



YourTurnMyTurn.com: Go-moku rules

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Go-moku rules

Introduction and object of the board game

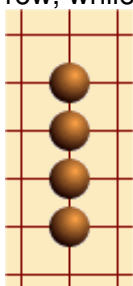
Go-Moku is played on a 19 by 19 Go-board, which is quite large. But very few games will use the entire board. The object of the board game is to get five stones in a row, be it horizontal, vertical or diagonal. You must notice that *six* in a row do not win, such a construction is called an *overline*. In that case the game just goes on. Of course the game can end in a draw, if the players agree, or in the very rare case the whole board is full of stones while no player has five in a row.

The black player begins the board game. In turn, each player places a stone on the board. You can place stones where two lines intersect, just as with Go, not inside the squares! You are allowed to place stones on the edge and even in the corner. Of course the intersection must be empty. On YourTurnMyTurn.com we have adopted the tournament rule. This means that black's very first move must be in the center of the game board. White's first move can be anywhere. Black's second move must be outside the 5 by 5 area in the center of the game board. White's second move, and all moves after that, can be anywhere.

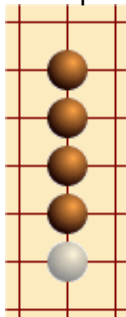
Tactics

There are several constructions in the game which arise frequently and therefore have been given names by players.

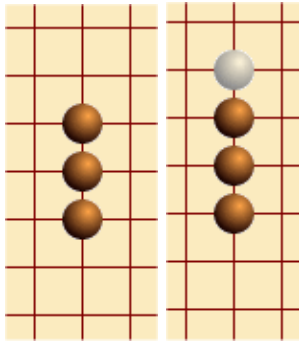
- An *open four* means an immediate win for the player who makes it (unless the other player can make five in a row himself). For there are two places where a stone can make five in a row, while the opponent can block only one. Example:



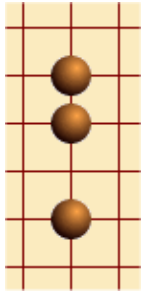
- The *four* is almost the same as an open four. The only difference is that the four is already blocked on one side, so it is not an immediate win. But the opponent's next move is obligatory, so the four is frequently used in a sequence of moves which allows you to win. Example:



- The *three* consists of three stones in a row. If the three is *open*, the player threatens to make an open four, so his opponent must do something against this. Examples of threes (open or not):



- Another form of the three is the *split three*. The split three is also three in a row, but between two stones there is an empty place. Here the player also threatens to make an open four, so his opponent must stop this, either by putting a stone in the middle, or on one of the sides. The first option is most of the time the best, because if you block on the side, your opponent can create a four which gives your opponent an extra tempo. Example:



- What the *five* is, is easy to guess. A five means a player has won.

A player will almost never win by only one of these constructions. Most of the times a player forces the win by making these constructions move after move. His opponent will have to counter everything and has only obligatory moves. After some moves a position will arise with *two* threats, which cannot be blocked both. Sequences of 20 (almost) obligatory moves can happen, but most of the times the sequence is 3 or 6 moves long.

Strategy

The above constructions give a very theoretical opinion on the game, but how to play good? Here are some tips:

- Black has the advantage (in fact, the board game is theoretically won for black) so it is advisable to take this into consideration. Black can play very aggressive from the beginning. This advantage persists until white can take over the attack. This means for white defense is important. It is advisable for white to play for a draw, just neutralising every black threat, until you can create some winning chances. Everytime, ask yourself: "What threatens black with his last move?" And just defend against that. Black wins just by creating winning chances, until white overlooks one (or until you can create multiple threats at once). If black loses the attack, the roles are reversed.
- Keep looking for places where knots of enemy stones arise. Knots are places where two rows of stones intersect each other. A row going from left to right can cross a row going from top to bottom. Those places are crucial points in a winning sequence for your opponent. Knots of your own stones are nice places to play your stones of course.
- Do not only play for creating winning chances. Always check what the last stone of your opponent does. At times, it ruins your own position or worse, it is a winning chance for your opponent which is faster than your own.
- Fours come often in handy to destroy your opponent's winning sequence. Fours are in a sense stronger than threes, because they win immediately. If you can block one threat of a double threat with a four, the next move you can block the other threat. A winning sequence consisting of only fours beats a winning sequence containing at least one three. This gives

you a chance to save a lost game!

- Concentrations of stones are most of the time very strong, but watch out! If they get enclosed, you have no stones at the outside, which gives your opponent a lot of threats. That doesn't mean you will lose the game, but it is difficult to get back the attack.
- And if you play on one side of the board and your opponent is busy on the other side, be careful to not lose the attack. Your opponent may have such strong threats you cannot block them anymore.

Go-moku is a board game with simple rules, but very sophisticated strategies. You will learn a lot just by playing. You will get a lot of losing situations, but you can apply them the next game to your opponents.

Wishing you many hours of Go-moku pleasure,
the YourTurnMyTurn.com team.