

SOME MORE VARIATIONS

The current strategy just described causes the computer to make a move it decides will limit you to the smallest possible gain. In other words, the computer plays in hopes of maximizing your disadvantage. In English, the computer tries to get tough with you.

This does not represent the best way of figuring a move for VIP-FLOP. I included it with your game as a good starting point. This strategy is a very good way to come up with moves in other games, and many of the chess programs sold today use the process as a basic strategy. Checkers works well this way, too. I did not feel you would be inclined to make changes to your program that worsened the computer's play. So now that you understand this strategy, let's write a better one!

The most obvious thing to do is to cause the look-ahead to end with an examination of the computer's possibilities instead of the opponent's. The result is that the computer will make a move that maximizes its own potential gain rather than minimizing yours. To accomplish this is easy. If the ply count is an even number, the look-ahead will always end with a look at the computer's move. (Or yours if the computer is