

# Commentary on the World Mind Sports Games 2008 Rules of Play

Version 5. 2008-11-20. By Robert Jasiek.

## Basic Commentary for Regular Players

### Shortcut

Readers looking for a shorter text might prefer to read the Simplified World Mind Sports Games Rules model instead of the remainder of the discussion below. It is also recommended to read a strategy guide.

### Turn

On his turn, a player makes either a play on the board or a pass.

### Suicide

Suicide is prohibited.

### Recreation

A play may not recreate any earlier position. This is known as superko rule. Its major consequences are: a) A basic ko is fought as usual. b) In most practical cases, the behaviour of several kos on the board is just familiar. c) A player cannot prevent the game from ending by recycling. d) A pass is not a ko threat because it does not change the position. These guidelines are good enough for 99.95% of your games. For rare shapes with forced long cycles, use this guideline: e) A long cycle is fought quite like a basic ko: Alternately the players make regular ko threats in between. Positions not covered by these guidelines occur in about only every 50,000th game.

### Final Removals

There are two methods for the final removals. One method lets the players make the first succession of two passes, then agree on the stones to be removed, then remove those stones, and then perform the counting procedure.

The other method lets the players make the first succession of two passes, then disagree on the stones to be removed, then resume and continue alternate turns to the second succession of passes, and then immediately perform the counting procedure.

The first method removes stones by agreement - the second method removes stones by actual play. From a simplified strategic view, both methods are equivalent.

### First Pass

**Exactly if White makes the game's first pass, then 1 point is subtracted from Black's score.**

This new rule creates a scoring system in between Area Scoring and Territory Scoring. The first pass becomes a move with an endgame value of its own. This has some strategic consequences and therefore players should read strategy guides on application of the rules.

## Score

A player's score is the number of his stones on the board plus empty intersections surrounded by only his stones. The game's score is Black's score minus White's score minus 6.5 komi minus 1 if White has made the game's first pass.

## Counting

The rules list three possible, equivalent counting methods for determination of the score but do not define them.

- "counting the stones and the surrounded points": Presumably this refers to Chinese Counting. More precisely, 1) perform Chinese Half Counting of the position, 2) double the count, 3) subtract the komi, 4) subtract any White passes first compensation.
- "counting the surrounded points after filling in the captured stones": This refers to Japanese Counting. More precisely, it is well known that pass stones and an equal number of valuable moves (a move is a play or a pass) are required. Therefore 1) for **each** pass during the game, a player takes 1 stone from his bowl and adds them to the captured stones (prisoners), 2) however, if **Black** has made the very **last** pass of the game, then for that pass the payment in (1) is not done, 3) Japanese Counting (including all prisoners and pass stones) is performed, 4) subtract the komi, 5) subtract any compensation if **White** has made the game's **first** pass.
- "counting by filling in all the stones": This refers to Ing Counting. More precisely, 1) each player has exactly 180 stones altogether, 2) Ing Counting is performed, 3) subtract the remaining fraction 0.5 of the komi, 4) subtract any White passes first compensation.

## Advanced Commentary for Regular Players

Some aspects of the rules are difficult to understand on the rules level but much easier to understand from an informal, practical point of view: contestable points, 1-sided dame, and the optional supplementary ko rule. In this section for regular players, only the practical application is explained.

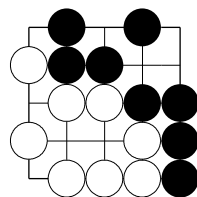
### Contestable Points

Ignore this concept!

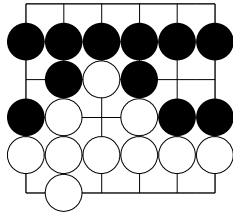
### 1-Sided Dame

After the first succession of two passes, 1-sided dame are filled **somehow** by the player who can do so. A player being in doubt about the supposedly correct procedure may call a referee for assistance.

### The Rules without the Supplementary Ko Rule

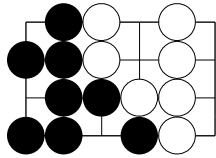


Black 1 should pass. This is Black's only strategically correct move.



Black to move

Black 1 should pass. This is Black's only strategically correct move - except that Black can also ko-capture, let White ko-capture, and then Black passes.



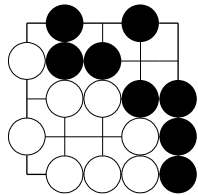
White to move

White 1 should either capture the ko or pass. Both are strategically correct moves.

## The Rules with the Supplementary Ko Rule

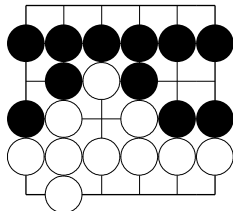
A tournament might use the supplementary ko rule by announcing it as a tournament rule. Its intended informal meaning is roughly:

*A player may not pass if there is at least one basic ko with his ko stone on the board that is a fighting ko or an external ko.*



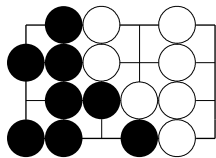
Black to move

Black 1 may pass because currently there is no basic ko on the board. If Black 1 fills the dame, then White 2 may **not** pass. Therefore Black will be the player to make the game's first pass even if he chooses to fill the dame. The simplest strategy lets Black fill the dame, forcing White to fill the ko.



Black to move

Black 1 may **not** pass because there is a fighting ko with a black ko stone on the board.



White to move

White 1 may pass. However, then Black 2 may **not** pass because there is a fighting ko with a black ko stone on the board. Even if White participates in the so called ko fight, White will be the one to make the game's first pass.

## Commentary for Referees

### Rules Version

A referee has to ensure to rely his application of the rules on their newest official version. When this commentary is being written, this is the English version of 2008-07-15 and the latest Chinese version.

## Pass

Players come from different cultural backgrounds and languages. Different expressions of a "pass" can be expected even if the rules should suggest a particular kind. E.g., a referee might be confronted with these kinds: a) saying "pass", b) saying "pass" and pressing the clock, c) pressing the clock, d) saying "Finished?", e) making gestures with the possible implicit interpretation of saying "Finished?", etc. While pass as a concept and term is well established in Western countries, it is relatively new in Eastern countries. So, in case of doubt, referees might consider both to explain firmly "placing a stone near the opponent's side of the clock and pressing the clock" as the correct procedure and to be generous if a player did not know this yet.

## Recreation

While players might prefer to study advanced strategy instead of rules arcana, referees are required to know the correct application of the rules even to difficult positions. A referee has to know exactly how the positional superko works as a rule and in practice of rare, but not impossible positions. Studying a few dozens of complicated shapes is a good preparation for strange move sequences in frequent shapes. E.g., a referee should not hesitate for a second how to apply the rule in a sending-2-returning-1 shape or a dead-ko in territory.

## Final Removals, First Pass, and Score

A referee must know the basic game ending procedures, application of the first pass compensation, definition of the score, and performance of the counting methods by heart. He should never make a mistake here - not even accidentally. Things will be new to the players, quite some of them will seek help, and the referees' best job is spreading confidence. Therefore, as a referee, learn and understand in advance very well what you need to know and apply.

## Contestable Points

The concept of "contestable points" is ambiguous in the rules. During the World Mind Sports Games 2008, only one person, the rules' major author Chen Zuyuan, dared to explain something about the concept at all. His only clear explanations were answers to example test positions shown to him by the author of this commentary. Therefore the concept is explained essentially only by precedents like the following. The informal generalizations are added by the author of this commentary.

	<p>The X intersections are <b>not</b> contestable points. As an informal generalization, alive stones around, dead stones in and nearby empty intersections in territory are not contestable points.</p>
	<p>The X intersections are <b>not</b> contestable points. As an informal generalization, intersections of a double ko seki are not contestable points.</p>

	<p>The X intersections are <b>not</b> contestable points. As an informal generalization, 1-sided dame are not contestable points.</p>
	<p>The C intersections are <b>contestable points</b>. As an informal generalization, intersections of still unplayed yose without ko are contestable points.</p>
	<p>The C intersections are <b>contestable points</b>. As an informal generalization, 2-sided dame are contestable points.</p>

During resumed alternation, neither player may play on a contestable point. During scoring, empty contestable points are evenly divided between the two players as if they were 0-sided dame in sekis. Since the precedents do not clarify the scoring of occupied contestable points, there are at least three likely possible interpretations:

- Each occupied contestable point intersection outside sekis and disturbing life ko shapes is evenly divided between the two players regardless of which player occupies the intersection. Each occupied contestable point intersection in sekis and disturbing life ko shapes scores for the player occupying it.
- The scoring of occupied contestable point intersections is undefined. Therefore declare the game a default tie.
- The scoring of occupied contestable point intersections is undefined. Therefore declare one of default tie, Black win, or White win depending on whether and how the winner might depend on the total number of occupied contestable point intersections.

### 1-Sided Dame

During the World Mind Sports Games 2008, it was explained that 1-sided dame may be occupied after the first succession of two passes, that the appropriate player occupies them, that he occupies the appropriate number of intersections, and that afterwards the scoring is as expected. However, it was not explained how the treatment of 1-sided dame is derived from the rules or how the occupation of 1-sided dame may be done. Therefore different likely possible procedures come to one's mind:

- As part of the counting mechanics.
- By alternation in resumed play before the second succession of passes.
- During the agreement about the removal of stones.
- Either of these ways.

### Supplementary Ko Rule

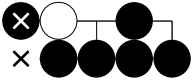
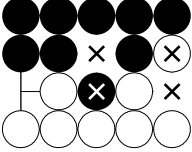
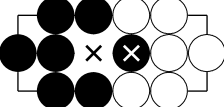
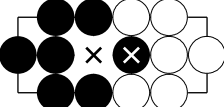
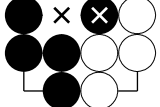
The original wording does not convey the intended meaning but even contradicts the intended meaning; therefore the original rule text should not be applied at all. Very likely the intended meaning is as follows:

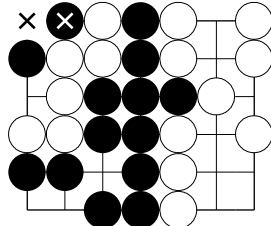
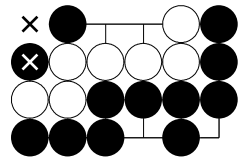
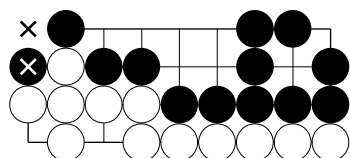
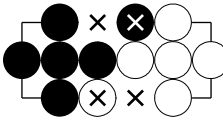
*A player may not pass if*

- *there is at least one basic ko with his ko stone on the board that is neither a disturbing life nor an internal disturbing death and*
- *he has some legal play that is not on a two-eye-formation.*

Formal, general definitions of "disturbing life", "internal disturbing death", and "two-eye-formation" are available elsewhere. In particular, there are the texts "Types of Basic Ko" and "External versus Internal Ko" by this commentary's author on his webpage. In practice, the above rule's second condition will never be relevant; it is for experts and people seeking completeness of the rules only.

Additionally, these precedents are available. The informal generalizations and the references to formal ko types are added by the author of this commentary.

	<p>Either player to move may pass. As an informal generalization, dead kos in territory need not be dissolved until the game's first pass. The formal ko type is "internal dead ko", which is an "internal disturbing death".</p>
	<p>Either player to move may pass. As an informal generalization, double ko sekis in a stable state need not be dissolved until the game's first pass. The formal ko type of each basic ko is "active disturbing life", which is a "disturbing life".</p>
 <p>(*) <i>Black to move</i></p>	<p>Black may <b>not</b> pass. As an informal generalization, a player may not pass if there is at least one basic endgame ko with his ko stone. The formal ko type is "external fighting ko".</p>
 <p>(*) <i>Black has just captured in the ko. White to move.</i></p>	<p>White may pass. This is so also on a bigger board with available tenukis. As an informal generalization, it is so because it is Black to make the last endgame play anyway; he has to fill the ko before passing. So White will be the one to make the game's first pass anyway. The formal ko type is "external fighting ko". Note that currently there is no white ko stone in the ko.</p>
 <p>(*) <i>The previous play has not been a ko-capture.</i></p>	<p>Black to move may <b>not</b> pass. As an informal generalization, a player may not pass if there is at least one ordinary fighting ko with his ko stone. - White to move may pass because the ko does not contain his ko stone. However, probably White will make a different strategic choice. - The formal ko type is "internal fighting ko".</p>

 <p data-bbox="207 403 734 436">(*) The previous play has not been a ko-capture.</p>	<p data-bbox="798 156 1420 380">Black to move may <b>not</b> pass. The aforementioned informal generalization applies.  - White to move may pass because the ko does not contain his ko stone. However, probably White will make a different strategic choice. -  The formal ko type is "internal fighting ko".</p>
 <p data-bbox="207 627 734 660">(*) The previous play has not been a ko-capture.</p>	<p data-bbox="798 459 1420 683">Black to move may <b>not</b> pass. The aforementioned informal generalization applies.  - White to move may pass because the ko does not contain his ko stone. However, probably White will make a different strategic choice. -  The formal ko type is "internal fighting ko".</p>
 <p data-bbox="367 873 574 907">(*) Black to move.</p>	<p data-bbox="798 705 1420 929">Regardless of possible ko threats elsewhere, Black may <b>not</b> pass. As an informal generalization, a player may not pass if there is at least one fighting ko with his ko stone and nearby teire approach plays. The formal ko type is "external fighting ko".</p>
	<p data-bbox="798 952 1420 1108">Either player to move may <b>not</b> pass. The informal generalization about basic endgame ko applies. The formal ko type of each basic ko is "external fighting ko".</p>

Only the (\*) examples were given in the World Mind Sports Games 2008 opening lectures for the tournaments. The other examples reflect answers to example test positions shown to Chen Zuyuan by the author of this commentary.

## Commentary for Experts

### General Characterization

Conceptually the World Mind Sports Games 2008 Rules are the first truly international, world-wide ruleset. The related tournament will be the first of their international application. Of course, it will take time for the rules to establish themselves as the regular ruleset for international tournaments permanently.

The rules unify the previous traditions by creating a compromise right in the middle. As such the rules are about as simple, elegant, and applicable as they could be. This is a surprisingly great achievement hardly anybody considered possible in 2007. The politicians deserve praise for overcoming the hurdles of sacrifices and creating unity.

There is no birth of flawless beauty. One might wish a more consistent wording and criticise the "contestable points" concept. On the other hand, the achievement is impressive: unified komi, easily understood clarification of status questions, unified scoring, flexible counting options, and a single ko rule.

## Terminology

"point" means "intersection" or "scoring unit". E.g., it means "intersection" in "Each intersection is called a 'point' [...]". E.g., it means "scoring unit" in "The amount of komi [...] is [...] 6.5 points."

"vacant" or "unoccupied" mean "empty" and are used for intersections without stones on. The rules also sometimes use "empty".

There are two types of moves: "play [on the board]" and "pass".

"unit", "group of stones", or "group of same-color stones" mean "string" (also known as "chain").

"forbidden point" refers to an intersection where a player's play would be suicide.

In these rules, "game end" (or similar phrases) refers to different meanings: a) a process in the headline "Section 5 Ending the Game", b) the moment just after the first succession of passes in "The game [...] comes to an end [...]", c) the moment just after completion of the removal of stones in agreement in "The game ends [...]", d) the moment just after the second succession of passes in "[...] the game comes to its end."

"resume" and "continue" occur for "restarting and prolonging alternate moving".

"life" and "alive" refer to the same and are undefined until after the second succession of passes. After the second succession of passes, "alive stones" are **all** the stones on the board.

"death" and "dead" refer to the same and are undefined when used as the complement of "life". There is a second usage of "dead": A stone or a unit / group of stones without liberties, i.e. just before its removal in a capture, is also called "dead". (Other rulesets like to speak of "prisoners" as soon as the stones have been removed from the board.)

"first pass": This is the game's first pass.

"compensation": There are two compensations: One is the 6.5 komi, the other is the 1 point compensation **if** White makes the first pass.

## Positional Superko

Besides of expressing the principle of prohibited reappearance of the same board position in the sentence "It is illegal to play in such a way as to recreate a board position that previously existed on the board.", the rules use a lengthy section to explain this also by a commentary. Although this commentary is non-essential for rules themselves, it prepares players unfamiliar with a superko rule principle. It is a way of "selling" superko to them by explaining why in general its application works quite like the most ordinary basic ko fight. This is an euphemism, of course, because some rare superko fights (rarer than your ordinary triple ko shape) can become more complicated and complex than the basic ko fight.

One thing the rules commentary does not mention: Instead of playing elsewhere on the board, it is also legally possible to pass. However, passing does not serve as a ko threat. Why? A pass does not change the board position. Therefore, if one wants to recapture in a ko, the rules commentary is right when saying that it requires a play elsewhere on the board to change its position and thereby be a real ko threat. It is relevant to understand this because, near the game end, a single intervening pass or a succession of two passes do not serve as a ko threat. This has strategic consequences: Usually connecting or leaving open the last endgame ko after a won ko fight are equal strategic options. More excitingly, if such a single last endgame ko is near teire of one's own, they do not have to be filled, either. This scarce strategic difference might surprise especially players previously used to traditional types of Territory Scoring rules.

Players new to superko have a tendency to ask some basic questions: "What is a board position?" This is the distribution of black and white stones on all the 361 specific intersections of the board. "Can rotation or mirroring of the board change the position?" Each of the intersections is specific;



rotation or mirroring would rotate or mirror also each intersection. "Does one have to distinguish the stone colour?" Yes. "What does the 'positional' mean in 'positional superko?'" It means that only the pattern on the board is considered - it is ignored whose turn it is or was. A pass does not create yet another board position. Plays are the only means for changing the board position.

## **Belief**

The rule "Two consecutive passes signal that both players believe that there are no more points to contest for in the game." speaks of what the players believe. By nature, belief is responsible only to a human being's conscience. As such, it is not available for verification by referees because, as a consequence of the United Nations' declaration of the human rights, no referee has the right to inquire about and demand expression of a human being's particular conscience.

The rule could and ought to have been formulated morally neutral as in "After the first succession of two passes, [...]" or, if one wants to include commentary into the rule, as in "After the first succession of two passes, which express that currently neither player wants to make a play but both players want to reach the agreement-or-disagreement-phase, [...]".

Since it is unreasonable to assume that a set of go rules might want to oppress players by possibly forcing them to reveal part of their conscience, it is more reasonable to assume that the reference to belief at all and to a specific materialization is not more than a bad choice of wording and style of conveying contents.

Since paragraph (3) allows for the possibility of "[...] contestable points on the board after two passes [...]", the rule about belief does not require the players to be correct in their belief. Therefore, even if a referee inquired about the players' belief, they may not be punished for possibly having an erroneous belief.

## **Game of Placing Stones in Alternation**

What does the rule "The game of placing the stones in alternation comes to an end and the competition is over." want to express besides reaching a temporary game end?

Stones are placed in alternation when the players alternate plays without any intervening pass. Such can occur a) before the first pass of the game, b) in between a single pass and a next single pass that is earlier than the first succession of passes, c) in between a single pass and the first succession of passes, d) in between the first succession of passes and the second succession of passes, e) in between the first succession of passes and a single pass, f) in between a single pass and a next single pass that are later than the first succession of passes, or g) in between a single pass and the second succession of passes.

Therefore it may neither be prohibited to make plays in alternation during a continuation of alternate moving after a dispute after the first succession of passes nor be prohibited to make single passes before the first succession of passes. But what then does "The game of placing the stones in alternation comes to an end" express at all besides reaching a temporary game end? Nothing. It might as well have been written as "A [temporary] end is reached [...]". Adding "The game of placing the stones in alternation" does not provide any useful new information but creates unnecessary confusion instead.

Still the meaning of "[...] the competition is over." needs to be clarified. Since paragraph (3) allows for the possibility of "[...] contestable points on the board after two passes [...]", the meaning is a wish rather than a requirement. It is commentary inside the rules but false commentary. For this, one does not even have to understand precisely "the competition of what" shall be referred to here.

Unprescriptive wishes ought not to be part of rules. They are better avoided. Skipping "[...] the competition is over." makes interpretation of the rules easier because one does not need to separate

requirements from wishes. Unfortunately, the rule is there and so the above characterization becomes necessary for the rule's interpretation.

A future rules revision should follow this principle: Separate rules from commentary! The rule might be: "After the first succession of two passes, [...]" A commentary might be: "Usually the players have already finished the yose. Afterwards the final removals may occur." By this separation, one does not need to understand precisely the meaning of "yose" in contrast to "final removals". Then all one would have to understand for an interpretation of the rules would be the phrase "first succession of [...] passes", what is easy enough and will not cause insurmountable translation difficulties.

## **Life and Death**

(This section does not refer to the dead stones removed from the board due to being without liberties.)

During the agreement-or-disagreement-phase, if the players agree on which stones to remove and remove them, then scoring applies to the board position after that removal. I.e., being on the board and the stone colour are the only relevant criteria for the status of a stone then. In other words, although the rules do not explicitly say so, one might call all the stones on the board then (after the previous final removals) "alive".

If the players disagree, continue to alternate moves to approach the liberties of stones to be removed by actual play, remove those stones by capturing them, and reach the second succession of passes, then the rules define all the then remaining stones on the board to be "alive".

However, otherwise, i.e. before reaching the scoring position, "life" and "death" are undefined. If one considers these terms then to be nothing more than commentary on the rules inside its text, then one does not have extra interpretation problems. However, experience with other rulesets teaches that some players show "allergic reactions" when "life" and "death" assume meanings that do not conform to their own traditionally imagined meanings. Such players might overinterpret the terms by overloading their associated contents with references to hypothetically perfect play strategy and demand that usage as terms of Go strategy implies usage as rules terms instead of vice versa.

Such superfluous interpretation difficulties could have been avoided if the rules did not use the terms "life" and "death" at all but spoke of something neutral like "all the stones remaining on the board" and "all the stones to be removed due to the players' agreement". A commentary - instead of the rules - could then still explain the former to be the alive stones and the latter to be the dead stones. That the rule text integrates rules and commentary makes interpretation more difficult again.

In particular, it can lead to disputes when one player calls all his stones alive and all his opponent's stones dead (justifying it, e.g., by the only definition in the rules about alive and by the game aim related to the score) while the opponent jumps to the ceiling when being embarrassed about such great deviation from the Go strategical meaning of the same words used as terms of strategy rather than as terms of the rules.

Experience shows that referee decisions can differ greatly here. A referee relying on the undefinedness of the terms might judge that it is up to the players to fill the terms with meaning and either agree or disagree (after all that is the very purpose of the agreement-disagreement-phase). Another referee relying on the identity of words of both the rules terms and the strategic terms might judge that a player seeing a difference here behaves unsportsmanlike to the highest degree.

This unpredictability of arbitration endangers the players to become "criminals" by trying to apply the rules. The responsibility is with the rules authors that ought to have provided the clarity which of the two major lines of interpretation is intended or - better yet - avoided terms that create confusion between rules and strategy necessarily.

Actually there is not that big a problem if only the referee chooses the compromise judgement: "The rules do not define which meaning of 'life' and 'death' is right during the agreement-disagreement-phase. Therefore continue to alternate moves and find it out! You are going to see who is right and you do so according to your Go skill!" This judgement does not blame either player and fits the rules perfectly. Total beginners will learn something about strategy then while top players learn reasonableness naturally. Could rules application be any more beautiful?

Status question about empty points are just consequences of status questions / disputes about "life" and "death". So it not necessary to this discuss this separately.

## Goal

The rule "The goal of a Go game is to occupy the majority of the 361 points on the board." is doubtful because of these reasons: 1) If the counting system does not occupy all the otherwise empty points, then the goal cannot be realized in practice. 2) The goal ought to mention also the first pass compensation. The rule, if omitting it is considered inappropriate, should say: "The goal of a Go game is to win by a favourable score."

## Shared Points

The rules also define the scoring of the shared empty points: "The unoccupied points between black stones and white stones are divided evenly between the two players." This is known to be equivalent to either not scoring those intersections at all or to score each such intersection for both players. Presumably the even division variant is chosen as a suggestive means to a) encourage the players to fill half each of an even number of 2-sided dame and b) describe the practical effect of the default counting method in 2008, which is the Ing Counting and which fills half of those empty intersections by black or white stones, respectively. If the scoring position should have an odd number of shared empty intersections, then the excess intersection is divided numerically as 1/2 point for Black and 1/2 point for White. During Ing fill-in counting, that one excess intersection would be the one left empty after 360 stones will have found their way onto 360 of the 361 intersections of the board.

## Counting

A tournament should announce or tournament rules should specify the actually used counting method.

Other counting methods exist. E.g., Point by Point Counting, Point by Point Half Counting, Pairwise Removal of Pairs of One Black Stone and One White Stone, Prisoner Counting for Area Scoring. Obviously each such method needs to be modified by any White passes first compensation. In particular, if New Zealand should want to use Point by Point Half Counting combined with any White passes first compensation, then tournament rules should specify such an overriding rule.

Japanese Counting or Ing Counting could be modified slightly to consider the White first pass compensation more elegantly. However, before the greatest efficiency is achieved, maybe everybody should first get used to the rules.

Basic commentaries on the counting methods can be found elsewhere.

By the way, it is nice to see that the rules distinguish between scoring (definition of which points score for whom) and counting (mechanical method for calculating the scores) carefully.

## Compensations

There are two types of compensations: 1) the 6.5 komi, 2) the first pass penalty. The latter is

conditional: If and only if White made the first pass of the game, 1 extra scoring point is subtracted from Black.

Detailed studies of the statistical effect of komi on the winning percentages of Black and White in mostly professional games have revealed that it is currently unclear whether 6.5 or 7.5 (aka 8 under Ing Rules) is the more appropriate komi. This makes it particularly attractive to use a system of conditional compensation that can award White either 6.5 or 7.5 points, depending on who made the first pass.

Calling the second type of points adjustment a "compensation" as well is both a well chosen term and a cute PR method of selling the rules to the general Go playing public: It is called what it is: A [contribution to the] compensation for Black's right to make the game's first move.

## Contestable Points

Section 5 sentence 1 and section 5 paragraph (3) refer to contestable points. The rule concept is as superfluous as the "effective move" rule of the Japanese 1989 Rules. Players taking pride in aesthetics will ensure strategically that they don't forget some yose and don't add some superfluous stone nevertheless.

Chen Zuyuan added that the rule was meant to be a tournament rule. However, the author of this commentary points out that it has been integrated into the text of the rules of play. Furthermore Chen added that it was meant to be a rule for the sake of pleasing the Japanese's demand for cultural rules and that contestable point did not refer to only intersections but also to abstract strategic / tactical possibilities.

## 1-Sided Dame

Someone said that the behaviour of 1-sided dame was very different from the behaviour of 2-sided dame. However, a precedental ruling or esoteric interpretation of a contestable points concept can be avoided by in particular one of the following ways:

- Like in the Simplified World Mind Sports Games Rules, the concept of contestable points can be dropped and, after the first succession of two passes, each player can always achieve a resumption of alternating play.
- Replace the "2 successive passes stop the game" rule by "After the first pass, the next succession of 2 passes stops the game".
- Replace the "2 successive passes stop the game" rule by "3 successive passes stop the game".
- Replace the "2 successive passes stop the game" rule by "2 successive passes stop the game. The player making the game's first pass may declare the rule to be replaced by the following: After the first pass, the next succession of 2 passes stops the game".

Rules should not be about special shapes or unclear about procedures. Both can be avoided by more careful rules design.

## Supplementary Ko Rule

For the sake of completion, it shall be said that the supplementary ko rule was declared about a week before the World Mind Sports Games 2008 in the 1st WMSG - Supplements to Regulations for Go Tournaments / article II. Penalties and Others / paragraph 2 as "For controversies over half-point *ko* before the endgame, the owner of the *ko* must end the *ko* and make the last play, despite the outcome of the *ko*". The rule was a political last minute compromise between the Chinese and the Japanese, whose wish it was, forgoing in particular the IGF.

For easier reference, the model rule shall be stated here again:

*A player may not pass if*

- *there is at least one basic ko with his ko stone on the board that is neither a disturbing life nor an internal disturbing death and*
- *he has some legal play that is not on a two-eye-formation.*

The various examples in the texts "Types of Basic Ko" and "External versus Internal Ko" can convince us why a disturbing life or an internal disturbing death may exist on the board when a player passes while fighting kos and external disturbing deaths (and also the semi-stable molasses ko) have to be dissolved. The original idea of having a supplementary ko rule has roughly been to avoid the game's first pass being strategically useful for its own inherent endgame value in other so called endgame contexts than nothing but 2-sided dame, i.e., to avoid new strategic behaviour in late endgame kos. The unequivocal model rule above captures this intention while being applicable to all possible positions.

Unfortunately, a complete understanding of the model rule and its theoretical foundation is far beyond the ordinary go player's ability. He might need to grasp the concepts of disturbing life and internal disturbing death on a somewhat intuitive level and leave it to the experts to understand correctness and completeness of the theoretical basis. Nevertheless, even from a purely practical view, the model rule (or at least its first condition) is much better than the original supplementary ko rule because now it is clear that so called dead kos in territory, double ko deaths, and disturbing lifes may exist to the game's first succession of passes.

Why does the model rule apply only to a player currently having a ko stone in a relevant ko? Because the original supplementary ko rule has wanted it this way.

What is the second condition's purpose? Completeness. One cannot prohibit a player to pass if he does not have any legal play. The added two-eye-formation detail might be omitted but, for sure, it has not been the original intention to prohibit a player to pass just to force him to kill one of his two-eye-formations, has it? Needless to say, such occurs only if in particular the player cannot fill the ko because he may not fill it as a consequence of the superko rule. Of course, it requires an expert's determination to construct an (unrealistic) example.

As could be seen, it is possible to understand the theory behind the supplementary ko rule completely and to apply its interpretation (the model rule) in practice. This commentary's author needed some 6 weeks for inventing the model (and relied on more than a decade of prior research). It is the contrary of a nice rule though and will arouse much criticism in future. Is this the kind of rules design desired for international rules? Who thinks that it will make beginners happy and thus help promoting the game?

## **Future**

Can the World Mind Sports Games 2008 Rules serve as the permanent unified ruleset for international tournaments? Their very good core including the first pass compensation rule suggests this. There are also the following objections though.

Objections by the author of this commentary:

- Minor details should receive an improved wording (see, e.g., the section Belief).
- (\*) The concept of contestable points should be dropped entirely because it is superfluous and only one official person during the World Mind Sports Games 2008 understood significantly more than nothing of it.
- (\*) The exceptional treatment of 1-sided dame should be dropped because it is too ambiguous and awkward.
- (\*) The supplementary ko rule should be dropped or its explanation should be literally over

a hundred times as good as during the World Mind Sports Games 2008.

The (\*) points were caused by the Japanese Go Association. One gets the impression that the Japanese put much salt into the rules to bury the beautiful core of the rules among growing lists of precedents. While the basic idea of the rules is great, the Japanese input is harmful. Although it is advertised as "compromise", it might well be called a trick. The Japanese are not happy with having achieved unvaluable 2-sided-dame, avoided superfluous defensive plays, and avoided premature removals of dead stones - they want more. It should be pointed out though that the supplementary ko rule was meant to be specifically for 2008. So one might be more optimistic by assuming that the Japanese have already realized their factually declining input in a world-wide rules compromise. At least in 2008 they have succeeded in reminding the world of their perception of cultural background.

Objections by other people:

- Yuki Shigeno: "These rules are meant to be for the World Mind Sports Games 2008 only."
- People from the Ing foundation: "These rules contain too many aspects of compromise. We dislike superko."
- Michael Marz: "Ing fill-in counting should not be used for these rules because it can happen that the opponent of the player with a winning space on the board wins the game."

So although the rules' core is still a primary candidate for a permanent unified ruleset for international tournaments, some changes of details can be expected and some people would like to see even greater changes.