

Tournament news

Wanstead 4 October

David Ward had 1/4, Phil Beck and Matt Reid each managed four wins, Anna Griffiths two.

New Malden 11-12 October

The New Malden Amateur Open Baduk Championship was a novel event with a new sponsor. The first day consisted of groups of 5 or 6, sorted by level, in an all-play-all. In that, out Tim Hunt had 3/4, Will Brooks 4/5, and organiser Anna Griffiths 1/5. It was Will who went through to play in the Sunday part of the event, in the top flight of the *kyu* division.

Three Peaks 8-9 November

Up north at this popular event in the Pennines, Tim Hunt had 3/5, Phil Beck 1.5, Frank Visser 4 and Roger Murby 2.

Small board Whittlesford 16 November

Much closer to home, seven local players took part in the National 13x13 Championship, won this year by Simon 'Surgeon of Crowthorne' Goss 2 *dan*. Out results read: Matthew Woodcraft 4/9, Will Brooks 4, Toshio Oshima 6, Garry Sturley 7, Shuntaro Oshima 1, Sumire Oshima 4, Alistair Turnbull 4.

London Open 28-31 December

This is one of the year's major go events, taking place in Great Portland Street. See http://www.bexfield.com/clgc/lon_open.htm for full details and online entry. Or follow the links at britgo.org to the calendar page. For less ambitious players the West Surrey Teach-In and Handicap events on 6 and 7 December may suit.

Community Go:

Juniors - Schools visits - UK Go Challenge - Headway

Over the past decade the Cambridge go scene has gradually expanded outside the confines of the University, with Chess&Go for juniors and a strong base down Mill Road at CBI. Now Paul Smith has started a programme of schools visits, ahead of the national UK Go Challenge being launched in 2004. The games festival MSO Cambridge 2004 will take place again in May, in Parkside Community College. Charles Matthews has been taking go to cognitive therapy sessions at Headway House, a centre for those recovering from head injuries. If you're interested in being involved in any way, please let Charles know (charles.r.matthews@ntlworld.com) .

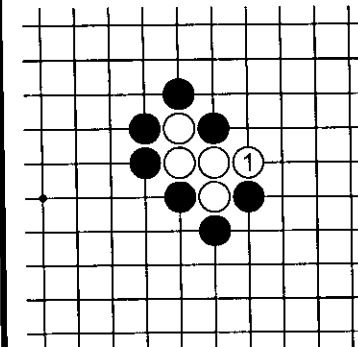
Tesuji

The Cambridge Go Newsletter

No.79 November 2003

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手筋



Failing ladder Black cannot take White directly. But how many times can Black threaten White?

Go meetings continue around Cambridge

- Mondays: restart in January.
- Tuesday meetings: *The Castle Inn*, Castle Street 7.30 pm.
- Wednesday Junior Chess & Go in school term.
- Thursdays 7 to 9 pm in the University Centre, top floor Reading Room.
- Fridays 7 to 9 pm at 'CB1', 32 Mill Road.
- Sundays informally in CB1. from about 4 pm .
- And at other times in CB1.

Competition Night Monday 1 December Clare Buttery 8 pm

It's our 13x13 event again, this time run in two divisions (one for Novices, without clocks). The Buttery will have people coming and going through it, so please note that this is a fun event with serious aspects, rather than the other way round. As usual, the main division will have six rounds, generous handicaps and time limits of 10 minutes each. *Everyone taking part is graded, whether or not they have a grade when they enter.* And promotions on the night are frequently given out, too. Come promptly at 8 pm to get in the draw.

Christmas closing

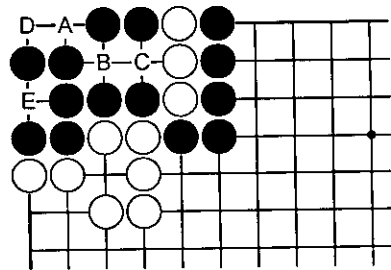
Closure details for CB1, the University Centre and the Castle will be circulated on the email list as we have them.

The heap paradox and talking about the rules

There is an ongoing debate about the formulation of the rules of go. For the most part it reminds me of a roundabout in a child's playground: the momentum is provided by those jumping on. Taking it seriously is mostly for *dan*-level players with time on their hands, or computing theorists.

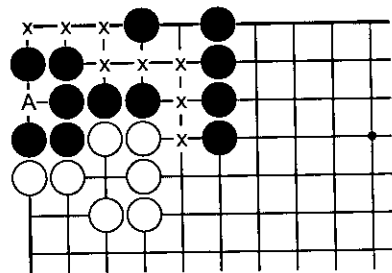
It has anyway become quite hard to find anything really new to say in this area. One idea that came up recently did strike me as novel; and not really technical. It relies on the ancient paradox about the heap of sand: if you take away one grain, you will clearly still have a heap - but do that often enough, and you'll only have a thin handful left.

I came up with several kinds of examples, in which it is helpful to be aware of the heap business. The first arose out of a discussion about what it meant for *life* to be *unconditional*.

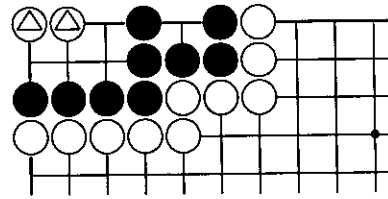
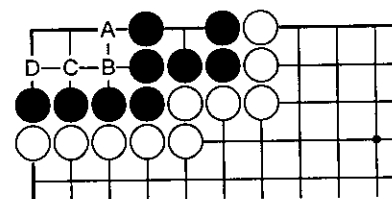


Here the black group in the corner isn't really under threat. If however White played at A, B, and C (capturing two black stones), then D - and Black still didn't answer at all - White could capture Black at E. This is a very remote possibility: it only makes sense to look at it as many (a whole heap ...) of *ko* threats being ignored.

Another such theoretical use of remote possibilities comes up in all versions of the so-called New Zealand rules (which I find good for abstract discussion, but, as here, in need of much unpacking to get the meaning). This time look at territory.

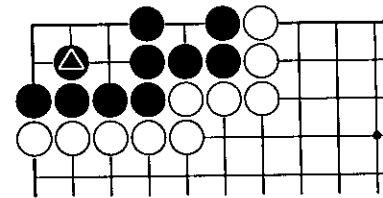


What is said is that the point A can be counted here as territory for Black. On the other hand the 1-1 point in the corner cannot, at this stage. In theory White could play at each of the 'x' points in turn, spoiling Black's territory into the corner. Stop right now, and Black gets no points to which White has open access.



This is another mild shocker. Here we would normally say Black has two eyes, and have done. White actually can attack Black on the left, with A, B, C and D. But not on the right, where the two marked stones impede White, via the suicide rule.

The logic definitely that of the heap: Black certainly might ignore White's first play, prodding into the open gap. *Therefore* we have to allow for Black ignoring all those marked plays. There is an eye inside which White can play safely. *Therefore* we have to allow for White doing so four times, with no black reply.



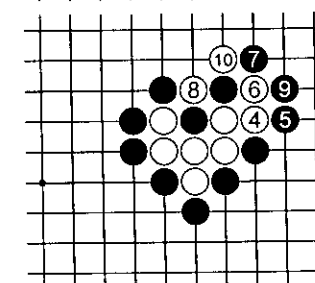
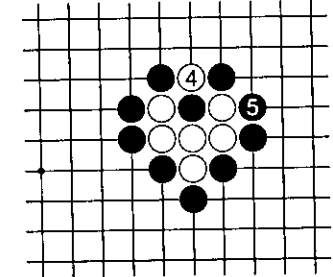
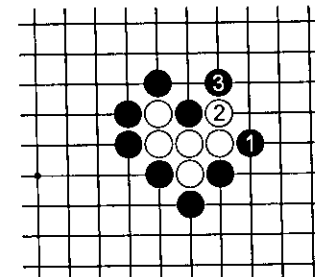
A final example of the reasoning: if Black plays inside at the marked point, the area becomes territory in a stronger sense than before. *This is almost always wrong-headed.* In effect it cuts out a *ko* threat long before it materialises.

Some sort of conclusion from me: the basic mechanism in go, of capture, is no mystery, but essentially everything that follows counts as *emergent*: the concepts build up. Now those concepts may not be 100% reliable: that's not a serious criticism. It just says there is skill in the game. The heap paradox kind of argument is a version of the *slippery slope*, saying that if you ignore one of your opponent's plays, you might ignore all of them until too late. Well, that doesn't follow, in human terms.

I'd go further: the heap paradox shows that in some sense slippery slope arguments are an anti-pattern (bad template) in relation to perception. The basis of positional judgement in go is to override them. On the other hand, one should *play* in an open-ended way, in general.

If you like abstract discussion of the go rules fundamentals, you might also be interested in the article series I started at <http://www.nrich.maths.org.uk/maths/journal/may02/art1/>.

Charles Matthews



Front page problem: Black can use 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 as threats, as shown. White 4 above is clearly just a mistake, since Black 5 captures White. Therefore, on threats alone, it should go as shown to the left.