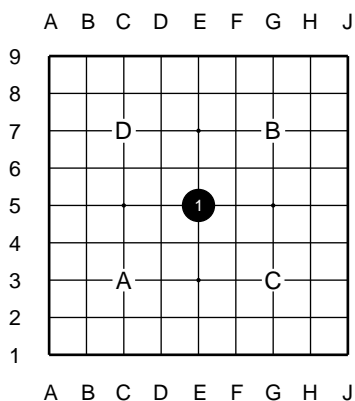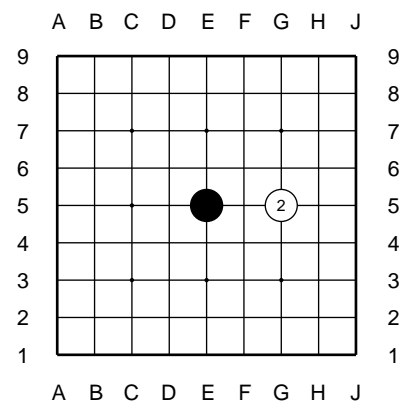Fig. 1

Fig. 1

Fig. 1

The rules of 9 x 9 Go are preferably under Chinese rules (komi being 7). The board has a 9 x 9 grid of lines, being empty at the outset. Around the board may exit coordinates in the form of A1 to J9, where A1 is in the lower left corner and J9 in the upper right corner (form a player's view), to name every point on the board. All pieces are identically double convex stones or round shape objects. Half of them are black, and the other half white.

The weaker player has an adequate supply of black stones, and is Black. Black always makes the first move, or Black 1, by placing a black stone on any empty intersection (point) on the board. However, if Black is allowed to play two, three, four, or five consecutive moves on the first turn, to compensate Black's disadvantage of being 2, 3, 4, or 5 stones weaker, the black stones (handicap stones) must be placed on A-B, A-B-C, A-B-C-D, or A-B-C-D-E (E being at Black 1), respectively.

The stronger player has white stones, and is White. After the first turn, White and Black alternate. White plays the second move, or White 2, which can be placed on any empty point on the board. Any stone on the board can neither be moved nor removed, unless it (or its group) is captured and removed by the opposing player. Each move can never be undone.
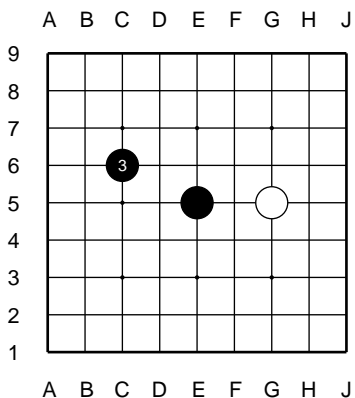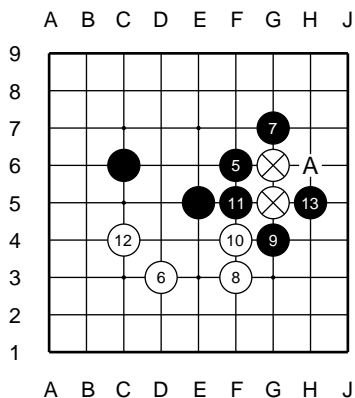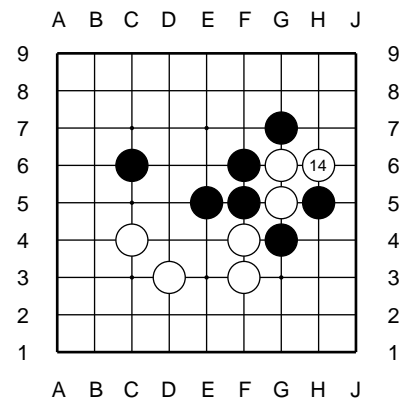

Fig. 1

Fig. 1

Fig. 1

A player may pass his or her trun at any time. But normally we do not pass until the endgame, when to add a new stone will not make any good result.

A stone or group of connected stones of the same color can be captured and removed from the board when all the intersections directly adjacent to it (liberties) are occupied by the enemy. For example, Black can capture the marked white stones by making a move on A. But White can escape by placing White 14 on A.

One object of 9 x 9 Go is to enclose a larger group (or groups) of empty points while making it harder for the opposing stones to occupy the inside area, than the opponent. The other is to make the opposing stones die on the board, by preventing them from making a larger group of two permanent rooms (two eyes), while preventing own stones from getting killed, unless the player can take advantage of his or her sacrificed stone (or stones).
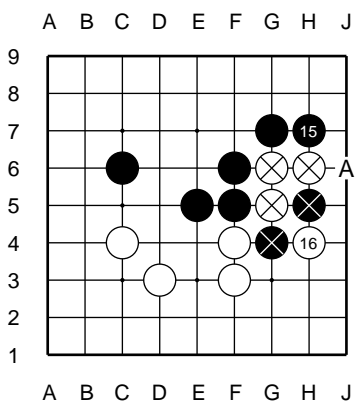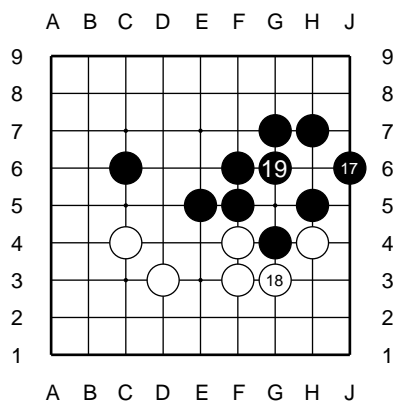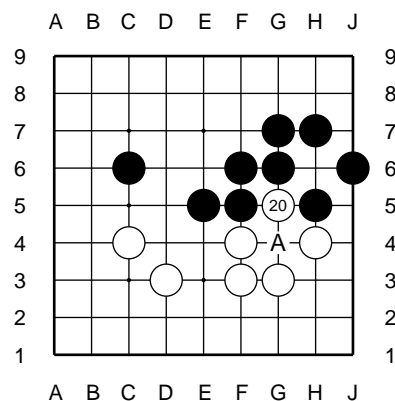
Fig. 1

Fig. 1

Fig. 1

Stones are not dead stones if they (Aji) can kill the enemy. For example, the marked white stones are not dead stones although they can be killed with Black 17 on A. White can capture the mark black stones if Black does not capture the marked white stones now.

There is Ko, when a counter capture is forbidden. For example, White 20 has just captured and removed the black stone from A. Black may not capture White 20 immediately, but must make a move elsewhere on this turn. After move 22, Black may capture White 20 (the Ko) if he or she can and want to do.
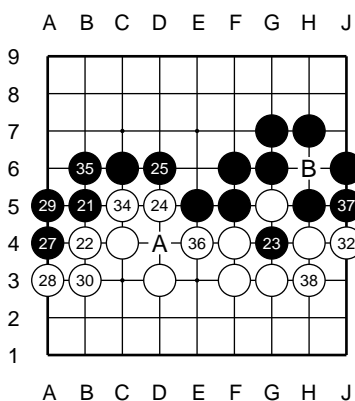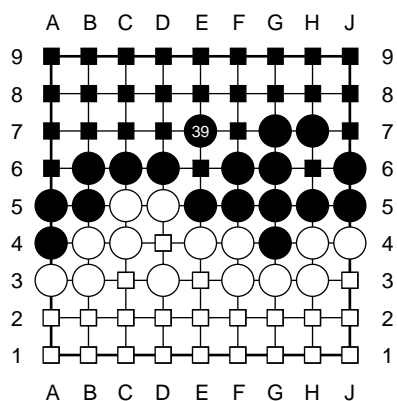

Fig. 1

Fig. 1

26 above 23, 31 at 23, 33 above 23

There are some empty points on which the opposing stones cannot be placed, because there will be no liberty once occupied. They are called eyes, such as the points on A and B, unless the placing is a capture.

When Black or White thinks no more moves are needed. He or she can pass, to let the opponent play the next move. If the opponent also passes, then the game ends due to the two consecutive passes. It's time to count the final scores of Black and White.

If a player resigns, then the game ends without score but the opposing player wins by resignation. If a player places one of his or her captured stones on the board, he or she resigns in a very polite way. If a player uses time to the limit, he or she losses by time.

Otherwise, the player with higher score wins. In this example, Black has the final score of 47 points, which equals the number of empty points surrounded by black stones, called Black's territories (27) + the number of white stones captured (2) + the number of black stones on the board (18). White has the final score of 44 points, which equals the number of White's territories (22) + the number of white stones on the board (14) + the number of black stones captured (1) + komi (7). Thus, the game result is Black wins by 3 points. The player who wins more games gains victory, and can be promoted to a higher rank if passing the criteria of the ranking system. The ranks in 9 x 9 Go are arranged from lowest to highest as 30 Kyu, 29 Kyu, ..., 1 Kyu, 1 Dan, 2 Dan,..., and 9 Dan. Beyond 9 Dan is considered superhuman.