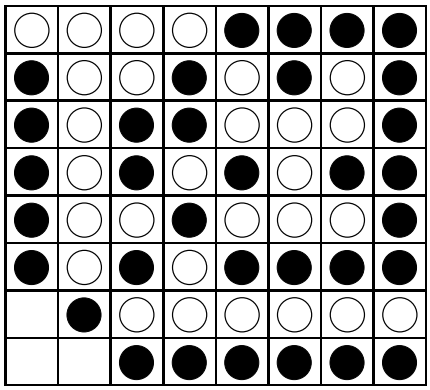
OFFICIAL BEGINNERS' SECTION



White to play

In this issue of the Official Beginners' Section of the British Othello Federation's newsletter we have some anti-swindling puzzles by Joel Feinstein.

Puzzles, articles, letters, cartoons etc. should be sent to the Section editor:

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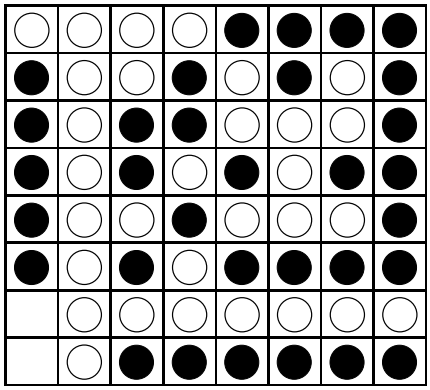
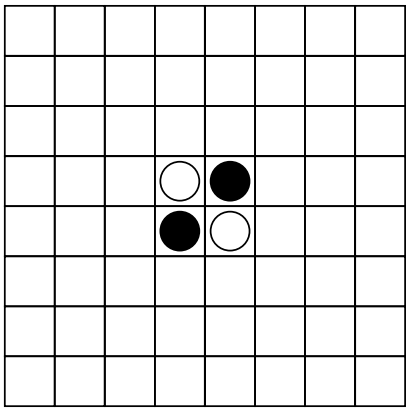


White will win (just!)

In the original position, White's other moves lose. Can you see why?

Notation.



The start position

a1	b1	c1	d1	e1	f1	g1	h1
a2	b2	c2	d2	e2	f2	g2	h2
a3	b3	c3	d3	e3	f3	g3	h3
a4	b4	c4	d4	e4	f4	g4	h4
a5	b5	c5	d5	e5	f5	g5	h5
a6	b6	c6	d6	e6	f6	g6	h6
a7	b7	c7	d7	e7	f7	g7	h7
a8	b8	c8	d8	e8	f8	g8	h8

The names of squares

a1	C					C	h1
C	X					X	C
C	X					X	C
a8	C					C	h8

Special squares

The board is split into eight columns and eight rows. We label each column with a letter, from 'a' for the left-hand column to 'h' for the right-hand column. We number the rows from '1' for the top row to '8' for the bottom. This is the opposite convention to that used in chess. So, as shown above, the top left corner is called 'a1', and the bottom right is 'h8'. The pieces used in the game are called 'discs'.

Some of the squares on the board are especially important. The four corner squares (a1, h1, a8 and h8) are very useful to have, since they can never be taken away from you. As a consequence, it can be dangerous to play to a square next to an empty corner too early in the game (your opponent might be able to use your disc to play a move in the corner). The squares b2, g2, b7 and g7 (one diagonally in from a corner) are known as 'X-squares'. The other squares one away from a corner are called 'C-squares'. These are shown in the third diagram above.

We sometimes use compass directions when describing regions of the board, so for instance the area of the board near to h1 is called the North-East corner.

DON'T GET SWINDLED! *by Joel Feinstein.*

This set of puzzles is a slightly more difficult follow-up to last issue's article about swindles. In each of the positions that follow there are three empty squares left, and it is White to play. Usually this means that White will get two of the last three moves, but in all of these positions White has to be careful: a wrong move would allow Black to play both of the last two moves. You have to decide which, if any, of White's moves avoid these 'swindles'. You may want to try some of these out on an Othello board, but it is more impressive if you can do them in your head!

Remember, it is White to move in all cases, and you have to decide which of White's moves, if any, prevent Black from playing both of the last two moves. You don't have to decide whether or not White is winning (but you can if you like). Answers are on the next page, so don't hold this page up to the light!

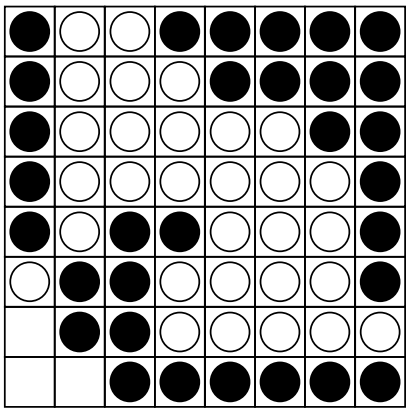


Diagram 1

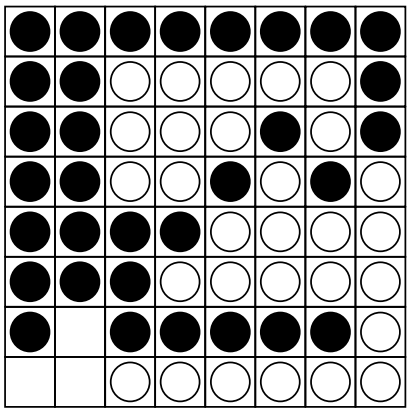


Diagram 2

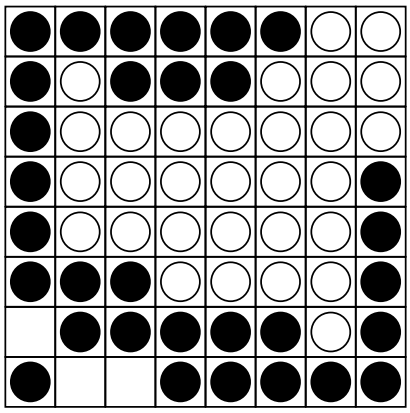


Diagram 3

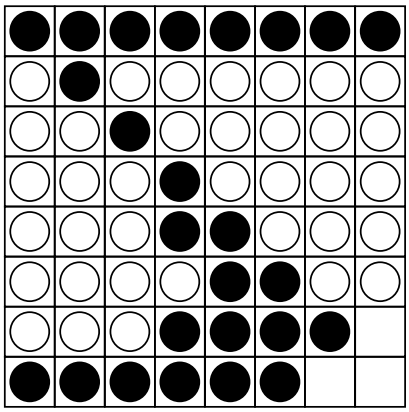


Diagram 4

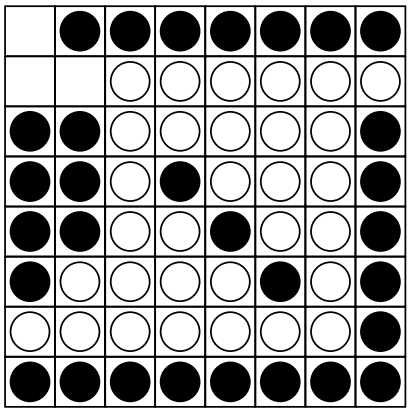


Diagram 5

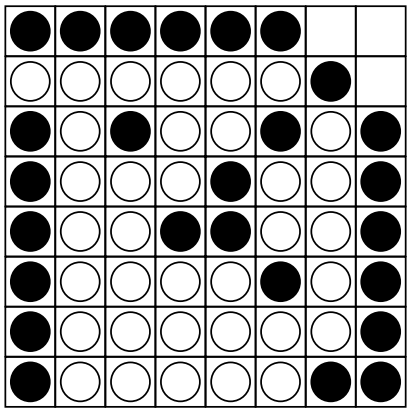


Diagram 6

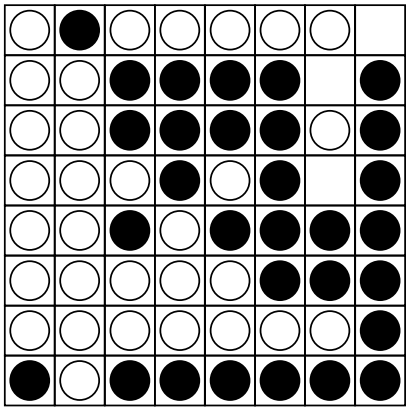


Diagram 7

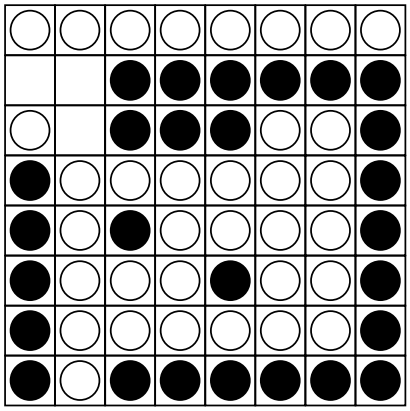


Diagram 8

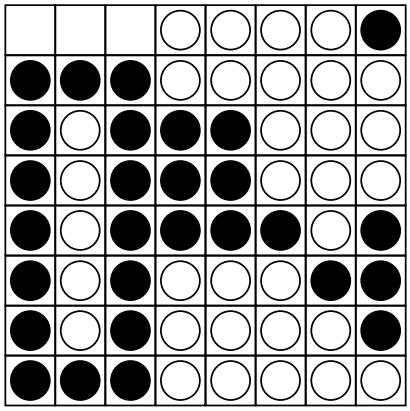


Diagram 9

DID YOU GET SWINDLED?

Here are the solutions to the puzzles on page 9.

Diagram 1 Unlike the cover position, this time White must take the corner with a8 in order to avoid being swindled. If White plays a7, then Black has b8 followed by a8, because all of the discs in the b column are white. If White plays b8, then Black has a7 followed by a8, for similar reasons.

Diagram 2 You may think that b7 is tempting! But if White plays b7, then Black has a swindle, playing first a8 and then b8. There is no problem if White starts with b8 instead.

Diagram 3 If White starts with a7, then Black has a swindle, playing b8 and then c8. White's other two moves avoid the swindles.

Diagram 4 There is no escape this time! If White starts with h7, Black has the swindle g8 pass h8. But if White tries g8 instead, Black has a similar swindle, playing h7 and then h8. White's problems come from the fact that all of the pieces on the a1-g7 diagonal are black.

Diagram 5 If White starts with a2, then Black can play a1 followed by b2. White can make use of the situation on the West edge to avoid the swindle by starting with b2 instead.

Diagram 6 If White starts with h1 or g1, then Black has a swindle. White can avoid the swindles by starting with h2, although this is, in fact a worse move than g1. Can you see why? (This is rather unusual!)

Diagram 7 White's natural move is to play g4, but then Black has a winning swindle with g2 pass h1. In fact White should start with g2 instead, because fortunately Black can not then play to g4.

Diagram 8 If White plays b3, then Black has a swindle, playing b2 and then a2. Luckily, White can avoid the swindle by starting with b2 instead.

Diagram 9 If White plays b1, then Black has a swindle, playing a1 and then c1. White should start with a1 instead (Black's move to c1 looks like a swindle until you spot that it flips b2 back to black again, allowing White to play b1.

So, now you should be even better than before at spotting swindles in advance. Remember, even experts can fall into these traps. If you master the art of swindling, you are well on your way to causing some major upsets!