Checking Life-and-Death Problems in Go II: Results

Lei Shen and Thomas Wolf

Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada

twolf@brocku.ca

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Abstract

In checking a collection of 500 life-and-death problems with the program SCANLD (built on GOTOOLS) a list of problems with partially incorrect solutions has been obtained. In this paper the results of the computerized check are discussed. The program SCANLD is the subject of the earlier paper [1].

1 Introduction

The computer program GOTOOLS solves life-and-death problems in Go but can also be used to generate new problems automatically ([2]). Although these problems are spacious and sometimes hard, they have an artificial touch and are not of much interest to some Go-players that want to practice with game relevant positions. In this paper the program SCANLD which is built on GOTOOLS is used to pick from a collection [4] (in the following called 'the book') of human invented problems those which have some kind of fault in one of their solutions. We hope that Go players find the incorrect problems even more interesting than the already interesting problem collection of the book. After-all, the solutions contain moves that are non-obvious enough that they were overlooked by the book authors.

Details of the program SCANLD are described in the first paper [1] of this sequel. In the section below we give a long list of the mistakes that were found except those where a better move only changes the number of ko-threats that are needed to win or changes the side which needs ko-threats in order to win.

Category	Problems	Percentage
a) boundary not easily closed	9	1.8%
b) timed out	167	33.4%
c) agreement	245	49%
d) changes status to life/death	20	4%
e) missing ko	10	2%
f) change of $\#$ of ko-threats	42	8.4%
g) no error, more than 1 best move	7	1.4%

Table 1: A statistics of the 500 problems in the book

A few short comments that were already made in [1] are repeated here to save the purely Go interested reader from scanning all of [1].

We discuss only occurrences of non-optimal play that are not already identified to be wrong in the book.

Go-players can use the diagrams twice, once for solving the given problem and one more time by trying to find out what is wrong with the given solution.

The program SCANLD is based on the program GOTOOLS and thus shares its weaknesses. One of them is that the problems have to be reasonably closed to be solved efficiently. The subroutine performing this closure is less accurate than the underlying solver but that is not a serious deficit as the cases where the boundary is too wide or too narrow can be corrected efficiently by hand. Another feature is that life and seki are treated alike. A complete list is given in the appendix of [1]. They are all not critical for the purpose of this investigation.

Readers can solve problems interactively and try out variations online at [3] but the boundary of problems has to be closed before suitably.

Table 1 shows problems where a) the boundary can not be closed easily without changing the status of the problem, b) the problem is currently too hard to be solved in a reasonably time, c) the program is in complete agreement with the book, d) the mistake changes the status to life or death, e) the mistake changes the status to ko, f) the mistake changes the number of external kothreats that are needed to win or the side which needs external ko-threats to win, g) the problem has no bug in any solution but one or more additional best first moves which are not mentioned in the book.

In the following 3 sections problems of type d), e) and g) are given. In all cases the first diagram shows the original problem as given in the book. The second diagram shows a solution from the book with non-optimal moves (which have not been identified as wrong in the book). For each such move follows a diagram showing a better move and what it can reach. If these diagrams do not already include the correct solution of the problem (because diagram 2 is not solution 1 in the book which in most cases is supposed to be the correct solution), then the solution with optimal play is added as the last diagram for this problem.

2 Problems with problems

2.1 Mistakes changing the status to life or death

For all problems in the book \bigcirc plays first and what we call 'solution 1' below is the first solution in the book which always is supposed to be the solution where both sides plays optimally. Later solutions typically discuss non-optimal variations.

2.1.1 Problem 33, solution 1



In Diagram 2, \bigcirc needs to win a ko at d19 to live. But \bigcirc can live by playing 2 on e19 as shown in Diagram 3. The only 1 that reaches at least a ko is shown in Diagram 4 and is missed in the book too.

2.1.2 Problem 64, solution 4





In Diagram 6, \bigcirc on g19 is wrong in that \bigcirc lives. With \bigcirc on d19 in Diagram 7, \bigcirc dies. However, already 0 is wrong because 0 on d19 as in Diagram 8 can ensure life. (Diagram 9 from the book shows the best play of 0.)

2.1.3 Problem 69, solution 2



(o on a13 in Diagram 11 was wrong in that \bigcirc needs to win a ko to live. However, with (o on c14 in Diagram 12, \bigcirc lives. (Diagram 13 from the book shows the best play of \bigcirc .)

2.1.4 Problem 98, solution 3





In Diagram 15, although \bigcirc kills the right 4 \bigcirc stones, \bigcirc saves the other group. But \bigcirc could save the right 5 stones as well by playing ② on h19 in Diagram 16. (Diagram 17 from the book shows the best play of \bigcirc which kills.)

2.1.5 Problem 101, solution 6



In Diagram 19, \bigcirc needs to win a ko to live. But with (a) on a17 as shown in Diagram 20, \bigcirc lives. (Diagram 21 from the book shows the best moves for \bigcirc in that \bigcirc dies.)

2.1.6 Problem 122, solution 3



In Diagram 23, ④ on b15 is wrong in that ● is safe in seki. By playing ④ on e15 as in Diagram 24, ● needs to win a ko to live. However, ④ on b19 in Diagram 23 is wrong already, whereas ⑤ on a17 as in Diagram 25 guarantees ● to live. (④ in Diagram 25 is the correct first move in agreement with the book.)

2.1.7 Problem 129, solution 4



Diagram 26.





In Diagram 27, \bigcirc dies with 2 on c15. This is not a mistake in the book because it makes a comment about 2 not being optimal but also the book does not say which 2 would be better. By playing 2 on b15 as shown in Diagram 28, \bigcirc lives. (Diagram 29 from the book shows the best 1 on b15 in that \bigcirc needs to win a ko to live.)

2.1.8 Problem 154, solution 4



In Diagram 31, \bigcirc needs to win a ko to kill. But with (2) on a18 in Diagram 32, \bigcirc kills. (Diagram 33 from the book shows the correct move (1) on a18 enabling (1) to live.)



Although \bigcirc dies in Diagram 35, (4) is wrong because after (5) on d16 in Diagram 36, (1) needs to win a ko to kill. Better is (4) on d16 in Diagram 37 which kills. (The solution with optimal play of \bigcirc from the book is given in Diagram 38 enabling \bigcirc to live in ko.)

2.1.10 Problem 192, solution 4





In Diagram 40, (3) on a16 is wrong in that \bigcirc lives. By playing (3) on c14 as in Diagram 41, \bigcirc dies. However, (2) on a 14 in diagram 40 is wrong already, and by playing (2) on b16 as in Diagram 42, \bigcirc lives. Diagram 43 from the book shows optimal play apart from (2) which should be on a16 after which \bigcirc needs 3 external ko-threats as shown in Diagram 44. In Diagram 43 \bigcirc needs only 2 external ko-threats to win (when \bigcirc uses the internal threat on d19). The book authors surely know that but according to the book (2) is done to get more liberties when instead playing on a16 is better.

A similar but different optimal play of \bigcirc which is missed in the book is shown in Diagram 45 in which \bigcirc also needs 3 external ko-threats.

2.1.11 Problem 201, solution 2



In Diagram 47, 2 on a15 is wrong in that \bigcirc needs to win a ko to live. By playing 2 on b15 as in Diagram 48, \bigcirc lives. (Diagram 49 from the book shows the best 1 which kills.)

2.1.12 Problem 215, solution 3





In Diagram 51, (2) on a12 is wrong in that \bigcirc lives. By playing (3) on b16 as in Diagram 52, (4) kills. However, (2) on a11 in Diagram 51 is wrong already and with (2) on a 13 as in Diagram 53, \bigcirc lives. (Diagram 54 from the book shows the best play of (4) which kills.)

2.1.13 Problem 296, solution 3



In Diagram 56, ③ on a16 is wrong in that ○ can still get a ko. By playing ③ on a13 as in Diagram 57, ● kills. A variation with a different ③ in which ● kills too is shown in Diagram 58 answering to a different ③. A Diagram like the last 2 should replace solution 1 in the book because of another mistake regarding the same problem (see the comments following Diagram 119 in the next subsection).



② on b15 in Diagram 60 is wrong in that it fails to kill ○. With ③ on a16 in Diagram 61, ● kills. Already earlier ② on b13 in Diagram 60 is not optimal.
② on b12 in Diagram 62 reaches a ko. (Optimal play of ● that kills is shown in diagram 63 from the book.)

2.1.15 Problem 342, solution 4



³ on c13 in Diagram 65 is wrong in that it fails to kill \bigcirc . But with ³ on b13 as in Diagram 66, \bigcirc kills. (Diagram 67 from the book shows optimal \bigcirc play leading to ko.)

2.1.16 Problem 412, solution 3



In Diagram 69, \bigcirc needs to win a ko to live. But \bigcirc can live by playing \bigcirc on a18 in Diagram 70. (Diagram 71 from the book shows optimal play of \bigcirc that kills.)

2.1.17 Problem 427, solution 2





6 on a13 in Diagram 73 is wrong in that \bigcirc dies. But \bigcirc lives by playing 6 on c12 in Diagram 74 . (Diagram 75 from the book shows another variation of 2 in which \bigcirc dies.)





on c19 in Diagram 77 is wrong in that ○ lives. By playing ③ on a17 as in Diagram 78, ● kills. Thus, contrary to the statement in the book, ③ on c18 in Diagram 77 is correct. (A variation of Diagram 78 is solution 1 from the book in Diagram 79 in which ● kills too.)

2.1.19 Problem 458, solution 4



In Diagram 81, \bigcirc on c12 is wrong in that \bigcirc lives through escape. By playing \bigcirc on b14 as in Diagram 82, \bigcirc at least captures the majority of \bigcirc . (Optimal play of \bigcirc that kills is shown in Diagram 83 from the book.)

2.1.20 Problem 459, solution 3



In Diagram 85, \bigcirc on b19 is wrong in that it fails to kill \bigcirc . With \bigcirc on a18 in Diagram 86, \bigcirc kills \bigcirc . However, \bigcirc on b18 is not the only move that kills.

Reversing the order of 1 and 3 works as well, see Diagram 87. Another killing 1 is shown in Diagram 88 from the book.





In Diagram 90, (a) on b12 is wrong in that \bigcirc needs to win a ko to live. By playing (a) on b15 as in Diagram 91, \bigcirc lives. However, (b) on a17 is already wrong, and by playing (c) on b15 in Diagram 92, \bigcirc needs to win a ko to live. The last diagram shows optimal play and should replace solution 1 in the book.

2.1.22 Problem 475, solution 1



Diagram 94 (which is supposed to show optimal play of \bigcirc in the book) results in a ko. But by playing 3 on d13 in Diagram 95 \bigcirc can kill.

2.2 Mistakes changing the status to ko

In the problems of this subsection moves are missed which would provide a ko for the side that otherwise would lose unconditionally.

2.2.1 Problem 121, solution 6



In Diagram 97, 0 on a16 is wrong in that \bigcirc lives. However, by playing 0 on c19 in Diagram 98, 0 could kill \bigcirc by winning a ko. (Diagram 99 from the book shows optimal 0 play that kills.)

2.2.2 Problem 128, solution 2



In Diagram 101, (a) on b16 is wrong in that \bigcirc dies. By playing (a) on a16 as in Diagram 102, \bigcirc could live by winning a ko. (Diagram 103 shows a variation as shown in the book for optimal play of \bigcirc with the same outcome as in diagram 102.)

2.2.3 Problem 181, solution 1





In Diagram 105 the move (\odot) is not optimal as it enables \bigcirc to live. Better is (\odot) on a19 as shown in Diagram 106 which kills. One move earlier, (\bigcirc) is an error too as it could have prevented death by playing on c16 in Diagram 107 leading to a favourable ko for \bigcirc . A slightly better and optimal play of \bigcirc is shown in Diagram 108 where \bigcirc needs one more ko-threat to kill. The solution in the last Diagram is equivalent to solution 3 in the book which due to the above mistakes is described there falsely as non-optimal.

2.2.4 Problem 202, solution 1



In Diagram 110, \bigcirc dies. But by playing 2 on c17 as in Diagram 111, \bigcirc could live by winning a ko. Diagram 111 replaces Diagram 110 from the book as the correct solution.



In Diagram 113, 3 on b11 is wrong in that \bigcirc lives. By playing 3 on a11 as in Diagram 114, \bigcirc has to win ko to live. (Diagram 115 from the book shows optimal 6 play that kills.)

2.2.6 Problem 227, solution 1



In Diagram 117 2 on b14 is wrong in that \bigcirc dies. Diagram 118 shows the better move 2 on a16 achieving a ko. It should replace Diagram 117 in the book as the correct solution.



In Diagram 120, (2) on a16 is wrong in that \bigcirc dies. By playing (2) on a13 as in Diagram 121, \bigcirc could live by winning a ko. For optimal \bigcirc play see Diagrams 57 and 58 in the previous section.

2.2.8 Problem 303, solution 4



In Diagram 123, (3) is wrong in that \bigcirc lives. By playing (3) on b19 as in Diagram 124, \bigcirc needs to win ko to live. (Diagram 125 from the book shows how \bigcirc can kill.)



According to the book Diagram 127 is supposed to show the correct solution but 0 on g19 is wrong in that \bigcirc dies. By playing 0 on h19 as in Diagram 128, \bigcirc could live by winning a ko. This is the best 0 can reach. It is better than what the other solutions in the book get.

2.2.10 Problem 469, solution 4



In Diagram 130, (1) on c17 is wrong in that \bigcirc lives. By playing (1) on c19 as in Diagram 131, \bigcirc needs to win ko to live. (Diagram 132 from the book shows how (1) can kill.)

2.3 Problems with more than one best move

Some problems in the book are somewhat less suitable for a tsume go collection because they have at least two equally good first moves. If there are any mistakes in their solutions in the book then these problems have been discussed in the previous sections. Here we list the additional error-free problems with non-unique solutions. The extra winning move is often an strong threat which has to be answered before the best move from the book is made. Another source of multiple best moves is the situation where the order of **1** and **3** can be reversed.

7 d е b d e d e С а C 11 @ 5 9 @ 1 (10 @ a13 (11 @ 3 10 @ a13 to move. (12) @ b17 13 @ a17 (14) @ a13 (12) pass 15 Q 3 17 Q a13 (13 Q 2) 19 @ a13 23 @ a14 24 @ b17 Diagram 133. Diagram 135. Diagram 134.

2.3.1 Problem 81

In addition to 0 on b16 in Diagram 134, 0 on a16 as in Diagram 135 also reaches the status that 0 needs two external ko-threats to win the ko although in Diagram 135 \bigcirc can afford to pass one more time (which the computer program SCANLD does not take into account). The moves 1-10 in Diagram 134 are from the book, the extra moves are from the program to show that 0 needs in total two external ko-threats to win.





In addition to 1 on d12 in Diagram 137, 1 on b13 as in Diagram 138 also reaches the status that \bigcirc needs one external threat to win the ko.





In addition to 1 on c17 in Diagram 140, also 1 on a18 in Diagram 141 and 1 on a17 in Diagram 142 kill.





Apart from 1 in Diagram 144 there is another 1 with one possible follow-up sequence shown in Diagram 145 which also guarantees life.

2.3.5 Problem 155



In addition to 1 on h19 in Diagram 147 also 1 on m19 as in Diagram 148 reaches the status that \bigcirc lives.



In addition to 1 on b16 in Diagram 150, Diagram 151 shows another best 1 on f18 also ensuring life.





In addition to \bigcirc on d18 in Diagram 153 also \bigcirc on a16 as in Diagram 154 reaches the status that \bigcirc needs one external threat to win the ko.





In addition to 1 on a14 in Diagram 156 also 1 on a19 as in Diagram 157 reaches the status that \bigcirc needs one external threat to win the ko.



In addition to \bigcirc on a14 in Diagram 159 also \bigcirc on j19 as in Diagram 160 reaches the status that \bigcirc kills.

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