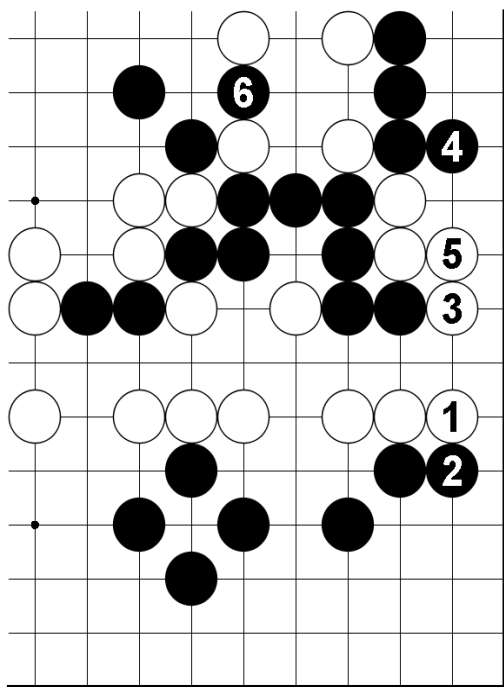


territory, however at this exact moment in time we do not count it because it's not definite. What about Black? He has a few points on the left and some on the side. For board positions like these, the best way to take stock of who is ahead is to not look at what is, but what could be. That is, it's time to read out sequences and then make a plan while under the assumption that those sequences will happen. Case in point:

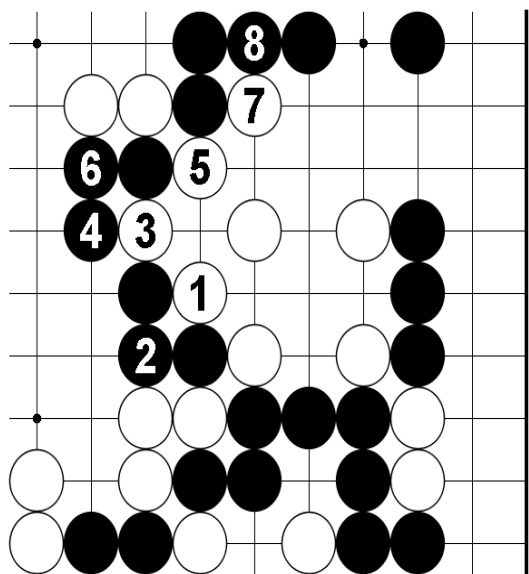


White 1 is a great, double purpose move so it'll be the first on the chopping block. It threatens to connect two cutting stones and attack the corner. If Black defends his corner territory he has to do something about his center stones, or else they'll be cut. This sequence raises an important question, "Will Black be able to play at 6 to save his group?" Of course

Black could save the two stones and lose a ton in the corner, which will raise the question of whether his group at the bottom will be safe.

*"Well this doesn't give me any definite answers! How am I supposed to calculate who has the better position if so much is up in the air?"*

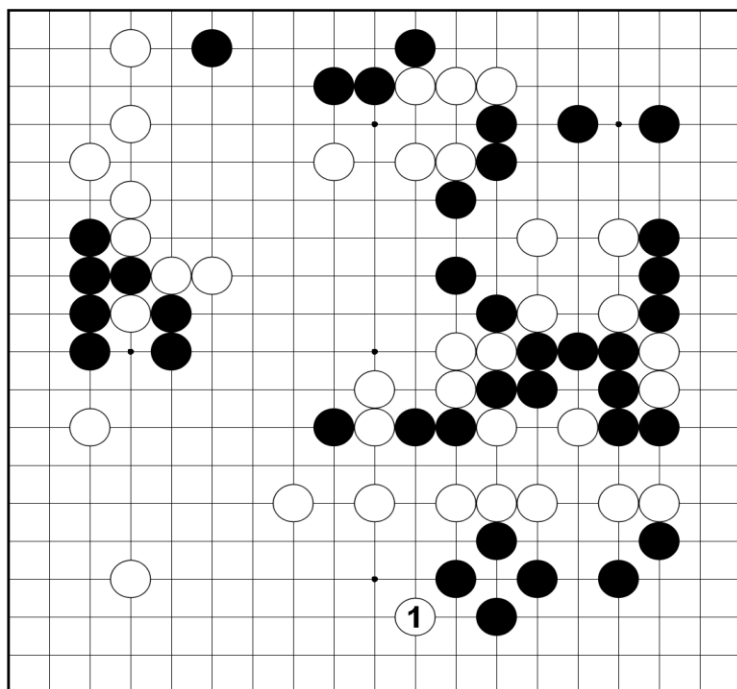
Welcome to Weiqi. The fact of the matter is, you can calculate both. If Black takes the corner he gets twenty some odd points. He'll have to give up the two stones and the surrounding territory, which we'll say is a ten point loss. If he saves the two side stones he ends up only making around ten to twelve points with his corner group. You should read out the sequence and count it in your head. In this case, Black can make twenty points in the corner if he can save his center group. If he can't, then he must capture the two White stones and be content with ten or so points in the corner. We'll take the lower estimate, and say that Black has about ten points there. What about the center of the board?



The aji that exists in the center is even more interesting. White can start a ko in the middle with 5. Pay special attention to the fact that in order to play this ko you need to play White 7, otherwise you'll be captured. The exchange of White 7 for Black 8 is a loss for White. Any future incursions into the

upper right corner are much harder now that Black has a sturdy shape with which to attack. So how do we count the center? Well, from Black's perspective covering this aji would be helpful, and it would secure a good 25 points for him, however it's hard

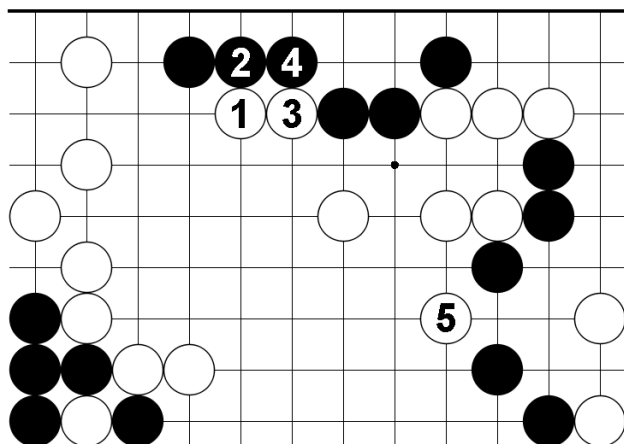
to find a move that simultaneously defends the center and performs some other job. So we can say that this area will either become twenty five points or a ko where White has to damage himself in the process.



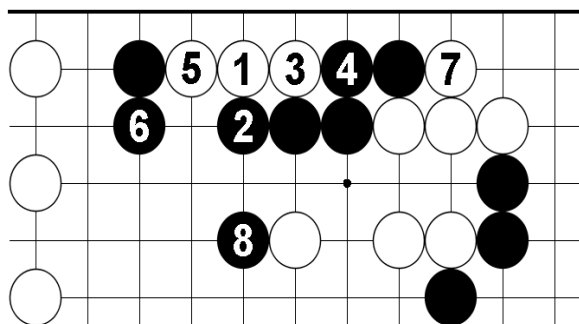
Looking back at the original board position, it seems that Black has quite a bit of solid territory, and the gray areas lean more in his favor in terms of turning them into points. What about White? White will either lose the corner or the bottom part of the board at the bottom. So the real potential is in the center. He's got some forcing moves and Black has only one solid group he can use as a base of operations into the center.

*Well there is that weak Black group at the top...*

You got it. White has to turn the center into something and he has a weak group nearby to help make that happen. White needs to answer the question “How many points can I make in the center” to offset Black’s advantage. Instead, White focused more on making the bottom as big as it could be rather than take the initiative. Again, let’s read out more sequences.

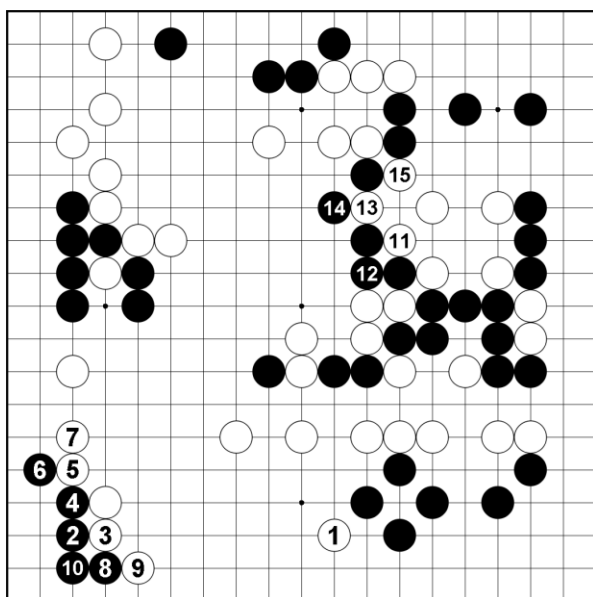


The soft approach would be to let Black live small by pressing him down in center and then using some forcing moves to sacrifice the stones in the center to form the center. This could net White twenty points or so of territory easily. Like I said, this is the soft approach.



White 1 is a severe move and threatens Black’s eye space. This will start a fight in an area where White has the advantage.

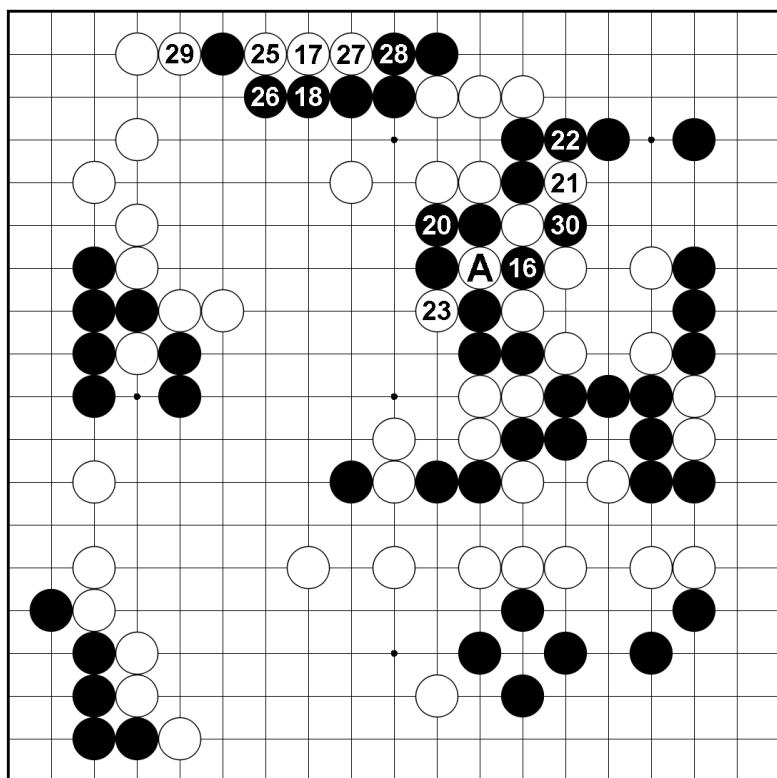
So then, maybe we can think of Black's top group as negative points. There is a lot of potential for White to use it to make territory. Why is White switching to the bottom not as good? The bottom is not sure fire. White decided to forego moves that give him clear, straightforward benefit in sente. It's like finding a twenty dollar bill on the ground, with no one in sight, and then just ignoring it. Given the fact that overall Black is in the better position to turn parts of the board into territory it should be clear that White is behind and must play **aggressively** to move the balance back in his favor. Is the game lost? Of course not, it's close.



Black took the corner for more sure fire territory, thinking he could get sente, once White defends, to either erase the aji in the middle or strengthen his top group (preferably in sente). The bottom isn't so big that Black cannot reduce it from the outside.

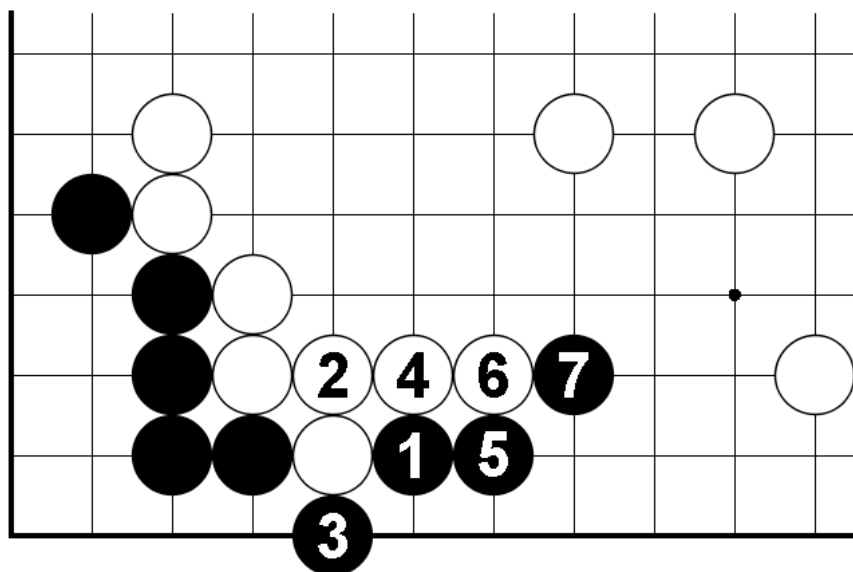
Instead of getting sente White took a gamble. As we saw before the ko is costly for White; he needs to make up for the fact that Black is stronger. The ko also makes it harder to make center territory, so we have to include that as a loss as well.

*“Well at least White gets to take the top Black group.”*

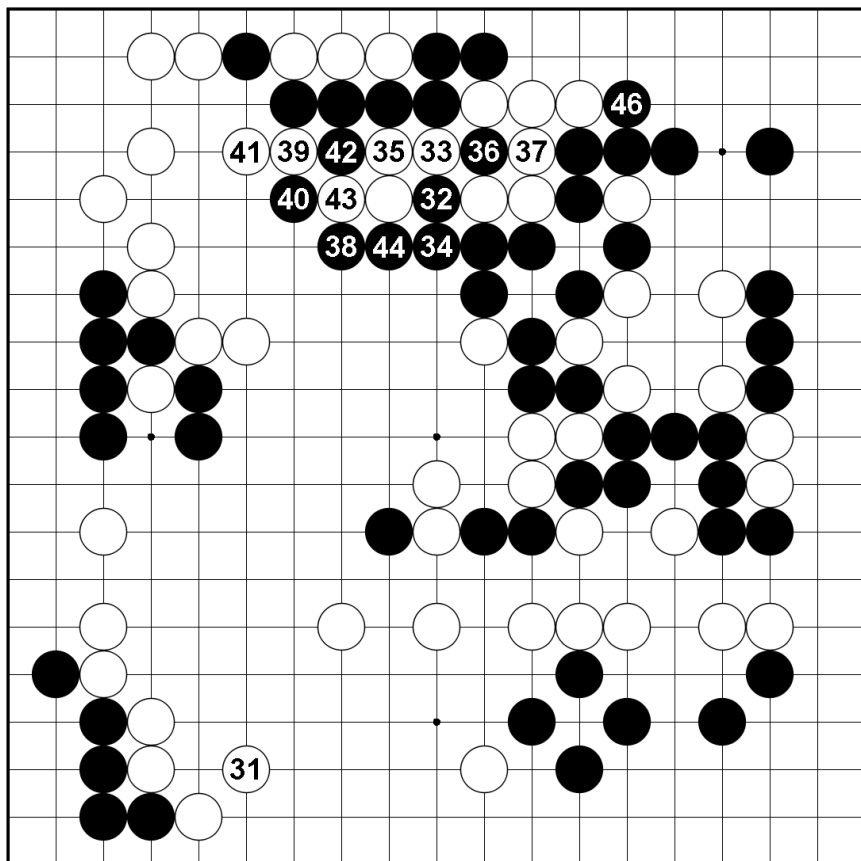


①⑨ at A, ②④ at ①⑥.  
(Real Game)

Sure, but you might've been able to do that at no charge. Plus look at what you're giving up on the bottom.



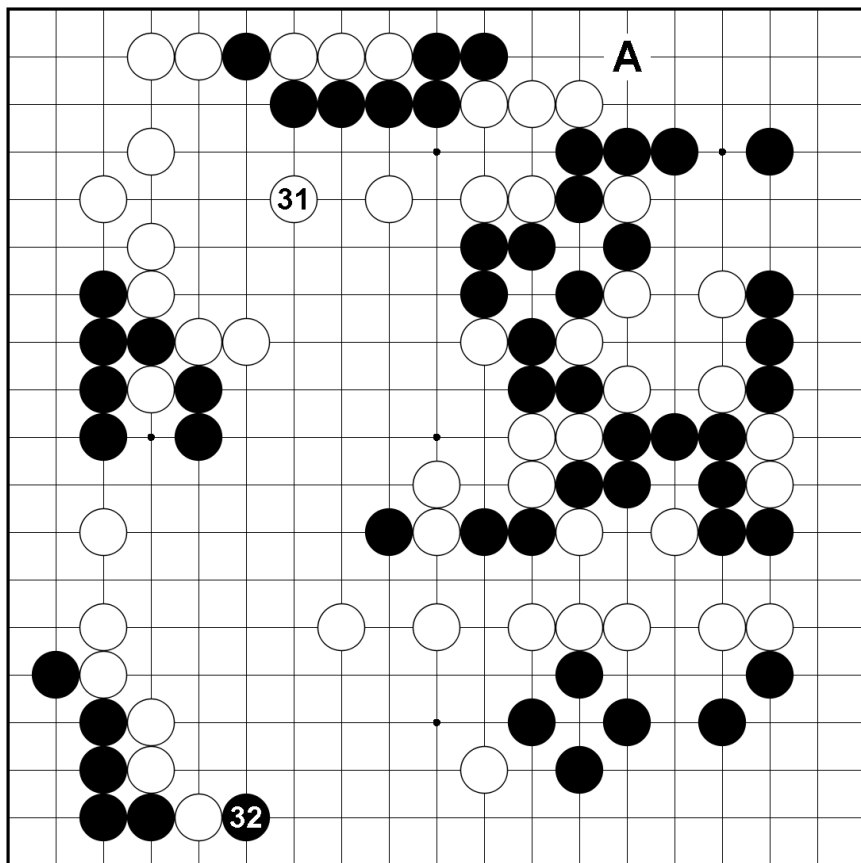
There are other variations I'm sure, but let's go with the simplest one. Everyone knows that if you leave this shape Black can clamp at 1 and come under, ferreting away all of the bottom territory. White pays dearly here if he doesn't get sente. Take a look at the real game, by the way, since this part is all about reading out sequences and using that to form a full board strategy, does White have any shape problems? Think long and hard, the answer isn't going to jump out at you. I'll give you a hint. There's a reason Black took at 30 and not the bottom stone.



45 at 36.

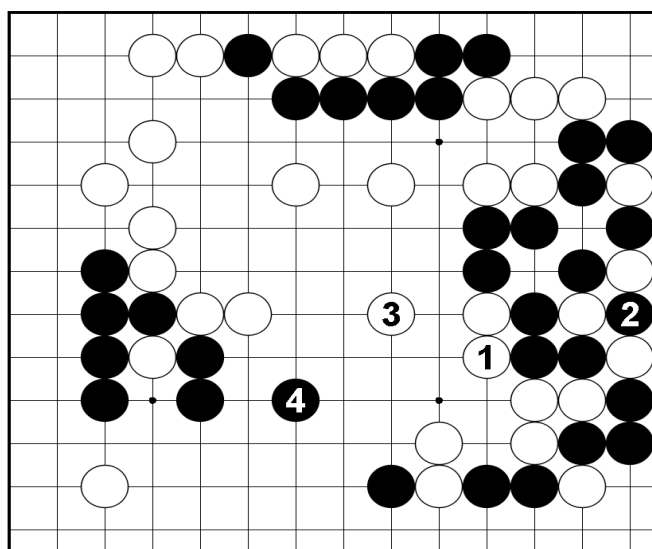
White is perfectly welcome to take sente and defend his weak point at 31, but this move is blind to the fact that Black has been building up to enclosing White. Black 32 and 36 are a beautiful tesuji combination and now White is captured. So much for taking sente.





White needs to cover up that hole. Yes he took the Black stones up top. No argument there, those stones bit the dust. The problem is those stones were half dead; a definite burden for Black. To offset White's gain Black has sente moves like A. This move alone is worth fifteen some odd points and is clearly sente. We've already seen what White loses with Black 32. White will have a rough time with the center, as he does have a forcing move, although sealing both sides with a single move will be

tough. What about the bottom right? We do not have to worry about our middle stones being cut off, so when White descends we will definitely choose to protect the corner, netting us a ton of points. Who has the better position? Black has a good eighty some odd points (I invite you to count for yourself). This is just an estimate; good enough for this stage in the game. White is not bad off. The top is a major source of points. What about the center? Again, let's read it out before we decide.



White 1 is without question sente, and White closes one door with 3 and Black walks through the other with 4. So we can estimate the top to be around 40-45 points. With komi that gives White 52 points, upper end estimate. White needs 29 points elsewhere to win this game. Is that possible? It's not out of the question, but that is no simple task given the fact he takes a loss at the bottom, the one place where he could've made that back. The game is good for Black. It made better tactical sense to use Black's weakness outright. It costs White nothing.

