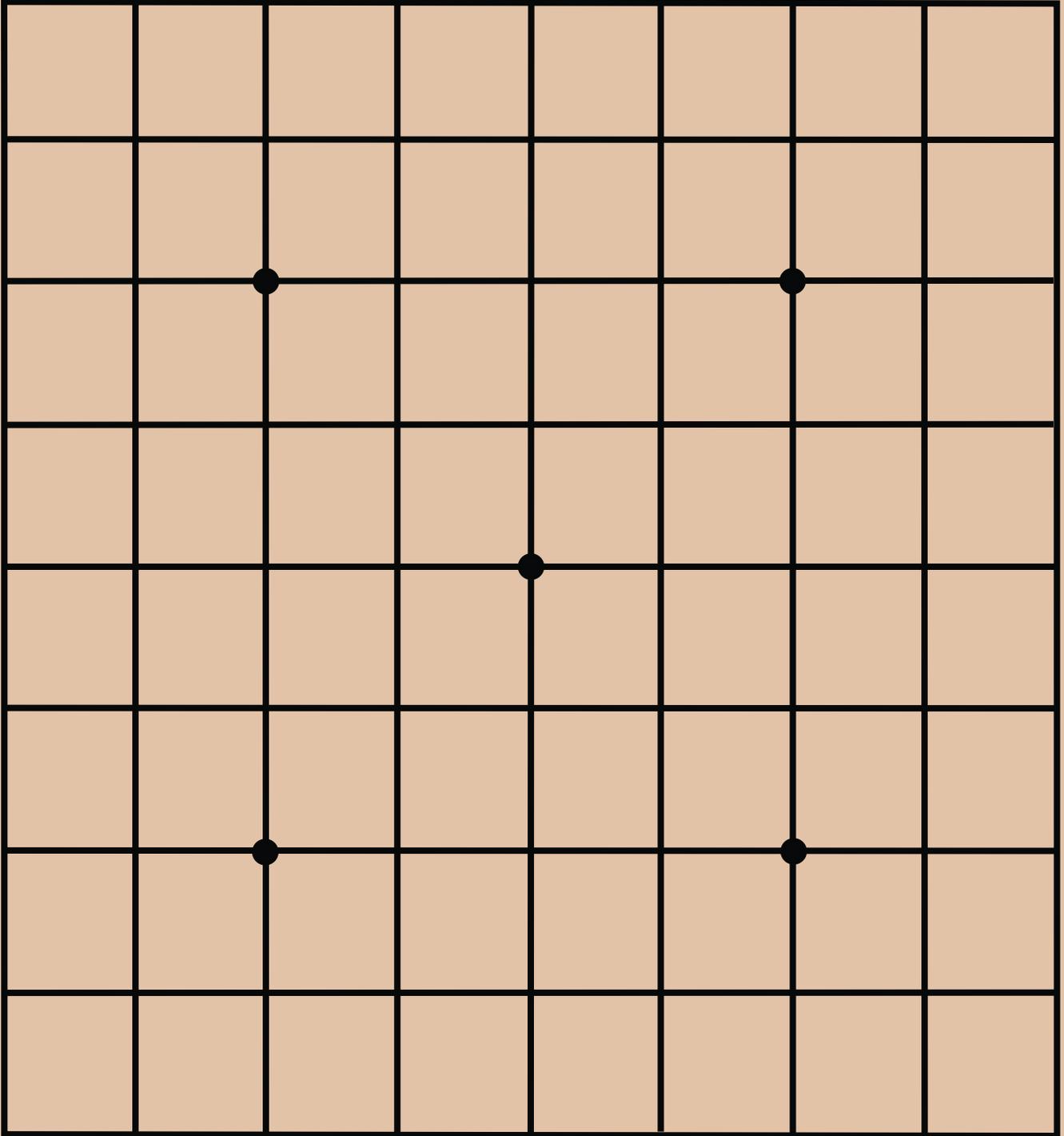


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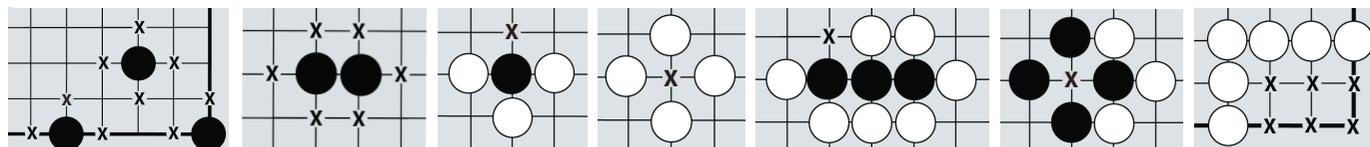
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Simplified American Go Association Rules of Go

1) Go is played on a grid of lines - like this 9x9 board. One player uses black pieces (called stones), one uses white. Except for handicap games, the board starts empty. Beginning with Black, the players take turns placing a single stone on an empty intersection (including edges or corners). On any turn, a player may pass and hand the opponent a “pass stone” instead of playing on the board. Usually this happens near the end of the game when a player thinks no more points can be gained. It signals that the player believes the game should end. A move is either a placement or a pass.

2) Object: To score more points by controlling more of the board.

3) Liberties: An empty intersection adjacent (directly above, below, left or right) to a stone is a liberty of that stone. Intersections diagonal to a stone are not adjacent and are not liberties of that stone. The uppermost Black stone in Dia. 1 has 4 liberties, at the Xs. The stone on the side has three, and the one in the corner only two. Stones of the same color are connected if they occupy adjacent intersections or if they are part of a string of connected stones. Stones in a string share the liberties of all the stones in the string. The two Black stones in Dia. 2 are connected and form a string with 6 liberties, indicated by the Xs.



Dia. 1

Dia. 2

Dia. 3

Dia. 4

Dia. 5

Dia. 6

Dia. 7

A stone or string of stones with only one liberty is said to be *atari*. If a move takes the last liberty of a stone or string, they are captured and removed. The Black stone in Dia. 3 is in *atari*; Dia. 4 shows the position after White captures. Dia. 5 shows three Black stones in *atari*. If White plays X, the stones will be captured. Captured stones become prisoners of the capturing player. Removing the stone(s) is part of the move. Self-capture – playing so one’s own stone or string of stones has no liberties at the end of the move - is not allowed. Playing at the X in Dia. 4 is illegal. However, in Dia. 6, White can play at X and capture Black because removing the Black stone gives White a liberty.

4) Repetition: Often players could alternately capture and recapture a single stone, as in Dia. 6. This is known as *ko* (a Japanese Buddhist word for eternity). It is illegal to play a stone which exactly recreates a previous full board position in the game. So after the first capture, the player moving next may not recapture immediately, since this would repeat the board position. Instead, that player must play elsewhere - changing the board - before being allowed to recapture.

5) Illegal Moves: If a player makes an illegal move and it is recognized before any other play, the stone is removed, the board restored to the way it was before the move, and a legal move made. If other moves have intervened, the illegal move stands.

6) Handicaps: The weaker player is always Black and may place 2 or more handicap stones on the board (enough to make an equal contest) before White plays a stone, and the players alternate from then on.

7) Ending the Game: The two players place stones until they believe they cannot gain any additional points. Beginners should play until they have captured any stones they can and have surrounded or occupied any intersections they can. Two consecutive passes signal the end of the game. With experience players recognize when some of their stones will not be able to avoid capture. After both players pass, the players may agree on the stones which are trapped but not captured. If there are no disputes, the trapped stones are removed from the board as prisoners without further play.

8) Disputes: After both players have passed, if they disagree about who controls any empty intersections or whether any stones left on the board are trapped, play resumes where it left off. Play stops a) when the players pass and agree about all stones and intersections and any trapped stones are removed or b) when both players pass twice in succession, all stones remain on the board and it is counted as is.

9) The Last Move: White must make the last move on the board, or if necessary, hand a pass stone to the opponent. The total number of stones played or passed by each player during the entire game (not including handicap stones minus one) must be equal.

10) Counting the score: Empty intersections surrounded by stones of one color are the territory of that color. The White stones in Dia. 7 surround 6 points of territory. At the end of the game, prisoners (captured, trapped and pass stones) are placed into the territory of their color - reducing the opponent’s territory. A player scores one point for each intersection of territory. Any empty point at the end of the game not surrounded by stones of one color is a neutral point and does not count in the score. The player with the higher total wins by the difference.

For complete AGA rules, and examples of play, download our free booklet *The Way To Go* at <http://www.usgo.org/usa/waytogo>