

SURVIVAL GO!

By: Tyler Reynolds

GO is the oldest board game still played in its original form, enjoyed by millions of people all over the world. “Survival GO” is one of the fastest and easiest ways to learn to play the game of GO for beginners of all ages.

- The Board is flat with 9-lines in each direction to make a square grid.
- There are two players, and two colours of playing pieces, called “stones”: Black and White—one for each side.
- Black always moves first [Figure 1], by placing a stone on any one of the empty “points” on the board where the lines cross or meet (including along the edge and in the corners)—not in the squares. The stones are not moved on the board once played.
- White must then place a stone on a point on the board in the same way. Black and White keep taking turns placing one stone at a time until one or more stones of either colour are “captured”—ending the game.

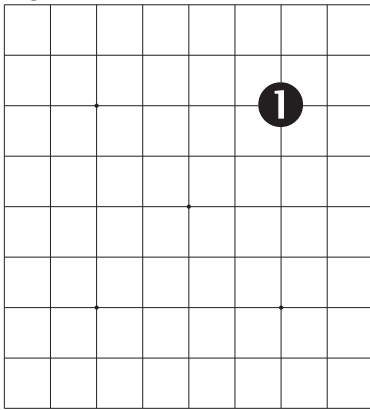
“Surround to capture”

- a) When a single stone is placed on a point on the board it will have up to four empty points right next to it along the lines [Figure 2]. Each of those empty points is called a “liberty” of the stone it is right next to. If all a stone’s liberties are taken by the other colour, that stone is “captured” and removed from the board.
 - b) Stones of the same colour on points that are right next to each other along the lines of the board become linked and share their liberties as a “group” [Figure 2]. This makes them safer because all the liberties of the all the stones in the entire group must be taken by the other colour in order to capture them.
 - c) When a stone, or group of stones, of one colour has only one liberty left, that stone or group is said to be “in Atari” [Figure 3a]. That means that the other colour could play a stone on that last liberty and capture the stone(s) in Atari on his next move.
 - d) It is rarely wise to place a stone on a point where it will have no liberty [such as point ‘a’ in Figure 3c]—since it would be captured right away and lose the game—*except* when that point is also the last liberty of an opponent’s stone or group that is in Atari [point ‘b’ in Figure 4a]. By playing on that last liberty, the stone that occupies that point gets its liberty from the space created after the captured stone or group is taken off the board.
- If a stone, or group of stones, was surrounded on an earlier move, and neither player saw that it should be captured, the first player to point out the capture wins that game. In such cases, it doesn’t matter what colour stones are captured but who sees them first!
 - After each game, the players should switch the colour of stones they will play.

Hints:

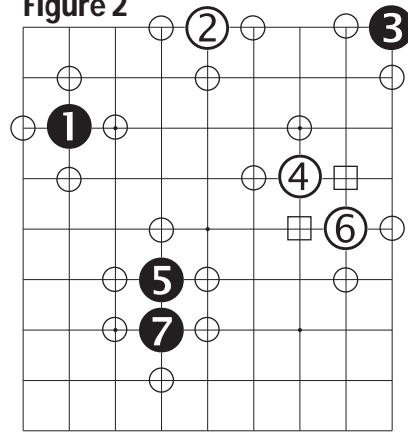
- Keep careful track of how many liberties each of your stone groups has after every move: any stones with only two liberties left are in immediate danger of being put into Atari, and need support.
- Black starts with an advantage by moving first. That advantage can be broken if White does not try to occupy one of Black’s stones’ liberties on every turn and instead keeps his own stones connected while playing to enclose the area of the board where most of Black’s stones are; but, Black can do this too!
- Instead of trying to capture the other player’s stones, try to surround as many empty points as possible, with your own stones, to be used as safe places to play as the board fills up.

Figure 1



Black moves first.

Figure 2



Circled points are 'liberties'.

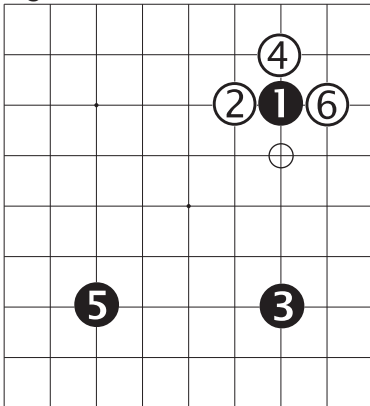


Black(1) has four liberties; White(2) has three liberties; Black(3) has only two liberties.

White(4 & 6) are separate stones with four liberties each; they are **not** yet linked as a group even though they both have two liberties in common (marked by squares).

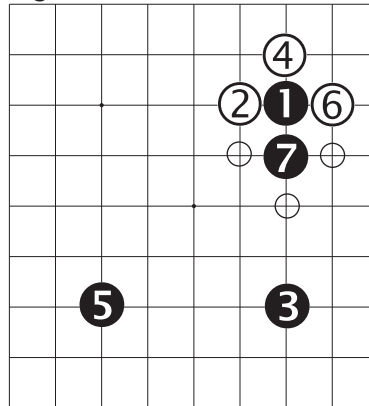
Black(5 & 7) **are** linked as a group that has six liberties altogether.

Figure 3a



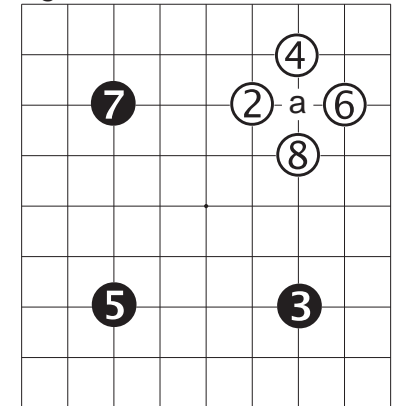
Black(1) is in Atari; its last liberty is circled.

Figure 3b



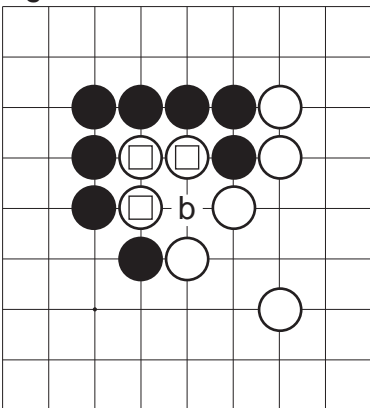
OR

Figure 3c



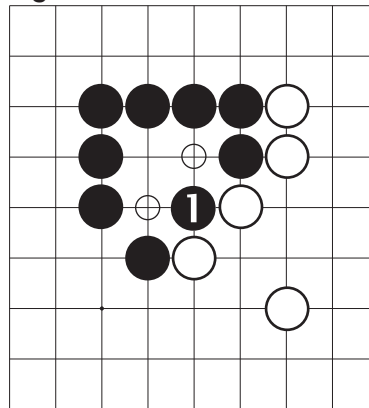
Black(7) will gain two liberties **OR** White(8) captures Black(1). If Black plays at 'a' now he loses the game, but White may play there to link five stones as a single group with eight liberties.

Figure 4a



A group of White stones are in Atari; 'b' is their last liberty. Black **may** play at 'b' to capture the three White stones because...

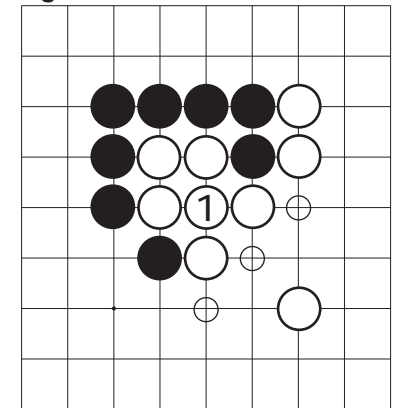
Figure 4b



...Black(1) gets its two liberties on points where the White stones (marked in Figure 4a) were before they were captured.

OR

Figure 4c



IF it were White's turn instead, she could get out of Atari by linking her stones into a group that would have three liberties.

To learn more about GO in Ottawa, or how to introduce the remaining three aspects of standard GO, please visit <http://www.goforall.ca> or email Tyler Reynolds gotoguy@goforall.ca