
                                     e8 d8 e7 h3 g2 h1/c7
e1 b1 a5 - see +

```

The sequence 32f7-h6-a5-a2-e1-b1-h5 is a more 'accurate' move order than either of the ones leading to the position marked +, since it forces Black to retake at a2, whereas he could prefer to play f8 if he is offered the West edge after the North. So, even discounting transpositions, if White reaches the position Takanashi did after move 31, he has ten different continuations before Black next gets a choice. Put another way, if Black wishes to 'learn' this book line, he has to be familiar with all ten lines, including one that goes to move 55 before he has a choice, and four others that go to move 53: on the other hand, White only needs to know one of them, and there's one where he doesn't have to think for himself until there are just five empty squares. Takanashi, I presume, knew enough about either the first or the second line of the tree above to go all the way to the end of the game if necessary.

In case you're wondering, 30a5 doesn't transpose into the system above, so that's an eleventh line (only -- the next option is Black's at move 39) that White can test Black on. 24g5 gives a twelfth (only -- the next option is Black's at move 29). I'm not in a position to push the analysis any further back and estimate how many different 'tests' White can set after move 7. In most of the other opening options I mentioned above, it seems that it's Black who gets the next choice, but the 'dead draw' appears to be another line where the branches tend to occur at White moves.

Here are just two of the exciting perfect-play lines for your amusement.

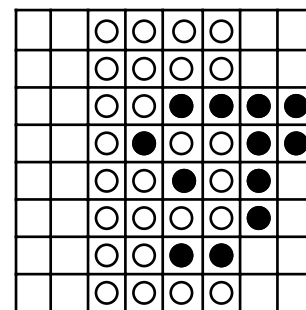
| | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 60 | 33 | 18 | 22 | 32 | 29 | 25 | 57 |
| 37 | 59 | 9 | 11 | 23 | 24 | 52 | 43 |
| 14 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 17 | 15 | 42 |
| 20 | 13 | 5 | ○ | ● | 6 | 16 | 31 |
| 36 | 19 | 7 | ● | ○ | 1 | 30 | 38 |
| 21 | 47 | 12 | 2 | 27 | 26 | 28 | 35 |
|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

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

With all of that out of the way, let's have a look at the game these two Japanese superstars actually played.

response of h5. Whereas if Black *does* play to h3 immediately then White simply plays f8.

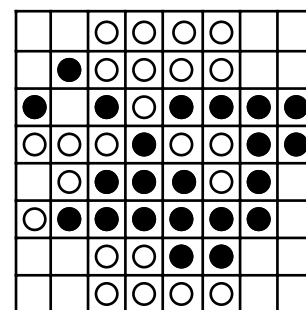
I did not see how I could be winning after 31e8 32h3 33h2 34f8, so I played 31h3 instead. But actually after this sequence there is some potential for a later Black move to g2, with maybe a parity gain if White gets to h1. And anyway the position after this sequence is clearly less bad for Black than after 31h3 32f8. So I wish I had played 31e8.



After 34c8

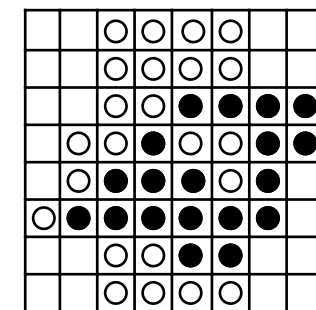
there -- note that 37b6 makes 38a6 very attractive for White, since then the disc at b6 does not flip.

Anyway, 37b6 was the only possibility, so I played out 37b6 38a6. But I was still in a horrible mess, because I was running out of moves in the West and in addition White had free moves to g8 and a7. What to do now?



After 41b2

At move 33, I did not like the idea of having those poisoning discs in the South, so I played 33e8 34c8, even though it gave White a free move to g8. And now I broke through the wall, with 35b5. While I sat and looked at the position after this, I became aware that 36a5 might be a very nice response for White. I had got as far as eliminating all responses except 37b3 when Geoff played 36b4. I breathed a sigh of relief, but then I realised that in fact Geoff had found a far better move! This 36b4 is really excellent. There is just no nice way for me to play near



After 38a6

I realised that there was a chance to gain some tempos by using the b2 x-square, so I played 39a3 40a4 41b2. The point is that I will soon play to a5, and then White's take-back move of a2 is poisoned by the x-square. And, even better, I myself will then be able to take the five safely, with a7 -- because even if White has taken the a1 corner he will have no access to a2. And so we had 42b3 43a5 44g8 45a7 (*next page -- Ed.*).

But I am still in a mess, because if White takes a1 then I have no access to a2. To be more precise, it is not clear that I want access to a2 right now, but surely I will want it later, say after sacrificing the a8 corner. Thus I will have to play to g7, soon, to try to get access -- but then White can deny me access by playing to h5, extracting the f7 disc! Admittedly,

sequence 50h1 51g1 52h7 53a8 54e1!, denying Black access to b8 and so winning easily. Of course, this is incredibly hard to spot at move 44. In fact, the right move after 44h4 is 45h3 -- after 46h5 Black plays 47g7 and wins because White will have to play b7 for parity, giving up lots of stable discs to Black. This line (after 45h3) is not too hard to find, as long as Black has realised that the much more seductive 45h5 does not work!

Going back even earlier, it turns out that there is a wonderful winning move for White at move 42, namely b7! In a sense, this is similar to the line actually played (with 48b7), but with two key differences: the East is less played out, so there is more opportunity for White to get discs there, and more importantly after 43f1 44b3 White retains access to b2. The reason this latter point is so significant is that after 45a8 46b8 47g8 White can play 48b2!, which gives him enough control to win.

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

Leader 42 Handel 22

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

Leader 35 Hubbard 29

In my game against Geoff I was also Black. Geoff seems to be making a habit of beating me in the Tiger (whether he is Black or White!), so I chose the

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | | |
| | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | | |
| | | ○ | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | |
| | | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | ● |
| | | ○ | ○ | ● | ○ | ● | |
| | | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | |
| | | ● | ● | ● | ○ | | |
| | | ● | | | | | |

After 30f7

Rose opening instead. We played down a line to move 27, and then I realised that I had erroneously played move 11 to c7 (the main-line Rose) whereas I had wanted to play to d7 (the Flat). With the Black disc at c7 at d7 instead, we now would have had 28c7 29h3 30d8 and the beautiful breakthrough move of b5, with all kinds of diagonalisation threats -- this is a nice idea of Nicolet's. But with the Black disc at c7 it is just a mess. We have 28d7 29d8 30f7, and now Black has a horrible choice. If Black does not play to h3 immediately then White will play there himself, with Black not having the

Here's the position after 33h6.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | ○ | ○ | | ● | ● | |
| | | ○ | ○ | ● | ● | | |
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ● | ○ | ● | ● | |
| ○ | ○ | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| | ● | ● | ● | ● | ○ | ● | |
| ● | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ● |
| | | | ○ | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

White to play at 34

Up to this point, White has taken advantage of the fact that Black has no access to the North-East, or to a5; now the time has come when White's natural move is h5, but before he plays there he gives Black both edges, poisoning Black's play to the South as well as making a Black sacrifice at g2 far less comfortable. After 34a5-a2-e1-b1-h5, Black's best move is d8: this motif is quite common -- the best way through a not-quite-flat wall is often to play straight to the edge, even when this yields quiet moves in the neighbourhood. White chooses 40c7, Black takes advantage of his access to h3 -- Black is looking to sacrifice at g2 shortly, giving up both the North and West edges for control -- and now White has the interesting shot of 42e7, leading to the position below.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| ● | | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | | |
| ● | ● | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | ● |
| ● | ○ | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| ● | ○ | ○ | ● | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ |
| ● | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ● |
| | | ○ | ○ | ○ | | | |
| | | ● | | | | | |

Black to play at 43

If Black plays 43g2 immediately, White just accepts the two sacrificed edges, and meets f7 with f8, leading to a straightforward parity win. The most natural move 43f7 is again met by 44f8, after which one perfect-play line is 45b7-a8-b8-c8-e8-b6-h7-g7-h8-g8-g2-h1-h2-a1-a7-b2 (31-33). So why is it better to play 43b7-a8-f7? One part of the answer is that, if then 46f8, Black can play 47g2-h1-h2-a1-b2-a7-e8, after which he will get both b8 and b6. The key is that Black has access to g2 at move 47, which he doesn't if f7 is played before b7 -- watch the d5 disc. There is plenty more that needs to work out after 43b7: for instance, if White plays 44b6, then the only winning line is 45g2-h1-h2-a1-b2-a7-a8-b8, and now 53e8, allowing no access to c8.

After 43b7-a8-f7, White has to play 46e8 rather than f8, leading to this position.

We've seen that b8 is the right move in a related line, but it isn't the right move here. The idea is presumably 47b8-c8-b2, but that has two flaws. First, it turns out that White can allow that, and follow up with 50h2 (cutting the diagonal) and now 51h1-g2 and Black can't get two of the three moves in the West. The other problem is that White can grab the

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| ● | | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | | |
| ● | ● | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | ● |
| ● | ○ | ● | ● | ○ | ● | ● | ● |
| ● | ○ | ○ | ● | ○ | ● | ○ | ○ |
| ● | | ○ | ○ | ● | ● | ○ | ● |
| | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | | | |
| ○ | | ● | ○ | | | | |

Black to play at 47

that White can grab the

diagonal first, as Takanashi did: 47b8-g7-c8-a7, and now White will get both a1 and b2, unless Black uses up the free move at b6: perfect play from here is 51b6-a1-b2-h1-h8-h7-g8-f8-g2-h2 (29-35), an illustration of the power of parity.

The simple 47f8 is correct, even though it gives White access to b6. Either immediately or after 48b6-b2, White will have to throw in g7, and Black has just enough control to justify the large sacrifice he again makes. Here is one perfect-play line.

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

As ever, there's a lot more going on than is shown by this single pretty sequence.

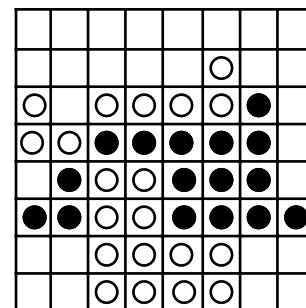
Finally, let's try the quiz again: which of reactions (1)-(5) do you still think are reasonable? In my view, (1) is a bit naive: playing good moves, whether through knowledge or skill, is what the game is about, but I hope I've shown you why it's not so amazing that the new World Champion can play perfectly in a game like this, although of course he does deserve credit for putting the opponent away at the end. On the other hand, (2) is unfair: it's quite true that this game is a victory cooked at home,

but there is more to opening choice than merely memorising lines, as again I hope to have illustrated. There must be some truth to (3), but I do think it's rough to condemn Takizawa for making a single error. (4) is plain wrong: in order to win the World Championship, it certainly *helps* to have a thorough and deep knowledge of the openings you're going to play, but a game like this is still the exception rather than the rule: Takanashi's great creativity and skill were apparent in many other games at this tournament, and he was a worthy winner. Overall though, I think (5) is the best summary: if your tournament strategy leads you into whose-book-is-longer battles on unfavourable terrain against an opponent like Takanashi, then it's hard to emerge victorious.

Answers to puzzles 1 and 2 on page 4

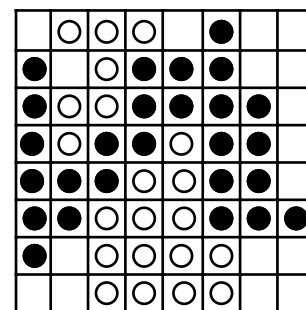
Puzzle 1: I think the longest Black can hold out is 13 moves: c1 d1 d2 d3 c4 b1 a1 a3 a2 a4 a5 d4 d5. Let me know if I'm wrong...

Puzzle 2: I believe that Black can always finish the game (victorious) without White being able to force play beyond row 8. There are innumerable ways to force the game beyond row 7, however. OK, OK, not strictly innumerable!



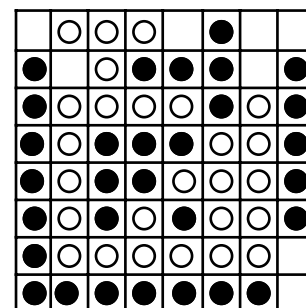
After 32a3

is that after 40b1 41a7



After 43f1

sure that *White* cannot grab the diagonal. Thus when White now played 44h3 Black had to respond with 45h5. After 46h4 47h2 White has nothing: he tried 48b7, but after 49a8 50b8 51g8 52g7 53h8 Black has the c3-h8 diagonal and hence the win.

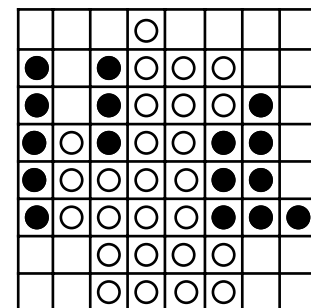


After 52g7

would then be able to sacrifice at b2. The best move there, in terms of keeping moves open and also getting access to a5, was d2, so I played there at move 33. Having been miserable up to now, I played this move feeling that I was winning.

After 34e2 35c2, my threat of a5 is too great, so White played there himself. I took back the edge, and White then played 38d1, removing my access to my free move at a7. But 39c1 gives me back my access. The key point

42b3 I have 43f1. This move may seem loud, but it guarantees that White will not control the c6-f3 diagonal, and in addition it is threatening a subsequent Black move to b7, controlling that diagonal for Black. Note that 44g2 fails to 45g1, because if 46h2 then 47g8 wins easily.

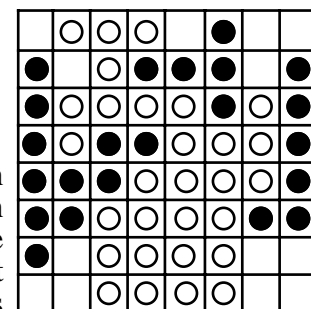


After 38d1

This threat of diagonal control is causing White real problems, although of course Black must be

sure that *White* cannot grab the diagonal. Thus when White now played 44h3 Black had to respond with 45h5. After 46h4 47h2 White has nothing: he tried 48b7, but after 49a8 50b8 51g8 52g7 53h8 Black has the c3-h8 diagonal and hence the win.

Zebra reveals an amusing feature to an alternative White move at 44, namely 44h4. It seems that the obvious continuation is 45h5 46h3 (if 46h7 then 47b7



After 47h2

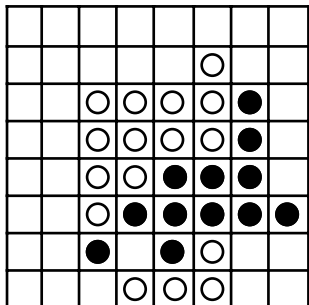
is killing), with White controlling the diagonal, and then 47h2 48b7 49g2 gets a Black disc on the diagonal, so that White cannot prevent Black from getting to the a8 corner. But then White would have the amazing

getting to the a8 corner. But then White would have the amazing

Cambridge Christmas Friendly 2009

by Imre Leader

Here are some brief comments on two of my most exciting games from the Cambridge Christmas Friendly -- held in the Christmassy month of November, as is now becoming traditional. The first is against Michael Handel and the second is against Geoff Hubbard.



After 24c6

I was Black against Michael, and we played down a line of the Heath. At move 25, I can choose between b6 and f1. In either line, White takes his moves to the South, and the question for Black is whether he wants meanwhile to take his moves to the West or the North. I decided that f1 just did not work, because after 26c8 27e2 28d7 29c2 30c1 the best that I have is a breaking-through move like 31b4, and then not only am I running out of moves but also (and this is the decisive thing) White has a move to g2 whenever he wants. So I went with 25b6. The idea is that 26d7 is met with 27c8 28b8

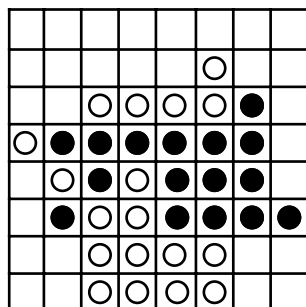
29b4, while 26c8 is met with 27b5. But I was rather unhappy, since then 28d7 29b4 30b3 leaves me only with uncomfortable things like 31c2 32d2 33a3. I had the general impression that I was probably going to lose.

My unhappiness increased considerably when Michael found an even better move 30: after 26c8 27b5 28d7 29b4 he played 30a4! The point of this beautiful move is that the obvious reply of 31a5 is met with 32b3: so this is similar to the line above except that my move to a3 at the end of the sequence is much worse than before.

This really rules out 31a5, so I played the only other move in that region, namely a6. Note that to leave the region alone, with for example 31f1, leads to White playing 32a3, with b3 to follow. So 31a5 was pretty much by elimination.

Of course, one has to have a response to 32b3, but luckily I would then have 33a2 -- a very convenient tempo. Note that if White then plays 34c2, threatening a5, then I can just ignore the threat and play 35f1 -- then 36a5 is met by 37a3! It is then exceptionally hard for White to play accurately, since Black has a free move stored up at a7 (which would also give Black parity).

So White played the other obvious move, namely 32a3. Up to now, I had felt that I was losing, because I was going to have to break through to the North. But I gradually realised that, as long as I could give White a nasty West edge, I could cheerfully play almost anything in the North, because I



After 30a4

Transcripts and the Othello Games Database: Frequently Asked Questions. (Why you should take a transcript and make it publicly available.)

by Emmanuel Lazard

Q: Why have a games database?

A: Several programmer players started their own projects of building games databases nearly 20 years ago. After several rounds of discussion and program development, the format called 'WTHOR' became the standard one and can now be used on several platforms by a lot of programs. So why a database? First of all, players like to replay their games later, even much later, so they have to be recorded somewhere and it is more convenient to have them as a file than on a piece of paper. These games may also be published in a magazine (or studied for a strategy article), so we need to have them easily available. Finally, games study is one of the best ways to improve one's skill!

Q: Where can I find the database?

A: We have been distributing the database worldwide for more than 15 years now and it is available on <http://www.ffothello.org/info/base.htm>. All our French tournaments (international, major and minor tournaments, plus some casual games) are included in it, as well as many other tournaments from several countries.

Q: Who set up the database?

A: Sylvain Quin initially set up the database. It has since been updated and maintained by the French Othello Federation. Emmanuel Lazard (Emmanuel.Lazard@katouche.fr) and Marc Tastet (Marc.Tastet@free.fr) are the current people to contact about it.

Q: But my games are not important?

A: Well, you may have been playing against a good player (and, if you won, other players will be interested) or you may later become a good player yourself. Anyhow, it is better to let the user decide which games he wants to study. Finally, it is a good thing to have everybody use the same rule so that lower players do not feel excluded.

Q: But I did not write a transcript during the game?

A: That is a pity, because your game will be lost forever and you will be sad when you want to replay this famous game you won against that brilliant player... Besides, it is not very difficult to take a transcript during the game, you can always complete it afterwards if you were short on time in the endgame.

Q: But everybody keeps their transcripts at the end of the tournament?

A: First of all, decide before the start who is in charge of collecting all the transcripts at the end of the tournament; do not forget to ask all players, before the last round, to hand in their transcript sheets. If players want to keep them, you can use carbon copy transcript sheets (a printer can make them for a small price) or quickly photocopy the sheets at the end. It is also possible to take digital photos of the transcript sheets, just check that your camera/phone has sufficient resolution beforehand.

Q: What happens when transcript sheets are unreadable or incomplete?

A: OK, that is inevitable. If you use carbon copy sheets, keep the first page, not the copy, since the latter is covered with marks made when the sheet is under the pen. Players remember their games so when you come to a difficult transcript, email the players. After a while, players will try to be more careful when they see that their games are not in the database...

Q: What if my games are incomplete, do not replay or replay with an incorrect score?

A: Try to complete the game from memory or generate a plausible endgame. If it still gives the wrong score, check that the moves seem right. If you cannot replay the game, try swapping moves but do not try too hard, it may be a waste of time. You can also send us the game and we can try, we have some experience with it...

Q: But nobody wants to type them!

A: We agree... It is long and tedious but someone has to do it! First, do not accumulate transcripts: the more you have to type, the less you'll want to begin. Use computer tools: Zebra, WThor, Cassio... Ask the players to type their own games and send them to you. As a last resort, we can do it if you send us the sheets (think who entered most of the games currently in the database...).

Q: Should I be submitting all tournaments?

A: The more you can the better, of course. We really would like to see all major tournaments (international tournaments, national championships...) in the database but all tournaments are welcome.

Q: I have the games typed in, but what about format?

A: Any! We can process all major formats: TXT, SGF, WZG... Best is just to send us text file(s) for each tournament with lists of moves (f5d6c3d3c4...) and names of players. One important thing is to have standard players' names in the files: 'Black-White' or 'Black score-score White' with no

As you can see, the rise in average rating in 2008 was short-lived, and we appear to have resumed the downward trend. (For the background to all this see my article in 'Better Late than ...', the July 2008 newsletter, and a follow-up article in 'Not Boardgame Hell', the January 2009 newsletter.) The question now is, does anything need to be done?

An immediate answer might be: yes, the average rating has again reached a new low; the deflation has not been stopped, so the feedback (FB) and loss-limiting (LL) thresholds should be lowered again to inject more points.

Another answer might be: yes we have reached a new low, but the rate of decrease (estimated by fitting a cubic polynomial to the points on the chart) has decreased, to about 9 points per year from about 35 per year in 2007. 9 points is not very much (within the noise?), so it might be best to do nothing until the rate becomes more significant.

Others might say: the supposed deflation is just a figment of the statistics. But flation (meaning inflation or deflation) *can* happen in Elo rating systems; go and read about it, for example the Wikipedia article on "Elo rating system." There's a bit of stuff in there about inflation in the FIDE chess ratings. OK, while admitting that it can occur, it's still legitimate to ask whether we are really experiencing deflation.

So, let's look at the figures a bit more carefully. If Imre had not been included the average would be 26 lower, and if Kali had not been included it would be 41 higher. This range of points, 67, is greater than every year-to-year change of the average rating and shows how dependent we are on the mix of players whose ratings go into the average. The trouble is that our sample has only 20 players, so it is not surprising that the average is rather sensitive to changes in the contributors. I had always feared this, but the criteria for choosing the sample were the best I could come up with. With chess ratings, with perhaps tens of thousands of players, this would not be a problem. I'm now not sure if we have any way of reliably measuring whether we have flation, and no-one has suggested one to me.

For another view of what might be going on I looked at the flow of points into and out of the established ratings pool in 2009. The total number of points in the British established ratings pool dropped by 36 points, as shown in the following table, which also shows that the foreigners did rather better; their established ratings pool gained 258 points. **Continued on page 5**

Answer to puzzle 5 on page 15

Puzzle 5 supplement: d2 b1 a1 d1 a3 d3 [delete row 3] c1 [delete row 1] a1.

Conversely: can a Tetris-variant game end with 1526 pieces on the board? (*Answer on page 29*)

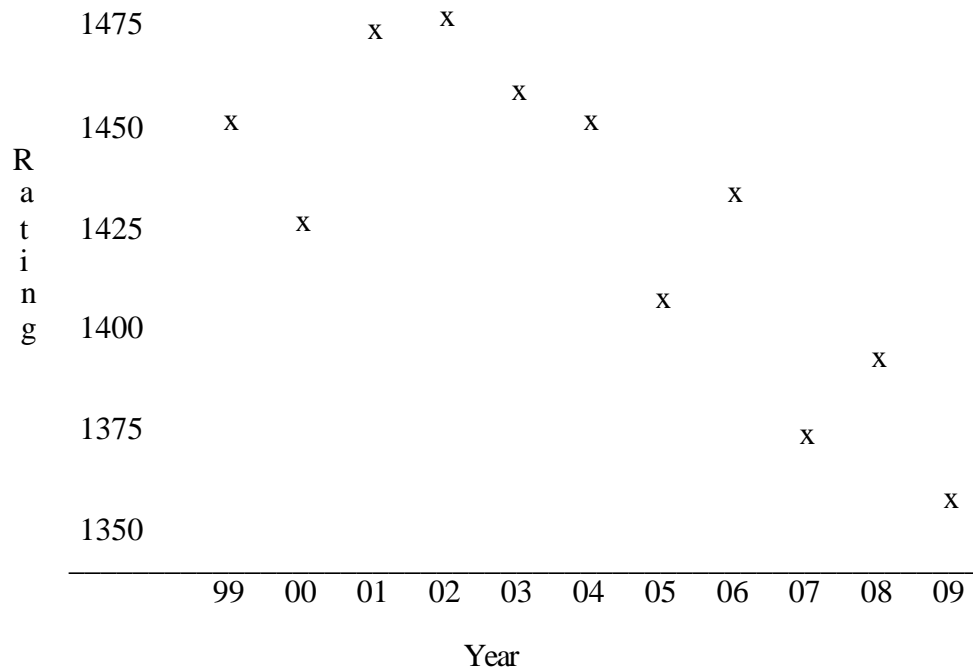
To do or not to do,...*by David Haigh*

A spaceman has been exploring the asteroid Icarus in a one-man space pod. On attempting to return to his mother ship the engine malfunctions and sends the pod, wildly spinning, heading back towards the surface of the asteroid. The spaceman is disoriented and confused and can't think what to do. The various things he tries only seem to make matters worse. Then he remembers a piece of advice from the 'Spaceman's Manual', and heeds it.

I'm not going to tell you what happens next. You can read it in Arthur C. Clarke's short story 'Summertime on Icarus'. But I will come back to that piece of advice at the end of this article.

It's time to report on how the rating deflation is going. After that introduction, in a flat spin perhaps?

There were 20 'Britons' who played this year, whose ratings were already established at the beginning of the year, and who therefore contributed to the 2009 rating average; they ranged from Imre to Kali. Here then is that chart showing a plot of average established ratings, with the point for 2009 added.



'dash' inside names (can be replaced by 'underscore') so that automatic processing is easier. In case of doubt, just email us.

Q: But we do not want to reveal our openings before the World Championship...

A: Obvious. The policy used so far is that all tournaments played up to the Paris Open (last leg of the European Grand Prix, end of August) will be in the database before the WOC whereas no later tournaments are immediately included BUT they are afterwards and that is what is important.

Q: But games are copyrighted, players do not allow us to send them?

A: No, games are not copyrighted; they are not considered works of art. Any spectator can watch and write down the moves. What IS copyrighted is a published game analysis. Furthermore, a game is played by two players so who would have the copyright? (And lastly, the number of different Othello games is not infinite. How could you copyright a previously-played game?)

Q: I do not use the database and I do not want my games to be seen.

A: Well, we are not going to oblige you to send your games. What we are trying to show is that by sharing as many games as possible, we will encourage players to do so and everybody will benefit from the database, as we said, not only for practice but also for recording and publishing purposes. We still think a world of co-operation is a better place than a world of competition.

Q: Ok, who should I send the games to?

A: Geoff Hubbard (geoff@instihost.com) is currently compiling the UK transcripts, so you should send them to him. He then sends them on to Emmanuel Lazard and Marc Tastet who add them to the database.

Answer to puzzle 3 on page 4

Puzzle 3: I think White can manage a loss by just one disc, as follows: a3 a4 b4 c4 d3 d2 d4 d5 d1 a1 a5 b1 c1 a2 d6 a6 c5. However, I probably haven't exhausted all Black's options, so maybe Black can increase the margin of victory in this line (though if you find a way, make sure that it also applies to the two transposing sequences that exist for the last six moves above). Answers on a postcard please...

Looking Ahead

by Imre Leader

Players are sometimes scared to try to look very far ahead. There may be just too many possibilities, or it may simply be too hard to visualise the board after a long sequence of moves. Nevertheless, sometimes the conditions are just right. This article is about one such situation.

The position occurred in my game against David Beck, from the recent Cambridge Christmas Friendly. It is White to play at move 44. First of all, what are the options?

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White to play at 44

There are four moves worthy of consideration: b6, e1, f1 and g1. After 44b6, Black might play to b1, or more dangerously to b2: indeed, if 45b2 46a1 then Black can play to b1, leaving a free move to a2, while if 45b2 46g8 then 47b1. After 44e1, Black will give White the five, with 45f1 46g1, and then sacrifice, with 47a2 (47b2 failing to 48g8). The move 44g1 is similar, except that Black can choose when to play off the e1-f1 pair. And 44f1 aims to gain a tempo with 45e1 46g2.

The second question is not which of these four moves is best, but rather: in what order should we examine them? This is often a silly question, because we are going to examine *all* the viable options, but here it is a very sensible question, with a clear right answer.

The point is that 44d1 is completely forcing. The game is set after that, with Black giving White the five and sacrificing (as stated above), and now White can take the corner with 48a1. Black has no more choices. So this has to be the sequence to look at first. If White wins it, then we need look no further. And we *should* be able to analyse it far ahead, precisely because Black has no choices. So this is a typical situation in which we should be looking far ahead: we should be able to determine who wins.

So what will happen after this 44d1 45e1 46f1 47a2 48a1? Black takes his corner, with 49b1 50b2 51h1, and then gets a fantastic move with 52g2 53g8: this stabilises nearly all the discs in the g and h columns, and in addition gets parity in the Southeast corner, thus keeping some discs around there as well. Counting, which is easy in such a forcing line, shows that White then has only 19 discs. So for White to win things need to play out very well after that. In particular, it will be vital to get the discs on column b.

So, still looking ahead, how will the final moves play out? We need to be able to visualise this to see if there will be a nice way to end it. What happens after the obvious 54h8 55h7? It will have to be 56b8, since 56b6 allows 57b7. But then what after 57b7? This is now the key observation: White will have

format as little as possible.

- (d) The Local Organiser shall appoint a Tournament Director (possibly themselves) to oversee the smooth running of the Championship.
- (e) The winner of the British Othello Championship shall be declared the British Othello Champion and shall be entitled to represent the United Kingdom at the next World Othello Championships.

9. Tournaments.

- (a) The Federation may organise other Othello tournaments from time to time.
- (b) For any tournament organised by the Federation, a Local Organiser shall be appointed who will be responsible for the choice of a time and place for the tournament and for the smooth running of the tournament.
- (c) Any Federation member shall be entitled, upon payment of an entrance fee to the Federation, to play in any tournament organised by the Federation, with the possible exception of the British Othello Championship. However, the Local Organiser or their appointed representative shall have the power to expel a player from a tournament in extreme circumstances.
- (d) The entrance fee for a tournament shall be decided by the committee in consultation with the Local Organiser. Any reasonable expenses incurred by the Local Organiser or their assistants in the running of a tournament shall be repaid by the Federation.

10. Newsletter.

From time to time, the Federation shall distribute free to its members a newsletter. The aim of the newsletter is to inform readers of activities in Britain and elsewhere connected with the game of Othello and to provide advice and instruction concerning the strategy and tactics of the game.

11. Dissolution.

The Federation may be dissolved by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at an Extraordinary General Meeting convened for that purpose, of which one month's written notice shall have been given to all members. Such resolution may give instructions for the disposal of any assets held in the name of the Federation, provided that, if any property remains after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, then such properties shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Federation but shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having, as far as is possible, objectives similar to some or all of the objectives of the Federation.

- (e) A member unable to attend a General Meeting may vote on any item of business before the General Meeting by writing to any committee member. Such a postal vote shall be registered at the General Meeting equally with the votes of those present.

7. Expulsion from the Federation.

- (a) The Committee may, in extreme circumstances, suspend the membership of a member of the Federation. If this should occur, the next General Meeting of the Federation shall decide whether to lift the suspension or to expel the member. The person affected shall be entitled to be present at the General Meeting for the discussion of their case and to address the Meeting. If a member is expelled from the Federation, any money paid by them as a subscription to the Federation for a period after the date of the original suspension shall be repaid in full. A member who is suspended shall be informed, by at least two weeks' notice in writing, of the date and location of the General Meeting at which their case is to be discussed and of their rights as set out above.
- (b) The Committee may, in extreme circumstances, refuse membership to an individual applying to join the Federation. If this should occur, the person affected shall have the right to appeal against the decision to the next General Meeting. Any person appealing against such a decision shall have the right to be present at the General Meeting for the discussion of their case and to address the meeting. A person refused membership shall be informed of this right in writing and, should they decide to appeal, shall be informed of the date and location of the General Meeting at which their case is to be discussed.

8. The British Othello Championship.

- (a) A British Othello Championship Tournament shall be held each year. The procedure to determine those qualified to play in the Championship shall be decided at a General Meeting and shall be administered by the committee. All those who are qualified to play in the event shall be given at least two weeks' notice in writing of the time and place of the Championship.
- (b) The committee shall appoint a Local Organiser who shall be responsible for all matters connected with the British Othello Championship, including the choice of a convenient time and place for the tournament.
- (c) The Local Organiser shall, as far as possible, organise the tournament according to the format decided upon by the previous General Meeting at which the matter was discussed. If this should prove impossible, the Local Organiser (in consultation with the officers of the Federation) should organise the tournament in a manner differing from the agreed

the gorgeous 58a7 59a8 60b6, getting huge numbers of discs and a clear win.

I hope that the above illustrates why, at move 44, d1 was definitely the move to look at first, *regardless* of what one feels about the relative worths of the four moves. And also how important it was to look ahead right to the end of the game, rather than just giving up depressed after seeing ahead to Black's excellent 53g8. And finally that this looking ahead, all 16 moves into the future, is quite doable when the sequence is so forcing.

Answers to the puzzles on page 5

Puzzle 4: In fact, 'challenging' is a gross understatement: this puzzle unfolds into a veritable treasure trove of swindles and counter-swindles. You should be able to convince yourself easily that Black very quickly either gains a stable disc or concedes the wipeout unless the game starts c1 d1 d2 d3 c4 or d2 d1 c1 d3 c4. After that, I think Black is well placed to secure a stable disc if White plays 6b4 or 6d5 (though I haven't fully demonstrated it), but 6b5 is altogether stronger. It forces 7c5 (though 7b4 puts up a good fight), which in turn forces 8b4. This is where the swindlefest begins in earnest. Black must avoid controlling the b-file (which would give White b1 followed by a1), but there are also numerous lines in which White can go to (i) a1 without flipping b2, or (ii) a1 flipping b2 while controlling the rest of the b-file, or even (iii) b1 flipping b2 while controlling c3 and d4 and later getting to a1 along the a-file. There are even a few lines in which White plays to a2 and then forces Black to play b1. But all the while, Black seeks to run White out of moves other than (i) a1 giving Black b1 as a wedge, (ii) a2 or b1 giving Black a1, or occasionally (iii) a move that ends the game while Black has discs on the a-file.

So, what happens? Masses of lines are nail-bitingly tight. In the end, the only line in which I haven't found a wipeout for White is c1 d1 d2 d3 c4 b5 c5 b4 d4 d6 a3 a4 a5 d5 b6 b7 c6 c7 c8 a6 a7; can you find one? (White has a few options to deviate from this sequence, notably 12d5, but I don't think they work.) If you fancy a challenge that I do know the answer to, see if you can force the wipeout after c1 d1 d2 d3 c4 b5 c5 b4 d4 d6 a3 a4 a5 d5 c6 or after c1 d1 d2 d3 c4 b5 c5 b4 d4 d6 a3 a4 a5 d5 b6 b7 c7. They're both pretty elusive. (*Answers on page 27.*) Some of the lines starting c1 d1 d2 d3 c4 b5 c5 b4 a3 or c1 d1 d2 d3 c4 b5 c5 b4 a4 are even tougher.

Puzzle 5: Yes, this is possible. Here's a line that works: c1 d3 b4 a1 d2 d4 c4 d1 b1 [delete row 1] a1 [delete row 1] a1 [delete row 1] a1. There is an eight-move solution too... can you find it? (*Answer on page 21*)

Constitution of The British Othello Federation

Adopted by the AGM: Saturday 19th September 1992

1. Title.

The name of the Federation shall be *The British Othello Federation*.

2. Objects.

The objects of the Federation shall be to promote the playing and understanding of the game of Othello in the United Kingdom. The activities of the Federation shall include the organisation of tournaments, including an annual British Othello Championship, and the distribution of a newsletter to its members.

3. Membership.

The members of the Federation shall be those persons who pay subscriptions to the Federation. The Federation retains the right to refuse membership, or to expel a member of the Federation, subject to the appeal procedures laid out in paragraph 7. A person shall not have any additional rights to compensation from the Federation by virtue of being a Member of the Federation.

4. Officers and Committee.

- (a) The management of the Federation shall be in the hands of a committee numbering between five and ten persons inclusive, including a Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and any other officers deemed advisable by the committee.
- (b) The committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Federation and shall continue in office until the following Annual General Meeting. All shall be eligible for re-election. The committee may co-opt up to two additional members.
- (c) A quorum for the valid transaction of business at meetings of the committee shall be four.
- (d) The officers shall be elected by the committee from among its members, this election to take place not later than the first full committee meeting following the Annual General Meeting.
- (e) The functions of the committee shall be:
 - (i) to make all arrangements for tournaments and other activities of the Federation, subject to decisions made at General Meetings concerning the matters set out in paragraph 6(d).
 - (ii) to control the finances of the Federation.
 - (iii) to submit to General Meetings such proposals in regard to the general policy and conduct of the Federation as it may think desirable.

5. Finance.

- (a) The financial year shall end on 31st August each year.
- (b) Such banking accounts as may be decided upon by the committee shall be maintained in the name of the Federation and cheques shall be signed by an officer of the Federation.
- (c) The Federation may receive donations, money received as subscription to the Federation or to its newsletter, money raised by the sale of Othello-related goods, and money raised by charging admission to its tournaments.
- (d) The income and property of the Federation shall be applied solely towards promoting the objects of the Federation as set forth above; no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred either directly or indirectly to any member or members of the Federation except in payment of legitimate expenses incurred on behalf of the Federation.

6. General Meetings.

- (a) An Annual General Meeting shall be held within two months of the end of the financial year, at a convenient time and place to be determined by the committee. All Federation members shall be invited by at least two weeks' notice, in writing, to attend this meeting.
- (b) An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by the committee at any time by giving to every Federation member at least two weeks' notice in writing. If a petition calling for an Extraordinary General Meeting, signed by at least ten members of the Federation, is received by the Chairman, then the committee shall call such a meeting to be held within six weeks of the receipt of the petition.
- (c) A quorum for the valid transaction of business at General Meetings shall be eight members of the Federation.
- (d) The function of General Meetings shall be:
 - (i) to receive reports from the officers of the Federation,
 - (ii) to receive an audited statement of account,
 - (iii) to elect a committee of the Federation,
 - (iv) to elect the Honorary Auditor,
 - (v) to amend the Constitution, provided that such amendment may only be agreed by a two-thirds majority of members present at a General Meeting, and that at least two weeks' written notice of the proposed amendment has been sent to all members,
 - (vi) to make any changes that are deemed necessary in the following affairs of the Federation: the format of the British Othello Championship, the rules for qualification for the British Othello Championship, the rules for qualification for the British team at the World Championships, and the rates of subscription to the Federation.