

CHAPTER ONE: HOLDING YOUR OWN

As a first step towards mastering high-handicap games, we will explore through example a simple strategic approach to winning. With this approach, Black seeks to avoid complex fighting, but to maintain the advantage given by the handicap stones throughout the game. When Black plays this way, White will usually attempt to frustrate Black's intentions by complicating the game wherever possible.

Sometimes, particularly during the first few games you play with a new opponent, the stronger player may play simply, hoping for an easy win, and also to discover the weaknesses of the player taking Black. If White plays this way, White can only win if Black makes serious blunders that White can exploit.

We will examine a game where both players try to avoid complexity. This will serve as a springboard for the analysis of more complex situations. This particular game is hypothetical and was crafted to facilitate discussion. In an actual game, even the most conservative player with White would soon realize that they were being suffocated by Black's play and would shift strategies. Even so, you would do well to learn how to play in this manner, as elements of this strategy appear in all handicap games, and even in many even games between strong players. We recommend putting stones on an actual board as you go along.

① and ③ in Diagram 1 are probes to see how Black will respond in the corner. Black chooses to respond in the corners rather than elsewhere because the corners are the most efficient places to make territory. The guideline to play first in the

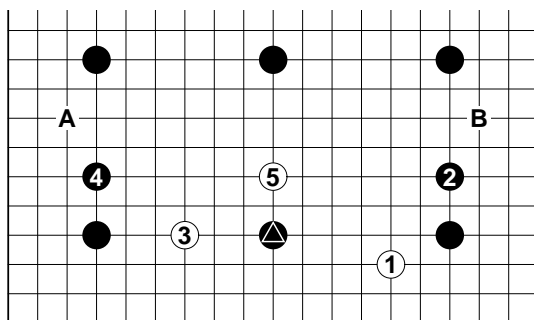


Diagram 1: Moves 1 – 5

corners, then along the side, then in the middle holds even in a nine stone game. Playing moves ② and ④ near the corners is thus more important than playing either of these moves near ⑤, which is along the side. The one space jumps serve to strengthen Black's presence in the corners, to reach out to the other handicap stones, and to create imposing towers that look down upon White's stones along the side, threatening to attack. Black

1. INVASION ON THE FOURTH LINE

After the invasion at ①, beginners will often play A, B, C, D, or E. All of these are bad moves. The worst is A. Moves B and C are nearly as bad. D is vague. E is not good. We will briefly examine these moves before returning to examples of good play.

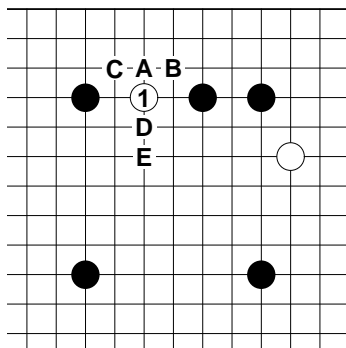


Diagram 2

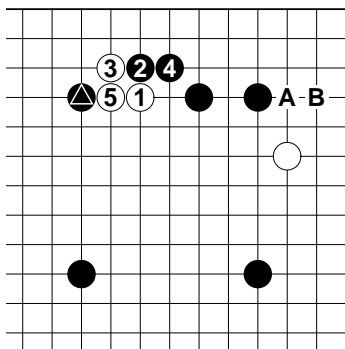


Diagram 3

If ② is at A in Diagram 2, the moves in Diagram 3 will follow. This sequence seriously weakens \triangle . White gains influence radiating toward the center and the left. Additionally, Black's corner remains open to invasion at either A or B.

If ② is at B in Diagram 2, White will play ③. Black aims to defend the corner, but does a poor job of it, as the corner remains open. Black has a large weakness remaining at A. White is happy to reinforce the lonely ① with ③. Although ② is not generally considered standard, it might be playable as an endgame move.

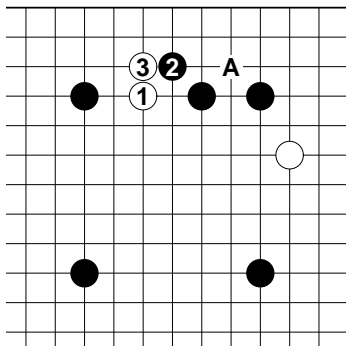


Diagram 4

3. ATTACHMENT INVASION

If White attacks by attaching at ① in Diagram 40, Black can respond at A, B, or C. Black D would be too timid, since White would invade at E, followed by Black F, and Black's corner profit would be too small for even the most optimistic player to call the result fair.

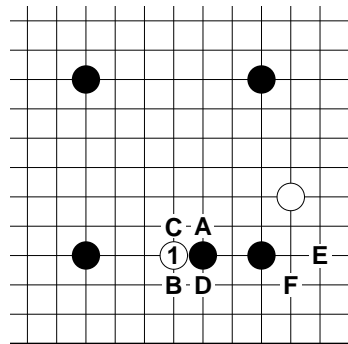


Diagram 40

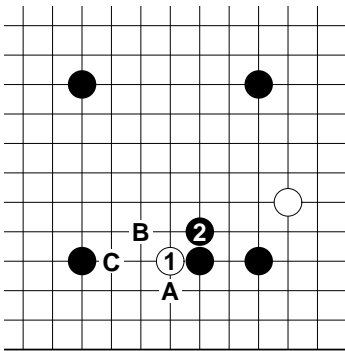


Diagram 41

Black may choose to play at A in Diagram 40. This move emphasizes the center. After ②, White can play at A, B, or C.

If White plays at A in Diagram 41, Black's response at ③ here is consistent with Black's original emphasis on the center. ⑤ must not be at A; White would then play B and Black would have no good follow-up. After playing ⑤, Black can establish a wall in sente through ⑪. The result is a large black influence in exchange for a small white territory.

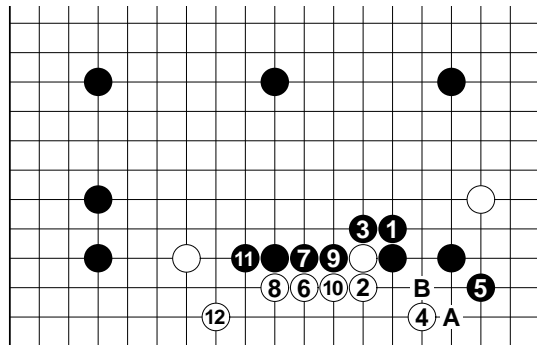


Diagram 42

Game 2

In this game, Black and White both exercise a sense of global strategy. Thus, this game will be a quite different and more mature effort than our previous game.

With ① White seeks to create synergy with ⑨ and ① and aims toward linking up with ⑬. In playing ⑭ Black emphasizes the importance of the center. However, playing as in Diagram 6 would also have been possible.

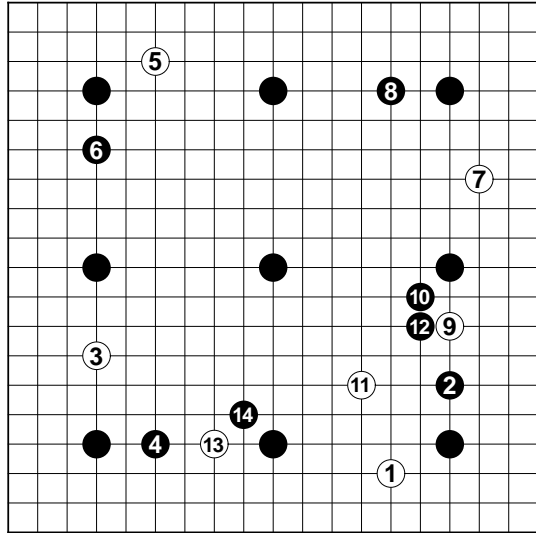


Diagram 1 (Moves 1 – 14)

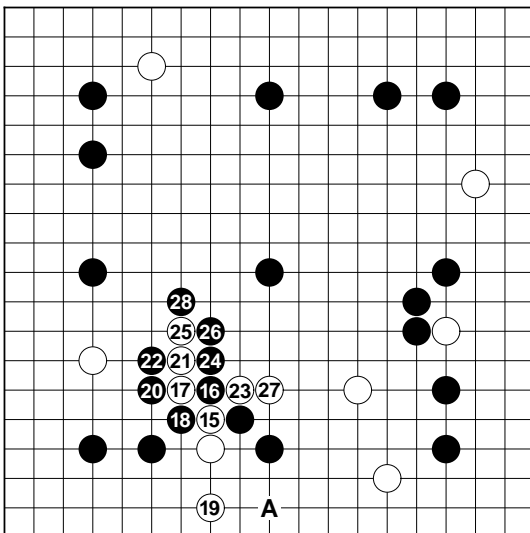


Diagram 2 (Moves 15 – 28)

⑳ sets the tone for the game, but it also could have been played at A (see Diagram 7). White could play ㉗ at ㉘ (see Diagram 8).

CHAPTER TEN: PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Eventually, knowledge gained from the study of patterns, theory, and books must be distilled and applied in actual games. Here we present three nine stone games that demonstrate how a weaker player can use the advantage of the nine handicap stones to crush stronger players.

GAME 1

White: Shuyo Miyashita 9 Dan professional
Black: Renaud Danset, then (May 1971) 2 kyu

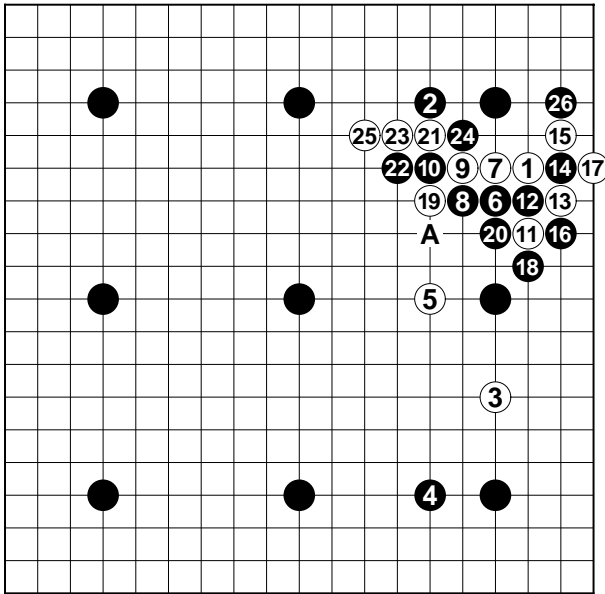


Diagram 1a (Moves 1 – 26)

White caps with ⑤; Black makes the most aggressive response with ⑥ (this pattern can be found in Chapter Three, Diagram 70 on page 52). White departs from the classic pattern with ⑪. ⑫ is the correct response. After ⑬, it is correct to cut with ⑭, and not at ⑯ (See Diagram 7 below).

Black plays well up through ⑱, but Black should have played ⑳ at A (See Diagram 8). White must submit to the exchange of ㉓ and ㉔ (See Diagram 9). After ㉕, the ladder to capture the black stones at ⑩ and ㉒ does not work for White, so Black can play ㉖.