

Commentary on the Chinese 2002 Rules

2015-08-13, version 1, Robert Jasiek

Sources

2015-08-05 EGF referee workshop: Zhao Baolong 2p [ZB], partly Li Ting 1p [LT], insight by participants of the workshop.

Current Rules

ZB: The current rules are of 2002.

LT (reported): The current rules are of 2008.

Overall Impression

- The Chinese Rules are not designed for beginners.
- The Chinese 2002 Rules are imperfect and not always written to be interpreted strictly literally.

Citations from the Chinese 2002 Rules (English translation)

"CHAPTER ONE - MAIN RULES

[...]

6. Forbidden repetition of the same shape on the whole board

It is forbidden to create a whole board shape which has appeared before. (A capturing move that creates a repeated board position is known as a Ko or Jie.)

7. Ending the game

7.1 A game is played until both players agree that it is finished.

7.2 During a game, if one player resigns, the game is finished.

7.3 If both players pass one after the other, the game is finished.

8. Living stones and dead stones

8.1 When the game is finished, by agreement of both parties, all un-removable stones are living stones.

8.2 When the game is finished, by agreement of both parties, all removable stones are dead stones.

9. Determining the winner

When a game is completed, the winner is determined by the method of stone counting. After all dead stones are removed from the board, count either of the two players' living stones plus all unoccupied intersections which are surrounded by those living stones.

The unoccupied intersections between both players' living stones are divided by two, and each player is credited with half.

[...]

CHAPTER TWO - RULES FOR COMPETITION

[...]

13. Ending the game

13.1 In addition to the game ending methods described in Chapter One, Rule 7, a game is also ended for situations of forfeit, judgements of loss or draw.

13.2 The following procedure ends a game: when it is one player's turn, this player clearly and simply states "the game is over." The opponent responds by stating "the game is over", and then the game is finished.

[...]

CHAPTER THREE - RULES FOR REFEREES

[...]

20. Forbidden repetitions of the same shape on the whole board

The only technical reason that obstructs the completion of a game is the repetition of the same shape on the whole board. In principle it should be prohibited.

20.1 It is forbidden to immediately play a Ko capture without first playing a Ko threat.

20.2 It is forbidden to play a false multiple rotational Ko (black move A in Diagram 3 is a false Ko).

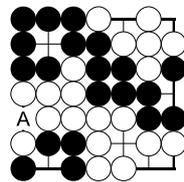


diagram 3

20.3 Triple Ko, quadruple Ko, eternal life Ko, two-stone Ko, etc., are rare repetitions of the same shape on the whole board which are in principle forbidden (see Diagram 4 for examples).

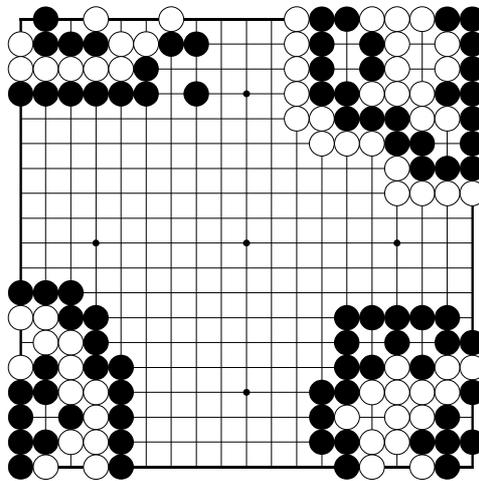


diagram 4

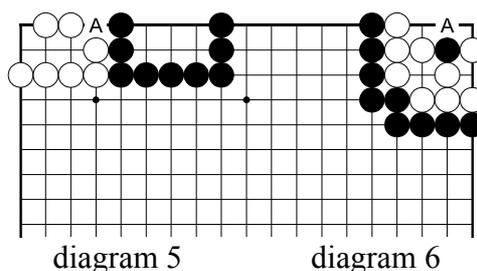
Depending on the type of the tournament, it is possible to make alternative rules, for example: no result, tie or additional competition.

21. Ending the game

21.1 A player may say "Game is finished" during their turn and then pass. If the opponent does not agree that the game is finished, the opponent is allowed to continue play. If play continues, then the one who initially passed has the right to play again. The game continues until both players agree that the game is finished.

21.2 If both sides have agreed that the game is finished but there are still meaningful moves remaining on the board, then these points should be handled according to the rule of shuanghuo (dual life, commonly known as seki). (See A in diagram 5).

21.3 After both sides have agreed that the game is



finished, even if one or both players discover that there are still effective moves, it is not allowed to resume play. (See diagram 6, moves like black A.)

21.4 Both players must agree about which stones are dead and which are alive. If there is disagreement, the game is resumed. The one who thinks the stones are dead plays first, and the argument is resolved by playing it out.

[...]"

Comments on Forbidden Repetitions

§20.2 applied to diagram 3 means: Black A is legal but the sixth successive ko capture is prohibited because it would repeat the same shape on the whole board.

§6 and §20.3 as a rule are essentially the positional superko rule, i.e., the prohibition of a play recreating the same shape [with the same distribution of black and white stones on specific intersections] on the whole board. In the practice of professional Chinese tournaments, a §20.3 repetition is allowed, results in the game result "tie" as an assumed alternative rule, which usually is not announced before the start of a tournament but is implicitly assumed. In 100% of all professional Chinese tournaments, this "tie" rule is used [ZB]. This does not prevent other tournaments, e.g. in Europe, from, e.g., always applying §20.3 as the positional superko rule if this should be preferred.

It is unclear if the alternative rule "tie" also applies to diagram 3.

Comments on Ending the Game

Possible means for a player to seek finishing the game include: a) pass, b) stating "The game is over.", c) stating "The game is finished.", d) otherwise seeking agreement with the opponent that the game is finished. (b) or (c) are different forms of making a pass and mean exactly the same. (a), (b) and (c) are a player's act on his turn; the game is finished if the opponent, on his next turn, acts with (a), (b) or (c). (d) is a turn-less form of trying to finish the game and succeeds if both players agree that the game is finished. If a player having the turn does not succeed with (d), his act can be (a), (b), (c) or a play.

Tournament rules, such as the EGF General Tournament Rules, can prescribe (a) and override the liberal variety of the Chinese Rules.

Comments on Status Disagreements - the Usual Procedure

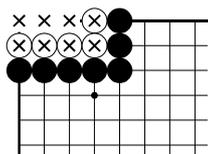
Under the Chinese 2002 Rules, a player disagreeing about the status of stones is required to express his disagreement by making a play on the board. Plays are the usual means to dissolve status disagreements. If the players cannot agree to finish the game apparently because they have a status disagreement, then they play to dissolve it. This concept of agreement or disagreement might differ from other rulesets; in particular, usually the players do not discuss whether particular stones are unremovable / alive or removable / dead and do not call a referee to determine their status - instead, in the case of unspecific disagreement preventing the game from finishing, the players are simply

expected to continue play because play can, in principle, be used to remove stones, which a cute observer might think of as "removable".

If counting started prematurely with the removal of some [possibly prematurely perceived as dead] stones and a disagreement occurs, the removals are undone before the players' turns possibly with plays on the board are resumed.

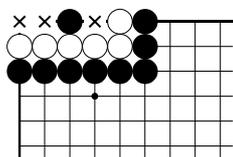
Comments on Status Disagreements - the Ultimate Procedures

If the players' status disagreement is followed by their immediate passes, the following precedents apply suitably:



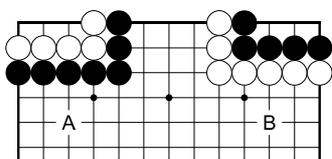
Dia. C1

Dia. C1: The marked intersections count for White.



Dia. C2

Dia. C2: Each intersection with a black stone counts for Black, each intersection with a white stone counts for White and each marked intersection is shared equally between the players. The corner is treated as a seki. This is so because both players would, if they were still allowed to, want to make the first play in the corner.



Dia. C3

Dia. C3: Both the corner shapes A and B are on the board. A is treated locally. B is treated locally. Locally in each corner shape, the player hypothetically plays first whose opposing stones supposedly can be removed and killed as a dead group. For the corner shape A, this means that Black hypothetically plays first locally in the corner shape A. For the corner shape B, this means that White hypothetically plays first locally in the corner shape B. The rule of alternation need not apply for the first move in one local corner shape. Hypothetical play for A and hypothetical play for B might as well be assumed to occur simultaneously. As a result, the white stones are removed from A and the black stones are removed from B. Afterwards counting is possible.

Who said that the Chinese Rules were logical or simple? In the case of stubborn players expressing their status disagreement by successively passing, they are not. Their behaviour differs from New Zealand Rules, AGA Rules or Simplified Ing Rules, which would never use local status assessment, hypothetical play or a violation of the rule of alternation. The Chinese 2002 Rules do use local status assessment, hypothetical play and violate the rule of alternation. Area scoring is simple but, nevertheless, the Chinese Rules manage to be complicated.

The precedents above apply regardless of the exact wording of §21.

Comments on Counting

Where the English translation of the Chinese 2002 Rules speaks of "the method of stone counting", that text is creating its own terminology meaning what the other literature calls "Chinese Half

Counting" and not to be confused with other methods of stone counting found in the literature.

The komi is "3.75 stones". The Chinese word for "stones" is "zi" and written by the Chinese symbol looking similar to a "j" in handwriting.

Recall to remove the removable / dead stones first.

The exact half counting score is calculated by forming a difference with the reference value 180.5 adjusted by the komi. E.g., $192 - 184.25 = 7.75$ is such a calculation if 192 is the count on the board and $180.5 + 3.75 = 184.25$ is the adjusted reference value. In the practice of verbal counting, such fractions are usually considered too complicated, the reference value is rounded defensively to 185 and the following simplifying statement can be made: "White lost by 7 stones." In writing, the exact score is stated with the fraction. [We get the full counting score by multiplying the half counting score by 2 to get "15.5 points", but this is not part of the Chinese Rules. However, tournament rules presuming full counting might require such a conversion in practice.]

Counting sekis is as follows to express that each player gets half of the shared empty intersections. The players fill their own surrounded intersections with their own stones; this is so also in sekis. As far as possible, each of the players fills half of the shared empty intersections. If one shared empty intersection remains, this counts 0.5 points for each player. For the counted player, this means the number of his empty intersections on the board is increased by 0.5. E.g., if White's count on the board is 182.5, such can result in the calculation $184.25 - 182.5 = 1.75$ meaning "Black wins by 1.75 stones."

The author has not understood yet the counting (and scoring) of handicap stones in China, apparently except that a handicap of 9 stones affects the counting by removing 4 of the stones before counting the remaining black stones on the board.