



Irish Go Association

IGA Newsletter, Issue 1 2009

Editorial

It's been a while since the last newsletter, but we are back in production. The main focus is on studies of our own games, reviewed by Jennie Shen 2p. Feel free to send in your recent tournament games to us at president@irish-go.org. At the moment the production quality is pretty basic, but I hope with time to improve that.

Regards, Ian Davis

Book Reviews

Master Play: The Style of Go Seigen by Yuan Zhou

This is a new book, published in 2008 by Slate and Shell. As is characteristic of Yuan Zhou, the commentary goes into immense detail on almost every move. As a result, you do not need to actually own a Go board to enjoy this work. It can be read on a train or plane in much the same way as a problems book would be, only those who wish to delve deeper into the games will need to reach for their stones.

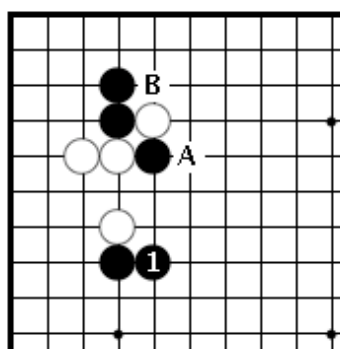
At 83 pages this is a short work, most will be suprised to learn that it infact only covers 2 games in around 80 pages. Both of these games happen to be against the same opponent, Fujisawa Kuranosuke, the significance of their rivalry being discussed in the short introduction.

The book was born out of lectures the author gave at his house, and the commentary contains discussions with 2 students from those. The commentary is of the same high standard as his previous works. Ideas behind moves are explained fully, with alternate variations also being discussed in great detail. Despite this, I found myself left disappointed with only having 2 games to enjoy. It would have been nice to see Go Seigen battling against some other opponents.

For those wishing to imitate Go Seigen, the book contains the following chilling advice, "Having good ideas is not enough, you must be able to back them up"

21st Century New Openings

21st Century New Openings is a new book from Kim Sung-rae 4p, published by Yutopian Enterprises. The translation from Diana Koszegi 1p is very good, unlike the translations in some of the other Korean books I have seen published. The title is a little misleading, because this book deals with new ideas in joseki and the opening. Modern ideas in the Kobayashi opening and Magic Sword joseki are amongst those featured in the 17 chapters. I have to say that I found the book really interesting and well written. Each new line that's shown is explained very thoroughly. Comparisons are made to old lines, mistakes and problems are pointed out, and an example from professional play is given for illustration. In my opinion, players of all levels will be able to read and understand this text, and gain something from it.

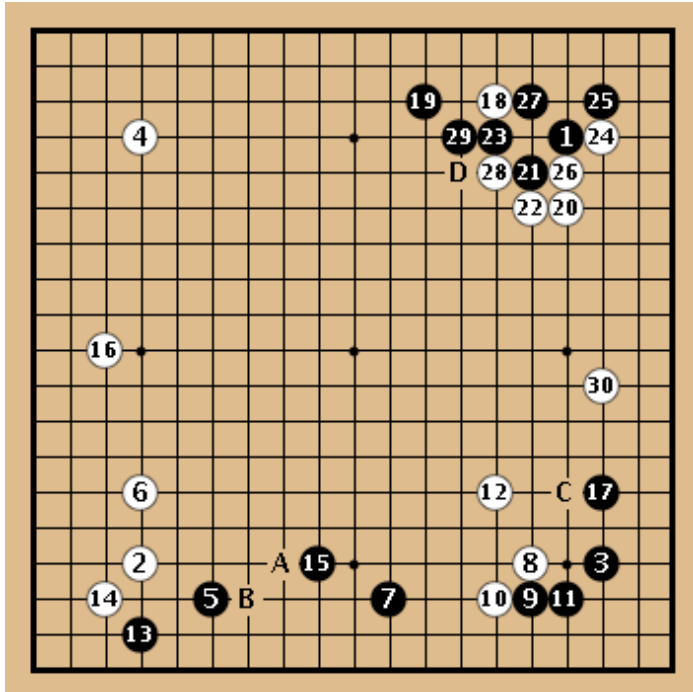


One of many lines covered

Game Review One

This game is taken from the London Open tournament. Black is Colin MacSweeney (3k), White is Edwin Brady (2k). Colin qualified for the Top 8 for the first time this year.

Moves 1 - 30



Move 15: Defending at A is better. This would make proper shape for the stones. This way, there's still some weakness at B.

Move 17: Good direction, but C is more severe for attacking, Black can profit more on the right side by attacking at C.

Move 21: The attachment at Black 23 is joseki.

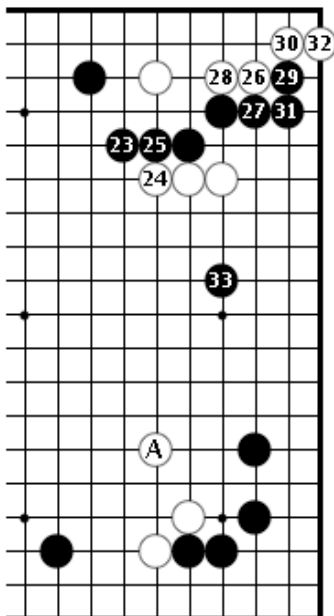
Move 23: Jumping at D is a better shape for Black. (see variation 1).

Move 24: White ought to play at the 3-3 point (see Variations 2 and 3)

Move 26: A thank you move.

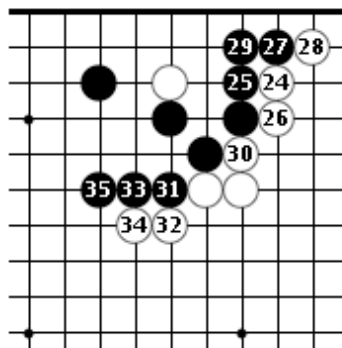
Move 27: Good Shape.

Move 29: Black gains so much in the corner, this is good for Black.



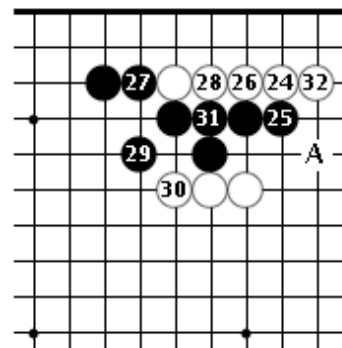
Variation 1

Black 27 at White 28 gives White more. With Black final move White is left with 2 weak groups at A and White 24.



Variation 2

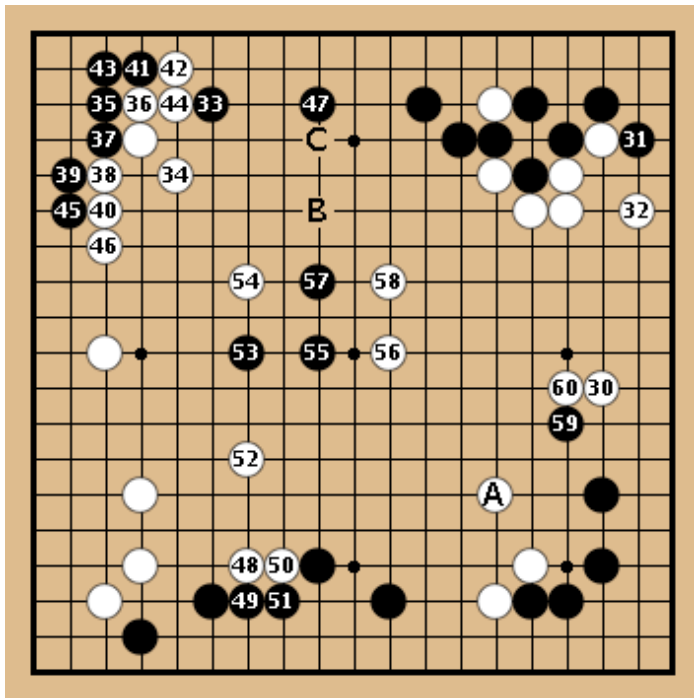
Locally, Black is very over-concentrated.



Variation 3

White 30 is a painful tesuji. White takes the corner, and can still jump back at A, the black stones are not efficient.

Moves 30 - 60



Move 36: Wrong direction for White, see variation 4.

Move 41: Wrong sequence. The correct sequence is black 45, white 46, black 41.

Move 47: This is a big move. But notice that White has a weak group at A, Black can reduce White's influence by attacking, see variation 5.

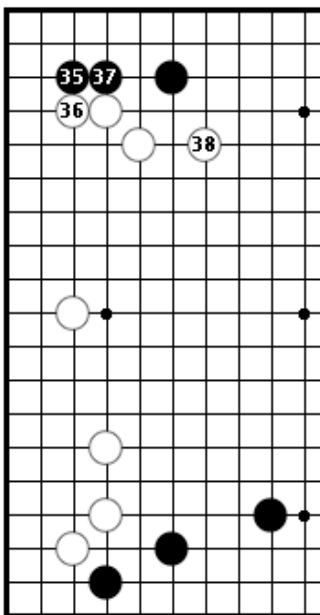
Move 53: This is too deep.

Move 56: Black missed the chance to attack group A, now Black is busy dealing with his centre. The A group is no longer a weakness for White now.

Move 58: Wrong direction, White is sending Black home.

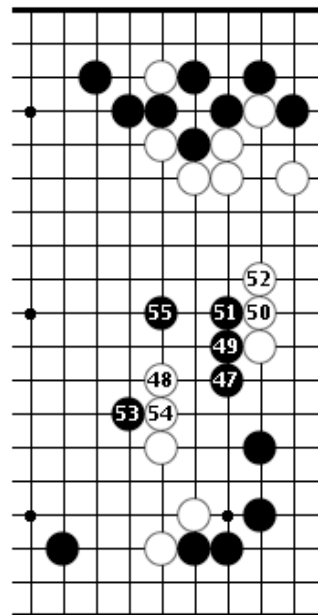
Move 59: Locally, it's good attack, but it's not the right timing. Black's center group is in danger. White's attack in the center is not efficient, Black is happy to link up at B now.

Move 60: This is not urgent, better to start a leaning attack on the black centre. Attaching at C to Black 47.



Variation 4

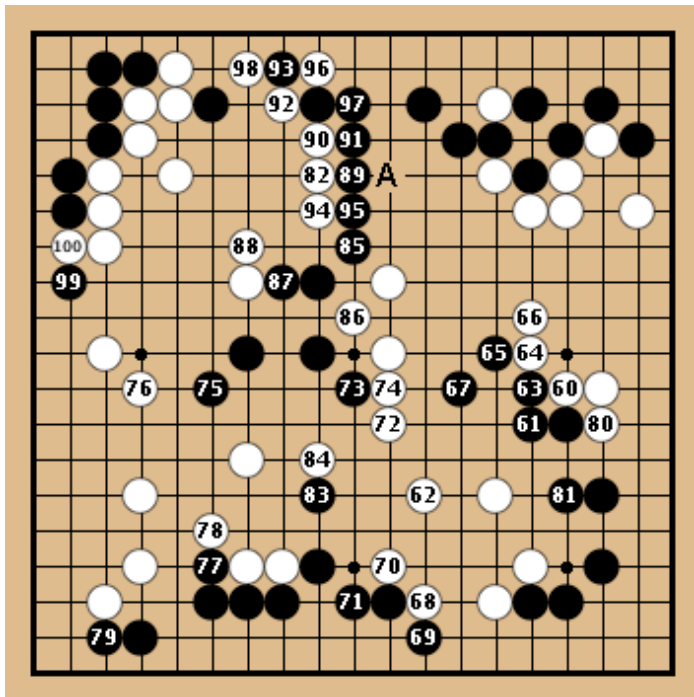
White's moyo is on the left side, so White wants to block this way to build that moyo.



Variation 5

The white group of White 54 is still heavy, Black can reduce the right side and walk into the center this way, this way there will be no potential in the center for White.

Moves 60 - 100



Move 63: The right side is not urgent. Black's central group is very weak now. Black still needs to link up at White 94.

Move 64: Exactly the same mistake as Black. White should attack the centre.

Move 75: Overplay. There's no future there for Black. If White cuts Black off at White 94, the black group is dying.

Move 79: A big move, but too greedy. Before starting yose, look at the whole board to see if there's some weakness or not. A play at White 94 is very urgent.

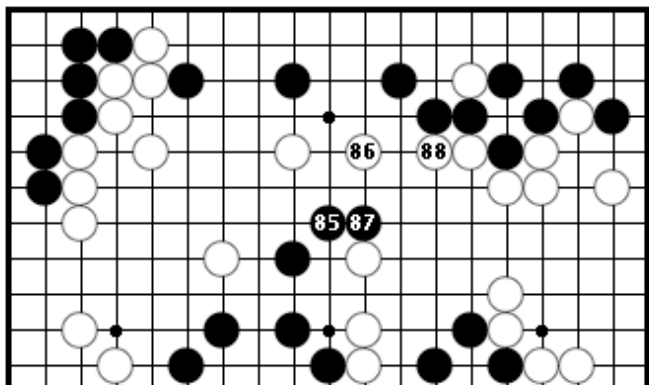
Move 82: Good

Move 86: White doesn't have any weakness here, so basically this exchange helps Black. White needs to jump out at A and continue to attack, see variation 6.

Move 90: Too soft, see variation 7.

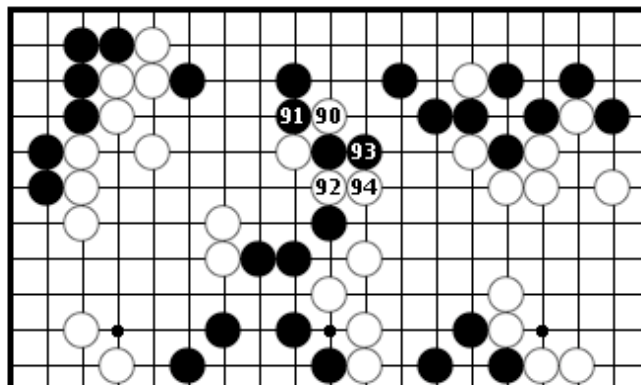
Move 91: After Black is nicely connected, White has no chance anymore.

Move 99: The correct yose here is nobi at 100.



Variation 6

The black group is dying.



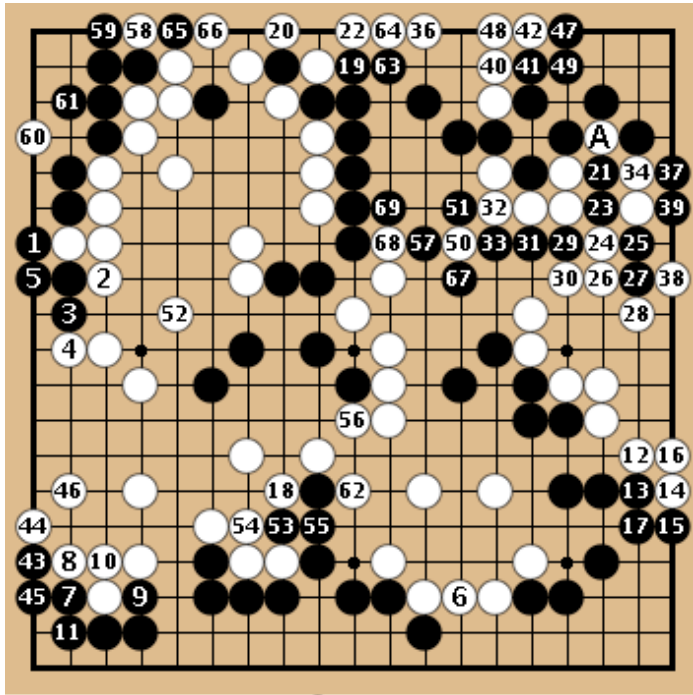
Variation 7

The last chance for White.



Edwin Brady (r) at the Belfast Rapid

Moves 100 - 169

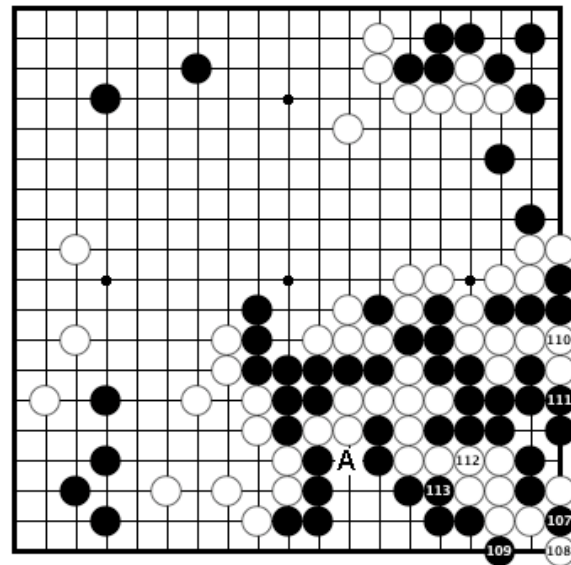


35 at A.

Although ahead, Black eventually lost the game in yose.

Puzzle Corner

So named because that's where the action is. This is from one of Colin's games at the London Open. In the game his opponent pulled out the tesuji of 107. In the game line White loses the semeai - if he connects at 107 Black simply plays at A. Can you find a better line for White? Answer next issue.



International News

Brian Gallagher will represent the IGA at this year's World Amateur Championship in Japan. There is a new Korea Points System in place, points are now available in each regional tournament. Top five players in each list as follows:

Japan		Korea	
Aidan Walsh	23.5	Noel Mitchell	61
Steve Flinter	20	Steve Flinter	44
Brian Gallagher	19.5	Claas Roever	37
Claas Roever	16	Ian Davis	31
John Gibson	15.5	Olivier Deme	21.5

Software Review - Leela

Leela is a computer program written by the Italian Gian-Carlo Pascutto, who has written a strong Chess engine called Sjeng. It is one of the new breed of Monte Carlo programs that use multiple random playouts as the initial basis to assess where to move. The website can be found at <http://www.sjeng.org/leela>. It's level is around 2kyu, despite its often pathetic opening play. Monte Carlo programs are very strong at corner positions and have to be ripped off at a higher level. As far as I can see it is Window's based.

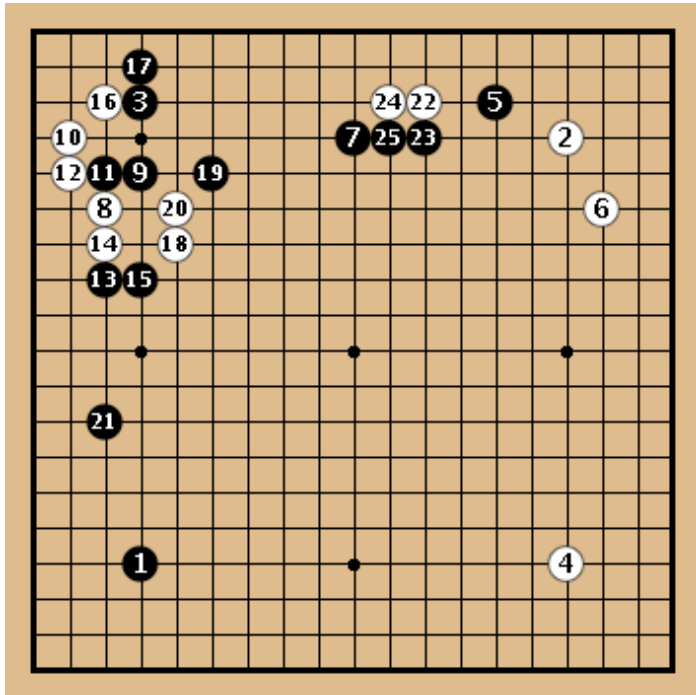
It has a free version called Leela Lite which plays only on small boards (9x9 and 13x13). This is supposed to be a slimmed down version, but Monte Carlo engines tend to get stronger as you move to progressively smaller boards. So you will find that Leela Lite will be of around Dan strength on a 9x9 board. It has some bugs in its user interface, but nothing that you should find too annoying. I would recommend this program as the easiest way to get some stern life and death practice on a 9x9 board.

Game Review Two

This game is taken from the 3rd Korean Prime Minister's Cup. Black is Fernando Ochoa (4d), White is Terence McSweeney (1d).

Terrence scored a very creditable 3/8 in Korea against tough opposition.

Moves 1 - 25



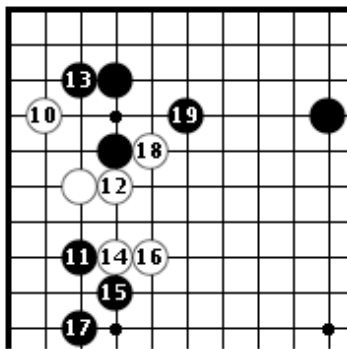
Move 11: see variation 1.

Move 15: The Move 14-15 exchange helps Black on the left side, see variations 2 and 3.

Move 19: Good shape for Black.

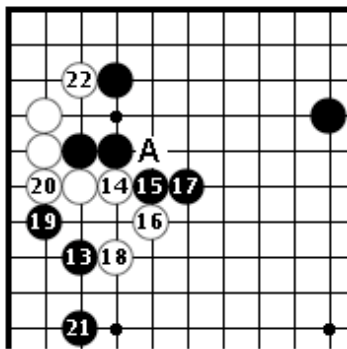
Move 21: Black gets both sides. This result is good for Black.

Variation 1



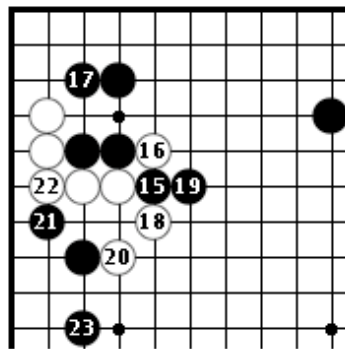
Black 11 is joseki. This is a new continuation from recent years.

Variation 2



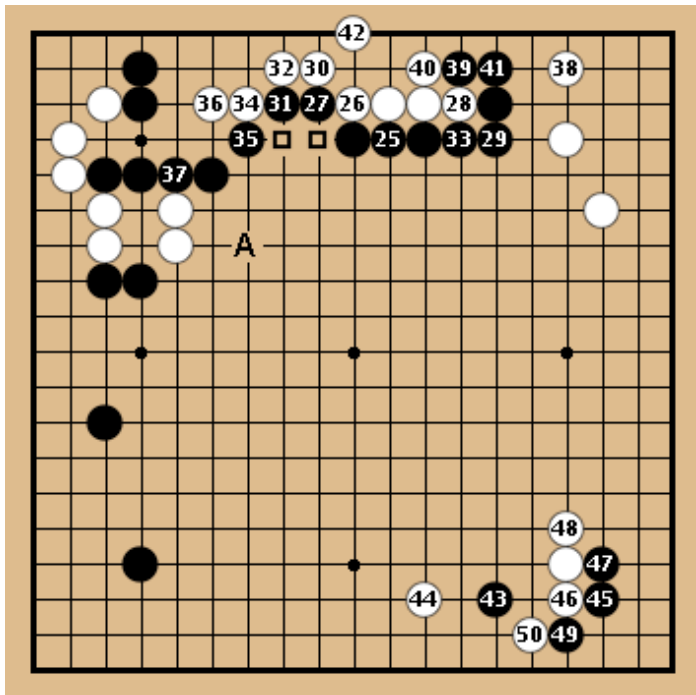
The hane of White 16 is correct. Without A - White 22 exchange, White gets better eye shape than in the next Diagram.

Variation 3



White 16 is an overplay. Black 17, this is a vital point. It takes White's eyes. Black 23, Black takes the top, the white group is still not alive.

Moves 25 - 50

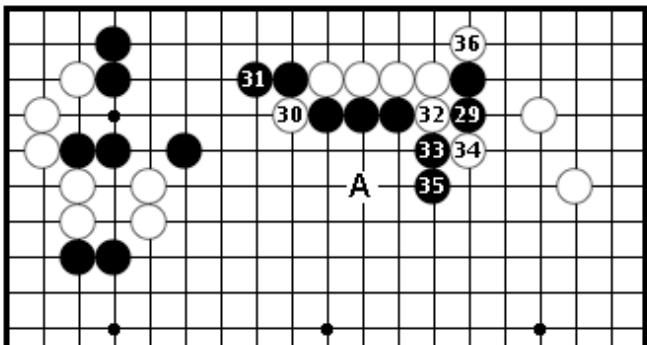


Move 29: Overplay, Black has so many cuts here, see variations 4 and 5.

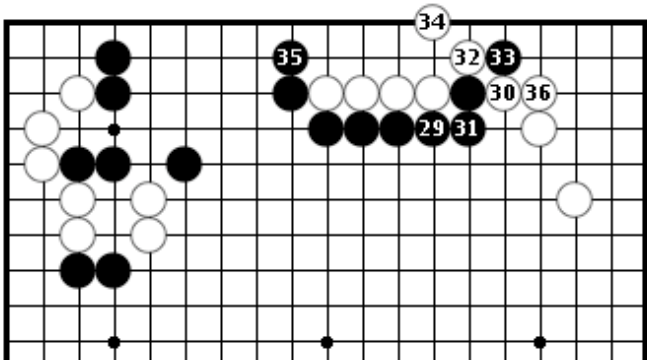
Move 37: This result is also good for White.

Move 38: This is a big move, but not urgent. White should play at A, reducing the center, aiming at the marked weak points.

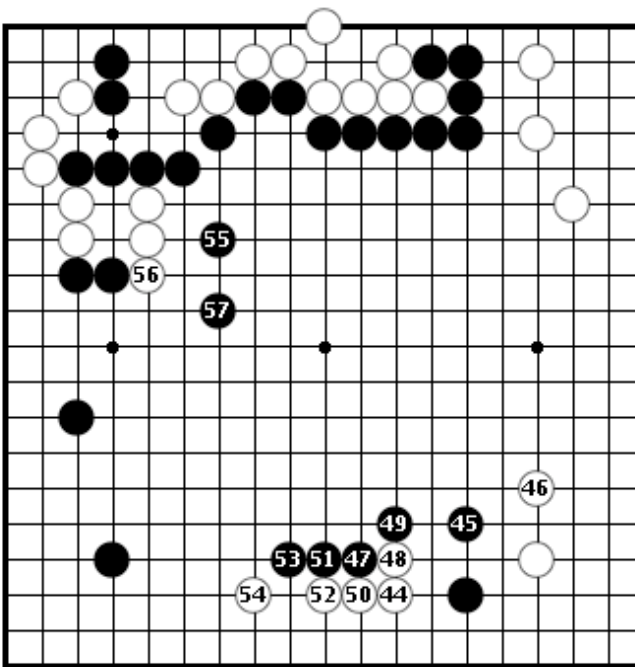
Move 45: See variation 6.



Variation 4: Black has weakness at the A area, the influence is not strong. White is happy to take the corner.

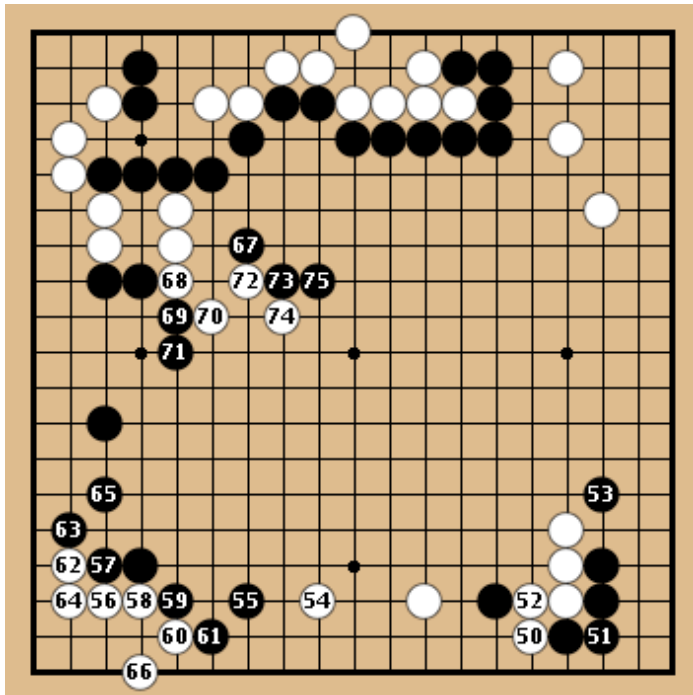


Variation 5: Black has to play at 29 and stay thick on the outside. This is a standard sequence locally.



Variation 6: This is a better plan for Black than in the game. The White group on the left is under attack, Black has a big potential in the center.

Moves 50 - 75

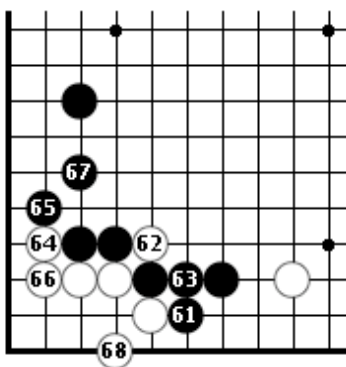


Move 54: White gets a solid position on the bottom, it also reduces Black's influence on top.

Move 62: Wrong sequence, see variation 7.

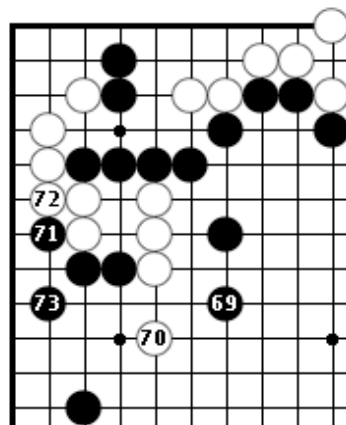
Move 67: Good Point

Move 69: Wrong direction, see variation 8.



Variation 7

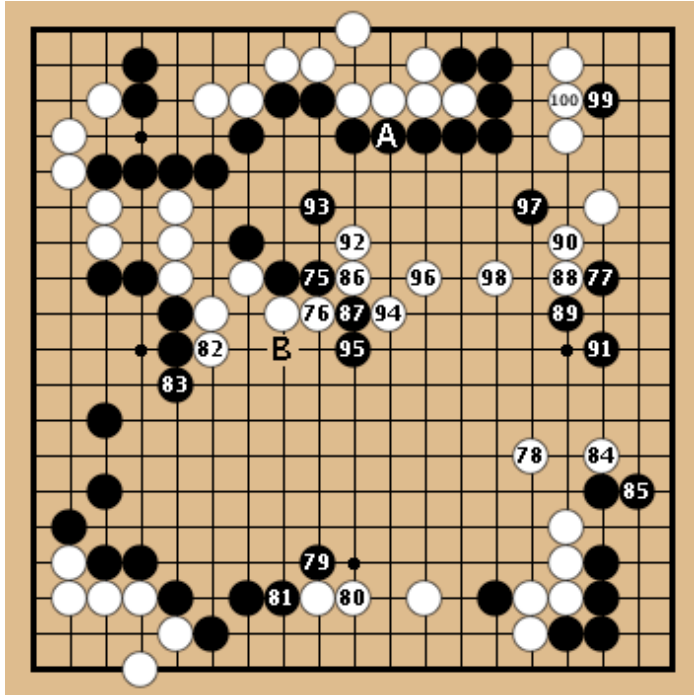
Correct sequence for both sides locally.



Variation 8

Locally, White is not alive.

Moves 75 - 100



Move 77: The right side is not urgent, nobi at White 86 is the shape.

Move 78: Hane at Move 86 is urgent. see variation 9.

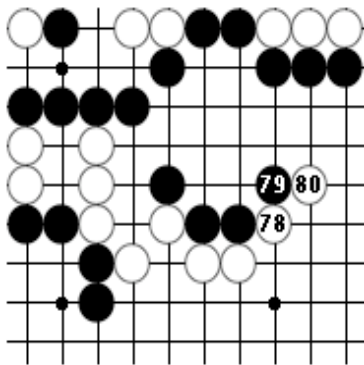
Move 86: Very good.

Move 88: White can play this if White is preparing to kill group A. If not, it helps Black on the right side. It's not good timing to play it, since Black 77 stone is also White's target, see variation 10.

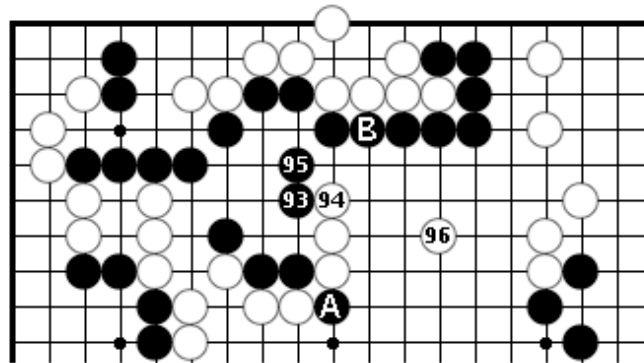
Move 91: This exchange makes Black stronger.

Move 94: See variation 11.

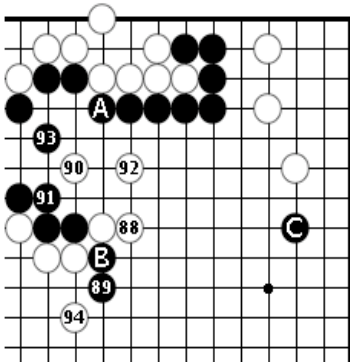
Move 97: Black can play B to destroy White's shape, and also force White to live on the left. This is also a reason why White doesn't want to play the 94-96 sequence, see variation 12.



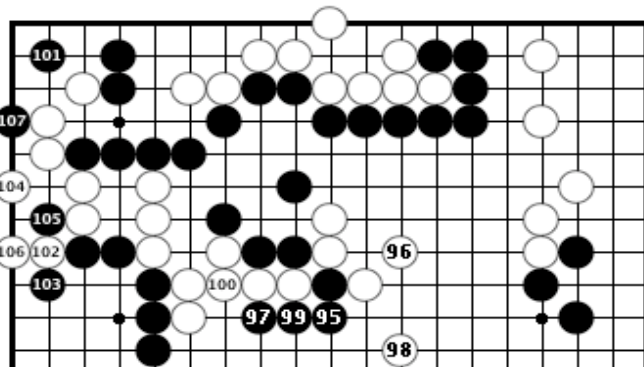
Variation 9: This is painful for Black.



Variation 11: White doesn't need to attack A directly as in the game. Locally, group B is not alive, it's hard for Black to fight with White at A area.

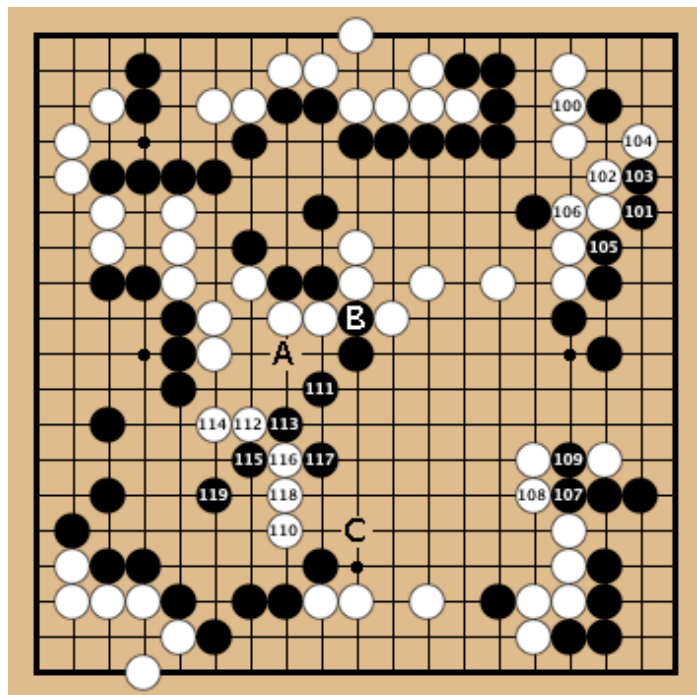


Variation 10: Nobu out is still a good choice. Black has 3 groups (A, B & C) to worry about.



Variation 12: Locally, it is dead shape.

Moves 100 - 119



Move 102: White can hane at Black 103.

Move 109: This is a big move, but still A is urgent. After that, B is no longer a weakness then.

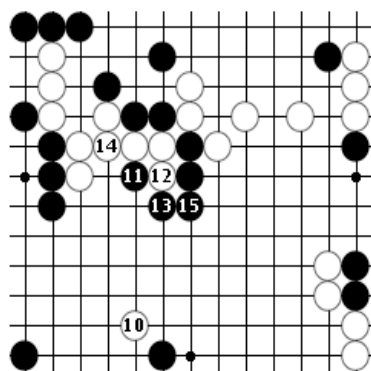
Move 110: White's shape is at Black 111.

Move 111: See variation 13.

Move 112: Now White has a chance. The B group is so far away from home.

Move 119: Now White just needs to jump at C, it's hard for the group at B to escape.

White eventually won by 6.5 points.



Variation 13 Move 111: This is still the shape for Black. The fight is now easier for Black.

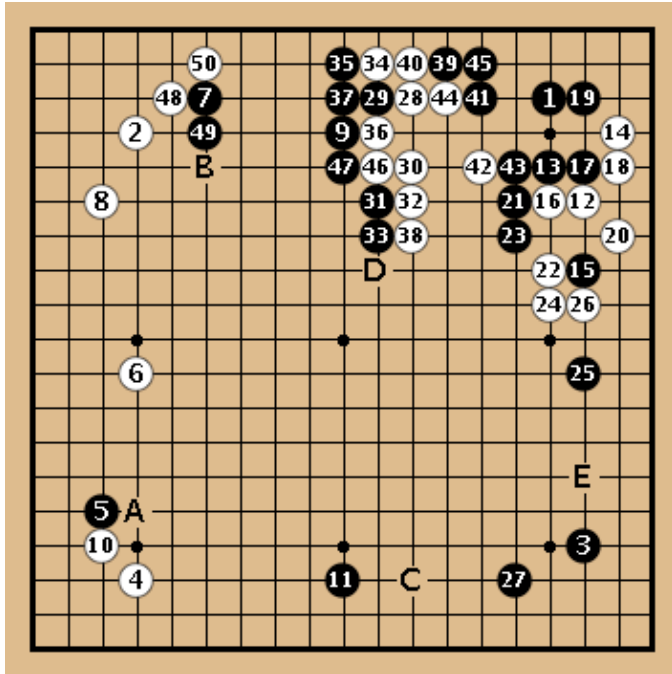


Terence McSweeney in action at the KPMC

Game Review Three

This game was played in the UCC tournament in Cork. It took place after the science building was evacuated due to extreme weather conditions, and so it was held in a pub. Black is Wei Wang (7d), White is Cao Tong Yu (4d).

Moves 1 - 50



Move 11: This is interesting opening idea. Black is fast paced.

Move 24: Joseki.

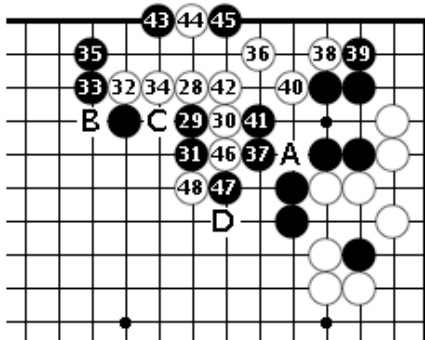
Move 28: A is also a big move for White. So another way for White is first defending at A, Black will jump at B and then White invades at 28.

Move 29: A normal way to answer the invasion, see variations 1 to 3.

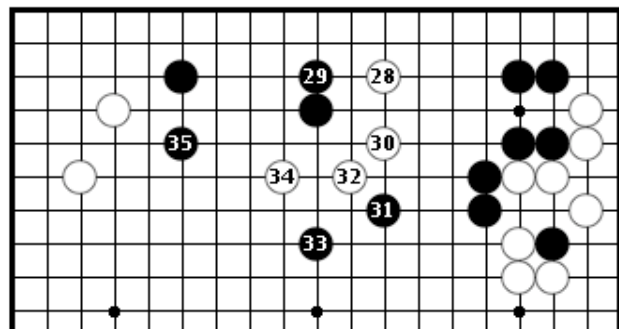
Move 31: The area around 21 is not very strong, pushing White this way is not a good idea for Black.

Move 38: Now Black needs to worry about the group at 23, see variation 4.

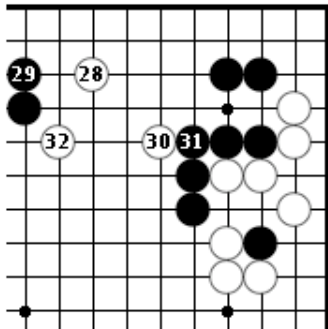
Move 48: Hane at D is a big move for White, after that, White is controlling the center and getting ready to invade the C or E areas.



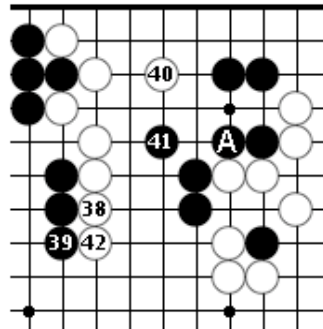
Variation 1: Move 29 is the most severe move for black. The follow ups are very complicated. Move 35 is the most severe attack for Black. Move 37: Black needs to defend the cut at A and close White. Move 48: Locally, White cannot live, but Black has B C D weakness on the outside, this leads to a very difficult fight for both sides.



Variation 2: Move 29 is a simple way for Black. Move 30: It is normal for White to jump out. The white group is heavy, Black is happy with this attack.

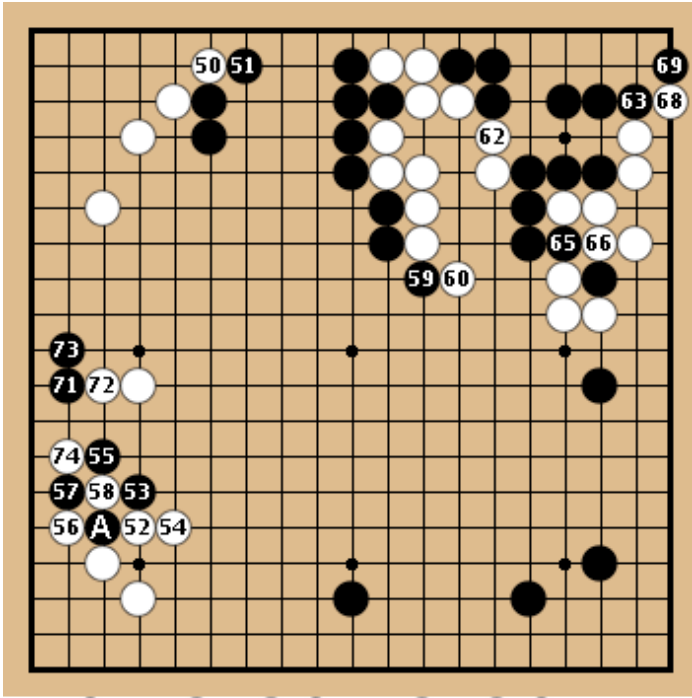


Variation 3: A better way for White. The white stones are lighter and White has better shape.



Variation 4: Nobi at 39 is the shape. This way, A is not alive, Black is not happy.

Moves 50 - 75



61 at A, 64 at 58, 67 at A, 70 at 58, 75 at A.

Move 52: A very big move.

Move 53: see variation 5.

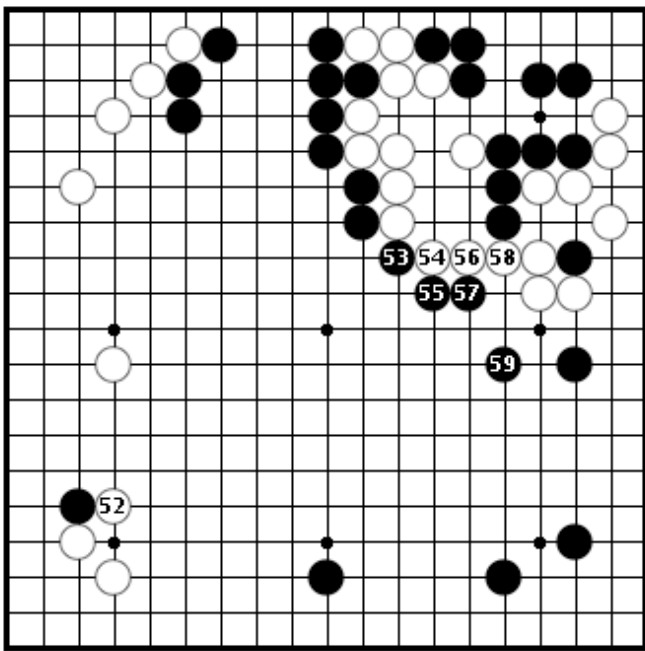
Move 54: This is the correct shape for White locally.

Move 59: Good ko threat.

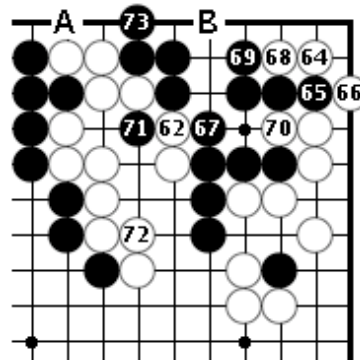
Move 62: This is not a threat. see variations 6 and 7.

Move 68: Not a threat again.

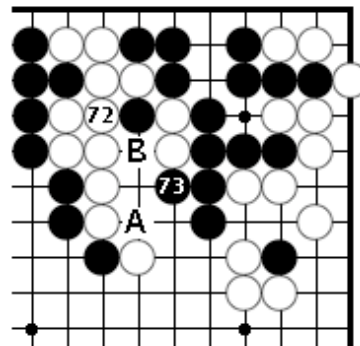
Move 71: Black can continue to fight the ko here, hane on top of 60 is a good threat.



Variation 5: Another way for black..

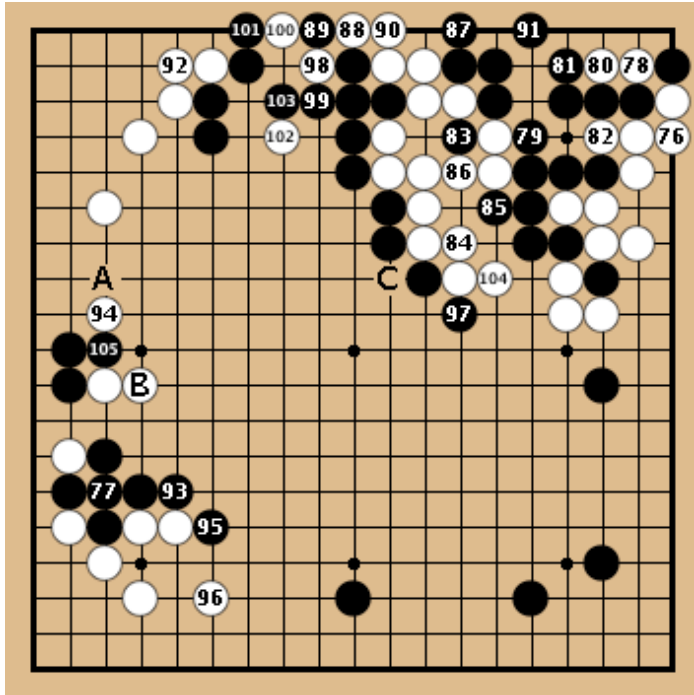


Variation 6: Move 71: Locally, if 73 is sente, Black can live at B. Move 73: A B miai



Variation 7: Move 73: A B miai.

Moves 76 - 105



Move 76: This is not a threat!

Move 77: Now White is in trouble.

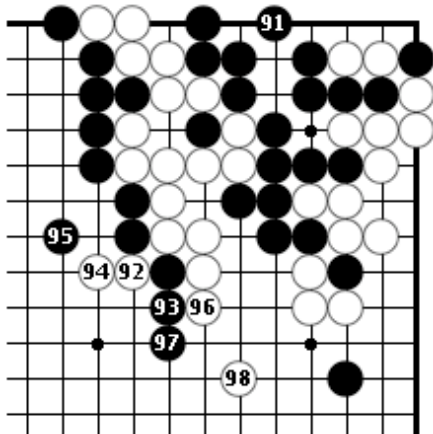
Move 92: Black hane at 97 is still painful for White. see variation 8.

Move 93: Black comes out, A - 95 miai for Black, group B is in trouble. White lost so much in the ko fighting, now Black is ahead.

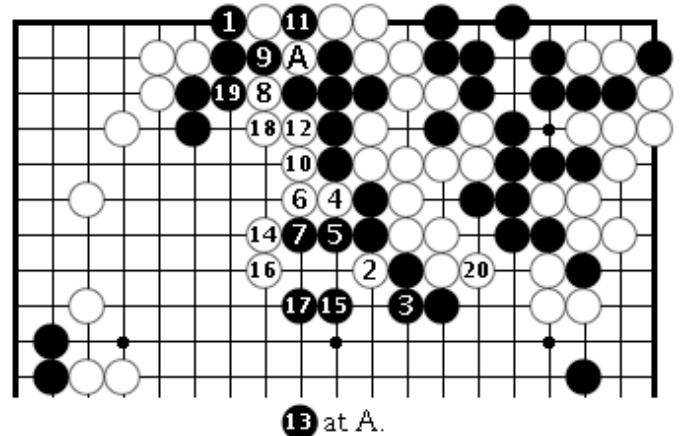
Move 95: This is painful for White.

Move 97: Black is in a very good mood.

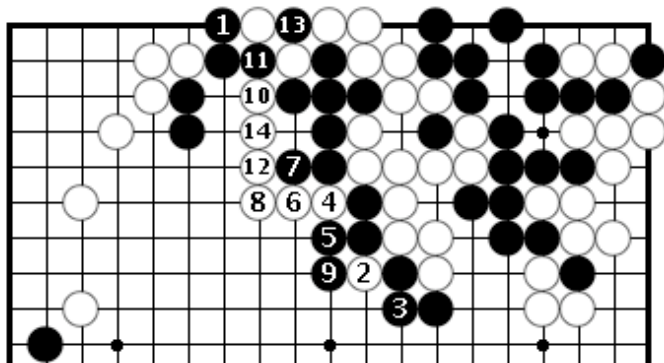
Move 101: This is not needed, it gives White a chance to counter attack. Just connecting at C is good enough, see variations 9 and 10.



Variation 8: The center is still important. If Black fights this way, White can walk into Black's moyo naturally.

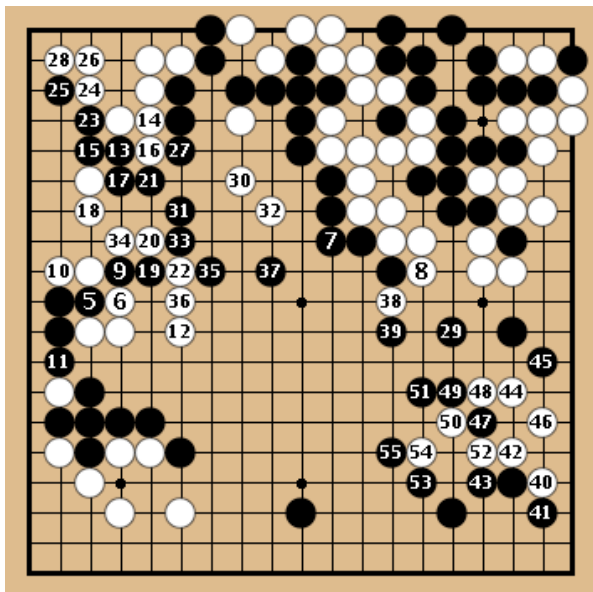


Variation 9: Move 107: Black has to come here, otherwise can kill the 3 stones with the ladder. Move 120: Now the Black group is almost dead.



Variation 10: What a headache.

Moves 105 - 155



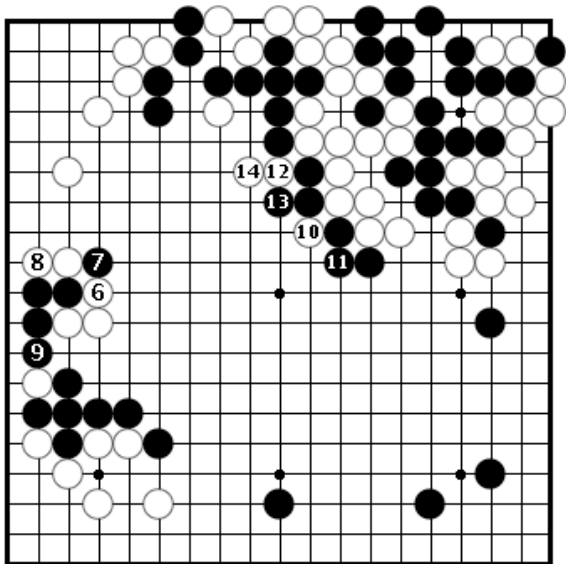
Move 107: Good defending. If Black cuts at 9 directly, White can counter attack at 7. see variation 11.

Move 109: This is severe. Black has thickness in the center, 6 group is in big trouble.

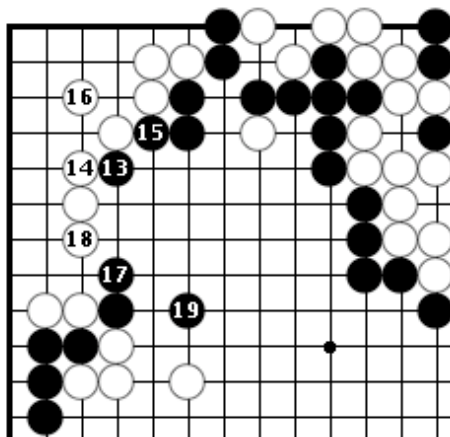
Move 114: White tries to counter attack. White thinks if he answers normally, there's no chance for him, see variation 12. It's good to try something instead of simply losing.

Move 124: White's only chance is to come out at 27 (instead of 24) and continue to fight.

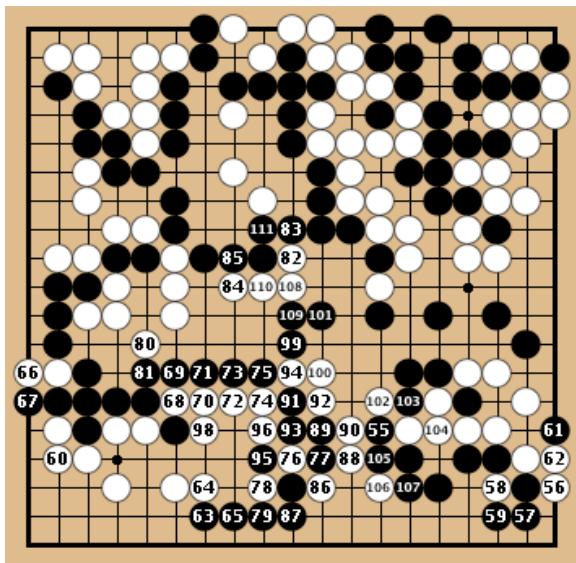
Move 137: The game is over here. White lost the game in the ko fighting.



Variation 11: This is severe, Black is in trouble.



Variation 12: Black's plan.

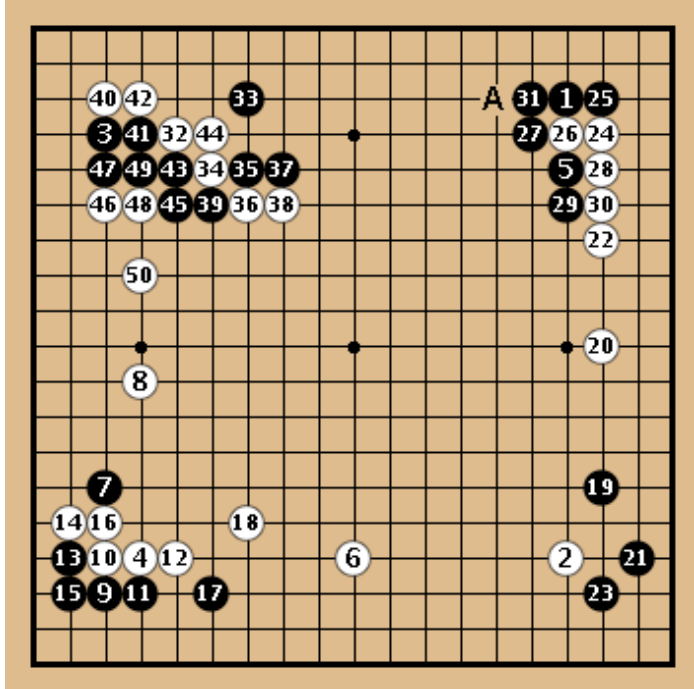


97 at 76

Game Review Four

This game was part of the Ladder Tournament, Black is Mark Webb (5k), White is Belfast's rising star Karl Irwin (6k). It will be interesting to see how far Karl climbs up the ladder this year, having begun in last place.

Moves 1 - 50



Move 10: This is wrong direction. White's moyo is on the bottom, White needs to block the other way to build the moyo, see variation 1.

Move 24: This is not urgent. The top is open, White can approach the upper left corner.

Move 31: Good, but A is a better shape for Black.

Move 39: In this case the cut is an overplay, since White has so many stones on the bottom. The fight will be good for White, see variation 2.

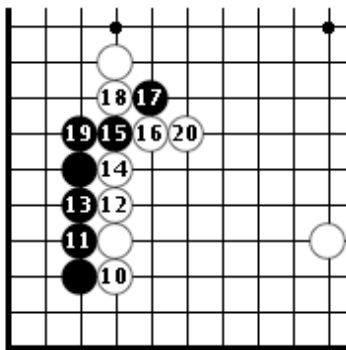
Move 40: This is not the correct shape. Black can nobi at 45 and White doesn't have a good reply. 45 is a vital point for both sides.

Move 41: Wrong shape for Black, see variation 3.

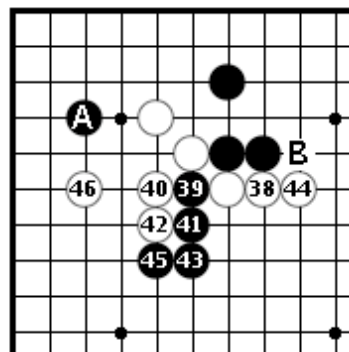
Move 42: White must atari at 45 first, this way, Black can atari at 43 and White is closed in.

Move 43: Now White is in trouble.

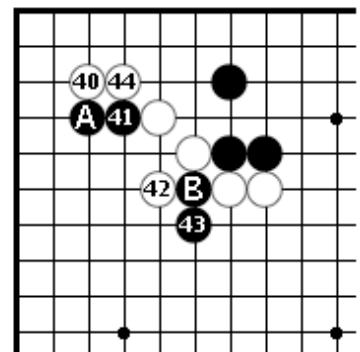
Move 46: Good, this is a vital point.



Variation 1
This is one joseki choice.

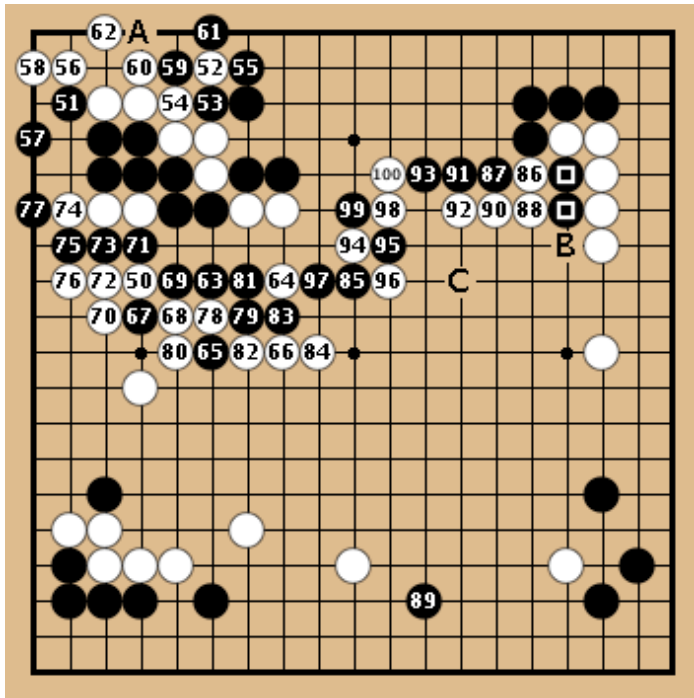


Variation 2
Move 40: This is important, White needs to come out.
Move 46: Now, A and 45 are under attack, white turns at B is also a vital point, (turn at the head of two is even better than hane at the head of two.) Black is too busy dealing with his weaknesses.



Variation 3
Now both A B are under attack. If instead 43 at 44, then White gains a ponnuki.

Moves 50 - 100



Move 62: White can live at A, this leaves a ko for Black at A.

Move 68: Overplay, just hane at 70 is enough.

Move 73: Black lives, this is a bad trade for White.

Move 78: This is not urgent. The stone at 65 is not big now compared to the top, see variation 4.

Move 83: Another bad trade for White, see variation 4.

Move 86: The two marked stones are not important since they are not cutting stones. Also in this area White is solid. So it's too small to kill them now. This way, White is helping Black to build the top, see variation 5.

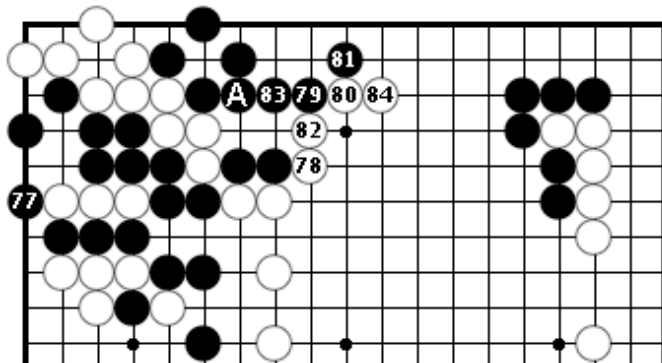
Move 87: Simple and good for black.

Move 89: This is big, a better plan for Black is atari at 88, white B, black C to enclose the top completely.

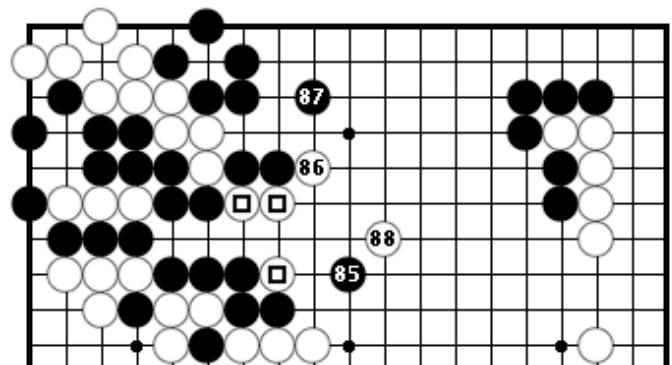
Move 90: A big move.

Move 97: see variation 6.

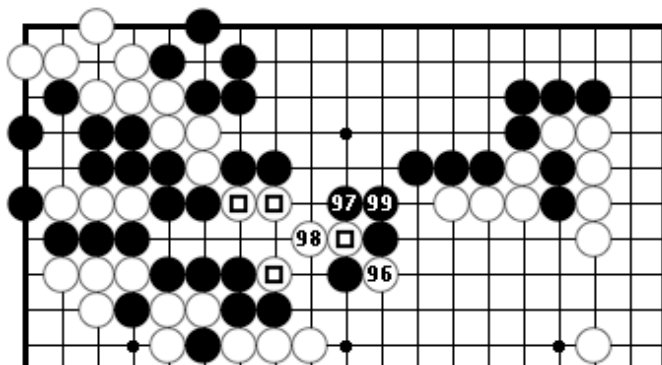
Move 100: Black loses more this way.



Variation 4: 78: This is a big move, it reduces the top and also helps with the ko in the corner. If the A area is safe this is a flower ko for Black, if not, the ko becomes heavy for Black, then Black cannot start the ko easily. Move 84: White can continue to press the top down like this.

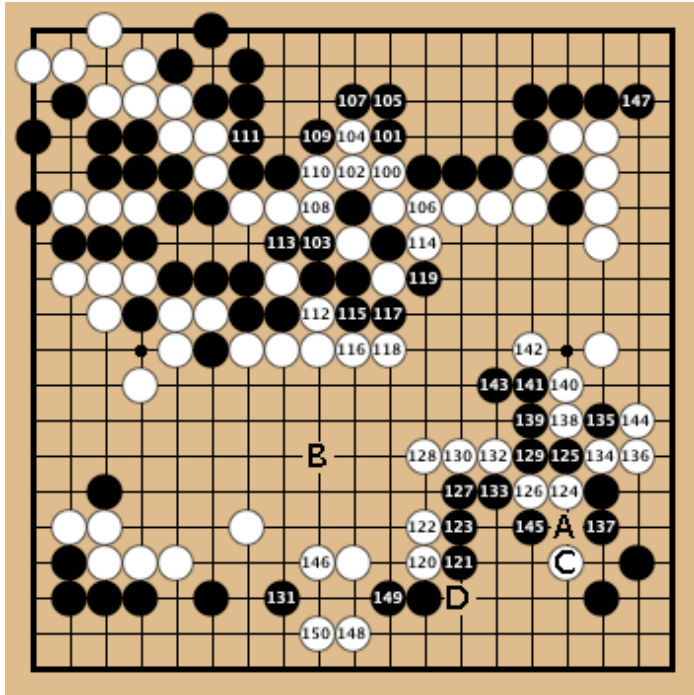


Variation 5: White still needs to jump into the top. Here, White doesn't need to save all the marked stones, he just needs to try his best to reduce the top.



Variation 6: The important thing for Black is to prevent White from jumping into the top, the marked stones are not important. This is a simple way to solve the problem.

Moves 100 - 150



Move 109: Too small, see variation 8.

Move 119: The area around 108 is very small. Both sides should tenuki there.

Move 120: White got sente. The game will be decided by the ko on the upper left. White attaching at A is a better plan. The B area is already White's territory. Saving the C stone is more important than enclosing more territory with the thickness.

Move 124: White's idea is not coherent. If White decides to do 120 and 122 then White has to give up C, see variation 9.

Move 128: White's plan is incoherent again. Now White needs to play 129 to save the 3 stones.

Move 131: It is better for Black to play 149 to fix the cut at D.

Move 137: White can turn at 144 to connect in sente.

Move 145: A is a better fix, it keeps White down to 1 liberty.

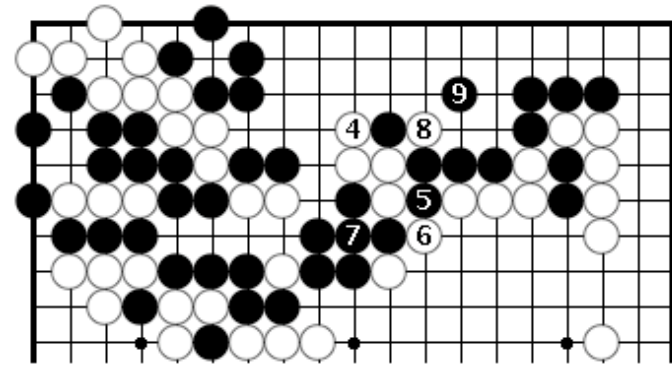
Move 147: Black totally forgot about the ko. Right now Black needs to fight the ko to win. The ko on the upper left is light for Black but heavy for White.

Move 148: Too greedy. White also forgot about the ko. Now is a good chance for White to fix the ko.

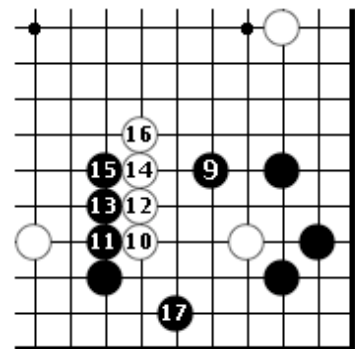
Move 104: Overplay, connect at 106 is good enough for white.

Move 105: Too soft, see variation 7.

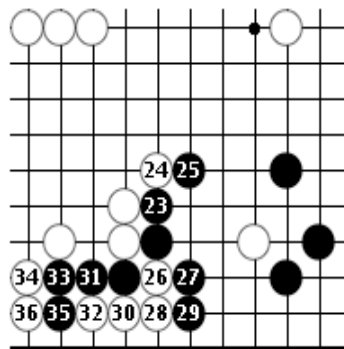
Move 108: This is too small, the focus is on the bottom now. White can come out at A.



Variation 7: Black can kill it this way.

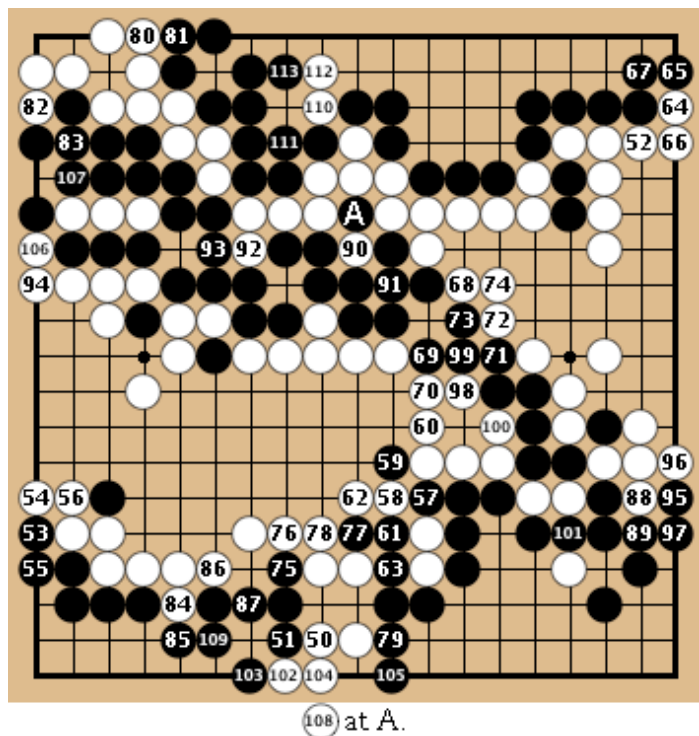


Variation 8: Black can reduce White's territory on the left by attacking this way.



Variation 9: A simple way for White, Black will be unable to escape.

Moves 150 - 213



Move 180: Black missed many chances to start the ko, now White is winning.

With the aid of komi, White finished 2.5 points ahead of Black .



Karl Irwin (r) at the Belfast Open

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