KONOBI

by Luis Bolaños Mures

Introduction

Konobi is a drawless **connection** game for two players: Black and White. It's played on the intersections (points) of a square board, which is initially empty. The top and bottom edges of the board are colored black; the left and right edges are colored white.

Luis Bolaños Mures designed Konobi in March, 2012.

11x11 Konobi board

Definitions

Two like-colored stones are **strongly connected** if they are orthogonally adjacent to each other, and **weakly connected** if they are diagonally adjacent to each other without sharing any strongly connected neighbor. Note that two stones of different colors are never considered to be connected.

A **chain** is a set of connected stones.

Play

Starting with Black, the players take turns placing stones of their own color on empty points of the board, one stone per turn.

It's **illegal** to make a weak connection to a certain stone unless it's impossible to make a placement which is both strongly connected to that stone and not weakly connected to another.

It's also illegal to form a **crosscut**, i.e., a 2x2 pattern of stones consisting of two weakly connected Black stones and two weakly connected White stones, as shown in the picture on the right.

If a player can't make a move on his turn, he must **pass**. Passing is otherwise not allowed. There will always be a move available to at least one of the players.
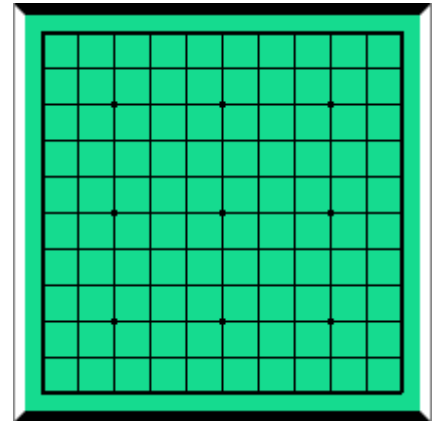
The game is **won** by the player who completes a chain of his color touching the two opposite board edges of his color. Draws are not possible.

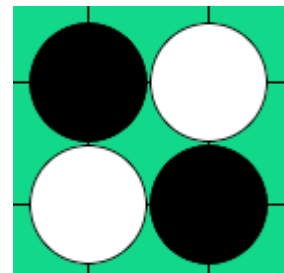*You can't form this or its rotations*

Pie rule

The **pie rule** is used in order to make the game fair. This means that White will have the option, on his first turn only, to change sides instead of making a regular move.

Examples

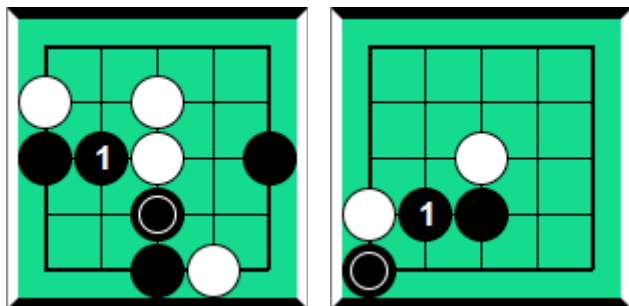Normally, a Konobi board will be larger than the tiny ones shown here.

Legal moves
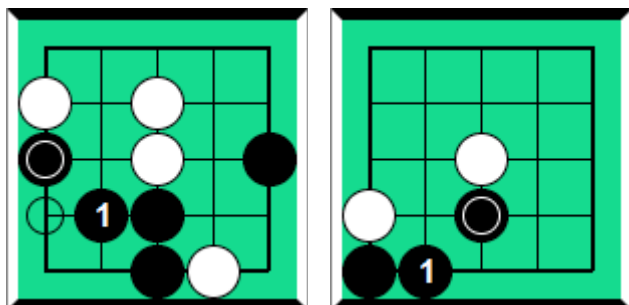

In both these pictures, Black 1 is a legal move. It's weakly connected to the marked stone, and all the remaining strong connections to that same stone would make weak connections to something else.

Illegal moves

In both these pictures, Black 1 is illegal. It's weakly connected to the marked stone, and it's still possible to make strong connections to that same stone without making weak connections to anything else. In the first picture, for instance, Black could play at the marked empty point instead.

Sample game
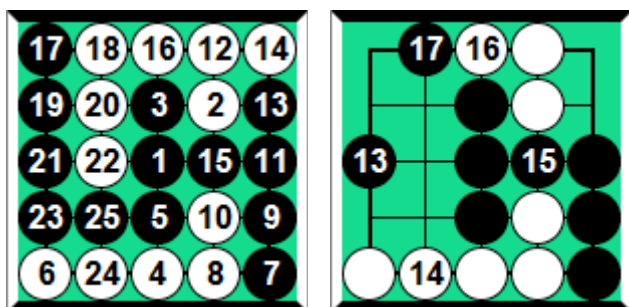
On the left, Black has won by connecting his two allocated board edges with a chain of his color. Note that 24 at 25 would have been illegal for White. The picture on the right shows an easier win for Black in the same game. Black 13 threatens to occupy 14 next, but also enables him to connect at 17 after White's blockade at 16.

Last update: 22nd November 2012