GO RULES

INTRODUCTION
Until quite recently the game of Go was practically unknown outside of China and Japan. By the end of the last century Go had begun to receive attention in Europe, but enthusiasts were still few and far between. More and more people discover that playing a game of Go is a unique experience; it is an ever-changing, often breath-taking contest, that can hardly be compared with other board games. A study of many centuries has not been able to exhaust its innumerable variations.
In encyclopedias Go is called the oldest of all known games. The age of the game which is in the Chinese origin, is indeed impressive: it has been estimated at thirty-five centuries. Go literature started some three thousand years ago, some writings still existing today which date back twelve centuries.
In Japan, where it was introduced around 735 A.D., Go is the intellectual game par excellence, with literally millions of enthusiasts. In its strict simplicity and rigorous logic Go compares favourably to chess; Go's rational structure however is no impediment to fantasy. It gives gull scope to the imagination: daring bluffs and risky invations are just as much part of the game as the classic construction of time-honoured, unshakable formations. If we regard both chess and Go as the depiction of a contest, then chess represents the knightly battle. Go, on the other hand, is so universal that, on an astonishing number of points, a comparison with modern warfare could be drawn. The Chinese and Japanese have a common heritage in the game of Go. According to the Japanese, a conscientiously, elegantly played game calls for well-considered control, alternated with sudden, dramatic action. They consider Go to be not only the most refined game, but even part of thier culture. Indeed, the game has such a stimulating effect that most people, having once learned it, will continue to play it with enthusiasm for the rest of their lives.

THE RULES OF THE GAME
Go is a game for two, played on a board. One player uses the white stones, the other the black ones.

The Board
The board has a grid of 19 horizontal and 19 vertical lines. The stones are placed on the intersections of this grid, i.e. not inside the squares. Thus there are 361 of those intersections, henceforth called points.
See fig. 1.
The numbers and letters along the sides of the board are not essential to the game itself; they are used in recording a game and for referring to various situations. The corner point left, below, is called a1; the point above a2, next to a2 is b2, above b2 we have b3, etc.
For clarity's sake, the outside lines have been thickened in all the diagrams. This has not been done on the board.
The nine points marked d4, d10, d16, k4 etc. Are of special significance only in a handicap game.

The Stones
Theoretically, the quantity is unlimited. Actually, there are 181 black and 180 white stones, which would occupy the entire board, but this will never happen in practice. E.g. one could play for years without noticing that one actually owns only 170 of each.

The Game
The stones are not placed in any specific position at the beginning of the game of Go, which makes it notably different from the other board games. Go begins with an empty field, a no-man's land. The players take turns at placing a stone on an unoccupied point. This is a move. Black begins. A stone once placed cannot be moved again. There is no shoving or jumping. Instead of making a move, a player may pass, i.e. skip his/her turn; this only makes sense towards the end of the game – then it may be useful to know that there is no obligation to make a move.
Stones captured in the course of the game (see below) are immediately removed from the board, kept, and counted after the game has finished. Capturing is done by enclosing or surrounding. A capture ('killing') is made when the stone concerned – or group of stories – is deprived of its last liberty. What do we mean by 'liberty'?

LIBERTY
In this game, the word means something like breathing space. Place a black stone on a empty board: it has four liberties, i.e. it is surrounded by four unoccupied points, all of them connected by lines with the point occupied by the stone.

CAPTURING
A capture is made as follows
1. White to move
2. White moves
3. And immediately removes the captured stone.
A connection is captured in the same way.
1. White moves and captures the three black stones
2. Which are immediately removed.

PRISONERS
It is not always necessary to kill a chain entirely. It often happens that a chain (or stone) 'bound to die' is not deprived of its last liberty or liberties, and for the time being remains on board as a 'prisoner', because the player who defeated the chain does not want to take the time for carrying out the execution since the consider moves in other areas of the board of greater importance. When the players are beginners at the game, it may happen that, later, he hostile surrounding stones of such a chain are captured with the result that, to its owner's joy, it 'comes to life' again. In the normal course of a game, however, if such a chain does not regain its viability and remains prisoner, it is, at the end of the game, considered as captured and removed from the board without more ado; it is therefore not necessary for the chain then to be first completely deprived of its liberty and killed.

OBJECT
The object of the game is to collect more points than the opponent. Points are obtained by:
a)gaining territory;
b)capturing enemy stones.
Of prime importance is the conquering of the largest possible territory. To explain the concept of 'territory' we represent in fig. 7 the closing situation of the game.
Black has, top left, a territory of nine unoccupied points. Left, below, a corner of two points and a large territory of 34 points in the centre. Thus, a total of 45 points is enclosed. White has a total of 41 points. If we learn that, in the course of the game, White has captured one stone and Black has not captured any stones at all, we may deduce that Black wins with 45-42.
For simplicity's sake, we used the smaller board here. A game of Go on the standard board lasts – roughly – one hour and a half. If that is considered too long, the 13x13 board may be used. The game can be played quite well on such a board, entirely according to the same rules, provided it is borne in mind that naturally the proportions are different. A territory of, for example, 15 points on the small board has the same significance as one of 32 points on the larger board.

TERMINATION OF THE GAME
The game comes to its natural end when the territory has been divided between the players. In that situation there is no sense in continuing the game: either the stones are placed in one's own territory, which means more captured stones for him/her.
There is more to say about the end of the game, but we would rather leave this till later.

LIVING GROUPS
In chess and draughts, the board gets emptier; the Go board, on the other hand, gets fuller all the time. Unavoidably, the positions grow out towards each other. One might think that, consequently, all groups will eventually menace each other, but this is not the case since it is possible for a group to be so constructed that it can never be captured.
White can never take all liberties in the inner space. Each white stone placed behind the lines would soon be killed in action. The position is menaced only:
1. if the group is too small, or too compact.
2. If the space within a position is so large as to allow the enemy to maintain himself within, forming as it were 'a state within a state'.
It is therefore of great importance to know how to make a 'living group'. This is based on the formation of 'eyes'. For a better understanding, however, we must first define the concept 'suicide'.

SUICIDE
You will remember: stones deprived of thier last liberty are immediately removed from the board.
If, therefore, you play a point that has no liberty at all – a place that is entirely 'choked' – you commit suicide.

ARE YOU STILL THERE?
We have come a long way. If you haven't given up yet, you have grasped the most difficult principles required to be able to play Go.
This doesn't mean that you won't find the game difficult at times, but that goes for everyone.
The majority of the Go problems deal with the 'making of eyes' and the prevention thereof: 'Black to move will kill the white group', or 'Black to move will form two eyes'. You will appreciate that this introduction cannot claim to be complete, but even the most exhaustive textbook could only contain a fraction of the total problem literature.
Part of the contest on the board is aimed at making eyes or preventing this, that is unavoidable. But in each game of Go the circumstances are different, and only practice can teach us how to deal with a specific case. When doing so, you must realize that at furst you will be playing against someone who finds the 'eye-question' as worrying and as difficult as you do yourself, and making or not making eyes is almost done by accident in beginners' games.

'KO'
Beginners will always find the Ko-situation a complicated matter.
Nevertheless, the Ko-rule itself cannot be called complicated. But when a Ko-situation does develop on the board, players should make the best possible use of it, and it is then that they may be faced with difficult decisions.
The object of the rule itself is only to prevent a repetition of moves.

'SEKI'
Arises when in a particular situation neither player dares make a move on that part of the board. A sort of impasse has been brought about, a local truce.
Here, White has surrounded three black stones, and Black four white stones. None of these is connected with other stones of the same colour. It might therefore be expected that one of the groups must be dead. However, neither the one nor the other grop is dead, since neither of the players can undertake any action without endangering his/her own group. As soon as Black makes a move to attack White, the black group will be captured, and vice versa.
This is why such patterns are left untouched on the board, the rules stipulating that the contest on that part of the field remains undecided, and that the space oncerned, cannot be clamed by anyone.

THE HANDICAP SYSTEM
Few chess-players are prepared to accept a handicap from a stronger opponent. In Go, a handicap game is quite normal.
When both players are beginners, the result of the game is often too much determined by chance, but when the players are experienced it often becomes quite clear that a stronger player frequently, if not usually, wins the game from an opponent who is only a little weaker. Each difference in playing strength can be evened out accurately by means of handicap stones.
As a consequence, every player must do his/her utmost in order to win; this prevents the possibility of an uninteresting Go game.
In a game without handicap, the player who plays black and there fore commences, actually has an advantage of one stone.
In a real handicap game, therefore there are at least tow handicap stones.
The placement of the stones is as follows:
2 stones d4, q16
3 stones d4, q4, q16
4 stones d4, d16, q4, q16
5 stones d4, d16, k10, q4, q16
6 stones d4, d10, d16, q4, q10, q16
7 stones d4, d10, d16, k10, q4, q10, q16
8 stones d4, d10, d16, k4, k16, q4, q10, q16
9 stones d4, d10, d16, k4, k10, k16, q4, q10, q16
Two to six handicap stones ate therefore is place in the centre (k10) and is replaced by k4 and k16 when there are eight handicap stones. The player who gets on 1-stone handicap, i.e. the black player in an ordinary game, does not have to play

one of the handicap points. A handicap player always plays black. Once the handicap stones have been placed, White opens the game; the placement of the handicap stones is considered, as it were, Black's first move.

THE END OF THE GAME
In every Go game there comes a moment when the claims to all vacant spots have been astablished. It is now impossible to conquer anymore territory and it is no longer necessary to protect against further attacks.
It is now a disadvantage to play in one's own territory, because you reduce your own territory by one point. It is also a disadvantage to play in enemy territory, because the opponent gets another prisoner. It is obvious that the players will now occupy the points outside thier own enclosed space, and also outside that of the opponent: the occupation of the so-called 'dame' is rather a logical consequence of the game.
By means of the dame stones, the hostile groups will link up with each other without interuption. This facilitates the making of the final count. As soon as the last neutral point has been occupied, the game is over. The players then remove the captured stones from the board.

NOTE
Counting is much simplified if both players place all the captured stones in each other's territory. This makes no difference in the final reckoning, because with every stone thus place one loses one prisoner, but the opponent also loses one point of his/her territory.