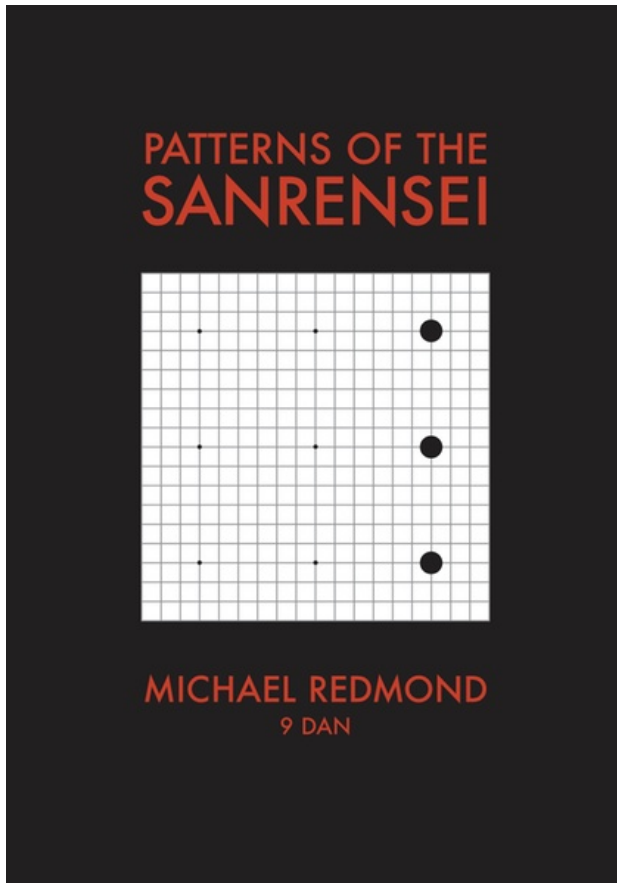


# Patterns of the Sanrensei

Michael Redmond 9 dan



© 2011 by Michael Redmond

Surrounding a large moyo is a lot of fun, and the Sanrensei opening is perfectly suited to do it. "Patterns of the Sanrensei" is a complete study of Sanrensei opening strategies that Michael Redmond used successfully in professional tournament games. In section 1 the reader will find the six Patterns, Black's six basic game plans for the Sanrensei. Section 2 is collection of twenty of Michael Redmond's games, in which the Sanrensei Patterns are

shown in actual play. Throughout the book Redmond gives a detailed analysis, making clear the meaning behind his tactics.



*Michael Redmond 9 dan*

Michael Redmond is the only Western Go professional to reach 9 dan. Written directly in English and specifically designed for SmartGo Books, this book is a treasure for every player interested in the Sanrensei opening, whether you want to play it or defend against it.

*This free PDF sample of Michael Redmond's book is provided for those who don't have access to an iPad. It's the same sample provided in the free SmartGo Books app: one of the six patterns and one of the twenty games. However, unlike the iPad, you can't replay the moves in the diagrams, or zoom the diagrams to see the context. Enjoy!*

## **Cover Page**

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## Michael Redmond—Biography

Born May 25, 1963 in California.

Living in Japan since 1977.

Professional 1 dan in 1981, 9 dan in 2000.

1984 Winner of Oteai.

1985 Winner of Ryusei Cup.

1989 Winner of Oteai.

2009 Achieved 500 professional wins.

International tournaments: Fujitsu Cup 6 times, LG Cup 3 times, Chunran Cup 3 times, Ing Cup 3 times, Tongyang Securities Cup once.

Challenger (final section) tournaments in Japan: Judan 6 times, Tengen 7 times, Gosei 5 times, Oza twice, IBM Cup once, Agon-Kiryama Cup once.

Books in English: *The ABC's of Attack and Defense* (Slate and Shell, 2002)

## Foreword

To define the Sanrensei, I would like to start with a description of the star point. Compared to the 3–4 point or the 3–3 point, the star point is farther from the edge of the board, making it relatively strong when attacked from above, and weak when attacked from below. The star point controls the corner area with one move, but puts little emphasis on the corner territory. In fact, it can be said that the star point doesn't surround any territory at all, as the opponent can jump into the 3–3 point and take away the corner. Quite often the next move in the area is an extension towards the side, not a shimari as is often the case with the 3–4 point. This ability to control the sides with relative speed is a strength of the star point. When playing the Sanrensei opening, Black creates a strong framework on the right side of the board, and if White invades the right side he will be in a cramped position. In this way the Sanrensei makes full use of the star point's strength towards the sides. The Sanrensei opening magnifies the outward pointing strength of the star point, and can quickly grow into a moyo that stretches out into the center. The potential speed and large scale of the Sanrensei is what makes it one of the most exciting openings.

This book is meant to be a textbook for the Sanrensei as well as a collection of my games. I will start with 6 basic patterns in the first section. These patterns are Black's basic game plan when playing the Sanrensei. The second section analyzes 20 of my games. In these games the reader will see how the patterns work in actual professional games.

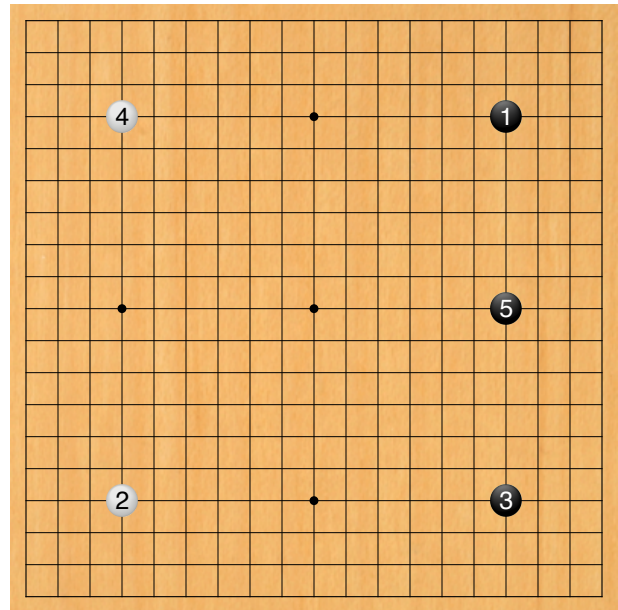
**Michael Redmond, May 2011**

## Section 1: Patterns

When I first decided that I wanted to play the Sanrensei opening, I started by studying hundreds of professional games. After learning how other professionals played, I devised my own game plan. This is the patterns, a set of Sanrensei openings for Black.

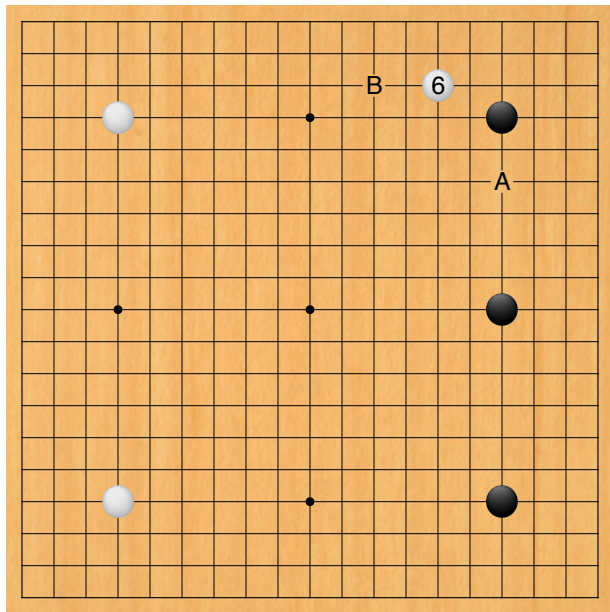
Since the theme of this book is the Sanrensei, I chose not to include openings in which White tries to disrupt the pattern, maybe by playing an unusual move with White 4. In the patterns I am showing the openings that Black wants to play, with White mostly playing what I consider to be normal moves.

### Pattern 1



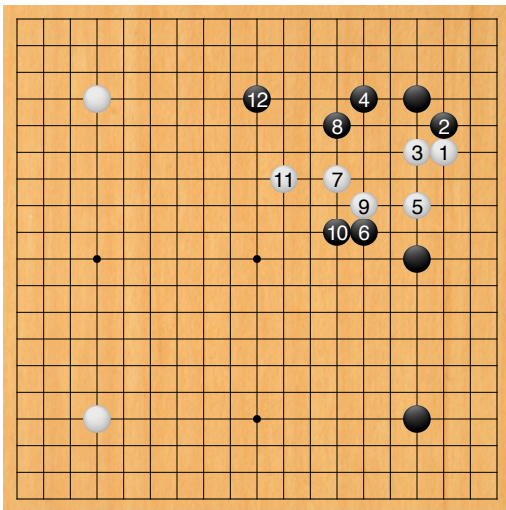
*Moves 1-5*

The Sanrensei is an opening that aims to control the sides and center quickly creating a large moyo (territorial framework). This is possible because Black controls each corner with only one stone, and can immediately expand. The trade-off is that the 3-3 points are open, and White can often take an advantage in territory.



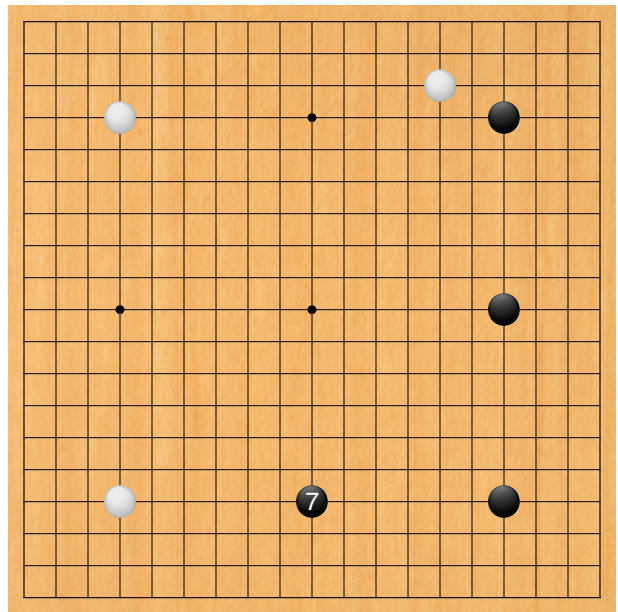
Move 6

It is natural for White to approach from the outside of Black's Sanrensei. Black can now answer at A, play a pincer such as B, or play elsewhere. Before we continue, let's take a look at what happens if White jumps inside the Sanrensei with 6.



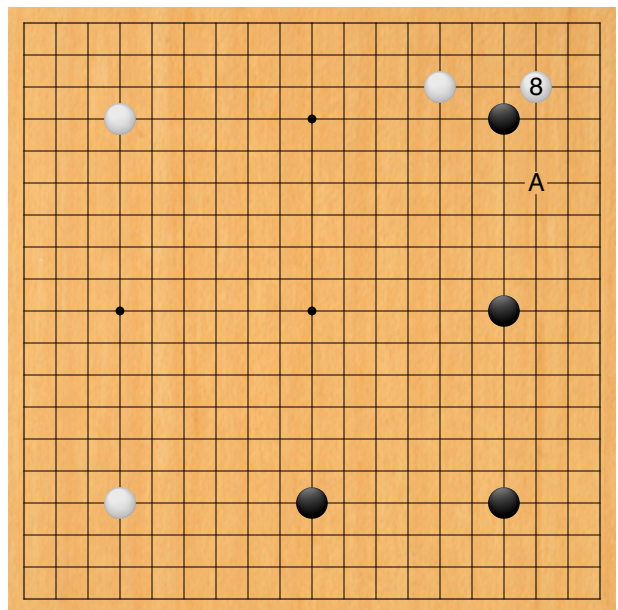
Bad for White

Jumping inside with White 1 is not advised. Black can attack immediately with 2, and White 5 is a cramped extension. Black continues the attack and strengthens both sides. Meanwhile, White has just created a weak group.



Move 7

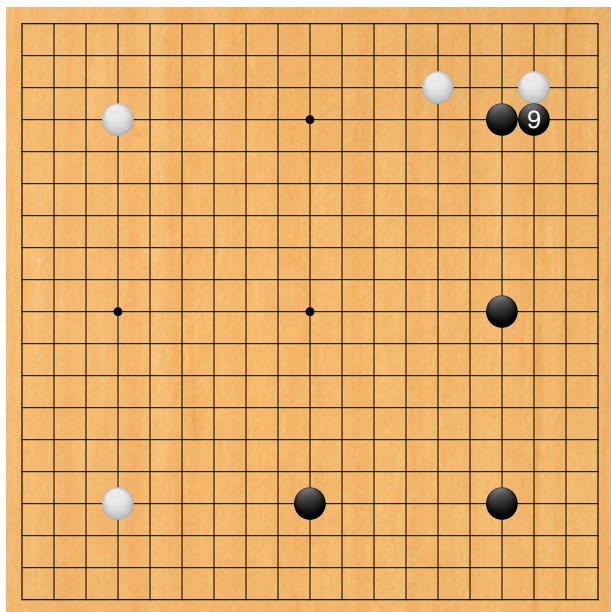
In this pattern Black extends on the lower side. With this move the center of Black's moyo shifts from the right side to the lower right area.



Move 8

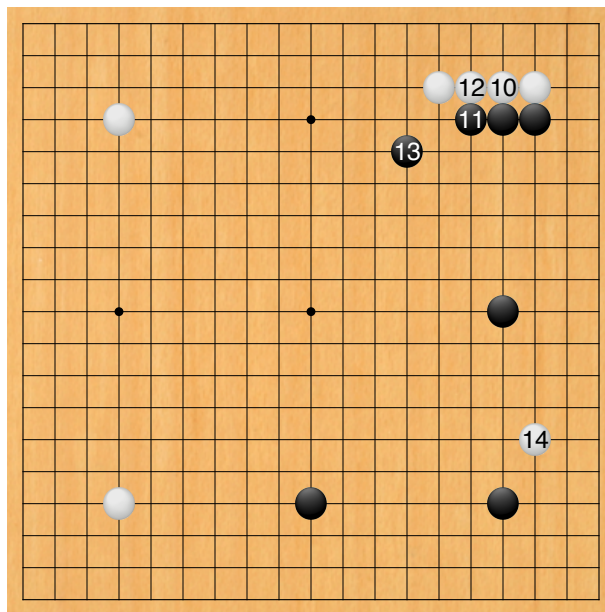
It seems natural for White to continue in the upper right corner. In pattern 2 White will play this move at A.





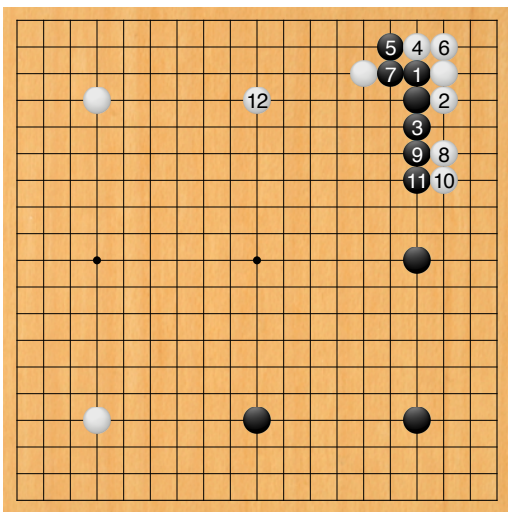
Move 9

Black covers on this side to expand the right side. The Go proverb says “Block from the wider side”, but does not apply in this case because Black has no stone on the upper side.



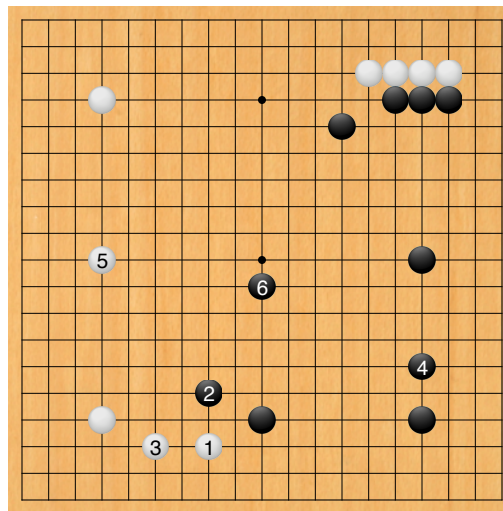
Moves 10–14

Black’s moyo is already beginning to expand into the center. White invades the Black moyo with 14. If White plays elsewhere with 14, Black will make a large moyo, as seen in the next diagram.



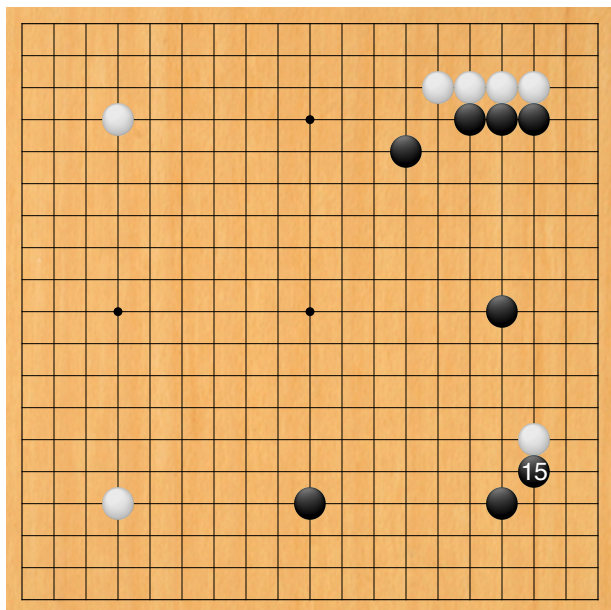
The wrong side

Playing this joseki when there is no Black stone on the upper side is not considered to be good. After White 8, 9 and 12 are miai (exchangable points). After White 12 it is difficult for Black to use this thickness to expand the moyo.



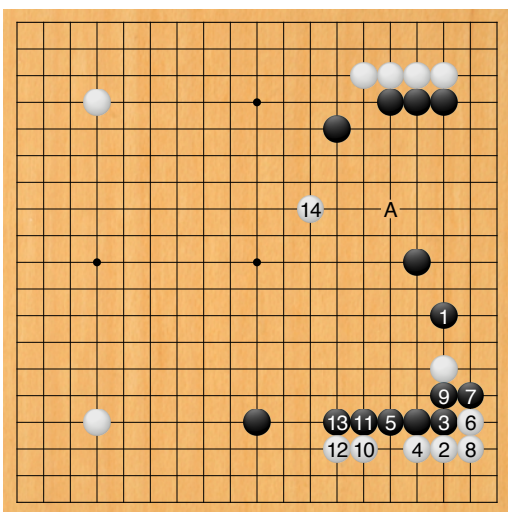
A large moyo

If White takes the large point at 1 Black will have a chance to strengthen the moyo with 4. Black 4 is a key point that makes it difficult for White to find a good invasion point on the side. After 6, White will have to invade after all, and a fight within Black’s sphere of influence can be expected.



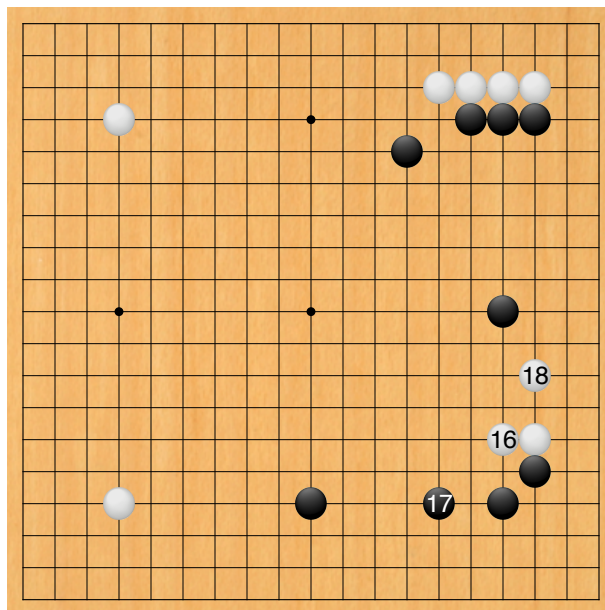
Move 15

Black 15 is the standard attacking joseki that is played when White plays a kakari inside the Sanrensei. This is better for Black than the previous diagram.

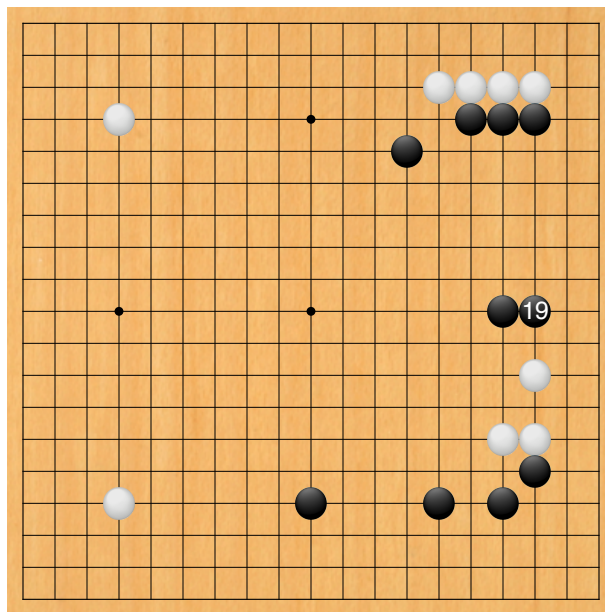


Limited to the right side

Black might be tempted to play at 1, but I would not choose this variation. White 14 threatens an invasion at A next, and Black's territory on the right side does not seem as big as White's advantage on the rest of the board.



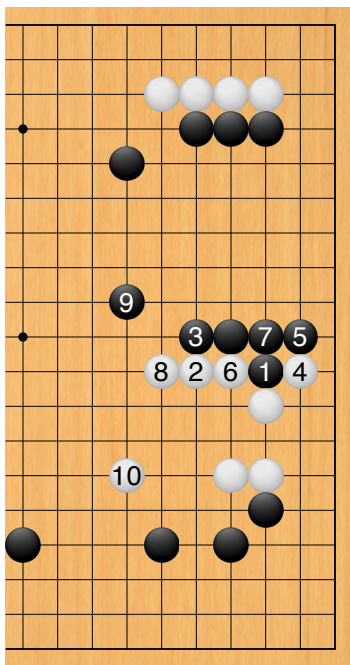
Moves 16-18



Move 19

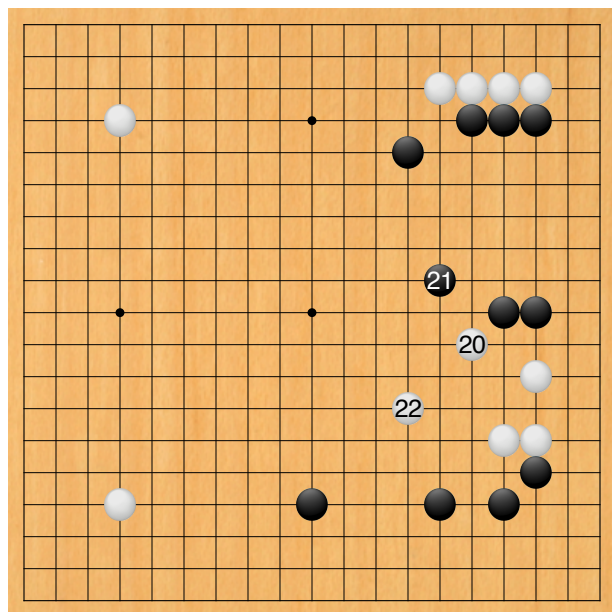
With 19 Black has a choice of two josekis.





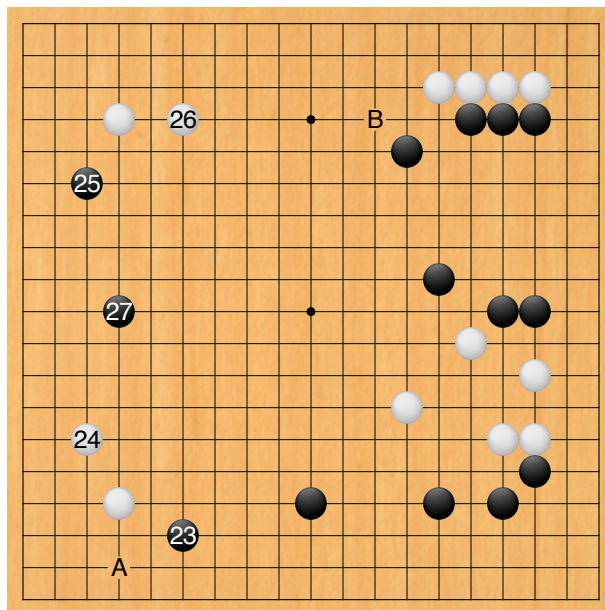
*Joseki*

If Black plays the attachment at 1, White 2 is the correct shape. 9 and 10 are miai. Up to 10 the result is similar to the main variation.



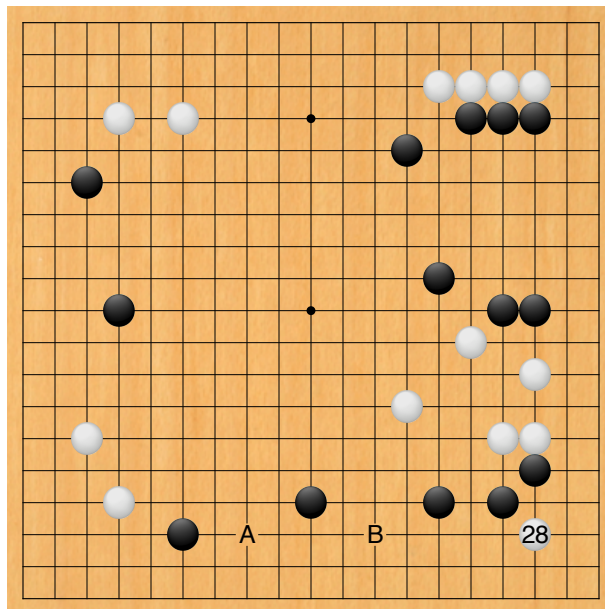
*Moves 20-22*

With an early invasion White has avoided a large Black moyo. In return Black has territory on the right side, and still has some potential to attack the White right side group later. This is an even result.



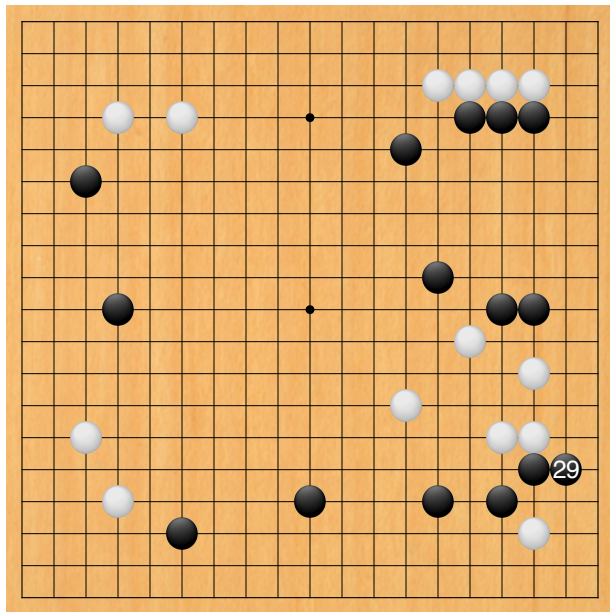
*Moves 23-27*

The opening is almost finished, and next a White move at A or B seems likely. The game is even at this point. I will now diverge from the expected continuation to show a joseki that often occurs in star point games.



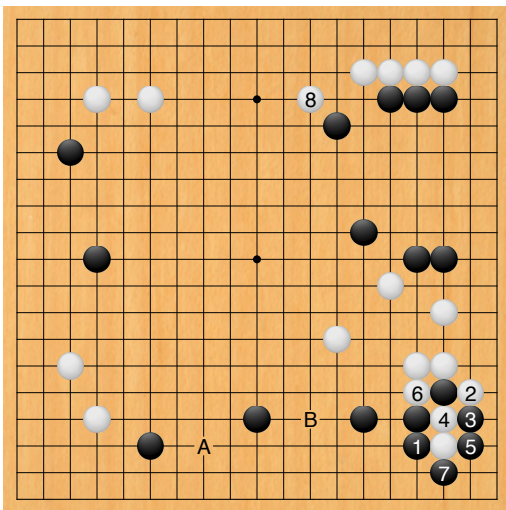
*Move 28*

White's invasion is premature as White has alternative invasion points at A and B, and Black cannot protect the whole side with one move.



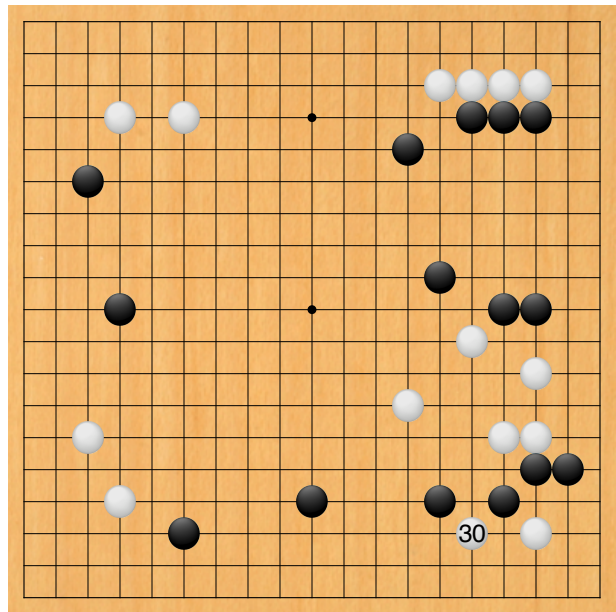
Move 29

Black should cut White off with 29. See the next diagram for a common mistake that gives Black a bad result.



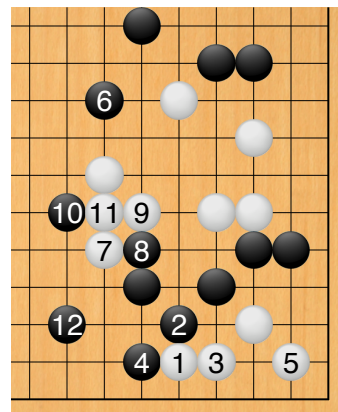
Too weak

Covering at 1 is too defensive, and the result is bad for Black. The sequence to 7 strengthens White's group, and after 8 Black is still left with weaknesses at A and B.



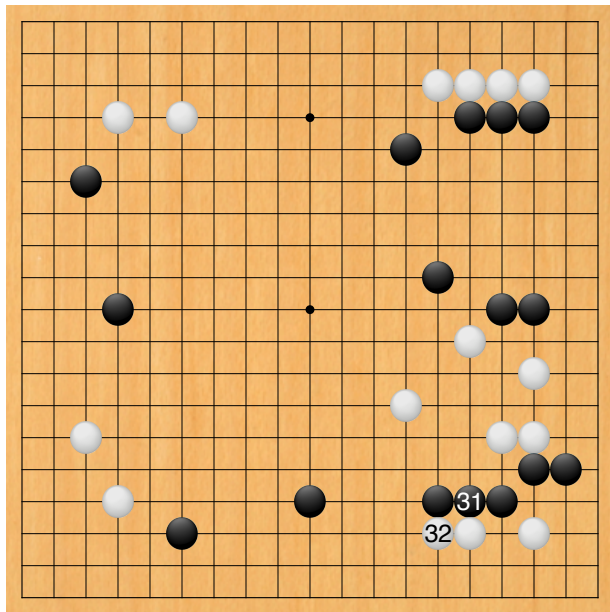
Move 30

White's peep is better than sliding as in the next diagram.



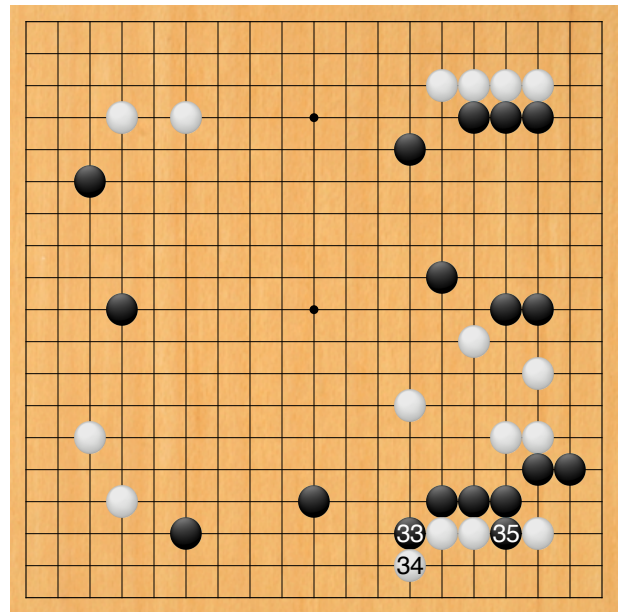
Not good for White

Sliding at 1 is not good in this case. Black 2 is the key point, and White must pull back at 3, making a painfully small life in the corner. Black attacks with 6, and has an advantage now.



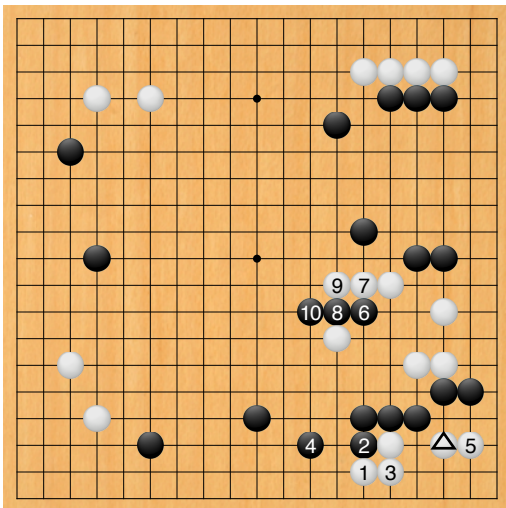
Moves 31–32

With 32 White could choose another joseki variation shown in the next diagram.



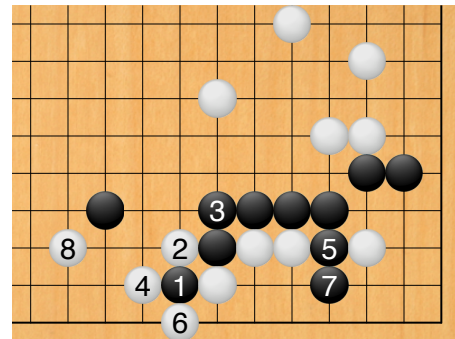
Moves 33–35

Black pushes through at 35 to create cutting points in White's shape.



Overall advantage

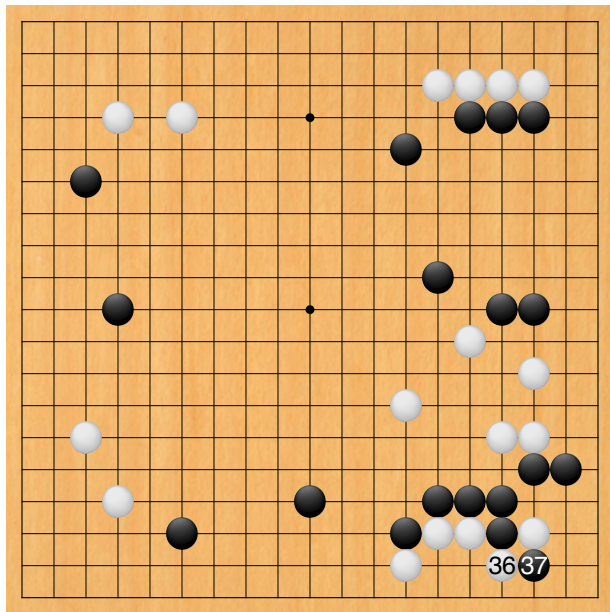
White 1 is a joseki variation, and the sequence to 5 should give an even result. However, the marked stone was a premature invasion, and the overall position is bad for White. Black can attack at 6 to gain an advantage.



Good for White

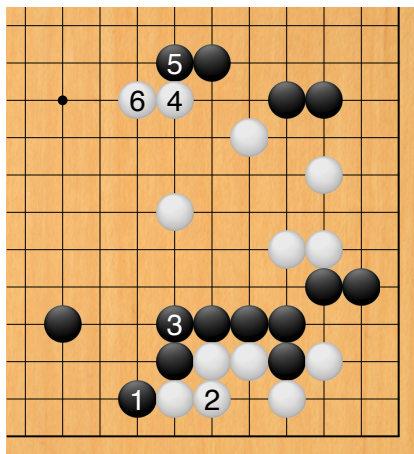
The double hane at 1 with 35 is one move too early. White will sacrifice the corner stone and erase Black's side. The sequence to 8 gives White a good result.





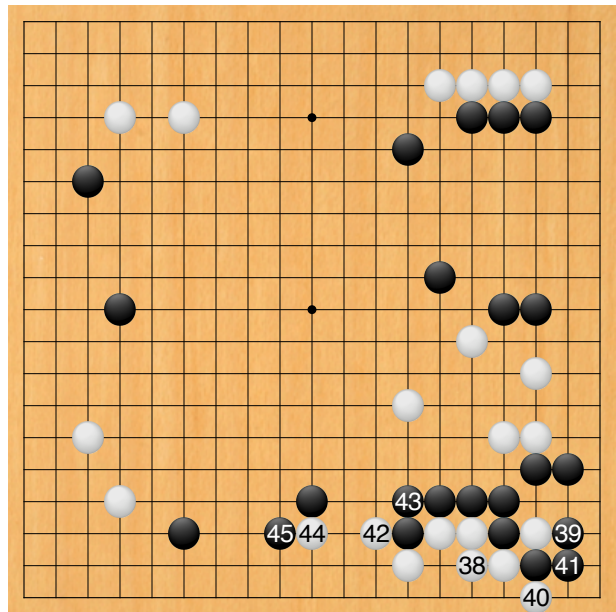
Moves 36–37

The cut at 37 is a joseki in which Black takes the corner and allows White to live on the side. The next diagram shows another joseki variation.

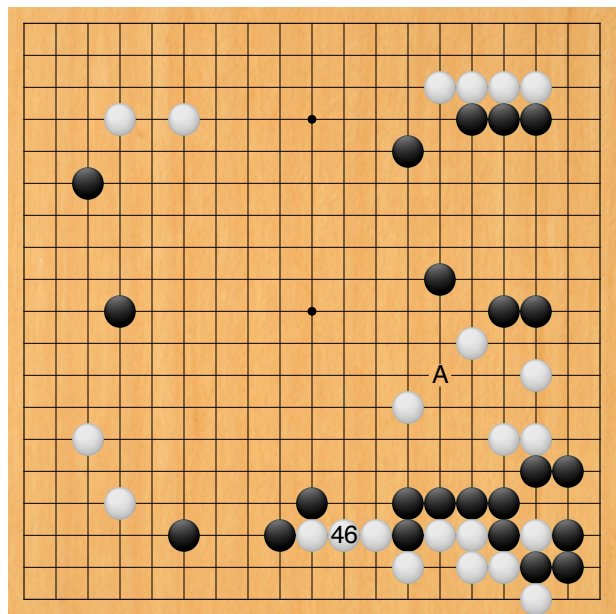


Gote

Black 1 is good shape, and in many cases would be the correct move. The drawback is that Black ends in gote, and in this case White can protect the weak side group with 4. Up to 6, the result is even.

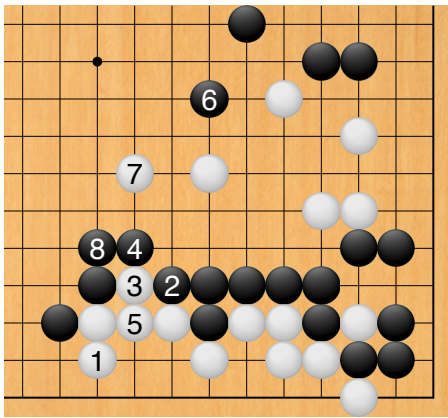


Moves 38–45



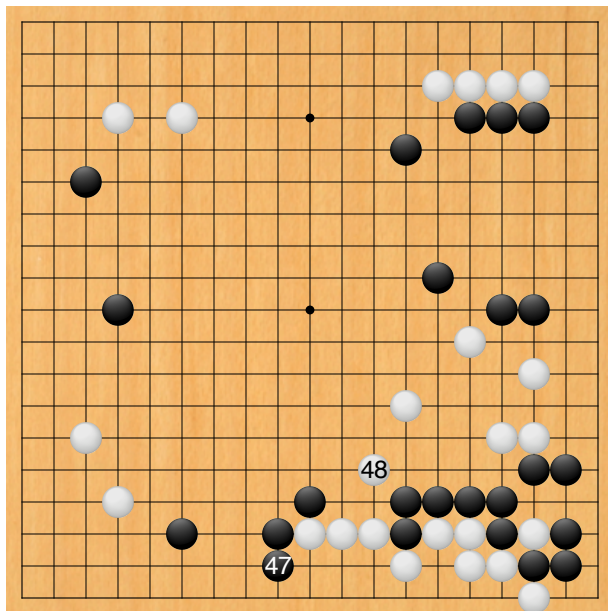
Move 46

White 46 is played to avoid the diagram variation. For Black's next move, the strongest attack is at A, but Black can be satisfied with the shown sequence.



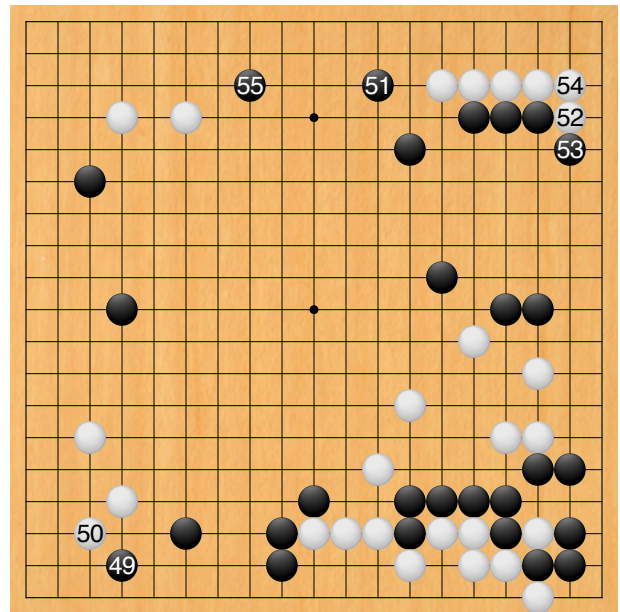
*Thick*

If White descends to 1, Black will force with 2, 4, and attack at 6. Black has a thick position.



*Moves 47-48*

With this move White protects both side groups.



*Moves 49-55*

Black has a favorable position.



## Section 2: Games

In 1988 I was starting to win my way into the final stages of tournaments. I thought of myself as a strong fighter, so I was looking for an opening that would make use of my fighting power. Late in this year, top players repeatedly used the Sanrensei opening against me when I was White. This roused my interest in the opening, and in 1989 I was ready to start playing the opening with Black.

For a few years, this opening perfectly matched my playing style, and I played it with some success. In this section I have chosen some of my best games from this period of time. Although the patterns in the previous section were my basic plan, in an actual game the opponent will not always cooperate to give Black an ideal opening. I hope the reader will enjoy seeing how the patterns can change in actual play.

## Game 1

**White:** Michael Redmond 5p

**Black:** Yamabe Toshiro 9p

**Komi:** 5½ points

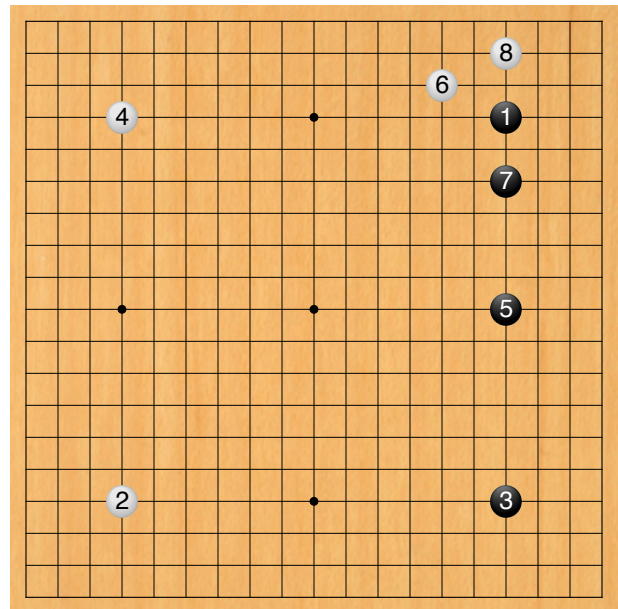
**Date:** 1988–10–06

**Event:** 15th Tengen 2nd section

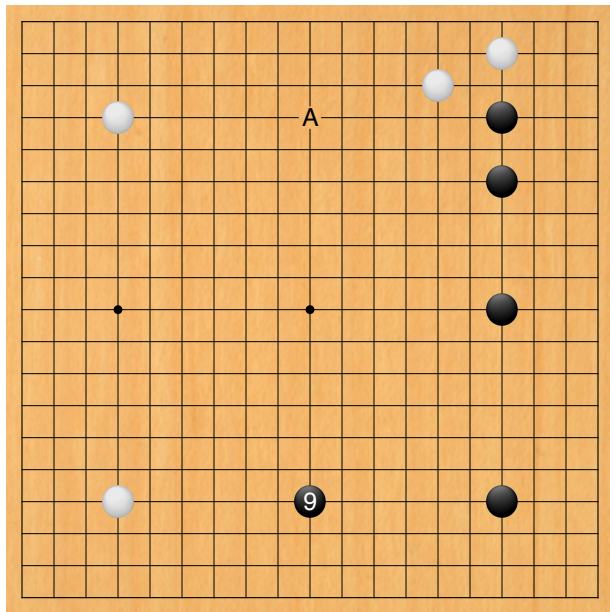
**Round:** Round 2

**Commentary:** Michael Redmond

Yamabe was one of the “three crows”, a phrase used in Japan to mean three specially gifted players. The other two players listed in this set with him were Fujisawa Shuko and Kajiwara Takeo. Yamabe was well known for his innovative style, but in this game plays a relatively orthodox Sanrensei opening. This encounter with the Sanrensei played by a top player sparked my interest in this opening, and was an important game at this stage of my career.

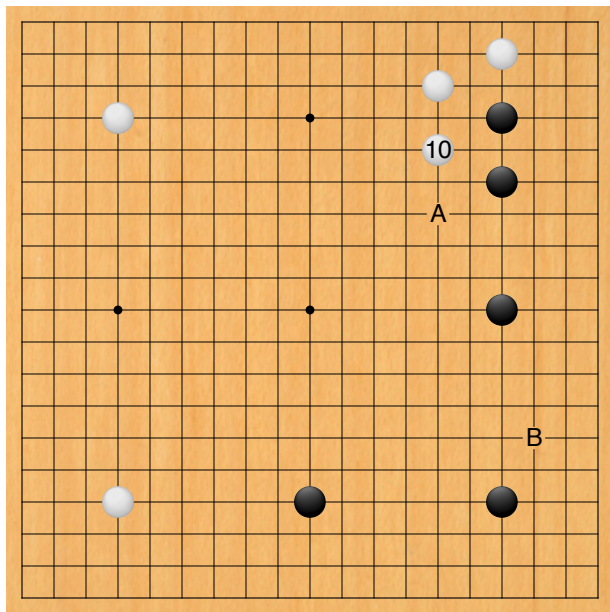


*Moves 1–8*



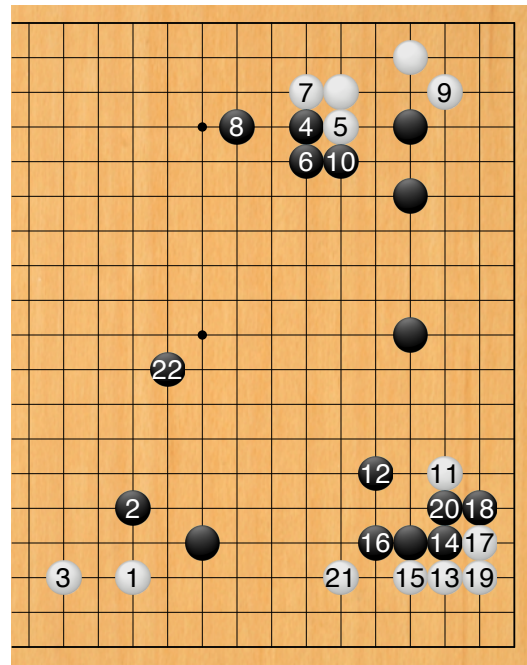
Move 9

This can be called a pattern 3 opening, with the sole difference being that in pattern 3 White 8 is at A.



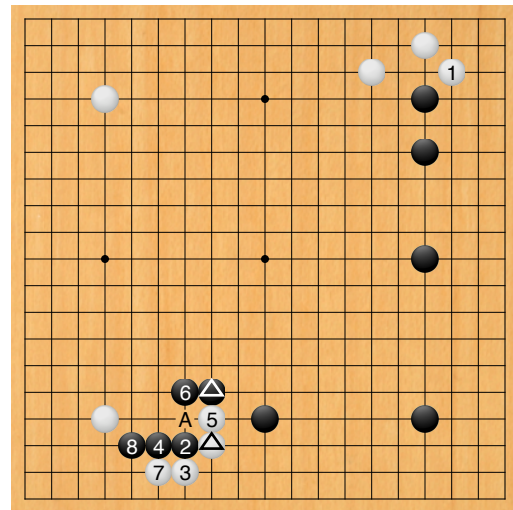
Move 10

With White 10 I aim to reduce Black's moyo by making miai of A and B. This move also increases the value of the upper side.



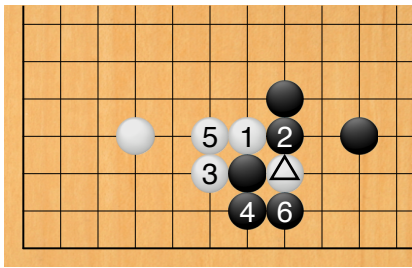
A large moyo

If White takes territory with 1-3, Black 4 is a severe move that takes advantage of White's low position. In the sequence to 22, Black has created a large center moyo.



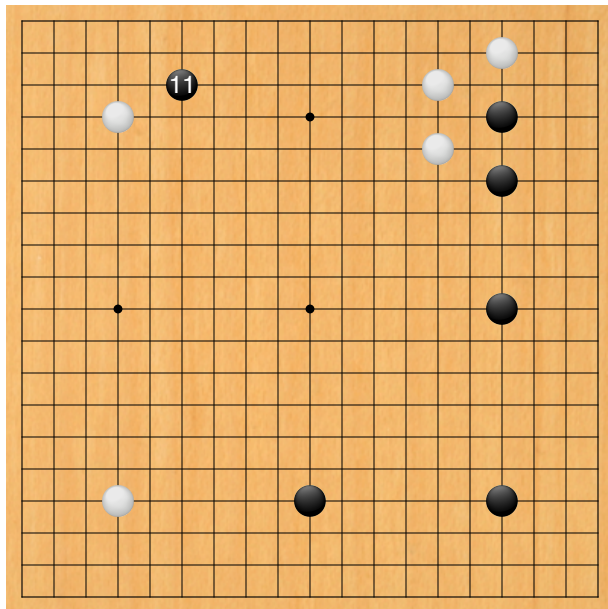
Painful for White

Playing the  $\triangle$   $\blacktriangle$  exchange and then playing elsewhere, at 1 in this diagram for instance, is considered to be bad for White. Black 2 is a strong attack that cuts  $\triangle$  off. After Black 2, continuing with White 3-7 is an overplay, and the following fight will be painful for White. It is perhaps better for White to play 3 at A, as we shall see in the next diagram.

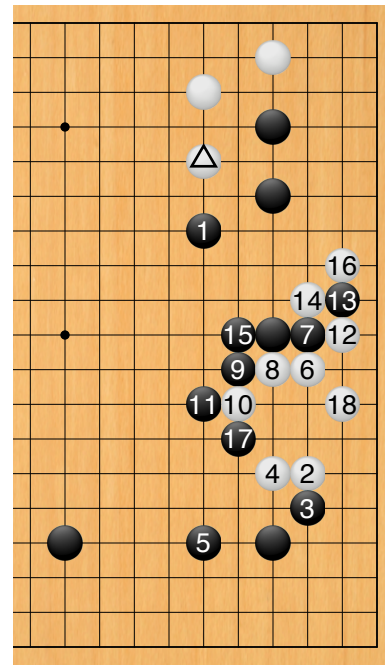


*Good for Black*

Sacrificing  $\triangle$  with 1–5 is better than the previous diagram, but is still not satisfactory for White. White’s forcing moves have not strengthened the corner very much, and Black can be happy with superior thickness.

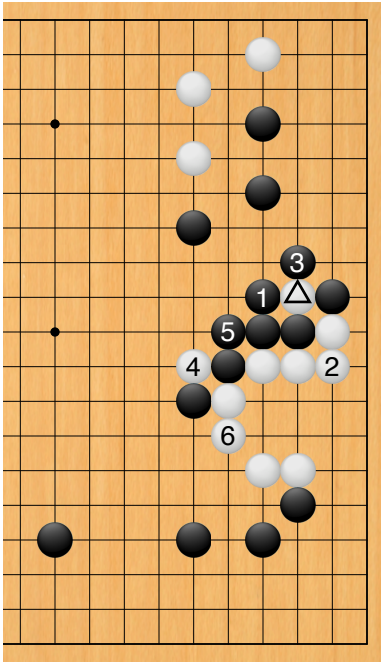


*Move 11*



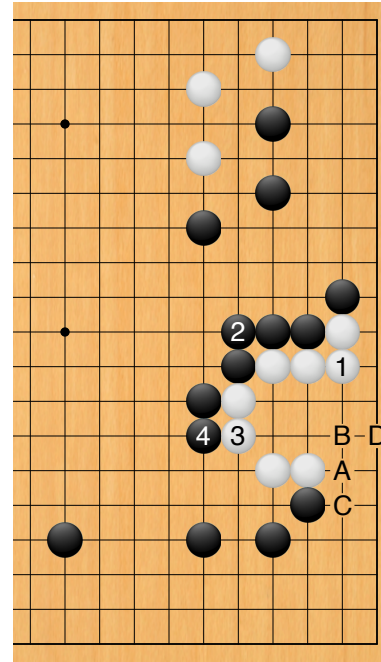
*Miai*

1 and 2 are miai. White 6 is usually considered a vulgar move, but since Black has a strong position in this area, White must try to quickly make a living shape. White 14 is a tesuji. In this trade White has lived on the side, and Black has thickness in the center.  $\triangle$  and Black 1 have become a profitable exchange for White, and White can be satisfied with this result.



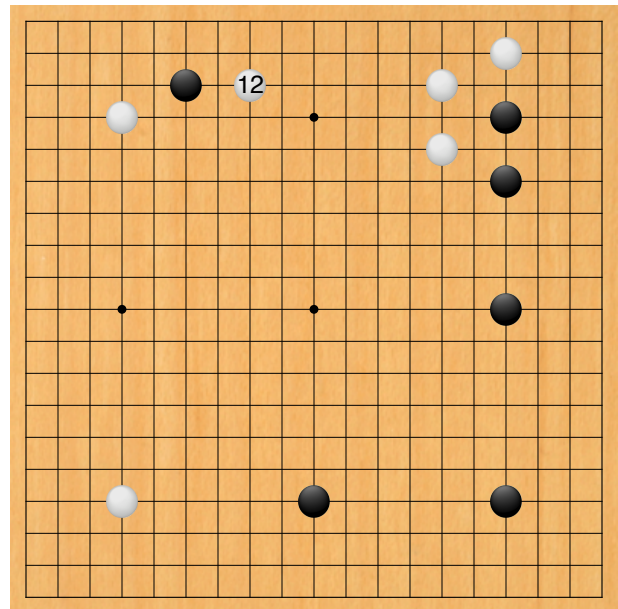
*Good for White*

If Black plays atari from above at 1, White can force with 2. By sacrificing  $\triangle$ , White has forced Black to protect at 3 instead of the more efficient connection at 5. With 6, White is alive on the side.



*Efficient shape*

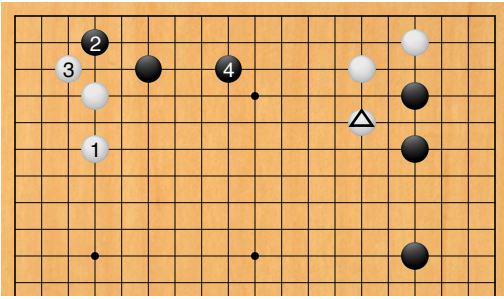
If White simply connects at 1, Black will make efficient shape with the connection at 2. Up to 4, Black has closed off the center as well as the upper right side, and also can later force with Black A, White B, Black C, White D, strengthening Black's corner in sente.



*Move 12*

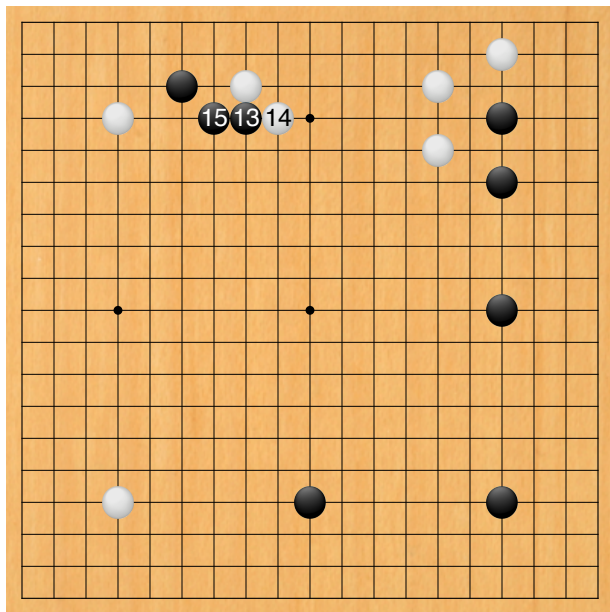
White has strength on the upper side, and thus has potential to attack Black. Therefore the pincer is a natural move.



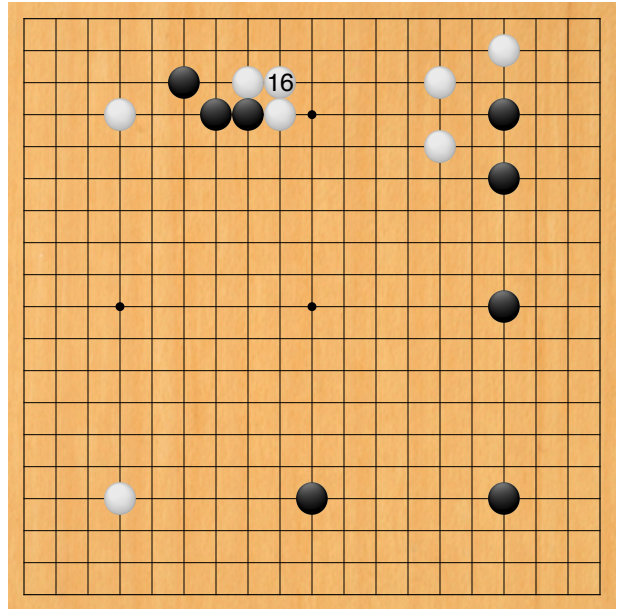


*A wasted move*

If White allows Black to live easily on the upper side with the sequence to 4,  $\triangle$  will become a wasted move.

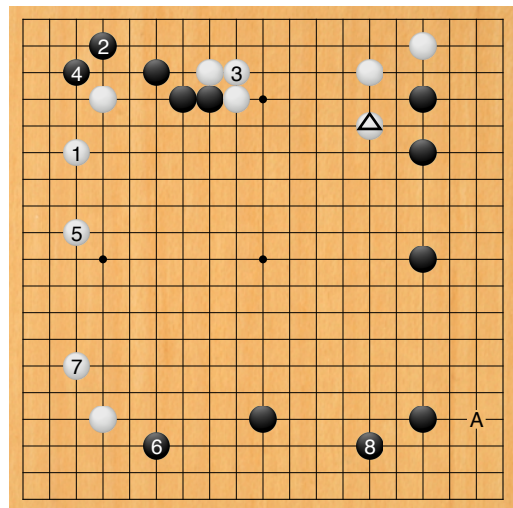


*Moves 13–15*



*Move 16*

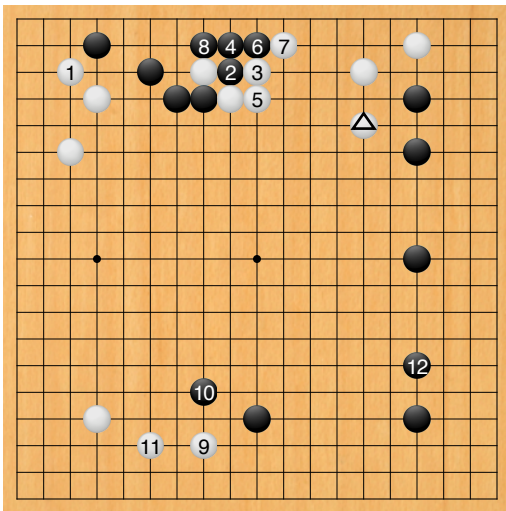
I do not want to allow Black to live on the upper side, so I try to attack by taking Black's eyes with 16.



*Peaceful*

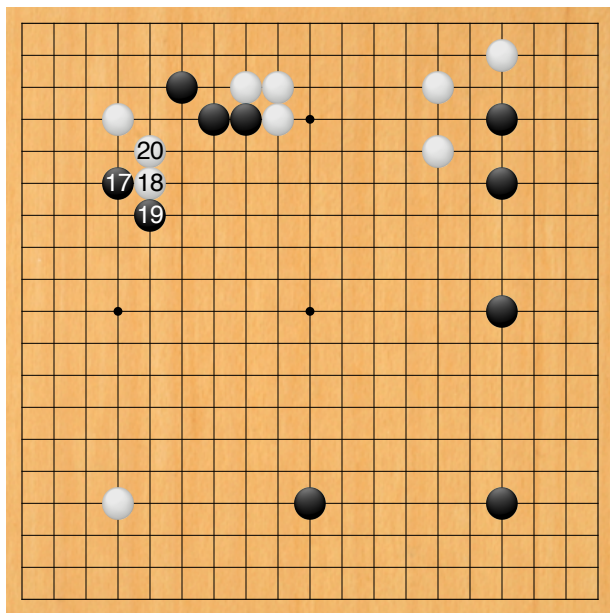
Playing at 1 and allowing Black to live was a variation that I did not find attractive at the time, as I felt that this would not be making full use of the  $\triangle$  stone. Looking at it now, I think that this is playable for both sides. White will probably continue with an invasion at A. Playing 3 at 4 will be shown in the next diagram.



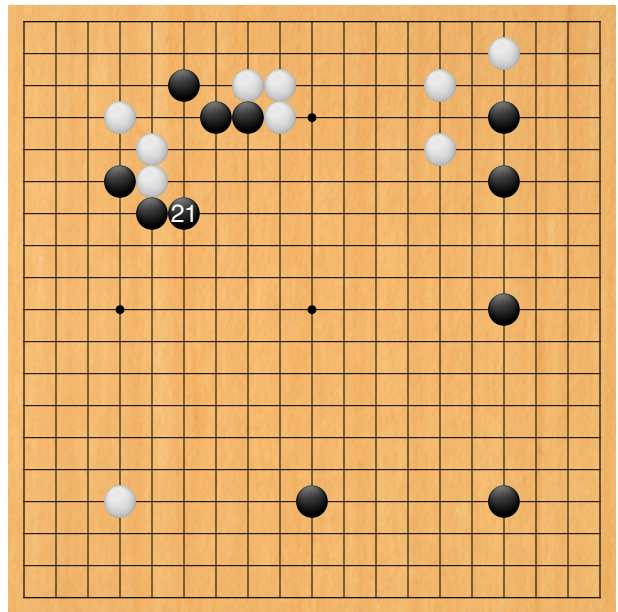


*Good for Black*

If White 1, Black takes the side stone with 2–8. White’s upper side position is cramped, and △ has become a relatively small move. I did not want to play this way.

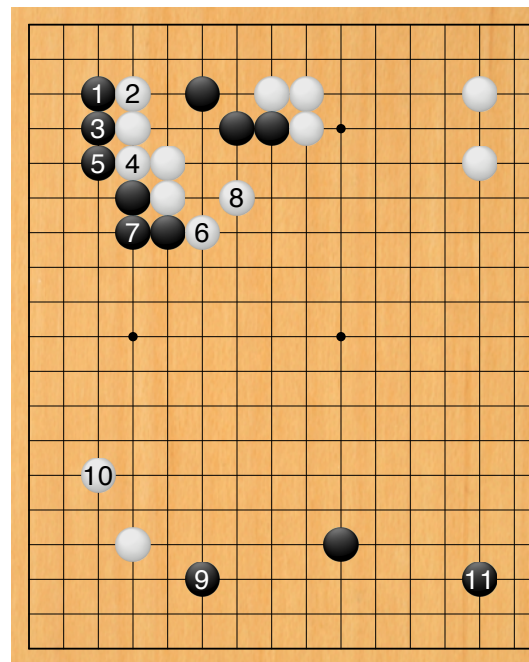


*Moves 17–20*



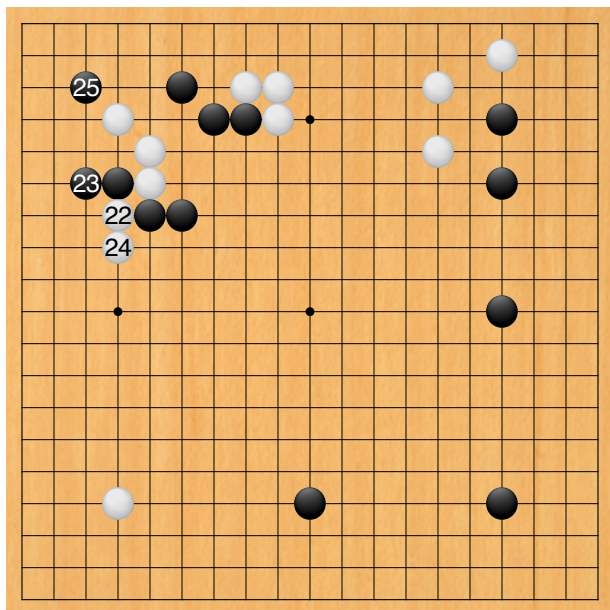
*Move 21*

Black 21 was an aggressive move that diverged from the joseki.

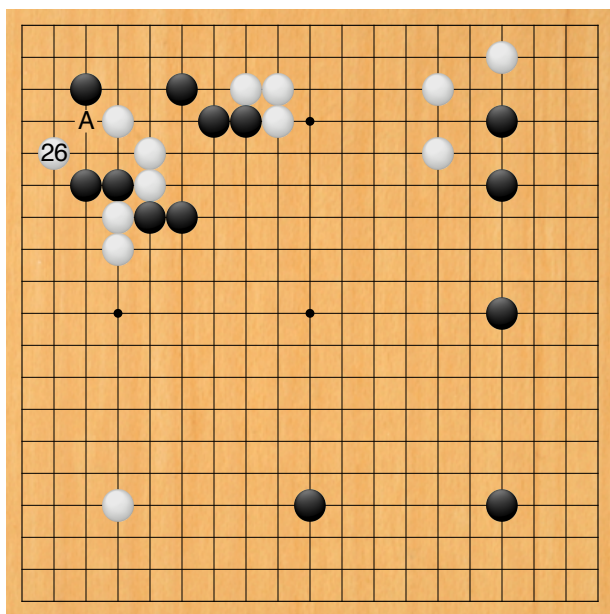


*Playable for Black*

This diagram shows Black’s normal move at 1. Black sacrifices the three stones to take a large corner territory. After 11, Black has a playable position.

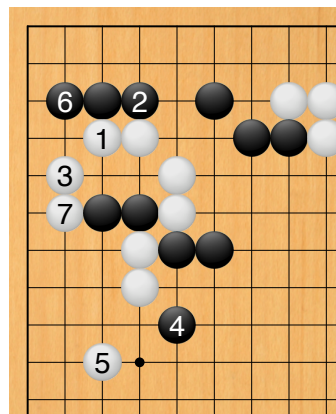


Moves 22–25



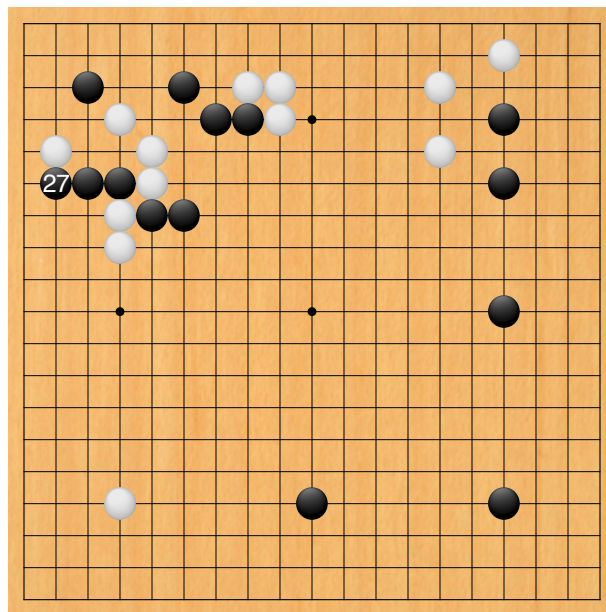
Move 26

White has a choice between this keima and a move at A.



Even trade

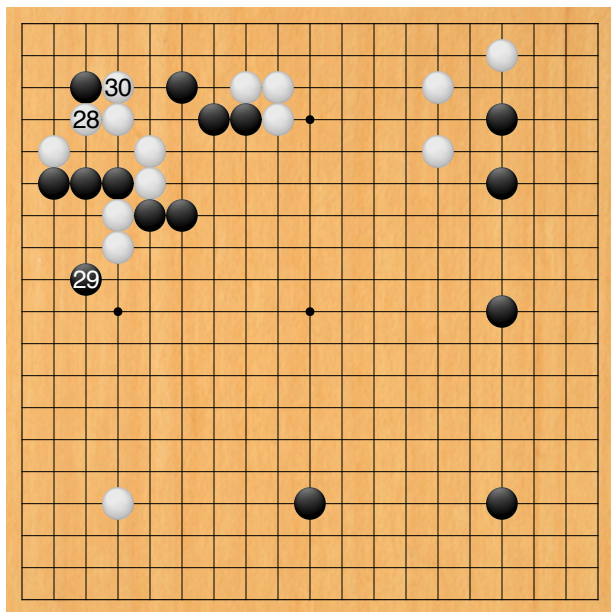
If White first covers at 1, White can capture the two Black stones. In the actual game I was trying to make this trade without the exchange of White 1 for Black 6.



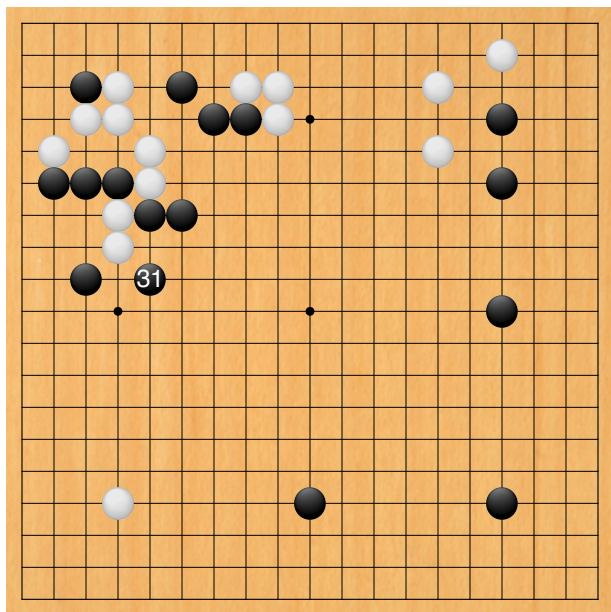
Move 27

Black surprised me by moving out with the two stones.



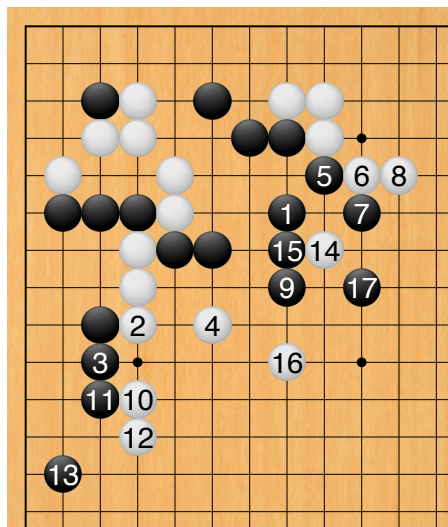


Moves 28–30



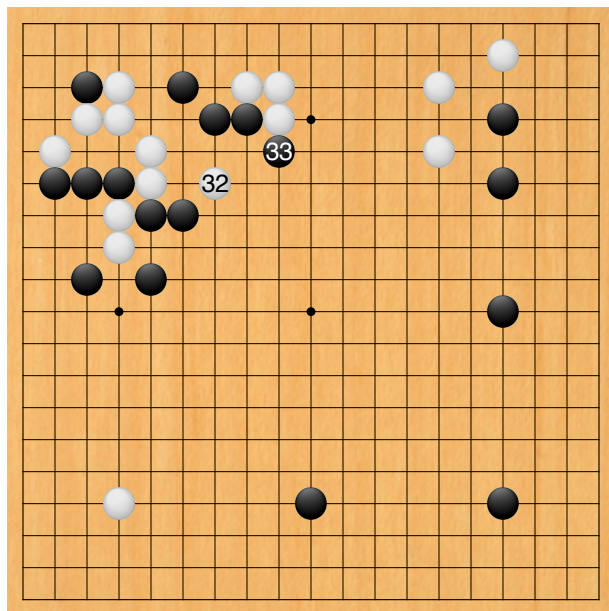
Move 31

Instead of capturing the two White stones, Black should have played as in the diagram.

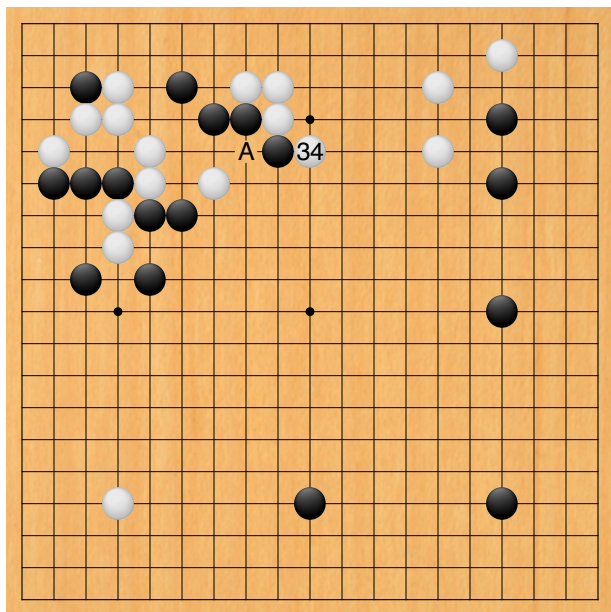


The correct move

Black should rescue the upper side stones with the jump at 1. Black settles his group with the sequence to 17, and the outcome of this game is still undecided.

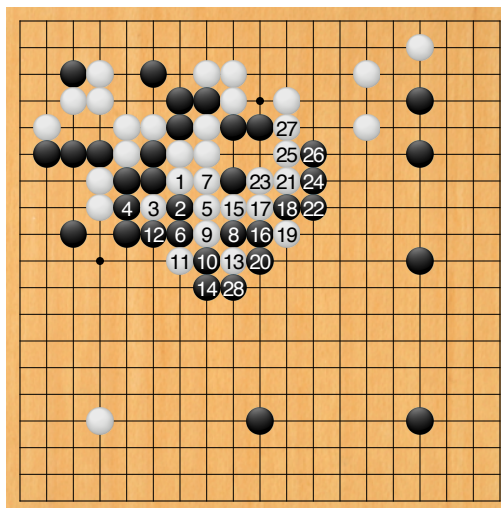


Moves 32–33



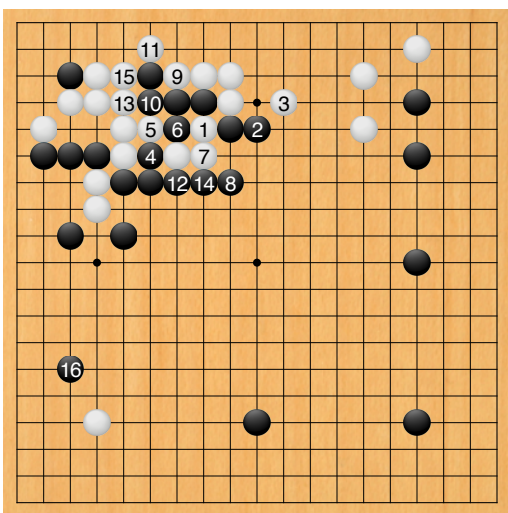
*Move 34*

It is correct for White not to cut at A.



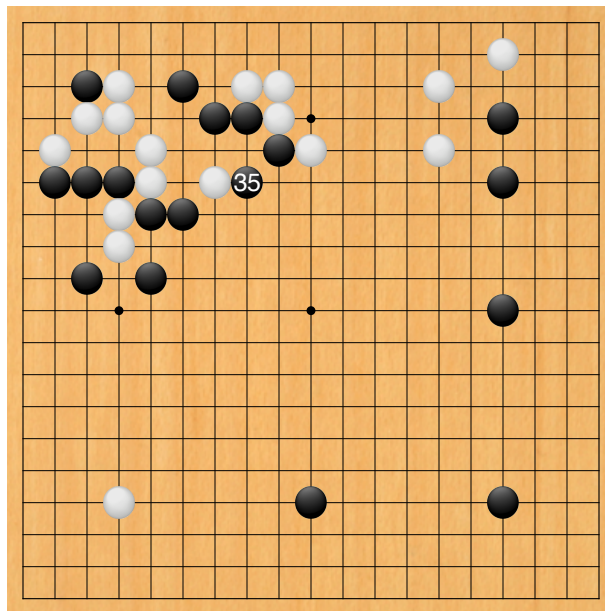
*Good for Black*

Pushing through at White 1 gives Black a larger wall in the end. Black can squeeze again with 8, and after 28 Black's thickness dominates the whole lower right area.

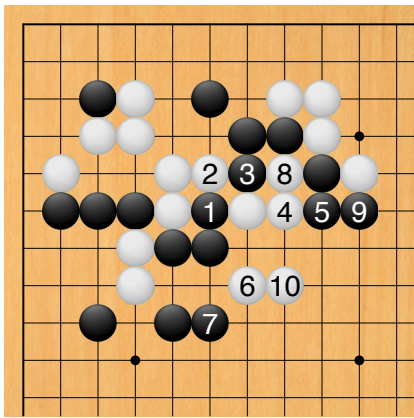


*Black is thick*

If White 1, Black will extend at 2, making miai of 3 and 4. Black can squeeze to create thickness in the center and has an advantageous position after 16.

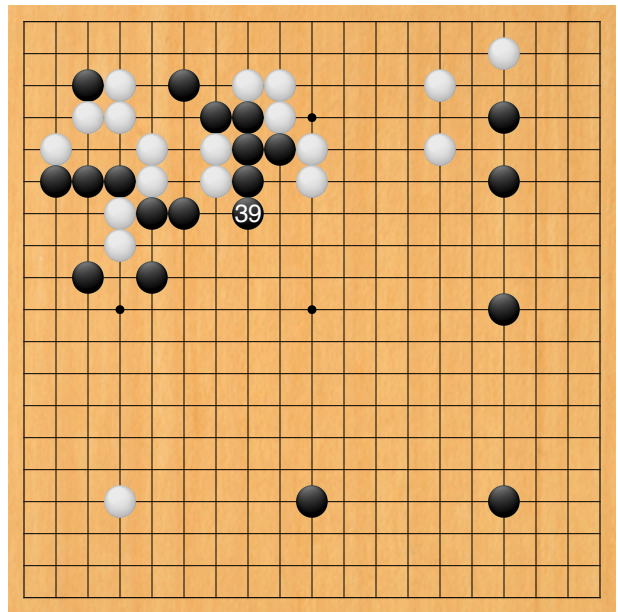


*Move 35*

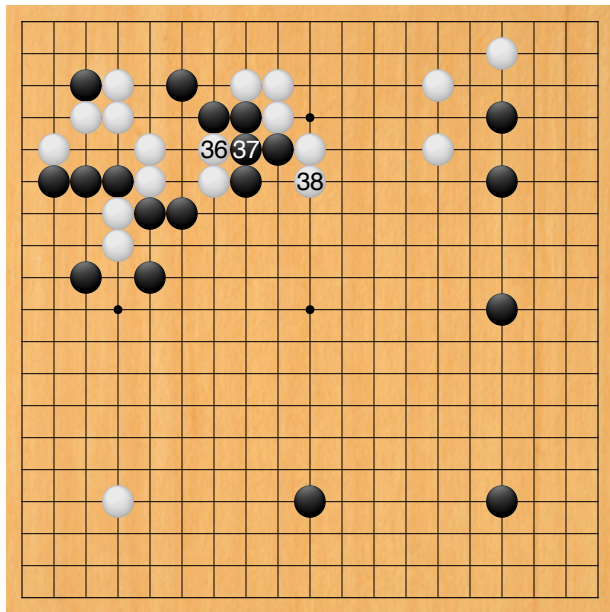


*White wins*

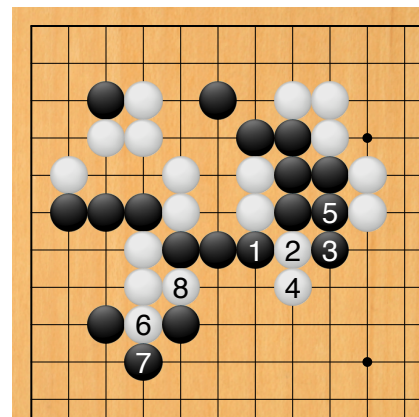
If Black cuts with 1–3, White will have an opportunity to force with 6 before cutting at 8. After 10, Black has no effective squeeze in the center, and White's upper side territory is large.



*Move 39*



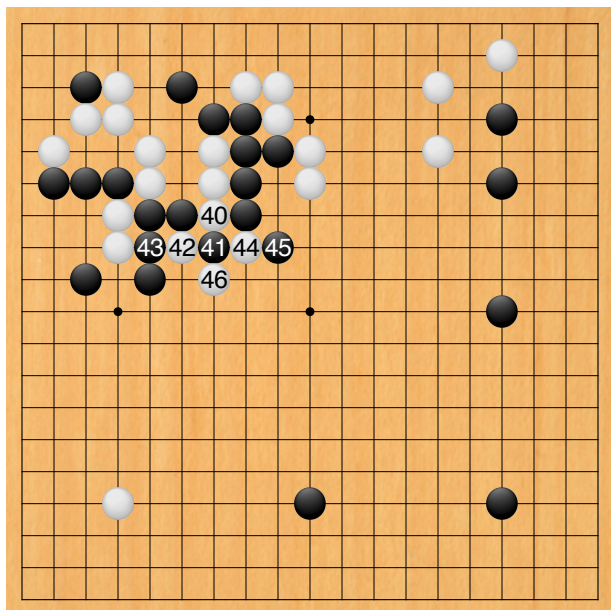
*Moves 36–38*



*Dangerous*

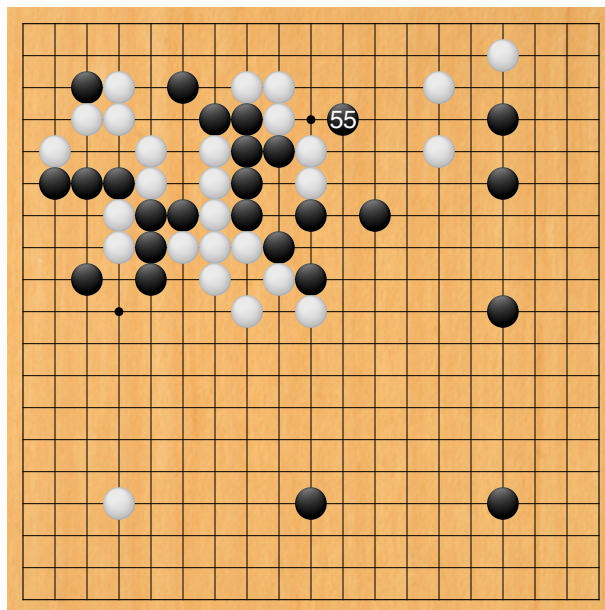
Covering at 1 is dangerous. After cutting first at 2, White can move out with 6–8 and Black is in trouble.





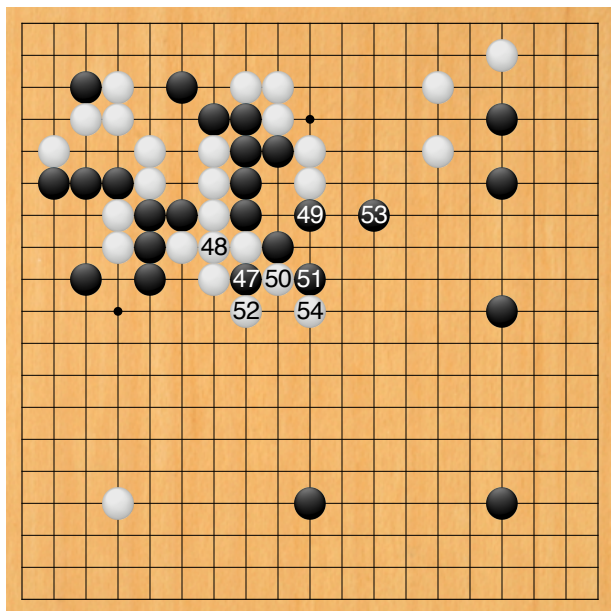
Moves 40-46

White splits the Black groups to continue the attack.



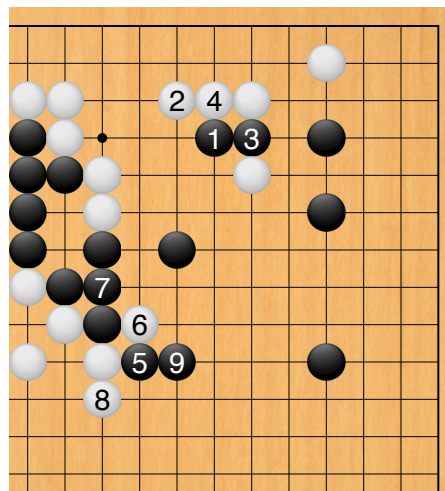
Move 55

Black played the wrong nozoki. It seems that Yamabe misread the semeai here.



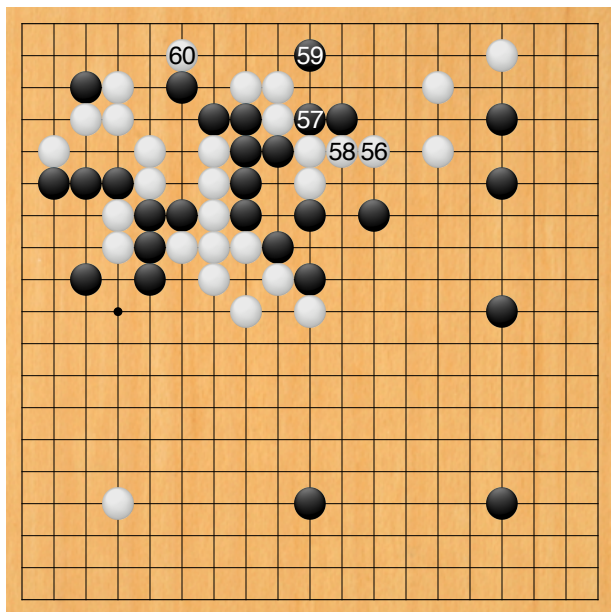
Moves 47-54

White has created thickness in the center, effectively erasing the value of Black's starpoints.



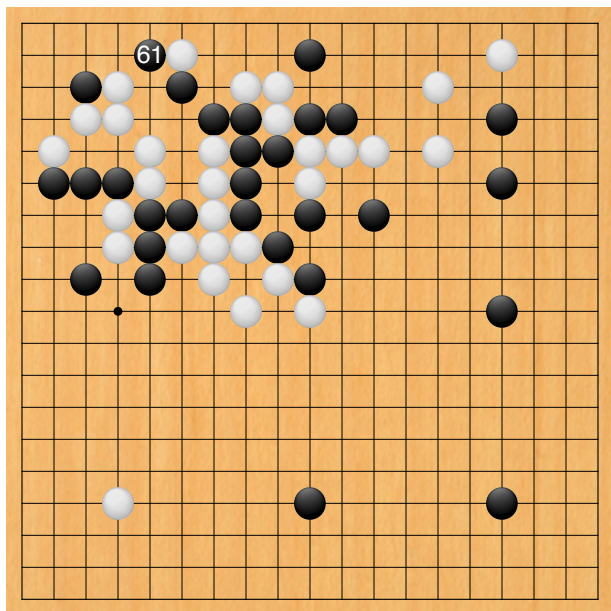
Black's correct move

Black 1 is correct. White must protect the upper side with 2, and this is much better for Black than the game.

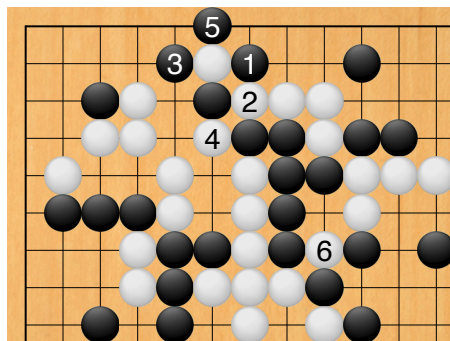


Moves 56–60

White 60 extends White's liberties, and White can win this semeai.

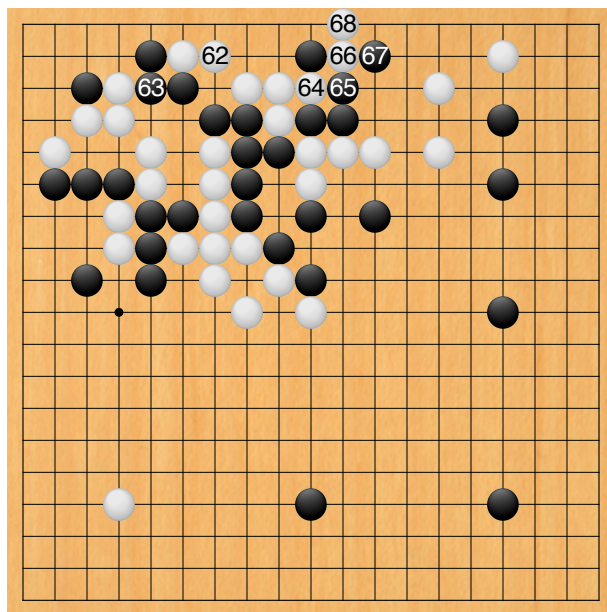


Move 61



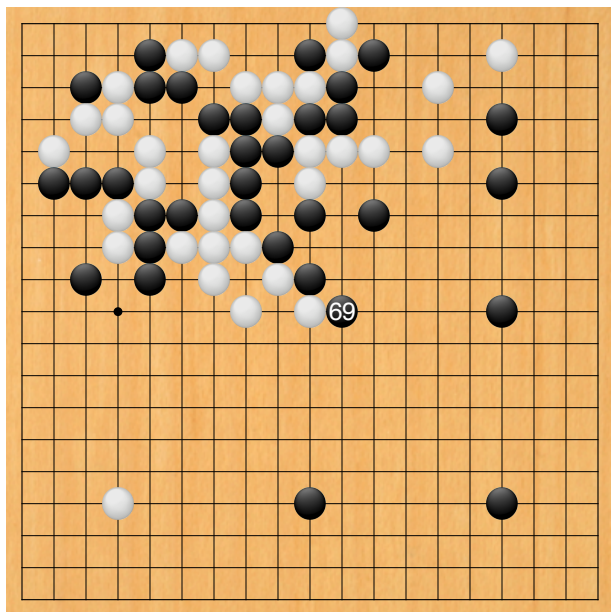
*Damezumari*

Since the Black stones in the center are in damezumari, Black cannot play this way.

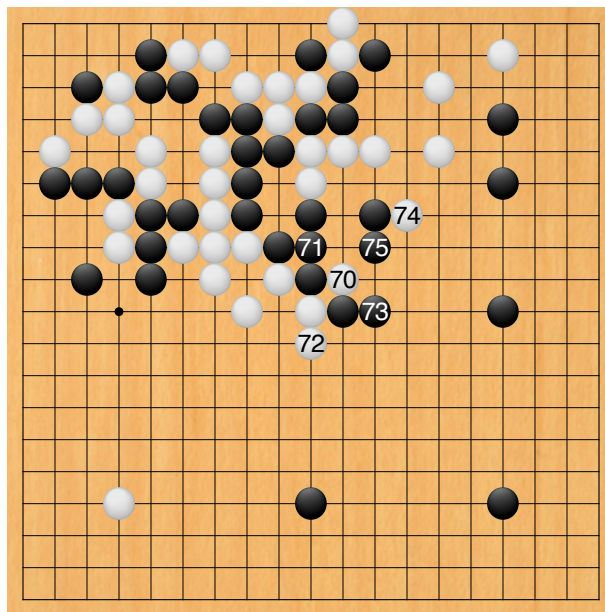


Moves 62–68

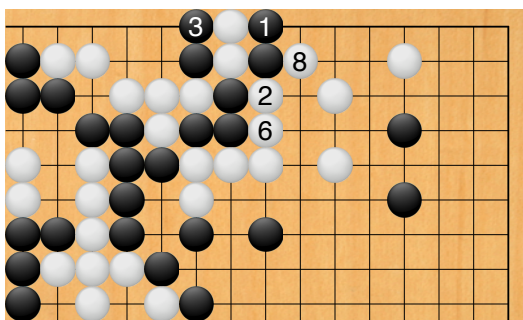
White 68 sets up a squeeze that will win the semeai for White.



Move 69

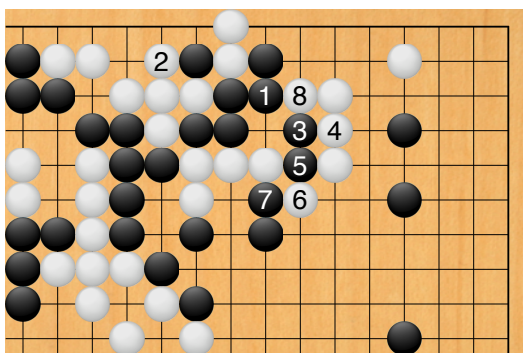


Moves 70-75



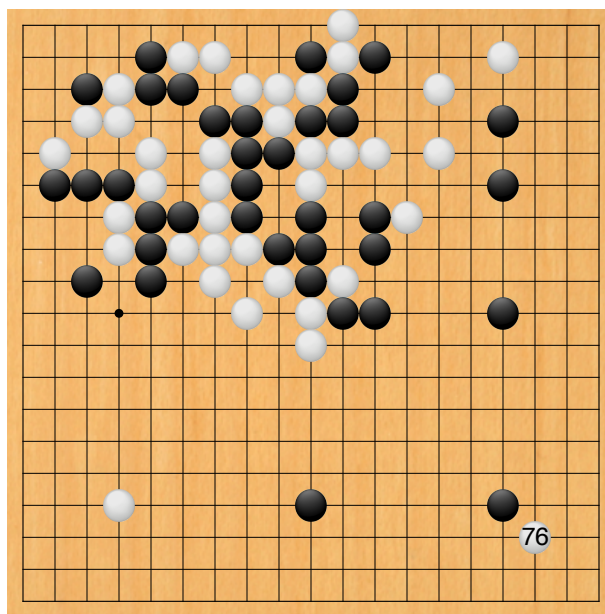
The sekito squeeze  
4 at L18; 5 at L19; 7 at L18

This squeeze is called the sekito (stone pillar) squeeze. White wins the semeai.



White wins

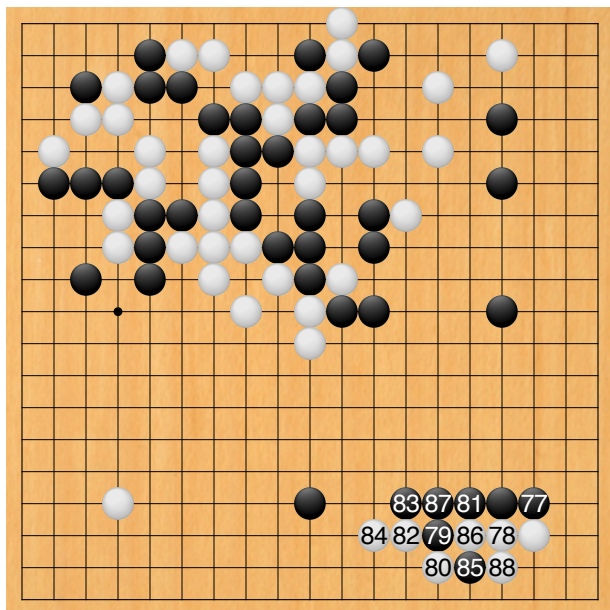
If Black 1, White lives with 2. Up to 8, White wins.



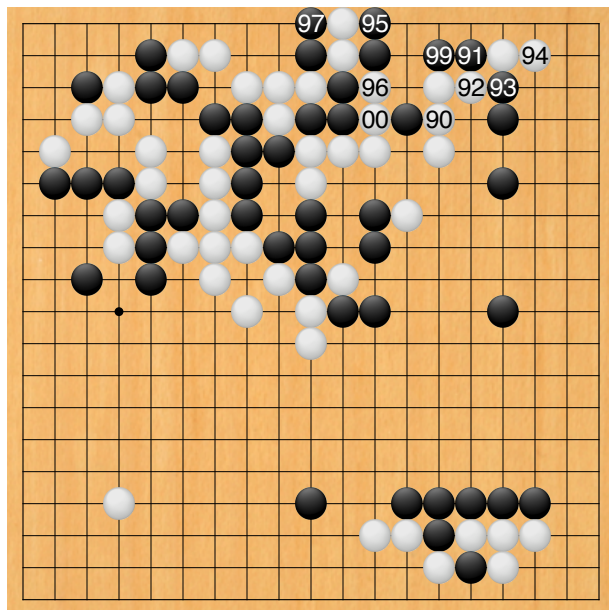
Move 76

At this point White has an advantage in territory. White's thickness in the center erases Black's potential moyo.

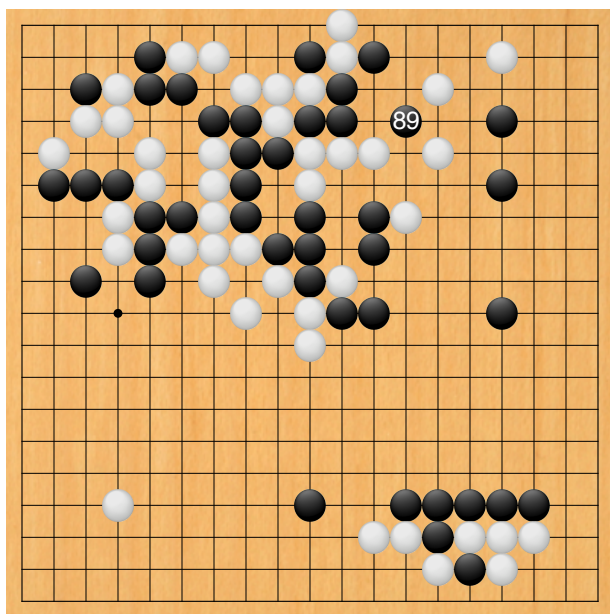




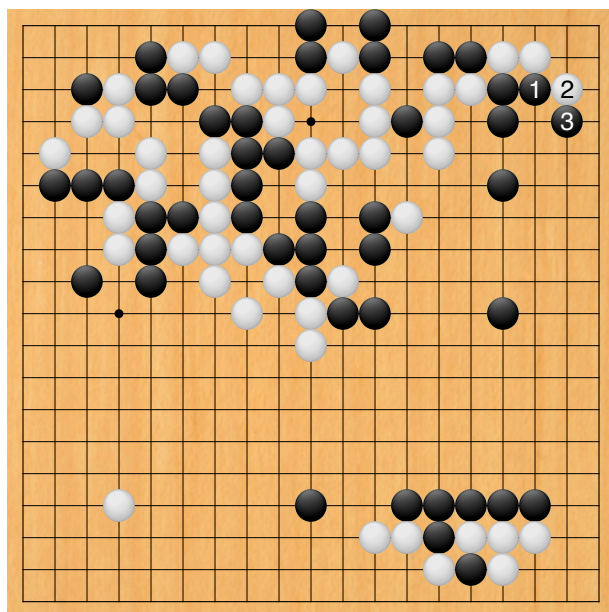
Moves 77-88



Moves 90-100  
98 at L18

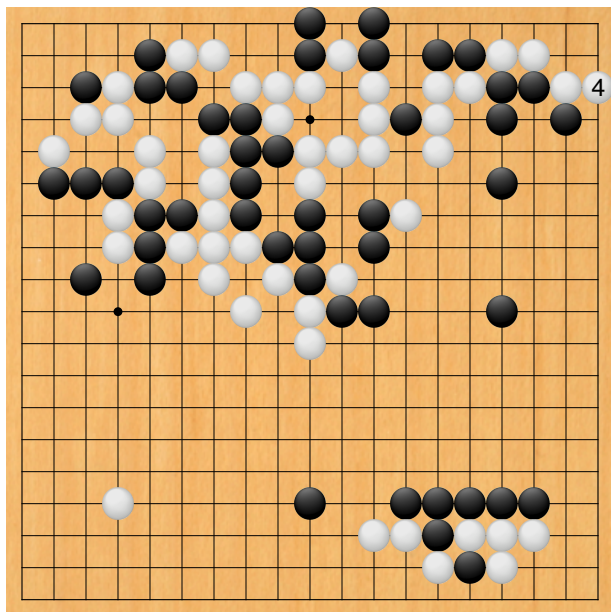


Move 89



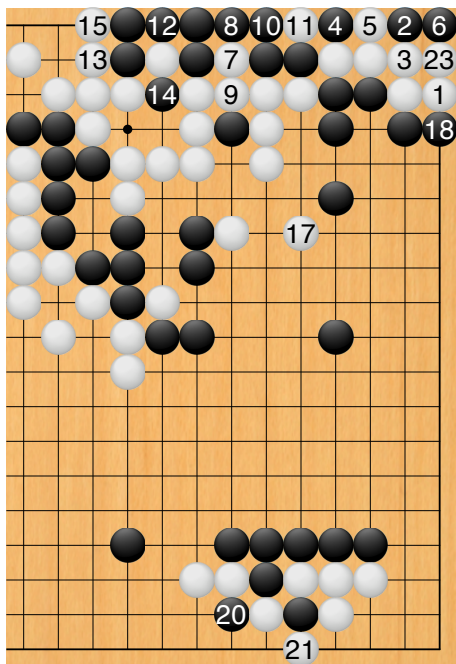
Moves 101-103

With 89 Black seems to be setting the scene for resignation.



Move 104

Yamabe was well known for his early resignations. There is still a potential ko in this position, but Black cannot profit from it.



A one-step ko

16 at 4; 19 at 11; 22 at 4; 24 at 2; 25 at 11

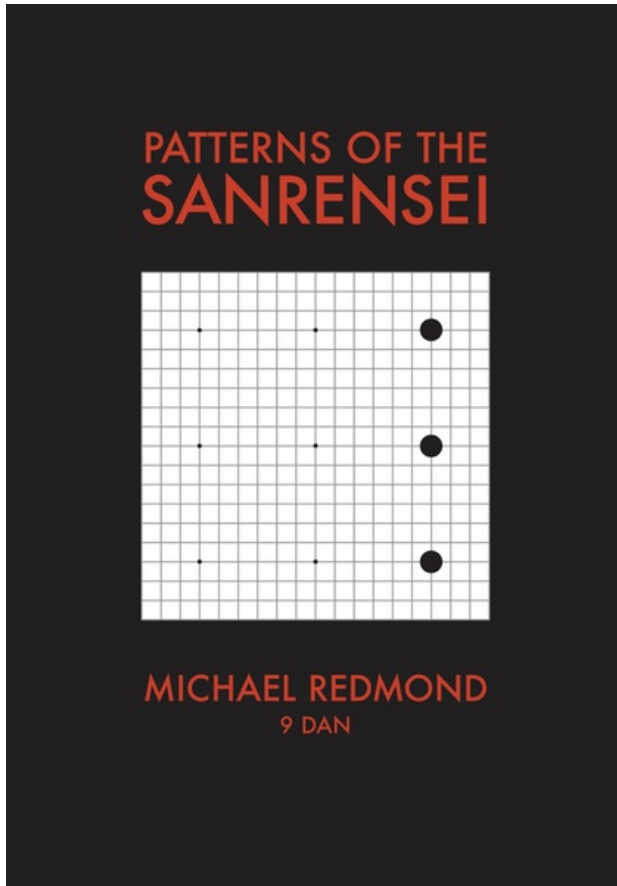
Black can make a one-step yoseko with this sequence, but since it is not a direct ko this is still a failure for Black.

End of sample game. The book contains twenty commented games.

104 moves. Michael Redmond wins by resignation.



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