Kingsrow Knows It Better

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500 stunning computer findings in international draughts games

Colofon

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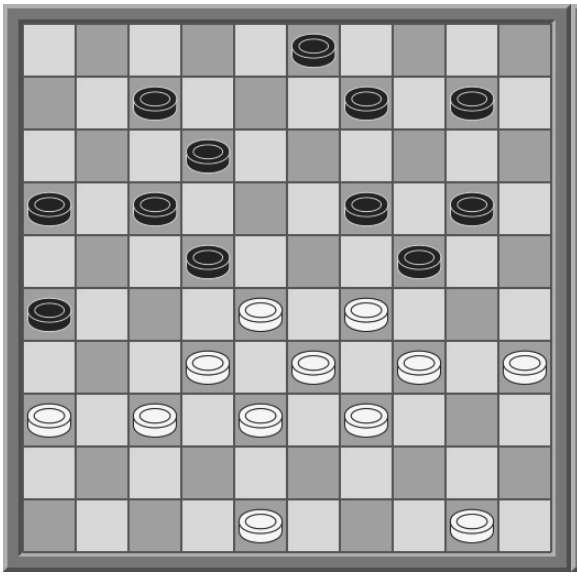
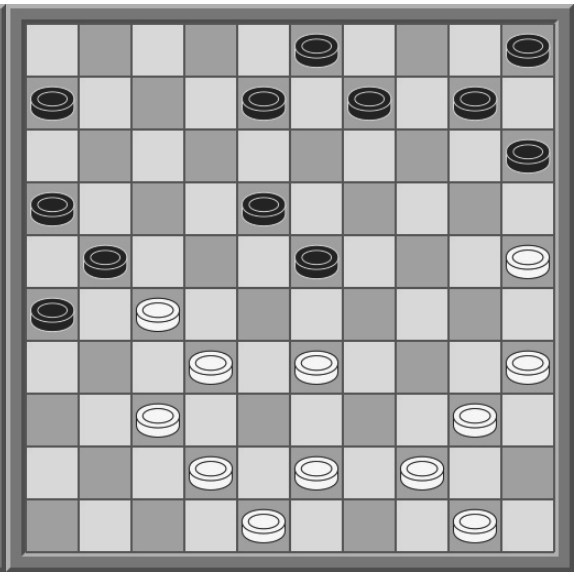
Imagine the following. Two draughts clubs of about the same strength are playing an important match. For example, it is a match where one team can be promoted, and the other team may drop to a lower division. Most people expect a draw, or a very small win for one of the teams. One of the teams has a player called Frits Fictief.



1. Arie Storm - Thomas Wielaard



2. Alex Ketelaars - Bert Habets

Frits Fictief is not a normal draughts player. He thinks and plays like a computer. At the same time, he sometimes behaves in a slightly tricky way, which is a very human thing. Frits is playing with White. The position shown in the first diagram is on the board. Suddenly, he moves his hand above piece 32.
"Surely he will not play that move." his opponent and some spectators think.

But he does. He picks up the piece and moves it towards square 27. Just before he lets go, he says, "Oh sorry, no." and moves the piece back to square 32. His opponent does not accept this.
"No, you touched the piece. You must play it."

The arbiter is standing next to the board and agrees. Some people who are passing by also start to interfere.
"But if I play that move, I lose a piece immediately." Frits says.

The arbiter does not change his mind.
"Unfortunately, the rule is clear. A touched piece must be played."

Frits continues with his preconceived behavior. He pretends to be embarrassed and plays 32-27! His opponent captures 22x42 very quickly and then leans back with a satisfied feeling. His teammates rubbed their hands and returned smiling to their boards. "These points are already won." they think.

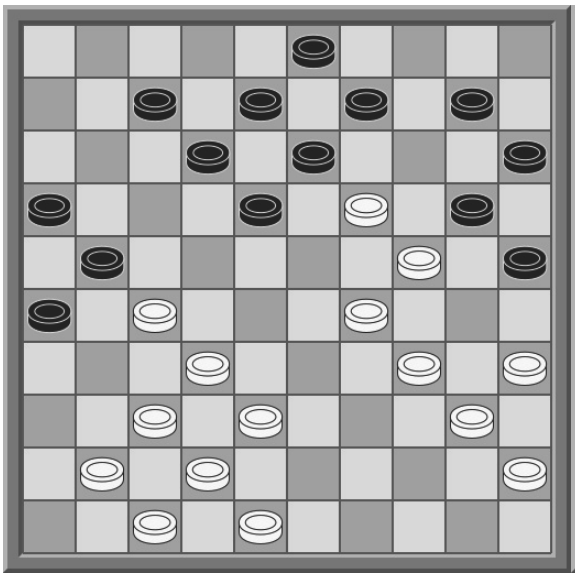
After a short time, Frits' opponent starts to see problems. After White captures 48x37, there is a 1-against-3 threat. And also the combination 35-30 (24x35) 29-24 (20x40) 39-34 etcetera, is still possible. What can Black do against this?

This is why Frits Fictief does not really exist as a human being. Only a computer seriously looks at the "ridiculous" move 32-27. A human player would not think about this move at all, even though it is actually very simple and strong. It is a typical computer move, found by the program Kingsrow. Once again, the computer is right. After 48x37, Kingsrow replies with double sacrifice (19-23), but this gives no real compensation. For the record: the position shown comes from a real game between Arie Storm and Thomas Wielaard (2007).

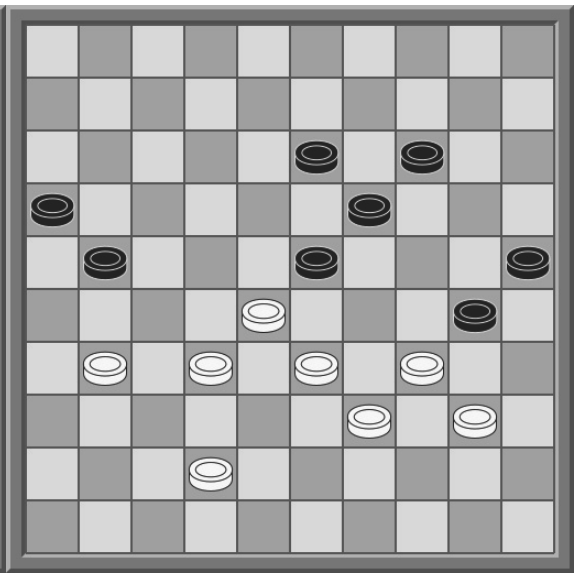
This booklet is about such moments. It shows winning chances that were missed in real games. These wins were found later by draughts programs such as Kingsrow, and sometimes also by Flits, Truus, Scan, Damage and Moby Dam. In most cases, these ideas are a little different from the standard combinations that many players know from the Prisma booklets by R.C. Keller, I. Koeperman and L. de Rooij. It is therefore not surprising that even top grandmasters, and even world champions, have missed simple wins in the past.

In the position shown in the second diagram, from a game between Alex Ketelaars and Bert Habets (2016), White is to move. Nobody looks for a winning combination that ends on square 10. Really nobody. This seems impossible. There is a black piece on square 10, and there are also pieces on squares 5 and 15. Still, White can win with a combination that ends on square 10. This is typical computer thinking. The computer sees something that humans do not see. White wins with 25-20! (15x24) 35-30 (24x35) 44-39 (35x44) 37-31 (26x28) 33x15 (21x32) 50-45 (44x33) 15-10 (5x14) 43-38 (32x43) 48x10.
Are you still following the moves?

The third example shows a missed capture combination for White to the "impossible" square 15. No human player looks at this move. A draughts program does. White



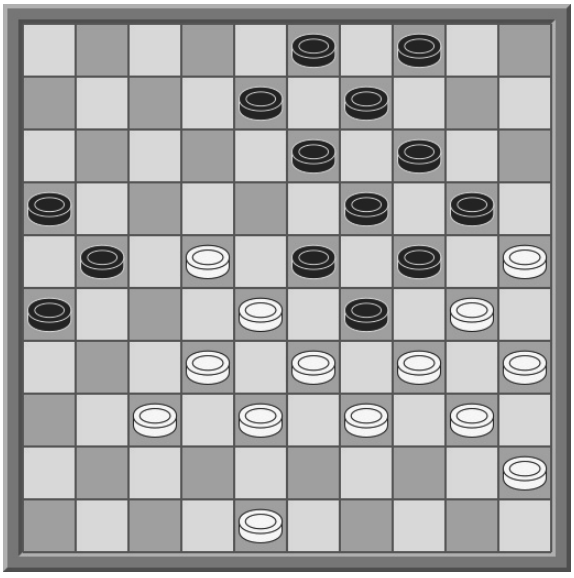
3. Bert Raven - Herman van Westerloo



4. Hein Meijer - André Bercot

combines to that square with 27-22! (18x27) 29-23 (20x18) 41-36 (13x24) 34-30 (25x34) 40x20 (15x24) 37-31 (26x28) 38-32 (27x38) 42x15. This position comes from a game between Bert Raven and Herman van Westerloo (1988).

Not all examples in this book are direct combinations. Sometimes the computer finds a forcing. This forcing can be slow, that will say more than one move. Sometimes the computer finds an "impossible" move, or a quiet move. Sometimes it finds a mix of these ideas. In a game between Hein Meijer and André Bercot (2002), shown in the fourth diagram, the Dutch grandmaster played 31-27? and the game ended in a draw. The winning line was 31-26! (21-27) 32x21 (16x27) and now 33-29! (23x32) and then the phenomenal quiet move 40-35! Almost no human player would think of this. Black has one piece more, but is forced to give up important material.



5. Ilya Deriglazov - Nicolay Germogenov

Some positions in this book are very difficult. In the position of the fifth diagram, from a game between Ilya

Deriglazov and Nicolay Germogenov (2019), the normal result is a draw, with Black to move. But a computer does not think in a normal way. It sees 21-27! 22x31 and then keeps playing. In the end, Black wins. How this works is shown in one of the problems in this book.

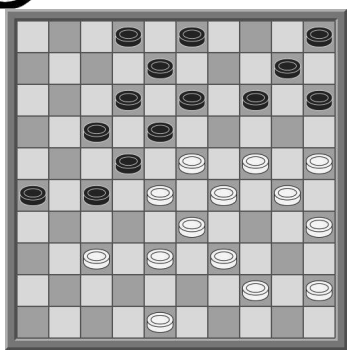
Each position has a difficulty level. This is shown with three different smileys. A big smiling face means the idea is quite easy. Every draughts player should be able to find it. Strong players may not even need a board. A friendly but worried smiley means the problem is harder. In that case, it is useful to set up the position and try some moves. A smiley with sweat drops (not tears) means the problem is difficult. Even strong players will usually need a board and some time. These positions often contain difficult forcings.

Kingsrow Knows It Better contains 500 positions in which a win (not a draw) is missed. Sometimes the win is based on a combination, but sometimes on a forcing, a gambit, a quiet move, or even an "impossible" move. On purpose, the type of winning idea is not indicated. In a real game, the player must discover this for himself. The solutions are given at the end of the book, together with an index of names.

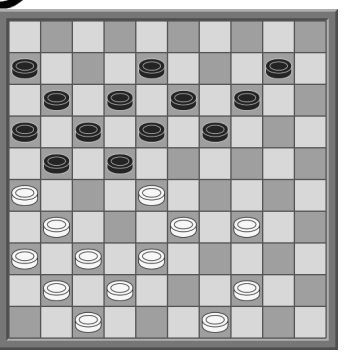
Finally, the question: will you play stronger draughts after working through *Kingsrow Knows It Better*? The answer is yes - and yes again. First, your mental equipment will be enriched with hundreds of largely unknown ideas and turning points. Second, you will learn to think outside the usual paths. In modern draughts, this is exactly where most decisions are made. With standard positional play, partly based on overused combinations, one does not get very far anymore.

The book *Kingsrow Knows It Better* could not have been made without help. Thanks go to Kingsrow (Ed Gilbert), Toernooibase (Piet Bouma), and Steven Tjong, who helped to collect the diagrams. In the solutions, the names of players who first published a computer discovery are sometimes mentioned. Many thanks to all of them.

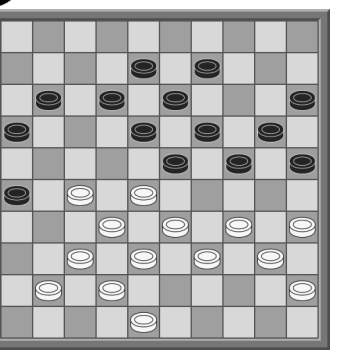
Eric van Dusseldorp
Jomtien, Thailand, januari 2026



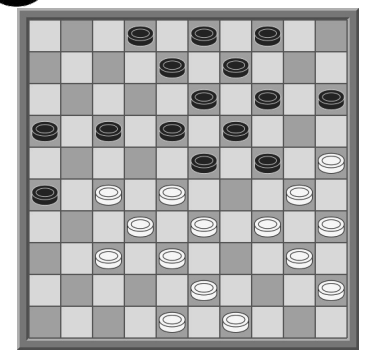
1. Al Sarayfi - J. Hoogterp
(IC Oerterp Drachten)
27-31? missing a win



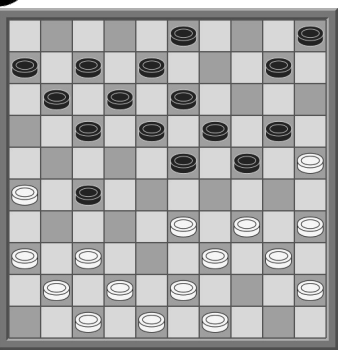
2. J. Capelle - E. Maijenburg
(Dutch NC 2023-2024)
19-23 missing a win



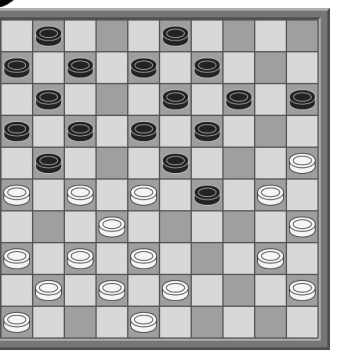
3. J.-M. Ndjofang - K. Romijn
(Amersfoort Open 2024).
48-43? missing a win



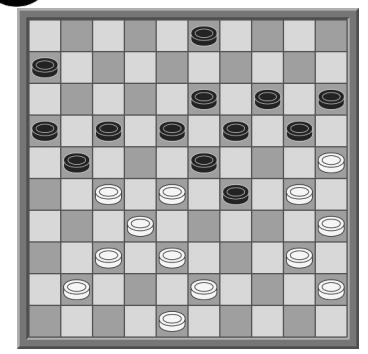
4. J. Kok - W. Meijer
(Dutch NC 2024-2025)
14-20? missing a win



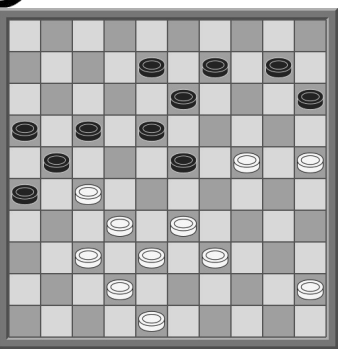
5. R. Heusdens - M. Corba
(MTB Open Hoogeveen 2011)
10-15? missing a win



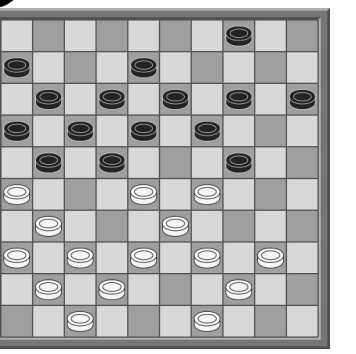
6. K. de Graaf - R. Cousijnsen
(Onderlinge Competitie DVSB)
Black missed a win



7. H. Velraeds - H. van der Pol
(Salou Open 2024)
20-24? missing a win



8. G. van der Meer - W. Sosef
(Dutch NC 2023-2024)
37-31? missing a win



9. J. Capelle - E. Maijenburg
(Dutch NC 2023-2024)
14-20? missing a win