NAME

    othello – a game of dramatic reversals

SYNOPSIS

    /usr/games/othello [[**−r**] *file*]

DESCRIPTION

    Othello (a.k.a *reversi*) is played on an 8 by 8 board using two-sided tokens. Each player takes his turn by placing a token with his side up in an empty square. During the first four turns, players may only place tokens in the four central squares of the board. Subsequently, with each turn, a player *must* capture one or more of his opponents tokens. He does this by placing one of his tokens such that he outflanks one or more of his opponents', horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Captured tokens are flipped over and thus can be re-captured. If a player cannot outflank his opponent he must forfeit his turn. The play continues until the board is filled or until no more outflanking is possible.

    In this game, your tokens are asterisks and the machines' are at-signs. You move by typing in the row and column at which you want to place your token as two digits (1-8), optionally separated by blanks or tabs. You can also type in

        c   to continue the game after hitting break (this is only necessary if you interrupt the machine while it is deliberating),

        g *n*   to start *othello* playing against itself for the next *n* moves (or until the break key is hit),

        n   to stop printing the board after each move,

        o   to start it up again,

        p   to print the board regardless,

        q   to quit (without dishonor),

        s   to print the score, and, as always,

        !   to escape to the shell. Control-D gets you back.

    Othello also recognizes several commands which are valid only at the start of the game, before any moves have been made. They are

        f   to let the machine go first.

        h *n*   to ask for a handicap of from one to four corner squares. If you're *really* good, you can give the machine a handicap by typing a negative number.

        l *n*   to set the amount of lookahead used by the machine in searching for moves. Zero means none at all. Four is the default. Greater than six means you may fall asleep waiting for the machine to move.

        t *n*   to tell *othello* that you will only need *n* seconds to consider each move. If you fail to respond in the allotted time, you forfeit your turn.

    If *othello* is given a file name as an argument, it will checkpoint the game, move by move, by dumping the board onto *file.* The **−r** flag will cause *othello* to restart the game from *file* and continue logging.

DIAGNOSTICS

    Illegal! and Huh?